EMENDATIONS IN PROPERTIUS

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I vi 9 *se denegat* sese negat

The subject of lines 5-12 is the series of complaints, threats, and prayers that Cynthia employs to stay the poet’s departure. If we give the verb its classical meaning, we must render the manuscript’s *illa ... denegat* as “although mine, she denies herself to me”, an awkward phrase and an unexpected lapse from the chain of querelae. “She says she is mine no longer” is surely what is wanted here.

I xvii 27 *divini fontes*) sunt duri montes

The *duros montes et frigida saxa* of I xx 13 suggest that *duri montes* may well have accompanied the *frigida rupes* of this line too.

II xii 6 *fecit et humano corde volare deum

ut facit humanum cor volitare deus

This rids the line of what Barber and Butler rather too euphemistically term “a bold image and a bold local ablative.” As emended, lines 5-6 may be rendered: “and he (the painter) very properly equipped Amor with windy wings, since he’s the god who makes the human heart flutter about.”

II xxix 16 *illa gravis*) illecebris

It scarcely seems possible that *illa* should occur after the *quae* of line 15.

III xii 24-37

There is much to suggest that this entire passage is a semilearned interpolation. In lines 15-23 Propertius is clearly building up to a climactic assertion of Galla’s fidelity. But at line 24 the mood and train of thought are rudely shattered by the introduction of this leisurely and essentially irrelevant account of Ulysses’ Wanderings. But if its position in context is strange, the number and nature of the gaucheries with which it is strewn are incredible. First, the chronology of the Odysseus is completely jumbled, with almost no incident
in its proper order, and such mythological errors as mons Ismara, Calpe and tuae, Polypheme, genae occur. Second, we find seven nouns plus seven infinitives with accusative subjects as the subject of one verb, nocuere. Third, the passage is replete with such curiosities as the asyndeton of line 25 and the most unlikely distich, 29-30. Fourth, within eight lines there are seven perfect infinitives, mugisse, fugisse, natasse, intrasse, adisse, revovasse, statuisse, all in the penultimate position. The quantity and seriousness of the sins against sense, sound, and the Latin language make the passage suspect in the extreme. Without it, the poem concludes in a relevant and effective manner:

nam quocumque die saluum te fata remittent,
pendebit collo Galla pudica tuo.
Postumus alter erit miranda coniuge Vlixes;
vincit Penelopes Aelia Galla fيدem.

III xxi 27-28
The close similarity between lines 25-26 and lines 27-28 has led many to suspect interpolation at this point, but 25-26 have invariably been selected as the lines to be excised. It is difficult to see why. None of the emendations proposed has made 27-28 a satisfactory distich. The inappropriateness of “docte” as applied to Menander is easily remedied, but librorumque has remained intractable. If we read libaboque with Suringar, we are left with the unattractive result of Demosthenis arma in apposition with studium linguae. If we accept Bury’s libraboque, the situation of tuos sales becomes obscure. But 25-26, with the alteration of vel to aut (Muller) are perfectly satisfactory. Thus the excision of the latter distich solves all the difficulties, not just some of them.

IV i 81-82 nunc pretium fecere deos et fallitur auro
Luppiter obliquae signa iterata rotae
nunc pretium fecere deos falluntur et auro
turpiter obliquae signa iterata rotae

The improbability of Luppiter and Iovis (line 83) occurring so close together has been pointed out by Barber and Butler, who also ably