

PROPERTIUS

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649118144

Propertius by J. S. Phillimore

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

J. S. PHILLIMORE

PROPERTIUS

PROPERTIUS

TRANSLATED BY

J. S. PHILLIMORE, M.A.

PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY
OF GLASGOW

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA
LIBRARY

OXFORD

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

1906

HENRY FROWDE, M.A.
PUBLISHER TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
LONDON, EDINBURGH
NEW YORK AND TORONTO

PA
6645
E5P5
254.1

PREFACE

I. THIS translation follows the Clarendon Press text of 1902 except where a footnote warns the reader of a divergence therefrom. The divergences are of various kinds. In a few passages I have returned to a traditional reading which that text had rejected; in a few others I have adopted a more palaeographically exact reconstitution of the reading where tradition offers a *vax nibili* which admits more than one possible correction: e.g. at III. xiii. 32, for the vulg. *versicoloris*, the charming *viricoloris* (*N. viricoloris*) which Prof. Robinson Ellis kindly communicated to me.¹ Sometimes the change is only a reformed punctuation; in one case the probabilities now seem to me to justify the *prima-facie* immensely improbable hypothesis of transposition; and in about a dozen cases I am now willing to accept the testimony of inferior manuscript witnesses against N. But much the largest category of innovation consists of conjectures admitted to the text. And here, if consistency be a thing worthy of vindication, I have to offer a few words of defence. I was guided in 1902 by a rigorous fidelity to the principles laid down for the Oxford Series of Classical Texts. The series was then comparatively new, and the principles have suffered a natural development in course of

¹ The word *lascivia* in IV. iii. 11 was suggested to me by Dr. Rutherford.

MS 10192

Class. Lang.

FEB 1 1938

W. & R.

their application to an increasingly wide field of material. However, the doctrine of maintaining the best manuscript reading, unless where it is to be held downright impossible or to admit of pretty certain conjectural correction, is well enough in the conditions of a text with *apparatus criticus*; the reader is not bound by the editor's choice, and has the means at hand to revise on appeal and substitute a definite sentence for *Non liquet*: but *ἐπέχω* is a conclusion ruled out by practical necessity for the translator, whose private hesitations may be still further dissolved by the thought that his reader will be easily content to take the constitution of the Latin text for granted if he is not provoked by stumbling-blocks in the English. Anyhow, the reader is entitled to require of the translator that he shall first settle what words he is going to translate in a given passage; and whereas the editor might, in a text of prescribed conservative structure, offer a *lectio dignissima* still competing with a pair of *lectiones dignae*, the translator must plump for the one which has even an infinitesimal majority of the points of probability. I have therefore promoted a good many readings from *apparatus criticus* to text. And furthermore I have ventured to give a first airing here to a few new conjectures of my own, though this is no place to vindicate their legitimacy. I will frankly plead that to alter one's mind on no point in four years, in the matter of so difficult and much disputed a text as Propertius might be set down to obstinacy; and, in particular,

the exercise of writing a complete version of my author, compiling a complete index to his Latinity, and amassing many materials for a commentary, has given me a far more disciplined and secure insight into Propertius.

II. As a translation it has the initial misfortune of being designed for two markets. It is intended for any such person as having no Latin may yet be curious to explore Propertius; but it is also intended to help those who wish to study this difficult and peculiar poet in the original. For the service of the student it takes its place as one of the pieces in a scheme of exposition which also comprises text, *index Latinitatis*, and commentary. But the first condition, if it is to satisfy the scholar's purposes, is that the key should fit the lock. I have therefore studied before all things to be faithful in my version: *inque meis libris nil prius esse fide*, as the Soothsayer says in the Prologue to Book IV. But the formula of fidelity may be applied to very different methods. 'Give me word for word,' says one man; and another maintains that it is no true translation which does not give a poem for a poem. Now *ex hypothesi* a prose version puts the latter requisition out of court. And, indeed, it might here be made a brief question whether the problem of turning verse into prose is not one which might conveniently be treated apart from translations of verse into verse or prose into prose.

III. Let us premise that there are two epochs when a language is most apt for these purposes. In the elasticity of youth, translation is its natural diet and exer-

cise: Latin, Italian and English all alike employed and deployed their adolescent powers by taking in foreign material for assimilation. At such dates the receiving idiom is able and ready to expand and adapt itself in sympathy with what it seeks to naturalize. Next when the receiving idiom is grown classically precise and firm-set, foreign literature immigrating by the way of translation is so violently drilled into conformity that (in a typical case) it soon comes to be allowed that Pope's *Iliad* may be a great English poem but it is not Homer. And lastly, I think that Mr. Bevan, in the preface to his excellent *Prometheus Bound*, was right when he argued that the present stage of the language is peculiarly favourable to translators. The incipient senile ataxy of English restores us something of the receptiveness which in the Elizabethans was an effect of juvenal elasticity.

But is it not true to say that translation from verse into prose is a specifically different problem? Historically, at least, it will be admitted that we have in English no such translation which can take rank among *Testi di Lingua*. Transpositions, not merely from language to language but from the key of verse into the key of prose, have not been done in English at any period when (either by virtue of the then age of the language or thanks to the general contemporaneous excellence of writing) they could become classical exemplars of the kind. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that they are a Victorian product; and, to put a still

finer point on it, that the prevailing vogue has been a reflected Tennysonianism in phrasing, and a truckling to the momentary Saxonizing reaction in vocabulary.

It is vain then to seek for principles of craftsmanship in second-rate models: there is no authority to give an answer. Mr. A. Lang ingeniously observes that poetical words in English should be used to translate poetry. Yes: but tautology, charming form of argument as it is, should be complete. If he had said that poetry should be translated into poetry, his statement would have been impregnable. But the day is past when English could be approved for poetical merely in virtue of certain quaint archaic vocables spotted about in sentences of quite modern rhythm and construction. Samuel Butler's *Odyssey*, horrifying as it was by the want of conventional quaintness and unreality, has done more to help us towards an eventual solution.

We are placed in a liberty of experiment which is bewildering as well as facilitating: no rule, no worthy model, nothing but a vague feeling that some day somewhere this desired and undiscovered province of speech must yield up its secrets to exploration. The present state of the language invites the pioneer; taste seems to require a certain character in prose translation from verse; yet criticism will not be content to allow that an anachronistic patchwork gives the missing note. The question remains: How shall prose render poetry and yet remain prose?