

PROPERTIUS 2.29

WITH EXEGETICAL NOTES

FOR THE SECOND-YEAR LATIN STUDENT

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TUSCALOOSAN DISPUTATIONS EINZELSCHRIFTEN, 2

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Extrémá, mea lux, cum pótus nocte vagárer,
 nec mé servórum dúceret ulla manus,
 obvia nescio quot puerí mihi turba minúta
 vénerat (hós vetuit mé numeráre timor);
 quórum alií faculás, alií retinére sagittás, 5
 pars etiam vísa est vincla paráre mihi.
 sed núde fuerant. quórum lascívior únus
 ‘arripite hunc’, inquit, ‘iam bene nóstis eum.
 hic erat, hunc mulier nóbís íráta locávit.’
 dixit, et in colló iam mihi nóduS erat. 10
 híc alter iubet in medium própellere, at alter
 ‘intereat, quí nós nón putat esse deós!
 haec té nón meritum tótás exspectat in hórás:
 at tú nescio quás quaeris, inepte, forés.
 quae cum Sídoniae nocturna ligámina mitrae 15
 solverit atque oculós móverit illa gravis,
 afflábunt tibi nón Arabum de grámine odórés,
 sed quós ipse suís fécit Amor manibus.
 parcite iam, fratrés, iam certós spondet amórés;
 et iam ad mandátam vénimus ecce domum.’ 20
 atque ita mí iniectó dixérunt rursus amictú:
 ‘í nunc et noctés disce manére domí.’
 máne erat, et voluí, sí sóla quiésceret illa,
 víseré: at in lectó Cynthia sóla fuit.
 obstipuí: nón illa mihí formósior umquam 25
 vísa, neque ostríná cum fuit in tunicá,
 íbat et hinc castae narrátum somnia Vestae,
 neu sibi néve mihí quá nocitúra forent.
 tális vísa mihí somnó dímissa recentí.
 heu quantum per sé candida forma valet! 30
 ‘quid tú mátútínus’, ait, ‘speculátor amícae?
 mé similem vestrís móribus esse putás?
 nón ego tam facilis: sat erit mihi cógnitus únus,
 vel tu vel sí quis vérior esse potest.
 appárent nón ulla toró vestígia pressó, 35
 signa volútantís nec iacuisse duós.
 aspice ut in tótó nullus mihi corpore surgat
 spíritus admissó nótus adulterió.’
 dixit, et oppositá própelléns sávia dextrá
 prósilít in laxá nixa pedem soleá. 40
 síc ego tam sanctí custós délúdor amóris:
 ex illó félix nox mihi nulla fuit.

Notes

- 1 **extrémá . . . nocte:** “very late at night, just before dawn”.
- 2 **manus:** “hand” or “group, band”? Probably both (a silly pun).
- 3 **nescio quot:** equivalent to an adjective: “I don’t know how many” = “lots”.
- 4 **turba minúta:** in apposition to *puerí*, despite the difference in number.
- 5 **retinére:** “to hold back” or just “to hold”.
- 6 **vísa est:** “was seen” or “seemed”? Difficult to say.
- 7 **fuérant:** Propertius sometimes uses the pluperfect for the imperfect.
- 8 **nóstis:** = *nóvistis*.
- 12 **interest:** another silly pun: *interíre* (*inter+íre*) means both “to go in the middle” and “to die”.
- 13 **nón meritum:** strengthened for *immeritum*.
- 14 **tótás . . . in hórás:** “for hours and hours”, “to all hours of the night”.
- 15 **exspectat:** not “expect”, but “wait for”!
- 16 **nescio quás . . . forés:** as in line 3, “I don’t know what doors” is contemptuous for “some door or other”. *forés* is from *foris, foris, F*, “door, gate”. Some scholars think the reading should be *foris*, an adverb meaning “out of doors, outside”. In that case, the line would mean “you are seeking I don’t know whom [fem.pl.] outdoors [= away from home]”.
- 17 **solverit:** “loosen”, here “untie”. **móverit:** here perhaps “stir”, “rouse”.
- 18 **Arabum dé grámine:** *grámen* = “herb”: most Roman perfumes came from Arabia.
- 19 **mandátam . . . domum:** highly compressed for “the house to which we were ordered to bring him”.
- 20 **ita:** “as follows”. **mí:** shortened form of *mihí*.
- 21 **í nunc:** this could be a promise, but the same phrase is very often used in threats: “go ahead (make my day)”.
- 22 **noctés:** what kind of accusative? **domí:** a nice example of the locative.
- 23 **voluí:** here = “I decided”.
- 24 **vísere . . . sí:** not “see if”, that is, “see whether”, but “visit, if . . . ”
- 25 **nón . . . umquam:** stronger than *numquam* (like “not ever” compared to “never”).
- 26 **neque:** if *et* can mean “even”, then *neque* (= *et nóñ*) can mean “not even”.
- 27 **hinc:** presumably “from this same room”.
- 28 **castae . . . Vestae:** women would go to the Temple of Vesta if they had bad dreams.
- 29 **narrátum:** a nice example of the accusative supine, expressing purpose.
- 30 **neu . . . néve:** variation for metrical or stylistic effect.
- 31 **nocitúra forent:** a periphrastic construction (*forent* is an alternative form of *essent*), “which would be likely to cause harm”.
- 32 **quantum:** what kind of accusative?
- 33 **comparatio compendiosa:** “do you think I am like your habits?”, meaning “do you think my habits are like yours?”.
- 34 **facilis:** as in English, “easy”, when used of a woman’s sexual morals, is very rude.
- 35 **sí quis:** *quis* means *aliquis* after *sí*!
- 36 **vérior:** again, as in English, “true” can mean “faithful to one’s beloved”.
- 37 **nón ulla:** again strengthened for *nulla*.
- 38 The word order is confusing: take as *nec signa duós iacuisse volutantís*, “nor signs that two have lain here rolling around”.
- 39 **aspice ut:** more or less = “look *how*”.
- 40 **spíritus:** here not “breath”, but a genteel word for “odor”.
- 41 **nótus:** probably “as we (being adults) both know”.
- 42 **pedem:** accusative of respect, “supported (with respect to her foot) by . . . ”.
- 43 **ex illó:** = *ex illo tempore*.
- 44 **féliz:** once more, as in English, “lucky” can mean “successful in love” — “this is my lucky night”.

Vocabulary

admittó, admittere, admísí, admissum, “admit; commit (of a crime)”

adulterium, -í, N, adultery.

affló, affláre, affláví, afflátus (= *ad+fláre*), “blow upon”.

appareó, apparére, apparuí, “appear, be visible”.

Arabs, Arabis, MF, “Arab” (noun or adjective).

arripió, arripere, arripuí, arreptum (= *ad+rapió*), “snatch to oneself; seize hastily, violently, lay hold of”.

aspició, aspiciere, aspexí, aspectum, “catch sight of; look at; inspect, observe”.

candidus, -a, -um, “shining; white; honest; beautiful”.

castus, -a, -um, “chaste”.

dextra, -ae, F, “right hand” (shortened from *dextera*).

délúdó, délúdere, délúsí, délúsum, “deceive, delude”.

dímittó, dímittere, dímisí, dímissum, “let go, release”.

ecce, exclamation, “look!, behold!”.

facula, -ae, F, diminutive of *fax, facis, F*, “torch”.

forma, -ae, F, “shape, form; beauty”.

ineptus, -a, -um (*in+aptus*), “useless; tactless, tactless; foolish, absurd”.

lascívus, -a, -um, “playful, frisky; impudent, lewd”.

laxus, -a, -um, “loose”.

lectus, lectí, M, “couch, bed” (the Romans slept and ate on couches).

ligámen, -inis, N, “band, tie”.

locó, locáre, locáví, locátum, “place; hire, contract for”.

máne, N (indeclinable), “morning”.

mátútínus, -a, -um, “pertaining to early morning”.

meritus, -a, -um, “deserving”.

mitra, -ae, F, “nightcap”.

nítor, nítí, níxus sum, “support oneself, lean, rest”.

noceó, nocére, nocuí, nocitúrus (+ dative), “harm”.

nocturnus, -a, -um, “nocturnal, pertaining to night”.

nodus, nodí, M, “knot, noose”.

numeró, numeráre, numeráví, numerátum, “count, number”.

obstupéscó, obstupéscere, obstupuí (also *obstíp-* in all forms), “be stunned, stupefied”.

obvius, obvia, obvium, “in the way, meeting, blocking the way”.

oppónó, oppónere, opposuí, oppositum (*ob+pónere*), “interpose”+other meanings.

ostrínus, -a, -um, “purple”.

parcó, parcere, pepercí, parsum (+ dative), “spare”.

pótus, -a, -um, “drunk, intoxicated”.

premó, premere, pressí, pressum, “squeeze, press”.

própelló, própellere, própulí, própulsum, (*pró+pellere*) “shove forward”

prósilió, prósilíre, prósiluí (*pró+salíre*) “leap forward, leap up”.

quiéscó, quiéscere, quiéví, quiétum, “rest”.

sagitta, sagittae, F., “arrow”.

sat = satis.

Sídonius, -a, -um, “Sidonian”. Sidon is in Phoenicia, near Tyre, and known for its luxuries.

solea, -ae, F., “slipper”.

somnium, somnií, N., “dream” (*somnus, somní*, M. is “sleep”.)

speculátor, -óris, M., “spy; (military) scout, reconnaissance soldier”.

spondeó, spondére, spopondí, spónsum, “promise solemnly, pledge”.

súrgó, súrgere, surréxí, surréctum, “rise, arise, get up”.

sávium, sávíí, N., “kiss”, shortened from *suávium*, that is, “a sweet thing”.

torus, torí, M., “mattress; bed, couch”.

tunica, -ae, F., “tunic” (ordinary sleeved garment for both sexes).

vagor, vagárí, vagátus sum, “to wander”.

valeó, valére, valuí, “be strong, be strong enough (to)”.

vestígium, -íí, N., “trace, track, footprint”, also “the depression made in a bed by someone lying in it”.

vetó, vetáre, vetuí, vetitum, “forbid” (as in English “veto”).

vinclum, vinclí, N, shortened form of *vinculum, vinculí*, “bond, fetter”.

volútó, volútáre, volútáví, volútátum (frequentative of *volvère*), “turn over and over, toss and turn”.

vísó, víseré (frequentative of *vidére*), “look at; go to see, visit”.