



**IMAGERY OF COLOUR AND SHINING
IN CATULLUS, PROPERTIUS AND HORACE**

Jacqueline Ruth Clarke

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in the Discipline of Classics,

Centre for European Studies and General Linguistics

University of Adelaide

July 1998

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Abstract

This thesis investigates how Roman poets make use of imagery and vocabulary of colour and shining to enhance the effectiveness of their poetry and how these can add to the atmosphere of a poem, influence the emotional responses of the reader and convey the attitude of the poet.

The study focuses on the work of three Roman poets Catullus, Propertius and Horace (in his *Carmina*). These poets have been selected because they have many themes in common and exhibit skilful and imaginative use of colour imagery and vocabulary. The first part of the thesis consists of a 'concordance' of colour terms. It lists, defines and examines each instance of colour term usage in the work of these poets, including a selected group of words for shining. Parallels are drawn with the colour imagery of the poets' predecessors, contemporaries and successors (in both Greek and Latin verse) to understand the significance of the various colour words for the Roman reader and to demonstrate how each poet adapts and modifies the colour imagery of predecessors and contemporaries. The second half of the thesis comprises in-depth examinations of the colour imagery of exemplary poems selected from each of the three poets. These examinations attempt to illustrate how Roman poets could employ colour imagery and vocabulary, how the colours interact with each other, and how they help to create the poem's meanings.

From these studies conclusions can be drawn about, 1) the many different ways in which Catullus, Propertius and Horace make use of words for colour and shining in their poetry, 2) the range of use and associations of individual colour terms and how they can lend subtle distinctions of meaning to a line or image, 3) the concerns and objectives of the poets as demonstrated by their use of colour imagery.

Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis being made available for photocopying and loan.

SIGNED

DATE: 22.2.99

Acknowledgments

This thesis was supervised in its early stages by Professor Robert Ussher of the University of Adelaide (since retired) and subsequently by Dr. Anne Geddes of the University of Adelaide and Dr. Peter Toohey of The University of New England. To them all I owe many thanks for their knowledge, advice and helpfulness, especially to Dr. Peter Toohey who agreed to supervise me although I was not a postgraduate at his university.

I received valuable advice regarding the structure and approach of my thesis from corresponding with Professor Kenneth Quinn (formerly Professor of Classics of University College Toronto). Previous drafts of the chapters on Propertius benefited greatly from detailed criticism by Professor Robert Baker of The University of New England. Dr Margaret O'Hea and Dr. Jane Olsson, both of the University of Adelaide, gave me much help in the area of Roman wall paintings and mosaics. Victoria Jennings, a postgraduate student of Newnham College Cambridge, tirelessly supplied me with many photocopies of articles and chapters of books which were not available in Australia and, while on a visit to Italy, confirmed the colour of the bride's shoes and veil in the Aldobrandini Wedding Fresco.

A series of Postgraduate Release Time Scholarships from the University of Adelaide for 1992, 1994 and 1995 helped to lift some of the burden of lecturing from my shoulders so that I could pursue my research.

Finally, I owe a debt of gratitude to Catherine Bartsch, Alison Harvey, Anna Ivey and Margaret King who assisted me with the Italian and German material and my father, Henry Clarke, who proofread the final draft of my thesis.

Introduction



In the first part of Book Twelve of the *Aeneid*, in which Turnus debates the wisdom of entering into single combat with Aeneas, there are a series of images of red and white. The first of these colour images are somewhat muted, suggested merely by references to blood¹ and to bones² but a simile follows in which the complexion of the blushing Lavinia is described by a sequence of images in which the colours red and white predominate:

accepit vocem lacrimis Lavinia matris
florantis perfusa genas, cui plurimus ignem
subiecit rubor et calefacta per ora cucurrit.
Indum sanguineo veluti violaverit ostro
si quis ebur, aut mixta rubent ubi lilia multa
alba rosa, talis virgo dabat ore colores. (vv. 64-69)

This simile leads on to the resolution of the episode, the point at which Turnus has decided to go to combat with Aeneas. He fits himself out with equipment which is described by words suggestive of red and white:

Haec ubi dicta dedit rapidusque in tecta recessit,
poscit equos gaudetque tuens ante ora frementis,
Pilumno quos ipsa decus dedit Orithyia,
qui candore nives anteirent, cursibus auras.
circumstant properi aurigae manibusque lacessunt
pectora plausa cavis et colla comantia pectunt.
ipse dehinc auro squalentem alboque orichalco
circumdat loricam umeris, simul aptat habendo
ensemque clipeumque et rubrae cornua cristae,
ensem quem Dauno ignipotens deus ipse parenti
fecerat et Stygia candentem tinxerat unda. (vv. 81-91)

¹ vv. 8, 29, 36, 51, 67

² '*sanguine* adhuc campique ingentes ossibus *albent.*' v. 36. In general, in quotes given in footnotes, 'explicit' colour terms are put in bold, while 'implicit' terms are underlined; see further below.

Had Virgil deliberately constructed this series of colour images and, if so, what purpose had he in mind? What effect would these repeated colour elements have had upon the Roman reader?¹ When I first encountered this cluster of colours as an undergraduate and sought opinions regarding Virgil's use of colour among the critics, I was disappointed to find that most of them had a tendency to gloss over or ignore allusions to colour. This is as true for most commentaries on Roman poetry as it is for those on Virgil. Although there are many interesting and dramatic instances of colour usage amongst the Roman poets, they did not seem to be considered an area worthy of detailed examination. Indeed the study of colour in literature has as a whole been considered, as Skard puts it, 'the hunting ground of dilettantes'.² Until fairly recently, this has also been the case with the examination of colour in Roman poetry.

Purpose of Study

In the 1970s a study was done by Lilja on the use of odour as a stylistic device for aesthetic purposes in Roman and Greek poetry. Lilja argued that not enough attention had been paid to how ancient poets made use of smells.³ She showed that both good and bad smells were employed by poets in a variety of ways, for instance to contribute to the erotic overtones of a poem, to mark the appearance of a deity, or for satirical purposes.⁴ Colour is an even more powerful device in the hands of a poet than smell. Colours are, of course, highly visual words and when they are employed of objects in a poem they assist the reader in creating a 'picture' or image in the mind's eye. This is especially the case in Roman poetry where the highly inflected language gives the poet more flexibility to create word 'pictures' by their arrangement of words in a line. Colours are also strongly allusive, possibly because they have evolved from contextualized terms which carry a lot of non-

¹ After examining the ways in which Roman poets can make use of the red/white colour combination in my thesis, I have come to the conclusion that Virgil employs this series of colour images to add to the ominous build up of the scene. He cleverly 'twists' the red / white colour combination, linking it with both death and life. Lavinia's blush is associated with love and life but it also has a sinister undertone because of the references to blood and bones which have gone before (Putnam 1993 p. 72f. also makes this point); this reminds the reader that Turnus' excessive passion for Lavinia is a major cause of the ensuing destruction. Virgil then transfers the colour combination from Lavinia to Turnus, heightening the doomed atmosphere surrounding his preparations for combat with Aeneas.

² (1946) p. 163

³ (1972) p. 7

⁴ (1972) p. 225ff. It is my opinion that Lilja could go even further in her exploration of the variety of ways in which ancient poets made use of smells. She tends to be factual rather than interpretive and largely confines herself to listing the types of smells which poets employed.

chromatic information.¹ As Sivik remarks, 'colors can also have connotations like cold, joyful, depressing, sick, healthy, dirty, feminine, masculine etc.'² It is because of the strong emotional connotations of colour words that they can be employed by poets to influence the emotional responses of their audience.

Colours in a poem can easily slip past a reader without him or her being consciously aware of them or the effect that they are having upon their emotions. Thus a study of the way in which a writer makes use of colour in a poem helps to sharpen our reading of it. Such a study does not set out to solve the controversies about the poem although it may lend weight to the arguments of certain critics. Instead it seeks to highlight aspects of a poem which we may have overlooked and add another dimension to the reading, making the reader more aware of the strategies which poets employ to get their message or messages across. Consequently, examining the way in which poets make use of colour will give us further insight into their techniques, concerns and objectives. As an added bonus, determining the individual 'colour strategies' of various poets may well give us further insight into the mind and character of each poet.³

This type of study is based on an informed reading rather than an initial reading, that is one which derived from several close encounters with a text. Each colour term is examined within the context of the other colour elements within the poem and the poet's use of the colour word in other poems. It is my reasonable assumption that many of the readers of Catullus, Horace and Propertius would have been careful readers, able to appreciate these poets' cleverness and prepared to read back over a poem to pick up its hidden meanings. In such a study attention must also be paid to the use of colour by the poets' predecessors and contemporaries. This is not only because Roman poets are highly allusive, borrowing and adapting much from their Greek and Roman counterparts, but also because we, as modern

¹ 'One possible hypothesis from a cognitive and linguistic evolutionary perspective is...the emergence of abstract conceptualization and naming of color out of a stage in which chromatic information is regarded as "object color" - that is, as an intrinsic property of objects, often not separate from other visual and non-visual properties.' Hardin and Maffi (1997) p. 352.

² (1997) p. 187

³ 'When we have ascertained a writer's colour-formula and his colours of predilection, we can tell at a glance simply and reliably, something about his view of the world which pages of description could only tell us with uncertainty.' (Ellis 1931 p. 29); 'The color-sense of every great Artist is an important element of his genius, a strongly marked characteristic of his artistic manner and range of perception...As it is in painting, so it is in poetry.' (Price 1883 p. 9-10)

day readers, need to acquire some understanding of the 'reverberations' of each colour term in the mind of the Roman reader. We must always keep in mind that the Roman response to certain colours and colour terms may have been different from our own.¹

While Roman colour terms are by no means as fraught as Greek ones², it is obvious, even at a glance, that the colour world of the Romans was different from our modern day one.³ Some colours, such as purple, had more significance for the Romans because of its role in religious and state ceremonies⁴ while certain colour terms, such as those for brown, are almost entirely lacking from the Roman vocabulary.⁵ The Romans would not have possessed anything approaching our sophisticated range of colours which are produced by aniline dyes and their range of natural colours (such as the colours of roses) would have been more limited. Roman wall painting, with its emphasis on strong background colours like red and black, can seem garish and overwhelming to modern day taste with its preference for light, neutral colours on its walls. Furthermore, as artificial lighting was rudimentary, interiors, unless sunlit, would have been dimmer and thus the play of light and shade would have been something of which the Romans were more aware. Consequently it is necessary to give some attention to the 'history' of the colour word in earlier poets and the connotations it carries with it. Only then can we gain a firm grasp of the range of use and association of Roman colour words and appreciate the way that the Roman poets meant their audience to respond to the colours in their poems.

Previous Scholarship on Ancient Colour Usage

There have been a few Classical scholars who have given attention to the use of colour in ancient literature. They are usually more concerned about defining the chromatic range of the terms than exploring their stylistic deployment. Both Kober and Irwin, for instance, have produced detailed studies in the problematic field of colour terms in Greek poetry.

¹ 'It is often said that color preferences and other associations with colors "are cultural or even completely individual"...At the same time, however, people assume that others share their opinions about color. The truth is that the degree of agreement lies somewhere in between these two extremes, and that it varies. On closer inspection the question of generality of color connotations could be a research area of its own.' (Sivik 1997 p. 186)

² Irwin (1974) p. 16

³ I am indebted to Professor Kenneth Quinn for suggesting to me in a letter many of these differences between Roman and modern-day colour worlds

⁴ Armstrong (1917) pp. 21-31, Reinhold (1970)

⁵ André (1949) pp. 123ff.

Kober (1932) who surveyed all the poets (excluding the epigrammatists) from Homer through those of the Alexandrian Age largely confined herself to listing the range of use and applications of each term in an attempt to define their hue. Her study provides a useful review of the sorts of objects to which each colour term was applied, but she did not endeavour to explore the reasons why poets made use of colours nor the variations in colour usage between different poets. Irwin's study (1974) was much more thorough although she had to limit herself to discussing only a handful of Greek colour terms in depth.¹ Irwin examined the non-chromatic associations of each term as well as looking at the reasons behind poets' use of particular terms. In the field of Roman poetry, André (1949) undertook a comprehensive survey of Roman colour terms, dividing them into different colour groups or families. André also gave some attention to colour 'symbolism' and to examining how the personality of the writer is revealed by their use of colour.² However because André's field of study was so wide (containing all the major prose and poetry authors), he could only touch briefly on these aspects, confining himself to a few remarks about each author.

After André, few major studies were done on stylistic use of colour in Roman poetry although certain scholars paid some attention to it in their books and commentaries³ or included examinations of the role of colour in their discussions of colourful poems like Catullus' c. 64.⁴ It remained however for Edgeworth (1992) to put the issue on the agenda with the publication of his comprehensive study of the role of colour in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Edgeworth undertook a systematic examination of every colour term in the work and it is this 'concordance of colour terms' which underpins his theories about Virgil's use of colours both to link episodes in the work⁵ and to vary the frequency of colour terms to

¹ Irwin examined *χλωρός*, *κίανθος*, dark and light contrasts and a few minor colour terms in the appendices.

² pp. 253-263, pp. 382-391

³ For scholars' remarks on Roman poets' use of colour see, for instance, Quinn (1973) p. 116, Nisbet and Hubbard (1978) p. 89, Commager (1962) p. 303

⁴ Curran (1969), Harmon (1973), O'Connell (1977)

⁵ One of the best instances of this is the image of the purple flower which Edgeworth (pp. 26-9) argues is employed as a symbol of death, present or impending, of important characters in the *Aeneid*. Dido (4.486), Anchises (5.79), Marcellus (6.884), Euryalus (9.435) and Pallas (11.69) are all associated with flowers of purple hue. The final character linked with a purple flower is Aeneas himself; in Book 12.411-22 Venus brings him a purple flower which cures him of his wound. Here Edgeworth argues that Virgil is cleverly reversing the imagery; with the appearance of a

influence the mood of his readers.¹ Edgeworth also tried to bring more precision to the study of colour usage by defining the ways in which a poet could employ colour.² He determined that there were six main usages of colour words:

- 1) *formulaic*, i.e. when the colour word forms part of a repeated phrase
- 2) *functional*, i.e. when it expresses an idea essential to the narrative
- 3) *allusive*, i.e. when it suggests a usage of colour in an earlier author
- 4) *decorative*, i.e. when it merely adds an attractive detail to the work
- 5) *cumulative*, i.e. when several colours are clustered at one of the climaxes of the poem
- 6) *associative*, i.e. to link episodes within the poem.

In this and other ways, Edgeworth's work broke new ground and was received well by reviewers.³ Edgeworth, however, viewed Virgil as unique in his mastery of stylistic deployment of colour. In his somewhat rapid survey⁴ of the use of colour in Virgil's predecessors, contemporaries and successors, he argued that none of them employed colour with as much complexity or control as Virgil.⁵ It was a belief that the colour strategies of skilful poets such as Catullus and Horace required a lengthier and more detailed examination than Edgeworth was able to give them, which led to the focus of this study.

purple flower, the reader half expects Aeneas' death but it turns out that this is the means of his recovery.

¹ Edgeworth demonstrates that Virgil makes use of colour in scenes of hope and happiness, while the absence of colour in gloomy passages adds to their mood (pp. 21ff.). For instance, Virgil does not, in general, employ bright colours in his description of the underworld in Book 6, utilising them only when Aeneas comes to the Elysian fields and the end of his journey (vv. 637-643). Conversely, there is a lot of colour in Virgil's description of the funeral games in Book 5, but when Aeneas' fortunes take a turn for the worse (at v. 604) all colour (apart from black) departs from the narrative.

² (1992) p. 2

³ Putnam says of it 'Edgeworth's volume has much to offer the Virgilian scholar, as a research tool which takes a specialized aspect of the *Aeneid* and brings it learnedly, thoughtfully alive.' (1993 p. 73). Flett comments that Edgeworth's study 'makes Vergil's achievement both more understood and more accessible' (1994 p. 116). Harrison says that his work 'deserves praise for its methodical highlighting of an underestimated area of Vergilian poetics' but adds 'it is not the final word on its subject.' (1994 p. 278).

⁴ Edgeworth examines the colour usage of Homer, Hesiod, Apollonius Rhodius, Lucretius, Catullus, Horace and Ovid in the space of fifteen pages. Harrison comments that Edgeworth's survey 'is perhaps too short for real comparative assessment on the reader's part' (1994 p. 277).

⁵ (1992) pp. 1-17 and p. 60f.

Focus and Outline of Study

In this study I have chosen to focus on the colour imagery of the lyric / elegiac poets Catullus, Propertius and Horace (in his *Carmina*), examining the extent to which these poets share a colour 'vocabulary'. It seemed to me that it would be surprising if Catullus, who is an innovator in so many ways in Roman poetry, did not also make use of colour images in original and imaginative ways, not merely for decorative purposes as Edgeworth asserted.¹ Catullus' successor, Propertius, who has many themes in common with him was an obvious choice for comparison. My feeling was that it would be instructive to compare the way in which these two poets make use of colours in similar situations, especially since Propertius seems to have been heavily influenced by visual arts. As Horace and Propertius were contemporaries and rivals, Propertius' colour imagery could, in its turn, be compared with Horace's. Furthermore, since Horace, in his *Carmina*, is the most 'lyric' of the three poets, I decided it would be interesting to see to what extent Horace's colour imagery has been influenced by Greek lyric poets such as Alcaeus, Bacchylides and Pindar.

The structure of this study is, to some extent, based on Edgeworth's methodology. It makes use of a similar 'concordance of colour terms' which lists, defines and examines each instance of colour term usage in the three poets, giving cross references to comparable concordance entries. This systematic evaluation will enable us to discover patterns of colour usage in Catullus, Horace and Propertius and help us to appreciate the differences between Roman and modern-day colour usage as we explore the subtle nuances which the different terms carry. It enables readers to draw their own conclusions about colour usage in the three poets. It also underpins the second half of the thesis which narrows its focus to a detailed examination of these poets' use of colour in selected poems. In this second half there will be an examination of how the colours work 'in practice', interacting with the rest of the poem's imagery to convey its meaning and to influence the emotional responses of the reader. It is in this section that it is demonstrated how a systematic study of colours can enhance understanding and appreciation of a particular poem.

¹ (1992) p. 11

As in Edgeworth's study, there will be a focus on 'colour clusters', that is when two or more colours are placed together in the space of a few lines to complement or contrast with each other. The use of 'thematic colour clusters'¹, colours which are employed to link episodes within a poem or associate one poem with another, will also be explored, especially in the second half of the thesis. In this process attention will be paid not only to the colour terms themselves (the explicit colours) but also to 'implicit' colour words. These are words such as *rosa*, *sanguis*, *lilia* and *nix* which, although not in themselves colour terms, can convey a strong impression of colour to the reader.² Such words are either the source of colour adjectives (as *rosa* is for *roseus*, *sanguis* is for *sanguineus* and *nix* is for *niveus*) or are highlighted chromatically by the poet who employs them as part of a series of contrasting or complementary colour images.³ As well as implicit colours, terms for shining are also included in the examination of the poets' colour imagery. As will become apparent in the concordance, words for shining such as *fulgeo* or *niteo* carry similar emotive connotations to colour terms like *candidus* or *aureus*. Such words for shining are frequently used by the three poets in conjunction with these colour terms or as apparent substitutes for them.

Tables and statistics are employed only on a few occasions.⁴ Although many scholars, including Edgeworth, use them to support their claims about a poet's use of colour, at best they are of limited value⁵ and at worst they can distort the picture. Such tables do not take into account, for example, a poet's use of implicit colour words which would be difficult,

¹ This expression first appears in O'Connell (1977 p. 748)

² A prime example of this is the Propertius line '*molliter et tenera poneret ossa rosa*' (1.17.22) in which a red / white contrast is created by the association of the homophonic words *ossa* and *rosa* and their placement together at the end of the line.

³ See, for instance, Catullus' use of the hyacinth in c.61.89 (discussed in Chapter 2, section 5.2) and Propertius' reference to *Cydonia* at 3.13.27 (discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.3) which form part of a series of allusions to colourful flowers and plants in this poem. Edgeworth pays some attention to implicit colours, including terms like *lac*, *lilium*, *rosa* and *nix* in his concordance. Apart from this however he doesn't really take implicit colours into account when discussing Virgil's use of colour imagery. This is possibly why he misses the red / white contrast at 12.36 which casts such ominous significance on the simile of the blushing Lavinia (see above).

⁴ For instance, there is some use of figures in the conclusion when the poets' preferences for certain terms is discussed.

⁵ It seems that even Groos, who was the major proponent of the statistical method of colour analysis, warned strongly against the belief that figures and tabulations were able to solve all problems. (Skard 1946 p. 172)

if not impossible, to tabulate.¹ The concordance enables the reader to form their own views about the relative frequencies of colour terms and construct their own tables if they desire. I have also decided against giving the colour word's metrical position in the line for there is too much variety in the metres Catullus and Horace employ for any significant conclusions to be drawn about the metrical position of the colour word in the three poets as a whole.

Layout of Thesis

As regards the range of terms covered by the concordance, in general, like Edgeworth, I have included a term if it is listed in André. Some terms, however, have been omitted because they are not chromatically significant or because they are fully covered in the discussions of other concordance entries or there are only a few minor instances of the term.² The nouns for gold (*aurum*) and silver (*argentum*) have been included, for these terms are frequently employed with the same emotional connotations as their corresponding adjectives.³ Words for shining have been selected both on the basis of their frequency of use in the three poets and their chromatic importance.⁴ Implicit colour words do not have their own concordance entries but are discussed when they appear in proximity with the explicit colour terms. The role of implicit colour words is more fully explored in the second half of the thesis with the analysis of the selected poems.

¹ This is because they are more subjective than explicit colour terms, their chromatic value usually depending upon the context in which they are placed.

² For instance, terms for bronze like *aeneus*, the adjective for iron *ferreus* and the adjectives *fuscus* and *flammeus* have been omitted from the concordance because they are not, as a whole, chromatically significant in these poets. (*Flammeus* however is treated as an implicit colour word in Chapter 2 because of its special significance in Catullus c.61.) Terms such as *marmoreus* and *nivalis*, which are listed in André, have been omitted because there are only a few, not very significant, instances of them in these poets.

³ In a similar fashion, the term *atratus* has been included, although it is not listed in André, because it is obviously related to *ater*. I decided, however, to omit the noun *ebur*, even though I have included its corresponding adjective *eburnus*. This is principally because most of the instances of this word occur in proximity with other colour terms and are included in the discussion of these terms: see Cat. 64.44 in the concordance under 1.3.2 ARGENTUM, Prop. 4.7.82 under 1.37.1 PALLEO / PALLESCO, Hor. 2.18.1 under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iii, Hor. 1.31.6 under 1.5.2 AURUM ii. *Livor* has been omitted because it is not chromatically significant in these poets although *liveo* and *lividus*, its corresponding verb and adjective forms, have been included.

⁴ *Fulgeo*, *fulgor*, *adfulgeo*, *eniteo*, *enitesco*, *mico*, *niteo*, *nitidus*, *nitor*, and *radio* have been selected on these criteria. However *refulgeo* has been omitted because the instances of this word in the poets were either not particularly significant (Prop. 3.20.8, Hor. 2.17.23) or were dealt with in other concordance entries (see Cat. 64.275 under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS iv, Hor. 1.12.27 under 1.2.2 ALBUS iii). For similar reasons, words for shining such as *colluceo*, *clarus*, *corusco*, *lucidus*, *radius*, *splendeo* and *splendidus* have not been given separate concordance entries but they are discussed when they appear in proximity with other colour words or when they are employed in the poems examined in the second section of the thesis.

In each concordance entry, the colour term is quoted in its context and then a translation or explanation of it is given. Usually, at least the line in which the colour term appears is supplied, but the surrounding lines are also quoted if other colour elements appear in them. The colour term being discussed is put in bold in the Latin quoted and supplied in brackets after the English translation of it. Any other colour elements (explicit, implicit or words for shining) which appear in the Latin quote are underlined and referred to in the discussion of the colour term. The *Oxford Classical Text* editions are employed for all quotes from the three poets and textual variations mentioned only when they affect interpretation of the colour image.

The noun, verb and adjectival forms of a particular colour term are, in general, classified separately but, for the sake of compactness, any different adjectival forms or verbal forms are classified together (thus instances of *albescō* are classified with *albico* and *atratus* with *ater*). If the verbal form of the colour word is used only by these poets in participle form, then it is classified together with its corresponding adjective (as is the case for *flavens*, which is classified with *flavus*). In general, the entries have been arranged in sequential order with all the entries for Catullus, followed by Propertius and finally Horace. When there are a lot of entries under one term however, then there has been an attempt to define patterns in the poets' colour usage by arranging the entries into categories.¹ These categories are provisional ones, designed to provoke thought. As will become apparent to the reader, most of the colour terms have a whole range of associations and nuances and many of the concordance entries could easily be classified under two or three different headings.

For the second half of the thesis, seven poems have been selected for discussion; two from Catullus, two from Propertius and three (shorter poems) from Horace. These poems have been chosen for their interesting and imaginative colour imagery, each illustrating a different way in which poets can make use of colour in their work. In these chapters the colour imagery is placed within the context of the poem as a whole and the poem's

¹ This is the case for *albus*, *ater* / *atratus*, *auratus* / *aureus*, *aurum*, *caeruleus* / *caerulus*, *candidus*, *flavens* / *flavus*, *fulgeo*, *niger* / *nigrans*, *niteo*, *niveus*, *purpureus* and *viridis*.

background and genre discussed. Each colour image is then examined for its contribution to the poem as a whole. When a quote is supplied from the poem, the colour words are highlighted either by being put in bold (the explicit terms) or underlined (the implicit terms and words for shining). Sometimes parallels with wall paintings or mosaics are drawn; in these cases either a reference will be given to an illustration in a book or to the appendix where certain illustrations have been reproduced.

Inevitably, the layout of this thesis involves a certain amount of repetition. When these three poets make use of colour clusters, which they do frequently, then each colour element is given a separate entry in the concordance. Sometimes the same quote from a primary source will appear in different parts of the thesis to support various arguments. In addition, the second half of the thesis will revisit certain colour images which have already been discussed under their entries in the concordance. It is hoped that the reader will bear with this as it was thought better to duplicate certain elements than to be overly succinct or cryptic.

Throughout the thesis comparisons for the colour usage of Catullus, Propertius and Horace have been drawn from a broad range of poets, both Greek and Latin.¹ In the field of Latin poetry, parallels with contemporaries such as Tibullus and successors like Ovid have been sought and I have also looked for comparable instances in the hexametre tradition of Ennius, Lucretius and Virgil. In Greek poetry I have looked for parallels not only with the colour imagery of the lyric poets Sappho, Alcaeus and Bacchylides but also that of the Hellenistic poets Callimachus and Theocritus and the epic / didactic tradition of Homer, Hesiod and Apollonius Rhodius. I have also, where appropriate, ranged further afield, drawing parallels with colour usage in the *Greek Anthology*, Greek tragedians like Euripides, comedy writers such as Plautus and satirists like Juvenal and Martial.² The reader must take note however, that in demonstrating how Catullus, Propertius and Horace

¹ This has been achieved both by my own survey of the literature and by referring to such sources as Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon*, the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, Kober's and André's works on colour terms and the TLG and PHI disks.

² When primary sources are quoted *Oxford Classical Text* editions have been used where appropriate and when they are available. In some instances I have chosen to use other editions (for example Gow's edition for Theocritus) and have indicated this after the relevant quotations.

inherit their colour imagery and pass it on to their successors I do not mean to imply that there is no originality in this process. As we will see, this does not have to be an unthinking practice: it will be shown how the three poets deliberately borrow colour imagery from their predecessors and contemporaries and adapt it for their own purposes.

Chapter 1

Concordance of Terms for Colour and Shining

1.1 ADFULGEO

Hor 4.5.7: *lucem redde tuae, dux bone, patriae: / instar veris enim vultus ubi tuus / adfulsit populo, gratior it dies / et soles melius nitent.*

Horace asks Augustus to return and bring back the light to his country; for when, like spring, his face shines (*adfulsit*) on the people the day goes better and the sun gleams more brightly. Here the return of Augustus to his native land is compared with the return of spring after a gloomy winter. Augustus is portrayed as a source of light shining like the sun on his people; the very sun draws light from his presence. Note how Horace begins and ends the stanza with words for light¹; in total in this stanza there are four words associated with light and shining. Imagery of light is appropriate for someone descended from a god - compare Virgil's descriptions of Augustus' mythical ancestors Aeneas and Iulus.² Similar imagery is employed of Octavian in the *Culex*³ and by Ovid in the *Tristia*⁴ According to Fraenkel, the stanza also owes something to Hellenistic and pre-Hellenistic eulogies where the appearance of the ruler is compared to the sun outshining the stars.⁵ Porter cites a number of instances in Book Four where Horace employs the motif of fire and light in association with the Augustan regime⁶, one of three ways in which Horace makes use of imagery of fire and light in the this book.

1.2.1 ALBESCO / ALBICO

Cat. 63.87: *ferus ipse sese adhortans rapidum incitat animo, / vadit, fremit, refringit / virgulta pede vago. / at ubi umida albicantis loca litoris adiit, / teneramque vidit Attin prope marmora pelagi, / facit impetum...*

Cybele's lion, rushing madly toward Attis, approaches the watery places of the whitening (*albicantis*) shore where he is standing. Here the whiteness of the shore is meant to suggest

¹ See also Fraenkel (1957) 'The stanza is radiant with light (*lucem, adfulsit, soles...nitent*)...' p. 442

² *Aen.* 1. 588-593; 10. 132-138; 10. 270-275

³ 'hoc tibi, sancte puer; memorabilis et tibi certet/ gloria perpetuum *lucens* mansura per aevum, / et tibi sede pia maneat locus, et tibi sospes/ debita felicitis memoretur vita per annos/ grata bonis *lucens*...' (vv. 37-41)

⁴ 'utque trahunt oculos *radiantia* lumina solis, / traxissent animum sic tua facta meum.' (2.325-6)

⁵ (1957) p. 442

⁶ (1975) p. 219

the foam of breaking waves; this effect is created by the placement of the words *umida* and *albicans* together and the fact that *albicans*, the present participle rather than the adjective, suggests an ongoing process rather than a state. *Albicare* is used in a similar fashion by Varro, in reference to the whiteness of turbulent water¹ and Virgil will employ the cognate verb *albescere* in the *Aeneid* to describe the appearance of the sea stirred by the wind.² In c. 63 the imagery of whiteness is reinforced by the reference to the *marmora* 'marble' of the sea in the following line, a word which gives an impression of coldness, vastness and even a figurative hardness. The white imagery of these lines displaces the impression of greenness and fertility in v. 86 which is suggested by the undergrowth (*virgulta*) which the lion shatters with its roving foot. The picture created is a desolate one. For a more detailed discussion of this colour image see Chapter 3, section 4.3.ii.

Hor. 1.4.4: *ac neque iam stabulis gaudet pecus aut arator igni,/nec prata canis albicans pruinis.*

The flock no longer rejoices in the fold, nor the ploughman in his fireside, and the meadows are no longer white (*albicans*) with hoary frost. Horace is describing the coming of spring and this scene is the final of his vignettes of the winter which has gone before. The colour term *albicans* is reinforced by *canis*³ which, as it is more usually employed of the hair of old people⁴, carries with it associations of old age and death. Thus Horace paints a charming picture, subtly personifying the meadows as 'white-haired' with frost. But, as Horace demonstrates, the meadows are able to renew themselves and the white of winter is contrasted with the green garlands of spring in v. 9.⁵ However in a circular movement, Horace then brings the poem back to the idea of death - the image of whiteness

¹ 'ubi rivus praecipitatu in nemore deorsum/ rapitur atque offensus aliquo a scopulo lapidoso albicans' *Men.* 75 (Cèbe 1975)

² 'fluctus uti primo coepit cum albescere vento' (7.528). See further Edgeworth (1992 p. 66) who thinks the Virgil line may have originally been inspired by the description in the *Iliad* of waves breaking on the sea-shore (4.422-26); there is however no colour adjective in the Homer passage. Also compare the use of *albescere* in Lucretius 2.773, Virgil *Geor.* 3.237 and Ovid *Met.* 11.480.

³ The white motif is also reiterated in the following couplet with the reference to the moon; 'iam Cytherea chorus ducit Venus imminente Luna/ iunctaeque Nymphis Gratiae decentes' (vv. 5-6).

⁴ See, for instance, Cat. 61.155, Cat. 64.350, Cat. 66.70, Cat. 68.124 etc. below under 1.9.2 CANUS.

⁵ 'nunc decet aut viridi nitidum caput impedire myrto' See further on this line under 1.50.2 VIRIDIS ii.

is picked up by *pallida Mors* in v. 13¹ and Sestius is reminded that old age and death will soon overtake him. As Commager says, the theme of this ode is the familiar contrast between the life-cycle of man and nature, and the poem is full of associations between spring and youth, winter and death.² Thus the image of the white meadows is integral to the poem for, ending the stanza on winter, it serves as a contrast to the green spring while unconsciously preparing the reader for the last two stanzas.

The theme and some of the motifs of this 'spring' poem have many parallels in Latin and Greek literature but it is interesting to note Nisbet and Hubbard's comment that although counter-scenes of winter are traditional in the subject matter of spring poems and often occur in the Anthology, 'the subject-matter of Horace's counter-scenes finds no parallel in the Anthology poems'.³ Similarly, Horace's language is unusual for he employs *albicare* only here: according to Nisbet and Hubbard the word imparts a colloquial and rustic flavour.⁴

Hor. 3.14.25: *lenit albescens animos capillus / litium et rixae cupidos protervae;* Horace's whitening (*albescens*) hair softens a spirit which is eager for strife and shameless brawling; thus he does not greatly care if the doorkeeper turns his slave away from Neaera's door. Horace's white hair, which he makes reference to in other poems⁵, is here contrasted with the allusion in the previous stanza to Neaera's *murreus* hair.⁶ *Murreus* is interpreted by many commentators as a colour adjective meaning 'chestnut' or 'light brown'⁷ and the implication is that Horace realises that he and Neaera are of different generations and the pleasures and pains of youth are no longer for him.⁸ The inceptive verb *albescio* (employed only here in Horace) and its participle form implies a gradual but on-going process. The word is also placed in opposition to Horace's former state (*calidus*

¹ *'pallida Mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas/ regumque turris.'* See further on this line under 1.37.2 PALLIDUS.

² (1962) p. 267f.

³ (1970) p. 63

⁴ *ibid.* p. 64

⁵ See 2.11.15 under 1.9.2 CANUS; see also *Ep.* 17.23.

⁶ *'dic et argutae properet Neerae / murreum nodo cohibere crinem;'* (vv. 21-22)

⁷ See further on Hor. 3.14.22 under 1.32 MURREUS.

⁸ Compare Theocritus 30.12-15 - 'τί δῆτ' αὐτε πόης; ἀλοσύνας τί ἔσχατον ἔσσειται;/ λεύκαις οὐκέτ' ἴσαισθ' ὅττι φόρης ἐν κροτάφοις τρίχας;/ ὦρα τοι φρονέην· μὴ <οὔτ>ι νέος τὰν ιδέαν πέλων / πάντ' ἔρδ' ὄσσαπερ οἱ τῶν ἐτέων ἄρτι γεγεύμενοι.' (Gow 1952)

iuventa) two lines further down¹, the contrast bringing to mind the coldness and lack of passion² associated with white hair and aging.³

1.2.2 ALBUS

i) Beauty / Desirability

Cat. 29.8: *et ille nunc superbus et superfluens / perambulabit omnium cubilia, / ut albulus columbus aut Adoneus.*

Catullus, to express his indignation with Mamurra's arrogant cavorting round other people's marriage beds, compares him to a little white (*albulus*) dove or an Adonis. As Ellis says, the comparisons explain each other⁴; both white doves and Adonis were associated with Venus. Thus the point of comparison is desirability - Mamurra is able to walk through the bedrooms of everyone as if he had Venus' favour. However there is as much contrast as there is comparison in this image for the whiteness of the dove also suggests purity⁵ and softness as well as beauty and the diminutive heightens these overtones.⁶ Adonis likewise was a beautiful (and in some traditions chaste) youth.⁷ Both these images are very different from the gross, dissolute Mamurra.

Cat. 61.187: *uxor in thalamo tibi est, / ore floridulo nitens, / alba parthenice velut / luteumve papaver.*

In this stanza in his marriage song, Catullus compares the bride to two flowers. The first is a white (*alba*) *parthenice* which, according to André, is the same as the *chamaemelon* or wild chamomile.⁸ The colour of the second flower is disputed but the likelihood is that this is meant to be a white/red colour contrast.⁹ In this line and the two lines surrounding it, Catullus utilises words for brightness (*nitens*), flowers (*floridulo, parthenice, papaver*) and colour (six out of the eight words that comprise these lines) to create an effect of beauty and

¹ *non ego hoc ferrem calidus iuventa / consule Planco.* (vv. 27-28). It was during the consulship of Plancus that Horace fought on the wrong side at Philippi (Commager 1962 p. 226f.).

² See Commager (1962) p. 226f. who comments on the somewhat cool and jaded tone of this ode which hails Augustus' return from Spain.

³ Compare Prop. 3.5.24 below under 1.2.2 ALBUS iv.

⁴ (1889) p. 99. On doves see Toynbee (1973) p. 259 and compare Catullus' use of doves in c. 68 to exemplify the delights of married love (vv. 125-128). Also see the discussion of Prop. 3.3.31-32 below in Chapter 4, section 6.3.ii.

⁵ See ii below for instances of *albus* employed with associations of purity.

⁶ As André says, 'La notion de beauté est à la fois dans l'évocation d'Adonis et dans le diminutif.' (1949 p. 257)

⁷ Ellis (1889) p. 99

⁸ (1956) pp. 84 and 239

⁹ See below on Cat. 61.188 under 1.28 LUTEUS.

freshness. The colour white is appropriate for a bride for it carries with it overtones of purity and innocence and the derivation of the name *parthenice* from παρθένος, virgin¹ reinforces the associations of the colour term. For a more detailed discussion of this colour image see Chapter 2, section 5.3.

Prop. 2.3.10: *nec me tam facies, quamvis sit candida, cepit / (lilia non domina sint magis alba mea; / ut Maeotica nix minio si certet Hiberno, / utque rosae puro lacte natant folia)*

Propertius proclaims that lilies would not surpass his mistress for whiteness (*alba*). The line is part of Propertius' description of Cynthia's charms which he portrays in idealised fashion, also comparing her complexion to snow and vermilion or rose petals floating amid milk. The use of white flowers in descriptions of complexions is, of course, a commonplace: compare Cat. 61.187 immediately above and Virgil's use of lilies to describe the complexion of the blushing Lydia.² The image of the white lilies contributes to the colourful effect of the passage (there are seven colour elements in the space of four lines) and these colours are reinforced in the following lines by words associated with shining which are employed to describe Cynthia's eyes and dress.³ Note also how Propertius, with his fondness for colour contrast, introduces words which suggest redness; *minium*⁴ and *rosae*.⁵ These lines are meant to be just a parenthesis to Propertius' claim that it was not Cynthia's *candida* face that won him but the length and elaboration with which he dwells on her charms casts a certain irony on this claim.

Hor. 2.5.18: *dilecta quantum non Pholoe fugax, / non Chloris albo sic umero nitens / ut pura nocturno renidet / luna mari...*

Lalage will be even more beloved than shy Pholoe or Chloris whose white (*albo*) shoulders gleam like the clear moon shining on the midnight sea. *Candidus* is the more usual term to describe the white gleam of unclad skin⁶ but here Horace uses *nitens* rather than the colour

¹ Quinn (1973) p. 274

² 'Indum sanguineo veluti violaverit ostro / si quis ebur, aut mixta rubent ubi lilia multa / alba rosa, talis virgo dabat ore colores.' (Aen. 12. 67-69). For other instances of the lily as the epitome of whiteness see the discussion on Prop. 3.13.30 in Chapter 5, section 5.3.

³ 'nec de more comae per levia colla fluentes, / non oculi, geminae, sidera nostra, faces, / nec si qua Arabio lucet bombyce puella' (vv. 13-15)

⁴ See Prop. 2.3.11 under 1.30 MINIMUM below.

⁵ Compare *Anacreontea* 16.22-23 where the poet describes his mistresses' complexion as milk mingled with roses; 'γράφει βίνα καὶ παρείδης / ῥόδα τῷ γάλακτι μίξας.'

⁶ See Prop. 2.16.24 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i and the two entries immediately below it.

term to suggest lustre. The idea of gleaming is also emphasised by a simile in the following lines - Chloris' shoulder gleams as brightly as the unclouded moon. The poet of 'Tibullus' 3.4. also uses the image of the moon as a simile for whiteness and brightness.¹ According to Nisbet and Hubbard, the simile goes back as far as Sappho who compares a girl to the moon which outshines the stars.² They also suggest that *albus*, not normally used of female beauty, conveys a dull whiteness and that the word thus forms an oxymoron with *nitens*; 'here it suggests that the girl had the pallid glitter of the moon'.³ In addition, Nisbet and Hubbard see significance in the name Chloris 'the name here suggests pallor...and provides a good contrast with the *purpureus color* of the future Lalage'.⁴ According to Reckford, Chloris and her association with the moon, in contrast to the blatant sexuality of the stanzas about Lalage, 'symbolises a pure love abstracted from sex'.⁵ Later on in his poetry however Horace will give an ironic twist to this association of Chloris with the light of heavenly bodies: see the discussion of Hor. 3.15 in Chapter 6, section 3.2.

ii) Simplicity / Purity

Prop. 4.1.32: *hinc Titius Ramnesque viri Luceresque Soloni, / quattuor hinc albos Romulus egit equos.*

Propertius, speaking of the ancient days of Rome, lists its tribes and heroes including Romulus whom he depicts driving four white (*albos*) horses. This is a reference to Romulus' three triumphal processions for white horses drew the triumphal chariot.⁶ Here the colour term *albus* picks up on the suggestion of whiteness in the previous couplet present in the word *oves* 'sheep' which are associated with Tattius, Romulus' co-ruler.⁷ Thus in this poem Propertius employs imagery of white to emphasise the pastoral

¹ *'candor erat qualem praefert Latonia Luna / et color in niveo corpore purpureus'* (vv. 29-30). Note how in these lines, as in Horace's poem, the whiteness of the skin is contrasted with a word for purple.

² (1978) p.90; φάος δ' ἐπί/σχει θάλασσαν ἐπ' ἀλμύραν / ἴσως καὶ πολυανθέμοις ἀρούραϊς (96.9ff. Lobel and Page 1955). Compare also Sappho fr. 34 (Lobel and Page 1955), Bacchylides *Ep.* 9.27-29 (Snell-Maehler 1970), Theocritus 2.79 (Gow 1952).

³ (1978) p. 89. See however *Serm.* 1.2.124 where Horace again employs *albus* for female beauty.

⁴ *ibid.* p. 89. See further on this image under Hor. 2.5.12 under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i.

⁵ (1959) p. 28

⁶ Butler & Barber. (1933) p. 325 who compare Tib. 1.7.7-8 - '*at te victrices lauros, Messalls, gerentem / portabat nitidis currus eburnus equis.*' Compare also Ovid's vision of the triumph of Gaius Caesar over the Parthians; '*ergo erit illa dies, qua tu, pulcherrime rerum, / quattuor in niveis aureis ibis equis.*' (*Ars. Am.* 1.213-14).

⁷ '*prima galeritus posuit praetoria Lycmon, / magnaue pars Tatio rerum erat inter ovis.*' (vv. 29-30). Camps points out that Tattius is represented here as a primitive and pastoral figure (1965 p. 55)

simplicity of old Rome: the word *albus* is picked up later on in the poem where it is linked with the place name *Alba Longa*.¹ This is placed in contrast with the golden glitter of the Rome of Propertius' day, suggested by such images as golden temples², the senate shining in its robes³ and the soldiers glittering in their threatening armour.⁴ Such colour imagery is a development of the nature/culture contrast which Propertius employs as a motif right throughout his poetry. See Chapter 5, section 3 for an examination of this motif in other poems of Propertius.

Prop. 4.1.35: *et stetit Alba potens, albae suis omine nata,/ ac tibi Fidenas longe erat isse via.*

In Rome's ancient days, Alba Longa, born of the white (*albae*) sow's omen, was still powerful and it was still a long journey from Rome to Fidenae. For the white sow see the *Aeneid*.⁵ The repetition of the term *albus* picks up on the place name and continues the association of old Rome with simplicity and purity (see the entry immediately above).

Prop. 4.11.54: *vel † cuius rasos † cum Vesta reposceret ignis,/ exhibuit vivos carbasus alba focos.*

The Roman wife Cornelia, citing examples of illustrious women to illustrate her own virtue, refers to 'she whose white (*alba*) robe showed a living hearth when Vesta demanded the fire'. Although the previous line is corrupt, this is clearly an allusion to the legend of Aemelia the Vestal Virgin who, accused of neglecting the sacred fire, proved her innocence by placing a portion of her dress upon the hearth, whereupon the fire blazed up again.⁶ *Albus* describes the colour of *carbasus* 'linen'. White garments were regularly used in the worship of the gods⁷ but in this context the white robe also signifies Aemelia's virtue.

¹ v. 35 - see the following entry.

² *'fictilibus crevere deis haec aurea templa'* (v. 5). See on this line below under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS ii.

³ *'Curia, praetexto quae nunc nitet alta senatu'* (v. 11). See on this line below under 1.34.1 NITEO i.

⁴ *'nec rudis infestis miles radiabat in armis'* (v. 27). See below on this line under 1.41 RADIO.

⁵ *'litoreis ingens inventa sub ilicibus sus / triginta capitum fetus enixa iacebit,/ alba solo recubans, albi circum ubera nati'* (8.43-45) These lines are a repetition of Book 3.390-392.

⁶ Camps (1965) p. 161

⁷ Armstrong (1917) p. 36 who cites Cic. *De Leg.* 2.45.12; *'color autem albus praecipue decorus deo est'*. It is likely that Vestal Virgins wore the white *toga recta* which Roman brides also wore, for their costume imitates that of Roman brides in other respects (see La Follette 1994 p.54).

Hor. 1.35.21: *te Spes et albo rara Fides colit / velata panno nec comitem abnegat, / utcumque mutata potentis / veste domos inimica linquis.*

Horace, in this ode to Fortune, tells the goddess that Hope attends upon her along with precious Faith whose hand is covered with a white (*albo*) cloth; nor do they refuse to act as her companion whenever in hostile mood she abandons the homes of the powerful clad in mourning. Both these goddesses are linked with Fortune in the Roman cult and the binding of the hand with a white cloth has reference to a cultic practise for, according to Livy, the priests of Fortune wrapped their hands to signify the sacred and precious nature of *fides*.¹ The image of *Fides*' white hand echoes the previous stanza with its depiction of the brazen hand of the goddess Necessity who also attends upon Fortune.² The white cloth associated with *Fides* is also placed in contrast both with the drab (and dark) mourning garb that Fortune dons when she abandons the homes of the powerful³ and the (presumably) more colourful attire of the *meretrix* in the following stanza.⁴

iii) Favourable Omen

Hor. 1.7.15: *albus ut obscuro deterget nubila caelo / saepe Notus...*

Horace tells his friend Plancus to dispel life's troubles with wine like the white (*albus*) South Wind which clears the clouds from the gloomy sky. According to the commentators, the South Wind was usually associated with rain⁵ so the idea is that even the South Wind sometimes blows clear and that the bad weather will not last forever.⁶ Nisbet and Hubbard's suggestion that Horace has in mind λευκόντοπος, the technical term for a special clearing South Wind is also plausible.⁷ Thus *albus* in this context can be translated as 'clearing' or 'clear' - it is employed principally for its metaphorical meaning with its

¹ 1.21.4 (Kießling-Heinze 1968 p. 148). See also Quinn (1980) p. 189. Porphyrio says of this line 'albo' autem dixit propter honestatem fidelitatis' (Meyer 1874)

² 'te semper anteit serva Necessitas, / clavos trabalis et cuneos manu / gestans aena ...' (vv. 17-19)

³ On the confusion created by these lines see Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) p. 396f. N & H suggest that the text is corrupt for 'up to this point Horace suggests that the Fortuna of the family shares the disaster that befalls the man.'

⁴ 'at vulgus infidum et meretrix retro / periura cedit' (vv. 25-26). See West (1973) p. 39; 'since *Fides* is draped in white, a strong invitation is issued to our visual imagination to see against the white of *Fides* the contrasting gaudiness of the prostitute. Such is the characteristic difference between married women and the *meretrix* (*Epistles* I.18.3-4).'

⁵ Quinn (1980) p. 136; Nisbet & Hubbard (1970) p. 102. This would seem to be the point of 'neque parturit imbris perpetuo' in the following line.

⁶ Commager associates these lines with other passages from Horace's *Odes* where he reproaches various friends who refuse to adapt themselves to nature's changes (1962 p. 238f.).

⁷ (1970) p. 102. See also Kießling-Heinze (1968) p. 43. Porphyrio says 'album autem Notum dixit, ut Graeci λευκὸν νότον, quod serenum faciat.' (Meyer 1874). Irwin (1974 p.169) says that Homer twice describes the South Wind as white (*Il.* 11.306, 21.334).

chromatic value secondary. Horace however also highlights the chromatic sense of *albus* by drawing a contrast between the white wind and the dark sky (*obscuro caelo*); note how he draws both adjectives together at the beginning of the line. Compare Hor.3.27.19 below which also uses *albus* of a wind with a similar contrast between light and dark and see Hor. 3.7.1 below under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS iii where *candidi* is employed of the West Winds. Other colour elements in 1.7 are suggested by the word for wine and the picture of the camp gleaming with its standards: on this see 1.7.19 below under 1.21.1 FULGEO v.

Hor. 1.12.27: ...*quorum simul alba nautis / stella refulsit*

As soon as the Dioscuri's white (*alba*) star shines out for sailors the sea grows calm. Nisbet and Hubbard think that this is a reference to St. Elmo's fire, but are uncertain about the meaning of the colour adjective as St. Elmo's fire is usually blue.¹ Horace however may be imitating Alcaeus where the St. Elmo's fire associated with Castor and Pollux is described by the term λάμπρος², a word which conveys brightness rather than blueness. Nisbet and Hubbard's suggestion that *alba* may be employed because of its metaphorical meaning 'favourable'³ is also plausible, especially taking into consideration that the Dioscuri's power to calm storms is probably meant as a parallel for Augustus' benign influence.⁴

Hor. 3.8.6: *voveram dulcis epulas et album / Libero caprum prope funeratus / arboris ictu.*

Horace had vowed a savoury banquet and a white (*album*) goat to Liber after he narrowly escaped death from a falling tree. Apart from the fact that white animals were regularly sacrificed to the heavenly deities (and black ones to the gods below)⁵ there seems to be no especial significance attached to the colour of the goat.

Hor. 3.27.19: ...*ego quid sit ater / Hadriae novi sinus et quid albus / peccet Iapyx.*

¹ (1970) p. 154

² 'εὐσδ[ί]των θρώσκοντες ..] ἄκρα νάων / πηλοθεν λάμπροι προ[] τρι λυτες, / ἀργαλέαι δ' ἐν νύκτι φ[ά]ος φέροντες / νᾶϊ μελαίναι.' (34a 9-12 Lobel and Page 1955)

³ (1970) p. 154. Porphyrio says that *alba* in this context means 'candida et benigna' (Meyer 1874).

⁴ Fraenkel (1957) p. 294. See also Hor. 1.12.46 below under 1.29 MICO.

⁵ Compare *Carm. Saec.* 49 'quaeque vos bubus veneratur albis' and *Aen.* 3. 120 'nigram Hiemi pecudem, Zephyris felicibus albam.'. See also Armstrong 'Black victims for the gods below, white for the gods above, was the rule...' (1917 p. 33).

Horace knows what the black gulf of the Adriatic and white (*albus*) Iapyx are capable of. Once again Horace is using the vagaries of the weather to make a point; this time however it is to deter a friend from embarking on a voyage rather than as an illustration of the need to adapt to changing circumstances. The Iapyx is a wind which blows in the south of Italy - as in 1.7.15 (above) *albus* refers to its favourable nature which Horace implies is sometimes deceptive. In a similar fashion to 1.7.15, Horace also plays on the chromatic meaning of *albus* by drawing a contrast with the black (*ater*) gulf of the Adriatic: both colour adjectives are at the end of their respective lines. See also Hor. 3.27.18 on this image under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS iv.

iv) Old Age / Sickness

Prop. 3.5.24 *atque ubi iam Venerem gravis interceperit aetas,/ sparserit et nigras
alba senecta comas*

Propertius says that when white (*alba*) old age has flecked his black locks he will turn from love to philosophy. He emphasises the colour contrast by placing *alba* next to *nigras*. Shackleton-Bailey draws a parallel between these lines and Anacreon¹; compare also Sophocles *Antigone*.² The white which will fleck Propertius' hair picks up on the previous couplet in which spring roses are twined round Propertius' head.³ Thus a red/white contrast is implied; the red suggested by the roses (and by the wine in the previous line) is associated with youth, love and elegiac poetry⁴, whilst *albus* is linked with old age and philosophy.

Prop. 3.25.13: *vellere tum cupias albos a stirpe capillos,/ a! speculo rugas
increpitante tibi*

Propertius depicts Cynthia in old age wanting to tear her white (*albos*) hair out by the roots and being mocked by the mirror for her wrinkles. The subject of this poem is traditional: the rejected lover envisages a time when his beloved has grown old and is desirable to nobody. Such 'aging courtesan' poems appear at frequent intervals in the *Greek Anthology*

¹ 'εὐτέ μοι λευκαὶ μελαίνας' ἀναμεμερίζονται τρίχες' (fr. 89 Diehl = fr. iamb. 3.1) (1956 p. 297)

² 'ἐξ ἔτου λευκῆν ἐγὼ / τήνδ' ἐκ μελαίνης ἀμφιβάλλομαι τρίχα' (vv. 1092-3). According to Irwin (1974), the contrast of dark hair with white was popular amongst the Greek poets; see p. 194f. for more examples.

³ 'me iuvat et multo mentem vincire *Lyaeo*/et caput in verna semper habere *rosa*.' (vv. 21-2)

⁴ see vv. 19-20

and references to white hair are a commonplace.¹ Postgate² thinks that Propertius had Tibullus 1.8.45³ in mind when composing this line. Note the contrast in attitude between Cynthia's desperation at the sight of white hairs and Propertius' calm acceptance of his own whitening hair in the poem above.

Hor. 2.2.15: *...nisi causa morbi / fugerit venis et aquosus albo / corpore languor.*

In an elaborate simile, Horace compares the lust for money to a disease - only by banishing the cause of the disease from the veins and the watery sickness from the white (*albo*) body is the sufferer cured. *Albus* is used here, instead of the more usual *pallidus*, for the pale complexion of ill-health. As André says 'Albus a le sens de "pâle, blême", désignant le blanc terne du teint d' une personne malade ou vivement émue'.⁴ However instances of *albus* employed for the pallor of sickness (as opposed to that of strong feeling) are not common. Horace and Persius occasionally employ the term to denote the pallor induced by overeating⁵ and although André mentions this usage of *albus* he doesn't cite any examples.⁶ The reason is possibly because, as Nisbet and Hubbard suggest, by using the term in 2.2 Horace is alluding to λευκοφλεγματία, a kind of dropsy.⁷

Hor. 2.20.10: *iam iam residunt cruribus asperae / pelles, et album mutor in alitem / superne, nascunturque leves / per digitos umerosque plumae.*

In this final ode of Book Two, Horace describes his transformation into a white (*album*) swan as a way of suggesting his enduring and widespread poetic reputation. Like the dove, the whiteness of the swan was proverbial in Latin literature; Virgil, for example uses *albus*, *niveus*, *candeo* and *caneo* of it at various points in the *Aeneid*.⁸ Greek literature also makes reference to the swan's whiteness (e.g. Callimachus⁹ Aristophanes *Wasps*¹⁰) but the

¹ See the discussion of 4.13.12 in Chapter 6, section 3.3.i.

² (1884) p. 196

³ 'tollere tum cura est albos a stirpe capillos'

⁴ (1949) p. 28

⁵ '...pinguem vitiis albumque neque ostrea / nec scarus aut poterit peregrina iuvare lagois.' (Hor. *Serm.* 2.2.21-22); 'turgidus hic epulis atque albo ventre lavatur' (Pers. 3.98).

⁶ (1949) p. 28

⁷ (1978) p. 46

⁸ Edgeworth (1992) p. 142; See also Prop. 3.3.39 under 1.35 NIVEUS i and Chapter 4, section 6.4 for a discussion of the white swan image in his poem.

⁹ 'εὖτε κόραξ, ὅς νῦν γε καὶ ἄν κύκνοισιν ἐρίζοι / καὶ γάλακι χροίην καὶ κύματος ἄκρω ἄώτῳ' (fr. 260.56-57 Pfeiffer 1949 vol. 1)

¹⁰ '...κύκνου τε πολιάτεραι δὴ / αἴδ' ἐπανθοοσιν τρέχες.' (*Wasps* 1064-65). On this line see Irwin (1974 p. 168).

colour image is only fully exploited by the Roman poets.¹ Horace however does not employ the specific term for a swan, using rather the vaguer term *ales* which can be applied to any winged creature; the idea of the swan is implied by his description and the long-established association of the swan with poets.² This deliberate vagueness is also Horace's way of exploiting the ambiguity of his transformation for, as several commentators point out, much of Horace's description could equally apply to the change to old age.³

Note Horace's placement of *albus* in this line. It is the first important word in its phrase (only *et* precedes it), is positioned before its noun and is placed immediately in front of the verb *mutor* which denotes the transformation taking place. The effect of this is twofold: the colour term marks Horace's transformation with the emphasis being placed on the colour change and it heightens the ambiguity, for, as we have seen in the two Propertius poems above, *albus* can be used of the white hair of old age and it is only with *alitem*, two words later, that the idea of a bird is introduced. Compare the quote from the *Wasps* given above where white hair is likened to a swan's plumage and Virgil *Aeneid* 10 where Virgil associates Cynus' transformation into a swan with the whiteness of old age.⁴

v) Other

Cat. 63.40: *sed ubi oris aurei Sol radiantibus oculis / lustravit aethera album, sola dura, mare ferum, / pepulitque noctis umbras vegetis sonipedibus*

The white (*album*) sky is part of the scene which Attis sees when he wakes up, disillusioned with his mad devotion to the cult of Cybele. Catullus surveys the whole earth in v. 40, describing the earth and sea as well as the sky. *Aethera album* is most probably a reference to the light of dawn⁵ and is placed in contrast with the shades of night in v. 41. This image follows on from the glittering eyes (*radiantibus oculis*) of the sun in the preceding line; the impression created is of a strong, harsh light, anathema to the followers

¹ According to Kober, colour terms for white are applied directly to swans only twice in Greek poetry (1932 p. 20)

² As Porphyrio says, 'iam dicit se in cycnum transfigurari.' (Meyer 1874)

³ Quinn (1980) p. 239, Nisbet & Hubbard (1978) p. 341f.

⁴ 'canentem molli pluma duxisse senectam / linquentem terras et sidera voce sequentem' (vv. 192-193). See Edgeworth (1992 p. 117) on this line and Nisbet & Hubbard (1978 p. 342) who list other instances of the comparison between white hair and swan's plumage.

⁵ Fordyce (1961 p. 267) relates it to Caes. B.C. 1.68: see also Luc. 2.720.

of Cybele who are associated with *opaca loca* right from the start of the poem.¹ With *dura* and *ferus*, the epithets Catullus applies to the earth and sea respectively, the picture created is of a harsh, unforgiving landscape. For a more detailed analysis of this colour image see the discussion in Chapter 3, section 4.1.ii.

Cat. 93.2: *nil nimium studeo, Caesar, tibi velle placere, / nec scire utrum sis albus an ater homo.*

Catullus tells Caesar that he has no desire to please him; nor does he really care whether Caesar is a white (*albus*) or black man. With the use of this phrase he expresses his contempt for Caesar. This is a proverbial expression used to denote ignorance or lack of interest in a subject², consequently the chromatic element is not strong.

Hor. 2.3.9: *quo pinus ingens albaque populus / umbram hospitem consociare amant / ramis?...*

Horace asks why the tall pine and white (*alba*) poplar love to entwine their branches with inviting shade. This is a rhetorical question; as Nisbet and Hubbard say, the unstated answer is 'in order that we may enjoy ourselves'³ for this poem is on Horace's well-worked theme of enjoying life while we can. The white poplar is mentioned by many ancient authors, including Virgil⁴ and Pliny⁵. There is an implied colour contrast not only with the darkness of the pine⁶ but with the shade (*umbram*) that the trees produce. This darkness will be picked up by the image of the black threads of the Fates in the following stanza.⁷

¹ See the discussion on this in Chapter 3, section 4.1.i.

² 'Et quidem vide, quam te amarit is, qui albus aterne fuerit ignoras.' (Cic. Phil. 2.4.1); 'unde illa scivit niger an albus nascerer' (Phaedr. 3.15.10)

³ (1978) p. 58

⁴ '...hic candida populus antro / imminet...' (Ec. 9.41) (Also cited by N & H). See also Theocritus 2.121.

⁵ 'populorum foliis grandissima lanugo evolat candida et radiata, folio numerosiore candicant ut villi.' (N.H. 16.35.86)

⁶ 'the poplar is slender or frail, the pine is dark and sombre' Quinn (1980) p. 202. Toll (1955) p. 157 offers a similar view. See also the *Culex* for the legend of the transformation of Phaethon's sisters into white poplars ('Heliades, teneris implexae bracchia truncis, / candida fundebant tentis velamina ramis.' vv. 129-130) and a similar contrast between light and dark trees; 'ilicis et nigrae species nec laeta cupressus / umbrosaeque manent fagus hederaeque ligantes / bracchia, fraternos plangat ne populus ictus' (vv. 140-142).

⁷ 'dum res et aetas et sororum / fila trium patiuntur atra' (vv. 15-16) See further on these lines under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS ii.

1.3.1 ARGENTEUS

Prop. 4.4.25: *saepe tulit blandis argentea lilia Nymphis,/ Romula ne faciem laederet hasta Tati:*

Propertius depicts the maiden Tarpeia giving offerings of silvery (*argentea*) lilies to the kindly Nymphs so that Tatius' spear will not wound Romulus' face. For the lily's association with virginity see the discussion on the lilies in Prop. 3.13.30 in Chapter 5, section 5.3. *Argenteus* here is an alternative to other, more conventional, terms for white such as *albus* or *niveus*.¹ It is possible that Propertius employed the term to suggest the gleam of lilies in the moonlight²; compare Virgil's use of the word to describe a goose at night.³

1.3.2 ARGENTUM

Cat. 64.44: *ipsius at sedes, quacumque opulenta recessit / regia, fulgenti splendent auro atque argento./ candet ebur soliis, collucent pocula mensae,/ tota domus gaudet regali splendida gaza.*

'But the dwelling of the king itself, in whatever direction the sumptuous palace receded, was resplendent with shining gold and silver (*argento*). Ivory gleamed whitely on the chairs, cups glittered on the tables, the whole gleaming house rejoices at the royal treasure'. In these lines Catullus describes the dwelling of Peleus, employing words for gold, silver and shining to contribute to the impression of a place that is full of light and splendour. *Argentum* here, like *aurum* and *ebur*, functions with two meanings, contributing both the idea of richness and that of shining; note that along with *aurum* the word is qualified by the epithet *fulgens*. Four out of the six words in v. 44 are associated with shining and the following lines are also full of words connected with light. As O'Connell puts it, 'this brightness helps to convey the heightened happiness of fairytale romance'.⁴ Note that Catullus emphasises the feeling of happiness with the verb *gaudet* in v. 46. This is not the

¹ For these terms applied to *lilia*, see the examples given in the footnote on Prop. 3.13.30 in Chapter 5, section 5.3.

² It is obvious from v. 23 that the scene takes place at night; '*saepe illa immeritae causata est omina lunae*'.

³ '*atque hic auratis volitans argenteus anser / porticibus Gallos in limine adesse canebat;*' (*Aen.* 8.655-56). The scene depicted is one on the shield; the colour term *argenteus* refers both to the material of the shield and the gleam of the goose in the dark (*tenebris et dono noctis opacae* v. 658). See Edgeworth's discussion of the line (1992 p. 70).

⁴ (1977) p. 749

first time that happiness has been connected with shining in ancient literature - the link is present as early as Homer.¹

This passage also owes much to the description of Menelaos' palace in the *Odyssey*² and, as Connely has observed, there are similarities to Sappho's description of the Wedding of Hector and Andromache³; compare also Alcaeus fr. 357.⁴ Later, Horace will elaborate on the theme with a description of his home being prepared for a birthday celebration (see 4.11.6 below). Yoch, who has traced the image of the luminous palace from Homer into European literature, points out that the pleasures of such places are usually only temporary and the inhabitants deeply flawed.⁵ As we will see, this is true of both the Catullus and Horace versions of the luminous palace. In the Catullus passage the colour imagery is extended into a description of the purple coverlet whose colours suggest the blood and slaughter to follow: see Cat. 64.49 below, under 1.40.1 PURPURA.

Hor. 2.2.1: *Nullus argento color est avaris / abdito terris, inimice lamnae / Crispe Sallusti, nisi temperato / splendeat usu.*

'For silver (*argento*) hidden away in the greedy earth there is no lustre, o Sallustius Crispus, you who are hostile to metal unless it shines with judicious use.' This is the way that Horace opens a poem on the corrupting effect of the life of luxury; for a similar sentiment compare *Sermones* 1.1.⁶ There are quite a few possible sources for this maxim, the most obvious being the Greek tragic fragment which Nisbet and Hubbard quote; 'οὐκ ἔστ' ἐν ἄντροις λευκός, ὦ ξέν, ἄργυρος'.⁷ The meaning of this fragment is unclear

¹ ἄγλαη δ' οὐρανὸν ἴκε, γέλασσε δὲ πᾶσα περὶ χθῶν / γαλκοῦ ὑπὸ στεροπῆς' (Il. 19.362f.)

² γαλκοῦ τε στεροπῆν καὶ δώματα ἠχίηεντα, / χρυσοῦ τ' ἠλέκτρον τε καὶ ἀργύρου ἢ δ' ἐλέφαντος.' (4.72-73). Present in both passages are references to the gleam of gold, silver and ivory.

³ '...πόλλα δ' [ἐλ]ύματα χρύσια κάμματα / πορφύρα] καταύτ[ι] . . . ἢ, ποικιλ' ἀθύρματα, / ἀργύρα τ' ἀνάριθμα [ποτη]ρ[ια] κάλεφαις.' (fr. 44 Lobel and Page 1955); 'The whole atmosphere is identical in its richness of color: gold, silver, purple, ivory, embroidery.' (Connely 1925 p. 411)

⁴ μαρμαίρει δὲ, μέγας δόμος χάλκω...' (Lobel and Page 1955)

⁵ 'Homer's lines seem to have set the basic pattern for the image no matter how various the later elaborations. Its features recur in later writers who emphasise the light: the building is strangely bright as though the sun or the moon shone into it...The pleasures the place represents are only temporarily satisfying and the inhabitants are deeply flawed.' (1978 p. 412). Unfortunately Yoch does not discuss the Catullus or Horace passages.

⁶ 'quid iuvat immensum te *argenti* pondus et *auri* / furtim defossa timidum deponere terra?' (vv. 41-42)

⁷ *Trag. Adesp.* 389 N. (1978) p. 35

however - see Nisbet and Hubbard's discussion of it. The colourlessness associated with hoarded silver is echoed later in the poem by the pale body of the greedy man: see Hor. 2.2.15 above under 1.2.2 ALBUS iv.

Hor. 4.11.6: *est hederæ vis / multa, qua crinis religata fulges: / ridet argento domus; ara castis / vincta verbenis avet immolato / spargier agno;*

Horace is preparing for a birthday party and describes his house rejoicing with silver (*argento*) and its altar, wreathed with sacred boughs, yearning to be sprinkled with the blood of a slaughtered lamb. Here the word *argentum* reinforces the impression of shining created by the verb *fulgeo* in the previous line, a word which Horace employs to describe both the green vitality of ivy and the beauty of his mistress Phyllis.¹ Words such as *ridet* and *avet* help to personify the house and bring it to life. In addition the verb *rideo*, positioned as it is next to *argentum* (a word suggestive of the gleam of treasure) and the word *domus*, recall the passage from Catullus 64.² Thus, Peleus' palace and Horace's house share the same qualities; they are full of light, happiness and movement.³ Similarly, like Peleus' house and other 'luminous palaces', there are suggestions that the pleasures of Horace's home are only temporary. A discordant note is introduced in vv. 7-8 with the image of the slaughtered lamb for, although the red gleam of the blood sprinkled on the altar picks up on the reference to wine in the first lines of the poem⁴ and contributes to the glow of the house, it also introduces an element of violence which was not present in the earlier lines of the poem. Once again, a parallel can be drawn with Peleus' palace in c.64 for this passage ends with a description of the purple coverlet which is linked with blood and violence. In Horace's poem the discordant note is strengthened later on in the poem by the image of the dirty smoke (*sordidum fumum* v. 11-12) and the colour term *ater* which is applied to cares which Horace hopes will diminish. See further Hor. 4.11.35 on these colour images below under 1.4 ATER /ATRATUS v.

¹ See further Hor. 4.11.5 on this image under 1.21.1 FULGEO iii.

² *'tota domus gaudet regali splendida gaza'* (v. 46). See above under Cat. 64.44.

³ In Horace's house boys and girls rush hither and thither (*'cuncta festinat manus, huc et illuc / cursitant mixtae pueris puellae;*' vv. 9-10) and in Catullus the whole of Thessaly pours into Peleus' palace (*'...domum conventu tota frequentat / Thessalia...*' vv. 32-33).

⁴ *'Est mihi nonum superantis annum / plenus Albani cadus;...'* vv 1-2

1.4. ATER / ATRATUS

i) Skin Colour

Cat. 39.12: *aut Lanuvinus ater atque dentatus*

Egnatius' flashy smile is compared with, amongst other things, a dark (*ater*) and toothy Lanuvian (an inhabitant of a town in Latium). Here the *ater* presumably refers to skin colour, probably the darkness of sunburnt skin. This would appear to be a characteristic of the Lanuvians as *pinguis* is of the Umbrian and *obesus* is of the Etruscan in v. 11; however, as Fordyce comments, we have no other source which confirms that Lanuvians were characteristically dark-complexioned.¹ Note the implied contrast between the darkness of the Lanuvian's smile and his white and gleaming teeth (*dentatus*) - an effective comparison for the blinding brilliance of Egnatius' grin.

Cat. 93.2: *nec scire utrum sis albus an ater homo.*

Catullus tells Caesar that he has no desire to please him; nor does he really care whether Caesar is a white or black (*ater*) man.. See Cat. 93.2 on this image above under 1.2.2 ALBUS v.

ii) Death

Cat. 108.5: *effossos oculos voret atro gutture corvus*

Catullus abuses Cominius by envisaging his gruesome death; amongst other horrors his eyes will be torn out and swallowed down a raven's black (*atro*) throat. *Ater* here suggests both the blackness of the raven's feathers (for these birds were proverbially black²) and the gaping black hole of the raven's throat; possibly this is meant to recall the jaws of hell.³ Thus here *ater* has an association with death. Compare Propertius' reference to a black bird at 2.28b.38 below under 1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS iii. For Catullus' use of other colour terms in this poem see Cat. 108.1 below under 1.9.2 CANUS.

¹ (1961) p. 187

² Cf. the fable recounted in Ovid in which the raven is changed from white to black in punishment for treachery (*Met.* 2.534ff.). This association of the raven with treachery may also have some relevance to Catullus' accusations against Cominius and his *inimica lingua* in vv. 3-4.

³ Compare *Aen.* 6.273; '*vestibulum ante ipsum primisque in faucibus Orci*'. Here the colour term *ater* is not used of the jaws themselves but is present in the previous line where it describes the night which takes the colour from everything ('...*et rebus nox abstulit atra colorem*').

Prop. 2.11.4: *omnia, crede mihi, tecum uno munera lecto / auferet extremi funeris atra dies;*

Propertius tells Cynthia that the final dark (*atra*) day of death will carry away all her gifts together with herself. In both Greek and Latin literature, words for black are frequently used of death and the things associated with it.¹ In the Roman calendar *dies atris* were those which were considered unlucky² and, like Propertius, Virgil also uses *atra dies* for the day of death.³ Note how in the Propertian passage the colour image is placed last in the couplet, emphasising the final and all-consuming nature of death; eventually everything will be consumed by darkness. Compare Hor. 1.28.13 and 2.3.16 below.

Prop. 3.5.34: *solis et atratis luxerit orbis equis*

Propertius wishes to learn why the sun's disk mourned (shone?) with its horses clothed in black (*atratis*). Presumably this is a stylised way of referring to an eclipse; in another poem Propertius employs the image of the sun driving dark horses to denote an event which is impossible or highly improbable.⁴ Tibullus also employs a similar image to describe an eclipse of the sun but the epithet he applies to the sun's horses is *pallentes*.⁵ In the Propertius lines the term *atratus* suggests the garb of mourning⁶ (compare the use of *ater* in the entry below) and this suggestion of death is reinforced by the verb *luxerit* which probably comes from *lugere* 'to mourn'. Alternatively, Camps suggests that *luxerit* could come from *lucere* and be contrasted with *atratis* 'in a kind of oxymoron' ('why the sun's disk *shone* with its horses clothed in *black*').⁷ This is not unlikely, considering that Tibullus makes use of a similar dark/light contrast in his description of the eclipse.

Prop. 4.7.28: *atram quis lacrimis incaluisse togam?*

¹ 'μέλας θάνατος' Il. 2. 834, 11. 332 etc., 'μέλας "Αιδης' S. OT 29, 'atrum funus' Lucr. 2.580, 'mors atra' Tib. 1.3.5.

² Armstrong (1917) p. 34

³ 'abstulit atra dies et funere mersit acerbo;' (Aen. 6.429)

⁴ See Prop. 2.15.32 below under 1.33. NIGER / NIGRANS v.

⁵ 'ipsum etiam Solem defectum lumine vidit / iungere pallentes nubilus annus equos:' (2.5.75-6). Note how Tibullus draws a contrast between the pallor of the horses and the darkness of the cloud.

⁶ The *Oxford Latin Dictionary* defines *atratus* as 'clothed in black, in mourning' (def. 2 1968 p. 198). If an alternative manuscript conjecture is correct Propertius also employs *atratus* with similar overtones in 2.1. - 'aut canerem Aegyptum et Nilum, cum atratus in urbem / septem captivis debilis ibat aquis' (33-34). The OCT however reads *attractus* at this point.

⁷ (1966). p. 77.

'Who saw your black (*atram*) robe grow hot with tears?' This is one of the accusations that Cynthia's ghost flings at Propertius when she comes to accuse him of neglecting her funeral rites. Black clothing for mourning was traditional.¹ Here the colour adjective is emphasised by being placed at the beginning of its line and separated from its noun. Note how the verb *incaluisse* 'grow hot' is placed in between, heightening the tension between this word and *atram*, for the blackness of mourning garb was usually associated with the cold and dark of the underworld.²

Hor. 1.28.13: ...*nihil ultra / nervos atque cutem morti concesserat atrae*

The first time that Pythagoras died, he yielded to black (*atrae*) death nothing except his sinews and skin. This is an allusion to the legend of Pythagoras' two deaths.³ The expression *mors atra* is of course traditional and goes back to Homer; see the instances given above under Propertius 2.11.4. Horace emphasises the idea of blackness by placing the word at the end of its line and this is picked up by *nox* at the end of the next hexametre.⁴ In this way Horace leads naturally on to his next point: although Pythagoras claimed that he managed to avoid black death once, a common night awaits everyone eventually.

Hor. 2.3.16: *huc vina et unguenta et nimium brevis / flores amoenae ferre iube rosae / dum res et aetas et sororum / fila trium patiuntur atra.*

Horace exhorts Dellius to bid his slaves bring wine, perfumes and the too brief blossoms of the lovely rose while fortune, youth and the dark (*atra*) threads of the three sisters allow. The three sisters are of course the Fates. In Catullus 64 the wool which the Fates spin is white⁵ but in Greek literature μέλας is often used for deities associated with vengeance or with fate⁶ and thus by association the word is here extended to their wool. The blackness, of course, has metaphorical overtones which are emphasised by the climactic position of

¹ Kober (1932) p. 30, Armstrong (1917) p. 33

² Armstrong (1917) p. 33

³ See further Quinn (1980) p. 176.

⁴ '...sed omnis una manet *nox* / et calcanda semel via leti.' (vv. 15-16). These two words are also associated by the use of the word *sordidus* in the intervening lines ('iudice te non *sordidus* auctor / naturae verique...' vv. 14-15) for, although the word is employed in a metaphorical sense here, its literal meaning is 'dirty', 'unclean'. Compare Horace's use of *sordidus* for its chromatic overtones in c. 4.11, discussed below under Hor. 4.11.35 under v.

⁵ See Cat. 64.318 below under 1.8.1 CANDEO /CANDESCO.

⁶ Kober 'We find that μ. is often used for deities connected with vengeance or with fate' (1932 p. 35). See the examples she lists on p. 35.

atra as the last word of the stanza: everything ends in the blackness of death. *Atra* in this position is also placed in contrast with *rosae* which is the last word of the second line of this stanza. The rose, along with the wine and perfumes which Horace exhorts the slaves to bring, symbolise the good things of life and these words bring to the reader's mind fragrance and redness.¹ Horace however refers to the flowers of the rose as *nimum breves* (v. 9), anticipating the blackness with which the stanza finishes.

Hor. 2.13.34: *quid mirum, ubi illis carminibus stupens / demittit atras belua centiceps / auris...*

When Sappho and Alcaeus sing in the Elysian fields it cannot be wondered that, lulled by such songs, the hundred-headed monster lowers his black (*atras*) ears. This line forms part of Horace's depiction of the underworld and description of how Sappho and Alcaeus beguile all in it with their singing. The hundred-headed monster is Cerberus who is black as befits the underworld.² According to Nisbet and Hubbard the separation of *atras* from its noun places emphasis on the colour adjective, heightening Cerberus' sinister appearance.³ In this way Horace draws a contrast between Cerberus' grim and savage aspect and the doglike fawning that appears when Sappho and Alcaeus play on their lyres.

Hor. 2.14.17: *visendus ater flumine languido / Cocytos errans ...*

Although we may try to avoid death, eventually we will have to look upon black (*ater*) Cocytos meandering with its sluggish flow. For the use of words for black in association with Cocytos and other rivers of the underworld compare Virgil '*...limus niger et deformis harundo / Cocyti ...*' (*Geor.* 4.478), '*Cocytusque sinu labens circumvenit atro*' (*Aen.* 6.132) and Ovid '*Stygia..nigrior unda*' (*Met.* 11.500). Nisbet and Hubbard suggest that here Horace is drawing a deliberate paradox with the idea of viewing blackness⁴; the word order *visendus ater* would tend to support this. The picture thus

¹ Andre [vermeil] est aussi la teinte favorite des roses, avec *purpureus*, (*Culex*, 399; *Copa*, 14; Hor., *Od.* III, 15, 15), *punicus* (Virg., *Egl.* V, 17; Hor., *Od.* IV, 10, 4), *rubens* (Mart. IV, 55, 18; cf. Virg., *Aen.* XII, 68), *rubescere* (Ov., *Pont.* II, 1, 36), *ruber* (Mart. IX, 90, 6), *rubor* (*Culex*, 399), *rutilus* (*Calp.* VI, 43). Les autres couleurs sont exceptionnelles: (1949 p. 331). Nisbet and Hubbard agree; 'In our passage *atra* makes a contrast with the red roses above' (1978 p. 62). The presence of the wine reinforces the idea of redness (compare Hor. 3.15.16 which is discussed in Chapter 6, section 3.2) and the perfume suggests the fragrance of the roses. As N & H point out, wine perfume and flowers are, for Horace, symbols of the symposium (1978 p. 61).

² See Hor. 2.14.17 below and compare Tibullus' use of the synonym *niger* to describe Cerberus; '*tum niger in porta serpentum Cerberus ore / stridet et aeratas excubat ante fores.*' (1.3.71-72).

³ (1978) p. 220

⁴ (1978) p. 232

created is dismal and gloomy, picking up on *tristi unda* in vv. 8-9.¹ There is also a colour contrast with *cruento Marte* in v. 13²; this phrase, suggesting the red bloodiness of war, is placed in the same position in its stanza.

iii) Snakes / Poison

Prop. 3.5.40: *Tisiphones atro si furit angue caput*

When Propertius grows old he will turn from love to philosophy and, amongst other things, will find out whether Tisiphones' head is really wild with black (*atro*) snakes. Tisiphones is usually depicted with snakes in Roman poetry.³ The colour term *ater* is appropriate not only because Tisiphones is a deity of the underworld but also because terms for black and blue were employed as epithets for snakes from Homer onwards.⁴ This is the third time in this poem that Propertius employs a term for black; he also uses *atratus* in reference to the eclipse of the sun⁵ and *niger* to describe his own hair which is slowly turning white.⁶

Hor. 1.37.27: *...fortis et asperas / tractare serpentis, ut atrum / corpore combiberet venenum*

Cleopatra was brave enough to handle wild serpents so that she might draw black (*atrum*) poison into her body. *Ater* (or *niger*) as an epithet for poison is traditional⁷; compare also *Epodes* 17.31 where *ater* is employed of Nessus' poisonous blood.⁸ Note how Horace emphasises the colour adjective here by placing it so that it is in a dominant position in its phrase and last in the line. The placement of *corpore* as first word of the following line enhances the picture of the blackness being drawn into Cleopatra's body.

Hor. 3.4.17: *ut tuto ab atris corpore viperis / dormire et ursis...*

¹ *'...qui ter amplum / Geryonen Tityonque tristi / compescit unda'*

² *'frustra cruento Marte carebimus'* See on this line further below under 1.13. CRUENTUS.

³ *Aen.* 6.572; Tibullus 1.3.69

⁴ For the use of μέλας and κυάνεος to describe the colour of snakes in Greek poetry see the examples listed in Kober (1932) pp. 27 and 72 respectively. In Roman poetry compare the use of *ater* at Hor. 3.4.17 (below) and *caeruleus* in Ennius *Trag.* 30 (Vahlen 1963) and Virgil *Aen.* 2.381, 7.346.

⁵ See Prop. 3.5.34 above under ii.

⁶ See Prop. 3.5.24 above under 1.2.2 ALBUS iv.

⁷ *'μελάγγιμον ἰδὲν'* Arg. 4.1508; *'atroque veneno'* *Aen.* 2.221; *'nigri veneni'* *Aen.* 4.514.

See also Prop. 2.27.10 below under 1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS iii.

⁸ *'...ardeo / quantum neque atro delibutus Hercules / Nessi cruore...'* (vv. 30-32)

When Horace was a boy he would sleep under the protection of the Muses with his body safe from black (*atris*) vipers and bears. Here again, the word order mirrors the sense for in this line Horace's body is literally surrounded by black vipers.

iv) Foul Weather

Prop. 2.5.12: *non ita Carpathiae variant Aquilonibus undae, / nec dubio nubes vertitur atra Noto*

The wrath of lovers changes more swiftly than the Carpathian waves change colour beneath the North wind or a dark (*atra*) storm-cloud shifts before the fluctuating South wind. This metaphor is a variation on the traditional idea that lovers' vows were as changeable as the wind.¹ *Ater* is a common epithet for clouds in Latin literature.² Similarly, in Greek literature they are frequently described by the colour epithets *κυάνεος* or *μέλας*.³ There may be a suggestion of colour in the preceding line with the word *variant*, for later on Propertius will use the term to describe the shifting hues of ripening grapes.⁴

Hor. 2.16.2: *Otium divos rogat in patenti / prensus Aegaeo, simul atra nubes / condidit lunam neque certa fulgent / sidera nautis;*

The merchant prays for peace when, caught on the open sea, a dark (*atra*) storm-cloud has hidden the moon and stars do not shine with a sure light for sailors. In this stanza Horace gives new life to this conventional colour epithet by drawing a contrast with the light of the moon and stars which the dark cloud is concealing. The contrast of dark with light seems to be a favourite device of Horace: compare the two entries immediately below where he draws similar contrasts between *ater* and words for white and light and Hor. 1.7.15 where he contrasts the white South wind with the dark sky (above under 1.2.2 ALBUS iii). Horace will later employ the image of a cloud covering the stars in a metaphorical sense in 3.15.⁵

¹ *'sed conubia laeta, sed optatos hymenaeos, / quae cuncta aeri discerpunt irrita venti.'* (Cat. 64.141-142); *'...sed mulier cupido quod dicit amanti, / in vento et rapida scribere oportet aqua.'* (Cat. 70.3-4); *'foederis heu taciti, cuius fallacia verba / non audituri diripere Noti.'* (Prop. 4.7.21-22)

² e.g. Lucr. 6.180 and compare Hor. *Od.* 2.16.2 below.

³ See Kober (1932) pp. 32 and 74 respectively. Amongst other references she cites *Il.* 4.277, *Od.* 14.303 and Bacchylides 3.55.

⁴ *'prima mihi variat liventibus uva racemis'* (4.2.13). See further on Prop. 4.2.14 below under 1.26.1 LIVEO.

⁵ *'et stellis nebulam spargere candidis'* (v. 6). See further on this image in Chapter 6, section 3.2.

Hor. 3.27.18: ...*ego quid sit ater / Hadriae novi sinus et quid albus / peccet Iapyx.*

Horace knows what the black (*ater*) gulf of the Adriatic and white Iapyx are capable of. The Adriatic is referred to as black because of the turbulence of its waters; in the following stanza Horace wishes the *aequoris nigri fremitum* onto Rome's enemies.¹ The black implies ill-omen, picking up on the references Horace has made in the previous lines to the raven (v. 11) and crow (v. 16), both black, ill-omened birds.² Unlike the cloudless wind of Iapyx, the black gulf is openly treacherous. On *albus Iapyx* see Hor. 3.27.19 above under 1.2.2 ALBUS iii.

Hor. 3.29.43: ...*cras vel atra / nube polum Pater occupato / vel sole puro: ..*

Tomorrow let the Father fill the sky with a black (*atra*) cloud or clear sunshine; he cannot destroy what has gone before for the man who has enjoyed each day as it comes. For *ater* as a common epithet for clouds see Prop. 2.5.12 above. In the Horace poem the black cloud, signifying stormy weather, is placed in contrast with clear sunshine to illustrate the vagaries of fortune. Compare Hor. 1.7.15 above under 1.2.2 ALBUS iii for a similar metaphorical use of the weather.

v) Care

Hor. 3.1.40: ...*neque / decedit aerata triremi et / post equitem sedet atra Cura*

Black (*atra*) care does not quit the brass-bound galley and sits behind the horseman. It is an oft repeated theme in Horace that nobody can escape from fear or worry; compare *Sermones* 2.7 in which he employs a similar image.³ In Greek literature μέλας is frequently employed of pain both of body and mind, note for example the formulaic phrase in Homer 'ἄχεος νεφέλη... μέλαινα' employed to denote overwhelming grief.⁴ Note how in Horace's use of the colour image the word order mirrors the sense, reinforcing the picture of a sinister black figure sitting behind the rider. Horace also adds drama to the

¹ *'hostium uxores puerique caecos / sentiant motus orientis Austri et / aequoris nigri fremitum et trementis / verbera ripas.'* (vv. 21-24). See further on Hor. 3.27.23 and compare Prop. 3.7.56 which are both under 1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS ii below.

² For the blackness of the raven see Cat. 108.5 above under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS ii. For the blackness of the crow see the discussion on Hor. 4.13.25 in Chapter 6, section 3.3.iii.

³ *'iam vino quaerens, iam somno fallere curam: / frustra; nam comes atra premit sequiturque fugacem.'* (vv. 114-115)

⁴ e.g. *Il.* 17.591; *Od.* 24.315

image by contrasting it with other colour elements in the surrounding lines. As West points out, a brass-plated ship (*aerata triremis*) would sparkle in the Mediterranean sun, creating a contrast between the light it gives off and the blackness of care, powerful enough to overwhelm the brightness.¹ The colour term *atra* is also contrasted with *purpurarum* in the following stanza²; not even the brightness of purple can counter black care and soothe a troubled man.

Hor. 3.14.13: *hic dies vere mihi festus atras / eximet curas;...*

Horace, rejoicing at Caesar's return, says that the day will be truly a festal one for him and will take away black (*atras*) cares. It is noteworthy that Horace associates the blackness of care with the whitening of his own hair; see v. 25 above under 1.2.1. ALBESCO / ALBICO. As in 4.11 below, Horace also draws a contrast between the blackness of care and the bright hair of the singers with whom he wishes to celebrate the festal day; see v. 22 below under 1.32 MURREUS.

Hor. 4.11.35: *...minuentur atrae / carmine curae.*

Horace tells Phyllis that black (*atrae*) cares shall be diminished with the aid of song. Here the reference to black cares sits oddly with the tone of this poem which is in celebration of Maecenas' birthday - the gleaming house, the garlands of parsley, the scurrying slaves all build up a picture of joyous activity in which care and worry seem out of place.³ As we have seen however, the allusion to the blood of the slaughtered lamb (vv. 7-8) introduces a serious note. In addition, as Commager points out, although the black cares are at first glance Phyllis' they could just as well be Horace's own for Maecenas' birthday marks the passing of time, always of concern to Horace.⁴ He says further 'the picture is not all gaiety. The smoke that rolls aloft is dirty, *sordidum*, and the image of brightness surrounded by darkness sets the mood of the whole.'⁵ This allusion to black cares is in the final lines of the poem, giving a sombre tone to the ending. Porter draws a parallel between

¹ (1973) p. 37f.

² 'quodsi dolentem nec Phrygius lapis / nec purpurarum sidere clarior / delenit usus nec Falerna / vitis Achaemeniumque costum' (vv. 41-44). See Hor. 3.1.42 under 1.40.1 PURPURA.

³ See Hor. 4.11.6 above under 1.3.2 ARGENTUM.

⁴ (1962) p. 305

⁵ (1962) p. 303. West (1973) points out that Horace is particularly fond of employing the word *sordidus* in the *Odes* with a contrast between the dull and the brilliant and cites 2.16.13-16, 3.2.17-20 and the above reference to illustrate this (p. 38).

the ending of this poem and two others in Book 4 - cc. 7 and 12. He points out that all three end with 'explicit mentions of darkness'¹ and that all are 'spring' poems which 'move from bright openings to shadowed conclusions'.²

1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS

i) Divine Power

Cat. 63.39: *sed ubi oris aurei Sol radiantibus oculis*

Catullus personifies the sun as it looks down upon the world and the sleeping Attis, giving it a golden (*aurei*) face and glittering eyes. The colour and shining words prepare the reader for the coming of day and the breaking of the 'spell' while the grandiose ring of the compound epithet *oris aurei* contributes to the epic quality of this passage. Euripides employs a similar epithet for the sun in the *Electra*³ *Aureus* is the first colour word in the passage; the colour elements following it take on more negative overtones. For a full discussion of this image see Cat. 63.40 above under 1.2.2 ALBUS v.

Cat. 64.5: *auratam optantes Colchis avertere pellem*

The Argonauts desire to carry off the golden (*auratam*) fleece of Colchis. The image of the golden fleece is well established in previous literature⁴ and thus this colour image is somewhat hackneyed. Catullus however emphasises the colour word by placing it at the beginning of the line and isolating it; the reader has to wait until the end of the line for the noun it describes. This is a favourite device of Catullus in this poem, according to Quinn it occurs twenty three times in c. 64.⁵ There is a colour contrast with *caerula* which, although two lines down, picks up from *vada* in the line following and, like *auratam*, is placed at the beginning of the line and separated from its noun.⁶

Cat. 66.60: *...ne solum in lumine caeli / ex Ariadnaeis aurea temporibus / fixa corona foret, sed nos quoque fulgeremus / devotae flavi verticis exuviae*

¹ 7.25, 'infernus...tenebris' ; 11.35-36, 'atrae...curae' ; 12.26, 'nigrorum...ignium'

² (1987b) p. 113

³ 'στρέψαι θερμὸν ἄελιον / χρυσωπὸν ἔδραν ἀλλαξάντα δυστυχία βροτεί-ω θνατῶς ἔνεκεν δίκας.' 739-742

⁴ Apoll R. 1.4, Theoc. 13.16, Ennius '...quia Argivi in ea delecti viri / vecti petebant pellem inauratam arietis' Trag. 250-251 (Vahlen 1963)

⁵ (1973) p. 301

⁶ 'ausi sunt *vada* salsa cita decurrere puppi, / *caerula* verrentes abiegnis aequora palmis.' 6-7. On these lines see Cat. 64.7 below under 1.6 CAERULEUS / CAERULUS i.

Berenice's lock says that it will shine in the sky as Ariadne's golden (*aurea*) crown does. There are lacunae in the corresponding lines of the original poem of Callimachus¹ so it is difficult to tell whether the colour word is an addition of Catullus but it is likely that it is for he has added other colour epithets in his translation of the poem.² Here the colour epithet by itself has no great force; it does however contribute to the impact of these lines for there is a word associated with light or colour in each of them (*lumine... aurea... fulgeremus... flavi*). The gold of the crown is echoed by *flavi* of v. 62 which describes Berenice's hair. The implication is that the lock is golden like the crown and deserves to become a constellation.

Prop. 2.26a.6: *qualem purpureis agitatum fluctibus Hellen, / aurea quam molli tergore vexit ovis.*

In his dreams Propertius saw Cynthia shipwrecked and sinking in the waves like Helle tossed on the purple waves whom the golden (*aurea*) sheep bore on its soft back. This is a reference to the legend of Helle who, fleeing her stepmother on a magic golden ram, fell into the sea and perished.³ An extravagant comparison; Propertius' emphasis on the colours of the scene (he places *aurea* first in the line and contrasts it with *purpureis* in the previous line⁴) adds to the exaggerated, dreamlike quality and suggests that he was not seriously concerned for Cynthia's welfare, while the use of the feminine word *ovis* to describe the magic ram creates a flippant tone.⁵ The emphasis on colours also suggests that Propertius had a painting of this scene in mind when composing these lines.⁶ Compare *Anacreontea* 57 which describes a relief of Aphrodite riding on the waves.⁷ For other colour terms in the Propertius poem which add to its pictorial quality see Prop. 2.26a.16 below under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i.

¹ ὄφρα δὲ μὴ νύμφης Μινωίδος ο[/.....]ος ἀνθρώποις μόνον ἐπι .[' (110.29-60 Pfeiffer 1949 vol. 1)

² See Cat. 66.62 below under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS i; Cat. 66.61 under 1.21.1 FULGEO ii.

³ Camps (1967) p. 177.

⁴ On this adjective see Prop. 2.26a.5 below under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS iv.

⁵ Contrast the more grandiose *aurata pellis* of Catullus 64.5 above and the *aurea lana* of Propertius 3.11.12 below.

⁶ Propertius is quite conscious of deriving his scene from a picture and therefore offers the simile in the third couplet, underlining its pictorial character between the purple waves and the golden fleece' Hubbard (1974) p. 167.

⁷ 'μέσον αὐλακος δὲ Κύπρις / κρίνον ὡς τοῖς ἐλιχθέν / διαφαίνεται γαλήνας.' (vv. 20-22)

Prop. 2.26b. 50: *iam deus amplexu votum persolvit, at illi / aurea divinas urna profudit aquas.*

These lines are awkward to fit in to the context. Their sense is that the god fulfilled the vow by his embrace and a golden (*aurea*) urn poured forth water *illi* 'for her/him'. *Illi* probably refers to Amymone (v. 47) who, according to the legend, was sent to search for water; in return for her favours Neptune struck the ground with his trident and caused a spring to gush up.¹ It is not certain where the golden urn fits in as this is not mentioned elsewhere. Butler and Barber think that this detail may have suggested itself to Propertius from some pictorial representation² and Enk³ cites *Philostrati Imagines* which would seem to describe such a picture.⁴

Prop. 3.3.14: *cum me Castalia speculans ex arbore Phoebus / sic ait aurata nixus ad antra lyra:*

Apollo, leaning on a golden (*aurata*) lyre and standing near a grotto, addresses Propertius. Apollo's bow, sword and lyre were traditionally of gold. His golden lyre goes back to Hesiod.⁵ The gleam of the golden lyre is anticipated by the proper name *Phoebus* whose literal meaning is 'bright' or 'radiant'. This gleam is placed against a background of green suggested initially by the word *arbore* and reinforced later in the poem. For a more detailed discussion of this colour image in its context see Chapter 4, section 6.2.

Prop. 3.11.12: *iret ut Aesonias aurea lana domos.*

As an example of the power of women, Propertius cites Medea who performed many prodigious deeds so that the golden (*aurea*) fleece might go to the halls of Aeson. There are many references to the golden fleece in Latin and Greek literature before Propertius; see Cat. 64.5 above. The gold of the fleece is echoed by the gold of Penthesilea's helmet a few lines further on; see Prop. 3.11.15 below under iv.

Hor. 1.10.19: *... virgaque levem coerces / aurea turbam,...*

¹ Camps (1967) p. 182

² (1933) p. 236

³ (1962) v.2 p. 343

⁴ 'τὸ γοῦν περίφοβον τῆς κόρης καὶ τὸ πάλλεσθαι καὶ ἡ κάλπις ἡ χρυσοῖ διαφεύγουσα τὰς χεῖρας δηλοῖ τὴν Ἀμυμώνην ἐκπεπληχθαι καὶ ἀπορεῖν' (1.8.2.4)

⁵ Sc. 201-203

Mercury marshalls the insubstantial crowd with a golden (*aurea*) wand. Mercury's golden wand goes back to Homer where he is given the epithet χρυσόραπης.¹ Here the golden wand is a sign of Mercury's divine power which is placed in contrast to the powerlessness of the insubstantial crowd which he controls. Later on in Book 1 Horace will call Mercury's wand *horrida*², an epithet with more ominous overtones.

Hor. 2.19.29: *te vidit insons Cerberus aureo / cornu decorum...*

Horace, addressing Bacchus, recalls the time when Cerberus looked upon him glorious with his golden (*aureo*) horn and did not harm him. Dionysus is called ταυρόκερως by Euripides³ and Hellenistic and Roman art often depict him as a young man with bull's horns.⁴ Gold is, of course, characteristic of deities; Virgil represents the river Eridanus with gilded horns.⁵ Here the implication seems to be that Cerberus did not harm Bacchus because he was dazzled by the gleam of his horns.

Hor. 4.3.17: *o testudinis aureae / dulcem quae strepitum, Pieri, temperas*

Horace addresses the Muse Melpomene who modulates the sweet sound of the golden (*aureae*) shell. The shell is the tortoise-shell which traditionally formed part of the lyre. The colour epithet *aureus* is applied to it most probably because of the convention which depicted everything which belonged to the gods as golden; compare Prop. 3.3.14 above.

ii) Wealth: Positive

Prop. 2.1.33: *aut regum auratis circumdata colla catenis*

Propertius would celebrate the deeds of Maecenas if he were able to sing of triumphs and of the necks of kings bound with golden (*auratis*) chains. Gold is traditionally associated with royalty and in the ancient world it was not uncommon for the shackles of captive kings or princes to be of gold.⁶ The image of kings in chains is enhanced by the word order of the line: *auratis* is placed next to *regum*, reinforcing the word's association with royalty and the word for neck, *colla*, is placed between *auratis* and its noun, creating a

¹ Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) p. 134. See *Od.* 5.87, 10.277.

² *'quam virga semel horrida / non lenis precibus fata recludere, / nigro compulerit Mercurius gregi?'* (24.16-18)

³ *Ba.* 100

⁴ Dodds (1960) p. 79

⁵ *'et gemina auratis taurino cornua vultu / Eridanus...'* (*Geor.* 4.371)

⁶ Enk (1962) p. 27

word picture. If an alternative manuscript reading is correct, there is also a colour contrast between the gold of the king's chains and the dark garb of the captive Nile in the previous couplet.¹

Prop. 2.31.1: *Quaeris, cur veniam tibi tardior? aurea Phoebi / porticus a magno
Caesare aperta fuit.*

Propertius explains to a friend that he is late in coming because today the golden (*aurea*) colonnade of Phoebus was opened by great Caesar. This was part of the complex of the temple of Apollo on the Palatine, renowned for its rich adornment.² Undoubtedly gold was employed in its decoration (most commentators suggest the roof) but it is likely that Propertius employs *aurea* here in a wider sense to sum up the richness and beauty of the building.

Prop. 2.33b.40: *spumet et aurato mollius in calice.*

Propertius expresses a desire that the wine flow more lusciously in Cynthia's golden (*aurato*) cup. It is typical of Cynthia to use the most costly materials for everything: see Prop. 1.3.41 below under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i and compare Hor. 1.31.10 below under iii.

Prop. 4.1.5: *ficilibus crevere deis haec aurea templa*

From gods of clay arose these golden (*aurea*) temples which now adorn Rome. In this poem Propertius contrasts the rustic simplicity of Rome in its earliest days with its current splendour. A common theme amongst Roman poets; compare *Aeneid* 8.348 ' (*Capitolia aurea nunc, olim silvestribus horrida dumis*).³ For other colour terms employed in this poem see Prop. 4.1.32 above under 1.2.2. ALBUS ii.

Prop. 4.1.131: *mox ubi bulla rudi dimissa est aurea collo, / matris et ante deos
libera sumpta toga*

¹ 'aut canerem Aegyptum et Nilum, cum atratus in urbem / septem captivis debilis ibat aquis' (vv. 33-34). This however is not the OCT reading.

² '(Caesar) templumque Apollinis et circa porticus facturum promisit, quod ab eo singulari exstructum munificentia est.' Vell. 2.81; see also Butler and Barber (1933) p. 247.

³ Later on, Ovid will pick up the motif; 'simplicitas rudis ante fuit: nunc aurea Roma est' (Ars. Am. 3.113). Compare Suetonius' remark about Augustus' transformation of the city of Rome; 'Urbem neque pro maiestate imperii ornatam et inundationibus incendiisque obnoxiam excoluit adeo, ut iure sit gloriatus marmoream se relinquere quam latericiam accepisset.' (Aug. 28.3). See also Camps (1965 p. 48) for allusions of other writers to the golden Capitol.

After the golden (*aurea*) ball was taken from Propertius' young neck and he put on the *toga virilis* before his mother's gods, he started writing poetry. The golden ball was an amulet worn by children¹; taking it off, like taking off the *toga praetexta*, marked the transition from youth to manhood. There is a possible gold/white contrast between this line and the reference to the *libera toga* in the following line, for the toga of manhood was entirely white.²

Prop. 4.7.40: *haec nunc aurata cyclade signat humum;*

The ghost of Cynthia complains that her successor in Propertius' affections 'now marks the earth with her robe's golden (*aurata*) border'. This is a sign of her increase in status. When she was a *meretrix* (as is suggested in the previous line³) she would have worn the toga - now she is Propertius' mistress she wears the garb of a wealthy woman.⁴ For the association of courtesans with bright colours see the discussion in Chapter 5, section 3. The gaudy clothing of Cynthia's successor is in contrast to the pallor of the dead Cynthia in v. 36.⁵

Prop. 4.10.28: *heu Vei veteres! et vos tum regna fuistis,/et vestro posita est aurea sella foro:*

Propertius, addressing Veii, reminisces about its former days of grandeur when the throne of gold (*aurea*) was set in its marketplace. This is an allusion to the Etruscan king's throne, adopted by the Romans as their curule chair.⁶

iii) Wealth: Negative

Prop. 3.2.12: *quod non Taenariis domus est mihi fulta columnis,/nec camera auratas inter eburna trabes*

Propertius' house is not supported by Taenarian columns, nor are there vaulted roofs of ivory with gilded (*auratas*) beams between. The gold and the ivory are obvious symbols of a lifestyle which Propertius rejects - for a similar sentiment compare Hor. 2.18.1 below. Note the colour contrast of the gold with the white ivory. Camps points out that the word

¹ Plin. *N.H.* 28.39. See also Sebesta (1994) p. 47

² See *virilis* under def. 3 in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (1968 p. 2072).

³ 'quae modo per vilis inspecta est publica noctes'

⁴ Butler and Barber (1933) p. 362

⁵ 'sensi ego, cum insidiis pallida vina bibi'. See further on this line under 1.37.2 PALLIDUS.

⁶ Butler and Barber (1933) p. 377 who cite Livy 1.8.3.

order (*camera* next to *auratas*, *eburna* next to *trabes*) 'helps to convey the alternation of materials in the coffering of the roof'.¹ There is also a suggestion of colour in the previous line with the reference to Taenarian columns for these were made from black marble.²

Prop. 3.12.12: *ferreus aurato neu cataphractus equo*

Galla fears that the mail-clad soldier with his gilded (*aurato*) steed will rejoice at her husband Postumus' death. Postumus has gone campaigning in the East and the richly clad soldier is presumably a Parthian.³ Compare the *Aeneid* where Chloereus who wears the rich trappings of the East rides a horse protected by bronze scales with gold links.⁴ Camilla is attracted by his rich attire and her desire to gain it as booty leads to her death⁵, just as here Postumus' greed for the riches of the East⁶ may lead to his own death. This association of gold with destruction will be continued into the next poem; see Chapter 5 below for an analysis of 3.13. Note the adjective *ferreus* which can mean 'hard-hearted', appropriate in this context, but Propertius also plays on the double meaning of the word by placing *aurato* immediately after it thus reinforcing its literal meaning 'made from iron'. Those who alter *aurato* to *armato* or *aerato* because of its 'improbability'⁷ do not appear to grasp the significance of the word.

Prop. 3.13.57: *tu quoque ut auratos gereres, Eriphyla, lacertos, / delapsis nusquam est Amphiararus equis.*

Because Eriphyla desired to have gold-decked (*auratos*) shoulders, Amphiararus and his steeds have disappeared. This is an incident from the story of the Seven against Thebes - Eriphyla was bribed (with a necklace or bracelet) to betray her husband Amphiararus' hiding place to the Seven; consequently he went to Thebes and was killed there.⁸ It is one of the mythological allusions that Propertius introduces as a warning of the dire things that

¹ (1966) p. 61

² Butler and Barber (1933) p. 266

³ see vv. 3-4

⁴ 'Forte sacer Cybello Chloereus olimque sacerdos / insignis longe Phrygiis fulgebat in armis / spumantemque agitabat equum, quem pellis aenis / in plumam squamis auro conserta tegebat.' (11.768-771). See also the lines following for a fuller and more elaborate description of Chloereus' trappings.

⁵ v. 778ff.

⁶ v. 5

⁷ e.g. Camps (1966) p. 113

⁸ Camps (1966) p. 120

happen as a result of the lust for gold. For a discussion of this colour image in its context see Chapter 5, section 5.4.

Prop. 4.5.21: *Si te Eoa Dorozantum iuvat aurea ripa,/ et quae sub Tyria concha superbit aqua*

An old bawd gives advice on coquetry to Propertius' mistress so that she can acquire the riches she delights in, among them the Eastern golden (*aurea*) shore of the Dorozantes. There are many textual variations on *Dorozantum* and it is not known who these people were nor why their shore was golden¹ but it is evident that they come from the East. There is an implied colour contrast in the following line with the reference to the *murex* from which the purple dye for cloth was produced. For a similar association of gold and purple with the corruption of the East see Prop. 3.13.5 below under 1.5.2 AURUM ii and the discussion on this line in Chapter 5, section 5.1.

Hor. 1.31.10: *...dives et aureis / mercator exsiccet culullis / vina Syra reparata merce*

Let the rich merchant drain from his golden (*aureis*) chalices the wine which he purchased with Syrian wares. Here Horace contrasts the life of the merchant with the simple existence he himself desires. The chalices are obviously golden because the merchant is rich; note how Horace emphasises *dives* and *aureis* by placing them together at the beginning of the phrase.² Horace, on the other hand, has rejected *aurum aut ebur* (v. 6). Quinn thinks that *aureis* is employed ironically here; 'the little golden goblets proclaim sophisticated refinement but the *mercator* drains them greedily to the last drop'.³ The colour of the golden goblets are complemented by the ruby colour of the wine which the merchant drains so eagerly.

Hor. 2.18.1: *Non ebur neque aureum / mea renidet in domo lacunar*

Horace says that neither ivory nor gilded (*aureum*) panels shine in his home. A traditional theme; compare Prop. 3.2.12 above. In both passages there is a similar gold/white contrast

¹ Camps (1965) p. 99

² For golden cups as a sign of a wealthy lifestyle compare Hor. *Sat.* 1.2.114; '*num tibi cum fauces urit sitis, aurea quaeris / pocula?...*' and Propertius 2.33b.40 (above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS ii).

³ (1980) p. 182

and an additional contrast with the colour of the marble which adorns the home.¹ According to Nisbet and Hubbard, Horace is imitating Bacchylides² but this image is also well-established in Latin literature and variations of the motif are produced by Lucretius³, Cicero⁴ and [Tibullus]⁵. Horace's description of the home of a rich man is full of light and colour - like Catullus' description of Peleus' palace in Poem 64⁶, there are references to gold, ivory, purple⁷ and words for shining (*renidet* v. 2).

iv) Beauty / Desirability

Cat. 2b.2: *tam gratum est mihi quam ferunt puellae / pernici aureolum fuisse malum*

Catullus says that a thing is as pleasing to him as the golden (*aureolum*) apple was for the swift girl (Atalanta). It is uncertain what is pleasing as this is part of a fragment. If this poem is attached to the end of c. 2, as some editors would have it, then Catullus is using this simile to describe his desire for Lesbia and indeed the apple, like the girl's belt in the following line, has obvious sexual overtones.⁸ The image of the golden apple of the Hesperides, like that of the golden fleece, is well established in previous literature with both Hesiod and Callimachus making reference to the χρύσεια μήλα and Lucretius to the *mala aurea*.⁹ It is significant that the word *aureus* conveys shining as well as colour for

¹ Propertius' house has Taenarian marble which, as has already been pointed out, was black in colour; Horace's house has Hymettian marble which was blue-grey in colour. (Nisbet and Hubbard 1978 p. 293)

² Nisbet and Hubbard (1978 p. 287f.) think that Horace is conflating two different passages from Bacchylides; 'οὐ βοῶν πάρεστι σῶματ' οὔτε χρυσός, / οὔτε πορφύρεοι τάπητες' (frag. 21.1-2 Snell-Maehler 1970) and 'χρυσῶ δ' ἐλέφαντί τε μαρμαίρουσιν οἴκοι' (frag. 20B 13. Snell-Maehler 1970).

³ '*nec domus argento fulget auroque renidet / nec citharae reboant laqueata aurataque templa*' (2.27-28)

⁴ '*qui marmoreis tectis ebore et auro fulgentibus*' Parad. 1.13.3

⁵ '*quidve domus prodest Phrygiis innixa columnis / Taenare sive tuis, sive Caryste tuis, / et nemora in domibus sacros imitantia lucos / aurataeque trabes marmoreumque solum?*' (3.3.13-16)

⁶ See Cat. 64.44 above under 1.3.2 ARGENTUM.

⁷ Horace's reference to purple comes in v. 8; '*nec Laconicas mihi / trahunt honestae purpuras clientae*:'

⁸ For the link of the Atalanta myth with Aphrodite see Foster (1899) p. 41f. Compare Catullus' use of the apple in c. 65, discussed below under 1.43.3 RUBOR.

⁹ Hesiod *Th.* 215-216; Callimachus *Cer.* 11; Lucretius 5.32. There is some dispute as to whether the apples are made from gold or are merely golden in colour (Kober 1932 p. 64). Fordyce (1961 p. 92) thinks that the description of Atalanta's apple as *aureus* probably just refers to the colour of ripeness (as it does in Virg. *Ec.* 8.52-53) but Ovid's description of the apple tree of the Hesperides mentions the crackle of the golden leaves ('...medio nitet arbor in arvo, / fulva comas, fulvo ramis crepitantibus auro:' *Met.* 10. 647-648).

Catullus uses shining words elsewhere in reference to objects or people especially desirable.¹

Cat. 61.95: ... *viden? faces/aureas quatiunt comas:*

Catullus urges the bride to come forth by depicting the waiting torches of the bridal procession shaking their golden (*aureas*) locks. The scene is at night and the torches blazing against the night form a dramatic backdrop to the action. The idea of fire or torches having hair or curls goes back as far as Aeschylus². The colour epithet *aureus*, which is an addition by Catullus, is not only appropriate to the wedding context³ but helps to personify the torches by associating them with the golden beauty of the bride (see the entry immediately below). For a detailed discussion of this colour image in its context see Chapter 2, section 5.2. Also compare 64.13 below under 1.24 INCANESCO where Catullus also employs a colour word to help personify an inanimate object.

Cat. 61.160: *transfer omine cum bono / limen aureolos pedes, / rasilemque subi forem.*

Catullus describes the bride's feet as golden (*aureolos*) in their passage over the polished threshold. *Aureolus* is an allusion to the colour of the bride's shoes, traditionally yellow like the *flammeum*, but the shining aspect of this word (echoed by *rasilem* 'polished' which describes the threshold) and the emotiveness of the diminutive also underlines the significance of crossing the threshold. For a more detailed discussion of this colour image see Chapter 2, section 5.3. This is not the only occasion in the long poems where Catullus uses a word for colour or shining to describe the feet of someone desirable or beloved.⁴

Prop. 3.11.15: *aurea cui postquam nudavit cassida frontem, / vicit victorem candida forma virum.*

When Penthesilea, the leader of the Amazons, was killed and her golden (*aurea*) helmet was stripped from her brow, her bright beauty conquered her conqueror. This is one of the mythological *exempla* which Propertius gives of the power of women - even in death

¹ See, for instance, below on Cat. 68.70 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS ii; Cat. 2.5 under 1.34.1 NITEO i.

² A. 306; *Pr.* 1044, 1084; see also Bacchylides 17(16).56 (Snell-Maehler 1970).

³ Edgeworth (1992) p. 11

⁴ See, for instance, Cat. 64.162 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i., Cat. 65.6 under 1.37.2 PALLIDUS, Cat. 68.71 below under 1.21.1 FULGEO ii.

Penthesilea had power over her slayer. Note that the colour word *aurea* is reinforced by *candida* in the following line, employed of Penthesilea's beauty. This use of colour in association with the power of beauty is also played upon in the following couplet with the verb *tingere* which Propertius employs to describe the Gygean lake's transformation of Omphale into an overwhelmingly beautiful woman¹, for the verb can also mean 'to dye with colour'.

Prop. 4.7.85: *hic Tiburtina iacet aurea Cynthia terra / accessit ripae laus, Aniene, tuae.*

The ghost of Cynthia tells Propertius to place an epitaph for her on a pillar, which reads 'Here golden (*aurea*) Cynthia lies in Tibur's fields; renown is bestowed upon your banks, Anio'. In Greek literature χρύσεος is regularly employed in a metaphorical fashion to denote physical or spiritual beauty, usually that of the gods.² In particular Aphrodite is often called 'golden'³; thus *aureus* is also an appropriate epithet for Cynthia whose pseudonym comes from a goddess. With this epithet Propertius also plays on the literal meaning of *aureus*, by the use of the epithet suggesting that Cynthia is the 'gold' lying in Tibur's fields which adds renown to the Anio's banks. Compare Tibullus' use of *aureus* to describe an old woman who has been kind to him⁴; here the metaphorical meaning predominates but there is still a certain tension between *aureus* and *anus*.

Hor. 1.5.9: *qui nunc te fruitur credulus aurea*

Alas for the ignorant youth now enjoying golden (*aurea*) Pyrrha. *Aurea* is an appropriate epithet for Pyrrha whom Horace describes as having yellow hair (*flavam comam* v. 4) and whose name is associated with these colours.⁵ Moreover, as we have seen in the entry above, 'golden' is an adjective which is regularly applied to the goddess of love. In this context the word also implies a willingness and an amiability which will turn out to be transient.⁶ Note how Horace places *credulus* with *aurea* at the end of the line; the

¹ *Omphale in tantum formae processit honorem, / Lydia Gygeo tincta puella lacu* (vv. 17-18). See further the discussion of the use of *tingere* at Propertius 3.3.27 under section 6.2.ii of Chapter 4.

² See Kober (1932) p. 62 and entry iii under χρύσεος in Liddell and Scott (1968 p. 2009).

³ *Il.* 3.64; *Od.* 8.337; *Mimn.* 1.1 (Allen 1993); also *Venus aurea* Virg. *Aen.* 10.16.

⁴ *'non ego te propter parco tibi, sed tua mater / me movet atque iras aurea vincit anus.'* (1.6.57-58)

⁵ See Hor. 1.5.4 below under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS i.

⁶ *'qui semper vacuam, semper amabilem / sperat...'* (vv. 10-11)

implication is that the youth is credulous to believe in Pyrrha's golden nature. In addition, Vessey sees a play on the literal meaning of *aurea*; 'those who "assay" Pyrrha in the fire of love find her base metal, despite the superficial sheen that captivates them.'¹ There is also a word play with *aurae* in v. 11² - note how *aurea* and *aurae* are at the end of their respective lines with two similar adjectives, *credulus* and *nescius*, immediately in front of them.³ Thus the first instant the Roman reader saw the phrase the idea of 'treacherous gold' as well as 'the treacherous breeze' would spring to mind.

v) Moral Worth or Merit

Hor. 2.10. 5: *auream quisquis mediocritatem / diligit, tutus caret obsoleti / sordibus tecti, caret invidenda / sobrius aula.*

Whoever cultivates the golden (*auream*) mean avoids both the dinginess of a shabby dwelling and a hall which is bound to excite envy. In this poem Horace outlines his favourite philosophical position. *Aureus* here is obviously employed in a metaphorical sense; as Quinn says it is a term of approval.⁴ Words for golden are often employed in this way in both Greek and Latin literature.⁵ Nisbet and Hubbard see an oxymoron in *aurea mediocritas* as *mediocritas* 'sometimes has an implication of mediocrity'.⁶ There is also a contrast between the gleam of *aureus* and the dinginess (*sordibus*) of the shabby dwelling. The contrast between the dull and the brilliant is a favourite one of Horace; compare Hor.3.1.40, Hor. 3.14.13 and Hor.4.11.35 above under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS v.

Hor. 2.13.26: *et te sonantem plenius aureo, / Alcaee, plectro dura navis, / dura fugae mala, dura belli!*

Horace depicts Sappho and Alcaeus in the underworld. Sappho is plaintively singing of her countrywomen and Alcaeus is celebrating more grandly with his golden (*aureo*) plectrum the hardships of the sea, the terrible hardships of exile and the hardships of war. Apollo and the Muses are traditionally portrayed with golden lyres⁷, as are bards of great skill.⁸

¹ (1984) p.466

² ...*nescius aurae / fallacis!*...

³ '*aurae* seems to be in tension with 13 *aurea*' (Nisbet and Hubbard 1970 p. 77)

⁴ (1980) p.217

⁵ 'χρυσέη Ἐλπὶς' S. O.T. 158; 'χρυσέη ὑγίεια' Pi. P. 3. 73; '*aurea dicta*' Lucr. 3.12; '*aurea Copia*' Hor. Epist. 1.12.28-29

⁶ (1978) p.160

⁷ See Prop. 3.3.14 and Hor.4.3.17 above under i.

⁸ '...*cithara crinitus Iopas / personat aurata, docuit quem maximus Atlas.*' (Aen. 1.740-741).

Thus Horace probably makes reference to Alcaeus' golden lyre because he wishes to emphasise his status as a master bard.¹ Minaedo views the golden lyre both as a phallic symbol, like the *lignum caducum* in the first half of the poem² and as a symbol of immortality; 'the golden plectrum shines imperishable amid the final darkness.'³

Hor. 4.2.23: ... *et viris animumque moresque / aureos educit in astra nigroque / invidet Orco.*

Pindar laments the young hero who has been snatched from his weeping bride, extolling his strength, courage and golden (*aureos*) virtues to the stars and begrudging them to black Orcus. Here the colour word *aureus* is picked up by the gleam of the stars and Horace creates a contrast between the golden *mores* of the hero and the blackness of the underworld which enfolds him.⁴ The implication is that Pindar will make the hero's virtues shine even in the blackness of death. According to Tarrant, metaphors of light to denote fame and dark for failure or obscurity are characteristic of Pindar's style.⁵ It is also possible that this colour image owes something to Bacchylides who draws a similar contrast between golden renown and the dark cloud of death.⁶

1.5.2 AURUM

i) Wealth: Positive

Cat. 64.44: *sedes ...fulgenti splendent auro atque argento.*

Peleus' palace is bright with gold (*auro*) and silver. See on this line above under 1.3.2

ARGENTUM.

Prop. 3.17.37: *ante fores templi crater antistitis auro / libatum fundens in tua sacra merum.*

¹ 'the golden plectrum is the symbol of the master-poet' Quinn (1980) p. 224. '*aureo autem plectro propter dignitatem carminis*'. Porphyrio (Meyer 1874).

² '*...agro qui statuit meo / te triste lignum, te caducum / in domini caput immerentis*.' vv. 10-12
³ (1982) p.224

⁴ See further on *nigro Orco* below under 1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS iii.

⁵ 'With Pindar the metaphor of light is very frequent in one usage, as applied to the radiant distinction or fame of a person or object...σκότος and cognate words are by contrast used to convey the disgrace of obscurity, failure, neglect, or deception.' (1960 p. 182)

⁶ 'ἐκ τοῦ παρὰ βωμῶν ἀριστάρχου Διὸς / Νίκας] φ[ε]ρεκυδέος ἀν-/στεφθε]ξαν δ[ν]θεα, / χρυσέ]αν δόξαν πολύφαντον ἐν αἰ-/ῶνι] τρέφει παύροις βροτῶν / α]λεί, καὶ ὅταν θανάτοιο / κυάνεον νέφος καλύψῃ, λείπεται / ἀθάνατον κλέος εὖ ἐρ-/χθέντος ἀσφαλεῖ σὺν αἴσαι.' *Ep.* 13 (12).58-66 (Snell-Maehler 1970). See also Simonides *Pal. Anth.* 7.251 which is quoted in the discussion on *nigro Orco* below under 1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS iii.

A difficult sentence because of the lack of a finite verb in this couplet. Shackleton-Bailey suggests that *stabit* or *erit* should be understood.¹ If this is the case, then the sense of the couplet is that a priest will stand in front of the doors of the temple, pouring out wine onto Bacchus' sacrifice from a bowl with a golden (*auro*) ladle.

Hor. 4.2.39: ...*quamvis redeant in aurum / tempora priscum.*

No-one greater than Caesar shall be bestowed upon the world, although the centuries return to the ancient age of gold (*aurum*). The expression goes back to Hesiod.² Horace also employs a similar phrase in the *Epodes*.³

ii) Wealth: Negative

Cat. 64.100: *quanto saepe magis fulgore expalluit auri*

Ariadne grows paler than the gleam of gold (*auri*) when Theseus fights the Minotaur. This, at first glance, seems an odd image, almost an oxymoron, for paleness seems to imply loss of colour, whereas *fulgor auri* brings to mind both colour⁴ and brightness. Catullus employs a similar image in c. 81 where he compares the pallor of Iuventius' lover to that of a gilded statue.⁵ Quinn explains the comparison with gold in c. 64 by saying that it is meant to recall the yellow colour of olive-skinned complexions when frightened⁶ and indeed yellowness and paleness are sometimes associated by ancient writers.⁷ It is even possible to find other instances of *palleo* and its cognates being used to describe gold or vice-versa.⁸ Even so, the conjunction of words for pallor and brightness (*fulgor*) is very unusual.

Prop. 1.8.39: *hanc ego non auro, non Indis flectere conchis, / sed potui blandi carminis obsequi.*

¹ (1956) p. 193

² 'χρύσειον μὲν πρώτιστα γένος μερόπων ἀνθρώπων / ἀθάνατοι ποίησαν Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες.' (*Op.* 109-110).

³ 'Iuppiter illa piae secrevit litora genti, / ut inquinavit aere tempus aureum;' (16.63-64)

⁴ For the colour of gold see Tib. 1.1.1 where he gives it the epithet *fulvus*.

⁵ 'hospes inaurata pallidior statua' (v. 4). See Cat. 81.4 below under 1.23 INAURATUS.

⁶ (1973) p. 317

⁷ e.g. 'o quantus instat navitis sudor tuis / tibi que pallor luteus' Hor. *Ep.* 10.15-16; 'lurida praeterea fiunt quaecumque tuentur / arquali, quia luroris de corpore eorum / semina multa fluunt simulacris obvia rerum, / multaque sunt oculis in eorum denique mixta, / quae contage sua palloribus omnia pingunt.' (*Lucr.* 4.332-335). Also compare Prop. 4.7.82 below under 1.37.1 PALLEO / PALLESCO.

⁸ See the instances which Fordyce gives (1961 p. 371); these include Ov. *Met.* 11.110 and Stat. *Silv.* 4.7.15.

Propertius did not persuade Cynthia to remain by means of gold (*auro*) or Indian pearls but with his poems. An additional colour element is suggested by *concha*; not here the conch shell which is associated with purple (like the *concha* of 3.13.6 below) but the pearl or mother of pearl¹, creating a gold/white contrast.

Prop. 3.5.3: *nec tamen in viso pectus mihi carpitur auro, / nec bibit e gemma divite nostra sitis*

Propertius says that his heart is not consumed by lust for hateful gold (*auro*), nor does his thirst drink from cups adorned with gems. Here the glitter of the gold is reinforced by the allusion to gems in the following line.

Prop. 3.13.5: *Inda cavis aurum mittit formica metallis, / et venit e Rubro concha Erycina salo, / et Tyros ostrinos praebet Cadmea colores, / cinnamon et multi pastor odoris Arabs:*

The Indian ant sends gold (*aurum*) from the caves of the mine, the conch shell of Venus comes from the Red sea, Cadmean Tyre offers purple hues and the Arabian shepherd the rich scent of cinnamon to storm the hearts of women. Women's lust for luxuries is a common theme in Propertius: compare Prop. 4.5.21 above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iii. As in Propertius 4.5 there is a gold/purple contrast between *aurum* and the purple hues (*ostrinos colores*) which Cadmean Tyre sends; the references to the conch shell, the Red sea and cinnamon also contribute to the colourful effect of the passage. For a full discussion of these lines in their context see further Chapter 5, section 5.1.

Prop. 3.13.48/ 49/ 50: *aurum omnes victa iam pietate colunt. / auro pulsa fides, auro venalia iura / aurum lex sequitur, mox sine lege pudor.*

In the present day piety is vanquished and everyone worships gold (*aurum*); gold (*auro*) has caused faith to be banished and with gold (*auro*) justice is on sale; gold (*aurum*) rules the law and rules chastity when the law has gone. In this continuation of his theme of gold's power to corrupt (see the entry above) Propertius extends the picture from women to the whole of mankind, employing the word for gold four times in the space of four lines. For a full discussion of these lines in their context see further Chapter 5, section 5.4.

Prop. 3.13.55: *te scelus accepto Thracis Polymestoris auro / nutrit in hospitio non, Polydore, pio.*

¹ Butler and Barber (1933) p. 166; Rothstein (1924) vol. 1 p. 114

The crime of Thracian Polymestor who was bribed with gold (*auro*) was nurturing Polydorus with impious hospitality. This *exemplum* of gold's power to corrupt will be picked up by the reference to the golden bracelets of Eriphyla in the following couplet: see Prop. 3.13.57 above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iii.

Prop. 4.1.81: *nunc pretium fecere deos et (fallitur auro / Iuppiter)...*

Now people make the gods a means of gain and Jupiter is falsified for gold (*auro*).¹

Prop. 4. 5.53: *aurum spectato, non quae manus afferat aurum!*

A bawd advises Propertius' mistress to look to the gold (*aurum*), not to the hand which brings the gold (*aurum*). Here Propertius emphasises the attraction which gold has for women by the placement of *aurum* at the beginning and end of the line.

Prop. 4. 7.47: *te patiente meae conflavit imaginis aurum*

Cynthia's ghost accuses Propertius of permitting his new mistress to melt the gold (*aurum*) of her image.

Hor. 1.31.6: *...non aurum aut ebur Indicum*

Horace does not pray for Indian gold (*aurum*) nor ivory. This allusion to gold is picked up in the following stanza by the picture of the merchant greedily draining his wine from golden chalices; see Hor. 1.31.10 above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iii.

Hor. 2.16.8: *non gemmis neque purpura ve-/nale neque auro.*

Otium cannot be bought with gems, purple, nor gold (*auro*). Horace here combines three symbols of wealth; their colour and brilliance emphasize their powerful appeal which, however, is not powerful enough to purchase *otium*. The motif of gleaming picks up from v. 3 where the stars no longer shine (*fulgent*) sure for sailors.² The impression conveyed is that, like the stars, the gleam of gold and gems also cannot be relied upon.

Hor. 2.18.36: *...nec satelles Orci / callidum Promethea / revexit auro captus....*

¹ According to Butler and Barber this is the most plausible interpretation of these lines if the manuscript is accepted as correct (1933 p. 328). However many believe that the text is corrupt at this point; see Shackleton-Bailey's discussion (1956 p. 221).

² See Hor. 2.16.3 below under 1.21.1 FULGEO i.

Orcus' servant could not be bribed by gold (*auro*) to bring back crafty Prometheus. This is an *exemplum* of the powerlessness of gold against death which forms part of Horace's rejection of wealth; see the first lines of this poem above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iii.

Hor. 3.3.49: *aurum irrepertum et sic melius situm, / cum terra celat, spernere fortior*

Juno prophesies that Rome will be stronger at rejecting undiscovered gold (*aurum*), which is better placed when the earth conceals it, than at snatching everything for gain. Once again, the idea is the corrupting power of gold and here Rome's ability to withstand the temptation of gold is seen as evidence of her moral superiority and right to be mistress of the world.¹

Hor. 3.5.25: *aurum repensus scilicet acrior / miles redibit. flagitio additis / damnum: neque amissos colores / lana refert medicata fuco*

Regulus, in his speech to the senate, comments sarcastically that a soldier ransomed with gold (*auro*) will be all the keener to fight. He is of course implying the opposite and hammers home his argument by drawing a parallel with dyed wool which cannot return to its original colour. Thus in this stanza we have three colour elements; the colour of the gold is picked up by the purple (*fuco*) of the wool whose original colour (*colores*) was, presumably, white. The association of the bright colour of dye or paint with corruption and moral degeneracy is not exclusive to Horace but seems to have been part of the Roman psyche.² As André comments, 'la teinture des laines était un symbole de la perte de cette pureté naïve des premiers âges.'³

Hor. 3.16.9: *aurum per medios ire satellites / et perrumpere amat saxa potentius / ictu fulmineo:...*

Gold (*aurum*) loves to go make its way through the midst of guards and break through rocks, being more powerful than the thunderbolt. This is an allusion to the legend of Zeus visiting Danae as a golden shower which Horace employs as an *exemplum* of the terrible power of wealth.⁴

¹ Williams (1969) p.44

² On this theme see further Chapter 5, section 3 below.

³ (1949) p. 253.

⁴ Williams (1969) p.100

Hor. 3.24.48: *gemmas et lapides, aurum et inutile, / summi materiem mali*

Horace exhorts the Romans to send their gems and precious stones and useless gold (*aurum*), the root of all evil, to the Capitol or into the sea. Once again the glitter of the gold is reinforced by the allusion to gems and precious stones.

iii) Moral Worth or Merit

Cat. 107.3: *quare hoc est gratum t'nobis quoque^t carius auro / quod te restituis, Lesbia, mi cupido.*

Catullus tells Lesbia that it is a pleasure to him more precious than gold (*auro*) that she restore herself to Catullus who desires her.

Prop. 3.23.7: *non illas fixum caras effecerat aurum: / vulgari buxo sordida cera fuit.*

It was not golden (*aurum*) fittings that made Propertius' tablets precious to him for they were only dirty wax on common boxwood. In this couplet Propertius sets up a contrast between the golden fittings of other people's tablets and the dirty (*sordida*) wax on his own. However there is also a suggestion that Propertius' tablets were a similar colour to that of gold, for the materials from which they are made (*cera* and *buxus*) are the source of colour adjectives which can be used to describe yellow objects.¹ The implication may be that Propertius' tablets were metaphorically 'golden' because of what could be written on them.

Prop. 3.23.21: *quas si quis mihi rettulerit, donabitur auro:*

Anyone who returns Propertius' tablets to him will be rewarded with gold (*auro*). Here Propertius reiterates the idea (implicit in vv. 7-8 above) that the contents of his tablets are more precious than gold.

iv) Beauty / Desirability

Hor. 4.9.14: *non sola comptos arsit adulteri / crinis et aurum vestibus illitum / mirata regalisque cultus / et comites Helene Lacaena*

Spartan Helen was not the only woman to burn with passion, marvelling at her adulterer's trim locks, the gold (*aurum*) embroidered on his clothing, his regal train and comrades.

¹ See André (1949) pp. 157 and 159 respectively.

This perhaps owes something to Apollonius' description of Medea's passion for Jason.¹ Also compare Ovid's description of Scylla when she sees Nisus in his purple robe² and Propertius' description of Tarpeia watching Tatius.³

1.6. CAERULEUS / CAERULUS

i) Sea and Sea Deities

Cat. 36.11: *nunc o caeruleo creata ponto*

Catullus calls on the daughter of the azure (*caeruleo*) sea to witness the consummation of Lesbia's vow to throw into the fire the writings of 'the worst of poets'. This grandiose sounding phrase is an allusion to Aphrodite and her birth from the sea foam and contributes to the tone of mock solemnity. Compare *Aeneid* 12 where, as witnesses to the covenant between him and Latinus, Aeneas calls upon many different gods including 'the powers which hold sway over the blue sea'.⁴ In Greek poetry epithets for blue are not applied to the sea until quite late. According to Edgeworth, Homer uses ἠεροειδής of the sea rather than epithets for blue⁵ and Irwin⁶ comments that Simonides was the first to call the sea *κυάνεος*.⁷ In Latin literature the use of *caeruleus* to describe the sea appears as early as Ennius.⁸ The colour blue is sometimes associated with Venus in pictures; see for instance the painting of Venus on a sea shell where the surrounding sea is a vivid blue.⁹

Cat. 64.7: *caerula verrentes abiegnis aequora palmis.*

The Argonauts sweep the azure (*caerula*) plains of the sea with oars of fir. Note how Catullus emphasizes the colour word by placing it first in its line and separating it from its noun; the word which follows it, *verrentes*, suggests the sea being churned up and

¹ Arg. 3.1015-1024.

² 'cum vero faciem dempto nudaverat *aere/purpureusque albi stratis insignia pictis/terga premebat equi spumantiaque ora regebat/vix sua, vix sanae virgo Niseia compos/mentis erat.*' (Met. 8.32-36)

³ See Prop. 4.4.20 below under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS i.

⁴ 'fontisque fluviosque voco, quaeque aetheris alti/religio et quae *caeruleo* sunt numina ponto.' (vv. 181-182)

⁵ (1992) p. 111.

⁶ (1974) p. 103

⁷ Simonides fr. 62.4 (Page 1962). See also Bacchylides *Ep.* 13 (12).124-25 (Snell-Maehler 1970) and Apollonius (4.843) who both employ this colour epithet of the sea.

⁸ *Ann.* fr. 384-5 (Vahlen 1963). For the quote see the following entry.

⁹ See Maiuri (1953) p. 7. Catullus however would certainly not have viewed this particular picture for Ling dates it as fourth style (1991 p. 152).

anticipates the description of the white foam of the waves in vv. 13-14.¹ The colour term picks up from *auratam* in v. 5 which is also the first word in its line.² Here Catullus has obviously been influenced by Apollonius' description of the departure of the Argonauts which utilises a great deal of colour in its description of the sea being churned up by the ship.³ Ennius also makes a similar use of colour in his description of the departure of the Roman fleet⁴ and Tibullus and Virgil in their turn will employ variations of this colour motif.⁵

Prop. 2.9.15: *cum tibi nec Peleus aderat nec caerula mater*

On the day that Achilles died neither Peleus nor his sea-blue (*caerula*) mother were present. Tibullus⁶ and Horace⁷ also use *caeruleus* of Thetis, and in Pindar, the epithet κυανόπλοκος is applied to her.⁸ This colour term is the last in a series which is employed in this vignette of Briseis' mourning over Achilles' corpse: see further Prop. 2.9.10 below under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i., Prop. 2.9.12. under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS ii.

Prop. 2.26a.16: *et tibi ob invidiam Nereides increpitarent, / candida Nesaeae, caerula Cymothoe*

White Nesaeae and azure (*caerula*) Cymothoe in their envy would have called reproaches upon Cynthia if she had become a sea nymph. Homer mentions the Nereids Nesaeae and Cymothoe⁹ but does not give them any epithets. Here the word *caerula*, complemented as it

¹ See Cat. 64.14 below under 1.8.1 CANDEO /CANDESCO.

² See Cat. 64.5 above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS i.

³ 'ἀφρώ δ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα κελαϊνὴ κήκειν ἄλμη / δεινὸν μορμύρουσα περισθενέων μένει ἀνδρῶν. / στράπτει δ' ὑπ' ἡλίῳ φλογὶ εἴκελα νηὸς λούσης / τεύχεα μακρὰ δ' αἰὲν ἐλευκαίνοντο κέλευθοι, / ἀτραπὸς ὧς χλοεροῖο διειδομένη πεδίοιο.' (1.542-546). As Phinney comments, 'The entire passage, in fact, reveals a painter's joy in color, particularly color contrast.' (1967 p. 145). Also compare Eur. *Hel.* 1500-1503.

⁴ 'verrunt extemplo placide mare marmore flavo; / caeruleum spumat sale conferta rate pulsum.' (*Ann.* fr. 384-5 Vahlen 1963). Note that Ennius, like Catullus, employs a yellow/blue contrast although he uses *flavus* rather than *aureus*.

⁵ 'nondum caeruleas pinus contempserat undas, / effusum ventis praebueratque sinum' (Tib. 1.3.37-38); 'haec inter tumidi late maris ibat imago / aurea, sed fluctu spumabant caerula cano, / et circum argento clari delphines in orbem / aequora verrebant caudis aestumque secabant.' (*Aen.* 8.671-674). Here Virgil employs a very similar colour sequence with the contrast between gold, blue and the foam of the waves. The silver of the dolphins are his addition to the colour cluster.

⁶ 'talis ad Haemonium Nereis Pelea quondam / vecta est frenato caerula pisce Thetis' (1.5.46)

⁷ '...nec mater domum caerula te revehet.' (*Ep.* 13.16). See further Camps (1967) p. 105

⁸ 'κυανοπλόκοιο παῖδα ποντίας / θέτιος βιατάν' *Pae.* 6.83-4. (Kober 1932 p.71).

However, as Kober demonstrates, other deities who have no link with the sea are also described with κυαν-hair (*ibid.*).

⁹ *Il.* 18.40-41 (Butler & Barber 1933 p. 234).

is by *candida*, suggests the colours of the sea.¹ These colour words, like *purpureus* and *aureus* in the third couplet², contribute to the pictorial quality of the scene³ and lend a touch of frivolity to Propertius' protestations over Cynthia's plight.

Prop. 3.7.62: *in me caeruleo fuscina sumpta deo est.*

The drowning Paetus says that the azure (*caeruleo*) god has taken up his trident against him. The blue god with the trident is obviously Neptune; Ovid also employs *caeruleus* of him in the *Metamorphoses*.⁴ This use of colour picks up from v.56 where the water, which is closing over Paetus' head, is described as *niger*.⁵

ii) Other

Prop. 2.18c.31/32: *an si caeruleo quaedam sua tempora fuco / tinxerit, idcirco caerula forma bona est?*

Propertius asks his mistress whether the fact that another woman stains her temples with azure (*caeruleo*) dye automatically makes azure (*caerula*) beauty fair. Propertius is complaining about the artificial adornments that his mistress uses to improve her looks. The idea of a woman staining her forehead with blue dye is an exaggeration for the sake of ridicule but it is also meant to recall the barbarous customs of the Britons.⁶ For the Roman mistrust of exotic dyes see the discussion under section 3 of Chapter 5.

Prop. 2.28b.40: *una ratis fati nostros portabit amores / caerula ad infernos velificata lacus.*

Propertius informs Cynthia that the same blue (*caerula*) boat will carry their loves, sailing to the pools of Hell. *Caeruleus* is similarly an epithet for Charon's boat in the *Aeneid*⁷ and in

¹ 'Sie sind *candida* und *caerula*, entsprechend der Farbe der Welle und des Wellenschaumes.' (Rothstein 1924 vol.1 p. 377).

² See Prop. 2.26a.6 above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS i.

³ Hubbard (1974) p. 167.

⁴ '*caeruleus frater iuvat auxiliaribus undis.*' (*Met.* 1.275)

⁵ See Prop. 3.7.56 below under 1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS ii.

⁶ '*nunc etiam infectos demens imitare Britannos, ludis et externo tincta nitore caput?*' (vv. 23-24). These lines are discussed under 1.34.3 NITOR. '*Omnes vero se Britanni vitro inficiunt, quod caeruleum efficit colorem atque hoc horribiles sunt in pugna aspectu;*' (*Caes. B.G.* 5.14)

⁷ '*caeruleam advertit puppim ripaeque propinquat.*' (6.410)

Theocritus it is given the epithet *κυάνεος*.¹ The dark colour of the boat complements the blackness of the funereal bird in the previous couplet.²

Prop. 4.2.43: *caeruleus cucumis tumidoque cucurbita ventre / me notat et iunco brassica vincita levi;*

The god Vertumnus says that his statues are distinguished by the blue-green (*caeruleus*) cucumber and other vegetables. The cucumber is *lividus* in Columella³ and *viridis* in Pliny⁴ but *caeruleus* is the colour epithet used of it in the *Copa*⁵ The blue-green of the cucumber is reinforced by the green of the other vegetables and plants in this couplet. This is the second colour cluster in the poem which is employed of Vertumnus; in vv. 13-16 Propertius associated Vertumnus with the purple hues of grapes and berries.⁶

1.7 CAESIUS

Cat. 45.7: *caesio veniam obvius leoni.*

Septimius says that he is willing to come face to face with a *caesius* lion if his love is found wanting. *Caesius* here is usually translated as green eyed.⁷ This term, as Edgeworth asserts, is probably a result of Catullus' misunderstanding of the meaning of *γλαυκίωων*.⁸ This Greek word, which in Homer and Hesiod meant 'glaring' or 'fierce-eyed', had by Catullus' time shifted its meaning to light blue.⁹ As Aulus Gellius says; '*nostris autem veteribus caesia dicta est, quae a Graecis γλαυκῶπις ut Nigidius ait, de colore caeli, quasi caelia.*'¹⁰ *Caesius* is elsewhere employed only of people¹¹ and thus the use of the colour word here helps to personify the lion, contributing to the whimsical tone of the poem. It is in keeping with the extravagant imagery of Acme's *purpureus* mouth.¹²

¹ ἄλλά μιν ἀρπάξασα, πάροιθ' ἐπὶ νῆα κατελθεῖν / *κυανέαν* καὶ στυγνὸν ἀεὶ πορθμῆα καμόντων' (17.48-49 Gow 1952)

² 'et iam Luna negat totiens descendere caelo, / *nigraque* funestum concinit omen avis.' (vv. 37-38). Note that *nigra*, like *caerulea*, is placed in an emphatic position at the beginning of the pentametre. See further below on these lines under 1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS iii.

³ 10.389

⁴ N.H. 19.23.65

⁵ 'sunt et mora cruenta et lentis *uva* racemis, / et pendet iunco *caeruleus* cucumis.' (vv. 21-22)

⁶ See these lines below under 1.26.1. LIVEO.

⁷ Fordyce (1961) p. 205

⁸ As in the *γλαυκίωων* λέων of Il. 20.172, Hesiod Sc. 430.

⁹ Edgeworth (1987) p. 135

¹⁰ 2.26.19

¹¹ See André (1949) p.179.

¹² See Cat. 45.12 below under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i.

1.8.1 CANDEO / CANDESCO

Cat. 64.14: *tortaque remigio spumis incanuit unda, / emersere freti **candenti** e gurgite vultus / aequoreae monstrum Nereides admirantes.*

The waves, churned up by the oars of the Argo, grow white with foam and the Nereids lift their faces from the whitening (*candenti*) waters of the sea to observe this marine monster. This is an important moment for it is the first ship which has sailed on these waters and the first time that Peleus sees Thetis. *Candenti* picks up on *incanuit* in the previous line¹ and, in its turn, will be echoed by *gurgite cano* in v. 18.² Like *albicans* in Catullus 63.87³, the use of a participle here rather than an adjective enhances the picture of water which is gradually growing white. In addition, the word *aequoreae* in the following line echoes both *aequor* in v. 12⁴ and *caerula aequora* of v. 7.⁵ This repeated use of *aequor* and its cognates reminds the reader of the contrast between the blue sea and the white trail of foam which the Argo is leaving in its wake.⁶

Cat. 64.45: *candet ebur solis*

Ivory gleams (*candet*) on the thrones in Peleus' house. See Cat. 64.44 above under 1.3.2 ARGENTUM.

Cat. 64.318: *ante pedes autem candentis mollia lanae / vellera virgati custodibant calathisci.*

At the feet of the Parcae lie the baskets full of gleaming white (*candentis*) wool with which they weave men's fates. *Candentis*, in conjunction with *mollia*, emphasises the whiteness, purity and softness of the wool. The effect is further enhanced by the placement of *candentis*, *mollia* and *lanae* together at the end of the line and the predominance of nasals and liquids in these words. It may be that, as in Juvenal⁷, the whiteness of the Fates' wool is meant to signify the auspicious nature of their prophecies⁸; compare Seneca where

¹ See Cat. 64.13 below under 1.24 INCANESCO.

² 'nutricum tenuis exstantes e gurgite cano.'

³ See above under 1.2.1 ALBESCO / ALBICO.

⁴ 'quae simul ac rostro ventosum proscidit aequor'

⁵ See Cat. 64.7 above under 1.6 CAERULUS / CAERULEUS i.

⁶ As Quinn says, 'Note how this passage is filled with sound, motion and colour...all in three lines and all in the colours of white foam (*incanuit*) and the blue expanse of ocean (*aequor*).' (1959 p. 2)

⁷ '...postquam Parcae meliora benigna / pensa manu ducunt hilares et staminis albi / lanificae...'

(12.64-66)

⁸ Ellis, citing Realinus and Mayer (1889 p. 333)

Lachesis spins white yarn with a lucky touch¹ and contrast Horace 2.3.16 where the Fates spin the black wool of death.² The white wool complements the colour of the Fates' gowns³ but its beauty also serves as a contrast (note *autem* v. 318) to the rather grotesque picture which has gone immediately before; the Fates with bits of wool clinging to parched lips.⁴

Prop. 2.18b.5: *quid mea si canis aetas candesceret annis*

Propertius asks Cynthia what would happen if his youth became white (*candesceret*) with the grey hair of old age. Compare Tibullus 1.10.43 *'liceatque caput candescere canis*.⁵

Prop. 4.7.35: *Lygdamus uratur - candescat lammina vernae - / sensi ego, cum insidiis pallida vina bibi-*

The ghost of Cynthia exhorts that iron plates be made white hot (*candescat*) to torture the house slave who conspired in her death. *Candescere* and its cognates are frequently used in Latin literature to describe the white glow given out by hot objects.⁶ *Candescat* is picked up by *pallida* in the following line; through the slave's treachery Cynthia drank wine which struck her pale.

Hor. 1.2.31: *...tandem venias precamur / nube candentis umeros amictus / augur Apollo;*

'Come at last we entreat you, prophetic Apollo, veiling your radiant (*candentis*) shoulders in a cloud'. In this poem in praise of Augustus Horace calls upon Apollo, amongst other gods, to come to the aid of the falling empire. The brightness of Apollo's shoulders is appropriate for a god who was known as Φοῖβος. Although Horace ultimately identifies Augustus with Mercury, there is a sense in which Apollo, and all the other gods Horace invokes, are identified with or embody Augustus' qualities. Thus Apollo was Augustus' patron and he made great efforts to have himself identified with the god.⁷ Apollo's bright

¹ *'candida de niveo subtemina vellere sumit / felici moderanda manu...'* (*Apocol.* 4.1.6).

² See above under 1.4 ATER/ATRATUS ii. Ellis (1889 p. 333) also compares Mart. 6.58.7-8; *'si mihi lanificae ducunt non pulla sorores / stamina...'*

³ See Cat. 64.308 below under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS ii.

⁴ *'laneaque aridulis haerebant morsa labellis, / quae prius in levi fuerant exstantia filo:'* (vv. 316-317)

⁵ Butler and Barber (1933) p. 221

⁶ e.g. Luc. 1.490; Hor. *Ep.* 1.15.36; Ov. *Met.* 2.230.

⁷ Commager (1962) p. 187

(or white) shoulders, placed in contrast with Jupiter's red hand which is the hand of destruction¹ and the red bloodiness with which Mars is associated², symbolise the hope and healing he brings with him.³ Apollo's white shoulders are also placed in contrast with the dark cloud which conceals them; this image goes back to Homer where gods sometimes veil their shoulders in mist.⁴ Note how the word order mirrors the sense with *candentis umeros* placed between *nube* and *amictus*. Thus Apollo's bright shoulders are literally concealed in the cloud.

1.8.2 CANDIDUS

i) Beauty / Desirability

Cat. 13.4: *...non sine candida puella*

Catullus invites his friend Fabullus to dine with him on condition that he will bring with him a good-looking (*candida*) girl. *Candidus* is used here as a synonym for beautiful or pretty (as Quinn says 'rather like our blonde'⁵) and there is no strong colour effect in the line.

Cat. 35.8: *quamvis candida milies puella / euntem revocet ...*

Catullus urges his friend Caecilius to resist the entreaties of his good-looking (*candida*) girlfriend. See the entry immediately above.

Cat. 61.108: *candido pede lecti*

Catullus appears to be talking of the shining white foot (*candido*) of the bridal couch. This is the first of Catullus' marriage hymns and the lines immediately preceding this have been lost but we know from the opening line of the stanza⁶ that this is part of a stanza addressing the marriage bed. *Candido pede* most probably refers to the foot of the couch which presumably is white because it is fashioned from ivory like the marriage couch of c.64.⁷ The other alternative is that Catullus is alluding to the white feet of the bride for her

¹ *'...rubente dextera sacras iaculatus arces / terruit urbem'* (vv. 2-4). See on these lines below under 1.43.1 RUBEO.

² See Hor. 1.2.39 below under 1.13 CRUENTUS.

³ *'...the god appears not as the warrior of the fourth Roman Ode, but as the augur of the Carmen Saeculare, presiding deity of Rome's revival.'* (Commager 1962 p. 187)

⁴ e.g. *Il.* 15.308. See further Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) p. 29.

⁵ (1973) p. 134

⁶ *'o cubile quod omnibus'* (v. 107)

⁷ *'pulvinar vero divae..geniale locatur / sedibus in mediis, Indo quod dente politum'* (vv. 47-48)

feet are given the colour epithet *aureolus* in v. 160.¹ With either sense the reference to a white foot increases the erotic element of the stanza; compare the entry immediately below which also employs *candidus* in association with the feet of a beloved object. For a full discussion of this colour image see Chapter 2, section 5.2.

Cat. 64.162: *candida permulcens liquidis vestigia lymphis, / purpureave tuum consternens veste cubile.*

Ariadne envisages herself washing Theseus' gleaming white (*candida*) feet and spreading a purple coverlet on his bed. In Homer the feet of heroes are often described as shining.² This colour adjective also has a further dimension, for Ariadne's reference to Theseus' feet as *candida* is a way of indicating the strength of her desire for him.³ Compare Catullus 68.70 (below under ii.) where he employs the adjective to describe Lesbia when they meet to consummate their love. In 64.162 Catullus gives added emphasis to *candida* by separating it from its noun and drawing it forward to the beginning of the line. There is a colour contrast with *purpurea* in the following line which is also placed at the beginning of the line and separated from its noun.⁴ This contrast of white with red or purple is one of many in c.64 and, as O'Connell has demonstrated, these purple/white colour clusters become increasingly ominous as the poem progresses.⁵

Cat. 86.1: *Quintia formosa est multis. mihi candida, longa / recta est:...*

Catullus evaluates Quintia's charms. To him she is not really beautiful or desirable, only good-looking. Part of her good looks is the fact that she is *candida* 'blonde' or 'fair'. Thus *candida* in this case is a deprecatory term, having here connotations of an appeal that does not necessarily go beyond the physical, similar to the use of the term in c.13.4 or 35.8 above or Prop. 2.3.9 below. It is not emotionally charged as it is in 64.162 or 68.70.

Prop. 2.3.9: *nec me tam facies, quamvis sit candida, cepit*

¹ See this line above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv.

² Cf. the formulaic phrase ποσσὶ δ' ὑπὸ λιπαροῖσιν ἐδήσατο καλὰ πέδιλα in *Il.* 2.44, 10.22.

³ O'Connell (1977) p. 751.

⁴ See Cat. 64.163 below under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i.

⁵ 'purple and white begin as a picturesque contrast and end as elements in a scene of tragic pathos' (1977) p.755. Compare Cat. 64.308 below under ii and Cat. 64.235 below under iii.

Propertius says that it was not Cynthia's face that won him, even though it was fair (*candida*). A standard colloquial usage of *candidus* but the simile which follows is out of the ordinary; see Prop. 2.3.10 above under 1.2.2 ALBUS i.

Prop. 2.9.10: *nec non exanimem amplectens Briseis Achillem / candida vesana verberat ora manu; / et dominum lavit maerens captiva cruentum / propositum flavis in Simoente vadis.*

Briseis, holding the dead Achilles, beats her fair (*candida*) cheeks with frenzied hand and, although a captive, sorrowfully washes the bloody body of her master which has been placed in the yellow shallows of Simois. The scene goes back to the *Iliad* but Homer uses the word *καλός* in association with Briseis instead of a word for white¹ and indeed throughout the *Iliad* the epithet *καλλιπάρης* is regularly applied to Briseis.² Thus Propertius is employing a colour adjective in place of a word for beauty and this choice appears to be a deliberate one for this is the first of a series of colour words employed to describe this scene.³ Note that Propertius places *candida* at the beginning of the line with *vesana* directly after it; the contrast between Briseis' loveliness and her frenzied anguish emphasises the horror of the deed. There is also a strong colour contrast between *candida* and Achilles' bloodstained (*cruentum*) body in the following line.⁴ Employing the whiteness of beauty in scenes of blood and brutality is a common device amongst Greek and Roman poets; see the discussion on Cat.64.364 below under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

Prop. 2.16.24: *candida tam foedo brachia fusa viro*

If men at Rome weren't wealthy, Cynthia would not have her white (*candida*) arms entwined about such a foul man. *Candidus* here picks up on *canus* in the previous couplet; girls would grow grey in the house of one lover if they were not seduced by riches.⁵ White arms were a traditional sign of beauty; *λευκώλενος* is a common epithet for

¹ 'Βρισηΐς δ' ἄρ' ἔπειτ', ἰκέλη χρυσέη Ἀφροδίτη, / ὡς ἴδε Πάτροκλον δεδαΐγμένον ὀξέτι χαλκῶ, / ἀμφ' αὐτῶ χυμένη λιγ' ἐκώκυε, χερσὶ δ' ἄμυσσε / στήθεά τ' ἠδ' ἀπαλὴν δειρὴν ἰδὲ καλὰ πρόσωπα.' *Il.* 19.282-5 Enk draws this parallel (1962 p. 136). Although Homer doesn't employ a word for white in this passage he does compare Briseis to golden Aphrodite.

² e.g. *Il.* 1.184,346. See further Kober (1932) p. 3.

³ See Prop. 2.9.11 below under 1.13 CRUENTUS.

⁴ It is interesting that Quintus of Smyrna also employs a similar contrast in his poem on the fall of Troy although the blood in this case is Briseis' own; '...ἐκ δ' ἀπαλοῖο / στήθεος αίματόεσσαί ἀνὰ σμώδιγγες ἄερθεν / θεινομένης· φαίης κεν ἐπὶ γλάγος αίμα χέασθαι / φοῖνιον·' (3.554-557).

⁵ 'numquam venales essent ad munus amicae, / atque una fieret cana puella domo;' (vv. 21-22). See these lines below under 1.9.2 CANUS.

goddesses and women in Homer.¹ Here the contrast between Cynthia's beauty and the foulness of the man she is embracing is emphasised by the placement of *foedo* between *candida* and *bracchia*, the word order reinforcing the sense. It is interesting to compare Tibullus' allusion to *candentes lacerti* 1.8²; in a similar vein Tibullus is advising girls to embrace their young lovers and not to think about profit.

Prop. 2.22a.5: *sive aliquis molli diducit candida gestu / bracchia...*

If some actress draws apart her white (*candida*) arms with a soft gesture, Propertius falls in love with her. For white arms see on entry immediately above.

Prop. 2.22a.8: *candida non tecto pectore si qua sedet*

In the theatre Propertius looks to see if any fair (*candida*) woman sits with an uncovered breast.

Prop. 2.26a.16: *candida Nesaeae, caerulea Cymothoe*

White (*candida*) Nesaeae and sea-blue Cymothoe would have chided Cynthia in envy if she had become a sea nymph. *Candidus*, the usual epithet for beauty in Propertius, here also suggests the foam of the sea; see on Prop. 2.26a.16 above under 1.6 CAERULEUS / CAERULUS i.

Prop. 2.28c.51: *vobiscum est fīopef, vobiscum candida Tyro*

Propertius lists all the beauties with Pluto in Hell, among them fair (*candida*) Tyro. There seems to be no especial reason for the epithet; in Homer she is given the epithet εὐπατέρεια.³

Prop. 2.29b.30: *heu quantum per se candida forma valet!*

Propertius, seeing Cynthia sleeping, exclaims 'How powerful is a fair (*candida*) form unadorned!'. *Candida* here suggests the gleam of unclad skin which, to Propertius, is even more seductive than when Cynthia is dressed in a purple tunic.⁴

¹ Il. 1.55, Od. 22.227.

² 'huic tu candentes umero suppose lacertos, / et regum magnae despiciantur opes.' vv. 33-34.

³ Od. 11.235

⁴ '...non illa mihi formosior unquam / visa, neque ostrina cum fuit in tunica' (vv. 25-26). See below on these lines under 1.36.1 OSTRINUS.

Prop. 2.32.58: *uxorem quondam magni Minois, ut aiunt, / corrupit torvi candida forma bovis;*

It is said that the snowy (*candida*) form of a fierce bull seduced great Minos' wife. This is the first of two mythological *exempla* of women's unchaste behaviour cited by Propertius. In this context *candidus* (which Propertius usually employs of women's beauty) suggests the beauty and seductive power of the bull. Note how Propertius places *candida* immediately after *torvi* in a kind of oxymoron, contrasting the beautiful appearance of the bull with its savage nature. Virgil also employs a term for white, *niveus*, in his description of Pasiphae's bull in the *Eclogues*.¹ In Latin literature *candidus*, *niveus* and related terms are regularly employed of animals such as sheep and cattle² just as in Greek Literature ἀργός is applied to cattle.³ However in this context the colour word may also owe something to wall paintings as Philostratus describes a painting of this story in which the bull is depicted in white.⁴

Prop. 3.11.16: *aurea cui postquam nudavit cassida frontem, / vicit victorem candida forma virum.*

When Penthesilea, the leader of the Amazons, was killed and her golden helmet was stripped from her brow, her bright (*candida*) beauty conquered her conqueror. On this colour image see Prop.3.11.15 above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv.

Prop. 4.4.40: *candidaque in saevos inguina versa canis?*

Tarpeia does not wonder that Scylla's white (*candida*) groin was transformed into fierce hounds. Virgil also employs this colour epithet of Scylla in the *Eclogues*.⁵ Here, as in 2.16.24 and 2.32.58 (above), Propertius employs *candida*, with its implications of beauty and femininity, in contrast with an image of savagery or foulness.

Prop. 4.8.32: *(Teia) candida, sed potae non satis unus erit*

Teia is fair (*candida*) but when she is drunk one lover will not be enough.

¹ 'Pasiphaen nivei solatur amore iuvenci.' (6.46)

² e.g. [Tib.] 3.4.67, *Aen.* 4.61. See also Hor. 4.2.59 below under 1.35 NIVEUS ii.

³ 'Cattle are also ἀργός...because their coat is glossy' (Irwin 1974 p.215). Kober gives two instances of ἀργός applied to cattle where she feels the word is employed with a chromatic sense (Pi. *O.* 13.69, E. *IA* 574-575) but points out that on one occasion (*Il.* 23.30) the word must mean sleek or fat rather than white (1932 p.14).

⁴ *Im.* 1.16.4.9

⁵ 'Quid loquar aut Scyllam Nisi, quam fama secuta est / candida succinctam latrantibus inguina monstribus' (6.74-75).

Hor. 1.13.9: *uror, seu tibi candidos / turparunt umeros immodicae mero / rixae...*

Horace says that he burns with jealousy if a quarrel, violent through use of wine, has marred Lydia's fair (*candidos*) shoulders. The beauty of Lydia's white shoulders is placed in contrast not only with the redness of the wine but also the marks of violence which are inflicted on them.¹ For similar contrasts between beauty and savagery compare Prop.2.16.24, 2.32.58 above.

Hor. 3.9.2: *Donec gratus eram tibi / nec quisquam potior bracchia candidae / cervici iuvenis dabat, / Persarum vigui rege beatior.*

'While I was pleasing to you and no more favoured youth flung his arms about your white (*candidae*) neck I flourished richer than the king of Persia'. This poem consists of a dialogue between two estranged lovers; the opening words are spoken by the male. Here the mention of Lydia's beautiful white neck adds to the wistful tone of the youth's speech.

Hor. 3.15.6: *maturo propior desine funeri / inter ludere virgines / et stellis nebulam spargere candidis.*

Horace tells the wife of Ibycus, now that she is drawing near to the fitting time for death, to stop playing among the maidens and casting a cloud over the shining (*candidis*) stars. The adjective *candidus* is equally applicable to the stars² and to the beauty of the maidens which is being marred by the presence of Ibycus' wife. The shining whiteness is placed in contrast with the darkness of the *nebula*; note that this word is placed between *stellis* and *candidis*, literally amongst the stars. For a full discussion of this colour image in its context see Chapter 6, section 3.2.

Hor. 4.1.27: *illic bis pueri die / numen cum teneris virginibus tuum / laudantes pede candido / in morem Salium ter quatient humum.*

Horace tells Venus to go to the house of Paulus: there twice a day boys and tender maidens, in celebration of Venus' rule, shall beat the ground with their white (*candido*) feet in Salian triple time. This appears to be in imitation of Greek literature where feet, especially the feet of dancing Bacchantes, are often described by the adjective λευκός.³ The

¹ See also Nisbet & Hubbard (1970) p. 174f.

² Compare *splendens stella candida* Plaut. *Rud.* 3; *candida sidera* Lucr. 5.1210.

³ e.g. E. *Ba.* 863, *Med.* 1164, *Cyc.* 74, (Kober 1932 p. 4)

colour adjective implies that the feet are bare¹; possibly bare feet were a requirement of the dance. For the erotic overtones of *candidi* feet see above on Cat 61.108 and Cat. 64.162. The implication is that it is more fitting that the goddess of love be worshipped by these youngsters than by Horace.

ii) Divine Power

Cat. 64.308: *...vestis / candida purpurea talos incinxerat ora, / at roseae niveo residebant vertice vittae*

The shining white garments (*candida*) of the Fates, fringed with purple, come down to their ankles, while rosy ribbons adorn their snowy heads. Here the contrast of white and purple is very striking; both words are placed together at the beginning of the line and the image is reinforced by the colour contrast *roseae niveo* in the following line.² In Plato's *Republic* the Fates are also clothed in white³; in Catullus white not only forms part of the Fate's attire but they spin with white wool.⁴ This association of the Fates with shining white is a sign of their power and is appropriate for the gloriousness of the life they are about to foretell. The purple however adds a more ominous note for it suggests the blood of Achilles' victims.⁵

Cat. 68.70: *quo mea se molli candida diva pede / intulit et trito fulgentem in limine plantam*

Catullus, in his reminiscences about the time when he and Lesbia met at Allius' house to consummate their love, envisages the moment when Lesbia placed her gleaming foot on the polished threshold; in his eyes at that moment she was a 'shining white (*candida*) goddess'. Here, as with the bride in 61.160⁶, Catullus concentrates upon the significant moment of stepping across a threshold, suspending the moment in time and turning Lesbia into a goddess.⁷ The adjective *candida* contributes to the idealisation of Lesbia. Although the word in this context has its usual connotations of beauty, it is a beauty that goes beyond the mere prettiness of the *candidae puellae* of 13.4 and 35.8 above. The idea of shining that is

¹ Kober (1932) p. 4

² See Cat. 64.309 below under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

³ 'Θυγατέρας τῆς Ἀνάγκης Μοίρας λευχειμονούσας' (10.14 = 617c)

⁴ See Cat. 64.318 above under 1.8.1 CANDEO /CANDESCO.

⁵ See Cat. 64.308 below under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS ii.

⁶ See this line above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv.

⁷ As Brenk says, this is an instance of 'the epiphanic divinization of the beloved, the equation of the beloved with the divine.' (1987 p. 125)

an aspect of this word is played upon by the reference to Lesbia's foot as *fulgens* in the following line¹ and also perhaps by the allusion to the *trito limine*, the 'polished' threshold.² As Brenk points out, there is a parallel between these lines and a line from Callimachus which describes Apollo knocking at the door with his beautiful foot³ but Callimachus does not employ any words for colour or shining in his line. Brenk shows however that in ancient literature there has always been a strong association between shining and the epiphany of a god⁴ and words for shining are sometimes used to denote the divine grace which is bestowed upon humans.⁵

Cat. 68.134: *quam circumcursans hinc illinc saepe Cupido / fulgebat crocina candidus in tunica.*

Cupid is depicted hovering about Lesbia shining brightly (*candidus*) in a saffron tunic. Cupid's appearance and dress indicates Catullus' hope for marriage with Lesbia.⁶ *Candidus* in this instance both suggests the fairness of Cupid's skin against the saffron-coloured cloth⁷ and heightens the impression of brightness suggested by the verb *fulgebat*. Mantero suggests that the term is meant to suggest the brightness of the nuptial torch.⁸ It is also likely that by employing *candidus* here Catullus is harking back to the *candida diva* of v. 70⁹, for in both instances the term is employed in a way which idealises Catullus' relationship with Lesbia. As in v. 70, the colour image here has great force for there are three words related to colour or shining clustered at the beginning of the line.

Prop. 2.3.24: *candidus argutum sternuit omen Amor?*

Propertius asks Cynthia if bright (*candidus*) love sneezed a shrill omen at her birth. The use of this adjective to describe the god of love is reminiscent of Catullus 68.134 above. In Propertius the use of *candidus* picks up from v. 9 where it is employed in a different sense to describe the beauty of Cynthia's complexion.¹⁰

¹ See Cat. 68.71 below under 1.21.1 FULGEO ii.

² Compare Catullus' use of *rasilis* in c.61.161 to describe the threshold which the bride is stepping across (see Cat. 61.160 above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv).

³ 'καὶ δὴ που τὰ θύρετρα καλῶ ποδὶ Φοῖβος ἀράσσει' Ap. 3 (Pfeiffer 1949 vol. 2)

⁴ e.g. Homeric Hymns; *h. Cer.* 188-190, *h. Ven.* 172-5 (Brenk 1987 p. 125).

⁵ e.g. *Aen.* 1.588-593.

⁶ See Cat. 68.134 below under 1.12 CROCINUS.

⁷ Compare Prop. 3.17.29 and Hor. 1.18.11 below.

⁸ (1979) p. 191

⁹ See Cat. 68.70 above.

¹⁰ See Prop. 2.3.9 above under i.

Prop. 3.17.29: *candida laxatis onerato colla corymbis*

Bacchus' white (*candida*) neck bows beneath trailing clusters of ivy berries. There are many references to Bacchus' white skin in both Latin and Greek literature. In the *Bacchae* Pentheus jeers at Dionysus because of his white skin¹ and in [Tibullus] 3.6 the epithet *candidus* is applied to Bacchus who is given the title *Liber*²; also compare Hor. 1.18.11 below. As with *niveus Adonis* in 2.13b³, the whiteness of skin seems to imply beauty and a certain femininity. Note also that the whiteness of Bacchus' neck is placed in contrast with the ivy and its berries: in both the Tibullus and Horace passages there are similar contrasts between the whiteness of the god and the green of ivy or other leaves.

Hor. 1.18.11: *non ego te, candide Bassareu,/ invitum quatiam, nec variis obsita frondibus / sub divum rapiam...*

'I will not, fair (*candide*) Bassareus, rouse you against your will nor bring into the open your emblems concealed with leaves of many kinds.' In this ode to Bacchus Horace promises the god that he will not profane his rites by surrendering to excess. *Candide* here is both a term of address⁴ and an allusion to the whiteness of Bacchus' skin as it is in Prop. 3.17.29 above. Like Tibullus and Propertius, Horace contrasts Bacchus' whiteness with greenness: in Tibullus and Propertius the greenness is suggested by ivy, in Horace by the leaves which surround his mystic emblems.

iii) Favourable Omen**Cat. 8.3:** *fulsere quondam candidi tibi soles*

Catullus employs the image of the bright (*candidi*) suns to depict his past happiness with Lesbia. Here, shining rather than colour is dominant; *candidus* is associated with *fulsere* and is used as an adjective for the sun. The word's chromatic sense is also in evidence however, for white was considered propitious. Compare Callimachus' expression λευκῆ

¹ 'λευκῆν δὲ χροιάν ἐκ παρασκευῆς' (v. 457); 'Beautiful' deities like Bacchus and 'beautiful' men like Adonis, Daphnis, etc., are called λευκός.' (Kober 1932 p. 2)

² '*Candide Liber, ades sic sit tibi mystica vitis / semper, sic hedera tempora vincita feras:*' (3.6.1-2). Note the contrast between the white skin of *Liber* and the green of *vitis* and *hedera*.

³ '*...cui niveum quondam percussit Adonem*' (v. 53). See on this line below under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

⁴ compare *Ep.* 14.5; '*candide Maecenas occidis saepe rogando*'.

ἡμέρα which he uses metaphorically¹; in Latin literature Ennius employs *candidum lumen* in a similar fashion.²

Cat. 8.8: *fulsere vere candidi tibi soles.*

Catullus repeats the image of the bright (*candidi*) suns to emphasise the happiness of his past relationship with Lesbia. See above.

Cat. 64.235: *funestam antennae deponant undique vestem,/ candidaque intorti sustollant vela rudentes*

Aegeus tells Theseus to take down the funeral sheets from his mast and on his twisted ropes raise white (*candida*) sails. These sails indicate the successful completion of his mission and the colour word *candidus* is obviously here associated with good fortune. Note that, as with many colour terms in this poem, the word is placed in a dominant position at the beginning of the line; in this way, the contrast with the adjective *funestam* in the previous line is emphasised. This adjective describes the first set of sails which Aegeus hangs on Theseus' mast, sails which have previously been described as dark red or purple.³ We have here a purple/white contrast⁴, one with more ominous overtones than the one in vv. 162-163.⁵

Cat. 68.148: *quare illud satis est, si nobis datur unis / quem lapide illa dies candidiore notat.*

Catullus comes to the realisation that he and Lesbia were never actually married and he states that he will be satisfied if she just gives to him the days she marks out with a whiter (*candidiore*) stone. Here Catullus is alluding to the practise of marking lucky or good days on the calendar with white stones.⁶ This is the third and last instance of *candidus* in c. 68⁷ and it signals a significant change in Catullus' attitude to his relationship with Lesbia. Whereas in the two previous instances Catullus was thinking in absolute and idealistic

¹ '...πᾶ[ν]τα δ' εἶχεν ὄσιν ἄνθρωποι / θεοί τε λευκᾶς ἡμέρας ἐπίστανται' *Iamb.* 191.37 (Pfeiffer 1949 vol. 1)

² '...atque hoc lumen candidum claret mihi' *Trag.* 326 (Vahlen 1963)

³ 'inde infecta vago suspendam lintea malo,/ nostros ut luctus nostraeque incendia mentis / carbasus obscurata dicet ferrugine Hibera.' (vv. 225-227). See on these lines below under 1.19 FERRUGO.

⁴ O'Connell agrees (1977 p. 751).

⁵ See Cat. 64.162 above under i.

⁶ Compare Hor. 1.36.10, Mart. 12.34.5-7 (Ellis 1889 p. 428). Callimachus also employs the expression ἡμᾶρ λευκὸν to denote a holiday (*Aet.* 178.2 Pfeiffer 1949 vol. 2)

⁷ For the other two see 68.70, 68.134 above under ii.

terms, his use of the comparative form of *candidus* here indicates his willingness to compromise.

Cat. 107.6: ...o *lucem candidiore nota!*

Catullus calls the day that Lesbia comes back to him as a day with a whiter (*candidiore*) mark. This appears to be a direct allusion to 68.148 (above).

Prop. 1.17.26: at vos, *aequoreae formosa Doride natae / candida felici solvite vela choro:*

Propertius, apparently in a storm at sea, exhorts the sea-born daughters of lovely Doris to unfurl the white (*candida*) sails of his ship and give it a prosperous escort. Here, as in Cat. 64.235 (above), white sails are a sign of good fortune. Note how Propertius, like Catullus, emphasises the colour of the sails by placing the colour term at the beginning of the line and separating it from its noun. The reference to the sea-nymphs in the previous line suggests a blue/white contrast similar to the one at 2.26a.16.¹

Prop. 2.15.1: O me felicem! O *nox mihi candida!* ...

Propertius was blessed and the night was bright (*candida*) for him because he spent it with his mistress. *Nox candida* is an oxymoron, playing on two meanings of *candidus*; 'happy' and 'bright'.

Prop. 4.1.67: Roma, fave, tibi surgit opus, date *candida cives / omina...*

Propertius asks Rome, for whom his work is created, to look favourably upon him and for her citizens to give him favourable (*candida*) omens. A use of *candida* where its metaphorical meaning predominates.

Prop. 4.6.71: *candida nunc molli subeant convivia luco;/ blanditiaeque fluant per mea colla rosae*

'Let the white-robed (*candida*) company enter the pleasant grove and caressing roses stream round my neck.' With these lines Propertius turns from war to a panegyric of peace.² The *candida convivia* are banqueters, for white was traditionally worn on festal days.³ There is

¹ See this line above under 1.6 CAERULEUS / CAERULUS i.

² 'bella satis cecini...' (v. 69).

³ Armstrong (1917) p. 36. See also Hor. *Serm.* 2.2.61.

a colour contrast with the redness of the roses in the following line, flowers which also have strong associations with peace and festivity.¹

Hor. 3.7.1: *Quid fles, Asterie, quem tibi candidi / primo restituent vere Favonii*
 Horace asks Asterie why she weeps for her husband for, at the arrival of spring, the bright (*candidi*) zephyrs shall restore him to her. *Candidus* or *albus*, employed in association with a wind, usually indicates that it is a 'clearing' wind i.e. it dispels the clouds from the sky; compare Hor. 1.7.15 where *albus* is employed in a similar fashion of the South Wind.² As in 1.7, the colour term also carries overtones of 'happy' or 'favourable'. In addition, the term *candidus* also suggests both the beauty of Asterie and the brightness of the approaching spring.³

iv) Landscapes

Prop. 1.20.38: *roscida desertis poma sub arboribus, / et circum irriguo surgebant lilia prato / candida purpureis mixta papaveribus.*

Hylas comes to a water meadow where there are dewy apples hanging from lonely trees and white (*candida*) lilies mixed with purple poppies. The story of Hylas' abduction is also related by the Hellenistic poets Apollonius and Theocritus but, although they both mention the landscape, neither of them employ the same plants or colours as Propertius.⁴ For the whiteness of lilies see Prop. 4.4.25 above under 1.3.1 ARGENTEUS and Prop. 3.13.30 below under Chapter 5, section 5.3. Note how the *candida lilia* are placed in contrast both with the (implied) redness of the apples and the purple poppies: to emphasise the colour contrast Propertius separates the two colour terms from their nouns and places them at the beginning of v. 38. This is a white/red (purple) contrast beloved by Roman poets and Propertius employs it here for a number of reasons. Firstly the bright colours, in combination with the apples and the references to moisture⁵, enhance the seductive qualities

¹ For the redness of roses see Hor. 2.3.16 above under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS ii. For their association with peace compare Prop. 3.3.36 in Chapter 4, section 6.3.iii.

² Above under 1.2.2 ALBUS iii.

³ For terms for white employed of the spring compare Call. *Cer.* 122.

⁴ Apollonius just refers vaguely to an 'ἐρατὸν ῥίον' (1.1224). Theocritus describes the surroundings of the pool in more detail but emphasises the lush, green foliage; '...τάχα δὲ κράναν ἐνόησεν / ἡμένω ἐν χώρῳ · περὶ δὲ θρύα πολλὰ πεφύκει, / κυάνεόν τε χελιδόνιον χλωρόν τ' ἀδίατον / καὶ θάλλοντα σέλινά καὶ εἰλιτενῆς ἀγρωστὺς.' (13.39-42 Gow 1952). However in *Id.* 11 Polyphemus woos Galatea with white lilies and the scarlet poppy; '...ἔφερον δέ τοι ἢ κρίνα λευκά / ἢ μάκων' ἀπαλὰν ἐρυθρὰ πλαταγώνι' ἔχοισαν · ' (vv. 56-57 Gow 1952).

⁵ 'umida' (v. 34), 'roscida' (v. 36), 'irriguo' (v. 37). See further Murgatroyed (1992) p. 92.

of the lush, fruitful landscape. Hylas is attracted by the colourful flowers and lingers to pick them, leading to his downfall. Secondly, the colours and the choice of flowers presage Hylas' death at the hands of the water-nymphs. Thomas points out that the colours of the flowers are the same as the colours of the *toga praetexta*, the toga of boyhood and when Hylas picks them he destroys them and moves into the adult phase of his life.¹ Lilies and poppies are both employed in association with death in Roman poetry² but there is also a tension between these two types of flowers: lilies are suggestive of Hylas' innocence while the purple poppies carry more erotic overtones.³ Ovid will depict a similar scene in the *Metamorphoses* where Proserpine gathers violets and white lilies in a meadow just before Pluto sees and abducts her.⁴

Several scholars have noted that poppies do not normally grow near water.⁵ Bramble thinks that the inclusion of poppies in the landscape may add to the unreal atmosphere of the scene.⁶ There may be something in this: the presence of poppies gives a certain artificiality to what is otherwise a wild and untamed landscape.⁷ This hint of artifice may be because Propertius is deriving his description in part or full from a painting of an idyllic landscape. Philostratus gives several descriptions of paintings in which flowers surround pools of water⁸ and although he doesn't specifically mention poppies there are suggestions that in these scenes the painter is trying to depict a dream-world.⁹

Prop. 3.16.3: *candida qua geminas ostendunt culmina turris*

Propertius has been summoned at midnight to go to Tibur where the white (*candida*) hills display twin towers. *Candida culmina* is probably a reference to hills with white buildings

¹ (1977) p.35.

² Thomas (1977) p. 35, Murgatroyd (1992) p. 93.

³ On this see the discussion of Cat. 61.188 in Chapter 2, section 5.3 and Prop. 3.13.30 in Chapter 5, section 5.3.

⁴ *'frigora dant rami, Tyrios humus unida flores:/ perpetuum ver est. quo dum Proserpina luco / ludit et aut violas aut candida lilia carpit'* (5.390-392)

⁵ Bramble (1974) p. 90; Murgatroyd (1992) p. 93 n.42.

⁶ 'With its unreal, artificial atmosphere, the garden here is reminiscent of the allegorical landscapes of later Latin poetry' (1974 p. 90). Murgatroyd agrees; 'he may have been aiming at an otherworldly nuance' (1992 p. 93 n.42).

⁷ Propertius says that the apples-trees are 'lonely' (*desertis* v. 36) and 'uncultivated' (*nullae pendebant debita curae* v. 35).

⁸ *Im.* 1.9.3, 1.23.2.

⁹ Conan (1987) p.166

on them.¹ The colour term suggests the gleam of white buildings in the dark: compare Horace's use of the term to describe the gleaming rocks of Anxur.² In view of the reasons for Propertius' summons (Cynthia wishes him to come to her) the term *candida* may also have an affective value; Tibur is dear to Propertius because *candida* Cynthia is there.³

Hor. 1.9.1: *Vides ut alta stet nive candidum / Soracte, nec iam sustineant onus silyae laborantes, geluque / flumina constiterint acuto.*

'You see how Soracte gleams white (*candidum*) with deep snow, nor can the labouring forests sustain the weight, and the rivers stand frozen with a sharp frost.' In the first stanza of this famous poem Horace creates a very evocative vignette of winter. According to Nisbet and Hubbard, the first two stanzas of the poem are modelled on an ode by Alcaeus⁴; however although Alcaeus refers to rain, a storm and frozen rivers, there is no mention of snow or whiteness.⁵ In Horace's poem the motif of whiteness is emphasised by being carried over into the second line with the picture of the trees bowing under the snow's weight and also into the third line with the picture of the rivers frozen over with frost.⁶ The snow and the whiteness contribute to the feeling of stillness and silence; like the simile of falling snow in *Iliad* 12.278-286, the effect created is of a hushed and frozen world.⁷

It is generally accepted that in these lines Horace is drawing parallels between winter and old age⁸ and the whiteness of the snow could equally apply to the white hair of an old person⁹; an impression which is increased by the image of the bent trees in the following line. The connection between whiteness and old age in this poem is finally confirmed in v. 17 by *canities* which is placed in contrast with the greenness (*virenti*) of youth.¹⁰ If the

¹ Butler & Barber (1933) p. 302, Camps (1966) p. 129.

² *'impositum saxi late candentibus Anxur.'* (*Serm.* 1.5.26)

³ Compare 1.8b.31 *'illi carus ego et per me carissima Roma'*. For *candidus* used of Cynthia see 2.3.9, 2.16.24, 2.29b.30 above under i.

⁴ (1970) p. 116.

⁵ fr. 338 (Lobel and Page 1955)

⁶ There is much disagreement among critics on the meaning of these lines as there is on almost every image in the poem. Vessey, for instance, argues that *geluque flumina acuto* refers to the frozen rivulets of water on the leaves of conifers (1985 p. 29f.)

⁷ Lattimore (1951) p. 43

⁸ Wilkinson (1968) p. 130, Commager (1962) p. 272. (It is worth noting however that some critics disagree with this connection e.g. West, 1967 p. 11).

⁹ Compare 4.13.12 where Horace uses the phrase *capitis nives* for the white hair of an old woman (discussed below in Chapter 6, section 3.3.i.)

¹⁰ *'donec virenti canities abest / morosa...'* See Hor.1.9.17 below under 1.9.1 CANITIES and compare Hor. 1.4.4 above under 1.2.1 ALBESCO / ALBICO.

trees in v. 2 are conifers or in leaf, as has been suggested by some critics¹, then there is a white/green contrast even in the first few lines of the poem which is restated more strongly in v. 17. This colour contrast however has a certain ambiguity for, as Striar has pointed out², the term *candidus* also has a connection with youth as well as old age for, associated as it is with the beauty of women, it anticipates the young girl of the final stanza.³

Hor. 3.25.10: *...non secus in iugis / exsomnia stupet Euhias / Hebrum prospiciens et nive candidam / Thracen ac pede barbaro / lustratam Rhodopen...*

Horace compares his poetic response to the banks and groves of Tibur to the feelings of a sleepless Bacchante who is amazed as she looks over Hebrus, Thrace white (*candidam*) with snow and Rhodope trodden by barbarian feet. The scene is set at night⁴ when the glimmering whiteness of the snow would stand out. In the *Bacchae* there is also an association between the Bacchantes and the cool white snow of Mt. Cithaeron.⁵ In Horace's poem the white snow adds to the feeling of loneliness and isolation; compare Catullus' use of terms for white in c.63 to convey the isolation of Attis.⁶ As Williams says, the landscape on which the Bacchante gazes is wild and lonely and well conveys the strangeness of poetic inspiration.⁷

v) Other

Cat. 39.1: *Egnatius, quod candidos habet dentes, / renidet usque quaque...*

Catullus makes fun of Egnatius' flashy smile, alleging that he smiles so much because he wants to show off his gleaming white (*candidos*) teeth. *Candidus* here suggests not only the whiteness and cleanness of Egnatius' teeth but their brilliance, further emphasised by *renidet* in the following line. The punch line will be that this brilliant whiteness is produced by a filthy practice.

¹ Both Vessey (1985 p.207) and Quinn (1980 p.141) are of the opinion that the trees are conifers. Striar argues that *onus* could just as easily refer to leaves or immature green fruit (1989 p. 207f.).

² (1989) p. 211 n.18.

³ *'nunc et latentis proditor intimo / gratus puellae risus ab angulo'* (vv. 21-22)

⁴ 'this is the sense of *exsomnia*' Williams (1969) p. 130

⁵ ἦκω Κιθαίων' ἐκλιπών, ἔν' οὐποτε / λευκῆς ἀνείσαν χιόνος εὐαγέϊς βολαί. (vv. 661-662)

⁶ *nive* v. 70, *albicans* v. 87. On the latter see above under 1.2.1 ALBESCO / ALBICO and on both, see below in Chapter 3, section 4.3.ii. For the use of landscape as a symbol of poetic inspiration see Chapter 4 on Prop. 3.3.

⁷ (1969) p. 130

Cat. 80.2: *quid dicam, Gelli, quare rosea ista labella / hiberna fiant candidiora nive*

Catullus innocently asks Gellius why his once rosy lips have become whiter (*candidiora*) than the winter's snow. The answer to this is that it is because he is indulging in unnatural practices. As Curran points out¹, the reader expects the conventional explanation of a lover's pallor and is given a shockingly literal reason; Gellius' lips are stained with semen.² The whiteness of snow was proverbial: the phrase 'whiter than snow' or variations of it are employed both in Greek and Latin literature but usually to describe the colour of horses.³ Here Catullus applies the expression to lips, setting up a colour contrast between the rosy lips in the previous line⁴, signifying health, and the white lips which have more sinister connotations. The adjective *rosea* also brings to mind the picture of roses set against the white snow of winter, in itself a beautiful image. As Quinn suggests, these initial lines of the poem create a sham lyricism which the following lines shatter.⁵ It is unusual for Catullus to employ *candidus* with any negative overtones⁶ but, by employing the comparison of winter and the snow, Catullus emphasises white's connection with coldness and death.

1.8.3 CANDOR

Prop. 1.2.19: *nec Phrygium falso traxit candore maritum / avecta externis Hippodamia rotis:!*

Hippodamia did not seduce her Phrygian spouse with false brilliance (*candore*). For Propertius *falsus candor* is that which is produced by jewels and silks. Curran points out that *candor* is the last of a series of words in vv. 15-19 which have association with brightness.⁷ The motif of brightness is also continued into the following couplet where

¹ (1966) p. 24 ff.

² 'et emulso labra notata sero.' (v. 8).

³ As far as Greek poetry is concerned Kober states 'The expression λευκότερος χιόνος is found comparatively frequently' (1932 p. 10). See for instance *Il.* 10.437 where it is employed to describe Rhesos' horses. Virgil employs variations of the expression to describe horses at two points in the *Aeneid* (3.538, 12.84).

⁴ See further on this below on Cat. 80.1 under 1.42 ROSEUS.

⁵ (1973) p. 415.

⁶ 39.1 above is an exception. It is, perhaps, because *candidus* is such a positive term in Catullus that he can employ the word in these two poems (39 and 80) to lull the reader into a false sense of security.

⁷ The lines fairly glitter with references to brightness of one sort or another. Heavenly luminaries are alluded to in four of the proper names: *Phoebe* 15, *Castor* 15, *Pollux* 16, *Phoebus* 17. Many have roots signifying light: *Leucippis* 15, *Phoebe* 15, *Pol lucem* 16, *Hilaira* ('shining') 16, *Phoebos* 17, *Phrygium* (*Phrygo* 'burn', *phryktos* 'torch') 19. Finally there are the Latin words *succendit* ('inflammes') 15 and *candore* 'fairness' 19' (1975 p.7).

Propertius says that the heroines of old did not owe their beauty to jewels but their complexions were as pure as the colour in Apelles' paintings.¹ In such ways Propertius illustrates his point to Cynthia that brilliance and splendour are part of nature and do not have to be purchased; however for the ironic twist in this argument see the discussion on this poem in Chapter 5, section 3.

Prop. 1.20.45: *cuius ut accensae Dryades candore puellae / miratae solitos destituere choros*

The Dryads, fired by Hylas' brilliant beauty (*candore*), cease their accustomed dance. These lines appear to be modelled on ones from Apollonius about the abduction of Hylas² but Propertius uses *candor* in place of Apollonius' term for red.

Prop. 2.25.41: *vidistis pleno teneram candore puellam, / vidistis fuscam, ducit uterque color;*

'You see a delicate girl of the whitest complexion (*candore*) and another of dusky hue; either hue attracts.' Propertius comments on the variety of female attractiveness. Here *candor* is not being employed as a general synonym for beauty but alludes to the fairness of complexion that was so attractive to the Romans and in the next line Propertius places this in contrast with a darker beauty which he finds equally attractive. Note *candidus*' association with delicacy and softness (*teneram*).

Prop. 3.24.8: *et color est totiens roseo collatus Eoo / cum tibi quaesitus candor in ore foret:*

Propertius tells Cynthia that although her complexion was compared to the rosy dawn, the radiance (*candor*) in her face was contrived. Here there is a certain tension between *candor*, usually associated with whiteness, and the red of *roseus* in the previous line³ but Propertius is probably alluding to Cynthia's pink and white complexion which he described so graphically in 2.3. as '*rosae puro lacte natant folia*'.⁴ Postgate comments (somewhat

¹ '*sed facies aderat nullis obnoxia gemmis / qualis Apelleis est color in tabulis.*' (vv. 21-22)

² '...τὸν δὲ σχεδὸν εἰσενόησεν / κάλλιει καὶ γλυκερῆσιν ἐρευθόμενον χαρίτεσσιν.' (1.1229-1230). Valerius Flaccus will develop the motif of Hylas' *candor* even further; '*stagna vaga quasi luce micant, ubi Cynthia caelo / prospicit aut medii transit rota candida Phoebi, / tale iubar diffundit aquis;...*' (3.558-560).

³ See Prop. 3.24.7 below under 1.42 ROSEUS.

⁴ (v. 12) See further on Prop. 2.3.10 above under 1.2.2 ALBUS i. Hubbard comments on the image in 3.24 '[Propertius] uses here only, a trick that Horace uses constantly. He singles out for vividness two quite different details the conjunction of which produces an irrationality that disappears if one substitutes general terms for particular ones, says here, for instance, 'I gave extravagant praise to your complexion, when it was all due to make up'. The distribution

literally) on these lines '*candor*, the clear bright white of the skin which sets off the *roseus color* ...The *candor* would be produced by white lead'.¹ On Propertius' disapproval of *falsus candor* see 1.2.19 above.

1.9.1 CANITIES

Cat. 64.224: *canitiem terra atque infuso pulvere foedans, / inde infecta vago suspendam lintea malo*

Aegeus tells Theseus that, as he is going to fight the Minotaur, Aegeus will firstly soil his grey hair (*canitiem*) with earth and then hang dark sails on his swaying mast. *Canities* here has pathetic effect, reminding us that Aegeus is an old man.² As with many colour terms in this poem, Catullus positions it at the beginning of the line for maximum impact³; he also creates a contrast between Aegeus' white hair, the dust which is defiling it and the dark purple sails in the following line.⁴ The image perhaps owes something to *Iliad* 24 where Priam soils his head and neck with dung⁵ but Homer does not use a colour word to indicate Priam's age, using rather the term γέρων. According to Edgeworth this is the first occurrence of *canities* in Latin literature.⁶ By employing a colour term here Catullus creates a link with the two other colour words in this poem which are used to describe the hair of the head. This colour image looks back to v. 63 where Ariadne is so grieved by Theseus' desertion of her that she doesn't bother to keep her mitra on her golden head⁷ and it will be echoed by v. 350 where mothers acknowledge Achilles' exploits by releasing their

between two clauses of the pink and white of Cynthia's complexion corresponds to the distribution of the gifts in Horace *Odes* 4.8.1ff.' (1974 p. 158)

¹ (1884) p. 192. Butler and Barber (1933 p. 320) compare Ovid '*scitis et inducta candorem quaerere creta: / sanguine quae vero non rubet, arte rubet.*' (*Ars. Am.* 3.199-200). This is in contrast to Propertius' picture of Cynthia in 1.4.; '*ingenuus color et multis decus artibus, et quae / gaudia sub tacita ducere veste libet.*' (vv. 13-14).

² 'white is associated with the sorrowful old age of Aegeus' O'Connell (1977) p. 751. The association of white hair with old age goes back to Greek literature with the use of the formulaic phrase γήρας πολίων (e.g. *Pi. I.* 6.15, *E. Ba.* 258; see further Kober 1932 p.50).

³ Compare 64.162, 64.308, 64.235 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i, ii and iii respectively.

⁴ For the colour of the sails see the discussion on 64.227 under 1.19 FERRUGO. Compare the colour contrast a few lines further on between the purple sails Theseus will set out with and the white sails he will raise on his return (64.235 above under 1.8.2. CANDIDUS iii).

⁵ '...ἀμφὶ δὲ πολλῆ / κόπρος ξην κεφαλῆ τε καὶ ἀυχέτι τοῖο γέροντος' (vv. 163-5)

⁶ (1992) p. 118

⁷ '*non flavo retinens subtilem vertice mitram.*' See further on this colour image below under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS i.

dishevelled hair from their grey heads.¹ In all three instances the suggestion is that the deeds of heroes such as Theseus and Achilles are bought at a terrible price.

Prop. 1.8b.46: *ista meam norit gloria canitiem.*

Propertius says that the glory of Cynthia's decision to stay will know his grey hair (*canitiem*) i.e. it will stay with him until he is old.

Hor. 1.9.17: *...nec dulcis amores / sperne puer neque tu choreas / donec virenti canities abest / morosa...*

Horace advises Thaliarchus not to spurn, as a youth, sweet love nor dances so long as crabbled old age (*canities*) is absent from the one who is in the bloom of youth. *Canities* here is employed as a synonym for old age but Horace highlights its chromatic sense by placing it immediately after *virenti* which literally means 'green', establishing a green/white colour contrast. Certain lines from Theocritus in which there is the same contrast between the white of old age and the green of youth may have inspired Horace.² In Horace's lines, the use of white in association with old age echoes the beginning of the poem with *candidus* employed to describe the white snow of winter and it is interesting that, even in this initial image, there are faint suggestions of a white/green contrast.³ It is the view of Cameron that the green/white contrast in v. 17 is the central paradox of this poem from which all other oppositions (youth/old age, summer/winter etc.) are derived.⁴

Hor. 2.11.8: *...fugit retro / levis iuventas et decor, arida / pellente lascivos amores / canitie facilemque somnum.*

Smooth youth and beauty are fleeing away from us with dry old age (*canitie*) driving out wanton love and easy sleep. This poem is on Horace's familiar themes of the briefness of life and enjoying the present. As in the previous entry, the primary meaning of *canities* is 'old age' but its chromatic value is still apparent because of the presence of contrasting colour words in the poem. In this poem, Horace places the white of *canities* in contrast

¹ *'cum incultum cano solvent a vertice crinem'* See further on this colour image below under 1.9.2 CANUS.

² ...ἀπὸ κροτάφων πελόμεσθα / πάντες γηραλέοι, καὶ ἐπισχερῶ ἐς γένυν ἔρπει / λευκαίνων ὁ χρόνος· ποιεῖν τι δεῖ ἄς γόνυ χλωρόν. (14. 68-70 Gow 1952). Nisbet and Hubbard also draw this parallel (1970 p. 123).

³ See Hor. 1.9.1 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS iv.

⁴ (1989) p. 149

with the spring flowers and reddening moon in the following stanza.¹ In the third stanza he echoes this contrast by another allusion to grey hair (*canos capillos*), setting it against the redness of the roses which have been placed in it.² Thus Horace skillfully interweaves the white of old age and death with the redness of spring, life and youth.

1.9.2 CANUS

Cat. 61.155: *usque dum tremulum movens / cana tempus anilitas / omnia omnibus annuit.*

Catullus tells a bride that she should allow her husband's house to care for her until grey (*cana*) old age, causing her head to tremble, nods yes to everything. The idea of love lasting until old age is a common motif in Roman poets and appears in both Propertius and Tibullus.³ Here the conventional image of grey hair is in tension both with the golden hair of the young bride, suggested previously⁴ and her golden feet in the following stanza.⁵ For a full discussion of this colour image in its context see Chapter 2 below under section 5.3.

Cat. 64.18: *mortales oculis nudato corpore Nymphas / nutricum tenus exstantes e gurgite cano*

Mortals behold the ocean nymphs rising as far as their breasts above the white (*cana*) waters. *E gurgite cano* echoes *candenti e gurgite* in v. 14; both colour adjectives qualify *gurgites* and are used to describe the white foam created by passage of the ship through the sea.⁶ Baehrens thinks that the phrase is also meant to suggest the whiteness of the nymphs' breasts⁷ and, although the adjective *canus* is not normally employed of skin⁸, the allusion

¹ 'non semper idem floribus est honor / vernis, neque uno Luna rubens nitet / vultu...' (vv. 9-10). See further on these lines below under 1.43.1 RUBEO.

² 'rosa / canos odorati capillos' (vv. 14-15). See further on these lines below under 1.9.2 CANUS.

³ '...nos, Delia, amoris / exemplum cana simus uterque coma.' (Tib. 1.6.85-86). Compare Prop. 1.8b.46 above under 1.9.1 CANITIES and the use of *canus* in Prop. 2.13b.40, 2.16.22, 2.18b.5 below.

⁴ The colour of the bride's hair is suggested by the allusion to the *aureae comae* of the torches in v. 95. On this see Cat. 61.95 above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv and below in Chapter 2, section 5.2.

⁵ See Cat. 61.160 above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv and below in Chapter 2, section 5.3.

⁶ See 64.14 above under 1.8.1 CANDEO / CANDESCO. It also picks up on the cognate verb *incanuit* in v. 13 (see below under 1.24 INCANESCO). *Canus* is a not uncommon epithet for the foam of the sea; compare Enn. Ann. 478 (Vahlen 1963), Luc. 2. 767 and see André (1949 p. 67).

⁷ (1885) v. 2 p. 367

⁸ Neither the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (1968 p. 268) nor André (1949 p. 64ff.) list any instances of *canus* used in this fashion although André does state that sometimes *canus* and *candidus* are interchangeable (p. 67 ff.).

to the nakedness of the nymphs in the previous line may call to mind the white gleam of their wet skin.

Cat. 64.350: *saepe fatebuntur gnatorum in funere matres / cum incultum cano solvent a vertice crinem / putridaque infirmis variabunt pectora palmis.*

Achilles' exploits will be acknowledged by mothers at the funerals of their sons when they release their dishevelled hair from their grey (*cano*) heads. As O'Connell points out, *canus* here is paralleled by *putrida* and *infirmis* in the following line, emphasising the helplessness and infirmity of the mothers¹ and underlining the violation of the natural order which is brought about when the young die before the old. Thus this image casts a certain irony on the *clara facta* of Achilles which the Fates claim to be prophesying.² The image also echoes Aegeus' soiling of his grey hair in his grief at Theseus' departure; see 64.224 above under 1.9.1 CANITIES.

Cat. 66.70: *sed quamquam me nocte premunt vestigia divum / lux autem canae Tethyi restituit*

When the light comes, Berenice's lock, which all night has been trampled by the gods, is restored to white-headed (*canae*) Tethys. Tethys, the wife of Ocean, is here metonymy for the ocean and this passage in a stylised, Hellenistic fashion describes the journey of the constellation from heaven to the horizon. The reference to white hair is most probably an allusion to Tethys' age. Unfortunately the Callimachus' poem on which this is modelled has too many lacunae at this point to be certain whether Callimachus mentioned Tethys at all but Lycophron refers to her as γράϊαν.³ *Canus* is also used to describe the foam of the sea⁴ and is thus doubly an appropriate epithet for Tethys.⁵

Cat. 68.124: *suscitat a cano volturium capiti:*

Protesilaus was dearer to Laodamia than a late-born grandson who drives the vulture from the grey (*cano*) head of his grandfather and foils the plans of the avaricious relative. The phrase *canum caput* is a commonplace, appearing frequently in comedy.⁶ Here however it

¹ (1977) p. 754

² 'illius egregias virtutes claraque facta' (v. 347)

³ 'γράϊαν ξύνευνον Ὠγένοῦ Τιτηνίδα.' *Alexandra* 231

⁴ Compare Cat. 64.18 above.

⁵ Compare Ovid *Met.* '...et ad canam descendit in aequora Tethyn / Oceanumque senem...' (2.509-510) where he plays on the two meanings of *canus* in his description of Tethys.

⁶ e.g. Plaut. *Cas.* 518, *Mer.* 305, *As.* 932.

is given new life, for the motif of whiteness and the bird motif are both taken up in the following couplet with the picture of the snowy-white dove in which its mate rejoices¹ and the grey head of the grandfather is contrasted further on with the golden head of Laodamia's husband² which in its turn is echoed by the saffron tunic of Cupid who is flying around Lesbia.³ These images are all metaphors for Catullus' feelings about Lesbia and his poetry⁴ and by employing interrelated colour imagery Catullus strengthens the connections between them.

Cat. 95.6: *Zmyrnam cana diu saecula pervoluent.*

Catullus tells Cinna that generations will go on reading his Smyrna until they are grey-haired (*cana*).

Cat. 108.1: *Si, Comini, populi arbitrio tua cana senectus / spurcata impuris moribus intereat*

Catullus speculates about what would happen if Cominius' grey (*cana*) old age, soiled with his filthy practices, should come to an end by the will of the people. Here the usual venerable associations of white hair are countered by the adjective *spurcata*, setting up a contrast between light and dark. The motif of darkness will be echoed in v. 5 with the allusion to the black throat of the raven.⁵

Prop. 2.13b.40: *hoc iter ad lapides cana veni memores.*

Propertius tells Cynthia that when she meets her death she should come, grey haired (*cana*), to his memorial stones and be buried with him. The grey of Cynthia's hair is set in contrast with the bloody tomb of Phthia in the previous couplet.⁶

Prop. 2.16.22: *atque una fieret cana puella domo;*

¹ *'nec tantum niveo gavisata est ulla columbo / compar...'* (vv. 125-126). See further below on these lines under 1.35 NIVEUS ii.

² *'ut semel es flavo conciliata viro'* (v. 130). See this line below under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS i.

³ *'fulgebat crocina candidus in tunica'* (v. 134). See further below on this line under 1.12 CROCINUS.

⁴ Janan (1994) pp. 135-138

⁵ See Cat. 108.5 above under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS ii. Horace also has a fondness for employing words such as *sordidus* in contrast with words for white or shining: compare 4.11.35 above under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS v.

⁶ *'nec minus haec nostri notescet fama sepulcri / quam fuerant Pthii busta cruenta viri.'* (vv. 37-38).

A girl would grow grey (*cana*) in the house of only one lover if men at Rome were not wealthy. *Cana* in this line is picked up by *candida* in the following couplet, employed of Cynthia's arms which are entwined about a rich lover.¹

Prop. 2.18b.5: *quid mea si canis aetas candesceret annis*

Propertius asks Cynthia what would happen if his youth became white with the grey (*canis*) hair of old age. See on this line above under 1.8.1 CANDEO / CANDESCO.

Prop. 2.18b.18: *et canae totiens oscula ferre comae.*

Aurora was not ashamed to heap kisses on Tithonus' grey (*canae*) locks. In contrast, in the Homeric Hymns Tithonus' πρώται πολιαί cause her to shun his bed.²

Prop. 4.9.52: *puniceo canas stamine vincta comas:*

The priestess of the Bona Dea who forbids Heracles entrance to the grove has her grey (*canas*) locks bound with a scarlet ribbon. Note how Propertius places both colour words at the front of the line, emphasising the contrast between them. This line has echoes of Catullus' picture of the Fates who have their snowy hair bound with rosy ribbons³; in both images there is the same suggestion of a frail exterior containing a hidden power. See also on this line below under 1.39 PUNICEUS / PUNICUS.

Hor. 1.4.4: *nec prata canis albicant pruinis.*

Spring has come and the meadows are no longer white with hoary (*canis*) frost. On this line see above under 1.2.1 ALBESCO / ALBICO.

Hor. 2.11.15: *et rosa / canos odorati capillos, / dum licet, Assyriaque nardo / potamus uncti?*

Horace tells his friend to stop worrying about the future and instead to recline with him under the trees drinking wine, their grey (*canos*) locks garlanded with fragrant roses and perfumed with Syrian ointment. The motif of grey hair is picked up from v. 8.⁴ Perfumes and roses were of course common at feasts. In this context Horace emphasises the

¹ See Prop. 2.16.24 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i.

² 5.228. See also Butler and Barber (1933) p. 222.

³ 'at roseae niveo residebant vertice vittae' (64.309). See on this line below under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

⁴ See this line above under 1.9.1 CANITIES.

fragrance of the roses but the idea of colour is also present, for roses in Roman poetry were invariably red and elsewhere Horace uses *purpureus* and *puniceus* to describe them.¹ This hint of red echoes *rubens* in the previous stanza² and in its turn it is echoed by the allusion to drinking (red) wine in v. 17. The image of red roses on grey (or white) hair has certain similarities to Catullus' depiction of the Fates with rosy ribbons on their snowy hair.³ As with the Fates, who wear bright ribbons in their hair like young girls, the picture of roses on grey hair has a certain incongruous and pathetic air.⁴ Roses are associated with youth and the grey hair is a reminder that the roses, like everything else, will fade and decay.⁵

1.10 CEREUS

Hor. 1.13.2: *Cum tu, Lydia, Telephi / cervicem roseam, cerea Telephi / laudas brachia...*

Horace tells Lydia that when she praises Telephus' rosy neck and *cerea* arms he grows wild with jealousy. There is some disagreement as to whether *cereus* is used chromatically here. It can sometimes be employed with the sense of 'yellow like wax' and applied to things such as fruit⁶ but yellow is not appropriate in this context.⁷ The *Oxford Latin Dictionary* cites this line under the definition 'like wax in texture' but they give no other examples of *cereus* with this sense.⁸ André, on the other hand, says that here *cereus* means 'blanc comme la cire (raffinée)'⁹ and argues that in this line *cerea* is contrasted with *roseam* and, as we have seen, red/white colour contrasts were not infrequently employed in descriptions of youth and beauty.¹⁰ Both the non-chromatic and the chromatic sense of

¹ See Hor. 3.15.15 below under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i, Hor. 4.10.4 under 1.39 PUNICEUS / PUNICUS. See also the note on Hor. 2.3.16 above under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS ii.

² '...neque uno Luna rubens nitet / vultu...' (vv. 10-11). See further below on these lines under 1.43.1 RUBEO.

³ See Cat. 64.309 below under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

⁴ Quinn 'the juxtaposition '*rosa canos*' is designedly ironical' (1980 p. 220).

⁵ Commager 'Yet, as is the case with nearly all the garlands thus offered by Horace, the conspiracy is moral as well as sensuous: these flowers too cannot keep their bloom.' (1962 p. 244). Compare Horace's reference to the *nimum brevis flores amoenae* in 2.3.13-14 (see Hor. 2.3.16 above under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS ii). Propertius also uses garlands and wine to signify the transitory pleasures of life; '*ac veluti folia arentis liquere corollas, / quae passim calathis strata natate vides, / sic nobis, qui nunc magnum spiramus amantes, / forsitan includet crastina fata dies.*' (2.15.51-54).

⁶ e.g. Virgil *Cop.* 18, Mart. 10.94.6.

⁷ As André points out, yellow applied to the skin was usually a sign of ill-health (1949 p. 158)

⁸ (1968) p. 302

⁹ André (1949 p. 157) gives no other instances of *cereus* employed in this way but cites instances where terms for white such as *albus* and *candidus* are used of refined wax (e.g. Pliny 21.49.84, 22.55.116). See also Nisbet and Hubbard who support this interpretation and cite some instances of *cereus* employed with the sense 'white' (1970 p. 171f.).

¹⁰ e.g. Prop. 2.3.10 above under 1.2.2 ALBUS i.

cereus may be present here but the position of *roseam* and *cerea*, placed in contrast in the middle of the line, would seem to indicate that Horace is employing *cerea* with its chromatic sense uppermost. The colour allusion in this line will be picked up by Horace's use of *color* in v. 5¹ in reference to the pallor of his own skin and *candidus* in v. 10 which is employed to describe the colour of Lydia's shoulders.²

1.11.1 COLOR

Cat. 64.90: *aurave distinctos educit verna colores*

Catullus makes a comparison between the odours of Ariadne's maiden bed and the various colours (*colores*) which a spring breeze brings forth. Compare the Propertius entry immediately below. As Quinn comments, this simile is a Homeric one³; it has strayed from its original point of comparison (smell) and introduced the new element of colour. Although colour does not seem to have much connection to the point of the simile, the colours of the earth were commonly linked with reds and purples⁴, a colour which heightens the erotic overtones of the comparison and which will later be picked up by Ariadne's reference to spreading a purple coverlet on Theseus' bed.⁵

Prop. 1.2.9: *aspice quos summittat humus formosa colores*

As part of his lecture against expensive clothing, Propertius tells Cynthia to look to nature and the colours (*colores*) which the lovely earth brings forth. The colours of the earth, associated with reds and purples as in Cat. 64.90 above, echo the purple of Cynthia's costly robe in v. 2.⁶ For a full discussion of this colour image in its context see Chapter 5, section 3 below.

Prop. 1.2.22: *sed facies aderat nullis obnoxia gemmis/qualis Apelleis est color in tabulis.*

Propertius states that the complexions of the mythical heroines of old were beholden to no jewels but were like the hues (*color*) in the paintings of Apelles. Apelles was renowned for

¹ See this line below under 1.11.1 COLOR.

² See this line above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i.

³ (1973) p.316.

⁴ Fordyce (1961 p.291) compares Virgil '*ante novis rubeant quam prata coloribus*' (Georg. 4.306) and Tibullus '*quam cito purpureos deperdit terra colores*' (1.4.29).

⁵ '*purpureave tuum consternens veste cubile*' (v. 163). See further below on this line under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i.

⁶ '*et tenuis Coa veste movere sinus*'

the colours in his paintings¹: for a detailed discussion of the significance of the reference to Apelles see Chapter 5, section 3 below.

Prop. 1.4.13: *ingenuus color et multis decus artibus...*

Propertius praises Cynthia's natural colouring (*color*) and grace in many arts. Later on, he will contradict himself and state that Cynthia's radiant complexion was all a sham.²

Prop. 1.6.6: *mutatoque graves saepe colore preces.*

Cynthia's altered colour (*colore*) and urgent entreaties keep Propertius from going with Tullus on his travels.

Prop. 1.15.39: *quis te cogebat multos pallere colores*

Propertius asks Cynthia who compelled her to become pale with many shifting hues (*colores*). This is one of the tricks which Cynthia employs to make Propertius believe that she cares about him. Note how Propertius places both colour words together at the end of the line, heightening the faint suggestion of oxymoron in the image. See also on this line below under 1.37.1 PALLEO / PALLESCO.

Prop. 1.18.17: *an quia parva damus mutato signa colore*

Propertius asks Cynthia if she scorns him because he gives small sign of his passion by changing colour (*colore*).

Prop. 2.18c.26: *turpis Romano Belgicus ore color.*

Propertius tells Cynthia that Belgian colour (*color*) is shameful on a Roman head. Here he is referring to a type of hair dye; compare Martial's reference to *Batava spuma*.³

Prop. 2.25.42: *vidistis pleno teneram candore puellam, / vidistis fuscam, ducit uterque color;*

'You see a delicate girl of the whitest complexion and another of dusky hue; either hue (*color*) attracts.' See Prop. 2.25.41 above under 1.8.3 CANDOR.

Prop. 3.13.7: *et Tyros ostrinos praebet Cadmea colores*

¹ Plin. *N.H.* 35.36.97

² See Prop. 3.24.8 above under 1.8.3 CANDOR.

³ '*fortior et tortos servat vesica capillos / et mutat Latias spuma Batava comas.*' (8.33.19-20). Camps also draws this parallel (1967 p. 141).

Tyre offers purple hues (*colores*) to overcome the resistance of women. On this see Prop. 3.13.5 above under 1.5.2 AURUM ii.

Prop. 3.24.7: *et color est totiens roseo collatus Eoo / cum tibi quaesitus candor in ore foret:*

Propertius tells Cynthia that although her complexion (*color*) was compared to the rosy dawn, the radiance in her face was contrived. On these lines see Prop. 3.24.8 above under 1.8.3 CANDOR.

Prop. 4.3.28: *diceris et macie vultum tenuasse: sed opto / e desiderio sit color iste meo.*

Lycotas' face is reputed to be thin and drawn but Arethusa prays that his pallor (*color*) comes from longing for her.

Hor. 1.13.5: *tum nec mens mihi nec color / certa sede manent...*

When Lydia praises Telephus, Horace's senses no longer remain in their fixed site, nor does his colour (*color*) stay unchanged. Horace's shifting colour is complemented by Telephus' pink and white complexion; see Hor. 1.13.2 above under 1.10 CEREUS.

Hor. 2.2.1: *Nullus argento color est avaris / abdito terris....*

There is no lustre (*color*) for silver hidden away in the greedy earth. See this line above under 1.3.2 ARGENTUM.

Hor. 2.4.3: *...prius insolentem / serva Briseis niveo colore / movit Achillem*

In former times the slave Briseis moved proud Achilles with her snowy-white complexion (*colore*). See on this line below under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

Hor. 2.5.12: *... iam tibi lividos / distinguet Autumnus racemos / purpureo varius colore.*

Horace tells an eager lover to stay his hand from the unripe grape and wait until multicoloured Autumn paints the darkening clusters with a purple hue (*colore*). See on this line below under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i.

Hor. 3.5.27: *...neque amissos colores / lana refert medicata fuco / nec vera virtus, cum semel excidit, / curat reponi deterioribus.*

Its lost hues (*colores*) cannot return to wool steeped in purple dye, nor does true courage, when once it has been lost, care to be restored to inferior men. On this colour image see Hor. 3.5.25 above under 1.5.2 AURUM ii.

Hor. 4.8.7: *...divite me scilicet artium / quas aut Parrhasius protulit aut Scopas, / hic saxo, liquidis ille coloribus*

If Horace were rich in the works of art which Scopas produced in stone or Parrhasius in liquid colours (*coloribus*) he would give such gifts to his comrades. Parrhasias was a painter of the fourth century B.C., famed for drawing outlines and his realistic depiction of scenes.¹ Diodorus Siculus ranks him with Apelles in his skill in blending colours.²

Hor. 4.10.4: *nunc et qui color est puniceae flore prior rosae / mutatus...*

Horace tells Ligurinus that he will repent of his cruelty toward Horace when that colour (*color*) which is now superior to the blossom of the crimson rose has faded. For the association of fading colour with aging compare below on 4.13.17. On the comparison with the crimson rose see this line below under 1.39 PUNICEUS / PUNICUS.

Hor. 4.13.17.: *quo fugit Venus, heu, quove color?...*

Horace asks the aging Lyce where her grace and colour (*color*) have fled. This is a reversal of the usual conceit, for it was normally the courtesans who caused their lovers' colour to depart; see for instance Hor. 1.13.5 above. This expression forms part of a complex series of colour images in this poem: for a full discussion of this colour image in the context of the others see below under Chapter 6, section 3.3.iii.

1.11.2 COLORO

Cat. 11.7: *sive quae septemgeminus colorat / aequora Nilus*

Catullus envisages himself journeying to the plains which the seven mouth Nile discolours (*colorat*). According to Fordyce this is an allusion to the alluvial deposits of the river to which other writers such as Virgil also make reference.³

¹ Pliny *N.H.* 35.36.65, 35.36.67

² 'Ἀπελλῆς ἢ Παρράσιος οἱ τοῖς ἐμπειρικῶς κεκραμένοις χρώμασι προαγαγόντες εἰς ἀκρότατον τὴν ζωγραφικὴν τέχνην' (26.1). See also Pollitt (1990) pp. 153-156.

³ 'et *viridem Aegyptum nigra fecundat arena*' (*Georg.* 4.292). See further Fordyce (1961) p.126.

Prop. 3.13.16: *felix Eois lex funeris una maritis / quos Aurora suis rubra colorat equis!*

Propertius blesses the unique funeral law of husbands of the East whom red Aurora darkens (*colorat*) with her horses. *Colorat* here is employed of the skin colour of the Indians; compare Prop. 4.3.10¹, Cic. *de Orat.* 2.14.60, Sen. *Ep.* 86.8, 108.4.² For a full analysis of this image in its context see Chapter 5, section 5.2.

1.12 CROCINUS

Cat. 68.134: *quam circumcursans hinc illinc saepe Cupido / fulgebat crocina candidus in tunica.*

Cupid is depicted hovering about Lesbia shining brightly in a saffron (*crocina*) tunic. This word, according to Mantero³, makes its first appearance in the poetry of Catullus and it is likely that it is Catullus' way of suggesting his desire for marriage with Lesbia.⁴ It is true that *luteus* rather than *crocinus* was the colour most directly associated with marriage⁵ but there is evidence that *luteus* and *crocinus* / *croceus*⁶ were closely related shades; for instance in the *Eclogues* Virgil uses *croceus* as an adjective for the colour word *lutum*.⁷ Furthermore, in the *Metamorphoses*, Hymen, the god of marriage, is dressed in a *croceus* tunic⁸ and in the *Aeneid* Edgeworth argues that Aeneas' gift to Dido of Helen's veil, which is embroidered with a pattern of *croceus* acanthus⁹, suggests the possibility of marriage between them.¹⁰ See also above on this line under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS ii.

1.13 CRUENTUS

Prop. 2.9.11: *et dominum lavit maerens captiva cruentum, / propositum flavis in Simoente vadis*

Briseis, although a captive, sorrowfully washed the bloody (*cruentum*) body of her master which had been placed in the yellow shallows of Simois. The horrifying sight of Achilles'

¹ below under 1.14.2 DECOLOR

² Fordyce (1961) p.126.

³ (1979) p. 183

⁴ Mantero agrees (1979) p. 190

⁵ See the instances below under 1.28 LUTEUS.

⁶ *Crocinus* and *croceus* are cognate words; according to the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* both are derived from the Greek κρόκος (1968 pp. 460-461).

⁷ 'iam *croceo* mutabit vellera luto' (4.44)

⁸ 'Inde per immensum *croceo* velatus amictu / aethera digreditur Ciconumque Hymenaeus ad oras / tendit...' (10.1-3). Note that *croceus* is employed here, a word which is cognate with *crocinus*.

⁹ 'et circumtextum *croceo* velamen acantho' (1.649). This image is repeated at v. 711.

¹⁰ (1992) p. 37.

bloodstained body is placed in contrast not only with the yellow shallows of the river¹ but also with Briseis' fair cheek in the previous couplet.²

Prop. 2.13b.38: *nec minus haec nostri notescet fama sepulcri,/quam fuerant Pthii busta **cruenta** viri.*

The fame of Propertius' tomb shall be known far and wide no less than was the bloody (*cruenta*) tomb of the Phthian hero. This is another reference to Achilles and by employing the epithet *cruentus* here, Propertius emphasises the contrast between the sort of fame which is earned by bloodshed and his own renown, earned by very different means.

Prop. 3.11.34: *et totiens nostro Memphi **cruenta** malo*

In his poem on the fall of Cleopatra, Propertius addresses Memphis which has been so often bloodstained (*cruenta*) with the misfortunes of Rome.

Prop. 4.1.96: *Gallus at, in castris dum credita signa tuetur,/concidit ante aquilae rostra **cruenta** suae:*

Gallus, while in the camp defending the standards entrusted to him, fell dead before the bloodstained (*cruenta*) beak of his eagle-standard. Gallus is one of the sons of a Roman matron whose desire for money leads to her sons going off to war and dying in battle.³ It is significant that Propertius employs the image of the *cruenta rostra* here for the image recalls the *punica rostra* of 3.3.32 which were also linked with the destructive power of war; see below on this line under 1.39 PUNICEUS / PUNICUS and Chapter 4, section 6.3.ii.

Prop. 4.1.112: *idem Agamemnoniae ferrum cervice puellae /tinxit, et Atrides vela **cruenta** dedit;*

The seer Calchas stained his sword in the throat of Agamemnon's daughter and the son of Atreus set forth with bloody (*cruenta*) sails. The image of Iphigeneia's white neck staining the sword goes back to Euripides.⁴ In Propertius' lines *cruenta* picks up on *tinxit* and reinforces the bloodiness and horror of the deed.

Prop. 4.5.68: *vidi ego rugoso tussim concrescere collo /sputaque per dentis ire **cruenta** cavos*

¹ Prop. 2.9.12 below under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS ii.

² See Prop. 2.9.10 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i.

³ Camps (1965) p. 66

⁴ 'φασγάνῳ λευκῆν φονεύων τῆς ταλαιπώρου δέριον.' (IA 875)

Propertius saw the cough clotting in the wrinkled throat of the bawd Acanthis and the bloodstained (*cruenta*) spittle seeping through her hollow teeth.

Hor. 1.2.39: *acer et Mauri peditis **cruentum** / vultus in hostem*

Mars' delight is in war and in the fierce countenance of the Moorish foot soldier when he faces his bloodstained (*cruentum*) enemy. The red bloodiness with which Mars is associated forms a contrast to the white brilliance of Apollo¹ and echoes the red/white contrast at the beginning of the ode.²

Hor. 2.8.16: *..et Cupido, / semper ardentis acuens sagittas / cote **cruenta**.*

Barine's wiles provide much amusement for Cupid who is forever sharpening his blazing arrows on his bloodstained (*cruenta*) stone. The fiery arrows and the bloodstained stone complement each other and provide a contrast with the cool radiance of the lying Barine.³

Hor. 2.14.13: *frustra **cruento** Marte carebimus*

In vain we shall escape from bloody (*cruento*) Mars and the other hazards of life for a common death awaits everyone. This use of red will be echoed in the last stanza of the poem by the picture of wine staining the pavement.⁴ The picture of bloody Mars is also placed in contrast with the black river of the underworld in the following stanza.⁵ It is interesting that the only colour elements used in this poem are all employed in association with liquids - the blackness of water and the redness of blood and of wine.

¹ *'nube candentis umeros amictus / augur Apollo'* (vv. 31-32). See above on these lines under 1.8.1 CANDEO / CANDESCO.

² *'Iam satis terris nivis atque dirae / grandinis misit Pater et rubente / dextera sacras iaculatus arces / terruit urbem'* (vv. 1-4). See below on these lines under 1.43.1 RUBEO.

³ *'...sed tu, simul obligasti / perfidum votis caput, enitescis / pulchrior multo...'* (vv. 5-7). See below on these lines under 1.16 ENITEO / ENITESCO.

⁴ *'...et mero / tinget pavimento superbo, / pontificum potiore cenis.'* (vv. 26-28). The stain of wine is reminiscent of blood and thus of death but here it is also associated with the festivity of the pontiff's banquets, a symbol of life.

⁵ See Hor. 2.14.17 above under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS ii.

Hor. 3.2.11: *sponsus lacessat regius asperum / tactu leonem, quem cruenta / per medias rapit ira caedis.*

The maiden is afraid that her royal bridegroom may provoke the lion, harsh to the touch, whom a bloodthirsty (*cruenta*) rage drives through the middle of the slaughter. The use of *cruentus* in association with the lion is reminiscent of epic, for in both Virgil¹ and Homer² words for blood are employed in similes about lions.

1.14.1 DECOLORO

Hor. 2.1.35: *...quod mare Dauniae / non decoloravere caedes? / quae caret ora cruore nostro?*

Horace asks what sea has Italian slaughter not discoloured (*decoloravere*) and what coast does not know their blood. Here he is speaking of the terrible carnage caused by the civil wars. *Caedes* suggests the redness of blood, a suggestion which is reinforced by *cruore* in the following line while the verb *decoloravere* emphasises the unnaturalness of the situation when clear water runs red with blood. This is not the only time that Horace and his fellow poets make use of the 'blood in water' motif: see Hor. 3.13.7 below under 1.43.2 RUBER and the discussion of this motif in Chapter 4, section 6.4.

1.14.2 DECOLOR

Prop. 4.3.10: *hibernique Getae, pictoque Britannia curru, / ustus et Eoa decolor Indus aqua.*

Arethusa sends a letter to her husband whom the wintry Getans, Britain of the painted chariot and the swarthy (*decolor*) Indian burnt by the Eastern wave have all beheld. The image of the Indian burnt brown by sun or sea is a not uncommon one in poets such as Propertius and Tibullus; compare Prop. 3.13.16 above under 1.11.2 COLORO and see the discussion in Chapter 5, sections 5.1 and 5.2.

1.15 EBURNUS

Prop. 2.1.9: *sive lyrae carmen digitis percussit eburnis, / miramur, facilis ut premat arte manus;*

When Cynthia strikes a tune from her lyre with her ivory (*eburnis*) fingers, Propertius marvels at the skill with which she applies her dexterous hands. Here *eburnus* functions as

¹ *Aen.* 9.341, 12.8.

² *Od.* 22.402, 23.48.

a synonym for *candidus* in its use as an adjective for the white skin of beautiful women and boys; compare Prop. 2.16.24 and 2.22a.5 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i. The word is rarely employed in this sense before Ovid¹ which suggests that Propertius is employing the adjective here because it implies an association between Cynthia's fingers and the ivory from which *plectra* and the lyres of courtesans were sometimes made; see Prop. 3.3.25 and Hor. 2.11.22 below.

Prop. 2.13.21: *nec mihi tunc fulcro sternatur lectus eburno,/ nec sit in Attalico mors mea nixa toro.*

Propertius tells Cynthia that when he dies he does not wish a bed with an ivory (*eburno*) foot be spread for him nor his corpse rest on a couch of cloth of gold. For the ivory feet of ceremonial couches compare the wedding couches of Catullus c. 61.108 and 64.48 which are discussed in Chapter 2, section 5.2. In Propertius the ivory is placed in contrast with the cloth of gold which Attalicus is supposed to have invented.² The coupling of gold and ivory is a commonplace in the poets, especially in contexts of the rejection of wealth: see Prop. 3.2.12 and Hor. 2.18.1 above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iii. and Hor. 1.31.6. above under 1.5.2 AURUM ii.

Prop. 2.24a.13: *et cupit iratum talos me poscere eburnos,/ quaeque nitent Sacra vilia dona Via.*

The rapacious Cynthia angers Propertius by demanding dice of ivory (*eburnos*) and such worthless gifts as glitter along the Sacred Way. Here the sheen of the ivory is picked up by the verb *nitent* in the following line; see these lines below under 1.34.1 NITEO ii.

Prop. 3.2.12: *quod non Taenariis domus est mihi fulta columnis,/ nec camera auratas inter eburna trabes*

Propertius' house is not supported by Taenarian columns, nor are there vaulted roofs of ivory (*eburna*) with gilded beams between. On these lines see above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iii.

Prop. 3.3.25: *dixerat, et plectro sedem mihi monstrat eburno*

¹ (*Am.* 3.7.7, *Met.* 3.422). The *Oxford Latin Dictionary* lists two forms of the adjective; *eburneus* and *eburnus*. Under the definition 'white as ivory' for *eburneus* it gives instances from Ovid and one from the CIL, for *eburnus* it only gives the Propertius instance (1968 p. 584).

² Butler and Barber (1933) p. 213

Apollo, in a dream, speaks to Propertius and points out the way to him with his ivory (*eburno*) plectrum. Propertius employs the ivory plectrum as a mark of distinction and a symbol of authority: for a full discussion of its significance see Chapter 4 below under section 6.3.i.

Prop. 3.9.15: *Phidias signo se Iuppiter ornat eburno;*

The Jupiter of Phidias is distinguished by an ivory (*eburno*) statue. This is part of a long list of painters and sculptors whom Propertius praises for their varied gifts. For the ivory and gold statue of Zeus at Olympia see Pollitt.¹

Prop. 4.2.5: *haec me turba iuvat, nec templo laetor eburno:*

The god Vertumnus says that he takes pleasure in the throng milling round him and does not rejoice in an ivory (*eburno*) temple.

Prop. 4.6.8: *spargite me lymphis, carmenque recentibus aris / tibia Mygdoniis libet eburna cadis.*

'Sprinkle me with water and by the newly built altar let the ivory (*eburna*) pipe pour forth libation of song from Phrygian vessels.' In these lines the ivory of the flute is associated with the solemnity and ritual of a religious ceremony.

Hor. 2.11.22: *quis devium scortum eliciet domo / Lyden? eburna dic age cum lyra / maturet...*

Horace asks who will lure the elusive tart Lyde from her home and bids her make haste with her ivory (*eburna*) lyre. Nisbet and Hubbard comment that the ivory lyre, like the name Lyde, is 'an exotic touch'.²

Hor. 3.27.41: *vana, quae porta fugiens eburna / somnium ducit?...*

Europa, transported to Crete by the treacherous bull, asks if some insubstantial phantom has brought a dream as it flies through the ivory (*eburna*) gate. The allusion to the ivory gate which issues false dreams goes back to Homer (*Od.* 19.562ff) and Virgil also makes

¹ (1990) p. 58f.

² (1978) p. 177

use of the ivory gate in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, emphasising its whiteness and sheen.¹

1.16 ENITEO / ENITESCO

Cat. 61.21: *floridis velut enitens / myrtus Asia ramulis*

Catullus compares the bride of his marriage hymn to an Asian myrtle shining (*enitens*) with flowery branches. In this poem Catullus regularly associates words for shining and words for flowers with the bride. Here he combines the two, as he does again in v. 186.² The allusion to the white flowers of the myrtle suggests the white gleam of the bride's skin. For a detailed discussion of this image in its context see this line below under Chapter 2, section 5.1.

Hor. 2.8.6: *...sed tu, simul obligasti / perfidum votis caput, enitescis / pulchrior...*

Horace tells Barine that as soon as she has bound her treacherous head with promises she shines forth (*enitescis*) even lovelier. The superficiality and falseness of outward radiance seems to have been a literary motif among these Roman poets; compare Ovid who uses *radio* in a very similar fashion³ and see Prop. 3.24.8 above under 1.8.3 CANDOR and Hor. 1.5.13 and 1.14.19 below under 1.34.1 NITEO ii. As when Horace employs the word of Pyrrha in 1.5, here *enitescis* gives the impression of a surface glitter which is not to be trusted.⁴ This is placed in contrast with the black tooth in v. 3 which Horace thinks Barine should acquire when she swears falsely.⁵

¹ *'altera candenti perfecta nitens elephanto'* (v. 895). Virgil's emphasis on the sheen of the gate reinforces the suggestion that its visions are not to be trusted; for a similar use of words for shining compare Hor. 2.8.6 below under 1.16 ENITEO/ENITESCO and Hor. 1.5.13 and 1.14.19 below under 1.34.1 NITEO ii. Significantly, this shining whiteness can be associated with that of the temple of Apollo at 8.720 on whose threshold Augustus is sitting (Edgeworth 1992 p. 113).

² *'ore floridulo nitens'* See on this verse below under 1.34.1 NITEO i.

³ *'argutos habuit: radiant ut sidus ocelli, per quos mentita est perfida saepe mihi.'* (Am. 3.3.9-10)

⁴ 'Barine's fair surface (*enitescis*, 6), like Pyrrha's, conceals a darker reality which not the smallest sign (*dente nigro*, 3), betrays to her unwary lovers.' (Commager 1962 p. 149). Horace makes a similar use of the cognate word *nitidus* in *Serm.* 2.1, this time in reference to poetry; *'...quid, cum est Lucilius ausus/primus in hunc operis componere carmina morem,/detrudere et pellem, nitidus qua quisque per ora/cederet, introrsum turpis...'* (vv. 62-65).

⁵ *'dente si nigro fieres vel uno/turpior ungui'*. See below on this line under 1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS v.

1.17 ERUBESCO

Prop. 3.14.20: *inter quos Helene nudis capere arma papillis / fertur nec fratres erubuisse deos.*

Propertius praises the women of Sparta and compares them to Helen who, it is said, with breasts exposed carried arms and did not blush (*erubuisse*) in the presence of her divine brothers. Even though *erubuisse* is negated here it still suggests redness which is placed in contrast with the whiteness of Helen's *nudis papillis* in the previous line. The red/white contrast contributes to the erotic insinuation of the couplet, the whiteness of the exposed flesh picking up on the snowy white flank of the Spartan girl in v. 11.¹ It is this sort of colour usage which helps to undermine the ostensible message of the poem. For a discussion of the way in which Propertius uses colours in this poem see below in Chapter 5, section 5.6.

Prop. 4.11.42: *me neque censurae legem mollisse neque ulla / labe mea vestros erubuisse focos.*

Cornelia swears to her husband that the censor's law was never relaxed for her nor did their hearth redden (*erubuisse*) with any sin of hers. The image of the hearth growing red with guilt is reinforced by the word *labes* which literally means a spot or stain.

Hor. 1.27.15: *...quae te cumque domat Venus, / non erubescendis adurit / ignibus...*

Horace tells his drinking-companions that, whatever passion masters them, it scorches them with a flame for which they need not blush (*erubescendis*). The use of a word for red here picks up on the allusions to blood and wine in previous stanzas², the frequent use of words associated with redness increasing the atmosphere of violence and passion which attends this symposium. The word for flames (*ignibus*) also suggests redness which makes *non erubescendis ignibus* almost an oxymoron.

1.18 EXPALLESCO

Cat. 64.100: *quanto saepe magis fulgore expalluit auri*

¹ 'gyrum pulsat equis, niveum latus ense revincit' See further on this line below under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

² 'verecundumque Bacchum sanguineis prohibete rixis.' (vv. 3-4); 'vino et lucernis Medus acinaces / immane quantum discrepat' (vv. 5-6); 'vultis severi me quoque sumere / partem Falerni?' (vv. 9-10)

Ariadne grows paler (*expalluit*) than the gleam of gold when Theseus fights the Minotaur. For a discussion of this line see above under 1.5.2 AURUM ii.

1.19 FERRUGO

Cat. 64.227: *inde infecta vago suspendam lintea malo, / nostros ut luctus nostraeque incendia mentis / carbasus obscurata dicet ferrugine Hibera.*

Aegeus tells his son that he will hang dyed sails upon his wandering mast so that the linen, darkened by Spanish rust (*ferrugine*) will betoken the fire of grief in his heart. As Fordyce comments, *ferrugo* is a puzzling term¹; André lists the word under three separate chromatic headings - 'rouge', 'noir' and 'vert'.² Some interpret the term here as 'black' or blue³ but both André and Edgeworth think that it is meant to suggest a red or purple colour, albeit one of dark hue.⁴ Simonides also describes a purple sail in his version of the story but this is used to indicate Theseus' safe return rather than disaster.⁵ Catullus' description of the sail places emphasis on the dyeing process (*infecta*), creating a colour contrast between the dark purple dye and the implied whiteness of the undyed linen (*carbasus*).⁶ This contrast between dark and light is reinforced by the reference to the bright fires (*incendia*) which are burning in Aegeus' heart. The purple/white contrast echoes others in the poem⁷; see v. 49 and v. 163 below under 1.40.1 PURPURA and 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i respectively.

1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS

i) Hair

Cat. 64. 63: *non flavo retinens subtilem vertice mitram, / non contacta levi velatm pectus amictu, / non tereti strophio lactentis vincta papillas*

Ariadne, in her distress at Theseus' departure, does not retain her finely-woven head-dress on her golden (*flavo*) head, doesn't keep her bosom veiled by the light robe nor her fair breasts bound by the smooth band. Golden hair is typical of gods and heroes in mythology

¹ (1961) p. 304

² (1949) p. 107ff.

³ Goold (1989) p. 153, Quinn (1973) p. 329

⁴ L'expression *infecta...lintea* (v. 225) semble indiquer plutôt des voiles de couleur par opposition aux blanches, mais c'est une teinte foncée (*obscurata*, v. 227), comme la pourpre de Virg., *Aen.* XI, 772, représentée par *ferrugo*. (André 1949 p. 107). Edgeworth draws a parallel between these lines and *Aen.* 9.582 (*ferrugine clarus Hibera*) which he translates as 'brilliant with red Iberian dye' (1992 p. 126f; see also p. 232).

⁵ 'φουνίκεον ιστίον ὑγρῶν / πεφυρμένον ἄνθει πρίνου / ἐριθαλέος' (fr. 550a Page 1962)

⁶ For the colour of linen see Prop. 4.11.54 above under 1.2.2 ALBUS ii.

⁷ O'Connell (1977) p. 751

and epic.¹ *Flavus* here is equivalent to the Greek ξανθός which is regularly employed as an epithet for the hair of men and women in Homer² and which Hesiod uses as an epithet for Ariadne in the *Theogony*.³ Ariadne's golden beauty is complemented by the whiteness of her exposed breasts, a whiteness which is suggested by the word *pectus* and further emphasised by the adjective *lactentis* which gives the impression of colour as well as plumpness.⁴ Her gold and white colouring and her fine clothes serve as a contrast to her disarray. The line about Ariadne's golden hair is imitated by later writers with some variations.⁵

Cat. 64.98: ...in flavo saepe hospite suspirantem!

Ariadne often sighed for the golden-haired (*flavo*) stranger (Theseus). Compare the *Argonautica* where Medea would have given her soul to Jason for the love which shone from his golden head.⁶ Theseus' golden hair complements Ariadne's; see above.

Cat. 64.354: namque velut densas praecerpens messor aristas / sole sub ardenti flaventia demetit arva

Achilles' slaughter of the Trojans is compared to a harvester who lops thick ears of corn and mows down golden (*flaventia*) fields under the blazing sun. Columella also used the word to describe grain ripe for harvest⁷ and the term and its cognates are frequently employed in association with Ceres.⁸ As Fordyce points out, the idea of comparing slaughter to harvest probably comes from *Iliad* 11.67ff but in this simile the sole point of comparison is plenitude.⁹ Catullus' addition of the colour word *flaventia*, a word that is frequently used of hair colour, recalls the heads of the Trojan heroes¹⁰ and another point of

¹ Armstrong (1917) p. 43

² For instance, Achilles *Il.* 1.197, 23.141, Menelaus *Il.* 3.284, 434, Agameme *Il.* 11.740. See also the numerous listings in Kober (1932 p. 56).

³ 'χρυσσοκόμης δὲ Διώνυσος ξανθὴν Ἀριάδνην' (v. 947)

⁴ See Cat. 64.65 below under 1.25 LACTENS / LACTEOLUS.

⁵ 'numquam illam post haec oculi videre suorum / *purpureas flavo retinentem vertice vittas*' (*Ciris* 510-511); 'utque erat e somno, tunica velata recincta, / nuda pedem, *croceas inreligata comas*' (Ovid *Ars. Am.* 1. 529-530)

⁶ 'τοῖος ἀπὸ ξανθοῦ καρῆατος Αἰσονίδαο / στράπτειν ἔρωσ ἠδείαν † ἀπὸ φλόγα...' (3.1017-1018)

⁷ 'sed cum maturis *flavebit messis aristas*' (10.311)

⁸ Tib. 1.1.15, Virg. *Dir.* 16.

⁹ (1961) p. 320

¹⁰ For the use of the cognate adjective *flavus* of the golden hair of gods and heroes see Cat. 64.63, 64.98 above and 66.62, 68.130 below. Tibullus also employs a comparison between grain and the golden hair of the head; 'rura ferunt messes, calidi cum sideris aestu / deponit *flavas annua terra comas.*' (2.1.47-48).

comparison is established. Catullus' image is also more vivid and sensual than the one in the *Iliad* for it not only employs a colour word but other words which appeal to the senses such as *ardenti*, a word suggesting heat and light, and *densis* which denotes the thickness and heaviness of the grains of corn.¹ The feelings of richness and fertility that these words evoke serve to highlight the destructive waste of Achilles' slaughter of the Trojans.

Cat. 66.62: ... *sed nos quoque fulgeremus / devotae flavi verticis exuviae*

Berenice's lock says that it wants to shine in the sky as the consecrated spoil of a golden (*flavi*) head. The colour word is an addition of Catullus not employed in the Callimachian original.² It picks up on *fulgeremus* in the previous line and *aurea* in line couplet before³, the last in a sequence of words for gold and shining.

Cat. 68.130: *ut semel es flavo conciliata viro.*

Catullus, addressing Laodamia, tells her that she exceeded the strong passions of doves after she was married to her golden-haired (*flavo*) husband. On the golden hair of mythological figures see on 64.63 above.

Prop. 4.4.20: *vidit harenosis Tatium proludere campis / pictaque per flavas arma levare iubas:*

A line with various interpretations. Tarpeia is watching Tattius practice for battle on the sandy plain. He raises his *picta arma* through the *flavas iubas*. Most commentators agree that *picta arma* is probably an embellished shield (although Palmer replaces *arma* with *frena* 'embroidered bridle rein' on the grounds that *arma* occurs in the next line⁴). *Flavas iubas* could either refer to Tattius' helmet plumes made of yellow horse hair (as Cycnus' are in Ovid)⁵ or the tawny mane of the horse on which Tattius is riding.⁶ Thus *flavus* here would be equivalent to the Greek ξανθός which is employed of horses at *Iliad* 9.407 and 11.680.⁷

¹ Compare *Aen.* 7.720-21 where similar words are employed; 'vel cum sole novo *densae torrentur aristae / aut Hermi campo aut Lyciae flaventibus arvis.*'

² 'φάεσιν ἐν πολέεσσιν ἀριθμῖος ἀλλὰ γένωμαι / καὶ βερβενίκειος καλὸς ἐγὼ πλόκαμος' (fr. 110.61-62 Pfeiffer 1949 vol. 1)

³ See above on 66.60 under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS i.

⁴ Butler & Barber (1933) p. 345. King comments that Tattius' *picta arma*, like the *litora picta* of 1.2.13, suggest refinement and sophistication; 'Tattius represents for her [Tarpeia] a refinement that Romulus does not offer.' (1990 p. 235).

⁵ '...non haec, quam cernis, equinis / fulva iubis cassis neque onus, cava parma, sinistrae / auxilio mihi sunt:...' (*Met.* 12.88-90)

⁶ Shackleton-Bailey agrees with Rothstein in interpreting the line in this way (1956 p. 235).

⁷ See further Kober (1932) p. 57.

This colour term picks up on the sand in the previous verse which is frequently described by epic poets such as Virgil by words for yellow.¹ Such details contribute an epic ring to the scene.

Hor. 1.5.4: *cui flavam religas comam / simplex munditiis?...*

Horace asks Pyrrha for which youth she ties back her yellow (*flavam*) hair in simple elegance. Nisbet and Hubbard point out that the name Pyrrha, derived as it is from the Greek πύρρ, 'suggests a girl with reddish-yellow or auburn hair'.² For fair hair as a sign of beauty see above on Cat. 64.63. Pyrrha with her golden hair and the simple way she arranges it³ is not to be trusted, an idea which will be picked up by *aurea* in v. 9.⁴

Hor. 2.4.14: *nescias an te generum beati / Phyllidis flavae decorent parentes:*

'For all you know the parents of your blond (*flavae*) Phyllis are rich and will do you, their son-in-law, credit.' Horace addresses Xanthias who is in love with the slave girl Phyllis. Nisbet and Hubbard point out that the name Phyllis suggests dark green leaves and thus makes a colour contrast with *flavae*.⁵ It is interesting that of the three poets only Horace employs this colour term of the hair of ordinary women (as opposed to that of goddesses and heroines). Propertius does not employ this term at all of women's hair, preferring to describe Cynthia's hair by the colour adjective *fulvus* which some commentators have felt is an indication of his dislike for artificial hair colouring.⁶ Thus Horace's use of this term in association with 'courtesans' such as Pyrrha (above), Phyllis and Chloe (below) suggests their 'artificial' and manipulative natures. Phyllis' unnaturally fair hair is a sign that she has pretensions.⁷

Hor. 3.9.19: *si flava excutitur Chloe / reiectaeque patet ianua Lydiae ?*

'What if fair-haired (*flava*) Chloe is thrown out and the door thrown open to rejected Lydia?' This poem consists of a dialogue between two estranged lovers who are becoming

¹ See the formulaic *fulva harena* at *Aen.* 5.374 and Edgeworth's discussion of the phrase (1992 p. 131).

² (1970) p. 74. See also Kiessling-Heinze (1968) p. 32 and Putnam (1970) p. 252.

³ See further N & H (1970) p. 75

⁴ On this line see above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv.

⁵ (1978) p. 73

⁶ See Prop. 2.2.5 below under 1.22 FULVUS.

⁷ 'The girl's blond hair suits Xanthias better than her own name or servile status.' Nisbet & Hubbard (1978) p. 73



reconciled; these lines are spoken by the male. As in 2.4.14 above, Chloe's name, suggesting greenness, is in contrast to the colour epithet *flava*. Chloe's fair hair is her distinguishing characteristic as Lydia's white neck was in v. 2.¹

Hor. 4.4.4: ...*expertus fidelem / Iuppiter in Ganymede flavo*

Horace compares Drusus to the eagle to whom Juppiter gave dominion when he found him faithful in regard to fair-haired (*flavo*) Ganymede. This is an allusion to the legend that Ganymede, son of a Trojan prince, was carried off to Olympus by an eagle because of his outstanding beauty. Ganymede is called ξανθός (the Greek equivalent) in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*²; the epithet is appropriate both in regards to his beauty and to his subsequent divinity. Thus the epithet *flavus* contributes to the stylised, epic ring of the passage.

ii) Rivers

Cat. 67.33: *flavus quam molli praecurrit flumine Mella, / Brixia Veronae mater amata meae*

The golden (*flavus*) Mella with its gentle stream flows past Brixia, the beloved mother-city of Catullus' Verona. *Flavus* is commonly used as an epithet for rivers, usually because of the colour of their sand, and in Greek literature both ξανθός and χρυσέος can be employed in this fashion.³ In the Catullus line however there may be an additional reason for the epithet as the river name *Mella* corresponds to the Latin for honey which is also given the epithet *flavus*.⁴ Catullus lays emphasis on the colour word by separating it as far as possible from its noun and placing it at the front of the verse. Note also the predominance of 'f' and 'm' sounds that give the line a soft lyrical quality in keeping with the beauty of the image. These lines form a lyrical interlude in this otherwise biting, satirical poem.

Prop. 2.9.12: *et dominum lavit maerens captiva cruentum, / propositum flavis in Simoente vadis*

¹ See above on Hor. 3.9.2 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i.

² 'ἦ τοι μὲν ξανθὸν Γανυμήδεα μητιέτα Ζεὺς / ἤρπασεν ὄν διὰ κάλλος...' (vv. 202-203)

³ For *flavus* employed of rivers compare *Aen.* 7.31 and see Prop. 2.9.12, Hor. 1.2.13, 1.8.8, 2.3.18 below. For parallels in Greek literature see Kober (1932) p. 58 and p. 65.

⁴ '...mellis dulci flavoque liquore' (Lucr. 1.938); '...de flavis Attica mella favis' (Ov. *Med.* 82)

Briseis, although a captive, sorrowfully washed the bloody body of her master which had been placed in the yellow (*flavis*) shallows of Simois. *Flavis* is a commonly accepted correction for the MSS tradition *fluviis*.¹ In Homer it is the Scamander, not the Simois, which is given the alternative name $\Xi\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\omicron\varsigma$ because of the yellow colour of its waters but, as Enk observes, the two rivers are said to flow together² so it is not surprising that Propertius uses this colour epithet of the Simois as well. This colour term is the third out of four employed to depict Achilles' death: the yellow of the river is placed in contrast with Achilles' bloodstained body³, Briseis' fair cheek⁴ and Achilles' sea-blue mother.⁵ The frequency of colour words in this vignette gives rise to the speculation that Propertius may have been thinking of a painting of this scene when he wrote this poem.

Hor. 1.2.13: *vidimus flavum Tiberim retortis / litore Etrusco violenter undis / ire deiectum monumenta regis templaue Vestae*

'We saw the yellow (*flavum*) Tiber, its waters flung roughly back from the Etruscan shore, proceed to throw down the King's Memorial and Vesta's shrines.' Horace is describing the portents which accompanied the upheaval following the civil war. *Flavus* is a common enough epithet for the Tiber⁶ but in this context the word could also refer to yellow hair since Horace goes on to personify the river as a god (*uxorius amnis* 19f.) who is wreaking havoc because of the complaints of his wife.⁷

Hor. 1.8.8: *cur timet flavum Tiberim tangere? cur olivum / sanguine viperino / cautius vitat....*

Horace asks Lydia why her lover Sybaris rides no more amongst his soldier friends, fearing to swim in the yellow (*flavum*) Tiber and avoiding wrestling oil with as much caution as if it were viper's blood. For *flavus* as an epithet of the Tiber see 1.2.13 above. Quinn suggests that in 1.8 the epithet may have overtones of 'muddy'; Sybaris, now he is in love, does not want to get himself dirty.⁸ As with 1.2.13 above, there may also be a

¹ On this see Shackleton-Bailey (1956) p. 80

² Enk cites *Il* 5.774 (1962 p. 137).

³ See Prop. 2.9.11 above under 1.13 CRUENTUS.

⁴ See Prop. 2.9.10 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i.

⁵ See Prop. 2.9.15 above under 1.6 CAERULEUS / CAERULUS i.

⁶ e.g. *Aen.* 7.31, 9.816 and Hor. 1.8.8 following.

⁷ Quinn also makes this point (1980 p. 123).

⁸ (1980) p. 139. Compare Virg. *Cat.* (13.23-26) where *flavus* is associated with the muddiness of the Tiber.

suggestion of personification in this use of the epithet, reinforced by the verb *tangere*. The yellowness of the Tiber is echoed by the colour of the olive oil and both are contrasted with the redness of the viper's blood in the following line. In this poem Horace employs colour terms in association with the activities which Sybaris is trying to avoid: compare Horace's use of *lividus* in v. 10 under 1.26.2 LIVIDUS.

Hor. 2.3.18: *cedes coemptis saltibus et domo / villaque flavus quam Tiberis lavit;* Horace tells Dellius that when he dies he will leave his purchased pastures and the estate which the yellow (*flavus*) Tiber laps. The yellow Tiber is the last of a series of colourful images. Along with the (green) grass (v. 6) and pastures (v. 17), white poplar (v. 9)¹ and (red) roses (v. 14) it is representative of the colour and gaiety of life which is placed in contrast to the dark threads (*fila atra*) of the three sisters (v. 16).² However the swiftly-flowing river, like the too brief blossoms of the rose in the previous stanza, is also a reminder of the transience of life.³ After Horace mentions death, all colour departs from the poem.

iii) Other

Prop. 2.16.44: *sed quascumque tibi vestis, quoscumque smaragdos, / quosve dedit flavo lumine chrysolithos*

Propertius wishes to see all his rich rival's gifts to Cynthia perish; these gifts include clothing, emeralds and topaz with their yellow (*flavo*) light. The yellow colour of the topaz is contrasted with the green of emeralds (*smaragdos*) in the previous line.⁴ Tibullus employs a similar yellow/green contrast (gold with emeralds) to express a related sentiment.⁵ This is a typical instance of Propertius' and his fellow poets' association of gaudy colours with the corruptions of wealth and civilisation; see further Chapter 5, section 3.

¹ See Hor. 2.3.9 above under 1.2.2 ALBUS v.

² See Hor. 2.3.16 above under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS ii.

³ Commager makes this point about the *lympha fugax* of v. 12; 'Several times Horace imagined time's passing in terms of flowing water, whether in random phrases like *fluunt tempora* and *adfluentis annos*, or in the structure of whole poems such as the Ode to Postumus. The laboring stream, trembling along in its devious course, suggests the transience of all human efforts...' (1962 p. 284).

⁴ Both Lucretius (2.805) and Tibullus (2.4.27) employ the colour adjective *viridis* of emeralds.

⁵ 'o quantum est auri pereat potiusque smaragdi, / quam fleat ob nostras ulla puella vias.' (1.1.51-2)

1.21.1 FULGEO

i) Happiness / Good Omen

Cat. 8.3: *fulsere quondam candidi tibi soles.*

Catullus employs the image of the suns shining (*fulsere*) brightly to depict his past happiness with Lesbia. *Fulgeo* is employed in association with *candidus* to contribute to the atmosphere of brightness and happiness. See also on this line above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS iii.

Cat. 8.8: *fulsere vere candidi tibi soles.*

Catullus repeats the image of the suns shining (*fulsere*) brightly. See immediately above.

Cat. 64.44: *...fulgenti splendent auro atque argento.*

Peleus' dwelling is bright with gleaming (*fulgenti*) gold and silver. *Fulgenti* is one of the words that contributes to the impression of the brilliance of the palace and contributes to the happy glow of the golden age. See on this line above under 1.3.2 ARGENTUM.

Cat. 64.387: *saepe pater divum templo in fulgente revisens*

In the golden age, the father of the gods visited his gleaming (*fulgente*) temple in person to celebrate the festal days. Commentators such as Ellis and Merrill interpret *fulgente* figuratively as an indication of opulence and say that Catullus is thinking of the splendid temple of Jupiter at Olympia.¹ This may be the case but the translation 'shining' is just as appropriate here for it picks up on the image of Peleus' palace as full of light (see Cat. 64.44 above) and contributes to the impression of the brilliance and happiness of the golden age.

Hor. 2.16.3: *...simul atra nubes / condidit lunam neque certa fulgent / sidera nautis;*

The sailor prays for peace when dark storm-clouds have hidden the moon and the stars no longer shine out (*fulgent*) sure for sailors. *Fulgeo* is commonly employed in Latin literature for gleam of stars² and the verb can be used of the light of the moon³ which is also

¹ Ellis (1889) p. 341; Merrill (1893) p. 161

² e.g. Ennius *Ann. fr.* 29 (Vahlen 1963); Lucr. 6.357

³ 'nox erat et caelo fulgebat Luna sereno' (Hor. *Epod.* 15.1)

mentioned in v. 3. For sailors there was good fortune when stars and moon were shining for they were aids to navigation. The shining stars are set against the darkness of the *atra nubes* in a dark/light contrast; see further above on Hor. 2.16.2 under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS iv.

ii) Divine Power

Cat. 66.9: *idem me ille Conon caelesti in lumine vidit / e Beroniceo vertice caesariem / fulgentem clare...*

The same Conon who identified all the stars also saw in the heavenly light the lock from Berenice's head shining (*fulgentem*) brightly. The lock shines because it has been made immortal and is now a constellation. As with other colour words in this poem, there appears to be no equivalent for *fulgentem* in the Callimachian original.¹ In the opening to his version of the poem it is noteworthy how much Catullus places emphasis on words for light and shining. The enjambment of *fulgentem clare* emphasises the radiance of the lock and these words for shining echo both *caelesti lumine* in v. 7 and the reference to the flaming brilliance of the sun in v. 3.² For Catullus' fondness for using words for shining in his poems see 64.44 above under 1.3.2 ARGENTUM, 2.5 and 61.186 below under 1.34.1 NITEO i and 66.94 and 68.71 below.

Cat. 66.61: *...sed nos quoque fulgeremus / devotae flavi verticis exuviae*

Berenice's lock says that it wants to shine (*fulgeremus*) in the sky as the consecrated spoil of a golden head. Once again there is no real equivalent in the Callimachus poem for this term; Callimachus merely says that the lock will be numbered among the many stars.³

Cat. 66.94: *...coma regia fiam, / proximus Hydrochoi fulgeret Oarion!*

A line which is difficult to understand because of the obscurity of the previous line and because the equivalent lines in Callimachus are extremely fragmentary. The general sense seems to be that if the lock could become royal once again (i.e. if it could revert to its

¹ ἴη με Κόνων ἔβλεψεν ἐν ἡέρι τὸν Βερενίκης / βόστρυχον ὄν κείνη πᾶσιν ἔθηκε θεοῖς' (fr. 110.7-8 Pfeiffer 1949 vol. 1). Verse 9 is missing but there is no indication from v. 8 that Callimachus would have continued with a description of the shining lock. Callimachus' v. 8 seems equivalent in sense to the second half of Catullus' ninth verse, omitting a description of the lock altogether.

² *'flammeus ut rapidi solis nitor obscuretur'* See below on this line under 1.34.3 NITOR.

³ For the Callimachian fragment see above on Cat. 66.62 under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS i.

former life) Orion would be welcome to shine (*fulgeret*) next to Aquarius (i.e the stars could change their courses).¹ This is Catullus' third use of *fulgere* in c. 66 and it is employed in the final line of the poem.

Cat. 68.71: *quo mea se molli candida diva pede / intulit et trito fulgentem in limine plantam*

Catullus depicts Lesbia as a shining white goddess who, with soft tread, places her gleaming (*fulgentem*) foot on the polished threshold. The image of the gleaming foot emphasises the significance of Lesbia's crossing of the threshold. In addition, it carries with it overtones of desirability which go back to the *Iliad* where Hera prepares to seduce Zeus by binding beautiful sandals on her gleaming feet.² This is the fourth time that Catullus employs a word for colour or shining in association with the feet in the long poems: see Cat. 61.160 above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv, Cat. 64.162 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i and Cat. 65.6 below under 1.37.2 PALLIDUS. For a full discussion of the image see Cat. 68.70 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS ii.

Cat. 68.134: *quam circumcursans hinc illinc saepe Cupido / fulgebat crocina candidus in tunica.*

Cupid is depicted hovering about Lesbia shining (*fulgebat*) brightly in a saffron tunic. Gods are often depicted as bright, but here the brightness has an additional association with happiness and good omen. As Mantero points out, *fulgebat* picks up on Lesbia's *fulgentem plantam* of v. 71 (above).³ For detailed discussions of the significance of this image see the line above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS ii and 1.12 CROCINUS.

Hor. 2.12.8: *...unde periculum / fulgens contremuit domus / Saturni veteris;...*

Horace proclaims that he does not wish to sing of savage themes; themes such as the triumph of Hercules over the Giants at whose threat the shining (*fulgens*) house of ancient Saturn shook with terror. Words for shining are applied to the homes of gods from Homer onwards.⁴ In this poem Horace plays on the term, employing it a second time when telling

¹ Fordyce (1961) p. 340f., Ellis (1889) p. 381

² 'ποσὸν δ' ὑπὸ λιπαροῖσιν ἐδήσατο καλὰ πέδιλα.' (Il.18.6).

³ (1979) p. 191

⁴ '...ἀπ' ἀργύρεον Ὀλύμπου' (Il. 1.532); '...ἔνθα δέ οἱ κλυτὰ δώματα βένθεσι λίμνης / χρύσεια μαρμαίροντα τετεύχεται...' (Il. 13.21-22). See further on the image of the luminous palace in the discussion on Cat. 64.44 above under 1.3.2 ARGENTUM.

of the subject he does wish to sing of: he would rather sing of the shining eyes (*fulgentis oculos*) of his beloved than Saturn's shining house (see Hor. 2.12.15 below under iii.).

iii) Beauty / Desirability

Prop. 2.1.5: *sive illam Cois fulgentem incedere +cogis+ / hac totum e Coa veste volumen erit;*

If Cynthia walks gleaming (*fulgentem*) in Coan silk, Propertius makes Coan cloth the subject of his entire book. Here *fulgeo* is used to describe the brilliant purple colour that Coan cloth was usually dyed.¹ The word also suggests Cynthia's beauty and the powerful attraction that she has for Propertius.

Prop. 4.3.51: *nam mihi quo Poenis nunc² purpura fulgeat ostris / crystallusque meas ornet aquosa manus?*

Arethusa whose soldier husband, Lycotas, is missing asks herself for what purpose purple now shines (*fulgeat*) for her with its Punic dye or clear crystal adorns her hands. As in 2.1.5 above, here *fulgeo* is used to describe the gleam of purple. This couplet is full of words for colour and shining; *fulgeat* is picked up by *aquosa crystallus* in the following line and *purpura* is reinforced by *Poenis ostris*. These are obvious symbols of wealth and Butler and Barber conclude that the woman is lamenting the futility of the luxury with which she is surrounded.³ While this is true, it is also the case that the gleaming attire signifies Arethusa's attractiveness for which she has no use now that her husband is absent.

Hor. 2.12.15: *...me voluit dicere lucidum / fulgentis oculos...*

Horace says that the Muse has commanded him to speak of Licymnia's brightly shining (*fulgentis*) eyes. Shining eyes were a sign of loveliness and those in love.⁴ Compare the shining face of Lesbia in Cat. 2.5 below under 1.34.1 NITEO i and the Sappho fragment which is quoted under this entry.

Hor. 3.28.14: *...quae Cnidon / fulgentisque tenet Cycladas et Paphum / iunctis visit oloribus ;*

¹ Enk (1962) p. 15

² Although the OCT reads *ter*, most other editors read *nunc* which makes more sense.

³ (1933) p. 341

⁴ See further Nisbet and Hubbard (1978) p. 195 who cite the ὄμματα μαρμαίροντα of Aphrodite at *Il.* 3.397.

In her final song, Lyde will sing of the one who occupies Cnidos and the gleaming (*fulgentis*) Cyclades and visits Paphos with her team of swans. These places are of course associated with Venus. The Cyclades are called *fulgentes* on account of their marble which was of an extreme whiteness¹; compare Horace's reference to *nitentes Cycladae* at 1.14.19 below under 1.34.1 NITEO ii. *Fulgentes* is doubly appropriate because, employed in association with Venus, it has overtones of sexuality and attractiveness. This enables Horace to move naturally to the final line of his poem which is about the delights that he and Lyde will enjoy during the night.²

Hor. 4.11.5: *est hederæ vis / multa, qua crinis religata fulges;*

Horace tells Phyllis that there is a great abundance of ivy in his garden and that when she has bound her hair with it she will gleam (*fulges*). As Commager says, 'Phyllis is associated with light and growth; green ivy is the natural setting for her gleaming beauty'.³ For the use of words for green and shining together see Hor. 1.4.9 below under 1.34.2 NITIDUS. The suggestion of gleaming is picked up in the following line by *argento* in v. 6; see further on this line above under 1.3.2 ARGENTUM.

iv) Renown

Hor. 3.2.18: *Virtus repulsæ nescia sordidæ / intaminatis fulget honoribus*

True worth, that does not know disgrace at electoral defeat, shines (*fulget*) with untarnished glory. As in 3.16 below, *fulgeo* has primarily a metaphorical meaning here. However Horace also plays upon its literal meaning, contrasting it with the *sordida*, 'dirtiness' of electoral defeat and associating it with the word *intaminatus* whose literal meaning is 'unspotted' or 'unstained'. For a similar contrast of *sordidus* with words for shining and colour see above on Hor. 4.11.6 under 1.3.2 ARGENTUM and Hor. 4.11.35 under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS v.

Hor. 3.3.43: *... stet Capitolium / fulgens triumphatisque possit / Roma ferox dare iura Medis.*

¹ See Edgeworth's comments on *niveam Paron* of *Aen.* 3.126 (1992 p. 43 and n.95).

² *'dicetur merita Nox quoque nenia.'* (v. 16)

³ (1962) p. 303

In her prophetic speech about Rome's future, Juno says that as long as the ruins of Troy remain uncultivated and wild, the Capitol will stand gleaming (*fulgens*) and fierce Rome will give terms to the conquered Medes. According to Juno this is one of the conditions of Rome's greatness; the Romans must not rebuild Troy. The Capitol is employed as a symbol of Rome's destiny and *fulgens* is used both to suggest the gilding of the roof¹ and is employed in a wider, more metaphorical sense to sum up Rome's splendour and richness. Horace places the gleaming Capitol in contrast with the wild and lonely wastes of Troy.² For a similar effect compare Virgil's description of the site of Rome³ and see Propertius' use of *niteo* of the senate house of his day which he places in contrast to the crude one of old.⁴

Hor. 3.16.31: *...segetis certa fides meae / fulgentem imperio fertilis Africae / fallit sorte beatior.*

Horace's assured lot of his humble farm makes him happier than the dazzling (*fulgentem*) governor of fertile Africa, though the governor is not aware of it. The participle *fulgens* is here employed predominantly in a metaphorical sense of 'illustrious' but on the literal level the idea of glittering picks up on the reference to gold earlier in the poem.⁵

v) Other

Prop. 4.10.21: *picta neque inducto fulgebat parma pyropo:*

Romulus' shield was not embellished and gleaming (*fulgebat*) with an overlay of golden bronze. Here *fulgere* is employed to describe the gleam of the bronze embellishments. It is obvious that such adornment suggests the corruptions of wealth and civilisation for it is contrasted with the simple rusticity of Romulus' actual attire; he wears a wolf-skin helmet⁶ and a belt from a slaughtered ox.⁷ This is another instance of Propertius' association of brightness and colour with corruption: see Chapter 5, section 3 below.

¹ Quinn (1980) p. 248

² 'dum Priami Paridisque busto / insultet armentum et catulos ferae / celent inultae...' (vv. 40-42)

³ *Aen.* 8.347-348. For the quotation see Prop. 4.1.5 above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS ii.

⁴ 4.1.11 below under 1.34.1 NITEO i.

⁵ 'aurum per medios ire satellites' v. 9. See further on this line above under 1.5.2 AURUM ii.

⁶ 'et galea hirsuta compta lupina iuba.' v. 20

⁷ 'praebebant caesi baltea lenta boves.' v. 22

Hor. 1.7.19: *molli, Plance, mero, seu te fulgentia signis / castra tenent seu densa tenebit / Tiburis umbra tui...*

Horace tells Plancus to dispel life's troubles with gentle wine, whether the camp gleaming (*fulgentia*) with standards holds him or the thick shade of his own Tibur. Livy also employs *fulgeo* of the gleam of standards from afar¹ and Nisbet and Hubbard suggest that the word in Horace is meant to suggest the glitter of the silver eagles.² The glitter of the camp signifies the attractions of military service³ which are placed in an artistic contrast with the dark shade of the Tiber, emphasising the distinction between the active life and the life of leisure.⁴ This dark/light contrast echoes the contrast in v. 15 between the white South Wind and the dark clouds⁵ but in v. 19 Horace adds a third colour element with his allusion to the (red) wine with which Plancus will chase away his troubles.

1.21.2 FULGOR

Cat. 64.100: *quanto saepe magis fulgore expalluit auri*

Ariadne grows paler than the gleam (*fulgore*) of gold when Theseus fights the Minotaur. For a discussion of this image see on this line above under 1.5.2 AURUM ii.

Hor. 2.1.19: *iam fulgor armorum fugaces / terret equos equitumque vultus.*

Horace imagines himself listening to Pollio's account of the battle of Pharsalus; he envisages the flashing (*fulgor*) of the weapons startling the nervous horses and horsemen's faces. As we have seen with Propertius 4.10.21 and Horace 1.7.19 above, *fulgeo* and its cognates can be employed to describe the gleam of weapons as can similar verbs such as *radio* and *mico*.⁶ In typical Horatian fashion, in this passage the imagery of shining is

¹ *'Hasdrubal ...procul signa legionum fulgentia plenosque hostium campos vidit'* 28.14.10

² (1970) p. 103. They quote Cicero; *'cum aquilam illam argenteam cui ille etiam sacrarium domi suae fecerat scirem esse praemissam.'* (Cat. 2.6.13).

³ Quinn (1980) p. 136

⁴ Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) p. 103. For the association of shade with leisure and the pastoral life see Prop. 3.3.1 *'visus eram molli recubans Heliconis in umbra'* and the discussion of this line below in Chapter 4, section 6.1.

⁵ See Hor. 1.7.15 above under 1.2.2 ALBUS iii.

⁶ Compare Livy *'micantes fulsere gladii'* (1.25.4) and Lucretius who employs *fulgor* and *renidescit* in a depiction of a mock battle; *'praeterea magnae legiones cum loca cursu / camporum complent belli simulacra cientes. / fulgor ibi ad caelum se tollit totaque circum / aere renidescit tellus superque virum vi / excitur pedibus sonitus...'* (2.323-327). See also Prop. 4.1.27 below under 1.41 RADIO.

contrasted in the following stanza with a word associated with darkness, *sordidus*, used of the captains who are begrimed with dust.¹ Such vivid details help bring the scene to life.

1.22 FULVUS

Prop. 2.2.5: *fulva coma est longaeque manus ...*

Propertius lists Cynthia's charms, the first of which is her *fulva* hair. According to Wagner² this is a colour between *flavus* (ξανθός) and *rufus* (πυρρός); Goold translates it as 'auburn'.³ *Flavus* is far more common as an epithet for hair⁴ but it is noteworthy that Propertius does not employ the term. He prefers *fulvus* which is rarely employed in Roman poetry to describe the hair of beautiful women although Virgil uses it twice in the *Aeneid* for the hair of men.⁵ Goold quotes Carter on this line; 'Propertius stands alone among the poets of his day in his praise of the *fulva coma* and his opposition to the *flava coma* ...or artificially coloured "golden" hair which was the fashion of the time.'⁶

Hor. 4.2.60: *vitulus... qua notam duxit, niveus videri / cetera fulvus.*

Horace tells Iulus he must sacrifice ten bulls and ten cows in honour of Augustus' return; his own contribution will be a more modest one - a tender calf which is tawny (*fulvus*) all over, apart from a snowy white crescent on its brow. The image of the calf ends this *recusatio* in which Horace declines to sing of Caesar's return, contrasting his humble poetic talents with Iulus' ability to do justice to the theme. Commentators have long puzzled over the significance of the sacrifices, especially Horace's lengthy description of his calf which many see as otiose and out of place.⁷ On the surface level the disproportionate nature of the sacrifices is a metaphor for the contrast between Iulus' talents and Horace's but this explanation does not really account for the loving detail with which Horace dwells on his

¹ *'audire magnos iam videor duces / non indecoro pulvere sordidos'* (vv. 21-22). Compare Hor. 3.1.40, 3.14.13 and 4.11.35 above under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS v.

² Quoted by Enk (1962) p. 49. See also André who classifies this usage of *fulvus* as 'jaune foncé à reflets rouges' and states 'Pour les cheveux, *fulvus*, correspondant à un degré foncé et rouge du blond, équivalait à une seule des nuances de *flavus*' (1949 p. 134)

³ (1990) p. 125

⁴ See the instances under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS i above

⁵ 10.562, 11.642; See also Ov. *Met.* 12.273, *Pont.* 3.2.74 where it is also employed of men.

⁶ (1990) p. 124f.

⁷ See Commager's discussion (1962 p. 64f.).

own 'humble' sacrifice.¹ Quinn suggests that dwelling on the final image in a poem is a technique to secure a slackening of tension at the conclusion.² Commager goes further, proposing that in his description Horace 'may glance as well at a familiar literary distinction, the *tener vitulus* insinuating his own *tenuis spiritus*, and Iulus' herd suggesting an almost *pinguis* mode.'³

In view of the speculation as to why Horace devotes seven lines to his description of the calf, the colours that he gives to the calf must be considered carefully. Are they mere decorative detail or do they have some deeper significance? Horace places much emphasis on the calf's colours for *fulvus* is the last word in the entire poem and it is contrasted with the *niveus* crescent on the calf's brow which is described with great attention.⁴ It was far more usual for sacrifices to the gods above to be predominantly white⁵; according to Armstrong there were but two exceptions to this rule, one of which was the *fulvi* calves which were offered to Vulcan⁶ and there is also evidence that such cattle were also offered to Mars.⁷ It is therefore possible that the calf is *fulvus* because Horace is offering it to Mars, an appropriate god for the occasion of a triumph. On a deeper level, Putnam sees a connection between this colour term and the allusions, earlier in the poem, to the 'golden customs' which Pindar praises and the 'golden age' which Augustus will restore to Rome. As Putnam comments:

Pindar's poetry may have the power to lead "golden customs" to the stars, and Augustus' political genius may bring us back into a time of "ancient gold" but

¹ 'First the calf is immediately eye-catching...The poet's graphic offering, in other words, is visually appealing and shapely.' (Putnam 1986 p. 60f.). Commager (1962 p. 437) and Toll (1955 p. 162) also make comments on this.

² (1980) p. 303

³ (1962) p. 65. For the use of adjectives such as *tener* to define a literary style see the discussion on Prop. 3.3.1, Chapter 4., section 6.1. The colour adjective *niveus* can also be employed in such contexts; see Prop. 3.3.39 and Hor. 4.2.59 below under 1.35 NIVEUS i and ii respectively.

⁴ For a discussion of this see Hor. 4.2.59 under 1.35 NIVEUS ii.

⁵ Sometimes a white spot on the forehead would be enough; 'If a white animal could not be obtained, chalk might cover the obnoxious red, or a white spot on the forehead would suffice' (Armstrong 1917 p. 35). This may be the case with Horace's sacrifice but why can't he obtain a totally white animal and why is so much emphasis placed upon the fact that the rest of the calf is *fulvus* ?

⁶ (1917) p. 33. The calf was *fulvus* probably because this colour was a suitable sacrifice to the fire-god. In the Horace lines the connection between *fulvus* and fire is strengthened by v. 57 where the calf's brow is associated with the fires of the moon; '*fronte curvatos imitatus ignis / tertium lunae referentis ortum*' (vv. 57-58).

⁷ '*bovem album Marti immolavit et centum fulvos*' (Pliny N.H. 22.5.8.).

Horace's poetic offering also reproduces both heaven's brightest nocturnal body and the colour of gold.¹

Hor. 4.4.14: *...fulvae matris ab ubere / iam lacte depulsum leonem*

Horace compares Drusus to a lion who has just been weaned from the rich milk of his tawny (*fulvae*) mother. *Fulvus* is a common epithet for lions according to André, especially in Virgil.² There is also an instance of Pindar employing the equivalent Greek term ξανθός of a lion.³ Thus the use of the adjective contributes to the 'high style' of these lines. Here Horace applies the word not to the lion itself but to its mother; Quinn thinks that the detail with which Horace dwells on the mother is intended as a compliment to Livia.⁴

1.23 INAURATUS

Cat. 81.4: *hospes inaurata pallidior statua*

Catullus refers to his rival for Juventius' affections as a man who is paler than a gilded (*inaurata*) statue. The comparison to gold is similar to c. 64.100 where Ariadne's paleness is compared to gold and gives this line a mock epic ring⁵. For a discussion of gold used as a comparison for paleness see above on Cat. 64.100 under 1.5.2 AURUM ii. For a discussion of the significance of the pallor of Juventius' friend see this line below under 1.37.2 PALLIDUS.

Prop. 1.16.3: *cuius inaurati celebrarunt limina currus*

The house door recalls a time when gilded (*inaurati*) chariots thronged round its entrance. The chariots are gilded because they are triumphal.⁶

1.24 INCANESCO

Cat. 64.13: *tortaque remigio spumis incanuit unda, / emersere freti candenti e gurgite vultus / aequoreae monstrum Nereides admirantes.*

¹ (1986) p. 62

² 'Ce sens [of *fulvus* as dark yellow to reddish brown] est fréquent dans les descriptions d'animaux, principalement pour le lion (plus de 20 ex. depuis Lucr. V,901, dont 5 chez Virgile)' (1949 p. 133)

³ 'ὄπισθεν δὲ κείμαι θρασειᾶν / ἀλωπέκων ξανθὸς λέων' fr. 222 (Bowra 1947)

⁴ (1980) p. 305

⁵ As Quinn comments, 'ostensibly the high style' (1973 p. 416)

⁶ Enk (1946) p. 137 who cites Hor. *Epod.* 9; 'io Triumphe, tu moraris aureos / currus et intactas boves?' (vv. 21-22).

The waves, churned up by the oars of the Argo, grow white (*incanuit*) with foam and the Nereids lift their faces from the whitening waters of the sea to observe this marine monster. As Ellis comments, the image of oars making the water grow white goes back to Homer.¹ This does not mean however that the image is a perfunctory one for Catullus, on the contrary he emphasises it by employing the image of white water two more times in the space of six lines (*candenti e gurgite* v. 14, *e gurgite cano* v. 18).² Quinn suggests that the combination of the colour word, linked as it is with grey hair and the word *torta*, gives the impression that the waves are being twisted into curls by the action of the oars.³ Catullus also uses colour to personify in c. 61 when he employs the colour adjective *aureus* of the curls of the marriage torches; see 61.95 above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv.

1.25 LACTENS / LACTEOLUS

Cat. 55.17: *nunc te lacteolae tenent puellae?*

Catullus asks his friend Camerius if the milk-white (*lacteolae*) girls detain him. Catullus seems to feel that, like Caecilius in c. 35, Camerius is too much distracted by *candidi puellae*.⁴ Thus Quinn's assertion that this term means 'fair-skinned' or 'blonde'⁵ seems reasonable but it is interesting to speculate as to why Catullus chooses to use this word rather than the more usual *candidus*. This is a difficult task however given the corrupt text of this poem and the fact that *lacteolus*, a diminutive of *lacteus*, is an exceedingly rare word in literature. Furthermore, although *lacteus* can be used of human flesh⁶, there seem to be no other instances of the diminutive applied to human beings.⁷ Nevertheless, Catullus' use of the cognate word *lactens* in c. 64 to describe Ariadne's breasts (below) and his application of another colour adjective, *roseus*, to the nipples of the 'milk white' girls⁸

¹ '...οἱ δ' ἐπ' ἔρετμα / ἐζόμενοι λευκαῖνον ὕδωρ ξεστῆς ἐλάττησιν. (*Od.* 12.171-2) (Ellis 1889 p. 285)

² See these lines above under 1.8.1 CANDEO / CANDESCO and 1.9.2 CANUS respectively.

³ (1973) p. 303

⁴ 'quamvis *candida* milies puella / euntem revocet...' (vv. 8-9).

⁵ (1973) p. 252f.

⁶ Apuleius employs it of the skin of little boys; 'illos teretes et lacteos puellos diceres tu Cupidines veros...' (10.32). See also *Aen.* 8.660; 10.137 and André (1949) p. 40.

⁷ André lists only the Catullus instance under the diminutive *lacteolus* (1949 p. 257) as does the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (1968 p. 995).

⁸ 'en hic in roseis latet papillis.' (v. 12). See this line below under 1.42 ROSEUS

implies that *lacteolus* was more erotically suggestive than *candidus*. This is fitting for girls whom in v. 10 Catullus describes as *pessimae puellae*.

Cat. 64.65: *non tereti strophio lactentis vincta papillas*

Ariadne, in her distress at Theseus' departure, doesn't keep her plump, white (*lactentis*) breasts bound by their smooth band. As André comments, the participle here has the sense of 'white like milk' as well as 'full of milk'.¹ The chromatic significance of *lactens* is enhanced by the contrast with Ariadne's golden hair which is in similar disarray.²

Prop. 4.2.14: *prima mihi variat liventibus uva racemis,/ et coma lactenti spicea fruge tumet;*

The god Vertumnus says that it is for him that the first grape changes colour with its purpling clusters and the spiky ear of corn swells with its milky (*lactenti*) fruit. In this instance the primary meaning of *lactens* is 'full of milk' but its chromatic element emerges in the contrast with the purple grapes in the previous line and the red cherries, plums and grapes in the following couplet (see the entry immediately below).

1.26.1 LIVEO

Prop. 4.2.13: *prima mihi variat liventibus uva racemis,/ et coma lactenti spicea fruge tumet;*

The god Vertumnus says that it is for him that the first grape changes colour with its purpling (*liventibus*) clusters and the spiky ear of corn swells with its milky fruit. *Liveo* is not an especially strong colour term; according to André it usually denotes a sombre blue or grey which gradually acquired pejorative overtones.³ In this instance however it is employed with its colour sense uppermost as an epithet for ripening fruit and carries no pejorative sense. This sort of use is not unique to Propertius for Horace also employs the cognate adjective of grapes⁴ and Ovid will use it of a type of plum.⁵ The idea of the changing colours of summer and autumn is continued into the next couplet with the description of fruits such as cherries, plums and mulberries reddening⁶ and the contrast

¹ (1949) p. 40; see also O'Connell (1977) p. 750.

² See above on 64.63 under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS i.

³ (1949) p. 174

⁴ See 2.5.10 below under 1.26.2 LIVIDUS.

⁵ 'prunaeque non solum nigro *liventia* suco' (*Met.* 13.817)

⁶ 'hic dulcis cerasos, hic autumnalia pruna / cernis et aestivo mora *rubere* die;' (vv. 15-16). See on these lines below under 1.43.1 RUBEO.

with the milky ear of corn (see the entry immediately above). Note how all the colour words in this cluster (*liventibus, lacenti, rubere*) are verbs or verbal derivatives: this contributes to the sense of the colours being in flux, changing as the fruit gradually ripens.

Prop. 4.7.65: *haec sua maternis queritur livere catenis / bracchia...*

Andromeda complains that her arms are turning blue (*livere*) from her mother's chains. The use of *liveo* in descriptions of bruises on the body is very common¹, so much so that any sense of colour is almost lost through cliché, although in this instance there is a faint suggestion of colour contrast between Andromeda's (white) arms and the blue bruises. Propertius also employs the noun *livor* at 3.8 to describe the bruises on his neck left from his brawl with Cynthia.² Compare also Hor. 1.8.10 below under 1.26.2 LIVIDUS.

1.26.2 LIVIDUS

Cat. 17.11: *lividissima maximeque est profunda vorago*

Catullus expresses a wish that one of his fellow citizens fall head over heels into the marsh where the mud is blackest (*lividissima*) and especially deep. As André points out, this term which is employed elsewhere of the waters of hell, carries in this context the same overtones of disgust and revulsion.³ Note the use of the superlative which will be picked up by two other colour adjectives in the lines following which are also in the superlative.⁴ The use of superlative colour adjectives reinforces the extreme emotions of the poem.

Hor. 1.8.10: *...neque iam livida gestat armis / bracchia...*

Horace asks Lydia why her lover, Sybaris, no longer displays his arms bruised (*livida*) from weapons drill. The contrast between Sybaris' bruises and the colour of his arms should be minimal as Sybaris is a male and would not normally be expected to have the fair

¹ 'Mais l'emploi de loin le plus fréquent (le 1/4 des exemples) se rapporte à une modification de la couleur de la peau humaine...Il s'agit d'abord, et d'une façon générale, de l'effet coloré d'une pression sur un point du corps' (André 1949 p. 172).

² 'in morso aequales videant mea vulnera collo:/ me doceat livor mecum habuisse meam.' (vv. 21-22). In this poem there is a similar contrast between the bruises and Propertius' white neck for a few lines further on he emphasises that he has the traditional pallor of an elegiac lover; 'semper in irata pallidus esse velim' (v. 28). See further on 3.8.28 below under 1.37.2 PALLIDUS).

³ (1949) p. 173f. See for instance *Aen.* 6.320 and Edgeworth's comments on it (1992 p. 137).

⁴ See below on Cat. 17.14 under 1.50.2 VIRIDIS i and Cat. 17.16 under 1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS i.

skin of a woman but by employing an image which was common amongst elegiac poets¹ Horace is probably implying that Sybaris has the pallor of a woman or an elegiac lover. This colour contrast picks up on the one in the previous stanza between the yellow Tiber, the olive oil and the viper's blood², creating a colour cluster linking the unpleasant activities which Sybaris is trying to avoid.

Hor. 2.5.10: *tolle cupidinem / immitis uvae; iam tibi lividos / distinguet Autumnus racemos / purpureo varius colore.*

In an elaborate simile, Horace compares the young Lalage to a grape not quite ready for plucking. He tells her eager lover to stay his hand from the unripe grape and wait until multicoloured Autumn paints the darkening (*lividos*) clusters with purple. The comparison between the stages of a woman's life and that of a grape has its tradition in Greek erotic poetry; it may go as far back as Alcaeus³ and it also appears in an epigram in the *Greek Anthology*⁴ but, in neither case, are colour terms employed in the simile. As with Prop. 4.2.13⁵, *lividus* is used here for the transitional colour of fruit ripening in multicoloured (*varius*) Autumn; this is placed in contrast with the purple hue which it will achieve later.⁶

Hor. 4.9.33: *totve tuos patiar labores / impune, Lolli, carpere lividas / obliviones...*

Horace will not allow envious (*lividas*) forgetfulness to prey undisturbed upon Lollius' many exploits. Here the use of *lividus* is almost entirely figurative with little or no suggestion of colour. According to André this was quite a common use of the term.⁷

1.27 LURIDUS

Prop. 4.7.2: *luridaque evictos effugit umbra rogos.*

¹ See above on Prop. 4.7.65 under 1.26.1 LIVEO. Compare also *Am.* 1.7.41 and 1.8.98 where Ovid describes the bruises of passion left on the (white) skin of his mistress. As André points out, this was a favourite elegiac theme (1949 p. 172).

² See Hor. 1.8.8 above under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS ii.

³ fr. 119.9-16 (Lobel and Page 1955). As this poem is so fragmentary it is unclear to whom Alcaeus is referring.

⁴ ὄμφαξ οὐκ ἐπένευσας· ὅτ' ἦς σταφυλή, παρεπέμψω./ μὴ φθονέσης δοῦναι κὰν βραχὺ τῆς σταφίδος.' (5.304). Also compare Theocritus 27.10 and see further Bertman (1989 p. 167f.), Kiessling-Heinze (1968) p. 181 and Nisbet and Hubbard (1978 p. 84f.) on this motif.

⁵ See above under 1.26.1 LIVEO.

⁶ See on Hor. 2.5.12 below under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i.

⁷ (1949) p. 174f. e.g. *Stat. Silv.* 1.3.103 '*liventem satiram nigra rubigine turbes*'.

Ghosts do exist after all and a pale (*lurida*) shade vanquishes and flees the pyre. André says that *luridus* is 'un jaune sans éclat' which is often used together with or to replace words of the *pallere* family.¹ As he points out, it is usually employed of horrific, ugly or ghastly things and frequently associated with death. Ovid likewise applies the term to a ghost² and to a corpse at a funeral.³

Prop. 4.11.8: *obserat herbosos lurida porta rogos.*

When the ferryman has received his toll, the pale (*lurida*) gate closes on the grassy funeral pyre. *Luridus* is the last of three colour words which Propertius employs in the space of seven lines to describe the underworld (*nigra*⁴...*fuscae*⁵..*lurida*). Note that, as in Virgil's description of hell, all are of dark or dingy hue.⁶ There may also be an implied contrast between the dingy colour of the gate and the green grass of the funeral pyre, for green of course, has associations with life and vitality.⁷ However the reading *herbosos* is much disputed, some favouring *umbrosos*⁸ which would reinforce *lurida* rather than form a contrast with it.

Hor. 3.4.74: *maeretque partus fulmine luridum / missos ad Orcum;...*

Earth mourns for her children, hurled down to murky (*luridum*) Orcus by the thunderbolt. This is one of a series of illustrations of *vis* which is cited by Horace. [Tibullus] also employs this colour term of Orcus.⁹

Hor. 4.13.10: *...refugit te, quia luridi / dentes te, quia rugae / turpant et capitis nives.*

Horace tells the aging Lyce that Cupid disdainfully flies past her, because yellow (*luridi*) teeth, wrinkles and the snows of her head disfigure her. Here the morbid associations of *luridus* serve as a contrast with *virentis* in v. 6 which is employed to describe the youth and

¹ (1949) p. 137

² 'in faciem Ceycis abit sumptaque figura / *luridus*, exanimi similis...' (Met. 11.653-654)

³ '*luridaque arsuro portabat membra feretro.*' (Met. 14.747)

⁴ See Prop. 4.11.2 below under 1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS iii.

⁵ 'te licet orantem *fuscae* deus audiat aulae:' (v. 5)

⁶ Edgeworth (1992) p. 23

⁷ See the instances below under 1.50.2 VIRIDIS ii.

⁸ Butler and Barber (1933) p. 380

⁹ '*dives in ignava luridus Orcus aqua.*' (3.3.38)

vitality of Lyce's successor.¹ The yellow of Lyce's teeth is complemented by the 'snows' of her head; note how *luridi* and *nives* are both placed at the end of their respective lines. For a full discussion of this colour image in its context see below in Chapter 6 under section 3.3.i.

1.28 LUTEUS

Cat. 61.10: *huc veni, niveo gerens / luteum pede soccum;*

Catullus exhorts Hymen (the god of marriage) to approach, wearing a *luteum* slipper on his snow-white foot. *Luteus* was the traditional colour of marriage², interpreted by most scholars as a yellow-orange shade.³ Note how Catullus gives emphasis to the colour word, placing it first in the final line of the stanza. In addition, the yellow slipper is placed in contrast with the snowy whiteness of Hymen's foot.⁴ The image of Hymen's yellow slipper will be echoed later on in the poem by the golden feet of the bride.⁵ For a full analysis of this colour cluster see the discussion of these lines in Chapter 2, section 5.1.

Cat. 61.188: *uxor in thalamo tibi est, / ore floridulo nitens, / alba parthenice velut / luteumve papaver.*

Catullus compares the bride's radiant face to a white chamomile or a *luteum* poppy. This is the second of the white / *luteus* contrasts in this poem; note how once again Catullus emphasises *luteus* by placing it first in the final line of the stanza. Edgeworth thinks that here *luteus* is best understood as pink or red rather than yellow. He argues that poppies were usually red and that the contrast of the poppy with the white chamomile is meant to signify the contrast of colours on the bride's face, normally, in Roman poetry a contrast of red against white.⁶ Edgeworth's arguments have some merit for these lines but when the word *luteus* first appears in this poem (v. 10 above) it denotes an orange-yellow shade. It is quite possible that the term *luteus* encompassed both these colours without the Romans

¹ ...*ille virentis et / doctae psallere Chia / pulchris excubat in genis.*' (vv. 6-8). See on these lines below under 1.50.1 VIREO / VIRIDO.

² Plin. *N.H.* 21.22.46

³ Quinn (1973 p. 266), Fordyce (1961 p. 240) and Ellis (1889 p. 212) amongst others state that the bridal veil and shoes were a yellow shade; however Edgeworth toys with the idea that the bridal apparel may have been a colour other than yellow (1992 p. 256). For a discussion of Edgeworth's argument see Cat. 61.188 following and Chapter 2 below under section 5.1.

⁴ See 61.9 below under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

⁵ See Cat. 61.160 above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv.

⁶ (1992) p. 256f.

being aware of any discrepancy. For a full analysis of the significance of this image see the discussion of these lines in Chapter 2, section 5.3.

1.29 MICO

Cat. 61.200: *ille pulveris Africi / siderumque micantium / subducat numerum prius, / qui vestri numerare volt / multa milia ludi.*

Catullus compares the joys of the newly-wedded couple to the number of the African sands or of the glittering (*micantium*) stars. The verb *micare* is regularly employed of stars; see the two instances below and compare Ov. *Metamorphoses* 7.100.¹ The use of stars as an image of infinity goes back to Homer where the numerous Trojan watch-fires are compared to the stars which appear 'conspicuous' or 'bright' against the shining moon.² Catullus also makes use of the image of stars in c. 7 as a comparison for the number of kisses he will give to Lesbia³ and he employs a similar contrast in this poem between the heat of the desert sands⁴ and the cool remoteness of the glittering stars.

Cat. 64.206: *quo motu tellus atque horrida contremuerunt / aequora concussitque micantia sidera mundus,*

When the ruler of the gods assented to Ariadne's request, the earth and terrible waters trembled and the firmament shook its glittering (*micantia*) stars. In Homer, Zeus' nod makes Olympus tremble⁵ but it is Catullus who adds the image of the glittering stars, possibly in imitation of Ennius⁶ or Lucretius⁷. Like the reference to the golden stars in Book 2 of the *Aeneid*, the suggestion is that the stars are above human concerns.⁸ The glittering stars are placed in contrast with the blinding darkness of Theseus' mind in the following line.⁹

Hor. 1.12.46: *...micat inter omnis / Iulium sidus velut inter ignis / luna minores*

¹ *'postera depulerat stellas Aurora micantes.'*

² ὡς δ' ὄτ' ἐν οὐρανῷ ἄστρα φαεινὴν ἀμφὶ σελήνην / φαίνετ' ἀριπρεπέα... (Il. 8. 555-556)

³ *'aut quam sidera multa, cum tacet nox, / furtivos hominum vident amores.'* (vv. 7-8)

⁴ *'quam magnus numerus Libyssae harenae / lasarpiciferis iacet Cyrenis / oraculum Iovis inter aestuosi / et Batti veteris sacrum sepulcrum.'* (vv. 3-6)

⁵ Il. 1.528-530

⁶ *'qui caelum versat stellis fulgentibus aptum'* (Ann fr. 29 Vahlen 1963)

⁷ *'nam cum suspicimus magni caelestia mundi / templa super stellisque micantibus aethera fixum'* (5.1204) Ellis also draws the parallels with Homer and Lucretius (1889 p. 316f).

⁸ *'...ferit aurea sidera clamor.'* (v. 488). On this see Edgeworth (1992) p. 41.

⁹ *'ipse autem caeca mentem caligine Theseus'* (v. 207)

The Julian constellation shines (*micat*) amid all others just like the moon amid the lesser lights. As Fraenkel points out, the *Iulium sidus* is the first direct allusion to Augustus in the poem.¹ With this simile the reader is probably meant to recall the white star of Castor and Pollux earlier in the poem, identifying Augustus more closely with them.²

1.30 MINIUM

Prop. 2.3.11: *ut Maeotica nix minio si certet Hiberno, / utque rosae puro lacte natant folia*

Propertius compares Cynthia's complexion to Maeotic snows striving with Spanish vermilion (*minio*) or rose petals floating amid pure milk. For a full discussion of these lines see above on Prop. 2.3.10 under 1.2.2 ALBUS i. The comparison has similarities with a fragment from Ennius where a woman's blush is compared to milk and purple mingled.³ Propertius has extended the metaphor by introducing snow and roses.

1.31 MUREX

Hor. 2.16.36: *...te bis Afro / murice tinctae / vestiunt lanae:...*

Grosphus is clothed in wool twice dipped in African purple (*murice*) along with all the other trappings of wealth; Horace however has other gifts that Fate has not granted to this wealthy man. 'Double dipped' purple was especially costly, according to Pliny.⁴ This reference to purple is obviously meant to recall Horace's pronouncement at the beginning of the poem that gems, purple and gold cannot buy *otium*.⁵ Nisbet and Hubbard think that the words *murice* and *tinctae* both have faintly ironical overtones in this context; *murice* because it 'literally refers to a malodorous shellfish'⁶ and *tinctae* because it 'is capable of bearing a suggestion of contamination'.⁷ This is worth considering, for Horace's use of the word *lanae* in these lines suggests the natural state of the undyed wool and can be associated with Horace's comment in 3.5 that wool once dyed with purple cannot return to

¹ (1957) p. 296

² See above on Hor. 1.12.27 under 1.2.2 ALBUS iii.

³ 'et simul erubuit ceu lacte et purpura mixta' Ann. fr. 352 (Vahlen 1963)

⁴ 'huic successit dibapha Tyria, quae in libras denariis mille non poterat emi.' (N.H. 9.63.137)

⁵ See Hor. 2.16.7 below under 1.40.1 PURPURA.

⁶ (1978) p. 269. Compare Martial; '*tinctis murice vestibus quod omni / et nocte utitur et die Philaenis, / non est ambitiosa nec superba: / delectatur odore, non colore.*' (9.62)

⁷ *ibid.*

its lost state.¹ Virgil also employs the words *murex* and *laena* in his description of Aeneas' purple cloak in Book 4 as a sign of his oriental effeminacy when living at Carthage.²

1.32 MURREUS

Prop. 3.10.22: *nox inter pocula currat, / et crocino naris *murreus* ungat onyx.*

At Cynthia's birthday party, let night take its course amid the wine cups and the casket of yellow (*murreus*) onyx anoint the nostrils with the scent of saffron. *Murreus*³ is a rare colour word. According to André (who cites this line) it describes the 'couleur de myrrhe' and is thus 'un blond pâle'⁴ while the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* defines it as a reddish-brown.⁵ It seems best to interpret the word here as 'yellow' for, according to Pliny, the most valued onyx was the colour of honey.⁶ *Murreus* however is not always used as a colour term for it can also mean 'scented like myrrh' and this is how some editors interpret the term here.⁷ Certainly this is one meaning of *murreus* in this context but the reader is also prepared for the chromatic element in the word by *crocinus* 'saffron' which also suggests yellowness. Thus *crocinus* and *murreus* both have associations with yellowness and perfume which Propertius exploits here.⁸ These words contribute to the sensual atmosphere of the poem; the yellow, with its overtones of voluptuousness⁹, is set against the suggestive darkness of the night.

Hor. 3.14.22: *dic et argutae properet Neerae / *murreum* nodo cohibere crinem;*

Horace bids his slave to tell clear-voiced Neaera to hurry up and fasten her yellow (*murreum*) hair in a knot. As with the Propertius instance above, *murreus* here is

¹ vv. 27-28. These lines are discussed with Hor. 3.5.25 above under 1.5.2 AURUM ii. Compare also Horace's use of the terms in a similar context in *Epist.* 2.2.; '*Gemmas, marmor, ebur, Tyrrhena sigilla, tabellas, / argentum, vestis Gaetulo murice tinctas / sunt qui non habeant, est qui non curat habere.*' (vv. 180-182).

² '*...Tyrioque ardebat murice laena / demissa ex umeris, dives quae munera Dido / fecerat ...*' (vv. 262-264).

³ Both Butler & Barber (1933 p. 287) and Camps (1966 p. 103) agree that *murreus* here comes from *murra* 'myrrh' rather than *murra* the mineral - *murreus* is used by Propertius to describe the mineral at 4.5.26.

⁴ (1949) p. 160

⁵ (1968) p. 1147

⁶ '*probantur quam maxime mellei coloris, in vertices maculosi atque non tralucidi.*' (N.H. 36.12.61)

⁷ Goold, for instance, translates *murreus onyx* as 'the jar of perfume' (1990 p. 293).

⁸ Butler and Barber (1933) p. 287; Camps (1966) p. 103

⁹ See Dana (1919) p. 24f.

suggestive both of colour¹ and of perfume² and contributes to Neaera's aura of youthful sensuality.³ This is placed in contrast with Horace's swiftly whitening hair a few lines further on; see on Hor. 3.14.25 above under 1.2.1 ALBESCO / ALBICO.

1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS

i) Beauty / Desirability

Cat. 17.16: *adservanda nigerrimis diligentius uvis*

Catullus says that a certain girl ought to be watched more carefully than the blackest (*nigerrimis*) grapes. Both Homer⁴ and Hesiod⁵ describe grapes as black at harvest time. Thus Catullus' description of the grapes as black indicates that they are ripe and ready for plucking⁶ and perhaps suggests the sensual dark eyes which were a mark of beauty (see below). This is the third of three superlative colour words in this poem; see above on Cat. 17.11 under 1.26.2 LIVIDUS and below on Cat. 17.14 under 1.50.2 VIRIDIS i.

Cat. 43.2: *nec bello pede nec nigris ocellis*

Catullus ironically greets the mistress of the Formian bankrupt as one who has (amongst other deficiencies) neither a pretty foot nor black (*nigris*) eyes. Black eyes as a mark of beauty go back to Greek literature where they were given the colour epithet μέλας.⁷ Compare also the two instances below.

Prop. 2.12.23: *qui caput et digitos et lumina nigra puellae / et canat...*

Propertius asks who will sing of the head, fingers and black (*nigra*) eyes of his girl if he is destroyed by Cupid's darts. The word that Propertius employs for eyes *lumina* (literally 'lights') has the effect of an oxymoron when combined with *nigra*. For *lumina nigra* used in a different sense see Prop. 4.3.14 below under iii.

¹ Porphyrio comments on this line; '*Colorem murreum in crinibus hodieque dicunt, qui medius est inter flavum et nigrum.*' (Meyer 1874 p. 99). Kiessling-Heinze (1968 p. 322) cite Ov. Met. 15.399 ('*quassaque cum fulva substravit cinnama murra*') where myrrh is described as *fulva*.

² Butler and Barber comment that 'the same ambiguity' (between yellow and myrrh-scented) exists in the Horace line as it does in Prop. 3.10.22 (1933 p. 287).

³ Compare the sexy Pyrrha who also ties back her *flavam comam* (Hor. 1.5.4 above under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS i.).

⁴ *Il.* 18.562

⁵ *Scut.* 294, 300

⁶ Ellis (1889) p. 64.

⁷ See Kober (1932 p. 26) who cites Bacchylides 16.17-18 and Anacreont. 17.12.

Hor. 1.32.11 (twice): *et Lycum nigris oculis nigroque / crine decorum.*

Horace speaks of the lyre of the Lesbian citizen who was accustomed to sing of Bacchus, the Muses, Venus, Cupid and Lycus beautiful for black (*nigris*) eyes and black (*nigro*) locks. The Lesbian citizen is of course Alcaeus. Like dark eyes, dark hair was a sign of beauty in Greek poetry; Kober cites references to the loveliness of dark hair from Sappho and Anacreon amongst others.¹ However none of the references she gives are from Alcaeus and there seem to be no allusions to dark hair or eyes in his fragments. Horace has a similar reference to the beauty of black eyes and hair in the *Ars Poetica*.² The beauty of Lycus' hair and eyes make him a fitting subject for love poetry.

ii) Foul Weather

Cat. 68.63: *ac velut in nigro iactatis turbine nautis*

Catullus likens Allius' help to a gentle breeze which comes to sailors tossed in a black (*nigro*) storm. For the synonym *ater* used of foul weather see the instances above under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS iv. Both *niger* and *ater* are used as epithets for *turbo* by Virgil³ while Homer uses μέλας and its cognates of both waves and water disturbed by the wind.⁴ In this context, *niger* also carries with it overtones of misfortune and death.

Prop. 3.7.56: *cum moribunda niger clauderet ora liquor:*

The drowning Paetus spoke his last words as the black (*niger*) water closed over his dying lips. This image possibly owes something to phrases such as *Od.* 5.353 which describes the dark sea covering Athena as she plunges into the waves.⁵ As in the instance from the *Odyssey*, *niger* in Propertius is used of water churned up by a storm and the colour word also carries with it the implication of death; the waters of the underworld are often referred to as black.⁶ The reference to water is typical of Propertius' preoccupation with still and flowing water in Book 3⁷ and the negative overtones of this image suggest Propertius'

¹ Sappho 65.13 (Bergk) = 58.14 (L-P), Anacreont. 16.6-7, 17.4-5 (1932 p. 26).

² 'spectandum nigris oculis nigroque capillo.' (v. 37). See also *Epist.* 1.7.26.

³ '...ita turbine nigro / ferret hiems culmumque levem stipulasque volantis.' (*Georg.* 1.320-21);

'...torrentis aquae vel turbinis atri / more furens...' (*Aen.* 10. 603-4).

⁴ *Il.* 7.64, 23.693 Kober says that in Greek poetry μέλας when used of the sea generally implies that it is disturbed (1932 p. 33).

⁵ '...μέλαν δέ έ κθμα κάλυψεν.' See also *Arg.* 1.256-7.

⁶ e.g. *Tib.* 1.3.68, *Ov. Met.* 11.500.

⁷ See further Chapter 4, especially sections 4, 6.1, 6.3.ii and 6.4.

ambivalent attitude to the sea which he associates both with triumph and overreaching oneself.¹ Ovid makes use of a similar allusion to water when describing the death of Icarus but uses *viridis* as the epithet for the water which is less effective.²

Hor. 1.5.7: *...aspera / nigris aequora ventis / emirabitur insolens*

Alas for the youth now enjoying golden Pyrrha - soon he will marvel in surprise at waters rough with black (*nigris*) gales. For the darkness of storm used as a metaphor for the troubles of lovers and the tradition that lovers' vows were as variable as the wind; see on Prop. 2.5.12 above under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS iv. Note how Horace positions *nigris* and *ventis* each side of *aequora* so that the word order mirrors the sense; the waters are literally enveloped by the gales.³ In addition, the colour adjective *nigris* comes between *flavam* (v. 4) and *aurea* (v. 9), the two colour terms used to describe Pyrrha's golden beauty.⁴ The placement of the colour terms reinforces the idea that the girl's outward appearance does not reflect her inner nature.

Hor. 3.27.23: *aequoris nigri fremitum et trementis / verbere ripas.*

In bidding farewell to Galatea who is about to go off on a voyage, Horace expresses the wish that the wives and children of enemies be the ones to feel the roar of the black (*nigri*) sea and the shores quivering from the blow. Williams says that this is an ancient form of prayer in which the petitioner asks the gods to divert his or her own troubles to an enemy.⁵ *Niger* picks up on the allusion to the treacherous black gulf of the Adriatic earlier on in the poem (*ater Hadriae sinus* v. 18); see on this line above under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS iv.

iii) Death

Prop. 2.24.34: *non labor Alcidae, non niger ille dies.*

Propertius says that nothing will change his fidelity, neither the labours of Heracles, nor that black (*niger*) day of death. A proverbial expression; see on Prop. 2.11.4 above under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS ii.

¹ 'The sea, then, is at once the path over which Rome's destiny is to be realized, and, at the same time, something vast and unstable which dulls the perspective of those who set forth upon it.' (Nethercut 1961 p. 402).

² 'clausurunt virides ora loquentis aquae.' (*Ars Am.* 2.92).

³ Nisbet and Hubbard also draw attention to this (1970 p. 76).

⁴ See on Hor. 1.5.9 above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv.

⁵ (1969) p. 138

Prop. 2.27.10: *neu subeant labris pocula nigra tuis.*

Mortals are full of worries, amongst them the fear that black (*nigra*) cups will pass under their lips. *Pocula nigra* refers to poison which is often given the epithet black in both Greek and Latin literature.¹

Prop. 2.28b.38: *nigraque funestum concinit omen avis.*

The dark (*nigra*) bird sings an omen of doom when Cynthia is ill. The bird is black both because it is associated with the darkness of night² and because it is ill-omened; as Butler and Barber point out, Ovid in the *Amores* addresses the *non albae aves* who sing sad omens.³ The black bird is complemented by the dark-blue boat of Hell (*caerula ratis*) in the following couplet; see Prop. 2.28b.40 above under 1.6 CAERULEUS / CAERULUS ii.

Prop. 3.12.33: *nigrantisque domos animarum intrasse silentum*

Odysseus was not harmed by entering the dark (*nigrantis*) halls of the silent ghosts.

Prop. 4.3.14: *quae mihi deductae fax omen praetulit, illa / traxit ab everso lumina nigra rogo*

Arethusa is so unfortunate in her marriage that the torch that gave the omen for her wedding procession must have drawn its murky (*nigra*) light from the ruins of a funeral pyre (ie. it was really a torch of mourning). *Nigra* is used here both literally and metaphorically, denoting the black smoke the torch produces, as well as signifying ill-omen.⁴ Propertius plays on the oxymoron of black light: the wedding torch is meant to cast light and happiness as it does in Catullus c. 61⁵ but here the torch casts darkness and despair.

Prop. 4.11.2: *panditur ad nullas ianua nigra preces*

The black (*nigra*) gate does not open to tears. This is obviously the gate to the underworld which Propertius also calls *lurida* in v. 8.⁶

Hor. 1.24.18: *nigro compulerit Mercurius gregi*

¹ See Hor. 1.37.27 above under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS iii.

² 'et iam Luna negat totiens descendere caelo' (v. 37)

³ 3.12.2 (1933 p. 241)

⁴ Camps (1965) p. 80

⁵ See Chapter 2, section 5.2.

⁶ See this line above under 1.27 LURIDUS.

Horace tells Virgil that he cannot bring back to life their dead friend Quintilius whom Mercury has marshalled to the dark (*nigro*) throng.

Hor. 4.2.23: ... *et viris animumque moresque / aureos educit in astra nigroque / invidet Orco.*

Pindar laments the young hero who has been snatched from his weeping bride, extolling his strength, courage and golden virtues to the stars and begrudging them to black (*nigro*) Orcus. Compare Simonides' epitaph on the Spartans at Platea who 'threw around themselves the dark cloud of death'.¹ Horace employs the same contrast between the virtues of his hero and the darkness of death but he heightens the contrast further by placing *astra* next to *nigro* and by employing *aureos* of the virtues so that the line begins and ends with colour words. For the similarity of this colour contrast to one of Bacchylides see on this line above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS v.

Hor. 4.12.26: *nigrorumque memor, dum licet, ignium / misce stultiam consiliis brevem:*

Horace tells Virgil to lay aside delay and eagerness for profit and, mindful of the dark (*nigrorum*) fires (of death), mix brief folly with wisdom. This is in the final stanza of a poem about the return of spring (see on Hor. 4.12.11 below under iv). As with Prop. 4.3.14 above, the use of *niger* to describe fire can be taken on a literal level as referring to the black smoke which the funeral pyre produces but by employing *niger* to describe a source of light, Horace creates an oxymoron which mirrors the tensions of the poem. The idea that one must always keep the darker side of life in mind crops up constantly throughout the poem with the allusions to the awful crime and suffering of Procne (v. 5ff.), the dark hills of Arcadia (v. 11f) and the bitterness of care (v. 19f) striking discordant notes in this celebration of spring. As previously mentioned, Porter draws a parallel between the dark fires in this poem, the *infernis tenebris* of 4.7.25 and the *atrae curae* of 4.11.36.²

¹ ἄσβεστον κλέος οἶδε φίλην περὶ πατρίδι θέντες / κυάνεον θανάτου ἀμφεβάλοντο νέφος· (Pal. Anth. 7.251.1-2)

² (1987b) p. 113. See further Hor. 4.11.35 above under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS v.

iv) Landscapes

Hor. 1.21.7: *vos laetam fluvii et nemorum coma, / quaecumque aut gelido prominet Algido / nigris aut Erimanthi / silvis aut viridis Cragi.*

In this hymn to Diana and Apollo, Horace tells the maidens to praise 'the one who delights in streams and sylvan foliage which stands out on icy Algidus or the dark (*nigris*) woods of Erymanthus or of green Cragus'. Such imagery is common in hymns to Diana; compare Catullus c. 34.¹ *Nigris* is probably in imitation of the Greek μέλας which, according to Kober, is often employed to describe the dark green of foliage (she lists eight occurrences of the epithet μελάμφυλλος).² Here *nigris* is contrasted with the lighter green of *viridis*.³ Both Nisbet and Hubbard and Quinn think that these colour epithets apply to both clauses; 'both mountains are green and their woods are dark'.⁴ Compare Ovid *Amores* 2.6⁵ and Hor. 4.12.11 (below) where there are similar contrasts between dark forests and green grass. It is possible that there is a third colour element in the stanza with *gelido Algido* which suggests to the mind's eye an impression of gleaming white snow.⁶

Hor. 4.4.58: *duris ut ilex tonsa bipennibus / nigrae feraci frondis in Algido*

Hannibal, in a speech bemoaning the might of Rome, compares the Roman state to an oak tree shorn of its boughs by axes on Mount Algidus which is prolific in dark (*nigrae*) foliage; although heavily pruned the oak grows back even stronger. *Niger*, once again employed in imitation of the Greek μελάμφυλλος, contributes to the epic ring of the stanza. Virgil employs a similar metaphor of the destruction of Troy but does not use explicit colour terms in his description.⁷

Hor. 4.12.11: *dicunt in tenero gramine pinguium / custodes ovium carmina fistula / delectantque deum cui pecus et nigri / colles Arcadiae placent.*

In the spring, the keepers of the fat sheep pipe songs on the soft grass and delight the god (Pan) who holds dear the flocks and black (*nigri*) mountains of Arcadia. In this poem, as in

¹ 'montium domina ut fores / silvarumque virentium / saltuumque reconditorum / amniumque sonantium.' (vv. 9-12). On these lines see Cat. 34.10 below under 1.50.1 VIREO / VIRIDO.

² (1932) p. 27

³ For a similar colour contrast in Horace see 1.25.18 below under 1.38 PULLUS.

⁴ N & H (1970) p. 257f. Similarly Quinn 'dark green mountain forests...green (lower) slopes' (1980 p. 164).

⁵ 'colle sub Elysio nigra nemus ilice frondet, / udaeque perpetuo gramine terra viret.' (vv. 49-50)

⁶ Compare Hor. 3.23; 'nam quae nivali pascitur Algido / devota quercus inter et ilices' (vv. 9-10)

⁷ *Aen.* 2.626-632

1.4 and 4.7, Horace contrasts the return of spring with the brevity of human existence and reiterates the necessity of enjoying life while one can. As is the case with the two entries above, the colour epithet *nigri* is employed of the dark green of Arcadia's forests. This colour term is placed in contrast with the colours implicit in *gramina* and *ovium*, the lighter green of grass and the whiteness of sheep. *Niger* occurs again in the final stanza with Horace's reference to the dark fires of death (see above on 4.12.26 under iii). It may be that *niger* is merely employed here as a Graecism but it could also be argued that, like the sooty smoke in the birthday poem immediately before¹, the use of the word *niger* in this spring scene strikes a note of foreboding, preparing the reader for the mention of care and death.²

v) Other

Prop. 2.15.32: *et citius nigros Sol agitabit equos*

The sun will drive dark (*nigros*) horses sooner than Propertius will be able to transfer his love to another. Since it is normally night that drives dark horses³ this is an impossibility. Compare Propertius' reference to the horses clothed in black at 3.5.34 (above under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS ii).

Prop. 4.6.83: *gaude, Crasse, nigras si quid sapis inter harenas: ire per Euphraten ad tua busta licet.*

'Rejoice, Crassus, if you are able to know anything amongst the black (*nigras*) sands, for we can now cross the Euphrates to your tomb.' These lines are part of a poem celebrating Augustus' triumph at the battle of Actium. Postgate thinks that Propertius calls the sands *nigras* 'from the alluvial character of the soil'.⁴ Other editors interpret *nigras harenas* more figuratively as an allusion to Crassus' grave⁵ and Shackleton-Bailey suggests that the phrase may be a reference to the mud thrown up by the rivers of the underworld.⁶

Hor. 1.6.15: *quis Martem tunica tectum adamantina / digne scripserit aut pulvere Troico / nigrum Merionen aut ope Palladis / Tydiden superis parem?*

¹ On this see Hor. 4.11.35 above under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS v.

² It is interesting that Bennett, in the Loeb edition, translates *nigri colles* as 'sombre hills' (1960 p. 331).

³ 'iam Nox aetherium nigris emensa quadrigis' [Tib] 3.4.17 (Enk 1962 p. 223).

⁴ (1884) p. 223

⁵ Butler and Barber (1933) p. 359, Camps (1965) p. 114

⁶ (1956) p. 248f. He cites Stat. *Theb.* 4.521 and Virg. *Aen.* 6.296ff.

Horace, declining to sing the praises of Agrippa, asks who could worthily tell of Mars clad in his invincible tunic or of Meriones black (*nigrum*) with Trojan dust or Tydides who with Pallas' aid is a match for the immortals. The answer, of course, is only Homer himself or a poet with similar gifts; not Horace whose gift is too slender for such lofty themes. All three characters appear in Homer and one would expect that the phrase *pulvere Troico nigrum* was a rendition of an Homeric formula. This is not the case however for although Homer describes Hector's corpse being dragged in the dust¹ and although in the Iliad both earth² and blood³ are black, no exact equivalent to this phrase can be found. Nisbet and Hubbard say that this touch is un-Homeric as is the mention of Meriones in association with Diomedes.⁴ Nevertheless it is interesting that Virgil employs a similar phrase in his description of Hector's corpse in the *Aeneid*.⁵

Hor. 2.8.3: *dente si nigro fieres vel uno / turpior ungui*

Horace tells Barine that he would trust her now if, when she had broken her vows, she had ever been punished by becoming uglier by a black (*nigro*) tooth or even a single fingernail; Barine however gives false promises and shines forth even lovelier. On the undesirableness and ugliness of black teeth compare Martial.⁶ Nisbet and Hubbard comment that 'bad teeth were a literary hall-mark of decayed courtesans'.⁷ The blackness (denoting Barine's true inner nature) is contrasted with her surface glitter, suggested by *enitescis* in the following stanza (see on Hor. 2.8.6 above under 1.16 ENITEO / ENITESCO).

Hor. 3.6.4: *... donec templa refeceris / aedesque labentis deorum et / foeda nigro simulacra fumo.*

Horace tells his fellow Romans that they will pay for their fathers' sins until they restore the tottering shrines of the gods and their statues which are fouled with black (*nigro*) smoke. In this poem, Horace deplores the lax moral standards that led to the impious deeds and the disasters of the civil war. In this context the negative associations of the colour

¹ *Il.* 22.401ff

² *Il.* 2.699 etc.; see Kober (1932) p. 33

³ *Il.* 4.149 etc.; see Kober (1932) p. 29

⁴ (1970) p. 88

⁵ '*raptatus bigis ut quondam, aterque cruento / pulvere...*' (2.272f.). See also Edgeworth's discussion of this phrase (1992 p. 75).

⁶ '*Thais habet nigros, niveos Laecania dentes./ quae ratio est? emptos haec habet, illa suos.*' (5.43)

⁷ (1978) p. 125

word *niger* are reinforced by its placement next to *foeda*, suggesting that the smoke is a metaphorical sign of corruption as well as literally black. Note also how Horace, with his usual skill, creates a word picture by placing *simulacra* between *nigro* and *fumo*, enhancing the image of the statues covered in smoke.

1.34.1 NITEO

i) Natural Beauty / Renown

Cat. 2.5: *cum desiderio meo nitenti / carum nescio quid lubet iocari*

Catullus says that Lesbia plays with her sparrow when it is pleasing for his shining (*nitenti*) object of desire to engage in some dear little frolic. For the association between shining words and sexuality see the entries above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i and 1.21.1 FULGEO iii and compare Sappho who speaks of her longing to see the 'bright sparkle' of Anactoria's face.¹ Here the sexual implications of the word are further strengthened by its association with *desiderium*.

Cat. 61.186: *uxor in thalamo tibi est, / ore floridulo nitens, / alba parthenice velut / luteumve papaver.*

The bride is waiting for her husband in the chamber, shining (*nitens*) with a flowery face. For the bride's association with flowers and radiance in this poem compare Cat. 61.21 above under 1.16 ENITEO / ENITESCO. For the colour elements in this cluster see Cat. 61.187 above under 1.2.2 ALBUS i and Cat. 68.188 under 1.28 LUTEUS.

Prop. 1.2.6: *naturaeque decus mercato perdere cultu, / nec sinere in propriis membra nitere bonis?*

Propertius asks Cynthia why she ruins the gifts of nature with purchased elegance and does not allow her limbs to shine (*nitere*) forth in their own glory. Cynthia's natural radiance is placed in contrast with the artificial gleam of her Coan silks and myrrh-anointed hair.² For a detailed discussion of the contrast between artificial and natural colours in this poem see Chapter 5 below under section 3.

¹ τᾶ]ς <κ>ε βολλοίμαν ἔρατον τε βᾶμα / κάμάρυγμα λάμπον ἴδην προσώπω' (fr. 16.17-18 Lobel and Page 1955)

² 'quid iuvat ornato procedere, vita, capillo / et tenuis Coa veste movere sinus, / aut quid Orontea crinis perfundere murra, / teque peregrinis vendere muneribus' (vv. 1-4)

Prop. 4.1.11: *Curia, praetexto quae nunc nitet alta senatu, / pellitos habuit, rustica corda, Patres.*

The Senate House, which now shines (*nitet*) on high with senators in togas, used to house the city fathers who were robed in skins of beasts. *Niteo* here is used to suggest the brilliant colours¹ of the *toga praetexta* which was white with a purple border.² It also, in a wider sense, is one of the colour and shining words in this poem which helps to convey the richness and sophistication of Propertius' Rome compared with the rough simplicity of old.³ For the use of such words in this poem see on Prop.4.1.32 and 4.1.35 above under 1.2.2 ALBUS ii, 4.1.5 above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS ii and 4.1.27 below under 1.41 RADIO.

Hor. 2.5.18: *non Chloris albo sic umero nitens*

Lalage will be even more beloved than shy Pholoe or Chloris who gleams (*nitens*) with her white shoulders. For a discussion of the use of *niteo* in this context see this line above under 1.2.2 ALBUS i.

Hor. 2.7.7: *cum quo morantem saepe diem mero / fregi coronatus nitentis / malobathro Syrio capillos.*

In this poem Horace rejoices at the return of Pompeius, his companion in the civil war. He recalls how with Pompeius he often shortened the lagging day with wine, garlanded and his locks glistening (*nitentis*) with Syrian nard. Hair glistening with ointment was one of the extravagances of feasts and symposia.⁴ This is an allusion to days long past for, as Nisbet and Hubbard point out, *niteo* can be used for the sleekness of youth.⁵ Compare Hor. 2.11.15 (above under 1.9.2 CANUS) where Horace's grey locks are garlanded with roses. As with the references to wine and roses in c. 2.11, the allusions in c. 2.7 to (red) wine and a garland (which is probably of red roses) introduce additional colour elements into the stanza.

¹ On the association between purple and words for shining see Hor. 3.1.42 below under 1.40.1 PURPURA.

² Sebesta (1994) p. 47

³ Compare Horace's use of the cognate word *nitidus* for a 'city slicker' (*ex nitido fit rusticus*) at *Epist.* 1.7.83.

⁴ Nisbet and Hubbard (1978) p. 112. Compare Hor. 1.4.9 below under 1.34.2 NITIDUS.

⁵ (1978) p. 112

Hor. 2.11.10: *non semper idem floribus est honor / vernis neque uno Luna rubens nitet / vultu: quid aeternis minorem / consiliis animum fatigas?*

Why tire your mortal soul with plans for eternity when the spring flowers do not retain the same glory and the blushing moon does not gleam (*nitet*) with a single face? *Niteo*, used here to describe the light of the moon¹, also carries with it associations with female beauty; the moon is portrayed as a woman whose glorious complexion (*rubens*)² will soon fade. Note the association in Horace between shining and the season of spring ; this will also occur in 4.5.8 (immediately below) and 1.4.9 (below under 1.34.2 NITIDUS).

Hor. 4.5.8: *lucem redde tuae, dux bone, patriae: / instar veris enim vultus ubi tuus / adfulsit populo, gratior it dies / et soles melius nitent.*

Horace asks Augustus to return and bring back the light to his country; for when, like spring, his face shines on the people the day goes better and the sun gleams (*nitent*) more brightly. *Niteo* forms part of the imagery of light in this stanza; see on this poem above under 1.1 ADFULGEO.

ii) Artificial / Treacherous Beauty

Prop. 2.24a.14: *et cupit iratum talos me poscere eburnos / quaeque nitent Sacra vilia dona Via.*

The rapacious Cynthia angers Propertius by demanding dice of ivory and such worthless gifts as glitter (*nitent*) along the Sacred Way. The reference to the Sacred Way suggests the jewellers' shops positioned along this road.³ Here *nitent* not only picks up on the gleam of the ivory dice but also the brilliance of a peacock-feather fan and a ball of crystal in the previous couplet, other gifts demanded by Cynthia.⁴ Thus *niteo* is employed here of the artificial glitter of 'purchased elegance'.

Hor. 1.5.13: *...miseri quibus / intemptata nites...*

Horace tells Pyrrha that those men for whom she shines (*nites*) untested are to be pitied. The idea of Pyrrha shining picks up from v. 9 where the trusting youth is enjoying golden (*aurea*) Pyrrha.⁵ As Quinn comments, the word *nites* 'evokes the mistress-as-goddess

¹ Compare Lucretius 5.705; '*luna potest solis radiis percussa nitere*'.

² See on Hor. 2.11.10 below under 1.43.1 RUBEO.

³ Butler and Barber (1933) p. 231

⁴ '*et modo pavonis caudae flabella superbae / et manibus dura frigus habere pila*' (vv. 11-12)

⁵ See Hor. 1.5.9 above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv.

cliche'.¹ The term also suggests the sea with which she is first compared at v. 7; Pyrrha shines like the calm surface of the sea which is often, in Roman poetry, compared to the glistening of marble.² As with Barine³, this surface glitter is deceptive for the seas will quickly turn rough with black winds.⁴

Hor. 1.14.19: *nunc desiderium curaque non levis,/ interfusa nitentis / vites aequora Cycladas.*

Horace tells a ship which is a source of love and weighty care to avoid the seas which rush between the glistening (*nitentis*) Cyclades. Most commentators follow Quintilian in believing that the ship is a metaphor for the state.⁵ Words for shining are applied to the Cyclades on account of their marble; see Hor. 3.28.14 above under 1.21.1 FULGEO iii. This, the concluding image of the poem, has worried many commentators for there does not seem any especial reason to mention the Cyclades apart from the fact that the area around them was noted for its winds.⁶ It may be that Horace employs this image as part of the language of love with which he express his concern for the ship⁷ for the gleaming Cyclades are elsewhere employed by Horace in a sexual context and the term *nitentes* is frequently associated with the treachery and seductiveness of women. In some senses this is a play upon the imagery of two other poems in Book 1. In 1.5.13 (above) Horace advises the youth to be wary of Pyrrha's seductive gleam, associating her with the treachery of the sea and in 1.19.5 Horace associates the slippery Glycera with Parian marble.⁸

1.34.2 NITIDUS

Prop. 3.10.14: *et nitidas presso pollice finge comas:*

¹ (1980) p. 132 Compare Cat. 68.71 above under 1.21.1 FULGEO ii.

² See further Nisbet and Hubbard 'the word suits a beautiful girl...Yet it also suggests the treacherous glitter of a shining sea.' (1970 p. 77). For the association of the shining surface of the sea with marble compare Catullus 63.88 '*marmora pelagi*'.

³ See Hor. 2.8.6. above under 1.16 ENITEO / ENITESCO.

⁴ See Hor. 1.5.7 above under 1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS ii.

⁵ See Fraenkel's discussion (1957 p. 154ff.).

⁶ Quinn (1980) p. 152; Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) p. 188. Porphyrio explains the allusion thus; '*maria enim angustiora periculosiora sunt; nam inde et freta dicuntur, quod semper ferveant id est inquieta sint.*' (Meyer 1874 p. 20).

⁷ For instance, *desiderium* which is employed by Catullus in reference to Lesbia and in association with *niteo* at 2.5 above under i. As Quinn notes, *cura* is frequently used for the mistress in Roman poetry (1980 p. 152).

⁸ See this line below under 1.34.3 NITOR.

On her birthday Propertius tells Cynthia to dress herself and arrange her shining (*nitidas*) hair with her fingers. Compare Horace's birthday poem 4.11, where he employs *fulgeo* of Phyllis' hair which has been garlanded with ivy.¹ In both cases the words for shining add to the sensuality of the scene.

Hor. 1.4.9: *nunc decet aut viridi nitidum caput impedire myrto / aut flore terrae quem ferunt solutae;*

Spring has arrived and it is now the fitting time to garland glistening (*nitidum*) hair with green myrtle or with flowers which the unfettered earth brings forth. *Nitidus* here has a number of meanings; it refers both to the sleek, well-conditioned appearance of youthful locks and to the gleam produced when perfume was poured on the hair at feasts. As we have already noted, in Horace the word is frequently associated with spring, probably because it is often applied to the growth of vegetation.² Thus *nitidus*, placed as it is after *viridi*, reinforces the idea of the earth bringing forth new growth. See also on this line under 1.50.2 VIRIDIS ii.

Hor. 2.12.19: *quam nec ferre pedem dedecuit choris / nec certare ioco nec dare brachia / ludentem nitidis virginibus sacro / Dianae celebris die.*

Horace wishes to sing of Licymnia for whom it is not unbecoming to tread a measure in the dance, to bandy jokes nor to extend her arms to the shining (*nitidis*) maidens while dancing on the sacred day of much celebrated Diana. On a literal level, *nitidis* is most likely an allusion to the gleaming attire the maidens have put on for the festival but may also refer to the maidens' hair which was freshly washed for Diana's day.³ The word also carries its usual overtones of youth and sexuality (note the use of the word *ludentem* which also has a sexual implication). This may be in contrast with Licymnia whom Nisbet and Hubbard think is an older woman⁴ but if so she still retains a certain measure of attraction for she has shining eyes herself.⁵ Horace's attitude to her is very different from his attitude to the wife of Ibycus whom he advises to stop casting her cloud amongst the shining maidens.⁶

¹ See 4.11.5 above under 1.21.1 FULGEO iii.

² *Oxford Latin Dictionary* definition 5b (1968 p. 1181). Compare Lucr. 1.252 'at *nitidae* surgunt fruges ramique *virescunt*', 5.783f. 'principio genus herbarum *viridemque nitorem* / terra dedit...'

³ Nisbet and Hubbard (1978) p. 196

⁴ (1978) p. 195

⁵ See above on Hor. 2.12.15 under 1.21.1 FULGEO iii.

⁶ See 3.15.6 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i.

Hor. 3.19.25: *spissa te nitidum coma, / puro te similem, Telephe, Vespero, / tempestiva petit Rhode: / me lentus Glycerae torret amor meae.*

'Ripe Rhode seeks you Telephus - gleaming (*nitidum*) with your abundant hair you are like the clear evening star; myself a slow passion for my Glycera scorches.' Horace is addressing a guest at an imaginary symposium. In this context the shining motif is further enhanced by the comparison to the bright evening star and Horace cleverly carries the imagery of light into the final line with the reference to his passion burning him. This is meant to recall *urit me Glycerae nitor* from 1.19.5; see this line below under 1.34.3 NITOR.

Hor. 3.24.20: *nec dotata regit virum / coniunx nec nitido fudit adultero.*

In the land of the Scythians no dowered wife rules her husband nor puts her trust in a dazzling (*nitido*) adulterer. In this poem Horace contrasts the simple life of the Scythians with the moral corruption brought by wealth at Rome. *Nitidus* is employed in this context like *niteo* in 1.5.13 above - to denote a superficial glitter which was not to be trusted. Horace of course is implying that dazzling adulterers are common at Rome and he with pick up the motif of shining in v. 48 with an entreaty to his fellow Romans get rid of their gems, jewels and gold. Compare also Propertius 4.1.11 above under 1.34.1 NITEO i. for the use of *niteo* to denote the sophistication of Rome.

1.34.3 NITOR

Cat. 66.3: *flammeus ut rapidi solis nitor obscuretur*

The astronomer Conon perceived how the flaming brightness (*nitor*) of the scorching sun is eclipsed.

Prop. 2.18c.24: *nunc etiam infectos demens imitare Britannos, / ludis et externo tincta nitore caput*

Propertius asks Cynthia why she feverishly imitates the painted Britons and dyes her hair, giving it a borrowed shine (*nitore*). The shine here is *externus* 'outward' or 'superficial' unlike in Prop. 3.10.14 (above under 1.34.2 NITIDUS) and Prop. 1.2.6 (above under 1.34.1 NITEO i).

Hor. 1.19.5: *urit me Glycerae nitor / splendentis Pario marmore purius:/urit grata protervitas / et vultus nimium lubricus aspici.*

Horace says that Glycera's dazzle (*nitor*) inflames him, Glycera who shines more than Parian marble; her pleasing impudence and her countenance excessively slippery to behold inflame him also. *Nitor* in this context is employed as a synonym for *pulcher* but Horace also places great emphasis upon the literal meaning of the word by employing the verb *uro* twice (bringing to mind images of heat and light) and by the comparison to Parian marble which was renowned for its brilliant whiteness.¹ However, like Pyrrha in 1.5, Glycera's surface glitter conceals a slippery and changeable nature; this is suggested by the adjective *lubricus*.²

Hor. 3.12.6: *Liparaei nitor Hebri,/ simul unctos Tiberinis umeros lavit in undis*

Horace tells Neobule that she is distracted from her tasks by Cupid as soon as she sees the dazzling beauty (*nitor*) of Liparean Hebrus after he has bathed his oiled shoulders in the waters of the Tiber. As in the entry above, *nitor* is employed as a synonym for *pulcher* but Horace once again plays on the literal meaning of the word with the image of Hebrus' shoulders gleaming from oil.

1.35 NIVEUS

i) Femininity / Fragility

Cat. 61.9: *huc veni, niveo gerens / luteum pede soccum*

Catullus tells Hymen to approach, wearing a yellow slipper on his snow-white (*niveo*) foot. *Niveus* as an epithet for the foot is one of the many different words associated with whiteness or shining (*candidus*, *fulgens*, *aureolus*)³ which Catullus applies to the feet of beautiful people or objects in his poetry. Although another word for white, *candidus*, is elsewhere employed of the feet of the very masculine Theseus⁴ here the word *niveus*, with its overtones of delicacy and softness⁵, helps to feminise Hymen and identify him more

¹ See Hor. 3.28.14 above under 1.21.1 FULGEO iii. As Kiessling-Heinze point out (1968 p. 92), both Pindar (*N.* 4.81) and Theocritus (6.38) also make use of comparisons with the whiteness of Parian marble.

² '*lubricus* brilliantly reinforces the image of *marmor*; Glycera's face is as dazzling as a marble floor, and as treacherous' (Nisbet and Hubbard 1970 p. 241)

³ See, for instance, Cat. 61.108 and 64.162 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i, Cat. 61.160 under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv, Cat. 68.71 under 1.21.1 FULGEO ii.

⁴ See Cat. 64.162 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i.

⁵ Compare [Virgil's] use of *niveus* in the *Lydia*; '*o fortunati nimium multumque beati, / in quibus illa pedis nivei vestigia ponet / aut roseis viridem digitis decerpserit uvam*' (vv. 9-11).

closely with the bride.¹ The picture of the delicate foot placed in its yellow slipper establishes an atmosphere of eroticism² right from the start of the poem; see further on these lines in Chapter 2, section 5.1.

Cat. 63.8: *etiam recente terrae sola sanguine maculans, / niveis citata cepit manibus leve typanum*

Attis, having emasculated himself and become in effect a woman, swiftly seizes the light tambourine in her snowy-white (*niveis*) hands while the blood is still spotting the ground. In ancient poetry, terms for white are often used of the hands of women or men who are in some way 'effeminate'. In Greek poetry χερὶ λευκά is used of Achilles disguised as a woman³ and in Latin poetry Propertius uses *niveus* at 2.13b.53 of the beautiful but doomed Adonis and at 3.6.12 of Cynthia's hands (both below). Thus *niveis*, placed first in its line to catch the reader's eye, is the first clue that Attis has been transformed into a woman. There is also an implied colour contrast with Attis' dripping blood in the previous line, reminding the reader of the violence and horror of the deed. For a full discussion of this colour image see Chapter 3 below, sections 4.2.i and 4.2.ii.

Cat. 64.303: *qui postquam niveis flexerunt sedibus artus*

Prior to singing, the Fates arrange their limbs on snowy-white (*niveis*) seats. On a literal level the seats are white presumably because they are fashioned from ivory, like the marriage couch in vv. 47-8. It is also possible however, that *niveis* is a transferred epithet and is meant to suggest the whiteness of the Fates' limbs. Unlike the snowy limbs of the youthful Polyxena at 364, this whiteness denotes the fragility of old age like the Fates' white hair at 309. This is the first of a series of colour epithets for white which Catullus employs in relation to the Fates; he also employs *candidus* of their dress⁴, *niveus* of their hair (see immediately below) and *candeo* of the wool which they spin.⁵

¹ See the discussion of this below in Chapter 2, section 5.1.

² Compare Tibullus; 'pauper ad occultos furtim deducet amicos / vinclaque de niveo detrahet ipse pede.' (1.5.65-66).

³ ἄνθ' ὄπλων ἐδιδάσκετο, καὶ χερὶ λευκᾷ / παρθευκὸν κόρον εἶχεν...' Bion (*Epith. Archillis et Deidameiae* 15-17).

⁴ See Cat. 64.308 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS ii.

⁵ See Cat. 64.318 above under 1.8.1 CANDEO / CANDESCO.

Cat. 64.309: ...*vestis / candida purpurea talos incinxerat ora, / at roseae niveo*¹
residebant vertice vittae

The shining white garments of the Fates, fringed with purple, come down to their ankles, while rosy ribbons adorn their snowy (*niveo*) heads. Catullus uses *niveus* here, instead of the more usual word *canus*, to describe the white hair of old age. *Niveus* is placed immediately after *roseae*, emphasising the red/white colour contrast and forming a chiasmic colour contrast with the previous line.² There is a certain grotesqueness to the picture of the aged Fates wearing gaudy ribbons in their hair like young girls; as Harmon puts it, they are dressed in 'ironically gay party attire'.³ On another level, the contrast *roseae niveo* brings to mind roses against snow⁴, the coldness of snow being suggestive of death while the roses are linked with youth and vitality. This, as well as adding to the irony, is possibly meant to suggest the contrast between the fragile old age of the Fates and the hidden power which they carry; compare Prop. 4.9.52 above under 1.9.2 CANUS.

Cat. 64.364: *cum teres excelso coacervatum aggere bustum / excipiet niveos*
perculsae virginis artus.

Achilles' tomb, rounded into a high mound, shall receive the snowy (*niveos*) limbs of a slaughtered virgin. Note the placement of the word *niveos* immediately before *perculsae*, emphasising the contrast between the brutality of the deed and the fragile beauty of the girl. *Perculsae* is also suggestive of the blood accompanying slaughter, as is *madefient* employed in relation to Polyxena a few lines further on.⁵ Thus these words, placed together with *niveos*, create a subdued red/white contrast: compare the *Electra* where Agamemnon holds his daughter over the altar and slashes her fair cheek⁶ and Prop. 4.1.112 which describes the same scene (above under 1.13 CRUENTUS). This red/white

¹ V reads *roseo niveae* i.e. 'snowy white ribbons on rosy crests' but the correction *roseae niveo* is generally accepted; see Ellis (1889) p. 331f, Fordyce (1961) p. 315f.

² See Cat. 64.308 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS ii.

³ (1973) p. 324

⁴ Compare Cat. 80.2 where a similar contrast operates (above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS v).

⁵ '*alta Polyxenia madefient caede sepulcra*' (v. 368). This picks up on *tepefaciet* in v. 360; as O'Connell puts it 'The verbs *tepefaciet* and *madefient* remind the reader that the colour red may be warm and wet as well as pictorial.' (1977 p. 754).

⁶ '...ἐνθ' ὑπερτείνας πυρᾶς / λευκῆν διήμησ' Ἰφιγόνης παρηΐδα.' (1022-1023) As Irwin points out, λευκός indicates not merely beauty in women but their helplessness and need of protection (1974 p. 121).

contrast echoes the others which Catullus employs earlier in the poem¹, but in a brutal and more shocking way.²

Prop. 2.13b.53: *testis, cui niveum quondam percussit Adonem venantem Idalio vertice durus aper;*

Propertius calls Venus to witness the fact that it is right to mourn for a lover who has perished. He cites her grief at the death of snowy-white (*niveum*) Adonis who was struck down by a cruel boar while hunting in the mountains. Here the colour adjective contributes to the pathos of the scene; a word more often employed of women, it emphasises Adonis' beauty and vulnerability in contrast with the *durus aper* which struck him down. It is likely that, as Enk suggests³, Propertius is using *niveus* in imitation of Bion's poem on the death of Adonis. Bion not only employs λευκός to describe the whiteness of Adonis' side⁴ but uses χιόνεος, the Greek equivalent of *niveus*, to describe both Adonis' flesh⁵ and his breast.⁶ Bion also makes use of the image of Adonis' white flesh to heighten the brutality of his slaying, in the two latter instances placing the white flesh in contrast with the blood which flows over and discolours it. Compare also Virgil who employs *niveus* of the dead Pallas at his funeral to heighten the pathos of the scene by drawing attention to his youthful beauty.⁷

Prop. 3.3.39: *contentus niveis semper vectabere cyncnis, / nec te fortis equi ducet ad arma sonus.*

¹ See Cat. 64.49 under 1.40.1 PURPURA, Cat. 64.163 under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i, Cat. 64.227 under 1.19. FERRUGO, Cat. 64.308 under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS ii and Cat.64.309 immediately above.

² As Curran comments, "The contrast between Polyxena's "snowy limbs" and her blood, drenching Achilles' tomb, provides a shocking climax for what otherwise might seem to be a purely decorative use of color. Throughout the poem Catullus has been pairing red and white; now we see that this is not mere ornament but a preparation for the final and most powerful statement of the color contrast." (1969 p. 190)

³ (1962) p. 201

⁴ 'κέϊται καλῶς Ἄδωνις ἐν ὄρεσι μηρὸν ὀδόντι, / λευκῶ λευκὸν ὀδόντι τυπείς...' (Epith. Adonis 7-8)

⁵ '...τὸ δέ οἱ μέλαν εἴβεται αἶμα / χιονέας κατὰ σαρκός...' (Epith. Adonis vv. 9-10)

⁶ ἄμφι δέ νιν μέλαν αἶμα παρ' ὀμφαλὸν ἀωρεῖτο, / στήθεα δ' ἐκ μηρῶν φοινίσσετο, τοὶ δ' ὑπὸ μαζοῖ / χιόνεοι τὸ πάροιθεν Ἄδωνιδι πορφύροντο.' (Epith. Adonis vv. 25-7)

⁷ 'ipse caput nivei fultum Pallantis et ora / ut vidit levique patens in pectore vulnus / cuspidis Ausoniae, lacrimis ita fatur obortis:' (Aen. 11.39-41). See Edgeworth's discussion of this image (1992 p. 143). Note how Virgil, in a similar fashion to Bion, contrasts the whiteness of Adonis' skin with the gaping wound which has marred it.

The muse Calliope tells Propertius that he will always be content to ride on snow-white (*niveis*) swans and the galloping of the war-horse will not lead him to arms. As swans were attached to Venus' chariot¹, this is Propertius' way of saying that he will be happy to confine himself to themes of love in his poetry rather than attempting martial epic. Here *niveis*, with its associations of purity and softness, is employed to highlight the contrast with the heavy galloping of the war horse in the following line. There is also a suggestion of a colour contrast with the redness of blood, introduced in v. 42 with the image of the groves of Helicon stained with warfare; see the discussion of these lines in Chapter 4, section 6.4 below.

Prop. 3.6.12: *ornabat niveas nullane gemma manus?*

Propertius asks the slave Lygdamus if he saw his mistress Cynthia without any jewel adorning her snow-white (*niveas*) hands. This and other observations which Lygdamus is asked to make are signs of Cynthia's distress at Propertius' supposed unfaithfulness; Cynthia is too upset to adorn her beauty. For white hands/arms as a sign of beauty compare Cynthia's *candida bracchia* in 2.16 24 (above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i).

Prop. 3.14.11: *gyrum pulsat equis, niveum latus ense revincit*

The Spartan maiden tramples the course with her horses and girds her sword to her snowy-white (*niveum*) flank. In this poem Propertius praises the austere and rigorous training of Spartan girls. The image of the girl's white sides not only suggests her nakedness but also emphasises the contrast between her femininity and the harsh training that she is undertaking. In addition, the girl's naked flank, in combination with the sword which is placed against it, gives strongly erotic connotations to the couplet, undermining the ostensible message of the poem.² Propertius also employs *erubesco* with similar overtones later on in this poem; see Prop. 3.14.20 above under 1.17 ERUBESCO.

Hor. 2.4.3: *...prius insolentem / serva Briseis niveo colore / movit Achillem;*

Horace tells Xanthias that his love for a slave girl should not be a source of shame to him, citing the story of the slave Briseis who in past times moved proud Achilles with her

¹ Ov. (*Met.* 10.708)

² On this see Nethercut (1983) p. 1843 and section 6 of Chapter 5 below.

snowy-white (*niveo*) complexion. This is the first of a series of mythological *exempla* which Horace gives of love between slaves and heroes. For the whiteness of Briseis' skin compare Prop. 2.9.10 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i. In the Horace lines *niveus*, with its overtones of vulnerability, serves as an effective foil for *insolentem Achillem*. However, as Nisbet and Hubbard point out¹, in reality white skin in slaves was unusual, a detail which belongs to the fantasy world of epic. Therefore it is quite probable that Horace mentions this detail in mocking contrast to Xanthus' choice of partner.

Hor. 3.27.25: *sic et Europe niveum doloso / credidit tauro latus et scatentem / beluis pontum mediasque fraudes / palluit audax.*

Horace uses the departure of his friend Galatea on a sea voyage to tell the story of Europa. Europa entrusted her snowy (*niveum*) form to a crafty bull and, although formerly bold, now blanched at the deep teeming with monsters and the treachery in its midst. For a similar scene see Prop. 2.26a in which Propertius compares the shipwrecked Cynthia to Helle who was carried across the ocean by the golden ram²; it is possible that, like the vignette of Helle, Horace's description of Europa on the bull may be inspired by some contemporary painting. The colour term *niveus* makes Europa appear all the more vulnerable in the face of the dangers of the sea and Horace emphasises the word's associations with youth and innocence by placing it in contrast with the guile of the bull (note how *doloso* is placed immediately after *niveum*). In addition, Horace plays on the motif of whiteness with the use of *palluit* in v. 28, implying that snowy-white Europa becomes even whiter when confronted with the sea-monsters.

ii) Other

Cat. 58b.4: *non Rhesi niveae citaeque bigae*

In a flight of exaggerated fancy, Catullus denies that his metamorphosis into creatures of mythology, amongst them Rhesus' swift and snowy (*niveae*) pair of horses, would aid him in some quest. As these lines are part of a fragment, it is uncertain what this quest is but it is possibly the search for his friend Camerius as some editors insert the line into c. 55.³

¹ 'there is something implausible about a slave-girl's snowy complexion' (1978 p. 68). For a similar note of mockery in the same poem see Hor. 2.4.14 above under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS i.

² See Prop. 2.26a.6 above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS i.

³ e.g. Goold (1989) p. 100

The whiteness and swiftness of Rhesus' steeds was proverbial; Homer describes them as whiter than snow and swifter than the wind.¹ Catullus' line is almost a direct rendition of Homer's and contributes to the 'mock-epic' ring of the passage.

Cat. 64.240: ...*ceu pulsae ventorum flamine nubes / aereum nivei montis liquere cacumen*

Aegeus' instructions left Theseus' mind like clouds driven by a blast of wind leave the airy top of a snowy (*nivei*) mountain. In this context *niveus* is employed with the literal meaning 'snow-covered'² but this colour term may also be meant to pick up on the *candida vela* of v. 235 which Theseus fails to raise on his return.³

Cat. 68.125: *nec tantum niveo gavisata est ulla columbo / compar...*

Catullus compares Laodamia's passion for her husband to that of a dove for her snowy-white (*niveo*) mate. For the whiteness of the dove and its association with Venus and sexuality see Cat. 29.8 above under 1.2.2 ALBUS i and Prop. 3.3.31-2 which is discussed below in Chapter 4, section 6.3.ii.

Prop. 2.19.26: *qua formosa suo Clitumnus flumina luco / integit, et niveos abluit unda boves.*

Propertius will join Cynthia in the country and will hunt where the Clitumnus protects its lovely stream with its groves and washes clean the snowy white (*niveos*) cattle. The cattle of Clitumnus were renowned for their whiteness which was celebrated by many authors including Virgil.⁴ This image, and indeed the theme of the poem, is reminiscent of Tibullus who often employs *niveus* to describe things associated with the countryside such as wool⁵ and sheep⁶. The idyllic nature of the scene is perhaps enhanced by the similarity

¹ 'τοῦ δὴ καλλίστους ἵππους ἶδον ἠδὲ μεγίστους· / λευκότεροι γίνοντο θείειν δ' ἀνέμοισιν ὁμοιοί.' (Il. 10.436-437).

² Compare Hor. 3.23.9; 'nam quae *nivali* pascitur Algido / devota...' , Virg. Aen. 7.674-676; 'ceu duo nubigenae cum vertice montis ab alto / descendunt Centauri Homolen Othrymque *nivalem* / linquentes cursu rapido;'

³ See Cat. 64.235 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS iii.

⁴ Georg. 2.146. See other instances cited by Enk (1962 p. 268)

⁵ 'et *niveam* Tyrio murice tingit ovem.' (2.4.28)

⁶ 'caesus et *niveae* candidus agnus ovis.' (2.5.38)

of these cattle to the white cattle of the sun-god; their extreme whiteness is mentioned by both Apollonius¹ and Theocritus² in depictions of pastoral landscapes.

Hor. 4.2.59: *vitulus... fronte curvatos imitatus ignis / tertium lunae referentis ortum / qua notam duxit, niveus videri / cetera fulvus.*

Horace tells Iulus he must sacrifice ten bulls and ten cows in honour of Augustus' return; his own contribution will be a more modest one - a tender calf which is tawny all over, apart from a snowy white (*niveus*) mark on its brow, the shape of which is similar to the crescent fires of the moon at its third rising.³ For a general discussion of the significance of Horace's sacrifice see Hor. 4.2.60 above under 1.22 FULVUS. The significance of the crescent moon can only be guessed at and most commentators do not try to explain it. Commager suggests rather tentatively that Horace's lengthy description of the crescent emphasises Horace's reluctance to identify himself with the sun in any form⁴ and Putnam thinks that the rising moon links the calf, and by implication Horace's poetic gift, to the processes of the natural world.⁵

There is more certainty about the significance of the colour term. As mentioned under FULVUS, white was an appropriate colour for sacrifices to the heavenly deities and it is also possible that *niveus* has a significance similar to Prop. 3.3.39 (above under i) where it is used in association with swans to denote a poetry which is 'softer' than the harshness of epic. It is interesting that in Horace's description of the calf there is a curious juxtaposition of words denoting opposites: those associated with warmth and heat (*ignis, fulvus*) and those linked with cold and snow (*lunae, niveus*). This could reflect Horace's attempt to

¹ '...οὐδέ τις ἦεν / κυανέη μετὰ τῆσι δέμας, πᾶσαι δὲ γάλακτι / εἰδόμεναι, χρυσέοισι κέρασι κυδιάσσκον.' (Arg. 4.976-8). See further Phinney (1967) p. 149

² 'ἄλλοι δ' αὖ μετὰ τοῖσι δωδέκα βουκολέοντο / ἱεροὶ Ἑλίου · / χροτὴν δ' ἔσαν ἥύτε κύνες / ἀργησται...' (25.129-131 Gow 1952)

³ Porphyrio interprets the *curvatos ignis lunae* as a description of the calf's horns; '*vitulum, quo votum soluturus sit, dicit cornua habere tertiae lunae comparabilia id est: adhuc parva.*' (Meyer 1874 p. 125) but Quinn (1980 p. 303) and Commager (1962 p. 64f.) both interpret these lines as a description of the mark on the calf's brow. Their interpretation seems more likely for the comparison to the moon implies whiteness which leads naturally on to the spot being called *niveus*.

⁴ 'Perhaps the disproportionate attention he gives to the calf's moon-shaped spot also emphasizes Horace's reluctance to associate himself with the sun in any form. His sacrifice, like his modest position in the crowd, marks him as one content with merely the reflected glory of Iullus' - or any other poet's - lofty, and perilous, attempt to Pindarize.' (1962) p. 65

⁵ 'The speaker at the end makes a poetic offering that is as solid as it is colorful. He can do this because he imitates not another master's inimitable genius, whose resources are beyond his, but nature herself, the young bull mirroring the very rising of the moon.' (1986 p. 61f.)

compromise between the expectations placed upon him and the sort of poetry he wants to write.

1.36.1 OSTRINUS

Prop. 1.14.20: *illa neque Arabium metuit transcendere limen / nec timet ostrino, Tulle, subire toro*

'She (love) is not afraid, Tullus, to cross an Arabian threshold nor to steal into a couch of purple (*ostrino*). In this poem Propertius illustrates how much more powerful love is than wealth. That purple was powerless to remedy ills was a common theme amongst the Roman poets: Lucretius states that cares do not turn back from the bright sheen of the purple robe¹ and Tibullus asks himself what is the use of lying on a purple couch when one is still unhappy.² Note how Propertius associates purple with the exoticness of an Arabian threshold. The term he uses, *ostrinus*, seems especially to carry exotic overtones, for the word's derivation from *ostrea*, shellfish, is a reminder of the manufacture of purple in Tyre (see 3.13.7 below). According to most commentators, an Arabian threshold was one made from onyx³ so the purple colour may be complemented by the honey-colour of this material.⁴ These bright colours are, in their turn, picked up by the allusion to multi-coloured silks in the following couplet.⁵

Prop. 2.29b.26: *obstipui: non illa mihi formosior umquam / visa, necque ostrina cum fuit in tunica*

Propertius was amazed, for Cynthia had never seemed lovelier to him, not even when she was dressed in her purple (*ostrina*) tunic. In this poem Propertius views Cynthia in bed and (presumably) naked; a few lines further on he exclaims at the power of her *candida forma*.⁶ This is another instance of Propertius' preference for natural colours over artificial ones: compare Prop. 1.2.6 and 2.24a.14 above under 1.34.1 NITEO i and ii respectively.

Prop. 3.13.7: *et Tyros ostrinos praebet Cadmea colores*

¹ '(curae)...neque fulgorem reverentur ab auro / nec clarum vestis splendorem *purpureai*' (2.51-52)

² 'quid Tyrio recubare toro sine amore secundo / prodest cum fletu nox vigilanda venit?' (1.2.75-76)

³ Rothstein (1924) vol. 1 p. 149; Enk (1946) p. 123

⁴ For the colour of onyx see Prop. 3.10.22 above under 1.32 MURREUS.

⁵ 'et miserum toto iuvenem versare cubili: / quid relevant *variis* serica textilibus?' (vv. 21-22)

⁶ See Prop. 2.29b.30 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i.

Cadmean Tyre provides purple (*ostrinos*) dyes to storm the hearts of virgins. On this see Prop. 3.13.5 above under 1.5.2 AURUM ii.

1.36.2 OSTRUM

Prop. 4.3.51: *nam mihi quo Poenis nunc purpura fulgeat ostris*

A wife whose soldier husband is absent asks herself for what purpose purple with its Punic hues (*ostris*) shines for her. Here the colour *ostrum* is reinforced by the adjective *Poenis* which, related as it is to the colour adjective *puniceus*, also suggests a red dye.¹ See also on this line above under 1.21.1 FULGEO iii.

Hor. 3.29.15: *mundaeque parvo sub lare pauperum / cenae sine aulaeis et ostro / sollicitam explicuere frontem.*

Often a change is welcome to the rich, and a plain meal under the lowly roof of the poor, without canopies and purple (*ostro*), smooths the troubled brow.

1.37.1 PALLEO / PALLESCO

Prop. 1.1.22: *et facite illa meo palleat ore magis!*

Propertius invokes the aid of magic to make Cynthia's face paler (*palleat*) than his own, i.e. to get Cynthia to fall more deeply in love with him than he is with her. The pallor of people in love may go back to Sappho who speaks of herself in love as *χλωροτέρα ποίας* which many scholars interpret as 'paler than grass'.² It is elegiac poets such as Propertius who turn this into a required characteristic of the lover and it is noteworthy how much more often Propertius employs *pallere* and its cognates than either Catullus or Horace.³ Indeed Ovid will later comment '*palleat omnis amans: hic est color aptus amanti*'.⁴

Prop. 1.9.17: *necdum etiam palles, vero nec tangeris igni:*

¹ *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (1968) p. 1521. See the instances under 1.39 PUNICEUS / PUNICUS below.

² fr. 31.14 (Lobel and Page 1955). For this common interpretation see Irwin (1974 p. 65). Irwin however disputes this and offers an alternative explanation that Sappho is 'comparing a reaction within herself to the moisture which is characteristic of plants' (p. 67). This may be the case but it is also quite possible that even in Propertius' time the line was being misinterpreted for Irwin offers evidence that the poet Longus of the third century A.D. interpreted Sappho's line as referring to the pallor of the complexion (1974 p. 65). Compare also Theocritus 2.88 where a maiden speaks of the pallor of her complexion 'καί μεν χρώς μεν ὁμοίς ἐγίνετο πολλάκι θάψω' (see Gow's note 1952 vol. 2 p. 53). As Gow suggests, this pallor may be as much due to the sight of her lover as to the magic she is performing.

³ He accounts for 13 out of the 18 instances in this concordance.

⁴ *Ars Am.* 1.729

Propertius tells Ponticus that, although he is in love, he is not yet even pale (*palles*), nor touched by real fire.

Prop. 1.13.7: *perditus in quadam tardis pallescere curis / incipis...*

Gallus has fallen at last for one girl and, wretched, begins to grow pale (*pallescere*) with belated cares. This picks up from 1.5.21 where Propertius tells Gallus of his own pallor which is caused by his love for Cynthia (below under 1.37.3 PALLOR).

Prop. 1.15.39: *quis te cogebat multos pallere colores*

Propertius asks Cynthia who compelled her to become pale (*pallere*) with many shifting hues. This is one of the tricks Cynthia employs to make Propertius believe that she cares about him. According to Camps, the expression *pallere multos colores* is a variation on the colloquial Greek idiom παντοδαπὰ ἠφίει χρώματα which actually alludes to blushing¹ and Enk cites examples from Horace and Catullus to demonstrate the variety of colours with which *pallor* can be identified.² The placement of the colour words together at the end of the line suggest that Propertius is highlighting the contradiction between these two terms, possibly as a way of indicating Cynthia's lack of sincerity.

Prop. 4.7.82: *et numquam Herculeo numine pallet ebur*

Cynthia's ghost tells Propertius to inscribe a cenotaph for her where, by the will of Hercules, ivory never loses its colour (*pallet*). The place where he is to do this is Tibur whose patron god was Hercules and whose air had the reputation of preserving the colour of ivory.³ When ivory discolours it turns yellow, thus in this context *pallere* is the equivalent of *flavescere*.⁴

Prop. 4.8.9: *talia demissae pallent ad sacra puellae*

¹ (1961) p. 82

² Cat. 64.100 and Hor. 3.10.14 (below under 1.37.3 PALLOR) and Hor. *Epod.* 7.15 (1946 p. 135).

³ Butler and Barber (1933) p. 365 who cite Mart. 8.28.12.

⁴ Compare Ov. *Am.* 2.5.39-40; 'aut quod, ne longis flavescere possit ab annis, / Maeonis Assyrium femina tinxit ebur'.

Girls who are sent down to rites involving the serpent in the sacred cave at Lanuvium turn pale (*pallent*) from fear. The association of fear with pallor goes back to the *Iliad* where *χλωρός* is used to describe fearful people or fear itself.¹

Prop. 4.8.54: *palluerantque ipso labra soluta mero.*

The meaning of this line is difficult. The phrase *palluerant labra* is clear enough; Propertius' lips turned pale (*palluerant*) in fear at Cynthia's unexpected entrance. *Ipsa labra soluta mero* 'lips loosened (or drunk) with wine' is open to various interpretations, which are discussed by Camps.² If *ipso* has concessive force, as both Butler³ and Goold⁴ take it in their translations, then the idea is that Propertius' lips grow white with fear even though they are stained with red wine.

Hor. 3.27.28: *...et scatentem / beluis pontum mediasque fraudes / palluit audax.*

Europa, although formerly bold, now blanched (*palluit*) at the deep teeming with monsters and the treachery in its midst. For a discussion of this passage see Hor. 3.27.25 above under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

1.37.2 PALLIDUS

Cat. 65.6: *namque mei nuper Lethaeo gurgite fratris / pallidulum manans alluit unda pedem*

Catullus, speaking of the death of his brother, says that the creeping wave of Lethe's stream has recently washed his pale (*pallidulum*) foot. The pallor, of course, is the usual pallor of death but Catullus' use of this word as an epithet for the foot is a little startling for elsewhere he employs bright and positive colour terms of the feet to imply beauty or sexual desirability.⁵ It is also noteworthy how much emphasis is placed on this term, for not only is it in the diminutive, giving a sense of heightened emotion, but it is separated from its noun by a line's length and placed at the beginning of the pentameter. This serves to fix it in the reader's mind, highlighting its contrast with the redness of the maiden's blush in v.

¹ See Irwin (1974 p. 62) who cites *Il.* 7.479, 8.77, 17.67 etc.

² (1965) p. 132f.

³ (1912) p. 319

⁴ (1990) p. 423

⁵ See above on Cat. 61.160 under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv, 64.162 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i and 68.71 under 1.21.1 FULGEO ii.

24.¹ Seventeen lines separate these two images but they are associated by means of the verb *manare* which is employed in both lines.² This is a contrast of death against life; see further on Cat. 65.24 below under 1.43.3 RUBOR.

Cat. 81.4: *praeterquam iste tuus moribunda ab sede Pisauri / hospes inaurata pallidior statua*

Catullus refers to his rival for Juventius' affections as a man from the dying town of Pisaurum who is paler (*pallidior*) than a gilded statue. For the comparison to gold see on this line above under 1.23 INAURATUS. Here *pallidior* picks up on *moribunda*, implying that the man is unhealthy as his town.³ The paleness also suggests dissipation; compare the poem preceding this one in which Gellius has white lips through indulging in unnatural practices.⁴

Prop. 3.8.28: *semper in irata pallidus esse velim.*

Propertius says that he would always wish to be the pale (*pallidus*) lover of an angry mistress. This line is interesting for its succinctness and word order. There are no words for lover or mistress, both are implied - it seems that the term *pallidus* has become so much identified with the figure of the lover in Propertius that it has become a synonym for it. *Pallidus* is placed immediately after *irata* to emphasise the contrast between the state of the lover and that of his mistress. Thus here the word *pallidus* implies a passive, almost feminine role.

Prop. 4.3.41: *...curis et pallida nutrix / peierat hiberni temporis esse moras.*

Arethusa's nurse, pale (*pallida*) with anxiety, swears falsely that Arethusa's husband is delayed because it is winter.

Prop. 4.5.72: *... et immundo pallida mitra situ*

When the bawd Acanthus died, one of the only adornments she had at her funeral was a cap which was discoloured (*pallida*) by filthy neglect.

¹ 'huic manat tristi conscius ore rubor.'

² Wiseman also thinks that Catullus deliberately links the corpse's pale foot and the girl's red face by means of the verb *manare*. (1969 p. 18)

³ Garrison comments that even in modern times this town has been said to have an unhealthy climate. (1995 p. 155).

⁴ See Cat. 80.2 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS v.

Prop. 4.7.36: *sensi ego, cum insidiis pallida vina bibi-*

Cynthia says that she knew that it was Lygdamus who caused her death when she drank the wine which was pale (*pallida*) from poison. There is a degree of dispute about this line. Butler and Barber interpret *pallida vina* as 'wine that strikes the pallor of death to them that drink'¹ and it is the case that a number of comparable uses of *pallidus* and its synonyms support this interpretation.² Shackleton-Bailey, on the other hand, thinks that this is less natural than the idea that *pallida* refers to the discolouration of the wine caused by poison and suggests that the word may also carry funereal associations like *niger*.³ The colour term may well carry both implications and, in addition, Propertius is perhaps playing upon the oxymoron of 'pale wine'.

Hor. 1.4.13: *pallida Mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas / regumque turris...*

Pale (*pallida*) Death with impartial foot knocks at hovels of the poor and at towers of kings. This line marks the turning point of Horace's ode on the coming of spring: after describing the renewal brought by the season, Horace introduces a grim reminder of human mortality. Instead of the more usual *atra mors* Horace depicts death as pale like a corpse⁴, picking up on the colours of the first stanza with the picture of the meadows white with hoary frost.⁵ In v. 13 however, the motif of whiteness is repeated in a grimmer and more negative way and *pallida*, placed first in its line, creates an abrupt and dramatic contrast to the greenery and flowers of the previous verses.⁶

1.37.3 PALLOR

Prop. 1.5.21: *nec iam pallorem totiens mirabere nostrum*

¹ (1933) p. 362

² e.g. Tibullus 'num te carminibus, num te *pallentibus* herbis / devovit tacito tempore noctis anus?' (1.8.17-18); Horace '...quodsi / pallerem casu, biberent *exsangue* cuminum.' (Epist. 1.19.17-18)

³ (1956) p. 250f.

⁴ Nisbet and Hubbard (1970 p. 67) cite Tibullus where *pallida* is used as an epithet for the ghosts of the underworld; 'illic percussisque genis ustoque capillo / errat ad obscuros *pallida* turba lacus.' (1.10.37-38). Quinn cites the *pallentis undas* of Aen. 4.26 (1980 p. 129).

⁵ See Hor. 1.4.4 above under 1.2.1 ALBESCO / ALBICO.

⁶ Paleness shrouds the colors of the preceding stanza like snow mantling foliage.' (Commager 1962 p. 268) On the use of green in these verses see Hor. 1.4.9 below under 1.50.2 VIRIDIS ii.

Propertius tells Gallus that if he continues making overtures to Cynthia he will not so often be amazed at Propertius' own pallor (*pallorem*).

Prop. 2.5.30: *hic tibi pallori, Cynthia, versus erit.*

The devastating verse that Propertius will write about Cynthia's fickleness will make her pale (*pallori*).

Hor. 3.10.14: *o quamvis neque te munera nec preces / nec tinctus viola pallor
amantium / nec vir Pieria paelice saucius / curvat...*

Horace asks his latest love Lyce to spare her suppliants, although she is moved neither by gifts nor prayers nor her lovers' pallor (*pallor*) tinged with the colour of violets, nor her husband's passion for a Pierian mistress. After the fashion of Propertius, Horace depicts his lovers in a state of elegiac paleness. The allusion to the *viola* however, is a new element. Williams¹ translates the word as 'purple' as does Quinn², both on the grounds that Lyce's lovers are blue with the cold as a result of waiting outside her door. According to Pliny however, there were three shades of violet including a yellow shade³ and it is the case that there are more instances in Roman literature of pallor described as or compared to yellow than to purple. Horace elsewhere uses the colour epithet *luteus* of *pallor*⁴ and Catullus compares Ariadne's love-pallor to the gleam of gold.⁵ Neither interpretation can be entirely ruled out, but the fact that Horace's only other use of *viola* is to describe purple dye⁶ and that a colour term for purple is derived from the substantive⁷ lends more weight to the idea that a shade of purple is implied here.

1.38 PULLUS

Hor. 1.25.18: *laeta quod pubes hedera virenti / gaudeat pulla magis atque myrto, /
aridas frondis hiemis sodali / dedicet Euro.*⁸

¹ (1969) p. 77

² (1980) p. 263; See also Commager 'The violet hue of his face (14) is calculated, understandably, to impress upon Lyce the extent of his sufferings.' (1962 p. 129).

³ 'violis honos proximus, earumque plura genera, purpureae, luteae, albae...e sativis maxima auctoritas luteis.' (21.14.27)

⁴ 'o quantus instat navitis sudor tuis / tibi que pallor luteus' *Epod.* 10.15-16. This is employed of the pallor of fear rather than love but compare Tibullus 'sed nimius luto corpora tingit amor' (1.8.52)

⁵ 64.100 (above under 1.5.2 AURUM ii).

⁶ 'lana Tarentino violas imitata veneno.' *Epist.* 2.1.207

⁷ See André (1949) p. 196 on *violaceus*.

⁸ The O.C.T. reads *Hebro* not *Euro* but the reference to the East wind seems to fit in better with the rest of the poem; see below on this line in Chapter 6, section 3.1.

Horace tells the aging Lydia that soon she will complain that merry youths delight more in green ivy than dark (*pulla*) myrtle, dedicating withered leaves to the East wind, the companion of winter. In this stanza, Horace employs the metaphor of garlands composed of different types of leaves to denote three different stages of life. Most editors give the translation 'green ivy and dark myrtle' but Nisbet and Hubbard's interpretation of *atque* as 'than'¹ makes sense when the contrast between the colours is taken into account. Thus *virenti* is employed for the freshness of youth², *pulla* for more sombre middle age. A third chromatic element is provided by the reference to the dry and colourless leaves of winter. For a detailed examination of the significance of *pulla* and of the stanza as a whole see Chapter 6, section 3.1.

1.39 PUNICEUS / PUNICUS

Prop. 3.3.32: *et Veneris dominae volucres, mea turba, columbae / tingunt Gorgoneo punica rostra lacu;*

Propertius dreams of the grotto of the Muses where the doves of Venus dip their red (*punica*) beaks into the Gorgon's pool. The poet is led to the grotto by Apollo who instructs him to keep to love poetry rather than try his hand at epic. The doves of Venus are symbolic of love and of love poetry and they dip their bills into the Hippocrene, the stream that was the symbol of poetic inspiration. There are two colour elements in this couplet for doves are traditionally white in Roman poetry³ and Propertius contrasts their white plumage with their red beaks. It is interesting that Propertius places great emphasis on this detail, reinforcing the red motif by the adjective *Gorgoneo* (which reminds us of the Gorgon's blood) and the verb *tingunt* which often carries overtones of staining or dyeing. For a detailed examination of the significance of the doves' red beaks and the adjective *punicus* at this point in the poem see below in Chapter 4, section 6.3.ii.

Prop. 3.13.28: *illis munus erant decussa Cydonia ramo, / et dare puniceis plena canistra rubis*

The gifts of the country folk of old to their women were simple things such as Cydonian quinces shaken from the bough and baskets full of crimson (*puniceis*) bramble-berries. In

¹ (1970) p. 298

² See Hor. 1.25.17 below under 1.50.1 VIREO / VIRIDO.

³For example, Cat. 68.125 (above under 1.35 NIVEUS ii). See also André on the whiteness of the dove (1949 p. 339) and the discussion on Prop. 3.3.32 in Chapter 4 below, section 6.3.ii.

this line not only the adjective suggests redness but the noun it agrees with as well, for *rubum* is probably cognate with *ruber*.¹ *Puniceus*, according to Armstrong, was so called because scarlet dye was manufactured chiefly in Carthage.² Although Lucretius also employs *puniceus* of berries³, the word in this Propertius poem has an additional significance for it is meant to remind us of the *ostrinos colores* from Cadmean Tyre in v. 7.⁴ In this way Propertius highlights the contrast between the expensive, artificially created colours that modern day mistresses require and the natural colours of the earth which used to satisfy the golden age women. In this passage the rich colour of the crimson berries is complemented by the colour of the quinces which were a golden fruit and these colours are, in their turn, set against violets and lilies and birds of bright plumage.⁵ For a detailed discussion of the colours in this passage see Chapter 5, section 5.3 below.

Prop. 4.9.27: *devia puniceae velabant limina vittae,/ putris odorato luxerat igne casa*

Scarlet (*puniceae*) garlands veiled the secluded portals of the shrine of the *Bona Dea* while the dilapidated hovel glowed with fragrant fire. The colour *puniceus* seems to have had a special religious significance: according to Armstrong, 'The *infulae* worn by priests and victims, and hung upon temples, trees, or other consecrated objects, were often of white and scarlet'⁶ and in v. 52 (below) the priestess has a headband of the same colour. The bright colour of the garlands is echoed by the glow of the fire in the next line⁷ while the fire's fragrance and the descriptions of luxuriant shade and singing birds in the following couplet⁸ create an atmosphere which is both sensuous and sacred.

Prop. 4.9.52: *puniceo canas stamine vincta comas:*

¹ *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (1968) p. 1664

² (1917) p. 1

³ '*...et quae nunc hiberno tempore cernis / arbuta puniceo fieri matura colore*' (5.940-941)

⁴ On these see Prop. 3.13.5 above under 1.5.2 AURUM ii.

⁵ '*nunc violas tondere manu, nunc mixta referre / lilia vimineos lucida per calathos, / et portare suis vestitas frondibus uvas / aut variam plumae versicoloris avem.*' (vv. 29-32).

⁶ (1917) p. 2

⁷ According to Armstrong, there was a special connection between fire (in the form of lightning) and the scarlet fillets of the *Bona Dea* ritual (1917 p. 19)

⁸ '*populus et longis ornabat frondibus aedem, / multaque cantantis umbra tegebat avis.*' (vv. 29-30) There could also be an additional colour element in this stanza if Housman's emendation of *longis frondibus* to *glaucis frondibus* is correct and both Butler and Barber (1933 p. 372) and Shackleton-Bailey (1956 p. 259) believe it could be.

The priestess of the Bona Dea who forbids Hercules entrance to the grove has her grey locks bound with a scarlet (*puniceo*) ribbon. Armstrong thinks that the headband of the priestess of the *Bona Dea* was of white and scarlet but for 'poetical reasons', perhaps to heighten the contrast with the priestess' grey hair, only one of the two colours was mentioned.¹ See also on this line under 1.9.2 CANUS.

Hor. 4.10.4: *nunc et qui color est puniceae flore prior rosae / mutatus...*

Horace tells Ligurinus that he will repent of his cruelty toward Horace when that colour which is now superior to the blossom of the crimson (*puniceae*) rose has faded. This change, like the down upon Ligurinus' cheeks and cropped hair², signals the transition to manhood. In Latin literature the complexion of maidens and youths is more often described as *roseus*³ but here Horace's use of a red of deeper hue suggests the passionate feelings which Ligurinus inspires in Horace and looks back to the purple swans of 4.1 where Horace is trying to come to terms with his own mortality.⁴ Significantly, the rose is associated with transience as well as beauty; compare Hor. 2.11.15 above under 1.9.2 CANUS and Hor. 3.15.15 below under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i.

1.40.1 PURPURA

Cat. 64.49: *Indo quod dente politum / tincta tegit roseo conchyli purpura fuco.*

The marriage couch of Peleus and Thetis which is embellished with Indian ivory is covered by a purple cloth (*purpura*) which has been dyed with the shell's rosy stain. Purple cloth, a symbol of wealth and status, also covers the marriage couch in c. 61.⁵ In c. 64 the purple of the cloth is placed in contrast with the whiteness of the ivory in the previous line and both colour elements are further enhanced by the suggestion of shining present in the word *politum*. This is the first of the series of contrasts between purple or red and white in this poem and it is the most intense with seven words relating to colour or shining in the

¹ (1917) p. 2 and n. 9

² *'insperata tuae cum veniet pluma superbiae, / et, quae nunc umeris involitant, deciderint comae'* (vv. 2-3)

³ For instance, Hor. 1.13.2 below under 1.42 ROSEUS. See however Aen. 11.819 '*purpureus quondam color ora reliquit*.'

⁴ See 4.1.10 below under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i. Ligurinus is also the love object in this poem.

⁵ See 61.165 below under 1.48 TYRIUS. Purple cloth is also mentioned as one of the wedding gifts in Sappho's description of the wedding of Hector and Andromache; see the note on Cat. 64.44 above under 1.3.2 ARGENTUM.

space of two lines. The colour imagery reaches its height in v. 46; in this line a colour cluster of great intensity is created by the use of three words that refer to purple (*roseo, conchyli, purpura*) placed together in the middle of the line with two words related to dye (*tincta, fuco*) placed at the beginning and end.¹ It is by techniques such as these that Catullus directs the attention of the reader onto the coverlet prior to describing the scenes which are depicted upon it.² The colour of the coverlet also prepares the reader for the violence and passion which is about to be described for it has a strong association with blood. As Harmon has observed, the purple and ivory of the marriage couch calls the mind the famous simile in which the blood gushing from Menelaos' wound is compared to ivory which has been coloured purple.³

Prop. 4.3.51: *nam mihi quo Poenis nunc purpura fulgeat ostris*

Arethusa whose soldier husband, Lycotas, is missing asks herself for what purpose purple (*purpura*) now shines for her with its Punic dye. See on this line above under 1.21.1 FULGEO iii.

Hor. 2.16.7: *otium bello furiosa Thrace,/ otium Medi pharetra decori,/ Grosphæ,
non gemmis neque purpura ve-/nale neque auro.*

'Thrace raging in war and the Parthians embellished with quivers both pray for *otium*, Grosphus, which cannot be bought with gems, purple (*purpura*), nor gold.' Like the gold and gems, Horace is using purple to signify the powerlessness of wealth; see Hor. 2.16.8 above under 1.5.2 AURUM ii. In addition, the colour here has strong links with authority and power. Reinhold thinks that Horace, on the political level, associated the colour with Parthian kings⁴ and the word thus picks up on *Medi* of the previous line. As Quinn points out⁵, the colour was also much employed by the Roman state and the word also leads us naturally into the third stanza with the reference to the *lictor consularis*.⁶

¹ As O'Connell puts it, 'In the final line all the words but the verb work toward conveying the purple of the coverlet; it is as if the words themselves weave together various shades of dark red' (1977 p. 749)

² Quinn 'The elaborately poetic diction focuses our attention on the bedspread in preparation for the switch from story 1 to story 2.' (1973 p. 309)

³ *Il.* 4.140-144 (1973 p. 17)

⁴ (1970) p. 48

⁵ (1980) p. 230

⁶ '*non enim gazæ neque consularis / summovet lictor miseros tumultus / mentis...*' (vv. 9-11)

Hor. 2.18.8: *nec Laconicas mihi / trahunt honestae purpuras clientae:*

Horace's house is not a gleaming palace nor for him do distinguished women trail robes of Laconian purple (*purpuras*). This poem is on the traditional theme of the superiority of the simple life over the life of luxury and indulgence. *Purpureas* picks up on the reference to gold and ivory in the first verse; see Hor. 2.18.1 above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iii.

Hor. 3.1.42: *quodsi dolentem nec Phrygius lapis / nec purpurarum sidere clarior / delenit usus nec Falerna / vitis Achaemeniumque costum*

Horace asks why he should exchange his life for one of wealth since neither Phrygian marble nor the wearing of purple (*purpurarum*) brighter than a star nor Falernian wine nor Persian balsam soothe a man in distress. Once again Horace associates purple with a wealth which is ultimately futile. Note how he emphasises the reflective qualities of the purple cloth by the comparison to the stars.¹ Brightness or sheen was a characteristic of purple in ancient literature; Greek writers regularly used πορφύρεος to suggest sheen rather than colour² and Roman writers often associated words for purple with verbs of shining such as *fulgere*.³ In these lines this brightness is further enhanced by the allusions to marble and to wine (which also picks up the colour of the purple cloth). The brightness of purple however is still not powerful enough to alleviate the blackness of care (*atra Cura*) which Horace has mentioned in v. 40.⁴ For variations upon this *topos* in Propertius and other poets see Prop. 1.14.20 above under 1.36.1 OSTRINUS.

Hor. 4.13.13: *nec Coae referunt iam tibi purpurae / nec cari lapides tempora...*

Horace tells Lyce that now she is aging, neither Coan purple (*purpurae*) nor costly jewels can for her bring back times that have gone. This is another variation upon the idea that purple has no power to alleviate human ills and once again the gleam of the cloth is enhanced by the reference to jewels in the following line. As we have seen in Propertius⁵, Coan cloth seems to have been especially favoured by high-class courtesans such as

¹ For similar comparisons see the *Argonautica* where Jason in his purple cloak is compared to the rising sun (1.725) and to a gleaming star (1.774).

² Irwin (1974) p. 18, Kober (1932) p. 96

³ e.g. *Aen.* 9.614 and Prop. 2.1.5, 4.3.51 (both above under 1.21.1 FULGEO iii).

⁴ See Hor. 3.1.40 above under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS v.

⁵ See on Prop. 2.1.5 above under 1.21.1 FULGEO iii, Prop. 2.29b.26 above under 1.36.1 OSTRINUS.

Cynthia. In the Horace poem however Lyce's purple robe makes a grotesque colour contrast with her yellowing teeth and greying hair, mentioned in the previous stanza.¹ For a detailed examination of this colour image in its context see Chapter 6, section 3.3.ii.

1.40.2 PURPUREUS

i) Sexuality

Cat. 45.12: *et dulcis pueri ebrios ocellos / illo purpureo ore suaviata*

Acme kisses her lover's drunken eyes with her purple (*purpureo*) mouth. *Purpureus* is an uncommon epithet for the mouth; Horace and Ovid use it this way only rarely², *roseus* being the more usual term.³ Similarly in Kober's study of colour terms in the Greek poets⁴, only Simonides appears to use πορφύρεος of the mouth.⁵ It is possible that Catullus uses this word in imitation of Simonides and, as Irwin suggests for the Simonides fragment, that the term is meant to describe 'sheen or iridescence, the apparent mixture of light and dark on a changing surface.'⁶ However it could also be the case that Catullus employs *purpureus* with its full chromatic value to suggest an aroused state and heightened emotion. There is an interesting association between this colour term and *ebrios* which brings to mind purple's association with wine and grapes.⁷ Thus Acme's purple mouth suggests the stain of wine but Acme is figuratively rather than literally drunk - she is drunk on Septimius.

Cat. 64.163: *candida permulcens liquidis vestigia lymphis, / purpureave tuum consternens veste cubile.*

Ariadne envisages herself washing Theseus' gleaming white feet and spreading a purple (*purpurea*) coverlet on his bed. For the association of purple with heroes compare the *Iliad* where Agamemnon carries a purple cloak⁸ and the *Argonautica* where Jason's purple cloak is described in great detail.⁹ Thus Theseus' purple coverlet signifies his heroic status but it also carries more suggestive overtones. The purple coverlet on Theseus' bed recalls the one

¹ See Hor. 4.13.10 above under 1.27 LURIDUS.

² Hor. 3.3.12 (below under iii), Ov. Am. 3.14.23 'illic purpureis condatur lingua labellis'

³ See Cat. 63.74, 80.1 below under 1.42 ROSEUS.

⁴ (1932) p. 95

⁵ 'πορφύρεου ἀπὸ στόματος / λείσα φωνὰν παρθένος' . fr. 585 (Page 1962)

⁶ (1974) p. 18

⁷ See, for instance, Hor. 2.5.12 below.

⁸ 'πορφύρεον μέγα φάρος ἔχων ἐν χειρὶ παχείῃ' (8.221)

⁹ 1.725-729

on Peleus' and Thetis' marriage couch and hints at Ariadne's anticipated sexual union with Theseus.¹ In combination with *candidus* in the previous line which suggests Theseus' desirability², the image carries strongly erotic overtones.

Prop. 1.3.41: *nam modo purpureo fallebam stamine somnum*

Cynthia says that she tried to keep awake while waiting for Propertius by spinning with purple (*purpureo*) thread. Spinning, of course, was a natural occupation for a Roman lady; compare Hor. 3.15.15 below. The colour of the thread is mentioned probably because purple was expensive and is characteristic of Cynthia's well-known taste for luxury and extravagance³ but it may also have a connection with Cynthia's sensual nature for, a love charm in the *Greek Anthology* is hung upon a thread of purple wool⁴ and the Cupids have purple bow strings.⁵

Prop. 1.20.38: *roscida desertis poma sub arboribus,/ et circum irriguo surgebant lilia prato / candida purpureis mixta papaveribus.*

Hylas comes to a water meadow where there are white lilies mixed with purple (*purpureis*) poppies. In this context, as with the simile of the blushing bride in Catullus c. 61⁶, the purple poppies are suggestive both of sexual union and of death, of Hylas' ravishment by the water nymphs and of his death at their hands. In contrast with the white lilies they heighten the sexual tension. Further on the contrast with the white lilies and on the passage as a whole see Prop. 1.20.38 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS iv.

Hor. 2.5.12: *tolle cupidinem / immitis uvae; iam tibi lividos / distinguet Autumnus racemos / purpureo varius colore.*

Horace tells Lalage's eager lover to stay his hand from the unripe grape and wait until multicoloured Autumn paints the darkening clusters with purple (*purpureo*). Horace also employs this colour term of grapes in the *Epodes*.⁷ In Lalage's case, as in the two

¹ Compare Theocritus 15.125 where the bed on which Adonis will lie with Aphrodite is to be covered with 'purple coverlets as soft as sleep' ('πορφύρεοι δὲ τάπητες ἄνω μαλακώτεροι ὕπνω.' Gow 1952).

² See Cat. 64.162 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i.

³ For Cynthia's extravagant tastes see Prop. 1.26 above under 1.34.1 NITEO i. On the pretentiousness of purple compare Horace; 'his ubi sublatis puer alte cinctus acernam / gausape purpureo mensam pertersit...' (Serm. 2.8.10-11).

⁴ 'πορφυρέης ἀμνοῦ μαλακῆ τριχὶ μέσσα δεθείσα' 5.205.5

⁵ 'καὶ πολλοὺς τότε χερσὶν ἐπ' ἠθέοισιν ὀστοῦς / τόξου πορφυρέης ἦκαν ἀφ' ἀρπεδόνης.' (5.194.5-6)

⁶ See the discussion of 61.184-188 in Chapter 2, section 5.3.

⁷ 'ut gaudet insitiva decerpens pira / certantem et uvam purpurae' (2.19-20)

instances below, purple is used to signify the fitting time for love. In a similar fashion, Ovid will give *Amor* the epithet *purpureus*.¹ Nisbet and Hubbard compare the Sappho fragment in which a girl (or possibly a bride) is likened to an apple reddening on the top of a bough.²

Hor. 3.15.15: *te lanae prope nobilem / tonsae Luceriam, non citharae decent / nec flos purpureus rosae / nec poti vetulam faece tenus cadi.*

Horace tells Chloris that, as she is old, the wool shorn near celebrated Luceria befits her rather than the lyre, the purple (*purpureus*) blossom of the rose and wine jars drained to the dregs. As Quinn points out, these three objects usually make their appearance at parties³ and the colour of the rose is picked up by that of the wine in the following verse. As in Hor. 4.10⁴, the red rose is intimately associated with youth and beauty but the flower and its colour also suggest impermanence.⁵ This *purpureus flos* is placed in contrast with the dull wool which it is now Chloris' lot to spin. For a detailed discussion of this colour image in its context see Chapter 6, section 3.2 below.

Hor. 4.1.10: *tempestivius in domum / Pauli purpureis ales oloribus / comissabere Maximi, / si torrere iecur quaeris idoneum:*

Horace tells Venus that, rather than visit him, she should, more fittingly, be carried by purple (*purpureis*) swans to the house of Paulus Maximus, if she seeks to inflame a suitable heart. Paulus Maximus is a more suitable candidate for Venus because he is younger than the aging Horace. There has been a great deal of controversy about the concept of purple swans; many commentators and translators choose to reject what they see as an outlandish image and render *purpureis* as 'shining'⁶ following similar uses of the Greek πορφύρεος.⁷ However, when one takes into consideration that these are mythical swans and that they belong to Venus, the goddess of love, the idea of purple swans

¹ *Am.* 2.9b.34, *Ars Am.* 1.232.

² 'οἶον τὸ γλυκύμαλον ἐρεύθεται ἄκρω ἐπ' ὕδα' 105a.1 (1978 p. 86)

³ (1980) p. 272

⁴ See Hor. 4.10.4 above under 1.39 PUNICEUS / PUNICUS.

⁵ Compare Tibullus '*quam cito purpureos deperdit terra colores*' (1.4.29)

⁶ 'borne by thy gleaming swans' (Bennett 1960 p. 283); 'take your silver swans to him' (Shepherd 1983 p. 173). Porphyrio of this image says '*quomodo dicitur, cum albi sint potius? sed sic purpureum pro pulcro dicere poetae adsuerunt...*' (Meyer 1874 p. 122).

⁷ See above on Cat. 45.12

becomes less unlikely¹, especially when Horace's use of the word elsewhere in passages about love and sexuality is taken into account (see the two instances above). It is difficult to believe that the *purpureis ales oloribus* would not make the Roman reader recall the *flos purpureus rosae* which, in a similar situation, was denied to the aging Chloe.

ii) Destruction

Cat. 64.308: ...*vestis / candida purpurea talos incinxerat ora*

The shining white garments of the Fates, fringed with purple (*purpurea*), come down to their ankles. For the tradition and significance of the Fate's white garments see Cat. 64.308 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS ii. The addition of purple strikes an ominous note for the colour suggests the bloody trail left by Achilles² and the sacrifice of Polyxena before Achilles' tomb.³ Thus the two contrasting colours of the Fates' dress reflect the ambivalence of the glorious deeds that they are about to foretell.

Hor. 2.12.3: *nolis longa ferae bella Numantiae / nec durum Hannibalem nec Siculum mare / Poeno purpureum sanguine mollibus / aptari citharae modis*

Horace tells Maecenas that there are stories that Maecenas would not wish to be adapted to the soft measures of the lyre, stories about the long wars of fierce Numantia, harsh Hannibal and the Sicilian sea purple (*purpureum*) with Punic blood. All these stories are about death and destruction and so are unsuited to lyric poetry whose main theme is love. As Nisbet and Hubbard point out⁴, *purpureum* in combination with *mollibus* would normally suggest luxury to the Roman reader but here it is associated with blood. In Greek literature, according to Kober⁵, the association of blood with purple began in the Homeric poems⁶ and lasted throughout Hellenistic times: this association was probably what gave rise to the Greek expression πορφύρεος θάνατος.⁷ In Roman literature, Virgil depicts the

¹ Both Edgeworth (1992 p. 216) and Schoonhoven (1978) also take the view that there is no reason why *purpureus* here cannot be taken chromatically. Edgeworth's reasoning is that these are imaginary swans and therefore can have wings of any colour one wishes. Schoonhoven's argument is based on comparisons from ancient art.

² 'non illi quisquam bello se conferet heros, / cum Phrygii Teucro manabunt sanguine <campi,>' (vv. 343-344); 'testis erit magnis virtutibus unda Scamandri, / quae passim rapido diffunditur Hellesponto, / cuius iter caesis angustans corporum acervis / alta tepefaciet permixta flumine caede.' (vv. 357-360)

³ See Cat. 64.364 above under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

⁴ (1978) p. 186

⁵ (1932) p. 97

⁶ '...αἴματι δὲ χθῶν / δεύετο πορφυρέω...' (Il. 17.360-361)

⁷ e.g. Il. 5.83, 16.334, 20.477

dying Rhoetus vomiting forth his 'purple life'¹ and in the *Metamorphoses* Ovid frequently uses both *purpureus* and *puniceus* of blood.² Horace places much emphasis on the colour of the blood here, for *Poeno* which modifies *sanguine*, gives rise to the colour adjective *poenicus* (*punicus*) which denotes a dark red colour.³ Note how Horace places the three colour words together at the front of the line, emphasising the play of colours.⁴ The *topos* of blood in water goes back to the *Iliad*; for a discussion of this see Chapter 4 below, section 6.4.

iii) Power

Prop. 3.19.22: *tuque, o Minoa venumdata Scylla figura / tondes purpurea regna paterna coma.*

Propertius, giving *exempla* of the power of lust over women, says to Scylla that with the shearing of Nisus' purple (*purpurea*) lock she sold her father's kingdom for Minos' beauty. Nisus' purple lock of hair which contained his power was proverbial; it is also mentioned by Tibullus⁵, Virgil⁶, and Ovid.⁷

Hor. 1.35.12: *regumque matres barbarorum et / purpurei metuunt tyranni, / iniurioso ne pede proruas / stantem columnam...*

In this hymn to the goddess Fortuna, Horace lists all the people who pray to her, including mothers of barbarian kings and purple-clad (*purpurei*) tyrants who fear that she will fling down the standing pillar of the state with disdainful foot. For Horace's association of purple with a style of rule which was un-Roman see 2.16.7 above under 1.40.1 PURPURA. In 1.35 *purpurei* has an almost causal force for, immediately preceding *metuunt*, it implies that the tyrants have even more to fear because of their power. There is also irony implicit in this line for, as Nisbet and Hubbard comment, normally tyrants are feared.⁸

Hor. 3.3.12: *hac arte Pollux et vagus Hercules / enisus arces attigit igneas / quos inter Augustus recumbens / purpureo bibit ore nectar.*

¹ *'purpuream vomit ille animam'* Aen. 9.349

² e.g. *purpureus* 4.127, 10.213, 12.111; *puniceus* 2.607, 4.728

³ See the instances under 1.39 PUNICEUS / PUNICUS above.

⁴ Nisbet and Hubbard also make mention of this (1978 p. 186).

⁵ 1.4.63

⁶ Georg. 1.405, Ciris 52

⁷ Met. 8.8

⁸ (1970) p. 392

By the virtues of steadfastness and justice, Pollux and wandering Hercules won their way to the fiery citadels and among them Augustus reclines and drinks nectar with purple (*purpureo*) mouth. The detail of Augustus' purple mouth seems to some readers to sit oddly with the *gravitas* of the passage. As we have seen with Cat. 45.12 (above under i), *roseus* is a more common epithet for the mouth and when *purpureus* appears it usually does so in the context of love-play. Various explanations have been given for the colour adjective in this poem: Porphyrio¹ connects it with the *purpureum lumen* of youth which Venus sheds upon Aeneas.² Kiessling-Heinze³ draw a parallel with the πορφύρεον στόμα of the young maiden in the Simonides fragment.⁴ Others suggest that Augustus' mouth is stained with nectar⁵ or that it is equivalent to the *roseus os* of deities and thus implies his divine status.⁶ In spite of these explanations however, Gordon Williams goes so far as to label Horace's use of this image as 'an error of taste and judgement'.⁷ With the *purpureis oloribus* of 4.1.10, it is a use of *purpureus* which sits uneasily with the modern reader.

iv) Other

Cat. 64.275: *post vento crescente magis magis increbescunt, / purpureaque procul nantes ab luce refulgent*

In an extended simile, Catullus compares the departure of the youth of Thessaly to waves ruffled by an early morning wind; as the wind increases they crowd on faster and faster and, floating from the purple (*purpurea*) light, reflect it from afar. Presumably the light is purple because it is dawn for dawn is 'rosy-fingered' in Homer⁸ and Ovid refers to sunrise and sunset as *purpureum diem*.⁹ In Catullus, this image could just be an Homeric extension of the simile but, on the other hand, the purple light could anticipate the radiance of the divine guests who are about to arrive at the wedding. This appears to be the only

¹ Meyer (1874) p. 79

² '...namque ipsa decoram / caesariem nato genatrix lumenque iuventae / *purpureum* et laetos oculis adflarat honores:' (Aen. 1.589-591)

³ (1968) p. 264

⁴ For the fragment see on Cat. 45.12 above under i.

⁵ Williams (1969) p. 42

⁶ Quinn (1980) p. 247

⁷ (1969) p. 42

⁸ 'ροδοδάκτυλος ἠώς' Il. 1.477, 6.175, 9.707 etc. See further Kober (1932) p. 87.

⁹ *purpureum rapido qui vehit axe diem* Fast. 3.518

occasion in c. 64 when a word for purple or red cannot be associated in some way with blood, although O'Connell does connect it with the menacing sails of Theseus' ship.¹

Prop. 2.26a.5: *qualem purpureis agitatam fluctibus Hellen,/ aurea quam molli tergo vexit ovis.*

In his dreams Propertius saw Cynthia shipwrecked and sinking in the waves like Helle tossed on the purple (*purpureis*) waves whom the golden sheep bore on its soft back. In describing waves as *purpurei* Propertius is imitating Greek verse where waves and water are often called πορφύρεος, especially in Homer²; thus the adjective lends an epic ring to the description. *Purpureis* is contrasted with *aurea* in the following line; on this see 2.26a.6 above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS i.

Prop. 3.5.32: *purpureus pluvias cur bibit arcus aquas*

When he becomes old, Propertius will explore the mysteries of nature such as why the purple (*purpureus*) bow drinks up the rain-water. The *purpureus arcus* is the rainbow, described as such in imitation of Homer who refers to it as the πορφυρέην ἴριον.³ Kober says of this, 'When πορφύρεος alone is used of the rainbow, it must mean "varicolored", since the yellow and orange in its centre are too vivid to be overlooked by anyone observing the phenomenon. The translation "bright" is also possible, however.'⁴

Prop. 3.17.17: *dum modo purpureo spument mihi dolia musto,/ et nova pressantis inquinat uva pedes*

Propertius asks Bacchus to let his vats foam with purple (*purpureo*) must and the new grapes stain the trampling feet. *Purpureus*, associated as it is with grapes⁵, is an obvious colour epithet for must and the colour effect carries over into the pentametre with the image of white feet being stained red by the juice.

¹ 'The bright purple of dawn is in itself an element of neutral significance...It does, however, convey an almost subliminal menace in its association with the sails of Theseus' ship' (1977 p. 752).

² 'πορφύριον κύμα' *Il.* 1.481-2, 21.326, *Od.* 2.427-8, 11.243 etc. (Kober 1932 p. 98)

³ *Il.* 17.547 (Edgeworth 1992 p. 221)

⁴ (1932) p. 97f.

⁵ See Hor. 2.5.12 above under i. It is interesting that Tibullus employs *candida* as an epithet for must in a very similar scene; '*aut mihi servabit plenis in lintribus uvas / pressaque veloci candida musta pede.*' (1.5.23-24). In this context the adjective could either refer to the gleam of the liquid or to the fact that white grapes are being trampled.

1.41 RADIO

Cat. 63.39: *sed ubi oris aurei Sol radiantibus oculis*

Attis wakes up when the golden-faced Sun surveys the world with its glittering (*radiantibus*) eyes. *Radio*, meaning literally 'to radiate light'¹, is a word often used of the light of heavenly bodies such as moon and stars² and to describe the light-reflecting quality of armour (as in the Propertius instance below). Pliny employs it to describe the eyes of cats in the dark.³ It is rarely used for light that is soft and gentle⁴ and, with the colour adjective *albus* which is employed in the following line⁵, contributes to the impression of a harsh, unforgiving landscape. For a detailed analysis of this colour image see the discussion on c. 63 in Chapter 3, section 4.1.ii.

Prop. 4.1.27: *nec rudis infestis miles radiabat in armis:*

In the ancient days of Rome, the rough soldiery did not glitter (*radiabat*) with threatening arms. Theocritus also employs a shining term when describing the armed hosts of Ptolemy⁶ and Propertius employs the cognate noun *radius* in 4.6 for the glitter of arms reflected on water.⁷ This is one of the words for shining which Propertius employs in c. 4.1 to suggest the glamour and sophistication of the Rome of his day; see further Prop. 4.1.11 above under 1.34.1 NITEO i.

1.42 ROSEUS

Cat. 55.12: *quaedam inquit, nudum reduc.../ 'en hic in roseis latet papillis.'*

There is a difficulty with this line because of the corruption of the preceding line but the general sense seems to be that a girl, when asked by Catullus about the whereabouts of his friend Camerius, exposes her chest and states that he is hiding between her rosy (*roseis*) breasts. Aphrodite in the *Anacreontea* is described with rosy breasts.⁸ The reference to

¹ *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (1968) p. 1571

² '*radiantis imagine lunae*' (*Aen.* 8.23); '*radiant ut sidus ocelli*' (*Ov. Am.* 3.3.9)

³ '*nocturnorum animalium veluti felium in tenebris fulgent radiantque oculi ut contueri non sit*' (*N.H.* 11.55.151)

⁴ Seneca *Phaedr.* 770 '*et fulgor teneris qui radiat genis*' is perhaps an exception.

⁵ See 63.40 above under 1.2.2 ALBUS v.

⁶ 'πολλοὶ δ' ἰππῆες, πολλοὶ δέ μιν ἀσπιδιώται / χαλχῶ μαρμαίροντι σεσαγμένοι ἀμφαγέρονται.' (17.93-94 Gow 1952)

⁷ '*armorum et radiis picta tremebat aqua*' (v. 26)

⁸ 'ῥοδέων δ' ὑπερθε μαζῶν / ἀπαλῆς ξενερθε δειρῆς / μέγα κῦμα πρῶτα τέμνει.' (57.17-19)

breasts is also reminiscent of the *Greek Anthology* where breasts are compared to golden apples¹ or declared superior to every flower²; in one such epigram an anonymous poet wishes that he were a rose nestling amongst his mistresses' snowy-breasts.³ Copley suggests that some sort of pun on Camerius' name is operating in these lines, namely that *Camerium* is another word for the *strophium*.⁴ For another suggestive use of colour in this poem see Cat. 55.17 above under 1.25 LACTENS / LACTEOLUS.

Cat. 63.74: *roseis ut huic labellis sonitus <citus> abiit*

As soon as Attis' speech of defiance issues from his rosy (*roseis*) lips, Cybele takes her revenge. Attis' rosy lips, like his snowy hands⁵, are a sign of his youthful female beauty. These touches, according to Sellar, help to establish a contrast between Attis' youth and the passions which possess him.⁶ They also create a feeling of pathos as they remind us of his vulnerability; in a similar fashion Attis is given the epithet *tener* in v. 88. For a detailed discussion of this colour image in its context see Chapter 3 below, sections 4.2, i, ii and iii.

Cat. 64.49: *tincta tegit roseo conchyli purpura fuco.*

A purple coverlet dyed with the shell's rosy (*roseo*) stain covers the marriage couch of Peleus and Thetis. See on this line above under 1.40.1 PURPURA.

Cat. 64.309: *at roseae niveo residebant vertice vittae*

Rosy (*roseae*) ribbons adorn the snowy white heads of the Fates. For the red headbands of priestesses, compare Prop. 4.9.27 and 4.9.52 above under 1.39 PUNICEUS / PUNICUS. For the image in general see 64.309 above under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

Cat. 80.1: *quid dicam, Gelli, quare rosea ista labella / hiberna fiant candidiora nive*

¹ 5.60.1-2

² 5.56.6

³ 'ἔϊθε ῥόδον γενόμην ὑποπόρφυρον, ὄφρα με χερσὶν / ἄρσαμένη χάριση στήθεσι χιονέοις.' (5.84-85)

⁴ '...a vulgar Greek word *καμάριον* might well have been in use to designate the *subcingulum* or *zonula* which the Greek and Roman woman wore as a support for the breasts.' (1952 p. 296). See also Quinn (1973) p. 252.

⁵ See Cat. 63.8 above under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

⁶ (1863) p. 370

Catullus asks Gellius why his once rosy (*rosea*) lips have become whiter than the winter's snow. Gellius' rosy lips signify his youth and desirability as well as perhaps suggesting his effeminate sexuality; on this see Cat. 80.2 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS v.

Prop. 3.24.7: *et color est totiens roseo collatus Eoo / cum tibi quaesitus candor in ore foret:*

Propertius tells Cynthia that although her complexion was compared to the rosy (*roseo*) dawn, the radiance in her face was contrived. Lucretius also employs *roseus* of the dawn¹ and in Tibullus it is Aurora's horses that are described as *rosei*.² In Greek Literature, the equivalent term *ρόδεος* (and its cognates) are often used to describe the rosy complexion of beautiful gods and mortals³ and, as we have seen, *ροδοδάκτυλος* 'rosy-fingered' is a common epithet of Eos in Homer.⁴ See also on this colour cluster above on Prop. 3.24.8 under 1.8.3 CANDOR.

Hor. 1.13.2: *Cum tu, Lydia, Telephi / cervicem roseam, cerea Telephi / laudas bracchia...*

Horace tells Lydia that when she praises Telephus' rosy (*roseam*) neck and waxy arms he grows wild with jealousy. For the use of *roseus* as a conventional epithet for the beautiful skin of goddesses and certain mortals see on the Propertius instance above and compare Theocritus where Adonis is given the epithet 'rosy-armed'.⁵ For a possible colour comparison with Telephus' *cerea bracchia* see this line above under 1.10 CEREUS.

1.43.1 RUBEO

Cat. 3.18: *flendo turgiduli rubent ocelli.*

Because of her bird's death, Lesbia's eyes are red (*rubent*) and swollen with weeping. This is the image with which Catullus ends his dirge for Lesbia's sparrow and in some respects it recalls the image of the guilty blush of the sad-faced maiden at the end of c. 65 (below under 1.43.3 RUBOR). In both instances Catullus uses a colour word to draw attention to, and increase the importance of, a seemingly irrelevant observation. In c. 3 one begins to

¹ *tempore item certo roseam Matuta per oras / aetheris auroram differt et lumina pandit* (5.656-7)

² *hoc precor, hunc illum nobis Aurora nitentem / Luciferum roseis candida portet equis.* (1.3.93-94)

³ It is used of Aphrodite at *Anacreont.* 55.22. and Helen at Theocritus 18.31.

⁴ See on Cat. 64.275 above under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS iv.

⁵ τὸν μὲν Κύπρις ἔχει, τὰν δ' ὁ ῥοδόπαχυσ 'Αδωνις.' (15.128 Gow 1952)

suspect that, in spite of his lamentations, Catullus is more concerned about his girl's sorrow and the fact that it has spoiled her looks¹ than the bird's death.

Prop. 1.10.8: *et mediis caelo Luna ruberet equis*

Propertius could not tear himself away from Gallus and his mistress, even though the moon with its horses was reddening (*ruberet*) in mid sky. In the *Georgics* Virgil employs *rubere* to describe the reddening of the moon under certain weather conditions² but both Camps³ and Enk⁴ think that *ruberet* has no chromatic value in the Propertius line and means little more than *luceret* 'was shining'. This may well be interpreting the line too literally: it seems more apt to take *ruberet* as 'blushing', the implication being that although even the moon was embarrassed at the love-play of Gallus and his mistress, Propertius could not stop watching! For a similar use of *rubere* in relation to the moon, compare Horace who speaks of the moon blushing at the foul deeds of the witches Canidia and Sagana.⁵ See also Hor. 2.11.10 below where the participle *rubens* is employed of the moon. In each of these instances Horace and Propertius are playing upon the idea of the blushing moon and creating a subdued red/white contrast.

Prop. 3.10.2: *mirabar, quidnam visissent mane Camenae,/ ante meum stantes sole rubente torum.*

Propertius wondered why the Muses had paid him an early visit, standing before Propertius' bed while the sun was reddening (*rubente*). *Sole rubente* indicates the light of dawn which *rubere* and its cognates are often employed to describe.⁶ The Muses give the signal for Cynthia's birthday and, as in 3.24.77, Cynthia is linked with the red light of dawn. For Propertius' use of other words for colour and shining to contribute to the joyful

¹ Merrill (1893 p. 8) comments that Clodia was renowned for the beauty of her eyes, citing Cicero *Att.* 2.14.1 where she is given the epithet βωώπις and *Cael.* 20.49 where Cicero speaks of her *flagrantia oculorum*.

² 'at si virgineum suffuderit ore ruborem,/ ventus erit: vento semper rubet aurea Phoebe.' (1.430-431)

³ (1961) p. 68

⁴ (1946) p. 96

⁵ '...Hecaten vocat altera, saevam/ altera Tisiphonen; serpentis atque videres/ infernas errare canis, Lunamque rubentem / ne foret his testis post magna latere sepulcra.' (*Serm.* 1.8.33-36)

⁶ '...interea fax/ occidit oceanumque rubra tractim obruit aethra.' (*Ennius Ann. fr.* 434-5 Vahlen 1963); 'aurea cum primum gemmantis rore per herbas/ matutina rubent radiati lumina solis' (*Lucretius* 5.461-462)

⁷ above under 1.42 ROSEUS

and sensual atmosphere of this birthday poem see 3.10.14 above under 1.34.2 NITIDUS and 3.10.22 above under 1.32 MURREUS.

Prop. 4.2.16: *hic dulcis cerasos, hic autumnalia pruna/cernis et aestivo mora rubere die;*

The god Vertumnus describes the fruit around his feet, amongst them sweet cherries, plums and mulberries which redden (*rubere*) on summer days. Postgate says that *rubere* means 'being half ripe'¹ and quotes Pliny who states that the mulberry goes through three colour changes² while Ovid describes the mulberry both as *nigra*³ and *purpureo colore*.⁴ Thus *rubere*, which covers the whole range of reds⁵, describes the fruit in the process of changing colour, a change for which Vertumnus is responsible.⁶ This picks up on the previous line where the allusions to cherries and plums suggest various shades of red. These lines contribute to the colour cluster begun at v. 13; see on Prop. 4.2.13 above under 1.26.1 LIVEO.

Hor. 1.2.2: *iam satis terris nivis atque dirae / grandinis misit Pater et rubente / dextera sacras iaculatus arces / terruit urbem.*

The Father (Jupiter) has sent enough terrible snow and hail upon the earth and, striking the sacred hilltops with his reddening (*rubente*) right hand, has terrified the city. This is the beginning of the famous ode in praise of Augustus as the one who has delivered the state from danger. Horace depicts the horrors of the civil war complete with awful portents of bad weather and a threat that the age of the Flood might return.⁷ The image of Jupiter's red right hand is a very unusual one which appears to be without parallel in ancient literature although most commentators believe that its source is Virgil's description of Jupiter in the

¹ (1884) p. 200

² '*moris sucus in carne vinosus, trini colores, candidus primo, mox rubens, maturis niger.*' (N.H. 15.27.97)

³ '*...quae poma alba ferebat / ut nunc nigra ferat contactu sanguinis arbor:*' (Met. 4.51-2)

⁴ '*...madefactaque sanguine radix / purpureo tinguit pendentia mora colore.*' (Met. 4.126-7)

⁵ '*Rubere, ruber et rubor englobent donc dans leur sens toutes les nuances du rouge.*' (André 1949 p. 77)

⁶ 'Vertumnus was clearly the god of the changing seasons' (Butler and Barber 1933 p. 333).

⁷ vv. 5-20. Earlier commentators such as Porphyrio seem to have assumed that these lines referred to the portents which accompanied the death of Julius Caesar. However the more recent interpretation is that they denote the mood of weariness which was the product of the long drawn out sufferings of the civil war. On this see Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) p. 17, Commager (1962) p. 178 ff.

middle of the storm clouds.¹ No one, however, has seen any particular significance in Horace's choice of the colour term *rugeo*; like Fraenkel they tend to assume that the word is just a variant of Virgil's *coruscus*.² It is much more than this for the colour term, unlike *coruscus*, recalls the colour of blood and thus brings to mind the carnage of the civil war. In a similar fashion Virgil compares Aeneas to blood-red comets before he joins battle with the Italians³; in Virgil the colour terms have reference to the slaughter which is about to come, in Horace it is the slaughter which has gone before. Horace's use of the participle form of this verb is also worthy of mention for it suggests an ongoing process and, with *iam satis*, contributes to the air of weariness produced by long years of turmoil. Note how Horace draws a contrast between the redness of Jupiter's hand and the implied whiteness of the snow and hail in the previous line. For a similar contrast of red and white in a life/death context compare Hor. 3.13.7 below under 1.43.2 RUBER.

Hor. 2.11.10: *non semper idem floribus est honor / vernis neque uno Luna rubens nitet / vultu: quid aeternis minorem / consiliis animum fatigas?*

Why tire your mortal soul with plans for eternity when the spring flowers do not retain the same glory and the blushing (*rubens*) moon does not gleam with a single face? See above under Prop. 1.10.8 for other instances of *rubere* employed to describe the moon. In this context *rubens*, like *nitere*⁴, helps to personify the moon as a blushing *virgo* whose colours will soon fade.⁵ The colour word also picks up upon the hint of colour introduced by the reference to the flowers of spring in the previous line.

1.43.2 RUBER

Cat. 22.7: *novi umbilici, lora rubra membranae*

Suffenus holds his awful poetry in such importance that he writes it on the best quality papyrus with new rods and red (*rubra*) tags for the wrapper. Thompson thinks that these

¹ *'ipse pater media nimborum in nocte corusca / fulmina molitur dextra...'* Geor. 1.328f. Kiessling-Heinze (1968 p. 12) also draw a parallel with Δία φοινικοστερόπαν of Pindar O. 9.10.

² *'rubente dextera* seems to be a fine variation of Virgil's *corusca dextera*' (Fraenkel 1957 p. 244). 'As can be seen from the article *coruscus* in the *Thesaurus*, *rutilus* is occasionally used by ancient grammarians to interpret *coruscus*...' (*ibid.* n.4)

³ *'non secus ac liquida si quando nocte cometae / sanguinei lugubre rubent...'* (Aen. 10.272f.)

⁴ See this line above under 1.34.1 NITEO i.

⁵ See also Nisbet and Hubbard (1978) p. 172 and compare Catullus' use of *rubor* in 65.24 below under 1.43.3 RUBOR for the blush of a maiden.

lora were perhaps the vellum labels which were attached to the end of the role and gave the title of the work¹; if this is the case then the red dye would be designed to make Suffenus' poems stand out.²

Cat. 67.46: *praeterea addebat quendam, quem dicere nolo / nomine, ne tollat rubra supercilia.*

The house-door declines to give the name of someone with whom its mistress had an affair, in case, it says, he raises his red (*rubra*) eyebrows. Scholars have produced different theories on this allusion to the colour of the brows. Merrill³ and Ellis⁴ suggest that the word refers to the angry flush on the brow, the implication being that the door is afraid to give the owner's name and risk his wrath. On the other hand the distinguishing feature of red eyebrows could be a sly hint as to their owner's identity (a well known personality with red hair?) like the other clues in the lines following.⁵ Garrison suggests that *rubra supercilia* may have pejorative overtones, hinting that the adulterer was of lowly stock for, in Roman comedy, red headedness indicated servile origins.⁶

Prop. 3.13.6: *Inda cavis aurum mittit formica metallis, / et venit e Rubro concha Erycina salo*

The Indian ant sends gold from the caves of the mine and the conch shell of Venus comes from the Red (*Rubro*) sea to storm the hearts of women. For the way in which poets play upon the chromatic meaning of the Red Sea's name see the discussion on Prop. 3.13.6 below in Chapter 5, section 5.1. See also the discussion of this passage above on Prop. 3.13.5 under 1.5.2 AURUM ii.

Prop. 3.13.16: *felix Eois funeris una maritis, / quos Aurora suis rubra colorat equis!*

Propertius blesses the unique funeral law of husbands of the East whom red (*rubra*) Aurora darkens with her horses. As we have seen with Prop. 3.10.2 (above under 1.43.1

¹ (1906) p. 57

² Compare Martial 3.2.11 'et *cocco* rubeat superbus index.'

³ (1893) p. 177

⁴ (1889) p. 395

⁵ 'longus homo est, magnas cui lites intulit olim / falsum mendaci ventre puerperium.' (vv. 47-48). 'The door 'refuses to name him' but describes him both by his appearance and his notorious courtcase in such a way as to make his identity (presumably) obvious to the poet's contemporaries.' (Godwin 1995 p. 201).

⁶ (1995) p. 148 See for instance Plautus *Ps.* 1218, *Ter. Hau.* 1061.

RUBEO), *ruber* and its cognates are frequently employed of the dawn. For a detailed analysis of this image in its context see Chapter 5, section 5.2.

Hor. 1.35.32: *...et iuvenum recens / examen Eois timendum / partibus Oceanoque rubro.*

Horace entreats Fortuna to preserve the freshly raised army of young men who are destined to be feared in Eastern parts near the Red (*rubro*) Sea's coast. In this context *ruber* is employed to designate a geographical area and with no other colour words in its immediate context it has diminished chromatic value; contrast Prop. 3.13.6 above. It is possible however that Horace ends this stanza on *rubro* as a way of preparing the reader for the next one which is about the terrible bloodshed of the Civil Wars.¹ For the association of *ruber* and its cognates with blood compare Hor. 1.2.2 (above under 1.43.1 RUBEO) and the instance immediately below.

Hor. 3.13.7: *O fons Bandusiae splendidior vitro / dulci digne mero non sine floribus / cras donaberis haedo / cui frons turgida cornibus / primis et venerem et proelia destinat; / frustra: nam gelidos inficiet tibi / rubro sanguine rivos / lascivi suboles gregis.*

'O Bandusian spring, brighter than crystal, worthy of both sweet wine and flowers, tomorrow you will be presented with a kid whose brow, swollen with its first horns, marks out both love and battles to come; but in vain, for the offspring of the playful flock will stain your cool streams with its red (*rubro*) blood.' This colour image is a very graphic and powerful one due to a number of factors. The word order reinforces the sense: *rubro* is placed between the two other words associated with blood (*inficiet* and *sanguine*) and these three words are surrounded by a word for water, *rivos*, and the adjective which agrees with it (*gelidos*), creating the impression of a pool of colour which is slowly spreading into the water. The stream's brightness (*splendidior*) and coldness (*gelidos*) suggest whiteness² and thus the warm, red blood is placed in contrast with the cool, 'white' stream in a classic red/white opposition.³ This colour contrast is reinforced by

¹ *'eheu cicatricum et sceleris pudet / fratrumque...'* (v. 33f.)

² Whiteness and brightness are often associated in Roman poetry; it is significant that *candidior* is a suggested emendation for *splendidior* in v. 1. *Gelidus* can be associated with the whiteness of frost and snow as in, for instance, Hor. 1.21.6 (see above on Hor. 1.21.7 under 1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS iv).

³ See also Quinn (1980) p. 268 and compare Theocritus *Ep.* 1.5-6 'βωμὸν δ' αἰμάξει κερατὸς τράγος οὐτός ὁ μαλὸς / τερμίνθου τρώγων ἔσχατον ἀκρεμόνα.' (Gow 1952).

other words in these lines and its association with life and death is strengthened. The wine and flowers in the second verse are associated with the joys of life but also with death for wine is red like blood and flowers are a symbol of transience. In a similar fashion, the verb *inficio* which is employed of the stain of blood also carries sexual implications; it is employed by Ovid in similes which describe the redness of a blush staining a white face.¹ Horace, of course, is not the only poet to make use of the image of blood in water in a life/death context. For a detailed examination of the ways in which this motif is employed by Roman and Greek poets see the discussion on Prop. 3.3.41-46 below in Chapter 4, section 6.4.

1.43.3 RUBOR

Cat. 42.16: *quod, si non aliud potest, ruborem /ferreo canis exprimamus ore.*

If he cannot get an impudent girl to return his tablets Catullus wishes to force a blush (*ruborem*) from the hard face of the bitch.

Cat. 65.24: *ut missum sponsi furtivo munere malum /procurrit casto virginis e gremio,/quod miserae oblitae molli sub veste locatum,/dum adventu matris prosilit, excutitur,/atque illud prono praeceps agitur decursu /huic manat tristi conscius ore rubor*

When her lover's gift of an apple is revealed to her mother, a guilty blush (*rubor*) spreads over the sad face of the maiden. This line is part of an extended simile: Catullus compares Hortalus' words leaving his mind to an apple which falls out of a girl's lap when she jumps up at the arrival of her mother. Catullus emphasises the blush by placing *rubor* last in the line (and indeed in the poem) so that the impression of redness diffusing over the girl's face lingers in the reader's mind. It seems odd that the girl is guilty and blushes about a gift from her *sponsus* 'betrothed' for surely her mother could not object to a gift from an approved lover. It is possible however that the girl feels self-conscious and blushes because she is aware of the symbolism of the apple, associated as it is with life and sexuality.² In this way, the colour of the girl's face picks up on the redness³ of the apple

¹ *Met.* 3.183-185; 10.594-596

² This association is made much of in the *Greek Anthology* e.g. 'τῷ μήλω βάλλω σε· σὺ δ' εἰ μὲν ἐκοῦσα φιλεῖς με, /δεξαμένη, τῆς σῆς παρθενίης μετάδος·' (5.79.1-2); 'ὄμμα πολυπτοίητον ὑποκλέπτουσα τεκούσης, /συζυγίην μήλων δῶκεν ἔμοι ῥοδέων /θηλυτέρη χαρίεσσα...' (5.290.1-3). Catullus himself links the apple with loss of virginity in 2b; see this fragment above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv.

³ For the redness of the apple see Sappho fr. 105a (L-P), Theocritus 7.117 and *Pal. Anth.* 5.290.1-3, quoted in the footnote above.

which runs away from her just as the blush creeps over her face, out of her control.¹

Catullus also places the maiden's blush in contrast with image of the pale foot of his dead brother earlier in the poem; see Cat. 65.5 above under 1.37.2 PALLIDUS.

1.44 RUSSUS

Cat. 39.19: *dentem atque russam defricare gingivam*

Egnatius rubs his teeth and reddened (*russam*) gums with urine. Most commentators are of the opinion that *russus* here refers to the redness caused by rubbing the gum in this manner; the white teeth stand out in contrast.² This is an exceedingly rare word and Fordyce asserts its main usage is non-literary.³

1.45 RUTILUS

Cat. 63.83: *rutilam ferox torosa cervice quate iubam.*

Cybele exhorts her lion to shake his ruddy (*rutilam*) mane fiercely on his brawny neck. According to André, *rutilus* is a red or reddish yellow of an especial brilliance and intensity.⁴ Here it is employed, instead of the more usual term *fulvus*, for the hair of a lion.⁵ The colour adjective is placed in a dominant position in the line and followed immediately by the adjectives *ferox* and *torosa*, emphasising the idea of a terrible force and power that is about to be unleashed on the unsuspecting Attis. Catullus also places the red mane of the lion in contrast with Attis' rosy lips in v. 74; see this verse above under 1.42 ROSEUS and the discussion of these lines below in Chapter 3, section 4.2 iii.

1.46 SANDYX

Prop. 2.25.45: *illaque plebeio vel sit sandycis amictu:/haec atque illa mali vulneris una via est.*

Whether a woman is clothed in plebeian dress or robes of scarlet hue (*sandycis*), in this or that way is delivered a cruel wound. *Sandyx*, used here by Propertius to suggest a

¹ Kaiser (1950) p. 2

² 'to scour the gum until it is red, suggesting that the process is as harsh as it is disgusting' (Garrison 1995 p. 114). See also André (1949) p. 84, Quinn (1973) p. 211.

³ (1961) p. 188. It is however employed both by Ennius (*Scen.* fr. 219 Vahlen) and Lucretius (4.75).

⁴ (1949) p. 86

⁵ For *fulvus* used of lions see on Hor. 4.4.14 above under 1.22 FULVUS.

sophisticated and refined elegance, was originally, according to André, a painter's term.¹ Virgil also employs this term as one of the colours which will clothe the lambs in the second golden age.²

1.47 SANGUINEUS

Hor. 1.27.4: *...verecundumque Bacchum / sanguineis prohibete rixis.*

Horace tells his drinking companions to protect modest Bacchus from bloody (*sanguineis*) brawls. This, the only use of the adjective *sanguineus* amongst the three poets, is not employed with a strong chromatic effect here although the suggestion of red is reinforced by the reference to wine in the following line.³

1.48 TYRIUS

Cat. 61.165: *vir tuus Tyrio in toro*

The bridegroom, reclining on a purple (*Tyrio*) couch, is waiting for his bride. The couch is covered with purple like the marriage couch of 64.47-49. Catullus employs the term *Tyrius* rather than the more usual terms for purple to emphasise the status of the bridegroom and because of the alliteration and word play on *toro*. Tyrian purple also had a connection with blood which suggests the blood associated with the consummation of marriage. On these points see the discussion of 61.164-168 below in Chapter 2, section 5.3.

Prop. 3.14.27: *nec Tyriae vestes errantia lumina fallunt*

In Sparta, there is no purple (*Tyriae*) cloth to lead astray the wandering eyes of lovers. For Propertius' disapproval of the corrupting influence of Eastern purple see 3.13.5 above under 1.5.2 AURUM ii. This image is set against the lascivious picture of the Spartan girl in v. 11 who rides naked with her snowy white thigh exposed; see this line above under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

1.49 VERSICOLOR

Prop. 3.7.50: *seu thyio thalamo aut Oricia terebintho / est fultum pluma versicolore caput*

¹ (1949) p. 292 Pliny discusses how it is produced by mixing various pigments; *'haec [cerussa] si torreatur aequa parte rubrica admixta, sandycem facit'* (N.H. 35.23.40).

² *'sponte sua sandyx pascentis vestiet agnos.'* (Ec. 4.45)

³ *'vino et lucernis Medus acinaces / immane quantum discrepat...'* (vv. 5-6)

In a cabin of citrus wood or Orican terebinth Paetus pillowed his head on feathers of many colours (*versicolore*). In this poem Propertius describes the taste for luxury which leads to Paetus' drowning at sea; like the costly timber, the cushions stuffed with multi-coloured feathers are a sign of unnecessary expenditure.¹ Once again, Propertius is employing bright colour in association with the themes of corruption and the ultimate futility of wealth.² This unusual colour word is also employed in 3.13 below, creating a link between the two poems; on this see the discussion of 3.13.25-32 in Chapter 5 below under section 5.3.

Prop. 3.13.32: *aut variām plumae versicoloris avem.*

Propertius lists the gifts of the country folk of old, amongst them dappled birds of rainbow (*versicoloris*) plumage. *Versicoloris* is a conjecture for the meaningless MS tradition *viricoloris* and suits *variā*m which in a chromatic sense is employed of objects which have two or more contrasting colours.³ This is the last colour element in Propertius' rich and colourful description of the golden age but, unlike 3.7 above, the word is not associated with corruption. For detailed discussions of this passage see Prop. 3.13.28 above under 1.39 PUNICEUS / PUNICUS and Chapter 5, section 5.3 below.

1.50.1 VIREO / VIRIDO

Cat. 34.10: *montium domina ut fores / silvarumque virentium / saltuumque reconditorum / amniumque sonantem:*

In the hymn to Diana, the goddess is called mistress of the hills, green (*virentium*) woods, secluded glens and splashing streams. As Fordyce points out⁴, such imagery is employed in association with Artemis in the *Homeric Hymns* but the woods are called σκιάεντα 'shady' rather than green.⁵ *Vireo*, which can be employed in a non-chromatic sense⁶, could mean little more than 'vigorous' or 'thriving' here as there are no other colour elements in

¹ Butler and Barber (1933 p. 279) draw a parallel with Cicero's description of Verres resting on a cushion stuffed with roses; '*pulvinus erat perlucidus Melitensis rosa fartus*' (*Verr.* 2.11.27).

² Compare 1.14.21-22; '*et miserum toto iuvenem versare cubili: / quid relevant variis serica textilibus?*' and see Prop. 1.14.20 above under 1.36.1 OSTRINUS.

³ *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (1968) p. 2013. See Prop. 1.14.22 in the footnote above.

⁴ (1961) p. 173

⁵ 'καὶ γὰρ τῆ ἄδε τόξα καὶ οὔρεσι θήρας ἐναίρειν, / φόρμιγγές τε χοροὶ τε διαπρύσιοί τ' ὀλολυγὰ / ἄλσεα τε σκιάεντα δικαίων τε πτόλις ἀνδρῶν.' (*h. Ven.* 5.19-20)

⁶ *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (1968) p. 2070.

the stanza. On the other hand, Diana is associated repeatedly with imagery of green in the *Culex*¹ Compare Hor. 1.21.8 below under 1.50.2 VIRIDIS ii.

Cat. 64.285: *confestim Penios adest, viridantia Tempe, / Tempe, quae silvae cingunt super impendentes*

Peneus, the river god, comes without delay to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis leaving behind green (*viridantia*) Tempe which is surrounded by overhanging woods. On the proverbial beauty and fertility of the valley of Tempe see Fordyce.² According to Harmon, Peneus' visit is not part of previous accounts of the wedding but is an innovation on the part of Catullus.³ Catullus makes much of Peneus' visit in his version, associating him with fertility and growth; he employs words for green both here and in v. 293 below and makes frequent references to trees of various types.⁴

Cat. 64.293: *vestibulum ut molli velatum fronde vireret.*

Peneus brings many trees with him so that the entrance court of Peleus' palace, covered with soft foliage, might grow green (*vireret*). *Vireret* is a deliberate echo of *viridantia Tempe*, suggesting that Peneus is bestowing the beauty and fertility associated with the vale of Tempe upon the marriage of Peleus and Thetis.⁵ There is however an ominous note in the inclusion of the poplar and cypress amongst the trees which Peneus brings, for these were associated with death.⁶

Prop. 2.34b.78: *tu canis Ascraei veteris praecepta poetae, / quo seges in campo, quo viret uva iugo.*

Propertius addresses Virgil who sings of the injunctions of the ancient Ascran bard, namely in which fields the corn grows green (*viret*), on which hills the vine. The Ascran bard was Hesiod whom Virgil imitates in the *Georgics*.⁷ Here the colour word has very little chromatic impact, meaning little more than 'flourishes'. It is noteworthy how infrequently

¹ See vv. 106-115 '*viridem muscum...luco virenti...viridi herba*'.

² Fordyce (1961) p. 312

³ (1973) p. 323

⁴ '*...namque ille tulit radicitus altas / fagos ac recto proceras stipite laurus, / non sine nutanti platano lentaque sorore / flammati Phaethontis et aerea cupressu.*' (vv. 288-291); 'Much importance is attached to the lush greenness of the foliage which grows profusely in *viridantia Tempe*, from which Peneus brings his gifts.' (Harmon 1973 p. 324).

⁵ 'The *dona* of Chiron and Peneus express joy and at the same time give concrete expression to the wish that the marriage flourish and be fruitful.' (Harmon 1973 p. 324).

⁶ See Harmon (1973) n. 44. For the relevant lines see the footnote above on 64.285.

⁷ '*Ascraeumque cano Romana per oppida carmen.*' (2.176)

Propertius uses terms for green in his poetry, employing an explicit word for green only here and in 3.3.27 in reference to the cave of inspiration (see below under 1.50.2 VIRIDIS iii).

Hor. 1.9.17: *....nec dulcis amores / sperne puer neque tu choreas / donec virenti canities abest / morosa...*

Horace advises Thaliarchus not to spurn as a youth sweet love nor dances so long as crabbed old age is absent from the one who is in the bloom of youth (*virenti*). For green used in association with youth compare Virgil's reference to green youth in the *Aeneid*¹, Hor. 1.25.17 immediately below and Cat. 17.14 below under 1.50.2 VIRIDIS i. In Horace 1.9, the chromatic aspect of the word is emphasised by being placed next to *canities* in a green/white contrast. For a detailed discussion of this colour cluster see Hor. 1.9.17 above under 1.9.1 CANITIES.

Hor. 1.25.17: *laeta quod pubes hedera virenti / gaudeat pulla magis atque myrto, / aridas frondis hiemis sodali / dedicet Euro.*²

Horace tells the aging Lydia that soon she will complain that merry youths delight more in green (*virenti*) ivy than dark myrtle, dedicating withered leaves to the East wind, the companion of winter. For the association of evergreen ivy with youth and vitality see the discussion on Cat. 63.23 below in Chapter 3, section 4.3.i. and the discussion on Hor. 1.25.17 in Chapter 6, section 3.1. For the contrast with the dark myrtle see Hor. 1.25.18 above under 1.38 PULLUS.

Hor. 2.5.5: *circa virentis est animus tuae / campos iuvencae, nunc fluviis gravem / solantis aestum, nunc in udo / ludere cum vitulis salicto / praegestientis...*

Horace, comparing an immature young girl to a heifer, says that her thoughts are on the green (*virentis*) plains as she now relieves the fierce heat in the streams and yearns to play with her comrades in the moist willow grove. This metaphor is based upon an epigram of Anacreon but in the Greek poem no colour term is employed.³ In Horace's poem, the colour word, along with *fluviis* and *udo*, creates a picture of a landscape which is lush,

¹ *Euryalus forma insignis viridique iuventa* (5.295)

² The O.C.T reads *Hebro* not *Euro* but the reference to the East wind seems to fit in better with the rest of the poem; on this see below in Chapter 6, section 3.1.

³ ἴνυ δὲ λειμῶνάς τε βόσκειαι κοῦφά τε σκιρτώσα παίζεις' (fr. 72.5). Nisbet and Hubbard draw this parallel (1978 p. 78).

fertile and attractive, contributing to the sensual overtones of the poem.¹ In addition, the word, coming as it does at the beginning of the stanza, picks up on the idea of the girl's immaturity.² The girl's greenness will change to purple as she matures; see on Hor. 2.5.12 above under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i.

Hor. 4.13.6: *...ille virentis et / doctae psallere Chiae / pulchris excubat in genis. / importunus enim transvolat aridas / quercus et refugit te...*

Horace tells the aging Lyce that, in spite of her efforts to attract Cupid, he sets his gaze on the beautiful cheeks of blooming (*virentis*) Chia who is skilled in playing on the harp; he flies past withered oaks uncaring and shuns her. In this context *vireo*, in its application to Chia, cannot have a literal chromatic value; it would appear that Horace is using the term as he does in the *Epodes*³ for its other meaning of 'blooming' 'fresh'.⁴ Horace however also plays upon the chromatic element of the word by his use of the tree metaphor in the following lines (Lyce is a withered oak and by implication Chia is a green sapling) and by the comparison with the dingy yellow of Lyce in the next stanza. On this latter comparison see Hor. 4.13.10 above under 1.27 LURIDUS and for a detailed examination of this colour image in its context see the discussion of this poem below in Chapter 6, section 3.3.i.

1.50.2 VIRIDIS

i) Youth / Sexuality

Cat. 17.14: *cui cum sit viridissimo nupta flore puella*

A girl in the greenest (*viridissimo*) flower of her youth is married to an old man. In Greek literature, *χλωρός* can be employed of flowers in the sense of 'fresh' or 'vigorous'.⁵ According to Quinn this image is a fusion of two idioms; *flos aetatis* and *viridis* in its

¹ '...the picture of Lalage, excitedly sporting through the moist groves in the heavy heat, remains erotic' Commager (1962) p. 253. Compare the landscape of Hor. 1.23 (below under 1.50.2 VIRIDIS i). The greenness, moisture and heat of 2.5 can be contrasted with the colourlessness, dryness and cold of the withered leaves of 1.25 above which signify the loss of sexuality.

² 'the word suits the grassy fields, but it also suggests the sap of youth' Nisbet and Hubbard (1978 p. 82).

³ '*...dumque virent genua*' (13.4)

⁴ Compare the Greek use of the word *χλωρός* whose original meaning, according to Irwin, is 'moist' 'fresh' (1974 p. 49).

⁵ *Helen* 243-244, *Iphigeneia at Aulis* 1279. See Irwin's analysis of these images (1974 p. 48-49).

meaning of vigorous.¹ Note the superlative for emphasis, one of three superlative colour words in this poem.²

Hor. 1.17.8: *impune tutum per nemus arbutos/quaerunt latentis et thyma deviae / olentis uxores mariti / nec viridis metuunt colubras / nec Martialis haediliae*³ *lupos*

When Faunus visits Horace's farm, the wives of his smelly goats, wandering unharmed through the peaceful grove, seek the hidden arbutus and thyme; their kids fear neither green (*viridis*) snakes nor the wolves of Mars. Snakes and serpents are more often given the colour epithets *caeruleus* or *ater* in Latin literature and in Greek literature, according to Kober, the dragon or snake is usually given the epithet *κυάνεος*.⁴ According to André, Horace was the first in Latin literature to employ *viridis* of snakes, writers such as Martial and Statius later adopting this colour image.⁵ The green of the snakes is suggestive, not only of poison⁶ but also perhaps a treacherous sexuality, an idea which is picked up by the allusion to *vitream Circen* later on in the poem.⁷ Their colour is set against the lush and peaceful green of the landscape, implied by the references to the arbutus tree and thyme.

Hor. 1.23.6: *nam seu mobilibus veris inhorruit / adventus foliis seu virides rubum / dimovere lacertae, / et corde et genibus tremit.*

Horace compares Chloe, who is shunning his advances, to a timid fawn which trembles in heart and limbs if spring's approach has set the light leaves quivering or the green (*virides*) lizards have pushed aside the bramble. Virgil also describes lizards as green in the *Eclogues*⁸ and in Horace 1.17.8 above, snakes are given this colour epithet. As Quinn comments, lizards coming out to sun themselves, like the breezes in the previous line, are a sign of the approach of spring.⁹ Their greenness not only picks up on the colour of the

¹ (1973) p. 150

² See Cat. 17.11 above under 1.26.2 LIVIDUS and 17.16 above under 1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS i.

³ The O.C.T. reads *Haediliae*, the genitive of a proper name, but the correction *haediliae* 'kids' is accepted by most editors; see Kiessling-Heinze (1968) p. 85.

⁴ (1932) p. 72. Kober (1932 p. 114) lists only one instance of a *χλοάοντα...δράκοντα* (Nic. Ther. 438). Nisbet and Hubbard (1970 p. 220) say that the epithet *viridis* is conventional and cite Pind. O. 8.37 *γλαυκοὶ δὲ δράκοντες* but they admit that this colour term probably refers the snake's eyes. Presumably if Horace were copying this image he would be more likely to use *glaucus* than *viridis*.

⁵ e.g. Mart. 7.74.2, Stat. Theb. 1.711, 2.279, 5.549 (1949) p. 340

⁶ *'pectora felle virent, lingua est suffusa veneno;'* (Ovid Met. 2.777)

⁷ See Hor. 1.17.20 below under 1.51 VITREUS.

⁸ *'nunc etiam pecudes umbras et frigora captant, nunc viridis etiam occultant spineta lacertos'* (2.8-9). Nisbet and Hubbard draw this parallel (1970 p. 278).

⁹ (1980) p. 167

leaves but also Chloe's name in the first verse¹ which Commager points out is equivalent to "green shoot".² In addition, Ronnick suggests there may be an implied colour contrast with *rubum* 'bramble' whose cognate adjective is *ruber*.³ Such imagery increases the erotic element of the poem; lizards are themselves phallic symbols⁴ and they part the 'red' brambles in a way which is suggestively sexual. For the erotic use of green in a landscape, compare Hor. 2.5.5 above under 1.50.1 VIREO / VIRIDO.

Hor. 3.28.10: *nos cantabimus invicem / Neptunum et viridis Nereidum comas;*

On the feast day of Neptune, Horace and Lyde will take it in turns to sing of Neptune and the green (*viridis*) hair of the Nereids. For colour terms of the blue-green range employed to describe sea-deities see above under 1.6 CAERULEUS / CAERULUS i. and Hor. 1.17.20 below under 1.51 VITREUS. Horace's use of *viridis* in this context could be in imitation of Greek literature although there is some uncertainty about the meaning of the Greek colour terms. According to Kober⁵, γλαυκός is used several times of sea-beings⁶ but the term may mean little more than 'grey-eyed'. Similarly, κυανοχάτης is frequently employed to describe the hair of Poseidon in Homer⁷ but Kober thinks that for the Greeks of that period it was the equivalent of μέλας.⁸ Whatever the origin of this usage of *viridis*, it is taken up enthusiastically by Roman poets such as Ovid.⁹ The focus on the nymphs' hair contributes to the sensual tone of this poem as does the allusion to the gleaming Cyclades in v. 14.¹⁰

ii) Lushness / Fertility

Cat. 63.30: *viridem citus adit Idam properante pede chorus.*

The band of Gallae swiftly approach green (*viridem*) Ida with hurrying feet. This is probably Catullus' rendition of one of the Greek epithets for Ida which is variously

¹ *'vitas inuleo me similis, Chloe'*

² (1962) p. 238. See also Ronnick (1993) p. 156. For Horace's use of green in reference to youth compare Hor. 1.9.17 and 1.25.17 above under 1.50.1 VIREO / VIRIDO.

³ (1993) p. 155

⁴ *ibid.* p. 156

⁵ (1932) p. 45f.

⁶ See, for instance, Theoc. *Id.* 7.59, 21.55.

⁷ e.g. *Il.* 13.563, 14.390 etc.

⁸ (1932) p. 71

⁹ *Met.* 2.12, 13.960.

¹⁰ See on this line above under 1.21.1 FULGEO iii.

referred to as 'woody' 'many-treed' or well-wooded'¹ but the colour term carries its own associations, denoting a lushness and fertility which will turn out to be illusory. See the entry immediately below and also the discussion of this line in Chapter 3, section 4.3.i.

Cat. 63.70: *ego viridis algida Idae nive amicta loca colam?*

Attis in the speech in which he laments his cruel fate, asks if he is to inhabit the icy, snow clad places of green (*viridis*) Ida. In this line there is a powerful juxtaposition between the green and the snow: the greenness brings to mind fertility and life, the snow coldness, isolation and death. Note the placement of *algida* next to *viridis*, emphasizing the difference between Attis' dreams and reality. Green Ida has turned out to be a cold, inhospitable place. For a detailed examination of this colour image in its context see Chapter 3, section 4.3.ii.

Hor. 1.1.21: *...nunc viridi membra sub arbuto / stratus, nunc ad aquae lene caput sacrae.*

There are those whose delight it is to drink wine with their limbs stretched out under the verdant (*viridi*) arbute tree, or by the sacred source of a gently murmuring stream. In this poem, Horace describes the many different ways that men decide to live their lives; he contrasts this scene with one of the busy life of a soldier. The arbute-tree is an evergreen.² The colour term has reference to this but is also employed along with the murmuring stream to create an impression of a lush and peaceful landscape. Virgil also places the green arbute tree in a similar landscape.³

Hor. 1.4.9: *nunc decet aut viridi nitidum caput impedire myrto / aut flore terrae quem ferunt solutae;*

Spring has arrived and it is now the fitting time to garland glistening hair with green (*viridi*) myrtle or with flowers which the unfettered earth brings forth. Virgil also alludes to green garlands but does not specify the plant they are made from.⁴ The green myrtle, like the flowers, are signs of spring and the renewal of life. The green, the glistening hair⁵, and the

¹ e.g. Hom. *Il.* 21.449, Theoc. 17.9.

² Quinn (1980) p. 120

³ *'muscosi fontes et somno mollior herba, / et quae vos rara viridis tegit arbutus umbra, / solstium pecori defendite: ...'* (*Ec.* 7.45-47). Compare also Lucretius 5.948ff.

⁴ *'munera principio ante oculos circoque locantur / in medio, sacri tripodes viridesque coronae'* (*Aen.* 5.109-110).

⁵ See on 1.4.9 above under 1.34.2 NITIDUS.

colours which the flowers call to mind serve as a contrast both to the *prata canis albicant pruinis* of v. 4¹ and to *pallida Mors* of v. 13.²

Hor. 1.21.8: ...aut *gelido* *prominet* *Algido* / *nigris* aut *Erimanthi* / *silvis* aut *viridis* *Cragi*.

Diana delights in the woods and streams which stand out on icy Algidus or the dark woods of Erymanthus or those of green (*viridis*) Cragus. For *viridis* used in reference to mountains compare Virgil³ and Cat. 63.30 above. For a full discussion of this colour cluster see on Hor. 1.21.7 above under 1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS iv.

Hor. 2.6.15: *ille terrarum mihi praeter omnis / angulus ridet, ubi non Hymetto / mella decedunt viridique certat / baca Venafrum*

Horace, praising the countryside around Tarentum, says that corner of the world smiles for him beyond all others where the honey does not give ground to that from Hymettus and the olive vies with those from green (*viridi*) Venafrum. *Baca* can be employed of other fruits but the olive is implied in the allusion to Venafrum which was famous for its olive groves⁴ and the use of the colour term *viridi* which suggests the colour of the berry.⁵ There is a second colour element in the line with the reference to *mella* 'honey' which is usually described as *flavus* and thus suggests yellow or gold.⁶ The gold and green contribute to the impression of a landscape which is rich and fertile. For a somewhat similar use of colours compare the *Metamorphoses* where Ovid describes yellow honey dripping from the green oak tree during the golden age.⁷

iii) Inspiration / Fulfilment

Prop. 3.3.27: *quo nova muscoso semita facta solo est. / hic erat affixis viridis spelunca lapillis*

¹ See on this line above under 1.2.1 ALBESCO / ALBICO.

² See on this line above under 1.37.2 PALLIDUS.

³ 'quattuor eximios praestanti corpore tauros, / qui tibi nunc viridis depascunt summa Lycae' (Georg. 4.538-539)

⁴ Nisbet and Hubbard (1978) p. 103

⁵ Quinn (1980) p. 209. Compare Theocritus' reference to the 'green wild-olive' (χλωρή ἀγριέλαιος' 25.21) although this probably refers to the tree as a whole.

⁶ e.g. Lucretius 1.938, Mart. 1.55.10.

⁷ 'flavaque de viridi stillabant ilice mella.' (1.112)

In his dream of Mt. Helicon Propertius is directed by Apollo along a mossy path to a green (*viridis*) grotto with its walls lined with pebbles. The green grotto is the home of the Muses. The colour word picks up on the moss of the path, creating an impression of a landscape which is soft and fertile, appropriate for a place of inspiration. This is almost the only time which Propertius employs this colour word in the whole of his poetry¹ and it is significant that he uses it here of a place in which his poetic vision is renewed. Compare Horace's reference to *virentem Heliconam* in the *Epistles*.² For a detailed examination of this colour image in its context see the discussion of these lines in Chapter 4, section 6.3.i below.

Hor. 3.25.20: ...*dulce periculum est, / o Lenaeae, sequi deum / cingentem viridi tempora pampino.*

'It is a sweet danger, O lord of the wine press, to follow the god, crowning one's forehead with green (*viridi*) vine-tendrils.' In this poem, Horace praises Bacchus as a source of poetic inspiration; these are his concluding lines. In a similar fashion Priapus is crowned with green vine tendrils in the *Priapea*.³ In the Horace lines a vivid word picture is created with *viridi...pampino* literally surrounding *tempora*. Some commentators think that *cingentem* qualifies *deum*⁴ and thus, as in 4.8.33 below, it would be the god whose temples are crowned with vine-tendrils. However, as Quinn points out, this would render the final line less effective⁵, for it would not then pick up Horace's comparison of himself to a Bacchant in vv. 8-14. In this way the glistening white snow of the landscape upon which the Bacchant gazes⁶ is placed in contrast with the vivid green of his vine-tendrill crown.

Hor. 4.8.33: *ornatus viridi tempora pampino / Liber vota bonos ducit ad exitus.*

Poetry has made many immortal, including Liber with his temples decked with green (*viridi*) vine-tendrils who brings vows to a happy outcome. On this colour image see the entry immediately above.

¹ He does employ *vireo* at 2.34b.78 (above under 1.50.1 VIREO / VIRIDO) but without a great deal of chromatic impact.

² '...et vatibus addere calcar, / ut studio maiore petant Heliconam virentem.' (2.1.217-18)

³ 'mihi virente dulcis uva pampino' (2.8)

⁴ e.g. Williams (1969) p. 129.

⁵ (1980) p. 286f.

⁶ See Hor. 3.25.10 above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS iv.

1.51 VITREUS

Hor. 1.17.20: *hic in reducta valle Caniculae / vitabis aestus et fide Teia / dices laborantis in uno / Penelopen vitreamque Circe:*

Horace tells Tyndaris that in a secluded valley at his farm she will escape the heat of the Dog Star and, in Teian strain, will sing of Penelope and glass-green (*vitream*) Circe contending for one man. *Vitreus* (literally 'like glass') is a difficult word to translate in this context, for ancient glass differed from our own and the word probably carried ideas of colour as well as brilliance. André thinks that the term was usually employed with a chromatic value and he includes this line among the instances of *vitreus* denoting a greenish-blue hue.¹ This seems quite probable when one takes into account the use of words for blue and green in descriptions of sea-nymphs in Roman poetry² for, although strictly speaking Circe herself was not a sea nymph, she has connections with the sea and in this context may be identified with the sea-nymph Calypso.³ The term is also frequently associated with water (see the entry immediately below) and thus is placed here in contrast to the blazing heat of the summer's day. As Nisbet and Hubbard point out, the glitter of ancient glass with its distorting translucency is a good analogy for the attractive but treacherous Circe⁴ and its greenish hue picks up on the poisonous *virides colubras* of v. 8.⁵ Thus the image of glass-green Circe leads naturally on to Horace's main point; that his farm is a refuge from the troubles and treachery of love.

Hor. 4.2.3: *Pindarum quisquis studet aemulari, / Iule, ceratis ope Daedalea / nititur pennis vitreo daturus / nomina ponto.*

Horace tells Iulus that those who strive to rival Pindar are (like Icarus) struggling on waxen wings of Daedalian craft and destined to give their name to some glassy (*vitreo*) sea. *Vitrum* and its cognates are frequently employed to describe water e.g. Vir. *Aeneid* 7.759,

¹ (1949) p. 188

² See on Hor. 3.28.10 above under 1.50.2 VIRIDIS i.

³ Nisbet and Hubbard point out that Circe was the daughter of an Oceanid and that Horace may have conflated her attributes with Calypso's for Calypso was the one who was really contending for Odysseus's love. (1970 p. 225)

⁴ *ibid.* p. 224. Kiessling-Heinze agree and draw a parallel with Publ. Syr. 189R '*Fortuna vitrea est*' and Stat. Silv. 1.3.85 '*vitreae iuga perfida Circes*' (1968 p. 87). Compare Horace's use of words for shining to describe *femmes fatales* such as Pyrrha in 1.5.13 (above under 1.34.1 NITEO ii) and Barine in 2.8.6 above under 1.16 ENITEO / ENITESCO.

⁵ See above under 1.50.2 VIRIDIS i.

Col. 10.136.¹ Here the word is little more than a synonym for *caeruleus* but, as with the instance above, Horace is probably employing this particular term to suggest something that is attractive but treacherous.

¹ André (1949) p. 188.

Chapter 2

Colour and Sexuality: Catullus Poem 61

2.1 First View

Both c. 61 and the poem which follows it are unmistakably part of the genre of wedding song - a genre which had a tradition going back at least five hundred years before Catullus.¹ The earliest literary wedding songs of which we possess fragments belong to Sappho although it seems likely that she did not create the genre.² Within the genre there were various types of wedding songs which were employed for different parts of the ceremony; the two main types were the hymenaion and epithalamium.³ Although the meaning shifted over time and the epithalamium eventually came to be used for wedding songs in general, the hymenaion was originally the song of the chorus as they accompanied the bride to the groom's house and the epithalamium was the song sung outside the bridal chamber during the consummation of the marriage.⁴ In c. 61 Catullus combines both forms and includes an old Italian wedding tradition, the *fescennina iocatio* which comprised ribald jokes about the past life of the groom.⁵

Scholars' neglect of this poem is surprising considering that Catullus may have been the one to have revived the genre of wedding song in Rome.⁶ The role of colour in the poem has also largely remained unexplored although there have been some scattered comments on its colourful effects. A detailed and systematic analysis of the colour images in c. 61 reveals that they are not just employed for functional or decorative purposes but have far more depth and complexity than this and reward closer examination.⁷ Colours in

¹ Wheeler (1930) p. 207

² See Fedeli (1983) pp. 8-10 for a discussion of the evidence for a tradition of wedding songs before Sappho. References to songs sung at weddings go back to Homer (*Il.* 18.491-496) and they are mentioned in Hesiod (*Sc.* 273-80). There is also evidence that Alcman wrote wedding songs (Fedeli 1983 p. 10).

³ Wheeler (1930 p. 207) also lists a διεγερτικόν or ὄρθριον 'waking song' and a κατακοιμητικόν or κατευναστικόν 'sleeping song'.

⁴ For a detailed discussion of the two terms and the way in which their meaning changed over the centuries see Robert Muth's 1954 article.

⁵ Fedeli (1983) p. 86

⁶ 'we have the best possible evidence...that in Catullus' time the lyric *epithalamium* was long obsolete...Catullus' admiration for Sappho, with whom the genre was particularly associated, makes it more likely than not that he was the innovator.' (Wiseman 1985 p. 115). See also Lenchantin (1945) p. 106.

⁷ C. 64 would in many ways have been the obvious choice for a study of Catullus' use of colours. It contains a great deal of Catullus' colour words and has some of the densest and most

this poem perform a number of functions. They not only contribute to the mood of elation in the poem and add to the strong visual drama of the wedding scene but, most importantly, they are a key element in its powerfully erotic atmosphere. Focusing attention on the figure of the bride, contrasting colour words contribute to her aura of innocence and sensuality, heightening the erotic tension. As c. 61 is the first of the long poems, its use of colour establishes their pattern of colour imagery. It will be shown how many of the colour motifs of this poem are taken up and developed in subsequent long poems.

All this will be demonstrated in the course of this chapter. However before a detailed colour analysis is undertaken some attention must be paid to previous scholars' studies of c. 61 and to its literary predecessors. In addition, there will be a brief examination of the structure, themes and mood of the poem and how the colour imagery relates to them.

2.2 Previous Scholarship : Background of Genre

C. 61 is not a poem to which a great deal of attention has been paid; there has been much more written on cc. 63 and 64 than c. 61. Many scholars seem to share the attitude of Quinn who states that 'The two marriage hymns (Poems 61 and 62) hardly call for the same detailed discussion [as cc. 63, 64 and 66].'¹ Some treat the poem merely as a source of information about Roman marriage customs or attitudes² and, as Fedeli says, there are large gaps in the commentaries on this poem.³ Few scholars of c. 61 have made more than passing references to its colour imagery although several have remarked on Catullus' love of colour effects and his use of them to enliven the conventional subject matter.⁴ Only Edgeworth has purposely examined c. 61 from a chromatic point of view but in his brief

memorable of Catullus' colour images. However it is too long a poem for its use of colour to be fully explored within the bounds of this thesis. In addition, the role of colour in c. 61 has never really been addressed while several scholars have already looked at the use of colour in c. 64 and discussed many of the interesting colour motifs; see Curran (1969), Harmon (1973) and O'Connell (1977). For my own interpretation of the colours in this poem see the various entries on c. 64 in the concordance.

¹ (1972) p. 259

² For example Gordon Williams (1958), Pearce (1974).

³ (1983) p. 3

⁴ For example Fedeli 'A further ingredient typical of Catullus and added by the poet to enliven the conventional subject is his love for colour effects' (1983 p. 28); Tufte 'It [c. 61] is filled with color and light - the nuptial wreath, the flame-hued wedding veil, the yellow bridal slippers, the golden pine torches, the glossy-leaved myrtle, the hyacinth flower, and the polished door of the wedding chamber' (1970 p. 23).

analysis he concludes that colour terms are employed in this poem mainly for functional or, at the most, decorative purposes.¹

Discussions of this poem tend to revolve around Catullus' literary predecessors and to what extent he has employed *topoi* from previous wedding hymns. This is difficult to determine because there are so few wedding hymns surviving. Only one, Theocritus 18, do we possess in its entirety; Sappho's *Epithalamia* survive in fragments of a few lines or less and we only have one line of Callimachus' wedding song for Ptolemy and Arsinoe.² On the Roman side there is a parody of a wedding song in Plautus' *Casina* and a few other vague fragments from neoteric contemporaries of Catullus.³ There are however extensive lists of traditional wedding topics in rhetoricians such as Himerius and Choricus who composed wedding orations. Although these rhetoricians were writing in the fifth to sixth centuries A.D. they studied the wedding songs of poets such as Sappho and openly imitated their content and form.⁴ From these, scholars such as Fedeli and Wheeler are able to draw conclusions about the *topoi* of wedding songs and to what extent Catullus employed them in c. 61. It appears from their examination of these sources that in c. 61 Catullus made much use of *topoi*; for instance the poem's natural inclination to dwell on the bride⁵ and its emphasis on the importance of marriage for home, family and fatherland⁶ appear to have been characteristic of earlier wedding songs. Similarly, some of Catullus' colour usage in this poem seems to have been traditional, such as his depiction of the colour contrast on the bride's face.⁷

¹ (1992) p. 11f. By functional Edgeworth means that the colour term refers to an element which is essential to the narrative, for example the colour words used of the bride's attire. By decorative he means that the colour just adds an attractive detail; he includes the simile comparing the bride to the white *parthenice* and red poppy in this category (187f.). However, as will become clear in the course of this chapter, these colour terms and the plants with which they are associated are employed for much more than decorative effect.

² In addition, one of the fragments of Parthenius addresses Hymenaeus (Lenchantin 1945 p.106). Parthenius came to Rome in 73 B.C. and had great influence on the *neoteroi*.

³ These include Calvus and Tigidas (Fedeli 1983 p. 15).

⁴ Wheeler (1930) p. 208 ff.

⁵ *ibid.* p. 212

⁶ Fedeli (1983) p. 56ff.

⁷ *ibid.* pp. 122f.

We must however treat this with a degree of caution since much of the evidence we are relying on is second hand and written many centuries after Catullus.¹ In addition, the tendency some scholars have to view c. 61 in this way, as a series of *topoi*, means that they lose sight of Catullus' part in the creation of the poem.² As Wiseman comments, when discussing some passages from c. 61:

I think it is legitimate to use these passages as evidence for the poet's own sensibilities. To attribute them solely to the generic conventions of the marriage poem is merely to put the question back one stage. Why did he choose to write a marriage poem in the first place?³

This is the attitude of mind which will be brought to the examination of the colours in the poem; although their possible sources in the genre will be explored they will be treated as deliberate choices on Catullus' part rather than an unthinking imitation of traditional material.⁴ We know for a fact that Catullus was not forced by the demands of the genre to employ colours in the poem, for his other marriage hymn, c. 62, contains not a single explicit colour term while this poem is full of them.⁵

2.3 Distribution of Colour Terms within the Structure

There are nine uses of 'explicit' colour terms in c. 61 (*niveus* v. 9, *luteus* vv. 10, 188, *aureus* vv. 95, 160 (dim.), *candidus* v. 108, *canus* v. 155, *Tyrius* v. 165 and *albus* v. 187). There are over six⁶ instances of words relating to shining (*eniteo* v. 21, *splendidus* v. 78, *clarus* v. 85, *rasilis* v. 161, *niteo* v. 186, *mico* v. 200). In addition, some of the plants and flowers which are frequently mentioned add to the colour effect (*amaracus* v. 5, *myrtus*

¹ For instance Lenchantin comments that it is not really possible to tell whether Catullus' primary inspiration came from Sappho or Alexandrian poets (1945 p.106).

² One sometimes gets this feeling from Fedeli's monumental work on c. 61. He does state that Catullus was not confined to imitating *topoi* from previous wedding songs (1983 p. 69) but doesn't really discuss what this poem tells us about Catullus' attitude to marriage and love. As Fedeli acknowledges (1983 p. 147 n. 5), Lieberg criticizes it on these grounds.

³ (1985) p. 115

⁴ As Wheeler points out, certain elements like 'the reddish yellow color (*luteus*) of the bride's veil' cannot have been inherited from the Greek tradition as they are exclusively Roman (1934 p.197). Furthermore, as will be demonstrated, many of the colour images in this poem can be linked with colour imagery in other poems of Catullus, especially the long poems.

⁵ Edgeworth also makes this point (1992 p. 10).

⁶ Over six because colour terms such as *aureus*, *candidus* and *Tyrius* also carry with them overtones of shining.

v. 22, *hedera* v. 34, *hyacinthinus* v. 89, *vitis* v. 103). Even words such as *floridus* vv. 21, 57, 186 (dim.), *varius* (v. 87) and *flammeum* vv. 8, 115 have chromatic significance when employed in this poem. Similarly *fax* vv. 77, 94, 114, *flamma* v. 171 and *praetextatus* v. 175 make some contribution to the colour imagery of the poem; their chromatic significance will be made clear further on in the chapter.

The structure of c. 61 is a formal one, it is composed of distinct sections such as the fescennine verses and the epithalamium. The poem can be divided basically¹ as follows:-

vv. 1-75	Address to Hymen
vv. 76-118	The wait outside the Bride's House
vv. 119-158	Fescennine Jesting
vv. 159-198	The Progress to the Bedchamber
vv. 199-228	Epithalamium

There is a great deal of colour in parts of the invocation to Hymen, in the wait outside the bride's house and the progress to the bedchamber, whereas the Fescennine jesting and the epithalamium proper have very few colour elements. The section which has the most frequent and consistent use of colour elements is the highly pictorial scene outside the bride's house which Fedeli sees as the core of the poem.² The colour imagery comes to a climax during the progress to the bedchamber with the colour cluster which describes the bride's face as she waits in the bedchamber for her husband (vv. 185-188). Other important moments such as the bride's emergence from the house (vv. 114-115) and her passage over the threshold (vv. 159-161) are also punctuated by colour clusters.

Within this structure there are elements of ring composition (a favourite Catullan device) with the exhortation to close the doors of the house in the final stanza (v. 224) picking up on the exhortation to open the gates of the house which begins the scene before the bride's house (v. 76).³ In addition, there is ring composition within some of the sections

¹ Scholars are more or less agreed on the various sections of the poem but there is some disagreement about where those sections begin and end. For instance Fedeli thinks that the epithalamium proper begins at v. 204 (1983 p. 134) whereas Goold in his translation of the poem has it starting at v. 184 (1989 p. 119).

² 'the procession of the *deductio*, with its realistic and picturesque details, constitutes the core of the poem' (1983 p. 156)

³ Fedeli (1983) p. 142. See also Haight (1950) pp. 121-22.

themselves, for instance a reference to 'sporting' (*ludere*) is present in the first and last stanza of the epithalamium.¹ Catullus' colour imagery also displays elements of ring composition with the final colour cluster in vv. 185-188 echoing the initial cluster in vv. 6-10 and references to the light from torches framing the section in front of the bride's house. These images will be discussed in greater detail further on.

2.4 Mood and Style of Poem: Contribution of Colour

As Wheeler puts it, c. 61 has a 'mimetic-dramatic character', that is Catullus writes as though he were taking part in it and assumes the role of master of ceremonies.² Catullus employs many devices to contribute to the realism of the scene and make the readers feel that they are a guest at the wedding; for instance frequent use is made of imperatives and, as Tufte points out, every strophe is directed at someone.³ Colour also has an important part to play in this. The colours which are employed in the poem are mostly bright ones such as the bride's orange veil, the purple cloth of the couch, the golden flames of the torches. These are the sort of colours which an onlooker's eye would naturally light upon, especially at night which is when the action of the poem takes place. The vivid colours also add to the drama and the excitement of the poem.

Colour also contributes to the happy mood of the poem. C. 61 at times has a solemnity of tone but that does not mean that the pleasures and joys of marriage are not taken into account. The poem is certainly the happiest of Catullus' long poems⁴ with words for happiness and goodness appearing constantly throughout.⁵ This happy mood is reflected in the colours which Catullus employs; there is a preponderance of words for white, gold and shining, in contrast to poems such as 63 where the emphasis is on darkness.⁶

¹ vv. 203 and 225 respectively (Lieberg 1974 p. 220f).

² (1934) p. 200

³ (1970) p. 26

⁴ 'The tone of the whole poem is one of joy, changing from the tumultuous rapture of expectation in the opening lines to the deep secure sense of happiness, expressed in the closing stanzas.' (Sellar 1863 p. 365).

⁵ e.g. *laetus* v. 8, *hilaris* v. 11, *bonus* v. 19 (twice), *bonus* v. 44 (twice), *gaudium* v. 110.

⁶ See the analysis of c. 63 in the following chapter, especially section 4.1 i.

There is however a certain tension in the poem created by an underlying suggestion of violence. The delicacy of the bride is placed in contrast with the fierceness of the bridegroom as the bride is snatched from her mother's embrace.¹ The bride is reluctant to leave her new home; she weeps and is ashamed.² All this is in line with Roman marriage customs³ but Catullus also uses it to focus attention on the bride's relinquishing of her virginity and on the sexual union. The structure of the poem reflects the importance of this; it finishes with the union in the marriage bed and the epithalamium outside the bedroom door. Throughout the poem there is constant emphasis on the sexual with words such as *cupidus* (vv. 32, 54) and *cupio* (v. 197 twice) used and *ludus* and *ludo* often employed with sexual overtones (vv. 126, 203, 204, 225). The frequent references to flowers and plants also add to the erotic atmosphere, for instance the bride is often compared with flowers and the significance of this becomes clear in c. 62 when the maidens compare the loss of virginity to a flower being plucked.⁴ The colours in this poem have a major role to play in its erotic atmosphere. As will be demonstrated, most of them are either used to convey the desirability, beauty and innocence of the bride or are connected in some way with the blood that is associated with the loss of virginity.

2.5 Putting the Colours to Work

Because this poem is divided into distinct sections the colours will be discussed section by section. However the poem does operate as a whole, so sometimes the discussion may run over the section divisions (which are to some extent artificially imposed) or make reference to colour motifs in other sections. The discussion will also include other imagery, such as the images of vegetation and fire, which works with and enhances the colour imagery.

¹ 'tu fero iuveni in manus/ *floridam* ipse puellulam/ dedis a gremio suae/ matris...' vv. 56-59. See also on these verses below under section 5.1.

² 'tardet ingenuus pudor. quem tamen magis audiens,/ flet quod ire necesse est.' vv. 79-81. Compare the reluctance of the maidens to relinquish their virginity in c. 62.

³ see Williams (1958) p. 18 n. 13

⁴ vv. 39-44. For the lines see below under section 5.2 in the footnotes on vv. 87-91.

2.5.1 Address to Hymen (vv. 1-75)

The address to Hymen, the god of marriage, can be further subdivided into two parts. In the first part (the cletic hymn) the god is invoked (vv. 1-45) and in the second part (the ἐγκώμιον) his functions are praised.¹ It is the first part which contains most of the colour imagery.

The first three stanzas address the god. The first stanza is a simple identification of him, the second describes his dress and the third his actions. Colour makes its appearance in the second stanza with the poet's request to Hymenaeus to surround his brows with flowers and take up the *flammeum*:

cinge tempora floribus
suave olentis amaraci²
flammeum cape laetus, huc
huc veni, niveo gerens
luteum pede soccum; (vv. 6-10)

The words *flammeum*, *niveus* and *luteus* create a burst of colour in this stanza which, in a synaesthetic combination with the references to flowers and fragrance, contribute to its sensual overtones. In the following stanza sound is introduced with the allusions to Hymenaeus' *tinnula vox* and his beating of his torch on the ground.³ The use of words related to sensations and the frequent use of imperatives (*cinge*, *cape*, *veni* etc.) help to

¹ Fedeli (1983) p. 17

² Although Catullus places the initial emphasis on the smell of the *amaracus* it is also likely that it contributed to this colour effect, for, as Ellis (1889 p. 212) points out, Columella implies that it has conspicuous flowers for he includes it amongst a list of colourful flowers such as those of the narcissus and pomegranate (10. 296-7)). Both Fordyce (1961 p. 239) and Quinn (1973 p. 266) identify the *amaracus* as the 'fragrant red marjoram' but without any justification or explanation. André, on the other hand, says that the word was used for 'différentes plantes odorantes non distinguées par les anciens' only one of which was the marjoram (1956 p. 26) and the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* lists three different plants under the word *amaracus* (1968 p.112). The *Oxford Latin Dictionary* also identifies the *amaracus* with the *parthenium*, citing Pliny (*parthenium alii leucanthes, alii amaracum vocant...nascitur in hortorum saepibus, flore albo* 21.104.176). This is an interesting possibility, for the white flowers of the *parthenium* or *parthenice* are also mentioned in the simile of the blushing bride in vv 184-88 (see these lines below under section 5.3). If it is the case that the *amaracus* is the same as the *parthenice*, then its white flowers enhance the contrast between white and yellow in this stanza. The presence of the *amaracus* in the bridal garland seems to have been an innovation on Catullus' part; there is no mention of it in previous wedding songs (Fedeli 1983 p. 27).

³ 'excitusque hilari die, / nuptialia concinens / voce carmina tinnula, / pelle humum pedibus, manu / pineam quate taedam.' (vv. 11-15)

make the scene come alive before the reader - it is presented with vividness and immediacy. Note that from the outset colours are associated with happiness; with the command to take up the *flammeum* Catullus employs the word *laetus*.

Each colour element in the cluster also has its own associations and nuances and must be examined individually.

The Latin word for bridal veil, *flammeum*, is of course derived from *flammeus*, the adjective for fiery which Catullus sometimes employs in other poems.¹ In this poem, as will be shown, the word retains its association with flame; it is identified with the flame of the torches in the second section (vv. 114-115) and Catullus continues the fire motif with his reference to the flame of desire burning in the bridegroom's heart (v. 171).² There is some uncertainty about the bridal veil's exact colour; Pliny says it is *luteus* without explaining exactly what colour *luteus* was (see the discussion below). Ellis defines the colour of the bridal veil as a 'a reddish-yellow...like flame'³ and it seems reasonable to suppose that the colour was similar to flame. Note how Catullus places *flammeum* and *luteum* first in their respective lines; the colour of the bridal veil dominates the stanza and, to a certain extent, the poem.⁴

Luteus is employed of Hymen's slipper. The colour term is an unusual one, only used by Catullus in c. 61, not employed at all in Propertius or Horace's *Odes*.⁵ Fedeli comments that it is a word more common in prose than in poetry.⁶ *Luteus* to the ancients was the marriage colour and the colour of women; Pliny says of it; '*lutei video honorem antiquissimum, in nuptialibus flammeis totum feminis concessum*' (21.22.46). Most scholars translate the word as 'yellow' or 'orange' but Edgeworth disputes this largely on

¹ '*qui persaepe vago victor certamine cursus/flammea praevertet celeris vestigia cervae*' (64.340-341); '*flammeus ut rapidi solis nitor obscuretur*' (66.3)

² See Dana's study of the association between the yellow of the *flammeum* and fire (1919 p. 12ff.). She concludes that 'the two were connected in thought and...yellow was the chromatic symbol of fire' (*ibid.* p. 32). It is interesting that the colour of the *flammeum* also seems to have been associated by some ancient authors with the rosy blushing of the bride; see Lucan 2.360-362 and La Follette (1994) p. 55.

³ (1889) p. 212.

⁴ See below in section 5.2 on vv. 114-115

⁵ It is however employed once in his *Epodes* - '*O quantus instat navitis sudor tuis/tibique pallor luteus*' (10.15-16).

⁶ (1983) p. 24

the basis of v. 188 where he feels *luteus* is meant to denote a shade of red or pink.¹ His argument has some merit for v. 188 but in this line there are good reasons for thinking of *luteus* as a shade of yellow. As Quinn points out², in the Aldobrandini Wedding fresco the bride is definitely wearing yellow shoes and a yellow-coloured object (usually assumed to be the *flammeum*) is lying on the bed.³ Moreover, in v. 160 of this poem Catullus depicts the bride with golden feet, possibly picking up on the colour of the shoes.⁴ In addition, Catullus' use of *crocinus* in c. 68 suggests that he thought of yellow as the colour of marriage.⁵ According to Edgeworth, *luteus* was a colour which could denote a range of hues from yellow to pink⁶ and thus it is quite probable that Catullus is using it in this poem to denote two different hues without his audience being aware of any discrepancy.⁷

Niveus is employed of Hymen's foot which is placed in contrast with the yellow of his slipper. It is interesting that in this poem Catullus applies colour words to feet three times (also vv. 108, 160 below); this emphasis on the feet (especially feet in slippers) increases the erotic element of the poem. Fedeli⁸ states that in Catullus' time *niveus* was probably a new creation for there is no mention of it before *Rhetorica ad Herennium*⁹ and Catullus. As Fedeli points out however, it is a word which Catullus seems very fond of for he employs

¹ (1992) p. 256. Edgeworth argues that the contrast between the *alba parthenice* and the *luteus* poppy is meant to be one of white against red for it is employed of the blushing bride. The use of red/white contrasts to describe blushing women and the association of the poppy with blood confirms this; see further below on v. 188 under section 5.3.

² (1973) p. 266

³ For a reproduction of this painting see fig. 1 of the appendix. Müller dates the painting to the last quarter of the first century B.C. (1994 p.16). The interpretation of the painting as a wedding goes back at least to the seventeenth century and most scholars accept it although there are disputes about what sort of marriage it represents. It is worth noting that not everyone takes this as read. Müller rejects this interpretation and offers an alternative one; that the painting is a depiction of Phaedra and Hippolytus (*ibid.* p. 160ff.). However the argument of Müller that the central figure cannot be a bride because she is veiled in white rather than yellow (*ibid.* p. 38) does not take into account the yellow cloth on the bed (see fig. 1.1 in the appendix for a close up of this). Müller does not offer an alternative explanation for the presence of this object.

⁴ Quinn (1973) p. 266, Lenchantin (1945) p. 116

⁵ *'quam circumcursans hinc illinc saepe Cupido / fulgebat crocina candidus in tunica.'* (v. 134) See further on the significance of this line above in the concordance under 1.12. CROCINUS. Other poets also link the colour yellow with marriage; in Tibullus the bonds of marriage are *flava* (*'...utinam strepitantibus advolet alis / flavaque coniugio vincula portet Amor'* 2.2.17-18). See further Dana's study of the colour of the bridal veil which she argues 'can scarcely be considered red.' (1919 p. 12).

⁶ (1992) p. 260. See also Dana (1919) pp. 9-12.

⁷ It is quite possible that at night, and especially under the light of pitch torches, the colour of the bridal veil changed and its reddish hues were emphasised.

⁸ (1983) p. 24

⁹ *'a similitudine sic: "Corpore niveum candorem, aspectu igneum adorem adsequatur."*' (4.44)

it a total of eight times in his poetry.¹ *Niveus*, when applied to flesh, carries with it connotations of delicacy and femininity.² As most scholars point out, in describing Hymen with snowy feet and in giving him a *flammeum* and *lutei* slippers, Catullus is giving him the appearance of a woman. Some scholars go further and say that in using these words Catullus is identifying him with the bride.³ This idea has a great deal of weight considering that the bride also wears the *flammeum* and that the colour motifs of yellow and white are later on applied to her.⁴

The colour imagery resumes in vv. 21-25, this time in reference to the bride:

floridis velut enitens
myrtus Asia ramulis
quos Hamadryades deae
ludicrum sibi roscido
nutriunt umore.

Catullus gives the name of both bride and groom (*namque Iunia Manlio* v. 16) and then, as is customary in wedding hymns⁵, shifts the focus immediately onto the bride as he praises her great beauty. In accordance with his use of words for shining to describe people who are desirable and beloved, Catullus employs *enitens* of the bride. Compare c. 2 where Catullus refers to Lesbia as his 'shining object of desire'⁶; in both contexts there are erotic overtones with the presence of words for 'playing' (*ludicrum* c. 61, *iocari* c.2).

Comparing the bride to plants or flowers was a *topos* of wedding hymns which goes back to Sappho; it was said of her that she likened brides to apples⁷ and to the tenderness of roses.⁸ Catullus compares the bride to a number of different plants in the course of the

¹ (1983) p. 24 n. 25

² See the discussion on the use of *niveus* in 63.8 below in Chapter 3, section 4.2 i.

³ e.g. Fordyce (1961) p. 239, Quinn (1973) p. 266

⁴ See vv. 21-26, 108, 160, 186-188 below.

⁵ 'Praise of the bride and groom was a regular feature of wedding compositions, both poetry and prose, from the time of Sappho. There was a natural inclination to dwell on the bride and this is illustrated in Catullus.' (Wheeler 1930 p. 212)

⁶ '*cum desiderio meo nitenti / carum nescio quid lubet iocari*' (vv. 5-6)

⁷ 'Σαπφούς ἦν ἄρα μήλω μὲν εἰκόσαι τὴν κόρην' Him. Or. 9. 16 (Lobel and Page 1955 fr. 105b)

⁸ Mich. Ital. Or. ad Mich. Oxit. '... ἄδει Σαπφῶ ἡ ποιήτρια ... ῥόδων δ' ἀβρότητι παραβάλλουσα τὰς νυμφευομένας παρθένους' (Campbell 1982 f. 117A; not listed in Lobel and Page)

poem; she has already been associated with the *amaracus* in v. 8 and here she is directly compared to the myrtle. In a similar fashion he compares Ariadne to a myrtle for her first meeting with Theseus where the emphasis is on her innocence and chastity.¹ It is not surprising therefore to learn that the myrtle symbolized virginity but it had a double attribution - it was also sacred to Venus.² The myrtle (*Myrtus communis*) is an evergreen plant³, an appropriate choice in a poem which celebrates youth and vigour.⁴ Its berries produced a red juice and because of this Virgil gives the plant the epithet *cruenta*⁵; it is quite possible that the berries were associated with the blood of virginity. Here however Catullus lays more emphasis on the myrtle's flowers (*floridis* is the first word of the stanza) and the flowers of the myrtle were white⁶, a suitable colour for the innocence of virginity.⁷ There is also perhaps a physical point of comparison for the shining white blossoms suggest the gleaming white skin and attire of the bride⁸, picking up on the whiteness of Hymen's skin in v. 9. Thus the colours of the myrtle contribute to the curious combination of innocence and sensuality in this stanza. The evergreen leaves and gleaming white blossoms of the myrtle suggest youth and purity and were associated with virginity but, on the other hand, the myrtle's link with Venus and its blood red berries, along with the reference to moisture (*umore*) and the use of the word *ludricrum*, lend erotic overtones to the scene.

¹ *'hunc simul ac cupido conspexit lumine virgo
regia, quam suavis exspirans castus odores
lectulus in molli complexu matris alebat,
quales Eurotae praecingunt flumina myrtus
aurave distinctos educit verna colores,* (64. 86-90)

² For Venus' association with the myrtle see Ovid *Ars. Am.* 3.53-54. See also Fedeli (1983) p. 32 and especially n. 55 where he discusses the duality of the myrtle's associations.

³ Loewenfeld and Back (1978) p. 188.

⁴ See however the discussion of the significance of the myrtle in Hor. 1.25.18 (Chapter 6, section 3.1).

⁵ *'et lauri bacas oleamque cruenta myrta'* (*Georg.* 1.306). See also Sargeant (1920) p. 83. See the garden painting in Jashemski (1979 vol. 1) in which there is a myrtle with large purplish berries (fig. 206).

⁶ Loewenfeld and Back (1978) p. 188. See also figs 206, 208 and 209 in Jashemski (1979 vol. 1) which are reproductions of wall paintings with myrtles in flower. Jashemski comments on the 'myriads of small white dots' which the artists employ to represent the myrtle flowers (p. 131).

⁷ Merrill (1893 p. 98) cites Aristophanes for the association between virginity and the white blossoms of the myrtle; *'ἠρινά τε βοσκόμεθα παρθένια / λευκότροφα μύρτα...'* (*Av.* 1099f.).

⁸ Compare Catullus' description of gleaming white skin in 64. 162 (*'candida permulcens liquidis vestigia lymphis'*) and his use of the epithet *candidus* to describe women in 13. 4 and 35. 8. Jashemski reproduces a photograph of a myrtle in bloom at Pompeii which has white waxy flowers with prominent yellow stamens (fig. 207 1979 vol 1). It is striking how well the white and yellow of the myrtle matches the bridal attire of white tunic and yellow veil.

As stated previously, the rest of the address to Hymen (consisting mostly of the ἐγκώμιον) has few colour elements although there are echoes of some of the colour motifs already established.

In vv. 31-35 Catullus compares the love which surrounds the bride's heart to the ivy binding a tree:

*ac domum dominam voca
coniugis cupidam novi,
mentem amore revinciens,
ut tenax hedera huc et huc
arborem implicat errans.*

Like the myrtle, the ivy is an evergreen plant and thus picks up on its associations of greenness, youth and vigour. It also has berries described by poets as golden¹ which is in keeping with the emphasis on gold and yellow in the poem. According to Fedeli, it is Catullus who first employs the simile of ivy round a tree in the context of love poetry.² Horace takes up the image and uses it twice; each time he places emphasis on the sexual implications of the metaphor.³

The epithet *floridus* is employed again in v. 57:

*tu fero iuveni in manus
floridam ipse puellulam
dedis a gremio suae
matris, o Hymenaeae Hymen,
o Hymen Hymenaeae. (vv. 56-60)*

This time the word is applied directly to the bride. In combination with the diminutive of *puella* the word once again suggests innocence and delicacy in contrast to the *fero iuveni* of

¹ 'ipsaeque ascendunt ad summa cacumina lentae/pinguntque aureolos viridi pallore corymbos.' (Virg. *Cul.* 143-144). See also Theocritus 1.29-31.

² (1983) p. 40

³ '...nec Damalis novo divelletur adultero/lascivis hederis ambitiosior.' (c. 1.36.18-20); 'artius atque hedera procera adstringitur ilex/lentis adhaerens bracchiis' (*Epod.* 15.5-6). Note that in the first instance Horace applies the adjective *lascivus* to the ivy.

the previous line.¹ The association between the bride and flowers will be reiterated in the hyacinth metaphor of vv. 87-91 and Catullus will also again employ the adjective *floridus* in his description of the bride waiting in the bedchamber for her husband (vv. 184-188).

2.5.2 The Wait outside the Bride's House (vv. 76-118)

With the words *claustra pandite ianuae* (v. 76) Catullus switches to the scene before the bride's house; it is as though he is flinging open the doors to reveal the scene within. The emphasis in this section is very much on the visual (note the use of *viden* in v. 77 and later on in v. 94) and there are a great many colour elements:

claustra pandite ianuae.
virgo adest. viden ut faces
splendidas quatiunt comas?

.....

..... (vv. 76-80)

Catullus immediately draws attention to the light of the torches (*splendidas comas* 'bright locks'). Throughout the scene he makes repeated reference to it², creating a vivid scene in which the light of torches blaze out in the darkness of the night.³ Allusions to torches are common in descriptions of marriages; they appear in Hesiod (*Sc.* 275-6), in the *Trojan Women* (319-20) and in the *Casina* (840). Catullus however gives an unusual twist to the usual allusion by describing the flames of the torch as its hair, a metaphor which is drawn from Aeschylus.⁴ This personification of the torch not only gives new life to the *topos* but also suggests the hair of the bride which was arranged in ritual locks.⁵ The connection between the bride and the torch will be strengthened when Catullus repeats the metaphor in vv. 94-95.

¹ Fedeli (1983) p. 54. As Lieberg points out (1958 p. 24f.), this idea is repeated in the other marriage hymn, c. 62, but in a darker and more negative way; '*Hespera, quis caelo fertur crudelior ignis?/ qui natam possis complexu avellere matris./ complexu matris retinentem avellere natam./ et iuveni ardenti castam donare puellam./ quid faciunt hostes capta crudelius urbe?*' (vv. 20-24). See also Merrill (1893) p. 100.

² See vv. 94-95, 114 below.

³ According to Fedeli, the time for the *deductio* was at night when the evening star was shining in the sky (1983 p. 63).

⁴ *Agam.* 306 'φλογὸς μέγαν πάγωνα'; *Prom. Vinc.* 1044 'πυρὸς ἀμφήκης βόστρυχος' (Fedeli 1983 p. 65)

⁵ 'Both an arrangement with vertical spiral locks falling on either side of a central part and a high bun made up of horizontal sections of hair have been proposed' (La Follette 1994 p. 57)

The motif of light is continued with the simile of the bright day in vv. 82-86:

*flere desine. non tibi Au-
runculeia periculum est,
ne qua femina pulcrior
clarum ab Oceano diem
viderit venientem.*

Once again the bride is associated with brightness. There is a reference to bright dawn in one of Sappho's marriage hymns¹ but the context is quite different; Theocritus' epithalamium is closer in its description of the beauty of the bride Helen.² According to Fedeli this metaphor has a long history, going back to the motif in Homer of the sun who sees everything.³ Here again Catullus gives a twist to the usual allusion, this time by reversing it - in his poem it is the bride who sees the dawn, not the dawn who sees her. The mention of dawn implies that Catullus has momentarily leaped ahead in time to the morning following the consummation of the marriage.

In the next stanza another flower metaphor is employed of the bride:

*talis in vario solet
divitis domini hortulo
stare flos hyacinthinus.
sed moraris, abit dies.*

<prodeas nova nupta.> (vv. 87-91)

This time the flower is a hyacinth which is conspicuous amongst the other flowers in a multi-coloured garden.⁴ This is the first appearance of the *hyacinthus* in Latin⁵ and the

¹ Ἐσπερε πάντα φέρων ὄσα φαίνολις ἐσκέδασ' Αὔωσ' (Lobel and Page 1955 fr. 104a.1).

² Ἄωσ ἀντέλλοισα καλὸν διέφανε πρόσωπον / πότνια Νύξ, τό τε λευκὸν ἕαρ χειμῶνος ἀνέντος / ὦδε καὶ ἅ χρυσεὰ Ἑλένα διεφαίνετ' ἐν ἀμῖν.' (18.26-28 Gow 1952).

³ e.g. *Il.* 3.277 (1983 pp. 66-67)

⁴ Catullus employs a similar image in the other marriage hymn but does not name a specific flower; *'ut flos in saeptis secretus nascitur hortis, / ignotus pecori, nullo convolsus aratro, / quem mulcent aurae, firmat sol, educat imber; / multi illum pueri, multae optavere puellae: / idem cum tenui carptus defloruit ungui, / nulli illum pueri, nullae optavere puellae'* 62.39-44. Note that once again an image from 61 is echoed in 62 in a darker and more disturbing way.

⁵ Fordyce (1961) p. 246

Greek sources of this comparison are a matter of debate. Ellis¹ suggests that Catullus has taken the image from the *Odyssey* where the curls of Odysseus' hair are compared to hyacinth petals² and it could be that Catullus had this simile in mind since, as we have already mentioned, the bride's hair traditionally hung in locks. However the hyacinth is also noted for the brilliance³ of its colour and this, surely, is the reason why Catullus places it in a many-coloured garden (*vario hortulo*) - it is the most colourful flower in a colourful garden.⁴ Although there is some uncertainty about the identity of the ancient hyacinth⁵ poets mostly give it colour epithets denoting red or purple. Virgil gives it the epithet *rubens*⁶ and Ovid relates how it sprung from the blood of Hyacinthus as a purple flower 'brighter than Tyrian dye'.⁷ Thus it is likely that the hyacinth would suggest red or purple to the Roman reader and, as many scholars have suggested, that the image is in some way related to the Sappho fragment about the purple hyacinth trampled in the mountains.⁸

The hyacinth's connection with redness and with blood makes its significance more obvious. It seems to symbolize sensual love in an Anacreon papyrus fragment⁹ and Himerius speaks of Sappho binding Aphrodite's hair with hyacinths.¹⁰ The hyacinth, like

¹ (1889) p. 223

² τὸν μὲν Ἀθηναίη θῆκεν, Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα / μελζονά τ' εἰσιδέειν καὶ πάσσονα, καὶ δὲ κάρητος / οὐλας ἦκε κόμας, ὑακινθίνῳ ἄνθει ὁμοίας.' (6.229-231)

³ Virgil associates it with the violet for its *fulgor*; '*hic iuvenem agresti sublimem stramine ponunt: / qualem virgineo demessum pollice florem/ seu mollis violae seu languentis hyacinthi/ cui neque fulgor adhuc nec dum sua forma recessit*' (Aen. 11.67-70).

⁴ Both Fordyce (1961 p. 246) and Ellis (1889 p. 223) interpret *stare* as 'to rise tall', implying that it is its height which makes the hyacinth conspicuous. This interpretation however seems to miss the point of the *varius hortulus*.

⁵ 'plante difficile à déterminer, parce que les anciens groupaient sous ce seul vocable plusieurs variétés, et peut-être même, comme pour les *violae*, de familles botaniques différentes.' (André 1949 p. 107)

⁶ '*... lauri et suave rubens hyacinthus*' (Ec. 3.63). He also calls it *ferrugineus* in *Georg.* 4.183, a usage which André classes amongst the reds (1949 p. 107).

⁷ '*Italia dum vero memorantur Apollinis ore/ ecce cruor, qui fusus humo signaverat herbas,/ desinit esse cruor, Tyrioque nitentior ostro/ flos oritur formamque capit, quam lilia, si non/ purpureus color his, argenteus esset in illis*' (Met. 10.209-213). As André says, 'Il semble donc exister un rapport entre une variété de la pourpre rouge et la couleur de l'*hyacinthus*' (1949 p. 108). Colour epithets such as *caeruleus* and *niveus* which are occasionally given to the hyacinth (see André 1949 p. 197) are more difficult to account for although they could be describing plants of a different variety or species.

⁸ 'οἶαν τὰν ὑακινθὸν ἐν ὄρεσι ποίμενες ἄνδρες/ πόσσι καταστειβοῖσι, χάμαι δέ τε πόρφυρον ἄνθος' (105c Lobel and Page 1955). Fedeli however disputes this on the grounds that 'the wild hyacinth trodden upon ἐν ὄρεσι...is quite different from the flower grown with great care in *hortulo divitis domini*' (1983 p. 67f.).

⁹ 'φοβερὰς δ' ἔχεις πρὸς ἄλλωι / φρένας, ὦ καλλιπρό[σ]ωπε παῖδ[ων] · / καὶ σε δοκεῖ μενε[...].[...]/ πυκινῶς ἔχουσα[/ ἀτιτάλειν · σ[.].[...].[...]/ τὰς ὑακιν[θ]ίνας ἀρ[ο]ύρας / ἵνα Κύπρις ἐκ λεπάδων / ...' '[.].α[σ κ]ατέδησεν ἵππους.' (fr. 346.1.2-9 Page 1962) In addition, in Theocritus 11.25-27 Polyphemus describes how he fell in love with Galatea when he saw her gathering hyacinth flowers on a hill

¹⁰ fr. 194 (Lobel and Page 1955).

the red berries of the myrtle, suggests the blood associated with the consummation of marriage in contrast to the pure white flowers of the myrtle which signify virginity. Thus Catullus' use of the flowers and their colours effects a skilful transition¹ and Fedeli suggests that this hyacinth simile jumps ahead in time to the bride waking up after a night of love.² The allusion to bright day in the previous stanza tends to support this.

In the following stanza Catullus repeats the metaphor of the locks of the torch:

*prodeas nova nupta, si
iam videtur, et audias
nostra verba. viden? faces
aureas quatiunt comas:
prodeas nova nupta. (vv. 92-96)*

Catullus varies the metaphor by replacing *splendidas* with *aureas*; as Edgeworth comments here Catullus improves on the Aeschylean metaphor of the torches shaking their locks by adding a colour adjective which suits the wedding context.³ However the colour adjective implies more than this. The word suggests the *flavus* hair which was the ideal of male and female beauty⁴ and the image recalls the Sappho fragment in which she describes a girl having hair which is yellower than a torch.⁵ Thus the identification between the bride's hair and the flames of the torch is strengthened.⁶

Catullus also echoes the simile of the ivy from vv. 31-35:

*lenta sed velut adsitas
vitis implicat arbores,
implicabitur in tuum
complexum. sed abit dies:
prodeas nova nupta. (vv. 102-106)*

¹ Fedeli (1983) p. 68 n. 24

² (1983) p. 69

³ (1992) p. 11

⁴ See the entries under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS i in the concordance esp. Catullus 64.63, 64.98, 66.62, 68.130.

⁵ 'ἀλλὰ ξανθοτέραις ἔχη[ταῖς κόμαις δάιδος' (98a 6-7 Lobel and Page 1955). On this fragment see Hahn (1960).

⁶ For a similar identification between a woman and a torch see Horace 4.13.28 which is discussed in Chapter 6, section 3.3.iii.

Here the plant and its colour are linked more directly to the bride for it is she who is compared to the vine which will entwine the tree in its embrace.

The significance of the next colour element is uncertain because of the lacuna which precedes it:

o cubile, quod omnibus

.....

.....

.....

candido pede lecti (vv. 107-8)

Candido pede lecti is an intriguing reference but we cannot be absolutely certain what it designates. Most scholars think that this stanza dealt with the topos of the μακαρισμός of the bed and thus they take the words together as a description of the ivory feet of the couch.¹ This is extremely probable considering Catullus' description of the marriage couch in c. 64² and it is possible that the lacuna contained a similar description of the purple coverlet, as Wilamowitz conjectures.³ However it is also possible that the *candidus pes* could refer to the white foot of the bride.⁴ If this were the case the allusion would form a bridge between Hymen's *niveus pes* in the first section and the golden feet of the bride as she passes over the threshold in v. 160. Indeed, even if *candidus pes* does refer to the couch, like the *aurae comae* above it may well be meant to have some association with the bride.

The sense of anticipation in this section is fulfilled when the bride emerges and the boys raise their torches for the beginning of the *deductio*:

¹ Compare the prominent and elaborately decorated foot of the couch in the Aldobrandini Wedding fresco (Appendix fig. 1.1) which could well be made of ivory.

² *'pulvinar vero divae geniale locatur / sedibus in mediis, Indo quod dente politum / tincta tegit roseo conchyli purpura fuco.'* (vv. 47-49)

³ *'o cubile quod omnibus molle stravit amoribus veste purpurea Tyros, fulsit Indus eburnei candido pede lecti.'* (1924) vol 2 p. 283 n. 3

⁴ Fedeli (1983) p. 81

*tollite, <o> pueri, faces:
flammeum video venire.
 ite concinite in modum
 io Hymen Hymenaeae io,
 o Hymen Hymenaeae' (vv. 114- 118)*

There is an element of ring structure here as this reference to torches picks up on the one at the beginning of this section. Although there are no colour or shining adjectives employed here to describe them, their flames are connected with the emergence of the *flammeum*. Once again, Catullus places emphasis on this colourful garment. As Fedeli puts it:

Catullus' love for colour elements is remarkable here as well as in other cases: the detail of the bride's progression that impresses his imagination is the *flammeum*, and he underlines it by saying: *flammeum video venire*.¹

The reference to the *flammeum* also recalls the beginning of the poem where it was Hymen who was dressed in the garment and it is significant that at this point Catullus resumes his invocation of him, strengthening the association between the god and the girl.

2.5.3 Fescennine Jesting (vv. 119-158) / The Progress to the Bedchamber (vv. 159-198)

The section of the poem which deals with the *fescennina iocatio* is almost free of colour elements, apart from the colour adjective *canus* used to describe the bride's hair after she has become an old woman. In keeping with the tone of this section this is mildly ribald for the wife's white head nods yes to everything, including, it is implied, her husband's sexual demands which were spoken of in vv. 144-146:²

*usque dum tremulum movens
 cana tempus anilitas
 omnia omnibus annuit.
 io Hymen Hymenaeae io,
 io Hymen Hymenaeae. (vv. 154-158)*

¹ (1983) p. 85

² 'nupta, tu quoque quae tuus / vir petet cave ne neges, / ni petitum aliunde eat.'

The colour adjective *canus* is in keeping with the frequent use of terms for white in the poem and also serves as a foil both to the golden hair of the young bride¹ and to her golden feet which are described in the following stanza:

transfer omine cum bono
limen aureolos pedes,
rasilemque subi forem.
io Hymen Hymenaeae io,
io Hymen Hymenaeae. (vv. 159-163)

The colour term *aureolus* not only picks up on the golden locks of the torch but also Hymen's *luteus soccus* at the beginning of the poem (v. 10). The word suggests the colour of the bride's shoes and, derived as it is from *aurum*, carries overtones of value, conveying the precious nature of the bride. This image may have been inspired by a Sappho fragment in which a bride or girl is described as having good feet² but it also owes something to the epithet χρυσοπέδιλος which is employed by ancient writers as an epithet for certain goddesses.³ Here the emphasis on the bride's feet increases the erotic element of the stanza.

Note that Catullus employs the diminutive form of *aureus* here; he also employs it in fr. 2b to describe the golden apple which was so desirable that Atalanta relinquished her virginity.⁴ As Fedeli has pointed out, c. 61 is characterized by an extensive use of diminutives, especially in reference to the bride.⁵ The diminutive not only suggests the bride's beauty and desirability, but in combination with the sense of shining which *aureus*

¹ Compare *Anth. Pal.* 5.26 where the glossy locks of a young woman are placed in contrast with her grey hair when she has aged. The sentiment is the same: love will continue even into old age.

² 'ατε τὰν εὔποδα νύμφαν [' (103.5 Lobel and Page 1955).

³ It is frequently employed of Hera e.g. *Od.* 11.604 ('παῖδα Διὸς μεγάλοιο καὶ Ἥρης χρυσοπέδιλου'), *He. Th.* 454 and *Anth. Pal.* 5.69.1. Sappho employs it of Dawn ('ἀρτίως μὲν ἂ χρυσοπέδιλος Ἀῶς' fr. 123 Lobel and Page 1955); also fr. 103.13.

⁴ 'tam gratum est mihi quam ferunt puellae/ pernici aureolum fuisse malum/ quod zonam soluit diu ligatam.' See further on this fragment above in the concordance under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv.

⁵ 'In c. 61 diminutives are frequent with regard to Junia, and it is noteworthy that, from the very first image of the young bride, Catullus wants to emphasize her grace and delicacy by using a stylistic device of affective language' (1983 p. 33).

and *rasiles*¹ convey, emphasizes the importance of the moment: the first time the bride enters her husband's *domus*. Catullus' description of the bride crossing the threshold is possibly an innovation on his part for the ceremony of warning the bride to cross the threshold with care is never mentioned as part of Greek ritual² and thus it would not have been alluded to in previous marriage hymns. Catullus places the same emphasis on crossing the threshold in c. 68 where he makes similar use of colour and shining words to describe Lesbia's entry into the house of Allius.³

In the following stanza, Catullus describes the groom waiting for the bride on a purple couch:

*aspice intus ut accubans
vir tuus Tyrrio in toro
totus immineat tibi.
io Hymen Hymenaeae io,
io Hymen Hymenaeae. (vv. 164-168)*

This is the only time in the entire poem that the groom is associated with a colour word and thus Catullus' reasons for using the word must be examined carefully. Firstly *Tyrrio* contributes to the alliteration in this line and creates a word play with *toro*. In addition, Tyrian purple was double-dyed and especially costly⁴ and by using this term Catullus emphasizes the status of the bridegroom. Here the word is applied to the couch on which the groom is resting. There is some debate amongst scholars as to whether this is the marriage bed or the banqueting couch⁵ but even if it is not the marriage couch, the use of the colour term creates an association with the marriage couch of 64.47-49. Tyrian purple had a peculiar sheen which Pliny compares to the colour of congealed blood⁶ and thus, like the hyacinth in v. 89, suggests the blood associated with the consummation of marriage.

¹ This word could be used either to describe the polished wood or metal of which the doorway of a rich man was composed or, like the *tritum limen* of 68. 71 it could refer to the shininess caused by years of use. (Ellis 1889 p. 232)

² Williams (1958) p. 16

³ 'quo mea se molli candida diva pede/ intulit et trito *fulgentem* in limine plantam/ innixa arguta constituit solea' vv. 70-72. See further on these lines above in the concordance under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS ii.

⁴ Pliny *N.H.* 9.63.137

⁵ Quinn (1973) p. 272f; Fedeli (1983) p. 111ff.

⁶ 'laus ei summa in colore sanguinis concreti, nigricans aspectu idemque suspectu refulgens; unde et Homero purpureus dicitur sanguis' (*N.H.* 9.62.135)

The colour purple carries overtones of passion appropriate in a stanza which describes the groom's desire for the bride. It is interesting to note how frequently purple and red are employed by Sappho in contexts of love and marriage. Not only does she employ the image of the purple hyacinth already mentioned but she describes Eros in a purple mantle (fr. 54), the bride is compared to a red apple (fr. 105a) and on another occasion she is 'violet-robed' (fr. 30).

There are faint chromatic echoes in the following two stanzas which continue the purple motif. The reference to the flame of passion burning in the couple's hearts in vv. 169-171¹ picks up on the image of the *flammeum* and suggests the reddish colour which is associated with it. In vv. 174-176 Catullus addresses the *praetextatus* who assists the bride into her husband's bed.² The *praetextatus* was a boy who was still wearing the purple-striped toga of youth, a garment which the bride has just relinquished.³

The final⁴ burst of colour appears a stanza later with Catullus' description of the bride waiting for her husband in the bedchamber:

*iam licet venias, marite:
uxor in thalamo tibi est,
ore floridulo nitens,
alba parthenice velut
luteumve papaver. (vv. 184-188)*

¹ 'illi non minus ac tibi / pectore uritur intimo / flamma, sed penite magis'

² 'mitte brachiolum teres / praetextate, puellulae: / iam cubile adeat viri'

³ According to Sebesta the child's *toga praetexta* was a garment of protection. Its protective power lay in its purple stripe which once again had an association with blood (1994 p. 47). Thus the term *praetextatus* both continues the motif of blood and reinforces the vulnerability of the bride who has just given up this garment. See also Thomas' analysis of Prop. 1.20.38 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS iv in the concordance. Thomas argues that the purple and white flowers which Hylas picks signify the colours of the *toga praetexta* and Hylas is relinquishing his boyhood in picking them. (1977 p. 35)

⁴ The epithalamium which constitutes the final part of the poem (vv. 199-228) contains no real colour elements although Catullus does compare the numerous delights of the married couple to the glittering stars; 'ille pulveris Africi / siderumque micantium / subducat numerum prius, / qui vestri numerare volit / multa milia ludi.' (199-203). This image continues the motifs of brightness and light which have been such a feature of this poem; the *flammeum*, the flames of the torches, the flame in the bridegroom's heart and the blazing stars are all associated with happiness and with passion. See further on these lines in the concordance above under 1.29 MICO.

This is the climactic moment before the husband goes in to the chamber for the consummation of the marriage and before the epithalamium proper is sung; note how Catullus begins the stanza by saying '*iam licet venias marite*'. The main colour elements from various parts of the poem are brought together. There is an element of ring composition here, for *luteus* and *albus* recall the colour cluster at the beginning of the poem which described Hymen; as Edgeworth puts it, the colour combination has been transferred from Hymen to the bride.¹ On the other hand *niteo*, *floridus* and even *albus* recall the colour cluster of vv. 21-25 where the bride is compared to myrtle. *Floridus* also harks back both to vv. 56-57 where the *florida puella* is depicted in the clutches of the *ferox iuuenis* and to v. 89 where the bride is compared to a hyacinth flower.

In this stanza the colours are employed to describe the bride's complexion which, as stated previously, was a *topos* of wedding songs.² Although *luteus* harks back to Hymen's *yellow* slipper, the main contrast here is one of red against white for, as we have already discussed, *luteus* could denote a range of hues and here it is employed of the poppy which is usually considered a red flower.³ Catullus' choice of these two varieties of flowers are not without significance. As Quinn points out, the *parthenice* is presumably chosen because of the word's similarity with *παρθένος*, virgin.⁴ Thus like the myrtle, this flower is associated with virginity and its association with *albus* reinforces the connection. The poppy has more passionate overtones which Edwards comments on, saying, 'we shall ponder deeply the presence of the scarlet flower as a simile for the ravished lips of the bride'.⁵ In the *Iliad* the flower is used to represent the colour of blood⁶, a use which is

¹ (1992) p. 12

² Fedeli (1983) p. 122f. A typical example appears in the prose epithalamium of the rhetorician Himerius; Himerius in his praise of the bride compares her complexion to the whiteness of milk and her cheeks to roses (cited by Wheeler 1930 p. 213). Compare also Propertius' use of this *topos* in his description of Cynthia's beauty (Prop. 2.3.10 in the concordance under 1.2.2 ALBUS i.

³ See Edgeworth (1992 p. 256) who cites Pliny ('*papaveris sativi tria genera: candidum...alterum genus est papaveris nigrum...tertium genus...flore rufo*' N.H. 19.53.168-169) and Propertius (*lilia...candida purpureis mixta papaveribus* 1.20.37-8) in support of the redness of the poppy; in addition Ovid describes the use of poppies as a form of rouge (*Med. Fac.* 99-100). André says that when the poppy is called *albus* or *niger* it is on account of the colour of the seed (1956 p. 238).

⁴ (1973) p. 274

⁵ (1992) p. 184

⁶ 'μήλων δ' ὡς ἐτέρωσε κάρη βάλεν, ἢ τ' ἐν κήπῳ/καρπῷ βριθομένη νοτίησι τε εἰαρυήσιν/ὡς ἐτέρωσ' ἤμυσε κάρη πήληκι βαρυθέν.' (8.306-8). See also Edwards (1992) p. 183

later imitated by Virgil in *Aeneid* 9.¹ The poppy, like the hyacinth and the red berries of the myrtle, is meant to suggest the blood associated with the consummation of marriage and the erotic tension is heightened by placing it in contrast with the virginal white *parthenice*. The maiden's blush signifies her dawning awareness and knowledge. As Catherine Campbell Rhorer has pointed out in her discussion of the significance of red and white in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 'Red is associated with *pudor*, that sense of shame that afflicts the innocent whose eyes have just been opened to erotic reality'.² In a similar fashion Catullus in c. 65 describes the redness of a young girl's face when her lover's gift, a sexually suggestive apple, is revealed to her mother.³ It is thus not surprising that Ovid, who is so concerned with the loss of innocence and awakening sexual consciousness, later takes over this type of imagery and develop it into an art form.⁴

2.6 Final Thoughts

C. 61 is a strongly visual poem and its imagery of colours blazing out in the darkness of the night helps to draw the reader into the wedding scene and add to its sense of festivity and excitement. In this poem the colours of happiness largely predominate - bright, clear colours such as white and gold which are employed to highlight significant moments such as the bride's passage over the threshold and the meeting of bride and groom in the marriage bed.

Colour imagery in the poem is mostly concentrated around the figure of the bride. Indeed, most of the colour images not directly employed of the bride can be traced back to

¹ *'volvitur Euryalus leto, pulchrosque per artus/ it cruor inque umeros cervix conlapsa recumbit:/ purpureus veluti cum flos succisus aratro/ languescit moriens, lassove papavera collo/ demisere caput, pluvia cum forte gravantur.'* (433-37). See further Edgeworth (1992) p. 153 on this image.

² 1980 p. 79. Compare [Tibullus] 3.4 where imagery of red and white is employed in much the same way; *'candor erat qualem praefert Latonia Luna,/ et color in niveo corpore purpureus,/ ut iuveni primum virgo deducta marito / inficitur teneras ore rubente genas'* (vv. 29-32).

³ *'atque illud prono praeceps agitur decursu,/ huic manat tristi conscius ore rubor.'* (vv. 23-24). It is interesting that the maiden has the same sense of sorrow as the bride when she contemplates the loss of her virginity; according to Edwards 'The staining of the maiden cheek with blood is the image of sorrow and defloration which we have traced through the other poems of Catullus' (1992 p. 202). See further on these lines in the concordance above under 1.43.3 RUBOR.

⁴ Ovid employs red/white imagery of blushing on many different occasions, making use of comparisons with red and white apples (*Met.* 3.482-4), lilies and roses (*Am.* 2.5.37) and the moon eclipsed red under white (*Met.* 4.332-3). Theresa Krier comments on Ovid's use of these colours 'The colors of love in European literature, red and white, reside in the arousing alternatives of innocence and experience, candor and shame, the quotidian complexion of white broken by the rising blood of erotic self-consciousness.' (1988 p. 2).

her in some way. Catullus applies colour words to objects such as the torches and the marriage bed in a way which personifies and feminizes them (the torches' golden hair, the white foot of the bed), recalling the bride and her beauty. The colour words which are applied to Hymen at the outset (the *flammeum*, the yellow slippers) are, in the course of the poem, transferred to the bride and along with them some of Hymen's aura of divinity. Words for shining are frequently associated with the bride and she has the golden feet characteristic of some deities.

All this contributes to the sense of the bride's attractiveness and desirability. This brings us to the main role that colours have to play in this poem - their contribution to its erotic element. Catullus employs colour in combination with motifs of vegetation, warmth and fragrance to produce the sensual atmosphere of the poem and he employs these in a way that increases the sexual tension in the lead up to the consummation of the marriage. Thus the colour of the *flammeum* is linked to the flames of the torches and through them to the flame of desire which is burning in the bridegroom's heart. The bride is associated with a series of flowers that are either white or purple: the white flowers represent her innocence and purity and the purple flowers the loss of blood associated with the relinquishing of her virginity. In some ways this is represented as a violent act for, although the happiness of the married couple is stressed, the bride weeps and is reluctant to leave her old way of life. It is interesting that the final flower with which the bride is associated, the poppy, was first employed in the *Iliad* in a context of death and destruction. This is the only discordant note in an otherwise happy poem; the discordant element will become more pronounced as the long poems progress.

Catullus' use of colour in this poem is repeated in many of the other long poems but in darker and more disturbing ways. The blush of the bride is echoed by the red blush of the sorrowful maiden in c. 65, the association between flowers and blood is also present in cc. 62 and 63 and in c. 68 Cupid inherits Hymen's yellow tunic and the image of the bride on the threshold appears again when Lesbia enters the house of Allius. In this way Catullus'

use of colour in the long poems forms a continuum; the colour images acquire more meaning and depth from each other's presence.

Chapter Three

Colours in Conflict: Catullus Poem 63

3.1 First View

In many respects c. 63 is the most interesting poem in the Catullan corpus, more interesting even than the poem which follows it, c. 64. Its subject matter is unique in extant Latin literature¹ and it is uncertain why Catullus wrote this poem or from where he drew his main inspiration.² It is a strange, wild poem and many scholars have remarked on the intensity of the feelings it projects and the skill with which this is achieved.³ A poem of extraordinary richness and creativity, it encompasses a good deal in ninety three lines and it is an inexhaustible object for study. Although, on a first reading, the colour images do not strike the eyes as dramatically as in c. 64, Catullus makes use of colour motifs as skilfully as he does in the larger poem; especially remarkable is the way in which he utilizes colour contrasts and colour inversion.

As with the chapter on c. 61, before analysing the colour motifs in detail it will be helpful firstly to examine previous scholarship on the poem and review its literary predecessors. The structure of the poem will also be analysed in some detail and attention paid to the relationship between the structure, mood and colour imagery of the poem.

3.2 Previous Scholarship / Literary Predecessors

When Elder wrote his article 'Catullus' *Attis*' in 1947 he was anxious to draw attention to a poem which he felt had largely been neglected by serious scholarship; '...few have seriously attempted to treat this poem as original poetry. Its fate too often has been: *laudatur*

¹ As Quinn says, it is 'perhaps the most remarkable poem in Latin' (1973 p. 282).

² As Guillemain puts it 'pourquoi Catulle a-t-il choisi ce sujet oriental?' (1949 p. 150). There have been ingenious (and totally unsupported) speculations that he became interested in the cult when visiting Bithynia (e.g.. Ellis 1889 p. 260; Merrill 1893 p. 120). Wiseman has proposed the theory that Catullus wrote it as a hymn for performance at the Megalesia (1985 pp. 198-206) and Newman has suggested that he wrote it as a sort of pantomime (1990 pp. 343-366).

³ '...it is an exact and intense expression of a significant and moving theme, put in a form of high technical excellence' (Elder 1947 p. 395); 'Catullus has imposed the splendid discipline of his consummate art upon the disorderly and chaotic sensations, impulses, and desires which characterize human experience, to produce a poem which - to use a famous expression of Coleridge - "a more than usual state of emotion" coexists with a "more than usual order"' (Small 1952 p. 16).

et alget.¹ Things however have changed since Elder's time. Shipton, writing forty years later, commented that there had been a great deal of attention paid to the poem.² Indeed in the past fifty years a great number of articles have been produced on many different features of this poem - on various aspects from its unusual metre³ to its animal⁴ and marriage⁵ imagery to its perceived autobiographical nature.⁶

Elder suggests one of the reasons for the neglect of c.63 before his time - Wilamovitz' idea that the poem was a translation of a lost Callimachian original led scholars to place a low value on it.⁷ The translation theory was later taken up by others including Fordyce and Bardon.⁸ David Mulroy, in his article 'Hephaestion and Catullus 63', went a long way towards discrediting Wilamovitz' view but the details of his argument need not concern us much here.⁹ Even if Catullus' poem is a close rendition of Callimachus or some other lost Greek poem (and on this point I am inclined, as Quinn¹⁰ is, to agree with Sellar that 'no translation ever written could produce that impression of genuine creative power which is forced upon every reader of the *Attis*'¹¹) there is still a deliberate and conscious act involved in his selection of words and phrases to replace the Greek. Thus, even in the act of translating, Catullus would have to decide which Latin colour term best expressed the Greek or whether to employ a colour term at all. In this regard it is interesting that in c. 66

¹ p. 394

² (1987) p. 444

³ Ross (1969)

⁴ Sandy (1968)

⁵ Forsyth (1970); Sandy (1971)

⁶ Harkins (1959)

⁷ (1947) p. 394

⁸ Fordyce just assumes that it is not original; 'Its spirit is so Greek...that it seems certain that Catullus was translating or adapting a Greek original which gave this turn to the *Attis* motif' (1961 p. 262). Bardon accepts this view with some qualifications; '...il faut considérer comme acquis que Catulle a imité de près un modèle hellénistique: sans excessive servilité dans le détail, avec fidélité dans l'ensemble.' (1943 p. 30). Even Small, who praises the *Attis* highly as a work of creative imagination, says only that it is '*possibly* an original composition' (1952 p. 3, my italics).

⁹ Wilamovitz' argument is discussed in detail by Mulroy; it is based on a fragment of Hephaestion (12.3) which, in describing the development of the Galliambic metre quoted two Galliambic lines and stated that ὕστερον δὲ ἀνακλώμενον ἐκλήθη διὰ τὸ πολλὰ τοὺς νεωτέρους εἰς τὴν μητέρα τῶν θεῶν γράψαι τούτῳ τῷ μέτρῳ. The scholiast on this passage comments ᾧ καὶ Καλλίμαχος κέχρηται.' (for the full text see Mulroy 1976 p. 62). From this Wilamovitz conjectured that these were lines from a poem of Callimachus which served as a model for some or all of Catullus 63. Mulroy, by revealing the logical inconsistencies within the text, demonstrates that there has been an interpolation; removal of it renders Wilamovitz' case unpersuasive.

¹⁰ (1973) p. 283

¹¹ (1863) p. 369

(which Catullus himself states is a translation of Callimachus) Catullus sometimes chooses to insert colour terms which were not present in the original.¹ Therefore, even if c. 63 is a similar exercise in translation, the use of colour may well be his own addition. It is idle to speculate about whether Catullus translated a lost Greek original or the extent to which he did so. As in the chapter on c.61, the attitude adopted will be that Catullus employs the colour terms as a deliberate choice rather than in unthinking imitation.

This is not to say that examination of the poem's literary predecessors is not a rewarding exercise. Wiseman has pointed out certain similarities in attitude between c. 63 and the fragments of the *Eumenides*, one of Varro's Menippean Satires, in which the protagonist describes his adventures in the temple of the Great Mother.² In her 1987 article Shipton discusses the similarities between Catullus 63 and four Hellenistic epigrams³ which describe an encounter between a Gallus and a lion; the Gallus scares the lion away by beating his drum. When these works are examined carefully there can be found interesting similarities in their use of landscape and in the way that the Galli are described; these similarities will be mentioned later in the course of the detailed examination of Catullus' use of colour in the poem.

Scholars who have written on the literary devices of the poem have in the main part concentrated on its use of sound; on its unusual metre, its use of repetition, alliteration, assonance and anaphora. It is true that this is a very aural poem, but in focusing on this scholars sometimes neglect the poem's visual aspects and its use of colour. Those scholars who focus on other aspects of the poem tend not to look at colour. A great deal of attention has been paid to the poem's main simile⁴; another area of interest has been the animal imagery⁵ of the poem. There are a few scholars who do make interesting points about Catullus' use of the visual in the poem. Sellar, writing in the 19th century, felt that the pictorial environment of the poem served to intensify its passion and agony⁶; this idea was

¹ See, for instance, Cat. 66.62 in the concordance under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS i and Cat. 66.9 under 1.21.1 FULGEO ii.

² (1985) pp. 204-206

³ Dioscorides 16, Alcaeus 21, 'Simonides' 2 and Antipater 64 in Gow and Page 1965

⁴ e.g. Shipton (1986); Glenn (1973)

⁵ Sandy (1968)

⁶ (1863) p. 370

later developed by Schäfer¹ and Traill². Several other scholars have interesting discussions about the reasons for Attis' rosy lips and snowy hands and some talk of the significance of green Ida; their views will be examined in the course of this chapter. All of these scholars however mention colours only in passing or to prove another point. No systematic study of the colours has of yet been done.

3.3 Distribution of Colour Terms within the Structure

There are ten instances of 'explicit' colour terms in the poem (*opacus* vv. 3, 32; *niveus* v. 8; *viridis* vv. 30, 70; *aureus* v. 39; *albus* v. 40; *roseus* v. 74; *rutilus* v. 83 and *albico* v. 87). There are over twenty 'implicit' colour words, although it is difficult to fix on an exact number because a few are somewhat marginal and subjective. The words which, it will be argued, would give a strong impression of colour, light or darkness to the Roman reader are *nemus* (vv. 2, 12, 20, 32, 52, 58, 79, 89), *sanguis* (v. 7) *hederiger* (v. 23), *radians* (v. 39), *nix* (vv. 53, 70) and *marmor* (v. 88) (note that *sanguis*, *nix* and *marmor* are themselves the source of colour adjectives). There are also a few words which, although in themselves they do not convey a strong impression of colour or shining, have chromatic significance in the context of this poem and in association with other colour words (*lustrum* v. 40, *noctis* v. 41 *umbræ* v. 41, *flos* vv. 64, 66, *virgulta* v. 86). It is also possible that *Sol* (v. 67) and *silvis* (v. 3) contained some suggestion of colour for the Roman reader; whether this is the case will be discussed later. Thus in the broadest possible terms there are thirty two instances of colour, light or darkness within the poem.

The poem is very tightly structured - as Quinn says the narrative is highly compressed and elliptical.³ At the beginning of the poem the reader is plunged into the action: Attis castrates himself within the space of a few lines and no mention is made, at this stage, of his background or motivation. His comrades appear and disappear without explanation; no space is given to the extraneous or merely decorative. The proportion of speech to narrative is very high - as Small has pointed out, the speeches contain the same

¹ 'Es war zu zeigen, wie die seelische Bewegung des Gedichtes in der räumlichen ihren Ausdruck fand: Heimat, Meeresstrand, Waldgebirge als die drei Stationen eines inneren Weges zwischen *liquida mens* und *furor*, die Sonnenhelle des Strandes und das Dunkel der Wälder als Versinnlichung seelischer Zustände.' (1966 p. 100)

² (1981) p. 212f.

³ (1973) p. 283

number of verses as the narrative portions of the poem.¹ Indeed the simplest way of viewing the structure of the poem is as alternations of *narratio* and *oratio* with the final prayer to Cybele tacked on at the end. This was suggested by Weinreich and is accepted by most scholars.²

There is disagreement however about the turning point of the poem, the point at which it becomes evident that Attis has lost control of his destiny and the mood begins to change. Sandy sees it as v. 33 which is the simile comparing Attis to a heifer³; this view however seems to be unduly influenced by his concentration on the animal imagery of the poem. Small agrees with Weinreich's view that Attis' monologue (vv. 50-73) is the climax of the poem with the two other speeches symmetrically corresponding to each other.⁴ The most interesting view however is that of Traill who modifies Schäfer's idea that v. 38 - *abit in quiete molli rabidus furor animi* - is the turning point. Traill sees vv. 39-43, the description of the sunrise, as the pivotal point of an elaborate ring structure.⁵ Not only is there a radical shift in subject matter and tone at this point in the poem (from the dramatic narrative of Attis' plight to the epic realm of the supernatural⁶) but these lines are clearly marked off by verbal repetitions; v. 44 repeats the ideas and vocabulary of v. 38.⁷

Traill's choice of vv. 39-43 as the pivotal point of the poem also makes sense when one examines Catullus' use of colour imagery, for the first three lines of this passage have the greatest concentration of colour words in the poem (six in three lines) and there is a cluster of words for light and white at this point which is in contrast with the darkness of Cybele's grove on either side:

*sed ubi oris aurei Sol radiantibus oculis
lustravit aethera album, sola dura, mare ferum
pepulitque noctis umbras vegetis sonipedibus* (vv. 39 - 41)

¹ (1952) p. 4

² See Bardon (1943) p. 31, Small (1952) p. 3-4

³ (1968) p. 395

⁴ (1952) p. 4.

⁵ (1981) p. 212f. . See also Shipton (1984 p. 39) and Syndikus (1990 pp. 81 and 89) who hold similar views.

⁶ Syndikus comments 'Die Bedeutung dieses Wendepunktes des Gedichtes wird auch dadurch unterstrichen, daß nur hier mythologische Gestalten eingeführt werden:' (1990 p. 89).

⁷ Shipton (1984)

Here there are two explicit colour terms in successive lines, with two terms relating to light (*radiantibus*, *lustravit*) reinforcing them and *noctis umbras* placed in contrast. In these three lines are brought together the motifs of light and dark which dominate the poem.

The other colour words appear in a reasonably even distribution around this focal point; there are four explicit and seven implicit colour words before vv. 39-41 and four explicit and eleven implicit after. The manner in which these words are distributed lends support to Traill's, Schäfer's and Small's views that the poem has a ring structure. As Small puts it, 'the poem as a whole achieves the perfection of a circle, turning back upon itself in the second half to reëcho the images and motifs of the opening sections'.¹ This is also true of the colours in the poem: *nivem* in v. 53 picks up on *niveis* from v. 8, *viridis* in v. 70 echoes *viridem* in v. 30, *roseis* (v. 74) and *rutilam* (v. 83) recall *sanguine* (v. 7) and *albicans* (v. 87) picks up on *album* (v. 40).

In this poem there are no really dense colour clusters as there are in c. 64.² Next in density after the pivotal colour cluster of vv. 39-41 is the colour cluster in vv. 86-89 with one explicit and three implicit colour words. Sometimes an explicit and implicit colour term appear together in the same or in successive lines (vv. 2-3, 6-7, 32, 70) but, unlike c. 64 in which certain colour clusters leap out at the reader's eye and make them pause, in 63, with the speed of the poem and its 'racy, elliptical narrative' most of the colours appear in flashes: the reader scarcely has time to absorb their significance before the story races on. This does not mean, however, that they have less impact. In this poem with its economy of language and where descriptions are kept to a minimum (there is only one major simile), colour adjectives have increased importance. In addition, the intensity of the mood heightens the vividness of the colour adjectives (and vice versa). As Sellar puts it, in speaking of the pictorial environment of the poem, 'everything is seen in those sharply

¹ (1952) p. 4

² e.g. v. 49 '*tinctorum tegit roseo conchyli purpura fuco*' in which all but one word *tegit* is associated with colour (five colour words in a single line) or vv. 44 - 45 '*fulgenti splendent auro atque argento. / candet ebur solis, collucent pocula mensae*' in which there are seven words associated with colour or shining in the space of two lines. See further on these lines in the concordance under 1.40.1 PURPURA and 1.3.2 ARGENTUM respectively.

defined forms which imprint themselves on the brain in moments of intense excitement or agony'.¹

3.4 Putting the Colours to Work

Poem 63 is remarkable for the intensity of the emotion it conveys. This intensity is achieved in a number of ways, including its use of colour. Key features of the poem are the repetition of words in similar metrical positions and the way in which the images and motifs of the first half are echoed in the second; as we shall see the colour imagery, with its use of repetition and inversion, plays a major part in this. In addition, throughout the poem Catullus makes great use of conflict and contrast. There is the contrast between speed and calm, wilderness and civilization, madness and sanity, dark and light. In his 1974 article Rubino points out the many contrasts in the poem and proposes that the poem is organized upon a series of oppositions which all stem from the primary opposition of masculine and feminine.² Contrast also plays a major part in the chromatic imagery of the poem: dark is contrasted with light, white with black, white with red and green with white and, in each of these instances, one of the colours 'defeats' or overcomes the other. Because the use of colour contrasts is so strong in this poem the colours will not be examined in sequential order, but in terms of the colour motifs and colour contrasts which are employed throughout it. In general, each colour element will firstly be analysed on its own and then its contrasts with other colours in the poem will be examined.

3.4.1 Dark and Light

3.4.1.i) Dark (*nemus*, *opacus*)

The major colour contrast in the poem is dark vs. light (or black vs. white).³ The darkness predominates throughout the body of the poem with the use of the noun *nemus* and the adjective *opacus*. *Nemus* occurs eight times in this poem, a remarkable total, especially considering that Catullus employs the word nowhere else in his poetry. In

¹ (1863) p. 370

² p. 157f.

³ Many scholars have made reference to this contrast including Syndikus 'So sind im Gefüge des Gedichtes eine helle und eine dunkle Welt einander gegenübergestellt (1990 p. 83). See also Schäfer (1966) p. 100, Lenchantin (1945) p. 138, Small (1952) p. 8, Rubino (1974) p. 158.

addition, as Elder¹ has pointed out, it is frequently in the same metrical position, emphasising its status as a key word - thus what Newman refers to as 'the mysterious, enticing, fearful and ineluctable forest'² is kept constantly in the readers' minds. Although *nemus* is not itself a colour term it is associated with *opacus* twice: in vv. 2-3 (*Phrygium ut nemus citato cupide pede tetigit / adiitque opaca silvis redimita loca deae*) in which the *opaca loca* are used as a synonym for *nemus* and v. 32 (*comitata tympano Attis per opaca nemora dux*) in which the colour word is applied directly to *nemora*. The term *opacus* is not a common word for blackness or darkness³ but it strikes the eye of the reader in a way that *niger* or *ater* might not. Like *nemus*, it is not a word Catullus employs frequently outside c. 63, but he does use it to describe Egnatius' beard where it carries the same connotations of blackness, bushiness and denseness.⁴ Furthermore, in its final use *nemora* is placed in opposition to the *umida albicantis loca litoris*; in this way darkness is emphasised by being placed in contrast with the whiteness of the shore.⁵

References to darkness are not unusual in poems about the Galli: Shipton points out that Dioscorides' epigram about a Gallus is set against the darkness of evening just as Catullus' poem is set against the darkness of the grove.⁶ Similarly in 'Simonides' epigram the Gallus takes refuge from a snowstorm in the darkness of a cave.⁷ Darkness is of course frequently employed in ancient literature in association with death and madness.⁸ Catullus himself often makes use of the negative associations of darkness; he uses it to signify death in c. 3⁹ and c. 5¹⁰ and the mad forgetfulness sent by the gods in c. 64.¹¹

¹ (1947) p. 402

² (1990) p. 361. See also Syndikus (1990) p. 82

³ André doesn't list it as a colour term (1949 p. 416).

⁴ 'Egnati, *opaca quem bonum facit barba / et dens Hibera defricatus urinas*' 37.19-20. Here the black beard is placed in contrast to Egnatius' brilliant white teeth.

⁵ Traill also makes this point (1981 n. 12). On this image see further below under section 4.3.ii.

⁶ (1987) n. 11

⁷ χειμεριήν νιφετοῖο κατήλυσιν ἤνικ' ἀλύξας / Γάλλος ἐρημαίην ἦλυθ' ὑπὸ σπιλάδα 'Simonides' 2 3304-5 (Gow and Page 1965)

⁸ For the associations of darkness with death see the many instances in the concordance under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS ii and 1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS iii. Elder (1947 p. 399) points out that the equation of night with frenzy and dawn with sanity is reminiscent of passages in the *Iliad* and *Ajax*; see further below under 3.4.1.ii.

⁹ 'qui nunc it per iter *tenebricosum*' v. 11

¹⁰ 'nox est perpetua una dormienda' v. 6

¹¹ 'ipse autem caeca mentem *caligine* Theseus / consitus oblito dimisit pectore cuncta' (vv. 207-208). Also 68. 43-44 'ne fugiens saeculis obliuiscitibus aetas / illius hoc caeca nocte tegat studium'

When *nemus* appears at the beginning of the poem its overtones are not entirely negative (vv. 2-3 *Phrygium ut nemus citato cupide pede tetigit / adiitque opaca silvis redimita loca deae*). At the beginning of the poem the word has protective overtones, signifying a sheltered place, surrounded by forests. This also perhaps carries a sexual significance for the adverb *cupide* appears in close proximity to the word. In addition the noun *silvis*, although overshadowed by the dominant colour epithet *opaca*, possibly brings with it a suggestion of the greenness of trees¹, creating an impression of green shadows.² Similarly, when Attis makes reference to the *nemus* in his first speech, he sees it as something desirable, a home that is to be sought after and journeyed to (v. 12 *agite ite ad alta, Gallae, Cybeles nemora simul*; v. 20 *Phrygiam ad domum Cybebes, Phrygia ad nemora deae*). However in the narrative that follows Attis' speech, Catullus uses *nemus* with ironical overtones (v. 32 *comitata tympano Attis per opaca nemora dux*). This is perhaps the moment of greatest triumph for Attis for he is acting as a leader to the Galli in their quest for the home of Cybele. However, by placing *nemora* next to *dux* and emphasising its darkness by the use of *opaca*, Catullus hints at the folly of it all: Attis' mind, like Theseus' in c. 64³, is filled with blinding darkness.

It is after Attis' awakening and return to sanity that *nemus* acquires a strongly negative cast. In Attis' second speech *nemus* is associated both with cold and with snow (vv. 52-53 *...ad Idae tetuli nemora pedem / ut apud nivem et ferarum gelida stabula forem*). The *nemus* is no longer a secluded place filled with green shadows but icy and barren and occupied by wild beasts; its darkness is emphasised by being placed in contrast with the whiteness of the snow. In his second reference to *nemus* in the monologue, there are additional overtones of irony (v. 58 *egone a mea remota haec ferar in nemora domo?*). This line picks up on vv. 19-20 where Attis identifies the *nemus* with his home. Here however he distinguishes the two; he laments that he will soon be carried off into the *nemus* which is far from his home. The irony of this change is emphasised by the placing of *nemora* and *domo* together at the end of the line.⁴

¹ Catullus describes a wood as green in c. 34, his hymn to Diana; '*montium domina ut fores / silvarumque virentium*' (vv. 9-10).

² 'The Idaean wilderness, we are told, is shadowy and green.' (Small 1952 p. 8)

³ See vv. 207-208 quoted above.

⁴ See also Small (1952) p. 13 who discusses the irony of this line in great detail.

Attis' worst fears are realised and in the narrative which follows Cybele commands her lion to drive him into the *nemus* (v. 79 *fac uti furoris ictu reditum in nemora ferat*); here the *nemus* is associated with the '*furoris ictu*', with the return of madness to Attis. Finally, *nemus* is employed in the second last line of the narrative as the lion pursues *demens* Attis into the woods (v. 89 '*illa demens fugit in nemora fera*'). In its final usage Catullus emphasises the wildness and inhospitality of the *nemus* by the use of the adjective *fera*, picking up on the image of the wild beasts which Attis envisaged as inhabiting the *nemus* in vv. 52-3. It is significant that the last colour reference in the poem denotes the departure of colour from the narrative. The poem begins and ends in darkness.¹

3.4.1.ii) Dark versus Light (*nemus / aureus, lustrum, radio, albus*)

As one would expect, the appearance of the sun's light signifies the return of Attis' reason. This passage in the middle of the poem, full of words for light, is in stark contrast to the frequent references to the darkness of the *nemus* on either side. As Elder has stated, there are parallels in the *Iliad* (23.212-32) and the *Ajax* (670-76) for the equation of dawn with sanity.² However in c. 63, although the dawn signifies the return of Attis' reason, it does not have entirely positive overtones. Catullus personifies the sun, giving it a golden face and glittering eyes (v. 39 *sed ubi oris aurei Sol radiantibus oculis*). With the golden face of the sun the reader is led to expect a joyful image for the word *aureus* is often employed in happy contexts (a prime example of this is the use of *aureus* in reference to the feet of bride in c.61³). However other words in the passage counter these joyful overtones. The verb *lustrare*, which means 'scan' or 'survey' as well as 'illuminate'⁴, gives the impression that the sun is dispassionately examining everything from on high. What the sun illuminates is a bleak, harsh landscape - the sky is bright or white, the earth is hard and the sea is wild (v. 40 *lustravit aethera albus, sola dura, mare ferum*). As

¹ 'In the opening and closing sections of the poem we see him (Attis) in the power of Cybele, surrounded by the dark woods and possessed by *furor*' (Traill 1981 p. 214)

² (1947) p. 399 n. 14. See also the *Bacchae* (1266-1271) where the sky seems brighter to Agave when her reason is returning and *Heracles* (1089) where Heracles on recovering his sanity says 'δέδορχ' ἄπερ με δεῖ / αἰθέρα τε καὶ γῆν τόξα θ' ἠλίου τάδε...'

³ v. 160 See the discussion of this line in Chapter 2 above under section 5.3.

⁴ *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (1968) p. 1052 def. 5.

Weinreich puts it, 'Schon hier, in der narratio also, ist die Landschaft desillusioniert und damit in glänzender Weise die ernüchterte Stimmung des nun einsetzenden Reuemonologs episch vorbereitet.'¹ The light is not kindly, it reveals things as they are and strips away all illusion, so there are no dark places in which to hide.² Indeed, in a sense, the usual associations of light and dark are reversed in this poem. For the followers of Cybele the dark is kindly for it is their natural habitat; the light on the other hand is harsh and uncompromising. This contributes to the dreamlike atmosphere of the poem, giving a feeling of inhabiting a topsy-turvy world where anything can happen.

The use of *radians* in reference to the sun's eyes reinforces this idea. As with *nemus*, c. 63 is the only poem in which Catullus employs this word. His favourite word to describe shining is *fulgeo*.³ As the entry in the concordance demonstrates⁴, *radio* is also employed of stars, armour and cats' eyes and its primary meaning is 'to radiate light' although 'glittering' is also an apt translation. Elder points out that the verse *sed ubi oris aurei Sol radiantibus oculis* is echoed further on by v. 48 (*ibi maria vasta visens lacrimantibus oculis*), for *lacrimantibus oculis* is in the same metrical position in the line.⁵ In this way the sun's glittering eyes are placed in opposition to Attis' tearful eyes and the unfeeling nature of the sun is contrasted with the warmth of human emotion. Later on, as Sandy suggests, there is an ironic contrast of this sunrise with the happy sunrises Attis had known in his own land, sunrises which brought warmth and human companionship (vv. 66-67 *mihi floridis corollis redimita domus erat, / liquendum ubi esset orto mihi Sole cubiculum*).⁶

In this context, the image of the *aether albus*, although not negative in itself, contributes to the negative overtones of the passage. This is unusual, for in Catullus words

¹ (1936) p. 479

² Compare our English expression 'in the cold light of day'. Attis, like the Sun, will see things all too clearly - as Shipton says 'Dawn looks around the landscape (*lustravit* 40) with his eyes surveying all the elements clearly. This has the effect of banishing the shadows. When Attis awakes he too sees his surroundings clearly (46)' (1984 p. 39). See also Weinreich; 'Eine klare Sonne geht auf, und in ihrem Licht zeigen sich die Dinge, wie sie dem ungetrübten Sinn eines nicht von religiösem Fanatismus überwältigten Hellenen sich darstellen mussten.' (1936 p. 478).

³ Catullus employs *fulgeo* nine times; see the instances in the concordance under 1.21.1 FULGEO i and ii.

⁴ See Cat. 63.39 in the concordance under 1.41 RADIO.

⁵ (1947) p. 403. See also Shipton (1984 p. 39f.) who extends the comparison between Attis and the Sun.

⁶ (1968) p. 396f.

for white usually have positive connotations.¹ Not only does the *aether albus* contribute to the impression of a light which is strong and harsh but, placed as it is next to the hard earth and wild sea, the white sky gains a sense of remoteness - like the sun it is above human affairs. A rather similar effect is produced the description of Olympus in the *Odyssey* where bright air and white light are associated with a realm which is unchanging and unassailable.² These connotations of *albus* will be picked up in the final colour cluster of the poem.

3.4.2 White and Red

3.4.2.i) White and Red applied to Attis (*niveus* , *roseus*)

Three adjectives are used to describe Attis' appearance, two of them colour words - *niveus*, *roseus* and *tener*. These adjectives are not out of place in descriptions of the Galli. In Varro's *Eumenides* the protagonist, who encounters the Galli in their temple, uses *tener* to describe them.³ It also seems that a fair complexion was associated with cults such as these; in the *Bacchae* Pentheus makes fun of the fair complexion of Dionysus.⁴ Vermaseren comments that sometimes the Galli were heavily made up with their faces resembling white-washed walls.⁵ In a somewhat similar fashion they had a preference for feminine attire.⁶

In c. 63 Catullus lays emphasis on all three adjectives, placing each of them⁷ in a dominant position at the beginning of its line:

niveis citata cepit manibus leve typanum (v. 8)

roseis ut huic labellis sonitus <citius> abiit (v. 74)

¹ It is true that Catullus tends to use *candidus* in this way rather than *albus* but he does use *albus* at 61.187 in his description of the colours of the bride's face (see the discussion of this line in Chapter 2 above under section 5.3).

² 'Ἡ μὲν ἄρ' ὡς εἶποῦσ' ἀπέβη γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη / Οὐλύμπονδ', ἔθι φασὶ θεῶν ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ / ἔμμεναι· οὔτ' ἀνέμοισι τινάσσεται οὔτε ποτ' ὄμβρω / δεύεται οὔτε χιῶν ἐπιπίναται, ἀλλὰ μάλ' αἴθηρη / πέπταται ἀνέφελος, λευκὴ δ' ἐπιδέδρομεν αἴγλη·' (6.41-45)

³ 'nam quae venustas his adest gallantibus! / quae casta vestis aetasque adolescentium! / quae teneris species!' (Wiseman 1985 p. 271 fr. 135)

⁴ 'λευκῆν δὲ χροιάν ἐκ παρασκευῆς ἔχεις' v. 457

⁵ (1977) p. 97

⁶ Wiseman (1985) p. 271 fr. 133

⁷ *Niveus* and *roseus* are employed only once. *Tener* is employed twice - it is also used in v. 10 to describe Attis' hands; in this verse it is placed in the middle of the line.

teneramque vidit Attin prope marmora pelagi (v. 88)

Niveus is the most important of these adjectives for it is the first to be employed, right after Attis has castrated himself. Usually employed of the skin of women¹, it is the first indication that Attis, like the rest of the Gallae, has changed from male to female; thereafter feminine adjectives and pronouns are used to describe him. Some scholars however have other interpretations of the significance of this colour adjective. Sellar thinks that both Attis' snowy hands and his rosy lips are used to indicate his vulnerability; '(they) force upon the mind the contrast between the tender youth and beauty of Atys and the power of the passion which possesses him.'² This is no doubt part of their effect, for *tener* 'soft', 'delicate' is used in association with *niveus* and employed to describe Attis' fingers (v. 10). Moreover Catullus employs *niveus* in a similar fashion at 64. 364; by using the word to describe the slaughtered Polyxena's limbs, he emphasises her vulnerability and the horror of the deed.³ Quinn however disagrees with the interpretation that the adjectives *niveus* and *roseus* are used to reinforce the idea that Attis has become female. He thinks rather that they are indications that Attis was a *puer delicatus* in his former life, one who was not able to make the transition to loving women.⁴ It is true that *niveus* and *roseus* can both be used in this way⁵ and thus may be meant to give the reader the impression of 'the sort of young man Attis was'.⁶ But when one considers that Catullus employs *niveus* only at the significant moment of castration (right after the image of Attis' dripping blood) Quinn's explanation does not seem to be sufficient, for his interpretation would detract from the power of the image.

3.4.2.ii) White versus Red (*niveus* / *sanguis*, *roseus*)

As well as employing terms for red and white to describe Attis' appearance, Catullus makes use of the contrast of red with white with more ominous associations. His use of white/red contrasts is similar to the way in which he employs them in c. 64 where the

¹ See Prop. 3.6.12, 3.14.11 in the concordance under 1.35 NIVEUS i. Also of relevance is the discussion of Catullus' use of *niveus* at 61.9 in Chapter 2, section 5.1.

² (1863) p. 370

³ See on this line in the concordance above under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

⁴ (1972) pp. 249-250. See also Lenchantin (1945) p. 137, Bongi (1944) p. 60.

⁵ Compare Tibullus 4.12 '*hic placidam niveo pectore pellit aquam*;' and see the concordance under 1.42 ROSEUS for Catullus' use of the word at 80.1 to describe Gellius' lips.

⁶ Quinn (1972) p. 250

colour contrast also acquires ominous overtones.¹ The beautiful picture of Attis' snowy white hands is given a sinister twist by placing them in contrast with the blood of his castration which is still spattering the ground:²

*etiam recente terrae sola sanguine maculans,
niveis citata cepit manibus leve typanum* (vv. 7-8)

The blood reminds the reader that whiteness can also be a sign of the pallor of disease or ill-health. This idea is reinforced in the second half of the poem when *niveus* is picked up by its cognate noun *nix* which is employed in a context which suggests barrenness and sterility:³

ut aput nivem et ferarum gelida stabula forem (v. 53)

Thus, as Small so aptly puts it, the image of Attis' snowy hands has 'multiple relevance'. He comments:

niveis not only vividly describes the effeminate hand of Attis but also reminds us of the fact that he is now condemned to live on snowy Ida for the rest of his life; furthermore, the adjective possesses an additional relevance in that it suggests the idea of emasculation and cold sexlessness as well as the *Veneris nimium odium* (v. 17) which originally prompted Attis' action.⁴

The redness of Attis' blood is echoed later on with the reference to his mouth as *roseus* (v. 74: see above under section 4.2.i). Catullus places the word in an emphatic position; it is the very first word of the *narratio* which follows Attis' speech of defiance against

¹ Harmon, in his 1973 article has examined the significance of the red and white contrasts in the poem. He argues that they gradually acquire ominous overtones; the purple of the marriage coverlet against the ivory of the couch is later echoed by the gruesome image of the blood against the snowy-white limbs of Polyxena (pp. 316 - 318).

² For the reference to blood compare *Pal. Anth.* 6.51 in which a Gallus dedicates to Cybele the goats of his madness which include knives reddened with blood; 'τυμπανά τ' ἠχήμεντα, καὶ αἵματι φοινιχθέεντα / φάσγανα, καὶ ξανθὰς, τὰς πρὶν ἔσεισε, κόμας.' (vv. 7-8).

³ See also v. 70 which is discussed below in section 4.3.ii and 80.1-2 where Catullus uses *nix* with similar overtones of disease and unhealthiness - to describe the pallor of a boy engaged upon unhealthy activities '*Quid dicam, Gelli, quare rosea ista labella / hiberna fiant candidiora nive*'. (See on these lines in the concordance above under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS v. References to snow are not uncommon in literature about the cults of Cybele and Dionysus. Snowstorms appear in two of the four Gallus epigrams ('Simonides' 2 and Antipater 64) and there is a reference to snow in the *Bacchae* (vv. 661-2). Both cults were of course associated with mountain heights.

⁴ (1952) p. 10

Cybele. *Roseus*, often applied to the mouths or complexions of women and boys¹, reminds the reader that, in spite of his rebellion, Attis is young and powerless and remains a handmaiden of Cybele. The colour word, echoing *sanguine*, recalls how Attis has emasculated himself; he has become both literally and figuratively impotent against the might of the goddess.²

3.4.2.iii) Red versus Red (*roseus* / *rutilus*)

Attis' rosy mouth is, in its turn, contrasted with the ruddy mane of the lion which Cybele unleashes against Attis:

rutilam ferox torosa cervice quate iubam (v. 83).

Roseus and *rutilus* are nine lines apart in the poem but both words belong to the red colour group³ and Catullus links them by placing them in the same metrical position, at the beginnings of their respective lines. Shipton has pointed out⁴ that Catullus' description of the lion shaking its mane is similar to Alcaeus' description of the lion in his epigram about the Gallus but Alcaeus, unlike Catullus, does not employ a colour term.⁵ In c. 63 Catullus uses the word *rutilus*, associated as it is with the red gleam of weapons and fire⁶, to help convey the violence and energy of the lion. This is in contrast to the youth and vulnerability of the pink-lipped Attis.

3.4.3 Green and White

3.4.3.i) Green (*hederiger*, *viridis*, *flos*, *floridus*)

With *hederiger* in v. 23 comes the first real appearance of green in the poem (*ubi capita Maenades vi iaciunt hederigeræ*).⁷ Crowning one's head with ivy was of course a

¹ See Cat. 80.1, Prop. 3.24.7, Hor. 1.13.2 in concordance under 1.42 ROSEUS.

² Furthermore, Shipton thinks that *roseus*, a stock epithet for the sunrise, echoes the passage about the dawn (vv. 39-41) and is meant to emphasize the contrast between them; 'In the case of Dawn 'rosiness' is part of its essential nature. In the case of Attis, however, his 'rosy' lips emphasize not his beauty but his completely non-natural change into a female condition.' (1984 p. 40). This is another instance of multiple relevance - this further dimension to the colour adjective *roseus* enriches the numerous contrasts of the poem.

³ André (1949) groups both terms under the chapter entitled 'Le Rouge'.

⁴ (1987) p. 445

⁵ '...ἐκ δὲ τερόντων / ἔνθους ῥομβητῆν ἐστροφάλιξε φόβην.' (Alcaeus 21.140-141 Gow and Page 1965)

⁶ e.g. Virgil *Aen.* 8. 529, 11. 487; *Georg.* 1. 454.

⁷ As stated before, although there is a suggestion of green with *silvis* in v. 3, it is overshadowed by the dominant colour word *opaca*.

commonplace in descriptions of cults such as these and there are frequent references to it in the *Bacchae*, sometimes in association with the colour word χλόη.¹ Ivy, according to Dodds, 'in its evergreen vitality...typifies the victory of vegetation over its enemy the winter'.² It is significant that the reference to the *Maenades hederigerae* appears in Attis' first speech. He envisages Cybele's home on Ida as a place which is green and fertile, not cold and wintry as is to turn out later.

The motif of greenness is picked up by the description of Ida as *viridis* in the *narratio* which follows Attis' *oratio*:

viridem citus adit Idam properante pede chorus (v. 30)

This is perhaps an attempt to render the Greek εὔδενδρος Ἰδης³ but it is significant that Catullus chooses a colour word to do it. According to Rubino, the greenness of Ida suggests the 'nature/culture opposition'; 'Cybele's mountain home, like the islands of Calypso and Polyphemus in the *Odyssey*, grows green with uncultivated vegetation'.⁴ Green Ida represents *idealized* nature, nature as it is envisaged by the followers of Cybele. Like the ivy-crowned Maenads in v. 23, it carries with it connotations of vitality and fertility. Catullus makes a similar use of imagery of greenness in c. 64 when he describes the way in which the entrance court of Peleus is decorated with foliage for his marriage.⁵ *Viridis* Ida is the place to which Attis believes he is rushing; however in the second half of the poem it turns out to be not quite as he expected.

The motif of fertility is continued with the references to flowers and sun in Attis' monologue:

*ego gymnasi fui flos, ego eram decus olei:
mihi ianuae frequentes, mihi limina tepida,
mihi floridis corollis redimita domus erat,
linquendum ubi esset orto mihi Sole cubiculum.* (vv. 64-67)

¹ e.g. v. 81, vv. 106-8, v. 177, vv. 341-2. See also Euripides' *Helen* v. 1360 for a reference to the greenness of ivy in association with the cult of Dionysus.

² (1960) p. 77

³ As in Alcaeus 21.135 '...Μητρὸς ἀγύρτης / Ἰδης εὐδένδρου πρῶνας ἐβουνοβάτει' (Gow and Page 1965).

⁴ (1974) p. 159

⁵ 'haec circum sedes late contexta locavit, / vestibulum ut molli velatum fronde vireret.' (vv. 292-3). See further on these lines in the concordance under 1.50.1 VIREO / VIRIDO.

Edwards associates these flowers and Catullus' simile of the cropped flower in 11.24 with Sappho's simile of the purple flower.¹ Edwards feels that the flowers here are meant to recall the shedding of Attis' blood at the beginning of the poem.² This may well be the case but, like the image of Attis' snowy hands in v. 8, the flowers have multiple relevance. On another level the flowers pick up on the ivy of v. 23 and form part of the green motif which runs throughout the poem. That it was possible for flowers to be viewed as green is shown by Catullus c. 17 where he speaks of a girl as one in the 'greenest flower of her youth' (*cui cum sit viridissimo nupta flore puella* v. 14). Moreover, as Small has pointed out, the phrase *floridis corollis redimita* echoes v. 3 (*adiitque opaca silvis redimita loca deae*) where *redimita* is in the same metrical position³; this relates the flowers more strongly to the motifs of vegetation and greenery. Small emphasises the irony of the contrast, commenting 'the cultivated flowers of home have been exchanged for the wild forest'.⁴ The contrast between the two environments is heightened by the other images in this passage. Attis' former home, as well as being filled with flowers, was warm (*tepida* v. 65) and sunny (*Sole* v. 67), whereas Mt Ida is cold, dark and snowy.⁵

3.4.3.ii) Green versus White (*viridis / nix ; virgulta/ albico, marmora*)

The green motif is brought to a climax in v. 70:

ego viridis algida Idae nive amicta loca colam?

In this line the greenness of Ida is brought into contrast with the whiteness of its snow. This is a powerful and dramatic colour contrast - Catullus here brings two colour motifs into conflict. It is not too fanciful to state that in this line the white overcomes the green as Attis' hopes of an Ida which is green and fertile vanish once and for all: green Ida has turned out to be snow-clad. Note the skilful interweaving of the colour images by the placement of the words. *Viridis* agrees with *Idae* but the two words are separated by *algida*

¹ fr. 105 c. (Lobel and Page 1955)

² (1992) p. 187f.

³ (1952) p. 13f.

⁴ *ibid.* p. 14

⁵ See vv. 52-3 above under section 4.1.i.

which agrees with *loca*; *nive* is placed in between.¹ Catullus emphasises the coldness (*algida*) of the snow as well as its whiteness and, once again, this is in contrast to the sunniness and warmth of Attis' homeland. As stated before, the reference to the snow also recalls the image of Attis' snowy white hand in v. 8 which associates it with the idea of sterility and this is strengthened by the use of the word *sterilis* in v. 69 (*ego Maenas, ego mei pars, ego vir sterilis ero?*). The whiteness, coldness and sterility which the snow brings to mind signifies Attis' spiritual isolation, an idea which will be developed in the final colour cluster.

In the final colour cluster of the poem, the green/white conflict is repeated, albeit less strongly:

*ferus ipse sese adhortans rapidum incitat animo,
vadit, fremit, refringit virgulta pede vago.
at ubi umida albicantis loca litoris adit,
teneramque vidit Attin prope marmora pelagi,
facit impetum. illa demens fugit in nemora fera;
ibi semper omne vitae spatium famula fuit. (vv. 85-90)*

As Sandy points out, *virgulta* suggests *viridis*.² The lion, in trampling the brushwood with its feet, is physically destroying the greenness of Ida. This greenness is placed in contrast with the whiteness of the sea-shore in the following line.³ Unlike the green/white colour contrast in v. 70 where the colour terms are evenly balanced, in this passage the white has finally overcome the green. White is the dominant colour element in this passage, not only because *virgulta* is less strongly chromatic than *viridis* and is set against *albicare* which is the one explicit colour word in the passage, but because the idea of whiteness is reinforced

¹ 'Il verso è ben costruito: dapprima un gioco di colori *viridis algida*; al centro, il nome proprio *Idae* e poi il particolare *nive amicta loca*, che è l'ultima pennellata a tutto il quadro.' (Bongi 1944 p. 59). Bongi goes on to compare this line with Callimachus *Dian.* 'Λευκὸν ἐπὶ Κρηταίου ὄρος κεκοιμημένον ὕλην' (v. 41 Pfeiffer 1949 vol. 2) and Theocritus 'ἔστι ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ, τό μοι ἄ πολυδέενδρος Αἴτνα / λευκᾶς ἐκ χιόνος ποτὸν ἀμβρόσιον προΐητι.' (11.47-48 Gow 1952) See also Fedeli (1978) p. 51.

² 'The epithet *viridem* (30) seems to correspond to *virgulta* (86). The two words are not, of course, related, but Catullus' contemporary Varro provides us with this current etymology, "*virgultum dicitur a viridi* " (5.21.102)." (1968) p. 394

³ As discussed in the concordance, this is probably an allusion to the white foam of breaking waves. See further on this line in the concordance under 1.2.1 ALBESCO / ALBICO.

by the use of the word *marmora* in the following line.¹ The focus in this passage is on the sea just as it was at in the very first line of the poem (*super alta vectus Attis celeri rate maria*). The sea separates Attis from civilization and from everything he loves; in a similar fashion Catullus depicts Ariadne at 64.52 looking out over the sea after the departing Theseus (*namque fluentisono prospectans litore Diae*).² In his description of Ariadne's seascape however, Catullus focuses on the sound of the waves (*fluentisono litore*), here he focuses on their colour. *Umida albicantis loca litoris* picks up on *aethera album* of the central colour cluster (vv. 39-41) and carries with it the same overtones of remoteness and distance. These overtones are reinforced by the use of the word *marmor* for, although the sea cannot literally be marble, the words bring to mind ideas of whiteness and coldness (like the snow) and of hardness.³ This is in contrast to Attis whom Catullus, in the same line, describes as *tener* 'soft', 'delicate'. Thus the final picture of Attis is of him standing soft and vulnerable against a vast backdrop of cold, white ocean. Then blackness descends as Attis is plunged into the darkness of the grove: thereafter all colour departs from the poem. The feelings of bleakness and despair that this final colour cluster elicits is hardly surprising, for, as Rubino puts it:

The discourse of the Attis 'immobilizes contradictions, refuses mediation, and keeps the conflict open...there is no progress toward a new state of 'integration' but only a sort of 'frozen portrait' of unmediated differences.⁴

¹ For the whiteness of marble see Theoc. 6.38. In Latin verse the adjective *marmoreus* which is a cognate of *marmor* can be employed as a synonym for *albus* or *candidus*. Lucretius employs it in this way in 2.765 '*marmoreo fieri possint candore repente*' and 2.774-5 '*nam quocumque modo perturbes caerula quae sint, / numquam in marmoreum possunt migrare colorem*'. As Lenchantin comments, '*marmor* è adoperato spesso per significare la superficie bianco-spumeggiante e tutta riflessi di luce del mare' (1945 p. 138).

² Both Attis and Ariadne then offer lamentation by the sea...In both of these scenes, the sea serves as a symbol of separation and heightens the sense of loneliness felt by Attis and Ariadne.' Forsyth (1970) p. 68

³ Compare v. 40, discussed above in section 4.1.ii, where the *aether albus* is associated with the hard earth.

⁴ (1974) pp. 169-170

3.5 Final Thoughts

At the most basic level the colour motifs in c. 63 are, like its numerous forms of repetition, a way of drawing the poem together. Catullus' use of colours matches the circular structure of the poem - colour elements such as white, red and green are introduced in the first half of the poem to be taken up in the second. However colours do not always recur in the same ways and as the poem progresses towards its tragic conclusion certain colour groups acquire increasingly negative overtones. This is the case for the blackness of the grove; at the beginning of the poem it had a certain mysterious and sexual quality but by the end it signified the approach of madness and death. Similarly, white first appears in association with Attis' hand where it carries with it the usual overtones of beauty, delicacy and softness but gradually the colour acquires increasing associations with coldness, hardness and sterility. This is comparable to Catullus' use of the red/white motif in c. 64 which, as Harmon has shown¹, takes on its ominous overtones only gradually.

The colour contrasts that appear in c. 63 form part of the numerous fabric of contrasts within this poem. In most cases one of the colours in the contrast is chromatically stronger than the other and 'overcomes' it as the darkness of the grove eventually overwhelms the light of dawn and the greenness of the landscape gives way to the whiteness of snow and shore. In addition, many colour contrasts are associated with other contrasting sensations (warmth versus cold, soft versus hard) in a form of synaesthesia that heightens their impact. However Rubino's view that the poem divides neatly into various groups of positive/negative contrasts (all stemming from the basic contrast of male/female²) does not do justice to the complexity and richness of the poem. As we have seen, sometimes a colour will start out 'positive' and end up 'negative', for instance 'white' is associated with softness at the beginning but hardness at the end. Moreover, several images that are associated with colour have ambivalent overtones or (as Small put it) 'multiple relevancies'; this is the case for the ambivalent appearance of dawn and for the chromatically ambiguous references to flowers. Catullus' tendency to 'twist' and invert the colour imagery in this way adds to the confused ambience of the poem where male turns to female and the

¹ (1973) pp. 316-318

² (1974) p. 156f.

desirable turns out to be illusion.¹ There is a similar feel to Euripides' *Bacchae* in which the hunter turns out to be the hunted and the world has been turned upside down by the end of the play.² In c. 63 the reader is drawn into a different world where anything can happen.

¹ Cohen also comments on the 'sense of nightmare' in the poem - 'shapes shift and senses are distorted' (1978 p. 51).

² For further comparisons between the works see Sandy (1968) p. 398 and Guillemin (1949) p. 157

Chapter 4

The Colours of Inspiration: Propertius Elegy 3.3

4.1 First View

C.3.3 is a very interesting poem from many points of view; not least from a chromatic standpoint. With the four poems which accompany it, it makes a statement about Propertius' view of himself as a poet and represents a renewal of his poetic purpose. As Nethercut puts it, 'Elegy III,3 occupies a place of special prominence: in a solemn scene, Propertius allows us to observe the communication of that creative inspiration in which he partakes'.¹ The poem is presented in dream form; the landscape, its figures and the colours which Propertius employs of them act unconsciously on the reader, contributing to the message of the poem. According to Luck, 'the subject [of poetic creation] is so mysterious and important that he [Propertius] has to resort to imagery and symbolism whenever he tries to come to terms with it'.² And indeed the colour words in this poem are, in general, applied to the 'symbols' which Propertius employs in the poem, symbols such as the golden lyre, the green cave, the doves with their red beaks and the snowy swans.

Before there is any detailed analysis of the colour motifs in this poem the views of scholars on the poem's purpose and its place in the collection must firstly be surveyed. As well as discussing the function of the colour terms and their distribution within the structure it will also be helpful to take a brief look at Propertius' style and at the influence of art on his use of colour.

4.2 Place and Purpose of c.3.3 in the Collection

There is general agreement amongst scholars that the first five poems of Book Three form a group which function as a sort of extended introduction to the work.³ These

¹ (1970b) p. 385.

² (1969) p. 132f. Luck also cautions against a too easy interpretation of these images; 'None of his images has any given, permanent 'meaning'. It is dangerous to read between the lines.' (p. 133) Fedeli agrees; 'il contenuto è apparentemente chiaro; in realtà, se si isolano i singoli motivi, ci si accorge che essa è costruita su una fitta trama di immagini simboliche, di metafore e di espressioni volutamente ambigue e ambivalenti.' (1984 p. 142). These warnings must be kept in mind when examining the colour imagery of c. 3.3.

³ See Nethercut (1983) p. 1832 for a survey of scholars' views on the structure of Book 3. The opening five poems are matched by a group of five at the end, framing the work.

poems, rather than dealing with love, are preoccupied with Propertius' status as a love-poet¹; in them, as Barsby points out, Propertius shows a 'new consciousness of himself as a poet rather than as a lover'.² The initial three elegies deal with various aspects of poetry: in the first (3.1) Propertius lays claim to being the first Roman poet to follow Callimachus and Philetas, in the second (3.2) he celebrates the power of poetry and in the third (3.3) he rejects Ennius and epic for love elegy. These are followed by two poems, one (3.4) extolling Caesar's achievements, the other (3.5) lamenting the corruption that accompanies war's riches and reaffirming his decision to stay away from epic. Thus Propertius uses these poems to explore a number of related issues: the power of poetry, elegy vs. epic and peace vs. war.³ And, as Nethercut has demonstrated, these poems are also linked by common motifs, especially by the motif of water⁴; this important motif will be discussed in more detail further on.

C. 3.3 follows a pattern typical of a *recusatio*; the poet proclaims his intention to write epic but is then foiled by divine intervention.⁵ Propertius has obviously been influenced a great deal by previous literature in the creation of this poem. The idea of a god or gods appearing to the poet in a dream or vision goes all the way back to Hesiod⁶ and this sort of divine manifestation also occurred in Callimachus' *Aitia*⁷ and in Ennius' *Annales*.⁸ The work of poets of his own time has also affected Propertius greatly; this poem and the others in this group of five show the influence of the *Eclogues*⁹, the *Georgics*¹⁰ and even perhaps

¹ Solmsen (1948) p. 105

² (1974) p. 135

³ Hubbard (1974) p. 71

⁴ (1961) pp. 393ff. See also Frost on the 'exceptional coherence' of 3.1-5; 'Within this framework, the poet builds a system of correlatives and equivalencies through the use of repeating, subsidiary motifs' (1991 p. 254).

⁵ Sullivan (1976) p. 71. See also p. 123 f. for Sullivan's discussion of Propertius' development of the *recusatio*; 'it becomes a whole new genre, that simultaneously displays his poetic abilities, rejects Augustan pressures, and defines the true nature of his art.' (p. 124).

⁶ *Theog.* vv. 22-34. See further Harmon (1979) p. 327.

⁷ 1.1.21-30, 1.2. See also Diodorus *Pal. Anth.* 7.42, Prop. 2.34.32 and Hubbard (1974) pp. 73-75, 78-79.

⁸ fr. 5, 6 (Vahlen 1963)

⁹ See Fedeli (1984 p. 146) who draws a parallel between the opening of the *Eclogues* and 3.3 and Hubbard (1974 p. 75f.) who discusses the connections between *Eclogue* 6.64-65 (in which Gallus is depicted being led up to Helicon by one of the Muses) and Propertius 2.10, 3.1 and 3.3.

¹⁰ Harmon (1979 p. 317) says that this group of poems calls to mind 'the end of the second and the beginning of the third books of the *Georgics*' .

of Virgil's work-in-progress, the *Aeneid*.¹ It is Horace and his *Carmina* however (published at the same time as or shortly before Book 3²) which have had the most profound influence on this group of poems, especially Horace's 'Roman Odes'. As Nethercut and others have pointed out, Propertius' elegies 3.1-5 echo (and perhaps parody) many of the motifs in the 'Roman Odes'³ and on one level this group of poems can be viewed as an ironic counter to their enthusiastic espousal of the Augustan programme.⁴

The subtleties of Propertius' attitude in this group of poems however are difficult to define. Although he may use them to reaffirm his commitment to love elegy, by the end of the book he has rejected Cynthia⁵ and in the following book, Book 4, he moves beyond love-elegy and has, as Baker puts it, a 'foot very firmly placed in the *castra* of Augustus'.⁶ Many scholars have commented on the ambivalence of Propertius' attitude: according to Sullivan, Propertius 'moves...between apology and pride'⁷ and Nethercut suggests that any analysis of Propertius' attitude in Book 3 must be undertaken with considerable caution.⁸ But it is perhaps Luck who best sums up the uncertainties in Propertius' attitude and suggests a plausible reason for them when he says:

Throughout Propertius' work we find this quarrel with himself, this constant urge to explain, to justify his own limited experience, his inability to leave the native domain of elegiac verse. He is perpetually searching for new symbols that might convey to the reader a sense of his own dilemma.⁹

¹ Sullivan (1976 p. 11) cites 2.34b. for evidence of Propertius' knowledge of the *Aeneid*; '*Actia Vergilium custodis litora Phoebi,/ Caesaris et fortes dicere posse ratis,/ qui nunc Aeneae Troiani suscitatur arma/ iactaque Lavinis moenia litoribus./ cedite Romani scriptores, cedite Graii/ nescio quid maius nascitur Iliade.*' vv. 61-66.

² Solmsen (1948) p. 105

³ (1970b) pp. 386f. Solmsen (1948) p. 106f.

⁴ 'As with Horace in the third book of his *Odes*, Propertius first propounds his literary and social theory in five defiant elegies. He defends his own stance in contrast to the stance of the poet who wrote the six impressive "Augustan" Odes of Book 3.' (Sullivan 1979 p. 85)

⁵ See cc. 3.24, 3.25. Ross comments on the slenderness of the role that Cynthia plays in Book Three (1975 p. 125). It is Courtney's view that 'Book 3...is intended to lead up to the final break between Propertius and Cynthia in poems 24-25.' (1970 p. 48).

⁶ (1968) p. 349. However see Nethercut's comment below.

⁷ (1976) p. 126

⁸ 'we must treat what Propertius does in Book Three with considerable caution before leaping to the assumption that, if Propertius sets himself out as a Roman poet, he therefore must be writing in support of what Rome is doing' (1983 p. 1839)

⁹ (1969) p. 139. Baker also quotes this passage to explain Propertius' ambivalent attitude (1968 p. 328).

And as will be demonstrated, the colour imagery which Propertius employs in c.3.3, as well as helping to convey a sense of the mysterious process of inspiration, is employed in such a way as to communicate this dilemma.

4.3 Influence of Art on Propertius' Style

Most scholars agree that Propertius' style of writing is extremely pictorial; according to Hubbard it is 'more vividly pictorial than that of any other Augustan poet except Virgil'.¹ As Hubbard goes on to point out, unlike Virgil whose fluid descriptions resemble a movie, Propertius' scenes are static and closer to paintings and indeed it seems that wall-paintings, mosaics and sculptures had a profound influence on Propertius' descriptions.² Boucher suggests that this may have been in part due to the explosion of art which occurred during Propertius' lifetime³ but, whatever the reason, the work of scholars has shown that many of his descriptions have their origin in and can be traced back to wall-paintings or mosaics.⁴ In a similar fashion, some of the colours in his descriptions seem to have been influenced by the colours in paintings: there were instances of this in the concordance⁵ and this is also the case with some of the colour images in this poem. Thus it is clear that any analysis of Propertius' use of colour must include a discussion of his possible sources in the visual arts, not because his references to colour are merely an imitation of the colours in paintings, but because their origin in pictures which were well-known to the Roman reader give them added resonance and depth.

4.4 Function of Colour in c.3.3. and 3.1-5

As mentioned in the introduction, the colour motifs in c.3.3 contribute to its dream-like feel. This is also the case in Propertius' other 'dream' poem, 2.26, where references to

¹ (1974) p. 164. See also Benediktson (1985) p. 112f., Ferguson (1958) p. 58, White (1964) p. 146.

² (1974) p. 164f. See also Lyne (1980) p. 84f.

³ 'Le monde romain des années 50-35 qui a vu l'enfance et l'adolescence de Properce se caractérisait par un développement considérable de la décoration sous toutes ses formes, notamment par la multiplication des statues et des peintures.' (1965 p. 41). However this does not explain why Propertius should be more affected by all this than his fellow poets, although Boucher makes some attempt to do so on p. 42, putting it down to Propertius' strong visual imagination. Benediktson suggests that Propertius as a young poet was affected by the excitement generated by the arrival at Rome of the first of such works of art (1985 p. 119).

⁴ See especially Hubbard (1974) pp. 164-165, 173; Benediktson (1985) pp. 113ff.

⁵ For example, see Prop. 2.26a.6 and 2.26b.50 in the concordance under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS i. and Prop. 1.20.38 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS iv.

purple waves, a golden sheep and blue sea-nymphs¹ help to create the 'air of inconsequence' which Margaret Hubbard points out is part of a dreamlike atmosphere.² In c.3.3 however, Propertius takes the colour images a step further, for this dream has been sent by the gods and thus the colours acquire all the significance and import of omens. Later on, Ovid will employ colours in a somewhat similar fashion in *Amores* 3.5. In the *Amores* he dreams, amongst other things, of a gleaming white heifer on whose breast a crow leaves black spots; the augur of visions then proceeds to interpret all the elements in his dream including its colours.³ Propertius is not so obvious as this and gives no final or absolute interpretation for his colours: it is up to the reader to pick up the clues.

In c. 3.3, as is to be expected, colour motifs are not just used in isolation but are employed in conjunction with many other motifs and images. Propertius in particular is renowned for the richness of his imagery and for his abrupt leaps from image to image to try to communicate his thought-process.⁴ As mentioned previously, Nethercut has demonstrated that the group 3.1-5 are connected by such common motifs as water, war, wealth and triumph; they are introduced in the word *Pegasides* in 3.1.19 and crop up frequently throughout these poems.⁵ Water especially is an important motif⁶ and Nethercut distinguishes between still water (associated with peace) and flowing water (representing war and Roman victory)⁷, a distinction which will turn out to be crucial to c. 3.3 and which gives added meaning to the colour imagery associated with it. In addition, many of the colour words in c. 3.3 are employed in connection with animals such as doves, swans and horses which all have their own connotations for the Roman reader. Thus, in the analysis of 3.3 it is necessary, more than ever, to give space to discussing the associated imagery in the poem for the colour imagery is inextricably entwined with it.

¹ See Prop. 2.26a.5 in the concordance under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS iv, Prop. 2.26a.6 under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS i., Prop. 2.26a.16 under 1.6 CAERULEUS / CAERULEUS i.

² (1974) p. 168

³ *'vacca puella tua est: aptus color ille puellae;/ tu vir et in vacca compare taurus eras./ pectora quod rostro cornix fodiebat acuto;/ ingenium dominae lena movebat anus/ quod cunctata diu taurum sua vacca reliquit;/ frigidus in viduo destituere toro./ livor et adverso maculae sub pectore nigrae / pectus adulterii labe carere negant.'* vv. 37-44

⁴ Nethercut (1983) pp. 1818-1819

⁵ (1961) p. 389f.

⁶ According to Delatte *aqua* is one of the twenty most common key-words in the Propertian corpus (1967 p. 36) and its synonyms also occur frequently. He comments 'In Propertius there is an extremely typical poetry of water' (p. 51f.).

⁷ (1961) p. 392f.

4.5 Distribution of Colour Terms within the Structure

There are five uses of 'explicit' colour terms in this poem - *aurata* v. 14, *eburnus* v. 25, *viridis* v. 27, *punicus* v. 32, *niveus* v. 39 and fourteen 'implicit' colour words. The implicit colour words which give a strong impression of colour, light or darkness are *umbra* v. 1, *muscosus* v. 26, *columba* v. 31, *hedera* v. 35, *rosa* v. 36, *sanguis* v. 45 and *nocturnus* v. 48. In addition, words such as *arbor* v. 13, *Phoebus* v. 13, *pratium* v. 18, *tingere* vv. 32, 42, *Gorgoneus* v. 32, *saucius* v. 46, *coronatus* v. 47 have associations with the colour motifs in the poem and thus can be considered part of its chromatic imagery.

The structure of 3.3 has similarities to the structure of c.63 of Catullus. Both are made up of alternations of *narratio* and *oratio* and both have repetition of ideas and motifs, resulting in a form of ring structure.¹ Most commentators agree that the poem can be divided into four basic sections²: Propertius and epic (vv. 1-12), Apollo and his advice (vv. 13-24), the cave and its occupants (vv. 25-36) Calliope and her advice (vv. 37-52). Within these basic divisions the poem could be further divided as follows:

- vv. 1-2 **Water of Inspiration**
- vv. 3-12 **What Propertius Would Sing of**
- vv. 13-24 **Phoebus and Advice to Avoid Epic**
- vv. 25-36 **The Cave**
- vv. 37-46 **Calliope and Advice to Avoid War**
- vv. 47-50 **What Propertius Should Sing of³**
- vv. 51-52 **Water of Inspiration**

¹ For the structure of Catullus 63 see Chapter 3 section 3 above.

² Phillip Thomas in his 1976 dissertation on the internal organization of Propertius 3.1-10 discusses the way that Camps and Rothstein divide the poem (p. 40). Their divisions are practically identical apart from a difference about where the second section ends (Rothstein ends it at v. 24, Camps at v. 26). Chromatically it makes little difference, for although the reference to the ivory quill in v. 25 can be linked back to the golden lyre of v. 14, the description of the mossy path in v. 26 looks forward to the green cave of v. 27. Thomas agrees with these basic divisions but subdivides the poem further (p. 41f.). See also Fedeli who divides the poem in a similar fashion (1984 p. 145).

³ One of the objections to this outline could be that 'What Propertius should sing of', actually forms part of Calliope's advice. This is in fact the case, but on the other hand this section is sharply divided from Calliope's advice of vv. 37-46 which deals with war and is wholly negative. Verses 47-50 are concerned with elegiac poetry and thus in subject matter can be contrasted with the ten lines on epic in vv. 3-12.

Unlike c. 63 in which the colours are more or less evenly distributed on either side of the central colour cluster, the colour imagery in this poem only really begins at v. 13 with the appearance of Apollo. Most of the colour elements are concentrated in the last twenty eight lines of the poem (from v. 25 onwards) which deal with the renewal of Propertius' poetic inspiration. The cave and the description of its occupants (vv. 25-36) forms the centrepiece of the poem with the picture of the doves drinking from the fountain coming in the middle of this section¹ :

vv. 25-30 **The Cave and its Ornaments**

vv. 31-2 **The Doves**

vv. 33-36 **The Muses and their Occupations**

The drinking doves are thus the central image of the poem² and the pond from which the doves drink can be connected with the waters of inspiration at the beginning and end of the poem. As will be demonstrated, the description of the drinking doves is also the key chromatic image of the poem and the colours it introduces are echoed in later colour clusters.

4.6 Putting the Colours to Work

The analysis of colour terms will mainly be undertaken in sequential order, with the analysis divided under the headings in accordance with my structural outline. It will sometimes be necessary however, in the discussions of a colour image, to make reference to a later, related image. This is the case with the image of the drinking doves whose complete significance can only be grasped in the light of the colour imagery of vv. 41-6.

¹ No other scholars surveyed have viewed the structure of the poem exactly in this way, although many draw attention to the way in which Propertius balances sections or ideas in the poem. For instance Richardson says; 'The structure is in perfect balance, four panels of twelve verses each devoted to the four parts and a concluding couplet to finish each half of the poem' (1977 p. 325). See also Camps (1966) p. 62f., Thomas (1976) p. 41f.

² Rothstein is over hasty about dismissing the couplet on the doves, saying 'Für den Fortgang der Handlung hat dieses Distichon nur geringe Bedeutung; man hat den Eindruck, daß der Dichter hier eine malerische Darstellung eines Musenplatzes genau wiedergeben will.' (1924 vol. 2 p. 26). Wimmel, on the other hand states that 'man hat sie bisher nicht genügend ernst genommen' (1960 p. 242); see also Herter (1976) who devotes a whole article to this image. In the course of this chapter I hope to demonstrate that the couplet on the doves is not merely an attractive detail but is a key to understanding Propertius' attitude to the issues explored in the poem.

4.6.1 Water of Inspiration (vv. 1-2) / What Propertius Would Sing of (vv. 3-12)

As mentioned previously, these first sections of the poem have few colour elements. The first six lines however introduce important motifs which must be examined, for later in the poem they will act in conjunction with the colour imagery:

*Visus eram molli recubans Heliconis in umbra,
 Bellerophontei qua fluit umor equi,
 reges, Alba, tuos et regum facta tuorum,
 tantum operis, nervis hiscere posse meis;
 parvaque tam magnis admoram fontibus ora,
 unde pater sitiens Ennius ante bibit; (vv. 1-6)*

In these first lines Propertius envisages himself on Mount Helicon, the legendary home of the Muses. The landscape which he describes is full of significance: the water, the grove, the mossy path and the green cave are associated with the themes of the poem.¹

The shade in which the poet reclines is, of course, appropriate for the dream setting of the poem. In addition, as Nethercut points out, it is usually associated with 'the peace and tranquillity of pastoral life'² and is thus a fitting setting for an *otiosus* poet. The word which Propertius uses to describe the shade, *mollis*, reinforces these associations for, according to Commager:

Adjectives...meaning "small", "narrow", "slender", or "soft" were, of course, almost technical terms for defining the supposedly lesser genre of elegy, as opposed to the large, swelling, grandiose, and harsh genre of epic.³

¹ For a similar use of landscape see King's discussion of Propertius 4.4. where '[the] interaction within an idealized landscape becomes a representation of Propertius' concept of elegy.' (1990 p. 225).

² (1961) p. 392. Nethercut cites 1.4-5 and 10.75 from the *Eclogues*. See also *Ec.* 2.3, *Georg.* 1.341-2 and especially Horace c. 1.12.5 ('in umbrosis Heliconis oris') which Ross once again associates with the shade of pastoral life (1975 p. 138).

³ (1974) p. 8. This distinction between the 'small' adjectives used to define elegy and the 'grand' ones used to define epic goes back to Callimachus; see *Aet.* 1.23-32, *Ap.* 108-112. For Roman poetry Commager gives the following adjectives as examples; *tenuis*, *gracilis*, *deductus*, *angustus*, *mollis*, *parvus*, *exiguus*, *humilis*, *lepidus*. (1974 p. 8 n. 12). *Mollis* especially seems to have

Such adjectives crop up at intervals throughout 3.3: in the *mollia prata* over which Propertius' wheels are to run (v. 18), the *tenerae manus* of the Muses (v. 34), and the soft, white bodies of the swans on which he is to ride (v. 39).

From almost the very start of the poem the emphasis is on water. Water is mentioned in the second line of the poem with the reference to the *umor Bellerophontei equi* beside which Propertius is reclining and in the space of these six lines there are five words associated with water or drinking: *fluit* (v. 2), *umor* (v. 2), *fontibus* (v. 5), *sitiens* (v. 6), *bibit* (v. 6).¹ The *umor Bellerophontei equi* is the Hippocrene, the mythical stream which sprung up when Pegasus' hoof struck the earth.² It was proverbially the source of inspiration for poets³ and in v. 6 Propertius reminds the reader that the epic poet Ennius had drunk from it. As Nethercut points out, the stream is also suggestive of war, for it was created by a horse and horses were associated with battle.⁴ Thus the associations of this stream with epic poetry and with war provide a sharp contrast with the 'soft shade' in the previous line which was linked with peace and with elegy.

4.6.2 Phoebus and Advice to Avoid Epic (vv. 13-24)

The list of topics Propertius gives of which he would sing in imitation⁵ of Ennius (vv. 3-12) contain no colour elements. The first colour cluster of the poem comes in vv. 13-14 and is associated with the epiphany of Apollo:

these associations: Delatte lists it as the sixth most common key-word in Propertius (1967 p. 36) and Fedeli associates it with Callimachus, saying of it, 'l'aggettivo *mollis*, conformemente all'uso analogo di μαλακός, è termine tecnico in riferimento al contenuto della poesia d'amore.' (1984 p. 146).

¹ See also Delatte (1967) p. 57 who comments on the frequency of water occurrences in this poem.

² Rothstein (1924) vol. 2 p. 19

³ It is interesting that allusions to the inspirational qualities of the Hippocrene also appear in the writings of English poets; cf. Keats 'O for a beaker full of the warm South / Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene, / With beaded bubbles winking at the brim, / And purple-stained mouth;' (*Ode to a Nightingale* vv. 15-18).

⁴ (1961) p. 392. As previously mentioned in section 4, Nethercut also points out that Propertius alludes to the origin of the Hippocrene at 3.1.19 with the appellation *Pegasides* ('*mollia, Pegasides, date vestro sarta poetae:*'). In this way from the very first poem he establishes water, war and the horse as important motifs in Book 3 (*ibid.* p. 389 and n.2).

⁵ It makes little difference, for the purpose of this analysis, whether the correct reading of v. 7 is *cecinit* ('Ennius sang') or the Renaissance emendation *cecini* ('I, Propertius, sang'); see further Courtney 1988 for a summation of the arguments for and against. Even if it is Ennius who is doing the singing it is clear from the context that Propertius wishes to imitate him (vv. 5-6).

cum me Castalia specularans ex arbore Phoebus

sic ait aurata nixus ad antra lyra:

Phoebus catches sight of Propertius from his Castalian grove.¹ He is portrayed standing near a cave and leaning on his lyre. The elements of this picture have their origin in both the visual arts and literature. Phoebus' lyre is of course one of his fixtures² and his pose of leaning upon it is characteristic of him in works of art.³ His golden lyre goes back to Hesiod⁴ and Pindar begins one of his odes by addressing Phoebus' golden lyre.⁵ It is however Callimachus, (whom Propertius claims to be imitating in Book 3⁶) who places the most emphasis on Phoebus' association with gold: in Callimachus everything that Apollo owns is of gold⁷ and when he is born the whole of Delos turns to gold.⁸

The colour gold is, of course, appropriate for the sun-god; note that here Propertius gives Apollo the appellation *Phoebus* whose literal meaning is 'bright' or 'radiant'.⁹ Thus both Apollo and the lyre are surrounded by a certain radiance and Propertius places them in

¹ Most editors interpret *arbor* here as 'grove' (Butler & Barber 1933 p. 268, Camps 1966 p. 65). Richardson however objects mainly on the grounds that the word is singular; he thinks that Apollo is depicted 'seated in the branches of his sacred tree watching the poet who reclines somewhere beneath' (1977 p. 327). It is difficult to imagine Apollo leaning on his lyre at the same time as sitting in a tree (a little difficult to balance surely?). In art Apollo is usually depicted as *standing* while he is leaning on his lyre; see in the footnotes below.

² See 2.31.6, 2.34b.79-80, 4.6.32.

³ There is a painting of Apollo leaning on his lyre from Herculaneum which is in the Museum of Naples catalogue (Bonagura 1986 # 256); Camps also makes reference to this painting (1966 p. 65). See also Ling (1991 p. 137 fig. 142) for a painting of Apollo playing the cithara from Pompeii. Hubbard (1974 p. 173) refers the reader to Maiuri (1953 p. 85) for what looks like a painting of Apollo leaning on his lyre but Maiuri, a few pages later, states the object is the *omphalos* (*ibid.* p. 89).

⁴ 'έν δ' ἦν ἀθανάτων ἱερὸς χορὸς · έν δ' ἄρα μέσσω / ἱμερόεν κιθάριζε Διὸς καὶ Λητοῦς υἱὸς / χρυσεῖη φόρμιγγι...' (*Scut.* 201-203)

⁵ 'χρυσέα φόρμιγγε, Ἀπόλλωνος καὶ Ἰσπλοκάμων / σύνδικον Μοισᾶν κτέανον...' (*Pyth.* 1.1-2)

⁶ 'Callimachi Manes et Coi sacra Philitae./ in vestrum, quaeso, me sinite ire nemus.' (3.1.1-2)

⁷ 'χρυσέα τῶπόλλωνι τό τ' ένδυτὸν ἦ τ' ἐπιπορπίς / ἦ τε λύρη τό τ' ἄεμμα τὸ Λύκτιον ἦ τε φαρέτρη, / χρυσέα καὶ τὰ πέδιλα · πολύχρυσος γὰρ Ἀπόλλων' (*Ap.* 32-34; Pfeiffer 1949 vol. 2). It is true that in general gold was 'the badge of deity' for the ancient world and other gods are portrayed with possessions of gold (Armstrong, 1917 p. 40f.). In this passage however Callimachus seems to place a special emphasis on gold as a mark of Apollo - as he says, he is πολύχρυσος.

⁸ 'χρυσέα τοι τότε πάντα θεμέλια γέινετο, Δῆλε, / χρυσῶ δὲ τροχόεσσα πανήμερος ἔρρει λίμνη, / χρυσεῖον δ' ἐκόμησε γενέθλιον ἔρνος ἐλαίης, / χρυσῶ δὲ πλήμυρε βαθὺς Ἴνωπος ἐλιχθεῖς.' (*Del.* 260-263; Pfeiffer 1949 vol. 2)

⁹ '...ἠέλιος γὰρ / Φοῖβος ἄναξ, καθαρὴν δὲ φέρει τηλέσκοπον αἴγλην.' *Pal. Anth.* 2.76-77

association with the green mysteries¹ of grove and cave which were linked with initiation from the very first poem of Book 3.² All this contributes to the idea of the god Apollo as initiator into the sacred mysteries of poetry. However, as Nethercut reminds us, the figure of Apollo possesses dual significance, for he is linked to Roman victory as well as poetry.³ This aspect of Apollo will emerge later on in the poem.

4.6.3 The Cave (vv. 25-36)

4.6.3.i) The Cave and its Ornaments (vv. 25-30)

After giving a speech which warns Propertius to stay away from epic and to keep to the province of an elegiac poet (vv. 15-24), Apollo directs him to a grotto:⁴

*dixerat, et plectro sedem mihi monstrat eburno,
quo nova muscoso semita facta solo est.
hic erat affixis viridis spelunca lapillis,
pendebantque cavis tympana pumicibus* (vv. 25-28)

Apollo uses his plectrum to point the way to the grotto. The *plectrum* was a short stick which was used to strike the strings of the lyre; here it is made of ivory⁵ which, like gold, was a material associated with wealth and authority.⁶

¹ Although no colour term for green is present in these lines, *arbor* gives a suggestion of greenness which will be picked up further on by the description of the *viridis spelunca* of v. 27; see further below in section 6.3.i.

² See below under section 6.3.i.

³ For Propertius, as for the other Augustan poets, the figure of Apollo possessed dual significance. Here (verse 38) and in 3.13 he appears as the god to whose realm music and poetry belong; yet it was through his *fides* (4.6.57) that Roman arms prevailed at Actium.' (1961 p. 390). In 4.6. Apollo appears without his lyre, the symbol of poetry and of peace; '*non ille attulerat crinis in colla solutos / aut testudineae carmen inerme lyrae*' (vv. 31-32). See further Baker (1968 p. 344f.) for a discussion of the changed depiction of Apollo in 4.6.

⁴ It is likely that the grotto in these lines is the same as the cave referred to in v. 14 although Propertius employs different terms for them (*antra* in v. 14, *spelunca* in v. 27). Richardson objects on the grounds that Propertius must follow a path to come to this grotto (1977 p. 327). We must keep in mind however that this is after all a dream and, to paraphrase Butler and Barber, it is a waste of time to try to work out the topography of Propertius' Helicon (1933 p. 266).

⁵ In the *Birds* Apollo's lyre is 'inlaid with ivory' ('*ἔν δ' χρυσοκόμας Φοῖβος ἀκούων / τοῖς σοῖς ἐλέγους ἀντιψάλλον / ἐλεφαντόδετον φόρμιγγα θεῶν / ἴστησι χορούς...*' 217-220). Note how gold is employed together with ivory in this description of Apollo. Similarly in [Tibullus] 3.4 Apollo appears in a vision holding a gold and tortoiseshell lyre which he is playing with an ivory plectrum; '*artis opus rarae, fulgens testudine et auro / pendebat laeva garrula parte lyra. / hanc primum veniens plectro modulatus eburno / felices cantus ore sonante dedit:*' (vv. 37-40). See also *Aeneid* 6.647 where Orpheus has an ivory plectrum. It appears that the ivory plectrum was a mark of distinction although Edgeworth comments that it is 'without lengthy literary pedigree' (1992 p. 47 and n. 110).

⁶ Propertius employs gold and ivory together in the poem immediately before this one to describe the ornamentation of wealthy houses ('*quod non Taenariis domus est mihi fulta columnis, / nec*

In this scene the altered landscape reflects the change of mood in the poem. The lush green of the surrounds is suggestive both of elegiac poetry and of the renewal of Propertius' poetic purpose. In his speech Apollo had advised Propertius to run over 'soft meadows'¹ and this image is reiterated in the *muscoso solo* of v. 26; in both the impression created is of a soft, green landscape.² The green element is also emphasised in the following line with the use of the colour adjective *viridis*³, employed of the grotto which, as Harmon puts it, is 'the symbol of artistic creation'.⁴ It is interesting that this is the only time in the whole of his poetry that Propertius employs this colour adjective with all its associations of vigour and renewal. Here it is linked with an object of great power and meaning, one that from the very first poem of Book 3 has a strong connection with the themes of initiation and inspiration.⁵ This grotto however is also lined with pebbles in a style fashionable amongst the urbanised Romans.⁶ Propertius has moved away from the *magni fontes* at which Ennius drank and the cave at which Callimachus spun the thread of

camera auratas inter eburna trabes' 3.2.11-12; see further on these lines in the concordance under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iii). In Rome of course the *sella curulis* of the magistrates was inlaid with ivory and in 4.6.8 Propertius mentions an ivory flute as part of a description of a religious ceremony.

¹ *'non hic ulla tibi speranda est fama, Properti:/ mollia sunt parvis prata terenda rotis;'* (vv. 17-18). As Fedeli comments 'Qui occorre notare che la presenza dell'aggettivo *muscosus* sembra richiamare i *mollia prata* del v. 18 ed anticipare, di conseguenza, al lettore che la via non battuta da altri conduce verso i territori assegnati alla poesia d'amore.' (1984 p. 150).

² Propertius describes the topography of Helicon in a similar fashion at 2.30b.25-6; *'...libeat tibi, Cynthia, mecum/ rorida muscosis antra tenere iugis.'* As Luck says of this poem, 'The idealized landscape that the poet sees returns once more, in a dream, in 3.3.' (1969 p. 136).

³ On the literal level, Postgate says that the greenness of the cave is probably due to the moss which has grown over its stones (1884 p. 156); see *Culex* 106 where moss is given the epithet *viridis*. Compare also Propertius' description of the landscape in 4.4.; *'lucus erat felix hederoso conditus antro, / multaque nativis obstrepit arbor aquis'* (vv. 3-4). As King comments, the ivy-bound grotto of 4.4 contributes to the sensual qualities of the landscape (1990 p. 226).

⁴ (1979) p. 332

⁵ *'Callimachi Manes et Coi sacra Philitae, / in vestrum, quaeso, me sinite ire nemus / primus ego ingredior puro de fonte sacerdos / Italia per Graios orgia ferre choros / dicite, quo pariter carmen tenuastis in antro?'* (vv. 1-5). 'The cave in which Callimachus and Philetas once 'refined their song' is surely identical with the *spelunca* shown to Propertius by Apollo in 3.3.' (Luck 1957 p. 177)

⁶ 'The cave is covered with bits of rough stone imbedded in stucco to give the effect called "rustication". This was popular in this period for the decoration of nymphaea, fountains, garden pavilions, summer triclinia, and the like, and into the walls and columns thus covered might be worked patterns and borders of shells and mosaic, while marble or terracotta masks and reliefs and bright mosaic pictures were not infrequently added.' (Richardson 1977 p. 328). Fedeli (1984 p. 151) cites Pliny on such grottos; *'Non praetermittenda est et pumicum natura. appellantur quidem ita erosa saxa in aedificiis, quae musaea vocant, dependentia ad imaginem specus arte reddendam'* (N.H. 36.42.154).

his song to a tamer, more civilized environment; to a highly artificial grotto which, as Harmon points out, would have been at home in the grounds of wealthy Romans.¹

4.6.3.ii) The Doves (vv. 31-2)

After describing the cave's ornaments (the Muses' mystic instruments, the clay image of Silenus) Propertius focuses on the doves which are drinking from a pool inside:

*et Veneris dominae volucres, mea turba, columbae
tingunt Gorgoneo punica rostra lacu; (vv. 31-32)*

This is the central image of poem and its key colour image and thus each aspect of this important image must be examined closely.

Firstly, the use of the water motif at this point must be discussed. There is some uncertainty as to whether this pool issues from the same source as the one from which Ennius drank.² Callimachus' hymn to Apollo mentions *two* streams of inspiration, the large but muddied river of epic and the small but pure stream of elegy³ and Propertius, in another poem, distinguishes between the waters of epic and those of elegy.⁴ However the use here of the adjective *Gorgoneus*, which is associated with the legend of Pegasus and Bellerophon⁵, suggests that this pool can be connected with the Hippocrene and thus it links this body of water with the waters of inspiration at the beginning and end of the poem. Nevertheless this water is very different in character from the waters described at the

¹ (1979) p. 328. Rothstein (1924 vol. 2 p. 24) agrees; 'Die Vorstellung solcher Höhlen war den römischen Lesern durch die großen Parkanlagen geläufig, in denen sie künstlich nachgeahmt waren' and he compares 3.2.13-14 where Propertius has described such grottos as one of the features of rich men's estates; '*nec mea Phaecae aequant pomaria silvas, / non operosa rigat Marcius antra liquor;*' (3.2.13-14). The hint of artifice created by the pebbled grotto is by no means unusual in Propertius' poetry: King compares Prop. 1.2.13 ('*litora nativis...picta lapillis*') commenting, 'The term "affixed" [with pebbles] matches "the shores painted with native pebbles" in its graceful balance of nature and contrivance and its reference to simple mosaic patterns.' (1990 p. 230). In both passages the impression conveyed is of the landscape as work of art and in 3.3 this heightens the significance of the cave's features and prepares the reader for the picture of the doves which itself has a strong association with mosaics. For further discussion regarding the 'artificial' air of Propertius' nature scenes see the following chapter on Prop. 3.13.

² 'Ob diese Grotte ein gänzlich neues Wasser oder einen Seitenarm der Hippukrene faßt, darüber ist nichts gesagt.' (Wimmel 1960 p. 242)

³ 'ὁ φθονος Ἀπόλλωνος ἐπ' οὐατα λάθριος εἶπεν / "οὐκ ἄγαμαι τὸν ἀοιδὸν δεῦρος οὐδ' ὅσα πόντος αἰεῖται." / τὸν φθόνον ὠπόλλων ποδί τ' ἤλασεν ὠδέ τ' ἔειπεν / " Ἀσσυρίου ποταμοῖο μέγας βόος, ἀλλὰ τὰ πολλὰ / λύματα γῆς καὶ πολλὸν ἐφ' ὕδατι συρφετὸν ἔλκει. / Διοῖ δ' οὐκ ἀπὸ παντὸς ὕδαρ φορέουσι μέλισσαι, / ἀλλ' ἤτις καθαρὴ τε καὶ ἀχράντος ἀνέρπει / πίδακος ἐξ ἱερῆς ὀλίγη λιβάς ἄκρον ἄωτον." (Ap. 105 - 112; Pfeiffer 1949 vol. 2).

⁴ '*nondum etiam Ascræos norunt mea carmina fontis, / sed modo Permessi flumine lavit Amor.*' (2.10.25-26)

⁵ For a detailed discussion of the significance of this adjective see below.

beginning of the poem. As Nethercut points out, it is calmer and more civilized¹, the placid pool from which the doves drink matches the tame and pretty setting. Thus the *Gorgoneus lacus* forms part of the motif of still and flowing water which Nethercut has identified.² The still water of the dove's pool is associated with elegy and with peace, in contrast to the flowing water of the Hippocrene and that of the Rhine later on in the poem.³

The vignette of doves drinking from water would strike an immediate chord with Propertius' Roman readers for it was a well-known subject for mosaics. As Toynebee states⁴, the earliest recorded representation of this theme is described by Pliny; a mosaic panel of Sosos of Pergama on which a dove was depicted drinking from a bowl and casting the shadow of its head on the water whilst other doves preened themselves on the rim.⁵ Although this mosaic did not survive, there are quite a few extant copies and adaptations of it, amongst them a mosaic from Hadrian's villa⁶ and a mosaic from the House of the Doves in Pompeii⁷, both of which depict doves drinking from basins of water. There are also many variations upon this theme, for instance a mosaic from Capua which depicts two parrots and a dove drinking from a bowl, below which crouches a cat-like animal.⁸

¹ 'The *Gorgoneus lacus*, on the contrary, is a pool or lake quiet enough that even doves may dip their bills therein;' (1961 p. 393). See also Luck (1969) p. 141; 'The pool, as the name suggests, must be connected with the Hippocrene, but it is a pool, not a source, possibly a natural cavity in the ground, where the water that gushed forth so powerfully from Hippocrene now forms a quiet little lake, safe even for doves to drink from.' Fedeli agrees with this view (1984 p. 161).

² (1961) p. 392f.

³ vv. 45-46. See below under section 6.4 for a discussion of this image.

⁴ (1973) p. 259

⁵ *Pavimenta originem apud Graecos habent elaborata arte picturae ratione, donec lithostrota expulere eam. celeberrimus fuit in hoc genere Sosus, qui Pergami stravit quem vocant asaroton oecon, quoniam purgamenta cenae in pavimentis quaeque everri solent velut relicta fecerat parvis e tessellis tinctisque in varios colores. mirabilis ibi columba bibens et aquam umbra capitis infuscans; apricantur aliae scabentes sese in canthari labro.* (N.H. 36.60.184)

⁶ For a reproduction of the mosaic see the appendix, fig. 2. Herter also draws a parallel between these lines from Propertius and the Hadrian's villa mosaic (1976 p. 123f.).

⁷ See the Museum of Naples catalogue (Bonagura 1986 # 17). Unfortunately a colour reproduction of this mosaic was not available to put in the appendix.

⁸ For a reproduction of the mosaic see the appendix, fig. 3. In addition Hubbard (1974 p. 173) refers the reader to Maiuri (1953 p. 128) where there is a colour reproduction of a mosaic from the House of the Faun, Pompeii (appendix, fig. 4). Hubbard seems to think that this is a representation of doves drinking. This is not the case; the accompanying description by Maiuri on p. 130 makes it quite clear that, although this picture is derived from the Sosos mosaic, the water trough is replaced by a trinket box out of which one of the doves is pulling a bead necklace. The mosaic is interesting nevertheless because of the dramatic contrast between the white bodies of the doves and their red beaks; on the importance of the doves' red beaks see below.

Doves are of course traditionally associated with Venus¹ as are the *nivei cycni* which Propertius refers to later on (v. 39) and, as with swans, Roman poets always used colour adjectives for white to describe them.² Propertius speaks of the doves in these lines as '*mea turba*', a highly emotive declaration of his commitment to Venus and to love poetry.³ In v. 39 the swans will serve the same purpose - thus in this poem Propertius employs the motif of white birds twice to signify the love elegy to which he proclaims his wholehearted devotion.⁴ In his description of the doves however Propertius also places emphasis on the birds' red beaks, setting up a contrast between these and their white plumage. The *punica rostra* are an unusual detail for literature and several commentators have attempted to account for them. Richmond suggests that *punica* really means *nitida*⁵ while Shackleton-Bailey theorizes that they might be a confused reminiscence of Eur. *Ion* 1207 where a dove is said to have φοινικοσκελεῖς χῆλας 'red feet'.⁶ These explanations seem inadequate; it is far more probable that the source for this detail is visual arts rather than literature for in most of the extant mosaics mentioned the doves characteristically have red beaks.⁷

However suggesting the origin of this colour element does not really explain why Propertius chose to include it. Is it merely a decorative detail or does it have deeper significance? Several scholars have proffered interpretations. Harmon suggests that the

¹ Toynbee (1973) p. 259. Compare Prop. 2.15.27-8; '*exemplo iunctae tibi sint in amore columbae./ masculus et totum femina coniugium*' and the Catullus and Ovid references in the note below.

² For example Cat. 68.125-128 '*nec tantum niveo gavisata est ulla columbo/ compar, quae multo dicitur improbius/ oscula mordenti semper decerpere rostro./ quam quae praecipue multivola est mulier.*' (See further the concordance under 1.35 NIVEUS ii on this image). Also Tib. 1.7.17-18 '*quid referam ut volitet crebras intacta per urbes/ alba Palaestino sancta columba Syro*'; Ov. Met. 13. 673-4 '*summa mali nota est: pennas sumpsere tuaeque/ coniugis in volucres, niveas abiere columbas.*' See also André on the whiteness of the dove (1949 p. 339).

³ There may be a possibility that doves were also associated with death for, according to Toynbee, they were frequently depicted on tombstones (1973) p. 258; see however Herter (1976) p. 134 who hasn't been able to find any literary evidence to support this). If doves do have a dual association with both love and death it would certainly not be out of place in the poetry of Propertius!

⁴ 'Die Vögel sind das neue Symbolelement des kleinen elegischen Dichtens' (Wimmel 1960 p. 242).

⁵ (1928) p. 259.

⁶ (1956) p. 296

⁷ This is the case for the mosaic from Capua (appendix fig. 3) and the one mentioned by Hubbard which comes from the house of the Faun (appendix fig. 4). It is hard to tell from the reproduction if the birds on the mosaic from Hadrian's villa (appendix fig. 2) have red beaks but Herter states emphatically that they do, drawing a parallel between them and the *punica rostra* of Propertius; 'sogar die *Punica rostra*, an denen O.L. Richmond unnötig gerätselt hat, sind noch auf dem Bilde zu erkennen' (1976 p. 123f.).

turba of 'crimson-lipped' doves are meant to evoke the *turba puellarum* of 3.2.¹ This is an interesting idea and is worth keeping in mind, considering the doves' connection with Venus and the fact that the word *columba* is of the feminine gender.² More interesting still is Nethercut's suggestion. Nethercut focuses on the word which Propertius chooses to employ for red - *punicus*. He points out that this variation for *puniceus* occurs in Propertius only in this passage and proposes the theory that in his use of this adjective Propertius meant the reader to recall the Punic wars and Rome's struggles with Carthage which Ennius sang of in vv. 9-12.³ Nethercut's argument about the association of red beaks with war gains more strength when one considers the word *rostra* which Propertius elsewhere employs mainly in battle contexts, usually for the beaks of ships.⁴ Especially pertinent is 4.1 where Propertius uses *rostra* of the beak of the eagle-standard, employing the adjective *cruentus* of it to suggest the destructive power of war.⁵ Thus, when one considers these other uses of *rostra*, it seems very likely that Propertius is employing the colour image of red beaks in 3.3 to link the couplet with war. In Nethercut's words:

where Ennius wrote of Punic battles around Carthage, Propertius will chronicle the "Punic" struggles symbolized by Venus' doves dipping their red bills (*punica rostra*) in the lower, tranquil waters of Hippocrene.⁶

Nethercut sees this as a variation on the conceit whereby the *castra* of the mistress is opposed to that of the leader.⁷

¹ (1979) p. 328; '*miremur, nobis et Baccho et Apolline dextro, / turba puellarum si mea verba colit?*' (3.2. 9-10). Compare Prop. 1.9.5 where it is possible that the *Chaoniae columbae* are girls.

² Although *columba* is the more common form of the word, there is also a masculine form which Catullus employs at 29.8 and 68.125.

³ (1970b) p. 393

⁴ '*Actiaque in Sacra currere rostra Via*' (2.1.34); '*Romanamque tubam crepitanti pellere sistro, / baridos et contis rostra Liburna sequi*' (3.11.43-44); '*tempus adest, committe ratis: ego temporis auctor / ducam laurigera Iulia rostra manu*' (4.6.53-54). Four out of the six instances of *rostrum* in Propertius are employed in contexts of war.

⁵ '*Gallus at, in castris dum credita signa tuetur, / concidit ante aquilae rostra cruenta suae:*' (vv. 95-96) Gallus is one of the sons of a Roman matron whose desire for money leads to her sons going off to war and dying in battle.

⁶ (1983) p. 1843

⁷ (1970b) p. 393

I would like to build on Nethercut's suggestion and propose a further dimension to his interpretation. My interpretation is based on two words in the couplet; *tingere* and *Gorgoneus*. *Tingere* is, of course, the verb in this couplet and although it is usually translated here as 'to wet' or 'to moisten', it can also frequently mean 'to dye' or 'to stain'¹ and Propertius employs it in this sense on many other occasions² including one later in this poem. In vv. 41-46 he paints a graphic picture of the horrors of war, describing how the groves of Aonia are stained (*tingere*) with war and how the Rhine is steeped in blood.³ The repetition of the word *tingere* in this passage and the recurrence of the water motif serve to remind the reader of the couplet about the doves. These words link the two passages and reinforce the contrast which *punicus* had established; the contrast between the horrors of real battle and the love-squabbles of the doves.

However the image of the doves is ultimately ambivalent, perhaps reflecting Propertius' uncertain state of mind about the value of elegy.⁴ This ambivalence comes with the word *Gorgoneus* which refers to the Gorgon Medusa out of whose blood Pegasus, and indirectly the Hippocrene, sprang.⁵ The word is thus associated with blood and with battle, and although there is not literally blood in the water as there is in vv. 45-46, in the light of these later images the suggestion is strengthened. Employed in conjunction with *tingere*, *Gorgoneus* carries with it the idea (perhaps only slight and subconscious) that in some sense the doves are dyeing their beaks red in the Gorgon's blood.⁶ (We must keep in mind that in this poem we are inhabiting a dream world, one in which ordinary rules and logic do not apply.) In this way the image of the doves becomes one that conveys the

¹ *Oxford Latin Dictionary* def. 3 (1968 p. 1942)

² Compare 2.18c.24, 2.18c.32, 4.1.112. Another interesting use is 3.11.17-18. ('*Omphale in tantum formae processit honorem, / Lydia Gygaeo tincta puella lacu*'). Here *tingere* does not literally mean 'to dye' but still carries with it the idea of transformation.

³ For these lines see below under section 6.4.

⁴ See the quote from Luck above in section 2.

⁵ See Fedeli (1984 p. 160f.) who cites Hes. *Theog.* 280-1 and Ovid *Fast.* 5.7-8.

⁶ The word order of the line reinforces this suggestion, for *tingunt* is the first word in the line with the adjectives *Gorgoneo* and *punica* following immediately after. In this way the chromatic implications of *Gorgoneus* are strengthened by the proximity of *punicus* and both adjectives serve to reinforce the idea of *tingunt* as 'dye with colour'. Note also how *rostra* is placed between *Gorgoneo* and the noun with which it agrees (*lacu*), emphasising the act of dyeing.

mysterious process of inspiration as well as hinting at the debt that elegy owes to epic; the soft, white doves are being nourished by the red blood of the Gorgon.¹

4.6.3.iii) The Muses and their Occupations (vv. 33-36)

Propertius proceeds to describe the Muses who inhabit the cave and he relates their various occupations:

*diversaeque novem sortitae iura Puellae
exercent teneras in sua dona manus:
haec hederas legit in thyrsos, haec carmina nervis
aptat, at illa manu textit utraque rosam. (vv. 33-36)*

The Muses' soft hands (*teneras manus*) link them with elegy. Each of their occupations has special significance for Propertius: as Harmon points out the ivy *thyrsi* mark Propertius as the leader of the Bacchic *thiasos*, the lyre suggests the inspiration which is to come from Apollo and the rose of course is associated with Venus and with love.² This final section of the cave sequence has no explicit colour terms but several of the words carry with them chromatic overtones which continue the colour motifs already established and enhance their associations.³

The reference to the evergreen ivy continues the motif of greenness established by the green cave and mossy path, strengthening its associations with the softness of elegy. In other poems Propertius employs ivy as a garland for the elegiac poet⁴, on occasion

¹ The *militia amoris* conceit is of course derived from epic but there are also other ways in which epic 'nourishes' Propertius' elegies. Fedeli thinks that the origin of the Gorgon's pond from the Hippocrene suggests the derivation of the elegiac couplet from the hexametre (1984 p. 161). Wimmel is also of the opinion that the significance of the image lies in the word *tingere* but he thinks the word suggests a more subtle contact with the water than was proposed in v. 5 (*tam magnis admoram fontibus ora*); 'die feinen befiederten Geschöpfe der Venus netzen ihre Schnäbel im großen Quellwasser, so wie die properzischen Elegien den heroischen römischen Stoff streifen.' (1960 p. 242). Nethercut feels that the point of the couplet is that 'we can expect the poet to write jointly of situations suited for carefully-spun, erotic verse, and of more heroic themes.' (1970b p. 392). As Fedeli comments 'l'elegia 3,3 nel momento stesso in cui esprime il rifiuto di scrivere poesia epica, presenta una serie di atti d'omaggio nei confronti del genere resprinto.' (1984 p. 161).

² (1979) p. 329

³ In addition to the implicit colour words discussed below, it is also possible that Propertius meant the reference to the strings of the lyre in v. 35 to recall Apollo's golden lyre at v. 14. The link is weak however because the two passages do not employ the same word.

⁴ For instance 2.5.25-6; 2.30.39

contrasting this soft garland with the rough and shaggy garland which belonged to Ennius¹ or setting the ivy crown of Philetas against the garland of Rome.²

The roses which the Muses are weaving into wreaths suggest the redness for which roses were renowned³ and echo the red of the dove's beaks. Here however the red motif is unambiguously linked with love, peace and elegy for these are the associations that roses usually carry in the poetry of Propertius.⁴

4.6.4 Calliope and Advice to Avoid War (vv. 37-46)

The Muse Calliope appears and delivers a long speech which begins with a reference to the white swans of Venus:

*contentus niveis semper vectabere cycnis,
nec te fortis equi ducet ad arma sonus.* (vv. 39-40)

As mentioned previously, this image of white birds picks up on the doves and carries the same associations. Swans were linked both with Venus and Apollo⁵ and, according to Kober, the Romans considered them 'the white bird' *par excellence*.⁶ Propertius emphasises this whiteness with the colour adjective *niveus* which carries its usual overtones of purity and delicacy, suggesting once again the 'softness' of love elegy. This is placed in sharp contrast with the hooves of the horse in the following line, an animal which signifies war and martial epic.⁷ Their juxtaposition with the war-horse strengthens the associations of the *nivei cycni* with peace⁸, an association which grows even stronger in the following lines when their whiteness is set in contrast with the red brutalities of war:

¹ *'Ennius hirsuta cingat sua dicta corona:/ mi folia ex hederā porrige, Bacche, tua,'* (4.1.61-2)

² *'serta Philiteis certet Romana corymbis'* (4.6.3)

³ For the redness of roses see Hor. 2.3.16 in the concordance under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS ii.

⁴ E.g. 3.5.22; 4.8.40. See especially 1.17.21-2 and 4.6.71-2 both of which also employ *mollis* or a cognate word.

⁵ Toynbee (1973) p. 259ff. Callimachus mentions the swan in connection with Apollo (*Ap.* 5); in Horace (3. 28.13-15) and Ovid (*M.* 10.717-18) swans draw Venus' chariot. See also Hor. 2.20.10 in the concordance under 1.2.2 ALBUS iv for Horace's description of himself turning into a swan.

⁶ (1932) p. 20

⁷ See Toynbee who comments on the frequency of depictions of war horses on battle sarcophagi and other reliefs (1973 p. 169).

⁸ Compare 4.6.71-2 where white-robed banqueters herald the arrival of peace; *'candida nunc molli subeant convivia luco;/ blanditiaeque fluant per mea colla rosae'*. Tibullus also associates peace and adjectives for white; cf. 1.10.45,68.

*nil tibi sit rauco praeconia classica cornu
 flare, nec Aonium tingere Marte nemus;
 aut quibus in campis Mariano proelia signo
 stent et Teutonicas Roma refringat opes,
 barbarus aut Suevo perfusus sanguine Rhenus
saucia maerenti corpora vectet aqua. (vv. 41-46)*

Sound is the first element which is emphasised in these lines; the harsh blare of the trumpet picks up from the galloping hooves of the war-horse in the previous line. Colour appears in v. 42 with the picture of the Aonian grove stained¹ with war. The stain, of course, is the red stain of blood. This is made clear in vv. 45-46 where the colour motif is repeated and strengthened, reappearing in the image of the Rhine saturated with blood, bearing wounded bodies down its sorrowing stream. Here *sanguis* is echoed by *saucia corpora* and the picture is given more vividness and impact by the word order of the pentameter: *saucia* is placed first in the line for emphasis and *maerenti* and *aqua* are placed round *corpora* to create a vivid word-picture.

The motif of blood in water is an extremely powerful one and, as Frost points out, goes all the way back to the Iliad and the description of Achilles choking the streams of Scamander with corpses.² Augustan poets made good use of it: the most famous instance is Horace c. 3.13 with the picture of the blood of the goat in the spring of Bandusia³ but

¹ Some editors employ the alternate reading '*nec Aonium cingere Marte nemus*' although the tradition has *tingere* (Camps 1966 p. 68). This conjecture seems to have come into being because there is no mention of blood in these lines, but, as Shackleton-Bailey points out, 'if *tingere* is right, *Marte* must stand for *bellantium cruore*, a bold though perhaps not impossible locution.' (1956 p. 141). See also Fedeli (1984 p. 157) who agrees that the line could be interpreted in this way

² 'The standard *locus* is Achilles' *aristeia* on the banks of the Scamander (Iliad XXI.200-232) and his subsequent battle with the river itself (233-382).' (1991 p. 251 n. 2). Bacchylides employs a variation of this motif when he describes the sack of the city of Sardis, setting the 'gold-swirling' Pactolus in contrast with the red blood with which it now runs; 'ἐρεύθεται ἄματι χρυσοδίνας / Πακτωλός...' (Ep. 3.44-45 Snell-Maehler 1970). Compare also Catullus 64 which gives a graphic description of Achilles' carnage in the Scamander; '*cuius iter caesis angustans corporum acervis/alta tepefaciet permixta flumina caede.*' (vv. 359-60).

³ '*...nam gelidos inficiet tibi/rubro sanguine rivos/lascivi suboles gregis.*' vv. 6-8. See further on these lines in the concordance under 1.43.2 RUBER. Compare Hor. 2.1.35 in the concordance above under 1.14.1 DECOLORO, Hor. c. 3.6.33-34; '*non his iuventus orta parentibus/infecit aequor sanguine Punico*' and Stat. *Theb.* 1.38-40; '*caerula cum rubuit Lernaeo sanguine Dirce/et Thetis arentis adsuetum stringere ripas/horruit ingenti venientem Ismenon acervo.*' (also cited by Frost 1991 p. 251 n. 2).

Virgil also employs it in the *Aeneid* in regard to the massive losses of the Italian forces when Latinus speaks of the Tiber 'running warm with blood'.¹ In addition, it may be that this image, like others in the poem, owes something to visual representations; both Rothstein and Frost propose the interesting theory that Propertius' description of the blood-stained Rhine can be connected with the stylized representation of the Rhine in Augustus' triumphal procession on August 14th, 29 B.C.² It is however the Virgil lines which come closest to Propertius in their tone and significance for both are employed in the context of the defeat of Rome's enemies but both carry with them a sense of sorrow.³ In the Propertius lines, as Nethercut has pointed out, the flowing water represents Roman victory⁴ but the picture of bloody corpses in the sorrowing water of the river is certainly not a pleasant one and highlights the ambivalence with which Propertius regarded Augustus' campaigns. The parallel with the doves is obvious for in both passages there is an allusion to water and the red stain of blood. On the other hand, their chromatic elements are quite different in their significance. The redness in vv. 41-46 is employed to highlight the negative aspects of war while the staining of the doves' red beaks, set against their soft whiteness, signifies the fertilization of elegy by martial epic.

4.6.5 What Propertius Should Sing of (vv. 47-50) / Water of Inspiration (vv. 51-52)

In the sections that follow there are no explicit colour elements but some of the lines carry interesting chromatic echoes of the preceding imagery:

quippe coronatos alienum ad limen amantis
nocturnaeque canes ebria signa fugae,
ut per te clausas sciat excantare puellas,
qui volet austeros arte ferire viros. (vv. 47- 50)

¹ '...recalet nostro Thybrina fluenta / *sanguine* adhuc campique ingentes ossibus *albent*.' 12.35-36. In this image Virgil brings in another colour element, contrasting the red blood in the river with the whiteness of the bleached bones on the plains. Note how he places *sanguine* at the very beginning and *albent* at the very end of this dramatic line.

² Rothstein (1924) vol. 2 p. 28, Frost (1991) p. 25.5

³ It seems fairly clear from Prop. 2.34b.61ff (quoted above in section 2) that Propertius had knowledge of Virgil's work-in-progress and thus it is likely that here he is imitating Virgil. Frost agrees, arguing that the image of a great river mourning for its people is 'preeminently, Vergil's image' (1991 p. 251). He does not however connect the Propertius lines with 12.35-36 but with the image of the sorrowing Nile at 8.711-13 and argues that Calliope's admonition to Propertius to keep away from this water means 'don't even think about [imitating] Virgil' (p. 259).

⁴ (1961) p. 393

The picture of the garlanded lovers in v. 47 suggests the garlands of roses which the Muses were weaving in the cave scene at v. 36. Roses are an appropriate flower for lovers' garlands¹ and this faint hint of red is placed in contrast with the redness of real warfare. Fedeli points out that the word *coronatus* also has a link with war for it could also be used of a victor in a triumphal procession.² Thus this image picks up on that of the blood-stained Rhine for, as we have already seen, the image of the Rhine is connected with Augustus' triumphal procession against the Suebi. The twist here is that the real victors are those who triumph in love for, as far as Propertius is concerned, love's battles are the only ones worth fighting. As Harmon puts it 'the poet will be the instructor in a new and creative type of warfare'³, the red of the roses replacing the bloody redness of the preceding lines.

The reference to the night in v. 48 recalls the soft shadows in which Propertius was lying at the beginning of the poem (v. 1). Both are connected with the delights of *otium*, the earlier verse to the satisfaction enjoyed by elegiac poets, the later to the erotic pleasures of lovers. This word contributes to the ring structure of the poem, the circle finally closing when Propertius speaks once more of the waters of inspiration:

*talia Calliope, lymphisque a fonte petitis
ora Philitea nostra rigavit aqua. (vv. 51-52)*

The *aqua Philitea* recalls the stream of inspiration at the beginning of the poem but it has an even stronger connection with the Gorgon's pool in the middle. Philetas was an Alexandrian love poet and although only a few fragments of his work survive there seems to have been both use of mythology and a marked bucolic element in his poetry.⁴ Propertius mentions him repeatedly in the same breath as Callimachus as a source of inspiration⁵, most notably in the very first line of Book Three, and on one occasion, as

¹ See for instance Hor. c. 2.11.14 and Tib. 1.3.62.

² (1984) p. 159

³ (1979) p. 329.

⁴ Day (1938) p. 14ff. See especially p. 19 n. 1. Butrica thinks that the connection between Propertius and Philetas was one of erotodidaxis; 'In 47-50 Calliope directs Propertius to become a *praeceptor* and teach others how to gain access to their *puellae*; it has been argued that erotodidaxis was prominent in Philetas' poetry' (1983 p. 467 n. 15). Day however warns against this sort of speculation; 'what can be known of Philetas' love-poetry from the fragments is little enough, and it is quite idle to trace parallels in Propertius and Tibullus.' (1938 p. 17).

⁵ 2.34b.31; 3.1.1.; 3.9.44.

already mentioned, sets Philitas' ivy garland against that of Rome.¹ It is unclear whether by singling Philetas out in these lines, Propertius means to distinguish his poetry from that of Callimachus² but the allusion at any rate makes it clear that it is from the Gorgon's pool that Calliope takes the water. We may imagine that, like the beaks of the doves, Propertius' lips are transformed by the contact.³

4.7: Final Thoughts

The complexity of the colour imagery in c.3.3 reflects the complexity of ideas in the poem. Propertius employs colour elements in conjunction with such powerful 'symbols' as water, caves and animals to deal with a number of difficult and interrelated issues - elegy versus epic, war versus peace and the mysterious process of inspiration. In interaction with the landscape of the poem, the colours help to convey Propertius' concept of elegy.

The other poems in this group of five deal with similar issues and much of the imagery which Propertius employs in 3.3 (e.g. water, the cave) also crops up frequently in these poems. However it would be true to say that c.3.3 stands alone amongst this group in the use it makes of colours and the significance which is attached to them. The dream format of the poem gives its colours added meaning and provides Propertius with an opportunity to experiment with colour images, producing for instance an otherwise absurd picture of doves dyeing their beaks in a pond of water. An extra dimension is provided by the similarity that many of the colour images have to themes in visual arts, although this is not unique to c.3.3.

Many of the colour elements of c.3.3 can be related to its themes of renewal and inspiration. The golden lyre of Apollo, the green cave, the mossy path and above all the red beaks of the doves all help to convey a sense of invigoration and excitement. As in Catullus

¹ 4.6.3. For the quote see above in the footnotes on section 6.3.iii.

² Butler and Barber say no: 'It has been argued that the reference to Philetas rather than Callimachus in l. 52 of the present elegy is intentional and that the erotic themes outlined in ll. 47-50 are meant to characterize Philetas' poetry but this interpretation seems forced. *Philita* was preferred to *Callimachea* for metrical reasons' (1933 p. xlii).

³ Harmon: 'the act of touching the lips confers a special gift upon the poet' (1979 p. 329). Compare Keats' 'purple-stained mouth' that results from his contact with the 'blushful Hippocrene', a stain which is perhaps not produced entirely by wine. (For the quote see in the notes on vv. 1-6 in section 6.1.)

63, certain of the colour elements are set in opposition; the snowy swans are contrasted with the red brutalities of war and doves drinking from the pond are set against the Rhine saturated with blood. Indeed much of the imagery of this poem could be divided into a series of positive/negative contrasts in the way that Rubino did for the Attis poem.¹ On the one side are elegy, peace, still water, softness and birds while on the other side are epic, war, flowing water, harshness and horses. To some extent the colours of the poem can be divided between these two 'camps'; greenness (the green cave) and whiteness (the white birds) are associated with elegy whereas redness (the redness of blood) has a strong connection with war and epic. But, as was demonstrated in the case of the Attis poem, the colour imagery is more complex than this. The red roses garlanding the lovers in v. 47 have strong links with peace, while at the same time suggesting the garlands of a triumphal procession and the *militia amoris* conceit. In a similar fashion, Propertius employs the image of the red beaks of the squabbling doves both in contrast with the horror of real warfare and to suggest the nourishment of elegy by epic. This dual use of the red motif both communicates to the reader Propertius' ambivalent state of mind about the value of elegy and hints at his future direction.

¹ (1974) p. 157f.

Chapter Five

Subversive Colours?: Propertius Elegy 3.13

5.1 First View

In c.3.13 Propertius deals with a well-worked *topos* in Ancient literature - the corruption brought about by riches. He focuses mainly on the effect that wealth has on the sexual mores of the women of Augustan Rome and contrasts this with the behaviour of women in other societies and other times, especially with the women of an idyllic rural society. As Boucher puts it, 'III, 13 est un grand développement bucolique où le poète oppose à la cupidité des femmes de son temps l'âge d'or et sa simplicité.'¹

This idea is, of course, not original; in contrasting Augustan Rome with the rural simplicity of the Golden Age Propertius is playing upon ideas already present in the poems of contemporaries such as Tibullus² and Horace.³ As will be demonstrated, the colour imagery in this poem also shows the influence of Propertius' predecessors and contemporaries but Propertius takes it further, setting the colours of the natural world in opposition to the artificial colours of wealthy society. In this way he uses colour to shape the poem. Most of the colour imagery of the poem is concentrated in two major colour clusters which, by highlighting the nature/culture opposition, draw the poem together while the remaining colour terms in some way or other are linked back to these two clusters. The germ of this idea was present very early on in Propertius' poetry; in c.1.2 the poet contrasts Cynthia's expensive finery with the simple hues of the natural world and the motif reappears from time to time in other poems.⁴ It is in c. 3.13 that this colour motif is developed to its fullest extent.

Thus Propertius' use of colour in 3.13 appears to be largely for structural and ornamental purposes but there may also be an added dimension to the colour imagery in this

¹ (1965) p. 414. See also La Penna; 'In 3,13 Properzio contrappone, secondo un luogo commune dell' età augustea, la semplicità dei tempi primitivi alla corruzione del suo tempo' (1950 p. 218).

² e.g. 1.10, 2.3

³ cc. 2.16, 2. 18, 3.16. In Roman poetry the theme goes back to Lucretius (2.20- 36). Ovid will later on pick up this idea but, in his own characteristic fashion, gives it a new twist, proclaiming that he prefers the culture and sophistication of his own time (*Ars. Am.* 3.113-128).

⁴ See further on this below under section 3.

poem. Many of the colours in 3.13 and their associated imagery (e.g. the motif of fire) carry with them strong sexual overtones which sometimes sit oddly with the professed moral message of this poem. It is evident that Propertius has not yet departed from the colour imagery of his personal love poetry: to what extent this is deliberate is a matter for careful consideration. When one takes into account the fact that Propertius' poetry frequently carries ironic overtones and that he employs colour ironically in the poem immediately following 3.13, the question deserves to be asked: do the colour terms in this poem subtly undermine its message?

With these considerations in mind I would firstly like to survey the views of other scholars on the place and purpose of this poem in the collection and trace the nature/culture opposition through the other poems of Propertius so that 3.13 and its use of colours can be placed in context. After c. 3.13's colour terms are subjected to detailed scrutiny, the poem's underlying message and its attitude to Augustus will be re-examined in the light of this analysis.

5.2 Previous Scholarship: Place and Purpose of c. 3.13 in Collection

The themes and motifs of c. 3.13 are echoed in various other poems of Book Three and scholars hold different opinions on the importance of its connections with each one. Marr groups poems 11-15 loosely together as 'on women' and suggests that in these poems Propertius alternates between a pro-women and anti-women stance.¹ The poem also has links with c. 3.7 on the death of Paetus for, as Woolley points out, both are concerned with the evils of φιλοπλουτία.² It is however cc. 12 and 14, the elegies that come immediately before and after it, that have the most in common with c.13. Propertius has already established gold's evil influence in c. 12 where it functions as an incentive for Postumus to go off to the wars and abandon his faithful wife Galla. In c. 14 he extends 3.13's comparison between Rome and other societies with a eulogy of the rigours of the Spartan system; as Putnam puts it 'no luxurious colors and scents corrupt Sparta as the preceding poem shows they have beguiled Rome.'³ Nethercut points out that these two poems, with

¹ (1978) p. 266

² (1967) p. 81

³ (1980) p. 103

38 and 34 lines respectively, stand in balance around 3.13 which has 66 verses and which occupies a central position in this book of twenty-five elegies.¹ Thus the poem stands as a centrepiece to the group and, to some extent, to the book as a whole; its position gives greater importance to its themes and imagery.

Given the central position of this ode, it is surprising that so little has been written on it. Scholars have a habit of passing over the poem - if they mention it at all they tend to dismiss it as a dull and rather unsuccessful attempt on Propertius' part to support the Augustan restoration of moral values.² The readiness of scholars to accept this poem on its face value is surprising when one takes into consideration the fact that the poems which surround it, 3.11, 3.12 and 3.14, all contain elements of irony and considering that 3.13 itself can be viewed as a reply to (and perhaps a parody of) Horace's ode 3.6 on the corruption of Rome and its women. These issues will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter but in the meantime the idea that there is a deeper (and possibly) ironic message behind the orthodox surface must always be kept in mind during the exploration of the poem's imagery.

5.3 Use of the Nature/Culture Colour Motif in Other Poems of Propertius

Propertius employs the contrast between the artificial brilliance of rich clothing and the colours of the natural world very early in his poetry. In 1.2 he tries to persuade Cynthia to abandon her elaborate trappings in favour of a simpler and more natural look:

*Quid iuvat ornato procedere, vita, capillo
et tenuis Coa veste movere sinus,
aut quid Orontea crinis perfundere murra,
teque peregrinis vendere muneribus,
naturaeque decus mercato perdere cultu,
nec sinere in propiis membra nitere bonis? (vv. 1-6)*

¹ (1970a) p. 99

² Rothstein, when he says 'Was der Dichter wirklich gibt, ist freilich nur eine Klage über den allgemeinen Sittenverfall, an dem das Gold die Schuld trägt.' expresses the conventional interpretation of this poem (1924 vol. 2 p. 107). See also Hubbard (1974) p. 87f. Nethercut however offers a different interpretation of the poem. His views will be discussed later on in this chapter.

As Butler and Barber point out, Coan silks were often dyed purple and were renowned for their transparency¹; they were also associated with words for gleaming or shining.² This, however, is an artificial gleam as Propertius is at pains to point out in v. 6. Note how Propertius links the colourful finery with the exotic eastern scent of myrrh. This word may also contain a hint of colour as Ovid employs the epithet *fulvus*³ of it and the adjective *murreus*, which is derived from the word, can denote a pale yellow colour.⁴

These exotic eastern colours are immediately placed in contrast with the hues of the natural world:

*aspice quos summittat humus formosa colores,
ut veniant hederae sponte sua melius,
surgat et in solis formosius arbutus antris,
et sciat indocilis currere lympa vias.
litora nativis + persuadent+ picta lapillis,
et volucres nulla dulcius arte canunt. (vv. 9-14)*

The greenness of ivy was, of course, proverbial.⁵ The arbutus tree was not only green⁶ but was renowned for its crimson berries⁷, picking up on the purple of Cynthia's robe. If in v. 13 the alternate reading *praeifulgent* is accepted in place of *persuadent*, then this word sets up a contrast between the artificial glitter of silks and jewels and that produced by pebbles and water. The colours of the nature passage are purer and clearer than their Eastern counterparts, there are no refined and ornate colours like those associated with *murra* and Coan silks but only the simple hues of nature - green and red.⁸

¹ (1933) p. 156. See also Horace's reference to *Coae purpurae* in 4.13.13 which is discussed in Chapter 6, section 3.3.ii.

² 'sive illam Cois *fulgentem* incedere + cogis +' (Prop. 2.1.5)

³ 'quassaque cum *fulva* substravit cinnama *murra*' (Met. 15.399)

⁴ See Prop. 3.10.22 in the concordance under 1.32 MURREUS.

⁵ See the discussion on ivy in Catullus c. 63.23 in Chapter 3, section 4.3.i above.

⁶ '...nunc *viridi* membra sub *arbuto* / *stratus*...' (Hor. 1.1.21-2)

⁷ '...et quae nunc hiberno tempore *cernis* / *arbuta* *puniceo* fieri *matura* colore' (Lucret. 5.940-1)

⁸ 'The contrast with Cynthia is thus developed in three relevant ways at the same time: her *cultus* is artificial, foreign, and bought, the landscape's beauty is natural, native and spontaneous.' (Curran 1975 p. 5)

It is worth keeping in mind however that there is another element to this depiction of the natural world for there are hints of artifice in Propertius' description. As Curran points out, the phrase *picta lapillis* calls to mind mosaics, a suggestion which will be picked up later on in the poem with the simile about the paintings of Apelles and thus the impression conveyed is that this landscape could also be regarded as a work of art.¹ Without detracting from the main thrust of Propertius' argument, the touch of artifice, even in this most natural of settings, gives ironical overtones to the scene and prepares the reader for a possible hidden agenda in the poem:²

Propertius further contrasts Cynthia's *falsus candor* with the story of Hippodamia, one of the *exempla* of mythological heroines which follow:

*nec Phrygium falso traxit candore maritum
avecta externis Hippodamia rotis:
sed facies aderat nullis obnoxia gemmis,
qualis Apelleis est color in tabulis.* (vv. 19-22)

In v. 22 Propertius compares the natural beauty of the heroines of old to the colours in the paintings of Apelles and, as Curran points out, there is a certain irony in employing a work of art as the ideal to which natural beauty should aspire.³ The comparison with Apelles operates on several levels. Apelles was not only famous for his painting of Coan Venus, an appropriate model of female beauty⁴, but was also renowned for his skill in blending colours⁵ and for the invention of a special glaze which he applied to the colours in his paintings.⁶ In addition, he was said to be one of the artists who employed a restricted

¹ (1975) p. 6. See also King (1990) p. 228.

² See further on this below in section 6.

³ (1975) p. 8

⁴ Prop. 3.9.11. See also Curran (1975) p. 9

⁵ See the quote from Diodorus Siculus (26.1) in the footnotes on Hor. 4.8.7 under 1.11.1 COLOR in the concordance.

⁶ According to Pliny, Apelles was famed for the invention of a special dark glaze which not only highlighted the various hues but subdued colours that were too garish. (*Inventa eius et ceteris profuere in arte; unum imitari nemo potuit, quod absoluta opera atramento in linebat ita tenui, ut id ipsum, cum repercussum claritatis colorum omnium excitaret custodiretque a pulvere et sordibus, ad manum intuenti demum appareret, sed et luminum ratione magna, ne claritas colorum aciem offenderet veluti per lapidem specularem intuentibus et e longinquo eadem res nimis floridis coloribus austeritatem occulte daret.* N.H. 35.36.97). Curran (1975 p. 7f.) notes Propertius'

palate of basic colours.¹ This last characteristic of Apelles' art has particular relevance to the nature/culture contrast; the heroines of old are associated with the simple, unrefined colours of Apelles unlike Cynthia and her fellow courtesans who go to the East for hues that are increasingly more exotic and elaborate.²

Propertius returns to the nature/culture theme again and again in his poetry, usually in relation to Cynthia. She is attracted to the superficial glitter of jewels³, dyes her hair with outlandish and exotic colours⁴ and is frequently associated with flamboyant colours or unusual colour combinations.⁵ These can be contrasted with the simple beauty which Cynthia has when she is naked and unadorned. Propertius describes her in this way in 2.29b and it is significant that he associates this beauty with a word for white - *candida*:

*obstupui: non illa mihi formosior umquam
visa, neque ostrina cum fuit in tunica,
ibat et hinc castae narratum somnia Vestae,
neu sibi neve mihi quae nocitura forent:
talis visa mihi somno dimissa recenti.
heu quantum per se candida forma valet! (vv. 25-30)*

emphasis on brightness in the *exempla* of mythological heroines which precedes this passage (for instance many of the proper names have roots signifying light) and suggests that the main point of the comparison is the peculiar lustre of Apelles' colours (p. 9). It is however a matter of debate as to whether the glaze intensified the colours or softened them - according to Bruno it is the latter (1977 p. 61).

¹ Pliny *N.H.* 35.32.50: '*Quattuor coloribus solis immortalia illa opera fecere - ex albis Melino, e silaciis Attico, ex rubris Sinopide Pontica, ex nigris atramento - Apelles, Aetion, Melanthius, Nichomachus, clarissimi pictores, cum tabulae eorum singulae oppidorum venirent opibus*'. See also Pliny *N.H.* 35.36.92 which makes much the same point. For a detailed discussion of the 'four colour question' see Bruno (1977) pp. 53ff. See also Wallace 1927 p. 45f.

² For the Roman distrust of flamboyant colours from the East see Bruno (1977) p. 70; 'Of particular significance is Pliny's manner of contrasting the colors of the four-colour palate with a group of colors that are variously characterized as more expensive, usually foreign in origin, more flamboyant, and more intense and bright - colors that are, in short, symbolic of a kind of luxury considered inimical to older Roman values.'

³ '*et cupit iratum talos me poscere eburnos, / quaeque nitent Sacra vilia dona Via.*' (2.24a.13-14). See further on these lines in the concordance above under 1.34.1 NITEO ii.

⁴ '*Nunc etiam infectos demens imitare Britannos, / ludis et externo tincta nitore caput? / ut natura dedit, sic omnis recta figura est: / turpis Romano Belgicus ore color...an si caeruleo quaedam sua tempora fuco / tinxerit, idcirco caerula forma bona est?*' (2.18c.23-26; 31-32)

⁵ '*sed quascumque tibi vestis, quoscumque smaragdos, / quosve dedit flavo lumine chrysolithos*' (2.16.43-44). See further on these lines in the concordance above under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS iii. See also 2.29b below.

Poem 3.13 will extend the nature/culture colour motif beyond Cynthia to women in general but these other instances add resonance to the colour images employed in this poem.

5.4 Role of Colour in the Structure of the Poem

C.3.13 has thirteen instances of explicit colour terms - *aurum* v. 5, v. 48, v. 49 (twice) v. 50, v. 55, *ruber* v. 6 (proper name), v. 16, *Tyrus* v. 7, *ostrinus* v. 7, *puniceus* v. 28, *versicolor* v. 32, *auratus* v. 57. There are around fourteen instances of implicit colour - *concha* v. 6, *color* v. 7, *colorare* v. 16, *messis* v. 26, *arbor* v. 26, *Cydonia* v. 27, *viola* v. 29, *lilia* v. 30, *lucidus* v. 30, *uva* v. 31, *varius* v. 31, *herba* v. 36, *pinus* v. 37, *umbra* v. 37 (note that, as with c. 61, many of these words are related to vegetation). There are also quite a few words for fire and burning which make a contribution to the colour imagery of the poem - *fax* v. 17, *ardere* v. 21, *flamma* v. 21, *perustus* v. 22, *torridus* v. 51.

The distribution of colour terms within the poem is uneven, most of the colour words occurring at the beginning and middle of the poem. The poem falls into five basic sections¹:

1. vv. 1-14 **The Women of Propertius' Rome**
2. vv. 15 - 24 **The Women of the East**
3. vv. 25 - 46 **The Women of the Golden Age**
4. vv. 47 - 58 **The Corrupting Power of Gold**
5. vv. 59 - 66 **Propertius as *haruspex*.**

The second and the third sections are both introduced by the word *felix*.² The implication is that the societies which Propertius describes in these sections are happier or more fortunate in the conduct of their women. The fourth section begins with the words *at nunc* as Propertius brings himself back to current realities and the beginning of the final section is marked by the use of the first person singular verb *proloquar*.

¹ Nethercut also divides the poem in a similar fashion (1970a p. 99f.)

² Nethercut (1970a p. 102). He notes that this word also occurs in 3.12 to describe Postumus' good fortune in having the chaste Galla for wife; '*ter quater in casta felix, O Postume, Galla*' (v. 15).

The subject matter of the poem is wide-ranging and there are leaps in both time and space from section to section (Propertius goes from present-day Rome to India, to the Golden age and back to Rome again). Colour motifs are one of the main ways in which Propertius draws the poem together. Colour helps to shape the poem - it leads us into the golden age and leads us back out again into an age which is golden only in a material sense. Most of the colour words occur in the first and third sections in the two major colour clusters of the poem, the first describing the wealth of Propertius' Rome, the second the delights of the Golden Age. As will be demonstrated, the colour imagery in the second section forms a bridge between these two colour clusters. In the fourth section the colour focus narrows to a single word, *aurum*, as Propertius hammers home the message that gold overwhelms and corrupts everything. Then in the final section, colour disappears from the poem when Propertius delivers his bleak moral message.

Of all the colour terms which are used to draw the poem together gold is the dominant one; in both noun and adjective form it occurs seven times and is the first and last colour word to appear. Propertius plays on the full range of gold's associations, it is not only connected with the greed for wealth and the destructive power of weapons but also the delights of the golden age. As Nethercut puts it, it is employed of two different golden ages 'one in which lovers mate openly, the other a product of the gold brought back from the East.'¹ Also used to link the first three sections are words for red and purple, both in implicit and explicit form. These are employed primarily for their connection with wealth but, as will be demonstrated, also carry with them strong erotic connotations.

5.5 Putting the Colours to Work

The chromatic analysis of this poem will be undertaken section by section; however within the sections it will sometimes be necessary to depart from a sequential examination of the colour words for the sake of clarity. Unlike in c. 3.3, water imagery does not play an important part in this poem. Instead, in a somewhat similar fashion to c. 61 of Catullus, Propertius employs imagery of fire and of vegetation, frequently with the same sexual

¹ (1970a) p. 101

overtones. Whenever this imagery is employed in conjunction with the colour elements in the poem it will also be examined.

5.5.1 The Women of Propertius' Rome (vv. 1-14)

Propertius begins his poem by replying to an implied question about the reasons for the greed of Roman women (vv. 1-2). Colour makes its appearance in the fifth verse with his description of the luxuries of the East which have seduced Roman women from the path of virtue:

*Inda cavis aurum mittit formica metallis,
et venit e Rubro concha Erycina salo,
et Tyros ostrinos praebet Cadmea colores,
cinnamon et multi pastor odoris Arabs:
haec etiam clausas expugnant arma pudicas,
quaeque gerunt fastus, Icarioni, tuos. (vv. 5-10)*

Gold is the first colour word in the cluster; its Eastern origin is suggested by the adjective *Indus*. In these lines Propertius associates each colour word with an exotic Eastern location (the conch shell with the Red Sea¹, purple with Tyre) - in this way he plays on the conventional notion that both bright colours and corruption originated in the East.² Propertius also lays emphasis on the metallic nature of gold (*metallis*). This prepares the reader for the metaphor of these luxuries as weapons which will overcome all resistance (vv. 9-10).³

The colours red and purple make their appearance in v. 6 with the word *concha* and the mention of the Red Sea. Most editors take *concha* here as pearl⁴ but it was also the

¹ In the ancient world the Red Sea included the Indian Ocean and is employed by Virgil in *Aen.* 8. 686 to represent the clash of East vs. West (Edgeworth 1992 p. 158).

² This was especially true of purple which was the brightest colour in the ancient world. Purple of course originated in the East and in the minds of the Greeks and Romans there was a strong connection between the East and corruption. In the fifth century this led to a reaction against purple amongst certain Greek cities as part of anti-Persian feeling and in the Roman Empire emperors such as Tiberius tried to set an example by rejecting purple and wearing clothes of sombre hue. See Reinhold (1970) p. 24f. for the Greek attitude; amongst other primary sources he cites Aeschylus *Ag.* 909, 946, 957. For Tiberius' attitude to purple see again Reinhold p. 49 where he cites Dio Cassius 57.13.

³ Here the concepts of war and greed are fused by Propertius in a context where the objects of greed are the very *arma* which storm the hearts of women' (Baker 1968 p. 337).

⁴ Camps (1966) p. 116, Butler and Barber (1933) p. 295. Propertius associates the Red Sea with pearls in 1. 14. 9-12 in a metaphor about the delights of his union with Cynthia; *'nam sive*

name for the shell-fish which produced the purple dye and the word could be employed as a synonym for purple.¹ Propertius introduces a further colour element with the name of the Red Sea (*Ruber salus*); playing upon the chromatic meaning of the proper name was quite a common device amongst the Roman poets.² The use of the explicit colour term *ostrinus* in the following line confirms these suggestions of purple.

In some writers the word *concha* was employed to denote the female genitalia.³ Note that here Propertius links the word with the adjective *Erycina* which was an epithet of Venus.⁴ This lends erotic overtones to the lines which reinforces the seductive connotations of purple cloth for, in Propertius and other poets, purple cloth could be associated with a character's desirability.⁵ The reference to the fragrance of cinnamon (v. 8), like Propertius' mention of myrrh in 1.2.3 (above) also adds to the sensual overtones of these lines.⁶ In addition, like the myrrh, it may contribute to the chromatic effect of the passage but it is difficult to know for certain as I have been unable to find any satisfactory references to the colour of cinnamon in any of the texts studied.⁷

The major colour contrast in this cluster is between gold and purple. Gold and purple are, of course, commonplace in descriptions of wealth; their use in Roman literature to

*optatam mecum trahit illa quietem, / seu facili totum ducit amore diem, / tum mihi Pactoli
veniunt sub tecta liquores, / et legitur Rubris gemma sub aequoribus;*'

¹ 'conlocat hanc stratis *concha* Sidonide tinctis' (Ovid. *Met.* 10.267)

² e.g.. Tibullus 2. 2. 15 - 16 'nec tibi gemmarum quicquid felicibus Indis / nascitur, Eoi qua maris unda *rubet*.'; [Tibullus] 3.8. 19-20 'et quascumque *niger rubro* de litore gemmas / proximus Eois colligit Indus aquis'; Martial 7.30.3-4 'et tibi de Pharia Menphiticus urbe fututor / navigat, a *rubris et niger* Indus aquis;'

³ The *Oxford Latin Dictionary* says that it could be employed of the female pudenda (1968 p. 386) and cites Plautus *Rud.* 704; 'te [sc. *Venerem*] ex *concha* natum esse autumant; cave tu harum *conchas spernas*.'

⁴ Some scholars substitute the more familiar *Erythraea* for *Erycina* but *Erycina* with its associations with Venus suits the context very well. See Shackleton-Bailey (1956) p. 177 for his arguments against the alternate reading.

⁵ In Propertius 4.3.51 a wife whose soldier husband is missing laments that she now has no need of purple to make her desirable (see further on this line in the concordance under 1.21.1 FULGEO iii and compare Prop. 2.1.5). In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* the sight of Nisus clad in purple and riding a white steed sends Scylla almost out of her mind with desire; 'cum vero faciem dempto nudaverat aere / *purpureusque albi* stratis insignia pictis / terga premebat equi spumantiaque ora regebat, / vix sua, vix sanae virgo Niseia compos / mentis erat:...' (8. 32-6).

⁶ Both are reminiscent of Catullus' use of fragrant plants in c.61 (see Chapter 2).

⁷ The elder Pliny does refer to cinnamon as both *nigrum* and *candidum* but this is in the context of contrasting the colours of two different types of cinnamon - one whiter and the other darker (perhaps a pale brown as opposed to a dark brown?); 'quidam cinnami duo genera tradidere, *candidius nigriusque*, et quondam praeferebatur *candidum*, nunc contra *nigrum* laudatur atque etiam varium praefertur *candido*.' (N.H. 12.42.92). On the paucity of words for brown in Greek and Latin literature see Edgeworth (1992) pp. 241-24, André (1949) p. 123-127 and Wallace (1927) p. 14 n.6.

signify the power of riches goes back to Lucretius.¹ In his poetry Propertius frequently makes use of these colours in descriptions of courtesans who were renowned for their love of luxury.² Cynthia spins purple thread in 1.3³, in 4.5⁴ a bawd gives advice to a young girl on how to acquire the gold and purple in which she delights and a courtesan marks the dust with her robe's golden border in 4.7⁵. This will be set in contrast to the Spartan girl of c. 3.14 who rides naked⁶ and who never wears clothing made from Tyrian purple.⁷

The use which Propertius makes of colours in this passage has great similarities to Tibullus who employs them in his description of the courtesan Nemesis:

*heu heu divitibus video gaudere puellas:
iam veniant praedae, si Venus optat opes:
ut mea luxuria Nemesis fluat utque per urbem
incedat donis conspicienda meis.
illa gerat vestes tenues, quas femina Coa
texuit, auratas disposuitque vias:
illi sint comites fusci quos India torret
Solis et admotis inficit ignis equis:
illi selectos certent praeberere colores
Africa puniceum purpureumque Tyros. (2.3.49-58)*

The contrast of purple and gold is present as well as the association of bright colour with the East (Africa and Tyre v. 58). In addition, the reference to the Indian attendants who have been scorched by the sun finds an echo in Propertius' lines on the people of the East who have been coloured by the dawn.⁸ It is difficult to be sure who is imitating whom as

¹ '...nunc aurum et purpura curis/ exercent hominum vitam belloque fatigant;' (5. 1423-24)

² Compare the *Greek Anthology*; 'τὴν καὶ ἄμα χρυσῶ καὶ ἀλουργίδι καὶ σὺν Ἔρωτι / θρυπτομένην...' (7.218.1f.)

³ 'nam modo purpureo fallebam stamine somnum' (v. 41). See further on this line in the concordance under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i.

⁴ 'Si te Eoa Dorozantium iuvat aurea ripa,/ et quae sub Tyria concha superbit aqua,' (vv. 21-22). See further on these lines in the concordance under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iii.

⁵ 'haec nunc aurata cyclade signat humum;' (v. 40). See further on these lines in the concordance under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS ii.

⁶ vv. 11-12. On these lines see further below under section 6.

⁷ 'nec Tyriae vestes errantia lumina fallunt' (v. 27)

⁸ Heyworth (1986) p. 206. See further on this line below under section 5.2.

the dates of Propertius' and Tibullus' books are uncertain¹ but it is probable that both are employing colour imagery that was in vogue amongst the Latin love elegists.²

5.5.2 The Women of the East (vv. 15 - 24)

The first colour word which Propertius employs in this section occurs in its second line with the description of the red dawn tanning the faces of Eastern husbands:

*felix Eois lex funeris una maritis,
quos Aurora suis rubra colorat equis!* (vv. 15-16)

As we have seen from the Tibullus' lines, this image was a conventional one; conventional also is the use of adjectives for red or pink to describe the dawn.³ This colour image picks up on the previous colour cluster with the mention of the East and the use of the colour adjective *ruber* recalling the *Ruber salus* of v. 6. However Propertius does not continue the idea that corruption comes from the East. Instead he reverses the usual notion by praising the virtue of Indian wives.⁴ This is in contrast to the courtesans and to Cynthia who, although not mentioned by name, is perhaps brought into the reader's mind because of her association with red dawn in two other poems of Book 3. In 3.10, Cynthia's birthday poem, the Muses stand in front of Propertius' couch in the reddening light of dawn⁵ and in 3.24 Propertius tells Cynthia that although she was often compared to the rosy dawn, her

¹ Camps (1966 p. 1), using the few historical references in the poems, fixes the limits of Propertius' Book 3 as not wider than 25-20 B.C. AND perhaps 24-21. Murgatroyed (1994 p. xi) says that most, if not all, of the elegies in Tibullus second book must have been written after the publication of his first collection in 27/26 B.C. and before Tibullus' death in 19/18 B.C. Murgatroyed inclines to the view that Book 2 of Tibullus was put together shortly before his death or soon after - if this is the case then it is possible that it was the publication of Propertius' Book 3 which influenced Tibullus. La Penna, on the other hand, inclines to the view that c. 3.13 has been influenced by Tibullus and his predecessors (1950 p. 232f.)

² Compare also [Tibullus] 3.3.17-18 ('*quidve in Erythraeo legitur quae litore concha/tinctaque Sidonio murice lana iuvat*') which also employs the *concha* and Eastern purple as symbols of wealth and especially [Tibullus] 3.8.15-20 ('*sola puellarum digna est cui mollia caris/vellera det sucis bis madefacta Tyros,/ possideatque, metit quidquid bene olentibus arvis/cultor odoratae dives Arabs segetis,/ et quascumque niger Rubro de litore gemmas/proximus Eois colligit Indus aquis.*') which associates Tyrian purple with a fragrant plant (although it doesn't specifically mention cinnamon) and contrasts the dark Indians with the Red Sea.

³ See the discussion on Prop. 3.24.7 in the concordance under 1.42 ROSEUS and Prop. 3.10.2 under 1.43.1 RUBEO and compare Prop. 4.3.10 above in the concordance under 1.14.2 DECOLOR.

⁴ Propertius may be following Cicero who describes suttee in India as an instance of virtue overcoming pain; '*mulieres vero in India, cum est cuius earum vir mortuus, in certamen iudiciumque veniunt quam plurimum ille dilexerit - plures enim singulis solent esse nuptae; quae est victrix, ea laeta prosequentibus suis una cum viro in rogam imponitur, illa victa maesta discedit.*' (Tusc. 5. 78). See also Herodotus 5.5 where he describes a similar custom among the Thracians in the same sort of language.

⁵ '*Mirabar, quidnam visissent mane Camenae,/ ante meum stantes sole rubente torum./ natalis nostrae signum misere puellae/ et manibus faustos ter crepuere sonos.*' (vv. 1-4)

radiance was contrived.¹ This latter instance is especially interesting for it continues the theme of artificial beauty versus natural. Cynthia has to produce her complexion by artificial means² unlike the Indians of 3.13 who are coloured naturally by the sun. A few lines later on however, Propertius will give an ironic twist to his description of ruddy complexions when he describes the Hindu wives laying their charred faces on their husbands' bodies.

In the lines that follow there are many words for flames and burning which continue the red motif:

*namque ubi mortifero iacta est fax ultima lecto,
uxorum fuis stat pia turba comis,
et certamen habent leti, quae viva sequatur
coniugium: pudor est non licuisse mori.
ardent victrices et flammae pectora praebent,
imponuntque suis ora perusta viris. (vv. 17-22)*

Like the *ostrinos colores* of v. 7, these terms also convey strong sexual overtones for *fax*, *ardeo* and *flamma* are often employed by poets in the context of love poetry.³ The sexual overtones are reinforced by other words and phrases in these lines. *Lectus* in v. 17, which denotes the funeral pyre, is more commonly employed of beds of love or marriage⁴ and the *turba uxorum* of v. 18 recalls the *turba puellarum* at c. 3.2. 10 and the *turba* of doves at 3.3.31, both of which are linked with love poetry.⁵ As Commager points out, this is another instance of the peculiar linkage in Propertius of love and death⁶ but there may also be a hint of irony in the use of terms for sexual passion in this passage. Propertius' use of language in this passage has similarities to the poem that follows in which the Spartan

¹ 'et color est totiens roseo collatus Eoo, / cum tibi quaesitus candor in ore foret.' (vv. 7-8)

² 'all its radiance has been got by painting' (Camps 1966 p. 165). See further on Prop. 3.24.8 under 1.8.3 CANDOR in the concordance.

³ Commager (1974) p. 20. Compare Hor. Od. 4.13.28; Cat. 45. 16, 51. 10. See also Chapter 2, especially sections 5.1 and 5.2, for a discussion of the use of *flamma* and *fax* in c. 61. Propertius himself in his other poems employs *fax* frequently in the context of love poetry (1.3.10, 1.13.26, 1.16.8, 2.3.14, 2.7.8, 3.16.16, 4.3.50) and twice uses *flamma* with strong overtones of sexual passion (3.8.7, 3.19.5). Although he doesn't employ the verb *ardere* in an erotic sense in other poems, he uses its cognate noun *ardor* almost exclusively to denote sexual passion (1.3.13, 1.7.24, 1.10.10, 1.13.28, 1.20.6).

⁴ e.g., Cat. 61. 108; Prop. 2.6.23, 2.18.35

⁵ As Nethercut points out (1970a p. 100f.), the word *turba* will also be employed in the poem following 3.13 for the crowd of lovers which pursue Propertius' mistress - 'at nostra ingenti vadit circumdata turba, nec digitum angusta est inseruisse via;' (3.14. 29-30).

⁶ (1974) p. 20.

women are depicted engaging in suggestive activities.¹ Although Propertius' praise of the Hindu women appears to be genuine (unlike the courtesans they are not motivated by a lust for gold), he is also deriving humour from the scene and it is likely that quite a few of his readers would have been uneasy with the frenzied passion of the Indian wives serving as a model for Roman matrons.²

5.5.3 The Women of the Golden Age (vv. 25 - 46)

Propertius begins his section on the country folk of the Golden Age with a burst of colour imagery that is even more brilliant than the opening colour cluster:

*felix agrestum quondam pacata iuventus,
divitiae quorum mensis et arbor erant!
illis munus erant decussa Cydonia ramo,
et dare puniceis plena canistra rubis,
nunc violas tondere manu, nunc mixta referre
lilia virgineos³ lucida per calathos,
et portare suis vestitas frondibus uvas
aut variā plumae versicoloris avem. (vv. 25-32)*

In the space of eight lines there are two explicit colour terms and nine words related to colour or shining; six more colour words than the opening cluster. Like *rubra Aurora* in the second section, many of these colour words recall the colours in the initial cluster. Once again there is a strong emphasis on red and purple with the purple berries, violets and grapes recalling the *ostrinos colores* of v. 7. The connection between these two clusters is strengthened by the colour adjective *puniceus* which, related as it is to the word for Carthage, calls to mind the exotic Eastern place-names of vv. 5-8. There is even an echo of the gold motif in the words *mensis* and *Cydonia*.

¹ See further below under section 6.

² For Roman expectations of the behaviour of wives see Lyne (1980 p. 3). He comments, 'The degree of modesty expected in a lady, and the modesty of conduct expected of a husband towards her, prohibited much chance of the necessary passion...Pleasure, at least sexual pleasure, was something that a wife - a lady - did not provide.'

³ The OC.T. reads *vimineos* but I agree with Baker's arguments for retaining the original reading *virgineos* (see the discussion below on this line).

Although these colour words are obviously meant to create a link with the initial colour cluster, the ultimate effect is one of contrast. Unlike in the first and second sections, here bright colours are not associated with the East but with Rome's rural past as Propertius elaborates on the concept expressed in this section's opening couplet of the natural wealth that exists in harvest and orchard (*divitiae quorum messis et arbor erant!* v. 26). The real 'gold' is that of the harvest and it is associated with peace¹, not conflict, a fact which Propertius emphasises by the use of the adjective *pacata* (v. 25).² This is in contrast not only with the military imagery associated with the gold which the courtesans pursue³ but also with the Hindu wives who are in conflict as they struggle with each other to be first to mount the pyre.⁴

Propertius' depiction of this lush and peaceful landscape would have made an immediate appeal to Roman sensibilities for garden and nature scenes were very popular on wall-paintings of this period.⁵ Indeed Guillemin goes so far as to equate the scene with the well-known painting of a young girl (or possibly the personification of spring) who is gathering flowers and placing them into a basket which she is carrying.⁶ This link with wall paintings, like the suggestion of a painting in the description of the landscape of 1.2, contributes a certain air of artifice and unreality to the scene. The reader is reminded that this picture of the past is an idealized one constructed by Propertius for the sake of supporting his argument.

¹ Tibullus also makes much of the association between peace and fruitfulness; see 1. 10. vv. 45 - 50 and especially vv. 67-68 - '*At nobis, Pax alma, veni spicamque teneto,/ profluat et pomis candidus ante sinus*'.

² As Rothstein comments, 'Die Jugend in der Zeit der alten Einfachheit ist *pacata*.' (1924 vol. 2 p. 111).

³ vv. 9 - 12. See further Baker (1968) p. 337, Nethercut (1970a) p. 99.

⁴ 'As in 3.12, the virtuous wife's behaviour is couched in language that suggests battle and the search for victory.' (Nethercut 1970a p. 100).

⁵ e.g. the Garden Room in the villa of Livia which was created some time around 20 B.C. For a reproduction of this painting see the appendix, fig. 5. Ling comments, 'The painter...was less concerned with strict fidelity to the laws of nature than with reproducing the flora and fauna of the garden in their most familiar and characteristic forms. Whether the resulting paradisiacal effect was deliberate or not is debatable; but such an effect would neatly mirror the emphasis on the new golden age and the fertility of Italy in contemporary court poetry.' (1991 p. 150).

⁶ 'la cueillette de l'élégie 3,13, 25-30, rappelle trait pour trait la délicieuse jeune fille du musée de Naples récoltant des fleurs, une corbeille à la main' (1940 p. 107). For a reproduction of this painting see the appendix, fig. 6. Apart from the girl, the main similarities between this painting and Propertius' description are the basket and the white flowers she is gathering which bear some resemblance to Propertius' line on lilies shining through the maiden's baskets (v. 30; see further on this image below). Pfuhl however gives the date of this same painting as the 1st century A.D. (1926 note under plate 149 on p. 115). If this dating is correct, then Propertius would certainly not have viewed this particular painting.

In the painting of the young girl and in many depictions of nature of this period the predominant colour is green. In the Propertius passage the green element is hinted at in the word *arbor* (v. 26) and the grape leaves (*frondibus* v. 31) and it is reinforced later in the section by references to vegetation such as grass and trees.¹ However there are no colours in this painting nor in any other nature-paintings I have seen which match the brilliant reds and purples of Propertius' description. Furthermore, it is interesting that poets of this period do seem to have a habit of employing these colours in descriptions of nature; for instance they crop up frequently in Virgil's *Eclogues*² and Propertius himself employs them in other nature scenes, most notably the Hylas landscape.³ It may well be that the use of these colours had a literary origin and purpose rather than an artistic one: Propertius is not just describing wall-paintings he has viewed but has included these colours for a reason.

With these considerations in mind, I now wish to examine the colour imagery of this passage in detail, analysing the significance of each colour element and the object with which it is identified.

The first fruits that are mentioned are *Cydonia* or *Cydonia mala* (v. 27). *Cydonia* is the Greek word for *cotonea* or quinces; some varieties, especially the native Italian one, had a colour verging on gold and were referred to as 'golden apples'.⁴ The reference to this fruit

¹ e.g. v. 34 '*oscula silvicolis empta dedere viris*'; v. 36 '*altaque nativo creverat herba toro*'; v. 37 '*pinus et incumbens lentas circumdabat umbras*'; Note in this last line the reference to shade which recalls the opening of 3.3 ('*Visus eram molli recubans Heliconis in umbra*'; see further the analysis of these lines in Chapter 4, section 6.1). These lines are also reminiscent of scenes in Lucretius e.g. 2. 29-33 - '*cum tamen inter se prostrati in gramine molli/ propter aquae rivum sub ramis arboris altae/ non magnis opibus iucunde corpora curant,/ praesertim cum tempestas arridet et anni/ tempora conspergunt viridantis floribus herbas*'; see also Lucretius 5. 1392-1404.

² e.g. 3.63, 4. 29, 5. 17, 5. 38, 6. 22, 10. 27.

³ '*hic erat Arganthei Pege sub vertice montis
grata domus Nymphis umida Thyniasin,
quam supra nullae pendebant debita curae
roscida desertis poma sub arboribus,
et circum irriguo surgebant lilia prato
candida purpureis mixta papaveribus* (1.20. 33-38)

For a full discussion of the significance of this landscape, including the artificial air created by the reference to poppies growing near water see these lines in the concordance under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS iv.

⁴ '*His proxima amplitudine mala quae vocamus cotonea et Graeci cydonea ex Creta insula advecta...plura eorum genera: chrysomela incisuris distincta, colore ad aurum inclinato, qui candidior nostratia cognominat, odoris praestantissimi.*' (Pliny *N.H.* 15.10.37). Note that Pliny also mentions the outstanding odour of the quince; like the odour of cinnamon in the first section,

thus reinforces the suggestion of gold present in *messis*. Apples, of course, were traditionally associated with love and courtship¹ and *Cydonian* apples had sexual connotations which were just as strong², although these were more often homosexual ones.³ The gold of the *Cydonian* apples are set in contrast with the *punicei rubi* 'crimson berries' in the following line which, as previously stated, recall the *ostrinos colores* of v. 7. Violets (v. 29) and grapes (v. 31) reinforce the purple motif for both were frequently described by writers as some shade of this colour.⁴ The allusions to berries and grapes pick up on the erotic connotations of the *Cydonia mala* and contribute to the sensual overtones which were associated with purple.⁵

A new colour element is introduced in v. 30, the line between the verses on violets and grapes. In this line Propertius describes the young men bringing back shining lilies in the maiden's baskets (*lilia virgineos lucida per calathos*). Although here Propertius uses an adjective which emphasises their sheen rather than colour, lilies were frequently employed by the ancient poets, Propertius included, to denote extreme whiteness.⁶ The use of the

the fragrance associated with the *Cydonea mala* contributes to the sensual overtones of the passage. There is representation of a tree in the garden painting from the villa of Livia which Jashemski says is a quince and which is characterised by prominent golden fruit (1979 vol. 2 p. 382). For a reproduction of this see the appendix fig. 5.1

¹ See Foster (1899) p. 51f., Rosenmeyer (1996) p. 17 and the discussion on Cat. 65.24 in the concordance under 1.43.3 RUBOR. The ancients appear to have seen a resemblance between the shape of a woman's breasts and the curve of the apple for, as Littlewood points out (1967 p. 157), Leonidas of Tarentum uses the word *μηλοθχος* of the *strophium*.

² 'Wie die Äpfel überhaupt, haben die *Cydonia* Beziehung zur Liebe und zur Ehe' (Rothstein 1924 vol. 2 p. 112). Littlewood (1967 p. 155) cites Stesichorus' story that *Κυδώνια μάλα* were thrown at the wedding chariot of Menelaus and Helen (fr. 187 Page 1962). Both Rothstein (1924 vol. 2 p. 112) and Foster (1899 p. 51) cite the story of Cydippe (related by Ovid in *Heroides* 20 and 21). Acontius declares his love for Cydippe by throwing a quince at her feet on which a marriage vow is written. See Rosenmeyer's analysis of the erotic implications of this gift; 'the apple itself is used as a letter, sent from the lover to his beloved.' (1996 p. 12).

³ *Cydonia* was a town in Crete and the Cretans were renowned for their homosexuality. Servius makes this connection when he comments on the references to quinces in *Ec.* 2.51 and *Aen.* 10.325 (Boyd 1983 p. 169ff.). See also Moretti 1996 p. 162; '...in effetti questi frutti velati di bionda lanugine risultano essere un dono particolarmente adatto nell'ambito di amori omoerotici.'

⁴ For grapes as purple see Hor. 2.5.12 and Prop. 3.17.17 in the concordance under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i and iv respectively. For the colour of violets see Edgeworth (1992), especially the reference under VIOLA (p. 165). Edgeworth states that 'the violet of Roman writers was certainly a purple flower' (p. 28) and draws attention to Sargeant's comment that it was the source of a purple dye (p. 180 n. 53). He does however point out that violets were not always purple in Roman literature; Pliny speaks of three kinds (*earumque plura genera: purpureae, luteae, albae* N.H. 21.14.27) and Virgil in the *Eclogues* gives them the epithet *pallentes* (2.47). Nevertheless in this Propertius passage, the strong colour adjective *puniceus*, occurring as it does in the preceding line, would induce the reader to think of the purple variety of the flower.

⁵ In c. 2.5. 9-12 grapes are employed by Horace in a famous simile about Lalage's ripeness for love. In the *Eclogues* berries are associated with those amorous deities Silenus (6. 22) and Pan (10. 27).

⁶ e.g.. Theocritus '[λευκὸν τὸ κρίνον ἐστὶ, μαραινεται ἀνίκα πίπτει· / ἅ δὲ χιτῶν λευκά, καὶ τάκεται ἀνίκα ἱπαρθῆ ..]' (23. 30-31 Gow 1952); Propertius '*lilia non domina sint magis alba mea*' (2.3.10); Virgil '*Indum sanguineo veluti violaverit ostro/ si quis ebur, aut*

adjectives *lucidus* and *virgineus* (which is employed of the baskets¹) emphasise the lily's association with purity and virginity²; this is placed in contrast with the purple fruit and flowers with their strong sexual overtones. The effect of this contrast is twofold. Firstly, as in the simile of the blushing bride in Catullus c. 61³, the contrast of a white flower with a red or purple one⁴ heightens the sexual tension. This is also the case in the Hylas landscape - the white lilies are representative of Hylas' innocence⁵ whereas the purple poppies give a presentiment of his ravishment and death at the hands of the water-nymphs.⁶ Secondly, the appearance of this white flower at this point in 3.13 (the only real appearance of white in the poem⁷) suggests the difference in the quality of sexuality of golden-age women.⁸ The emphasis on purple implies that their sexuality is as strong as that of their descendants but the white lilies signify a simpler and more innocent approach to their lovers which is very different from the calculating sexuality of the women at the beginning of the poem.⁹

mixta rubent ubi lilia multa / alba rosa, talis virgo dabat ore colores.' (*Aen.* 12. 67-69). See also Edgeworth (1992) p. 27.

¹ Some editors replace *virgineos* with *vimineos* on the grounds that it is the *men*, not the maidens, who bring these baskets of flowers (Camps 1966 p. 117). However, see Baker's arguments for retaining the original reading (1974 p. 53ff.); he thinks that the adjective is meant to imply that the girls are *intactae* (p. 57 n. 4). As far as the chromatic imagery of the poem is concerned, the adjective *virgineus* and Baker's interpretation of it suits the context very well.

² For the association of lilies with virginity compare *Copa* 15-16 - '*et quae virgineo libata Achelois ab amne / lilia vimineis attulit in calathis.*'; [Tibullus] 3. 4.31-34 - '*ut iuveni primum virgo deducta marito / inficitur teneras ore rubente genas, / et cum contexunt amarantis alba puellae / lilia et autumnis candida mala rubent.*' In Propertius 4.4 Tarpeia gives silvery lilies to the kindly nymphs, an appropriate offering for a virgin ('*saepe tulit blandis argentea lilia Nymphis, / Romula ne faciem laederet hasta Tati.*' vv. 25-6).

³ See the analysis of vv. 184-188 in Chapter 2, section 5.3.

⁴ In this Propertius passage there is an especially strong contrast between the lilies and the violets for these are in the same couplet and both words are at or near the beginning of the line. Later on Ovid will employ the same combination of flowers in his description of Proserpine ('*quo dum Proserpina luco / ludit et aut violas aut candida lilia carpit.*' *Met.* 5. 391-2). Compare also Theocritus 3. 11. 56-57; '...ἔφερον δέ τοι ἢ κρίνα λευκά / ἢ μάκων ἀπαλὰν ἐρυθρὰ πλαταγῶν' ἔχουσιν.' (Gow 1952)

⁵ It is true that lilies also had some association with death. Murgatroyd (1992), discussing the Hylas passage, says that lilies were a symbol of transience (surely most flowers were!) and were associated with Proserpine - see his references p. 93. Thomas (1977 p. 35) also suggests the connection between lilies and death in the Hylas passage and cites a number of passages in support including *Aen.* 6. 709. This is yet another instance of Propertius' linkage of love and death.

⁶ For the association of poppies with death and sexual union see the discussion on the blushing bride simile of Catullus c.61.184-188 in Chapter 2, section 5.3.

⁷ It could be argued that the reference to snow in v. 54 is meant to suggest whiteness (as it does in c. 63 of Catullus in vv. 53 and 70) but the fact that its cognate colour adjective *niveus* is not employed in this poem (as it is in c. 63) argues against there being any strong suggestion of colour.

⁸ Compare Propertius' use of words for purple (*ostrinus*) and white (*candidus*) in 2.29b.25-30 to contrast Cynthia in her expensive finery with the simplicity and beauty of her naked form (see above in section 3).

⁹ The behaviour of golden age women to their lovers is described in the lines following; '*hustum blanditiis furtiva per antra puellae / oscula silvicolis empty dedere viris / hinnulei pellis totos operibat amanti, / altaque nativo creverat herba toro.*' (vv. 33-36). The rustic simplicity of this scene is once again reminiscent of Lucretius; '*et Venus in silvis iungebat corpora amanti;*'

Finally, all the colours of this passage come together in the allusion to the multicoloured bird of iridescent plumage (*aut variam plumae versicoloris avem. v. 32*). *Versicoloris* is a conjecture for the meaningless MS tradition *viricoloris*¹ and chromatically it suits the line very well for it picks up on *variam*.² The word is also employed in c. 3. 7 whose theme is similarly φιλοπλουτία. In this poem however Propertius is not concerned with women but with a man - the hapless Paetus whose pursuit of riches leads him to his death.³ This unusual colour word creates another link between the two poems and highlights the contrast between the two different societies. In the golden age of 3.13. birds of rainbow plumage were so freely available that they could readily be given as love-tokens to maidens⁴; in Paetus' case a desire to pursue such scarce and effeminate luxuries as pillows of multicoloured feathers leads to his disastrous sea-voyage.⁵ Thus *versicolor* in v. 32 emphasises the abundance of colours in the golden age as opposed to present-day Rome. In the Rome of Propertius' day, women have to go to the East (3.13) and Paetus has to go to sea (3.7) to obtain the colourful finery which they so desire.

In summary, the colours of the golden age pick up on the colours of the initial colour cluster and are even more brilliant and varied but unlike the colours which the Roman women desire they are not associated with corruption. The golden age colours are natural,

conciliabat enim vel mutua quamque cupido/ vel violentia viri vis atque inpena libido/ vel pretium, glandes atque arbuta vel pira lecta.' (5.962 - 965). As Baker points out, the women of the golden age still demand gifts of their lovers (1974 p. 53f.). The gifts however are simple ones and there is no indication that these girls sell themselves to the highest bidder.

¹ Camps (1966) p. 117

² *Variam* und *versicoloris* sind in der Bedeutung nicht verschieden' (Rothstein 1924 vol. 2 p. 112). In contrast Shackleton-Bailey's support of Ellis' conjecture *vitricoloris* ('sea-green') seems largely without foundation (1956 p. 180). He states that the evidence of the MSS as a whole points to this conjecture but does not elaborate and he admits that *vitricolor* is otherwise unattested.

³ *'nunc tulit haec Paetus, stridorem audire procellae/ et duro teneras laedere fune manus;/ seu thyio thalamo aut Oricia terebintho/ est fultum pluma versicolore caput'* (vv. 47-50). See further on these lines in the concordance above under 1.49 VERSICOLOR.

⁴ Rothstein comments that gifts such as these were given in the time of the poet (1924 vol. 2 p. 112) but the passage he quotes in support of this (*'quin etiam turdoque licet missaque columba/ te memorem dominae testificare tuae'* Ov. *Ars. Am.* 2.269-270) only makes mention of doves and thrushes. A fan made of peacock's feathers is one of the gifts which Cynthia angers Propertius by demanding in 2.24a.11.

⁵ 'The sequence of ideas...suggests that the downy cushions represent the luxurious life which was the object of Paetus' quest, in the hope of which he was prepared to endure the rigours of sailing' (Robertson 1969 p. 383)

unrefined ones and are not a product of exotic dyes and eastern localities; here gold is linked with the fruitfulness of the harvest, it does not have to be mined from underground caves. The presence of white lilies among the gifts that the young men bring to their lovers suggests the innocence and simplicity of golden age women but, on the other hand, the frequent allusions to purple in the violets, berries and grapes implies that their sexuality is as strong as that of the Hindu wives and the women of present-day Rome. To paraphrase Nethercut, Propertius is not praising these women for their chastity but for their unrestrained and honest expression of love.¹ It is interesting to compare Propertius' sentiments in 3.13 with Horace's ode 3.6 which may have inspired this elegy. Although both poets point to the past as a model, Propertius' idyllic and whimsical picture of a society based on 'free love' is very different from Horace's more orthodox and sober version of old Rome - a race of rustic warriors who stain the sea with the blood of Carthage and bring home wood for their mothers.² Horace does not concern himself with the sexuality of the women of Rome's past and, significantly, he employs few colour words in his description.

5.5.4 The Corrupting Power of Gold (vv. 47 - 58) / Propertius as *haruspex* (vv. 59 - 66)

With the words *at nunc* Propertius brings himself back to the present and departs from the elaborate colour imagery of the preceding sections. He returns to the motif of gold:

at nunc desertis cessant sacraria lucis:

aurum omnes victa iam pietate colunt.

¹ (1970a) p. 101

² *'non his iuventus orta parentibus
infecit aequor sanguine Punico,
Pyrrhumque et ingentem cecidit
Antiochum Hannibalemque dirum,
sed rusticorum mascula militum
proles, Sabellis docta ligonibus
versare glebas et severae
matris ad arbitrium recisos
portare fustis, sol ubi montium
mutaret umbras et iuga demeret
bobus fatigatis, amicum
tempus agens abeunte curru.'* (vv. 33-44)

As Little puts it, when talking of Propertius' and Horace's attitude to Augustus and the countryside, 'The contrast with Horace is strong...The countryside of old was a bastion of purity, fit mother to warlike sons, not a sportsground for rural Cynthias.' (1982 p. 299).

*auro pulsa fides, auro venalia iura,
aurum lex sequitur, mox sine lege pudor.* (vv. 47-50)

Here there is an emphasis on words for gold (four in four lines¹ with the word placed first in three successive lines) as Propertius illustrates its power to corrupt every aspect of life. Baker points out that in these lines Propertius moves away from a love that is purely personal and attempts to impart a universality to his theme.² The move toward universality is also apparent in the first two of the *exempla* of gold's power to corrupt which Propertius sets forth in vv. 51-58. The fire motif returns once more but here it contains no erotic connotation, merely being the instrument to punish greed.³

In the final *exemplum* however, Propertius employs the adjective for golden as he returns to the idea of the seductive power of gold over women:

*tu quoque ut auratos gereres, Eriphyla, lacertos,
delapsis nusquam est Amphiaraus equis.* (vv. 57-58)

There is thus an element of ring composition in the chromatic imagery of 3.13 for Propertius employs the final colour word of the poem in a way that recalls its initial colour image. This rounding off of the colour imagery is the signal for a new direction in the poem as Propertius takes on the role of *haruspex* and sets forth the moral lessons that are to be drawn from the preceding scenes (vv. 59-66).

5.6 Irony and Augustus

Most scholars agree that 3.13 and the poems that surround it represent a shift towards Augustus and away from love elegy: as Putnam puts it, c. 3.13 contains 'the most conspicuous example of the new Propertius'.⁴ Elements of love elegy however are not entirely absent from the poems. Ross views 3.13 as an attempt to handle Augustan topics in a love elegy format:

¹ The word for gold is also employed in vv. 55-56 where Propertius gives an example of gold's power to corrupt; '*te scelus accepto Thracis Polymestoris auro / nutrit in hospitio non, Polydore, pio.*'. Thus the word *aurum* (and its cognate adjective *auratus*) occurs six times in this short section.

² (1970) p. 690

³ '*torrida sacrilegum testantur limina Brennum, / dum petit intonsi Pythia regna dei.*' (vv. 51-52)

⁴ (1980) p. 103

it begins with the rhetorical address to the reader... concerning a common elegiac subject - we expect, perhaps, a variation on the theme of the poor poet ousted by a wealthy rival. Instead we meet with an essay on *luxuria*, a large part of which is taken up with a contrast between an idealised bucolic past... and the venial present.¹

Camps also holds similar views on the poem's strange combination of love elegy with themes of national importance², a combination which is viewed by some scholars as not entirely successful.³ The colour imagery of the poem is part of this strange combination for Propertius employs colour motifs drawn from personal love poetry to illustrate themes of national importance.

But although this poem ostensibly displays leanings towards the Augustan programme, Propertius' taste for irony and double-entendre must always be kept in mind. As we have seen, the emphasis on simplicity and lack of finery which occurs in this poem is a common enough motif in Propertius but sometimes it is not as straightforward as it seems and carries with it a hidden agenda. This is the case for c.1.2 which, as Lyne points out, extols simplicity over extravagant finery but conveys an underlying message to Cynthia to stop behaving like a whore.⁴ Irony is especially apparent in Book 3 which, according to Nethercut, 'illustrates Propertius' ironic art at its very best'⁵ and many scholars have detected elements of irony in the poems which are grouped round 3.13 - 3.11, 3.12 and 3.14. In 3.11, as Sweet comments, the conflict between Augustus and Cleopatra is introduced in a purely personal light as subjection to a woman's power and Propertius is

¹ (1975) p. 128.

² (1966) p. 115. Propertius may be following Horace Odes. 3.14 in which, according to Griffin, Horace 'has managed to marry praise of the ruler with characteristic attributes of his own personality' (1984 p. 200).

³ 'On the other hand, he does try to open new ground in 3.11, the first of a series of apparently experimental elegies (11,13,14,19), none of which is really successful, in spite of some beauties of detail. They are nominally still love elegies, and most of them present themselves, like many of the earlier poems, as the poet's speech in a particular situation; a conversation has been going on, of which we now hear part. But in these poems this supposed situation is of no interest to him or to us, often reducing itself to little more than a preliminary formula of the 'You ask...' or 'Why be surprised...?' kind.' (Hubbard 1974 p. 87).

⁴ (1980) p. 106f. There may also be the suggestion that Propertius feels the style to which Cynthia has become accustomed will be a severe drain on his finances! See 2.24a.11-14 for Cynthia's demands that Propertius buy her all manner of expensive trifles.

⁵ (1983) p. 1843

also 'seen to hail Augustus' victory in a state of advanced intoxication'.¹ Jacobson proposes that c. 3.12, although ostensibly extolling Galla's chastity, carries a suggestion that she may not remain so² and both Nethercut and Griffin feel that the poem underlines the inconsistency of Augustus' policies, showing how the commitment to Augustus' Parthian wars could result in severe disruption to family life.³ The ironic element becomes even more pronounced in c.3.14. In this poem Propertius praises the life that the women of Sparta lead but he does not praise them for their chastity.⁴ Instead he indulges in lascivious pictures of them wrestling or riding naked⁵ and walking without shame by their lovers' sides.⁶ Nethercut suggests this may be a parody of Horace's second Roman Ode which urged Rome's youth to follow a Spartan programme of vigorous training and pure living.⁷

In c.3.14 Propertius makes use of colour to contribute to the sense of irony. He employs the colour adjective *niveus* of the flank of the Spartan horsewoman:

*gyrum pulsat equis, niveum latus ense revincit,
virginemque cavo protegit aere caput, (vv. 11-12)*

It is significant that all other instances of this adjective in Propertius occur in the context of love poetry.⁸ The word not only conveys the beauty of the Spartan girl's flank but suggests its nakedness and in combination with the phallic sword the phrase carries strong erotic overtones. It is through the erotic insinuation of words such as *niveus* that a poem, at first glance extolling a way of life which was renowned for its austerity and toughness, is turned into a bawdy romp.⁹ As Griffin puts it, 'At times indeed the relation between Augustan ideal and its poetic expression looks like burlesque, as when it turns out that Propertius praises Sparta because you can get closer to girls there...'¹⁰

¹ (1972) p. 174`

² (1976) p. 161f.

³ Nethercut (1983) p. 1849; Griffin (1984) p. 208

⁴ Nethercut (1970a) p. 101

⁵ 'quod non infamis exercet corpore ludos / inter luctantis nuda puella viros' vv. 3-4; see also vv. 11-12 above.

⁶ 'lex igitur Spartana vetat secedere amanti, / et licet in triviis ad latus esse suae' (vv. 21-22)

⁷ (1983) p. 1843

⁸ See 2.13b.53, 3.3.39, 3.6.12, 3.14.11 and 2.19.26 in the concordance under 1.35 NIVEUS i and ii.

⁹ Compare also Propertius' use of *erubuisse* in v. 20, discussed in the concordance above under 1.17 ERUBESCO.

¹⁰ (1984) p. 205

With 3.14 in mind one is given to wonder whether something similar isn't going on in the poem's forerunner, 3.13. It is obvious that Propertius deplores the greed of Roman women which he feels has led to a loose and calculating sexuality. On this point he agrees with Horace's views on the lack of morality of present-day Roman women and Horace's picture in c.3.6 of the young wife giving herself to the rich captain of a Spanish ship has similarities with the opening of 3.13.¹ It is likely that by voicing sentiments such as these Horace means to give support to Augustus' push for moral reform²; likewise, in the *Carmen Saeculare*, composed about six years later, Horace calls blessings on Augustus' new marriage legislation.³ Thus it appears that at the opening of 3.13 Propertius follows Horace in voicing sentiments that were in tune with Augustus' feelings. In a similar fashion, the two poets highlight the corruption of the present day by contrasting it with societies that are remote in time or space but, at this point, their visions diverge. Horace places his ideal society at the time of the Punic wars and his picture promotes the very Roman values of hardiness, poverty and devotion to labour. Propertius contrasts contemporary Rome with not one society but two and the colour terms which he uses to link these scenes give them a light and whimsical tone. In the passage on the Hindu wives the use of a word for red in association with words for flame and passion picks up on the colour terms of the previous section and, in combination with them, convey strong sexual overtones. This erotic insinuation gives the passage a certain humour and frivolity which diminishes the impact of Propertius' moral message. In the passage on the golden age the colours are even more lavish and the terms for purple, red and white, linked as they are with fruit and flowers, contribute to the powerful eroticism of the scene. Like the snowy-

¹ *'motus doceri gaudet Ionicos/ matura virgo et fingitur artibus/ iam nunc et incestos amores/ de tenero meditatur ungui;/ mox iuniores quaerit adulteros/ inter mariti vina, neque eligit/ cui donet impermissa raptim/ gaudia luminibus remotis,/ sed iussa coram non sine conscio/ surgit marito, seu vocat institor/ seu navis Hispanae magister,/ dedecorum pretiosus emptor.'* (vv. 21-32). Note that Propertius follows Horace in deploring the lack of shame with which the acts of adultery are committed and the readiness with which sex is exchanged for money; *'nulla est poscendi, nulla est reverentia dandi,/ aut si qua est, pretio tollitur ipsa mora.'* (vv. 13-14).

² 'Horace is unique among Augustan poets in giving explicit support to Augustus' programme of moral reform in the decade of failure, and this support was itself something new in Roman literature.' (Williams 1962 p. 45). Little agrees; 'Horace [in Odes 3] has become the spokesman of Augustan moral reform; the change is one of the most specific reflections of immediate political influence on his poetry.' (1982 p. 289).

³ *'diva, producas subolem, patrumque/ prosperes decreta super iugandis/ feminis prolisque novae feraci/ lege marita'* (vv. 17-20)

white flank of the Spartan girl in 3.14, the colour terms in this passage suggest that the sexuality of these women is even stronger than that of their present day counterparts, if of a different quality. Propertius is not advocating sexual restraint in this poem - rather he is deploring the fact that the sexuality of the women of his day has been debased by their greed for luxuries. Thus on one level the poem is a reworking of the stock elegiac situation in which the poet bemoans the fact that his mistress is eager to sell her favours in return for riches.¹ This is Rome on Propertius' own terms: as Nethercut comments on two other poems in this book, 3.22 and 3.18, 'Propertius takes from Rome what he judges suitable for his own purposes and tailors it to fit his scheme'.² To what extent this is done with a positive intention to mock and as a parody of Augustan ideals is hard to say. Both the *turba* of Indian wives and the fruitfulness of the golden age (linked as it is with the unreality of wall paintings) are so divorced from actual Roman life that they provide no real solution to the problem set forth at the beginning of the poem and thus leave the reader with no concrete alternative. This may well be why many readers find this poem so unsatisfactory.

It is worth pointing out that 3.13 is certainly not the only poem of Propertius which has an unsettling effect on scholars because of a discordant combination of themes and images. Jasper Griffin, in an attempt to explain the oddities in the battle of Actium poem, c. 4.6, comments:

Like Horace, Propertius attempts to make the Imperial theme fit with his own general poetic persona...Because the poetical persona of Horace is more urbane and accommodating, he can in his best poems make the combination a harmonious one. By contrast, the more reckless persona of Propertius, which defines itself by explicit rejection of the respectable values of marriage and soldiering, produces more discordant and bizarre effects when the theme of Actium or of conquest is brought in. Exactly how far this is deliberate is hard to say.³

¹ For instance, compare Prop. 4.5, especially vv. 21-28 and Ovid. *Am.* 1.8. These are both *lena* poems in which a bawd gives advice to a young girl on gold-digging techniques.

² (1983) p. 1845

³ (1984) p. 209

Griffin's comment on this poem could equally as well be applied to 3.13. It is not only when Propertius is dealing with conquest and battles that bizarre effects are produced but also when he is addressing the moral issues of Augustus' Rome.

5.7 Final Thoughts

As has been demonstrated, the motif of the exotic and elaborate colours of the East versus the simple unrefined colours of nature runs right throughout Propertius' poetry and he employs it to different effect in various poems. In c. 3.13 we find the lengthiest and most complex development of this motif. Propertius employs the motif to give coherence and unity to a poem which ranges from Rome to the East and the Golden age and back again to contemporary Rome.

However in Propertius things are rarely as straightforward as they seem. Even at an early stage of development of the motif (c. 1.2) there are hints of artifice in the parallel that Propertius draws with wall-paintings and the suggestion that Cynthia should look to Apelles as the ideal model of natural colouring. These suggestions of artifice prepare the reader for the hidden agenda of the poem - Propertius wants Cynthia to stop behaving like a whore and, perhaps, doesn't wish to have to pay for her finery. In 3.13 too, there are parallels with wall-painting for the pastoral scene is reminiscent of the idealised landscape painting of the time. However in this poem the main instruments of 'subversion' are the colours which Propertius employs. The sexual tension generated by the contrast of purple and white and the erotic insinuation of words for red and fire undermine the impact of Propertius' moral harangue and make the careful reader think again about the message which is ultimately being delivered in this poem. As Nethercut says ' "make love, not war for gold" is not very good Augustan propaganda'.¹

Propertius employs the nature/culture colour motif once again in the first poem of Book Four, associating white with austerity and simplicity of Rome's past² and words for gold

¹ (1970a) p. 101

² See 4.1.32 and 4.1.35 in the concordance above under 1.2.2. ALBUS ii.

and shining¹ with the Rome of his own time. It is interesting however to note that any hint of sexual innuendo has entirely disappeared from the colour imagery of this poem.

¹ See 4.1.5 in the concordance under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS ii., 4.1.11 under 1.34.1 NITEO i, 4.1.27 under 1.41 RADIO.

Chapter Six

The Fading Colours of Aging: Horace Poems 1.25, 3. 15, 4. 13

6.1 First View

This chapter, instead of concentrating on a single poem, will examine the colour imagery of three short poems¹ on a similar theme; that of the *moecha senescens*²

These three odes are in the tradition of invective poems in which aging courtesans are attacked and derided; numerous examples appear in the *Greek Anthology*. The attacks can become quite savage and explicit but the savagery is largely formulaic and, in general, little colour or original imagery is employed in these sorts of poems. In contrast, Horace employs a great deal of colour in his versions, indeed he uses increasing amounts of colour with each restatement of the theme.

Horace's use of colour in these odes is derived from the tradition of erotic poetry in which words for bright colour or shining are used to indicate a woman's desirability; for instance in 1.5 Pyrrha is described as golden, Barine in 2.8 and Phyllis in 4.11 gleam with beauty and Lalage in 2.5 is compared to a purple grape.³ The association of colour and beauty is not exclusive to Horace but seems to be part of the tradition of erotic poetry for, as we have seen in Chapter 2, the bride of Catullus' c. 61 is continually associated with bright, clear colours.⁴ In these three odes, Horace also employs colours in conjunction with other imagery which is frequently employed in erotic poems, motifs such as roses, wine and vegetation. In cc. 1.25, 3.15 and 4.13 however Horace twists and inverts the usual colour imagery. The courtesans in these poems desire bright colours and eagerly seek

¹ There are a number of reasons for examining three poems together. It is typical of Horace to produce variations on a theme and many of his odes can be categorised under different headings (spring poems, invitation poems etc.); it would therefore be difficult to analyse the colour imagery of one poem without including discussion of the others in the same group. There is a continuity to the colour imagery in these poems but this does not imply that it is identical and it is interesting to compare the differences in the amount and use of the colours in each poem, especially when taking into consideration that there is a fifteen or twenty year gap between the first and last poem.

² Esler (1989) p. 172

³ See the concordance on Hor. 1.5.9 under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv, Hor. 2.8.6 under 1.16 ENITEO / ENITESCO, Hor. 4.11.5 under 1.21.1 FULGEO iii, Hor. 2.5.12 under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i.

⁴ See, for instance, 61.21-25 in Chapter 2, section 5.1 and 61.87-91 and 61.92-96 in section 5.2.

after them but they themselves are increasingly associated with dull colours or colours that are fading. This colour imagery is initially employed with sarcastic or mocking overtones but some of the images, linked as they are to elements of the natural world, on closer examination reveal a strong sense of pathos.

Connor says of these odes:

A feature common to all three poems, and found elsewhere in Horace's poetry, is the brilliantly sharp imagery, both sights and sounds, which appears in almost every stanza. This brightness is unmodulated and aggressive and complements the unrestrained criticism.¹

This is however a matter for debate; there is a great deal of disagreement amongst scholars about the degree of malice in these odes, particularly in 1.25 and 4.13. Certain scholars have been inclined to take the attacks in the poems at face value, following Victorian scholars such as Page who found 1.25 too crude and nasty for his taste and dismissed the ode in a few choice phrases.² In more recent years these odes have been viewed with greater sympathy but there is still much dispute about such issues as the attitude underlying 1.25³ and the frequent mood changes of 4.13.⁴ A detailed examination of colour imagery will help to define Horace's attitude in these poems and show how he gradually turns from disgust to empathy. Such an examination will also, in 1.25, throw light upon the disputed reading of the final stanza, in 4.13 it will reinforce the argument of certain critics that the pivotal point of the poem is the allusion to Lyce's snowy hair and in 3.15 will reveal hidden complexities in what looks like a fairly standard poem. In short,

¹ (1987) p. 185; see however his 1981 article p. 1622 where he views 4.13 as more sympathetic.

² 'A coarsely expressed ode...It has no merit and may be omitted with advantage' (1901 p. 78). Collinge, although writing in the 1960s is equally as dismissive of 1.25; 'the crudest and nastiest poem in Horace's lyrics' (1961 p.52). Copley says much the same of 4.13; 'these poems [cc. 2.8 and 4.13] are even worse than the worst of Catullus for they display an ugly, vicious temper in place of Catullus' honest, if misguided, attempts at humour' (1956 p. 160, n. 40).

³ Ancona, for instance, sees the poem as a strong attack upon women (1992 p.247), Boyle sees it more as an instance of the universal law of decay (1973 p.176f.).

⁴ There is disagreement about whether the opening is triumphant or sorrowful, about where the mood begins to change and whether the poem reverts at the end to its former triumphant tone; see further below under section 3.3. It is no wonder that scholars such as Connor remain uncertain about Horace's final attitude in this poem (1981 p.1635). The shifts of mood sit uneasily with some; Nisbet finds the poem 'psychologically unconvincing' (1962 p. 188).

exploration of the colour imagery of these poems will create a more rounded and subtle reading, deepening our appreciation and understanding of them.

Before embarking on a detailed colour analysis of these three odes firstly, in the background section, I would like to look at the odes' literary predecessors and then at how the odes relate to other poems in the collection. The number of colour terms and their distribution within the poems will also be discussed but more briefly than usual; these points will be explored in more detail in the chromatic analysis of each poem.

6.2 Background

The evils of old age are a theme that is as old as Classical literature itself; the *topos* first appears in Homer where the epithets for old age are all pejorative¹ and in Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes where elderly choruses bemoan the numerous indignities of being old.² As Bertman points out³, this theme soon acquired an erotic aspect; Anacreon laments that a girl rejects him because of his white hair⁴ and in the *Greek Anthology* there are many epigrams concerning the physical decay of beautiful courtesans or boys.⁵ The subject matter of these epigrams is especially interesting and it is likely that Horace drew some of his inspiration for his own poems from them. They contain however little of the intense feeling of Horace's poems⁶ and, apart from perfunctory references to white or grey hair, they do not make much use of colour imagery.⁷

In Latin literature the *topos* recurs in love poets such as Propertius, for instance in 3.25 where he gleefully envisages Cynthia's old age and her desire to tear out her white hair by

¹ See Bertman (1989) p. 159.

² *OC* 1211ff., *Heracl.* 637ff., *V.* 443 respectively (Bertman 1989 p. 160)

³ (1989) p. 162

⁴ The poem is interesting because of the contrast between the bright colours associated with love ('σφαίρη δηῦτέ με πορφύρη / βάλλων χρυσοκόμης Ἔρωσ / νήνι ποικιλοσαμβάλω / συμπαίξειν προκαλείται.') and the white hair of Anacreon ('ή δ', ἔστιν γάρ ἀπ' εὐκτίτου / Λέσβου, τὴν μὲν ἐμὴν κόμην, / λευκὴ γάρ, καταμέμφεται ') (358 in Page 1962).

⁵ For instance Book 5 poems 21, 23, 271, 273, 298, Book 6 poem 210, Book 11 poems 41, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 71, 72, 73.

⁶ 'Also noteworthy in the Greek epigrams is the low level of emotional involvement on the part of the poets: pity, anger, even disgust - if expressed at all - are expressed without much heat. Overall, these poems convey the impression of literary exercises, ringing the changes on various aspects of a well-worn poetic convention.' (Esler 1989 p. 172)

⁷ The few colour images which do occur in these epigrams will be discussed, if relevant, in the detailed chromatic analysis of cc. 1.25, 3.15 and 4.13.

the roots.¹ Horace himself in his earlier poetry also touches upon the theme; two of his epodes are virulent attacks upon aging women with black teeth, sagging breasts and flabby buttocks described in cruel and graphic detail.² Later in Latin poetry, Martial will take up the theme with equal explicitness and venom.³ It is interesting however that, apart from casual references to black teeth or white hair, none of these poems, including Horace's two epodes, make much use of colour imagery. It is only in Horace's more lyrical odes that colour imagery is employed of old age extensively and with imagination⁴; the reasons for this will be explored in the course of this chapter.

As far as placement of the poems is concerned, all three poems can be grouped with the odes of invective.⁵ C. 4.11, in which Horace warns a young man that his beauty will fade, is also on a similar theme but, as Ancona points out, this ode lacks the force and virulence of the odes to aging women.⁶ That various other odes of Horace also have an affinity with the subject matter of these odes can be seen when we examine the placement of the odes within their respective books and their relationship to the poems that surround them.

In Book One c. 25 is generally grouped with the two poems which come immediately before it - the ode urging Chloe to sexual maturity (c. 23) and the dirge for Quintilius (c. 24). Scholars point out that all three poems examine various aspects of the themes of natural cycles and of human love.⁷ Similarly 4.13, as Porter points out, is part of the

¹ 'vellere tum cupias albos a stirpe capillos' v. 25. See further on this line in the concordance under 1.2.2 ALBUS iv.

² 'Rogare longo putidam te saeculo/ viris quid enervet meas,/ cum sit tibi dens ater et rugis vetus/ frontem senectus exaret,/ hietque turpis inter aridas natis/ podex velut crudae bovis?/ sed incitat me pectus et mammae putres,/ equina quales ubera,/ venterque mollis et femur tumentibus/ exile suris additum.' (8.1-10); 'qui sudor vietis et quam malus undique membris/ crescit odor, cum pene soluto/ indomitam properat rabiem sedare;...' (12.7-9). See also *Epod.* 17.21-24.

³ 3.93, 10. 67. The topos is also taken up by writers of other times and cultures; see for instance the 1966 article by Crosby which, amongst other things, examines the Latin sources of the Spanish poet Quevedo's poems on aging women (p. 443f.).

⁴ Ovid is a partial exception to this for he does make some use of colour imagery in his address to aging courtesans in *Ars Am.* 3.67-76; 'hos ego, qui canent, frutices violaria vidi / hac mihi de spina grata corona data est. / tempus erit, quo tu, quae nunc excludis amantes, / frigida deserta nocte iacebis anus/ nec tua frangetur nocturna ianua rixa, / sparsa nec invenies limina mane rosa/ quam cito, me miserum, laxantur corpora rugis / et perit, in nitido qui fuit ore, color / quasque fuisse tibi canas a virgine iures, / sparguntur subito per caput omne comae!' It seems highly likely, however, that in this passage Ovid is imitating the language and imagery of Horace's poems.

⁵ Andrewes (1950) p. 111

⁶ (1992) p. 256

⁷ Arkins (1983) p. 169; Fuqua (1968) p. 45, Porter (1987a) p. 84

collection of poems in the fourth book on time's relentless progress.¹ Thus it can be compared with 4.1, 4.10-12 and even 4.7 whose seasonal imagery has ties with some of the imagery of this poem.² In Book Three, c. 3.15 does not seem to fit so readily into any such group although Porter places it in the general group of poems 7-24 which pose solutions to 'human problems'³ and Commager compares it with 3.14 where Horace comments wistfully on his own aging.⁴

Thus this group of odes can be viewed as an extension of Horace's preoccupation with the passing of time and, as will be demonstrated, the imagery of nature poems such as 1.4, 1.9 and 4.7 finds an echo in the chromatic imagery of these poems. In addition, one of the preoccupations of these three poems is the proper time for love and their colour imagery can be contrasted with other love poems, especially the ones about women on the verge of sexual maturity (Chloe in c. 1.23 and Lalage in 2.5). The odes can also be viewed as Horace's revenge poems on women who have rejected him; consequently the colour imagery of the poems which portray the aging women in their younger days is also of relevance.⁵

Of the three poems, cc. 1. 25 and 4.13 are closest in tone and subject matter; there is less evidence that Horace was romantically involved with Chloris of 3.15⁶ and the poem is less passionate and more moralising in tone.⁷ Nevertheless, as will be demonstrated, the themes and colour imagery of this poem have obvious parallels with 1.25 and 4.13 and scholars frequently make reference to it when discussing the other two poems.⁸

¹ (1975) p. 190

² *ibid.* p. 191 n. 4. See further on this below under the chromatic analysis of c. 4.13.

³ (1987a) p. 174

⁴ (1962) p. 256

⁵ e.g. 1.13, 2.5, 3.10. 2.5 is especially interesting; see the discussion below on 3.15.

⁶ Horace praises Chloris' beauty but says that she is less dear to him than Lalage (2.5.17-20). He does not profess jealousy of her as he does of Lydia (1.13). Nor does he wait outside her door as he waits outside Lyce's (3.10).

⁷ Kiessling-Heinze say of this poem that while 'IV 13 auf einstige Liebe zurückblickt, und I 25 solche wenigstens ahnen läßt, ist der Dichter hier ganz unbeteiligter Zuschauer' (1968 p. 323). In addition, 3.15 like 4.13 is in a form of Asclepiad metre whereas 1.25 is in Sapphics. See also Esler (1989) p. 177.

⁸ 'Critics are right to compare ode 13 with two poems from Horace's earlier collection, c.1.25 and 3.15, for they share many elements in common.' (Putnam 1986 p.228). See also Arkins (1983) p.169.

6.3 Putting the Colours to Work

There are two explicit colour terms in c. 1.25 (*virens* v. 17, *pullus* v. 18), two in c. 3.15 (*candidus* v. 6, *purpureus* v. 15) and three in 4.13 (*virens* v. 6, *luridus* v. 10, *purpura* v. 13). As far as implicit colour terms go, there are few in 1.25 although *aridas frondis* v. 19 makes some contribution to the colour imagery and *noctes* (v. 7), *interlunia* (vv. 11-12) and *flagrans* (v. 13) will be echoed in the colour imagery of the other poems. In 3.15 there are five implicit colour words (*nebula* v. 6, *Chloris* v. 8, *lana* v. 13, *rosa* v. 15, *cadus* v. 16) and 4.13 has around nine (*bibo* v. 4, *aridae querci* vv. 9-10, *capitis nives* v. 12, *lapis* v. 14, *color* v. 17, *cornix* v. 25, *fervidus* v. 26, *cinis* v. 28, *fax* v. 28).¹

The colour imagery of each poem will basically be examined in sequential order. Because of the strong connection between these three poems, less emphasis will be placed on the poems that surround each ode but reference will be made to the colour imagery of the related poems mentioned above. Unlike in the last two chapters on Propertius, no parallels will be drawn with wall-painting or mosaics for although Horace lived through the same explosion of visual arts he seems to have been less influenced by it than Propertius.² It is true in some instances that Horace's themes can be related to the themes of paintings³ but

¹ It is interesting that in this group of odes there seems to be a pattern of increasing use of colour; 1.25 has one main colour cluster (vv. 17-19), 3.15 has two (vv. 5-6, vv. 13-16) and 4.13 has a whole series. This is also apparent in the distribution of the colour terms within the structure - in 1.25 colour imagery only really makes its appearance in the final stanza, in 3.15 it appears in two out of four stanzas and in 4.13 five out of seven stanzas have some form of colour imagery. Increasing use of colour imagery is not merely the result of the repetition of a theme in Horace for this pattern does not seem to occur in other poems with similar themes. This can be demonstrated by an examination of the colour imagery of two similar odes of Horace, 1.4 and 4.7. Both of these contrast the cycle of nature with the brevity of human life but the first ode (1.4) makes a great deal of use of colour while the second (4.7) has very little. C. 1.4 has four explicit colour terms (*canus* v. 4, *albico* v. 4, *viridis* v. 9, *pallidus* v. 13) and one word for shining (*nitidus* v. 9) while 4.7, although containing a few implicit colour images, has neither explicit colour terms nor words for shining. As will be demonstrated, Horace's use of colour in his aging women poems increases as his sympathy grows and his feelings on the matter become more complex.

² See Hardie's article on Horace and the visual arts where he argues that pictorialism was alien to Horace's lyric style (1993 p. 122f.).

³ Maritz (1990) draws quite a few parallels between Horace's subject matter and wall paintings but the comparisons seem fairly superficial and Maritz does not speculate about who influenced whom. Hardie also draws some parallels between Horace's descriptions and wall-paintings but points out that Horace's landscapes never read like descriptions of paintings (1993 p. 123).

this is certainly not the case for these three odes - aging women were not a popular subject for wall-paintings!¹

6.3.1 *Carmen* 1.25

The structure of c. 1.25 and the content of its first four stanzas will be discussed only briefly because colour does not really make its appearance in the poem until the final stanza.

The structure of the poem is a variation on a pattern typical of Horace, one in which two sections are connected by a stanza which makes the transition from one to the other.² In this poem however, the transition is not effected by a stanza but by a single word - *invicem* - which serves to contrast Lydia's past and present state (vv. 1-8) with her grim future (vv. 9-20).³ As many commentators point out, Lydia is in the transition phase (the youths still seek her but less often); this is made clear by the number of comparatives in the first few stanzas.⁴

In most of the poem imagery of sound predominates rather than imagery of colour - it is present in the rattling of shutters, the cries of the youths and the sound of the wind.⁵ There are however strong sexual overtones throughout the poem to which words such as *noctes* (v. 7) and *flagrans* (v. 13) contribute; these words, together with *interlunia* (vv. 11-12) also have chromatic associations which will be picked up and developed in cc. 3.15 and 4.13.⁶ Nevertheless Horace only employs colour terms proper in the leaf metaphor of the final stanza:

laeta quod pubes hedera virenti
gaudeat pulla magis atque myrto,
aridas frondis hiemis sodali
*dedicet Euro.*⁷ (vv. 17-20)

¹ The only instance I have come across of a possible correspondence between the subject matter of these poems and the visual arts is one mentioned by Maritz who says that Lyce's stained teeth, white hair and wrinkles were 'the verbal equivalent of the veristic portraiture of the time.' (1990 p. 9) and cites the bust of an old woman who has been portrayed 'warts and all' (see Wheeler 1964 fig. 150). Even if there is some truth in Maritz' speculation, this does not help us with Horace's choice of colour in the poems.

² Williams (1968) p. 122f.

³ Boyle (1973) p. 176 ; see also Ancona (1992) p. 252 f. , Collinge (1961) p. 114.

⁴ *parcius* v. 1 , *prius* v. 5 , *minus et minus* v. 6 (Ancona 1992 p. 247 n. 4)

⁵ Esler also makes this point (1989 p. 175)

⁶ See below on 3.15.5-6 in section 3.2 and 4.13.26-28 in section 3.3.iii.

⁷ The O.C.T. reads *Hebro* (the *Hebrus* was a Thracian river) but many commentators read instead the Aldine edition's *Euro* (the East wind) and this is the reading I have chosen to accept for this

Horace states that Lydia will complain because 'happy youth rejoices more in green ivy than dark myrtle, dedicating withered leaves to the East wind, the companion of winter'. The comparison of human lives with leaves is first employed by Homer¹ and it also makes its appearance in lyric poets such as Mimnermus.² It is a very fitting one for Horace's poetry which frequently compares nature's cycles with those of human beings. As several scholars point out, the allusion to leaves also has direct relevance to the situation of the poem, for it suggests the garlands of a symposium from which the riotous youths might well have come.³

There are three colour elements in this stanza, two explicit and one implicit. The colour elements are present in the three different types of leaves - green (*virens*), dark (*pulla*) and withered or 'colourless' (*aridae frondis*). Note that Horace places the colour elements in descending order of brightness. The effect of gradually fading colour which is produced is a metaphor for different stages of desirability in women.⁴ Joy is associated primarily with the bright green colour of the ivy (*laeta* and *virenti* are placed at the beginning and end of v. 17) but it is also linked with the dark myrtle (*gaudeat* next to *pulla* in v. 18).⁵ No word of emotion is employed of the withered leaves, instead they are associated with the chill of winter (*hiemis* v. 19).

Each element of this colour cluster also has its own connotations and associations and, in addition, the significance of ivy and myrtle must be taken into consideration.

reference to the East Wind picks up the allusion to the wind in v. 12. For additional arguments in favour of the reading *Euro* see Armstrong (1992).

¹ 'οἷη περ φύλλων γενεή, τοίη δὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν. / φύλλα τὰ μὲν τ' ἀνεμος χαμάδις χέει, ἄλλα δέ θ' ὕλη / τηλεθόωσα φύει, ξαρος δ' ἐπιγίγνεται ὄρη · / ὧς ἀνδρῶν γενεή ἢ μὲν φύει ἢ δ' ἀπολήγει.' (Il. 6.146-149)

² 'ἡμεῖς δ' οἶά τε φύλλα φύει πολυανθέος ὄρηι / ξαρος, ὅτ' αἰψ' αὐγῆς αὔξεται ἡελίου' (fr. 2.1-2 Allen 1993). Allen also compares an elegy attributed to Simonides which has a very similar opening (1993 p.41). In Roman poetry Ovid produces a variation of this metaphor in *Ars. Am.*; '*nos male detegimur, raptique aetate capilli, / ut Borea frondes excutiente, cadunt.*' (3.161-162).

³ The green leaves that the young men select are presumably to be employed in the construction of wreaths, the emblem of the symposium. This plausible assumption about the poem's latent scaffolding is confirmed by the iconographic meaning (often overlooked) of the *sets* of leaves chosen - ivy (*hedera*) and myrtle (*myrtus*). The former is closely associated with the wine-god, Bacchus, the latter with the love-goddess, Venus.' (Davis 1991 p. 220); see also Arkins (1983) p. 167, Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) p. 298.

⁴ Ancona (1992) p. 254 n. 25

⁵ Arkins (1983) p. 167

The evergreen ivy is a common symbol of youth and vitality and was employed as such in three other poems we have examined; c. 61 of Catullus in which it was used in a metaphor about the love that surrounded the bride's heart¹, Catullus 63 where it was associated with Cybele's home at Mt. Ida² and Propertius 3.3 where it was present in the cave of inspiration.³ In Horace 4.11, ivy in Phyllis' hair sets off her youthful beauty and is linked with a word for shining which draws attention to its bright colour.⁴

In c.1.25 Horace lays emphasis on the bright green colour and evergreen nature of the ivy by employing the colour adjective *virens*.⁵ This colour adjective in its turn links the image with other poems of Horace, especially cc. 1.9 and 1.23. In c. 1.9 *virens* is employed as a synonym for youth which is placed in contrast with the white hair of old age⁶ and in c. 1.23 *viridis* is applied to the lizards which the youthful Chloe fears.⁷ This last colour image is especially interesting for it comes from a poem which is generally grouped with 1.25 and whose subject matter concerns a girl on the verge of sexual maturity. According to Ronnick, the green lizards in this poem contribute to the green imagery of its first half and 'establish a tone of explicit eroticism'.⁸ The association between greenness and sexuality is as strong in c.1.25, for in the same line as the colour adjective Horace employs the term *pubes* which has sexual overtones⁹ and the adjective *laeta* whose primary meaning is 'happy' but which can also be employed of the fertility of soil and crops.¹⁰ Thus in Horace's poetry, both ivy and the colour adjective *virens* and its cognates have strong connotations of youth and sexuality.

¹ See Chapter 2, section 5.1 on 61.31-35.

² See 63.23 which is discussed in Chapter 3, section 4.3.i

³ See Chapter 4, section 6.3.iii on 3.3.35.

⁴ 'est *hederæ vis / multa, qua crines religata fulges*' (vv. 4-5): see further on these lines in the concordance under 1.21.1 FULGEO iii.

⁵ '*virens* bezeichnet mehr als *viridis* das frisch Grünende' (Kiessling-Heinze 1968 p. 112)

⁶ '...*nec dulcis amores / sperne puer neque tu choreas / donec virenti canities abest / morosa...*' (vv. 15-18). See further on these lines in the concordance under 1.50.1 VIREO / VIRIDO.

⁷ '...*seu viridis rubum / dimovere lacertae*' (vv. 6-7)

⁸ (1993) p. 156

⁹ 'The word is capable of a sexual implication that *iuventus* lacks.' (Nisbet and Hubbard 1970 p. 298).

¹⁰ Virgil employs it in this sense at the beginning of the *Georgics*; '*Quid faciat laetas segetes...*' (1.1).

The *virens* ivy is placed in contrast with the *pulla* myrtle.¹ There is a great deal of controversy about the significance of the myrtle in this contrast. Many commentators, following Porphyrio², think that both the ivy and myrtle signify youth and that the translation of vv. 17-18 should be 'happy youths rejoice more in green ivy *and* dark myrtle'.³ In support of this view is the association of the myrtle with virginity which we have seen in Catullus' c. 61⁴ and Horace's use of the myrtle in 1.4 to signify the approach of spring.⁵ In addition, the myrtle like the ivy is an evergreen plant and Bonanno follows Bentley in arguing that on this ground it must have the same significance.⁶

However in 1.4 Horace used *viridis* of the springtime myrtle but here he employs the adjective *pullus*. Although epithets for black to describe the myrtle are not unknown⁷, the associations of this particular term for black and the contrast between it and *viridis* lend support to Nisbet and Hubbard's view that *atque* is meant to be interpreted as 'than' ('happy youths rejoice in green ivy *more than* dark myrtle') and that the dark myrtle represents middle-age, the stage which Lydia is now at.⁸ *Pullus* suggests a more sombre shade than the *viridis* ivy; according to André the word denoted a black without lustre or

¹ This contrast of green with a darker colour is slightly unusual, being almost unknown in Greek poetry. Irwin (1974 p. 44) does cite a fragment of Anacreon in which the μελαμφύλλωι δάφναι is contrasted with the χλωρῶι ἐλαίαι (fr. 443 PMG). However she goes on to comment 'When μελάμφυλλος occurs, it emphasises the darkness of the foliage, whether of tree-covered mountains or a single tree, as in Anacreon. Where it is contrasted with χλωρός it indicates the darker, as χλωρός the lighter green...Since Anacreon's listeners were familiar with the trees, they would grasp the contrast at once. It may be, indeed, that Anacreon was trying out the effect of these two epithets placed side by side. His experiment, if it was that, was not to my knowledge repeated.' (p. 45f.). Horace however does make use of the colour contrast on two other occasions in his odes; see Hor. 1.21.7, 4.12.11 in the concordance under 1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS iv.

² 'pullum autem myrtum succrescentem ac per hoc novellam intellegendum.' (Meyer 1874 p. 31).

³ In support of this reading are Kiessling-Heinze who think that the alternative reading is both 'sachlich unrichtig' (i.e. youths do not prefer ivy over myrtle at symposia) and 'sprachlich bedenklich' (1968 p. 112), Quinn (1980 p. 171) who says that the alternative is 'rather too ingenious', Commager (1962 p. 248), Boyle (1973 p.176), Giomini (1981 p.502), Bonanno (1983 p.238) and Davis (1991 p.216). Fewer scholars support the reading 'rejoice in green ivy *more than* dark myrtle' (Nisbet and Hubbard 1970, Arkins 1983, Ancona 1992) but their arguments are more compelling - see the discussion below.

⁴ See Chapter 2, section 5.1 on 61.21-25.

⁵ 'nunc decet aut viridi nitidum caput impedire myrto' (v. 9)

⁶ *Aridae frondes plane opponuntur frondibus hederæ ac myrti, scilicet quæ non arescunt hieme sed perpetuo virent'* (Bentley, cited by Bonanno 1983 p. 238)

⁷ e.g. 'ros maris et lauri nigraque myrtus olent:' (Ars Am. 3.690)

⁸ 'virenti' means 'fresh and young' (like evergreen leaves in the spring), *pulla* 'dark', almost 'dingy' (like the same leaves in late summer) (1970 p. 298). Thus this colour image spans the seasons - the *virentes* leaves of the ivy (like the *viridis* myrtle in 1.4) are associated with spring, the *pullae* leaves with summer and the withered leaves with autumn and winter. See also Ancona (1992) p. 254, Arkins (1983) p. 167.

brilliance¹ and it often carried pejorative overtones. The term is frequently employed to describe the clothing of poor people or people who wished to demonstrate their humility and the *praetexta pulla* was the official garment of magistrates at funeral ceremonies.²

This colour term is not often employed by the poets (neither Catullus nor Propertius make use of it) but Horace uses this colour adjective on two other occasions in his poetry, once to denote the ripeness of figs³ and once to describe the colour of a sacrifice to the infernal deities.⁴ These two uses of *pullus* give the term a certain ambivalence but both can be linked with middle-age. In the first instance the overtones of ripeness which *pullus* conveys suggests middle-age rather than the greenness of youth (indeed Lydia could be said to be 'over-ripe') while in the second the term's association with death is consistent with the morbid overtones of middle age in 1.25.

In summary, although the myrtle itself has links with Venus and spring, the colour term employed of it here is more appropriate for sober middle age than for riotous youth. Consequently, a close examination of the colour terms in this passage supports the three stage reading. Moreover, the idea of three stages of leaves suits the 'transitional' feeling of this poem, suggested by the comparatives and by words such as *inter-lunia* (vv. 11-12).⁵ Lydia is at the 'in-between' stage of the dark myrtle.

It is significant that no specific plant is associated with the image of the withered leaves; all leaves, be they of ivy or myrtle, are reduced in the end to a colourless anonymity. The epithet *aridus*, while it suggests lack of colour, has a primary meaning of 'dryness', a dryness that is the opposite of the moisture which is frequently associated with

¹ 'Toutefois ce n'est pas un noir brillant et lustré. Vitruve distingue les *pulla pecora* de ceux qui sont *coracino colore* (VIII, 3, 33). De ces deux nuances du noir *pullus* marque la plus terne: *lana quidem tristis*, dit Martial (XIV, 157, 1) des laines de Pollentia.' (1949 p. 71)

² André (1949) p. 72, Sebesta (1994) p. 46. See also Mart. 14.157.1 '*pullo lugentes vellere lanas*'.

³ '*suamque pulla ficus ornat arborem*' Ep. 16.46. This is in a passage about the delights of the Islands of the Blessed.

⁴ '*...pullam divellere mordicus agnam / coeperunt...*' Serm. 1.8.27

⁵ Lydia's inter-lunar night has an eerie, displacing quality absent from the shut-out lover's situation. Lydia is not only spatially dislocated to the lonely outdoors; she is located temporally in an in-between time (*inter lunia*) which further serves to isolate her not only from humanity but at least momentarily from the world of nature (the natural cycles of the moon) as well' Ancona (1992) p. 254

sexuality.¹ The word is also employed of old age in 2.11² and, as we will see, Horace uses it again in 4.13, his final poem to an aging courtesan. The *aridae frondes* are linked with the chill of winter which serves as a dramatic contrast with the *flagrans* Lydia of v. 13.³ Thus Horace not only employs colour in this stanza but also, in a kind of synaesthesia, makes use of other sensation words (dryness, cold) to contribute to the feeling of decay.

In conclusion, the colour cluster in the last stanza has connections with the imagery of the rest of the poem but it also modifies to some extent the tone of the imagery of previous stanzas.⁴ Although the final image is without pity, it has a certain detachment not evident in the strong sexual imagery of the other stanzas which is both savage and cruel; Lydia has been associated with the raging wind (vv. 11-12), she has been compared to a mare in heat (vv. 14-15), she has haunted alleyways like Lesbia (vv. 9-10).⁵ The leaf metaphor places the theme of the poem in the realm of universal truths⁶ and its use of colours contributes a certain beauty. The three colour elements in the stanza signify the three different stages of life: youth, middle age and old age. The dull colour of the *pulla* myrtle and the faded *aridae frondes*, set in contrast with the vivid green of the ivy, represent the diminishing attractiveness of aging women. Lydia is at the stage of the dark myrtle but she is left to contemplate the awfulness of becoming a withered leaf, rejected by everyone.

¹ 'The dryness of leaves replaces the wetness of her [Lydia's] formerly aroused state' (Ancona 1992 p. 258). Compare Horace's description of the green and moist willow grove, the metaphorical landscape of the young Lalage; '*circa virentis est animus tuae / campos iuvencae, nunc fluviis gravem / solantis aestum, nunc in udo / ludere cum vitulis salicto / praegestientis...*' (2.5.5-9; see further these lines in the concordance under 1.50.1 VIREO / VIRIDO). See also the use of moisture in c.61.21-25 of Catullus (discussed in Chapter 2, section 5.1). According to Irwin, the association between youth and moisture, dryness and death goes back to early Greek thought (1974 pp. 33-41).

² '*...fugit retro / levis iuventas et decor, arida / pellente lascivos amores / canitie facilemque somnum.*' (vv. 5-8).

³ '*cum tibi flagrans amor et libido / quae solet matres furiare equorum / saeviet circa iecur ulcerosum*'

⁴ 'The imagery of the final stanza sounds a new note. The concentrated virulence of stanzas 3 and 4 subsides, the *Thrachio Bacchante*, personified scorn and violence, gives way before the icy chill of *hiemis sodali Euro*.' Catlow (1976) p. 817. See also Lyne (1980) p. 209.

⁵ See Lee for the comparison between Lydia and Lesbia (1975 p. 36). For the sexual imagery of the previous stanzas see Ancona (1992 pp. 249-254).

⁶ Boyle comments on 'the explicit nature symbolism of the final stanza, which places the personal devastation to be suffered by Lydia within the context of a universal law of nature.' (1973 p. 177)

6.3.2 *Carmen* 3.15

As mentioned previously, c. 3.15 differs somewhat in tone and structure both from 1.25 and, as we shall see, from c. 4.13. The poem is the shortest in this group of odes¹ and it is simplest in structure; as Collinge puts it, it is an expansion of a single thought.² Basically the poem can be divided into three parts. In vv. 1-6 Horace admonishes Chloris for her present behaviour, in vv. 7-12 he tells her that her behaviour is more appropriate for her daughter and in vv. 13-16 he lists what is suitable and unsuitable for her as an old woman.³ The moralising tone is stronger in this ode than in the other two. This is evident in words such as *propior* (v. 4), *rectius* (v. 8), *decet* (v. 8), *decent* (v. 14) while words like *uxor* (v. 1) and *pauper* (v. 1) place the ode firmly within the sphere of Roman values.⁴ Horace seems less personally involved in this ode than in the others but his use of colour imagery is still interesting and worth examining.

There are two major colour clusters in the poem. The first occurs at the end of the first section:

*Uxor pauperis Ibyci,
tandem nequitiae fige modum tuae
famosisque laboribus:
maturo propior desine funeri

inter ludere virgines
et stellis nebulam spargere candidis. (vv. 1-6)*

Horace compares Chloris' attempts to sport amongst the maidens to a cloud being cast amongst the shining stars. The word order adds to the vividness of the image for *nebulam* is placed between *stellis* and *candidis*, the cloud literally amongst the stars. The contrast is one of light (*stellis...candidis*) and dark (*nebula*); Chloris is associated with darkness and is

¹ 16 lines as opposed to 20 lines for 1.25 and 28 lines for 4.13.

² (1961) p. 68

³ Quinn also divides the poem in this way (1980 p. 271).

⁴ 'The moralising tone of III.5 is clear from the start, where Chloris' status as *Uxor* and her husband's *paupertas* are both reasons for restraint and sobriety...And perhaps Horace addresses her as *Uxor* in order to set her apart from Lydia and Lyce as a woman with special responsibilities in whom the conduct of a courtesan is particularly unbecoming.' (Cattlow 1976 p. 814 and n. 5). See also Esler - 'this poem has closer ties with certain of the philosophical odes than with the iambic tradition' (1989 p. 174).

trying to take the maidens' light.¹ This colour image has connections with 1.25 for in this poem there was a suggestion that Lydia was also associated with darkness; in vv. 7-8 her suitors perish through long drawn out nights² and in vv. 10-12 Lydia herself weeps during moonless nights.³ In addition, Horace is playing on traditional colour imagery in which the colour adjective *candidus* is employed to describe the beauty of young girls. As can be seen from the concordance, this motif is already well established in Catullus' and Propertius' poetry.⁴ In the odes prior to 3.15, Horace has employed the word twice in reference to female beauty; in c.1.13 to describe the beauty of Lydia⁵ and in c. 3.9 of another girl.⁶

But, most of all, Horace means the reader to recall a poem in Book 2 in which a (presumably) younger Chloris was compared to the bright moon:

*dilecta quantum non Pholoe fugax,
non Chloris albo sic umero nitens
ut pura nocturno renidet
luna mari, Cnidiusve Gyges, (2.5.17-20)*

The parallels are obvious. Here it is Chloris who is being compared to a heavenly body which is casting its light upon the midnight sea.⁷ Thus the colour image of 3.15 is a reversal of this previous image; formerly Chloris cast light on the darkness but now she is the darkness which takes the light. There may well be a hint of pathos in this reversal. Indeed Lyne thinks that by the comparison of the girls to stars, Horace suggests to the

¹ 'Die ungewöhnliche Metapher *spagere nebulam* ist analog dem häufigen *caliginem fundere, offundere*' (Kießling-Heinze 1968 p. 324)

² 'me tuo longas pereunte *noctes*/Lydia, dormis?'

³ 'flebis in solo levis angiportu,/ Thracio bacchante magis sub *inter-/ lunia* vento,' Note the reference to the moon in this expression; for the association of aging courtesans with waning moons see below.

⁴ See the entries Catullus 13.4, 35.8, 86.1, Propertius 2.3.9, 2.9.10, 2.16.24, 2.22a.5, 2.22a.8, 2.28c.51, 2.29b.30, 3.11.16, 4.4.40, 4.8.32 in the concordance under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i.

⁵ 'uror, seu tibi candidos / turparunt umeros immodicae mero / rixae...' (vv. 9-11). See further on this image in the concordance under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i.

⁶ 'nec quisquam potior brachia candidae / cervici iuvenis dabat' (vv. 2-3). See further on this image in the concordance under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i.

⁷ It is interesting that one of the epigrams to aging women in the *Greek Anthology* compares an aging courtesan to the waning moon; '...τὸ δ' αὐξοσέληνον ἐκεῖνο / ἐξέλιπεν, συνόδου μηκέτι γινομένης' (5.271.5-6). Compare also Sappho; 'ἄστερες μὲν ἀμφὶ κάλαν σελάνναν / ἄψ' ἀπυκρῦπτοισι φάεννον εἶδος, / ὄπποτα πλήθοισα μάλιστα λάμπη / γὰν...' (fr. 34 Lobel and Page 1955). Campbell thinks that this was a metaphor for a girl who outshone her companions in beauty (1982 p. 83).

reader the impermanence of all human beauty in contrast to the eternal beauty of nature.¹ Like Chloris who was once compared to the bright moon, the brightness of the girls will grow dim while the stars go on shining.²

The second section of the poem is devoid of colour imagery, apart from a faint suggestion of colour in the proper name Chloris.

*non, si quid Pholoen satis,
et te, Chlori, decet: filia rectius
expugnat iuvenum domos,
pulso Thyias uti concita tympano. (vv. 7-10)*

The name Chloris is derived from the Greek χλωρός. Amongst other things, this word is employed as a colour adjective for green³ and this could be the force of the name here. In a similar fashion, in 1.23 the cognate name Chloe forms part of the imagery of green in the first half of the poem.⁴ When interpreted in this way, the name contributes to the irony of the stanza⁵, heightening the contrast between her and her daughter - young Pholoe is the one to whom the name should be applied!⁶ On the other hand χλωρός can also mean 'pale' or 'wan'⁷ and Nisbet and Hubbard, with some justification, give this interpretation to

¹ 'The imagery is complex, suggesting not only the girls and their beauty, but also (quite emphatically I think) the *impermanence* of them and their beauty. And the ultimate distinction between the girls and their apparent equivalent must be felt to be a sad one. We and the poet can only presumably regret the ways in which the girls are *not* like stars.' (1980 p. 206)

² Lyne misses the comparison with the Chloris of 2.5 but he does draw attention to 4.7 in which the ability of the moon to reappear is contrasted with the finality of human death (1980 p. 206):- '*damna tamen celeres reparant caelestia lunae: / nos ubi decidimus / quo pater Aeneas, quo Tullus dives et Ancus / pulvis et umbra sumus.*' (vv. 13-16). See also Commager (1962 p.248) on the use of the moon as a symbol of transience in 1.25.11-12 and 2.11.10-11.

³ See the dictionary entry in Liddell and Scott under χλωρός (1968 p. 1995 def. I). The word however had a range of meanings and was not always employed in a chromatic sense as Irwin's study of the term demonstrates (1974 p. 31f.).

⁴ 'the first half is dressed in green from Chloe (1), whose name χλόη means a green sprout' (Ronnick 1993 p. 156); 'the name suggests greenness and immaturity' (Nisbet and Hubbard 1970 p. 275).

⁵ This faint suggestion of green also serves as a bridge between 1.25 where *viridis* was employed of the ivy and 4.13 where the colour term is used of Chia who, like Pholoe, is placed in contrast to her aging counterpart. See the discussion of 4.13.6 below under section 3.3.i.

⁶ It is not my intention in this chapter to discuss whether Horace approves or disapproves of the wanton behaviour of Pholoe. Whether he thinks that this behaviour is only appropriate for Chloris' daughter or whether he disapproves of such behaviour altogether is not really relevant to the main point of the poem, nor will an examination of the colour imagery throw light upon the matter. For a discussion of this question see Connor (1987) p.187.

⁷ Liddell and Scott (1968) p. 1995 def. II

Chloris' name when she appears in c.2.5.¹ In this way the name suggests lack of colour and looks forward to the final section of the poem where Chloris is denied bright colours and associated with pale and unwashed wool. It may well be that Horace is playing on the two possible meanings of this colour word: the first looks back to the glory and vigour of Chloris' youth, the second suggests a beauty which has faded and grown dull.

The second major colour cluster appears in the final section as the poem ends on a burst of colour imagery:

*te lanae prope nobilem
tonsae Luceriam, non citherae decent
nec flos purpureus rosae
nec poti vetulam faece tenuis cadi. (vv. 13-16)*

Horace denies to Chloe the lyre, the rose and wine while reserving for her the wool of Luceria. All three of the former objects are connected with *symposia*.² Spinning wool was the lot of a Roman matron and, along with the placename Luceria, the reference to wool strikes a note of drab realism³ which is in contrast to the images of merry-making.

The colour of the wool is also of interest. Luceria was in Apulia which was renowned for the quality of its wool and Martial writes an epigram about the fine fleeces of Apulia, Parma and Altinum which he entitles '*Lanae Albae*'.⁴ Thus the wool of Luceria was white but here Horace also speaks of it as newly shorn⁵ and unwashed wool was regarded as

¹ 'This interpretation suits the white arms and the clear moonlight below...' (1978 p.89). See further on Hor. 2.5.18 in the concordance under 1.2.2 ALBUS i.

² 'In further specifying what is inappropriate behaviour for the amorous *uxor*, Horace once again appeals to emblematic features of the symposium (music, wreaths, wine-drinking)' (Davis 1991 p. 222); see also Quinn (1980) p. 272.

³ 'the sudden appearance of Luceria is surprising and strikes a note of Roman reality which the reader now recognises was really inherent in the first word of the ode - *uxor*, and the moral tone implicit in *pauperis* is the same as that in the recommendation to wool-making.' (Williams 1969 p. 97)

⁴ '*Velleribus primis Apulia, Parma secundis/nobilis; Altinum tertia laudat ovis.*' (14.155.1-2).

⁵ *tonsae* v. 14. 'It is possible that some of the shearing was done in the vicinity of the markets: there may be a hint of this in the words of Horace 3,15,14...' wool sheared near famous Luceria' which should perhaps be taken literally' (Fraysn 1984 p. 142). Horace of course was born in Apulia and may have had the opportunity of seeing the shearing process.

greasy '*sucidus*' or dirty '*sordidus*'.¹ This dirty, white wool is reminiscent of the hair of old women², appropriate for the faded Chloris whose name can mean 'pale'.

The section is dominated by the image of the *purpureus* rose. As we have seen from Propertius' c. 3.3, the word *rosa* on its own has connotations of redness³ and here Horace lays special emphasis on the colour by the use of the adjective *purpureus*. In Horace this colour adjective is often associated with the sexuality of youth. In 2.5 Lalage is compared to a grape which will only be ready for plucking when autumn has painted it purple⁴ and in 4.1 Horace will tell Venus to take her purple swans to a more suitable (i.e. younger) candidate.⁵ The colour will also be employed in a similar fashion in 4.13, as can be seen in the discussion below. In 3.15 the implication is that Chloris is still seeking after the vivid colours of the rose; as Commager puts it, it is 'as though winter were to masquerade in the colors of spring'.⁶ These colours however are no longer suitable for Chloris and the purple rose is placed in contrast with the drabness of the pale wool which it is now her lot to spin.

The colour of the rose is picked up by the colour of the wine in the following line.⁷ In a similar fashion, the colours of the rose and wine are linked in 2.3 and placed in contrast with the dark threads of the Fates.⁸ This brings us to the dual significance of both roses and wine for, as well as being connected with *symposia*, they are a reminder of the impermanence of the pleasures of life. As Commager comments on the above passage, 'the

¹ 'a quo sudore recens lana tonsa sucida appellata est' (Var. R. 2.11.6-7); 'quas geritis vestis, sordida lana fuit' (Ov. Ars. Am. 3.222).

² Compare Catullus 64 where the aged Fates have white hair ('at roseae niveo residebant vertice vittae' v. 309) and spin white wool ('ante pedes autem candentis mollia lanae / vellera virgati custodibant calathisci' vv. 318-319).

³ See Chapter 4, section 6.3.iii on 3.3.36.

⁴ '...tolle cupidinem / immitis uvae: iam tibi lividos / distinguet Autumnus racemos / *purpureo* varius colore.' vv. 9-12. See further on these lines in the concordance under 1.40.2

PURPUREUS i.

⁵ 'tempestivius in domum / Pauli *purpureis* ales oloribus / comissabere Maximi, / si torrere iecur quaeris idoneum.' vv. 9-12. See further on these lines in the concordance under 1.40.2

PURPUREUS i.

⁶ (1962) p. 250

⁷ See Prop. 3.17.17 in the concordance under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS iv where the colour adjective is applied to must and Horace 2.5.12 above where it is employed of grapes. Compare Theocritus 5 '...καὶ τὸ δὲ, Κράθι, / οἴνω πορφύροισ...' (vv. 124-125 Gow 1952).

⁸ 'huc *yinga* et unguenta et nimum brevis / flores amoenae ferre iube *rosae* / dum res et aetas et sororum / fila trium patiuntur *atra*.' (vv. 13-16). See further on these lines in the concordance under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS ii.

roses suggest life's impermanence as well as its beauty'.¹ This attitude is also apparent in 4.10 in which Horace compares the complexion of a youth to a crimson rose which is soon to fade.² In 3.15, Chloris' draughts of the red wine, like her attachment to the purple rose, is a sign that she has not accepted that her glory days lie in the past.³

In summary, in this ode Chloris is continually portrayed as seeking after light and colour - she wishes to sport amongst the shining stars, yearns for the purple rose and drinks deep draughts of red wine. She has not yet accepted that she is closer to a dark cloud than the bright moon and that it is now her lot to spin dull and dirty wool. There is some mockery in this use of colours and also a sense of irony (especially in the chromatic implications of the name Chloris) but a close examination of the colour elements in this poem reveal that it has an additional dimension. This is not just a moralising or philosophical poem for, underlying the nature motifs with which many of the colour images are connected, is a suggestion of the universal impermanence of human life and beauty.

6.3.3 *Carmen* 4.13

In some respects c. 4.13 picks up from where 1.25 left off; what Horace envisaged as happening to Lydia has happened to Lyce - she has become an old woman.⁴ C. 4.13 is structured in a similar fashion to 1.25, with the poem divided into two equal halves by a transition passage⁵ and much of its imagery, especially in the first half, is equally as savage. However in 4.13 Horace is describing an emotional state that is much more complex for, as we will see, his attitude changes radically during the course of the poem.⁶

¹ (1957) p. 72. Compare Theocritus 27 'ἄ σταφυλὶς σταφίς ἔσται· ὁ νῦν ῥόδον, αὐτὸν ὀλεῖται.' (v. 10 Gow 1952). For a fuller discussion of the significance of the rose in Horace see Davis (1991) p. 228-233.

² 'nunc et qui color est puniceae flore prior rosae, / mutatus Ligurinum in faciem verterit hispidam' (vv. 4-5). Compare also 2.11.13-17 - 'cur non sub alta vel platano vel hac / pinu iacentes sic temere et rosa / canos odorati capillos, / dum licet, Assyriaque nardo / potamus uncti?...'.
³ According to Commager, flowers, wine, and music are denied to Chloris because these objects are 'the privilege of those who accept the realities of the present' (1962 p. 249). See also Commager (1957) p. 75.

⁴ 'The starting point of this poem is different from that of the Lydia ode. Horace no longer predicts, but contemplates the fulfilment of his prayers.' (Cattlow 1976 p. 818)

⁵ 'in iv. 13 the attack on Lyce (1-12) is connected to the poet's nostalgic sense of the past and his own old age (17-28) by the lines 13-16 which state that nothing can repair what time has destroyed.' (Williams 1968 p. 123). See also Quinn (1963 p. 95) who holds a similar view about the turning point of the poem.

⁶ 'The poem is unique among the three under discussion, and among other treatments of the aging-woman *topos*, in the breadth of its tonal range and the complexity of the attitude it adopts...In 4.13 we find at last something of the complexity, the doubleness of vision, the shift

This is reflected in the increased use of colours in the poem and the depth and subtlety of many of its colour images. In addition, the poem and its imagery gains an added significance from its position for, as Minaedo points out, it is the last of Horace's love lyrics in the last book and 'manages to evoke the whole span of Horace's erotic career'.¹

This poem is the longest in the group of three and there are many colour images which must be examined. Accordingly, for the sake of clarity, the discussion will be divided into three sections which correspond to the divisions in the poem which Williams makes²; vv. 1-12 The Attack on Lyce, vv. 13-16 Transition passage, vv. 17-28 Regret.

6.3.3.i) The Attack on Lyce (vv. 1-12)

Horace opens the poem gleeful at the gods' fulfilment of his prayer of revenge upon Lyce outside whose door he waited (presumably in vain) in 3.10:

*Audivere, Lyce, di mea vota, di
audivere, Lyce: fis anus, et tamen
vis formosa videri
ludisque et bibis impudens (vv. 1-4)*

As Cattlow points out, the note of triumph is struck by the insistent repetition (*audivere* twice, *Lyce* twice, *di* twice) and the hissing rhyme (*fis, vi, ludisque, bibis*)³, an atmosphere of triumph which will continue almost unabated until the end of the first section. In the first stanza the presence of the verbs *ludis* and *bibis* (v. 4) recall Chloris of 3.15 for like her Lyce attempts both to sport (*ludere* v. 5) and to drink wine in a denial of present reality.⁴ However in 4.13 any suggestion of colour in this final line is diminished because of the lack of a word for wine and of an explicit term for red for it to pick up on.

from mood to antithetical mood which we associate with some of Horace's best and most characteristic work.' (Esler 1989 p. 175 and 177). Nisbet however disagrees - 'The earlier poem [1.25] is more concentrated, its images are stronger, and it is better in every way.' (1962 p. 187)

¹ (1982) p. 40.

² (1968) p.123

³ (1976) p. 819. See also Kiessling-Heinze; 'die Wiederholung kennzeichnet die triumphierende Sicherheit' (1968 p. 452). Both Quinn (1963 p. 92) and Lyne (1980 p. 211) interpret this repetition as pathetic rather than triumphant but Cattlow dismisses their arguments on the grounds of the aggressive hissing rhyme and the hurtful details which Horace singles out. I agree with Cattlow; the power of the poem lies in the alteration of mood which occurs as the poem progresses and it is much more effective if it begins on a triumphant note.

⁴ Commager (1962) p. 300; Putnam (1986) p. 222

The first real colour image of the poem occurs in the second stanza:

*et cantu tremulo pota Cupidinem
lentum sollicitas. ille virentis et
doctae psallere Chiae
pulchris excubat in genis. (vv. 5-8)*

As in 1.25, the first explicit colour term is *virens* and once again it is employed of youthful beauty. Here however the term, instead of being used in an elaborate metaphor, is applied directly and more boldly to describe a rival courtesan. As Quinn suggests¹, the image is probably inspired by some lines from a chorus of Sophocles' *Antigone* but in these lines no word for green is employed.² Horace also employs *virens* to describe the vigour and freshness of youth in *Epodes* 13³ and, as we have already seen, in c.1.9.⁴ As in 1.9, in 4.13 the word is not employed in a literal chromatic sense (girls are not green!) but its chromatic meaning is played upon by the use of contrasting colour words.⁵ In the case of 4.13 these occur in the following stanza:

*importunus enim transvolat aridas
quercus et refugit te, quia luridi
dentes te, quia rugae
turpant et capitis nives. (vv. 9-12)*

In this stanza Lyce is compared to a withered oak; by implication Chia is a green sapling. The adjective *aridus* recalls the withered leaves of c. 1.25.⁶ Lyce, like Lydia, is associated both with dryness and with cold (*capitis nives*), the difference being that in Lydia's case this association was still in the future, for Lyce it is part of the grim present.

¹ (1963) p.94

² 'Ἔρωσ ἀνίκατε μάχαν, / Ἔρωσ, ὅς ἐν κτήεσι πίπτεις, / ὅς ἐν μαλακαῖς παρειαῖς / νεάνιδος ἐννυχεύεις...' (vv. 781-4)

³ 'dum virent genua / et decet, obducta solvatur fronte senectus.' See also Edgeworth on *Aen.* 5.295 and 6.304 (1992 pp. 166-7).

⁴ See the discussion on *virenti* in 1.25.17 above under section 3.1.

⁵ In 1.9 the contrasting colour word is *canities* which comes immediately after *virenti*. See further Commager (1962) p. 271.

⁶ Putnam suggests that *quercus* at 4.13.9 may stand for *frondes* in 'a synecdoche of whole for parts' (1986 p. 235 n. 22).

Similarly, while in the leaf metaphor of 1.25 Horace predicted the fading of Lydia's colours, in 4.13 Lyce's colours have actually faded.

Here the colours that are applied to Lyce are pale and dingy ones which contrast sharply with Chia's greenness.¹ In addition, the colour words that Horace uses of Lyce are a ghastly distortion of those terms which are frequently employed of the beauty of young women. Colour terms in the yellow/gold range such as *flavus* and *aureus* are regularly used of the fair hair of beautiful girls² or to describe the glow which surrounds them.³ In contrast, in these lines Horace employs *luridus*, a yellow without lustre⁴ and he applies the word instead to Lyce's teeth. In a similar fashion the phrase *capitis nives* recalls the cognate adjective *niveus* which is often used of the beautiful white skin of youth⁵ but here *nix* is associated with the white hair of old age. Nowhere has Horace employed colour imagery more cuttingly.⁶

However the final colour image (*capitis nives*) of this stanza also introduces a note of sympathy; as Quinn puts it 'the terrible words... [are] mitigated by a concluding touch of fancy'.⁷ The image is a variation on the usual cliché of old women's white hair common in poems on this *topos*⁸ but it is a bold metaphor, unusual enough for Quintilian to remark on it.⁹ Placed as it is at the very end of the stanza (indeed *nives* is the *final* word), the

¹ Her [Lyce's] metaphors, both visual and tactile, are antonymical to Chia's green freshness. The leaves of Lyce's oak are dry, her teeth yellowed, her hair snow white. Spring is Chia's season. Winter's hoar and chill have come upon Lyce.' (Putnam 1986 p. 222)

² See the entries Catullus 64.63, 66.62 Horace 1.5.4, 2.4.14, 3.9.19 under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS i. in the concordance.

³ See especially Hor. 1.5.9 in the concordance under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv ('*qui nunc te fruitur credulus aurea*') where *aureus* is used of Pyrrha and compare Prop. 4.7.85.

⁴ André (1949) p. 137f. It was sometimes used to describe the colour of corpses (*ibid.*).

⁵ See the entries Catullus 63.8, 64.364 Propertius 2.13b.53, 3.6.12, 3.14.11 Horace 2.4.3, 3.27.25 under 1.35.1 NIVEUS i. in the concordance.

⁶ 'the details which he singles out are intended to hit where it hurts' (Cattlow 1976 p. 819). Compare *Epod.* 17 where Horace employs very similar imagery of a man who is perhaps Horace himself; '*fugit iuventas et verecundus color / reliquit ossa pelle amicta lurida; / tuis capillus albus est odoribus*' (vv. 21-23).

⁷ (1963) p. 95; also Cattlow (1976) p. 819.

⁸ See the examples in *Pal. Anth.* 5.21, 5.23, 5.273, 5.298, 11.66, 11.67, 11.69, 11.72. As mentioned previously, Propertius also makes use of this cliché in 3.15 his poem about Cynthia aging (section 6.2 above). See further Bertman (1989) p. 165, Putnam (1986) p. 230. The metaphor may well owe something to the *Greek Anthology's* 'πολιῶ γήραϊ νιφόμενον' used of the hair of old men at 6.198.6 and 7.91.2.

⁹ Quintilian disliked the metaphor, because he found it 'harsh' (jarring?), and 'fanciful' - '*Sunt et durae, id est a longinqua similitudine ductae, ut 'capitis nives'*' (8.6.17). Kiessling-Heinze comment 'die Metapher, schon von Quintilian (VIII 6 17), weil *a longinqua similitudine ducta* (sic), als hart gerügt, ist für den Lateiner eben so kühn, als wollte er von den *rosae genarum* oder dem *ebur membrorum* sprechen' (1968 p. 453).

image would strike the eye of the Roman reader and give them pause. This is especially the case because the verb *turpant* comes first and leads the reader to expect a gross conclusion. *Nives* however is unexpected, reminding the reader not only of the white skin of young girls but also of the depiction of snow in Horace's nature poems. The word would immediately recall the opening of 4.7¹ and through it the Soracte ode² (the connection with this latter ode has of course already been established by the common use of *virens*). Particularly in the latter ode the whiteness and purity of snow contribute to a scene of great beauty and power. Thus in 4.13 the expression becomes almost an oxymoron: snow should be beautiful but here it disfigures (*turpant*).³ A parallel can be drawn with c. 3.15 where the metaphor about Chloris casting her cloud amongst the shining stars harks back to an earlier, more beautiful image of the moon shining on the midnight sea, lending a certain pathos to Horace's depiction of Chloris. In a similar fashion, the two nature odes which *capitis nives* echoes both have as a theme the idea that nature renews itself where human beings cannot. Like the shining stars of 3.15, the snows of Lyce's head are a reminder of human decay against nature's constancy.

Thus, a detailed examination of this colour image supports Cattlow's argument that it is here that Horace's vengeful mood begins to change.⁴ The image of snows of the head has a beauty which strikes a chord with the reader and, placed in the context of other poems of Horace, it forms part of a truth with which every reader can identify.

6.3.3.ii) Transition (vv. 13-16)

The note of sympathy which *capitis nives* introduces into the poem leads Horace naturally into his transition passage and the whiteness of *nives* is placed in contrast with *purpura* in the following line:

¹ *Diffugere nives, redeunt iam gramina campis/ arboribusque comae*.' Note the contrast between the whiteness of the snow and the greenness of the grass and leaves of the trees. Porter also sees a connection between these two odes (1975 p. 221).

² *Vides ut alta stet nive candidum / Soracte...* (vv. 1-2). Lee thinks that the picture of Lyce in 4.13 is meant to be of 'a withered oak with snow on top' (1970 p. 252); if this is the case then it strengthens the connection with 1.9 ('...*nec iam sustineant onus/ silvae laborantes...*' 1.9.2-3). See also Commager (1962) p. 271.

³ '*capitis nives* is evocative of old age, but not wholly effective as abuse because even when allied to *turpant*, it is beautiful.' (Cattlow 1976 p. 819).

⁴ Cattlow sees this phrase as one of the pivotal points of the poem (1976 p. 819 n.20).

*nec Coae referunt iam tibi purpurae
nec cari lapides tempora quae semel
notis condita fastis
inclusit volucris dies. (vv. 13-16)*

Horace tells Lyce that neither Coan purple nor jewels can bring back the days that have been lost. The sexual connotations of purple cloth go all the way back to Sappho where Eros is depicted in a purple mantle.¹ As we have seen in our examination of Propertius 3.13, purple robes were much favoured by courtesans²; and Putnam states that Coan robes were a sign both of affluence and sexuality in the Roman world.³ In 4.13 the word *purpura* not only echoes the allusion to the purple rose in 3.15 but also picks up on the purple swans of 4.1 which we have already mentioned in connection with 3.15.⁴ Unlike Horace who tries to resist the purple swans of Venus, Lyce and Chloris have not even come halfway to the realisation that they are no longer young and they seek after the bright colours which are more appropriate for beautiful young girls.⁵ According to Putnam, in this context purple 'signifies Lyce's continuing futile attempt to regain what "green" Chia possesses naturally and what her own whiteness proves in her case to be irrecoverable.'⁶ This behaviour results in a grotesque combination of purple robe and greying hair.

The brilliance of the purple robe is enhanced by the reference to jewels in the following line.⁷ The combination of purple and jewels is reminiscent of another Propertius poem in which a wife whose soldier husband is missing asks for what purpose purple shines for her

¹ ' ἐλθόντ' ἐξ ὀράνω πορφυρίαν περθέμενον χλάμυν' (fr. 54 Lobel and Page 1955). Pollux who quotes this line makes it clear that Eros is the subject.

² See the discussion of 3.13.7 in Chapter 5, section 5.1 and compare Horace '*muricibus Tyriis iteratae vellera lanae / cui properabantur?...*' (Epod. 12.21-22).

³ (1986) p. 223

⁴ See the discussion on the *purpureus* rose of 3.15.15 above under section 3.2.

⁵ Compare *Pal. Anth.* 5.271 where the golden castanets and finery that a courtesan wore as a young girl are employed as a contrast with her aged and diseased state; 'τήν ποτε βακχεύουσαν ἐν εἴδει θηλυτεράων, / τήν χρυσεῶ κροτάλω σειομένην σπατάλην, / γήρας ἔχει καὶ νοσος ἀμελίχως ...' (vv. 1-3).

⁶ (1986) p. 223

⁷ If the variant reading *clari* is correct then the brightness of the jewels is even more pronounced and, according to Maclean, *clari* not *cari* is the reading of the greater number of MSS (1881 p. 252).

and clear crystal adorns her hands.¹ This suggests another *topos* frequently explored by Horace; the idea that purple has no power over human ills.² Here it is time itself that purple has no power over³ and with the introduction of this idea Horace further universalises Lyce's situation - it becomes the common plight of all humanity including himself.⁴

6.3.3.iii) Regret (vv. 17-28)

In the series of anguished questions which introduce the third section, few colour words are employed. One question however sums up the colour imagery:

*quo fugit Venus, heu, quove color? decens
quo motus? quid habes ilius, illius,
quae spirabat amores,
quae me surpuerat mihi (vv. 17-20)*

In asking Lyce where her colour has fled, Horace is reiterating the motif of fading colours; the question reinforces the picture of Lyce's drab colouring in stanza two. Here we have a reversal of the usual elegiac imagery for it was normally the courtesans who caused their lovers' colour to depart and in elegiac poetry much is made of their pallor.⁵ The question may be meant to recall 3.10 where Horace describes the pallor of his own complexion while he is lying in wait outside Lyce's door.⁶ The tables have been turned on Lyce but Horace finds that he can no longer be gleeful about the result. His sadness is felt in the

¹ 'nam mihi quo Poenis ter purpura fulgeat ostris / crystallusque meas ornet aquosa manus?' (4.3.51-2). See further on these lines in the concordance under 1.21.1 FULGEO iii.

² See for instance Hor. 2.16.7 and 3.1.42 in the concordance under 1.40.1 PURPURA and Hor. 1.35.12 under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS iii.

³ According to Porter, the uselessness of wealth as a barrier to the passage of time is one of the motifs of Horace's Fourth Book (1975 p. 209f.).

⁴ 'Lyce becomes in the next two stanzas, a symbol not merely of female folly but of mortality in general' (Esler 1989 p. 176). See also Connor (1981) p. 1622.

⁵ See the instances under 1.37.1 PALLEO / PALLESCO and its cognates in the concordance e.g. Propertius 1.9.17, 1.13.7 and 3.8.28 under 1.37.2 PALLIDUS. See especially 1.1.22 (under 1.37.1 PALLEO / PALLESCO) and Propertius' vain hope to make Cynthia's cheek as pale as his own.

⁶ 'O quamvis neque te munera nec preces / nec tinctus viola pallor amantium / nec vir Pieria paelice saucius / curvat...' (vv. 13-16; see further on these lines in the concordance under 1.37.3 PALLOR). Compare also 1.13 where the thought of Lydia's infidelities causes Horace to lose his colour; 'tum nec mens mihi nec color / certa sede manent...' (vv. 5-6).

interjection *heu*¹, the liquid sound of *illius*, *illius*² and the frequent repetition which now has a sorrowful rather than scornful effect.³

There are no real colour words in the sixth stanza which is taken up with the recollection of Cinara who died young (and who presumably kept her colour in contrast to Lyce who goes on fading). There is however an interesting play on the proper name Cinara which is employed twice in the stanza:

*felix post Cinaram notaque et artium
gratarum facies? sed Cinarae brevis
annos fata dederunt
servatura diu parem (vv. 21-24).*

In an ironic twist, *Cinara* will be echoed by the homophonic colour word *cineres* in the final line of the poem, implying that Cinara could only achieve eternal beauty through the ashes of death.⁴ For the significance of this word play in the final stanza see below.

Strong colour comes back into the poem in the seventh and final stanza when Horace contemplates Lyce's immediate future:

*cornicis vetulae temporibus Lycen,
possent ut iuvenes visere fervidi
multo non sine risu
dilapsam in cineres facem. (vv. 25-28)*

Horace firstly compares Lyce to an old crow. This was a common comparison in poems on this *topos* for it was the belief that crows lived a long time.⁵ The comparison is peculiarly appropriate in this instance, for there was a legend that the crow once tried to dress itself in

¹ 'The exclamation of grief, *heu*, in the middle of line 17, is the only occurrence of such a word in any of the three odes.' (Esler 1989 p.176)

² 'Und er vertieft sich immer mehr in die Erinnerung: das malt schön das verweilende *illius*, *illius*, aus dem etwas wie Sehnsucht klingt;' (Kiessling-Heinze 1968 p. 454)

³ Esler (1989) p.176

⁴ 'Her name, which gave her reality, and the face that was so significant a feature of that reality have become only ash.' (Putnam 1986 n.13)

⁵ See, for instance, *Pal. Anth.* 11.67, 69. In 3.17.13 Horace gives the *cornix* the epithet *annosa*. See further Putnam on the significance of the crow; 'symbol of age, darkly squawking of darkness' (1986 p. 227 and n. 12). For the legend, see Phaedrus 1.3.

the cast-off feathers of the peacock, a story which Horace himself makes reference to in *Epistles* 1.3.¹ Thus like the crow, Lyce is attempting to dress herself in borrowed colours but cannot disguise her real nature. Furthermore, the *cornix* was a black bird² and the association of Lyce with this colour echoes Chloris', and to a lesser extent Lydia's, association with darkness in 3.15 and 4.13. The contrast between the blackness of the crow and the *fervidi* youths in the following line reinforces the link with 3.15 by recalling the contrast between the *nebula* and the *candidi* stars; the word *fervidi* also picks up on *flagrans Lydia* of 1.25.13.

The motifs of darkness and light are repeated in the final dramatic colour contrast of the poem with the image of the torch collapsed into ashes. Note how Horace emphasises the dark/light contrast by positioning the word for ash (*cineres*) right next to the word for torch (*facem*) and note how he places emphasis on the image by making these two words the final ones in the entire poem. This dramatic juxtaposition of light and dark picks up on Horace's allusion to the dark fires of death in the last stanza of the poem immediately preceding.³ The picture created is a stark one - there is no gradual fading here for all colour has disappeared and the ashes signify the darkness and dryness⁴ of death. In contrast, the torch and its flames suggest the passion and seductiveness associated with courtesans for, as Quinn points out, the torch of love was a common metaphor in classical poetry.⁵ In 4.13 the word *fax* not only recalls *flagrans Lydia* in 1.25.13 but also poems such as 1.5 in which the seductive Pyrrha is associated with fire⁶ and it can also be compared with

¹ 'ne, si forte suas repetitum venerit olim / grex avium plumas, moveat cornicula risum / furtivis nudata coloribus?' (vv. 18-20)

² See *Metamorphoses* 2 where the crow recounts its transformation from maiden to bird; '...tendebam bracchia caelo:/ bracchia coeperunt levibus nigrescere pennis;' (vv. 580-1). Pliny speaks of a crow which was remarkable for its very black colour; 'nunc quoque erat in urbe Roma haec prodente me equitis Romani cornix e Baetica primum colore mira admodum nigro' (N.H. 10.60.124).

³ '*nigrorumque memor, dum licet, ignium/ misce stultitiam consiliis brevem:*' (4.12.26-27). See further on these lines in the concordance under 1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS iii. Putnam also makes this point (1986 p. 227 n. 13). Porter (1987b p. 113) goes further and links the ending of 4.13 not only with 4.12 but also with 4.7 and 4.11, all of which end with explicit mentions of darkness (7.25, *infernis...tenebris*; 11.35-36, *atrae ...curae*).

⁴ Compare *Ep.* 17.34 where Horace uses *aridus* as an epithet for *cinis*. The dryness of the ashes in 4.13 recalls, of course, the *aridi frondes* of 1.25.19.

⁵ (1963) p. 98

⁶ The name Pyrrha is probably derived from the Greek adjective πυρρός which means 'flame-coloured' (Nisbet and Hubbard 1970 p. 75). 'Pyrrha, blonde seductress, becomes a beacon fire that lures ignorant seafarers to their destruction and the pyre on which they suffer the *ardor* not of love but of death' (Putnam 1970 p. 253).

Catullus' use of *fax* in c.61 in association with the bride and her beauty.¹ Note that the final word of the poem is not *cineres* but *facem*. This softens the conclusion as it harks back to stanzas four and five and their recollections of Lyce's former grace and colour.

Some commentators are of the opinion that in the final stanzas of the poem Horace reverts to his former sarcasm.² An examination of the colour imagery in this stanza does not support this view. Horace is realistic and unsentimental³ about what awaits Lyce (as he was about Lydia in the final leaf image) but he is not laughing with the youths. That he is all too aware of the effect of time's passage on his own life is suggested by the word *cineres* which recalls *Cinara* of the sixth stanza, the symbol of Horace's youth and of his own vulnerability to time.⁴ Nor are the youths themselves immune from the painful realities of life. The phrase *fervidi iuvenes* recalls the *laeta pubes* of 1.25, for both have overtones of sexuality, but whereas the sexuality of the *laeta pubes* was associated with happiness and fertility, that of the *fervidi iuvenes* seems of a more frenzied and destructive kind.⁵ There is a tension between the word *fervidi*, which describes the youths, and *fax*, which refers to Lyce. Underlying this is a realisation (though they themselves do not realise it) that the *fervidi* youths will themselves, like the *fax*, gradually burn out to become nothing more but ashes.⁶

In conclusion, *carmen* 4.13, the last of Horace's 'love' lyrics, represents the culmination of Horace's colour imagery on this *topos*. Many of its colours echo the colour motifs of 1.25 and 3.15 but Horace employs them with even greater subtlety and depth. A prime example of this is the phrase *capitis nives* which, on first examination, appears to be wholly derisive but which introduces a note of sympathy in its evocation of the nature

¹ See Chapter 2 section 5.2 on 61.77, 94 and 114.

² For instance Catlow 'Horace tries desperately to reassert his previously exultant scorn' (1976 p. 820). See also Fraenkel (1957) p. 416, Kiessling-Heinze (1968) p.454. Connor seems to share this view in his book (1987 p. 189) but in an article he states that 'the last stanza...embodies the new sympathy that has invaded Horace almost against his will' (1981 p. 1622).

³ Quinn also comments on 'the mood of detailed, objective realism which characterises the stanza' (1980 p. 322f.). This is partly produced by the shift from second person to third person: Horace is no longer talking *to* Lyce but *about* her (Putnam 1986 p.227).

⁴ '*non sum qualis eram bonae / sub regno Cinara*' (4.1.3-4)

⁵ *Fervidus* can also mean violent; see for instance Virg. *Aen.* 9.736 '*mortis fraternae fervidus ira*'. The *Oxford Latin Dictionary* states that the word can also mean 'angry' 'savage' (1968 p. 692 def. 6b).

⁶ '*fervidi*, things that glow, *also* become ashes - though *fervidi* tend to forget it.' (Lyne 1980 p. 211)

poems: it is by employing colour images such as these that Horace is able to express the complexity of his emotions on this subject.¹ A close examination of such colour imagery reveals that a poem which certain scholars have dismissed as simply 'vicious' or 'bitter' is in reality a masterly study of someone who is drawn to sympathy in spite of himself.

There is the same underlying pattern of colour imagery in all three poems. Like Chloris, Lyce seeks bright colours to cover her dingy ones but she is doomed to fail and will go on fading into the darkness like both her predecessors. However 4.13 focuses much more on the tragedy of this event than 1.25 or 3.15 and the second half of the poem laments the passing of Lyce's beauty while acknowledging its inevitability. Horace employs colour even in the poignant final image and, in the contrast between the darkness of the ash and the light of the torch, the reader can dwell on all that has been lost.

6.4 Final Thoughts

Examination of these odes reveals that Horace has introduced colour imagery into a *topos* that did not make much use of it and in doing so he has created poems that go beyond set pieces of the genre. A gradual development of colour imagery can be observed in these three poems; Horace's use of colour progresses from a single colour cluster at the end of 1.25 to colour words in almost every stanza of 4.13. The increased use of colour words, with all their allusiveness and ambiguity, is one of the devices by which Horace is able to express ideas and emotions that are increasingly complex and, at times, even contradictory.

The colour images gain much depth and subtlety from their link to colour motifs in other odes of Horace. Many of the colours echo those of erotic odes, especially their use of green and purple, colours associated with youth and sexuality. These colours however are seen in a new aspect; it is shown that green will eventually fade and that wearing purple cannot bring back one's lost desirability. The bright colours and light with which young women are associated are placed in contrast with the dull and dark colours of the aging

¹ 'does Horace hate Lyce (through being disgusted with her) or does he sympathize with her?...Even at the end of this poem Horace's attitudes and emotions are so complex that a decisive yes or no cannot be given' (Connor 1981 p. 1635)

courtesans - it is a cruel comparison. Connor was right in saying that much of the imagery in these poems is sharp and aggressive but this is not the full picture: sympathy is also evident in the way in which many of these colour images are either associated with nature metaphors or echo Horace's nature poems. In this way, Horace is able to convey a message about the inevitability of decay and the transitory quality of human beauty. Thus a detailed and systematic analysis of the colours in these poems refutes the Victorian view of the odes as crude and nasty and lends support to critics such as Cattlow who sees them rather as studies in human psychology.¹

The poems become more sympathetic as the connection between the colours and the natural world is reiterated and strengthened. The leaf image of 1.25 has a certain plaintive beauty, the cloud image of 3.15 has an underlying sadness but it is in 4.13, with its images of snowy hair and dying flames, that Horace finally makes the transition from disgust to empathy.

¹ (1976) p. 820

Chapter 7

Closing Thoughts

In this concluding chapter, we will summarize briefly what has been gained from the study by revisiting the issues posed in the introduction about the ways in which colours are used and what this can tell us about the poems and poets studied. For the sake of clarity, the review will be divided into two main sections: conclusions from the concordance, and conclusions from the detailed study of individual poems. These two sections will be further compartmentalised under various headings. Sometimes, in the first section, reference will be made to the colour imagery of the poems studied in depth as these were also touched upon in the concordance.

7.1 Conclusions from Concordance

By no means can we summarize all the observations that could be made about colours in the concordance, for examining each colour term separately would require a substantial chapter on its own. Instead we will attempt to give instances of the sorts of conclusions that can be drawn from the concordance so that the reader can go back at leisure and use the concordance as a tool for drawing inferences about the use of colour in these poets.

The concordance can give us information about three major aspects.

7.1.1 The ways in which Catullus, Propertius and Horace utilise colours

By examining the concordance, we gain an understanding of the wide variety of ways in which Catullus, Propertius and Horace make use of colour terms. They employ colours to help scenes come to life, to evoke all sorts of emotional responses in their audience, both positive and negative, to draw attention to a person or thing and to make connections within a poem or between groups of poems. Indeed, in a majority of instances colour is employed with more than one purpose in mind. For example, a colour may be used both for assistance in drawing attention to an image in the poem and for its emotional effect. This is why certain key colour images will crop up repeatedly in our discussion of the role of colour in these poets.

Like their predecessors, all three of our poets make much use of colours in 'scene creation', that is they employ colours to bring scenes to life and enable the reader to envisage them more clearly. This is the case with much of Catullus' use of colour in the 'long poems'. For instance, in c. 61 he describes the golden flames of the torch¹, the golden shoes of the bride² and the purple cloth of the marriage couch³ to make the reader feel as though they were a participant in the wedding ceremony. Likewise, in c. 64, Catullus employs words for light and shining⁴ and words associated with greenness⁵ to bring the interior and exterior of Peleus' palace to life. In a similar fashion, Propertius employs allusions to the purple waves⁶, a golden sheep⁷ and white and blue sea nymphs⁸ to create the dream scene of 2.26a, while Horace uses words suggestive of white and green in his creation of the wintry landscape of Mt. Soracte.⁹

In many of these scenes, the three poets not only use colour words for pictorial effect but for the emotional response they elicit in the reader. Thus the words for light and shining in the description of Peleus' palace in Catullus' c. 64 add to its atmosphere of happiness. A similar effect is produced with the use of words for white, gold and shining in c. 61. As one would expect with poets who are largely concerned with love, many of their colour words are employed to heighten the erotic atmosphere of a poem. The poets usually employ words for white, red and shining such as *candidus*, *niveus*, *roseus*, *purpureus* and *fulgeo*¹⁰ for their erotic effect, but words for green¹¹, yellow¹² or even black¹³ can also, on occasion, be used in this fashion. Indeed, so strong are the erotic associations of some of these terms that sometimes a single use of the word can, in the right circumstances,

¹ See Cat. 61.95 in the concordance above under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv.

² See Cat. 61.160 under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv.

³ See Cat. 61.165 under 1.48 TYRIUS.

⁴ See Cat. 64.44 under 1.3.2 ARGENTUM.

⁵ See Cat. 64.285 and 64.293 under 1.50.1 VIREO / VIRIDO.

⁶ See Prop. 2.26a.5 under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS iv.

⁷ See Prop. 2.26a.6 under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS i.

⁸ See Prop. 2.26a.16 under 1.6 CAERULEUS / CAERULUS i.

⁹ See Hor. 1.9.1 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS iv.

¹⁰ The erotic associations of these colour terms are discussed below in the following section.

¹¹ For instance, see Cat. 17.14 and Hor. 1.23.6 under 1.50.2 VIRIDIS i.

¹² See, for example, Cat. 64.98 and Hor. 1.5.4 under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS i, the Catullus instances under 1.28 LUTEUS and Propertius' and Horace's use of the term *murreus* under 1.32 MURREUS.

¹³ See the instances under 1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS i.

impart a sexual undertone to a passage. This is the case with the use of *niveus* in reference to the thigh of the Spartan girl in Propertius 3.14¹ or the allusion to the *nitentes Cycladas* at the end of Horace 1.14.²

Colour words are by no means always employed by Catullus, Propertius and Horace to call forth a positive response. Frequently they make use of them to elicit a feeling of sorrow, horror or disgust in the reader or to impart an atmosphere of bleakness or despair to a scene. This is especially the case with dull or dingy colours such as *luridus*, *pallidus* and *canus*. *Luridus* for instance, is employed by Propertius of ghosts and the underworld³ and by Horace of the disgusting yellow teeth of Lyce.⁴ Similarly, Catullus employs *pallidus* of the foot of his brother in c. 65 to increase the pathos of the image⁵ and *canus* of the hair of the mourning Trojan mothers in c. 64 to heighten the atmosphere of horror surrounding the bloody deeds of Achilles.⁶ Sometimes even bright colours are utilised by the poets in this way. Catullus' picture of Achilles slaughtering men is made more horrific by the contrast with golden fields of corn⁷ and, as we will see in the following section, terms for red and purple are frequently employed for their associations with death.

In some instances the poets make use of colours with ironic or deprecating effect. Horace, for instance, employs a mocking comparison between the beauty of an ordinary Roman slave girl and the snowy white complexion of the mythological Briseis⁸, while his use of the colour term *flavus* of the hair of courtesans suggests their artificial and manipulative natures.⁹ Similarly, Catullus' lyrical description of the pallor of Gellius' once rosy lips leads on to a shockingly literal explanation.¹⁰ Propertius, of course, is a master of the ironic use of colour images and we have seen, how in 3.13 and 3.14, he employs colours to cast doubt upon the ostensible message of his poems.¹¹ Usually the poet

¹ See Prop. 3.14.11 under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

² See Hor. 1.14.19 under 1.34.1 NITEO ii.

³ See Prop. 4.7.2 and 4.11.8 under 1.27 LURIDUS.

⁴ See Hor. 4.13.10 under 1.27 LURIDUS.

⁵ See Cat. 65.6 under 1.37.2 PALLIDUS.

⁶ See Cat. 64.350 under 1.9.2 CANUS.

⁷ See Cat. 64.354 under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS i.

⁸ See Hor. 2.4.3 under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

⁹ See Hor. 2.4.14 under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS i.

¹⁰ See Cat. 80.2 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS v.

¹¹ See Prop. 3.14.11 under 1.35 NIVEUS i. and Chapter 5 on 3.13.

generates the sense of irony by employing the colour term in an unexpected or unusual context. Thus Horace takes colour terms more often used of characters in epic and applies them to ordinary women, while Catullus and Propertius employ colour images drawn from love poetry to sharpen the satirical edge of their poems.

Colour is also employed by the three poets to shape their poems. They frequently make use of a colour word to focus attention upon something and give it greater significance, for instance Catullus uses *rubent* at the end of c.3 to alert the reader to the fact that it is Lesbia, not the sparrow, who causes him most concern.¹ This is especially true of colour clusters which often appear at climactic moments such as the appearance of Apollo in Propertius 3.3² or the return of Augustus in Horace 4.5.³ In addition, repeated colours or colour motifs are frequently used to draw a poem together and link certain themes or ideas. This is the way in which Catullus employs the red/white, purple/white clusters in c. 64. By means of these colours he links widely scattered elements in this complex poem, strengthening the connections between the inner and the outer stories, and creates a chain of colour which acquires increasingly ominous overtones as the poem progresses.⁴ On other occasions the poets make use of this device to link different poems, as Horace does when he ends three poems in Book Four with allusions to darkness.⁵

Catullus, Propertius and Horace are so skilful and subtle in their use of colour words that even what is apparently the most clichéd of colour imagery deserves close examination. As we have seen, allusions to Lesbia's red eyes in Catullus 3, the yellow hair of courtesans in Horace or the snowy flank of the Spartan girl in Propertius 3.14 all have another level of meaning. Many commentators and translators are too hesitant in their interpretation of such imagery and thus tend to down-play the colour words or mistranslate them. This is the case with the *purpurei olores* of Horace 4.1 which many scholars translate as 'gleaming swans'

¹ See Cat. 3.18 under 1.43.1 RUBEUS.

² See Prop. 3.3.14 under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS i.

³ See Hor. 4.5.7 under 1.1 ADFULGEO.

⁴ Catullus uses white and red/purple to link the marriage coverlet of Peleus and Thetis with the coverlet which Ariadne envisages herself as spreading on Theseus' bed, the red sails and the white sails of Theseus' ship, the dress of the Fates and the bloodstained limbs of Polyxena. See Cat. 64.49 under 1.40.1 PURPURA, Cat. 64.163 under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i, Cat. 64.227 under 1.19 FERRUGO, Cat. 64.308 under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS ii, Cat.64.309 and Cat. 64.364 under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

⁵ See Hor. 4.12.26 under 1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS iii.

or 'silver swans'.¹ Such translations, however, ignore the fact that these are the mythical swans of Venus and that Horace means the reader to link them with the *purpureus flos rosae* of 3.15.15 to signify the youthful sexuality which is denied both to himself and to Chloe.² Likewise, some commentators are of the opinion that *luna ruberet* in Propertius 1.10.8 has no chromatic value and should be translated as 'the moon was shining' but this interpretation misses the suggestion that the moon was blushing at the sexual antics of Gallus and his mistress.³

7.1.2 The range of use and association of individual colour terms

By examining the concordance we can see not only how Catullus, Propertius and Horace make use of colour groups but how they employ different terms in a colour group to give subtle distinctions of meaning to a line or image. This can be observed by a review of the white and red/purple colour groups. We will concentrate on these colours because, as has previously been observed by scholars, Roman poets seem to have had a marked preference for colour terms in the red and white range and frequently employed them together in colour combinations.⁴ This is confirmed by a brief examination of the colour terms listed in the concordance. Roughly half of the terms listed there can be placed in either the white or red colour groups.

The three poets' frequent and varied usage of the white colour group is reflected in the number and variety of terms that they employ. These poets make much use of the common terms such as *albus* and its cognates, *candidus* and its cognates, *canus* and its cognates, *niveus*, *pallidus* and its cognates and occasionally resort to more unusual terms such as *argenteus*, *eburnus*, *lactens*, *lacteolus*. Most of these terms, barring the more obscure ones, are employed by all three poets on one occasion or another, although, as will be discussed in the section following, each poet displays a marked preference for certain terms or particular usages.

¹ See Hor. 4.1.10 under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i.

² See Hor. 3.15.15 under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i.

³ See Prop. 1.10.8 under 1.43.1 RUBEO.

⁴ See Thomas (1979) p. 310, n. 1.

All the terms exhibit subtle distinctions in their range of use and associations. For instance, although *albus* and *candidus*¹ can, on occasion, be employed almost as synonyms (both are used of omens which are favourable²) *candidus* is usually the word used in highly charged contexts. This special Latin term for a white which was saturated with light³ (and for which there is no English equivalent) is employed by Catullus to emphasise the significant moments of Peleus' first sight of Thetis in c. 64⁴ and to highlight Lesbia's crossing of the threshold in c. 68.⁵ In a similar fashion, it is used by Horace in association with Apollo to denote the hope and healing he brings with him after the terrible carnage of civil war.⁶ It is thus a colour word which can be used for situations of great emotional intensity and power. A parallel can be drawn with words for shining which are sometimes employed by these poets in the same way⁷ or used in association with *candidus* to heighten the effect.⁸

Candidus and cognates are also the colour terms which are preferred in love contexts. The favoured terms for describing the gleam of human flesh, they are frequently employed in association with such erotic body parts as hands, feet, breasts or shoulders to signify a special attractiveness or allure that the beloved has for the lover.⁹ Although, in some instances, *candidus* appears to be little more than a synonym for 'good-looking'¹⁰, on others it is employed with overtones of an attraction which is irresistible, in contexts where the lover is powerless before the allure of the beloved.¹¹ Once again, a parallel can be

¹ For the sake of brevity, a reference to an adjective for colour will hereafter be taken to refer also to its verbal and substantive cognates - here, for instance, the reference to *albus* includes *albescere* / *albico* and *candidus* includes *candescere* / *candescere* and *candor*.

² See the instances under 1.2.2 ALBUS iii and 1.8.2 CANDIDUS iii in the concordance.

³ André (1949 p.26) quotes Servius on the difference between *candidus* and *albus*; 'Servius, ad G. III, 82, a parfaitement exprimé ce qui les différencie: *aliud est candidum esse, id est quadam nitenti luce perfusum, aliud album, quod pallori constat esse vicinum.*'.

⁴ See 64.14 under 1.8.1 CANDEO / CANDESCO.

⁵ See 68.70 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS ii.

⁶ See Hor. 1.2.31 under 1.8.1 CANDEO / CANDESCO.

⁷ See Hor. 4.5.7 in the concordance above under 1.1 ADFULGEO.

⁸ See Cat. 68.71 and 68.134 in the concordance above under 1.21.1 FULGEO ii.

⁹ See Cat. 64.162, Prop. 2.16.24, 2.22a.8, 2.32.58, Hor. 1.13.9, 3.9.2 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i.

¹⁰ See Cat. 13.4, 35.8, Prop. 2.3.9, 2.28c.51, 4.8.32 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i.

¹¹ For instance, Ariadne, when talking of her overwhelming attraction for Theseus, alludes to his *candida vestigia* (64.162 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i) and Propertius, to support his claim that goddesses are unable to remain chaste, alludes to the story of Pasiphae who is overcome with the desire for the *candida forma* of a bull (2.32.58 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i.).

drawn with words for shining that are frequently employed with erotic implications.¹ *Albus*, on the other hand, denoting a white which is without lustre, is used less often in erotic contexts. The word can sometimes be employed in similes about the beauty or sexuality of a character² but it is rarely applied directly to a person; on the rare occasions that it is there appears to be a hint of criticism in the application.³

It is because *albus* lacks strong erotic overtones or any association with words for shining that it can be used by the three poets in contexts where these associations would be out of place or jarring. For instance, the word is used by Propertius to signify the rustic simplicity of old Rome⁴ and by both Propertius and Horace to suggest the purity or virtue of a character.⁵ *Albus* also has a stronger connection than *candidus* with the negative aspects of whiteness and is employed when the poets wish to suggest coldness⁶, lack of passion⁷, sickness⁸ or old age.⁹ In this way the word shares in some of the implications of *canus* and *pallidus* which are also employed in this fashion.¹⁰

Niveus is usually employed in special circumstances when Catullus, Propertius or Horace wish to convey a heightened sense of fragility or vulnerability. Like *candidus*, the word is often used in erotic contexts; for example it is applied to Hymen's foot by Catullus¹¹ and Cynthia's hands by Propertius.¹² It is, however, characteristically used in

¹ For instance, see Cat. 61.21 under 1.16 ENITEO / ENITESCO, Cat. 2.5 under 1.34.1 NITEO i., Prop. 2.1.5 and Hor. 2.12.15 under 1.21.1 FULGEO iii.

² For instance at Cat. 29.8 the sexually insatiable Mamurra is compared to an *albulus columbus*, in Cat. 61.187 the bride is compared to an *alba parthenice* and in Prop. 2.3.10 *alba lilia* are employed in a description of Cynthia's complexion. See all these instances in the concordance under 1.2.2 ALBUS i.

³ This is the case with Hor. 2.5.18 where *albus* is used of Chloris' shoulder, suggesting a pallid beauty which will be surpassed by Lalage's vivid colouring. See further on this line under 1.2.2 ALBUS i.

⁴ See 4.1.32, 4.1.35 under 1.2.2 ALBUS ii. This is set in contrast with words for gold and shining which suggest the wealth and opulence of contemporary Rome.

⁵ Propertius uses it of the Vestal Virgin Aemelia (4.11.54) and Horace uses it of the goddess *Fides* (1.35.21). See further on both these instances under 1.2.2 ALBUS ii.

⁶ See Cat. 63.87 and Hor. 1.4.4 under 1.2.1 ALBESCO / ALBICO.

⁷ See Hor. 3.14.25 under 1.2.1 ALBESCO / ALBICO.

⁸ See Hor. 2.2.15 under 1.2.2 ALBUS iv.

⁹ See Prop. 3.5.24, 3.25.13, Hor. 2.20.10 under 1.2.2 ALBUS iv.

¹⁰ See the entries under 1.9.1 CANITES, 1.9.2 CANUS, 1.37.1. PALLEO / PALLESCO, 1.37.2 PALLIDUS, 1.37.3 PALLOR in the concordance.

¹¹ See Cat. 61.9 under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

¹² See Prop. 3.6.12 under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

contrast with a harsher image or to heighten an atmosphere of horror.¹ This is the case for Catullus 64.364 where the snowy whiteness of Polyxena's limbs enhances the horror of her brutal slaying. It is also the case in Propertius 2.13b.53 where Adonis' snowy form emphasises his vulnerability in contrast with the harsh and brutal boar which has slaughtered him.² Thus *niveus* seems to convey ideas of femininity and delicacy characteristic of terms for white but in an enhanced form. It is the term Catullus uses to suggest the transformation of Attis into a woman in c. 63³ or to convey the fragility of extreme old age when he applies the term to the hair of the Fates in c. 64.⁴ An additional level of meaning is supplied by the derivation of the term from *nix* which gives it an association with the coldness and lifelessness of snow. Both Catullus⁵ and Horace⁶ play upon these associations.

When these poets wish to convey special nuances or associations which are not part of the normal range of terms they will resort to more unusual terms for the colour or even create a term. Thus Catullus employs the participle *lactens* of Ariadne's breasts when he wishes to draw attention to their whiteness, plumpness and fecundity⁷ and he uses the adjective *lacteolae* to suggest the sexy voluptuousness of the girls with whom he is conversing.⁸ Propertius likewise plays cleverly upon the image of Cynthia strumming upon her lyre by transferring the epithet *eburnus* to her fingers.⁹

The colour terms which Catullus, Horace and Propertius employ from the red/purple group are even more numerous and wide ranging than those of the white group.¹⁰ Like the terms in the white group they all convey subtle distinctions of meaning. *Roseus*, for

¹ *Candidus* can also be employed in this way; see, for instance Prop. 2.9.10 and 2.16.24 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i. It is however used less often like this than *niveus*.

² See these instances (and also Cat. 63.8, Prop. 3.3.39, 3.14.11, Hor. 2.4.3, 3.27.35 in which similar contrasts operate) under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

³ See Cat. 63.8 under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

⁴ See Cat. 64.309 under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

⁵ See the discussion of Cat. 63.8 and 63.70 in Chapter 3, sections 4.2.ii and 4.3.ii.

⁶ See Hor. 4.2.59 under 1.35. NIVEUS ii.

⁷ See Cat. 64.65 under 1.25 LACTENS / LACTEOLUS.

⁸ See Cat. 55.17 under 1.25 LACTENS / LACTEOLUS.

⁹ See Prop. 2.1.9 under 1.15 EBURNUS.

¹⁰ *Cruentus*, *erubescio*, *ferrugo*, *minium*, *murex*, *ostrinus* and its cognates, *punicus* / *punicus*, *purpureus* and its cognates, *roseus*, *ruber* and its cognates, *russus*, *sandyx*, *sanguineus* and *Tyrius* all of which can be placed in the red/purple group are utilised by these poets on one occasion or another.

instance, like *niveus*, carries the associations of the word from which it is derived and this is played upon by Catullus when he employs the term of Gellius' lips and contrasts them with the winter's snow.¹ Because of the size of this group it would take too much space to review each colour term in its turn. But it is worth noting that all the terms in the red/purple group share an inherent duality, for they can all be linked with blood which is strongly associated with both life and death. Thus *rubere* is employed by Propertius in the context of the fertility of the Autumn season² and the cognate noun appears in Catullus 65 in association with the dawning sexual consciousness of a young girl.³ On the other hand, Horace uses the verb of the hand of Jupiter which brings death and destruction in its wake.⁴ Not infrequently this duality is exploited by these poets when they wish to indicate the ambivalence of a situation or emotion. Thus Catullus employs terms for red and purple of the marriage couch of c. 64 to suggest both Peleus' and Thetis' joyful sexual union and the subsequent bloodshed of their son Achilles.⁵

Terms for purple, while sharing in the general associations of the red group, are often employed with heightened significance or special meaning. Because terms for purple denoted hues of a great intensity and depth they are employed by Catullus, Horace and Propertius in contexts of heightened emotion.⁶ Furthermore, purple's association with shining as well as its connection with blood meant that, like *candidus*, it could be employed with strong sexual overtones.⁷ Since purple was the costliest cloth in the ancient world the colour was closely linked with wealth and is employed regularly by the poets with this association.⁸ In addition, because its main centre of manufacture was in Tyre, words for purple are employed on occasion by both Propertius and Horace to suggest the opulence

¹ See Cat. 80 under 1.42 ROSEUS AND 1.8.2 CANDIDUS v.

² See Prop. 4.2.16 under 1.43.1 RUBEO.

³ See Cat. 65.24 under 1.43.3 RUBOR.

⁴ See Hor. 1.2.2 under 1.43.1 RUBEO.

⁵ See Cat. 64.49 under 1.40.1 PURPURA.

⁶ See, for instance, Cat. 45.12, 64.163, Prop. 1.20.38 under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS and Hor. 4.13.13 under 1.40.1 PURPURA.

⁷ See the instances in the concordance under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i.

⁸ See Hor. 2.16.7, 2.18.8, 3.1.42, 4.13.13 in the concordance above under 1.40.1 PURPURA, Prop. 1.3.41 under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i, Cat. 61.165 under 1.48 TYRIUS.

and corruption of the East. This is especially true of the term *ostrinus* whose derivation from *ostrum* suggested the process of manufacture.¹

When terms for red and white or purple and white are employed together in colour contrasts, like the individual colour terms themselves, they carry both positive and negative associations. Thomas' statement that this colour combination is always employed in contexts of death² is incorrect for it is used of beautiful complexions by both Propertius and Horace with no apparently morbid associations.³ Frequently, however, there is a tension between the two terms with the red suggesting a violent sexuality which is in conflict with white's associations with innocence, purity or old age.⁴ Accordingly, sometimes in contexts when the colour combination seems initially to be employed for positive effect, it carries with it an underlying suggestion of disruption or violence. This is the case with the Hylas landscape of Propertius 1.20, where the white and purple colour terms contribute to the sensuality of the landscape but also suggest Hylas' impending death at the hands of the water nymphs.⁵

7.1.3 The concerns and objectives of each poet as revealed by their use of colour.

From the ways in which Catullus, Horace and Propertius make use of colour words in the concordance and the sorts of colour terms they employ we can draw conclusions about their concerns, objectives and poetic techniques. We have to remain cautious, however, about conclusions drawn from the relative frequencies of colour terms amongst these poets, for their use of certain colour terms will be restricted by the particular metre in which they are writing. Most forms of *candidus*, for instance, are unavailable to writers of dactylic verse⁶ which explains Propertius' limitation to certain inflections of the word and his monopoly of the alternative term *candor*. Nevertheless it is still of interest when these poets show either a marked preference for or avoidance of particular colour terms or usages.

¹ See the instances in the concordance under 1.36.1 OSTRINUS (especially Prop. 1.14.20) and 1.36.2 OSTRUM.

² (1979) p. 310f.

³ See Prop. 2.3.11 under 1.30 MINIMUM and Hor. 1.13.2 under 1.42 ROSEUS.

⁴ See the discussion of the associations of terms for white above.

⁵ See Prop. 1.20.38 under 1.40.2 PURPUREUS i. and 1.8.2 CANDIDUS iv.

⁶ I am indebted to Professor Kenneth Quinn for pointing this out to me in a letter.

Catullus, who of course stands close to the beginning of personal poetry at Rome, in many ways seems the boldest and most original in his use of colour. His colour imagery rarely appears clichéd and, on the whole, seems more concentrated and intense than that of Propertius or Horace. None of their colour clusters match the one at c. 64.48-9 describing the marriage couch, where there are seven words relating to colour or shining in the space of two lines¹, or the cluster preceding this which describes Peleus' palace (vv. 44-46) and employs eight words associated with light or shining.² Certainly the intensity and originality of Catullus' colour usage is in part due to the long poems which give him more scope for description and for experimenting with the repeated use of colour images. We can see how skilfully Catullus makes use of the repetition of colour images in these poems when we realize that the golden feet of the bride in c. 61³ are picked up by the pale foot of Catullus' brother in c. 65⁴ and that both images, in their turn, are echoed by the climactic colour cluster of c. 68 in which Lesbia's gleaming feet cross the threshold of Allius' house.⁵ In this way Catullus associates the themes of cc. 61 and 65 with 68, preparing the reader for the series of meditations about marriage and his brother's death in c.68 which are sparked off by the image of Lesbia.

Catullus seems to have a fondness in general for sensory language; his emphasis on the erotic significance of fragrance has been noted previously by Lilja.⁶ Even more so than the other two poets, he will combine words for various sensations to heighten the impact of his descriptions. This is the case with the description of Ariadne at 64.86-90 which adds the element of colour to a simile based on smell, increasing its erotic overtones.⁷ Likewise in c. 63, Catullus utilises words associated with warmth, coolness and sound in combination with the colour imagery to convey the intensity of the emotional experience which Attis is undergoing.⁸

¹ See Cat. 64.49 under 1.40.1 PURPURA.

² See Cat. 64.44 under 1.3.2 ARGENTUM.

³ See Cat. 61.160 under 1.5.1 AURATUS / AUREUS iv.

⁴ See Cat. 65.6 under 1.37.2 PALLIDUS.

⁵ See Cat. 68.71 under 1.21.1 FULGEO ii and 1.8.2 CANDIDUS ii.

⁶ (1972) p. 220

⁷ *'hunc simul ac cupido conspexit lumine virgo / regia, quam suavis expirans castus odores / lectulus in molli complexu matris alebat, / quales Eurotae praecingunt flumina myrtus / aurave distinctos educit verna colores'* (64. 86-90). On this see Cat. 64.90 under 1.11.1 COLOR.

⁸ See Chapter 3.

Catullus' attraction to words for the senses perhaps explains his fondness for a colour term such as *niveus*¹ which conveys ideas of softness and coldness as well as colour. Quinn suggests that *candidus* is also an emotionally charged word for Catullus.² An examination of the concordance shows that Propertius makes as much use of the term as Catullus but it is the case that many of Propertius' uses of *candidus* are standard, colloquial ones³ while Catullus is more likely to employ the word to add emotional intensity to a scene.⁴ He is the most inclined of the three poets to use *candidus* of people or events which are important to him, for instance to signify his past happiness with Lesbia⁵ or to suggest the possibility of marriage with her.⁶

At first glance, Propertius does not appear a particularly colourful poet.⁷ He is inclined to use isolated terms rather than dense colour clusters and, unlike Catullus, does not have a broad canvas on which to experiment. On the other hand, his colour images have added resonance because of echoes in wall paintings and many of them are less conventional than they first appear. It is the case, for instance, that he often employs *candidus* in a standard, colloquial way but he can also use the term, as Catullus does *niveus*, in scenes of savagery or violence.⁸ As would be expected of an elegist, he makes a lot of use of *pallidus* and its cognates but on occasion he will enliven the conventional epithet by employing a contrasting word or phrase, sometimes twisting it into an oxymoron.⁹

¹ Catullus accounts for half of the sixteen usages of this term; see the concordance.

² (1973) p. 116

³ See, for instance, Prop. 2.3.9, 2.22a.8, 2.26a.16, 2.28c.51, 2.29b.30, 4.8.32 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i.

⁴ For instance under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS see Cat. 61.108, 64.162 under i, 64.308, 68.70, 68.134 under ii and 8.3, 8.8, 64.235, 68.148 under iii.

⁵ See Cat. 8.3 and 8.8 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS iii.

⁶ See Cat. 68.134 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS ii.

⁷ This is the conclusion which Brozeck draws in his 1985 article which surveys Propertius' use of colours in his elegies. He states that although Propertius saw colours in nature and aimed at variety in his expression of them, his elegies remain poor in the scale and variety of their colours (p. 371). Brozeck's article however is somewhat brief and is by no means a detailed or systematic examination of Propertius' use of colours.

⁸ See Prop. 2.16.24 and 2.32.58 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS i.

⁹ See Prop. 3.8.28 and 4.7.36 under 1.37.2 PALLIDUS and Prop. 1.15.39 under 1.37.1 PALLEO / PALLESCO.

In Propertius' poetry we see a strong association between bright colours and moral degeneracy¹ but, with characteristic Propertian self-contradiction², he also employs bright colours in his 'natural' landscape scenes.³ Words for green, except in an implicit sense, are scarcely used at all by Propertius: Brozeck attributes this to the fact that Propertius is a city poet.⁴ In keeping with this, many of Propertius' landscapes have an artificial air which tends to undermine his message about going back to nature.⁵ In Propertius' poetry one must always keep in mind that he may be employing a colour image for the sake of humour or to undermine his ostensible message.

Although Horace's colour images, unlike Propertius', find few echoes in visual arts he shows a strong awareness of colour and will frequently highlight the chromatic implications of a word even when this is not its primary function.⁶ He is also unlike Propertius in the fact that he makes a great deal of use of words for green.⁷ This echoes his preoccupation with the cycles of life and nature for he employs such terms in idyllic nature scenes⁸ or in association with youthful sexuality.⁹ Frequently, however, Horace will introduce another, less positive, colour element into this imagery of green; he will set green against white to suggest the contrast between youth and old age¹⁰ or fertility and death¹¹ or he will include a word for black in a nature scene to introduce a note of foreboding.¹² Indeed, in Horace's

¹ See, for instance, Prop. 2.24a.14 under 1.34.1 NITEO ii, 2.16.44 under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS iii.

² Propertius' thought process often, at first glance, appears illogical or contradictory, something which many modern scholars have commented upon (Postgate 1884 p. lxxii, Commager 1974 p. 4). It is the case however that this is often a deliberate ploy on Propertius' part, to give an ironic or witty undertone to his argument. Hubbard discusses this point, commenting that Propertius, Juvenal and Lucan 'aim at the surprise of paradox' (1974 p. 6). See also the discussion of Propertius' use of irony in Chapter 5, section 6.

³ For instance see 1.20.38 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS iv, 3.13.28 under 1.39 PUNICEUS / PUNICUS and 4.2.13 under 1.26.1 LIVEO.

⁴ (1985) p. 367

⁵ See Chapter 5.

⁶ See, for instance, Horace's use of *vireo* at 4.13.6 (under 1.50.1 VIREO / VIRIDO) or his use of *rubum* and *Chloe* at 1.23 (under 1.50.2 VIRIDIS i).

⁷ Horace accounts for over half of the usages of VIREO / VIRIDO and VIRIDIS in the concordance.

⁸ See, for instance, Hor. 1.1.21, 1.4.9, 1.21.8, 2.6.15 under 1.50.2 VIRIDIS ii.

⁹ See Hor. 1.9.17, 1.25.17, 2.5.5 under 1.50.1 VIREO / VIRIDO and the Hor. 1.23.6 under 1.50.2 VIRIDIS i.

¹⁰ See Hor. 1.9.17 under 1.9.1 CANITIES.

¹¹ See Hor. 1.4.13 under 1.37.2 PALLIDUS.

¹² See Hor. 4.12.11 under 1.33 NIGER / NIGRANS iv. and compare 1.25.18 under 1.38 PULLUS.

Odes, ideas of death and care are never far from the surface¹ and it is also characteristic of him to employ words for black in the midst of imagery of brightness and shining.²

Horace, in particular, seems to make use of colour imagery as a form of social commentary. It is in his poetry that we see the most frequent use of words for shining to suggest the deceptive and untrustworthy natures of courtesans: *niteo* and its cognates especially are employed by Horace in this fashion.³ Horace also has a habit of using colour words such as *albescens*, *canus*, *flavus*, *murreus* and even *viridis* to describe people's hair. Frequently the colour of the hair will imply something about its owner as Pyrrha's *flavus* hair suggests her manipulation of the situation⁴ or Horace's *albescens* hair tells us that the passions of his youth are waning.⁵

Although the three poets differ from one another in many of the ways they employ colour, the concordance shows that they also have many colour usages in common. Both Catullus and Horace, for instance, make use of the contrast of white against green to suggest the opposition of barrenness and fertility⁶ while Propertius' description of the priestess of the *Bona Dea* with her grey locks bound by a scarlet headband echoes Catullus' picture of the Fates.⁷ Many of these colour motifs are adapted from the poets' predecessors and we have seen from the concordance that the three poets are heavily influenced by the colour imagery of the Roman poets Ennius and Lucretius and a wide variety of Greek poets such as Homer, Hesiod, Sappho, Bacchylides, Apollonius, Theocritus and Callimachus. This does not mean, however, that the poets are merely imitating the colour imagery of their predecessors for it is their habit to adapt or expand whatever they take. Compare, for instance, Catullus' and Horace's two different versions of the 'luminous palace' an image which is taken originally from Homer.⁸

¹ For instance, in Book One cc. 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 24, 25, 28, 34, 35 all contain references to impending death, the inevitability of aging or the vagaries of fortune.

² See, for instance, 2.3.16 under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS ii and 3.1.40, 3.14.13, 4.11.35 under 1.4 ATER / ATRATUS v.

³ See Hor. 2.8.6 under 1.16 ENITEO / ENITESCO, Hor. 1.5.13 under 1.34.1 NITEO ii, and Hor. 1.19.5 under 1.34.3 NITOR.

⁴ See Hor. 1.5.4 under 1.20 FLAVENS / FLAVUS i.

⁵ See Hor. 3.14.25 under 1.2.1 ALBESCO / ALBICO.

⁶ See Cat. 63.70 and Hor. 1.4.9 under 1.50.2 VIRIDIS ii.

⁷ See Prop. 4.9.52 under 1.39. PUNICEUS / PUNICUS and Cat. 64.309 under 1.35 NIVEUS i.

⁸ See Cat. 64.44 and Hor. 4.11.6 under 1.3.2 ARGENTUM.

The three poets also seem to share a great many colour motifs with contemporaries (or, in Catullus' case, successors) such as Tibullus and Virgil. It is hardly surprising that Tibullus employs the same types of colour images for he is operating in a similar genre.¹ It is interesting however, just how often Virgil's use of colours, both in his epic and pastoral works, echoes those of Catullus, Propertius and Horace.² Thus there appears in general to be a large degree of crossover between the genres; poets of different genres borrow each others' colour images or take them over from predecessors and adapt them to fit their particular themes. Edgeworth has already commented on Virgil's skilful reworking of other poets' colour images, but is of the opinion that this poet is unparalleled in the degree of complexity and control he gives to it.³ The concordance demonstrates that this is not the case. My survey of Catullus', Propertius' and Horace's use of colours demonstrates that they are equally as skilful, notwithstanding the fact that they do not have the large canvas of the *Aeneid* to work on.⁴

7.2 Conclusions from Poems

The survey of conclusions from the studies of individual poems will be briefer because they have already been summarised at the end of each chapter.

7.2.1 Catullus 61 and 63

Edgeworth is incorrect when he says that Catullus employs colour elements in c. 61 for mainly functional or decorative purposes.⁵ Colour in this poem plays a number of significant roles. The words for light and shining, in combination with references to colourful flowers and plants, begin the long poems optimistically on a burst of colour

¹ See, for instance, Prop. 2.19.26 under 1.35 NIVEUS ii and the discussion of Prop. 3.13.5-10 in Chapter 5, section 5.1.

² See, for instance, Prop. 2.19.26 under 1.35 NIVEUS ii, Hor. 1.2.2 under 1.43.1 RUBEUS, Cat. 34.10 and Hor. 1.9.17 under 1.50.1 VIREO / VIRIDO.

³ (1992) p. 60

⁴ See, for example, Catullus' description of the white waves at the beginning of c. 64, an image which is taken originally from Homer (64.13 under 1.24 INCANESCO), Propertius' description of the Hylas landscape which is based on Apollonius and Theocritus (1.20.38 under 1.8.2 CANDIDUS iv) and Horace's comparison of Chloris to the bright moon, a simile which has its origin in Sappho (2.5.18 under 1.2.2 ALBUS i.). In each instance the poets skilfully rework the original colour image to suit their own particular theme.

⁵ (1992) p. 11.

imagery. The colour words help to focus attention on the figure of the bride for even colour terms which are employed of inanimate objects such as the torches (vv. 77, 95) and the foot of the bridal couch (v. 108) serve to personify them so that everything acquires a feminine, sensual glow. Words for yellow, gold and white which are initially used of Hymen (vv. 7-10) are transferred to the bride (vv. 21-22, vv. 159-161, vv. 186-188), deifying her and creating an image of idealized womanhood which will not be sustained as the long poems progress. The erotic atmosphere of the poem is further heightened by the many allusions, both explicit and implicit, to red or purple objects such as the hyacinth (v. 89), the purple couch (v. 165), the purple striped toga (v. 175) and the flame-red poppy (v. 188). As with most red and purple colour elements, these carry an inherent ambiguity which increases the erotic tension. The tension culminates in the final colour cluster which contrasts a red flower with a white one (vv. 186-188), reminding the reader of the violent transformation which the bride is about to undergo and creating a disturbing undercurrent which will be echoed by the red/white contrast at the start of c. 63.

In c. 63 the conflict between colour elements has increased: dark is set against light, red against white and white against green. The polarity of the colour imagery mirrors the extreme emotions which Attis undergoes while the repetition of key colour images contributes to the ring structure of the poem. The tragic atmosphere of c. 63 is heightened by the inversion of the colour imagery, for colour motifs which start out reasonably positive acquire increasingly negative overtones as the poem progresses. This is similar to a pattern which Harmon has identified for c. 64¹; the white and purple of Peleus' and Thetis' marriage couch (vv. 47-49) is transformed into the Trojan mothers tearing out their white hair in their grief at their sons' deaths (v. 350) and the red blood of Achilles' numerous victims (vv. 359-360, vv. 362-364).

This and other observations I have made about the repetition of key colour images throughout the long poems suggests that this area deserves further examination; indeed it is worthy of a separate study on its own. The colour imagery in the long poems appears to form a continuum which culminates in c. 68's images of Cupid in his saffron tunic (vv.

¹ (1973) pp. 316-318

133-134) and Lesbia placing her gleaming foot on the threshold (*vv.* 70-72). Such a study could help throw further light not only on the difficulties of *c.* 68, but also on the continuity and interrelationships of the long poems as a whole.

7.2.2 Propertius 3.3 and 3.13

Propertius employs colours in both 3.3. and 3.13 as a structural device. In 3.3 the repetition of certain colour images helps to link a number of different issues and in 3.13 it draws together a poem which jumps about in time and space. In both poems colours are also employed to heighten the atmosphere. In 3.3 colours contribute to the dreamlike feel of the poem and increase the significance of its 'symbols' of artistic creation while in 3.13 they add to the erotic atmosphere of the poem as Propertius draws upon the colour imagery of personal love poetry to cast doubt upon his moral message.

As stated previously, a difference from Catullus and Horace is the link of Propertius' colour images with visual art. In the case of 3.3, connections with mosaics help to highlight the image of the drinking doves (*vv.* 31-32) as the key image of the poem and the image through which Propertius communicates to the reader his ambivalent state of mind about the value of elegy. In the case of 3.13, the Golden Age section (*vv.* 25-46) recalls the garden paintings of that period. As we have seen with *c.* 1.2, a poem on a related theme, the references to Apelles (*v.* 22) and to mosaics (*v.* 13) gives an artificial air to the examples he is drawing from nature to support his argument. Similarly in 3.13, the idyllic garden scene has an air of unreality which makes the reader wonder about the validity of the solution which Propertius is proposing.

In short, the colours which Propertius employs in these poems add to the subtlety and complexity of his viewpoint and help to convey his shifting attitude to the situations he is exploring.

7.2.3 Horace 1.25, 3.15, 4.13

Horace uses colours in these three poems to enliven a conventional *topos*. Unlike the other poems we have examined in depth, Horace is employing colours with malicious intent and images such as the fading leaf which Lydia is becoming (1.25.17-20), the dark cloud

which Ibycus' wife casts (3.15.6) and the yellow teeth of Lyce (4.13.10) help to sharpen the satirical edge of Horace's attacks. Some critics do not go beyond this.¹ However, a closer examination of the colour images supports the view that Horace becomes increasingly sympathetic as the poems progress. The connections between the colour motifs of these poems and the ones employed in Horace's nature poems universalizes the situation for the reader so that the final poem evolves into a tragedy.

7.3 Summation

The study has enabled us to appreciate the wide range of ways in which Roman poets make use of colour words; they employ them for the purposes of ridicule, subversion, eroticism, empathy, to shape their poems and to link ideas within and between poems.

Colours help poems to go beyond the conventional. Colour in Roman poetry is a lot less clichéd than has been assumed, for many apparently commonplace instances of colour usage, on closer examination, turn out not to be so. Even poems which are 'direct' translations of Greek originals, for example Catullus 66, expand upon the existing colour imagery or add their own. Poets borrow freely from their predecessors and contemporaries but adapt the colour imagery to suit their own purposes. Indeed the 'allusiveness' of a colour image both to the work of a previous author or authors and to the poet's other poems frequently gives added resonance and depth to the poem. In this way the poet is able to express contradictory emotions and convey concepts that cannot be put across in plain language.

We ignore the colour elements in a poem at our peril. If we pass over the colour words we may well end up with a poorer understanding and appreciation of particular poems and sequences of poems. Without a detailed and systematic examination of all the colour elements in a poem, including the poem's implicit colours, we cannot claim that we have truly understood it.

¹ For instance, the Victorian scholar Page who had no time for c. 1.25 (1901 p. 78), Collinge who viewed 1.25 as the nastiest poem in Horace's lyrics (1961 p. 52) and Copley who thought that c. 4.13 displayed a vicious temper (1956 p. 160 n. 40). See the review of their attitudes in Chapter 6, section 1.

APPENDIX: LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS**Fig. 1 Aldobrandini Wedding Fresco****Region:** Rome**Date:** Last quarter of the first century B.C.**Source of Illustration:** Maiuri (1953) p. 7**Current Location:** Vatican Library**Fig. 1.1 Bridal Veil and Couch Foot Detail from Aldobrandini Wedding Fresco**

As above

Fig. 2 Copy of Sosos Mosaic**Region:** Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli**Date:** (Original) Third to second century B.C.**Source of Illustration:** Charbonneaux et al. (1973) p. 157**Current Location:** Capitoline Museum**Fig. 3 Parrots and Dove Mosaic****Region:** Capua**Date:** 80-30 B.C.**Source of Illustration:** Postcard from Naples Museum**Current Location:** Naples Museum**Fig. 4 Doves with Necklace****Region:** Pompeii, Casa del Fauno**Date:** circa 100 B.C.**Source of Illustration:** Maiuri (1953) p. 128**Current Location:** Naples Museum**Fig. 5 Garden Room Painting****Region:** Villa of Livia at Prima Porta, south wall**Date:** circa 20 B.C.**Source of Illustration:** Jashemski (1979) vol. 2 pp. 381, 382

Current Location: National Museum of the Terme, Rome

Fig. 5.1 Detail of Quince Tree

As above

Fig. 6 Flora

Region: Stabiae

Date: Ist century A.D.

Source of Illustration: Maiuri (1953) p. 83

Current Location: Naples Museum

ILLUSTRATIONS PRESENTED OVERLEAF:-



Fig. 1 Aldobrandini Wedding Fresco



Fig. 1.1 Bridal Veil and Couch Foot Detail



Fig. 2 Copy of Sosos Mosaic



Fig. 3 - Parrots and Dove Mosaic



Fig. 4 Doves with Necklace



Fig. 5 Garden Room Painting



Fig. 5.1 Detail of Quince Tree



Fig. 6 Flora

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