VISUALITY, ART AND ECYPHRASIS IN THE MONOBIBLOS OF PROPERTIUS

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Contents

Part One: The visual artist.

Introduction: ‘Cynthia and the Temple to Apollo’ pp. 1-29.

Chapter One: Propertius’ visual and pictorial imagination, style and influence, pp. 30-52.

Chapter 2: ‘Getting to know Cynthia’: Dramatic realism, text and art: a reading of the opening three poems of the Monobiblos, pp. 53-76.


Part Two: The Monobiblos and Painting of the Second and Third Styles

Chapter 4: Dreaming and visual art, pp. 91-106.

Chapter 5: The Propertian ecphrastic dream-narrative, pp. 107-125.

Chapter 6: Artistic pendants and visual narratives, pp. 126-148.

Chapter 7: Pictorialism and poetics in Books One and Two, pp. 149-179.

Conclusion: pp. 180-181.


Abstract

In this thesis I argue that the conflation of *puella*, art and godhead in Propertius 2.31 and the succeeding 2.32 strongly impacts upon the opening book, the *Monobiblos*, of the same author. The dynamic of vision, the poet’s pictorial imagination, and the feminised, subservient stance of the elegiac lover are all well documented strains of Propertian elegy, but have generally been treated as independent areas of study. By emphasising vision as the key factor that inextricably binds lover and beloved, confusing their roles within the text, I argue that the poems of the *Monobiblos* respond both to contemporary effects in visual art within the changing fashions in wall painting, and a literary tradition of visuality. In the second half of this thesis I show how Propertius draws on stylistic effects in late Second and early Third Style wall painting and so provides a poetic response to viewing contemporary art. Yet not only does his poetry, like wall painting, aim to involve the reader visually but also requires the reader’s participation in the dynamic verbal artefact he creates. Just as the emerging imperial ideology was being increasingly impressed upon the Roman citizenry through the power of imagery, so this text creates a multifaceted narrative that enables a constantly shifting accessibility of viewpoint across traditional gender lines. As a consequence, the imbrication of erotic and poetic concerns highlights the tension between art and literature in this text.

Part One: The visual artist

Introduction

**Cynthia and the Temple to Apollo: 2.31 and 2.32**

The mediation between art and poetics in the *Monobiblos* that I wish to explore in this thesis begins with an examination of two poems from outside of this text. Poems 31 and 32 of Book Two present a continuity that holds the political and private in tension and as a dramatic pair openly grapple with issues concerning writing about visual art; as such I hope to show how these two poems can illuminate the relationship between art and text in the *Monobiblos*.¹

¹ While there are clear indications that the *Monobiblos* was conceived as a single unity (at the opening of 2.3 for instance an interlocutor mentions an *alter liber* to complement the first book), there are indications of deliberate connections being drawn
Most of the previous scholarship on 2.31, the *ecphrasis* of the temple to Apollo, reads the poem as evading the ideological concerns to which the temple’s location, structure and imagery points, to focus attention on poetics, turning the temple from a celebration of Octavian’s victories to a celebration of elegiac poetry. So Keith: ‘Just as Octavian’s temple complex aestheticizes his naval victory over Sextus Pompey by transmuting it into a lavish gift to his patron divinity, so Propertius aestheticizes Octavian’s martial victories by commemorating them as a glorious promenade for literary and mythological lovers at their leisure, under the patronage of the god of literature.’ As the only poem where Propertius writes at any length about a specific artwork, it offers a particularly fascinating case study for my project in that it participates in the tradition of the poetic *ecphrasis* of art as well as being concerned with a key monument of the Augustan building programme. Dedicated on October 9th 28 BC, the temple evidently had great resonance in the eyes of the public, being visible from all parts of the city and a focal point for acts of *pietas*, and is mentioned more than any other monument by the Augustan poets for its incomparable beauty. Propertius’ choice is also significant for the temple’s visual and thematic complexity. The terracotta plaques hark back to classical models in both motif and material, and the general philhellenism is apparent from various artworks which illustrate a blending of old and new styles.

Equally intriguing however are the various ambivalences surrounding the temple’s design and associations for the contemporary viewer, which illustrate how the
visual language of Augustan Rome encompassed several dimensions of signification which Propertius capitalizes on. As Kellum notes, various parts of the temple betray gender encodings that are far from transparent. For instance what appears on first inspection as a scene of Apollo and Diana crowning a sacred pillar from one of the terracotta Campana plaques appears on closer examination, through hairstyle and costume, as a *pas de deux* for two maidens, self-consciously juxtaposed to the ‘masculine’ Apollo and Hercules on another plaque, locked in contest over the Delphic tripod (*figure 1*). This gendered discourse becomes particularly prominent in the *porticus*, the focus of Propertius’ poem, where the iconography of the dagger-laden Danaids on their wedding night embodies ambiguity, serving as both justification and warning; though linked to Cleopatra, and despite the gender difference, the image is also unequivocally an allusion to cousin killing, fratricide and civil war. Thus it is particularly noteworthy that Propertius draws attention to those parts of the temple with potentially ominous Actian nuances only to side-step this aspect of their imagery.

Indeed that Augustus saw himself as an Apolline saviour through the god’s associations with victory, vengeance and rescue would have been particularly evident to the contemporary viewer from the sight of the statues of the Danaids, an image which at the same time is most typical of the polysemy that characterizes much of Augustan art.

Of the Augustan poets Propertius is generally recognized as the temple’s principal guide, attempting to capture the perspective of a visitor approaching the site with the implication of movement, and indeed archaeological evidence confirms the poet’s description, conceived as a linear progression from the recently opened portico to the area outside the temple, then the temple façade and finally contemplation of the god within. Boucher points out how much of the poem’s actual syntax is mimetic of such movement, yet this is counterbalanced by the selectivity of the images described. For instance the poet omits the connections of the temple to the *Princeps’* house, where Apolline imagery abounded, from evidence of a passage between the two buildings.

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6 Kellum 1997.158.

7 According to Apollodorus, Cleopatra was the name of two daughters of Danaus. Like all the Danaides, apart from Hypermnestra, both Cleopatras killed their husbands on their wedding night. See Apollodorus *Library* 2.1.5.4 and 2.1.5.7.

8 Richardson 1977.302: ‘It is as if the poet were exploring the complex; each part comes in its proper sequence: first the colonnade of the Danaids, then the statue of Apollo in the court, the altar, the temple itself, the temple doors, and finally the cult images.’

9 The statue of the musical Apollo outside the temple is associated by archaeologists with the marble fragments of such a discovered figure, and the poet’s order for the divine triad in 2.31.15-16 is confirmed in Pliny *Nat. Hist.* 32.25, 36.24.

10 Boucher 1965.49-50. He points to the final hexameter: ‘L’art visuel de poète va jusqu’à disposer les mots (*inter matrem / deus ipse / interque sororem* 2.31.15) dans l’ordre même des choses pour mieux les faire voir.’
epitomising the increased blurring of public and private space under the new regime, and he omits the archaizing terracotta reliefs of Hercules, Perseus and Victory. In particular he omits to mention that one of the statues of Apollo in the temple complex showed Augustus with Apollo’s attributes. Such an incongruity would surely have struck the knowing observer, such was the temple’s prominence, since what Propertius here passes over is as significant as what he includes.

Indeed despite being the only poem in Books One and Two lacking a patently erotic theme, 2.31 provides the clearest indication of Cynthia’s importance for the poet. I argue that this omission of any overt reference to Augustus in a poem that otherwise draws such close attention to him by its choice of symbolism invites us to see Cynthia, the poet’s Muse, as a kind of replica of the temple itself as well as its principal subject, a commemoration not of Augustus but of the puella. For it is the same combined qualities of viciousness and beauty inherent in Cynthia’s characterization that generate her irresistible attraction for the Propertian lover. Like Cynthia, the temple’s visual splendour belies other interpretative responses that Propertius encourages the reader to pursue, in stressing its debt to Greek models, while also advertising its clear contemporary relevance.

In particular the poem’s associations of puella, divinity and art enable us to see more clearly the relevance of the ambiguities between appearance and reality that it highlights, and the tensions between witnessing and interpreting that lie at the heart of its exploration of the various merits of the verbal and visual arts. The blurring of real and illusory, of objects and the representations of objects, where art appears as a rival to the real figures it models, has been amply demonstrated by Laird. Thus in line 4 the crowd of Danaus’ daughters are mentioned as if they were actually there, as are the herds of Myron in line 7, the confusion signalled by the pentameter that follows: quattuor artificis, vivida signa, boves, showing how art can pretend to be its subject. Most intriguing are the two statues of Apollo, one outside, the other within the temple. The first, of marble, and ‘more beautiful than Phoebus himself, seemed to mouth a song with silent lyre’ (statque deus Phoebo visus mihi…..tacita carmen hiare lyra (lines 5-6)); as for the second, the enigmatic vision of the singing Phoebus (line 16), ‘is this art-

11 Laird 1996. See also Welch 2005.81ff.
12 All Latin quotations are taken from the text of Richardson 1977.
Indeed the poem becomes not so much a celebration of a visual spectacle but rather a meditation on the relative capacities of the visual and verbal arts to evoke the ‘real’, the ability of poetic *ecphrasis* to challenge its referent in its ‘reality’ effect. What is particularly notable is the progression from artistic verisimilitude (in lines 5-6 the marble statue of Phoebus, though more beautiful than the god himself, merely ‘seemed’ to sing) to a kind of poetic ‘hyper-reality’ (in lines 15-16, the sculptured image of Apollo actually does sing), which is accompanied by a decreasing emphasis on words associated with materiality. This puts the narrator’s opening excuse (*quaeris cur veniam tibi tardior?* (line 1)) in rather clearer perspective; he is not so much delayed by the temple’s stunning artwork, but rather out of admiration for his own poetically visualized text.

What is also notable about this sequence is Propertius’ reversal of a trend in the *ecphrases* of Virgil and Homer. Although Homer displaces the scenes depicted on the Shield of Achilles in *Iliad* 18 by animating the figures within them so vibrantly, as Propertius does with the final image of Apollo here, he also repeatedly registers their inorganic condition, not only by frequently referring to the metals of their production and introducing each descriptive insert by a verb of fixing or placing (ποίει 478, ἔτευξ᾽ 483, ποίησε 490, ἐτίθει 541), but also by concluding his most dramatic narratives on a note of charged suspension. For instance in the description of the golden cattle and the story of the ox attacked by the lions whom the herdsman’s dogs pursue (*Iliad* 18.573-586), the story comes to a sudden halt at the end of this scene, as the dogs stand off, frozen in apprehension between attack and escape, a clear recognition of the limits of his verbal craftsmanship when it meets with the fixed forms of visual representation. A more pertinent contrast is the shield *ecphrasis* in *Aeneid* 8, in which Virgil converts the scenes into a narrative of episodes from Rome’s history, and where again the dynamic narrative impulse that is generated culminates in the static, sculpted figure of the divine Augustus in the place where the statue of Apollo would stand at the entrance to the god’s temple, *ipse sedens niveo candentis limine Phoebi* (line 720), a

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14 One notes that *sonat* is stressed as the final word of line 16.

15 In the first twelve lines we see *aurea* (line 1), *marmoreus* (line 6), *marmore* (line 9) and *Libyci dentis* (line 12), whereas in the last four, as the narrator moves through the imagined space of the temple, there is a complete absence of such descriptive adjectives.
line that testifies to the political power of art to perpetuate this image of Apollonian authority.

Yet the wider significance of these innovations for Propertian poetry has not to my mind been fully appreciated. Only Bowditch and Hubbard in fact appear to recognise the full significance of the juxtaposition with 2.32, a poem far more in the manner of the *Monobiblos*, and thus stand to my mind as two of the more perceptive readings,\(^\text{16}\) since they show how the poem sets the temple within an erotic context and links together description, the creation of beauty and desire. Bowditch shows how in these poems the erotic gaze typical of Propertius’ earlier work evolves into the ‘panoptic gaze of state control’,\(^\text{17}\) anticipating the adultery laws of 18 BC and the encroachment of the state into the private sphere, and underlines the exchange of gazes throughout Propertius’ work as an essential power struggle: ‘As a response to beauty, the subjection of the lover (to the *forma* of his mistress) adumbrates the effects of Augustan urban renovation and beautification on the newly emerging imperial subject…the temple to Apollo on the Palatine constitutes a spectacle - a *forma* of sheer beauty - whose symbolic power of surveillance returns the citizen’s gaze.’\(^\text{18}\)

Hubbard illustrates how 2.31 and 2.32 invite reflection on the nature of poetic vision through their various levels of visual engagement. Like Bowditch, he argues from the manuscript tradition for understanding 2.31/32 as originally intended as a single poem, and both readings revolve around the ambiguity in the pivotal opening couplet of 2.32 (*qui videt, is peccat: qui te non viderit ergo / non cupiet: facti lumina crimen habent*) as reflecting back upon the *ecphrasis* of the preceding 2.31 as well as forward to the more obviously erotic 2.32. This is similar to other dramatically paired poems in the poet’s corpus where the opening lines of the second poem play a pivotal role.\(^\text{19}\) The opening couplet can refer to the act of looking at the cult statue of Apollo, re-inforced by the echo of a couplet in the Callimachean Hymn to Apollo (‘who sees him is great; who does not see him is lowly’ *Hymn* 2.10), as well as evoking the

\(^{16}\) Bowditch 2009 and Hubbard 1984. 2.32 is certainly unlike the internal narrative ‘stream of consciousness’ effect and diversification of address in most other poems of Book Two, which give these poems a ‘jerkiness, an unpredictability in structure and thought progression’ (Warden 1980.90); rather the dramatic setting, Cynthia imagined as fleeing from Rome, and the sustained dialogue form, are much closer in style to several poems of the *Monobiblos*, which also respond to a particular dramatic situation within an imagined setting. Most editions of Propertius separate the two poems, apart from Heyworth 2007, but he still calls them 2.31/2.32.

\(^{17}\) Bowditch 2009.401.

\(^{18}\) Ibid.410.

\(^{19}\) See Davis 1977.
typically Roman attitude of shame before a divinity, yet the emphasis on the eyes as the road to love and the use of peccare (2.32.1) are appropriate to the description of Cynthia and the response that her beauty evokes in 2.32.1-10. Hubbard shows how, as the poem progresses, we find a constant blurring between empirical, subjective perception and detached aesthetic contemplation. Thus both readings assimilate ‘Cynthia’ as the recipient of the male erotic gaze and herself the owner of this active gaze to ‘Cynthia’ as a work of art to be aesthetically appreciated.

The opening couplet of 2.32 creates a triple ambiguity between art, godhead and puella that reflects back on 2.31 and continues throughout 2.32, and which allows us to perceive more clearly their significance for the poems of the Monobiblos. In 2.31/32 Propertius fuses the human, erotic emotions of a lover with a species that echoes Cynthia’s own visual ornamentation that we see in 1.2, as she becomes the singer of 1.3. Both 2.31/32 and the Monobiblos consistently blur the typically masculine act of ‘seeing’ with that of the more feminine ‘being seen’, and both show an affinity between the erotic and proprietary gaze. Cynthia’s visits to the various shrines outside Rome associate her with the recherché cults that these places of worship invoke, for Trivia (2.32.10) conjures the sinister and irrational elements of Diana’s worship, but also recalls her celestial function as the moon goddess besides Apollo, the sun-god, at 2.31.15, and reminds us that the epithet ‘Cynthia’ can refer to both divinities, responding to the puella’s masculine and feminine traits. Just as Cynthia becomes a ‘spectacle’ in 2.32, fleeing the male lumina of line 18 (non urbem, demens, lumina nostra fugis), so the lover himself is consistently on view in the Monobiblos, a ‘spectacle’ for his elite male friends.

Yet 2.32 also strongly foregrounds the importance of literary construction. The poet’s ironic use of fabula at 2.32.26 links Cynthia to the peccadilloes of a series of femmes fatales who form the exempla series in 2.32.31-40 but suffer no legal consequences, and one notes the use of doctus (line 20) and imitata (line 61) of the lover and Cynthia respectively, for Cynthia’s ‘freedom’ (haec eadem ante illam iam impune et Lesbia fecit (2.32.45)) poetically figures Propertius’ artistic freedom in the realm of literary imitation (quod si tu Graias es tuque imitata Latinas, / semper vive meo libera iudicio! lines 61-62). Indeed the poem is clearly concerned not just with

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20 See Barton 2002.218.
Cynthia’s visual beauty, but her reputation as a consequence of that beauty, and the poetic promulgation of this reputation, for Cynthia’s verbally maligned character (famae iactura pudicae….(line 21)), nuper enim de te nostras maledixit ad aures / rumor…(lines 23-24)) is closely linked to the visual recognition of her sexual indiscretions (falleris, ista tui fur tum via monstrat amoris: / non urbe m, demens, lumina nostra fugis! (lines 17-18)); Cynthia has more to lose, the narrator implies, from public rumor (both ‘gossip’ and poetic dissemination) than from being held captive as the object of visual fascination in his poetry. Thus when the narrator exhorts Cynthia to remain ‘in this place’ (hoc utinam spatiere loco, quodcumque vacabis, / Cynthia! sed tibi me credere turba vetat (line 7)) he is surely suggesting the idea of Cynthia availing herself of the glory conferred upon her by the power of his poetry. Yet the hallmark of the Monobiblos is the way the poet disguises the literary artifice at work and enmeshes the reader in the lover’s servitium amoris, allowing the ego of these poems to maintain a double voice, anguished soul yet also peddler of literary wit and allusion; an effect, I argue, that is largely achieved through the stimulus towards vision and innovations on the traditions of ecphrasis that he exerts, eliding the distinctions between lover and art object. For by placing his puella within an historical, poetic and mythological tradition, Propertius invites us to see her through multiple lenses.

In the substitution in 2.31 of Cynthia for the princeps as the focus of Propertius’ celebration, the ambiguity in these two poems between art, godhead and puella is especially suited to a climate in which the authority of emperors and gods was repeatedly constructed through stories of their sexual relationships. Vout has recently argued against the tendency of critics to explain away the beauty of statues of emperors for political ends and shown how this is the aspect of such images that is too often overlooked; awe and admiration are invariably compounded by sexual desire.\(^22\) This is especially true of Augustus, statues of whom were liberally set up around the Roman world. Suetonius’ description of the emperor in ‘The Life of Augustus’,\(^23\) which focuses so unabashedly on his physicality, clearly demonstrates the kind of reaction that viewers of such statues might be encouraged to adopt. The word used to characterize the Gallic chieftain’s response (remollitum) carries intimations of a gendered nature; diametrically

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\(^22\) Vout 2007.

\(^23\) Suetonius Aug. 79.3: Forma fuit eximia et per omnes aetatis gradus venustissima… Vultu erat in vel sermone vel tacitus adeo tranquillo serenoque, ut quidem e primoribus Galliarum confessus sit inter suos, eo se inhibitum ac remollitum quo minus, ut destinaret, in transitu Alpium per simulationem conloquii proprius admissus in praecipitium propelleret.
opposed to the ideals of Roman manhood (*virtus*), its root (*mollis*) is the term that characterizes the stance of the elegiac lover and the genre in which he writes. Such a response may therefore have implications for the kind of response that the elegist may be encouraging. For at a time when the concept of the emperor’s divinity was being increasingly impressed upon Augustan society through visual means, by engaging with such imagery Propertius bestows upon his *puella*, as the absolute source of power in the alternative world of the elegiac poet, a share with the *princeps* of a liminal position poised between the human and divine. Thus Vout’s point that the concentration on the physical beauty in such images of the emperor may indicate a loss of masculinity ‘that need not be wholly negative’, and that the ‘penetrative’ model of the ‘sex is power paradigm’, while not redundant, ‘needs to be squared with other modes of the discourse’, is relevant here. As criticism of Propertius’ poetry has shifted from biographical readings to the ways in which the poet situates himself and his poetry vis-à-vis other discourses, exploration has focused on the poet’s engagement with such varied codes as gender, genre and Augustan ideology, amongst others, and thereby shown its resistance to any consistent or stable discourse. Thus whilst the male lover is feminine in his subservience to his mistress, he is masculine in his control of the text and of her representation. Propertius’ use of pictorial imagery in the *Monobiblos*, taking its cue from contemporary art, is integral to this process, allowing for a temporary accessibility to the positions of subject and object of desire, male and female, made possible by the poems’ dramatization of the moment of fascination triggered by vision, enabling gender role reversals and shifting identifications.

The play on artifice and reality in 2.31 also attests to the way in which authors and artists toyed with the strong sense of slippage between flesh and marble in ancient thought, and not only Ovid’s Pygmalion, for there are numerous other examples in ancient texts. Thus Catullus enhances the sexual allure of Ariadne by comparing her to a statue (*saxea ut effigies bacchantis* (*Cat.* 64.61)), which in addition to conjuring up familiar representations of Ariadne (the arm bent behind her head as in the Vatican Ariadne), and bacchant (the hair wild with frenzy), encourages us to focus on her

24 Vout 2007.22-23.

25 See for instance Pliny *Nat. Hist.* 34.7-8 for the lifelikeness of Myron’s sculpted cow. Squire takes issue with Lessing’s view that only poetry can represent the divine faithfully; as Squire shows, the idea that ‘invisibility is the natural condition of the gods’ is at odds with the polytheistic traditions of Greek and Roman antiquity which stressed the sacredness of the ancient image and the coalescence between gods and images (Squire 2007.112). He points out the evidence of Artemidorus in *Oneirocritica* that experiencing the divine was a visually conceptualized phenomenon, since the image mediating the divine could be said to embody it (p. 115).
physicality; the uncertainty here between reality and image stimulates our ‘curiosity-led desire’. Or the story related in Lucian’s Essay in Portraiture of the ardent admirer of Praxiteles’ Aphrodite of Cnidos, who contrived to be locked in when the shrine was closed for the night, and alone with the statue, raped it. Like Ovid’s Pygmalion, the story displays and literalises the merging of the work of art and perceiver, yet also implies the presence of other readers (Lycinus’ companion Polystratus, the external reader etc.).

Fitzgerald confirms this element as integral to the viewer’s pleasure in the case of the statuesque Ariadne in Catullus 64, drawing attention to the ‘different satisfactions of description and narrative’ in the juxtaposition of the narration of the fateful end of Theseus and the description of the distraught figure of Ariadne. ‘The viewer’s pleasure’, he writes, ‘is always to some extent at the expense of the figures in the picture, who are unconscious of the whole, narrative or compositional, into which they fit; it is a pleasure that depends on our oscillation between entering the scene and knowing the whole story.’ The image of Ariadne as the rock-like bacchant confirms the reader’s sense of pathos yet also his power and mobility. Fitzgerald’s words here are worth quoting in full: ‘Though gazing, Ariadne’s only action, is in itself hardly Bacchic, the empathetic words of the observer - prospicit, eheu, / prospicit - create the same feeling of trapped motion as does the sculpture of a bacchant. These words are spoken not only of Ariadne, but also of the figure (his italics) of Ariadne in the tapestry, trapped by the medium itself in a moment of unbearable yearning; the pathos of the observer’s words fuses the narrative level (Ariadne’s longing) with the visual level (the figure’s suspended animation), and so creates a mode of existence equivalent to that of Myth, in which Ariadne stands, the epitome of the abandoned woman, ready to be cited.’

Because the simile focuses attention on how we as readers are to feel in looking upon the abandoned Ariadne, the image also reminds the reader of his power, like the Thessalian guests, to compensate for this pathos by moving to another part of Catullus’ coverlet to see, for instance, the arrival of Bacchus and his riotous band. The

26 Vout 2007.28. She mentions all these examples in her introduction.
27 See Lucian Imagines 4 and Pliny Nat. Hist. 7.127 for this story.
28 Cat. 64.246-250. See Fitzgerald 1995.154.
29 Ibid.
30 saxea ut effigies bacchantis, prospicit, eheu, / prospicit et magnis curarum fluctuat undis (Cat. 64.61-62).
image thus casts Ariadne into a world of homosocial relations, and accounts for the kind of ‘double seeing’ that is inherent in the nature of myth and at work in Catullus’ poem as both drama (‘which we may wake into life or re-enact’32) and component of mythology, (‘a list of resonant names, a series of picturesque tableaux, a storehouse of exotic marvels’33 … ‘Ariadne is both fictional figure and artist; her voice is heard both as lament and as poetry…’34).

This attempted fusion of the narrative and visual levels that is epitomised in the description of Ariadne’s lament in Catullus 64 is particularly acute in the poetry of the Monobiblos, and suggests Propertius’ close engagement with that text, for through the poems’ visual impact he both enters into the emotions of the figures he creates and maintains sufficient distance from them by a process of objectification and externalization. Yet he also complicates this process by situating his portrait of Cynthia within a very contemporary viewing context, a diverse nexus of patrons, friends and literary rivals that consolidates male authority in and through women’s bodies. For in casting Cynthia as an object of textual circulation amongst men, Propertius invokes the shared conventions of a highly visual culture.

**The Monobiblos and the literary and critical scene on Propertius, vision and art.**

Perhaps no other ancient author has garnered such a range of critical responses over the past century as has Propertius. While scholarship around the turn of the nineteenth century approached Propertius from a mainly biographical standpoint, treating his poetry as a faithful portrait of a poet’s love affair, by the mid-twentieth century this approach had been largely rejected by such Propertian scholars as Allen (1962), Williams (1968), Luck (1960) and Hubbard (1974), all of whom posited ‘Cynthia’ as referring to an authentic historical figure, while refuting the notion that the poems themselves aimed to present a single overarching story of a love affair. By the 1980’s this position had become well established, and criticism became principally concerned with the means by which this effect of ‘realism’ was achieved. Veyne’s landmark text of 1988 presented the sharpest break from these positions by denying ‘realism’, or the presentation of such, as a conscious effect at all, but rather seeing

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32 Ibid.159.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.158.
Propertius’ poetry, and indeed elegy as a whole, as a semiotic ‘game’ between author and learned reader, aimed more at amusement than to create emotion. Meanwhile during the 1970’s feminist scholars such as Hallett (1973) had begun to consider elegy, and principally the poems of Propertius, in terms of presenting a quasi-feminine perspective, inverting traditional Roman ideas regarding relations between the sexes. Greene’s position (1998) was aligned to this, but rather less optimistic; the apparent counter-cultural stance in Propertius is in fact only that. Rather than genuinely aimed at opening up a space for the female viewpoint, Greene argued that the elegiac puella is purely a projection of the male poet’s fantasies and anxieties about women. During the 1990’s the position had shifted again, and Wyke has been at the forefront in arguing that the triangular relationship between the elegiac poet, the figures in his poems, and the reader, is mainly governed by ideas about literature, ideas that have received widespread consensus over the past decade.

While these various critical stances have to some extent acknowledged and granted some credibility to each other, it seems clear that in moving away from one extreme (‘the biographical view’) to another (‘the purely literary approach’), it has been recognised that Propertian criticism has alienated itself from the social conditions of possibility that can account for the genre’s brief existence at all. Recent scholarship however has begun to address this, and shifted the focus back towards historicism, and away from using elegy, in the words of Johnson, ‘to prove or disprove current literary theories……’.35 Miller for instance argues for the complex and contradictory subject position of the Roman male elegist, the way in which elegy engages and calls into question the norms of social conduct, as a symptom of the social, political and ideological crisis attending the troubled transformation of the Roman Republic into a multi-national empire; elegy thus becomes a literary marker of the dissolution of the private citizen’s fixed sense of self, concomitant with the crisis resulting from this transition. Augustus’ ensuing programme of state renewal under the individual princeps, masked by the proclamation of a return to the ‘status quo’, was thus largely responsible for the major ambiguities, the moments of ‘trauma and undecidability’, in the cultural productions of this period that can account for the ‘semiotic slippage’36 at the heart of elegy, due to new semantic possibilities in language, which ‘never simply

35 Johnson 2009.xii.
broke free of, or replaced, the traditional meanings of such words; instead, they existed in a constant and unstable dialectical tension with them. Precisely that tension made lyric subjectivity as a publicly recognized private consciousness possible, with all the contradictions that such a formulation implies.\textsuperscript{37} Thus, as Miller points out, the elegists consistently speak of respecting traditional values whilst at same time rejecting those very values for their \textit{personae}, for instance appropriating military language to characterise their relationships with their mistresses yet also to justify their rejection of the public expectation of participation in soldiery.

Miller sees this crisis as primarily responsible for the production of a series of ‘female scare figures’ within the cultural productions of the period, reflecting a new anxiety over women’s sexual conduct; this, he argues, can account for the elegists’ \textit{dominae} and their lovers’ passivity despite the poets’ equestrian status. Johnson takes this point further, and considers how such tensions were felt most perceptibly in the realm of gender and sexuality. Johnson does not reject the theory of the \textit{puella} as a metaphor for poetics but questions more intensely the reasons behind the elegists’ choice of this particular metaphor. As once members of Rome’s elite, the elegists now found themselves as private citizens whose emphasis on the need for privacy and intimacy in their writing constitutes an implicit protest against Augustus’ intrusions into private life. Meanwhile the greater independence and sexual liberation of women due to the growing cosmopolitanism of Romans at the end of the Republic can account for the subservient and feminized stance of the elegiac lover;\textsuperscript{38} the social climate offered a space for them to focus on themselves and their poetry, with ‘commerce, politics and social life going on all around them’\textsuperscript{39} Thus in elegy we see the confrontation between traditional Roman erotic ideology and a libertarian ideology that sought to replace it.

These recent publications have rendered the critical scene a great service in recognising that there are intermediary positions that can take account of and register those earlier divergent stances, or at least recognise a more involved and complex fusion of art and ‘life’ which is at the heart of the genre’s continued appeal. For they recognise that Propertian elegy is \textit{not} merely a semiotic ‘game’ (as considered by Veyne who completely severs elegy from its historical context) nor a purely sincere

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.28. See also Conte 1994:254.

\textsuperscript{38} Johnson 2009:216.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.217.
outburst of feeling, but rather the result of a complex interaction with social realities. As
Fear puts it: ‘The elegiac text is neither a simple window on to Augustan reality nor a
transcendent literary artefact that has no relation to its historical moment of
conception.’

It is for this reason that these arguments should be placed within the wider context of Augustan culture that recognises the interface of elegy, as has been recognised in other areas of Augustan literature, with visual art. For this tension or crisis in the relationship between private and public self is shown not only in the self-contradictory stance of the elegist but also in the themes that elegy consistently engages, its preoccupation with envy, violence, death and the suffering occasioned by frustrated desire, and indeed such themes also resonate within visual art from this period. Fredrick has recognised the overlap between the two art forms and has demonstrated how the complex gendered discourse that both Roman elegy and art explore reflects larger questions regarding political and social relations of power. Thus elegy’s clear intersection with Roman imperialism, despite the apparent insistence of its authors on being removed from public life, finds its corollary in the blurring of public and private art. Such complex intersections of Roman imperialism with gender and sexuality, ethos and class, reflecting a wider interplay between gender and power in Roman society as a whole, have recently been recognised by Keith, who directs this approach to a number of poems from the Monobiblos.

This same trait has been appreciated within Augustus’ own building programme. Kellum for instance has detected gender encodings in several Augustan monuments. Yet studies within the private sphere also offer compelling evidence for erotic representations in Roman culture being intimately connected with these larger issues concerning relations of power. This is particularly the case with the mythological panel painting within domestic architecture, as Fredrick has demonstrated. Thus the mythological panels within several Pompeian houses are both erotic and violent in a

\[\text{References}\]

\[\text{Fear 2000.154.}\]


\[\text{Fredrick 1997.}\]

\[\text{See Fredrick 2002.236-264.}\]

\[\text{Keith 2008.139-165.}\]

\[\text{Kellum 1997.158-181.}\]
similar fashion to many of the mythical exempla that the elegists employ to explore the complexity of love, connecting both with larger political and social relations of power. Moreover it has been shown that it was the placement of such panels as well as their individual composition within this domestic architecture that was significant in exploiting the sexual vulnerability of the male body as a reaction to this political instability. Fredrick has shown evidence of a strong taste for paintings in the private sphere from the late Republic and early Empire which confuse active male and passive female schemata, and that paintings that dramatize the moment of fascination generated by vision articulate male and female desire by similar gestures and poses.\textsuperscript{46}

Thus it is in contemplation of these paintings, as Fredrick points out, that the male gaze is shown as most prone to fragility, where the confusion between active male and passive female is most pronounced. Certain studies of individual houses have elaborated on this by showing how the very structure of the Roman house was articulated through a complex orchestration of the view which in turn could draw out and reflect upon these issues of gender and power, creating a complex blend of the pleasure in power inflected by the fear of losing it. The House of the Dioscuri (ca. 30-79 AD) provides a fine example of this, where the play on themes of active and passive vision within its wall-paintings help to enact a social narrative. As Trimble has shown,\textsuperscript{47} the mythological panels from the tablinum not only depict the different stages of a narrative that the viewer was invited to re-construct through reference to literary sources, but also employ visual puns which cut across the boundaries of male and female, mortal and divine. Studies such as Trimble’s can demonstrate how the contextual significance of these art-works is at least as important a question as the extent to which they can be regarded as copies of Greek masterpieces, in that they create social narratives that impact upon critical moments of self-identity through questions of self-representation, and by playing on themes of ‘seeing’ and ‘being seen’.\textsuperscript{48} What is particularly intriguing here is not only the ambiguity regarding male and female identity, but also how certain iconographic details project the viewer beyond the critical moment, requiring knowledge of a wider narrative, yet at the same time haul

\textsuperscript{46} Fredrick 1995.269.

\textsuperscript{47} Trimble 2002.

\textsuperscript{48} Thus she shows how the ‘Achilles on Scyros’ painting, which represents the moment of his discovery by Odysseus, articulates this crisis through a contrast in gazes between the two figures, while other viewing figures highlight this central tension and act as a foil for Achilles’ moment of transformation to male hero.
the reader back from the proleptic importance of the scene to the painting’s lack of resolution.⁴⁹

A similar case is a series of pendant panels highlighting women’s dangerous power from a small cubicle in the House of Jason from the late Augustan period, where the three heroines - the sitting Phaedra and Medea and the downturned gaze of the standing Helen - adopt the characteristic poses of a Roman matron occluding the disruption of the domus which each will bring about. Bergmann coins the term ‘pregnant moments’ for the poses within these paintings, where the spatialisation and repetition of proleptic scenes builds towards a climax of comprehension as imagination takes the viewer beyond what could be captured in a single moment. These images of women from myth held in a state of excruciating suspended animation clearly hold important implications for women as signifiers in Roman art.⁵⁰ This same mix of femininity and violence is integral to the lover’s fascination with Cynthia, and his use of myth enjoys the same kind of privileged position through its wider impact upon the narrative. Indeed in the Monobiblos, I argue, Propertius explores this same transcendence of social categories, and his poems are full of such critical moments that the use of myth exploits but does not resolve, projecting the reader beyond the moment through knowledge of a wider narrative, only to re-focus attention on the moment’s lack of resolution.

Just like the social narratives that such artworks create within the private sphere, Propertius revels in oscillating between different gendered positions,⁵¹ and the visual images that he creates are aimed at a similarly calculated effect, enticing the reader to draw out further implications, to participate vicariously in his elegiac ‘story’. Moreover by situating several other male ‘viewers’ in the text Propertius engages with this same dynamic of visual control and unstable boundaries that we find within domestic art, and the contextual significance of his poems is equally important a question as those of imitation and appropriation, inviting the reader to explore various ambiguities.

⁴⁹ Such questions gain added point from the visual and thematic interplay with other panels, in this case the confrontation of Achilles and Agamemnon in the panel opposite, which depicts a similar moment of crisis between the hero’s willingness to take up arms and his abandonment of battle, and evokes similar questions regarding the transcendence of social categories, this time the challenge to a king. As Trimble points out, the contradictions in these paintings in the transcendence of social categories of gender and authority are accentuated rather than resolved.

⁵⁰ See Bergmann 1996.

⁵¹ Fredrick 2002.256-257 points to the manifold depictions of passive males in art such as Endymion and Selene in the House of the Dioscuri as well as the painting of Pan and Hermaphroditus, as evidence for the possibility of cross-gender identification in such paintings. His point is that desire for visual control is shown to be pregnant with risk, as such paintings are aimed at disarming the male viewer by a sudden and unexpected thwarting of expectations.
therefore argue not only that the visual arts offer eloquent testimony to the diffusion and incorporation of elegiac romantic ideals into mainstream domesticity, but also to an intellectual dimension that responds to the social narratives that art could enact within domestic settings.

In recognising these thematic resemblances, one also notes the sharp increase in scholarship of late concerning the importance of vision within Augustan literature as a whole. Mulvey’s seminal work on the male gaze in cinema, and the distinctions she draws between the ‘scopophilic’ and ‘voyeuristic’ gazes that narrative cinema habitually elicits from the male viewer, are also relevant for both elegy and art, since they connect ways of looking at the female body with power and powerlessness, and are therefore profoundly relevant for a society deeply stratified by gender and class.

Mulvey argues that exclusion from the point of narrative film’s origination is particularly disturbing for the male viewer for whom it acts as a projection of earlier fears of castration, disabling his identification with discursive power. The two fundamental looks or ‘gazes’, she argues, that narrative cinema elicits from the male viewer in its portrayal of the feminine compensate for this, protecting the viewer against this loss of power and status. ‘Scopophilia’ suggests but disavows sexual difference by focusing the viewer’s attention on the exaggerated beauty of certain body parts, splitting the woman into idealized fragments; sadistic ‘voyeurism’ on the other hand recognises it, treats it as offence, and anticipates punishment or forgiveness.

Contradictory in their approach to narrative time and space, the former fetishises the female and has the quality of a ‘cut-out’ or icon, arresting time, while the latter creates depth in the temporal plot. This, as Fredrick has pointed out, is analogous to elegy’s constant oscillation between fascination and suspicion on the part of the elegiac amator, the puella as both candida and dura, and provides the foundation upon which elegiac discourse rests. Yet in elegy of course such a resolution is not forthcoming, as the lover is kept continually in abeyance. As Conte has shown, suffering, and the failed attempts

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52 Mulvey 1989.

53 For a brief overview of Mulvey’s ideas, and their general relevance for both Roman art and elegy, see Fredrick 1995.269-270; see also Fitzgerald 1995.147-148 in relation to Cat. 64. He points out that the ‘cutting and framing’ of cinema reminds the viewer that the reality reflected by film is only the creation of another’s impression of reality, like elegy’s fragmented narratives, for which the same point could be made.

54 The contrast is between mobility (power) and immobility, between seeing women as ‘whores’ and seeing them as ‘Madonnas’. ‘Sadism [= voyeurism] demands a story, depends on making something happen, forcing a change in another person, a battle of will and strength, victory/defeat, all occurring in linear time with a beginning and an end. Fetishistic scopophilia, on the other hand, can exist outside linear time as the erotic instinct is focused on the look alone.’ (Mulvey 1989.22).
to relieve it, is the very condition of elegy’s poetics, essential for the survival of elegiac discourse.\(^5^5\)

In poetic terms the two diverse ways of portraying the *puella* map on to a contrast between the elegy and epic, against which elegy defines itself by opposition. If the struggle of the Propertian lover is to manoeuvre the *puella* from one state (*dura*) to the other (*candida*), then this corresponds to a struggle on the poetic level to map the one genre onto the other, to assume for his elegy an epic prerogative, to invert the gendered opposition that structures its narratives. In the *Monobiblos* in fact we find that this *telos* of forgiveness or punishment is inverted, as the lover becomes progressively distanced from this resolution. Thus it is the *puella’s* various escapades, the *amator’s* fears of her sexual experience with other men, that constantly drive the sense of an elegiac ‘plot’, and which account for the contrasts between images of beauty and violence. As we will see, this opposition between the two genres maps on to a tension between the ecphrastic impulse that elegy aspires to and the narrative continuity that is characteristic of epic.

Other studies can help to elucidate just how pregnant with risk visuality itself was in Ancient Rome, and the ways in which both artists and poets might explore its contradictory effects. As Bartsch points out, this was especially so during the late Republic and early Empire. In his reading of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Smith deploys as his key idea Merleau-Ponty’s concept of Aeneas as the ‘voyant-visible’, the ‘one who sees and is seen’, and convincingly argues from this that the key characters of the *Aeneid* are stressed as both the subjects and objects of perception, and communicate through visual signals. He demonstrates the tensions for instance at the heart of Aeneas’ two ‘visions’ in Carthage, the prophetic image of future Rome through the appearances of Mercury and Anchises, and the insistently present erotic gaze of Dido. Smith argues that the Augustan period evinced a shift from a Republican oral to an imperial visual culture, involving the gradually more persuasive power of seeing rather than speaking as the primary means of conveying and gathering information, and so gives evidence of a crisis in identity that is habitually explored through vision and its ambivalences.\(^5^6\)

Vision is indeed the constant spur to the Propertian lover’s behaviour, yet whereas Virgil’s use of vision points towards the poem’s *telos*, the foundation of Troy in Rome,

\(^5^5\) See Conte 1994.

\(^5^6\) Smith 2005.
Propertius’ use of vision carries the lover ever further away from his, domination of the 
puella.

Bartsch has shown how the intersections between vision, sexuality and self-
knowledge in the Ancient world provided a space for conceptualising selfhood, 
relations which were mutually dependent. This mutual dependence was most plainly 
graspable, she argues, within philosophical texts that explored the concept of the mirror, 
whether literal or metaphorical, as a reflection of the self which in turn could be 
considered as a manifestation of that self as seen by others. Barton considers further 
the close connections between visibility and social values in Roman society and the 
importance of visual affirmation particularly regarding the institutions and traditions of 
the Roman Republic. The eyes, she argues, were regarded as both the most powerful 
of senses but also the most vulnerable of bodily inroads, creating ambiguities in the 
cultural assumptions surrounding being at the centre of the Roman gaze, a necessary 
prerequisite for exemplarity, glory and triumph but also a locus of vulnerability and 
sexual deviancy. The paradigmatic examples, as Bartsch notes, were the orator and 
actor, each at a different end of this spectrum of class, vulnerability and virtus. ‘And 
yet’, she writes, ‘Roman elites acknowledged that the orator’s position was 
uncomfortably akin to that of an actor. Cicero’s strictures to ensure that the former 
distinguish himself carefully from the latter are well known, and a series of sources 
point out this similarity and offer warnings against it…’. Yet it was the transition to 
Empire that brought a breakdown of these distinctions: ‘At Rome these were the 
rewards for subscribing to the shared values of the community and performing them in 
the flesh – at least during the Republican period. One of the most salient aspects of the 
transition to Empire was precisely the breakdown of these rewards and the breakdown 
too of the reciprocity of the gaze. Along with this went a breakdown in the distinctions 
between safe and unsafe forms of visibility…’.

The Monobiblos in particular gives evidence of this same tension. For the 
Propertian lover both displays himself as a ‘spectacle’ for his elite friends and for the

57 Bartsch 2006.
58 Barton 2002.
60 Ibid.137.
puella herself, but also plays the role of magister amoris, suggesting a similar connection between ethical behaviour and ‘being in the public eye’, like the social narratives that domestic wall-paintings could create which often figure internal viewers, complicating the viewer’s own response. Several of the poems from the Monobiblos create this same triadic configuration that Bartsch discusses in that the figures the poet creates become ‘mirrors’ of himself, starting out as foils but ending up reciprocating the lover’s own elegiac suffering.

However while I agree with several Propertian scholars that vision is the striking feature in the poet’s intricate web of cultural and literary manipulations, it is the mere presence rather than the actual role of vision in his poetry that has been the focus of many studies on this poet. Yet as O’Neill points out, the servitium amoris topos that characterizes the elegiac lover’s stance is principally defined throughout the four books by the effect on the lover of viewing Cynthia.61 My aim is to complement this approach by considering the intratextual effects of vision within Propertius’ writing rather than its mere presence, a study that necessarily engages with the intersections between gender and power that I mentioned earlier. O’Neill challenges the prevailing view of a dominant male ideology in the male gaze in Propertian elegy, where the puella becomes a kind of blank canvas on to which the lover can project his visual fantasies, the argument that any sense of the mistress’s power in fact illusory. Such a view responds in large part to the metaphorical associations of Cynthia’s body and her adornment with the embellishment of the literary text. Yet as O’Neill points out, the puella does not in fact submit quietly to the lover’s objectifying gaze, but rather the sight of her destabilizes the lover. Raucci takes this argument further to show how vision is key to the oppositions crucial to the relationship between lover and puella.62 Like O’Neill, Raucci argues that the object of vision is not necessarily in a powerless state, that the simple binary model of woman/object/passive - man/subject/active does not hold;63 rather the power relation resides in the question of how well either party is able to manipulate the other’s gaze.


62 Raucci 2004. She therefore argues that vision becomes the principal operative dynamic in a power struggle between lover and puella throughout the four books.

63 See for instance Fredrick 2002.23: ‘temporary identifications with the passive position do not disrupt the transitive nature of the viewing structure, but are rather inversions that define the norm, and the norm remains male/active-female/passive…’. 
Thus rather than seeing the depiction of women, like Greene, as serving to devalue them, or, like Hallett, as creating a space for the female voice, I attempt like Raucci to locate the ambiguity between the two schools of thought in Propertius. Instead of a power dynamic in which control is in the possession of one party (the subject of the gaze), power is fluid and has the ability to move back and forth between parties. Furthermore it is the poet’s imagined visions and the power dynamic between lover and puella that this creates within the book as a whole that betray the instability of the poet’s literary fictions. For anxiety about the beloved can figure a deeper anxiety about language and the poet’s oeuvre once it leaves his control and enters the public domain. Just as the Propertian narrator is unable to occupy his beloved’s attention and restrict her movements, so the poet’s work is not immune to being incorporated into the fictions of other poets with very different concerns. As Wyke points out, Roman elegy draws, to cite only a few examples, from New Comedy, epigram, epyllion, mime and epic, and in Propertius, the changes in situation from poem to poem or from passage to passage are dependent upon the generic mode then dominant in the text. This is what creates the ‘tricky tension’ between art and ‘life’ that Sharrock and others have recognised in Propertius, particularly in the Monobiblos. However an important part of the way that the poet maintains this tension, I argue, is through his manipulation of contemporary artistic effects, prompted by this strong emphasis on vision, which in turn promotes the dramatic conceit of his poetry.

The pervasion of imagery as the means by which Augustus promoted his political agenda is now well documented. The huge importation of Greek masterpieces, and the proliferation of mythological images in Roman public and private spaces, clearly provided an outlet and common visual vocabulary through which both art and literature could engage with this public mode of discourse and establish a community of experience with its readership. For just as literature was based on Greek imports, so Greek works of art, displaced, re-located and copied in Augustan Rome, were now heavily invested with political significance. Zanker has shown how the motivation behind this sudden inundation of imported art was an attempt to coerce morality, identity and behaviour into forms in tune with the new state. Such acts of

64 See Wyke 1989.30-32 for the various generic influences on the characterisation of the puella and Gold 1993.87-93 on Cynthia’s numerous and contradictory personae.

65 Sharrock 2000.

transference and re-contextualisation, and the polysemous implications of these, show clear parallels with the Roman process of intertextuality with Greek literary models. As Barchiesi puts it: ‘Intertextuality is a process, not a state; an operation, not a result…….The idea of a public semiotics that operates with previously owned artifacts - paintings and rings, poems and ideologies - invites us to compare and contrast the strategies of poetry and the visual arts.’ What such studies bring to light is evidence of the demands felt both by poets and artists to define their work in competition with other media at this time, and Virgil’s ephrases have been the subject of several major studies which consider how the various descriptions of imaginary artworks and questions of focalisation impinge upon the narrative.

Yet when one reflects on the close interface between literature and the visual art from this period, one can move beyond this approach. As Webb points out, in the ancient world ecphrasis itself as a rhetorical effect was never thought of, even primarily, as referring to a description of real or imaginary artworks, even though there is a large body of writing in the ancient world that can be described as ‘ecphrastic’ in this modern, restricted sense. For it was during this period that Roman citizens for the first time had suddenly become slaves to their eyes. Thus as Boucher points out, even a mere word or gesture could summon forth a whole host of images for a Roman at this time, such was their sensitivity to the magnetism of visual pleasure in art, and as Benediktson notes, visual imagery pervades Propertian elegy because he witnessed the first arrival of these works of art. Thus when Propertius writes in 1.2 that the heroines of myth radiated a beauty and colour ‘such as could be seen in Apelles’ paintings’ (qualis Apelleis est color in tabulis 1.2.21) one may recall that many of this artist’s works were taken from Greece to Rome as spoils of war by successful generals. Therefore the evidence for the power of the ecphrasis of art to offer metatextual reflection on a work as a whole can be more widely applied, to the extent that

67 Barchiesi 2005.294. See Kellum 1997.158-161 and Galinsky 2006 chapters 4 and 5 for a wider survey of the importance of this Greek/Roman interaction in art and literature which reached its apogee in the Augustan era. As the latter notes, the increasing emphasis on social stability within Augustus’ regime allowed for the actively creative participation of the reader/viewer: ‘layers of allusion or intertextuality ... engage the reader in a creative dialogue.... this is an essential dynamic of Augustan culture’ (Galinsky 2006.359).

68 See also Leach 1988.

69 See introduction to Webb 2009.

70 Benediktson 1985.119. Boucher 1965.41-42 and Papanghelis 1987.207 also draw attention to the pervasive presence of art during the period in which Propertius flourished.

71 Pliny Nat. Hist. 35.9.
description itself, triggering the reader’s experience of the dynamics of viewing art, can be seen as acting as a foil for poetics. In one sense there are clear advantages in having a work of art as an object of *ecphrasis*, for if an author is seeking to suspend the flow of discourse for a visually appealing interlude, he or she can most easily bring to the reader’s mind an object that has already been created as a fixed representation. However I believe that Propertius was interested in *ecphrasis* more generally as a form of ‘word-painting’. This is certainly in line with the expansiveness of the application of the term in Hellenistic rhetoric, where it was considered much more a technique than a genre, intended to interrupt the temporality of discourse as a kind of indulgence in spatial exploration. Yet at the same time I believe that within this process Propertius actually draws on the strategies of visual artists which would be familiar to his contemporary reader. Thus I argue that the poetry of the *Monobiblos* mediates between the literary traditions of *ecphrasis* and the primacy of visual art within Augustan ideology, and offers a particularly intriguing avenue for the exploration of this interaction.

Welch deals at length with Propertian *ecphrasis* in Book Four, where the poet turns his attention to Roman institutions and topology, and remarks on how sweeping changes in the urban fabric coincided with the political and social crises that I have mentioned in a period of transition in Roman identity. By establishing himself as a rival to Augustus in the creation of Rome’s urban identity, Propertius engages in a dialogue with Roman citizens about the unique development of their state: ‘the elegies of Book Four make audible the process of self-expression, individuation, and even defection all but drowned out by the overwhelming - and persuasively symphonic - legacy of Augustus’ city of marble’\(^{72}\) ... His reconstructions of Rome’s past are designed to indicate that monuments have no fixed, real, or zero-grade meaning, but rather that their meaning is always open to (re)interpretation.’\(^{73}\) However she also notes: ‘In this way, the questions I raise about the topographical poems can be fruitfully adapted to those more private poems as well: what is Roman identity, and how is it shaped and enforced? .... The relationship between the individual and the city that unfolds in Book Four is, indeed, as faithful and fickle, as rewarding and painful, as pure

\(^{72}\) Welch 2005.12.

\(^{73}\) Ibid.13.
and as complex as the love Propertius once expressed for Cynthia. This certainly suggests evidence of a potential connecting thread between Propertius’ earlier and later work in terms of the impact upon the poet of this sudden explosion of imagery, for this echo can be read into the notion, played on in one Pompeian graffito, that the secret name for Roma was Amor. Like the monuments of Book Four, ‘Cynthia’ I will suggest, is shaped and fashioned by the poet in such a way that invites his readers to view her from certain perspectives, sometimes from several perspectives at once.

Art and ecphrasis have been the focus of recent work on individual poems from earlier books in the corpus, but most studies of Propertius refer to the poet’s ‘pictorialism’ bringing to mind certain works of art, or that the poet executes with the imagination of a painter, without taking this line of approach any further. I argue more boldly that the primacy of vision in Propertius’ early work is the means by which he can express the ‘crisis’ that I discussed earlier most forcefully, since Augustan ideology was being impressed upon its citizenry through visual means. The Monobiblos offers a particularly fascinating case study for this crisis of identity because of the uniquely complex relationship between the dramatic, fragmentary, quasi-autobiographical episodes that these poems recount and the pictorial description by means of which each poses as ‘realistic’, creating gaps of ironic communication that become increasingly apparent as the poems progress. In this way I demonstrate a close link between the elegist’s fragmented subjectivity and his attempts to create for himself a coherent self-image and ‘recover’ the puella through ecphrasis.

Hence I aim to show not only how visuality resonates within individual poems, but also informs the collection as a whole, encouraging us to read ‘across’ poems. Such a study can expand upon the growing interest in narrative in recent years, and the questions of focalisation and functions of description with which this is concerned, an interest that has only recently been considered in elegy since its various temporal contradictions and very metre make it appear ‘anti-narrative’. Yet this cannot hinder the strong sense that one is participating vicariously in a kind of developing and coherent account, and it is clearly this that underlies the various attempts to formulate some kind of unity within individual books, not least within the Monobiblos.

74 Ibid.17-18.
75 Kellum 1997.177.
Recognition of the types of ‘visual narrative’ that Brilliant\(^\text{77}\) and others have discovered within domestic art is relevant here because of the emphasis on the reader-viewer’s participation in configuring such narratives, and can enrich appreciation of how the elegiac poet, like the visual artist, could capitalize on rhetoric to manipulate the relationships between poet, reader, characters and text to present ‘embedded tales’.

The *Monobiblos* warrants this kind of study owing to the fact that while each poem is presented as a drama in itself, together they supplement and augment each other by the treatment of similar and contrasting situations. This is consistent with the ancient interest in the dialectical possibilities of language, in the relationships among *similitudo, vicinitas* and *contrarium*, and the notion of *schema* as a rhetorical term, mainly through Varro, in whose work the traditions of Stoic criticism played a major role, and stems also from Quintilian’s interest in tropes or ‘modes’ (*Inst. Orat.* 8.6.1-59), involving the abstraction of elements from their cohesive narrative contexts and subsequent re-deployment to represent various themes, expressed in linguistic or visual terms. There have been various studies on the programmatic connections among groups of painted panels in the rooms of Roman houses, yet little on individual books of poems. Such narrative contexts represent for Propertius his rich literary heritage, and such a perspective is especially important for an author who was an innovator in a relatively new genre, for in this book allusions to such authors as Catullus, Gallus and Callimachus abound, and contribute integrally to the ‘meaning’ of the book as a whole. Thus by drawing connections with such ‘visual narratives’, I aim to elucidate how visuality in the *Monobiblos* generates its intricate development of themes, through an understanding of the cyclical arrangement of poems involving the interdependence of themes and moods. Myth is the obvious arena where poetry and art become participants in a cultural dialectic, and this will be an important focus, yet I will argue that the influence of visual art from this period and its various modes of presentation pervade the book in other subtle ways. This process of negotiation in the opening book is therefore a uniquely complex one, and I will draw a distinction with Book Two where one finds a much stronger and more stable identification between vision and the narrator’s fictive world of immediate experience.

The nature of the interrelationship between art and text in the ancient world and the degree to which they interact has recently been subject to considerable dispute.

\(^{77}\) Brilliant 1984.
Whilst Small maintains the independence of artistic and literary traditions and measures the degree to which they interact in terms of the verbatim correspondence of salient details,\textsuperscript{78} Squire has recognised a more fluid interchange.\textsuperscript{79} Squire aims to demonstrate how visual images formed a central part of the preconditioning that ancients brought to their reading of verbal texts and vice-versa. Thus the strict distinctions that have been made between so called ‘obedient’ and ‘disobedient’ \textit{ephrases}, are misplaced,\textsuperscript{80} a result of the general tendency to privilege text over image; rather ‘\textit{ecphrasis} forced its readers to contemplate the verbal evocation of a typified picture \textit{in parallel with a visual tradition of images}; indeed it was by applying that visual tradition to the text at hand that the reader could gain insight into the focalizing lens through which an \textit{ecphrastic} description was cast’.\textsuperscript{81} Hence in considering afresh the sensitivity of the ancients to the visual aspects of written communication I aim to show how the ancient poet’s consistent orientation towards the visual could actively affect the viewer’s response to painted images as well as vice-versa.

In relation to this Bartsch has shown how vivid passages of description that draw on topics that are set out as suitable for the practice of \textit{ecphrasis} in the \textit{Progymnasmata} are employed by the Greek novelists of the Second Sophistic to draw their audiences into an effort in interpretation: ‘The Greek novelists manipulate the readers’ expectation of the need to interpret pictorial description and oneirography, and play also with the relation linking these and other types of descriptive passages to the reader and to the text.’\textsuperscript{82} Thus the descriptions of paintings, dreams, oracles and other spectacles place the characters who ‘see’ them as ‘viewers in the text’, but also demand interpretation from the reader who is thereby made via \textit{ecphrasis} to ‘see’ what is described. In this sense, the \textit{ephrases} of works of art in Philostratus’ \textit{Imagines} from this period are doubly \textit{ecphrastic}, or ‘metaecphrastic’ as Webb puts it, exploring the nature and effects of general principles of rhetorical \textit{ecphrasis} and the reader’s experience of the disjunction between fiction and reality as a strategy of rhetorical \textit{ecphrasis} as a whole. These poems highlight the fact that, even when purporting to

\textsuperscript{78} Small 2003.

\textsuperscript{79} Squire 2007.

\textsuperscript{80} The former ‘limits itself to what can be consistently visualised’, while the latter ‘breaks free of the disciplines of the imagined object’. Laird 1993.19.

\textsuperscript{81} Squire 2007.147. Squire allies himself with Elsner 2007 in this respect; \textit{ecphrasis} in ancient conception was both a verbal and visual phenomenon.

\textsuperscript{82} Bartsch 1989.37.
describe a particular artistic image, literary *ecphrasis* calls attention to its displacement of that same image, and therefore comments on the rhetorical principle of *ecphrasis* as a quality of verbal narrative that seeks to rival the painter’s art.

That knowledge of pictorial versions was essential to the reader’s multi-dimensional response to Philostratus’ poems, as Squire shows, has clear ramifications for this study. Squire’s point is that images need not passively follow texts to engage with them, or vice-versa, and conclusions remain inherently flexible.\(^{83}\) Certainly, as with Philostratus’ poems, Propertius’ images from myth engage with iconographic tradition, yet they bypass pictorial versions and rather monumentalise literary precedent. Furthermore, as we will see, the blurring of the distinctions between Cynthia as human and mythological lover in the *Monobiblos* created by the consistent emphasis on vision allows one to apply this approach more widely to individual poems and the way in which they engage with one another. Moreover the fact that this approach shows a strong self-consciousness regarding the gendered dynamics of artistic responses increases their relevance for the *Monobiblos* for reasons already mentioned; the constantly shifting, multiple identification through the various cross-gender associations and role-reversals that this text marks out is only achievable within the fictional world of elegy, where characters appear outside the patriarchal, social structures of real life. Like the iconography of mythological idylls wherein paintings that dramatise the moment of fascination through vision articulate male and female desire through similar gestures and poses, it is Propertius’ emphasis on the visual and imagistic that allows for a similarly shifting, multiple identification.

This approach is also abetted by renewed interest in elegy’s descent from Hellenistic epigram,\(^{84}\) which played on the ambiguity of its own poetic status between material monument and self-conscious literary object, as shown by Goldhill,\(^{85}\) who demonstrates the importance of Hellenistic epigram’s role in the development of

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\(^{83}\) One particular instance of such a text that Squire explores to illustrate his argument has clear implications for the *Monobiblos*, namely Philostratus *Imagines* 2.18, which evidently responds to the rich literary and pictorial tradition surrounding the myth of the Cyclops Polyphemus’ love for the sea-nymph Galatea, and to which Squire directs his three-pronged approach (See Squire 2007.300-357). ‘Interpictorial intertexts’ deals with how alternate versions of the myth (Polyphemus / Galatea, Polyphemus / Odysseus) which were alluded to iconographically in painting can be paralleled with verbal allusion in Philostratus’ poem following Theocritus, setting different versions against each other. ‘Gazing with Galatea’ shows how the variables of focalization, turning the conventional subject of the gaze into an object to gaze at, are key to interpreting Philostratus’ text. ‘Programmatic questions’ consider how the arrangement of pictorial versions of the myth within a programmatic collection and their juxtaposition with other pictorial myths might affect viewer response. This again finds its parallel in *Imagines* 2.18: ‘As viewers, we are invited to complement our understanding of each image by looking for comparisons with others, even if …..that search for analogy lacks definitive verbal closure (p. 339).’

\(^{84}\) See most recently Keith 2011.

\(^{85}\) Goldhill 1994.
ecphrasis, involving a complex set of cultural ideas about vision. Hellenistic literary epitaphs consistently dramatise and discuss the moment of interpretation, the representation of the poet’s gaze as it is being performed (his italics), self-consciously presenting the poet as a seeing subject in his interaction with the object of his critical gaze, a process that Propertius complicates dramatically. Benediktson has commented judiciously in this respect on Propertius’ imagistic style; ‘we are looking on a stage in the realization of thought’, he writes, and speaks of the poet’s ‘susceptibility to impressions’, his tendency to leave visual images incomplete: ‘Propertius experiments with thought processes, their lack of logical neatness, their failure to maintain a constant point of view…..he conveys experience itself, rather than a distilled account of that experience.’ As Goldhill shows, these epigrams agonistically position themselves in response not only to one another but also to a series of prior texts, coinciding with a major shift in the discussion of the epistemological status of viewing, a change in viewing discourse: ‘It is in Hellenistic poetry where the form of words on the page itself signifies, becomes a sema.

This disjunction between text and image is very much the case with the Monobiblos which on the one hand stresses its artistic fides through ‘le temperament visuel’, yet on the other hand self-consciously plays on its status as literary text, forcing the reader to respond to both text and image; individual poems encourage their reader to devise new associations based on mental re-arrangement of visual images, yet they also lead the reader back to a series of literary texts. Therefore I aim to demonstrate how intellectual completion of the elliptical figures and allusive images, which, although typical of Augustan poetry in general, are particularly characteristic of Propertius, rely on similar principles of engagement in visual art, and how an understanding of such principles can enrich this intellectual process for the reader’s engagement with the Monobiblos. Particularly important here is elegy’s engagement with epic, for by the late first century B.C the opposition between the two had become commonplace, particularly in the statements that Latin love poets made concerning their

86 Ibid.212.
87 Benediktson 1989.79.
88 Ibid.86.
89 Ibid.215.
90 The title of Boucher 1965, Chapter 2, pp. 42-65.
91 See Williams 1980.
own poetry, and close examination of several poems of the *Monobiblos* show that the poet vies with epic themes in a particularly complex way. Furthermore Propertius often sets lyric against epic intertexts, intensifying the effects of the former but reversing or manipulating epic scenarios. My interest here in the types and depths of allusion that Propertius employs and how they enrich or complicate the reading process takes its cue from the distinction Conte makes between ‘integrative’ allusion (a trope like metaphor) and ‘reflective’ or confrontational allusion, as we will find, both these types create thematic undercurrents that constantly impinge upon sense through poetic memory.

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Chapter One: Propertius’ visual and pictorial imagination, style and influence

From the opening of the Monobiblos (Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis 1.1.1) we are left in little doubt that the lover is captivated above all by Cynthia’s eyes. It is striking that ocellis is repeated in 1.19, where the word again suggests the emotive power of the puella’s eyes on the lover even in death: non adeo leviter noster puer haesit ocellis / ut meus oblito pulvis amore vacet (1.19.5-6). Between these two poems we find the notion of the eyes as the road to love playing a central role in the narrator’s erotodidaxis as well as his own experiences, and an ongoing theme, which, in its various forms, is to play a major role in the remainder of his poetry. So in his warning to Gallus to keep away from Cynthia, he points out that she would not allow him freedom to sleep or let his eyes range at will: non tibi iam somnos, non illa relinquet ocellos (1.5.11). Ponticus is given a similar warning of the dangers of falling in love and not being allowed to give his eyes free rein: quippe ubi non liceat seducere ocellos / nec vigilare alio nomine cedat Amor (1.9.27-28).

Moreover the idea of capture in the military metaphor of cepit at the opening of 1.1, continued in tum mihi constantis deiecit lumina fastus in 1.1.3, is pertinent not only to the characterisation of the relationship between lover and puella as that of slave and mistress, but also initiates the theme of the eyes as the seat of danger and the violence that results from absorption in physical spectacle; so Milanion in 1.1, wandering deranged: ibat et hirsutas ille videre feras / ille etiam Hylaei percussus vulnere rami / saucius Arcadiis rupibus ingemuit (1.1.12-14); or the lover’s impulse to rape in 1.3: subiecto leviter positam temptare lacerto / osculaque admota sumere et arma manu (1.3.15-16). Cynthia’s eyes are always, simultaneously, a site of danger and attraction: tam tibi ne viles isti videantur ocelli, / per quos saepe mi credita perfidiast (1.15.33).

Yet the theme of vision is not only integral to the lover’s enslavement to the puella and the warnings he issues to the various male counterparts who populate the Monobiblos. Indeed even where we do not find any explicit mention of eyes or verbs of sight, I would argue that scenes are often constructed in a manner that invite the reader to visualise a particular scenario. One could consider Bassus in 1.4, whose

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93 Sharrock’s view is aligned to this in that she shows how the amici of the Monobiblos act as ‘stand-ins’ for the reader, and so draw us into the lover’s world, sharing in the pleasures and anxieties of Roman masculine sexuality, although she omits any discussion of the cumulative effect of vision or actual visual terms as an aid to this construction. See Sharrock 2000.
attempts to induce the amator to look at other beauties (tu licet Antiopae formam Nycteidos...referas ......et quascumque tult formosi temporis aetas 1.4.5-7) are answered, in the repetition of forma, only by the appeal to envision Cynthia instead (haec sed forma mei pars...ingenuus color et motis decor....1.4.11-13). Cynthia herself is clearly implicated in these ‘gazing games’, as Raucci calls them,\(^\text{94}\) when the narrator imagines her looking upon his ‘dust’ (pulvere 1.19.22), and his ‘dead bones’ (ossa 1.17.12), or mourning his funeral (1.17.24), or ‘seeing’ the lover’s predicament (aspice, quam saevas increpat aura minas 1.17.6), even when she is not figured as physically present within the poem’s fiction. Thus even where there is no direct appeal to sight, there is a frequent implicit recognition of its profound effects upon the various personae of the poet’s drama; the cumulative effect is that the reader, as the implicated ‘viewer’ of these various erotic entanglements, becomes involved in this visual dynamic, and experiences the constant emotional pull that it creates. This extends to the metaphorical associations of landscape and other scenes with Cynthia’s imagined temperament (tune audire potes vesani murmura ponti..(1.8.5).....quin etiam absenti prosunt tibi, Cynthia, venti (1.17.5)). Like the frequent apostrophes to the puella that we see an example of here, the poet’s constant use of ‘deictics’, like pointers in a stage play, prompts participation in these dream-like situations, as he points to something or somewhere as if it actually exists - hic furor (1.1.7), hoc malum (1.1.35), haec certe deserta loca (1.18.1)...hic licet occultos proferre (1.18.3), haecine parva meum finus harena teget? (1.17.8), hic mihi conteritur vitae modus, haec mea fama est, hinc cupio nomen carminis ire mei (1.7.9-10). By drawing us into the emotional dynamics of his poetry, vision becomes the essential means by which the poet obscures the gap between the omniscient author and the narrator’s more limited viewpoint.

It has been recognized that Propertius’ articulation of vision follows closely on optical theory in Epicurean thought, as had recently been popularized by Lucretius.\(^\text{95}\) Thus the idea in Propertius of visual beauty invading and even overcoming the lover’s reason and free will, as well as the lingering image of the beloved even in her absence,\(^\text{96}\)

\(^{94}\) Raucci 2004.

\(^{95}\) For Propertius’ acquaintance with Epicurean and Stoic disputes about vision and the imagination, and the Epicurean doctrine of images, see Hubbard 1984 and Papanangelis 1987.207-210, who notes strong parallels between Propertius and Lucretius. Philodemus’ Greek epigrams have been shown to have had a considerable influence on Propertius; see Benediktsdottir 1989.110-111, and for the debt of Propertius 1.3 to Philodemus 5.123, see most recently Cairns 2011.33-50.

\(^{96}\) See for instance 1.5.11, 1.19.5, 2.12.13, 2.26.41.
are both common amatory motifs in Lucretian philosophy. This Epicurean theory of vision, as expounded in Book Four of the *De Rerum Natura*, held that vision was caused by the emanation of *simulacra* or ‘idols’ that stream from the object’s surface, traverse the air and enter the eye, and that particularly bright or beautiful objects could cause pain through their extraordinary force, containing seeds of fire; love might be excited but could never be fulfilled by the perception of such ‘idols’. Moreover such *simulacra* could remain in the air even in the object’s absence and could thereby be distorted by the recipient into various fantasies. The term *simulacra* therefore had a double-edged nature, referring not only to the emanation of such particles, but also to delusive and unreliable images such as ghosts, warped representations and dream-images. Lucretius’ discussion of dreams in *DRN* 4.722-776 posits such *simulacra* as responsible for those visions in dreams that cannot be separated from reality by the sleeping mind. This leads on to his famous discussion of vision, love and sex in *DRN* 4.1030-1287, and his idea that anyone who is shot by the *simulacra* emerging from the arrows of Venus strives towards the source of the wound, the object of vision, and wishes to be conjoined with it. Thus for Lucretius erotic vision was not a happy process for the lover, for since the body could not feed on anything except the *simulacra* received through the eyes, such vision could only lead to frustration (*sic in amore Venus simulacris ludit amanti, / nec satiare queunt spectando corpora coram* (4.1101-1102)), and even physical pain (*quod semina possidet ignis / multa dolorem oculis quae gignunt insinuando* (4.330)). Yet the theory was not a wholly passive one. In *DRN* 4.805-18 Lucretius notes how the mind has the power to select which among the many available images it might pay attention to, a doctrine of selective apprehension, and he therefore exhorts the obsessed lover to turn his attention to another object (4.1063-4, 1072). This tension in Epicurean psychology between passive and active modes of vision lies at the heart of Propertius’ visual aesthetics, which demonstrate both a state of being overwhelmed by the sight of the love object as well as an active projection of the subject’s will, whether in the form of desire or aesthetic judgement. My discussion of 2.31/32 demonstrated that the projection of visual consciousness could not only be seen

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97 *DRN* 4.1061ff.
98 Ibid. 4.324-331.
100 *Hoc ideo fieri cogit natura, quod omnes / corporis affecti sensus per membra quiescunt / nec possunt falsum veris convincere rebus* (*DRN* 4.762-764).
in terms of the sexual impulse, but also in the opposite tendency; sight could also take the form of ‘insight’ or intellectual perception through experience.

As was seen in 2.31 and 2.32, likewise in the Monobiblos the power of subjective vision, the impact on the speaker of ‘seeing’ Cynthia, is invariably juxtaposed to and contrasted with such cognitive sense perception that perceives and explores ‘truth’ through poetry. Indeed we find that the latter is usually consequent upon the effects of the former. Thus the Lucretian ‘wound’ of love through the eyes, an altogether unhappy experience for the Lucretian lover, initiates his restless exploration of the poetic imagination. There is then a consistent contrast and movement between these two states. Indeed it is as if the lingering image of the beloved in her absence, imprinted on the lover’s mind, causes the effects of distortion and hyperbole in his visual flights of the imagination.

In connection with this, as I have mentioned, the influence of artistic representation upon his imagery has been a favourite subject of Propertian criticism. This has been encouraged by the narrator’s own frequent admissions:

*illic vel stadiis animum emendare Platonis*  
incipiam aut hortis, docte Epicure, tuis;  
persequar aut studium linguae, Demosthenis arma,  
libaboque tuos, culte Menandre, sales;  
aut certe tabulae capient mea lumina pictae  
sive ebore exactae, seu magis aere, manus.  

(3.21.25-30)

The way the catalogue is phrased in the latter example above (*aut certe*) and the placement of *tabulae pictae* at the end strongly suggests a greater interest in art compared with the earlier intellectual distractions. 101 These frequent allusions to his own susceptibility to the influences of visual art serve as metaliterary comments on what he feels it is to be a *poeta*, 102 self-conscious reflections on the art of poetry itself. This approach to the poet’s use of myth has been regarded as enabling him to

101 The admission comes in the middle of a poem purporting to relate a trip the poet undertook to Athens, from which the influence of Epicurus can be strongly conjectured: *incipiam aut hortis, docte Epicure, tuis* (line 26), especially if he chanced upon one such Epicurean exposition: ‘for my part, I cannot conceive the good without the pleasures of taste, sexual pleasures, the pleasures of listening to, and the pleasures of looking upon, something beautiful.’ (Epicurus Fragment 67).

102 For other instances see 1.2.22, 2.6.27-30 and 3.9.9-16.
communicate his romanticism to the reader,\textsuperscript{103} and to intimate his own views as to the nature of his poetry. It is Propertius’ communication of this romantic aura through myth that particularly unites the reader with his poetic persona, since the narrator’s feelings are an amalgam of his readers’ own, reinforced by the ubiquity of such images in art, as he moves from one world to another, from his own to the fabulous world of myth. Lyne has identified three main ways in which Propertius exploits myth within his poetry.\textsuperscript{104} For sometimes we observe the lover accepting and believing myth, and accordingly applying it to his present circumstances; in some poems the mythological \textit{topos} raised is dismissed, and the Propertian lover disassociates himself from it; and on some occasions the belief may not be entire or belief and disbelief may exist simultaneously in the same poem. As Lyne has commented: ‘Into a myth that projects belief in a heightened, splendid existence, the poet insinuates details that hint at, but only hint at, a different awareness. The myth shows the poet believing - but aware of the facts which will destroy that belief.’\textsuperscript{105} It is this subtle ‘insinuation of details’ beneath the projection of belief in a ‘heightened existence’ that aligns Propertius, I believe, more closely than the other elegists with effects that were being exploited in visual art at that time.

However while this stress on the importance of reader response has been noted in regard to the poet’s use of myth, it extends to other images and scenes of description that the poet creates. Indeed the Propertian lover’s various reactions to, or ‘readings’ of, these various images, act as a kind of \textit{mise-en-abyme} of the reader’s situation with regard to each individual poem. Walde for instance has considered the soliloquies of poems 16-18 of the \textit{Monobiblos} as ‘dialectics at a standstill’, ‘photographically fixed moments’ in time communicating alternate potential ‘plots’ by alluding to a series of intertexts.\textsuperscript{106} Yet the same point could be made of all the poems of this text, both in terms of their timeless quality and the multiplicity of individual experience that such intertexts communicate. As a result they rely on a high degree of abstraction, a process that depends not only on a re-configuring of their dramatic contexts, but also on an exploration of the poet’s personal realisation of convention. These poems’ atemporality,
their self-presentation as interstices from a seemingly wider narrative, creates the impression of a ‘dream-world’, with his appeals to the various addressees acting as a formal device for a deeper exploration of the poetic imagination. The effect is often deeply disarming, for although many of the poems of the Monobiblos are presented in dialogue form, it throws into doubt the question of whether one is witnessing a dialogue or soliloquy.

As well as contemporary painting, Propertius can be shown to be responding to a strong tradition of visuality within poetry and issues surrounding the correspondence between the two art forms in the ancient world. The power of images to provoke an emotional response had been a topic of philosophical debate since the 5th century BC, yet it is only with Aristotle that one finds sustained discussion of the pleasure derived from the contemplation of representation (or mimesis) within a pre-determined setting. For Aristotle the pleasure of mimesis lies essentially in the fact that it is through imitation that man comes to an understanding of the world around him; by connecting image and subject, something apprehended previously through experience is made comprehensible through representation. Thus in Greek tragedy, since the painful realisation (anagnorisis) suffered by the tragic figure lies within the realm of the probable, the spectator’s pleasure derives from the ability to identify with the tragic figure’s predicament whilst at the same time remaining sufficiently distanced from it, since the tragic character’s suffering confirms something previously apprehended yet unexamined in the viewer’s experience. While Aristotle’s treatise in the Poetics focuses primarily on tragedy, since tragic pity affords a particularly heightened instance of the emotional dynamics that artistic mimesis produces, many of his observations could be applied to an analysis of the same emotional reactions elicited by the visual arts. Indeed Aristotle uses an analogy from painting to emphasise the gulf between reality and representation that must be maintained for this model of projection and identification to remain at its most effective. In Aristotelian mimesis, the response to the mimetic work constitutes a compound reaction to the essential interplay between both the work’s representational content and its artistic rendering. As two of the

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107 Laird 1996 has most recently considered evidence for and against equivalences between the two art forms in ancient thought, drawing mainly on evidence from Augustan poetry.

108 My argument here follows Halliwell 2002, and chapter 6 in particular.

109 See Poetics 54h.8-11: ‘Since tragedy is a representation of people superior to us on the social scale, it should imitate the portrait painters, for while rendering individual likenesses they make them like their owners, but also draw them as more beautiful than they are.’
'representational arts’, Aristotle like Plato holds painting and poetry to be essentially concerned with questions of imitation. Thus although the ‘mimetic’ quality of poetry and painting differs in that they imitate with different tools, this is far more than a question of their ‘mirroring the real’, but rather of the artwork’s internal logic, providing insights into human action and character.

Alexandrian poetry gives greater prominence to the ways in which artistic representation might be brought into the closest possible contact with the sensory and intellectual experiences of the audience.\textsuperscript{110} Enargeia, the quality of pictorial vividness in poetry, aimed not simply to make viewers out of listeners, but to transform them into actively involved spectators who not only saw with the mind’s eye what was being described, but felt the same emotions as those experienced by the original witnesses. Indeed it is striking to note that the poem of the Monobiblos that has been most remarked on for its pictorial effects, 1.3, comes immediately after the poem in which Propertius compares himself to the fourth century artist Apelles (1.2.21-22), as this may suggest ways in which Propertius may be toying with the reader’s expectations. This painter, renowned for the exploitation of such effects, and the creation of that effect of realism springing from the depiction of particular phenomena drawn from common experience, was a major inspiration for the Alexandrian poets; until the time of Apelles, artists and their public were content merely with the verisimilitude in art objects arising from representation of general types of subject-matter.\textsuperscript{111} Indeed the term enargeia has been shown to be a term created by Hellenistic scholars to denote literary pictorial description emerging from the depiction of such phenomena as they appeared in nature;\textsuperscript{112} the term thus represented a shift away from the concept of mimesis, discussed by Plato, Aristotle and Xenophon, as referring to the process, in both fine art and literature, of individualising a general type or mental image drawn from a number of instances of that type.\textsuperscript{113} Graham Zanker has demonstrated how the pictorial powers of these Alexandrian poets were lavished on works of art which utilised ‘trompe l’oeil’ effects, yet he also makes the point that there is often no need to posit actual works of art as a direct influence on their writing; rather these poets are more often acting in a

\textsuperscript{110} See G. Zanker 1987.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.42-50.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.1981.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid.1987.39-42.
manner that is analogous to the artists of period, exploiting the effects of literary
\textit{enargeia} as the counterpart to artistic realism.\textsuperscript{114} In doing so they rely on the viewer or
reader's visual sophistication.

Closer still to Propertius' own day, Horace's famous dictum \textit{ut pictura poesis} is
set within a discussion which draws an analogy between the sister arts principally from
the spectator's point of view:

\begin{quote}
\textit{ut pictura poesis: erit quae, si proprius stes,}
t\textit{te capiat magis, et quaedam, si longius abstes;}
\textit{haec amat obscurum, volet haec sub luce videri,}
\textit{iudicis argutum quae non formidat acumen.}
\end{quote}

(Horace \textit{Epis.} 2.3.361-364).

The distinction between paintings that merit close or more distant inspection
maps on to a change in the fashion of Roman painting that began during Propertius' 
early compositions (approximately 29-28 B.C) and was gaining ground when Horace
was writing his \textit{Ars Poetica} (18 B.C); Republican wall-decoration had favoured
pronounced illusionistic effects that could best be appreciated from a distance, while the
new fashions of the Augustan period brought in more intricate details that could not be
adequately observed from far away. Thus we find that despite the span of time from
Aristotle through to Propertius' own day, the relationship between the two art forms
was broadly conceived in terms of how and to what extent they engaged the spectator or
reader in an empathetic emotional response through the familiarity and vividness of the
depicted situation, a comparison that was dependent on audience rather than creator.
This complex fusion of emotion, cognition and pleasure within Aristotelian \textit{mimesis} in
the interaction between artwork and viewer or reader is I believe particularly
pronounced in the \textit{Monobiblos}, dependent on both a recognition of the influence of
contemporary art and the literary tradition of visuality within which Propertius writes.

For this goes to the heart of the appeal of Propertian poetry, providing as it does
a very convincing sense of a lover's disorientation, yet one that is paradoxically
achieved by a highly planned and conscious ordering of elements. Indeed Aristotle's
treatise on tragedy would seem particularly pertinent to the genre of elegy as a whole.
Both genres explore the destabilisation of boundaries, of gender, but also of the division
between human and divine spheres as the fulchra around which the tragic plot moves,
boundaries that are particularly unstable and fluid in the \textit{Monobiblos}. Yet more than
other elegiac texts, I would argue, the \textit{Monobiblos} gains its emotional impact from this

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.49-50.
same dynamic of identification with, and detachment from, the emotional experience of its protagonists. Indeed the very ‘plot’ of the Monobiblos involves this same deployment of cognitive processes, creating a delight that proceeds from the consciousness of fiction.

Of course unlike tragedy, where the crossing of the boundaries of gender and mortality is usually resolved by harsh punishment, the destabilisation of these boundaries is invariably countered by humour, and we shall often see this vein running beneath Propertius’ temporary access to a world of heightened emotions. Nevertheless I would hold that both Aristotle’s ideas here concerning artistic mimesis, and the shift in emphasis within Alexandrian poetry to empiricist particularism, exert a profound effect upon Propertius’ poetry, for the poet’s art of tragic mimesis is based on the drive to sustain his visualised text. Thus both Aristotelian mimesis and later Alexandrian empiricism concerning the ability of language, whether spoken or written, to stir such a visual response in its reader are highly relevant for a full appreciation of such a visually compelling poet as Propertius. Indeed we find that the exhortations of later Roman rhetoricians that when listening to a piece of description, the listener should be turned into an eyewitness through the skilful use of language, are in line with Aristotle’s recommendation that tragic poets should not rely on spectacle, requiring less skill in evoking horror and pathos than words alone.\textsuperscript{115}

\textit{Ecphrasis, enargeia and ‘realism’ in the Monobiblos}

Ecphrasis was one of the rhetorical exercises of the Progymnasmata, handbooks for students of the Hellenistic east whose authors range from the first through to the fourth century AD, and which give guidelines for content and procedure in these rhetorical techniques.\textsuperscript{116} The stress these rhetorical prescriptions place on the importance of the vivid visual image, drawing on topics with which the reader or listener would be familiar, is similar to what we have already seen in Aristotle and Alexandrian poetry, in that they depict the mind as the locus of interaction between word and image. Indeed as Webb points out, the speaker of a successful ecphrasis becomes a metaphorical painter, imitating the painter’s art, since ‘any ecphrasis rivals

\textsuperscript{115} Poetics 14.1-3.

\textsuperscript{116} See Webb 2009, chapters 2 and 3 for a detailed overview of the contents of these handbooks.
the visual arts in that it seeks to imitate their visual impact.\footnote{Ibid.83.} As Webb shows, it is clear that authors from the period when they were written use language close in terminology to that found in these rhetorical handbooks. For instance Plutarch’s account of his experiences of reading passages in Thucydides,\footnote{Ibid.20.} and Philostratus \textit{Imagines} 2.9 on Pantheia’s death,\footnote{Ibid.21.} both stress the need for imaginative elaboration on the part of the reader, and both use \textit{synaesthesia} which as we will see is often the case with Propertius.

Yet the same point could be made of much earlier texts, as Becker for instance has shown in applying the rhetorical stipulations of the \textit{Progymnasmata} to reading and responding to the ‘Shield of Heracles’ and Homer’s ‘Shield of Achilles’ in \textit{Iliad} 18,\footnote{See Becker 1992 and 1995 respectively. The ‘Shield of Heracles’, a descriptive fragment attributed in antiquity to Hesiod, is now dated to the early sixth century B.C (See Becker 1992, n.3).} and hence I would argue that the \textit{Progymnasmata} represent the rationalization of a much larger history of theories regarding visual and verbal relations, the nature of sight as opposed to insight, and that many of the stipulations within it are applicable to Propertius’ own poetry. All of these texts place emphasis on this same interaction, focusing attention on the impact of the text on the listener rather than the text as an object of analysis. Indeed in several rhetorical treatises visualisation is recognised as the best way to spur emotion in the listener. While the term \textit{ecphrasis} was not regularly adopted until the Second Sophistic, Latin rhetorical treatises give a number of terms such as \textit{repraesentio, descriptio, evidentia}, and \textit{sub oculos subiectio}, all of which equate in some respect to the Greek \textit{enargeia}, the hallmark of \textit{ecphrasis}, in terms of ‘placing the scene before one’s eyes’. For instance in the earliest Latin rhetorical work, the \textit{Rhetorica ad Herennium}, the anonymous author considers \textit{descriptio} as a means of arising extreme emotions (\textit{rerum consequentiam perspicuam et dilucidam...expositionem (ad Her. 4.51)}) as well as \textit{effictio}, which consists of ‘painting with words’ (\textit{effingitur verbis}) an individual with sufficient detail to enable the listener to form an outline of his or her bodily form (\textit{ad Her. 4.63}). Quintilian also considers \textit{enargeia} in detail in Book Eight of the \textit{Institutio Oratoria}, which he at times refers to as \textit{evidentia}, as well as the alternative \textit{repraesentio} (8.3.61), as a form of verbal ‘scene-painting’, (\textit{tota rerum imago quodammodo verbis depingitur (8.3.63)}), with the result
that a speech can be delivered in such a way that the facts presented actually appear to be seen by the listener, rather than merely heard. Indeed on a number of occasions Quintilian uses the language of painting (efficitur, exprimere facies (8.3.66)) to denote this kind of ‘word-painting’ in oratory. In this he hints at a kind of ‘spatial prose’ in the mental images that result from visual language, but at the same time suggests that such images are both spatial and temporal. Interestingly in his use of sub oculos subiectio in Book Nine Quintilian makes the point that the matter being described should not be shown as completed and static (non gesta indicatur), but rather as being in the process of being completed (ut sit gesta ostenditur) and non universa sed per partis (9.2.40). As I go on to show, Propertius’ images in the Monobiblos are truly ‘pregnant moments’, which while ‘freezing’ the flow of narrative, have consequences that find fulfilment in other parts of the narrative. Thus not only do the poet’s images appear to take on a spatial ‘reality’ in isolation, they also create ‘visual narratives’ which the reader can construct as taking place over time.

Propertius was living in a cultural climate dominated by the influence of rhetoric and its teachers. In this respect it is noteworthy to consider the extent to which his use of description conforms to various rhetorical prescriptions on ecphrasis.\(^{121}\) \(^{122}\) At Progymnasmata 37.13-14 the fourth century rhetorician Aphthonius recommends that descriptions of scenes should put the subject in the context of his or her surroundings,\(^ {122}\) which as we will see is very much the case with several poems of the Monobiblos. The Greek rhetorician Demetrius, citing a passage from Ctesias, notes the importance of circumstantial detail as a means of increasing the emotional impact of a passage,\(^ {123}\) as does Dionysius of Halicarnassus who notes that one of the reasons why the orator Lysias possessed plenty of enargeia was his attention this circumstantial detail, which could give his listeners the impression they were meeting his characters face to face.\(^ {124}\) Quintilian recognises the importance of creating a ‘picture’ of the scene described (rerum imago), in order to enhance the listener’s capacity to judge accurately the truth of the case being presented by placing him, as it were, at the scene of the event himself.\(^ {125}\) Aphthonius also notes that enargeia is best achieved by engaging a style that

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\(^{121}\) For further on the influence of rhetoric on Propertius see Keith 2008.19-44.

\(^{122}\) Spengel 1853 2.47.

\(^{123}\) De Eloc. 213-217.

\(^{124}\) Lysias 7.

\(^{125}\) Quintilian Inst. Orat. 4.2.123.
does not distract the audience or call attention to the fact that words are creating what he ‘sees’. Nikolaus, writing in the fifth century, takes up this point by remarking that ‘to the proposed subject matter one should fit the form of the narrative’, an effect that Propertius admirably achieves in several poems. Yet the same rhetorician qualifies the claim that description should ‘turn listeners into viewers’ by stating that, rather than diminishing the force of the illusion, including the reactions of the describer can enhance for the reader the illusionistic quality of the image described; while some texts downplay the mediating presence of the describer and the language of description, others call attention to them.

It is striking to note how reading Propertius relates to earlier texts in this respect. On the one hand the poet’s seamless fluctuation between the language of narration and that of imagistic description is aided by the fact that he generally eschews the typical registers of literary ecphrasis that draw attention to the mediating presence of the describer, a common feature in a line of literary ecphrases that precede Propertius. Indeed one can trace a clear development in the way in which literary ecphrases are deployed and how Propertius’ passages of description present a further advance on the relationship between text and image. The poet’s awareness of the ecphrastic tradition that preceded him is strongly suggested by the fact that 1.3 is so heavily indebted to the ecphrasis of Catullus 64, which in turn invites reflection on how both texts depart from the usual practice in ancient literary ecphrasis. Laird notes how the Catullan ecphrasis, the scenes described on the marriage bed of Peleus and Thetis, is unusual in having no stylistic features to differentiate it from the narrative that encloses it, such as apostrophes to the reader like *ut credas*, emphasising the verisimilitude of the artwork. On this ‘standardisation of texture’ Laird remarks: ‘What Catullus’ retention of the same narrative style inside and outside his ecphrasis achieves is to expose the way that verbal narrative can efface the ontological difference

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126 Spengel 1853 2.47.

127 Ibid. 3.493.

128 Various commentators have noted the poem’s verbal and stylistic echoes of Catullus’ *epyllion*. Only Breed 2003 however recognises the poem as a distinct engagement with the mechanics of Catullan *ecphrasis*.

129 See Laird 1993.21-24 on how Catullus extends the capability of *ecphrasis* and explores possibilities that are not approached by his predecessors.

130 Ibid.29.
between Ariadne in a picture and Ariadne directly described. Indeed this comment has clear significance not only for our interpretation of 1.3, but for several other poems in the *Monobiblos*; at the same time we can perceive a clear advance in that while the Catullan *ecphrasis* is disproportionately large in relation to the main body of the poem - 216 out of 408 verses - and forms a ‘set-piece’ that can be clearly separated from the ‘outer’ narrative that encloses it, Propertius moves in a far less formal fashion between narration and description. The elegist also exhibits the ‘relaxed style’ recommended by Aphthonius that allows language to act as a ‘window’ onto the described phenomena, assisted by the fact that he refers to locations as well as historical personages that would be well-known to the Roman reader, such as his address to Cynthia at the opening of 1.11: *equid te mediis cessantem, Cynthia, Baiis, / qua iacet Herculeis semita litoribus* (1.11.1-2), or at the opening of 1.14: *Tu licet abiectus Tiberina molliter unda …et nemus omne satas intendent vertice silvas, / urgetur quantis Caucasus arboribus* (1.14.1-6).

Moreover unlike the Catullan *ecphrasis*, one notes the preoccupation of critics to tie the mythological *exempla* at the opening of 1.3 to specific pictorial sources, owing to the pervasiveness of images of all three of these motifs in Campanian wall painting, and the rather essentialising judgements they have accordingly provoked: ‘When in 1.3 he comes upon the sleeping Cynthia, imagination presents her as the sleeping Ariadne beloved by ancient sculptors and painters, or as the Maenad sleeping exhausted on the grassy bank of a stream that we see in a painting in the Naples museum. In the same poem he is the Argus intent on Io represented in the House of Livia on the Palatine and in other versions in Naples…..When he speaks of Calypso sitting on the shore, her hair uncombed (1.15.11ff.), it is relevant to recall that the *Seated Calypso* of the painter Nicias was to be seen in Rome itself.’ Indeed the spectacular painted rooms uncovered by archaeological excavation in Rome and Pompeii suggest the kind of bedchamber in which Cynthia may be imagined as sleeping in 1.3. Valladares has therefore recently suggested that her bedchamber may be

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131 Ibid.
132 Spengel 1853 2.47.
133 Fredrick 1995.272 totals ‘forty-three paintings of Ariadne abandoned or discovered in Pompeii - roughly somewhere between five and ten per cent of the total number of central panels’.
134 Hubbard 1974.164-165. See also Curran 1996.195, Harmon 1974.155 for similar judgements. Birt’s study of the Vatican Ariadne appears to be the principal source for the widespread belief that in composing 1.3 Propertius had pictorial representations in mind (Birt 1895).
imagined as containing paintings of the very heroines of Greek mythology to whom Propertius compares her, paintings which abound in Campanian wall-paintings from this period. In this respect we can perhaps see a mutual correspondence at work between art and text. For just like paintings these images are ‘windows’ onto a wider, more expansive narrative, the fallible sensations of the narrator in 1.3 and the fluctuation between pain and pleasure that he experiences corresponding to the ambiguous situations of the three abandoned women, all of whom in myth cause injury in return.

In this regard several Propertian scholars have commented on the strong sense of psychological realism in the poet’s vivid evocation of physical situations and naturalistic depiction of complex emotional and mental states, as well as the poetic devices that underpin this effect. Wyke has discussed the pre-occupation with biographical methodology and attempts among critics to find equivalences between ‘written and living women’ by constructing the movement of sophisticated and liberated women as part of an Augustan demi-monde; a pre-occupation that, despite the difficulties involved, has been particularly applied to Propertius, since he, more than the other elegists, engages in such ‘realist strategies’. For it is the visual quality of these poems, arresting the narrative development, that masks the fusion of wit and erudition that lurks beneath the dramatic scenarios he creates. Propertian ‘realism’ however is a complex phenomenon that requires subtle handling, as the poems perpetually affirm but then undermine the distinctions between ‘life’ and ‘art’. Sharrock gives evidence of the complexities involved within this particular book; the subjective stance of the elegiac ego offers a pose of immediacy and speaks to our desire for stability and authority, ‘occluding the artificiality of its own dynamics’. These poems commence in medias

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135 Valladares 2005.
136 1.3.1-6. Through her curse Ariadne will cause the death of the man who has injured her, described not only as libera (1.3.4) the term Cepheia (1.3.3) for Andromeda hints at a second fight for Perseus and the death of Phineus her unheroic husband; Edonis marks the bacchant as one of the devotees of the god whom Lycurgus scourged, for which he was blinded (Iliad 6.130ff).
137 So Lyne 1980.144: ‘Propertius . . . likes his poems to reproduce psychological uncertainty or vacillation’; Hodge & Buttimore 1977.87 (on 1.3): ‘Propertius’s state of mind is dreamlike, but the experience itself is real, particular, conveyed with utter fidelity’, and Benediktson 1989.36 (on 2.25): ‘the reader feels that he or she is sharing the private thoughts of the poet instead of witnessing the rational reorganization of these thoughts that most classical poets would have presented’.
139 Sharrock 2000.263.
res, as if in response to some interjection from the addressee, ‘thus tempting us to fill in
the gaps that make up the reality effect’.140

This almost paradoxical feature of his poetry, its ability to convey almost
simultaneously the impression of reality and unreality, is a unique feature of Propertius
among the Roman elegists. Even as strong a critic of the biographical approach as
Veyne, who sees elegy as an essentially humorous genre,141 admits to the persuasive
power of Propertius’ poetry to suggest that one is witnessing an autobiographical
encounter, an effect that is not diminished by the poet’s manipulation and personal
realisation of convention in his use of mythological exempla, since Propertius ‘takes on
a child’s soul to make (the heroines) equal Cynthia’,142 and the reader ‘docilely accepts
the poet’s meanderings’ into and out of the world of myth.143 In the suspended moments
of erotic action contained in such exempla, Propertius draws the reader into the
dramatic framework of his poetry, while his subtle and playful disclosure of the literary
artifice at work wrests the reader away from that sense of ecphrastic amazement for
which the narrator’s own visual impulse provides a model.

In this respect Steiner’s designation of ecphrasis as the literary mode ‘in which a
poem aspires to the atemporal eternity of the stopped-action painting’144 captures
something of Propertius’ achievement, for unlike the ecphrastic literature of his
predecessors, the epic ecphrases of Homer and Virgil, and the epyllion of Catullus 64,
Propertius refrains from the storytelling impulse that this interface provokes, and
refuses to make explicit the narrative that graphic art also relates only by implication.
At the same time however his illustrationes cannot be said to ‘symbolize the frozen,
stilled world of plastic relationships which must be superimposed upon literature’s
turning world to still it’145 as Krieger would have it, for they consistently expose the
tension between that ‘stillness’ and the narrative which encloses them, constantly
threaten to disturb the emotional equilibrium of the poem. Indeed with Propertius we
are constantly made aware of the power of description to branch out in the direction of
other stories, of roads not taken, ‘frozen moments’ that create various ‘storytelling’

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140 Ibid.270.
142 Ibid.119-120.
143 Ibid.131.
145 Krieger 1967.5.
impulses and can carry various ironic undertones. This emotional selection of pictures, mediated through the focalising lens of the narrator, can also stimulate recognition of other voices in the narrative, and thus other ways in which such scenes can be viewed.

For the irony that is addressed to the reader through the interpretative bias with which the narrator may discern images presented within the text, Petronius’ Encolpius and Virgil’s Aeneas stand out as similar types of ‘fallible’ viewers. Petronius contrives a comparably double point of view in the pinacothea episode of Satyricon 83.3, where Encolpius gazes in wonder upon the paintings of Zeuxis and Apelles, and which centres on homoerotic love and moments of amatory possession as common themes in the paintings he sees. Here, as Leach notes, Encolpius euphemizes the visual facts of the stories, and gains gratification in personal identification, since to him *amor* is by nature homosexual: *ergo amor deos tangit...et omnes fabulae quoque habuerunt sine aemulo complexus et ego in societatem recepi hospitem Lycurgo crudeliorem* (Satyricon 83.4-5). Yet only the first of these pictures represents a lover’s success, as the following two love objects were decidedly harmed as a result of their dealings with the gods. In failing to have sympathy for the victims of such divine possession, the quality that Encolpius feels is most removed from his experience, the overbearing possessiveness of the gods, is in fact most pertinent to himself. This is similar to Aeneas in front of the Carthaginian murals, whose reactions to what he sees of the depictions of events from the Trojan War in the Temple of Juno are explicitly stated and place emphasis on the tragic events associated with Aeneas’ Trojan past; as a result, ‘the order of presentation creates confusion between the visual image and Aeneas’ thoughts’. Yet here, as with Encolpius, one is consciously and consistently aware of the disparity between their ‘readings’ of these images and their true semantic import; the fusion of the narrator and lover in Propertian elegy on the other hand creates a more subtle irony

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146 *hinc aquila ferebat caelo sublimis Idaeum, illinc candidus Hylas repellebat improbam Naiada. damnabat Apollo noxias manus lyramque resolatam modo nato flore honorabat.*

147 See Leach 1988.405ff. for further on this.

148 *Virgil Aen. 1.455-493.*

149 Leach 1988 labels Aeneas’ reactions to the scenes he views ‘deeply sentimental’, since they ‘show the process of perception as one of selection, amplification and re-ordering...’ (p. 323). Fowler also points out that while the hero’s reactions throw emphasis on tragic events aligned with the Trojan past, ‘as often with focalization, there is more than one story of whose points of view the pictures and their descriptions represent’ (Fowler 1994.33). One could, for instance, go as far as Horsfall in judging Aeneas’ response as a total ‘misreading’ of the images since, being in the Temple of Juno, they would be neither friendly nor sympathetic to the Trojans, but rather display ‘those qualities which the Carthaginians might admire in the victorious Greeks – greed and brutality, for which they themselves had such a fine reputation’ (Horsfall 1990.138); or ‘One might take the scene as more normative and less aporetic, as enjoining upon the reader like Aeneas to read tragically rather than triumphantly, whatever the picture that is offered.’ (Fowler 1994.33). This complexity of interpretation is typical of the polysemy of Augustan art that we saw in the image of the Danaids in 2.31.
and a more delicate ambiguity, through the ability of the poet to subordinate our view to that of the narrator, and thus the deception steals upon the reader more gradually.

As Leach comments on Aeneas’ reading of the scenes on the Carthaginian temple in *Aeneid* Book One, the interaction between Aeneas as reader and the work of art that he interprets ‘will not appear foreign to the contemporary reader who understands that meaning is not the inherent property of a text but is instead created in variant forms through variant experiences of reconstructing the work as text’, which clearly underlies the poet’s own comment on Aeneas’ gazing: *miratur* (456)…..*atque animum pictura pascit inani* (464). Thus the interpretational bias with which Aeneas approaches the images from the temple of Juno is similar to the Propertian lover’s own subjective responses to the visual images that the poet creates, in that they generate ironic gaps between the reader and the various characters that inhabit the world of the poems. Indeed through creating multiple ‘flashbacks’ and ‘flashforwards’ through vivid imagery, Propertius calls attention to the dynamic relationship between *ecphrasis* and narrative.

Leach comments further on the frequent change of tense in Virgil’s account in Aeneas’ reactions to the depicted scenes that vary the degrees of the hero’s emotional involvement, the uncertainty regarding the specific form and location of the images in the temple, and the lack of connectives between the locational adverbs; this same effect, I suggest, operates in Propertius’ text, aided by his consistent use of deictics. Thus Virgil locates the scenes by the vague *hac…hac* (467, 468), *nec procul hinc* (469), *alia parte* (474), and indeed at times they follow each other without any connecting phrases; as I have already suggested, our ability to picture places and situations in Propertius’ text is only because the narrator actually points to them as if they exist. What is also notable here is the confusion Virgil creates between the images presented and Aeneas’ thoughts. This is clearest in the depiction of Troilus (lines 474-478), where Virgil interposes Aeneas’ subjective response between the reader and what he describes; the emotional outburst *infelix puer* coincides with his identification of the image, after which, rather than *fugiens*, Troilus is shown, or perhaps imagined, as being

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150 Leach 1988.322.

151 Leach 1988.320ff. also argues that visual differs from verbal narrative because of the latitude and freedom of the reader’s participatory response in the former in both spatial and temporal movement, yet I argue that Propertius aims to collapse such differences.

152 Hence there is no discernible separation in lines 489-490 between the portrait of Priam stretching out his hands for the corpse of Hector and Penthesilea raging across the plain that might indicate that this is a separate scene, as one would evidently infer.
dragged from his chariot. This is particularly the case as we shall see with Propertius’ images where so much is ‘read into’ what is seen. The frequent changes of tense in Virgil’s account ‘break through the visual synchronicity of painted actions to trace a series of intellectual movements across time’.\(^\text{153}\) Aeneas’ recreation of the series of events in his mind, reanimating the images as he surveys them, is similar to Propertius’ own frequent switching of tenses within poems. Hence 1.1 begins by tracing a similar movement across time - *prima ...cepit* (line 1), *tum* (line 3) - and the perfect tense verbs up to line 6, creating the expectation of an ongoing story, which is precisely what does not happen. For then there is a sudden shift to the present (*et iam* 7), and the address to Tullus in the ‘now’ of the narrated self, up to line 36 as the *amator* describes his present suffering. From then on the present tense dominates in nearly every poem,\(^\text{154}\) especially at the opening of poems, throwing the reader into the *amator’s* situation, breaking in upon a scene or dialogue; hence the pleading to Cynthia 1.2 (*quid iuvat....capillo*), the annoyance with Bassus in 1.4 (*quid mihi tam multas...cogis*), the exasperation with Gallus at the opening of 1.5 (*quid tibi vis, insane*), the calm reassurance to Tullus at the opening of 1.6 (*non ego nunc vereror....tecum*). Past tenses on the other hand are less frequent, being mainly used for mythical *exempla*, although they can allude to previous events that are directly or indirectly related. Hence the imperfect at the opening of 1.15 (*saepe...timebam*) alludes to Cynthia’s previous treachery, but then suddenly shifts to the present as the narrator looks upon his own situation, (*aspice me ...periculo* (line 3)). Similarly 1.17 opens by alluding to a previous act of desertion (*et merito, quoniam potui fugisse puellam*), *et merito* admitting blame for some past offence, after which the *amator* speaks of his present predicament (*nunc adloquor...alcyonas* (line 6)).

Future tense verbs however abound, usually at the end of poems; hence the predictions of *mala* for those who do not heed the narrator’s words at 1.1.37-38 (*si quis monitis ...adverterit...heu referet...*) and of Bassus’ downfall at the hands of Cynthia in the second half of 1.4, line 17ff. (*non impune feres....*) up to line 24. Similarly the first six lines of 1.5 are in the present until the future predictions of Gallus’ grievances take over in line 8ff. (*molliter irasci.....non sciet...tibi*). 1.6 is likewise preoccupied with the

\(^{153}\) *Ibid.*\(^{317}\). This is most notable in lines 483-487 where the pluperfect (*ter circum raptaverat....*) narrates the story of Hector being dragged around Troy, shifting to the imperfect describing the ransom of Hector’s body (*exanimumque auro....vendebat Achilles*) and then to the present in his emotional reactions to the sight of the dead hero (*tum vero....dat pectore ab imo*) which continues with Penthesilea raging across the battlefield (*medique...ardet 491*), (*audetque...virgo 493*).

\(^{154}\) 1.3 is an exception, since here the narrator recounts an episode from the past, although I later discuss the reasons for this anomaly.
present, throwing the reader into the *amator’s* situation for the first 32 lines but then ending with a series of futures in the last four: *seu pedibus...carpes, vivere me duro...sidere eris* (lines 33-36). As with Aeneas, the effect is to stress the poetic *ego* as a limited narrator, interposing his subjective response, leaving the poem unresolved, and possessing none of the omniscience that the poet enjoys. Hence he often expresses doubt about what Cynthia is doing, or will do, (*tune audire potes vesani murmura ponti / fortis, et in dura nave iacere potes?* 1.8.7-8), or wonders if another man has made his way into her affections in Baiae (*an te nescio.....Cynthia carminibus?* 1.11.7-8).

In this way the text becomes a kind of ‘spatial tapestry’. The narrator reacts in the present to the ‘pictures’ that he sees, but also in the process alludes to past and predicts future experiences that the reader can register and recreate in the mind’s eye only by recalling or anticipating other parts of the narrative. Propertius’ sudden and frequent switches of tense align him more with Virgil than Catullus in this respect since the images he presents never become independent of the spectator’s process of interaction. Just as Aeneas’ interpretational bias can tell us about Roman habits in the appreciation of painting, so Propertius gives an elegiac response in the process of selective perception and animation.155 This is in line with rhetorical theories of the imagination which stress the experience of the receiving audience in detecting a set of recognisable signs that provoke reconstruction from the accumulation of separate details (*interim ex pluribus efficitur illa quam conamur exprimere facies* (Quintilian *Inst. Orat.* 8.3.66)).

Literary *ecphrasis* then can be seen as a two-way process involving the narrator’s mental vision prior to creation, leading to the stimulation of the reader’s own mental vision from the image the text strives to represent. In this sense it is arbitrary whether the vision the artist ‘sees’ is a ‘real’ object or work of art, since what the author describes is something that is of necessity created with his ‘mind’s eyes’. The first century rhetorician Quintilian here captures the potential power of *enargeia* to make the ‘absent’ seem ‘present’, as he describes his own vivid visual experience in reading the orations of Cicero:

*An quisquam tam procul a concipiendis imaginibus rerum abest, ut non, cum illa in Verrem legit: ‘Stetit soleatus praetor populi Romani cum pallio purpureo tunicaque talari muliercula nixus in litore’, non solum ipsos*

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155 Also notable here is the fact that Aeneas’ interpretations depart so markedly from Homer’s text. This is particularly the case in the scene of Achilles selling Hector’s body, introducing an element of commercial transaction that is absent in Homer. In the same way Propertius’ visual images often depart from known texts or allude to obscure versions.
Quintilian pinpoints the power of *enargeia* to persuade the reader that he is in the presence of the scene described. Part of this effect of vividness in Propertius stems from the power of language to evoke this same sense of presence. In addition he often juxtaposes extreme figurative language to describe the hazards of love for Cynthia with more literal description of what such servitude entails to create the same emotional and dramatic impact. In 1.5 for instance, to dissuade Gallus from his attempts on Cynthia, the narrator likens loving her to walking through fire or drinking poison (*properas.../ ignotos vestigia ferre per ignes, et bibere e tota toxica Thessalia* 1.5.4-6). The more literal account that follows of the effects Cynthia might have on Gallus - weeping, shuddering and speechless (*et tremulis maestis orietur fletibus horror / et timor informem ducet in ore notam* (1.5.15-16)) - while still vivid, is thus raised to a similar hyperbolic level, as the type of behaviour that one might expect of a man who has been poisoned or has walked through fire. A similar effect can be seen in 1.9, where the narrator likens love to ‘facing Armenian tigresses’ or ‘feeling the chains on Ixion’s wheel’, followed by a more literal explanation to Ponticus of a lover’s servitude (*quippe ubi non liceat vacuos seducere ocellos* (lines 27ff.)).

Hence Propertius often moves between imagery that resonates with the reader’s experiences and that which is hyperbolic or fanciful. Such images linger in the mind, and stand out when set aside naturalistic thought progression. These ‘purple patches’ however also carry strong literary resonances, being as concerned with poetry as with love. Horace at *Ars Poetica* 14-19 discusses the role of description in poetic discourse:

\[
\textit{Inceptis gravibus plerumque at magna professis}
\]
\[
\textit{purpureus late qui splendeat, unus et alter}
\]
\[
\textit{adsuitur pannus; quam lucus et ara Dianae,}
\]
\[
\textit{et properantis aquae per amoenos ambitus agros}
\]
\[
\textit{aut flumen Rhenum, aut pluvius descriptur arcus:}
\]
\[
\textit{sed nunc non erat his locus...}
\]

As Laird shows, Horace’s language here predicates poetic *descriptio*, corresponding to the Greek *ecphrasis*, in visual and spatial terms, since *arcus descriptur* can refer to both writing and drawing.\(^{156}\) Horace’s visual representation of these scenes, the grove,

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\(^{156}\) Laird 1996.91.
the altar, and the idyllic stream, is simultaneously a series of literary *topoi*. The *Monobiblo* abounds with such scenes which are both visually realistic yet mask a strong poetic element; *enargeia* thus also involves ‘seeing’ beyond the text into other texts and poetic traditions.

However as Webb points out, Quintilian’s discussion of how this quality of *enargeia* might actually be achieved by an orator, historian or poet, betrays a certain vagueness regarding the use of language, in that he offers no formal or detailed linguistic analysis of the ability of words to create the sense of presence that *enargeia* aspires to, and indeed elides any distinctions between words and their imaginative effect, and between that effect and the perception of reality.\(^{157}\) The reason, as she points out, is that Quintilian regards the function of language primarily as a trigger, prompting the imagination to move beyond the limits that verbal representation imposes upon it, since he gives evidence of how widespread among ancient audiences the expectation of a visual response was in the ancient world: *Quas phantasias Graeci vocant (nos sane visiones appellemus) per quas imagines rerum absentium ita representatur animo ut eas cernere oculis ac praesentes habere videamur* (*Inst. Orat.* 6.29-30). Indeed his reaction to reading the passage from Cicero’s *Verrines* that I quoted strongly suggests that he expected the reader to be able to flesh out the details of the text from the imagination, and that this kind of elaboration was considered the norm, based on the assumption of a dynamic interaction between language and image in the minds of both speaker and listener.

Yet there is no clarification given as to how the orator could be confident of attaining this effect, inducing the same sort of experience that Quintilian undergoes while reading Cicero. As Webb points out, Quintilian appears to be appealing to what she calls the reader’s ‘cultural competence’—‘a familiarity with the key values of a culture and the images attached to them’\(^{158}\) as the means for ensuring the reliability of this effect. The implication here then would seem to be that Quintilian’s reaction to Cicero’s portrait of Verres derives to a large extent from the moral degeneracy with which he is portrayed in other parts of the speech, along with other culturally acquired knowledge, stored in the reader’s mind, such as the reader’s prior knowledge of Verres’

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\(^{157}\) Although Quintilian is principally concerned with the effects of vivid language in oratory, it is clear that he recognises the ability of *enargeia* to create similar effects in historiography and poetry, since he draws several examples of its effectiveness from both.

\(^{158}\) Webb 2009.125.
character. Again however, this would appear to be a rather unreliable gauge of the predictability of this effect.

Yet one of the main effects of the constant emphasis on visuality and dense imagism within Propertian poetry, I believe, is brought to light by Quintilian’s discussion of *phantasia*, referring to the author’s imagination, the words uttered, and the resulting impression in the reader’s mind, as well as the memory as a storehouse of mental images that could be activated by *enargeia*.\(^{159}\) Indeed the mental image that could be conceived in the mind of the listener was considered important mainly as a means of stirring up the emotions, inducing a kind of pathos that could thereby give access to the mind in which the mental image arose. In the *Monobiblos*, the consistent prompt to visualize, be it landscape settings, scenes from mythology, or the *puella* herself, aims to ‘enslave’ the reader through this psychological effect of *phantasia*, drawing the reader into the poetry’s emotional dynamics. Its cumulative effect is to temporarily destabilise the emotions, to get past the ‘censor of the intellect’ as Goldhill puts it,\(^{160}\) an effect that is encouraged by elegy’s subjective stance. Like Aristotle’s views on tragedy, Propertian elegy creates a similar psychological effect of influence. Yet at the same time this prompt allows us to see or discern patterns of meaning and thought in Propertius’ text, requiring a high degree of erudition on the part of reader, since elegy’s self-conscious literacy anticipates and indeed requires readers thoroughly learned in Greek and Latin literature. For words and images can provoke thoughts of their use in other contexts, conjure up scenes from other texts, amplifying the poetry’s emotional impact, yet also creating other subtle voices, at times imitative, at times parodic. I would argue then that in addition to the poet’s adept use of language to create this sense of ‘presence’, it is also to a large extent images in combination that could create this added dimension that allows the reader to enter into the subjective emotions of the elegiac *ego*, to undergo the same sense of pathos. It is also the means by which he exploits the paradox of *enargeia*, its ‘presence of absence and absence of presence’, through the simultaneous sense of reality and unreality that one gains from a sequential reading of his poems.

\(^{159}\) Ibid.6. At 8.3.64 Quintilian also notes that listeners of an orator’s *ecphrasis* would inevitably create additional images out of their own stores of existing *phantasiae*. Webb also refers to Ps-Longinus’ discussion of *phantasia* in support of Quintilian’s ideas here; see Ps-Longinus ‘On the Sublime’ 15.1. Longinus distinguishes between *enargeia* in oratory and *ekplexis* in poetry, but they are clearly similar in aiming to rouse the audience’s emotions. Like orators, the elegists aim to give the scenes they create an air of believability, and this is particularly the case with the *Monobiblos* which foregrounds realist strategies more than other books.

\(^{160}\) Goldhill 2007.6.
Thus the rhetoricians’ proposition that I mentioned earlier, namely that our readiness to entertain the dramatic illusion that \textit{enargeia} offers is in fact accentuated by our consciousness of it as such, in a way that can develop an argument or plot, is largely reliant upon the reader’s visual interplay, a recreative process of movement between such visual scenes, yet one with which ancient audiences would be familiar, not only because a systematic memory training formed the basis of a Roman’s education, but also because classical culture in general did not privilege strictly sequential time.\textsuperscript{161} In \textit{De Oratore} Cicero points out how the architectural mnemonic of Roman pictorial ensembles in domestic situations could provide a model for ancient memory systems since the spatial setting of such images allowed them to be retained much more effectively than abstract thought alone,\textsuperscript{162} and indeed I believe that it is this model that underlies this text. This is the point of Bergmann’s study that I mentioned earlier, as she draws on the spatiality and materiality of the ancient memory system in order to show how the semantic flexibility of panel paintings in combination was effective in stimulating viewer response; movement through the house allowed viewers to perceive myriad combinations, thematic contrasts and parallels by discerning meanings that were implicit and allusive, rather than on the surface.\textsuperscript{163} As Lucretius shows, this ability of images derived from sense perception to stimulate memory and motivate such imaginative elaboration, for which the visual arts could evidently provide a source, was considered particularly acute in the case of lovers.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item See Small 1999.
\item Cicero \textit{De Orat.} 2.86.351-354. See also \textit{Rhet. ad Her.} 3.16-24ff. for the importance of memory training in the Ancient world.
\item Bergmann 1994.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Chapter 2: ‘Getting to know Cynthia’: Dramatic realism, text and art: a reading of the opening three poems of the Monobiblos

My exploration of this interaction between vision, art and text in the Monobiblos, set against the theoretical background of visuality and the relations between art and text that I have outlined, continues with a sequential reading of the opening three poems, where we find that the ambiguous notions of vision in both its subjective and objective modes that we saw in 2.31/32 can be seen in the shifts between the narration of and commentary upon the experience of love. This shift can in fact be seen in the opening lines of the very first poem, in an image which is intensely pictorial:

*Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis,
Contactum nullis ante cupidinibus.
Tum mihi constantis deiecit lumina fastus
Et caput impositis pressit Amor pedibus

(1.1.1-4)*

As he points out in 2.32: *qui videt, is peccat: qui te non viderit ergo, non cupiet: facti lu
mina crimen habent;* the lover may be emasculated by Cynthia’s gaze, yet this seeming loss of power provides the material inspiration for his poetry, and a more intense romanticism with himself:

*ferte per extremas gentes et ferte per undas,
qua nonulla meum femina norit iter.
vos remanete, quibus facili deus annuit aure,
sitis et in tuto semper amore pares.

(1.1.29-32)*

Clearly we are faced here in these opening lines with what Sharrock calls a ‘refusal to look that actually enhances the act of looking’. Sharrock forms this judgement in relation to the painting of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia from Pompeii V1 8 3, now in the National Museum in Naples (figure 2). Iphigeneia is at the centre of both Euripides’ story and the painting, but the men in the painting refuse to look at her. The averted gaze of the internal male viewers only enhances the external viewer’s desire to look at the virgin bride, made more enticing by Iphigeneia’s parted clothes, and to consider the prelude to and aftermath of this moment by reference to Euripides’ tale. The external

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*164 Sharrock 2002a.281.*
viewer’s gaze both ‘away and back’\textsuperscript{165} is akin to the lover’s downcast gaze here at the opening of 1.1, which both focuses our attention on the ‘sight’ of the \textit{puella} and encourages us to consider other concerns that the emphasis on vision may address, the actuation of sight into insight; Cynthia may control the lover either with her vision or as a vision, but within the scope of poetic production she is subject to the poet’s creativity. The opening of 1.1 is the snapshot image or ‘pregnant moment’ that typifies mythological paintings of this period and which characterises Propertius’ visual aesthetics.

Yet as we have already seen in 2.31, the lover’s visual fascination is not confined to Cynthia. In 3.21 we recall how he has resolved to travel to Athens to escape Cynthia’s eyes: \textit{crescit enim assidue spectando cura puellae} (line 3). Yet contemplation of the art-works by which he hopes to divert his attention from her is couched in language that distinctly echoes the dominance that Cynthia gains through vision at the opening of 1.1 - \textit{aut certe tabulae capient mea lumina pictae, / sive ebore exactae, seu magis aere, manus} (3.21.29-30) - with \textit{ebore} in addition reminiscent of the imported fineries in which, as we find, Cynthia will parade herself in the second poem. The echo of \textit{cepit} (line 1) and \textit{lumina} (line 3) at the opening of the \textit{Monobiblos} retrospectively conveys the idea that Cynthia is herself to be regarded as another such ‘painted panel’, and encourages the suggestion that Propertius exploits the dynamics of viewing visual art in his portrayal of the \textit{puella} from the outset of his work; with some irony here then, one recalls Lucretius’ exhortation to the lover to flee the beloved’s \textit{simulacra}.

The effect is similar to 2.12, where the narrator interprets the painter’s depiction of \textit{Amor} (2.12.1), described in the first half of the poem, with regards to his own predicament in the second half (\textit{quicumque ille fuit, puerum qui pinxit Amorem} (2.12.1) \textit{......in me tela manent, manet et puerilis imago} (2.12.13)). The language used here - the waging war in the narrator’s blood, the poisoned weapons, the images of dryness and disease (\textit{siccis...medullis} (line 17), \textit{assiduus meo sanguine bella gerit} (line 16) - is highly reminiscent of the suffering love imposes in 1.1 (\textit{furor} (line 7), \textit{saevos...ignes} (line 27)) and shows the same proclivity to extrapolate from the visual image. In terms of structure and balance also the poems are strikingly similar, since the contrast between the successful Milanion and the narrator’s own failed experiences (\textit{in

\textsuperscript{165} Ibid.\)
me tardus Amor non ullas…..(1.1.17)) half way through the poem is comparable to the contrast between the beauty of the portrait of Amor with his ventosas alas (2.12.5) and the lover’s suffering in the later poem (in me tela manent…(2.12.13)), the in me repetition marking the antithesis between the two halves. As Laird notes, the painter at the opening of 2.12 almost gets forgotten after line 12, since the conceptions he offers cannot be pictured, yet the question in the last verse, echoing the question in the first, might recall him: qui caput et digitos et lumina nigra puellae / et canat ut soleant molliter ire pedes?, where pedes contrasts with the painter’s manus in line 2. As Laird points out, molliter and pedes not only describe the physical attributes of the puella but also label soft, elegiac poetry and metrical feet, and suggest the power of word over image, since only poetry could convey ‘how daintily her footsteps fall’.166

This could also be compared with 2.31, where the poet transforms silent work of arts into vivida signa (2.31.8), and animates the artistic version; indeed canat recalls Apollo singing in the later poem (sonat 2.31.16) as Propertius tests the boundaries between the verbal and the visual. It is the sustained interactive tone that is especially notable, for in the second half of 2.12 the narrator still has the painted version in mind (in me tela manent, manet….imago line 13), since imago can refer to the faculty of memory itself. Imago here then retains a certain poignancy; the suitability of the painting of love as a boy was a common topos for rhetorical debate since the Hellenistic period and in the Roman rhetorical schools.167 Propertius however gives his own idiosyncratic version. He does not dispute the aptness of the painted version but rather suggests that it has a very different effect on him; if he is ‘killed off’ who will be unable to sing of the visual image of his mistress?

Propertian scholars have noted the relation of the four opening lines to four lines of an epigram by Meleager in the Greek Anthology:168

‘Myiscus, shooting me, unwound by desires, under the breast with his eyes, shouted the following: ‘I have seized the bold one, and see there I tread on the arrogance of princely wisdom on his brow.’169

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166 Laird 1996.81-83. Laird points out the versatility of the poetic over the plastic medium in this respect although he does not compare the poem with 1.1.

167 See Quintilian Inst. Orat. 2.4.26.

168 My discussions of Meleager and Philostratus closely follow Raucci 2004.30-32.

There are indeed close parallels between the opening of 1.1 and the epigram, yet more interesting is how the Propertian text differs. In the epigram the focus is on Myiscus, who like Cynthia uses his eyes to conquer the lover, yet while the focus remains on him, in Propertius it is love in the abstract, rather than a particular figure, which has this effect upon him. Propertius is not alone however in having Love personified as the aggressive agent. A passage from Philostratus conveys the same violent imagery associated with love and vision:

‘From what vantage point did you seize upon my soul? Is it not plain that it was from the eyes, by which beauty alone finds entrance? For as tyrants seize on citadels, kings on strongholds, gods on high places, so too love seizes on the citadel of the eyes, for the eyes are not fortified by ramparts of wood and brick as are the citadels of kings, but the eyelids only, and Love slips quietly and by degrees into the heart.’

But while both authors use the language of warfare to describe the erotic assault on the eyes, rather than using metaphors to depersonalise this capturing as Philostratus does, the Propertian lover relates his feelings as the assault takes place. The elegist’s image is not only more individualised but also more graphic, and the sympathy that this process of interaction elicits governs and guides the reader’s response. Like 2.12 and 2.31 then, the opening of 1.1 is particularly distinguished for the sustained interactive tone between viewer and artwork, highlighting the role of the viewer as interpreter, and sets up an immediate tension between the capabilities of art and text.

More notably still, although in a different way, Propertius’ opening lines recall the opening of Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura* 1.33-39, the portrayal of Mars in the arms of Venus: armipotens regit, in gremium qui saepe tuum se / reiecit aeterno devictus vulner amoris, / atque ita, suspiciens teriti cervice reposta, / pascit amore avidos, inhians in te, dea, visus / eque tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore. / hunc tu, diua, tuo recumbantem corpore sancto / circumfusa super….. The stress on love received through the eyes is common to both poems, yet more prominent again are the innovations in Propertius on the posture of the reclining lover. Absent from Lucretius is the humiliation that Amor imposes that is so clearly marked at the opening of 1.1: tum mihi constantis deiecit lumina fastus / et caput impositis pressit Amor pedibus (1.1.3-4). The erotic vignette of Mars and Venus harks back to a pictorial tradition from the

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170 See most recently Hoschele 2011.19-26 on these parallels.

171 Philostratus *Epistula* 12.
Hellenistic period, the classic portrayal of blessed love. Papanghelis suggests that the visual motif of the reclining love-sick male, such as Mars in the lap of Venus, was one in which 'painters and sculptors had been the first to ring the changes', and cites Bailey who considers the possibility of a sculptural group behind Lucretius’ description. Admittedly the parallel is an imprecise one, yet I would still suggest that Propertius right at the opening of his collection is acknowledging the twofold influence of his visual imagination, yet emphatically reversing the stereotypes by making Amor / Cynthia the armed, combative warrior. This interchange is clearly significant for the rest of the book, as is the fact that the background of the Lucretian image of Mars and Venus in these opening lines signifies the respective genres of epic and elegy.

The poet’s use of myth goes on to establish more forcefully this complex nexus of art, text and reality. With its picturesque intensification of the lover’s struggles in a primitive setting remote from civilisation, Milanion’s courtship in 1.1 is the paradigm of a conventionally successful love:

\begin{quote}
Milanion nullos fugiendo, Tulle, labores saevitiam durae contudit Iasidos. nam modo Partheniis amens errat in antris, rursus in hirsutis ibat et ille feras; ille etiam Hylaei percussus vulnere rami saucius Arcadiis rupibus ingemuit. ergo velocem potuit domuisse puellam: tantum in amore fides et benefacta valent. in me tardus Amor non ullas cogitat artes, nec meminit notas, ut prius, ire vias. (1.1.9-18)
\end{quote}

Perhaps the most evident of the poet’s ‘realist’ strategies lies here in the narrator’s anxieties to express openly what is explicitly presented in the rest of the poem as a private and incommunicable experience, and this is captured in the opening line of this \textit{exemplum}. For the poem transports the reader into the realm of myth at the very moment when the narrator appears to respond to some highly ‘naturalistic’ interjection (or question? advice?) from the poem’s addressee; this desire to publicise the experience can in fact be seen throughout the poem: \textit{vos amici} (line 25), \textit{si quis} (line 37). In fact a figure from myth seems to be the only means by which the poet is able to

\textsuperscript{172} Papanghelis 1987.53.

\textsuperscript{173} Bailey 1947. Dionysus reclining in Ariadne’s lap from the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii is a good example (Maiuri 1953.62). See also Edmunds 2002.346-355 for this pictorial tradition.
find some common identity with his audience. By portraying this figure as the standard lover of elegiac convention, the narrator can elevate and ennoble his own experience. Furthermore the solemnity in tone established by labores, contudit, percussus and saucius, raises the reader’s expectations that, despite his isolation, both emotionally and from society, the narrator’s struggles, like those of Milanion, will eventually be justified.

This lends even greater pathos to the contrasting experience of the narrator, in me tardus Amor non ullas cogitat artes (line 17), a temporary identification followed by a sudden awakening, and this pathos is deepened by the similarities between Milanion’s physical suffering and the pain of the lover’s own experiences. So we are told at the outset of the poem that the lover has been physically ‘struck down’ (cepit...contactum) by the tender ocellis of his beloved, a physical pain that mounts in the opening lines (deiecit (line 3), furor (line 8)), and that in addition he suffers the mental pain of being isolated from society and prevailing morality. But while on the one hand his predicament can only be described as like a ‘disease’ from which he cries out for rescue (quae rite non sani pectoris auxilia (line 26)), the very next line (fortiter et ferrum saevos patiemur et ignes) betrays his need to indulge it, for ignes, as well as ‘fire’, carries the unmistakable secondary meaning of ‘passion’. Thus the poem’s departure into the realm of myth, whilst painting a world of idealised glamour to which the Propertian lover and his beloved can aspire, and with which his reader would be familiar through art, serves only to magnify the lover’s sense of degradation and isolation, and prepares the reader for the tensions and discord in the dramatic progression and description of their affair. The whole effect then is, from a dramatic perspective, highly powerful. The poem offers a kind of commentary on or around the exemplum, similar to what a viewer of such mythological images might do.

Yet when one disengages from this, one can immediately detect other voices at work here. For as several commentators have noted, the poet is following a highly obscure version of the myth recorded by Apollodorus, and the narrative that follows presupposes a similarly highly detailed prior knowledge. Iasidos, for instance, is meaningless except to readers who knew that Jasus was Atalanta’s father. The humour

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174 Depictions of Milanion and Atalanta were clearly popular in amatory art. Suetonius for instance describes her famous picture admired by Tiberius at Suetonius Tib. 44.

175 See Hodge and Buttimore 1977.66-67, who also discuss the poet’s omission of the most famous aspect, the footrace, which is only briefly alluded to in velocem (line 15). Furthermore in Apollodorus’ version it is Atalanta, rather than Milanion, who defeats the suitors.
is hardly disguised either. For there is some absurdity in Milanion’s behaviour in lines 11-14, not least in the play on *videre* (l.12); has Milanion come to attack these *hirsutas feras* (l.12) or merely to gaze upon them? Secondly Pincus calls attention to the subtle intertext of this episode with a now lost original of Cornelius Gallus, and demonstrates the significance of the incongruous *preces* - ‘Propertius’ allusion both calls attention to what it lacks, namely any account of Milanion’s famous speech, and serves to direct the reader to an account of these very words in the earlier poet’s work.¹⁷⁶ For statements about memory (*nec meminit* (l.18)) can serve to footnote issues of allusion itself and can thus be read as metapoetic declarations. Pincus continues: ‘The poet can claim complete originality for his poetry by alluding to, but failing to reproduce, Milanion’s speech as recorded by Gallus…. for the very metaphor that the poet employs to convey this idea *(notas...ire vias)* undercuts the suggestion that *Amor* does not remember.’¹⁷⁷ This is of course particularly appropriate to a set of poems that beguilingly present themselves as having arisen out of the poet’s own experiences.

The citation of this myth set within the dramatic conceit of a dialogue with Tullus creates a layered form of realism characteristic of the late Republic and early imperial elite, namely the practice of expressing one’s response to a particular situation depicted in art through reference to Greek myth. The fact that the situation at the outset of this poem is described as a visual scenario channels the reader’s response towards various interrelationships; firstly, the description of the lover’s apparent response to a work of art, in which he sees a depiction of his own suffering, a response that would not differ from that of a member of such an elite in late Republican Rome; secondly a fictionalised dialogue between two men in which representation and experience are related through the medium of a literary citation, an exercise that might mirror the reader’s own response to the text by reference to this ancient cultural practice. Neither is the effect dissimilar to Lucian’s famous ‘Essay on Portraiture’, where the sight of a beautiful woman inspires Lycinus’ account through the *ecphrases* of some of the most famous statues of old by some of the most famous artists of old. Yet the attempt to model the woman’s beauty on such famous artworks results in an effacement of the actual woman herself, buried beneath a pile of mythical *exempla*, and thus becomes the point at which vision both coheres and falls apart. Thus the speech which passes


¹⁷⁷ Ibid.192-193.
between speaker and listener and which purports to expose the love-object by these means actually contrives to occlude it, as Lycinus’ ecphrastic speech is shown to be relevant only as a means of uniting two subjectivities at the expense of the third element, the feminized object. In the same way, Propertius creates that sense of spontaneity that allows us to envisage ‘Cynthia’ as the flattered extratextual witness, but the exposure effaces the ‘actual’ woman herself. Yet the text refuses to keep art and life neatly divided in separate categories - just as Lycinus and Polygnotus conceive ‘Panthea’ as an art object even though the impression is given that a real woman is being referred to - and exemplifies the practice that the Propertian narrator himself is involved in through his addresses to various male participants and alter egos.

The programmatic significance of the opening poem has been widely recognised, yet the discursive function of the poet’s excursion into myth within this program has not been given sufficient attention; not only is the poet’s take on the tale of Milanion paradigmatic for the poet’s use of myth in subsequent elegies, in the way in which the exemplum is integrated thematically into the poem as a whole, but it prefigures the lover’s predicament. For instance the trials in remote regions faced by Milanion (ibat et hirsutae saepe et videre feras; / ille etiam Hylaei percussus vulnere rami / saucius Arcadiis rupibus ingemuit (1.1.12-14)) prefigure situations that the amator faces, for instance in 1.18 (haec certe deserta loca et taciturna querenti (1.18.1)), yet this situation is faced by Atalanta in earlier sources; indeed much of the poet’s description here alludes to trials faced by Atalanta, rather than Milanion, in such sources. Thus Partheniis antris evokes memories of Atalanta’s exposure at birth, and brings to mind the virgin huntress of the Calydonian boar hunt, wounded yet healed by Medea. In this sense then Atalanta appears as the classic example of the casta puella from 1.1.5, a ‘stand-in’ for the puella herself, just as the Propertian lover sees himself, like Milanion, as endangered by rivals (Hylaei…rami). The result is a kind of blurring of the distinctions between lover and beloved, male and female, an effect that is similar to the contemplation of mythological idylls in art. In his attempts to recover her via his own creative ecphrasis, the poet’s manipulation of texts illustrates the tension between the

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178 Elsner 1994 considers at greater length how this triangulation forms an excellent model for a psychoanalytical account of ecphrasis, involving the speaker’s deliberate manipulation of the listener’s imagination and desire, and analyses Lucian’s ‘Essay’ in greater depth through this model. See also Sharrock 2002a.283ff. for parallels between this text and poem 1.3.

179 See Callimachus Hym. 3.222ff., Apollod. 1.9.23, 3.9.2; also Ovid Ars Am. 2.185, Ovid Met. 8.270-545.

180 The Callimachus reference in particular shows Atalanta as the clear favourite of Artemis.
lover’s actual situation, domination by Cynthia, and his desired situation, domination of
the puella, and hence programmatically initiates the distinctions between author and
narrator, between the abjection of a lover and an author’s self-conscious relation to a
literary tradition.

Enargeia then, as well as captivating the visual imagination and hence
‘freezing’ the temporal flow of narrative, here has the quite opposite effect of initiating
the argument in a highly complex and subtle manner. In the same way Cicero’s portrait
of Verres that, as we saw earlier, Quintilian found so visually persuasive has that effect
because of the implications of such a portrait for the character of the accused, that he is
by nature, as it were, morally deficient, and hence gives Cicero’s developing arguments
more authority.\(^\text{181}\) The Propertian lover may be enslaved to the puella, stranded in the
unique position between the exemplum and the ‘ordinary lovers’ of 1.1.31, but on an
extradiegetic level he is master and manipulator of a literary tradition. The visual
exemplum thus acts as a reference point for the theme of the impossibility of desire that
runs through the Monobiblos, yet also initiates the lover’s struggles to alleviate his
suffering that will continue throughout this book.

If, as has been shown, Ovid’s opening triad of poems moves from a scene of
poetics to the gradual suggestion of an actual puella, then the opening three poems of
the Monobiblos would appear to move in quite the opposite direction.\(^\text{182}\) Despite
centrestaging the puella and the theme of vision from the outset as the cause of the
lover’s furor, Propertius intrigues and tantalizes the reader by a very gradual and
deliberate unveiling of Cynthia’s appearence and personality, for in 1.2 we are given
details only of her dress and appurtenances, where the poet scolds her for adorning
herself in ‘Coan silks’ (1.2.2), noted for their fineness and transparency,\(^\text{183}\) and suggests
rather that the beauty of his artistic ‘creation’ far exceeds anything that artificial
adornment could achieve, by drawing attention to the consummate aesthetic
programme his mistress embodies:

\[\textit{non illis studium conquirere amantis}\]

\(^{181}\) See Webb 1999.123 on this point.

\(^{182}\) As Sharrock puts it: ‘Where Propertius has Cynthia prima bringing love bringing love elegy bringing elegiac couplets, in Ovid’s
schema the enforced elegiac couplet brings elegy, bringing love bringing a beloved.’ (Sharrock 2002b.156).

\(^{183}\) Produced on the Greek island of Cos by spinning the filaments of a caterpillar similar to the Chinese silkworm, ‘Coan silk’ was
almost transparent and hence advertised the wearer’s sexual availability (cf. Horace \textit{Sat.} 1.2.101-103, Quintilian \textit{Inst. Orat.} 8.6.53).
Propertius’ use of \textit{forma}, mentioned here and earlier in line 8 of this poem, is particularly prominent in the \textit{Monobiblos}; by encouraging the reader to visualise the \textit{puella}, the term promotes the dramatic conceit of his poetry. At the same time Keith suggests that the physical description of Cynthia inherent in \textit{forma} can be viewed simultaneously as a description of poetics and refers to style of composition.\textsuperscript{184} However another challenge is laid down in 1.2. Keith notes that the catalogue of mythological heroines in 1.2.15-22 ‘affords Propertius ample opportunity to demonstrate his literary erudition and Cynthia’s artistic lineage……..Our elegist offers comment on the complex artistry of his lines in subtle \textit{paragone} with the illustrious Greek painter Apelles, famous for his use of colour. Cynthia is as exquisite in her beauty as the incomparable heroines of myth in Apelles’ paintings while, by implication, Propertius rivals Apelles in aesthetic achievement.’\textsuperscript{185}

Sharrock has shown how the art/nature opposition established at the start of this poem, and continued here in the series of \textit{illustrationes}, is suddenly undermined by the narrator’s self-comparison with the Greek painter, famed for the life-likeness of his artistic creations and the type of \textit{falso}……. \textit{candore} (1.2.19) for which he reprimands his \textit{puella};\textsuperscript{186} for Propertius, just like Apelles, is an \textit{artifex formae} (1.2.8), yet one who relies on the verbal art of adornment that ‘hides’ itself by its own deceptive simplicity; rather than painting herself, Cynthia should allow the poet to ‘paint’ her. A comparison can be made with Homer’s labelling of the sculpted works on the shield in \textit{Iliad} 18 as \textit{δαίδαλα}, ‘cunningly wrought works’ (\textit{Iliad} 18.482), to signpost the measuring of his verbal creation against Hephaestus’ graphic art. 1.2 lingers on the troubling separation between reality and image, for while much of the language stresses the superiority of

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{184} Keith 2008.93, who demonstrates the metaphorical associations of Cynthia’s body and adornment with the embellishment of the literary text.

\textsuperscript{185} Ibid.94-95.

\end{footnotesize}
nature over artifice (solis antris (11), indocilis vias (12), nativis (13)), the terminology of ornament that Propertius uses in this poem, (nudus (line 8), ornato (line 1), veste (line 2)), is firmly associated with literary style. The Latin critical vocabulary in fact regularly employs nudus, vestitus, ornatus, and related terms to distinguish between the straightforward, plain style, and more elaborate writing. Thus Propertius’ rejection of ornament in 1.2 suggests that he is encouraging a view of his own poems as a display of actual events without the interference of artifice; like Cynthia, he avers, they have greater beauty as a result.

Yet at the same time such terms clearly invite us to see a kind of visual and verbal play at work. Indeed frequent analogies are drawn by ancient authors between poetry or rhetoric and ornament. The pun on figurae at 1.2.7, referring to Cynthia’s appearance but also to the inflection or form of a word, strengthens this view. An awareness of such comparisons, alongside the frequent analogies between poetry and painting, is clearly heightened by the ecphrasis of visual art, which draws particular attention to how verbal and visual media operate. Thus the depictions on Catullus’ coverlet in Catullus 64 are framed by language that creates this same double play of meaning that we find in Propertius’ poem: haec vestis priscis hominum variata figuris (Cat. 64.50), talibus amplifice vestis decorata figuris (Cat. 64.265), stressing that Catullus’ coverlet is first and foremost a verbal artifact. Similarly Aeneas’ shield is introduced as non ennarrabile textum where textum (Aen. 8.625) can refer both to weaving and rhetorical style. The repeated use of such terminology at the opening of 1.2, in addition to the reference to Apelles, clearly encourages us to reflect carefully on the distinctions between the two media, yet also to consider the poem as both verbal and visual, as opposed to Virgil’s metaliterary comment, where non ennarrabile confesses to the poet’s inability to create the effects of a medium beyond his own. Forma here thus has the same effect as Catullus’ use of figura, and in the context of 1.2 draws attention to the poet’s own exploration of the capacities of ecphrasis. Indeed as Laird points out, the comparison made between speech and clothing at Quintilian 8.5.28

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187 The argument that unadorned surpasses artificial beauty is a favoured Hellenistic theme that is also treated by Tibullus 1.8.9-14, Ovid Am. 1.14, and Martial 2.41, 9.37.

188 See Varro De Lingua Latina 8.71, 9.55.

189 Horace Ars Poetica 7, 9, 21, 361, Aristotle, Poetics 1448a, 1454b and 1460b all offer analogies between poetry and painting.
comes straight after an analogy which is taken from visual art\textsuperscript{191} and Horace’s own ‘weaving’ metaphor comes straight after a sustained poetry-painting analogy in \textit{Ars Poetica} 1-13.\textsuperscript{192} One is reminded of the description of the Apollo’s temple in 2.31 (\textit{speciem, pulchrior} (line 5), \textit{marmoreus} (line 6)) evoking thoughts of Cynthia’s adornment here.

Yet the poem betrays a constant slippage between the encouragement to realism and artifice, not least in the mythical \textit{exempla}, which, set alongside the natural \textit{exempla} of lines 9-14, have all the power of non-fictional examples:

\textit{non sic Leucippis succendit Castora Phoebe,}  
\begin{flushright}  
\textit{Pollucem cultu non Helaira soror;}  
\textit{non, Idae et cupido quondam discordia Phoebo,}  
\textit{Eueni patriis filia litoribus;}  
\textit{nec Phrygium falso traxit candore maritum}  
\textit{avecta externis Hippodamia rotis}  
\end{flushright}

(1.2.15-20)

The narrator appears to be so immersed in the descriptive scenes that he conjures that the point that had earlier provided the departure into the realm of myth (\textit{te peregrinis vendere muneribus} (1.2.4)) becomes lost in the series of \textit{exempla} that ensue. One is led to expect that the purpose behind these \textit{exempla} is to point out that the heroines involved used no art to win their lovers, their natural beauty implying Cynthia’s own. However, as commentators have pointed out,\textsuperscript{193} not only do the \textit{peregrinis muneribus} of line 4 play no actual part in the myths themselves, but the thematic link between these \textit{exempla}, the fidelity of the heroines to a single lover, is only, at the very most, hinted at in the preceding lines (\textit{vendere} (l.4), \textit{persuadent} (l.13)). Thus in the very act of contrasting Cynthia’s behaviour with the mythological heroines described, the lover seems to have extracted the novel idea that follows this tableau, \textit{uni si qua placet, culta puella sat est} (line 26), a dramatically compelling consequence of the lover’s paranoia, a shift from natural beauty to beauty as chastity. This is also conveyed by the fact that these heroines are the targets of increasingly violent male desire (\textit{succendit} (l.15), \textit{discordia} (l.17), \textit{patriis litoribus} (l.18), \textit{avecta} (l.20)), and the evidence that the suitors themselves are such morally equivocal figures evoking the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{nec pictura, in qua nihil circumlittum est, eminet; ideoque artifices etiam, cum plura in unam tabulam opera contulerant, spatiis distinguant, ne umbrae in corpore cadant.}\textsuperscript{191}
\item Laird 1993.25.
\end{itemize}
treachery of the East (Phrygium (1.19), externis...rotis (1.20)) creates confusion as to their frame of reference; for surely it is Cynthia, involved in such treachery and deceit, who bears greater resemblance to the male figures in the lover’s mind. One also notes that the ecphrasis of 1.2, despite the stress on the natural beauty of the heroines, echoes the violence that is caused by Cynthia herself in 1.1. The descriptions of the daughter of Evenus (line 17) and Hippodamia (line 20), and the violence to which their beauty leads, are particularly graphic, placing these heroines in evocative dramatic settings, and they thus highlight the importance of subjective vision for the effectiveness of these poems as dramatic pieces. Indeed as Curran notes, Propertius’ emphasis on brightness in the exempla of mythological heroines is inherent in the very names themselves (Phoebe, Helaira, Pollucem). Enargeia again then both develops themes that have already been generated in the opening poem - the theme of violence and the struggle to turn Cynthia into such a heroine - and anticipates further exploration of the same.

However as Gaisser notes, the ‘mythological sleight of hand’ that we observe here serves other voices in the narrative too, and ‘the details suppressed are as important as those that the poet allows into the text’, for the poem displays the same fusion of wit and erudition that we noted in 1.1. Beneath the tale in 1.2 of the feminine beauty of these heroines is a tale of multiple suitors, abduction and strife between abductors and bridegrooms, which hardly reinforces the poet’s subsequent point: uni si qua placet, culta puella sat est (1.2.26). Thus the ostensible message of the poem is undermined, for the exempla series demonstrates that lack of adornment by no means limits Cynthia’s faithlessness. This is matched by the subtlety of the verbal humour in lines 17-18, for it is only when we come to the final syllable in Phoebο that we realise the poet is referring to a different tale from that of Helaira and Phoebe in the previous couplet; similarly in the pun on litoribus in line 18, ‘the shores are literal and parental, since the river is named for Evenus’.

194 Curran 1975.7ff.
196 Ibid.
197 Ibid.383. Castor and Pollux slew the brothers Idas and Lynceus who were betrothed to the daughters of Leucippus, Phoebe and Hilaira, after they abducted these maidens. See Theocr. 22.13-152, Apollod. 3.11.1-2. On Marpessa, daughter of Evenus, Idas and Apollo see Apollod. 3.10.3, 11.2, 7.9, Hyginus Fabula 14. Evenus challenged all prospective suitors of Marpessa to a chariot race. Idas abducted her and Evenus, being unable to catch them, threw himself into a river that took his name. Yet he still had a rival in Phoebus; Marpessa chose Idas with the consent of Zeus. On the struggle for the hand of Hippodamia, see Pindar Olymp. 1.24ff.
198 Ibid.384.
The double voice that the poet here creates is strengthened by the verbal echoes of the opening poem which both increase the sense of dolor which the narrator warns other lovers to guard against in 1.1.38 and show the same concern with issues of poetry and poetic allusion. The description of Apollo as cupido in 1.2.17 echoes the poet’s use of cupidinibus in 1.1.2,\(^\text{199}\) who is like Phoebus, bestowing the gift of song, made possible by the puella’s lack of chastity. For in the exemplum Phoebus is the rival who lost, thus confirming the lover’s fear of doing likewise, and the repetition from 1.1 encourages the dramatic conceit. Thus in retrospect we can see perhaps more clearly why the lover ‘hates chaste girls’ in 1.1.5, as well as the dual sense of nullo vivere consilio of 1.1.6, referring not only to the lover’s isolation but no less conspicuously to the poet’s individualism, for the real reason that lover has no fear of being vilior istis (line 25) is that he can flatter with glittering words and specious arguments.

The series of mythical exempla at the opening of 1.3 (qualis Thesea iacuit…..), a reminder of qualis Apelleis…. at 1.2.22, presents an even wider range of potential perciipients through whom to engage with the poem. In the comparison of Cynthia to Ariadne, the narrator is assigned the complimentary mythical role of Bacchus, the gazing lover of Catullus 64.\(^\text{200}\) However she is not the soft, yielding lover of myth when she awakes, and she sees the lover more as the deserting Theseus figure: tandem te nostro referens iniuria lecto / alterius clausis expulit e foribus….. (1.3.36). The lover could in fact see himself in both roles; he has abandoned Cynthia, but unlike the heartless Theseus, he repents by returning, playing the rescuer Bacchus as well. Similarly Cynthia sees herself as the Penelope figure from the weaving motif in line 41 (nam modo purpureo fallebam stamine somnum), but is herself morally equivocal, as there are clear suggestions of a post-coital state in languida (line 2), the word that Cynthia hurls at the lover in line 38, casting them both in an immoral and erotic role. So we see a confusion and uneasiness underlying this romantic scene that the waking Cynthia may shatter the lover’s illusions, and this is heightened in the unpredictable figure of the bacchant of line 5, with ominous implications of potential viciousness (expertae… saevitiae (18)). Thus we see Cynthia poised between sleep and restiveness (spirare… mollem quietem (7), leviter positam (15)), and the shift between literal and metaphoric language in the lover’s own behaviour - osculaque… sumere et arma (16) -

\(^{199}\) Cynthia...me...contactum nullis ante cupidinibus....

\(^{200}\) Corresponding to the thiasos that accompanies Bacchus in Cat. 64.251-256, the band of slaves shaking torches escort the drunken Propertius. Like Bacchus (incensus amore, Cat. 64.253) Propertius is on fire with love (correptum amore, line 13) and has garlands to give Cynthia, the corollae in line 21 recalling Ariadne’s crown.’ Curran 1966.196-197.
similarly evokes the suspension between the violence and calm of the Bacchic condition. The fantasy world of myth in which Cynthia is initially set is sustained in the play on munera in line 25 (omnia quae ingrato largibar munera somno, munera de prono saepe voluta sinu), which likens the puella to a divinity, since the successful Roman general celebrating his victory always placed such munera as the corollas in line 21 in the lap of the god or goddess; corollae evoke not only the wreath worn by the drunken reveller but also the victory wreath worn at the festal procession of the triumph. Propertius’ play on the meaning of munera as ‘gifts’ or ‘duty’ also alludes to Lucretius, the poet’s desire for peace and release from munera militiae; Cynthia is presented as the diva who is able fundere placidam quietem, yet this line ironically marks the transition in the poem from the lover as triumphator to the lover as vanquished, subjected to the puella’s angry tirade, for then she suddenly stirs: et quotiens raro duxti suspiria motu, obstupui… (line 27).

Valladares stresses the point that the catalogue of myths which opens the poem refers primarily to the narrator’s frame of mind, his subjective experiences rather than a separate mythical world; it is not so much a question of how Cynthia is but rather how she seems to the lover (1.3.7). Yet Dunn has shown how the sustained combination of the lover’s desire and fear in 1.3 reflects back on the opening exempla by reduplicating the way in which the mythical exempla are integrated into the poem as a whole. The lover’s subjective impressions at the opening initially appear disconnected from the context but they are also paradoxically objective in that they anticipate the movement of the poem as a whole.

In this respect, several assessments of 1.3 have characterized the poem as ‘dream-like’. Allen has spoken of the narrator’s ‘subordination of feeling’ in this poem that the narrator-viewer feels with the viewed subject, resulting in an identification between the two, a point that could surely also be made about 1.1 and 1.2. The narrator here has ‘passed from the place of present reality and become a figure in a dream, an insubstantial shadow’. This effect is partly caused by the narrator’s own admission of

202 Lucr. DRN 1.29-30: effice, ut interea fora munera militiae...quiescant and 1.40: funde petens placidam Romanis, incluta, pacem.
203 Valladares 2005.
204 See Dunn 1985. The image of Bacchus and Ariadne anticipates lines 11-20, where the lover approaches Cynthia impelled by desire, that of Perseus and Andromeda lines 21-33, where he gives her gifts and shows her chivalrous concern, and Pentheus and the maenad lines 34-46, where she wakes up and rebukes him.
205 Allen 1962.133.
drunkenness as he moves towards the sleeping Cynthia (hac Amor, hac Liber, durus uterque deus…1.3.13-14), particularly when we recall that Lucretius likens living in a dream-state to being in a drunken stupor, involving the same sense of distorted perception. However it also stems from the fact that the lover’s experiences and the examples from myth he uses to reinforce them become increasingly blurred, which illustrates the constant slippage between his own ‘dream-like’ experience and interrogation of the same in the sleeping Cynthia, as the narrator imagines the content of Cynthia’s own ‘dream’ in lines 27-30.

Yet the tensions and pains of the lover’s experiences that pervade 1.3 again mask other voices in the narrative. First of all there are the allusions to art that have frequently been noted in the opening series of exempla, and literature, for cedente carina in line 1 recalls Cat. 64.249 cedentem ... carinam, while desertis……litoribus of line 2 echoes Cat. 64.133 deserto... in litore. Curran draws attention to the Greek noun forms in these opening lines of 1.3, exploited for the exotic flavour of their sounds, and which link ‘Cynthia’ by appellation to the same world of heroic myth. At the same time the very learnedness of these allusions can be seen to exaggerate the underlying humour in the incongruity of the mythological analogues. For as we have seen in line 9, the lover’s suspicions of Cynthia’s infidelity are seen through an alcoholic haze, which immediately undercuts the lover’s own vision of himself as a hero such as Perseus. This is stressed by the sudden shift in tone as the poem moves out of the exempla series where the language becomes increasingly calculated and comic (1.3.15-16). Other possibilities open up for the amusement and entertainment of the reader, for if Thesea (1.31) suggests another lover, then the scene is not dissimilar to a Roman adultery mime, and the comparison with Argus (l.20) emphasises the lover’s impotence and fear in the grip of lust and drunkenness. The allusions reflect humorously on Cynthia too, for the image of the puella lying on a grassy bank could be seen as sexually comic, opening up an amusing contrast between the lover’s suspicions and Cynthia’s

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206 Lucretius DRN 3.1045-62.

207 For the frequent ancient depictions of the sleeping Ariadne and sleeping Maenad, sometimes indistinguishable given the Bacchic angle to the Ariadne story, see McNally 1985. There are no recorded representations of Andromeda asleep, but her liberation by Perseus is a common theme in Campanian wall-painting (for an example see Ling 1991.131).

208 See for instance Ovid Tristia 2.497-508.

209 Harrison 1994.21: ‘single women finding themselves next to a river in mythology are likely to be ravished by its river-god or another water-deity (examples are Tyro, raped by Poseidon in the river Enipeus, Perimede, assaulted by the river-god Achelous, and Ilia, attacked by Mars by an unnamed river)’. 
later hypocritical accusations and protestations of Penelope-like virtue. The juxtaposition with 1.2 could also carry more humorous consequences, since the moral standards proclaimed for Cynthia in 1.2 the lover disregards at will; moreover his advice that the puella should beware the gifts of rivals in 1.2.4 is overlooked when the lover offers them himself in line 24, and formare capillos at line 23 is an act for which the lover also chastises Cynthia in 1.2.

In each of the opening three poems then, Propertius plays on the deceptiveness of pictorial imagery and the process of prejudicial viewing, a process that recognises visual imagery’s mimetic power, its ability to immerse the viewer in, yet also expose, its dynamics of recognition and identification. This process is particularly pronounced here in 1.3, and Propertius’ evocation of the visual arts has been at the forefront of the mass of scholarship that has been devoted to this poem. Valladares has attempted the most profound comparison of 1.3 to visual art by focusing on the suspended moments of erotic action that are central to Propertius’ strategies of realism; by recalling certain ‘modes of viewing’ the poet creates an analogy between the plight of the lover and the emotional dynamics elicited by viewing works of art, a point that can be applied more widely to his poetry. By taking the reader through the full gamut of emotions the poet deeply complicates the subjectivity of the first person narrator and so imparts a range of viewpoints, of means of accessing his poems. In his suspended moments of erotic action, Propertius lays great emphasis on the interpretative powers of the reader, which in turn points to the subjectivity and insubstantiality of each individual interpretation; indeed the fact that both romantic and comic readings of this poem have claimed equal attention testifies to the poem’s power to align the reader’s viewpoint with that of the narrator. In this sense the figure of the hundred-eyed Argus gazing on Io ut ignotis cornibus (1.3.20), put to sleep and slain by Mercury, is an apt model not only for the confused surrendered gaze of the lover-viewer (intentis haerebam fixus ocellis (line 19)) but also for the disorientation of the reader as the poet negotiates our subjective positions in relation to the text. The indistinct movement between identification and detachment as the lover takes up various subjective positions allows the reader to see

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210 See Aeschylus Prometheus 705ff.

211 The arresting of narrative development in intentis haerebam fixus ocellis (19) is most prominent at the moment of looking and longing, central to Propertius’ strategies of realism. The painting of Nicias in the House of Livia on the Palatine has been recognised as a possible source of inspiration for this image, yet the image of Io with her horns becomes her common form in several later Pompeian works. See Bergmann 1995:95ff. for these various examples; there is little difference in the appearance or position of Argus in each.
the narrator as both excluded from and subsumed into the ‘artwork’ but not to ignore the tension between the two.  

Indeed the reflection on these poems as ‘verbal paintings’ that we saw in 1.2 is given more immediate particularity. After the admonishment of Cynthia in 1.2, dressed in her finery, we are now presented with the image of a woman in her full naked beauty (caput line 8, temporibus line 22, capillos line 23, ocellos line 33), a prospect made more enticing after the exhortation to Cynthia in the previous poem - nudus Amor formae non amat artificem - only to find in fact that the focus of the lover’s gaze is on a woman reduced to a simile. The sleeping Ariadne, reclining, as Cynthia does, with her head on her hands, has been most commonly linked to the image of the sleeping Ariadne in the Vatican museum and the image of the maenad to a variety of possible Pompeian frescoes, yet there are several surviving paintings of Ariadne that correspond to this image. Indeed the ambivalence of the authorial gaze in 1.3 conforms to the various compositional types of portraits of Ariadne within Campanian wall-painting that Elsner draws out and expounds upon, where we find a similar ‘play of gazes’. Sharrock comments further on the encouragement we receive as readers to reflect on Ariadne here as a work of art in her remarks on the double sense of visa est at 1.3.7, hinting at the representational nature of Cynthia’s appearance; Cynthia ‘was seen’ to breathe, but this was something that she only ‘seemed’ to do: ‘The very factor which might seem to distinguish her from the statues to which she has been compared in fact binds her more closely to the visual arts.’ This is further suggested at the end of the poem, where she complains that her grievances are unheard: interdum leviter mecum deserta querebar / externo longas saepe in amore moras (1.3.43-44). The life-like effect of the art object which ‘seemed’ to breathe confirms the puella as a construct of the text, a product of its mimetic power.

Greene notes that the narrator arranges her ‘as an artist might arrange a still life’, yet he evidently fails if that is his intention for the gifts all fall from her lap (line 26), and Cynthia is always threatening movement, always on the verge of coming to

212 Sharrock 2002a has demonstrated a similar tension in the iconography of the Portland Vase, a fine example of the polysemy characteristic of Augustan art.


216 Greene 1998.58.
life; she is propped *non certis manibus*, she sighs (*suspiria* line 27). By contrast, after his drunken entrance (line 9), he becomes increasingly like a figure within the static work of art the poem attempts to create. Like Narcissus, stupefied by his own reflection, the lover reacts with poetic *ekplexis* at the sight of his own creation. Yet Cynthia only comes to life after the moon, with its *moraturis luminibus*, wakes her (line 32). The compositional formula that Propertius utilises here is similar to several portraits of Selene approaching the sleeping Endymion, a popular motif in visual art, in which the goddess, like the narrator, hesitates towards the sleeping Endymion, here envisaged as Cynthia, the nighttime elegist, suffering *insolitas timores* (line 29) like the *amaras noctes* that the narrator himself suffers from in 1.1.33; she may be able to wake Cynthia, but Cynthia can only come to life and give voice in poetry.

On the one hand, Cynthia’s direct speech at the end of the poem would seem to be the clearest declaration of her identity outside the narrative; one recalls that the statue of Apollo in 2.31 is perfectly realistic save for the fact that its lyre is *tacita* (2.31.6). Yet at the same time, in attributing a voice to ‘Cynthia’, an act beyond the scope of artistic representation, and by framing that voice as a quotation by the narrator (*sic ait in molli fixa toro cubitum* (1.3.34)), Propertius highlights a literary model, Catullus 64, that is itself ‘mimetically disobedient’, a model that ‘explores audience reactions as it approaches and even surpasses reality’. For *obstupui* here, (*obstupui vano credulus auspicio* (1.3.28)), at the narrator’s moment of most heightened emotional involvement, deliberately plays into the language of interpretation, of seeing oneself seeing, for it taps into a long tradition within literary *ecphrasis* of treating the ecphrastic object as a *thauma*, an appeal to the reader’s belief in something that goes beyond reality. This is particularly intriguing when we recognize that the lover’s startled response here comes immediately after his attempts to mould Cynthia into the kind of art-work similar to one of the heroines to whom she is compared at the opening.

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217 See Fredrick 1995.273. Fredrick counts Selene and Endymion as among the most popular motifs in art from Pompeii, along with Argus and Io, with paintings of Ariadne being the most popular; yet as he notes the most striking common feature of all these paintings is the erotic, scopophilic gaze, so that the narrator’s position as the Bacchus figure approaching the sleeping Ariadne at the poem’s opening is similar to Selene’s approach here, suggested by *lumina*, which as well as referring to the moon’s rays can also imply the lover’s eyes.

218 Breed 2003.33.

219 Two often cited examples of this are Virgil *Aen*. 8.691–693: *alta petunt, pelago credas innare revolvas* / *Cycladas, aut montes concurrere montibus altos*, and *Ovid Met.* 6.104: *Maconis elasam designat imagine tauri Europen: verum taurum, freta vera putares*. Such language goes back to Homer’s Shield of Achilles and Hesiod’s Shield of Heracles. Laird 1993 examines the ‘hyper-reality’ effect of the *ecphrasis* of *Cat.* 64 as the prime example of this, since it incorporates sound, movement and temporality, all beyond the scope of the visual artefact, albeit a fictional one, that the poem purports to describe. The resemblances of many of the details of 1.3 to *Cat.* 64 have been noted by Curran 1966.205–206, evident from several words repeated from Ariadne’s lament: *deserto* 64.133, 187, *languenti* 64.99, 188, 219, *curaram* 64.62, 69, 72, 95, 250, and *me miseram* 64.57, 71, 119, 140, 196.
Thus I would argue against the ostensible opposition that several scholars see between the visual illusion that dictates the opening of the poem and the ‘realistic’ voice of ‘Cynthia’ that breaks in upon it; as Breed remarks: ‘……by suggesting a thoroughgoing analogy between his art and ecphrastic description, Propertius aligns his elegiac puella with those creations of hyper-reality that are strictly the domain of poets’.  

*nam modo purpureo fallebam stamine somnum,*  
*rursus et Orpheae carmine, fessa, lyrae;*  
*interdum leviter mecum deserta querebar*  
*externo longas saepe in amore moras:*  
*dum me iucundis lassam Sopor impulit alis.*  
*illa fuit lacrimis ultima cura meis.*  

\[1.3.41-46\]

The poet has already adumbrated features of Cynthia’s behaviour when she awakens in his romanticized opening; the ‘Cynthia’ of the final part of the poem is thus no less idealised than the ‘Cynthia’ of the first. For the references to *querēbar, Orpheae lyrae* and the image of the ‘purple thread’ as a metaphor for creating poetry, all imply that Cynthia, as well as casting herself into the picture of Ariadne at the opening of the poem, has taken on the role of an elegiac poet; through repetition of the words that the poet frequently uses of her (*cura* 1.3.46, 1.15.31, 1.1.35-36), and by following the amator’s dictates in 1.2 (1.2.27-32), Cynthia, with her *lyra* and *carmina*, becomes the narrator himself.

The poem’s close association with the visual arts, as I have already mentioned, is witnessed to by the preoccupation of critics to tie the mythological *exempla* of 1.3 to known pictorial sources, owing to the pervasiveness of images of all three of these tales in Campanian wall-painting. Whitaker for instance is so taken with the idea that there is an original artistic source for each of Propertius’ mythological parallels that he goes so far as to claim that the image of the sleeping Andromeda had to be inspired by a painting now lost, despite the absence of an art-work that matches precisely the scene and situation described in 1.3.3-4. Noonan however has convincingly linked this

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220 Breed 2003.53-54.

221 Fredrick 1995 totals ‘forty-three paintings of Ariadne abandoned or discovered in Pompeii – roughly somewhere between five and ten per cent of the total number of central panels’, (p. 272). Mauuri 1953 notes that images of Ariadne were the most popular in Pompeian art, closely followed by Perseus and then figures of maenads.

222 See Whitaker 1983.91. References to Perseus and Andromeda, a hugely popular motif in Campanian art, are given by Keyssner 1975. Wall-paintings show either Perseus chivalrously leading Andromeda away by the hand, or the two lovers leaning together and looking at Medusa’s reflection in the water. There is therefore much debate about Propertius’ model.
couplet to Euripides’ *Andromeda* 125 and 155a, where Andromeda is likened both to an art-work (*eikon*) and a statue (*agalma*), as the most likely source of inspiration both for this text and for the various pictorial representations of Andromeda chained to her rock; the phrase *amblopos opsis* ‘sight-dimming sight’ at 155(a) (most probably, although inconclusively, referring to Perseus’ sighting of Andromeda), where the speaker is unsure whether he sees a girl or the sculptured image of a girl, suggests that the drama was so overpowering as to make seeing itself doubtful. Such ‘doubtful vision’ becomes a central theme in 1.3,\(^{223}\) since it corresponds to the precarious situations of each of the three heroines, who as well as being harmed are also capable of causing injury in return, as the narrator will increasingly discover to his cost as the poems progress.

The strength of Noonan’s argument would suggest that Propertius has intriguingly placed an image that finds its closest correspondence in a literary text between two *exempla* which can be more confidently paralleled with a number of artistic representations.\(^{224}\) Indeed this discrepancy acts as a microcosm of the way the poem works its effect. In the same way that the opening three *exempla* dramatically prefigure the movement of the poem, so the interrelation of art and literature in this series prefigures a deeper engagement with the relative merits of the two art-forms. As in 2.12 and 2.31, Propertius draws from the visual image which in turn draws him into the world of his poetic imagination. There is therefore an intriguing contrast between the first *visa* of line 7 and the second in line 29. The first stresses the amator’s reactions to images popular from visual art, but his curiosity about Cynthia’s ‘visions’ prepares us for her Ariadne-style lament. The double sense of *visa* here, referring both to what the narrator ‘sees’ and the poetic *inventio* that issues from this,\(^{225}\) creates a kind of double duplicity. The verbal echoes of the opening of the poem at the end cast the lover and Cynthia into the world of visual art as the poet wakes the images into life, only to cast them back into the world of literature, as the brief allusions to Catullus’ poem at the opening of 1.3 become more pronounced towards the end, suggesting that the balance of the poem is founded not so much upon contrast (each art-form possessing its own

\(^{223}\) Noonan 1991.331-332. For a reconstruction of the *Andromeda* see Webster 1967.192-9.

\(^{224}\) References to the figure of the bacchant in art in painting are also given by Keyssner 1975. She is usually portrayed in lush surroundings, and is always observed by another figure.

\(^{225}\) One also notes that what the narrator fears above all if he wakes Cynthia are her *iurgia*, her words.
distinct effects and qualities), but assimilation (as well as creating its own unique effects, poetry can take on the qualities of painting).

The elision here of person and image throws into relief most prominently the significance of reading description as interpretation and the kinds of representation that verbal and visual media aspire to. One recalls that in 1.2, Cynthia is admonished not to conceal her true beauty with visual adornment, and so she becomes nuda, and only as such, after the poet has ‘clothed’ her in his poetry, can she ‘sing’ like Apollo in 2.31. This drawing on a poem that itself demonstrates a radical departure from its literary predecessors in parading the versatility of the poetic over the pictorial medium, is highly significant for our interpretation of other poems in this collection. Propertius exposes and explores the nature and capacity of these media with a sleight of hand that is critical to our understanding of the mechanics of his poetry.

1.3 has been judged as very obviously indebted to the visual arts, whereas other poems in this collection have not. What I suggest however is that by exploring the nature of the mental image provoked against this model, 1.3 becomes ‘metaephrastic’ in relation to other poems in the book, which toy with the same illusion of reality. The poem becomes not so much an evocation of paintings but a reflection on the manner in which such paintings are viewed, the nature and impact of his poetry in relation to viewing visual art, in a similar way to what we have seen in the opening two poems and in 2.31 and 2.12. The ‘hyper-reality’ effect, as Breed calls it,\(^\text{226}\) stems from the complex fusion of art and literature that we have seen in the opening three poems and which is manifested throughout the Monobiblos, since they both register the mechanics of literary ecphrasis as seen in earlier texts while also preparing us for the innovations the poet exerts. Becker demonstrates how Homer’s description of the Shield of Achilles acts as a metaphor or ‘mise en abîme’ mirroring the textual whole, through the various levels of attention to which the ecphrasis draws us as readers in its focus not just on the images depicted (which he calls res ipsa), but also the relationship of those images to their artisan (artifex) and his artistry (opus ipsum), as well as their effect on the viewer (animadversor), here Homer’s bard, who acts as the audience’s guide and hence models our response to the epic as a whole.\(^\text{227}\) These various levels of engagement are clearly

\(^{226}\) Breed 2003.43ff.

\(^{227}\) Becker 1995.41-44.
evident in the opening three poems, which involve a movement that is remarkably similar to what we saw in 2.31. For if the first poem dramatizes the narrator’s response to ‘Cynthia’, the picture itself, then the second gives explicit attention to the medium (her forma) as well as the artifex, the poet as Apelles, by which and through whom we gain that access, whereas the third draws close attention to the interpreter who models his audience’s reactions (obstipui). The tensions these levels create in our reading of the Monobiblos are very similar to the tensions generated by the image of Ariadne as bacchant in Catullus 64, and which the ecphrasis goes on to explore, between the anticipated image of a static portrait and the unfolding of a narrative that incorporates sound, movement and temporality. For Ariadne’s intrinsic motion, despite her containment, mirrors that of Cynthia 
\[\text{visa mihi mollem spirare quietem….. non certis nixa manibus (1.3.8); like Ariadne she is both lifeless and lifelike at the same time.}\]

1.3 is also distinctive in the ‘Cynthia’ collection as being the only poem that presents itself as a temporal sequence of ‘events’ that the narrator looks back on, that enacts a ‘story’ in and of itself, rather than a soliloquy or dialogue, an impassioned plea of some sort to Cynthia or an exhortation to another male character. Indeed the series of imperfect tenses in the poem and the temporal markers (et modo (21)….et modo (23)….donec (31)) contrast sharply with the ‘this is happening to me here and now’ effect, the predominance of present tense verbs, in other poems. Yet Benediktson has commented on the effect of ‘temporal warping’ in 1.3, the narrative ‘events’ corresponding ‘not to their actual occurrence in time but to the narrator’s perception of them’, due to the fact that any purported action on the part of the narrator (lines 15-18, 21-24) is interspersed with a succession of visually impressionistic elements - the mythological exempla, the imaginings of her dreams, the lingering moon - which are in turn loaded with metacritical references to the poet’s own artistic ideology. In these respects it is very similar to Amores 1.5 which shows a similar alternation, and which stands out in Ovid’s opening book for similar reasons. In both the techniques of realism are particularly pronounced, the series of disconnected images of Corinna in Am. 1.5 being similar to the different phases of Cynthia’s posture and appearance here. The effect is to both delay and intensify the movement towards each poem’s climax.

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228 Benediktson 1989.84.

229 Keith 1994.34ff. demonstrates the literary aspects of Am. 1.5, since the poem employs the diction of Latin literary criticism to characterize Corinna’s corpus, as Ovid implicitly conflates the physique of his elegiac girlfriend with the poetics espoused in his elegiac collection.
This ‘temporal warping’ is also enhanced by the ‘ring-composition’ effect in both poems through the echo of diction at the end from the opening (*mediam...horam* (Am. 1.5.1), *medii.....dies* (Am. 1.5.26), *languida desertis* (1.3.2), *languidus* (1.3.38), *deserta* (1.3.43)). Like the narrator’s own fragmented gaze, the fragmentary structure of 1.3 provides a model for approaching the book as a whole, by encouraging the reader to draw comparisons and contrasts between scenes, to recreate one’s own elegiac ‘story’, just as the narrator recreates his own ‘story’ by creating a narrative ‘around’ the various visual perceptions of Cynthia in 1.3. Salzman-Mitchell has argued cogently that *Amores* 1.5 plays a similar programmatic role in Ovid’s poetry, since the ‘chopped-up’ narrative of elegiac discourse involves the reader in piecing together such ‘fragments of story’. Like the narrator’s own fragmented gaze, the fragmentary structure of 1.3 provides a model for approaching the book as a whole, by encouraging the reader to draw comparisons and contrasts between scenes, to recreate one’s own elegiac ‘story’, just as the narrator recreates his own ‘story’ by creating a narrative ‘around’ the various visual perceptions of Cynthia in 1.3. Salzman-Mitchell has argued cogently that *Amores* 1.5 plays a similar programmatic role in Ovid’s poetry, since the ‘chopped-up’ narrative of elegiac discourse involves the reader in piecing together such ‘fragments of story’. The fact that the particular visual images that Propertius chooses in 1.3 evoke popular artworks is the reason why the Andromeda image is so striking, and demonstrates how the art-literature interaction that I have been discussing is integral to this process. The poem’s series of disconnected ‘events’ acts as a metaphor for the way in which the reader of the *Monobiblos* can ‘re-write’ the lover’s story by drawing on thematic correspondences between poems, and between images within poems, which is itself analogous to the semantic flexibility of ‘visual narratives’ in art, transcending the necessarily linear reading of verbal texts.


Of particular significance in relation to the issue of enargeia in poetry is the concept of fides as a technical term of Classical literary scholarship. In his influential article Allen set out the different criteria attached to the concept of fides by the ancient and modern critic, and so warned against the modern tendency to impose standards on the elegist of which he himself would be unaware. Allen argued that the preoccupation amongst his contemporaries to look for signs of ‘biographical truth’ in their poetry was far removed from that which the elegists and their contemporaries considered relevant. Drawing a parallel between the elegist and the orator, he argued that for Propertius’ audience, the question of a poet’s fides resided only in the relationship between the poems themselves and their audience. Thus in classical literary theory fides carried the ideas of ‘plausibility’, ‘credibility’ in an objective sense, rather than of personal ‘honesty’ or ‘sincerity’; the term was conceived as a product of literary style rather than of personality.

The extent to which Propertius may be encouraging his reader to view the Monobiblos as an overtly literary programme may be more clearly illustrated by considering how Ovid, who makes little attempt to disguise the literary artifice at work in the opening book of the Amores, may be engaging with his elegiac predecessor. Hardie shows how Ovid dramatises the ‘absent presence’ as a condition of his elegiac puella, and explicitly unmasks as reality effect any sense of elegiac verism in the Amores. Thus although the reader is ‘drawn’ towards the personality of his puella from the outset, it is not until the end of the third poem of the Amores that she is actually revealed, although without a name; by contrast, the ‘flesh-and-blood’ object of Propertius’ desire is presented from the outset: Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis (1.1.1). This is most definitely not the scene of writing that opens Amores 1.1; however the sudden change in subject in line 4 – et caput impositis pressit Amor pedibus – creates a confusion of agency. Keith takes this argument further, and shows how this line provides only one of the means by which Ovid alludes to the earlier programmatic poem and so acknowledges his poetic model; Ovid retrospectively casts

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on the earlier poet a confusion between personal and textual presence. Thus in *Am.* 1.4.4 - *dicetur atque unum surripuisse pedem* - Ovid is registering the Propertian pun; *Amor* imposes his metrical, as well as literal foot, upon the Propertian lover. This recognition of literary artifice is important in relation to our understanding of a poet’s *fides* as a stylistic term. In *Am.* 1.3.19-20 the poet promises his girl:

\[te \ mihi \ materiem \ felicem \ in \ carmina \ praebe:\]
\[provenient \ causa \ carmina \ digna \ sua\]

However the mythological parallels that follow immediately undermine this promise:

\[carmine \ nomen \ habent \ exterrita \ cornibus \ Io\]
\[et \ quam \ fluminea \ lusit \ adulter \ ave,\]
\[quaeque \ super \ pontum \ simulato \ vecta \ iuvenc\]
\[virginea \ tenuit \ cornua \ vara \ manu.\]
\[nos \ quoque \ per \ totum \ pariter \ cantabimur \ orbem,\]
\[iunctaque \ semper \ erunt \ nomina \ nostra \ tua.\]  

These parallels not only undermine the author’s claims to personal ‘honesty’ but also textual, objective ‘credibility’; the former by the allusion to Jupiter’s infidelity (line 21-22), and the latter by calling attention to the tales of metamorphosis linked to the three figures to whom his *puella* is compared. As Hardie puts it: ‘The first of these tales (that of Io) calls attention to the detachability of names from persons. Io is herself the subject of transformation, a bodily change through which the name remains constant….his *puella* will be no more or less real than these mythological heroines, women whose only presence is to be found in writing….’. By contrast in the opening poem of the *Monobiblos*, following the highly allusive and ‘Alexandrian’ reworking of the myth of Milanion and Atalanta, the poet’s declaration *quaerite non sani pectoris auxilia* (line 26) immediately recalls Catullus’ own love-sickness: *ipse valere opto et taetrum hunc deponere morbum* (*Cat.* 76, line 25); indeed it is Catullus’ refusal to incorporate mythical allusions into his personal poems that is largely responsible for their air of tortured sincerity.

Allen’s article is geared towards the poet’s manipulation of literary conventions that contribute to this impression of sincerity, and several scholars have noted how

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Propertius’ use of convention and frequent use of myth do not destroy this sense of psychological realism in his poetry, yet this same argument can equally be applied to the poet’s manipulation of the conventions of viewing art. Much has been made of Ovid’s own ‘literary biography’ in the Amores, the way in which the poet reverses Propertius’ ‘cause and effect’ and rather asserts control over elegiac inspiration by tracing a very definite movement from a scene of writing and textual allusion towards the evocation of the puella. Yet rather than emphasising this reversal, what I find rather more intriguing is the way in which Ovid’s ‘double narrative’ of poeta/amator, outlining the creative process into which he is initiated into elegy, registers Propertius’ own initiation into the role of elegiac artist. Holzberg for instance sees the development of the Amores as constituting both an erotic plot and an increasing reflection on poetics, since although the amator increasingly loses control over the puella, the poet keeps a firm grip on the progress of his elegiac work. Thus although the early poems of the Amores suggest the amator’s success, the advice he confidently gives to Corinna on how to hoodwink her husband in Am. 1.4 backfires when later she cheats on him. Equally the early poems of the Monobiblos convey a similar sense of the lover’s success; despite the judgements that have been made about how Cynthia’s ‘tirade’ destroys the amator’s idealizing at the end of 1.3, it cannot escape notice that she here becomes exactly the kind of heroine that the lover exhorts her to become in other elegies, confessing her sleeplessness, suspicions of infidelity, and alleviating her distress through song, rather than the cold indifference she normally displays. Indeed this tone is continued in 1.4 and 1.5 in his reprimand to Bassus and then Gallus, who present a threat in different ways. The lover confidently predicts Bassus’ punishment (1.4.19-22) and Gallus’ suffering in love (1.5.13-18), both of which imply the increasing intimacy of the lover - puella relationship; predictions, however, that will only rebound later on the lover himself. Both texts then appear to enact a gradual process of ‘womanufacture’, the creation of a puella who later turns on the creator (since the amator will increasingly suffer at the puella’s hands); this creation reaches its acme in 1.3 and Am. 1.5, in both of which the visual realism masks the emphasis both poems place on the language of literary construction.


236 Holzberg 2002. Holzberg expounds the thesis that Ovid’s elegiac works can be read like novels.

237 See for instance Amores 1.10 where Corinna is evidently accepting bribes from other lovers.
Boyd has recognised how the opening three poems of the Amores constitute a poetic program within the book as a whole. Am. 1.1, a tale of literary aspiration and frustration, since by the end of the poem the narrator finds himself an elegist without the pangs of love (et in vacuo pectore regnat Amor 1.1.26), is remedied in Am. 1.2 where both lover and elegist co-exist, and a surrender both amatory and literary (at 1.2.8-10 both characters deliberate: et possessa fera pectora versat Amor / cedimus, an subitum luctando accendimus ignem? cedamus). By the end of Am. 1.3, as we have seen, lover and poet have attempted to intertwine (te mihi materiem felicem in carmina praebe…. (1.3.19)), an impression underscored by the repeated profession of lifelong fides (et nulla cessura fides…1.3.13, tu mihi, si qua fides, cura perennis 1.3.16); yet they cannot be assimilated, an effect that creates a dissonance between poet and lover. The opening three poems of the Amores may present themselves in a more obviously linear sequence than the opening poems of the Monobiblos (the topos of the symptoms of love in Am. 1.2.8, et possessa fera pectora versat Amor, marks a clear advance on 1.1.26, in vacuo pectore regnat Amor, while 1.2.19, tua sum nova praeda, Cupido, is taken up at the opening of the third poem: iusta precor: quae me nuper praedata puella est…), yet we have seen how the same repetition of key words is evident in the opening three poems of the Monobiblos and creates a similar sense of thematic development. Moreover there is the same reversal of expectations at the end of Propertius’ third poem, since the ‘reality’ effect of Cynthia’s speech becomes, on closer inspection, a comment on the nature and function of literary ecphrasis. The double sense of visa est at 1.3.7 as both ‘seemed’ and ‘was seen’, contrasting what the lover sees in his own mind (itself contrasted with the visions of rivalry he fears the puella ‘sees’ in her dreams at 1.3.29)) with the poet’s artistic control over elegiac inspiration, illustrates the double perspectives of narrator and poet that are kept as parallel threads up to this point.

This undermining of poetic fides finds a parallel in the particular pictorial effects that both elegists create. In comparing Propertius to Ovid, Benediktson has suggested that Propertius’ greater propensity for creating pictorial effects through the use of myth in his poetry can be explained by the coincidence of his early career with the arrival of such works of art in Rome. However while agreeing with him that Ovid is apt to both

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239 Benediktson 1985.119.
duplicate and undermine these effects,\textsuperscript{240} to my mind he underplays the intrusion of external elements which ‘interfere with the stimulation of the reader’s imaginative processes’ in Propertius.\textsuperscript{241} Indeed it is in ‘advertising his debts as well as his independence’\textsuperscript{242} through the greater prominence of these traits in his own work that Ovid is evidently acknowledging the more subtle play with the audience’s imagination that Propertius himself is capable of, just as Amores 1.1 references the opening of Propertius’ poem. The most intriguing instance of this in relation to what we have seen in 1.3 is Amores 1.14, of which Benediktson makes only brief mention, where the narrator scolds his mistress for dyeing her hair, pointing to the beauty of her locks in times past. When he recalls that she used to appear on her bed in the morning \textit{ut Thracia Bacche, cum temere in viridi gramine lassa iacet} (line 21), the image closely recalls that of the bacchant in 1.3.5-6 (\textit{nec minus assiduis Edonis fessa choreis / qualis in herboso concidit Apidan}) which makes a similar appeal to the visual imagination, with the erotic touch of \textit{lassa}, like \textit{fessa} in Propertius’ poem. The later image taken from myth in Ovid’s poem however collapses any emotional appeal that this might create into bathos:

\begin{quote}
\textit{formosae periere comae, quas vellet Apollo}
\textit{Quas vellet capiti Bacchus inesse suo,}
\textit{Illis contulerim, quas quondam nuda Dione}
\textit{Pingitur umenti sustinuisse manu.}
\end{quote}

(Ovid Am. 1.14.31-34)

Images of Apollo are of course, in art and literature, wholly conventional,\textsuperscript{243} and thus the effect is similar to Propertius’ portrait of Ariadne at the opening of 1.3, where language acts as a ‘window’ onto the described phenomena, but the reference to a \textit{particular} painting of Venus, the famous Aphrodite Anadyomene of Apelles, which had recently been brought to Rome by Augustus,\textsuperscript{244} and which is alluded to by Ovid on several other occasions,\textsuperscript{245} undermines the pictorial stimulus that the previous image

\textsuperscript{240} Benediktson cites Am. 1.10.1-8 / Prop. 1.3.1-6 as an example of the latter, Am. 1.14.19-22 / Prop. 1.3.5-6 an example of the former, and Am. 1.7.13-18 as a combination of the two.

\textsuperscript{241} Ibid.112.

\textsuperscript{242} Ibid.120.

\textsuperscript{243} See for instance Tibullus 1.4.37-38.

\textsuperscript{244} See Pliny \textit{Nat. Hist.} 35.91.

\textsuperscript{245} \textit{Ars Am.} 3.223-224, 401-402, \textit{Trist.} 2.527, \textit{Pont.} 4.1.29.
might create by triggering the reader’s imagination. This is however only a more explicit example of the technique in Propertius 1.3, where the images of Ariadne and the bacchant could call to mind a whole host of examples from visual art, yet as we have seen there is a strong likelihood of the interposed image of Andromeda being indebted to Euripides’ play. Thus what matters here is the imaginative stimulus that pictorial language can create, and hence a direct reference to a particular image in art or literature can interfere with that imaginative process and create a jarring note, as of course does humour, which has been amply noted in the case of Ovid, yet less so in Propertius. Benediktson and Whitaker both mention humour in connection with Ovid’s mythological images, where the poet stimulates various mental images of the heroines to evoke Corinna’s beauty, for instance in 1.7:

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\begin{align*}
\text{sic formosa fuit; talem Schoeneida dicunt} \\
\text{Maenalias arcu sollicitasse feras.} \\
\text{talis periuri promissaque velaque Thesei} \\
\text{flevit praecipites Cressa tulisse Notos.} \\
\text{Sic, nisi vittatis quod erat, Cassandra, capillis,} \\
\text{Procubuit templo, casta Minerva, tuo.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Ovid Am. 1.7.13-18)

The portraits of Atalanta, Ariadne and Cassandra are standard in literature and art but the imaginative stimulus is then broken by Ovid’s comment on his own allusion; this creates an effect of ‘overprecision’, since the specific mention of hair is a direct reminder of the amator’s impetuous violence to Corinna’s person earlier in the poem and deflates the pictorial effects which temporarily distract attention from his earlier actions. The effect is overtly humorous, whereas as we have seen Propertius maintains a much finer balance between serious and humorous modes. One might say that Propertius dramatizes the act of viewing itself, whereas Ovid directly reflects or comments upon this process without the earlier poet’s idealization of myth.

This subtle play with the audience’s imagination is important in relation to the concept of the poet’s fides in Quintilian; the semantic ambiguities of Propertius’ pictures bring the reader into the world of the poem in that they require the reader’s intellectual amplification for their effect within or outside the poem to be realised,
whereas this process is far more controlled by Ovid as authorial narrator. As Leach demonstrates, Ovid is not so much concerned with the ambiguity of myth or the imaginative distance between past and present worlds. Thus for instance in the simile at the opening of Amores 1.10 (qualis ab Eurota Phrygiis…..), often noted for its close resemblance to Propertius 1.3.1-6, the mythological figures assume Corinna’s own form: talis eras: aquilamque in te taurumque timebam….., where eras marks a clear advance on Propertius’ visa est; Corinna does not so much resemble these ancient heroines, but rather ‘shows how their portraits should be drawn’, as Ovid ‘blends present and past into one amoral continuum’. Thus it is too simple to say that Ovid is merely ‘parodying’ Propertius, but rather he recognises him as a fellow poeta doctus in the Callimachean tradition, working up new literary forms out of what his predecessors in the genre had achieved, making explicit what is already implicit in Propertius.

Boyd discusses how Ovid’s use of the mythological exemplum and more frequent use of extended or ‘multiple’ similes expand the generic boundaries of elegy, which through their visual emphasis exploit and subvert the epic background of the simile, transforming the elegiac present and drawing the subject matter of the heroic past within an elegiac framework. While Ovid tends to use similes far more frequently than Propertius, simile and exemplum have a similar effect in enhancing visual effectiveness, as Cicero records (exemplum est alicuius facti aut dicti praeteriti cum certi auctoris nomine proposito. id sumitur isdem de causis quibus similium) since they make the subject matter ornatior, apertior and probabilior. As Zanker notes, one of the major impulses behind visual realism is the desire ‘to confront the past and interpret it for the present’, exploiting the poetic memory. Yet this visual realism can be intellectually deceptive; in 1.10 for example Ovid appears to want to compare Corinna’s beauty to three mythological heroines, yet the comparisons emphasize only the circumstances of rape. However the burlesque image at Am. 1.10.7 aquilamque in te taurumque timebam / et quidquid magno de Iove fecit amor is only a more pronounced form of the humour derived from Propertius’ series of exempla in 1.2, which also carry with them the connotations of rape. Ovid’s similes here therefore present a strongly

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246 Leach 1988.439.
247 Ibid.
249 Cicero ad Her. 4.49.62.
distancing effect in that they distract attention from the thematic development of the rest of the poem, which is in 1.10 concerned mainly with the mistress’ venality and the mercenary nature of women in general. Instead they focus attention on the intellectualizing dimension of the simile or exemplum; Ovid’s ‘visual memory’ incorporates multiple allusions since, as Boyd argues, his frequent claims to autopsy, vidi ego… (eg. Am. 1.2.11-16, 2.12.25), and the frequent impression of ‘overprecision’ in Ovid’s similes and exempla act mainly as claims to what he has read. For Propertius however the visual realism created by the exemplum or simile can function in unison with the poem’s thematic development while carrying a similar intellectual dimension, since we see the same wide-ranging echoes of other authors. Propertius’ exempla in the Monobiblos, whilst as graphic in their visual details, reveal an ambiguity that creates depth by opening up possible pasts and futures through allusions that his audience is invited to envisage and reconstruct in relation to his poetry.

As we have seen in the opening three poems, by sowing seeds of doubt or ambiguity into his poetry through his use of myth, Propertius consequently makes a far greater demand than his elegiac successor on the reader’s imaginative participation for exploring such varied nuances. In 2.6 the poet distances himself less ambiguously from his narrator to illuminate this process, the way in which his poetry is able to manipulate the reader’s emotions through pictorial means. Here Propertius invents a new kind of golden age before the birth of domestic decoration:

\[quaem manus obscenas depinxit prima tabellas\]
\[et posuit casta turpis visa domo,\]
\[illa puellarum ingenuos corrupit ocellos\]
\[nequitiaeque suae noluit esse rudis.\]
\[a gemat, in terris, ista qui protulit arte\]
\[turpis sub tacita condita laetitia!\]
\[non istis olim variabant tecta figuris:\]
\[tum paries nullo crimine pictus erat.\]

(2.6.27-34)

As Richardson notes it is highly unlikely that the tabellae obscenae which the narrator blames for this moral degeneration can refer to specifically pornographic paintings. Rather the ‘tongue-in-cheek’ effect of the phrase responds to the spectator’s wilful and impressionable response to appearances. The irony steals upon the reader gradually, for it is only when we reach the scorn that is heaped upon the originator of such painted

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251 Richardson 1977.228. He notes that the evidence from Pompeii suggests that genuinely pornographic paintings were uncommon and mainly kept out of sight.
panels that we can recognize the ironic context for this outburst that the poet has created; Propertius celebrates his love by drawing on exactly the same types of examples in myth that he now deplores as embodiments of the evils of jealousy, Helen and the causes of the Trojan War (lines 15-16), and a moment’s reflection on the Roman examples he adduces, Romulus and the Sabine virgins (lines 19-22), will bring to mind the realization that Rome has never enjoyed such an age of innocence.

That our eyes should be attuned to painted versions of such exempla has already been signposted by the mention of the iuvenum pictae facies of line 9. Indeed the type of activity that the poet appears to be criticizing in 2.6, the viewer’s wilful distortion of imagery, conforms exactly to that of the narrator of 1.3, who transforms the sight of the motion of Cynthia’s breath into a fantasy of her sexual dreams (et quotiens raro duxti suspiria motu, / obstupui vano credulus auspicio, ne qua tibi insolitos portarent visa timores, / neve quis invitam cogeret esse suam (1.3.27-30)). Mythology’s imitation of life may appear to hold no such perils for Ovid as it does for the Propertian amator here in 2.6, yet the irony is only amplified when one considers that in most of the poems of the Monobiblos the lover scolds Cynthia for not resembling figures from the heroic past.

This comparison with 2.6 also highlights an important distinction between Books One and Two in terms of their employment of visual imagery that mirrors other distinctions between the Monobiblos and other books in the corpus. Though both 1.3 and 2.6 play on the moral neutrality of the visual image, until the viewer applies his own particular distortions, mythical exempla in Book Two generally display a far closer correspondence to the narrator’s fictive reality. In the Monobiblos myth opens up a greater range of dialectical possibilities, and the ambiguity and confusion that this engenders can underscore similar tensions in the lover’s relationship with the puella. This is consistent with the emphasis the poems of the Monobiblos place on the reader’s own dramatic reconstruction of situation and the more variable possibilities of communication.

In 1.4 the irony is at Bassus’ expense when he attempts to divert the lover’s passion by praising the beauty of past heroines:

\[\text{quid me non pateris vitae quodcumque sequetur}
\text{hoc magis assueto ducere servitio?}
\text{tu licet Antiopae formam Nycteidos, et tu}\]
Spartanae referas laudibus Hermionae, 
et quascumque tulit formosi temporis aetas

(1.4.3-7)

Underlying Propertius’ complaint however is the recollection that although Antiope and Hermione suffered rape or abduction, their male offenders were punished by death; Bassus in turn faces a poisoned reputation among women (et te circum omnis alias irata puellas / differet: heu nullo limine carus eris (1.4.21-22)). The insertion of another figure in 1.4, the iambist Bassus, gives a more rounded portrait of the lover and Cynthia while also complicating that relationship, and again shows the same balancing contrast between Cynthia as candida and dura puella in the first and second halves of the poem that we saw in 1.3. In a similar manner to what we have already seen, the use of myth heightens the poem’s dramatic effectiveness yet also casts the same ironic shadows over the poem as a whole. Indeed close comparison with 1.2 is encouraged by the triple repetition of forma in lines 5, 7 and 11 of the central section of this poem, emphasising the scopophilic nature of these images, which echoes the repeated use of the same term in 1.2 (lines 9, 11, 24) to create the same tension between art and nature. Moreover the praise of Cynthia’s ingenuus color at 1.4.13 is reminiscent of the poet’s praise for the heroines’ lack of falsus candor in 1.2.19. At the same time the poet’s disingenuity that we saw in the earlier poem in the use of forma (nudus amor formae non amat artificem 1.2.8) supports a reading beyond mere praise of physical beauty here. Bassus’ attempt to distract the amator from the attentions of Cynthia relates her beauty to that of Antiope and the Spartan Hermione, yet as in 1.2 these girls have rival suitors (Epopeus and Neoptolemus) who met dire fates as a result of their interference in the liaison. Thus as in 1.2, the heroines were famous for having two lovers, one of whom lost his life for the part played in the affair.252 The effect is to heighten the association, in dolor and amor, of the implied tragic fate of the Propertian lover in 1.2 with that of Bassus in 1.4. However the full ramifications of the dangers of the puella’s forma to which the Propertian amator is here exposed, in both its erotic and poetic senses, vicariously channelled through the fate of the iambist, will not be felt until later on in the book. The balance of the poem between the positive and destructive effects of

252 Orestes returned to murder Neoptolemus, as related in Euripides’ Orestes, while Antiope’s sufferings were avenged by her sons. For Antiope’s story, see Hyginus Fabula 8, based on the lost Antiope of Euripides. Hermione’s story is also told in Euripides’ Orestes; see also Apollod. 3.5.5.
*servitium* echoes the same balance that we see in 1.3, but is complicated by the effects of a kind of ‘triadic viewing’.

The ‘punishment’ that the narrator predicts for Bassus (1.4.17ff. *non impune feres…*) thus alters the perspective of the *puella*’s tirade at the end of 1.3. While on the one hand, as I suggested earlier, Cynthia’s outburst at the end of 1.3 strongly suggests the *puella*’s attachment in the lover’s mind, this suddenly becomes questionable in the light of 1.4, since lines 25-28 (*non ullo gravius temptatur……*) in particular highlight the lover’s fear that Bassus’ fate will be his, a fear that is magnified by the poet’s departure into the world of myth; Cynthia’s beauty belies the violence she will increasingly wreak on the lover as the book progresses. Other links with 1.3 create a strong sense of a dramatic continuum, for the lover’s warning to Bassus in 1.4.1 concerning his appeal to *multas puellas* at the poem’s opening could convey the idea that the lover is implicitly apologizing for his amatory escapades in 1.3 and Cynthia’s accusations (*tandem te nostro referens iniuria lecto / alterius clausis expulit e foribus?* 1.3.35-36), whilst also humorously suggesting that Bassus himself is responsible for this interest. At the same time the *multae puella*e whom Bassus praises suggest the various mythical heroines who populate these poems and whom the *amator* is often quick to praise in contrast to Cynthia (1.2 and 1.15), yet as the poem progresses Cynthia increasingly takes on the vengeful and hostile characteristics that belie the beauty of the heroines invoked, a pattern that mirrors the progression of the book as a whole.

1.4 again then elicits the power of the gaze, a projection on to the visual artwork, as Propertius draws the iambist into his elegiac world; Bassus ‘misreads’ the images. Lines 5-14 make an increasingly strong visual appeal; the repetition of *forma* increasingly emphasises the appeal to sight, as the beauty of the heroines is juxtaposed to the beauty of Cynthia (lines 11-13), followed by ironic predictions of Bassus’ suffering (*sciet haec insana puella / et tibi non tacitis vocibus hostis erit* (lines 17-18)). Thus the interplay between the lovers and the figures from myth is an essential aspect of the viewing strategies of the *Monobiblos*. Indeed while the images from myth in 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 convey a strong sense of the viewer’s power, we find that such images in later poems suggest only the viewer’s impotence. This interplay is encouraged by the open-endedness of these poems, as the consequences of 1.3 can be seen in 1.4.
The amator’s subjection to the suffering he predicts for others first becomes evident in 1.15. The thematic relation of this poem to 1.2, on the true beauty of a faithful lover against the deceit of false adornment, has often been noted, yet more intriguing is the way it provides a yet more striking example of the same range of tonal effects that we have already seen in earlier poems through the use of mythological exempla:

at non sic Ithaci digressu mota Calypso
desertis olim fleverat aequoribus 10
multos illa dies incomptis maesta capillis
sederat, iniusto multa locuta salo,
et quamvis numquam post haec visura, dolebat
illa tamen, longae conscia laetitiae.
nec sic Aesoniden rapientibus anxia ventis
Hypsipyle vacuo constitit in thalamo:
Hypsipyle nullo post illos sensit amores,
ut semel Haemonio tabuit hospitio.
coniugis Euadne miseris elata per ignes
occidit, Argivae fama pudicitiae. 20
Alphesiboea suos ultast pro coniuge fratres
sanguinis et cari vincula rupit amor.

(1.15.9-22)

Once again the series of static moments of intense emotion created by the absorption in visual fascination - since fleverat (10), sederat (12), constitit (18), dolebat (13), tabuit (21), and occidit (22), describing the heroines, contrast with the movement of the male figures (digressu (9), rapientibus...ventis (17)) - divert attention from the point they appear to illustrate, and so create a similar sense of disorder. Sick or more probably about to embark on a journey, the lover views Cynthia’s concern for self-adornment and lack of concern for the narrator’s departure as hinting at a new love. However as the exempla series progresses, we see that the point that they were originally introduced to illustrate, the neglect of the heroines for their appearance, is increasingly lost sight of, so that the final pair of exempla bear no relation to the original point of departure in the series - Calypso’s neglect for her own appearance (incomptis...capillis (11)) - but are simply the most powerful examples of female devotion in the lover’s mind. This transition has a powerful dramatic effect that is

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253 Most commentators see the two possibilities of periculum as mutually exclusive - either the poet is sick or he is about to embark on a journey (which would give greater point to the Calypso/Hypsipyle myths) - but could it not carry both senses? Periculum could refer to the emotional ‘sickness’ caused by Cynthia’s perceived cruelty as well as the physical danger of travel, thus anticipating the physical and emotional separation of the poems that follow.
similar to the alteration in the movement of thought in 1.2. Furthermore the increase in emotional intensity underlines the anxieties and tensions in the lover’s own mind about the prospects of his beloved’s infidelity, for the graphic description of Calypso’s grief (fleverat (10), dolebat (14)), which escalates and ends with Evadne proud of her supreme act of self-sacrifice (Evadne miseros elata per ignis (21-22)), clearly contrasts with Cynthia’s perfidia (2), referring both to her trivial and nonchalant behaviour in the earlier part of the poem (desidia (6)) and the exaggerated concern of the final lines (fletum……luminibus (40)). There is also the same confusion regarding the frame of reference that we saw in 1.2. For surely it is the lover who sees himself as devoted like the mythical heroines, whilst Cynthia is endangering herself (si quid forte tibi durius inciderit (28)) and the gods may destroy him to punish her (audax a nimium, nostro dolitura periculo (27)). Furthermore the heightened sense of disorder in the lover’s mental condition that the allusions show, corresponds to the darkening of tone in the dramatic progression of the Monobiblos as a whole. The narrator now accuses the puella of nequitia (38), far stronger than the levitatis of line 1, and immediately assumes treachery (lines 35-38) and guilt in Cynthia’s tear-stained eyes (lines 39-41). Thus the sense of realism that this poem creates is in no way undermined, on a dramatic level, by the departure into the realm of myth; the same tone unites the myths and their context. Moreover the fact that it is not immediately clear how the myths relate or are relevant to the situation they are intended to illustrate is also dramatically credible as a product of the lover’s tortured and bewildered mental condition, as the poet imbues a series of static scenes with movement and actuality, confusing representation and reality.

The poem’s relation to 1.2 thus creates a sense of narrative progression within the Monobiblos as a whole. The implied dangers of a ‘new man’ in 1.2 become far more acute in 1.15, as the puella’s mores start to become an open issue; the acknowledgement that satis forma pudicitiae in reference to the heroines of 1.2 becomes the recognition that Evadne, Argivae fama pudicitiae (22), has become a byword for chastity itself. Yet the poem’s humorous dimension, as with 1.2, is also unmistakeable, since the lover uses the pleading compliments of blanditiae in 1.2 but accuses Cynthia of the same in 1.15.42 (non ullis tutum credere blanditiis). There is also the same process of manipulation and incongruity, for here it is the sea-nymph, rather than Odysseus as in the Homeric account of the Calypso episode, who sits weeping, and the lover’s self-comparison with Odysseus and Jason is also presented
Humour is also created not only by the rapid escalation of intensity in the behaviour of the named heroines, but also by the fact that in three of the four cases (Evadne apart), separation is voluntary on the man’s part (desertis…..aequoribus (10)). Thus if the mythical analogues for Cynthia explicitly suggest, by contrast, the fidelity of the heroines to a single lover, there is also the unmistakeable, albeit implicit, suggestion of a lover making a plea for his beloved’s fidelity in the face of his own desertion.

The subtle ‘blurring’ effect in the Monobiblos that we have seen from the poet’s use of myth, the sense that ‘Cynthia’ and ‘Propertius’ consistently fluctuate between being convincingly human lovers and characters from myth, is rather different from what we find in Book Two, where Cynthia is suddenly declared to ‘inspire whole Iliads’ (2.1.14), has become a fabula (maxima de nihilo nascitur historia (2.1.26)), and is immediately placed on an equal footing with Helen, Andromeda and others (post Helenam haec terris forma secunda redit (2.3.32)). The implications of this in relation to changes that were taking place in the visual arts at this time is the subject of the second half of this thesis.

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254 1.15 is thus on the one hand dramatically compelling through the poem’s connection with 1.14, which gives a serious picture of love as dolor yet pleasurable (1.14.17-24), and so appears as a practical demonstration of such dolor, yet the poet’s misapplication of mythical exempla in 1.15 undercuts that stance. In the Homeric account it is Odysseus who weeps towards the sea, while Calypso dresses up to bid her lover farewell (Od. 5.148-159).

255 For the tale of Hypsipyle and Jason, see Apollonius Rhodius 1.607-910. Evadne was the wife of Capanaus, one of the seven against Thebes, who was destroyed by Jupiter’s thunderbolt because he had boasted that Jupiter could not stop his assault on Thebes; Evadne threw herself on his pyre. The story of Alphesiboea is told in Apollodorus 3.7.5. She was the wife of Alcmaeon, son of Amphiaras. After Alcmaeon departed to marry Callithoe, the daughter of Acheulon, he returned to Arcadia to fetch the necklace of Harmonia, which he had promised his new bride, and was slain by the brothers of Alphesiboea.
Part Two: The *Monobiblos* and Painting of the Second and Third Styles

Chapter 4: Dreaming and visual art

Propertius’ evocation of the visual arts can be seen particularly in his ‘dream’ poems. I would like to foreground here Scioli’s recent thesis which I believe can shed light on my project and present more specific evidence for the ways in which changing artistic trends may have affected the poet’s early style.\(^{256}\) These poems raise the point that although a poem such as 1.3 has been regarded as very ‘dream-like’, actual representations of dreams only occur in later books. Thus as I argued in the case of the *ecphrasis* of the temple of Apollo in 2.31 and in 2.12, certain poems in later books can offer a theoretical perspective on what is implicit in the *Monobiblos*, for both dreaming and the *ecphrasis* of art reflect on the premises of elegiac composition.

Scioli shows how Propertius’ poetry evinces a keen grasp of the importance of the visual aspect of dreaming and how his exploitation of the ways in which this experience is evoked in the visual arts is central to his representations of dreams. Her thesis examines the role of visuality in these poems though the sophisticated interplay between reality and artifice, or between ‘interior and exterior space’,\(^{257}\) in the development from the height of the Second to early Third Style wall-painting, which she believes Propertius recaptures in these poems through a similar interplay of visual effects. Yet I argue here that as a form of *ecphrasis*, the representation of dreams in textual form, and the means by which Propertius relates the complexities of this experience by gesturing to the reader’s own experience of these effects in the visual arts, can be compared more generally with the dynamics of literary *ecphrasis* that the poet employs in the *Monobiblos*. Indeed she suggests that the experience of the dreamer as represented in the text is analogous to the position of the elegiac narrator and dreaming to the process of composing elegy.

This is an intriguing line of thought, for Propertius’ poems could indeed be regarded as conceived from the outset as ‘dream-like’ experiences; as I argued earlier, the *noctes amaras* that the *amator* suffers at the opening of the collection in 1.1.33 derive from Cynthia’s persecutions, and account for his various imaginative exploits,

\(^{256}\) Scioli 2005:41-110.

\(^{257}\) The phrase Scioli commonly uses, eg p. 93.
hinted at in 1.1.29-30: *ferte per extremas gentes et ferte per undas / qua non ulla meum femina norit iter*. As Scioli notes, dreaming is an apt metaphor for the first person subjectivity and liminal state of the elegiac narrator, since like the elegist, the dreamer sees a manifestation of himself which shares the characteristics or concerns of the person dreaming, being subject to the vision while dreaming but able to exert a form of control in the re-telling. For instance she notes how Lev Kenaan observes of Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* that by the equation of *actor* with author, Apuleius ‘establishe a dream-like basis for his autobiographical fictions’. 258 This parallel between dreaming and creativity draws attention in particular to visual experience as a critical part of this process, which reflects on the poet’s subjective impulse. Quintilian compares the orator’s imaginings, the *phantasiae* that we noted earlier, to ‘daydreams’ which nevertheless remain under the speaker’s conscious control. 259 In this respect the actual representation of a dream, like the *ecphrasis* of a work of art, can have an important programmatic function in addressing poetic concerns that are voiced less self-consciously in other parts of the text. The poems of the Monobiblos in particular display the incoherence of the dream experience, the fluctuation between the focalised visual images capturing the seemingly incommunicable essence of his love (in me tardus Amor non ullas cogitat artes 1.1.17)) and the commentary that he provides around such images, such as direct exhortation to Cynthia or the various male rivals who populate the book. Hence through these subtle shifts between *auctor* and *actor*, the text strives to depict its erotics and poetics as inseparable or entangled, rather than each standing allegorically for the other.

Scioli cites 3.8.15-17 as a prime instance of Propertius appearing to acknowledge the parallels between dreaming and looking at art, where the narrator gives various forms of behaviour which reveal a girl’s attempt to disguise her passion and claims he has the power to interpret these: *seu timidam crebro dementia somnia terrent / seu miseram in tabula picta puella movet / his ego tormentis animi sum verus haruspex*. The similarity between the subjects of the two lines of the couplet lies, as she


259 ‘when the mind is unoccupied or is absorbed by fantastic hopes or day-dreams, we are haunted by these visions of which I am speaking to such an extent that we imagine that we are travelling abroad, crossing the sea, fighting, addressing the people……and seem to ourselves not to be dreaming but acting. Surely, then, it may be possible to turn this form of hallucination to some profit……’ (Quint. *Inst. Orat*. 6.2.30). This also harks back to Lucretius’ point that I made earlier about the ‘wakefulness’ of the mind even in sleep which is unable to resist the equation of false and true impressions: hoc ideo fieri cogit natura, quod omnes / corporis affecti sensus per membra quiescent, nec possunt falsum veris convincere rebus (DRN 4.762-764).
acknowledges, in their mutual creation of a temporary distortion or madness; the parallel positions of dementia and picta in the couplet reinforce the connection between dreaming and looking at visual art.\textsuperscript{260} This harks back to my earlier discussion of the sense of deception that is often involved when the poet’s visual senses are stirred, for instance in his condemnation of the effects of art in 2.6; both 2.6.27-32 and 3.8.15-16 could therefore be seen as meditations on the capacity of images to deceive, whether in dreams or artistic form. Particularly thought-provoking here is the use of haruspex, the poet advancing himself as an interpreter of the ‘distorting effects’ that both dreaming and looking at art involve.

Scioli’s remarks on the parallels between 2.26a and 3.3 and the viewer’s contemplation of the painted panels in the House of Livia (ca. 30-20 BC) and those from Cubiculum M of the Villa at Boscoreale (ca. 50-40 B.C.) are particularly insightful.\textsuperscript{261} Her discussion provides strong evidence that the poet took advantage of his readers’ familiarity with the complex representational techniques of figural and non-figural painting, and that his awareness of the possibilities for deception inherent in artistic representation, as able to confound the poles of art and reality, was strongly informed by the illusionism of the architectural vistas popular for most of his early life (the Second Style) and the compositional modes which emerged in Rome at the height of his career (the transitional period between the Second and Third Styles). In both cases the means by which a sense of realism is created is destabilized by techniques that remind the viewer of the parameters of this experience, yet this is achieved in different ways according to the artistic style evoked. As she notes: ‘The Second Style was characterised by an illusionism that showed realistic vistas receding away from the flat planes of the wall, while the Third Style re-asserted the wall’s integrity and boasted smaller, picture-like images which were themselves like portals to a fantastical world outside the room.’\textsuperscript{262} Indeed I argue that the realism of Propertian poetry which visuality effects can be likened to the complex illusionism of Second Style wall

\textsuperscript{260} Scioli 2005:42-47.

\textsuperscript{261} Ibid.75-96.

\textsuperscript{262} Ibid.77. Mau 1882 developed this classification system. Beyen 1938 revised it to include two phases of the Second Style: early (ca. 80-40 B.C.) and late (what I here refer to as ‘transitional’, ca. 40-15 B.C.). See Ling 1991:12-100 for a broad overview of the developments in these four styles. It is clear that aspects of the Third Style are already starting to come into fashion \textit{circa} 30-20 BC; see Gruner 2004:171-211.
painting, where the sense of realism conveyed by the imagery enables the viewer to transcend the confines under which she experiences them.

Yet at the same time, this sense of realism in Propertian poetry is consistently undermined, resulting in a tension between ‘interior and exterior space’ in paintings of the late Second Style (roughly coinciding with the publication of the first two books of Propertius) which show emerging trends of the new Third Style, which was flourishing at the time of his later compositions. I therefore believe that one can discern a development in Propertius’ imagism and style in the Monobiblos which reflects similar developments in the visual arts during the late first century B.C.

2.26a, 3.3 and the Monobiblos

As Hubbard has shown, poem 2.26a provides a clear instance of how an entire poem can derive its distinctive character through pictorialism in the amator’s dream of the ‘drowning’ Cynthia. Important elements of the dream are all present in a depiction of the same myth, the drowning of Helle, on a mosaic from the Naples museum. The drenched hair that makes it all but impossible for Cynthia to keep her head above water, the hands outstretched in appeal, the speeding dolphin, and the crags like those from which the narrator wishes to fling himself, all suggest that Propertius is conscious of deriving his scene from a picture, especially in the simile in the third couplet (qualem purpureis agitatam fluctibus Hellen / aurea quam molli tergore vexit ovis (lines 5-6)), its pictorial character underlined in the colour contrast between purpureis...fluctibus and aurea...ovis; the later contrast between candida Nesae and caerula Cymothoe (line 16) has a similar effect. Hubbard shows how the poem’s order of development seems to be dictated by the order of perception that we find in several artistic representations of this myth, and accordingly invites appreciation in those terms. When one looks at extant paintings of the drowning of Helle, attention is at first concentrated upon the central and powerful emotional figure; the rescuing dolphin of the poem is in the pictorial representations merely a decorative element in the seascape, while the cliffs


264 Hubbard 1974,166ff. remarks on how the visual approach that lends the poem the ‘air of inconsequence’ that is characteristic of a dream can satisfy the questions regarding the poem’s logic, or rather lack of it; the question of why Propertius should wish to fling himself from the crag when he has already seen the dolphin speeding to the rescue. Indeed as we have seen in poems such as 1.2 and 1.15, seeming illogicalities or abrupt leaps in thought can be resolved by considering a poem’s manipulation of the reader’s viewpoint.
like those on which the lover stands (*iamque ego conabar summo me mittere saxo* 2.26a.19) frame the seascape and are the last element attended to, just as they are in the poem. However as Scioli points out, in most pictorial versions of this myth Phrixus takes centre stage, yet here the focus is on Helle as the dominant figure. Thus while Propertius’ poem is undoubtedly ‘pictorial’ in its effects, and clearly evokes artistic depictions of this myth, such effects are manipulated to serve his distinct purposes, involving here a reversal of roles. The poet’s subtle manipulation of art in placing Helle rather than Phrixus at the centre of his tableau relocates the reader’s sympathies and champions his own art in demonstrating how the myth is to be interpreted; in the renaming of the sea (lines 7–8) and the image of the rescuing dolphin of the penultimate couplet (*sed tibi subsidio delphinum currere vidi* (line 17)), Cynthia becomes the distinctively Propertian version of the Helle of painted fame. As we have seen then in poems already examined, painting becomes an important medium by means of which Propertius can communicate the nature of his poetry to his readers without resorting to being overly reliant upon such pictorial versions.

The poem is therefore a striking illustration of the way in which dreams and pictures can be equated, for both provide an image of, as well as a departure from, reality. Scioli focuses on the disjunction between the fixed images created by the mythological parallels and the diachronic narration of the events of the narrator’s dream, creating a disjointed narrative that ‘confuses the reader’s navigation of primary and secondary observations’ through a constant shift in perspective between participation in the dream experience and commentary upon it through these parallels. In relation to this effect she focuses on the south wall of the *tablinum* in the

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265 Scioli 2005.51-52. Most of the representations of this myth from LIMC show Helle either riding on the back of the ram with her brother Phrixus, or Phrixus alone, Helle having slipped off the animal’s back into the sea. Only the mosaic from Naples contains all the features of Propertius’ poem.

266 Scioli points out the striking use of the active form of *video* here in contrast to the use of the passive in other dream poems in the Propertian corpus (*visus eram mollis recumbens Heliconis in umbra* (3.3.1), *Cynthia namque meo visast incumbere fulchro* (4.7.3)). The irregular use of the active draws attention to the fact that even from the perspective of being awake, looking back, the images the narrator saw appeared to him as real, whereas the passive, although conveying the dreamer’s feeling of being convinced of their reality at the time, would acknowledge his realisation from this perspective that they were clearly false. See Cicero *Academica* 2.51-52 on the active and passive uses of *video*. The same use of the active in line 17, the climactic moment of the dream experience where the narrator sees the dolphin approaching, heightens the dramatic suspense.

267 Ibid.49.

268 This systematic alternation can be seen throughout the poem. Lines 1-4 describe the scene and the amator’s envy, followed by the shift to the mythical plane (*qualem purpureis agitantum fluctibus Hellen / aurea quam molli tertore vexit ovis*); this is followed by the fear that the same fate will befall Cynthia (lines 7-8), and his vows to various gods and goddesses in lines 9-10, *quantum ego Neptuno, quae tum cum Castore fratri, / quaeque tibi excepti, iam dea, Leucothoe!* Further narration follows in lines 11-12, and the narrator’s fears for Cynthia then lead back to the world of myth, the image of Glaucus and the Nereids: *et tibi ob invidiam Nereides crepitarent, / candida Nesaee, caerulea Cymothoe.* Finally we see the entry of the dolphin that rescued Arion, fusing together the world of myth with the lover’s psychological reactions. Scioli’s emphasis is on the constant shift between the sense of illusionism created by the narrative of the dream experience - as in 1.3, the details of Cynthia’s physical movements and physical body (*manus*
Casa di Livia as a prime example of the visual incoherence that is characteristic of the late Second Style in wall painting, combining the aesthetic of ‘breaking through the wall’, through illusionistic and other architectural devices, and the more intimate viewing required for the painted panels or pinakes, the distinguishing features of the early Third Style (figure 3). The cityscape to the left of the aedicula on this lateral wall in the Casa di Livia, viewed through a rectangular opening and peopled with human figures, heightens the illusionistic sense of realism, as it suggests a world existing beyond the confines of the room. Yet this outwardly focused architecture contrasts with the inwardly focused pinakes depicting human lovers, and the large red panels that surround them aid this ‘interior’ effect as they serve to re-assert the wall’s flatness.

The large mythological paintings, framed within aediculae in the central sections of the walls of houses, are most prominent in the overall decorative scheme, and contribute significantly to the ‘dream-like’ contrast between ‘interior’ and ‘exterior’ viewing. They provide a kind of ‘middle ground’, since they both contain recognisable figures from myth who could not possibly exist outside the confines of the room, yet also provide the spatial depth that is characteristic of the Second Style since they feature aspects of landscape that are appropriate for the imitation of outdoor space. The ‘Argus and Io’ panel in the aedicula on this lateral wall of the tablinum of the Casa di Livia is particularly intriguing in this regard, inviting both ‘projection’ and ‘reflection’, particularly when considered in relation to the Polyphemus and Galatea panel from the same room, so creating the same ambivalent tones that the Argus exemplum provides in 1.3.

Now there are clear similarities between 2.26a and poems such as 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.15, where we saw that, just like a dream, the static visual impulse created by myth dominates and the narrative is disrupted. Indeed the way in which the details of the shipwreck and the cliffs from which the narrator views the puella create an imagined dramatic setting for the poem, and so provide the point of contingency between the

line 2, comas line 4, palmas line 11) - and the striking colour effects of the mythical parallels which provide a commentary on or around this experience, and which halt the narrative.

269 Scioli 2005.90.

270 Ibid.93. See also Clarke 1998.52 on these larger paintings within the aediculae. The point I go on to draw attention to is the sense of ambivalence between their being pictures and prospects.

271 ‘The works show monstrous lovers (not so monstrously portrayed) comically in love and incapable of physically traversing the space separating them from the objects of their desire.’ Valladares 2006.108-109.
legendary world and his own as imagined in the dream, taking in geography familiar to the ancient reader as well as mythology, is much more in the manner of the mini-dramas that are typical of the *Monobiblos* than the poems of Book Two, which impress rather as interior monologues, poetic meditations on the vicissitudes of love, with their various shadowy addressees.\(^\text{272}\) Equally the figure of Glaucus at 2.26a.13-14, transfixed by the vision of Helle (*quod si forte tuos vidisset Glaucus ocellos / esses Ionii facta puella maris*), is an apt prototype for the narrator of the *Monobiblos*, transfixed by the sight of his beloved as he is in these earlier poems, and the fusion of subjective and objective a metaliiterary comment on the nature of Propertius’ art. In this respect Glaucus is reminiscent of Argus in 1.3, creating a similar sense of the viewer’s fixation; the liminal position of the lover in the context of the dream of 2.26a is analogous to the position of the artistic viewer in 1.3, where as we saw the vivid images created by myth generate that strong sense of *enargeia* which is such a hallmark of Propertian poetry.\(^\text{273}\) Yet I argue that the ‘disjunction’ that Scioli refers to here in 2.26a between the fixed images and the narration of the dream, where the narrator recoils from its subjective expression to create a commentary via the mythological parallels, is not nearly as striking as it is in those earlier poems, where as we have seen, the mythical *exempla* confuse the frame of reference and thus convey a strong sense of the lover’s incoherence in a way that is most ‘dream-like’, whilst at the same time destabilizing the sense of dramatic realism that this gives rise to.\(^\text{274}\)

Indeed the distinct organisation of the constituent features of 2.26a, and the neat and systematic alternation between the relation of the dream experience and the mythological parallels, points to a far more self-conscious reflection on the antagonism between word and image than what we find in the *Monobiblos*. At the same time, the way in which anxiety in this poem about the potential loss of the *puella*, both as the

\(^{\text{272}}\) Several commentators have made this point on Book 2; see Leach 1988.43, Lyne 1980.120-133, Warden 1980.90. However the lover’s detachment from the central image in 2.26a, positioned on the cliff-face and calling out to Cynthia as she departs, echoes the image of the *amator* at the opening of 1.8 and 1.17. 2.26a is similar to 2.32, where Cynthia is imagined as escaping from Rome, in being more typical of a *Monobiblos* poem in this respect, although it is more obviously pictorial in its colour effects than the latter. The unresolved ending of this dramatic episode that I go on to discuss is also more typical of the poems of the *Monobiblos*. However the narrator’s looking back upon the dream here gives it a more obvious theoretical perspective than we see in 1.3 for instance, which while also set in past, dramatises the incident through the sudden shift of tenses that is typical of other poems of the *Monobiblos*.

\(^{\text{273}}\) As in 1.3, in 2.26a he imagines himself as the internal male viewer gazing upon his mistress that is a common motif in art, while also showing an ability to identify with the abandoned victim, since the role he plays here is reminiscent of the Catullan Ariadne on the shoreline, gazing out at the departing Theseus, as well as images of other abandoned women in ancient literature.

\(^{\text{274}}\) Scioli does note the similarity between this poem and the ‘dream-like’ 1.3 (pp. 112-114) yet the line between the narrator’s immersion in and curiosity about Cynthia’s dream experience and his reaction to it is far more blurred in that earlier poem, which as she acknowledges raises some doubt about who is actually dreaming and whose dream, Cynthia’s or his own, the narrator inhabits (p. 115).
object of the lover’s affections and as the source of creativity for the poet, conflicts with, yet also heightens the aesthetic and visual pleasures of composition, is a shared characteristic of this poem and several poems of the *Monobiblos* that I have thus far examined. Flaschenriem shows how much of the language in this poem, and several of the names mentioned, link with ideas of commemoration and imply thoughts of Cynthia’s own deification through poetry. The poet’s suggestion that Cynthia might become *Ionii...puella maris* in line 14 if Glaucus were to glimpse her is a reminder that the sea’s name derives from Io, who reached the Ionian shores after Juno’s persecutions. The implication is that Cynthia might earn similar compensation for her sufferings, but that she can live on only in the homage of the poet who mourns her and is able to captivate her visually through the power of his poetry. As Flaschenriem points out, just as the narrator fears that the sea might hold her *nomen* in line 7, so she acknowledges his authority over her by calling out repeatedly to him in line 12 (*saepe meum nomen iam peritura vocas*). So the narrator ‘tries to have it both ways’ by urging on her rescue but also celebrating her potential loss in the images of Glaucus and the Nereids (lines 13-16), transfixed by her beauty. This idea is suggested most strongly in the vision of the dolphin at the end of the poem that rescued Arion, and, as we find, is able to rescue Cynthia too. Indeed, as Flaschenriem notes in this couplet, the emphasis placed on Arion’s lyre (*Arioniam...lyram* line 18), rather than Arion himself, subordinates the fame that Cynthia acquires to that of the poet himself. However at the same time this ambiguous ending, in which the dreamer awakens just as the dolphin is about to depart and the narrator about to leap from the cliff-top, marks the anxiety with which the poet entertains thoughts of Cynthia becoming the ‘instrument’ of another. To my mind it is as if the dream impinges too closely on the poet’s deepest fears regarding the status of his own poem, which is here tellingly characterised by the emphatic *talia visa* in the final line, since her living presence forces him to confront the limits of his mastery over her as a visual spectacle; the survival of his poetry would

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275 An interesting comparison can be made between the chiming ‘c’ sounds and elaborate Alexandrian diction in 2.26a.16, *candida Nesaee, caerula Cymothoe*, and 1.3.1-3, *cedente carina...Cnosta...Cepheia*.

276 Flaschenriem 2010.

277 For the story ibid.192-193. Furthermore the mention of Castor and Pollux in line 9 suggests an attachment that outlasts the death of the loved one, since Pollux gave a portion of the immortality offered him to his mortal twin.

278 This is similar to what we saw at the end of 1.3, where Cynthia’s associations with the *Orpheus lyra* (1.3.42) also draw attention to the fame the poet himself acquires through song.
appear to depend upon his ability to keep on celebrating her in the spatial and visual properties of language that are so vividly on display here.

The narrator’s fears concerning the puella’s death as the subject of the poem strengthens this metapoetic reading. Wyke has shown how the amator’s anxiety about Cynthia figures a deeper underlying anxiety about the fate of the poet’s work once it enters the public domain. Therefore since death is the ultimate and irrevocable absence, it also acts as a figure for the impossibility of elegiac desire, and marks the vanity of the elegist’s fantasy of a lasting and complete fusion of lover and beloved. The relationship between figurative death and poetic achievement on the other hand is apparent in several literary epitaphs such as the Garland of Meleager which characterize the work of other poets in these terms. The poet thus develops a Hellenistic convention, yet what is notable in Propertian poetry is the anxiety that this relationship conveys, since usually it is the narrator who is placed at the centre of the death scene. At the end of 2.1 for instance (2.1.71-78) he imagines Maecenas stopping his chariot to shed tears at his graveside with the epitaph huic misero fatum dura puella fuit. In 3.16.25-30 his concern is that his grave may be desecrated by, and hence his poetry come into the hands of, the vulgus from whom the narrator disassociates himself. The address of mea vita then at the opening of 2.26a, often used as a mere pet name for the beloved (quid iuvat ornato procedere, vita, capillo 1.2.1), here retains something of its literal force.

On this metaliterary reading then, it appears that the need to tell ever new versions of the ‘Cynthia story’ conflicts with the desire to still the narrative, to fix it in time, to dress the puella in the pictorial extravagance of the poet’s language. It is as if Cynthia’s nakedness in this poem, such as was seen in 1.3, equates with the poet’s own sense of vulnerability in his need to celebrate his puella by confronting visual art, as he attempts to ‘dress’ her with his own poetic imagery. Here in 2.26a however she is not only stripped of her physical autonomy but is also most unlike her vocally imperious self in that earlier poem, which rather places the poet’s position in even sharper relief. Thus her confessions of the mentita in line 3 draw attention to the poet himself as a

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279 Wyke 1984.112ff.
280 See for instance AP 7.26 Antipater of Sidon on Anacreon, AP 7.37 Dioscorides on Sophocles, AP 7.536 Alcaeus of Messene on Hipponax.
281 di faciant, mea ne terra locet ossa frequenti / qua facit assiduo tranite vulgus iter! (3.16.25-26).
fabricator of erotic tales, yet the punishment for this duplicity pulls against the immortality offered her in song. The conflict therefore between the temporality of poetry and the fixed spatiality of the visual image here remains unresolved and involves the reader implicitly in the double role of viewer and interpreter; the poet’s fantasy of control in the erotic and poetic spheres draws out the tension between the stasis of visual art and poetry’s need to embrace change. An understanding of this conflict in the Monobiblos, the fluctuations in Cynthia’s behaviour generating ever new versions of the lovers’ mutual story, is closely related to the interdependence and interaction of these poems, a process itself reliant upon the underlying shifts in poetic voices, as they gravitate slowly through themes of separation and alienation towards death.

In fact the same conflict between word and image can be clearly observed in 1.19, with the same sense of anxiety that this elicits. Flaschenriem again focuses on how this poem confronts the limits that mortality imposes on desire through the imperative of time and so presents the puella as the focus of literary as well as erotic unease, evoking the same relationship between figurative death and poetic achievement that we see in 2.26a. Thus if Cynthia’s potential abandonment that the narrator fears may accompany his own death in this poem (flectitur assiduis certa puella minis 1.19.24) can again metaphorically figure the potentiality of her desertion from his poetic project, this situation once more mirrors the narrator’s, who shifts in 1.19.7-14 from a Catullan Protesilaus to an ‘elegiac Odysseus, a sojourner among the dead’. Indeed despite his protestations of loyalty to Cynthia in the face of the various beauties of the underworld in lines 13-18, the narrator is shown to be as changeable as the puella; as Flaschenriem notes, the generic inclusiveness of elegiac writing ‘promotes a certain instability even among its own fictions’ and hence ‘the network of allusions that he manipulates so deftly does not exempt his own fictions from such workings’.

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282 Flaschenriem notes in this line that the indicative fueras, ‘the reading of the superior manuscripts’, rather than the alternative subjunctive fueris, shows that line 3 (et quaecumque in me fueras…..) does not form part of the indirect statement dependent on vidit, but rather insists that Cynthia’s falsehoods ‘belong to an objective reality beyond the imaginary world of the dream’ (p. 193).

283 Flaschenriem 1997.266. Flaschenriem notes in particular the series of negatives that dominate the opening six lines of 1.19 (‘talking about the beloved is tantamount to speaking her away’ (p. 261)) and the insubstantial character of his proxy Protesilaus, since while in other versions of the myth (Hyginus F.103, Apollodorus Epit. 30) Laodamia’s lover returns to her ‘in full satisfying form’ (p. 262), here the emphasis is on constraint; Protesilaus is a mere umbra and Cynthia turns out to be totally refractory. Far from establishing closure of the body of ‘Cynthia’ poems in Book One, 1.19 betrays the ‘permeability of such fictive borders’ and ‘denies the possibility of closure’ (p. 265).

284 Ibid. 265.

285 Ibid. 266. Keith notes ‘we can appreciate our elegist’s elevation of his mistress’ forma above that of the mythological heroines of Greece (1.4.5-8) and Troy (1.19.13-16). In stylistic terms he propounds the superiority of elegy over tragedy and epic’ (Keith 2008.93). However the fact that thoughts of the fame that he hopes will accompany his posthumous reputation are rarely unambivalent in Propertius’ poetry pushes me closer to Flaschenriem’s view here. This view is strengthened by Propertius’ reversal of the traditional version of the myth, since here Protesilaus is the faithful lover, rather than Laodamia as stressed in Catullus 68 and
Yet this anxiety about poetic reception is, like 2.26a, most unambiguously channelled through what Papanghelis calls a ‘dialectics of the concrete and the abstract’.286 The dense sensory urgency that springs from the poet’s meditations on death is most evident in lines 7-11 as the narrator moves from subjective thoughts on death to an objective vision of his underworld existence:

\[
\text{illic Phylacides iucundae coniugis meros,} \\
\text{Non potuit caecis immemor esse locis,} \\
\text{Sed cupidus falsis attingere gaudia palmis,} \\
\text{Thessalus antiquam venerat umbra domum.} \\
\text{illic quidquid ero, semper tua dicar imago}
\]

(1.19, lines 7-11)

\textit{Falsis} (9), \textit{umbra} (10) and \textit{imago} all underline the narrator’s vision of and assimilation to Protesilaus, like pictorial art itself, as pretence and illusion. Wedged between \textit{falsis} and \textit{gaudia}, the blatantly physical \textit{attingere} brings out the agony of a ghost’s non-sentient existence; \textit{attingere gaudia} might suggest either ‘to touch his beloved’, if the emphasis is thrown on \textit{palmis}, or ‘to attain his joy’, when we note its undercutting by \textit{falsis}. Yet the poem seems to fluctuate between these two conditions, for immediately following these lines the narrator reasserts the power and possibility of sensuous perception in the underworld as \textit{forma} plays on the lover’s mind:

\[
\text{traicit et fati litora magnus amor.} \\
\text{illic formosae veniant chorus heroinae,} \\
\text{quas dedit Argivis Dardana praedia viris:} \\
\text{quarum nulla tua fuerit mihi, Cynthia, forma} \\
\text{gratior et (Tellus hoc ita iusta sinus) quamvis te longae remorentur fata senectae} \\
\text{cara tamen lacrimis ossa futura meis.}
\]

(1.19 lines 12-18)

The fluctuation here between the language of truth and that of fiction, between the apparently genuine and the distinctly delusive, highlights the mimetic procedure that we saw in 1.3 - \textit{obstupuit vano credulus auspicio} (1.3.28) - an invitation to embrace, yet also disengage from the amatory fiction; as Protesilaus’ proxy, the narrator here plays out the role of the reader. As Papanghelis notes, the \textit{idea} of love in this poem takes other versions of the story. Hence the narrator’s complete resignation to the stance of \textit{servitium} in 1.19 is a far cry from 1.1, where he aims to play the role of the heroic Milanion.

second place to its form, and we have already seen the emphasis the poet places on forma, for he cannot imagine amor without its formal embodiment; thus fata in line 2 can suggest a physical corpse as well as simply ‘death’, and funus (3), exsequiis (4) and pulvis (6) involve the same ambiguity. Other commentators note the focus on disturbing concrete images in much of the language of the poem. As the narrator imagines himself weeping over Cynthia’s ‘dead bones’ in the underworld, the cara ossa of line 18 are as Lyne notes ‘shockingly physical’, and create a jarring effect alongside lacrimis. The same point could be made about sentire favilla in line 19. Thus it is the physicality of this love in death idea that impresses most here, the narrator’s attempts to resist the morbid feelings aroused by future thoughts of death centred around a more intense conflict between the sensory and the abstract than any other poem in the Monobiblos.

One can therefore see a transition from earlier poems in the book, such as 1.2 and 1.3, where the poet appears to triumph in his paragone with visual art, whereas this has become far more fragile by the time we arrive at 1.19. The echo in forma at line 15 of its repeated use in line 2 strongly suggests that he conceives the heroinae of line 13 as nudae, as in 1.2 and 1.3, and so again he pits his verbal powers against those of the visual artist. Thus the poet’s use of forma here in 1.19 reflects on the antagonism between Cynthia’s forma and that of the painter of 1.2, but highlights more intensely the anxieties of reception that such thoughts provoke. This is again a reminder of the repetition of figura at Catullus 64.265 from line 50 which similarly frames the ecphrasis of the wedding coverlet, yet forma here, unlike its use in 1.2, acknowledges the ‘representational friction that occurs whenever the dynamic pressure of verbal narrative meets the fixed forms of visual representation and acknowledges them as such’. Indeed the strong suggestion of convergence between medium and referent in the earlier poem only heightens the sense of divergence here, since the poet’s narrative is most suspended as it reaches a pitch of dramatic intensity.

Just as 2.26a can comment on the interaction of word and image in 1.19, so 3.3, the other poem that Scioli treats, bears close comparison with the second poem of the

287 Ibid. Papanghelis cites Williams 1968.766ff. on this point.
288 As with cara ossa, this phrase with viva also involves the superimposition of present and future, living and dead, since sentire emphasizes Cynthia’s act of perception and favilla strongly suggests ‘live ash’.
289 As we will see there is an important forecast here at 1.19.13-14 of the epic figures who populate Book 2.
**Monobiblos.** In 3.3 Propertius ‘creates a visual dreamscape which exploits the similarities between dreaming and looking at visual art as a means of forging a connection between dreaming and creating poetry.’ 291 Here as Scioli notes, the poet deviates from his poetic lineage by privileging the description of the environment which provides the scene of his poetic initiation over the actual communication between the poet and divinity in Hesiod, Callimachus, and Ennius:292

* dixerat, et plectro sedem mihi monstrat eburno,*  
* quo nova muscoso semita facta solost.*  
* hic erat affixis viridis spelunca lapillis,*  
* pendebantque cavis tympana pumicibus,*  
* orgia Musarum et Sileni patris imago*  
* fictilis et calami, Pan Tegeae, tui;*  
* et Veneris dominae voluces, mea turba, columbae*  
* tingunt Gorgoneo punica rostra lacu;*  
* diversaeque novem sortitae iura puellae*  
* exercent teneras in sua dona manus:*  
* haec hederas legit in thyrsus, haec carmina nervis*  
* aptat, at illa manu exit utraque rosam.*

(3.3, lines 25-36)

The poet envisages his narrator on Mount Helicon, home of the Muses, dreaming of his attempt to drink from the Hippocrene, the mythical stream that sprang up when Pegasus’ hoof struck the earth, the source of inspiration for poets and, as Propertius reminds the reader, the stream from which Ennius once drank. 293 The narrator then moves from observed to observer; Apollo chastens him for attempting the task of ‘heroic song’ (*…quis te / carminis heroi tangere iussit opus?* lines 15-16) associated with Ennius, and rather directs him to the spelunca (3.3.27) to serve as a reminder of the very different ideals to which as a poet he should aspire: *mollia sunt*

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291 Scioli 2005.64.

292 Ibid. The relevant passages, as she notes, are Hesiod *Theogony*, lines 1-34, Callimachus *Aitia* (prologue and reference in *Anth. Pal. 7.42.1*), and Ennius *Annals* Book One, fragments 1-3, 9. The problem is that the works of Callimachus and Ennius are fragmentary, although it is clear that the poetic initiation of each takes place on Mount Helicon and that the visions they experience - in Ennius it is Homer rather than Apollo who appears to the sleeping narrator - focus on the poetic interchange between deity and poet rather than the surroundings in which this takes place. Luck 1969.96ff. considers the thematic relations between the opening three poems of Book 3 which give the *epiphysis* of the cave its particular prominence, as does Nethercut 1970b.385, and Butrica 1996.135ff. shows how they demonstrate Propertius’ new consciousness of himself as a poet, rather than a lover. What is particularly noteworthy then is the way Propertius communicates the dilemma regarding the future direction of his poetry by confronting visual art, just as the opening three poems of the *Monobiblos* draw on the visual arts to articulate the nature of elegiac inspiration. Clarke 2003.219-239 comes to this conclusion in her discussion of the colour imagery of 3.3, for while 3.3 affirms the poet’s commitment to love elegy, by the end of the book he has rejected Cynthia.

293 The image of the narrator ‘lying in the soft shade of Helicon’ evokes artistic portraits of the sleeping mortal and observing deity familiar from art, such as Selene and Endymion, Bacchus and Ariadne, Mars and Rhea Silvia.
parvis prata terenda rotis (line 18). The elaborate and artificial description of the grove that then follows, set within a background scene of rustic simplicity (*dixerat et plectro sedem mihi monstrat eburno / qua nova muscoso semita facta solost* (lines 25-26)), creates a similar type of incoherence or disingenuity through the art/nature opposition to that which we saw in the programmatic 1.2, where the lover reprimands his mistress for the kind of embellishments in dress that can be achieved through language; as we recall, instead of painting herself, Cynthia should allow the poet to ‘paint’ her. The lush green landscape, the water, grove, mossy path and cave, all of which imply the renewal of poetic purpose, clash with the rich iconographic details of artistic inspiration; as in 1.2, where we saw the same emphasis on untainted nature in the lover’s appeal (1.2.9-14), what is claimed as most ‘natural’ is in fact highly artificial. This clash in 3.3 is particularly evident in the reference to Apollo’s golden lyre in lines 13-14 which he leans on as he chastises the narrator, since the image evokes common representations of Apollo in art and sculpture.294

Scioli draws some particularly perceptive connections between this passage and the frescoes of *Cubiculum M* from the Villa at Boscoreale in terms of the concurrence of urban and rustic elements in both the poem and the panels that juxtapose one another (figure 4). These frescoes create the illusionistic ‘trompe-oeil’ effects typical of the mature Second Style as individual panel paintings, but the juxtaposition of the grotto panel in the alcove which contains the least architectural detail and is least reminiscent of the room itself, with the architecturally intricate compositions on either side, creates a sense of incongruity which in turn reminds the viewer of the parameters of the visual experience and the mechanism at work; the effect can be compared to the artifice of the *ecphrasis* of the Muses’ dwelling in 3.3, creating the strange sense of a highly civilized environment that disrupts the otherwise naturalistic setting of Propertius’ poem, stressed by the shade, stream and rocky path. Yet the sense of realism that this grotto panel attains, the experience it fosters of departing from space, is itself undermined. The proximity of the panel to a window opening on to an actual rustic scene, the image of a god standing on the cave floor which emerges from the darkness, and the bird in the cave shown drinking from the fountain, all serve to blur the distinctions between fantasy and reality. Similarly in 3.3 the clay image of Silenus (*Sileni patris imago*...
and the naturalistic description of the white doves with their rosy beaks sipping water within the cave (3.3.31-32), draw the reader’s attention to the subtle interplay of construct and reality in Propertius’ poem; the artificiality of the setting stressed by *imago* reminds the reader of the strong sense of artistic illusionism through the deceptive realism of the luxuriant scene the poet creates.

As with 2.26, the dream of 3.3 shows how visual art can illuminate the mechanics of Propertian poetry. Indeed there is a similar slippage here between reality and representation to that which we saw in 2.31, since while the initial appearance of Apollo (3.3.13-14) evokes thoughts of his representation as a statue, he is given not only a voice (lines 15-24, cf. 2.31.15-16) but also movement (lines 25-26). Thus both the statues of Apollo in 2.31 and 3.3 become animated in the context of the narrator’s subjective reactions. This movement from representation to subjective response also bears close comparison with 1.3 as we have seen, although the parallels with 1.2 are equally striking. As Curran notes, the names of several of the figures from myth that I earlier discussed in 1.2.15-20, such as *Phoebe* and *Pollucem*, suggest a visual spectacle,295 and other words such as *candore* (line 19) and *succendit* add to the emphasis on brightness; yet lines 19-20, where the narrator imagines Hippodamia being dragged away by her Phrygian abductor Pelops (avecta...externis rotis), suddenly imbue the visual scene with a sense of motion and actuality. The confusion between reality and representation is also registered in the lines previous to this passage, 1.2.9-14, where several of the phrases the narrator uses in his argument against Cynthia’s adornment emphasise what is natural and unaffected,296 yet Curran again points out how the phrase *picta lapillis* in line 13 (*litora nativis praegaudent picta lapillis*) calls to mind Roman mosaics and so undermines this claim. There is a clear parallel between this line and 3.3.27 in the contrast between *viridis spelunca*, suggesting a lack of interference by an outside hand, and *affixis...lapillis*, a phrase which again calls to mind representations of such mosaics. Most notably, *legit, aptat* and *texit*, to describe the activity of the Muses, create the same slippage between visual image and verbal production that we saw with *forma* in 1.2 and *figura* in Catullus 64.

Thus as with 2.26, Scioli’s reading of 3.3 touches on an area of contact between poetry and art which I believe has important implications and deem worthy of further investigation. While Scioli connects this simultaneous awareness of construct and

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295 Curran 1975.7ff.
reality in Propertian poetry and art to a fuller exploration of the psychology of dreams in antiquity as represented in literature, my aim here is to promote Propertius’ awareness of such complexities in the visual effects of the poems of the Monobiblos. 2.26 and 3.3 draw on the visual arts to communicate either the nature of poetic inspiration, as is the case in 3.3, or the anxieties to which this relationship exposes the poet that we see in 2.26. In the same way the contrasting poles of poetic initiation and death are foregrounded at the beginning and end of the Monobiblos respectively as experiences that demand a strong visual penchant. Furthermore the striking visual quality of the interspersion of details from the myth of the drowning Helle with the narration of a dream in 2.26, and the visually dazzling ecphrasis of the grotto in 3.3, both create a confusion between art and nature, representation and reality, by utilizing strategies from two distinct modes of the visual arts. Yet the distinctions between ars and natura are particularly hazardous in the poems of the Monobiblos. Scioli notes on 3.3: ‘Propertius’ ecphrasis is not merely an elaborate veneer, but rather reflects an element of the Muses’ advice to him about his poetic material.’ The poet’s aim here appears to be to ‘dazzle’ his reader through language, to appeal to the capacity of the reader’s visual imagination and involve her imaginatively in the scene he creates. Yet at the same time this is undermined by effects that draw the reader back from this imaginative ‘projection’. The result is the type of irony we have already seen when the poet calls upon our visual imaginations. For while both poems aim to blur the distinctions between the poet as a participant in his dream and as one who reflects upon it, they also interject key terms such as puto (2.26.18) and ut reor (3.3.38) in order to highlight this participation. Similarly the way in which the use of imago at 3.3.29 highlights the process of artistic production and thus breaks the illusion of lifelikeness, can be compared to the way the poet limits the sense of realism that visuality effects in the poems of the Monobiblos. The effectiveness of this is heightened, I suggest, by the poet’s manipulation of the reader’s experience of similar effects in contemporary art, acknowledging art’s capacity to both mimic and deviate from reality. Wider analogies, I believe, can therefore be drawn between these artistic modes and the poetry of the Monobiblos.

297 Scioli 2005.70.
Chapter 5: The Propertian ecphrastic ‘dream-narrative’

The profound changes that were taking shape in the visual arts at this time, when Propertius was composing the *Monobiblos*, have recently been compared with those that were being experienced in the realm of poetry by Gruner,298 who undertakes a systematic study of the changes in the two art forms between 100 BC to the end of the elegists. While the impressive and flamboyant ‘megalographies’ during the height of the Second Style appear suited to the temper of the late Republic with its jostling for influence and strong political interest in show, this flamboyant Republican style gives way to the refinement of the private man during the early Principate, when owners of houses could create their own private stamp through the selection of pictures and myths. Gruner explicates the parallels between the development of the neoteric aesthetic at the end of the Republic and the late Second Style, exactly the style of painting which, as he demonstrates, Vitruvius targets in his famous tirade in the *De Architectura*.299

Principles and characteristics such as *leptos*, *tenuis*, and *lepidus*, involving humour and irony, operate in both poetry, especially Catullus and Propertius, and wall painting, through principles of refinement and detailed composition. The more indigenous Hellenistic poetry grew to be in the literary life of Rome, the more important these principles of style became. That Callimachus adhered to the aesthetic principle of *leptos* is reflected in his attacks on Antimachus and Apollonius, and Apollo’s famous reprimand to the poet in the prologue to the *Aitia* to keep his Muse ‘slim’,300 and to drive his chariot ‘not on the broad road, but on unfamiliar tracks’.301 As Gruner points out, it is Propertius who in 3.9 draws on this vivid image to build a bridge to the visual arts,302 in his *recusatio* addressed to Maecenas, which shows his intimate awareness of principles taking shape in both art forms at this time. His justification for the claim of

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298 Gruner 2004. Gruner is interested in the parallels between the erotic subjectivity of the elegiac narrator and the advent of mythological themes in the framed paintings of the early Third Style, the shift from ‘Illusionarchitektur’ to ‘Illusionsperson’. The elegiac ‘ich’ thus projects himself onto the characters (mainly lovers) in the painted panels. Thus the painting is no longer seen as illusionistic decoration or representation, but interferes in the intimate reality of life (‘An die Stelle der Illusionsarchitektur tritte also eine ‘Illusionsperson’…Der Betrachter (hier das lyrische Ich) projiziert seine eigene Lebenssituation auf die Malerei’ p. 216). This has already been seen in poems such as 2.6, where the paintings on the wall become objects of the amator’s moral accusations, since in his warped mind they bear responsibility for Cynthia’s wayward behaviour.

299 *nam pinguntur tectoriis monstra potius quam ex rebus finitis imagines certae……Hac autem nec sunt nec fieri possunt nec fuerunt.* (Vitruvius *De Arch.* 7.5.3–4).

300 Callimachus Fr. 1 Pf. 23ff.

301 Ibid. 25ff.

being ill-suited to composing epic, stated with similar vividness - *quid me scribendi tam vastum mittis in aequor / non sunt apta meae grandia vela rati* (3.9.3-4) - is underlined by comparison with various artists to show that not every practitioner can be master of every *techne*, as Greek sculptors and painters are introduced with their various areas of expertise:

*gloria Lysippost animosa effingere signa;*  
*exactis Calamis se mihi iactat equis;*  
in *Veneris tabula summam sibi poscit Apelles;*  
Parrhasius parva *vindicat arte locum;*  
*argumenta magis sunt Mentoris addita formae;*  
at *Myos exiguum flecit acanthus iter;*  
Phidias *signo se Iuppiter ornat eburno;*  
Praxitelen *propria vendit ab urbe lapis.*  
(3.9 lines 9-16)

The Callimachean antinomy of *grandis* and *tenuis* reflects here the selection of artists, the choice of words and the antithetical formation of each distich, as Propertius characterizes each artist in the pentameter by referring to his work with a Latin variation of the Greek *leptos*, thereby producing a repertory of neoteric programmatic terms applicable to both poetry and art, and opening up in a concise form the aesthetic ideals of the epoch; the horses of *Kalamis* are *exacti*, the *ars of Parrhasius* is *parva*, and tiny engraved *akanthus* tendrils wind their *exiguum iter* around the mouldings of the ornamental silversmith Mys. These epithets in 3.9 present in a major way the visual aesthetics of the Third Style in Roman wall-painting, the precise working out of compositions in detail, with small pictures and minuscule ornaments, yet are elements that emerge strongly during the late Second Style as Gruner points out. Thus while in 3.9 Propertius associates the programmatic terms of his love elegy with the visual arts, he could only do so because elegiac poetry and early Augustan wall painting were already aesthetically connected. The ‘slender Muse’ thus finds its equivalence in the visual arts, in the gradual slimming down of the architectural elements in wall painting in the progression from the mature to the late Second Style.

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303 The exception is the last couplet, lines 15-16. Barber and Butler suggest *vendit ab* as a plausible emendation for *vindicat* in the MSS which is certainly impossible on its own but would make sense by emending *urbe* to *arte* and would be more in keeping with the pattern here. Boucher 1965-43 makes the point that a number of the works of these artists could be seen in Rome. Parrhasius, the painter of Ephesus (397 BC), admired for his subtlety of outline and noted for small paintings of erotic content, would appear to offer a particularly suitable exemplar for the poet.

304 Butrica 1996 notes the similarities between 3.3 and 3.9 in terms of their programmatic features and use of nautical and water imagery to contrast elegy with epic. In 3.9 the narrator seems to have absorbed Apollo’s lessons of the earlier 3.3, where the god wards him away from writing epic, since epic is now decisively rejected and he declares his wish to imitate Philias and Callimachus (3.9.37-46). Yet ‘the situation is a consciously paradoxical one’ for in lines 47-56 ‘Propertius pledges himself to pursue under Maecenas’ guidance without disqualification a series of ...(epic) themes which he had earlier rejected (lines 1-8,
As with his Hellenistic master, the ‘Roman Callimachus’, as the poet goes on to style himself in Book Four (4.1.63-64), dressed his ideal of ‘slim’ poetry in numerous pictures, parvi and exigui, the same qualifications by which Callimachus regularly identified his own poetry. Propertius clearly recognised that the concept of the deductum carmen corresponded to the aesthetic preferences of his time and was right for the taste of an audience which put the emphasis on precision and refinement, rather than the grand and monumental style; the terms tenuis and lepidus are therefore not only keywords of neoteric aesthetics, but also express the development of the structured forms in the wall paintings of the same period.305

Just as there are many different types of fine art, the poet suggests, so there are many different types of literary genre, which Propertius works into his elegiac fictions. Yet what is also notable here is how, at the opening of his catalogue, Propertius opposes the fine work of Calamis to the animosa signa of Lysippus in line 9, since animosus characterises the works of the Republican tragedian Accius.306 Given primary place, Lysippus of Sicyon (328 BC) was famous for his psychological and realistic portraiture, which Propertius may well have in mind with reference to the lifelike portraits of Alexander for which the sculptor was renowned,307 yet this is clearly the opposite of what our poet seems to be searching for in 3.9, since it hindered the intimate elegantia, which the Third Style strove towards; while the pathos and grandeur of epic related to the high Second Style, restrained decoration, signifying erudition and connoisseurship, was what was aimed for by the house owner of the early Augustan period.308 Yet as I have already suggested it is clear that Propertius sets out to create that sense of pathos in the poems of the Monobiblos which suggest an affinity with painting of the Second Style. Indeed, as we saw, the puella as an animosum signum is exactly what the poet appears to be striving to attain in 1.3.

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305 Gruner 2004.171-173. Vitruvius employs tenuis in his description of the art of the late Second Style (Vitr. 7.5.4: quemadmodum enim potest calamus vere sustinere tectum aut candelabrum ornamenta fastigii, seu coliculus tam tenuis et mollis sustinere sedens sigillum…).  
306 See for instance Ovid Am. 1.15.19, Ennius arte carens, animosique Accius oris; Cicero Planc. 59 describes him with rather more decorum as gravis et ingenious. Tragedy is also animosa as Elegy’s antagonist in the humorous opening poem of the third book of the Amores (Ovid Am. 3.1.35ff.).  
307 See Richardson 1977.349.  
As Gruner notes, this process of change is particularly notable in the decorations of such houses as the *Villa della Farnesina* (ca. 30-20 BC), which like those of the *Casa di Livia* from a similar period, are at a crossroads, embodying the transition from the Second to the Third Style, the transition as Vitruvius put it, from the representation of things ‘which really can exist’ to fantastic figures and illogical assemblages of grotesques and hybrids, as the artists of the late Second Style employed characteristic architectural features of Republican wall decoration, *non subripiendi causa, sed palam mutandi, hoc animo, ut vellet agnosci*. In this respect elements of sophisticated humour and irony which are very much in vogue towards the end of the Second Style find parallels with the subtle verbal humour characteristic of neoteric poetry and especially Propertius, whose use of language Sullivan describes as deploying ‘a refined mode of irony which shows itself in delicate linguistic ways, in a sensitivity to how language is used in other contexts, and in a deployment of those other uses for its own humorous, satiric or poetic aims, to produce an effect entirely contrary to their effect in the usual contexts’. Several of the frescoes from the *Villa della Farnesina* display that subtle mode of visual humour though variation, parody and perversion of certain features of the Second Style. This humour derives from the meaningful engagement with the typical features of the Second Style, in particular the parody of architectural and illusionistic features that had been so popular at the height of this style, producing effects that are lambasted by Vitruvius. In the same way much of the humour in Propertius stems from his manipulation of his poetic predecessors. Indeed as we have already seen, through the visual quality of his poems Propertius relies on recognition in the exploration of his poetological cosmos, yet he counters such recognition through gender reversals and other subtle ambiguities.

Not only must one keep in mind in this respect that the *Monobiblos* was produced at a time close to the paintings on the walls of these houses, but also that the clients for such works formed the bulk of the audience for whom Propertius, Tibullus and Horace wrote. *Exactus, parvus and exiguus* that we saw in Propertius’ catalogue of

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309 Ibid. 180-181.
310 Seneca *Suasoriae* 3.7, who comments on how Ovid borrowed from Virgil in this respect.
311 See Sullivan 1976.151, although Sullivan believes that traces of this are ‘admittedly few’ in the *Monobiblos*, a point with which I disagree. Gruner 2004.184-211 outlines these features of painting during the late Republic (*pictura lepida*) which can be closely paralleled to the *literarische ironie als aesthetisches vorbild* in Catullus, Horace’s *Satires* and Propertius. Propertius’ highly imagistic style suggests a strong affinity with and response to this characteristic in art.
312 See Gruner 2004.202-206 for this subtle humour from the corridors of this villa, which is typical of this phase of wall painting. Indeed it is the subtlety of Propertian humour that particularly intrigues in the *Monobiblos*. 
artists in 3.9 are appropriate epithets for the fashions in wall-painting at the same time as the publication of Book Three (ca. 15 BC), yet such principles of composition are already evident in the *Monobiblos*.313 My earlier discussion of 3.3 showed that Propertius deviates from his poetic lineage by privileging the representation of the environment, profoundly influenced by the visual arts, and which provides the scene of his poetic initiation, over the communication between the poet and divinity that we find in Hesiod, Callimachus, and Ennius. At the same time the poem articulates a clear statement of Propertius’ aesthetic principles (*mollia sunt parvis prata terenda rotis* 3.3.18) which, as we have seen in 3.9, show his awareness of changes that were taking place within the poetic and pictorial arts. It is important to note how he alludes to both his master and antagonist here, for during the late Republic the enemy for the adherents of this new style was no longer Antimachus but the epicist Ennius.

Now it has been noted that the poems of the *Monobiblos* engage with epic in a rather different way from the poems of later books. Greene for instance has argued that in the *Monobiblos* the Propertian narrator largely maintains the fiction of gender reversal, and that the heroic persona the male poet implicitly adopts for himself in the opening book becomes more and more overt in Book Two.314 Thus in 2.1 the narrator vacillates between an image of himself as the *mollis* poet of elegy and identification with the values and ideals associated with masculine epic. In the *Monobiblos* there is rather a constant abrasion between the two genres, as opposed to elegiac love ‘supplanting’ epic experience as at the start of Book Two (*seu nuda erepto mecum luctatur amictu, / tum vero longas condimus Iliadas* 2.1.13-14). Hence we see a different stance, generated by the recognition that Cynthia has become a *fabula*,315 since the extreme depths of emotion that the narrator suffers are so consistently expressed through analogies with mythical experience, drawn from the epic register, rather than the deviation from this experience that the narrator suffers from or which he bemoans in the behaviour of the *puella* in the *Monobiblos*. This can also be seen from the strong implication that the ‘epic’ struggles between lover and *puella* in Book Two frequently substitute for sexual consummation.316

313 For instance the celebration of the *angusto lecto* of 1.8b.33 points to his attachment to Callimachean ‘slender verse’.


315 2.24.1-3 show a clear awareness of being read by the public at large, as the anonymous interlocutor asks *tu loqueris, cum sis iam noto fabula libro / et tua sit toto Cynthia lecta foro?, and the anxiety that this necessarily engenders (*cu non his verbis aspergat tempora sudor?*).

This implicit engagement with epic can also be seen from the fact that whereas the narrator in epic frames and introduces each individual speaker, the poems of the Monobiblos are presented as soliloquies or episodic dialogues introduced in medias res, necessitating the reader’s process of abstraction from an implied wider dramatic structure. The result is the narratological interplay of time, place and action that lends an epic dimension to these poems. This has also been recognized in theories on the book’s architectonic structure and symmetry of design which lend it its dramatic unity, in a similar way to Catullus 64, and as demonstrated in such studies as that of Otis on Virgil’s Aeneid, involving various correspondences and contrasts in theme. King for instance comments on the book’s architectonic structure as the means by which Propertius elevates his elegy to the lofty position enjoyed by epic, yet argues that this careful arrangement does not jettison its sense of spontaneity, since such complexity bespeaks the complex nature of love itself.

The poet’s creation of different ‘panels’ that illustrate the lover’s varying emotions shows an affinity with Second Style wall painting, with its aim of providing an escape into an illusory world. As with Catullus’ poem, the traditional narrative of character successively revealed through action in epic is replaced by subjective representation as revealed in the book’s structure. Thus what stands out are the structural resemblances between the Second Style and contemporary poetry, in their shared interest in creating an aesthetics of form and symmetry, or dispositio, the one in images, the other in language. Hence the ‘architecture’ of the verse could arise in the mind’s eye of the listener during recitation, creating a visual impression of space. This could relate not only to individual verses but entire poems, and even books. Gruner proposes the same concern with a visual aesthetics of symmetry in Catullus’ entire

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318 See Otis 1963.217 for this symmetry of design in the Aeneid.
319 See King 1975.112. She notes the contrast between the portrait of love’s success in the first half (2-9), after the programmatic 1.1, as opposed to the failure of the second half (10-19).
321 Ibid 87. Like King, Otis 1965.8-9 sees close thematic correspondence between various poems in the first and second half of the Monobiblos and also shows correspondence between these poems in terms of length and division of stanzas, evincing a similar concern with visual aesthetics.
corpus, since as is well known, he frames the longer poems (61-68) with the polymetra and epigrams.  

Martin’s discussion of this effect in Catullus 64 gives further evidence of the influence of that poem on the Monobiblos. Martin demonstrates the juxtaposition of eight such panels (or ‘compartments’ as he calls them) involving contrasting moods and tones, evident for instance in the transition from wedding feast (lines 32-50) to Ariadne’s search (lines 51-116), or from Aegeus’ lament (lines 208-250) to Bacchus’ search (lines 251-265). Indeed his division is very similar to the structure and unity we find in the poems of the Monobiblos, which like the compartments of Catullus’ poem, are both chronologically and chiastically related (figure 5). Thus in Catullus’ poem ‘the inner compartments are continuous with each other and the four outer compartments in both chronological and chiastic order’, and ‘individual scenes are presented as a whole, not narrated sequentially; as a result they are spatially deep but temporally flat’.  

This is indeed very similar to what we find in several poems of the Monobiblos. The effect on the reader of ‘viewing’ such varied ‘panels’, contrasting nature and civilisation, discord and harmony, is also similar to the experience of the viewer of the panels of the Boscoreale cubiculum, who ‘could pass at will, with a flick of the eye, from the jumbled cliffs of a multi-storeyed townscape to portico precinct to villa hortus and grotto, each the stage for a different persona’ (figure 4). This visualization of the text itself is also in accord with evidence for the close relationship between the processes of viewing and reading in the ancient world, and we have already seen how Propertius plays on this double sense of video in 1.3. A good parallel is Virgil’s use of the phrase perlegerent oculis at Aeneid 6.34 to denote Aeneas’ survey of the sculptured panels on the doors to the temple at Cumae. Leach notes how Servius supplies perspectarent as a semantic equivalent, but also justifies Virgil’s phrase by citing Ars Poetica 52 as evidence for the endorsing of Greek coinages with twisted meanings, since grapsai can refer to

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323 Ibid.162-163.
324 See King 1975.112 and Baker 2000.14 for this structure of 1.1 to 1.19. The chiastic arrangement is very similar to what Martin 1992.157 shows with Catullus 64.
325 Kuttner 1998.81.
326 Servius II 1884.11.
327 Et nova fictaque nuper habebunt verba fide, si Graeco fonte cadent parce detorta.
both writing and painting; yet at the same time, as we saw with the Carthaginian murals in Book One, Aeneas does ‘read’ the sculptured panels since they tell a story.

Yet there are several ways in which various motifs are subtly changed or altered between such panels in Catullus’ poem which break through this symmetry and structure, in the way that events are echoed and predictions find fulfillment in other parts of the tapestry, creating a series of ‘flashbacks’ and ‘flashforwards’, most obviously Ariadne’s curse in lines 201-202, which is fulfilled in Aegus’ death, yet in more subtle ways as well. Thus in the picture of Ariadne in lines 53-63, Ariadne’s bare breasts are a reminder of the similarly exposed nymphs at the opening of the poem (‘love at first sight then is balanced by despair at last glimpse now’328) and transitions between scenes are ‘casual, if not illusory’.329 Like Cynthia, Theseus, the poem’s ‘vanishing point’ towards whom others direct their gaze, is elusive and shadowy: ‘it is as though he exists only to prove the futility of human actions, to show us that it is mortal fate to desire helplessly, like Aegus, like Iacchus, all equally helpless in rage, in grief and in love…….’330 Likewise Propertius involves the various personae of the Monobiblos in the diverse experiences brought on by love, such as Bacchus, Ariadne and Aegeus suffer in Catullus’ poem.

In the same way one finds that the attempts to formalize the structure of Propertius’ book, while showing important correlations and contrasts between poems, are at the same time too rigid, and do not allow for the ways in which they dynamically interact in a number of ways, since the poet conflates the puella, the animosum signum of 1.3, with his visualized text. Rather narratological theory can produce a more fruitful understanding of the way in which these poems are interrelated. This has been a particular focus of recent critical attention to the genre as a whole, despite the reservations of critics such as Veyne and Boucher,331 who consider the lack of continuity in and across the collected poems of the elegists as the chief obstacle to reading Roman elegy as narrative poetry, a problem that has been aptly summarized by Connolly: ‘Lyric and elegy may be the worst culprits, as they are compact and univocal

328  Martin 1992.162.
329  Ibid 171. I earlier pointed out the absence of typical ecphrastic ‘markers’ in Catullus 64.
330  Ibid.
331  See Boucher 1965.401 and Veyne 1988.50ff., although Veyne’s focus on the relationship between poet and audience informs my reading here.
with little plot and less character development; and they provide fewer opportunities for storytelling, in itself such an important element of what we generally call narrative structure. Yet as Liveley notes in her recent article on the subject, attempts to endow collections of elegiac poems with narrative meaning now pervade critical reactions to the genre and narrativity is regarded as fundamental to the way elegiac stories are read and configured. Hence the visuality of the Monobiblos encourages us to read ‘across’ poems. Thus formal theories of narratology, involving questions of focalization, point of view or the functions of description, can enrich appreciation of how the elegiac poet, like the visual artist, manipulates the relationship between reader, poet, characters and text to present ‘embedded tales’.

Despite the disparate theories of narrative that have been propounded, narratologists have recognized the essential factor determining a text’s narrative status as its dependence on time; not only must there be ‘events’, but events that follow one after the other. And in particular, according to Ricoeur, for a narrative to be coherent its readers must negotiate the ‘aporias, the doubtful or problematic elements of time, the gaps between events, to configure a coherent sense of time and temporality’. Yet such narrative emplotment need not be restricted by a linear chronology, and I mentioned earlier how the strict synchronization of time was not necessarily expected by the Roman reader. Indeed Ryan’s conclusions about the essential features of narrative, which Liveley applies to the Sulpicia poems, are no less pertinent to the Monobiblos, and are fundamental to this relationship between narrator and narratee; problem solving between protagonists, the assumption of events taking place in the non-narrated textual interstices, conflict (the jealousy aroused by fears of a rival), interpersonal relations, not only the figures within the text but no less the audience to whom the narrator implicitly (quod si quis monitis tardas adverterit aures, / heu referet quanto verba dolore mea! 1.1.37-38) or explicitly appeals (me legat assidue post haec

332 Connolly 2000.74.
334 This is based on Aristotle Poetics 6-11, his insistence upon action, crisis and denouement in a temporally structured sequence of incidents as the key elements of the plot. Bal defines an ‘event’ as ‘...the transition from one state to another, caused or experienced by actors.’ By the word ‘transition’ he stresses the fact that an event is a process or alteration, producing a ‘story’, ‘a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors’ (Bal 1997.5).
335 Genette 1980.25 refers to ‘narrative’ as the oral or written discourse that undertakes ‘to tell of an event or a series of events’. See also Bal 1997.208-214.
Indeed the most important among these relations would appear to be that of the narrator and reader, since the characterisation of agents other than the narrator within the text appears to be so underdeveloped.\textsuperscript{337} Hence elegy’s intertextual devices can ‘create a more nuanced narrative subjectivity than the slender corpus of the elegiac text would appear to allow’\textsuperscript{338} and contribute to this sense of temporality. In addition Liveley’s location of the temporal markers or ‘flags’ of the Sulpicia poems is exactly what we have found to be the case in the poems of the \textit{Monobiblos},\textsuperscript{339} since they ‘give the impression of action occurring in and over time, within, between and across the poems of the collection’, in a mimetic rather than a diegetic mode.\textsuperscript{340}

Ricoeur’s emphasis upon the importance of the synchronism of the world of the text and the world of its readers that comes about in and through the negotiation of such aporias, the non-narrated interstices, and which Liveley also discusses,\textsuperscript{341} is clarified by his proposal of three modes of \textit{mimesis} as interdependent stages of reading and interpretation, which expatiate further on the way in which narrative is mediated by the human experience of time. In line with Aristotle’s definition of narrative as ‘imitation’, he argues that ‘an understanding (or configuration) of a text in the present is initially enabled (or prefigured) by memories and experiences of the past, a past that is in turn influenced (or refigured) by an anticipation or imagination of a future ending’.\textsuperscript{342} ‘Prefiguration’ involves the anticipation of a character’s behaviour, (the initial confidence of the lover in early poems suggesting increasing success) which can involve generic designation (the narrator’s eroticized enslavement to a \textit{dura puella}).

‘Configuration’ entails the narratee’s relation of diverse elements into a coherent series, or narrative ‘emplotment’, again with a key temporal dimension since it holds an expectation of closure, making temporal and causal connections between moments and events, and is hence responsible for the frequent editorial efforts to reconstruct or offer

\textsuperscript{337} Hence narratives are characterized by their ‘need to be heard, their desire to become the story of the listener, something that is most evident in ‘framed tales’,……….which embed another tale within them, and thus dramatize the relation of tellers and listeners’ (Brooks 1984.50-51).

\textsuperscript{338} Liveley 2010.147.

\textsuperscript{339} Ibid.418-419.

\textsuperscript{340} Ibid.2012.420.

\textsuperscript{341} Ibid.2010.116.

\textsuperscript{342} Ibid.117.
divisions within the Propertian corpus. Yet these two processes are only fully resolved in the third and final mode, ‘refiguration’, ‘the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the hearer or reader’; that is, the ‘impact of the text upon its audience to bring about new or increased understanding’, enabling revised interpretation of inferences that may have been drawn from the processes of prefiguration and configuration. As Liveley puts it, ‘memories and experiences of the past that enable us to interpret his narrative here are always open to (future) revision; our anticipation or imagination of the future of that narrative—and particularly of a future ending—is always open to denial and frustration by (future) revelations (especially those about the past).’

Such theorizing is particularly to the point when one considers again the double-edged nature of much of the language of 1.19 as well as the conflict between sensory and abstract in that poem that I have addressed, illustrating the poet’s anxieties regarding the effects of time on his work and the instabilities of his own erotic fictions. Indeed the metapoetic dimension of 1.19 in relation to earlier poems in this text has been under-appreciated, with words possessing both erotic and literary valences, and can fittingly illustrate that process of the reader’s experience of the text that Ricoeur refers to as being in the mode of refiguration. Earlier I noted the frequent temporal markers throughout the Monobiblos, and demonstrated that several poems show both a fixation with the present as well as great anxieties for the future. I argue here that 1.19 acts as a culmination of these earlier predictions and earlier fears regarding Cynthia’s behaviour, reflecting back on this tension between present and future while dramatizing it more forcefully, which in turn becomes a more intense contemplation of the antagonism between image and word, candida and dura puella, and the nourishment of elegy by epic, the jealous investigation of a ‘rival’ as a necessary structural feature of the genre. Thus while it has been noted that the potential disruption in the liaison between lover and puella is relevant in the poetic no less than in the erotic sphere, this overlap is consistently constituted through this antagonism between word and image. I argue that the explicit undermining of the distinction between peaceful elegy and

343 Ibid.116ff.
344 Ibid.119, quoting from Ricoeur 1991.71.
345 Ibid.119.
346 Ibid.121-122.
warlike epic in the heroic persona the narrator adopts in Book Two, is in the
Monobiblos implicitly realized through Ricoeur’s three different modes of mimesis, and
that only 1.19 brings about full communication of the conflict between the spatial
properties of the image and necessarily temporal dimensions of language that this maps
on to, and that lies at of the heart of the Monobiblos, involving a retroactive re-reading
or revised interpretation, which we can trace by carefully exploring the various textual
echoes of earlier poems.

Indeed this interaction is integral to how ‘embedded tales’ are told across the
poems of this text. Thus while it is only 1.6 and 1.7 that explicitly move towards the
theme of death, there is a much broader dimension to this which in turn draws out the
tension between the elegiac and epic genres, through the use of language with both
literary and erotic valences. Indeed thoughts of death become more urgent as the poems
progress, yet it is only in 1.19 that the narrator confronts directly the possibility of love
after death. In this way increasing thoughts of death at the hands of the dura puella
accentuate this tension between word and image, since they revolve ever more acutely
around this same sensory urgency, and this confrontation with epic verse. This point is
most forcefully emphasised at 1.19.11 as the narrator contemplates his underworld
existence, illic quidquid ero, semper tua dicar imago, since as we saw in 2.12.13, in me
tela manent, manet et puerilis imago, and 3.3.29, orgia Musarum et Sileni patris imago,
the use of imago forcefully highlights the process of poetic response to artistic
representation.

What is noticeable first of all is the frequent use of diction that can signify these
respective genres. The opening of 1.19, nunc tristis vereor ...Manis (1.19.2),
immediately suggests fear of the ‘gloomy’ shades of epic verse, and registers the
frequency with which the poet attempts to conflate elegiac and epic genres and ways of
life, for instance the tristia arma of 1.7.2, the subject of Ponticus’ poetry, and the tristis
amica that holds the lover back from accompanying Tullus abroad in 1.6.10, allying the
hardship in war that characterizes Ponticus’ verse with the militia that springs from
service to the duram dominam of 1.7.6. Indeed while such qualms on a poetic level are
first suggested at 1.2.25 non ego nunc vereor ne sim tibi vilior istis (rival poets as much
as the rival lovers for whom the narrator fears Cynthia beautifies herself), by the time

347 1.6.25-30 and 1.7.23-24.

348 Butler and Barber, Camps, Hodge and Buttimore and Richardson read sim here, taking istis as masculine: ‘…than I am of less
worth than those whose attention you attract by your display’. Only Skutsch is in favour of sis since he takes istis as feminine and
we arrive at 1.19 this has become a much more intense fear, whilst also hinting at the latent fear behind the narrator’s apparent nonchalance earlier in 1.2. One may recall that in 1.8 the narrator was able to ‘conquer’ Cynthia and ‘turn’ her away from her prospective voyage and rival through his verse: *vicipus: assiduas non tullit illa preces* (1.8.28)… *sed potui blandi carminis obsequio* (1.8.40), a ‘conquest’ that is perhaps wistfully recalled at the opening of 1.15.1 (*saepe ego multa tuae levitatis dura timebam*), where *levis* can clearly suggest the ‘light’ metres of elegy, and his further accusations of the treachery her superficial *cultus* betrays at the opening of this poem which may lead to some ‘greater harm’ befalling her (*nostro dolitura periculo / si quid tibi durius inciderit* 1.15.27-28). Yet it is the narrator who goes on to experience this *periculum* (*et datur inculto tramite dura quies* 1.18.28) in the contrast between the epic *dura quies* and the *inculto tramite*, the Callimachean ‘unbeaten track’ with which Propertius often metaphorically aligns his own slender verse.

At the same time, if 1.19 reflects on the differences between these male *personae* in terms of lifestyle and genre, the contrast between epic and elegiac themes, lines 5-6 (*non adeo leviter nostris puer haesit ocellis, / ut meus oblito pulvis amore vacet*) echo the power of Cynthia as a visual spectacle which effectively binds them together, drawing them into the poet’s elegiac programme, and encouraging the reader to ‘linger’ on the images he creates, emphasized by the use of the plural *nostris*. This is aided by the poet’s frequent use of cognate forms of *mora*, which similarly epitomize the contrasting temporal and narratological dimensions of elegy and epic. Indeed Propertius’ anagrammatic play on *mora* that we frequently see throughout the *Monobiblos* as a response to this anxiety bespeaks the genre’s close engagement with epic, Roma’s official literary and narrative mode. His apparent lack of concern then in 1.19.2 - *nec moror extremo debita fata rogo* - proves to be an ironic assertion since that is exactly what he attempts as his thoughts turn to Protesilaus and he lingers, an

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349 Otis 1965.15-18 also remarks on the light and coy tone of 1.2, the indirect censure that anticipates the success of the narrator’s warning, in contrast to his far more urgent plea in 1.15, the poem with which it is most often compared.

350 It is notable that whilst 1.15.33-40 again suggest Cynthia’s visual hold upon the *amator*, his anxiety in this poem is deepened by the fact that she no longer looks upon him (*et contra magnum potes hos attollere solem, / nec tremis admissae conscia nequitiae line 38*) as she had so emphatically in 1.1.

351 Propertius’ use of *mora* is far more frequent in the *Monobiblos* than in Book 2, where it is only used twice, at 2.23.16 and 2.15.10. Only the latter bears comparison in its contextual effect; as Connolly notes, the *oscula morata* (2.15.10), the ‘lingerings’ of the lovers’ kisses, humorously frustrates the reader’s desire for more intimate access to the couple’s lovemaking, stressed by the ensuing couplet *si nescis, oculi sunt in amore duces*. See Connolly 2000.75-79.
elegiac Odysseus, on the *umbrae* of epic verse in lines 13-14. Pucci mentions that *mora* can denote delay or belatedness, obstruction, detention, lingering or staying, ‘a notion of time that is connected with the present and at the same time disjointed from the present’ and hence suggests the attempted retrieval of the immediacy of possession or presence.

This links with the contrasting *forma* of Cynthia and the epic heroines of 1.19.13-15, an echo of the *forma* with which the poet shapes the literary portrait of his *puella* (1.2.9, 11, 24, 1.4.5, 11). Yet the poet’s own *forma* is consistently under threat in the departure of the *puella* from the poet’s elegiac project, most noticeably at 1.15.8 (*ut formosa novo quae parat ire viro*), a clear echo of 1.2. Thus the narrator’s fear regarding Cynthia’s dream of a rival at 1.3.30 (*obstupui...ne qua tibi insolitos portarent visa timores, / neve quis invitam cogeret esse suam*), while only there a dream-like possibility, becomes more acute in poems such as 1.15, and is suddenly in 1.19 a far more powerful fear (*quam vereor... iniquus Amor, / cogat et invitam....cadentis* (1.19.21-23)). In particular the enigmatic final line *non satis...longus amor* 1.19.26, which gives urgency to the ‘delights’ (*laetemur*) of the previous line, echoes 1.1.34 (*et nullo vacuus tempore defit Amor*). Otis describes the contrast as between an essentially hortative ‘type of love, rather than his personal stake in it, that is emphasized’ in 1.1, whereas 1.19 is ‘actual, dramatically living’. This is clearly right, however the anagrammatic play on *amor* again in this final line of 1.19 suggests what is really at stake here, since it harks back to Cynthia’s song in 1.3, in particular lines 44-45 (*interdum leviter mecum deserta querebar / externo longas saepe in amore moras*), where the oxymoronic *longas..moras* similarly implies the anxieties regarding the effects of time on the poet’s work, in contrast to the static visual image implied by *mora* which helps to link, along with the other verbal echoes in her speech, Cynthia’s song with the images of the poem’s opening. The narrator’s complaint in 1.6.5 *complexae remorantur verba puellae*, that the words of his mistress and her *graves preces* prevent him from accompanying Tullus, also hark back to Cynthia’s song in 1.3. Yet later the narrator complains that Cynthia’s elegiac *querelae* are not forthcoming, as they had been in 1.3; they have become *saeva querelae* in 1.17.9.

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352 Pucci 1978.69.
353 Otis 1965.12.
In addition to querelae, the poet’s stress on the double valence of lacrimae, both a lover’s tears and the ‘fluent laments of elegy’, \(^{354}\) also contributes to this tension, since the word lacrimis clearly codes the elegiac mode (cf. 1.12.16 non nihil aspersus gaudet Amor lacrimis). At 1.19.23 the narrator fears for Cynthia that Amor may compel her lacrimas siccare, (whereas in line 18 her bones will always be dear to his lacrimis), despite her claim that she was absorbed in them back at 1.3.46 (illa fuit lacrimis ultima cura meis). At 1.15.40 the narrator claims that Cynthia is forcing tears for the narrator’s undefined periculum (quis te cogebat multos pallere colores / et fletum invitis ducere luminibus?), and the appeal is heightened at 1.17.9 (an poteris siccis mea fata reponere ocellis?) where he pleads with her that were she not to refrain from her saevas querelas she would be compelled to inquire about his death siccis ocellis, which again becomes a more intense fear in 1.19.

Thus I suggest that the ‘dream vision’ of the Monobiblos calls attention to the way in which language may strive to attain a state of momentary visual captivity, while acknowledging the impossibility, indeed undesirability, of attaining that ‘dream’. Krieger puts it well: ‘the ecphrastic aspiration in the poet and reader must come to terms with two opposed impulses, two opposed feelings, about language: one is exhilarated by the notion of ecphrasis and one is exasperated by it. Ecphrasis arises out of the first, which craves the spatial fix, while the second yearns for the freedom of the temporal flow’. \(^{355}\) Indeed this ‘ecphrastic hope’ has become far more diminished by the time we arrive at 1.19, compared with earlier poems in the collection (1.2 and 1.3), and this is consistent with the increase in the lover’s resignation to the stance of servitium, strongly suggesting the ambivalence, the striving to maintain but also fading, of this ecphrastic impulse.

Brooks speaks of the ‘anticipation of retrospection as the chief tool in making sense of narrative’, \(^{356}\) and it is by this anticipation that the poet animates a series of visual scenes into a dramatically compelling ‘story’. Anxieties regarding thoughts of the future pervade these poems, and hint at a confrontation with death. Brooks refers to the sequentiality of narrated events as a series of ‘metonymic’ strands of a larger totality that is not explicitly represented (the ‘pleasure principle’), whereas the closural quality

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\(^{354}\) Oliensis 1997.159.


\(^{356}\) Brooks 1984.22.
of the text he relates to ‘metaphor’ (the ‘death drive’), which ‘determines the meaning and status of the metonymic work of sequence’. Yet at the same time 1.19 resists the closure that these poems seek, in its attempt to resist the inevitability of the loss of sensuous perception in death. Indeed the ‘loss’ of Cynthia is precisely the need to prevent that loss of individuality that comes from her and their relationship becoming a mere *fabula*, since the narrator cannot contemplate death other than in visual, physical terms.

An important part of the way this effect is created, the dynamic movement between the ecphrastic impulse in language and the freedom of its temporal flow, is the constant shifting of tenses that I noted earlier, which confuse the temporalities between what Kennedy calls the ‘now’ of the ‘narrated self’ (the poem as it is experienced) and the ‘now’ of the ‘narrating self’ (the temporality of writing). This can be seen particularly in 1.3, a poem that as we saw looks back on the past looking forward to (frustrated) sexual consummation with Cynthia. Indeed therein lies its uniqueness within the *Monobiblos*, its clear combination of anticipatory and retrospective viewpoints, which is key to its programmatic function at the end of the opening three poems. For as we saw the poem’s teleological drive, its representation of the desiring subject in the midst of the action, is thwarted by the sudden speech of Cynthia, who herself looks back on her night’s vigil. In addition the investment of emotion marked by the questions (1.3.36) and the exclamation (*utinam talis perducas, improbe, noctes, me miseram qualis semper habere iubes!* (1.3.39-40)) shifts such emotion from the past to a present that interrupts the poem’s sequentiality, whilst the present optative in *perducas* looks forward to the re-enactment of such *amaras noctes* (1.1.33) as she wishes on the narrator here. In this sense the poem becomes a model for our reading of the text as a whole. We chart the movement of the episodes of an affair in a linear sequence, but in doing so we realize them as a kind of present in terms of our experience. Just as Cynthia’s speech in 1.3, with its drive towards realism and spontaneity ‘runs athwart the narrative drive of the poem’ so the constant ‘interruption’ of temporal movement in the *Monobiblos* as a whole ‘looks to govern the interplay of absence and presence, lack and satisfaction, desire and fulfillment…’.

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357 Ibid.29. Hence the ‘paradox’ of the narrative plot is its desire for an end that is the ‘consummation of its sense-making’ (pp. 51-52), but a closure that must not come prematurely, but is most satisfying only after a series of delays and detours.

358 See Kennedy 2008 for an explication of these ideas in relation to Ovid *Am.* 1.5.

Thus the fascination of 1.19 lies in the way in which, through its emphasis on the visual, it re-traces and hence gives added dimension to earlier scenes, lending a sense of temporality to a series of static, subjective responses. Laird entertains the possibility in ancient thought of a community between visual and verbal media, between seeing pictures and hearing poetry, through the parallel between Aeneas (Aen. 1.455-493) and Odysseus (Od. 8.83ff.) in their emotional reactions to the presentation of the past, where Virgil has substituted a visual for a verbal medium as the cue for his hero’s tears. Yet both men weep as a reaction to being exposed to their past sufferings for a duration of time; for Odysseus it is through the sequential linearization of Demodocus’ song, for Aeneas it is the sequence of his gaze. Propertius here recognizes and elaborates on this correspondence, the perception of pictures through time, and creates a truly ‘visual narrative’.

This tension between the ‘spatial fix’ of language and its temporal flow also harks back to my earlier discussion of Mulvey’s theories on the gaze in narrative cinema, and the distinctions she draws between scopophilia and voyeurism, the spectacular as opposed to the suspicious gaze. While the first is characterized by a series of iconic parts, where narrative progress is halted, the second creates temporal depth. As Fredrick notes, there is an evident contradiction between the conservative relationship that Mulvey builds on the response these different gazes elicit, which serves to protect the male viewer, and Wyke’s argument that the narrator’s stance of servitium amoris acts as a metaphor for political alienation, but Greene for instance has argued that this can be regarded as an ironic pose. I stress rather the fluctuation between these stances in the constant movement between elegiac and epic resonances, in the tension between the stilled visual image and the temporal movement of poetry. 1.3 is the classic example, where the arrested images of the poem’s opening are broken by Cynthia’s lament, the miniature of the Catullan epyllion with its mix of epic and elegiac resonances, prefaced by the sudden shift from trying to make her into an artwork to his fears for the ‘rival’ he senses to be the object of Cynthia’s dreams. This is also illuminated by Sharrock’s argument concerning Ovid’s Pygmalion in the Metamorphoses as a metaphor for Ovid writing epic, ‘breathing the flawed life of elegy into the frozen beauty of epic’, which

360 See Laird 1996.86ff.

reflects on the eroto-artistic relationship of the poet / puella in love elegy (ars adeo latet sua arte, the art object which becomes a love object mirroring the elegiac myth of the love object as art object). This I argue finds its closest correspondence in the realist strategies of the Monobiblos, epitomized in the programmatic prosopopoecia of Cynthia’s lament, foregrounding the Monobiblos as a mini-epyllion which exploits the architectonic structure of epic to allow the reader to dynamically interact with the ‘story’ it purports to tell, since it rehearses themes that are to be played out in the rest of the text. As in 2.31, where the series of stunning fragments, like so many descriptions of the puella, belies the discordant ‘story’ that complements its moments of visual contemplation, so such ‘frozen moments’ in the Monobiblos overlay a story of increasing absence and loss. Hence 1.3 has a programmatic function in its clear attempt to fuse the two art forms, since despite Cynthia’s allusion to weaving poetry (nam modo purpureo fallebam stamine somnum 1.3.41), there are clear echoes of the poem’s opening with its strong suggestions of visual art. Thus the poem’s model in Catullus 64 is very apt here, the attempt to fuse the two modes and create an elegiac epyllion, a series of visual images that both arrest the narrative and situate it ‘in deep 3D space’. 1.3 demonstrates the subordination of the narrator to the idealized image of the puella, the mirror object for the narrator as the ‘weaver’ of his own poetic epyllion, the Callimachean text. For it is only after being stripped of her visual adornment in 1.2 that the nuda puella, with her body parts presented so explicitly, sings her Ariadne style lament, as the poet invokes Catullus’ poem in the attention it gives to the desired visual and spatial, as well as the temporal, properties of language.

As a result, while the narrator may constantly wish to proceed with his ‘story’, the images, as with the Catullan poem, work to slow it down. Gardner considers Catullus’ poem through Kristeva’s concept of a ‘gendering of time’, which articulates the differences between men and women in terms of time and space, associating women with generative space, and men and masculine subjectivity with ‘cursive’ time, or the time of linear history. In this regard Ariadne, she argues, rather than Lesbia, shapes the puellae of elegy through her socio-cultural isolation and spatio-temporal crisis.

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362 ‘Epic may be perfect art, but if Pygmalion’s statue is flawless then it is lifeless, while ‘limp-footed’ elegy is seductive despite, or rather because of, her very flaws.’ Sharrock 1991.39.

363 Fredrick 2012.430.

364 See Gardner 2007. Gardner 2008.68-85 also draws on Kristeva’s work to consider how Ovid’s Remedia Amoris illustrates the tensions arising from the elegiac lover’s simultaneous desire for erotic inertia and the wish to move beyond it, which I focus on here (as mora marks the Propertian lover as static in contrast to Tullus, engaged in military pursuits), and aggressively resolves it, since men make narrative progress while women suffer confinement and repetition.
Indeed Catullus’ obsession with the unfolding of time and temporal progress, from the point where Theseus’ ships first embarked on the Cnossian shore and the future happiness she hoped for, to the present circumstances of the poem in which she laments her abandonment, is very similar to the close sensitivity to time unfolding in the *Monobiblos*. Yet by her curse Ariadne disrupts Theseus’ heroic progress through the death of Aegeus, like Cynthia’s curse in 1.3, which disrupts the narrator’s. In this sense she is also an apt prototype for the elegist, for the Propertian narrator becomes increasingly like Ariadne in his abandonment as these poems progress, just as Theseus is made to endure Ariadne’s sufferings. Indeed just as Ariadne is unable to impose any sense of closure or linear framework on her suffering, imagining the *postrema hora* (line 191) which never arrives, since Catullus keeps returning to her moment of abandonment on the tapestry, so the closure that death could bring in 1.19 remains inherently unstable. Just as Catullus refocuses at the end of his poem on Bacchus and the guests gathered at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, who continue to gaze at the heroine, so it is the elegiac * amatror, rather than Cynthia as earlier, who becomes the passive, inert object of the viewer’s gaze, in contradistinction to Cynthia who becomes increasingly intractable.
Chapter 6: Artistic pendants and visual narratives: The Villa della Farnesina.

Bergmann has pointed out the difficulty of extracting a Greek ‘original’ from the variations in popular artistic images in the last decades of the first century BC when, under the direction of Augustus and Agrippa, there was a new push for the restitution of masterpieces of Greek art to the public eye; this, she argues, does not indicate a lack of skill or precise knowledge of such originals on the part of the artists concerned but rather reveals their talents as translators of an inherited tradition, the images they present intended to elicit the pleasures of connoisseurship.\(^{365}\) As the pinacothecae, the Hellenistic style public picture galleries with paintings of different styles, began to be imitated by private collectors anxious to rival such collections, such fictive picture galleries, painted in fresco, both marked the collapse of public into private and became associated with the growing luxuria of Roman life. Cubicula B and D of the Villa della Farnesina, roughly contemporary with the period when Propertius was composing the Monobiblos, present fine early examples of the framed pinakes that made their debut on domestic frescoed walls around this time, with the dimension of suggestiveness and associative richness demanding viewer response that is characteristic of the late Second Style (figure 6). Bergmann draws attention to the various Hellenistic, classicizing, as well as Egyptianising motifs in these rooms, reflecting a variety of geographical and historical sources, a variety typical of the new Rome under Augustus.\(^{366}\) The cultural capital gained by these artistic references strongly suggests private and elite viewing, transferring the cachet of a public monument to a private space. Indeed in the same way, the images of exotic places that Propertius frequently lingers on in the Monobiblos, and his range of intertextual styles, draw on this same cultural capital. The fictive representations of foreign works in new collections ostensibly glorified the Greek past, yet through their simulations transcended that past, creating the Roman

\(^{365}\) See Bergmann 1995.81, 94-98. See also Pollit 1978 on Roman visual culture in the late first century B.C.: ‘Once this astonishingly rich collection of Greek masterpieces became part of their urban scene, the Romans were never able simply to ignore it. They were driven to clarify their own relation to it, and in the process of doing so, they devoted a considerable amount of energy to denouncing it, praising it, evaluating it, trying to figure out a proper role for it, and finally to using it for their own purposes’ (Pollit 1979.158). Bergmann takes as her prime example of ‘multimedia metamorphosis’ the Gratiæ, which between the 1\(^{\text{st}}\) century BC and the 4\(^{\text{th}}\) century AD became a ubiquitous sign of the Roman arts through adaptations of an icon that ‘set painting against sculpture, mosaic against fresco’; now, she writes, there is no original ‘Three Graces’, merely ‘subtle examples of aemulatio that celebrate techne’ (p. 98).

\(^{366}\) Ibid.98-103. Thus on the back wall of Cubiculum B the painting of the infant Bacchus nursed by Leucothea is typical of the style of 4\(^{\text{th}}\) Century BC painters, whilst Venus with Amor at her side on the side wall is in a calligraphic style reminiscent of 5\(^{\text{th}}\) Century BC white ground vases.
illusion of a Greek world, based upon a self-conscious use of colours, materials and poses.

As Valladares points out, one possible reason for the abandonment of the brief experimentation with the representations of intimacy and passion between human individuals, such as we find in the panel pictures from the walls of these cubicula, in favour of myth, was that myth offered a more supple vocabulary for articulating such fantasies of passion.\footnote{Valladares 2006.70.} In addition, the citation of mythical exempla was strongly suggestive of erudition, literary artifice and convention; mythological ‘correctness’ formed an important part of the education of elite Roman citizens, and was essential for any Roman aspiring to culture and status, informed as he was by literature, art and religious ritual. As I have already suggested, this in turn gave rise to the propensity amongst the wealthy to adorn the walls of their houses with paintings evoking this world of fable and glamour. So one of the ways in which Petronius in his Satyricon can mock the escalation in the number of ‘nouveau riche’ in Neronian Rome is through Trimalchio’s ignorance of the mythological scenes depicted on the walls of his cena (Rogo, inquit, Agamemnon mihi carissime, numquid duodecim aerumnas Herculis tenes, aut de Vlixe fabulum, quemadmodum illi Cyclops pollicem poricino extorsit? Solebam haec ego puere apud Homerum legere).\footnote{Petronius Cena Trimalchionis (Ch. 48), referring to the depictions of episodes from Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey in the atrium noted in Cena Trim. Ch. 29.}

However the important point to note about the spatial arrangement of paintings in, for instance, a cubiculum from the House of Jason in Pompeii, was that these artworks operated relationally, offering ethical or intellectual programmes to the viewer; in the depictions of Zeus’ abduction of Europa, Pan with his nymphs, and Hercules at his moment of victory over the centaur Nessus, is the commonly implied theme of the violence of desire, and we have seen a similar cumulative effect at work in the triad of myths at the opening of 1.3, or the escalation and intensification on the theme of the violence of desire in the mythological catalogue of 1.15, lines 9-22.\footnote{Leach has likened the effect created by the interaction of these exempla to the arrangement of pendant panels in a pinacotheca, which would clearly enhance their dramatic impact for the reader. Immediately one can see from this mythical tableau that the two more vividly pictured examples are placed first in this ensemble. The dishevelled hair and sad face of Calypso contrast with Cynthia’s vanity, whilst Hypsipyle’s rooted adherence to her bedchamber casts shame upon Cynthia’s preparation to depart from hers. As modern editors have printed the text, the two pictorial images are joined in succession, creating a juxtaposition of similar tableaux, but the manuscript order had placed Alphesiboea’s story between the descriptions of Calypso and Hypsipyle. Such alternation sharpens the interplay of similarity and difference among the myths. Two heroines, Calypso and Hypsipyle, accept bereavement with passive fidelity, whilst two are active. The passive heroines are made exemplary by descriptive contrast (non sic), the active ones by implied exhortation. Thus the manuscript order shows an escalation in emotional intensity; Hypsipyle, who}
there is evidence of a rapid growth in the popularity of ‘pendant pictures’ on mythological themes at this time,\(^{370}\) whereby programmatic connections in domestic settings between artistic representations, linked by integration or contrast and placed to arrest the attention of the observer as dramatic presentations, achieved a form of resonance through poetic analogy rather than explicit demonstration; such analogies could only be comprehended if the viewer possessed sufficient knowledge of the separate stories to reconstruct them mentally. By representing images from myth in vivid, repetitive terms, associated in extended metaphors through analogy, poetic and pictorial techniques invite the application of the rhetorical tropes or ‘modes’ that Quintilian discusses,\(^{371}\) through the extraction and re-shaping of elements from their cohesive narrative contexts.

Yet we also find that the process of reading the poems themselves conforms closely to the experience that Brilliant has remarked on of viewing such artistic ‘pendants’ within their domestic settings: ‘….the very fact of projection and the deliberate association of the pendants in an affecting relationship together serve to break the frame of the individual panel and replace it by the larger enframement offered by the room as a whole’.\(^{372}\) Brilliant attempts to show how Horace’s analogy *ut pictura poesis* can implicate the creative possibilities attendant upon seeing works of art as a literary *topos*, and how ‘visual narratives’ may thus develop diachronic as well as synchronic modes of reading, the former determined by the succession of images, the latter freed from such constraints.\(^{373}\) He distinguishes between the two art forms by suggesting that unlike texts, visual images possess an infinite capacity for verbal extension in that viewers must become their own narrators, translating images into some form of internalized verbal expression. Bergmann, in applying these ideas to an evaluation of the mythological panels in the House of the Tragic Poet, has also pointed to the importance of visual literacy for the systematic memory training that formed the basis of Roman rhetorical education, and stresses the importance of movement for the creative activity of reading such narrative ensembles. We can therefore begin to see

isolated herself in her chamber, and Evadne, who entered the conjugal pyre, give more absolute demonstrations of loyalty than Calypso and Alphesiboea. (Leach 1988.417-420).

\(^{370}\) See Brilliant 1984 Ch. 2.


\(^{372}\) Brilliant 1984.78.

\(^{373}\) Ibid.18-19.
how the process of reading the Monobiblos is akin to this movement through such a ‘picture gallery’, in that each poem invites the reader to remember, compare and contrast with others in a way that holds poems in tandem or in tension, giving them a kind of dynamic interdependence. The viewer was thus able to perceive myriad combinations in the thematic arrangement of panels, corresponding to the rhetorical principles of similitudo, vicinitas and contrarium; while similarities might stimulate recognition of difference, contrasts could invite the viewer to consider patterns of association.

At the same time, visual art’s capacity to both absorb the viewer yet also draw attention to the viewer’s limitations, engaging participatory completion of the image or images presented, is a recognisable feature of the art of the late Republic and early Principate, and a distinguishing feature of such paintings. Hence in addition to referencing Greek models, the importance of the viewer’s perspective was a core concept in the Roman observation of the visual world, who was expected to be able to organise time and space for himself, and indeed different viewers might bring different types of literary or artistic appreciation. The important question then was of what responses the images might have elicited from their viewers that governed the artist’s particular choice of figural elements and stylistic composition in a similar manner to poetic images.

Now as I have suggested, the types of paintings that have been discovered from Cubicula B and D of the Villa della Farnesina, from a similar period as the Casa di Livia, are particularly impressive simulations of public pinacotheca, and give particularly pointed orientation for the Monobiblos, since they epitomise the kinds of changes between the Second and Third Styles to which I have referred. These two rooms clearly fall into the grand/private axes appropriate for the reception of owners and close friends, marked by the sense of wealth and sophistication that aims to blur

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374 A famous example is the ‘Dionysiac Frieze’ from an oecus at the south-west corner of the Villa of the Mysteries (ca. 60-50 B.C), which self-consciously insists in this way on directing attention to the process of viewing: ‘Yet the more you look at the picture the more the images throw back at you the limitations of your ability to see and describe. You cannot see what the naked boy is reading, you cannot hear satyr’s’ lyre; you cannot see what the kneeling girl is revealing (and concealing) under the purple cloth. Throughout the frieze, it is precisely the endless complications of viewing that are emphasized: mirror, mask and veiling.’ (Beard and Henderson 2001.47).


376 The building is dated to the early part of the Augustan period, ca. 30-20 B.C. Beyen proposed that the property was decorated on the occasion of the wedding of Augustus’ daughter, Julia, to Agrippa in 21 BC. For varying interpretations regarding ownership and precise dating see Valladares 2006.15-27. Ling 1991.36-42 dates the frescoes of Rooms B and D to between 30 and 20 BC (Second Style phase B), comparing them to the House of Augustus (28 BC), the Casa di Livia and the Aula Iulia.

377 See Vitruvius De Arch. 6.5.1 on public / private, humble / grand axes in atrium houses.
public with private and strongly suggests a hoped for or perhaps even real connection with the Imperial regime.\textsuperscript{378}

At the same time, the erotic \textit{tabellae} that we find within their walls show a clear rapport with the elegiac ideals of love that Propertius enshrines in his early work, in terms of what Valladares calls their peculiarly ‘romantic vein of eroticism’,\textsuperscript{379} depicting ‘stages in different dramas of seduction, alternating between moments of hesitation and mutual surrender’.\textsuperscript{380} What is particularly intriguing about these paintings is the way they both acknowledge the presence of the viewer yet at the same time tantalise through their sense of impending inaccessibility and deferral of fulfilment,\textsuperscript{381} the highly charged and silent glances that the lovers exchange, and the blending of the mythical and the everyday. While the images of human lovers are elevated by the intensity of their gaze and the ‘suspended’ quality of their actions, the large mythological paintings within the \textit{aediculae} (for instance the infancy of Bacchus and the toilettte of Venus in one of the \textit{aediculae} of \textit{Cubiculum B}) offer the viewer images of daily life that are familiar, yet by their use of myth seductively transformed into something grander, aided by the opulent materialism of these rooms (\textbf{figures 6 and 9}).

Now a major way in which these paintings invite interpretation and a programmatic response, I suggest, derives from the different demands placed on the viewer between the erotic frescoes and the \textit{aediculae}, as we saw with the \textit{Casa di Livia}, an encouragement to see the one in terms of the other, or to create a sense of interplay. Ling for instance notes how the borders of these large mythological panels often recall the frames of the smaller panels, and that even when such borders are lacking, the columnar pavilions in which they are set act as glorified frames, emphasising their content.\textsuperscript{382} If one considers the antechamber wall of \textit{Cubiculum D}, one can see that the dominance of the centrally placed \textit{aedicula}, depicting a mythological scene with Dionysiac imagery, is intended to seize the attention first, but attention is then given to

\textsuperscript{378} In \textit{Cubiculum D}, like \textit{Cubiculum B}, we see winged Victories and Egyptian motifs, symbolic of Augustus’ conquests. The bedspread of one fresco is purple, which clearly signified expense.

\textsuperscript{379} Valladares 2006.61.

\textsuperscript{380} Ibid.66. Ovid Tr. 521-28 gives evidence of the wide diffusion of erotic \textit{tabellae} in Roman homes, so they were clearly widespread.

\textsuperscript{381} As we have seen with the temple of Apollo in 2.31, ‘the narrative is left purposely incomplete, introducing an element of ambiguity that also serves as an enticement towards interpretation’ (Valladares 2006.65). This sense of impending inaccessibility is particularly created by the presence of the \textit{cubicularii}, the slave attendants, alongside the painted lovers. While some look out of the picture frame, others avert their gaze and complete their menial tasks with the suggestion that they will soon leave.

\textsuperscript{382} Ling 1991.112.
the polychrome frescoes arranged around this central aedicula (figures 7 and 9). While this large central white ground image seems best appreciated from a distance, the smaller polychrome vignettes around it clearly encourage closer viewing.\(^{383}\) Again, as in the Casa di Livia, the upper zone that extends from the top of the aedicula to the ceiling contains a mixture of fantastical perspectives, suggesting the illusionism of the Second Style, but with framed figural images against which the painted frescoes of lovers stand out.\(^{384}\) Hence the viewer is simultaneously aware of both effects, the contrast between the delicacy and realism of the erotic panels and the effects of projected space in the aedicula and the upper zone. As Horace points out, ut pictura poesis: different paintings require different modes of viewing.

The overall effect from the spectator’s viewpoint is that the presence of the gods in the mythological tableaux that grace such walls shows an ongoing mediation between mortal and divine worlds, since their activities give the impression that human and divine are living together. In the panels of human lovers, this suspense is created not only by this visual absorption but also the proximity of hands and lips, on the verge of, but never quite touching. Valladares speaks fittingly of the ‘dream-like slowness of the actions represented’.\(^{385}\) Thus it is the deferral of fulfillment that is significant here, the persistent gap between the figures, for such highly charged ‘pregnant moments’ invite interpretation as part of a much wider narrative, and encourage the viewer to vicariously enter into this world of fantasy and longing. Hence in these sets of panels, the erotic tabellae and the larger aediculae, the invitation to interpretation is elicited in different ways; while in the tabellae the beholder’s involvement in the representation is indicated through the apparent response of the cubicularii to his or her presence, in the mythological paintings the illusion of accessibility results from the artists’ use of colour and scale. In Cubiculum B for instance, ‘the large open frames through which we see the gods in their quotidian existence, the vaporous hues of the two blue paintings, and the luminous delicacy of the lines of the toilette of Venus effectively draw us into these compositions’, and make them appear ‘dream-like’.\(^{386}\)

\(^{383}\) Indeed we see four large white-ground images framed by aediculae with ornate pediments in the room as a whole, while simpler and smaller aediculae accentuate the smaller polychrome images at eye-level.

\(^{384}\) Leach 2004.138 draws attention to the fine brushwork of the frescoes, encouraging the ‘close-up’ effect.

\(^{385}\) Valladares 2006.73.

\(^{386}\) Ibid.74. She notes the contrast between the ‘airy soft colours’ of the mythological compositions within the aediculae and the strong red of the surrounding walls, creating the impression that we are not looking at paintings but rather through windows that
The effects in the viewer’s experience that I have outlined here are very similar to the sense gained of the simultaneous creation and destabilisation of realism that we have already seen in several poems of the Monobiblos. Like the Villa della Farnesina, the Monobiblos was composed at a similarly interstitial phase between Second and Third Style wall painting, and the fluidity between panels of human and mythological lovers reflects a similar fluidity within Propertius’ text, for the distinctions between Cynthia as human lover, goddess or ‘painted lady’, aided by the juxtaposition of naturalistic thought progression and learned mythological exempla that we have seen, are left purposely indeterminate, rather than her being unambiguously implanted right into the world of myth such as we find in Book Two.

This kind of overlap is apparent in the Argus, Io and Hermes panel within the centrally placed aedicula from the tablinum of the Casa di Livia, examination of which shows close resemblance to the image of the lover as Argus in the third poem of the Monobiblos (figure 8). Io’s position on the rocky ledge below the pedestal of Juno’s statue, through the alignment of the two figures, presents a contrast between the sculptured goddess and the human form of Io, and so suggests Juno’s precinct as an extension of the goddess’ power: ‘the visual symbolism thus enforces a tension between the sculptural personification of Juno’s divine authority and the gentle form of her captive rival’. Argus and Io stand at a distance from each other and, like the lovers of the erotic tabellae of the Villa della Farnesina, their exchange is reduced to a prolonged gaze. If Cynthia takes on the characteristics of both women within the book as a whole in the confusion she creates between ars and natura (since Io’s humanity is stressed in contrast to the statuesque Juno), divinity and mortal, candida and dura puella, then the balancing figures of Argus and Hermes, the first static and transfixed, the second mobile (the ‘peeping’ Hermes), differentiate the two roles the poet plays; like the lover, Argus’ gaze results in punishment (at the hands of Cynthia / Juno) while he plays Hermes to witness the downfall through love of Bassus, Ponticus and Gallus.

In the same way, the encouragement we receive to supply a narrative to these erotic paintings from the Villa della Farnesina is not dissimilar to the way in which the reader of elegiac verse, as with the viewer, is encouraged to negotiate the aporias both

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within and between poems, since the conclusions to the mini-dramas they enact are left so ambiguous or indefinite. This is particularly relevant for the poems of the *Monobiblos*, which involve a series of mere prolonged gazes between protagonists, with the ‘lingering’ effect of *mora*, helping to convey a strong sense of wonder at the world of mythical experience. For images of amatory struggles, the violence that excessive love can breed, similar to that which we find for instance in the House of the Dioscuri from a much later period, are not apparent in the *Monobiblos*, where epic violence is implicit rather than explicit as in Book Two. Thus it is the sense of ambiguity that I wish to stress here, for while these panels are on the surface, as Valladares suggests, ‘tender moments’, there is a certain level of ambiguity in how the viewer might respond, which has implications for our appreciation of the dynamics of the Propertian text.

**Performance and provocation: The Gallus poems**

Bergmann describes the Roman viewer’s incorporation of contemporary life into the reading of the mythological paintings that made their way on to the walls of elite Roman houses as one of ‘double vision’,\(^\text{388}\) and adopts a similar approach to Trimble’s reception of the paintings from the House of the Dioscuri, as episodes which ‘explore critical moments in the performance of public masculinity that were equally dependent on representations of oneself and being seen’.\(^\text{389}\) In the same way I believe that these erotic panels from the *Villa della Farnesina* can illuminate the social dynamics that the Propertian narrator establishes in the *Monobiblos*, the exploration of the relationship between a visual and social narrative. Thus like Trimble, I suggest that by using literary evidence alongside visual material one can consider the ways in which art can construct social relationships through the similarity of these images to real situations. Indeed I find a remarkable affinity between the dynamics of Propertian *ecphrasis* within the *Monobiblos* and the kinds of responses that might have been provoked by these panel-paintings within their decorative display. I suggest then a kind of ‘live *ecphrasis*’ at work in this text in the mirroring of art and reality through the situations created in the poems, similar to Trimble’s own approach, since the blurring of reality and

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\(^{389}\) Trimble 2002.241.
representation in these frescoes encourages particular social interactions for their viewers.

On the ubiquity of such erotic paintings as those in the cubicula of the Villa della Farnesina Myerowitz has aptly commented: ‘The Romans saw as appropriate décor for their walls scenes that imitate, qualify, and even magnify the real life activity of the self within the room’, scenes that could in turn promote viewers’ self-awareness. For in the same way that the various figures of these panels from the Villa della Farnesina could impose a ‘script’, as it were, on how viewers might position themselves vis-a-vis the frescoes and other viewers, and so act out socially appropriate responses, so the various internal viewers of the Monobiblos elicit and provide a model for the external reader’s own gaze and response. Hence Myerowitz stresses the didactic function of such erotic panels, they become a ‘model of reflection in which art becomes not simply a prism through which experience is understood retrospectively, but a mirror that at every stage demands our attention, forcing us to objectify our activity……erotic images, because of their location, turn the bed into a stage and the lovers inexorably into self-conscious actors’. Myerowitz’s theory of reception is particularly relevant, I suggest, for the complex interaction between the various focalised images of the Monobiblos and the narrative that the poet constructs. This is especially the case if we consider these poems, with their frequently abrupt change of viewpoint and tone, as poems of performance in relation to the model of reflection prompted by the erotic panels and the decorative scheme as a whole, which can offer various possibilities in performance.

Considering the poems within their performative context is also a particularly fruitful approach when we recall that elite Romans were constantly on display, subject to the scrutiny of the public and their peers. Kaster has considered how social behaviour among ancient Romans was strongly affected by seeing oneself through the eyes of others, and how behavioural conformity to particular social and cultural expectations was dependent on surveillance. Indeed such social and emotional ‘scripts’ as he calls them would be acted out in both the private and public arena, since as we recall a strong

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391 Ibid.149.
392 See Gamel 2012.351ff. on elegy and performance.
part of Augustus’ moral agenda was to diminish the division between these spheres. In addition a guest’s reception of the status symbols on display in the Villa della Farnesina would be closely linked to contemporary anxiety regarding the weakening of status barriers, which as we saw was frequently explored through issues of gender and sexuality. Thus it seems possible that Cubicula B and D’s decorative schemes might have provoked their elite male viewers within a social setting to display their own elite status and taste, since the communication of such status would only be effective through an appreciative audience.

Hence by acknowledging the various markers of status and displaying one’s own knowledge of Greek taste, the Roman male viewer could both affirm the elite status of the patron, and show himself to be a member of his elite circle. Yet the atmosphere of leisured propriety that these various symbols of status create, a ‘dream-world’ of aesthetic stimulation and refinement for the dominus and his guests, is undermined, I suggest, by the anxiety that would have been fuelled by viewing the erotic vignettes within these tabellae, since they provoke particular gender appropriate responses which connect to this need to show elite status.

A closer assessment of the various male and female poses within these tabellae supports this idea. While the male figures are consistently depicted as fully dressed and stationary, their eyes unhesitatingly focused on their female partners, there is a striking range in the profiles of the latter. If we consider the three scenes in figure 9, we see that in the first the woman’s dress and sitting posture are modest and submissive, her eyes downcast, like the narrator at the opening of 1.1, a sign of womanly virtue. In the second however she adopts a far more sexually aggressive posture and drapes almost across the entire bed, staring directly at the male’s forehead with her arms exposed. Meanwhile the female in the third panel might elicit a response midway between the other two in terms of her pudicitia, as she reclines lightly on her left arm and leans next to the male, her robe draped suggestively, and her gaze not quite directed at him but at his shoulder, or perhaps rather nonchalantly beyond it into the distance (figure 9).

394 Milnor 2005 has argued that under Augustus, formerly domestic virtues, especially among women, were now suddenly brought into the public sphere.

395 See Quintilian Inst. Orat. 11.2.69. See Langlands 1996.27-78 on how Roman women were expected to exhibit pudicitia and verecundia in appearance and behaviour.

396 Clarke 1998.102 describes her as ‘unrestrained and aggressive’ and the male as looking ‘stunned by the woman’s passion’.
Clarke debates the identity of these women, and admits that analysis is not simple, but believes they are supposed to portray brides or perhaps the vignette of a wedding night for a male fantasy, ‘the narrative of the modest bride becoming an immodest lover’ in Cubiculum D, the woman at first ‘chaste and tentative, then passionate and explicit’. They cannot be hetairae he argues since ‘prostitutes do not wear such voluminous clothing’, and gives evidence from various Roman texts of the wife’s erotic interest in her husband. Yet this seems far from certain. Andreae for instance believes the most submissive woman is a bride and the least restrained a courtesan.

What can be asserted is that they represent a spectrum of female modesty, signified by dress and posture, and that furthermore they compare closely with the range of Cynthia’s behavioural characteristics in the Monobiblos. Indeed the pregnant ambiguity of the status of these female figures accords closely with her portrayal in the Monobiblos, and the various contradictory images we are given of her. As Veyne points out, ‘from one page to the next, Cynthia may be a courtesan, an adulterous wife, a freedwoman’, or Miller: ‘Cynthia is to be both matrona and meretrix in one….She is less a person than a function, her role more that of a narratological actant (an agent construction necessary for narrative progression) than of a fully developed character or actor…’ Moreover as a narrative they clearly suggest the deceptiveness underlying the feminine pose of modesty; Cynthia can appear submissive when she wants to, like the virtuous wife (the faithful Penelope anxiously waiting for her husband in 1.3.41-42), but she can also of course be sexually provocative (1.3.1-6) or unrestrained in her anger (1.17.9-12); or the narrator may harbour doubts about her intended loyalty (1.11.5-6, 1.19.21-23). In this particular instance then I disagree with Valladares’ judgement: ‘unlike the elegiac poems of the late first century, which are rife with political irony, the erotic paintings from the Villa della Farnesina present us only

397 Ibid.103.
398 Ibid.102. Clarke concludes that because of the rich eclecticism of subject matter and style, and the fact that the mythological paintings take pride of place, the primary intention is decorative rather than documentary, yet I see both effects as important here.
399 Ibid.103. Valladares 2006.77 comments: ‘In the climate of Augustus’ moral reforms, this search for a fulfilling, passionate sexual relationship within the bonds of matrimony resulted then in the transfer of romantic ideas associated with extra-marital affairs to iustae coniuges….There is no need to insist on an epithalamic meaning for these images – at least not in the literal sense.’ Clarke 1998.105 admits that they are intended to feed a male fantasy and clearly that lies behind the ambiguity.
400 Veyne 1988.7.
401 See Miller 2004.63, who discusses the difficulties of establishing Cynthia’s social standing. Wyke 1989.28-34 also notes the failure of these attempts.
with the sweeter aspects of an amatory experience, since they appear above all else to prey on male anxieties regarding the behaviour of women. This seems particularly so when considered in tandem with the Dionysiac scenes and the image of Bacchus that I mentioned earlier, suggesting the violence underlying this submissiveness.

On the other hand, the appropriate masculine gestures, proper reclining male posture and steady profiles of the males in each of the panels strongly suggest elitism and masculinity, and bring to mind Bassus, Gallus, Tullus, and Ponticus. Roman elite males may have had more licence in their sexual behaviours than women, especially when directed at slaves or meretrices, but these women are clearly marked as elite; in the case of married women or matronae, sexual behaviour was strictly limited to and controlled by their husbands. If then the ambiguity of the status of these women suggests that expressing desire for them would have been a hazardous enterprise for their male viewers to say the least, expressions of desire for the elite males would have been even more damaging to their social standing. Walters speaks of the importance for elite men within Roman society to maintain, and to be seen to maintain, their ‘impenetrability’ or bodily integrity, which would extend even to verbal expressions of desire, as this could seriously damage the elite male’s status. Yet the erotics of Propertian amicitia in the Monobiblos clearly suggests this response, a confusion of such boundaries.

That such improper behaviour was scorned in public is evident from such texts as the Pro Caelio, in which Cicero frequently dwells on the public, and hence degrading, nature of Clodia’s illicit behaviour. This might suggest a certain freedom or safety for such behaviour in private, the potentially subversive reactions that could alleviate the kind of internalized oppression caused by this type of cultural conditioning. Yet so concerned were Romans to maintain and monitor such socially acceptable boundaries that even when performed alone, inanimate objects could be bestowed with the power to observe and judge inappropriate behaviour. On the one hand then, by drawing his fellow elite and very ‘public’ viewers into his own private world, Propertius brashly

402 Valladares 2012.331.
404 Ibid.37.
405 See Oliensis 1997 on elegy’s blending of amor and amicitia.
406 For instance Juvenal Sat. 8.148-150 where the consul Lateranus races past the bones and ashes of his ancestors nocte quidem, sed Luna videt, sed sidera testes / intendunt oculos.
entertains ‘subversive visions’. On the other hand, by frequently calling upon inanimate objects as witnesses to the private love that he celebrates, (*luna* in 1.3.31 and 1.10.8, *testis* in 1.18.19) he exposes the anxieties inherent in such subversion.

Now the *Monobiblos* more than any other book stresses its manifestly homosocial dynamic and in several poems its social setting. Indeed several poems imply the background of the *cubiculum* as the glorified setting for the dramas which take shape,\(^{407}\) the scene of the narrator’s escape into fantasies of the imagination, often involving the remoteness of nature. Thus Tullus, Bassus, Gallus, and Ponticus, who despite their own elite status in the public world from which the narrator divorces himself, become ‘commentators’ on the poet’s own cultured ‘decorative scheme’. They succumb to his elegiac world, and so confirm not only the idiosyncratic nature of the love that he espouses (through their descent from *nobilitas* to *servitium*) but also the elite poetic status of the poet-host, in the various voices beneath the elegiac surface, since lifestyle and poetics are so intimately intertwined in the *Monobiblos* (the narrator writes to win his mistress), just as a guest’s comments on the decorative schemes in *Cubicula* B and D might confirm the patron’s elite status and mark the observer as a member of his elite circle. At the same time, by surrounding himself with this male coterie, the narrator profoundly reflects on the anxiety that this creates, which is in turn recaptured in the dissolve between elegy and other genres. Contemporary anxiety regarding the integrity of gender, sexuality and status boundaries is thus manifested in the responses of the elite circle within which the poet situates his elegies; Bassus, Ponticus, Tullus and Gallus are made to react in ways that threaten these boundaries, and hence threaten the power structure based on the rigidity of such categories.

Hence the fates of these characters are mutually intertwined. The narrator confounds the life of the lover with the man of action in 1.6 by using language that blurs the distinctions between the very different situations of himself and Tullus. When for instance Tullus departs from Rome for foreign campaigns, the narrator addresses him as if he were reproaching his beloved:

*at tu, seu mollis qua tendit Ionia, seu qua*

*Lydia Pactoli tingit arata liquor,*

\(^{407}\) See for instance 1.2.1-2, 1.3.7-8, 1.8b.33-34, 1.15.5-8, 1.10.1-2 and 1.13.14-18. Evidence for *cubicula* being used for non-intimate activities is given by Riggsby 1997:47-48. The social aspect of these *cubicula* evidently made them popular for the display of art.
seu pedibus terras seu pontum remige carpes,
ibis et accepti pars eris imperii:
tum tibi si qua mei veniet non immemor hora,
vivere me duro sidere certus eris.

(1.6, lines 31-35)

Like Ariadne on the sea-shore, the narrator here adopts the position of the abandoned heroine, while Tullus appears as the hard-hearted lover who leaves, captivated by two other ‘ladies’, ‘Ionia’ and ‘Lydia’, ‘fair temptresses who have seduced Tullus from Propertius’ side’. This looks forward to the defence of love poetry in the poems addressed to Ponticus (7, 9), where life and literature are explicitly intertwined (nos, ut consuemu,
nostros agitamus amores, atque aliquid duram quaerimus in dominam 1.7.5-6). Hence 1.6 emphasises servitude in love as superior to epic travel, but looks ahead to 1.17, 1.18 and 1.19, where the narrator is forced to undertake his own series of epic journeys. In addition the sense of an ongoing conversation is maintained by the poet’s characteristic wordplay, playful oppositions and ironic reversals; the rejection of doctas Athenas (1.6.13) replaced by the desire to be read by the doctae puellae (1.7.11), or the use of iacere to characterise the narrator’s servitude in love in 1.6.25, the demise of Ponticus’ efforts to write epic when he is struck by Cupid’s arrow in 1.7.18, and Cynthia’s departure to foreign climes in dura nave in 1.8.6. Hence transitions between poems are created by linguistic anticipations, the use of implicature and inference to create the impression of a spontaneous and authentic dialogue through a cluster of words, an intertext or a metaphor which can evoke a topic soon to be addressed in another poem. Within this nexus of poems however, the three ‘Gallus’ poems, 1.5, 1.10 and 1.13, strike a very different chord and suggest a very different response, which is matched by the irreconcilable portrayals of the character in the Monobiblos as a whole, in contrast to the very definite and historically identifiable features of ‘Tullus’, ‘Bassus’ and ‘Ponticus’. Indeed careful examination shows that, like the erotic panels in Cubicula B and D of the Villa della Farnesina, with the same emphasis on time, visuality and voyeurism, these poems highlight the various stages of an amatory encounter that appear to act as a kind of foil to the narrator’s own amatory narrative.

At the opening of 1.10 the lover recalls his night of voyeurism:

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408 Oliensis 1997.158: ‘Propertius has transformed a client’s excuse into a beloved’s reproach.’
O iucunda quies, primo cum testis amori
affueram vestris conscius in lacrimis!
o noctem meminisse mihi iucunda voluptas,
 o quotiens votis illa vocanda meis,
cum te complexa morientem, Galle, puella
vidimus et longa ducere verba mora!
quamvis labentis premeret mihi somnus ocellos
 et mediis caelo Luna ruberet equis,
non tamen a vestro potui secedere lusu:
tantus in alternis vocibus ardor erat.

(1.10.1-10)

_Iucunda quies_ (line 1), forced out by the intensity of the lover’s emotion, immediately suggests the stillness of the voyeur, and despite the contrast with _lacrimis_ in line 2, as though to distinguish Gallus’ response from his own, _conscius_ would imply a much greater complicity and identity of feeling. As with Protesilaus in 1.19 in the underworld, desiring to look upon his beloved Laodamia, the poet’s memory here is strictly visual, and Papanghelis has spoken of _iucunda_ as ‘the _mot juste_ for ripples of sensation’. Juxtaposed to _voluptas_ in line 3 we gain a further sense of immediacy and the evocation of visual, sensory pleasure despite the distancing effect of the pluperfect _affueram_ in line 2, and _vocanda_ in line 4 again suggests the lover’s longing to replay his own sensory engagement with this scene.

Such skilful use of language exploits its mimetic effect to create the distinct impression that one is witness to a genuine encounter. Yet we also see a clear instance here of the way in which we are encouraged to read across poems, for these lines also play out the lover’s own fears that we saw in 1.3, and suggest the narrator’s own ambivalence towards this remembered scene and his suspicions regarding the beloved’s fidelity: _et quotiens raro duxit suspiria motu / obstupui vano credulus auspicio_ (1.3.27-28). Moreover the contrast between the narrator’s passivity and the vigour of the full moon, the inanimate witness to the lover’s private passion (1.10.5-9) echoes a similar contrast in 1.3.31ff. (donec diversas praecurrens luna fenestras…).

With this scene from the earlier poem evidently echoing in his mind, the narrator here in 1.10 almost seems to ‘merge’ with the dying Gallus. In line 10 the syntax mimetically evokes Gallus’ own incoherent words, for _ducere verba_, framed by _longa……mora_, suggests the narrator’s own words being ‘dragged out’ in the description, and the shift from the participle _morientem_ (line 5) to the infinitive _ducere_
(line 6) would again suggest the strain of these words. The pictorialism of the opening of 1.10 thus draws us into the scene, a protracted experience of pain and pleasure, broken only by the irony of the narrator’s advice that follows, since he is clearly ineffective himself in winning over his mistress. The amator’s visual experience gains added point from 1.13, where Gallus has again fallen for a ‘new love’ (*perditus in quadam tardis pallescere curis* (1.13.7)). Speech is again seen as an important part of the erotic experience for Gallus, and the latter’s inability to articulate his true feelings is once more mirrored by the strained syntax in a manner that is remarkably similar to 1.10:

\[
\text{Haec non sum rumore malo, non augure doctus;}
\]
\[
\text{Vidi ego: me quaeso teste negare potes?}
\]
\[
\text{Vidi ego te toto vinctum languescere collo,}
\]
\[
\text{Et flere iniectis, Galle, diu manibus,}
\]
\[
\text{Et cupere optatis animam deponere verbis.}
\]

(1.13.13-17)

The anaphora in *vidi...vidi* (lines 14-15) once more suggests the lover’s longing to replay this experience, and the separation of *optatis...verbis* in line 17 again imitates Gallus’ inability to express his true feelings. The separation of *toto...collo* framing *vinctum languescere* creates the sense of suffocation in Cynthia’s embrace, since *languescere*, like *animam deponere*, suggests the same weakness like death created by *morientem* at 1.10.5. Through the adept use of language, the elegiac poet shapes the world of those around him, makes them move according to his reality, including the reader, who thus enters into the emotional dynamics of the scene presented. For like the narrator, the reader is a *testis*, as the poet models the relationship between reader and text and creates the sort of narrative suspension that is so characteristic of the ‘pregnant moment’ of mythical lovers in standstill, as through his use of language he blurs the distinctions between the lover as ‘voyeur’ and the lover as part of the scene itself.

At the same time the poet’s recreation of Gallus’ night of passion becomes a site of antagonistic poetics, where influence is acknowledged only to be resisted. Current scholarly consensus sees in the poem an invitation to metapoetic interpretation, reading it as Propertius’ meditation on the relationship of his amatory elegy to that of
Propertius compliments his amatory model and literary mentor by suggesting his admiration for his love-poetry. At the same time however, he expresses his rivalry with him by writing poetry that could remedy his predecessor’s amatory failures; the poem’s final couplet suggests that Propertian elegy succeeds where Gallian elegy fails, in triumphant devotion to a single mistress: *is poterit felix una manere puella, / qui numquam vacuo pectore liber erit* (1.10.29-30). Yet to avoid the eroticism of this scene and allegorize it all back into the text is to miss the dynamic shift that Propertius has here conjured. He has recreated his predecessor, the inventor of the genre, a fellow elegist in the struggle against epic *minas*, in his own image, and so recentered the elegiac tradition around himself and his realistic, visual style of poetry; for the scene is one that the lover evidently imagined Cynthia was dreaming of in 1.3, full of tears, embraces, sleepy eyes, with the moon in the sky. However in the *Monobiblos* the amator never attains the consummation of desire, the erotic *Liebestod* that Gallus appears on the point of reaching here, and indeed the clear ambivalence of the remembered scene undermines this boast.

The thorny ‘Gallus’ question is indeed a question of poetic influence yet the beauty of the poem lies in its ambiguity, the possibility of bivalent readings, both literal and figurative. The etymological connection between *mora* and *memor* strengthens the implications of this tension between word and image, since *memor* can suggest literary as well as erotic memory. Hence *iucunda coniugis heros non potuit caecis immemor esse locis* (1.19.7-8) in reference to Protesilaus is a clear echo of 1.10.1-3 *o iucunda quies… o noctem meminisse…iucunda voluptas*, where the similar striking collocation of *meminisse* …*iucunda* emphasises this same reading/viewing dichotomy here. It is as if the narrator is so moved by the emotion conjured by the *phantasiae* of Gallus’ own poetry that it results in his reader’s *ekplexis*, like the image of Argus in 1.3.20. Thus he forms mental images as he reads, giving details of time and setting (line 8) and his own physical condition, but he can also give a poetic response. So he then suddenly turns away from his own visual memory to give Gallus advice drawn from his

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410 The main problem of the identification with the elegist Gallus is Propertius’ apparent designation of his Gallus as noble (1.5.23-24). Cornelius Gallus was an *eqes*, and therefore should not be characterized by *nobilitas* nor have *imagines* with which to adorn his home. Yet linked as he is with the other authors, Bassus and Ponticus, the resonance of the name of Latin love elegy’s founder would surely be too much to dismiss. As I go on to show, this use of *nobilitas* in relation to Gallus in 1.5 is aimed at creating a very different effect from mere descriptive identification.


412 See Conte 1986.57-69, especially pp. 61ff. on Ovid *Fasti* 3.469-75, *Cat. 64.130-135* and 143-144. See also Hinds 1998.4.
typical elegiac tropes (*possum...possum...possum* lines 15-17); the *paraclausithyron* (*et dominae tardas possum aperire fores* (line 16)), love poetry as solace (*nec levis in verbis est medicina meis* (line 18), the importance of *servitium amoris*, (*tu cave ne tristi cupias pugnare* (line 21)).

As Oliensis points out, in the guise of giving advice to Gallus in 1.10, the lover shows the strength of the bonds of a lover’s servitude that exist between himself and Gallus.413 Indeed the theme of knowledge based on painful experience in 1.10 also harks back to 1.5414 and particularly to the prediction of Cynthia’s power over Gallus in the magical terms of line 6 (*properas.... bibere e tota toxica Thessalia* (1.5.4-6)). The advice based on knowledge theme here, married with desire and death, foreshadows the strictly visual experience in 1.10, evoking the sense of pleasure tinged with pain, and the fulfilment of love as a kind of erotic death, as Gallus experiences the consummation of desire in 1.13, the erotic Liebestod that eludes the amator. In the earlier poem the narrator warns Gallus of the possible consequences of his attempt on Cynthia (*quare, quid possit mea Cynthia, desine, Galle, / quaeerere: non impune illa rogata venit* (1.5.31-32)), whereas in 1.13 Gallus has fallen for a single *puella*, and exults over the narrator’s recent downfall (*tu, quod saepe soles.....casu* (line 1)) since Cynthia has been ‘stolen’ from him (*abrepto amore* (line 2)), and Gallus has himself abandoned his licentious ways (*dum tibi deceptis augetur fama puellis*). The ‘Gallus’ poems therefore not only stress the dual aspects of *poena / voluptas* inherent in *amor*, but the amator’s ambivalent visual memory also becomes his poetic memory in his stance as an objective onlooker. This is accompanied by the range of tones in these poems, the anger of 1.5 (*insane* line 1), the mood of contemplation and reverie at the opening of 1.10, and the sense of resignation in 1.13 (*utere: non alio limine dignus eras* (line 34)).

There is of course a deliberate ambiguity regarding the *puella’s* identity in 1.10 and 1.13, although after 1.5 (*quare, quid possit mea Cynthia, desine, Galle* (1.5.31)) the suspicion lingers that she is in fact Cynthia, and indeed the amator’s loss of his beloved anticipates the theme of increasing separation in later poems of the book.415 Perhaps the line then that is most revealing of the narrator’s situation is his fear for Gallus: *quam*...
cito de tanto nomine rumor eris (1.5.26), for most crucial to the former appears to be maintaining his own nomen, his ability to control and shape the representation of his elegiac world. In a sense then these poems only ostensibly relate to Gallus. Haunted by the shadow of his predecessor, the narrator meditates on the loss of his own nomen, his becoming a rumor or fabula like Gallus, who suffers the fate that the text of the Monobiblos strives to resist. The narrator of 1.10 becomes the observer of his own subversive love, yet Gallus’ Liebestod is likened to mythical experience and portrayed in language that is sharply distinct from the poet’s use myth in relation to Cynthia and the lover in the rest of the Monobiblos. Cairns notes the stress laid on Gallus’ nobilitas in 1.5.23 which has caused so much debate on the latter’s identity. As he points out, this need not be limited to its politico-social sense, but can carry the more non-technical sense of ‘celebrity’. By drawing on the word’s etymological links with nomen, nota and nosse, words which are used throughout 1.5, he argues that Gallus had claimed in his verses to be ‘well-known’. Like the narrative that the panels from Cubiculum B and D could be seen to construct, the Gallus poems dramatise the fall from nobilitas to servitium, as his predecessor passes into the realm of fabulae. In his textual circulation the famous poet becomes a kind of mythological exemplum of his own.

I argue then that the visual opening of 1.10 acts as the book’s focal point, its central axis as it were, like the sophisticated Second Style perspective system where lines of perspective could converge on a vertical axis at or near the centre of the painting. As he reenacts the nighttime vision of the sleeping Cynthia in 1.3, the poet stages the problem of his own ‘belatedness’, the anxiety that his own poetry is not immune to appropriation which his ensuing ‘silence’ in 1.13 regarding Gallus’ own

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416 Papanthelis 1987.58-60 takes various critics to task for avoiding the sensuality implicit in the love as death metaphor in 1.13.21-28 which ‘comes alive with sensory urgency’. Hercules’ love described as flagrans calls up central element of the Oetean pyre on which Hercules ended his life; as Hercules is consumed by the fire while consummating his marriage ‘sensit et gaudia are strongly carnal and tactile’ (p. 59). Water complements fire as the material vehicle for Neptune’s erotic passion in the previous couplet (lines 21-22), facilis presstit amore deus in 22 for flagrans amor in 23, ‘liquefying fondling for incandescent penetration’ (p. 60). As I go on to show, this type of imagery is far closer in style to Book Two.

417 Ibid. 97-99.


419 Quintilian defines the exemplum as rei gestae aut ut gestae utilis ad persuadendum id quod intenderis commemoratio (Inst. Orat. 5.11.6), which he divides into the categories of historical, things that actually happened (res gestae) and mythological, mere possibilities (ut gestae). What he stresses though is how both depend on a literary retelling (commemoratio) for their power to be realised (utilitas ad persuadendum).

420 See earlier on structure. 1.10 acts as the pivot of poems 2-19, with nine each side, taking 1.8 as comprising two separate poems 1.8a and b, balancing the solidarity and ‘success’ of the first half of the Monobiblos with the increasing ‘failure’ of the second half.
words betrays. This takes up Bloom’s central thesis that poets are hindered in their creative processes by the ambiguous relationships they necessarily hold with the poetic predecessors who inspire them, since the survival of their work depends upon the originality of their own poetic vision, creating a tension between emulation and originality.421

Indeed not only do the visual, the erotic and the poetic here overlap, but throughout the *Monobiblos* they are inextricably entangled, an effect that can only be registered through recognition of other heavily visualised scenes. My reading of these poems takes its cue from Pincus’ argument that the ‘Gallus’ poems of the *Monobiblos* display a thematic coherence that can move us beyond questions of factual information about the historical figure which has aroused so much controversy.422 Pincus demonstrates how Catullus 50 provides the backdrop to this poem, yet *testis* here shifts the symmetrical relationship between Catullus and Calvus and the convergence of homoerotic desire with poetic production from two to three.423 Particularly intriguing is the complex relationship between *testis* and *fides* that Pincus draws out through the intratextual link between the opening of 1.10 and 1.18, where the mediation of erotic desire at the opening of 1.10 is figured as a more intense engagement with Gallus’ poetry. The setting and theme of 1.18, where the narrator finds solace for his lovesickness in an empty grove, clearly connect it with bucolic poetry in general, but the apostrophe in lines 19-22 (*vos eritis testes, si quos habet arbor amores, / fagus et Arcardio pinus amica deo / ah quotiens vestras resonant mea verba sub umbras, / scribitur et teneris Cynthia corticibus*) specifically brings into focus Virgil’s Gallus of *Eclogue* 10.52-54: *Certum est in siluis inter spelaea ferarum / malle pati te nerisque meos incidere a/ mores / arboribus: crescent illae, crescetis, amores.*424

*Testis* here provides the move to intertextual reminiscence yet also highlights the poet’s own ambivalent attitude towards revelation. For to reveal ‘faith’ here is evidently to break it, since he initially asks that his deserted surroundings should ‘keep *fides*’ but then depicts them as abounding in sound.425 1.18 thus becomes an exploration

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422 Pincus 2004.
423 The poem shows strong echoes of *Cat.* 50, the verse epistle to Calvus on the morning after a day spent writing verses together, which left him sleepless with excitement.
424 The *Eclogues* text is taken from Greenough, J.B. 1900.
425 Pincus points out that whereas Gallus’ lament to nature focuses on its emotional reactions (*Ecl.* 10.8-16), in 1.18 nature mimics not emotions but words (pp. 182-183).
of textuality and literary influence, channelled through the ambiguity of testis here and in 1.10, mediating both an erotic, and through Virgil, a poetic triangulation. At the same time 1.18 also becomes a practical outworking of the narrator’s warning to Gallus in 1.5 that this kind of experience would occur in his attempt on Cynthia (quid tibi vis insane? meos sentire fuores? 1.5.3) and a fulfilment of 1.5.17 where the amator predicts Gallus’ suffering in words that distinctly refer to the ‘laments’ of elegiac writing - quaecumque voles fugient tibi verba querenti. The warning of 1.5.16 et timor informem ducet in ore notam also predicts the narrator’s own cry of 1.18.8 nunc in amore tuo cogor habere notam. As the narrator becomes the Gallus of Eclogue 10, these three poems are linked on both dramatic and literary levels. Propertius draws Gallan poetry into his elegiac framework, yet the tie between them is stressed as an ultimately visual experience. Seeing and interpreting become virtually synonymous. The hazardous relationship here between testis and fides has wider ramifications for the imbrication of erotics and poetics in the Monobiblos and the tension between art and literature that this maps on to, since it figures an underlying anxiety about future reception at the heart of this text.

Indeed the arguments for Gallan influence in the Monobiblos are directly related to questions of enargeia, like Virgil’s own reconstruction of Homeric ecphrasis in Aeneid 8. The idea put forward by Ross that the programmatic Milanion exemplum in 1.1.9-18 alludes to poetry by Gallus because of its similarity with Eclogue 10.50-64 (the poem generally recognised as the locus classicus for Gallan language and motifs), where Gallus is cast by Virgil in the role of an Arcadian shepherd dying of heartache over his unrequited love for Lycoris, and which Ross sees as an allusion to Gallus’ own version of the myth, has gained considerable ground, such that it is now the overwhelming consensus that Gallus used Milanion in a famous exemplum.\textsuperscript{426} In this passage, generally referred to as ‘Gallus’ lament’, Virgil has the elegist wander through the woods to distract himself from his love and comfort himself with his poetry. Now in the context of my argument lines 56-58, where Gallus envisions himself leading an active life of hunting beasts, are particularly significant, for the line iam mihi per rupes videor, lucosque sonantis / ire in line 59, following on from the reference to Parthenios...saltus

\textsuperscript{426} Ross 1975. Zetzel 1977 followed up on this and Rosen and Farrell 1986 have also built on Ross’ original argument, pointing out other echoes of the Tenth Eclogue such as the theme of medicina furoris (quaeurite non sani pectoris auxilia / fortiter et ferrum saevos patiemur et ignes (1.1.26-27) and Ecl. 10.29).
in line 58 (similar to *Partheniis...antris* at 1.1.11), invokes the language of dreaming that we saw in 3.3, and is a reminder of the poet’s use of the passive *visa est* at 1.3.7 to describe Cynthia’s appearance, as well as 1.3.29 where the narrator fears the amorous *visa* of Cynthia’s own dreams. Indeed if we accept the allusion to Gallus’ poetry and his treatment by Virgil, for which there is compelling evidence, there is a strong suggestion that from the outset Propertius is compelled above all by the *enargeia* of Gallus’ own verse, which lends it a kind of quasi-mythical status, since in Virgil he imagines himself leading an active masculine life similar to that of Milanion in Propertius’ *exemplum*, an ability stressed by the latter’s use of the more active *videre* to describe Milanion’s exploits in line 12 in contrast to his own failure. The lover’s nighttime vigil in 1.10, itself highly dream-like through the striking use of the active form of the same verb, reminding the reader of the power of the dreamer’s indelible conviction regarding what he has seen, recreates the vision of Cynthia’s own dream of Gallus in 1.3.

Conte has very persuasively argued that in the Tenth Eclogue Virgil stages a clash between the bucolic and elegiac genres in order to explore their limits and validate his choice of bucolic, and indeed Gallus eventually rejects the role of the masculine life he imagines for himself in line 61, (roaming the mountains of Arcadia (line 55) and hunting (lines 56-59)) and returns to the reality of his elegiac servitude. Yet this is not merely a question of substitution. Indeed Conte argues that *Eclogue* 10.52-60 are a re-writing of what Gallus had originally put into Chalcidic verse, that Gallus must have written words like that for Lycoris. Just as Virgil dresses Gallus in bucolic clothing while retaining his poetry’s evocative power, as Conte argues, so Propertius through the power of *enargeia* attempts to convert Gallus into a Propertian lover. For while the poet may confront Gallus’ words (*tantus in alternis vocibus ardor erat* 1.10.10), he will

427 Parthenius of Nicaea presented Gallus with a prose digest of mythological love stories taken from various Hellenistic poets, including Euphorion of Chalcis whom Virgil appears to refer to as Gallus’ model when he writes *Chalcidico...versu* at *Ecl.* 10.50. Apart from 1.1, this is the only other mention of Mount Parthenius in Augustan poetry.

428 *Videre* has been challenged on the basis that simply ‘seeing’ wild beasts is hardly a fitting tribute to Milanion’s *labores* in 1.1.9, and more vigorous alternatives such as ‘brave’ or ‘face up to’ have been proposed, but as Booth 2001.69 points out there are few examples of *videre* possessing this sense. Booth 2001.71-74 argues that Propertius is here ‘correcting’ Gallus’ practice of setting up Milanion as a role model for himself. I agree with her that in conjunction with 1.1.17-18 Propertius’ intention to write love poetry that differs from his predecessor is marked by his pointing out how far his situation is from characters from myth, yet this need not amount to criticism. Pincus 2004.190 sees Milanion and Hylas as analogues of Gallus and Propertius battling over a girl in 1.5 which would suggest the anxiety of Gallan influence rather than criticism.

429 Conte 1986.100-130.

430 He also notes the convergence of lines 59-60 (*iam mihi videor...libet*) with *Prop.* 2.19.17-18.

431 Cairns 2006.116-117 also believes that in 1.10 and 1.13 Propertius is challenging Gallus’ own erotodidaxis, and suggests that Gallus had made use of the seeing/reading equivalence that later writers could evoke as typical of his elegy, citing *Ecl.* 10.26 as Virgil’s claim to have read about Pan in Gallus’ poetry (citing Ross 1975.98-99), as well as *visus* at *Prop.* 1.20.52, again involving Gallus.
not ‘copy his language’ *(at non ipse tuas imitabor...voces 1.13.3)* but must strike out anew.
Chapter 7: Pictorialism and poetics in Books One and Two

The evidence that the poems of the *Monobiblos* recognise and show an affiliation with this development in artistic fashions that I have outlined is further suggested by the poet’s depiction of characters from myth within various pictorial landscape settings, enabling both ‘projection’, since such scenes are strongly illusionistic and have a dramatic impact on the poem as a whole (in helping to create a sense of the lover’s own incoherent emotions), and ‘reflection’, since through their allusions to other texts they imply a much wider narrative that the viewer is invited to reconstruct in relation to the lover’s discourse. Indeed this has already been seen in the poems we have examined; the images of Milanion in 1.1 (*nam modo Partheniis amens errabat in antris / ibat et hirsutas saepe videre feras* (1.1.11)), Marpessa in 1.2 (*non, Idae et cupidio..... Eveni litoribus* (1.2.18)), Ariadne in 1.3 (*qualis Thesea .......desertis litoribus* (1.3.1)), Calypso in 1.15 (*at non sic Ithaci digressu mota Calypso desertis....aequoribus* (1.15.9-10)), and even Protesilaus in 1.19, crossing the *litora fati* (1.19.12), all suggest romantic, liminal environments associated with shores, groves and rocky crags. Indeed I suggest that this goes to the heart of the pictorial effects of the *Monobiblos*, in the ‘dream-like’ fluctuation between the ‘view outward’ and the ‘view inward’. Thus we are offered ‘close-up’ portrayals of the mistress for instance in 1.2.1-5, 1.3.21-30, and 1.15.5-8 in contrast to the figures from myth in these settings, which invite a very different imaginative response. At the same time we often find that the remote rural settings that form the background to these mythological exempla are echoed in the scenarios and settings in which the amator or Cynthia are themselves often placed. Thus it is particularly notable that while early poems (2, 3) strongly suggest the *cubiculum* as their dramatic setting, later poems (15, 17, 18, 19) move us further away into remote landscape environments. Between we find a frequent contrast between the visualized world of travel and romance and the *domus* (1.6.31-32 and 7-10, 1.8, 1.11, 1.14.1-8 and 17-22) which encourages links between these various groups of poems. This frequent sudden and abrupt movement between viewpoints within a poem is similar to Second Style painters who through the use of perspective were able to create the illusion of varying levels of depth in their painting. The effect of the *ecphrasis* of the grotto in enhancing the sense of the reality of the scene projected that we saw in 3.3, while simultaneously masking its poetological dimension, is similar to the way in which several poems of the *Monobiblos* obscure strong intertextual impulses
through the visual presentation of such scenes that provide their dramatic settings, impulses which in turn anticipate or highlight the movement of the book as a whole.

Propertius’ clear interest in the depictions of landscape in his poetry was no doubt influenced by the innovations of contemporary painters. While Greek landscape painters focused primarily on the characters depicted in such paintings and their activities, the Second Style introduced a change in emphasis from these people-focused compositions to the wider environment in which such activity might occur. Dawson identifies an Italian genesis for such paintings: ‘despite a definite decrease in the emphasis on man to the exclusion of his surroundings and a definite increase in the world of nature (in Hellenistic painting), the representation of landscape for its own sake is not to be found before the first century BC’. 432 Ling cites the ‘Odyssey landscapes’ from the Esquiline in Rome (ca. 50 BC) as a typical example, 433 in which ‘figures from myth or legend were reduced to a tiny scale and set in a vast panorama of trees, rocks and the like’ to create a convincing impression of space and distance, with less distinct forms in the background, and with the landscape of each scene passing almost imperceptibly into that of the next. 434 As the first surviving example of ‘mythological landscapes’ in frieze form, which were superseded by the new fashion for dominant panel-pictures at the end of the Second Style, they epitomise the Roman fashion for reducing the size of the figures, who were often indistinguishable from figures in everyday life, and sketchily drawn to give the setting greater prominence, and show the vastness of the wilds. Ling also notes that the development of this genre landscape painting reaches its climax at the end of the Second Style with paintings from the Farnesina villa, the House of Livia and the red and black rooms of the Villa at Boscotrecase from the early Third Style (ca. 15 BC), all of which reveal a taste for creating a highly realistic treatment of space in visually convincing terms. 435

Leach has shown how Roman authors of the late Republic could draw on this use of topography as a means of exploring psychological or philosophical experience, owing to the Roman capacity for visual and spatial imagination. 436 The Auctor ad

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432 Dawson 1965.48. See also Ling 1991.142ff.
434 ‘But the subject-matter is almost of secondary importance; the figures could be substituted by everyday figures or omitted altogether, and the landscape would still present sufficient interest to stand in its own right.’ (pp. 109-110).
435 Ibid.142-146.
436 Leach 1988.73-143.
Herennium comments on the spatial extension of *loci* (3.17-18.30 and 19.32), and Quintilian suggests that the locations of the memory system might be furnished by the experiences of travel (*Inst. Orat.* 11.2.20); since this *ars memoriae* was closely related to *enargeia*, the listener might be encouraged either to contemplate a vista from a fixed point of view, or engage in the imaginary traversal of space.\(^{437}\) She also notes how, in the interrelation of action and location within a symbolic topographical structure in the case of such paintings, the informational contribution is often secondary to the pictorial, which in turn requires a strong imaginative contribution from the spectator, since they merely adumbrate links with reality which the spectator must supply.\(^{438}\) As she suggests, such depictions of space in coherent topographical patterns principally create a relationship between spectator and environment that indicates man’s confidence in his capacity for organisation and control.\(^{439}\)

This emphasis on control correlates with an increasing awareness of physical space, and the political and cultural emphasis on imperial expansion during the early 20s, as an important part of Octavian’s mandate to rule in his attempts to assert sole control over the Roman world after the defeat of Anthony, when he advertised the spoils of conquest to those at home. Lindheim has recently argued that as Octavian focuses minds on the space of the Roman empire, this is viewed by Propertius with considerable anxiety, since it involves confronting the infinite and ever-changing world in which he now lives, which is in turn an underlying factor behind the destabilisation of any fixed or coherent self-image on the part of the elegiac narrator. Hence when halfway through the *Monobiblos* the poet writes *Cynthia prima fuit, Cynthia finis erit* (1.12.20), his use of *finis* involves a spatial as well as a temporal dimension, and suggests the poet’s response to a growing awareness of and concern with issues of physical space and empire, reflected in his repeated attempts to keep Cynthia geographically contained. In *finis* the poet proclaims a desire for ordered space, a boundary that can bestow on him a sense of fullness of being, but such boundaries are not final, fixed entities; hence Cynthia’s spatial mobility in poems such as 1.8, 1.11 and 1.12, when she is lured away from Rome by the attractions of a wealthy rival, is used by the poet to suggest the strain in the lovers’ relationship, since he aligns himself with a

\(^{437}\) Ibid. 78-79.

\(^{438}\) Ibid. 108.

\(^{439}\) Ibid. 79.
particularly germane cultural signifier, yet one that by its very nature cannot be stable.440

By contrast in poems where the narrator is geographically separated from Rome and Cynthia, 1.17, 1.18 and 1.19, it is his immobility that is emphasised. While journeying suggests the uncivilized world of epic adventure and escape from the unyielding cruelty of the elegiac mistress, and is therefore employed as a vehicle for exploring the narrator’s emotional isolation, I suggest that one can relate this idea to the poet’s realistic treatment of myth in the Monobiblos, and the means by which he interweaves myth with the dramatic framework or setting of his poems to create subtle interrelations between the human figures and the figures from myth in his use of landscape, since journeying connects the lovers to other mythical figures, such as Protesilaus in 1.19. Hence the poet’s use of landscape evokes the strange temporal and spatial relations with the world of myth that makes one think of the dream-like spatiality of Second Style wall painting, and is therefore an important part of the text’s constant attempt to recover mythical experience, to lend the relationship of ‘Propertius’ and ‘Cynthia’ the aura of mythical status.

The importance of flight and journeying in the Monobiblos harks back in particular to the programmatic 1.1 where Milanion’s escape to the wilderness brings triumph in contrast to the narrator, suggesting a more intense engagement with poetry. In the same way Cynthia’s increasing absence from the narrator in the Monobiblos is explored both spatially and in poetic terms; his amores become increasingly tristes as I have suggested. I focus then on the implicit paragone between word and image in the poet’s use of landscape. Lindheim draws on Lacanian theory of the separation of the self from its idealised other as a model for understanding how Propertian elegy grapples with the unstable masculine self in the way it relates to the spatial boundaries implied by his use of the concept of finis. The compulsion of the elegiac subject towards a fixed and stable self-definition, in its attempt at recovering this idealised other, which through its recovery can render the subject coherent, is consistently undercut by the realisation that such wholeness lies in the realm of fantasy. Hence the exclusus amator finds himself separated from the puella by a variety of delays and barriers. This I suggest relates to the complementary relations of the verbal and visual discourses that operate in this text. The visualized text strives to stem the flow of language, to render Cynthia

440 Lindheim 2011.
defixa (1.8.18) by writing ecphrasis, to fuse the narrative and visual levels of his poetry, and hence create a mode of existence equivalent to that of myth. On the other hand the poet frees language from such constraints through the intertextual depth that can reach outwards dialectically in time from such photographically fixed moments tied to particular situations or settings.

The opening of 1.18 for instance is particularly reminiscent of the viewer’s experience of the grotto panel in Cubiculum M of the Villa at Boscoreale (Haec certe deserta loca et taciturna querenti, / et vacuum Zephyri possidet aura nemus / hic licet occultos proferre impune dolores, / si modo sola queant saxa tenere fidem (1.18.1-4)), with the references to the ‘empty grove’ and the ‘lonely rocks’, and as a whole the poem appears to possess little of the ‘architectural intricacy’ that the use of myth and other rhetorical effects can lend to certain poems of the Propertian corpus. This sense of naturalism is enhanced by the commencement of the poem in medias res (haec certe deserta…..), typical of the poems of the Monobiblos in giving no indication of the reasons behind the situation that the poem goes on to outline, in this case Cynthia and the lover’s conflict, and the sharp visualisation of the deictic haec. Indeed the opening four lines are reminiscent of the way the grotto panel at Boscoreale encourages the viewer to transcend the confines of the room and ‘cast’ himself within the scene. Yet as Walde has shown, the indirect recusatio in the opening apostrophe to the absent Cynthia in line 5 (fastus recalling 1.1.3) raises her to the level of divinity and the couple’s relationship to that of heroic conflict. Lines 9-17 then develop various conflict scenarios before giving way to a declaration of unswerving love and a lack of communication that becomes a vehicle for poetic production, for the sequence of invocations to and visual representations of geographical scenes is simultaneously a sequence of literary topoi that highlight, as we have seen, an ambivalent attitude towards literary influence.

I.17 offers a yet more striking example of this effect, and again the opening lines enhance the sense of the scene’s credibility:

\[
\text{Et merito, quoniam potui fugisse puellam,}
\text{nunc ego desertas alloquor alcyonas.}
\text{nec mihi Cassiope salvo visura carinam,}
\text{omniaque ingrato litore vota cadunt}
\]

(1.17.1-4)

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As in 1.18, the narrator’s journey of escape suggests the conflict in absence and existential sense of dolor that provides the source of the poet’s visual creativity; likewise the setting forms a suitable backdrop for the speaker’s presentation of the dramatic situation in medias res, necessitating the process of abstraction and re-construction of events preceding his current predicament (et merito ...). The ecphrastic quality is suggested immediately by the adumbrated landscape setting (desertas ... alcyonas, Cassiopé, ingrato litore). Particularly striking is the speaker’s appeal to the alcyonas in line 2, which, like the effect of Venus’ doves that we saw in 3.3.31 (and the argutas aves at 1.18.30) enhances the sense of the scene’s reality, as does the absence of mythological exempla.

On the one hand then the scene demands sharp visualization, with the synaesthesia of aspice… inrepat in line 6 and his appeal to the aura, and Cassiopé… visura, as inanimate nature witnesses his flight. Yet the location of the narrator’s lament has been particularly argued over. This centres on whether parva… harena in line 8 refers to coastal sands, or, in the light of iniqua vada in line 10, sands of the sea bed, and so it is unclear whether he is on a ship in stormy sea or stranded on shore, but such arguments stem from a fallible, overly literal approach. I suggest rather that the landscape setting and circumstances of the journey are kept deliberately confused, oblique and abstract, an effect that indeed heightens the poem’s qualities of enargeia. A parallel can be drawn with Attis’ lament on the shores of Phrygia in Catullus 63, where again the landscape is merely adumbrated. As Attis awakens in the shadows of the cold and dark mountainous forests, the scene of his frenetic worship of the goddess Cybele, a ‘shadowy realm that the imagination can hardly penetrate’ (gelida stabula (53), opaca latibula (54), like the ignotis silvis in 1.17.17) he gazes from the shoreline towards the homeland to picture the life he has abandoned. As Leach notes, ‘repetition of these indefinite words accomplishes what precise description might actually do less effectively’, rather like the poet’s adjectives of abandonment here, in the contrast

442 Like Baker I disagree here with Camps and Richardson, both of whom take Cassiopé as the harbour town on Corcyra, since the topography is too specific. The constellation as a more generalized indicator of sea-voyaging is more suitable here. See Baker 2000.155.

443 See Solmsen 1962.75-79 for the differing opinions on this.

444 Contrast for instance the precision of Virgil’s picture of the harbour in Aen. 1.159-169 or the sacral-idyllic scenes of Prop. 2.13.33-34 and 2.19.11-16 with the vague setting at the opening of 1.17.

445 Leach 1998.119.
between the homeland to which his mind is directed (*patria, bonis, amicis...gymnasiis Cat. 63.59-60*) and the forest behind him. As with the Catullan poem, Propertius’ civilized world in Rome forms a contrast by taking shape in familiar and distinct forms, and so shows how an external can mirror an internal psychological experience. The striking disparity between the imprecise and vaguely sketched opening with the sharply portrayed behaviour of Cynthia during the narrator’s imagined funeral at home, with its more precisely detailed imagery (*caros...crines* (21), *tenera....rosa* (22)), the closely paralleled and formal arrangement of lines 19 (*illic si qua meum sepelissent fata dolorem*), 21 (*illa meo caros donasset funere crines*) and the chiastic 23 (*illa meum extremo clamasset pulvere nomen*), with their central subjunctives and the anaphora of *illic, illa, illa*, as well as the alliterative ‘n’ sounds in *quando..labens...undas..mansuetis* (27-28), is highly ‘dream-like’, and conveys a gradual resolution of the narrator’s emotions through the contrast in viewing experience. Hence the symbolism of the poet’s imagined locations, closely aligned with their spatial relationships evoked through language, evinces a particular movement that appeals to the reader’s visual imagination.

Yet as Walde demonstrates, the psychological experience that these visualized scenes in 1.17 mirror is explored through a series of mythological episodes, since they obscure various poetological landscapes which are crucial to the poem’s sense and meaning. This is aided by the strong suggestion that the lover’s soliloquy consistently blurs the boundaries between the narrator and the absent Cynthia, partly through the self-reflexivity of the speech act (*aspice......minas* in line 6 seems deliberately ambiguous, addressed both to himself and to the absent Cynthia), as well as the fact that he takes her part too in lines 19-24, as he imagines her mourning his own funeral had he died in Rome. Indeed envisaging the figures of the poem in the context of their surroundings, through the imaginary scenes created through various intertexts, subsumes the figures into the settings, as the landscape takes on an identity of its own. Thus the *venti* of line 5 become the poetic equation of Cynthia herself, an extension of her power, and *aura* in line 6 the image which he is both captivated by and wishes to escape; the narrator’s absence from Cynthia only brings her image more forcefully back to his consciousness.

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446 Walde 2008.134-139.

447 Hodge and Buttimore 1977.185-186 note the ‘grim pun’ on *fata reponere* at line 11, suggesting both ‘to rehearse my death’ and ‘bury my corpse’ and the sudden dissolution of a positive and tender image in line 12 *ossaque nullia tuo nostra tenere sinu*, similar
Yet what Walde omits is the way the poet interrelates lyric and epic intertexts in a manner that highlights the poem’s position in the book as a whole. This centres around the narrator’s appeal to the alcyones in line 2, who as symbols of marital love and devotion, point to the transformed lovers Ceyx and Alcyone in Homer Iliad 9.561-564. While Alcyone’s fidelity is a reminder of the heroines of 1.15, the lover evidently views himself as an analogue of Ceyx the deserter, justly punished, yet he is also unmistakeably like the Ariadne of Catullus 64 and the opening of 1.3, abandoned on the shore (omniaque ingrato litore vota cadunt (line 4)), thus effecting the switch in the male/female orientation of Catullus’ tale that the poet’s departure into the realm of mythology often conveys. In this respect he is equally like Theseus in his initial admission of flight from his mistress (et merito, quoniam potui fugisse puellam (line 1), as the deserter becomes the deserted. Indeed the lack of clarity as to whether he is on land or still at sea promotes this double perspective. The thematic correspondence between two separate myths (Ceyx/Alcyone, Theseus/Ariadne) is particularly underlined by the similarity in setting (ingrato....litore (line 4)), contrasting verbally with the mansuetis litoribus that he prays he may be safely delivered to in line 28, namely Rome, civilisation in contrast to his present desolation. Propertius appears then to play one myth off against another, since the poem’s thrust involves replacing one myth of alienation with another of solidarity (a progression from an Ariadne/Theseus to an Ceyx/Alcyone situation), yet the attempt clearly fails, since a scene of separation still opens 1.18, despite the fact that in the climactic section of the poem Cynthia, from being a dry-eyed Theseus, comes increasingly closer to a faithful Alcyone in his imagination.

448 The myth involves a couple who were said to be so happy together in love that they boasted of their bliss. Stricken by Ate in retaliation, Ceyx was impelled to undertake a sea voyage, reluctantly leaving behind his wife in order to do so; wrecked in a storm, Ceyx drowned and was washed ashore. Alcyone, finding his remains, committed suicide, but Zeus, taking pity on the couple, joined them in death by turning them into kingfishers (Apollodorus 1.7.3).

449 She also notes how the scene is also reminiscent of the homesick Odysseus of Od. 5.82, who receives Calypso’s promise not to wreck his craft, as Ino Leucothoe comes to his aid as a sea-bird (p. 136). This is a neat reversal of the image at 1.15 where it is Calypso who sits weeping, but the socio-cultural isolation, the emphasis on desertion in desertus (2), ingrato (4), iniqua (10) and ignotis (17), echoing Cat. 64.164, 168 and 179 among numerous other lines, point to the latter as the more prominent intertext here. The merging of the narrator and his physical context is also similar to the description of Ariadne’s situation at Cat. 64.60-70 and 97-98, and like Ariadne (line 142), he indict the meaninglessness of his words. Hence Cynthia/Ariadne’s curse in 1.3 is most obviously fulfilled in a complete reversal of that earlier situation where Cynthia laments her abandonment.

450 Lines 21-22 also echo Cat. 64.160-163 where Ariadne imagines a similar tender scene. Leach 1966.216 notes the ironic undertones of mansuetus at 1.9.12, which here also undercuts the optimism at the end of 1.17, since the trials of love are shown to be more intimidating than those of the epic hero (1.9.19-22).
Thus 1.17, like 1.18, involves the type of illusionism employed by Second Style landscape painters, in placing the reader through sharp visualization within varied landscape settings that ‘break through’ the surface of the poem, creating the depth and space that is akin to the effect of ‘breaking through’ the wall in Second Style painting, allowing the reader to ‘project’ his own narrative, while the mythological parallels that undergird the poem both contribute to and undermine the sense of dramatic realism, a tension in the lover’s ‘dream-vision’ between an external and internal gaze in his vain attempt to transfer an image of separation to one of solidarity. Nature as the opposite of Roma may suggest simplicity, a lack of artifice and escape from the complexities of love, and so promote the ephrastic impulse for the ‘natural’ or unaffected, but it belies the poet’s artifice here. The Propertian narrator always portrays himself as the opponent of artifice, a reminder of 1.2 where his appeal to Cynthia to eschew artifice succeeds (since she is nuda like the heroines at opening of 1.3) and 1.15.23-24 where it fails, since it is commences a series of separation poems and it is the narrator who is forced to undergo this journey into the idyllic and heroic world of adventure. The correlation of thematic material in the two halves of the poem is thus registered through the tension between human and mythological lovers, a situation that recalls the poet’s programmatic statement in 1.1.29-30 (ferte per extrems gentes et ferte per unda / qua non ulla meum femina norit iter).

The poem thus reflects the lover’s attempts to play the role of the male, to assume an epic dimension for his visualized text, yet he remains as the frustrated gazer, like the Catullan heroine. (We recall that by the opening of Book Two on the other hand, the poet can propose Cynthia as a ‘second Helen’). Line 26 in particular shows the lover’s attempted final rejection of the Ariadne role in his appeal to the Nereids (candida felici solvite vela choro), but despite the suggestions of good omen in candida, the line is an ironic reminder of Aegeus’ fate in his command to Theseus from Catullus’ poem (candidaque intorti sustollant vela rudentes (Cat. 64.235)), with the implication that the lover will suffer in similar fashion, as Cynthia’s curse in 1.3 takes effect. The narrator re-enacts the roles of the abandoned heroines of 1.15, furthering the theme of separation and death, as he increasingly takes upon himself the burden of fidelity he transfers to Cynthia in earlier poems (1.2), culminating in his self-comparison to Protesilaus in 1.19, the epitome of the faithful lover, while Cynthia becomes increasingly distanced from the faithful mythological heroines with whom she is often compared.
This kind of ‘interassociative reading’ characterizes the type of response that has again been shown to have governed Roman sensibility towards visual art during this period, in particular the interest in the continuous narrative technique, the coalescence of two or more moments in time within a single picture frame, which places emphasis on the spectator’s contribution to and imaginative completion of the visual image. This can be seen for instance in the approach that Leach and others have adopted in the case of the two remaining narrative paintings from an original ensemble of three, of Perseus and Andromeda and Polyphemus and Galatea respectively, in a room from the Villa at Bostrecase from the early Third Style, another early example, like the Odyssey frieze, of the ‘mythological landscape’ tradition (figure 10). Again here the artist has used the metaphorical associations of landscape to guide the spectator’s response. Ling comments on the climate of unreality that these paintings evoke, for in both pictures the ‘absence of a visually consistent perspective is combined with an imprecision in the definition of topography’ regarding the divisions between land, sea and sky, to create a ‘dream world where time and space have no meaning’, an invitation ‘to enter into the exploration of myth as a vicarious world beyond the everyday’. ‘Each composition’, Leach writes, ‘centres around a lofty seaside crag that has been detached and brought forward from its background by dramatic highlighting of angles and planes. Thus focused, our attention falls upon the principal figures set off by the crags: Polyphemus and Galatea. Comparing the two panels, we notice that their placement of the principal masculine and feminine figures is in reverse. The position of the saviour, Perseus, hovering on his wings in one panel, is analogous to that of Galatea floating on her seabeast in the other. In each case the secondary action appears in the upper right-hand corner; the Cyclops’ stoning of Odysseus’ ship has its counterpart in the meeting of Perseus and Andromeda’s royal father.’ Similarities in visual patterns here belie differences in theme, for the two panels appear to contrast a futile love in the case of Odysseus with a rewarded love in the pact between Perseus and Cepheus. Yet at the same time they both stress the deceptions of the civilized world in contrast to an uncomplicated love heroically sought in a natural setting, like the exempla series of several poems of the Monobiblos, since the violence of the secondary action in the

452 Leach 1988.368.
453 Ibid.364-365.
Polyphemus panel reminds the viewer that the apparently peaceful scene in the same section of the Perseus panel belies hidden perils, since Andromeda is already engaged and Perseus will have to fight again. 454

This interplay of sameness and difference is very similar to the effects that Propertius creates both in 1.17 and indeed throughout the Monobiblos. While the scene is a clear reversal of 1.6 and 1.14 which emphasise servitude in love as opposed to epic travel, the opening scene of 1.17 creates a visual interaction with the mythological images of 1.15, in particular that of Calypso, with a similar reversal of the principal masculine and feminine figures, and picks up the more humourous undertones of that poem where the lover also plays the roles of both deserter and deserted. This could provide one possible explanation for the enigmatic opening et merito, quoniam potui fugisse puellam, and poses the question of whether the narrator will emulate Odysseus’ triumphant homecoming. 455 Yet this opening is also a reminder of the narrator’s inability to emulate Milanion’s heroic venture, since journeying implies regeneration or a new identity in love, and suggests that the optimism of reconciliation at the end of 1.17.25-28, with the appeal to the Nereids, will turn out to be futile.

At the same time, this encouragement we receive to create an interchange of significance between these images from myth can be supplemented by the way they solicit the reader’s gaze, in a similar way to the panels from Bostrecase. Fitzgerald has cogently argued that these two paintings essentially create two types of viewing experience that reflect two attitudes towards the world of mythology. In the Andromeda painting, both the surrounding figures and her central position channel the viewer’s gaze towards her static naked body, made more enticing by the cavernous rock that opens up behind her, whereas in the Polyphemus painting, the eye cannot settle on the even more enticingly presented semi-naked Galatea at the bottom left of the picture, set against a fanning cavernous rock, since it is persistently distracted by the larger and more prominent figure of Polyphemus in the centre at the foot of a tall column, who in turn expresses a hopeless longing, a frustration that is matched by his repeated, though this time blinded figure at the top right, throwing boulders at Odysseus’ departing ship. While the first he argues suggests the availability to the viewer of the world of

454 Ibid.366. She refers to Apollodorus Library 2.4.3, which mentions the conspiracy of Phineus, the king’s brother, to whom Andromeda had been betrothed.

455 The visual echoes of 1.15 are matched by verbal ones, the similarity of aspice quam saevas increpat aura minas at 1.17.6 to aspice me quanto rapiat fortuna periclo at 1.15.3, and like Calypso (iniusto multa locuta salo 1.15.12) he utters complaints to the sea; the waves in 1.15.10, like the halcyons in 1.17, are desertis, and there is also an echo in aequorea (1.17.25) of aequoribus (1.15.10).
mythology, the second is an affecting and poignant image of our alienation from that world, accentuated by the allusions of the column and the rock to the male and female organs respectively.456

Just as these artistic panels exploit their associative potential through the way they elicit the viewer’s gaze, so the various mythical landscape depictions in the Monobiblos create a similar contrast in the viewer’s experience. We noted earlier how the beauty of the heroines and the emphasis on brightness in 1.2.15-22 are primarily scopophilic, as are the figures at 1.4.5-6, while the opening images of 1.3.1-6 sexualise the reader’s gaze through landscape, in particular the juxtaposition of languida and desertis...litoribus, and the sexual overtones of the ‘exhausted’ bacchant on the grassy verge of the river Apidanus. On the other hand, the contrast between the movement of the male deserters and the immobility of the heroines in 1.15.15-22 reminds us that the worlds of Calypso and Hypsipyle are only tangentially and frustratingly related to those of Odysseus and Jason, born away by the winds, and Protesilaus also expresses a hopeless yearning in 1.19.9. In the same way while the opening poems show an increasing sense of the poet’s recognition of his own mastery of the visual medium, later poems strongly suggest his resigned acceptance of the vanity of such ecphrastic endeavour, filled as they are with images of alienation and frustrated gazing. Hence when he imagines Cynthia ‘shouting out’ (1.17.23) and the rocks reverberating with his nomen in 1.18, we are reminded of Cynthia’s appeal in 2.26a.12 (saepe meum nomen iam peritura vocas). This is further suggested by the echo of clamat and nomine in 18.18 and 32 from 17.23; the poet’s ability to shape reality, the maintenance of his nomen, is profoundly linked to the enargeia of his text.

Propertius’ use of landscape settings to provide various emotional environments for Cynthia and as a metaphorical way of underscoring the narrator’s feelings through poetic style can also be seen in 1.8 and 1.11. In 1.11, where Cynthia has departed for ‘Baiae’, a leisure resort well-known for illicit affairs and moral turpitude,457 the narrator’s imaginings of Cynthia’s activities in distant climes create emotions that are evoked mimetically through the framing of language and poetic structure. The elaborate language and topographical references at the opening of this poem, referring to the alteration of the landscape through two great feats of engineering - Hercules’ building

456 Fitzgerald 1995.144-146.
of the *semita* (line 2) and Agrippa’s ‘Herculean’ project in line 3 - render graphic the danger to Cynthia’s emotions at Baiae, marked by *cessantem* (line 1) and *mirantem* (line 3), poised at the centre of each of these lines. The landscape here almost takes on the *amator’s* paranoia in the allusion to Hercules’ heroic deed and the exotic tones of *Thesproti...regno* (line 3), which serve to enhance the sense of Cynthia’s distance from the *amator*. The modest activities of boating and swimming which the lover goes on to envision for Cynthia in lines 9-14, on the other hand, contrast with these imposing sites, while the language this time creates a sense of confinement; *te* in line 9 and *clausam* in line 11 place Cynthia in a suspended passive attitude as the object of *cumba moretur* (line 10) and *lympha teneat* respectively, and the gentle water of lines 11-12 represents a stabilising of the emotions and symbolizes the wishful quality of the thinking with which the lover collects and assures himself. Such limitation of place and movement thus correspond to a more reflective rationalisation of Cynthia’s fidelity, yet the *parvula cumba* of line 10, set against the mountainous backdrop, the lingering sense of *moretur*, and the imagined motion of Cynthia’s arms (*alternae facilis cedere lympha manu* (line 12)) still creates a sense of the lingering fear of a rival on a *tacito litore* (line 14) which suggests the complicity of the ‘secret shoreline’ in Cynthia’s infidelity.

Such skilful use of language to stir so empathetic a response is emphasised by contrast with the final nine lines, a resolution of feeling, place and style (*mater, vita, tu, domus, parentes, amici* (lines 21-25)), and the image of the *domus* with which a true, unaffected and faithful Cynthia is identified - *tu mihi sola domus, Cynthia, sola parentes* (line 23). This abrupt movement from instability to stability in the geography of the lover’s mind, between various emotional environments that appeal to the reader’s visual imagination, can also be seen in 1.8, which like 1.17 pitches the reader in *medias res*, as the *amator*, like the deserted Ariadne, voices his complaints from a deserted shore; yet the fiction of the poem is that Cynthia is there, listening to the lover’s prayers - *tune igitur demens, nec te mea cura moretur?* (1.8a.1) - for in the second half she appears to be persuaded by his pleas: *hic erit! hic iurata manet! rumpantur iniqui* (1.8b.27). Again the harsh, distant regions through which Cynthia travels at the opening contrast with the simplicity of the *domus* as the ‘home’ for the

458 The general consensus among commentators is that line 3 refers to Agrippa’s construction of the Portus Iulius in 37 BC which connected the Lucrine lake with the sea and Lake Avernus.

459 See Saylor 1975 for further on this movement from instability to stability in 1.11.
lover’s affections at the end of the second, and is again in keeping with Propertius’ tendency to characterize the success of his unorthodox love in the conventional terms of Roman family and marriage. One notices in particular at the opening how the harsh landscape through which Cynthia travels is evoked through the alliteration of consonants (tune audire potes vesani murmura ponti….tu pedibus teneris positas fulcire pruin nas (lines 5, 7)), the synaesthetic quality of language (while the appeal is mainly to sight, fulcire also conveys the sound of Cynthia’s ‘dainty feet’ against the harsh frost), and the personification of the boat on which she travels, since the dura domina of 1.7.6 becomes the dura navis of line 6. As in 1.11, the dramatic impact of the language with which the narrator expresses the simplicity of his love for Cynthia at the end of the poem, is heightened by association with the more extreme imagery that precedes to create the same high emotional pitch. The visual imagery of the poem thus contrasts scenes of abandonment and desolation in the first half (nec tibi Tyrrhena solvatur funis harena, / neve inimica meas elevet aura preces / et me defixum vacua patiatur in ora / crudelem infesta saepe vocare manu! (11-16)), suggesting the world of epic adventure, with the intimacy of the domus in the second (illa vel angusto mecum requiescere lecto……mea (33-34)).

But one can also consider the importance of enargeia with regards to the sequence and interrelation of these two poems. In the structure of the Monobiblos, 1.8a and b have been shown to balance 1.11 and 1.12. While 1.8b suggests the success of his pleas in 1.8a, since we find that Cynthia had never departed, the opening of 1.12 (lines 3-4) confirms the failed attempts of 1.11, a balance that contrasts the growing ‘success’ of the first half of the book with the increasing ‘failure’ of the second. Yet what is particularly notable here is the way our recognition of this balance is guided by enargeia’s rhetorical force, which like 1.17 entangles the erotic and poetic to exploit a contrasting ‘exterior’ and ‘interior’ gaze. Through enargeia Propertius both evokes art and vies with art through his visualized text, a process that highlights further the poet’s thematic engagement with the poetry of Cornelius Gallus.

460 See in particular 1.8.27-34, hic erat!…..illa carus ego et per me carissima Roma/ dicitur…illa vel angusto mecum requiescere lecto / et quocumque modo maluit esse mea.

461 See Otis 1965.28-29 and King 1975.118-119. 1.8 is divided by no extant manuscript, but is regarded as two separate poems, 1.8a/1.8b, by most editors because of the awkward transition in tone and addressee at line 27. Yet as Quinn notes, it hardly matters if they are treated as two connected poems or a single poem in two parts, since they are clearly complementary (Quinn 1963.242-253). For instance the rivalis referred to in line 45 only makes sense in light of the scornful istic of line 3. I treat 1.8 as comprising two separate but interconnected poems (a and b from line 27), which is consistent with the formal structure of the Monobiblos that I recognise. See n. 420.
As in 1.17, so in 1.8a and b, questions of fidelity and infidelity in love map onto similar questions in poetry. As has been recognized, 1.8a is a propempticon, a conventional rhetorical form appropriate to a departure. Indeed there is clear evidence that Propertius’ poem is strongly influenced by Gallus’ propempticon as referred to in Eclogue 10, since the elements correspond so closely to 1.8a, and indeed both follow Menander’s prescription, the attempt to dissuade the traveller from departing by emphasizing the dangers, followed by acceptance and good wishes.

1.8.1-16 and line 7 in particular (tu pedibus teneris positas fulcire pruinas) show close resemblance to Ecl. 10.47-49: Alpinas a!, dura, nives et frigora Rheni / me sine sola vides. A, te ne frigora laedant! / A, tibi ne teneras glacies secet aspera plantas! This modelling is further supported by a possible allusion to Virgil’s text in Vergiliis (line 10) and Servius’ comment on Ecl. 10.46: hi autem omnes versus Galli, sunt de ipsius translati carminibus. The imitation is more than a mere compliment however. The poet’s Gallan style propempticon succeeds, since Cynthia destitit ire novas vias (line 30); rather she becomes immobilized, remains in Roma, and stays on the notas vias of Gallus that Amor remembers so well in 1.1.18. Indeed she is overcome by the narrator’s preces, the kind of preces perhaps with which Milanion overcomes Atalanta in Gallus’ account, but which the narrator only alludes to in 1.1.16 (tantum in amore preces et benefacta valent).

If Gallus is the most important model in 1.8a, in 1.8b the narrator is suddenly famed amid a host of poets, since there are echoes not only of Virgil/Gallus in Eclogue 10, but also Catullus, another Eclogue of Virgil, and Horace. So the Propertian narrator too, with the help of the Muses and Apollo, joins the ranks of the gods and the great lyric poets. The angustus lectus of line 33 is an unambiguous reference to

462 I elaborate on King’s recognition of the important position of 1.8 as the first time Cynthia is estranged from the amator; the lover takes on Cynthia’s cura in 1.3.46 which she lacks here. Hence the poet writes aliquid durum in dominum (1.7.6), and so fulfils his boast in 1.7.21 (tum me non humilem mirabere saepe poetam). While 1.6 is a question of lifestyles, the ‘epic’ tendencies of a willingness to go abroad contrasted with the preference for life duro sidere (1.6.36) at home with Cynthia, 1.7 espouses the poetic values, elegy as opposed to epic, that correspond to this preference, and 1.8 merges the erotic with the poetic; compare in particular 1.8b.33-36 and 1.6.14. The narrator’s confidence in appropriating epic values for his elegiac poetry is thus underlined by the successful attempt at overcoming this ‘epic’ venture through his carmen.

463 This was first formulated by Menander. Quinn 1963.239ff. discusses Horace Odes 3.27 and Ovid Amores 2.11 as similar poems.

464 See Spengel 1853 Rhetores Graeci 3.396-397. That the propempticon allowed formal expression to the conflicting emotions of the one left behind was what probably drew Propertius to the conventional form.


466 See Gold 1985-86.151-152. She highlights Cat 66.69ff., Ecl. 5.57ff. and Horace Od. 1.1.36, as prominent intertexts.
Callimachus, and indeed the final lines of the poem suggest that the poet exceeds his rivals in both literary and erotic terms:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nunc mihi summa licet contingere sidera plantis:} & \\
\text{sive dies seu nos venerit, illa meast!} & \\
\text{nec mihi rivalis certos subdect amores:} & \\
\text{ista meam norit gloria canitiem.} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

(1.8.42-46)

Gold recognizes the importance of the poem’s movement from the lover and Cynthia’s personal world to the world of poetry, in the switch from the second to the third person address. Yet the model text that is most apparent here, especially in *dotatae Hippodamiae* of 1.8b.35, but has been less noted, is Pindar’s epinician ode of *Olympia* 1, which celebrated Elis, the locale of the Olympic games and a demonstration of wealth and power.\(^{467}\) The poet’s emulation of Pindar’s lyric exposition of the epic way of life is particularly significant for understanding Propertius’ mission as a creative poet and the evidence for a Pindaric modelling is also strengthened through the reference to Apollo and the Muses at 1.8.41, Pindar’s own tutelary deities.\(^{468}\) Indeed the echoes of Pindar become more persistent as the poem progresses,\(^{469}\) as the victory of elegy over epic is cast in the form most appropriate for victory, the epinician ode. Propertius’ Callimachean text acquires Pindaric mythical status in 1.8b; *Amor* may have been slow to help in 1.1 (*in me tardus Amor non ullas cogitat artes*), but not Apollo here (*neque amanti tardus Apollo* 1.8b.41).

Hence as Gold notes, the future hopes of 1.8a have come true by the poetic time of 1.8b, for only in poetry can time be manipulated, as the narrator’s Gallan style elegy brings him literary fame, since his hopes that poetry can influence the future (*illa futura meast* (1.8a.26)) can refer not only to keeping her as a lover but also as his poetic inspiration until he dies, and *gloria* (46) is often used of his hoped for fame as a poet.\(^{470}\) Indeed it is the poet’s *enargeia* that halts Cynthia’s spatial mobility, since she remains *defixa*, the narrator’s mirror image, as the lover hoped (1.8.15), and as is reflected in the triumphant boast to Ponticus in 1.9 (*me dolor et lacrimae merito fecere peritum* 1.9.7). Gold notes how in 1.8a.7 Propertius substitutes *pedibus* for *plantis* at *Ecl.* 10.49, and

\(^{467}\) See Pindar *Ol.* 1.77-78. As we noted in 1.2, the story of Hippodamia, the kingdom of whose dowry was Elis, also involved the rivalry of suitors.

\(^{468}\) See *Ol.* 1.11 and Pausanias 10.24.5. This harks back to the appeal to Cynthia at 1.2.27-28. See also 3.1.19-20, 3.3.13ff., 27ff. and 4.6.69ff.

\(^{469}\) Eg. 1.8.43-44 / *Ol.* 1.115-116, 1.8.46 / *Ol.* 1.83-84.

\(^{470}\) See 2.7.17-18, 3.9.9 and 18.
then reinserts *plantis* at 1.8b.43 in reference to poetic immortality. Hence the image of ‘treading the highest stars in heaven’ (*nunc mihi summa licet contingere sidera plantis* 1.8b.43), a neat inversion of Virgil’s line, reverses the image of humiliation in 1.1.4: *caput impositis pressit Amor pedibus*, as the Gallan narrator appears to attain the distinction and exemplarity that mythical status holds.

The visual dynamic here is very similar to 1.17, where Cynthia’s conflation with the setting also designates a particular literary territory, and in both poems the concealment of talking to Cynthia herself progressively fades, suggesting a deeper engagement with poetry. Indeed Propertius’ vision of poetic immortality here, I suggest, replays the kind of fantasy that could be encouraged by contemplation of the erotic panels of human and mythological lovers from *Cubicula* B and D of the *Villa della Farnesina*, set against a background reflecting diverse cultural and historical erudition, in which the viewer is persuaded to see an ongoing mediation between human and divine and to participate vicariously in the world of romance and luxury that this evokes. Yet at the same time, just as the paintings primarily create the sense of an ever-elusive fulfillment of desire, (the lovers can only look but never touch), so the poems of the *Monobiblos* are poems *in absentia*, relying on a dynamic of movement between an ‘exterior’ and ‘interior’ perspective. Like the paintings, the poems create that sense of anticipation implied by *mora*, for while the former encourage the viewer to project various possible narratives into the erotic scenario, the dramatic effectiveness of Propertius’ poetry takes its cue from the complexities of viewing such scenes, evoking the combination of pain and pleasure that such intense romanticism suggests.

Pucci has pointed to the implicit and conceptual connection that is drawn in 1.8.1 (*nec te mea cura moretur?*) and 22 (*nam me...tuo limine verba querar*) between the ideas of *amor*, *mora* and *limen*, which harks back to 1.1.35-36 (*sua quemque moretur / cura, neque assueto mutet amore torum*): ‘….the text suggests the idea of not crossing back across the threshold once the lovers are at home and their love has become a familiar habit (*neque assueto mutet amore torum* (the MSS reading))…..a sort of ‘detention’ within the house ensures the continuation of happy love. For *limen* indicates the threshold, an open space, and *mora* designates an odd temporality, implying a sort of lingering in view of a future thing or a detention from something.’

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471 There is the same switch from the second to the third person address to Cynthia at 1.17.13ff. as there is at 1.8.27.

472 Pucci 1978.53.
At the same time the *limen* is often used to designate the beloved herself (to Bassus: *heu nullo limine carus eris* 1.4.22, to Gallus: *tu vero quoniam semel es peritus amore / utere: non alio limine dignus eras* 1.13.34), or, as in the case of 2.6.23-24 (*felix Admeti coniux, et lectus Ulixis, / et quaecumque viri femina limen amat*) the house of the husband and therefore the husband himself. Thus crossing the *limen* and the pursuit and fulfilment of the lover’s desire, possession of the mistress, amounts to the same thing. As the separating boundary between the sacred and profane and as possessing a ritual function within marriage, the lover’s desire to cross the *limen* establishes his desire to elevate his pursuit to mythical status. Hence like the *venti* in 1.17, the *limen* here in 1.8 simultaneously acts as an image of absence and a personification of denied presence.

The lover’s eventual crossing of the *limen* and hence conquest of his mistress (*vicimus* (29), *certos amores* (45)) enhances the *cubiculum* to this same mythical status: *illa vel angusto mecum requiescere lecto / et quocumque modo maluit esse mea, / quam sibi dotatae regnum vetus Hippodamiae / et quas Elis opes apta pararat equis.* (1.8.33-36), yet also prescribes entrance into a particular literary territory. In specifying this territory, the *limen*, like Cynthia, thus constitutes the contacts between Propertius’ language and that of the poetic tradition in which he stands, and crossing it an assertion of victory over his rivals.

The visual impulse of Propertian poetry is integral to this constant fluctuation between separation and solidarity in the *Monobiblos*, the attempt to attain a univocal ‘presence’, consisting of a masterful poetic series of placements and displacements around the *limen*. Indeed this movement from pictorial representation to poetic response is exactly what we saw in 2.31, 3.3 and 2.12, stressing how poetry achieves what painting is unable to do by its *doctrina* and engagement with poetic tradition. Propertius dramatizes this movement in 1.8, as he does classically in 1.3, where Cynthia usurps the narrator’s dream-vision, and her ‘coming to life’ in song, the ultimate merging of viewer and artwork, is drawn in the language of Catullan *ecphrasis*, demonstrating how language always intrudes upon this ecphrastic urge, a tension that maps onto the interface of elegy and epic.

This tension gains added point from the poem with which it is often thematically paired, 1.11, which involves a similar fusion of erotic and poetic language. The distinct parallels between the two poems can particularly be seen in the central sections, 1.11.9-
16 and 1.8.9-20, which both employ imagery with erotic but also distinctively poetic connotations alluding to the ‘slim’ style of the elegiac mode to stress the dream-like effect of the narrator’s imaginative attempt to rationalize Cynthia’s infidelity, proclaim his own fidelity, and recuperate her into his elegiac verse. Indeed the Propertian elegiac motifs with which the narrator claims to be able to assist Gallus in 1.10 are here far more prevalent, and show distinct echoes of what we saw in 3.3, where the waters of Mt Helicon are viewed, as they were by Callimachus in the prologue to the Aitia, as the source of poetic inspiration. Yet this merging of the erotic and poetic is even more prominent in 1.11, with remis minitis (9), parvula cumba (10), tenui unda (11) and molliter compositam (14) in reference to the lover’s presumed rival (an te nescio quis simulatis ignibus ......carminibus 7-8); ‘come back to my love’ effectively equates with ‘come back to my Callimachean song’. Moreover the eroticization of the landscape, with litoribus 2...litora 29 framing the poem, a similar framing to 1.17.4 and 28 (litore...litoribus), links Cynthia with the various figures from myth in landscape settings. In this way the poet both recalls Gallus (in 1.8a) and stands apart, and this gains added point from the poem’s close correspondence with 1.10; alterna.... manu, evoking the motion of Cynthia’s swimming arms, recalls the in alternis vocibus of 1.10.10, referring to Gallus’ own attempts to speak to the puella in elegy. Indeed the narrator’s appeal nostri....memores....noctes (line 5) and his use of meminisce in line 16 footnote the same issues of allusion as meminisce 1.10.3.....nec meminisce 1.10.25-26, and hence again recall the notas vias of Gallan verse at 1.1.17. By deliberately adopting the elegiac motifs outlined in 1.10 by which he professes to be able to remedy his predecessor’s poetic failings, he vies with Gallus’ own blandos susurros (line 13), recalling the blanditiae of the elegiac mode (1.10.6) and the simulatis ignibus (line 7) which the narrator witnesses at the opening of 1.10.

At the same time, the close correspondence with 1.8a shows how similarity in visual patterning elides with difference. The more ponderous si quid tibi triste libelli / attulerint nostri: culpa timoris erit (lines 19-20) that follows the strong elegiac sentiments of lines 9-16 echoes the rebuke to Ponticus (tristis istos sepone libellos

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473 Eg. 1.8.14 and 1.11.11, remo, 1.8.19 and 1.11.9. utinam at 1.8a.9 and 1.11.9, introducing these sections, stresses the ‘dream-like’ effect of both passages.

474 We saw the importance of visual art in the poet’s initiation in 3.3, as in the recusatio of 3.9, in both of which his poetry is described as a tiny skiff skirting the shore (3.3.23-24, 3.9.3-4 and 35ff.), similar to the merging of the erotic and poetic through water imagery in 1.8 and 1.11 (cf. the taunt to Ponticus at 1.9.15-16 (.....nunc tu / insanus medio flumine quaeris aquam)). See Boucher 1965.169ff. and Gold 1985-86.152ff. for the association of water imagery with the poetry of Callimachus and Philetas.
1.9.13-14) as well as the advice to Gallus (\textit{tu cave ne tristi cupias pugnare puellae} (1.10.21)), where the use of \textit{tristis} is closely associated with epic verse. Hence the tenor of the poem suddenly turns from the ‘dream-like’ Gallan sequence to epic, and fails despite the fact that these lines exalt the \textit{domus} just as 1.8b does. As Baker notes, line 23 (\textit{tu mihi sola domus, tu, Cynthia, sola parentes}), closely imitates Andromache’s plea to Hector not to return to battle for fears he will die in \textit{Iliad} 6.429-430: ‘Hector you are my father and mother, my brother, and my stalwart husband’; Cynthia plays Hector to the narrator’s Andromache and neglects his advice, since the opening of 1.12 shows that they are still separated.\footnote{Baker 2000.123 notes the long literary ancestry of the sentiment from Homer.} This is very different from the emulative impulse of 1.8, which improvises on earlier passages with deliberate reference to their existence as literature. Rather, in the inert epic line the poem mutates, becomes ‘other’.\footnote{See Conte 1986.66-67 on the differences between ‘integrative’ and ‘reflective’ allusion.} The increased epic spirit of the final lines, urging Cynthia to quit Baiae, in the repetition of \textit{tristis} 19 and 24 and in the language of discord - \textit{discidium} (28), \textit{inimica} (29) - contradicting the lover’s advice to Ponticus at 1.9.14 (\textit{cane quod quaevis nosse puella velit}), underlines the irony of the lover’s advice to Gallus in the second half of 1.10. Whereas the unsuccessful rival of 1.8a.5 offers ‘epic’ trials for Cynthia to endure (\textit{audire murmura ponti}), in 1.11.13 the successful rival speaks to her through blandos susurros, highlighting the \textit{alternae voces} of Gallus’ own words in 1.10.

The evidence for this kinship with the visual arts that I have argued for, in the balances and contrasts between various poems of the \textit{Monobiblos}, is strengthened when one considers the further changes in decorative ensembles of the early and later stages of the Third Style. Houses from a later period than I have considered show no difference in terms of colour between the background of these panel pictures and the remaining elements of the wall. Thus the emphasis falls on the iconography of the figures within these panels, and the wider expanses of the wall lose their architectural illusionistic significance.\footnote{See Ling 1991.112, also Clarke 1991.64.} In addition one starts to see a greater proliferation of panel pictures involving mythical figures, rather than the depiction of human figures as in \textit{Cubicula} B and D of the \textit{Villa della Farnesina}, while the larger central \textit{aediculae} begin to lose their prominence in the overall scheme. Thus as Ling notes, it is during the early Third Style that the ‘picture’ increasingly begins to triumph over the ‘prospect’, aided
by the increasingly precise renderings, ornamental detail, and abandoning of structural realism, which take the viewer into a world of pure fantasy, without any attempt to create the illusion of projected space.\textsuperscript{478} Hence what is provoked by this change of emphasis is not so much ‘thinking away’ the spatial limits of the wall, as with the Second Style, since the wider surfaces no longer demand attention but rather serve to guide the viewer’s attention to similar or contrasting gestures of the figures within these panels, involving minute examination demanded by the rich iconographical systems.\textsuperscript{479} Leach remarks on this semantic change in the design of \textit{pinacothecae} concomitant with the Third Style, in which the tendency towards simplicity of background brings forward the mythological panels as the main focus of interest, rather than the illusionary pretensions from the simulation of wealth and status through Greek imports of different styles and periods, typical of late Second Style \textit{pinacothecae}.\textsuperscript{480} Bergmann in her study of a room from the House of Jason (ca. 30-20 BC) also notes how connections through similar patterns or colours in more privileged areas of the house tended to set off the mythological panels to best effect, emphasising similar or contrasting postures or gestures between figures (\textbf{figure 11}).\textsuperscript{481}

Now with this in mind there are some notable parallels between this shift in emphasis from the late second to the early Third Style and the changes in visual strategy that we find between Books One and Two of Propertius. Indeed Leach has made the point that as the books progress, the reader becomes less often a fellow-participant in the poetic exploration of experience than a passive spectator, since ‘the poet as lover relives past experiences celebrated by mythology’;\textsuperscript{482} this is very different from the dissonance between the world in which the lovers move and the world of myth in the \textit{Monobiblos} that can create various resonances within the dramatic conceit of the poem. Similarly, the far more extensive use and often rapid accumulation of myths characteristic of Book Two create interrelationships that are based more on content than on pictorialism as is the case in the \textit{Monobiblos}. The diminishing of any attempt to create the sense of an authentic world outside of the text that results from this is

\textsuperscript{478} Ling 1991.52-53.

\textsuperscript{479} Peters 1963.60-61 also remarks on the lack of uninterrupted landscapes, which might be peopled with human figures, in the upper zones of Third Style \textit{pinacothecae} as is the case at the end of the Second Style.

\textsuperscript{480} Leach 1988.377. Ling 1991.53 also remarks on how the imitation of improbable wealth was gradually displaced by more substantive exhibitions of culture.

\textsuperscript{481} Bergmann 1996.241.

\textsuperscript{482} Leach 1988.430.
consistent with the way many of the poems of Book Two tend not to follow in a rational
development of ideas, but rather the fluctuation of the emotions which, as several
commentators have recognised, is embodied in the incoherent logic or structure of many
of its poems.

Yet the importance of visuality in the construction of the puella in the opening
three poems of the Monobiblos is no less evident at the opening of Book Two, through
this same sense of deferral, the creation of ‘narrative desire’ through the paragone with
visual art, although again they offer a more theoretical perspective on the dramatic
emphasis the poet places on this process of initiation in the Monobiblos. Indeed the
opening of 2.1.1-14, which while harking back to the visual description of the puella at
the opening of 1.2 in the reference to her Coa veste (2.1.6), also looks ahead to the
lavish description of the temple of Apollo in 2.31, since the marble statue of Phoebus
with its tacita ...lyra in 2.31.6, explicitly contrasting the poet’s elegiac song with visual
art, is a clear echo of the description of Cynthia at 2.1, sive lyrae carmen digitis
percussit eburnis....invento causas mille poeta novas (lines 9-14). Yet here in 2.1 the
derived pleasures from viewing Cynthia’s adorned body also evidently substitute
directly for the pleasures of epic, the visually poetic textual pleasure as a substitute for
the erotic pleasure that can only be described in epic language and culminates in
death.483

The poet’s affiliation to ‘Cynthia’, and hence to elegy as his chosen genre, is thus
marked, as in 1.2, by her visually poetic adornment, clothing, hair, and ‘ivory fingers’
(line 9), but then the erotic ‘battles’ he conducts with her when she is nuda mark the
transition to the poet’s recusatio and the ecphrasis of epic themes, as opposed to the
ecphrasis of her visual adornment at the poem’s opening. Hence much of the language
of 2.1.13 that leads into the narrator’s recusatio (seu nuda erepto mecum luctatur
amictu) is drawn from the epic register. As Greene notes, the implicit construction of
masculine subjectivity in the Monobiblos here becomes explicit, the poet’s assumption
of epic experience in his elegiac life.484

The emphasis on Cynthia’s hair, hands, height and gait at the opening of 2.1 is
immediately taken up as the theme of 2.2, yet here the poem is more explicitly visual

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483 2.1.71-78. See Papanghelis 1987.20-49 on the death theme of 2.1. The poet’s strategy here is very similar to 2.15, where again
the passage swerves away from its strongly visualised opening (oculi sunt in amore duces…line 12), just before detailing the lovers’
sexual consummation in line 13, to the mythological exempla series, three of whom are depicted as naked, and in which Paris is
destroyed by a naked Helen (perisse line 13) and Endymion lulled into a death-like sleep.

484 Greene 2000.
and pictorial, just as 1.2 is more strongly pictorial than 1.1. Cynthia is now suddenly placed on a mythical plane, which is what we might expect after the pronouncement of 2.1.14 (tum vero...Iliadas), and the mythical exempla are drawn from Homer and epic. Despite his intended resistance (liber eram et vacuo meditabar vivere lecto 2.2.1) he is again compelled by her physical beauty, but rather than the sudden shift to the epic recusatio that Cynthia’s nudity provokes in the programmatic 2.1, here epic violence lingers just beneath the beauty of the heroines. As in 2.1, visuality is shown to be integral to the poet’s inspiration, but again the poem ends with thoughts turned to failure, and the anxiety with which he entertains thoughts of the future and the effects of time as he awakens from his erotic fantasy (lines 15-16); the sudden gulf between the heightened world of mythical existence and the recognition of its impossibility highlights his anxiety to sustain the visual dimensions and properties of language.

Overlooked in 2.2 (Iuppiter, ignosc pristina furta tua line 4) now in 2.3, on account of her beauty, the puella will be Jove’s first Roman consort (2.3.30). Yet much of the perplexity caused by the poem revolves around the question of why the narrator firstly denies the power of her beauty, (in itemising and then discounting fragments of her body that Roman elegy held to be so compelling in lines 9-16), but then focuses on that very beauty as the quality which so inspires him. Indeed the narrator is evidently consumed by his puella’s forma and facies despite his protestations to the contrary, as the celebration of his mistress’ facies in line 39 (digna quidem facies, pro qua vel obiret Achilles) after the renunciation of line 9 (nec me tam facies, quamvis sit candida...) reveals. Spelman argues convincingly that this contradiction is central to the poet’s construction of beauty itself as a separated object, dependent on the creativity of the poet, as the cause of his incessant desire, rather than a woman that he loves. At the same time several aspects of the poem point to the parallels between the painter and poet as the creator of such beauty. Just as the latter describes the puella’s eyes as faces (line 12) in their effect on him, so whether the painter shows the product of his ars ‘to easterners or westerners’ he will ‘set them on fire’ (uret 43). Indeed lines 41-42 (si

485 King 1981.173 notes how in the references to Ischomache and Brimo, violence is implied in their very etymologies. This also harks back to the repetition of sive...seu...sive...seu...seu...seu in 2.1.1-16 in the evocation of Cynthia’s physical beauty, suggesting an epic catalogue and the potential for epic violence beneath.

486 See Richlin 1992.41-44.

487 Spelman 1999. In fact Cynthia’s name is not mentioned at all in 2.1-2.3, yet there is an interesting sudden shift from the second to the third person in line 2.3.33, the same shift as at 1.3.34, sic ait..., which serves to objectify the puella in a similar way.

488 Benediktson 1989.15-16 notes the same contrast between east and west in lines 9-22 and 33-46.
quis vult fama tabulas ...in arte meam) point to the conclusion that while Cynthia is certainly indebted to the painter, he is in turn indebted to the poet’s manipulation. This can be seen in particular in lines 9-16, which overlay elements of her physical body with the exotic imports of empire, such as the Arabian silk and Spanish vermilion, that progressively blur the distinction between her ‘natural’ beauty and the visual and superficial adornment by which he describes her, a very similar strategy to what we find in 1.2 and 1.3.

While this again clearly involves the more direct incorporation of heroic epic into elegiac verse than what we find in the Monobiblos, and demonstrates his love as an epic experience, I suggest here that while the shift in the poem’s logic on the one hand dramatises the poet’s power in defining how Cynthia’s attributes may be perceived, at the same time the disavowals mark the difficulties and anxieties involved in his attempt to incorporate visual *forma* into his poetry; that he cannot withstand its dominance, as it were, any more than he can completely attain it. Indeed 2.3 ends with this same sense of anxiety regarding the loss of the *puella* that we see in 2.1 and 2.2 (*his saltēm ut teneār iam finibus! ei mihi, si quis, acrius ut moriār venerīt alter amor 2.3.45–46*), and shows the same complex association of *ars* and *natura*, poetry and visual art. The emphasis on the *puella*’s face, hair and clothing at 2.3.9-16 is a reminder of the opening of 2.1, and serves to highlight the contrast between the visual stasis of art, which invariably comes to the fore when elegy defines itself in opposition to epic, and the temporal movement of poetry.

The opening three poems of Book Two thus document the narrator’s return to, as opposed to his initiation into elegy, through this same *paragone* with visual art. Indeed the implications of each poem are realised in the successive one. The visual features that inspire the poet to write in 2.1 are evoked with greater pictorial emphasis in 2.2, just as the sight of Cynthia which compels the *amator*’s enslavement to her in 1.1 is evoked with greater pictorialism in 1.2; as with 1.3, 2.3 re-combines more profoundly the themes of visual art and poetry.

At the same time however, in all three of these poems, one is struck by the very different visual strategies, in particular the implications of the mythical *exempla* on the interior psychological musings of the poet, rather than the effects of these implications on the dramatic conceit of the poem itself, which points to this change of styles in the visual arts. 2.2 is a classic example of this immersion through myth into a world of fantasy. The narrator’s opening consideration of living alone turns to thoughts of his
mistress’ *facies* (line 3), which in turn leads to thoughts of his mistress’ gait being like that of Juno or Minerva; an *exemplum* that leads by its associations with power to the *exemplum* of Ischomache’s rape at the hands of the Centaurs, harking back to Jove’s own ‘rapes’ in line 4. The poem then reverts back to the images of Juno and Minerva earlier through reference to Paris’ judgement in lines 13-14, and lastly back to the mistress’ *facies* in line 15, her potent mixture of beauty and violence now affirmed. The scenes here become increasingly detailed and pictorial; hence the poem moves from general artistic types of Juno and Pallas to the more engrossingly pictorial image of Brimo, Mercury’s consort. The series of visual ‘snapshots’ here is similar to what we saw in 2.26a, where Cynthia plays Helle to the narrator’s Phrixus.

Another means by which the poet alters the visual dynamic in Book Two is the more intense imagery which often provides the dramatic centrepiece, or what Papanghelis calls the ‘visual nucleus’ of the poem itself, and we can see this in the programmatic concerns of 2.1. The opening visual evocation of the *puella*, which leads into the *recesusio* through the *ecphrasis* of epic themes, ending at 2.1.45, *nos contra angusto versamus proelia lecto*, with the echo of its starting point, *seu nuda erepto mecum luctatur amictu* (2.1.13), and the displacement of Helen by Cynthia as the more appropriate subject of Homer’s epic (lines 49-50), culminates in the exultation of erotic *Liebestod* (lines 47ff. *laus in amori mori*...), and the sinister and macabre sensuousness of the mythical heroines, both enchanting and deadly, like Cynthia and like *amor*: ‘The poet moves from the touched vessel (*tangenda pocula*), through the more specific herbs, to the effervescent cauldron, thereby escalating the concreteness and physical threat of the magical utensils until these absorb the visual imagination as prominent features of some tableau vivant.’

This strategy is similar to 2.26b, where the narrator visualises the lovers’ death at sea 29-42. The density of writing in the fusion of the erotic (*compressa, amplexu*) and the aquatic (*latices, palus, urnus, profudit, aquas*), and in the synaesthetic image of Neptune (*compressa...pulsa tridente*), is as Papanghelis notes, ‘irrepressively

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489 Boucher notes: ‘le type sculptural de Pallas, et ici encore la vision artistique de Minerve, le gorgoneion sur la poitrine, prolonge et dépasse provisoirement le portrait de l’amante…. la suite est attendue: enlevé par sa amante, Cynthie se donne à lui et c’est une scene d’amours mythologiques, rendue plastiquement par l’image virgineum …latus qui est chargée de nous le faire voir’ (Boucher 1965.56). The exemplum of Ischomache ‘inconnu d’ailleurs, doit être une variante picturale’ (ibid. n.2). King notes that the description of the Lapiths and Centaurs in lines 9-10 strongly suggests associations with visual art. King 1980.172.

490 Papanghelis 1987.86, in reference to 2.26b.29-42.

491 Ibid.39.
suggestive’, so that ‘bodies tossed by passion’ takes precedence over ‘corpses tossed by waves’. As he shows, like 2.1.51-56, this becomes the poem’s focal point after thoughts of their naked corpses cast ashore (lines 43-44). Moreover he notes a similar movement of thought in the lines leading up to these themes. In both 2.1.1-46 and 2.26b.21-28, thoughts of the rivalry between elegiac and non elegiac modes resolve into a definitive statement involving thoughts of death, and the puella in question need not be Cynthia, but could be any woman, since she is so lacking in individuality. In both cases the preceding lines act as mere ‘formal preludes devoid of any real dramatic substance’, a more ‘neutralised’ framework as it were, like the external framework in Third Style Roman wall painting, by which the poet guides our attention to the more dramatically sensuous imagery of the mythological panels, moving from typical elegiac motifs towards visually intense versions of Propertian Liebestod. Yet in both cases I would suggest that the strategies, and not merely the subjects, of visual art are on the poet’s mind, since the shift in visual emphasis is so integral to the movement from drama in the Monobiblos to pure fantasy in the poems of Book Two, which lack the semblance of pointing to an occasion outside literature, in life.

In all of these examples, the poet ‘aggrandises passion to make it commensurate with the generic atmosphere, rather than seizing, on the spur of the moment, upon famous examples to illustrate the unfolding of a given emotional crisis’. This is even more the case in a poem such as 2.8. The impression of incoherent emotion that accompanies thoughts of his beloved’s desertion is here strongly suggested by the narrator’s rapid change of addressees. Yet the Haemon-Antigone example (lines 21-24) that results from the amator’s disturbed emotions has caused some perplexity, since it appears at first not to ‘fit’ the situation described. The amator contemplates suicide, and turns to mythological precedent in justification. Butler and Barber object: ‘The illustration with which he justifies his proposed suicide is peculiarly inept. Antigone was no faithless mistress; in all forms of the legend it is in grief for her death that Haemon slew himself. The inappropriateness is intensified by the lines which follow, in

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492 Ibid. 92. This harks back to Gallus’ Liebestod in 1.13, but the poem lacks the evocation of the landscape that we see in 1.8a, 1.11 and 1.17.

493 Ibid. 93-101.

494 Ibid. 114.

495 Ibid. 117.
which the poet threatens to murder Cynthia. Richardson however exonerates this apparent derailing of logic by suggesting that the narrator is simply ‘bolstering his determination with the thought of other lovers who have killed themselves for love’. Camps also simply notes: ‘the speaker’s thoughts are rendered incoherent by emotion’. ‘Incoherent emotion’ is certainly on the mark here, yet by insisting on Haemon as the *comparandum* for the narrator, these comments neglect the manipulation of mythical experience and emotion involved here. In lines 17 the narrator has already resolved to kill himself, and in 18-20 he imagines himself dead. The more appropriate figure of comparison would surely therefore be Antigone, especially considering his description of her as *miserae* (line 23), the classic epithet of the elegist himself. Hence if Cynthia fails to embrace her role as Haemon by mourning at his graveside rather than trampling on his ashes (line 20), he will correct the situation by killing her himself (*sed non effugies: mecum moriaris oportet…*line 25ff.). In this mood he can become like Achilles, defiant in the agony of love (line 29ff.). The poet dramatically alters Cynthia’s behaviour to lend their relationship, and hence the drama of the poem itself, an equivalence with the gravity of the Sophoclean and Homeric myths, rather than the vicarious participation in the world of myth in the *Monobiblos*, the gap between that world and the lovers’ experiences, and the movement along the line that extends between these two spheres. This is not dissimilar to Ovid’s manipulation of mythical experience, for instance his ‘alteration’ of Cassandra’s standard appearance in art with her hair bound that we saw in *Amores* 1.7.17-18, yet without detracting from the convincing impression of psychological vacillation that stems from the narrator’s immersion in a world of fantasy. This is aided by the intense visual imagery of lines 31-35, and the repetition of *viderat…..viderat* which conveys the same ‘dream-like’ effect as what we saw in 2.26a, abruptly dissolved at the end by his ironic comment on this effect: *inferior multo cum sim vel matre vel armis, / mirum, si de me iure triumphat Amor*?

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496 Butler and Barber 1933.204.
497 Richardson 1977.234.
498 Camps 2005.102.
499 This follows the argument of Sharrock 2000.276-282. Propertius and Cynthia become ‘coloured’ with epic grandeur.
500 Boucher 1965.265 considers the pictorial quality of 2.8.33-4. Papanghelis also recognises the ‘transparent artifice of passion’ here (115), as opposed to Boucher’s view of 2.8 as ‘la vision tragique’ (p. 390), but neither discusses the gender reversal or manipulation of myth. Suits 1965.437 notes the chiastic form of this arrangement of addressees (first the ‘friend’ (lines 1-12), then the *puella* (13-16), then himself (17-24), then the *puella* (25-28), then the friend again: 12 + 4 + 8 + 4 + 12) which would suggest a more controlled form of emotional chaos than is apparent from a surface reading.
Another change in the visual dynamic of Book Two that finds a correlation with changing artistic trends is the poet’s use of colour, which adds to the sense of surrealism created by such visual fantasies. Ling mentions that the early Third Style is characterised by the rather restricted palette of black, red and white, but later light blue, sea green and gold become widespread (figure 11), and a particularly notable distinction between the *Monobiblos* and Books Two and Three is the richer colour scheme that poems of these later books employ. Indeed these are exactly the colours that we see in 2.3, 2.13 (red/white), 2.26a (light blue, gold) and 3.3 (green, red and white). Ling for instance contrasts the *Villa della Farnesina* paintings with the Third Style paintings from the *Villa Imperiale* in Pompeii from a later period, in the former’s gradual softening of colour compared with the latter’s ‘relief-like’ images through the striking use of colour and sharp forms.501

Like 1.2 and 2.3, 2.13 shows the poet revealing a taste for what, in the same poem, he appears to condemn, and how in the process of disparaging art he demonstrates its importance for his poetic imagination. In both poems what is most ‘natural’ proves to be highly artificial. 2.13 has a similar theme to 1.19, the anticipation of the *amator*’s death (lines 17-24), and his wish to be remembered for his own *doctrina*, the approval of the *docta puella* (lines 11-12). As in 1.19 and 2.26, we find the attempt to halt the inevitability of death by a kind of visual indulgence. As in 2.1 and 2.26b, 2.13 opens as another typically ‘formal prelude’ with standard elegiac motifs (lines 1-16) as a frame for the more intense imagery that follows. The visual motif of the reclining male who muses upon death is introduced early on: *me iuvet in gremio doctae legisse puellae* (line 11), and serves to unify this appeal to the *puella’s doctrina* in the opening sixteen lines with the *topos* of the poet’s death and funeral in lines 17ff. Here however Propertius displays a unique flair for looking on the bright and aesthetic side of the funeral ritual, as lines 19-24 tell of the trumpet’s wailing amid a suffocation of perfumes and incense, and the contrast of ivory and gold:

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501 ‘But the treatment of the figures and their relation to the setting differ from that of the Second Style predecessors. Instead of being developed in depth, the composition seems relief-like with figures ranged parallel to the surface-plane and the background reduced to a more or less neutral foil. The colour and handling of form reinforce the effect of flatness….There is a clear taste for clear, hard colours, sometimes juxtaposed in striking contrasts….’ (Ling 1991.118). This is aided by a shift away from the asymmetrical perspective system of the Second Style, a perspective system designed for viewing the whole room, to a single axial focus, assisting viewing of these smaller panels (See Clarke 1991.50ff.). Again this narrative perspective that is characteristic of the Second Style is indeed what we find in the *Monobiblos* in the encouragement it gives to the reader to see the book as a unified whole.
Yet the narrator then shuns a lavish funeral for himself and suggests his modest contentment with the three books he may offer to Persephone (25-26). This same disingenuity in 2.13 comes across distinctly in other parts of the poem. His only aim, he avows, is that ‘Cynthia should be spellbound by my verse’ (magis ut nostro stupefiat Cynthia versu (line 7)), yet stupefiat strongly suggests being captivated by visual spectacle. By the very exposure to a variety of colours, sheens and sensations such as we see in the lines above, Cynthia, he hopes, will be overcome; as in 2.26a, rather than being overpowered by death, the poet invokes its pictorial equivalents. If colours and sheens mark the first part of the ceremony in the dazzling contrast of ivory (eburno (21)) and gold (Attalico (22)), then the second part, with Cynthia trailing the funeral procession, is notable for more tactile images: tu vero nudum pectus lacerata sequeris, / nec fueris nomen lassa vocare meum, / osculaque in gelidis pones suprema labellis, / cum dabitur Syrio munere plenus onyx (27-30), where the endearing warmth of the diminutive labellis is marked by the stark gelidis and the mutilation of Cynthia’s tender breast. Thus the initial appeal here is to sight; it is only once we are taken in by the visual spectacle that other senses are invoked. Again this certainly suggests a different emphasis in the viewer’s experience, the more ‘close-up’ effects demanded by the rich and intricate iconographic details.

A similar array of colours can also be seen in 2.3.10-14 (nix, minio, rosae, lacte), reinforced in lines 14-15 by words associated with brightness to describe Cynthia’s eyes and dress (geminae, sidera, luce, bombyce). The use of white flowers to describe her complexion (line 10), although a literary commonplace, together with nix and lacte stand out against the richness of minium and rosae to describe the contrast between her appearance and the Arabian shawls in which she ‘shimmers’ (lucet line 15); in the ensuing revelation of Helen as Cynthia’s legendary counterpart (line 30) and the painting analogy of lines 41-42, (si quis vult fama tabulas anteire venustas, / hic dominam exemplo ponat in arte meam) forma and facies are the hub of the matter. Both

502 See for instance Cat. 61.187, Virgil Aen. 12.68.
passages clearly evince an emphasis on ornate detail in such contrasting chromatic effects, whilst minio (2.3.10), as Clarke notes, recalls the technical vocabulary of the professional painter.\(^5\) *Ut pictura poesis*: poems as well as paintings require different modes of viewing.

Such dazzling colours are absent from the *Monobiblos*, yet there is a consistent stress on the more neutral color of the mistress, where the narrator praises the ‘natural’ colouring of the mythological heroines of 1.2.22 (*qualis Apelleis est color in tabulis*), and of Cynthia herself 1.4.13 (*ingenuus color et motis decor artibus*), or 1.6.6 where Cynthia’s *mutatus color* prevents the narrator’s departure to be with Tullus;\(^5\)\(^4\) or 1.18.17 where the amator begs to know whether it is his own lack of *mutatus color* that is responsible for the puella’s anger. Most intriguing is the apparent contrast between the artificial brilliance and sheen of the Coan silks in 1.2.2 (*Coa veste*) for which the amator criticizing Cynthia and the *colores*, ‘hues’ of the natural world (1.2.9), in which she should rather ‘shine’ (1.2.6). Yet as Clarke points out, the use of *colores* in these scenes from the natural world in 1.2 actually hint at or can imply strong suggestions of colour, in particular the same red and purple colours of Cynthia’s apparel.\(^5\)\(^5\)

What is also notable in this regard is the metaphorical usage of *color*, deriving as we saw from cosmetics and facial complexion, within the rhetorical tradition, concerning the character one adopts in taking up an argument, and, like *ecphrasis*, can allow for translation from rhetorical to poetic criticism. Deriving in rhetoric from the Greek *chroma*, the term concerns the ‘posturing’ of the accused in the practice of declamation to acquit him of culpability. Thus in the rhetorical tradition, *color* was concerned with the effectiveness of the portrayal of one’s character. The veracity of this portrayal was not at issue but rather its effectiveness as the speaker might ‘colour’ it. This is stressed by Quintilian who lays emphasis on the importance of probability in the adoption of a particular *color*; the *color* of the accused is the particular aspect given to a case by the skilful manipulation of facts, the ‘gloss’ or ‘varnish’ put on them by the

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\(^5\) See Clarke 2003.98 who shows how the red dye of minium was highly valued and employed in wall painting. He cites Pliny Nat. Hist. 33.36.111, 33.40.122, and Vitruvius De Arch. 7.9.2.

\(^5\)\(^4\) There is a striking collocation of visually nuanced words in remorantur...mutato...colore at 1.6.5-6.

\(^5\)\(^5\) Clarke 2003.244-45. The *colores* of the earth (1.2.9) are commonly associated with red and purple. He cites Cat. 64.90 and Virgil Georgics 4.306 as parallels. The greenness of ivory (*hederae* line 10) is proverbial, and the *arbutus* (line 11) renowned for its crimson berries (*Lucretius DRN* 5.941).
accused in creating *falsae expositiones*. He therefore underlines the importance of internal consistency for an assumed *color* to be effective, which is exactly what we see in the *Monobiblos*. For through the word’s visual associations the poet consistently makes use of *color* to create an air of believability that can belie the irony that checks our sense of the *amatort’s* suffering.

The implicit effect of this of course is to contradict the narrator’s requests to Cynthia in 1.2 not to parade herself in such rich colours. Thus it is again particularly noteworthy that the narrator compares himself in 1.2.22 to Apelles, renowned for his restricted palate and the ‘glaze’ that he applied to the colours of his paintings, subduing colours that were too garish (*claritas colorum...coloribus* Pliny *Nat. Hist.* 35.97), for cognates of *pallesco* also abound in the *Monobiblos*, much more so than in other books. Like *color* then, the effect is to encourage the reader’s imagination, stimulated by the various textual echoes, to move beyond the vague and indirect effect suggested by such words, rather than to promote the closer viewing demanded by the precise and strikingly ornate effects that the poet goes on to create in Books Two and Three, which suggest the emphasis on attention to chromatic detail characteristic of the Third Style. Particularly intriguing are the chromatic effects of 3.3, and the even wider array of colour terms that Propertius employs there. As I have shown, like 1.2, 3.3 has a clear programmatic function within Book Three, being concerned with Propertius’ status as a love poet and indicating the communication of that creative inspiration in which he partakes, through the use of colour terms applied to Apollo’s golden lyre (line 14), the green cave (line 27), and the white doves with their *punica rostra*; the vivid description of the Muses’ grotto makes explicit what is implicit in 1.2.9-14, creating the vivid colours that are merely hinted at in the earlier poem. Hence I suggest that Propertius registers a conscious distinction between different means of creating pictorial effects that finds a parallel in the changing fashions of visual art that the span of his life encompassed.

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507 The poet’s use of *color* in the *Monobiblos* is far more prevalent than in other books. In fact there are only four other instances, at 2.18.26, 2.25.42, 3.13.7, and 3.24.7.

508 See 1.1.22, 1.9.17, 1.5.21, 1.13.7, 1.15.39. The *pallor* of lovers may go back to Sappho who speaks of her complexion as ‘paler than grass, (frag. 31.14 *chlorotera poias*) as well as Theocritus 2.88 where a maiden speaks of the *pallor* of her complexion. See Camps 1961.132. Richardson 1977.188 cites Cat. 64.100 and Horace *Epod.* 7.15 as evidence of the various colours with which *pallor* can be associated, a sickly yellow and a white pallor. Camps 1961.82-83 also points out how *multos pallere colores* in 1.15.39 is a variation on the Greek *pantodapa ephie chromata* and actually alludes to blushing, suggesting the gradual changes between various shades of colour and emphasised here by the two seemingly contrasting words.
Conclusion

*Quaeris, cur veniam tibi tardior?* When Propertius excuses his late arrival for his appointed rendezvous with Cynthia with a tour of the newly opened Temple to Apollo and its stunning artworks, he is not merely commemorating the beauty and illusionistic power of art, but rather making a profound statement about the nature of his poetic consciousness. In 2.31 and 2.32 the poet reflects and comments upon his own role as artist. By drawing attention to the way in which his poetry can strive to replicate the visual beauty of art yet also highlight the distinctive qualities of his own verbal medium, Propertius capitalizes on the sensitivity of his audience to the sweeping changes that were taking place in the urban fabric of Augustan society, and places his own poetry within the complex dialogue between poets and artists that is a distinctive feature of the period in which he lived.

In doing so the poet absorbs various influences to create his own unique style of visual poetry. I have considered how an understanding of these influences, which include rhetorical theory and the traditions of *ecphrasis*, can enable us to gain a fuller appreciation of his particular innovations, and how we can move beyond seeking out mere formal or verbatim correspondences between his images and scenes from contemporary art to examine the implicit *paragone* between poetry and art that is at work in the poems of the *Monobiblos*, and which enhances our understanding of the unity of the collection as a whole, through the lack of self-consciousness in their engagement with visual media that is central to their dramatic effect.

Rather he provides a more comprehensive examination of the ways in which poetry can adapt the methods of its sister art, by showing how a close, intertextual reading of the poems of this book can serve as a constructive parallel for viewing contemporary Roman art in the development from late Second to early Third Style Roman wall painting in providing a verbal response to viewing, since Propertian poetry, like wall painting, aims to integrate the reader visually, but also requires the reader’s participation in the dynamic verbal artefact that he constructs. Propertius creates particular ‘modes of viewing’ that extend to the book as a whole, by manipulating the relationship between poet, reader and text, and by demonstrating the way in which combinations of pendant paintings in an affecting relationship can be translated into a verbal narrative of poems that enhance each other by their treatment of similar or contrasting situations, through his recognition of reading itself as a highly visual
activity, showing how the concepts of space and time can shape the way we read elegy. I have also shown how art and poetry were closely interwoven in the fabric of society in the Ancient world in relation to societal constructs of gender, sexuality and status, by comparing Roman interactions with decorated spaces with the visual dynamics of the *Monobiblos*, to show how vision unites Cynthia’s status as a love object and textual object in a way that extends to the sphere of poetic influence.

Propertius’ verbal commemoration of the newly opened portico, in his substitution of Cynthia for the *princeps* as the focus of his celebration, becomes in essence a microcosm of the elegiac experience itself, as art becomes the means by which he reflects upon the subjective impulse of his poetry. By engaging with the illusionistic techniques employed in contemporary art, in the *Monobiblos*, as both viewer of and viewer within the text, he comments on his own twofold role as creator of and character in his poetry.
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183

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Illustrations / Photos

Figure 1: Terracotta Campana Plaques from the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine, Rome.

Archaizing maidens crowning an aniconic representation of Apollo Agyieus.

![Terra cotta Campana Plaques from the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine, Rome.](Image)

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Apollo facing Hercules

![Apollo facing Hercules](Image)

Photo: Vroma Project ([www.vroma.org](http://www.vroma.org)).
(See also Kellum 1997, pp. 159-160.)
Figure 2: The Sacrifice of Iphigeneia, Pompeii VI 8 3 (House of the Tragic Poet)
National Museum of Naples.

Photo © Imago: The Roman Society Image Bank, Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies.
(See also Ling 1991, p. 135.)
Figure 3: The House of Livia, *Tablinum*, South wall

Drawing: The King’s Visualisation Lab: The Skenographia Project. (See also Ling 1991, p. 37.)

Figure 4: Views from a *cubiculum*, The Villa at Boscoreale.

Corner of Room M from the Villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale.
Photo: Wikimedia Commons.
(See also Ling 1991, p. 31.)
Figure 5: Structure of the *Monobiblos* (left) and Catullus 64 (right)

Figure 6: Views from Cubiculum B, Villa della Farnesina

Photo: Wikimedia Commons.  
(See also Valladares 2012, p. 330.)
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Figure 7 Cubiculum D, Villa della Farnesina

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Figure 8: Argus, Io and Hermes. *Tablinum*, South wall, House of Livia

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Figure 9 Wall Paintings from *Cubicula B and D, Villa della Farnesina*

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(See also Valladares 2012, p. 328.)

Figure 10: Wall Paintings from The Villa at Bostrecase, ‘The Mythological Room’.

Perseus and Andromeda
Galatea and The Cyclops

Figure 11: Wall Paintings of the Third Style

The *tablinum* of the House of Marcus Lucretius Fronto (ca. AD 35-45)

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The *caldarium* from the Villa at Oplontis (ca. 25 BCE - 40 AD)

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