

Propertius 1.3 notes

1ff. “Verses 1–2 and 5–6 illustrate Propertian mythological writing at its best. While glorifying the sleeping Cynthia through romantic association, they also offer alternative senses of Propertius's place in the *exemplum*: he may fancy himself a lustful Bacchus or a satyr, but in Cynthia's eyes he may prove to be a Theseus, or the Maenad may wake and tear him limb from limb.” (S. Heyworth, *Cynthia*).

1ff.: who is being described? Who is focalizing? Think about how the reader may adjust their view of narrator and described female as they go through the poem.

1-2 Ariadne. We might think of Catullus 64's telling of the story.

2 Cnosia: Ariadne was the daughter of king Minos of Crete (whose capital was Cnossus).

3-4: Andromeda. For the myth (popular in art) see e.g. Apollodorus 2.4.2-3.

3 accubuit: See OLD s.v. accumbō (~mbere, ~buī, ~bitum intr., (tr.) Also adc-) sense 2: To lie down (in bed or elsewhere). “primo ... somno” probably dative after “accubuit”.

3. Cepheia: See OLD s.v. Cephēius (~a, ~um adj.) Descended from Cepheus.

4. cotibus: = cautibus. See OLD sv cautēs (~is f.) sense 1 (usu. pl.) A rock, cliff, crag, or reef. Ablative of separation with “libera”.

5. Edonis: See OLD sv Ēdōnis (~idos f. adj.) Of the Edoni; (as noun) an Edonian woman, especially as a worshipper of Bacchus. The Edoni were a people of Thrace east of the river Strymon. What would the reader expect a Bacchant to be like and an Edonian one at that (Richardson says they are repeatedly mentioned as more than ordinarily wild in Bacchus' orgies)? Roman art could show sleeping Bacchantes.

6 Apidano: Āpidanus~ī m. A river in Thessaly, a tributary of the Peneus. Here “in” used in sense of beside the river (on the grassy bank).

7 visa: understand “est”. This explains the infinitive,

7. mollem spirare quietem: Richardson translates “to exude peaceful rest”. See OLD s.v. spīrō (~āre, ~āuī, ~ātum intr., tr.) sense 6b (with accusative) to breathe or express the spirit of; (intr., of a quality) to emanate.

8 Cynthia: we get confirmation that this poem is about Cynthia.

8 consortis nixa caput minibus: “pillowing her head” (Richardson). See OLD s.v. nītor sense 1b to support oneself (on a part of one's body). Richardson and Heyworth read “non certis”.

9 we realize the narrator was drunk.

“multo ... Baccho”: ablative of cause with “ebria”.

10 quaterent: See OLD s.v. quatiō sense 1: To move vigorously to and fro, shake, rock, agitate, or similar.

10 facem. See OLD s.v. fax sense 1: a torch used to provide light.

11 nondum etiam: Richardson says = nondum.

11 deperditus: See OLD s.v. dēperdō: to lose, be deprived of (leg.) to lose permanently (through destruction, etc.) c (pass.) to be utterly lost or ruined.

11 omnis: = “omnes” (with “sensus” = “in all my faculties”, accusative of respect). See OLD s.v. “omnis” sense 2 (pl.) All collectively, the full number or sum of.

12 molliter impresso conor adire toro: See OLD s.v. molliter sense 2 With a gentle movement or action, softly. Richardson says take with “impresso” as well as “adire”. See OLD s.v. imprimō sense 3 To exert pressure on, press, crush, squeeze, etc. “conor”= present tense (=> vivid).

13 correptum: understand “me”.

14 hac... hac: See OLD s.v. hāc sense 2: hac .. hac, etc., on this side .. on that.

14 durus: Richardson translates “imperious”.

15 leviter: Richardson says to be taken with subiecto, positam and temptare. See OLD sv temptō (~āre, ~āuī, ~ātum tr.) sense 1 To handle in an exploratory manner, feel.

16 Richardson and Heyworth read “sumere et arma”. “et arma has been assailed on three grounds: (a) that it introduces an un-Propertian obscenity; (b) that the syllepsis oscula sumere et arma is improbably harsh; (c) that the structure of the line is ungainly. Objection (a) has been met by reference to III xx 20 (pace Shackleton Bailey, who fails to observe that Amor is the subject here as Venus is there) and IV viii 88; (b) by comparison with III ix 23–4 secures | et ... ponere iura. As for (c), it is true that Propertius rarely has et so late in a pentameter (I note I xvi 30; II xviii 38 et terram rumor transilit et maria; II xxvi 56; III vi 16 (postponed); III xi 46 iura dare statuas inter et arma Mari; III xiii 26 diuitiae quorum messis et arbor erant; IV i 2; and a number of cases where et = etiam), but the number is not so low as to throw doubt on any individual occurrence. Nor is the distribution of admota ... manu between the two members of the sentence such as to destroy faith in the paradosis: see Housman ad Man. 1.269; and the punctuation I have proposed for IV v 57 at CQ 36 (1986), 209–10; and cf. Ov. ep. 7.44” (Heyworth).

18 expertae ... iurgia saevitiae: “the abuse of a temper I had already made trial of” (Richardson). See OLD s.v. iurgium sense 2 Abuse, vituperation, invective.

19 intentis ... ocellis: Richardson says either ablative absolute “with unwavering stare” or ablative of specification with “fixus”, “rooted in my intent gaze”.

19 haerebam: See OLD s.v. haereō sense 6a To fasten (on) with the senses.

20 Inachidos: See OLD s.v. Īnachis sense 2b (2 (as noun) A female descendant of Inachus) b (often applied to Io; sometimes identified with Isis). Argus was the hundred-eyed giant set by Juno to watch her heifer rival (i.e. Io). Another popular art scene.

20 Argus ut: sc. haerebat (+ abl).

21 ff; addresses Cynthia.

21 solvebam: See OLD s.v. soluō sense 3 To take off or remove by unfastening, disengage.

21 corollas: See OLD s.v. corolla A small wreath of flowers, etc., garland. These could be given as love gifts.

23 lapsos: See OLD s.v. lābor sense 5b to slip (from the grasp); to slip out of position.

23 formare: See OLD s.v. formō sense 2d to set in order, compose (parts of the body).

24 furtiva: take adverbially. The poet has brought fruit from the banquet he has been at, as was custom.

24 manibus: See OLD s.v. manus sense 18 The hand as employed in giving and receiving. Dative: cupped hands are meant.

25 ingrato ... somno: dative. Why is sleep said to be ungrateful?

26 prono: See OLD s.v. prōnus sense 4 (of terrain or other surfaces) Having a forward or downward incline, sloping, shelving.

27 duxti = duxisti.

28 obstupui: See OLD s.v. obstipescō sense 1a To be struck dumb, be stunned, dazed, or astounded by any powerful emotion. a (with horror, consternation, bewilderment, etc.).

28 vano: See OLD s.v. uānus sense 3 (of assertions, predictions, etc.) Containing no truth or substance, false, groundless.

29 ne qua visa: “lest something in your dreams” (Richardson).

29 portarent: See OLD s.v. portō sense 3b To bring with one b (with abstract or nonmaterial object).

31 praecurrens: See OLD s.v. praecurrō sense 1b (with accusative) to run in front of, precede; to run past the front of. Goes past “parted window shutters”.

32 “the moon, that busybody with lingering eyes” or “the over-zealous moon, with light disposed to linger” (Richardson).

33 levibus: See OLD s.v. levis sense 6 (of physical conditions) Lacking intensity, moderate, mild, slight.

34 fixa ... cubitum: “supporting herself on one elbow” (Richardson: cubitum = acc of

respect). OLD cite under s.v. *figō* sense 6 To set down, plant (in a particular place).
 35 *referens*: here + dative (“*nostro lecto*”).
 37 *meae ... noctis*: “of the night that belonged to me” (Richardson).
 37 *consumpsi*: = *consumpsisti*.
 38 *sideribus*?: OLD s.v. *sīdus~eris* (neut.) 1b (pl.) the heavenly bodies as a whole, the stars (including where appropriate the sun and moon); (by metonymy) the period during which the stars shine, i.e. night.
 39 *perducas*: OLD s.v. *perducō* (~*cere*, ~*xī*, ~*ctum* tr.) 6b: to pass (a period of time) in a protracted or wearisome manner.
 41 *purpureo ... stamine*: Cynthia is spinning crimson thread...
 42 Orpheus was a Thracian; nb 5-6.
 44 “that (with you) there is often long delay for an alien love” (Richardson).
 44 *moras*: OLD s.v. *mora* (~*ae*, f.) 2: An intervening period, interval, delay.
 45 *iucundis ... alis*: Richardson takes as an instrumental ablative with “*impulit*”. Camps sees it as a descriptive ablative with “*sopor*”.
 46 “that was the final worry for my tears” (Richardson); “final cure for my tears” (Heyworth).