

MASCULINITY AND MONUMENTS IN PROPERTIUS 4.9

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Abstract. In elegy 4.9, Propertius connects the story of Hercules' transvestism to some of Rome's most ancient and venerable sites: the Ara Maxima, the subject of the poem's *aition*, and the sanctuary of the Bona Dea, where the poem's action takes place. These locations resonate with Rome's traditional gender roles and with the Augustan urban renovation. This essay argues that Propertius' use of monuments in 4.9 responds to and challenges the Princes' use of Roman places as a means to solidify his position in the new Rome, thereby establishing the poet as the Princes' rival in creating urban meaning.

INTRODUCTION

PROPERTIUS 4.9, AN ELEGIAC VERSION OF HERCULES' ADVENT IN ROME, has enjoyed considerable scholarly attention in the past fifty years. Until a few decades ago, critics read this poem in a political light. Since Augustus and his wife had revived ancient rituals and restored dilapidated shrines and temples, Propertius' celebration of religious *arcana* was seen to endorse and to congratulate the Princes.¹ Later interpretations read the poem as a generic tour-de-force, whose dazzling and recondite details broadcast the poet's virtuosity and his redefined elegiac poetry.² More recent critics of this poem have focused on Hercules' alterity—particularly his transvestism—and how it unsettles the hero's place in the national canon.³ Whether Hercules' transvestism confounds traditional gender categories (Janan 1998, 2001) or reaffirms those categories (Cyrino 1998), whether it questions the very means for defining gender identity (Lindheim 1998), whether it calls into question Roman imperialism (Fox 1998) or historicism (Fox 1999), or whether it creates

¹ Grimal 1953; Holleman 1977; Coli 1978.

² McParland 1970; Pinotti 1977; Warden 1982; Cairns 1992; DeBrohun 1994; Anderson 1964, 1992.

³ Janan 1998, 2001; Lindheim 1998; Cyrino 1998; Fox 1998, 1999; Spencer 2001.

broader epistemological problems (Spencer 2001), critics agree that Propertius' Hercules makes an important contribution to Rome's evolving sense of itself during the transition from Republic to Principate.

In this essay, I analyze Propertius' use of Roman monuments in the poem. I ask what it means that Propertius connects the story of Hercules' transvestism and his re-emergent masculinity intimately with some of Rome's most ancient and venerable sites: the Ara Maxima, for which his poem is an *aition*, and the sanctuary of the Bona Dea, at which most of its action takes place. Hercules differs from the feminized elegiac lover whose ambiguous gender identity is ubiquitous. In this poem, in contrast, Propertius locates Hercules' gender play in specific Roman locations—locations that resonate both with traditional gender roles and with the Augustan urban renovation.

I argue that Propertius' use of monuments in his elegy on Hercules responds to and challenges the Princeps' use of Roman places as a means to solidify his position in the new Rome. In so doing, the elegist establishes himself as a rival to the Princeps as a creator of urban meaning. My aim is not only to illuminate how polemical Propertius' fourth book is but also to explore to what extent Rome's people considered monuments subject to interpretation. Art historians and archaeologists of the Augustan age, such as Zanker and Favro, have been concerned with understanding the monuments of Augustan Rome as a form of imperial propaganda.⁴ With his program of urban renewal, Augustus eased the transition between Republic and Principate, inviting Romans in his day to consider themselves and their new state as the destined and deserving inheritors of Rome's glorious legacy. His attention to the Ara Maxima and Livia's restoration of the sanctuary of the Bona Dea, both old monuments associated with traditional gender roles, cast that legacy as one indebted to prescribed masculine and feminine behavior. This message was also encoded in other instruments of imperial ideology such as the *leges Iuliae*.⁵

Archaeology, however, can tell little about how this message was accepted by Rome's citizens or even how it was intended to work upon them. Propertius' poem offers a glimpse of how Romans reacted to the city around them, revealing that he interpreted these newly imperial monuments as attempts to coerce morality and identity into forms more in tune with the new state. Like other topographical poems in Book 4,

⁴ Zanker 1988; Favro 1993, 1996.

⁵ The *leges Iuliae* prescribed appropriate conduct for women (marital fidelity and childbirth) and their husbands (punishment of adulterous wives). See Raditsa 1982.

this poem offers a way of looking at the monuments that differs from the way Augustus intended.⁶ By reading Propertius' poem as a response to the changing cityscape, we begin to understand the Augustan monuments not so much as propagandistic statements by the emperor but as part of a dialogue with Roman citizens about the evolution of their state and their collective identity.

My approach is heavily influenced by two studies that appeared in the last decade on the interaction between Roman texts and monuments. Vasaly's *Representations* (1993) demonstrates how Cicero's speeches employ space as a rhetorical device to aid persuasion, not only by exploiting the connotations of the monuments in view, as Cicero delivered his speeches, but also by evoking preconceptions about places not immediately visible to the audience, places both inside and outside Rome. Cicero uses what Vasaly calls a "metaphysical topography: that is, the meaning those places would have held for a Roman audience in Cicero's time."⁷ Edwards in *Writing Rome* (1996) examines the conceptual city in Latin literature and the ways Latin texts have informed the Romans' and our own opinions about the great city, i.e., "the literary resonance in the city and the city's resonance in literature."⁸ These approaches form a complementary pair: while Vasaly searches for the influence of monuments—or, better, of monuments' metaphysical topography—on texts, Edwards focuses on the influence of texts on the metaphysical topography of monuments.

Recent studies of Propertius, however, have largely omitted systematic discussion of Propertius' Roman places, an omission I seek to redress. Two notable exceptions are the similar analyses of the pastoral landscape in Book 4 by Kenneth Rothwell (1996) and Elaine Fantham (1997). Rothwell traces the lack of a romanticized Golden Age and the persistence of nature as linked themes in the topographical elegies, concluding that for the poet, nature is a force that can—and will—overpower any of man's achievements in the physical world, which were never laudable in the first place. Fantham offers a more optimistic view, arguing that Propertius' depiction of Rome's untamed early landscape overshadows the city's contemporary manufactured splendor and indicates

⁶ See, for example, O'Neill 2000 on elegy 4.2. O'Neill connects Vertumnus' own mutable gender with the mutable monument to this god that stood at the Forum's edge. Like elegy 4.9, the Vertumnus poem questions Augustan moral propaganda through the use of Roman monuments.

⁷ Vasaly 1993, 41.

⁸ Edwards 1996, 2.

the poet's preference for the lost innocence of Rome's distant past.⁹ I see Propertius' portrait of early Rome as neither naturalist nor nostalgic; on the contrary, I argue that the elegist's ancient landscape is already darkened by the shadow of what it will become—an emblem of a state that demands too much conformity from its citizens. Propertius' elegiac discourse on Rome resists the presence of an intrusive state by resisting the invited perspective on Roman identity and behavior.

MONUMENTS AND MORALITY: THE PRINCEPS, HERCULES, AND THE ARA MAXIMA

Elegy 4.9 is an *aition* for the Ara Maxima, Hercules' largest Roman shrine, located in the Forum Boarium on the banks of the Tiber. The association of Hercules and the Princeps was forged on August 12, 29 B.C.E. On that day, the anniversary of Hercules' advent in Rome, Octavian celebrated Hercules' rites at the Ara Maxima.¹⁰ The very next day Augustus began his triple triumph for his recent victories over the Illyrians, the Egyptians, and over Antony's forces at Actium.¹¹ Hercules had long been a favorite of triumphators, and Octavian's scheduling was deliberate and shrewd.¹² Servius calls it εὐσύμβολος (= *feliciter*, *ad. Aen.* 8.102), and Donatus tells that Octavian delayed his entry into Rome by linger-

⁹ Fantham 1997, 132. Edwards 1996 discusses the resistance that elegiac texts pose to the public concerns that are manifest in the city and how those texts problematize Roman urban identity, but her discussion of Propertius' poetry is very brief.

¹⁰ This date is attested in the *Fasti Amiterni* (= *CIL* 1².244):

HERCVLI•INVICTO•AD•CIRCVM•MAXIM

“Rites to Hercules Invictus at his sanctuary next to the Circus Maximus.”

¹¹ For the triple triumph, see the *Fasti Antiati* (= *CIL* 1².248):

AVGVST[VS]•TRIVMP[HAVIT]

“Augustus celebrated a triumph.”

See also the *Tabula Barberiniana* (= *CIL* 1².77):

IMP•CAESAR•DE•DALMA[TI]S•EID•SEX

TRIVMPH•PALMAM•DEDIT

IMP•CAESAR•[EX•AEGY]PTO•XIIIX•K•SEPT

TRIVMP[H] AVIT

“Imperator Caesar celebrated a triumph over the Dalmatians on the Ides of Sextilis (August). He offered the palm branch. On the 18th day before the Kalends of September Imperator Caesar celebrated a triumph over Egypt.”

¹² Triumphators even clothed one of the Forum Boarium's many statues of Hercules in triumphal garb for the procession, and victors sometimes dedicated new statues or altars to the god. See Coarelli 1988, 165, for a discussion of the role of Hercules in the triumphal celebration, and Fox 1998 for a discussion of Hercules as a model imperialist.

ing for four days in Atella while Vergil read the *Georgics* to him.¹³ The delay ensured that Octavian would reenact Hercules' advent into Rome. According to the prevailing legend, the Ara Maxima commemorated Hercules' defeat of the outlaw Cacus and so solidified not only the hero's martial prowess but also his role as a civilizing agent in a time of lawlessness. This was a useful image for the Princeps, who had just restored peace to Rome after the civil wars. The association of triumphal Octavian with Hercules thus lent a veneer of legitimacy to Octavian's defeat of Antony. It also invited into Octavian's own personal pantheon the herogod who had been Antony's favorite. The *gens Antonia* enjoyed an ancestral relationship with Hercules through Anton his son.¹⁴ Antony had especially cultivated this relationship, both to win prestige in Rome in the years after Caesar's death and to develop his persona abroad; Hercules provided Antony with a linkage to Alexander, the East's great divinized king, who had himself cultivated an association with the hero who became a god.¹⁵

After defeating Antony at Actium, the Princeps sought to recuperate Hercules for the Roman cause and for his own. Though Hercules was not the most pervasive god in the imagery of the Principate, his appearances are telling. He is featured prominently, for example, in the decorative program of the Temple to Palatine Apollo, dedicated on October 9, 28 B.C.E., just a year after the triple triumph. The temple complex boasted representations of myths of vengeance mingled with notions of the dangerous foreigner—images that subtly reflected the Princeps' Actian victory.¹⁶ Among them on the terra-cotta Campana-style reliefs appears

¹³ Donatus *Vit. Verg.* 91 = Suetonius *Vit. Verg.* 27. See Grimal 1988 for a discussion of Octavian's possible motives in timing his triumph thus.

¹⁴ Plut. *Antony* 4.

¹⁵ See Zanker 1988, 44–45, and Gurval 1995, 92–93, for a collection and discussion of the sources for this association. The connection between Antony and Hercules appears in ancient literary sources (Appian *Bellum Civile* 3.16–19 and Plutarch *Antony, passim*), on coinage (*RRC* 494.2, with Antony on the obverse and Anton on the reverse), and in sculpture (preserved in a carved ring from Pompeii and perhaps at play in the lost *De Antoniis stautis* of Messala Corvinus, partisan of Octavian in the thirties; see Zanker 1988, 58). Though Gurval argues that the connection was within the bounds of Roman tradition and need not imply any political aims, I agree with Zanker that the cultivation of the association, particularly its Alexandrian precedent, was politically motivated.

¹⁶ See Strazzulla 1990, Kellum 1993 (1986), and Zanker 1983 for discussion of the potential Actian imagery in the temple complex (Strazzulla is the most conservative of these three in evaluating the Actian imagery). The porticus that surrounded the temple was adorned with statues of the Danaids, Egyptian women who spelled disaster for their lovers and were thus evocative of Cleopatra. The temple doors boasted representations of the

Hercules facing Apollo over the Delphic tripod. The calm posture of the two gods suggests not hostility but rather negotiation—that is, the relief depicts the moment of reconciliation and resolution after the struggle for the tripod.¹⁷ The symbolism is clear: like Apollo reconciled with Hercules, the Princeps' new order resolves the previous conflict between Roman forces. The Ara Maxima goes one step further. While on the Palatine reliefs Hercules and Apollo remained separate but reconciled, the correspondence between the Princeps' official celebration of his victory in the civil wars and the anniversary of the foundation of the Ara Maxima marks a total integration of Rome's two opposing camps.¹⁸

It should be noted too that, while women seem to have worshipped Hercules freely elsewhere in Italy and even in Rome, his worship at the Ara Maxima was restricted to men only.¹⁹ The exclusion of women from worship at the Ara Maxima may have been linked to the fact that the cult was celebrated *ritu Graeco*, in the Greek fashion, and it may have been linked with the cult's original aristocratic flavor.²⁰ Augustus' activities at the Ara Maxima thus signal not only his new political role but also his participation in a club of elite Roman men. The coincidence of rites and triumphs in 29 B.C.E., celebrated in the public Fasti, marks a crux in imperial ideology. On the one hand, it looks back to the images of the civil wars and puts a symbolic end to the propaganda war against Antony. On the other hand, this event also looks forward to the tenor of the new regime in the way it links imperialism with the established and traditional masculinity of Hercules' worship at the Ara Maxima. This connec-

Gauls cast down from Parnassus and the death of Niobe's children, both victories of the righteous over the hubristic. Against this interpretation, see Gurval 1995, who does not see pervasive Actian imagery or a clear Actian message in the temple decoration, and Huttner 1997, who denies an official or deliberate connection between the Princeps and Hercules.

¹⁷ See Galinsky 1996, 222–24. I am grateful to John Pollini for pointing out to me that previous representations of this episode show the demigod running away with the tripod, such as is seen on the red figure vase from Vulci by the Berlin painter, or on the relief from the Siphnian treasury at Delphi. See Flacelière and Devambez 1966, 93–95, with figs. XI (1) and XI (2). Hercules' revised pose and calm stance in these Campana-style reliefs suggest reconciliation rather than opposition.

¹⁸ It is even possible that the Princeps restored the Ara Maxima in the early 20s B.C.E. among the 80-odd other unnamed shrines he mentions restoring in *RGDA* 20.4.

¹⁹ Schultz 2000. For other restrictions at the Ara Maxima, see McDonough 1999.

²⁰ In *Origo Gentis Romanae* 8.5, the exclusion of women from worship at the Ara Maxima is coextensive with its control by the patrician Potitii and Pinarii. According to this source, Appius Claudius Caecus used bribery to change both restrictions. This account suggests that at some time the stricture against women was lifted. See Schultz 2000, 296, with n. 23.

tion between imperialism and masculinity would appear broadly in Augustan architectural programs for the next thirty years, culminating in the sculptural program of the Forum of Augustus.²¹

However direct the Princeps was in cultivating a relationship with Hercules, by 16 B.C.E., when Propertius' poem was published, the association would have been clear thanks to Vergil's *Aeneid*. In *Aeneid* Book 8, Evander tells Aeneas the story of Hercules and Cacus and of the resultant foundation of the Ara Maxima. Vergil's narrative connects epic heroism, traditional masculinity, and Roman nationalism in the figure of Hercules, locating this vortex of Roman virtue at the Ara Maxima.²² Vergil also makes clear that Aeneas repeats Hercules' advent into Rome and that Augustus will be the next great hero in the series of Rome's founders.²³ Vergil seems to have taken his cue from the Princeps' activities in 29 B.C.E., for in Book 8 Augustus-as-Hercules appears at the climax of the shield ekphrasis, celebrating his triple triumph. Hercules' victory and the Ara Maxima begin Book 8, and Augustus' triple triumph ends it.²⁴ Aeneas' chummy partnership with Evander throughout the episode and the conspicuous lack of women who participate in their encounter (the book's featured woman is Cleopatra on the shield) make Book 8 into its own sort of men-only club that repeats and enforces the strictures of the Ara Maxima.

The connection between Augustus and Hercules also appears in Livy's account of Rome's origins. Though Livy's history does not champion Augustus' cause, it is clear that the historian's national pride lends emphasis to Rome's many founders. Each founder of Rome adds something in Livy's account, and Rome is thus the product of combined, rather than individual, efforts.²⁵ Hercules' defeat of Cacus and his subsequent

²¹ See most recently Fredrick 2002 about the connection between masculinity and nationalism in Augustan images. For another version, see Kellum 1997.

²² Janan 1998 demonstrates this connection in Vergil's aition of the Ara Maxima, and see also Fox 1998 for the linkage of Hercules with masculinity and imperialism in other Augustan sources.

²³ Hercules in the *Aeneid* is well studied. In addition to Janan's 1998 study, see Galinsky 1972, 153–66, and his 1984 entry in the *Enciclopedia Vergiliana*, s.v. Hercules. Grimal 1988 discusses the political nuances of Vergil's narrative sequence.

²⁴ Galinsky 1972, 241, curiously mentions this relationship in the reverse order: "it is hardly accidental that Octavian scheduled his great triple triumph on the day of the official annual festival of Hercules at the Ara Maxima . . . it is exactly on this day that Vergil has his Aeneas arrive at the site of Rome and, on that occasion, he develops most extensively the analogies between his own hero and the greatest hero of the Greeks."

²⁵ Miles 1995, 220–24, and cf. Konstan 1986 who explores the tension between individuality and plurality from a different angle.

apotheosis make him a fitting model for Romulus, himself destined to be deified for his achievements. Augustus is subtly included in this Herculean nexus of foundation by the simple adjective Livy uses to describe the hero: “formamque viri aliquantum amplio^rem *augustio^remque* humana intuens” (“seeing that the physique of the man was somewhat grander and more august than the human physique,” 1.7.9).

Horace, too, took inspiration from Octavian’s activities in 29 B.C.E., and the lyric poet’s association of Augustus and Hercules stands out in the third book of that collection. *Odes* 3.3 links Augustus with Hercules because they both are reliable and righteous men (*iustum et tenacem . . . virum*, 3.3.1) who will enjoy the pleasures of eternal life (*quos inter Augustus recumbens / purpureo bibet ore nectar*, 3.3.11–12: “reclining between them [Hercules and Pollux], Augustus will drink nectar with his purple-stained mouth”). Again, in *Odes* 3.14 (*Herculis ritu . . .*), the poet explicitly compares Augustus’ triumphant return from Spain to Hercules’ arrival from Spain so long ago. Military conquest and victory over death align Horace’s hero and the Princeps. Such was the climate of the decade after Actium. Sparked by the Princeps’ own actions at the Ara Maxima and fueled by the poets of the twenties, Propertius could rely on a firm and popular connection between Rome’s first founding hero and its latest, a connection linking triumph and traditional masculinity and focused on the Ara Maxima.

MONUMENTS AND MORALITY: LIVIA, WOMANHOOD, AND THE BONA DEA

The other place featured in Propertius’ elegy is the sanctuary of the Bona Dea Subsaxana at the foot of the Aventine where Hercules takes his drink (*femineae loca clausa deae fontisque piandos*, 4.9.25).²⁶ Though many shrines to the Bona Dea have been identified in Rome by clusters of inscriptions, the sanctuary on the Aventine remained her largest and was the locus of her official urban cult.²⁷ The Bona Dea’s rites were celebrated twice annually in Rome. Calendars record a celebration to Bona Dea on May 1, the anniversary of Claudia Quinta’s dedication of her Aventine sanctuary.²⁸ Little is known about this observance. More

²⁶ All citations are from Barber’s 1960 text.

²⁷ Brouwer 1989 is a convenient collection of all the sources regarding this goddess and her worship.

²⁸ Ovid *Fasti* 5.147–58 and Macrobius *Saturnalia* 1.12.21.

notorious and better documented is the nocturnal celebration that took place each December at the home of the chief Roman magistrate or priest. These were state rites performed for the well-being of the Roman people as a whole, but they were performed in secret by aristocratic women and were strictly forbidden to men.²⁹ The nocturnal mysteries were hosted by the wife or mother of the magistrate or priest and involved music, dancing, drinking, and revelry. The infamous Clodius scandal in 62 B.C.E. is particularly telling in this context. Clodius had dressed as a woman harpist and broken into the rites when they were being hosted by Caesar's wife Pompeia—an action that combined sacrilege, adultery, and sedition.³⁰ Cicero's prosecution of Clodius for his infiltration of the Bona Dea's rites and Caesar's resultant divorce of Pompeia reveal the ideological force of the Bona Dea's cult at Rome: that proper female—and male—behavior was required for the proper working of the state.

The sources for the cult of the Bona Dea are problematic; literary and material sources for the cult offer very different pictures about the cult's appeal and practice. Inscriptions from all periods reveal that at Rome and elsewhere, the Bona Dea welcomed celebrants of both genders from all social classes. The literary evidence for this goddess, however, reveals a strong gender bias: she is a goddess for Roman aristocratic *matronae* of good standing in society and of good morals. The discrepancy can be explained in a variety of ways: by differences in her cult in and outside of Rome,³¹ the influence of Cicero's bias on the literary sources,³² or a transition in the way she was worshipped and conceptualized

²⁹ Flory 1984, 318, n. 29, suggests that the women had to be *univirae*, but it is unlikely that this is so. Livia, for example, would thus be excluded.

³⁰ Social status may also have motivated Clodius' intrusion; he may have wished to assert his rights as a patrician (which he still was) or to curry favor among plebeians. See Brouwer 1989, 263; Tatum 1999, 85–86; and Fox 1998, 15, for speculation as to Clodius' motives. Tatum's discussion leaves in no doubt how serious Clodius' offense was.

³¹ At Rome, her primary sanctuary was restricted to women, as was the official nocturnal celebration, but elsewhere it was not. Roman literary sources therefore reflect the Bona Dea's official Roman rites rather than her broader, unregulated worship.

³² For Cicero, according to Brouwer, the Bona Dea is guarantor of all that is holy and right about Roman tradition—all that Clodius violated, while the dedicants of inscriptions were not concerned with the goddess as a political symbol but with her ability to help and protect individuals. See Brouwer 1989, 260, for Cicero's influence and 396 for non-political responses to the goddess. Leach 2001 adds to Brouwer's conclusions the Roman cultural primacy of the masculine; Cicero used Clodius' cross-dressing as a way to effeminize his opponent and thus devalue his political authority.

in the first century B.C.E.³³ I believe that the tension in the evidence for this cult is to be explained by the shifting paradigms of morality and identity at the crux between Republic and Principate. Cicero in his invective against Clodius, accuses Clodius of violation of gender roles combined with religious transgression and political insurrection. His comments betray deep and expanding fissures in Roman mores—especially those that govern gender roles.³⁴ The powerful female and aristocratic slant seen in Cicero’s words about the Bona Dea marks an attempt by the orator to examine and understand this rupture of values, even to contain it. As Rome fell further under the control of dynasts at the Republic’s end, Cicero’s emphasis on female *probitas*, as required by the cult of Bona Dea, expands responsibility for the health of the state to the personal realm, not just the political realm.³⁵

The Bona Dea’s sanctuary was no less important to the imperial family than the Ara Maxima. Confirmation is found in Ovid’s *Fasti*:

interea Diva canenda Bona est.
est moles nativa, loco, res nomina fecit,
 appellant Saxum, pars bona montis ea est.
huic Remus institerat frustra, quo tempore fratri
 prima Palatinae signa dedistis aves.
templa patres illic oculos exosa viriles
 leniter adclini constituere iugo.
dedicat haec veteris Clausorum nominis heres
 virgineo nullum corpore passa virum.

³³ For Bömer 1957 *ad* 5.147, the discrepancy between the archaeological sources and literary sources results from a transition in the goddess’ worship in the first century B.C.E. from a strict, aristocratic, and gender-specific following to a gender inclusive and socially diverse following. It is possible that the impetus for such an expansion of the goddess’ appeal was perhaps the influx of foreign religious beliefs and practices in the first century B.C.E.

³⁴ Cicero’s strongest vitriol seems to me to come in his *De Haruspicum Responis*. See, for example, DHR 44: *P. Clodius a crocata, a mitra, a muliebribus soleis purpureisque fasceolis, a strophio, a psalterio, a flagitio, a stupro est factus repente popularis* (“Clodius has cast off his yellow robe, his headband, his delicate sandals and his violet stockings, his bra, his harp, his debaucheries, his adultery, and he has suddenly become a man of the people”). Similar strong language is used in the fragments from *In Clodium et Curionem*, particularly fragments 5 and 23 with Crawford’s commentary (1994, loc. cit.).

³⁵ The shift from political to personal responsibility is marked at the end of the Republic and accompanied by a shift in the semantic range of words and ideas such as *concordia*, *libertas*, and *amicitia*. For *Concordia/concordia*, see Flory 1984, 315; for *libertas* and *amicitia*, see DuQuesney 1984 and Kennedy 1992; and for the general trend of semantic and moral transition, see Wallace-Hadrill 1997.

Livia restituit, ne non imitata maritum
 esset, et ex omni parte secuta <virum>. (5.148–58)

Meanwhile I should sing about the Bona Dea. There is a natural rock; this feature generated the name for the place: they call it the Rock (Saxum), and it makes up the better part of the mountain. On it Remus stood in vain, when you birds of the Palatine gave your signs to his brother Romulus first. The founding fathers built a temple on the gently-sloping cliff, a temple that is taboo to men's eyes. The heir of the ancient family of the Clausi dedicates this sanctuary, a girl who had never permitted the touch of any man on her virgin's body. Livia restored it, lest she fail to imitate her husband and follow his lead in every way.

Ovid places Livia's activity at this sanctuary within the context of the goals of Augustus' program of moral and urban renewal: her civic activity supported the same goals, and by the same means, as his. Indeed, Livia actively sponsored places and rituals that supported traditional female morality: marriage, fidelity, and childbirth.³⁶ In keeping with her other urban activities, Livia's attention to the Bona Dea's cult advertised her status as a *matrona* and a sponsor of *matronae*, the bulwark of female morality in Rome.³⁷

Kleiner has recently argued that Livia's urban activity may have served more complicated political goals.³⁸ Not only did her building projects promote the importance of traditional female behavior in a successful Rome, they also buttressed the importance of traditional social roles in that success. Her restoration of the Bona Dea's sanctuary reinforced the moral code so important in the Princes' design for a new Rome. It placed Livia in a patrician context; she was, after all, of the *gens Claudia* and brought that higher status to her husband, by birth not as noble as she.³⁹ It recalled the old-style religion that featured so prominently in Augustus' rule. Most importantly, it imprinted all these ideas

³⁶ The force and focus of Livia's urban activity is well discussed by Kleiner 1996 and Flory 1984. Livia restored the shrines of Pudicitia Patricia and Pudicitia Plebeia (28 B.C.E.), Fortuna Muliebris (7 B.C.E.), Concordia (15–7 B.C.E.); the latter is linked by its date of dedication to Mater Matuta, Fortuna Virgo, and the Matralia—festivals for married women and *univirae*.

³⁷ To be sure, one inscription even attests that the women of Forum Clodi took Livia's sponsorship of family values so seriously that they celebrated her birthday at the sanctuary of the Bona Dea. See Brouwer 1989, 104–5 (=CIL XI.3303), and Flory 1984, 320. See also Purcell 1986.

³⁸ Kleiner 1996, but see Flory 1984 for a different view.

³⁹ See above, n. 30, for Clodius' possible patrician motivation. Whatever his intention, Livia repopulates the goddess' rites with the better sort of Claudian devotee.

(nobility, feminine decorum, religious traditionalism) into an urban site meant for women only—attesting the importance to women of all these factors as well as the part they played in them.⁴⁰ Finally, Livia's activity in the cult of the Bona Dea was an attempt to stabilize Roman values after their upheaval in the final years of the Republic—a response to the same crisis of morality that prompted Cicero to such strong invective against Clodius. Livia's intervention into the crisis of the Bona Dea reflects the imperial attempt to stabilize Rome's shifting paradigms of morality.

As the wife of the first man in Rome, Livia would surely have hosted the goddess' December rites. Livia's restoration of the sanctuary might have provided incentive for Propertius' poem. Ovid gives no indication of the date of Livia's restoration, but it is reasonable to suppose that she restored it before 16 B.C.E. when her husband was so active in temple restoration and when the campaign of moral and religious renewal was at its strongest. Augustus and Livia, therefore, in their activity at the Ara Maxima and the sanctuary of the Bona Dea, encouraged fixed and conservative gender roles as a means to guarantee Rome's well being. Even if her restoration postdates our elegy, the meaning of the monument is clear: the Bona Dea's shrine, like the Ara Maxima, reinforces traditional Roman gender roles and their complicity with public success. In fact these two monuments support the same message as Augustus' moral legislation of 18 B.C.E., the sweeping set of laws that regulated families by encouraging marriage and penalizing adultery, and the boldest statement yet of the importance of proper gender roles to the health of the state. The message? Appropriate roles for women and men in a successful Roman society are prescribed and discrete. In the new Roman state, mapped onto the monuments sponsored by the Princeps and his wife, gender was prescriptive: men should be men, women should be women, and never the twain should meet except in legitimate marriage.⁴¹

⁴⁰ The shrines to Pudicitia Patricia and Pudicitia Plebeia speak clearly to this aim. Livia dedicated her shrine to Concordia on the site of the extravagant villa of Vedius Pollio, willed to Augustus in 15 B.C.E.. The return of this land to public use was a marked political statement against the excesses of the late Republican aristocracy. Her act thus supported Augustus' sumptuary law, the *Lex Iulia de modo aedificiorum urbis*, passed at the same time as the moral and marriage legislation. The porticus was dedicated on the heels of Tiberius' victorious return from Germany; it is possible that he co-sponsored the dedication (Dio 55.8.1). Livia's sponsorship of this site, therefore, reinforced traditional social roles, traditional gender roles, and Augustan dynastic succession. See Kleiner 1996, 32, and Flory 1984, 329, for details about these other possible motives for her dedication.

⁴¹ See Kleiner 1978 for this dynamic on the Ara Pacis panels. Kleiner argues that the Ara Pacis casts women in traditional female roles, i.e., wives and mothers. Kampen 1988 and 1991 discusses the same message as seen in Severan art and other Augustan art.

MONUMENTS, MORALITY, AND PROPERTIUS' POEM

The aforesaid constraints were not so in Propertius' poetic city. The elegiac lover's refusal to conform to prescribed or rigid gender roles in his love poetry is well known;⁴² in Book 4, the elegist also refuses to succumb to the roles that are encoded in the city around him. Hybridized or problematic gender roles pervade Book 4 and are often connected to urban places: Vertumnus' monument is both male and female (4.2); warrior Cynthia wages battle on the Esquiline (4.8); and feminine Tarpeia exposes the cruelty of masculine ideology and makes her monument a testament not to her shame, but to her resistance against it (4.4). Elegy 4.9 likewise participates in the disruption of traditional gender roles.

This elegy purports to explain the origins of the Ara Maxima and the sanctuary of the Bona Dea. In doing so, the poet takes great liberties with the myth of Hercules' arrival, with the cults of Hercules and the Bona Dea, and with the cityscape. He therefore makes sport of all aspects of his chosen poetic topic in Book 4: *sacra diesque canam et cognomina prisca locorum* (4.1.69). Propertius' light treatment of places and myths of the Forum Boarium at once proves that he is the Roman Callimachus (4.1.64), author of refined and learned poetry. Propertius' landscape is a masterpiece of mannered sophistication, full of erudite details that stem from the Varronian, rather than Vergilian, tradition. For example, the poet in 4.9.1–6 offers etymologies for the Palatine (from *pecus*, evoked in *pecorosa*, 4.9.3; see Varro *DLL* 5.53) and Velabrum (*velificabat*, 4.9.6, and cf. Varro *DLL* 5.44) as well as a possible *aition* for the cult name of Hercules at the Ara Maxima (Hercules Invictus, evoked in *invictos montis*, 4.9.3).⁴³ Later in the poem, Hercules himself voices an amusingly bookish gem when he negates local legend and names the Forum Boarium after his cows (4.9.19–20: *arvaeque mugitu sancite Bovaria longo: / nobile erit Romae pascua vestra Forum* [“cows, hallow with your prolonged mooing the Boarian fields; your pasture will be the noble forum of Rome”]; cf. Ovid *Fasti* 1.582). This playful and nontraditional landscape continues with Hercules' remarkable sensory feats: though he

⁴² Gold 1993 explores the way Cynthia's many roles in Propertius' poetry—e.g., as lover, critic, friend, and topic—inhibits any simple understanding or classification of gender. For other explorations of gender *aporia*, see Greene 1995, Wyke 1987, Janan 1989, 1998, 2001, Lindheim 1998, and Miller and Platter 1999, among others.

⁴³ Pinotti 1977 discusses these details. I add to Pinotti's list a possible allusion to the etymology of the Aventine from *adventus* (Varro *DLL* 5.43) at 4.9.3 (*venit ad . . . montes*). *Invictos* in 4.9.3 is attested in late manuscripts; the line is corrupt.

is a half a mile away or more, and though his cows are engaged in prolonged mooing, nevertheless, the burly hero hears girls laughing behind the far-off closed doors of the Bona Dea's sanctuary (4.9.19–23). Likewise, the landscape is aquatically fickle: watery one moment (4.9.5–6), arid the next (4.9.22).

More important, however, is the commentary Propertius' poem offers on the way the urban landscape contributes to Roman constructions of gender. Antiquarian inquiry of any sort was morally and politically charged in the late Republic and early Principate, an era when the past was used to valorize the present.⁴⁴ The tradition of the Ara Maxima was especially loaded. Not only does Hercules in the Forum Boarium endorse imperialism, he also endorses traditional masculinity. Consequently, as Beard, North, and Price note, "when the antiquarians, historians, and poets of the late Republic and early empire speculated on the myth and ritual of this particular cult site at the Ara Maxima, more was involved than the simple physical **location** of the cult. In this case, ideas of **place** lead straight to ideas of demarcation of **gender**, that is, to rival claims about the religious **place** of women. Stories of Rome **situated** the Roman system of cultural norms and practices."⁴⁵ The same can be said for late Republican/early imperial interest in the sanctuary of the Bona Dea. Through Hercules' actions at the Bona Dea's shrine and the manner of his foundation of the Ara Maxima, Propertius offers a serious social commentary that also touches on the first family's public activities and goals, disrupting both the Princeps' and his wife's urban activity.

As has long been recognized, Hercules' speech at the threshold of the sanctuary is a *paraklausithyron* in the best tradition of the elegiac lover, feminized and unconcerned with the state.⁴⁶ At the very least, Hercules' appearance as an *exclusus amator* lightens the tone of the poem and, with it, the poem's places:

⁴⁴ Rawson 1985, 236: ". . . it is always at least worth inquiring whether a Roman antiquarian has political views." See also Wallace-Hadrill 1997. For a slightly less charged interpretation of Propertius' antiquarianism, see Feeney 1998, 117 (" . . . the category of 'ritual' does not constitute a focus of inquiry for him as it does for us: he has his eye on gender and genre, and is making these cults and myths work within that framework"). Even further away from politically motivated antiquarianism is Cairns 1992, 66 ("Propertius 4.9 is an elegy, not a piece of scholarship").

⁴⁵ Beard, North, and Price 1998, vol. 1, 174 (the emphasis is theirs) and cf. the first chapter of Staples 1998.

⁴⁶ Anderson 1964.

et iacit ante fores verba minora deo:
 “Vos precor, o luci sacro quae luditis antro,
 pandite defessis hospita fana viris.” (4.9.32–35)

And before the doors he flings words inferior to the god: “I beg you, you who play in the sacred hollow of this grove, open your sanctuary as a shelter for weary men.”

This encounter at the doorstep certainly undermines the solemnity of the hero’s advent into Rome. He utters, after all, words that are inferior to his divine status (*verba minora deo*); he prays, after all, to girls (*precor*, 4.9.33). More important for the present argument, his performance of the *paraklausithyron* transforms the hallowed sanctuary of the Bona Dea, locus of aristocratic feminine virtue, into an elegiac bedroom, the realm of erotic sport (*luditis* and cf. *ridere*, 4.9.23) that is temporarily off-limits to the lover who waits at its doorstep. Like the erotic threshold, it is decorated with garlands of a sort (*vittae*, 4.9.27) and incense (*odorato igne*, 4.9.28).⁴⁷ Likewise, Hercules’ words and actions transform the venerable priestess who guards the sanctuary doorway into the elegiac *lena* who guards access to the *puellae* within⁴⁸—who promotes behavior antithetical to Augustan moral goals by fostering promiscuity among noble, unmarried women.

Indeed, Propertius conflates the May rites at the sanctuary of the Bona Dea with those held in December at the home of the chief magistrate in order to eroticize the city’s public landscape. By setting Hercules’ *paraklausithyron* in a public place, Propertius participates in one major ideological trend of the Principate: he blurs the distinction between private and public. The city of Rome had always served as the background for Propertius’ amatory activities. In elegy 2.31, the newly opened Temple to Palatine Apollo provides the poet an excuse for being late to meet his mistress. In 4.8, Cynthia forbids Propertius to flirt in the Theater of Pompey or the Forum (4.8.75). In 1.16, the Capitoline hill (not primarily a residential area), more specifically the temple to Fides, is the setting for a *paraklausithyron*. As in poem 4.9, the *paraklausithyron* of 1.16 presents a remarkable overlay of erotic concerns onto public and venerable space.⁴⁹ The whole city is a playground for elegiac lovers.

⁴⁷ Compare the *corollae* and *faces* of 1.16.7–8.

⁴⁸ The celebrants are called *puellae* by the poet at 4.9.23, by the priestess at 4.9.59, and by the hero at 4.9.69. Everyone involved agrees on who they are. Anderson 1964 discusses the effect of the *paraklausithyron* on the characters of the poem but not on its places.

⁴⁹ Corbeill, forthcoming.

The sanctuary of the Bona Dea, secluded and open to women only, lent itself especially to such amatory diversions, and other elegiac poets seized the opportunity to exploit the sanctuary's erotic possibilities. For Tibullus, the Aventine shrine is the setting for adultery when he warns Delia's husband to beware a wife who goes to participate in the Bona Dea's rites (1.6.21–24). It is a pretext, Tibullus explains: she is merely using her participation in the rite as an excuse to meet up with a lover:

exhibit quam saepe, time, seu visere dicet
 sacra Bonae maribus non adeunda Deae.
 at mihi si credas, illam sequar unus ad aras;
 tunc mihi non oculis sit timuisse meis. (1.6.21–24)

As often as she goes out, beware, or if she says she is going to witness the rites of the Bona Dea that no man may attend. But if you trust me, I alone would follow her to the sanctuary; then I would not have to fear for my eyes.

Tibullus, like Delia's husband, is jealous of her current lover. In offering to accompany Delia to the sanctuary, Tibullus hopes to rekindle their affair.⁵⁰ Ovid makes the connection between the Bona Dea's Aventine sanctuary and adultery even more explicit. In a discussion on deceiving a husband, he urges women to use the city's monuments. Theaters and circuses are crowded enough to allow for foul play, and the Bona Dea's temple offers a sure-fire escape from a protective husband:

quid faciat custos, cum sint tot in urbe theatra,
 cum spectet iunctos illa libenter equos,
 cum sedeat Phariae sistris operata iuvencae
 quoque sui comites ire vetantur, eat
 cum fuget a templis oculos Bona Diva virorum . . .
 (*Ars Amatoria* 3.633–37)

What is a guardian to do, when there are so many theaters in this city, and when she goes readily to the races, when she sits worshipping with the sistrum of the Pharian heifer, when she goes where her escorts are forbidden to go, when the Bona Dea puts to flight the eyes of men from her temples . . .

⁵⁰ Shades of adultery color the other mention of the Bona Dea's rites in the Tibullan corpus. At 3.5.7–8, the dying Lygdamus contrasts himself to friends who sport at Baiae (notorious as a place for liaisons) and then protests that he has not revealed the Bona Dea's secrets—i.e., he has been discreet about affairs.

In Propertius' poem, therefore, as in the elegiac tradition, the sanctuary of the Bona Dea spells elegiac—that is, adulterous—love. In Propertius' urban landscape, Livia's matronal decorum is incapacitated and Augustus-as-Hercules is put in the position of the excluded paramour.

Moreover, Hercules' foundation of the Ara Maxima is not, in Propertius' poem, the commemoration of victory over an enemy, as it had been in Vergil's and Livy's accounts and, indeed, in the Princes' own "reading" of the monument. Rather, in the elegy, the foundation of the Ara Maxima is the jealous act of a spurned lover.⁵¹ Hercules and the priestess—and through them Augustus and Livia—adopt elegiac roles, while Rome's monuments, so important in the new regime, become the setting for an elegiac lovers' dispute.

Given Hercules' historic association with Antony, Propertius' eroticisation of the urban landscape is more than a playful elegiac trope. In elegy 4.9, the poet imbues Hercules with strong Antonian overtones that disrupt the "Augustan" meaning of the poem's monuments. Here, Hercules argues that he should be admitted to the all-female sanctuary because he has experienced life as a woman, in submission to the Lydian queen Omphale:

"sin aliquem vultusque meus saetaeque leonis
terrent et Libyco sole perusta coma,
idem ego Sidonia feci servilia palla
officia et Lydo pensa diurna colo,
mollis et hirsutum cepit mihi fascia pectus,
et manibus duris apta puella fui." (4.9.45–50)

"If my face and the mane of this lion and my hair burned with the Libyan sun should frighten anyone, I have also performed the servant's duties wearing a Sidonian cloak and turned the daily wool at the Lydian distaff, and a soft band has covered my hairy chest, and I was a suitable girl for all my strong hands."⁵²

As mentioned above, Antony had claimed descent from Hercules through the hero's little-known son Anton and had used Hercules' iconography—the lion-skin and the club—in his own self-promoting images. This ancestral relationship backfired in the later years of civil wars, when the story of Hercules and Omphale was used as anti-Antonian propaganda

⁵¹ Anderson 1964, 9.

⁵² I read the adjective *duris* with concessive force in the ambiguous line 50. The contrast with *mollis* in line 49 seems to point to such a reading.

against Rome's wayward general and his own foreign queen.⁵³ Hercules and Omphale, each in the other's clothes, appeared in Augustan art as an indirect way to criticize Antony and the luxury, corruption, and desire that threatened Rome and its moral foundations.⁵⁴

Submissive Hercules brings Antony into this poem—all the more so because of the strong verbal resonance between Hercules' cross-dressing episode in 4.9 and the same episode in 3.11, the famous Cleopatra elegy:⁵⁵

Omphale in tantum formae processit honorem,
 Lydia Gygaeo tincta puella lacu,
 ut, qui pacato statuisset in orbe columnas,
 tam dura traheret mollia pensa manu. (3.11.17–20)

Omphale advanced to such a degree of honor for her beauty, a Lydian girl bathed in the lake of Gyges, that the man who had set up his columns in the world he has pacified was working supple wool with his oh-so-hard hands.

Elegy 3.11 draws an implicit parallel between Hercules and Antony.⁵⁶ Yet, in poem 3.11, Hercules' servitude to Omphale and Cleopatra's mastery over Antony are not symbols of moral decay or of political decline.

⁵³ Plutarch's *Antony* might exaggerate Antony's Herculean affinity (see Gurval 1995, 92, n. 14), but the abundance of details suggests some truth. *Antony* 4 tells us that Antony enhanced his natural physical resemblance to the god by dressing in a low-belted tunic with a heavy cloak and by swaggering; at *Antony* 36, Antony uses Hercules' polygamous example to defend his own promiscuity; and at *Antony* 60, the destruction of a temple of Hercules by lightning was considered a prodigy against Antony.

⁵⁴ Kampen 1996a and Zanker 1988, 58–59. Since Roman ideology posited a connection between Roman success and Roman morality (i.e., behavior appropriate to one's gender and social status), sexual deviance and political instability formed a mutually reinforcing set of ideas. See Edwards 1993 for the best expression of this connection. Kampen 1996a demonstrates that after the Augustan age, as the East began to lose its negative resonance, Omphale and Hercules began a gradual shift toward respectability, appearing in funerary sculpture and on coins.

⁵⁵ Both passages mention the specific feminine duties Hercules performed while in service to Omphale. The coincidence of the words *mollia*, *dura*, and *pensa* in each passage, combined in one sentence, with the hands being *durus* in both cases, cements the allusion.

⁵⁶ Though Antony's name is left unspoken in 3.11, I disagree with Gurval 1995, 195, that his example does not figure prominently in Propertius' poem. To be sure, Propertius' focus in 3.11 is the power of women and not the defeat of men. Nevertheless, Antony's subjugation is hinted at in 3.11.29: *quid, modo quae nostris opprobria vexerit armis* ("what about the woman who recently brought such shame upon our army?"), and he is unmistakably evoked at 3.11.31–32: *coniugi obsceni pretium Romana poposcit / moenia* ("she sought the city of Rome as the fee for her unclean marriage").

The elegist does not condemn Hercules and Antony but acquits them for falling prey to a woman. Indeed, the warning in the poem's opening (*exemplo disce timere meo*, 3.11.7) suggests not shame or censure for the man who succumbs to a woman but, rather, acceptance of her inevitable power. Thus, far from condemning Antony, Propertius' poetry shows a broad affinity for the defeated man whose public reputation of devotion to a woman at the expense of the state made him an attractive model for the elegiac lover. Propertius' use of Antony as an example for his own situation does not, as some have suggested, imply that Propertius was Antony's political partisan.⁵⁷ The elegist, after all, focuses not on Antony's political opposition to Octavian's regime but rather on the tension between Antony's private affairs and Rome's public goals.⁵⁸

In elegy 4.9, Antonian, personal, luxurious Hercules arrives at Rome and founds the Ara Maxima, a monument Octavian linked to his own defeat of Antony at Actium. Hercules' self-satisfied acceptance—even boast—of his Antonian past sneers at the Princeps by bringing to mind not only the Roman general vanquished in the battle of Actium but also the incompatibility of Antony's "elegiac" values with the new Roman cityscape. Indeed, Hercules' approach to the Bona Dea's sacred spring—to drink it dry (*exhausto flumine*, 4.9.63)—is typically Antonian; Caesar's friend was notorious for his excessive drinking.⁵⁹ Antonian Hercules thus challenges and casts doubts on Augustan Hercules, and Octavian's triumphal Ara Maxima becomes anything but: it becomes a monument that memorializes not the victor and his triumphant mores but rather the victim and his suppressed mores.

The incompatibility of cross-dressed Hercules with the new Augustan city is set into high relief by the state's recent attempt to regulate male-female relationships and the first family's interest in these sites as a way to order gender. If Livia's restoration of the sanctuary predates Propertius' poem, as I believe it does, the repeated use of forms of the word *claudio* in this poem (*inclusas*, 4.9.23; *clausa*, 4.9.25; *clausisset*, 4.9.44; *clausa*, 4.9.62) not only emphasizes Hercules' status as *exclusus amator* but also reminds the reader that this closed-off place is a Claudian place, that is, associated with Livia's *gens Claudia*.⁶⁰ The word simultaneously

⁵⁷ Griffin 1977 suggests this, but Gurval's 1995 argument to the contrary convinces.

⁵⁸ This is the basic thesis of Stahl 1985, 234–47.

⁵⁹ Plutarch *Antony* 2.4 and cf. Cicero *Philippics* 2.44–45. Krostenko 2001, 293–96, discusses the political importance of Antony's display.

⁶⁰ It is tempting also to see an allusion to Appius Claudius Caecus, the censor linked with the history of the cult of Hercules at the Ara Maxima: he transferred jurisdiction over this cult from the patrician Potitii and Pinarii to the state. He also built Rome's first

evokes Livia's less upstanding Claudian relation Clodius who also had something to do with the Bona Dea. Hercules, with a cross-dressing history and in his breaking into the Bona Dea's sanctuary, certainly recalls the scandal of 62 B.C.E. and brings Clodius anew into the respectable world of the Bona Dea's rites—this time, shaming Livia at her shrine rather than Pompeia at her own house. In this poem, Propertius debunks Livia's attempt to restore both Claudian decorum and the Bona Dea's traditional respectability. Likewise, where the Princeps had used the Ara Maxima to define and encourage the sort of masculine behavior that would build the new state, Propertius sabotages the Princeps' gendered urban message by temporarily transforming Hercules into a man-woman, unable to be defined by the cityscape and unclassifiable in the Julian laws.⁶¹ Elegy's systematic *aporia*, therefore, momentarily takes over the Roman landscape.⁶²

Yet the elegiac effect on the city does not last. The priestess reaffirms Augustan principles and forbids Hercules' entry into the sanctuary because she denies his womanhood. Temporary feminization does not a woman make, and men are forbidden from the Bona Dea's sanctuary: *interdicta viris metuenda lege piatur / quae se summota vindicat ara casa* ("this altar which protects itself in this remote shelter is forbidden to men and hallowed by a law not to be ignored," 4.9.55–56).⁶³ She cites Tiresias as an example of the dangers of intruding into a sacred space:

aqueduct, called the Aqua Appia. Perhaps *non clausisset aquas* in 4.9.44 hints at this public work.

⁶¹ Though his emphasis is not on the poem's monuments, Fox 1998, 15–16, reaches the same conclusion in his study of Hercules' transvestism. Touching upon Livia's restoration of the sanctuary, he writes: "Such an aggressive display of gender disorder is out of accord with the emphasis on harmonious state and family relationships to which Livia's proximity to the poem appeals . . . Hercules is here acting as a symbol of resistance to any kind of ritually enforced socio-sexual order."

⁶² Miller and Platter 1999, 453–54, note how elegy draws attention to tensions and anxieties in Roman beliefs and behaviors as one of its primary generic strategies: "Augustan elegy is therefore an oppositional discourse, not so much because it represents a determined univocal opposition to a given set of values—Augustan or otherwise—but rather in the sense that it is constructed out of values whose inherent contradictions make conflict between elegy and Roman ideology a necessary condition of the genre's existence." For elegy's most pervasive *aporetic* notion, i.e., gender roles (which are not simply inverted but rather are hybridized or otherwise made ambiguous), see n. 42.

⁶³ For Lindheim 1998, Hercules' and the priestess' differing views of how to define gender constitute another layer of this elegy's *aporia*. It asks the question, is gender constructed (i.e., defined by behavior and appearance—this is Hercules' method), or essential (defined by anatomy—the Priestess' method)?

“magno Tiresias aspexit Pallada vates,
 fortia dum posita Gorgone membra lavat.
 di tibi dent alios fontis: haec lympha puellis
 avia secreti limitis unda fluit.” (4.9.57–60)

“At great cost to himself the prophet Tiresias caught a glimpse of Pallas Athena while she was bathing her strong limbs and had set aside her aegis. May the gods grant you other fountains: this liquid flows for girls only, this pathless trickle of a secret threshold.”

The priestess here alludes to the subject of Callimachus’ fifth hymn, the so-called *Bath of Pallas*, in which Tiresias unwittingly stumbles into the bath of the goddess and is blinded as a punishment. While the reference certainly serves to anchor this poem in the context of Alexandrian poetic techniques and to prove Propertius indeed to be the Callimachus Romanus (4.1.64), it also adds to the commentary on gender and space that the poem’s primary *aitia* generate. A variation on the topos of “intrusion into the goddess’ bath,” Callimachus’ hymn itself subverts expected gender roles. This topos, involving the unauthorized glimpse of a nude goddess, is much more suited to Artemis than to Athena.⁶⁴ Callimachus’ innovation is in assigning a myth that highlights feminine chastity to the most masculine of goddesses.⁶⁵ Yet in citing this version of the myth, the priestess is suppressing—and so, evoking—the more popular tradition about Tiresias: namely, that he was himself cross-gendered.⁶⁶ In his intrusion, his indeterminate gender, and his Alexandrianism, Tiresias thus serves as an *exemplum* for Hercules at the doors of the forbidden sanctuary.

Tiresias is a topographical *exemplum* as well. At issue in both Propertius’ poem and Callimachus’ *Hymn to Athena* is access to forbidden spaces. In both poems, these spaces are remote, unurban. In Propertius’ poem, the Bona Dea’s sacred space is far off (*procul*, 4.9.23), enclosed (*inclusas*, 4.9.23; *clausa*, 4.9.25), off the beaten path (*devia*, 4.9.27),

⁶⁴ Haslam 1993, 124, with n. 28, suggests that the topos may have originally been assigned to Artemis.

⁶⁵ Depew 1993, 66–69, traces the masculine outline of Callimachus’ Pallas.

⁶⁶ In the context of Hercules’ transgendered experience, the name Tiresias also recalls an older version of his myth from pseudo-Hesiod’s *Melampodia*. Ovid preserves the tale at *Metamorphoses* 3.316–38. Tiresias, experienced as both a man and as a woman, was punished for his extra knowledge. To be specific, Hera blinded Tiresias for asserting the supremacy of women in attaining sexual pleasure. In this version, the gendered implications of Tiresias’ punishment are even stronger: not only has the seer blurred the boundary between male and female—a threat to discrete gender roles—but he has also valued the female over the male experience, thus upsetting the hierarchy normally resident in the binary system.

secluded (*summota*, 4.9.56), and hidden (*secreti*, 4.9.60). Propertius' landscape is also undeveloped:

lucus ubi umbroso fecerat orbe nemus,
 femineae loca clausa deae fontisque piandos,
 impune et nullis sacra resecta viris,
 devia puniceae velabant limina vittae,
 putris odorato luxerat igne casa,
 populus et longis ornabat frondibus aedem . . . (4.9.24–29)

Where a grove with its shady head had made a dell, there are the enclosed places of the women's goddess and fountains that must be revered, and rites disclosed to no man without punishment. Purple garlands drape over her remote threshold, the smoky house had gleamed with perfumed fire, and a poplar tree decorated the shrine with its long branches.

The setting of Athena's bath in the Callimachus hymn is similarly untamed and remote. The goddess bathes at the spring of Hippocrene on Helikon, where the water flows beautifully 'Ἑλικωνίδι καλὰ ῥεοῖσαι, *Hymn* 5.71). The hour is noon and quiet stills the remote landscape (μεσαμβριναὶ δ' ἔσαν ὥραι, / πολλὰ δ' ἄσυχία τῆνο κατεῖχεν ὄρος, *Hymn* 5.73–74). The natural locale is especially appropriate for the goddesses; not only are such wild places conducive to divine epiphanies, but more importantly, these parallel places are situated so as to protect the goddesses from the intrusion of profane visitors.

Hercules and Tiresias both approach these hidden and forbidden springs thirsty, but there the similarity ends. Tiresias stumbles innocent and unwitting upon the forbidden sight:

Τιρεσίας δ' ἔτι μῶνος ἀμᾶ κυσὶν ἄρτι γένεια
 περκάζων ἱερὸν χῶρον ἀνεστρέφετο·
 διψάσας δ' ἄφατόν τι ποτὶ ῥόον ἤλυθε κράνας,
 σχέτλιος· οὐκ ἐθέλων δ' εἶδε τὰ μὴ θεμιτά. (Hymn 5.75–78)

Tiresias, as yet alone with only his dogs, with a beard just darkening his cheeks, turned toward the sacred place. Feeling an unspeakable thirst, he turned toward the trickle of the stream, wretch: unwillingly he saw what was unholy to see.

Hercules, on the other hand, seeks out the secluded sanctuary by choice: *huc ruit in siccam congesta pulvere barbam* ("he rushes to this place with dust matted into his dry beard," 4.9.31). What is more, Hercules enters the forbidden area deliberately, having been warned in advance about the place's restrictions:

... ille umeris postis concussit opacos
 nec tulit iratam ianua clausa sitim.
 at postquam exhausto iam flumine vicerat aestum,
 ponit vix siccis tristia iura labris . . . (4.9.61–64)

. . . He shook the impenetrable portal with his shoulders and the door, though closed, wasn't able to withstand his aroused thirst. But after he had conquered his burning heat and the river was dried up, he utters these dread oaths with lips barely dry . . .

His intrusion is laced with erotic nuance: *aestum* and perhaps *sitim* evoke sexual desire, desire that Hercules sates by draining the dregs of the river (*exhausto iam flumine vicerat*, 4.9.63).⁶⁷ Having stretched his role of *exclusus amator* to its literal bursting point, Hercules uses force to break into the sanctuary—an action akin to rape and dependent on strict gender difference. He petulantly commemorates his return to amorous proactivity by establishing his own monument to rigid gender roles, the Ara Maxima for men only.

While Hercules' return to an active role may seem to reassert his more traditional, even excessive, masculinity,⁶⁸ the hero nevertheless remains ridiculous. The elegiac Hercules misinterprets himself and his role in the world and in the Roman city. In breaking into the sanctuary, Hercules seeks to demonstrate what he has argued earlier in the poem—that he is master of all places, from the heavens to the underworld:

“audistisne aliquem, tergo qui sustulit orbem?
 ille ego sum: Alciden terra recepta vocat.
 quis facta Herculeae non audit fortia clavae
 et numquam ad vastas irrita tela feras,
 atque uni Stygias homini luxisse tenebras?”

“Angulus hic mundi nunc me mea fata trahentem
 accipit: haec fesso vix mihi terra patet.

⁶⁷ *Sitis* appears with a sexual connotation at Ovid *Remedium* 247; for *aestus*, see, e.g., Propertius 2.33.43. See Anderson 1964, 12, with n. 26–27 for this and further erotic nuances in Hercules' actions.

⁶⁸ To Cyrino 1998, this emergence is the purpose of the transvestism. Hercules' transvestism is an experiment that, functioning like a carnivalesque diversion, confirms the re-emergent masculinity of the hero. Such diversions, popular in Roman rituals and discourse, release the tensions that build up in Rome's highly stratified daily life. She discusses both Achilles' and Hercules' cross-dressing myths in detail and concludes that only the manliest of men could dress in female clothes and remain masculine: the transvestism of each hero “. . . serves primarily a conservative function: to reaffirm his high-octane sexuality” (217).

Maxima quae gregibus devota est Ara repertis,
 ara per has” inquit “maxima facta manus,
 haec nullis umquam pateat veneranda puellis,
 Herculis aeternum ne sit inulta sitis.” (4.9.37–41, 65–70)

“Have you heard about the man who bore the world on his back? I am that man: the earth that I took up calls me Hercules. Who has not heard the brave deeds of Hercules’ club, and about the arrows never hurled in vain at huge beasts? Who has not heard about the one man for whom the shadows of Styx brightened?”

“This corner of the world receives me as I carry out my destiny. This land scarcely lies open for me when I am weary. Let the Greatest Altar, which has been vowed upon recovery of my herd, the Altar made greatest,” he said “through these hands, never be open to girls for worship, lest the thirst of Hercules remain ever unavenged.”

With his claim of supremacy over all places (*orbem, terra, tenebras*), Hercules casts the earth itself as passive (*terra recepta*, 4.9.38). His violent entry into the Bona Dea’s sanctuary reveals that he sees himself as master of both feminine and masculine places (4.9.69–70). Hercules also desires to control sacred as well as secular space. Though he is a self-styled mortal and treated like a man by the priestess (*homini*, 4.9.41; *viris*, 4.9.55), he establishes an altar to himself (4.9.67–68), tacitly asserting himself to be a god. He thus attempts to write his own apotheosis into the landscape.⁶⁹ As he confidently asserts, he is leading his fates along (4.9.65)—not the other way around.⁷⁰

We can hardly take this boastful Hercules seriously, and the poem ends ironically as the elegist’s voice reemerges and casts doubt on Hercules’ topographical pretensions:

hunc, quoniam manibus purgatum sanxerat orbem,
 sic Sanctum Tatiae composuere Cures.
 Sancte pater salve, cui iam favet aspera Iuno:
 Sancte, velis libro dexter inesse meo. (4.9.73–74, 71–72)⁷¹

⁶⁹ Ovid’s Hercules does the same. At *Fasti* 1.581, Hercules himself founds the Ara Maxima, thus styling himself a divinity. As this *aition* immediately precedes Augustus’ appearance in the *Fasti*, Barchiesi 1997, 97, finds Hercules’ proactivity pointedly ironic.

⁷⁰ Cf. Livy 1.7.15: *eum sua fata ducebant*, “his fates were leading him.”

⁷¹ I agree with Barber’s (1960) rearrangement of the last four lines of the poem; see Camps 1965, ad 4.9.73 ff. for explanation. Richardson 1975, ad 4.9.73–74, does not transpose the couplets as do Barber and Camps but admits the sequence in the manuscript is awkward.

This one, since he had sanctified the world that had been purified by his hands, the Romans of Tatius' line style "Sanctus." Hail, father Sanctus, whom harsh Juno now favors. Sanctus, may you wish to enter my book favorably.

The mention of purification, linked with an etymology for Hercules' Sabine epithet (4.9.73–74), flies in the face of his violation of the sanctuary of the Bona Dea. The verb *composuere* highlights the fact that this epithet is a subjective interpretation—one with which the elegist apparently disagrees. The poet even states the patently false: that Juno herself now favors the god. To clinch the poem, Propertius prays for the god's quiet and propitious entry into this poem: may Hercules not enter Propertius' poem as he did the Bona Dea's sanctuary.

Though Hercules' final actions—his forced entry into the Bona Dea's sanctuary and his establishment of his own exclusively male shrine—attempt to reinforce a traditionally masculine control over the Roman landscape, this poem will forever link the Ara Maxima with indecorous, transvestite behavior coupled with the excesses of passion and the unmanly petulance of the god. In the end, Propertius has exerted more control over the interpretation of the Ara Maxima than has Hercules. The perfumed scent of the god's feminine boudoir lingers in the Roman monument.

CONCLUSION

Propertius' poem blends genre and gender with political innuendo and Roman monuments in a provocative response to the Princeps about the new Roman landscape. In the imperial building program, the Ara Maxima and the sanctuary of the Bona Dea served to redefine Roman morality and, more importantly, Roman self-perception. By linking Roman tradition with gender roles, the Princeps redefined the successful Roman as one who acted like an old-style man. As Elsner has said about the Roman visual arts, a work of art both relies on the viewer's prior knowledge and experiences (that is, reinforces who he thinks he is) and adds something to his knowledge and experiences (that is, redefines who he is by adding something new).⁷² These monuments reorient the Roman viewer to the new Rome and to his place in the new Rome. The Ara Maxima had always encouraged traditional male values; Augustus inserted

⁷² Elsner 1995, 4–5.

himself into that picture as a paragon of those virtues and their protector in the civil wars against Antony, who conspicuously had not maintained that traditional male role. Augustus' actions regarding the Ara Maxima are complemented by Livia's restoration of the decorum of the *matrona* via her restoration of the Bona Dea's shrine.

In paying attention to these urban sites, the Princeps and his wife tacitly acknowledge the power of place to define identity. Gaze theorists might explain this phenomenon in a different way: that the viewer, rather than controlling what he sees and desires, is on the contrary transformed by the object of his gaze.⁷³ Augustan monuments, according to this view, make the Roman viewer passive, enacting upon him some message that informs, or rather, transforms him. The power of images in this poem is enough to transform Hercules from an elegiac lover into a traditional Roman man.

Nevertheless, Propertius' poem breaks the hold those monuments have over the viewer by reorienting the viewer's perspective. One might say that Propertius thus returns the Roman viewer to a more active role in looking at Roman places by providing alternative ways of interpreting Roman monuments. Playing with Hercules' gender allows Propertius to redefine the evolving Augustan city and to interrogate the gender associations emphasized in certain places by the Princeps, by his wife, and by other literature of the day. The elegist's poem on the origins of the Ara Maxima challenges traditional Roman mores as much as Propertius' earlier love poetry had done, and what is more, in writing a new Rome, challenges Augustus' authorship of the new urban landscape. The Ara Maxima stands not as a monument to the new regime, but as a monument to the elegiac lifestyle. With his small voice, the poet answers back to the silent city.⁷⁴

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⁷³ Miller 2001, and see also Kampen 1996b, 20–21.

⁷⁴ An earlier version of this paper was delivered at the January, 2000 meeting of the APA at a panel entitled "Gendered Dynamics in Latin Love Elegy." I am grateful to the organizers and participants of that panel, especially Ellen Greene, and to all those who offered comments. I owe special thanks to David Konstan, Natalie Boymel Kampen, Brian Walters, Stanley Lombardo, and Anthony Corbeill, who were kind enough to comment on written drafts. Finally, I am indebted to the editors and anonymous readers of *AJP* for their careful and insightful comments.

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