The poetics and the politics of liminality in Propertius

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Pietro Morlacchi, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed _____

Date _____05/08/2019_____

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Abstract

Working at the intersection between classical philology and cultural studies, the thesis offers a space-sensitive reading of Propertius' poetry (*Elegies* 1-4). Taking space as a site for identity and political negotiations, rather than a static narrative backdrop (in alignment with the view of many thinkers from the 'spatial turn' in the Humanities: Foucault 1986; Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1996; Massey 2005), the project investigates how Propertius' literary representation of space resists and criticises the *princeps* Augustus' contemporary commitment to the creation of an homogeneous, fully tamed imperial space (Nicolet 1991; Wallace-Hadrill 2005), across which subjects are ordered in clear-cut positions (according to ethnicity, class, gender), fixed and watched over by the central power (as within a Panopticon-like regime of surveillance). I argue that Propertius proposes a counter-cultural model of space and identity to that promoted by the imperial ideology, in that he does not imagine a world governed by the binary logic of borders drawn between people but, rather, by the presence of open 'thresholds' (*limina*) in which clear-cut identities are constantly re-negotiated and political contestations are possible. Consisting of close textual readings sustained and corroborated by a strategic use of contemporary theories on the 'spatial' (Derrida, Bhabha, Massey, Deleuze, Foucault, Kristeva), the thesis does not only constitute a first comprehensive analysis of Propertius' spatial imagination (so far either dealt with in article-length contributions: e.g. Pucci 1978, DeBrohun 2003, Ch. 4; Cristofoli *et alii* 2010; Parker 2009; Gardner 2010; Lindheim 2011; or focusing on the poet's response to monumental Rome in Book 4: Welch 2005) but also offers an alternative route into the investigation of the vexed question of Propertius' relationship to the Augustan *principatus* and its emerging imperial ideology, so far approached from different angles (e.g. La Penna 1977; Stahl 1985; Keith 2008, Ch. 5; Janan 2001; Miller 2004).

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0. General Introduction

0.1. Augustus, Propertius and the 'production of space'

On a *denarius* coin minted after the naval victory over Sextus Pompey at Naulochoi (36 BCE), the *triumuir* Octavian is represented nude, his pose resembling that of the famous Poseidon sculpted by the Greek master Lysippus. Holding the stern of an enemy ship in his right hand and the general's lance in his left, the *uictor* rests his right foot on a globe.[1] While the statue unfortunately has not survived outside its microscopic representation on the coin, we can easily understand the message it intended to send out to its Roman viewers.[2] A few years before his triumph at Actium (31 BCE), marking the end of the Republic and the beginning of the imperial age through the installation of his *principatus* as Augustus (a name in itself resonant with the very idea of spatial expansion),[3] Octavian had already started advertising himself as world conqueror, holding all-embracing power over land and sea. Even though this 'ecumenic' rule over a borderless territory (*imperium sine fine*, Virg. *Aen.* 1.279) would be bound to remain a narcissistic fantasy rather than turn into a historical *fait accompli*, Octavian *does* have to be credited for the fastest and most closely planned period of expansion in Roman history.[4] This expansion did not only result in the political transition from Republic to Empire but also in the transformation of the traditional Roman conceptualisation of 'space' into an 'imperial space' inhabited by an unaccountable number of new subjects and supervised by a single man.[5]

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[1] On the coin, issued as a boastful response to Sextus' own *denarius* (showing Sextus with his foot stepping on a ship's beak), see Zanker 1988:39-41. According to Dio 43.14.6, a bronze statue of the same kind as Octavian's was dedicated to Julius Caesar a decade earlier and came with a bold inscription ("because he is a demigod") pointing to the man's apotheosis.

[2] Coins of a similar kind were minted between 36 and 27 BCE, often representing the winged goddess Victory standing on the globe with the symbols of the military *uictor* (cf. e.g. RIC^2 254a, 255).

[3] *Augeo*, *OLD* 1. This is obviously not the only etymological affiliation of Augustus, also connected to the sacral verb *auguror*.

[4] On Augustus' self-promotion as world conqueror, often magnifying his actual military achievements, see esp. Gruen 1996. On the poetics of *imperium sine fine*, compare also Livy 21.30.10, 34.58.8; Hor. *C.* 4.15.13-6.

[5] I follow Alston (2013:197-8)'s argument that under Augustus a new form of state was established, namely "an imperial state which grew out of the city state but was distinctively

As A. Wallace-Hadrill has persuasively argued, Augustus' construction of a new epistemological system, through which he appropriated the Republican elite's transmission of knowledge, in fact also involved a dramatic re-definition and re-organization of the spatial.[6] Augustus developed an obsession with representing, controlling and maintaining his worldwide conquest. If "the space of the city of Rome [became] co-extensive with the space of the whole world" (*Romanae spatium est urbis et orbis idem*, Ov. *Fast.* 2.683-4), this was not only because Rome had conquered the οἰκουμένη but also because it had 'incorporated' it inside its cityscape.[7] The geographical extent of the *princeps*' territorial domain was recorded in his 'book of deeds' (*Res Gestae* 25-33)[8] and posthumously exposed outside his Mausoleum, recurrently paraded at official triumphs (through the images of captive lands)[9] and represented in the homogeneous iconography of the new imperial monuments adorning the cityscape.[10]

Yet, it was the production of maps in particular that allowed the *princeps* not only to show off the vastness of his *imperium* but also to scrutinise the inhabitants living across it.[11] While the number of representations of Rome's as well as of Italy's topography grew significantly, the most ambitious map

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different; and it substantially post-dated Rome's acquisition of new territories and her hegemony over previously independent states", as well as Alston's definition of 'Roman Empire' ("a state-type political structure which exercises hegemony or domination over smaller states and incorporates those states within its organisation", 197), and of 'imperialism' ("the ideology that sustains and maintains the empire-state, and its emergence must be contemporaneous with the birth of an empire", *ibidem*). On the nature of the *principatus*, see further *infra*.

[6] Wallace-Hadrill 2005:76ff., building upon Nicolet 1991: esp.95-122. Two important collections of essays on Augustan space are in course of publication: Citroni *et alii* forthcoming; Gale & Chaoud forthcoming.

[7] Cf. Östenberg 2009:292.

[8] Nicolet 1991:19-20 calls these chapters in particular "a lesson in political and military geography". Cf. the work's boastful Latin preface: *rerum gestarum diui Augusti, quibus orbem terrarum imperio populi Romani subiecit* (on whose issues of authenticity, see Cooley 2009: esp.6ff.).

[9] The most emblematic of these being the 29 BCE triple triumph for the victory over Egyptians, Dalmatians and Illyrians (on which see further Chapter 3).

[10] See Suet. *Aug.* 28; Dio 52.30; 56.30; Wallace-Hadrill 2005:78. While Augustus' building of a whole Porticus ad Nationes (displaying the statues of all conquered peoples) is disputed (Seru. *Ad Aen.* 8.721), extended inscriptions of defeated people certainly accompanied the statues of the *summi uiri* across the Forum Augustum's side colonnades (2 BCE), a space both figuratively and ritually connected to imperial conquest (it was the departing and returning point for military expeditions). On the Forum, cf. Aug. *RG* 29; Suet. *Aug.* 31.5; Ov. *Fast*. 5.549-70; and see the classic analyses of Zanker 1968; 1988; Galinsky 1996:197ff.; Kellum 1996; La Rocca 2001:184ff.; for literary responses to its iconography, see ultimately Pandey 2018a:142ff., with further bibliography.

[11] On Augustus' 'mapping impulse', Lindheim 2010 and 2011 include thought-provoking discussion.

produced in this period was the first official map of the Roman world (7-2 BCE), publicly exposed in the Porticus Vipsania.[12] Far from mere administrative tools, these maps facilitated territorial divisions, which resulted in a more efficient management of people. The division of Rome and Italy, respectively chopped into eleven and fourteen "regions" (*regiones*, at Rome themselves further divided into an expandable number of "quarters" or *uici*), helped a better functioning system of census-taking.[13] Indeed, a detailed account of the inhabitants' precise location and amount of possessions (their lands being surveyed, measured, divided, and bound) was recorded in the capital's archives and proved a powerful instrument to reduce the dole list.[14] Furthermore, a more efficient employment of police surveillance was made possible in urban contexts.[15] Similarly, by having the *prouinciae* represented on larger world maps (of the Vipsania kind), Augustus could have a clearer idea of the extent of the territories controlled by his magistrates, who could incur the charge of infringing the *maiestas populi Romani* in case of violation of their assigned boundaries.[16]

This new 'production of space' did not only reinforce Augustus' legitimisation to rule but also the Roman citizen's construction of an imperial identity. The ubiquitous iconography juxtaposing Roman winners and non-Roman losers, often represented as female personifications of foreign countries, brought about the hierarchical relationship between a model imperial subject (Self: ethnically Roman, male, high-class, military and sexually impenetrable, virtuous), with which the Roman viewer was suggested to identify himself, and his antithesis (Other: ethnically foreign, female/feminised, enslaved, military and sexually penetrable, lacking virtue).[17] A similar sense of superiority must have

[12] Suet. *Aug.* 101.4; Pliny *NH* 3.16-7; Nicolet 1991:9; on Roman cartography, see further Wiseman 1987; Dilke 1998.
[13] Nicolet 1991:123-70; Wallace-Hadrill 2005:77.
[14] Wallace-Hadrill 2005:77.
[15] Suet. *Aug.* 32.
[16] Wallace-Hadrill 2005:80.
[17] A flashy example comes from the famous cuirassed statue from Prima Porta (dated c.20 BCE), one of the best representations of Rome's ecumenic power (Zanker 1988:188-92), in which the incorporation of foreign peoples into the empire is literally 'incorporated' onto Augustus' chest. At the centre of the breastplate, the exchange of *signa* between a Roman and an Oriental man reminded the viewer of Augustus' recovery of the Roman military standards (20 BCE), formerly lost to the Parthians during the tragic battle of Carrhae (53 BCE) conducted by Crassus and then taken back to Rome and stored in the Temple of Mars Ultor next to the Forum Augustum (Aug. *RG* 29.2, with Cooley 2009:242-5; Dio 54.8.2; Hor. *Epod.* 1.12.27-30; Ov. *Fast.* 5.579ff.). At the sides of the main scene, then, the imperial hierarchy between ruling Rome and subjected foreign 'Others' was further corroborated by the two, similarly-dressed captive women, respectively

been instilled in the Roman viewers by the contemplation of maps: as they strolled through the Porticus Vipsania and scrutinised the map from the epicentre of the Empire, the Roman elite citizens had their gaze temporarily overlapping with that of the conqueror Augustus himself, setting his eyes over all the territories under his sway.[18] So too, Augustus' spatial surveillance over all imperial subjects and their consequent filing into the capital's archives contributed to enhancing the spatial 'fixation' and social division of citizens into clear-cut categories, according to their ethnicity (Roman vs. non-Roman), gender, status and amount of material possessions.[19]

It is indeed not inappropriate to suggest that Augustus' production of a new 'imperial space' rested upon a new and rather paradoxical relationship to physical and metaphorical borders. On the one hand, the imperialist nurtured the fantasy of ruling over a compact, pacified community of Romans (and Romanised) living in peace inside the same 'borderless' geo-political territory (the Other being unproblematically incorporated and 'domesticated' by the Self).[20] Yet, this fantasy manifested itself together with an antithetical, maniac desire to draw all sorts of borders – physical and social, territorial and geo-cultural – between the spaces and, therefore, the people inhabiting them.[21] This desire laid bare that the success of Rome was predicated also upon the articulation and reproduction, rather than the erasure, of social, ethnic, gendered difference across space (the Other being used as a foil for the construction of the Self).[22] To look at

personifying conquered Gaul and Spain (see Squire 2013:275n42-3 for a bibliographical survey on the women's geographical identifications).

[18] Pliny indeed reports that Augustus exhibited the entire world for the city "*to gaze upon it*" *(...orbem terrarum urbi* ***spectandum*** *propositurus esset*, *NH* 3.17).

[19] As Suetonius recalls (*Aug*. 40), dividing the citizens into e.g. Roman and non-Roman helped Augustus, who did not want "the native Roman stock to be tainted with foreign or servile blood", to narrow down the numbers of manumissions of slaves so as to limit the number of new Roman citizens; cf. how, as the historian further records (*Aug*. 42), in a season of great scarcity Augustus ordered a physical expulsion of both *low-class* and *foreign* people from Rome.

[20] The process of incorporation of the Other is problematic in itself, for it reveals the uneven, asymmetrical relationship between conquerors and conquered. The Aeneadic scene staging the pact between Jupiter and Juno (Virg. *Aen*. 12.834), through which it is established that the future race of Romans shall emerge from the combination of Trojans and Latins, illustrates that this asymmetry lay at the foundation of Rome: the Latins are allowed not only to keep their ethnonym, dress, habitation, but also their national language and customs, instead of absorbing the Trojans'.

[21] Rimell 2015: esp.28-77 explores the Roman imperial tension (Augustan and post-Augustan) between the possession of an ever-growing empire and an ever-growing preoccupation with making it a secure space (paradoxically both open-ended and enclosed/demarcated).

[22] This seems to be the pattern in contemporary imperialistic systems too, where geographical expansion is by no means conductive of inclusive policies towards the society's 'Others'. Drawing on the analogy between Augustus' *imperium sine fine* and the US' post 9/11 boundless war on

Augustus' re-organisation of the world and its related production of a Roman imperial identity through more theoretical lens, one can indeed fruitfully draw comparison with the Foucauldian model of the Panopticon, whereby the subjects of a given political system are fixed in space under the regulatory gaze of their master in what works like "a compact model of disciplinary mechanism".[23]

As is well-known, the Panopticon discussed by M. Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (1977) refers to the architectural structure of the prison designed by Jeremy Bentham.[24] Constituting of a warden's central tower pierced with wide windows and looking onto windowless cells in which the inmates are confined, Bentham's Panopticon enacts a dissociation between the see/being seen dyad (the centre can gaze at the periphery, but not vice versa)[25] and supports "a type of location of bodies in space, of distribution of individuals in relation to one another, of hierarchical organization, of disposition of centres and channels of power, of definition of the instruments and modes of intervention of power".[26] While the Panopticon proves a useful schema in environments such as hospitals, workshops, schools, and obviously, prisons (that is, "whenever one is dealing with a multiplicity of individuals on whom a task or a particular form of behaviour must be imposed"),[27] its application extends to society as a whole, particularly when subjected to imperial, colonial and other sorts of autocratic rule. As post-colonial critic G. C. Spivak has passingly noted, Foucault's analysis, with its insistence on the capillary location of subjected people across space, is in fact also descriptive of the dynamics of colonialism, demanding reinforced spatial distinctions between people of different race and ethnicity, gender and class.[28] Indeed, Foucault himself contends that the discipline emerging from the Panopticon's spatial surveillance has clear political objectives: "it fixes; it arrests or regulates movements; it clears up confusion; it dissipates compact groupings

terror, Pandey 2018b:online (https://eidolon.pub/romes-empire-without-end-and-the-endless-u-s-war-on-terror-5c39ee3d0c66) e.g. highlights the "cancerous, if less visible" effects that the expansion of US *imperium* after 9/11 had within the American body politic: "[d]espite our nation's Romulean origins in immigration and asylum, we have grown accustomed to illegal discrimination against whole classes of minorities; hate crimes against Muslims and ethnicities conflated with them by popular ignorance".

[23] Foucault 1977:197.

[24] Foucault 1977:200ff.

[25] Foucault 1977:201-2.

[26] Foucault 1977:205.

[27] Foucault 1977:200, 205.

[28] Spivak repr.2000:1449-50; cf. Mitchell 2000:3; Legg 2007:266-7.

of individuals wandering about the country in unpredictable ways; it establishes calculated distributions. It must also master all the forces that are formed from the very constitution of an organized multiplicity; it must neutralize the effects of counter-power that spring from them and which form a resistance to the power that wishes to dominate it: agitations, revolts, spontaneous organizations, coalitions – anything that may establish horizontal conjunctions".[29]

The Foucauldian Panopticon finds its most emblematic representation in the space of the Augustan theatre, which constituted a miniature geography of the whole Roman world, and whose seating policy was regulated by the *princeps* through an important reform act, the *lex de theatris* (22 BCE).[30] Suetonius informs us that Augustus took measures against "the highly confused and loose practice of attending the spectacles" (*spectandi confusissimum ac solutissimum morem correxit*, *Aug*. 44). Through a Senatorial decree, the *princeps* obtained that, for the duration of public performances (*quotiens quid spectaculi...publice ederetur*) offered in any place (*usquam*), the first row of seats were reserved for the senators (*uacaret senatoribus*) and forbade (*uetuit*) the ambassadors of the free or allied nations in Rome (*Romae legatos liberarum sociarumque gentium*) to take their place in the orchestra (*in orchestra sedere*), for he realized that some delegations were constituted of freed slaves (*libertini generis*). Furthermore, the *princeps* separated the soldiers from common people (*militem secreuit a populo*), assigned special steps to married plebeians (*maritis e plebe*), two adjacent sectors to those who wore the *toga praetexta* and their preceptors (*praetextatis cuneum suum et proximum paedagogis*) and forbade those who were dressed in dark clothes (most likely plebeians who could not afford a properly clean white toga: *ne quis pullatorum*) to sit in the middle steps (*media cauea*). Finally, a particular assessment involved women: as far as gladiators' shows were concerned, female spectators (*feminis*) excluding the Vestals (*solis uirginibus Vestalibus*), who could sit in front of the *praetor*'s stage (*contra praetoris tribunal*), were not allowed to

[29] Foucault 1977:219.

[30] As Wallace-Hadrill 2005:79 argues, Augustus' unprecedented theatre building programme (on which see Zanker 1988:147-8), was in itself symptomatic of an anti-Republican attitude towards public space. Indeed, for the Senate, the private citizen's establishment of a theatre bearing his name would have concentrated too much visibility in the hands of a single member and, thus, would have posed a threat to the collective (rather than individual) power of the ruling class (note how Pompey had managed to have the construction of his theatre approved in the 50s only by presenting it as an adjunct to the temple of Venus).

take a seat together with men as they used to in the past (*promiscue spectari sollemne olim erat*), yet they could enjoy the shows in the highest part of the *cauea* (*ex superiore loco*). When it came to the wrestlers' games (*athletarum...spectaculo*) instead, women were not admitted into the *cauea* altogether (*muliebre secum omne...summouit*).

As it clearly emerges from Suetonius' passage, distinction in the Augustan theatre's *cauea* was made with respect to social class, ethnicity and gender.[31] As far as class difference was concerned, Suetonius emphasises the neat separation between senators from the other ranks as well as, for example, the privileged position given to the army. Yet, the question of social difference intersected with that of ethnicity, for, as Suetonius notes, Rome's public *hospites* (the aforementioned ambassadors of the free or allied nations) were prevented from sitting together with the senators, a clear demarcation between Roman and non-Roman spectators.[32] Although Suetonius is not explicit about it, this demarcation must have certainly applied to the less respectable foreigners as well: indeed, E. Rawson contends that "common foreigners" (*peregrini*), most likely wearing a white toga of a different kind from the Roman, were allocated either behind the *togati* or in a specific reserved area of the theatre.[33] As far as gendered difference is concerned, then, the reference to the women's segregation to the upper part of the *cauea* is rather self-explanatory. Yet, a further difference must have also been produced between women of different status: indeed, the privileged position of the *mariti* in the *cauea* suggests that an operating division between married and unmarried women needed to be maintained in the same space.[34] In virtue of this, we must think that *matronae* were separated from registered *meretrices* and

[31] Zanker 1988:150 rightly observes that the differentiation was also brought about by architectural elements other than the *cauea*, such as the network of arched passageways and staircases leading to the *auditorium*, each used for specific classes of citizens.
[32] As Rawson 1987:92 remarks, exceptions were made for especially respectable foreigners (sometimes allowed to sit together with the Roman senators).
[33] Rawson 1987:92-3. Note that Suetonius refers to Augustus' revival of the toga as a signifier of 'Romanness' in a near chapter (*Aug*. 40), in which the *princeps* is said to have denied admission to the Forum and the nearby area to those Roman citizens who were not wearing the garment (see further Chapter 2 on this ban).
[34] Rawson 1987:89-90, also adducing that a similar differentiation was operative in the Athenian theatre.

probosae in general, a separation made even more visible by the different garments worn by each group.[35]

The case of the *lex theatralis* bears further witness to Augustus' obsession with making space the producer of a hierarchy between different identities. Indeed, the micro-geography of the theatre, conceived in terms of a grid divided by physical borders, does not only testify for the *princeps*' understanding of 'space' as a powerful instrument of social surveillance, but also works "as one active element among the numerous ideological functionaries supporting and generating Roman social structure" and "an instrument of the reproduction of 'Romanness' as a variously lived experience".[36] In the theatre, the creation of a coherent, ideal Roman subject, male, Roman, high-class, civically responsible, morally irreprehensible, sexually penetrative and impenetrable, overlapping with the senator sitting in the front rows and physically and conceptually separated from an-Other subject against which he could define himself, was indeed 'produced'.[37]

As we can appreciate, in spite of the Augustan ideology's own claim to have left things as they were, the Augustan 'spatial revolution' is one way of looking at the production of a radically different physical and conceptual world, the imperial, as well as radically different people living inside it, the imperial subjects.[38] Yet, in a world that was fabricating Roman imperial identity and all sorts of Other identities against which Roman imperial identity could define itself,

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[35] Rawson 1987:90, 94 is right to emphasise that, on formal occasions, Augustus wanted to see male citizens in the *toga* and the *matronae* with the *stola* as opposed to the *uestis meretricia* usually donned by prostitutes (on the politics of female dress, see further Chapter 5).

[36] Gunderson 1996:117 (referring to the twin space of the arena).

[37] Fredrick 2002:237 rightly makes the connection between "[m]ovement down the [Roman] social scale" and "an increasing liability to sexual and violent penetration together with one's diminished control over one's own space and an increasing level of psychological stress" and argues that the Roman theatre's and amphitheatre's Panoptic organisation shows the dynamic brilliantly, with the hierarchy of penetrability not only displayed by the seating policy but also by the very spectacle, "for the closer and more impenetrable spectators enjoy the penetration – torture, dismembering – of the actors in the arena" (244-5).

[38] There is no univocal understanding of the nature of the *principatus* among historians but the main trends still follow either Syme 1939's rather uncanny depiction of the Augustan regime as an autocratic rule (a view inevitably developed by the historical context in which his book came to light: Hitler, Mussolini, Franco and Stalin having risen to prominence around that time) or Galinsky 1996's more positive evaluation, providing a more naïve reading of Augustus' self-proclaimed rule via *auctoritas* (rather than *potestas*) and thus of the Republican aspects of the *principatus*. See further the collection of essays in Raaflaub & Toher 1990 and in Galinsky 2005; add Citroni 2009, 2012. On the cultural revolution coming with the political transition, Zanker 1988 remains fundamental; with Habinek & Schiesaro 1997; Wallace-Hadrill 2008; Labate & Rosati 2013.

there is still room to investigate to what extent the imperial citizens internalised Augustus' imperial 'production of space' and whether if they produced a different model to Augustus' spatial production of difference. This thesis looks at the way the Augustan discourse on the spatial, colluding with the emergence of imperial ideology and its related construction of a coherent Roman imperial identity, is re-imagined and contested across the *oeuvre* of the elegiac poet Propertius. The specific interest of the present work lies in the way Propertius eschews Augustus' 'production of space' through the production of his own alternative space. Across his text, Propertius indeed represents a kind of space that is diametrically different from the Augustan: if the *princeps* was in fact concerned with the fabrication of clear-cut borders in order to bind and control his people in clearly demarcated spaces and set them in hierarchical relationships between each other (as per the Panopticon model), Propertius conceives of a space characterised by fluid, permeable thresholds, in which ambivalent, 'unfixed' rather than binary identities (Roman vs. non-Roman; male vs. female; low class vs. high class) are produced. Such spaces are inevitably imbricated with politics, for their own constitution of 'third identities' plays against the grain of Augustus' need to corroborate a monolithic Roman identity.

Before passing to expose the methodological approach of the thesis, let me offer a sneak-peak into Propertius' resisting spatiality by the means of what seems to me an apt textual reference at this point. Across his poetic *corpus*, Propertius' resistance to being 'fixed' in the Panopticon space of the Emperor is significantly brought about by allusion to the very Augustan theatre on which we have just mused. Propertius' theatre is conceived in a markedly different way from the space of social performance designed by Augustus. This is particularly well conveyed in a passage from elegy 2.19:

sola eris et solos spectabis, Cynthia, montis
et pecus et finis pauperis agricolae.
illic te nulli poterunt corrumpere ludi,
fanaque peccatis plurima causa tuis.
illic assidue tauros spectabis arantis,
et uitem docta ponere falce comas;
atque ibi rara feres inculto tura sacello,
haedus ubi agrestis corruet ante focos;

protinus et nuda choreas imitabere sura;
omnia ab externo sint modo tuta uiro.
(2.19.7-16)[39]

Propertius is relieved that his mistress Cynthia shall be "alone" (*sola*) and "enjoying the spectacle" (*spectabis*) of the quiet bucolic surroundings where she has fled, instead of strolling around the city's hotspots: the theatres and the temples (*ludi...fana*). The theatres are indicated as spaces of corruption, where men and women can meet up and where physical boundaries separating them, unlike the natural (*montes*) and artificial (*finis*) boundaries offered by the countryside, can be easily crossed.[40] When read in the context of the upcoming *lex theatralis*, these lines bear witness to Propertius' irreverent resistance to the panoptic gaze exercised by Augustus over the theatre and, more specifically, to the theatre's clear gendered demarcation between upper and lower seats (respectively reserved to women and men).[41] Indeed, far from mirroring the Augustan bounded distributions of spectators over carefully assigned benches, Propertius implies that *his own* theatre facilitates the mingling with the opposite sex.[42] As the poet contends, the best spectacle is not that happening on stage, but rather that offered by the girls or boys sitting on the *cauea*.[43] The theatre is thus transformed into a space of erotic encounters in which it is still possible, amid the strict legislations and the geometrical division orchestrated by Augustus, to roam freely in order to achieve one's erotic goals, a space where the borders drawn

[39] Here and elsewhere, I print Fedeli's edition of Propertius (Books 1-4) and indicate where my *lectiones* diverge from this editor. My translations into English instead follow Heyworth's, with minor adjustments when needed.
[40] As Fedeli 2005 *ad loc*. notes, *corrumpere* and *peccatis* signal unfaithfulness and therefore imply the spatial proximity of the men and women involved.
[41] On Book 2's chronology, see *infra* n520.
[42] Contrast the countryside's secluded space, preventing Cynthia from being harassed by a stranger (*ab externo…uiro*). Propertius had previously admitted that theatres represent for him "a cause of ruin" (2.22a.4), given their abundant presence of titillating female performers and spectators (vv.5ff.); and that Cynthia should not wear wear excessive make-up there in order not to attract too many suitors (2.18d.36, accepting the suggestions of Shackelton Bailey 1956:98 and Fedeli *ad loc.* on *sedere*). Ovid, drawing from Propertius, shall also draw significant attention to the erotics of the theatre (cf. esp. *Am*. 2.7.3-4; *AA* 1.89ff., 494-504, *Rem.* 751-6).
[43] Cf. elegy 4.8, where Cynthia, having caught Propertius *in flagrante* with two other women, forbids him to visit the theatre (among other dangerous places across the cityscape), for there he could turn his back to the upper seats occupied by female spectators (*colla caue inflectas ad summum obliqua theatrum,* 4.8.77; for an in-depth discussion of poem 4.8 in the context of other Augustan laws, see Chapter 5).

between Self and Other (here overlapping with the male/female binary in particular) can be eluded and transgressed.

0.2. Propertius and the 'spatial turn': the methodological approach to the text

By making space a producer of social interaction and political resistance, I position myself within the broad theoretical context of the so-called 'spatial turn' and, more specifically, among those critics who have started establishing a fruitful dialogue between the 'spatial turn' and classical literature.[44] The 'spatial turn' movement originated in France in the tumultuous 1960s thanks to the works of Foucault and philosopher and sociologist H. Lefebvre, who started thinking about space no more as "the backdrop against which life unfolds sequentially", but rather as "intimately tied to live experience".[45] In an intellectual environment dominated by a historicist obsession with the analysis of temporal relations to explain socio-political phenomena,[46] both Foucault and Lefebvre suggested that the organization of space was fundamental for the correct functioning of the capitalistic mode of production that they aimed to criticise.[47] Indeed, the two intellectuals "saw potential emancipatory power in a consciously spatial praxis based in a practical and political awareness that the geographies we have produced (or were produced for us) can negatively affect our lives but that we can act to change these unjust and oppressive geographies".[48] Whilst Foucault never exposed an organic spatial theory, his contribution to spatial theory remaining

[44] While most contributions have been made by Hellenists (e.g. Paschalis & Frangoulidis 2002; de Jong 2012; Purves 2010; Asper 2011; Clay 2011; Thalmann 2011; Tsagalis 2012; Gilhuly & Worman 2014; Worman 2015), there is a recent interest among Latinists to engage with spatial theory and provide new readings of better and lesser known texts across a plurality of genres (e.g. Krebs 2006; Bexley 2009; Pogorselski 2011; Skempsis & Ziogas 2014; Keith 2014a; Rimell 2015; Rimell & Asper 2017; Fitzgerald & Spentzou 2018).
[45] Warf & Arias 2008:4; useful collections reviewing and discussing the 'spatial turn' include e.g. Crang & Thrift 2000; Hubbard *et alii* 2004; Tally 2012, 2017.
[46] Warf & Arias 2008:2-3; Tally 2012:3.
[47] Warf & Arias 2008:3.
[48] Soja 2008:20.

scattered across his *oeuvre*,[49] Lefebvre has instead offered a trialectic spatial theory that ended up influencing most of the spatial analysis developed after him.[50]

Lefebvre distinguishes between three kinds of interrelated and equally-important social spaces: 'representations of space' (*espace conçu*), 'spatial practice' (*espace perçu*) and 'spaces of representation' (*espace vécu*; sometimes also referred to as 'representational spaces').[51] 'Representations of space' coincides with the highly conceptualised space of "scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers", usually working at the service of the dominant system of production and its ideology.[52] This is the geometrical space of grids, maps, communication systems and architectural complexes created to sustain the coherent language of the dominant ideology as well as to favour its need to control and scrutinise the social body under its rule. 'Spatial practice' is instead the empirical space produced and re-produced by citizens in their daily practice. Through the urban transport routes taking him from home to work and other recurrent itineraries, each individual (of a given social class) in fact creates 'networks' between a set of places, which turn out to be pivotal in the production and re-production of their social position.[53] Finally, Lefebvre indicates the 'spaces of representation' as those unpredictable spaces that are directly 'lived' by inhabitants and users. These spaces involve both 'representations of spaces' and 'spatial practice'. Indeed, in order to 'live' space, the citizen has to acknowledge not only the way that space has been planned in the urban (or extra-urban) context in which she lives but she also needs to practise that space by moving through and crossing it. Yet, 'spaces of representations' are more than the real spaces engineered in 'representations of space' and practised in 'spatial practice', for they bear an element of imagination that detaches them from the real world. Not surprisingly, they are the most closely "linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art", often 'lived' by those philosophers and writers "[whose] imagination seeks to change and appropriate".[54] In these

[49] Esp. Foucault 1972; 1977; 1980; 1986; for a comprehensive overview of Foucault's concern with the 'spatial', see Elden & Crampton 2007; West-Pavlov 2009:111-65.
[50] On the crucial importance of Lefebvre's theory for following scholarship, see Soja 1996:65-8.
[51] Lefebvre 1991:33.
[52] Lefebvre 1991:38.
[53] Lefebvre *ibidem*.
[54] Lefebvre 1991:33, 39.

spaces, both 'real' and 'imagined', there is room for contesting and re-imagining space and, thus, for the production of new ideals and the constitution of new social movements.[55]

As this succinct presentation already demonstrates, my interest in Propertius' political response to Augustan space in his literary work is inevitably in dialogue with Lefebvre's tripartite theory at the basis of the development of the 'spatial turn' in the Humanities. Indeed, if the space of the official Augustan imperial ideology (with its 'Panopticon-like' structure, as analysed above) can be additionally read in terms of Lefebvre's 'representations of space', Propertius' own literary production of space can be looked at through the lens of Lefebvre's 'spaces of representations'. This coincides with the artist's response to the authority's spatial production which, as it shall become more apparent throughout the thesis, is also bound up with Lefebvre's 'spatial practice', namely the individual's physical orientation within the fabric of the official space. While, at the outset of this research, the relevance of Propertius' text to Lefebvre's spatial theory has clarified to me how fruitful a *spatial analysis* of the Propertian text could prove, for it lays bare the close connection between space, literature and politics, further inspiration to *the kind of space* to be sought across Propertius' text has come to me from the reading of E. Soja's re-elaboration of Lefebvre's theorisations.

Soja also conceives a trialectic, which constitutes of 'first', 'second' and 'third space'.[56] 'First' and 'second space' are set in an antithetical relationship between each other: the first being the material kind of space that Lefebvre classifies as *spatial practice*; the second instead mainly overlapping with the mental space produced by ideology, namely Lefebvre's 'representations of space'.[57] Yet, against the threat of a reductive binary dialectic between two elements (the 'perceived' and the 'conceived'), Soja theorises the existence of a non-binary 'third space', inclusive of both the 'first' and the 'second' (the 'real' and the 'imagined', the 'empirical' and the 'psychological') in which dichotomies are overcome and contamination between two or more spaces is made possible (e.g. the space of colonisers and colonised, of men and women, of the high-class

[55] Lefebvre *ibidem*.
[56] Soja 1996:66ff.
[57] Soja 1996:78-9.

and the low).[58] While this 'third' dimension of the spatial is (self-admittedly) difficult to pin down, Soja is nevertheless explicit about the issues of identity being imbricated with politics (an aspect that had been partly touched on by Lefebvre in his 'spaces of representation'). A "place of critical exchange where the geographical imagination can be expanded to encompass a multiplicity of perspectives that have heretofore been considered by the epistemological referees to be incompatible, uncombinable",[59] 'third space' is indeed essential for the formation of unconventional identities, themselves 'third' in their combination of opposed elements, that defy those political system's tendency to divide people in binary categories.[60] It is in fact in 'third spaces' that the construction of "communities of resistance and renewal that cross the boundaries and double-cross the binaries of race, gender, class and all oppressively Othering categories" are allowed and that "struggle, liberation and emancipation" are made available.[61]

As I shall argue throughout the thesis, this conceptualisation of 'third space' is particularly germane to the spaces Propertius lingers in and moves about across his *oeuvre*. If the Augustan regime intended space to be bordered and therefore divisive, and possibly occupied by homogeneous groups of people in alignment with the growing imperial logic, Propertius in fact re-imagines a set of 'third spaces' that are not predicated on the drawing of borders and the consequent 'fixation' of clear-cut identities inside/outside (as per the *lex theatralis*), but that are instead characterised by elusive, confusing, ambivalent, and sometimes fully eroded demarcations in which non-binary, and thus counter-ideological, 'third' identities emerge. Deploying one of the key-words of the elegiac genre in which Propertius writes, I shall refer to such spaces marked by ambivalent, porous demarcations as *limina* (or 'thresholds') and the kind of non-binary identities produced in such spatial dimensions as 'liminal'. 'Liminality' is a word that originates in anthropology, particularly through the works of A. van Gennep and V. Turner.[62] According to these anthropologists, 'liminality' refers to the in-

[58] Soja 1996:60-70 refers to the strategy of 'Thirding-as-Othering', whereby a 'third' element is interjected to overcome as a creative process through which conventional epistemologies are challenged and our spatial imagination opened up.
[59] Soja 1996:5.
[60] Soja 1996:65; on the analogies with Homi K. Bhabha's own notion of 'Third Space' here, cf. Chapter 2.
[61] Soja 1996:84, 68.
[62] Van Gennep 1909 (=transl. 1960); Turner 1967; 1969; 1974a.

between state of an individual who is in the process of changing his social role through a 'rite of passage'.[63] Such a temporary state always involves a specific spatial dimension in which the rite of passage takes place.[64] Yet, while van Gennep and Turner posit that the inhabitation of the 'threshold' is a powerful signifier of the instability of the person involved in the rite of passage, they also maintain that this is overcome as soon as the individual is re-integrated into the social body with his new social identity. Indeed, the analysis of the two anthropologists has the merit of emphasising the potentially disruptive force of 'in between spaces' but relegates such a disruptive force to short periods of life occurring prior and after the subject's integration into the society.[65]

Going way beyond the anthropological approach, scholars working across different areas within the Humanities have shown how 'liminality' can instead be a permanent condition experienced by the subject.[66] To inhabit the 'third space' of the *limen*, an interstitial region in which 'fixed' identifications are overcome in favour of ambivalently 'unfixed' identities mixing and meshing different and often opposed characteristics, means dwelling in a culturally productive space where "subjectivity finds itself poised between sameness and alterity and new discursive forms are constituted".[67] Propertius' liminal subjectivity is indeed not temporary but can be detected across his *oeuvre*.[68] It is my contention that, in the face of the Augustan rehabilitation of the ideal of the Roman male citizen (high-class, civically responsible, morally irreprehensible, sexually penetrative and impenetrable), Propertius represents a counter-ideological model of the Roman male citizen, who oscillates between different and often antithetical types. Such an oscillation, I submit, is never performed in a vacuum, but in 'third spaces' where meaning is negotiated. Rather than spaces of difference, where clear-cut

[63] Cf. Decker & Winchock 2017:4.
[64] Cf. esp. Van Gennep 1960:11, 15-25, who refers to the three phases of the 'rite' with a spatial nomenclature (*separation*, *transition*, *incorporation*); Turner 1974b:58.
[65] Decker & Winchock 2017:4.
[66] I shall develop this point more thoroughly in Chapter 2.
[67] Thieme 2003:144; cf. Bhabha 1994:4.
[68] For an exploration of liminality in literary studies outside Classics, see e.g. Viljoen & van Der Merwe 2007; Gomez Reus & Gifford 2013; Mukherji 2013; Jacobson *et alii* 2018; and the series of publications from the "*Studies in Liminality and Literature*" issued by the Gateway Press (https://www.northangerlibrary.com/gateway.asp#2).

identities (either Self or Other) can emerge, Propertius conveys spaces where meaning is made unstable and identities are impossible to fix.[69]

0.3. The goals of the thesis ('liminally' inside and outside Propertian scholarship)

The present thesis has three main objectives. To begin with, it aims at overcoming the current scholarly approach to Propertius' engagement with space. Propertian readers have in fact drawn attention to the 'spatial' in either a 'descriptive' way or narrowed their investigation down to the elegist's reaction to the contemporary re-construction of 'monumental' Rome in his aetiologically-oriented Book 4. R. Cristofoli, C. Santini and F. Santucci's edited volume, with half of the essays dedicated to the representation of space (the other half being instead devoted to 'time'), is illustrative of the first methodological approach.[70] Indeed, none of the contributions in this collection see 'space' as anything other than the background to the narrative. Attention is paid there to space as long as it helps the reader orient him through the poems, yet there are no significant arguments proposing a close-knit connection between space, identity and politics.[71] As far as the second approach is concerned, the most emblematic representative is T. S. Welch's monograph on Propertius' reading of the Augustan monuments in Book 4.[72] Working at the conjunction between archaeology and literary criticism, Welch rightly views the Augustan monolithic imprint on the cityscape as open to re-interpretations and ideological re-negotiations: as she submits, "the [Propertian] poems offer ways of looking at the monuments that...differ from the ways Augustus intended them to be seen".[73] Welch's work therefore *does* create a(n implicit) connection between space, politics and Roman

[69] Jacques Derrida's notion of *différance*, to which I shall provide a full explanation in the context of Chapter 1, is here relevant.
[70] Cristofoli, Santini & Santucci 2010.
[71] See esp. the articles by Fedeli, Pinotti, Mazzoli, Ferraro and Günther in the collection.
[72] Welch 2005, building upon Boyle 2003's work on Ovid. A similar attention to Propertius and the monumental is also paid by Fantham 1997; Spencer 2001; Rea 2007:103-23. For a broader interest in literary representations of Rome's topography and monumentality, see esp. Vasaly 1993; Edwards 1996; Jaeger 1997; Larmour & Spencer 2007.
[73] Welch 2005:3.

identity. Yet, my own contention is that Propertius provides us with a much broader spatial narrative than his final tour across the imperial city: when one looks at the space represented across the poetic *corpus* through a 'third space' methodology, it becomes apparent that, right from the beginning of his poetic career, Propertius has developed a sensitivity for the representation of spaces of ideological contestation, which do not necessarily overlap with mappable places from the urban fabric.[74]

In arguing for a poetic re-reading of space, politics and identity through the Propertian *corpus*, I wish to achieve the two other objectives of the thesis: not only to propose a different approach and, therefore, to reframe the question of Propertius' identity, but also to insert myself into the vexed debate about the extent to which Augustan texts might be critical of and/or oppositional to the regime. As far as the first issue is concerned, I wish to shift the focus from other more popular approaches to the identity of Propertius, which, so far, has been addressed from a psychoanalytical, and specifically Lacanian, viewpoint.[75] P. A. Miller in particular has explained the emergence of the Latin elegiac genre in dialogue with Marxist, historicist, dialogic and, most importantly, psychoanalytical thought.[76] Through a string of case studies also involving Propertius (together with Catullus, Tibullus and Ovid), Miller has argued that Latin elegy's internal conflict between the private and the public sphere is reflective of the collapse of the same distinction as occurred during the turbulent historical transition from Republic to Empire in which the genre originated, flourished and faded.[77] Indeed, it is Miller's contention that the complex position of the elegiac lover-poets, struggling to adapt to the changing of times, is symptomatic of the ideological crisis of the end of the Republic. The implication of Miller's argument is that Latin love elegy is not deliberately counter-ideological in respect to the Augustan regime. On the contrary, whenever it sounds so, Miller submits that this is only due to its lyrical voices' incapacity to

[74] I shall provide a full spatial analysis of precisely those three poems from Book 4 neglected by Welch (see Chapter 5 on 4.7-8; 4.11); in Chapter 3, my analysis on the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine is not concerned with the monument itself (as in Welch 2005:79-111), but rather with the *amator*'s and the *puella*'s movements around it.
[75] On my 'spatial' use of Julia Kristeva, who, among other things, is a Lacanian psychoanalyst, see Chapter 5.
[76] Miller 2004.
[77] Miller 2004: esp.1-31.

make their self-projections (their ego identifications in the Imaginary realm, to say it with Lacan) cohere with the type of masculine civic identity construed by the newly-born imperial society (the Lacanian Symbolic order).[78]

Adopting a similar Lacanian framework, M. Janan has devoted a whole monograph to Propertius' Book 4, which she contends to be the elegiac collection in which the conflict between the private and the public persona of Propertius is most thoroughly represented.[79] Janan argues that the Propertian subject is divided because of its impossibility of cohering with the ideological system imposed by Augustus: far from embracing the views of those scholars who reckon that Book 4 represents Propertius' ultimate capitulation to the ideology of the regime, Janan contends that this is the collection where contradictions and divisions are most emblematically represented.[80] Yet, just as was the case with Miller, Janan's psychoanalytical insight into the Propertian text implies that the disjunctions emerging across the last collection mirror the subject's impossibility at overcoming Rome's socio-cultural crisis at the end of the Republican age, during which period the Roman citizen had lost all sense of a coherent identity.[81] While I have been deeply inspired by these critics' commitment to draw conceptual parallels between Latin elegy and postmodern thought,[82] I argue that the main problem in having Propertius recline on the couch of the analysand (as he is made to do in Miller's and Janan's books) is that it is detrimental to the right assessment of the author's intentionality. If Propertius' 'split subjectivity' is only a 'symptom' of the subject's incapacity to keep at pace with the dramatic political changes occurring in his day and age, his criticism of the imperial ideology is in fact at best unintentional. Yet, to follow this train of thought risks underestimating the subversive ambivalence haunting the text of an author that has always been

[78] Miller *ibidem*.
[79] Janan 2001.
[80] Janan 2001: esp. 6-9.
[81] Janan 2001:12 and *passim*.
[82] We have come a long way from Veyne (1988)'s interpretation of Latin elegy as a self-conscious literary game (*jeu sémiotique*) detached from the extra-textual reality. Particularly thanks to the focus on gender and sexuality in the genre (Hallett 1973; Greene 1998; Wyke 2002; James 2003), scholars started taking into account the relationship between the socio-political context and the poems' eroto-poetic fiction (on Propertius: e.g. Stahl 1985; Cairns 2006; Keith 2008; and ultimately Wallis 2018).

appreciated for his brilliant use of irony and whose political criticism may be subtle but not necessarily unconscious.[83]

Speaking of political criticism, I proceed to tackle the aforementioned third objective of the thesis, which is to re-assess Propertius' political position in respect to the Augustan regime. While the previous sections may have already betrayed my understanding of Propertius' negative judgement of the *principatus*, it is worth discussing this crucial topic more in-depth. In an oft-cited contribution to what has turned into a huge scholarly debate, D. Kennedy has argued that we should go beyond the binary opposition between 'pro'- and 'anti'- Augustan literary texts.[84] Kennedy has emphasised that the distinction only makes sense for those who believe in a static view of language, for a more dynamic, discursive view of language lays bare the inconsistency of any oppositions: indeed, words can be taken as ambiguously part of the 'establishment discourse' as much as potentially open to lend themselves to 'subversion'.[85] Subsequent scholarship on Augustan literature has used Kennedy's insights to either reject the label 'anti-Augustan' altogether or to provide readings of Augustan texts grounded in reader-response criticism, that is, analyses that emphasise the open-ended possibilities, on the reader's part, to view the texts as *either* 'pro'- or 'anti'- (or *even both*) rather than insisting on the authors' 'intentionality' to construe a self-aware political position.[86] In a recent article, E. Giusti has nevertheless re-opened the debate on the politics of Augustan literature by proposing a new reading of Kennedy's article as a contribution that engages with ideology criticism.[87]

According to Giusti, Kennedy has in fact unconsciously offered a 'totalitarian' view of Augustanism throughout his article, in which Augustan poets are viewed as unable "to express an oppositional statement except within a discourse that has rendered that opposition impossible to voice" (that is, by

[83] On Propertius' irony, see esp. Lefèvre 1966; Ezra Pound's fascination for the elegist (*Homage to Propertius*, in Pound 1919) is also animated by his acknowledgement of Propertius' humorous vein.
[84] Kennedy 1992.
[85] Kennedy 1992: esp.27ff., drawing attention to the non-univocal value of politically-fraught words, such as *libertas, amicitia, pax*.
[86] Such a strategy has found special success among Ovidian scholars and, to a lesser extent, among Virgilians (aiming at going beyond the Harvard School's and the European School's respectively pessimistic vs. optimistic readings of the *Aeneid* in particular).
[87] Giusti 2016.

employing the same language adopted by the regime).[88] As Giusti contends, such an assessment of the Augustan *principatus* shows significant points of contact with Hannah Arendt's fundamental theorisation of 20th-century totalitarian regimes in particular.[89] Although Arendt would have frowned upon the association between Roman rule and a 'totalitarian system' (the latter being a specific form of government emerging in the unprecedented historical context of the Second World War), the Augustan *principatus*, with its autocratic system's deceptive disguise in Republican clothes (and the self-proclamation of its ruler as a *primus inter pares* rather than a *tout court* monarch),[90] lends itself particularly well to Arendt's description of 'totalitarism' as well as to Kennedy's own interpretation of the Augustan regime. Indeed, for Arendt, the 'totalitarian' ruler "manages to permeate all strata of the population in an ultimately repressive way, but by temporarily maintaining the 'fiction of a normal world' in which oppositional voices are never explicitly silenced, but only recomposed in order to make them adhere to the new system";[91] and it is with one such system that Kennedy implicitly identifies the Augustan *principatus*, concerned not as much with silencing oppositional voices but rather with denying them the possibility of expressing dissent with a language distinguishable from that of consent.

Rather than preventing us from analysing Augustan texts as 'anti-Augustan' in their subtle expression of dissent, Giusti therefore persuasively shows that Kennedy's article allows us to interrogate the texts as containing the (sometimes hidden) seeds of 'subversion' to the autocratic system, even as he invites us to "always be conscious of the fact that the Augustan revolution often makes the languages of dissent and consent appear indistinguishable".[92] My approach to Propertius follows Giusti's invitation to evaluate the Augustan poets as operating within a totalitarian-like system and yet a system that can be subverted and called into question through their literary texts' fictional representations of their contemporary real world. While I do not wish to argue that Propertius is blatantly 'anti'-, for I agree that it would have been impossible for him to *openly* show his criticism of Augustus' regime (this being indeed an

[88] Giusti 2016:6; Kennedy 1992:41.
[89] Giusti 2016:8.
[90] See esp. Wallace-Hadrill 1982.
[91] Giusti 2016:8, drawing esp. from Arendt repr.2004.
[92] Giusti 2016:8; cf. Giusti 2018 for a reading of the *Aeneid* that builds upon this perspective.

autocratic system that did not leave room for the expression of realistic political alternatives nor, as we have seen, for an opposition voiced in explicitly confrontational language),[93] I am nevertheless convinced that a close reading of Propertius' elegies allows us to view the poet's political position towards the regime as fundamentally critical[94] and that his oft-detected ambiguity is not illustrative of his apolitical positions, but rather of his 'subtle criticism' to the Augustan ideology.[95] Considering the (above discussed) political imbrications of space as one of the many channels through which ideology sustains itself, a space-sensitive analysis suits this objective well, for space (and the language used to convey it) could be perceived as but it is in fact never, a neutral aspect in the practice of ideology criticism.

Finally, I would like to add an extra point among the thesis' goals. I believe that to propose a space-sensitive analysis of an ancient literary text is hopefully more than the mere attempt to fill the gap(s) in the bibliographical survey on a single author, but a starting point for reflection on the problematic contemporary issues of space, identity and politics in the era of globalization. In a Europe whose Constitution highlights the importance of a geographical unity to favour the cultural, economic and political exchange between its member states, we are witnessing, also in virtue of the ever-increasing success of nationalist and sovereign parties across the Continent, the consolidation of a conservative rhetoric on national borders.[96] Amid the construction of physical walls, paradoxically augmented since the fall of the Berlin wall to date, amid the failure to comply with the Dublin agreement on the fair redistribution of asylum-seekers from war-stricken Africa and the Middle East, amid the incumbent (if ever-delayed) spectre of Brexit, there is a lurking risk that the dream of a truly united Europe will disintegrate in favour of protectionist policies that, at least as regards

[93] On the several repressed attempts, by both politicians and intellectuals, to oppose Augustus, see Raaflaub & Samons 1990; Rohr Vio 2000.
[94] While I am here suggesting why Propertius qua subject of an autocratic rule could speak an oppositional voice, the personal motivations behind Propertius' political position can be traced back to his story of oppression, dispossession and migration (which I shall explore more thoroughly in Chapter 2 in terms of geo-cultural 'liminality') as an Italian-born Roman citizen.
[95] Different readings of Propertius' position in respect to Augustus include 'pro'- (Cairns 2006), evolving from 'anti'- into 'pro'- (Stahl 1985), 'anti'- (Heyworth 2007b, Johnson 2009), nor 'pro'- nor 'anti'- (Keith 2008, Gale repr.2009, Wallis 2018, the most influenced by Kennedy).
[96] See ultimately the updated study of Ruiz Benedicto & Brunet 2018.

the delicate issue of the entry of migrants, prove inhuman.[97] While taking into account all the differences of the case, this paradox finds a comparandum in the contradictory nature of the Augustan *imperium*, a pan-Roman territorial unit, yet one hierarchically organized into clear-cut classes of citizens.[98] To re-read Propertius in light of this controversial political climate can therefore become a salutary exercise if not an act of resistance. Propertius' representation of the world, made of permeable thresholds instead of divisive barriers, also reminds us that there is an alternative to the contemporary politicians' worryingly 'Augustan' concern with 'producing space' in order to sustain the discourse of difference (ethnic, gendered, social) and prevent the crossings of (at once) geographical, cultural and identity borders.

0.4. Outline of the thesis

My work is grounded in classical philology and its hermeneutics, so the thesis, articulated into five Chapters, shall appear to the reader as a set of close readings from the Propertian *corpus* (in a quasi-chronological order)[99] that are relevant to my analysis on the 'production of space' and its repercussions on politics and identity. Yet, the present work also benefits from a dialogue with a plurality of theoretical critics (Derrida, Bhabha, Deleuze, Foucault, Kristeva), whose work, while not being necessarily situated within the 'spatial turn' proper, engages with 'space', is part of a larger, post-structuralist discussion on the spatial (coeval to the emergence of the 'spatial turn').[100]

In Chapter 1, which has a paratextual function with respect to the subsequent Chapters of the thesis, I shall focus on the powerful role played by the domestic *limen* in the production of the unstable gendered and sexual identity of the elegiac 'lover-poet', with which Propertius identifies. As I shall argue, the

[97] Ruiz Benedicto & Brunet 2018:36-8.
[98] The same obviously applies to the current discriminatory politics of Trump's America (on which see Pandey 2018b: online).
[99] Chapter 1 and 2 mainly deal with Propertius' Book 1; Chapter 3 with poems from Book 2; Chapter 4 with elegies from Book 3; Chapter 5 with Book 4.
[100] Cf. Tally 2012:3 on the impact of post-structuralist thought on the 'spatial turn'.

threshold, conceived both as a space of separation and as a space of inclusion with respect to the beloved indoors (what Derrida would term a '*hymen*'), represents an ambiguous 'third space' in which binary logic collapses. Indeed, the door's undecidable nature as both a penetrable and impenetrable female character impacts on the double identity of the *amator* who either crosses it or is hindered by it as he tries to achieve his erotic τέλος. An irreducible *exclusus/dominus* with respect to the elegiac *domus*, and therefore to the *puella* indoors, the 'lyrical I' thus changes identity in accordance with his continuous 'liminal' oscillation between inside and outside (the *centre* and the *periphery* of *domus*), between missed and reached penetration, thus making his gendered and sexual identity oscillate between that of an orthodox Roman penetrator (when inside the *domus*) and a deviant non-Roman non-penetrative male subject (when outside the *domus*). Basing my analysis on a metapoetic reading of a specific cycle of erotic elegies addressed to the elder elegiac poet Cornelius Gallus, in the second part of the chapter I shall further argue that the same identity 'oscillation' around the threshold is conveyed in Propertius' eroto-poetic rivalries with his fellow 'lover-poet'. The opposite of a dividing boundary between two limited spaces, here too the *limen* manifests itself as a now impenetrable, now penetrable border. Precisely by virtue of its changing nature, the threshold allows the Propertian 'poet' (on top of 'lover') both the penetration of Gallus' household and the consequent imitation or even robbery of the latter's poetic *materia* (*dominus*) and the exclusion from the same domestic space of poetic exchange (*exclusus*), thus transferring his now manly ability, now unmanly inability to 'penetrate' into the metapoetic sphere.

If the first chapter focuses on the 'unfixed' eroto-poetic identity of the *amator* as produced by the domestic *limen*, Chapter 2 inaugurates the analysis of Propertius' political identity as also construed in similar thresholding spaces. By examining the author's self-portrait in the 'seal-poem' 1.22, I shall argue that Propertius utilises his native territory of the Italic Etrusco-Umbrian border to construe his identity as both a *central* (Roman) and a *peripheral* man (Umbrian, non-Roman), or, in more theoretical terms, as that of a 'liminal man' theorised by post-colonial critic Bhabha (*dominus* at/*exclusus* from 'R/home'). The Etrusco-Umbrian border, 'Romanised' for a long time and yet again victim of a recent military invasion by the Roman army led by the future *princeps* Augustus himself, is indeed a 'third space' both inside and outside, incorporated into and resisting

to Rome, and so are the peoples hailing from it. While apparently fully integrated into the imperial metropolis, Propertius in fact describes his homeland as a space where it is possible not only to denounce Rome's, and specifically Augustus', abuse of power but also to challenge it. I shall move on to demonstrate that the Vicus Tuscus, the street of Rome from which the speaking statue of the Etruscan god Vertumnus (4.2) delivers his speech, functions as a *limen* analogous to the Etrusco-Umbrian border. Located on the 'threshold' of Rome (halfway between the *centre* and the *periphery* of the *Vrbs*), the Vicus is the strategic 'third space' from which Vertumnus, an immigrant figure serving as Propertius' own *dopplegänger*, does not only manage to withdraw from the central headquarters of the imperial power but also to recount the personal vicissitudes of his complicated integration into the Roman world, which ambivalently renders him both a Roman and a non-Roman citizen (*dominus/exclusus*) negotiating rather than fully absorbing the emerging imperial culture of the metropolis.

While across the first two Chapters I am interested in static *limina* eroding the polarity centre/periphery (Roman and non-Roman) and 'unfixing' the identity of the speaking subject, in Chapter 3 I shall focus on the production of Propertius' political 'liminality' mainly through his fictional character's literal spatial movement between philo-Augustan *centre* and anti-Augustan *periphery* in an important diptych of elegies (2.31/2). Invited to the inauguration of arguably the most representative monuments of the emerging imperial ideology, namely the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine dedicated to the conquest of Augustus over Egypt in the *centre* of Rome (*dominus* inside 'R/home'), from the very beginning Propertius explains that his visit to the temple anticipates his displacement into Rome's *periphery*, where his beloved Cynthia has fled (*exclusus* outside 'R/home'). Through the symbolic identifications of Augustus with the god Apollo (Sun) and of Cynthia with the Egyptian goddess Isis (Moon) with whom Augustus' rival Cleopatra also identified, I shall suggest that it is possible to attribute political significance to Propertius' liminal oscillation between the 'solar' centre to the 'lunar' periphery of the *Vrbs*. Indeed, the search for Cynthia into a secluded space of love (what Deleuze calls a 'smooth space', as opposed to the 'striated space' of Augustus' Palatine temple) overlaps with an attempt to escape the control of the *princeps* into a territory that is affiliated with the

princeps' very enemies and where it is still possible to enjoy that Republican *libertas* that the advent of the regime has irreparably compromised.

Chapter 4 then zooms out from the urban dimension to that of the 'ecumenic' imperial space conquered by Augustus. Here, I shall analyse those elegies, significantly written in the period of greatest territorial expansion of the *princeps*, which refer to peripheral places of the newly-born empire as well as to their cultural relationship with the metropolis (3.7; 3.13; 3.22). If, on the one hand, Propertius seems willing to defend the cultural superiority of Rome in the manner of a proper Roman moraliser 'orientalising' the East (*dominus* inside 'R/home'), on the other hand, he challenges his own Romano-centric vision of the imperial world. An 'orientalised' man imbued by Hellenistic culture and a fascination for the 'Other', the poet in fact concomitantly deems the periphery a space of greater literary inspiration than Rome as well as a space that holds the mirror to Rome's vices (*exclusus* outside 'R/home'), thus calling into question Augustus' discourse of Roman military mastery and moral superiority in respect of the conquered lands. Propertius' 'liminal' oscillation between Roman Self and non-Roman Other, between a *central* and a *peripheral* man, reflects the liminal quality of the imperial space that he aims at representing in the poems. This is indeed a fluid territory, in which Roman and non-Roman, West and East, *centre* and *periphery*, are contaminated by each other through penetrable geo-cultural *limina* instead of impenetrable borders. In these Foucauldian 'heterotopias' in respect of the Augustan Empire, the undisputed domination of Augustus is constantly jeopardised rather than celebrated.

Finally, Chapter 5 focuses on the close reading of two elegies (4.7; 4.11) in which two 'liminal' characters other than Propertius (and his many *alias*) are put under the spotlight. Here, the protagonists are Propertius' beloved, the *puella* Cynthia, and the *matrona* Cornelia, both suspended as ghosts in a liminal space between life and death. I shall argue that Cynthia's and Cornelia's existence in the interstice between survival and biological expiration allows them to mould their social identities against the binary standards (low-class 'whore' vs. high-class 'matron') by which women had been 'fixed' and regulated under the regime, and more specifically, through Augustus' contemporary promulgation of his moral laws. If, on the one hand, Cynthia's ghost manages to conquer the *domus* of Propertius to become his legitimate *domina* displaying a quasi-matronal

attitude and moral code (from low-class *exclusa* from 'R/home' to high-class *domina* at 'R/home'), Cornelia suffers the very opposite destiny. Formerly a matron who has always made *domus* (both ancestral and marital) the space most forcefully validating her status and attached virtue, Cornelia is in fact excluded from *domus* and made to linger in Hell's limbo, awaiting the judgement over her life. This is a space in which she risks being downgraded to the opposite kind of woman (a woman much like Cynthia) to the one she always been (from high-class *domina* to low-class *exclusa* from 'R/home'). Sustained by Kristeva's theory on 'abjection', I shall argue that the two women's spatial transgression overlaps with a transgression of the proper imperial hierarchy between 'domestic' and 'non-domestic' women, which in turn poses a threat to the Augustan body politic. While, unlike in the previous Chapters, I am here not concerned with delving into Propertius' representation of his own liminality, I shall contend that the liminality of Cynthia and Cornelia, ambivalent *dominae/exclusae* like Propertius himself, betrays the importance of the connection between space and identity in the construction of the poet's political resistance to the Augustan regime.

Chapter 1. Between *exclusus* and *dominus* I: the *amator* and the politics of '*lhymen*ality' in the *Monobiblos* and beyond

1.1. Introduction

In what still remains the only exhaustive treatment on the poetic trope of the παρακλαυσίθυρον (or 'door song') among Latin authors, F. O. Copley has shown how there is no such thing as a standard παρακλαυσίθυρον, for every poet, both elegiac and not, has their own different strategy of representing this stock – yet not always dull – feature in their verses.[101] As he passes to analyse Propertius' rendition of the 'door song' in poem 1.16, the same critic catches the absolute novelty that the Umbrian elegist displays in his reworking of the trope: as Copley observes, "although the earlier Roman writers consistently assign to the door a position of prominence in the poem and with equal consistency attribute human feelings and personality to it, none of them[…]has made the *paraclausithyron* [*sic*] into a complete 'door song', as Propertius has done".[102] Although critics have emphasised the influence of Catullus' *carmen* 67 on Propertius' 'speaking door', the elegist in fact displays an unprecedented interest in rendering the door a commentator of the elegiac narrative in which her monologue is embedded.[103] Brought to life as an 'actress', as it were, of the elegiac stage, the *ianua* provides us in particular with an insight into the ambivalent character of the Propertian *amator*, the 'lover-poet' with whom the author Propertius identifies and whose 'door song' the door ventriloquises (1.16.17-44) amid her own lament (1.16.1-16, 45-8).

In virtue of the *ianua*'s pivotal role in defining the *amator*, I shall start this Chapter, whose scope is to provide the reader with an introduction to the identity of the 'lover-poet', by offering a close reading of the 'door song' poem. I shall

[101] Copley 1956. On παρακλαυσίθυρα in and outside the Latin elegiac genre, cf. also Leroy 1969.
[102] Copley 1956:116, who further contrasts (at 78, 107, 125) Tibullus' (Tib. 1.2; 1.5) and Ovid's (*Am*. 1.6; *Met.* 14.698-758) rather plain exercises on the trope with Propertius' brilliant use of παρακλαυσίθυρον.
[103] On Cat. 67 and its own sources, particularly the Greek tragic door revealing the secrets of the οἶκος (Aesch. *Ag.* 36ff.; Eur. *Hipp.* 415 ff.) and its Roman comic counterpart (Plaut. *Curc.* 147-54 Lanciotti), see ultimately Portuese 2013: esp.106-8.

demonstrate that the Propertian *amator* has a liminal identity, for his oscillation between the *periphery* and the *centre* of the elegiac *domus* (from one side of the door to the other) splits him between an *exclusus* from and a *dominus* at 'home', and that his liminal identity is 'produced' by his ambivalent encounter with the very personified *limen*, the *ianua.* I shall concentrate first on the liminal identity of the *ianua*, which is made to oscillate between that of 'penetrable' and of an 'impenetrable' female figure (particularly, according to whom is judging her: herself vs. the *amator*). By providing a more theoretically-oriented interpretation of the last couplets sung by the door, and specifically, of the verb *differor* (1.16.48: "I am deferred/made to differ") through the lens of Jacques Derrida's notion of *différance*, I shall argue that the *ianua*'s meaning is in fact forever 'deferred' and 'made to differ' before the Propertian readers' eyes. An ambiguous, undecidable 'Third Space' of the kind Ed Soja talks about in his spatial theory, the door can be interpreted, again with Derrida, as a '*hymen*', exposing and yet again protecting the house/*puella* behind it.[104] As a result of the *ianua*'s 'unfixed' identity, I shall argue that the *amator* figure also needs to be deconstructed as an oscillating, 'liminal' character, himself marked by *différance*.[105] To corroborate my understanding of the *amator* as 'liminal' or 'l*hymen*al', I shall go on to provide examples from the Propertian text (2.14-6) that bear witness to the poet-lover's *différance* as both *exclusus* and *dominus*, depending on the ultimately 'unfixed' meaning attributed to *ianua* (a mirror to the *puella*), as either the 'penetrable' space which welcomes him inside (*centre*) or 'impenetrable' space rejecting him outside (*periphery*).

In the second part of the Chapter, I shall expand my interpretation of 'l*hymen*al' *ianua* and *amator* further through the reading of a set of texts that deal with the Propertian *amator*'s identity as 'poet', on top of 'lover'. Using the *Monobiblos*' cycle of elegies addressed to Propertius' (erotic and) poetic rival Cornelius Gallus, I shall demonstrate that, even in these literary polemics aimed at establishing the superiority of a poet with respect to the other, the space of the

[104] The metonymic value of the word *limen* in Latin as paradoxically both (exterior and open) 'threshold' and (interior) 'household' reflects in many ways the 'l*hymen*al' quality of the domestic border (cf. *OLD* 1, 2c, with Pucci 1978:55).
[105] Fear 2005:13ff. has applied the label 'liminal' to the Propertian *amator* in a temporal sense, that is, to refer to the period of youthful aberration (the *tirocinium adulescentiae* preceding adult responsabilities) in which he develops his love affair (overlapping with Propertius' *Books* 1-3).

domestic threshold emerges as a 'l*hymen*', an ambivalent locus of poetic exclusion ('impenetrable') and inclusion ('penetrable'). Indeed, by developing a relationship between 'hosts' and 'guests' to each other that can be fruitfully interpreted through Derrida's concept of 'hos*ti*pitality', Propertius and Gallus invite each other inside their abodes (inside the *limen*: *domini*) to strengthen their poetic bond and are excluded outside the same domestic spaces (outside the *limen*: *exclusi*) to sanction the poetic superiority of one another, in an oscillating motion around the domestic threshold that replicates that of the 'lover' with respect to the *puella*. I shall argue that, once more split between the *periphery* and the *centre* of *domus*, the Propertian *amator* shows in the poetic sphere the same 'unfixity' (his *différance* as *exclusus*/*dominus*) as displayed in the erotic.

The Chapter rounds off with some general Conclusions. Here, I shall clarify how the eroto-poetic 'l*hymen*ality' of the Propertian *amator*, theorised and discussed throughout the present Chapter, offers an important paratextual introduction to the 'liminality' of Propertius qua 'citizen' of his day and age. On this aspect, namely the way that Propertius' sense of belonging to both Rome (*centre*) and the metropolis' *periphery* 'unfixes' him as an in-between subject ('Self' and 'Other', 'Roman' and 'non-Roman', marked by *différance*) and how this geographical 'liminality' affects his representation of space and politics across his *oeuvre*, the following Chapters of the thesis shall all concentrate.

1.2. *Sic ego nunc differor*: the *différance* of *ianua* and *amator* and the politics of 'l*hymen*ality' (Propertius 1.16; 2.14-16)

> *"[Hymen] is an operation that* both *sows confusion* between *opposites* and *stands* between *the opposites 'at once'. What counts here is the between, the in-between-ness of the hymen. The hymen 'takes place' in the 'inter-', in the spacing between desire and fulfilment, between perpetration and its recollection"*[106]

[106] Derrida 1981a:212 (original emphasis).

"[i]n signifying both membrane and marriage, [hymen] designates both the virginal intactness of the distinction between the inside and the outside and the erasing of that distinction through the commingling of self and other"[107]

The ventriloquising strategy of elegy 1.16, whereby the author Propertius is masked behind the words of the *ianua* qua the poem's speaking subject, implies a significant shift in the focalization of the elegiac perspective as hitherto provided through the *Monobiblos* (1.1-1.15).[108] The *amator*, with whom Propertius usually identifies, is in fact not the first-person speaker in the text; instead, he is looked at from the objective point of view of the *ianua*, who even reports *verbatim* his παρακλαυσίθυρον-song. H. Jones has rightly understood the elegy as 'ironic', for its presentation of the elegiac affair "through a half-serious, half-playful indulgence in parody and wit" and by "revitalising an erotic motif [*i.e.*, the παρακλαυσίθυρον] whose possibilities had been pretty well exhausted".[109] Yet, I think that it would be restrictive to view the poem as a simple *divertissement*. Through the establishment of the power relation between 'locked-out lover' and 'threshold', Propertius rather provides his readers with a self-conscious hermeneutic for construing the characters of both *ianua* and *amator*.[110] The poem's first part coincides with the door's song proper:

Quae fueram magnis olim patefacta triumphis,
ianua Tarpeiae nota Pudicitiae,
cuius inaurati celebrarunt limina currus,
captorum lacrimis umida supplicibus,
nunc ego, nocturnis potorum saucia rixis
pulsata indignis saepe queror manibus,
et mihi non desunt turpes pendere corollae
semper et exclusi signa iacere faces.
nec possum infamis dominae defendere uoces,
nobilis obscenis tradita carminibus;
nec tamen illa suae reuocatur parcere famae,

[107] Johnson 1981: xxvii-xxviii (from the *Translator's Introduction* to Derrida 1981a).
[108] Treatments of 1.16 include MacKay 1956, Terzaghi 1957, Yardley 1979, Jones 1992, Nappa 2007, Walde 2008.
[109] Jones 1992:308.
[110] *Contra* Nappa 2007:60-1, I argue that (albeit not referred to as Propertius) the *amator* of elegy 1.16 is an *alias* of the Propertian *amator* with whom the author's 'lyrical I' identifies in the remainder of the *Monobiblos* (and beyond).

turpior et saecli uiuere luxuria.
has inter grauius cogor deflere querelas,
supplicis a longis tristior excubiis.
ille meos numquam patitur requiescere postes,
arguta referens carmina blanditia:
(1.16.1-16)[111]

The door starts by lamenting the miserable capitulation of her function through time: in her glorious past (*olim*), she used to be opened (*patefacta*) in occasion of great military triumphs (*magnis…triumphis*), whereas now she has come to terms with being used by the practitioners of *militia amoris,* rather than orthodox cultivators of *amor militiae*. Yet, to begin with, the *ianua*'s mention of the "prude Tarpeia" as an exemplary observer of domestic chastity (*Tarpeiae nota Pudicitiae*) has puzzled the critics.[112] A woman to whose infamous love for an enemy of Rome and consequent betrayal of her chaste *domus* (*i.e.* the temple of the Vestals on the Capitolium) Propertius shall dedicate an entire elegy (4.4),[113] Tarpeia jeopardises the tenability of the *ianua*'s archaic good reputation, for her reference might in fact "mask a reality not so different from that of the present [*i.e.*, the elegiac]".[114] At the outset of the poem then, the door is already playing up with the readers' responses: not only is she mimicking the elegiac lover by stealing his voice, but she is also ambivalently representing herself, under a thin veil of chastity, as the threshold of a (potentially) defamed house in both monarchic and contemporary times.

Yet, in addition to blurring the notions of 'moral' and 'immoral'/ 'epic' and 'elegiac'/ 'Roman' and 'un-Roman' through the ambiguous mention of Tarpeia, I argue that the door then goes on to maintain an undecidable identity throughout the poem, particularly in respect to her sexualised body's penetrability. For example, when she admits to having been all "wet" (*umida*) because of the "suppliant tears of the captives" (*captorum lacrimis…supplicibus*) in the past, she

[111] I print Rothstein's and Enk's *Tarpeiae* (v.2; vs. Fedeli's *patriciae*); Heyworth's *uoces* (v.9; vs. Fedeli's *noctes*); Butler's *has* (v.13; vs. Fedeli's *haec*) and accept Goold's transposition of vv.25-6 *post* 36.
[112] To the point some (e.g. Shackleton Bailey, Heyworth and Fedeli himself) have expunged Tarpeia from the text altogether.
[113] Cf. esp. 4.4.35-6 on Tarpeia's spatial infraction (and compare Livy 1.11.5-9).
[114] Nappa 2007:63, who concludes that "we are in no position to choose between these options, and the possibility has been raised that an elegiac rereading is available for this portrait of antique Roman virtue". On Tarpeia's ambivalent figure, see most recently Welch 2015.

exposes herself to a raunchy sexual pun indicating her passivity in the sexual intercourse.[115] This potential pun anticipates her present condition as both "wounded" or even "pierced, cut or torn as by a wound" in the follow-up line (*saucia*, respectively *OLD* 2, 3)[116] and "beaten" (*pulsata*, esp. *OLD* 5 on the idea of a physical attack) by the "unworthy hands" (*indignis…manibus*) of locked-out drunkards, which leave her with nothing but unfading elegiac mourning (*saepe queror*).[117] As the semantics of these words reveal, the door paradoxically exposes herself to comparison with the elegiac mistress in her most docile (to be sure, her rarest) manifestations, as a female body that can fall victim to the violence of her offenders (even though, to a certain extent, she is also 'masculinising' herself by stealing the elegiac *amator*'s voice).[118] The attachment of "shameful garlands" (*turpes…corollae*) on the *ianua*'s 'body', as referred to by the door herself in the following lines, is also particularly telling, for it is a replica of a previous (pseudo)παρακλαυσίθυρον, where the Propertian *amator* had similarly 'attached' his own "garlands", along with other *munera* (apples), onto Cynthia's sleeping body:[119]

et modo soluebam nostra de fronte ***corollas***
ponebamque tuis, Cynthia, temporibus;
et modo gaudebam lapsos formare capillos;
nunc furtiua cauis poma dabam manibus:
omnia quae ingrato largibar munera somno,
munera de prono saepe uoluta sinu;
(1.3.21-6)

[115] See Oliensis 1997:170n27 (drawing from Adams 1982:90-1) on secretion (of *lacrimae* too) as a sexual pun on ejaculation.
[116] Significantly, the adjective is a marker of (unmanning) elegiac suffering in Propertius, who applies it at the outset of his first book to the lover Milanion, smitten with a blow from Hylaeus' club (*Hylaei percussus uulnere rami/**saucius***, 1.1.13-4); compare also 1.21.2.
[117] Note the effective sandwiching of the desperate lament between the hands of the offenders (*INDIGNIS saepe queror MANIBVS*).
[118] On physical violence in elegy, cf. Fredrick 1997.
[119] I speak of quasi-παρακλαυσίθυρον because the scene at 1.3 is set indoors (rather than on the actual threshold) and yet the *amator* treats the sleeping body of Cynthia as an *ianua* onto which presents are attached. Indeed, Cairns 2011:44 sees 1.3 (and, similarly, 2.29a+b) as "the *komos* of the *admissus amator*", a variant of the παρακλαυσίθυρον (performed inside the bedroom of Cynthia, whose sleeping body works, like the *ianua*, as a hurdle to his erotic success). The poem's last word, after all, notably marks the *amator*'s rejection (*excludor*, v.46).

The similarities between the treatment of Cynthia and *ianua* by the (Propertian) *amatores* in both poems 1.3 and 1.16 do not only strengthen the association between female body (of the mistress) and door,[120] but also the male lover's desire to dominate both. Indeed, in contrast to previous 'romanticising' readings of elegy 1.3, E. Greene in particular has argued that the *amator*'s gestures of arranging garlands on Cynthia's head (as well as re-arranging her hair and trying to place the apples into her hands) "reinforce a portrayal of Cynthia as a mannequinlike figure", arranged by the speaker "as an artist might arrange a still life" or "a pictorial object…linked to the sexual arousal of the male lover".[121] So too, whilst reminding us that the lover is a locked-out (*exclusi*)[122] and that there are even "lamps" (left on the threshold) that can testify his condition (*signa iacere faces*), the *ianua* at 1.16 reveals that the *amator*'s exclusion allows him to perpetrate acts of objectification or even violence against herself, as if the *ianua* were indeed a more malleable version of the indoor *dura puella* excluding the lover outside her gate.

It is no surprise, then, that the "once noble" (*nobilis*) door goes on to admit her present failure at "patrolling" like a military guard (*non possum…defendere*) the voices circulating about her scandalous mistress (*infamis dominae…uoces*).[123] Indeed, she is once again objectified into a writing support (for the "unworthy hands" of the locked out lovers, we have to assume) on which defamatory poems are inscribed (*obscenis tradita carminibus*) against herself and her lascivious *domina* (cf. 10-11).[124] In the conclusive remarks of her initial lament (before she passes on to report the *amator*'s own *querela*), the door further maintains her posture as a victimised women: whilst the *ianua* in fact describes the *exclusus* as a "suppliant" (*supplicis*), she concomitantly depicts his *mora* on the threshold as the obstinate (and hence – at least according to an essentialist gendered view – virile) vigil of a "(military) guard" (*a longis…excubiis*). The *amator*'s vigil makes her "sadder" (*tristior*) and forces her to burst into heavy (elegiac) crying (*grauius*

[120] Cairns 2011:45: "Propertius treats the sleeping Cynthia as such komasts treat the door".
[121] See Greene 1998:51-9 (quotes at 58). Note that the *ianua*-Cynthia is also voicing an elegiac *querela* (cf. 1.3.43, quoted *infra*).
[122] Here I accept Lipsius' emendation of *exclusis* into the genitive singular.
[123] See *defendo*, *OLD* 1 on the verb's military hue; cf. Hodge & Battimore 1977:178.
[124] *Trado, OLD* 1 ("to hand over"), renders well the helpless de-humanization of the door.

cogor deflere) amid (her own?)[125] laments (*has inter querelas*), all elements pointing to her feminisation as an elegiac character. Finally, in the last couplets of the *ianua*'s song proper, one last sexual innuendo can be grasped: indeed, when she states that the *amator* never allows her posts to rest (*ille meos numquam patitur requiescere postes*), the door may well be making a sexual pun denoting her passivity in the sexual intercourse with the locked-out lover, for *postes*, as J. N. Adams reminds us, can also be used as a metaphor for female genitalia.[126]

As we have been appreciating, then, a close reading of the elegy's first part, coinciding with a description of the *ianua* as per the *ianua*'s own viewpoint, can therefore shed light on the ambiguous self-representation of the door. Only *prima facie* a hurdle to the elegiac *amator*'s sexual gratification, the *ianua* recursively characterizes herself as a victimised woman who criticises the *amator*'s domineering attitude towards her and thus capitalises on the lover's potential to turn the tables of his condition as *exclusus*. By doing so, she manifests not only her own but also the *amator*'s (gendered and) power instability: whilst remaining 'excluded', he is in fact also appointed as a *dominus* '*in potentia*'. Yet, in the elegy's second part, where the *ianua* reports *verbatim* the *amator*'s viewpoint on herself, a very different perspective on the *limen* is provided:

'ianua uel domina penitus crudelior ipsa,
quid mihi tam duris clausa taces foribus?
cur numquam reserata meos admittis amores,
nescia furtiuas reddere mota preces?
nullane finis erit nostro concessa dolori,
turpis et in tepido limine somnus erit?
me mediae noctes, me sidera plena iacentem,
frigidaque Eoo me dolet aura gelu.
o utinam traiecta caua mea uocula rima
percussas dominae uertat in auriculas!
sit licet et saxo patientior illa Sicano,
sit licet et ferro durior et chalybe,

[125] These laments might as well be the *ianua*'s own (cf. *queror*, v.6), for there is no secure linguistic indication that they have to be taken as the *amator*'s. Hodge & Buttimore 1977:177 rightly note that, by crying, the *ianua* is mirroring the aforementioned *capti*.

[126] Adams 1982:89. I should further point out on this line that, whilst *patior* is here constructed with infinite + accusative (*OLD* 7 "to allow, permit"), before we realize this, *ille…numquam patitur* means "he is never subjected" (*OLD* 1; cf. *OLD* 2c "(of a female) to submit to or experience sexual intercourse with"), namely, "he never plays the passive role in bed, he is never 'the woman' (as per the Roman sexual model of active/passive roles, on which see Edwards 1993:70ff., with bibliography).

non tamen illa suos poterit compescere ocellos,
surget et inuitis spiritus in lacrimis.
nunc iacet alterius felici nixa lacerto,
at mea nocturno uerba cadunt Zephyro.
sed tu sola mei, tu maxima causa doloris,
uicta meis numquam, ianua, muneribus,
tu sola humanos numquam miserata dolores
respondes tacitis mutua cardinibus.
te non ulla meae laesit petulantia linguae;
quae solet irato dicere tanta ioco,
ut me tam longa raucum patiare querela
sollicitas triuio peruigilare moras?
at tibi saepe nouo deduxi carmina uersu,
osculaque innixus pressa dedi gradibus.
ante tuos quotiens uerti me, perfida, postes,
debitaque occultis uota tuli manibus!'
(1.16.17-44)

The *amator*'s song as ventriloquised by the *ianua* opens with one more explicit comparison between door and *puella*. Nevertheless, whilst up to this point the *ianua* has equated herself to the victimised body of a penetrable mistress, according to the *amator* she is instead "even harsher" than an elegiac *puella* (*domina penitus crudelior ipsa*), for she remains "locked" (*clausa*) thanks to her "harsh timbers", and "silent" throughout (*taces*; cf. *tacitis…cardinibus*). The equation between recalcitrant *ianua* and *puella* is not lost through the following lines, when the *amator* complains about his failed attempts at winning the door over. As B. Hodge and R. A. Battimore note, the employment of the participle *mota* ("moved") is for example ambiguous, for it does not only translate the physical "movement" of the door, through which she would let the *amator* be admitted on the other side (*meos admittis amores*), but also the successful persuasion ("moved, convinced") of an elegiac mistress listening to the lover's pleas.[127] This idea is further expanded when the *amator* laments that the door can never be won over by his gifts (*uicta meis numquam, ianua, muneribus*): here too, the employment of the military *uicta* modified by *numquam* subverts the semantics of violent sexual penetration deployed by the *ianua* in her own song.[128] As it becomes apparent, the door is now represented as an undefeatable enemy.

[127] Hodge & Battimore 1977:179.
[128] Cf. *supra* esp. on *pulsata*/*nec possum defendere.*

The sexual penetration of the *ianua/puella* is in fact not represented as a condition already suffered by the door (as in the door's own lament) but as the unaccomplished desire of the locked out lover: indeed, the *amator* can only wish (*o utinam*) he could make his "little voice" (*mea uocula*, the diminutive of *uox* being in itself a self-admission of disempowerment) "penetrate through an opening" (*traiecta caua…rima*), "strike" and "enter" through the little ears of the mistress (*percussas uertat in auriculas*), as in what would be a bold eroto-military act of violence.[129] Ultimately, verses 37-44 strengthen the association between *ianua* and intractable *puella*: the locked-out lover confesses having composed poems for the door in a modern fashion (*nouo deduxi carmina uersu*; poems that, contrary to the *ianua*'s belief, certainly do not contain stains of *diffamatio*: v.37), kissed her by pressing his lips against her steps (*osculaque impressis nixa dedi gradibus*) and gifted her with due presents (*debitaque…uota tuli*) but to have ultimately been rejected by the perfidious *ianua* (*ante tuos quotiens uerti me, perfida, postis*). The door is in fact as adamantine as the *puella* inside: the *amator* aptly describes the latter as "more impassive than Sicilian rock" (v.29) and "harder than iron and steel" (v.30), forcing him to spend his nights prostrated on the heated threshold (*in tepido limine*),[130] in the harshest of climates (vv.21-4, 34).

Yet, in the same way as in the previous self-representation of the door (vv.1-16), where the *amator*'s exclusion concomitantly exposed the *ianua* to sexual assaults pointing to her physical penetration, the door is once more made to oscillate between two positions, as an 'open' and a 'closed' threshold at once, within the *amator*'s song itself. Indeed, although, as we have seen, the general representation of door and mistress as per the *amator*'s viewpoint is that of two mirroring impenetrable bodies, not even here are *ianua* and *puella* made to fully cohere as unambiguous characters. For example, the possibility that the door may be penetrated still stands, as the *amator* acknowledges the presence of a luckier rival on the other side of the threshold (*nunc iacet alterius felici nixa lacerto*), and thus, the fact that the *ianua* could (physically) open to his phallic desire of

[129] Cf. Nappa 2007:67-8, drawing from Adams 1982:95, 145-150, on *rima*, *traicio* and *percutio* as sexually charged.
[130] I accept Richardson (1977 *ad loc.*)'s interpretation of *tepido* as "warmed by his vigil" (fittingly in contrast with the unpleasant weather).

breaching and entering.[131] In addition to this, the stone-hearted *puella* is sometimes capable of emotional breakdowns (vv.31-2, as we understand, if the *exclusus*' song manages to reach her ears) that may lead her to open the door. All in all, then, in spite of all the efforts to "uncover" (*patefacta*, v.1)[132] herself to the readers, the door, a transgender elegiac lover (singing and reporting *verbatim* the 'serenade' of one such male but feminised lover) and an elegiac mistress (herself masculinised as *dura* or feminised as a penetrable sexual body) at once, remains a tantalisingly ambiguous character throughout the poem, transformed by the oppositional but irreconcilable views that she withholds about herself: her own (themselves ambiguous) *versus* the *amator*'s (similarly discordant in themselves).

It may be useful, at this point, to turn to the elegy's final lines, in which the door regains control of her own voice after impersonating the locked-out lover:

haec ille et si quae miseri nouistis amantes,
et matutinis obstrepit alitibus.
***sic ego nunc** dominae uitiis et semper amantis*
*fletibus alterna **differor** inuidia.*
(1.16.45-8)

The *ianua* refuses to go on reciting more verses from the *amator*'s song, for the readers, being themselves "miserable lovers" (*miseri amantes*), already know its standard features all too well (*nouistis*). Her last words instead concentrate on her own condition as a defamed object. As she maintains, the *ianua* is currently slandered by alternating malice (*alterna inuidia*), because of both the mistress's vices (*dominae uitiis*) and the never-ending tears of the excluded lover (*et semper amantis/fletibus*). The highly polysemic value of the last verb pronounced by the door, *differor*, has been rightly underscored: whilst the most obvious translation in the last couplets' context is "to be defamed" (*OLD* 3b), J. Nappa has in fact noted how the door could additionally be thinking of herself as "being pulled in

[131] Nappa 2007:67: "The door represents itself as resistant to immorality but then has the poet-lover reinterpret that severity as collusion with the elegiac *puella*".
[132] Cf. *patefacio, OLD* 1.

two directions", that is, "torn apart by the lover's complaints on the one side and the mistress's vices on the other".[133] Such a translation renders well the duplicitous power of both exclusion (of the lover lingering outside) and inclusion (of his luckier peer, for this other *amator*'s scandalous presence is what causes the mistress to be stained by *uitia*) attributed to the door. Yet, to push the final verb of the composition a little further, it might also be useful to remind that *differo*'s translations also include "to differ" (*OLD* 5) and "to defer" (*OLD* 4). As I propose, according to these other translations, the *ianua* could be signalling her self-awareness about her own polysemy, the "difference" and "deferral" of her meaning. In other terms, the door could be alluding to her own consciousness that, despite being the active speaker of the poem, she is rhetorically governed (note the passive tense of *differ**or***) by the author Propertius, who marks her with semantic "difference" and "deferral" (as we have extensively argued, through the poem's very confused perspective on *ianua* itself).[134]

My interpretation of *differor* as the *ianua*'s self-acknowledgement of her own semantic ambiguity is driven by the verb's development into the French *différer*, a verb that keeps the double Latin value of "differing" and "deferring". J. Derrida famously draws from *différer* to coin his own term *différance*, through the lens of which, as I suggest, it is possible to look at the door's semantic ambiguity (the powerful "difference" and "deferral" of her meaning) in a more theoretically-informed perspective. One of the key-words of the French philosopher's deconstructive vocabulary (and certainly, a "mind-boggling" one),[135] *différance* is "neither a word nor a concept…[nor] a name", as Derrida himself maintains.[136] Forged as a '*portmanteau*' term embedding in itself the double meaning of *différer*, *différance* is, to begin with, Derrida's own re-interpretation of

[133] Nappa 2007:71-2 (following DeBrohun 2003:127), who also notes (72n47) how *differor* primarily brings about the idea of "being carried away" (*OLD* 1): this other translation implies the penetration of the door ("carried away" via persuasion) and thus the deconstruction of her supposed moral superiority.
[134] Albeit the poem's speaker, the door is ultimately Propertius' *scripta puella* (to borrow from Wyke 1987b), a (sexed-up) poetic *materia* that he creates and masters (like the drunkards in the text, the author also "manipulates" her, just "with worthier hands").
[135] Royle 2003:71-2. For a definition, cf. Wortham 2010:38-9; for some discussion on this pervasive term in Derrida's work, see e.g. Royle 2003:71ff.; Wolfreys 2007:44-78; the essay collection by Wood & Bernasconi 1988; Wood 2009 *passim*.
[136] Derrida 1968:7, 26.

structuralist linguist F. de Saussure's concept of 'differentiality'.[137] As is well-known, according to Saussure, language is a system of 'signs', in which the 'sign' is intended as the combination of both 'signifier' (the part of the sign we can hear and see, created arbitrarily as a chain of sounds/letters) and 'signified' (the concept to which the chain refers).[138] As Saussure further theorises, *difference* is what allows particular 'signifiers' and 'signified' to emerge from the indistinct mass of acoustic material or of thought within a chain, so that ultimately meaning can be pinned down in a network of signifiers.[139] Unlike Saussure, Derrida instead argues that "reading is not as a simple passage from sign to signified"[140] and his own creation of the term *différance* serves to elucidate precisely on how "interpretations of meaning and the positions adopted in reliance on meaning are contingent and unstable".[141] As a result, for Derrida, a text is "an essentially vitiated, impure, open, haunted thing",[142] for "[a]ny single meaning of a concept or text arises only by the effacement of other possible meanings, which are themselves only deferred, left over, for their possible activation in other contexts".[143] Because of this, the practice of reading itself should not be motivated

[137] Saussure 1995. For the purpose of my argument, I am not concerned with the implications of *différance* within Derrida's larger critique of a metaphysics of presence (commencing with *De la grammatologie* [Derrida 1967=1998] onwards), but rather, with its textual/linguistic ones. Yet, the two discourses are related (the very basic analogy being that, as much as a text [marked by *différance*] is never capable of fixing meanings so too reality has no 'present' universal truths).
[138] I paraphrase (here and in the next sentence) Wood 2009:23-4.
[139] 'Differentiality' is therefore the means through which a word receives a meaning by establishing a relationship of difference between itself and other words (e.g. that something is 'red' is only possible to define unless by referring to everything that is not 'red' [example borrowed from Matthews 2000:111n20]).
[140] Wood 2009:24.
[141] Matthews 2000:110. Because *différance* makes all systems of thought be marked by a play of differences, a trace, Derrida's spelling of the term, with the letter "a" instead of the "e" of the actual French word *différence* (meaning both "difference" and "deferral"), is a double pun on its very ambiguity. Not only does the coined word itself perform its own meaning of "difference" and "deferral" by *differentiating* itself from the orthodox French word *différence* (with "e") and by *deferring* its meaning (for, like *différence*, spelt with an "e", it maintains its polysemic value as "difference" and "deferral"), but it also draws attention to the imperceptible difference between phoneme (audible mark) and grapheme (written, visible mark). In fact, in French to say *différence* or *différance* makes no difference (since the "e" of *différence* is pronounced as a nasal "a"). Via the pun, Derrida wants to deconstruct the Saussurian argument on the pre-eminence of the spoken word over the written ('phocentrism'), by showing that the sign, *whether inscribed or spoken*, is 'always already inhabited by the trace of another sign' (Spivak 1998: xxxix, quoted at Wolfreys 2007:66-7).
[142] Royle 2003:78.
[143] Derrida repr.1986:125.

by an attempt (on the reader's part) "to capture a text's true meaning" but rather to "explore the positions and the supplements the text does not privilege".[144]

Whereas it is beyond my objective to argue, after Derrida, that *any* texts' meaning is deferred, I borrow strategically the philosopher's *différance* as a theoretical tool to push a deconstructive reading of the text under my scrutiny in particular. As we have seen, the elegy presents itself as an 'undecidable' fight between two (textualised) songs, respectively the *ianua*'s and the *amator*'s (as reported by the *ianua*), yielding contrasting views on the former.[145] Indeed, the door is inserted in Propertius' text as an undecidable 'third', that defies, through her own *différance* (*sic ego nunc differor*), univocal understanding. To defer a little longer our engagement with Derrida, we might as well interpret the door with one of those 'undecidable' terms that are marked by *différance* (like '*pharmakon*', 'supplement', 'gift', to name the most emblematic) and which punctuate Derrida's life-long deconstructive work: the 'hymen'.[146] The 'un-decidability' of 'hymen' emerges at its best in the context of ancient Greek marriage (where the word originates as a synonym of 'marriage' itself), in which the practice of exposing the bride's blood-stained clothes testified *at the same time* for the 'hymen''s double function as both the membrane securing the girls' virginity and the penetrable, and indeed *already penetrated*, membrane, an easily decomposed threshold between outside and inside, consummation and virginity, openness and closure.[147] Paradoxically, 'hymen' in fact starts to exist, within the ancient Greek ceremony, at the same time as it ceases to exist as such, and it is through its paradoxical 'discovery' and 'death' (as protective membrane) that the Greek marriage used to gain its socio-legal validation.[148]

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[144] Matthews 2000:112, who further notes (*ibidem*) that, whilst *différance* jeopardises *any stable* and *univocal* meanings and truths, it does not imply that there are no meanings we can use to function and communicate in our society: indeed, "*[d]ifférance* precludes climaxes of ultimate shared meaning but accepts the viability of provisional temporary truths that allow thought and action to operate".

[145] At another level, the *amator*'s song is already an 'iteration' of his words ('deferred' and 'made to differ') by the *ianua*.

[146] See Derrida 1981a:221 on the equation between all these terms on the grounds of their being inhabited by *différance*.

[147] Cf. Wetson 1999:299, 312. Compare Derrida 1981b:43: "the hymen is neither confusion nor distinction, neither identity nor difference, neither consummation nor virginity, neither the veil nor unveiling, neither the inside nor the outside".

[148] Cf. Wetson *ibidem*.

The anatomical function of 'hymen' is fully registered by Derrida, when he refers to it as the "protective screen, the jewel box of virginity, the vaginal partition, the fine, invisible veil which, in front of the *hystera* [= 'womb'], stands between the inside and the outside of a woman, and consequently between desire and fulfilment", something that is "neither desire nor pleasure, but between the two".[149] Yet, as it has been recently stressed, the philosopher takes a wider interest in the element: indeed, "Derrida uses the figure of the 'hymen' to demonstrate that […] the border between inside and outside is impossible to maintain[, for 'hymen'] disrupts the [very] logic of inside/outside".[150] In other words, 'hymen' is for Derrida what defies binary logic, for it determines the possibility of both dividing and merging the outside and the inside.[151] On the grounds of the close reading of elegy 1.16 developed above, I argue that the 'in-betweenness' (and *différance*) of 'hymen' as well as its function as a (porous) protection of the inside (an inside that is already outside) makes it a fit metaphor with which to observe the *ianua*, placed as the ambiguous membrane to the '*hystera*' that *domus* and *puella* represent for the *amator*.[152] Indeed, the same 'labial politics'[153] of the Derridean 'hymen' govern the logic of the Propertian *ianua*, a 'third space' of *différance* which serves as both the conjunction between inside and outside (via her own penetrability) and, at the same time, the means of separation between the outer/public and the inner/domestic spaces possible (via her own impenetrability).

To a certain extent, the 'hymen'-like nature of the Propertian *ianua* is resonant with its ambivalent function as both protecting barrier and welcoming gate to the non-fictional Roman *domus.* Indeed, although at Rome the threshold was the locus of a set of religious and folkloric apotropaic practices aimed at securing the

[149] Derrida 1981a:212-3 (original emphasis).
[150] Vaughan-Williams 2009:150. The context in which the term surfaces and is played out is a rather obscure discussion on the Platonic concept of μίμησις (in '*The Double Session*', contained in *Dissemination* [=Derrida 1981a]). Through an analysis of Mallarmé's *Mimique*, Derrida critics the 'logocentric' Platonic tradition of viewing the literary text as a copy of the truth and deploys 'hymen' (a word appearing in Mallarmé's work) as a metaphor for the 'un-decidability' of reference and representation in literary texts.
[151] Cf. Johnson 1981's quote, reported as an epigraph *supra*.
[152] Note that the Propertian *amator* is obsessed with the *puella*'s *sinus* (among other things: 'womb'): see *infra* on poem 1.5.
[153] I borrow and re-contextualise feminist theorist Luce Irigaray's famous term here (Irigaray 1985).

indoor space's invulnerability,[154] to which the worship of Janus, Penates and Lares in Roman households also contributed,[155] the Roman household was not only an enclosed, detached space from the outdoor and public. The Roman *domus* (unlike the Greek οἶκοι) in fact provided the setting for important social gatherings of the Roman *élite* citizens (the morning *salutatio* between *patroni* and *clientes* as well as the dinners between *amici* being prominent aspects of this), so that the distinction between outdoor/public and indoor/private was porous.[156] Because of this, its door therefore needed to separate and mingle, to protect and allow passage, just like a 'hymen' materialising the distinction as well as the erasure between outside and inside. Yet, within the fictive elegiac world depicted by Propertius, the identification of *ianua* with 'l*hymen*' is important for another reason: it provides us with a key to understand the 'oscillatory' or, as we may call it, 'l*hymen*al' identity that the Propertian *amator* performs in the texts through its constant dislocation between the *periphery* and the *centre* of the mistress's *domus*. If the meaning of the door is in fact made to 'differ' within the text (for the door changes identity according to whom is depicting her – either herself or the *amator* – as well as within each antagonising song) and, at the same time, also 'to defer' (for we readers are left without a clear-cut definition of what this *limen* signifies), so too is the meaning of the other characters in the text, *amator* and *puella*.[157] Indeed, the *ianua*'s *différance* as 'hymen' also 'defers' any clear-cut understanding of the *amator*-figure in particular, who is a 'different' character according to the *ianua*'s will or not to 'defer' his sexual gratification.[158] The peculiar language of penetration and impenetrability used for the door does not only create an ambiguous, indeed 'liminal', characterisation of the door but also

[154] Cf. Ogle 1911; Bartsch 2006:139-43 presents a set of threshold mosaics from Roman *domus* displaying a variety of prophylactic imageries including *phalli*, another pointer to the *ianua*'s sexualisation.
[155] Scullard 1981:17. On Janus, see Martin 1985:263; Hardie 1991 (on Ov. *Fast.* 1.63-288).
[156] Wallace-Hadrill 1988; expanded in 1994. On *domus* as a display of social power and respectability before the guests' eyes, cf. esp. Cic. *Off.* 1.138-9; Fredrick 1995; 2002:253-8.
[157] As I have emphasised, the *puella* is also marked by *différance* (she is either too lascivious, according to the door concerned with her own *infamia* generated by the mistress's sexual prowess, or a 'stonewalling', cruel *domina*, according to the *amator*). On (specifically) Cynthia's liminal identity, see Chapter 5.
[158] The *ianua*, as we have seen, ultimately assumes that we know our stuff about the *amator* (*nouistis*, v.45) but what she achieves is precisely to confuse us with an ambivalent representation of the character, for she is ambivalent herself (Connolly 2000:77 argues the door is "a symbol of and a barrier against the pleasure of fictive speaker and reader", yet sometimes she is an accomplice in the dynamic: see *infra*).

of the *amator*, for it is suggested that he is either an aggressive penetrator of this *limen* (and ultimately a *dominus* in respect to it) or a debased 'locked out' lover (*exclusus*), failing to satisfy his phallic drive.[159] Not solely a feminised 'excluded' casting *infamia* on himself and attracting the harsh commentaries of more orthodox *élite* Romans,[160] the *amator* rather liminally moves between *this* and the contrary posture, that of a masculine, penetrating, quasi-epic conquering *dominus*, at the *centre* and not only at the *periphery* of the household.[161] To illuminate further the *différance* of the *amator* as an *exclusus 'in potentia'*, it may be useful to draw attention to a set of poems in which the transgression of the door's *limen* has been carried out, yet only apparently with success:

Non ita Dardanio gauisus Atrida triumpho est,
cum caderent magnae Laomedontis opes;
nec sic errore exacto laetatus Vlixes,
cum tetigit carae litora Dulichiae;
(…)
pulsabant alii frustra dominamque uocabant:
mecum habuit positum lenta puella caput.
haec mihi deuictis potior uictoria Parthis,
haec spolia, haec reges, haec mihi currus erunt.
(2.14.1-4; 21-4)

Poem 2.14, for instance, shows a rare event yet one worth noting: whilst many other rivals knocked at the mistress's door and called the *puella* in vain (v.21), the Propertian *amator* explains how last night (*nocte*) he managed to cross the mistress's threshold and rejoice in bed at her side (v.22). As he reveals to his readership of pupils, his disdain (*contemnite, amantes!* v.19) has proven a successful strategy to be admitted into Cynthia's bedroom. Exclusion, as he

[159] I disagree with Copley 1956:116, for whom the *amator* remains a "shadowy non-entity" in the poem.
[160] Cf. Prop. 2.24.7; 2.30b.1-3. On *mollitia* as a counter-value to the *mos maiorum*, see the classic discussion by Edwards 1993:63-97.
[161] Whilst not looked at in terms of (spatial) 'liminality', the gendered ambiguity of the Propertian *amator* has been addressed by those scholars who concentrated on the *puella*'s erotic domination of the *amator* (*domina*) viz. her poetic subjugation to the *amator*'s rhetorical control (her poetic *dominus*, as it were): see esp. by Wyke 1987a, repr.2002 (*contra* the seminal Hallet 1973); Sharrock 1991; Gold 1993; Greene 1998; James 2003.

contends, is just a phase: the girl who denied herself yesterday shall be willing to meet today (*sic hodie ueniet, si qua negauit heri*, v.20). The successful breaching of the *limen* (via *pulsare* and *uocare*, the former verb implying sexual violence against the door)[162] is deemed more important than a victory over the Parthians (v.23), for these shall be the *amator*'s spoils, his kings, and his chariot (v.24), as the lover exhults. The epic imagery of these lines re-echoes the poem's opening verses, where the *amator* compares his erotic conquest to the two arguably most emblematic epic τέλη of Greek mythology: Agamemnon defeating the Trojans (vv.1-2) and Odysseus returning to Ithaca after much wandering (vv.3-4).[163] And yet, whilst at the apex of his enthusiasm the *amator* swears he shall become immortal if he is granted one more night like the last one (*immortalis ero, si altera talis erit*, v.10), he rounds off his composition with references to a prospective difficulty or even impossibility to re-cross the *limen*. The success of the voyage that took him, in the manner of Odysseus, to the 'shores' of his own elegiac Ithaca, namely the *puella*'s household (*cum tetigit carae litorae Dulichiae*, v.4), is now in the hands of the mistress herself, who shall either allow him a safe return home (*ad litora nauis/seruata*, vv.29-30) or run his ship aground, burdened, in the shallows (*an mediis sidat onusta uadis*, v.30). The last couplet is even darker in projecting a return on the other side of the threshold: the *amator* in fact declares his readiness to die on the threshold (***uestibulum*** *iaceam mortuus* ***ante tuum***, v.32), in case Cynthia should notice any wrongdoings on his part (*quod si forte aliqua nobis* ***mutabere*** *culpa*, v.31). Considering his previous statement about the quintessential fickleness of lovers (*...quam facile irati uerbo* ***mutantur*** *amantes*, 2.5.11-3), the *amator* here betrays his consciousness of the difficulties of being permanently admitted, and thus, of his impending re-positioning outside, as an *exclusus* (to be hyperbolically maintained until his death).[164]

The following piece, elegy 2.15, showcases an even more accentuated deflation of enthusiasm for the heroic penetration into Cynthia's bedroom.[165] In this other poem, Propertius displays his dissatisfaction for war (with particular

[162] See *supra*.
[163] Fedeli 2005 *ad loc.* notes how the slow spondaic rhythm of v.3 mirrors Odysseus' interminable *error*.
[164] Fedeli *ad loc.* emphasises the gloomy sound *u* reiterated through the verse (an omen of death).
[165] For Fedeli 2005:414, 2.14-15 "sembrano collocati in voluta successione perché complementari".

reference to the recently-concluded Actian conflict, vv.41-8) and yet only after having transferred the language of *militia* into the realm of *amor*:

O me felicem! o nox mihi candida! et o tu
lectule deliciis facte beate meis!
quam multa apposita narramus uerba lucerna,
quantaque sublato lumine rixa fuit!
nam modo nudatis mecum est luctata papillis,
interdum tunica duxit operta moram.
illa meos somno lapsos patefecit ocellos
ore suo et dixit 'Sicine, lente, iaces?'
quam uario amplexu mutamus bracchia! quantum
oscula sunt labris nostra morata tuis!
(…)
ipse Paris nuda fertur periisse Lacaena,
cum Menelaeo surgeret e thalamo;
nudus et Endymion Phoebi cepisse sororem
dicitur et nudae concubuisse deae.
quod si pertendens animo uestita cubaris,
scissa ueste meas experiere manus:
quin etiam, si me ulterius prouexerit ira,
ostendes matri bracchia laesa tuae.
(2.15.1-10, 13-20)

Not only is his sexual encounter with the *puella* conveyed as a "great fight" (*quantaque rixa*) against her now recalcitrant (vv.5-6), now willing body (vv.7-10), but the *amator*'s penetration of the domestic *limen* culminates with a penetration, as it were, of Cynthia's body, onto which he imagines to perpetrate violence as in an outburst of wrath (vv.17-20), justified by illustrious mythological *exempla* of incontinent masculinity (vv.13-6).[166] Both epic aggression and renewed self-proclamation of quasi-immortality (*si dabit multas, fiam immortalis in illis*, vv.39-40) again align the *amator* with a successful *dominus* inside the *puella*'s household.[167] And yet, amid the galvanised account of his reception at Cynthia's, the *amator* acknowledges his impossibility to overcome his usual elegiac pains with a series of ἀδύνατα (cf. vv.31-6) that

[166] The same vulnerability to the lover(s') "hands" characterised the *ianua* (cf. *supra*), another pointer to the implicit association between *limen* and *puella*.
[167] Cf. Greene repr.2009, who concentrates on the epic identity of the *amator* at 2.8-9.

interrupt the positive flow of his verses. Furthermore, exactly like in the previous elegy, the final four verses cast a gloomy aura on the whole poem:[168]

ac ueluti folia arentis liquere corollas,
quae passim calathis strata natare uides,
sic nobis, qui nunc magnum spiramus amantes,
forsitan includet crastina fata dies.
(2.15.51-4)

The last image of the petals (*folia*) fallen from withered crowns (*arentis corollas*) and strewn upon wine cups (*calathis strata natare*) is deployed as a simile *(ac ueluti…sic nobis*) for the lovers' impending departure: whilst they are "breathing deep" in the present (*nunc*), they may well see their fate enclosed tomorrow (*crastina…dies*).[169] As the following piece in this sequence of poems confirms, the suspicions about the interruption of the *amator*'s indoor sexual gratification anticipated in 2.15's final lines are grounded. In spite of the lover's fantasies for an unbreakable chain with which to bind himself to the *puella* under *coniugium* (2.15.25-8), the spatial asymmetry of the elegiac couple is in fact taken back from 2.16's very first line, where we read about the arrival of a wealthy Illyrian *praetor* to Rome and at once to Cynthia's *domus*. Notably, the rival's intromission displaces the *amator* from indoor to outdoor, from *dominus* to *exclusus*: the *diues amator* has in fact usurped the Propertius *amator*'s *regna* (*barbarus excussis agitat uestigia lumbis/et subito felix nunc mea regna tenet*, vv.27-8), that is, Cynthia's bedroom.[170] His conquest of the indoor space, also signalled by a reference to his and Cynthia's feasting in the *tablinum* (*nunc sine me plena fiunt conuiuia mensa*, v.5),[171] results in the Propertian *amator*'s

[168] Gardner 2013:196-7 rightly notes the transition, within the elegy, from "the celebration of a single endless night" to "a sombre reflection on the night's inevitable conclusion".
[169] Here, the theme of life's caducity is reminiscent of both Cat. 5 and Hor. *C* 1.11.
[170] On the elegiac bedroom as *regna*, cf. e.g. 4.7.6; compare *reges* at 2.14.24, quoted *supra*.
[171] Note how the end of Propertius' and Cynthia's feasting in the *tablinum* was perhaps already anticipated by the petals and imagery at the end of 2.15 (a point of connection with the previous elegy).

repositioning outside, on the threshold: now, in fact, the door remains opened all night (*nunc…tota ianua nocte patet*, v.6), yet just not in his presence (*sine me*).[172]

All in all, then, the set of poems to which I have just drawn attention bear witness to the 'l*hymen*ality' of the *amator* as dependent upon the 'l*hymen*' that the *ianua* constitutes. The lover is marked, *like* and *because of* the 'threshold', by *différance* and can only appear in the text as an undecidable 'third' himself, a figure who spatially oscillates between two areas of opposed lingering (*morae*), at the *periphery* (homelessness) and the *centre* (homeliness) of the domestic space, with further implications for his gendered identity (non-penetrative, effeminate; penetrative, masculine). The dynamic is beautifully summed up in Propertius' own proverbial observation on the politics of elegiac love's "wheel", with which we can fittingly conclude this section:

omnia uertuntur: certe uertuntur amores:
uinceris a uictis, haec in amore rota est.
(2.8.7-8)

"Everything changes, and certainly do loves; those whom you have defeated shall defeat you in turn":[173] Propertius uses the *dictum* to acknowledge that the battle between exclusion and inclusion is never definitively won, for loves are ever changing (*uertuntur*). Yet, if we keep *uerto*'s primal spatial meaning alive, we note that Propertius argues more specifically that "loves are made to *revolve or move about a centre*".[174] Indeed, the centre of the elegiac *domus* is not permanently inhabited by the *amator*, for he revolves between it and the space outside threshold:[175] the *limen* (or 'l*hymen*') closes and opens both ways, turning the *amator* into an 'undecidable' *exclusus*/*dominus*, his 'l*hymen*al' space and identity being constantly re-negotiated.

[172] This, after all, is no surprise at corrupted Rome, where the greedy *puellae*'s permanence in the same (marital) household until their elderly years is an impossible wish (*una fieret cana puella domo*, v.22).
[173] On the proverbial quality of these lines, see Fedeli *ad loc*. Cf. also 2.9.1-2 for a similar awareness on the mutability of the *amator*'s condition.
[174] *Verto, OLD* 1.
[175] The context of elegy 2.8 is one of exclusion (*eripitur nobis iam pridem cara puella*, v.1).

1.3. *Mea ad limina curres*: Propertius' and Gallus' politics of 'hosti-pitality' (1.5; 1.10; 1.13; 1.20)

> "[*E*]*xclusion and inclusion are inseparable in the same moment*"[176]

> "*Hospitality in theory and practice relates to crossing boundaries ('Come in, come in') or thresholds (even* seuils de tolerance *sometimes), including those between self and other, private and public, inside and outside, individual and collective, personal and political, emotional and rational, generous and economic – these couples that overlap each other's territory without any one exactly mapping another*"[177]

Through the analysis on poem 1.16, I have shown how one fruitful avenue for investigating the identity of the Propertian *amator* is to look at its 'production' by the space that defines his eroto-poetic experience the most, the *ianua* or *limen*. As I have argued, the *différance* of the door is what determines the *différance* of the Propertian *amator*, who is represented as either an *exclusus* (by the door) or a *dominus* (of the door), according to the very *limen*, the element regulating the politics of the elegiac genre and defining the spatiality of the *amator* altogether.[178] The *ianua*, which, as we have observed, is represented as a sexualised 'prop' in the 'door-song' elegy, can in fact be imagined as a Derridean 'hymen', a border that serves to both protect, when shut, the integrity of the *puella* (standing indoors, on the other side of the threshold) and to testify, when breached, for the mistress's

[176] Derrida 2000:81.
[177] Still 2010:4.
[178] Copley 1956:78: "Propertius reaches the extreme point in the symbolic use of the *limen* when he makes the term (or one of its substitutes, such as *fores* and *ianua*) a synonym for *amor*, so that the *paraclausithyron* [*sic*] comes to represent the totality of love".

penetrability. Put differently, the door stands for both the physical materialisation of a denied desire, the 'producer' of the *amator*'s 'homeless condition' (when barred: *exclusus*) and, paradoxically, the means through which the same desire can be satisfied. Through an *iter* from the *periphery* to the *centre* of *domus*, 'home' can in fact turn for the lover-poet from 'absence' to 'presence' (when *ianua* opens: *dominus*).

In the remainder of this Chapter, I shall indulge a little longer on the *différance* of the 'hymen'-like *ianua*/*limen* (that is, its im-/penetrability) resulting in the *différance* of the Propertian *amator* (*exclusus/dominus*) in the *poetic* rather than the erotic sphere. That the transgression of *limen* signifies 'poetic production' on top of 'sexual intercourse' is made apparent by several indications of the co-habitation with the *puella* as an opportunity for poetic creation throughout the Propertian *oeuvre*.[179] The poet and mistress need to be indoors, on the same side of the threshold, for the former's lyric activity to be successfully carried out.[180] This emerges well in elegy 1.3 where the *puella,* enclosed within the four walls of her *domus*, is represented as an elegiac lyre-player waiting for the *amator* to join her in bed as much as, we can reasonably assume, in poetic composition (*nam modo purpureo fallebam stamine somnum/rursus* ***et Orpheae*** *carmine, fessa,* ***lyrae***, 1.3.41-2). Here, Cynthia's lyre-assisted elegiac song (*interdum leuiter mecum deserta* ***querebar***, 43)[181] matches the one she performs in order to detain the *amator* within the domestic walls, when he is invited on a military expedition by his fellow Tullus (*sed me complexae* ***remorantur uerba*** *puellae…his ego non horam possum durare* ***querelis***, 1.6.5, 11).[182] At 1.11, then, Cynthia's transgression of the domestic epicentre of love and poetry to linger with a rival

[179] Pucci 1978, to this extent, remains a thought-provoking study. In only two instances, Propertius envisages a co-habitation with Cynthia outside *domus*, yet in outdoor spaces recalling the 'domestic': 2.13.4, 7 (with *habito, OLD* 2, 3), 2.30.25-6 (with *teneo*, esp. *OLD* 7, 11).

[180] McNamee 1993:232: "[i]n Propertius when the beloved leaves, poetry will cease" (for "love in the *Monobiblos* is a metaphor for poetic composition", 235); cf. also Fear 2010. Thrice referred to as a *docta puella* (1.7.11; 2.11.6; 2.13a.11), Cynthia is after all not only the dedicatee of elegiac verses but also Propertius' first literary critic (*me iuuet in gremio doctae legisse puellae/auribus et puris scripta probasse mea*, 2.13a.11-2). Cf. Cynthia's Homeric criticism at 2.1.49-50; at 2.3a.21-2, she is even indicated as a poetess herself (on top of an excellent dancer and a lyre-player: vv.17-19).

[181] See Saylor 1967 for *queror* as the technical verb for elegiac composition.

[182] In a reversed situation (Cynthia threatening to leave *Roma/amor* for a trip to Illyria with a rival), the *amator* obtains the mistress' detainment in their smothering-small bed (***angusto lecto****…maluit*, 1.8b.33-4), itself a signifier of the the elegiac house's Callimachean interior design (cf. McNamee 1993:232-3), through the gift of his sweet verse (*sed potui blandi carminis obsequio*, v.40), another pointer to the poetic activity happening indoors.

on the corrupting beaches of Baiae ("like a girl lacking the custody of a watcher": *ut solet amota…custode puella*, v.15) stirs the *amator*'s jealousy, for the other man has stolen the *puella* from his own *carmina* (*an te nescio quis simulates ignibus hostis/**sustulit e nostris, Cynthia, carminibus***, 1.11.7-8) and can now engage in poetic activity with her *(…quam uacet alterius **blandos audire susurros/molliter** in tacito litore **compositam**/*, vv.13-4).[183] One more instance is ultimately the programmatic poem of Book 2, overlapping with a *recusatio* of the elegiac genre (vs. the epic) addressed to Maecenas. Here, Propertius foresees that he shall die since Cynthia has made a prey of his good sense (*una meos quoniam praedata est femina sensus*, v.55) and that his funeral shall be led forth "from this house" (***ex hac** ducentur funera nostra **domo***, 2.1.56). This reference to the domestic occurs some verses after the poet has described how the artistic qualities of the *docta puella* generate his elegiac verses (1.2.1-16) and, thus, it works to strengthen the connection between the co-habited *domus* and poetic creation.[184]

Be that as it may, although the *amator* fantasises about his felicitous co-habitation with Cynthia in the household (to the point he even equates her to his estate: *tu mihi sola domus*, 1.11.23), as we have seen, he is recursively excluded from the eroto-poetic connection with the *puella* indoors. I argue that, as a means of compensating for the absence of Cynthia from *domus*, Propertius creates a parallel domestic bonding (yet one also marked by exclusion, on top of inclusion) with his friend and rival (or 'frenemy') in love and poetry, the elder elegist Cornelius Gallus.[185] Across the elegies addressed to Gallus (1.5; 1.10; 1.13; 1.20), Propertius indeed represents his exchanges of poetry with Gallus as acts of 'hospitality': both poets invite each other and temporarily linger on the same side of the *limen* in order to share their respective poetic outputs. More specifically, in poem 1.5, Propertius invites Gallus into his house so as to ignite a process of

[183] In the twin poem 1.12, Cynthia is still away from the *amator*'s bed (*tam multa **illa meo diuisa est** milia **lecto***, v.3), similarly not only a locus of erotic acitivity (*nec mihi consuetos **amplexu** nutrit amores*, v.5) but also of poetic production (***Cynthia**, nec nostra dulcis in aure **sonat***, v.6).
[184] Here too returns the idea of the Callimachean "narrow bed" (v.45).
[185] On the interpretation of Gallus as Cornelius Gallus, Augustan *uir militaris* and elegiac poet (author of a collection titled *Amores*: Seru. *ad* Virg. *Ecl.* 10.1), cf. e.g. Ross 1975:82-4; King 1980:212-30; McNamee 1993:226 (for contrary positions, see the bibliography collected at Miller 2004:80n41 and 80-3 for a convincing point-to-point rejection of the arguments in defence of the non-identification). I do not take the speaking soldier of elegy 1.21, who refers to himself as Gallus (*Gallum*, v.7), as *Cornelius* Gallus: indeed, not only is poem 1.21 not concerned with metapoetics, but also, as Heyworth 2007a:99 notes, the soldier's name might have been simply assimilated to the Gallus of previous poems by a distracted copyist.

eroto-poetic bonding, whereas, in elegy 1.10, Propertius is allowed to spy on a sexual meeting between Gallus and his *puella* inside Gallus' domestic space, a meeting that needs to be read, as we shall see, as a metaphor for a poetic encounter between Propertius and Gallus' elegies (also recalled in poem 1.13). Yet, this dynamic of friendly 'hospitality' turns into an antagonist 'hosti-pitality', in which the poets try to claim one's poetic superiority over the other by excluding one another outside the *domus*, on the other side of the *limen*. In particular, at 1.20, Propertius uses the highly metapoetic account of the mythological abduction of Hylas by the nymphs Hamadryads, to convey his own theft (and incorporation into his own poetic *corpus*) of the elegies of Gallus, who shall ultimately identify with a (robbed) *exclusus*. I shall ultimately contend that the ambivalent function of *limen* emerging from this male-to-male, metapoetic παρακλαυσίθυρον between Propertius and Gallus (mirroring, in many ways, the *amator/puella* one) does not only lay bare again the 'hymen'-like quality of the threshold (uncannily both penetrable and impenetrable) but also the 'l*hymen*ality' of the Propertian *amator*, both a powerless *exclusus* and a powerful *dominus* in respect not only to the *puella* qua his erotic *corpus*, but also qua his poetic *corpus* ('*Cynthia*': *puella* and text).[186]

1.3.1. *Possum aperire fores*: 'hospitality' between Propertius and Gallus (1.5; 1.10)

Let me start in order from the first appearance of Gallus in the *Monobiblos* in elegy 1.5. Here, Propertius warns his peer not to "get too close" to Cynthia, for whom the rival seems to have developed a reckless erotic interest (*quid tibi uis, insane? meos sentire furores?* v.3). If Gallus decides to do so, he will end up having the same experience of exclusion and homelessness (among other unpleasant and typically elegiac feelings) as Propertius is himself accustomed to:

[186] See Wyke 1987b for Cynthia as *scripta puella*.

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.
a! mea contemptus quotiens ad limina curres,
cum tibi singultu fortia uerba cadent,
et tremulus maestis orietur fletibus horror,
et timor informem ducet in ore notam,
et quaecumque uoles fugient tibi uerba querenti,
nec poteris, qui sis aut ubi, nosse miser!
tum graue seruitium nostrae cogere puellae
discere et exclusum quid sit abire domo;
nec iam pallorem totiens mirabere nostrum,
aut cur sim toto corpore nullus ego.
(1.5.9-22)

Among the standard symptoms of ἀγρυπνία and perceptions of faulted sight (v.11), detainment (v.12), aphasia (v.14), lachrymal secretion (v.15), anxiety (v.16), pallor (v.21), some of the "thousand pains" (*curarum milia*) that Cynthia will bestow on Gallus if he ever decides to pursue *seruitium amoris* for her (v.19), the παρακλαυσίθυρον, with its related feelings of displacement and exclusion, is in fact also contemplated by Propertius (***discere et exclusum quid sit abire domo***).[187] Yet, at the same time as he foresees the exclusion of Gallus from the domestic space of eroto-poetic co-habitation with Cynthia, Propertius concomitantly anticipates to his 'frenemy' how many times (*quotiens*), after being despised by Cynthia (*contemptus*), he shall run and reach Propertius' own threshold (***mea…ad limina*** *curres*) as a compensation for being rejected from the mistress's place. Largely overlooked by critics, this line has caught the attention of R.O.A.M. Lyne as a *uariatio* to the traditional *exclusus amator* motif. According to Lyne, "[d]isdained and barred from passing the beloved's threshold, [Gallus] will not stay there at the *limina*, like the conventional excluded lover

[187] I read Heyworth's *domo* (vs. Fedeli's *domum*), for it makes more sense to keep an ablative rected by *abire*. Yet, the competitive reading *domum* ("you'll learn what it means, once excluded, to *return home*") is also an interesting emendation, for it would be resonant with the idea that Gallus will reach another house (Propertius': see *infra*) after being excluded from Cynthia's. Lyne 1974:262-3 suggests that the ἀγρυπνία (v.11) is a signature feature of the *exclusus*' vigil on the threshold: if so, we might as well imagine all the symptoms as being developed during Gallus' (imagined) παρακλαυσίθυρον at Cynthia's.

lamenting and finally sleeping the night. He will come dashing with his sorrows to Propertius' threshold of all places, where he will gain admission – and provide we may assume some passing *Schadenfreude* (= 'pleasure derived from the pain of others')".[188] What is indeed suggested is that Gallus shall be excluded from Cynthia's *limen* at the same time as he shall be included into the *limen* of Propertius, a graphic representation of the *différance* of *limen* as both open and closed 'hymen' forestalling penetration and opening itself to it, even though in a male-only context. Such an idea of reciprocal male 'inclusion' in the face of 'exclusion' from the female is further corroborated by the final image of Propertius' and Gallus' *sinus*:

sed pariter miseri socio cogemur amore
alter in alterius mutua flere ***sinu****.*
(1.5.29-30)

The reference to the "embrace" alludes to the homoerotic allure of Propertius' and Gallus' meeting (cf. esp. *OLD* 2a, 2c).[189] Notably though, *sinus* has additional spatial meanings of "bosom, refuge, shelter" (*OLD* 3) and "the innermost part, heart (of a place)" (*OLD* 6).[190] The connection between *sinus*, the "place" where Propertius and Gallus shall encounter each other in the face of Cynthia's exclusion, and (at once) "womb" and "indoor space" squares well with the previous prediction of Propertius' that Gallus would "run into his house". Propertius and Gallus are indeed meant to re-create a *limen*/*sinus* of erotic bonding in the face of their mutual rejection from Cynthia's own domestic threshold (*limen/sinus*).[191] Their masculine *sinus* (an "embrace", a paradoxical "womb" and a "sheltering space" at once) makes up for the loss of the feminine, maternal body of Cynthia and the denied co-presence with her indoors. As it

[188] Lyne 1974:264. Cf. a similar yet much underdeveloped idea at Tib. 1.4.77-8 (with Della Corte 1980 *ad loc.*), where the lover-poet invites the rejected lovers to consult him at his place (***cunctis ianua nostra patet***).
[189] Cf. Oliensis 1997:170, with n27 on the sexual connotation of both "tears" and "bosom".
[190] Cf. also *OLD* 9, 11.
[191] The word *sinus* frequently appears elsewhere in reference to Cynthia: e.g. 1.3.26; 1.17.12; 3.4.15.

becomes apparent, then, in poem 1.5 Propertius starts figuring his relationship with his 'frenemy' Gallus as revolving around the trope of inclusion (and, as the word *limen* suggests, potential exclusion too), as if Gallus were, to a certain extent, another Cynthia.[192] As he predicts that Gallus shall run into his household if he ever succumbs to *seruitium amoris* for Cynthia, Propertius takes advantage of the *différance* of the threshold: he points to Gallus' rejection from Cynthia at the same time as he alludes to his peer's inclusion into his own place.

Yet, what is the ultimate purpose of lingering indoors with Gallus without Cynthia? I argue that Propertius' invitation to Gallus to run to his *limina* coincides with an exhortation to explore their respective poetic text. To be sure, this would seem to contradict Propertius' apparent warnings to Gallus not to get too close to Cynthia, warnings that culminate, at the end of the elegy, with Propertius dissuading Gallus from trying to get to know "the powers of his *Cynthia*" altogether (*quare, quid possit mea Cynthia, desine, Galle/quaerere...*, vv.31-2), for "Cynthia never comes without bringing misfortune to those who recall her" (*...non impune illa rogata uenit*, v.32). Yet, as it often happens across the Propertian *oeuvre*, Cynthia can signify not only the physical body of the mistress but also the poetic body of the poet's text: as Oliensis has noted, the poem's last distich should indeed not be read literally but literarily, as "the punchline to what is revealed in retrospective to be a joke…with a literary favour".[193] Although Propertius seems to be willing to hide his *puella* from the fellow elegist, he is in fact titillating him about the powerful poetry he has been composing under the name *Cynthia* (so powerful that he may not wish to read it, for *Cynthia* is potentially even better than Gallus' own *Amores*). All in all, Propertius may not want Gallus to put his hands over the 'flesh-and-blood' Cynthia, yet he is definitely eager to show his poetry to his fellow, who, in turn, shall also share his own elegiac collection, to prove the worth of his work. This is why, whilst being both excluded from the actual body of Cynthia (rejecting them on side of her

[192] The homoerotics of the poem are brilliantly elucidated by Oliensis 1997. Note in particular how the idea of *paritas* that binds Propertius and Cynthia against Gallus' threat (*et sine nos cursu, quo sumus, ire* ***pares***, v.2) is transferred to Propertius and Gallus by the end of the poem (*sed* ***pariter*** *miseri*, v.29).
[193] Oliensis 1997:159.

threshold), Propertius and Gallus should therefore meet at Propertius' place (*mea...limina*): to enjoy the mistress's 'poetic body' (*Cynthia*: Propertius' text).[194]

This relationship of 'hospitality' between Propertius and Gallus (exchanging poetry during pseudo-homoerotic domestic encounters) envisaged in elegy 1.5 emerges clearly in the next poem addressed to Gallus. To be sure, the situation is here inverted from the one we may have expected, for, as it appears, it is Propertius that has been excluded by Cynthia and Gallus is the one who provides him with the solace of domestic inclusion.[195] The Propertian *amator* in fact recalls the night when, in the manner of a titillated voyeur, he spied on Gallus' hook-up with a charming girl:

O iucunda quies, primo cum testis amori
affueram uestris conscius in lacrimis!
o noctem meminisse mihi iucunda uoluptas,
o quotiens uotis illa uocanda meis,
cum te complexa morientem, Galle, puella
uidimus et longa ducere uerba mora!
quamuis labentis premeret mihi somnus ocellos
et mediis caelo Luna ruberet equis,
non tamen a uestro potui secedere lusu:
tantus in alternis uocibus ardor erat.
(1.10.1-10)

As it has long been observed, the peculiar wording of this encounter suggests that Propertius must have not only enjoyed looking at the *amores* of Gallus with his *puella*, namely, an actual sex scene that he observed as the excited third part of a *ménage à trois*, but also at the *Amores* (with capital letter *A*) by Gallus, the collection of erotic elegies that the elder poet composed before Propertius published his own first booklet.[196] Indeed, the "alternating words"

[194] If Cairns 2006:116 is right in suggesting that 1.5 is replete with Gallan words, then the exchange shall be symmetrical (for Propertius shall continue enjoying Gallus' *Amores* at the same time as he shall let his fellow take pleasure from his own *Cynthia*).
[195] To read the *Monobiblos* like a papyrus of uninterrupted poems is informing here, since the elegies following 1.10 (1.11-15) all represent Cynthia's abandonment of the elegiac *domus* (to be sure, more as a transgression of her own than as a rejection of Propertius on the threshold).
[196] Since Skutsch 1906:144-6, also Benjamin 1965:178, Ross 1975:83-4, King 1980:212-30, O'Hara 1989:561-2, Sharrock 1990:570-1, Miller 2004:78-9, Pincus 2004:175-9. The Gallan

(*alternae uoces*) that Gallus and his girlfriend exchange with "enflamed passion" (*ardor*) may well be taken as eavesdropped "elegiac couplets", as the adjective *alternus* is typically used to indicate the genre's distichs.[197] Similarly, the "ludic activity" (*lusus*) with which Propertius describes the encounter between Gallus and his *puella* can also refer to "poetry" and it is surely employed in this way in Catullus' *carmen* 50 (*Hesterno, Licini, die otiosi/multum* ***lusimus*** *in tuis tabellis*, Cat. 50.1-2), the main model for Propertius 1.10, in which the lyric poet recalls his own enflaming poetic encounters with his fellow Licinus Calvus.[198]

Yet, what has instead been downplayed by the scholars is the spatial dimension to the Propertian *amator*'s encounter with Gallus. Indeed, it is obvious from a number of textual references that the meeting occurred within a domestic environment: for a start, the *incipit* of the poem (*O iucunda quies...o noctem*) is intratextually connected to Propertius' own poem 2.15, where the *amator* recalls one of those rare sexual encounters with the *puella* on her "little bed" with similar enthusiasm (2.15.1-2),[199] as well as intertextually dependent on a number of Greek erotic epigrams describing the hot, lamp-lit nights spent by lovers *in the bedroom*.[200] Furthermore, Propertius goes on to state that, thanks to spying on Gallus, he has learnt how "to re-conjunct separated lovers once again" (*possum ego diuersos iterum coniungere amantis*, v.15) as well as "*to open the doors* of a recalcitrant mistress" (*et dominae* ***tardas possum aperire fores***, v.16). Finally, in the next poem addressed to Gallus, Propertius shall recall Gallus' night once again (1.13.14ff.) and claim that Gallus "could not deserve a better *limen*" (*non alio* ***limine*** *dignus eras*, 1.13.34), namely a better "threshold" or, metonymically, a better "household" than that of his *puella*.[201] The *ianua*'s penetration, leading to

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influence in Propertius is most thoroughly investigated, albeit often with speculative arguments, by Cairns 2006:70-249.

[197] Sharrock 1990:570-1 (vs. O'Hara 1989:561-2, who argues that *alternae* points to amoebean verse). There is no need to believe that the *puella* with whom Gallus is involved is Cynthia (as if he had actually managed to snatch her from Propertius, after threatening to do so in 1.5): rather, the *puella* is a metaphor for Gallus' own elegiac *corpus* (so perhaps she is his own mistress Lycoris, on which see Keith 2011b).

[198] See esp. Pasco-Pranger 2009:142-3 for a close intertextual look. Add further that the verb *uideo* (*uidimus*, 6; cf. *uidi ego…/uidi ego…,* 1.13.14-5) is used as a metaphor for the act of reading a literary text (with Cairns 2006:117, who quotes Virg. *Ecl.* 10.26 as a *comparandum*, significantly also a text starring Cornelius Gallus).

[199] Quoted *supra*.

[200] Cf. e.g. *AP* 5.8.1; 5.166.1. Note further that the Catullan scene at *c.*50 is also certainly set at Calvus' place (cf. *in tuis tabellis*, v.2; *illinc abii* [=*domo tua*], v.7).

[201] It is beyond the point, especially in view of the metapoetic value of the encounter here recalled, to establish whether if the house into which Propertius is admitted as a voyeur in 1.10 is Gallus'

a certain extent to Propertius' co-penetration of Gallus' mistress, is therefore an erotic act (signposted by the sexual pun of the word *testis*, indicating Propertius' role as "witness" and "[additional] testicle" of Gallus' sexual encounter)[202] that subtends an act of poetic imitation, for Propertius is enjoying reading the poetry of his fellow elegist and, at once, claiming power to "open slow doors" (*tardas aperire fores*).[203] All in all, then, poem 1.10 makes real what was suggested in elegy 1.5, namely a successful παρακλαυσίθυρον (as it were) between Propertius and Gallus, in which the two peers could consolidate their poetic bond in view of their exclusion from the (non-textualised) body of Cynthia: if we will, an exchange between the Gallan *Amores* and the Propertian *Cynthia*. As Gallus includes Propertius into his own *limen* (rather than the other way around, as 1.5 initially suggested), the elder elegist in fact offers him the opportunity to create a poetic imitation of his own poetry, which ultimately results in a poetic exchange. Indeed, so as to reciprocate the 'hospitality' of his friend (opening the threshold of his *Amores* to him), Propertius repays Gallus with a "duty" (*accipe commissae* ***munera*** *laetitiae*, v.12), namely a lecture on love, which, as he maintains, he was taught by Cynthia:

Cynthia me docuit*, semper quaecumque petenda*
quaeque cauenda forent: non nihil egit Amor.
(1.10.19-20)

The double meaning of Cynthia as *puella* and text lends itself, once again, to a metapoetic interpretation of this couplets: the *munera* that Propertius offers to Gallus are his own collection of poetry, *Cynthia* (whose powerful verses, after all, he titillated Gallus with at the end of poem 1.5), and, more specifically, an ἐρωτοδίδαξις there contained. The reciprocal 'laws of hospitality' (Gallus invites

or Gallus' *puella*'s: in either cases, Propertius is Gallus' (and his *puella*'s) 'guest' and Gallus is the *dominus* of the household (either at his own estate or successfully made such by the *domina* who has let him in), like Propertius at elegy 2.14 (quoted *supra* and intertextually linked to 1.10).
[202] Oliensis 1997:160.
[203] If Cairns 2006:116 is correct in suggesting that even this poem is replete with Gallan motifs (an ἐρωτοδίδαξις and a description by Gallus of his own successful love-making), then Propertius (metapoetically) already shows the influence of Gallus' *Amores* on his poetry.

Propertius as his guest; Propertius repays the host with a duty) seems to be respected in this elegy. And yet, the symmetry of this relationship of 'hospitality' between the two elegiac poets meeting inside the threshold (two peers whose relationship, we should not forget, is of enmity as much as friendship) does not remain the same. The uncanny quality of this relationship, comparable to the *amator/puella* one, surfaces in elegy 1.20, the last addressed to Cornelius Gallus, to which we shall now turn.

1.3.2. From 'hospitality' to 'hos*ti*pitality': Propertius, Gallus and the metapoetics of Hylas' abduction into the Hamadryads' *domus umida* (1.20)

> "*Anyone who encroaches on any 'at home', on my power of hospitality, on my sovereignty as host, I start to regard as an undesirable foreigner, and virtually as an enemy. This other becomes a hostile subject, and I risk becoming their hostage*"[204]

> *"Hospitality obviously carries the risk of creating the conditions of possibility for theft, assault or murder"*[205]

After poem 1.10 and before 1.20, Gallus is addressed again at elegy 1.13. Here, Propertius features as an *exclusus*, as he makes clear that some other rival has snatched his beloved from him (*abrepto solus amore uacem*, 1.13.2).[206] Contrariwise, Gallus, still involved with the *puella* with whom he was spending

[204] Derrida 2000:53-55.
[205] Still 2010:13-4.
[206] In the collection, elegy 1.13 significantly comes after a pair of closely related poems in which the *amator* laments his exclusion from Cynthia, who has abandoned him for another man (on 1.11-12, see ultimately Lindheim 2011).

the night at 1.10,[207] is once again depicted as a successful *dominus* (*una dies omnis potuit praecurrere amantis*, v.25), even though he already shows the standard symptoms of the lovestruck (vv.27-8) that might result in his unhappy *seruitium* outside the mistress's threshold. Although Gallus has, as usual, made fun of Propertius for his unhappy fate as *exclusus* (*tu, quod saepe soles, nostro laetabere casu*, v.1), for the moment Propertius nevertheless decides to maintain a friendly attitude towards the elder elegist (v.2), even as he warns him about the risks that love comes with (vv.9-13). After all, Gallus may well decide to open his threshold again and let Propertius spy on his *Amores* as he did in elegy 1.10. Yet, as much as the tension between the two 'frenemies' is kept at bay in elegy 1.13, it eventually bursts out in the following poem addressed to Gallus, 1.20, resulting in their relationship of 'hospitality' being jeopardised.[208]

Indeed, this last elegy of the cycle 'turns the table' on the two elegists' former co-presence within the same *limen*, where they could invite one another and fruitfully *exchange* their respective poetic work (*Cynthia* and the *Amores*). This time, Propertius allegorises his *robbery* of Gallan poetics through the sophisticated mythological account of the abduction of Hylas, the young ἐρώμενος beloved by Hercules and kidnapped by the nymphs Hamadryads into the nymphs' *domus umida* (the "wet house" – that is, the "spring" – where they dwell). I shall first present the metapoetic interpretation of the poem that validates Propertius' identification with the Hamadryads, Gallus' with Hercules and Hylas' with Gallus' poetic work. In virtue of this interpretation, I shall argue that Propertius uses the ἐπύλλιον to refer to his own robbery of Gallus' work (Hylas) into the *domus umida* of which he becomes the *dominus* (the Hamadryads), and, at the same time, to Gallus' exclusion outside the abode as a robbed *exclusus* (Hercules) outside the same *domus umida*. I shall argue that, whilst Propertius'

[207] The *nox* is recollected at 1.13.14-24. Here, the reference to Enipeus (vv.21-22), the river with whom Neptune mingles in order to make love to Tyro, is reminiscent of "Propertius' vicarious participation in Gallus' sexual act [at 1.10]" (Oliensis 1997:160).

[208] Cf. esp. 1.5.1-6; 1.13.1-4. According to Cairns 2006:117, the poetic exchange of ἐρωτοδιδάξεις with which Propertius has been trying to lecture Gallus on matters of love (in 1.5, 10, 13) is, to a certain extent, already a challenge to Cornelius Gallus' own activity as *magister amoris*, through which Propertius attempts to turn into the master, rather than a pupil, of Gallan erotodidactics. In other words, beneath a veil of *paritas* (*pariter miseri*, 1.5.29), Propertius has already been trying to claim the superiority of his own *Cynthia* over the Gallan *Amores*, which he has been managing to imitate and incorporate into his own poetics by turning into Gallus' 'guest' (cf. the power attributed to Cynthia at 1.5.31-2; 1.10.19ff.). Yet, 1.20 coincides with the turning point in the politics of the peers' relationship.

and Gallus' relationship seems to have been regulated by the laws of 'hospitality' up to this point (poems 1.5 and 1.10), elegy 1.20 shows how these laws are in fact fragile and easily subverted, leading the two poets to experience rather a relationship of what Derrida refers to as 'hosti-pitality' (the ambivalent relationship between 'guests' and 'hosts'). As per the politics of 'hosti-pitality', the 'guest' invited into the threshold (*dominus*) – in this case, to share poetry – can in fact always be cast out outside it (*exclusus*) after being robbed – in this case, of his poetic material. I shall conclude that the *différance* of the Propertian *amator* as *exclusus/dominus* in the erotic sphere thus finds its counterpart in the same ambivalent identity that he displays in the poetic sphere. As in the erotic context, the *amator*'s liminal identity is in fact also bound up with the 'l*ymen*al' quality of the threshold (penetrable and impenetrable), which makes him oscillate between both its sides, from the *periphery* to the *centre* and back again, in a continuous shift of positions and, at once, of opposed identities.

1.3.3. Premise: the metapoetics of 1.20

In 1.20, Propertius uses the cautionary *exemplum* of Hylas' abduction by the nymphs Hamadryads to warn Gallus to watch after his 'beloved', who, being just as beautiful as the legendary Hylas, might also be an appealing prey to rival lovers:[209]

Hoc pro continuo te, Galle, monemus amore,
quod tibi ne uacuo defluat ex animo:
saepe imprudenti fortuna occurrit amanti:
crudelis Minyis sic erat Ascanius.

[209] In structural terms, Propertius closely follows Theocr. *Idylll* 13, in which the story of Hylas is also recounted to a fellow poet as an *exemplum*. The other fundamental Hellenistic source (emphasised by the "Alexandrian footnote" *ferunt*, v.17) is, naturally, Apollonius Rhodius' version of the myth in the *Argonautica* (AR 1.1207-72).

est tibi non infra specie, ***non nomine dispar,***
Theiodamanteo proximus ardor ***Hylae***
huic tu, siue leges Vmbrae sacra flumina ***siluae****…*
(1.20.1-7)

D. Petrain has developed a metapoetic reading of the ἐπύλλιον from a wordplay on the name Hylas, which derives from the Greek noun ὕλη, meaning both "wood" and "poetic subject matter" and translates into Latin as *silua*, a noun that can also signify both "wood" and "poetic *materia*".[210] As Petrain astutely observes, the metapoetic play is triggered in the Propertian text by both the 'etymological signpost' at the end of v.5 (*non nomine dispar*) and the 'vertical juxtaposition' of *Hylae* and *siluae*, at the end of back-to-back verses (vv.6-7).[211] According to Petrain then, Propertius is not only intending Hylas as Gallus' erotic partner but also as the elder elegist's poetic work (ὕλη*/silua*), that Gallus, not differently from Hercules, should learn to protect from the hands of other rivals. The conclusive couplets of the elegy, in which Propertius calls Gallus' love interest 'his *amores*' (v.51, end of verse) before referring to him with his proper name (*Hylan*, v.52, also end of verse), corroborate the understanding of the young boy as Gallus' '*scriptus puer*', for the *Amores* was the name of Cornelius Gallus' collection of elegies.[212] In order to answer the question of *which rival* would constitute a threat to Gallus' *Amores*, Petrain then follows D. O. Ross and (more recently) F. Cairns in stressing that Propertius' ἐπύλλιον is full of metrics and words that Cornelius Gallus employed in his own elegies (and, perhaps, in a different version of the very myth of Hylas) and, in virtue of this, maintains that Propertius' warnings are ironic, for it is *Propertius himself* the one who has already stolen his peer's poetic *materia* (*Hylas* < ὕλη) in order to write elegy 1.20.[213] Although Petrain does not make the equation transparent, the critic

[210] Petrain 2000.
[211] Petrain 2000:410, drawing from O'Hara (1996:75-79, 86-88)'s study on the same techniques as deployed by Virgil to indicate etymological puns.
[212] Cf. n185 *supra*.
[213] Petrain 2000:418-9: "Propertius warns Gallus to keep safe his Hylas and his ὕλη from those who might steal them away, but in the course of giving this advice perpetrates just such a theft. […] Poem 1.20 thus commits the very act it warns Gallus to be on his guard against". Cf. Ross 1975:74-81; Cairns 2006:223-32 (add Lightfoot 1999:363-4; 552-8; Cairns 2004:86ff. on 1.20's setting of Bithynia as corroborating the intertextual debts to Gallus, who himself drew it from his *cliens* and fellow poet Parthenius, a native of Nicaea in Bithynia).

therefore wittily identifies Propertius with the Hamadryads, who drowned and kidnapped Hercules', that is, *Gallus'* young ἐρώμενος, into their "wet household" (*domus…umida*, 1.20.34).

To be sure, M. Heerink has recently proposed a different metapoetic reading of the ἐπύλλιον.[214] Heerink considers the Hamadryads a symbol of Virgil's bucolic poetry.[215] In virtue of this, this critic argues that, when Propertius warns Gallus not to entrust his Hylas/*Amores* to the Hamadryads (qua Virgilian *Bucolics*), he makes allusion to the literary polemic between the elegiac and the bucolic genres as developed at the end of the *Eclogues*, where Virgil makes the elegiac Gallus succumb to his bucolic poetry (as Gallus fails to find relief in bucolic landscape at the same time as he has to acknowledge his elegiac capitulation).[216] Heerink contends that at 1.20 Propertius aims at making a successful claim of superiority over both Gallus and Virgil, thus overcoming the previous polemics between the fellow poets.[217] Indeed, by appropriating into his elegiac poetics a myth, that of Hylas, which had been treated 'bucolically' by Virgil in his *Eclogues* (cf. esp. *Ecl.* 6.43-4), Propertius would not only outdo Virgil but also Gallus, for, unlike the elder elegist, he did not succumb to Virgilian bucolic poetry but actually managed to outdo it via the 'elegiacization' of the Hylas myth.[218] Although I can agree with Heerink that an additional polemic against Virgil may be enacted in elegy 1.20 via Propertius' elegiac appropriation of the bucolic treatment of Hylas,[219] I am nevertheless not persuaded by the point on which Heerink bases his analysis, namely that the Hamadryads should be unproblematically taken as a metonym for Virgil's *Eclogues*. Whilst it is true that these nymphs come to be associated to bucolic poetry in Virgil, the Hamadryads are in fact given a quintessentially *elegiac* characterisation by Propertius, who call

[214] Heerink 2015, building his study upon Monteleone 1992; the arguement is also reprised, with few adjustments, by Heslin 2018:154-65.
[215] Heerink 2015:88ff., esp. on the grounds of Virg. *Ecl.* 10.62, where *Hamadryades* would stand metonymically for the *Eclogues* (cf. Prop. 2.34.76).
[216] Heerink 2015:92; cf. *Ecl.* 10.62ff. (and esp. the famous *omnia uincit Amor: et nos cedamus Amori,* v.69). Compare Monteleone 1992:117-8 on *Ecl.* 10 as Virgil's allusive indication to Gallus to make a transition from the superior bucolic-Theocritean tradition to the elegiac-Euphorionean.
[217] Heerink 2015:110-2.
[218] For Monteleone 1992:117-8, Propertius suggests Gallus he keep on writing poetry in the erudite-Euphorionian style (as opposed to the bucolic-Theocritean adopted by Virgil and symbolically represented by the *Hamadryads* at 1.20).
[219] On 1.20's multiple intertextual debts to the *Bucolics,* see further Monteleone 1992 *passim*.

them "enflamed mistresses" (*accensae…puellae*)[220] and make them compete, as per a standard elegiac triangle, with other potential rivals over the possession of Hylas, the Boreads Zetes and Calais (v.25).[221] Indeed, before appearing in the *Bucolics*, the nymphs had a particular significance in Gallus' own *elegiac* poetry.[222] By drawing attention to the Hamadryads' etymological connection with 'trees' (Seru. *Ad Ecl.* 10.62: *'nymphae quae cum arboribus et nascuntur et pereunt'*; cf. *Schol. ad* AR 2.476) and, concomitantly, to the fact that, in Virgil's *Eclogue* 10 (where the nymphs are mentioned: v.62), Gallus carves his 'loves' on 'young trees' (vv.53-4), D. Kennedy reads the nymphs as protectors of Gallus' loves and poems (*amores/Amores*) or 'surrogate Gallan Muses' in the context of Virgil's last *Eclogue*.[223] Kennedy therefore argues that the nymphs' appearance in Propertius (e.g. at 2.32.37) should not necessarily be read as an allusion to Virgil's *Bucolics*, for they could also mask a reference to Gallus,[224] a possibility that is further corroborated by Cairns' view that the Hamadryads featured at different points in Gallus' own erotic poems.[225]

Following this line of thought, I do not wish to take the Hamadryads as a reference to the *Bucolics*, as Heerink does. Instead, after Kennedy, I take the same nymphs as 'Gallan Muses'. As it shall become apparent, this association does not only link poem 1.20 with the previous *Monobiblos* poems addressing the 'frenemy' Gallus to which poem 1.20 provides the natural conclusion (a link that Heerink's interpretation risks neglecting) but it also validates Petrain's (over Heerink's) metapoetic reading of the elegy altogether. Indeed, if Propertius identifies with the Hamadryads as the kidnappers of Gallus' Hylas/ὕλη, then when he refers to his own impending inhabitation of the spring of the 'Gallan Muses', Propertius salaciously alludes to his own mastery of the 'house of Gallan poetry'

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[220] The erotic bond between 'abductor' and 'victim' is already present in Apollonius' version, where the nymph who kidnapped Hylas "made him her husband" (ποιήσατο…ὃν πόσιν, AR 1.1324-25).
[221] On the Boreads as *amatores*, cf. Oliensis 1997:161; Ingleheart 2015:137; Heerink 2015:105, 109.
[222] In addition to alluding, as Pietropaolo 2012:106 notes, to Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos* (δρύες…Νύμφαι, vv.83-5), which is yet another potential source (other than Virgil) that Propertius could have in mind.
[223] Kennedy 1982:377-80. At 1.18, Propertius' imitation of Gallus' own practice of inscribing the name of the poetic collection (*Cynthia*) into tree barks might as well further confirm his debt to (Hamadryad-inspired?) Gallan poetry and his desire to outdo it (by substituting Gallus' carved *Amores* with his own carved *Cynthia*).
[224] Kennedy 1982:379-80 (even as he is unsure what to make of them in the cryptic 1.20).
[225] Cairns 2006:123, 222-3, on the grounds of *Culex* 94-7.

(inhabited by the elder elegist's Muses: *dominus* of the *domus umida*, like the Hamadryads), into which he shall drown Gallan poetic material/Hylas and yet from which, concomitantly, Gallus/Hercules shall end up being excluded (*exclusus*; formerly *dominus* of the Hamadryads' *domus umida*).[226] Ultimately, I am therefore inclined to espouse Petrain's metapoetic reading, which, as I have already been implying and as I shall demonstrate further in the next section, allows us to view Propertius and Gallus as engaged, like in the previous poems of the cycle, in a relationship of (reversed) 'hos(ti)pitality'.

1.3.4. *Domus umida(e)*: 'l*hymen*al' waterscapes and the abduction of Hylas

Poem 1.20 draws attention to the porosity of the inside/outside threshold by referring to a number of aquatic spaces that, much like the 'l*hymen*al' *ianua* of the elegiac *domus* (marked by *différance*: penetrability and its opposite), open and close, thus allowing transgressions and robberies as much as the equally dangerous possibility of ending up locked out. As Propertius contends in the first part of elegy, Hylas (that is, Gallus' ἐρώμενος) should steer away from these uncanny waterscapes, for these places could always be haunted by kidnapping Nymphs:

hunc tu, siue leges Vmbrae sacra flumina siluae,
siue Aniena tuos tinxerit unda pedes,
siue Gigantei spatiabere litoris ora,
siue ubicumque ***uago fluminis hospitio****,*
Nympharum semper cupidas defende rapinas
(non minor Ausoniis est amor Adryasin);
ne tibi sit duros montes et frigida saxa,
Galle, neque expertos semper adire lacus.

[226] *Contra* Heerink 2015:88, for whom Gallus, identifying with Hercules, could not be losing Hylas to his very Muses. Yet, the sense is that Propertius has already been usurping, via his intertextual thefts already apparent in 1.20, the elder elegist's porous poetic domain (*domus umida*). If Hylas' wandering in Bithynia also represents Gallus' *Amores*' *error* inside Parthenius of Nicaea's poetic geography (cf. n213 *supra*), then Propertius signals his robbery of Gallus' own robbery of Parthenius, a double booty.

quae miser ignotis error perpessus in oris
Herculis indomito fleuerat Ascanio.
(1.20.7-20)[227]

On first inspection, all the places here listed by Propertius look safe and 'enclosed', yet they turn out to betray an uncanny degree of 'openness' facilitating a potential kidnapping. The first one, the desolate and peripheral Clitumnus, indeed suggests a sequestered space where the protection of a beloved is supposed to be an easy task. Propertius provides the evidence for this at elegy 2.19, where the river features (vv.25-6) in the solitary bucolic landscape into which Cynthia has fled (*deuia rura,* 2.19.2). Here, amid chaste fields (*castis… in agris*), Propertius argues that no young rival shall corrupt the *puella* (*nullus erit…iuuenis…corruptor*, v.3). The sense of protection is also brought about by the Clitumnus, which covers (*integit*, v.26) its beautiful waters (*formosa...flumina*) with "its own grove" (*suo...luco*).[228] Although at 1.20 Propertius similarly mentions the "Umbrian wood" (*Vmbrae…siluae*), the natural protection sheltering the river, he argues that the river's banks can nevertheless constitute a threat to the wandering beloved. As much as it is a sheltered body of water, the Clitumnus is therefore also exposed, an enclosed yet again penetrable aquatic 'l*hymen*'.[229] A similar space, yet more urban and crowded, and thus, potentially even more dangerous, is also the river Anio, the tributary of the Tiber to which Propertius refers next. As both W. A. Camps and L. Richardson suggest in their commentary on these lines, several members of the Roman *élite* (of which Cornelius Gallus was part) had their holidaying estates built along the river Anio (particularly in the area of Tibur).[230] By being adjacent to the riverbed, these private properties, that is, sheltered *indoor* spaces, were therefore exposed to the river's dangerous waters *outdoors*, their borders separating them from the outer space being threatened and turned permeable (like 'l*hymen*a'). Finally, the third

[227] I accept Heyworth's emendation of *umbrosae* into *Vmbrae sacra* (v.7), for, as the editor remarks (2007:88), geographical precision is needed in all three *exempla* Propertius provides in these lines and, by referring to "Umbrian rivers", the poet has the Clitumnus in mind (cf. 3.22.23, where the Clitumnus is mentioned together with the Anio, here mentioned too).
[228] Note the sandwiching: *SVO…flumina LVCO*.
[229] The reference to Umbria is particularly ironic, for it is the Umbrian Propertius himself who shall steal Gallus' Hylas (compare also *non minor* ***Ausoniis*** *est amor Adryasin*, v.12).
[230] Camps 1961:93; Richardson *ad loc.* Cf. esp. 2.32.5.

reference to the Giants' shore in the Neapolitan area of Baiae is also evocative of an uncanny landscape marked by both enclosed, sheltering and open-air places. Here, the reader is in fact immediately reminded of elegy 1.11, where Cynthia had fled to Baiae with a rival.[231] At 1.11, the lake Lucrinus (*Lucrina...aqua,* v.10) was presented as an enclosure where Cynthia could be safely tamed and entrapped (*moretur...aut teneat clausam*, vv.9-11).[232] Yet, in the same text, Propertius also referred to the open waters of Baiae too, and specifically to Baiae's dangerous coastline, as the backdrop for Cynthia's likely betrayal. Indeed, the poet imagined the *puella* sluggishly lain on the beach (*molliter in tacito litore compositam,* v.13) at an earshot from the sweet whispers of the rival (*alterius blandos…sussurros*, v.12), in the manner of a girl transgressing the domestic custody of a vigil (*ut solet amota labi custode puella*, v.14),[233] and poignantly concluded the elegy with a fitting curse to the waters of Baiae (*a pereant Baiae…aquae!* v.30). In virtue of the intratextual link to 1.11, at 1.20 Baiae thus fittingly appears (after the Clitumnus and the Anio rivers) as yet another dangerous place capable of protecting and enclosing its visitors as much as opening up and exposing them to unwanted threats (like a '*hymen*'). Significantly, in a conclusive remark following the Baiae reference, Propertius indicates that Gallus should actually protect his 'Hylas' from "any places in the meandering home/hospitality of a river" (*ubicumque uago fluminis hospitio*). As the juxtaposed employment of the adjective *uagum* and the noun *hospitium* suggests, the poet here identifies all rivers (yet, the Baiae reference rather suggests 'all bodies of water') with a paradoxical "wandering household" or an "erratic space of hospitality", that is, spaces that can tantalise and welcome their guests as abodes (*hospitia*), yet that can also entrap and kidnap them in their haphazard course (they are *uaga*).[234] This preliminary insistence on the '*hymenal*' quality of watery *uaga hospitia*

[231] Fedeli 1980 *ad loc.* underscores the intratextual link. On 1.11's presentation of progressively restricted spaces, from open-air and dangerous to enclosed and secure, see Saylor 1976:126-37; Lindheim 2011 *passim*.

[232] On *moror/mora* as elegiac detainment indoors, cf. Pucci 1978 *passim*. On *claudo* as domestic enclosure, compare e.g. 2.7.9; 3.3.49; 3.13.9.

[233] Indeed, the *puella* consumes her "love at the margins" (*in extremo amore*, v.6), outside/in the periphery of Rome and the elegiac *domus*. Contrast Propertius' hopeless association between Cynthia and the cloistered domestic space further below in the text (*tu mihi sola domus*, v.23).

[234] *Hospitium* embraces both the idea of the physical (bordered) "house" where the guest is welcomed and the ties of "hospitality" connected to it: cf. respectively *OLD* 3a, c and 1, 2 ("[t]he permanent relationship existing between host and guest, the ties of hospitality"). *Vagus* is instead used for something "on the move" and "erratic": cf. esp. *OLD* 1, 3, 6b.

anticipates the following presentation of the main 'l*hymen*' (open and close) of the elegy, namely the Hamadryads' spring where Gallus' Hylas shall be kidnapped:

hic erat Arganthi Pege sub uertice montis,
grata ***domus*** *Nymphis* ***umida*** *Thyniasin,*
quam supra nulli pendebant debita curae
roscida desertis poma sub arboribus,
et circum irriguo surgebant lilia prato
candida purpureis mixta papaueribus.
quae modo decerpens tenero pueriliter ungui
proposito florem praetulit officio,
et modo formosis incumbens nescius undis
errorem blandis tardat imaginibus.
tandem haurire parat demissis flumina palmis
innixus dextro plena trahens umero.
cuius ut accensae Dryades candore puellae
miratae solitos destituere choros
prolapsum leuiter facili traxere liquore,
tum sonitum rapto corpore fecit Hylas.
(1.20.33-48)

The Hamadrayds' residence is conveyed in the text as a peculiar kind of 'private property', an inside space (*domus*) that nevertheless has porous, aquatic borders (*umida*): therefore, an inside space exposed to the outer space by virtue of its undetectable separation between inside and outside. In particular, the element of water permeating the Hamadryads' abode blurs the distinction between inside and outside (and, at the same time, between freedom/property, safety/danger), to the point it propels the ἐρώμενος' abduction. Indeed, Hylas, unaware to have crossed the borders of the nymphs' private property, is firstly seduced by the household's natural amenities, all drenched with water: from the fruit bending from the trees over the spring, "wet with dew" (***roscida****...poma*), to the surrounding lawns full of white lilies and crimson poppies, also "soaked with water" (***irriguo****...prato*). Yet, then, precisely when, in a narcissistic posture, he contemplates his reflection on the water's surface (*formosis incumbens nescius*

undis/errorem blandis tardat imaginibus),[235] the young boy is abducted underwater. Hylas' disappearance *inside* the aquatic *domus*, facilitated by the household's liquid borders, alienates him from Hercules, who is left lingering *outside* the *domus*, specifically on the shore of the untameable Ascanius (*Herculis indomito fleuerat Ascanio*), as a proper *exclusus*.[236]

Whilst critics have generally neglected to look at the abduction in these terms, I argue that it corresponds to the quintessentially elegiac situation lamented in the παρακλαυσίθυρον. Indeed, the Hamadryads' *domus umida*, characterised by fluid borders, lends itself to comparison with the elegiac *domus*, also characterised by the 'l*hymenal*' border of the *ianua*. Not only is the definition of the nymphs' "spring" as *domus* (*umida*) resonant with the epicentre of erotic plenitude and poetic production that *domus* constitutes in the Propertian narrative,[237] but it is its (im)penetrability, the fact that it can enclose inside whilst excluding outside, that renders it a perfect example of elegiac household.[238] Furthermore, the characters placed around it, Propertius/Hamadryads, Gallus/Hercules and Hylas, are fittingly related by an erotic bond that situate them, like elegiac lovers, in the dynamic of inclusion/exclusion in respect to the *limen*. Gallus/Hercules is in fact the *exclusus amator* losing his beloved Hylas to the rival Hamadryads, who possess the young boy on the other side of the threshold.[239] Yet, to return to the metapoetic reading of the poem discussed above, this exclusion/inclusion needs be read as Gallus losing his poetic *materia* to Propertius. If, in the previous poem (1.10; also recalled at 1.13) Propertius and

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[235] As Oliensis 1997:162 has suggested, "[t]he watery mirror that seduces Hylas with *blandae imagines* may be read as a figure for the glittering surface of the Propertian page, a text that seduces Gallus – perhaps the image of his own poetry". According to the metapoetics outlined by Petrain, Hylas indeed sees his reflection on Propertius' page after having belonged to Gallus' text.
[236] The adjective *indomitus* modifying Ascanius is an etymological pun on the river's name (the Greek equivalent of Ascanius, ἀσκάλαφος, meaning "untameable": Cairns 2006:240-41). Yet, by being ***indom****ito*, the Ascanius is also indicated as the opposite of ***dom****us* for the *exclusus* Hercules. For the Hamadryads, it instead constitutes the "home" (***domus*** *umida*) in which they can claim property over Hylas (for their spring was located along the Ascanius' course: cf. Strab. 12.563; Ant. Lib. *Met.* 26.3). *Indomitus*' and *crudelis*' (v.4) elegiac colouring (both adjectives being used for intractable elegiac *puellae*: Ingleheart 2015:137) also intensifies the complicity between the Ascanius and the Hamadryads (significantly, the river's sisters in Antoninus Liberalis' version).
[237] See *supra*.
[238] At 1.16, the *ianua* was also "humidified" by the tears of the *exclusi amatores* left outside and also "inundated" by the continuous tears of the *exclusus* (*semper amantis fletibus*, vv.47-48).
[239] On Hercules' elegiac profile: cf. esp. vv.15-6, with Casanova-Robin 2010:710-12; on Hylas and Hercules as elegiac lovers, cf. Ingleheart 2015: esp.147: "[they] look directly equivalent to those of the lover-beloved dyad (that is, the male poet and the female mistress) in Propertian elegy".

Gallus experienced a symmetrical relationship of 'hospitality', whereby they invited each other on the same side of the *limen* to exchange their poetic outputs, this time we see that their former reciprocal relationship is violated. Thanks to the porosity of the *domus umida*'s aquatic *limen*, Propertius can in fact perpetrate the theft of Gallus' *Amores* (his 'Hylas'/ὕλη) and become the *dominus* withholding the beloved *inside*, whilst Gallus is left mourning his loss *outside*, "at a distance" (*procul*, v.49) from the *domus* as an *exclusus*.

As I contend, the relationship of friendship and at once rivalry existing between Gallus and Propertius, who invite and exclude each other inside and outside the domestic *limen*, lends itself well to the Derridean model of 'hosti-pitality'. In his work on the theme of hospitality, to which he dedicated one of his final enquiries, Derrida maintains that the act of inviting a 'guest' into one's 'house' always has to be regulated by laws, as the 'host' cannot open his door to a complete stranger (nameless and unknown) before he makes sure he establishes a relationship of reciprocity with this stranger, who has to observe his own rules and re-pay him with a duty (or *munus*).[240] Derrida contends that, as such, absolute hospitality in fact does not exist, for having somebody cross our domestic threshold always implies some kind of violation of what is quintessentially ours, our 'home'.[241] Be that as it may, the philosopher further concedes that, even when we *do* know who is crossing our threshold, we expose ourselves to the risk of losing our power over our innermost space, so that the act of 'hospitality' can always lead to a relationship of 'hosti-pitality'.[242] The transgression of the threshold is indeed always dangerous as the 'guest' can stop acting as such to become the 'host' of the former 'host'. To be sure, even at a merely linguistic level, Derrida notes that the French word *hôte* can referred to both the 'guest' and 'host', the 'stranger' and 'master', two opposed identities that can nevertheless

[240] See most importantly Derrida 2000 (cf. also Derrida 1999a, 1999b, 2002). Critical readings about (Derridean) hospitality include e.g. Still 2010, de Ville 2011, Wrobleski 2012, Shepherd 2014.

[241] Derrida problematises the association between the 'home' and 'the proper' by drawing to their semantic interrelation in ancient Greek, οἶκος and οἰκεῖος: cf. Zlomislič (2007:337)'s remarks on the deconstructive approach to the domestic in Derrida (with the idea of the 'house' of the Self as being always 'haunted'; compare Wigley 1993:101ff.).

[242] See especially Derrida 2000:47ff. on the many ways the threshold between the public and the private space is crossed and violated in contemporary times (e.g. where the State can ban pornographic websites accessed at home; private conversations can be eavesdropped by the police, etc.).

easily exchange each other.[243] Yet, the *différance* of the 'guest' and 'host' is also generated by the *différance* of the threshold, to borrow from Derrida himself, an undecidable *hymen* (or 'l*hymen*') that opens and closes, entraps and excludes and, because of this, can prompt the 'host'/'guest' to swap roles.[244] Whilst up to poem 1.20, Propertius and Gallus had developed a reciprocal relationship of 'hospitality', signalled by the exchange of a 'duty' or *munus* that could regulate it (remember *accipe commissae* ***munera*** *laetitiae*, 1.10.12: Propertius gave an ἐρωτοδίδαξις to Gallus to thank the elder poet for his 'hospitality'), at 1.20 we see that something went awry in this symmetrical exchange. In accordance with Derrida's theory, the former 'guest' (Propertius spying into Gallus' bedroom at 1.10) has in fact become the 'host' (in the myth, of the Hamadryads' *domus umida*) and the former 'host' has been turned into an excluded 'guest', alienated from his own eroto-textual body (Hylas/ὕλη/*Amores*).

Yet, as we have come to appreciate, this poetic game (as much as the parallel erotic game between *amator* and *puella*) could continue forever. The displacement of Propertius and Gallus in respect to *limen*, ambivalently marking their exclusion from and inclusion into each other's eroto-poetic domain (their lovers and texts), in fact depends upon the *différance* of the 'threshold', the *ianua* of a *domus umida*, namely the door of a household marked by open, fluid borders (impenetrable yet again penetrable, a 'l*hymen*'). The threshold's 'undecidability' (it can close and yet again open) suggests that infinite oscillations inside-out and outside-in can happen around it: 'hos*ti*pitality' (reflecting 'frenmity') implies that the antagonistic relationship could turn friendly and then again hostile. Gallus could occupy the position of *dominus* in the future (the Hamadrayds), whilst Propertius could return to his previous condition as *exclusus* (Hercules).[245] To be

[243] See esp. Derrida 2000:21, 45, drawing from the Indo-European etymologies studied by Benveniste 1973, with Still 2010:192ff. Cf. Still 2010:15: "Hospitality between individuals (governed by the code) is often theorised (and experienced), on the one hand, as a structure of reciprocity and, on the other, as an exchange between peers, although non-reciprocity and inequality are at least important". By looking at the friend-foe relationship between the *amator* and the *riualis*, I offer a different interpretation from that given by critics that have analysed it in terms of (reciprocal) 'homosociality' (esp. Keith 2008:115-38, with full bibliography).

[244] On hospitality as crossing thresholds (*seuils*), cf. the epigraph reported *supra* (beginning of section 1.3); cf. Derrida 2000:75.

[245] Note that the eroto-poetic 'hostage' Hylas' mobility (*ibat…ibat*, v.32) suggests he may still roam outside the Hamadryads' *domus* in the future, thus escaping Propertius' control. Cf. Cynthia's comparison (inaugurating the *Monobiblos*) to the "swift girl" Atalanta (*uelocem…puellam*, 1.1.15), whom the hunter Milanion, unlike the Propertian *amator,* could 'tame' and 'bring home' (*ergo potuit…**domuisse**,* 1.1.15).

sure, the intertextual relationship between elegy 1.18 and 1.20 can retrospectively suggest that the *exclusus* Hercules in particular is not only a mirror image to Gallus, but also to Propertius. The space that Hercules/Gallus shall inhabit as *exclusus* from Hylas are in fact strikingly similar to those Propertius has been seen wandering about in elegy 1.18, when he was mourning his exclusion from Cynthia.[246] Uninterrupted chains of mountains and cold rocks (*continui* ***montes*** *et* ***frigida*** *rupes*, 1.18.27), wild tracks providing rough sleep (*inculto tramite* ***dura*** *quies*, 1.18.28), deserted cliffs (*deserta…* ***saxa***, v.32) and woods (***siluae***, v.31) are resonant with the rough mountains and cold cliffs (***duros montes et frigida saxa***, 1.20.13) featuring in the Bithynian woods (***siluae***, 1.20.7) of elegy 1.20.[247] By re-casting Gallus (as a 'new Hercules') in the same spatial position of exclusion as the one he experienced himself (in respect to his own lost Cynthia) and, at the same time, by appropriating Gallus' Hylas/ὕλη into the Hamadryads' wet household (of which he is now the *dominus*),[248] Propertius turns the table on the last appearance of Gallus at 1.13, where Gallus was still enjoying his affair with his beautiful *puella* (*dominus*) and Propertius was excluded from Cynthia by some other lover (*exclusus*) and lampooned for this by Gallus himself.[249] Yet, at the same time, Hercules' shouting Hylas' name and hearing his own echo through the inhospitable landscape of Bithynia (*cui procul Alcides iterat responsa; se dilli/nomen ab extremis montibus aura* ***re****fert*, vv.50-1), reminds us that of

[246] On the intratextual relationship, see ultimately Cairns 2006:139-40. Poem 1.18, where Propertius imagines himself amid inhospitable landscapes away from the city and Cynthia, makes it explicit he has been *exclusus* from the mistress's threshold (*quae solum tacitis cognita sunt foribus*, v.24).

[247] Either *continui montes* (more appropriate in a *locus horridus*) or the alternative reading *diuini fontes* strengthen the connection with 1.20's landscape, for *fontes* translates the Greek Πηγαί (Latinised as *Pegē*), namely, the "Springs" of the Hamadryads (and its "sacrality" implied in *diuini* alludes to Apollonius Rhodius' description of the same spring [κρήνης ἱερὸν ῥόον, AR 1.1208]; cf. Heerink 2015:43ff.).

[248] Cairns 2006:136-40 argues that these 'wild landscapes' are modelled on Gallus himself (compare Virgil's Gallan *Eclogues* 6, 10). If so, at 1.20 Propertius re-assigns to Gallus his own poetic landscape (at the same time as, metapoetically, he steals it and incorporates it into his text).

[249] Gallus will only appear again in elegy 2.34 among the poets of the literary tradition of which Propertius aspires to be part (vv.91-4). For Propertius, to have won Gallus over (by 'domesticating' his Hylas/ὕλη) in 1.20 means, in many ways, to validate his inclusion into the tradition of Latin love elegy to which he refers at 2.34 (a tradition commenced by his 'frenemy' Gallus himself). According to Suet. *Aug.* 66, Cornelius Gallus, after covering the prefecture of Egypt, fell into disgrace with Augustus, who "*forbade him his house* and the privilege of residence in the imperial provinces, because of his ungrateful and envious spirit" (*ob ingratum et maliuolum animum* ***domo*** *et prouinciis suis* ***interdixit***) before leading him to commit suicide (most likely in the early 20s, and thus around the time when the *Monobiblos* came out). Ironically, this is yet another (non-fictional) 'hospitality' gone awry for Gallus.

Propertius' own production of the echo of Cynthia (***re**sonent mihi 'Cynthia'*, 1.18.32). The reader who prefers to privilege the connection between these intratextual 'echoes' over the metapoetic game enacted by the Hylas episode shall thus be prompted to look at Hercules as a 'mirror' image of Propertius, instead of or, at least, on top of Gallus.[250] More than one interpretations over the winner and the loser in this male-to-male poetic παρακλαυσίθυρον is ultimately legitimate. Yet, far from a simplistic suspension of judgement, this ambiguity concerning who is the *exclusus* and who is the *dominus* can be attributed to the 'threshold'. Marked by *différance*, the 'l*hymen*' determines the *différance* of the Propertian *amator,* his identity being made to 'differ' and 'defer' in both his erotic and his poetic oscillations around the 'l*hymen*' itself.

1.4. Conclusions

Whilst *limen* is a key term in all the Latin elegists, in the analysis developed above I have argued that its use in Propertius is highly original, rather than merely imposed by the elegiac genre. Indeed, I have attempted to explain how *limen*, the space around which the Propertian *amator* moves, is responsible for the 'production' of the fictional character's liminal identity. The reading of elegy 1.16 in particular has shed light on the *ianua*'s function as a powerful space where binary logic collapses. As I have shown, the door exists as an irreducible 'third space', both a penetrable membrane providing the *amator* with the access to *domus* and *puella* and an impenetrable membrane, forestalling the same erotic union indoors. In virtue of the door's identification with an undecidable 'hymen' (now penetrable, now impenetrable) marked by Derridean *différance*, I have contended that the Propertian *amator* also needs to be deconstructed as an undecidable 'third', his identity split between that of an *exclusus* outdoors and a *dominus* indoors.

[250] By the time of poem 1.20, Cynthia has been mourned as 'absent' by Propertius for several poems. She shall appear again as 'presence' (beside the *amator*) only at the beginning of Book 2 (cf. *supra* on 2.1).

This section has already made clear how fruitful a space-sensitive analysis of the Propertian *oeuvre* can turn out to be. If geographer and spatial theorist E. Soja argues that literature is (among other forms of art) a fertile terrain for the production of 'third spaces', namely, "spaces of resistance to the dominant order" (or 'counterspaces') that, whilst appearing in subordinate, peripheral or marginalised positions, display a powerful capacity to defy all sorts of reductionist binarisms,[251] Propertius demonstrates that his literary text is no exception to this observation. Placed at the margins of the elegiac *domus*, the Propertian *ianua* in fact does not only defy an orthodox binary logic but also provides a critique of this logic. Indeed, 'her' aberrant gendered and sexual identity, made up of irreducible pairs of terms (female body/transgender voice; penetrable/impenetrable; unchaste/chaste as a foil to the non-respectable *puella*/respectable *matrona* lying indoors) allows her to produce an open alternative to the status quo, for which the two terms would have rather been opposed in an antithetical relationship. Yet, more than this, the *ianua* also 'produces' the unstable gendered and sexual identity of the *amator*, either lingering outside or trespassing her border (*exclusus/dominus*), and, therefore, both penetrative and non-penetrative, effeminate and male. 'Different from' and 'deferring' his fixation with either the Self (the same) and the Other in respect to a proper Roman male citizen, the *amator* liminally exists as both Self and Other. Even in those narrative moments in which his identification with an orthodox indoor *dominus* seems finally achieved (elegies 2.14-15), it is in fact suggested that he shall return to his condition as non-penetrative *exclusus* (and so he does: 2.16) as per a continuous oscillatory movement inside-out/outside-in.

In the second part of the Chapter, I have further argued that the undecidable role of *ianua* as both excluding 'barrier' and including 'gate' takes a metapoetic twist across the poems addressed to Propertius' 'frenemy' Gallus, which indeed explore the *amator*'s role as 'poet', on top of 'lover'. Much like in his relationship with the *puella*, the Propertian *amator* develops an ambiguous relationship of 'hos(ti)pitality' with Gallus, made up of inclusions and exclusions, respectively signifying a symmetrical and an asymmetrical poetic exchange with

[251] Soja 1996:60-1, 68, building upon Lefebvre (1991:33)'s 'lived spaces of representations' ('*espaces veçus*': see General Introduction).

his fellow.[252] As I have shown, the *limen* ('l*ymen*') opens up and yet again shuts out, invites and excludes, or can invite just to shut out, as a space facilitating both poetic imitation and poetic theft. Through the allegoric mythological narrative of 1.20 in particular, I have argued that Propertius seems ultimately aligned with the *dominus* (Hamadryads) of Hylas (Gallan poetic *materia*) and Gallus (Hercules) with a (robbed) *exclusus amator.* Yet, since the politics of 'l*ymen*ality' implies that the 'fixation' with either a *dominus* or an *exclusus* can always be re-negotiated, I have posited that even the outcome of this literary competition can lend itself to different interpretations.[253]

The analysis of this Chapter ultimately serves as a paratextual threshold (another *ianua*, as it were) to the discussion developed in the following Chapters. Indeed, as I shall demonstrate next, the *amator*'s 'l*ymen*ality', that is, his unfixed position as produced by his oscillatory movement inside and outside the domestic epicentre of erotic elegy, anticipates and finds its counterpart in Propertius' political 'liminality'. By this label, I mean Propertius' ambiguous appreciation of imperial Rome and its attached Augustan ideology as conditioned by his own geopolitical inclusion and exclusion from Rome (*dominus*/*exclusus*). In Chapter 2 that follows, I shall argue precisely that Propertius, born in the *periphery* (Umbria) once at war with the centre (Rome), and emigrated into the *centre* (Rome), belongs to both spaces as a *dominus/exclusus* at/from 'R/home'. As a result of his geographical *différance* (his identity being made to 'differ' and 'to defer' from that of a proper Roman), Propertius cannot help but look at the centre, the metropolis of the emerging Augustan Empire, with peripheral eyes, as if he

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[252] The idea of 'hosti-pitality' also emerges in the (minor) rivalry between the Propertian *amator* and Lynceus, who wanted to put his hands over Cynthia (*puella* and text; 2.34.9-10): the former mentions the myth of Menelaus' hospitality of Paris (along with Medea's hospitality of Jason) to exemplify Lynceus' (almost) violated bond of friendship (***hospes in hospitium*** *Menelao uenit adulter,* 2.34.7; cf. Still 2010:22 on the the 'hosti-pitality' of Menelaus-Paris as one of the most emblematic of the ancient world).

[253] Although I have used the Gallus poems as my case studies (for the greater importance of Cornelius Gallus and his rivalry in the economy of the Propertian *corpus*), the importance of *limen* emerges also within another (arguably minor) literary polemic. In elegy 1.4 (a poem displaying structural similarities to the discussed 1.5: see Cairns repr.2009), Propertius warns his 'frenemy' Bassus that, if he keeps hindering his own *seruitium* for Cynthia, the mistress shall turn him into her enemy (*hostis erit*, 1.5.18) and 'defame' him ((***differet***..., v.22) in front of other *puellae*, who, in turn, shall exclude him from their 'thresholds' (...*heu* ***nullo limine*** *carus eris*, v.22). Such an exclusion reads metapoetically as Bassus' exclusion from the elegiac genre (see Heslin 2011 on the metapoetics). Note the employment of *differre*: Bassus' prospective exclusion via 'defamation', bearing obvious negative implications for his poetic fame, also betrays his own *différance* as an *exclusus* '*in potentia*'.

were always re-negotiating his position in respect to 'R/home': inside/outside (integrated yet not fully so). Chapters 3 to 5 further corroborate my understanding of Propertius as 'liminal' and the political implications of such a 'liminality'. Through a spatial analysis of a set of politically-engaged poems, I shall look at the strategies through which Propertius, via the fictional first-person speaker(s) with whom he identifies, manages to detach himself and contest the *centre* as well as to subvert the hierarchical relationship between *centre* and *periphery* that Augustus was fabricating in order to grant himself the stability of his *imperium*. As it will emerge from these readings, the 'production' of Propertius' own (as well as other fictional characters') liminality ultimately proves a form of political resistance to an autocratic power that was conceiving space in terms of divisive borders, through which to foster hierarchies between the people located across it.

Chapter 2. Between *exclusus* and *dominus* II: Propertius' liminal identity at the margins of 'R/home'

2.1. Introduction

In the previous Chapter, I have argued that *limen* (or 'l*hymen*'), that is, the physical *ianua* of the elegiac *domus*, 'unfixes', through its own *différance*, the identity of the *amator*, 'lover' and 'poet', as an undecidable *exclusus/dominus*, also marked by *différance*. As far as the erotic narrative is concerned, the *amator*'s perpetual displacements between the *inside* and the *outside* – or *centre* and *periphery*, if we will – of the elegiac *domus* in fact result in his alignment with two antithetical types of men. When he lingers *outside* the domestic threshold, the 'lover' identifies more comfortably with a feminised, debased, non-penetrating, 'anti-Roman' Other. Instead, when he penetrates *inside*, he turns into a masculine, active, penetrating 'Roman' Self, translating the Roman military culture of conquest and domination into the sphere of *amor*. In the same discussion, I have drawn further attention to the 'liminal identity' of the *amator* as 'poet' (on top of 'lover'). I have demonstrated that *limen* (or 'l*hymen*') regulates the politics of the Propertian *amator*'s poetic rivalry with other *amatores* ('lover-poets'). The impenetrability and penetrability of the threshold once more turns the *amator* into either an *exclusus* from or *dominus* of his rival's poetic work, always ambiguously oscillating between two positions and their attached roles.

In the present Chapter, I shall step outside the fictional world of the elegiac erotic and (meta)poetic narrative to explore the 'liminality' of the elegies' first-person speaker, with whom Propertius identifies, in the realm of history and contemporary politics.[254] Through the lens of post-colonial critic H. K. Bhabha, whose theoretical apparatus significantly rests on his re-activation of Derrida's *différance* within the colonial discourse, I shall argue that Propertius embodies a

[254] Although, as it shall emerge throughout the thesis, it is impossible to separate the erotics and the poetics from politics in Propertius, for these terrains recursively penetrate each other, here (as well as in the next Chapters) I shall concentrate on those poems which help us scrutinise more effectively the first-person speaker 'Propertius' as 'citizen' of his day and age, on top of 'lover-poet'. On Latin elegy's interconnection between the erotics, the poetics and politics, see ultimately Spentzou 2013.

'liminal man' straddling between two spaces and cultures, the native Umbria (*periphery*) and the adoptive metropolis Rome (*centre*). As a Bhabhian 'liminal man', Propertius is partially integrated in the colonial metropolis where he has migrated (*dominus* at 'R/home') and yet again still emotionally connected to his peripheral homeland, a region that was oppressed and devastated by Rome (significantly led by the then-*triumuir* and future *princeps* Octavian Augustus) during the poet's childhood (*exclusus* from 'R/home').[255] Propertius' ambivalent feeling of inclusion and exclusion from Rome, his alignment with both a Roman citizen and an Umbrian oppressed, is not devoid of political implications. On the contrary, it is at the core of his ambivalent appraisal of Rome's emerging imperial culture under Augustus, as shown throughout his whole *oeuvre*.

After these more theoretical premises, I shall propose two case studies that help us illuminate further on Propertius' 'liminality'. As Bhabha and other post-colonial thinkers contend, 'liminality' is not an abstract position but refers to a physical location in marginal spaces, where the 'liminal man' situates his 'standpoint' to look at the world around him and offer his criticism and resistance to its dominant culture. It is with this proposition in mind that I shall approach elegies 1.22 and 4.2. Masked behind the voices of these two poems' speakers, respectively a man fallen during the war between Rome and the Etrusco-Umbrian rebels and now speaking 'beyond the grave', and the speaking statue of the Etruscan god Vertumnus, Propertius identifies with the two characters' geographical and cultural 'liminality'.

As it shall become apparent, both speakers do not construe their 'liminality' in a vacuum but in two specific Bhabhian 'Third Spaces' (in many ways, sites of integration and exclusion like the elegiac *ianua* of Chapter 1). On the one hand, the dead soldier answers his addressee's questions regarding his geo-cultural identity by describing for him the Etrusco-Umbrian region, where he was born. In this *limen*, both part of the centre *inside* ('Romanised') and yet the theatre of a war against the metropolis, thus a space *outside* and resisting to the centre ('non-Roman'), the speaker splits himself as an 'undecidable' *dominus*/*exclusus* at/from 'R/home' (marked by *différance*), a 'citizen' of the

[255] We thus move from the dynamics of exclusion/inclusion in respect to *domus* qua (elegiac) "household" (*OLD* 1), as discussed in Chapter 1, to *domus* qua "(Roman) country" (*OLD* 4).

metropolis and yet again a 'citizen' oppressed by the metropolis. On the other hand, the statue of Vertumnus, who presents himself to his addressee as an Etruscan *émigré*, refers to the place where he lies, namely the Vicus Tuscus in Rome's Etruscan neighbourhood, as a convenient 'threshold' *inside* the *Vrbs* and yet again *at a distance* from the city's epicentre. Here, Vertumnus entertains his passers-by with the tale of his personal story as a 'war booty' imported into Rome from the periphery as well as his extraordinary transformations into different characters, which locate the Etruscan god on the threshold between 'integration' into and 'exclusion' from the Roman *ciuitas* and disturb the Roman citizens' notion of social identity.

In the Conclusions to this Chapter, I shall contend that what the two texts achieve is not only to provide their internal addressees, with which the readers identify, with counter-hegemonic narratives about Rome and its imperial power, but also to physically 'deviate' them onto the 'Third Spaces' from which the poems' speakers deliver their speeches. Such 'deviations' from the centre to the 'margin' work to 'hijack' the addressees' and, thus, the readers' perspective on Rome and its culture, which is observed from its 'thresholds' (spaces where outsiders and insiders meet) rather than from its centre (inside). If the dominant culture of the centre tries to impose its superiority on the periphery and its people, the presence of 'Third Spaces' where people of the centre and people of the periphery meet, helps re-negotiate and challenge the imbalanced relationship between centre and periphery. Therefore, to linger on (and even displace people onto) the *limina*, as Propertius does by ventriloquising the poems' speakers, is ultimately an act of resistance, at once spatial and political.

2.2. Propertius, a 'liminal man' between Umbria and Rome

> "*Sometimes we feel that we straddle between two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools. But however ambiguous and shifting this ground may be, it is not an infertile territory for a writer to occupy. If literature is in part the business of finding new angles at which to enter reality, then once again our distance, our long geographical perspective, may provide us with such angles*"[256]

It is well known that the Romans were a people of immigrants (according to the legend, 'Trojan Others' before becoming 'Roman Selves'), who made the incorporation of other Italic communities the basis of their city's foundational myth.[257] As a result, 'Roman ethnicity', unlike the Greek – which was, at least in the archaic and classical period, a matter of ancestry, kinship and descent[258] – was from the very start heterogeneous and mixed, thus making the process of extending the 'Roman status' to foreigners a relatively easy one to legitimise.[259] In other words, *Romanitas* was a more malleable notion than 'Hellenicity',[260] for it depended on the acquisition of certain legal privileges (citizenship) and cultural traits rather than one's genealogy. Yet, many critics have shown that the process of 'Romanization', that is, the (broadly defined) geographical and cultural incorporation of subjugated peoples of the Roman Empire at the outset and throughout Rome's history, has never been devoid of problems and contradictions, nor has it ever erased the tensions emerging from the metropolis' domination of its peripheries.[261] To be sure, the very label 'Romanization', as a term and methodological tool for the investigation (among other aspects) of Roman imperial identities, has been either revised or rejected.[262]

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[256] Rushdie 1992:15 (from "*Imaginary Homelands*").
[257] Cf. Dench 2005; on dual citizenship of Roman born outside the metropolis: Cic. *Leg.* 2.2.5; Aul. Gell. *NA* 17.17.1.
[258] Hall 1997, 2002.
[259] See Lomas *et alii* 2013:2-8, with further bibliography.
[260] I borrow from Hall's 2002 book title.
[261] See Woolf 2001. I follow Barrett 1997:51's definition: "Romanization is applied generally to all those processes whereby diverse indigenous peoples were either incorporated in or aligned themselves with the Roman Empire".
[262] Revised: e.g. the essays in Keay and Terrenato 2001. Rejected: e.g. Barrett 1997; Woolf 1998; Mattingley 2006, 2010.

As scholars are more and more inclined to argue, Roman models of living were in fact adopted in a complex way by the provincial *élites* and the production of Roman identity was a constant bilateral renegotiation between metropolitan and local cultural practices rather than an unilateral transfer of culture.[263] Thus, D. J. Mattingly has suggested that critics studying indigenous people from the Roman Empire should locate these "in the power networks and colonial discourse that bound them to Rome", and seek "to understand the prelude, processes and results of their complex negotiations (societal and personal) with the imperial power" through "an approach that liberates the study of Roman imperialism from its traditional strait-jacket [and helps] to de-centre Rome and to explore multiple and divergent histories and perspectives of the Roman Empire".[264]

This approach is also advisable for the study of the Italic peoples living in Rome's near periphery. Although the Italians certainly did not constitute the Other to the metropolis (as much as, for example, Easterners did), critics have in fact argued that it is wrong and unproductive to whitewash the cultural differences between the metropolis and its near periphery too, by privileging a Romano-centric view only.[265] In his diachronic study on the Umbrians, the ethnic group of which Propertius was part, G. Bradley has argued against 'Romanization' as the dominant interpretative model for understanding Umbria, since it over-assesses the Roman influence at the expense of others (especially the Etruscan).[266] The scholar has in fact convincingly demonstrated that, in spite of the political and cultural changes occurring in Umbria towards and after the Social Wars (90s-80s BCE) and leading to the inevitable 'Romanization' of the Italic region, a sense of ethnical identity remained strong for a much longer period in the same area.[267] Indeed, the Roman/imperial identity of the Umbrians became "complementary" rather than "antithetical" to a sense of "local communal identity" and the process of 'Romanization' not a quick shift but a "gradual complexification of identities" in which "local societies [were] absorbed into the larger structure of the Roman empire".[268]

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[263] See esp. Webster 1996:11; Hingley 2005 *passim*.
[264] Mattingley 1997:10-1.
[265] See e.g. Farney 2007:133-40, listing the Romans' stereotypes on the Etruscans.
[266] Bradley 2000:269.
[267] Bradley 2000, esp. his conclusions at 239ff. and 266-69.
[268] Bradley 2000:268.

According to Bradley, then, Propertius' double-passport as an Umbrian *émigré* living in Rome would certainly not make him a *complete* alien to Rome and its culture, for his homeland had been successfully 'Romanised' by the time of his birth. Yet, also following Bradley's argument, Propertius' identity would also have to be assessed as 'peripheral' and not only 'metropolitan'.[269] Migrated to the metropolis and yet again hailing from a region that, during his very childhood, revolted against Rome to defend the integrity of its territory (thus a region ambivalently standing *with* and *against* Rome), Propertius would be better understood as geographically, culturally and politically 'in between' centre and periphery, Rome and Umbria.

One avenue for the exploration of an 'in between' identity like Propertius' is offered by post-colonial theory in particular.[270] Whilst taking into account the discrepancies between the ancient Roman and, particularly, the modern British Empires, critics of Roman studies have shown the multiple similarities existing between the colonial dynamic that both systems enacted and, in light of this, the comparable relationship emerging between their respective metropoles and peripheries.[271] To be sure, the analysis of Latin literary texts, often authored by writers who were born and raised elsewhere than Rome before moving to the metropolis, has already proven particularly suitable to this theoretical underpinning.[272]

In virtue of this, I argue that Propertius' identity can be especially assessed in terms of the geo-cultural 'liminality' theorised by post-colonial critic H. K. Bhabha (born 1949).[273] Ethnically a member of the migrant Parsi community in

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[269] Bradley 2000:243 passingly alludes to Propertius' "strong sense of regional heritage".

[270] Webster 1996:7 lists a set of key themes at the heart of post-colonial texts: repudiating the domination of the centre and articulating the history for the margins a) via the articulation of the active histories of colonised peoples, including their capacity for subtle forms of overt and covert 'resistance' b) the deconstruction of the binary models by which the West has categorised its Others and in doing so defined itself. These oppositions include Self/Other, metropolis/colony, centre/ periphery. Compare Goff 2005:2.

[271] Webster 1996:2-5. I take the proceedings of the symposium chaired by Webster & Cooper 1996 as the *terminus post quem* for the development of the connection between post-colonial theory and Roman studies.

[272] Johnson 2001:7 speaks of the Latin as "a literature of *émigrés*". Analysis on Latin texts sustained by post-colonial theory include Syed 2005; Lowell Bowditch 2014; Lowrie 2015a, 2015b (and see also Vasunia 2003; Adler 2008; Parker 2011; Gruen 2011 for different views on the connection between colonial discourse and classics). Whilst falling short of offering a post-colonial reading of Propertius, Keith 2008:139ff.; O'Rourke 2011; Lowrie 2011; Panoussi 2015 have made parallels between Augustan imperialism and colonialism.

[273] On the notion of 'liminality' in anthropology, see General Introduction.

colonial India, a hybrid group of stateless people who experience the ability of feeling at home everywhere and yet, paradoxically, also "the burden of having no home whatsoever", Bhabha has always had ambivalent sentiments of inclusion and exclusion from the dominant culture.[274] The Parsi man in respect to the Indian, the colonised Indian in respect to the British coloniser, Bhabha's own multiple perspective on the world (his own 'in between-ness') informs his theoretical thought, in which identity, politics and the spatial are closely intertwined.[275] Bhabha's concept of 'liminality' is first of all used to deconstruct the hierarchical relationship between centre and periphery and their respective inhabitants, the colonisers and the colonised.

Following Edward Said's argument on the Western constructions of the East as exposed in his groundbreaking essay *Orientalism* (1978), Bhabha agrees that the cultural identity of a colonial nation as well as its claims of superiority is founded on the differentiation between itself (Self) and the cultural identity of the colonised people (Other).[276] Yet, unlike Said, Bhabha contends that such a differentiation is only possible through the encounter between the two cultures and that this encounter is characterised by an irreducible ambivalence preventing the hierarchy of the coloniser/colonised relationship from being successfully assessed.[277] Indeed, although the coloniser's culture wants to claim its difference from that of the colonised in order to validate its power, Bhabha contends that this is impossible for, in the very moment when the meeting happens, such a difference sustaining the hierarchical relationship between coloniser and the colonised fails to be reproduced.

To prove this, Bhabha expands the Foucauldian and then Saidian idea that language is the most powerful means to attain and exercise (colonial) power.[278] Yet, unlike Foucault and Said, Bhabha adopts a post-structuralist approach to

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[274] Huddart 2006:53.
[275] Bhabha 1994:x: "the unresolved tensions between cultures and countries[…]have become the narrative of my life, and the defining characteristic of my work".
[276] Said 1978; Huddart 2006:3.
[277] Cf. Loomba 2015:112-3.
[278] Said 1978:3; Huddart 2006:2. Said 1978 *passim* argues that the coloniser can successfully master the colonised by failing to acknowledge the latter's complex and multi-layered identity and creating negative 'stereotypes' with which to define him. Through these 'stereotypes' (the Other is e.g. deemed 'intellectually inferior'/ 'uncivilised' / 'savage' and so on), the coloniser can inscribe his relationship with the Other in binary terms (Self over Other), and, in virtue of this, legitimise his power. See Bhabha 1994:77; Huddart 2006:29.

language to argue that the means of language is never completely successful in establishing the mastery of one culture over the other.[279] By strategically re-activating Derrida's notion of *différance* to the colonial discourse, Bhabha argues that the coloniser's language is indeed never stable nor secure but always open to negotiations.[280] At the level of linguistic enunciation, the 'signs' that the coloniser transfers to the colonised in order to control him in fact always undergo a semantic slippage that distorts and dislocates the meaning of the enunciation.[281]

In the essay *Signs Taken For Wonders*, Bhabha illustrates most thoroughly the unpredictable and defective function of language as a means to assert colonial power.[282] Bhabha focuses on the divulgation of the Bible, which he often refers to as the 'English Book', in the "wild and wordless" peripheries of the British Empire.[283] The critic argues that the discovery of the 'English book' by the colonised was coterminous with both "a moment of originality and authority" and "a process of displacement".[284] Certainly, the Bible was meant to work as a 'symbol' of the English colonial authority, for, through it, the missionaries of the British Empire attempted to divulge the Word of the (Western) God as well as a series of key ideas pertaining to the Western cultural and religious tradition.[285] Nevertheless, the text ended up lending itself to "a process of displacement, distortion, dislocation, repetitions" (*Entstellung*), its original meaning being 'made to differ' and 'defer' after reaching the colonised community.[286] In India, for example, those natives that did read the holy text – some of them simply re-sold it or used it as waste paper – displayed a general attraction to the new religion, yet "they did not imitate its ideas slavishly".[287] If, on the one hand, Indians were for example generally inclined to receive baptism, they accepted the sacrament only on the condition that there would be a mass conversion.[288]

The episode of the Bible's divulgation in colonial India lays bare the failure of the linguistic medium of colonial authority (the 'English Book') to

[279] See Bhabha 1986 *passim*; 1994:107-8.
[280] Bhabha 1994:107.
[281] Bhabha *ibidem*.
[282] Bhabha 1994:102ff.
[283] Bhabha 1994:102.
[284] Bhabha 1994:103.
[285] Bhabha *ibidem*.
[286] Bhabha 103, 107-8.
[287] Bhabha 1994:118, 122.
[288] Bhabha 1994:114, 119.

validate its authority via an orthodox reception and, thus, at a theoretical level, the validity of Derrida's post-structuralist approach to language for the colonial discourse (marked by *différance*).[289] Furthermore, the episode sheds light on the inevitable 'liminality' emerging from the cultural encounter between Self and Other (through the textual medium).[290] This 'liminality' characterises both the medium and the people. The Bible is in fact turned from a pure, authentic text reflecting the Western tradition into a text whose meaning is re-negotiated by the receiving culture, a text ultimately both Western and Eastern, appropriated by both the centre and the periphery. Yet, his colonial readers are also inevitably made 'liminal' by the encounter, for, whilst being partly 'domesticated' (Others turned into Christian Selves), they keep the uncanny traits of their difference, their identities resembling and yet again being 'made to differ' and 'defer' from those of their Christian masters (in between Selves and Others).

More generally speaking, the reception of the Bible in India is therefore illustrative of the irreducible ambivalence deriving from the clash of two cultures and their respective representatives. Rather than being marked by 'difference' from each other, the cultures clashing together are governed by *différance*, their supposedly stable and fixed characteristics being always open to re-negotiations.[291] It is precisely this disturbing interplay between similarity and difference (a partial iteration and partial disavowal of the Self) to which Bhabha refers to as 'mimicry' that renders the 'liminal men' participating in the encounter politically resistant to colonial power. Their 'mimicry', namely the 'imperfect copy' that they make of the dominant culture (Self and Other), in fact exposes the inconsistency of the dichotomy between Self and Other on which the imperial ruling class strives to impose his control over the colonised.[292]

The colonised remaining in the periphery as much as the *émigrés* often leaving the periphery for the metropolis are fitting representatives of these 'liminal', 'mimic men'.[293] In touch with the centre and yet always connected to

[289] Bhabha 1994:108.
[290] Bhabha 1994:116.
[291] Bhabha 1994:66-84, 93-101.
[292] Indeed, in the aftermath of the colonization of India (but the same could be observed in other colonial contexts), the British unwillingly 'created' a class of educated Indians who had partly internalised the culture of the colonisers whilst still displaying traces of autochthonous 'Otherness' (Bhabha 1994:87; Huddart 2006:41).
[293] On the comparable figures of the 'colonised' and the 'migrant', see Bhabha 1994:79-80, 139; Huddart 2006:80-4.

their homelands, their 'liminality' is not an unproductive position from which to look at the world outside and, as for post-colonial authors in particular, to write about it.[294] As I have already posited, Propertius can be taken as a man and writer of this kind. Whilst his 'displacement' from the motherland and consequent migration to Rome has been assessed in terms of painful 'homelessness' and 'loss' only,[295] no one seems to have emphasised the positive consequences coming from the poet's presence in the metropolis as 'an outcast within', a man both 'at home' (*dominus* at 'R/home') and 'estranged' from the centre (*exclusus* from 'R/home'). This may well be due to the fact that he did not move from Bombay to London, (in other words) that he is an ancient rather than a modern 'immigrant'. Yet, it seems like there are certain universals in an immigrant's personal story (a sense of displacement joined by an equally strong desire to struggle and resist) that transcend time and space and invite us to look at Propertius as an *émigré ante litteram*, a man 'in between' two geographical and cultural spaces that developed an ambivalent political relationship between each other.

2.3. 'Third Spaces' and other *limina*: spaces 'in between' for people 'in between'

My interest in Propertius' 'liminality' is specifically directed to its spatial dimension. As Bhabha contends, 'liminal identities' (like his own) are not produced in a vacuum but in a specific space.[296] His most famous collection of essays, significantly titled *The Location of Culture*, opens with a discussion of those geographical interstices or 'Third Spaces' where people with different backgrounds, the metropolitans and the peripheral (the colonisers and the

[294] I re-echo the words of post-colonial writer S. Rushdie (reported in the epigraph *supra*).
[295] Gardner 2010 in particular argues that Propertius' (and Tibullus') fictional attempts to co-habit with their *puellae* in a shared *domus* are symptomatic the loss of the (real) *domus* of their ancestors.
[296] Huddart 2006:5. In order to develop his own discussion on 'liminality', Bhabha 1994:4-5 significantly draws from *the physical space* of a staircase (part of Afro-American artist Renée Green's installation '*Sites of Genealogy*'), which he reads as a metaphor for the hybrid geographical encounter between the white and black communities.

colonised/migrants) clash to turn "solid, authentic culture" into "unexpected, hybrid, and fortuitous [cultures]" and where a new form of 'liminal subjectivity' emerges.[297] These are not only the colonies but, more generally, any spaces that stage the encounter between two cultures.[298] 'Third Spaces' are the geo-cultural spaces of *différance*, where meaning is constantly re-negotiated between two or more cultures and processes of identity negotiation and resistance for the oppressed can take place.[299]

To be sure, the production of spaces of both oppression and resistance is germane to many post-colonial thinkers other than Bhabha. I should mention at least two among those who have inspired my reading of Propertius the most: American feminist, cultural and queer theorist Gloria E. Anzaldúa (1942-2004) and black feminist and post-colonial writer bell hooks (born 1952). Anzaldúa's and bell hooks' configuration of the space of the oppressed as interactive and contaminated – inevitably 'liminal', for it is always in touch with the dominant culture, as opposed to the pure, isolated space of the segregated Other –, are resonant with Bhabha's notion of 'Third Space'.[300]

Anzaldúa's work as well as her life-long political activism on many fronts (especially within the Chicana and LGBTQ+ movements as a Chicana, lesbian, working-class-bred academic residing in the USA) cannot be properly assessed without taking into account the very spatial standpoint from which the critic views the world around her. Born and raised on the physical threshold, or, as she calls it, the '*Borderlands*' between Mexico and the USA, a culturally-fluid and only 'officially' and 'superficially' American territory at the Southern tip of Texas (the Rio Valley), Anzaldúa refers to her existence on this geographical and cultural

[297] Huddart 2006:7; cf. Bhabha 1994:1 on 'Third Space' as "the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and presence, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion".
[298] Bhabha 1994:139 indicates the spaces of community available to the scattered *émigrés* like him, "gathering *on the edge* of 'foreign' cultures; gathering *at the frontiers*; gathering *in the ghettos* or cafés of city centres" (my emphasis).
[299] 'Third Space' is therefore both an abstract and a physical concept in Bhabha. It refers to both 'the space of enunciation' between speaker and addressee (Self and Other: the representatives of two distinguished cultures) in which the former's utterance is given room to be interpreted in various ways by the latter ("appropriated, translated, rehistoricised and read anew", 1994:37) and the physical spatial reality in which such a negotiation of meaning between cultures is made possible.
[300] Soja 1996:125ff. significantly mentions Bhabha, Anzaldúa and bell hook together as thinkers who contribute to providing a new understanding of space that defies simplistic binary dichotomies.

limen as the reason behind her 'seeing' double, first from the perspective of one culture (the dominant), then from the perspective of another (the minority).[301] As the critic suggests with her characteristic poetic diction, "[r]emoved from [the dominant] culture's center you glimpse the sea in which you've been immersed but to which you were oblivious, no longer seeing the world the way you were enculturated to see it".[302] Throughout her work, the critic attempts to transform the apparent 'confusion' and negative 'ambivalence' generated by her condition as an 'in-between' subject into a self-empowering instrument of critique of the dominant culture (the Euro-centric, American) and its inherent hierarchies. This liminal subjectivity of the 'Borderlands' "has access to a multiplicity of perspective[,] bridges the unnatural divide formed between them" and "gains a sensitivity and insight – *la facultad* [to deploy Anzaldúa's own term] – that allows [her] to tactically navigate monocultural biases and exclusionary practices that tend to form within isolated in-groups".[303] What Anzaldúa ultimately achieves in her work is indeed to challenge typically Western dualistic ways of thinking expressed through 'labels' that split and fix people into reassuring and coherent categorizations,[304] to "empowe[r] the permeability of the Borderland and delegitimiz[e] the authority of the impenetrable border".[305]

The empowerment that the 'Borderland' provides for a 'liminal' identity like Anzaldúa, a US citizen (*domina*) yet one excluded (*exclusa*) from the hierarchical structures at the foundation of contemporary American society, is

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[301] Cf. Keating 2009:2: "[Anzaldúa] moves within, between, and among [diverse], sometimes conflicting worlds. She positions herself on the thresholds – simultaneously inside and outside – and establishes points of connection with people of diverse backgrounds".

[302] Anzaldúa, from *"now let us shift"*, quoted in Keating 2006:8. The in-between spaces of the 'Borderlands' constituting the 'standpoint' for looking at America as a *marginalised within* is often re-created by Anzaldúa as a more imaginary *limen* that the writer likes to call '*nepantla*' (a Nàhuatl word significantly meaning 'in the middle of it'). It is by inhabiting the physical and metaphorical space of '*nepantla*' that marginalised individuals (whether or not part of the Chicano community) are allowed to "question old ideas and beliefs, acquire new perspectives, change worldviews and shift from one world to another" and can "attempt a community" and create "links instead of borders" (Anzaldúa, from *"(Un)natural bridges, (Un) safe spaces"*, quoted in Keating 2009:243ff.).

[303] Decker & Winchock 2017:4-5.

[304] Cf. Anzaldúa's suggestive self-presentation (from *"La Prieta"*, quoted in Keating 2009:2): "You say my name is ambivalence? Think of me as Shiva, a many-armed and legged body with one foot on brown soil, one on white, one in straight society, one in the gay world, the man's world, the women's, one limb in the literary world, another in the working class, the socialist, and the occult worlds. A sort of spider woman hanging by one strand of web. Who, me, confused? Ambivalent? Not so. Only your labels split me".

[305] Decker & Winchock *ibidem*.

resonant with the conceptualization of 'marginal spaces' as 'sites of radical openness' offered by bell hooks. Raised within a black community at the edges of a small town in Kentucky (USA), bell hooks also owes her deep-rooted awareness about the political implications of the spatial to her own upbringing in a place where racial differences were mapped over the urban spaces of centre and periphery, the two poles being physically demarcated by the local railway tracks.[306] Whilst bell hooks is well aware that margins are often sites of repression dictated by the centre's oppressive structures,[307] bell hooks argues that they can also offer the possibility for new, radical perspectives from which to see and create, particularly for exploited and colonized people living at the edges. Indeed, in racialized urban contexts like that in which she spent her childhood, the black community's daily oscillation between the periphery and the centre (respectively, their dwelling and working spaces at the service of the dominant white class) endow them with a particular 'liminal' way of seeing reality and, specifically, with the faculty of "looking from the outside in and from inside out…on the centre as well as on the margin" and thus of "underst[anding] both".[308] According to bell hooks, the space of the margin can move beyond its alignment with a detached, pure site of oppressed (*versus* oppressors) to become a place in contact and in competition with the centre and its fallacious hierarchies. Indeed, when the 'margin' construes a productive relationship with the centre, it can transform itself into "a central location for the production of a counter-hegemonic discourse", one that "nourishes [the oppressed's] capacity to resist".[309]

Following Bhabha, Anzaldúa and bell hooks, I argue that Propertius also chooses *limina* (comparable to the 'Third Spaces', 'Borderlands', 'margins' here

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[306] bell hooks 1989:20.

[307] bell hooks *ibidem*: "Across those [railway] tracks were paved streets, stores we could not enter, restaurants we could not eat in, and people we could not look directly in the face. Across those tracks was a world we could work in as maids, as janitors, as prostitutes, as long as it was in a service capacity. We could enter that world but we could not live there. We had always to return to the margin, to cross the tracks, to shacks and abandoned houses on the edge of town. There were laws to ensure our return. To not return was to risk being punished".

[308] bell hooks *ibidem*.

[309] bell hooks *ibidem*. Notably, bell hooks concludes her discussion on 'marginality' with an invitation to the white colonisers to 'cross the railway tracks' themselves from the centre back to the periphery, so as to interface with the voices they attempt to supress and to reconsider their assumption that the 'centre' is the only powerful space in the dialectic ("This is an intervention. A message from that space in the margin that is a site of creativity and power, that inclusive space where we recover ourselves where we move in solidarity to erase the category colonised/coloniser. Marginality as a site of resistance. *Enter that space. Let us meet there*. We greet you as liberators", 23 [my emphasis]).

presented) to produce his own 'liminality', namely his geo-cultural and geo-political sense of inclusion and exclusion from the imperial metropolis. If in the previous Chapter we have looked at the way the *limen* (or 'l*hymen*') of the elegiac *domus*, a space of successful and failing encounters, makes Propertius' identity (as *amator*) oscillate (always 'differing' and 'deferring') between that of *exclusus* (outside) and *dominus* (inside), through the following case studies we shall explore how Propertius' identity (as citizen) is made to 'differ' and 'defer' from that of a proper 'Roman' around other, equally powerful 'thresholds' of identity re-negotiation and political contestation.

2.4. *Contingens Vmbria* (Deviations to the margin I): Propertius' and Tullus' return to the Italic 'contact zone' (1.22)

"*When I left that concrete space in the margins, I kept alive in my heart ways of knowing reality which affirm continually not only the primacy of resistance but the necessity of a resistance that is sustained by remembrance of the past, which includes recollections of broken tongues giving us ways to speak that decolonise our minds, our very beings*"[310]

In the *Monobiblos*' 'seal poem' 1.22, Propertius reveals his geo-cultural provenience in Umbria to his friend Tullus, a native of Umbria's neighbouring Etruria. The poet weaves a compressed yet dense narrative about the woeful events occurred in Umbria and Etruria during his childhood. At that time, Rome, led by its then-*triumuir* Octavian, repressed a local attempt of revolt,[311] which resulted in Propertius' loss of his father, land confiscations and consequent migration to Rome.[312] I argue that in this text Propertius 'deviates' Tullus, a man

[310] bell hooks 1989:21.
[311] On the *bellum Perusinum*, cf. DuQuesnay 1992:51-4, with full historical sources. On the siege of Perusia in particular, see Vell. 2.74; Flor. 2.16; Sen. *Clem.* 1.11.1; Suet. *Aug.* 15, with Gabba 1969:215-23. Whilst the name of Octavian (Augustus) is strategically not mentioned in 1.22, the poem preceding 1.22 in the collection, also dealing with the *bellum Perusinum*, *does* mention Augustus as the enemy of the Etrusco-Umbrian dissidents (*per medios ereptum* ***Caesaris*** *ensis*, 1.21.7). Thus, the absence of an explicit reference to Octavian does not weaken the criticism against the *princeps* but rather makes it subtler (cf. similarly Bonamente 2004:53-4).
[312] At 4.1b, the astrologer Horos refers to the death of Propertius' father as occurred in the poet's childhood, before the land confiscations (and thus, potentially, in the context of the *bellum*

associated to Rome's growing imperial power, back to his 'homeland' so as to remind him of his past as an oppressed yet dissident Italian, contrasting his present as a Roman imperialist. In order to do so, Propertius provides Tullus with an ambivalent description of the Etrusco-Umbrian 'margin'. As the poet reveals, this is not only a territory of loss and dispossession for the Umbrians and the Etruscans, for which no one needs to be blamed but the "Roman strife" (*Romana Discordia*, 1.22.5), but also of political resistance for the oppressed, who sympathetically bonded with each other in the face of Rome's military invasion. By identifying himself (and Tullus) as a man hailing from this Bhabhian 'Third Space', Propertius splits himself (and his addressee) into a 'liminal man' divided between *centre* and *periphery*. Indeed, in spite of including himself among the 'citizens of Rome' (*suos...ciues*, 1.22.5; *dominus* at 'R/home'), the very devastation of Umbria by Rome makes him develop a feeling of not belonging anywhere, of not having a 'citizenship' whatsoever and, thus, of not being part of the metropolis (*exclusus* from 'R/home').

2.4.1. 'Deviating' Tullus: an Odyssean encounter in the motherland(s)

In a recent article, I. Peirano has drawn attention to the narratological 'liminality' of the *Monobiblos*' last two poems, 1.21 and 1.22, namely their 'paratextual' function in respect to the collection's previous erotic pieces, at the margins of which they appear.[313] Yet, the narratological is not the only way in which these pieces are 'liminal'. Both poems in fact stage encounters at the threshold between life and death, for their respective speakers are dead men

Perusinum): *ossaque legisti non illa aetate legenda/patris et in tenuis cogeris ipse lares* (4.1b.127-8). On the confiscations, cf. Dio 48.6.3, 48.8.5, 48.13.6, 48.9.3, 49.15.1; Virg. *Ecl.* 1 and 9; *Dirae*; Hor. *Epist.* 2.2.49-52 and see esp. Gabba 1971; 1985:99ff. The disputed possibility that the Propertii were rewarded lands by Augustus years after the confiscations (Gabba 1985:103; Bonamente 2004:30ff.; Cairns 2006:57-9) shall not change Propertius' ambivalent political position in respect to Augustus and his imperial propaganda in the years to come.

[313] Peirano 2014:231. I shall not provide a joint reading of 1.21 and 1.22, even though I am fully aware of the formal and thematic similarities between the two poems (on which see ultimately Peirano 2014:237; and *infra* n333). The oft-suggested identification of the dead man at 1.22.7, a relative of Propertius', as the speaker of 1.21 (e.g. La Penna 1977:9) does not bear significant consequences to my argument.

addressing a hurried *uiator* passing by their tombs in the characteristic language of sepulchral epigram.[314] Furthermore, in the second of this pair of poems, 'liminality' also has to do with the geographical space in which the sepulchral encounter has to be imagined. Indeed, the encounter between Propertius and his friend Tullus, the speaker and his addressee, seems to take place at the 'threshold' of Rome, and specifically, 'in between' the two men's respective motherlands of Umbria and Etruria. Here, in a territory recently invaded by the Roman army, the passer-by Tullus has come to visit the tombstone of Propertius, who plays the role of a victim fallen during the war against Rome and now 'speaking beyond the grave':

Qualis et unde genus, qui sint mihi, Tulle, Penates,
Quaeris pro nostra semper amicitia
si Perusina tibi patriae sunt nota sepulcra
Italiae duris funera temporibus,
cum Romana suos egit discordia ciues—
sic mihi praecipue, puluis Etrusca, dolor,
tu proiecta mei perpessa es membra propinqui,
tu nullo miseri contegis ossa solo—
proxima suppositos contingens Vmbria campos
me genuit terris fertilis uberibus.

(1.22)

The poem starts with Propertius reporting Tullus' tricolon of questions about his social (*qualis...*) and ethnic (*...et unde genus, qui sint mihi Penates*) identity, to which, at the end of the poem, Propertius provides the answer (vv.9-10).[315] Tullus' elementary questions have led critics to speculate about the authenticity of both his acquaintance with Propertius (*pro nostra semper amicitia*)

[314] See Fedeli 1980:486-8, 496-99; Peirano 2014:231. Although there is no need, as Williams 1968:173-5 does, to argue that the speakers are "ghosts" (like Hector at *Aen.* 2.288), we are left with the impression of hearing two 'speakers from the grave' (on such kind of speakers, see Chapter 5).
[315] Cf. Janan 2001:51; Schwindt 2013:48 on the poem's serpentine syntactical structure delaying the answer to the opening question.

and his provenience in Etruscan Perusia (*Perusina…patriae*).[316] Against such speculations, Cairns has nevertheless provided historical evidence for Propertius' and Tullus' birth in neighbouring regions and even for their potential blood relationship.[317] In addition to Cairns' findings, I argue that confirmation that Propertius and Tullus are bound by a genuine sentiment of friendship also derives from the literary background to the questions posed by Tullus. On top of featuring as a standard formula in Greek and Latin epitaphs,[318] the questions are in fact reminiscent of an important Odyssean scene, in which Penelope interrogates Odysseus, finally arrived in the motherland Ithaca and yet still hidden in disguise, about his identity.[319] In virtue of their Odyssean intertext, Tullus' questions corroborate the idea that his encounter with Propertius is one happening in a shared homely space (another 'Ithaca', as it were) between two people who know each other well, even though time and space have turned them into strangers.[320]

Drawing attention to the Homeric intertext is also interesting when we take into account that Propertius' and Tullus' final re-union in the same familiar space contrasts the usual spatial asymmetry between the two friends, as brought about in other elegies. Whereas Tullus often displays, much like his illustrious uncle (1.6.19), an obstinate interest in the Roman fatherland's public and military affairs which takes him, Odysseus-like, far from the metropolis, Propertius, in the manner of Penelope, does not move from Rome, where he dedicates full time to the private joys of love (*nam tua non aetas cessauit amori/semper at armatae cura fuit patriae*, 1.6.21-2; contrast 1.8a+b).[321] It is clear, then, how in poem 1.22 Propertius 'deviates' Tullus towards a very different *iter* in space and time from the ones on which he is used to embarking at the service of Rome. This is in fact not the imperial journey of a 'metropolitan' man travelling to become "part of the

[316] Heyworth 2007a:101; Caston 2012:146. I read *semper* (v.2) as a temporal modifer of *amicitia* ("ever-lasting friendship") rather than *quaeris*.
[317] Cairns 2006:59-62 suggests that Tullus' family, the Volcacii, had an Umbrian branch in Asisium. Proof of this would come from a tomb complex unearthed near the Via Statilia at Rome, in which three funerary inscriptions of freedmen from the *gens Propertii* have been found next to the inscription of a freedman from the *gens Volcacii* (and "joint tombs of related families [were] particularly characteristic of funerary practice on the frontier between Umbria and Etruria", 62).
[318] Cf. the copious examples provided by Peirano 2014:235n40-1.
[319] τίς πόθεν εἶς ἀνδρῶν; πόθι τοι πόλις ἠδὲ τοκῆες; (*Od*. 19.105; reprised at Virg. *Aen*. 8.114).
[320] See Putnam 1976:95-6 for a different reading of the Homeric intertext.
[321] Gardner 2013:59 brilliantly defines Tullus as "a young addressee whose link with consular authority and failure to experience the erotic crises of youth make him an example of civically responsible maturation", thus a counter-figure to Propertius' elegiac *persona*. For a detailed reconstruction of Tullus' biography, see Cairns 2006:42ff.

accepted imperial machine" (*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***, 1.6.31-4),[322] but, rather, the personal journey of a 'peripheral' young boy, returning to the 'chronotope' (*duris…temporibus*) of his past oppression as an inhabitant of Etruria.[323] For once, Tullus is indeed deviated from the centre to a *different* periphery. Like Odysseus at the end of much wandering, he is driven back to his true 'home'.

2.4.2. *Contingens Vmbria*: the polluted margin of destruction and loss, 'contact' and resistance

Contingo:
"*to smite, infect*";
"to be in contact or connected with (a person) by relationship of friendship"[324]

Through a close reading of the elegy, we can underscore how the Etrusco-Umbrian periphery is presented to Tullus as a land of both death and destruction and sympathetic bonding and resistance for their oppressed communities: the Etruscan, of which Tullus used to be part, and the Umbrian, to which Propertius used to belong before they both moved to Rome. In virtue of its double function, the Etrusco-Umbrian becomes a 'margin' of the kind post-colonial thinkers talk

[322] Cairns 1974:159-63 argues that Tullus went to Asia with the charge of supervising the return of looted temple treasures. This would make him a quintessential 'imperialist', concerned with the importation of goods from the subjected *peripheries* into the metropolitan *centre*.
[323] Here (and *infra* throughout the thesis), I borrow the term from Russian literary theorist Mikhail M. Bakhtin, who refers to хронотоп (i.e., 'time-space': Bakhtin repr.1981:84-5) as the literary configuration of time and space (defining a particular literary genre). According to Bakhtin, in the literary 'chronotope', "spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole" (*ibidem*, 84) so that a 'chronotope' appears in a literary text as either a space marked by a specific temporality or a time characterised by a specific spatial dimension (cf. Tally 2012:56-7). Within elegy 1.22, the interconnectedness of 'time' and 'space' is made apparent in Propertius' description of Etruria's and Umbria's geographical space, which is inevitably bound up with its devastation "during the harsh times" (*duris…temporibus*) of the *bellum Perusinum* (see further *infra*); hence, my employment of the term 'chronotope' to define the peripheral area in which the poet was born.
[324] *OLD* 6 and 2b, respectively.

about, a Bhabhian 'Third Space' of both exclusion and inclusion, where 'liminal identities' situate their 'standpoint' for looking at the world outside.

Let us begin with the 'margin' as a site of sufferings and exclusion. After noting how Rome's brutal attack made a graveyard of Propertius' and Tullus' homelands (*Perusina…patriae…sepulcra/Italiae…funera*),[325] Propertius goes on to convey both Etruria and Umbria as uncanny spaces that, due to Rome's invasion, turned from 'generative' to 'destructive'. As far as Etruria is concerned, Propertius 'exhumes' the tragic story of one of his relatives (*mei…propinqui*), apparently a native of Etruria, who has fallen in the warfare. The poet's greatest source of sorrow (*sic mihi praecipue…dolor*) is constituted by the "Etruscan dust" (*puluis Etrusca*), which has failed to grant a burial place to his relative as well as to other fellow soldiers of his. As J. Clarke has recently argued, by being defined as "dust", Etruria is recast in the role of a "terrible mother who has become so estranged and alienated from her Italian offspring that she lets them be abandoned, neglecting to cover and protect them".[326] Such a representation of Etruria as an inhospitable maternal space abandoning her offspring is further mirrored by Propertius' presentation of his native Umbria that follows and which I re-quote:

proxima suppositos contingens Vmbria campos
me genuit terris fertilis uberibus.
(1.22.9-10)

Propertius refers to his homeland with the language of motherhood too: not only through *me genuit*[327] but also through the adjective *uber* modifying "Umbrian fields" (*terris... uberibus*), a cognate of the noun indicating "a woman's

[325] *Italiae* obviously implies both Tullus' Etruria and Propertius' Umbria. The poem's spatial organization, quoting Perusia first (v.3) and then the *suppositi* ("located further south") fields of Umbria (vv.9-10), with the "Etruscan dust" lying in between, closely follows the geographical space to which it refers.
[326] Clarke 2012:374, drawing attention to *puluis*' female gendering in this context as well as the additional meanings of *contegere* and *proicere* as respectively "covering to protect" and "abandoning a baby".
[327] *OLD* 1b, "to create [of a mother]".

breast or teat (as the source of milk)" (*uber*).[328] Far from a sheltering and nurturing mother, Umbria is nevertheless also indicated as "the closest to" (*proxima*) and "in touch with" (*contingens*) the aforementioned "Etruscan dust", her "fields" indeed lying right "below" the Etruscan (*supposito…campo*).[329] Since the "Etruscan dust" is made of the blood and the bones from the many corpses fallen on the battlefield (and denied burial, like Propertius' relative), Propertius alludes to the fertility of maternal Umbria with great irony: as H. Parker has noted, Umbria is in fact sowed, so to speak, "by blood and bones".[330]

Propertius therefore suggests that Etruria and Umbria constitute a borderless continuum of putrefying fields rather than protective 'mother(land)s'. Indeed, Umbria is not a 'bordered womb' but a vulnerable space, "infected" (*contingens*) by the "Etruscan dust" scattered above it. The poet's birth in a region "physically in touch" with death and destruction renders him virtually indistinguishable from the fellow dead Etruscans and Umbrians, as if he had been born to be himself annihilated by the ***Romana*** *Discordia*. Notably, instead of communicating his Roman *nomen* to Tullus (as one would expect in a 'seal poem'), Propertius scatters it through the pentameter of the poem's second verse (***PRO*** *nostra sem****PER*** *amici****TI****a*).[331] Such a fragmentation of his name in more parts, mirroring the dispersion of the Etruscan soldiers' corpses through the "Etruscan dust", well conveys Propertius' loss of his sense of identity as a Roman citizen and, at the same time, his identification with the nameless victims of the metropolis' oppression. In spite of the poet's previous reference to Italians (Etruscans and Umbrians) like himself as Rome's "own citizens" (*suos...ciues*), Propertius and his fellow Italians do not seem to belong anywhere since their

[328] *OLD* 1; cf. Virg. *Aen.* 1.531; 3.164. Note that the adjective *fertilis* (< *fero*) preceding *uberibus* is usually applied to land with the meaning of "fruitful, productive, fertile" (*OLD* 1), yet its cognate *fertilitas* can point to the "fertility" of women (*OLD* 1c). On the association between (mother)earth and female body in Latin (epic) literature, see Keith 2000:36-64.

[329] Hendry 1997:603 notes the additional meaning of *contingens* as "to smite, infect" (compare Propertius' erotic contagion by Cynthia opening the *Monobiblos*: ***contactum*** *nullis ante Cupidinibus*, 1.1.2); Putnam 1976:107 that of *supposito* as "buried" (*OLD* 1b) and "made subject" (*OLD* 4). Contrast the vulnerability of Umbria (opened to Etruria) with Tullus' initial question on the location of Propertius' "enclosed home" (*Penates*, connected to *penitus,* "from the inside, from within", *OLD* 1). On Etruria as annihilated and borderless, cf. Massa-Peirault 2014:149.

[330] Parker 1992: esp.88-92. Cf. Hor. *C.* 2.1.29-30, *pinguior/campus sepulcris*. Note that Umbria's etymological connection to *umor*/*imber* further enhances its potential of "sowing" and "moisturing" the barren field of *ossa* in nearby Etruria. So Umbria is both "fertilising" the *puluis* Etrusca and joining her in putrefaction.

[331] Heyworth 2007:101. Contrast e.g. Virg. *Georg.* 4.559-66 (Virgil's σφραγίς containing the poet's *nomen*).

homes were violated. Certainly, they do not feel part of the 'Roman country' (of which Etruria and Umbria were officially part), who has turned into the enemy of his own citizens.

Yet, the geographical re-designation of Umbria as a space physically 'closest' and 'in touch' with Etruria does not only bring about the sense of a shared feeling of alienation and dispossession from the motherlands. The configuration of Umbria as inseparable from Etruria in a borderless space of oppressed people is also a vivid pointer to the margin's potential resistance in the face of its annihilation. I contend that the participle *contingens* modifying Umbria in particular helps us develop this further reading. Whilst *contingo* implies, as we have just noted, Propertius' co-habitation in the same putrefying space as his unburied relative and other dead soldiers, the verb in fact also explains to Tullus that Umbria has a *friendly* connection to Etruria.[332] The relationship of solidarity between the two regions' victims, geographically and emotionally 'in touch'[333] with each other, can be considered a spatial and political attempt to resist the oppressors.

This becomes more evident when we take into account Rome's contemporary attempts to divide Umbria and Etruria as well as to re-define the two regions' borders. Indeed, in the aftermath of Rome's military intervention in Umbria and Etruria, Augustus drew a divisive border between the *regio VII Etruria* and the *Regio VI Vmbria*, a form of physical and cultural mastery of the two ethnic communities, which, up to that point, had developed a productive and long-lasting cultural relationship.[334] Furthermore, around the same time, the future *princeps* created the centuriation of Hispellum for his veteran soldiers after expropriating the locals' territories around the Umbro-Etruscan border (between

[332] See *supra.*

[333] The semantic insistence on geographical/ethnic and friendly "closeness" (***proxima**…Vmbria*; cf. *proximus*, esp. *OLD* 2, 8) also permeates poem 1.21 (*pars ego sum uestrae **proxima** militiae*, 1.21.4). Indeed, in 1.21 too, the speaker and addressee, respectively the speaking 'ghost' of a soldier fallen in the *bellum Perusinum* and a fellow Etruscan soldier, are also trying to sympathise with each other. The passer-by could let the dead man's sister know where his bones lie, thus preventing the dispersion of his corpse on the Etruscan mountains (*Gallum per medios ereptum Caesaris ensis/effugere ignotas non potuisse manus/et quaecumque super dispersa inuenerit ossa/montibus Etruscis, haec sciat esse mea*, 1.21.7-10).

[334] On the division of Italy into *regiones*, see General Introduction; Laurence 1998. On the cultural exchange between Etruria and Umbria, see Aigner-Foresti 1996:11-27; with Sensi 1983 on the prosopographic presence of Umbrians in Perusia.

Assisium and Perusia).[335] If the advanced suggestion that the Propertii owned their properties precisely in the area occupied by the centuriation of Hispellum (for the creation of which their lands were confiscated) is grounded, then Propertius must have been especially sensitive to these geographical changes.[336] Yet, by identifying his birthplace as an open space connected to Etruria instead of an enclosed hearth (as the idea of *Penates* at the elegy's opening seemed to imply),[337] Propertius challenges the Augustan attempts at re-drawing the borders between the two communities of dispossessed.[338] His 'homeland' is viewed in terms of an open *limen* (or 'l*hymen*'): it has not only produced his *exclusion* from *domus*, but also his *inclusion* into a larger new 'home(land)', made of both Etruscans and Umbrians bonding together.[339]

This is the 'homeland' that Tullus is invited to remember, a 'homeland' he has lost yet that he can re-construct through his (literary) encounter with Propertius.[340] As I have been arguing, the Etrusco-Umbrian border's double function as a space of oppression and resistance sets forth its comparison with a Bhabhian 'Third Space'. This is a *limen* where cultures meet (the Umbrian, the

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[335] On Hispellum's centuriation, see Manconi *et alii* 1996; with further epigraphical evidence collected in Keppie 1983:176-7.

[336] Cf. *nam tua cum multi uersarent rura iuuenci/abstulit excultas pertica* ["the surveyor's measuring rod"] *tristis opes,* 4.1b.129-30. Cairns 2006:52-53 supports with epigraphical evidence (specifically the locale of Propertius' relative C. Passennus Paullus Prop. Blaesus' monumental tomb) his argument that the Propertii owned their land precisely in that part of Asisium centuriated by the *pertica* of Hispellum. Furthermore, he notes (56) that Propertius' failed reminiscence of the Hispellum border in the description of Asisium's *ora* (4.1b.121-4) may be due to "this [being] a boundary which Propertius was emotionally unable to accept".

[337] Cf. *Penates*, *OLD* 3, 4. La Penna 1977:10 additionally notes that *Penates* can refer to the "city" too (so again to a bordered, enclosed space).

[338] Compare Schwindt 2013:49, 54 on the contiguity between Umbria and Etruria. Such an assessment of the Umbrian space as inseparable from the Etruscan is conspicuously different from the one Propertius provides at the opening of Book 4, in which he refers twice to the *walled* citadel of Assisium as his hometown (***scandentis*** *quisquis cernit de uallibus* ***arces***/ *ingenio* ***muros*** *aestimet ille meo!* 4.1a.65-6; *scandentisque Asis consurgit uertice* ***murus/ murus*** *ab ingenio notior ille tuo,* 4.1b.125-6).

[339] Cf. Anzaldúa 1987:24-5, who conceptualises the 'Borderland' as both "an open wound" (*una herida abierta*) and a space of "healing" and refers (Anzaldúa, quoted in Keating 2009:246) to "bridging" (that is, opening our thresholds to those who have been oppressed like us) as an "attempt to community" and "an act of will, an act of love, an attempt toward compassion and reconciliation, and a promise to be present with the pain of others without losing themselves to it".

[340] If Cairns 2006:47-8 (*contra* Stahl 1985:102) is correct in suggesting that Tullus (and the Volcacii) had been an opponent of Octavian at the time of the *bellum Perusinum* (and only later on in the 30s rekindled their relationship with the future *princeps*, as indeed signalled by the consulship of Tullus' uncle in 33 BCE at the side of Octavian), then the *uir militaris*' displacement into the 'chronotope' of the Umbro-Etruscan border hit by the civil wars can even work to remind him of his anti-Augustan past.

Etruscan, the Roman) and where the hierarchy existing between them can be re-negotiated. In this 'Third Space', Propertius 'unfixes' himself as a 'liminal man' straddling between Rome and the periphery (*dominus/exclusus* from 'R/home'). Whilst he may have ended up living in the *centre*, absorbing its culture and being a legal "citizen of Rome", Propertius is in fact also an oppressed Italian. As he presents himself to the addressee (and the readers), he is concerned with associating himself with the *periphery* and its own counter-hegemonic narrative of oppression and resistance.

2.5. *Romanum est satis posse uidere Forum* (deviations to the margin II): Vertumnus' 'deviation' of the *Romana turba togata* onto the Vicus Tuscus (4.2)

"[t]o be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body"[341]

If elegy 1.22 is concerned with Propertius' disclosure of information about his origins to Tullus, elegy 4.2 shares a similar interest: here, it is the speaking statue of the Etruscan god Vertumnus lying on Rome's Vicus Tuscus who presents himself to a passer-by (4.2.3-4).[342] Critics have not failed to notice the similarities between Propertius and Vertumnus.[343] If we have to catch a pun on Propertius' name in the "hurrying sickle" (***PROPER****an****TI*** *falce,* 4.2.59) with which Vertumnus' first *artifex* is said to have hewn the god's wooden statue, then the identification between artist (poet) and artefact (character), the former making an avatar of himself out of the latter, is even subtly alluded to in the text.[344] Whilst some have taken the god of transformation as a living metaphor for the flexibility

[341] bell hooks 1989:20.
[342] Suits 1969:480-1 passingly notes the thematic link between the two pieces. Fedeli 2015 *ad loc.* is sensitive to the intertextual connections between 1.21-2 and 4.2, which are, after all, both 'epigrammatic encounters' between a speaking object (respectively 'tombstones' and a 'statue') and a passer-by characterised by similar linguistic formulae (e.g. 1.21.1, 3; 1.22.1 = 4.2.1, 57).
[343] Lee Stecum 2005:38; Spentzou 2013:46 rightly speaks of Book 4 as a "masque ball" in which the author's voice is ventriloquised by other characters (see further Chapters 4 and 5).
[344] See Marquis 1974:500, with Hutchinson 2006:99 on the wordplay. Significantly, we noted a similar wordplay on Propertius' name at 1.22.2 (see *supra*).

of Propertius' bipolar poetic programme in his aetiological-yet-again-erotic Book 4,[345] others have instead stressed the ethnic similarities between the two: as P. Lee Stecum has put it, "one clear point of convergence between poet and god is their strong identification with both Rome itself and another distinct ethnic group".[346]

Building upon this latter group of critics in particular, I take Vertumnus as an *alias* of Propertius and suggest that we should see the god's spatial and cultural 'liminality' as a foil for Propertius' own condition as *exclusus/dominus* in respect to 'R/home'. I argue that, not differently from the speaker of elegy 1.22, the speaker of elegy 4.2, with whom Propertius identifies, also cuts out a Bhabhian 'Third Space' in which he locates himself and from which he lets his marginal voice be heard. Indeed, the statue of Vertumnus lies in Rome's peripheral neighbourhood of the Vicus Tuscus, a space 'liminally' *inside* Rome and yet conveniently *at a distance* from Rome's epicentre (the Forum).

The Vicus Tuscus thus turns into a space of encounters between two cultures, the dominant and the oppressed (metropolitan 'Roman' and colonised/immigrant 'Etruscan'), in which the hierarchy existing between the two is re-negotiated and the speaker can subtly reveal his ambivalent relationship to the metropolis. Indeed, Vertumnus 'deviates' the urban journey of his Roman addressees and makes them linger at his feet: this is the moment when the 'immigrant' Vertumnus, colonised and then imported as an imperial booty from his native periphery to the metropolis, has the opportunity to recount his story, to explain why he sits on the Vicus Tuscus and to present his unorthodox identity (mixing different gendered and social roles) to his interlocutor. This is not only a moment when Rome's imperialism is seen through the eyes of a god who experienced it as the Other drawn within but also a moment in which the listener of this narrative is temporarily detained in the 'Third Space' (like Tullus in 1.22) and invited to look at the centre from the perspective of an outsider. Far from celebrating one of the many urban spaces of official imperial power (as expected

[345] Especially Dee 1974; Shea 1988; DeBrohun 1994, 2003:169-75.
[346] Lee Stecum 2005:38 (cf. similarly Welch 2005:36). Whilst falling short of offering an analysis of 4.2 through the lens of post-colonial theory, Lee Stecum 2005:38-9 has passingly referred to Bhabha's notion of 'mimicry' as a label applicable to Vertumnus. My reading of the elegy expands Lee Stecum's underdeveloped line of enquiry (although I am more interested in Vertumnus' occupation of a 'Third Space', which Lee Stecum completely neglects).

from Book 4), 4.2 ultimately presents a counter-space and a counter-narrative to Roman imperialism, which Propertius shows it is still possible to resist.

2.5.1. *Vert*umnus: 'deviated'

Verto*: "to change the course of, turn in another direction"*[347]

As Vertumnus claims, his statue lies on the Vicus Tuscus, a street located at the margins of Rome:

et tu, Roma, meis tribuisti praemia Tuscis,
*(unde hodie **Vicus** nomina **Tuscus** habet),*
tempore quo sociis uenit Lycomedius armis
atque Sabina feri contudit arma Tati.
uidi ego labentis acies et tela caduca,
atque hostis turpi terga dedisse fugae.
(4.2.49-54)

Historically a space of Etruscan refugees, the Vicus Tuscus was not only the street that those coming from Etruria into Rome had to pass by to reach the metropolis' centre, thus a topographic, physical 'threshold' between the Etruscan periphery and the metropolis, but also a metaphoric 'threshold' connecting Etruscans and Romans.[348] The street's name, as the 'aetiologist' Vertumnus himself underlines, is in fact reminiscent of the friendly relationship between the two ethnic communities.[349] Rome had once sought the alliance of the Etruscan king Lycmon (*sociis uenit Lycomedius armis*) to fight against the ferocious Sabine king Tatius (*Sabina feri…arma Tati*). Such a request of help turned out to be successful for the Romans and the Etruscans (*meis tribuisti praemia Tuscis*) and

[347] *OLD* 11.
[348] Livy 2.14; Dion. Halic. 5.36; Varro 5.46; Tac. *Ann.* 4.65.
[349] Cf. Welch 2005:51 (a "beacon of friendship"); Fedeli *ad loc*.

the defeat of Tatius offered the opportunity for the integration of both the Sabines and the Etruscans at Rome: indeed, three Roman tribes, named after the leaders of their respective ethnic groups, the Ramnes (from Romulus and his followers), the Tities (from Tatius and his Sabines) and the Luceres (from Lycmon and his Tuscans), were created.[350] When placed in its historical context, the Vicus Tuscus can therefore be read as a productive cultural margin or 'contact zone' (like the Italian provinces of Umbria and Etruria, populated by "Roman citizens", 1.22.5), reminding the Romans of the process of acculturation and assimilation of their former enemies into the metropolis. P. Pinotti goes as far as to give a political connotation to this interpretation of the Vicus: its physical and metaphorical function as the connecting 'gate' between Etruscans and Romans would reflect Augustus' claim to have pacified the Empire, the tensions between its different ethnic groups having been finally overcome during his age of *pax*.[351]

Yet, I argue that a less naïve reading of Vertumnus' 'margin' is also allowed. Indeed, the street is not only a reminder of the Roman expansion (via alliance against a common enemy), but also a 'margin' of resistance for Vertumnus, who chooses it as an alternative space to the centre. This becomes apparent when Vertumnus in fact alludes to a different place within the cityscape where he could have been destined:

haec me turba iuuat, nec ***templo*** *laetor* ***eburno****:*
Romanum satis est posse uidere Forum.
(4.2.5-6)

As critics have underlined, "the ivory temple" (*templo…eburno*) to which Vertumnus says he prefers "the throng of passers-by" (*haec me turba iuuat*) of the Vicus Tuscus is the temple of Vertumnus on the Aventine, where the cult of the god was officially celebrated,[352] thus "[the] temple that should have been

[350] Cf. Prop. 4.1.31; Lee Stecum 2005:36.
[351] Pinotti 2004:50 ("Vertumno, il dio accolto50 del sincretismo religioso romano, diventa anche la voce del sincretismo politico-etnico voluto da Augusto"); re-echoed by Giardina 1994:23-4; Fedeli 2015:405.
[352] Cf. Festus 228 L.

Vertumnus' proper place".[353] The presence of Vertumnus inside the Aventine temple, arguably one of those eighty-two temples that Augustus refurbished during those years of urban renovation,[354] served as a reminder of the conquest of Volsinii by the Roman commander Fulvius Flaccus (264 BCE), who, according to the Roman practice of *euocatio*, appropriated Vertumnus' cult as the main deity of the vanquished city.[355] The temple was indeed a symbol of Rome's spatial expansion: ivory was appropriated from the conquered Etruscans to embellish it,[356] Flaccus featured in the building's painting cycle with the *toga picta* of the *triumphator*,[357] Vertumnus' statue reminded the visitor of the successful conquest of Volsinii and, perhaps, even of the depredation of the city's two-thousand wooden statues.[358]

Whilst A. Deremetz and K. O'Neill have proposed that the Etruscan god's dislocation into the Vicus Tuscus reads metapoetically as Propertius' refusal to bend his poetry to national poetry and his constant engagement with the erotic verse (for the Vicus Tuscus was also a well-known area of street workers),[359] I argue that the god's deviation into the marginal area of the Vicus also reads like a political choice. Indeed, by 'deviating' himself from the temple of Fulvius Flaccus on the Aventine to the Vicus Tuscus, Vertumnus interrupts his association with the conquest of Volsinii, which would have enhanced his presence at Rome as that of an 'imperial booty', incorporated into the metropolis as a signifier of Rome's spatial expansion into the Italic periphery during Republican times.[360] A small yet significant detail might as well betray how painful the conquest of Volsinii must have been for the god and thus corroborate his choice to remain in the 'margin'. Indeed, when Vertumnus claims he has *happily* relocated from his

[353] Janan 2001:14.
[354] *duo et octoginta templa…refeci* (Aug. *RG* 28).
[355] Pinotti 2004:46.
[356] Fedeli *ad loc*.
[357] Pinotti 2004:46.
[358] Pliny *NH* 34.34 refers to philosopher Metrodoros of Skepsis' belief that the depredation of these many wooden statues was the only reason behind Rome's attack against Volsinii. Notably, Vertumnus recalls his past as a *wooden* statue (*stipes* ***acernus*** *eram,* v.59).
[359] Deremetz 1986:148-9, basing his metapoetic reading on *arma tuli quondam* (= "Once upon a time, I took [and rejected] arms" = "I flirted with yet jettisoned national poetry"); O'Neill 2000 *passim*.
[360] Similarly (yet on different grounds) Welch 2005:51. Pinotti 2004:51instead argues that to celebrate Fulvius Flaccus through the temple would have been an anti-Augustan move, for Flaccus' descendent Fulvia had been Marc Antony's wife and one of the major figures implicated in the *bellum Perusinum* (thus, a former enemy of Augustus').

motherland, hit by war (*nec paenitet inter/proelia* ***deseruisse focos***, v.4), to the metropolis, he does so with words that are intertextually indebted to gloomy scenes of farewell to the domestic space: the syntagm *deseruisse focos* is in fact a Catullan[361] and Tibullan[362] *iunctura* that Propertius seems to have in mind elsewhere, when he refers to the Etruscans' "shattered households" (***euersos****que* ***focos*** *antiquae gentis*, 2.1.29) in the aftermath of the *bellum Perusinum*.[363]

All in all, then, the locale of the statue inside the marginal Etruscan neighbourhood, as opposed to the temple celebrating the Roman victory at Volsinii, can point to the god's desire to remain connected to his people, from which, as he subtly implies, he has painfully been separated in the aftermath of the Roman conquest. By re-locating the Etruscan god on the 'liminal' Vicus Tuscus, conveniently situated outside the Aventine temple as well as at the 'margins' of Rome's cultural epicentre (***Romanum*** *satis est posse uidere* ***Forum***),[364] the god chooses a fitting 'Third Space' that symbolises both his integration yet his sense of exclusion from the metropolis. This is an ambivalent space of power and identity negotiation rather than the place where Vertumnus is put on display as Rome's 'imperial booty'.

2.5.2. *Vert*umnus: 'deviating'

> Verto: *"to turn into something else"; "to subvert, ruin, confound (a country, institution, etc.)"*[365]

So far, I have looked at the 'deviation' of the statue of Vertumnus within the cityscape. Yet, Vertumnus is not content with only 'deviating' *himself* into a

[361] Cat. 68.101-2.
[362] Tib. 2.5.52.
[363] Cf. Fedeli *ad loc.* on the emotional import of *focus*: "non è un semplice sinonimo di *domus*, ma evoca l'atmosfera di intimo affetto e di sacralità che circonda il focolare domestico".
[364] Note the shift in the god's gaze: whilst the previous reference to the war against Tatius involving the Etruscans set Vertumnus on the side of the Roman with his own people (*meis Tuscis*) and thus overlapped his gaze with that of the metropolis (***uidi*** *ego…*), he now shifts the gaze back at the epicentre of the same metropolis (*…posse* ***uidere*** *Forum*), an apt shift from centre to margin.
[365] Respectively *OLD* 22 and 5b.

space where he can avoid being associated with the metropolis' 'imperial booty' and, thus, re-negotiate his position as post-war *émigré*. Vertumnus also 'deviates' (physically and conceptually) *those who stop by his feet*. Towards the end of the elegy, Vertumnus prays to the god Sator (Jupiter) that the "toga-suit Roman throng" could pass by his feet through the centuries to come:

sed facias, diuum Sator, ut ***Romana per aeuum***
transeat *ante meos* ***turba togata*** *pedes.*
(4.2.55-6)

D. O'Rourke observes that the couplet here reported is intertextually indebted to a passage from *Aeneid* 1, where Jupiter (referred to as *homin**um sator** atque deorum*, 1.254; cf. Propertius' *diu**um Sator***) is seen unrolling the book of fate to guarantee eternal sovereignty for "the togate people of Rome" (***Romanos*** *rerum dominum gentemque* ***togatam***, 1.282; cf. Propertius' ***Romana…togata***).[366] P. Fedeli instead focuses on the toga as a symbolic garment identifying the Roman citizens in the contemporary Augustan propaganda: as he reminds, the *princeps* had particularly recommended that the toga were worn around *in the surroundings* of the *forum*.[367] In virtue of the intertextual and symbolic value of the syntagm *Romana turba togata*, it seems that the people Vertumnus wants to "pass by" (*transeat*) his statue in the 'margin' and, at the same time, "get changed in the process" (*transeo OLD* 6, "to change one's nature, appearance, be transformed")[368] are 'traditional Romans'. I believe the ethnicity of the passers-by is an important detail to stress, for Vertumnus is interested in "changing" the metropolitan citizens' perspective on Rome's imperial power by recounting (as we have seen) his own story as an *émigré* as well as to engage them with an

[366] O'Rourke 2014:165. I should add that *turba* also translates as "[a] (large) group of people having common interests or characteristics" (*OLD* 5), including, we could suggest, their ethnic homogeneity.
[367] Fedeli *ad loc.*, drawing from Suet. *Aug.* 40.
[368] Note that *transeo* primarily means "to pass through, to go across" (*OLD* 1), a fit verb for a 'thresholding' space like the statue lying 'at the doors of Rome' (cf. esp. *aut ego **transirem tua limina clausa** maritus*, 2.7.9, where the verb is modified precisely by the "shut (elegiac) door").

alternative model of 'Roman citizen' from the normative one. This last aspect emerges well from his descriptions of his several bodily transformations:

mendax fama, noces: alius mihi nominis index:
de se narranti tu modo crede deo.
opportuna mea est cunctis natura figuris:
in quamcumque uoles uerte, decorus ero.
indue me Cois, fiam non dura puella:
meque uirum sumpta quis neget esse toga?
da falcem et torto frontem mihi comprime faeno:
iurabis nostra gramina secta manu.
arma tuli quondam et, memini, laudabar in illis:
corbis in imposito pondere messor eram.
sobrius ad lites: at cum est imposta corona,
clamabis capiti uina subisse meo.
cinge caput mitra, speciem furabor Iacchi;
furabor Phoebi, si modo plectra dabis.
cassibus impositis uenor: sed harundine sumpta
fautor plumoso sum deus aucupio.
(…)
at mihi, quod formas unus uertebar in omnis,
nomen ab euentu patria lingua dedit
(4.2.19-34; 47-48)

As M. Bettini has recently emphasised, the "shape-shifting divinity of Vertumnus represented a model diametrically opposed to the actual practice of Roman society", in which different social roles (emerging from differences in either gender, status or occupation) were rigidly codified.[369] By assuming a set of different social identities, the god indeed "allow[ed the Romans] to glimpse a manner of living in which the one and the many, the other and the self, were no longer exclusive categories".[370] Such a manner of living was antithetical to that expected of a proper Roman citizen (sticking to a single role within the *ciuitas*) and could therefore attract the criticism of the most conservative representatives of the Roman society. A significant criticism of a 'Vertumnian' citizen is in fact found in a passage from Horace's *Satires* (Hor. *Sat.* 2.7).[371] Here, the moraliser Davos chastises the schizoid personality of Priscus, a man of the kinds who were

[369] Bettini 2010:333.
[370] Bettini *ibidem*.
[371] Cf. Bettini 2010:326ff.

born "with all Vertumnuses unfavourable" (***Vortumnis*** *quotquot sunt natus* ***iniquis***, v.14). Much like the god of transformations, Priscus can be seen moulding and transgressing the borders of his social identity on a daily basis: at times he wears three rings on his left hand, like a wealthy master (*saepe notatus/cum tribus anellis*, vv.9-10), and at times no rings at all, like a slave; from one hour to the next, he also changes the stripe on his tunic (*clauum ut mutaret in horas*, v.10) to resemble first a senator and then a knight; furthermore, Priscus leaves his huge household (*aedibus ex magnis*, v.11) to go skulking in sordid places that a respectable man should not attend (*unde/mundior exiret uix libertinus honeste*, vv.11-2); finally, he is said to play the bugger (*moechus*, v.13) in Rome and, the very next day, he turns into a philosopher (*doctus*) in Athens, this final transformation perhaps serving as the pinnacle of the man's bipolar behaviour.[372]

Whereas in Horace Davos is therefore given the opportunity to criticise Priscus' Vertumnian *persona*, in Propertius the "togate Roman throng" encountering Vertumnus himself on the Vicus Tuscus are not only denied the possibility to react, perhaps by expressing their dismay, to the god's transformations but are also asked to contribute to the creation of Vertumnus' 'protean' identity by turning him into whatever the Roman onlooker likes (cf. the chain of imperatives: *indue, da, comprime, cinge*…).[373] The passers-by stopping at Vertumnus' feet learn that the god is not one thing but different and often antithetical characters, all fluidly mapped onto a "single body" (*formas* ***unus*** *uertebar* ***in omnis***).[374] Vertumnus can in fact embody the traditional Roman togate man (a mirror to Vertumnus' very addressee), the soldier and a peasant devoted to agricultural *labor*, the latter being a value especially praised by Augustus in his moral propaganda on pristine activities and values.[375] On the other hand though, the god can disguise into non-traditional figures including the *puella* wrapped in diaphanous Coan silk and the feminised Iacchus (Bacchus) wearing the oriental *mitra*.[376]

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[372] Bettini 2010:327-8 rightly points out how rings, the tunic, the household all construe one's social identity.
[373] I disagree with Lindheim 1998a:29, who argues that the passer-by lacks characterization and "functions no more than a vehicle to allow for Vertumnus' performance".
[374] On Vertumnus' gender-bending identity forged by his transvestism, cf. Lindheim 1998a.
[375] See further Chapter 4.
[376] See Fedeli *ad loc*. on the connection between the two Eastern garments.

These opposing roles, associated with both the Roman Self and the Eastern Other in particular, contribute to accentuate Vertumnus' (geographical) 'liminality' as both central and peripheral. Yet, they also challenge the ideal of Roman man as promoted by Augustus and divulged to the Roman citizenship (of which the passer-by is a representative). By contending that none of his transformations jeopardise his "appropriate nature" and that he is "worthy of approval" regardless of the role he plays (***opportuna****…cunctis natura figuris*/*in quamcumque uoles uerte,* ***decorus ero***),[377] Vertumnus in fact connects the traditional value of *decorum* to *personae* that were not believed to possess it as per a traditional Roman moral discourse (the lascivious *puella*; the drunkard; the god Bacchus himself). Viewed in these terms, Vertumnus' 'liminality' is therefore not only a mere celebration of the 'cultural meeting' between Self and Other, but also a threat to the Self's cultural borders.

The 'togate' man, a representative of the (traditional) *Romana turba togata* passing by the statue's feet, must lose his sense of orientation during his encounter with the Etruscan god. Hurriedly heading towards the *forum* (the *centre*) to witness some hearings (*te,* ***qui ad uadimonia curris****,* v.57), the Roman citizen is 'deviated' to and detained on the 'margin'[378] to confront the presence of a Roman that does not fully cohere to the ideal promoted by the contemporary propaganda (a man with a clear gendered identity and with a clear position occupied in the social pyramid).[379] Lingering on Vertumnus' urban 'Third Space' (as we have pointed out, that part of the cityscape physically and metaphorically 'in between' Etruria and Rome), the urban stroller passes through a *limen* where meaning is made to collapse by the presence of the 'in between' god.

As the passer-by realises, the god's opening invitation to "learn the signs betraying his origins" (*accipe signa paterna*, v.2) was in fact an ironic statement, for Vertumnus challenges the learning process of his interlocutor by showing him the ever-changing "signs" constituting his bizarre identity. Far from having a single 'meaning' (a 'signified' constituted by a fixed set chain of 'signifiers'),

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[377] *Decorus* does not only have an aesthetic connotation ("good-looking", *OLD* 1) but also a moral one ("worthy of approval, suitable, decent", *OLD* 4).

[378] Vertumnus takes up the space and time of the addressee: cf. Fedeli *ad loc.* on *ultima creta* and *spatium*.

[379] See *uerto, OLD* 11a, 11c. In alignment with Ov. *Fast.* 6.405-11, it is also implied that Vertumnus actively changed through 'diversion' the space surrounding him once he arrived to the metropolis: *Vertumnus uerso dicor ab amne deus* (v.9).

Vertumnus exists as the incoherent summation of several 'signified', his meaning ultimately made to 'differ' and 'defer'.[380] Physically and conceptually on the 'threshold' between what is considered properly 'Roman' and what is deemed 'non-Roman', the god defies the binary categories of Self and Other and presents himself as the disturbing negotiation of the two (both traditional/moral and foreign/immoral): not simply *different* from a Roman but rather marked by that disturbing *différance* that Bhabha's 'liminal man' (colonised and *émigrés*) are meant to possess.[381]

All in all, by ventriloquising Vertumnus (the *opus*), Propertius (his *artifex*) teaches the passer-by (as well as the external reader) a narrative of colonisation and ambivalent integration.[382] To come to Rome, it is suggested, does not mean to yield to Rome and its culture but to re-negotiate the relationship with the 'host'. As we have seen, Vertumnus' refusal of detention within the temple of the Aventine and his consequent 'deviation' at the outdoor margins of the cityscape is an act of spatial transgression through which the Etruscan god displaces himself from the hegemonic centre to the cultural 'Third Space' that the margins constitute. This is where resistance to the centre is possible and where power relations can be renegotiated through the physical 'interaction' with an (normative) addressee (or 'colonizer'), who also ends up being 'deviated'. From his convenient 'standpoint', in the city and yet again at its liminal fringes, the statue ultimately testifies for Propertius' own 'liminal' identity and perspective, his inclusion and exclusion from 'R/home' (*exclusus*/*dominus*).

[380] Note that the adjective *paterna* modifying *signa* is ambivalent on its own, for the "origins" of the god (his *patria*) are referred to as both 'Etruscan' (*Tuscus ego Tuscis orior*, v.3) and 'Roman' (*nomen ab euentu patria lingua dedit*, v.48, the *patria* of Latin speakers being Rome).
[381] Vertumnus' statue functions as an *ianua*: the verb *morari* with which Vertumnus conveys his 'delaying effect' on the passer-by (*moror*, v.58) is the elegiac verb most closely connected to the παρακλαυσίθυρον *empasse*: see Pucci 1978.
[382] Welch 2005: esp.44, 54-5 instead argues that Vertumnus is a metaphor for how to read polysemically the cityscape of Rome as presented in Book 4.

2.6. Conclusions

The poems discussed in this Chapter are *limina* in a paratextual sense: elegy 1.22 stands at the edges of Book 1, whereas elegy 4.2 lies at the edges of those Book 4 poems concerned with the aetiological discovery of monumental Rome.[383] Yet, the two elegies also *represent* geographical *limina* (or 'Third Spaces'), located both *within* and yet *outside* imperial Rome. *At* these 'thresholds' (comparable to the domestic *ianua* discussed in the previous Chapter), the speakers, two representatives of the peripheral rather than the dominant culture, re-negotiate their position in respect to the imperial metropolis and emerge as Bhabhian 'liminal men', at once *inside* and *outside* Rome (*exclusi/domini* at/from 'R/home').

To this extent, both elegies 1.22 and 4.2 align with those 'autoethnographic texts' that post-colonial critic Mary Louise Pratt (born 1948) talks about. As Pratt contends, the 'autoethnographic text' is the most emblematic representative of the literature of the 'contact zone', which is Pratt's equivalent to Bhabha's 'Third Space'.[384] Geographical and at once social spaces where contact between two or more cultures is made possible (note that 'contact' develops from the very Latin *contingo* through which we have looked at Umbria's cultural connection to Etruria), 'contact zones' are territories of resistance to monocultural domains, where the hierarchical relationship between centre/periphery or colonisers/colonised can be deconstructed.[385] A response to the 'ethnographic text', in which European metropolitan subjects represent to themselves their conquered Others, the 'autoethnographic texts' of the 'contact zone' are literary texts constructed by the so-defined Others themselves, who create through them

[383] The trip through the metropolis' landmarks officially starts after the programmatic elegy 4.1. Indeed, O'Rourke 2014:166 notes that poem 4.2 is "*a threshold* through which the reader passes *en route* into the book and onwards, *ad uadimonia* as it were, to Cornelia's courtroom appearance in 4.11" (my emphasis; on Cornelia's courtroom as a 'margin' rather than a centre, see Chapter 5).

[384] Pratt 1991:34.

[385] Pratt *ibidem* notes that 'contact zones' are sensibly different from 'colonial frontiers': while the latter term is grounded in a European expansionist perspective (the 'frontier' is such only for the invader), 'contact zones' in fact shift the center of gravity and the point of view, for they refer to the bilateral dimensions of imperial encounters that go so easily ignored or suppressed by accounts of conquest and domination told from the coloniser's viewpoint only.

the '*testimonio*' (Spanish word for 'record' or 'denunciation') of their interaction with the metropolitan subjects.[386] Addressed to both metropolitan audiences and the speaker's own community, these kinds of text are marked by a highly indeterminate reception, for they "create self-representations intended to intervene in metropolitan modes of understanding" of the so-called Other.[387]

As we have seen, Propertius 1.22 and 4.2 are indeed texts composed at Rome and written for the Roman audience. Yet, they give a representation of Roman imperialism as suffered by ethnic Others hailing from the periphery. In virtue of this, we can imagine that their reception in the *Vrbs* may well have proven rather ambivalent. As far as elegy 1.22 is concerned, the poem (mentioning *Romana discordia* as the reason behind the transformation of Italy into *funera*) does not only criticise the resolution of the conflict between Rome and the Etrusco-Umbrian army through the metropolis' military repression of its periphery but it also circulates at Rome during the time when the leader of the repression, namely Octavian (soon to be 'Augustus'), was on his rise to autocratic power.[388] Elegy 4.2 instead allows the Roman audience to hear the voice of the Other, apparently incorporated and tamed inside the metropolis' borders as an 'imperial booty' yet somehow still resistant to this 'domestication'.[389] The transformations of Vertumnus, partly willing to conform to the norms of the coloniser's culture and partly unwilling to be normalised (thus 'mimicking' rather than 'slavishly imitating' the dominant culture), exposes the potential distortions

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[386] Pratt 1991:35.

[387] Pratt *ibidem.* Pratt 1991: esp.34-6 illustrates her understanding of the 'autoethnograhic text' through a case study, a 17th-century manuscript written in a mixture of Quechua and ungrammatical, expressive Spanish by Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, an indigenous Andean claiming noble Inca descent and addressing the king Philip III of Spain in a lengthy letter. Through his unorthodox representation of the *conquista* (which should have been a peaceful encounter of equals with the potential for benefitting both, but ultimately proved beneficial only for the mindless greed of the Spanish conquerors), Guaman parodies Spanish history before the eyes of the very Spanish king, to whom his document is addressed. As Pratt underlines (*ibidem*), it is Guaman's geo-cultural location in the 'contact zone' (his 'liminality': a '*mestizo*' whose *Spanish* father had given him access to Christian education, Guaman may have worked in the Spanish colonial administration as an interpreter, scribe, or assistant to a Spanish tax collector, hence as a mediator between the indigenous and the European communities) that helps him re-negotiate the coherent narrative of the Spanish conquest that the colonizers have produced in their own literary texts.

[388] The exact dating for the *Monobiblos*' publication is disputed (circa 33 BCE: Heslin 2010; 30/29 BCE: esp. Batstone 1992:301-2), yet it occurred a few years before Octavian's conferment of the titles of *Princeps* and *Augustus* (16th January 27 BCE), with which the *principatus* officially started.

[389] Edwards 2003 explores the ambivalent responses to the presence of plundered statues at Rome ("were they all reassuring? Did all the citizens respond to their narratives in the same way?", 45).

that come with the process of 'domestication' of the colonised Other. The god's speech thus does not only constitute a 'missed chance' for the celebration of an Augustan monument (for Vertumnus focuses on his personal story) but also a reminder for the Roman *turba* of readers (and Augustus amid it) that colonial power is never devoid of resisting voices speaking from within its spaces of domination.

At another level, the two texts set in the liminal 'contact zone' also stage the 'contact', in the sense of physical 'meeting', between the two speakers and their respective passers-by (their internal addressees). *To* the 'thresholds' of Rome (the Etrusco-Umbrian region and the Vicus Tuscus), the (Roman) readers (overlapping with the poems' internal addressees) are in fact 'diverted' and made to listen to the speakers' personal narratives about how they got in touch with Rome. The Bhabhian 'Third Spaces' from which the speakers deliver their speeches are transformed by the 'encounters' of their temporary inhabitants into spaces of resistance to the dominant culture. This idea is resonant with geographer Doreen Massey's spatial theory in particular. Indeed, Massey argues that space and place are not fixed backgrounds to the social activity but are instead 'produced' through active material practices and out of social relationships.[390] As Massey submits, 'movement' and 'journeying' are the most fruitful activities for the 'production' of space: by passing through space, one is not simply connecting two points over a flat surface but re-living that same space, changing it by intersecting his own trajectory with that of other individuals.[391] The unpredictable intersections of human trajectories across space make space a dynamic, open locus of ever-changing interactions, leading to ever-changing perspectives on the world.

This understanding of the spatial is fraught with political meaning.[392] Indeed, to imagine space as the site of multiplicity and heterogeneity is already a political act that goes counter to the discourses of nationalism (resting on binary

[390] Massey 2005:9. This corresponds to the first proposition of Masseyan 'space', which is also 2) "the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality" and 3) "the sphere of coexisting heterogeneity". There are obviously points of contact with Soja's 'ThirdSpace', of which Massey is aware (18; see Massey 2005:20-48 for a critique of previous spatial theories).
[391] Cf. Massey 2005:117-8's own daily experience as a commuter altering the space she passes through by meshing her own 'story' with a thousand stories made and in the making.
[392] Massey 2005:9: "thinking the spatial in a particular way can shake up the manner in which certain political questions are formulated"; cf. 61.

dichotomies and refusing the very 'encounter' with the Other)[393] and promotes a salutary exchange of ideas between two (often previously unrelated) individuals.[394] As we have seen, through their 'encounters' in the 'contact zone', Tullus and Vertumnus' interlocutor, two quintessentially Roman citizens, are made to re-negotiate their (supposedly) clear-cut 'national' identities. By getting in touch with the dead soldier on the Etrusco-Umbrian border, Tullus is in fact reminded of the time when his homeland was devastated by the metropolis at the service of which he presently works and made to reconsider the effects of Roman imperialism from the perspective of an outsider. By getting in touch with Vertumnus on the Vicus Tuscus, the urban stroller forestalls his physical and conceptual *iter* to the epicentre of Rome and learns that there are many ways of adapting to Rome and its culture, not all of them orthodox and re-assuring for the imperial propaganda. These 'encounters' with the oppressed coincide with moments of re-negotiation and contestation for the passers-by: as Propertius implies, these moments are not only still possible but also of pivotal importance in the face of the growth of a totalizing Empire.

[393] Cf. esp. Massey 2005:64-5.

[394] Massey *ibidem*. Within an urban context (like that of elegy 4.2), this idea is also resonant with Lefebvre's theory of 'rhythmanalysis' (Lefebvre & Régulier repr.2010). According to Lefebvre, Mediterranean cities in particular are constituted by the 'polyrhythmia' of their free citizens (or 'rhythmanalysts'), who, via their accidental or determined encounters across the cityscape, create their own 'spatio-temporal rhythms' for living the city and pose a threat to the State's organization of urban space ("Political power dominates or rather seeks to dominate space; whence the importance of monuments and squares, but if palaces and churches have a political meaning and goal, the townsfolk citizens divert them from it; they appropriate this space in a non-political manner", 186) and, particularly, its hierachical separation between powerful centre and subordinated periphery (188).

Chapter 3. Between 'citizen' and 'lover': the Actian celebration(s) and Propertius' liminal oscillation between 'solar' Augustus and 'lunar' Cynthia.

3.1. Introduction

From Propertius' lingering at the domestic *ianua* to Propertius' lingering at the *limina* of Rome, in the first two Chapters we have investigated the eroto-poetics and the politics of liminality, that is, how the identity of the elegies' speaker 'unfixes' himself in 'third spaces' that defy binary oppositions and make room for identity and (at once) political negotiations. What has emerged from Chapter 2 (devoted to politics) in particular is that Propertius' cultural 'in between-ness' renders him both an insider and an outsider (*exclusus/dominus*) in respect to Rome and its imperial culture, a metropolitan and at once peripheral subject, whose liminal standpoint offers the physical and conceptual space to look at the colonial centre with critical eyes.

In the present Chapter, I shall turn to the political climate of the years following the conclusion of the civil wars (31 BCE). My objective here is to shed further light on the poet's ambivalence in the face of the emerging Augustan ideology and, specifically, the *princeps*' self-fashioning as the colonial ruler of a pacified world at the eve of his *principatus*. In order to do so, I shall concentrate on the famous elegy 2.31, which Propertius composed in occasion of the opening of the Portico of the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine (9th October 28 BCE), the *monumentum* celebrating Augustus' triumph against Egypt at Actium (31 BCE).[395] Whilst *prima facie* the poem suggests Propertius' deviation towards panegyric poetry for the *princeps* and, more generally, a compliant attitude towards Augustan imperialism (his successful subjugation of the non-Roman world epitomised by Egypt), I shall propose a brand new argument to the ongoing debate on why this view should in fact be dismissed. By drawing attention to

[395] On the history behind the construction of the temple, cf. Vell. 2.81.3; Suet. *Aug.* 29.3; Dio 49.15.5, 53.1.3, with further bibliography on its archaeological excavations and literary fortune in Miller 2009: esp.186-91 and *passim*; Steenkamp 2012.

2.31's complementary piece 2.32, with which the poem forms a 'diptych',[396] I argue that it is once more Propertius' physical and conceptual oscillation between *centre* and *periphery* that provides him with an instrument of resistance to Augustus' own hierarchical conceptualisation of space (with Rome at the centre of a subjugated world as the *caput mundi*). Indeed, in these two texts Propertius creates an alternative, fluid 'third space' through which he 'unfixes' himself between two identities, that of the committed Augustan 'citizen' at the *centre* of the metropolis (in the diptych's first part) and that of the 'lover', who shall reach his *puella* (*ueniam tardior*, 2.31.1)[397] clandestinely moving at the *periphery* of the urban space (in the diptych's second part). Unlike the general scholarly trend, my own analysis therefore does not aim at addressing the degree of Propertius' 'Augustanism' by looking at *what* the elegist tells or does not tell about the Actian monument itself.[398] My interest is instead to explore the speaker's spatial position *within* and *outside* the architectural complex and the political value of such a liminal oscillation eroding the border between centre and periphery, 'here' and 'there', Augustus and Cynthia.[399]

In particular, I shall argue that a subtle political symbolism can be detected in Cynthia's, *and ultimately Propertius'*, transgression of Augustus' monumental headquarters on the Palatine. By emphasising the *princeps*' connection with Apollo 'the Sun' in poem 2.31 (first part of the diptych) and then Cynthia's own identification with a 'Moon' orbiting towards unclear destinations in the *Vrbs*' periphery at 2.32 (second part of the diptych), I contend that Cynthia's 'lunar revolution', so to speak, enhances her association with Augustus' very enemy at Actium, Cleopatra. In the contemporary political propaganda against Egypt, the Eastern queen was in fact associated with the 'Moon' via the 'lunar' goddess Isis, precisely the same deity to whom Cynthia is said to have consecrated herself in

[396] Whilst not all the editors print 2.31 and 2.32 together as in the manuscript tradition (e.g. Richardson 1977; Heyworth 2007a do; with the latter I also share the verse transpositions at the beginning of 2.32, but not his division of 2.32 *post* v.18; *contra* e.g. Fedeli 2005), most scholars analyse them as a 'diptych' (Hubbard 1974; Welch 2005:94; Lowell Bowditch 2009; Spentzou 2018).

[397] I take, as most critics do, Cynthia as the *amator*'s addressee right from v.1. The fact that the encounter the speaking voice is delaying is a rendez-vous with the *puella* is after all enhanced by the employment of the adjective *tardior* which defines the lover's *amor* in the *Monobiblos*' programmatic poem (1.1.17; see further Gardner 2013).

[398] See *infra* for bibliography of such kind.

[399] Spentzou 2018 finds a similar approach to the poems, yet she reaches different conclusions.

the piece following our diptych, elegy 2.33a. The connection between Cynthia and Cleopatra via Isis is thus subtly provided in poem 2.32 itself, also because, as I shall show, the elegiac mistress has been seen fleeing to unspecified religious sites that bear interesting connection to the Egyptian goddess herself.

In virtue of all this, the Propertian *amator*'s visit at the Temple is thus not only a temporary detour from an amorous rendez-vous (as usually maintained)[400] but can also become a temporary deviation at the space of the *centre*, where Egyptian culture was visually 'subjugated' through the conquest of Augustus, from the space of the *periphery*, where Egyptian rites were performed by devotees of Isis, such as Cynthia and Cleopatra, and where Propertius shall ultimately flee. By lingering with the 'solar' Augustus and yet then joining the 'lunar' Cynthia, Propertius splits himself between a normative Roman citizen, bowing to the *princeps*' splendid success over the East as carved in shining marble, and a rather un-Roman lover, fleeing out of the urban area to follow a mistress whose cultic preferences connected her to Rome's enemy and were despised by the contemporary Augustan propaganda.[401]

So as to round off my analysis of Propertius' viewpoint on Actian politics (and the embedded relationship between Rome and Egypt), I shall briefly draw attention to the representation of Isis and Cleopatra as emerging elsewhere in the elegiac *corpus* (2.33a, 3.11, 4.6). Much like the itinerant Cynthia, the Egyptian goddess and queen are depicted as transgressive travellers, who have posed (Cleopatra) or still pose (Isis) a threat to Augustus' obsession with spatial surveillance. I shall argue that the references to these peripheral women's aberrant itineraries *inside* and *outside* the metropolis work to problematise the negative picture that, on first inspection, Propertius seems to provide them and thus his alignment with the *princeps*' official 'orientalising' discourse, predicated upon the geographical and cultural control of the West over the East.

In the Conclusions to the Chapter, I shall return to Cynthia's *free* roaming (*libera*, 2.32.62) at the margins of *Roma* to make a broader reflection on the political and at once metapoetic value of the *puella*'s escapade. The mistress's flight does not only assert the possibility, on Propertius' part, of escaping the

[400] See ultimately Spentzou 2018.
[401] See *infra* for Augustus' propaganda against Isis dated 28 BCE.

centre of the imperial metropolis and taking side with the *periphery* of the recently oppressed Egyptian colony, as perhaps the only space where, paradoxically, freedom is still possible after the installation of the regime. In fact, Cynthia's 'revolution' also states the primacy of erotic elegy ('*Cynthia*' as both flesh-and-blood *puella* and text, that is, Propertius' poetic *monumentum*) over panegyric poetry ('Augustus'), which Propertius manages to reject in spite of an initial, fallacious fascination with the *princeps* and his *monumentum*. Propertius' ambivalent 'in betweenness' (his *différance* as an *exclusus/dominus* at Rome) thus emerges once more from his *literally* liminal oscillation between official and unofficial spaces: a fluid trajectory takes him from the triumphal, Roman centre to the amorous and (potentially) Eastern periphery. The passage from the door, as it were, of Augustus' *porticus* to the *ianua* of the mistress's household is open to crossing and re-crossing and allows the poet to move in between *Roma* and *amor*. In the elegist's narrative, these two polar opposites are in fact intimately bound up and contaminated by each other, rather than separated as in strict binary opposition.

3.2. *Phoebi Caesaris porticus*: Propertius' 'solar striation' (2.31)

After a long set of poems dealing with erotic material, poem 2.31 steers the reader's attention away from the *amator*'s tormented affair. As its opening rhetorical question addressed to Cynthia well conveys – "You ask me, why will I come to you belatedly?" (*Quaeris, cur veniam tibi tardior?* 2.31.1), the lover-poet has to keep his *puella* waiting for a while, because "the golden portico of Phoebus has been opened by the great Caesar" (*aurea Phoebi/porticus a magno Caesare aperta fuit,* 2.31.1-2).[402] The citizen Propertius seems committed to the celebration of Augustus' Actian *monumentum* merely as a consequence of the fact that he could not meet Cynthia among the colonnades of its portico. If Cynthia

[402] To emphasise the exchange between Cynthia and Augustus, the *amator* depicts his encounter with the *princeps* as happening in a quintessentially elegiac environment: the domestic. The verb *aperio* is particularly striking, for the doors 'to be opened' are usually Cynthia's (cf. 1.10.16; 2.9.42).

had joined him at the inauguration, perhaps he would have set his eyes on female flesh, rather than Augustan marble.[403] Be that as it may, the mistress's absence *does* temporarily leave him room for a rather detailed description of the complex that he is visiting on his own:[404]

Quaeris, cur ueniam tibi tardior? aurea Phoebi
porticus a magno Caesare aperta fuit.
tanta erat in spatium Poenis digesta columnis,
inter quas Danai femina turba senis.
hic equidem Phoebo uisus mihi pulchrior illo
marmoreus tacita carmen hiare lyra;
atque aram circum steterant armenta Myronis,
quattuor artificis, uiuida signa, boues.
tum medium claro surgebat marmore templum,
et patria Phoebo carius Ortygia:
in quo Solis erat supra fastigia currus;
et ualuae, Libyci nobile dentis opus,
altera deiectos Parnasi uertice Gallos,
altera maerebat funera Tantalidos.
deinde inter matrem deus ipse interque sororem
Pythius in longa carmina ueste sonat.
(2.31)

Responses to Propertius' 16-line tour of the Augustan temple have been the most diverse.[405] Some critics go as far as to contend that the poem was officially commissioned by Maecenas for the celebration of Augustus' victory at Actium;[406] others instead argue that Propertius fails to create an ἔκφρασις that would have pleased the *princeps*.[407] According to the latter group of scholars, Propertius in fact omits several details, among those that archaeologists have found in their Palatine excavations, that would have accentuated Augustus' Actian success.[408] Yet, the visual language that Propertius 'reads' as he strolls

[403] The Portico shall become a favourite Ovidian spot for erotic rendez-vous (cf. Ov. *Am*. 2.2.4; *AA* 1.74; *Tr*. 3.1.62).
[404] The description is in fact not about the *porticus* only (as the initial couplet might suggest) but on the whole cultic site. Fedeli 2005:870 argues that the *porticus* was inaugurated after the dedication of the temple and thus, retrospectively, provided Propertius with the excuse to talk about the whole complex.
[405] An updated recollection of views in Steenkamp 2012.
[406] Esp. Cairns 2006:340-1; cf. Heyworth 1994:56-9.
[407] E.g. Welch 2005; Miller 2009; *contra* Lowell-Bowditch 2009; Spentzou 2018:38.
[408] On the material excavated, see also Zanker 1988 *passim*; Gurval 1995:111-36.

through the portico is nevertheless undeniably that of Augustus' military incorporation of Egypt as well as of the *princeps*' successful conclusion of the civil war era *tout court*. Indeed, the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine (as well as the adjacent *domus Augusta*, decorated with a good share of Egyptian artefacts), which was inaugurated just three years after the victory, served as arguably the most important instrument for the construction of a visual narrative that strengthened the hierarchy between the centre and the just-subjugated African periphery.[409]

Propertius' acknowledgement of the presence of the sculptural group of the Danaids (v.4), fifty Egyptian brides (save one) who, on their father's order, murdered their cousins-husbands on their wedding night, has rightly been interpreted as a reference to fratricide and civil war and, more specifically, to the vanquishing of Cleopatra (with whom, perhaps significantly, one of the criminal sisters even shared the onomastic: Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.1.5, 4, 7; Hyg. *Fab.* 70).[410] The brides' descendance from Io,[411] the lover of Zeus who was received in Egypt as the 'Moon' goddess Isis,[412] not only strengthened their symbolic association with Cleopatra, who identified with the 'lunar' Isis or the 'Moon' in the years preceding Actium,[413] but was also consistent with other decorative elements of the Temple featuring Isis herself.[414] On a terracotta plaque unearthed in the complex's area, for example, Isis is tacked up like a victory trophy between a pair of sphinxes and appears to be waving her *sistrum*, just as Cleopatra did to summon

[409] Whilst also the climax of the civil wars, the battle of Actium was advertised by Augustus as a '*foreign* war' against Egypt and a single enemy, Cleopatra (Dio 50.4.4-5; Plut. *Ant*. 60; the incorporation of Africa is stressed in *Poenis…columnis* and *Libyci…dentis*). Augustus' 'Egyptomania', reflected in his taste for Egyptian art, is an important part of the display of his colonial power over this important province (on his acquisition of obelisks in 10 BCE, cf. Pliny *NH* 36.64-74; on the Egyptian decorations of his *domus*, cf. Carettoni 1983:67-85).

[410] Kellum 1985:173-4, who also rightly underscores that, in the *Aeneid*, the Danaids appear on Pallas' *balteus* (Virg. *Aen.* 10.497-8), which Turnus (interestingly, of Argive descendance like the Danaids: *Aen.* 7.370-2) rips from the enemy. It is precisely from the sight of Pallas' *balteus* that Aeneas' anger – an allegory of Augustus' anger against Cleopatra and Antony (*Aen.* 1.293-6; *RG* 2.13) – is famously taken out on Turnus at the poem's closure.

[411] Note the emphasis on descendance as brought about by *Danai…senis.* According to Ovid (*Tr.* 3.1.60-2), the statue of the *barbarus pater* Danaus was also present with his sword drawn, mustering his daughter to their deed. A later scholiast (*Schol. Pers.* 2.56) instead reports that fifty equestrian statues representing Aegyptus' fifty sons featured too.

[412] Cf. Prop. 2.33a, discussed *infra.*

[413] On Cleopatra qua 'New Isis' or 'the Moon', cf. Plut. *Ant.* 54.6 (νέα Ἶσις) and Dio 50.5.3 (ἐκείνη δὲ Σελήνη τε καὶ Ἶσις), with Becher 1966:42-43; Witt 1971:34, 147. Compare also Dio 50.2.5 for Octavian's political use of Cleopatra's lunar identification at the eve of Actium.

[414] Cf. Kellum 1985:171, drawing from the material brought to light by Carettoni's 1968 excavations (see Carettoni 1971/2, 1973).

her animal-headed minions against the virtuous forces of Octavian and Apollo in Vergil's allusion to Actium (*Aen*. 8.696), also reprised by Propertius in a later poem (3.11.43).[415] Whether or not the Roman reader (perhaps invited at the opening of the Portico just like Propertius) was made to think of all these polyvalent allusions elicited by the reference to the Danaids in the elegy, she could certainly enjoy the poem's mimetic reproduction of the visual hierarchy between the Danaids and Apollo Sol staring down at them from the temple's frieze with a judgemental and repressive look (v.10). The fifty deviant ladies' crime was in fact scrutinised from above the *monumentum* by the 'all-encompassing' gaze of the god, with whom Augustus identified.[416]

The Danaids are not the only reminders of Augustus' successful incorporation of Egypt as registered by Propertius: the mythological scenes carved on the Temple's doors and displaying two acts of revenge carried out by Apollo (vv.12-3) have also been read as allegories of Augustus' role as a defender of the Roman world at Actium (versus foreign threats: cf. the Galli) as well as of avenger of his adoptive father Julius Caesar.[417] According to this interpretation, Apollo's superior position in respect to his enemies on the doors' carvings thus replicates his privileged standpoint on the temple's frieze, from which he visually controls the transgressive slaughter of the Danaids, and accentuates his power to repress threatening deviant behaviours.[418] Finally, the sculptural complex last referred by the poet, namely the statue of Apollo flanked by Latona and Diana inside the temple, also carries potential references to the victorious naval battle of three years before. In virtue of the tripartite statue's similarities with an artwork dated from the same period (the so-called 'Sorrento base'), in which Apollo is making an offering (a patera held in his right hand) after killing the female snake Pytho, critics have suggested that Apollo, significantly called *Pythius* by

[415] Strazzulla 1990:84 does not believe that Isis stands for Cleopatra in this plaque, yet I think she contradicts herself when she argues (36ff.) that in other plaques representing Perseus and Medusa the latter symbolises Cleopatra (if Medusa can be taken as Cleopatra, why cannot Isis?).
[416] On Apollo Sol's gaze qua a reflection of Augustus', compare Lowell-Bowditch 2009 *passim*. The statues' *giallo antico* colour (a golden-like shade: Stat. *Silv.* 1.5.36-37; Hor. *C*. 2.18.5, with Nisbett & Hubbard 1978 *ad loc.*) perhaps enhanced the statues' irradiation by Apollo's solar light.
[417] Kellum 1985:172-3. On Apollo's and Artemis' slaughter of the Niobids: *Il.* 24.602-9; Ov. *Met.* 6.146-312. On the Gauls' expulsion from the Parnassus: Paus. 10.23.1-9.
[418] Steenkamp 2012:86-7 argues that there may be a veiled reference to Apollo's extraordinary avenging power also in Propertius' reference to the cattle sculpted by Myron (vv.7-8), for Apollo was sentenced to guard the flocks of Admetus at Pherae after killing Zeus' Cyclopes (cf. *Il.* 21.450-2; Call. *Hymn* 2.47-9).

Propertius (v.16), is represented in the same sacrificial context in the statue referred to in the elegy.[419] Considering that an association between Pytho and Cleopatra has been established, it has been proposed that this last sculptural complex also alludes to the expiation and peace resulting from Cleopatra's defeat.[420]

In view of these symbolic references, I suggest that by strolling through the Palatine complex, the *amator* thus temporarily turns into a 'citizen' committed to acknowledging and praising the Augustan triumph over the East via his poetic re-inscription of the *princeps*' visual language. Indeed, although the reader is asked to integrate the elements sketched out by Propertius with those the poet does not include in the ἔκφρασις, Propertius' positive response to Augustus' temple is nevertheless transparent.[421] One more textual detail may help us corroborate this view: if we want to accept S. J. Heyworth's edition of the poem, then we have to even make for room for a *lacuna* before line 5, where, according to Heyworth, Propertius describes a statue of Apollo with the features of Octavian himself, a statue "more beautiful than Apollo himself".[422] Propertius' bow to Octavian through the reference to the *princeps*' Apollonian statue would be further sustained by the intertextual link to Callimachus' *Hymn* 2.24 (*marmoreus*; *hiare* < **μάρμαρον** ἀντὶ γυναικὸς ὀιζυρόν τι **χανούσης**), where the Hellenistic poet refers to a marble statue of Niobe, namely the same mythological woman mentioned by Propertius towards the end of the ἔκφρασις (v.14). Since Callimachus' *Hymn* contains adulatory references to an unspecified king of the Ptolemies, who is significantly compared to Apollo in the text, then, as Heyworth contends, the "[a]llusion to the Callimachean context [can in fact] confirm the [indirect] panegyric" of Propertius for Augustus.[423]

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[419] Kellum 1985:175-6; with Roccos 1989 *passim* on the 'Sorrento base'.
[420] On Cleopatra as Pytho, cf. 4.6.35-6, with DeBrohun 2003:224, who also suggests that Cleopatra's suicide by snake poison strengthened the queen's connection with the reptiles. On the identification between Cleopatra and snake-haired Medusa in plaques found on the Palatine, cf. n415 *supra*.
[421] *Contra* Steenkamp 2012:79-81, who argues that our knowledge of what Propertius omitted is little and thus calls into question a political reading of what we *do* have in 2.31.
[422] Heyworth 1994:56-9. According to our source on the artwork (*schol. ad.* Hor. *Epist.* 1.3.17; compare Serv. *ad* Virg. *Georg.* 4.10), the statue resembling Octavian was located at the entrance of the adjacent Libraries and, thus, off the *amator*'s trajectory. Yet, one possibility, if we want to defend Heyworth's text, would be that Propertius is deliberately confusing the several Apollonian statues he has seen.
[423] Heyworth 1994:58.

Whether or not we are willing to accept this last textual detail caught by Heyworth, I have been showing how the ἔκφρασις of the Palatine temple is replete with political allusions to Augustus' mastery of Egypt and can thus be interpreted as a poetic homage to the *princeps*' recent military success, with which he inaugurated a new political era at Rome. The same argument, I suggest, can be sustained by looking at the way Propertius meticulously composes an ἔκφρασις that mimics the official architectural space to which it refers and thus pays tribute to the Augustan management of space. The 'citizen' Propertius moves as he recounts to the reader what he saw: his is a geometrical, measurable kind of spatial advancement, whose rhythm arithmetically overlaps with the couplets-units forming the poem before our eyes, each dealing with a specific part of the Palatine complex.[424] Throughout the verses, emphasis is in fact clearly put on dimensions (*tanta*), order (*in spatium*[425] *digesta*), orientation (*inter quas, hic, atque circum, tum medium, in quo, supra, deinde, inter...interque*), numbers (*quattuor, altera...altera*), symmetries (*altera...altera, inter...interque*), and balance (*tum medium*: Phoebus shining with equal intensity over the other parts of the complex as well as over the even number of couplets coming before and following).

An interesting way of looking at Propertius' careful poetic inscription of the Augustan *monumentum* is through the lens of G. Deleuze's theory of 'striated space', to be read in conjunction with its antithesis, the so-called 'smooth space'.[426] Arguably one of the most 'spatial' philosophers of the 20th century,[427] Deleuze (together with Guattari in their joint output) calls 'striated' the sedentary space of the State apparatus, in which the State organises its territory by dividing a surface through a geometrical grill of points and lines, of carefully connected places according to an overarching order, a "homogeneous space of quantitative

[424] Richardson 1977:302 ("[w]e move with [the visitor] along the main axis, drawn along in the experience of the architect's conception and development, the ritual of architecture that is supremely Roman"). On the geometrical movement within the cultic site implied in 2.31, compare Boucher 1965:49-50; Miller 2009: esp.197-199 ("The approach is logical: from the front to the rear of the sanctuary, from the top to the bottom, then from outside to inside of the temple", 199).
[425] I read *spatium* (vs. *speciem*), with Shakleton Bailey 1956 *ad loc.*
[426] See Deleuze & Guattari 1988:475ff. The term 'striated' originates with the configuration of fabric as a striated space: "interwoven as a grid, a closed delimited in width space, coming with a top and a bottom"; 'smooth' instead recalls the surface of deserts and seas (spaces on which it is more difficult to impose 'striation').
[427] Tally 2012:136.

multiplicity".[428] It is through the fixed coordinates of 'the striated', "with respects to which any and all movement can be mapped" that the State 'fixes' and regulates the wanderings of its citizens.[429] I contend that Propertius' stroll through the Palatine complex, as we have shown above an important ideological space of the emerging regime, is constrained by the State's own delineation and division (or 'striation') of the same area. As I have in fact emphasised, the stroll is coterminous with a regular movement marked by constant geometrical intervals, a form of spatial representation that is imposed on and limits the mobility of the *flâneur* ('urban stroller'), rather than a free kind of roaming. Indeed, it is as if the controlling gaze of Apollo *Sol* staring down at Propertius from the frieze of the *fanum,* a surrogate of Augustus' own power to scrutinise his citizens as within a Panopticon-kind of space, were in fact disciplining the poet's visit too.[430] When viewed under this light, Propertius' participation in the glamorous opening of the Augustan *porticus* betrays an apparent conformism, whereby alternative routes are banned to accommodate the detailed (if incomplete) description of a pivotal official space at the *centre* of the *Vrbs*.

Nevertheless, as we have pointed out earlier, Propertius' 'fixity' in the 'striated' perimeter of Augustus' headquarters has been threatened from the very start by his own preliminary admonition that he shall (belatedly) reach Cynthia at a yet unknown destination. His time with Augustus and the Actian *monumentum* is just a limited 'interval', for the domineering mistress shall ultimately recall the *amator* into the sphere of *amor* and away from *Roma*. The passage from the 'striated' to a less normative kind of space is attuned with Deleuze's introduction of 'smooth space', which, as I have anticipated, constitutes the alternative to the 'striated'. In his theorization of the 'smooth', Deleuze is very much inspired by the itinerant lives of nomadic tribes: as he underscores, nomads have a qualitatively different kind of space from that of the State, a fluid space explored without calculation and quantification but rather through the process of

[428] Patton 2000:112. Cf. Miggelbrink *et alii* 2013:15: "Striated space must be marked by land surveyors because it is under the surveillance of the (settlers') space".
[429] Lorraine 2005:170. Compare Boer 2002:159. The 'striated' thus shares several points of contact with H. Lefebvre's 'representations of space' (*espaçe conçu*, the first term in his trialectic), the space constituted via control over knowledge, signs, codes and representating "power and ideology, [c]ontrol and surveillance" (Soja 1996:66-7; cf. General Introduction).
[430] Propertius' 'arrested mobility' is comparable to Apollo's own static on the temple's frieze: on his chariot (*currus*, from *currere*) and yet temporarily resting.

'itinerarization' and 'ambulation' ('*itinération, ambulation*').[431] Since Western societies make 'order', 'stability' and 'settled-ness' the basic norm, against which 'disorder', 'instability', 'mobility' are secondary, deviant, and indeed punishable states, the nomadic subject poses a threat to the same societies' obsession with ordering fluxes.[432] By passing through 'lines of flight' leading "away from the centred site of gaze and out of the ordered picture",[433] the Deleuzean nomadic subject constantly 'de-territorialises' and 're-territorialises' herself in between 'striated' and 'smooth', never fully sticking to neither of the two spaces and rejecting a clear position in favour of unexpected movement. By escaping structuration and normative control, 'smooth spaces' are thus also fraught with political significance (just like the 'striated'): it is in fact by crossing their 'lines of flight', "unpredictable and unruly routes of escape that defy spatial [surveillance, that] hegemonic spatial semantics [break up]".[434] Indeed, if 'striated space' points to the citizen's alignment with the State's power and ideology, 'smooth space' is instead the privileged terrain for the manifestation of "acts of rebellion, insubordination and guerrilla warfare".[435] As we shall see in the next section, Cynthia's movement away from Rome into a hardly definable space at the margins of the *Vrbs* can be viewed as one such spatial act: a 'nomadic' displacement from Propertius and Augustus' symbolic space at the centre that shall ultimately captivate Propertius himself. Cynthia's erratic nomadism in fact attracts and causes the citizen's impending getaway from Rome and calls into question the stability of *his own* 'striated' position at the *centre*: 'striated' *Roma* shall easily (if belatedly) 'smooth out' into the *peripheral* realm of *amor*.

[431] Cf. Tally 2012:136.
[432] Cf. West-Pavlov 2009:175, 178-9. Compare how, sadly, this is still the trend in contemporary Europe and USA, where immigrants are treated as deviations of national birth right as much as threats to domestic welfare.
[433] West-Pavlov 2009:202.
[434] Ganser 2009:78.
[435] Deleuze & Guattari 1988:385, drawing on the opposition between the sedentary State city and the moving war machines that threaten the State.

3.3. *Cynthia libera*: the *puella*'s 'lunar revolution' from Augustus' 'solar temple' (2.32)

"...If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if the other do.

And though it in the center sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home..."

(J. Donne, *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*, vv.25-32)

libera currebant per annum et inobseruata sidera
(Ov. *Fast.* 4.110)

Critics have not failed to notice that the ἔκφρασις of the temple of Apollo, addressed to Cynthia, does not only work as a means of delaying the *amator*'s encounter with the *puella*, but also as a simultaneous invitation for the mistress to come and visit the spell-binding, sunlit (or indeed 'Sun'-lit) Augustan complex.[436] The beginning of poem 2.32 provides the evidence:

***hoc** utinam spatiere **loco**, quodcumque uacabis,*
Cynthia, sed tibi me credere turba uetat,
cum uidet accensis deuotam currere taedis
in nemus et Triuiae lumina ferre deae.
qui uidet, is peccat: qui te non uiderit ergo,
non cupiet: facti lumina crimen habent.
(2.32.1-6)[437]

[436] Cf. Miller 2009:197.
[437] On this verse order, cf. n396 *supra*.

Propertius expresses his wish that Cynthia, in her spare time, could roam with him around the space he has just described (*hoc...loco*). The convenient sandwiching of the verb indicating movement (*spatiere*) in between the two words that designate location (*hoc…loco*) mimics Propertius' desire to enclose the *puella* in the geometrically delimited area where he currently lingers, the 'striated' perimeter of the Augustan regime. Yet, to his dismay, the *puella* has in fact trespassed the Palatine *monumentum* (as much as the whole *Vrbs*) for other destinations, committing a betrayal that is both spatial and erotic. Indeed, a throng of informers (*turba*) has apparently seen the mistress "piously running" (*deuotam currere*), lamps alight in her hands (*accensis...taedis*), towards the holy wood of Nemi and "carrying the lights" (*lumina ferre*) to a local sanctuary of the goddess Trivia.[438] Whilst the *turba*'s deposition that Cynthia is on her way to Nemi may well be truthful, Propertius is still unsure whether he should buy their version of events. Thus, he is made to think of alternative places at the periphery of the *Vrbs* where the mistress might equally have fled after scorning the Palatine and central Rome altogether. The poet's suspicions are brought about by a series of insistent questions:

nam quid Praenesti dubias, o Cynthia, sortis,
quid petis Aeaei moenia Telegoni?
cur ita te Herculeum deportant esseda Tibur?
Appia cur totiens te uia Lanuuium?
(2.32.3-6)

I argue that the accumulation of these many alternative destinations, all located like Nemi at the borders of the Capital, works to situate Cynthia in a diametrically different 'spatiality' from Propertius' 'striated' lingering on the Palatine. Unlike the poet, the *puella* in fact pertains to the nomadic, and thus freer, wanderings across Deleuzean 'smooth space'. If the *amator* is strolling (on an invisible line) through the points forming the architectural complex of Augustus

[438] Cf. Lowell Bowditch 2009:419 for the additional reading of *turba* as erotic (on top of legal): Propertius' informers on Cynthia's *iter* might as well be other lovers of hers.

(the points being each element described in the metrical textual space of the elegiac couplet, as we have noted above), the *puella* is impossible to pin down in the same way. Cynthia has a "road" (*ista uia*, v.17), a "line"[439] linking a set of points on a map (the suburban villages to which she is potentially fleeing), but her journey is on an unruly trajectory rather than a clearly traceable itinerary leading her to a precise point. The mistress is in fact imagined as she freely moves in space (*spatiari, currere, ferre, petere, deportari*) and, because of this, she avoids being safely geolocated in a clearly recognizable spot (like the Palatine *porticus*). Furthermore, although she does have a supposed destination (Nemi, standing on its own), this is in fact not a definitive one (Praeneste, Tusculum, Tibur, Lanuvium all compete with it, at least in Propertius' suspicious mind). The open-ended, unpredictable *iter* on which the *puella* has embarked is resonant with the shifting nature of the journey taken across Deleuzean 'smooth spaces' and opposes her safe placement within the cloistering and geometrical 'striated'.[440] To be sure, later in the text (vv.11-16), Propertius makes Cynthia's reluctance to stick with the orderly spaces of the State apparatus even more explicit. When the elegist in fact reveals that the mistress "loathes" (*sordet*) the portico of Pompey, not only an architectural complex built in an area adjacent to the Palatine complex but significantly one that Augustus refurbished and restyled in recent years (32 BC), he does so by insisting on its highly 'striated' structure.[441] The portico's decorations include shady columns (*columnis...umbrosis*), orderly planted trees (*et platanis* ***creber pariter*** *surgentibus* ***ordo***, v.13) and plashing fountains enriched with a complex of refined statues (vv.14-16), also geometrical in shape (*toto orbe*) and geometrically disposed, as we can further appreciate by looking

[439] Esp. *uia, OLD* 6: "The line of travel leading to a particular destination, way, course".
[440] Lorraine 2005:164; cf. further 167ff. for an analysis of Melville's *Moby Dick* as a quintessential narrative set in (aquatic) 'smooth space': in the work, the whale-hunters in fact "locate themselves not with respect to the town hall or church to which all members of their town have an ascertainable spatial relationship, but rather to the men with whom they work, the tasks they have to perform, and the whales (always in motion on an ever-changing sea) they pursue" so that "[w]hen [the protagonist] Ahab abandons the quadrant [i.e., the scientific tool aiding him in his navigation], he abandons an already tenuous tie with the striated space of conventional life to pursue the smooth space of the nomadic subject" (168).
[441] Welch 2005:95 underlines the linguistic echoes between this and the previous portico (*columnis*: 2.31.3, 2.32.11; *porticus*: 2.31.12, 2.32.12; *surgo*: 2.31.9, 2.32.13). On this other complex, cf. Aug. *RG* 20; Suet. *Aug.* 31.5. Compare Favro 1996:109-10; Kuttner 1999:349-50; Wallace-Hadrill 2005:79-80; Syme 1939:50, 316-18.

at the archaeological surveys of the area.[442] Cynthia in the text is therefore doubly displeased with the two 'striated' *porticus* engineered by Augustus, the Palatine and the Pompeian:[443] uncontrollable and unbound rather than tameable within the enclosed geometrical grill of the regime's architectural complexes in the heart of the city, the *puella* is (spatially, on top of mentally) "delusional" (*demens*, v.18; cf. 1.8b.1) indeed: her mysterious *iter* is a confusing 'line of flight' that puzzles her lover as much as us readers.

As we have been showing, on top of 'de-territorialising' herself from Propertius and us, the mistress concomitantly defies Augustus' 'striation'. As it is characteristic of Deleuzean 'smooth spaces', her flight from central Rome is in fact a politically fraught one and, specifically, a reactionary one against the regime. This is not only due to the transgressive logic of her nomadic *iter* itself (a 'smooth' escape from the 'striated') but also due to the symbolism attached to the same journey. In order to approach the politics of Cynthia's route, I suggest we start by detecting a subtle pun emerging through a set of verses in the poem:

Non urbem, demens, ***lumina*** *nostra fugis!*
(2.32.17-18)

"It is not the city that you avoid, madwoman, but my eyes!", screams a frustrated Propertius as he tries to dissuade Cynthia from fleeing away on her extra-urban journey. Since the primary meaning of *lumen* is "light, radiance; rays of light" (especially coming from stars and planets: *OLD* 1) rather than "eye", one might here catch an allusion to the 'solar illumination' irradiating Propertius as he strolls through the *golden* Portico of the *solar* Apollo (2.31.1-2).[444] According to this more literal translation of *lumen*, Cynthia is then not said to be leaving the

[442] Corso & Romano 1997:735 point out that the *Porticus Pompeianae,* with their (highly geometrical) "corte rettangolare quadriporticata" served as an architectural paradigm for future porticos (adjacent to theatres) in the Roman world.
[443] Batinski 2003:621-2 notes that the portico of Pompey's fake natural elements "reveals a conquering city which grotesquely controls the meagre remnants of the natural world allowed to remain within its walls" and that "[t]his is the Rome from which Cynthia flees: a city adorned with riches gathered from its far flung empire, a city in which trees are grown in regimented order, the buildings, not trees, provide shade, and the water nymphs who reside in fountains are gobbled up".
[444] Cf. also *lumen, OLD* 7: "reflected light, shine, glitter".

city as a whole (*non urbem*), but more specifically the light of Augustus' solar portico: the *puella* is refusing to 'meet'/ 'make eye-contact' with both her partner and the *princeps* (qua Apollo *Sol*) on the Palatine. The pun on *lumina* then appears in the description of Cynthia's (suspected) flight to Nemi, which we have already reported above:

cum uidet accensis deuotam currere taedis
in nemus et Triuiae ***lumina*** *ferre deae.*
(2.32.9-10)

Even though in this other context it makes perfect sense to translate *lumina* as "the light of the torches" (cf. *accensis…taedis*) that Cynthia carries to the temple of Diana at Nemi (according to Propertius' informants), the word again maintains its other two meanings of "eyes" and "rays of light". Therefore, here too, Cynthia is "taking *her eyes* away" from the splendours of Augustan Rome – and specifically from the Augustan portico of Apollo 'the Sun' –, to the periphery – and specifically to the temple of Diana *Triuia* 'the Moon'.[445] Simultaneously though, we may even suggest that Cynthia herself is "carrying moonbeams/lunar illumination" to 'the Moon' Diana, for *lumina* can point to the "beams" and the "illumination" (*OLD* 1) of the *luna*, whose letters are further anagrammed by ***lu****m*i***na*** in the verse.[446] Cynthia's identification with the 'Moon' – an identification that has often fascinated the critics in virtue of the mistress's onomastic connection to Diana herself – is corroborated by further textual elements.[447] The dative *Triuiae...deae*, depending on the verb *ferre*, can in fact be

[445] By being *Triuia*, Artemis/Diana in fact embodies her 'lunar' third Hecate (note that the etymology of the name Diana itself associates her with "light": for the same root, cf. the Greek Ζεύς, gen. **Δι**-ός). *Triuia* also recalls the "crossroads" as the goddess's favourite cultic sites (perhaps an additional pun, for Cynthia is seen at the crossroad of more than one route on her way to Nemi: vv.3-6).
[446] Such wordplay is not alien to Propertius: see Chapter 2.
[447] On Cynthia qua the Moon, cf. Prop. 1.1.1-4; 1.1.19ff.; 1.3.31-34; 1.4.25; 1.6.36; 1.16.39-40; 2.17.11-16; 2.20.21-22; 2.28.37-38; 3.14.21-22, 29-30; 3.16.15-16; 3.20.13-14; 4.4.23-24; 4.5.13-14; 4.7.19-20; with O'Neil 1958, Commager 1974:34-35; Höschele 2011:22. Habinek 1982 (influenced by Skutsch 1963, who had already proposed a quasi-geometrical arrangement of the poems in Book 1 as well as by the impact of Aratus of Soli's *Phaenomena* on the Augustan poets) went as far as to contend that the number of couplets in Propertius' first booklet of elegies, known at Rome as *Cynthia* (cf. Prop. 2.24.2; 2.34.87-94), is the same as the number of days in a lunar year (354; cf. on the timespan of one year attributed – up to that point – to Propertius' love-affair

ambivalently taken as a genitive modifying *lumina* (so that Cynthia is seen carrying "the [lunar] light *of* the goddess Trivia" rather than "*to* the goddess Trivia").[448] Furthermore, the verb describing the mistress's movement, *currere*, re-echoes a previous Propertian poem where the "(early-)running" lady was the (personified) Moon herself (*donec diuersas prae**currens luna** fenestras,* 1.3.31) and where the Moon's "illumination" was interestingly rendered in Latin with *lumina* (*luna moraturis sedula **luminibus**,* 1.3.32).[449]

According to the close reading of these verses, we are therefore stimulated to view Cynthia 'the Moon' as the performant of a sort of 'lunar revolution', so to speak, towards a 'lunar cultic spot'. In a narrative context like that of poems 2.31/32, the *puella*'s lunar identification can be fittingly contrasted with Augustus' own solar connection to Apollo *Sol* dominating Rome from the peaks of the Palatine (potentially not only an abstract association, but one physically forged in marble if Propertius quotes the statue of Augustus with the features of Apollo in the ἔκφρασις' conjectured *lacuna*, as noted above). Cynthia's lunar 'mobility' can be further juxtaposed to the orderly strolling of Propertius visiting the 'solar' temple, 'striated' under the Augusto-Apollonian sunlight. As we may put it, Cynthia's refusal to be irradiated by the sunshine of Augustus at the side of Propertius is counterbalanced by her itinerant emanation of Trivian moonlight: her lunar 'light' resists the captivating force of the *princeps*' solar *lumina* (which have instead temporarily enthralled her partner).

I argue that there are disturbing elements in Cynthia's disavowal of 'solar' Augustus' 'striated space' and preference for the clandestine 'smooth space' of the periphery, towards which she orbits as she carries 'moonlight'. In the early post-Actian context behind the composition of our 'diptych' of poems, Cynthia's association with the (peripheral) moon(light) instead of the (central) sun(light)

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with Cynthia in the collection's programmatic piece: *et mihi iam **toto** furor hic non deficit **anno**,* 1.1.7). For Diana's epithet *Cynthia* compare Hor. *C.* 3.28.12 and later on Ov. *Met.* 2.463-65; 7. 753-55; 15. 537; *Fast.* 2. 91. 159 (Apollo, also born at the feet of mount Kynthios on the island of Delos like his twin sister is *Cynthius* at Prop. 2.34.80; compare Cat. 9.60; Hor. *C.* 1.21.2; Tib. 3.4.50; Virg. *Buc.* 6.3, *Georg.* 3.36); on the goddess's identification with the Moon, cf. Hor. *CS* 1-2, 35-36; *C.* 4. 6. 37-40; *Epod.* 5. 49-51; Ov. *Met.* 2. 454. On Cynthia as Diana, see ultimately Keith 2014b (and Keith 2012, 2016 on the elegiac *puellae*'s literary rather than historical onomastics).

[448] *Ferre* can be construed absolutely (i.e., without dative: cf. *OLD* 1).

[449] On the erotic role of the Moon as a competing lover of Cynthia's in this piece, see Valladares 2005; cf. O'Neil 1958:5 on the mirroring characterisation of Cynthia and the Moon (both *sedulae*) here.

shows uncanny points of contact with (the herself peripheral) Cleopatra's own contemporary self-advertisement as the 'Moon', via her affiliation to her favourite goddess from the Egyptian pantheon: Isis.[450] To be sure, although Cynthia seems to embody the Roman 'Moon' Diana (to whom she is fleeing, provided that she is actually headed to Nemi), several elements in our text blur the stability of this specific lunar connection and rather suggest that the 'Moon' to whom the mistress is affiliated is no one but Cleopatra's Isis herself.[451] Indeed, Cynthia is consecrated to Isis by the time of poem 2.33a following 2.32 (as if she had finally managed to reach a favoured cultic site after much wandering across 'smooth space' in 2.32).[452] Furthermore, already in poem 2.32, where we are not provided with precise indications about the extra-urban destination chosen by Cynthia to flee from Propertius and Augustus, we can speculate that Cynthia's preference for the periphery over the Palatine reflects her preference for the cultic sites of 'lunar' Isis' over the Palatine sanctuary of 'solar' Apollo. In Propertius' day and age, the Egyptian goddess was in fact worshipped at Nemi in a moon-shaped Iseum next to the temple of Diana Nemorensis.[453] Considering that, as several epigraphical and archaeological sources confirm, female devotees were used to carrying torches (*taedae/lumina*) to the Egyptian goddess too[454] and calling Isis a *triformis dea* (*Triuia*),[455] the *turba* of informers might well have guessed correctly the place to which Cynthia was fleeing (Nemi) but have misunderstood the 'lunar' deity to

[450] See n413 *supra*.
[451] Koenen 1976:130 alludes to the potential Isiac undertones in the names of both Tibullus' and Propertius' elegiac mistresses, who display an interest in the cult of Isis in a good share of poems (Tib. 1.3.27ff.; Prop. 2.28.60-61, 4.5.34, on top of 2.33a). The island of Delos to which the onomastic *Delia* and *Cynthia* refer had in fact been the privileged cultic site of the Egyptian lunar goddess since the 3rd century BC (in addition to the homeland to the Roman 'Moon' Diana). On Tibullus' Delia qua Isis, cf. Lee-Stecum 1998:110, who sees the dying *amator* at Tib. 1.3 as an Osiris wanting to be saved by his Delia/Isis (and compare Maltby 2002 *ad loc.* on Tibullus' ambivalent attitude towards the goddess in the same poem). Ovid's Corinna shares a similar interest in Isis at *Am.* 1.8.73; 2.13.7-18; 3.9.34. On the similarities between Artemis/Diana and Isis, cf. Witt 1971: esp. 151. On the appearance of this Egyptian cult in Italy in the late 2nd/early 1st cent. BC, cf. the epigraphical evidence and the bibliography collected at Orlin 2008:236n9.
[452] Note the semantic link between the two poems in respectively *deuotam* (2.32.9) and *operata est* (2.33a.2).
[453] Guldager-Bilde & Montesen 2002:47: "There is evidence from Nemi that Diana, *from the late Republic onwards*, was venerated together with Isis" (my emphasis). More on the archaeological presence of Isis at Nemi in Pasquali 1990-91; Ghini 1997; Ghini-Palladino 2012 (also on Diana Nemorensis).
[454] Cf. Witt 1971:50, 148 (with Heyob 1975 *passim*) on the importance of torches for both deities. A direct cultic connection between Diana and Isis is further given by Propertius at 2.28.60-62, where he suggests Cynthia make an offer to both deities in back-to-back couplets.
[455] Apul. *Met.* 11.1-5 is a later but important source for the epithet.

whom she had consecrated herself (Isis, rather than Diana Nemorensis). The alternative routes of Cynthia's pilgrimage are themselves also identifiable with Isis' cultic sites for Roman devotees.[456] The first one, Praeneste, was one of the most ancient Italian places for the worship of Isis: there, the primary local goddess indirectly quoted by Propertius (*dubias...**sortis***), namely ***Fortuna*** *Primigenia,* was early assimilated with the Egyptian 'Moon', who was known as *Isi**tyche*** in one of her many manifestations.[457] It is no wonder then that, at the Praenestean cultic complex for *Fortuna Primigenia*, a famous Nilotic mosaic most likely dating from the Sullan age (first half of the 1st century BCE) was unearthed. Not only did this artwork visually reinforce *Fortuna*'s close connection with Isis, but, as archaeologists have persuasively shown, its representation of Isis and Osiris during a rite in royal garments that recall those of the Ptolemaic family provided a further link to the 'New Isis' Cleopatra in late Republican times.[458] Moreover, it has been contended that Cleopatra herself visited the temple in two separate occasions (58 BC; 44 BC) and was familiar with with the local Isiac community of worshippers.[459] As far as Tibur is concerned, we have epigraphical evidence for the identification of the local deity Albula with Isis (to whom – an inscription tells us – a devotee offered a statue of her *alias* Diana).[460] At Tusculum instead, another inscription from the Republican age attests the devotion of a local *aedilis lustralis* to the Egyptian goddess and the presence of an Iseum.[461] Finally, the most important deity worshipped at Lanuvium, namely Juno Sospes, to whose mysteries Cynthia will take part in a later poem (4.8), was prominently associated with Isis[462] and the *Via Appia* on which Propertius locates Lanuvium has been identified as one of the arteries through which the cult of Isis reached Rome from Southern Italy (where it had been firstly diffused by Delian sailors trading goods in the Italic peninsula).[463]

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[456] Cf. the inscriptions collected by Vidman 1969 s.v. *Lavinium, Nemus Dianae, Tusculum, Praeneste, Tibur*.
[457] Coarelli 1994; Witt 1971:34.
[458] See the comprehensive study by Meyboom 1995. For the mosaic's connection to Cleopatra and thus its date as ca. 40s BC, see further Weill Goudchaux 1998:525-34.
[459] Weill Goudchaux 2001:131, 133.
[460] Vidman 1969 *s.v. Tibur* (to be sure, an imperial inscription; yet, on the grounds of the concomitant evidence coming from the nearby villages, nothing impedes us to think that the cult arose earlier).
[461] Malaise 1972:82.
[462] Takacs 1994:38-39.
[463] Hidalgo de la Vega 1986:90.

As I have been suggesting, Propertius might as well have thought of all these extra-urban localities together for they were all, to a greater or lesser extent, evocative of the cult of Isis, to whom Cynthia is ultimately consecrated *in the elegy following* 2.32. The free, open-ended, 'smooth' *iter* of Cynthia (perhaps leading her to Nemi, perhaps to nearby towns at the margins of Rome) after all allows us critics the freedom to make our own guesses about the mistress's mysterious cultic preferences. If Cynthia's affiliation to Isis is anticipated already in elegy 2.32 though, considering the internal chronology of the poem, it is hard not to catch the (indeed) 'revolutionary' dimension to Cynthia's 'lunar revolution' across 'smooth space', where, as Deleuze would argue, "acts of rebellion, insubordination and guerrilla warfare" usually take place. By escaping Augustus' *monumentum* for Actium, decorated with a visual language that alluded to Rome's subjugation of Egypt also via the vanquishing of Isis (qua an allegory of the defeated Egyptian queen),[464] and, on the other hand, by reaching far less illustrious *monumenta* devoted to the worship of Cleopatra's very favourite deity, Cynthia symbolically takes side with the 'lunar' *periphery* rather than the 'solar' *centre*: the defeated East instead of the triumphant West.[465] More specifically, Cynthia's 'lunar revolution' towards Isiac cultic sites reacts to the peculiar post-Actian context in which Propertius' poem was written, one that saw Augustus' promulgation of an edict against the cult of Isis itself on the grounds of the goddess' close relationship with the just vanquished Cleopatra. Indeed, whilst at the centre of the *Vrbs* the *princeps* had recently fabricated the *monumentum* of his geo-cultural appropriation of Egypt, in the very same year as the inauguration of the temple's portico (28 BCE), he concomitantly banned the celebration of Egyptian rites including Isis' in the metropolis and restricted them to the areas

[464] Cf. *supra*.

[465] Lowell Bowditch 2009:429n68 limits herself to noting that the reference to "Herculean Tibur" (*Herculeum Tibur*, v.5) might point to Cynthia's preference for Antony (who claimed descendance from Hercules: Plut. *Ant.* 3.3; 4.1-3) over Augustus. As much as this is an appealing suggestion, it is also highly problematic, for Augustus had started making association between himself and Hercules in the aftermath of Actium (see Chapter 4). By the same logic, since Antony identified himself with Dionysus (among other deities: Dio 50.25.3-4), the god known as *Liber* at Rome, then one might wonder whether the definition of ***Cynthia*** as ***libera*** at the end of the poem could constitute a further pun on her Cleopatra-like status, considering that ***Libera*** was the partner of *Liber* (usually Ariadne, to whom Cynthia is elsewhere compared: 1.3; 2.30b). The Bacchic affiliation of Cynthia also emerges in a near poem (*me miserum, ut* ***multo*** *nihil est mutata* ***Lyaeo****! /iam bibe, formosa es, nihil tibi uina nocent,* 2.33b.35-6).

outside the *pomerium* ('holy border').[466] Through this legal act, Augustus re-enforced the idea that oriental cults should remain on the outskirts of the city, as if the topographical space of the *Vrbs* and its surroundings could mirror the hierarchical relationship between the imperial metropolis and her subdued peripheries (or Self vs. Other).[467] In other words, the *pomerium* boundary was used *ad hoc* by Augustus as an arbitrary tool to map and re-define the concept of 'Romanness' in the aftermath of Actium,[468] for at the same time as it was important to advertise Egypt's successful domestication (as we have observed, the visual language of the Temple of the Palatine itself did much in this respect), the African province needed to be regarded as patently non-Roman (and thus marginal, at a topographical level).

In view of all this, Propertius utilises the character of the *puella* as that of an insubordinate 'citizen' who, by fleeing away from the centre and reaching the periphery, eschews the control of the regime as well as its religious discourse and, even more threateningly, deviates the lover's own normative fixation at the centre. Tellingly, although Propertius (embracing the lover's viewpoint) starts by condemning Cynthia's spatial infraction, he eventually accords her the freedom to roam in her own 'smooth space'. In other words, the elegist ends up becoming complicit with the *puella*'s escapade. With a swift overturn of thought and attitude

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[466] Dio 53.2.4 (on 28 BCE): καὶ τὰ μὲν ἱερὰ τὰ Αἰγύπτια οὐκ ἐσεδέξατο εἴσω τοῦ πωμηρίου, τῶν δὲ δὴ ναῶν πρόνοιαν ἐποιήσατο: τοὺς μὲν γὰρ ὑπ᾽ ἰδιωτῶν τινων γεγενημένους τοῖς τε παισὶν αὐτῶν καὶ τοῖς ἐκγόνοις, εἴγε τινὲς περιῆσαν, ἐπισκευάσαι ἐκέλευσε, τοὺς δὲ λοιποὺς αὐτὸς ἀνεκτήσατο. The source is differently interpreted: Orlin 2008:243 argues that, through the measure (which re-echoed a previous 53 BCE decree with which the Senate tore down the temples of Isis and Serapis and permitted the deities' public worship only *extra pomerium*: Dio 40.47.3-4), Augustus restricted the celebrations of Egyptian rites inside the *pomerium* but allowed the private restoration of the extant *Egyptian* cult sites outside the holy border. His reading contrasts Malaise (1972b:380-4; 1993:375; 2011: esp.168)'s, who contends that Augustus, who disliked the Egyptian animal worship in particular (Suet. *Aug.* 93), was taking care of the sanctuaries erected for *traditional* Roman gods only and *inside* the *pomerium*. Neither of these two interpretations is in conflict with my argument. Augustus' measure would be exacerbated further in 21 BCE by Agrippa, who extended the ban to *one mile* beyond the *pomerium* (Dio 54.6.6). For previous measures against Isis and other Egyptian deities, cf. also Tert. *Ad Nat.* 1.10.16-8 (quoting Varro on 58 BCE) and Dio 42.26.1-2 (on 48 BCE). Dio 47.15.4 (on 43 BCE) refers to the sole former measure in support of Isis, namely the construction of a naos for Isis and Osiris by the *triumuiri* (including Octavian), which is nevertheless not supported by archaeological sources. Be that as it may, I espouse Malaise (2011:195)'s view that the decision may well have been Mark Antony's (for his love of Cleopatra) and that Augustus' 28 BCE ban was a reaction to precisely Mark Antony's previous initiative.

[467] For the physical placement as well as the wider cultural significance of the *pomerium*, originally a furrow ploughed by Romulus that served to demarcate Rome's wall border at the time of its foundation (cf. Varro *Ling.* 5.43: *pomerium* from *post murum*), see Tac. *Ann.* 12.24, with Andreussi 1988, 1999.

[468] Orlin 2008 *passim*.

and by relying on several mythological *exempla* (vv.25ff.), Propertius in fact deems Cynthia *libera iudicio* (v.62): "freed from judgement" but also, in virtue of *libera*'s primal spatial meaning, "free" to roam about and perhaps even cheat on the *amator*.[469] After all, as he maintains, by fleeing out of town Cynthia is not committing anything tremendous like 'poisoning somebody' (v.27) but most likely only the same minor *crime passionnel* as that several women from the Graeco-Roman myth have happened to perpetrate (*Graias es tuque imitata Latinas,* v.61). The *exemplum* of Helen (*Tyndaris*, v.31) inaugurating the catalogue here suits the mistress particularly well, for the Spartan queen, before being taken back home alive and with no sentence whatsoever (*reducta domum est… sine decreto uiua,* v.32), also committed an 'eroto-spatial' sin: she left her homeland (*patriam mutauit*) for an "international love" (*externo amore*).[470] Like Helen, even though through a much shorter symbolic *iter*, Cynthia has apparently also deserted the *patria* (Roman, rather than Greek) to take sides with the Eastern periphery (Egyptian, rather than Trojan) where Propertius shall ultimately reach her (hopefully just in time before she meets up with another man).

Cynthia's geographical displacement (or, with Deleuze, her 'de-territorialisation') into the suburban areas of the metropolis thus makes her neglect her own 'Romanness', as it were, and embrace what is Other to the *régime*'s propaganda: this is perhaps no wonder for a woman like her, already marked by gendered (female), ethnical (she was most likely a foreigner and, specifically, an Easterner) and social (prostitute; courtesan at best) marginality and thus more comfortably made to align with the periphery and to pose a threat to her successful 'fixation' within Rome's 'striated' order.[471] What is instead more problematic is the power accorded to the *puella* to 'deviate' (physically and metaphorically) the more normative lover, who seemed to be at ease inside Augustus' 'striated space' as a proper Roman 'citizen'. By exculpating and

[469] Cf. *OLD, liber* 2 ("Not subject to autocratic rule, politically free"), 5 ("Free from physical restraint or compulsion, loose, unconnected, free" [applied to things]), 10 ("Possessing freedom of action, able to take one's own decisions, free from restrictions").
[470] Fedeli 2005 *ad loc*.: "Forse proprio nel motivo dell'abbandono della patria si può scorgere un legame con la situazione di Cinzia che ormai preferisce a Roma ben altri luoghi". The lady mentioned next, Venus, is also a wandering lover, firstly seducing Mars "in heaven" (*in caelo,* v.34) then fleeing down to the mount Ida to enamour the shepherd Paris (v.35).
[471] On Cynthia's (and her fellow elegiac *puellae*'s) position within the imperial hierarchy, see Keith 2011b and Chapter 5. On her function as a metaphor of political disorder, cf. Wyke 2002:34ff. and Miller 2004:60ff.

(belatedly) reaching Cynthia, Propertius in fact also manages to disenfranchise himself from the symbolic centre of 'Romanness' and to deviate towards the shady periphery of potentially clandestine 'un-Roman' rites with the *puella*. The elegist's flight from the Roman Palatine into the philo-Egyptian periphery, as announced at the outset of poem 2.31, speaks of his deviation from the duty of an official celebration for the *princeps* to the duty of *seruitium amoris* for his own *puella*. Yet, in view of the proposed connection between Cynthia and Cleopatra (via the 'Moon' Isis), his *iter* additionally alludes to his veiled if hopeless (considering Actium has already happened) preference for Mark Antony, a champion of glamorous hedonism including a taste for wine and for defaming, domineering mistresses just like Propertius.[472]

All in all, instead of opposing Augustus to Cynthia, Propertius rather moves 'in between' the two poles, from one to the other. Initially separated in respectively 'striated' and 'smooth spaces' (in and out of the State control), the elegiac lovers ultimately fill the gap of their spatial asymmetry by meeting at the margins. In alignment with Deleuze's observation that the two antithetical spaces are not forever stable but rather morph into one another, Propertius' and Cynthia's erotic conjunction destabilises and re-orients their different spatial (and political) positions, 'striated' and 'smooth'.[473] Propertius, both 'citizen' and 'lover', in fact takes steps forward towards *Roma* and yet again withdraws back to *amor* in a constantly oscillatory movement that is invested by a significant political meaning, for, by oscillating in and out, he is liminally split between centre and periphery, engagement and exclusion (*dominus/exclusus*). *Roma* and *amor*, it is

[472] It is perhaps too simplistic to argue that Propertius was Antonian *tout court* (even though Antony's brother significantly took side with the Etruscans and the Umbrians and against Octavian during the *bellum Perusinum*). On Mark Antony's 'elegiac' lifestyle reflecting Propertius' (including addiction to alcohol, women and general lassitude), see Griffin 1977 *passim* (among other salient facts, the politician, before starting an extra-marital relationship with Cleopatra, had also been romantically involved with C. Gallus' own elegiac *puella* Volumnia Cytheris, fictionally named Lycoris: Cic. *Philip*. 2.77; furthermore, he was forced to compose a self-defence titled *De Sua Ebrietate* after Octavian accused him of being a drunkard). Cf. 2.15.41-48, where Propertius makes a controversial statement on the battle of Actium: as he argues, if everyone had lived a life of wine and love much like his own (but implicitly like that of Antony too!), the horrors of Actium would have not happened (cf. similarly Griffin 1977:17; Gibson 2009:289); compare 2.16.37-42, where Propertius stains a praise of Augustus' Actian victory by justifying his own shameless *seruitium* for Cynthia with Antony's 'base love' (*infamis amor*) for Cleopatra. Finally, the closest connection between Propertius/Cynthia and Antony/Cleopatra then comes at 3.11.29ff., on similar grounds (see further *infra*). Wyke 2002:35ff. draws a parallel between the elegiac *puellae* and some first-century BCE 'deviant' ladies at Rome among whom Cleopatra would have easily featured.

[473] Deleuze and Guattari 1988:474.

implicitly revealed, are indeed easily exchangeable worlds, according to one's potential movement from periphery to centre (or graphically from right to left: *R-o-m→a*) or from centre to periphery (from left to right: *r←o-m-A*).[474]

In order to complete my foray into Propertius' handling of the Actian celebration, in the next part of the Chapter I shall have a look at the elegist's attitude towards both Isis and Cleopatra as emerging in other poems from his second and third collections. As I shall argue, in a similar way as with the transgressive Cynthia, firstly condemned and yet again ultimately condoned for her free *iter* outside Augustus' radar, Propertius treats the Egyptian women with significant ambivalence. Under a thin veil of antipathy against them reflecting the contemporary Augustan propaganda, the poet acknowledges these women's power to wander across 'smooth space' just like Cynthia and, by doing so, to pose a threat to the spatial surveillance of Augustus, who has attempted to impose them borders, or, in Deleuzean terms, at 'striating' them inside and outside his imperial domain.

3.4. Isis' and Cleopatra's *itinera*: further aberrant journeys into 'smooth space' (2.33a; 3.11; 4.6)

If we decide to take poem 2.33a[475] as the narrative conclusion to its precedent in the second collection, then we have to assume that Propertius has been subsequently told by a more reliable source about the place where Cynthia has fled.[476] As it appears from elegy 2.33a, the 'nomadic' *puella* has in fact finally reached her religious destination, indeed a temple of Isis, whose annual "mournful rites" (*tristia sollemnia,* 2.33a.1) have returned once again (*iam redeunt*

[474] For the wordplay on *Roma/amor*, cf. (among others) the famous Pompeiian graffito on a wall of the House of Menander (*CIL* 4.8297), with the letters of the two words arranged into a word square. For *Roma/amor*'s acrostics in literary texts (esp. Ovid), see ultimately Hansen 2016.
[475] In agreement with other critics (since Hertzberg 1843, also Butler & Barber 1933, Fedeli 2005, Heyworth 2007a; *contra* La Penna 1977:64, Richardson 1977), I read 2.33a as a different poem from 2.33b, which is often printed together with 2.33a.
[476] In spite of being the following poem to 2.31/32 in the manuscript tradition, 2.33a is never read together with its precedent. For a supportive reading of Propertius' poems in a more linear trajectory, see Salzman-Mitchell & Liveley 2008:4-5, with further bibliography.

iterum).[477] To be sure, Propertius was too optimistic when he presumed that the mistress would be missing from his bed only "for a night or two" (*nox una aut altera*, 2.32.29): the *puella* has just consecrated herself to the Egyptian goddess (*est operata*, v.2; re-echoing *deuotam* at 2.32.9) for ten straight nights (*noctes decem*), during which she shall remain chaste. The 'Moon' Isis' nocturnal rites (*noctes; noctibus his,* 2.33a.1, 22) have therefore eclipsed Cynthia from the Apollonian 'Sun' under which the *amator* had been waiting for her (2.31).[478] The *puella*'s consecration to the lunar Isis is thus a fit conclusion to the peripheral 'lunar revolution' she performed in elegy 2.32, when, as we have seen, she snuck away from the Augustan Palatine.[479] Yet, on top of the potential narrative connection between the 'diptych' 2.31/32 and 2.33a, the latter poem is also worth looking at in the context of the present Chapter for its subtle thematic concern with Augustus' post-Actian propaganda against Egypt as well as its interesting handling of imperial space. Although 2.33a is in fact usually neglected by the critics,[480] it makes subtle allusions to the Augustan measures against Isis (and fellow Egyptian cults) dated 28 BCE:

aut nos ***e nostra te****, saeua,* ***fugabimus urbe****:*
cum Tiberi Nilo gratia nulla fuit.
(2.33a.19-20)

[477] Whereas the word 'temple' is missing in the text of 2.33a, there is little doubt, as Witt 1971:92 argues, that the ceremony in which Cynthia takes part is set at an Iseum (rather than at her private place, with Hutchinson 2006 *ad loc.* Prop. 4.5.34). Furthermore, as Miller 1982:104-5 has suggested, they are not only "sad" (*sollemnia…tristia*) to the *amator* (*nobis*: as they deny him access to Cynthia), but on their own: they could in fact be the mournful rites performed for the death of Osiris and, if so, they definitely needed *to take place in a temple*. The reference to Isis as forcing the *puellae* to "sleep without their partners" (v.19) is another potential link to the practice of overnight incubation in the temple involved in the same rite (cf. Richardson 1977:308; Fedeli 2005 *ad loc.*).

[478] The lunar identification for Isis is offered in the elegy by her appearance as the cow Io (see *infra*), whose *cornua* (v.9; v.18) have the same shape as a crescent moon (Witt 1971:30, drawing from Diod. Sic. 1.11 on the Roman association of Isis with a Cow and Moon goddess).

[479] Retrospectively, when Propertius anticipated that Phoebus would have to eye-witness the pure hands of the *puella* (*testis eris puras, Phoebe, videre manus*, 2.32.28), he might as well have played with the upcoming consecration of Cynthia to the Egyptian 'Moon' rather than the Graeco-Roman 'Sun' (Welch 2005:95 gives a different but equally interesting reading: "if Cynthia does spend her free time in Apollo's temple, the god will be able to attest that she has remained faithful". She obviously has not done so).

[480] Miller 1982 remains virtually the only exception.

Propertius threatens the Egyptian goddess: "we will chase you off from our city, cruel goddess, because the Nile and the Tiber have never been on good terms". With these harsh words, the elegist takes side with the Augustan propaganda, for which Rome's physical and cultural boundaries should be maintained in the aftermath of Actium.[481] Nevertheless, in spite of the apparent conformism in his treatment of an Egyptian deity (reflected in his espousal of an 'orientalising' rhetoric that would have pleased the regime), I argue that Propertius displays a much more ambiguous attitude towards Isis. In particular, as much as in 2.32, in which the elegist condemns and yet again exculpates Cynthia's movement (as we have seen, a transgression of elegiac *fides* as much as of Augustan Rome in favour of the potentially philo-Egyptian periphery), he similarly treats Isis as a 'nomadic subject' defying geographical boundaries. Like Cynthia's, the goddess's unruly travels are also ultimately condoned, for Isis represents a model of elegiac lover that bears much resemblance to the 'aberrant love' of Propertius and Cynthia themselves.

Let us start with Propertius' tirade against the deity. One might reasonably point out that, if the *amator* was concerned with keeping Cynthia within Augustan Rome and away from the dangerous Isiac periphery in the previous poem (*hoc* ***utinam*** *spatiere loco,* 2.32.1; *non* ***urbem****, demens, lumina nostra* ***fugis***, 2.32.18), now he is coherently desperate to keep Isis off the same urban space (***utinam*** *pereant…e nostra…****fugabimus urbe***) and simultaneously off Cynthia. To a certain extent, Cynthia and Isis are thus similarly conveyed in the two poems as unruly female bodies moving in Deleuzean 'smooth spaces' on nebulous 'lines of flight' (or *uiae*) and in need of (masculine) 'striation'. In other words, they are both represented as two women who ought to be controlled, restrained and, more specifically, either enclosed (Cynthia) or expelled (Isis) from delimited geographical areas, because they have committed a spatial infraction. Cynthia has betrayed the *amator* and the Augustan Apollo *Sol* (as we have suggested, for the rites of the peripheral 'Moon' Isis); on her part, Isis, under the pseudonym of Io,

[481] Even though Propertius is thinking generally about the *urbs* (constituted by both centre and periphery) rather than specifically about the *pomerium* (dividing official and unofficial rites), the political undertones are not lost (cf. Fedeli 2005:923 and *ad loc.*). On Roman stereotypical representation of Egypt at the time of its incorporation as *prouincia*, cf. esp. Tac. *Hist.* 1.11.1.

has also "overstepped her natural boundaries"[482] by travelling from Egypt to Rome:

tu certe Iouis occultis in amoribus, Io,
sensisti multas quid sit inire uias,
cum te iussit habere puellam cornua Iuno
et pecoris duro perdere uerba sono.
a quotiens quernis laesisti frondibus ora,
mandisti et stabulis arbuta pasta tuis!
an, quoniam agrestem detraxit ab ore figuram
Iuppiter, idcirco facta superba dea es?
an tibi non satis est fuscis Aegyptus alumnis?
cur tibi tam longa Roma petita uia?
quidue tibi prodest uiduas dormire puellas?
sed tibi, crede mihi, cornua rursus erunt.
(2.33a.7-17)

To be sure, the aberrant wanderings of the Egyptian goddess originated when she was not even Egyptian: the deity used to be the Greek Io, the daughter of the Argive king Inachus (*Inachis*, v.4), when she had an affair with Jupiter.[483] As a result of her clandestine relationship, Jupiter's jealous wife Juno transformed Io into a cow (vv.9-10) and made her go 'round and round' on "many journeys" (*multas...inire uias*). It was then Io's secret lover who brought her back to her human identity from her "rustic looks" (*agrestem...figuram*) and, spatially, from the bucolic landscape to which she had been confined (*frondibus*; *stabulis*). Io's liberation from Juno's spell resulted in her transformation into a scornful goddess (*facta superba dea es*) and consequently in a new cycle of transgressive journeys: the first one to Egypt (v.15), the second one even further, a "long way" (*longa...petita* ***uia***) up to Rome, where she has fascinated many more worshippers – including Cynthia – than the black-skinned Egyptians (*fuscis...alumnis*). As Propertius contends, since she has trespassed the boundary between the East and the West by coming to Rome and sent her deviant rites "from the sultry Nile"

[482] Miller 1982:108.
[483] As he looks at Isis through the lens of her Graeco-Roman interpretation (Isis is turned Greek and thus made more familiar to the Roman audience) whilst still emphasising elements of the goddess' deviancy, Propertius adopts a typically Western rhetoric of assimilation and rejection of the Other (see Said 1978:58-9 for the way "cultures process, domesticate, and stage the exotic for their own consumption"; compare Lowell-Bowditch 2014's similar analysis of Osiris at Tib. 1.7).

(*Nilo tepente*, v.3) "to the Roman matrons" (*matronis...Ausoniis*, v.4), Isis must either return to her innocuous bovine status or flee back to Egypt (*cornua rursus; e nostra te...fugabimus urbe*).[484] By arguing for Isis' African re-confinement, the poet imitates Augustus' masculine desire to 'geo-locate' and fix the goddess's body in 'striated space' (more precisely, a delimited space outside the borders of Rome's 'holy centre' as per the banning act on which he have indulged above) in a similar manner to the way he previously attempted at controlling Cynthia by making her stroll *in his own place* (***hoc*** *utinam spatiere* ***loco***, 2.32.1). Be that as it may, the elegist ends up neutralising his resentment against the deity at the end of his tirade, for he makes the elegiac lovers, Cynthia and himself, align with the same 'free travelling' spirit as the Egyptian goddess':

at tu, quae nostro nimium placata dolore es,
noctibus his uacui ter faciamus iter.
(2.33a.21-22)

After his ten-night-long wait during the Isiac festivities, Propertius is ultimately ready to re-unite with Cynthia, even if belatedy indeed (*tibi ueniam tardior*, 2.31.1). Cynthia has in fact been "conciliated" (*placata es*) by the excessive pain felt by the *amator* during her absence (*nostro nimium...dolore*). Now that the elegiac couple has been finally "freed" (*uacui*) from the curse of the Isiac consecration,[485] the *puella* can positively respond to the lover's exhortation "to go three times on a journey" (*ter faciamus iter*). By 'getting on the road' with Cynthia and withdrawing into the realm of *amor*, Propertius finds a way to neutralise the political judgement on his mistress's religious affiliations. Indeed, provided that Cynthia is with him now, he does not seem to be interested in targeting Isis as Rome's enemy anymore, for the goddess has ultimately set his mistress free. To be sure, Propertius' sympathetic attitude towards the goddess here seems to emerge at the level of poetic diction too: the musical quality of the

[484] Fedeli 2005:931: "ciò fa pensare, dunque, a una dea messa in fuga e costretta a ripercorrere la *longa uia* che la ricondurrà in Egitto". Note that the definition of Isis' Roman worshippers as "Ausonian matrons" emphasises their high social status as well as their ties to ancient, and thus less corrupted, Italy.
[485] I follow Enk (1962)'s and Camps (1962)'s interpretation of *uacui* as "freed" (= *liberati*).

internal rhyme in *ter...iter* in fact mimics the language of prayers to a deity.[486] Furthermore, the adjective *placata* here modifying Cynthia is usually deployed to convey a "well-disposed" deity, as if Propertius were playing up the identity of the beloved Cynthia with that of the despised Isis.[487] Whilst the elegy's conclusive couplet thus points to Propertius' and Cynthia's liberation from the Isiac rites, it looks as if the *amator* had been absorbed into the holy environment of the Iseum where his mistress has sequestered herself for the last ten nights. The final triple *iter* is thus an ambiguous spatial liberation from the tantalising power of Isis: Propertius is ready to 'move on' or perhaps to 'fall back' into another cycle of consecration with Cynthia, as a neophyte devotee of Isis himself.

Yet, there is a much more interesting point to make on this final elegiac journey. As J. F. Miller has noted, even though the elegiac lovers' final *iter* most likely alludes to a metaphorical sexual kind of 'trip', the same *iter* also "sums up the travel imagery used throughout the tirade against Isis".[488] By 'roaming freely' the elegiac couple recalls the very transgressive journeying of the Egyptian queen, another elegiac lover 'on the road', whose clandestine passion has also taken her on the unruly *uiae* of 'smooth space' across Greece, Egypt and Rome.[489] Therefore, if Propertius' wish for an incumbent (but still not accomplished) 'flight back' to Egypt for Isis espouses the 'orientalising' rhetoric of a conservative Roman citizen backing Octavian's decree against the Egyptian rites,[490] his competing identity as 'lover' once more jeopardises the tenability of his anti-Egyptian tirade: how can he approve the confinement of Isis when she is an aberrant lover *just like himself and Cynthia*? By splitting himself between a proper Roman citizen supporting Augustus' orientalising discourse on space and religion and yet again turning into a rather un-Roman lover, who aligns with the deviant conduct of the travelling Egyptian goddess, Propertius deconstructs his own

[486] Fedeli 2005 *ad loc.* Retrospectively, cf. other uses of ritual language throughout the poem (especially *quaecumque illa fuit,* an allusion to Isis' epithets *multinomen/*πολυώνυμος, μυριώνυμος: Miller 1982:106; for the sacral formula see further Norden 1913:144-45).
[487] Fedeli *ad loc.* Reversely, adjectives of the likes of *saeua* and *superba* used for Isis in this poem are elsewhere attached to Cynthia (*saeua*: 1.1.10 [Atalanta as Cynthia], 1.3.18; *superba*: 3.8.36, same metrical *sedes*).
[488] Miller 1982:110-11, who cautiously stresses the difference between the elegiac lovers' and Isis' travels (the latter is constrained to roam out of her "corruption [and consequent] punishment [by Juno]" as well as to display "the suffering of separation [from her lover Jupiter]".
[489] Note the etymological connection between ***i**ter* and *in**i**re* (v.8).
[490] Even if, to be more specific, Octavian was not thinking of a *tout court* expulsion of Isis from Rome, but rather of her marginalisation (cf. *supra*).

identity as 'fixed' and rather marks it with ambivalence: he liminally takes side with Rome (centre; 'striated space') just to betray a puzzling sympathy for Egypt (periphery; 'smooth space'). This is achieved by the poet's very representation of Isis as the transgressor of those geo-cultural dichotomies that sustain the hierarchical opposition between West and East: the goddess's own liminality, that is, her transgressive fluctuation in and out the doors of Rome, lays bare the fallacy of the regime's propagandistic discourses.

As critics have not failed to underscore (yet without ever developing the connection further), the physical expulsion of Isis from Rome back to Egypt flagged up in poem 2.33a has much to do, in the historical context of the aftermath of Actium, with the expulsion of Cleopatra from Rome's cultural landscape back to Egypt.[491] The allusion to Cleopatra and the post-Actian propaganda in this elegy is transparent from both an intertextual viewpoint, as certain expressions in this text are revisited by Propertius in 3.11, the famous 'Cleopatra elegy' (*cum* ***Tiberi Nilo*** *gratia nulla fuit = et* ***Tiberim Nili*** *cogere ferre minas,* 3.11.42; ***fugabimus urbe*** *=* ***fugisti*** *tamen...nec accepere* ***Rom****ula* *uincla*, 3.11.51-2),[492] and a thematic one. If Egyptian cults are chastised in the text, this is indeed because Isis was perceived as an uncanny reminder of the 'new Isis' Cleopatra, vanquished and yet again still 'present' in the Romans' cultural memory. The difficulty of exiling the transgressive 'travelling' Isis from Rome after Actium in fact betrays the harsh process of 'expelling' Cleopatra herself, whose identification with Isis was one of the many ways in which the queen secured herself her posthumous survival within the borders of the *Vrbs*.[493]

By looking at the Propertian elegies dealing with the Egyptian queen more explicitly (3.11; 4.6), I shall draw a parallel between the 'unruly mobility' of Isis, lingering inside Rome against Augustus' will, and that of Cleopatra, also an unruly female body 'on the move' who posed a threat to her male controller Augustus' desire to 'fix' her in space (a desire that, as we have seen, initially

[491] On the allusion to Cleopatra in 2.33a, cf. e.g. Richardson 1977:310, Fedeli 2005:923, Syndikus 2006:313n207.
[492] Only the former is registered by Fedeli 1985 *ad loc*.
[493] Wyke 1992: esp.115ff. (repr. 2002:195-243) argues that the queen virtually disappeared from Roman coins and other artefacts in the aftermath of Actium, for her posthumous representation would have worked as a reminder of the threat she posed to Rome (compare Dio 51.22.3, who notes that the presence of a golden statue of Cleopatra qua Aphrodite did nothing but increment her posthumous glory in the *Vrbs*).

animated Propertius himself at elegy 2.32, as he tried to keep Cynthia on the Palatine). If Isis is in fact yet to leave Rome as some kind of 'Trojan horse' infecting traditional religion *within* the urban borders (hence Augustus' banning act), Cleopatra did leave the *Vrbs*. Nevertheless, her legendary flight was not only autonomously carried out, but it also went counter to the *princeps*' desire to expose her at Rome in the occasion of the triumphal procession for Actium:[494]

scilicet incesti meretrix regina Canopi,
una Philippeo 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,
foedaque Tarpeio conopia tendere saxo,
iura dare et statuas inter et arma Mari!
quid nunc Tarquinii fractas iuuat esse secures,
nomine quem simili uita superba notat,
si mulier patienda fuit? cane, Roma, triumphum
et longum Augusto salua precare diem!
fugisti tamen in timidi uaga Nili:
non cepere tuae Romula uincla manus.
bracchia spectasti sacris admorsa colubris,
et trahere occultum membra soporis iter.
'Non hoc, Roma, fui tanto tibi ciue uerenda!'
dixit et assiduo lingua sepulta mero.
septem urbs alta iugis, toto quae praesidet orbi,
non humana deicienda manu.
(3.11.39-58)[495]

At the heart of elegy 3.11, Propertius targets the Egyptian 'harlot queen' (*incesti meretrix regina Canopi*) for the way she dared (*ausa*) to introduce animal deities of the likes of the dog Anubis (*latrantem...Anubim*) at Rome and to oppose them to the anthropomorphic gods of the Western tradition (*Ioui nostro*).[496] A specific reference to Isis is made when Propertius alludes to Cleopatra's

[494] My interpretation of 3.11 is closer to those critics who have pinpointed its ambiguous rather than patriotic character (e.g. Stahl 1985, Tronson 1999 *contra* Nethercut 1971a, Hubbard 1984).
[495] I read *non cepere* (52, vs. *accepere*) with Tronson 1999; Giardina 2005 (on the grounds of Markland's long-neglected conjecture); *spectasti* (53, vs. *spectaui*) *fui* (55, vs. *fuit*) with both Tronson 1999 and Heyworth 2007a (*contra* Nethercut 1971a; Fedeli 1985).
[496] The contrast returns at Virg. *Aen.* 8.678-80.

threatening replacement of the Roman trumpet (*tuba*) with the rattling *sistrum* (*crepitanti sistro*), the lunar goddess's most characteristic prop.[497] Although these religious aspects are part of a broader modification of Rome originated with the Western metropolis' perverted contact with Egypt and its deviant queen (cf. vv.41-46), Propertius nevertheless locates them in the past (cf. *adusta; ausa*) and looks at the present full of hope. The elegist in fact invites Rome to sing about Augustus' triumph (*cane, Roma,* ***triumphum***) and to pray for the long-lasting life of its saviour *princeps* (*et longum Augusto salua precare diem!*).[498] Initially, Propertius' positive exhortation thus seems to identify Augustus' naval victory with an absolute success, through which Cleopatra's evil influence has been annihilated and Rome, dangerously 'orientalised', has re-established a proper hierarchy with the deviant East.

And yet, in spite of Octavian's success at Actium (*tamen*), the queen is then said to have managed to flee (*fugisti*) from the battlefield to the "winding waters of the timid Nile" (*in timidi uaga Nili*)[499] and, by doing so, to have avoided falling prisoner to the "Romulean chains" (*non cepere Romula uincla*).[500] This poetic representation of Cleopatra's flight from Actium is historically consistent: as more than one source reports, her return to Egypt did indeed deny Octavian the chance to physically parade her at Rome, during his magnificent triple triumph (29 BCE).[501] In this occasion, the *princeps* only managed to show the queen's children Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene as prisoners, whereas Cleopatra herself was displayed solely through an image (*figura*) describing her iconic suicide. Therefore, the reference to Cleopatra's avoidance of the Roman chains through her transgressive *iter* away from Actium (and thus from Rome) inevitably works to mitigate the previous exhortation to Rome to sing triumphal songs for Augustus, for the triumph itself, as it has just been suggested, was one where the

[497] Cf. here Virg. *Aen.* 8.696.
[498] Fedeli *ad loc.* rightly refers to the specific triple triumph celebrated by Octavian in 29 BC.
[499] Cf. Richardson *ad loc.*: *uaga* can refer to the labyrinthine seven mouths of the river, an apt hiding place.
[500] Note that here the adjective activates the association between Augustus and Romulus, which was far from problematic, for it emphasised the *princeps*' collusion in the last years' fratricidal wars (thus Augustus' rejection of the title *Romulus*: Suet. *Aug.* 7.2; Dio 53.16.7-8; see further Hinds 1992: esp. 132ff.).
[501] Plut. *Ant.* 86; Dio 51.21.8.

main captive did not feature.[502] Propertius' fascination for the Egyptian queen's autonomous death is reflected in Horace's contemporary commentary on Cleopatra's escape, where the oriental queen's suicide is characterised with the paradoxical Stoic bravery of a Republican élite man:

deliberata morte ferocior
saeuis Liburnis scilicet inuidens
priuata deduci superbo
non humilis mulier, triumpho
(Hor. *C.* 1.37.29-32)

Whilst Propertius is less explicit than Horace in rendering Cleopatra a heroine who chose her own destiny, the elegist shares the lyric poet's sensitivity towards honouring Cleopatra's avoidance of the ignominious journey that would have decreed her imprisonment at Rome.[503] To corroborate my point, I contend that the peculiar representation of Cleopatra's last hours, as given in the lines immediately following the reference to her flight in elegy 3.11, also works to complicate the queen's portrayal as unproblematically 'dead and gone'. With a fair amount of alcohol running through her veins (*assiduo...mero*), Cleopatra is said to have attended the spectacle of her own death (*spectasti*), caused by the bite of "some holy snakes" (*sacris...colubris*).[504] After exclaiming her 'famous last words' (v.55), the queen saw her limbs "drawing out a *hidden journey* of (eternal) sleep" (***occultum****...soporis* ***iter***). The odd periphrasis with which Propertius conveys Cleopatra's self-imposed death is worth engaging with, for it once more plays on the idea of the Egyptian queen's liberating flight.[505] Cleopatra has indeed gone "on a *hidden journey* of eternal sleep", which has "covered" her from the enemy who wanted her imprisonment at Rome.[506] Her *occultum iter* towards death is thus not just a means of having her disappear from the world (through her

[502] According to Porph. *ad* Hor. *C.* 1.37.30, Livy reports that Cleopatra boldly exclaimed: οὐ θριαμβεύσομαι ("I shall not be triumphed over") before dying.
[503] Cf. Parker 2009:94 on Horace's sympathetic accents. See my Chapter 4 for the Horatian influence on Propertius' Book 3.
[504] Interestingly, the snake was associated with Isis: cf. Fedeli *ad loc.,* also for a collection of different versions on Cleopatra's suicide by snake poisoning.
[505] Williams 1968:780 deemed this "an almost untranslatable phrase".
[506] Cf. *occultus*, *OLD* 1 ("hidden from sight, concealed, inaccessible").

'burial'),[507] but it also recalls the idea of her 'clandestine escape' (cf. *fugisti*, the preceding verb of movement) from the hands of the enemy Octavian, who had planned a rather different end for the queen.[508] Cleopatra fled (*fugisti tamen*), avoided the triumph (*non cepere...Romula uincla*) and committed suicide in her own palace, that is, in a space where Augustus could not reach her.

Propertius' ambivalent attitude towards the queen's legendary end is also on display in the last elegy of those remembering Actium, 4.6. In line with the aetiological vein of Book 4 (published *post* 16 BCE), this other poem should offer a fifteen-year-belated celebration of the *princeps*' *monumentum* for the victory, the Palatine Temple. Not differently from poem 2.31/32 though, poem 4.6 also veers towards concerns other than the Temple, which ultimately obfuscate its celebratory spirit altogether.[509] The reference to Cleopatra is precisely one of those elements in the text that work to call Augustus' triumphalism into question:

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!
(4.6.63-6)

Perhaps we would go too far in arguing that, at this point, Propertius has the same sympathetic vein for Cleopatra as Horace demonstrated in *Ode* 1.37, composed almost a decade before this later elegy. Propertius' Cleopatra, hardly leaning (*male nixa*) onto her tiny boat (*cumba*) as she hurriedly (*fugaci*) heads to the Nile's mouth, could in fact be taken as nothing more than "an object of

[507] *Occultus* stems from *occulo*, "to bury" (*OLD* 1b).
[508] Other interpretations of this line have been given: Williams 1968:780 has taken the image of the *occultum iter* as an effective visual representation of the poison spreading in concealment through Cleopatra's veins and progressively paralysing her body; La Penna 1977:107 has instead caught in the adjective *occultum* a reference to the 'insidious' and almost 'magic' power of the snake poison.
[509] The pro-Augustan readings of e.g. Baker 1983; Cairns 1984; Stahl 1985:250-5; Mader 1989; Harrison 2013:141 contrast the more nuanced interpretations of e.g. Sweet 1972; Johnson 1973; Connor 1978; Gurval 1995:249-78; Janan 2001: esp.101; Welch 2005:96-111; Griffin 2005:316; Lowrie 2009:188-95; Roman 2014:197-201. On the poem as a literary challenge rather than a political commentary, cf. instead DeBrohun 2003:210-35; Miller 2009:80-92.

disparagement or ridicule".[510] Almost twenty years have after all passed since Actium and the oriental queen may have lost her appeal to the elegist for her multiple symbolic associations. Yet, even at this temporal distance, Cleopatra's spatial infraction into her peripheral homeland does not cease to threaten her victor at the centre. The queen's failed domestication glances back to 3.11, where, as we have seen, Augustus' triumph was also overshadowed by Cleopatra's *occultum iter* towards Egypt. Here though, new disturbing elements are added to the picture. The Virgilian intertext shrouded beneath *moritura* triggers the association with Dido, also referred to as "about to die" in the *Aeneid* (Virg. *Aen.* 4.6444, *pallida morte futura*; cf. 4.308, 415, 519, 604, *moritura*):[511] the link thus builds up an implicit connection between Aeneas and Augustus and casts a negative aura on the *princeps*' success for, like the epic hero, he has also hastened an African queen's self-inflicted death.[512] On top of this, even though *prima facie* it is suggested that it was much better for Augustus that Cleopatra did not show up for it would have been ridiculous to parade such a woman at a triumph anyway,[513] Propertius implies that the missed exposure of Cleopatra failed to grant Augustus the same military credibility as Marius', who *did* expose his other African enemy Jugurtha on the streets of Rome.[514] The awkward comparison with the Republican general problematises the importance of Marius as an *exemplum* of military *uirtus* for Augustus, as advertised by contemporary literary and architectural works.[515] In poem 4.6 too, Propertius implies, the *princeps* may have done the right thing letting Cleopatra run back to Egypt, and yet not without jeopardising his own status as Roman *triumphator*.

Although it has been suggested that Actium was a "battle of sexes" between Western male and Eastern female resulting in the victory of the

[510] Gurval 1995:271 (believing that the flight scene lacks the Virgilian and Horatian pathos); similarly, Hutchinson 2006 *ad loc.*; O'Rourke 2011:11ff.; DeBrohun 2003:232n35 is instead unsure whether to read sympathy in the image.
[511] O'Rourke 2011:11.
[512] Compare Welch 2005:103.
[513] Yet, this statement is per se problematically sandwiched between references to Augustus' world-triumphalism as well as an enumeration of his victories, which are not justified if Cleopatra indeed constitutes an insignificant threat.
[514] Hutchinson *ad loc*. rightly notes that "Propertius uses an approved hero [i.e., Marius] awkwardly" and "gets his argument into trouble" with the reference to Jugurtha's winner.
[515] Cf. esp. Hor. *Epod*. 9.23-4; see Zanker 1988:210-3 on Marius' triumph's presence among the decorations of the *forum Augustum*.

former,[516] Propertius aptly indicates that Augustus' triumph over Cleopatra was much more problematic than the *princeps* expected. As both poems 3.11 and 4.6 highlight, the queen's independent (if deadly) *iter* in fact allowed her to escape Rome and Augustus' will to parade her so that she could die (or, to recall 3.11's pun, 'to go on a hidden journey [of death]') in her own homeland. As we have seen, Cleopatra's flight is resonant with the other female journeys so far described in this Chapter. Cynthia defied the spatial constrictions that the *amator* wanted to impose to the mistress by captivating her into Augustus' celebratory space (2.31/32): indeed, it was ultimately the *puella* herself who captivated the lover outside the centre of Rome. Isis instead trespassed her Greek and then Egyptian borders to come all the way up to Rome (2.33a) with unwanted consequences for the traditional Roman pantheon: in spite of his legal measure against the barbaric goddess, Augustus could not really stop her *sistrum* from rattling at Rome.

Given the recurrent theme of female free travelling across the elegiac *corpus* under scrutiny, we can conclude that Propertius displays a fascination for women's transgressive movement and links it to acts of resistance to the centre and its cultural politics.[517] The aberrant itineraries of Cynthia, Isis and Cleopatra (three women affiliating themselves with or symbolising the Egyptian Other) have in fact all defied the *princeps*' attempts at 'striation' (that is, at keeping them either inside or outside his radar). Although one of the poems we have summoned insists that thanks to Augustus, who has surpassed the success of previous *triumphatores* fighting against foreign adversaries (3.11.58, 67-8, 59-60),[518] Rome is finally leading the whole world (*septem urbs alta iugis,* ***toto*** *quae praesidet* ***orbi***, 3.11.57) and having her walls well protected from external menaces by its divine founders (***haec*** *di condiderant,* ***haec*** *di quoque* ***moenia*** *seruant*, 3.11.65),[519] Propertius suggests, in this as much as in the other texts to which I have drawn attention, that geographical and cultural borders have in fact not always been (Cleopatra) and still are not (Cynthia; Isis, herself a reminder of Cleopatra's posthumous presence *within* the *Vrbs*) in the *princeps*' full control.

[516] O'Rourke 2011: esp. 10, 12. Yet, see Chapter 5 for the re-appearance of the female (via Cynthia's ghost) right after poem 4.6.
[517] On Tarpeia's *iter* at 4.4, see Chapter 5.
[518] I accept Giardina's transposition of vv.67-8 *post* v.58.
[519] Note the echo of *Romana…moenia* (vv.31-2), previously demanded (*poposcit*) by Cleopatra as the price of her obscene marriage to Antony (*coniugii obsceni pretium*). For Augustus' world domination achieved via Actium, cf. also 4.6.38-9.

Rather than separating inside and outside, Rome and her periphery in a strict hierarchical relationship (Self over Other), these borders work more like porous *limina*, open to penetration and thus transgression, just like the elegiac *ianua* (Chapter 1). It is the vulnerable quality of these (often invisible) lines of demarcation that allows the 'nomadic subjects' on the run to pass through them and, by doing so, to resist those who wish for their sedentary 'fixation' on one side of the threshold only. All the wanderers that we have dealt with in the Chapter – including Propertius himself, whom we saw moving in and out of Rome according to Cynthia's own nomadic 'deterritorialization' – are thus themselves *liminal*, moving from centre to periphery (and vice versa) and hardly ever remaining where the State wishes to locate them.

3.5. Conclusions

Whilst Book 1's coda (1.21-22) offers a condensed (if deep) reflection on the horrors of civil wars (Chapter 2), Propertius' Book 2 is much more interspersed with the theme of civil strife.[520] In spite of his disavowal of singing about recent bloody clashes, including both the *bellum Perusinum* and the *Actiacum* (2.1.27-34) as well as his commitment to the composition of erotic verses (*quaeritis unde mihi totiens scribantur amores*, 2.1.1) at the outset of Book 2, Propertius in fact *does* return to the theme of the *bella ciuilia* throughout the second collection.[521] With his characteristic subtlety, the elegist draws parallels between fraternal and erotic rivalry (e.g. 2.27.7-8; 2.30.19-22) and makes several allusions to the Theban saga (e.g. 2.1.21; 2.8.1-10; 2.9.49-52; 2.10.1-8; 2.34.1-6) as the legendary antecedent to Rome's strife at the end of the Republic. In addition to this, Propertius writes a poem on the *monumentum* celebrating Augustus' triumph at Actium concluding the civil wars (2.31), which offers an important

[520] By implicitly accepting Heslin 2010 on Book 1's pre-Actian dating, Breed 2010:233 calls the *Monobiblos* the product of a "proto-Augustan world" and opposes it to Book 2, published in a historical period, the 20s (cf. ultimately Lyne 2007:254-7 for a 26-24 BCE dating suggestion), in which contemporary poets could "mark the end of the civil wars and [react] to some official statements from the regime of what transpired in the now finished era of conflict".
[521] Breed 2010:233 and *passim*.

piece of evidence to understand the poet's political position at the rise of the *principatus*. By looking at the spatial dimension of this piece and its following in the collection (2.32; two interconnected poems), I have argued that Propertius quite literally 'displaces' himself from the *centre* of Rome, overlapping with the symbolic space celebrating Augustus' victory, to the *periphery* of the *Vrbs*, where his rebel *puella* has fled. Propertius' physical and conceptual liminality, this time achieved through his strategic displacement *inside* and *outside* the symbolic centre of Augustan Rome, mirrors the domestic 'oscillation' that his amatorial *persona* experiences *inside* and *outside* the door of his mistress, which splits him, as we have seen, into an ambivalent *exclusus/dominus* figure (Chapter 1). Here though, the 'oscillation' is politically fraught.

Far from suggesting that Propertius supported Egypt instead of Rome (an absurd statement in view of the several negative standards by which he judges the country) or that he was an Antonian man (something that can be hardly proved), the elegist's personal vicissitudes – we should remember that the metropolis oppressed the poet's peripheral homeland precisely in the context of the civil wars ending with the battle of Actium – would have nevertheless made it impossible for him to take full part in Augustus' feast for his victory over Cleopatra.[522] Not surprisingly then, Propertius symbolically resists his full alignment with the Roman centre by escaping towards Cynthia into a periphery that is evocative of Egyptian culture (the cult of Isis), an erotic and geo-cultural space that offers an antithesis to Rome qua the centre of *officium* and colonial triumph. In many ways then, his urban 'oscillation' between the Roman *centre* and non-Roman *periphery* bears further witness to the poet's 'Vertumnian' liminality (Chapter 2): like the Etruscan god standing at the edges of Rome, in a space that is both *inside* and *outside* the *Vrbs*, the Umbrian Propertius, an *exclusus/dominus* at Rome, also moves through a 'third space' ('striated' and then 'smooth') that is at once Roman and non-Roman, both central and peripheral. As I have suggested, although on first inspection the poems forming the diptych construe a binary opposition

[522] I do not mean to imply that Umbrians and Egyptians needed to be sympathetic with each other, yet I do think that they both stood on the side of the losers by 31 BCE (hence Propertius' ambivalent attitude towards Egypt). At 4.1b, it is interestingly the Egyptian astrologer Horos who reminds Propertius of his 'Otherness' as an Umbrian (instead of Roman) and thus of the poetic choices he should make (erotic poetry over patriotic: see Lowrie 2011 for a recent discussion on 4.1's 'divided voice').

between *Roma* and *amor* (or Western imperialism and deviant Eastern love), Propertius' initial *ueniam* in fact deconstructs that very same border. The verb indicating (impending) movement points to the poet's ambivalent stay with Augustus and flight with Cynthia (the 'static' Sun and the 'orbiting' Moon), to the visual consumption of the *monumentum* of Augustan imperialism (the Temple) and that of Cynthia, the poet's own private *monumentum*.[523]

Cynthia's freedom and free roaming outside the Augustan space thus translates Propertius' own freedom as citizen and elegiac lover-poet, still disenfranchised in spite of living and writing under an autocratic regime.[524] If we are allowed to detect a political value behind the mistress's spatial *libertas*, then we might as well connect the *puella*'s itinerary as a 'chronotopic' return to the Republican (vs. imperial) age, where 'freedom' was still possible, unlike under the current *principatus*. Amid all the slogans through which Augustus claimed to have re-given Rome its pristine freedom in the aftermath of the civil strife, Propertius seems to signal that the only possible way to be *actually* free is to tactically escape, like Cynthia and he do, to those margins where the *autocratic* – and only apparently Republican in a true sense – State loses traces of those 'nomads' who transgress its borders (and the State's enemies Isis and Cleopatra have displayed a similar propension to elude Rome with their own unbound *itinera*).[525] By sticking with *Cynthia*, not only his flesh-and-blood mistress but also his artistic output, the elegist thus manages to transgress the space of official panegyric poetry for that of unofficial erotic elegy, and thus to 'move on' (physically and metaphorically) from the praise of Augustus to that of Cynthia.[526]

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[523] There is an element of Derridean *différance* in the spatial movement: Propertius is different (he turns from 'citizen' into 'lover') as he defers (*ueniam tardior*) Augustus for Cynthia and vice versa.

[524] Cf. similarly 3.4 for an envisaged 'withdrawal' from the official space of *Roma*, where Augustus shall celebrate his triumph over the Parthians (3.4.1-11) into the world of *amor* governed by Cynthia (3.4.12ff.), from whose lap (*sinu…puellae*, v.17) Propertius imagines attending the *princeps*' triumphal procession. Here too, *Roma* and *amor* blend into a borderless space that includes and excludes the citizen from participating in an Augustan celebration (compare Spentzou 2018:31-3).

[525] On the Augustan concept of *libertas* (to be free from the arbitrary rule by force of *ciues priuati* or *licentia*, like at the end of the Republic), see Galinsky 1996:54ff. and, notably, *RG* 1.1.

[526] Roman 2014:180-1 observes that there may be a pun on Cynthia's status as *scripta puella* in *Cynthia* ***libera*** (*liber* = "book"). In this respect, I add that the verb *uacabis* (2.32.1), whose subject is Cynthia in the poem, can also be used to indicate a blank writing support (*OLD* 1; cf. Ov. *Am.* 1.11.20).

Chapter 4. *Mutatis terris*: Propertius' geopolitical 'oscillation' between 'Western moraliser' and 'Eastern lover-poet'

4.1. Introduction

In the previous Chapter, we have followed Propertius' oscillatory movement through the spaces of *Roma* and *amor*, respectively mapped over the *centre* and the *periphery* of the cityscape. As I have argued, the elegist's liminal oscillation in the narrative splits him between the identities of a 'committed citizen' celebrating Augustus and that of a 'committed lover' celebrating Cynthia. Propertius' liminality – his ambiguous presence and absence *inside* and *outside* the official space of the Augustan propaganda – translates the ambiguity of the elegist's position in respect to Rome and its imperial culture. Invited at the centre (*dominus*, 'at R/home') just to retrocede into the periphery (*exclusus*, 'out of R/home'), Propertius fails to remain within Augustus' Panopticon and to accord the *princeps* due praise for his successful conclusion of the civil wars via the conquest of Egypt. The elegist's quest for the 'free Cynthia' outside the Augustan space in fact turns into a quest for political and poetic *libertas*, which, as Propertius subtly tells us, cannot be found under the *princeps*' surveillance but rather in the marginal counter-realm of love and elegiac poetry.

At another level though, Chapter 3 has also helped us look at the way the geographical hierarchies sustaining Augustan imperialism are unstable and can be easily overturned. The transgression of geo-political borders drawn between Western metropolis and Eastern periphery (specifically, Egypt) jeopardises the orthodox 'fixation' of central and peripheral subjects within their own confines. Representatives of the colonised, non-Roman periphery can indeed pose a threat to the centre's hierarchical conception of space by moving in and out of its delimited areas.[527] All in all, Propertius has therefore displayed an ambivalent liminality rather than a Romano-centric view on space: instead of offering a clear-cut opposition between centre and periphery in favour of the former, he

[527] See e.g. Isis' and Cleopatra's *itinera* inside/outside Rome.

emphasised ways in which the dichotomy can cease to be an effective instrument of control for the imperial power.

In the present Chapter, I seek to further explore the way Propertius dismantles the geographical hierarchies sustaining Augustus' *imperium*, and specifically the centre/periphery dichotomy, through a set of poems from Book 3. By rejecting the view that Book 3 "accommodates the geography of Augustan imperial expansion",[528] I shall rather demonstrate that the collection challenges Augustus' appropriation of space in many ways. For a start, Book 3 gives a very 'spatial' twist to the relationship with Cynthia.[529] Propertius' progressive abandonment of the mistress, with whom he seems to have reached the highpoint of a long-lasting crisis[530] and to be doomed to a definitive *discidium* by the end of the collection (3.24/5),[531] is in fact represented throughout the book as an actual departure from Rome, the epicentral territory of *amor*.[532] New, peripheral areas of the Roman empire are in fact used as destinations where the poet seeks to transgress the narrow confines of his metropolitan genre. Instead of being concerned with the *princeps*' military expansion, the collection indeed rather celebrates Propertius' own 'poetic imperialism', his pacifist and literary conquest over the Hellenistic East in particular, a (temporary) getaway from Cynthia.[533]

On top of usurping Augustus' role as conqueror of the East and bending it to an eroto-poetic context, Propertius utilises the geography of Book 3 to call into

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[528] Wallis 2018:4; cf. Heyworth & Marwood 2011:26. On Augustus' increasing commitment to military expansion in the period between 25-20 BCE (i.e., around Book 3's publication *post* 22 BCE), see especially Gruen 1996.

[529] See esp. Jacobson 1976; Clarke 2004 on the theme of voyaging (particularly in poems 3.16 and following).

[530] Poems with the *puella* at the centre are just a few (3.6; 3.8; 3.15-16) and mostly dark (perhaps only 3.10 is an exception).

[531] But see Chapter 5 for Cynthia's uncanny return in Book 4.

[532] Cf. especially elegy 3.17, where Propertius' hymnic request to Bacchus, lover and healer of lovers, to cure him from the pains of *seruitium amoris* by setting him on a favourable journey (*da mihi pacatus* ***uela secunda****, pater*, 3.17.2) figures the departure from amatory verse as a geographical flight from Rome and its affiliated genre (cf. Keith 2008:63-5, after Fedeli 1985; Lefevre 1991; Miller 1991); see *infra* on 3.21. Contrast Propertius' centripetal desire to make *puella* and *domus*/*Roma* collapse in previous collections (see Chapters 1 and 3).

[533] In the book's programmatic poem (3.1), Propertius' self-identification with a priest claiming to be the first one to march (*primus* ***ego ingredior****...sacerdos*, 3.1.3) from a holy spring to the threshold of Callimachus' and Philitas' holy wood (3.1.1-2, 5-6) in order to bring "Italian rites" into the "Greek dances" (***Itala*** *per* ***Graios*** *orgia ferre choros*, 3.1.4) aligns him from the outset with a 'poetic conqueror' on a military *iter* from the West into the East (see Hunter 2006:7-9 on the Bacchic overtones of this journey). Cf. also his self-fashioning as *triumphator* following next (3.1.9ff.), which plays antithetically with the reference to Augustus' upcoming military successes in the East (***finem imperii Bactra futura****...*, 3.1.16).

question, rather than to affirm, the superiority of Rome in respect to the peripheries under his domain. Although the elegist is often caught espousing an 'orientalising' discourse to either back Augustus' propaganda against *luxuria* and perverted *mores* imported from the East (in the first two case studies I shall propose: 3.7; 3.13-4) or to celebrate Rome's military superiority over the East (in my last case study: 3.22), such a hierarchical opposition between Western metropolis and Eastern periphery is in fact deconstructed within the very same texts in which it surfaces. Either morally superior than or a threat to Rome, the periphery challenges the colonising centre's post-Republican 'rebirth' under Augustus and thus compromises the credibility of Propertius' identification with a proper Roman moraliser at the service of the *princeps*.[534] Split between an apparent attachment to Rome and its rhetorics of imperialism and a concomitant fascination for the East, a space of greater literary inspiration as much as a space that 'holds the mirror' to Rome's vices, Propertius displays his double vision on imperial geography, gazed at from the centre and yet again from the peripheries' standpoint too. It is the elegist's spatial oscillation between West and East, his geographical liminality rather than his 'Romanness', that once again translates his ambivalent participation and exclusion from sustaining and celebrating Rome and its Empire (*dominus/exclusus*).

The Chapter is divided into three sections corresponding to the close readings of three elegies that I propose as my case studies. As usual, remarks on how these case studies are interrelated and fit into the broader structure of the thesis follow in the Conclusions to the Chapter. I shall start with elegy 3.7, which serves me as a good starting point to deconstruct the apparent hierarchy between West and East subtended in all the texts I consider. Here, the amatory speaker's assumption of a Roman moralising *persona* (in itself a paradox), one that would have pleased the *princeps*' preoccupation over the spread of corrupting *luxuria* in the metropolis, apparently leads him to chastise the Romans' money-driven voyages towards the Eastern Mediterranean. In particular, the fatal voyage of the young Paetus, shipwrecked on its way to Egypt, is used as an illustrative case on why the East should not be reached. Through a brand new metapoetic

[534] On the Horatian influence behind Propertius' vatic *persona* throughout Book 3, see Wallis 2018 *passim*; cf. n587 *infra*.

interpretation of the text, I shall nevertheless argue that Propertius exploits Paetus' *ars nauigandi* for his own 'poetic expansion' towards the Hellenistic periphery. In virtue of this reading, I shall contend that Propertius finds a subtle way to contradict his own 'orientalising' rhetorics, for the Latin elegy that the poet writes at Rome actually depends on his 'plundering' of the Hellenistic East, of which Paetus' navigation serves as a metaphor. A Roman censor refusing the contact with the East and yet again, concomitantly, a Hellenistic lover-poet expanding towards the Greek literary periphery, Propertius thwarts his identification with an 'orientalising' moraliser, for he is at once an 'orientalised' poet who needs to travel eastward so as to expand his poetic domain. Liminally split between West and East, at 3.7 Propertius ultimately manages to mimic and mock two orthodox Roman roles embodied by Augustus' contradictory *personae,* the middle-Republican 'moraliser', who collapses at the expenses of the *poeta*, and the post-Republican 'imperialist', whose imperial travels in arms and in search of materialistic goods are substituted by the *poeta*'s metapoetic voyage. All in all, in spite of its apparent conformism, the elegy thus reveals that Propertius' transformation into an official voice of the *principatus* is far from accomplished.

My second case study addresses poem 3.13. Here too, Propertius targets the import of luxurious products from the East into Rome, resulting in the metropolis' moral corruption. Although the elegist seems to embrace a traditional Romano-centric view on the relationship between centre and periphery, he nevertheless goes on to provide a bleak, topsy-turvy representation of the same spatial dialectic within his tirade. Indeed, not only does Propertius use the periphery as a a counter site to Rome and the elegiac poetics linked to Cynthia, a space of Hellenistic *otium* and 'free love', but he also humorously displaces onto the Eastern periphery those traditional Roman *mores* that would propel the metropolis' moral rebirth under Augustus, thus making the periphery look 'more Roman' that the metropolis itself. The climax of this subversion is reached at end of the elegy, when, by predicting that he shall fail to save the *Vrbs* from its capitulation (in the guise of a 'Roman Cassandra'), Propertius fully abandons his civic commitment to the Augustan restoration of *mores*. What the poem ultimately reveals is in fact that the poet can leave Rome drowning in the abyss of its decadence whilst he explores the imperial periphery as yet another territory

accommodating his literary ambitions. As in poem 3.7, the poet's initial 'orientalism' voicing a moralistic preoccupation for Rome's contact with the deviant East is just a posture and his eroto-poetic exploration of the Greek periphery a self-interested mission that contrasts Augustus' military expeditions.

My third and last case study is a brand new reading of poem 3.22. In this elegy, another 'orientalising' rhetoric against the Hellenistic East – savage and corrupt in respect to Rome, which is instead deemed superior for both its invincible military strength and its greater moral qualities – is deployed to apparently accommodate Augustus' politics of imperialism and engagement with a traditional morality. Yet, I shall contend that the exploration of the periphery, developed through the text via the imagined journey of Propertius' friend Tullus, in fact bears witness to Propertius' 'poetic imperialism', rather than Augustus' military expansion. On top of re-imagining the East as *his own* rather than Augustus' domain, Propertius also utilises a rich web of literary allusions to problematise (rather than celebrate) the Augustan space and, particularly, the Romano-centric conceptualisation of a fully subjugated and pacified world, marked by a fixed hierarchy between the metropolitan centre and its peripheries.

4.2. Lost in epigrammatic waves*: ars*/*inertia* and Paetus' maritime *uiae* towards the luxurious East (3.7)

"The direful spectacle of the wreck, which touch'd
the very virtue of compassion in thee,
I have with such provision in mine art
So safely ordered..."
(W. Shakespeare, *The Tempest,* Act I, Scene 2, 26-9)

4.2.1. Introduction

In elegy 3.7, Propertius uses the pitiful occasion of a young boy named Paetus' premature death at sea to condemn money-driven voyages through the

Mediterranean. Drawing from a traditional moralising discourse, the poem develops a stark contrast between a safe, 'dry' life lived in *patria* resulting in traditional death and a perilous, 'wet' existence spent sailing abroad and ending in fatal shipwreck. Two subjects are attributed the first and the second *modus uiuendi,* respectively on the (mother)land and across the (foreign) sea. On the one hand, the elegiac *amator*, with whom the 'lyrical I' identifies, has remained put on the threshold of his girlfriend's house, thus securing himself a non-tragic death at home. On the other hand, Paetus, sailing towards Alexandria, has fatally transgressed the secure borders of the Italian motherland just to succumb to the waves of the Aegean Sea *en route* to Egypt.

Prima facie, the poem therefore capitalises on the neat distinction between two identities and their own spatial collocations: to the elegiac *mora* of the speaking *amator*, the anti-elegiac *iter* of the addressee, the voyager, is opposed. And yet, whilst the speaking subject attempts to construe the position of his normative Self (Roman and apparently refusing contact with the East) in opposition to a deviant Other (Paetus: Roman and yet 'orientalised' by his recursive contact with the East),[535] he is, ironically, a deviant character himself, who is hardly ever going to effectively voice the concerns of a moraliser against imperial journeys. The exact opposite of the hard-working Italian *agricola* that he wishes Paetus could have imitated by staying in *patria*, the *amator* in fact ultimately defines himself as inactive (*iners*, 3.7.72, the word emphatically concluding the piece), thus jeopardising the consistency of his tirade against foreign waters in favour of operose, Italian land-sowing.[536]

If the *amator*'s moralising voice is the text's most evident irony, it is nevertheless not the only one. Indeed, I shall propose a new metapoetic reading of the elegy, in which I demonstrate that Paetus' "body" (*corpus*, 3.7.25) can be read metaphorically as the (transgressive) *corpus* of Propertius' elegy, attempting to *literally* and *literarily* expand and go beyond its strict erotic specification (mapped on *Roma/amor*) into the sea of Hellenistic epigrams of the ναυαγικά

[535] See especially the description of Paetus' Oriental wardrobe: 3.7.49-50.
[536] Lefevre 1966:149 rightly deems "überraschend" the elegy's last couplet. On the *amator*'s erotic success depending on the possession of Eastern luxurious goods (to please the most likely Eastern *puella*), cf. Lowell Bowditch 2006 *passim*; Keith 2008:146; 2011.

kind, whose mosaic-like juxtaposition forms the *corpus* of elegy 3.7 itself.[537] I shall then indulge on the political consequences that such a metapoetic reading implies and conclude that Propertius deconstructs his apparent identification with an 'orientalising' and 'moralising' *persona*, for, as it shall become apparent, he is also a poetic explorer of the very East he seems to chastise. On top of poking fun at the traditional (Republican) discourse against *luxuria* that Augustus was (anachronistically) starting to embrace during those years of moral renewal, the poet also contrasts the (imperial) military explorations of the East that the *princeps* was conducting (3.4; 3.12) by creating his own pacifist, literary voyage into the periphery of Hellenistic *otium*.

4.2.2. An alternative metapoetic reading

Whilst the more historicising interpretation of the poem offered by F. Cairns has proposed to see Paetus as an indirect relative of Propertius and, specifically, as the son of the second prefect of Egypt Aelius Gallus, whose sister (or daughter) Aelia Galla was married to Propertius' blood-relative Postumus,[538] L. B. T. Houghton has argued that Paetus has to be taken as a fictional character rather than a historical figure.[539] In support to his thesis, Houghton has convincingly shown that the young protagonist of the elegy can be equated to the characters of both the *amator* and the *puella*.[540] With the male lover, Paetus in fact shares the same young age (3.7.7, 17, 59: cf. Prop. 2.10.7), a mother whose affection his corpse will be deprived when dead (3.7.9-10, 17-8, 63-4: cf. Tib.

[537] Keith 2008:150-1 limits herself to underscoring that the elegy's Greek words and the references to Greek mythology and geography (vv.5, 21-4, 37-42, 49-50, 57) are illustrative of Rome's conquest of the Hellenistic East. 3.7's problematic text (for whose reading I follow Fedeli 1985) has dissuaded critics from a literary analysis: exceptions are e.g. Nethercut 1971b:248-51; Hubbard 1974:83-7; Orlebeke 1996 (yet one filled with editorial concerns); Houghton 2007; Williams 2006:111-23.
[538] Cairns 2006:16-20, re-echoing Syme 1986:308. On Postumus and Galla, see 3.12 (and 4.3, with Hutchinson *ad loc*.).
[539] Houghton 2007:164-5.
[540] Houghton 2007:165.

1.3.5-8) and the issuing of *mandata* (3.7.55: cf. 2.13.17-8, also ordered by Cynthia at 4.7.71); with the female beloved, his long hands (3.7.60: cf. Prop. 2.2.5), his unsuitability to "harm delicate hands on hard rope" (*duro teneras laedere fune manus*, 3.7.48, an intratextual echo of a former peregrination of Cynthia's: 1.8a.5-8)[541] as well as well as his "lightness" (3.7.70; often attributed to Cynthia: e.g. Prop. 1.15.1).[542] According to Houghton, Paetus' fictional elegiac qualities on the one hand, and Propertius' lack of sympathy for his life choices (leading to a tragic and inevitable culmination) on the other, invite the reader to see the young boy as a (spatially) 'deviated' and thus 'failing' elegiac poet, who had the potential of cultivating the same genre as Propertius but was fatally attracted by what elegy conspicuously rejects: commercial trade and materialism through the 'un-Callimachean' and 'epic' open sea.[543] In virtue of this, Houghton argues that poem 3.7 restates the same kind of literary polemic between erotic elegy (cultivated in dry Rome at the door of a recalcitrant *puella*) and epic (conquering the vast aquatic body of the Aegean Sea) as that developed between Propertius and an epic poet named Ponticus (conspicuously, a 'maritime' onomastic) in two poems from the *Monobiblos* (1.7; 1.9).[544]

Whilst Houghton's reading is often persuasive, I am not entirely convinced that the binary geographical opposition between erotic elegy and epic poetry that he proposes still functions in the same way as it used to in Propertius' most erotic first collection. If there is indeed one thing that defines Book 3, this is its generic expansiveness rather than a dichotomous representation of opposing generic affiliations.[545] Particularly under the pressure of the forthcoming publication of the *Aeneid* and the first three books of Horatian *Odes*, Propertius engages with epic and lyrics in a more substantial way in Book 3 than ever before.[546] Of course, as J. Wallis points out, Propertius' "early elegy's strident self-declaration as a fiercely exclusive and differentiated genre has always concealed a practice of generic assimilation"; yet in Book 3 the genre "is

[541] Itself most likely an intertextual echo of Cornelius Gallus via Virg. *Ecl.* 10.47.
[542] Houghton 2007:165n15 further observes the erotic overtones in Paetus' very name ("blink-eyed"), applied to Venus in Latin literature (e.g. Varro, *Sat. Men.* 344; Ov. *Ars* 2.659; *Priap.* 36.4).
[543] Houghton 2007:166.
[544] Houghton 2007:169-70.
[545] See esp. Wallis 2013. Note the absence of literary polemic in the book (unlike in previous collections: see Chapter 1).
[546] Wallis 2013:30.

markedly *inclusive* of other generic modes and symbols, even as it seeks to define its superiority over other genres".[547] I argue that these premises on the discourse of genre in Propertius' third collection can help us evaluate Paetus' aquatic *iter* towards the East as reflective of Propertius' generic *expansiveness* rather than a polemic against the epic genre. It is, after all, one of the last elegies of Book 3, 3.21, that explicitly adopts the trope of voyaging towards the East as illustrative of Propertius' desire for generic change from the powerful nexus that *Cynthia*, *Roma* and *amor* constitute.[548]

Therefore, in contrast to Houghton, I suggest that Paetus should not be identified with Propertius' poetic opposite, namely, an elegiac poet that, too boldly and inconsiderately, launches himself into a territory – the epic sea – that decrees his ruin. Indeed, Paetus' *corpus* can instead be fruitfully taken as a metaphor for Propertius' *own* poetic *corpus* at this stage of the elegist's career, a *corpus* that is intentionally trying to transgress Rome and reach new poetic shores in the Hellenistic East.[549] To this extent, two specific couplets of the elegy, so far overlooked by commentators and critics, are worth engaging with, for they bear an interesting metapoetic value:

terra parum fuerat, fatis adiecimus undas
fortunae ***miseras auximus arte uias***
(3.7.31-2)

at tu, saeue Aquilo, numquam mea uela uidebis:
ante fores *dominae condar oportet* ***iners****.*
(3.7.71-2)

[547] Wallis 2013:32-3 and *passim* for Propertius' generic hybridity in the programmatic elegies of Book 3 (3.1-3, on which see also Nethercut 1970b: esp. 392-3; compare the ongoing flirtation with Virgilian epic at 3.4 too, on which see Cairns 2003).
[548] Jacobson 1976; Clarke 2004.
[549] In a way, Paetus substitutes Cynthia qua Propertius' *scripta puella* (Wyke 1987b; cf. Wallis 2013:47, 54 on the mistress's diminished importance in this collection). The boy's feminisation as *puer delicatus* (thus Keith 2008:150; cf. esp. the eroticisation of the wind Aquilo's attack against him, which exposes him to comparison with Aquilo's other victim Orithyia, a girl: vv.13-4 and v.59; his veiled association with Agamemnon's ἐρώμενος Argynnus, another ill-fated *puer* who drowned in a river and caused the sufferings of his elder partner: vv.21-4; his 'queer' wardrobe: vv.49-50) after all favours his identification with Propertius' poetic *materia* (compare Hylas' similar role at Prop. 1.20, discussed in Chapter 1; see esp. Greene 1998 on the dynamics of gender and eroto-poetic domination in elegy).

In both these couplets, there is a similar juxtaposition between 'space' and the idea of 'craftsmanship' (as presence and lack: *ars/inertia*). In the first one, the speaking subject argues that, for the Romans (of whom he is part: *-mus*), it was not enough to remain with their feet on the Italic soil (*terra parum fuerat*): they added the waves to the causes of destruction (*fatis adiecimus undas*).[550] Indeed, through the acquisition of *ars nauigandi* (*arte*), the Romans have "increased the routes of (their own) misfortunes" (*Fortunae miseras auximus…uias*). In the second couplet I have reported (the elegy's conclusive distich), the speaker, identifying himself with the elegiac *amator*, has instead openly refused to sail abroad from Rome (*numquam mea uela uidebis*) under the gushes of the inclement wind Aquilo (*saeue Aquilo*), and, therefore, to practise precisely the *ars nauigandi* that Paetus acquired through his Eastern voyages. In virtue of his obstinate presence at home, the *amator* flash-forwards his burial (*condar*) on the threshold of his mistress (*antes fores*), where he has been lying *iners*: "sluggish" or "deprived of skills".[551]

When read together, the two couplets therefore connect, on the one hand, "skilfulness" (*ars*) with "imperial (aquatic) pathways" (*uiae*)[552] and, on the other, "unskilfulness" (*in-ers* < *in-ertia* < *non ars*) with erotic elegy's sedentary placement on the domestic threshold.[553] Whilst respectively pointing to the anti-elegiac seafarers' *ars nauigandi* and the elegiac lover's characteristic *inertia*,[554] *ars* and *inertia* (its 'lack') nevertheless bear an additional poetic meaning in Propertius, as "artistic skill/achievement" and its opposite.[555] Unsurprisingly, sound examples of the employment of *ars* occur in Propertius' programmatic poems: in these contexts, the word is applied to both the figure of the poet and the *puella*, both "skilled" and co-operating in crafting the former's "artistic achievement".[556] Once we underscore the potential poetic meaning of *ars* and

[550] Compare the declamatory tone of Sen. *Nat. Quaest.* 5.18.8-9.
[551] *OLD* 2 and 1, respectively. Note *iners*' marked position (end of verse and elegy altogether).
[552] Whilst *uias* is here modified by the genitive *fortunae* (to mean "the [metaphorical] routes of misfortune"; cf. Tib. 1.3.50) – as Shackleton Bailey 1956 *ad loc*., Fedeli 1985 *ad loc*. and Heyworth & Morwood 2009 *ad loc*. all agree – the word does not lose its physical, spatial meaning of "(imperial, geographical) routes" in the voyaging context in which it appears (note, after all, its conspicuous distance from its modifier *fortunae* in the verse).
[553] On *limen* and poetic production, see Chapter 1.
[554] Fedeli *ad loc*. reports Rehm's and Kuinoel's translations of *iners* as '*qui peregrinari nolim*' and '*qui non nauigat*'.
[555] Respectively *ars*, *OLD* 1, 8.
[556] E.g. 2.1.10; 2.1.45-6; 2.13.7-12; 3.24/5.25. Cynthia is a *docta puella*: 1.7.11; 2.13.11.

inertia, we can therefore be prompted to see a declaration of poetics in elegy 3.7's lines reported above: the metropolis Rome is seen as an uninspiring space where the elegiac lover-poet lacks "artistic skill/achievement" (*iners*), whereas the peripheral open sea of Hellenistic Greece (*Carpathium…mare*, v.12) is instead where "artistic skill" (*arte*: *ars nauigandi* and *poetandi*) can be found.

In virtue of this reading, when Propertius writes that [*fortunae*] *miseras auximus arte uias* ("through our art, we have increased the sorrowful paths [of misfortune]", v.32), he may well be making a metapoetic pun on the way he expanded, thanks to his "artistic skill" (*arte*), the "miserable paths" of his erotic elegy (the "paths" being fittingly "miserable", considering that *miser* is a technical adjective of the elegiac vocabulary).[557] The pun's effectiveness is further corroborated by the metapoetic value that the word *uiae*, on top of *ars*, bears in Propertius. An important programmatic poem, namely the *Monobiblos*' first, in fact features the metapoetic use of both *ars* and *uiae*:

in me tardus Amor non ullas cogitat ***artis****,*
nec meminit notas, ut prius, ire ***uias****.*
(1.1.17-8)

These two verses close the mythological example of Milanion and Atalanta, which Propertius deploys as a foil for his own relationship with Cynthia (1.1.9-16). Propertius confesses that, unlike the hunter Milanion, his "slugghish love" (*tardus amor*) could not "think up any tricks" (*non ullas cogitat* ***artis***) "nor remember to travel the old familiar courses" (*nec meminit notas, ut prius, ire* ***uias***) to win Cynthia over.[558] Given that the example of Milanion and Atalanta is an intertextual echo to Cornelius Gallus' own treatment of the same myth,[559] M. Pincus has rightly interpreted lines 17-18 (closing the *exemplum*) with metapoetic lens too.[560] Although Propertius apparently claims to have lost memory (*nec*

[557] Cf. esp. the programmatic *miserum* at Prop. 1.1.1, with Keith (2011a:147n32)'s recent annotations. The adjective also suits well the *sepulchral* kind of elegy that the poet explores in 3.7: see *infra*.
[558] Note that both *artis* (archaic plural of *ars*) and *uias* are in marked position.
[559] Esp. Ross 1975:91, adducing that the archaism of these lines is symptomatic of an imitation and that Ovid's Milanion's (*Ars* 2.185-96) intertextual indebtedness to both Propertius' Milanion and Vergil's Gallus at *Ecl.* 10 implies Ovid's use of the same Gallan source as the other two poets.
[560] Pincus 2004:192.

meminit), "skills" (***artis***) and "the known paths" (*notas...**uias***), Pincus argues that the elegist is in fact making a statement of poetic originality (conspicuously at the beginning of his first book).[561] As Propertius subtly implies, he shall diverge from his recalled model Gallus (whom he has forgotten: *nec meminit*) throughout his own poetic collection: as a consequence of this, he should be credited with "artistic merits" (*artis*) of his own, for he is venturing into "paths" (*uias*) other than those trodden by fellow poets (including Gallus himself).[562] Therefore, Pincus' reading underscores the juxtaposed metapoetic value of the words *ar(ti)s* and *uiae* within an important programmatic context and further legitimises a metapoetic reading of 3.7.32, featuring the very same words.

Indeed, this line from the Paetus elegy can suggest that, through his own "artistic skilfulness" (*arte*) coinciding with Paetus' (and the fellow Romans') *ars* (*nauigandi*) – namely the young boy's itinerary towards the Eastern Mediterranean – Propertius has managed to "increase" his poetic "ways", both metaphorical and physical (imperial and aquatic) "routes" of generic experimentation. In other words, even though Propertius ultimately emphasises that he shall remain "inactive/unskilled" (*iners*: "without *ars*") outside his mistress's house at Rome (until his very last day: *condar*), Paetus' transgressive *iter*, marked by *ars*, serves the elegist's poetic navigation outside his comfort-zone of urban Rome (at a time when, significantly, the eroto-poetic bond with Cynthia seems to be fading away and to remain at Rome means to be artistically *iners* indeed: vv.71-2). Unlike Houghton, then, I do not see Paetus' hazardous, and ultimately fatal, voyage as a cautionary tale for those elegiac poets that, unlike the wiser Propertius, 'get lost' in the whirlpools of epic. According to my own metapoetic interpretation, Paetus' exploration of Greek waters is rather a metaphor for Propertius' own attempted transgression of the narrow confines of Cynthia-dominated erotic poetry, overlapping with the geographical space of the *Vrbs*. To this extent, it is perhaps a shrewd provocation that, as he launches Paetus through the literary sea of Hellenistic Greece, Propertius includes himself into the

[561] *Memor* and its cognate alert the reader of intertextual memory (Pincus 2004:192n41, after Conte 1986:57-69; Miller 1993).

[562] To be sure, Propertius' "untrodden ways" are (not-so-originally) already part of Callimachus' own declaration of originality (κελεύθους ἀτρίπτους, Call. *Aet.* fr. 1.27-8 Pf.; and compare Propertian *artis* with Callimachean τέχνην, Call. fr. 67.3, with Booth 2001: esp. 66-7, 73-4), although the wide space of imperial geography across which Propertius traces his poetic *uiae* contrasts the Callimachean paths' "narrowness" (στεινοτέρην, Call. *Aet.* fr. 1.27-8 Pf.).

process of imperial expansion through *ars (nauigandi* and *poetandi*): the first-person plural of *augere* (*auxi**mus***) in fact signals the poet's self-conscious artistic complicity in Paetus' reckless *iter*, which provides Propertius with the opportunity to 'enlarge' his elegiac horizons (or "ways": *uias*). On the way in which 3.7 itself offers a taste of Propertius' new, experimental poetics, I shall tell more in the following section.

4.2.3. Swimming through foreign 'epigrammatic' waters: 3.7 as a mosaic of Hellenistic ναυαγικά

The intertextual debts to Hellenistic epigrams throughout Propertius 3.7 have long been demonstrated.[563] In the 1970s, M. Hubbard had already taken the first twelve lines of 3.7 as an epigram in its own terms.[564] Similarly, T. D. Papanghelis had spoken of the elegy as an "extended epigram".[565] More recently (and, I think, more accurately), R. F. Thomas has instead read 3.7 as an epigram made up of other (dismembered) epigrams (*disiecta membra*) put together, and, specifically, epigrams of the ναυαγικά kind (sepulchral epigrams for shipwrecked voyagers).[566] Although Propertius had already composed two other elegies under the influence of ναυαγικά (1.17; 2.26), the strategic reuse of these sepulchral compositions in the elegy for Paetus is in fact much more consistent than in the previous pieces.[567] This time, it may not be too bold a statement to say that the intertextual combination of these Greek sources, like 'waves' splashing together, generates the Latin text as we read it. Let us explore some of these Hellenistic 'waves' more closely:

[563] On the generic interface between erotic elegy and epigram, see ultimately Keith 2011a.
[564] Hubbard 1974:83-4 (after Hutton 1935:10-17; Day 1938:123-4; Schulz Vanheyden 1969:58-66; Robertson 1969:384).
[565] Papanghelis 1987:83, 87.
[566] Thomas 2011:82 (cf. also 2004), who explains the poem's 'brokenness' with the 'mosaic-like' combination of its epigrammatic sources (rather than its poor manuscript transmission).
[567] On the epigrammatic sources for 1.17, see Williams 2006:105-11; on 2.26, see Fedeli 2005 *ad loc*.

Ergo sollicitae tu causa, pecunia, uitae!
per te immaturum mortis adimus iter;
tu uitiis hominum crudelia pabula praebes;
semina curarum de capite orta tuo.
tu Paetum ad Pharios tendentem lintea portus
obruis insano terque quaterque mari.
nam dum te sequitur, primo miser excidit aeuo
et noua longinquis piscibus esca natat.
et mater non iusta piae dare debita terrae
nec pote cognatos inter humare rogos,
sed tua nunc uolucres astant super ossa marinae,
nunc tibi pro tumulo Carpathium omne mare est.
(3.7.1-12)

Almost all of these first twelve verses are either modelled on or closely imitate a ναυαγικόν.[568] If the rebuke to "money" (*pecunia*) opening the poem is in fact a *uariatio* from the epigrammatic rebuke to the winds or waves (taken aback by Propertius at vv.13-6),[569] the juxtaposition between trade and death in the same lines (*pecunia – mortis*) instead re-echoes Callimachus' own connection of two similar Greek words (ἔμπορος and σῶμα, *AP* 7.272.3-4, beginning of consecutive lines) in the ναυαγικόν for the death of Lykos from Naxos. As well as drawing on Callimachus' epigram, here Propertius also has in mind Asclepiades' tribute to the tragic death of Euippos of Chios (*AP* 7.500), whose "ship" and "**merchandise**" (καὶ νῆα καὶ **ἐμπορίην**, v.3) were destroyed by the terrible wind Euros (κακὸς Εὖρος/ὤλεσεν, vv.3-4). The couplet 5-6 instead closely follows the first lines from Leonidas of Tarentum's ναυαγικόν for the death of Teleutagoras (*AP* 7.652.1-4), who was also "sailing" like Paetus (πλώοντ', v.2; cf. Propertius' own present participle *tendentem*) and succumbed to the sea's madness (ἄγρια χειμήνασα καταπρηνώσαο πόντῳ/σὺν φόρτῳ λάβρον κῦμ' ἐπιχευαμένη, vv.3-4; cf. Propertius' *obruis insano…mari*).[570] Furthermore, as M. F. Williams notes, the reference to the lighthouse of Pharos (*ad Pharios…portus*) is reminiscent of Posidippus' poem on the same building at

[568] The following discussion on 3.7's intertextual debts overlaps at many points with Orlebeke 1996; Williams 2006:115ff.
[569] See *infra* n576 for the sources.
[570] For this couplet, cf. also Leon. *AP* 7.665.3-4 (also relevant for the 'burial in the homeland' theme).

Alexandria (Pos. 11 G-P = 11 Page), dedicated to the Dioscuri for the safety of voyagers and thus a fit destination for sailors who managed to survive in their aquatic *iter*.[571] The *corpus* of Teleutagoras, already a model for Propertius' lines 5-6 (as noted above), then re-emerges at Propertius' lines 9-11 (cf. *AP* 7.652.5-8). Like Paetus', Teleutagoras' body was in fact also bewailed by sea-birds (τεθρήνητ', v.6; a close *comparandum* for the Propertian *adstant*).[572] Furthermore, Propertius reworks the image of Teleutagoras' father weeping over his son's cenotaph (vv.7-8) by substituting it with that of Paetus' mother, unable to provide his son with proper burial (*et mater non iusta piae dare debita terrae*). Two more intertexts are worth mentioning in this context. Lines 7-8 recall the ναυαγικόν composed by Leonidas for the death of Kallaeschros (*AP* 7.273.3-6), whose young age (ἀπώλισθον δὲ βίοιο*,* v.3) is mirrored by Paetus' (*excidit aeuo*) along with his transformation into a bait for fishes (ἰχθύσι κύρμα, v.5 = *piscibus esca*).[573] Lines 11-12 instead re-echo an epigram for the death of Erasippos attributed to Glaukos of Nikopolis (*AP* 7.285), which certainly influenced Propertius at the level of both syntax and imagery. Indeed, the ***non…nec…sed*** construction of the Propertian lines mirrors the layout of Glaukos' epigram (**οὐ** κόνις **οὐδ'** ὀλίγον πέτρης... τὰ **δ'** ὀστέα*,* vv.1, 3),[574] whilst Propertius' line 12, where Paetus is said to have the "whole Carpathian sea as a tomb" (*pro tumulo Carpathium omne mare*), is resonant with Erasippos' "whole sea as a tomb" (πᾶσα θάλασσα τάφος*,* v.2).[575]

As we can see, the first 12 lines of the elegy condense a thick amount of ναυαγικά – both physical shipwrecked *corpora* and literary *corpora* drowned by Propertius into his elegy – as models for Paetus' own *corpus fluctuans*. The same can be said of the remainder of the text, which is similarly construed as a 'mosaic' of juxtaposed epigrammatic tesserae.[576] All in all then, the Paetus' elegy can be

[571] Williams 2006:114; contrast Houghton (2007:114)'s different reading.
[572] Fedeli 1985 *ad loc. adstare* ("la presenza di congiunti accanto alla tomba o al luogo funebre").
[573] Compare also *natat* with Leonidas' πόντῳ δινεύμενος (v.5). Leonidas treats the grotesque death of a half-eaten man by a monster at *AP* 7.506.
[574] Otherwise, Heyworth & Morwood's text, anticipating vv.11-2 *ante* vv.9-10 and thus printing ***sed…nunc…et***, re-echoes the syntax of a different ναυαγικόν (Call. *AP* 7.271.3-4, **νῦν δ'...δ'**).
[575] Compare also Leonidas *AP* 7.273.
[576] It goes beyond my objective to discuss all the remaining intertexts. For 3.7.13-4: esp. Leonidas *AP* 7.495.1-2 (whose *AP* 7.665; 7.503 are also relevant), Posidippus 14.7-10.1 Bastianini (also evoked at 3.7.36, 65-6); for 3.7.14: Pos. 14.21 Bast.; for 3.7.17-8: Hegesippus *AP* 13.12.4; for 3.7.18, 57ff.: Pos. 14.3-6 Bast.; for 3.7.19-20: Leon. *AP* 7.264; for 3.7.25-6, 63-4: Pos. 14.5-6, 19-24 Bast. (perhaps intertwined with Leon. *AP* 7.665); for 3.7.27: Asclepiades *AP* 7.500; for 3.7.28:

looked at as a literary *corpus* that depends upon the rescuing, from drowning and oblivion, of the *corpora* of Paetus' epigrammatic fellows, shipwrecked in Greek waters (Teleutagoras, Promachus, Erasippos, just to name a few). In virtue of Propertius' metapoetic use of the word *uox* as "literary echo" in previous contexts, the reference to Paetus' "last words" (*ultima…uox*, 3.7.68), pronounced as he drowns into the deep sea, might in fact allude to the elegist's exploitation of Paetus as the "last echo" of a series of previous literary voices, those of his Hellenistic fellow shipwrecked.[577] These *corpora*, both physical and literary bodies, therefore constitute the literary *corpus* shaping poem 3.7 itself.[578]

As we can easily understand, elegy 3.7's peculiar structure, a collection of texts juxtaposed together, makes it a very different text from the erotic compositions which Propertius has accostumed us to read: never before did the elegist show such an ostentatious dependence upon Hellenistic poetry in his text.[579] I argue that Paetus' voyaging *ars* accommodates the *ars* of his poetic creator Propertius, who makes the young boy fluctuate in the Aegean Sea so as to plunder several Greek sources and combine them together to create *his own* elegy. Whilst decreeing his death, Paetus' perilous voyage through the Greek sea indeed coincides with an imperialistic act of 'literary plundering', so to speak, through which the shores of Roman erotic poetry are expanded and drenched with those of Hellenistic epigram, so as to lay bare the 'flexibility' of the elegiac genre at this critical point of Propertius' career. Indeed, the naturally borderless sea, as opposed to the enclosing land where the *amator* remains *iners*, becomes a space where genre is negotiated thanks to *ars* (both *nauigandi* and *poetandi*) and 'death by water' becomes not only a metaphor for artistic capitulation (the elegiac body of Paetus succumbs) but also of artistic rebirth through poetic experimentation

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Call. *AP* 7.272.5-6 (and possibly Leon. *AP* 7.266.2); for 3.7.39-42: Zonas of Sardis *AP* 7.404; for 3.7.43-6: Call. *AP* 7.272.1 (with Phalaecus *AP* 7.650; compare Hor. *Ep.* 2.1-3, *C* 1.1.11-8; Tib. 1.1.5-50).

[577] For *uox*'s metapoetic use: 1.4.18; 1.5.1; 1.10.10 (on which see Chapter 1); 1.13.3. *Vltima*'s primal spatial meaning, "furthest away" (*OLD* 1; cf. 4 "final"), well conveys the foreign quality of the "echo" that Paetus emits, from the Greek waves away from the motherland.

[578] There is a fine analogy, I think, between the *corpus* of Paetus, eaten and transformed (reduced to *ossa,* 3.7.11) by "foreign fishes" (*et noua* ***longinquis piscibus*** *esca natat*, 3.7.8) and the elegiac *corpus* of Propertius' poetry, itself 'torn into bits' of epigrams and, thus, transformed through the young boy's fluctuation in foreign waters.

[579] Cf. Hubbard 1974.

(Propertius' elegiac body morphs into something new).[580] The aquatic space's geographical in-betweenness, being the sea amid the Western Italian and the Eastern Egyptian shores, reflects the hybridisation of Paetus as a (poetic) body that defies secure fixation at a specific (poetic) 'homeland' (nor the West nor the East).[581] Moreover, it reflects Propertius' self-characterization as an itinerant poet on the *uiae* linking West and East, conveyed at Book 3's other pivotal 'voyaging' moments.[582] Yet, as we have remarked from the beginning of our exploration into 3.7, the elegy is interesting not only for its metapoetic game but also for its political overtones. Therefore, we shall proceed to look at the political resonance that the elegist's ambivalent relationship with the Eastern periphery bears.

4.2.4. A double vision on the *uiae* of Empire

As I have shown, Propertius develops a contradictory double vision on imperial geography and, specifically, on the embedded discourse of the cultural contact between centre and periphery. Although I have drawn attention to the elegist's poetic oscillation, there is a concomitant political dimension to this contradiction. On the one hand, the reclusive character of the *amator*, with whom

[580] The Iliadic references to both Agamemnon (vv.21-24 *post* 38) and Odysseus in the elegy could also contain a metapoetic reference to the power of the sea as a space for generic infractions. Indeed, the "shores" become "witnesses" of the elegiacisation of Agamemnon (*sunt Agamemnonias testantia litora curas*, v.21, where *cura* pertains to the elegiac vocabulary: Heyworth & Morwood *ad loc.*) from epic, forward moving hero to elegiac, lingering lovestruck (*hoc iuvene amisso classem non soluit Atrides/pro qua mactatast Iphigenia mora*, vv.23-4), because it is at sea, at least according to this version of the story, that his beloved Argynnus gets lost (cf. v.22; compare Athaeneus 13.603d, with Hollis 2006). Odysseus is similarly caught in elegiac mourning (*fleuit Vlixes*, v.41) for the loss of his comrades (*socium iacturam*), for this time the sea (***in mare***, v.42) has not proven the background for the effectiveness of those tricks (*soliti non ualuere doli, ibidem*, where *ualuere* is semantically linked to epic *ualor*) that usually advance his epic νόστος (on the Mount Caphareus episode evoked here: *Od.* 4.492-518; Aesch. *Ag.* 648-60; Ov. *Met.* 14.466-74).

[581] See Houghton 2007:168 for a different interpretation. Paetus displays ethnical liminality: he is certainly Roman (cf. v.63) but possesses the debasing luxurious commodities of an Eastern man (vv.49-50).

[582] On Propertius' Bacchic 'poetic conquest' at 3.1, see n533 *supra* (cf. MacGoráin 2011, 2013 on Bacchus as the geographically liminal deity *par excellance*). In a closing poem from the collection, the elegist makes reference to his impending voyage to the "erudite Athens" (*ad doctas…Athenas*, 3.21.1), a space that shall fittingly substitute the *amator*'s *docta puella* at Rome.

Propertius identifies, abhors the *uiae* linking the West with the East so as to espouse Augustus' emerging moralistic stances.[583] The speaker's traditional attack against Eastern corruption is in fact significantly attuned with Augustus' moral propaganda commenced in the late 20s and translated into a set of laws promulgated in the early 10s (18 BCE): among these measures, a *lex sumptuaria* was issued to limit the display of luxurious material goods, particularly as imported from the East and especially as exhibited by women.[584] On the other hand, though, the plundering of Eastern literary sources to which the fluctuation of Paetus' body through foreign waters alludes – as we have seen, a vital fluctuation for the process of artistic composition in elegy 3.7 – confirms the imperialistic attitude of Propertius' poetic project at this point of his career. The new, experimental kind of elegy that Propertius writes in fact depends upon the *uiae*, imperial and poetic, that take the *poeta* eastward (away from Cynthia and Rome), and then again westward (for he needs to import *Hellenistic* poetry so as to write his own *Roman* elegy). Albeit only metapoetically, Propertius qua *poeta* thus aligns himself with Augustus' spatial expansion and importation of goods from the East (literary ones, in his case).[585] With characteristic irony, the key verb on which I indulged in the discussion above, ***aux****imus* ("we have expanded"), not only annexes the speaking subject (indeed, not only an *iners amator*) to the practice of imperialistic expansion via voyaging *itinera* but also etymologises the name of the 'expansionist' *princeps* **Aug**ustus himself.[586]

By 'orientalising' the periphery (qua moraliser) and yet again allowing his own 'orientalisation' in the periphery (qua *poeta*), Propertius rejects a sole Romano-centric view on the metropolis' geopolitical relationship with the East and rather splits himself between the *personae* of a Western moraliser and an Eastern *poeta*. These two figures do not only account for Propertius' liminality, his geographical oscillation, as it were, between the Roman West and the Hellenistic East (reflected in Paetus' own fluctuation *in between* Western and

[583] See ultimately Zecchini 2016: par. 19, who contends that fighting τρυφή ("luxury") was one of the "pilastri 'ideologici' dell'Italia augustea".
[584] Cf. Zecchini 2016 *passim*, with relative bibliography; see further in Chapter 5.
[585] Note that Paetus' desire for foreign riches mirrors that of the Augustan *uiri militares* participating in Eastern military expeditions in elegy 3.4 (see esp. Nethercut 1971b, also for the verbal parallels in the two elegies; Hubbard 1974:83). This intra-textual link further problematises the tenability of the speaker's sermon as reflective of an Augustan morality in 3.7, for Augustus (via his men) was the first to be blamed for the Romans' φιλοχρηματία.
[586] See n3 *supra*.

Eastern waters), but they also serve a political function. Indeed, they poke fun at the more orthodox identities that Augustus was trying to forge for himself (that of the moraliser and that of the military imperialist). Incapable of aligning with the spokesman of Augustan morality (for he is also a journeying *poeta*) and, at once, substituting the *princeps*' Eastern expansion with his own pacifist, poetic (as opposed to military) conquest of the periphery, Propertius utilises the geo-poetics of poem 3.7 to provide the evidence of his disengagement from the highly contradictory – somehow both middle-Republican and imperialistic – propaganda of the *princeps*.

4.3. Overcoming Rome: (Im)possible Eastern *uiae* towards new *mores* (3.13)

4.3.1. Introduction

Another elegy from Book 3, 3.13, shows a similar ambivalence in the representation of imperial geography, and specifically, of the relationship between Western centre and Eastern periphery. Like those navigated by Paetus, the imperial routes in 3.13 carry Eastern vices into the Western metropolis through a standard 'orientalising' discourse (3.13.1-14). And yet, as Propertius suggests, the same 'routes' could liberate the Roman community from the very vices tarnishing its metropolis. Indeed, it is in the imaginary spaces of the Far (India, 3.13.15-22) and the near East (the Greek Golden Age, 3.13.25-46) that the elegist, speaking to his fellow citizens with prophetic powers and a higher morality (*haruspex*, 3.13.59), locates 'better worlds', untouched by corruption and deviated *mores*. Therefore, the poem offers an ironic if contradictory appraisal of the East, deemed not only as the source of the evils of the West (injecting *luxuria* into its metropolis) but also as a positive 'counter space' to the West. Such a subversion is *per se* politically charged, since, by relegating Roman *mores* to the periphery, Propertius questions the feasibility of Augustus' upcoming programme of moral restoration in the *Vrbs*. The *patria* that the elegist addresses indeed seems to have lost to the periphery most of those qualities

required for her moral rebirth and is ultimately doomed to the same fate as Troy (3.13.59-66).

As I shall further demonstrate via an inter- and intra- textual reading of the elegy (particularly through the lens of Propertius' own elegy 3.14, the following in the collection, and Horace's *Epode* 16), the peripheral spaces summoned by Propertius are only *prima facie* 'better' *for the whole Roman community*. Rather than worlds of actual social regeneration and change, these spaces away from Rome (similarily to the epigrammatic Greek sea of elegy 3.7) work more as 'poetic fantasies' in which urban erotic elegy linked to Cynthia can temporarily be transgressed. Therefore, even though apparently it is the civically-minded agenda of the prophet that engages with the periphery, the periphery is once more used to accommodate the self-interest of the speaker qua lover-poet. All in all, in this elegy too, Propertius confirms his unorthodox treatment of imperial space as well as its imbrication with the question of his political identity. The elegist plays the role of a communitarian 'moraliser' rejecting the East and yet one that can hardly 'speak louder' than the self-interested 'lover-poet', for whom the exploration of the East fulfils his own eroto-poetic satisfaction, rather than Augustus' imperialistic drive. Liminally torn between Western centre and Eastern periphery, the elegist once more ludicrously 'mimics' two orthodox Augustan roles, the Republican defender of *mos maiorum* and the imperialist, without fully aligning with neither.

4.3.2. *Nimium libera uia*: corrupted West, immaculate East (...and their better *puellae*)

Whilst the speaker of elegy 3.13 clarifies his alignment with a *haruspex,* namely the Etruscan version of a prophet marked by a higher civic conscience, or *uates*, only towards the end of its lengthy diatribe (3.13.59), the reader can easily interpret the nature of the poem as moralising from its very opening lines.[587] As

[587] On the *uates*' political role, cf. e.g. Newman 1967:64 ("entitled to step forward with proposals about morals and manners to the whole citizen body"); with O'Hara 1990:181; an historical perspective in Santangelo 2013. For the Greek tradition of poets/προφηταί influencing the Latin

rightly noted, the introductory verb *quaeritis* ("you ask [me]", v.1) in fact brings about the sensation of orality and the exchange between the community and a single citizen accusing his own *patria*.[588] More specifically, the sermonising speaker opens his tirade by targeting the West's cultural contact with the East, which has resulted into the import of *luxuria* from the periphery into the metropolis:

Quaeritis, unde auidis nox sit pretiosa puellis,
et Venere exhaustae damna querantur opes.
certa quidem tantis causa et manifesta ruinis:
luxuriae nimium libera facta uia est.
Inda cauis aurum mittit formica metallis,
et uenit e Rubro concha Erycina salo,
et Tyros ostrinos praebet Cadmea colores,
cinnamon et multi pastor odoris Arabs.
haec etiam clausas expugnant arma pudicas
quaeque gerunt fastus, Icarioti, tuos.
matrona incedit census induta nepotum
et spolia opprobrii nostra per ora trahit.
nullast poscendi, nullast reuerentia dandi,
aut si quast, pretio tollitur ipsa mora.
(3.13.1-14)

The attack here developed against the importation of goods from the Middle and Far East (India, the Red Sea, Phoenicia and Arabia, vv.5-8) through the "unbound" *uia* of imperial luxury (*luxuriae nimium libera facta uia est*) certainly accommodates the speaker's civic preoccupation as (prophetic) moraliser.[589] The consumption of *luxuria* has stripped Roman women belonging to the higher social classes (*clausas...pudicas; matrona*) of their higher degree of morality and has thus made them virtually indistinguishable from the high-charging (and usually foreign) prostitutes of the opening line, also affected by *luxuria* (*auidis...puellis*).[590] Yet, like in poem 3.7, the apparently straightforward

uates, see the examples collected by Nisbett & Hubbard *ad loc* Hor. C. 1.31.2, with Kambylis 1965:12-4. Cf. also Prop. 2.10.19; 4.6.1; 3.1.3; Enn. *Ann.* 214; *scaen.* 319; Lucr. *RN* 1.102-6; Hor. *Epode* 17.44; *C.* 1.1.35, 1.31.2, 2.20.3; *Epist.* 2.1.119ff.; *AA* 400; Virg. *Ecl.* 7.28; 9.33ff.; *Aen.* 7.41; with Varro's etymology: *ling.* 7.36.

[588] Heyworth & Morwood *ad loc.*

[589] Fedeli *ad loc.*: "una tematica di viva attualità".

[590] The situation recalls the Late Republic and its depraved *matronae*, e.g. Sempronia (Sall. *BC* 24-5), Fulvia (Plut. *Ant.* 10, 30) or Clodia Metelli (Cic. *Cael.* 47-9): see Keith 2008:154; cf.

'orientalising' discourse developed by the speaker, who seems to condemn the acculturation of Rome via the contact with the periphery (through its "way-too-free route": *nimium libera...uia*), is highly contradictory.[591] Indeed, the East is also described in positive terms, as an exemplary space for the West. The first spatial alternative to corrupted Rome is India (*Eois*, v.15),[592] the land previously chastised for its exportation of gold (***Inda*** *cauis aurum*…, v.5):[593]

felix Eois lex funeris una maritis,
quos Aurora suis rubra colorat equis!
namque ubi mortifero iactast fax ultima lecto,
uxorum fusis stat pia turba comis,
et certamen habent leti, quae uiua sequatur
coniugium: pudor est non licuisse mori.
ardent uictrices et flammae pectora praebent,
imponuntque suis ora perusta uiris.
hoc genus infidum nuptarum, hic nulla puella
nec fida Euadne nec pia Penelope.
(3.13.15-24)

In India, women practise suttee, a form of immolation on their husbands' pyre that exalts their extraordinary marital bond.[594] Both their legal status as "wives" (*maritis, uxorum*, cf. *coniugium*) as well their conspicuous moral qualities (*pietas*, *pudor*, *fides*), akin to those Augustus wanted to see in Roman women, construe them as opposite to the women inhabiting contemporary Rome, as introduced at the beginning of the poem (vv.1-2, 9-14). The superiority of India, not introduced, unlike in Propertius' closest model Cicero, with an 'orientalising' rhetorical question enhancing its inferiority towards Rome (*Quae barbaria India uastior aut agrestior? Disp. Tusc.* 5.78), matches that of Greek

Weinlich 2013:269-70 on the analogy between Rome and the adulterous *puellae* as both 'penetrated' by Eastern *luxuria* through the imperial *uia.*

[591] On *uia*'s spatial meaning (physical "route" connecting Rome with the periphery), see Heyworth & Morwood *ad loc.*; n552 *supra*.

[592] Literally *Eois* means "Eastern" (cf. 2.3.43-4), but Propertius was well aware that suttee (to which the lines reported *infra* refer) originated in India, for he follows closely the account of Cicero, who explicitly speaks of *India* (cf. *infra*).

[593] Parker 2008:91 (re-echoing Papanghelis 1987:62) sees in India's double vision "[t]he irony of poem 3.13" but is not interested in the irony's political implications.

[594] For other Latin accounts on suttee, cf. Val. Max. 2.6.14; Sen. *Contr.* 2.2.1, 2.5.8, 10.3.1; Jer. *Adv. Jov*. 1.311, with Heckel-Yardley 1981.

mythological heroines of the likes of Evadne (*nec fida Evadne*) and Penelope (*nec pia Penelope*), other 'peripheral women' that remain conspicuously absent from the space of Rome (*hoc genus infidum nuptarum, hic nulla puella*).[595] Outshone by Eastern females from both contemporary and heroic times, the Propertian Rome does not even seem to have yielded Roman *exempla* of chastity of its own as means of responding to the present moral crisis. Indeed, Rome is simply forced to look Eastward and to develop a sort of 'complex of inferiority'.[596] India is indeed conveyed as a threatening space for the *Vrbs*, not only because it is one of those territories producing luxurious goods that contribute to the moral deterioration of the Capital by reaching it as *arma* (v.9), but also because, in the process of trading with Rome, it has deprived the metropolis of his signature traditional qualities.[597]

And yet, this is not the whole story about Propertius' Indian women. At the same time as they seem to provide a more orthodox, and thus more Augustan, model of femininity, I suggest that these ladies from the Far East also constitute an alternative eroto-poetic fantasy to Propertius' Cynthia (and Rome's fellow greedy women). That the elegy's tirade against *luxuria* is also sustained by the self-interested voice of the lover-poet, on top of the civically-minded moraliser, has after all been transparent from the very beginning. When Propertius argues that the expensive charges demanded by the urban sex-workers propel the lovers' complaints (*querantur*, the technical elegiac lament), whose fortunes have been wasted on unaffordable rendez-vous (*Venere exhaustae damna...opes*), it is because he knows in the first place what it means to get involved in a costly relationship.[598] Contemporary Rome's affairs, in which the *puellae* ask and the *amatores* give without shame (vv.13-4), in fact reflect the elegist's own affair in

[595] Evadne is *de facto* the *Greek* equivalent to an Indian practitioner of suttee (although her monogamy does not set her in competition with her husband's other wives: cf. Heckel & Yardley 1981:305; on her immolation, cf. Prop. 1.15.21ff.; Ov. *Ars* 3.21-22; *Ex P.* 3.1.111-2, after Eur. *Suppl.* 984ff.). She is an anti-Cynthia already at 1.15.21-2.

[596] La Penna 1977:204-5 argues that, here and elsewhere (e.g. 2.9.17ff.; contrast 2.6.19ff.), heroic Greece, instead of ancestral Rome, is Propertius' ideal "regno del *pudor*". Contrast the military imagery of the soldiering Indian women (*certamen, uictrices*) with that of the Roman *matronae* (*spolia obprobrii…trahit*).

[597] *Contra* Cairns 2006:387n122, who points out that "Propertius' concern with India in 3.13 of course obliquely compliments Augustus", solely because the *princeps* received Indian embassies (and their expensive gifts) in both 25 and 20 BCE.

[598] Cf. James 2003:94 and Plaut. *Truc.* 22ff.; Lucr. 4.1123-32; Juv. *Sat.* 6 for attacks on greedy women.

the *Vrbs*, where his sexual gratification has also often been delayed by his material poverty (*pretio ipsa mora tollitur*). The reference to India, a spatial alternative to Rome, thus fittingly becomes an eroto-poetic alternative to the pains of his Rome-bound *seruitium amoris* for Cynthia. At this point, the quest for a new female subject to praise in elegiac couplets is after all not only attuned with the transgressive poetics of Book 3, which seek to dethrone Cynthia from her pivotal role as the poet's source of inspiration,[599] but also, more specifically, with the narrative segment of poems 3.12 and 3.14 (sandwiching 3.13), both dealing with potential substitutes for Cynthia.[600]

Certainly, the Indian women are superior in terms of both legal status and moral qualities and, thus, to a certain extent, more in line with an Augustan moral ideal than the fickle mistress. Yet, at the same time, their erotic charge, which goes counter to Augustus' insistence on female *pudicitia*, is potentially even higher than Cynthia's and works to undermine their normativity. The Far Eastern ladies' sex appeal emerges from the very context of suttee. Whilst Cynthia has been recurrently targeted for her unorthodox management of the *amator*'s envisaged funerary ceremony, the Indian women instead excel in these particular occasions.[601] To be sure, their attitude towards their dead beloved should work to emphasise their impeccable wifehood, and yet Propertius seems more interested in exploiting it for its erotic rather than moral valence. Papanghelis notes that a specific passage from a former poem runs parallel to vv.21-2 from elegy 3.13 (reported *supra*):[602]

tu uero nudum pectus lacerata sequeris,
nec fueris nomen lassa uocare meum,
osculaque in gelidis pones suprema labellis
(2.13.27-30)

[599] See *supra*. Retrospectively, the ambiguous word order at vv.1-2 might as well suggest to the reader that the speaker has "exhausted…/…the greedy elegiac mistresses" (*exhaustae…puellae*, *i.e.* Cynthia) before she realises that *exhaustae* agrees with *opes* (cf. Fedeli *ad loc.*).
[600] See Wallis 2011's discussion on Galla in 3.12; on 3.14's Spartan *puella*, see *infra*.
[601] Cf. e.g. 1.17.19-24, called into question by 1.19.1-4, 21-4; 3.16.23-30.; and esp. 2.13b.17ff. (see Chapter 5 for Cynthia's ghost's complaints against the *amator*'s management of her own funeral). On the theme, see Papanghelis 1987:50-79; Marchese 2012 *passim*.
[602] Papanghelis 1987:64; compare also Commager 1974:20.

As the intratextual link testifies, Indian women accomplish in the present the erotically-tinged actions that Cynthia has only been imagined to (possibly) perform in the future (*sequeris*; *pones*): literally but also metaphorically "enflamed" (*ardent*), they offer their (naked) "breasts to the pyre" (*flammae pectora*, v.21) and join their dead husbands in what looks like an ultimate "kiss in the flames" (*imponuntque suis ora perusta uiris*, v.22).[603] A peripheral 'elsewhere' away from the metropolis, India thus comes to signify a space 'more Augustan' than Augustan Rome and yet also more erotically gratifying than the metropolis. Its women's higher morality is in fact impossible to separate from a paradoxically higher sex appeal, one that Cynthia could only exhibit in the *amator*'s remote fantasies about his death. Through the reference to India, Augustus' moral project is thus doubly mocked: not only is the *princeps* offered a topsy-turvy relationship between centre and periphery, with the latter being 'more Roman' than Rome and Rome being the 'Eastern' space of the two (and thus more difficult to reprimand), but Indian ladies, in spite of embodying some orthodox virtues, are also potentially even more unchaste than Propertius' own *puella*. Rather than the *princeps*, they can end up fulfilling a fantasy that abides in the lover-poet's mind. All in all, then, India becomes a territory revoked to Augustus' imperial control and returned to Propertius as a space (outside Rome) onto which he can project his eroto-poetic dreams.

A similar dynamic, I suggest, is at work in 3.13's twin (yet much shorter) piece 3.14, also peppered by an ironic interest for foreign women 'of a higher morality'.[604] In this other text, Propertius engages with yet another peripheral space of evasion, Sparta, and contrasts it to Rome.[605] Much like India, Sparta is represented as one more elegiac space where Cynthia could be substituted with a new poetic model, especially given the *amator*'s desire for an inexpensive relationship with the *puella* (devoid of *luxuria*). Indeed, the Spartan *puellae*,

[603] *Os* is both "mouth" and "face" (respectively *OLD* 1; 6).
[604] On 3.12-14 as a self-contained thematic sequence in the book, cf. Nethercut 1970a:99-102; with Cairns (2006:395)'s intertextual observations on 3.13-14 and Cic. *Disp. Tusc.* 5.77. For a different joint reading of 3.13-14, see ultimately Weinlich 2013.
[605] Sparta's geographical 'Otherness' is enhanced by the Greek words in the piece (cf. e.g. *gymnasii,* v.2, a rare non-disyllabic word: see Weiden Boyd 1987). Note Sparta's presence at the beginning of the piece (v.1) and Rome's at the end (v.34), as if the poem's spatial organisation mirrored the two cities' geographical distance.

unlike the Roman, are said to be insensitive to Eastern products (***nec Tyriae uestes*** *errantia lumina fallunt/est neque* ***odoratae*** *cura molesta* ***comae***, vv.27-8). Yet, to argue that Sparta could be classified as a space displaying an Augustan morality once again misses the highly ludicrous dimension to this other space.[606] For Propertius, the Greek πόλις is in fact admirable (*miramur*, v.1) mainly for the sexual availability of its *puellae*, which is especially favoured by its peculiar gym laws:[607]

Multa tuae, Sparte, miramur iura palaestrae,
sed mage uirginei tot bona gymnasii,
quod non infamis exercet corpore ludos
inter luctantis nuda puella uiros
(3.14.1-4)

The advantages deriving from the particular arrangements of the Spartan maidens' training spaces (*uirginei tot bona gymnasii*) are soon revealed: not only does the average Spartan *puella* exercise naked among her male fellow wrestlers (*inter luctantis nuda puella uiros*), but her gendered-free training does not even bear negative consequences on her reputation either (*non infamis…ludos*). Propertius can in fact gaze at the Spartan woman with blameless eyes: after glancing at her training routines, each emphasising a part of her body (vv.5-12),[608] he draws comparison between her and the mythological female nudes of the Amazons (v.13) and Helen (v. 19), who was unashamed to appear naked in front of her divine siblings (*nec fratres erubuisse deos*, v.20). Both the Spartan *puella*'s availability to the erotic male gaze and the concomitant moral integrity that she upholds in spite of her greater vulnerability to her onlookers' eyes point to her status as 'anti-Cynthia'. In the *Vrbs*, Propertius' long-time mistress has in fact always been the domineering gazer rather than the male gaze's passive recipient (*Cynthia prima* ***suis*** *me cepit* ***ocellis***, 1.1.1). Moreover, the mistress's sexual

[606] *Contra* Cairns 2006:390.
[607] On the rhetorical exercises (*legis laudatio/comparatio*) and paradoxographic literature influencing India and Sparta at 3.13-14, cf. Cairns 2006:369ff.; Heyworth & Morwood *ad loc.*
[608] A rather 'scopophilic' gaze on this foreign mistress (compare esp. Ov. *Am.* 1.5, with Greene 1998).

profligacy with different partners has always impinged on her and the *amator*'s reputation in equal measure.[609] An elegiac fantasy that reverses the reality of *seruitium amoris* at Rome, the Spartan *puella*, favoured by the special laws of her own city, thus challenges the rules of the metropolis' elegiac relationship. This is made even more explicit in the poem's second part:

lex igitur Spartana uetat secedere amantes,
et licet in triuiis ad latus esse suae,
nec timor aut ullast clausae tutela puellae,
nec grauis austeri poena cauenda uiri.
nullo praemisso de rebus tute loquaris
ipse tuis: longae nulla repulsa morae.
nec Tyriae uestes errantia lumina fallunt,
est neque odoratae cura molesta comae.
at nostra ingenti uadit circumdata turba,
nec digitum angustast inseruisse uia;
nec quae sit facies nec quae sint uerba rogandi
inuenias: caecum uersat amator iter.
(3.14.21-32)

At Sparta, there is in fact no separation for the lovers, nor any restrictions to their encounters *en plein air*, nor is there fear nor the necessity to confine women, nor need to punish them for adultery, nor need for slaves as "go-betweens", nor *luxuria* (vv.21-8). Whilst commentators and critics are generally unwilling to put couplets 23-4 in the historical context of Augustus' upcoming *lex de adulteriis*, the reference to an austere husband's (*austeri…uiri*) harsh legal sanction to be feared by the adulterers (*grauis poena cauenda*) may well be resonant with the contemporary Augustan measures.[610] If so, there is an additional reason why meeting up with a lover has become so complicated at Rome, in contrast to Sparta: Augustus. Indeed, Sparta can be taken not only as the space eluding the laws of the elegiac genre (for the greedy *puella* is replaced by the more naïve Spartan girl) but also those of the Principate, which were certainly detrimental to the *amatores*' libertine lifestyle.[611] It is after all later on re-stressed

[609] Esp. Prop. 2.24.1-2.
[610] Augustus was already shaping the *lex* at this point, then officially promulgated in 18 BCE. Note that the *auster uir* can indicate a "legal husband" (rather than a generic "rival").
[611] Poem 2.7 (on the *lex sublata*) bears much witness to the elegiac couplet's 'outlaw' relationship.

(vv.29-30) how Roman women are made inaccessible through the throng of people (potentially, their *custodes*) surrounding them, which might as well point to Augustus' intrusive gaze into their life (via the guardians).[612] If these suggestions are correct, then the Greek periphery functions not only as a utopian getaway from urban elegy with Cynthia, but also as a temporary flight from Augustus' growing interest in domestic politics. Even in poem 3.14, then, Augustus' imperial project is doubly mocked. The contact with the East has not only deviated the conquering West to the extent that the conquered East has become more orthodox than Rome, but its exploration can elude the *princeps*' intrusive morality instead of affirming it. An illusionary space away from the corruption of the metropolis, in both 3.13 and 14 the periphery in fact seems to be designed to please Augustus. But only at first sight: it is indeed ultimately re-appropriated by the lover-poet as his own territory, away from the *princeps*' growing interest in a codified and surveilled morality.[613]

4.3.3. The Greek Golden Age: free love over political freedom

India is not the only space that Propertius summons to contrast Rome in poem 3.13. Indeed, the elegist goes on to provide a lengthy description of the Golden Age, a different reality, in both space and time, from the urban. When viewed within the imperial geography, this is also a peripheral space (like India), for it is a 'Greek' rather than a 'Roman' Golden Age. In spite of his intertextual indebtedness to Virgil's Golden Age (*Georgics* 2.458-540),[614] whose explicit setting is ancestral Italy,[615] Propertius in fact never makes explicit, unlike his

[612] *Turba* has a legal dimension to it: see Chapter 3. Contrast Rome's spatial asphyxiation with the Spartans' free roaming (esp. vv.15-6).
[613] The pluperfect and imperfect subjunctives closing the piece (*fores…imitata; esses*, vv.33-4) cast an aura of hopelessness, for they suggest that Sparta shall never be an available model for Rome, where the upcoming Augustan reforms are jeopardising what the speaker views as *bonum* (*hoc…bono*, 33: sexual freedom; contrast *bona* at 3.13.60, corrupting "material goods").
[614] In particular, compare 3.13.25-6 with *Georg.* 2.458-60; 3.13.45-6 with *Georg.* 2.493-4.
[615] Cf. esp. *Georg.* 2.532-4 (*hanc olim **ueteres** uitam coluere **Sabini/hanc Remus et frater**; sic fortis **Etruria** creuit/scilicet et rerum facta est **pulcherrima Roma**...*); cf. the *laudes Italiae* in the same book (*Georg.* 2.167ff.).

fellow Roman poet, that his Saturnian Age has to be imagined in Italy. Instead, the elegist seems to locate his Golden Age in the Hellenic East:[616]

illis munus erat decussa Cydonia ramo,
et dare puniceis plena canistra rubis,
nunc uiolas tondere manu, nunc mixta referre
lilia uimineos lucida per calathos,
et portare suis uestitas frondibus uuas
aut uariam plumae uersicoloris auem.
his tum blanditiis furtiua per antra puellae
oscula siluicolis empta dedere uiris.
hinnulei pellis stratos operibat amantes,
altaque natiuo creuerat herba toro,
pinus et incumbens laetas circumdabat umbras;
nec fuerat nudas poena uidere deas.
corniger Idaei uacuam pastoris in aulam
dux aries saturas ipse reduxit ouis
dique deaeque omnes, quibus est tutela per agros,
praebebant uestri uerba benigna foci:
'et leporem, quicumque uenis, uenaberis, hospes,
et si forte meo tramite quaeris auem:
et me Pana tibi comitem de rupe uocato,
siue petes calamo praemia, siue cane.'
(3.13.27-46)

Not only does Propertius adorn his text with a rich Greek vocabulary (*Cydonia, calathos, Idaei*, *Pana*) and allusions to Greek myths (vv.27, 38-9), but he also takes inspiration from the Hesiodic tradition of the Golden Age, whose peaceful, bucolic youth is represented as sluggish and inactive (v.25).[617] By following Hesiod, the elegist diverges from Augustus' model of Saturnian Age, whose inhabitants' 'happiness' is instead predicated upon agricultural toil (or *labor*), a model that was faithfully represented by Virgil (esp. *Georg.* 2.513-22).[618] Furthermore, Propertius also steers away from its other main source, namely Horace's *Epode* 16, in which the Golden Age was conveyed as a viable

[616] Thus, also Weinlich 2013:278.
[617] A more sophisticated pointer to the 'Greekness' of the Propertian Golden Age lies in the free translation of a Hellenistic epigram (Leonidas, *AP* 9.337) at vv.43-6.
[618] Cf. Galinsky 1996:95 on the Augustan redefinition of the Saturnian Age (with Varro's etymology for Saturn < *sero*, "to sow").

destination for the corrupted community of Rome, and thus a space of moral regeneration.[619]

In the pre-Actian *Epode* 16, Horace, speaking as a prophet marked by a higher civic conscience (*uates*, 16.66), predicts the tragic doom of Rome amid the turmoil of the civil wars.[620] Even though the civil wars have come to a close, at elegy 3.13 the Propertian Rome is nevertheless still as morally corrupted as before the installation of the Augustan *principatus*: like Horace, Propertius in fact embraces a similar vatic *persona* (the *haruspex*) to foresee Rome's impending capitulation. Yet, the notable difference between Horace and Propertius is that only in the former does the vatic speaker lead his Roman community on a voyage of salvation away from the tarnished metropolis. When interrogated by the greatest (*melior pars*, v.15) among his fellow-citizens (***quaeritis***, v.16, matching the Propertian elegy's own opening ***quaeritis***) on how to escape from the evils of civil strife (*malis carere…laboribus*), the Horatian *uates* responds that the Romans should imitate the Phocaeans (*Phocaeorum/uelut…ciuitas*, vv.17-8), who immigrated from their homeland (*agros atque lares patrios*, v.19) into a foreign land at a critical time.[621] Although the direction of the journey seems random and confused (*ire, pedes quocumque ferent…*, vv.21-2), Horace reassures those Romans willing for a change that the Golden Age of the 'Isles of the Blessed' shall await them:

uos, quibus est uirtus, muliebrem tollite luctum,
Etrusca praeter et uolate litora.
nos manet Oceanus circum uagus: ***arua beata***
petamus, arua diuites et insulas,
reddit ubi cererem tellus inarata quotannis
(…)
illic iniussae ueniunt ad mulctra capellae
refertque tenta grex amicus ubera

[619] Commentators usually catch an unmistakable intertextual reference to the *Epode*'s opening lines (***suis*** *et* ***ipsa Roma*** *uiribus ruit*, *Epode* 16.2) towards the end of the Propertian piece (*frangitur* ***ipsa suis Roma*** *superba bonis*, 3.13.60) but are less prepared to read its political implications (cf. e.g. Fedeli *ad loc.*).

[620] The poem's date is controversial (see Mankin 1995:10-11, 244 for a discussion of pre- and post-Actian readings; cf. Carrubba 1969:15-7, Setaioli 1981 for the *Epodes*' difficult chronology as a whole): I am inclined to take *Epode* 16 as pre-Actian, for its opening allusion to unfinished civil wars is otherwise hardly explained.

[621] Cf. Hdt. 1.165-8.

nec uespertinus circumgemit ursus ouile
nec intumescit alta uiperis humus…
(…)
aere, dehinc ferro durauit saecula, ***quorum***
piis secunda uate me datur fuga*.*
(Hor. *Epod.* 16.39-43; 49-52; 65-6)

Both Propertius and Horace create equally marvellous territories –self-producing lands exonerating their inhabitants from agricultural *labor* (*reddit ubi cererem tellus inarata*..., vv.43-52) in which the cattle come back to the farms without the aid of their herdsman (vv.49-50; compare Prop. vv.39-40).[622] Yet, Propertius' Greek Golden Age remains a past, and thus inaccessible 'chronotope'. On the other hand, Horace is the only one who uses his Saturnian land as a viable alternative to Rome, even though this shelter from contemporary strife may be 'utopistic'.[623] As T. S. Johnson has recently argued, the *Epode* "is perfectly balanced between feelings of destruction (lines 1-14), curse (15-38), and promise (39-66)" and "embrace[s] pessimism and optimism, pain and relief […and] a progression from brokenness to healing".[624] Indeed, a progressive sense of hopefulness can be detected in the text, since the journey away from Rome towards the Golden Age reigning in the 'Isles of the Blessed' constitutes an effective (if desperate) antidote to the civil wars haunting the metropolis.[625] At the end of the poem, the *uates* leading the Romans in their "favourable escape" (*quorum/piis* ***secunda uate me*** *datur* ***fuga***, 16.65-6) thus "declares sacrosanct his capacity to realize a world not torn apart by warfare".[626] Horace's hopefulness is instead suppressed by Propertius' avoidance to represent his own alternative space, the Golden Age, as an actual destination for the deviated community of

[622] The latter imagery is Virgilian (*Buc.* 4.21-2) but Horace's *grex* most likely indicates the "sheep" also featured in Propertius (*ouis*; cf. also Tib. 1.3.45-6; Theocr. 11.12-3; cf. Watson *ad loc*). On the equivalence between the 'Isles of the Blessed' and the 'Golden Age' and their political function as 'utopias', see esp. Gabba 1981:57ff.; Watson 2003:480-4 on their similar literary sources.
[623] Cf. esp. Watson (2003:479)'s overview on the *Epode*'s mostly pessimistic readings.
[624] Johnson 2012:153-4.
[625] See esp. Johnson 2012:162, with n21. Significantly, the Horatian line (v.2) that Propertius re-works at the end of his elegy (v.60) belongs to the "destruction" part of the *Epode*: the elegist denies hope to the future of Rome and lacks the vatic persuasion demonstrated by Horace.
[626] Johnson 2012:162; cf. Fitzgerald 1988:177.

Romans that he addresses.[627] Propertius' Greek Golden Age, in spite of being thought *after and not before* Augustus' rise to power, is in fact simply a mythical ancestral space which, unlike in Virgil's *Eclogue* 4 modelling the 'Isles of the Blessed' in Horace's *Epode* 16, was part of the past and shall never come back.[628]

Instead of withholding a socio-political role, Propertius' Saturnian land rather accommodates the needs of the 'voyaging' lover-poet in search of inspiration. Like in the Paetus elegy, where generic expansion from erotic elegy overlapped with a transgression from the space of Rome into the wider geography of Empire, the Hellenic Golden Age (as much as India before it) in poem 3.13 is offered as a territory where the *amator*/*poeta* can dream of new eroto-poetics at the critical stage of his elegiac enterprise. To a certain extent, this space displays some affinity with Augustus' ideals on morality.[629] Nevertheless, the Golden Age primarily constitutes a poetic rather than a political alternative to Rome, where the *puellae*'s consumption of expensive Eastern products has increased the 'price of erotic elegy' (denounced at vv.1ff.). Indeed, when the elegist makes reference to the exchange of natural *munera* in this Arcadian past, he connects them to a better strategy of elegiac wooing than that currently deployed at Rome: thanks to these simpler gifts, mistresses (*puellae*) were bribed (*his tum blanditiis,* v.33) into kissing in secret grottoes or even copulating on the grass, under a pine's shadow (vv.36).[630] It is clear then that the Greek Saturnian Age coincides with a dream-like 'chronotope' for urban *amatores* like Propertius.[631] The elegist surely points, once again, to the periphery's potential as a space where Rome and Cynthia (erotic elegy *stricto sensu*) can be transgressed. The self-interested voice of the Eastern lover-poet wins over the communitarian voice of the Western moraliser.

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[627] Note how Horace allows honourable Romans to change through the *iter*, whilst Propertius views *luxuria* as a phenomenon transcending social boundaries.

[628] On the vexed question of the *Epode*'s dating in respect to *Ecl.* 4, I give priority (after e.g. Nisbett 1984:2-5=1995:163-6; Cavarzere 1992:218) to Virgil, who must have composed the hopeful *Ecl.* 4 in the context of the Peace of Brundisium (40 BCE). Even in *Georgics* 2 modelling the Propertian Golden Age, there is still more hope: Virgil's *agricolae* are lucky, for their *tellus* is still *iustissima* and can take them away from civil strife if only they become aware of this (*Georg.* 2.458-60). Contrast Propertius, whose rustic youth's luck was only possible "once upon a time" (*felix…**quondam***, v.25).

[629] E.g. lack of imperial trade generating *luxuria* (vv.27ff.); rewarding *pietas* towards the gods (vv.41ff.). Yet, note how no legal consequences (*nec fuerat…poena*, v.37) attend their male voyeurs of (divine) female beauty: perhaps a hint to the land's greater laws in respect to the upcoming Augustan (cf. Sparta).

[630] Compare the Indian women's *oscula* for their husband (quoted *supra*).

[631] Heyworth & Morwood 2009:232 read the pastoral vignettes (lines 29-32 re-echo esp. Virg. *Ecl.* 2.44-6; 3.70-1) as "a celebration of the poetry of [Propertius'] lost youth".

4.3.4. Epilogue: the 'Cassandran' *haruspex*'s elegiac unfaithfulness

Propertius' poetic exploration of the East, ultimately praised more for its better *puellae* than its more orthodox *mores*, undermines the 'orientalism' on which his sermon against *luxuria* is predicated and which would work, once again, to sustain Augustus' contemporary propaganda on morality. Rather than adopting a Romano-centric standpoint, Propertius liminally suspends himself between West and East. The literal and literary 'ways' (*uiae*) connecting Rome with the (near and far) East, India and Greece, are in fact necessary to travel, more mentally than physically, for him to overcome urban elegy with Cynthia and turn into an 'Eastern poet'.[632] Yet, precisely because of this, the exploitation of the East qua *poeta* needs to go counter to its denouncing qua moraliser. Propertius' inability to perform a civic role of guide for the Roman community is exacerbated in the last lines of the elegy. If the Horatian *uates* of *Epode* 16 ultimately states that a positive change can happen under his guidance thanks to the journey to the 'Isles', at the end of the elegy the Propertian *haruspex* instead finally clarifies his utter hopelessness towards the future of the Capital, in which he remains put, as an excluded member of the citizenship:

proloquar (atque utinam patriae sim uerus haruspex!):
frangitur ipsa suis Roma superba bonis.
certa loquor, sed ***nulla fides****; neque uilia quondam*
uerax Pergameis maenas habenda mali:
sola Parim Phrygiae fatum componere, sola
fallacem Troiae serpere dixit equum.
ille furor patriae fuit utilis, ille parenti:
expertast ueros irrita lingua deos.
(3.13.59-66)

Via his identification with the Trojan prophetess Cassandra (*uerax Pergameis…*), also an outcast in her own community (*sola…sola*), Propertius

[632] On elegy 3.13's "gusto ellenistico" (especially reflected in Propertius' paradoxographic interest), cf. Fedeli 1985:416; with Keith 2008:155; Heyworth & Morwood 2011:232.

exculpates himself for his incapability of performing his social role as *haruspex patriae* and re-aligns with the type of the 'unfaithful' elegiac *amator*. As he suggests, the metamorphosis into a civically-minded speaker is in fact impossible, for Rome, incapable of *fides*, is too 'unfaithful' to accord the *uates* "any faith" (*nulla fides*) and therefore to make him "useful to the community" (*utilis patriae*).[633] Whilst expressing his willingness to drive Rome out of the immorality that the contact with the East has produced, Propertius is in fact also ironically offering his readers the opportunity to judge him (yet again) as a corrupted elegiac character himself, who cannot change the future of his doomed society but is a victim of its very corruption (*nulla fides*).[634] Considering that, throughout the elegy, the *Eastern* 'gold' has been judged responsible for the metropolis' consequent lack of 'faithfulness' (both in its marital and religious declensions: cf. esp. vv.23, 49), Propertius ultimately reveals his helpless 'orientalisation' in a city of helplessly 'orientalised' citizens. By doing so, he does not only take part in the geographical inversion between centre and periphery, for he confesses to be an 'orientalised' man dwelling in the West but, in virtue of this, he also denies divinatory help to the *princeps*. After all, how can he be useful when nobody gives him credit? Just like Cassandra's prophecy falls deaf on her 'father' and 'father of the Trojan fatherland' Priam (*parenti*), so does Propertius' on the (soon-to-be) 'father of the Roman fatherland' Augustus. Through the elegy, Propertius therefore manages to usurp Augustan imperial space to please his own eroto-poetic fantasises whilst also challenging the geopolitics sustaining Augustan *imperium* and the feasibility of the *princeps'* upcoming moral reforms.

4.4. *Totum iter legas*: *Romana terra* and Tullus' ambivalent voyage through the imperial periphery (3.22)

[633] Thus, 'Oriental' Rome is similar to Eastern Troy (attacked by Western Greece) not in virtue of their ethnic link but as a paradigm of her vulnerability to foreign attacks (cf. esp. wooden horse image: *fallacem…serpere…equum*), another subversion between West/East.
[634] Note that the exclusion of Cassandra from her communitarian role is also due to her asymmetrical, and thus *elegiac*, erotic relationship to Apollo (she did not reciprocate him/granted him *fides*), resulting in her punishment.

4.4.1. Introduction

Our final case study, elegy 3.22, is yet another piece that, on first inspection, draws from an 'orientalising' discourse enhancing the dichotomy between Western Self and Eastern Other.[635] This time, Propertius addresses his long-term friend Tullus, the Augustan administrator who has been living in Asia Minor for several years, in order to favour his return back to the metropolis (vv.1-16).[636] As Propertius contends, the Eastern periphery is a hostile, savage space (vv.27-38) that does not suit an elite Roman man. Tullus deserves to live in the superior Italian motherland (vv.16-26), the only territory that would accommodate his lifetime aspirations, both in the public and the private spheres (vv.39-42). At first sight, the poem thus capitalises on the standard power imbalance between centre and periphery and therefore aligns with the spatial narrative of 'hegemonization' that would have pleased Augustus, for Rome's superiority works to legitimise her control over her subjected peripheries, inferior spaces in need of a civilising mission. And yet, in the same way as poem 3.7 and 3.13, 3.22 lends itself to a subtler interpretation that goes beyond the traditional opposition between West and East.[637]

As I intend to show, the literary space that Propertius creates to convey Tullus' historical stay at, and wandering through, the Eastern periphery invites *us* – as much as the poem's internal *addressee* himself – to re-think of imperial space as an open site allowing constant cultural interactions. Instead of sustaining the fixed, closed and coherent cartography of a one-man rule's *imperium*, these interactions re-define the power hierarchy between colonizers and colonized, invaders and invaded, Roman Self and Eastern Other. Indeed, through his own literary presentation of imperial geography, Propertius does not only manage to

[635] Other critical trends in approaching elegy 3.22 include an exploration of his link to its twin piece 3.21 (Jacobson 1976), of the homosocial relationship between speaker and addressee (Keith 2008:130-1), of its historical and political context (Stahl 1985:205-9; Cairns 2006:352-4; Johnson 2009:109-17), of its imitation of the Virgilian *laudes Italiae* (*Georg.* 2.136-76: e.g. Williams 1968:421-6; Putnam 1977).
[636] See Chapter 2 on Tullus' imperial *itinera*.
[637] Stahl 1985:206n33 takes 3.22 as a "façade poem" covering up Propertius' real attitude but sees (207-8) Propertius' forced political surrender in the elegy. For other philo-Augustan interpretations, see Stahl's useful bibliography (209-12).

usurp Augustus' historical geography and transform it into his own poetic exploration of Hellenistic waters (which, at a metapoetic level, confirms the poetic expansion of the poet as shown in the texts discussed in this Chapter so far), but he also once more deconstructs the apparent 'orientalising' stances to which he seems to appeal to validate Rome's moral and military superiority. As a consequence of all this, the elegist produces an alternative narrative to the official, one that challenges (instead of affirming) the process of spatial appropriation, domination and absorption that Augustus was exhalting in his contemporary propaganda as much as the ideal of an immaculate Rome, untouched by all the abject moral characteristics of the East.

4.4.2. *Romana terra* and her savage periphery: the Augustan vs. the Argonautic approach

The presentation of the *Romana terra*, conveniently given at the centre of the elegy's textual space and flanked by the peripheral spaces of Greek geography and mythology (vv.1-15, 27-38), frees Rome of all her potential negative associations:

…omnia Romanae cedent miracula terrae.
natura hic posuit, quidquid ubique fuit.
armis apta magis tellus quam commoda noxae:
Famam, Roma, tuae non pudet historiae.
nam quantum ferro tantum pietate potentes
stamus: uictricis temperat ira manus.
hic, Anio Tiburne, fluis, Clitumnus ab Umbro
tramite, et aeternum Marcius umor opus,
Albanus lacus et socia Nemorensis ab unda,
potaque Pollucis nympha salubris equo
(3.22.16-26)[638]

Propertius idealises the land's martial character (*armis apta…/…nam quantum ferro*) by balancing it with references to its exemplary treatment of those it subjugates: Rome's political strength (*stamus*) in fact depends upon her display

[638] As usual, I read Fedeli's text throughout, but accept Heyworth's *Dindymis* (v.3).

of *pietas* as well as her *clementia* (*uictrices temperat ira manus*), therefore perfectly responding to the Virgilian message of *parcere subiectis et debellare superbos* (*Aen*. 6.853).[639] The poet further emphasises the invulnerability of Rome against potential threats to her body politic (*quam commoda noxa*) as well as Fame's lack of embarrassment at her history (*Famam tuae non pudet historiae*). Such an idealised depiction of the *Romana terra* is then further amplified by the natural beauty of the Italic territory, which is punctuated by the presence of pure watercourses (both natural – *Anio…Clitumnus…Albanus lacus…Nemorensis ab unda…pota Pollucis nympha* – and artificial – *Marcius umor*). In this compressed version of the Virgilian *laudes Italiae*, Propertius re-configures Rome as an immaculate space, a quasi-bucolic *locus amoenus* over-writing the corrupted urban environment with which the metropolis had been identified in previous pieces (most notably 3.13, analysed *supra*) and apparently sequestered from the contact with the broader imperial geography that she controls and surpasses (*omnia…cedent miracula*).[640]

More than one scholar has frowned upon such a perfect representation of Rome: for instance, B. Weinlich has recently noted that the term *noxa* denoting "harm done to Rome" is relatively rare in contemporary prose and poetry but significantly occurs in two important narratives in which Rome's vulnerability is in fact enhanced.[641] Not only is it used in Livy's famous account of the rape of Lucretia (a wrongdoing successfully perpetrated against the body politic of Rome), but also in Propertius' own elegy 3.11, in reference to Cleopatra's Egyptian hometown (*noxia Alexandria*, 3.13.33), which certainly *did* harm to Rome and her people (cf. 3.11 *passim*).[642] As this use of the word illustrates then, Propertius knows well that Rome has been far from invulnerable from the attacks of outsiders, and this *per se* calls into question the Fame of her glorious history.[643] In a similar fashion, the reference to *clementia* has been deemed ironic by both M. Putnam and S. J. Heyworth, who rightly draw attention to the controversial end of the *Aeneid*, where Aeneas is ultimately overwhelmed by his anger against

[639] Cf. Fedeli *ad loc.*
[640] Both the river Clitumnus and the *Fons Iuturnae* have connection with Roman military deeds yet are removed from the military sphere (unlike at Virg. *Georg.* 2.146-8).
[641] Weinlich 2015:57-60.
[642] Weinlich *ibidem.*
[643] On *fama* as *uox media* here, cf. Putnam 1977:243. Compare 3.11.58-64, 67-8, where Cleopatra's threat makes Propertius ponder on the usefulness of Rome's glorious Republican past.

Turnus and shows an unorthodox behaviour in respect to the Roman notion of *clementia* and *pietas*.[644] If even the symbolic hero of Rome (a foil to Augustus) could not restrain himself from avenging the enemy, is Roman *clementia* even a thing?

Like the scholars to whom I have been referring, I am also interested in deconstructing the apparent solidity of this idealised representation of Rome as an invulnerable, armed centre detached from the threats coming from her own periphery, to which it should offer a perfect antithetical space. Whilst Propertius seems to imply that the periphery is inhabited by savage creatures and perverted mythological figures (esp. vv.27-36), he also suggests that these do not contaminate the *Romana terra*, as if centre and periphery were two worlds apart.[645] Nevrtheless, it is my contention that the narratives subtended by the literary spaces where Tullus is imagined to sojourn (the area of Cyzicus on the Propontis) and travel through in the imperial periphery (the extreme West and East of the Mediterranean basin) interrogate, rather than confirm, the apparently unproblematic power hierarchy of the Augustan world map, with a metropolis stronger and morally superior than the geographical borders under its *imperium*.

Indeed, scholars have been quick to assume that the spaces where Tullus lingers and is made to navigate are co-extensive with the reaches of Augustan *imperium* and, therefore, that they instil in him (an Augustan man) a sense of attachment to the Roman Empire (in spite of his current physical distance from the *Vrbs*) as well as of the legitimisation of Augustus' control over it.[646] Unlike them, I suggest that, when we consider their literary and intertextual debts to important narrative sections from Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica* in particular, these spaces become sites of cultural contact and negotiation, which emphasise the connection rather than the division between West and East, the colonising and the colonized worlds, or even the potential threat emerging from the destabilising contact with the Other (through voyaging).

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[644] Putnam 1977:244; Heyworth 2007a:404, who notes Propertius' bitterness here: Augustus refrained from violence only after fighting the *bellum Perusinum*.

[645] The mythological dimension to the periphery, after all, helps remove her from the 'chronotope' of contemporary Rome into an Iron Age, as if it had remained at an ancestral evolutionary stage.

[646] Heyworth 2007a:404: "Whether Tullus goes to the furthest west or the furthest East, he cannot escape Roman power"; similarily Keith 2008:130; cf. Weinlich 2015:55-6: "a landscape of heroic quest...[and] also a map of Augustan power", who further observes that Augustus had gained control over the peripheral areas mentioned in the poem in contemporary years, by abusing his consular power (*maius imperium,* 23 BCE).

That Tullus, the addressee of the poem, is invited to pay attention to the Argonautic intertexts in particular in his reading of the Propertian elegy is after all advertised by a subtle metapoetic pun in the text. Indeed, when Propertius exhorts him to "trace the whole route of the ship built with wood from Mount Pelion [namely, Argo]", he concomitantly suggests he "read" about it in the *Argonautica* (*Peliacaeque trabis totum iter ipse* ***legas***, v.12).[647] Tullus is therefore advised to read not only Propertius' elegy of which he is the addressee and which is an Augustan praise of Rome and the hegemonizing space that Augustus fabricated in the aftermath of his conquests, but also, and more subtly, the *Argonautica* (inspiring the Propertian elegy), which is in many ways a colonial text reflecting on the oft-problematic issue of spatial appropriation.[648] I suggest that this 'double reading' expected of Tullus by Propertius (that is, to read Propertius and yet again to be alert to the Argonautic presence in Propertius' spatial imagination) is an indication of how to read the representation of the imperial world in the elegy, not only in terms of *accomplished* Augustan colonisation but also of *open-ended* 'Argonautic' colonising process.

4.4.3. Cyzicus

[647] Heyworth & Morwood *ad loc.* also quote Catullus' own metapoetic reference to the Argonauts qua ***lecti*** *iuuenes* (64.4) as Propertius' intertext for the wordplay. The line is also a sound intertext of AR 2.1264-78 (Heyworth 2007a:406).

[648] On space in the *Argonautica*, Thalmann 2011:194-5 offers illuminating words: "[The] appropriative, hegemonic construction of space as Greek is one major impulse in the poem, but there are other impulses that bring it into question, qualify it, and even work against it. The result is a picture of the world that to some important extent coheres spatially and can be mastered cognitively and, to the extent that knowledge implies power, politically, but in which there are also considerable 'dislocations'. The poem conveys a mixture of confident spatial control and an undercutting of that confidence".

Right from its beginning, poem 3.22 fuses historical facts with a specific literary imagination. Whilst Tullus was in fact most likely holding an administrative position in the town of Cyzicus (Asia Minor),[649] Propertius re-configures the geographical environment of the man's official appointment through the lens of Apollonius' literary representations of the same spaces:

Frigida tam multos placuit tibi Cyzicus annos,
Tulle, Propontiaca qua fluit isthmos aqua,
Dindymis et sacra fabricata in uite Cybebe,
raptorisque tulit quae uia Ditis equos?
(3.22.1-4)

The specific intertext evoked by these opening lines is *Argonautica* 1.936-52, where Cyzicus appears as the first major destination of the Argonauts outside Greek waters.[650] Even before we start exploring further the itinerary of Tullus (which, as we shall see, has another important Argonautic moment), we are therefore invited to re-cast Propertius' addressee in the role of an epic Argonautic hero, rather than a simple imperial officer: Tullus 'is' the Argonaut and at once 'reads' the Argonautic intertext of these opening lines. Without taking into account the Argonautic narrative subtended by these lines, A. Keith points out that the Greek female names populating the exotic area where Tullus has been lingering (*Cyzicus, Propontis, Dindymis, Cybebe* [and *Helle*, v.5]) work to convey the administrator's stay in the East as some kind of elegiac dalliance, in which "Roman masculine hegemony over both Mediterranean geography and Greek mythology [is] in alignment with the 'natural' hierarchy of the sexes".[651] Yet, the very question through which Propertius interrogates his friend on whether he

[649] On this appointment, see Cairns 2006:352-4. Stahl 1985:206-7 speculates that, in view of Augustus' connection to Tullus (see Chapter 2), the poem's composition was perhaps suggested by Augustus himself, with the purpose of "reminding Tullus of his Roman obligations". If this is the case, then Propertius' subversive discourse is even more disturbing, for it was surely read by the *princeps* too.
[650] Propertius' *Helles* ***Athamantidos*** *urbes* (v.5) also re-echoes the lines immediately preceding the episode of Cyzicus (AR 1.926-35), where the Argonauts dangerously sail through "the sea of the Athamantis" (**Ἀθαμαντίδος**, 1.927). Helle's patronymic reminds the erudite Propertian reader of the connection between Helle, Phrixus and Jason (cf. AR 1.256-9; 1.763-7), the nephew of Athamas, on whose importance see further *infra*.
[651] Keith 2008:158 (cf. Proserpina's rape alluded at v.4).

actually enjoyed (*placuit…?*)[652] to dally with such 'Eastern female characters' is perhaps a first rhetorical strategy to call into question the pleasant sojourn of the 'colonizer' Tullus: has Cyzicus truly treated Tullus well or have these years been more complicated than an elegiac *mora* with foreign 'girls'?

When read through the lens of Propertius' literary model, the space of Cyzicus recalls not simply "un luogo freddo, flagellato dalle onde e sovrastato dal monte Dindimo [e] una terra di predoni"[653] but also a problematic narrative of colonization, in which the power hierarchy between colonizers and colonized, centre and periphery, is unexpectedly turned upside down at several moments (before being ultimately normalised). As W. G. Thalmann has recently observed, although the appropriation of Cyzicus by the Argonauts anticipates the Ionian colonization of the city, of which, obviously, the readers of the *Argonautica* were fully aware, that space is in fact the theatre of the problematic interaction between Greek 'guests' and peripheral 'hosts', rather than reflective of normative Greek culture from the outset.[654] Whilst Jason and other comrades ascend to Mount Dindymus (*Dindymis*), the crew of heroes who stayed around the harbour and the isthmus area (*qua fluit isthmos*) with Heracles have to fight first against the Gegeneis (six-armed, 'earth-born' Giants), the 'savage' inhabitants of the land (cf. AR 1.1006-11). But this is only the first of the two warfare narratives set in Cyzicus, for the heroes are unwillingly drawn back to the land of the Doliones, their former 'hosts' who do not recognise them anymore as such and thus engage with them in battle.[655] The outcome of the war sees the triumph of the Argonautic heroes as a form of legitimisation of their presence in the East. Yet, the story also betrays the instability of the relationship of ξενία as well as repressive violence as its sole resolution. It is perhaps no coincidence that, for the same year as the presumed composition of our elegy (22 BCE), Cassius Dio records Augustus' brutal repression against Cyzicus, resulting in its citizens' loss of their former

[652] See Heyworth 2007a:401 on the textual reasons for reading the *incipit* as a question.
[653] Fedeli *ad loc*.
[654] Thalmann 2011:91-100, esp.92-3 ("[the Cyzicus episode] helps to set the pattern for the colonial appropriation of space, and its narrative is ostentatiously spatial", 91).
[655] Thalmann 2011:93 points out the ethnic vicinity (Thessalian/Greek) between the Doliones and the Argonauts is lost in the poem, because the former are suggested by an oracle (and not by their ethnic kinship) to welcome the latter.

independence rights.[656] Whether Propertius had in mind this episode or not,[657] this historical event regarding contemporary Cyzicus mirrors the mythical narrative of Cyzicus, for it further illuminates the vulnerability of the colonizer to the foreign or the threat coming from the 'colonized'. Ultimately, Propertius' references to Mount Dindymus and the goddess Cybele (a controversial deity *per se* at Rome) shows not only the colonisers' appropriation of the cult (and therefore their 'natural' control over the territory) also via the construction of its wooden statuette (*fabricata e uite;* cf. AR 1.1117-20),[658] but the importance of cultural negotiation with the Other, for at the beginning, the foreign goddess Cybele is hostile to the crew and prevents them from sailing away from Cyzicus.[659] It is only through the seer Mopsos' advice to Jason climb to the top of the Dindymus and placate her that the Argonauts can successfully proceed in their voyage (AR 1.1090). When we think of the literary source to which the speaker alludes when he asks Tullus about his sojourn in the East, Propertius may well sound animated by a sense of uncertainty about the degree to which the process of colonisation to which Tullus partakes as a "wilful part of the imperial machine" (*accepti…pars imperii*, 1.6.34) is being un-problematically carried out. And the historical source of the revolt of Cyzicus mentioned above, if registered by Propertius, could corroborate these doubts.

4.4.4. The Far West and Colchis

The following references to the mythological area of the furthest West that Tullus may well "see with his own eyes" (*tu licet aspicias*, v.7), provided he sails from Cyzicus across the opposite side of the Mediterranean, can bear further witness to the same instability:[660]

[656] Dio 54.7.6.
[657] Fedeli *ad loc.* does not believe so (*contra* Rothstein *ad loc.*), although he does see a potential connection between this event and vv.27-38 ("un chiaro monito per Tullo").
[658] Cf. Putnam 1977:242.
[659] On Cybele as Other, compare the tale of the Scythian Anacharsis' murder for having introduced her rites in Scythia recounted by Herodotus (Hdt. 4.76).
[660] For Richardson 1977:403, Tullus had disclosed to Propertius his intention to voyage off the coasts of Asia Minor and Egypt.

tu licet aspicias caelum omne Atlanta gerentem,
sectaque Persea Phorcidos ora manu,
Geryonis stabula et luctantum in puluere signa
Herculis Antaeique, Hesperidumque choros;
(3.22.6-10)

At the Western edges of the Mediterranean basin, Tullus is turned into the spectator not only of the 'savageness' of the periphery but also of the repressive (mythical) force through which the civilised Greek heroes have established their superiority against the periphery (Perseus against Medusa; Hercules against Gerion, Antaeus and the Hesperides).[661] The 'gaze' towards the conquered does not only intensify the Argonautic characterization of Tullus', for he 'gazes' also through the eyes of the winner Hercules, a role model for the Argonauts after his departure from the crew,[662] but it also makes him come to terms with the military violence perpetrated by Augustus against the peripheral peoples of his Empire, in order to secure the wellness of the centre. The presence of Hercules among the heroes 'civilising' the unruly monsters of the periphery is in fact especially resonant with Augustus' own symbolic association with Hercules the 'civiliser', as developed by the propagandistic mythology of contemporary official literature.[663] Moreover, when Tullus is cast in the position of Perseus (Medusa's killer), he might as well end up petrified by the monster's re-bounding look, perhaps an ironic nod to the potential destabilisation in the hierarchy between civiliser and peripheral monster/subjugated.[664]

Right after de-touring in the Western periphery, Tullus is then led to the remotest land of the East, Colchis, arguably the most important among the Argonautic peripheries:

tuque tuo Colchum propellas remige Phasim,
Peliacaeque trabis totum iter ipse legas,

[661] Cf. Fedeli *ad loc.* for the interconnection between these myths (compare Ov. *Met.* 4.655ff.; Diod. 4.27.2; AR 4.1399).
[662] Feeney 1986 *passim*.
[663] See Conclusions *infra*.
[664] Fedeli *ad loc.* notes the irony without problematising it.

qua rudis Argoa natat inter saxa columba
in faciem prorae pinus adacta nouae:
(3.22.11-14)

The deviation of the Argonauts towards Colchis is certainly the most famous episode of their epic voyage, not only because Colchis is where the ultimate goal of the crew (the rescuing of the Golden Fleece) is accomplished but also because it serves as the background for Jason's encounter with Medea. As Thalmann argues, Medea's homeland Colchis (as represented in the *Argonautica*) is "an in-between space where the normative Greek cultural categories [of the Argonauts] confront what is foreign and cannot be assimilated to them [, …] an alien environment where their position is precarious".[665] More here than in any other places then, the *iter* of the coloniser has to come to terms with the cultural difference existing between him and the 'host'. As Jason and the crew flow into the Phasis to reach Medea's royal palace at the end of *Argonautica* 2 (2.1260ff.), the same aquatic route into which Propertius pushes Tullus (also the leader of his own imaginary expedition: *tuo…remige*, v.11), the hero enters a different space, in which the target of his epic voyage is indeed only accomplished via the help of the 'host' Medea. As several readers of the *Argonautica* would agree, Jason in fact obtains what he wants in a most un-heroic way, not by strength alone but by resorting to magic and a foreign woman's help through the power of Eros.[666] Whilst Propertius elides a direct reference to Medea, by referring to the cutting of the trees on Mount Pelion (*Pelicaeque trabis*), the poet shows his intertextual indebtedness to other literary texts dealing in particular with the tragic plot resulting from the encounter between Jason and the Colchian woman, namely Euripides' and Ennius' *Medea*.[667] The reference to Tullus' passage through Colchis and, therefore, to his encounter with Medea is perhaps worth bearing in

[665] Thalmann 2011:116, 195 (see further at 120-31).
[666] Cf. Thalmann 2011:130-1.
[667] Cf. Heyworth & Morwood *ad loc.*, who rightly add Catullus 64 as a source (dealing with another ill-fated love between an Argonaut and a woman: Theseus and Ariadne). I have not included vv.15-6 in the discussion for their reading is highly problematic. Yet, if we decide to keep *et qua septenas temperat unda uias* (v.16, the Nile vs. *serpentes...uias*, the river Menander), there might be a veiled reference to Cleopatra (as Weinlich 2003:108-9 speculates also on the grounds of *cerastae*, v.27, indicating "Egyptian snakes": Diodorus 3.15; Lucan 9.704-16). If this is the case, before encountering Medea, Tullus would have to pass by the threatening Cybebe, Medusa and Cleopatra during his peripheral *iter*.

mind until the end of the elegy, when Propertius forcifully exhorts Tullus' return to Rome:

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.
(3.22.39-42)

Already in view of the inverted geographical mapping of *mores* suggested – as we have seen – by previous poems in the collection (above all 3.13), Tullus' return to the motherland to fulfil those private sphere achievements that had never interested a *uir militaris* like him,[668] namely proper marriage (*uenturae coniugis aptus amor*, 42) and copious offspring (*ampla nepotum/spes*, vv.41-2), is *per se* problematic.[669] Indeed, Rome has been previously appointed as a space of moral deterioration, a *lena*-like teacher of luxury (*luxuriae Roma magistra suae*, 3.12.18) in which even the best *coniuges* turn out to be corrupted by *luxuria* (cf. esp. 3.13.11-4). The Greek examples quoted at lines 29-34 and all dealing with "terrible crimes within families [and] grim violations of *pietas*"[670] have in fact already penetrated the *Vrbs* as fit examples of her inhabitants' perversions.[671] Yet, even when taken on its own, 3.22 sheds a dark light on Tullus' future aspirations for a *coniunx* and *nepotes*.[672] In the Euripedean tragic plot that Propertius intertextually evokes in the elegy, Medea after all famously manages to kill both Jason's new wife and the children she begot to him.[673] After having been pushed

[668] Contrast esp. *nam tua non aetas umquam cessauit amori/semper at armatae cura fuit patriae* (1.6.21-22).
[669] I reject Fedeli (1985:629)'s naïve interpretation here (Tullus accomplishes those things that Propertius cannot achieve). Putnam 1977:240 is more cautious on the man's hopeful future.
[670] *Sic* Heyworth & Morwood *ad loc.* 34.
[671] Eriphile's failed marital *fides* is paradigmatic for the Roman wives' corruption (3.13.57-8); cf. also 3.19, a desperate prayer that future Roman brides could distinguish themselves from the libidinous ladies of Greek myth. On Io/Isis (vv. 33-4) at Rome, see Chapter 3.
[672] As most commentators note, the syntagm *ampla nepotum/spes* is also problematic for its intertextual debt to the *Aeneid*, where it refers to Priamus' *killed* Trojan offspring (Virg. *Aen.* 2.503). If, as Cairns 2006:354 suggests, the elegy's final lines hint at Augustus' upcoming laws on morality, then Tullus' potential deviation is even sharper.
[673] The tragic outcome of Medea's *iter* to Greece with Jason is not lost in the *Argonautica* either: cf. Alcinous' speech at 4.1102-3, with Mori 2008:113, who links the couple's voyage from Colchis to continental Greece to the socially disruptive phenomenon of the abduction-marriage,

all the way down the river Phasis as the first-century BCE Roman version of the heroic Jason, Tullus' prospective *iter* back to the metropolis challenges the private ambitions that he shall accomplish once *returned* there, for he might have drawn within the threatening Other Medea as well, with all the most horrific consequences deriving from this voyage back to the civilised West.[674]

All in all, then, when we take the time to explore the imperial geography that Tullus 'passes through' and at once 'reads' in elegy 3.22, we encounter literary sites that problematise the secure spatial hierarchy between Western Self and Eastern Other suggested by the poem's overarching rhetoric, for in these very spaces cultural borders between Self/Other and West/East disrupted, often with tragic consequences. Tullus' literary *iter* becomes a mythological exploration of the instabilities at the margins of Augustus' pacified world, one that calls into question the very idealisation of a concordant Empire devoid of tension apparently set forth by the poem. When read between the lines, the elegy in fact suggests that Rome, bellicose and yet forgiving, invulnerable and glorious, is not immune to the threats coming from the edges of its *imperium*. The *uiae* of Empire linking the imperial centre to its edges indeed blur the boundaries with which the hierarchical binary opposition between 'us' and 'them' is fabricated, for the East is already in the West and vice versa. Propertius' ambivalent double perspective on the Augustan world, apparently viewed from a Romano-centric standpoint and yet once again explored with 'peripheral eyes' too, makes him liminally 'oscillate' between the Western centre and the Eastern periphery. The alignment with Rome and a set of orthodox moral values that legitimised Augustus' control of the world is in fact only apparent, for, as the elegist suggests, the East (subjugated by the literary erudition of the *poeta* rather than the military *uirtus* of the *princeps* in this elegy too) becomes a space of resistance to and potential danger for those who visit it and return to the West. Switching from one side of this imaginary threshold to the other (from the Western to the Eastern), Propertius refuses to accept one way of looking at the Roman world and is instead

"provoking a *neikos* that threatens Greece itself". Retrospectively, line 6's alternative reading *tuo…desiderio* (v.6, printed by Giardina vs. Fedeli's *nec…meo*) suggests that Tullus is animated by an *erotic* desire to travel, which in fact leads him to Medea's homeland (see Keith 2008:130 on *desiderium*'s erotic valence).

[674] Contrast Propertius' specular voyage from Rome to Athens in the preceding elegy (3.21), a departure from an equally wicked *amor* (with Cynthia).

determined to approach it *liminally*, from both the *inside* and the *outside* (*dominus* at and *exclusus* outside 'R/home').

4.5. Conclusions (& Coda). *Ille ego sum* (?): Hercules or 'the colonizer on the threshold'

unum erit auxilium: ***mutatis*** *Cynthia* ***terris****...*
(3.21.9)

Where one is placed on a map, particularly of imperial dimensions, often constitutes a means of determining where one stands in the imperial social pyramid. As Soja contends, hegemonic power indeed does not only manipulate but also *produces and reproduces* differences between individuals as a key strategy to create and maintain modes of social and spatial division.[675] The centre-periphery relation in particular emanates a set of trappings, like 'metropoles' and 'colonies', that 'spatialise' and enclose 'us' and 'them' in a dichotomous relationship.[676] And yet, no map is definitive. Soja in fact also observes that "those who are territorially subjugated by the workings of hegemonic power [can] mobilize to resist, drawing upon their putative positioning, their assigned 'otherness', to struggle against this power-filled imposition".[677] What I have argued through the close readings of this Chapter is precisely that Propertius contests the hierarchical structure underpinning the Empire under which he is writing and which hinges upon a substantial differentiation between its colonising centre and the colonised periphery. In his text, the elegist lays bare that the supposedly *natural* hierarchy between imperial centre and imperial periphery, the colonising and colonised worlds, is in fact *artificial* and vulnerable to constant re-negotiations. In particular, across the texts analysed above, it seems that geo-cultural borders between the colonising West and the colonised East are

[675] Soja 1996:87, developing a clearly Foucauldian idea.
[676] Soja *ibidem*.
[677] Soja *ibidem*.

reinforced to validate the former's imperial power and moral superiority over the latter. Yet, on closer inspection, it is instead suggested that the world rather dissolves into *limina*. Crossable thresholds overlapping with the imperial *uiae* linking the metropolis to its edges, these *limina* inter-penetrate, confound and contaminate the relationship between Western centre and Eastern periphery and invert their orthodox representation.

As he 're-writes' the spatial hierarchies underpinning the Augustan world in his own way, Propertius thus changes and re-appropriates the Augustan imperial space and makes it his own domain, with its own internal logic. Propertius' world is indeed 'another' world, different and similar space to the real one it talks about. An enacted space of contestation and distortion of a real space (the Augustan Empire), it shares much with the 'heterotopias' theorised by Foucault.[678] Part of every culture and civilisation, 'heterotopias' are something like counter-sites to the real ones, where all the other real sites are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted ("*à la fois représentés, contestés et inversés*").[679] Propertius' Empire seems to work as what Foucault would term, more specifically, a 'heterotopia of illusion', for it unmasks the illusory nature of the space which it contests and distorts, Augustus' real Empire.[680] Propertius in fact exposes the reader to the fallacies behind the politics of imperial space, behind the supposedly fixed roles assigned to a leading metropolis and a subservient, inferior periphery. At another level, Propertius' Empire also works as a 'heterotopia of crisis', one created for those individuals who do not fit the normative order of society but rather suspend themselves between multiple identities.[681] As I have argued, this is precisely the case of Propertius (identifying with the poems' speaking subject), for his ambivalent oscillation between West

[678] Foucault 1986. See esp. Giusti 2017; Fitzgerald & Spentzou 2018 *passim* for other 'heterotopias' in Latin literary texts.
[679] Foucault 1986:24. The 'mirror' image here used by Foucault is particularly effective: the heterotopia projected in the mirror is a counteraction to the real space, similar but *not identical* to its reflection.
[680] Foucault 1986:26 (heterotopias' sixth principle).
[681] Foucault 1986:24-5 (first principle); with Cenzatti 2008:3. Propertius' Rome, incongruously represented as both morally inferior and superior to its peripheries (3.13 vs. 3.22 in particular), also responds well to the third principle, for which "in a single real place [exist] several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible". The fourth principle, whereby "[t]he heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time", is also relevant: Propertius' post-Republican Rome is marked by a very late-Republican moral deterioration (esp. 3.7; 3.13, re-echoing, as we have seen, Horace's pre-Actian *Epode* 16), for, despite Augustus, little has changed after the civil wars.

and East makes him align with both an 'orientalising' moraliser concerned with Rome's purification from a perverted East and an 'orientalised' Hellenistic lover-poet, in love with that very East that seems guilty of Rome's deterioration. Propertius' liminality, his ambiguous alignment with both the Roman *centre* and the non-Roman *periphery* translating his conservative and at once non-conservative political identity, makes him fail in his attempt to turn into an official voice of the regime (standing *at* and *with* Rome), at a time when such a conversion would have been very much appreciated by the *princeps*.

Speaking of geographical liminality and its political effects, I think it is appropriate to round off this Chapter with a final image, that of 'Hercules on the threshold' in elegy 4.9. The semi-god, as represented in this later poem, is a powerful figure to end our discussion because he serves the double function of allegorising Augustus' precarious identity as coloniser[682] as well as Propertius' own liminality as a subject incorporating and resolving the Self/Other, Eastern/Western dichotomy. As scholars have highlighted, Hercules prefigures Aeneas and thus Augustus as respectively the founder and the re-founder of the Roman State.[683] It is true that, by the end of the elegy, Hercules has successfully carried out the conquest of the colonised Other in order to found Rome, a conquest that depends upon the establishment of the normative hierarchies between human/monstrous, male/female, culture/nature, the latter terms being excluded and replaced by the former. Yet, the poem is much more interesting than a celebration of Rome's colonial power, and thus, of its contemporary imperialism. At several points in the text the semi-god's identity as 'coloniser' is problematised rather than celebrated. In the very ambiguous space of the threshold (*limen*) in particular Hercules finds himself incapable of distinguishing himself completely from the indigenous 'Others', monstrous and female, the giant Cacus and the priestesses of the Bona Dea sanctuary, over whom he shall ultimately assert his power. The threshold once again works as a 'third space' of *différance*, where

[682] We have had a first glimpse at Hercules' status as colonizer while analysing 3.7.7-10 (see *supra*).
[683] Esp. Galinsky 1972:141ff.; Spencer 2001:266; Panoussi 2015 *passim*; Fox 1999: esp.157-60. Other treatments of 4.9 include e.g. Grimal 1953, Pillinger 1969; MacParland 1970; Pinotti 1977; Warden 1982; Lindheim 1998b; Cyrino 1998; Fox 1999; Janan 2001; Spencer 2001; DeBrohun 2003; Welch 2005:112-32; Harrison 2005; O'Rourke 2011.

Self and Other 'unfix' themselves and merge into a liminal subject who suspends the existing hierarchies.

Let us scroll through the elegy. Undeniably, at its outset, Hercules is provided with all the most prominent qualities required of a coloniser:

Amphitryoniades qua tempestate iuuencos
egerat a stabulis, o Erythea, tuis,
uenit ad inuictos pecorosa Palatia montis,
et statuit fessos fessus et ipse boues,
qua Velabra suo stagnabant flumine quoque
nauta per urbanas uelificabat aquas.
(4.9.1-6)

Not only does the semi-god's boastful patronymic (*Amphitryoniades*) integrate him into a "stable and persistent patriarchal system"[684] of illustrious domination (Amphitryon had been a Theban general) but his deeds and their civilising function are also put under the spotlight. Hercules has in fact already made a name for himself via the conquest of the monster Gerion's cattle (*iuuencos/egerat*) at the Western tip of the world (*o Erythea*), a proper subjugation of the periphery and one of its many deviant inhabitants.[685] Now that he has arrived in an almost deserted landscape, the Italic, where one day Rome shall rise, emphasis is put on his impending colonial success. The Palatine hills, whilst still being a shepherding spot (*pecorosa Palatia*), are in fact proleptically referred to as "invincible" (*inuictos…montes*), an adjective that plays up with Hercules' future cult at the Ara Maxima, where he shall be worshipped as *inuictus*.[686] Similarly, the Velabrum, in spite of looking like an uncharted marsh (*stagnabant*), is also already visualised, through a sound etymological pun (*Velabra…uelificabat*), as the fluvial commercial area of Propertius' time

[684] Thus Spencer 2001:266; cf. Fedeli *ad loc.* on these lines' stylistic *grauitas*.
[685] Compare Hdt 4.8.2; Hes. *Theog.* 287-94; Apollod. 2.5.10. On Far Western monsters, cf. *supra* on 3.22.7-10.
[686] The mention of the "invincible Palatine" (vs. the Aventine, where the Cacus episode usually takes place) might veil Propertius' "omaggio al principe" (Fedeli *ad loc.*). Hutchinson 2006:206 further notes the connection between Hercules' cult and Augustus' triple triumph celebration (29 BCE), which arguably took place the day right after the celebrations for Hercules *inuictus*.

(*urbanas…aquas*),[687] a pastoral territory already made urban. Hercules' defeat of two Italic aboriginal inhabitants, the three-headed monster Cacus and the priestesses of the Bona Dea sanctuary, resulting in the foundation of two specific monuments of the future metropolis, respectively the Forum Boarium (vv.19-20) and the Ara Maxima (vv.64ff.), then makes Hercules' appropriation of the Roman space explicit. As we read, both these enemies inhabit enclosed spaces that Hercules needs to open in order to assert his power. The breaking of the doors, both the door of Cacus' cave (*implacidas diruit ira fores*, v.14) and the priestesses' doors at the Ara Maxima sanctuary (*ille umeris postis concussit opacos/nec tulit iratam ianua clausa sitim,* vv.61-2), symbolises the resolution of the conflict between newcomer (coloniser) and native (colonised-to-be) whereby the hierarchy between Self (masculine and penetrative) and Other (monstrous/female and penetrable) is set straight.

Yet, the poem shows us what happens *before* such a resolution and, specifically, on the threshold of the same doors.[688] On the *limen*, a sense of ambivalence surrounding the identities of colonizer and colonized is brought about. Before being killed in its cave, the native Cacus (*incola*, v.9) steals Hercules' cattle. As the elegy's beginning reminds us (vv.1ff.), this is the very same cattle that Hercules had himself stolen from another monster, Gerion. Cacus' theft thus temporarily reverses the roles between coloniser and colonised, for now it is the latter that poses a threat to the former.[689] Occupying the position of Gerion as well as his opponent, Hercules finds himself in a moment of unheroic *impasse*, which, spatially, locates him as a disempowered excluded on the threshold of Cacus' cave, into which the three-headed monster has hidden the newcomer's oxen (*traxit in antra*, v.12). Such a liminal moment *antes fores*, preceding Hercules' penetration into Cacus' cave to reclaim the cattle and at once the colonial space belonging to the Other, works to align the coloniser with a dispossessed.[690] More specifically, Hercules is dispossessed of what validates his control over the very colonial space: the ***bou****es*, without which Cacus' cave cannot

[687] Cf. Varr. *Ling.* 5.43; *schol. ad* Hor. *Ars* 67 (*Velabrum, dictum quod uelis transiretur*).
[688] For a different (ritual and aetiological) interest in this *limen*, see DeBrohun 2003:134-43; Panoussi 2015:189-90.
[689] Propertius' Cacus' intertextual indebtedness to Virgil's Gerion (*Aen*. 8.202) further hints to the two monsters' close relation.
[690] The relationship is, in many ways, one of ambiguous 'hosti-pitality' (cf. *infido…hospite*, v.7): compare Chapter 1.

be conquered and transformed into the (future) *Forum* ***Bou****arium* (vv.19-20). Certainly, the episode reaches the conclusion we all expect – Hercules crosses the threshold and triumphs over Cacus –, yet it also raises the question not only of the stability of the coloniser's superior position (if it did not take much effort for Cacus to deceive Hercules, this teaches us that colonial power can be threatened and resisted) but also of his legitimacy to rule. Indeed, Hercules' appropriation of the Other's territory through violence (*ira*, v.14) responds to the perpetration of a crime, the theft of the oxen, that the semi-god had committed in the first place. Whilst turning into a rather orthodox narrative of colonial conquest, the Cacus episode lays bare the ambivalence lurking behind the very same conquest, at least for as long as it remains set on the *limen*.

The erasure of the clear-cut dichotomy between colonising Self and colonised Other also looms large in Hercules' next colonial encounter, which, significantly, is also staged on the threshold. Possessed by an extraordinary thirst, Hercules reaches the *limen* of the Bona Dea temple, situated in a wood (*lucus*, v.24) and inhabited by an all-female cast of priestesses who prevent the representatives of the opposite sex from accessing their indoor rites.[691] Lingering on the threshold, Hercules starts off by emphasising the solidity of his colonial power, so as to persuade the priestesses that he has the right to penetrate their "cloistered spaces" (*loca clausa*, v.25):[692]

"audistisne aliquem, tergo qui sustulit orbem?
ille ego sum: Alciden terra recepta uocat.
quis facta Herculeae non audit fortia clauae
et numquam ad uastas irrita tela feras,
atque uni Stygias homini luxisse tenebras?
Angulus hic mundi nunc me mea fata trahentem
accipit: haec fesso uix mihi terra patet"
(4.9.37-42, 65-6)[693]

[691] On Hercules' thirst, compare AR 4.1441-2 (another colonial narrative). On the Bona Dea rites' importance, cf. Cic. *Ad Att.* 1.13.3 (with Beard, North & Price 1998.1:129-30); on their restoration under Augustus by Livia, see Panoussi 2015:183.
[692] The Roman land's representation as a paradoxical pregnant woman (*feta*, v.22: *OLD* 3b) that cannot deliver (*non ullas…aquas*) had anticipated the uncanny character of this female space, penetrable yet barred.
[693] I print Fedeli's (following Jacob's) transposition of vv.65-6 *post* 42.

The semi-god insists that all the lands he subjugated (*terra recepta*) unanimously call him by the same name (*Alciden*), a patronymic that etymologises his proverbial physical strength (ἀλκή). Furthermore, he specifically identifies himself (*ille ego sum*) as the one who has carried the world (*orbem*) on his shoulders. This is certainly an allusion to Hercules' victory over Atlas but it also works as a metaphorical pointer to his world-domination (further corroborated by the references to his terrestrial and subterranean deeds: vv.39-41).[694] In virtue of his spatial appropriation, Hercules is confident that "this corner of the world" (*angulus hic mundi*) to which he has now arrived, the Italic soil, shall also receive him (*nunc me…accipit*), even though, presently, it is showing resistance to being penetrated (*uix…patet*). Yet, before crossing the *limen*, Hercules is not only associated with an alpha-male. In this interstitial territory, we read the juicy details of his past as the emasculated slave of an Eastern queen:

"…sin aliquem uultusque meus saetaeque leonis
terrent et Libyco sole perusta coma,
idem ego Sidonia feci seruilia palla
officia et Lydo pensa diurna colo,
mollis et hirsutum cepit mihi fascia pectus,
et manibus duris apta puella fui"
(4.9.45-50)

Hercules recalls his enslavement to the Lydian Omphale, who turned him into a "proper girl" (*apta puella fui*), luxuriously dressed up in a Sidonian cloak, dedicated to wool spinning (v.48), and thus "soft" (*mollis*), in spite of his (her?) paradoxical "harsh hands" (*manibus duris*).[695] Although the semi-god's feminine impersonation should play a key role in granting him the opposite sex's sympathy, the priestesses still include him among ordinary men at the end of his performance (cf. *uiris*, v.55). Furthermore, we discover that such an ordinary man's appearance

[694] *Orbis* here is too generic to point, as it should, to the "sky-vault" carried by Atlas. But what do the priestesses know about the outside male world when they live in their own (cf. n692 *supra*)?
[695] Note the elegiac vocabulary (Hutchinson *ad loc. cepit*; Panoussi 2015:184). Hercules' feminisation had been anticipated by the detail of his beard, a marker of masculinity, being "covered in dust" (*in siccam congesta puluere barbam*, v.31) and thus invisible.

and gaze (*uultusque meus saetaeque*) has never really frightened the Bona Dea devotees. Represented by the voice of one fellow (*alma sacerdos*, v.51), the priestesses in fact reply to him with a prohibition not to gaze upon them (*parce oculis*, v.53) and an invitation to flee from their venerable holy wood (*lucoque abscede uerendo*) and leave their threshold "safe" (*tuta…limina*). Hercules should take away his gaze from their cultic site not because the women are intimidated by his look (what is terrifying in all this, as the priestess in chief makes clear, is in fact only the women's law rejecting male visitors: *metuenda lege*, v.55) but, rather, because they hold the power to gaze back to those men who get caught spying onto their secret rites. To this extent, the cautionary tales summoned by the priestess, Tiresias spying on Athena and Medusa petrifying her onlookers (vv.57-60) are fit reminders of the consequences coming from setting the eyes where one (and, specifically, a man) should not.[696] If, according to Bhabha, the 'scopic drive' is what regulates the hierarchical relationship between coloniser and colonised, whereby the colonised needs to be 'fixed' as the passive receptacle of the coloniser's gaze, we are provided with a liminal moment in this colonial narrative in which such a 'scopic' hierarchy is disrupted.[697] The threat coming from the coloniser's gaze in fact does not only prove ineffective but is also displaced on the colonised, who resists his invader by looking back (or, at least, threatening to do so).

All in all, what Hercules' gender-bending transformation on the threshold achieves is to lay bare the arbitrariness of his self-identification with a coloniser, for, during his presence on the *limen*, he splits himself into a masculine conqueror (*Alcides*) and a feminine slave (Omphale's *seruus*), who can easily turn into the receptacle of the Other's gaze. The Bona Dea episode thus becomes a commentary on how, even when a colonial conquest is successfully carried out, the hierarchy between coloniser and colonised continues to be fragile and called into question, for the identities that sustain it are subject to deconstruction. Hercules' identification with the subjugated/female is in fact problematic because it temporarily aligns him with the colonised Other, the priestesses onto whom he is struggling to assert his power. Before being crossed, the threshold is indeed

[696] Cf. Fox 1999:162 on the association between Bona Dea and Athena.
[697] Bhabha 1994: esp.76, 81, 89; cf. Huddart 2004:45ff.

"safe" (*tuta…limina*) for the priestesses but very unsafe for the semi-god, for it exposes him to a re-negotiation of his bold statement to be 'one thing' (*ille ego sum*), in a liminal moment of *différance* ('difference' and 'deferral' of his identity).

In view of his capacity to betray how identity, a cultural construct rather than a monolithic essence, can be deconstructed, Propertius' Hercules 'on the threshold' can be analysed with a post-colonial sensitivity. In this respect, Bhabha comes in handy again, for the encounter between coloniser and colonised presented in the elegy activates a ludicrous relationship of 'mimicry' between the two opponents, whereby one becomes the imperfect copy of the Other (monstrous/female), rather than its opposite.[698] Retrospectively, it is as if the priestesses' premonitory laughter at the beginning of the Bona Dea episode (*sed procul inclusas audit* ***ridere puellas***, v.23; compare *luditis*, v.33) had anticipated the burlesque inversion of roles that Propertius contemplates in this Roman myth of foundation. Like the priestesses, we too can have a laugh at Propertius' representation of colonial power and, specifically, in view of Hercules' contemporary association with Augustus, of the *princeps*' colonial power. On the one hand, Hercules' liminality in fact problematises the stability and legitimacy of Augustus qua the ruler of the world, for it draws attention to the precariousness of the identity upon which his colonial power is predicated: the 'Self' has traces of 'Otherness' within himself so any claims of superiority on his part can be easily called into question.[699] The mockery of Augustus' colonial power then finds its fine counterpart in the mockery of his colonial world, which we have analysed throughout this Chapter. On the other hand, though, Hercules' in-betweenness, his ambivalent placement on the *limen* where he oscillates between Western masculinity and Eastern effeminacy, Roman colonising power (masculine, penetrative, deceiving) and powerlessness of the non-Roman colonised (feminine, penetrable, deceived), also comes to allegorise Propertius' own ambivalence. As also emphasised throughout this Chapter, Propertius indeed lingers on a permanent *limen*, as it were, in between the Western centre and the Eastern

[698] See already Chapter 2.

[699] The feminisation of Hercules can further suggest Augustus' similarity to his ex-opponent, the 'loser' Antony, whose relationship with Cleopatra was compared by Octavian himself to Hercules' bond to Omphale (see Chapter 3; cf. O'Rourke 2011). Propertius might also imply that there is no substantial difference between the two.

periphery, the apparent coherence of his Romano-centric look on the world being constantly deconstructed.

Chapter 5. Between *matronae* and *puellae* (or *dominae* and *exclusae*): 'abject' Cynthia and Cornelia speak from the *lim*bo

5.1. Introduction

The previous Chapter was sealed off by the image of Hercules 'on the threshold' in elegy 4.9 and its highly symbolic meaning. Caught in a liminal moment of *différance* in which his identity vacillates between that of the colonising Self and that of the colonised Other, the hero pokes fun at the coherence of Augustus' own identity as conqueror of the world. As we have seen, Hercules conceptually follows those elegies from Book 3 (also analysed in Chapter 4) in which Propertius calls into question the *princeps*' *imperium* through an ambivalent representation of the Roman Empire's centre and periphery. In this final Chapter, we shall encounter two more characters from Propertius' fourth book whose liminality is also imbricated with contemporary Augustan politics.[700]

In respectively poems 4.7 and 4.11, the *puella* Cynthia and the *matrona* Cornelia are represented in the interstitial space 'in between' life and death, as ghosts that have biologically expired but that keep on existing as *umbrae*. Whilst the two poems are often, and reasonably, read in tandem, for both their protagonists speak 'beyond the grave',[701] little attention is usually paid to the intersection between their speakers' spatial dimension, the question of their identity and contemporary politics.[702] Yet, I shall argue that, by assigning

[700] The spatial in Book 4 is usually analysed for the copious references to monumental Rome and its attached aetiological significance (see, above all, Welch 2005). DeBrohun 2003:20-1 nevertheless argues that "[t]he definition of boundaries, both poetic and literal, is a central concern throughout Propertius' aetiological collection", as the opening figure of Horos (4.1b), the Egyptian astrologer whose name recalls the Greek word for "border" (ὅρος) and who sets the boundaries of Propertius' poetic project, well testifies.

[701] Comparisons or pair readings of the two elegies include Lange 1979; Warden 1980:80; Stahl 1985:262; Johnson 1997:166; Gold 2007:171, 2009:368-69; Duffalo 2003.

[702] Without referring specifically to 4.7 and 4.11, Hutchinson 2006:19 makes a (much under-developed) observation that in Book 4 "an opposition between inside and outside, indoors and outdoors, house and city [ties] in with the opposition of sexes, and the morality of women". The transgression of spatial borders and female identity issues in fact plays an important role in

unconventional spatial positions to Cynthia and Cornelia, Propertius offers a disturbing inversion of the normative concept of womanhood as promoted by Augustus in his contemporary propaganda on *mores*.[703]

A short time before the composition of Book 4 (whose *terminus post quem* is 16 BCE), Augustus had promulgated two important laws, namely the *lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus* and the *lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis* (18-17 BCE), that aimed to regulate specific classes of Roman citizens' moral conduct in the private sphere.[704] In both these measures, particular emphasis was put on social borders existing between the *ordines* and, specifically, between women of higher and lower status.[705] According to the *de maritandis*, a decree that issued a system of rewards and penalties for marriage within and between social classes, all freeborn citizens were for example prevented from marrying *prostitutes*.[706] Furthermore, the same bill promoted the number of births by honouring *high-class* women who begot a certain number of children with a set of either social, political or financial benefits.[707] The *de adulteriis* was instead concerned with the punishment of betrayals between married couples.[708] High class women who did not respect this second measure were forbidden to wear the *stola*, the signature garment of respectable ladies, and, in virtue of this, they could be downgraded to

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Arethusa's and Tarpeia's back-to-back elegies (4.3-4), which have deserved greater attention as a 'diptych'. Whereas the home-bound Arethusa mourns the absence of her beloved, the soldier Lycotas, from within her domestic boudoir, the Virgin Vestal Tarpeia betrays her confining *domus* (the temple of Vesta on the Capitol Hill), to join the army of Rome's enemy Tatius, the Sabine king with whom she has fallen in love. If the former is a contracted courtesan like Cynthia (rather than a legal wife: James 2012), then Propertius presents us with a fitting inversion of socio-legal identities and spaces, for the *puella* Arethusa is more easily 'domesticated' than the Vestal Virgin, whose spatial infraction is also a moral infraction (cf. Welch 2005:77).

[703] This is not to claim that Cynthia's status had been straightforward in previous poems (see esp. Miller 2004:61-63). Yet, I argue that it was never problematised in the same way and that the *puella* could be more comfortably associated with the courtesan type, who changed partner according to her financial needs (cf. James 2003:41-52), notwithstanding the *amator*'s sporadic idealisation of his relationship with her as a quasi-marital bond (cf. e.g. 1.11.23-24; 2.6.41-42).

[704] Aug. *RG* 8; Dio 54.16.6. I follow Spagnuolo Vigorita 2010:1-10 (*contra* Badian 1985) in considering the *lex edicta* and then *sublata* to which Propertius refers at 2.7 as a preliminary measure (circa 28 BCE) on domestic morality that Octavian took on his way into the development of the 18-17 BCE *leges* (cf. Tac. *Ann.* 3.28.2-3). See Chapter 4 on the contemporary *lex Iulia sumptuaria*, also intervening on the issue of female morality.

[705] Milnor 2005:154 argues that, with the laws' promulgation, women officially became "part of the business of the state", even though Augustus' attention to female behaviour had already originated in the late 20s, as e.g. elegies 3.13-4 (discussed in Chapter 4) reflect.

[706] I paraphrase Milnor 2005:141. This law is usually referred to by later jurists (who commented it) as the *lex Iulia et Papia* (*Poppaea*), as in their analysis they usually include the 9 AC revision of the measure, known as *lex Papia Poppaea* (cf. Tac. *Ann.* 3.25.1).

[707] Milnor *ibidem*.

[708] See here Treggiari 1991:277ff. for a detailed discussion.

look like low class representatives.[709] These salient aspects of the Augustan legislation, among others, show that the *princeps* was trying to retrieve a die-hard distinction between 'bad' and 'good' ladies.[710] The enhancement of this difference between female types was paramount to Augustus' propagandistic promotion of his own ideal of the Roman woman (constructed against an opposite, morally deviant lady of lower status: Other), namely a high-class lady on whose chastity and virtuosity depended not only the respectability of her *domus* but also the maintenance of the Roman Empire.[711]

Poems 4.7 and 4.11, dealing with women from different social backgrounds and replete with a legalistic terminology, can be read against the backdrop of the Augustan legislation and its creation of social borders between women. On the one hand, Cynthia represented the Other (non-Roman) type of woman: if her Eastern provenience is only likely (and ultimately impossible to demonstrate), the mistress's set of vices and aberrant lifestyle certainly contributed to her identification with a woman that Augustus would have liked to see confined in the periphery and certainly outside the domestic space.[712] To be sure, the spatial expulsion of morally flawed women like Cynthia in the form of an imposed exile from the metropolis was in fact a practice that the *princeps* deployed in the years following the promulgation of the moral laws. Indeed, one is immediately reminded of Augustus' own adulterous granddaughter Julia Minor, whom the *princeps* sent to the island of Pandataria for five years straight, and whose son he never recognised nor reared as his grandson.[713] In virtue of this, I shall argue that Cynthia's uncanny re-appearance in Propertius' bedroom as a ghost in elegy 4.7 not only threatens the *poeta*'s desire to make the mistress disappear from the borders of his now-aetiologically-oriented text,[714] but also calls into question Augustus' ideal of a *casta domus* inhabited by a fittingly *casta*

[709] On the *stola*, see Milnor 2005:112-3 and *infra*.
[710] Syme 1939:414; Milnor 2005:150; McAuley 2016:43.
[711] On women's unprecedented role in shaping and sustaining the imperial ideology, see esp. McAuley 2016:32ff. (and esp. 48 on Augustus' wife Livia appropriating "the idealised symbolic authority of the maternal as guarantor of the reproduction of the patriarchy").
[712] Keith 2011b *passim*.
[713] Suet. *Aug.* 65.10.
[714] Cf. Wyke 2002; DeBrohun 2003; and see Chapter 4 on Propertius' promise to do without his *scripta puella* at the end of Book 3.

domina.[715] As she re-conquers the domestic space from which she has been outcast after her death, Cynthia in fact attempts to re-fashion herself as a high-class *matrona*. By claiming to possess a (previously undetected) irreprehensible morality (she lists herself among mythological *maritae sine fraude* inhabiting the Elysium), Cynthia lays her claims over the domestic space that she left behind. Whilst the reader can suspect that the *puella*'s speech is a blatant demystification of the truth about her relationship with Propertius, in which she had in fact featured as a disloyal partner of courtesan status, this does not mean that Cynthia's self-transformation is not successful, for the reader is indeed induced to think of the woman differently. By crossing the doors of Hades and occupying the space where Augustus would have placed a proper *matrona*, Cynthia manages to transgress the boundaries of her low social rank and to fabricate an identity, made up of the disturbing summation of both the 'prostitute' *and* the 'matron' types (Self *and* Other) and resisting the imperial ideology's necessity to divide women in antithetical types.

At the other end of the social spectrum, we encounter Cornelia, not only the illustrious representative of an important and glorious Roman *gens*, but also the daughter of Augustus' ex-wife Scribonia herself.[716] For the *princeps*, a woman displaying Cornelia's virtues represented 'Romanness' in the most faithful way,[717] and therefore needed to stay at 'R/home' (in the *centre*) for fellow Roman women to imitate.[718] Be that as it may, in elegy 4.11 the prematurely dead *matrona* is not only 'outstanding' but also 'standing out' of the *centre* to which she should provide the ultimate moral *exemplum*.[719] Cornelia in fact remains trapped in the foreign Greek Underworld, a marginal space at the periphery of the

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[715] On the Augustan ideal of the *casta domus*, see Spagnuolo Vigorita 2010 *passim* (add Saller 1984: esp.342ff. for an extended discussion of *domus*' spatio-social value). Note the importance of *domus* under the *de adulteriis*, whereby a *paterfamilias* catching *in flagrante* his married daughter with a lover could only kill the two only if the crime was being committed either in his own or his son-in-law's household, for, as a later jurist reports on this aspect of the law, "the legislator thought it a more serious outrage for [the daughter] to dare to bring an adulterer into the house of her father or her husband" (Ulpian, *de adulteris* 1, quoted in Just. *Digest* 48.5.24).

[716] Hallett 1985 remains invaluable for its detailed account on the relationship between Cornelia and the *domus Augusta*.

[717] Janan 2001:155-6 makes the connection between the invulnerability of Cornelia's body and the invulnerability of the Roman Empire's borders.

[718] Compare how, contextually, the number of public statues representing *matronae* from the imperial family (above all, Livia), a visual proof of the importance of virtuous womanhood for the imperial ideology, raised exponentially in this period (see Flory 1993 *passim*).

[719] *Exemplum* ironically derives from *eximo*, "to take out" (to make outstand) but also "to banish" (esp. *OLD* 1, 3).

upper Roman world, without being given the possibility to make an excursion back to her illustrious *domus*. Displaced from that 'home' and 'home-land' ('R/home') that used to secure her with her socio-legal privileges into a foreign, a-historical space where her past life remains unknown, the *matrona* struggles to be considered as a woman of her own rank in front of the infernal court that scrutinises her status. To be sure, she even goes as far as to expose herself to comparison with one of the Danaids, a 'bad girl' (or the Other) in respect to a normative Roman woman.[720] Her speech ultimately works to exacerbate the doubt over her status rather than provide the judges with confirmation. Consequently, it also calls into question the utility of belonging to the upper-class, for in the interstitial 'waiting room' between two secure spaces in which she was and shall be recognised as a *matrona* (Rome and the sky where she shall ascend only after receiving confirmation of status by the Underworld's judges), Cornelia temporarily suspends her identity ('deferred' and 'made to differ').

On the grounds of my juxtaposed readings of elegies 4.7 and 4.11, I shall ultimately contend that the two women uncannily upset the Augustan distinction between normative women of the *centre* (Roman) and deviant women of the *periphery* (embodying the non-Roman) and enact a spatial and social female transgression that can be theoretically sustained by J. Kristeva's work on the 'abject'. Cynthia, the woman representing the peripheral Other (non-Roman), is in fact driven back home in the manner of a proper Roman lady, whereas the proper lady embodying the (female) Roman Self is excluded from the centre and made to look like a peripheral woman. As I shall emphasise in the Conclusions to the Chapter, this is yet another strategy through which Propertius challenges the Augustan Panopticon, whereby people needed to be located in a certain position, either central or peripheral, according to their own socio-legal status. What Propertius once again gives us in these final pieces is in fact an ambivalent picture of social roles and their attached 'spatialisation', which confirms the elegist's own ambivalent position in respect to Rome's newly-born imperial ideology.

[720] Cornelia was considered by the *princeps* as a female role model for her successful fulfilment of her wifely and motherly duties (in particular, her numerous offspring provided her with the *ius tres liberorum*, according to the *de maritandis*). See Hallett 1985:85 on Augustus' fabricated dichotomy between (the by-then deceased) Cornelia and the *princeps*' own granddaughter Julia, protagonist of the infamous sexual scandal dated 2 AD.

5.2. Same border, different positions: 'abject' Cynthia and Cornelia on the threshold between life and death

Among the reasons that encourage the comparison between elegies 4.7 and 4.11, critics have rightly drawn attention to the liminality of their two female protagonists, namely their presence on the 'threshold' between the world of the living and that of the dead, a *limen* that is at once spatial and biological.[721] For instance, J. DeBrohun contends that both Cynthia and Cornelia are "ghosts [that] never fully die", and that "there is no opportunity for reunion [with their respective partners] until death".[722] Whilst this comment is generally correct, it also assumes that Cynthia's and Cornelia's spatial position, and specifically their relation to the life/death border (Hades' physical *ianua*), is the same. Yet, by looking at the description of the Underworld (and its border) in the poems, we discover that the two women suffer two very different kinds of 'marginalisation' through death. Whilst Cynthia is in fact allowed to come back to the world of the living and haunt Propertius' Roman *domus*, Cornelia is significantly denied the same re-transgression. Locked in Hell waiting for the infernal court's judgement, the *matrona* cannot come back home to beloved husband Paulus and children.[723]

Let us start from Cynthia. In Book 4's opening poem, the Egyptian astrologer Horos had foreseen that "one girl" would annihilate Propertius' poetic victories in the aetiological genre (*eludit palmas una puella tuas,* 4.1b.140) and relegate him to the usual spatial asphyxiation of *seruitium amoris* (*et bene cum fixum mento discusseris uncum/nil erit hoc: rostro te premet ansa tuo*, 4.1b.141-2).[724] Whilst this *puella* would provoke the *amator*'s confinement, she would

[721] See esp. DeBrohun 2003:151-4. Lowrie 2009:353 has recently argued that Cornelia "seems to be in (at least) two places at once" (note Cornelia's contradictory use of the deictic indicating proximity to refer to both her "grave" [*in lapide* ***hoc***, 4.11.36] and Hell [*immatura licet, tamen* ***huc*** *non noxia ueni*, 4.11.17; cf. ***hic***, v.18]), and that her spatial inconsistency is due to the different speech modalities that the *matrona* utilises (written: sepulchral epigram; oral: *laudatio funebris*).
[722] DeBrohun 2003:151, 154; compare Johnson 1997:165.
[723] The difference between the spatial position of Cynthia and Cornelia is never made explicit, even when, particularly in the commentaries to the two elegies (cf. *infra*), it is e.g. noted that Cornelia seems imprisoned in Hell. Janan 2001:162 is perhaps the only critic who alludes to the different representations of the Underworld in 4.7 and 4.11 but does not problematise these further.
[724] Compare Propertius' original 'captivity' at 1.1.

instead manage to sneak away from the lover by transgressing the borders of their shared *domus*:

nec mille excubiae nec te signata iuuabunt
limina: persuasae fallere rima sat est.
(4.1b.145-6)

As Horos had suggested to the *amator*, protecting the threshold (*excubiae...signata/...limina*) shall prove ineffective indeed, for against a *puella* "accustomed to cheat" (*persuasa fallere*), a "crack in the wall" (*rima*) is always more than enough to flee out.[725] Poem 4.7 shows us that Horos' opening prophecy has proven partly true:[726] although Cynthia has not left the house of the *amator* through "a rim in the wall" (from inside out), she has successfully crossed the wall of the House of Hades to come back to Propertius' household (from outside in) as one of the subterranean "wandering shadows" (*uagae umbrae,* 4.7.89).[727] The conclusive verses of the elegy, where the mistress's ghost explains to Propertius how, tonight, she managed to sneak away from the reign of Hades and reach the lover's bedroom, explain the dynamic well:

nocte uagae ferimur, nox clausas liberat umbras,
errat et abiecta Cerberus ipse sera.
luce iubent leges Lethaea ad stagna reuerti:
nos uehimur, uectum nauta recenset onus.
(4.7.89-92)

Night time (*nocte...nox*) offers the enclosed spirits (*clausas...umbras*) of the dead like Cynthia the chance to wander (*uagae*) outside their infernal prison. The janitor of Hades himself, Cerberus, wanders off, after having thrown aside

[725] Compare 2.6.37ff.
[726] Cf. Liveley 2010:113-4.
[727] The adjective *uagus* is especially poignant when applied to Cynthia, for, on top of pointing to a wandering movement (*OLD* 1), it also defines the attitude of a prostitute "changing from one partner to the other" (*OLD* 8b; compare Coutelle 2015 *ad loc.*). Yet, this hue of the adjective plays against Cynthia's self-presentation as a woman of higher status.

the bar on the door over which he usually watches (*abiecta...sera*). At dawn (*luce*) though, the spell ends: the infernal laws (*leges*) impose the return to the Lethean pools. Thus, the spirits are once more transported across the infernal marsh by Charon, who meticulously counts his cargo (*uectum nauta recenset onus*). The idea of the permeability between life and death subtended in these lines further re-echoes the elegy's opening *sententia*:

Sunt aliquid Manes: letum non omnia finit,
luridaque euictos effugit umbra rogos.
(4.7.1-2)[728]

As usually noted, the general statement inaugurating poem 4.7 is a sound intertext of an Iliadic verse in which Achilles, after seeing the phantom of his dear friend Patroclus, makes a quasi-philosophical consideration on the afterlife ('ὦ πόποι ἦ ῥά τίς ἐστι καὶ εἰν Ἀΐδαο δόμοισι / ψυχὴ καὶ εἴδωλον, ἀτὰρ φρένες οὐκ ἔνι πάμπαν, *Il.* 23.103-4).[729] Unlike Homer, Propertius elaborates on the border between life and death. As the elegist argues, death does not give spatial limitations to everything (*omnia*) and certainly not to the ghostly shade (*lurida...umbra*) of Cynthia, who has transgressed combustion on the pyre (*euictos effugit rogos*) and confinement in Hades to flee back into his bedroom (*fulcro*, v.3).[730] Right from its beginning and throughout, elegy 4.7 thus makes explicit that, although she should have remained among the dead on the other side of the life/death border and, specifically, in the *peripheral Eastern* Underworld, Cynthia has managed to return to the *centre of Rome* and, specifically, to the heart of Propertius' domestic hearth.[731]

[728] I keep Fedeli's *euictos* (vs. Heyworth's *exstructos*, "heaped up").
[729] See esp. Hubbard 1974:149-52; Muecke 1974:126; Warden 1980:14. Dimundo 1990 *ad loc.* notes that the *sententia* is more poignant in Propertius than in Homer, because it opens the elegy.
[730] Whilst usually translated in its temporal sense ("death does not *end* everything": *OLD* 4, 7, 8), the verb *finire* is a primarily spatial verb ("to mark out the boundaries of [a territory or other area]": *OLD* 1; "to form the boundary of; to divide, demarcate": *OLD* 1b). On the geographical (as opposed to temporal) reading of the word *finis* at Prop. 1.12.20, see Lindheim 2011.
[731] On the characterization of the Underworld as 'Eastern' in 4.7 (and thus, peripheral in respect to Rome), cf. its populations including worshippers of Cybele dancing with the effeminate mitra (*mitratisque…choris*, vv.61-2) as well as Graeco-Egyptian heroines (v.63). Janan 2001:113 notes that the hedonism of the Underworld makes it "the inversion of [masculine] Rome".

As far as Cornelia's location is concerned, the same three-headed monster Cerberus to whom Cynthia has alluded in his speech is also referred to in the *matrona*'s own account of the Underworld, the inhospitable place where she has just set foot:

Cerberus et nullas hodie petat improbus umbras;
et iaceat tacita laxa catena sera.
(4.11.25-26)

In order to be listened to by the subterranean community, at the outset of her defensive speech Cornelia expresses an impossible wish, namely that Cerberus, along with fellow mythological creatures of the Underworld (Sisyphus, Ixion, Tantalus: vv.23ff.), could stop performing his usual duties of hounding the shades (*petat...umbras*) and remaining tightly attached to the bar of Hades' door (*sera*).[732] Since this remains no more than a wish – as the subjunctives emphasise (*pet**at***; *iace**at***) –, Cornelia shows us that the *limen* of her Underworld is in fact well-patrolled, unlike that which has allowed the nocturnal escapade of Cynthia to the house of Propertius. To be sure, Cornelia had pinpointed Hades' closure from the beginning of her speech, where she had started off by presenting the Underworld like a prison to her husband Paulus:[733]

desine, Paulle, meum lacrimis urgere sepulcrum:
panditur ad nullas ianua nigra preces;
cum semel infernas intrarunt funera leges,
non exorato stant adamante uiae.
te licet orantem fuscae deus audiat aulae:
nempe tuas lacrimas litora surda bibent.
uota mouent superos: ubi portitor aera recepit,
obserat herbosos lurida porta rogos.
(…)
damnatae noctes et uos, uada lenta, paludes,
et quaecumque meos implicat unda pedes,
immatura licet, tamen huc non noxia ueni.
(4.11.1-8, 15-17)

[732] Cf. the reprise of *sera* at 4.7.26, quoted *supra*.
[733] Coutelle *ad loc.* 3-4: "une prison d'où ne sort jamais".

As already noted by Copley, the beginning of the elegy displays a quintessentially elegiac spatial relationship, that between a cloistered *puella* and a mourning *exclusus amator*.[734] The erotic bond between Cornelia and Paulus, located respectively inside and outside Hades' door, renders them perfect counterparts to the fictional elegiac lovers, who are routinely divided by the threshold of a barred *ianua*. Yet, the notable difference is that this dark door (*nigra ianua*), unlike that of the elegiac *domus*, will *never* open to let Paulus' prayers pass through (*panditur ad nullas...preces*).[735] In the following verses, this idea is further corroborated by the imagery of the adamantine door blocking the way to those who wish to come back (*non exorato stant adamante uiae*)[736] as well as by the vivid description of Hades' stagnant waterscape (*litora*). Whereas, according to Cynthia, Charon ferries the spirits back to the Underworld at every dawn, after they have been allowed to wander outside Hades all night, here the *portitor* seems to have to ferry the same spirits only once: after he has taken his coppers (*aera recepit*), the hideous door (*lurida porta*) is in fact barred forever behind the ferried souls who cannot flee back to the world of the living.[737] Indeed, the subterranean waters entrap the feet of those who have entered the Underworld like Cornelia (*uada lenta, paludes/et quaecumque meos implicat unda pedes*), and, at the same time, they are deaf to those who mourn the loss of their relative on the other side of the life/death border, like Paulus (*tuas lacrimas...surda bibent*). As all these details well enhance, Cornelia is therefore physically located within an uncanny domestic environment reminiscent of the elegiac *domus* (provided with *ianua* and *ianitor[es]*) and yet far from the space of erotic *mora* that the elegiac *domus* constitutes, for her lover Paulus is forever barred outside her quasi-domestic

[734] Copley 1956:80-82. See further Hutchinson 2006 *ad loc.* for funerary epigraphical material comparable to the *incipit* (and especially *AP* 6.667, whose imperative **παῦε**, "stop", is perhaps re-echoed in Propertius' *desine,* "stop", and the vocative ***Pau****le*).

[735] Contrast Chapter 1 on the elegiac door as (im)penetrable '*hymen*'. Note further that Propertius here contradicts his previous claim (2.27.15-16) that the power of love can break the infernal laws by making a dead *amator* return to his *puella* (as in a reversed re-enactment of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice).

[736] Coutelle *ad loc.* rightly emphasises that the antithesis between *stant* (=*obstant*) and *uiae* is strengthened by the *caesura*.

[737] The door concomitantly "shuts out" the surviving relatives on the other side (*obsero*, *OLD* 1a, 1b; cf. Hutchinson *ad loc.*).

door.[738] Far from physically returning to her former *domus*, the lady haunts Rome with a speech delivered *from beyond* the door of Hades.

As I have been showing, the entrance of the Underworld is presented in contradictory terms by Propertius within the short span of four poems. A proper '*lhymen*', the infernal *ianua* works as a permeable door for the mistress Cynthia and an impenetrable door for the *matrona* Cornelia. Of course, the Roman and contemporary reader had and has access to both women as 'ghosts' trespassing their subterranean confinement: we see and hear Cynthia in the same way as we view and listen to Cornelia. Yet, within the narrative, Propertius finds his mistress's 'ghost' right at the side of his pillow (from *exclusa* to *domina*), whereas Paulus has to acknowledge the irreversible displacement of his wife from his own *domus* to the inhospitable *domus* of Hades (from *domina* to *exclusa*).[739] Although critics have neglected these spatial displacements in their readings of these poems, I argue that Cynthia's and Cornelia's location in respect to the Hades' *ianua* challenges the normative conception of womanhood, whereby the *domina* at R/home would have been Cornelia and the *exclusa* from R/home would have been Cynthia. Neither Cornelia nor Cynthia are found where we expect to see them, respectively outside and inside the Roman household. Their unconventional absence from and presence at *domus* impinges on the reader's construction of the two women's identities, who, as we shall in greater detail below, are not neatly distinguishable as per the Augustan dichotomy between 'matron' and 'whore'.

The disruption of spatial and simultaneously socio-political borders (as enacted by female characters in particular) performed by Cynthia and Cornelia in the texts can be profitably read through Bulgarian-French theorist, psychoanalyst and feminist J. Kristeva's theory of 'abjection', as firstly presented in her 1982 essay *The Powers of Horror*.[740] The employment of the 'abject' in the broader

[738] See Coutelle *ad loc.* 7-8 on the Underworld as "une sorte de demeure, comme dans les *paraklausithyra*". Compare Curran 1968:135, who highlights Propertius' intertextual relationship to Virgil's configuration of Hades as a domestic environment at *Georg*. 4 (e.g. *ostia Ditis*, 4.467; *domus atque intima Leti/Tartara*, 4.481). To be sure, Paulus is separated from Cornelia by a double physical boundary: not only the dark door of the Underworld, but also the tombstone of his wife (*meum...sepulcrum*), as if the two places were made to overlap (on the space of the tomb as featuring an *ianua* itself, cf. *Epic. Drusi* 69): see further *infra*.

[739] Johnson 1997:165 argues that we identify with Paulus qua the *matrona*'s *audiens* throughout the poem, yet I think that the poem's spatial dynamic complicates the overlapping between our and Paulus' position.

[740] Kristeva 1980 (= trans. 1982).

context of the thesis is first of all justified by the theory's concern with spatial borders.[741] Indeed, as Kristeva contends in the first pages of *The Powers of Horror*, "the abject [is that which] does not respect borders".[742] In strictly psychoanalytical terms, where the complex and multi-layered idea of the 'abject' originates, the 'abject' is in fact associated with what transgresses the borders that the subject draws between inside/outside, subject/object, Self/Other in order to achieve a sense of wholeness and independence from the outer world and, by so doing, provokes in him feelings of horror, anxiety, disgust and repulsion.[743] Representations of the 'abject' therefore include (unburied) decaying corpses (at the sight of which the subject is reminded of his own mortality and loses his sense of invulnerability based on the subject/object distinction), food expelled through vomit (that which should have remained inside but has unwillingly been ejected outside), and bodily fluids (like urine, shit, bleeding wounds, also trespassing the border between inside/outside).[744] The female body, particularly when displaying those features that emphasise its 'Otherness' in respect to the male one (genitals, the changes it undergoes during pregnancy, and menstruating blood), is also listed among the 'abject''s manifestations, for it reminds the subject of his bond to the (female) maternal body ('m/Other') during infancy, a bond that he painfully cut off (or 'abjected') in order to develop into an independent and self-relying person.[745]

On top of this, by insisting on the fine analogy between the formation of the psychoanalytical subject and that of a society's identity (both depending on the creation of divisive borders between Self and Other), Kristeva has gone on to argue that 'abjection' does not only relate to the tenuous psychoanalytical borders

[741] As West-Pavlov 2009: esp. 67-9 puts it, the 'abject' is a theory that "spatializes human subjectivity". For a recent reading of Kristeva through the lens of the 'spatial turn' (and, significantly, in tandem with Foucault and Deleuze, from whom I have also drawn in previous Chapters), see West-Pavlov 2009:37-110.
[742] Kristeva 1982:4.
[743] McAfee 2003:46.
[744] McAfee 2003:46-7.
[745] Unlike Freud and Lacan, Kristeva argues that, although this separation from the maternal (phase) is apparently fully achieved when the subject enters the paternal order (symbolic, Oedipal phase), the subject is in fact never fully capable of drawing a definitive border between Self and m/Other, hence his experiences of 'abjection' (McAfee 2003:46). Kristeva 1982:3 lists milk spitting, defecation, and refusal of embrace among the set of actions encapsulating the child's need for detachment from the maternal body. On the Kristevan view on the maternal body as an intimate yet unhomely space to inhabit, cf. Smith 1996:26.

drawn between Self and (m/)Other but also to the socio-political borders.[746] Kristeva contends that the 'abject(s)' of the Western societies overlap with those socially and culturally marginalised groups that constitute a menace to the dominant ideology, its identity and well-being. These groups, among which, given the phallocentric structure of Western societies, women feature predominantly, are usually spatially excluded from a society's centre and, in virtue of this, kept at a distance from power and authority.[747] Yet, these marginalised subjects can 'revolt' against the system that has encouraged their marginalisation and upset the centre/periphery hierarchy that relegates them into disempowering spaces. Indeed, although the society's 'abject(s)' are thrown, as it were, towards the society's periphery, it is precisely from these peripheral regions that they can frighten those at the centre: as Kristeva well puts it in the inaugural pages of *The Powers of Horror*, "from its place of banishment, the abject does not cease challenging his master".[748]

Whilst it incorporates a process of exclusion, Kristeva therefore ultimately utilises 'abjection' as a political strategy for disrupting and transgressing hegemonic structures constructed by the dominant ideology. In virtue of these many characterizations of the 'abject', I argue that the concept becomes a useful lens through which to scrutinise the figures of Cynthia and Cornelia. Indeed, not only do the two ladies appear as '(unburied) decaying corpses' (or 'ghosts') that fail to respect the physical and biological borders of their banishment (either pagan 'Hell' or 'Paradise'),[749] but they are also two 'women', that is, the marginal group *par excellence* within their Western patriarchal society, who contest their society's ideological structure "from the place of [their] banishment".[750] As I shall demonstrate next via a close reading of the elegies under scrutiny, Cynthia and Cornelia re-design their respective socio-legal identity against the one that

[746] Cf. esp. West-Pavlov 2009:78.
[747] One could legitimately think of the 'foreigner' and, in our day and age, the 'migrant' seeking for asylum (e.g. within the EU), more and more frequently marginalised outside domestic borders (compare West-Pavlov 2009:76-8).
[748] Kristeva 1980:2.
[749] One of the two, namely Cornelia, was formerly a *mother* figure (the primal 'abject'), whom death has 'abjected' from her children (see *infra*).
[750] On women as 'dissidents', see also Kristeva repr.1986. Kristeva's views on the 'female voice' has much in common with Alice Jardine's notion of 'gynesis' (1985), whereby within the fabric of male-authored texts, the marginalised (including the female) characters' voice can speak against the text itself, thus upsetting the text's gendered hierarchy (see Gold 1993 for a connection between 'gynesis' and the genre of Latin love elegy).

Augustus would have assigned them. Cynthia takes possession of Propertius' *domus* to mimic the empowered 'domestic' *matrona* whereas Cornelia unconsciously associates herself with a non-respectable woman by making constant allusion to the loss of the 'domestic' validating her privileged position.

5.3. Cynthia, *puella informis et fallax*

In Book 3's conclusive elegy, Propertius had pronounced his bitter farewell to Cynthia: there, he wished the woman to grow old, grey-haired, full of wrinkles, as well as to fear the threatening process of her physical decrepitation.[751] That final image of Cynthia's transformation into an 'ugly spinster' had thwarted the beautiful poetic representation of the *puella* as provided in the elegies up to that point.[752] Yet, whilst showing that even the divine Cynthia could lose her sex appeal, Propertius had altogether rejected a further engagement with the mistress, whom he "cast out" (*exclusa*, 3.25.35) for good from his upcoming poetic project. Whilst Cynthia's abrupt re-emergence amid the aetiological Book 4 is thus puzzling *per se*, what is even more 'uncanny' is precisely the fact that she appears as a terrifying 'ghost', thus realising the threat of her metamorphosis into something scarily different from the perfect *scripta puella* she had been throughout Books 1-3. Before she starts ranting against Propertius, the mistress frightens him with her *umbra*:

eosdem habuit secum quibus est elata capillos,
eosdem oculos; lateri uestis adusta fuit,
et solitum digito beryllon adederat ignis,
summaque Lethaeus triuerat ora liquor.

[751] *at te celatis* ***aetas grauis*** *urgeat annis/et ueniat formae* ***ruga sinistra*** *tuae!/uellere tum cupias* ***albos*** *a stirpe* ***capillos****/iam speculo* ***rugas*** *increpitante tibi/exclusa inque uicem fastus patiare superbos/et quae fecisti facta queraris* ***anus****!/has tibi fatalis cecinit mea pagina diras/****euentum formae disce timere tuae!*** (3.25.31-8).
[752] See Gardner 2013: esp. 207ff. and *passim* on the dynamics of elegiac beauty and the passing of time.

spirantisque animos et uocem misit: at illi
pollicibus fragiles increpuere manus:
(4.7.7-12)

Propertius here enhances the similarities and differences between Cynthia's ghost and Cynthia's former look (whilst alive).[753] As he reveals, when the mistress appeared next to his pillow, she had the same hair (*eosdem habuit secum...capillos*) as well as the same eyes (*eosdem oculos*) as those she displayed at her funeral (*quibus est elata*) before her cremation.[754] At the same time though, her dress (*uestis*) showed signs of combustion (*lateri...adusta*) and so did the ring she used to wear on her finger (*solitum beryllon*), both elements pointing to her body's passage through the funeral pyre (*ignis*).[755] Furthermore, although the woman breathed and spoke like a living body (*spirantisque animos et uocem misit*), she had the surface of her mouth worn away by the water of the infernal river Lethe (*summaque Lethaeus triuerat ora liquor*) and skinless hands creaking at the joints (*pollicibus...increpuere*) emphasising the process of her bodily consumption. Cynthia's physical appearance as 'ghost' mixing elements of both life and death over her own body can be read through the lens of Kristeva's 'abject', that which "does not respect borders, positions, rules" and presents itself as "[t]he in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (half alive, half dead; reminding its viewer of his mortality).[756] Whilst this new look works to contrast Cynthia's previous beautiful appearance as an object of desire, I argue that it also contributes to Cynthia's uncanny *post mortem* metamorphosis into a different Cynthia, one that is aesthetically disenfranchised from the attractive courtesan-type with whom she had always been associated. In particular, the combustion of her signature dress (*uestis*), a transparent, and thus highly arousing, Coan silk

[753] Cf. Wallis 2016:3.
[754] Cynthia's eyes in particular constituted the first feature of her beauty to be mentioned at the beginning of her poetic life (*suis...ocellis*, 1.1.1); cf. the mention of Cynthia's name (beginning of v.3) corroborating the intra-textual reference to the *incipit* of Book 1.
[755] Wallis 2016:4 notes that the ring, despite being referred to as *solitum*, had never been mentioned before by Propertius, an element that suggests that "we might not know Cynthia as well as we think we do".
[756] Kristeva 1982:4. Hutchinson 2006 *ad loc.* speaks of "an eerie borderline"; Papanghelis 1987:150 of "a corpse awaiting identification in the mortuary"; compare also Raucci 2011:134.

product,[757] represents, both physically and metaphorically, the sign of her dis-identification from a sex-worker.[758]

Further to this, I contend that such a dis-identification becomes even more consistent when Cynthia starts speaking and mimicking the opposite kind of woman to the courtesan, namely the *matrona* of an unfaithful husband. Whilst, at the beginning of her speech, the woman remembers the old nights of passion consumed with Propertius in the red-light district of the Suburra, the reference to which might still betray her low status and profession (vv.15-22), we soon discover that the mistress managed to re-locate from a brothel of the Suburra to the *domus* where she has now returned and in which she co-habited with Propertius and a good share of slaves in the manner of a high-class *domina*. This transition does not only go counter to the representation of Cynthia as a woman that we have seen located within the domestic space only to consume one-night encounters with the *amator* and his rivals,[759] but also as a woman whose legal status could not make her the legal owner of a significant number of slaves.[760]

Cynthia's socio-legal empowerment in the *domus* further emerges from the way, through a set of *mandata*, she tries to restore order in the household. By assuming she has the right to fix the *domus* because of her irreproachable morals, which render her superior to both Propertius and his new *domina*, the mistress in fact demands torture for the slaves who killed her with poison (vv.35-8). Moreover, she orders a fairer treatment for those who still remembered her after she died and that, for this reason, suffered the punishments of Propertius' new mistress (vv.39-46). Yet, although the *puella* claims that Propertius has been the "unfaithful" partner of the two (*perfide*, v.13), the reader knows well she has

[757] The dress is not specified as the Coan, yet the reader cannot think of any other *uestis* for Cynthia (1.2.2; cf. Tib. 2.3.53-4; 2.4.29-30).
[758] The *lena* Acanthis mentions the dress to her pupil courtesan (potentially Cynthia herself): 4.5.57. Cf. Hor. *Serm.* 1.2.101-2, who notes that the dress's transparency left little to the imagination of what was underneath (*Cois tibi paene uidere est/ut nudam*).
[759] See Chapter 1. Elegy 1.3 could be taken as an exception in that it features a 'Penelopean' Cynthia waiting for Propertius in her bedroom and accusing him of unfaithfulness when he eventually comes to her place (cf. esp. 1.3.35ff.). Yet, even here, Cynthia's chastity is called into question by her signs of post-coital slugghishness (*languida*, 1.3.2; matching Propertius': *languidus*, 1.3.38), followed by reference to her erotically tinged encounter with the god of sleep Sopor (vv.45-6: perhaps hiding a sexual encounter with another man; cf. Hodge & Battimore 1977:98).
[760] The *domina* owning the slave Lygdamus (a slave of Propertius' here) in elegy 3.6 could be Cynthia, yet she remained nameless. Hutchinson 2006:171 attempts a biographical explanation and argues that Cynthia would have gained enough money throughout her career to afford all this before dying.

always been at least as perfidious as him.[761] Similarly, even though Cynthia tries to distance herself from the greediness of her ex-lover's new mistress, the reader is well aware of her similar relationship to money.[762] To be sure, the rival with whom Propertius has erased Cynthia's memory and replaced her in the household is, just like Cynthia, a former sex worker that pretends to look like a respectable woman wrapped up in golden garments (vv.39-40).[763] When, in a second set of *mandata*, Cynthia orders that her devoted slave Latris never lend the mirror to the new *domina* (*deliciaeque meae Latris, cui nomen ab usu est/ne speculum dominae porrigat illa nouae,* vv.75-6), she metaphorically tries to interrupt the reader's association, as it were, between herself and the new mistress (her 'mirror image'), even though pre-knowledge on the *puella* has already induced the reader to make the link between the two women's former status. Whilst Cynthia and her substitute should have therefore been legally excluded from 'running' the domestic, their powerful presence in Propertius' *domus* lays bare the facility with which identity could be moulded against social, and specifically Augustan, expectations. As Propertius reveals, the passage from Suburran sex worker to *matrona* wrapped up in golden garments is not a difficult one to the point that drawing the boundary between a respectable and a non-respectable lady seems to have become an almost impossible task. This also clearly emerges when Cynthia makes reference to the treatment she has been accorded in the Underworld:

iuro ego Fatorum nulli reuolubile carmen,
tergeminusque canis sic mihi molle sonet,
me seruasse fidem. si fallo, uipera nostris
sibilet in tumulis et super ossa cubet.
nam gemina est sedes turpem sortita per amnem,
turbaque diuersa remigat omnis aqua.
unda Clytaemestrae stuprum uehit altera Cressae
portat mentitae lignea monstra bouis.
ecce coronato pars altera rapta phaselo,
mulcet ubi Elysias aura beata rosas,
qua numerosa fides, quaque aera rotunda Cybebes

[761] Cf. e.g. 1.8a; 1.11, 1.12; 1.15.
[762] Cf. e.g. 2.16; 4.5. The new mistress's melting of Cynthia's golden statue to make a dowry with Propertius' approval (vv.47-8) also coincides with the erasure of an important instrument of memory (cf. Eur. *Alc.* 329-68 for Alcestis' statue and Virg. *Aen.* 4.638-40 for a gender-reversed situation: Dido wanting to burn Aeneas' statue).
[763] Indeed, by wearing the *cyclas*, she disguises as an upper-class lady (cf. Dimundo *ad loc.*).

mitratisque sonant Lydia plectra choris.
Andromedeque et Hypermestre sine fraude maritae
narrant 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 uitae sancimus amores:
celo ego perfidiae crimina multa tuae.
(4.7.51-70)

The *puella* swears (*iuro ego...si fallo*) she has been granted a place in the Elysium (rather than Hell) at the side of some illustrious women from Greek myth, for she has preserved her faithfulness throughout her lifetime (*me seruasse fidem*). As she explains, the souls of the dead are ferried, according to their behaviour in life, to either the Elysium or Hell (*geminae sedes*), the two destinations being demarcated by the dark river flowing in between (*turpem sortita per amnem*).[764] Cynthia provides examples for each category of souls: treacherous women such as Clytaemnestra and Pasiphae, who both betrayed their husbands, have been rightfully destined to Hell, whereas heroines of the likes of Andromeda and Hypermestra have been ferried to the pleasant valley of the Elysium on the other bank of the river.[765] M. Janan has nevertheless rightly complicated the picture of this neat division: as she points out, the representation of Clytaemnestra and Pasiphae "still floating aimlessly on the Lethe" (v.57) implies that the river fails in its divisive function, for it leaves women "suspended in a repetitive limbo" rather than on one bank.[766] Furthermore, the same critic notes that Andromeda's and Hypermestra's description as *sine fraude* glosses over the fraud that they perpetrated against their relatives (respectively parents and sisters) in order to please their husbands.[767]

Yet, here the most bizarre element certainly lies in Cynthia's own affiliation with stainless wives (*sine fraude*), with whom she claims to have

[764] Compare Tib. 1.3.59-64; Virg. *Aen.* 6.441-45, 540.
[765] Compare esp. Hom. *Od.* 4.563-8. For Andromeda's legal status as wife, cf. Prop 2.28.22; note that all the Danaids (but Hypermestra) shall be taken as damned souls by Cornelia (see *infra* on 4.11).
[766] Janan 2001:110.
[767] Janan *ibidem*.

deserved beatitude in the Elysium.[768] To be sure, the *puella*'s claim to rightfully share the destiny of some impeccable mythological women is called into question by her previous reference to the illicit nature of her affair with Propertius (cf. *furta,* v.15; *dolis*, v.16), which makes her placement in the Elysium among proper "wives" (*maritae*) hardly imaginable. Be that as it may, even if we decide to believe in Cynthia's ascension into the Elysium, the attitude she displays there betrays her difficulty in acting like her fellows. Indeed, whereas both Andromeda and Hypermestra use their permanence in the Elysium as a therapeutic opportunity for recounting *(narrant*) their mythological vicissitudes (*historiae...suae*) and how, in these, they have distinguished themselves from other wicked women (respectively mother and sisters),[769] Cynthia conspicuously reveals that she hides (*celo ego*) from her fellows the juicy details of Propertius' unfaithfulness (*perfidiae crimina multa tuae*). Significantly, the verb *celo* deployed by Cynthia indicates a mixture of omission and deception.[770] Indeed, the mistress both "hides" and "deceives" her listeners: if she were to recount the whole timeline of her love story with Propertius, she would certainly turn out to be the more unfaithful partner of the two and, surely enough, the opposite of a *marita sine fraude*.[771] Therefore, instead of disclosing the real nature of her relationship with Propertius, she chooses to deceive the more pious fellows of the Elysium by fabricating a fallacious account of it as well as to grant herself a legitimate place among the irreproachable wives.[772] Cynthia's sabotage of truth intensifies her connection to Kristeva's 'abject'. Indeed, when Kristeva passes to draw the moral profile of the 'abject', she observes that the 'abject' can also be identified with the composite, ambiguous figures of "[t]he traitor, the liar, the criminal with a good conscience" (crossing the borders of 'good' and 'bad').[773] All these figures threaten the system by displaying that the law can be turned aside

[768] Cynthia is elsewhere compared to dead heroines (1.19.13-14; 2.28.49-54) but there the comparison is offered by her beauty, not by her morals (Dimundo *ad loc.*; cf. also La Penna 1977:210).
[769] Andromeda's mother Cassiope had flaunted to be more beautiful than her fellow Nereids and caused Andromeda's imprisonment by a sea monster (cf. ***maternis****...catenis*).
[770] *OLD* 1.
[771] *Contra* Dimundo *ad loc.*, who naïvely contends that Cynthia is even less fortunate than her fellow heroines because her verbal repression denies her the chance to "heal her amorous sufferings" (*sancimus amores*).
[772] Wallis 2016:8 pinpoints Cynthia's capacity to manipulate her narrative.
[773] Kristeva 1982:4.

or taken advantage from *ad hoc* if one knows how to manipulate it, and therefore, that the law is a fragile instrument of power.[774] The culmination of Cynthia's shrewd fabrication of the truth about herself and her relationship is achieved when she demands Propertius to burn the books that he dedicated to her in the past (*et quoscumque meo fecisti nomine uersus/ure mihi: laudes desine habere meas,* v.77-8) and to substitute them with a short epitaph preserving her memory:

ramosis Anio qua pomifer incubat aruis,
et numquam Herculeo numine pallet ebur,
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".
(4.7.81-86)

Although the *puella* refers to Books 1-3 as containing her *laudes*, she must be well aware that there were much more than praises for her in those collection. Indeed, the combustion of the *libelli* erases the more diffused literary depiction of Cynthia as unfaithful. Moreover, their replacement with the sepulchral epigram dictated by the *puella* herself serves to accentuate the woman's disenfranchisement from her *ante mortem* attributes by emphasising her (disputable) virtues. The epitaph would have to appear in a *locus amoenus* on the banks of the river Anio in the area of Tibur, where the splendid temple of Hercules Victor also lies.[775] Furthermore, its distich would define Cynthia as "golden" (*aurea*), an adjective that exalts the woman's physical and moral qualities,[776] so that the *puella* would give glory (*laus*) to the river flowing next to the inscription (*ripae...Aniene, tuae*). Without the proof from Books 1-3 and through this

[774] Kristeva 1982:15: "The abject is perverse because it neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition, a rule, or a law; but turns them aside, misleads, corrupts; uses them, takes advantage of them, the better to deny them".
[775] Hutchinson 2006:170 views the inscription as an αἴτιον (origin of a graffito to be written on a pillar).
[776] Dimundo *ad loc.* observes that the adjective *aureus* qualifies Cynthia with *summa pulchritudo, suauitas, uirtus*. Cf. Call. fr. 75.30-1 Pfeiffer (said of the *virgin* Cidippe).

misleading epigram, Cynthia once more aims at transforming herself into an exceptional woman *sine fraude*, one whose logical afterlife destination is the Elysium.

As we have been appreciating, the border between life/death re-crossed by Cynthia has made the *puella* re-mould her past identity as well as the moral standards attached to it: a self-appointed *marita sine fraude* (albeit with a past as a Suburran *meretrix*), the *puella* transgresses her usual identification with a courtesan by re-writing her socio-legal status for her own purposes. All in all, Cynthia's self-interested fabrication of a new morality, as well as a new legal code (*mandata*) to exercise over the domestic space of which she used to be part, makes the *puella* an 'abject' not only in respect to the individual that had thrown her away (or 'abjected' her), for the *amator* who cursed her, let her die in disgrace and replaced her with a new lover now has to acknowledge and succumb to her abrupt re-appearance from the Underworld,[777] but also in respect to the society of which she is part. Indeed, if Augustus was concerned with clear-cut social boundaries between women of different classes and, at the same time, with the legal power attributed to each, Cynthia transgresses the norms that the *princeps* was trying to impose in his contemporary propaganda. By making use of *her own* laws, the mistress in fact usurps, and thus, challenges the historical *leges* that would have excluded her from the society once dead, as nothing more than a once-beautiful courtesan. Cynthia's resistance to her biological combustion replaces her 'in between' life and death and simultaneously provides her with an 'interstitial space' where she is granted the right to speak and control the world she has left behind, with its own fragile norms. Neither alive nor dead, not completely forgetful nor fully reminiscent (and therefore only partly sincere),[778] Cynthia thwarts her banishment from Propertius' aetiological book and re-emerges *ex abrupto* to challenge both the *amator*'s poetic laws and Augustus' moral ones.

[777] Note how, at the end of the poem, Propertius is denied the possibility of answering back to Cynthia's accusation and, thus, to react to the fallaciousness of her speech. He limits himself to trying to embrace the mistress's *umbra* (v.96; cf. Hom. *Od.* 23.99-100; 1.19.7-10), a pointer to his rhetorical defeat.

[778] Retrospectively, if we translate (as does Dimundo *ad loc.*) *triuerat* as "had made her close the mouth", then Cynthia would have come back from the Underworld before drinking the Lethean water causing forgetfulness in the dead.

To round off the analysis on Cynthia, we may conclude by looking ahead to the only other poem from Book 4 featuring the woman: 4.8. I argue that elegy 4.8, which is usually read in tandem with 4.7 mainly for its similar intertextual affiliations, is worth recalling too, for it goes in the same thematic direction as its predecessor.[779] Indeed, it re-stages Cynthia's transgression into Propertius' *domus* and re-problematises the construction of her identity as that of a low-class courtesan by according her an extraordinary legal power over the domestic. Unexpectedly alive again,[780] in this other poem Cynthia comes back home to Propertius, even though, this time, she returns from the town of Lanuvium at the doors of Rome, a nearer periphery than the Greek Underworld. Appearing as a threatening 'monster' (significantly also one of Kristeva's theorised manifestations of the 'abject'),[781] Cynthia breaks down the door of Propertius' *domus* (4.8.49-52) to find out that, during her absence, the *amator* has been entertaining himself with two prostitutes. Therefore, she punishes the two sex workers (and the slave Lygdamus who has backed Propertius in committing his *perfidia*) before passing to impose a set of laws to Propertius through which he shall be prevented from cheating again. Finally, she purifies the *domus* and resolves to have sex with her lover. Cynthia's indoors *mandata* in particular offer an important thematic link to poem 4.7:

atque ait "admissae si uis me ignoscere culpae,
accipe, quae nostrae formula legis erit.
tu neque Pompeia spatiabere cultus in umbra,
nec cum lasciuum sternet harena Forum.

[779] 4.7's and 4.8's engagement with two Homeric intertexts, *Iliad* 23 and *Odyssey* 22-3 (and, additionally, with Virg. *Aen.* 4-6), suggests that the two pieces were written back-to-back and, thus, invites a juxtaposed reading: see esp. Warden 1996:119ff.; Allison 1980; Coutelle *ad loc*. For readings that emphasise Propertius' comic re-engagement of epics in both poems, see Komp 1988:126-7; Dee 1978:41; McKeown 1979:75; Wyke 2002:106-7.

[780] On 4.8's bizzarre ὕστερον πρότερον in respect to 4.7, see Janan 2001:114 with n4; Wyke 2002:102ff.

[781] Kristeva 1982:12-3 also includes the failed distinction between what is human and non-human (as in a 'monster') in the manifestations of the 'abject'. Cf. esp. ***non operosa*** *comis,* ***sed furibunda*** *decens,* v.52; ***fulminat*** *illa oculis et quantum femina* ***saeuit/spectaculum*** *capta nec minus urbe fuit,* vv.55-56; *et mea peruersa* ***sauciat*** *ora manu/imponitque notam collo* ***morsuque cruentat****/praecipue oculos, qui meruere,* ***ferit***, vv.64-66. Kristeva's idea that the 'abject' is that which is both terrifying and attractive is also relevant here, for Cynthia is both (cf. esp. *furibunda decens*; *spectaculum*).

colla caue inflectas ad summum obliqua theatrum,
aut lectica tuae se det aperta morae.
Lygdamus in primis, omnis mihi causa querelae,
ueneat et pedibus uincula bina trahat."
indixit leges: respondi ego "legibus utar".
riserat imperio facta superba dato.
(4.8.73-82)

The mistress gives measures intended to restrict Propertius' spatial mobility through Rome's cityscape and to elevate the man's moral conduct. Indeed, Propertius must skip the Portico of Pompey as well as the gladiatorial games at the Forum; furthermore, he must repress his erotic gaze at the theatre and avoid lingering at the open *lectica* of a tempting woman in the middle of the street.[782] Much like in 4.7, Cynthia's application of *her own* laws (*formula legis*) plays against Augustus' promulgation of *his own* laws which prevented a woman like Cynthia from withholding a powerful role as legislator in the domestic sphere.[783] The woman's legal authority at home is yet another manifestation of her socio-legal empowerment and, specifically, of her affiliation with a chaste wife regulating the moral conduct of her reproachable partner. To this extent, the Homeric intertextual framework behind the composition of elegy 4.8 is worth bearing in mind, for it strengthens Cynthia's association with the exemplary Penelope in particular. Although critics have focused on Propertius' debt to *Odyssey* 22, where Odysseus' slaughter of the suitors in his palace offers the hypotext to Cynthia's revenge against the two *scortilla*,[784] Odysseus' and Penelope's marital re-conjunction in their thalamos in *Odyssey* 23 lies behind Propertius' and Cynthia's re-conjunction in bed (4.8.87ff.; both scenes serving as the τέλος of respectively the epic and elegiac love-stories).[785] Thus, if Cynthia is first of all identified with the avenging Odysseus slaughtering the suitors in his

[782] On the erotics of theatres, cf. General Introduction and Chapter 3.
[783] *Contra* Dimundo 1990:21, who naïvely views the *mandata* as a generic return to the jurisprudence of *seruitium amoris.* Yet, a domestic scene of revenge serves as a gender-reversed enactment of the situation described in Augustus' *lex de adulteriis* (where the *uir* could legitimately punish his unfaithful wife).
[784] Evans 1971 *passim* has especially pointed out a number of close echoes: e.g. *Od.* 22.17-20 = 4.8.53, 44; *Od.* 22.361-3 = 4.8.68-9; *Od.* 22.452-3, 481-2, 493-4 = 4.8.83-4.
[785] Cf. esp. *Od.* 23.254-55, 289, 294. Janan 2001:117 sees 4.8 as "a conspectus on [Propertius' and Cynthia's] entire relationship, especially since it is [the elegist's] collection's very last word on the subject".

palace, she is also compared to the figure of Penelope going to bed with Odysseus.[786] Cynthia's wifely concern with 'ordering' the household is particularly emphasised in the ritualistic gestures she performs at the end of the elegy:

dein, quemcumque locum externae tetigere puellae,
suffiit, at pura limina tergit aqua,
imperat et totas iterum mutare lucernas,
terque meum tetigit sulpuris igne caput.
atque ita mutato per singula pallia lecto
respondi, et toto soluimus arma toro.
(4.8.83-88)

Whilst these acts of purification (*suffit...tergit...imperat mutare...tetigit sulpuris*) have not been interpreted univocally,[787] they surely represent a kind of domestic performance that the legitimate *domina* of the household would carry out, for their aim is to transform the polluted household into a *casta domus.* By excluding the two *externae puellae* who have contaminated the indoor space with their impure "touch" (*quemcumque locum...tetigere*) and rendering the inside space an immaculate space unthreatened by external menaces, Cynthia draws Propertius into a safe domestic border (demarcated by neat thresholds: *pura limina tergit aqua*) in which the couple can start their relationship anew, not only with a new moral code to adhere to but also as in a quasi-marital environment evoking Penelope's and Odysseus' purified palace. Yet, as much as Cynthia tries to re-fashion herself as *casta* in a *casta domus*, the reader cannot forget that she has just come back from Lanuvium where, as Propertius suspects, she has just had

[786] On Cynthia's gender-bending depiction in 4.8 (male and female, Odyssean and Penelopean), cf. Turpin 1973:159-71; Janan 2001:116; Mastroiacovo 2005:383-93; for Cynthia qua Penelope, see n759 *supra*.
[787] Dalzell 1980:34 argues that Propertius' invented form of purification was unknown to religion and was meant "to remove all traces of the unwelcome visitors". This is a further link to the narrative of *Od.* 22-23, in which the protection and purification of the palace features as a major theme (and is carried out by Odysseus with the same cleaning material possessed by Cynthia: vv.480ff.). Compare Homer's mention of the altar of Zeus Herkeios (22.330ff.), the protector of the house, with Propertius' mention of the Genius (v.69).

illicit sex with yet another lover (the despicable *uulsus nepos*), in spite of her alleged participation in the rites of Juno Sospes (*causa fuit Iuno, sed mage causa Venus*, v.16).[788]

The reader, as much as Propertius, is not given access to Lanuvium but is asked to imagine what went on beyond the doors of this small town (*Lanuuii* ***ad portas****, ei mihi, solus eram,* v.48).[789] With its ambiguous function as both the holy site of a rite from which only chaste girls come back (*si fuerint castae, redeunt in colla parentum*, v.13)[790] and yet also a potential destination for illicit sex, Lanuvium is presented as a mysterious place from which Cynthia returns as either a chaste or an unchaste woman. Yet, at the end of a narrative that has constantly invited us to see Cynthia as a cheater (particularly in areas outside the *Vrbs*), it is hard to believe that Cynthia has indeed not betrayed Propertius one more time. Rather than believing that Cynthia has proven her chastity through the Juno Sospes' rite (she has not been eaten by the snake killing the *incestae puellae*), we are rather made to think that she has been shrouding her unfaithfulness beneath a veil of chastity. Cynthia is a 'polluted' *externa puella* herself returning indoors and pretending to be the opposite (thus, she fulfils again the behaviour expected of the Kristevan 'abject', the "composite, the ambiguous" and the "criminal with a good conscience").[791] To put it differently, we may think that Cynthia is no more than a "fake Penelope", pretending to have the moral superiority for punishing her partner for precisely the crime for which she is also guilty.[792]

Because of this, the final image of Cynthia and Propertius sharing a bed as well as a (purified) household together in the manner of the happily-ever-after Homeric couple looks rather uncanny.[793] Paradoxically enough, the *puella* who refused to be tamed and cloistered within the domestic thresholds for once

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[788] For a similar eroto-religious escapade, cf. 2.32.1ff. (discussed in Chapter 3).

[789] I agree with Hutchinson *ad loc.*, for whom Propertius is not physically at Lanuvium, but mentally there with his jealous mind (cf. how he addresses the Via Appia to tell him what went on outside of town: vv.17-20). To a certain extent, Lanuvium is not different from the Underworld in poem 4.7, an unreachable 'other space' for the *amator* where Cynthia proved chaste only according to her own deposition.

[790] On the rite of Juno Sospes, cf. Mastroiacovo 2008 *passim.*

[791] Kristeva 1980:4.

[792] Parallels can again be drawn with 1.3 (Warden 1980:75): see n759 *supra.*

[793] Janan 2001:127 observes that the hints of failed sexual encounters hovering in the poem (Cynthia and her improbable lover; Propertius and the two prostitutes) might suggest that the two elegiac lovers are also doomed not to enjoy themselves in their *lectum,* so that their armistice (*soluimus arma*, v.88) might in fact result in a re-engagement of their hostilities.

becomes the guarantor of an apparently orthodox *domus*, co-habiting under the same roof as (and never abandoning) the *amator*. Indeed, by reversing the usual spatial asymmetry of the elegiac narrative, which routinely places the lovers either inside or outside the *domus* but hardly ever on the same side of the threshold, 4.8 re-visits the domestic framework of its Homeric intertext; yet, the poem offers a rather perplexing and haunting depiction of domesticity, one that distances itself from the serenity of *Odyssey* 23 and recalls the haunted *domus* of poem 4.7. If the bed functions for both couples (the epic and the elegiac) as a long-awaited place for the lovers' re-union,[794] in the case of Propertius and Cynthia it is instead the site for an uncanny re-conjunction. Cynthia is in fact only *prima facie* different, a quasi-*matrona* displaying, punishing and imposing faithfulness in her marriage. As the reader knows well, she is still the treacherous mistress of the past and her sneaky visit to Lanuvium has born witness to this. The *limen* of the house closes and inside lie a spatially confined (*captus*, v.70) man and a ruling woman (*imperio...dato*, v.82) liminally flirting with two antithetical models of femininity – or, rather, displaying one and hiding the other – in what looks like a worryingly fake *casta domus*.

5.4. Cornelia, an *onus* away from *domus*

Whilst Cynthia is attributed the power of re-establishing order in her household like a *matrona* via her uncanny re-transgression of the domestic borders in both poems 4.7 and 4.8 (respectively as 'ghost' and 'monster'), in elegy 4.11 the *matrona* Cornelia is instead marginalised from *domus,* both her 'household' and the 'Roman homeland', where she could flaunt the status of *matrona.* Cornelia's certainties about her lifetime achievements significantly vacillate before the actual beginning of her self-defence speech (vv.27ff.) and,

[794] Thus, Komp 1988:126n1. Note how, throughout the Propertian *corpus*, the bed had so far functioned as the space of hardly-ever experienced erotic satisfaction in previous poems (see Chapter 1, esp. on 2.14-15).

more specifically, amid the description of her spatial displacement from 'R/home' into the Underworld's subterranean prison:[795]

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
(4.11.11-14)

Now that she has crossed the *limen* between Rome and Hell, a door that has been shut forever behind her back, Cornelia wonders which advantages can derive from having been an illustrious *matrona*: neither her *coniugium* to Paulus nor her forebearers' fame have in fact managed to smooth her Parcae. The woman has turned, like anybody else, into a light "weight" (*sum...onus*) that "can be held together by a single hand" (*quod digitis quinque legatur*). Cornelia's neutralization into a "weight" is a first hint at her dis-identification from a Roman *matrona*, for the contemporary Augustan *leges Iuliae* required that a high-class lady wore the class-defining *stola* in order to be recognised as such.[796] Whilst at some point in her speech Cornelia will remember how she used to wear precisely this garment (*et tamen emerui generosos **uestis** honores*, v.61), also as a result of her commendable observance of the Augustan *ius tres liberorum*,[797] the woman presents herself to the infernal court as an undressed, vulnerable corpse devoid of what would secure her a place at the top of the Roman social pyramid.[798] By giving up on the *stola*, the *matrona* therefore loses what *de visu* would betray her privileged condition and, perhaps more disturbingly, what would distinguish her from an immoral woman, since Augustus made respectable women lose their *stola* when charged with adultery.[799]

[795] vv.1-10, 15-17, already quoted *supra*.
[796] Milnor 2005:112-3.
[797] That is, the fact that she begot three children as expected from the *lex de maritandis*.
[798] Note that Cornelia's funeral torch has deprived her of her *caput* (*subdita **nostrum/detraheret** lecto fax inimica **caput***, vv.9-10), a word indicating (at once) "personhood", "civic identity" and "physical body" (cf. Hutchinson *ad loc*.).
[799] See *supra*.

Cornelia's identification with an *onus* of "bones" (*ossa*, vv.20, 102) further strengthens her connection to Kristeva's 'abject' in particular, for her decaying yet speaking body, much like Cynthia's, "does not respect [the] borders" between life and death. Cornelia's ghost in fact reminds the reader of the woman's 'uncanny' existence in the interstice between existence and eternal rest.[800] Yet, Cornelia's connection with the 'abject' does not only have to do with her disturbing looks but also with the potential Kristeva attributes to women to contest the phallocentric structure of their societies. As the *matrona* reveals in these same lines, the Underworld is also the place where the honours that the patriarchal society (*uir; aui*) has dispensed her seem to have lost their importance. The *matrona*'s insistence on the futility of both her marriage to Paulus and her affiliation to an illustrious family in fact reveals that Augustus' laws and their embedded distinction between respectable and non-respectable women, as well as their emphasis on marriage and female moral conduct, stop making sense when a woman crosses the borders of 'home' and 'homeland'. Cornelia's status as *matrona*, construed and validated by the now absent 'men of her life' and, as we have already noted, impossible to decipher from her attire, is thus called into question even before she starts her defence.

This monologue preceding Cornelia's self-defence speech proper is worth bearing in mind when we proceed to read through the *matrona*'s harangue, which is also permeated by a sense of uncertainty regarding Cornelia's socio-legal identity. I argue that the major problem emerging from Cornelia's speech comes from her wrong assumption that 'home' is still something present and available for her to rely on in order to persuade the court about her status.[801] The woman's obsessive repetition of the word *domus* or similar words indicating 'home' and 'homeland' to validate her condition in fact plays against her dislocation outside 'R/home' into the "dark house of Hades" (*fuscae deus...aulae*, v.5).[802] In this other

[800] It is worth remembering that Cynthia also deployed the word *onus* in her own speech (*uectum nauta recenset* ***onus***, 4.7.92), where it referred to her own and her fellow *umbrae*'s bodies wandering outside Hades during their nightly escapades. Cynthia's transformation into a "weight" had also substituted her terrestrial appearance (as *scripta puella*: Books 1-3) and made her inhabit the liminal corporeality of a 'ghost'.

[801] See Leen 2000 on *domus* as an instrument of invective in Cicero's attack against Clodia in the *Pro Caelio*.

[802] Curran 1968:137-8 notes that the imagery of 'fire' (*rogos,* v.8; *fax*, v.10; *facem*, v.46; *rogum*, v.72; cf. Cornelia's cremated body: *cineres*, v.74, v.92; *ossa*, v.20, vv.58, 102; *inusta*, v.74) and 'water' (esp. vv.6-8, 15-16, 69-70; cf. the references to Tantalus, v.24, and the Danaids, vv.27-8,

subterranean *domus*, a mythological Greek space rather than a historical Roman space, Cornelia looks more like a 'guest' than a 'host'. Therefore, her Augustan idealization, built upon her exemplary role at 'home', fails to make sense, for the new Cornelia has been displaced from precisely the 'homely' space that would confirm her past identity. What Propertius provides us with is rather an 'uncanny' version of Cornelia, 'familiar' and yet again 'unhomely' (as typical of the 'abject'). Throughout her harangue, Cornelia asks validation of status especially from both the ancestral and the marital *domus*:

ipsa loquor pro me: si fallo, poena sororum
infelix umeros urgeat urna meos.
si cui fama fuit per auita tropaea decori,
Afra Numantinos regna loquuntur auos:
altera maternos exaequat turba Libones,
et domus est titulis utraque fulta suis.
(4.11.27-32)

The martial *uirtus* of Cornelia's fatherly and motherly ancestors (*per auita tropaia*; *auos*), namely the Africani, the Numantinii and the Libones, has "filled her household with trophies" (*et* ***domus*** *est titulis utraque fulta suis*). Yet, the reference to the illustrious Roman *gentes* to which Cornelia belonged comes right after her mention of the subterranean court (vv.18-22): this is made up of Greek foreigners, who are certainly not familiar with the military deeds of the *matrona*'s family. In one case only, a judge may know her ancestors. Yet, Aeacus (v.19) was the founder of the dynasty over which Cornelia's ancestors had triumphed and, therefore, he might still feel resentment towards the woman's *domus* rather than being impressed by its achievements.[803] Be that as it may, Cornelia does not seem to register that her addressees are not Romans. The woman's misconception about

both victims of watery punishments) permeating the elegy are all drawn from the Roman marriage context, where they are presented to the bride after she has stepped into her groom's household as symbols of life and wifehood (cf. Ov. *Ars* 2.598, *Fast.* 4.783ff.). Therefore, the *matrona*'s entry into the Underworld looks like the performance of an uncanny wedding rite inside Hades' infernal *domus*. As Janan 2001:157-8 observes, the presentation of Cornelia's arrival in the Underworld as a raping act (*rapina*, vv.62, 65-66) after all strengthens her link to Hades' wife Proserpina.

[803] Cf. Richardson 1977 *ad loc.*: "his examination of her case might be expected to be the most severe".

her interlocutors is reflected in her misconception about the space she is currently inhabiting, for although she has left 'R/home' and reached a foreign periphery (Greek; subterranean), she still views the surrounding territory as a *forum* (*foro*, v.22), overlapping with Rome's physical and conceptual epicentre.[804] Thus, the *matrona*'s agreement to receive, in case she is caught lying (*si fallo*), the same treatment as the Danaids' (vv.27-8), a perverted group of Egypto-Greek heroines that certainly deserved eternal damnation in Hell,[805] becomes a hugely problematic premise to her self-defence. Indeed, it may well in fact be the case that her addressees, to whom her past *domus* is unknown, fail to recognise the truth in her words. Yet, if nobody knows her family's glorious past, what should prevent her from being taken as a Danaid kind of lady?[806] At a later stage of her defence, Cornelia returns to mention her ancestors amid a heartfelt invocation to her 'bigger *domus*', the homeland Rome:

testor maiorum cineres tibi, Roma, colendos,
sub quorum titulis, Africa, tunsa iaces,
et Persen proauo stimulantem pectus Achille,
quique tuas proauo fregit Achille domos,
me neque censurae legem mollisse nec ulla
labe mea uestros erubuisse focos.
non fuit exuuiis tantis Cornelia damnum:
quin et erat magnae pars imitanda domus.
nec mea mutata est aetas, sine crimine tota est:
uiximus insignes inter utramque facem.
(4.11.37-46)

Cornelia here deploys Rome's invulnerability against a foreign land that has fallen into Rome's *imperium* as the barometer of her own invulnerability qua

[804] See Chapter 2 on *forum* qua Rome's symbolic centre.
[805] On the Danaids as paradoxically the 'chastest' (refusing incestuous marriage to their cousins) and the 'most deviant' (refusing the paternal law; ultimately penetrated through rape; ethnic Other: see Chapter 3 for their connection to Cleopatra), cf. Janan 2001:157. On Hypermestra as the only exception among these perverted sisters (and thus the only one deserving afterlife beatitude), see Cynthia's speech *supra*.
[806] Cf. how Cornelia also points to Scribonia (vv.49-58) as a role model. Yet, Johnson 2009:175 has noted the ambiguity in the reference to Cornelia's mother (Cornelia was linked to Augustus "only by virtue of a dissolved marriage").

casta matrona.[807] In particular, by summoning as witnesses (*testor*) the exemplary deeds of her forefathers, through which Rome established geographical and ethnic hierarchies over the conquered Other (Africa), the *matrona* tries to validate her irreprehensible observance of the censorial laws (*me neque...mollisse*) and, through it, the respectability of her household, which she never shamed (*neque ulla/labe mea uestros erubuisse* ***focos***). Yet, the logic of her argument is once again problematic. First of all, considering that Cornelia presents Aemilius Paulus' victory (*quique...fregit*) over the King of Macedonia Perseus (at Pidna, 168 BCE) as the triumph over the household (***domos***) of the descendent of Achilles, one could ponder how effective a rhetorical strategy is to diminish the power of Greek heroes in front of a mythological Greek court. More importantly though, Cornelia asks the foreign court to follow her, one more time, into the sphere of Roman history and to take the *tituli* obtained by her forbearers as proof of her status. This is again an impossible request, for her addressees, who live *outside the Roman world*, are not familiar with Rome's military successes.[808] The woman's distance from the 'domestic' patriarchy (*auos...colendos*) ensuring her success in the present trial further connects her to Kristeva's 'abject'. Cornelia has unconsciously accessed a peripheral territory where no one can bear witness to her own words (*ipsa loquor pro me*, v.27), in spite of all the efforts she makes to be taken as the 'Cornelia' that Augustan Rome has come to know so well. Yet, from her space of banishment, a space fittingly given to the representative of a marginal group of the phallocentric Roman society (woman), she can offer her criticism of the centre. Indeed, Cornelia lays bare the fragility of the very system to which she belonged, for she lays bare the potential futility of all the benefits that masculine Rome used to grant her. If she ends up defeated at her trial, this indeed shall happen because, when she is displaced from 'home' (at the centre) to a space where 'home' does not mean much to its inhabitants (at the periphery), a respectable woman can be easily turned into another kind of lady. Thus, the

[807] Janan 2001:155-6.

[808] To be sure, Cornelia inadvertently commits the mistake of remarking that she *was* – and she is no more – part of that great *domus* (***erat*** *magnae pars imitanda domus*), a statement that emphasises how she has separated herself from that *domus* and its exemplarity. The temporal limitation is here further enhanced by Cornelia's self-admission that her irreproachable morals (*non...damnum; sine crimine*) lasted from her marriage until her death (*insignes inter utramque facem*): what will happen after?

Augustan laws securing a *matrona*'s status, Cornelia implies, have a limited effectiveness in time and space.

The other *domus* that Cornelia uses as a means of validating her morals is then the marital, both as it appeared in the past and as it shall remain in the future. Yet, even when she makes reference to her bond with Paulus and her children, Cornelia's status vacillates, instead of receiving confirmation:

mox, ubi iam facibus cessit praetexta maritis,
uinxit et acceptas altera uitta comas,
iungor, Paulle, tuo sic discessura cubili:
in lapide hoc uni nupta fuisse legar.
(4.11.33-36)

Although the woman argues to have accessed Paulus' bedroom (*tuo cubili*) to remain a *uniuira* (*uni nupta*) through her lifetime, she utilises a piece of proof, the tombstone (*in lapide*), that remains not only unavailable to the court, for it belongs to the Roman space that has been excluded from the judges' view, but also to herself. Indeed, Cornelia betrays uncertainties over what has actually been written on her epitaph: she can only hope (*legar*) to have been indicated as a faithful wife.[809] Her ignorance is symptomatic of her distance from the epitaph itself, which is situated, like the addressed Paulus (*Paule*), on the other side of the threshold. Rather than reassuring the court that she has been a *uniuira*, Cornelia thus ultimately corroborates the suspicions over her association with a Danaid, for even the marital *domus* (and, specifically, the epitaph her relatives wrote about her) is not there to confirm her stainless reputation. To be sure, the spatial gap between Cornelia and her relatives becomes transparent later in her speech, when she suggests to Paulus that he should try and speak to her image in the future "as if she were going to answer" (*atque ubi secreto nostra ad simulacra loqueris/**ut responsurae** singular uerba iace*, vv.83-4). This statement in fact implies that

[809] *Legar*, which I take as subjunctive ("may I read"), can alternatively be read as future indicative ("I shall read"). Yet, even so, the verb conveys an impossible action, for Cornelia cannot return to the world of the living and read the epitaph. Note further the implied spatial distancing in *sic discessura*.

Cornelia's answers are nothing more than an illusion, for there shall be lack of communication between her and her family members. Therefore, when she invites her daughter to follow her role model (*nos imitata*, v.68) by marrying one man only (*unum...uirum*) and sustain the household with a good offspring (*et serie fulcite genus*, v.69), we are left with no certainty that her message shall actually come through.[810] Similarly, the orders directed to Paulus may well fall on deaf ears:

fungere maternis uicibus, pater: illa meorum
omnis erit collo turba ferenda tuo.
oscula cum dederis tua flentibus, adice matris:
tota domus coepit nunc onus esse tuum.
(…)
seu tamen aduersum mutarit ianua lectum,
sederit et nostro cauta nouerca toro,
coniugium, pueri, laudate et ferte paternum:
capta dabit uestris moribus illa manus;
nec matrem laudate nimis: collata priori
uertet in offensas libera uerba suas.
seu memor ille mea contentus manserit umbra
et tanti cineres duxerit esse meos,
discite uenturam iam nunc sentire senectam,
caelibis ad curas nec uacet ulla uia.
(4.11.75-8; 85-94)

These orders to the *uir* are not only puzzling for the fact that they shall remain unheard, but also for their content. Cornelia initially asks Paulus to take over from her own interrupted maternal duties (*maternis uicibus*), which includes giving warm embraces and "the mother's kiss" to their children (vv.75-6), and, more generally, accepting "the burden of the whole household" (***tota domus*** *coepit nunc onus esse tuum*). Yet, whilst Cornelia contemplates the possibility

[810] Contrast Cynthia's effective delivery of *mandata* inside Propertius' *domus* (discussed *supra*). The spatial distance in between *mater* and *filia* is here aptly emphasised by the reference to the departing *cumba* of Charon that has ferried her to the subterranean world (*mihi cumba...soluitur*, vv.69-70). On the wicked destiny of the Cornelii, see Hallett 1985:85-6 (e.g. Cornelia's son Paulus, mentioned at v.63, fell into disgrace in 8 AD).

that Paulus shall replicate her own model of monogamy (*uniuira*) by refusing to re-marry (cf. vv.91-4), the woman nevertheless goes on to picture a different domestic *ménage* for the years to come, in which Paulus shall rely on a new wife in order to run the household, the "step-mother" (vv.85ff.).[811] As it has been observed, the presence of the *nouerca* within the Cornelii's domestic walls constitutes a potential threat to the *domus*, since, for a Roman audience, it evokes negative mythological examples of stepmothers.[812] Indeed, the possible re-appearance of the maternal in the form of the stepmother is not only worrying to the extent that the *nouerca* shall certainly fail to replicate Cornelia's exemplary motherhood, but also because the acceptance of the *nouerca* shall result in the oblivion of Cornelia's example. Furthermore, here too, Cornelia shows yet another point of connection with the Kristevan 'abject', specifically given the 'abject''s aforementioned primal association with the repudiated maternal body. Whilst the *matrona* freights her children with the burden of the separation from her own maternal body (a violent and painful process, according to Kristeva, here even more so considering Cornelia's *premature* death), she also exposes them to the threat of a co-habitation with a potentially bad mother, as if she could return to *domus* only via a worse *dopplegänger*.

All in all, then, Cornelia's transient presence outside Rome (*domus*) and simultaneously also outside the Elysium, a space where her virtues at Rome would be matched by her eternal beatitude (therefore, a mirror-space of her past *domus*), provides her with a territory in which those values that have made her exceptional in the past are potentially subverted because of their ceased applicability. The woman may display a blind belief in the "natural law" (*mi natura leges dedit*, v.47), those which "came down to her by bloodline" (*a sanguine ductas*) and which secured her with a privileged socio-legal position throughout her lifetime.[813] Yet, she seems concomitantly aware that the discourse of jurisprudence does not go hand in hand with that of ethnicity and class anymore, for she has been displaced into a foreign landscape of myth provided with its own

[811] The penetrability of the household is aptly emphasised by the door's acknowledgement of a different woman in the bedroom (vv.85-6).
[812] On the *nouerca* as a disruptive figure (note her possible etymology from *nouus*), see Watson 1995: esp.92-134. Janan 2001:162 puzzles at Cornelia's acceptance of a substitute figure, for it contrasts Alcestis' (one of the literary model for Cornelia: see Curran 1968:136) request to her husband Admetus not to re-marry after her death.
[813] It is quite ironic that a *bloodless* heap of *ossa* speaks of "rights of *blood*".

laws (v.3), as opposed to the historical reality of Rome and, on a smaller scale, of her *domus*. Notably, by end of the poem, Cornelia still expresses in the subjunctive mode her desire to see her worth matched by the judges' decision (*moribus et caelum patuit: **sim** digna merendo/cuius honoratis ossa uehantur auis*, 4.11.101-2):[814] the woman might be confident that she has managed to persuade the court and thus that she shall ascend into 'Heaven', yet she is, and we are, left with no certainties. We still find Cornelia in the same position, ready to "be carried" (*uehantur*) somewhere else and yet standing still. This nevertheless does not mean that the Underworld is an utterly disempowering space to occupy. Ultimately, and for all her pleas to be readmitted, the *matrona*'s marginalisation in Hell frees her from subjection to the centre, and specifically, to Augustus and his laws. As Cornelia had passingly remembered, the *princeps* Augustus himself was present at her funeral among the larger community of Rome:

maternis laudor lacrimis urbisque querelis,
defensa et gemitu Caesaris ossa mea.
ille sua nata dignam uixisse sororem
increpat, et lacrimas uidimus ire deo.
(4.11.57-60)

The mourning *princeps* is comparable to Paulus at the beginning of the poem. Indeed, Augustus too is a sort of *exclusus amator* from Cornelia,[815] whom he 'loved' as the embodiment of the *mores* that he wanted Romans to imitate but that he had to let go.[816] Although in contemporary times the periphery was intended by the *princeps* as a space of exile for those deviant women who did not conform to the traditional morals imposed by his norms – see Julia Minor's aforementioned exile on the desolate Pandataria –, Propertius in fact presents us with the exile of a woman that Augustus would have wanted to stay in the 'centre'

[814] I accept Heyworth's *auis* (instead of *aquis*).
[815] Cf. Augustus' elegiac *gemitus* among the *querelae* of the whole urban community (on elegiac Paulus, see *supra*).
[816] *Legibus nouis me auctore latis multa exempla maiorum exolescentia iam ex nostro saeculo reduxi et ispe multarum rerum **exempla imitanda** posteris tradidi*, Aug. *RG* 8.5.

for every Roman woman to copy. The central woman is made peripheral and it is from the margins of the society that took her as a role model that she interrogates the validity of her past 'domestic' identity altogether. This is, as I have posited, a foreign space outside the Roman law, where any Augustan measures could cease to be effective and, thus, any normative identities could start being re-negotiated. This space exposes the potential threat to the phallocentric system's 'domestication' of women in fixed types and, more generally, the futility of thinking about people in binary terms. In this *limen*, centre and periphery, Self and Other, merge together to upset the status quo.

5.5. Conclusions

In this final Chapter, we have returned full-circle to the space of the *ianua*, with which this research has started (Chapter 1), yet, this time, a door that separates life from death, rather than the interior and exterior of a Roman *domus*. Here too, we have looked at the double function of *ianua* as the now impenetrable, now penetrable *limen* (or 'l*hymen*') that either blocks or allows passage to those who find themselves on the threshold. The door, which had already split the *amator/poeta* into an ambivalent figure (*exclusus/dominus*), has confirmed its powerful role as 'third space', a space around which identities move and change, are deferred and made to differ (*différance*). In the texts I have analysed, I have shown how the *puella* Cynthia's and the *matrona* Cornelia's relationship in respect to the 'door' is specular. Whilst Cynthia has found her way back from the periphery (the Greek Underworld) to the centre (Rome; and, microscopically, Propertius' *domus*), Cornelia has been accorded a very different destiny: from the centre (Rome; her illustrious *domus*), she has come to inhabit the inhospitable periphery on the other side of the life/death threshold (the Greek Underworld). I have argued that the two women's displacement inside and outside Hades plays against the Augustan construction of the female in relation to the domestic:

Cynthia, a woman that the *amator* has always tried to 'domesticate',[817] is finally made to inhabit the epicentre of elegiac love as some sort of legitimate *domina*.[818] Cornelia, a woman that embodies the ideal of the 'domestic(ated)' woman, is instead excluded from the *domus* that made her unanimously the 'most Roman' of all Roman women into a foreign space where laws are different from the homeland's (*exclusa*). Although Augustus would have liked to see Cynthia and Cornelia 'fixed' in their normative positions (Self 'at home' vs. Other 'outside home', as per his panoptic control of identities across space), we have seen how Propertius chooses a different destiny for both ladies from that expected by the imperial propaganda.[819]

This choice comes with further political implications, for Cynthia's invasion and Cornelia's loss of *domus* do not only challenge the effectiveness of the Augustan laws (not all *domus* would turn into ideal *castae domus*),[820] but, more broadly, also the idea of an invulnerable Empire nurtured by 'good' women and devoid of 'bad' ones. Indeed, the contemporary measures on the Romans' private life ultimately constructed the ideal of an invulnerable *domus* ('home') as the (microscopic) reflection of an invulnerable 'home-land' (*patria*),[821] which, according to the contemporary imperial logic, needed to be kept safe and prosperous (particularly after the turmoiled period of the civil wars, when the collapse of the 'domestic' had resulted in the subversion of the Republican State and internal strife).[822] Instead of presenting an invulnerable 'home-land' sustained

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[817] Remember Cynthia's primal mythological association with an anti-Atalanta, that is, a woman impossible to "tame" and (at once) "bring home" (*ergo ille potuit uelocem* ***domuisse*** *puellam.../...in me tardus Amor non ullas cogitat artis,* 1.1.15, 17). Cf. Chapter 3, where I discussed a different attempt, on Cynthia's part, to evade the *centre*.

[818] In virtue of the narrative connection between 4.7 and 4.8, where Cynthia returns home "for good", I have shown how this co-habitation looks permanent (rather than temporary) against the standard elegiac displacement from *domus*.

[819] In this, I have diverged especially from Dimundo 1990:93-94, who contends that the poems maintain the social hierarchy between women (Cornelia can confirm her moral integrity also through Rome's communitarian mourning, whilst Cynthia does not have anybody to cry for her death and remains a disadvantaged woman).

[820] To this extent, Propertius subtly anticipates Tacitus' openly pessimistic observations on the *leges Iuliae* as having done nothing but threatening the very households that they tried to safeguard (*cum* ***omnis domus*** *delatorum interpretationibus* ***subuerteretur****, utque antehac flagitiis ita tunc legibus laborabatur*, Tac. *Ann.* 3.25).

[821] Augustus' title of *pater patriae* (2 BCE), through which he became the *paterfamilias* of all the Romans, made the equation between Rome and a (patriarchal) 'home' explicit (cf. esp. Severy 2003:3).

[822] On the connection between civil wars and the subversion of the domestic and, thus, of the State, cf. Hor. *C*. 3.6.17–20: *fecunda culpae saecula nuptias/primum inquinauere* ***et genus et domos/hoc fonte deriuata clades/in patriam*** *populumque fluxit* (compare McAuley 2016:40ff.).

by positive female figures, Propertius explores a Rome with 'Cynthia(s)' inside and 'Cornelia(s)' outside the national borders, as well as a Rome where social borders dividing the womenfolk in binary categories are transgressed. We could perhaps look at Propertius' Rome as a *centre* contaminated by 'strangers' appearing on its thresholds (and, in the case of Cynthia, even conquering the centre from the *limina*). Indeed, whilst Cynthia and Cornelia belong to the nether world of the dead (and death has cast them out, or 'abjected' them, from the upper world), their speaking *umbrae* (both reaching the Roman audience on the other side of the threshold) still work to haunt the *patria*'s borders.

Significantly, Kristeva's theory of the 'abject', with which I have interpreted Cynthia's and Cornelia's aberrant positions, is further developed in the philosopher's later work on the figure of the 'stranger', that is, the 'immigrant', 'the 'refugee' or the 'asylum seeker'.[823] Kristeva makes the connection between the 'abject' and the 'stranger' explicit when she considers the borders that the society draws against him in order to maintain the status quo. As she argues, the stateless 'stranger' is constructed as Other by the hosting society, which either neutralise his 'Otherness' (those characteristics that render him 'alien' and 'dangerous') or develop a defence mechanism that ultimately justifies the violence perpetrated against him.[824] Yet, the State does not always succeed in its process of either excluding or neutralising the Other (in turning him into a controlled 'object'). The 'stranger' can in fact remain put at the threshold of the nation, from where he resists his marginalisation (as an 'abject', rather than object) and fight for the integration of his difference inside.[825] As I have been arguing, this is precisely the function of the revenant ghosts of Cynthia's and Cornelia's. They are two 'strangers' that upset the binary logic of centre/periphery as well as the way this spatial opposition overlaps with a hierarchy between antithetical types of women, two 'strangers' that carry traits of both 'Romanness' and the 'non-Roman', the 'domestic' and the 'foreign' within themselves.

[823] Kristeva 1991.
[824] Papastergiadis 2006:433.
[825] Kristeva's larger scope is obviously to overcome an antagonistic relationhsip between the hosting country and the stranger by offering an ethical model of acceptance and respect for difference. By insisting that 'Otherness' (or 'strangeness') is part of all humans (whose psychoanalytical development also required 'estrangement' from the 'mother', comparable to the foreigner's 'strangement' from the 'motherland': see *supra*), she argues (1991 *passim*) that the encounter with the stranger serves to recognise the 'stranger' also present within ourselves.

Ultimately, the 'strangeness' of the two ladies accounts for the 'strangeness' of the author that ventriloquises them.[826] Between *dominae* and *exclusae*, Cynthia and Cornelia mirror Propertius' own transgression of the border between Self and Other, centre and periphery, Roman and non-Roman, and thus his ambivalent liminal status as *exclusus* from/*dominus* at 'R/home', from which originates, as I have been trying to show throughout the thesis, his transgressive (non-binary) representation of space across his whole *oeuvre*.

[826] Propertius' virtual disappearance from Book 4 does not mean that we should not seek for his political voice behind the *personae* of his speakers throughout the collection (for Propertius' identification with Vertumnus in elegy 4.2 and Hercules in 4.9, see respectively Chapters 2 and 4).

6. General Conclusions

a pereant, si quos ianua clausa iuuat!
(2.23.12)

"Damn those men whom a closed door pleases!". In the erotic context in which it surfaces (a standard elegiac complaint),[827] Propertius' curse reminds his reader how frustrating the life of the elegiac lover is. This is an existence spent in constant struggle with the physical barrier of the *puella*'s door (*ianua*), which becomes especially detestable each time it remains shut (*clausa*).[828] Yet, if for a moment we detach the curse from its erotic frame of reference, perhaps we can also see it as a motto that well illustrates Propertius' general antipathy towards those who are keen on building *all sorts* of *ianuae clausae* across space, namely those barriers and borders that delimit the human passage, including, yet not limited to, the hideous obstacle to the lover's sexual gratification.

Throughout this thesis, I have attempted to demonstrate how Propertius' text is indeed interspersed by spaces which are never enclosed by boundaries and barriers and which, precisely as a consequence of this, never delimit those who occupy them. It is in these spaces, I have further posited, that the fluid and ambiguous identities of those who dwell and move through them are 'produced'. As I have documented in Chapter 1, the elegiac *ianua* itself is not at all permanently *clausa*, but rather a now penetrable, now impenetrable border allowing the *amator*'s continuous passage inside and outside the *puella*'s household. I have therein further contended that the *amator*'s oscillations around the domestic *limen* determine his transformation into an (ever-changing) penetrative and non-penetrative man (sexually 'liminal'; both Self and Other), recursively excluded from/dominated by and included into/dominating the erotopoetic *materia* that the *puella* represents for him.

[827] Cf. Fedeli 2005 *ad loc.*for similar elegiac interjections.
[828] For a metapoetic reading of the line, pointing to Propertius' will to revise his elegiac poetics, see Fear 2012.

The *ianua* has only been the first of several more fluid, open-ended, and therefore ambiguous, 'third spaces' imagined by Propertius across his *oeuvre*. In Chapter 2, I have argued that both the Etrusco-Umbrian region and the Vicus Tuscus within Rome's cityscape, in which two characters that serve as Propertius' *alias* (the Umbrian soldier and the Etruscan god Vertumnus) inhabit, can also be interpreted as *limina*. These spaces' ambiguous incorporation into and detachment from Rome in fact impinge on the 'liminality' of their inhabitants, namely their ambiguous geo-political inclusion and exclusion from the imperial metropolis. To be 'liminal', as Propertius self-represents himself here through his two *dopplegängers*, means to partly absorb (Self) and partly reject (Other) the dominant culture as well as to deploy marginal standpoints as the strategic spaces from which to look at the centre with critical eyes.

In Chapter 3, I have proceeded to analyse the elegiac lovers' 'liminal' journey from the centre to periphery of Rome's urban space. This is not only a kind of inside-out displacement that re-echoes the *amator*'s swings around the domestic *ianua* (Chapter 1) but also a quest and preference for the 'margins' that looks back to the Umbrian soldier's and Vertumnus' own avoidance of the imperial centre (Chapter 2). I have therein submitted that Propertius' physical 'liminality' (his presence and then absence from the centre) determines his political ambivalence and, specifically, his engagement with and disengagement from Augustus' imperial propaganda. Indeed, while initially bewitched by the monument that most celebrates the imperialism of the *princeps* within the *Vrbs*, Propertius prefers the disordered and unpredictable itinerary leading him to his aberrant Cynthia outside the city over a stroll through the Palatine complex. Such an erotic escape towards the periphery, predicated upon the erasure of the border between imperial centre and non-imperial suburbs, thus ultimately allows him to hide from and resist to Augustus' spatial control in search for erotic and political *libertas*.

In Chapter 4, I have instead shifted the focus from the urban to the 'ecumenic' dimension. Throughout this discussion, I have argued that the imperial world imagined by Propertius is made up of fluid *limina* instead of divisive borders between West and East, centre and periphery. Rather than espousing a Romano-centric view on imperial space and reinforcing the metropolis versus colonies hierarchy that would have sustained Augustus'

legitimisation to rule, Propertius in fact often depicts Rome as thoroughly contaminated by the vices of the periphery, and therefore utterly indistinguishable from the supposedly inferior spaces under the *princeps*' sway, as well as still vulnerable to the periphery's potential threats. Here too, the poet's geopolitical reflections over the imperial space have laid bare his 'liminality', for Propertius ambivalently 'orientalises' the East like an orthodox Roman moraliser looking at the periphery from within the centre and is 'orientalised' by it, as if he looked at Rome with the eyes of a peripheral outsider.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I have proceeded to analyse the transient presence of Cynthia and Cornelia in the *limen* between life and death. By manufacturing the ultimate fluid border between existence and non-existence, Propertius cuts out one more productive 'third space' in which his characters are allowed to renegotiate their identities against the status quo. Indeed, I have argued that the *limen* between life and death allows the ghosts of Cynthia and Cornelia to respectively conquer and escape the space of *domus* (here intended with the double meaning of both 'home' and 'homeland') and, in the process of doing so, to transform their social identity by 'contaminating' it with that of their own opposite kind of woman in the social spectrum. In virtue of this, Cynthia's and Cornelia's unexpectedly liminal *itinera* inside and outside 'R/home' become subversive, for, by overcoming their 'fixation' into those two clear-cut categories (the 'domestic' *matrona* and the 'untameable' *puella*) prescribed by Augustus' propaganda on female morality, the two women pose a threat to Rome's body politic.

As hopefully made evident in all my case studies, Propertius' *corpus* thus ultimately reads like a celebration of liminal spaces and liminal identities. Its characters' presence around the *limina* (especially Chapters 1, 2) as well as their liminal movement in between the centre and the periphery (particularly Chapters 3, 4, 5) strategically jeopardise their spatial 'fixation' and, therefore, their alignment with clear-cut, homogeneous subjects. This validates the theoretical premises of the 'spatial turn' movement, for which space is not the empty Kantian container lying at the backdrop of the social phenomena[829] but rather the

[829] Tally 2012:29-30.

Lefebvrean pre-condition and producer of all social relationships, which are often articulated as relationships of power.[830]

The creation of literary 'third spaces' indeed lends itself to a political reflection. As amply discussed in the General Introduction, the transgressions, oscillations, and the ambivalent positioning of the *amator* and his fellow characters populating Propertius' elegiac verses, work to challenge the contemporary Roman imperial ideology's conceptualisation of space. While Augustus was producing an ideal Roman subject, whose *difference* with respect to the Other was predicated on precise spatial demarcations between himself and the Other (think again of the capillary subdivisions in the Panoptic amphitheatre), the 'third spaces' represented by Propertius, whose boundaries are never divisive but rather penetrable thresholds either connecting the subjects from one to the other side of the border or letting them linger in between, react to the Augustan obsession for borders and their claim to differentiate people. Rather than by *difference,* Propertius' 'liminal' subjects are in fact marked by irreducible *différance* (the elusive indeterminacy of their ever 'differing' and 'deferring' meaning), and it is precisely this ambivalent *différance* that offers the springboard for a re-evaluation of the author's characteristically ambivalent political position.[831]

At face value, this thesis may have been concerned with *past* times, yet it would have never been conceived and written if it had not been inspired by our own *present* times. While the similarities between Augustus and contemporary political leaders are yet to be fully explored,[832] I am persuaded that there are clear

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[830] Lefebvre 1991:85; Tally 2012:117.

[831] Butrica repr.2009:42-3 rightly points out that the famous phrase "*Quot editores, tot Propertii*" used by editor J. S. Phillimore (1901) to convey the chaos of Propertius' manuscript tradition, also applies to the state of Propertian studies, in which, due to Propertius' elusiveness, "every interpreter seems to create a different Propertius".

[832] Over the past months, I have e.g. been struck by the uncanny resemblance between the far-right Hungarian PM Orbán's bill, which exempts women with at least four children from income tax in an attempt to boost the Hungarian population and react to the current migratory crisis (https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/10/viktor-orban-no-tax-for-hungarian-women-with-four-or-more-children), and the *ius tres liberorum* included by Augustus in the *leges Iuliae* (see Chapter 5). The well-documented importance of Augustus' model for Mussolini (see e.g. Nelis 2007; Giardina 2008; Mazza 2017) is also worth thinking about now that Italy, currently governed by extreme right-wing populists, is witnessing a worrying growth of consensus for neo-fascist groups evoking the 'Duce' (cf. e.g. the several articles published by the weekly magazine 'l'Espresso' over the last year regarding the revivial of 'neo-fascismo': http://espresso.repubblica.it/ricerca?query=neofascismo&dateFromForm=&dateToForm=&dateFrom=&dateTo=&author=&sort=date).

points of contact between the Augustan nationalism and the kind of nationalism supported by today's governors, whose protectionist policies utilise geographical boundaries as both tools which demarcate and separate citizens in binary categories (those who stay within versus those who have to remain excluded outside, according to their ethnicity, religious and political beliefs, gendered identity, and so on) and shields against what is supposed to threaten the national integrity from the outside. With this contemporary framework in mind, we can therefore return to the Propertian curse reported above and read it anew like an exhortation to those who lead our countries in this day and age. Without going as far as to wish anybody's death,[833] we can nevertheless hope that the political measures of this new wave of leaders, who seem to be pleased (*iuuat*) by the construction of *ianuae clausae* rather than the exhaltation of open *limina*, can soon "come to an end":[834] *a pereant!*

[833] *Pereo*, *OLD* 3.
[834] *Pereo*, *OLD* 7.

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