further means of draining the rich of their wealth.

Chapter Seven introduces the main theme of the book, the effects of heavy taxation at Athens in the fourth century. Chapter Eight introduces factors other than taxation in the decline of Athens, including non-productive expenditure, slavery, lack of technical progress, population, as well as the broader questions of stasis and constant inter-polis warfare.

In the Conclusion we read:

‘In essence, therefore, for Greece and in particular for Athens, what Rostovzeff has affirmed for the ancient world in general can be repeated, or rather that its decline cannot have a purely economic explanation.’

I found this book a useful addition to the standard literature on the subject. It is interesting and thorough and the Italian is easy. To those who read Italian badly the general organization of the book into clearly defined chapters, and the practice of further splitting up chapters into short sections, each with its appropriate title, will prove a joy.

I did not like to have to work from a book which lacks a bibliography although full references to the many works consulted can be found in the footnotes. Nor did I like the practice of quoting ancient sources in Italian or French, with only brief phrases in Greek. The book is surely intended for classical scholars as well as for the modern economist; and in spite of comments in the Introduction to the effect that the study of ancient taxation is still of interest to a heavily taxed modern world Gera finally concludes that the differences between the ancient and the modern economy are too great to allow comparison.

The book seems to me to be good value at 10,000 lire (approx. $12). Ernest Albergo writes the Preface.

Vivienne Gray


The English-speaking world has waited a long time for a book-length discussion of Propertius. Now, hard on the heels of Margaret Hubbard’s Propertius in Duckworth’s ‘Classical Life and Letters’ series, comes J.P. Sullivan’s Propertius: A Critical Introduction. Hubbard’s book appeared while Sullivan’s was in the press, so that the two authors were writing independently; it is symptomatic of the elusiveness of the poet, or perhaps of the variety of approaches now followed by classical scholars, that the two books have comparatively little in common.

Sullivan had previously produced several stimulating articles on Propertius and on Roman elegy, as well as his book on Pound and Propertius. Now, his
publisher informs us, he ‘has written the complete critical survey so long needed of [this] major Latin poet’. It is thus something of a disappointment to find that, of the four chapters in the book, one and the bulk of another are merely revised reprints of earlier articles. This is not necessarily a reprehensible way of producing a book, since valuable views deserve to be aired beyond the confines of periodicals; but it is not the most satisfactory one, leading as it does in this case to some repetition and even inconsistency. There are other signs too of hasty composition: the book has more than a reasonable share of errors and misprints, even if most of them are of a minor nature.

The first chapter is entitled ‘Life and Literary Fortunes’. Sullivan prefers a late date for Propertius’ birth, namely about 48 B.C., which he claims is ‘the general drift of the evidence’, and sees Cynthia as ‘probably a high-class meretrix’. He rightly rejects Williams’ thesis of a single publication of the first three books, and himself argues for a publication of Book 1 by 28 B.C. and of the present Books 2 and 3 (as a three-book collection, since Book 2 is reasonably seen as a conflation of what were once two separate books) some time before 20 B.C. But there seems to be no compelling argument for thus combining Books 2 and 3; Sullivan’s whole treatment of the metrical evidence here is unsatisfactory. The most interesting part of this chapter is the attempt to translate Horace’s known antipathy to Propertius into a running literary battle, whereby Propertius’ third book is his counter to Odes 1-3, and Odes 4 is Horace’s ‘critical reply to the upstart Alexandrian”; however, some of the hostile allusions which Sullivan sees may be innocent or imaginary (for example, the reference to Theseus and Pirithous in Od. 4.7, cf. Prop.2.1). The chapter ends with a repetition of Sullivan’s previous strictures on the general drift of Propertian scholarship and an assertion of the importance of Pound’s Homage as ‘the first genuine critical advance in the study of Propertius’.

The second chapter (‘The Politics of Elegy’) is a repetition of the article which appeared under the same title in Arethusa in 1972. There are only minor changes: Propertius’ relationships with Maecenas are now more realistically assessed, and the idea that Ovid in his amatory works ‘vulgarises’ Propertius is added and repeated. This is a worthwhile article which bears reprinting, with its clear account of the literary and political choices facing the Augustan poets and of Propertius’ own implied criticisms of the Augustan regime.

The basis of the third chapter is Sullivan’s article ‘Cynthia Prima Fuit’, which first appeared in Arion as long ago as 1962. The striking features of this are the reaction away from the extreme literary position of the ‘new critics’ towards a more historical and biographical approach, and the labelling of the attitudes to love of Catullus and Propertius as ‘romantic’, representing something of a ‘sentimental revolution’ against the traditional classical conception of love as a furor. The reference to Freud in the last part of the original article is here expanded into an excursus into the ‘psychohistory’ of Propertius, who is shown
to conform fairly well to one of Freud's lover types; this helps to explain certain features of Propertius' self-portrayal, especially his open concern with his own jealousy. Here the distinction between Propertius and his poetic *persona* is in danger of being blurred: it is surely hazardous to talk of a poem such as 2.23 as a 'document'. The chapter ends with a discussion of 1.1, based on Sullivan's sensible *Wiener Studien* article of 1961.

In the final chapter Sullivan discusses the Alexandrian heritage of the Roman poets, the neoteric tradition and its enemies, and (again) the conflicts between Propertius and the pressures of the Augustan age. He concludes that 'the *recusatio* is an integral part of Propertius' poetry', and goes on to develop the thesis of his 1966 *Arion* article ('Propertius: A Preliminary Essay') that 'the whole of Book 4 may be seen as an elaborate and ironic *recusatio*'. He shows convincingly that the aetiological poems of this book have little or no patriotic content; whether he is right to see the Actium poem (4.6) as parody is perhaps more doubtful. This chapter offers also some discussion of Propertius' style. A further examination of Propertius' metrical practice, this time designed to show its relation to Callimachus' techniques, is confused and unhelpful. More interesting is the attempt to define Callimachean *leptotes* ('besides the conscious delight in words and allusions, the most important ingredient is a distancing, an irony verging on humour, which Propertius was slowly to develop'), and the borrowing of Pound's term *logopoeia* to characterize Propertius' own style (defined by Pound as 'the dance of the intellect upon words' and by Sullivan, following further hints in Pound, as 'a refined mode of irony which shows itself in certain delicate linguistic ways, in a sensitivity to how language is used in other contexts, and in a deployment of these other uses for its own humorous or satiric or poetic aims').

The chief merit of Sullivan's work is that he sets Propertius firmly in his historical and literary context (and his account of Propertius' own development within that context is preferable to that which sees the poet as bowing to Augustan pressures in Book 4). This makes the book a valuable complement to Hubbard's more strictly literary approach, though in the detailed examination of individual poems Hubbard has much more to offer. But Sullivan has said before most of what he has to say on the context of Propertius' poetry and his attitude to love; and it is doubtful whether the newer parts of the book (notably the Freudian analysis and the Poundian literary terminology), interesting as they are, make any very major contribution to the understanding of the poet. The book is a reasonable attempt to create a coherent account of Propertius from a patchwork of previously written material, but the 'complete critical survey' is yet to be written.

*J.A. Barsby*