

THE RAPE OF HYLAS IN THEOCRITUS IDYLL 13 AND PROPERTIUS 1.20

THE RAPE OF HYLAS IN THEOCRITUS *IDYLL* 13 AND PROPERTIUS 1.20

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LAY ABSTRACT

The rape of Hylas is a minor event occurring during the famed expedition of the Argo. A handsome boy named Hylas, who is the beloved of the mighty hero Heracles, fetches water during a brief landing on their voyage to Phasis. As Hylas draws water from a spring, water nymphs abduct him. Heracles, now bereaved, rampages madly in futile search while the other Argonauts sail on without him. Such are the general details of the Hylas myth.

This thesis examines two versions of the Hylas myth, the first by Theocritus, a third century BC Hellenistic poet, and the second by Propertius, a first century BC Roman poet. My objective is to prove definitively that these two accounts are connected, with Propertius having modelled his treatment on the rendition provided by Theocritus. This will be achieved through a thorough literary-critical appreciation, with particular focus on wit, humour, and narrative.

ABSTRACT

The Hylas myth, in which the eponymous boy beloved of Heracles is raped by water nymphs while drawing water from a spring, seems to have been a wildly popular subject among the literary circles of Augustan Rome. Indeed the rape of Hylas had been so ubiquitous that Virgil himself could claim that no one was unfamiliar with it (*Georgics* 3.6: *cui non dictus Hylas puer?*). Yet despite this declaration, few renditions of the Hylas myth survive. Propertius 1.20, an Augustan era Latin poem in elegiac couplets, is one extant version of the rape of Hylas. While the similarities between this poem and Theocritus *Idyll* 13, a short Hellenistic hexameter poem composed well before Propertius, have long been observed by modern scholars, there has been no sustained effort to connect these two accounts of the Hylas myth conclusively. Instead, what little scholarly work that has been done on these poems either appraises them in isolation, or seeks a non-Theocritean template behind Propertius 1.20. With this thesis, I aim to prove definitively that Theocritus *Idyll* 13 is the major model for Propertius 1.20. In my first chapter, I provide a brief overview of the rape of Hylas throughout all of Greek and Latin literature. In my second chapter, I examine Theocritus *Idyll* 13 with particular attention to its wit, humour, and narrative. In my third chapter, I offer a thorough literary-critical appreciation of Propertius 1.20, establishing links to *Idyll* 13 wherever possible. Finally, in my conclusion, I consider the possible influence of other poets and mythographers upon Propertius, before appraising 1.20 both independently and within the context of the Propertian *Monobiblos*.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FGrHist – F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*

IG – *Inscriptiones Graecae*

OLD – *Oxford Latin Dictionary*

LSJ – H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*

DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The author declares that the content of the research contained herein was carried out in full by Andrew Gyorkos with recognition of the contributions of the supervisory committee, comprised of Dr. Paul Murgatroyd, Dr. Kathryn Mattison, and Dr. Claude Eilers, made during the writing and editing process

CHAPTER I: *RAPTUS HYLAS*

1.1 The Rape of Hylas in Greek and Latin Literature

The purpose of this thesis is to offer a detailed critical appreciation of Propertius 1.20, especially in connection with Theocritus *Idyll* 13. However a brief overview of the rape of Hylas, which is the central action of both poems, will be necessary before this treatment is undertaken. The primary focus of this chapter will not be limited to a comparison of the rape in Propertius 1.20 with its treatment in Theocritus *Idyll* 13, but will consider in addition other major extant renditions of this event in Greek and Latin literature by Apollonius Rhodius, Valerius Flaccus, Antoninus Liberalis, Dracontius, and the author of the *Argonautica Orphica*. This overview is intended to provide an understanding of how Propertius 1.20 either conforms with or diverges from other extant accounts, which will serve as precursory information necessary for the remainder of this thesis.

The early Hellenistic author Apollonius Rhodius, in 1.1207-1357 of his *Argonautica*, offers an early extant sustained treatment of the the rape of Hylas. The context is that Hylas, with Heracles gone to fashion a new oar for himself after the Argonauts had landed among the Mysians, has taken a bronze vessel in search of water. Before the actual rape, Apollonius reveals some background information: Hylas had a father, Theiodamas,¹ whom Heracles killed over a ploughing ox, after which Heracles then raised the young Hylas to be his attendant. This digression goes on for several lines before Apollonius acknowledges his distraction at 1.1220 and returns to the present

1 Hylas' father varies in different accounts. For a fuller discussion, see n. 11.

narrative. Hylas then arrives at the spring at 1.1221, and the following hexameters describe the general activities of the nymphs dwelling within before Apollonius focuses on one nameless nymph smitten by Hylas' beauty in the moonlight. One lengthy yet rather dry period spanning six hexameters from 1.1234-39 then relates Hylas' abduction as he leans into the spring with his pitcher before the enamoured nymph pulls him into the water.

Theocritus, a contemporary so near to Apollonius that there is some debate over whose treatment of the Hylas episode first circulated,² similarly writes on the rape of Hylas. Unlike Apollonius, Theocritus offers a rather different treatment of this episode. Awkward integration of Hylas' lineage into the narrative is entirely foregone; instead, Heracles becomes a father-figure for Hylas in a simile describing his tutelage, and their closeness is greatly emphasized in the following lines, which describe how they are never apart from each other (5-15). The spring is given a detailed description at 39-42 with particular emphasis on the vegetation of rushes, celadine, maiden-hair, wild celery, and dog's-tooth. The nymphs are also more animated with their sleepless dances and their status as fearful goddesses for country-folk, even significantly possessing the names of Eunice, Malis, and the particularly ominous Nycheia (43-5).³ Most strikingly, the abduction of Hylas in Theocritus is not only swift, with the action confined to the second half of 47, but remarkably sudden. The narrative sequence of an incurably smitten nymph abducting Hylas in Apollonius is here broken up and inverted, where Hylas is first seized

2 Gow (1950b), 231-2, prefaces his commentary on *Idyll* 13 with a concise summary of the relationship between Apollonius and Theocritus as regards the rape of Hylas.

3 Aside from Theocritus, the only other account in which the nymphs are named is Dracontius *Carmina Profana* 2.

by all the nymphs before it is explained that love had incited them, and the entire event is crowned with a touching simile likening Hylas' fall into the dark water like that of a shooting star.

Such are the broad strokes of character, context, and style established by Apollonius and Theocritus regarding the rape of Hylas. The events following Hylas' abduction, however, are also treated differently according to both authors. In the *Argonautica*, Apollonius writes that it is Polyphemus⁴ who hears the cry of Hylas from the spring with great clarity and accuracy, despite there being no explicit mention of Hylas crying out (1.1240). Heracles is encountered during his searching and Polyphemus mistakenly informs him that Hylas must have been assaulted by bandits or beasts (1.1257-60). The two heroes are left behind by the other Argonauts, who after setting sail are informed by Glaucus of the fates of their three missing crew members: Heracles will return to Argos to perform his labours, Polyphemus will found a city at Cius among the Mysians, and a nymph has made Hylas her husband (1. 1315-25). Neither Polyphemus nor Heracles will discover the fate of Hylas.⁵

Where Apollonius spends some 125 hexameters on the aftermath of Hylas' abduction, Theocritus dedicates to this a mere 22. Like Theiodamas, Polyphemus is entirely omitted from *Idyll* 13, and the expedition of the Argo is a mere narrative framing

4 A fellow Argonaut, not to be confused with the cyclops of Homer *Odyssey* 9.166-556. The presence and significance of Polyphemus varies in different renditions. Apparently, there even existed accounts by Socrates Argivus and Euphorion where Hylas was the beloved of Polyphemus (*schol. Ap. Rhod.* 1207b and *schol. Theoc.* 13.7 respectively.)

5 Hyginus *Fabula* 14 and Apollodorus *Bibliotheca* 1.9.19 effectively summarize *Argonautica* 1.1207-1357.

for the rape of Hylas central to this account.⁶ Two remarkable images are also presented after the ordeal; one of the nymphs comforting Hylas in their laps,⁷ and the other of Heracles crying out three times while standing right next to the very spring into which Hylas had been pulled.⁸ The poem ends with Hylas reckoned among the immortal gods while Heracles is mocked.⁹

Antoninus Liberalis, active during the later Roman empire, offers a short and dry Greek prose account of the rape of Hylas within a larger compendium of myths revolving around the theme of metamorphosis.¹⁰ A note prefacing his rendition states that the Hellenistic author Nicander offered an expanded treatment in the second book of his *Heteroeumena*, which in conjunction with a fragment of Nicander indicating how Hylas turned into an echo (fr. 48, Gow and Scholfield) has offered tantalizing evidence for a fascinating lost account which Antoninus is heavily abbreviating. That the nymphs turn Hylas into an echo in order to deceive the raging Heracles is the central metamorphosis of this version and seems to have been one of many variations throughout this brief rendition. Other differences include Heracles being elected leader of the Argonauts, Hylas being an orphaned son of Ceyx,¹¹ Hylas being abducted at the river Ascanius by

6 This frame has led some to classify *Idyll* 13 as an epyllion, although definitions and opinions vary. See Crump, 51-4.

7 *Id.* 13.53-54. Also *cf.* Dracontius *Carmina Profana* 132-139, where the nymphs are given direct speech.

8 *Id.* 13.58-60. This image of Hylas and Heracles, close but separated by the water's surface, is remarkably vivid.

9 Hylas, now the husband of a nymph, presumably becomes immortal in Apollonius, too. *cf.* Ap. Rhod. 1.1324-1325.

10 Antoninus Liberalis 26.

11 Hylas' parentage varies: Hellancius (fr. 131, Fowler) says Theiomenes was Hylas' father; Callimachus (*schol. Ap. Rhod.* 1.1212), agreeing with Apollonius and Propertius, says Theodamas; Socrates Argivus (*schol. Theoc.* 13.7) says Heracles himself, surely confusing Hylas with Hyllus (the name of his son). There are other discrepancies, but they are ultimately trivial.

many nymphs,¹² Heracles only temporarily searching for Hylas before ultimately rejoining the expedition, Polyphemus being left behind to search for him, and an ending reinforcing a ritual aetiology for springtime calls to Hylas by the local people.¹³

Apollonius Rhodius, Theocritus, and Nicander through Antoninus Liberalis offer the only three extant full accounts of the rape of Hylas which predate Propertius. Together, these three renditions would seem to codify the essential elements of the rape of Hylas, however much the finer details and points of style and technique may depart from one another. The context of the expedition of the Argo, the landing at Mysia, Hylas setting out on his own voluntarily to seek water, the abduction of the youth by nymph(s), a cry being heard and responded to after the ordeal, and a subsequent futile search are all standard.¹⁴ More specific details, however, could vary, as the number and names of the nymphs (whether one unnamed in Apollonius, three named in Theocritus, or a presumed unnamed plurality in Nicander) and the specific function of the Argonauts in the myth (paramount to Apollonius but of minor consequence to Theocritus and Nicander) often did.

The next extant account of the Hylas episode,¹⁵ Propertius 1.20, exemplifies the individual authorial license over such details. While his rendition conforms to the

12 Ascanius is twice mentioned in Propertius 1.20 (at 4 and 16), perhaps indicating that Propertius was also looking back to this lost account by Nicander.

13 The lexicographer Hesychius regards Aeschylus' *Persians* 1055 as alluding to a ritual dirge for a Hylas, though unnamed, perhaps indicating an aetiology stretching back as far as the fifth century BC. Philostratus in the third century AD (*Heroicus* 45.6) also refers to lamentations for Hylas.

14 Antoninus Liberalis' abbreviated account does not explicitly mention that Hylas cries out; however Heracles notes his disappearance regardless and cries to him as he searches.

15 Virgil *Geo.* 3.6 (*cui non dictus Hylas puer?*), believed to have been published in the late 30s/early 20s BC, indicates that the rape of Hylas had been thoroughly written on by the time Propertius was active. This verse therefore offers a sobering reminder of the innumerable renditions now lost, as well as revealing just how popular the story of Hylas' abduction had been.

framework established by his predecessors, he nevertheless offers significant variations. He reaffirms Hylas as the son of Theiodamas with a patronymic, further excises the Argonauts from the episode by not recapitulating their presence at its conclusion, omits Polyphemus entirely, describes the abduction of Hylas by an indefinite plural number of nymphs, has Hercules respond to a presumed cry only to be met with an echo, and merely hints at a futile search. Certain elements may align with one author, others with another, yet all are canonically valid. As regards details central to the rape of Hylas, Propertius seems to have taken a novel approach in manipulating the expected narrative sequence by expressing grief over Hylas' abduction before it has even occurred.¹⁶ The description of the spring is also remarkably vivid, forgoing the technical botanical details of Theocritus in favour of a more general picture of dewy fruit from wild trees and a meadow of white lilies and purple poppies.¹⁷ Hylas even undergoes a nuanced change of personality, from approaching the spring with keen eagerness in Theocritus to delaying his task with a boyish distraction in Propertius.¹⁸

After Propertius, the standard features of the rape of Hylas begin to change. While the general framework remains the same, later accounts seem to have tended towards including more supernatural elements with a tremendous focus on the activities of the gods. These innovations are especially apparent in Valerius Flaccus, the next extant author to have treated the Hylas episode in his Latin epic *Argonautica* (3.533-610) in the first century AD. While his account is more similar to the epic stylization of Apollonius

16 1.20.32 expresses grief over an action that occurs at 1.20.45-48. The simple presence of this interjection, here expressing mock-grief, also seems to have been novel.

17 *cf.* Prop. 1.20.35-38 and *Id.* 13.39-42.

18 *cf.* Prop. 1.20.39-42 and *Id.* 13.46-47.

than to the bucolic impulses of Theocritus, his version still offers a radical departure from the broader *Argonautica* cycle with its enormous focus on divine influences. Juno in particular, the persistent antagonist of Hercules, is here a looming figure throughout his rendition. Hylas pursues a deer sent by Juno to draw him away from Hercules (3.545). When Hylas comes to rest at a stream, he ignores the signs of a single nymph lurking beneath the surface and is pulled into the water before he can cry out for Hercules (3.555). While the rest of the episode is largely familiar as Hercules is left behind by the Argonauts (3.600), Valerius offers some striking innovations throughout, primarily by capitalizing on the greater heavenly and supernatural elements to have Hylas later address Hercules in a dream (4.22).

Dracontius, a fifth century Christian poet, also retells the Hylas episode in a brief 163 hexameter poem, the second of his *Carmina Profana*. Similar to Valerius Flaccus, Dracontius amplifies the influence of the gods; only his version predominantly focuses on Cupid's actions as commanded by Venus instead of on Juno's vindictive behaviour. As a result, his initial programmatic statement that he will sing of the fate of Hylas proves frustrating, given how much space the interplay between Venus and Cupid and then Cupid among the nymphs occupies. It is only within the last 40 lines that the rape of Hylas actually occurs: Hylas draws water from a spring, a troupe of nymphs pulls him under, and Hercules seeks out his companion. However there are considerable innovations within this space: the nymphs, granted direct speech throughout, seem to console Hylas effectively;¹⁹ Hercules is pitied and informed of what has transpired;

¹⁹ Dracontius *Carmina Profana* 2.132-139

Dracontius even gives Hercules a substantial closing speech which fleshes out the relationship between Hylas and Hercules in unprecedented ways, most notably that a young Hylas was entrusted to Hercules by his unnamed mother to whom he imagines reporting his abduction.²⁰ It must also be noted that this is the only extant version of the Hylas episode which omits any explicit mention of the expedition of the Argo.

The anonymous *Argonautica Orphica*, an imitation of early Greek hymn and epic belonging to late antiquity, is the final sustained treatment of the Hylas episode to survive. The poem essentially functions as a condensed version of the *Argonautica* from the perspective of Orpheus. As such, the Hylas episode occupies a mere 28 hexameters (627-55): the Argonauts land at Mysia, Heracles searches for food, and Hylas wanders off to a marshy cave. It is here in this waterless realm that Hylas is abducted. Heracles again searches for Hylas, and abandons the expedition when they are inclined to sail on without him. Aside from the change of scene, the only element of this account worthy of note is the motivation of the nymphs for seizing Hylas; a passionate love for Hylas on the part of the nymphs had been a motivating factor for every other account of his rape.²¹ Here, however, such a motive is conspicuously absent, instead replaced with granting Hylas immortality by virtue of his godlike appearance (646).

While extant ancient literature offers no further sustained treatments of the rape of Hylas, minor references to the figure still appear infrequently.²² These isolated mentions

20 cf. 2.147-148 for Heracles informed (unprecedented since it contradicts the ritual aetiology), and 2.152-163 for Heracles' speech. For these aspects and many others, Dracontius' entire poem is a remarkably fascinating text.

21 Whether this love is a result of his beautiful appearance or divine inspiration is left unclear.

22 The following is a list of references to Hylas not discussed elsewhere in this section (See "Hylas" in Pauly-Wissowa v.9 pp.1 110-6 and Roscher v.1 pp. 2792-6): Cephalion, *FGrHist* Vol. 2A, 438ff. (#93);

of Hylas independent of any sustained treatment of his rape often occur as a general allusion to a lost beloved signified by the author. Here, the rape of Hylas is not particularly central to the author and thus a picture can emerge of how Hylas was regarded in contemporary thought. In Latin, the action is often described in these brief and at times tenuous references with some form of *rapere*.²³ In Greek, expressions are often more evocative, whether Hylas “goes into a spring unseen,” as in Philostratus, or “the nymphs conceal the the graceful Hylas in jealous streams,” as in Nonnus.²⁴ In some circumstances, as in Tertullian and Plutarch, Hylas is not explicitly named and the allusion must be deciphered contextually.²⁵ Across these and other extant minor references, the split between a focus on the lost beloved (Hylas) and the bereaved lover (Heracles) is generally well balanced. The presence of the nymphs (whether singular or plural) is more often explicit in the former while instances of the latter tend obscure Hylas in order to focus on Heracles. In either case, certain elements of the rape of Hylas are activated or omitted to suit a particular end.

Memnon, *FGrHist* Vol. 3B, 356ff. (#434); Plinius Secundus *Naturalis Historia* 5.144; Petronius *Satyricon* 85.3.5; Statius *Silvae* 1.1.199, 1.5.20, 2.1.113, 3.4.40, *Thebaid* 5.443; Martial, *Epigrammata* 5.48.5, 6.68.7, 7.15.1, 7.50.7, 9.25.7, 9.65.13, 10.4.3, 11.43.5; Dionysius, *Periegetes* 805ff.; Lucian *Navigium* 43.a.E, *Verae Historiae* 2.17; *IG* 14.2131; Clement of Alexandria *Protrepticus* 2.33; Philostratus *Epistolai Eroticae* 8; Solinus 42.2; Arnobius *Ad Nationes* 4.26; Avienus *Descriptio Orbis Terrae* 3.976ff.; Prudentius *Contra Symmachum* 1.116ff.; Servius *In Tria Virgilii Opera Expositio*, *Ad Ecl.* 6.43, *Ad Geo.* 3.6, *Ad Aen.* 11.262; *Scholia Bernensia*, *Ad Bucolica* 6.43-4, *Ad Georgica* 3.6; Martianus Capella 6.687; Priscianus *Periegesis* 773ff.; Vatican Mythographers 1.49, 2.199, 3.3.8; Lactantius Placidus *Thebais* 5.443, *Achilleida* 397; Eustathius *Periegetes* 791.805ff.; Zenobius *Proverbia* 6.21; Suda “Υλαν κρηνάζειν.

References not included in Pauly-Wissowa: Bassus *De Metris*, fr. 6.138; Ammianus Macellinus 22.8.5; Ausonius *Epigrammata* 97, 98.

23 Ovid *Ars Amatoria* 2.110, Seneca *Medea* 649, and Martial 5.48.5 all have *raptus*.

24 Philostratus *Heroicus* 45.6 and Nonnus *Dionysiaca* 11.227.

25 Tertullian *Ad Nationes* 2.14 and Plutarch *Bruta Animalia Ratione Uti* 7.

CHAPTER II: THE RAPE OF HYLAS IN THEOCRITUS *IDYLL* 13

2.1 Heracles and Hylas, Epic and Bucolic

That Theocritus ostensibly intends *Idyll* 13 as an erotic epistle to his friend Nicias is undeniable given that the very first words of the poem unambiguously state that mortal men are not alone in experiencing love (1-2). This proposition, however, quickly falls away in favour of a delicate illustration of the intense love Heracles felt for Hylas. After a sequence introducing and characterizing the relationship of Heracles and Hylas, Theocritus then offers his rendition of the rape of Hylas and its aftermath, events which are framed by the expedition of the Argo. While the general subject matter of love certainly persists throughout the *Idyll*, Theocritus' motives are far more subtle than the simple observation which his programmatic statement would claim. The clearest evidence that this is the case is perhaps to be found both in the complete disappearance of its addressee after his initial mention, as well as in the absence of any concluding recapitulation of the central proposition of the poem. These are by no means the only generic and narrative changes occurring over the course of *Idyll* 13; however they are arguably the most distinct and thereby most likely to invite deeper consideration as to Theocritus' poetic intentions and ambitions. A closer reading will in fact yield numerous occasions in which Theocritus subverts and undermines traditional epic themes through humour, wit, irony, and mock-heroic deflation.²⁶ It is my intention to explore in this chapter not only how and to what end Theocritus uses these techniques, but also his

²⁶ Mastronarde has, to my knowledge, produced the strongest and most comprehensive analysis of these techniques in *Idyll* 13, although others, notably Hunter and Gutzwiller, are sensitive to them as well. I will be contributing to these observations, in addition to referring to them liberally, as necessary.

general narrative treatment of the Heracles and Hylas episode.²⁷ This will provide the necessary framework for appreciating Propertius' literary and narrative handling, which will then be considered in the following chapters of this thesis.

Accounting for only 75 lines but written in hexameters depicting a minor incident involving a heroic figure during a legendary adventure, *Idyll* 13 is composed in a form which is very clearly and quite purposeful transgressing generic custom.²⁸ The traditional meter of epic is here used to present an unheroic incident in a short narrative form, which is then further deflated through extensive wit and playfulness. In addition, Theocritus uses language which often subtly blends lowly bucolic elements with the high heroic register to heighten this subversive effect. Not only are there extended similes, lengthy patronymics, and language which quite conspicuously invokes epic poetry, but there is also rustic language and other idyllic touches which are often used to deflate its epic themes traditionally associated with the dactylic hexameter and its preferred lofty subject matter. These techniques, so used in a poem about the effects of love on heroic figures and thus juxtaposed with themes and language generally inappropriate for its preferred

27 Of the many prevalent interpretations of *Idyll* 13, three readings in particular seem to have received considerable scholarly favour and debate. The first approaches the text through the lens of mythography in an effort to trace the origin of the ritual springtime ramble and call to Hylas by the Mysians (Gow [1950b], 242-3, Hunter 262-3, and Sergent 159-62). The second is favoured by social historians, who see the abduction of Hylas from Heracles as an allegorical transition of a young man from the adolescent status as the beloved of a mature male to heterosexual adulthood (Hunter, 262-3, Sergent 155-66). The third preferred reading emerges from diligent literary criticism, which attempts to use the language of *Idyll* 13 to reveal the sentiments of its authors regarding genre, character, and contemporary Alexandrian poetics (Gutziller, 19-28, Mastronarde, and Van Erp Taalman Kip). Certainly there is no need for any of these readings to preclude the insights offered by alternatives, and in fact many scholars have gratified all three as well as others in their own estimations. The scope of my thesis, however, only permits me to indulge in detail that reading which is most relevant, namely one done through literary criticism.

28 Such poems are occasionally regarded as “epyllia,” and are generally characterized by their selectivity, sensitivity, and mythological obscurity. Crump, especially 51-4.

mode of expression, are deliberately used to establish a tension between the heroic and the bucolic. The result is that love reduces Heracles, traditionally a figure of virtually unparalleled heroism and might, to a thoroughly risible and unheroic figure. It is the effects of this tension on its heroic characters, and perhaps its ramifications for contemporary poetry, which seems to be Theocritus' foremost concern.

I will now present selective literary criticism of *Idyll* 13, proceeding section by section according to the main narrative features of the Hylas episode outlined in my first chapter and focusing on the most striking features of humour, wit, irony, and mock-heroic deflation. For my purposes, I divide the poem into seven sections: introduction (1-15), the earlier part of the voyage (16-29), the Argonauts land at Mysia (30-35), Hylas goes for water (36-47b), Hylas is abducted (47b-54), Heracles rampages after Hylas (55-71), and conclusion (72-75). I will then offer brief generalizing comments on Theocritus' narrative and literary treatment of the Hylas episode in anticipation of my following chapters on Propertius 1.20.

At 1-15, Theocritus introduces the subject matter of his poem. The leading proposition, that mortals are not alone in experiencing love, is dispatched in the first four hexameters, with the remainder dedicated both to introducing Heracles and Hylas and to characterizing their relationship. The register of epic is employed immediately at the first introduction of Heracles, who is described as the bronze-hearted son of Amphitryon (*Ἀμφιτρυώνος ὁ χαλκεοκάρδιος υἱός*, 5), a title which occupies the entire hexameter. The length and weight of these words alone qualify as epic, but it is the impressive patronymic and the *hapax legomenon* *χαλκεοκάρδιος* which specifically recall both heroic

status and traditional Homeric epithets respectively.²⁹ This introduction is not strictly restrained to one hexameter, but spills over into the next through a relative clause which abbreviates his triumph over the Nemean lion (*λῆν* 6),³⁰ as if the might and renown of Heracles were boundless.³¹ However what may well have been a catalogue of achievements is promptly cut short in the last two feet of the hexameter, where unexpected love suddenly imposes upon the hero (*ἤρατο παιδός*, 6). Hylas is then introduced in his own full line with descriptive language establishing a deliberate contrast to Heracles by means of the distinctly feminine qualities of grace and beauty (*τοῦ χαρίεντος* "Υλα, *τοῦ τὰν πλοκαμῖδα φορεῖντος*, 7).³² In addition to diverting attention away from Heracles and towards Hylas, this sudden transition marks a greater interest of the poet in characterizing their relationship together as opposed to continuing his poem flatly in typical heroic style.³³

This tension between love and heroism will persist throughout the poem; however the lines following the introduction of Heracles and Hylas effect a somewhat peculiar mood. The presumed pederastic relationship soon yields to a paternal one, as Heracles is said to have taught Hylas everything just as a father to his beloved son (8). The ostensible reason for this instruction is to shape Hylas into a hero celebrated for his excellence (9) in accordance with Heracles' own will (14) and thereby guide him to true adulthood (15); however the hexameters separating purpose and objective complicate matters considerably. Their never being apart, whether day, dawn, or dusk (10-13), is presented

29 Gutzwiller, 9-10, and Van Erp Taalman Kip, 159-60.

30 Itself another Homeric form. *cf.* *Il.* 11.480.

31 Gow (1950b), 233, and Hunter, 267.

32 Mastronarde, 276, n.3.

33 Mastronarde, 276, and Hunter, 268.

as smothering and culminates in the reduction of Hylas to a chirping chick scurrying to the comfort of its nest and the wings of its mother hen (12-13).³⁴ The irony is that, notwithstanding the snatching of Hylas by the nymphs, this constant closeness may have otherwise prevented Hylas from reaching the heroic standing Heracles had in mind for him. This would then serve to explain Theocritus' clever innovation on the formulaic image of a new day dawning frequently found in Homer, where the prospect of heroism reaching the heights of Zeus on a new day is frustrated by immediate nightfall and homely comfort in bucolic imagery.³⁵ Theocritus is keenly aware of the incredible distance between Hylas' current effeminate adolescence and any truly masculine adulthood. It is fundamentally ridiculous that Hylas will grow into a legendary hero on par with or even eclipsing his mentor, and so Heracles' assiduous attentions here become reduced to those of an overbearing lover.³⁶

At 16-29, Theocritus describes the expedition of the Argo. The register of these lines is lofty and impressive throughout due to its abundance of heroic nomenclature and its high epic subject matter; however the overall brevity of this section seems indicative of authorial lack of interest, and in fact it is precisely its distinctly epic tone here which will amplify the later deflation of such material, especially at 55ff.³⁷ For comparison, two full books of Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* are here effectively compressed into a

34 This image perhaps anticipates the final picture of Hylas among the nymphs, who act motherly and console Hylas with soothing words as he weeps on their laps.

35 Gutzwiller, 21, and Van Erp Taalman Kip, 161-2.

36 Mastronarde, 277.

37 Some brief epic elements in this sequence: 16-18 and 22-24 reference the heroic legends pertaining to the quest for the golden fleece and the Argo sailing through the Symplegades. There is both a striking direct mention of Jason ('*Ἰάσων Αἰσονίδαας*, 16-17) and an allusion to all the other great heroes of the Argo (*ἀριστῆες ... / πασῶν ἐκ πολίων προλελεγμένοι*, 17-18). Heracles is described with a bulky epithet (*ταλαεργὸς ἀνὴρ*, 19) and a hexameter spanning matronymic ('*Ἀλκμήνης υἱὸς Μιδεάτιδος ἡρώϊνης*, 20). Hunter, 271-3, and Gow (1950b), 235-8.

breathless nine hexameter period from 16-24,³⁸ which contrasts sharply with the mood and material of the following sentence beginning at 25 in which Theocritus slows the meter and focuses more on pastoral imagery. The first two spondaic feet of 25 lead off this new phase of the narrative in a much more measured and deliberative manner than the predominantly dactylic hexameters which preceded it,³⁹ and the imagery of spring turning into summer and distant fields beckoning lambs to pasture are humble pictures generally beneath the scope of traditional epic. Furthermore, the inclusion of Heracles and Hylas within this highly abbreviated account of the Argonautica is striking for both their explicit mention and central position at 19-21. Whereas Apollonius, for example, spends over 200 hexameters dutifully cataloguing every hero and attendant involved in the expedition of the Argo and Heracles and Hylas are little more than two names in a sprawling list, Theocritus instead singles out Heracles and Hylas and devotes only two lines to the rest of the heroes.⁴⁰ As a result, not only does Hylas receive unprecedented significance among the Argonauts, but such impressive events as the quest for the golden fleece (16-18) and the Argo speeding through the Symplegades (22-24) become entirely periphery. Allusions to them are here little more than contextualizing, and in fact will later prove ironic as Theocritus demonstrates no interest them.

At 30-35, Theocritus describes the arrival of the Argonauts at Mysia, where they anchor in Propontis after having sailed for three days. Similar to the picture of lambs at pasture in early summertime which characterized their initial departure at 25-26,

38 Hunter, 271.

39 25 in particular features dactyls in all four variable feet of the hexameter, no doubt reflecting the speed of the Argo as it passes the Symplegades. The sudden change in metrical pace is indicative of Theocritus zooming in on the focus of his narrative.

40 cf. Ap. Rhod. 1.23-233 and *Id.* 13.17-18. Heracles and Hylas occur at 1.122-32 in Apollonius' catalogue.

Theocritus again turns to the pastoral imagery of local country-folk using oxen to plough broad furrows in order to define the land at which the Argo now arrives (30-31).⁴¹ Up to this point in the narrative, Theocritus has so far presented no occasion for these god-beloved mightiest of heroes to affirm their glorious reputation. In fact their entire enterprise seems to be undertaken rather leisurely, which is evidenced both by the complete omission of Pelias, who sends Jason after the golden fleece, and by their convenient departure under the Pleiades, which herald the ideal time of year for sailing.⁴² Without any urgency or pressure, the expedition loses its impressive quality. This deflation is further continued at 32-33, which directly appropriates the Homeric language of disembarking, dining, and sleeping as the Argonauts set about their camp and supper after landing.⁴³ An epic styled repose without any suggestion that it is at all deserved renders this sequence mock-heroic, especially considering how their only explicit labour so far has been preparing their evening meal (*δαῖτα πένοντο*, 32).⁴⁴ The following description of the Argonauts constructing their resting place from the local vegetation then marks a return to the earlier pastoral imagery. The botanic features of a meadow of sharp sedge and thick galingale are quite mundane details, and yet they receive two full hexameters and vivid adjectives (*βούτομον ὄζυ βᾶθύν τ' ἐτάμοντο κύπειρον*, 35). Such attention to otherwise minor details simultaneously emphasizes the bucolic sensibilities

41 Theocritus' image here does not readily suggest any sort of toil or struggle in the life of the locals, which Hunter (274-5) compares to Apollonius' detailed description of their weariness after a long day in the fields. *cf.* Ap. Rhod. 1.1172-8.

42 Hunter 273-4, and Gow (1950b), 237.

43 Gutzwiller, 24, and Hunter, 275. The treatment of this common scene in Homer (especially *Od.* 15.499-500) recalls Theocritus' earlier description of dawn at 11, itself another common Homeric image (occurring five times in just *Od.* 9 alone at 152, 170, 307, 437, 520) and similarly tweaked by Theocritus.

44 The solidarity of the Argonauts dining in pairs and sharing one sleeping-place perhaps also contrasts sharply with the individualistic heroism of traditional Homeric epic. Hunter, 275.

of Theocritus and deflates the heroic subject matter of his poem, as the former now receives unprecedented prominence and the latter is continuously truncated.

At 36-47a, Theocritus describes how Hylas leaves camp to fetch water, which marks the first appearance of Hylas since his initial boarding of the Argo at 21. In this sequence, Hylas becomes a curiously nondescript figure in comparison to the lavish presentation of both the spring and the activities of the nymphs therein. While three and a half hexameters are dedicated to detailing the spring (39b-42) and three more are used to describe the nymphs within (43-45), Hylas is only given a single short epithet (ζανθός, 36)⁴⁵ and is later referred to as simply a young lad (κοῦρος, 46 and 53).⁴⁶ Even the pitcher Hylas is bringing along to carry the water becomes more strikingly detailed than its carrier, as πολυχανδέα κρωσσὸν (46) is a conspicuously bulky word no doubt intended as a witty jab at Heracles' voracious appetite.⁴⁷ The immediate result of this constant backgrounding of Hylas here is that his earlier heroic potential alluded to in 8-15 becomes utterly deflated; even within his own narrative, he can scarcely be said to be the hero.

Instead of Hylas, it is the nature of the spring and the character of the nymphs which become the main focuses of Theocritus' attentions. The description of the spring is particularly remarkable both for its lushness of five distinct types of vegetation (reeds, maidenhair, celandine, wild celery, and dogstooth grass),⁴⁸ and for its irony in ascribing

45 *LSJ* s.v. “ζανθός.” This epithet is also common to Menelaus in epic poetry (*cf. Od.* 4.31)

46 *LSJ* s.v. “κοῦρος.”

47 Hunter, 279.

48 For the most part, these are ordinary plants common in wetlands and marshes. Theocritus' focus on otherwise unremarkable details continues his promotion of the commonplace over the heroic. Hunter, 239, and Gow (1950b), 277-8.

to each plant its own vivid adjective ironically contributing a quality Hylas himself would have been unable to perceive due the pervasive darkness (*περὶ δὲ θρύα πολλὰ πεφύκει, κυάνεόν τε χελιδόνιον χλωρόν τ' ἀδιάντον καὶ θάλλοντα σέλινα καὶ εἰλιπενῆς ἄγρωσις*, 40-42).⁴⁹ The lack of any verbs in 41-42 and their being in apposition to the grammatically complete 39b-40 also renders this section as remarkably slow-paced, thereby cultivating a tense atmosphere in anticipation of the nymphs and their imminent snatching of Hylas.

When finally Theocritus does introduce the nymphs at 43-45, he continues to ramp up the tension by focusing on their menacing qualities, such as how they are a constant threat due to their being sleepless (*ἀκοίμητοι*, 44)⁵⁰ and their reputation as fearful goddesses (*δειναὶ θεαὶ ἀγροιώταις*, 44),⁵¹ in order to make their later comic treatment more striking. Their explicit identification in 45 conscientiously adapts traditional epic patterning for their formal introduction,⁵² and the undefined plurality of nymphs in 43-44 is then narrowed to three, each of whom receiving what are not unlikely to be significant names: *Εὐνίκη*, *Μαλὶς*, and *Νύχεια*. Of the three, names *Νύχεια* in particular is especially witty.⁵³ While her name is no doubt reflective of the darkness surrounding this phase of poem, her description as having spring in her eyes (*ἔαρ θ' ὀρόωσα*, 45) is particularly

49 Darkness is a major theme of this poem: it is already evening when Hylas sets off (36-39), one of the nymphs who rape him is named after night (*Νύχεια*, 45) the water of the spring is black (49), Hylas is compared to a shooting star (50-53) Heracles ranges the country side in the darkness (61-65), and the Argo sets sail suddenly at midnight (69). Segal, 54-61.

50 Hunter, 278. This is perhaps also intended as a humorous contrast with the heroes of the Argo who are deeply concerned with sleep. 33-35.

51 Calypso (*Od.* 7.246) and Circe (*Od.* 10.136) are famously *δειναὶ θεαὶ*. cf. *Od.* 7.255-7 and 12.448-50 for how the phrasing here recalls epic. Also note how the attentions of the nymphs once Hylas is abducted resemble Calypso's attentions to Odysseus, while their character and the narrative around them beforehand is similar to Circe at *Od.* 10.133-574: much like Odysseus, Hylas is drawn to an exotic and menacing low-lying place inhabited by dread goddesses. Gutzwiller, 26, and Van Erp Taalman Kip, 162.

52 Hunter, 278. A hexameter of three names, only the third of which is qualified, is a common formula in hexameter poetry.

53 For a brief discussion of *Εὐνίκη*, *Μαλὶς*, and *Νύχεια*, see Hunter, 278, and Gow (1950b), 240.

ironic considering both the current time of year (spring has already passed; *cf.* 25-26), and how a sleepless goddess peering through the darkness is being juxtaposed with the sleep-requiring mortal Hylas presently unable to see.

At 47b-54, Theocritus describes the moment of Hylas' abduction and his fate thereafter. The fully dactylic 46-47a quickens the metrical pace after the heavily spondaic description of the spring and its nymphs from 39b-45, and the narrative then returns to the pace established at the moment Hylas left camp for water at 36.⁵⁴ The action of 47b-49a is fascinating both for how the nymphs act in unison as all three clasp Hylas by the hand, and for Theocritus' narrative inversion of presenting the action before explaining its motivation. Humorously, all three nymphs are eagerly vying for Hylas at 47b and yet no one of them will emerge with an uncontested claim to Hylas, which is evidenced by the nymphs collectively consoling and sharing the boy among their laps at 53-54.⁵⁵ Still more humour is added as a result of Theocritus' narrative playfulness in this section. Retardation is used twice in quick succession to teasing effect as the results of actions are deliberately delayed. The first occurrence in 47b-49a has already been noted as the aftermath of the nymphs latching onto Hylas' hand is put off with a one and a half hexameter clarification of the reason behind their sudden action. Theocritus then immediately uses the same technique again at 49b-52, where Hylas' descent into the

54 Hunter, 278, and Gow (1950b), 239, note the remarkable occurrence here of three consecutive spondaic lines at 42-44. In addition to metrical slowing, the focus on two specific scenes (the spring at 39b-43, the nymphs at 43-45) had also slowed down the narrative pace. Hylas' notice of the spring is immediate (*τάχα δὲ κρήναν ἐνόησεν*, 39b) following his earlier departure from camp at 36-39a, which is itself a sequence of similar length to the two above scenes only due to mention of Heracles and Telamon. Immediate too is the abduction of Hylas at 46-47, if metrical pace here reflects narrative pace. All variable feet in these lines are dactyls, with the exception of the spondee marking a hard third foot caesura in 47. Hunter 278-9, and Gow (1950b), 240.

55 Alternatively, Mastronarde (285-7) views the nymphs as mock-solemn throughout, with 53-54 resolving and justifying their previously ambiguous nature.

water is enjambed into 50 and taken up again with a striking shooting star simile from 50-52.⁵⁶

It is only at 53-54 that Theocritus offers any measure of resolution, as the nymphs comfort Hylas crying on their laps. In considering the host of possible readings for this final image of Hylas, the puzzling logistics of how one manages to cry underwater should not be overlooked, and nor should the undefined reasons for Hylas' tears.⁵⁷ While it is possible that Hylas is crying because of his reluctance to oblige willingly these sudden erotic feminine attentions after being engaged in a pederastic relationship with Heracles for so long,⁵⁸ his tears could just as fairly be attributed to the simple fear of death in such an overwhelmingly stressful situation.⁵⁹ Regardless, there is perhaps something distinctly humorous in Hylas receiving yet another custodian, recalling not only the earlier foster upbringing provided by Heracles at 8-15, but perhaps also his real father from whom Heracles had originally taken him.⁶⁰ At any rate, there can be no doubt that this final image of Hylas, weeping and being comforted on the laps of the nymphs, is a decidedly

56 Hylas' earlier bland characterization from 36, in which Theocritus only describes Hylas as blonde (*ξανθός*), is perhaps meant to intensify the effect of this simile. Hylas' blonde hair acts as a remarkably bright and vivid detail in a scenario characterized by darkness and menace, and thereby firmly links his descent into the black spring to a shooting star illuminating the night sky. Mastronarde, 280.

57 Hunter, 281, suggests that Heracles' mothering is here replaced by the nymphs. A maternal element is certainly plausible, especially given parallels to Virgil *Geo.* 4.315-414 in which Aristaeus is depicted as seeking his mother in her underwater abode. However such a reading does not account for the carnal motivations explicitly driving the nymphs at 48-49a. Any reconciliation between these two moods would therefore seem unsatisfactory.

58 If this text is read as the transition of a youth from adolescent homosexual love to heterosexual adulthood, then there is perhaps humour in viewing Hylas' tears as childishly resisting this sudden (albeit no less timely and age appropriate) maturity. Otherwise there is no immediate reason as to why the sexual advances of the nymphs should reduce a young Argive man to tears. Sergeant, 155-66.

59 The menacing and mock-solemn details involved in the presentation of the spring, the characterization of the nymphs, and the rape of Hylas, all cultivate a scenario in which tears would be appropriate. Although this threatening atmosphere is ironic and becomes humorously deflated here, Hylas' fears would not so easily be assuaged. Mastronarde 285-7.

60 Given how Apollonius includes a digression on how Theiodamas was Hylas' birth father and how this account is contemporary with Theocritus, this may be the figure to be recalled.

unheroic picture intended to be compared with the mighty hero he will never become.

Reference to Hylas as *κοῦρος* both immediately before and after his abduction, at 46 and 53 respectively, essentially locks him into stasis; Hylas will forever be a child and his heroic potential will never be fulfilled.

At 55-71, Theocritus describes Heracles' immediate response to the rape of Hylas. The abrupt scene change from the nymphs inside the spring to Heracles presumably still at evening camp near the Argo is made more humorous by the juxtaposition of the nymphs enjoying the company of Hylas with Heracles being suddenly and inexplicably disturbed over the boy. Heracles, here named with the most impressive patronymic featured in the Idyll (*Ἀμφιτρωνιάδας*, 55), then takes up his bow and club (56-57), weapons which, despite being emblematic of the hero, will be of no use whatsoever.⁶¹ Although these verses at least initially recall epic arming sequences in which heroes equip themselves for battle, their fundamental inappropriateness and eventual uselessness renders these lines derisive. His following triple shout, for all its impressive volume, similarly yields no results as the faint voice of Hylas from the water ironically deceives Heracles (58-60).⁶² The sheer inanity of a shout from deep underwater being heard on the surface notwithstanding,⁶³ Heracles' comic oafishness is here on full display as he somehow confuses this thin voice (*ἄραιά ... φωνά*, 59) for a distant echo, despite his nearness to the very spring into which Hylas was pulled.

61 Van Erp Taalman Kip, 167. Heracles as part of ancient material culture can typically be identified by the Nemean lion skin he wears over his head around his shoulders, as well as by his massive cudgel.

62 Hunter, 282-3, Gow (1950b), 242-3, Gutzwiller, 27-8, Van Erp Taalman Kip, 165, and Bramble, 85-6.

63 Similar to how one manages to cry underwater, the effectiveness of Hylas shouting from deep within the spring should also be pondered. Could any mortal be heard at all from its bottom? Regardless, any sound that emerges would surely be muffled and scarcely audible, unlike the crisp reverberations associated with echoes, and thereby Heracles' confusion becomes all the more perplexing.

As a result of Hylas' disappearance, a maddened Heracles ranges the land.

Theocritus here uses a mocking Homeric simile to ridicule his feeble efforts by likening his frantic search to that of a lion hunting a whimpering fawn through the mountains (61-63).⁶⁴ This comparison both associates Heracles with the defeated Nemean beast from earlier in the poem (6) and reduces his grand heroic status to a comic caricature of the skinned beast traditionally around his shoulders: while a lion may be able to hasten out of bed to a superlatively easy meal, Heracles will enjoy nothing of the sort. Such teasing then becomes fully apparent when Theocritus returns to Heracles to complete the simile, as the superhero is propelled by his bereavement further and further away from his beloved across vast swathes of untrodden countryside (64-65).⁶⁵

The final hexameters of this sequence return to the frame of the Argonautica after using the futile wanderings of Heracles to support a generalizing statement of how lovers are wretched (*σχέτλιοι οἱ φιλέοντες*, 66).⁶⁶ The final descriptions of Heracles within these hexameters strip away any traces of sensitivity and finer feeling perhaps still lingering from his earlier more tender characterization in the opening sequences and reduce Heracles to senseless raging (*μαινόμενος*, 71) and wandering (*ἀλώμενος*, 66). Unlike the patient waiting of the Argonauts, who are presented as mindful of their comrade (68-70a), Heracles's madness has seemingly driven out all regard for the expedition (67b).⁶⁷ The

64 Hunter, 283-4, Gow (1950b), 243, Mastronarde, 277-8.

65 Mastronarde, 278-279, notes the ridiculous and mocking physical pain Heracles would surely feel from the untrodden brambles (*ἀτρίπτοιςιν ἀκάνθαις*, 64) stinging his feet across his far ranging heroic trek.

66 For the sense of 66-67, how Theocritus momentarily brings back Nicias into the poem, and how Theocritus transfers to lovers a characteristic usually applied to Eros, see Hunter, 285.

67 These final hexameters in which the Argonauts sail off without Heracles and Hylas raise certain questions about Theocritus' narrative logic. Foremost among them, if it was not their intention to spend the night, then why do the Argonauts make camp and fashion a place to sleep at 32-35? Hunter, 285-6,

quaint explanation that a harsh god has stung his liver (71) then conjures an unusually visceral and specific image, since Heracles' emotional and mental affliction is ascribed to a physiological cause.⁶⁸ Theocritus' subjection of Heracles to a divine whim here, in addition to his violent emotional reactions and his utter impotence in being unable to recover Hylas, renders complete the deflation of Heracles to a feeble caricature of his most risible qualities.

At 72-75, Theocritus concludes his poem by alluding to the aftermath of the preceding events. Hylas is presumably enjoying immortality and a measure of divinity among the blessed ones (72) while Heracles not only receives no distinction whatsoever but is also mocked for abandoning the Argo (73-75). One final insult is then issued to Heracles in the final two hexameters as Theocritus juxtaposes the impressive sailing off of the Argo (*τριακοντάζυγον Ἀργώ*, 74) with his ignoble catchup on foot (*πεζῇ*, 75). The result is that Heracles has suffered a rather merciless deflation as even a cursory comparison of his initial impressiveness at 55-57 to his ultimate disgrace at 73-75 should reveal. His heroic patronymic, his faith in his mighty weapons, and the pride of his superhuman abilities have all disappeared. The final image of Heracles that Theocritus presents is one that merits no heroic distinction whatsoever, as no place among the Argonauts is afforded to this once mighty hero. In fact Heracles' risible status is fully validated by the way in which the Argonauts jeer at him as a deserter in 73.⁶⁹ This is set in immediate contrast to Hylas, who does enjoy a sense of belonging and is presumably

Gow (1950b), 244.

⁶⁸ Hunter, 287.

⁶⁹ Gow (1950b), 244, notes the assonance of *Ἡρακλέην δ' ἥρωες ... ἥρώησε* (73-74), but was unsure of its significance. Hunter, 288, suggests that it is perhaps Theocritus himself mocking Heracles, just as the Argonauts themselves do in these lines.

better off than before now that his tears have stopped and his exceptional handsomeness (*κάλλιστος*, 72) is allowed to shine through.

The failures of Heracles here, expressed by Theocritus in humorous, witty, ironic, and mock-heroic language throughout, are often used to validate a reading of *Idyll* 13 as reactive to the deficiencies and limitations of traditional epic poetry in the style of Homer.⁷⁰ Through such a reading, the final hexameters in which the handsome Hylas finds new acceptance among the blessed ones while the hulking Heracles is shunned and reviled would seem to indicate that the delicate fineness of Hylas had been in vogue while the lumbering bluntness of Heracles had fallen out of favour.⁷¹ Yet as valuable as this poem is for its insights into the Hellenistic attitude towards epic poetry, traditional heroism, and contemporary Alexandrian tastes, it must be remembered that the rape of Hylas had not previously been an important mythological event, at least so far as can be gleaned from what meagre evidence survives. Theocritus here is primarily interested in adapting a very minor episode into something of unprecedented significance, regardless of whether it is intended as veiled love advice to a certain Nicias or a polemic against the perceived crudeness of Hellenistic epic or both.⁷² To focus as much as possible on the relationship on this episode and its central characters while still maintaining the contextual integrity of the *Argonautica*, all extraneous narrative is excised.⁷³ The grand expedition of the Argo is reduced to mere framework while the voluntary mission for

70 Gutzwiller, Mastronarde, and Van Erp Taalman Kip all prefer such a reading. Comments by Gow (1950b) and Hunter also support this, albeit more moderately.

71 Gutzwiller, 29.

72 Mastronarde, 273-4, n.2, and Gow (1950b), 231-2.

73 Bramble, 83-4, and Easterling and Knox, 582-3.

water by a servant boy is given a lavish treatment. The following chapter will explore how Propertius 1.20 continues in this style.

2.2 Connecting Theocritus *Idyll* 13 and Propertius 1.20

While the debt owed in Propertius 1.20 to the extant Hellenistic models provided by Apollonius Rhodius and Theocritus has long been acknowledged by modern English scholars, there has been, to my knowledge, no sustained attempt to explore in detail the nuances of this intertextual relationship.⁷⁴ Both commentaries on and companions to the elegies of Propertius alike tend merely to offer a perfunctory sketch of this parallel in their respective assessments before becoming occupied with exploring broader textual and literary problems. For this reason, the purpose of this section is to establish the link between Theocritus *Idyll* 13 and Propertius 1.20.

The thrust of 1.20 is that Gallus,⁷⁵ an acquaintance of Propertius, is being a bit too careless in his relationship with his beloved, who either enjoys a similar reputation to the mythological beloved of Hercules or is in fact actually named Hylas (5-6).⁷⁶ Perceiving the similarities between the relationship of his friend and the mythological relationship of Hercules and Hylas, Propertius composes a poem urging Gallus to be more careful with

74 Postgate, 90, Butler and Barber, 183, Hubbard, 37, and Newman, 352, all connect Theocritus and Propertius, but do not explicitly assert that *Idyll* 13 is the major model for 1.20. Richardson, 201, claims that Propertius looked to Theocritus and Apollonius Rhodius in equal measure, and suggests an unidentified third model for the unprecedented Zetes and Calais episode. Hunter, 264, similarly ranks *Idyll* 13 as but one of multiple possible sources for 1.20. Baker, 173, says that Propertius has at least followed closely the narrative of Theocritus and Apollonius. Camps, 93, claims that *Idyll* 13 is the immediate model for 1.20. Bramble, 81-93, explores the tones and qualities of 1.20 and *Idyll* 13 at length. Other models have been suggested, and indeed Cairns (2006b), 235-49, makes a convincing argument for Parthenius and Cornelius Gallus as possible models for 1.20, but those discussions are not here relevant to this thesis.

75 Some understand this Gallus to be the elusive pioneer of Latin love elegy, Gaius Cornelius Gallus. Others take him to be an otherwise unknown friend of relative. Whatever the case, his true identity cannot be confirmed with certainty and is ultimately of little consequence for my purposes. Postgate, 58, Butler and Barber, 161, Baker 173, and Cairns (2006b), 219-49.

76 For a concise overview of these debated readings, see Bailey, 56.

his own beloved, lest he suffer just as Hercules did when his Hylas was taken away from him (13-16). Propertius then relates the rape of Hylas (17-50), an apparently trite and overused subject by this time,⁷⁷ focusing extensively on Hylas and the constant erotic threats he faces in being even momentarily apart from Hercules. Once the boy is inevitably taken and Hercules is made aware of his loss, Propertius drives his point home: *his, o Galle, tuos monitus servabis amores / <...> / <...> / formosum Nymphis credere rursus Hylan* (51-54).⁷⁸

Major contributions to our understanding of 1.20 have been made by Bramble, Newman, McCarthy, Petrain, Hollis, Cairns, and Heyworth.⁷⁹ Bramble, examining 1.20 on its own merits as well as in relation to Alexandrian poetics, promotes Theocritus as Propertius' primary model and offers a sustained comparative examination of *Idyll* 13 and 1.20. Newman, noting the strange qualities inherent when regarding 1.20 as any sort of epic and especially in connection with Alexandrian sensibilities, gives a brief appreciation of 1.20 in the context of exploring the generic tensions which faced Propertius from the outset of his poetic career. McCarthy, approaching 1.20 with the aim of securing its otherwise anomalous place in the *Monobiblos*, fits 1.20 into the balanced arrangement of the preceding elegies by understanding it as the cadenza complementing the programmatic opening of the first book, with the Hercules *exemplum* in 20.7-16 mirroring the Milanion sequence of 1.9-16. Petrain, considering the vertical juxtaposition

77 Virgil *Geo.* 3.6: *cui non dictus Hylas puer?*

78 I print Heyworth from the most recent 2007 OCT. Past editors have not usually supplied a two line lacuna between 51 and 52 and instead read those lines as a complete elegiac couplet. For this and other possible variations, none of which drastically alter the reading, see Heyworth (2007b), 93-4.

79 Bramble, 81-93; Newman, 351-6; McCarthy, 196-206; Petrain, 409-21; Hollis (2006), 97-126; Cairns (2006b), 219-49; and Heyworth (2007b), 86-94.

of *Hylae* and *silvae* in 6-7, theorizes that Propertius here signposts a deliberate gloss through etymological wordplay, which then invites further comparison between peculiar and significant themes across the *Monobiblos*. Hollis, examining the influence of Hellenistic poetry on Propertius, details some of the more obscure Latin and Greek intertexts for 1.20, such as Nicander, Euphorion, and Alexander of Aetolia. Cairns, exploring the possible traces of Cornelius Gallus and Parthenius in 1.20, suggests that Propertius is alluding to his debt to Parthenius not only through its geographical details relevant to Parthenius' life, but also through the otherwise unprecedented account of Zetes and Calais, which may have been an appropriation of Parthenius' own invention. Heyworth, despite offering comparatively little by way of a new critical appreciation, uses textual analysis to provide compelling arguments for why certain emendations should be preferred or dismissed, often with cross-references to other relevant phenomena in Augustan poetry.⁸⁰

There can be no doubt that *Idyll* 13 serves as a model for 1.20, given the numerous similarities that emerge even after initial readings of these two poems. Both poems are short vignettes of the same mythological episode, addressed to an acquaintance and meant to inform by means of their common *exemplum*. Theocritus uses the rape of Hylas to demonstrate to Nicias that love affects even heroes and divinities as well as mortals, and Propertius uses the same subject to advise the seemingly oblivious Gallus on the threats to his own relationship. Furthermore, Propertius features in his own narrative

⁸⁰ In addition to these major contributions, 1.20 is also occasionally discussed in general works on Propertius, Latin love-elegy, and Augustan poetry. However, these typically amount to using 1.20 as little more than an example of Alexandrianism creeping into Augustan era poetics. Hubbard 37-40, and Keith (2008), 45-85.

and in the same order all of the core elements of the rape of Hylas which have been identified in chapter 1 and applied to *Idyll* 13 in chapter 2: the context of the expedition of the Argo (*cf.* 1.20.17-19 and 13.16-29), the landing of the Argonauts at Mysia (*cf.* 1.20.20-22 and 13.30-35), Hylas setting out on his own voluntarily to seek water (*cf.* 1.20.23-44 and 13.36-47a), the abduction of the youth by nymphs (*cf.* 1.20.45-47 and 13.47b-54), and the futile search of Heracles/Hercules for Hylas (*cf.* 1.20.48-50 and 13.55-71). Both poets even have strikingly similar fixations, such as on the spring and its characteristics (*cf.* 1.20.33-38 and 13.39b-42) and on the immediate response of Heracles/Hercules to the disappearance of Hylas (*cf.* 1.20.48-50 and 13.58-60). There are of course other remarkable similarities as well, but those will be discussed with due fullness in later sections where appropriate.

For my purposes, I divide Propertius' Hylas poem into seven sections according to the same criteria by which *Idyll* 13 was divided in chapter 2: introduction (1-16), the earlier part of the voyage (17-19), the Argonauts land at Mysia (20-22), Hylas goes for water (23-44), Hylas is abducted (45-47), Hercules rampages after Hylas (48-50),⁸¹ and conclusion (51-54). Below is a chart comparing the narrative structuring of 1.20 and *Idyll* 13, both as mere parts of the Hylas episode (first and third columns) and as parts of the poem in its entirety (second and fourth columns). First, however, it should be noted that many of the differences that will emerge from close examination of the narrative structure of these two poems do not necessarily undermine the status of *Idyll* 13 as the major

81 One may prefer to qualify 13-16 as part of this section as well since what Gallus might experience in these lines foreshadows what Hercules traditionally suffers once Hylas has disappeared. However since these lines fall outside of Propertius' formal introduction and treatment of the rape of Hylas, which begins at 17, I do not consider 13-16 as part of this section.

model for 1.20. Such variations are instead the result of Propertius' originality, independence, and desire to trump his predecessors, including and especially Theocritus. Instances and explorations of the striking and curious disparities between these two poems will be treated as necessary in their appropriate sections.

	The percentage of the rape of Hylas in Propertius 1.20 taken up by each section	The percentage of the full text of Propertius 1.20 taken up by each section	The percentage of the rape of Hylas in Theocritus <i>Idyll</i> 13 taken up by each section	The percentage of the full text of Theocritus <i>Idyll</i> 13 taken up by each section
Earlier part of the voyage of the Argo	8.82% (3 lines)	5.56%	25.00% (14 hexameters)	18.67%
The Argonauts land at Mysia	8.82% (3 lines)	5.56%	10.71% (6 hexameters)	8.00%
Hylas searches for water	64.71% (22 lines)	40.74%	20.53% (11.5 hexameters)	15.33%
Hylas is abducted by nymph(s)	8.82% (3 lines)	5.56%	13.39% (7.5 hexameters)	10.00%
Heracles/Hercules searches for Hylas	8.82% (3 lines)	5.56%	30.36% (17 hexameters)	22.67%

As evidenced in the chart above, it is due to Propertius' overwhelming focus on Hylas in comparison to the relative uniformity of Theocritus' narrative that the initial disparities between these two poems emerge. Whereas Theocritus had composed a poem constructed of approximately equal sections, Propertius instead places tremendous focus on Hylas, dedicating nearly half of 1.20 in general and well over half of his treatment of the episode in particular to the events surrounding his quest for water.⁸² Conversely, the

82 The most obvious reason for this tremendous focus on Hylas is that Propertius was primarily concerned with giving advice to Gallus. In Propertius' view, Gallus has been far too careless in protecting his beloved. He therefore lingers on the threats he constantly faces (*cf.* 11-12, 25-30, 45-47) so as to incite Gallus to be more mindful of him (*cf.* 1-11, 51-54). Alternatively, "Hylas" may be metonymy for Gallus' poetic subject matter, and thus Propertius could simply be engaging in an allusive literary game.

other elements essential to the episode are remarkably abbreviated, with all four of the remaining core sequences comprising a mere three lines. In Theocritus, however, while certain elements of the narrative are indeed more prominent than others in respect to length, no single sequence so thoroughly dominates the poem as does Hylas' search for water in 1.20. Not only are all elements in *Idyll* 13 treated with detail and fullness, but they are also fully integrated into a logical linear narrative through incidental details such as time and purpose.⁸³ Furthermore, the weather and the night time help to contextualize Theocritus' narrative in addition to being thematically relevant, as does the fact of Hylas voluntary seeking water in eager service of his master. Many of these details are omitted in Propertius, and as a result the connection between one sequence and another must be understood intuitively.⁸⁴ As regards detail and fullness, while Theocritus was of course deliberately minded to dwell on and promote such minor details as the commonplace vegetation of grasses and reeds, Propertius' focus, on the other hand, is not quite as sharp, as evidenced in his abbreviation of the fuller details of Theocritus as much as possible.⁸⁵ An excellent example of this tendency is his description of the Argonauts setting up camp upon their landing at Mysia, where he condenses into one elegiac couplet (21-22) what occupies four hexameters in Theocritus (32-35).

See Petrain.

83 *cf.* 25-29, in which Theocritus leisurely describes and characterizes the time of year and the voyage, and 36-39, in which Theocritus explains why Hylas goes for water and even further digresses to Heracles and Telamon. Propertius tends not to include these details.

84 In lieu of the detailed transitions from one sequence to another seen in Theocritus, Propertius instead uses simple adverbs and conjunctions: *namque* (17), *iam* (19), *hic* (21), *at* (23), etc. Given the apparent ubiquity of this material at the time (Virgil *Geo.* 3.6), Propertius likely saw no need to dwell on these trite details (Bramble, 83). Conversely, see Hubbard, 37-40, who notes the potential difficulties for contemporary Augustan audiences in reading such an allusive poem.

85 Also *cf.* 13.55-71 with 1.20.13-16, and 13.49b-54 with 1.20.47. There are still more instances, which will be fully explored in later sections as relevant.

In addition to the identical subject matter of the rape of Hylas, both 1.20 and *Idyll* 13 share a similar purpose for composition which both poets avow in their introductory lines. Just as Theocritus addresses his poem to Nicias, so too does Propertius address his poem to a certain Gallus, and both poems should perhaps ideally be read with this epistolary function in mind. Yet as striking as this similarity may be, there are some key differences in their respective uses of an expressed recipient that should be noted. Foremost among these are perhaps the varying degrees to which Theocritus and Propertius involve their respective addressees in their poems. Whereas Nicias promptly disappears from *Idyll* 13 after a single initial mention (2), Gallus, on the other hand, remains present throughout. Not only does he appear in the vocative in both the first and final couplets of the poem, together with similar phrasing indicative of deliberate ring composition,⁸⁶ but there is also a fair number of second person pronouns and verbs throughout the opening sequence of 16 lines, as well as a third vocative form (14), which keeps the addressee always in the mind of the audience.⁸⁷ Additionally, the portion of the narrative assigned to these addressees and their impact on the balance of the poem also varies tremendously. At a mere four hexameters, Theocritus dedicates just 5% of his poem to his addressee, whereas Propertius, across a 16 line introduction and a concluding couplet returning to him, spends fully one third of his poem speaking to his. As a result, Gallus receives a degree of prominence in 1.20 second only to Hylas. Not only that, but even Propertius himself figures heavily, since the pervasiveness of second person forms and vocative address necessarily suggest the first person poet. Theocritus, on the other

86 cf. *te, Galle, monemus amore* (1) with *o Galle, tuos monitus... amores* (51).

87 Prince, 7-25.

hand, ceases to be at all present after his fifth hexameter. Thus on the matter of narrative balance, to claim that Theocritus is primarily concerned with Heracles while Propertius is primarily concerned with Hylas may provide an adequate summary of the interests of their respective authors as regards their mythological material. As a result, despite the certainty with which it seems that Propertius may have had a copy of *Idyll* 13 at hand while composing 1.20, it nevertheless appears that Propertius went to considerable lengths to distinguish, even at a structural level and whether from Theocritus alone or from other now lost models as well, his own contribution to whatever popular tradition of the rape of Hylas might have been current in Augustan Rome.⁸⁸

With these narrative, structural, and contextual details established, there still remains to be considered matters of tone and quality. Some general comments on such things here should suffice to further the distance between 1.20 and *Idyll* 13 before a more thorough exploration of Propertius' Hylas poem is undertaken in the following chapter.

As was discussed in my previous chapter, there are clear signs that Theocritus had intended *Idyll* 13 as a witty, ironic, and humorous poem, so deliberately tuned in order both to subvert epic themes and to undermine traditional heroism. Propertius, on the other hand, does not seem to have this particular purpose in mind, since he is predominantly concerned with the perceived carelessness of his friend in his own relationship, and as a result these qualities so pervasive in *Idyll* 13 are not so readily apparent in 1.20.⁸⁹ Faint notes of such tones can still be felt in 1.20, but they seem nearer to lingering echoes still

88 Bramble, 83: "Seeing that the theme had already undergone a certain amount of literary anatomization in Rome, if it had not been actually treated *in extenso*, the demands on Propertius' originality would have been great."

89 Postgate, 90-1, and Baker, 172-3.

resonating from a comparative reading of *Idyll* 13 far more than they feel confidently reactivated. This is not to suggest that 1.20 is not also a witty, ironic, and humorous poem, but rather that these qualities come about differently. One example is how both poets use the nymphs: whereas Theocritus creates humour by first characterizing them as menacing figures (43-45) and then by deflating them to an image of attentive mothers (53-54), Propertius makes their rape of Hylas a foregone conclusion (32) and instead creates humour by rendering them as opportunistic figures taking advantage of him (47), much in the same way that Propertius imagines the pretty girls of resort towns would exploit the real beloved of Gallus. Other such examples will of course be discussed where appropriate in later sections.

A considerable share of these tonal differences may be the result of how much more intimate 1.20 is in comparison to *Idyll* 13. There are no references to such fantastic events as the quest for the golden fleece and racing through the Symplegades; in fact only a single mention is made of the expedition of the Argo, which is done primarily for the sake of context. There are also far fewer allusions to peripheral figures, whether through patronymics or through indirect reference, while his main characters are depicted much more sparingly.⁹⁰ Even the nymphs, whose presence was so pervasive in *Idyll* 13, in addition to lacking their vivid characterization and a ceremonious introduction, play a

90 Some peripheral figures in Theocritus: Eros (1), Zeus (11), Eos (11), Jason (19), Aeson (20), Alcmene (20), Midea (20), the Cnicians (30), Telamon (37), and the sailors of the shooting star simile (51-52). The Argonauts are collectively referred to at 17-18, 27-28, 32-33, and 73. *Idyll* 13 is thus deceptively crowded despite its ostensible focus on just two figures. Propertius, on the other hand, alludes to the Argonauts just once at 21, and there are no other extra characters with the peculiar exception of the Boreads Zetes and Calais. Yet despite this, Propertius' characters are more nondescript. The only colouring characteristic his Hylas receives is a delicate fingernail (*tenero ungui*, 39) while his Hercules is blandly wretched (*miser*, 15).

much more ambiguous role in Hylas' abduction.⁹¹ Together with the absence of virtually any precise details of time, purpose, and logic, the result is that Propertius' rendition of the rape of Hylas, in contrast to the forward moving linearity of *Idyll* 13, is remarkably still and picturesque.

Yet despite this general ethereal quality, 1.20 is nevertheless still a more immediate poem than *Idyll* 13. While this is partly to do with Theocritus' interest in the epic themes from the remote past of traditional heroism, aspects which Propertius consciously eschewed for his own take on the Hylas myth, it is actually the strength of its frame concerned with Gallus and his real beloved which lends 1.20 its urgency.⁹² As has been noted earlier, fully one third of 1.20 is allocated to Gallus, which is a far greater portion of the poem than Theocritus gave to Nicias, but it is the content of these relevant lines and not just their sheer volume alone which contributes to their immediacy. Since the sufferings of Hercules are foreshadowed by their explicit link to what Gallus himself would experience if his beloved was lost, the effect in Propertius is that of a very urgent warning, as opposed to the looser and much more unclear link between Nicias and Heracles in *Idyll* 13. Additionally, Propertius alludes to real places which would pose real threats to Gallus' relationship. *Aniena unda* (8) refers to the Tibur river flowing through the fashionable districts of Rome, *Gigantei ora* (9) refers to the resort town of Baiae, thoughts of which troubled Propertius himself when Cynthia holidayed there in 1.11, and *Ausoniis Adryasin* (12) defines Propertius' nymphs as Roman girls.⁹³ The final couplet of

91 *cf.* 13.43-45 with 1.20.45-46.

92 Camps, 93.

93 Camps, 93-4, Bramble, 87-9, and Baker, 173-6.

1.20 then drives home all these potentially uncomfortable realities for Gallus. As a result, Theocritus' Hylas poem, despite being far more vivid, is much less pointed than that of Propertius.

Having made these general comments on the relationship between Propertius 1.20 and Theocritus *Idyll* 13, I will now offer detailed literary criticism of Propertius 1.20 in the following sections.

CHAPTER 3: A DETAILED LITERARY-CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF PROPERTIUS 1.20

3.1 A General Note on the Arrangement of Propertius 1.20

While it is my intention to examine Propertius 1.20 according to the framework provided by the essential elements of the rape of Hylas, the structure of the poem in its own right should nevertheless be considered briefly.

1.20 is a poem of 54 lines which can be divided into three equally balanced sections and a short conclusion.⁹⁴ The first section spans lines 1-16 and introduces the subject matter of the text. The focus of Propertius here is on establishing the parallels between Gallus and his beloved with the Heracles and Hylas of his forthcoming *exemplum*. The second section spans lines 17-32 and briefly treats the details of the expedition of the Argo immediately relevant to the rape of Hylas as well as the unprecedented assault of the Boreads. Noteworthy here is the contrast between Hylas securely among the Argonauts (17-24) and the dangers initially posed by Zetes and Calais as soon as he is separated from them (25-32). The third section spans lines 33-48 and details the environs of the spring, Hylas' activities thereabout, and his inevitable abduction by the nymphs. This is the climax of the poem and as such receives tremendous detail with respect to the quality of the spring, the characterization of Hylas, and the nature of the nymphs. There then follows a three couplet conclusion from 49-54, the first couplet of which distills Hercules' response to his lost beloved to its most

⁹⁴ Heyworth (2007b), 94 and 530-1, suggests that the poem's original length is actually 54 lines, arguing for a two line lacuna between the final couplet.

essential and affecting qualities, while the remaining two generally recapitulate the first section and more specifically echo the very first couplet of the poem.

Moreover, these three sections of 16 lines may also be further divided based on the scenes which comprise them. As a result, the first section could be divided into 1-6, which introduces Gallus' beloved, and 7-16, which connects Gallus and Hercules. The second section could be divided into 17-24, which abbreviates the necessary features of the expedition of the Argo, and 25-32, which features the first erotic assault on Hylas by Zetes and Calais. And the third section could be divided into 33-42, which describes the spring and Hylas' activities thereabout, and 43-48, which begins the sequence in which the boy is abducted by the nymphs. Thus the 16 + 16 + 16 schema can also be neatly rendered as (6 + 10) + (8 + 8) + (10 + 6), which produces a pleasing chiasmus.⁹⁵

Although neither manner of dividing 1.20 outlined above coheres perfectly with my proposed division based on the essential sequences comprising the rape of Hylas, Propertius' craftsmanship in creating a poem of such remarkable balance in its own right should nevertheless be appreciated.

The following sections offer a comprehensive analysis of Propertius 1.20, managed according to the essential elements of the rape of Hylas identified in chapter 1. As with my chapter 2 on Theocritus *Idyll* 13, particular attention will be paid to instances of humour, wit, irony, and mock-heroic deflation, although detailed comments on the style and allusiveness of Propertius are also made. Finally, occasions where Propertius

⁹⁵ Baker, 172-3.

seems to be explicitly looking back to Theocritus are noted to support my proposition that *Idyll* 13 had served as his primary model.

3.2 The Introductory Sequence (1.20.1-16)

Lines 1-16 comprise the introduction of 1.20 and occur before Propertius' formal treatment of the rape of Hylas, which occupies lines 17-50. While there are indeed many allusions to this forthcoming subject matter contained within this first section, the phrase *namque ferunt* at 17 marks a distinct separation between the preceding preamble and the *exemplum* it introduces,⁹⁶ and thus qualifying such early allusions as part of the forthcoming mythological rendition should perhaps best be avoided.

1.20 begins with a vocative address to its recipient, a certain Gallus, similar to the way in which Theocritus had addressed Nicias at the beginning of *Idyll* 13. However whereas Theocritus ostensibly composed his poem in order to console Nicias, Propertius invokes a very different tone as he is issuing a warning to Gallus (*te, Galle, monemus*, 1) and insists heavily upon its importance by stressing that he pay attention to it (*tibi ne vacuo defluat ex animo*, 2). Such urgency does not exist in Theocritus' introductory hexameters, and in fact it is already possible to detect the innovative quality of Propertius within this very first elegiac couplet, where he uses the pentameter to emphasize and thus redouble the content of the hexameter it follows.⁹⁷ Additionally, since such tremendous stress is placed upon the warning, it is clear that Propertius is here engaging in the tradition of Augustan poets to play the occasional *praeceptor amoris* for their friends.⁹⁸

96 The phrase *namque ferunt* is used by Catullus at 64.212. Virgil also features this formula twice in his *Aeneid* at 7.765 and 10.189. In later Latin, it is also found in the *Thebaid* of Statius at 7.319.

97 For the effects of the pentameter, see Luck, 25-46.

98 For the *praeceptor amoris* theme elsewhere in Propertius, see Maltby 147-153

However the sincerity with which Propertius performs this function for Gallus must always be questioned, and indeed there is already a hint that the poet may be less than serious, especially given his characterization of Gallus' potential forgetfulness. The concern is that his advice might “flow down out of his empty mind” not only alludes to the central theme of water omnipresent throughout 1.20 by means of the verb *defluat*,⁹⁹ but also links Gallus with the Heracles of *Idyll* 13, for whom everything else became secondary to recovering Hylas (67) since a harsh god had driven him mad (71). This absence of mind is a defining feature of Hercules, and its allusion here is one of the many indirect references to such a towering figure who otherwise has such little expressed prominence in Propertius' treatment of the Hylas myth.

As for the construction of this couplet, particularly noteworthy here is the prevalence of long “o” sounds which perhaps contribute a mock-solemn quality. The final vowels of *vacuo* and *animo* especially, which stand as the requisite first long syllable in the third and fifth feet of the meter respectively, also deliberately reverberate in reference to the related echo motif of the Hylas myth. Finally, the fully dactylic quality of 2 should also be appreciated, which reflects both the ease with which Gallus might be likely to ignore Propertius and the speed of running water evoked by the verb *defluat*.

The second couplet of the poem features Propertius' warning, which is proverbially phrased and highly allusive. Propertius refers to Gallus as a reckless lover (*imprudenti amanti*, 3) and claims that misfortune (*fortuna*, 3) is often cruel (*crudelis*, 4) towards such lovers, before citing his example: *Minyis durus ut Ascanius* (4). The

⁹⁹ Newman, 353.

preferred reading of this section has changed over time, with modern editors tending to read in 4 *crudelis*, *Minyis durus ut Ascanius* whereas past editions would print *crudelis Minyis dixerit Ascanius*.¹⁰⁰ Heyworth credits Butrica with this improvement, partly based on the tendency of poets not to grant bodies of water the faculty of speech which is suggested by the verb *dixerit*, but also for lack of any better alternative.¹⁰¹ Aside from this change from a river which speaks to one which is harsh by means of hypallage (for it was the event reported to have taken place near the river which is *durus* and not the river itself), the only other difference is the noun to which *crudelis* becomes attached. Past editors would take this adjective with *Ascanius*, but now that *durus* tends to be read with that proper noun instead, it is now more appropriately read with *fortuna* in an instance of enjambment. This makes for a potent reversal: Gallus might expect *fortuna* to be beneficial, but *occurrit* suggests otherwise,¹⁰² and the delayed *crudelis* is a grim confirmation.

The allusions in 4 are very likely difficult only for modern readers, given both the supposed ubiquity of this myth by the time Propertius was active and our present difficulties in reading this text.¹⁰³ Much of the allusiveness inherent in *Ascanius* disappears when a reader ceases to imagine a speaking entity, as past editors had preferred, let alone one that is *crudelis*. While markedly less inventive, Butrica's reading is nevertheless much more intelligible. All that remains is to locate *Ascanius*, which should pose no significant challenge for Roman audiences, given that the name of

100 This is the reading found in both Phillimore's and Butler and Barber's OCTs, neither of which show any consideration of this alternative in their *apparatus critici*.

101 Heyworth (2007b), 87.

102 Postgate, 92, and Richardson, 202.

103 Hubbard, 37-40.

Aeneas' son is derived from the region Ascania in Phrygia.¹⁰⁴ Whether *Ascanius* then refers to the river near the city of Cius, which would cohere well with *Idyll* 13.30, or the lake near Nicaea, an area which is connected with Parthenius and out of which region the river Ascanius flowed, matters little since the puzzle has been solved.¹⁰⁵ As regards *Minyis*, these are the Argonauts, most of whom were descended from a Thessalian king named Minyas. Although this word does not appear in Theocritus, Apollonius Rhodius does validate the reference at 1.229-233.¹⁰⁶

That Propertius will be treating the Hylas myth becomes clear at line 4, since both the Argonauts and the place where Hylas was lost are explicitly mentioned here, albeit with words not used by Theocritus in his treatment. The proverbial tone of line 3, which is consistent with the opening hexameters of *Idyll* 13 and is supported by the example given in the following complementary pentameter, also appears to be innovative due to its critical nature.¹⁰⁷ Whereas Theocritus composed his Hylas myth without any direct comment upon its addressee, Propertius is now negatively characterizing Gallus for the second time by referring to him as *imprudenti*,¹⁰⁸ which is preferably translated as “unawares.” The tone is simultaneously teasing of Gallus and mocking of Hercules, as the perceived negligence of both in their respective affairs has set them up for derision by Propertius.

104 Richardson, 202.

105 Postgate, 82, summarizes the geography necessary to understanding the allusion. Butler and Barber, 183, Camps, 93, and Richardson, 202, prefer the river. Postgate, and Baker, 172, prefer the lake. Cairns (2006b), 240-1, argues that Propertius intends the ambiguity as a deliberate allusion to Parthenius.

106 Butler and Barber, 183.

107 Theocritus was content to remove Nicias from his narrative almost immediately. Propertius perhaps saw this as a failing and sought to improve upon him by alluding to Gallus whenever possible.

108 Only Postgate, 91, notes the traditional appropriateness of this adjective for Hercules, which further serves to connect Gallus to him.

The third couplet rids the reader of any lingering doubt that Propertius is in fact treating the Hylas myth by naming him in line 6. Two consecutive instances of litotes are featured in 5 (*non infra* and *non... dispar*) which modestly amplify the appeal of Gallus' beloved, while the impersonal dative of possession (*est tibi*) simultaneously emphasizes the pride with which Gallus should regard Hylas and draws attention to what is at stake for him. The pentameter in 6, which rephrases the content of its preceding hexameter much in the same way as the first couplet of the poem had done, then dashes Propertius' earlier modesty with its remarkably ceremonious introduction of Hylas.¹⁰⁹ The patronymic *Theiodamanteo*,¹¹⁰ which occupies fully one half of its pentameter, attaches great impressiveness to the mythological Hylas, and thereby flatters Gallus' beloved as well who happens to share his name. As regards the rest of the line, the superlative *proximus* secures the link between the two figures while the noun *ardor* suggests the fiery passion of their affair.¹¹¹ The dative *Hylae*, in prominent position at line end, finally completes a ring initiated by *Theiodamanteo*; indeed the entire couplet had been composed with tremendous anticipation of Hylas' appearance, first by alluding to his likeness, then his name, and finally his pedigree.

109 Petrain, 411, remarks upon the elaborate periphrasis of this couplet which heavily anticipates Hylas due to its grammatical tension.

110 Such grand patronymics are typically reserved for the mightiest of heroes, not effeminate young boys. Richardson, 202, notes the rarity with which Propertius uses impressive Greek names, which no doubt draws further attention to its usage here.

111 Newman, 353, notes the seed provided by the noun *ardor*, which the *accensae Dryades... puellae* (45) will later pick up. A sudden instance of fire in a sequence heavily characterized by water imagery perhaps also alludes to the only defining feature of Hylas in *Idyll* 13, namely his blonde hair (ξανθός, 36). It was this characteristic which so vividly evoked Hylas in the simile of 13.49b-52, in which that shooting star received the adjective *πυρρός* (50). That both Propertius and Theocritus draw out the image of fire in and surrounded by water is a remarkable connection between the two.

Certain scholars have vigorously debated how best to regard *nomine* in line 5, with the result that a trio of possibilities has emerged. Either Gallus' beloved is exactly named Hylas, or he has a name similar to Hylas but with some minor difference (such as Hyllus), or *nomine* should be understood as equivalent with *fama*, and thus the Hylas of Gallus was renowned in some capacity, presumably for his beauty. Arguments for why the most straightforward reading should not be preferred, namely the one that takes the beloved of Gallus to be named Hylas, range from the paucity of evidence for the existence of ancients named Hylas to the citation of other places where Propertius seems to have used *nomen* interchangeably with *fama*.¹¹² Apparently this bizarre modern preference for *nomine* as *fama* was at one point so prevalent that Bailey expressed his perplexity regarding this interpretation in his commentary, though fortunately the simple reading that Gallus' beloved is actually named either Hylas or something similar has become much preferred in more recent times.¹¹³

Despite the lavishness with which Hylas is introduced, Propertius must be being facetious here. The mythological Hylas is a highly illustrious figure, born to a great king and so renowned for his beauty that he becomes immortal in some accounts of this myth. The beloved of Gallus, meanwhile, is just an ordinary mortal boy. Far from being royalty, Gallus' Hylas may very well be just a slave. And while he may have been handsome enough to catch the attention of amorous individuals from time to time, he would never become divine because of it. For all the impressiveness of lines 5-6, this couplet must

112 Butler and Barber, 183, decisively claim that *nomine* means “fame” and not “name.” Richardson, 202, is otherwise the strongest proponent of this argument.

113 Bailey, 56, also wonders why a young boy would be complimented on his fame. Most recently, Baker, 57, and Heyworth (2007b), 530, translate *nomine* as “name.”

nevertheless be read with this reality in mind. The same applies to instances where Propertius links Gallus with Hercules, albeit more so. Hercules is the mightiest of heroes, the subject of countless myths and legends, and becomes a god himself. Gallus can reasonably aspire to none of this, and in fact it is for this reason that any comparison of him to Hercules must be massively derisive.

Line 7 initiates a lengthy sequence, first of locations which Propertius views as being particularly dangerous for Gallus' affair (7-10), and second of what Gallus should expect if he does not take care (13-16). With respect to the first couplet of this section, its most striking feature initially is the close juxtaposition of *hunc* and *tu*, which refer to Gallus' beloved and Gallus respectively and emphasize the closeness of the two. Whether it is *hunc* or the previously preferred *huic* which is to be read here is ultimately of little consequence since it both functions the same grammatically and refers to the same figure regardless.¹¹⁴ What is of consequence is the emendation of *Vmbrae sacra flumina* for the previously read *umbrosae flumina*.¹¹⁵ The change to a specific place name from a general location corrects what was once thought of as a curious anomaly: each line from 7 to 10 mentions various locations, with the first three of these lines now featuring a single specific location apiece while the last line reflects upon the tour in general. The previous reading rendered 7 as not identifying a specific location at all, which led some scholars to

114 The verb which governs the *hunc/tu* juxtaposition is the imperative *defende* in 11. Properly, this verb takes a dative object, which makes writing an accusative a syntax error. Heyworth (2007b), 88, however, argues that *hunc* is easier to follow than *huic* given the four lines which separate the verb from its object.

115 Despite scepticism of what ideally should be read here, it is generally agreed that Propertius is alluding to the river Clitumnus. Butler and Barber, 183, Richardson, 203, Camps, 94, Baker, 174, and Heyworth (2007b), 88. Postgate, 93, seems to be alone in suggesting the mountainous district of Sila in the south of Italy, which takes Scaliger's emendation of *Silae* for *silvae*, which has otherwise been largely disregarded.

wonder why Propertius would compose a geographic catalogue, highlighted by the anaphora of *sive* throughout, and start off with something general before moving on to two specifics instead of using the final general at 10 to reflect upon the preceding list of three specifics.¹¹⁶ This suggestion is by no means new, but its printing in Heyworth's OCT does much to validate such a reading.¹¹⁷ There then remains the question of how best to regard *leges*, which is typically regarded as either sailing upon a river with *umbrosae flumina* or strolling along the riverbank with *Vmbrae sacra flumina*. Heyworth naturally prefers the latter, and the OLD supports this interpretation of the verb *lego* by citing this very instance.¹¹⁸

Before considering the complementary pentameter of line 8, there is a highly conspicuous vertical juxtaposition of *Hylae* and *silvae* at the line ends of 6 and 7 respectively, the consequences of which have had, for certain scholars, profound ramifications for the interpretation of the entire *Monobiblos*.¹¹⁹ Without delving too deeply into repercussions beyond the confines of 1.20, the deliberate positioning and rhyming of *Hylae* and *silvae* prompt close consideration of the relationship between these two words, which is in fact a remarkable instance of cross-language word play. The

116 Richardson, 203, suggests that 8 defines 7 more precisely, while 10 explains why 9 should be as dangerous as the location in the preceding couplet. Alternatively, Baker, 175, argues for a deliberate “water-walking” chiasmus of unspecific (7), specific (8), specific (9), unspecific (10). In my view, the most convincing argument that no emendation is necessary is Petrain, 411 (especially n.9), who feels the seemingly awkward features of 7 is an invitation for deeper consideration, which perhaps reveals a metapoetic game.

117 Heyworth (2007b), 88. Phillimore credits Hoeufft for *Vmbrae sacra flumina* in the *apparatus criticus* of his 1901 OCT.

118 OLD s.v. “*lego*” 7b. Regardless, Baker, 174, reads *umbrosae flumina* and takes *leges* as “skimming over the river.”

119 This paragraph effectively summarizes the compelling arguments of Petrain (409-421) immediately relevant to Propertius 1.20. It should be noted, however, that much of Petrain's argument hinges on the identity of the Gallus of 1.20 as the elusive Cornelius Gallus, who authored a collection of poems under the title of *Amores*. This simply cannot yet be proved.

etymological root of Hylas' name is *ἔλῃ*, which translates to *silva* in Latin, and both words are occasionally used to denote unformed poetic subject matter.¹²⁰ With this definition in mind, the sense of a poetic game afoot between Propertius and Gallus begins to form: Gallus' beloved is not actually a beautiful boyfriend, but rather his poetic dominance with respect to the Hylas myth. Thus by treating the rape of Hylas, Propertius is actually attempting to claim such material for himself. Not only that, but by framing his rendition as advice that Gallus keep his Hylas safe, Propertius is actually stealing Hylas in the same moment these verses cross his eyes. All of this is hinted at various points throughout 1.20, but the clearest clue emerges from this vertical juxtaposition at the line ends of 6 and 7 and the sprawling nexus of etymological wordplay it reveals.

Returning to line 8, Propertius mentions the first of two undisputed specific locations that might endanger Gallus' affair. The phrase *Aniena... unda* refers to the river Anio, which is reported to have been one of the most fashionable holiday destinations for Romans, filled with exquisitely lavish villas.¹²¹ Propertius had already demonstrated immense scepticism over the idea that lovers on holiday can be faithful earlier in the *Monobiblos*, so his admonition to Gallus not to be too careless with Hylas while at a resort is neither unexpected nor unmerited.¹²² Furthermore, this line is composed in a stylish manner to match the region it describes. Setting aside *sive*, which properly begins an instance of anaphora in initial position across three lines, the paired adjective/noun phrases tidily wrap around the main verb *tinxerit* in the abVAB formation associated with

120 *LSJ* s.v. “*ἔλῃ*”; *OLD* s.v. “*silva*” 5b.

121 Camps, 93, Richardson, 203, and Baker, 174.

122 Prop. 1.11. 27-30.

the so-called “golden lines” of hexameter poetry. While no doubt a vivid scene due to the image of waves wetting the feet of a couple lazing along a beach, this elegant arrangement may perhaps continue the metapoetic game suggested by the earlier *Hylae/silvae* nexus, since it is precisely such poetic virtuosity which is likely to rob Gallus of his Hylas, regardless of whether this here alludes to his beloved or his subject matter.¹²³

The second specific location occurs in the hexameter of the following couplet, *Gigantei... litoris* (9).¹²⁴ In a manner typical of Alexandrian style, Propertius uses a particularly erudite allusion in reference to the region of Baiae, another famous holiday destination. The local adjective *Gigantei* is used to describe the volcanic region near Cumae where a battle between the giants and the gods took place.¹²⁵ That Baiae is allusively referenced here forcefully recalls Propertius' eleventh elegy, especially the final two couplets in which Propertius damns its tendency to instill strife and infidelity among lovers. However, whereas Propertius in 1.11 urges Cynthia to return as soon as possible, here he seems to encourage Gallus to take his time, presumably so that the vulnerabilities of his affair are more likely to be exploited. The verb *spatiabere* suggests the leisurely pace of an pleasant stroll,¹²⁶ which brings about the situational irony of Gallus, in a context where it is imperative that he be on guard (*defende*, 11), being not at all perturbed by the dangers that surround him.

123 An actual golden line does in fact occur at 24. Pertain, 413.

124 There is dispute as to whether *Gigantei* or *Gigantea* should be read, but this matters little. Bailey, 57, summarizes the argument from a stylo-metric perspective, and Richardson, 203, prefers *Gigantei* since the alternative is too awkward.

125 This area is alternatively known as the *campi Phlegraei*, which is located on the northern coast of Naples. Postgate, 93, Butler and Barber, 183, Richardson, 203, Camps, 94, and Baker, 175.

126 Postgate, 93.

The following pentameter in line 10 concludes both the preceding geographic catalogue and the persistent anaphora of *sive*. Reference to no specific place in particular is made; instead, Propertius concludes with a general statement: *ubicumque vago fluminis hospitio*. The adverb *ubicumque*, here in the sense of “anywhere” or “wherever it be,” is qualified by the following ablative phrase, with the result that it is not just the three earlier places characterized by their water that are dangerous, but absolutely any body of water whatsoever.¹²⁷ The hypallage of applying the adjective *vago* to *hospitio* instead of the more logical *fluminis* then not only amplifies the perils, but perhaps also looks back to Theocritus' characterization of the nymphs in *Idyll* 13, who were similarly fickle and changeable in their intentions towards Hylas.¹²⁸ That this is the case may be reflected both in the chiasmus of *vago... hospitio* which surrounds and therefore claims ownership of the *fluminis*, and in the internally rhyming “o” sounds, which are reminiscent of 2 and once again call to mind the echo motif.

Having presented this learned geographic catalogue, Propertius in line 11 finally returns to the *hunc tu* juxtaposition which had been interrupted for two couplets and completes its grammar: you protect this boy! This is the heaviest hexameter of 1.20 so far due to its three spondees, ostensibly intended to amplify the force of the imperative *defende*, but also mock-solemn in tone. In addition, by conflating the Roman girls presumably populating 7-10 with the nymphs now explicitly mentioned, Propertius continues to blur the line between whether his subject matter in this introductory phase is

¹²⁷ Richardson, 203, and Baker, 175.

¹²⁸ For this sense of the adjective, see *OLD* s.v. “*vagus*” 8. Theocritus' nymphs were introduced as menacing (43-45), became amorous (47b-48), and were finally conciliatory (53-54).

Gallus' beloved or the mythological Hylas.¹²⁹ This ambiguous metaphor is certainly intended and continues the metapoetic game, however the balance now begins to shift to the realm of mythology, given that *cupida... rapina* is a succinct encapsulation of the traditional interaction between the nymphs and Hylas.¹³⁰ Furthermore, this phrase preempts the outcome of the rape of Hylas and seems to be a unique inversion of conclusion and introduction. The result is that any expectation that Propertius is proceeding along hackneyed lines is dashed, and possibilities for other innovations now exist, one of which will be seen in the very next couplet.

The pentameter complementing line 11 is a periphrasis explicitly clarifying why Gallus should be wary of the places detailed in 7-10: Roman girls are no less amorous. The second half of this comparative construction is left unexpressed,¹³¹ but it is clear that Propertius is linking *Ausoniis... Adryasin* with the earlier nymphs of the Ascanius who stole Hylas from Heracles. Although the connection between holidaying girls and nymphs is quite appropriate, given the prettiness and promiscuity common among both groups, Propertius is nevertheless being facetious by referring to them as “Italian wood-nymphs.” This likening of mortals to divine figures is very much reminiscent of the way in which Gallus and his beloved were earlier compared to Hercules and Hylas respectively, but due both to the naturalness of the “a” alliteration and the understated *non minor*, Propertius is able to make this connection with remarkable flippancy. Finally,

129 Baker, 175, notes that this is a cryptic joke which will be expanded in the next line.

130 Also note that the verb *defende*, and by extension its subject (Gallus) and object (Hylas) are surrounded by the chiasmus of *cupida... rapina*. Heyworth (2007b), 88, has changed the accusative plural *cupidas... rapinas* preferred by past editors to the ablative singular *cupida... rapina*, arguing against the need to have a direct object in the same line as *defende*.

131 Postgate, 94, notes that this is typical of Propertius' style.

the dative phrase pairing the Latin *Ausoniis* and the Greek *Adryasin* successfully transplants the distant Bithynian nymphs to the distinctly Italian geography of the poem.

While *Ausoniis* here is a relatively mild allusion compared to others that have been encountered (the Ausones were ancient inhabitants of Campania and as a result they supply a poetic word for Italy),¹³² *Adryasin* has proved to be somewhat problematic.¹³³ The Dryads and Hamadryads are typically forest nymphs while is it the Naiads who are water nymphs. Although what exactly falls under the remit of either group in any given situation seems to have depended on poetic license,¹³⁴ the fact that this particular adjective is unprecedented in either early or contemporary Greek and Latin literature is still problematic.¹³⁵ It is entirely possible that this was the term used to describe the nymphs in some lost Greek model familiar to Propertius.¹³⁶ Alternatively, the text may well be corrupt, and emendations which pull out the banal *est* and revise *amor Adryasin* to something more plausible (such as *ardor Hamadryasin*, which is suggested by Burman and tentatively supported by Heyworth) may have merit.¹³⁷ Whatever the case, Propertius has certainly indicated forest nymphs, perhaps showing more regard for his metapoetic play than for logic of his narrative.¹³⁸ Thus bearing this etymological game in mind, Propertius may be seeking not only to rival Gallus for his claim to the Hylas myth, but

132 Baker, 175.

133 The problems and their possible solutions are summarized by Butler and Barber, 183-4.

134 Richardson, 203. On the other hand, Camps, 94, sees no reason to be overly concerned with the conflation of Naiads and Dryads, noting that the names of the Muses were often used in the same way.

135 Nonnus is the only other ancient author to use this word, which occurs at *Dionysiaca* 24.127.

136 la Penna, 183-9.

137 Heyworth (2007b), 88. I dislike this emendation since it is an unattractive repetition of *ardor* in line 6 which spoils the appealing water imagery of this section.

138 Petrain, 416, identifies the Hamadryads, which appear at 32 and are linked with *Adryasin* here, as “surrogate Gallan muses.” Even if the Gallus of 1.20 is not the famous forefather of Latin elegiac poetry as Petrain presumes, there is nevertheless a metapoetic aspect present. The only difference is that Propertius is either signalling a figure unknown to modern scholars, or deceiving them altogether.

also to match the poetic achievements of his Greek models as well. Hinging this pentameter on the delicate balance struck by the dative forms of *Ausoniis* and *Adryasin* functions as a remarkably witty way to achieve this.

With this imperative to Gallus made, Propertius now depicts what Gallus should expect if he fails to protect his beloved. Much in the same way as the earlier *cupida... rapina* anticipates the inevitable rape of Hylas, so too does the couplet of 13-14 preempt what Hercules will experience once his beloved is lost. By rearranging the narrative sequence in this way, Propertius is simultaneously enlivening an old story and preparing for innovations which will occur once his rendition of the Hylas myth formally begins in the next section. For now, the landscape suggested by *duros montes et frigida saxa* (13) is cold and barren, which is reflected in the slow pace effected by its three spondees and the shivering quality of the short repeated vowels in *frigida saxa*. Such a scene is not unprecedented in Propertius (*cf.* 1.18) nor uncommon in Augustan poetry (*cf. Ecl.* 10.14-15, 58-59);¹³⁹ indeed it may well have been typical of Gallus' own poetry, and thus such details here would become especially poignant here. Gallus is of course highly unlikely to experience such things, however, and thus Propertius is here being quite flippant with his exaggerated and mock-solemn account of Gallus' miseries. Finally, the dative of possession in *tibi sit* (13) emphasizes the likelihood of such misfortunes for Gallus, much in the same that its earlier usage in line 5 drew attention to his apparent pride in being in a relationship with Hylas.

139 It is Baker, 175, who singles out these sections.

The misery of what Propertius imagines could befall Gallus continues in the following pentameter, albeit now with a return to the earlier water imagery in *neque expertos... lacus* (14). It seems that Propertius is here mocking Gallus quite extensively, since he of all people should know precisely where to look if his Hylas should actually disappear.¹⁴⁰ The vocative *Galle*, his only address outside of the first and last couplets of the poem, draws tremendous attention to this fact and should therefore be considered sarcastic.¹⁴¹ As a result, any time spent scouring the inhospitable landscape depicted in the preceding hexameter would be time wasted. Furthermore, there is irony in that these *lacus* are by no means *neque expertos*, which is perhaps signalled by the hyperbolic use of *semper*.¹⁴² Whether it is mythological water nymphs or real Roman girls, these bodies of water are occupied by them, and Hylas is now there, too. It is only Gallus who will have no experience of them, and although Hylas might be found there if Gallus continues to exercise no caution in his affair, his beloved can never be retrieved.¹⁴³

The final couplet of this section, lines 15-16, formally introduces Hercules and continues the allusion to his rampage after Hylas which was begun in the preceding couplet. Once again, Propertius inverts the established narrative of the rape of Hylas by treating the wanderings of Heracles before he even begins his *exemplum*. The relative pronoun *quae* picks up on the material specifically featured in the preceding couplet, as

140 This is in part due to the ubiquity of the Hylas myth (*cui non dictus Hylas puer?*) and his presumed familiarity with it given Propertius' earlier metapoetic play.

141 The use of *Galle* here also completes a ring by echoing its first appearance at the very beginning of 1.20. It therefore functions as an indication that Propertius is bringing this section to a close. Newman, 353.

142 Two instances of *semper* so closely together (11 and 14) is highly conspicuous. Propertius is perhaps underscoring that Gallus will *always* experience such miserable locales if he does not *always* protect Hylas. At any rate, the hyperbole here is striking.

143 Richardson, 203, and Baker, 176.

well as the events of the Hylas myth in general, and condenses the lengthy rampage of Heracles in *Idyll* 13, where it was so prominent and thematically necessary, to the pithy phrase *miser... error perpessus*.¹⁴⁴ Unlike Theocritus, who made Heracles initially impressive in order to amplify his reduction to a comic caricature of his most risible qualities, Propertius introduces Hercules with no fanfare whatsoever. Even the adjective *miser*, which would appropriately describe such a deflated superhero, functions as another instance of hypallage, used to describe the *error perpessus* instead of Hercules himself.¹⁴⁵ Simultaneously, the phrase *ignotis... in oris* amplifies his alienation by reminding the audience that not only was the Heracles of *Idyll* 13 robbed of Hylas in a foreign land, but he was also abandoned by the Argonauts. The sibilant consonance of “s” even functions in the same way as Theocritus' jeering *Ἡρακλέην δ' ἥρωες ... ἠρώησε* (73-74), albeit here with a contemptible hissing instead.

The genitive form *Herculis* begins the pentameter complementing line 15 and ultimately frustrates any expectation that the adjective *miser* would eventually agree with him. This marks a sharp contrast between the respective introductions of Hylas and Heracles, the former receiving a grammatically suspenseful couplet and a grand patronymic, the latter receiving absolutely nothing. Hercules has become utterly impotent; even his deplorable wandering of desolate landscapes receives more distinction than he himself does. To further this degradation, Propertius applies elsewhere an epithet otherwise typical of Hercules. The river Ascanius reappears, here wittily characterized as

¹⁴⁴ Postgate, 95, Butler and Barber, 184, and Richardson 203.

¹⁴⁵ Richardson, 203, and Baker, 176, keenly note that this transferred epithet creates a striking poetic effect, but draw the wrong conclusion in my view. It is not that the action of Hercules becomes more important than its actor, but rather that the status of Hercules has been irrevocably reduced in light of the overwhelming disgracefulness of his behaviour.

indomito (16).¹⁴⁶ Hercules was once worthy of such a designation, but Propertius has read Theocritus and recalled how a difficult god rent his heart,¹⁴⁷ and therefore appreciates that such an epithet is no longer appropriate. In light of this, the juxtaposition of *Herculis* and *indomito* without grammatical agreement is especially cruel. Yet Propertius goes further still by having Hercules weep (*fleuerat*, 16). Theocritus may also have rendered Heracles as completely powerless, but he was not so completely robbed of dignity. This image of Hercules weeping to a river, however, is sheer humiliation.¹⁴⁸ The general realism of this section demands that an inanimate river not become suddenly anthropomorphized and persuaded by tears (the realm of heroic mythology is entered in the next section). But even if Propertius here did temporarily grant thought and feeling to the river Ascanius, he nevertheless offers no compelling reason for it to yield to such a pathetic figure and therefore compromise its unrelenting nature.

3.3 The Expedition of the Argo (1.20.17-19)

Having introduced his narrative at considerable length and with an abundance of allusive wit, Propertius formally begins his treatment of the rape of Hylas at line 17, which is firmly set apart from the preceding section with the narrative formula, *namque ferunt*.¹⁴⁹ This sequence, which comprises a mere three lines and is the first of five essential elements of the Hylas myth, presents a heavily abbreviated account of the details of the Argonautica which are relevant to the story. As a result, only three points

146 Richardson, 204, and Baker, 176.

147 *Id.* 13.71

148 Camps, 94, reads *indomito... Ascanio* as ablative of place, but accepts the alternative that this is intended as a dative. Richardson, 204, is impartial.

149 *cf.* Catullus, 64.212 (Newman, 354, and Baker, 176). Hodge and Buttimore, 205 notes that such a formula suggests “a narrator conscious of the dignity of his office.”

are mentioned, one per each of the three lines: the beginning of the expedition in which the Argo sets out from Pagasa (17), the progress of the Argo far along on its way to Phasis (18), and the arrival of the Argonauts at the region of the Hellespont in which Mysia (to be specified in 20) is located (19).

Unlike Theocritus' treatment of this section (*Id.* 13.16-29), Propertius spends no time on extraneous details. Direct references to the quest for the golden fleece, sailing through the Symplegades, and even Jason himself are all excised.¹⁵⁰ Whereas Theocritus had extensively used epic language and subject matter in anticipation of his later mock-heroic deflation, Propertius instead strips away all such features and condenses the entire *Argonautica* into a single elegiac couplet, presumably in anticipation of treating the elements of the Hylas myth which hold the most interest for him.¹⁵¹ The result is a much quicker pace in 1.20, as opposed to the somewhat meandering quality of this sequence in *Idyll* 13, which is primarily focused on the Argo and makes only passing mention of Heracles and Hylas as they join the expedition. This impatience is even reflected in the language of this section, which prominently features three verbs of motion (*egressam*, 18, *isse*, 18, and *praeteritis*, 19). While all three verbs contribute to the swiftness of this sequence, the perfect participle *egressam* is particularly striking. While used circumstantially here to describe the Argo after having set out from the shipyards of Pagasa, the verb also has the additional connotation of deviating or digressing.¹⁵² Its

150 However the patronymic *Athamantidos*, which is discussed on p. 58, may still indirectly conjure a nexus of images associated with the *Argonautica*.

151 Such abbreviation may also be another result of the contemporary ubiquity of the Hylas myth, since Propertius would perhaps feel no need to devote his attentions to such hackneyed details. The same sort of abbreviation occurs in the following section as well.

152 OLD s.v. "*egredior*" 3.

significance is further highlighted due to its prominent position as the first word in the pentameter, its heavy metrical weight, and its enjambment from the noun *Argo* (17) in the preceding hexameter, with which it agrees. It therefore seems that, by writing *egressam*, Propertius is not only subtly acknowledging his digression from his real interests (*i.e.* Hylas), but also cleverly signalling his variation from the pace and content Theocritus. Yet despite this variation, Propertius still recreates the irony and mock-heroism throughout this section of *Idyll* 13 by means of the epic motif of the introductory phrase *namque ferunt* (17). Whereas Theocritus had developed these qualities over the full course of his poem, Propertius has accomplished them immediately, since there is nothing explicitly epic about this sequence beyond whatever adventures might be suggested by presence of *Argo*.¹⁵³

Despite the brevity of this section, Propertius nevertheless includes a number of striking features worthy of note. Chief among these is the clever etymological wordplay of *Pagasae navalibus* (17). According to Strabo, the name of the Thessalian port of Pagasa is derived from its role in building the Argo, for which special shipyards were built.¹⁵⁴ Propertius is therefore using *navalibus*, the Latin translation of *ναυπήγια*, to gloss both the etymology of *Pagasae* and its connection to the Argo.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, Strabo also suggests that Pagasa could be more plausibly named for its many richly flowing

153 While of no tremendous concern, Heyworth's OCT prints *Argo* where past editors had printed *Argon*. Heyworth (2007b), 89, attributes this ambiguity in the manuscripts to the banalization of unusual Greek endings to those more familiar. For past arguments which preferred to read *Argon* as indicating Argus, the builder of the Argo, see Postgate, 95-6, and Enk, 182.

154 Strabo, 9.436.

155 Butler and Barber, 184, Richardson, 204, and Baker, 176

springs.¹⁵⁶ This is a striking definition, especially given that the name of Propertius' fateful spring, which will be mentioned at line 33, is simply a witty Latin transliteration of its Greek word, *πηγή*.¹⁵⁷

In addition to the continued playfulness arising from the etymological wordplay of this section, there are also premonitory allusions contained within the patronymic *Athamantidos* (19).¹⁵⁸ This alludes to Helle, who drowned in the Hellespont and was the daughter of the legendary Thessalian king Athamas. While the word *Athamantidos* indeed conjures up many images, including the Argonauts and their quest for the golden fleece (for Helle had fallen from the golden ram into the Hellespont), its primary connection to a drowning victim heavily anticipates the inevitable fate of Hylas. This becomes especially striking in light of the qualities common to both Hylas and Helle, since both were young, noble, and beautiful mythological figures. There is even a slight verbal connection between this allusion to Helle here and the forthcoming rape of Hylas, since Propertius uses some form of the root verb *labor* at both instances. While here agreeing with *Argo*, *labentem* nevertheless foreshadows the forthcoming perfect participle *prolapsum* (47), which is there used to describe Hylas' body as he slips forward into the spring. Finally, the ablative absolute *praeteritis... undis* surrounds the *Argo* as it glides along and leaves behind the waves of the Hellespont, further emphasizing the power and ubiquity of water in this poem.¹⁵⁹

156 Strabo, 9.436.

157 LSJ “*πηγή*.”

158 Richardson, 204, and Baker, 176-7, adequately summarize the allusions contained within *Athamantidos*.

159 Hodge and Buttimore, 205.

3.4 The landing at Mysia (1.20.20-22)

Similar to the brevity with which Propertius treats the expedition of the Argo, the landing at Mysia, which is the second standard feature of the Hylas myth, also comprises a mere three lines. Yet although Propertius is once again condensing as much as possible events which Theocritus had handled with relative fullness, it is nevertheless within this brief section that some of the more striking connections with *Idyll* 13 are found. Foremost among these is the way in which Propertius describes the camp of the Argonauts at 21-22, which is very much evocative of the mood and atmosphere in Theocritus' treatment of this very sequence. Propertius deliberately signals this debt with the phrase *hic manus heroum* (21), which is a phrase that is strongly reminiscent of Theocritus' *θεῖος ἄωτος / ἥρώων* (27-28) and occurs very near to his own account of the landing at Mysia. The remainder of this couplet then dutifully recreates the tranquillity of *Id.* 13.32-35, albeit without Theocritus' studious attention to botanical details. Their camp on calm shores (*placidis... oris*, 21), the soft beaches (*molliā... litora*, 22),¹⁶⁰ and the beds of leaves (*composita... fronde*, 22) recall not only the pleasant quality of this scene in Theocritus, but also the ironic leisureliness of the Argonauts throughout their heroic enterprise.¹⁶¹

Despite the idyllic nature of 21-22, many commentators have noted the theme of deceptive tranquillity it may present, which is occasionally regarded as an essential feature of the Hylas myth.¹⁶² The sudden transition from the cliffs of Mysia (*Mysorum*

160 Postgate, 96, Camps, 95, and Enk, 183 all read *molliā* as proleptic. Richardson, 204, however, simply supposes that Propertius is referring to the sandy beach. Agreeing with Richardson are Hodge and Buttimore, 206, who also note the luxurious quality such a reading contributes to this couplet.

Butler and Barber, 184, and Baker, 177, note Propertius' adaptation of *Id.* 13.33-34.

161 Hunter, 273-4.

162 For the perceived deceptive tranquillity of this sequence, see Richardson, 204, and Baker, 177.

scopulis, 20) to its calm beaches and soft shores in the following couplet is often cited as alluding to this motif, yet while certainly abrupt, it is hardly menacing or threatening, especially given the playfulness with which Propertius has imbued his Hylas myth so far. Instead, attention is primarily focused on the *scopulis* of Mysia not only because it looks back to the *duros montes et frigida saxa* of line 13 which traditionally await bereaved lovers, but also because it wittily prefigures the *extremis montibus* at line 50.¹⁶³ Of course the simple fact that, for sailors, the cliffs of Mysia were its most prominent feature must also be admitted.¹⁶⁴

However while imminent danger may be superficially suggested by *scopulis Mysorum*, only to be revealed as either a harmless geographical feature or a witty allusion to the traditional sufferings of Hercules once Hylas has been lost, it is actually indicated by the phrases *placidis... oris* and *molliā... litora*. These two phrases are highly evocative of line 9 (*Gigantei spatia bere litoris ora*), which had been the climax of an earlier catalogue of three specific places which Propertius supposes might threaten Gallus' affair. Therefore the tranquillity of lines 21-22 cannot be deceptive, at least as regards strictly scenic details, since far from concealing the dangers of this place, Propertius has already been abundantly clear about them.

Nevertheless, some sense of deceptive tranquillity is apparent through the use of the verb *tegit* (22), which governs the action of this section. While the verb *tego* is

However Segal, who extensively considers the themes of death and water in *Idyll* 13 (54-61), does not comment on any sort of deceptive tranquillity in Theocritus' account of the landing at Mysia, and thus it is perhaps not to be found in Propertius' treatment of the same either.

163 Newman, 354, keenly notes that *scopulis* “portends the wreck of Hercules' passion,” but reads *fontibus* instead of *montibus* at 50 (as do Camps, Enk, and Baker). See also Cairns (2006b), 233.

164 In support of this reading, Enk, 183, and Bailey, 57, who both cite Postgate, 96. Baker, 177, notes that this region of Lesser Mysia is a mountainous area on the sea of Marmora.

generally used of *covering*, it also has the function of *concealing*.¹⁶⁵ This is an especially striking definition for such a mythological *exemplum* as this, in which the pleasant *locus amoenus* of the landscape conceals the dangers posed by its resident nymphs.¹⁶⁶ This sequence in which the Argonauts conceal the shores with greenery therefore cleverly anticipates the forthcoming description of the spring (33-38), in which its attractive environs conceal the dangerous nymphs contained within. The position of *tegit* in not only the final position of its couplet but also as the final word in this brief section heavily emphasizes this fact.¹⁶⁷

3.5 Hylas Searches for Water; the Zetes and Calais Episode (1.20.23-32)

After his brief account of the expedition of the Argo and the landing at Mysia, Propertius moves on to treating the element of Hylas' search for water. As has already been noted, this phase of the narrative, which accounts for 12 full elegiac couplets and is therefore the longest and most detailed section by far, occupies nearly two thirds of his Hylas myth in particular, as well as comprising almost half of 1.20 as a whole.

Additionally, this sequence is further emphasized due to its central position, both as the third of five sections and as the centrepiece of the entire poem. As a result, it is clear that Propertius' treatment of Hylas and his activities leading up to his rape not only received tremendous focus from its author, but consequently would also have been regarded with considerable scrutiny from its readers. It is perhaps in response to the pressures of such a

165 OLD s.v. "*tego*" 6.

166 *Idyll* 13 also features this, however Propertius distinguishes himself from Theocritus by crafting a much more colourful and eerie spring.

167 Newman, 354, suggests that the greenery which the Argonauts use for their bedding hides the inherent dangers of this locale, however he does not anticipate its effect of foreshadowing the nymphs hiding within the spring.

discriminating audience that Propertius either included or invented the amatory assault of Zetes and Calais, which is an otherwise unprecedented episode in the traditionally established narrative of the Hylas myth.¹⁶⁸

Due to its considerable length, I divide this sequence of the narrative into three sections: the first will examine the Zetes and Calais episode (which occurs at 1.20.25-32), the second will examine the *locus amoenus* of the spring (1.20.33-38), and the third will examine Hylas' activities thereabouts (1.20.39-44).

Before the Zetes and Calais episode formally begins, however, there is a single couplet (1.20.23-24) which describes Hylas as he goes off voluntarily in search of water. As with the expedition of the Argo and the landing at Mysia, Propertius is again condensing events which Theocritus had treated rather fully. This simple action of leaving camp to fetch water occupies some four and a half hexameters in *Idyll* 13 (36-40a), two of which are fully dedicated to Heracles and Telamon and their dining habits. Propertius thoughtfully omits such details and improves his narrative by focusing on Hylas and quickening the pace. However despite the brevity of this couplet and the simplicity of its action, considerable interest can nevertheless be found in the content and expression of these lines. While the early juxtaposition of *comes* and *invicti* in 23 emphasizes the closeness of Hylas and Hercules, tension is created by use of the adversarial conjunction *at*, which introduces not only the hexameter but also this new phase of the narrative. The adjective *iuvenis* is then sharply contrasted with *invicti* (itself an ironic usage, given the forthcoming defeat of Hercules by the nymphs), which

168 Newman, 354, and Baker, 177.

simultaneously reminds us that Hylas is a young boy and that youthful qualities are typically incompatible with traditional heroism.¹⁶⁹ In fact by initially framing the relationship between Hylas and Hercules as that of a squire to a hero instead of as lovers, or even simply as mere travelling companions, Propertius seems to have downplayed the erotic dimension of their relationship.¹⁷⁰ This dispassionate characterization would then cohere quite well with Theocritus' treatment of this minor scene, which is similarly without much of an amatory element, albeit largely due to its epic register.¹⁷¹

In the pentameter of line 24, Propertius artfully describes the objective of Hylas' departure in a golden line: *raram sepositi quaerere fontis aquam*.¹⁷² The chiasmic arrangement of adjective and noun around the main verb (abVBA), the double water imagery of *fontis* and *aquam*, the exotic allure of *sepositi*, and the gravity of the block spondee *raram*, are all elements which create tremendous appeal.¹⁷³ In fact this is by far the most attractive pentameter of 1.20, and its striking arrangement seems intended to prompt deeper consideration of its thematic words and narrative significance. In particular, both Hellenistic and Augustan poets commonly associated water and poetic inspiration.¹⁷⁴ It is therefore possible that Hylas' search for the *raram... aquam* of a

169 Enk, 184, notes that Hercules is often referred to as *Victor* or *Invictus* in epigraphical sources. Baker, 177, and Richardson, 204, note the restoration of this epithet to Hercules, which was cruelly appropriated by the Ascanius in 16.

170 This perhaps looks back to Apollonius Rhodius, who seldom focused on their love.

171 Hunter, 276-7.

172 Heyworth (2007b), 89, expresses hesitation that *raram* should be read here. He also considers *puram*, which might reference with a passage in Callimachus (*Hymn to Apollo*, 110-112), and *sacram*, which would directly allude to Ap. Rhod. 1.1208 (κρήνης ἑρὸν πόον). Also worth nothing is that the phrase *ἑρὸν ὕδωρ*, while not found in *Idyll* 13, occurs twice in Theocritus at *Id.* 1.69 and 7.136.

173 Petrain, 414-4.

174 Segal, 48-9. Prominent later uses of this imagery in Propertius are found at 3.1.1-6, in which he asks the shades of Callimachus and Philetas, among other things, *quamve bibistis aquam?*, and 4.6.1-4, in which a *Romana urna* supplies *Cyrenaeas* (Callimachean) *aquas*. Keith (2008), 77-85.

remote spring might be a metapoetic affirmation of the learned poetry which a young Propertius is aiming to produce.¹⁷⁵ Certainly this sort of metapoetic play is not unprecedented in 1.20, given the earlier vertical juxtaposition and rhyme of *Hylae/silvae* (6-7) which had already etymologically linked Hylas and poetic subject matter.¹⁷⁶ Thus the quest for *raram... aquam* here perhaps denotes the poetry to which Hylas is intuitively drawn.¹⁷⁷ Alternatively, Propertius might also have intended a clever allusion to the tensions between epic and bucolic poetry so pervasive in *Idyll* 13, since Hylas' departure from the heroic expedition in search of exquisite water in 1.20 neatly coheres with the outcome of Theocritus' Hylas myth (72-75), in which Hylas ultimately becomes better off in the pastoral realm of the nymphs while Heracles returns to the heroic world to which he properly belongs. In either case, Propertius seems to be playing with the imagery of poetic inspiration, even if it is merely as an expression of his fondness for the erudite subject matter sourced from a *sepositi fontis* and preferred by the Alexandrians to whom he owes so much.¹⁷⁸

Now that Hylas is separated from the camp of the Argonauts, he immediately becomes vulnerable. Over the course of the next four couplets (25-32), Propertius depicts the attempts of Zetes and Calais upon Hylas, which is a scene found only here and nowhere else. This episode impacts the narrative considerably. It is the first lengthy and detailed event after two heavily abbreviated sequences, it teases the learned among Propertius' audience who would at this point be expecting Hylas' arrival at the spring, and

175 Petrain, 414, supposes that *raram* indicates the “purity and quality of the water from which poetry should spring.”

176 See pp. 45-6 above.

177 Petrain, 413-4.

178 cf. Callimachus, *Epigr.* 28.

it provides a lively and unexpected turn. This is also a pertinent episode for Gallus, since the masculine threat to Hylas here posed by Zetes and Calais not only mirrors the female threats of holidaying Roman girls at 7-12, but also validates the warning to Gallus which had prompted this poem.¹⁷⁹ However before launching into this episode, some background information seems necessary.

Zetes and Calais are the sons of Boreas, the personification of the north wind, and Orithyia, who was the daughter of the Athenian king Erectheus and whom Boreas raped.¹⁸⁰ They participated in the expedition of the Argo, but would later be killed by Heracles because they persuaded Jason not to return for him when it was soon realized that they had left him behind at Mysia.¹⁸¹ Due to their association with Boreas, they are traditionally understood as winged beings, although the specific details of their appearance and attributes seem to have varied remarkably.¹⁸² Yet despite the variety and peculiarity of their physical appearance due to the way in which various authors visualized their wings and the influence of their aerial pedigree upon them, their presence aboard the Argo is certain. As a result, the appearance of Zetes and Calais in Propertius

179 Bramble, 89, and Baker, 177.

180 Apollonius gives a brief account of this genealogy at *Argonautica* 1.211-223. Propertius alludes to both parents through the patronymic *Aquilonia* at 25 and the matronymic *Orithyiae* at 31.

181 Postgate, 97, Butler and Barber, 185. Apollonius mentions the death of Zetes and Calais at the hands of Heracles at *Argonautica* 1.1298-1309, but this event never occurs in his narrative (also cf. *schol. Ap. Rhod.* 1304). Alternatively, while Apollodorus, 3.15.2, also says that Heracles killed them (in support of which he cites only the fragmentary sixth century mythographer Acusilaus), he seems to prefer an alternative in which they died pursuing the harpies.

182 An Attic red-figure krater dated to approximately 460 BC depicts either Zetes or Calais with wings on his shoulders and feet (the other has no such striking features). Apollonius has both Boreads pursue the harpies at *Argonautica* 2.262-300, but does not specify physical details (so to Valerius Flaccus at 4.501-528 of his *Argonautica*). Hyginus, *Fabula* 14, claims that Zetes and Calais have wings on their heads and feet, as well as dark-blue hair. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 6.711-721, says that Zetes and Calais developed eagle-like wings, in addition to golden feathers and down even on their cheeks, upon entering manhood.

1.20, while indeed unprecedented as regards all extant accounts of the Hylas myth, is nevertheless entirely logical, especially given the way in which Heracles' traditional enmity towards them might suggest undertones of sexual jealousy.¹⁸³

The first couplet of this sequence, lines 25-26, introduces Zetes and Calais as the offspring of Aquilo (*Aquilonia proles*, 25), which is the Latin name for Boreas and an alternative term for the north wind. Their introduction here is remarkably striking, both for its suddenness, since the brothers are already pursuing Hylas closely, and for its unexpectedness, since it is entirely possible that Zetes and Calais are being connected to the rape of Hylas for the first time. Certainly Propertius seems to have arranged the couplet in such a way as to amplify the curiosity of this sequence, both with Hylas already becoming an object (*hunc*, 25) so soon after setting off, and with the phrase *duo sectati fratres* (25) designating a pair of unknown male pursuers, which are then somewhat cryptically revealed in the apposition of *Aquilonia proles* before they are explicitly identified in the following pentameter. Even their close pursuit of Hylas is strikingly reflected in the word order of *hunc duo sectati fratres*, with Hylas going first and the two brothers following close behind. In the complementary pentameter, however, Zetes and Calais are already above Hylas.¹⁸⁴ This is the only instance in which they are named, and Propertius has perhaps deliberately composed this line in such a way that neither brother becomes more prominent or more successful in their pursuit than the

183 Butrica (1980), n. 2, and Richardson, 205, both consider the possibility of this. Also note that, according to Euphorion (*schol. Ap Rhod.* 1.1207b) and Socrates Argivus (*schol. Theoc.* 13.7), it was Polyphemos who loved Hylas. It is very likely that other accounts once existed and were available to Propertius which featured different Argonauts involved with the Hylas myth in different ways.

184 Enk, 185.

other. This may result in poetic flatness,¹⁸⁵ but the repetition of *nunc superat* (26) not only reflects their persistence, but also locks the two in petty rivalry amongst each other for the boy's affection.¹⁸⁶ As a result, they become completely interchangeable, especially as far as Hylas would be concerned.¹⁸⁷

Also striking in these lines is its sound, which features remarkably elaborate patterning. While “s” consonance does indeed permeate both the hexameter and especially the pentameter of this couplet, it is actually its prominent occurrence in key words at the middle and end of both lines which is truly significant.¹⁸⁸ *fratres* and *proles* in 25 highlight the relation and pedigree of Zetes and Calais, while *Zetes* and *Calais* 26, located at the end of otherwise flatly repetitive phrases, creates variation and introduces the pair quite impressively. In fact as a result of this sibilance, it could even be supposed that Propertius is deliberately invoking the swooshing sensation typically associated with wings and flight. Finally, while likely not of any tremendous significance in terms of sound effects, the patterning of *hunc... / nunc... nunc* across this couplet is also noteworthy for the way in which it paces and partitions this couplet.¹⁸⁹

The following two couplets, which describe the actions of Zetes and Calais towards Hylas, have posed many challenges both to readers attempting to make precise sense of these difficult lines and to editors attempting to repair a highly uncertain and likely corrupt text. Thorough textual criticism is not the thrust of this thesis, however;

185 Butrica (1980), 69-70.

186 Baker, 177-8, remarks on the persistence of Zetes and Calais.

187 Although Propertius gives no explicit indication as to the time of day, the rape of Hylas traditionally occurs at evening or night time, and thus Hylas would presumably have difficulty identifying which brother is which.

188 Curran, 284-5.

189 Thomas, 37-8.

instead, interested readers are encouraged to consult Butrica and Heyworth on this matter, whose work on repairing this part of the text has significantly improved our understanding of this striking scene.¹⁹⁰

In lines 27-28, Propertius describes the way in which Zetes and Calais take turns (*alterna*, 28) snatching kisses from Hylas (*oscula... carpere*, 27) and giving their own to him (*oscula... ferre*, 28).¹⁹¹ The action here is not only intricate, but also remarkably dynamic. While both the ongoing aspect of the imperfect verb *instabant* and the slowing effect of three spondees prolong this amatory assault, the use of three other verbs throughout this couplet (*suspensis*, *carpere*, and *ferre*) serves to intensify the striking feats of upside-down kisses (*oscula... supina*) and alternating flight (*alterna... fuga*).¹⁹²

Just as in 25-26, Propertius has once again woven some striking sounds into yet another impressively arranged couplet. In particular, the anaphora produced by the repetition of *oscula* at the beginning of both lines places tremendous significance on the fact that Zetes and Calais actually manage to kiss Hylas.¹⁹³ Furthermore, the phrase *oscula... carpere* perhaps reveals passive acceptance or even willingness, since it is only from the mouth that kisses could be taken from him, and thus there is an indication here that Hylas may have been coyly relenting from time to time.¹⁹⁴ This might also further the likelihood that Propertius was tapping into some element of sexual jealousy between the Boreads and Hercules, although there is too little evidence to be certain. Additionally,

190 Especially Butrica (1980), 69-75, and Heyworth (2007b), 89-90. For various other attempts at interpretation, see Postgate, 97-8, Enk, 185-6, Butler and Barber, 185, Camps, 95-6, Richardson, 205, Baker, 178, and Cairns (2006b), 246-7.

191 For *oscula ferre* as meaning *oscula dare*, see Bailey, 58, and Camps, 95.

192 Baker, 178, also remarks on the continued persistence of Zetes and Calais.

193 Curran, 284-5, and Thomas, 38.

194 Butrica (1980), 71-2.

with the exception of some aggressive language, Zetes and Calais are not particularly forceful with Hylas, since the semi-divine heroic brothers would be more than capable of taking full advantage of him had they been so inclined. Instead, Propertius keeps the tone light and the action gentle throughout this episode by playing with the sound and rhythm extensively. This was especially prominent in the preceding couplet, and continues here with the striking internal rhymes created by the phrases *suspensis... plantis* and *alterna... fuga*, which artfully reflects the grace and rhythm of the Boread ballet overhead.

In lines 29-30, Propertius shifts to the perspective of Hylas in order to describe the way in which he reacts to the kisses of Zetes and Calais.¹⁹⁵ Instead of going further along with Zetes and Calais, Hylas now frustrates their advances (*ludit*, 29).¹⁹⁶ This marks a turning point in the episode, which is strongly reflected in the three consecutive spondees of this hexameter. Furthermore, the use of the present tense (*pendentes*, *ludit*) stills the action to a prolonged moment in which Zetes and Calais hang just a wing tip above Hylas (*extrema... in ala*, 29). In fact even the position of Hylas' teasing within the hexameter, which is surrounded by the prepositional phrase denoting the wings of the Boreads, pinpoints the action, with one brother having been teased by Hylas and the other just coming in for another kiss. The result is a remarkably sharp image of a verse that had otherwise perplexed for so long.

Hylas' baffling of the Boreads continues in the pentameter, in which he wards off Zetes and Calais by brandishing a bough (*ramo*, 30). This is the most vivid scene of the

195 29 used to be read as *ille sub extrema pendens secluditur ala*, which perplexed scholars (see n. 190). Butrica (1980), 72-5, deferred to an old emendation proposed by Nicolaus Heinsius, *ille sed extrema pendentes ludit in ala*, with one minor change (he proposed *extremam... ad alam*). Heyworth accepted Heinsius in full for his OCT.

196 OLD s.v. "*ludo*" 9.

episode, due in large part to the mock-serious language which playfully recasts the earlier amatory play as the response to a treacherous ambush. The verb *submovet* (30), here used to describe Hylas as he drives off the Boreads, is effectively synonymous with *pellit* and has military connotations associated with beating back an enemy.¹⁹⁷ This exaggerated tone continues with the phrase *volucres... insidias* (30), which cleverly links the Boreads and their behaviour towards Hylas with the harpies and their penchant for airborne harassment. This is also an especially witty comparison, given how it was Zetes and Calais themselves who traditionally handled the harpies in most accounts of the *Argonautica*.¹⁹⁸ As a result, while the unexpected appearance of military language and the recasting of Zetes and Calais as winged threats certainly produces a tonal shift from the levity and playfulness which had characterized this episode so far, its articulation from Hylas' perspective renders such expression as ironic. Given the nighttime, the surprise of the Boreads, and Hylas' separation and vulnerability, it would not be unreasonable for Hylas to react to the advances of Zetes and Calais as if they were truly threatening, hence the mock-serious language which Propertius now uses. Readers, on the other hand, would appreciate that Zetes and Calais are effectively just flirting with Hylas. The way in which Hylas brandishes a bough (*ramo*) firmly signals his disinterest to the Boreads, and so they yield in the next couplet. It should be noted, however, that Hylas' successful defence against Zetes and Calais is strictly symbolic, since two half-divine heroic brothers would have no difficulty taking Hylas for themselves if they were truly

197 OLD s.v. “*submoveo*” 3.

198 cf. Ap. Rhod, *Argonautica* 2.262-300, and Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica*, 4.501-528. The adjective *volucres* is particularly striking, given the way in which Virgil himself uses it three times to describe the harpies (cf. *Aen.* 3.216, 241, and 262).

minded to do so. Indeed it is the bough (*ramo*, 30) which is effective, and not the action (*submovet*). Not only does its association with wood make it an appropriate defensive tool for Hylas, but it also entrusts the boy to the forest nymphs by warding off his airborne pursuers and by anticipating the *Hamadryasin* (32) simultaneously.¹⁹⁹ For these reasons, *ramo* is both witty and ironic.

Lines 31-32 mark the final couplet of the Zetes and Calais episode. Suddenly, the Boreads relent (31), and Propertius flippantly laments that Hylas is going to the nymphs (32). Propertius describes the departure of Zetes and Calais as yielding (*cessit*, 31), which coheres well with the earlier military verb of *submovet* and the mock-serious tone established in the last couplet.²⁰⁰ Now that their advances have been rejected, the Boreads disappear and Hylas resumes the quest for water begun in lines 23-24. Also continued here is the mock-heroism, which is achieved by the bloated periphrasis and of *Pandioniae... genus Orithyiae* (31).²⁰¹ While the reference to Pandion, the grandfather of Orithyia and therefore the great-grandfather of Zetes and Calais, impressively fills up the hexameter but is otherwise perhaps without too much meaning for the Hylas myth, the reference to Orithyia is quite significant. Orithyia had been raped by Boreas, and her appearance here conspicuously prefigures the forthcoming rape of Hylas, which the complementary pentameter of this couplet is already set to lament. Finally, due to the fullness with which first the father (25) and now the mother (31) of the Boreads is mentioned, Propertius caps this episode with an elaborate ring composition.

199 Petrain, 411-2.

200 Postgate, 98, translates *cessit* as “baffled.”

201 Enk, 186, Butler and Barber, 185, and Baker, 178.

The final pentameter of 32 leaves behind Zetes and Calais and looks forward to the nymphs. This line is strongly characterized by the mock-solemn lament of *a dolor!*, which is the only interjection of its type in 1.20.²⁰² Such an expression here seems to mock both the epic patronymics and military toned departure of Zetes and Calais in the preceding hexameter. Furthermore, it also renders the remainder of the pentameter, in which Propertius prophesies that Hylas was going to the nymphs, as flippant. This is due not only to the irony of Hylas being completely unaware of his inevitable fate, but also to his short-lived immunity and freedom from danger.²⁰³ In fact it may even have been the case that the Boreads actually provided the boy with a modicum of safety, since the phrase *unus Hylas* (32) seems to emphasize his sudden loneliness and isolation.²⁰⁴ At any rate, after the lengthy and unexpected scene in which Zetes and Calais pursue Hylas, the presence of *Hamadryasin* (32), which occupies a prominent position at line end, strongly anticipates the introduction of the nymphs and their rape of Hylas.²⁰⁵ *Hamadryasin* soon proves to be an ironic inclusion, however, since Propertius instead continues Hylas' search for water by first turning to the *locus amoenus* of the spring and then his activities thereabouts. The result is a very effective instance of retardation which strongly looks forward to the nymphs, despite their appearance being six full elegiac couplets away.

202 Baker, 178, provides a full discussion of this exclamation.

203 Bramble, 89.

204 Much like line 29 above, line 32 has undergone considerable scrutiny. Heyworth's OCT differs from past editions by reading *a dolor! unus Hylas ibat Hamadryasin* in place of the previously accepted *a dolor! ibat Hylas, ibat Hamadryasin*. Richmond, 180-2, and Heyworth (2007b), 91.

205 The form *Hamadryasin* may indicate that 1.20.32 is an imitation of Alexander Aetolus: αὐτὸς δ' ἐξ Νύμφας ὄχετ' ἐφουδριάδας (Parthenius *Erotika Pathemata*, 14). Butler and Barber, 183-4. For a possible connection of 1.20.32 to Parthenius, see Cairns (2006b), 245.

3.6 The *Locus Amoenus* of the Spring (1.20.33-38)

With the sudden departure of the Boreads, Propertius now turns his attention to the fateful spring in which the nymphs dwell and to which Hylas now comes. This sequence, although not providing the same degree of teasing retardation as the innovative episode of Zetes and Calais had done, nevertheless continues to expand the narrative as a result of Propertius' intense focus on the nature and atmosphere of the spring. In fact, despite its many innovations, it is in this phase of the narrative that some of the more striking interactions with Theocritus *Idyll* 13 occur. These are not limited to the common interest of both poets in the vegetation of the scene and their implications, but also include a similar metrical pace throughout, as well as a picture at 1.20.35-36 that condenses to a single image *Idyll* 13 in its entirety.²⁰⁶ The result is that some of the most compelling evidence for *Idyll* 13 as the major model for Propertius 1.20 can be found in this phase of the narrative.

The couplet of 33-34, in which the main details of the spring are given, seems to be a highly conventional opening for leading into the description of a *locus amoenus*. The type of place in the nominative with a third person form of *esse* (*fons erat*, 33), followed by its location (*sub vertice montis*), name (*Arganthi*), and divine association (*grata... nymphis Thyniasin*), is a formula found in many instances of similar ecphrases.²⁰⁷ The result is a firm division that leaves behind the innovative account of the Boread assault

206 The hexameters of all three couplets in this sequence are largely spondaic, a very rare occurrence in Greek hexameter poetry which produces a slow metrical pace that very conspicuously matches what Theocritus had produced at 13.40-42. See Gow (1950b), 239, and Hunter, 278.

207 Heyworth (2007b), 91, provides a list of such patterning in Virgil and Ovid. *cf. Aen.* 1.12-16, 1.159-68, 2.713-15, 7.563, 8.597-602, and *Met.* 1.168-71, 1.568-9, 3.155-6, 8.788-91. The presence of such specific details (the name of the spring, a demonym for its inhabitants, and a nearby landmark) are all elements unattested in *Idyll* 13.

and formally resumes the traditional narrative of the Hylas myth. Such a return is strikingly reflected in the renewed prominence of significant water imagery, which had been entirely absent throughout the Zetes and Calais episode and now dominates so much of this couplet.²⁰⁸ The presence of *fons* in first position of the hexameter, the use of the Greek name for spring (*πηγή*), and the *domus... umida* (34), which would be particularly appealing to the nymphs, are all features that look back to the content of lines 23-24 (*raram sepositi... fontis aquam*) and pick up where Hylas' search (*quaerere*) had been interrupted.

Similar to the phrase *Pagasae navalibus* in line 17, which uses the Latin form of a Greek word to explain the meaning of *Pagasa*, Propertius includes another instance of etymological wordplay in the name of his spring. The word *Pege* is simply the Latin transliteration of the Greek word *πηγή*, which is translated as “spring” and is glossed by both *fons* in the hexameter and *domus... umida* in the pentameter.²⁰⁹ Further allusive playfulness is then found in the namesake of mount Arganthus.²¹⁰ According to Parthenius, Arganthone was in love with Rhesus. When Rhesus joined the Trojan War and was killed, a distraught Arganthone returned to where they first made love and called out his name incessantly. While this indeed bears a striking resemblance to the ritual aetiology associated with Hylas,²¹¹ it also coheres well with the traditional response of Hercules to Hylas' rape, which finds him desperately shouting out to him. Mount

208 Baker, 179.

209 Baker, 178-8. Propertius' name for the spring here may be an instance of *contaminatio* from Apollonius Rhodius, who features the same name for his spring at *Argonautica* 1.1221-2. Theocritus, conversely, does not name his spring at all.

210 The myth of Arganthone is given in Parthenius *Erotika Pathemata*, 36. Mount Arganthus is also present in Apollonius' narrative at 1.1178, which perhaps reveals another instance of *contaminatio*.

211 Hunter 262-3, and Sergeant, 159-62.

Arganthus thus provides an ominous hint as to the forthcoming miseries that Hercules will suffer.²¹²

In lines 35-36, Propertius narrows his focus and offers a detailed description of the spring. Both this couplet and the one following it strongly evoke a similar passage in *Idyll* 13, in which Theocritus describes his spring with particular attention to the vegetation that surrounds it.²¹³ Yet while both poets pay special attention to such details, Propertius distances himself from Theocritus by emphasizing the remoteness of the spring before decorating it with exotic and unnatural features.²¹⁴ The phrase *nulli... debita curae* (35), used of the spray-splashed fruit (*roscida... poma*, 36), is an elaborate periphrasis which strongly emphasizes the wild growth of the fruits through the absence of any diligent cultivation.²¹⁵ This is then reinforced by the phrase *sub desertis... arboribus* (36), which not only draws further attention to the isolation of the trees, but also perhaps alludes to the forthcoming abandonment traditionally suffered by Heracles after his loss of Hylas.²¹⁶ The result is an elaborate foreshadowing of the fates of Hylas and Heracles which mirrors certain elements of their characterization and ultimate abandonment in *Idyll* 13.²¹⁷ Through such a reading, the phrase *roscida... poma* would indicate the youthful and water-bound Hylas, while *desertis... arboribus* would allude to

212 Alternatively, Cairns (2006b), 243-4, views the mention of mount Arganthus and *nymphis... Thyniasin* as signalling Propertius' debt to Parthenius of Nicaea.

213 cf. *Id.* 13.39b-42.

214 Theocritus used common and unremarkable vegetation, but achieved an ominous tone due to a spondaic rhythm and lack of verbs. Gow (1950b), 239, and Hunter, 277-8.

215 Enk, 187: *arbores debent fructus agricolis qui eas coluerunt*. Richardson, 206, notes that dew is unlikely indicated by *roscida* since the episode takes place in the evening.

216 Alternatively, Enk, 187, and Baker, 179, cite Postgate's interpretation of *desertis*: "The trees had been planted and abandoned and cultivation had renounced its claim upon them." Postgate, 99.

217 For a reading which appreciates this couplet through itself, see Bramble, 91-2: "Through the pathetic fallacy, the description of nature in terms of human moods and emotions, the landscape is transformed into a garden of temptation."

Heracles, who will soon be left behind by the Argonauts.²¹⁸ Theocritus had fixated at length on the incessant closeness of their relationship at *Idyll* 13.8-15, however he characterized it as far more paternal than erotic. It therefore seems that, if this couplet is read metaphorically, Propertius is alluding to Theocritus' characterization of Hylas and Heracles through the nature of trees, which protect their fruit and seeds until maturity, at which point they are separated from one another.²¹⁹ The natural result of this, as regards this passage in 1.20, is that the fruit will fall into the spring over which (*quem supra*, 35) it precariously hangs (*pendebant*, 35).²²⁰ The inevitability of this falling action also evokes *Idyll* 13.49b-52, in which Hylas' descent into the spring is likened to a shooting star. These prominent elements of Theocritus' Hylas myth – the paternal dynamic between Hylas and Heracles, the striking image of Hylas falling into the spring, and the ultimate abandonment of Heracles – all seem to be condensed and loaded into a metaphorical reading of this couplet.²²¹

In addition to the striking visual elements featured throughout these two couplets and discussed above, their sound and style are also significant.²²² With the possible exception of 35, due to the preference of Heyworth for *nulli* as opposed to the previously accepted *nullae*, all four of these lines feature internal rhyme or near-rhyme: *nullae... curae* (35), *desertis... arboribus* (36), *irriguo... prato* (37), and *purpureis... papaueribus*

218 For the youthful and erotic connotation of *roscida... poma*, see Hodge and Buttimore, 208.

219 Enk, 187: *sub foliis arborum quae a natura instituta sunt non ad ornatum solum, sed ad id vel maxime ut fructum et semen protegant a nimio solis ardore; aliter enim non coqueretur, sed exureretur.* Such a reading also loosely coheres with understanding the Hylas myth as an allegorical transition from youth to adulthood. Hunter, 262-3, and Sergent 155-66.

220 Baker, 179.

221 Propertius makes no mention of these elements otherwise.

222 Thomas, 39.

(38).²²³ Such rhyming creates some very appealing sound effects, which not only amplify the attractive qualities of the spring that will soon beguile Hylas, but also suggest the beauty of its resident nymphs. As a result, Propertius has cultivated a bewitching atmosphere appropriate for the lovely beings residing therein. Also noteworthy in these two couplets are the way in which certain phrases intermingle, perhaps emphasizing the wild growth of the vegetation all around (*circum*, 37) and intertwined (*mixta*, 38).²²⁴

Propertius continues his description of the spring in lines 37-38, shifting his focus from the trees and their fruit to the white lilies and crimson poppies rising in the water-meadow all around. The dedication of another full couplet to describing the *locus amoenus* further delays the appearance of the nymphs and their rape of Hylas by slowing the narrative pace. In comparison, Propertius has by now well eclipsed the volume of verse and detail granted to this element in *Idyll* 13. Where Theocritus had taken just three and a half hexameters to describe the vegetation of the spring at 13.39b-42, Propertius has almost doubled that amount by describing such features across six full lines of poetry. As a result, while both poets have similar focuses, the sense of retardation in Propertius is much more strongly felt.

Perhaps the most striking element of this couplet, however, is its colour. The mingling of white lilies and crimson poppies (*lilia... / candida purpureis mixta papaveribus*, 37-38) creates a vivid picture of an alluring spring against the backdrop of

223 Heyworth prints *nulli* for *nullae* in his OCT, an archaic form that may be corrupt (also see Butler and Barber, 185). Curran, 284-5, supports *nullae*, however, claiming that Propertius had deliberately intended an internal rhyme with *curae* at line end.

224 Note the alternating cases of *roscida deserties poma... arboribus* (36), *irriguo... lilia prato* (37), and *candida purpureis mixta papaueribus* (38).

evening.²²⁵ The colourful attraction of delicate flowers produces a much more striking image than the common and generally unremarkable vegetation surrounding Theocritus' spring.²²⁶ The implications of these lush details have been well noted. The presence of lilies and poppies together in a water-meadow is a curious blend of two distinct environments, not only because these flowers do grow in the same place, but also because they bloom at different times of the year.²²⁷ Their colours are also symbolic, with the white of the lilies perhaps suggesting both the delicate pale skin of youth and the feminine fairness of the nymphs, while the rich crimson of poppies has an ominous fatal connotation.²²⁸ Even the poppies themselves, which are flowers symbolic of oblivion, prove to be an especially clever detail, given the way in which Hylas becomes forgetful of his mission in the following section. The result is a supernatural and erotically charged landscape which prefigures the nymphs and their rape of Hylas.²²⁹ The use of *candida* anticipates the *candore* (45) of Hylas that inflames the nymphs, while the verb *surgebant* (37) suggests their rising up from the spring to snatch him.²³⁰ Finally, the prevalence of water imagery throughout 1.20 now culminates with the land around the spring being immersed in water (*irriguo... prato*, 37). The result is an overreaching of watery realms beyond their normal boundaries to claim not only the meadowland here, but soon Hylas as well.

225 The adjective *purpureis* is typically regarded as crimson (Baker, 179, and Heyworth [2007b], 531) or purple (Hodge and Buttimore, 208). *OLD* s.v. "*purpureus*" 2.

226 This is not to suggest that Propertius is necessarily improving upon *Idyll* 13, but rather that their objectives were different. Theocritus deliberately chose vegetation that would not explicitly highlight the dangers of his spring and instead evoked its ominous quality through long and slow hexameters. Gow (1950b), 239, and Hunter, 277-8.

227 Richardson, 208, and Baker, 179.

228 Hodge and Buttimore, 208.

229 McCarthy, 198-9.

230 Hodge and Buttimore, 208.

3.7 Hylas at the Spring (1.20.39-44)

Having depicted his *locus amoenus* at length and with considerable detail, Propertius now dedicates another three full couplets to describing Hylas' activities at the spring. This is the final element of Hylas' lengthy quest for water, which immediately precedes his abduction by the nymphs in the following section. As with the previous components of this sequence, in which Zetes and Calais had pursued Hylas (1.20.25-32) and the nature of the *locus amoenus* had been presented (1.20.33-38), Propertius continues to innovate upon Theocritus' treatment by expanding this phase of narrative and by lingering on its details. One result of this is that the introduction of the nymphs is delayed yet again, which further increases the audience's anticipation of them. Yet while the inevitable appearance of the nymphs continues to be held back teasingly, Hylas receives a fair amount of attention in return. His otiose behaviour and the putting off of his task effects a childish and naive characterization, which not only compliments the lush beauty and eerie atmosphere of the scene, but also marks a striking departure from the diligent efficiency displayed by Hylas in *Idyll* 13. It therefore seems that Propertius had sought to improve upon this element of the myth in his major model by focusing much more intently on Hylas, a figure of almost no description in Theocritus, despite his profound narrative significance.²³¹

Lines 39-40 mark the first couplet of this sequence and describe the way in which Hylas picks the lilies and poppies adorning the spring (the antecedents of *quae*, 39) and puts these flowers above his intended task (*proposito florem praetulit officio*, 40). This

²³¹ Another possible reason for Propertius' greater focus on Hylas may be to draw attention to Gallus' beloved and the qualities he perhaps has in common with Hylas.

sequence, in which Hylas actively engages with the *locus amoenus* before his rape, has no parallel in Theocritus. In fact its presence here is effectively teasing, since perceptive audiences familiar with *Idyll* 13 would recall that the vegetation of the spring is the final element of Theocritus' narrative to appear before the nymphs are introduced.²³² The result is further retardation produced by a logical expansion of the narrative which focuses on the activities of Hylas. For just when it seems that Propertius is finally returning to the treatment of Hylas' search for water provided by his major model, the narrative changes course yet again, this time in order to explore a new dimension of this scene.

The most striking feature of this couplet is no doubt the imagery of plucking flowers (*decerpens*, 39), which conscientiously foreshadows the upcoming rape of Hylas.²³³ However the primary connection between these two events seems to have less to do with the obvious erotically loaded imagery here, and more to do with the ease with which they are accomplished. While the act of plucking a flower certainly evokes the sexual idea of deflowering a virgin, Propertius does not belabour this metaphor, possibly so as to distract from the ways in which this imagery fails to be entirely adequate.²³⁴ Instead, it seems to be the ease of plucking flowers which affords the main connection to Hylas being plucked by the nymphs in turn. For just as the poppies and lilies yield easily to Hylas' tender nail (*tenero... ungui*, 39), so too will Hylas himself offer no resistance to

232 *cf. Id.* 13.40b-45.

233 Famously, Persephone had been picking flowers when she was raped by Hades. *cf. Hymn* 2.

234 The most immediate problem is that there is no indication of Hylas' sexual experience, and indeed Propertius does not fixate on this element at all. Furthermore, such imagery is typically used to describe the way in which a sexually experienced girl loses her appeal and becomes spoiled, especially as far as marriageability is concerned. Not only is Hylas a boy, but he also ends up being taken by a plurality of nymphs (at least in Propertius' account), which seems to undermine the primary thrust of this metaphor. *cf. Cat.* 62.39-48.

the nymphs (47).²³⁵ In fact even the effects of the flowers on Hylas and Hylas on the nymphs are remarkably similar, since both offer distractions that interrupt their current activities: Hylas puts off his intended task to pick flowers, and the nymphs cease their customary dances to admire Hylas (45-46).

Also noteworthy in this sequence is the degree to which Propertius emphasizes the youth of Hylas. The adverb *pueriliter* (39), which is perhaps best taken with *praetulit* in the pentameter, characterizes his shirking of responsibilities as boyish procrastination, as if a mature Hylas would not be so distracted.²³⁶ Furthermore, the location of this adverb between the phrase *tenero... ungui* serves to gloss this peculiar phrase used principally to indicate the youth of an individual.²³⁷ This unnatural juxtaposition of a hard fingernail with a delicate touch seems to match the *proposito... officio* in the following line, in which the adult responsibility assigned to the young Hylas is momentarily rejected.²³⁸

The distraction of Hylas continues in the next couplet, in which he reclines beside the attractive waters of the spring (*formosis incumbens... undis*, 41) and becomes engrossed in their lovely images (*blandis... imaginibus*, 42). With Hylas placed at the edge of the water, completely unaware (*nescius*, 41) as to what is about to happen to him, Propertius comes tantalizingly close to bringing the nymphs into his narrative. However

235 Alternatively, the picking of these flowers may symbolize the loss of Hylas' youth. The red of the poppies and the white of the lilies are the same colours as the *toga praetexta*, which marks out young boys, and thus picking these flowers destroys his youth and symbolizes his advancement into adulthood. Thomas, 35.

236 Richardson, 206.

237 Baker, 180. Also cf. Cat. 62.43, and Hor. *Carm.* 3.6.24.

238 Hodge and Buttimore, 208. Alternatively, Baker, 180, suggests that *officio* might refer to Hylas' duty to Heracles as his beloved. As a result, putting off this *officio* could be regarded as Hylas being unfaithful.

their appearance is put off yet again as Propertius instead fixates on the continued delay of Hylas. The phrase *et modo* (41) beginning this couplet mirrors the earlier *quae modo* (39), which perhaps indicates Hylas' languid indulgence as he entertains one distraction after another. The following phrase *formosis... undis* then draws further attention to the beauty of this scene and its waters, which now ominously surround Hylas as he delights in the water-meadow and its attractions. This is further reflected in the position of *incumbens nescius*, a nominative phrase indicating Hylas which is surrounded by these pleasing waters. The adjective *nescius* in particular is a striking characterization for Hylas and perhaps continues to emphasize his youth, given the tendency of boys to marvel at things unfamiliar to them.²³⁹ However it is also likely that this is an ironic usage of *nescius*, since Hylas is completely unaware of who is in the water and what is about to befall him.

In the pentameter of this couplet, Propertius expands upon the earlier *formosis... undis* with the phrase *blandis... imaginibus* (42), which presumably refers to both the reflections of himself that Hylas sees in the water and the reflections of the evening sky and the overhanging trees as well.²⁴⁰ The result has been interpreted as something of a Narcissus motif, since Hylas seems to become absorbed in his own beauty as he is reflected in the water, although it should be noted that no explicit indication is given that Hylas is marvelling at his own reflection.²⁴¹ At any rate, Hylas now seems to be deliberately prolonging his quest for water (*errorem... tardat*, 42). By referring to his task

239 Postgate, 100, Enk, 189, and Richardson, 206.

240 This would make better sense of the plural, and Heyworth (2007b), 531, seems to have preferred this for his translation. See also Richardson, 206, and Baker, 180.

241 Enk, 189, and Curran, 292. Postgate, 100, supposes that the plural indicate that Hylas is playing with his reflection.

as a “wandering,” Propertius reconnects this part of the narrative with the broader tradition of the rape of Hylas.²⁴² Not only does *errorem* recall the *miser... error* of Hercules at line 15, but it creates anticipation of the way in which Propertius will treat his upcoming futile search for Hylas. In fact the pentameter of this couplet and the one preceding it might very well be metapoetic, since they could perhaps be understood as clever acknowledgements by Propertius of the degree to which he has been teasing his audience with digression after digression. That Hylas puts flower picking ahead of his intended task at line 40 perhaps mimics Propertius' own considerable interests in the decoration of the his *amoenus*, while Hylas putting off his mission with attractive images accurately reflects how Propertius has been delaying any narrative advancement with one enticing picture after another. This metapoetic playfulness is perhaps even reflected in the pleasing sound effects and slowed metrical pace of 41-42: the allure of the *blandis... imaginibus* is amplified by the internal rhymes of “-is” across both lines of this couplet, while the higher than usual frequency of spondees (three in the hexameter, two in the pentameter) emphasizes the meaning of *errorem... tardat*. Whatever the case, the result is an exquisitely arranged couplet.

In 43-44, Propertius finally advances his narrative and returns to familiar territory. Hylas prepares to draw water (*haurire parat*, 43), propped up by his right shoulder (*innixus dextro... umero*, 44) as he presumably hangs over the spring.²⁴³ In Theocritus, Hylas' act of drawing water is the event that immediately precedes his rape by the

242 Richardson, 206, and Baker, 180.

243 For a detailed description of the posturing of Hylas here, as well as the mechanics of drawing water from a spring, see Enk, 189, and Richardson, 206. Baker, 181, sees a parallel between the *demissis... palmis* of Hylas here and the earlier *suspensis... palmis* (although *plantis* in Heyworth) of Zetes and Calais at line 27.

nymphs, which happens so suddenly that it interrupts the hexameter in which this dramatic moment occurs.²⁴⁴ Propertius, however, inverts the order of events found in his major model. At this point in 1.20, the nymphs are still yet to be formally introduced by the time Hylas is already engaged in his fateful task of drawing water. This rearrangement not only toys with the established sequence of events found in the extant Hellenistic renditions, but also affirms Propertius' primary interests in playing with the content and subject matter of the Hylas myth, as opposed to presenting the rape of Hylas as a serious narrative. While this is partly indicated by the introductory mock-serious *tandem* (43), an emphatic “*at last!*” standing in prominent position as the first word in its hexameter, it is certainly indicated by a peculiar oversight: the absence of any vessel in which to contain the water.²⁴⁵ Audiences familiar with *Idyll* 13 will certainly note this omission, principally because Theocritus had found a way to work this item into a witty jab against Heracles in his own treatment.²⁴⁶ However since Hercules has not figured as prominently over the course of 1.20 so far, Propertius perhaps simply felt that this particular detail was utterly superfluous for his purposes.²⁴⁷

At any rate, Propertius has finally returned to the core components of the Hylas myth. With no more distractions to entertain, this final couplet of Hylas' search for water, in which minor details are once again abbreviated or overlooked, returns to the condensed

244 *cf. Id.* 13.46-47. Individual elegiac couplets are typically consistent in their content and do not normally feature dramatic developments between hexameter and pentameter, let alone mid-line. Luck, 27-9.

245 Many editors nevertheless understand a vessel (Enk, 189, Butler and Barber, 185, and Richardson, 206). Heyworth, however, suspects that this is one of many possible reasons to regard this passage as corrupt.

246 *cf. Id.* 13.46, in which the bulky adjective *πολυχανδέα* mocks the ravenous appetite of Heracles.

247 Similarly, it is also possible that the verb *haurire* so strongly implies the presence of a vessel that to mention it explicitly would be redundant. Postgate, 100-1

narrative pace featured in Propertius' treatment of both the expedition of the Argo and the landing at Mysia. Such compression is especially noticeable in the difficulties of understanding the precise logistics of this scene, since the relationship between certain phrases in this section has continued to prove problematic.²⁴⁸ In particular, the fact that Hylas dips in both his hands (*demissis... palmis*, 43) seems like an unnecessary precursor to his propping up on one shoulder (*innixus dextro... umero*). Also strange is that Hylas draws up *flumina* (43), which while easily enough referring to the water of the spring, nevertheless seems to be an odd choice of word.²⁴⁹ Finally, it is unclear if *plena* (44) is to be taken adverbially or as an object, and how the second participle *trahens* fits into the sense of the couplet.²⁵⁰ Yet despite these issues, Propertius has nevertheless arranged the sound and meter of these lines with an ear towards the final phases of his poem. The presence of three spondees in the hexameter and two more in the pentameter lingers on the action of Hylas performing his fateful task, while the internal “o” rhyme of *dextro... umero* conscientiously evokes the echo motif and anticipates the winds returning the shouts of Hercules from distant mountains. In fact it may very well be that Propertius has so strained his language in service of such effects.²⁵¹ However regardless of the difficulties posed by the expression of this couplet, its implications are both clear and effective: Hylas reaches into the spring and inadvertently fires the passions of the nymphs

248 Heyworth (2007b), 91-2.

249 Enk, 189.

250 It should be noted however that *trahens*, here used of Hylas pulling up water, will soon be reused to describe the nymphs pulling Hylas through the water in a humorous bit of irony (*cf.* 1.20.47). This will be elaborated upon in the following section.

251 Richardson, 201.

within. The static calm and leisurely pace which characterized the preceding six couplets will now be broken by the brevity and abruptness of the final sequences of the poem.

3.8 Hylas is Raped by the Nymphs (1.20.45-47)

After focusing on Hylas' search for water for 11 elegiac couplets, in which the youth is unexpectedly pursued by the Boreads and both the spring and his actions thereabout are leisurely presented, Propertius now returns to the core narrative sequence of the rape of Hylas. However while the primary action of this scene, the fall of Hylas into the spring, is superficially similar to what Theocritus depicts in *Idyll* 13, Propertius' treatment is much more abrupt and ambiguous in comparison to his primary Hellenistic model. Such a style, which is highly evocative of Theocritus despite its brevity and nuance, will persist throughout the few couplets of 1.20 that still remain.

In order to best appreciate Propertius' treatment of this particular sequence, a brief overview of Theocritus' rendition seems necessary. The relevant part of his text is *Idyll* 13.43-54. The first element is the introduction of the nymphs, occurring at 43-45, in which the nymphs are about to begin their dances in the water (*Νύμφαι χορὸν ἀρτίζοντο*, 43), are described as sleepless and dread goddesses (*νύμφαι ἀκοίμητοι, δειναὶ θεαί*, 44), and are precisely identified with three thematically appropriate names (*Εὐνείκα... Μάλις... Νύχεια*, 45). The next element is the fateful action of Hylas dipping his pitcher into the spring, which occurs at 46-47a and marks a change of the narrative focus from the nymphs to Hylas. At the caesura of 47, Theocritus then abruptly shifts his attention back to the nymphs as they grab his hand (*ταὶ δ' ἐν χειρὶ πᾶσαι ἔφρυσαν*, 47), no doubt with the aim of reflecting the suddenness of their action. At 48-49a, Theocritus explains their

motivation (*πασάων γὰρ ἔρωσ ἀπαλὰς φρένας ἐξεσόβησεν*, 48), and then uses an elaborate simile to liken Hylas' descent into the water to a shooting star (49b-52). Finally, through a mocking deflation of their earlier fearsome introduction, the nymphs are seen tenderly comforting Hylas on their laps (53-54). This entire sequence spans 12 hexameters, with Theocritus introducing the nymphs from 43-47a as part of Hylas' search for water, while 47b-54 properly comprise Theocritus' rendition of Hylas being raped by the nymphs.

While Theocritus' treatment of this sequence is lengthy and detailed, Propertius' rendition is, in comparison, far more terse. In 1.20, the nymphs and their rape of Hylas occupy just three lines of poetry, a mere quarter of the 12 hexameters that Theocritus provides. At line 45, an undefined plurality of nymphs, referred to as *Dryades... puellae*, are inflamed by the fairness of Hylas (*cuius ut accensae... candore*). In the complementary pentameter of 46, the nymphs stop their customary dances (*solitos destituere choras*) as they marvel at him (*miratae*). Finally, in the hexameter of 47, Hylas has fallen forwards (*prolapsum*), and the nymphs gently draw him through the water (*et leviter facili traxere liquore*).

There are many differences between these two accounts, some of which perhaps resulted from an effort to streamline the narrative. Whereas Theocritus had used one and a half hexameters after the rape of Hylas to explain that love for the Argive youth had smitten the nymphs, Propertius instead tidily expresses the motive of their action through the short phrase *cuius... accensae... candore* (45) before it even occurs. Furthermore, Propertius has also left out the striking shooting star simile, very likely in service of dramatic brevity, but also due to the inappropriateness of such an epic technique for his

elegiac poetry. Finally, there is no mention of Hylas' fate, whether immediately after his rape, which Theocritus gives in the humorous lines of 13.53-54, or in a brief recapitulation of the story, which can be found at 13.72. The result of all these omissions is a tighter and more unified narrative in Propertius.

In addition to excising certain superfluous narrative elements of this sequence found in *Idyll* 13, Propertius has also left out some striking descriptive and characterizing details. Specifically, whereas Theocritus had named the nymphs of the spring and had described them as sleepless and dread goddesses, Propertius does not name them at all and provides no extraneous description beyond their initial designation as *Dryades puellae*.²⁵² This not only produces a much less intimidating characterization, but also fixates on their youthful femininity, making them an ideal complement for the boyishness of Hylas. The absence of any names also evokes the holidaying girls of posh resort towns alluded to from lines 7-12, *puellae* who are likewise anonymous except for being referred to as *Ausoniis... Adryasin* (12).²⁵³ The echo provided by *Dryades* therefore increases the urgency of this warning to Gallus, especially with the nymphs on the verge of raping Hylas at this point in the narrative.

As a result of these changes, Propertius has produced a much more streamlined account of this phase of the narrative in comparison with Theocritus. Yet despite its swifter pace and lighter tone, primarily due to its brevity and the characterization of the nymphs as impetuous girls, Propertius has nevertheless preserved the deflation of the

252 Enk, 190, Richardson, 206, and Baker, 181.

253 The *puellae* of elegiac poetry are often the sweethearts of the poets. See *OLD* s.v. "*puella*" 3 a+b. Propertius may therefore be issuing a teasing warning to Gallus that the girlfriends of his beloved are pulling the boy away from him, with *leviter facili* alluding to the youth's lack of protest.

nymphs, which is perhaps the most striking feature of this sequence in *Idyll* 13, albeit through different means. Whereas Theocritus had accomplished this by means of the stark contrast between their initial menacing depiction and their final attentive comforting of Hylas, Propertius instead deflates the nymphs by severely limiting their presence, confining them to a mere three lines of poetry despite heavily anticipating them throughout the entire poem. Although alluded to at lines 7-11 and named at lines 12 (*Ausoniis... Adryasin*), 32 (*Hamadryasin*), and 34 (*Thyniasin*), the nymphs enter and leave the narrative within the same period, receiving neither a lavish introduction nor a final picture of Hylas among them, both of which are prominent in *Idyll* 13.

Similar to the different manner in which the deflation of the nymphs is achieved, Propertius has also distinctly recreated the suddenness of the dramatic moment in which Hylas is raped. While much of this is captured in the terseness of this section, as has already been noted, the success of this effect also lies in the somewhat unusual use of the respective meters of both poets. In Theocritus, Hylas is raped mid-hexameter at the caesura of 13.47, which no doubt reflects the suddenness of the act. Propertius, on the other hand, uses one full hexameter in order to continue the expression and append this action to the preceding couplet, thereby both amplifying the tension and depicting the moment of Hylas' rape at a metrically surprising point.²⁵⁴ This also presents the rape of Hylas as having occurred much faster than is depicted in *Idyll* 13, since the nymphs become smitten with the fairness of Hylas (45), stop their dances (46), and pull Hylas through the water (47) over the course of a single action-packed sequence.

254 Baker, 181.

As regards the style of this section, internal rhyme is once again a striking feature, occurring both at 45 with *accensae... puellae* and at 46 with *solitos... choros*, perhaps reflecting the beauty of such dances. Fire imagery then appears with *accensae* for the first time since *ardor* at line 6, which is a somewhat ironic quality to ascribe to the enamoured water nymphs. Another prominent feature is the vivid fairness of Hylas, since his *candore* (45) is bright enough to illuminate the presumed darkness of the scene. The complementing pentameter of 46 then amplifies the effects of Hylas upon the nymphs, since not only do they marvel at him in amazement (*miratae*), but they immediately stop their fervent dancing. Hylas' attractiveness is thereby all the greater for interrupting the nymphs as they are ensconced in their accustomed activities than it would be if they had yet to begin, as is the case in the Hellenistic models.²⁵⁵

The sense of 45-46 then spills over into the next hexameter, marking a rare overreach of the expression beyond the confines of the elegiac couplet, possibly both reflecting the impetuosity of the nymphs and recreating the choppiness of Theocritus' own narrative once Hylas had been raped.²⁵⁶ Furthermore, the hexameter of 47 is perhaps the most ambiguous line of 1.20, due in large part to the surprising vagueness of its expression: Hylas has fallen forwards (*prolapsus*) into the spring, after which the nymphs draw him (*traxere*) through the yielding water (*facili... liquore*). Not only is this a much gentler touch in comparison to the unexpected snatching and headlong fall

255 Enk, 190, and Baker, 181. Both Apollonius Rhodius and Theocritus have the nymphs at the point of beginning their dances when they notice Hylas. cf. *Argonautica*, 1.1222-3, and *Id.* 13.46.

256 The hexameters immediately following the rape of Hylas in *Idyll* 13 feature the enjambment of certain phrases beyond line-end, especially 'Αργείῳ ἐπὶ παιδί at 49, ἄθροος at 50, and ἄθροος ἐν πόντῳ at 51. The sudden disruption created by the event is thus reflected in the metrical imbalance of the poem.

described in Theocritus, but it also renders Hylas at least as equally responsible for his fate as the nymphs are.²⁵⁷ Hylas has already somehow entered the water, whether having succumbed to the appealing pleasures all around him or otherwise by mysterious accident; the nymphs simply pull him from there.²⁵⁸ To what degree either the nymphs are accountable for raping Hylas or Hylas himself is responsible for his own rape is never clarified, a question Propertius consciously deepens through the placement of the adverb *leviter* (47) in balance between *prolapsum* and *traxere*.²⁵⁹ In either case, Propertius has accomplished this event with considerable finesse, both in the Latin and in the action here described. The rape of Hylas is now complete, in a manner as delicate as it is abrupt, and the next sequence will describe the response of Hercules to this event.

3.9 Hercules Searches for Hylas (1.20.48-50)

The final essential element of the rape of Hylas is the futile search of Hercules after his beloved had been raped. In keeping with the abbreviated narrative characteristic of all sequences with the sole exception of Hylas' search for water, Propertius has similarly condensed this phase of the narrative to only a few lines of poetry. However while the expedition of the Argo and the landing at Mysia are arguably extraneous features best handled as efficiently as possible, and the brevity of the nymphs and their limited involvement in the proceedings is a very clever and creative reinvention of Theocritus' own treatment, the removal of Hercules from any prominence within the episode is especially striking, given his traditional significance to the narrative. There is

257 Hodge and Buttimore, 208, and Baker, 181.

258 Newman, 355, translates *prolapsum* as "he [Hylas] lost his balance." If we imagine that Hylas is drawing water into a massive pitcher as is seen in Theocritus (*Id.* 13.46-47), then it is entirely possible that the weight of the vessel might have been too much for the boy to handle.

259 Enk, 190, Richardson, 206, and Baker, 181.

no argument that Heracles/Hercules had been a tremendously popular and pervasive figure in Greek and Latin literature, and even the extant Hellenistic accounts of the rape of Hylas are far more about Heracles than they are about Hylas. Indeed Theocritus gives more attention to Heracles than he does to Hylas, which is evident not only in his bereaved rampage being the longest and most detailed element of *Idyll* 13, but also since the poem in its entirety is ostensibly about mocking the debilitating effects of love upon epic heroes, for which end Hylas is therefore merely a catalyst. In 1.20, however, Hercules is all but entirely removed. Propertius focuses so extensively on Hylas that virtually every other element becomes secondary, thereby cleverly reinterpreting the traditional narrative as the tale of how Hylas is raped by the nymphs and not of how Heracles had lost his beloved in Mysia.

Although so much of Heracles' rampage in *Idyll* 13 is omitted from Propertius' treatment that a comparative analysis becomes hardly necessary, a brief review would nevertheless be beneficial. The entire sequence spans 17 hexameters. At 13.55-57, Heracles becomes troubled over the absence of Hylas, equips himself, and sets out in search. At 58-60, the famous triple shouting by Heracles after Hylas occurs, a strikingly ironic image for how far removed from each other they are despite their actual nearness which only the surface of the water separates. At 61-65, Theocritus extensively compares the distraught Heracles to a ravenous lion through a mock heroic simile. At 66-70a, a brief allusion is made to the pains endured by Heracles across his rampage before Theocritus returns to the expedition of the Argo which for the moment waits for him to

return. 70b-71 then summarizes the fate of Heracles at Mysia, who continues to madly range since a harsh god had rent his heart.

In contrast to the lengthy account on this sequence given by Theocritus, Propertius provides a mere three lines. After being pulled through the water by the nymphs, Hylas makes a sound (*sonitum... fecit Hylas*, 48), to which Hercules responds three times (*Alcides ter 'Hyla' respondet*, 49). The sequence then ends with Hercules being met with the winds bringing back Hylas' name in turn (*at illi / nomen... aura refert*, 49-50).²⁶⁰ The heroic arming and preparation of Hercules, the epic simile, the pains suffered while searching, the recollection of the other Argonauts, and the note of a harsh god rending his heart are all excised.

The only feature of this sequence in Theocritus' narrative adopted by Propertius is the triple shout, which is done in a manner that presents some striking ambiguities. Foremost among these uncertainties is the nature of *sonitum* at line 48. The precise noise made by Hylas has been variously understood as a cry, a splash, or some combination thereof, with the lattermost option receiving the most support.²⁶¹ That Hylas cries out would best cohere with Theocritus' account in which a thin voice emerges from the spring (13.59-60), and yet many scholars suppose that more than just this is indicated by *sonitum*. Indeed the noun *sonitus* often refers to sounds not necessarily or exclusively

260 Whose name is indicated by *nomen* is uncertain. See my discussion on pp. 94-5, and in n. 266.

261 Bailey, 58, offers the most forceful interpretation of *sonitum* as referring both to Hylas' struggles in the water and his cries for help, with which Richardson, 206, and Baker, 181, agree. Alternatively, Butler and Barber, 185, only suppose that a cry is made. McCarthy, 199, similarly rules out a splash, and Heyworth (2007b), 93, further suggests that the human voice, when heard through the water, becomes a *sonitus*. See also Postgate, 101-2, and Enk, 190-1.

attributed to human voice, such as crashes and dins.²⁶² However while it would be preferable to suppose that this sound is some combination of splashes and cries for help resulting from a struggle in the water, the Latin seems to rule this out decisively. Not only is it impossible for Hercules to answer a splash (*respondet*, 49), but the rape has occurred with such a delicate touch (*leviter facili... liquore*, 47) that any reactive thrashing in the water by Hylas should probably not be imagined. *sonitum* should therefore mean just a cry, with the only oddity being the use of a peculiar word to denote this. While it is possible that *sonitum* emphasizes the volume and inarticulateness of Hylas' cry for help - for how could it reach Hercules at a distance (*procul*, 49) otherwise? - another possibility is that the sound of the human voice is no longer recognized as belonging to a human when it is heard through the barrier of water, and thus referring to this sound as *sonitum* becomes most appropriate.²⁶³

Yet whatever the precise meaning *sonitum*, certain logical difficulties nevertheless remain. Not only is Hylas at a remote spring (*sepositi... fontis*, 24) far removed from the camp of the Argonauts, but Hercules perceives and responds to the *sonitum* despite being at a considerable distance from its source (*procul*). Furthermore, Hercules acts entirely in response (*cui... respondet*, 49, with the relative pronoun having *sonitum* as its antecedent) as opposed to making a general cry of concern as he does in Theocritus' account.²⁶⁴

Indeed there is no indication that Hercules has done anything more than call the name of

262 OLD s.v. "*sonitus*." Camps, 97, suggests that there is no adequate Latin word for whatever Hylas presumably vocalizes.

263 In support of this, Heyworth (2007b), 93, cites, Virgil *Geo.* 4.333-334, in which Cyrene perceives the laments of Aristaeus, referred to as *sonitum*, through the water.

264 cf. *Id.* 13.55-58. Alternatively, Postgate, 102, supposes that it is *Hylas* which is the antecedent of *cui* in 49. Propertius' Latin supports both readings.

Hylas three times, let alone equip himself and set out in frantic search as Theocritus has him do, which perhaps effects a stronger, albeit more subtle, deflation of the figure than is presented in *Idyll* 13. Unsuccessful though he was, at least Theocritus' Heracles lived up to his reputation; Hercules in Propertius is so impotent that he accomplishes nothing more than a triple cry.

The last major difference between this sequence in Theocritus and Propertius is to do with the outcome of the triple shout. Whereas Heracles in *Idyll* 13 hears a faint voice from the spring next to which he stands as he shouts, Hercules in 1.20 is met with the winds returning a *nomen*, although to whom it belongs is at first unclear.²⁶⁵ The most likely option is that Hercules hears “Hylas,” with his triple call is echoed back to him from the far off mountains (*ab extremis montibus*, 50, with *montibus* being an emendation first put forward by Heinsius and printed by Heyworth), while the other possibility is that Hercules hears “Hercules,” with Hylas calling his name from the far off fountains (preserving the appearance of *fontibus* in the manuscripts, which certain editors prefer).²⁶⁶ No doubt this ambiguity is deliberate, but while compelling arguments could be advanced for reading *fontibus*, *montibus* must be correct.²⁶⁷ Recalling *procul* at line 49, Hercules is not only nowhere near the spring into which Hylas was pulled, but still presumably at camp. Hercules would thus be unable to determine that Hylas had been

265 For a brief overview of the problem, see Postgate, 102, and Enk, 191.

266 Scholars reading *nomen* as indicating the name of Hercules returned from Hylas include Postgate, 101, Enk, 191, Richardson, 206, and Newman 355. Those who read *nomen* as indicating Hylas, which is echoed back to Hercules, include Butler and Barber, 185-6, Camps, 97, Hodge and Buttimore, 208-9, and Baker, 181. Heyworth (2007b), 93, is inconclusive, but cites Bailey, 58, and presents a translation at 531 which seemingly favours the latter.

267 For arguments in support of preserving *fontibus*, see Postgate, 102, Enk, 191, Richardson, 206-7, Newman, 355-6, Camps, 97, and Baker, 181-2. In my estimation, Newman offers the most compelling argument for reading *fontibus*, citing the thematic and elemental unity it affords the poem as a whole.

pulled into a spring, let alone able to locate precisely the spring as the source of any perceptible cry from Hylas.²⁶⁸ Instead, the cliffs of Mysia (*Mysorum scopulis*, 20) and Mount Arganthus (*Arganthi... sub uertice montis*, 33) are much more likely to echo the shouts of Hercules, with the result that only the name of Hylas comes back to him.

At this point, the narrative proper of the rape of Hylas is complete. All things considered, Propertius' treatment ends on a much bleaker note than in Theocritus, with Hercules utterly abandoned, not even hearing Hylas' voice for a final time, and with the precise fate of his beloved unknown. However even here Propertius is still not sympathetic towards Hercules. In the hexameter of 49, a cruel measure of promise is afforded to Hercules through the stop after *respondet*, as if optimistically expecting the voice of Hylas, only to be crushed by the adversarial conjunction *at* (49) which cruelly dashes any hope. The irreconcilable distance between the two lovers is then emphasized by the separation of *illi* referring to Hercules at line 49 from the *nomen* denoting the name of Hylas at line 50. This final image of the bereft Hercules and the lost Hylas thereby provides a chilling and ambiguous conclusion. Indeed it may be that Propertius supposes such an outcome could be the result of Gallus' own affair if he should pay no mind to his warnings.

3.10 Returning to Gallus (1.20.51-54)

Although the winds bearing back the name of Hylas to Hercules would make for an ideal place to end his poem, Propertius has instead written a perfunctory two couplet

²⁶⁸ Just as with Theocritus' account, one should perhaps ask whether Hylas would be able to hear the triple shout of Hercules from within the spring, and if Hylas could produce any response that would definitively meet Hercules.

conclusion to echo the very first lines of 1.20, the middle two lines of which have been lost.²⁶⁹ This provides a succinct and forceful ending, not only cementing the ambiguities and uncertainties which properly concluded the rape of Hylas in the preceding section, but also elegantly rounding off the poem with its verbal echoes to its very first lines.²⁷⁰ It also marks a striking return to the real world of Propertius and his friend which characterized so much of the introduction of the poem, leaving behind the mythological *exemplum* in order to emphasize its primary thrust in simple terms: keep an eye on your Hylas, Gallus, lest he is lost to the nymphs just as the beloved of Hercules had been! While perhaps superfluous, such a plain recapitulation might very well have been necessary for Gallus to hear; the adverb *rursus* (54) indicates that Gallus had already been too careless in his affair at least once before, and thus Propertius perhaps felt that he required the bluntness of such a directly expressed admonition.²⁷¹ Alternatively, Gallus might simply be a bit thick, and therefore would need the warning to be explicitly repeated.

Theocritus, to compare with Propertius, ends *Idyll* 13 in a similarly tidy fashion, but he does so without returning either to his addressee or to the reason for presenting the poem as stated in his first four hexameters. Instead, he provides closure, claiming that Hylas is numbered among the blessed ones (72) and that Heracles was mocked as a

269 Heyworth (2007b), 93-4. The pentameter of the first couplet (52) and the hexameter of the second (53) seem to be lost, with the result that the hexameter of the first (51) and the pentameter of the second (54) have combined to form a single couplet, which the majority of editors before Heyworth have accepted. The previously accepted *uisus* in place of *rursus* had thus been a makeshift emendation to repair what appears to be an incomplete prohibitive subjunctive clause which would have existed in line 53. For other defunct alternatives, see Postgate, 102-3.

270 This is discussed on p. 31 above, as well as on p. 97 below.

271 This is contingent on reading *rursus* instead of *uisus*, as Heyworth postulates. With the previously preferred reading of *uisus*, it is unclear if Gallus had previously been reckless in his relationship with Hylas, and thus such a direct warning here loses much of its necessity.

deserter and eventually rejoined the Argonauts at Phasis by arriving on foot (73-75). This strikes quite a different tone from what is found in Propertius, whose final picture of Hercules and Hylas, despite not properly belonging to the concluding sequence, is that of a bereaved hero standing motionless while his boy beloved is pulled through the water of a distant spring. Far from offering closure, Propertius not only forgoes any truly satisfying outcome, but outright destroys whatever solemnity existed in the preceding two meagre sections by abruptly returning to reality. Gallus reenters the narrative, his lesson hopefully learned, and the poem ends.

As regards the style of these lines, they do create a pleasing echo with the very first couplet of the poem. In the hexameter, *his, o Galle, tuos monitus... amores* (51) all recall *hoc... te, Galle, monemus amore* (1), thereby creating a pronounced ring composition.²⁷² In the pentameter, there is a final point of urgency with the juxtaposition of *formosum*, which agrees with *Hylan*, and *nymphis*, thereby reflecting the immediate threat that nymphs/Roman holidaying girls pose to his relationship. Finally, *Hylan* stands in final position of the line and as the last word of the poem, granting tremendous significance to both the presumed beloved of Gallus and the mythological figure of his namesake, thereby reaffirming their presence as the central figure of the poem.

272 Curran, 285, and Thomas, 31-2.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this thesis was to argue that Theocritus *Idyll* 13 is the major model for Propertius 1.20. It is my hope that this has been competently and convincingly achieved as a result of my conspectus of the Hylas myth throughout Greek and Latin literature (chapter one), my exploration of the tone, style, and quality of *Idyll* 13 (chapter two), and my detailed literary critical appreciation of 1.20 with particular reference to its relationship with the Theocritean model (chapter three).

While there is little reason to doubt that Theocritus *Idyll* 13 was the major model for Propertius 1.20, this does not preclude the influence of other poets upon Propertius' Hylas myth. Not only was Propertius a remarkably allusive and learned poet, but the Hylas myth had enjoyed tremendous contemporary popularity, seemingly to the point of annoying ubiquity.²⁷³ Propertius, for his inspiration, would therefore have presumably had access to countless renditions of the Hylas myth by both known and unknown authors, only a few of whom have been plausibly identified through diligent study of whatever fortuitous fragments have emerged. For the sake of fullness, I now present a brief consideration of these other possible influences.

Nicander of Colophon, a second century poet and grammarian, wrote a collection of poems unified under the theme of transformation entitled *Heteroeumena*. Although most of the collection is lost, a fragment nevertheless survives which mentions Hylas being turned into an echo (fr. 48, Gow and Scholfield). This fragment is believed to have belonged to Nicander's own lengthy rendition of the Hylas myth, which is accurately yet

273 Recalling Virgil *Geo.* 3.6: *cui non dictus Hylas puer?*

heavily abbreviated in a prose adaptation by Antoninus Liberalis (*Metamorphoses* 26), a grammarian active during the late Roman empire who explicitly notes his debt to Nicander prior to presenting his account.²⁷⁴ While it seems, insofar as can be determined from Antoninus' presumed fidelity to his original, that Nicander differed quite considerably from contemporary accounts by Theocritus and Apollonius Rhodius,²⁷⁵ he nevertheless supplies a detail which twice appears in Propertius and not once in either *Idyll* 13 or *Argonautica* 1.207-1357: the Ascanius, which is harsh to the Argonauts at 1.20.4 and where Hercules weeps at 1.20.16.²⁷⁶ It is here where Antoninus, and so presumably Nicander as well, locates the rape of Hylas by a plurality of nymphs. As a result it seems that Nicander's lost account of the Hylas myth may have informed at least this particular element of Propertius 1.20.²⁷⁷

Alexander Aetolus, a third century Aetolian poet, authored a now lost collection of poetry, some of which also seems to have influenced Propertius, albeit indirectly. Quoted by Parthenius in *Erotika Pathemata* 14, the relevant line is ἀντὸς δ' ἐς Νύμφας ὄχετ' ἐφρυδριάδας, which originated in Alexander's *Apollo*, and seems to lie behind Propertius' *unus Hylas ibat Hamadryasin* (1.20.32).²⁷⁸ Due to the relative obscurity and perceived unremarkable quality of Alexander, it seems doubtful that Propertius directly

274 Gow (1950b), 231.

275 For a brief overview, see pp. 4-5 of this thesis.

276 Whether "Ascanius" in 1.20 refers to the river or lake (an ambiguity in Latin which is avoided by the differing grammatical genders of "river" and "lake" in Greek) is unknown. Cairns (2006b), 240-1.

277 The third century Hellenistic poet Euphorion of Chalcis (fr. 74, Powell) also references the Ascanius, here in connection with Mysia (*Μυσοῖο παρ' ὕδασιν Ἀσκανίου*), and may therefore have informed Propertius' use of this location as well. Hollis (2006), 101. Cairns (2006b), 236-7, n. 65, also suggests that Euphorion may have treated the Hylas myth.

278 While this connection lends support to Baehrens emendation of *Hamadryasin* to *Ephydriasin*, the appearance of *Adryasin* (12) and *Dryades* (45) still opposes this. Hollis (2006), 110.

adapted this line.²⁷⁹ Instead, the prevailing theory is that this line came to Propertius by way of Alexander's story of Antheus, which is told by Parthenius in *Erotika Pathemata* 14.²⁸⁰ Although this Antheus myth differs radically from the rape of Hylas, there are nevertheless some strikingly similar details. Foremost among these is a central action which takes place at a well, in which a handsome youth is immersed and lost. Additionally, the treacherous woman responsible for the demise of Antheus is twice referred to as a nymph;²⁸¹ a vessel for carrying water is lost, perhaps just as Propertius consciously omits this detail which appears several times in Theocritus and Apollonius;²⁸² and the name of Antheus is etymologically linked with flower blossoms, which coheres well not only with the etymology of Hylas' own name, but his preoccupation with poppies and lilies at 1.20.37-38.

Apollonius Rhodius, who provides one of only two extant Hellenistic accounts of the rape of Hylas at *Argonautica* 1.1182-1272 (the other being Theocritus *Idyll* 13), supplies certain details for Propertius that have no precedent in his primary model of Theocritus. The most striking of these is certainly the name of the spring, which he notes is called *πηγάς* ("Pege") by the locals at 1.1221-1222 and which is adapted by Propertius at 1.20.33 (*fons erat... Pegae*).²⁸³ Also taken from Apollonius is the Arganthonian mountain (*Ἀργανθώνειον ὄρος*, 1.1178), which appears at 1.20.33 as well, albeit rephrased as mount Arganthus (*Arganthi... montis*), and is similarly not to be found in

279 Hollis (2006), 109, refers to Alexander Aetolus as a "second-rank figure."

280 Hollis (2006), 109-10, and Cairns (2006b), 245.

281 *νύμφης* at fr. 3.8 and *νύμφη* at 3.16 (Magnelli). Cairns (2006b), 245.

282 Hollis (2006), 109, n. 61.

283 Hunter, 277, notes the surprise of finding a named spring with no description in Apollonius as opposed to a nameless spring painstakingly described in Theocritus.

Theocritus.²⁸⁴ Finally, Apollonius is the only extant source other than Propertius to feature Zetes and Calais in any capacity, which occurs shortly after the end of his rape of Hylas at 1.1298-1308.²⁸⁵ While far from the remarkable airborne amatory assault found at 1.20.25-30, this terse anticipation of their demise at the hands of Heracles does at least hint at the possibility of other versions of the myth which might have developed the theme of sexual jealousy perhaps lying behind this episode in Propertius.²⁸⁶

Cornelius Gallus, the elusive forefather of Latin love-elegy active in the mid first century, provides the only plausible Latin source for Propertius 1.20.²⁸⁷ However despite his tremendous influence on Augustan literature, only some 10 lines from what is believed to have been four books of his poetry survive, none of which shed any light on Propertius' Hylas myth.²⁸⁸ Instead, scholars have looked to other Augustan poets and their receptions and perceived appropriations of Gallus to reconstruct his preferred themes, interests, and expressions.²⁸⁹ The results are certainly tenuous, but nevertheless seem to

284 However it is surprising how both Theocritus and Apollonius explicitly mention the people of Cius (cf. *Κιανίδος ἥθεα γαίης*, *Argonautica*, 1.1177, and *Κιανῶν*, *Id.* 13.30) while Propertius omits them entirely. On multiple occasions, it seems that Propertius has deliberately borrowed elements unique either to Theocritus or Apollonius, and where both these Hellenistic models are in agreement, Propertius stands apart.

285 Cairns (2006b), 247-9, supposes that the Zetes and Calais episode in Propertius may owe something to the way in which Apollonius describes Hylas being raped by a single nymph at 1.1234-1239. Both scenes are quite graphic and feature bizarre and unusual contortions of the human body, however efforts by Butrica ([1980], 69-75) and Heyworth ([2007b], 89-90) to make better sense of the text seem to undermine considerably this already tenuous connection.

286 Butrica (1980), 69, n. 2

287 For a useful overview of Gallus and his place in the tradition of Augustan literature and Latin love elegy, see Raymond, 59-67.

288 In addition to being a poet, Gallus was also a prominent politician, and his fall from grace and eventual suicide may have resulted in his *damnatio memoriae*, which perhaps contributed to the loss of his poetry. Raymond, 60-1. Alternatively, it could be suggested that the loss of his work reflects a tremendous gap in the quality of his poetry, and thus a rapid decline in favour, in comparison to his successors (In particular, Quintilian, *Inst. Orat.* 10.1.93, regarded Gallus as *durior* than the other Latin elegists).

289 Many of these features and their particular relevance to Propertius 1.20 are comprehensively

reveal many striking convergences between 1.20 and Gallan motifs, especially if the addressee of the poem is indeed this famous Gallus.²⁹⁰

The most convincing argument for Gallus as a source for 1.20 is the fact that he seems to have produced his own Hylas poem, to which Propertius is likely to have had access.²⁹¹ This can be determined in two ways. The first is through Euphorion of Chalchis, whom the scholiast on Theocritus claims is responsible for an account of the Hylas myth in which Polyphemus was his lover.²⁹² Virgil, at *Ecl.* 10.50-51, explicitly links Gallus with *Chalchidico... versu*, while Servius, in his commentary on *Ecl.* 6.72, writes *hoc autem Euphorionis continent carmina quae Gallus transtulit in sermonem Latinum* in reference to myths of the Grynean Grove, which seems to indicate poems of Euphorion translated by Gallus.²⁹³ Both references support Gallus as being a prominent “cantor Euphorionis” condemned by Cicero in the mid-first century.²⁹⁴ It therefore seems likely that, if Euphorion did produce a rendition on the Hylas myth, Gallus would not just be aware of it, but closely associated with it.

The second evidence for a lost Hylas myth authored by Gallus is through Parthenius.²⁹⁵ The two figures were closely related, as is clear from Parthenius' dedication

catalogued by Cairns (2006b), 222-235. See also Ross, 74-84.

290 The precise identity of this Gallus remains impossible to ascertain. For Gallus as the preeminent Latin love elegist, see Cairns (2006b), 219-222. For Gallus as a relative of Propertius, see Hutchinson, 195-200. Other, less popular alternatives include Gallus as an unknown friend, Gallus as a minor contemporary poet, and Gallus as a fictional poetic construct.

291 Ross, 80, supposes this; however Lightfoot, 467, is unconvinced.

292 *schol. Theoc.* 13.7.

293 Cairns (2006b), 233, connects Gallus' description of the Grynean grove (which is based on Euphorion) with 1.20.33-38, however Lightfoot, 63, is sceptical.

294 *Cic. Tusc. Disp.* 3.45. See Lightfoot, 55-57.

295 Parthenius is considered in more detail on pp. 104-6 below. Additionally, while this paragraph only considers the connection between Gallus and Parthenius, it should also be noted that Euphorion and Parthenius are connected as well, with Parthenius believed to have been responsible for popularizing the

to Gallus of his *Erotika Pathemata*.²⁹⁶ In addition to this collection of brief prose episodes culled from minor authors, certain fragments of Parthenius also reveal works in which the rape of Hylas would have been appropriate, including a *Heracles* (fr. 19-22, Lightfoot) and a *Metamorphoses* (fr. 22, Lightfoot).²⁹⁷ Gallus would have certainly had ready access to these texts. Therefore, if he did produce a Hylas myth, it is very likely to have been influenced by Parthenius, despite his perhaps never having produced a rendition of the Hylas myth *per se*.²⁹⁸

However while the apparent Gallan motifs, as well as the nexus of Gallus-Euphorion-Parthenius and its influence on a young Propertius, appear to indicate Gallus as a very probable model for 1.20, this seems to be ruled out by the poem's decidedly Hellenistic quality,²⁹⁹ which is due in large part to Propertius' fascination with Greek words and sounds.³⁰⁰ The ubiquity of the Hylas myth at Rome would have placed immense pressure on Propertius to produce something radically original, or at the very least deeply learned. Deferring so obviously to a Latin contemporary produces neither, and so any traces of Gallus in 1.20 should perhaps best be regarded as a predictable byproduct of operating in the same literary climate.³⁰¹

relatively obscure Euphorion among the literary circles of Rome. Lightfoot. 57-67.

296 However for a different reading of this dedication (which Lightfoot, 74, finds objectionable), see Cairns (2006a), 83-4.

297 For commentaries on these fragments, see Lightfoot, 111-2, and 160-4. However both Cairns (2006b), 237, and Lightfoot, 27, n. 42, are reluctant to state definitively that Parthenius composed a Hylas myth.

298 It is perhaps far too fanciful to suppose, however, that a now lost Hylas myth authored by Gallus was a direct product of receiving the *Erotika Pathemata* collection from Parthenius.

299 Cairns (2006b), 236.

300 Curran, 281-93.

301 It is especially telling that Propertius seems to have had the last word on the Hylas myth in Augustan literature. After him, the rape of Hylas is curiously absent from perfectly appropriate texts, such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Cairns (2006b), 248-9.

Parthenius is the final and, in my estimation, most likely poet to have figured strongly into the background of Propertius 1.20.³⁰² While both the extent of his relationship with Propertius and his direct contribution to the Hylas myth is uncertain, 1.20 nevertheless features many geographical details uniquely relevant to Parthenius, which strongly suggests that he (if not a now lost Hylas poem by him) had been a major influence on Propertius.

1.20 is a poem in which Propertius very consciously locates the action as occurring in Bithynia. The appearance of the lake/river Ascanius at lines 4 and 16, characterizing the nymphs of the spring as “Bithynian” (*nymphis... Thyniasin*) at 34, the Bithynian landmark of mount Arganthus at 33 – these are all precise details which refer to the origins of the Hylas myth in Bithynia.³⁰³ Accordingly, it seems to be no coincidence that Parthenius himself was a Bithynian, having been born in Nicaea, a city and cultural centre situated near the eastern end of lake Ascanius.³⁰⁴

It therefore seems likely that Propertius has intended all of these Bithynian references to be of special interest to Parthenius, both in respect to his origin in Nicaea and as concerns his literary activities. A restored inscription likely composed by the philhellenic emperor Hadrian indicates that Parthenius might have been popularly known as “the man from Ascania,” thereby leading some scholars to regard the two mentions of

302 Cairns (2006b), 235-49.

303 Note, however, the peculiarity of the Argonauts landing at Mysia (1.20.20). Mysia and Bithynia were originally distinct regions, but their exact boundaries were constantly shifting, and the poet's awareness of this fact seems to strengthen the likelihood of a Bithynian source. Strabo, 12.4.4. See also Cairns (2006b), 238-40.

304 Strabo, 12.4.7. For the life and career of Parthenius, see Lightfoot, 1-16.

Ascanius in Propertius 1.20 as a Hellenistic footnote on Parthenius.³⁰⁵ Similarly, the learned geographic awareness of 1.20, evidenced by an action of Hylas which transgresses the tenuous border between Mysia and Bithynia and finds the boy taken by *nymphis... thyniasin* (1.20.34), may reveal an attempt to complicate either region's claim on the Hylas myth.³⁰⁶ Independently, Propertius would be unlikely to demonstrate such a keen awareness of foreign geography and its impact on local mythography, and so this perhaps indicates the influence of Parthenius.³⁰⁷ Finally, the landmark of mount Arganthus (1.20.33) seems intended to evoke *Erotika Pathemata* 36, in which Parthenius briefly relates the story of Arganthone.³⁰⁸ While largely distinct from one another, the climaxes of the Hylas myth and the Arganthone myth nevertheless overlap in one remarkably striking way, as both feature a bereaved lover (Hercules/Arganthone) calling out in vain to their lost beloved (Hylas/Rhesus).³⁰⁹ Accordingly, two byproducts of this connection should be noted: the first is the activation of the ancient aetiology for a Mysian ritual involving the rape of Hylas, in which the Mysian women call to Hylas;³¹⁰ the second is a witty allusion to the tensions surrounding the claim to the Hylas myth as either Mysian or Bithynian, since the sons born to Arganthone by Rhesus are the namesakes of these regions: Mysus and Thynus.³¹¹ With these allusions in mind,

305 Cairns (2006b), 242. The inscription is found in *IG* xiv. 1089 and belongs to an elegiac epigram adorning the tomb of Parthenius. For commentary, see Lightfoot, 5-6.

306 Cairns (2006b), 239-40.

307 Cairns (2006b), 239, rhetorically asks, "Who else but a Bithynian poet would have written in this way? And what other Bithynian poet's work would have ranked more highly in the minds of Gallus and Propertius than Parthenius?"

308 For a commentary on *Erotika Pathemata* 36, see Lightfoot, 552-558.

309 Through this connection, Cairns (2006b), 243-4, fancifully speculates that an episode of Parthenius' *Metamorphoses* may well have juxtaposed the Bithynian myths of Arganthone and Hylas.

310 Gow (1950b), 242-3, Hunter, 262-3, Sergeant, 159-62. and Cairns (2006b), 238, n. 75.

311 Lightfoot, 552-3. Arrian provides the names of Mysus and Thynus at *FGrHist* 156 F 83, 59.

Propertius therefore seems to be operating directly under the auspices of Parthenius by locating his rape of Hylas under the summit of mount Arganthus (*Arganthi... sub uertice montis*, 1.20.33).

While all these features of Bithynian/Mysian geography provide strong evidence for the influence of Parthenius upon Propertius, there is nevertheless no concrete indication that either he or a Hylas myth authored by him had been of any consequence to the narrative of 1.20.³¹² Certainly Propertius' perceived use of Gallan motifs and Parthenian points of interest, as well his thematic unity with lost works by Alexander Aetolus and Nicander, may reveal a debt to these poets insofar as the quality and tonality of his Hylas myth is concerned, however it cannot be proven that they served as narrative models as well. In this respect, Theocritus *Idyll* 13 stands alone.

Lastly, there remains the task of considering Propertius 1.20 within the context of the Propertian *Monobiblos*.³¹³ However before doing this, the remarkable qualities of the poem – independent of both its relationship to the major model provided by Theocritus and its potential debt to those other possible influences explored above – should be briefly reviewed.

The most striking feature of Propertius' Hylas myth is arguably its narrative, specifically the way in which Propertius adjusts its pace and focus in order to surprise the audience or to subvert their expectations.³¹⁴ This is also the feature upon which the contemporary success of 1.20 perhaps most heavily depended, largely due to the many

312 However see Cairns (2006b), 248-9, who suggests (unconvincingly, I find) that Parthenius is responsible for the amatory assault of the Zetes and Calais.

313 For the arrangement of the *Monobiblos*, see Skutsch, 238-9, Ross, 74-5, and Manuwald, 228-31. For the place of 1.20 in the *Monobiblos* in particular, see Hutchinson, 195-200.

314 Bramble, 83.

renditions of the Hylas myth in circulation at the time with which Propertius would have been competing. In response to these pressures, Propertius artfully frames his exemplum (1-16, 51-54) and leisurely depicts Hylas' search for water (23-44), but swiftly and almost impatiently treats the other requisite narrative sequences (17-19, 20-22, 45-47, 48-50). Furthermore, he not only surprises the audience with the unexpected appearance of Zetes and Calais (25-32), but also teases them with early allusions to Hercules and the nymphs (12, 16, 32, 36), figures of little importance to Propertius' rendition despite their otherwise traditional significance. Even the unsurprising and inevitable fate of Hylas is repeatedly put off by having the youth entertain one distraction after another in anticipation of his drawing water from the spring (39-44).

Another noteworthy aspect of 1.20 is its humour. Indeed the facetious comparison of Gallus' absentminded and indolent beloved to a handsome mythological prince (5-6, 41-42) and the sustained mockery of Gallus' own imprudence and foolishness in his relationship (1-2, 7-12, 51-54) make for some obvious humour, however there are other more subtle instances throughout as well. Certain curiously relevant details and expressions – for example the covering of the shore by Argonauts (*tegit*, 22) alluding to the concealed dangers of the *locus amoenus*, the search for water outlined in 23-24 being forgotten as a result of the crimson poppies (*purpureis... papaveribus*, 33) and their symbolizing of oblivion, and Hylas' delaying at the spring (*tardat*, 42) reflecting Propertius' own poetic retardation – are all cleverly humorous. Additionally, the use of etymological wordplay (*Hylae/silvae*, 6-7, *Pagasae*, 17, and *Pegae*, 33) and the appropriateness of the various mythological allusions for the subject matter of the poem

(*Athamantidos*, 19, *Aquilonia*, 25, *Pandioniae*... *Orithyiae*, 31, and *Arganthi*, 33)

contribute to the wit of 1.20 as well.

Finally, 1.20 is impressive for its tonality and literary technique. The frequency of internal rhyme (some 16 instances³¹⁵) and the deliberate reappearance of particular word groups (*trahens* in 44 and *traxere* in 47, *candida* in 38 and *candore* in 45, and *ardor* in 6 and *accensae* in 45, among others) conscientiously evoke the echo motif which informs much of the Hylas myth and which Propertius similarly exploits at 48-49. There is also a profundity of striking water imagery, which is readily apparent not only through the prominent use of rivers, shores, springs, and nymphs, but also in Propertius' initial phrasing of his warning to Gallus (*ne vacuo defluat ex animo*, 2).³¹⁶ Lastly, the abundance of Greek words and names creates an exotic tonality. The thetas (*Theiodamanteo*, 6, *Athamantidos*, 19, and *Arganthi*, 33), phis (*nympharum*, 11, and *Phasidos*, 18), and upsilons (*Minyis*, 4, *Hylae*, 6, and *Orithyiae*, 31), as well as the use of certain Greek case endings (*Argo*, 17, *Hamadryasin*, 32, and *Hylan*, 54) all produce a unique aural quality, especially as they mingle with the Latin to create some ornately detailed rhymes and sound effects (19-20, 25-27).³¹⁷

Having assessed 1.20 independently, a brief consideration of the poem within the context of Propertius' first book of poetry can now be performed. Unfortunately, this discussion must invariably tackle the identity of "Gallus," a name which appears in four other poems (1.5, 10, 13, and 21). However due to the impossibility of identifying the

315 Curran, 284.

316 For a reading of 1.20 with an eye towards elemental unity, see Newman, 353-6.

317 Thomas 30-9, and Curran, 281-93.

Gallus of each poem with absolute certainty, despite the best efforts of virtually every prominent Propertian scholar, it seems a more beneficial approach would be to consider the Gallus of these poems without tenaciously clinging to a specific and tenuous identification.³¹⁸

Each of these five Gallus poems is remarkably distinct from one another. In 1.5, Propertius addresses a friend, whose identification as Gallus is withheld until the final couplet (1.5.31-32), who asks about Cynthia far too inquisitively for his liking and who is characterized as a rival lover.³¹⁹ In 1.10, Propertius congratulates Gallus (identified early at 1.10.5) for successfully courting an unnamed girl, and promises to offer assistance to him in his affair. In 1.13, Propertius blames Gallus (named at 1.13.2, 4, and 16) for perfidiously stealing his sweetheart, but soon appears to soften and wishes the new lovers well by the end of the poem. In 1.20, Propertius issues a warning to Gallus to protect his relationship with a boyfriend not unlike the mythological Hylas. Finally, in 1.21, Gallus is a victim of the Perusine War, whose bones lie on the Etruscan hillside.

Momentarily disregarding 1.21, the poem most likely to feature a Gallus who is distinct from the others, it is clear that the remaining Gallus poems form a coherent narrative when taken together: Gallus rivals Propertius for Cynthia (1.5), then finds romantic success and Propertius' approval with another girl (1.10), and finally returns for

318 Nevertheless, many scholars believe that the “Gallus” of 1.5, 10, 13, and 20 is the elusive elegist Cornelius Gallus, generally based on certain themes and motifs of his which Propertius seems to be emulating, while the Gallus of 1.21 is kinsman of Propertius. Cairns (2012), 168-185. However for a more radical departure, which rejects that Cornelius Gallus is the “Gallus” of any of the poems in which the name appears, see Hutchinson, 198-200.

319 Cynthia is Propertius' own beloved and muse. *cf.* 1.1.

Cynthia and steals her away from Propertius (1.13).³²⁰ This trio of poems not only characterizes Gallus as a serial lover, but also attests to his carelessness, thereby demonstrating the romantic recklessness which would make Propertius' warning to him in 1.20 entirely necessary, provided of course that he is the same Gallus. These four poems also interact with each other in many striking ways, foremost being the contrast of Gallus' secure relationship with an unnamed female beloved in 1.10 with his threatened relationship with a named male beloved in 1.20, and Propertius playing *praeceptor amoris* in both cases.³²¹

While the first four Gallus poems seem to be comfortably unified, the last is unfortunately somewhat problematic. The temptation to disassociate completely 1.21 from the other Gallus poems on the basis of its tragic and autobiographic quality is perhaps misguided, largely due to its immediate following of another Gallus poem in 1.20.³²² While Gallus is certainly a common cognomen, it nevertheless seems bizarre for two consecutive poems to feature two separate addressees sharing the same name. It also seems unlikely for the Gallus of 1.21 to be a fictional poetic construct,³²³ since a reader's natural instinct is to find some connection between the other instances of Gallus already encountered.³²⁴ There therefore must be some connection between all five Gallus poems,

320 Cynthia is never named in 1.13, but Propertius is deeply jealous of Gallus (13-24) and has a tremendously high opinion of his sweetheart (29-36). It is unlikely that the girl of 1.13 could be anyone other than Cynthia, whom Gallus asks about in 1.5. Richardson, 180-1.

321 Another striking contrast: Gallus as both unsuccessful and successful rival of Propertius in 1.5 and 1.13, respectively. For others, see Richardson, 158-9, 173, 180-1, and 201-2.

322 Nevertheless, this disassociation is commonly made. For arguments and evidence in support of this, see Keith (2008), 7-8.

323 This is supposed by Richardson, 207. However it seems highly unlikely that any poet would fabricate an autobiographical statement, especially one informed by recent civil war. But if he did, why not use another name and forgo any confusion?

324 Hutchinson, 198-9.

perhaps through members of Propertius' family.³²⁵ This would allow for the appearance of Gallus in reference to separate people in at least two distinct scenarios.

Finally, a brief note on the position of 1.20 within the *Monobiblos*. Propertius' Hylas myth stands as the final long composition in his first book of elegies, located before the concluding pair of brief autobiographical *sphragides* (1.20.21-22) but after a trio of poems contemplating separation from Cynthia (1.20.17-19).³²⁶ This is a peculiar place for 1.20, given both its existence outside the deliberately balanced order of the preceding 19 elegies and its sustained mythological subject matter.³²⁷ As a result, 1.20 exists as a delightful departure.³²⁸ Its sustained Hellenistic tonality and mythological *exemplum* are unprecedented anywhere else in the *Monobiblos*, while its wit and humour at Gallus' expense establish a marked contrast to Propertius' brooding in the preceding three poems.³²⁹ Alternatively, the sudden appearance of such a distinct and unprecedented poem has led some scholars to regard 1.20 as a successful early experiment which validated the talents of a hotshot young Propertius – hence its incongruous inclusion in an otherwise unified book.³³⁰ Yet for all its surprises and allusions, 1.20 is nevertheless a cohesive part of Propertius' first book of poetry. Its numerous intersections with the other poems of the *Monobiblos*, whether due to its narrative unity with the Gallus poems or as a

325 “I suspect that the poet [Propertius] has taken an obscure relation, unknown to the public, and has developed him as a foil without strict regard to veracity.” Hutchinson, 200.

326 Ross, 75, refers to the grouping of 1.20-22 as “a cadenza before the final chords.”

327 Other poems in the *Monobiblos* make use of mythological *exempla*, too, but they are usually confined to no more than a couplet or two. 1.3.1-6 provides an excellent example of this.

328 Hubbard, 37.

329 However note the thematic overlap between the wilderness of 1.18.27-28 and 1.20.13-14.

330 Bramble, 83, and Newman, 352. Note, however, that this judgement is largely based on stylistic and stylometric analysis. If Propertius is consciously emulating an older style or poet in 1.20, then any perceived archaic sensibility is likely deliberate, and its date of composition remains uncertain. Ross, 81, n. 1.

result of its general thematic compatibility, all serve to affirm its integrity. However it is when taken on its own that Propertius' account of the rape of Hylas seems to be most impressive. If Virgil's *cui non dictus Hylas puer?* and a subsequent falling out of fashion indicate contemporary frustration with the annoying ubiquity of this particular *exemplum*, then Propertius 1.20 may not only have been a definitive rendition, but also the last word on the matter.

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