

Myth and Structure in Propertius 2.8, 2.9, and 2.10

1: Cynthia Takes a New Lover

- a. *eripitur nobis iam pridem cara puella* (2.8.1) And now my dear girl has been ripped away from me
- b. *tu mihi sola places: placeam tibi, Cynthia, solus* You alone please me: Cynthia, may I alone please you (2.7.19)

2: Propertius' Program in Book 2 (H.P. Stahl)

1. Cynthia and his love for her are the reason for his success, and thus he raises love to the level of epic.
2. Propertius would write epic if he had been so endowed, but he was destined to write elegy.
3. Propertius is committed to writing elegy.
4. It would be impossible to dissuade Propertius from his commitment to elegy.
5. Propertius asks that Maecenas understand his life course.

3: Mythical *Exempla* in 2.8

- a. *magni saepe duces magni cecidere tyranni
et Thebae steterunt altaque Troia fuit* (9-10) Often great generals and great tyrants have fallen
and Thebes once stood and Troy was high
- b. *quid non Antigona tumulo Boeotius Haemon
corruit ipse suo saucius ense latus
et cum miserae permiscuit ossa puella
qua sine Thebanam noluit ire domum* (21-24) Well then, did not Boeotian Haemon fall at Antigone's
tomb, wounded in the side by his own sword,
and mix his bones with those of the miserable girl,
without whom he wished not to return to his Theban
home
- c. *sed morere interitu gaudeat illa tuo* (18) But die and let her rejoice at your death
- sed non effugies mecum moriaris oportet
hoc eodem ferro stillet uterque cruor* (25-26) But you will not escape, it is right that you die with me
and that our blood drip from the same sword
- d. *ille etiam abrepta desertus coniuge Achilles
cessare in tectis pertulit arma sua* (29-30) Even famous Achilles, deserted after his wife was taken,
endured to withdraw his arms into his tent
- e. *inferior multo cum sim vel matre vel armis
mirum si de me iure triumphat Amor* (39-40) Since I am inferior by much, both in mother and arms
is it a wonder that Love rightly triumphs over me?

4: Mythical *Exempla* in 2.9

- a. *Penelope poterat bis denos salva per anno
vivere tam multis femina digna procis* (3-4) Penelope was able to live safely for twenty years,
a woman who was fit for so large a number of suitors...
*nec non exanimem amplectens Briseis Achillem
candida vesana verberat ora manu* (8-9) No less did Briseis, while embracing dead Achilles
beat her shining face with a wild hand
- b. *at tu non una potuisti nocte vacare
impia, non unum sola manere diem* (19-20) But you were not able to spend one night alone
faithless girl, you could not be alone for one day
- c. *non ob regna magis diris cecidere sub armis
Thebani media non sine matre duces
quam mihi si media liceat pugnare puella
mortem ego non fugiam morte subire tua* (49-52) No less than the Theban leaders who fell in deadly combat
because of the throne, with their mother between them,
were I allowed to fight, with the girl between us,
I would not flee undergoing death if you also died

5: Reading with Skepticism in 2.10

- a. *sed tempus lustrare aliis Helicon choreis
et campum Haemonio iam dare tempus equo*
(10.1-2) But it is time to survey Helicon with other meters
and to give the field to the Haemonian horse
- b. *India quin Auguste tuo dat colla triumph... (15)
haec ego castra sequar (19)* Indeed, India gives its neck to your triumph, Augustus
These camps I shall follow.
- c. *quod si longinquos retinerer miles ad Indos* But if I were retained by military duty in far-off India?
(9.29)

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