The Construction of Masculinity in Propertius

by

Melanie Racette-Campbell

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Graduate Department of Classics
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Abstract

The gendered characterization of the Propertian lover-poet does not fit comfortably into either the role of a traditionally masculine elite male Roman or that of an effeminate elegiac lover. This dissertation argues for a lover-poet whose gender role draws on and reacts to elements from both of these pre-existing roles with the end result of a character that disidentifies with Roman gender roles and exists outside of the binary oppositions that they provide. The lover-poet’s characterization is intimately bound to that of his elegiac puella, usually identified in the poetry as Cynthia, and as such the focus of this dissertation is on the poems in which the lover-poet and Cynthia interact. Propertius explores tensions inherent in the gendered roles and relationships of elegy through his exposure of the limits of elegiac fides and his interaction with non-elegiac fides as part of the language of Roman social relations. These tensions are further exposed through his use of women’s speech, which depicts women as critical of both the elegiac scenario and of mainstream Roman values. Propertius uses the common elegiac trope seruitium amoris to consider issues of freedom, speech, and patronage both within and without the elegiac world and differs from the other Latin love poets in his presentation of his puella as possessing a measure of mastery. He also uses the equally common trope militia amoris to portray the elegiac world as morally superior to that of traditional militia, including epic poetry and contemporary conquest and empire-building. The existence of similar themes and critiques in the non-Cynthia poems, especially those that ostensibly praise Augustus, suggests the importance of further investigation into
the connection between Propertius’ construction of masculinity and the social, cultural, and political change of the Augustan era.
Acknowledgments

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# Table of Contents

Abstract ii

Acknowledgements iv

Introduction: About a Girl 1

Chapter 1: Disidentifying with fides in Propertius 2.9 and 2.29 30

Chapter 2: Death Becomes Her: Women’s Speech Haunting Propertian Elegy 64

Chapter 3: Freedom, Patronage, and seruitium amoris 103

Chapter 4: Epic, Empire, and militia amoris 142

Conclusion: Propertius without Cynthia 183

Bibliography 199
Introduction: About a Girl

nos uxor numquam, numquam deducet amica:
semper amica mihi, semper et uxor eris.

Prop. 2.6.41-42\(^1\)

indixit leges; respondi ego: ‘Legibus utar.’

Prop. 4.8.81

In this dissertation, I explore the construction of masculinity in the character of the Propertian lover-poet, particularly as it is constructed through interaction with the puella. In the final couplet of elegy 2.6,\(^2\) Propertius’ lover-poet tells Cynthia that he will have no wife or mistress other than her, and that she will always be both his wife and his mistress. These lines sum up the difficulty of assigning the Propertian puella to any one status: she is wife and mistress in one, while at the same time she is neither.\(^3\) Moreover, the lines strongly suggest that Propertius wrote her as an internally self-contradictory character. One of the results of this characterization is that it is equally difficult to understand the Propertian lover-poet as a unified subject, since his character is inextricably intertwined with Cynthia’s.

The characters called Propertius and Cynthia\(^4\) are not to be considered exact representations of historical people whose actions reflect those experienced by the poet in a biographical sense. They are literary constructions that serve the varied artistic and socio-poetic purposes of their author, Propertius.\(^5\) I have indicated this in part by using the name “Propertius” when referring to the historical person who was the author of these poems, and

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\(^1\) All quotations from Propertius are from Fedeli 1984, unless otherwise noted.
\(^2\) Some editors (Luck 1979; Goold 1999; cf. Heyworth 2007, 138-39 for a full discussion) move this couplet to the beginning of elegy 2.7, because they believe the previous couplet provides a suitable ending to the poem and that lines 41-42 do not have any relationship to the subject matter of 2.6, but do relate to the subject matter of 2.7. I find Fedeli’s (2005, 218-19) argument that the lines provide a guarantee of fidelity and an honoured place to Cynthia, should she be faithful to him, compelling, and so prefer to leave the couplet at the end of 2.6, as transmitted in the manuscripts. Regardless, my argument about the lines’ encapsulation of Cynthia’s self-contradictory characterization does not depend on their placement in one poem or the other.
\(^3\) Miller (2004, 62-63) argues that Cynthia, by being meretrix and matrona in one, is a conceptual impossibility in Roman thought and society. Cf. Wyke 2002, 20-21 on Cynthia’s lack of distinct status.
\(^4\) This discussion also applies to unnamed puellae who may or may not be Cynthia.
by referring to “the lover-poet” when I mean the main male character of the poems, who is usually, but not always, the ego who speaks the poems. Nor should the character Cynthia and/or the *puella* be thought of as an historical figure or as a window through which we can learn directly about the lives of historical women. She exists to fulfill the roles that Propertius creates for her.

Cynthia does not fit comfortably into the role of the sort of well-educated and scandalous aristocrat familiar from Sallust’s Sempronia (*Cat*. 25), Cicero’s Clodia (*Cael.*, especially 13-16), or, by implication, Catullus’ Lesbia (79). Yet neither is she easily classifiable as an actress or *meretrix*, like Cytheris/Volumnia, the mistress of Antony and putative inspiration for Gallus’ Lycoris. The difficulty of assigning Cynthia to one social category suggests that she symbolizes a point of resistance to normative social identities, by challenging the separation between the normally opposed categories of wife and prostitute and therefore the coherence of the categories themselves. An overview of the abundant scholarship on the characterization of the mistress and her place and function in the poetry will be useful as a starting point for considering the construction of gendered characters in elegy in general and the Propertian corpus in particular.

Cynthia and the other elegiac mistresses have been subject to a number of different interpretations. The earliest and simplest is the biographical interpretation, which has its roots in ancient biographies of the poets and, in Cynthia’s case, is based on the ancient identification by Apuleius (*Apol*. 10.3) of Cynthia as a pseudonym for Hostia, a Roman

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6 Wyke 1987.
7 Even these women, although ostensibly historical, are constructed by hostile authors for their own political aims; Skinner (1997, 5), Wyke (2002, 36-39) and Miller (2004, 23-24) all argue for their role as gendered metaphors for the social and political chaos of the late republic. Cf. Hillard 1989. McClure (2003, 86) suggests that the association of facility at Greek and Latin literature with the *hetaira* also branded such educated elite women as sexually promiscuous.
9 Miller (2012) has recently set out an overview of the scholarship on the elegiac *puella* in the last century. I will follow him in parts of the following discussion.
noble-woman of the Clodia-type. The biographical reading appears in two distinct forms, one romantic and sentimental, the other historical and darkly realistic. Both of these have in common the basic assumption that the poet’s voice is identical with that of the elegiac lover and the corpus is a literal retelling of an actual affair. On the romantic reading, the poet presents a sincere report of his feelings and experiences, and any potential contradictions to his version of this scenario are ignored. The puella must therefore also be a truthfully portrayed and unified object of the poet’s feelings. The historical reading avoids idealizing the poet, the puella, or the elegiac world, instead situating the poetry in the cultural conventions governing relationships between Roman men and women. This reading strategy, however, leads to problems of consistency in the case of all the love poets, and especially in the case of Propertius. Even in book 1, which focuses most strongly on Cynthia and the love affair, it is difficult to force the characters and circumstances of all the poems into one consistent story, and after the first book it is quite impossible. The recent shift to reading elegy and its characters as literary constructions has addressed these problems of consistency and chronology. The influence of the biographical reading is, however, still visible in many later critical approaches, some of which I discuss below, which continue to see the puella as the object of the poet’s verse and the poet as speaking in a single, unified voice.

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10 Hostius, an epic poet of the second century BCE, is then named as Hostia’s ancestor, based on the statement at 3.20.8 that the puella of that poem has a doctus aaus. Courtney (1993, 52), in his entry on Hostius, argues against identifying him as Cynthia’s ancestor. See Wiseman (1969, 50-52), who suggests that the ultimate source of Apuleius’ identifications was C. Julius Hyginus, who was a friend of Ovid; Boucher (1980, 60-65) summarizes the problems with the identification of Cynthia with Hostia and discusses further possibilities, such as Roscia.

11 Miller defines the “romantic” (2012, 5) and “historical” (2012, 15-16) readings.

12 Miller 2012, 5-6. He cites Sellar (1899, 219) as an example of this sort of reading. Cf. Kennedy 1993, 35. Lyne (1980, 118-19) and Papanghelis (1987, 145, 181, and 185) both provide examples, in their condemnation of Cynthia for spoiling the romantic illusion in her speeches, of the difficulty that some scholars have with a puella who breaks the illusion of the passive love-object.

13 Miller 2012, 6.

14 See, for example, Griffin 1986.

15 Papanghelis 1987, 94; Wyke 2002, 48; Miller 2004, 186. Sellar (1892, 233) provides an example of how “romantic” readers attempt to circumvent difficulties in defining the mistress’ status as presented in the poetry; Luck (1979, 147), when forced to admit that Corinna lacks biographical consistency, still insists that when Ovid writes of her he is thinking of “his mistress of the moment.” Cf. Miller 2012, 7, 9.

16 Miller 2012, 3.
In the latter half of the twentieth century, critics began to interpret Cynthia as a literary construct and particularly as a symbol of elegy and the elegiac lifestyle.\textsuperscript{17} This reading is clearly justifiable, since Cynthia, who gives her name to Propertius’ first book\textsuperscript{18} and is said to be “read all over the forum” (2.24.2 \textit{et tua sit toto Cynthia lecta foro}), undeniably appears as a symbol for elegy and the poet’s work.\textsuperscript{19} Lange provides a good example of the re-interpretation of Cynthia from such a standpoint. For her, the death of Cynthia in 4.7, which had caused problems for biographical interpreters, coming as it does before the living Cynthia’s reappearance in 4.8, represents the death of erotic elegy.\textsuperscript{20} The interpretation of the mistress as a literary construct is an important feature of most, if not all, other recent interpretations of Cynthia and the elegiac mistress as a character. An important connection between this approach and earlier biographical readings, however, is that the \textit{puella} remains nothing more than a reflection of the poet’s desires: instead of being his love object, she becomes the object of his poetry.\textsuperscript{21}

The biographical interpretation of elegy also influenced early feminist readings, which tended to search for the “real woman” behind the characters of elegy.\textsuperscript{22} Generally, however, the mistress is more fruitfully read not as a representation of any specific historical woman, but as a construct whose characterization may draw in part on the lived experience of historical women, or particular aspects of their lives, especially in the case of the two types of women that seem to provide much of the inspiration for the mistress character, the

\textsuperscript{17} Greene (2005a, 212) argues that the \textit{dura} mistress’ association with poetic composition is part of the alliance of Propertius’ poetry with the values of epic; cf. McNamee 1993, 215-16. Miller (2012, 11-15) refers to this critical approach as “formalism,” for which see Sullivan 1964 and 1976; Gold 1984 and 1985/86; Benediktson 1989. Cairns (2006, 67) perhaps follows a similar approach, as he argues that Cynthia’s character changes because of the multiplicity of literary models on which she is based.

\textsuperscript{18} Via the convention of referring to books by their first word (for which see Kennedy 1993, 83) which in Prop. 1.1.1 is “Cynthia”.

\textsuperscript{19} Randall (1979) argues that even the choice of pseudonym for the mistresses is intended to associate them with poetry. Cf. King (1980, 216), on Cynthia’s associations with Apollo and Artemis. Fear (2000, 230) connects the act of reading with the sexual possession of the \textit{puella}.

\textsuperscript{20} Lange 1974, 336, 341, although the continued influence of the autobiographical interpretation lingers in Lange’s suggestion that Cynthia represents the life the poet truly desired. See also Warden 1980, 12; Fear 2005, 29; and Günther 2006, 381. See McNamee 1993, 215 for Cynthia as elegiac poetry.


\textsuperscript{22} Hallett 1973.
misbehaving noblewoman and the *meretrix*. These readings influence my work in that I am interested in why Propertius would introduce the perspective of these women into his work, and especially why he would create characters who frequently oppose and undermine the assumptions and beliefs necessary for the maintenance of the characters and values of a stereotypical elegiac world.

Some of the most recent research on Propertius and Roman elegy has focused on the use of the concept of the Other to understand how the lover-poet’s mistress functions in the text. Gold draws attention to Propertius’ use of Cynthia to represent what he wants and fears for himself. Wyke argues that the mistress exists in the text solely to define the poet, that is to behave as the Other who defines his Self by opposition. Although the elegiac mistress has often been identified as serving the purpose of an opposing Other for the lover-poet, in Propertius’ case this reading is complicated by the lover-poet’s frequent identification with the mistress, and further complicated by both of them resisting specific identification with any one gendered role. Undoubtedly, my interpretation owes a debt to the post-structuralists, the first cohort of scholars to drop the requirement of internal consistency and unity. I argue for a more serious reading of the poet than scholars such as Veyne, however, who see the elegies as humourous or ironic, although I do not reject such readings either. Since internal consistency is not a formal requirement in Roman elegiac poetry, it is not necessary to privilege a single way of reading elegy to the exclusion of all others.

Recent feminist criticism has tended to ground elegy in its historical context while at the same time viewing the *puella* as a literary construct, but not one that is entirely under the conscious control of the poet. Cynthia in many ways closely resembles the character of the

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26 For mistress as Other, see Gold 2002, 444; Greene 1995, 303; and Wyke 2002, 30. For another interpretation, see Miller (2004, 188) who argues that the subject, as it becomes dispersed in Propertius, loses its opposition to the Other.
independent, capricious, and elusive *hetairai*, whose description in Davidson is applied by James to the elegiac mistress.29 These women shared characteristics with both wives and prostitutes.30 As in the case of wives, access to them was restricted; they did not solicit customers in the street or lie available to all in brothels.31 But, like common prostitutes, they received their livelihood from the sexual relationships they had with men, and were not tied exclusively to any one man.

The *hetaira/meretrix* also had characteristics that put them outside of either of the socially definable categories of wife or prostitute. They derived their livelihoods not from cash payments for individual transactions, but from “gifts” bestowed upon them by their male “friends.” These gifts might be of money, generally large sums, but also might consist of material goods or slaves, or in exceptional cases even property.32 In return, they provided more than just sex. They provided companionship, intellectual stimulation, and entertainment.33 And, possibly most importantly, they had the power to refuse their lovers’ demands for free access to their homes, bodies, and minds.34 The *hetaira/meretrix* was perhaps the only woman in Greco-Roman society who had this ability, and although she likely did not actually use it often, the ability itself was part of her appeal.35 The common elegiac trope of the *exclusus amator* is a literary reflection of this ability to refuse access.36

The *hetaira/meretrix* was in many ways a free agent, not under the permanent, sanctioned control of any one man, despite her economic dependence on her lovers.37 The lover could not be sure what her thoughts and feelings were, since on some level he was always aware

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29 Davidson 1997, 125, 200 and James 2001, 225 n.4.
30 For Cynthia as both *meretrix* and *matrona*, see Sharrock 1991, 46; Miller 2004, 62.
31 Davidson 1997, 200.
32 Davidson 1997, 125; for an example of such a woman, see Theodote in X. Mem. 3.11.
34 James (2005, 269) argues that the freedom of the courtesan from male citizen control causes anxiety in the lover-poet.
35 Davidson 1997, 124; for discussion of this in a specifically Roman context, see James 2005, 269-70.
36 It was of course possible for a lover to ignore the refusal, but this would require completely giving up any illusion of love and free choice on her part.
that she kept company with him because she was paid to, and that any protestations of love from her had to be considered within that framework.38

The exchange of gifts and favours, the freedom of association, and the provision of intellectual stimulation and companionship make the relationship between a *hetaira/meretrix* and her lover(s) similar to that of *amicitia* between male friends, a similarity that Catullus and then the elegists exploit in their use of the language of Roman social relations in the depiction of amatory relationships.39 The reciprocal gift-giving, the companionship, and the choice of association were all factors that did not feature in men’s relationships with their wives, their slaves, or common prostitutes. And yet, the relationships of men and *hetairai* were still at their heart based on sexual attractiveness.40 A woman without beauty could never have been a successful *hetaira*, even if she had all the other skills.41 This conflict between masculine and feminine aspects of the persona of the *hetaira/meretrix* and of the relationships of these women added to their attractiveness but also made them a threat to the social order.42 This presents the elegiac lover with a dilemma. He wishes to frame his relationship with his mistress in terms of *fides*, and to devote himself to her and to poetry, and for her to have a similar devotion towards him. But given her social position, the mistress cannot afford to rely on him alone even if she wants to, and so he constantly struggles with what he perceives as her infidelity.43 I take up Propertius’ idiosyncratic way of illustrating this tension between elegiac *fides* and social realities in chapter one.

The lover-poet is equally difficult to define. For although he has many effeminate characteristics, he resists identification as an effeminate male. One can see this, for example,

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38 James 2005, 269.
40 Wyke (2002, 38) points out that in the end the *hetaira*’s dependence on gifts keeps her from true independence. Cf. Gibson 1995, 77; James 2001, 224.
41 The letters of the 16th century Venetian courtesan Veronica Franco present an interesting, although much later, viewpoint from an insider to the profession. She advises an acquaintance against grooming her daughter for a career as a courtesan, partly on the basis of her lack of beauty (Letter 22).
42 For the elegiac *puella* as threat to social order for these reasons, see Wyke 2002, 171; Miller 2004, 137; James 2005, 295.
in Propertius 4.8, where he certainly appears as a feminized character who takes on the role of wife or mistress through his actions. Cynthia here acts more like a husband/lover than the lover-poet ever does, most notably when she returns home to discover the lover-poet with two other women and acts as a man would, violently expelling the rivals and physically assaulting the lover-poet and the slave who conspired with him (4.8.49-70). But the lover-poet also inhabits the roles of husband and lover in this poem, and in the end there is no resolution of these disparate roles; he simply returns to the language of *militia amoris* (4.8.88): *respondi, et toto soluimus arma toro* (I answered, and we released our arms on the entire bed). The flexibility of the gendered roles inhabited by the *hetaira/meretrix/elegiac* mistress allows Propertius to combine traits suited to both genders in Cynthia without her becoming a monstrous figure.\(^{44}\) To the degree that her position reflects the role of a *meretrix*, she is neither a respectable wife, mother, or daughter, nor an indisputably *infamis* prostitute. She is independent of male social control and able to negotiate with men on her own terms, at least so long as she is young and attractive, and this independence is unique for a woman in Roman society. Yet since she is undeniably still a woman, as well as economically dependent on men and on her own youthful good looks, she can never achieve true equality with her male associates. The characteristics and behaviour of the *hetaira/meretrix* put her in a position between genders, since she is granted some of the personal freedom of a man but is still held by the dependence and social inferiority of a woman. I argue that it is precisely in this socially indeterminate category that Propertius situates his lover-poet too. The mistress resists definition because she is inspired by the ambiguous character of the *hetaira/meretrix*, and the lover-poet emulates her socially unique status and ability to escape preset roles.\(^{45}\) In this way, Propertius uses the character of the mistress as a strategy to construct the character of the lover-poet. The mistress is neither wife nor prostitute, just as the lover-poet is neither manly nor effeminate, and their relationship correspondingly resists definition.

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\(^{44}\) Wyke 2002, 29; Greene 2005b, 62; Skinner 2005, 222.

\(^{45}\) Cf. Janan (2001, 44) for Cynthia’s role in revealing the lack of unity in the character of the lover.
The elegiac depiction of the male role has recently begun to attract scholarly interest. Both Ellen Greene and Sharon James have investigated the role of the elegiac lover and concluded that, while the lover-poet temporarily rejects traditional male roles, in the end he becomes identified with and re-embraces them. Miller, however, has argued for a lover-poet who occupies a feminine position, although he maintains a certain amount of male privilege. My own research attends to this stream of inquiry into the masculine role in Propertius, but I shall argue that the Propertian lover-poet does not at any point either return to the traditional masculine role or remain effeminized; instead I shall argue that he negotiates for himself an identity containing elements of both of these roles while also standing apart from them. There is a certain amount of innovation in Propertius’ depiction of his lover-poet as a masculine figure, but the existence of a space in which he could create such innovation is due to factors already existing in Roman culture and its construction of gender.

It has been observed before in the context of elegiac scholarship that Roman masculinity was constantly under construction and Roman femininity was also unstable. Roman elite masculinity was an outward-directed performance and not directly based in anatomical sex, leaving its borders difficult to determine and constantly under attack. Elite males displayed their masculinity in public and private roles, such as participation in the political life of the state, success in or at least support of military endeavours, and the maintenance of a well-ordered and prosperous household with obedient and well-behaved family and dependents. For poets, direct participation in political and military life (and even the semi-private role of pater familias) might be replaced by or supplemented with the composition of poetry that, directly or indirectly, upholds these roles as virtuous and

47 Miller 2004, 137.
worthwhile. Propertius, however, frequently either explicitly rejects or implicitly problematizes all of these roles for his lover-poet. Yet at the same time he also refuses to accept the inferiority associated with a male who rejects masculine roles. Instead, he attempts to revalue non-standard roles for men in a way that opens up a new kind of masculine identity based on a fusion of elegiac and elite values that conform to neither code.

Propertius wrote during a time of change and confusion, particularly for men of his class, i.e. elite but non-senatorial (domi nobiles, in Cicero’s famous phrase). He began his career with the publication of his first book of poetry around 29 BCE, although he must have been writing already in the late thirties, and his last book appeared around 15 BCE. He therefore wrote during a period when Augustus was still consolidating his power, when it was still possible that Augustus might fall and Rome return to chaos. During this time, elite Roman men seem to have experienced a crisis of masculinity. During the late Republic, upper-class Roman citizens were supposed to be active participants in political and military affairs, upholding the honour of their families in the public sphere. They were to act with self-restraint and to direct their ambition towards bettering their immediate and extended families and the state. In the last third of the first century BCE, however, the traditional avenues to success, power, and wealth, always conventionally restricted to the Roman nobility, became closed even to many of these members of the upper-class due to the concentration of power and glory in the hands of Augustus, his friends, and family. This situation exacerbated the change in the definitions of masculinity, which had seen continuous revision for at least a century before Octavian’s victory in the civil wars.

51 E.g. Hor. Carm. 3.1-5, Saece; Tib. 1.7. 2.2. 2.5.
52 Miller (2004, 133-34) argues that the contradictions and holding of multiple roles is what makes up the Propertian subject.
53 See Miller (2004, 4) for the elegists as writing in a time of collapse and restructuring of the Roman’s values system and (158) as part of that restructuring of discourse.
54 For Republican elite masculinity, see McDonnell 2006, discussed below.
55 There may have been some contest over the proper sphere of action for aristocrats in the late second and early first centuries BCE, with some arguing for a return to traditional military values and others focusing on a supposedly Greek-influenced virtus (McDonnell 2006, ch.8). See Wray (2001, 207) for the continuing validity of this split in the time of Catullus. Yet even those aristocrats, like M. Claudius Marcellus or Scipio Africanus, who adapted oratory or cultural capital as part of their self-fashioning still generally sought military excellence.
Before the principate, wealthy Romans and well-connected provincials had a variety of options for attaining public power, the most important of which were military service, oratory, and public service. These three spheres are difficult to separate, as generally an ambitious member of the elite would make an effort to gain experience in all three areas. However, occasionally someone who was inactive or unsuccessful in one area could compensate by asserting himself in another, as in the case of Cicero, whose unparalleled skill as an orator more than compensated for deficiencies in his public record such as his lack of military experience and reluctance to serve in the provinces. The opportunity to win advancement through one’s skill as an orator, which was always limited, became even more limited, however, as power was consolidated in the hands of the leading strongmen Pompey, Caesar, Augustus, and the latter’s imperial successors. Glory could no longer be won by arguing cases or political causes when all outcomes were essentially under the control of one man. It became increasingly difficult for elite young men to attain to the roles that had been open to them and traditionally defined their masculinity. In the end, even those who were able to access these routes to power began to question whether they were worth the effort and danger inherent in them.

Under the Principate, civil service such as the provision of games and governorship of provinces became centralized, performed either by Augustus and his family members, or by those approved by him. This did result in many opportunities for equites and members of the provincial elite who were able to win the trust of Augustus, as he seems to have preferred to

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as well. This public dispute over the meaning of manliness paved the way for its redefinition in the late Republic, notably in the writings of Cicero and Catullus (Edwards 1993, ch. 2; Krostenko 2001; Wray 2001; McDonnell 2006, 346), and in the Augustan age.

56 Wiseman 1971, 11.

57 McDonnell, however, has shown that Cicero’s success as a nouus homo without military glory to propel him to a political career was almost, if not entirely, unprecedented (2006, 329). Wiseman (1971, 142-53) outlines the typical career paths of a nouus homo.

58 For a discussion of the provision of other forms of public display, such as games and public shows in the late Republic and early Empire as a replacement for oratory, see Gamel 1998, 87. Also see Wyke (2002, 177) for the devaluation of the public performance of masculinity in the early Empire.


60 The elegists, and Catullus before them (Skinner 1993), express this dissatisfaction with the state of masculine endeavours: Myers 1996, 10-11; Fredrick 1997, 172, 179; Fear 2000, 234-38; Miller 2004, 4, 75. Cf. Wyke (2002, 177): “By the beginning of the principate, the performance of masculinity in public competition was already felt to have become a mere pantomime.”
advance the interests of those who owed their success to him, while still placating the now less-powerful traditional senatorial class. Even for those who did succeed in politics under the new system, however, there was still the problem that all patronage was concentrated in the hands of the princeps and his circle. This centralization of power increased the imbalance between patron and client and made it more likely that the increasingly inferior client would feel emasculated. Equally importantly, as the imperial system became more entrenched it would have become increasingly clear that, unlike even in the highly restricted political system of the late Republic, there was essentially no chance for the lesser members of the elite to ever rise to the top, regardless of their lineage, military success, or speaking ability. Thus, even those who did find success in the imperial system faced threats to their masculine identity.

The reason that changes in the roles available or attractive to the elite could threaten their identity as men was that gender in Rome, and masculinity in particular, was not a permanent and inviolable state. The Roman man’s male identity was not based solely on his anatomical sex (for one could be male but not masculine) but rather on the projection of masculinity via his body, words, and actions. Any deviation from the norm, itself an indefinable and constantly shifting set of ideals, could lead to the suspicion of effeminacy. Such deviation more often took the form of excessively feminine behaviour, but a man

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61 Wiseman 1971, 10-12, 177-81; Nicolet 1984, 96-107.
62 Dio Cassius (46.32.1) reports the fear, present as early as 43 BCE, that senators would become slaves to the winner of the civil war. Cf. Cic. Att. 2.17.1, where he says of the situation under the first triumvirate tenemur undique neque iam quominus seruiamus recusamus. Cf. Bradley 1994, 144; Wyke 2002, 177.
63 McDonnell 2006, 384 sums up the situation under Augustus: “With the Principate, military glory and martial virtus were monopolized by the emperors, while the emasculated Roman nobility was left to cultivate a private, Hellenic type of virtus. The failure of both is the subject of Tacitus’ Annals.” Cf. Fear (2005, 26), who sees a relationship between the change from republic to principate and the flourishing of elegy, with the lover’s enslavement to the mistress parallel to Rome’s enslavement to Augustus; and Fear (2000, 236) on how Augustus’ political dominance forces the elite to trade republican freedom for otium.
64 Edwards 1993, 81; Gunderson 2000.
65 Gleason 1995, xxvi and Gleason 1999, 75. Butler (1999, 180), argues that since gender is performative, the acts are the gender and do not come from any deeper, inherent gender identity. But also see Butler (2003, ch. 1) on the cultural nature of sex as well as gender, and the compulsion towards manifesting a culturally appropriate gender. Cf. Wyke (2002, 190), who argues that elegy draws attention to the constructed nature of gender.
perceived as “too masculine” was considered suspect as well.\textsuperscript{67} If a man appeared to be trying too hard to be manly, it was sometimes interpreted as a sign that he was compensating for some intrinsic lack. It was undoubtedly quite difficult for men to uphold masculinity, when the rules were often unspoken, amorphous, and constantly subject to being defined by those who successfully placed themselves in a dominant position.\textsuperscript{68}

Rather than struggling with the performance of manhood, however, the lover-poet of Propertian elegy is consistently portrayed as declining to fulfill the roles of masculinity. He shows this most overtly in his repudiation of military and other public service.\textsuperscript{69} He glorifies his own choice of lifestyle, to be a slave to his mistress or a soldier in love’s camp rather than attempting to succeed in the traditionally masculine public world.\textsuperscript{70} At elegy 2.7.13-14 he goes still farther, rejecting both marriage and the production of sons, and thereby refusing the private masculine roles of husband and father as well as the public roles of soldier and politician.\textsuperscript{71} Instead he takes up the role of elegiac lover-poet, popularized by Gallus in his \textit{Amores} and refracted in Virgilian pastoral (\textit{Ecl.} 10) and generally considered effeminate.\textsuperscript{72} Both the poet and his poetry are \textit{mollis} (soft), as compared to the \textit{durus} (hard) nature of both a proper man and of epic poetry, a genre inspired by the glorious deeds of heroes and wars.\textsuperscript{73} Going beyond his own refusal of mainstream masculine roles, the lover-poet attacks those who accept them, as we see in elegy 3.20, when the \textit{puella’s uir} is criticized for leaving his mistress (or perhaps wife) for financial opportunities in Africa, certainly a socially sanctioned

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\textsuperscript{68} See Halperin (2002, 33) and Skinner (2005, 212) on the difficulty of achieving and maintaining masculinity.
\textsuperscript{69} E.g. 1.6, 2.7 (where he refuses even to father sons to be soldiers) and 3.4. See Flaschenreim 1998, 52; Wyke 2002, 170; Skinner 2005, 224.
\textsuperscript{70} Sullivan (1976, 62-63) argues that fame and the mistress’ affection compensates for the Propertian lover-poet’s lack of great wealth and military or political distinction, i.e. for his failure to reach the goals most valued by traditional elite males.
\textsuperscript{71} The production of sons was particularly important in this time of declining births among the nobility, as demonstrated by the Augustan legislation of 18 BCE, within a decade of the publication of Book 2. For full discussion of elegy 2.7, see chapter 4. McDonnell (2006, 168) argues that while the begetting of children was part of manliness, it was not part of \textit{a uritas}, which is a public virtue; the public concern about the birthrate in the age of Augustus, however, and the connection made between fathering children and political success in the Augustan marriage laws, suggests that fatherhood was a public concern.
\textsuperscript{72} Wyke 2002, 168; Fear 2005, 23; Welch 2005, 11; Ramsby 2007, 43.
\textsuperscript{73} The elegiac mistress is also \textit{dura}, leading some to suspect the poet’s claim to be unable to take on difficult/harsh (\textit{durus}) tasks (Green 2005a, 216). Cf. Bowditch 2006, 309.
action. But in the elegiac world, such behaviour is tantamount to breaking *fides*,\(^{74}\) not only with the *puella*, but also with the ethos espoused by the poet.

Propertius also portrays his lover-poet as unable or unwilling to serve society with public poetry, writing a number of *recusationes*, poems explaining why he cannot write public or epic verse.\(^ {75}\) In Book 3 alone he presents three *recusationes* (3.1, 3.3, and 3.9) at strategic locations in the book. The first, at the opening of the book, is a general statement of his continued allegiance to elegy, a polished and gentle form of verse.\(^ {76}\) The use in the *recusationes* of words such as *tenuis* (fine, slender, delicate) and *mollis* (gentle, soft) to describe his poetry and the gifts given him by the Muses align him with elegy and against *durus* (hard/harsh) epic. Since the adjective *mollis* in particular carries connotations of femininity,\(^ {77}\) such words also declare his refusal to opt into mainstream masculinity. In 3.3, he continues to use elegiac language, and even has Apollo, a god who may have been particularly venerated by Augustus,\(^ {78}\) forbid his writing of epic (3.3.15-16): *quid tibi cum tali, demens, est flumine? quis te/ carminis heroi tangere iussit opus?* Finally, in 3.9, he urges Maecenas to stop asking him to create public verse. He repeats his protestations of inability to write epic, and points out that Maecenas himself has forsaken a public career (3.9.21-30).\(^ {79}\) He states that Maecenas’ loyalty and his choice to stay in the background politically will be Augustus’ best memorial (3.9.29-34). Maecenas is known to have had a reputation for effeminacy\(^ {80}\) and his decision to eschew an overtly active role in the public arena can be read as a rejection of traditional elite masculine roles. The lover-poet’s suggestion that this retirement, along with his avoidance of exploiting his connections to Augustus, will earn him

\(^{74}\) King 1980, 227.

\(^{75}\) 2.1, 2.34, 3.1, 3.3, 3.9. For full discussion of these poems, see chapter 4. King (1975/76, 109-10) suggests that the entirety of book 1 functions as a kind of *recusatio*, showing how and why Propertius is devoted to love poetry.

\(^{76}\) 3.1.8 *exactus tenui pumice uersus eat* (let the verse be proceed, polished with fine pumice); 3.1.19 *mollia, Pegasides, date vestro serta poetae* (Pegasides (Muses), grant a delicate garland to your poet).

\(^{77}\) Edwards 1993, ch. 2; Wyke 2002, 168; Greene 2005b, 76.

\(^{78}\) See Gurval 1995, 88-89 for a discussion of Augustus’ relationship with Apollo and the scholarship surrounding it.

\(^{79}\) For full discussion of this poem, see chapter 4.

\(^{80}\) Sen. *Ep.* 114.4-11. Kennedy (1993, 39) suggests that adopting a style that is seen as pejoratively effeminate can be a way of maintaining class boundaries, as non-elite males reject it. Cf. Krostenko 2001.
a place in the annals of Rome equal to that of Camillus (3.9.31-32) thereby works to undermine the normative view of the supremacy of traditional masculinity in the public sphere.\textsuperscript{81}

The lover-poet of elegy may appear to be entirely effeminate. He is associated with the trappings of luxury such as wine, soft couches, exotic fabrics, and of course the mistress herself, whose roots are likely in the \textit{hetairai} of the Greek east.\textsuperscript{82} All of these luxuries were themselves considered imports from the East, a place often viewed as effeminate and as a source of influences that corrupted traditional Roman values.\textsuperscript{83} Yet it is possible for a man to remain masculine in the midst of luxury if he is extremely self-controlled and aware of the danger, and if he continues to uphold his proper role in the rest of his life.\textsuperscript{84} It is even possible for a man to be overcome by luxury in his youth but return to proper masculine deportment and take on the duties of adulthood, as Cicero asserts of Caelius.\textsuperscript{85} The lover-poet’s renunciation of the traditional goals of manhood is not simply tied to adolescent rebellion,\textsuperscript{86} but represents a different set of values, which favour poetry and the mistress. In fact, he asserts that his preferred activities have a higher value than that of the activities generally ascribed to elite men, and that the service he undertakes in love is more challenging (and by implication more manly) than military service.\textsuperscript{87} In his re-evaluation of the roles associated with elegy, moreover, he refuses to fully accept the effeminate connotations that go along with them, and in this way he offers a fundamental challenge to the value system of the Roman elite.

\textsuperscript{81} Sullivan 1976, 17.

\textsuperscript{82} Edwards 1993, 5. For the control of colonized women as part of the display and transmission of the power of the colonizing male, see McClintock 1995, 3.

\textsuperscript{83} Edwards 1993, 177. Cf. Halperin (2002, 33) on the danger of pleasure. On the other hand, the orator Hortensius spoke in favour of “effeminate” sophistication over brute virility (Hortensius in Gell. 1.5.2-3; cf. Edwards 1993, 97) so it seems that the dominant view of corruption by luxury was not unchallenged. See also Krostenko 2001.

\textsuperscript{84} Edwards 1993, 23; Gleason 1999, 77.

\textsuperscript{85} Cael. 42-43; Cf. Fear (2005, 15-16), who argues that a certain amount of self-indulgence was expected in elite youths. For the problematic relationship between youth and virtue on display in this speech, see McDonnell 2006, 171. Cicero associates \textit{virtus} with giving up leisure and pleasure in order to serve the state at Rep. 1.1.1.

\textsuperscript{86} Fear 2005, 19.

\textsuperscript{87} See, for example, 2.25.
The lover-poet is feminized not just by his rejection of traditional male roles, but also by his association with the role of lover, which is made problematic by its alleged dependence on a woman, regardless of what type of woman we consider her to be.\textsuperscript{88} If the elegiac mistress is a married woman, then the lover is an adulterer, and adulterers could be considered effeminate in the Greco-Roman world.\textsuperscript{89} Men were supposed to show self-control, but the adulterer, by his willingness to risk serious consequences for sexual encounters, showed a remarkable lack of self-control, particularly when one considered that sex was easily available from slaves or prostitutes. Additionally, men who were so lacking in self-control sexually became suspect in other respects as well.\textsuperscript{90} Then again, if the mistress should be read as a meretrix, the lover-poet’s claim that he is enslaved to her and his devotion to her rather than to a public career is also problematic. The lover-poet may not be at the top reaches of Roman society, but he is still elite, as a member of the Italian aristocracy and a landowner. For him to subject himself to a woman who was sub-elite, probably of foreign origin, and possibly a slave or freedwoman is demeaning and effeminizing, as it upsets the social hierarchy.\textsuperscript{91} Propertius, however, has his lover-poet claim to be attached to a worldview in which enslavement, or fidelity, to a mistress has the highest moral value. The lover-poet rejects the effeminate position imposed upon the role of lover at the same time that he rejects the masculine roles valued by the dominant culture.

The speaking ego of Propertian elegy has been variously seen as pro- and anti-Augustan, a proto-feminist and an unabashed misogynist, as rejecting and accepting the contemporary precepts of masculinity.\textsuperscript{92} Rather than trying to argue for the firm acceptance of any one of these standpoints, my dissertation instead takes up the project of accepting

\textsuperscript{88} For devotion to a woman as feminizing, see Edwards 1993, 85 and Halperin 2002, 95.
\textsuperscript{89} Edwards 1993, 81.
\textsuperscript{90} For the association of sexual immorality with other types of immorality, see Edwards 1993, 5 and Skinner 2005, 198. Cf. Foucault 1984, 83.
\textsuperscript{91} Cf. Wyke (2002, 42) and Valladares (2005, 237) on how the inversion of the elegiac speaker’s gender role does not necessarily lead to the inversion of the puella’s.
\textsuperscript{92} For an anti-or ambiguous attitude towards Augustus, see Commager 1974; Sullivan 1976; Stahl 1985; Miller 2004; and Welch 2005. For a pro-Augustan stance, see Williams 1990, 263 and Cairns 2006. For the effeminate lover-poet, albeit one who does not give up his “phallic privilege”, see Miller, 2004, 137. For a lover-poet who ends by reaffirming conventional masculinity, see Greene 2005b and James 2005.
these differences as an essential part of the Propertian lover-poet’s characterization.\textsuperscript{93} I maintain that we should see in the Propertian lover-poet an attempt at constructing a new kind of male gender identity that draws on elements of the female and the male roles, and the effeminate and the masculine, in order to shape something distinct from either. I examine the ways that Propertius uses features that are distinctive to his elegy (his emphasis on \textit{fides} and women’s speech) as well as tropes that are common to all of Augustan love elegy (\textit{seruitium amoris} and \textit{militia amoris}) to destabilize the characters of lover and mistress and the elegiac worldview and open up a space for the creation of a radically new masculine identity.

The theoretical works with which I engage all relate in some way to the concept of hybridity, which undermines binary oppositions and interrogates the ideologies of dominant cultures, all of which are themes that I seek to draw out in Propertius’ poetry. Postcolonial theory, when applied to literature, looks at the literature of the colonized and the colonizers.\textsuperscript{94} The process of colonization affected both groups, and the subsets of the groups, in many ways. Although postcolonial theory has been developed through the study of colonization by Europeans since the Renaissance, it can also be applied, within certain limits, to Roman imperialism.\textsuperscript{95} This application is made easier because European colonization was not a monolithic entity, and therefore its study has not been either.\textsuperscript{96} Moreover, there are indications in the literature of the Renaissance and early modern periods that some European colonizers self-consciously thought of themselves as treading in the footsteps of the Romans.\textsuperscript{97} Methods and motivations of colonization and decolonization vary over time and place, so that we can select those that seem most applicable to the Roman context. The colonizing/imperialism that intersects with my interests is twofold: that in Italy, which affected Propertius on a personal level as he was a member of the Italian, but not Roman,

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{93} Cf. Miller 2004, 134.
\item\textsuperscript{94} Postcolonial studies may examine European texts for indications of resistance and critique of the dominant culture’s values (Raman 2011, 9).
\item\textsuperscript{95} And earlier: Raman (2011, 10) sees the roots of colonial discourse in Herodotus.
\item\textsuperscript{96} See Skura 1999, 86 on the importance of considering the exact time period when discussing colonialism.
\item\textsuperscript{97} Childs 1999, 4; Raman 2011, 15;
\end{footnotes}
aristocracy; and that in the Greek east, from where luxury goods, elegiac poetry, and even the *puella* were imported.

The historical person Propertius is not entirely recoverable, but what we can recover suggests that the background that he gives his lover-poet is a plausible one for a member of the Italian aristocracy. With that in mind, in this section of the introduction I will treat the details about family background, early life, and hometown that are given in the Propertian corpus as though they are actual biographical details. The lover-poet is a subject who exists as both colonized and colonizer; he was not born into a Roman family, but an Italian one, in Umbria, near Assisi. He was, however, of a class that was rapidly absorbed into the Roman elite in his lifetime and beyond, so that his identity was both Roman and Italian. The conflict between these two elements is played out in his poetry; he refers to himself as Roman, yet also mentions his birth outside of Rome. More tellingly, he identifies with the losses suffered by his countrymen in the civil wars (1.21 and 1.22, as well as 4.1.129-30).

Propertius’ lover-poet is a subject who lives on the borderline between identities; he is both Roman and Italian, at a time when the two are not yet (if they ever became) identical. A subset of postcolonial theory considers the identities built by hybrid colonial subjects, often colonized people who have to some degree internalized the culture and values of the colonizing culture, either as migrants to the colonizing countries or as subjects educated in the colonial system who work for the colonial government or business interests. These hybrid subjects have some traits in common with the Propertian lover-poet, who is an Italian educated to Roman standards for a Roman career, and who dwells in Rome. These Romanized Italian aristocrats were hybrid subjects partaking of multiple identities at the same time.

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98 Cairns 2006, ch. 1; Ramsby 2007, 63; Keith 2008, ch.1.
99 1.22.9; 4.1.63-4, 121, 125.
101 This contradiction is explicitly expressed at 4.1.64: *Umbria Romani patria Callimachi*. Wallace-Hadrill (2008, 20) suggests that the large number of non-Roman born authors in the Latin literary canon suggests that literature and intellectual life was an important component of the romanizing of provincials.
102 Bhabha’s “mimic men” (1994, ch.4). Prakash (1997, 498) gives the example of the Anglicized Indian as an Other whose close similarity to the Self undermines the unity and naturalness of the Self.
time, both Roman and not-Roman. The theoretical standpoint that is the most dominant in my reading of Propertius’ construction of masculinity, disidentification, provides a way of studying hybrid subjects, although it is as concerned with gender and sexuality as with ethnicity.

Disidentification is a contemporary theoretical paradigm, primarily focused on art, literature, and performance, of the process whereby a subject neither identifies nor counter-identifies with the dominant ideology, but instead forges a new identity from and within the dominant ideology. At its core, disidentification is theorized as a process of working with, within, against, and through dominant cultural texts and concepts to expose their inner workings of exclusion and false universalization, and to reformulate them to allow for empowered minority identities. The disidentifying subject is a minoritarian subject, whose identity is formed in response to the oppressive ideologies of society. The strategy of disidentification to survive in a hostile culture is not, however, available to everyone; a certain level of privilege, whether it be educational, financial, or social (i.e. membership in an effectively supportive network), is necessary for the disidentifying subject to find satisfaction in this strategy in the long term. Disidentification involves not only resistance to dominant ideology, but also the disclosure and discovery of an alternative view of the world and new spaces for identity that can be opened up within the systems of the dominant culture. Disidentification is also a means of taking a “toxic identity,” an identity that has been thrust upon the subject as an insult and injury, and re-making it as a source of value, energy, and power.

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103 Krostenko (2001, 2) gives an excellent defense of the use by contemporary scholars of current critical terms that articulate features of Roman society even if an equivalent of these terms did not exist in Latin.
106 Muñoz 1999, 161-64.
108 Muñoz 1999, 185, 194.
We can view the lover-poet as incarnating a toxic identity in the context of the Roman socio-political elite. The traits associated with the elegiac ego, including effeminacy, lack of self-control, and submission to a woman’s whims, were generally negative ones for Roman males.109 There are a number of (near-) contemporary examples of this negative stereotype in Latin literature, including Catiline and Mark Antony, who were both abused publicly for all these vices.110 The Propertian lover-poet, however, embraces this devalued identity when, for example, he makes nequitia equivalent to military service and something he would willingly die for at 1.6.25-30.111 He even explicitly identifies himself with Antony at 3.11.29-56,112 when Antony and Cleopatra, although unnamed, appear in a catalogue of heroic mythical and historical males who have been under the sway of women.

Disidentification can be used for “worldmaking,” creating “a utopian blueprint for a possible future while, at the same time, staging a new political formation in the present.”113 Propertius creates a world in which the values of the dominant cultural elite are not just turned upside down, as in the counter-identification regularly associated with the stereotypical elegiac lover and poetry, but altered.114 Elegiac values are also challenged, but from within, especially when the puella (and other women) speaks to accuse the lover-poet of lying about her, himself, and their relationship.115 The doubts that her words articulate are also, I will suggest, latent in many of the lover-poet’s own statements and in his comparisons of himself to other men, historical and mythical.116 The world that Propertius makes is one of instability, where the lover-poet and the puella are detached from the gender roles expected

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109 For the elegiac lover’s behaviour as a display of mollitia, see Fear 2005, 22-23 and cf. Welch 2005, 11. Butler (1999, xxviii) has argued that when the male is made dependent on the female Other, his autonomy is exposed as illusory.
110 Catiline: Cic. Catil. 2.7-9 (on Catiline) and 2.10-11 (on his co-conspirators); Sallust Cat. 5. Antony: Cic. Phil. 2.44-45, 58, 77; 6.4. Griffin (1985, ch. 2) argues that Propertius identified with Mark Antony’s character and cause.
111 Stahl 1985, 93.
112 Griffin 1985, 34; Welch 2005, 125. The lover-poet’s identification with Antony, however, complicates his position as a critic of imperialism and luxury (Bowditch 2006, 320).
113 Muñoz 1999, 200.
114 Miller (2004, 137) identifies a similar theme in Latin love elegy when he says “elegists, in fact, represent a travesty of Roman conventions of masculinity that both questions these conventions and implicitly accepts them as the ground of their questioning.”
115 For discussion of which see chapter 1 and chapter 2.
116 For discussion of which see chapter 1 and especially chapter 4.
in elite and elegiac culture, which makes it difficult to understand them as coherent characters. Once we consider them as disidentificatory, however, the incoherence and instability can be read as integral parts of the characters.

While “disidentity” is in some senses dependent upon the categories it draws on and rejects (i.e., in chapter one, fides and the gender roles related to it in mainstream upper-class Roman society and in elegy) it reprocesses and re-presents them in ways that are different from their original associations. It differs from the process of counter-identification in that the latter, even in the rejection of the dominant identity, still endorses the dominant ideology as the privileged norm and source of definition, as when the elegiac lover defines his own gendered position in opposition to that of a Roman man who displays the conventional attributes of elite masculinity, such as holding military or political office. Disidentification may draw on components of identities and counteridentities, but it does not rely on them for definition and worth, which can be seen in part in the role that reclaiming negative identities takes in the disidentifying process. In Propertius, this takes the form of ascribing worth and dignity to the role of elegiac lover-poet and refusing or reclaiming the negative attributes associated with it, as when he declares his allegiance to nequitia at 1.6.26.

Propertius’ lover-poet can be identified as a minoritarian subject with respect to imperialism and gender normativity, which are for him intertwined. While undoubtedly privileged with respect to wealth and class, Propertius himself was in a minority position with respect to the Roman senatorial elite, not only because of his provincial origin, but also, importantly, because of his rejection of normative gender roles in public and in private. He acts out this rejection through the character of the lover-poet, in poetry that draws on autobiographical and contemporary events, but transforms them to suit his poetic goals and his idiosyncratic elegiac world-making. The lover-poet consistently defies a monolithic

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117 E.g. Tullus in 1.6 and 1.14.
118 Muñoz 1999, 55; see also Butler 2003, 223.
definition of character, and the result of this can be seen in the contradictory stories scholars tell about him. For my purposes, his relationship to conventional elite Roman masculinity is the most interesting of these conflicting tales. Propertius does not consistently maintain a normative masculinity, nor does he present himself precisely as effeminate, or like a *cinaedus*. Instead, I suggest, he disidentifies, seeking to forge a new space for the Roman male speaking subject within the binary opposition of identification and counteridentification.

Cynthia, as well as a number of other women who speak in Propertius’ corpus, offers an opinion on the lover-poet and his fidelity and engagement with the role of elegiac lover that disagrees with his views expressed elsewhere in the corpus and informs the way that his identity is formed. She too can be interpreted as a disidentifying subject, since disidentification is, in part, the incorporation of dissimilar parts into one whole. In a similar way, the theoretical standpoint of haunting, which I take up in chapter 2, looks at how ghosts and haunting can be used to re-incorporate the abject. To draw on the theoretical apparatus of haunting, one may begin by thinking about the function of haunting and consider the two main reasons why ghosts appear in ghost stories. The first is because they have unfinished business that they want the living to complete for them, and the second is because they are echoes of the past, often of an event of violence or strong emotion. Haunting, Gordon argues, is a manifestation of the violence of the past or of unseen violence, such as that caused by oppressive systems. These systems may no longer be functioning but they still affect and “haunt” the present, their operations hidden or their effects denied (Gordon’s

120 Veyne 1988, 96.
121 Cf. Miller 2004, who identifies irresolvable tensions in the persona of the *ego*, who is positioned beyond binaries (146), and is both pro-and anti-Augustan (132-33).
122 Catullus also experimented with different positions on the axis between *uir* and *cinaedus* (Miller 2004, 45; Manwell 2007, 126; Skinner 1993 and 1997, 18), and Propertius undoubtedly drew on his experiments in his own exploration of masculinity. Also see Miller (2007, 410) for the debt of the elegists to Catullus’ formation of subject position. Cf. Miller (2004, 137), who sees Propertius as creating a travesty of masculinity while still implicitly accepting the conventions. For an overview of the character of the *cinaedus*, see Williams 1999.
123 Gordon 2008, xvi-xvii.
example is slavery in the novel *Beloved*, which is set after the American civil war).\textsuperscript{125} Gordon’s articulation of a materialist theory of haunting is specifically indebted to modernism and the postmodern critical turn and embedded in the structures and deprivations of the twentieth century that are manifested by ghosts, especially as the political, social, and economic conditions of modernity are modified in the postmodern.\textsuperscript{126} This suggests that times of change (or perceived change) are particularly susceptible to the sorts of haunting that Gordon posits, and therefore that the modification of social, political, and even economic structures in the late Roman republic and early empire might also be a fertile period to analyze from this critical perspective.\textsuperscript{127}

A critical theory of haunting can help us to describe how that which appears not to be there is actually present, and exerts pressure on taken-for-granted realities; the ghost is the sign that a haunting is taking place.\textsuperscript{128} Women are largely ignored in Roman literature, but that does not mean they are not there and do not matter. Haunting can offer a means of exploring the effects that women and the feminine and all the aspects of life that they represent had on that which is included in literature, if we assume that women do matter and that the androcentric viewpoint is not completely unaffected by them.\textsuperscript{129} The study of haunting looks for the echoes and unfinished business of the past that can be read inside of and under the surface of texts\textsuperscript{130} and sees the ghost as demanding that something be done in

\textsuperscript{125} Gordon 2008, xvi. A Propertian example of a hidden system may be seen in elegy 4.5, where the poverty, “greed,” and “immorality” of demimonde females are viewed as individual character flaws, rather than as part of or a reaction to a larger system of discrimination embedded in social structures. Indeed, haunting occurs at the point where social structures and individual experience of them intersects (Gordon 2008, xvii, 19); ghosts point to alternative stories and experiences that have been suppressed by the dominant culture (Gordon 2008, 23).

\textsuperscript{126} Gordon 2008, 12.

\textsuperscript{127} Fear (2005, 34) connects the challenges to the dominant culture contained in elegy with the contemporary social and political changes.

\textsuperscript{128} Gordon 2008, 8.

\textsuperscript{129} Cf. Homans (1987, 160) on the focus of feminist criticism on recovering that which is lost or hidden from view.

\textsuperscript{130} Gordon (2008, 25) argues that literary fiction is important in the study of haunting because literature has not been subject to the same norms of knowing and knowledge production that “factual” writing, such as sociological work, has been in the twentieth century. As a result, fiction can reveal in an imaginative way issues and conflicts that cannot be accessed through standard methods.
response to it; it looks for redress for the violence that created it and provides an avenue for change in the present, for opening up new spaces much like disidentification does.\textsuperscript{131}

On this reading, the women’s speeches in Propertius’ corpus, especially those that come from beyond the grave in book 4, respond to the repressed experience of women in Roman society. This is especially true of the two underclass women, Cynthia (4.7) and Acanthis (4.5), who bring to light the financial and social challenges experienced by women who did not have the socially sanctioned protection of men, but it is also true of Cornelia the matrona of 4.11, whose speech is haunted by the brief expression of doubt that her exemplary life was truly worthwhile (4.11.11-14). These ghosts are somewhat different from Gordon’s modern ghosts, however, in that their voices are harnessed by Propertius and used as part of his larger project of destabilizing the gender system. As such, the “something to be done” that they bring forth is not really for themselves and their specific experience of violence in the nexus of gender-based oppression. Rather, it has the effect of calling into question the constructs of gender that dominated Roman elite society and the elegiac scenario. Gordon sees haunting as transformative and productive of a new state of being,\textsuperscript{132} an insight that seems importantly transferable to Propertius and his context, since he writes in a time of cultural change. Within the transformations that are coming from political and social change, he attempts to wrest a space to direct a different transformation, represented in the character of his lover-poet and the construction of his masculinity. Like disidentification, haunting exposes the structures of the dominant culture along with the gaps in them and the falsity of their universalization.

My first chapter, “Disidentifying with \textit{fides} in Propertius 2.9 and 2.29,” examines \textit{fides} and the use of the language of social performance and elite friendship in Propertius. \textit{Fides} is part of the language of social relations, which originally applied primarily to


\textsuperscript{132} Gordon 2008, 202.
relationships between male members of the elite.\textsuperscript{133} The proper use of this language was an integral part of negotiating the complex social and political hierarchy of Republican and Augustan Rome. It also served as a template for homosocial relations and a way to mystify elements of social control and unequal status within the elite.\textsuperscript{134} Social status and the ability to maintain relationships with other elite males were both important components of an individual’s masculinity.\textsuperscript{135} When this language began to be used in the area of private romantic relationships between men and women in the works of Catullus, however, many of the meanings and nuances that it bore in its primary usage transferred over; but there were also important changes.\textsuperscript{136} By using this category of language to describe extra-marital love affairs, Catullus and the elegists who write soon after him both elevate these love affairs to the level of legitimate social relations between men and at the same time taint the structures of elite society with the illegitimacy of these love affairs and the perceived immorality of those who participate in them.\textsuperscript{137} Further, by bringing women who are either of the sub-elite or, if they are elite, are adulteresses, into the position of elite males in this social discourse, the poets raise these women to the level of equals or even superiors, thus challenging the gender codes and social hierarchies of the Roman republic.

I focus my study of \textit{fides} on Propertius 2.9 and 2.29 since, when read together, they illustrate the treatment of fidelity in the Propertian corpus. In 2.9, the lover-poet upbraids Cynthia for her infidelity and assures her of his continued fidelity. In 2.29, Cynthia defends herself from accusations of infidelity while at the same time casting doubt upon the lover-poet’s faithfulness. I focus on the place of fidelity in the ideology of Propertius’ elegy, as exemplified by these two poems, and pay especially close attention to the accusations and accusations and

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\textsuperscript{133} Krostenko 2001, 17-18. Krostenko argues for a constricted use of the language of social performance in the Augustan poets (ch.8), who no longer used it to negotiate success in traditional spheres of masculine activity. I will not argue against this, but suggest that the language still had a public and political, in a broad sense of the word, component.

\textsuperscript{134} Gold 1987, 134; Dixon 1993; Wray 2001, 60; McMaster 2010, 72. For homosociality, see Sedgwick 1992.

\textsuperscript{135} Krostenko 2001, ch.1; Wray 2001, 60.

\textsuperscript{136} Boucher 1980, 92; Freyburger 1980, 111; Fear 2005, 20; Skinner 2005, 220; McMaster 2010, ch. 3.

\textsuperscript{137} See Tatum (2007) on the politics of Catullus’ affair with Lesbia.
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defenses made in them, their similarities and differences, and their intratextual resonances in
the corpus as a whole. I argue that Propertius uses the language of fidelity and socially
approved relationships to undermine traditional conceptions of both, destabilizing the
gendered roles traditional both in love poetry and in mainstream Roman society.\textsuperscript{138} His
rejection of conventional gender roles and their, in many ways equally conventional, elegiac
reversals, contributes to the construction of a disidentifying subject.

This sense of disidentification with fides and with elegiac values that I argue for in
chapter one also informs my second chapter, “Death Becomes Her: Women’s Speech
Haunting Propertian Elegy.” In this chapter I consider the direct speeches in book 4 made by
female characters from beyond the grave. The chapter falls into two sections, the first
concentrating on Cynthia’s speech in 4.7 and the second considering the other ghosts of book
4, Acanthis (4.5) and Cornelia (4.11). Both sections also discuss the generic play found in
Propertian women’s speech, which acts not only to call the norms of the elegiac genre into
question but also to create intertextual links with other genres, notably epic, history, oratory,
epigram, and comedy.

Although women are ostensibly elevated in elegy, we rarely hear even a report of
their voices in contemporary elegiac collections. Indeed, Propertius’ use of women’s speech
is strikingly extensive in comparison with the other love poets.\textsuperscript{139} Moreover, Cynthia is
remarkably consistent in the content of her speeches; in fact, she may be the most reliable, in
the sense of internally coherent, character in all of Latin love elegy. Yet every time she
speaks it is to undermine the basic precepts of elegy, for example the lover-poet’s fidelity and
devotion to his mistress.\textsuperscript{140} I argue that Propertius uses his speaking female characters as
objects to further the disidentification of his lover-poet with Latin elegiac and Roman social

\textsuperscript{138} See Wyke (2002, 166) for elegy as a manifestation of the destabilization of gender categories in
contemporary Rome.
\textsuperscript{139} Cynthia makes nine direct speeches that take up all or part of 137 lines: 1.3.35-46, 2.15.8, 2.24.35-38,
2.26.24, 2.29.31-38, 3.6.19-34, 3.23.12-16, 4.7.13-94, 4.8.73-80. In addition, there are a number of other
speaking females: the muse Calliope in 3.3; the bride Arethusa in 4.3; the disgraced Vestal virgin Tarpeia in 4.4;
the lena Acanthis in 4.5; the unnamed priestess of the Bona Dea in 4.9; and the matrona Cornelia in 4.11.
\textsuperscript{140} E.g. 1.3.35-46; 2.29.31-38.
norms by having their speeches question and destabilize cultural codes and conventions, thereby supporting the lover-poet’s resistance to strict identification with either an upstanding and responsible Roman male citizen, or an effeminate and ineffectual elegiac lover.

My third chapter, “Freedom, Patronage, and Seruitium Amoris,” addresses seruitium amoris and the relationship of the lover-poet to Roman social hierarchies. Propertius, when not using seruitium amoris in passing as a kind of metaliterary shorthand for elegiac love affairs in general, tends to focus on socio-political issues of freedom and speech, or their lack. This is central to his exploration of masculinity, since freedom, including freedom of speech, was an essential part of Roman masculinity, while enslavement was an effeminized state, regardless of the biological sex of the slave. The very existence of male slaves made clear the constructed nature of masculinity and the disconnect between sex and gender. These slaves, although they were biologically male, lacked the power and self-determination necessary for truly exercising a masculine gender role. So by claiming that he takes on the role of a slave with respect to his mistress, the lover-poet explores a subordinate and non-masculine role which shares some traits with the effeminate stereotype of the elegiac lover, who is also biologically male but rejects masculine responsibility and self-determination.

A central part of the argument of this chapter is that a significant difference between Propertius and the other Roman elegists lies in the depiction of the mistress. Cynthia, unlike the other elegiac puellae, while not precisely characterized as an owner-mistress, displays elements of mastery and at the very least a presence that the other mistresses lack. The Propertian picture of elegiac seruitium amoris is further complicated by the shifting of the relationship between mistress and lover-poet from master and slave to patron and client. Through this elegiac trope, Propertius addresses the blurring of the line between slave and client or lesser amicus that was of concern to his contemporaries, in a further investigation

142 For an overview of seruitium amoris in Latin elegy, see Copley 1947; Lyne 1979; and Murgatroyd 1981. For a more recent treatment, see McCarthy 1998.
144 Gibson 1995, 67.
into the complex masculinity of subordinate males and a further engagement with Roman social relations.  

My fourth chapter, “Epic, Empire, and militia amoris,” considers militia amoris and the relationship of the lover-poet to actual military service and imperialist conquest. I argue that Propertius uses the concept of militia amoris to glorify the life of love at the expense of military service, which I connect to Propertius’ position as the only one of the Latin love poets who never claims to have participated in military or public life and to his consistent, if often subtle, refusal to exalt Rome and Augustus unconditionally, even as he enjoys the spoils of empire. Not only does the lover-poet problematize public glory and private conventionality, but he also chooses and manipulates mythical exempla from heroic epic to support and glorify the elegiac lifestyle. He compares the lover-poet with heroes, the mistress with heroines, and selects myths that can be manipulated in such a way that the characters and situations support the elegiac worldview. Propertius creates a lover-poet and mistress who are elevated by their association with these epic characters and situations, while at the same time he calls the values of the epic world into question by exploiting the amatory possibilities latent in epic texts. Propertius overtly connects his elegiac characters and the attitudes expressed in his poetry with the public world and Augustus in a number of recusationes, all of which implicitly or explicitly criticize militia, civil conflict, and imperial conquest, and the role of the princeps in fostering them.  

My dissertation concludes by suggesting some further areas of exploration of masculinity in Propertian elegy and contemporary Roman culture. I analyze the construction of the lover-poet in the absence of the puella in the context of a brief consideration of two

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145 McCarthy 1998, 174; Fitzgerald 2000, 73.
146 For Propertian militia amoris, see Murgatroyd 1975; Miller 2004, 146; Fear 2005, 20; Greene 2005b, 66.
147 See Ramsby (2007, 61); “His [Propertius’] poetry, his chosen metre and the quantity of his work form a challenge to the Roman notions of manhood, career and duty.” Cf. Stahl 1985, 14; Papanghelis 1987, 71. Sullivan (1976, 11) sees Propertius as “completely contemptuous” towards military service; cf. Commager 1974, 47. See Fear (2000, 235) for the role of Augustus in providing the otium that the lover-poet enjoys.
149 For an example, see 2.8.29-40. Cf. Whitaker 1983, 14.
150 For the political content of Propertius’ works, see: Nethercut 1970; Fedeli 1981, 238; DeBrohun 2003; Welch 2005.
poems, 3.11 and 4.8, in which the lover-poet claims to praise Augustus. Although these are among a number of poems that seem to display a straightforward identification with the goals of Augustus’ regime, the intratextual connections between these poems and the rest of the corpus suggests that Propertius continues to employ strategies of disidentification. I argue that, rather than capitulating to the desire of the princeps for poetry in praise of Rome, Propertius instead presents Augustus himself as a figure who lacks strict definition and co-opts him for the Propertian elegiac project. The internal contradictions within the character of Octavian/Augustus and the ongoing attempts to resolve or ignore them throughout his long principate made the Augustan era particularly prone to periodic rearticulations of masculinity.

\[151\] For the difficulties in reading these poems as straightforward praise, see Nethercut 1961; Nethercut 1970, 407; Wyke 2002, 56; Greene 2005b, 69. Hollis (2007, 5) points out that although the poets of Maecenas’ circle promised, at times, works on Augustus’ achievements, none of the major poets ever followed through on this promise.


\[153\] The “moral legislation” of the Augustan era is a manifestation of this social reform.
Chapter 1: Disidentifying with *fides* in Propertius 2.9 and 2.29

Propertius associates *fides*, a concept with lofty religious and moral associations, with illicit amatory relationships, decadent lifestyles, and deviant presentations of gender. This invocation may take the form of using the word *fides* directly or of using related terms, such as *foedus* and *fidus*, or may be done by presenting arguments about fidelity. The Latin love-poets, beginning with Catullus, seek to create their own moral order, in which the amatory relationships that are central to their work can be presented as having the same stability and moral weight as more traditional, socially sanctioned arrangements. This presents a challenge to the social order: if sacred and legal constructions are applied to relationships and lifestyles that lack social and legal sanction, it undermines the formal use of the terms. Propertius uses the language of fidelity and socially approved relationships to undermine traditional conceptions of both, destabilizing the gendered roles traditional both in love poetry and in mainstream Roman society. His rejection of conventional gender roles and their, in many ways equally conventional, elegiac reversals, leads to the construction of what I shall call a “disidentifying” subject. This in turn is part of his construction of an alternative male gender role that incorporates some of the characteristics of the traditional masculine role for upper-class Romans and of the feminized role of the elegiac lover and the fluidity of the elegiac mistress.

Fidelity is one of the main themes of Propertius’ poetry, appearing in many of the poems that feature Cynthia or the elegiac relationship, and is also a key element of the strategies of disidentification in Propertius’ text. Traditional scholarly interpretations of elegiac fidelity have tended to accept the complaints of the elegiac speaker at face value, for

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1 Freyburger 1980, 105. Skinner (2003, 69) provides a general overview of the use of *fides* and other ethical terminology in Catullus, much of which is also applicable to Propertius. For *fides* as part of the language of aristocratic social codes, see Lyne 1980, 24.
2 Boucher 1980, 92; Freyburger 1980, 111.
3 See Freyburger (1980, 111) on Cicero’s use of *foedus* to describe the allegiance between Piso and Gabinius.
example, at 1.12.15-20, when he claims to be faithful and downtrodden, while he represents the elegiac mistress as flighty and unfaithful. This ready acceptance, however, has been shown to be both androcentric and too dismissive of the contradictory portrayal of both characters. Cynthia frequently and often in direct speech is made to accuse the lover-poet of infidelity, and even the lover-poet does not always describe himself as faithful. Indeed, although the lover-poet repeatedly accuses Cynthia of infidelity or meditates on its possibility, he is contradicted not only through the speeches the poet ascribes to Cynthia, in which she protests her fidelity, but even by his own words.

Propertius 2.9 and 2.29, particularly when read together, illustrate the treatment of fidelity in the Propertian corpus. In 2.9, the lover-poet upbraids Cynthia for her infidelity and assures her of his continued fidelity. In 2.29, Cynthia defends herself from accusations of infidelity while at the same time casting doubt upon the lover-poet’s faithfulness. In this chapter, I will focus on the place of fidelity in the ideology of Propertius’ elegy, as exemplified by 2.9 and 2.29. I shall pay especially close attention to the accusations and defenses made in them, their similarities and differences, and their intratextual resonances in the corpus as a whole. I will also consider the role of fides in these poems in the construction of the gender identity of the lover-poet, drawing on the theoretical framework provided by disidentification.

Fides was an important part of Roman morality, generally associated with socially sanctioned relationships between two individuals or states, as in patronage, amicitia, marriage, or treaties. Valerius Maximus, writing after Propertius’ death but about the triumviral period that immediately preceded his career, divides fides into three subsections: men’s loyalty to the state, wives’ loyalty to husbands, and slaves’ loyalty to masters. These

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4 Davis 1977, 70-75; Lyne 1980, 90-92, and esp. 118-19; Papanghelis 1987, 181.
5 James (2003, 121-32) offers a nuanced reading of the characterization of lover and mistress.
6 1.11.17 has the lover-poet assuring Cynthia that he knows she has a good reputation, 2.13.51-52 and 55-56 has him imagining her fidelity to him when he is dead. 2.20.27-28 presents an unnamed mistress who refuses other lovers for the lover-poet.
7 For fides as a part of amicitia, see Cic. Amic. 25, 65. For fides as essential to carrying out obligations, see Cic. Off. 1.15, and especially 1.23 “Fundamentum autem est iustitiae fides”.
categories do not exhaust all the possible manifestations of *fides*, but his treatment of them is instructive. For the first type, *fides* is inextricable from Roman identity and citizenship and for the third it is practiced by those who are entirely excluded from Roman identity and citizenship, while the second type relates to a class of people who possessed Roman identity but not the full rights of citizenship. This classification by Valerius Maximus also expresses the variable placement of *fides* with respect to private and public spheres. While only the first type is unambiguously public, the duty of a wife to a husband and slave to a master were simultaneously private and public concerns, particularly in the late Republic when the vicissitudes of politics and the absence or death of many heads of household pushed aristocratic Roman women further into the public sphere than previously. Also, as Milnor has noted, the behaviour of a Roman woman reflected on her husband, with the public display of a privately virtuous wife contributing to her husband’s public reputation.

All three types of *fides* are relevant to Propertius’ work, for the lover-poet repeatedly abdicates from the responsibilities to the state that he has as a male citizen (e.g. 1.6, 2.7), choosing instead loyalty to a mistress. He sometimes characterizes this loyalty as slavish or as akin to that of a wife to a husband, which may make the lover-poet appear to be simply a counter-identifying subject. In contrast, at other times he offers his services to the state as a poet who will praise Rome and Augustus (most notably 2.10 and the first half of 4.1), and he can also be flagrantly disloyal to his mistress (e.g. 2.22-24). It is in his conflicted relationship with *fides* that we can see Propertius’ lover-poet acting as a disidentifying subject, in that he disidentifies with the systems of social, moral, and legal codes of which *fides* is a part. For if he does not identify with these personal codes, neither does he straightforwardly engage in a counter-identification with the *fides* of these codes by upholding *fides* as an elegiac lover, for he also rejects the Catullan usage of *fides* in an amatory relationship, often undermining his position of fidelity to his mistress with subtle or bold suggestions of infidelity.

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8 Milnor 2005, 196.
9 Milnor 2005, 234.
While adjectives such as *fidus* and its cognates might generally have been considered more suited to those in a socially sanctioned relationship, whether of patronage, *amicitia*, or marriage, in the elegiac context they are regularly applied to the elegiac lover.\(^{11}\) The Propertian lover-poet repeatedly emphasizes his fidelity, particularly in contrast to his fickle mistress.\(^{12}\) In their expectation of male fidelity, the elegists differ from the conception of *fides* in Valerius Maximus, since in his list the category of marital fidelity is that of wife to husband, not husband to wife. While there was a certain duty of care expected of a husband towards his wife, sexual fidelity was not part of it. Propertius and the other elegists, however, promise eternal love and fidelity to their mistresses; thus in 2.9, 2.24, and 2.25 the Propertian lover-poet declares that he will be true to Cynthia alone despite her cruelty and infidelity. The Latin love poets, beginning with Catullus, deploy the ideal of *fides* and *foedus* to impart a sense of solemnity and nobility to the relationship between lover and mistress, and to characterize these relationships as more than just a source of physical pleasure.\(^{13}\) This is a strategy that Propertius uses as part of his disidentification with *fides*, as the counter-identification that it represents is as important an element of the elegiac code as of the dominant cultural text.

The elegists present their amatory relationships as stable and moral unions, akin to marriage or the natal family.\(^{14}\) Catullus likens his relationship with Lesbia to that between a father and his sons and sons-in-law (72.3-4), suggesting that he values her as much as a man would value the ties that not only ensured the continuation of his family name, but also were expected to lend him support in political life.\(^{15}\) Tibullus imagines Delia in the place of the mistress of his estate (Tib. 1.5.21-34), depicting her in wifely terms and as someone entrusted

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12 See for example Prop. 1.12.19-20, 2.6.41-42, 2.17.17-18, 3.15.9-10, and 45-46. Cf. Catul. 76, 87, and 109 for the connection of *fides* and *foedus* to his relationship with Lesbia.
13 Freyburger 1980, 105; Lyne 1980, 33-38; Williams 1968, 416; Wiseman 1985, 105, although also see Skinner (2003, especially 75 and 134), who reads this use of the language in the context of Catullus’ view that it had been subverted and made impotent by the power struggles of the upper class.
14 Boucher 1980, 92.
15 Dyson 2007, 270. Admittedly, the question of Catullus’ fidelity is undoubtedly more complicated than this brief overview allows, but for the purposes of this study I am focusing on the elements in his work that contributed to the trope of elegiac fidelity.
with the maintenance of his property, as though she were a mater familias.\textsuperscript{16} Propertius’ lover-poet states that he values his relationship with Cynthia more highly than the name of father, and assimilates her to his parents or wife or commanding officer by putting her in the place of legitimate family ties (parents 1.11.23, wife: 2.6.42), choosing her rather than fatherhood (2.7.20), a duty with both public and private implications, especially in the Augustan period,\textsuperscript{17} or placing her in the role of a general, a male role that demanded fidelity and obedience (2.7.15-17). Propertius does use fidelity to add value to the lover-poet’s amatory relationships, but at the same time he problematizes the lover-poet’s relationship to fidelity. Propertius brings the language of fidelity into a realm in which it is resistant to consistent categorization, both through depictions of the lover-poet as faithless and through shifting descriptions of Cynthia’s fidelity. And because \textit{fides} and the relationship of his characters to it is part of their roles as gendered subjects, he uses the depiction of \textit{fides} as part of a further strategy of disidentification with the gender roles of elegy and of mainstream Roman society.\textsuperscript{18}

From the beginning of the corpus, fidelity is one of Propertius’ central concerns. The first appearance of the word \textit{fides} in Propertius may occur in his first poem, at 1.1.16 (\textit{tantum in amore fides et benefacta ualent}), although this reading is controversial.\textsuperscript{19} If Propertius did write \textit{fides}, however, it is significant that the lover-poet would thereby imply that \textit{fides}, along with \textit{benefacta}, would allow a lover to obtain his girl. This also would have intertextual significance, because by introducing \textit{fides} in his first poem the Propertian lover-poet would align himself with a Catullan perspective on the elegiac relationship, a perspective which foregrounds Roman social and moral terms such as \textit{fides} as vital parts of amatory

\textsuperscript{16} I argue in Chapter 3 that the Tibullan lover-poet is a counter-identifying subject, and that his depiction of Delia is part of his counter-identification.
\textsuperscript{17} Wyke 2002, 169-70. Cf. James 2003, 269 n. 76.
\textsuperscript{18} Manwell (2007, 113) lists the qualities that are the “building blocks” of Roman masculinity, including \textit{fides}. Later in this article (125) she argues that Catullus uses the qualities of Roman manhood to redefine masculinity, an interpretation that is similar to disidentification.
\textsuperscript{19} Fontein suggested emending to \textit{fides}, but many editors, including Fedeli and Heyworth, accept the manuscript reading of \textit{preces} here.
relationships. This would suggest that *fides* is not just an important virtue for the lover, but also that the lover’s *fides* is part of the foundation upon which the elegiac relationship, and as a result the elegiac genre, is built. Even if the conjecture *fides* at 1.1.16 is incorrect, however, the manuscript reading of *preces et benefacta* still sets many of these meanings in play, as they link religious associations and the *benefacta* exchanged in *amicitia* and patron/client relationships to elegiac love. *Preces* occurs four other times in the *Monobiblos*, always at line end: 1.6.6, 1.8.12, 1.8.28, and 1.16.20. Elegies 1.6 and 1.8 are those in which, respectively, the lover-poet refuses to leave Cynthia for foreign travel, and Cynthia contemplates but then decides against leaving the lover-poet. In both cases, the *preces* are those of the one who is going to be left behind, and they are both ultimately successful in convincing the traveler not to leave, which would be a case of breaking *fides*. The example in 1.16 comes in the speech of the *exclusus amator*, who almost by definition has suffered from a lack of *fides* in his *puella*. The occurrences of *preces* outside of the first book are also all at line end (2.16.48, 2.30.12, 4.11.2), so that if it is the correct reading in 1.1.16, it is a striking difference to find it in the middle of the line and suggests that we should pay extra attention to the word. These later appearances of the word have similar resonances to those in book 1. In 2.16, *preces* are again associated with betrayed lovers and in 2.30, with the betrayer who seeks forgiveness. The one apparent exception is the last example of the word, in 4.11, which refers to the prayers of Cornelia’s widowed husband at her tomb, yet even this could represent the *preces* of an abandoned lover. Therefore, if the word at 1.1.16 should be *preces* not *fides*, similar themes of devotion are set into play, but along with the undercurrent of betrayal that is seen linked to fidelity throughout the corpus.

Regardless of whether *fides* and the themes it brings occur in elegy 1.1, in this first and necessarily tone-setting poem there are already hints of male infidelity, especially when

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21 Stahl 1985, 4.
22 For wandering as a breach of *fides*, see King 1980, 227.
23 The appearance of *preces* in 4.11 also provides a connection between the world of 4.11 and that of erotic elegy, a subject that will be returned to in chapter 2.
the lover-poet wishes that he were free from Cynthia (1.1.25-30).\textsuperscript{24} While the wish does not
in itself suggest unfaithfulness, it does suggest abandonment, which is closely tied to
infidelity in Propertius’ poems.\textsuperscript{25} This also foreshadows Cynthia’s fears of desertion, which
emerge several times in book 1 (see below) and are perhaps confirmed in 3.25, when the
lover-poet abandons Cynthia (at least until her reappearance in Book 4). Also, the poem ends
with a warning to those who are faithless in love, lest they suffer what the lover-poet suffers
(1.1.35-38). This is rather curious, as it suggests that suffering in love comes after an earlier
act of betrayal, undermining the suffering lover-poet’s conception of himself as faithful
already at the outset of the corpus.

The general impression that the lover-poet gives of his fidelity in book 1 follows that
implicit in the first poem, as the lover-poet’s repeated assertions of fidelity are undermined
by hints of infidelity.\textsuperscript{26} In 1.4 and 1.12, the lover-poet claims that he is enslaved by Cynthia,
putting himself in a position in which he, as slave, owes fides to his mistress. At 1.4.3-4 he
tells an interfering friend to stop trying to separate him from Cynthia, referring to his
relationship with her as assuetum seruitium, and at 1.12.18 he again refers to love as
seruitium, although in this case he speaks of love affairs in general.\textsuperscript{27} He refuses to leave
Rome for provincial service in the entourage of a more exalted patron in 1.6 out of love for
Cynthia, and underscores his rejection of the wealth and opportunity that this trip would have
given him by addressing 1.14, which declares that Cynthia is worth more than riches, to the
same person, Tullus. The rejection of political and economic success is a standard part of
elegiac convention, which values the beloved and the life of love more highly than the
trappings of public success.\textsuperscript{28} By setting up the mainstream and elegiac positions, Propertius

\textsuperscript{24} A similar wish appears at 2.9.39.
\textsuperscript{25} For example, the lover-poet sees Cynthia’s absence and refusal to return to Rome in 1.11 and 1.12 as
indicative of her lack of fidelity (Davis 1977, 42-45).
\textsuperscript{26} King (1975) provides an insightful overview of the lover-poet’s experience of love in Book 1, and expresses
the importance of fidelity as a theme in it on page 121.
\textsuperscript{27} Seruitium amoris is the subject of my chapter 3. For the elegiac theme of seruitium amoris, see McCarthy
1998. Miller (2007, 408) argues that both 1.4 and 1.5 contain Catullan intertexts of betrayed fides and failed
amicitia.
\textsuperscript{28} James 2001.
provides space for his disidentifying subject. Finally, he shows himself to be faithful to Cynthia even when she behaves badly towards him: in 1.8, when she contemplates a journey to Illyria with a wealthy rival; in 1.11 when she abandons the lover-poet in Rome while she holidays at Baiae, from which, judging by his continued complaints of her absence in 1.12, she refuses to return; and in 1.15, in which he accuses her of *periuria* (25), and in which the theme of her absence is revisited.

Propertius begins his critique of the elegiac position on fidelity in book one as well. He calls into question the lover-poet’s claims of fidelity most explicitly at 1.3.35-38:

*tandem te nostro referens iniuria lecto
alterius clausis expulit e foribus?
namque ubi longa meae consumpsti tempora noctis,
languidus exactis, ei mihi, sideribus?*

In 1.3, Propertius questions the lover-poet’s constancy in Cynthia’s voice by having her accuse him of spending the evening with another woman. Cynthia’s suspicion of the lover-poet can be seen again towards the end of the first book, when he imagines that she is angry at him because she has heard that he has been unfaithful (1.18.9-10): *quid tantum merui? quae te mihi carmina mutant?/ an noua tristitiae causa puella tuae?* Besides these two passages, there are also a number of occasions in book 1 when Cynthia is depicted as fearful of desertion or betrayal (1.4.24-26, 1.5.25, 1.17.5-10). In 1.17, Cynthia complains about the lover-poet’s absence, and the word used for her complaints is *querelae*, which is a technical term in the Propertian corpus, referring both to the lover’s characteristic utterance and to the poet’s characteristic genre. Its use for Cynthia’s complaints likens them to the *querelae* of the lover-poet and suggests they should be taken just as seriously. Cynthia’s fears in 1.4 are particularly troubling, as they suggest that Cynthia has experienced betrayal by the lover-poet before (1.4.25-27): *non ullo grauius temptatur Cynthia damno/ quam sibi cum rapto cessat*

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30 For a reading of 1.11 and 1.12 as a pair that should be contrasted with 1.8A and B, see Davis 1977, 42. See also Stahl 1985, 4.
31 Saylor 1969.
Cynthia’s concerns about the lover-poet are expressed in the same vocabulary as the lover-poet uses of his doubts about her fidelity, as both are suspicious of rivals and fear desertion.

Poems 2.9 and 2.29 draw on many of the concerns about fidelity that are introduced in the first book and which run through the entire corpus. In some ways, the two poems are opposites of each other, with 2.9 casting the mistress as faithless and the lover-poet as eternally faithful and 2.29 presenting a faithless lover-poet and faithful but angry Cynthia. This exploration of opposing points of view and testing of the boundaries of elegiac personae with respect to fidelity invites us to interpret these poems in the analytic grid provided by disidentification. Together, they offer a range of views on the fides of both lover-poet and mistress in which we can also see them responding to each other’s accusations.

2.9 begins with the lover-poet rejected by his mistress in favour of another man, and predicts that the rival will be cast out and replaced in turn (2.9.1-2): Iste quod est, ego saepe fui: sed fors et in hora/ hoc ipso eicto carior alter erit. These words evoke the wheel of fortune (cf. Prop. 2.8.7-8) and imply that the mistress is not only unfaithful to the lover-poet specifically, but that she is generally incapable of fidelity to anyone, thereby making her essentially faithless. The puella’s lack of fidelity is illustrated at length in the couplets that follow, which compare her to epic models of faithful women, Penelope (3-8) and Briseis (9-18). In the next section, the lover-poet returns to the puella and her crimes (2.9.19-30):

\[
\text{at tu non una potuisti nocte uacare,} \\
\text{impia, non unum sola manere diem!} \\
\]

Fedeli prints the manuscript reading of deus; many others, including Butler and Barber 1933, Barber 1953, Camps 1961, and Goold 1999, accept Kraffert’s conjecture of decus. I have chosen to print the manuscript reading, since the question of whether it is the god (presumably Amor) or Cynthia’s charms that cease/lie idle does not alter my argument.

King (1975, 111) argues that Cynthia’s hatred of the lover-poet’s infidelity in 1.4 refers to her speech of 1.3.

The puella of 2.9 is never identified by name. Many of the exempla and characteristics used to define her in this poem are conventionally used of the faithless mistress type, but the focus on Penelope, a character with whom Cynthia allusively self-identifies in a number of places, most notably in 1.3, as well as the points where the lover-poet’s complaints match the lexicon of Cynthia’s complaints in 2.29, suggest that we should identify this puella as Cynthia.

It also suggests, however, that, contrary to his general representation of her cruelty to him, the lover-poet has often been successful in obtaining the puella’s favours. Also see Horace’s somewhat cynical treatment of elegiac love, e.g Carm. 1.33, 2.9, 3.7.
quint etiam multo duxistis pocula risu:
forsitan et de me uerba fuere mala.
hic etiam petitur, qui te prius ipse reliquit:
di faciant, isto capta fruare uiro!
haec mihi uota tuam propter suscepta salutem, 25
cum capite hoc Stygiae iam poterentur aquae
et lectum flentes circum staremus amici?
hic ubi tum, pro di, perfida, quisue fuit?
quid si longinquos retinerer miles ad Indos,
aut mea si staret nauis in Oceano? 30

These lines serve a number of purposes. First, they emphasize the puella’s heartlessness, providing a list of injuries including and in addition to her infidelity that the lover-poet has suffered or might suffer. Her faults are illustrated through the negative comparison to Penelope (19-20); the accusation that she, with her new lover, mocks the lover-poet (21-22); her lack of gratitude for his solicitude when she was ill (25-28); and the epithets impia (20) and perfida (28). The lover-poet concludes this list by wondering how she would act if he were absent (29-30), since she is incapable of being faithful to him when he is present.

At this point, the lover-poet moves from specific complaints about his mistress to generalizations about all women, claiming that they are skilled in deceit and denying that their promises are binding (35, non constat foedus). Before returning to the rival at the end of the poem, he avows his fidelity, insisting that he will remain true despite her frequent and flagrant betrayals (2.9.37-48):

nunc, quoniam ista tibi placuit sententia, cedam:
tela, precor, pueri, promite acuta magis!
figite certantes atque hanc mihi soluite uitam!
sanguis erit uobis maxima palma meus. 40
sidera sunt testes et matutina pruina
et furtim misero ianua aperta mihi,
te nihil in uita nobis acceptius umquam:
nunc quoque eris, quamuis sis inimica mihi.
nec domina ulla meo ponet uestigia lecto:
solus ero, quoniam non licet esse tuum.
atque utinam, si forte pios eduximus annos,
ille uir in medio fiat amore lapis!

36 Cynthia is also called perfida at 2.5.3.
Here, Propertius associates the lover-poet’s pledge of fidelity with other elegiac tropes: the hoar frost, stars, and a wretched lover at the door (41-42) that complement a poem like 2.9, which features the *exclusus amator* and the rival who enjoys the *puella* when the lover is excluded.37 The lover-poet asserts his loyalty clearly and in several ways, claiming that no one will ever mean more to him than she (43), that he will have no other mistress (45), that he will be alone if he cannot have his mistress, and that they have spent dutiful years together (47). He underscores his fidelity with the promise that he will die literally at the hands of love, in the form of the *pueri* (37-40).38

2.9 contains many of the standard elements of the elegiac metanarrative: the faithless mistress, the faithful lover, the rival, the *exclusus amator*, lies, promises, and the suggestion of a party in the imagined drinking and laughter (21). My initial interpretation focuses on the lover-poet’s depiction of himself as the injured party and the *puella* as hurtful to him – his apparent identification with the role of the elegiac lover. A more nuanced reading that considers the poem as part of Propertius’ corpus by exploring intratextual references and questioning the lover-poet’s presentation of events, however, shows that Propertius casts doubts on the lover-poet’s trustworthiness in this elegy.39

Latent in the mythological exempla are hints that undermine the lover-poet’s claims of fidelity, and therefore his identification with the role of elegiac lover. By comparing his mistress to Penelope and Briseis he implicitly compares himself to Odysseus and Achilles. Odysseus, with his dalliances with Calypso (which Propertius mentions at 3.12.31) and Circe, certainly does not meet elegiac expectations of male fidelity.40 Nor is Achilles a model of fidelity, as we are reminded in the reference to Achilles’ desertion of Deidamia in the midst

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37 For other examples of the *exclusus amator* in Propertius, see the lament of one at 1.16.17-44 (which is immediately followed by the use of *matutinus* to describe the birds who hear him) and 3.20.29, part of a curse on unfaithful lovers.
38 Papanghelis (1987, 137) argues that for Propertius death is the ultimate pledge of fidelity.
39 Fetterley (1978, xviii-xxiv) provides an overview of the idea of a resisting reader, who refuses to accept the dominant perspective of a text as the only possible meaning.
40 Ancona (2005, 48) argues that the allusion to Odysseus in Catul. 61.221-24, even though he is not named, undercuts the poem’s message of a sexually exclusive marriage.
of the Briseis exemplum (16). By stating that his mistress is not like these women, however, the lover-poet may also be interpreted as saying that he is not like their men. In fact, it would not be surprising for an elegiac lover to oppose himself to men like Achilles and Odysseus, who, as epic heroes, are models of traditional masculine virtues, which the elegiac lover rejects in favour of the elegiac values of love and submission to the mistress. Indeed, at least in terms of fidelity, the elegiac lover regularly asserts his superiority to men who accept traditional models of virtue. The lover-poet’s superior fidelity makes his mistress seem even more heartless in comparison to these women who remained faithful despite their men’s faults. But when we consider the appearances of Odysseus, Penelope, Achilles, and Briseis elsewhere in the corpus, all of which contribute to strategies of elegiac disidentification, we may not be satisfied with this reading.

We will only consider the poems in which both Odysseus and Penelope or Achilles and Briseis appear or are alluded to. These are 1.3, 2.29, 3.6, and 4.8 for Odysseus and Penelope, and 2.8, 2.20, and 2.22 for Achilles and Briseis. All of these poems consider fidelity in some way, and all but one of them focuses on the infidelity of the lover-poet. All four of the Odysseus and Penelope poems contain the direct or quoted speech of Cynthia, and they are the more striking of the two sets of exempla. In 1.3, 2.29, and 3.6, Cynthia plays the part of Penelope, depicting herself as waiting faithfully for her errant man, and in 1.3 she strengthens this image by claiming to have spent the hours in weaving. All three of these poems also feature Cynthia accusing the lover-poet of infidelity. By having Cynthia, an elegiac mistress who should be unfaithful by nature, play the part of Penelope, the archetype of marital fidelity, Propertius disidentifies her with fidelity and with traditionally female roles, as he forges for her an identity containing elements of both mistress and wife, but fitting neither role perfectly. In 4.8, the lover-poet plays the role of Penelope and Cynthia that of Odysseus, but with the added twist that the lover-poet is no chaste Penelope – instead

41 Greene (2005a, 228) points out that the mention of Deidamia also reinforces the fluid gender identification of the lover-poet, since Achilles married Deidamia when he was cross-dressing on Scyros in order to escape the Trojan war and the death that awaited him there.
he has a party with two other women, with only bad omens and his own impotence keeping
him from being unfaithful to Cynthia.\textsuperscript{42} While Cynthia is often accused of being faithless,
the lover-poet in 4.8 is shown as such, and this poem suggests that Cynthia’s earlier
accusations were not groundless. Further, since the lover-poet’s attempt at infidelity in 4.8 is
an act of revenge for the infidelity that he believes Cynthia to be engaging in, 4.8 also
undermines the lover-poet’s promises in elegy 2.9 of fidelity regardless of the \textit{puella}’s
actions. Although Penelope is used in 2.9 as a negative exemplum for the \textit{puella}, elsewhere
in Propertius, either Cynthia plays her role or the lover-poet plays her role improperly. We
may thus view Penelope as figuring in Propertius’ critique and transformation of dominant
cultural values, and read the allusion to her as either claiming a position of fidelity for the
mistress or underscoring the lover-poet’s lack of fidelity. In either case, her conventional
semiotic significance of marital fidelity is transformed.

The other couple in the mythological exempla of 2.9, Achilles and Briseis, present
less striking figures in Propertius’ work. Briseis is an enslaved captive of war whose absence
from her lover is no fault of her own,\textsuperscript{43} and her lack of agency makes her a less apt
comparison to the \textit{puella} than Penelope, who chose to be faithful. The exempla featuring
Briseis tend to be briefer and less fully developed than those with Penelope. The 2.20
exemplum is another instance of a poem in which the \textit{puella} believes that the lover-poet has
been unfaithful; it is also similar to the group of “Cynthia as Penelope” exempla discussed
above. 2.8, which will be discussed further under the topic of \textit{militia amoris} in chapter 4, is
the only one of the poems discussed in this section that presents a faithful lover-poet,
unsurprisingly in a poem that is linked by theme and position to 2.9.\textsuperscript{44} In 2.8, the lover-poet
justifies his laments for his lost girlfriend by attributing similar elegiac emotion to Achilles,
the greatest of the epic heroes, which suggests that his own sorrow is not excessive or a mark

\textsuperscript{42} For 4.8 as Propertius’ “Odyssey,” see Wyke 2002, 106. For the lover-poet in 1.8 more successfully
identifying with Penelope, see Pucci 1978, 55.
\textsuperscript{43} Greene (2005a, 221) argues that Briseis symbolizes the lover-poet’s desire to subdue Cynthia.
\textsuperscript{44} While there are serious textual problems in the second book, to my knowledge no one has questioned the
positioning of 2.8 and 2.9 beside each other.
of weakness. In Propertius’ reading of the *Iliad*, Achilles is not wrathful and driven by *kleos*, but mournful and driven by love for Briseis.⁴⁵ In the last example, 2.22, the lover-poet claims, in a list of exempla demonstrating that love-making need not make a man weak, that in this arena he is Achilles and also Hector (2.22.34: *hic ego Pelides, hic ferus Hector ego*).⁴⁶ The exempla here, which also include Jupiter, furnish a further instance of the lover-poet disidentifying with the figure of the mythological hero, and in this case with a god. The lover-poet identifies himself with the heroic or divine figure, but in their roles as lovers. The focus in this poem on the hero’s or god’s role as lover allies 2.22 with the depiction of Achilles in 2.8, but the assertion that the love affairs of the exemplary figures in 2.22 do not hamper their abilities as god and heroes associates them also with the heroic Odysseus and Achilles of 2.9, who are not cast primarily as lovers in 2.9.⁴⁷

Elegy 2.22 is also the most troubling poem in which to find a reference to Achilles and Briseis with respect to the interpretation of 2.9, because this poem, and the two that follow,⁴⁸ comprise a sequence in which the lover-poet overtly sheds his position as an abjectly faithful lover, and instead represents in detail the joys of multiple girlfriends and simple, cash for sex transactions.⁴⁹ 2.23.36-40 even suggests that the mistress is to blame if he is unfaithful, in contrast to his assertions in 2.9 and elsewhere that he will be faithful regardless of her actions. Elegy 2.24 furthers this suggestion that Cynthia is to blame, claiming that her disdain is the cause of his bad reputation and leads him to turn to cheap (*uilis*) women (2.24.5-10). The use of Achilles as an exemplum in 2.22 associates that epic hero with a lover-poet who rejects the unswerving fidelity of his promise in 2.9, and therefore problematizes the presence of Achilles in 2.9.

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⁴⁵ See Welch 2005, 125 for Propertius’ use of submissive heroes to demonstrate women’s strength.
⁴⁶ Fedeli brackets the couplet 2.22.33-34, but I include it, following Richardson.
⁴⁷ The focus on their absence in 2.9 indicates both that they are on heroic business (for the association of wandering or absence from home with heroes, see Keith 1999b, 217). For the elegiac lover, however, wandering implies the breaking of *fides* (King 1980, 227).
⁴⁸ Camps (1991, 27-29) sees these poems as so closely related to each other that he argues that 2.22.43-2.24.16 is a single poem.
Thus, the mythological exempla of Odysseus and Penelope and of Achilles and Briseis that the lover-poet associates with himself and Cynthia are extremely troubling when we consider the other appearances of these characters in Propertius’ work, especially in light of their consistent manifestation in poems that deal with fidelity, like 2.9. Every one of the other contexts in which Penelope or Briseis is directly compared to the mistress (1.3, 2.20, 2.29, and 3.6) involves the mistress accusing the lover-poet of infidelity. Even poems that feature these mythological women in roles less directly tied to the mistress explore issues of fidelity. Moreover, 2.22 and 4.8 both feature a lover-poet who uses the actions of his wayward mistress to excuse his own infidelity, and while the mistress is not characterized as faithful in these poems either, the lover-poet is far from his claims of undying fidelity in 2.9. 2.8 is most like 2.9 in that it features an unfaithful mistress who has abandoned the lover-poet, and in many ways it is a companion poem to 2.9. Propertius has his elegiac lover and mistress engage in a series of complex strategies of disidentification with characters from epic. At no point do either of Propertius’ characters straightforwardly identify with the epic characters, even when the lover-poet explicitly says “I am Achilles,” as at 2.22.34. Instead, they take characteristics and pieces of the epic stories that can be added to elegiac situations and characters to undermine elegiac identities and epic identities and use them in the creation of disidentity. In his disidentification with mythological exempla, Propertius explores the relationship of his lover-poet and his elegiac mistress to fidelity. By having them identify with characters and behaviours that show a range of identification with fidelity and infidelity, both in its mainstream and elegiac meanings, he makes his lover and mistress disidentify with fides.

The Propertian critique of the figure of the exclusus amator provides a further link between 2.9 and two poems in which Cynthia questions the lover-poet’s fidelity. The exclusus amator is implied throughout 2.9, as the lover-poet has been separated from the
puella while she entertains a rival; moreover, 41-44 seems to evoke his usual night-time vigil until we reach aperta near the end of line 42:

sidera sunt testes et matutina pruina
et furtim misero ianua aperta mihi,
te nihil in uita nobis acceptius umquam:
nunc quoque eris, quamuis sis inimica mihi.

The recollection of an open door (ianua aperta) serves in 2.9 to recall the lover-poet’s past access to the puella, in contrast to his current situation, and to reinforce the wheel of fortune image from the first couplet. Significantly, there are two other places in the corpus in which the lover-poet arrives at Cynthia’s open door at the early hour that stars and morning frost suggest, one in 1.3 and one in 2.29. In both of these cases, the lover-poet’s time of arrival arouses suspicion of his infidelity. Cynthia’s accusations in 1.3 have been discussed above, but at this point we can highlight the time at which the lover-poet returns, sera nocte (1.3.10) and exactis sideribus (1.3.38). In 2.29 too the lover-poet is out at night (nocte, 2.29.1) and arrives at Cynthia’s house in the morning (mane, 2.29.23). The word matutinus provides a further verbal link between the scenes in 2.9 and 2.29. A rare word in the Propertian corpus, it appears at 2.9.41 and in Cynthia’s speech to the lover-poet at 2.29.31, and also at 1.16.46, in the door’s complaint about exclusi amatores, and in 4.5.62, in the lena’s warning to the puella about fleeting youth. Thus all of the four Propertian uses of this word occur in poems dealing with the fidelity of a mistress and/or an elegiac lover.\footnote{The promiscuity of the mistress of 1.16 causes the door’s complaints. I have not chosen to look at this poem more closely, as I follow Fedeli (1980, 367) in not considering it part of the relationship of lover-poet and Cynthia/puella.} The appearance of matutinus in 4.5 is particularly chilling, since it occurs in the lena’s sharp admonitions to the elegiac mistress about the long-term dangers of fidelity to the lover-poet, demonstrated in the wretched end of the lena, who is, after all, an aged puella, and in the text of the lena’s speech.\footnote{For this interpretation of this poem, see Myers 1996, 3; Wyke 2002, 102; James 2001, 226.} The image of an exclusus amator is important for a straightforward reading of 2.9, as it strengthens the depiction of the lover-poet as faithful and the puella as cruel and fickle.

But by associating the early morning arrival at a mistress’ doorstep, generally the setting for a
paraclausithyron (as in 1.16), with the lover-poet’s earlier success with the puella and by using thematic and verbal similarities to link 2.9 with other poems in which the lover-poet’s fidelity is questioned, Propertius effectively resists the counter-identity of exclusus amator for his lover-poet, and offers a critique of the fidelity that is associated with that figure (and also of the mistress’ infidelity).

After first reading 2.9 as a straight denunciation of the puella and declaration of the lover-poet’s fidelity, and then tracing the undertones in the text through the allusions to other poems in the Propertian corpus, we are ready to consider 2.29.52 That 2.9 and 2.29 should be read together is indicated by a number of verbal similarities, most explicitly in the statement of both the lover-poet (2.9.45) and Cynthia (2.29.35) that there are or will be no traces (nec/non ulla uestigia) of another lover in their beds (lectus/torus). When we read these poems together, they appear to be a “he said/she said” argument in which similar language is used by each party in attacking the other, with both asserting their own virtue and undermining the other’s. Although the lover-poet makes no explicit accusations in 2.29, if we read this poem with 2.9 we can see Cynthia responding to the accusations of the earlier poem and adding some allegations of her own against the lover-poet’s professed fidelity.

Before beginning our analysis of 2.29, it will be useful to consider Propertius’ depiction of Cynthia and her relationship to fidelity. When describing his relationship with Cynthia, as we have seen, the lover-poet usually portrays himself as the faithful, long-suffering partner who puts up with her cruel rejections and infidelities. At times, though, the lover-poet diverges from this by claiming that he too is unfaithful, or that he prefers the company of less complicated girls, most notably in the sequence of 2.22-2.24. Propertius strengthens these suggestions by having Cynthia, either through first-person speech or through the lover-poet’s report of what she did or might say, repeatedly portray him as faithless or at least inclined to

52 Although many editors divide 2.29 into two poems, 2.29A and 2.29B, throughout this discussion I will simply refer to 2.29. As the two sections of the poem are clearly thematically linked and as they are numbered sequentially, I will treat them as one poem for simplicity’s sake. Also see Davis (1977, 19-22) on two-part poems.
be so. While some commentators have dismissed these contradictions in an attempt to keep the character of the lover-poet consistent, amatory inconsistency and an ambiguous relationship to the conventions of society and elegy are two essential characteristics of the lover-poet, and should be addressed, not ignored.53

Cynthia, like the lover-poet, interacts with Valerius Maximus’ categories of fides. While she does not directly display any particular loyalty or disloyalty to the state, Propertius does set her up in competition with the state for the loyalty of the lover-poet. This appears as early as 1.6.5-6, in which the lover-poet cites her pleading as the reason that he cannot go to the east with his friend Tullus (sed me complexae remorantur uerba puellae/ mutatoque graues saepe colore preces). The stark opposition between Cynthia and duty to the state continues throughout the corpus, with Cynthia also representing elegy and the elegiac lifestyle.54 While Cynthia rarely appears as a slave or slave-like figure, if the lover-poet is enslaved, she must be his owner/mistress.55 The application of the term domina to her (e.g. at 1.1.21, 1.3.17, 2.3.8, 3.16.1) reinforces this understanding, but in general the motif of seruitium amoris may seem more concerned with the lover’s slavery than the mistress’ mastery.56 Cynthia’s relationship to seruitium amoris and militia amoris will be explored in chapters 3 and 4, while in this chapter the focus will be on her interaction with amatory or marital fides.

Cynthia’s relationship to marital fidelity and infidelity is complex, and her character exhibits traits from a variety of social and gender roles not only throughout the corpus but

53 The dismissal of Cynthia’s claims is often done through derogatory language concerning Cynthia’s character and motivations: Camps says of her speech in 4.7 “The statements made...are not of course to be taken as all necessarily true; Cynthia’s imagination is fired by jealousy.” An even clearer example of this tactic is in Lyne (1980, 118-19), on 1.3, according to whom Cynthia “employs gratuitous and unfounded accusation…employs tenuous, feminine logic, not unviciously…displays vindictiveness and self-pity…employs…whining reproach…” and her speech “continues to the end in unjustified, inappropriate, calculated self-pitying pathos…destructively incompatible with any of the imagined, romantic Cynthia” and that “she certainly acts like an only too real wife: complaining, suspicious, illogical, proprietorial.” Also see Papanghelis 1987, 145 and 181. Cf. James (2003, 9) on the overemphasis on the male elegiac perspective in the critical literature.

54 Wyke (2002, 77) argues that Propertius uses Cynthia as a device to avoid poetry about Augustus and the state.

55 For a recent discussion of the elegiac trope of the seruitium amoris, see McCarthy 1998; see also my chapter 3, below.

56 See Wyke (2002, 172) for the greater emphasis on the lover-poet’s enslavement.
sometimes even in the same poem. Thus she appears as a faithful wife (1.3), vengeful husband (4.8), faithful mistress (4.7), faithless mistress (2.8, 2.9), and even a suspicious lover (4.8). In Cynthia, Propertius creates a character who disidentifies with the gendered roles of participants in amatory relationships. Her self-portrayal, in the poems in which she speaks in the first person (including 1.3, 2.29, 3.6, 4.7), tends towards the faithful, often betrayed, wife, while the lover-poet vacillates between depicting her as a wifely and a courtesan figure. The fidelity that the speaker seems to desire from her is more often associated with a wife than a mistress in conventional Roman culture, but in elegy it is desired from the mistress, although not usually attained. The lover-poet is more likely to depict her as faithless, regardless of what role he conceives of her in, but at times he too describes her as faithful (e.g., in the second half of 1.8; in a hasty assurance to her at 1.11.17; and as a faithful mourner at 2.13.27-30).

Elegy 2.29 is one of the poems in which Propertius has Cynthia express her views on the lover-poet’s fidelity and her own, views which stand in contrast to the standard behaviour associated with the identities of the elegiac lover and mistress. The poem is a two-part description of the lover-poet’s homecoming one night after an evening of drunken carousing. First, he imagines that he is accosted by a group of mischievous Cupids, who were sent by his mistress to bring him home. From line 23 on, however, he depicts his return to Cynthia’s bedroom, with a move from “fantasy” to a “realistic” depiction of the night.

We will begin with the introduction to the dramatic setting of the poem (2.29.1-7):

Hesterna, mea lux, cum potus nocte uagarer,
   nec me seruorum duceret ulla manus,
obuia nescio quot pueri mihi tuerta minuta
   uenerat (hos uetuit me numerare timor);
   quorum alii faculas, alii retinere sagittas,
   pars etiam uisa est uincla parare mihi.
   sed nudi fuerant. quorum lasciuior unus…

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57 For other general discussions of elegy 2.29, see Davis 1977, 66-75 and Syndikus 2006, 304-6.
58 For the division of this poem into fantasy and reality, see Davis 1977, 69.
The poem presents the lover-poet in a similar situation to that immediately before 1.3 begins, out late after drinking, but with some important differences. In 1.3 he had slaves (pueri, 1.3.10) with him, while here he seems to be alone (until the pueri find him); also, in 2.29 he is wandering (uagarer, line 1) with no apparent destination, whereas in 1.3 he drags his drunken steps (ebria ... traherem uestigia, 1.3.9) to Cynthia. In 2.29, his apparently aimless wandering is soon arrested when he is accosted by a band of boys whose attributes (torches, arrows, nudity) identify them as Cupids. Their initial identification as pueri, coupled with their torches, draws us back to the pueri who accompany the lover-poet in 1.3, however, and in combination with the lover-poet’s nocturnal drunkenness should make the discovery that the lover-poet has again missed a night with Cynthia not unexpected. In 2.29, however, the pueri have come with weapons and chains in addition to their torches, in order to remind the lover-poet of his state of seruitium amoris and bring him back to Cynthia.

After setting the scene, one of the pueri makes a lengthy speech to the lover-poet, which culminates with the lover-poet being deposited at Cynthia’s door (2.29.8–22):

>'Arripite hunc,' inquit, 'iam bene nostis eum. hic erat, hunc mulier nobis irata locauit.'
dixit, et in collo iam mihi nodus erat.
hic alter iubet in medium propellere, at alter, 'Intereat, qui nos non putat esse deos! haec te non meritum totas exspectat in horas: at tu nescio quas quaeris, inepte, foris.
qua cum Sidoniae nocturna ligamina mitrae soluerit atque oculos mouerit illa grauis, afflabunt tibi non Arabum de gramine odores, sed quos ipse suis fecit Amor manibus.
parcite iam, fratres, iam certos spondet amores; et iam ad mandatam uenimus ecce domum.'
>'I nunc et noctes disce manere domi.'

The pueri describe Cynthia spending an evening similar to the one she portrays in 1.3, representing her as angry (2.29.9) after waiting for the lover-poet while he sought out another

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59 Drunken night-time wandering does not occur elsewhere in Propertius, with the exception of 1.16.17–46, which presents a paraclausithyron and differs significantly from the scene in 1.3 and 2.29, in which the lover-poet has full access to the mistress’ house and there is no hint of a barred door. Syndikus (2006, 304) refers to 2.29 as a reworking of 1.3.
woman (13-14) until she falls asleep (15-16).\textsuperscript{60} The similarity to 1.3 recalls the use of Penelope in Cynthia’s disidentification with female roles, which is also present in 2.29. The accusations of the \emph{pueri} are not quite the same as those of Cynthia in 1.3, however. The \emph{pueri} accuse the lover-poet of looking for another woman (\emph{nescio quas quaeris}) but do not state that he was actually unfaithful, whereas Cynthia in 1.3 is far more detailed and certain in her accusations. This is important because it seems that the \emph{pueri}, at least, are satisfied with the lover-poet’s (implied) protestations of fidelity, as indicated by line 19 \emph{parcite iam, fratres, iam certos spondet amores}. Considering the threats made by the \emph{pueri} earlier in the poem, both those suggested by the chains (6) and noose (10), and the actual cries of \emph{arripite} (8) and \emph{intereat} (12), we can imagine the lover-poet swearing his fidelity in terms like those used in 2.9 in order to reassure them.\textsuperscript{61} At this point, the lover-poet is delivered to Cynthia with a warning to stay home at night, and the poem develops into a new scene in the following lines.

Here too the poem recalls the beginning of 1.3 and also, briefly, 1.2 (2.29.23-30):

\begin{verbatim}
mane erat, et uolui, si sola quiesceret illa,
uisere: at in lecto Cynthia sola fuit.
obstipui: non illa mihi formosior unquam
uisa, neque ostrina cum fuit in tunica,
ibat et hinc castae narratum somnia Vestae,
neu sibi neu sibi quae nocitura forent.

talis uisa mihi somno dimissa recenti.
heu quantum per se candida forma uael!
\end{verbatim}

Although the lover-poet’s initial motive for observing Cynthia is suspicion, he can see that she sleeps alone. The lover-poet compares her beauty as he watches her sleep to that which she possessed when she was piously relating her dreams to the goddess most associated with chastity, Vesta, in order to ensure the safety of herself and the lover-poet, allying her current state with one of chaste piety. The impression of Cynthia’s beauty and innocence is further emphasized by the lover-poet’s heartfelt praise of beauty that shines of itself, without artificial embellishments. The wording is different, but the sentiments are similar to those the

\textsuperscript{60} Cf. Cynthia’s anger (1.3.18); her wait while he is with another (1.3.35-44); and her sleep (1.3.45-46).
\textsuperscript{61} On the assumption of the lover’s speech here, see Davis 1977, 70.
\textsuperscript{62} Some editors (Richardson, Goold) insert lines 2.2.9-12 here, no doubt due to a desire to make a list of mythological comparisons to the sleeping Cynthia like that in 1.3.
speaker expresses in 1.2, associating unadorned beauty with chastity and chiding the puella (generally assumed to be Cynthia)\textsuperscript{63} for her attempts at artificial beauty, with the attendant implication that the purpose of such cultivation is to attract other lovers. Propertius, by writing a scenario that reminds us of a faithless Cynthia even as it documents her chastity and fidelity, brings multiple aspects of identity and counter-identity into play.

Despite the momentary suspicions of the lover-poet in line 23, Cynthia is presented as virtuous in 2.29, and until she begins to speak, the lover-poet seems to have successfully neutralized the doubts about his own fidelity. The repeated allusions to 1.3, however, may lead the reader to suspect that Cynthia will not be so easily satisfied. Besides the similar setting of the poem, talis uisa mihi (29) explicitly rehearses the first half-line of the lover-poet’s description of Cynthia at the beginning of 1.3.7. While in 1.3 the lover-poet spends twenty-seven lines with the sleeping Cynthia before she wakes and delivers her accusatory speech, in 2.29 only a single line separates the end of the lover-poet’s description of her and her speech. Cynthia’s speech affirms the innocence that the lover-poet already expects of her, but by favourably contrasting her behaviour with his (2.29.31-38):

\begin{quote}
'Quid tu matutinus,' ait 'speculator amicae? me similem uestris moribus esse putas? non ego tam facilis: sat erit mihi cognitus unus, uel tu uel si quis uerior esse potest. apparent non ulla toro uestigia presso, signa uolutantis nec iacuisse duos. aspice ut in toto nullus mihi corpore surgat spiritus admisso motus adulterio.'
\end{quote}

Cynthia presents pragmatic evidence that she, at least, has spent a virtuous night alone, while at the same time providing us with the sort of sordid details that would indicate that she had not.\textsuperscript{64} She also makes an oblique accusation of the lover-poet, declaring that in her desire for only one lover and her ability to spend the night alone she is not like him.

\textsuperscript{63} Camps and Fedeli both refer to the puella of 1.2 as Cynthia.
\textsuperscript{64} Syndikus 2006, 305.
This is not the only place in the corpus in which Cynthia accuses the lover-poet of infidelity. Almost every time she speaks, she calls his fidelity and his love for her into question, from her first named appearance in the corpus in 1.3 to her last in 4.8, furthering the dissociation of the lover-poet from elegiac fidelity. The most extended example is in 4.7, which is the poem that contains the longest direct speech from Cynthia, with eighty-two of its ninety-six lines in Cynthia’s voice. Because this poem is discussed at length in the next chapter, at this point I will only briefly point to a few relevant details. In 4.7, she refers to the lover-poet’s promises as *fallacia verba* (line 21) and accuses him of taking up with another woman too soon after her death. While describing her experience among the virtuous women of the underworld, she even claims that she hides the lover-poet’s *perfidiae crina* from them (70).65

The following poem, 4.8, discussed briefly above in reference to Penelope and Odysseus, features the infidelity of both Cynthia and the lover-poet. The poem begins with her driving out to the country with another man, allegedly to watch a religious rite, but the lover-poet claims *fuit…mage causa Venus* (4.8.16). In retaliation, the lover-poet, in contradiction to his claim that he will be faithful regardless of his beloved’s behaviour in 2.9.43-46, invites two other girls to spend the evening with him (4.8.27-34):

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cum fieret nostro totiens iniuria lecto,
mu[I]tato uolui[t] castra mouere toro.
Phyllis Auentinae quaedam est uicina Dianae,
sobra grata parum: cum bibit, omne decet. 30
altera Tarpeios est inter Teia lucos,
candida, sed potae non satis unus erit.
his ego constitui noctem lenire uocatis
et Venere ignota furta nouare mea.
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These girls, Phyllis and Teia, are particularly interesting for their character type, which is represented as closer to that of Horace’s symposium girls than to the elegiac beloved. They are associated with drinking, and later in the poem with dice games and singing, all activities

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65 Cynthia’s claims in 4.7 have attracted skeptical commentary from a number of scholars, including Papanghelis (1987, 181), who calls them “false” and later (185) charges that Cynthia is a “vindictive shrew.” In contrast, Flaschenreim (1998, 53, 63) sees Cynthia’s speech as Propertius’ acknowledgement of an autonomous female perspective on their affair.
for the symposium/conuia, and they noticeably lack the learning and sophistication, as well as the temper and caprice, of Cynthia. Their very names associate them with Horace, who has a girl named Phyllis as part of the celebration of Maecenas’ birthday in Carm. 4.11.3 and who, at Carm. 1.17.18, uses Teia as an adjective for the type of lyre a musical entertainer plays. Propertius’ vignette is also reminiscent of the lover-poet’s claims in 2.22 and 2.23 that he will take on a more casual and promiscuous attitude, like that seen in Horace’s Carmina, towards love and women, and therefore reject the role of the elegiac lover. In 4.8, however, the lover-poet’s attempts at infidelity fail, as he is beset by bad omens and perhaps even impotence (43-48), before his party is interrupted by the return of Cynthia (49). The lover-poet’s engagement in strategies of disidentification is displayed in 4.8 by the failure of his rejection of the role of the faithful elegiac lover. He cannot fully reject this role because his disidentification with fides requires him to maintain some connection with it and to draw on and incorporate it into his own subjectivity.

After disrupting the lover-poet’s party, Cynthia restates the terms of their relationship and her expectations of the lover-poet’s behaviour (4.8.73-80):

atque ait: ‘Admissae si uis me ignoscere culpae,
accipe, quae nostrae formula legis erit.
tu neque Pompeia spatiabere cultus in umbra,
nec cum lascium sternet harena Forum.
colla caue inflectas ad summum obliqua theatrum,
aut lectica tuae se det aperta morae.
Lygdamus in primis, omnis mihi causa querelae,
ue neat et pedibus uincula bina trahat.’

In this, the last instance of her direct speech, she explains the rules concerning how the lover-poet is to behave after she has caught him in infidelity. The mention of the theatre recalls 2.22.4-10, in which the lover-poet admits to seeking lovers there, and in general Cynthia’s

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66 In his commentary on Propertius Book 4, Hutchinson (2006, 195-96) identifies Phyllis as a common freedwoman’s name and the name of one of the party girls at Virg. Ecl. 10.37-41, making the date of Horace Carm. 4 (after Propertius Book 4) unproblematic for using Carm. 4.11 as a general reference for the type of girl alluded to in Prop. 4.8. He suggests that Teia is meant to evoke Anacreon of Teos, and thus lyric poetry. Keith (2008, 106) identifies the objects of desire in 2.23 as lyric freedwomen as well.

67 For the Horatian attitude towards love, see Oliensis 2007.
terms forbid the lover-poet from frequenting places where men would go to meet women.\footnote{Public entertainments, such as those held in the Forum before permanent theatres and amphitheatres were built, were notorious for their associations with prostitution, as were public spaces such as the portico of Pompey’s theatre: McGinn 2004, 22-25. For the association of Pompey’s portico and prostitution, see Catul. 55.6-10, Ov. Ars 1.67, Mart. 11.47.3.}

In forbidding him to parade about such spaces, Cynthia prohibits the lover-poet from going to places where he might meet those looking for an affair. This connects her speech in 4.8 with that in 2.29, as both present a lover-poet inclined to be faithless, and shows that her perspective on his fidelity is considerably more consistent than his.

Cynthia’s speech in 2.29 can seem unprovoked if we only read her speech in the context of this poem, but when we consider both the other instances of Cynthia’s direct speech and the accusations and claims of the lover-poet in 2.9 and throughout the corpus, it should be clear that in the larger context of the corpus her speech is understandable.

Cynthia’s defense in the poem begins with her accusation that the lover-poet is an early morning spy (2.29.31: \textit{matutinus speculator}), a perfectly justifiable charge in light of the motives that he himself states (23-24): \textit{mane erat, et uolui, si sola quiesceret illa,/ uisere.}

Since her speeches almost always contain suggestions or accusations about the lover-poet’s fidelity and/or a defense of her own, we should not be surprised to find accusations of infidelity and protestations of loyalty in this one, especially since earlier in 2.29, as we have seen, the \\textit{pueri} suggest that the lover-poet was at least intending to be unfaithful. Even in poems in which Cynthia does not speak, the lover-poet may imagine her charging him with infidelity, suggesting that he at least has come to expect these accusations. In book 1 (1.18.9-12), the lover-poet wonders if she is angry with him because she imagines that he has betrayed her with another woman (1.18.10: \textit{noua puella}). In book 2 (2.20.4), he says that a woman, unnamed but likely Cynthia, complains \textit{nostram ... cecidisse fidem}, but assures her that he is faithful. Regardless of whether Propertius writes her accusations as her direct speech or as the imaginings of the lover-poet, he still makes his elegiac mistress sow seeds of
doubt about the lover-poet’s professed fidelity.⁶⁹ Since both the lover-poet and Cynthia are
Propertius’ creations, they are in some ways analogous to the characters that a single
performance artist may use to perform what Munoz calls “worldmaking.”⁷⁰ Propertius makes
a world in which the lover-poet’s claims of elegiac fidelity are persistently undermined by his
mistress. Our appreciation of Propertius’ dissatisfaction with the counter-identification
represented by elegiac conventions is strengthened by the use of this character, who belongs
to the world of elegy, to destabilize it.

Cynthia’s frequently expressed fear of betrayal strengthens the sense of the lover-
poet’s unreliability, and provides further justification for her speech in 2.29. Even when she
is not explicitly accusing the lover-poet of infidelity, Cynthia is often made to appear fearful
of betrayal and/or desertion, much like the lover-poet in 2.9; it is one of the reasons that
Cynthia and the lover-poet appear more alike than opposites. The first instance of this motif
comes as early as 1.4, where it is a central theme (25-27): non ullo grauius temptatur Cynthia
damno/ quam sibi cum rapto cessat amore deus:/ praecipue nostri. This theme reappears
throughout book 1, as for example when the lover-poet gives Cynthia’s fear of desertion as
the reason he cannot go with Tullus in 1.6. Elegy 2.7, which deals with the repeal of a law
that threatened to separate lover and mistress by forcing him to marry, also shows Cynthia as
fearful that the lovers may be parted. The lover-poet uses Cynthia’s fears as excuses to
refuse and denigrate masculine duty, including obedience to laws, thereby connecting her
fears with the rejection of mainstream identifications as well as with the critique of the
counter-identification of elegiac lover, and suggesting a link between Cynthia’s fears of
betrayal and the lover-poet’s disidentification. The lover-poet’s behaviour in 4.8 shows
Cynthia’s fears to be well founded, and gives further credence to the accusations she makes
in 2.29.

⁶⁹ Kennedy (1993, 76) suggests that if one reads elegy as a play of discourse, the poet becomes a shrewd
observer and critic of the lover; here, Cynthia is used to carry out this role.
⁷⁰ Muñoz 1999, especially chapter 8.
It should not surprise us to find Cynthia accusing the lover-poet of infidelity in 2.29, especially since he has provided her with a reason to be suspicious by spending the night out drinking. The specific interaction between this poem and 2.9, however, provides a reason for her defense of her own character. There are a number of verbal reminiscences of the lover-poet’s statement of fidelity at 2.9.41-48 in 2.29, especially in Cynthia’s speech in 2.29. The most striking of these similarities is the example used by both the lover-poet and Cynthia to prove their fidelity: at 2.9.45, the lover-poet declares *nec domina ulla meo ponet uestigia lecto*, and at 2.29.35 Cynthia states *apparent non ulla toro uestigia presso*. The differences in the statements made by the lover-poet in 2.9 and Cynthia in 2.29 are interesting. The lover-poet’s verb is in the future tense, but Cynthia’s is in the present, making hers a strong statement of current fact, while his is a promise. *Vestigia*, the focus of both proclamations, is not a common word in Propertius, appearing only five other times, at 1.3.9, 1.5.5, 1.5.25, and 2.16.27, and 3.9.33. In four of these five other appearances, it simply means “footsteps.” In the one other place where it means “traces”, as in 2.9 and 2.29, it refers to male infidelity: *quod si parua tuae dederis uestigia culpae/ quam cito de tanto nomine rumor eris!* (1.5.25-26). In 1.5, the posited infidelity is that of Gallus, a friend of the lover-poet’s who has expressed interest in Cynthia. The lover-poet warns Gallus of the hazards of loving Cynthia, including, in the couplet quoted above, her reaction to infidelity. The claims that Cynthia reacts to infidelity by making rumours about the one at fault can be illustrated by her speeches against the lover-poet in the corpus. Cynthia and the lover-poet both make similar claims about the lack of traces of others in their beds, but Cynthia’s is stronger both in terms of tense and in its connection to 1.5.

In asserting at 2.29.33-34 that her own fidelity to the lover-poet hinges upon his fidelity to her, Cynthia both echoes and refines statements made by the lover-poet. Cynthia

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71 The association of sexually available women with drinking parties was widespread, as can certainly be seen in Horace (for example, *Carm.* 1.17, 3.14, 3.19, and 4.11). Cf. Livy 1.57, on the contrast between the wives of the princes and the virtuous Lucretia. Also see Roller 2003 for the presence of female entertainers and *meretrices* at Roman parties.
requires mutual fidelity (33-34): *sat erit mihi cognitus unus,/ uel tu uel si quis uerior esse potest.* Her unspoken threat here is that she will be unfaithful to him if he is to her. This is reminiscent of the lover-poet’s claims in 2.24.5-10 that Cynthia’s cruelty causes him to seek out other women, but at the same time is significantly different in that Cynthia claims that she will be faithful to one man at a time regardless of who it is: while the lover-poet favours promiscuity in response to Cynthia’s behaviour, Cynthia prefers serial monogamy. Neither, however, fulfills the elegiac stereotypes of the lover (who is faithful to one woman unto death) or the mistress (who is capriciously unfaithful as it suits her greed and inclination). These elegiac characters are not very good at being elegiac characters - which is not surprising if we see them as showing dissatisfaction with gendered elegiac conventions as well as with the values of the dominant culture. Propertius strains the clichés of the genre in his characterization of elegiac lover and mistress.

To conclude the reading of Cynthia’s speech, her defense of her behaviour in 2.29 is not unmotivated; rather it is a response to the accusations of infidelity that the lover-poet makes in 2.9 and elsewhere, and engages in the process of disidentification that surrounds the concept of *fides* in Propertian elegy. In a general sense, the similarity between the circumstances of 1.3 and 2.29 bring Cynthia’s representation of herself as a Penelope figure in 1.3 and the *pueri*’s suggestion of the same in 2.29 into conflict with the lover-poet’s use of Penelope against Cynthia in 2.9.3-8. In contrast to the picture of her in the opening couplet of 2.9, Cynthia’s speech in 2.29 focuses on her sexual fidelity and refutes the lover poet’s claims at 2.9.19-20 that she is unable to be alone for even a single night: she says that she is satisfied with one man, there is no evidence in her bed that any man has been there, and her body gives no indication of infidelity either. The presentation of the evidence for her solitary night forestalls the rest of the lover-poet’s accusations in 2.9.19-30, since if she has been alone she cannot have been having a drinking party, mocking the lover-poet, or chasing a man who once left her.
Furthermore, the presentation of pragmatic physical evidence contradicts the lover-poet’s suggestion that she will try to make up excuses and lies (2.9.31-32): *sed uobis facile est uerba et componere fraudes:* *hoc unum didicit femina semper opus.* Her speech even draws upon the wording of this accusation when she declares at 2.29.33 *non ego tam facilis.* *Facilis* here is often translated “fickle,” which is no doubt the primary meaning, but it could be drawing on the idea of “facility at speaking” present in 2.9.31 at the same time.\(^72\) Cynthia’s speech also counters the generalizing *uobis* at 2.9.31, which suggests that all women are liars, with *uestris moribus* at 2.29.32, implying that all men are unfaithful. Cynthia in 2.29 is presented as contesting the specific accusations of 2.9 and denying the characteristic infidelity of the elegiac mistress and by doing so as rejecting that identity. The depth of her disidentification is strengthened when we consider the behaviour that Cynthia accepts for herself. She claims that she will be faithful, but not in a way that matches any of the available roles for women in elegy or Roman society. She will not return the abject fidelity that the lover-poet claims to offer, nor does she offer the fidelity expected of a wife. She offers fidelity in exchange for fidelity, with the right to seek out another relationship if the pact is broken.

Cynthia’s speech problematizes the relationship of the lover-poet to *fides* as well, by providing a refutation of the lover-poet’s claims of fidelity in 2.9. The two points she makes with respect to the lover-poet in her speech are that she does not act like “you men” (2.29.32: *me similem uestris moribus esse putas*) and that she will be content with one man, either the lover-poet or someone more true (2.29.34: *uel tu uel si quis uerior esse potest*). While neither of these points is specifically damning of the lover-poet, they both suggest that his protestations of fidelity are not as credible to her as they are to the *pueri* at 2.29.19. The casual and general nature of Cynthia’s accusations suggests that they are part of an ongoing dispute, which in fact they are. Throughout the corpus, Cynthia and the lover-poet struggle

\(^{72}\) “Skillful” is the eleventh entry for *facilis* in the OLD, while “ready, quick (of passions)” is the eighth and “complaisant, indulgent, accommodating” is the ninth.
with fidelity as each attempts to assert their own position and clarify or undermine the other’s. One of the results of this dispute is that neither Cynthia nor the lover-poet maintains a consistent position with respect to fidelity in the corpus, nor do they display the attitude and behaviour expected of their elegiac character type. In his complex depiction of their claims and counter-claims, Propertius exemplifies the use of strategies of disidentification in the representation of the relationship of both Cynthia and the lover-poet to fides throughout the corpus.

Cynthia’s commitment to fidelity is as ambivalent as the lover-poet’s, as well as being just as important a component of her character and actions, if not more so. Of the thirty-three poems in which Cynthia is named, twenty-six have fidelity as one of their themes, and of the twenty-two poems that feature an unnamed puella, ten have fidelity as a theme. Cynthia, as an elegiac mistress, may conventionally be expected to be faithless. This expectation is far too simplistic for Cynthia, however, as her position on the spectrum between faithfulness and faithlessness varies widely throughout these poems. As in the case of the lover-poet, Cynthia’s relationship to fidelity is disidentificatory, as she incorporates elements of both the infidelity of mistress and the fidelity of a wife, resulting in a unique identity. At one extreme, Propertius often and in a wide variety of ways describes Cynthia as faithless.73 Propertius sometimes strengthens the accusations in a manner similar to that used in the exempla of Penelope and Briseis in 2.9. Rather than negatively comparing her to faithful women, however, he more often equates her to the famously faithless women of myth, history, or literature, as in 2.32 where he compares her to a variety of mythical figures (including Helen, Pasiphaë, Danaë, and Venus)74 or 2.6.1-6, where he associates her with the historical courtesans Lais and Phryne, as well as Menander’s Thais, a relation that is significant when

73 For example she is perium at 1.8.17, 2.5.21, or 2.16.53, she commits periera at 1.15.25 and is perfida (2.5.3) or commits perfidia (1.15.34), and frequently is leuis (2.5.28, 2.24.18) or behaves with leuitas (1.15.1) or commits an injury to their bed (4.8.27).
74 Cf. Öhrman 2008 for elegiac use of mythological exempla.
we recall the influence of the *hetaira/meretrix* character on the depiction of Cynthia. Poems such as 2.9 and 2.24 contain a number of attacks on Cynthia for her lack of fidelity, but end with the lover-poet’s assertion that he will be faithful to her anyway, as part of his claims of abject subjection to her. Cynthia’s speech at 4.7.93-94, where she promises that she will have him in death, even if others have him in life, interacts with this tendency of the lover-poet’s, creating a similarity between them while at the same time making Cynthia seem more threatening after her death than Propertius ever depicts the lover-poet to be after his. Propertius increases the sense of Cynthia’s disidentification with fidelity by sometimes having her appear as both faithless and faithful in a single poem or pair of poems. The first instance of this is 1.8, the first half of which describes her as faithlessly proposing to desert the lover-poet, and the second half of which presents her as faithfully staying with him in Rome despite the temptation of riches. In 1.11, the lover-poet wonders whether she has stayed faithful during a trip to Baiae, but also suggests that such doubts will lead to her anger – something that he depicts in 2.29.31, when she angrily accuses him of spying on her. And 2.29 is itself an example of a poem in which the lover-poet is briefly suspicious of her, but is proved wrong. But as we have seen, regardless of the lover-poet’s opinion of her fidelity, Cynthia consistently asserts her own fidelity.

Cynthia’s complex relationship to fidelity spreads across the entire Propertian corpus, as does the lover-poet’s. Many of the poems in which Propertius presents an unfaithful lover-poet are quite far from the sequence of poems near the end of book 3 that are usually interpreted as his attempts to convince himself to end the affair and stop writing love elegy, nor are they limited to discrete sequences such as 2.22-2.24. When we add to these explicit examples of male inconstancy the poems in which Cynthia expresses her displeasure with the lover-poet, we can see that Propertius’ portrayal of the lover-poet is no more static than his portrayal of Cynthia. Propertius allows both characters in the elegiac scenario to claim not

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75 James 2003, 21.
76 For the lover-poet’s position of submission as essential to elegy, see Greene 2005a, 234.
77 E.g. Williams 1968, 417.
only their own faithfulness but also their lover’s inconstancy. Poems 2.9 and 2.29, when read together, provide an illustration of the disidentification at the heart of the relationship of the lover-poet and mistress to fidelity in the Propertian corpus.

In 2.9 and 2.29, Propertius portrays Cynthia and the lover-poet as both faithful and faithless. The lover and mistress, with respect to both mainstream Roman and elegiac fidelity, operate in a middle ground, where apparent opposites can coexist, and where different meanings and spaces can be forged. The speech of both mistress and lover carries weight, as both struggle to assert their own fidelity and to understand the fides avowed by the other. Propertius uses the conflicted depiction of his main characters in relation to fidelity as part of a general and sustained exploration of the fluidity of male and female gender roles and their action in amatory relationships in elegy and Roman society. Propertius uses this fluidity to create a new space for an elegiac lover and mistress by having them engage in strategies of disidentification with both dominant and elegiac ideologies.

Normative Roman sexual roles demanded absolute fidelity of women, especially wives, but tolerated and even expected a certain amount of male promiscuity, especially if it was limited to prostitutes and their own slaves. Elegiac sexual convention, by contrast, asserts the absolute value of the male lover-poet’s fidelity, or at least his profession of it, and laments but still tolerates female promiscuity and sexual refusal. Propertius and Cynthia, however, fit uncomfortably into both the normative Roman and elegiac gender roles with respect to fidelity. Propertius’ lover-poet claims to be faithful, at least some of the time, and so does Cynthia. The lover-poet accuses Cynthia of infidelity, and she accuses him in turn. It is significant, I think, that both their claims to fidelity and to the other’s infidelity are made in the first person. Cynthia, as I discuss in the next chapter, speaks far more than any other elegiac mistress. Additionally, every time she speaks, with the exception of her extremely short speech in 2.15 and her imagined lament over the lover-poet’s grave in 2.24, she accuses

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the lover-poet of infidelity in a way that calls the elegiac dynamics of their relationship into question. By giving a voice to the mistress’ side of the story, a voice that challenges the standard portrait of the elegiac lover, Propertius creates a lover-poet who resists his own character type; we shall see this even more clearly in the next chapter. The picture that Cynthia creates of the lover-poet is of a careless, pleasure-seeking man who is not truly concerned with love and fidelity, and at times the lover-poet provides the same image (e.g. 2.34.55-60). Propertius refuses to define his elegiac ego consistently, in an act that we can interpret through the theoretical lense of disidentification. The lover-poet at times displays characteristics that suggest that he conforms to dominant ideology, which encourages young men to treat love affairs as a frivolous, if amusing, part of their leisure. But he also espouses the values of an elegiac counter-identity, which considers love and love poetry a serious pursuit. By having both the lover-poet and the mistress stake claims to behaviour that falls on both sides of the continuum of fidelity, and because those traits are linked to gender roles whether they are read as they appear in the larger Roman culture or in elegiac culture, Propertius depicts his characters as acting in ways that do not strictly conform to gender roles and that are not constrained by the norms of either the Roman elite or the elegiac world. In their resistance to norms and their creation of personae that incorporate and transform pre-existing traits, Propertius’ characters engage in what we can now call disidentification.

Propertius’ treatment of fides in 2.9 and 2.29 and throughout the corpus unmoors a culturally significant virtue from its traditional function of buttressing gender norms. He leaves questions of sexual and social identity unresolved, refusing to identify or counter-identify, and he situates his speaker in a place where he is an indeterminately gendered being who has some of the qualities of both male and female, Roman and elegist, and who resembles no one so much as the figure of the mistress that he has created, who also appears both faithless and

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faithful, powerful and powerless, male and female. In the next chapter, I will continue to investigate the central position of Cynthia in Propertius’ strategies of disidentification.
Chapter 2: Death Becomes Her: Women’s Speech Haunting

Propertian Elegy

Propertius devotes more space to the direct speech of women than any other love elegist.\(^1\) Cynthia speaks far more than the other elegiac mistresses: her nine direct speeches take up all or part of one hundred and thirty-seven lines, a great deal when compared to Lesbia,\(^2\) Delia or Nemesis, who say nothing at all,\(^3\) or Ovid’s Corinna, who rarely speaks.\(^4\) The only comparable amount of elegiac text with a female first-person speaker comes in the poems attributed to Sulpicia ([Tib.] 3.13-3.18), where between forty and eighty-four lines\(^5\) are uttered in the voice of a female lover-poet. In addition to Cynthia’s speeches, Propertius gives another two hundred and seventy-two lines to women’s speeches, including the advice of the muse Calliope in 3.3 and, in his fourth book, words attributed to diverse mortal women, including a bride (4.3),\(^6\) a disgraced Vestal virgin (4.4), a lena (4.5), a priestess (4.9), and a matrona (4.11), who appear to have little in common except for their gender and social distance from the persona of the lover-poet.

This chapter will consider the direct speeches made by three female characters in book 4.\(^7\) After introducing the subject of women’s speech, the first section of the chapter will look at Cynthia’s longest speech, that in 4.7. The second section of the chapter will consider

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\(^1\) In the case of Ovid, only his work that strictly resembles the elegiac works of his predecessors, the Amores, or directly comments on the elegiac lifestyle, the Ars Amatoria, is included in this discussion; although the Heroïdes are in the elegiac metre, their subject matter and near total restriction to mythological characters is quite different. Propertius’ experiments with female voice, especially 4.3, may have been an inspiration for the Heroïdes (Knox 1995, 14-18, Merklin 1968), although see Reeson (2001, 7) for the significant differences between Arethusa’s letter and the Heroïdes.

\(^2\) Although Lesbia is not technically an elegiac mistress, as she appears in poems in a range of metres, she has much in common with them (as Propertius makes clear at 2.32.45–46). Apuleius (Apol. 10) mentions her in his list of pseudonymous mistresses along with Cynthia, Delia, and Perilla, the last of whom featured in the lost works of the neoteric poet Ticidas.

\(^3\) Delia and Nemesis are silent in the Tibullan corpus although they do speak in Ov. Am. 3.9.55-56 and 57-58, respectively.

\(^4\) Corinna (or an unnamed mistress who may be Corinna) speaks at Am. 1.11.24, 1.14.48-50, 2.2.6, 2.11.30, 3.14.48.

\(^5\) See Parker 1994 and Hallett (forthcoming b) for discussion of the attribution of poems 3.8-12 of the Corpus Tibullianum.

\(^6\) Although James (per litteras) argues that she is a contracted courtesan.

\(^7\) See Chapter 4 for a larger discussion of the program and content of book 4 as a whole.
two other women of book 4, who occupy diametrically opposed social positions. All three of these women are united, however, by presenting speeches from beyond the grave. Both sections will also discuss the generic play found in Propertian women’s speech, which acts both to call the norms of the elegiac genre into question and to create intertextual links with other genres, notably epic, history, oratory, epigram, and comedy. I will argue that Propertius uses these female characters as objects to further the disidentification of his lover-poet with Latin elegiac and Roman social norms by having their speeches question and destabilize cultural codes and conventions, thereby supporting the lover-poet’s resistance to strict identification with either an upstanding and responsible Roman male citizen, or an effeminate and ineffectual elegiac lover. I will also bring in another theoretical paradigm, haunting, which explores the use of ghosts in literary fictions as a way to address people, ideas, and issues that are excluded from or considered unimportant in dominant cultural texts. Like disidentification, the theoretical paradigm of haunting considers how that which is abjected and excluded can be recovered in textual analysis.

Women’s speech in Propertius is, of course, not actual women’s speech, but rather the poet’s ventriloquization of his female characters. As such, it cannot be used as unmediated evidence about the lives and conditions of historical women. There are indications, however, that Propertius uses women’s speech to attempt to give voice to the issues and concerns of women of the demimonde and, more surprisingly in an elegiac context, the nobility. Most notably, the speaking women of Propertius frequently attack or cast doubt on the values of elegy and/or of the Roman elite. All of Propertius’ female speaking characters engage in some level of disidentification with the androcentric norms of elegy and of larger

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8 See 1.6 for an example of this type of man in Tullus, and discussion in Cairns 2006, 43 and Fedeli 1980, 167-70.
9 See Horace Carm. 1.33 and 2.9 for a caricature of the elegiac lover, with discussion in Nisbet and Hubbard 1970, 368-76 and 1978, 136-38. Cf. Ep. 1.4, caricaturing the elegist (Tibullus) who is the object of Horace’s caricature in Carm. 1.33.
10 Some scholarship has made interesting and quite successful attempts to reconstruct the lives of primarily named, historical women out of texts, including Delia 1991 on Fulvia; Skinner 2011 on Clodia Metelli, who was probably Catullus’ Lesbia; Dixon 2007 on Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi; Fantham 2006 on Julia Augusti; Hallett (forthcoming b) on Sulpicia; cf. Homans 1987 on feminist literary criticism. For caution regarding such work, however, see Culham 1990; cf. Hillard 1989.
Roman society; in them, he combines elements of a variety of identities and counter-identities to create characters that do not fit neatly into the roles and values of either world and who expose the false universalizations of the dominant culture. Moreover, his female characters also frequently engage in a disidentificatory practice that participates in dialogue with genres other than elegy, including elements of related genres such as epigram or comedy, but also of high-status genres like epic, history, or oratory.

Since the rejection of and opposition to characteristics perceived as feminine was an essential part of male identity for the Roman elite,\(^{11}\) the introduction of disidentificatory elements into female roles in Propertius can be interpreted as a strategy of disidentification in the construction of the male lover-poet as well.\(^{12}\) This is particularly evident in the case of Cynthia, who is the lover-poet’s Other in some senses,\(^{13}\) but who also shares many similarities with the lover-poet and even at times fills masculine roles more effectively than he does. Whether he is rejecting or identifying with Cynthia, the lover-poet’s character takes on similar disidentificatory characteristics to hers. Her speeches expressly undermine his identification with the roles of elegiac lover and of Roman elite male, and her status as a woman who resists categorization makes her a suitable counterpart to a disidentificatory male character.

The study of haunting looks for the echoes and unfinished business of the past that can be read inside of and under the surface of texts and sees the ghost as demanding that something be done in response to it, to redress the violence that created it and provide an avenue for change in the present, for opening up new spaces (much like disidentification).\(^{14}\)

This theoretical paradigm allows us to hear the ghosts in the fourth book responding to the

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\(^{11}\) Edwards (1993, 81) argues that Roman definitions of “effeminate” change over time because they represent whatever qualities were deemed undesirable in an elite male Roman in any given time period; she uses this to explain how effeminate men were thought of as like women both because of excessive desire for sex and because of their passivity, qualities that might be construed as incompatible. Gleason (1999, 75) discusses the importance of nearly every possible aspect of character, appearance, and behaviour in determining and maintaining gender status.

\(^{12}\) Butler (1999, 33) argues that the exposure of elements in a gendered person that do not fit that gender uncovers the constructed nature of gender.

\(^{13}\) For Cynthia as Other, see Greene 1995a, 202; Gold 2002, 444; and Wyke 2002, 30.

experience of women in Roman society, experience which is left out of most literature. This is especially true of the two underclass women, Cynthia and Acanthis, who bring out the financial and social challenges experienced by women who did not have the socially sanctioned protection of men, but it is also true of Cornelia the *matrona* of 4.11, whose speech is haunted by the brief expression of doubts that her exemplary life was truly worthwhile (4.11.11-14). These ghosts are somewhat different from Gordon’s modern ghosts, however, in that their voices are harnessed by Propertius and used as part of his larger project of destabilizing the gender system. As such, the “something to be done” that they bring forth is not really for themselves and their specific experience of violence in the nexus of gender-based oppression. Rather, it has the effect of calling into question the constructs of gender that dominated Roman elite society and the elegiac scenario. Gordon sees haunting as transformative and productive of a new state of being; Propertius writes in a time of transformation, and within the transformations that are coming from political and social change, he attempts to wrest a space to direct a different transformation, which is represented in the character of his lover-poet and the construction of his masculinity. Like disidentification, haunting exposes the structures of the dominant culture along with the lacunae in them and the falsity of their universalization.

In this chapter, we shall look at three literal ghosts, all from book 4: Cynthia in 4.7, Acanthis the *lena* in 4.5, and Cornelia the *matrona* in 4.11. Through my study of haunting, I want to consider not only how the ghosts function but also why the poet used the ghosts of these women to present ideas contrary to the values of love poetry in particular and of Roman society in general. One of the defining features of women like Acanthis and Cynthia is their lack of permanent relationships to men; they exist outside the bounds of social legitimacy. I argue that their very portrayal as members of an out-group allows Propertius to voice criticism of social and literary conventions. Their status as outsiders, which even applies to a

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certain extent to women like Cornelia who were part of the elite, makes women particularly suitable for use as haunting figures, since they emblematize what is programmatically excluded from Roman society and Latin literature. Although in this chapter I will focus my use of haunting theory on the poems that specifically contain ghosts, the living women of the Propertian corpus also represent voices and viewpoints that were often occluded in social intercourse, as we have already seen in Cynthia’s speech in 2.29, which presents a version of fidelity that differs from the strikingly androcentric ideals of elegy and the masculine conventions of elite Roman society.

Elegy 4.7 encompasses nearly all of the themes and issues surrounding women’s speech that will be explored in this chapter, both those that are of particular concern to Cynthia and also those that appear in the speeches of the other women of book 4. The poem recounts the lover-poet’s stark and dramatic dream of his dead mistress appearing at his bedside, opening with the lover-poet describing her as still beautiful but clearly dead and ending with a couplet in which he attempts to embrace her as she disappears. Eighty-two of the ninety-six lines of this poem, however, report her speech to him, in which she reminisces about their past love, berates him for his poor treatment of her after her death, and delivers her final instructions. Cynthia’s speech has been the subject of a number of studies which have variously interpreted it as illustrating the death of erotic elegy; Propertius’ engagement with the epic genre; and an oratorical technique adapted for non-political use under the principate. It has also frequently been noticed that Cynthia’s speech serves to refute many of the claims made throughout the corpus about both her and her relationship with the lover-poet. All of these readings will inform this chapter, but I shall also demonstrate that 4.7, along with the other examples of women’s speech in the Propertian corpus, consistently refutes the picture of the puella and the elegiac love affair that the male

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17 With the exception of Cornelia’s speech, which takes up all one hundred and two lines of 4.11, Cynthia’s speech in 4.7 is the longest example of a woman’s direct speech in the Propertian corpus.
18 Respectively, Lange 1974, 336; Wyke 2002, 106; Dufallo 2005, 117.
perspective privileges while the poem also engages with generic allusions and socio-political themes to call masculine identities and privileges into question.

Many recent interpretations of Cynthia’s speech in 4.7 see in it a condemnation of the lover-poet and the gendered viewpoint and expectations of elegy.\(^{20}\) This poem has been read as showcasing the voice of the underclass, by drawing from a more realistic register to portray the life and motivations of the social type that the elegiac mistress might represent.\(^{21}\) This focus on realism, however, cannot account for the fact that Cynthia in 4.7, as well as Cornelia in 4.11 and Acanthis in 4.5, all speak from beyond the grave and are therefore ghostly revenants. Gordon’s theory of haunting may help to address this lacuna in the scholarship on 4.7. She suggests that ghosts often animate characters who articulate perspectives that have been occluded in the dominant culture’s version of reality.\(^{22}\) She has therefore theorized that haunting is a process by which the excluded returns to demand recognition and redress.\(^{23}\) The ghosts of Propertius’ fourth book give voice to figures who are silent in the historical record,\(^{24}\) including the elegiac mistress, who has been taken to represent the socially marginalized figures of the historical courtesan and the adulterous noblewoman.\(^{25}\)

Although Cynthia’s speech takes up the majority of the poem, elegy 4.7 begins in the voice of the lover-poet. Cynthia is dead and buried and the lover-poet is in bed alone, missing her, when her ghostly figure appears at his bedside (4.7.7-12):

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\begin{align*}
eosdem\ habuit\ secum\ quibus\ est\ elata\ capillos, \\
eosdem\ oculos:\ lateri\ uestis\ adusta\ fuit, \\
et\ solitum\ digito\ beryllon\ adederat\ ignis, \\
summaque\ Lethaeus\ triuerat\ ora\ liquor. \\
spirantisque\ animos\ et\ uoce\ misit:\ at\ illi \\
pollicibus\ fragiles\ increpue\ manus: \\
\end{align*}
\]

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\(^{21}\) See also Flaschenriem 1998, 53; James 2010; and Wyke 2002, 185.
\(^{22}\) Gordon 2008, 8, 17.
\(^{23}\) Gordon 2008, 63-64.
\(^{24}\) Even the hetairai whose sayings have supposedly been preserved in Athenaeus are only preserved in a fragmentary form that reflects the view of the compiler about them and the culture they lived in (Glazebrook and Henry 2011, 7).
\(^{25}\) See the bibliography on Lycoris/Cytheris/Volumnia (e.g. Boucher 1966, 15-17; Anderson et al. 1979; Hallett (forthcoming a); and Keith 2011) and Lesbia/Clodia (e.g. Dixon 2001, chap. 9 and Skinner 2011).
Cynthia is visibly dead, and while she certainly still resembles her living self, she shows signs of cremation and her journey to the underworld as well. Even before Cynthia begins to speak, the realistic details of her appearance after death disrupt the literary image of an elegiac mistress.26 The description of Cynthia’s ghost draws on characteristics that the lover-poet had particularly admired in the past, such as her hair (7) and eyes (8); book 1 famously opens with Cynthia’s captivation of the lover-poet with her eyes (1.1.1), while book 2 opens with Cynthia as his poetic inspiration, including her hair (2.1.7-8). These features both seem the same (eosdem) to him, but her adornments (8: uestis and 9: beryllon) have suffered from the flames of her funeral pyre; the lover-poet professes to value her natural beauty, and derides her fine clothes and desire for luxury,27 so it is a suitably elegiac touch that the fire harmed only her adornments. Finally, the lover-poet underscores the uncanny combination of dead and living features in the contrast of her lips, withered by Lethe’s waters, and her bony hands (suggested by fragiles increpuere) with her spirantisque animos et uocem.28 The lover-poet’s description of Cynthia merges realistic details with ghostly ones, so that even here Cynthia resists identification with any one state. This is the first indication that Cynthia’s presence as a haunting figure lends support to her role as a disidentificatory character.

A further element of the disidentification with social and literary codes in the character of Cynthia appears in the epic allusion embedded in the description of her ghostly form. Her nocturnal visit has been widely recognized as an allusion to Patroclus’ appearance to Achilles at Il. 23.59-92,29 an allusion which sets Cynthia’s apparition in the literary context

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26 Warden (1980, 20) points out that the description of Cynthia has her as part corpse, part ghost, part live woman.
27 Most notably in 1.2, but also e.g. 1.15.5-8; 2.16.17-18, 43-44; 2.24.11-14; 3.13.1-8.
28 Papanghelis (1987, 152) suggests that the mention of Lethe here implies that Cynthia is “forgetful” and uses this to argue that Cynthia is wrong when she calls the lover-poet perfide. If, however, the purpose of drinking the waters of Lethe was for the dead to forget their lives, it seems to have failed in Cynthia’s case, as she provides a detailed account of her life and death. Indeed, even Papanghelis never brings up the issue of Lethaean forgetfulness again.
29 Warden 1980, 14 and Wyke 2002, 26. Patroclus, however, is described at Il. 23.66-67 as looking exactly as he did in life; cf. Hutchinson 2006, 173.
of ghostly visits in epic. The first couplet of Cynthia’s speech (13-14) is part of the Patroclus allusion as well. Like Cynthia in her reproaches to the lover-poet, Patroclus criticizes Achilles for being able to sleep (*Il. 23.69*): ηὕδεις, αὐτῷ ἐμὲ ἔλασμένος ἔπλευ, Ἀχιλλεῦ. The epic allusion endows Cynthia with solemnity and her speech with force, but at the same time the description of her appearance contains elegiac elements and her speech is concerned with distinctly non-epic material: love and contemporary Roman life. Since epic stood at the pinnacle of the classical hierarchy of genres and offered models of behaviour to men (and women), its integration with elegiac characters and situations in a way that does not condemn them looks like disidentification: the disparate elements are combined in a way that does not give higher value to either and that transforms the meaning of both. Moreover, Propertius frequently uses latent erotic motifs in epic to open up a space in which he may compare his elegiac characters and situations to epic models; this is a central feature of his strategies of disidentification and will be considered more generally in chapter 4. Here we may note that he takes characters from the pinnacle of martial epic and implicitly places his elegiac characters in their roles, and that the tradition that Achilles and Patroclus were lovers may have suggested and made easier this substitution. The jarring juxtaposition of epic and elegiac conventions in his characters leads to the result that these characters fit neatly into neither genre and, equally, open up the genres themselves to cross-contamination.

Cynthia begins her speech with an accusation of faithlessness (*perfide*) directed at the lover-poet which sets it in the context of Propertian elegy and its concern with *fides* and sets the tone for her depiction of the lover-poet throughout the poem (4.7.13-14): *Perfide nec cuiquam melior sperande puellae,/ in te iam uires somnus habere potest?* This is consistent with her words in other speeches in the corpus as well (e.g. 1.3.25-46, 2.29.31-38, and 3.6.19-

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30 Including the near contemporary examples from the *Aeneid*, Creusa (2.771-94) and Dido (6.450-76).
31 Warden (1980, 140) argues that the connection with the *Iliad* ennobles Cynthia and Propertius’ relationship and detaches them from their immediate context. For an overview of Achilles and Patroclus as lovers, see Dover 1989, 197.
32 For Propertius’ engagement with *fides*, see Chapter 1.
In 1.3, Cynthia accuses the lover-poet of returning to her after sexually exhausting himself (she calls him *languidus* at 1.3.38) with another woman. In 2.29, as we have seen, she suggests that his morals are not as elevated as hers (32, 34), when he returns to her in circumstances similar to those in 1.3. In 3.6, moreover, Cynthia interweaves accusations about the lover-poet’s infidelity with statements about her own blamelessness (3.6.21-24):

> ille potest nullo miseram me linquere facto  
> et qualem nolo dicere habere domi!  
> gaudet me uacuo solam tabescere lecto:  
> si placet, insultet, Lygdame, morte mea!

Cynthia’s claims here about her own behaviour accentuate her innocence and are similar to those in 2.29: she has done nothing (21: *nullo facto*) and her bed is empty (23: *uacuo lecto*). In contrast, she accuses the lover-poet of keeping another woman in her place (22), so that her fidelity is given to him in spite of the wrongs he has done. Throughout the corpus, without exception, Propertius has Cynthia claim sexual fidelity for herself; unlike the lover-poet, Cynthia never acknowledges that she has been unfaithful. As I argued in chapter 1, however, Propertius makes Cynthia’s relationship to fidelity disidentificatory, in that she conforms neither to the dominant culture’s ideal of female sexual *fides* nor to that of elegiac norms, but instead shows a type of *fides* that contains elements of both as it is transformed into something new. Cynthia’s self-depiction in 4.7 will conform to this pattern as well.

Cynthia’s depiction of her behaviour suggests that she does not see herself as a woman who is selfish, greedy, faithless, and cruel, like the stereotypical elegiac mistress of Propertian elegy and the elegiac corpus in general. The first challenge to this depiction

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33 Her consistency speaks against the views of those who do not believe her, including Papanghelis, cited above p. 54 n.65, and Lyne (1980, 118-19).
34 Cf. Ov. Am. 3.7.3-4: *hanc tamen in nulos tenui male languidus usus/sed iacui pigro crimen onusque toro* for an example of *languidus* associated with sexual impotence but also (79-80: *aut te traiectis Aeaea uenefica lanis/deuouet, aut alio lassus amore uenis*) sexual betrayal. Adams (1982, 46) catalogues examples of *languidus/languoe* suggesting impotence. All quotations from Ovid are from Kenney 1995.
35 The circumstances of 3.6 are linked to 4.7 by the presence of the slave Lygdamus, on whom see below, and by Cynthia’s description of the woman with whom she believes the lover-poet has replaced her (*qualem nolo dicere*), suggesting a woman of lower status than she rather than another elegiac mistress; she will make a similar accusation about Chloris, the woman who has replaced her in 4.7.
36 The lover-poet makes similar claims for himself at 2.9.43-44, 2.24.35-40, and 2.32.
37 Chapter 1.
comes in her description of the early days of their affair, in which she gives no suggestion of demanding payment or gifts for her services, or of withholding herself for wealthier lovers (4.7.15-20):

iamne tibi excidera uigilacis furta Suburae
et mea nocturnis trita fenestra dolis,
per quam demisso quotiens tibi fune pependi,
alterna veniens in tua colla manu?
saepe Venus triuio commissa est, pectore mixto
fecerunt tepidas pallia nostra uias.
foederis heu taciti, cuius fallacia uerba
non audituri diripuere Noti!

Cynthia mentions details that locate the relationship in a specific site of contemporary Rome and yet present a very different picture of her and of their activities from that given by the lover-poet elsewhere in the corpus. She depicts herself as an active and enthusiastic partner in their affair, who is willing to take risks such as crawling out of an upper-story window (16) to be with the lover-poet. Cynthia’s version of their affair is the opposite of that presented in the lover-poet’s claims of being an *exclusus amator* in other poems, rather than locking him out, she escapes to him. By locating their affair in the Subura (15), moreover, and saying that they embraced in the crossroads and streets (19-20), she associates their love and his genre with an area of the city known for vulgar prostitution and with locations where men might engage in quick and low-cost sexual acts with a lower class of woman than Cynthia is usually depicted as. She does not, however, unproblematically identify herself with such a woman, since later in the poem she uses mythological exempla and statements about her household and her own fidelity that clearly differentiate her from the position (and realistic portrayal) of a low-class or slave prostitute. Cynthia’s self-description defies easy placement of her in any of the Roman societal categories for women.

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38 Griffin (1986, xi) argues that one of the hallmarks of elegy is that it idealizes the opposite of the restrictions and unpleasantness of Roman life, for which he gives as specific examples “the blank walls of the Roman town house, from which the beloved could not look down from a window… the difficulties of meeting a woman and being alone with her.”

39 E.g. 2.8, 2.9, 2.16.

40 See McGinn (2004, 20-21) for the Subura as an area of lower-class and even some upper-class (80) housing as well as a relatively high concentration of brothels. Cf. Catul. 37 and 58.
The beginning of Cynthia’s speech in 4.7, however, in addition to introducing non-elegiac elements into the elegiac world, also continues the epic allusions of the introduction to her speech, in that she represents herself as not unlike Ariadne in Catul. 64 or Dido in Aeneid 4, thereby interweaving multiple genres and identities. The vocative perfide, which is the first word of Cynthia’s speech, also occurs in the first lines of her female models’ speeches (sicine me patriis auctam, perfide, ab aris/ perfide, deserito liquisti in litore, Theseu? Catul. 64.132-33; dissimulare etiam sperasti, perfide, tantum/ posse nefas tacitusque mea decedere terra? Verg. A. 4.305-6). Further connection to Catullus’ Ariadne comes when Cynthia accuses the lover-poet of verbally deceiving her (21-22: foederis heu taciti, cuius fallacia uerba/ non audituri diripuere Noti!),41 for in Ariadne’s speech (Catul. 64.139-42), the heroine also refers to the winds as taking words away. In the specific context of Propertius’ poem, the couplet provides a bridge between the apparent happiness of the lovers early in their relationship and the misery and neglect of Cynthia’s death. Propertius shows her ghost haunting the lover-poet to illustrate the ease with which he can move on from her, an ease that arises at least in part from the disparity in their social positions (which the lover-poet is often at pains to deny). By calling their relationship a foedus, however, Propertius alludes to Catullus’ Lesbia poems as well.42 Catullus refers to his relationship with Lesbia as a foedus in three of his elegiac poems, at 76.3, 87.3, and 109.6. Propertius uses the allusions to Virgil and Catullus in Cynthia’s speech to connect her simultaneously to the neoteric prototype for the elegiac mistress, Lesbia, and to the deserted heroines of myth who accuse their lovers of faithlessness in (near) contemporary Latin hexameter, adding further elements to her identity.

Cynthia’s description of her death contrasts with the protestations of fidelity and wishes for her loyalty at his death that the lover-poet expresses elsewhere in the corpus.43

She begins by suggesting that he could have kept her alive longer if he had wanted to (4.7.23-

41 For the use of foedus in the elegiac context, see Freyburger 1980.
at mihi non oculos quisquam inclamauit euntis:/ unum impetrassem te reuocante diem.

Her statement here contrasts with several made by the lover-poet about his behaviour during earlier illnesses. For example, in poem 2.9 he claims that he made vows for her health and attended her sickbed (2.9.25-27): *haec mihi uota tuam propter suscepta salutem,/ cum capite hoc Stygiae iam poterentur aquae/ et lectum flentes circum staremus amici?* Moreover, the entirety of 2.28 focuses on Cynthia’s illness and the lover-poet’s concern about it, including a vow made for her recovery (43-44): *pro quibus optatis sacro me carmine damno:/ scribam ego ‘Per magnum est salua puella Iouem.’* The lines from 2.9 clearly state that the lover-poet was at her bedside during her illness, and the content of 2.28 suggests constant concern. Cynthia’s account in 4.7, however, suggests rather the antithesis of the behaviour expected of a devoted elegiac lover in the lover-poet’s indifference to her illness and death, and especially in his quick substitution of another woman (4.7.39: *quae modo per uilis inspecta est publica noctes*, emphasis added).

The gap between expectation and treatment increases with Cynthia’s sketch of her funeral. To begin with, her funeral is marked by poverty (4.7.25-26): *nec crepuit fissa me propter harundine custos,/ laesit et obiectum tegula curta caput*. She lacks a guard for her corpse and a broken tile raises her head on the bier. Cynthia also takes the lover-poet to task for omitting small luxuries from the proceedings, including spices, flowers, and a libation of wine (4.7.32-34): *cur nardo flammae non oluere meae?/ hoc etiam graue erat, nulla mercede hyacinthos/ inicere et fracto busta piare cado*. Although the poverty of Cynthia’s funeral is surprising, given the association of the elegiac mistress and the elegiac lifestyle with luxury, the lover-poet’s absence is still more disturbing. This lies at the heart of Cynthia’s complaint (4.7.27-31):

\[
\text{denique quis nostro curuum te funere uidit,}
\text{atram quis lacrimis incaluisse togam?}
\text{si piguit portas ultra procedere, at illuc}
\]

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44 By contrast, the elaborate lying-in-state of a Roman noblewoman featured a sumptuously dressed corpse and burial couch, mourners, torches, garlands, incense, and music. See Toynbee 1971, 44-45.

45 Tib. 2.3 is the locus classicus; in the Propertian corpus, 1.2 sets the tone for the mistress’ luxury.
Here she reproaches him for his omission of public mourning, neither accompanying her funeral procession nor attending her pyre. And indeed, his absence from Cynthia’s funeral contrasts sharply with his earlier fantasies about her behaviour at his funeral (e.g. 2.13.27-30). The lines reproaching him for his absence are placed within those describing the lack of amenities and draw a close relationship between the two omissions; his love is a central constituent of the luxurious trappings of the elegiac lifestyle and, like them, is missing from Cynthia’s death.

Cynthia follows her report of her lonely and impoverished funeral with accusations against those she holds responsible for her death (4.7.35-38):

Lygdamus uratur - candescat lamina uernae -
       sensi ego, cum insidiis pallida uina bibi -
       at Nomas - arcanas tollat uersuta saliusas;
       dicet damnatas ignea testa manus.

Cynthia’s focus on the personal wrongs that she wants redressed is clear here, although she gives no explicit reason for these charges. We must look, therefore, at Lygdamus’ role in two other poems in which Cynthia speaks, 3.6 and 4.8. In 4.8, Cynthia views Lygdamus as a traitor because he serves the lover-poet and two rival women, and in 3.6 the lover-poet promises to obtain Lygdamus’ freedom if he spies on his mistress (2): sic tibi sint dominae, Lygdamus, dempta iuga. Lygdamus is thus represented as disloyal to Cynthia even before her death, and this background underpins her suspicion of him in 4.7. Although it was not uncommon to claim poisoning whenever a death came unexpectedly, regardless of proof, Cynthia provides full details on who prepared it (37-38), who administered it (35-36), and how (36). Cynthia speaks clearly, stating what happened, who is responsible, and the appropriate punishments or manner of forcing a confession. Yet scholarly reaction to her

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46 Hutchinson 2006, 35.
charges has often been dismissive, although generally with no justification given for the dismissal other than an implicit or explicit belief that Cynthia is lying.\footnote{E.g. Goold (1999, 359 n.71) “Cynthia’s charges are not to be taken seriously”; Cynthia is a “vindictive shrew” (Papanghelis 1987, 185).}

Her requirement of a just punishment for Lygdamus contrasts with the unjust punishments meted out by the lover-poet’s new mistress, Chloris, to Cynthia’s slaves at 4.7.41-46 (quoted below). Yet even before Cynthia describes the punishment of her slaves, her description of the new mistress further increases the sense of disidentification with elegiac norms pervasive in Propertius’ works (4.7.39-40): \textit{quae modo per uilis inspecta est publica noctes;/ haec nunc aurata cyclade signat humum}. The injury to Cynthia is increased by the type of woman that the lover-poet has taken up with after her death, for she has recently been a common streetwalker, a \textit{scortum} rather than a \textit{meretrix}. She is not unlike the class of women that the lover-poet claims he will turn to in the set of related poems at 2.22-24, in which he seems to be advocating the casual approach to love and women more appropriate to lyric.\footnote{Oliensis 2007.} Cynthia’s own status remains carefully obscured even in 4.7 with its mention of the Subura. She does not suggest that she sold her favours; she presents the public nature of their liaisons as an extra excitement rather than a necessity, and the need to sneak out of her window could mark her as a wife or daughter as easily as a concubine or \textit{meretrix}.\footnote{Although she is obviously neither a well-behaved wife nor daughter. There is some resemblance between Cynthia’s self-depiction and Cicero’s description of Clodia the \textit{proterua meretrix procaxque} at \textit{Cael.} 49.} The lover-poet’s new mistress, however, as a former streetwalker, has a specific background, despite her newfound prosperity, represented by the gilded hem of her garment (\textit{aurata}, 40).\footnote{By wearing a \textit{cyclas}, a long cloak worn by wealthy women, rather than a toga, the dress of a prostitute, she displays her change in status (Butler and Barber 1964, 362).}

Cynthia describes the new mistress’ behaviour in this section of her poem, and gives an idea of her character: she commits a number of offenses against Cynthia’s memory, starting with melting down a golden statue of Cynthia (4.7.47-48): \textit{te patiente meae conflauit imaginis aurum,/ ardent<e> e nostro dotem habitura rogo}. Her actions gain more nuance...
and justification if one considers them with respect to the circumstances of young women of her status at the time. The girl’s clothing advertises her new status, gained from the favour of a man, and the melting of the statue for a dowry suggests that she is following the instructions given by lenae in comedy and elegy and preparing for a future in which she knows she cannot depend on the continuing generosity of the lover-poet, a type of advice that I will discuss at greater length later on in connection with 4.5.\textsuperscript{51} Both the lover-poet and the elegiac genre pretend that mistresses are driven by greed, but the historical courtesan had to act in such a way as to secure her future prosperity.\textsuperscript{52} Cynthia and Chloris present different responses to the problems faced by women who lacked family or marital bonds with citizen men, but they are both engaged in the haunting of elegy with the issues of a specifically gendered poverty and insecurity that the genre prefers to ignore. Propertius has Cynthia’s self-depiction conform, to some extent, to the lover-poet’s wishes for free love, but her lonely death and cheap funeral cast doubt on the efficacy of this behaviour, even for a woman who was still young. In this light, Chloris’ actions seem reasonable and practical. The literal destruction of her predecessor’s image that she engages in when melting the statue, however, also suggests some insecurity in her position, even if her rival is dead. This insecurity, coupled with cruelty, also appears in her treatment of Cynthia’s slaves.

The lover-poet routinely portrays Cynthia as cruel (e.g., 1.3.18, where he refers to her saeuitia, and 1.8.16, crudelem), and he bases this description in large part on her fickleness and greed. Cynthia herself, however, is represented as contesting these claims. The next chapter considers Cynthia’s role as cruel owner/mistress of the lover-poet in the guise of seruus amoris, but Cynthia’s speech in 4.7 shows her to be a beloved mistress of her female slaves (4.7.41-46):

\begin{verbatim}
et grauiora rependit iniquis pensa quasillis,  
garrula de facie si qua locuta mea est;  
nostraque quod Petale tulit ad monumenta coronas,
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{51} Janan 2001, 108. For lenae’s advice, see Prop. 4.5 (and below), Ov. Am. 1.8, Pl. As. 521-34; Cist. 47-50, 78-81, 95-97, and 118-19.
\textsuperscript{52} James 2003, chapter 3.
Cynthia’s slaves remain devoted to her after her death, to the point that they are punished for their actions by their new mistress, who has inherited Cynthia’s possessions along with her lover. The slaves are first punished for their mention of Cynthia’s beauty (42), which may imply a comparison with the new mistress, but their other transgressions suggest more personal attachment to Cynthia. Tending a grave, such as by laying flowers on it, is associated with fidelity to the memory of the dead, to whom the caretaker is assumed to have a deep attachment, as at 3.16.23-24 when the lover-poet imagines his mistress tending his grave: *afferet haec unguenta mihi sertisque sepulcrum/ ornabit custos ad mea busta sedens.* Lalage’s case is curious, as it is not clear who the recipient of her request in Cynthia’s name was. It would be odd of a slave to ask her mistress’ replacement such a thing, but if we are to assume that she was punished for asking a favour of the lover-poet, her subsequent punishment opens him to a charge of cruelty. The slaves’ care for Cynthia’s memory, to the point of their willingness to suffer punishment for it, suggests that Propertius is here portraying the dead mistress as someone who inspired devotion in those in her service.

The prominent place of slaves in Cynthia’s speech, and particularly the fact that the slaves are named (35, 43, 45, 74-75) and subject to torture or other punishments (35, 38, 41-46), align this elegy with comedy. Even Cynthia’s reminiscences at the beginning of her speech (15-20) suggest comic actions and her position is evocative of a slave prostitute, another stock character of comedy. Cynthia’s insertion of comic elements, especially those that align her with the slave prostitute of comedy, interact with other aspects of the elegiac scenario as well. According to the elegiac lover, the mistress’ infidelity is related to her

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53 Some historical former slaves even commemorated their owners with funerary monuments: see Dixon 2001, 100,106.
55 Hutchinson 2006, 175. For a discussion of the pull between comic and serious readings, see Janan 2001, 106-7. See James 2003, 37 for the association of this character with greed and luxury goods as an element in the creation of the character of the elegiac mistress.
greed, since she will grant her favours to whatever man gives her the best gifts. This focus on
greed and gifts is also an important part of the characterization of the comic *meretrix*. Recent
work that reads elegy from the perspective of the mistress, however, has argued that the greed
and faithlessness that the lover-poet presents as a character flaw are in fact professional
necessities.\(^{56}\) The *puella*, if she is seen as a *meretrix*, has a limited number of years of
optimal earnings in which to store up enough money and property to see her through her later
life.\(^{57}\) This is undoubtedly part of the characterization of the elegiac mistress, but in
Cynthia’s case I would suggest that it does not entirely explain her self-portrayal. For
Cynthia avoids strict identification with a *meretrix*, even in her description of the underworld
in 4.7.\(^ {58}\) In this section of the poem, Cynthia maintains her claims of fidelity while at the
same time she brings the roles of all women in elegy and in Roman society into question.
Cynthia depicts an underworld in which time stands still and all women, good and evil, are
left floating on a stream without reaching either punishment or reward.\(^ {59}\) The evil women are
represented as deceptive and unfaithful to their husbands, the polar opposite of Cynthia’s
self-construction here (4.7.55-58).\(^ {60}\)

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nam gemina est sedes turpem sortita per amnem,
turbaque diversa remigat omnis aqua.
unda Clytaemestrae stuprum uel adultera Cressae
portat mentitae ligna monstra bouis.
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Clytemnestra and Pasiphaë are especially suitable women for Cynthia’s purpose, proving her
own virtue, since both were notorious for their sexual infidelities, which led to the death of
the former’s husband and the destruction of the whole of the latter’s family. Thus in this
respect, Cynthia uses her mythological exempla as part of her ongoing disidentification with
*fides*. Her moral distance from the faithless wives suggests that she may identify at least in
part with faithful wives.

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\(^{56}\) James 2001, 226.

\(^{57}\) James 2001, 239, 244-45.

\(^{58}\) Cf. Tib. 1.3.57-66 on females in the elegiac underworld.

\(^{59}\) Janan 2001, 110-12.

\(^{60}\) Warden 1980, 45.
The good women, however, are not so easy to interpret (4.7.63-70):

Andromedeque et Hypermestre sine fraude maritae narrat historiae tempora nota suae:
haec sua maternis queritur liuere catenis bracchia nec meritas frigida saxa manus;
narrat Hypermestre magnum ausas esse sorores,
in scelus hoc animum non ualuisse suum.
sic mortis lacrimis uitiae sanamus amores:
celo ego perfidiae crimina multa tuae.  

Andromeda, Hypermestra, and Cynthia may have been judged “good,” but they do not seem to have won any reward for their behaviour. Although the lands of the blessed dead are described (4.7.59-62), the good women, like the bad, are still afloat on their journey to them (59: ecce coronato pars altera rapta phaseslo), even though Andromeda and Hypermestra’s lives and deaths took place in the distant mythical past. Additionally, the good women are not given rest from their earthly sorrows.61 They continue to tell and retell their stories of victimization and betrayal, all except Cynthia, who keeps silent since to tell of the betrayals she suffered at the lover-poet’s hands would be tantamount to breaking faith. The good women of myth, like Cynthia, have not been rewarded for their virtue. From the theoretical standpoint of haunting, we may interpret Cynthia’s ghost as expressing doubts about the value of women’s virtue to women’s safety and fulfillment in life, since it does not even protect them in death. They thereby expose the oppression of the roles that Roman society imposes on women.

Cynthia’s ghost makes requests for her slaves, which, had the lover-poet been truly faithful, he would have received at her death bed, thus returning to the theme of his treachery (4.7.73-76):

nutrix in tremulis ne quid desideret annis
Parthenie: potuit, nec tibi auara fuit.
deliciaeque meae Latris, cui nomen ab usu est,
ne speculum dominae porrigat illa nouae.

61 Warden 1980, 44-47. The verb queritur (65) has elegiac connotations, usually signifying the complaints of the lover-poet, as at 1.16.39 and 1.18.29 (cf. Saylor 1969). It also appears in a simile describing a puella’s complaints about her lover’s infidelity at 2.20.5.
Earlier in the poem, Cynthia demands punishment for the slave she believes was responsible for her death (35-36), but here we see that she also expects her loyal servants to be duly rewarded. The promises of freedom to Latris and financial support to Parthenie are the practical result of their faithful service and exemplify the type of reward that an historical slave could hope for from an owner, whether in the latter’s lifetime or in his or her will.62 These bequests also add to the portrayal of Cynthia’s circumstances at her death. The keeping of a nurse implies a certain degree of respectability and her role as a slave-owner suggests that she had prospered, particularly if, as may be hinted at in the opening lines of her speech, she had begun her career as a slave prostitute herself,63 and so this section of the poem furthers her disidentification with female roles by adding that of prosperous slave-owner. These couplets come in a section of the poem that is similar to a will, a particularly pragmatic document, but also one that speaks, even if only indirectly, to the value placed on domestic relationships.64 Deathbed scenes can be a way of maintaining social relations beyond the abyss of death;65 since the lover-poet did not attend Cynthia’s death, she returns as a ghost to demand due respect for her slaves (and herself).

The similarity of Cynthia’s final requests to a will connects her speech to legal forms, but it is not only in these lines that Cynthia’s rhetoric intersects with the law. Cynthia’s speech has been widely recognized as containing rhetorical features that are suited to Cynthia’s purpose in 4.7, since orators try to convince their hearers of their accuracy by adding realistic touches, while at the same time their genre is highly literary.66 There is very little doubt that Propertius would have been trained in rhetoric; as a male of the upper, but not senatorial, class, his family would have expected him to gain experience in the courts.67 Even

63 Hutchinson 2006, 171, 185. Even unskilled agricultural slaves were expensive, and very poor households would not have owned them (Hopkins 1978, 110).
64 See Gardner 1991, chap. 9 for a summary and additional bibliography.
66 For the association of realism with persuasion, see Reinhardt 2006, 202.
67 For a discussion of Propertius’ education, see Keith 2008, 19-44.
many of the terms that he uses to describe his poetry and his literary alter-ego are used in rhetorical treatises of his era. Cicero (Brut. 289) associates speaking *anguste* (narrowly) and *exiliter* (thinly) with the neo-Atticists of his day, as well as (Brut. 283) *eruditior* (learnedly) and *eleganter* (elegantly).\(^{68}\) Propertius draws on this stylistic vocabulary throughout his elegiac verse, referring to Callimachus’ *angusto pectore* (2.1.40) and explaining that his field of action is an *angusto lecto* (2.1.45).\(^{69}\) At 2.22.21, he uses *exilis* to describe the presumed physique of a lover.\(^{70}\) Although *erudio* does not occur in the works of Propertius, *doceo* does many times, most famously to describe Cynthia, the *docta puella* of 1.7.11 and 2.13.11. Cynthia herself does not use these terms, but her speech contains echoes of the rhetorical training that her creator must have had.

While Propertius himself values many of the technical terms of rhetoric used to describe a stylistic school that opposed Cicero, Cynthia’s speech at 4.7 is an example of a rhetorical technique made famous by Cicero in the *Pro Caelio, mortuos ab inferis excitare*.\(^{71}\) There, Cicero impersonates Appius Claudius to berate his descendant Clodia, and, through her, her brother Clodius, Cicero’s real target.\(^{72}\) Claudius censures Clodia’s behaviour, behaviour that allies her with the depiction of the Propertian *puella* given by the lover-poet.\(^{73}\) At *Cael.* 34, Cicero-as-Claudius asks Clodia to justify her behaviour: *Ideone ego pacem Pyrrhi diremi, ... ideo viam munivi, ut eam tu alienis vivris comitata celebres.* But Cynthia, in her speech from the grave, fondly reminisces about behaviour similar to that for which Clodia is criticized, when she recalls at lines 19-20 how she and the lover-poet acted in the early days of their affair: *saepe Venus triuio commissa est, pectore mixto/ fece\textsuperscript{runt} tepidas pallia nostra uias.* She even indignantly accuses the lover-poet of betraying their *foedus* at

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\(^{68}\) Keith 1999a, 43.

\(^{69}\) Fedeli 2005, 77-78, 83.

\(^{70}\) Fedeli 2005, 639-40.

\(^{71}\) Dufallo 2005, 113. For ancient rhetoricians on this figure, which is treated as a subset of *prosopopoeia*, see Aquila Romanus, *Rhet.* 23.22–5, 23.30–1; Rut. Lup. 15.5–7; Anon., *Rhet.* 72.15–20.


\(^{73}\) Dufallo 2003, 168.
Cynthia uses oratorical techniques in a speech in which she espouses a lifestyle that most orators would have claimed at least to disapprove of, certainly for women, if not necessarily for men. Cicero criticizes Clodia for actions that Cynthia would not; instead, she saves her criticism for the lover-poet’s neglect of her after her death, a neglect that would not have been censured by Cicero.

Besides the fact that her entire speech in 4.7 is an example of a rhetorical figure, it has often been noted that Cynthia in 4.7 speaks like an orator. Cynthia speaks as a woman presenting a laudatio of herself and a condemnation of the lover-poet and, through him, of elegy itself and its treatment of women. She also presents her case against her poisoners in terms reminiscent of the law court. Finally, she takes up a different legal form, the will, in expressing the wish that her favourite slave be freed and her former nurse cared for in old age as well as specifying the location of her grave monument and dictating her funerary epitaph.

Propertius creates a woman who is adept at the legal forms that were important to the members of upper-class Roman society, and because the world of the law courts and the forum was generally a masculine one, this troubles her gender identification.

Cynthia’s demands on behalf of her slaves are not the only requests that she makes of the lover-poet, however, since at the end of her speech she shifts her focus from her dependents to her desire to control her image after her death, first by rejecting the lover-

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74 Although as Warden (1980, 25) points out, as a secret pact it would not have been legally binding.
75 See recently Dufallo 2005, 112 and Hutchinson 2006, 178.
76 Dufallo 2003, 171.
77 Warden 1980, 37.
78 cf. V. Max, 3.3.1, the story of Maesia who defended herself admirably when on trial and *egit modosque omnes ac numeros defensionis non solum diligenter, sed etiam fortier executa*. Valerius Maximus (3.3.3) also speaks admiringly of Hortensia, who spoke before the triumvirs against a proposed tax on women, *et constanter et feliciter*. Although the author seems to condone both of their actions, he is highly critical of a third woman who sought out lawsuits on her own behalf, and even in the case of the other two women, it is clear that their actions affected the perception of their gender. Maesia is called Androgyne, and Hortensia is said to have brought her father, the great orator Hortensius, back to life with her words, which were also inspired by him. Quintilian also knew her speech and mentions it as an example of the influence of educated parents on their children (*Inst. 1.1.6*).
poet’s poems, and thereby explicitly refusing to allow his representation of her to stand (4.7.77-80):79

et quoscumque meo fecisti nomine versus,
ure mihi: laudes desine habere meas!
pelle80 hederam tumulo, mihi quae praegnante corymbo
molli<a> contortis alligat ossa comis.

Cynthia does not want him to continue to gain cultural capital by his account of their love affair. Although she may have been dependent on his generosity in life,81 she refuses to be dependent on him for her artistic representation after her death.82 Indeed, she goes beyond urging him to burn his poetry to refusing to allow ivy, a plant the lover-poet associates with his poetry at 2.5.26 and 4.1.61-2,83 to grow over her tomb. She envisages it as choking her remains, perhaps a symbol for how the poetry has twisted her image in life, given the difference between the lover-poet’s portrayal of her and the one her words give. Cynthia suggests that the lover-poet’s fame is really hers, wrenching poetic mastery from him. Since poetic mastery is another one of the elements of the identity of lover-poet, by challenging his right to it, Cynthia implies that he both possesses and lacks it at the same time. This embodiment of these opposing positions is another marker of the lover-poet’s disidentificatory character.

Propertius represents Cynthia taking active control of her own artistic memory by dictating her own epitaph. Cynthia chooses both how she should be remembered and where that memorial should be (4.7.81-86):84

ramosis Anio qua pomifer incubat aruis,
et numquam Herculeo numine pallebub,
hic carmen media dignum me scribe columna,
sed breue, quod currens uector ab urbe legat:
HIC TIBURTINA IACET AUREA CYNTHIA TERRA:
ACCESSIT RIPAE LAUS, ANIENE, TUAE.

In stark contrast to the lover-poet’s desire for a secluded grave, (3.16.25-26: di faciant, mea ne terra locet ossa frequenti,/ qua facit assiduo tramite uulgus iter!), Cynthia requests that her monument be placed where hurried travelers may see it as they rush by. As her parting shot against the lover-poet’s verse, her very epitaph, two lines of an elegiac couplet, alludes to the function of elegy as a funerary genre and shows her own facility with the Alexandrian style to which the lover-poet aspires. At the same time, she challenges the values of Alexandrian elegy, by rejecting the secluded trails and back roads espoused by Callimachus (Aet. Fr. 1.25-27). Propertius shows Cynthia seeking to take control of her own reception and challenging the lover-poet’s right to define her and their affair. Cynthia’s depiction of herself challenges the role set out for her by the lover-poet and for elegiac puellae in general by elegists. Propertius thereby undermines the lover-poet’s equally gendered and stereotypical role as well as the codes and conventions of his chosen genre.

Cynthia ends her speech by ceding possession of the living lover-poet to other women while promising that she will repossess him in the end (4.7.93): nunc te possideant aliae: mox sola tenebo. This is her final word on his behaviour, but not the end of her speech, which promises in a somewhat disconcerting way that her fides will remain after both their deaths and that her remains will spend eternity with his (94): mecum eris et mixtis ossibus ossa teram. Elsewhere, Propertius has the lover-poet idealize devotion beyond the grave, but here Cynthia takes that ideal to its furthest extreme. Cynthia consistently represents the lover-poet as faithless in 4.7 and throughout the corpus, and in the end she seems to accept

85 Lange 1974, 340. Propertius indicates his admiration for and identification with Alexandrian poetry in the opening poems of three of his four books, at 2.1.39-42, 3.1.1-6, and 4.1.59-64. See also Fedeli 2005, 75-81 (2.1), Fedeli 1985, 41-57 (3.1), and Hutchinson 2006, 72 (4.1). Keith 2011 explores the relationships between elegy and epigram in programmatic poems of the elegists’ collections.
86 In addition, she rejects the type of memorial that Propertius and, by allusion to the Aetia prologue, the earlier Greek elegiac tradition privilege.
87 Although not actually, as she will return to the subject when she shows up still alive in the next poem.
88 See Uden 2005, 640 for the use of tero with connotations of “excessive and threatening sexuality,” notably at 3.11.30 to describe Cleopatra as worn out from sex with slaves.
that she cannot change him; indeed, her statement that more than one other woman may have him (*aliae*) acts as one last challenge to his claims of elegiac devotion to a single woman.

In describing her death as one marked by treachery and loneliness, Cynthia brings issues of genre into play as well. As we have seen, Cynthia presents her indictment of her poisoners in a way that is also reminiscent of legal prosecutions. Moreover, Cynthia’s successor, Chloris, is not an elegiac mistress. As a former streetwalker, she fits more neatly into the category of the companions in Horatian lyric than those of elegy. Indeed, Chloris’ very name suggests lyric provenance rather than elegy.\(^89\) It is significant that Chloris actively attempts to destroy the memory of Cynthia, both by punishing her slaves when they mention or otherwise commemorate her, and by literally destroying an image of her, for the elegiac *puella* is an essential component of the lifestyle that makes up a large part of the elegiac lover’s identity. Cynthia accuses the lover-poet not only of breaking faith with her but also of taking up with a non-elegiac woman who actively obliterates the memory of his elegiac *puella*. By having her make these accusations, Propertius in effect makes Cynthia deny that the lover-poet is truly an elegiac lover.

Finally, Cynthia’s depiction of her own afterlife and promise of a future for her and the lover-poet’s earthly remains ground her in some of the tropes of elegy while at the same time representing the lover-poet’s behaviour (and her own) as deviating significantly from generic norms. This tension between conflicting roles is typical of disidentification. It is not only the disintegration of her physical remains that contributes to her characterization as a figure who resists secure identification; Cynthia’s version of the afterlife sets her in comparison with the virtuous and depraved heroines of myth in a way that challenges the lover-poet’s version of her character but at the same time undermines secure categorization of women as good or evil in general and our expectation of punishment for vice and reward for virtue. The lover-poet frequently applies mythological exempla to himself and Cynthia

\(^{89}\) There is a Chloris at Hor. *Carm.* 2.5.17 and another is the subject of 3.15.
elsewhere in the corpus in order to raise their relationship to the heights of mythology or in some cases to compare Cynthia negatively to the heroines. Cynthia adopts this technique but uses it to highlight her own virtue; she places herself with the weeping virtuous women, and proves her *fides* to the lover-poet by hiding his *perfidia* (69-70). In addition, she uses the myth of the underworld to ally herself with *pietas* (87-88): *nec tu sperne piis uenientia somnia portis:/ cum pia uenerunt somnia, pondus habent.* In this way, she characterizes herself as a true dream coming from the gates of piety. Propertius thus shows both of his main characters using a similar rhetorical strategy in their employment of mythological exempla for opposing ends.

In 4.7, Cynthia’s ghost revisits many of the themes that pervade the corpus, especially the challenges to the generic norms of behaviour offered by both the lover-poet and *puella,* and to the conventions of the elegiac scenario itself. In this context, Cynthia may be interpreted as reclaiming the “toxic identity” of the elegiac mistress, associated by the lover-poet with greed and inconstancy, but which she represents as something of value and power. Cynthia, while disidentifying with the roles of both faithful wife and faithless courtesan, nonetheless seems to expect the same respect for her wishes and attention to her death and funeral that a husband would be expected to provide, and she expresses anger when she does not receive her due. Her detailed description of her death also compels our recognition that the lover-poet himself lacks the requisite devotion, and her accusation that soon after her death he has taken up a new mistress, and not even an elegiac one at that, not only underscores his lack of devotion but also calls his character’s suitability for the genre into question. Cynthia’s depiction of their love affair, however, is equally problematic, as she

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90 For the use of virtuous heroines as exempla in elegy, see Öhrman 2008.
91 Hom. *Od.* 19.560-69 and Verg. *A.* 6.893-96 differentiate between the gates of ivory, from which come false dreams, and the gates of horn, from which come true dreams. We should therefore identify Cynthia’s *piis portis* with the gates of horn. Goold (1999, 363) claims that this only signifies that Cynthia resides in the realm of the *pius,* implicitly denying that it indicates any truth in her speech, but this is not based on any necessary reading of Propertius’ text; Propertius’ words do not indicate that we should disbelieve Cynthia.
92 Muñoz 1999, 194. Cf. Butler (1997, 104), who argues that an “injurious term” must be occupied in order to recast the power that it holds in order to resist and oppose it.
inserts apparently “realistic” and non-elegiac details into her narrative. Indeed, her entire speech draws elements from different roles, scenarios, and genres and recombiness them to create something that is elegiac, realistic and idealizing, epic, lyric, and comic at the same time. Cynthia calls the lover-poet’s assumption of the role of elegiac lover into question, and she further complicates his occupation of that role, and the male identity that goes with it, by undermining every aspect of the elegiac scenario to transform it into something very different.

By putting the speech into the mouth of a ghost, moreover, Propertius employs a figure who dwells between two poles, the living and the dead, to expose the ideology of elegy, which is situated in partial opposition to but still depends heavily upon the ideology of mainstream elite Roman society. This is the point at which the theoretical seams of disidentification and haunting intersect. Cynthia, like ghosts elsewhere in western European literature, makes her presence known to demand recognition and redress, which in her case takes two forms. First, she demands recognition of extraordinary engagement with the elegiac situation. Then, she makes specific requests of the lover-poet to redress his behaviour to her before and after her death. Her last requests also, however, encompass part of her demands for recognition, in that she denies his right to represent her in his poetry and dictates her epitaph. Through her requirement of recognition and redress, she also fulfills the ghostly role of forcing open gaps in the text, by bringing elegy into contact with the sordid historical details of the lives of women who lacked the sanctioned protection of men.

The lover-poet’s claims about the puella and the elegiac relationship are further undermined in the only other poem in book 4 that belongs without question to erotic elegy, 4.5. This poem takes as its central figure the lena Acanthis, and consists of a speech by her (21-62) framed by commentary on her character, behaviour, and death by the lover-poet (1-20 and 63-78). The lena’s speech in 4.5 endeavours to usurp the lover-poet’s role of the

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94 Gordon 2008, 63-64.
95 Cf. Homans (1987, 173) on the inclusion, even if by accident, of female voices in male-authored texts.
praecceptor amoris by advising the puella to do precisely the opposite of what the lover-poet asks of her. Acanthis provides very practical reasons for the behaviour that the lover-poet censures.\(^96\) Despite his protestations of fidelity, it is unlikely that he will stay with the puella forever (whether she is a courtesan or an adulterous aristocrat).\(^97\) The lena advises (4.5.59-62):

\[
dum uernat sanguis, dum rugis integer annus,
\]
\[
    utere, ne quid cras libet ab ore dies!
\]
\[
    uidi ego odorati uictura rosaria Paesti
\]
\[
    sub matutino cocta iacere Noto.
\]

These words, warning of the fleeting nature of youth and beauty, echo the lover-poet’s own threats in elegy 3.24.31-38,\(^98\) where he predicts that his cast-off puella will curse her own old age and wish she had treated him better:\(^99\)

\[
    at te celatis aetas grauis urgeat annis
\]
\[
    et ueniat formae ruga sinistra tuae!
\]
\[
    uellere tum cupias albos a stirpe capillos,
    a! speculo rugas increpitante tibi,
\]
\[
    exclusa inque uicem fastus pataire superbos,
    et quae fecisti facta queraris anus!
\]
\[
    has tibi fatalis cecinit mea pagina diras:
    euentum formae disce timere tuae!
\]

Thus 4.5.59, with its warning about wrinkles (rugis) takes up the ruga the lover-poet predicts for Cynthia at 3.25.12, 14, while the warnings about the fleeting nature of youth at 4.5.61-62 reflect the lover-poet’s command that Cynthia fear the end of her beauty (3.25.18). The lover-poet predicts that Cynthia will regret her treatment of him when she is old and can no longer attract lovers, but his argument is part of a diatribe against the type of behaviour, such as false tears and rejection, that the lena will champion as the means to encourage lovers to pay more.

\(^{96}\) Myers 1996, 1. Öhrman (2008, 106) believes that the lenae of 4.5 and Ov. Am. 1.8 and Priapus in Tibullus 1.4 “offer the most complete teachings of love in ‘canonical’ elegy”, thus suggesting that in fact the lena is a better praecceptor amoris than the lover-poet.

\(^{97}\) James 2003, 40-41.

\(^{98}\) I follow Fedeli (1984) in combining 3.24 and 3.25 into one poem; the question of whether there is one poem or two here has no bearing, however, on my argument.

\(^{99}\) Fedeli 1985, 692.
The basis of both the *lena* and the lover-poet’s warnings, however, is the simple fact that women’s age, unlike men’s, affects their ability to attract lovers. The lover-poet’s words in 3.25 show the scorn felt for a woman who has lost her youth, as does his description in 4.5 of Acanthis, who has a *rugosum collum* (4.5.67), *cavi dientes* (68), and *rari capilli* (71). Acanthis, unlike the *lenae* of New Comedy, does not seem to be acting out of self-interest in her warning to the *puella*, but is advising her in practical terms to make her fortune while she can. This is an important back-story for the elegiac scenario, since the historical courtesan, whose attributes colour the character of the elegiac mistress, enjoyed few years in which she could expect to earn well, and the long nights and rough lifestyle that she would lead in that period would only make her age faster. According to Sallust, the same limitations applied to the aristocratic woman who traded on her favours to finance her lavish lifestyle (*Cat. 24*):

mulieres etiam aliquot, quae primo ingentis sumptus stupro corporis toleraverant, post, ubi aetas tantummodo quaestui neque luxuriae modum fecerat, aes alienum grande conflaverant.

Sallust suggests that elite women who had aged beyond the ability to attract wealthy lovers would go into debt rather than change their luxurious ways. So while the elegiac lover could expect to return to the lifestyle and earning potential of an upper-class Roman male once his years of youthful indiscretion were over, the *puella* had no such expectation of future earnings after the affair. The ghost Acanthis addresses the financial consequences facing

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100 For threats of Cynthia’s coming old age, see 2.18.19-22, 3.25.11-18. For old age as no bar to love for the lover-poet, see 2.25.9-10; cf. Hor. *Carm.* 1.25. For discussion of Horace, see Nisbet and Hubbard 1970, 289-92. Cf. Ancona 1994, chap. 4 on the differing effects of age on lover and beloved; and see now Gardner (forthcoming).

101 This theme is also treated in Horace *Epod.* 8 and 12 and *Carm.* 2.25, 3.1.5 and 4.13. Cf. Griffin 1986, 21-22.

102 As Propertius himself suggests at 2.33.33-34. Further, as McGinn (2004, 53) points out, prostitutes also had to invest significant amounts of money on enhancing their attractiveness and often worked in environments that were not conducive to saving money.

women who could not or would not depend upon male relatives, conditions which haunt the world of elegy.\textsuperscript{104}

Cynthia’s funeral in 4.7 is not unlike that of Acanthis, and the similarities further emphasize how inappropriate Cynthia’s funeral is for a beloved girlfriend. The emphasis in Cynthia’s description of her funeral is on the absence of luxury and love. Acanthis’ interment also lacks these elements, but where Cynthia’s is characterized by omission, the lena’s poor funerary accoutrements are described in unattractive detail (4.5.71-72): exsequiae fuerunt rari furtiua capilli/ uincula et immundo pallida mitra situ. The mention of her rari capilli recalls the ghostly Cynthia’s eosdem capillos (4.7.7), providing a further connection between the two women’s experiences after death. So too is the single mourner/guardian who attends her, a dog that used to keep the lover-poet away from his mistress (73-74): et canis, in nostros nimis experrecta dolores,/ cum fallenda meo pollice clatra forent. Not only was the lena’s funeral impoverished, but her very grave is rough, overgrown, and accursed (4.5.75-78):

sit tumulus lenae curto uetus amphora collo:
urget hunc supra uis, caprifice, tua.
quisquis amas, scabris hoc bustum caedite saxis,
mixtaque cum saxis addite uerba mala!

The lover-poet thus accords Acanthis a grave that is both appropriate to her ethos (the broken wine jar suggests the habitual drunkenness associated with the lena)\textsuperscript{105} and a focus for the anger of other lovers, much like he imagines his own grave (1.7.23-24) as a source of inspiration to them. The fig that he hopes grows on her tomb anticipates the ivy that Cynthia says is binding her bones and that she asks the lover-poet to remove from her grave, and again highlights the similarities between the two women’s deaths. Cynthia’s lonely and shabby end in 4.7 bears out the importance of Acanthis’ instructions to the puella in 4.5,

\textsuperscript{104} McGinn (2004, 70-71) argues that women without male relatives to depend on were particularly likely to turn to prostitution for survival.
\textsuperscript{105} Keith 2008, 35.
which emphasize the necessity of getting money out of her lovers in order not to suffer in old age.\textsuperscript{106}

In a practical sense, from the point of view of both \textit{meretrix} and \textit{lena}, fine gifts are necessary not only for the present purpose of supporting her current household and the glamorous appearance and lifestyle necessary to attract and keep clients\textsuperscript{107} but also in order to store up wealth for the future, which she must do as much as possible in her youth in order to support herself in her unmarketable old age.\textsuperscript{108} But the \textit{lena} goes further than simply advising the \textit{puella} to earn as much as she can; she also specifically mocks the pretensions of the lover-poet, advising the \textit{puella} not to give in to the poet who claims poverty (4.5.54-58):

\begin{quote}
\begin{center}
\textit{uersibus auditis quid nisi uerba feres?}
\end{center}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\begin{center}
‘Quid iuuat ornato procedere, uita, capillo et tenuis Coa ueste mouere sinus?’
\end{center}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\begin{center}
qui uersus, Coae dederit nec munera uestis, istius tibi sit surda sine aere lyra.
\end{center}
\end{quote}

Lines 55-56, if they belong here, as I think they do,\textsuperscript{109} cite the first two lines of Propertius 1.2, an elegy which aims to convince his mistress that fine gifts and adornment are unnecessary for either her beauty or the lover-poet’s desire. In the \textit{lena’s} speech of 4.5, however, Propertius introduces a second \textit{praeeptor amoris} who directly opposes the values the lover-poet professes and, along with Cynthia’s depiction of her relationship with the lover-poet in 4.7, engages in rewriting the Propertian elegiac love affair that was set out in the \textit{Monobiblos}.\textsuperscript{110} Moreover, by introducing a rival expert in amatory matters who is both a woman and a social outcast, Propertius undermines the lover-poet’s role as an expert, especially when he has Acanthis use his own words to mock him. Acanthis advises the \textit{puella}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{106} James (2001, 225) connects Acanthis’ advice in 4.5 to Cynthia’s “greedy” behaviour in 2.16. Cf. Wyke (2002, 184) on the motives of Acanthis by contrast to those of the lover-poet.

\textsuperscript{107} James 2003, 168-71 (specifically on hairstyling).

\textsuperscript{108} James 2001, 224-25.

\textsuperscript{109} Fedeli (1984) does not bracket the lines, but a number of editors do. The argument for bracketing these lines is that they are “probably a marginal quotation which has entered the text” (Hutchinson 2006, 148); Camps (1965, 102), on the other hand, thinks that it “does not seem impossible that it should be quoted here by the speaker, with a sneer”. I would argue that the quotation of the first of Propertius’ poems, in which the lover-poet tries to convince Cynthia that luxury is unnecessary, is a clever and compelling device in the speech of the \textit{lena}. Cf. Wyke 2002, 102.

\textsuperscript{110} Ovid’s Dipsas will take this stance even further (Myers 1996, 20).
\end{flushright}
to do the opposite of what the lover-poet wants; yet when she inhabits the role of the *praecceptor amoris*, the *lena* becomes a mirror image of the lover-poet. The structural homology that grounds their functional and rhetorical opposition implies a close connection between the identities of *lena* and lover-poet, two characters who are in many ways diametrically opposed to one another, not just in their advice to the *puella*, but also in their age, gender, and social status. This connection in turn can be interpreted as part of the strategy of disidentification in the case of the character of the lover, because it makes one of the core aspects of his role, that of the *praecceptor amoris*, resist strict identification with that of the male elegiac lover-poet or with the gender and class lines of the Roman elite.

Moreover, the lover-poet and his enemy the *lena* occupy the same role, but to different ends, so that the role of *praecceptor amoris* turns on itself and contributes to the disidentificatory character of the *puella*, who is thereby subjected to differing advice that rests on different representations of her character and circumstances.

The viewpoints of Cynthia the *puella* and Acanthis the *lena*, both of which undermine the portrayal of the beloved, the lover-poet, and the elegiac lifestyle favoured by the lover-poet, are not restricted to the female characters of the elegiac scenario, however; for the speech in elegy 4.11 of Cornelia (who, as an upper-class *matrona*, is not part of the traditional elegiac cast of characters) focuses on the definition of virtue while consistently expressing some measure of distrust in male authority as well. In this poem, Propertius uses women’s speech to expand his strategies of disidentification with male gender roles beyond the elegiac genre. Cornelia is less overtly hostile to male authority and fidelity than Cynthia or Acanthis. However, the many correspondences between her speech from beyond the grave and Cynthia’s in 4.7, coupled with her stated uncertainty as to whether the way she lived her life was truly worthwhile (4.11.11-14) combine to bring even this woman, based on a real and exemplary *matrona* who was related to many important politicians in the late first

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century BCE, including Augustus, to question territorial assignments of gender at Rome and relationships between men and women.

Cornelia’s speech shares a great deal in common with Cynthia’s in 4.7, though the two women would appear to be polar opposites, Cornelia an aristocratic Roman matron and Cynthia an elegiac mistress. But just as with Acanthis and Cynthia, there are many awkward similarities between Cynthia and Cornelia. Both women speak long addresses from the grave to their male partners, Cornelia’s filling all of 4.11 and Cynthia’s occupying the bulk (13-94) of 4.7. Both profess their fidelity (4.7.51-54; 4.11.41-54), and worth (4.7.69-70, 85-88; 4.11.30-72), and both give instructions to be carried out by the living (4.7.35-38, 73-86; 4.11.73-98). There are even similarities in the details they supply about their place in the underworld: both women pass over water (4.7.59-60; 4.11.15-16), mention the crime of the Danaids (4.7.67-68; 4.11.27-28), and refer to Cybele in connection with good women (4.7.61; 4.11.51). Some of these similarities come, of course, from the genre: both women are performing funeral orations for themselves and delivering their last requests to their loved ones. Yet a closer look at the two together yields further thematic overlap, which, taken together, suggest that Cornelia too offers criticism, if not condemnation, of the roles available to women in Latin elegy and Roman society. Her ghost shows that the Roman matrona haunts male discourse as well.

Despite the similarities between Cynthia and Cornelia, there has been scholarly resistance to interpreting Cornelia as another literary construct, which is necessary if we are to consider her role as ghost as like that of Cynthia’s. Even as the recognition that Cynthia is a literary construction has gained ascendancy, the figure of Cornelia has remained

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112 Lange 1974, 338.
113 Cornelia’s speech resembles funeral orations given to women, as exemplified in the so-called Laudatio Turiae, and, to some extent, also epitaphs that claim to be in the voice of the dead woman (e.g. CIL VI 6593).
114 Dixon (2007, chapter 4) argues that Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, was subsumed into the image of a virtuous wife and mother, with the intellectual and political aspects of her character and life softened into a generic exemplum. Dixon’s reading of the ancient evidence for Cornelia seems to me to be trying to retrieve what was elided from her story and can be interpreted as another example of a matrona haunting male discourse.
considerably more grounded in reality so far as much of the scholarship is concerned. This is no doubt because Cornelia was demonstrably an historical person: a member of an aristocratic family with an historically attested husband, Paullus Aemilius Lepidus (censor in 22 BCE), and the stepdaughter of Augustus, sharing a mother with his daughter Julia. This should not be a barrier to the consideration of Cornelia as a literary figure, however, since Propertius’ lover-poet, although he shared the name and perhaps some of the characteristics, opinions, and experiences of the historical person Propertius, is undoubtedly a literary construction. Cornelia may be less wholly literary than Cynthia, but she should not be seen as wholly historical either. Her stronger ties to historical Roman society are evident in the content and shape of her speech, yet at the same time she can also be seen to “haunt” Propertius’ elegiac discourse in the theoretical sense. Even socially well-connected elite women tend to inhabit the margins of historical writing, and to serve specific and conventional purposes when they do appear. On the surface, Cornelia’s ghost acts in this conventional way, but the occasional hints of doubt that she expresses haunt her speech and express the largely unacknowledged gaps in the depiction of women’s experience in Roman texts.

Cornelia’s speech is more clearly structured and contains more of the precise elements of a rhetorical laudation than Cynthia’s in 4.7. One of the central themes of Cornelia’s speech is that she, like Cynthia, is sure of herself and her virtue, and boasts that she has

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115 For a discussion of this see Wyke 2002, 108-14.
116 Julia herself is an interesting figure to compare with Cornelia, as she was, during the time when book 4 was written, both a positive exemplum of fertility and, according to the rumours and sayings preserved in Macr. 2.5, already engaging in the sexual behaviour that would, at least in part, lead to her exile. 
117 Wyke 2002, 110.
118 E.g. 2.34.56-60, where the poet presents the character Propertius as the “type” of the elegiac lover. See Keith 2008, 10.
121 Gordon (2008, 19) theorizes haunting as a way to understand the gaps between the articulation of social structures, which are everywhere evident in Cornelia’s speech, and the lived experience of them.
122 It can be divided into an *exordium* (1-14); appeal to nether spirits (15-26); address to survivors and eulogy to her family and character (27-62); consolation (63-72); and *mandata* (73-98). Cairns 1972 and Lange 1974, 336.
perfectly fulfilled her role in life. She affirms this on a number of levels, beginning with her
fidelity to her ancestors’ virtue (4.11.37-44):

testor maiorum cineres tibi, Roma, colendos,
sub quorum titulis, Africa, tunsia iaces,
et Persen proaui s[t]imulantem pectus Achilli,
quique tuas proauro fregit Achille domos,
neque censurae legem mollisse neque ulla
labe mea uestros erubuisse focos.
non fuit exuuiis tantis Cornelia damnum:
qui et erat magnae pars imitanda domus.

Cornelia demonstrates her pride in her illustrious ancestors and swears by them that she has
followed in their footsteps. Her ancestors are named by their military successes, but she
swears that her own virtue has been in a more appropriately feminine sphere, in that she has
been sexually virtuous (41-42).  

Cornelia’s affirmation of her own good character grounds
her in Roman history and social hierarchies, documenting her
status as a Roman
noblewoman; in this, she differs strikingly from Cynthia, a woman of uncertain status,
unknown ancestry, and foreign nomenclature.

Cornelia seems to be unproblematically
identifying with and upholding the values of the Roman elite.

In the next section of her speech, she continues to emphasize her virtue, although this
time in a specifically marital context, and compares herself to virtuous *matronae* of Roman
history (4.11.45-54):

nec mea mutata est aetas, sine crimine tota est:
uiximus insignes inter utramque facem.
mi natura dedit leges a sanguine ductas,
nec possis melior iudicis esse metu.
quaelibet austeras de me ferat urna tabellas:
turpior assessu non erit ulla meo,
uel tu, quae tardam mouisti fune Cybeben,
Claudia, turritae rara ministra deae,
uel cuius cassos cum Vesta reposceret ignis,
exhibuit iuius carbasus alba focos.

123 The use of famously virtuous Claudiae to chastise Clodia in Cic. *Cael.* 34 is a negative example of this
technique.
124 Apuleius (*Apol.* 10.3) names Cynthia as a pseudonym for Hostia, which led to the assumption that the *doctus
avus* of 3.20.8 is the second century BCE epic poet Hostius. For further discussion of this identification, see
above, p.3 n.10.
Cornelia emphasizes that her behaviour conforms to that expected of Roman women and of noblewomen in particular, and to the standards of her ancestors.\textsuperscript{125} This distinguishes her from women like Cynthia or the “sexually liberated” aristocrats of the late republic and triumviral period who caused so much concern to their contemporaries (e.g. Cicero and Sallust) and an earlier generation of critics.\textsuperscript{126}

The next sections of her speech emphasize her family connections, including her relationship to Augustus, and then proceed to catalogue her fulfillment of the ideals of wifehood and motherhood (4.11.61-72):

\begin{center}
\begin{verbatim}
et tamen emerui generosos uestis honores,
ne＜c＞ mea de sterili facta rapina domo.
tu, Lepide, et tu, Paulle, meum post fata leuamen,
condita sunt uestro lumina nostra sinu.
uidimus et fratrem sellam geminasse curulem; 65
consule quo facto tempore rapta soror.
filia, tu specimen censurae nata paternae,
fac teneas unum nos imitata uirum.
et serie fulcite genus: mihi cumba uolenti
soluitur aucturis tot mea fata meis.
haec est feminei merces extrema triumphi,
laudat ubi emeritum libera fama rogum.
\end{verbatim}
\end{center}

Cornelia connects her fulfillment of feminine duties to her male relatives’ excellence in their own sphere of public duty, and presents herself as an exemplary Roman matrona, as uniurīa and mother of three children.\textsuperscript{127} She would seem to have little in common with Cynthia, except for their emphasis on their loyalty to one man, especially when she declares her status as uniurīa (35-36): iungor, Paulle, tuo sic discessura cubili:/ in lapide hoc uni nupta fuisse legar. Yet Cynthia too repeatedly swears that she kept faith (4.7.51-54) and counts herself among the blessed women (4.7.69-70). While the class differences between the two are obvious, the connections that link them emerge as interesting and problematic.

\textsuperscript{125} Claudia herself is a somewhat problematic example, at least by the time in which Propertius was writing. According to Ovid, she was suspected of being unchaste (Fast. 4.305-44) due to her stylish appearance and bold speech, but her ability to move the goddess’ barge when it stuck in the Tiber proved her chastity. Cf. Skinner 2011, 28-29.
\textsuperscript{126} E.g. Balsdon 1962, 45-62.
\textsuperscript{127} Cf. the so-called Laudatio Turiae and the eulogy to Murdia (CIL VI 10230).
Cynthia and Cornelia are both primarily concerned with the sphere of the household and relationships between men and women, yet they themselves occupy both private and public worlds. Cynthia concerns herself with the actions of slaves, her own fidelity, and the lover-poet’s infidelity. Yet she presents the beginning of their relationship as literally taking place in public, in the uias and triuia. Similarly, while Cornelia’s main concern is her proper fulfilment of the role of uniuira and matrona, her relationships to prominent figures of the past and present (especially Augustus) draw in public concerns, and even her very position as a matrona makes her a semi-public figure. Cynthia and Cornelia both present private lives lived publicly, and deliver speeches in the same vein as the funeral addresses offered to eminent women in their time, such as the orations of Julius Caesar to his great aunt Julia (Suet. Jul. 6) and his wife Cornelia, both in 69/68 BCE (Suet. Jul. 6) and of the young Octavian to his grandmother Julia in 51 BCE (Suet. Aug. 8). Both women act as orators delivering apologiae suae: both raise questions about how justly the roles they fulfilled were imposed on them in the first place, and whether there was ultimately any value in their actions.

I have considered already the challenge that Cynthia’s speeches present to the lover-poet and elegiac scenario, but Cornelia’s reaction is more complex. Cornelia is less overtly condemnatory than Cynthia. She speaks well of her husband and, like Cynthia, permits him to have another woman while he lives, if he must. Near the beginning of 4.11, though, she exclaims (4.11.11-14):

quid mihi coniugium Paulli, quid currus auorum profuit aut famae pignora tanta meae?
non minus immitis habuit Cornelia Parcas:
et sum, quod digitis quinque legatur, onus.

This outburst colours the catalogue of her virtues and decorous actions with doubt about their worth. Although Cornelia certainly presents no other path for herself that would have been

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130 Dufallo 2003, 171-72. Suetonius says that Caesar included praise for her ancestry in his eulogy to his aunt, much like Cornelia honours her ancestry.
131 Hutchinson 2006, 171; Dufallo 2003, 174. For female orators, see V. Max. 8.3.
132 Günther 2006, 394.
better, she does not give unqualified support to the one she took either. These lines, combined with the ending of the poem, which leaves Cornelia awaiting a verdict of the underworld judges, make it difficult to accept that this poem is a whole-hearted endorsement of the conventional role of the respectable woman. As in the case of Cynthia, Propertius represents this female ghost as expressing views that were generally repressed in the dominant culture. Both of these ghosts are interesting manifestations of haunting. In Gordon’s readings of haunting in literary texts, she finds that the ghost or ghostly figure tends to be somewhat elusive and to require a certain amount of interpretation in order to understand the absence that it represents or the wrong it wants redressed. Propertius’ ghosts, however, are considerably clearer about their questions and doubts. When one considers the many connections between this speech and Cynthia’s in 4.7, Cornelia’s briefly expressed doubts in combination with Cynthia’s condemnation of the elegiac lover implicitly criticizes the Roman male establishment, which includes both elegiac lover and upstanding citizen, both of whom write women into the restricted, if complimentary, roles of puella and matrona.

It is difficult to appreciate why Propertius so consistently represents women as criticizing the roles they and the men in their lives fill and repeatedly casting doubt on the possibility of male fidelity while at the same time underlining its importance. Cynthia continually accuses the lover-poet of infidelity, an attack that aims at the very heart of the identity of elegiac lover; she also insists on redefining her own role, either ignoring or expressly rejecting the elegiac puella’s characteristic greed and faithlessness. The ghosts of elegiac women in Propertius’ fourth book raise uncomfortable questions about the security of the puella and how much she can count on the lover-poet to love her (and therefore care for her financially) forever, interjecting material realities into the idealized world of elegy. The

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133 Lange 1974, 336.
134 See for example her discussion of how the ghost of Morrison’s Beloved does not just force recognition of the past and redress its wrongs, but also makes the living move through the haunting and let go of the violence of the past (Gordon 2008, 175-90).
position the lover-poet takes, with some consistency,\textsuperscript{135} is that he is the wronged figure, the faithful lover who waits but is betrayed by his mistress’ inconstancy and greed.\textsuperscript{136} The picture that Cynthia promotes of the lover-poet is of a callous and careless lover, whose real concerns are carousing and enjoying himself, not love and faithfulness. He is more like the picture of Caelius presented by Cicero, a young man who is sowing his wild oats, but will not stay in the demimonde forever.\textsuperscript{137} The narrative trajectory of Propertius’ elegiac collections can also support her depiction. For despite his claims to being suited only to writing of love and girls, Propertius writes progressively more about public or mythological themes in books 2 and 3, culminating in his decision to write only public, aetiological poetry for the glory of Rome in 4.1.67-70.\textsuperscript{138} He does not, however, carry through with the plan articulated in the first half of elegy 4.1 to turn to Rome alone for inspiration. Instead, he capitalizes in the fourth book on the doubts about contemporary public life and elite values that he has sown in the earlier amatory collections, but on a greater scale, with Cynthia returning from her dismissal at 3.24/5 and a chorus of other women critiquing not only him but also men whose roles the lover-poet has rejected, such as soldiers and public figures. The speeches of Cynthia and the other women of book 4 are integral to the strategies of disidentification that Propertius explores in the representation of his lover-poet.

The extraordinary number of women’s speeches found in Propertian elegy is a distinctive feature of his poetry. Their words haunt his elegies and insist on the recognition of what the lover-poet and his elegiac contemporaries leave unsaid and unexplored in the elegiac scenario. By questioning the worth of conforming to contemporary cultural pressures, their speeches also enact a strategy of disidentification, as they undermine the identities and counter-identities in which the lover-poet participates. Indeed, by giving voice to Cornelia, an identifiable historical figure, an aristocratic and socially well-connected

\textsuperscript{135} Although not completely: see for example 2.22, 2.23 (although here he blames Cynthia for his very inconstancy), and 4.8.

\textsuperscript{136} E.g. 1.8, 1.15, 2.5, 2.9, 2.16, 3.21, and even in his supposed dismissal of her at 3.24-3.25.

\textsuperscript{137} Fear 2005, 15.

\textsuperscript{138} Keith 2008, 113.
matrona, and a uniurita, Propertius radically destabilizes the normative values of the Roman elite. Women’s speech in Propertius can therefore be seen to offer a stinging rebuke not only to the ideology of the dominant culture and its Augustan transformation but also to the ideology of the elegiac world. My next two chapters, on seruitium amoris and militia amoris, will explore these social and elegiac identities and counter-identities further, but in the context of common elegiac tropes rather than, as in the case of fides and women’s speech, themes that are uniquely prominent in Propertius’ elegy. Seruitium amoris and militia amoris both engage with larger social issues, such as friendship, patronage, military and political service, that are important to the Roman elite, and also, in the case of militia amoris, with generic issues, specifically the issue of epic intertextuality and the lover-poet’s reluctance to write epic, as he shows by his championing of elegiac values over epic.
Chapter 3: Freedom, Patronage, and seruitium amoris

It is generally accepted in elegiac scholarship that the focus of the genre is on the lover-poet’s experience: on his humiliation and submission to love, rather than on the mistress’ power over him. This is thought to be especially so in the case of seruitium amoris, which for the most part focuses on the lover-poet’s slavery, not the mistress’ mastery. While this may be generally true, I will argue that for Cynthia the paradigm does not hold. Propertius may not exactly focus on her mastery, but he does present her as a more dynamic character than is usual for an elegiac puella, and this presentation includes specific discussions of her behaviour as his domina. Furthermore, I will argue that Cynthia’s mastery can be used as a focal point for examining social and political issues relating to freedom and slavery that are important in Propertius’ work, especially the slave’s inability to speak freely and the elision of the boundary between the services and behaviours of slave and client or lesser amicus that was of concern to his contemporaries.

Seruitium amoris first appears in its fully-fledged form in the Roman love elegists,\(^1\) and it is probable that Propertius and Tibullus were the major innovators. Yet these two poets are by no means identical in their treatment and use of the trope.\(^2\) Propertius makes frequent use of the trope seruitium amoris, in which the lover-poet is compared to a slave and serves his beloved who thereby assumes the role of master or mistress.\(^3\) This appears to place the lover-poet in a position of counter-identity with respect to the role of elite slave-owner that the elegists themselves would have held in Roman society and shows elegiac servitude

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\(^1\) While isolated examples of comparisons of love to slavery appear in Hellenistic epigrams and the plays of Plautus and Terence, and occasionally even earlier in Greek tragedy and lyric, they are not common or developed enough in these genres to be considered a trope (Copley 1947, 290; Lyne 1979, 118). The use and frequency of seruitium amoris in Catullus is similar to that in the earlier genres, so that it seems to emerge in its full form only in Propertius and Tibullus, and possibly Gallus (Murgatroyd 1981, 595-96). For seruitium amoris and Gallus, see Cairns 2006, 191-92, 203 n.46.

\(^2\) The fact that Ovid’s treatment of seruitium amoris, as I will show, looks more like Tibullus’ than Propertius’ may suggest that Tibullus’ use of the trope was considered the standard version, although Ovid also reacts against Propertius. See Murgatroyd 1981, 602 for a comparison between Ovid’s treatment of seruitium amoris and that in Tibullus and Propertius. Cf. Copley 1947, 294.

\(^3\) Occasionally love or love poetry may be substituted for the beloved, as in Prop. 1.7.7, in which the lover-poet claims seruire dolori (here a synonym for love) or Ov. Am. 1.1.26, in uacuo pectore regnat Amor. Cf. Veyne 1988, 2.
interacting with the dominant cultural text of slavery.\textsuperscript{4} Propertius’ use of amatory slavery is, however, more complex than a simple case of identity and counter-identity and prompts us to consider the differences between historical and amatory slavery, most noticeable in the gap between the real social status and power of an historical slave and an elite poet who enters love slavery voluntarily.

The internal contradiction inherent in the elegiac mistress is also a part of all the elegists’ \textit{seruitium amoris}. The \textit{puella} is presented as the owner-mistress of her enslaved lover, but is at least in part based on the historical courtesan, who was often a slave or freedwoman and was without doubt inferior in status to her lover(s).\textsuperscript{5} The character of the elegiac mistress also draws on the stereotype of a sexually liberated noblewoman, whose character included elements of a slavish devotion to her own pleasure and greed that was at odds with her elite social status. Both of these contributors to her identity, \textit{meretrix} and noblewoman, contain slavish and masterly elements. Propertius differs significantly from Tibullus and Ovid in the amount of attention he pays to the mistress in poems that feature \textit{seruitium amoris}.\textsuperscript{6} Propertius is willing to explore the contradictions in her character and the power and agency her role as owner-mistress could bring to a much greater extent than Tibullus in his treatment of Delia or Nemesis, or, even more so, Ovid in his treatment of Corinna.

Tibullus’ \textit{seruitium amoris} focuses on humiliation above all else, by detailing his lover-poet’s experience of servile tasks, bondage, and punishment. To better emphasize the difference between the two poets’ approaches, I will focus my discussion on how these elements that are prominent in Tibullus’ work interact with the depiction of the \textit{puellae} in connection with \textit{seruitium amoris}. 1.5.61-66 is the first reference to specific services

\textsuperscript{4} On the role of oppressive or dangerous cultural forces in disidentification, see Muñoz 1999, 55.  
\textsuperscript{5} For the historical courtesan, see Davidson 1997 and McClure 2003.  
\textsuperscript{6} I will focus on comparing Propertius’ depiction of the mistress with respect to \textit{seruitium amoris} to that of Tibullus rather than Ovid, for two reasons. The first is that Propertius and Tibullus were contemporaries who undoubtedly reacted to and were influenced by each other’s work (Solmsen 1961; Lyne 1980, 183; Lyne 1998; Knox 2005), and the second is the general consensus that Ovid’s Corinna is a shadowy figure and that Ovid was even less concerned than his predecessors to create an individual portrait in her (Buchan 1995).
performed by the Tibullan lover-poet, and is the most recognizable as an example of *seruitium amoris*:

*pauper erit praesto semper tibi, pauper adibit
primus et in tenero fixus erit latere.
pauper in angusto fidus comes agmine turbae
subicietque manus efficietque uiam.
pauper ad occultos furtim deducet amicos
uinclaque de niueo detrahet ipse pede.*

The services themselves range from those that might be required of a client, such as accompanying the patron-*puella* in public (63-64), to those that are undoubtedly servile, such as removing the mistress’ footwear (66). This passage provides one of the first examples in elegy of a phenomenon that also existed historically, the blurring of the boundaries between the roles of clients, especially poor ones (emphasized by the repetition of *pauper* in 61, 63, and 65), and of slaves, which was perceived to be particularly problematic in the late republic. This situation caused a great deal of anxiety, as can be seen in *Ep.* 1.7, where Horace considers the balance of freedom and support that a writer needs, a problem which he illustrates with a number of examples, including one of a disastrous patron/client relationship that leaves the formerly independent client servile and desperate (46-95). Since a slave lacked the self-determination and citizen status that were essential to Roman masculinity, the imposition of slave-like behaviours on a free client was problematic, and even more so if the patron-figure were a lower-status woman.

Tibullus, however, unlike Propertius, undermines the transgressive power dynamic implicit in his lover-poet’s servitude/client-ship to Delia and, later, to his second mistress, Nemesis, by never representing either of them as actively carrying out the superior roles of owner/mistress or patron of the lover-poet in his poems, beyond the use of the word *domina*. Delia receives his services in 1.5, but her actions in the poem align her with a *mater familias*.

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7 All quotations from Tibullus are from Maltby 2002.
9 Although the lover-poets’ claims of poverty are dubious; see James 2001 for this topic.
10 Cf. Gold (1987, 126-130) and Bowditch (1994) on issues of patronage in *Ep.* 1.18; Fitzgerald (2000, 73) refers to the lover-poet as “a lightning rod for all the floating dis-ease with the increasing servility of social relationships.”
or domina of a household, in that she provides services to Messalla, rather than receiving them herself (Tib. 1.5.31-34):

huc ueniét Messalla meus, cui dulcia poma  
Delia selectis detrahát arboribus,  
et tantum ueneráta uirum hunc sedulá curet,  
huic paret atque epulas ipsa ministra gerat.

The lover-poet imagines her as serving his own patron, thereby casting her in a suitably inferior feminine role and using her to absolve himself from slavish service to a superior, something that could potentially undermine his masculinity.\(^\text{11}\) Delia exists in this poem as an attractive prop and not much more.

In book 2, the situation changes somewhat, as Tibullus focuses his seruitium amoris on the servitude of the lover-poet to his new mistress, Nemesis, who is cruel and greedy and therefore more actively elegiac\(^\text{12}\) than Delia, whose caprice and greed are blamed on her lena (1.5.47-60). As we shall see, however, starting with her first appearance in Tib. 2.3, even Nemesis lacks mastery. Here she is associated with exotic luxury and suggestions of greed (2.3.51-58):\(^\text{13}\)

ut mea luxuria Nemesis fluat utque per urbem  
incedat donis conspicienda meis.  
illa gerat uestes tenues quas femina Coa  
textuit auratas disposituque uias.  
illi sint comites fusci quos India torment  
Solis et admotis inficit ignis equis.  
illi selectos certent praebere colores  
Africa puniceum purpureumque Tyros.

Nemesis, although she is not given much of a personality, is certainly characterized as an elegiac mistress by her expensive tastes, including the uestes Coae that Cynthia favours. Yet even in this poem, which includes the longest passage in Tibullus on a lover as slave,

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\(^{11}\) Hemelrijk (2004, 194-97) explains the importance of powerful, potentially transgressive women maintaining success in domestic and feminine pursuits in order to avoid criticism from others and potentially emasculating their husbands.  
\(^{12}\) Or epigrammatic, as Nemesis appears as a force of retribution against proud lovers in AP 5.273, 9.260, 11.326, 12.140, 141, 193, and 229 (Maltby 2002, 44). The anonymous AP 9.146 opposes Nemesis and Hope, an opposition that Tibullus draws on at 2.6.20-28 (Cairns 1979, 185).  
\(^{13}\) Bright (1978, 226-27) argues that Nemesis is Delia “stripped of the emotional trappings,” so it is not surprising that in matters of mastery she is as passively and peripherally involved as Delia, despite her apparently stronger personality.
Nemesis is not really depicted as the owner-mistress of her slave-lover any more than Delia is in 1.5, and she is even less active in the poem, appearing as the passive bearer of luxury, while at least Delia performs services to Messalla.

Nemesis appears again as a *domina* at Tib. 2.4.1-6:

\[
\text{Sic mihi seruitium uideo dominamque paratam:}
\]
\[
\text{iam mihi, libertas illa paterna, uale.}
\]
\[
\text{seruitium sed triste datur, teneorque catenis,}
\]
\[
\text{et numquam misero unclae remittit Amor,}
\]
\[
\text{et seu quid merui seu nil peccauimus, urit.}
\]
\[
\text{uror: io, remoue, saeua puella, faces.}
\]

In this poem, the lover-poet details what he would be willing to endure to escape the torments of his *seruitium*, but begins by presenting a succinct and clear expression of *seruitium amoris*, containing nearly all the words and images that together constitute the trope. Thus, *seruitium* appears twice (1 and 3); the mistress is called *domina* (1); chains (3), bonds (4), fire (5-6), and torture (6) are all present; and the lover-poet explicitly refers to his loss of freedom (2). The contrast between *libertas paterna* and the chains and torture of the following couplets emphasizes the lover-poet’s degradation, which is further underlined by tracing its source to the greed of women, which is detailed in the central section of the poem (13-44). Apart from this discussion of her greed, however, Nemesis herself does not appear until the last couplet of the poem, nor does she have an active role in the enslavement of the lover-poet at the beginning of the poem.

Tibullus’ *seruitium amoris* focuses on the degradation and humiliation of servitude and places his lover-poet in the feminized role of a slave, a counter-identification in which he loses the privileges of a freeborn man and submits to treatment suitable for slaves, even voluntarily offering to take on servile duties in order to please or gain access to his mistress. This is a potential transgression of Roman gender roles by the inversion of power in which Tibullus claims his lover-poet partakes, but it is undermined by the absence of mastery in the

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14 See Kennedy (1992, 31-34) for the shifting meaning of *libertas* in the late Republic and early Augustan period and its ideological importance.

15 Cicero (*Parad.* 36) shows a mainstream attitude to submission to a woman’s power that also emphasizes the incongruity of such service with freedom; cf. Hillard 1989, 166.
depiction and behaviour of the *puellae*. Neither Delia nor Nemesis actively enslaves the lover-poet, nor do they personally oversee his torments, except possibly at 2.4.6, when he asks Nemesis to take away the torches that burn him. The conclusion of Tibullus’ second book, moreover, undermines his earlier protestations of servitude, as the lover-poet abandons the life of love for military service and the fulfillment of his masculine duty. Tibullus uses *seruitium amoris* to make love seem unsavoury and emasculating, thereby implicitly supporting the dominant ideology of Roman masculinity and public life, as counter-identities often do, whether intentionally or not. But he is careful to avoid situations in which the *puellae* are truly in control, so that the lover-poet can safely explore positions of servitude in the amatory world without permanently compromising his masculinity. Tibullus, unlike Propertius, does not construct his lover-poet as a disidentifying subject with respect to *seruitium amoris*. His use of the trope is more of a straightforward counter-identification involving a role reversal for him but no real disruption to the traditional hierarchy of power and gender. Tibullus does not provide the same challenges to genre and contemporary social constructions that I will argue that Propertius does in his employment of this figure.

My discussion of Ovid will be brief, only considering a few poems that bear striking similarities to or significant differences from Tibullus or Propertius. Like other aspects of earlier elegy, *seruitium amoris* becomes a conceit in Ovid, and is used as a signpost for elegy and elegiac love. The first instance appears at *Am.* 1.2.17-18 when Ovid, like Propertius, uses *seruitium* as a synonym for *amor: acrius inuitos multoque ferocius urget,/ quam qui seruitium ferre fatentur, Amor*. At this point, the Ovidian lover-poet has yet to acquire a *puella* to focus his love upon, but is instead simply suffering from love in the abstract. This situation emphasizes the parodic nature of this *seruitium* and its metaliterary symbolism.

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16 Fitzgerald (2000, 73) argues that the fictional world of elegy allows the poet to explore servitude in an unthreatening way.
17 James (2001, 239) argues that the *puella* is well aware that the lover-poet can always return to what he has rejected, and Fear (2005) argues that elegiac pursuits are restricted to the period of youth and eventually abandoned by the lover-poet; cf. Gardner (forthcoming).
18 Lyne 1979, 128.
At Am. 1.7.28, Ovid combines servile punishment with the divinity of the mistress: *debita sacrilegae uincla subite manus*.\(^{19}\) It is rather stunning, however, to have this conceit appear in a poem that depicts the lover-poet’s remorse after an act of physical violence against the *puella*, because physical violence is used on slaves, not masters. The physical violence is very revealing about the nature of *seruitium amoris* and elegiac tropes in general in the Ovidian corpus; as literary conceit, they prevent any social challenge to the lover-poet’s masculine privilege. The idea of physical violence against a beloved appears in Tib. 1.10 and is criticized in Prop. 2.5.21-26, but neither undertakes such an action in the context of *seruitium amoris*. Am. 1.7 is one of many Ovidian poems in which the historical realities of the lives of women who might engage in such love affairs intrude into the elegiac world.\(^{20}\) By placing the slavery metaphor here, Ovid subtly undermines it by reminding us that the lover’s servitude was voluntary and limited and that he had the power to mistreat his beloved, with no real recourse for her if he did.\(^{21}\)

*Amores* 2.7 and 2.8 represent a different way of looking at slavery in love, with an actual slave of the mistress acting as a rival to her.\(^{22}\) As in 1.7, this pair of poems brings evidence of historical unbalanced power relations, which are usually elided in elegy, into play, with the lover-poet lying to his mistress and threatening the slave.\(^{23}\) A slave was extremely vulnerable to abuse of all kinds, in this case to the physical abuse that the mistress would undoubtedly visit upon her if the lover-poet told her of their actions and the sexual abuse that is implied by the lover-poet’s threats to her at 2.8.21-28.\(^{24}\) These poems leave the

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\(^{19}\) Murgatroyd 1981, 602.

\(^{20}\) See McGinn 1998 and 2004 for an overview of Roman prostitution.

\(^{21}\) On violence against courtesans, see James 2005, 293 and against prostitutes in general, McGinn 2004, 86-90. McGinn (1998, 326) cites Cato (Gell. 9.12.7) and Cicero (Cic. *Planc*. 30) as support for suggesting that prostitutes were not covered by laws against *uis* or rape.

\(^{22}\) Fitzgerald 2000, 63. Cf. Henderson 1991 on reading these poems.

\(^{23}\) Davis (1977, 100) argues that the reader should not be offended by Ovid’s intimidation of slaves for his own ends precisely because he has removed it from the real world, but this interpretation is difficult to support in light of Ovid’s frequent use of “real world” touches to undermine the elegiac scenario.

impression of a manipulative lover-poet who uses the two women in equally exploitative, if somewhat different, ways.

The *Ars Amatoria* contains several sections suggesting services that could be performed to win girls over, including 1.151-62, on attentive behaviour at the races, and most of all 2.197-232, on the services and behaviour of impoverished lovers, which, like those in Tibullus, range from the servile (removing her shoes, 212, and holding a mirror, 216) to those of a client (accompanying her in a crowd, 210, attending her in the Forum, 223-24). At 227-28, Ovid’s poet-praeceptor explicitly orders the lover to attend his mistress *pro seruo*: *nocte domum repetens epulis perfuncta rehbit:/ tum quoque pro seruo, si uocat illa, ueni*. Ovid explains this service as a means of artfully undermining the mistress’ defenses, as 177-78 illustrates: *si nec blanda satis nec erit tibi comis amanti,/ perfer et obdura: postmodo mitis erit*; additionally, the following three couplets (179-84) all recommend *obsequium* as the way to overcome obstacles.

Overall, Ovid’s use of *seruitium amoris* falls into three inter-related categories: as a generic marker which situates his work in the context of Latin erotic elegy; as a literary device to highlight the incongruity between the elegiac world and the historical demimonde; and as a stratagem for gaining mastery over the feelings of the beloved. While drawing on the images established by both his elegiac predecessors, he differs from Propertius in his lack of focus on the character and mastery of the beloved but probably draws on the disidentification of the Propertian lover-poet with the masculine roles in elegy and mainstream Roman society in his overt display of the contradictions between idealized elegiac love and the conduct of young Roman men.

Propertius’ *seruitium amoris* is recognizably the same trope as in Tibullus and Ovid, but I will argue that his treatment of it is distinct from theirs and produces a noticeably different effect. When Propertius focuses on humiliation, it tends to be related to the lover-

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poet’s feelings about his abject servitude and to the enslaved lover’s inability to speak his mind. Propertius’ treatment of *seruitium amoris* lacks detailed descriptions of the services rendered by the lover-poet/slave and only rarely draws on the imagery of torture and violence associated with love’s slavery in Tibullus and with Roman slavery in general. Instead, Propertius, when not using the trope in passing as a kind of metalinguistic shorthand for elegiac love affairs in general, tends to focus on socio-political issues of freedom and speech, or their lack. This is central to his exploration of masculinity, since freedom was an essential part of Roman masculinity, while enslavement was an effeminized state, regardless of the biological sex of the slave. Propertius generally distances the lover-poet from explicit identification with actual slaves, while still exploiting the complications to successful Roman masculinity that the state of enslavement brings.

A central difference between Propertius and the other Roman elegists lies in the depiction of the mistress. For Cynthia, unlike the other elegiac *puellae*, while not precisely characterized as an owner-mistress, displays elements of mastery and at the very least a presence that the other mistresses lack, even if her character traits do not combine to make one coherent individual. Cynthia’s position as *domina* can appear to put her in an unambiguously higher position than the lover-poet, but this is undermined by the occasional suggestions of her lower social status and by a few depictions of her as enslaved, since Propertius does not unproblematically identify his lover-poet with a *seruus amoris*. I argue that the contradictions and difficulties in her character are not unlike those in the lover-poet’s and that both are a result of the strategies of disidentification that Propertius exhibits in his work.

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27 For freedom and its lack: 1.1.27-28, 2.23.23-24. Lyne (1979, 126) notes that the lack of freedom to speak is a sign of slavery in Propertius.
29 Nixon (1999, 60) discusses the engagement with dominant cultural texts by formerly colonized subjects, specifically that they may find them compelling but insist on engaging with them on their own terms. Propertius’ lover-poet, while not exactly a colonized subject, is a minoritarian subject (Muñoz 1999, 5), as I have argued above (chapter 1), and part of the construction of his character comes from engaging with dominant cultural texts in a way similar to that of the authors Nixon examines. Butler’s (2003, 223) work on reappropriation of terms of defamation also informs my reading of Propertius’ *seruitium amoris*.
In his first book, Propertius establishes a pattern for the use of *seruitium amoris* that will continue in the following three books. He activates the themes of patronage, master/slave relationships, and freedom of speech to connect his characters to a complex of social conventions relating to gender roles and their slippage, to the elision of the boundaries between the actions and behaviours associated with slavery and *clientela*, and even to the renegotiation of the position and power of the elite under the newly established principate.\(^3^1\) Further, he distinguishes himself from his contemporary Tibullus by avoiding paying more than glancing attention to the details of servitude; his *seruitium* is both less literal and more embedded in the socio-political context in which he writes. He differs from Tibullus as well in the clear and detailed pictures he draws of Cynthia in connection with *seruitium amoris*. Unlike in the case of Delia or Nemesis, Cynthia’s behaviour in several of the poems suggests active engagement in the servitude of the lover-poet and others.

The most sustained treatment of *seruitium amoris* in book 1 comes in the closely related poems 1.4 and 1.5, beginning with the first lines of 1.4 (1-4):

\begin{verbatim}
Quid mihi tam multas laudando, Basse, puellas
mutatum domina cogis abire mea?
quid me non pateris uitae quocumque sequetur
hoc magis assueto ducere seruitio?
\end{verbatim}

In these lines, the appearance of the word *seruitium* makes it clear that this is a state of slavery. Cynthia has been called *domina* before, in the opening poem (1.1.21), but here for the first time she appears explicitly as a slave-mistress.\(^3^2\) In 1.4, moreover, the lover-poet focuses considerably more attention on Cynthia than on his own slavery. Her qualities as an elegiac mistress are emphasized in this poem, as she is called more beautiful than heroines of old, as well as graceful and sexually thrilling (5-14). While this characterization does little

\(^{3^1}\) This concern with issues of identity and definition is akin to that seen in English literature and its use in colonial contexts, particularly since colonial administrators explicitly compared themselves to Romans undertaking Romanization (Childs 1999, 4). These colonizers were as much concerned with defining “Englishness” as with other identities (1-3).

\(^{3^2}\) Use of the word *domina* to describe a beloved first appears at Catullus 68.156 (Murgatroyd 1981, 595), a poem that is widely regarded as one of the most important immediate precursors of Latin love elegy and which also calls Lesbia *candida diu* (70), although the themes of the mistress’ divinity and of *seruitium amoris* are not given further attention by Catullus (Dyson 2007, 269).
besides put her in the literary category of a mistress or courtesan, it does have the effect of creating an actual character to whom the lover-poet is enslaved.

The other side of the character of the elegiac mistress, however, also appears, when her fury, jealousy, and vengefulness are described in 1.4.17-28. Cynthia’s rage will be a recurring topic in Propertius’ poetry, and is something that the lover-poet both fears and desires.\(^{33}\) In 1.3, Cynthia’s rage was directed at the lover-poet because of his infidelity, but here we see that her anger can also encompass other targets. The commonality between the lover-poet in 1.3 and Bassus in 1.4 is clear: each earns Cynthia’s fury by causing the lover-poet to be unfaithful, as the lover-poet warns at 1.4.17-18 (*non impune feres: sciet haec insana puella/ et tibi non tacitis uocibus hostis erit*). One of the punishments that Cynthia will bring about (21-22: *et te circum omnis alias irata puellas/ differet: heu nullo limine carus eris!* ) is fit for an elegiac lover, since she will make him an *exclusus amator* with other *puellae*, but the others are less straightforward. The statement (19-20: *nec tibi me post haec committet Cynthia nec te/ quaeret; erit tanti criminis illa memor*) that Cynthia will no longer commit the lover-poet to Bassus nor seek him out suggests that they have some sort of relationship, one which will now cease because she is his enemy (*hostis*, 18). The idea of entrusting (*committere*, 19) someone to another is reminiscent of, if not precisely the same as, the language used by the elite when recommending the interests of someone, often a client, to an equal or superior.\(^{34}\) This is the first indication in the corpus that, as well as being a figurative and literal *domina*, Cynthia may also be seen as a patron, with Bassus figured as a rival and perhaps a former friend who has betrayed her interests. This characterization of Cynthia as a patron adds a more complex dimension to her character and puts her into closer contact with Roman social relations.

\(^{33}\) Greene 2005a, 234. For poems featuring the anger of Cynthia (or an unnamed mistress who may be Cynthia), see 1.3, 1.18, 2.5, 2.29, 3.8, 3.15, 3.16, 3.23, 4.8.

\(^{34}\) *Commendo* is generally used in this sense (*Cic. Fam.* 13.53.1; *Sall. Cat.* 35.6) and may have been the usual term, but there is also an example from Terence that pairs *commendo* and *committero* (*Eu.* 886). This last example is particularly intriguing, as it is used by a young lover entrusting himself to a courtesan, whom he says he takes as a *patrona* (*Eu.* 885-87). Cf. Cotton 1984, 418-22.
This early association of Cynthia with patronage is given added strength at 1.8.40, one of Propertius’ characteristically brief references to *seruitium amoris* and another example of how servile experience in Propertius can also evoke patronage. Here, the lover-poet says that Cynthia was won over by *blandi carminis obsequio*. *Obsequia* can be associated with slavery, but are more regularly performed by clients.35 This merging of the duties of slaves and clients recalls the issue discussed above with respect to Tib. 1.5.61-66, a considerably clearer example of this tendency. The lover-poet’s masculinity is already undermined by his servile status with respect to his mistress, a woman and (probably) a social inferior, but the association of the mistress with the patron-client relationship further complicates his gender identity. As I have already suggested, there was concern among contemporary Romans that the inferior role of a client could be emasculating, an issue I will consider at greater length later in this chapter. By moving this concern to the elegiac world, Propertius both provides a space to explore the implications of servility in clients and also creates an extreme situation in which the patron is, by traditional standards, unworthy.

After introducing the idea of Cynthia as patron, the next couplet of 1.4 focuses on Cynthia’s sorrow (23-24: *nullas illa suis contemnet fletibus aras,/ et quicumque sacer qualis ubique lapis*) and returns her to a more elegiac realm, although one in which the mistress rather than the lover-poet is doing the weeping.36 The following lines (25-27: *non ullo grauius temptatur Cynthia damno/ quam sibi cum rapto cessat amore deus:/ praecipue nostri*), however, return to her anger and go beyond characterizing her as an elegiac mistress to a slave-mistress, as is earlier suggested by the use of *seruitium* and *domina* in the opening couplets of the poem. Cynthia, like any sensible slave-mistress, does not take kindly to other

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35 See Konstan 1995 for the difficulty of precisely defining the role and duties of a client, although this article concentrates on the difference between clients and friends; also see Saller 1989 for a more general treatment of the question of what patronage was in the late Republic and empire. George (2005, 42) identifies *fides* and *obsequium* as the most valuable attributes of a slave.

36 See chapter two for Cynthia’s sorrow.
people interfering with her property.  

Her anger in this poem is expressly directed not against the lover-poet but rather against the interfering Bassus. Bassus is not exactly characterized as a lover, but he does praise girls (1), suggesting that he is at least susceptible to love, which in Propertius’ world-view means that he is at least potentially bound by *seruitium amoris*, and as a result Cynthia’s anger can be directed at him. The cause of Cynthia’s anger is the threat to the lover-poet’s fidelity that Bassus poses, as is made clear by the couplet that comes between the sections of the poem on Cynthia’s beauty and attributes and on her anger and sorrow, in which the lover-poet asserts their mutual love and fidelity against Bassus’ attempts to undermine them (15-16: *quo magis et nostros contendis soluere amores,/ hoc magis accepta fallit uterque fide*). Bassus is not precisely a rival to Cynthia, but he does seem to constitute an obstacle to the elegiac couple.

Cynthia’s abuse of a slave who is a rival to her for the lover-poet’s affections in a more literal sense than Bassus was in 1.4 emphasizes the different ways she treats actual slaves and free men, and reminds us of the real differences between slavery and “servile” client-ship. In 3.15, Cynthia is jealously tormenting the lover-poet’s first mistress, Lycinna. The poem does not clarify Lycinna’s social status, but she has been identified as Cynthia’s slave on the basis of the poem’s mythological exemplum and in comparison with Ov. *Am.* 2.7 and 2.8. More interesting is the glimpse that we are given of Cynthia’s harassment of a rival, or at least of someone she views as a rival, and Cynthia’s anger. Propertius does not provide details concerning Cynthia’s behaviour towards Lycinna, but the mythological exemplum features a jealous woman who physically abuses the slave girl that she perceives as her rival. This is considerably different from Cynthia’s treatment of Bassus, who will suffer the torments of a rejected lover and the loss of her trust but not outright physical abuse. Cynthia is angered in both poems by doubts about the lover-poet’s fidelity, as 3.15.45 (*fabula*

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37 There are several examples of slave-owners attempting to recover runaway slaves in Cicero’s letters, e.g. *Fam.* 13.77.3, *Q. fr.* 1.2.14.; P. Turner 41, P. Oxy. 1643, and P. Oxy. 1423 also provide historical examples of slave-owners, the first of whom is female, attempting to recover runaway slaves.

38 Fedeli 1985, 471.
nula tuas de nobis concitet auri) shows, but her treatment of Lycinna and of Bassus reflect the gender and class standings of the two different rivals.\textsuperscript{39} Bassus occupies the role of a lover, usually a male, if not masculine, role in elegy, and of a member of the elite who has a homosocial relationship of friendship with the lover-poet but who also seems to be in some ways an equal of Cynthia.\textsuperscript{40} Cynthia is depicted as treating the slave rival Lycinna, an inferior to her, in a different manner that is more suited to the latter’s status and that identifies Cynthia with a literal (also mythical and royal) domina.

Cynthia’s mastery and the lover-poet’s homosocial relationships with other men, key themes of 1.4, are also important in the next poem to be discussed in detail, 1.5, which contains the most extensive treatment of a recognizably elegiac seruitium in Propertius. There, the lover-poet imagines sharing his servitude with another man, his friend and fellow poet Gallus (1.5.19-20): \textit{tum graue seruitium nostrae cogere puellae/ discere et exclusum quid sit abire domum}. Propertius uses the same word to describe the state he imagines that Gallus will share as he did to describe his own state in 1.4, \textit{seruitium}. This poem differs from 1.4, however, in concentrating more explicitly on the misery of the lover/slave.

The lover-poet also, however, still focuses on Cynthia, insisting on her uniqueness, describing her as unlike flighty girls (7: \textit{non est illa uagis similis collata puellis}). Propertius thereby unmoors her from the standard representation of the elegiac mistress, as it suggests that she does not capriciously change her lovers. This implication is strengthened by the suggestion that any attempt to steal her affections from the lover-poet will lead to her fury (8: \textit{molliter irasci non solet illa tibi}). The next four lines promise that even if Gallus is successful he will take on the sufferings of an elegiac lover (1.5.9-12):

\begin{verbatim}
quod si forte tuis non est contraria uotis,  
at tibi curarum milia quanta dabit!  
non tibi iam somnos, non illa relinquet ocellos;  
illa feros animis alligat una uiros.
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{39} Cf. McClintock (1995, 3-8) on the gendered experience of imperialism and colonialism, which, while not exactly like the experience of slavery in the Roman era, can provide a starting point for considering issues of gender under somewhat similar circumstances.

\textsuperscript{40} Sedgwick 1992.
Here we see the *curarum milia*,41 among which is the inability to sleep, suffered by other Propertian lovers (e.g. 2.22.47, 2.25.47, 3.20.22) and used by Ovid (*Am. 1.2.3-4*) as a generic marker of elegiac love. Line 12 also includes one of Propertius’ characteristically brief allusions to the torments of slavery, as he warns that Cynthia binds (*alligat*) men.42 These lines interweave Cynthia’s anger, the lover’s servitude, and the afflictions suffered by elegiac lovers, themes that will continue throughout this poem.

In 1.5, the lover-poet describes a mistress who is dangerous whether she looks upon her lover with anger or acceptance, and who is quick to punish any transgressions. Real slave-mistresses could be a danger to their slaves whether or not they were close to them, and while the closeness of the personal slave to the mistress could have advantages, it also meant they were more likely to become the object of their owner’s anger.43 In elegy, the abuse of personal slaves is implied in Ov. *Am.* 1.14.16-18, 2.7 and 2.8, but we can also see this in Propertius, through Cynthia’s relationship to her (or perhaps the lover-poet’s) slaves. In 4.7, most of the abuse is meted out by the lover-poet’s new mistress, who torments the dead Cynthia’s loyal slaves (41-46). Cynthia herself, however, demands punishment for Lygdamus, the slave she accuses of poisoning her (*Lygdamus uratur*, 35) and who returns in 4.8, where Cynthia is represented as punishing Lygdamus, whom she blames for her misfortunes (67-69, 79-80). This aspect of Cynthia’s anger, one which inflicts physical punishments that are reminiscent of those inflicted upon historical slaves, has similarities to and differences from her physical mistreatment of the lover-poet.

Thus, Propertius depicts Cynthia physically abusing the lover-poet before she punishes Lygdamus at 4.8.63-70:

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Cynthia gaudet in exuuiis uictrixque recurrit
et mea peruersa sauciat ora manu,
imponitque notam collo morsuque cruentat,
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41 *Cura* is often used in connection with elegiac love by Propertius, e.g., at 1.1.36, 1.15.31, 2.25.1.
42 The imagery of binding could also be used to suggest magic. For magic and love in Propertius, see Papanghelis 1987, chapter 3, esp. 37-40.
43 Bradley 1987, 123.
praecipueque oculos, qui meruere, ferit.
atque ubi iam nostris lassauit brachia plagis,
Lygdamus ad plutei fulcra sinistra latens
eruitur, geniumque meum protractus adorat.
Lygdame, nil potui: tecum ego captus eram. 70

The lover-poet avoids identifying with the master’s position and endures treatment from his mistress that mainstream Roman masculinity would not allow. Moreover, he endures abuse from Cynthia at the same time as he depicts her as active, angry, and masterly. A number of details separate the lover-poet from the actual slave here, however, despite his assertion at 70 that he is *tecum captus*. The actual injuries that he is said to have suffered are similar to those in 3.8, a poem that is a depiction of a violent lovers’ quarrel and lacks any suggestion of *seruitium amoris*. At 3.8.6-7 the lover-poet offers to suffer a scratched face and threats of injury to his eyes (*et mea formosis unguibus ora nota,/ tu minitare oculos subiecta exurere flamma*), and at 21-22 he brags about the bites on his neck and the bruises he has sustained (*in morso aequales uideant mea uulnera collo:/ me doceat liuor mecum habuisse meam*). In 3.8, the lover-poet considers the *puella*’s violent actions a sign of her love (3.8.9-10: *nimirum ueri dantur mihi signa caloris:/ nam sine amore graui femina nulla dolet.*) and part of her attraction for him (1-2, 23-28, 33-34), as her anger is also attractive at 4.8.52 (*furibunda decens*).44

This comparative evidence suggests that although the torments inflicted upon the lover-poet in 4.8 are not necessarily those that a man who performed traditional masculinity would willingly suffer or enjoy, they are also not slavish; there is no suggestion of chains, whips, or implements of torture, unlike in Tibullus’ descriptions of torment. Further, although the lover-poet at 4.8.70 equates himself with Lygdamus, the preceding line suggests that the slave himself does not see the lover-poet that way, but rather as a superior who may intercede for him: *geniumque meum protractus adorat.*45 Lygdamus serves the lover-poet as

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44 Greene (2005a, 234) identifies Cynthia’s anger as a source of pleasure to her and the lover-poet.
45 For slaves addressing free people to intercede on their behalf with their masters, see D.C. 54.23, which recounts the famous story of Augustus intervening for a slave whom Vedius Pollio was about to feed to his eels; and Petr. 30.7-8.
a proxy, scapegoat, and co-conspirator, but Propertius sharply distinguishes his lover-poet from the only named male slave in his corpus and therefore from the historical experience of slavery.

1.9.1-4 also causes the elegiac world to interact with the experience of slaves, although in this case with a slave who is a man’s mistress:

Dicebam tibi uenturos, irrisor, amores,  
nec tibi perpetuo libera uerba fore:  
ecce iaces supplexque uenis ad iura puellae  
et tibi nunc quaeuis imperat empta modo.

The fact that Ponticus, the addressee of this poem and an epic poet who had previously mocked elegiac love, has now submitted to the rule of a girl is made even more humiliating by her identification as an actual slave, *empta modo* (1.9.4). The mention of the slave-girl’s status, however, reminds the reader of the actual state of slavery, and admits the unsightly world of purchased sex into the idealized world of elegy, as the reader may wonder how “enslaved” a man could be to a recently purchased slave girl, who may have been chosen specifically for her sexual attractions. In the course of the poem, the lover-poet suggests that the course of love will not run easy for long and predicts the *puella’s* future anger, but it is clear from line 25 (*nec te decipiat, quod sit satis illa parata*) that she is currently submitting to her master-lover, as would be required of a slave. This *puella*, at least, does not exhibit the elements of mastery, fury or even individuality of Cynthia, and so she provides an instructive contrast to the relationship between Cynthia and the lover-poet. It is also significant that this case of a free man depicted in amatory servitude to a slave woman does not directly involve the lover-poet. Propertius introduces the issue of masters’ sexual relations with slaves, but does not implicate his own lover-poet in these déclassé relations.

He is perfectly capable of drawing a *puella* who lacks mastery, despite being the object of a man’s *seruitium amoris*, but she is not Cynthia.

47 Bradley 1994, 49.
48 Cf. McClintock 1995, chapter 2 for a comparable period of eroticization of working women: “the peculiarly Victorian and peculiarly neurotic association between work and sexuality.”
The possible elision between the status of free man and slave inherent in the metaphor of *seruitium amoris* is occasionally played out quite literally in Propertius, such as at 2.16.27-28 when a slave turns lover: *barbarus excussis agitat uestigia lumbis* / *et subito felix nunc mea regna tenet!*⁴⁹ The *barbarus* himself, however, is only a hypothetical rival in this poem about a different rival, a praetor who is generally identified as the same man with whom the lover-poet successfully vied in an earlier poem, 1.8. In 1.8, the lover-poet managed to win over Cynthia with his poetic *obsequium*, but elegy 2.16 suggests that it was not a permanent victory. The praetor’s status and wealth both exceed that of the lover-poet, whose loss of Cynthia’s favours as a result of this inferiority only underscores his powerlessness and the relative uselessness of his *seruitium*.⁵⁰ The example of a wealthy freed slave as another potential rival emphasizes the lover-poet’s own degradation. The background of such a rival also serves to show the greed and debasement of the mistress, which makes the lover-poet’s enslavement to her all the more humiliating. Propertius, by equating the freed slave with the praetor through making them both rivals for his mistress, subtly suggests the lover-poet’s superiority to the rich official as well. He also draws the attention of the reader to the state of actual slavery that this theoretical rival experienced by the evocative image of the slave displaying his physical ability for potential buyers at 2.16.27, rather than the metaphorical slavery of the lover-poet, thereby opening up a gulf between historical servitude and *seruitium amoris*.

The image of a slave lover recurs in book 4 at 4.5.51-52: *aut quorum titulus per barbara colla pependit,/ cretati medio cum saluere foro*. These lines revisit the subject of the lover-poet’s complaint in 2.16 about those who were recently slaves gaining acceptance as lovers, but are in the mouth of the *lena* Acanthis, who advises her protégée to accept a slave as a lover, so long as he can pay. The *lena*’s advice includes a list of others the *puella* should

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⁴⁹ Bowditch (2006) provides a reading of this poem that contrasts Cynthia’s demands for exotic gifts with her symbolic opposition to the militarism that provides access to such goods, an issue that I will consider in the next chapter.

accept, including soldiers and sailors, whose professions are among those the lover-poet scorns.\textsuperscript{51} This is designed to illustrate how venal and anti-elegiac the \textit{lena} is, but the example from 2.16, which connects the \textit{barbarus} of lines 27-28 with the \textit{iniuria} and \textit{uitium} committed by the \textit{puella} in later lines (31-32), implies that the \textit{puella} must also bear some of the blame.

Elegy 4.5 continues the elision of difference between slave and free status when it comes to rivals whom the lover-poet disdains, an elision of status that differs from Propertius’ treatment of the lover-poet, who suffers amatory servitude but is spared the concrete experiences of slaves.

This separation of the Propertian lover-poet from the institution of slavery also appears in 1.12, an elegy addressed to unspecified critics of the lover-poet’s \textit{crimen desidiae}, defined as his sorrow at his mistress’ absence and his inability to love anyone else. The \textit{seruitium} of this poem, however, belongs to others (1.12.18): \textit{sunt quoque translato gaudia seruitio}. The joys that he mentions in this line are not for him, however, as he makes clear in the next two lines (1.12.19-20): \textit{mi neque amare aliam neque ab hac desistere fas est:/ Cynthia prima fuit, Cynthia finis erit}. Servitude is mentioned as a general condition for lovers during a lament about the things the lover-poet cannot do, and so the lover-poet’s servitude is not the focus of this poem either. The idea of transferring servitude is a strange one, as slaves certainly had no choice about who they served,\textsuperscript{52} and Propertius therefore moves the literary metaphor still further away from historical slavery and the emasculation and dehumanization that slaves suffered. At the same time, however, he emphasizes the lover-poet’s devotion to Cynthia, so that even though the \textit{seruitium} of 1.12 is not technically the lover-poet’s, his excessive devotion to his mistress emerges as the entire point of the poem, thereby placing the lover-poet in a subordinate and effeminate position.

Another brief example of Propertius’ dissociation of the lover-poet from the vicissitudes of historical slavery may be seen in 1.17. In this poem, the lover-poet has been

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{51} Soldiers: 2.7.14; sailors, 3.7.71. Cf. Tib. 1.1.49-54, 75-78.
\textsuperscript{52} Although under a later law, a magistrate might order a slave who had suffered extreme abuse sold to another master (Gaius, \textit{Inst.} 1.53)
\end{flushleft}
A shipwrecked, and deservedly so, he says, since he ran away from his mistress (1.17.1: *fugisse puellam*). Given the ubiquity of the trope of *seruitium amoris* elsewhere in the Propertian corpus, this could be read as the slave’s flight and subsequent punishment, although of course the punishment of an actual escaped slave would not be shipwreck.53 It is not surprising that Propertius does not allude to punishment more clearly, however, since he generally does not dwell on the physical punishments that slaves endure; in this way his lover-poet retains the element of a free man’s masculinity that keeps his body inviolable.54 The lover-poet, in fleeing from literary servitude, receives a literary punishment, and again the metaphor is distanced from the facts of historical slavery.

2.29, a poem whose deep engagement with strategies of disidentification has been discussed in chapter 1, also puts into circulation the image of the lover-poet as runaway slave (2.29.3-10):

> obuia nescio quot pueri mihi turba minuta
>  uenerat (hos uetuit me numerare timor);
>  quorum alii faculas, alii retinere sagittas,
>  pars etiam uisa est uincla parare mihi.
>  sed nudi fuerant. quorum lasciuior unus
>  ‘Arripite hunc,’ inquit, ‘iam bene nostis eum.
>  hic erat, hunc mulier nobis irata locauit.’
>  dixit, et in collo iam mihi nodus erat.  

The *pueri* (3) are slave-catchers, sent by Cynthia to bind the errant lover-poet with *uincla* and return him to her.55 They also have a *nodus* (10), which they put on the lover-poet’s neck. This is a term that the lover-poet uses in 2.20 to describe the bonds that he would break in order to get to Cynthia (*nodis*, 9). The image of the runaway slave thus coheres with Propertius’ interest in freedom or its lack, since running away could be a slave’s desperate

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53 A common punishment was wearing an inscribed iron collar to identify them if they tried to run away again, *e.g.* ILS 8726; cf. Plb. 1.69.4, and see further Bradley 1994, 127. Flight from slavery is largely absent in the other elegists; even when Tibullus says goodbye to elegy at the end of his second book, it is a return to masculine duty.

54 On the importance for elite men of preserving bodily integrity, see Skinner 1997, 5.

attempt to assert freedom.\textsuperscript{56} In 2.29, however, it is the \textit{pueri}, and through them Cynthia, who characterize the lover-poet as a runaway; his own description of his behaviour differs. In one sense, his behaviour is certainly suspicious for a lover; but it is also suspicious for a slave. The lover-poet says that the \textit{pueri} found him \textit{cum potus nocte uagarer} (1). Slaves were thought to be prone to drunkenness and wandering, in the sense of not returning from errands as quickly as they ought.\textsuperscript{57} The lover-poet at the beginning of 2.29 is not acting as a good lover or a good slave, and so he is temporarily threatened with servile treatment, although, as elsewhere in the corpus, he does not actually experience it.

The elision between free and slave status that can be seen in the lover-poet’s treatment of \textit{seruitium amoris} encourages us to consider the relationship between Cynthia and the lover-poet in terms of patrons and clients or greater and lesser \textit{amici}. In the late republic and early empire, the relationship between client and patron became increasingly one-sided, with the client’s services providing less esteem for himself and more for the patron, rather than the ideal of a reciprocal arrangement.\textsuperscript{58} The negotiation of relationships between those of unequal status had always been difficult, but it became more so as the gap between patrons and clients increased.\textsuperscript{59} There was a danger that this one-sided service could begin to appear servile, and because servility was felt to be emasculating, there was ideological pressure to separate the relations between free men from those between slaves and masters. There also existed, therefore, the potential that relationships between free men of very different status could lead to problems in the maintenance of the masculinity of the lesser party.\textsuperscript{60} These problems could be increased if the patron or higher-status person was a woman, thereby overturning the gender hierarchy.

\textsuperscript{56} Bradley (1994, 126-28) recounts the dangers and challenges involved in the act of running away, beyond any punishment that might accompany being caught, which suggests how strongly a slave must have been motivated, either to escape an intolerable situation or simply to seek freedom, in order even to consider taking on such a trial.


\textsuperscript{59} Brunt 1965. Cf. White 1993, especially chapter one.

\textsuperscript{60} For social problems inherent in patronage relations, see Brunt 1965 and Konstan 1995. For a specifically literary context, see Gold 1987, 2. Cf. Oliensis 1998, chapter one on Horace’s contradictory treatment of social climbers and his own social climbing in the Satires.
Historical evidence for women acting as patrons before the development of the principate is sparse, but there is enough to indicate that the *matronae* of elite families could and did carry out actions similar to those of male patrons, even if they had male relatives who could have taken over these functions.\(^61\) In a pair of letters (*Ad Att.* 15.11.2 and 15.12.1), Cicero represents Servilia as present at private political discussions and as influencing public life, reporting that she promised to influence the contents of a *senatus consultum*.\(^62\) Her attempts to influence public policy were performed privately and on behalf of male relatives, particularly her son. Cicero’s wife Terentia seems to have acted in a similarly indirect way on Cicero’s behalf during his exile.\(^63\) More problematic for Cicero was his acceptance of a loan from a woman who was not related to him, Caerellia, as it brought with it suggestions of impropriety.\(^64\) Certainly throughout Propertius’ lifetime the women of Augustus’ family offered prominent examples of female patrons, especially Livia\(^65\) and to a lesser extent Octavia.\(^66\) All these women differ significantly from Cynthia, of course, in that they are undoubtedly wealthy, aristocratic, and well-connected.\(^67\)

There is evidence from the late republic and the triumviral period for women acting for their husbands in ways that make them not unlike patrons, particularly when the husbands

\(^{61}\) Dixon 1983, 94. Moreover, Keith (2006) shows that there are scattered references suggesting the existence of aristocratic women’s networks that could have some effect on public matters, such as politically significant marriages (*Plu. Cat. Mi.* 30.2-4; *Cic. Att.* 5.17.4; *Fam.* 3.12.2; 8.6.2; *Att.* 5.4.1, 6.1.10), as well as other actions undertaken by women during the triumviral period, including the famous speech of Hortensia (*App. BC* 4.32-34). Keith (2006, 11) argues that the direct political action indicated by the speech shows the breakdown of the effectiveness of women’s networks.


\(^{63}\) Hemelrijk 2004, 191.

\(^{64}\) *Att.* 12.51.3. Cf. *Dio Cassius* (46.18.4), who suggests an adulterous relationship between them.

\(^{65}\) *Dio Cassius* (48.52.4) says that Livia was destined to dominate Octavian and hold his power, and later (55.14.4-8, 15.3, 16.1-21.4) writes a long speech attributed to her in which she advises Augustus and intercedes on behalf of a conspirator (*Sen. Cl. 1.9.2-12 also relates this story*); as well, *Dio* reports several acts of philanthropy on her part (57.16.2, 58.2.3). Purcell (1986, 87) states that Livia was a *patrona* of the *ordo matronarum* and the *ordo equester*, and was part of the network binding the *ordines* to the elite around Augustus. Bartman (1999) examines the place of Livia’s portraiture in Augustus’ political, social, and moral program, arguing (72) for its essential role particularly in the latter two. Cf. Flory 1993. Also see Flory (1984) on Livia’s building program.

\(^{66}\) *Dio Cassius* reports (47.7.4) a story of Octavia interceding on a woman’s behalf to ensure the pardon of her proscribed husband. Bartman (1999, 213) points to the use of Octavia’s portraiture in the propaganda war with Antony in the late 30s BCE, and Flory (1993, 293-94) argues for interpreting the statue voted to her in 35 BCE, along with the grant of *sacrosanctitas*, as more significant politically than the identical honours given to Livia at the same time.

\(^{67}\) Although the noblewoman is part of the construction of Cynthia’s character, she is not consistently portrayed as such.
were under some disadvantage, most often exile.\textsuperscript{68} In these cases, the women may take on decidedly masculine \textit{virtus}, with the accompanying risk of their husbands becoming feminized.\textsuperscript{69} In order for the gender hierarchy to remain untroubled, the women must both act on behalf of their husbands, rather than for themselves, and also continue to succeed in areas of feminine virtue, such as domestic skills, chastity, and familial loyalty.\textsuperscript{70} Propertius was able to draw on the changing social norms regarding the position of women as patrons in his depiction of Cynthia and also upon the potential disruption to gender roles implicit in women’s acts of patronage.

The lack of a distinct boundary between the political and the social that was a feature of elite Roman culture was perceived as particularly problematic in the late republic and triumviral period and led to a blurring of boundaries between male and female roles,\textsuperscript{71} all of which opened up a space in which Propertius could further trouble the territorial assignments of gender by transferring the power and prestige wielded by women of the elite to a woman like Cynthia, who complicates normative gender roles even more by acting in her own interests, rather than in those of the man who claims to be her inferior.\textsuperscript{72} The freedwoman and former mime actress Cytheris/Volumnia provides an historical example that may be

\begin{itemize}
  \item The most famous of these couples are Cicero and Terentia and the husband and wife of the so-called \textit{Laudatio Turiae}; Hemelrijk 2004 also includes Ovid and his wife in this category. App. BC 4.15 and V. Max. 6.7.2-3 tell of wives helping their proscribed husbands.
  \item Hemelrijk 2004, 190-91. Cf. Gunderson (2007) on Cicero’s exile and its effect on gender roles. Hillard (1989) argues that most of the reports that we possess of Roman women wielding public power have their source in political polemic meant to damage the men involved. See Gleason (1999, 75) on the necessity for constant vigilance in the maintenance of masculinity.
  \item Hemelrijk (2004, 192-94), as an example, argues that Fulvia was criticized for failing as a woman, not for succeeding as a man. The so-called \textit{Laudatio Turiae} (CIL VI 1527), which dwells at length on the masculine actions performed by the woman (whose monument it is) in the absence of her husband, also makes reference to her feminine virtues; lines 30-36 of the inscription both sum up her successful performance of womanhood and emphasize the unusual nature of her other actions:

  \begin{verbatim}
  domestica bona pudicit[iae opsequi comitatis facilitatis lanificii stud[ii religionis] sine superstitione
  of[n]atus non conspicendi cultus modici cur [memorem cur dicam de cari]tate familiae pietate [c]um
  aequ[e] matrem meam ac tuos parentes col[ueris non alia mente] illi quam tuis curaueris cetera
  innumerabilia habueris commun[i]a cum omnibus] matronis dignam f[aima sunt tua quae uindico ac [paucae uxor[es in] similia inciderunt ut taliu patenteret et praestarent quae rara ut
  essent [propitia] fortuna cuit.
  \end{verbatim}

  \item Cicero (\textit{Ver.} 2.5.38) and Plutarch (\textit{Luc.} 6.1-4) both record rumours of the illicit control of elite men by courtesans. Cf. Hillard 1989, 167-69.
\end{itemize}
comparable to Cynthia. The inspiration for Gallus’ Lycoris,\(^73\) she accompanied Antony during his official travels in Italy in 49 and greeted him upon his return from campaign in 48, which was considered scandalous at the time.\(^74\) While information about Volumnia’s own behaviour during these travels and any influence she may have wielded over Antony is scarce, the example of Antony’s wife Fulvia may give us further indications about contemporary women’s use of power. Fulvia was roundly criticized for her actions, partly because she failed to be properly feminine in order to balance the masculine roles she took on,\(^75\) and partly because she was believed to be acting in her own interests, rather than strictly in her husband’s.\(^76\) It would not be surprising if similar rumours and criticisms circulated about Volumnia, who had not even the respectability of being Antony’s wife and a member of the elite.\(^77\) The elevation of an elegiac mistress to the position of *domina* is almost by definition a strategy of disidentification, because in her Propertius combines elements of a social inferior with those of a superior to create a new (dis)identity that partakes of both but conforms to neither. While the other elegists downplay this contradiction both by avoiding the creation of a strong character in the mistress and by focusing on the lover’s servitude rather than the mistress’ mastery, Propertius draws out the contradictions and incorporates them into his depiction of Cynthia.

Propertius’ depiction of *seruitium amoris* does not always focus on a *patrona*-like mistress or on her superiority, however; at times it looks more like the *seruitium* favoured by

\(^73\) Serv. *Ecl.* 10.1.
\(^74\) Plut. *Ant.* 9.4. Cic. *Att.* 10.10.5, 10.16.5, *Phil.* 2.58, 61; Cicero (*Fam.* 9.26.2) describes a dinner party given by her *patronus* Volumnius that he and Volumnia both attended, a fact which he seems somewhat scandalized by. Anderson et al. (1979, 152–153) summarize the reports of her behaviour; see now Keith 2011.

\(^75\) Hemelrijk 2004, 192-193.

\(^76\) Dio Cassius (47.8.2) reports that Fulvia caused people to be proscribed on her own behalf, even if Antony had no dealings with them. He also refers to her as the real co-consul of L. Antonius in 41 (48.4.1) and claims that L. Antonius was awarded a triumph through her influence (48.4.3-4). App. *BC* 4.29 suggests that a man was proscribed so that Fulvia could have his house. Delia (1991) argues that Fulvia’s power was probably considerably less than the surviving sources indicate, and that the picture of her that emerges was part of the partisan attacks on Antony by Cicero and later Octavian. She does concede (206), however, that such attacks suggest that their contemporaries perceived women like Fulvia as wielding power, regardless of how accurate these perceptions might have been. See Hallett (forthcoming a) for a study of sources on Fulvia that are contemporary with her lifetime.

\(^77\) Appian (*BC* 5.76), referring specifically to Antony’s love for Octavia, says that he was by nature “excessively fond of women.” Edwards (1993, 85) argues that excessive interest in women, even their wives, could lead to accusations of effeminacy against men if it led to the neglect of their masculine duties.
Ovid as a stratagem for gaining mastery over the feelings of the beloved.\textsuperscript{78} And so the most unusual treatment of \textit{seruitium amoris} in the entire Propertian corpus comes in 2.20, a poem which challenges the limits of this trope and the conventions of the genre. In contrast to the usual depiction of the elegiac mistress, the \textit{puella} of 2.20 (likely Cynthia, given the themes and mythological allusions present in this poem), has been granting the lover-poet free access to her bed for months (2.20.19-28). The poem does not begin with \textit{seruitium amoris}, however, but rather with the mistress weeping over the lover-poet’s infidelity (2.20.1-8). The rest of the poem is devoted to assuring her that he is faithful, and he attributes his fidelity in part to the mildness of his service (\textit{seruitium}) (2.20.19-28):

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{l}
\textit{quod si nec nomen nec me tua forma teneret,} \\
\textit{posset seruitium mite tenere tuum.} & 20 \\
\textit{septima iam plenae deducitur orbita lunae,} \\
\textit{cum de me et de te compita nulla tacent:} \\
\textit{interea nobis non numquam ianua mollis,} & 25 \\
\textit{non numquam lecti copia facta tui.} \\
\textit{nec mihi muneribus nox ulla est empta beatis:} \\
\textit{quidquid eram, hoc animi gratia magna tui.} \\
\textit{cum te tam multi peterent, tu me una petisti:} \\
\textit{possim ego naturae non meminisse tuae?} \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

This account of \textit{seruitium amoris} provides an extraordinary contrast to the descriptions of erotic servitude in the other elegists and to the portrait of the typical character and behaviour of the elegiac mistress that emerges in the elegists.

The lover-poet claims that for seven months the \textit{compita} (crossroads) have been talking about him and his mistress (21-22). While gossip about the lover-poet is not in itself unusual, the content of this gossip certainly is.\textsuperscript{79} The lover-poet claims that he has been granted at least occasional (\textit{non numquam}) access to his mistress’ house and bed (23-24). Her door is described as \textit{mollis}. \textit{Mollis} is an adjective not elsewhere associated with the doors of elegiac \textit{puellae}, which are more frequently characterized as \textit{durus},\textsuperscript{80} but \textit{mollis} is

\textsuperscript{79}A more usual subject of gossip is suggested at 1.5.25-26: \textit{quod si parua tuae dederis uestigia culpae/ quam cito de tanto nomine rumor eris/} and also in 1.6, when the lover-poet chooses love and nequitia over provincial service with his patron Tullus. Cf. Fear 2005, 20.
\textsuperscript{80}E.g. 1.16.18.
frequently associated with the lover-poet, his poetry, and his elegiac lifestyle, and also with the female and effeminate.

Further reversals of the usual elegiac scenario come in the next lines (25-27): *nec mihi muneribus nox ulla est empta beatis:* *quidquid eram, hoc animi gratia magna tui./ cum te tam multi peterent, tu me una petisti.* Here the lover-poet claims that the *puella* received no gifts for her services, and sought out the lover-poet alone, although she had other suitors. The exchange of gifts (*munera*), as well as the mention of *gratia*, bring relations of patronage and/or *liberalitas* into play. As a result, Propertius’ lengthiest treatments of *seruitium amoris* functions, like the lists of services in Ovid and Tibullus, to weaken the line between slaves and clients; in fact, these lines contain one of the highest concentrations of patronage language in the Propertian corpus. 2.20 is very different from *seruitium amoris* as presented in the other elegists or even elsewhere in Propertius, however, since the circumstances described here are almost the opposite of the usual elegiac scenario and a confusing depiction of *seruitium*. Cynthia does not appear consistently as any one type of woman throughout the corpus, but in this poem in particular she acts differently than elsewhere, behaving as the lover-poet claims to want her to. The poem ends with an affirmation of fidelity from the lover-poet, supported in part by the *seruitium mite* that he describes.

In 2.20, Propertius destabilizes the elegiac meaning of *seruitium amoris*. He describes a servitude that enacts the ideal scenario for the elegiac lover, but that seems to mean misery for the elegiac mistress, who begins the poem weeping and believing herself betrayed. This is not all that different from the situation of the historical courtesan who, at least in part, lies behind the mistress. For her, giving her favours without receiving anything in return would be financially disastrous, and lead to misery of a sort. And if we look

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81 I.e. 1.7.19, 2.1.2, 2.22.23, 3.1.19, 3.3.1.
82 Edwards 1993, chapter 2.
84 Gibson 1995, 77 on the *puella*’s power being based on sexual desirability, not like a real patron. For *liberalitas* in the context of love elegy, see McMaster 2010, 149-50.
forward to the advice of Ovid’s *praecceptor amoris*, free access may also lead to boredom on the part of the lover, who has neither social ties nor a sense of challenge to keep him with her, and so her fears about fidelity may be justified as well.

But in overturning the usual form of *seruitium amoris*, Propertius does not simply return to the dominant cultural formation of slavery or of love, because the lover-poet still appears devoted to love and his mistress rather than to any of the careers that were suitable for a man of his class, swearing that he will remain true forever (2.20.29-36):

> tum me uel tragicae uexetis Erinyes, et me inferno damnes, Aeace, iudicio, atque inter Tityi uolucris mea poena uagetur, tumque ego Sisyphio saxa labore geram! ne[c] tu supplicibus me sis uenerata tabellis: ultima talis erit, quae mea prima fides. hoc mihi perpetuo ius est, quod solus amator nec cito desisto nec temere incipio.

Thus Propertius’ lover-poet, even when he disrupts elegiac scenarios, remains committed to them. These lines toy with the idea of suffering, which is not something that Propertius usually details in his depictions of *seruitium amoris*, but the sufferings that the lover-poet is willing to endure are heroic and mythological, rather than Roman and concrete. Tityus and Sisyphus are the great wrongdoers of the underworld, with neither elegiac nor servile resonances, so by comparing himself to them the lover-poet resists the emasculation inherent in servile and even elegiac suffering. The Propertian lover-poet, through his disidentification with male roles, is able to explore elements of servile roles without fully identifying with the emasculated slave, while also resisting traditional models of masculinity.

The picture of *seruitium amoris* in 2.20 is unusual, for elegy in general and Propertius in particular, as the next poem in which an example of the trope appears, 2.23, makes clear. This poem is part of a series (2.22-2.24), in which the lover-poet rejects elegiac love and

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86 *Ars* 3.577-610.
fidelity for more conventional Roman attitude towards love,\(^87\) before he returns to the elegiac viewpoint at the end of 2.24. The circumstances that are rejected in 2.23 are similar to those found elsewhere in connection with elegiac love in general and *seruitium amoris* in particular (2.23.3-12):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ingenuus quisquam alterius dat munera seruo,} \\
\text{ut prommissa suae uerba ferat dominae?} \\
\text{et quaerit totiens ‘Quaenam nunc porticus illam integit?’ et ‘Campo quo mouet illa pedes?’} \\
\text{deinde ubi pertuleris, quos dicit fama, labores} \\
\text{Herculis, ut scribat ‘Muneris ecquid habes?’} \\
\text{cernere uti possui uultum custodis amari,} \\
\text{captus et immunda saepe latere casa?} \\
\text{quam care semel in toto nox uertitur anno!} \\
\text{a pereant, si quos ianua clausa iuuat!}
\end{align*}
\]

These lines bear comparison with the two most extended depictions of *seruitium amoris* in the Propertian corpus, those in 1.5 and 2.20. The *fama* of line 7 recalls the rumor of 1.5.26 but to different effect, since in 1.5 the rumour is started by Cynthia in response to male infidelity, and the *fama* also recalls the *compita nulla tacent* of 2.20.22, in which the gossip is about the favour that Cynthia has shown the lover-poet, rather than the labours he has performed for her. The gifts to the slaves (3) and the written request from the mistress for gifts (8) contrasts with 2.20.25, where the lover-poet uses the same word, *munus*, when he states that he has not had to purchase Cynthia’s favours with presents.\(^88\) Unlike the closed door and guardian of 2.23 and the closed house and rejection of 1.5, in 2.20.23 the lover-poet experiences a door that is *non numquam mollis*. While he complains of how seldom nights are gained and at what great cost at 2.23.11 and predicts that Gallus will often (*quotiens*) experience rejection in 1.5.13, in 2.20 he suggests a greater frequency of success by repeating *non numquam* in lines 23 and 24. 2.23, however, along with the closely related 2.23 and 2.24, rejects the elegiac lifestyle, including *seruitium amoris*. The poet accordingly goes so far as to say *libertas quoniam nulli iam restat amanti,/ nullus liber erit, si quis amare uoleat*

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\(^87\) See chapter 1 for a larger discussion of this set of poems.
\(^88\) See Dixon 1993 on gifts and gift-giving in Roman social relations and McMaster (2010, 140) on elegiac lovers’ gifts.
(23-24). Given the importance of freedom as an element of elite masculinity, and the earlier connection of love with deference to women and slaves, the attitude espoused in this poem seems similar to that of those who follow the conventional elite career. 2.23 urges an attitude towards love that maintains the freedom and autonomy of the male.

The incompatibility of love and freedom appears one final time at 2.30.7-10, in which love is inescapable and transforms a free man into a slave:

\[
\text{instat semper Amor supra caput, instat amanti et grauis ipsa super libera colla sedet.}
\text{excubat ille acer custos et tollere numquam te patietur humo lumina capta semel.}
\]

This poem, in contrast to 2.23, presents the enslavement of the lover in a context that affirms the lover-poet’s devotion to elegy, as Love cannot be avoided. Love is compared to a custos, a position that usually appears in elegy to be filled by a slave or lena who keeps the lover-poet away from his mistress, and is therefore tied into the idea of slavery. Further, the poem refers back to the beginning of the corpus, with the lumina capta of line 10 recalling the first lines of 1.1, in which Cynthia captures the lover-poet with her eyes (cepit ocellis, 1) and Love casts down the lover-poet’s eyes (deiecit lumina, 3), therefore affirming the centrality of servitude to Propertius’ poetic project.

Poems 2.20, 2.23, and 2.30 present a varied and contradictory look at amatory servitude, drawing on the trope of seruitium amoris, the attitudes of the Roman elite towards love, the type of love depicted in Horatian lyric and the suffering experienced in epic. Propertius draws upon multiple sources to construct a multi-faceted picture of seruitium amoris. The final lines from book two to be discussed here, 2.26.21-22 (nunc admirentur, quod tam mihi pulchra puella/ seruiat et tota dicar in urbe potens!), are an extension of the strange seruitium of 2.20 and the rejection of elegiac love in 2.23. These lines depict an

\[89\] Wiseman (1971, 11) argues for Augustus’ senate as particularly welcoming to new men, and later (180) details the offices held by Propertius’ relative, C. Propertius Postumus.
enslaved *puella* and *potens* lover-poet, and the following couplets further associate them with the description of *seruitium* in 2.20 (2.26.23-28):

> non, si Cambysae redeant et flumina Croesi,  
> dicat ‘De nostro surge, poeta, toro.’  
> nam mea cum recitat, dicit se odisse beatos: 25  
> carmina tam sancte nulla puella colit.  
> multum in amore fides, multum constantia prodest:  
> qui dare multa potest, multa et amare potest.

This *puella* gives the lover-poet access to her bed (24) and rejects riches (23) and rich men (25) for the loyalty (27-28) and art of the lover-poet (25-26). Like the *puella* of 2.20, she acts as the lover-poet wants her to, but in this poem as well there are suggestions of her distress, in that she is enslaved to him, and the condition of slavery is one that is associated with suffering in elegy. These depictions of the enslaved or distressed *puella* in 2.20 and 2.26 have the effect of undermining both the lover-poet’s own claims of servitude and the depiction of the mastery of the beloved.\(^9^0\) In this, Propertius engages in disidentification not just with the opposition of slave and master, but with the literary trope of *seruitium amoris* and the characters of elegiac lover and *puella*, who are destabilized and at the same time made more like each other as they each try out the other’s usual role.

The final poem that I will discuss in this chapter, elegy 3.11, provides excuses for the lover-poet’s submission to his mistress by using examples of dominant women from myth and history, and the depiction of these women and their men further articulates Propertius’ view of women’s mastery. The poem makes explicit reference to *seruitium amoris* in the context of the lover-poet’s reflection on his subjection to his mistress (3.11.1-4):

> Quid mirare, meam si uersat femina uitam  
> et trahit addictum sub sua iura uirum,  
> criminaque ignau capitis mihi turpia fingis,  
> quod nequeam fracto rumpere uincla iugo?

Here Propertius alludes to slavery with such images as a woman who controls the lover-poet’s life and keeps him under her rules (1-2) and with the *uincla* and *iugum* that he is

\(^{90}\)The *puella* of 2.26 is unnamed and Papanghelis (1987, 96) argues that this could be any female; the similar circumstances of 2.20 suggest that she is at least Cynthia-like, however, even if not firmly identifiable as Cynthia.
unable to break (4). The use of the word *addictum* has interesting implications here as well. In the Twelve Tables, an *addictus* is someone who has defaulted on debt, leading to his enslavement. This connects the enslaved lover of 3.11 to social unrest, as best illustrated by Propertius’ contemporary Livy’s discussion of the turmoil caused by debt-bondage in the early republic. The most important idea in these opening lines, however, is the mastery of women, since this poem, more than any other, dwells specifically on this topic. The exempla that follow are all implicitly compared to the lover-poet’s mistress, and are of a type that will allow me to introduce as well the concerns of my next chapter, *militia amoris*, and its concommittant negotiation with epic poetry and public service.

The mythological exempla in 3.11 all concern women who behave in ways that complicate their gender, and a number of them also in some way unman the males around them. The first of these is Medea (9-12):

Colchis flagrantis adamantina sub iuga tauros
egit et armigera proelia seuit humo,
custodisque feros clausit serpentis hiatus,
iret ut Aesonias aurea lana domos.

Medea, who is the only woman other than Cleopatra not referred to by name, takes on a thoroughly masculine role in this exemplum; except for the feminine form of her epithet *Colchis* there is no indication that she is female. The exemplum focuses on the heroic acts that her aid allowed Jason to perform, but completely elides him from the story. By making *Colchis* the subject of the actions, the poet increases the reader’s sense of her gender transgressions. Interestingly, both Medea’s magic powers, a generally feminine attribute, and her familial roles, which are deployed elsewhere to emphasize the monstrousness of her

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91 Lex XII II; cf. Gell. 20.1.46.
92 Liv. 2.23-33. Plebian soldiers protested that they fell into debt as a result of being away from their farms for military service, and the lack of response from patricians led to the plebian withdrawal to the Sacred Mount (2.32) and the institution of tribunes of the plebs (2.33).
93 Welch (2005, 125) argues that Propertius does not condemn the submission of Hercules and Antony, but rather sees them as confirmation of the power of the mistress.
94 Goold (1990, 257) translates *Colchis* as “the witch of Colchis” and while this may not be an unreasonable expansion, the word only means “the Colchian woman.” Propertius refers to her magic at 2.1.54, where he also calls her *Colchis*, and uses an adjective from the name of a city in Colchis, Cytaea, to allude to magic at 2.4.7.
actions,\textsuperscript{95} are also left out; she is not called wife, mother, daughter, or sister. This has the effect of dissociating Medea from roles traditionally filled by women, even negative ones such as witch.

The Amazon queen Penthesilea furnishes the second exemplum (13-16):

\begin{verbatim}
ausa ferox ab equo quondam oppugnare sagittis
Maeotis Danaum Penthesilea ratis;
aurea cui postquam nuduit cassida frontem,
ucit uictorem candida forma uirum.
\end{verbatim}

In the first couplet of this exemplum, she is a warrior woman, and therefore by definition a gender transgressor.\textsuperscript{96} Amazons had long constituted a symbol for social disorder, especially in epic poetry.\textsuperscript{97} Propertius makes her elegiac in the second couplet, however, by changing the focus to the power of her beauty: the adjective \textit{candida} is one that is conventionally used of the elegiac \textit{puella}.\textsuperscript{98} The male of this exemplum, Achilles, is unnamed but given a more active role in their interaction, compared to Jason’s absence in the previous exemplum, by being called \textit{victor}.\textsuperscript{99} Penthesilea is a less threatening figure than Medea, despite her martial ability, because her gender transgression ultimately leads to her death. Even though she “conquers” Achilles at her death, her conquest is a feminine one. The overall impression of the exemplum, however, is still one of gender and even genre transgression. The conquest of the epic hero by an elegiac beauty overturns the hierarchical position of man over woman and epic over elegy.

The third exemplum is Omphale (17-20):

\begin{verbatim}
Omphale in tantum formae processit honorem,
Lydia Gygaeo tincta puella lacu,
ut, qui pacato statuisset in orbe columnas,
tam dura traheret mollia pensa manu.
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{95} She is an abandoned wife at Prop. 2.21.11-12, 2.24.45-46 and 4.5.41-42; 2.34.8 refers to her relationship with Jason; and her murder of her children appears in 3.19.17-18. In her loss of these familial roles, she is similar to Cleopatra in Roman representations of her (Wyke 1992, 105).

\textsuperscript{96} MacDonald 1987, 6.

\textsuperscript{97} Tyrrell 1984, esp. ch. 3.

\textsuperscript{98} Prop. 2.3.9, 2.16.24, 2.29.30 (where \textit{candida forma ualet}, Ov. \textit{Am.} 1.5.10, 1.7.40, 2.4.39, 2.7.5, 3.3.5, 3.7.8

\textsuperscript{99} Despite being a paragon of heroic masculinity, Achilles’ history of cross-dressing destabilizes his own gender identity. Cf. Greene 2005a, 228.
Like Penthesilea, Omphale is also praised for her beauty, although she is portrayed as considerably less threatening to men than the previous two heroines. Thus, unlike Medea and Penthesilea, Omphale does not take on a transgressively masculine role, and the most problematic part of her behaviour, her cross-dressing, is suppressed in the exemplum.

Hercules’ cross-dressing is also absent, although alluded to in the reference to his feminine behaviour in wool-working. In 4.9.47, the last allusion to *seruitium amoris* in the Propertian corpus, Hercules refers to the *seruilia* he performed for Omphale. While this certainly refers to the actual servile tasks of weaving among the queen’s slaves, as in 3.11.20, the tradition also includes an affair between Hercules and Omphale. This love affair, combined with the depiction of Hercules in 4.9 as a sort of *exclusus amator*, suggests that Hercules too can be seen as a *seruus amoris*. Even without this further allusion to his service to Omphale, however, Hercules, although still not directly named, has more presence in the poem than the other heroes associated with the women of 3.11.

Up to this point, then, the female exempla have been characterized as progressively less masculine and more like elegiac puellae, culminating in Omphale who is actually identified as an (elegiac) *puella* (18). Their lovers, on the other hand, have become progressively more vivid in the exempla, from the lack of any reference to Jason, through Achilles’ appearance both as a *uictor uir* and the object of Penthesilea’s conquering beauty, to Hercules, who receives as much attention in the exemplum as Omphale does (one couplet each). Hercules, however, is problematically gendered: the first line of his couplet (19) focuses on his masculine, heroic acts of establishing boundaries for a world that he has pacified, but the second (20) shows him engaging in wool-working, a quintessentially feminine activity. While the heroes’ roles may expand as the exempla go on, they do not

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100 For Hercules as a problematically gendered figure, see Loraux 1990.

101 In this way, Propertius characterizes Hercules as he had Achilles in 2.8.29-40, or, by allusion to Danaë, Jupiter in 2.20.9-12, turning a heroic figure into an elegiac lover. For Hercules in 4.9 as an *exclusus amator*, see Welch 2005, 122.

102 The placement of the masculine actions in the hexameter and the feminine in the pentameter suggests that the form of the couplet itself underlines Hercules’ propensity to transgress gender norms. Cf. Morgan (2010) who
become any more securely masculine, as the lover-poet makes explicit in the contrast between the soft (mollia) work done by Hercules’ hard (dura) hand (20).

The last woman to appear before Cleopatra in 3.11’s exempla is Semiramis, the legendary queen of Babylon (21-26):

Persarum statuit Babylona Semiramis urbem,
ut solidum cocto tolleret aggere opus,
et duo in aduersum mitti per moenia currus
ne possemt tacto stringere ab axe latus;
duxit et Euphraten medium, quam condidit, arcis,
"iussit et imperio subjedere Bactra caput.

Her feats of construction, engineering, and rulership are mentioned, but not the conquest of any particular man, such as her husband, whom legend suggests she killed and who is completely absent from the exemplum. Women’s leadership was threatening to Roman conceptions of proper gender roles in itself, but the omission here of any overt suggestion of military leadership could make her less threatening. There may be, however, an allusion to conquest and imperial expansion in line 26, but the focus of the exemplum seems to be on her building activities.

It was not unheard of in Augustan Rome for high-profile women to sponsor building projects, as Semiramis does, with Livia and Octavia the obvious exemplars; therefore that action in itself is not necessarily transgressive. Another link between the construction in the exemplum and the threat of powerful women, however, lies in the potential connection to the portrait of Dido in Aeneid 1, where she builds (condebat, 447) a temple (446-49), directs the work of her people (503-8), and refers to herself as establishing (statuo) the city (573).

Semiramis’ activities as city-founder and builder of walls are similar to Dido’s, and she could

makes a number of observations and arguments about the use of the form of the elegiac couplet to emphasize contrasts and contradictions (esp. 18-22, 347, 362). Morgan also argues that for Ovid (drawing particularly on Am. 1.1.17-18, 27) the hexameter can represent potency and the pentameter enervation (352).


According to Diodorus (2.4-20), summarizing the reports of other historians, primarily Ctesias), she was a courtesan who killed her royal lover, the Assyrian king Ninos, and usurped his power. A romance on Ninos and Semiramis may have been in circulation by Propertius’ lifetime; for detailed bibliography and discussion on this fragmentary text, see Morgan 1997, 3330-37.


Herodotus (1.184 and 3.154) mentions Semiramis’ building projects in Babylon.
well stand in as another in a long line of Eastern queens for comparison with Cleopatra.\textsuperscript{107} Propertius differs from both historians and other elegiac poets (Euphorion, \textit{Supp. Hell}. 415 col. 1.9-11, Ov. \textit{Am}. 1.5.11-12) in dissociating her from erotic actions, and breaks the pattern of the previous exempla in this regard as well as in returning to the absence of a male figure.

The final exemplum in the elegy, Cleopatra, is presented as abusing her position both privately and publicly. As a slave mistress, she is accused of engaging in sexual activity with her male slaves (30) and, inasmuch as she resembles an elegiac mistress, she also assimilates her free lover, Antony, to a slave.\textsuperscript{108} Propertius even invites the comparison of the misbehaving elegiac \textit{puella} with Cleopatra in his specific claim about the queen: \textit{famulos inter femina trita suos} (3.11.30).\textsuperscript{109} The image at 3.11.30 of Cleopatra sexually worn out by her slaves is meant to degrade her, much like the association with slave lovers or freedmen is meant to degrade the elegiac \textit{puella}.\textsuperscript{110} Because she is a woman, the elegiac \textit{puella}’s role as a slave-owner differs with respect to sexual activity with slaves from that of a male \textit{dominus}; while it was seen as shameful for female owners to have sexual relations with male slaves, it was also taken for granted that slaves were sexual objects of interest to female as well as male owners.\textsuperscript{111} By contrast, on the few occasions in which the lover-poet tells of successful sexual liaisons with his mistress, the language of slavery is absent, although the trope of \textit{militia amoris} is often present (e.g. in 2.14, where his success is compared to a triumph). The lover-poet and mistress’ sexual relations look, if anything, like a meeting of equals, as is exemplified at the end of 4.8. There, after the slaves and comic characters who populate the early scenes of the poem have been banished and the lover-poet’s domestic space has literally been cleansed (83-87), Cynthia and the lover-poet resume their erotic combat (88).

\textsuperscript{107} For Dido and Cleopatra, see Parry 1963, 73, 77; Bertman 2000; Keith 2000, 68, 118-22.
\textsuperscript{108} Hor. \textit{Epod}. 9.12 refers to Antony as \textit{emancipatus feminae}.
\textsuperscript{109} Propertius, to some extent, equates his love for Cynthia with Antony’s for Cleopatra in 2.16 as well, where he also justifies his submission to love and his mistress and rejection of other pursuits by comparing himself to the \textit{dux} who gave up everything for \textit{infamis amor} (36-40). See Griffin 1986, 34; Miller 2004, 133.
\textsuperscript{110} For which see 2.16 and 4.5, discussed above.
The erotically enslaved Antony, as well as the lover-poet, could remind the reader that many slaves were once free and were therefore a testament to the fact that free men, even Romans, could be enslaved. The slave, who was at the same time an abjected other and yet very similar to the free, was a constant reminder of the fragility of Roman selfhood. The state of freedom, like that of manhood, was not a permanent one, but something that had to be maintained, for even if a Roman was not legally enslaved, he could still easily slide into enslavement to his desires and to pleasure and luxury. The lover-poet can be (and has been) read as a warning about such voluntary enslavement; like a slave, the lover-poet lacks self-control in his refusal to sublimate his desires to the needs of the state and the requirements of adult masculinity. Slaves too were believed to naturally lack self-control, so that the ability of a slave to show virtue, which implies the possession of this very quality, was a matter of some debate. At the same time, however, there were examples of slaves’ virtuous loyalty to their masters, for instance in Valerius Maximus’ tales of slaves who protected their masters from the triumvirs’ orders of proscription. Some of these slaves even go so far as fighting for their masters or impersonating them, with the most extreme examples of loyalty being slaves who died in their masters’ place. In these cases, the existence of such clear examples of masculine courage, despite the dangers involved and the rewards offered for betrayal, worked in direct opposition to common beliefs about slaves’ general lack of virtue. Propertius uses the idea of slavery, with its limitations and internal

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117 Fitzgerald 2000, 7.  
118 V. Max. 6.8.5-7.  
120 For the edict promising rewards of money and freedom to slaves, see Appian BC 4.8-11; cf. Osgood (2006, 63-64) on its authenticity. Further, see Osgood (2006, 9-10) and Gabba (1984, 68-76) on using Appian and Dio Cassius as sources for the triumviral and Augustan periods and Reinhold and Swan (1990) on Dio’s assessment of Augustus. Also see Toher (1990) on the relative lack of contemporary historiographical accounts of this period.
contradictions, in combination with *seruitium amoris*, to explore Roman standards of freedom, virtue, and masculinity.\textsuperscript{121}

Of further concern was the state of affairs that came about after the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra. Dio Cassius (46.32.1) reports that as early as 43 BCE most senators felt that they would become slaves (δουλεύσουσι) of whoever prevailed in the fighting between Antony and Octavian, a fear that was realized after the defeat of Antony at Actium in 31 (50.1.2). When Octavian became the only real source of patronage, every other member of the elite was reduced to the status of a lesser *amicus*, client, or at worst a slave.\textsuperscript{122} For men who had been used to being important in their own right and who were suspicious of the monarchical tendencies of the new regime,\textsuperscript{123} this led to a crisis, which appears in Propertius as a sense of disengagement from the military and political hierarchy. Propertius is able to focus his exploration of the problem of slavery on the figure of the mistress, because the elegiac genre and the mistress herself are at least purportedly disengaged from the serious business of public life.\textsuperscript{124} This disengagement is illusory, however, since Propertius’ lover-poet continually brings in elements from public life as well as private or informal relationships, a tendency that will be explored in the following chapter, when I consider his use of *militia amoris* in a broad sense, encompassing military metaphors, engagement with the epic genre, and relationship to Roman politics. Because Propertius creates a lover-poet who disidentifies with the roles of the Roman elite male and the elegiac lover, both of which are based in part on the acceptance or rejection of military and political roles, it is impossible for his lover-poet to be truly disengaged from public life.

\textsuperscript{121} This is not unlike the way that colonial constructions of identity expose the anxieties of the colonizers at the same time as they define their identities (Childs 1999, 1-3).
\textsuperscript{123} A suggestion of this feeling comes in Macr. 2.4.21, attributed to Asinius Pollio (at ego taceo. non est enim facile in eum scribere qui potest proscribere) on the dangers of speaking one’s mind to Augustus, despite his general tolerance of free speech (for which cf. Tac. Ann. 4.34, where he has Cremutius Cordus speak on the difference between Augustus and Tiberius in this respect) and from the younger Seneca’s *Apocolocyntosis* (10.2), when he attributes the words *pudet imperii* to Messala, which may have been spoken by him when he resigned the prefecture of the city after only six days, supposedly out of disgust with the autocratic government.\textsuperscript{124} Osgood (2006, 87) uses the example of Hortensia to make the point that only women could be outspoken in the dangerous political environment of the triumviral period, and argues (250) that Horace is “blind to politics out of prudence.” He also remarks on Propertius’ personal take on the triumviral period in 1.21 (170-71).
By moving between slave and client, and by using language that refers to freedom and its absence and suggesting the permeability of the line between free and slave, Propertius brings contemporary social and political issues into play with his use of *seruitium amoris*.\textsuperscript{125} By making the superior person in the relationship, whether of *seruitium* or *clientela*, a woman, and one whose character suggests that she was not a respectable one at that, he makes the relationship particularly degrading.\textsuperscript{126} He is quite consistent, however, in portraying public life as inferior to the elegiac world, as I will show in the next chapter. There I will argue that the lover-poet suggests that his mistress is superior to the ultimate patron and master of the public world as well. Further, by revelling in the subjection of the lover-poet to a woman, the Propertian lover-poet articulates his disidentification with masculine roles, as he rejects the manly superiority that Roman elite males were supposed to embody while at the same time depicting this elegiac submission as superior to that required in the public world.

Propertius’ use of *seruitium amoris* emphasizes freedom or its lack, rarely dwells on the details of servitude, and is a shared characteristic of (elegiac) love, regardless of whether he is applying it to the lover-poet or to his friends and rivals. A central feature of his use of the trope is the strong, if inconsistent, portrait of his elegiac mistress, generally identifiable as Cynthia. While Propertius’ *seruitium amoris* is similar to that found in Tibullus and Ovid, he differs from both of them in his specific deployments of the figure, especially in his separation of the lover-poet from the concrete experience of historical slavery and his more complex depiction of his elegiac puella. The characterization of both lover and mistress interacts with the social realities of the early Augustan period, in the areas of relations between slaves and masters, patrons and clients, and the elite and the emerging imperial order. Propertius uses this trope, which hints at the ambiguously gendered nature of male slaves, the shifting and difficult to negotiate social relations, and the potentially challenging

\textsuperscript{125} Cf. Keith (1992, 135) on poets and free speech.
\textsuperscript{126} Cf. Muñoz (1999, 185) on toxic identities.
characters of his lover-poet and mistress, as part of his disidentification with male gender roles. The intertwining of seruitium amoris and militia amoris and of social relations and public roles that is apparent in several of the poems discussed in this chapter provides a bridge to the next, in which Propertius’ disidentification with epic characters and the epic genre, rejection of public service in all its forms, and conflicted relationship with Augustus’ regime will be considered as part of his construction of masculinity for the lover-poet.
Chapter 4: Epic, Empire, and *militia amoris*

Propertius is unusual among the male Latin love poets, including Catullus, in that his lover-poet persona never participates in military or public service, nor is there any external evidence suggesting such service by the poet. Catullus’ trip to Bithynia on Memmius’ official staff, Tibullus’ accompaniment of his patron Messalla on service abroad, Ovid’s tenure of judicial posts, and especially Gallus’ military and political career all mark them as at least in some way participating in the career path expected of young men of elite but not yet senatorial families. Propertius’ refusal to participate does not, however, mean that he or his lover-poet is disengaged from politics and public life. Through his use of the trope of *militia amoris*, his engagement with the heroes and themes of epic poetry, and his deployment of troubling comparanda evoking civil war and greed in his *recusationes*, Propertius reveals a deeply ambivalent attitude towards the masculine duty of public service and the Augustan regime itself, which both redefined and promoted this duty.

This chapter begins by interrogating the lover-poet’s relationship to the public duties of the Roman elite and his depiction of *militia amoris*. I will argue that Propertius takes the despised role of elegiac lover and rehabilitates it to a more glorious soldiery than actual military service. Moreover, at the same time as he glorifies *militia amoris* he associates Roman military service in the provinces with effeminate luxury and questionable morality. In Propertian elegy, *militia amoris* functions as part of his construction of an alternate male identity that rejects the roles valued by elite Roman culture while at the same time refusing to submit to the effeminate identity that the dominant culture associates with this rejection. This part of the chapter considers a selection of poems in which the lover-poet interacts with (probable) historical figures who did participate in traditionally masculine activities. I will

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1 See Wiseman (1971, 142-53) on the pre-senatorial career of a *nouus homo* and Nicolet (1984, 99-107) on the equestrian order’s roles under Augustus.

argue that these figures are depicted in such a way that the difficulty and indeed masculinity of their endeavours is brought into question. I then contrast this with the way that the lover-poet describes his own service to *puella*, love, and elegy as both difficult and demeaning, but at the same time more rewarding and less immoral than service to Rome.

The second section of this chapter considers Propertius’ use of epic allusion to further the lover-poet’s disidentification with conventional forms of masculinity, and examines his depiction of the value of writing epic poetry in general. Here I consider the lover-poet’s literary engagement with the project of writing nationalistic epic, especially his consistent, if often subtle, refusal to glorify Rome or Augustus unconditionally. All of the aspects of Propertius’ work cohere with his strategies of disidentification, but his (or the lover-poet’s) attitude towards epic poetry, treatment of epic heroes, and revaluation of *militia amoris* are the most prominently involved. Epic poetry and its heroes were dominant cultural texts in Augustan Rome and thus were scripts the disidentifying subject could work with, within, against, and through. *Militia*, outside of love poetry, refers to military service, one of the disciplinary structures that affirms and informs manhood in Roman culture, and is thus a dominant cultural text. The opposite of epic, its heroes, and *militia* are constituted by elegy, its lover-poet, and *militia amoris*, which all contribute crucially to the construction of the Propertian lover-poet’s masculinity and, like the dominant cultural scripts, are neither fully accepted nor rejected by him.

We have already seen that the lover-poet is generally reluctant to engage in the activities traditionally associated with elite Roman manhood. These interconnected duties included military service, public office, provincial service, and the more private yet still ultimately public duties of fatherhood, landownership, and household stewardship associated with citizenship. It may not seem surprising that an elegiac lover-poet would disavow all of

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3 See Edwards (1993, 23) on the paramount importance of fulfilling one’s duties to the state. Skinner (2005, 224) connects the lover-poet’s refusal to participate in military service to his questioning of traditional masculinity.

4 Chapter 1.
these roles, but if we briefly consider what is known about the public careers of Catullus and his contemporaries, as well as those of the other three canonical elegists Gallus, Tibullus, and Ovid, we will see that the Propertian lover-poet is more strikingly disengaged from public life than they are. Much of this information comes from the poetry of these other love poets, and therefore it is possible to compare it directly to what Propertius’ poetry says about his lover-poet.

Catullus’ public service is well-known, as he describes his less than edifying and enriching experience on the staff of a provincial governor in 10 and 25. Writing a generation earlier than the elegists, Catullus seems more overtly politically engaged than they and does not suggest that there is any conflict between love poetry and public engagement. He also, of course, vigorously rejects the suggestion that being a love poet makes him less masculine (Catul. 16). Although their poetry survives only in fragments, Catullus’ contemporaries Cinna and Calvus offer further examples of men in the late republic who combined the composition of love poetry with public careers. Cinna, author of the erotic epyllion Smyrna and tribune in the year of Caesar’s death, was murdered by the Roman mob in the aftermath of Caesar’s assassination, when they mistook him for Caesar’s enemy, Cornelius Cinna. He also seems to have gone to Bithynia, possibly as part of the same entourage as Catullus. Calvus, who wrote a lament for the death of his mistress (or perhaps wife) Quintilia, does not seem to have held political office but was active as an orator and

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5 The major exceptions are the fragmentary poets, and under the circumstances it is impossible to tell whether or not they would fit the same pattern of fictionalized autobiography that we find in those whose work is extant. The career paths are, however, similar, regardless of the source of the information.

6 Catullus and other men of his time expected provincial service to be enriching; see his complaints at 10.8-13 and all of 28. Cf. Hinds 2001, 229-36.


8 Calvus appears in Propertius’ catalogue of love poets at 2.34.89-90. Propertius also pairs Calvus with Catullus at 2.25.4.

9 Cf. Catul. 95.

10 For an argument against the identification of Cinna with Cinna the tribune, see Wiseman 1974.

11 Hollis 2007, 18-19. Catullus (10.29-30) mentions him as the true owner of the litter and bearers that he claimed to have obtained in Bithynia.

12 For a summary of the debate on the status of Quintilia, see Hollis 2007, 69.
was also the son of a man who had reached the office of praetor, and therefore part of the senatorial class if not a senator himself.\textsuperscript{13}

The most well-known of the publicly active love poets, however, is Gallus, whose military and administrative service under Octavian is recorded in biography (Suet. Aug. 66), historiography (D.C. 53.23), and the epigraphic record (\textit{CIL} III 14147, a stele from Philae listing his accomplishments as prefect).\textsuperscript{14} Even in the few surviving lines of his poetry, he demonstrates some engagement with public life with a reference to praising Caesar (Gal. fr. 145.2-5 Hollis).\textsuperscript{15} Virgil’s portrayal of Gallus in \textit{Ecl.} 10 is also instructive about what Gallus’ engagement with \textit{militia amoris} may have looked like.\textsuperscript{16} Gallus, like Catullus and his peers, does not seem to have felt that a public career and a poetic vocation were mutually exclusive.\textsuperscript{17}

Tibullus refers to military and other kinds of public service in several poems, and in the last poem of his second book his lover-poet claims that he is giving up the life of love in order to serve on the staff of his patron Messalla. I have already suggested that Tibullus’ characterization of his lover-poet as a \textit{seruus amoris} is a case of counter-identification rather than disidentification, in that he rejects the masculine roles and values of the dominant culture while still holding them as sources of value and definition.\textsuperscript{18} His military service and the value that he accords to public life, not just in the portrait of his lover-poet but also in his praise of the public successes of Messalla (especially 1.7) and his son Messalinus (2.5), strengthen my reading of Tibullus, as they show his ultimate acceptance of the ideology of the dominant elite culture that placed value on public service. Even the epitaph that Tibullus provides for his lover-poet early in the corpus portrays him as a military associate of his patron Messala, not an elegiac lover (1.3.55-56): \textit{hic iacet inmiti consumptus morte Tibullus}.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[14] Cf. Anderson et al. 1979; Boucher 1966; and, specifically on the stele, Hoffmann et al. 2009.
\item[15] Anderson et. al. (1979, 152) suggest that this is Julius Caesar, not Octavian.
\item[17] Boucher 1966, 106.
\item[18] Murgatroyd (1975, 76) argues that Tibullus “morally objects” to war, much like Propertius. This may be true, but it does not seem to lead to the sort of rejection of military service that Propertius displays.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
*Messallam terra dum sequiturque mari.*\(^{19}\) For Tibullus, love and love poetry can provide only a temporary distraction from fulfilling his masculine duty.\(^{20}\)

Ovid’s judicial service appears in his later poetry, the *Fasti* (4.383-84) and *Tristia* (2.93-96, 4.10.33-34), rather than in his strictly amatory works.\(^{21}\) His lover-poet and *praeeceptor amoris* personae do not engage in public service,\(^{22}\) but the connections between his later and earlier poetry are such that I will discuss his public career here. Ovid’s description of his career shows him holding the minor judicial posts with which an *eques* who hoped (or whose family hoped) eventually to climb the *cursus honorum* would start his public career.\(^{23}\) Ovid did not go any further with this career path, but Propertius’ lover-poet has apparently not even attempted this early step, as the astrologer Horos’ words suggest (4.1.133-34):

\[
\text{tum tibi pauca suo de carmine dictat Apollo/ et uetat insano uerba tonare foro.}
\]

Finally, Ovid’s account of his early poetic aspirations may provide a metaliterary parallel to his early attempts at and then abandonment of a public career, as he claims that he began to compose an epic poem before being tricked by Amor into writing elegy (*Am. 1.1*).

Overall, the Latin love poets of the late republic and Augustan period seem to have pursued careers typical of sons of the elite non-senatorial Italian aristocracy. The Propertii and the Valerii Catulli eventually did become senatorial, as is proven by inscriptional records of later descendants of Catullus’ family\(^{24}\) and by the career of Propertius’ cousin Postumus, the addressee of elegy 3.12 (and Hor. *Carm. 2.14*) and a man whose career can be traced in the epigraphic record.\(^{25}\) There is evidence for other men who made political careers as a

\(^{19}\) Kennedy 1993, 17.
\(^{21}\) See Kenney 1969 for Ovid’s legal career. Ovid does portray public positions in the love poetry, such as when he pictures an orator giving in to love in the courts at *Ars* 1.79-88, but he does not specifically attribute public positions to his lover-poet persona.
\(^{22}\) Ovid’s *praeeceptor amoris* does, however, list the *fora* among the places to look for love and the *consultus* (and *patronus*) as susceptible to love (*Ars* 1.79-88). Cf. Bablitz 2007, 44-45. The disengagement of the Ovidian lover-poet from public life provides another connection between him and the Propertian lover-poet.
\(^{23}\) See Bablitz 2007, 98-99 and 112 for the posts held by Ovid and 103 for his turn away from a senatorial career. Cf. Wiseman 1971, ch. 6.
\(^{24}\) Wiseman 2007.
\(^{25}\) His funerary inscription survives (*CIL IV* 1501) and tells us that he reached the rank of proconsul. Cf. Wiseman 1971, 180; Cairns 2006, 14-24; and Keith 2008, 5.
result of their literary achievements, including the poet C. Valgius Rufus, addressed as a writer of elegies by Horace in *Carm.* 2.9. He is known to have written elegies as well as other types of verse and was suffect consul in 8 BCE. Propertius, in his refusal even to make a start, as Ovid did, on a public career emerges as atypical in this company. Even if we take into account the fact that not every man of his class wanted to have such a career, he had evidently been trained for one and certainly managed to make contacts that would have facilitated his rise. Yet the closest Propertius’ lover-poet ever gets to any area of public service is his refusal of it. Propertius’ lover-poet even rejects fulfilling his masculine duty on the private level of marriage and fatherhood. This refusal is expressed most explicitly in elegy 2.7, where the lover-poet declines to provide sons for Rome’s triumphs (13-14: *unde mihi patriis natos praebere triumphis?* / *nullus de nostro sanguine miles erit*) and declares that he values Cynthia more than fatherhood (19-20 *tu mihi sola places: placeam tibi, Cynthia, solus:/ hic erit et patrio nomine pluris amor*).

Elegy 2.7 therefore affords a suitable starting point for examining how the lover-poet’s attitude towards the duties of elite Roman men interacts with his depiction of *militia amoris*, his construction of masculinity, his heroic characters, and even his interaction with the Augustan regime. We shall see that this one short poem touches at least briefly on every theme explored in this chapter. The lover-poet begins by addressing Cynthia on the occasion of the repeal of a marriage law (2.7.1-6):

> Gauisa es[t] certe sublatam, Cynthia, legem, qua quondam edicta flemus uterque diu, ni nos diuideret: quamuis diducere amantis non queat inuitos Iuppiter ipse duos. 'At magnus Caesar.' sed magnus Caesar in armis: 5 deuictae gentes nil in amore ualent.

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26 Hollis 2007, 287-99 collects six fragments (165-170) of his poetry, from elegiac, epic, and bucolic works. See Wiseman (1971, 178-79), who says Rufus’ “sole claim to repute was in the literary field,” for a discussion of how his artistic success led to a political career.

27 For Propertius’ education, see Keith 2008, 19-44.

28 A possible exception to this refusal, in the poems where the lover-poet takes on the task of praising Augustus (2.10, 3.4, 3.11, and 4.6), will be discussed at the end of this dissertation.
These lines contain a challenge not just to the law, whatever it may have been, but also to the moral program that Augustus would implement more fully a decade later. They also challenge Augustus’ right to intercede in private matters, by denying that his military might has any bearing on *amor*. Further, they deny that such measures are even effective. The lovers may have feared being divided, a fear that is illustrated in the poem by placing *Iuppiter ipse* between *inuitos…duos* in line 4. Jupiter may attempt to divide them, but the larger context of the couplet and the poem refuses him that power. The lover-poet places his realm, that of *amor*, outside the scope of Jupiter and Augustus and the public religious and political realms over which they hold authority.

The next lines elaborate the lover-poet’s disavowal (2.7.7-10):

nam citius paterer caput hoc discedere collo,  
quam possem nuptae perdere more faces,  
aut ego transirem tua limina clausa maritus,  
respiciens udis prodita luminibus.

These couplets underscore the lover-poet’s rejection of traditional Roman marriage, a theme which recurs from the final line of the previous poem, 2.6.42, which refers to Cynthia as *uxor*, but also as *amica*. Cynthia’s disidentificatory characterization bars her from simple identification as an *uxor* as much as it does the lover-poet from being a *maritus*. In 2.7, the lover-poet illustrates the incompatibility of marriage and his elegiac world by declaring that marriage would bar him from performing a *paraclausithyron*: if married, he would *perdere faces* and pass by the *limina clausa*, which he will have betrayed (*prodita*). *Prodita* raises once more the recurring theme of fidelity, which the lover-poet claims he would break if he performed the duties society demands of men of his class. It has been suggested that this

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30 In the *Lex Julia de maritandisordinibus* in 18 BCE and the *Lex Julia de Adulteriis Coercendis* in 17 BCE, reformulated a generation later in the *Lex Papia-Poppaea* of 9 CE.

31 Fedeli (1984) prints the manuscripts’ *more* between daggers, but Fedeli (2005) does not. Also see Camps (1967, 99) and Fedeli (2005, 229) for discussion of *more* vs. the emendation *amore*.

32 For the *paraclausithyron* in elegy, see Copley 1956 and Cairns 1972, 6.

33 See below for further discussion of this issue in elegy 1.6.
poem acts to enforce normative gender roles and the acceptance of elite social mores:\textsuperscript{34} the lover-poet’s rejection of normative masculinity makes him a negative example who is not meant to be taken seriously. On this interpretation, the poem actually supports marriage by describing it as a way to end the emasculating practice of the \textit{paraclausithyron}, and, by association, the effeminate lifestyle of the elegiac lover. For this argument to be unimpeachable, however, every reader must accept the poet-lover’s identification with normative masculinity and the goals and values of the Roman elite, an identification that is undermined in these very same lines. For the lover-poet presents marriage either as simply another way of being devoted to a woman’s commands, if we translate \textit{nuptae more} (8) as meaning something like “according to the demand of his bride” or even as feminizing, if we interpret those words as “in the manner of a bride” and therefore referring to his own behaviour as bride-like.

Propertius continues elegy 2.7 by moving out of the domestic world into a fully public realm. The word \textit{tuba} acts as a transition from the private world of love and weddings to the public one of war, since a \textit{tuba} is specifically a war trumpet (2.7.11-14):\textsuperscript{35}

\begin{verbatim}
a mea tum qualis caneret tibi tibia somnos, 
tibia, funesta tristior illa tuba! 
unde mihi patriis natos praebere triumphis?
nullus de nostro sanguine miles erit.
\end{verbatim}

The language of war is far more marked in the second of these couplets, but it is still part of the transition between the themes of love and war, since the lover-poet is specifically rejecting marriage as a means of producing sons to feed Roman militarism, symbolized by the \textit{triumphis} (13). He connects the private socially approved masculine role of fatherhood with the public one of service to the fatherland (\textit{patriis}), rejecting them both. The next lines move us beyond the roles that the lover-poet rejects, however, by bringing us into the disidentificatory realm of \textit{militia amoris} that he espouses (2.7.15-18):

\textsuperscript{34} Fear 2005, 32.
\textsuperscript{35} The \textit{OLD} lists three uses for the \textit{tuba}: military signals (s.v. 1), opening religious ceremonies/games (s.v. 2), and funerals (s.v. 3). Even when not used in a battle situation, the instrument was associated with serious, public or semi-public events.
The lover-poet declares his mistress’ camp to be the true one, better even than divine or legendary military service, and asserts that *gloria* comes from service to his mistress. He emphasizes this point metrically as well, by elevating the elegiac *puella* and her *castra* to the epic hexameter of the couplet, and demoting the martial hero Castor and his great warhorse (*magnus equus*) to the elegiac pentameter. This assertion of the superiority of service to the *puella* over that to the state is a consistent feature of Propertius’ elaboration of the trope of *militia amoris* and is part of the Propertian lover-poet’s project of representing the elegiac lifestyle as at once more demanding and more rewarding than the activities valued by the traditional Roman elite and accorded renewed encouragement from Augustus. By identifying his mistress as the source of true glory, the lover-poet places her above Augustus and Rome, and therefore, by implication, values his service to her above service to Rome.

In poem 2.7, Propertius has fully integrated the lover-poet’s commitment to *militia amoris* into his identity, calling the camp of love the true one (*uera*), and, far from being unfit for glory, he has become renowned to the edges of the empire because of his service to Cynthia. The claim that his *gloria* extends to Borysthenes, a town on the outskirts of the empire and far from the urban and cultured world suitable to the lover-poet, suggests that his *militia amoris* is so glorious that it transcends the bounds of the elegiac world. He has taken the despised role of a lover-poet, engaged in disidentification with *militia* through the elegiac trope of *militia amoris*, and rehabilitated the lover-poet’s role to a more glorious soldiery than actual military service. Propertius uses the trope of *militia amoris* to glorify the

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36 The designation of the *castra* as belonging to the *puella* at line 15 seems to me to complicate the assertion (e.g. Bowditch 2003, 179-80) that the gendered hierarchy of military triumphs, in which the feminized country is conquered by masculine Roman might, makes the *puella* a victim of *militia amoris*. In Cynthia’s case, the *puella* at least sometimes plays the role of the lover-poet’s *dux*, and therefore any triumphs he makes in her or love’s cause are made for her and with her, not against her.

37 See Morgan (2010, 369-77) on Propertius’ use of the two different lines in the elegiac couplet to express the tension between epic and elegiac subject matter.

38 Keith 2008, 39. It is even beyond the sources of luxury and literature in the Greek east.
life of love at the expense of actual military service, as part of his construction of an alternate identity for elite Roman citizens that rejects the values of the dominant culture while at the same time rejecting the effeminate identity that the dominant culture imposes on those who reject these values.

The lover-poet’s promotion of *militia amoris* above service to the state is seen elsewhere as well. Propertius’ treatment of *militia amoris* is particularly prominent in 1.6, in which he apparently declines an offer to accompany his friend Tullus on provincial service. He begins this poem by denying that fear is the cause of his refusal, and therefore dismissing any suggestion that he is cowardly or less of a man than his friend (1.6.1): *Non ego nunc Hadriae uereor mare noscere tecum.* The lover-poet explains that his *puella*’s laments have convinced him to stay in Rome with her (5-18). This appears at first to be a straightforward example of the emasculation caused by love, but I will argue that in fact it is part of the lover-poet’s opening salvo in his challenge to the values of the dominant elite culture and to the moral rectitude of imperial service.

Elegy 1.6 articulates a challenge to the values of empire in the lover-poet’s rejection of the importance of travel, which symbolizes both service to empire and the rewards of imperialism (1.6.13-18):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{an mihi sit tanti doctas cognoscere Athenas} \\
\text{atque Asiae ueteres cernere diuitias,} \\
\text{ut mihi deducta faciat conuicia puppi} \\
\text{Cynthia et insanis ora notet manibus,} \\
\text{osculaque opposito dicat sibi debita uento,} \\
\text{et nihil infido durius esse uiro?}
\end{align*}
\]

By asking whether seeing Athens and Asia would be worth the price of upsetting Cynthia, the lover-poet places love above these emblems of empire, which were significant sources of wealth and Greek culture for the Roman elite. Cynthia’s charge that nothing is harsher/harder than a faithless man (*durius*, 18) brings important elegiac concepts into play

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39 As in Hor. Carm. 1.8, for which see Nisbet and Hubbard 1970, 108-9.
40 Keith 2008, 143.
41 Wealth and Greek culture, however, are both problematic for traditional Roman values, as I discuss below.
along with epic and Roman values. *Durus* is conventionally used either of the mistress herself or of epic poetry, in contrast to the effeminate (*leuis*) lover-poet and his frivolous (*leuis*) elegiac poetry respectively. Cynthia suggests that his betrayal of her will turn the lover-poet into something that he is not, a *durus infidus uir*,\(^\text{42}\) that is, into the type of man who acts out the values of the dominant culture with respect to love and unmarriageable women.\(^\text{43}\) A *durus uir*, the opposite of a *leuis* lover-poet, would consider the opportunities for wealth and political advancement to be found in provincial service in Asia and Athens a worthwhile reason to upset a *puella* (cf. 3.7). The lover-poet equates foreign travel with acceptance of the masculine roles valued by the dominant culture.

My reading of the poem so far supports the suggestions made by some scholars\(^\text{44}\) that Propertius portrays his lover-poet in such a way as to uphold obliquely the dominant culture by making him unappeasingly emasculated, an interpretation that may be strengthened by the next lines, where the lover-poet predicts success for his friend and contrasts the imperial service of Tullus and his family with his own elegiac lifestyle (1.6.19-24):

\[
\begin{align*}
tu & \text{ patrui meritas conare anteire securis} \\
& \text{et uetera oblitis iura refer sociis.} \\
\text{nam tua non aetas umquam cessuit amor},
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{semper at armatae cura fuit patriae;} \\
& \text{et tibi non umquam nostros puer iste labores} \\
& \text{afferat et lacrimis omnia nota meis!} \\
\end{align*}
\]

20

Unlike the lover-poet, Tullus has devoted his youth to martial and political pursuits, not even indulging in the casual love affairs that were acceptable in young men. Tullus has behaved as an exemplary young man by engaging in training for the military role on which political careers were usually based and fulfilling the expectations of his family as well as traditional Roman society.\(^\text{45}\) This contrast, emphasized by the polyptoton *tu* (19), *tua* (21), *tibi* (23) at or near the beginning of each couplet, further differentiates Tullus’ career from that in the image

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\(^{42}\) Although see chapter 1 for discussion of how faithful the lover-poet really is.


\(^{44}\) Notably Cairns (2006, 43 and 326), which, although about 2.7, makes a similar claim about the anti-social nature of the attack on traditional values undermining the speaker’s credibility and therefore the seriousness of Propertius’ motives.

\(^{45}\) For the traditional importance of martial training for aristocratic Roman youths, see McDonnell 2006, 181-85.
of the lover-poet implied in this poem and more explicitly elsewhere in the corpus; regardless of what his training, education, and the expectations of his family may have prepared him for, the lover-poet has refused the very roles in which Tullus excels.

The next three couplets, however, brings the lover-poet’s relationship to the masculine role of provincial service into the range of disidentification (1.6.25-30):

me sine, quem semper uoluit Fortuna iacere, 25  
hanc animam extremae reddere nequitiae.  
multi longinquo periere in amore libenter,  
in quorum numero me quoque terra tegat.  
non ego sum laudi, non natus idoneus armis: 30  
hanc me militiam fata subire uolunt.

The language of these lines includes the significant terms *nequitia* (26), *laus* (29), and *militia* (30). The first couplet, with its declaration that the lover-poet is fated to spend his life in *nequitia*, worthlessness, seems at first to fit with the interpretation that his role is to be a negative exemplum that serves to buttress the dominant culture’s values. By calling the elegiac lifestyle worthless, the lover-poet appears to accept the conventional valuation of it. The following couplet, however, with the statement that many men have willingly engaged in such behaviour, at the very least suggests that the lover-poet is not unique in his *nequitia*. It is only in the final couplet of this sequence that the lover-poet begins to rehabilitate *nequitia* and construct a positive identity that resists the privileging of military service. He claims to be unfit by nature for glory (*laus*) or arms (29), which are both connected to the values of the dominant culture (and to epic). Rather, he is fated to forego such pursuits and undergo a different sort of *militia*. Here he disavows *laus* and *arma*, yet embraces *militia*. Propertius associates *nequitia* with *militia amoris*, which he will use as a tool to rehabilitate the counter-identity of lover-poet into a disidentity. Throughout the corpus, Propertius will present a version of *militia amoris* that is both more moral and more manly than conventional *militia*.

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46 On Propertian *nequitia*, see Courtney 1970, 51; Stahl 1985, 93; Wyke 2002 175; Cairns 2006, 94; Keith 2008, chapter 6. Stahl (92) argues that Propertius uses this terminology “in order to make his own dissent understood to the other person.”

47 On rehabilitation, see Butler 2003, 223.
Propertius will return to the superiority of *militia amoris* over traditional martial
*militia* in later poems, but at the end of this elegy he begins, in an address to Tullus, to
undermine the value of normative masculine pursuits (1.6.31-36):

> at tu seu mollis qua tendit Ionia, seu qua  
> Lydia Pactoli tingit arata liquor;  
> seu pedibus terras seu pontum carpere remis  
> ibis, et accepti pars eris imperii.  
> tum tibi si qua mei ueniet non immemor hora,  
> uiuere me duro sidere certus eris.

At first sight, these lines seem to emphasize once again the difference between Tullus and the
lover-poet, with Tullus fulfilling his socially prescribed masculine duty and taking up his
*pars imperii*. The specific sites of Tullus’ duty, however, are troubling. Ionia and Lydia are
places associated with the effeminate Greek east, and this is emphasized by the lover-poet
when he calls Ionia *mollis*. Moreover, Lydia is a common woman’s name attested in the
epigraphical record and in Horace’s erotic poetry. The implication is that Tullus himself is
enthralled by eastern luxury, women and pleasure. In contrast, the lover-poet claims
*uiuere…duro sidere*, thereby suggesting that his amatory service is *durus* and masculine.
Propertius inverts the adjectives suitable to traditional *militia* and *militia amoris*. The
ambiguity caused by this inversion is intensified in 1.14, the companion poem to 1.6 in which
Tullus is once again the addressee.

Elegy 1.14 contrasts the luxury that Tullus enjoys, possibly as a result of his trip to the
east, with the love that the lover-poet values. The poem is filled with words suggesting
opulence and foreign luxuries that have come to Rome as the spoils of empire (1.14.1-6):

> Tu licet abiectus Tiberina molliter unda  
> Lesbia Mentoreo uina bibas opere  
> et modo tam celeres mireris currere lintres

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48 Keith 2008, 128-29.
49 For Lydia as an historical woman’s name *CIL* 27711, and for the much more common Lyde see *CIL* 18520, 33453, and 4268; cf. Solin 2003, 661, and in Horace see *Carm.* 1.8, where she is the woman who is ruining a young man; *Carm.* 1.13 where she is the woman who praises another man and arouses the jealousy of the speaker; *Carm.* 1.25, where she is an aging courtesan; and *Carm.* 3.9, where she is one of the two speakers on old and new loves. Ionia is also attested as a woman’s name in the epigraphic record: *CIL* XV 5980, cf. Solin 2003, 628.
50 Bowditch 2006, 318.
et modo tam tardas funibus ire ratis;
et nemus omne satas intendant uertice siluas,
urgetur quantis Caucasus arboribus;

The adverbial form of *mollis* appears in the first line of this poem, thus continuing the
inversion of *mollitia* and *duritia* from the earlier poem. Tullus is situated in a setting
identified as Roman, a pleasure garden on the banks of the Tiber (1), like that which Cicero
describes as belonging to Clodia in the *Pro Caelio*.*51* Even though he is situated in Rome,
Tullus is no longer engaging in the masculine pursuits that characterized him in elegy 1.6 and
the garden is itself a non-Roman addition to the city: the intrusion of eastern luxury into this
Roman setting is made clear by the Lesbian wine in cups made by Mentor (2).*52* In casting
the dutiful Tullus as a Roman who has succumbed to eastern luxury, luxury that has come to
Rome as a direct result of supposedly *durus* military pursuits, the lover-poet opens a space for
representing his own *militia amoris* as a more taxing undertaking than Tullus’ provincial
service.

The lines that follow equate the joys of love with the enjoyment of wealth and luxury
(7-16), before the poem returns to a realm that more explicitly addresses *militia amoris* (17-
22).*53

illa [sc. mea puella] potest magnas heroum infringere uires,
illa etiam duris mentibus esse dolor:
illa neque Arabium metuit transcendere limen
nec timet ostrino, Tulle, subire toro
et miserum toto iuuenem uersare cubili:
quid releuant varis serica textilbus?

These lines open with a couplet that emphasizes the difficulty of love’s service. The lover-
poet claims in epic language and in the epic hexameter that his *puella* can break heroes, while

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*52* Keith 2008, 145.
*53* Although lines 7-16 still interact with *militia*, as the *Pactoli liquores* (11), referencing a Lydian river famous
in antiquity for the gold in its sands (according to myth, this happened after Midas washed away the golden
touch in this river, Ov. *Met.* 11.140-44), and *Rubris gemma sub aequoribus* (12) both suggest the luxuries
 gained from conquest (Keith 2008, 145).
in the pentameter he adds that she causes elegiac pain (dolor) to hard (duris) hearts. These lines make the creature of the supposedly mollis world of elegy stronger than the durus epic hero, which in turn suggests that service to the elegiac puella is harder than anything the heroes of epic (or of contemporary imperial Rome) have overcome. Since the lover-poet has claimed that he at least sometimes succeeds in gaining her affection (9-10: nam siue optatam mecum trahit illa quietem/ seu facili totum ducit amore diem) we must suppose that he has had some success in her service. In the following couplets, Propertius’ language again invokes foreign luxury (19: Arabium limen; 20: ostrino toro; 22: uariis serica textilibus) and thereby suggests his puella’s dominance over Roman empire-builders as well as epic heroes. These lines continue the association of Tullus, who is named for the first time in this poem at 20, with foreign luxury: Arabium limen (19) and ostrinus torus (20). By associating the man who fulfills his masculine duty with effeminate luxuries, the lover-poet undermines Tullus’ gender identification and martial prowess and at the same time suggests that the performance of militia and service to Rome are both carried out in order to gain such luxuries. Tullus’ passive enjoyment of luxury contrasts with the lover-poet’s strenuous service under the most difficult of regimes, that of the puella.

In the couplet that follows, the statement that the lover-poet scorns regna and munera holds at least two significant meanings (23-24): quae mihi dum placata aderit, non ulla uerebor/ regna uel Alcinoi munera despicere. First, it is yet another claim that the lover-poet rejects the spoils of empire that provincial service brings. But it also suggests that the lover-poet has gained the puella’s favour without giving her gifts. This second point connects with the larger theme of rejecting imperial militia. Propertius dissociates his lover-poet and his elegiac love affair from the mercenary world of courtesans who demand gifts and are

54 Morgan (2010, ch.4) argues that breaking the normal association of hexameter with elevated material, as Propertius does here, is a way for the poet to draw attention to the incongruity of the epic metre in non-epic settings.
55 For Propertius, empire, and luxury, see Bowditch 2003, 2006, 2009.
themselves part of the spoils of empire. The lover-poet’s rhetorical strategy in elegy 1.14 thus works to decouple masculine virtues from the performance of traditionally masculine duties and re-describe activities generally considered effeminate, such as service to a mistress, as arduous and worthy.

Tullus’ last appearance in book 1 comes in the sphragis, 1.22, where he is the addressee of a poem that identifies the lover-poet as Italian in origin, from a family that suffered in the civil wars. After that, he disappears from the corpus until near the end of the third book, in 3.22. This poem returns to the theme of travel to the east, although now the lover-poet concentrates on mythologically and historically significant sights and places, rather than luxury. These allusions encompass a number of epic tales and include the stories of Perseus, Hercules, and Jason and the Argonauts, the settings of which the lover-poet claims are less marvelous than Rome. Although elegy 3.22 does not engage with elegiac love or militia amoris, it does provide a sense that Tullus’ choice to fulfill his masculine duty and take up provincial service in the East has ultimately been unsatisfying. The lover-poet urges him to return home to Rome to enjoy true public success (3.22.39-42):

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

The lover-poet predicts that Tullus will succeed on public and private levels if he returns to Rome, which, earlier in the poem (19-22), the lover-poet had also associated with war, fame, power, and victory. Yet back in 1.6, Rome was the place where the lover-poet stayed, avoiding public service, while the East, vaguely denigrated in 3.22, was the place where Tullus would undertake suitable public duties. The final poem in the Tullus series thus implicitly reinforces the thematic tensions of the previous poems in book 1, to suggest that the East is not a place for true success, and to associate the lover-poet and his elegiac world

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56 For a reading of the “greedy girl”, see James 2003, chap. 3. For Cynthia as one of the spoils of empire, see Keith 2008, 146.
in Rome with the public glory that is ostensibly alien to him. In Propertius’ hands, neither
the East nor Rome has a solid and unshifting characterization.

Tullus is demonstrably an historical person,\(^{58}\) unlike the next recurring character who
features in Propertius’ *militia amoris* poems, “the praetor” of 1.8, 2.8, 2.9, and 2.16. This
character is never given a name and need not be the same man; each instance could also be
read as a different wealthy rival, the stock character of the *diuies amator*.\(^{59}\) The first of these
poems opens with the *puella* proposing to abandon the lover-poet to go to the provinces with
another lover (1.8.1-8):\(^{60}\)

\begin{verbatim}
Tune igitur demens, nec te mea cura moratur?
an tibi sum gelida uilior Illyria?
et tibi iam tanti, quicumque est, iste uidetur,
ut sine me uento quolibet ire uelis?
tune audire potes uesani murmura ponti
fortis, et in dura naue iacere potes?
tu pedibus teneris positas fulcire pruinas,
tu potes insolitas, Cyn
\end{verbatim}

As in elegy 1.6, foreign travel in the company of another man threatens to separate the lovers,
but here the elegiac figure who plans to leave is the *puella*, Cynthia, and she shows none of
the reluctance of the lover-poet in 1.6, at least initially; she is more willing to leave the
elegiac sphere of Rome and enter that of *militia*, although not as a combatant. Still, this is the
first suggestion in the corpus that Cynthia is more willing to carry out masculine endeavours
than the lover-poet. The lover-poet, however, attempts to convince Cynthia that she is
unsuited to such a voyage. Cynthia, a creature of the *mollis* elegiac world, will have to travel
by *dura naus* (6) and her *pedes teneri* will be unable to stand the cold of Illyria, a place far
distant from the city setting in which the elegiac love affair takes place.

While 1.6 described Cynthia’s distress, 1.8 focuses on the lover-poet’s, so that the two
poems complement one another. Cynthia, like the lover-poet, does eventually decide to stay,

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\(^{58}\) Cairns 2006, 43.

\(^{59}\) This character also appears in Tib. 1.5 and 2.3.

illi carus ego et per me carissima Roma
dicitur, et sine me dulcia regna negat.
illa uel angusto mecum requiescere lecto
et quocumque modo maluit esse mea,
quam sibi dotatae regnum utetus Hippodamiae
et quas Elis opes ante pararat equis.
quamuis magna dare, quamuis maior daturus,
non tamen illa meos fugit auara sinus.
hanc ego non auro, non Indis flectere conchis,
  sed potui blandi carminis obsequio.

A number of themes from 1.6 and the other Tullus poems reappear in these lines. The first is the identification of Rome as the location of the elegiac love affair (31), which we recall from the lover-poet’s decision to remain there in 1.6. Equally important is the rejection of opulence, symbolized not only by the references to kingdoms (32, regna; 35, regnum) and wealth (36, opes), but also by the evocation of foreign places in the mention of Hippodamia’s dowry (35), Elis (36), and India (39). The lover-poet associates these places and their products with mollitia in 1.6 and 1.14, and so by implication their rejection here once again suggests that the elegiac lifestyle is not mollis, but rather the foreign service and riches associated with the rival. In this poem, it may seem that he is simply turning the conventional associations of mollis and durus on their head, but in the larger context of the first book, as we have already seen, this is not the case. Rather, Propertius unmoors words such as mollis and durus from their traditional generic and moral associations as part of a larger rhetorical strategy of disidentification.

In elegy 2.16 the poet specifies that his rival is a praetor and, by mentioning that he has come from Illyria, identifies him with the rival of 1.8 (2.16.1-2): praetor ab Illyricis uenit modo, Cynthia, terris,/ maxima praeda tibi, maxima cura mihi. Here too, the praetor is associated with riches, or more precisely, plunder (praeda), and the following couplets focus on Cynthia’s greed, before the poem moves on to a broader condemnation of wealth that corrupts women and ruins elegiac love. Propertius has his lover-poet reject the provincial

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61 Keith 2008, 97 on the opposition presented here between elegiac and epic/imperial values.
62 The lover-poet, although he frequently declares his allegiance to mollis elegy, may at the same time paradoxically reject the luxury goods associated with mollitia (Bowditch 2006, 310).
63 Elegies 2.8 and 2.9 do not dwell on luxury, and are discussed elsewhere.
service that brings this wealth into Rome, which he idealizes as the setting of elegiac love. This rejection goes beyond simply a refusal to participate in such service himself; he portrays it as a corrupting force. Similarly, in elegy 3.13 the lover-poet blames the wealth of modern times for the corruption and greed of women. This focus on corruption aligns the lover-poet with the moralizing tradition at Rome that saw outside, especially Eastern, influences as liable to undermine traditional Roman values and masculinity. Moreover, he problematizes the role of provincial service in creating and reinforcing elite masculine identity, by associating such service with mollitia, as opposed to the durum officium he offers to his mistress and his genre, elegy.

Propertius’ revaluation of traditional masculinity extends beyond his direct engagement in 1.6, 8, 14 and 2.16 with the military service in the provinces that many of his contemporaries undertook. It is also implicit in his use of a wide array of mythological exempla, with which he compares the amatory relationships of his elegy. These allusions to epic characters and situations recur repeatedly throughout Propertius’ corpus, despite the generic setting of elegy in the Rome of the author’s own time, and constitute an easy shorthand: for example, a poet can use Penelope to signify chaste womanhood or Thebes to signify fratricidal warfare. It is not simply a given, however, to find them in elegiac verse; Tibullus’ use of mythological allusions is far more sparing than Propertius’ and he typically confines them to poems that do not focus on his mistresses. This difference could be

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64 Bowditch (2006, 313) notes that the praetor’s wealth, coming from provincial service, ultimately comes from Octavian and his victory over Antony, with whom the lover-poet aligns himself in this poem, thereby strengthening the lover-poet’s opposition to the praetor and to provincial service and the wealth that comes from it.

65 The following elegy, 3.14, makes naked Greek women available to Roman men. There may be a connection between the wealth, from foreign conquest, that corrupts Roman women and the Greek women, themselves luxury goods from foreign conquest, who are presented as an acceptable source of sexual interest.

66 As discussed in Edwards (1993, 177) and especially McDonnell (2006, 55), who discusses the opinions of Cato the Elder about the enervating effects of luxury on Roman manliness, e.g. as reported in Cato ORF 8.17 (= Gell. 16.1.1) and Plu. Cat. Ma. 4.22.5.


68 For Penelope as exemplum of fidelity in Propertius, see Öhrman 2008, 26-29.


70 Whitaker 1983, 87. The major exception to this rule is 1.3, which contains a description of the underworld; even here, however, the allusions are related to the lover-poet’s death from an illness contracted while traveling.
related to Propertius’ avowed Callimacheanism (2.1.40, 2.34.32, 3.1.1, 3.9.43, and 4.1.64), as Callimachus also used myth to illustrate the situations that he devised.\(^7\) For the present argument, however, it will be more interesting to consider the specific ways that he deploys epic allusions to interact with elegiac characters and scenarios, and how they inform his depiction of the lover-poet’s gender commitments.

Propertius frequently compares his lover-poet and puella to mythical heroes and heroines and even to gods, as we have already seen in passing several times in previous chapters. Generally, scholars have interpreted these comparisons as functioning to elevate the elegiac love affair from the sordid plane and provide it with dignity, in a manner not unlike the use of the language of Roman social relations that begins with Catullus.\(^8\) It will be useful, however, to focus in detail on the comparison of the lover-poet to the heroes of the epic tradition, and consider not just how these comparisons enhance the status of the lover-poet but how they change and challenge the heroes and heroic values.

In chapter one, I showed how Achilles (and Briseis) figure in Propertius’ revaluation of fides as a strategy of disidentification. There, I briefly discussed both 2.8 and 2.22 as well as the two poems that were the main focus of my chapter, 2.9 and 2.29. Here, however, I wish to look more closely at 2.8 and 2.22. A striking example of Propertius’ appropriation of the epic hero for elegy appears in 2.8.29-40:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{ille etiam abrepta desertus coniuge Achilles} \\
&\text{cessare in tectis pertulit arma sua.} \\
&\text{uiderat ille fuga stratos in litore Achiuos,} \\
&\text{feruere et Hectorea Dorica castra face;} \\
&\text{uiderat informem multa Patroclon harena} \\
&\text{porrectum et sparsas caede iacere comas,} \\
&\text{omnia formosam propter Briseida passus:} \\
&\text{tantus in erepto saeuit amore dolor.} \\
&\text{at postquam sera captiua est reddita poena,} \\
&\text{fortem illum Haemoniis Hectora traxit equis.}
\end{align*}
\]

abroad on military service with his patron (and therefore betraying his elegiac fides), not to his relationship with his mistress.

\(^7\) Cf. Whitaker (1983, 30 and 36-37) on Callimachus’ use of myth and the possible influence of his technique on Propertius.

In this poem, the lover-poet justifies his grief over the loss of his girlfriend by imagining Achilles, the greatest of the epic heroes, in a similar situation. Propertius’ Achilles is not motivated by anger and a desire for κλέος, as in the Iliad, but by sorrow and love for Briseis. Propertius places Achilles in the hexameter (29), an appropriate place for an epic hero, but then undermines his epic stature by making him desertus, a state that is more commonly associated with elegiac lovers and the deserted heroines of epyllion and epic. Moreover, the hero’s weapons (arma) appear in the elegiac pentameter (30), where they are out of place and their idleness is specifically marked. In the following couplets, the lover-poet emphasizes the depth of Achilles’ love by focusing on the destruction that he willingly ignored while Briseis was lost to him. By eliding the masculine motives for Achilles’ anger, that is, the blow to his honour when Agamemnon robs him of his war-prize, the lover-poet displaces the hero’s actions from the epic realm into the elegiac sphere. Propertius identifies the lover-poet with the hero Achilles, but then disidentifies with the hero-type by turning details familiar from Homeric epic to his own elegiac ends. He reminds us of the hero’s motivations in the Iliad, however, by referring to Briseis as captiua (37), although even as he does so he places her twice (35 and 37) in the hexameter. This simultaneously strengthens and weakens the epic reminder, as it places Briseis, a character from epic, in her proper metre; but since she is also the object of Achilles’ love, her appearance in the hexameter endows it with amatory associations. Propertius closes the exemplum with Achilles’ heroic victory over Hector (38), but again uses the metre to undermine the epic associations, since the hero’s victory is commemorated in the pentameter of a couplet whose hexameter has

73 Greene 2005a, 221.
74 For the hexameter as identified with epic and therefore with the highest of the poetic genres, see Morgan 2010, 284.
75 For the abandoned elegiac lover see 1.11, 1.12, and 1.15; cf. Gallus (Fr. 145.1 Hollis = 2 Courtney; Verg. Ecl. 10), Catullus (in lyric, 11; in elegy, 68, 72, 76). For the deserted heroine of epic, cf. Ariadne in Catul. 64, and Virgil’s Dido (Verg. A. 4).
76 Greene (2005a, 221) argues that Briseis’ slave status symbolizes the lover-poet’s desire to enslave Cynthia to his love; this meaning is certainly present in the exemplum, but I do not think it is the only or primary one. See my discussion of this poem in chapter one.
amatory material. By calling himself *inferior* in the line that follows Achilles’ victory (39), the lover-poet distances himself from the hero while at the same time he restores the traditional hierarchy of genres (he is inferior both in his lineage and his weapons). But he then immediately disturbs this hierarchy again through the later appearance of the triumphing Amor in the pentameter (40).

Another case of Achilles as exemplum, however, places the lover-poet in a position equal or even superior to that of the hero (2.13.31-38):

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deinde, ubi suppositus cinerem me fecerit ardor,  
accipiat Manis paruula testa meos  
et sit in exiguo laurus super addita busto,  
quae tegat extincti funeris umbra locum,  
et duo sint ursus: QUI NUNC IACET HORRIDA PULUIS,  
UNIUS HIC QUONDAM SERUUS AMORIS ERAT,  
nec minus haec nostri notescet fama sepulcri,  
quam fuerant Pthii busta cruenta uiri.  
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Here the lover-poet claims that his own tomb will be as famous as that of Achilles. Yet the lover-poet’s tomb is a distinctly elegiac one: his urn is *paruula* and the tomb itself *exiguus*. Nonetheless, Propertius twice sets the tomb in a hexameter (33 and 37), while reducing the hero’s to a single pentameter (38). He thereby associates the *laurus* and *fama* of the lover-poet’s tomb with the epic metre while denying the appropriate metrical setting to the *busta cruenta* of Achilles. Further, his epitaph identifies the tomb as belonging to *a seruus unius amoris*, and thus declares that the dead man is an exemplary elegiac lover, which is why his tomb will be no less renowned than that of Achilles. In a way, this appropriation of Achilles is more challenging to epic tropes than that in the other poems discussed in this chapter, in which the lover-poet draws out latent amatory possibilities from that genre. There is no suggestion in 2.13 that Achilles is famous for being a lover; rather, the lover-poet insists that his own deeds as a lover are as important, and as capable of generating *fama*, as Achilles’

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77 For the tomb of Achilles, see Hom. *Od*. 24.80-84. There is also evidence that it was a tourist destination of sorts. Plutarch (*Alex*. 15.4) reports that Alexander the Great visited the tomb, while lamenting that he did not have a Homer to write of his deeds.

78 Chapter 3.

79 Habinek (1998, 129) interprets this image as Propertius’ vision of an aristocracy whose posthumous fame is based on literary, rather than military or political, achievements.
deeds were, and he thereby disavows the standards of value in the dominant culture in epic and in contemporary Rome. This employment of the character of Achilles is part of Propertius’ elevation of militia amoris to the same level as or even higher than epic militia.

Propertius’ recasting of epic heroes in his construction of the lover-poet’s masculinity extends beyond Achilles, however (2.22.25-34):


Here we see a similar rhetorical strategy as Propertius draws out the amatory elements in the myths associated with heroes (and in this case, with the king of the gods as well) and harnesses the metrical structure of the elegiac couplet to destabilize further the epic commitment of the heroes. In the hexameter lines 27, 29, and 31, the god or hero is presented as a lover, and each successive pentameter contains an assertion of the strength that the mythological males exhibit after their amatory exploits. Each of the exemplary males is paired with a female beloved, as the lover-poet emphasizes that love did not emasculate Jupiter, Achilles, or Hector, and therefore need not unman him either (2.22.21-24):

sed tibi si exilis uideor tenuatus in artus, falleris: haud umquam est culta labore Venus. percontere licet: saepe est experta puella officium tota nocte ualere meum.

These couplets make it clear that the meaning of the exempla in 2.22 is subtly different from that of those in elegy 2.8. Elegy 2.22 is a poem ostensibly celebrating the joys of promiscuous, non-elegiac love: the lover-poet is here at pains to separate himself from the stereotypical elegiac lover, assuring his addressee that he is neither thin nor worn out by his

80 Fedeli (2005, 644-46) brackets lines 33-34, though he admits that there are no textual difficulties with it, on the grounds that the couplet is nonsensical. I accept the couplet as sound and motivated by the lover-poet’s comparison between himself and the heroes; see infra.
love. His insistence on his strength and virility is buttressed by his reference to the king of the gods and the champions of the Trojan War as exemplars of virility who, like the lover-poet, can make love all night and still get up and fight in the morning.

The curious thing about the exempla of 2.22, however, is the lover-poet’s emphasis on their excellence as lovers and warriors simultaneously. In each case, the male exemplum is described as moving from his beloved’s bed to martial feats. This movement is rather curious in relation to the lover-poet, even in a poem in which he is attempting to distance himself from elegiac love. Propertius’ idiosyncratic approach to militia amoris, however, may shed light on this problem. In the final couplet of the section containing mythological exempla, the lover-poet summarizes the non-amatory actions of the god and heroes (2.22.33): ille uel hic classis poterant uel perdere muros, where classis represents Hector’s target, the Greek ships (e.g. Il. 15.716-46), and muros Achilles’, the walls of Troy (e.g. Il. 21.515-36). The pentameter then returns to the lover-poet and the elegiacized epic heroes (2.22.34): hic ego Pelides, hic ferus Hector ego. It is not clear precisely what he means by “hic.”

Commentators generally either avoid the issue by translating it simply as “in this” or assume that he is referring to amatory feats, translating it as “in love” or something similar. Yet the most recent referents for hic are the martial feats of destroying ships and cities. It is unlikely that the lover-poet here claims to be able to undertake similar actions; he may be distancing himself from the weakness and dependency of elegiac lovers in this poem, but he shows no other sign of taking on the persona and accoutrements of a military man instead. Indeed, when the lover-poet attempts to reject amatory elegy, it is always a rejection in favour of some other type of literary project. But, as we have seen, he suggests that militia amoris,

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81 See Keith (1999a) on the rhetorical associations the elegists make between physical and poetic schemata and (1994) specifically on the bodies of Ovid’s puellae.
82 Commentaries that make hic mean “in love” or something similar: Camps 1967, Warden 1972, Goold 1999. Fedeli, however, explores the possibility that hic means “in these circumstances”, as it did at 2.4.7, and therefore suggests the lover-poet may be claiming strength in war.
83 For example, he claims to have attempted epic in 3.3 and to be planning warlike poetry in 2.10; he plans to turn to the study of philosophy, rhetoric, and comedy in 3.22; he declares his intention to take up aetiological elegy in 4.1. Cf. Wyke 2002, ch. 2.
service in the castra of his puella, is even more taxing than militia, and in this sense his statement that he is Achilles and Hector makes sense. He is comparing his level of excellence in the field of battle that he has chosen to theirs, so that in this regard the interpretation of hic as “in love” is appropriate. The lover-poet combines the god’s and heroes’ feats in love and their feats in battle in his own singular excellence in militia amoris.

The lover-poet most explicitly compares his success in love to the success of mythological characters in battle in 2.14 (1-10):

Non ita Dardanio gausus Atrida triumpho est,  
cum caderent magnae Laomedontis opes;  
nec sic errore exacto laetatus Ulixes,  
cum tetigit carae litora Dulichiae;  
nec sic Electra, saluum cum aspexit Oresten,  
cuius falsa tenens fleuerat ossa soror;  
nec sic incolu mem Minois Thesea uidit,  
Daedalium lino cum duce rexit iter,  
quanta ego praeterita collegi gaudia nocte:  
immortalis ero, si altera talis erit.  

This poem begins simply enough, with the lover-poet declaring his joy greater than Agamemnon’s upon the fall of Troy or Odysseus’ upon reaching Ithaca. Propertius does not draw out erotic elements of either of these Homeric stories, although it would have been easy enough to make Odysseus’ joy about his reunion with Penelope. The other two exempla, however, are more complex, as the lover-poet compares his joy to that of Electra and Ariadne. By comparing himself to women when he might just as easily compare himself in both cases to the men, Orestes and Theseus, while still using the same stories, he troubles his gender identification. Additionally, it is only with the female exempla that he introduces an erotic element, since Ariadne is the only one of the epic characters with whom he compares himself who is rejoicing at the return of a lover. But even the Ariadne and Theseus exemplum focuses on Ariadne’s aid to Theseus in escaping the Minotaur’s labyrinth rather than on the erotic aspect of their story. While the lover-poet elsewhere foregrounds erotic elements in epic tales, in elegy 2.14 he avoids them.
It is clear, however, that his own triumph has been erotic, as the word he uses to describe it, *gaudia*, has an erotic meaning elsewhere in the corpus. By comparing his success with epic successes, the first of which is even called a *triumphus* (1), the lover-poet clearly activates the trope of *militia amoris*. Moreover, he returns to the idea of a triumph later in the poem (2.14.21-24):

> pulsabant alii frustra dominamque uocabant:  
> mecum habuit positum lenta puella caput.  
> haec mihi deuictis potior victoria Parthis,  
> haec spolia, haec reges, haec mihi currus erunt.

In these lines, the lover-poet directly compares his own erotic triumph, symbolized by his *puella’s* acceptance of him and rejection of the other men, who are made *exclusi amatores*, with a Roman triumph, symbolized by the treasure, captives, and triumphal chariot that were all essential parts of the procession. As with the epic exempla, this contemporary military exemplum has no erotic element; the lover-poet overtly claims his own activities as more worthy of joy and even better than the deeds of epic heroes and Roman generals. And by explicitly saying that his success is better than a victory over the Parthians, the lover-poet implicitly compares himself to Julius Caesar, who planned a Parthian campaign, and Augustus, who celebrated the return of Crassus’ standards as a victory. In other poems, the lover-poet uses epic exempla to justify and elevate his elegiac deeds, often by making epic elegiac. In 2.14, however, he places the military triumphs that epic and the Roman elite value beside the success lauded by elegy, and characterizes the latter in terms of the former, replacing epic value with elegiac value but in terms his audience can understand. None of the epic heroes he mentions become immortal, although the deserted Ariadne will, and the lover-poet too will do so if he achieves erotic success one more time (10). The lover-poet rejects the literary and military standards of the dominant elite culture and revalues his own position as the desirable one. The inclusion of a Parthian victory among the accomplishments that

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85 According to Murgatroyd (1975, 70) the image of love’s triumph originates with this poem and is part of the Romanization of *militia amoris*. On the Roman triumph, see Beard 2007.  
86 Caesar: D.C. 53.51; cf. Malitz 1984 for a summary of the evidence for Caesar’s planned campaign.
pale before his own, however, adds a further element to his disidentification with dominant values. By suggesting that his elegiac success is better than a victory in a campaign associated with Augustus he indirectly compares himself to the princeps and even outdoes him, as Augustus’ campaign was a political and diplomatic, not a military, victory.

Propertius’ engagement with the genre of epic is as important as his treatment of heroic figures in his disidentification with the values of Roman elite culture, and will eventually lead us to his direct engagement with Augustus and public poetry. When the lover-poet mentions epic poetry in books 1 to 3, it is usually for one of two related reasons: to explain why he cannot or will not write it, or to talk about another poet who does write it. Both of these scenarios are present in elegy 1.7, addressed to the lover-poet’s friend Ponticus. The first four lines of the poem establish Ponticus as an epic poet: singing of Thebes (1), a subject from the epic cycle, and comparable to Homer (3). The next ten lines treat Propertius’ practice of love elegy (1.7.5-14):

nos, ut consuemus, nostros agitamus amores  
atque aliquid duram quaerimus in dominam;  
nec tantum ingenio quantum seruire dolori  
coger et aetatis tempora dura queri.  
hic mihi conteritur uitae modus, haec mea fama est,  
hinc cupio nomen carminis ire mei.  
me laudent doctae solum placuisse puellae,  
Pontice, et iniustas saepe tulisse minas;  
me legat assidue post haec neglectus amator  
et prosint illi cognita nostra mala.

In this section, Propertius describes his mistress as dura and his time of life, spent in composing elegy, as tempora dura. Durus is normally associated with the genre of epic, while elegy is characterized as mollis, but here the lover-poet clearly reverses the traditional associations to apply the adjective durus to his elegiac lifestyle and poetic practice. The poet also says that he serves his sorrow, not his talent, implying that he has the talent to write

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87 Ov. Tr. 4.10.47 also mentions Ponticus; nothing is known about him beyond what Propertius and Ovid tell us; cf. Hollis 2007, 426.
88 On the use of durus and mollis in Propertius, see Hinds 1987, 21; McNamee 1993, 219; Wyke 2002, 168; Miller 2004, 68; Greene 2005b, 70.
epic, but chooses not to.\textsuperscript{89} This contrasts sharply with what he says about Ponticus (1.7.15-20):

\begin{verbatim}
  te quoque si certo puer hic concusserit arcu,
  † quod nollim nostros euiolasse † deos,
  longe castra tibi, longe miser agmina septem
  flebis in aeterno surda iacere situ;
  et frustra cupies mollem componere uersum
  nec tibi subiciet carmina serus Amor.
\end{verbatim}

The epic poet, despite his \textit{durus} genre, is just as susceptible to conquest by the \textit{puer} Amor as the elegist is. But Ponticus does not have the talent to write elegy; the \textit{mollem uersum} eludes him, and so he will learn to rank the elegist above all. In this subtle treatment of the two genres, the lover-poet reveals a disidentificatory relationship with them. He rejects the writing of epic, but anticipates praise (11) and \textit{fama} (9) for his poetry, the rewards of epic heroes and by implication epic poets. Nor does he fully embrace the role of elegist, however, at least in the sense of it as a role that is soft or effeminate, and therefore of less value than epic. Propertius’ elegist is capable of writing epic but does not. He imbues his elegiac poetry with the hardness of epic, in the form of the \textit{dura puella} and the \textit{dura tempora} of his life. He predicts that he will not only be famous in his lifetime and beyond because of his elegiac poetry, but that even the epic poet will learn to value him and his poetry above all others.

Propertius creates a role in which the elegiac poet is engaged in serious, difficult work that will bring lasting fame, as the final three couplets of the poem declare (1.7.21-26):

\begin{verbatim}
  tum me non humilem mirabere saepe poetam,
  tunc ego Romanis praefar ingenii;
  nec poterunt iuuenes nostro reticere sepulcro
  'Ardoris nostri magne poeta iaces.'
  tu caue nostra tuo contemnas carmina fastu:
  saepe uenit magno faenore tardus Amor.
\end{verbatim}

The lover-poet moves from the comparison of Ponticus with Homer and denigration of his own poetry,\textsuperscript{90} the composition of which he dismisses with the comment \textit{nostros agitamus amores} (5), to predict that Ponticus himself will one day admire (21: \textit{mirabere}) him and that

\textsuperscript{89} Fedeli (1981, 229) argues that the theme of 1.7 is the triumph of elegy over epic.
\textsuperscript{90} Stahl (1985, 58) argues that Propertius, not Ponticus, is the real rival to Homer in this poem.
he will be ranked higher than other Roman men of genius (22). He specifically identifies young lovers as those who will most admire him (23-24), but since he has already shown that anyone, even an epic poet, can be struck by love, it seems as though fame among lovers is fame tout court. This suggestion that love can take hold of anyone is reinforced by the warning in the final couplet to respect love poetry or expect to pay interest to the love god himself.

Ponticus reappears in 1.9, where the warning that the lover-poet gave him about the worthlessness of epic verse in elegiac situations has come true (1.9.9-16):

quid tibi nunc misero prodest graue dicere carmen
aut Amphioniae moenia flere lyrae? 10
plus in amore uael Mimnermi uersus Homero:
carmina mansuetus lenia quaerit Amor.
i quaeso et tristis istos compone libellos,
et cane quod quaeuis nosse puella uelit!
quid si non esset facilis tibi copia? nunc tu
insanus medio flumine quaeris aquam. 15

The lover-poet compares love poetry to epic, and the latter comes up lacking. Furthermore, by associating epic themes with weeping (10: flere), usually an elegiac action, he extends the boundaries of the genre. Moreover, he implies that Ponticus lacks talent, since he is unable to compose despite his ample material. This contrasts sharply with the lover-poet’s own claims in 1.7 that he has talent (ingenium), but is constrained by circumstances. Here in Book 1, the lover-poet depicts epic poetry as a useless enterprise in the world of elegy, the truly durus genre.

Considering the attitude towards epic that the lover-poet holds, it is not surprising that he refuses to write it himself. His most notable statements on this subject come in the form of multiple recusationes. The lover-poet’s statements about the uselessness of epic in amatory situations act as mini-recusationes, and precede his formal examples of the type. The effect of this professed reluctance to write epic is twofold: first, the lover-poet elevates

91 See James (2001, 235) on the worth of the two genres when trying to attract puellae.
love and love poetry above epic and the martial or public exploits that it celebrates; and second, the lover-poet, in his refusal to write the kind of poetry that supports the state, may imply criticism of Augustus and his regime, without outright denunciation.

The significance of the *recusationes* of Propertius and his contemporaries is contested. It has been convincingly argued that neither Augustus nor Maecenas truly wanted every poet to produce a martial epic like the *Aeneid.*\(^93\) Instead, it has been suggested, Maecenas sought the most talented poets of every genre and encouraged them to excel in their chosen form.\(^94\) On the other hand, the evidence of Horace’s fourth book of *Carmina* and his *Carmen Saeculare* suggests that a certain amount of persuasion might be brought to bear on poets and that poetry supporting the goals and values of Augustus’ regime was not unwelcome.\(^95\) Equally suggestive is the report that Augustus himself intervened to stop Virgil’s dying wish for the destruction of the unfinished *Aeneid* from being carried out.\(^96\) Although it seems unlikely that there was any direct and explicit pressure on Propertius to produce a Roman epic, there may well have been more subtle encouragement of poetry that at least did not conflict with the goals of the regime. Nonetheless, it is unlikely that a feeling of pressure from the regime was the sole or even the most important reason for Propertius’ *recusationes.*

I would argue, rather, that the *recusationes* serve to undermine the moral rectitude of the regime and of the type of elite masculinity encouraged by the princeps and his entourage and thereby lend support to Propertius’ project to rehabilitate the socially marginal figure of the lover-poet in his construction of a disidentifying masculine subject. This tendency can be seen as early as the *Monobiblos,* which, although it does not contain an explicit *recusatio* of the type that appears in books two and three, presents in the final two poems a troubling reminder of the civil wars and land confiscations of the triumviral period. Moreover, these

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\(^{93}\) Gold 1987, 112 and cf. White 1993, esp. ch. 5.  
\(^{94}\) Cairns 2006, 41.  
\(^{96}\) Suet. *Life of Virgil* 39.
two short elegies situate the lover-poet in opposition to Octavian/Augustus. The first, elegy
1.21, presents a sympathetic portrayal of a Gallus who fought against Octavian in the siege of
Perusia and is likely identifiable with the propinqui of 1.22.7. The second, elegy 1.22, also
identifies the lover-poet as a native of nearby Umbria and refers to Perusia as patriae
sepulcra (3). These poems are the first in the corpus to emphasize the disquieting incidents
of Italian civil war and social and physical destruction that marked Octavian’s rise to power,
and which he seems to have been at pains to downplay in the decades after Actium.97

The first of Propertius’ recusationes, 2.1, takes up some of the same issues as 1.7,
1.21, and 1.22, but in a more explicitly programmatic way, since it opens the second book.
The poem begins with an explanation for the lover-poet’s composition of elegy, characterized
as mollis (1); but from line 17, the poem modulates into a priamel declaring the lover-poet’s
refusal to write epic. The relevant section, addressed to Maecenas, whose own engagement
with normative masculinity will be discussed further below, begins with a denial of the lover-
poet’s fitness for epic, but then quickly moves into a list of potential epic topics (2.1.17-25):

quod mihi si tantum, Maecenas, fata dedissent,
   ut possem heroas ducere in arma manus,
non ego Titanas canerem, non Ossan Olympos
   impositam, ut caeli Pelion esset iter,
nec ueteres Thebas nec Pergama, nomen Homeri,
   Xersis et imperio bina coisse uada,
regnaue prima Remi aut animos Carthaginis altae
   Cimbrorumque minas et bene facta Mari:
bellaque resque tui memorarem Caesaris et tu
   Caesare sub magno cura secunda fores.

20

A number of the exemplary themes of epic verse Propertius here details suggest fratricide or
some sort of civil conflict.98 Although they are standard epic themes, the Gigantomachy and
the Theban cycle both include such resonances,99 and the trend becomes particularly marked
at line 23 with the mention of the early reign of Remus, rather than Romulus.100 Similarly,

98 Nethercut 1983, 1839.
99 For Thebes as a site for civil war in the Roman imagination, see Braund 2006.
100 See Welch (2005, 101-2) for discussion of another occasion when Propertius brings up Remus to similar
despite his mention of the *bene facta* of Marius, the name of that general would still have suggested the civil wars of the early part of the century as much as his external victories.\textsuperscript{101} It is true, however, that there are external conflicts in this list that balance the internal ones, so that when the lover-poet adds the wars of Caesar (25-26) at the end, it is possible to see it as a balanced and not necessarily negative list.

When he lists those wars of Caesar, however, the focus is strictly on the internal conflicts (2.1.27-36):

\begin{verbatim}
nam quotiens Mutinam aut, ciuilia busta, Philippos
  aut canerem Siculæ classica bella fugae
euersosque focos antiquæ gentis Etruscae
  et Ptolemaei litora capta Phari,
  30
aut canerem Aegyptum et Nilum, cum attractus in urbem
  septem captuius debilis ibat aquis,
aut regum auratis circumdata colla catenis,
    Actiaque in Sacra currere rostra Via;
te mea Musa illis semper contexeret armis,
  35
et sumpta et posita pace fidele caput:
\end{verbatim}

All of these conflicts represent victories of Octavian over Roman forces, even if the last, at Actium, was widely portrayed as a victory over Egypt.\textsuperscript{102} Moreover, Propertius emphasizes the internal nature of the conflicts with his mention of *ciuilia busta* in the first line of this section (27). He names Mutina, the site of the first battle in which Antony and Octavian fought against each other, and Sicily, the stronghold of Sextus Pompey, the preeminent civil conflicts in the early years of Octavian’s career. Of particular concern to Propertius may have been the events of line 29, which are thought to allude to the siege of Perusia in 41-40 BCE, mentioned in elegy 1.21 in connection with the lover-poet’s ancestry and birthplace.\textsuperscript{103} Taken together, these conflicts about which the lover-poet would write epic verse, if only he could, are of a sort to make Augustus happy that the poem would never be written.

Elegy 2.1 thus taints epic poetry with the stain of civil war. Propertius thereby resists an equation of epic poetry and the deeds the genre celebrates with social virtue. By focusing

\textsuperscript{101} Gurval 1995, 174.
\textsuperscript{103} Cairns 2006, 46-47.
on the controversial side of Augustus’ military victories, even while claiming to celebrate them, Propertius makes it difficult to read his work as straightforwardly positive about the princeps (a topic to which I shall return in my concluding chapter). More important for the current argument, however, are the implications of the lover-poet’s attitude towards these military victories. By showing them as internally destructive, he calls into question the military values of Roman masculinity and buttresses his assertions that *militia amoris* is morally superior to actual *militia*.

Elegy 2.1 is not Propertius’ only *recusatio*, and many of the themes and issues already discussed in this chapter reappear in his later *recusationes* as well. There are a number of examples in book three, with the most sustained treatments appearing at 3.1, 3.3, and 3.9, although in a way the whole cycle of “Roman Elegies” (3.1 - 5) acts as an extended rejection of both militarism and epic. His *recusatio* in 3.1, again programmaticallly placed at the opening of a book, is an avowedly Callimachean and elegiac statement of generic commitment, in which the lover-poet rejects epic in favour of elegy (3.1.7): *a ualeat, Phoebum quicumque moratur in armis!* In this elegy, the lover-poet firmly refuses to make epic his chosen genre, and, unlike in 2.1, neither apologizes nor expresses the wish that he could write epic (3.1.15-20):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{multi, Roma, tuas laudes annalibus addent,} & \quad 15 \\
\text{qui finem imperii Bactra futura canent:} & \\
\text{sed, quod pace legas, opus hoc de monte Sororum detulit intacta pagina nostra uiia.} & \\
\text{mollia, Pegasides, date uestro serta poetae:} & \\
\text{non faciet capiti dura corona meo.} & 20
\end{align*}
\]

The lover-poet provides the conventional attribution of the adjectives *mollis* and *durus*, to elegy (19) and epic (20) respectively, but puts them into the wrong lines of the couplet, reversing the epic associations of the hexameter and the elegiac of the pentameter. Moreover,
his earlier dismissal of those who delay Apollo with warlike themes suggests both hostility to epic and that genre’s inherent unsuitability for the god of poetry.\(^{104}\)

Immediately after disavowing the *dura corona* of epic, the lover-poet turns to consider the fame that he will earn, particularly after his death. These couplets strengthen our earlier impression of the inherent worth of elegy (3.1.21-24):

\[
\text{at mihi quod uiuo detraxerit inuida turba,} \\
\text{post obitum duplici faenore reddet Honos;} \\
\text{omnia post obitum fingit maiora uetustas:} \\
\text{maius ab exsequiis nomen in ora uenit.}
\]

The *duplici faenore...Honos* of line 22 is reminiscent, both in wording and placement in the line, of 1.7.26 *magno faenore...Amor*, and recalls the lover-poet’s claim in the earlier poem that he would be worshipped by lovesick youths after his death (1.7.23-24), admired by Ponticus the epic poet (1.7.21), and ranked above other Roman talents (1.7.22). This reminder of his earlier statements about his own posthumous fame and the greater value of elegiac, as opposed to epic, poetry is particularly instructive when combined with his statements about fame in 3.1, where he spends eight lines (25-32) on Homeric themes before naming Homer himself (3.1.33-38):

\[
\text{nec non ille tui casus memorator Homerus} \\
\text{posteritate suum crescere sensit opus.} \\
\text{meque inter seros laudabit Roma nepotes:} \\
\text{illum post cineres auguror ipse diem.} \\
\text{ne mea contempto lapis indicet ossa sepulcro,} \\
\text{prouisum est Lycio uota probante deo.}
\]

The lover-poet challenges the association of lasting fame with epic, and implicates Homer in his strategies of disidentification by using the example of Homer’s fame to support the predictions of his own fame in the very poem in which he explicitly rejects epic composition. The lover-poet rejects epic poetry and yet identifies with the epic poet at the same time. He strengthens his rejection of epic, while simultaneously subtly reasserting his own generic

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\(^{104}\) See DeBrohun (2003, 220-34) on the opposing values contained within the figure of Apollo.
allegiance, by ending the poem with a Callimachean allusion in the prayer to Lycian Apollo (Call. Aet. fr. 1 M.).\textsuperscript{105}

Elegy 3.3 reports the lover-poet’s dream that he was dissuaded from writing epic by Apollo and Calliope.\textsuperscript{106} Calliope’s instructions concerning the genre in which he should write contrast the martial world of epic with that of elegy (3.3.39-46):

\begin{verbatim}
'Contentus niueis semper uectabere 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 restringat opes,  
barbarus aut Sueuo perfusus sanguine Rhenus  
saucia maerenti corpora uectet aqua.  
\end{verbatim}

This \textit{recusatio} goes beyond his earlier ones in 2.1 and 3.1, with the lover-poet being forbidden by a higher power than any earthly patron from writing epic, so that the decision is taken out of his hands.\textsuperscript{107} Calliope, perhaps serving her role as muse of epic by keeping an unsuitable poet away from the topics under her care, directs the lover-poet back to love poetry by telling him to ride swans, a bird associated with Venus. The muse specifically forbids the lover-poet from taking up Roman epic (43-46), but in contrast to the content of previous \textit{recusationes}, she mentions none of the traditional non-Roman epic topics, such as the Trojan or Theban cycle. The wars are for the most part foreign ones, against Germanic peoples: the Teutones, whose conquest was the source of Marius’ fame, and the Suebi who clashed with Julius Caesar and remained a problem for Rome into the reign of Augustus. Calliope focuses on the blood and carnage of these wars, rather than the glory and victory, which underlines their inappropriateness for a love poet’s subject. This poem reinforces the association of epic, and the wars the genre relates, with suffering. Moreover, the mention of people whose conquest was instrumental for the rise of not only Marius but also Caesar may remind the reader of the civil wars in which both men eventually participated, especially

\textsuperscript{105} Cf. Fedeli 1985, 85-86.
\textsuperscript{106} This dream also alludes to a famous Callimachean set piece, Aet. fr. 3-7 M.
\textsuperscript{107} Weinlich 2010, 135. Cf. Verg. Ecl. 6.3-5, modeled on Call. Aet. Fr. 1 M.
considering Marius’ presence in an earlier list of civil conflicts (2.1.24). The lover-poet reacts against the military glory that elite males traditionally sought out in order to glorify themselves, their families, and Rome. He uses the events of the recent civil war to reject this glorification of military service and its part in creating and affirming elite masculinity.

Further, by refusing to write epic, he not only rejects the actual service but even the literary genre that espouses militarism.

Elegy 3.9 returns to many of the same themes of the other recusationes, particularly the rejection of epic, especially Roman epic. It is also a highly political poem, addressed to Maecenas (1), and naming not only Augustus but also Antony, who, although alluded to elsewhere (2.16.37-40; 3.11.31), is named only here (3.9.56): *Antonique grauis in sua fata manus*. The address to Maecenas, while not in itself unusual, can also be read as part of Propertius’ engagement with the contemporary construction of elite Roman masculinity (3.9.21-32):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{at tua, Maecenas, uitae praecepta recepi,} \\
\text{cogor et exemplis te superare tuis.} \\
\text{cum tibi Romano dominas in honore securis} \\
\text{et liceat medio ponere iura foro,} \\
\text{uel tibi Medorum pugnacis ire per hastas} \\
\text{atque onerare tuam fixa per arma domum,} \\
\text{et tibi ad effectum uires det Caesar et omni} \\
\text{tempore tam faciles insinuentur opes,} \\
\text{parcis et in tenuis humilem te colligis umbras:} \\
\text{uelorum plenos subtrahis ipse sinus.} \\
\text{crede mihi, magnos aequabunt ista Camillos} \\
\text{iudicia, et uenies tu quoque in ora uirum...}
\end{align*}
\]

The lover-poet reminds Maecenas that although he has the ability to serve the state in a public and traditional fashion, he does not. More importantly, Maecenas’ behaviour wins the approval of Augustus and will be praised by posterity. The lover-poet points to Maecenas as an example for him to follow in his refusal of the roles and duties associated with conventional masculinity.

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108 2.1.24.
109 Maecenas was a patron of numerous poets, and programmatic addresses to him can also be found in every book of Virgil’s *Georgics* (1.2; 2.41; 3.41; and 4.2) and in Horace *Epop.* 1.4, *Carm.* 1.1.1, S. 1.1.1, Ep. 1.1.3.
Maecenas was at the same time not only a close friend and loyal supporter of Augustus but also a man who challenged the precepts of traditional Roman masculinity in his own self-fashioning. On the public level, Maecenas opted out of a conventional career. He had a number of unofficial or temporary posts that were due to his friendship with Octavian/Augustus, but he did not follow the *cursus honorum* or join the senate. The lover-poet alludes to Maecenas’ rejection of an official career (3.9.21-34), which he uses as a justification for his own refusal to write state-supporting epic. But Maecenas did not entirely reject participation in public life, as is evidenced by his willingness to act in unofficial capacities, notably as an envoy in the negotiations that resulted in the pacts of Brundisium in 40 BCE and Tarentum in 37 BCE. Maecenas later acted as Octavian’s surrogate in control of Rome from 36-33 BCE, when the latter was campaigning in the West, and 31-29 BCE, when he was fighting Antony and Cleopatra in the East.

On the private level too, Maecenas’ engagement with Roman masculinity seems to have been equally ambivalent. Although he fulfilled the most basic duty, marriage, he was widely considered to be somewhat effeminate, a characterization that he seems to have cultivated consciously. Even his marriage was not necessarily a mark of his masculinity. His wife was rumoured to have had an affair with Augustus, which, if true and sanctioned by Maecenas (as was also alleged), could have called his masculinity even further into question, as he had failed to exert proper control over his wife’s sexual behaviour. Maecenas himself, moreover, was rumoured to have had numerous love affairs and was over-fond of luxurious living, both of which contributed to his reputation for effeminacy.

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110 He does not seem to have fathered children, though, at least not ones that survived long enough to enter the historical record. He made Augustus heir of his vast wealth.
112 D. C. 54.19.3.
113 Under Augustus’ marriage legislation, Maecenas could even have been charged with acting as a pimp if he failed to divorce his wife after learning of her adultery.
114 Plin. *Nat.* 8.170 on Maecenas and gourmet dishes; Tac. *Ann.* 1.54 on his scandalous love affair with the actor Bathyllus; Sen. *Ep.* 114.4-11 on his luxurious lifestyle and effeminate self-presentation.
In his poetry, too, Maecenas appears to have promoted this picture of himself as a devote of luxury. He wrote in the style of Catullus and his friends, who had occasionally challenged traditional masculine values in the previous generation (e.g. Catul. 16). What little of Maecenas’ poetry survives displays his interest in neoteric style and Hellenistic luxury, as can be seen in a couple of poems addressed to Horace (Maecenas fr. 185 Hollis = 2 Courtney):

lucentes, mea uita, nec smaragdos,
beryllos mihi, Flacee, nec nitentes,
<nec> percandida margarita quaero,
nec quos Thynia lima perpoluiit
anellos, nec iaspios lapillos

and (Maecenas fr. 186 Hollis = 3 Courtney):

ni te uisceribus meis, Horati,
plus iam diligo, tu tuum sodalem
hinnulo uideas strigosiorem.

Both of these poems are in hendecasyllables, Catullus’ favourite metre,\(^{115}\) and Catullan influence is especially clear in the second poem’s allusions.\(^{116}\) The list of jewels in the first of these poems shows a careful attention to the details of expensive jewelry.\(^{117}\) But enjoying Maecenas’ patronage and even alluding to his private way of life or fondness for luxury was, of course, not unique to Propertius. Horace’s poetry mentions Maecenas in the context of parties and high living a number of times, and also explicitly discusses the circumstances under which he gained Maecenas’ notice and his status as the lesser amicus of his patron.\(^{118}\) In the context of the particular way that the Propertian corpus puts pressure on the precepts of elite manhood, the focus on Maecenas’ reluctance to participate in normative masculine endeavours and behaviour functions as a justification of the lover-poet’s similar refusals.

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\(^{115}\) See Morgan (2010, 63-73 and 76-78) on the lasting association of this meter with Catullus.


\(^{117}\) Maecenas was a collector of jewels, as may be indicated by a fragmentary letter from Augustus, preserved at Macr. 2.4.12; cf. Keith 2008, 156. On the association of jewel collections and Hellenistic luxury, see Bing 2004 and Hunter 2004.

\(^{118}\) For his entry into Maecenas’ circle, see S. 1.6.52–62 and 2.6.40–42. Gold 1987, 126–31.
Maecenas, like the lover-poet but on a much grander scale, is also able to opt out of socially approved roles because of his social elevation.\textsuperscript{119} Despite his apparent lack of conformity to the goals of the Augustan regime, Maecenas was still an integral and supportive member of it, so that the connection between Maecenas and the lover-poet works to elevate the status of the lover-poet and to legitimate his literary pursuits. But the connection moves both ways, so that it also implicates Maecenas in the lover-poet’s critique of normative elite masculinity and of the regime that encourages it.

Allegedly, Maecenas fell from favour sometime after 23 BCE, either because he told his wife of the discovery of a conspiracy involving her brother against Augustus (Suet. Aug. 66) or because of his wife’s affair with Augustus (D.C. 54.19).\textsuperscript{120} Whether or not this is true, he does seem to have had a considerably less public role in the period in which Propertius would have been writing book 4, which may have made him a less attractive figure to use in questioning the more public aspects of normative masculinity on which book 4 focuses. The lover-poet instead begins the book with a mention of the greatness of Rome (4.1.1) and, after the multiple recusationes of the earlier books, there appears to be a change in his attitude towards poetry that praises the state and its apparatus when the lover-poet promises to write aetiological elegy in the spirit of Callimachus (4.1.69-70): *sacra diesque canam et cognomina prisca locorum:/ has meus ad metas sudet oportet equus*. This promise, however, is soon undermined by the speaker of the second half of the poem, Horos, who reminds the lover-poet of his true vocation (4.1.135-36): *at tu finge elegos, fallax opus (haec tua castra!)/ scribat ut exemplo cetera turba tuo*. The dual nature of the opening poem of book four is reflected in the rest of the poems in the book as well.\textsuperscript{121} While a few of them fall strictly into the category of erotic elegy (4.3, 4.5, 4.7, and 4.8), even these contain at least some mention of Roman places, or in the case of 4.8, *sacra*. More problematically, however, the

\textsuperscript{119} See Muñoz (1999, 164) for the privilege necessary for successful disidentification.

\textsuperscript{120} Williams (1990) argues that Maecenas did not fall from favour, but rather that Maecenas cooperated in the movement of the poets from his patronage to that of Augustus.

\textsuperscript{121} Welch 2005, 34.
aetiological poems almost all have some element of erotic elegy (4.10 is the only real exception), so that there is no real separation of the two sub-genres, erotic and aetiological elegy, but a blurring of the boundaries between the two (as in, e.g. Call. *Aet. Fr.* 67-75 M.). Most problematic of all, however, are the doubts sown throughout the final collection, even in the most aetiological elegies (4.6 and 4.10), about the moral rectitude of Rome and of Augustus, a subject to which I return at the end of this dissertation.

Propertius’ construction of masculinity draws on multiple private and public, dominant and countercultural roles. The character of his lover-poet is informed by literary constructions such as the epic hero and the elegiac lover, as well as by the acceptance, rejection, and critique of contemporary political and social structures and traditional Roman values. Propertius lived in a time when a new regime was attempting to stabilize the political and social system at Rome. Augustus was deeply invested in portraying the sometimes radical changes that he was introducing as, in actuality, a return to the traditions of the past, traditions that had been undermined and even lost in the upheaval of the wars and civil unrest that dominated the first century BCE. Thus, Augustus himself was a figure full of self-contradiction, not least in his reinvention of himself as upholder of the republican constitution and pious creator of peace, despite his many and very public violations of legal and political institutions and violent, war-mongering acts after the death of Julius Caesar and even after the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra.122 It should not surprise us that an author working in such a turbulent context would struggle with contradictory representations of his society.

Propertius uses the character of his lover-poet alter-ego to explore the space opened up as a result of the collision between new and old political and cultural systems. Traditionally, Roman masculinity was expressed and constructed through participation in socially sanctioned activities in the political, military, social, and familial arenas.123 And according to dominant cultural beliefs about suitable male behaviour, the elegiac lover’s

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123 See Introduction.
service to a woman, devotion to luxury, and avoidance of responsibility is at best an allowable, time-limited diversion for the very young man,\textsuperscript{124} at worst a sign of corruption and effeminacy.\textsuperscript{125} Propertius uses \textit{militia amoris}, broadly defined to include engagement with contemporary military structures, Roman political and military figures, empire-building, epic poetry and characters, and poetry that praises the state, to interrogate these assumptions about what makes a man. He was able to do this, however, in part because of some of the very things about which he is critical, including civil war and the luxuries that were the fruits, and one of the causes, of Roman imperialism.

Propertius’ lover-poet repeatedly rejects all forms of conventional masculine duty, including military service, provincial service, public life, the production of epic poetry, and even marriage and fatherhood. Along with them, then, he must also reject the activities that signaled a Roman man’s masculinity, because the performance of manhood was at least as important as having a physically male body.\textsuperscript{126} At the same time, however, he rejects the counter-identity that is at hand, that of an effeminate lover-poet. When he identifies with epic heroes or historical figures, the lover-poet emphasizes the parts of their stories that provide openings for devotion to love and a woman. In this way, he uses the epic genre as one of his strategies of disidentification, by appropriating it for his construction of a disidentity that is built in part on the revaluation of love and elegy above the traditional social and literary values of the elite. Propertius claims that \textit{militia amoris} is more difficult than service to Rome and therefore more deserving of lasting fame. He sets the \textit{puella} up as a worthy and challenging leader, and service to her as the best expression of his disidentificatory masculinity.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[124] As argued by Cicero at \textit{Cael.} 42-43.
\item[125] As exemplified by Catiline’s followers in Sall. \textit{Cat.} 14.
\end{footnotes}
Conclusion: Propertius without Cynthia

Throughout this dissertation, I have presented Cynthia as a central component of the construction of the lover-poet’s masculinity and of his resistance to normative masculine roles. But in every book there are poems that do not address Cynthia, even indirectly, and although she features in the majority of the poems of the first book, her presence decreases in every subsequent book.1 On the other hand, Propertius’ engagement with major public figures, notably Maecenas and Augustus himself, is already hinted at in book 1 and increases until it culminates in book 4’s intended project to “sing of rituals and [festive] days and the ancient names of places” (4.1.69) and especially in the central poem of book 4, on the battle of Actium (4.6). Nonetheless, in this final brief chapter, I maintain that the lover-poet continues to disidentify with normative and elegiac masculine roles regardless of whether Cynthia is present in a poem. I present some suggestions for further avenues of research concerning the role of Augustus in the construction of the lover-poet’s masculinity in the absence of Cynthia, first through a reading of some aspects of elegy 3.11 not discussed in chapter 3, and then with a discussion of 4.6.

In chapter 3, I discussed the elements of poem 3.11 that related to *seruitium amoris*, but after the list of mythological exempla the poem turns away from this trope and from Cynthia, as the comparison of Cynthia and the lover-poet to Cleopatra and Antony invites the poet to shift to the events of the civil war between Octavian and Antony. The main point of the comparison of the lover-poet to Jason, Achilles, and Hercules is to use their submission to women to justify the lover-poet’s subservience to Cynthia. This submission continues to be the focus of the lines immediately after the list of mytho-historical exempla, which add the exemplum of Cleopatra and Antony (3.11.29-32):

```
quid, modo quae nostris opprobria nrexerit armis,
et (famulos inter femina trita suos!)
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conjugis obsceni pretium Romana poposcit
moenia et addictos in sua regna Patres.

Antony’s status as a *seruus amoris* is implied here by comparison to the other men so far mentioned, although he is unnamed and for the most part absent from the poem, only alluded to in the phrase *coniugis obsceni*. Instead, the focus of this exemplum is on the shameful behaviour of Cleopatra, and of Rome for fearing a woman, and an unchaste and corrupt one at that. The *seruus amoris* here is as much Rome as Antony, as Cleopatra’s domination of a Roman general allows Propertius to address the heart of the problem of women’s mastery: its potential intrusion into the public realm. The public danger of Cleopatra’s mastery is twofold. First, as a queen, she corrupts her own country, in accordance with Roman beliefs about female rule, and second, by dominating a Roman general and politician, she threatens to overcome and enslave Rome itself. It is at this point that the poet moves from using Antony’s submission to Cleopatra to justify the lover-poet’s submission to Cynthia, to apparent praise of Augustus for saving Rome from external enemies. Cleopatra unquestionably brings Propertius’ elegiac lover and mistress into contact with the historical and public realms; this is no mythological exemplum, but contemporary politics.

In elegy 3.11, Cleopatra is presented as a danger to Rome, in that she would have turned the capital into a second Alexandria, effeminate and treacherous (3.11.39-49):

```
scilicet incesti meretrix regina Canopi,
unae Philippo sanguine adusta nota,
ausa Ioui nostro latrantem opponere Anubim,
et Tiberim Nili cogere ferre minas,
Romanamque tubam crepitanti pellere sistro,
baridos et contis rostra Liburna sequi,
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2 Calling Antony an *obsceni* spouse also contrasts this union with Antony’s other, Roman marriage with Octavia, which had a legitimacy at Rome that his relationship with Cleopatra did not. Wyke (1992, 94) argues that Cleopatra’s marriage which was not recognized as such puts her in the position of wife and not-wife at the same time. This reading assimilates her, in some ways, to the disidentificatory figure of the elegiac puella discussed in this dissertation.

3 Summed up in the phrase *famulos inter femina trita suos*. Bradley (1994, 28) argues that while it was seen as shameful for female owners to have sexual relations with male slaves, it was also taken for granted that slaves were sexual objects of interests to female as well as male owners. Cf. Hopkins 1993.


5 Hamer (2008, 20) argues that the name Cleopatra in contemporary and later literature evokes transgression because the presence of political power in a female body transgresses Roman gender rules. Cf. Wyke 2002, ch. 6.
The lover-poet sets Roman and Egyptian places, gods, and symbols against each other, overtly comparing Rome with Egypt, the latter symbolic of the luxurious and corrupting East,\(^6\) which Propertius uses elsewhere to question the greed underlying Roman imperial conquest and to assert the superiority of his own *militia amoris*.\(^7\) Even the description of Cleopatra as *meretrix regina* has an eastern feel to it: Rome does not have queens, and the luxury courtesan is an eastern import.\(^8\) The identification of Cleopatra as a *meretrix regina* also in some ways encapsulates the dichotomous nature of the *puella as dux* of elegiac *militia amoris*, in that she rules like a *regina* while at the same time she is a socially marginal woman like a *meretrix*. The combination of a real queen and threat to Rome with elegiac tropes may seem to undermine the claims for the superiority of *militia amoris* over *militia* that the lover-poet makes elsewhere.\(^9\) It is, however, worth noting that Cleopatra could only become a threat to Rome in the context of martial *militia* and imperial ambition: Rome was endangered precisely because Antony combined service to love and to his beloved with the military and political roles of normative Roman elite manhood.

The lover-poet praises Augustus for defeating Cleopatra, and the poem turns from women’s power to a panegyrical of the princeps and Roman military victory (3.11.49-56):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{\ldotscape, Roma, triumphum} \\
\text{et longum Augusto salua precare diem!} \\
\text{fugisti tamen in timidi uaga flumina Nili:} \\
\text{acepere tuae Romula uincla manus.} \\
\text{bracchia spectau} \\
\text{sacris admorsa colubris} \\
\text{et trahere occultum membra soporis iter.} \\
\text{'Non hoc, Roma, fui[t] tanto tibi ciue uerenda!' } \\
\text{dixerat assiduo lingua sepulta mero.}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^6\) Keith 2008, 151-52.
\(^7\) Chapter 4.
\(^9\) Chapter 4.
The combination of these two themes in a single poem is striking, and well illustrates the tension between erotic elegy and praise of Augustus that is found elsewhere in Propertius’ corpus. I believe, however, that the lover-poet’s praise of Augustus is motivated by his own values. By defeating Cleopatra, Augustus has removed the problematic figure of Antony, who combines the roles of lover and general in a way that lies outside of the Propertian conception of militia amoris and that leads to his own destruction. Antony’s fate might even represent an exemplum justifying the lover-poet’s abstention from public affairs, which are seen to mix badly with elegiac love and luxury. Propertius can thus appropriate Augustus and his defeat of Antony for his elegiac project, rather than simply bowing to the dominant culture’s values and power structures.

The following section of the poem lists legendary (61-64) and more recent (59-60, 67-68) external Roman victories that Augustus’ overshadows, so that the lover-poet may seem to move away from his practice of associating Augustus’ wars with internal conflicts. And yet, the victory over Egypt was also a victory over Antony and therefore a civil conflict, regardless of how Augustus chose to frame it. Therefore in his praise of this victory as exceeding those over purely external enemies, the lover-poet may seem to imply that the greatest purpose of Roman military might is to win civil wars. Considering his frequent denigration of civil war, this stance amounts to a criticism of Roman military activity and of Augustus, who leads the army. If we are willing to read this poem as criticizing Augustus, an allusion in the previous section, the Tarquinii fractas...securis (47), may also strike us as sinister. The axes of Tarquin were overthrown by a Brutus, and the overthrow of the adopted father (and initial source of power) of Augustus by another Brutus precipitated the civil wars of the late forties and thirties. The final couplet of 3.11 brings elegiac criticism of militia and empire-building more obviously back into play (3.11.71-72): at tu, siue petes portus seu,

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10 Gurval (1995, 11) argues that 3.11 does not suggest any modification of Propertius’ negative view of civil war in general and Actium in particular. Rather, he suggests that the allusion to Actium in this poem reminds the reader of civil war and its stain on Rome at precisely the moment when Propertius is allegedly praising Augustus.
nautia, lingues. / Caesaris in toto sis memor Ionio. The lover-poet is critical of sailors elsewhere, most notably in 3.7, an elegy on the death of a young Roman who had sailed to find wealth, and, as we have seen, he associates Ionia (1.6.23-36; 1.14.17-24) with effeminate luxury, luxury which he rejects for his harsh amatory service, even as he dwells on it in his writing. The lover-poet may support warfare to end fighting and keep Rome safe, but the final couplet of the poem alludes to the greed and luxury that he presents as the motive for much of Roman imperial expansion.

In elegy 3.11, the lover-poet combines praise of Augustus with servitude to his mistress, but is less overtly critical of the princeps’ association with civil war than in other poems. Elsewhere in books 2 and 3, and especially in 4.6, the central poem of Propertius’ final collection, the lover-poet seems to engage in outright praise of Octavian/Augustus. Elegy 4.6 especially is notable in that it completely elides the mistress and militia amoris from the discussion, thereby going considerably farther than 3.11 towards focusing solely on Rome and Augustus. I argue, however, that even in this ostensibly patriotic poem, with its tight focus on Augustus, his victory, and the temple he dedicated, Propertius includes many of his key elegiac themes and allusions to other poems critical of imperial militia and Augustus.

Elegy 4.6, on the temple of Palatine Apollo and the Battle of Actium, has been seen as Propertius’ capitulation to the pressure to write in praise of Augustus and as the fulfillment of the promises he made in elegy 2.10 to turn away from love poetry. Reception of this poem varies and tends to focus on its success or lack thereof as a piece of propaganda. Critics who judge the poem on these terms generally consider it uninspired at best and at worst, simply a bad poem and proof that Propertius is really not suited to patriotic writing. But others, often

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11 Such as 1.21, 1.22, and 2.1, discussed in chapter 4.
12 Especially 2.10 and 3.4.
13 Williams 1990, 263; Cairns 2006, 54.
14 On 4.6, see Sullivan 1972; Cairns 1984; Stahl 1985, 248-305; Wyke 1992; Debrohun 2003, 210-35. Williams (1962, 43) said that 4.6 is “one of the most ridiculous poems in the Latin language” and later (1968, 51) that “Propertius is generally judged to have written a thoroughly bad poem.” Hutchinson’s (2006, 154-55)
those who read the poem as something other than a wholehearted endorsement of Augustus and his regime, have analyzed it more favourably. Such interpretations connect it to the complex themes and attitudes displayed in book 4 as a whole, which is less than enthusiastic about Augustus and his vision for Rome. I agree with recent scholarship that sees in book 4 the lover-poet’s unease with contemporary standards of Roman masculinity and the conventional values promoted by Augustus, and more generally by the Roman elite, in his social and moral legislation. Indeed, I would argue that elegy 4.6 presents the princeps himself as a morally ambiguous figure. As with Cornelia’s speech in 4.11, much of the content in 4.6 can appear to offer a straightforward endorsement of normative values. But the intratextual allusions to themes and language of Propertius’ erotic elegy both in the framing passages and the description of the battle combine to invite doubt even about this seemingly patriotic poem.

Elegy 4.6, more than any other, appears to offer unconditional praise of Augustus, while also fulfilling the lover-poet’s promise from 4.1.69: *sacra diesque canam*. The poem begins with the word *sacra* and takes as its subject the temple of Palatine Apollo (4.6.11: *Palatini Apollinis aedem*), with a description of the rites at the temple that combines Roman tradition with elegiac language and themes (4.6.1-10):

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Sacra facit uates: sint ora fauentia sacris
et cadat ante meos icta iuuenca focos.
cera Philiteis certet Romana corymbis,
et Cyrenaecas urna ministret aquas.
costum molle date et blandi mihi turis honores,
terque focum circa laneus orbis eat!
spargite me lymphis, carmenque recentibus aris
tibia Mygdoniis libet eburna cadis.
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comments express many of the criticisms while avoiding outright condemnation of the poem: he refers to the “strange narrative technique” and also refers to the poem’s “peculiar” treatment of Actium, its “strangeness” (twice), the “strange absence of battle-narrative,” “oddity,” and, of the lines from 59 to the end, says “[it] is handled capriciously; its extravagance passes at points into humorous paradox (59-60n.), maladroit argument (65-6n.), unpicturable action (66-7n.). The account is swiftly abandoned for a party. The poem seems now to be swerving away from an engaged or engaging treatment.” Sullivan (1972, 30) argues that book 4 as a whole is an elaborate *recusatio* proving that Propertius is not suited to writing public poetry.

16 This has been the consensus of much of the scholarship on book 4 in recent years, e.g. Janan 2001, DeBrohun 2003, and Welch 2005. Cairns (2006, 37, 54) offers an opposing view.
17 For which see chapter 2.
ite procul, fraudes, alio sint aere noxae: 
pura nouum uati laurea mollit iter.

The first couplet of elegy 4.6 details standard sacrificial practices, including the call for silence that ensured no words or sounds of bad omen would spoil the ritual.\textsuperscript{18} In the second couplet, the lover-poet associates \textit{cera Romana} and libation with two Hellenistic poets whom he claims as models elsewhere, Philitas (2.34.31 and 3.1.1) and Callimachus (2.1.40; 2.34.32; 3.1.1; 3.9.43; and 4.1.64, where he declares himself the Roman Callimachus). Elegiac softness enters the rites in two places, 5 (where he offers the god \textit{costum molle}) and 10 (\textit{mollit}), and hints of the Eastern luxury associated with the temple appear in the \textit{Mygdoniis cadis} and \textit{tibia eburna} of line 8.

Thus, as is suggested by the double program presented in the two halves of elegy 4.1, generic mixing infects serious aetiology with amatory elegy, even before the lover-poet announces his plan to sing for Caesar and (martial) Apollo (11-14):

\begin{quote}
Musa, Palatini referemus Apollinis aedem: 
res est, Calliope, digna fauore tuo. 
Caesaris in nomen ducuntur carmina: Caesar 
dum canitur, quaeso, Iuppiter, ipse uaces.
\end{quote}

Propertius has sung of the Temple of Apollo previously, in 2.31, which describes the temple’s artistic program (2.31.3-16). Elegy 2.31, however, is also placed in the context of amatory elegy, as the first line (\textit{Quae ris, cur ueniam tibi tardior?}...) suggests that the lover-poet was late for an assignation because he was distracted by the beauty of the temple.\textsuperscript{19} The description of the temple in 2.31 also acts to mark it as a site for the display of exotic luxury goods, with \textit{Poenis columnis} (3), \textit{armenta Myronis} (7), and \textit{Libyci dentis} (12) among its decorations.\textsuperscript{20} So when the lover-poet identifies his subject in 4.6 as \textit{Palatini Apollinis aedem} (11), the reader may recall Propertius’ earlier introduction of the temple as a thing of beauty to be described to a \textit{puella} in order to distract her from the lover-poet’s lateness. And since the lover-poet’s tardiness is elsewhere a prelude to Cynthia’s anger and suspicion (notably in

\textsuperscript{18} Cf. Hor. \textit{Carm.} 3.1.1-2. 
\textsuperscript{19} Welch 2005, 123. 
1.3 and 2.29), the temple may also be associated with this pervasive aspect of the Propertian corpus, though there is no sign of a puella at all in this unusually homosocial poem.

The invocation of the muse Calliope (4.6.12) draws our attention back to two earlier poems, 2.1 and 3.3, both discussed in chapter 4. In both of these poems she was also associated with Apollo, not surprisingly for a muse. More significantly, however, in both of those poems she is associated with the lover-poet’s refusal of epic themes. At 2.1.3-4, the lover-poet declares that his puella, not Calliope or Apollo, inspires his poetry, and at 3.3.38 he introduces Calliope as the muse who makes a speech (3.3.39-50) explicitly telling him to avoid martial themes and continue with love poetry, before having him approach the same spring from which Philitas drank (3.3.51-52). Further, as I have argued, both of these recusationes associate Roman militia and Octavian/Augustus with civil war in a critical way. Since the central section of 4.6 actually focuses on the Battle of Actium, the climax of the civil war between Octavian and Antony, rather than the temple of Palatine Apollo itself, the critique of civil war that Calliope admits to the poem should trouble our reading of elegy 4.6.

The battle section begins abruptly by setting the scene of the action and briefly describing the two opposing fleets (4.6.15-24):

est Phoebi fugiens Athamana ad litora portus, 
qua sinus Ioniae murmura condit aquae, 
Actia Iuleae pelagus monumenta carinae, 
nautarum uotis non operosa uia. 
huc mundi coiere manus: stetit aequore moles 
pinea, nec remis aequa fauebat auis. 
altera classis erat Teuco damnata Quirino, 
pilaque femineae turpiter apta manu: 
hinc Augusta ratis plenis Iouis omine uelis, 
signaque iam patriae uincere docta suae.

The first couplet identifies the site of the battle as a bay off the Ionian Sea; yet elsewhere in the corpus, Propertius suggests that Ionia, the site of Tullus’ militia, is one of excessive luxuria and effeminacy. Actium is, in fact, located on the Ionian Sea, and although the associations that it has in 1.6 need not enter 4.6 as well, given the pervasive infection of

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21 1.6, 1.14. See further Chapter 4.
elegiac softness elsewhere in this poem, it might. Lines 21 and 22 describe the fleet that opposes Octavian, led by Cleopatra, with no mention of Antony’s role. When we encounter Cleopatra, her manus (literally hand but also power), and her defeat, she is already, from her appearance in 3.11, associated with militia amoris and with the elegiac critique of greed and the wealth that drives empire-building, yet also provides the leisure and luxuries that are an essential part of the elegiac lifestyle. The scene for the battle is set, but with references to earlier poems in the corpus in which the lover-poet criticizes militia and imperial expansion.

Propertius next describes how, as the two fleets are ready to begin the battle, Apollo appears on the side of Augustus (4.6.31-36):

non ille attulerat crinis in colla solutos
aut testudineae carmen inerme lyrae,
sed quali aspexit Pelopeum Agamemnona uultu,
egessitque auidis Dorica castra rogis,
aut qualis flexos soluit Pythona per orbis 35
serpentem, imbelles quem timuere lyrae.

The Apollo of the battle scene is emphatically not the Apollo who advises the lover-poet against epic themes in elegy 3.3, who spoke leaning on his lyre (3.3.14: sic ait aurata nixus ad antra lyra). Nor is he the peaceful Apollo whom the lover-poet described depicted in sculpture in 2.31.6 (marmoreus tacita carmen hiare lyra), who is similar to the aspect of Apollo who will appear in the final sections of 4.6. This Apollo is the one who sent a plague upon the Greeks at Troy to avenge his priest Chryses and who killed the Python, a god of vengeance and aggression. He is, therefore, comparable to the warlike, and epic, Apollo of Aeneid 8.704-5: Actius haec cernens arcum intendebat Apollo/ desuper. By presenting Apollo as both the god of poetry and the god who inspired Octavian’s victory at Actium in a single poem, Propertius reminds us that Apollo himself contains multiple identities, identities which can align him with the martial feats of Octavian and the militia amoris of the Propertian lover-poet.
Apollo’s speech to Octavian (4.6.37-54), although primarily hortatory and laudatory, still includes a reference to civil war which draws attention back to earlier, more critical poems (4.6.41-44):

solue metu patriam, quae nunc te uindice freta
imposuit prorae publica uota tuae.
quam nisi defendes, murorum Romulus augur
ire Palatinas non bene uidit auis.

Apollo specifically directs Octavian to free Rome from fear in the first couplet, but then in the second he draws attention to the fact that Rome was founded on conflict between brothers by mentioning Romulus’ sighting of the omen on the Palatine. This allusion to the story of Romulus and Remus (and also the mention of Remus later in the poem at 80) associates Octavian with civil conflict once again, especially when one considers the fact that Octavian and Antony had been brothers of a sort, through Antony’s marriage with Octavia. Thus, Propertius may express approval of ending the conflicts of civil war while still quietly disapproving of the war itself.\textsuperscript{22} Another figure associated with civil war appears somewhat later, after Apollo has stopped speaking. In a further piece of direct speech, Julius Caesar announces (4.6.60): \textit{sum\textsuperscript{23} deus; est nostri sanguinis ista fides}. He too had been involved in a civil war with kin with whom he had ties through marriage, since his daughter Julia was married to Pompey. The poem combines exhortation to end the war with subtle reminders that the war is between Romans, regardless of Antony’s elision from this narrative.

Before he ends his speech, Apollo also mentions the figureheads of Antony and Cleopatra’s fleet, contrasting their threatening appearance with their leaders’ lack of true strength and righteousness (4.6.49-52):

quodque uehunt prorae Centaurica saxa minantis
(tigna caua et pictos experiere metus).
frangit et attollit uires in milite causa;
quae nisi iusta subest, excutit arma pudor.

\textsuperscript{22} Gurval 1995, 271-78.
\textsuperscript{23} Fedeli (1984) prints \textit{tu}, following Richter, although every manuscript he cites gives \textit{sum}. Accepting this conjecture would not affect my argument, as Augustus’ divinity would still be related to that of Caesar, but I prefer \textit{sum}.
The Roman/Egyptian fleet is decorated with mythological creatures who symbolize excess and lack of self-control.\textsuperscript{24} Apollo denies that the centaurs are truly threatening, as they are nothing but wood and paint, and he associates strength and justice with \textit{causa}, the reason for a war. He does not state what the \textit{causa} is here, but he does suggest that the \textit{iusta causa} does not lie with the forces of Antony and Cleopatra. This may seem to support the reading of this poem as pro-Augustus and as a change from the lover-poet’s previous identification with Antony. Yet as I suggested above, the lover-poet can also be critical of Antony. For although Antony carries some of the traits of the lover-poet to extremes, such as his servitude to a woman, he also interacts directly with the public sphere, something that the lover-poet avoids. Propertius critiques the character and behaviour of both leaders of the civil conflict of the late 30s, although I would argue that Octavian/Augustus, as the winner, bears the greater share of the criticism.

The end of the battle narrative returns to Cleopatra, who appears at 57-58: \textit{uincit Roma fide Phoebi: dat femina poenas:/ sceptra per Ionias fracta uehuntur aquas}. This couplet appears to restore Cleopatra to her culturally approved place, as conquered and punished for her audacity in taking up arms against Rome.\textsuperscript{25} The reader knows, however, and it will be soon be stated, that Cleopatra was not actually made to pay Rome’s penalty for its defeated enemies, and that in the end she eluded display in Octavian’s triumph and subsequent execution. Propertius admits this ending into his narrative, although he tries to downplay her actions (4.6.63-66):

\begin{quote}
illa petit Nilum cumba male nixa fugaci,
 hoc unum, iusso non moritura die.
di melius! quantus mulier foret una triumphus,
ductus erat per quas ante Iugurtha uias!
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{24} Centaurs fall into the category of hyper-masculinity, a category that can also sometimes include Hercules (cf. Loraux 1990), with whom Antony identified (App. \textit{BC} 3.16, 19; Plut. \textit{Ant.} 4.1-2, cf. Gurval 1995, 92-93); there is also a fragmentary terracotta plaque from the Palatine Temple of Apollo depicting Apollo and Hercules fighting over the tripod at Delphi, which has been interpreted as alluding to the struggle between Octavian and Antony: see Strazzulla 1990; but cf. Gurval (1995, 125), who suggests caution in allegorically interpreting the temple’s artwork. On the centaurs and “undiluted masculinity,” see Dubois 1991, 31.

\textsuperscript{25} Sullivan (1984, 31) thinks the whole poem is a parody of Horace’s Cleopatra ode (\textit{Carm.} 1.37)
Propertius suggests that it is for the best that Cleopatra escaped, as she would not have made much of a triumph anyway, and does not mention Antony’s role in her escape from Actium or her death and ultimate defeat in Egypt. It is interesting, however, that Cleopatra, to whom Cynthia is compared in 3.11, does not, in the end, actually submit to the power of Octavian; she escapes him, much like Cynthia escapes the lover-poet (4.1.139-40): *nam tibi uictrices quascumque labore parasti,/ eludi palmas una puella tuas*. Cleopatra does not fully conform to the submissive gender role expected of her as woman and easterner.

Another suggestive link to Cynthia occurs in the appearance of *fides* twice in the battle narrative, at lines 57 and 60. As I showed in chapter 1, *fides* is a central concern of Propertius’ work, in which its meaning and contexts repeatedly shift. In line 57, Rome’s victory over Cleopatra (*femina*) is credited to *fide Phoebi*, but given the complex relationship between *fides* and gender elsewhere in the corpus, it is troubling to see it as the means of conquering a woman. This usage could reinforce Cynthia’s reluctance to trust the *fides* of the lover-poet. The second instance of *fides*, in line 60, may at first sight have little to do with Cleopatra or women in general. The statement “*est nostri sanguinis ista fides*” that Propertius attributes to Julius Caesar, however, can perhaps refer to the claim that Antony and Cleopatra put forth that her son Caesarion was the true heir of Caesar. This *fides* that proved that Octavian was Julius Caesar’s heir involved the defeat of Cleopatra and the death of her son by Caesar, so that *fides* is shown once again to disadvantage a woman. In the elegiac world, Cynthia is able to take some control over the meaning of *fides*, but when Propertius moves his poetic topics into the historical or epic world, *fides* seems to act against women.

The end of the poem, which, along with the sacrifice at the beginning, frames the battle scene, illustrates the lover-poet’s continuing engagement with Rome and masculinity.

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26 For *fides* as the pervasive theme in all of book 4, see Sullivan 1984, 33-34.
27 Chapters 1, 2, and 3.
28 For the Augustan poet’s refusal of Cleopatra as legitimate wife or mother, see Wyke 2002, 206. For Caesarion as rival son and heir of Julius Caesar, see D.C. 49.41.1; 50.1.3; 51.3.5; Grant 1972, 87-88; Zanker 1988, 34; Aly 1992, 50.
This section begins with the announcement of a change of subject and a banquet (4.6.69-74):  

bella satis cecini: citharam iam poscit Apollo  
uictor et ad placidos exuit arma chors.  
candida nunc molli subeant conuiuia luco,  
blanditiaeque fluant per mea colla rosae,  
unciaque fundantur prelis elisa Falernis,  
perque lauet nostras spica Cilissa comas.

There is an abrupt shift in tone: Apollo returns to his role as patron of poetry after a three-word summary of the battle scene, and the god’s epithet uictor is pushed into the pentameter, where the removal of arms for peace finds a suitable place. Both lines of the following couplet begin with words associated with the elegiac mistress, candida (cf. 2.3.9, 2.16.24, 2.29.30) and blanditiae (cf. 1.15.42), although in the Propertian corpus they are also frequently associated with the male lovers (1.16.16; 2.19.4; 3.13.33) or even Amor himself (1.9.30). Lines 71-74 create a suitable setting for the lover-poet and his amatory service, with a banquet, roses, wine, and perfume, showing again that the bipartite program of elegy 4.1 is not excluded from this poem on Actium.

The poem ends with the description of the poets’ banquet (4.6.75-86):

ingenium positis irritet Musa poetis:  
Bacche, soles Phoebos fertilis esse tuo.  
ille paludosos memoret seruire Sycambros,  
Cepheam hic Meroen fusque regna canat;  
hic referat sero confessum foedere Parthum:  
‘Reddat signa Remi, mox dabit ipse sua:  
siue aliquid pharetris Augustus parcat Eois,  
differat in pueros ista tropaea suos.  
gaude, Crasse, nigras si quid sapis inter harenas:  
ire per Euphraten ad tua busta licet.’  
sic noctem patera, sic ducam carmine, donec  
iniciat radios in mea uina dies.

Once the poets are given free reign, the talk remains on martial subjects (77-84), but with a familiar twist. Although he carefully avoids any mention of Antony or suggestion that Actium was yet another battle in the civil wars, Propertius has one of the anonymous

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29 Cf. 2.34.55-60.
30 Morgan 2010, 370-72.
banqueting poets link Augustus’ recovery of Crassus’ standards with Remus (79-84). There is a great deal of evidence that Augustus was particularly proud of this Parthian success, and that it was given the significance of a military, rather than diplomatic, triumph. For Propertius to associate this with Remus, despite undoubtedly having other options for describing the recovered standards, is to associate Augustus’ great triumphs (here Actium and the Parthian negotiation) with civil conflict once again. The lover-poet may appreciate the peace that came at the end of the civil wars, but it does not follow that he wholeheartedly approves of the events of those civil wars. Propertius can praise some of Augustus’ actions without being entirely pro-Augustan, just as he can criticize the princeps without being entirely anti-Augustan.

In 4.6, Propertius offers a more subtle critique of militarism and Augustus than is on display in his recusationes, his elevation of militia amoris, and his repeated references to controversial events in Octavian’s earlier career. But this more muted critique should not be misread as unconditional praise. The lover-poet rejects booty-driven greed and conquest as elements of elite masculinity as much as he rejects civil conflict, and in this he interacts with the tradition of distrust of foreign luxuries that occurs at least as early as Cato the Elder.

32 Gurval 1995, 280-83. Augustus was voted, but declined, a triumph (D. C. 54.8.3). He placed the recovered standards in his temple to Mars Ultor once it was completed (for discussion of when and where the standards were, see Gurval 1995, 283, esp. n. 12). Horace (Carm. 1.12.53; 4.5.25; Ep. 2.1.256; Saec. 54) and Ovid (Fast. 5.580-598) either predict or celebrate glory based on a Parthian campaign. There are foundations for an arch in the Forum Romanum that likely commemorated the return of the standards (Andreae 1957; Carettoni 1960; cf. Gurval 1995, 36-37). Coins were minted celebrating the return of the standards, including RIC2 131-37, 359, 508-10.

33 Propertius names Remus four other times in the corpus, all in programmatic places, either the first poem of a book (2.1.23, 4.1.9 and 50) or in a recusatio (3.9.50). He names Romulus six times, all but once in book four (2.6.20, 4.1.32, 4.4.79, 4.6.43, 4.10.5 and 14) and uses the adjectival form of his name twice (3.11.52 and 4.4.22). For comparison, Tibullus mentions each of the legendary twins once, in the same couplet, 2.5.23-24; Horace, in a rather larger corpus than Propertius’, names Remus once (Epod. 7.19) and Romulus four times (Ep. 2.1.5, Carm. 1.12.33, 2.15.10, 4.8.24) in addition to two instances of the adjectival form of his name twice (3.11.52 and 4.4.22). For comparison, Tibullus mentions each of the legendary twins once, in the same couplet, 2.5.23-24; Horace, in a rather larger corpus than Propertius’, names Remus once (Epod. 7.19) and Romulus four times (Ep. 2.1.5, Carm. 1.12.33, 2.15.10, 4.8.24) in addition to two instances of the adjectival form of his name twice (3.11.52 and 4.4.22). Virgil, again in a larger corpus, names Remus twice (G. 2.533, A. 1.292) and Romulus four times (G. 1.498, A. 1.276, 6.778, and 8.342) with an additional three adjectival (A. 6.876 and 8.654) or patronymic (8.638) forms. Propertius mentions both brothers more often than his contemporaries do, and Remus far more frequently, and always in programmatically significant poems: there is clearly work to be done on Propertius’ use of Remus. On Remus in 4.6, see Welch 2005, 101-2; for Remus in Roman myth and history, see Wiseman 1995.

34 Elsewhere in the corpus he associates the standards with Crassus (3.5.48; Crassi signa), who is addressed at 4.6.83 as well. Cf. Horace Carm. 4.15.6-7; Ep. 1.18.56.

35 Nethercut (1961, 403-4) sees criticisms and warnings about the necessity for restraint in many of the Propertian poems that allegedly praise the princeps.

36 Sullivan 1979, 82-83 argues for the necessity of subtle critique under Augustus.
The lover-poet exposes the mercantile undercurrents in Roman militia and calls the claims of just wars into question. And because participation in warfare and provincial service is part of the construction of elite masculinity, when Propertius problematizes militia, he also critiques the valorization of masculinity that it informs.

Yet, the security that Propertius, like many other young men of the provincial equestrian elite, enjoyed under Augustus and as a result of Augustus’ success in militia was undoubtedly a factor in his engagement in disidentificatory practices and could even be symbolized by the dual nature of Apollo in 4.6. As Muñoz argues, a certain amount of privilege is necessary to engage in artistic work or self-fashioning that successfully expresses disidentification.37 Propertius’ class privilege and access to elite social networks, including the patronage (and example) of one of the emperor’s closest friends, gave him the leisure to write highly allusive and complex poetry, and the security to question the rules governing gender and genre in Roman society. Propertius’ poetry, especially in the fourth book, is highly ambivalent about both the princeps and the imperial Roman state, and is consistent with his exploration, throughout the collection, of Roman gender roles and normative values such as the structures governing social relations between Romans and the imperial ambitions on display in the conquest and maintenance of other territories. Had he to depend on others for his livelihood or had he been without the protection of powerful friends, it would undoubtedly have been more difficult for him to write in a way that was open to competing interpretations.38 We cannot really know whether the historical person acted out the rejection and transformation of mainstream elite roles and values that the lover-poet exemplified. But we can suggest that Propertius’ experiments took advantage of the fissures in Roman culture

37 Muñoz 1999, 161–64.
38 It is possible to read Propertius’ poetry as a rejection of alternative gender roles and as wholeheartedly praising the glories of Rome’s past, present, and future; but I would argue that it is not tenable to claim that this is the only possible reading.
that are reflected in the “crisis of masculinity” in the Augustan age and perhaps opened some new ones.39

39 A productive area of inquiry may be Propertius’ influence on later authors, especially Ovid, who is certainly in dialogue with him (see Chapters 3 and 4 for some discussion and bibliography). Seneca the Elder, a contemporary of Propertius, also provides an interesting viewpoint (Con. 1.pr.8-9) of the young men of the early principate that may also relate to Propertius’ project. Seneca portrays the young men as lazy (torpent), effeminate (effeminatos), physically soft (mollitia corporis), interested in singing and dancing (cantandi saltandique…studia), as enemies to the virtue of others and themselves (expugnatores alienae pudicitiae, negligentes suae), and asks quis satis uir est?
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Abbreviations

Abbreviations follow, or are fuller than, those of Liddell-Scott-Jones, *A Greek English Lexicon*, and Glare, *Oxford Latin Dictionary*; abbreviations of journal titles follow, or are fuller than, those of *L’Année Philologique*.

*CIL* = 1863-. *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Berlin.

*M* = Massimilla 1996


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