

# PROPERTIUS

## Elegies I–IV

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION  
AND COMMENTARY, BY

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- 24 "and do not let her words of kindness fall unnoticed and for nothing." For the expression cf. Ovid, *Her.* 3.98; *tibi* is ethic dative. What P. means is that even when she does not ask for something any display of kindness and affection on her part must be rewarded.
- 25 *irritata uenit*: "she will turn indignant." For *uenio* = "to appear in an unusual or unaccustomed guise or aspect," cf. e.g. Tibullus 3.6.21.
- 26 "nor once she has been wounded will she be minded to withdraw her righteous threats."
- 27-8 *quo . . . hoc*: "to the extent that . . . to this extent." Cf. 1.4.15-16.
- 28 *effectu*: The reading is a Renaissance correction of *effecto* in the major MSS, necessary to remove the ambiguity that otherwise results as to whether *effecto* or *bono* is the substantive. Cf. 3.23.10: *effectus . . . bonos*.
- saepe*: Note the hint of uncertainty, increased by the use of the potential subjunctive.
- 29-30 The pertinence of this couplet comes from the fact that Gallus is a womanizer; cf. also 1.13.1-6.
- 29 *una . . . puella*: ablative of accompaniment passing into means and manner.
- 30 "who will never be a free agent with his heart disengaged," i.e. who will give himself up entirely to the beloved.

### I.11. Introductory Note

This poem and the next make a pair. Cynthia has gone to Baiae, a resort on the north shore of the Bay of Naples, the most fashionable watering place of the time, and left the poet in Rome. First he writes a letter urging her return, full of anxiety about the viciousness of Baiae and the danger that he will lose her to another. Then he follows this with a pathetic complaint after he has indeed lost her. Though Baiae is not mentioned in the second poem, the poet tells us he has lost his mistress as the result of a trip, and we are encouraged to associate the two pieces.

The first poem, the letter, does not tell us why Cynthia is at Baiae or why P. is not with her; we gather that it is simply a holiday for her, no falling-out between the lovers provoked her into leaving him. But evidently there have been no letters from her, and P. fears the worst. He begins by listing the sights of Baiae and then asks wistfully whether in the midst of these she thinks at all of him. Or has she been stolen from him by some rival?

The three paragraphs of the poem are clearly marked; if Housman's transposition of 15-16 to follow 8 be accepted, they are in balance, each of ten verses, and the pattern is the same as that of 1.10. But attractive as Housman's suggestion is, it is not absolutely necessary, and the disbalance is hardly to be used as a strong argument for accepting it. P. is never rigid about stanzaic composition.

The Cynthia of this poem is a woman rather different from any we have met earlier. A woman of fashion, she goes to the centers of amusement and frivolity unaccompanied. It is not said whether she hired a villa for her stay, or whether she took rooms in one of the great hotel-like complexes that lined the slope above the little bay. How many other Roman women she would have found there in similar situation we cannot guess, probably a good few. Baiae's scandalous reputation was probably considerably exaggerated, and certainly people of every type

went there. But P. draws for us a picture that leaves little doubt in our minds that Cynthia went not so much for the baths or the rounds of social life as to look for eligible men.

## I.11. Notes

- 1 *Ecquid*: with *nostrī cura subit* in 5: "does concern about me enter your thoughts at all?"  
*mediis* . . . *Bais*: locative ablative. The notion may be either that Baiae was crowded with buildings and people, or that it was at the center of many beautiful and interesting places, of which the poet goes on to list some. The former is preferable.
- 2 "where lies the path on shores piled by Hercules." The sandspit between the Lacus Lucrinus and the Bay of Baiae was supposed to be the work of Hercules; along it ran the road connecting Baiae with Puteoli and Naples. Cf. 3.18.4 and note; Strabo 5.245.
- 3-4 "and marveling that waters only lately situated beneath Thesprotus' kingdom are now next to glorious Misenum." Thesprotus was eponymous king of an Epirote people in whose territory were situated the lake of Acherusia and the rivers Acheron and Cocytus (Pausanias 1.17.4-5), all of which were supposed to have connexion with the Underworld. Hyginus connects Thesprotus with Avernus as well (*Fab.* 88; cf. Pliny, *NH* 4.4). In Campania the Lake of Avernus, a crater lake between Baiae and Cumae, was supposed to be connected with the Underworld, and Strabo (5.244) lists a river Styx, a stream Pyriphlegethon, and an Acherusian lake in the district. Hence it would appear that what P. means is that waters that appeared in Epirus were thought to pass through the Underworld and to reappear in Italy, just as Arethusa and the Alpheus were believed to pass under the sea from Elis in Greece to Syracuse in Sicily. In 37 B.C. Agrippa, in constructing the great naval base of the *portus Iulius*, connected the Lake of Avernus with the Lucrine Lake by a canal and cut the sandspit between the Lucrine Lake and the sea with another, thus providing a set of well protected basins for the ships. The work was a tremendous undertaking and of immense importance (cf. Vergil, *Geor.* 2.161-4). By this system of channels it could now be said that waters from Epirus, emerging afresh in Campania, flowed out into the sea in the shadow of Misenum. Cf. also 3.18.1-10.
- 4 *Misenis* . . . *nobilibus*: The plural is probably poetic. Misenum is the truncated cone of a small extinct volcano at the end of the northern promontory framing the Bay of Naples. Its curiously artificial appearance led to its identification as the tomb of Misenus, the trumpeter of Aeneas (cf. Vergil, *Aen.* 6.162-76, 212-35). It is a readily identified and important landmark, hence *nobilibus*.
- 5 *memores adducere noctes*: "to bring nights when you are mindful of me." Cf. 1.1.12 and note. Notice how the effect of pathos is enhanced by postponement of this to follow the geographical catalogue.
- 6 *in extremo* . . . *amore*: "at the edge of love." Enk and SB are worried about the Latinity here, and hence SB would take it to mean "now that our love is at its last gasp." But in P.'s mind their love is far from its last gasp, as the next couplet shows, and in the context of all this geography "on the edge of love" seems not too bold a figure. Cf. Catullus 68.99-100, of which this may be more than casually reminiscent.

- 7 *simulatis ignibus*: As Baiae was a fashionable resort and notorious as a place where casual affairs might be readily found (cf. e.g. Ovid, *AA* 1.255–8), it is natural for P. to presume that no man Cynthia met here would be sincere.
- 8 *e nostris . . . carminibus*: We must understand that P. means: from my arms, so that I shall no longer write poems about you, but the metonymy is both bold and uncommonly dispassionate. We may compare many other places in P. where there are abrupt leaps in thought, but none seems exactly parallel to this, and it is at least possible that this is an admission that Cynthia exists only in the poems. We may think of her as a composite figure to which various women contributed, or a tissue of fiction built around the core of an actual woman.
- 9–14 This is as good a source as we have for the pattern of life at such a resort as Baiae; it would seem to show a remarkable resemblance to life at a similar place today, but it should be noted that the white complexion admired by the Romans (cf. 2.3.9–12) would preclude any notion that 13–14 refers to sun-bathing.
- 9 *mage*: = *potius*, a colloquialism.  
*remis confisa minutis*: with *cumba* in 10: “relying on small oars.” The phrase seems a bit strained; P.’s point seems to be that it must not be a craft large enough to accommodate a boating party.
- 10 *moretur*: here “holds you and occupies your time.” P. is fond of this verb and uses it in many contexts; cf. e.g. 1.1.35; 1.3.32; and 3.1.7.
- 11–12 One of the few references in antiquity to swimming for pleasure, though from the story of the death of Agrippina (Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.5) it may be presumed that the ability to swim was not uncommon among Roman women, and swimming was a recognized sport (cf. e.g. Horace, *Car.* 3.7.27–8).
- 11 *tenui Teuthrantis in unda*: *Teuthrantis* is Scaliger’s correction of the chaos offered by the MSS at this point (N has *teutantis*, AF *tuetantis*, P *metantis*). The association of the name Teuthras with Cumae (cf. Silius Italicus 11.288), near Baiae, recommends it, but it is not possible to identify a body of water to which the name might apply. The suggestion in P.’s couplet is that it was a mineral spring, sulfur water perhaps, which has a slippery quality that might well be described as *facilis cedere*. Certain other mineral waters have exceptional clarity that might account for *tenui . . . in unda* (though this phrase might also refer to the shallowness of the pool; see SB *ad loc.* for a collection of examples). Mineral springs and pools abound near Baiae because of the volcanic nature of the region; in fact their availability was the principal reason for the growth of the resort.
- 12 *alternae . . . manu*: For this alternate form of the dative, cf. 2.1.66; 2.27.7; and Aulus Gellius 4.16.8.  
*facilis cedere*: The construction of the infinitive with such adjectives is common in Augustan poets; cf. e.g. 2.13.28; 3.5.35; 4.5.13.
- 13 *quam uacet*: impersonal: “than that you should be at leisure to. . .” Impersonal *uacet* usually takes the dative but here is construed with the accusative and infinitive.  
*alterius*: genitive of *alius*.
- 14 *molliter*: “voluptuously.”  
*compositam*: sc. *te*. The prefix suggests, but does not insist, that they are close to one another.
- 15–16 Housman proposed to transpose this couplet to follow vs. 8 but has been followed in this only by Richmond. It is a very attractive suggestion and may well be right;

certainly it would improve the flow of the argument. But because the couplet is not absolutely unintelligible in its position in the vulgate, I have hesitated to move it.

- 15 *amoto . . . custode*: “when left unguarded.” Not that P. had set guards on Cynthia, but that he performed this office himself. (NAF have *amota*, but the statement is a general one, and besides we know nothing of a *duenna*.)
- 16 *communes . . . deos*: i.e. the gods by whom the lovers have jointly sworn faith.
- 17 *non quia . . . non es*: the reason for his wish beginning in vs. 9. One expects the subjunctive here, where the statement is given as untrue (cf. e.g. 2.16.25–6), but there are rare exceptions (for a full discussion of this, see SB *ad loc.*).  
*perspecta . . . fama*: ablative of description “of impeccable reputation.”
- 18 *in hac . . . parte*: “in this region,” i.e. at Baiae. SB would translate “in this matter” or “in this respect,” but that is weak when the focus of the poet is not on fidelity but on the dangers of Baiae. Camps has collected a number of parallels for *hac in parte* = “here”; cf. especially Silius Italicus 9.271.  
*omnis timeatur amor*: “any manifestation of love is feared” or “love is always a menace” (Camps).
- 19 *ignosces igitur, si*: evidently a deliberate echo of Catullus 68.31.  
*triste*: “unpleasant,” either because of his own gloominess or because of the insistence of his anxiety.  
*libelli*: For this word used of letters, cf. Plautus, *Pseud.* 706; Cicero, *ad Att.* 6.1.5.
- 21 *an mihi nunc*: The MSS have *an mihi non*, which gives a sense contrary to any admissible in the context. Lachmann proposed *a(h) mihi non*, accepted by BB, but this presumes that P.’s mother is still alive whereas vs. 23 indicates she is not. What we need is: would the protection of my dear mother be of greater concern? So I accept Beck’s correction of *non* to *nunc*. As Camps points out, this gives a characteristically Propertian turn of phrase and is better than *sit* ( $\pi$ 2, Puccius).
- 22 *cura ulla*: picking up *nostris cura* in 5.
- 23 Cf. Homer, *Il.* 6.429 (Andromache to Hector), often imitated; one is also reminded of the last lines of Catullus 68.
- 25 *ueniam*: cf. 1.10.25.
- 27 *corruptas . . . Baias*: “wicked Baiae.”
- 28 *multis . . . dabunt . . . discidium*: “will cause the break up of many couples” or “will be the separation of many.”
- 29  *fuerant*: If the reading is correct (many editors alter it to *fuerunt*), this pluperfect emphasizes the fact that Baiae had long ago manifested its vicious character. SB compares 2.13.37–8 where the fame of Achilles’ tomb, achieved in the distant past, clearly continues in the present, but the verb is put in the pluperfect.  
*castis . . . puellis*: i.e. such as he hopes she still is.
- 30 *Baiae . . . aquae*: = *Baianae aquae*. Cf. 2.1.76; 4.4.26 for similar adjectives.  
*crimen amoris*: “a reproach to love” (Phillimore). Cf. Vergil, *Aen.* 10.188.

### I.12. Introductory Note

This little poem, the more touching for its brevity and reticence, appears to be a pendant to the preceding poem, to which it is connected in the majority of MSS (though not N). Here P. laments that Cynthia has terminated their love affair in consequence of a trip. No quarrel is mentioned, or rival, and it appears there has

been no interview. P. himself is bewildered by the turn of events and miserable, but helpless and unable to see any way out of the dilemma.

The poem is constructed in three stanzas, shorter ones at beginning and end balanced around a slightly longer center stanza, 6.8.6. The poem gets its quality from the intensity of the emotion it conveys; we see a man drawn tight within himself but very close to collapse, but there is no accusation of Cynthia, no rebuke or anger.

## I.12. Notes

- 1 *desidiae* . . . *crimen*: “the charge of idleness.” SB and Camps take *desidiae* here to mean “love-making,” as against pursuing a career; it seems more likely to mean “doing nothing,” rather than pursuing Cynthia and trying to win her back.  
*ingere*: here perhaps best translated “devise.”
- 2 “you, Rome, who are privy to what would keep me here.” The reading here follows the MSS; for *consciis* followed by a relative clause, cf. Cornelius Nepos, *Dion.* 8.4. Most editors take the *quod* clause to mean something like “because I stay in Rome” (Camps), supplying *desidia* from the hexameter as subject for *faciat* or emending *faciat* to *facias* (SB, Barber). These solutions seem awkward and contorted, while the unsupported *conscia* in the vocative seems unlikely. By *Roma* the poet means those friends he encounters on his rounds, who talk about his dejected condition and how he ought to take himself in hand and do something positive.
- 3 *tam multa* . . . *milia*: accusative of extent of space where ablative would be more usual.
- 4 *Hypanis*: the Bug, a great river of south Russia flowing into the Black Sea.  
*Veneto* . . . *Eridano*: *Eridanus* is the poetical name of the Po, in north Italy, otherwise called *Padus*. It is called Venetian because its mouth was in the country of the Veneti.
- 6 *nec nostra dulcis in aure sonat*: “nor does she whisper sweetly in my ear”; this interpretation is demanded by the general tenor of the poem, but there is an overtone of the alternative, “nor does her name ring sweet in my ear.”
- 8 *simili* . . . *fide*: This must be on both sides; cf. 1.4.16. Though P. puts it in the singular, it is clear that he has both lovers in mind, hence *inuidiae fuimus* in 9.
- 9 *inuidiae*: dative of purpose: “an object of envy.”  
*non*: = *nonne*: “was it not some god who crushed me?” The idea here is that their love was so intense that it can hardly have been within the power of human agency to destroy it; therefore P. can only imagine that it must have excited the envy of the gods.  
*an quae*: On P.’s ending of hexameters with a double monosyllable, cf. on 1.4.5.
- 9–10 *an quae/* . . . *iugis*: Construe: *an herba (nos) diuidit quae in Prometheis iugis lecta (est)?*
- 10 *Prometheis* . . . *iugis*: The Promethean ridges are those of the Caucasus, where Prometheus was crucified; their proximity to Colchis, a land famous for its witches, would make this a natural source of rare herbs for use in potions.
- 11 *fueram*: pluperfect for imperfect, but the pluperfect emphasizes the termination of the state. This seems subsequently to have become a catchphrase, if it was not so already.

*mutat uia longa puellas*: This is most naturally taken as referring to Cynthia's visit to Baiae, the subject of the preceding poem. It is not clear whether or not she has now returned to Rome; the opening of the poem suggests she is still absent. In that case she must have sent a message to the effect that P. is to consider their affair terminated.

- 13 *nunc primum*: not merely a rhetorical flourish; while he has been forced to spend nights alone from time to time, this is the first time he has despaired of an end to his solitude in the near future.
- 14 *meis auribus . . . grauis*: picking up vs. 6; he is, of course, referring to reiterated lamentation.
- 16 This verse allows two interpretations, depending on whether or not we capitalize *amor*. If we do not, we get: "a love takes some joy in the shedding of tears," i.e. there is relief in weeping (but only when this can be done in the presence of the beloved). If we capitalize, we then get: "Love takes great joy in being showered with tears," as though these were a libation. The latter suits the Latin somewhat better, but when we ask the relevance of this to the poem we have to compass so great a leap in thought that it seems better not to attempt it.
- 17 *aut si*: following on *qui* in 15.
- mutare calores*: i.e. exchange one love for another.
- 19 *ab hac desistere*: i.e. give her up and love no one.

### I.13. Introductory Note

In a poem to Gallus, closely connected in sequence with 1.10 and 1.12, P. announces the break up of his love affair and, as though to take his mind off his troubles, goes on to celebrate again the beginning of Gallus' new affair, of which we have already heard in 1.9. There are certain sinister overtones, especially in the first part of the poem: that Gallus will be glad at P.'s misfortune, that he is *perfidus*, that P. seems to know Gallus' new mistress far better than one would know a girl one had met only casually—indeed better than Gallus himself does. These suggest Gallus has filched Cynthia from the poet, but if this is the case, it is pushed to the background before the poem is half over, and the poem becomes a hymn of delight in the happiness P. foresees for Gallus, alloyed only slightly by the suggestions that Gallus will not know how to appreciate his good fortune and that he must even have his poems written for him.

The poem is constructed in a symmetry: 4. 8. 12. 8. 4. At the beginning is a simple statement of the poet's situation and misery, with the promise that, unlike Gallus, he will wish nothing of the sort to happen to his friend. This is balanced at the end by an admonition to Gallus to make the most of his affair and a wish for his future happiness. Just inside this external frame of the poem is a more elaborate inner frame. First (5-12) is the picture of Gallus as the cold-hearted womanizer who now begins for the first time to know what love is like, who has fallen under the spell of a woman who will dominate his life and put an end to his philandering. This is balanced (25-32) by the other half of the picture, the assurance that the poet understands the change and development there has been in Gallus, that he has now finally met a woman who cannot easily be put aside and forgotten, a fascinating creature equal to the great women of legend. In the center (13-24) is a retelling of the story of Gallus' first encounter with his mistress, this time told



with all the elegance P. is capable of. He writes for his friend as feelingly as he has ever written for himself.

Clearly the poem is meant to be enigmatic. The attitude toward Gallus seems curiously ambivalent. The nagging suspicion that the girl just might be Cynthia persists, and if we reread 1.5 and 1.10 we can find touches there to reinforce it, certainly nothing to exclude the possibility.

### I.13. Notes

- 1 *quod saepe soles*: We know nothing of Gallus' taking pleasure over misfortunes, but it follows from his character as a womanizer and the sketch of their conversation given in 1.5 that he would have made fun of any devotion as single-minded as P.'s.  
*nostro . . . casu*: i.e. the loss of his mistress, as is explained in what immediately follows; presumably this is the desertion he lamented in the preceding poem.
- 2 *abrepto . . . amore*: This is the first inkling we are given that a rival was involved.  
*solus . . . uacem*: The tautology is emphatic, and following on that of *saepe soles*, slightly ironic in the rhetorical balance. For the verb cf. 2.9.19.
- 3 *tuas . . . uoces*: probably a deliberate echo of 1.5.1.  
*perfide*: It is hard to tell whether P. is accusing Gallus of disloyalty to himself; if he is, what follows in the poem is incongruous. Much depends on whether we take *puella* in the pentameter to refer to his present mistress or to every girl he may ever have an affair with. The poem is brilliantly complex if *perfide* is a specific accusation and the *puella* is Cynthia.
- 5 *deceptis . . . puellis*: ablative absolute of attendant circumstance passing into ablative of cause; "for the (number of) girls you have deceived."
- 6 *certus*: From P.'s use of this word elsewhere one gathers it is to be taken with *in nullo . . . amore*: "never faithful in love" (cf. 1.19.24; 2.24.36-7; 2.34.11), with the rest of the verse construed repeating this: *in nullo amore quaeris moram*: "in no love affair do you seek to prolong it." Alternatively we may take *certus* to mean something like "sure of yourself." This too is simply his reputation, not the reality, as is shown by what follows.
- 7 *perditus*: "head over heels in love."  
*in quadam*: with *palescere* (cf. 3.8.28).  
*tardis . . . curis*: "with a true passion, late though it be in coming." *tardis* may have other overtones as well; cf. 1.1.17.
- 8 *primo lapsus abire gradu*: "losing your balance at your first step to slide into the abyss." For *abire* (a Renaissance correction of *adire* in the MSS) in the sense "to go to ruin," cf. e.g. Sallust, *Cat.* 25.4; Seneca, *Med.* 428.
- 9 *haec*: looking forward to the pentameter.  
*contempti*: transferred epithet; it is not so much their suffering that he has scorned as the girls themselves, but the hypallage points out that *doloris* can mean both "love" and "grief."
- 10 "one alone will exact grievous punishment for many." For *miseras* of what will be pitiful to behold, cf. 3.7.32. For *uices* = *poenas*, cf. Horace, *Car.* 1.28.32; Servius, *ad Aen.* 2.433; the idea is that the customary positions will be reversed. For the genitive of the victim avenged, cf. e.g. Vergil, *Aen.* 9.422-3.
- 11 Cf. 1.5.7, but there is probably no particular sting here.

- 12 The phrasing is curious, possibly colloquial. Camps suggests we should take *noua quaerendo* with *amicus* as equivalent to a Greek compound with *philo-*, "one fond of pursuing novelty," but the word order is rather against that, attractive as it is, and *semper amicus* seems to go together, an ironic description of Gallus. Therefore I am inclined to take *noua quaerendo* as a modal or causal ablative (cf. Leumann-Hofmann 2.379-80) and translate: "nor will you be always and everywhere the lover in the pursuit of new conquests."
- 13 *haec ego: sc. praedico*. Enk would rather understand *sum* with *doctus*, which is less likely; P. is affecting the lofty style here.  
*rumore malo*: "malicious gossip."  
*non augure*: P. may be using the ablative of agent without a preposition because of the attraction of the parallel *rumore*; or *augure* may here stand for *augurio*. Cf. 2.6.6.
- 15 *toto uinctum . . . collo*: The syntax reflects the sense: "locked in her embrace." *toto . . . collo* is ablative of specification, the epithet suggesting that she wound her arms round as far as they would go. Cf. 1.10.5-6.
- 16 For tears as the sign of any strong emotion, cf. 1.10.2.  
*iniectis . . . manibus*: Enk would take this to mean that Gallus' arms were embracing the girl; he compares Ovid, *Am.* 1.4.6 and *Meta.* 3.389. One might also take it to mean he was covering his face with his hands.
- 17 "and long to breathe out your soul with wished for words." P. is here clearly trying to convey the intensity of lovers' conversation; cf. 1.10.6. The epithet *optatis* is brilliantly ambiguous: it may be that he wishes to hear her say them and shows the intensity of his longing by the way he listens, or that he wishes to say them himself and brings them out so carefully and with such effort that he seems to be breathing out his soul, or it may be that she wishes to hear them, and it is his anxiety to say just what she longs to hear that makes the effort so vital.
- 19 *non ego . . . potui*: "I should not have been able to . . ." not, of course, that he tried to.
- 21-4 The point of comparison of the exempla introduced here, Neptune and Tyro and Hercules and Hebe, whose love is implied to have been less intense than that of Gallus and his mistress, has puzzled editors. It is double: for Neptune and Tyro it is the completeness of their embrace, the girl enveloped in the water god (*mixtus . . . facili . . . amore*); for Hercules and Hebe it is the heat of passion (*flagrans*). The opposition of the elements of water and fire, normally mutually exclusive, is a neoteric conceit.
- 21-2 Tyro, the daughter of Salmeoneus, was in love with the river Enipeus in Thessaly. Neptune in turn fell in love with her and in order to win her disguised himself as the Enipeus and so lay with her in the bed of the river under an arching wave. Their children were Neleus and Pelias. The story is a romantic one, and P. seems to have been fond of it; cf. 2.28.51; 3.19.13-14. Our best source for the story is Apollodorus 1.9.7-8, but it was known to Homer (*Od.* 11.235-59).
- 21 *Haemonio . . . Enipeo*: Haemonia is the poetic name for Thessaly. For the synzesis of the last two syllables of *Enipeō*, cf. e.g. 2.1.69; this is common in P. in Greek names.  
*Salmonida*: accusative of the patronymic.  
*mixtus*: This does not suggest disguise so much as the mingling of waters, which may have been part of the story in some versions.

- 22 *Taenarius deus*: There was a famous shrine of Neptune on Taenarus, the southernmost promontory of the Peloponnesus (now Cape Matapan).
- 23-4 Hercules, in agony from the shirt of Nessus and unable to die because of his immortal blood, persuaded his son to build him a pyre on the top of Mount Oeta and immolated himself. The mortal elements were burnt away, and the immortal ascended to Olympus, where he was received as a divinity and married to Hebe. Here P. deliberately confuses the funeral fire on Oeta with the fire of love Hercules felt for Hebe, though in the usual version of the story he had, of course, not yet seen her. Camps assumes that P. would have Hebe descend to Oeta to be united with Hercules immediately on his deification, but that is not necessary.
- 23 *caelestem . . . Heben*: accusative of respect with *flagrans*, apparently a unique example with this verb; cf. Vergil, *Ecl.* 2.1; Horace, *Car.* 4.9.13-16.
- 25 *una dies*: here for the short space of their first meeting.  
*omnes . . . praecurrere amantes*: "surpass all the lovers of history."
- 27 *praeteritos*: = *solitos*, but now a thing of the past.  
*succedere*: "to come over you again" (Paley).
- 28 *abduci*: sc. *te*. Presumably P. means especially by some other woman, but the phrase is deliberately vague.  
*te tuus ardor aget*: "your own passion will govern you." The emphasis is on *te*.
- 29 *Ioue digna et proxima Leda*: "worthy of Jove and very like Leda."
- 30 The reference must be to the three daughters of Leda: Phoebe, Clytemnestra, and Helen (Euripides, *Iph.Aul.* 49; cf. Apollodorus 3.10.6); two of these were daughters of Tyndareus; only Helen was the daughter of Jupiter.  
*gratior*: "lovelier."
- 31 *illa sit*: Camps would take this as a potential *sit*, but it seems better to understand it as a continuation of the *cum* clause, or, with SB, as the subjunctive in a comparison with suppressed protasis (*si conferantur*); cf. 2.3.10.  
*Inachis et blandior heroinis*: "more winning in her speech than the heroines of Argos." Inachus was the first king of Argos, the father of Io. The reference can hardly be to Io, and editors have been hard put to it to find Argive heroines who were winning in their speech. BB thinks "possibly an allusion to the Danaids" (following Rothstein in this); Camps would have it "Argive (or Greek) of the legendary age." I think the reference is far more likely to Clytemnestra in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and the wives of the Seven, all persuasive women, especially Eriphyla, the wife of Amphiaraus, for whom see on 2.16.29.  
*heroinis*: For the spondaic ending with a Greek word of four syllables, cf. 1.19.13; 1.20.31; 2.2.9; 3.7.13; 4.4.71. There is one with a Latin word of four syllables in 2.28.49.
- 32 This may best be understood as a parenthesis emphasizing the point of the hexameter: "by her words she would make Jove himself love her."
- 33 *semel*: "this one time" or "once and for all." The usage seems colloquial.
- 34 *utere*: "make the most of it."  
*non alio limine*: There is probably an overtone of the situation of the paraclausithyron here, but the metonymy *limen* = *domus* is very common. Cf. 1.4.22.
- 35-6 "may she be propitious to you, since it is an unfamiliar straying from your accustomed ways that has befallen you; and may she in herself alone be everything you wish."
- 35 *nouus . . . error*: Every love affair may be called *error* (cf. 1.9.33), but P. uses the

word sparingly and especially of wanderings like those of Ulysses (cf. 2.14.3; 3.12.36).

36 *quodcumque*: a Renaissance correction of *quocumque* in the MSS.

### I.14. Introductory Note

In this poem to Tullus, the poet's wealthy and well connected friend (cf. 1.1.9 and note; 1.6.1-4), no mention is made of the breach with Cynthia that dominated the two poems immediately preceding. Instead we find P. on top of the world, happy and fulfilled in love, reading a lecture on love's superiority to wealth to the friend he elsewhere describes as a man who has never yielded to love (1.6.21-2). His tone is not patronizing, however, but reasonable and equable; he is speaking almost as much to himself as to Tullus.

### I.14. Notes

- 1 *licet*: concessive.  
*abiectus . . . molliter*: "reclining comfortably." Cf. 1.11.14.  
*Tiberina . . . unda*: "by the waters of the Tiber"; cf. 1.3.6: *in herboso . . . Apidano* and Vergil, *Geor.* 2.199: *pascentem niueos herboso flumine cycnos*.
- 2 *Lesbia . . . uina*: i.e. the finest imported wine. For the high esteem in which Lesbian wine was held, cf. 4.8.38. The plural of *uinum* is regular, far commoner than the singular in the nominative and accusative.  
*Mentoreo . . . opere*: "from a work of Mentor." Mentor was a silversmith of the fourth century famous for his figure compositions on vessels. Cf. 3.9.13; Pliny, *NH* 33.154.
- 3-4 Presumably the skiffs are traveling with the current, while the barges are being towed against it.
- 5-6 Interpretation of this couplet depends on *uertice*. If we take it to refer to the tops of the trees, we get: "and all your orchard lift its planted woods upwards with trees as great as those by which the Caucasus is pressed." *nemus* is collective, the plantation as a whole; the *silus* are individual, distinguished as *satas*, set out individually; *uertice* is collective and paralleled by usage in Manilius 1.5 and Petronius 131.8. But though this interpretation is intelligible, we should like the phrase *intendat uertice* to be completed with a dative (*caelo*) or adverbial phrase, and we should like the orchard put into closer relationship with the picture of Tullus as he lies drinking and watching the traffic on the river. Moreover, the emphasis on the size of the trees is disturbing; it might be a touch to indicate that this was an ancestral villa in the possession of the family for many generations, but if so it is rather cryptic. In such plantations one would expect rather fruit trees and olives than anything of spectacular size; it is not their height but their number and fruitfulness that we expect to be emphasized. Cf. *infra* 24 and 3.2.13; Vergil, *Geor.* 2.87; Horace, *Car.* 2.14.22-4 and 3.16.29-30. Therefore it is inviting to take *uertice* as a locative ablative, "overhead," and read: "and all your orchard spread its planted woods overhead with as many trees as the Caucasus is weighed down by." Then the couplet becomes relevant to the picture, and we see Tullus in the midst of his orchard. For the planting of orchards along rivers, cf. 4.7.81; Horace, *Car.* 1.7.13-14 and 1.18.1-2. The only difficulty is that *uertice* is unknown in such

a usage, though *a uertice* ("from the zenith," straight down from above") is relatively common. As a third possibility we may supply the dative *tibi*, since personal pronouns are often omitted by P.: "and all your orchard arch (*intendat uertice*) its planted woods over you with as many trees as the Caucasus is pressed by." This is perhaps the best.

- 7 *ista*: the wealth and pleasures of Tullus; the tone is deprecatory.  
*contendere*: "to vie with." The construction with the dative is poetical (cf. 1.7.3) and the usage here, where neither the subject nor the object is personal, is very striking.
- 8 Cf. 1.5.24: *nescit Amor priscis cedere imaginibus*.
- 9 *optatam . . . quietem*: "the rest I have longed for." It is usual to take *quietem* here as equivalent to *noctem*, but in view of what follows it might better be the afternoon siesta. Cf. Catullus 32.3; Ovid, *Am.* 1.5.1-2.  
*trahit*: "prolongs"; cf. L-S s.v. II.A.7 and 8.
- 11-12 The extravagance of the figure is probably deliberately humorous, and the figure perhaps deliberately erotic.
- 11 *Pactoli . . . liquores*: cf. 1.6.32 and note; 3.18.28.
- 12 The reference is most likely to pearls. The best were supposed to be those from the Persian Gulf. The Indian Ocean off Arabia and its arms were known collectively as *mare Rubrum*. Cf. e.g. 3.13.6; Pliny, *NH* 9.106.
- 13 *mihi*: with both *cessuros* (sc. *esse*) and *spondent*.
- 14 *dum me fata perire uolent*: "until the fates wish me to perish," or "as long as the fates wish me to be so desperately in love." For *dum* "until" with the future indicative, cf. Plautus, *Amph.* 470-73.
- 16 *tristi . . . Venere*: "if Venus be angry with me" with the overtone "if my mistress be angry with me." As Camps points out, we may take this as either a conditional ablative absolute or an extension of the ablative of price dependent on the idea embodied in *praemia*.  
*praemia*: perhaps here "advantages," but with the overtone "compensations" (Camps).
- 17 *illa*: ostensibly Venus, but P. may have Cynthia in mind too. Cf. 1.5.12.
- 19 *Arabium . . . limen*: The stone usually associated with Arabia is oriental alabaster, which the Romans called *onyx* (cf. Pliny, *NH* 36.59), but this, being friable and porous, would be poor stone for a threshold. Perhaps P. means no more than some exotic stone, Arabia being proverbially a source of luxuries.
- 20 *ostrino . . . toro*: i.e. a couch with purple coverlets.
- 21 Cf. 2.22.47; Catullus 50.11-12.
- 22 *uariis serica textilibus*: "silks of varied texture"; P. here seems to be thinking of silk damask or tapestry, specimens of which have been found in tombs in the Altai mountains. These would have been very precious and known to the Romans only through the caravan trade. The construction of *uariis . . . textilibus* is ablative of description. (It is also possible, but less attractive, to take it as an instrumental ablative with *releuant*.)
- 23 *placata*: = *mitis*.
- 24 *uel Alcinoi munera*: "even the gifts of Alcinoüs," not the lavish gifts Alcinoüs presented to Ulysses (Homer, *Od.* 8.392-420), but his magical palace and orchards, which were gifts of the gods (Homer, *Od.* 7.81-132). For the refusal of kingdoms as a trope, cf. 1.8.31-6.

## I.15. Introductory Note

This poem is one of the hardest in all P. to understand at first reading, nor have editors generally done much to help with its elucidation. They fall into the error of thinking its occasion must be either some serious illness of the poet in which Cynthia seemed unsympathetic or P.'s threatened departure on a dangerous voyage. But nothing in the poem supports either hypothesis. There is no mention of his being kept to his bed or in fever, as there certainly would be if he were dangerously ill; there is no mention of dangers of the sea or the road as we should expect were he about to set out on a journey. All that is said is that he is in danger of his life.

The necessary clue, it seems to me, is given us in the first few lines (as often in P.): Cynthia has broken faith with the poet. She has tired of him and tried to sever relations with him, and this is his account of their confrontation. He is distraught, physically ill with fear and worry. She by contrast is cool and self-possessed. He begins by plunging in abruptly: he has been afraid of many things at her hands but not this complete breach of faith. Does she not see what it has done to him? how close he is to a breakdown?

The structure here is not neat. The poet is trying to set his frantic agony with all its lapses of logic and passages of powerful eloquence against his mistress' icy calm. He threatens and cajoles, using whatever argument comes to hand; he would very much like to provoke a scene. This is the heart of the matter; he is over-dramatic and wants us to see him as such. She is doing her best to get through this interview without a scene.

## I.15. Notes

- 1 *multa tuae leuitatis dura*: "the many cruel aspects of your frivolity." *dura* acts as a substantive; *leuitatis* seems to mean more than simply "changeableness."
- 2 *perfidia*: Note the emphasis in position heightened by the vocative set before it.
- 3 *quanto . . . periclo*: As SB points out, this is far more likely to be the state of his health than anything else. Cf. 2.28.46.  
*rapiat*: "is hurrying me away."
- 4 *lenta . . . uenis*: In the larger context, as in the *sermo amatorius*, this will mean "you show yourself indifferent," though the immediate context suggests "you are slow to come." Both ideas may be present.
- 5 *hesternos . . . crines*: i.e. your hair that has not yet been dressed today.
- 6 "and examine your appearance at long leisure," sc. in a looking-glass. Cf. Macrobius, *Sat.* 3.13.4. Enk thinks the particular reference is to making up her face (cf. 3.24.8), but more likely *faciem* includes the drape of her clothes, its meaning in the passage in Macrobius.
- 7 *Eois . . . lapillis*: "oriental jewels." *lapillus* in this sense is normal, not deprecatory. *uariare*: "adorn" with emphasis on color.
- 8 *ut formosa*: "like a woman vain of her beauty." It might also be possible to take the adjective predicatively, as Camps suggests, though *formosa* normally refers to natural beauty.  
*nouo . . . uiro*: P. often uses the dative where the more normal construction would be *ad* + accusative.

- 9-14 For the story of Calypso, the nymph who made Ulysses her lover and kept him prisoner for seven years on her island of Ogygia, see Homer, *Od.* 7.244-66.
- 9 *Ithaci*: Ulysses, whose home was Ithaca.
- 10 *desertis . . . aequoribus*: probably dative; cf. vs. 12 *infra* and 1.12.15.
- 10 *fleuerat*: pluperfect for preterite.
- 12 *sederat*: pluperfect for preterite.
- 12 *iniusto . . . salo*: The sea is unjust because it carries Ulysses away on his raft.
- 13 *quamuis numquam post haec uisura*: sc. *eum*. We might think it was rather *because* she was never to see him again, but *quamuis* points the difference between mortals and immortals. Immortals, having faced such partings repeatedly, might be expected to accept an inevitability with calm.
- 17-20 Hypsipyle was queen of the Lemnians, a nation of women who had slaughtered all the men on the island because of their infidelity. On its outward voyage the Argo put in there. Hypsipyle was taken with Jason, and the Argonauts were hospitably received and remained for two years. Cf. Apollonius Rhodius 1.607-910.
- 17 *Aesoniden*: a Greek accusative. Jason was the son of Aeson.
- 18 *constitit*: "stood rooted" by her grief.
- 20 *Haemonio . . . hospitio*: "her Thessalian guest." *hospitio* = *hospite*; cf. the use of *coniugium* for *coniugem* in 3.13.20. For *Haemonio*, see on 1.13.21; Jason was the son of the king of Thessaly and sailed from Iolcus.
- 21-2 Evadne was the wife of Capaneus, one of the Seven against Thebes. He was blasted by a thunderbolt hurled by Jupiter because he had boasted that Jupiter himself could not stop his assault on Thebes. Evadne threw herself on his pyre.
- 21 *elata*: properly of one who is carried on his bier from his house to the place of cremation: "finding her obsequies" (BB). Cf. 4.7.7.
- 22 *Argiuae fama pudicitiae*: "the glory of Argive womanhood"; *pudicitia* is the epitome of womanly virtue.
- 15-16 This couplet is clearly out of place in the MSS, since the sequence *at non sic* (9) . . . *nec sic* (17) must not be interrupted. Its correct place is disputed, Lachmann having proposed that it belongs after 22, Markland that it belongs after 20; and others have suspected it of being an interpolation. BB suggests that the similarity of ending of *laetitiae* (14) and *pudicitiae* (22) might be adduced to explain the dislocation. More important is the question of sequence and climax in this catalogue. Alpheisiboea, as the most violent in the demonstration of her affection, properly belongs at the end.
- Alpheisiboea was the wife of Alcmaeon, son of Amphiaraus. After Alcmaeon was banished from Psophis, he married a second time, Callirhoe, the daughter of Achelous. He returned to Arcadia to fetch the necklace of Harmonia, which he had promised his new bride, and was then slain by the brothers of Alpheisiboea. Cf. Apollodorus 3.7.5 (where her name is given as Arsinoe) and Pausanias 8.24.8-10. Only P. has Alpheisiboea exact vengeance for Alcmaeon.
- 16 *sanguinis . . . cari*: = *sanguinis cognati*.
- 23 *quarum nulla*: i.e. the example of none of these.
- 24 *nobilis historia*: "a glorious story," an example to be cited in time to come.
- 25 *desine iam*: Evidently Cynthia has tried to interrupt the poet's tirade against her with protestations that she made no such compact with him.
- 25 *reuocare*: "to recall to mind."
- 26 *oblitos parce mouere deos*: "do not rouse gods who may have forgotten them."

That Cynthia has not yet suffered for her perjuries is an indication that the gods turned a deaf ear when she first uttered them, but to remind the gods will be dangerous.

- 27 *nostro dolitura periclo*: sc. *es*: “you will suffer at my peril.” The only way this can be made to fit the context seems to be by giving *periclo* a different value from that it has in 3. P. urges that he is afraid to have Cynthia reiterate her perjuries lest the gods now take notice. If they do and punish her, it will have repercussions on him, because anything terrible that happens to her must affect him, and his health is already undermined. There is no need for her to perjure herself since he will love her anyway. Cf. SB *ad loc.* for examples of the idiom of *nostro periclo*.
- 29–30 For similar *adynata* (things impossible of accomplishment in nature introduced to show by argument *a fortiori* the impossibility of something else) cf. 2.15.31–4; 3.19.5–8.
- 29 *nulla*: a conjecture for *multa* in the MSS. *multa* is retained by Rothstein and BB, punctuating with a colon after *prius*; this gives: “many marvels will happen first: rivers will flow back out of the desert sea, etc.” This solution, though ingenious, is hardly persuasive; one expects the first of the poet’s examples to be unambiguous. *uasto . . . ponto*: = *in uastum pontum*.
- 30 *uices*: “seasons.”
- 31 *tua . . . cura*: “my love for you.”
- 32 *non aliena tamen*: sc. *sis*: “but yet do not desert me for another.” Some editors prefer to supply *eris*, rather than the more obvious *sis*, and to interpret *aliena* as “a stranger to my heart” (BB) or “a matter of indifference to me,” but the other reading is both readier to hand and more within the usual manner of P.
- 33 *tam*: (Palmer), a necessary correction for *quam* in the MSS.
- 34 *per quos*: i.e. with an oath on which.  
*mihi*: dative of agent with a passive verb.
- 35 *hos tu iurabas*: “you took your oath by these.” We must then supply something like “with the prayer” to govern the *ut* clause. The idea of prayer is implicit in *iurabas*.
- 36 *suppositis . . . manibus*: ablative absolute, perhaps best translated “into the hands you held up to them.” Cf. 2.32.40.
- 37 The sun was commonly invoked to witness an oath; cf. 2.32.28; Vergil, *Aen.* 12.176.
- 39–40 The point of this couplet is that she was under no compulsion to take the oaths she did, and so she cannot plead that they were extracted under duress and therefore not binding.
- 39 *multos pallere colores*: The thought seems to be of progressive shades of pallor; cf. 1.6.6. Pallor in Rome was usually thought of as a sickly yellow (cf. 4.7.82; Catullus 64.100), but Horace has a white pallor (*Epod.* 7.15).
- 40 I.e. her tears of emotion when she took her oath were genuine, not feigned. Cf. e.g. 1.10.1–2.
- 41 *quis ego nunc pereo*: “and now I am about to die because of these”; i.e. had she not lured him into devotion by oaths and proofs of affection, he would not have become hopelessly entrapped. *quis* = *quibus*, best taken as a neuter referring to the preceding catalogue.  
*similes . . . amantes*: “lovers in like case.”  
*moniturus*: i.e. to be by my example a warning to.



42 *tutum*: sc. est.

## I.16. Introductory Note

This elegy, cast as a soliloquy spoken by a housedoor, mentions no names and is best regarded as having nothing to do with P. or Cynthia, being rather an exercise in a set form, a *paraclausthyron*. The history of the form, a mournful serenade before the closed door of the beloved, is a long one; the earliest we know of was by Alcaeus (cf. *PLF*<sup>2</sup> Alcaeus 374). In the Hellenistic period the form seems to have been popular, and a splendid example is introduced into the *Curculio* of Plautus (147–55, beginning: *pessuli, heus pessuli*). In the Augustan period we have examples by Tibullus (1.2), Horace (*Car.* 3.10) and Ovid (*Am.* 1.6). These are very different from one another, and it is hardly possible to set rules or norms for the form, but clearly the present example is unusual. Catullus, in poems 4 and 67, had already shown the possibilities of the speaking object for poetry; in the latter poem a door figures as a character, but the poem is not a *paraclausthyron*. P. must owe much to this antecedent, especially in his drawing of the character of the door as snobbish and disagreeable, but Catullus' poem is a savage lampoon, while P.'s is a romantic serenade in which the puritanical door is set against the sweet-tempered, sorrowful lover.

I am unable to discover any clear pattern of structure in the poem, but Richmond, by the transposition of vss. 7–8 to follow 12 and 25–6 to follow 36, is able to divide the poem into six stanzas of eight verses each. The transpositions are attractive on other grounds as well, but not essential to make the poem readable.

It is interesting that the character of the woman in this poem remains so shadowy, as though the poet were at some pains to conceal her identity, if she was not wholly fictional. The lover does not much resemble the P. of other poems; he is too gentle, too sweetly melancholy.

## I.16. Notes

- 1 *fuera*m: pluperfect for preterite, perhaps used to heighten the contrast between past and present.  
*patefacta*: This elegant verb emphasizes the physical effect of opening both leaves of a great Roman housedoor. Most of the time one came and went through a side door or a small door cut in one of the large leaves.
- 2 *Tarpeiae nota pudicitiae*: "famous for the womanly virtue of Tarpeia." We know of no Tarpeia to whom this might easily refer, and in the rest of the poem P. gives us no other clue to the identity of this house (if indeed he has a particular house in mind). Enk would therefore take *Tarpeiae* as equivalent to *Capitolinae*, the crest of the hill being also known as Mons Tarpeius (cf. 4.4.93–4 and note), and he adduces Juvenal 6.47–9 to show that womanly virtue was under the special protection of the Capitoline triad of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva. This explanation is ingenious, but the evidence supporting it is slight, and the expression seems an odd one. The *gens Tarpeia* was not only an early one, but disappeared early in Roman history, its last recorded member being a consul of 452 B.C. The name may have been chosen for its antiquity, though the fact that it is that of the false Vestal who betrayed the Capitoline to the Sabines (cf. 4.4) would seem to militate

against its choice for this particular context. One wonders whether the text is sound here, but attempts at emendation have so far turned up nothing convincing. SB suggests "some otherwise unknown local tradition may well lie behind." For the genitive dependent on *nota*, cf. Horace, *Car.* 2.2.6.

- 3 *inaurati* . . . *currus*: For the gilding of triumphal chariots, cf. Horace, *Epod.* 9.21-2.  
*celebrarunt limina*: both "thronged over the sill" (as though there were great crowds of them) and "made the sill renowned." *celebrarunt* = *celebrauerunt*.
- 5 Cf. 2.19.5; Ovid, *AA* 3.71 and *RA* 31. The brawling may be between the door and its assailants, the would-be lovers and the *ostiarius*, or rivals among the lovers; the first is obviously most likely.  
*saucia*: "damaged"; cf. Horace, *Car.* 1.14.5; but P. is playing with the personification, as also in the next verse.
- 6 *indignis* . . . *manibus*: not that the young men are social inferiors, but that their blows are undeserved by the door (cf. L-S s.v. II.B).
- 7 "and disgraceful garlands do not cease to hang upon me," as though the door receiving these offerings to its mistress saw itself as got up like one of these drunken lovers, the garland askew and wilting. Some take *turpes* to mean that the presence of these garlands showed the house was disreputable, but that is not likely. The door is simply fastidious and a bit pompous.
- 8 *exclusi signa*: "the evidence that someone was excluded." The ends of torches that lie about in front of the door have been discarded as they burned down while the lover kept his vigil. *exclusi* is Lipsius' correction of *exclusis* in the MSS, which is retained by some editors. But *exclusis* would mean the torch ends were indication to later comers that others had been there and waited before them, whereas what is wanted is evidence to passers-by in the morning that the door had been the scene of a vigil.  
*iacere*: sc. *ad me*, supplied from *mihi* in the hexameter.
- 9 "nor can I ward off the scandalous nights of my mistress." Here *defendere* might mean "ward off from myself," as I have taken it, "ward off" from my mistress, taking *dominae* as dative, or "protect." The last meaning is inappropriate, and the door is so full of personality and critical of the vices of its mistress that the first is to be preferred. *infames* (-is) might be nominative ("being myself of ill repute"), genitive with *dominae*, or accusative with *noctes*, but *noctes* is clearly most in need of an epithet.
- 10 It would be possible by repunctuating to take *nobilis* with *dominae* but very awkward; it is the door that is conscious of its aristocratic origins.  
*obsценis tradita carminibus*: "delivered over to indecent poems." The thought is probably not of ribald verse (so Butler and Camps) but of paraclausithyra. What the door would consider indecent is not necessarily what the reader would. Cf. vs. 41 *infra*; Plautus, *Merc.* 409-11; Ovid, *Am.* 3.1.53-4.
- 11 *nec tamen*: i.e. in spite of her notoriety.  
*reuocatur*: In this verse we must take this in the sense "is checked so as to" and in the pentameter in the sense "is held back from," the zeugma being of the type illustrated by Housman on Lucan 4.316-18 (SB). This is easier than the alternative, to take *reuocatur parcere famae* as *reuocatur a uitiiis ut parcat famae* (Madvig), which entails understanding *famae* and *uiuere* as parallel, both de-

- pendent on *parcere*, with a change in the sense of *parcere* from "have regard for" to "refrain from." But either way the couplet is harsh.
- 12 "nor is she held back from living a life more scandalous than the license of the age." The door seems to be a shocking gossip as well as a prude.
- 13 *haec inter*: This is Passerat's correction (*ex cod.*) for *has inter* in the MSS. If we are to retain *has inter* we must follow Richmond in transposing 7–8 to follow 12, since *noctes* in 9 is too far away to be the antecedent of *has* and the phrase *inter has noctes* yields only poor sense. Richmond's transposition is attractive, but *haec inter* is the simpler correction.
- grauibus . . . deflere querelis*: There is deliberate confusion here: though the door says it is obliged "to lament in doleful complaints" or "to weep with doleful complaints," it is clear that the complaints are really the shut out lover's. His copious tears make the door appear to weep in sympathy with him, and his efforts to send his voice through the cracks of the door (cf. 27–8) make the door seem to speak. For *deflere* used intransitively, cf. e.g. Pliny, *Epist.* 8.16.5.
- 14 *a longis . . . excubiis*: For this construction to express cause or instrument, cf. e.g. 4.1.126. This is preferable to taking *a* as an exclamation.
- 15 There may be a witticism here: the turning of the *cardines* at the top and bottom of a *postis* made a rasping noise often compared to speech (cf. e.g. Plautus, *Curc.* 94: *num muttit cardo?*)
- 16 *arguta . . . blanditia*: "in a clear-voiced serenade." Alternatively we may take this as a descriptive ablative with *carmina*: "songs of clear-voiced blandishment."
- 17 *penitus*: intensive with *crudelior*.
- 18 *tam duris . . . foribus*: either ablative of means with *clausa* or ablative absolute. The latter gives a prettier effect: "why are you closed to me and silent, your leaves so hard?"
- 19 *reserata*: The *sera* was the great bolt of wood propped against the door to secure it for the night. Cf. 4.5.47–8 and note.
- meos . . . amores*: = *me amatorem*.
- 20 *reddere*: Editors seem generally agreed that this must mean "to deliver," the prayers being consigned to the door as a messenger. In this case the paradox of the verse and play on the sense of *mota* is extraordinary: "you who cannot be moved to deliver my prayers (to your mistress)." But the prayers are made especially to the door at this point, and why else should they be *furtiuas*? One wonders whether there is not something to be said for Foster's translation of *preces* as "things prayed for" (B. O. Foster in *CP* 2, 1907, p. 210). I should translate "who cannot be moved to grant my stealthily voiced prayers."
- 21 *nullane finis*: *finis* is feminine here, masculine in 3.5.37, the only other place in P. where its gender is shown.
- 22 *in tepido limine*: i.e. warmed by his vigil there; cf. 4.7.20. The presumably stone sill would certainly not be warm normally.
- 23 *sidera prona*: Defenses of *sidera plena* of the MSS are hardly convincing, and this correction, already appearing in Renaissance manuscripts, is easy. The reference is to the time after midnight. Cf. Valerius Flaccus 3.33.
- 24 *Eoo . . . gelu*: "with the chill of the dawn." For the Roman poets' interest in the breeze that rises at dawn, cf. Catullus 64.269–75.
- me dolet*: "is sorry for me"; the verb takes its number from the nearest subject.

How the lover perceives the sympathy of these is not clear, but possibly this is an allusion to the falling dew.

- 25 *numquam*: with both *miserata* here and *respondes* in 26.
- 26 *respondes . . . mutua*: "reply reciprocally." P. is playing on the notion that the door could speak by its *cardines* (as it opened). Cf. on vs. 15 *supra*.
- 27 *caua . . . rima*: "through an open crack"; cf. 2.17.16. Roman doors, because of their engineering, could not be fitted tight in their frames.  
*uocula*: a real diminutive, "a single little word," but with connotations of the diminutive in the *sermo amatorius*: "a word of love."
- 28 *percussas . . . uertat*: "might strike and twist." The expression is unusual but graphic.
- 29 *licet*: concessive.  
*saxo patientior . . . Sicano*: This is enigmatic. Had P. meant simply "more enduring than lava" there is really no reason why he should have added the epithet "Sicanian," since lava of good quality was quarried near Rome and at many places on the western coast of Italy. Moreover we should expect the word *lapis* rather than *saxum*. *saxo . . . Sicano* on the face of it suggests some famous promontory or headland battered by the sea (cf. e.g. 2.16.3; 3.7.39), but none in Sicily immediately suggests itself, though Pelorus is a possibility. More likely the allusion is to Aetna, the only active volcano of note in this period, with the thought that it is able to withstand intense heat and yet not be consumed. Cf. Catullus 68.53: *cum tantum arderem quantum Trinacria rupes*. The verse may be a deliberate reminiscence of Catullus. The adjective *Sicanus* did not at this period indicate a particular part of Sicily; it is used of Aetna by Horace, *Epod.* 17.32-3.
- 30 *chalybe*: a Greek word for steel, essentially poetic; cf. Vergil, *Aen.* 8.445-6.
- 31 *compescere ocellos*: i.e. keep back the tears.
- 32 "and in spite of her, the tears and sighs will come" (Camps). This is to take *spiritus* in the sense of *suspirium* (cf. Horace, *Epod.* 11.10); it might also be used for sobbing.
- 33 *felici*: transferred epithet properly belonging to *alterius*.
- 34 *at*: continuative.  
*nocturno . . . cadunt Zephyro*: "fall on the night breeze." Cf. 1.17.4. Enk would take *Zephyro* as dative.
- 35 *tu sola . . . tu maxima causa*: sc. *es*. This effect of second thought is unusual in P.
- 36 *meis . . . muneribus*: i.e. the garlands, kisses and poems of vs. 7 and 41-2.
- 38 *irato dicere probra sono*: "to hurl insults in an angry tone"; the MSS read *irato dicere tota loco*; Heinsius suggested *probra* to replace *tota* and *ioco* to replace *loco*. This emendation would make adequate sense, but it is not entirely satisfactory and has won no acceptance. *petulantia* suggests anger and insult mingled with *iocus*, but *irato ioco* is an odd and unlikely phrase. Baehrens' conjecture *sono* to replace *loco* seems better. Other suggestions are less attractive, and since *tota* cannot possibly stand unsupported (see the discussion of SB *ad loc.*), we are thrown back on conjecture.
- 39-40 "that you should suffer me, hoarse from so lengthy a complaint, to watch through long worried stretches of waiting in the street."
- 40 *sollicitas . . . moras*: The adjective belongs properly to the watching lover, but the transference suggests the danger to such serenaders from footpads and street gangs.

*triuio*: properly a point where three streets meet, but apt to be used loosely for the streets in general.

- 41 *nouo* . . . *uersu*: ablative of description with *carmina*. It is unlikely that he means that he experimented with verse forms, though we have the *cantica* of Plautus as famous prototypes for this.  
*deduxi*: "spun," a common metaphor for the composition of poetry. Cf. Horace, *Ser.* 2.1.3-4; *Epist.* 2.1.225.
- 42 *osculaque* . . . *nixa*: The participle belongs properly to the speaker, but "straining kisses" is a happy invention.  
*impressis* . . . *gradibus*: ambiguous: either "kneeling on the steps" (in which case we must supply *tibi* from the preceding verse to go with *dedi*) or dative "to the steps on which she had set foot." The superiority of the latter is self-evident. Most Pompeian houses are preceded by a step or two, but seldom more.
- 43-4 This is almost certainly a description of an act of worship in which the door is treated as a divinity. There would be nothing very odd about this to the Romans, who regarded doors as sacred (witness the wedding rite of having the bride anoint the door of her husband with wolf's fat or oil), but the precise details of the ritual are hard to make out.
- 43 *uertit me*: For turning in Roman ritual either to face the divinity or to make a complete gyration, cf. Lucretius 5.1199; Pliny, *NH* 28.25; Suetonius, *Vitel.* 2.5.  
*perfida*: because the door has accepted the prayers and offerings in the past but now will not respond and open for him.
- 44 *debitaque* . . . *uota*: "the offerings due," i.e. those he had vowed. The allusion must be to previous occasions when he had been successful in his siege. What these might be we are left to guess.  
*occultis* . . . *manibus*: i.e. either carrying the *uelamenta* of suppliants (cf. Plautus, *Amph.* 257: *uelatis manibus orant ignoscamus peccatum suum*) or else with his hands tucked into the folds of his toga so no one would know what he was about (possibly a necessary measure when the door was not your own).
- 45 *haec ille*: sc. *canit*.  
*si quae*: "whatever else."
- 46 *et*: = *etiam*.  
*obstrepsit*: i.e. raises his own song above the noise of the birds. BB suggests the vivid translation "outbawls."
- 47-8 *semper amantis / fletibus*: "the perpetual lamentations of this lover." For the use of *semper* with a noun, cf. 1.22.2 and 1.3.44.
- 48 *aeterna differor inuidia*: "I am slandered in unkind gossip all the time" (Camps). For *differor* cf. 1.4.22.

### I.17. Introductory Note

The poem is a fantasy in which the poet imagines that he has run away from Cynthia, taken ship to cross the Adriatic, and finds himself in a storm on, or just off, a forbidding coast and threatened with destruction. He sees the storm as the agent of vengeance of his deserted mistress, brought into being by her anger and distress, and begs her for mercy lest she destroy him. His prayer brings him to the reflection that it would have been easier to endure her ways and caprices than to perish thus, and furthermore if he had died in Rome she would have buried him

lovingly with proper rites. So now he gives up the notion of any such escape and calls upon the Nereids to rescue him and to set his sails back to civilization and love.

The poem is delicate, a dreamy, insubstantial tissue. It is the first of three elegies in which the poet plays with the idea of separation from his mistress and various conventions of Latin poetry. Here it is the poetry of sea and storm, the world of the propempticon and such lyrics as the ship odes of Alcaeus and Horace (*Car.* 1.14); in 1.18 it is the world of the bucolic; and in 1.19 the poetry of death. The three form a little sequence and gain by being read together, though they are otherwise unrelated.

## I.17. Notes

- 1 *Et merito*: an independent exclamation: "well deserved!" Cf. Horace, *Ser.* 1.6.22; Ovid, *Meta.* 6.687 and 9.585.
- 2 *desertas . . . alcyonas*: "the lonely halcyons." The identification of these sea birds has always been a matter of dispute; they were associated with the sea in its wilder and more desolate aspects (cf. 3.7.61), and their cries were mournful (cf. 3.10.9).
- 3 *Cassiope*: a port in the north part of Corcyra (cf. Cicero, *ad Fam.* 16.9.1; Pliny, *NH* 4.52; Suetonius, *Nero* 22.3) or a port in northern Epirus (cf. Ptolemy 3.13.2 Mueller). Any attempt to make this the constellation Cassiopeia (so Enk) would have to explain what influence this constellation might have that would assure safety.  
*saluo*: so Richmond, for *solito* in the MSS, which can scarcely be right. Among the many suggestions for emendation one is torn between *saluo* and *solidam* (Wytenbach), either of which will yield good sense.  
*uisura*: sc. *est*.
- 4 *ingrato litore*: "on a thankless coast." For the construction, cf. 1.16.34. He may be ashore unable to leave some cove where they have put in for the night (cf. 2.26.31-2), aboard a ship sheltering in the lee of an island (cf. 3.7.19-20), or on the open sea in sight of a coast. The point is that his prayers for salvation from his danger, instead of ascending to the gods, fall back unheard on the inhospitable coast that will wreck him or starve him to death.
- 5-6 The notion that Cynthia pursues him with accusations of faithlessness (cf. 9-10) that raise the tempest and make the winds her avengers is nicely developed, as it might develop in the poet's mind. At first he sees only that the winds are menacing, and because he feels guilty thinks they are punishment.
- 5 *quin etiam absenti*: to be taken together.  
*absenti . . . uenti*: This rhyme, uncommon in Latin verse except for special effect, may be intended to suggest the gusts of the storm.
- 6 *increpat*: used of any sudden, sharp sound; here perhaps "crackles out" or "claps out." Cf. Vergil, *Aen.* 9.504.
- 7 *placatae . . . fortuna procellae*: "chance of abating the tempest." *fortuna* is a stroke of luck defined by the genitive *placatae . . . procellae*.
- 8 *haecine parua . . . harena*: This suggests that a small cove with a bit of beach is at least in view.  
*meum funus*: = *meum corpus*.

- 9 *tamen*: i.e. angry though you may be and justly so.  
*in melius*: "to a better quarter." Her complaints now identified with the storm winds, she is thought of as governing them and able to wreck or save his vessel at will.
- 10 *nox*: "the darkness." Cf. e.g. Vergil, *Aen.* 1.89.  
*iniqua uada*: "the shoal-infested shallows."
- 11 *mea fata reponere*: "to store away my death"; i.e. to file it away in her archive once it is accomplished. Many editors prefer to emend *reponere* to *repscere* (Baehrens) with the sense "ask news about." (Others would like to keep *reponere* and see in it reference to a form of burial with a cenotaph, for which cf. Vergil, *Aen.* 6.505–10, but this would make her perform the proper rites only to lay his ghost, lest it haunt her after she has destroyed him. The whole thought is then too complicated for so simple a statement as that before us.)
- 12 The reference is to the gathering of the bits of bone after the pyre was extinguished; these were then laid down in an urn. Cf. e.g. 4.1.127–8.
- 13 *a pereat*: simply a mild curse, a favorite with P.; cf. e.g. 1.6.12; 1.11.30.
- 14 *inuito gurgite*: locative ablative. For the thought, cf. Horace. *Car.* 1.3.21–4.
- 15 *nonne fuit leuius*: "would it not have been a lighter task . . ." Cf. e.g. 2.25.11.  
*dominae peruincere mores*: "to contend with my mistress' humors until I won my way" (Camps).
- 16 Cf. 2.1.78; 1.8.42.
- 17 *ignotis circumdata litora siluis*: "shores ringed with unexplored forest"; i.e. the forest is not simply an unfamiliar one, but one without a sign of human life.
- 18 *Tyndaridas*: the Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux, putative sons of Tyndareus. These were the patrons of mariners and manifested their presence by the appearance of St. Elmo's fire about the masthead, which presaged a prosperous voyage. Cf. Horace, *Car.* 1.12.25–32; Valerius Flaccus 1.568–73; Pliny, *NH* 2.37.101.
- 19 *illic*: i.e. in Rome with Cynthia.  
*si qua meum sepelissent fata dolorem*: "if any death had buried my suffering." The language is ornate but readily understandable.
- 20 *ultimus . . . lapis*: This can only be the cippus inscribed with the name of the dead that was commonly set up within the *bustum*.  
*posito . . . amore*: ablative absolute ("love laid aside") or locative ablative ("where love has been laid to rest"). For the former, cf. 1.9.8; the latter involves some slight springing of the language, but surely there is more than an overtone of this here. For the use of *ponere* in this sense, cf. Vergil, *Aen.* 6.508; Ovid, *Fast.* 5.480.
- 21 The offering of hair (as a part of oneself) at the pyre of a close relation or friend is at least as old as Homer (*Il.* 23.135–6).  
*caros*: precious for its symbolism as well as because it was one of Cynthia's points of beauty. Cf. 2.1.7–8; 2.3.13.
- 22 *tenera . . . rosa*: singular, as always in P. and most other Roman poets when it is a question of the blossoms. We hear of offerings of flowers at funerals (cf. e.g. 4.7.33–34), but this bedding of the charred bones in rose petals is an unusual touch. Juvenal, however, in 7.207–8 seems to speak of crocuses in a similar connection. (Camps thinks of strewing the grave with roses as a possible alternative, but *molliter* and *tenera* insist on the other interpretation.)