

THE LIFE OF LOVE

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1. Introductory

When Propertius' *monibiblos* appeared in the early 20s the civil wars had brought an end to the republic and the door was open for regular imperial government. It had been a time of revolutionary political activity, fervour, and change.

Changes in moral and sexual attitudes were of a different kind; in a way they did not really change. Attitudes simply became more entrenched, the separating lines more clear-cut. And the manner of making one's views felt changed. Conservative traditionalism acquired a formidable advocate. Already in the 30s, it seems, Octavian (the future Augustus) was turning his thoughts to moral regeneration. And he was prepared to lend traditional veneration for family, *patria*, and honour the muscle of an autocrat: where the *maiores* had for the most part observed, exhorted, praised, or deplored, Octavian was prepared to punish and compel. He *organized* morality as everything else and brought it into the scope of public law.¹

Opponents shifted their emphasis. Rather than simply defy accusations of immorality, they argued their case as an alternative morality; what was implicit became explicit. The generation of Catullus became the generation of the Elegists. The 'life of love' was codified.²

2. The life of love (1): eternity

It had been Catullus' aspiration that love should be for life. Note too the implications of poem 5, *vinumus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus*. The attitude assumed here (simple though it may seem) is important. If we recall the conventional view that love was properly a *ludus*, a *ludus* belonging to youth (responsible men had more important things to do), we shall realize that Catullus' position has a provocative (moral, philosophical, and social) that is easy to miss.

The early Elegists adopt the Catullan view and broadcast it. Neither fickle time nor even the onset of age (but see below) will change their love. It is

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hoped with greater or lesser confidence that the beloved will be similarly devoted, cf. e.g. Prop. 1. 12, 19 f.:

mi neque amare aliam neque ab hac desistere
fas est

Cynthia prima fuit, Cynthia finis erit.

For me it is not right to love another or stop
loving her.

Cynthia was the first, Cynthia will be the end.

Cf. too 1. 15, 29 ff., 2. 6, 41 f., 7. 19, 21. 19–20. Lines 2. 1. 65 f. phrase the idea differently; as often (cf. below) Propertius adopts the condemnatory terms that society might use:

hoc si quis vitium poterit mihi demere, solus
Tantalaeae poterit tradere poma manu.

If anyone could remove this vice from me,
he could put fruit in Tantalus' hand.

That is, it is impossible. 2. 15. 36 is characteristic in another way:

huius ero uiuus, mortuus huius ero.

I shall be hers in life and hers in death.

Love until *death* is a favoured Propertian emphasis. He can consider love after death too.

One fact to notice (it is psychologically very plausible and therefore revealing) is that although Propertius is committed to love's surviving for life, he does not as a rule face the full implications of that commitment. His own and Cynthia's *ageing* is usually ignored. Exceptions to this are few and interesting.³ One sees Propertius' point. Horace confronted the fact of ageing and came to a very different view of life and love (pp. 204–15). Romantic aspiration needs the indulgence of a blind eye.

Unless (apparently) you are Tibullus: Tibullan commitment to lifelong love can, it seems, more easily accommodate the problem of age. Cf. 1. 6. 85–6:

nos, Delia, amoris
exemplum cana simul uterque coma.

Delia, you & I
must be Love's paradigm when we are both
white-haired.

(Lee)

And 1. 1. 59–62

re spectem suprema mihi cum uenerit hora;
re teneam moriens deficiente manu.
flebis et arsuro positum me, Delia, lecto,
tristibus et lacrimis oscula mixta dabis.

O let me gaze at you, when my last hour comes –
hold you, as I die, in my failing grasp!
Delia, you will weep for me laid on the bed of
burning
and you will give me kisses mixed with bitter tears.
(Lee)

is followed in 69 ff. by these 'Horatian' lines:

inireta, dum fata sinunt, iungamus amores:
iam ueniet tenebris Mors adoperta caput;
iam subrepet iners aetas, neque amare decebit,
dicere nec cano blanditias capite.

Meanwhile, with Fate's permission, let us unite and love.
Tomorrow Death will come, head hooded – in the dark,
or useless Age creep up, and it will not be seemly
to make white-headed love or pretty speeches.
(Lee)

But perhaps 1. 1. 59 ff. and 69 ff. are inconsistent. There is a point worth attention here.⁴

3. The life of love (2): the lover and society (*militia amoris*)

Attitudes to life implicit in Catullus' poetry (including 'love is forever') amounted, we could say, to a virtual alternative social creed; his romanticism had public as well as private implications.

Catullus served a spell in the entourage of the governor in Bithynia.⁵ This (*militia*, 'military service') was as we shall see exactly the sort of thing a young man of Catullus' class should do if he had a proper, conventional career in mind. For Catullus it was clearly no more than a distasteful brush with convention.⁶ His priorities and values were different. He was profoundly and provocatively devoted to occupations of leisure (*otium*), to poetry, and (in particular) to love. Years of effort lavished on a poem is a matter for praise;⁷ solemn protestations of deepy Roman obligation are uttered to a girl-friend; the girl-friend is called his 'life', and the implications of that term are

accepted. Catullus ignores the normal rewards and honour that a man of his class could expect in *negotium*, to court the rewards of *otium*. Love is not only to last for life, it is the most serious occupation of life; love and poetry are his *negotium*, for which he sacrifices virtually all else. Here was a set of values – romantic values – to enrage conventional opinion; we should remember (for example) Cicero's careful qualification of the role of love in life. And we have evidence that the Catullan phenomenon did actually enrage Cicero: in his oration *Pro Sestio* (56 BC) Cicero vilifies an idle society of pleasure in terms that sound very like a jaundiced and malevolent misrepresentation of the world we see reflected in Catullus' poems.⁸

By the time we get to the first books of the early Elegists we find a renunciation of conventional life explicitly and formally declared. An alternative social creed finds and emblazons itself.

Interestingly the two Elegists put it (at this stage) in rather different ways, or at least moods. Tibullus, whose first book is published a little after Propertius' *monobiblos*, makes the more unequivocal statement. His first poem is virtually programmatic. In the opening lines he expresses hopes for a *uita iners*, a life without *negotium*, in the country (a typically Tibullan emphasis) and derides the wealth that *labor* in military service brings. In 45–52 wealth, which demands effort, is judged inferior to love and serenity in comparative idleness. In 53–8 Tibullus directly expresses his preference for a life of love with Delia to a life of honourable military action. He starts politely (because he is contrasting himself with his patron, the great Messalla) but nevertheless firmly:

re bellare decet terra, Messalla, marique
ut domus hostiles praeferat exuias.
me retinent uinctum formosae uinclae puellae . . .

It befits you, Messalla, to make war by land and sea
so that your house may display spoils taken from the enemy.
But the bonds of a lovely girl hold me, a prisoner . . .

He concludes with an enthusiastic statement of his own commitment to love and unmanly *otium*:

non ego laudari curo, mea Delia: recum
dum modo sim, quae so segnis inersque uocer.

I don't care about esteem, Delia.
Provided that I am with you, I court the name idle, inactive.

And the life of love with Delia is also (it is hoped) to be in truth lifelong, as we saw above (lines 59–60).

Many more such passages could be cited from this and other poems. But

the message is clear and for the moment adequately illustrated. Tibullus is explicitly advocating inactivity, *otium*, and love in contrast to conventionally proper and honourable pursuits: military service, the pursuit of esteem and wealth. And he provocatively accepts for himself society's pejorative terms, positively emblazoning what Cicero, for example, had derided (this had *not* been a Catullan habit).⁹ The Elegist's declaration is designed as a deliberate affront. Catullan attitudes have been codified into a flagrantly provocative creed.

Propertius argues for the life of love in his first book as explicitly as Tibullus. But he acknowledges more complexity; and (a fact not unconnected with this: see below) he doesn't talk in generalities but considers a specific case, that of himself and his friend Tullus.

In poem 6 he rejects an invitation from Tullus, nephew of the proconsul of Asia in 30–29 BC, to accompany him as a member of his uncle's staff, and in the course of the poem contrasts his own life of love with Tullus' approaching life of military action. He commits himself, like Tibullus, to his life of love, which he avows to be disreputable, and rejects Tullus' honourable course. But his espousal of the dishonourable is less enthusiastic than Tibullus' (25 f.):

me sine quem semper uoluit fortuna tacere
hanc animam extremae reddere nequitiae
Allow me, whom fortune always wished me be low,
to surrender this life to utter depravity.

Cf. to 29 f.:

non ego sum laudi, non natus idoneus armis
hanc me militiam fata subire uolunt.
I was not born for esteem and arms.
The fates want me to undergo *this* soldiering [i.e. love].

Meanwhile there is no derision at, nor even overt criticism of, Tullus' life of military action – rather indeed the contrary (21–4). Like Tibullus, Propertius is committed to the life of love for life: cf. 26 above; also 27 f.:

multi longinguo periere in amore libenter
in quorum numero me quoque terra tegar.
Many have willingly died in a long love.
Among this number may earth also cover me.

But unlike Tibullus, as these lines show (and cf. 2. 1. 65 f.), he does not seem too overjoyed about it.

We find the same general pattern in poem 14 where Propertius contrasts love and wealth, an obvious achievement of a conventionally successful life. Again it is discussed in the specific situation – Propertius' love and Tullus' wealth; and again there is no obvious criticism of Tullus' portion and far from unequivocal praise of love. So in these two poems Propertius emerges, like Tibullus, explicitly committed to the life of love; and he takes upon himself society's condemnatory terms – he does so more strikingly in 1. 1 (also addressed to Tullus) where he represents himself as subject to degradation, disease, folly, and madness.¹⁰ But he suggests that his way is more of a painful necessity than a happy and clear-cut choice; his acceptance of condemnatory terms seems to be much less cheerful.

Propertius will in later books argue the superiority of the life of love with more confidence and vigour; and Tibullus will admit to more pain, problems, and compulsion in his choice.¹¹ In their first books in fact we catch an interesting moment. Propertius is perhaps the earliest poet so explicitly to argue so unorthodox a life. For him the issue is very topical and still *specific*; he is not yet interested in – he perhaps has not yet thought of – generalizing. That is one reason why his decision is difficult and his attitude more complex. A friend's career and achievements are not to be simply dismissed or derided; his own love which he admits to that same friend is painful and humiliating cannot be glibly preferred without some acknowledgement of the objections to such a preference. Tibullus writes in the wake of these Propertian beginnings; he formulates the life of love more generally; and while generalizing he can desire it more unequivocally. And perhaps his love-life was easier.

Militia amoris (the soldiering of love)

The Elegists found one distinct and telling method of projecting their creed which we should notice: *militia amoris*. (And approaching the figure from this, the proper direction, we shall be able to give a truer account of it than exists in the standard books.)¹²

Military imagery of love had been sparingly used in Greek (Hellenistic) poetry. Its growth and development was particularly Roman. We find it mainly in Roman Comedy – and then in the Elegists (it is not for example Catullan). Literary historians might have scrutinized this peculiar distribution with profit.

The general attraction of such imagery for Romans is comprehensible. Military life and customs were very close to ordinary Roman citizens – closer than to Hellenistic readers of Hellenistic literature.¹³ Soldiering therefore offered lively and immediate illustrations that might be wittily discordant or unexpectedly and amusingly appropriate – love is both violent and supremely non-violent. These considerations account for the popularity of the image in the very Roman comedian Plautus.

They account partially for the popularity of the image with Propertius and Tibullus. But a comedian making fictional characters speak of the soldiering of love (when soldiers were often on stage) is something rather different from, rather more obvious than, personal love poets speaking of themselves in those terms. We remember that Catullus, the great progenitor of the elegy, did not; and among the Alexandrian erotic epigrammatists it was a fairly insignificant conceit. Yet with the Augustan Elegists it suddenly becomes (it seems) fashionable. There must be particular reasons for this new interest. There are. They lie in the reality of *militia*, in what real 'soldiering' stood for at the time when the Elegists wrote and what its implications for them were.

In the first place *militia*, service under a provincial governor or general on campaign was, as has often been said above, a standard stage in the career of an ambitious young man. Whether or not he intended his ultimate *negotium* to be military in emphasis, *militia* was a wise course for him — for a time — to follow: it offered valuable experience, financial benefits, and a chance to secure the friendship and support of important people. This could be demonstrated countless times over. An interesting and amusing illustration is offered by letters of Cicero to a protégé, the jurist Trebatius Testa (known to us also from Horace, *Satires*, II. 1). Cicero had secured a position for Trebatius on the staff of Julius Caesar in Gaul. But Trebatius was none too thrilled with his golden opportunity, either before or during it, having a strong taste for the town; and Cicero had to write to him repeatedly, strengthening his resolve and pointing out the advantages. (When Trebatius was finally reconciled to his *militia*, Cicero wrote to him again, with some humour, praising him for his fortitude: 'your letter showed that you are now bearing *militia* with firmness of purpose and that you are a brave and stout fellow (*esse fortem virum et constantem*).')¹⁴

Here, in the fact that *militia* was a standard stage in a conventional career, lies one important reason for the popularity of the *militia amoris* figure with the Elegists. They were organizing and proclaiming the life of love as an alternative to conventional life; *militia* was symptomatic of conventional life; by professing their own *militia* the Elegists might neatly declare their dissociation. With bland insolence or subtler irony the figure could demonstrate that the life of love was *by definition* incompatible with, an aggressive alternative to, the life decreed by society.

Let us recall Tibullus' programmatic poem (1. 1), where Tibullus dissociates himself (at first very tactfully) from Messalla's military life of action:

te bellare decet terra, Messalla, marique . . .

It befits you, Messalla, to make war by land and sea . . .

Some lines later (75–7) he writes:

hic ego dux milesque bonus: nos signa tubaque
ite procul, cupidis vulnere ferre uris,
ferre et opes.

Here [i.e. amidst the boisterous brawls of love]
I am general and stout soldier. You
standards and trumpets [of real, military]
hence far away! Take your wounds to greedy men,
take wealth too!

Tibullus' attitude to a life of military action ultimately becomes clear and less tactful. He strikes a nearly provocative stance by transferring its esteemed terms to his own dishonourable but cherished life.

Tibullus we should note had an especial stimulus to use this particular method of provocatively stating his creed. At some time around this period he *did* himself do the standard thing and perform real *militia*: he was present on Messalla's Aquitanian campaign, and started with Messalla for other campaigns in the East but was prevented by sickness.¹⁵ For Tibullus therefore, the one-time or occasional and no doubt pretty unwilling *miles*, the *militia amoris* must have been a particularly enjoyable, certainly a very relevant, way to present an unorthodox philosophy of comparative idleness.¹⁶

Propertius has only one manifest example of the image in the *monobiblos* but it is very prominent (since Propertius was never a *miles* himself, the image might not have suggested itself so immediately to him as to Tibullus). It occurs in the sixth poem, the poem to Tullus opting for the life of love rather than conventional life in the form of, precisely, *militia*. To Tullus he says (19):

tu patrii meritas conare anteire securis

Do you make ready to march before your uncle's well-earned *fasces*.

As for himself (29–30):

non ego sum laudi, non natus idoneus armis
hanc me militiam fata subire volunt.

I was not born suited for esteem and arms.
The fates want me to undergo this *militia* [i.e. love].

His use of *militia amoris* allows him *in a word* to show that the life of love is a rival to, completely incompatible with, a conventional and honourable life. It is itself *militia*.

At this interim point we may notice an incidental but interesting difference in Propertius' and Tibullus' understanding of the *militia amoris*. For Tibullus

the stuff of erotic soldiering is, typically, the often physical quarrels lovers may have with their beloveds, he seems in fact to have found these unusually spicy. Propertius has in mind the act of love or the strategy leading to love as well as quarrels.

That was another aspect of real *militia* and another plank in the platform of the life of love which made the *militia* figure magnetic. *Militia* broadly considered might mean violence, savagery, and death; but the life of love proclaimed a virtual pacifism – something quite different incidentally from orthodox Augustan eulogies of Augustus' peace. The Elegists used *militia amoris* to declare their dissociation from war. The conventional world made wars and wars were frightful; 'war' existed in the life of love but was something other, and more or less delightful. Offering their own kind and definition of war the elegists neatly demonstrated the incompatibility of real war with the life of love.

In 1. 3 Tibullus praises the Golden Age and castigares present times thus (47–50):

non acies, non ira fuit, non bella, nec ensem
immiti saevus duxerat arte faber.
nunc loue sub domino caedes et uulnera semper,
nunc mare, nunc leti mille repente uiae.

Anger and armies and war were not yet known:
no blacksmith's cruel craft had forged the sword.
But now, in Jove's dominion, it is always wounds & slaughter;
now there is the sea and sudden Death's one thousand roads.

(Lee)

Soon after he is describing Elysium, where lovers live their afterlife in bliss. He includes these two lines (63 f.):

ac iuuenum series tenentis immixta puellis
ludit, et assidue proelia miscet Amor.
Young men and tender girls make sport, lined up together,
continually engaging in the battles of Love.

(Lee)

Love, the implication is, offers its own battles, harmless indeed pleasurable battles, alternative and obviously preferable battles to those of the real *militia* earlier evoked.

Tibullus opposes *bella Veneris* more directly to real war, carefully defining them and distinguishing them from military violence, in 1. 10. First note lines 1–4:

quis fuit horrendos primus qui protulit enses?
quam ferus, et uere ferreus, ille fuit!
tum caedes hominum generi, tum proelia nata,
tum breuior dirae mortis aperta uia est.

Tell me, who invented the terrifying sword?
Hard he must have been and truly iron-hearted.
War that day & slaughter were born to humanity;
that day there was opened a short cut to grim death.

(Lee)

Then 51 ff. (the aftermath of a country festival):

rusticus e lucoque uehit, male sobrius ipse,
uxorem plaustro progeniemque domum.
sed Veneris tunc bella calent, scissosque capillos
femina perfractas conquiriturque fores.
flet teneras subtrusa genas, sed uictor et ipse
flet sibi dementes tam ualuisse manus.
at lasciuus Amor rixae mala uerba ministrat,
inter et iratum lentus utrumque seder.
a lapis est ferrumque, quam quicumque puellam
uerberat: e caelo deripit ille deos.
sit satis e membris tenuem rescindere uestem,
sit satis ornatus dissoluisse comae,
sit lacrimas mouisse satis: quater ille beatus
cui tenera irato fere puella potest.
sed manibus qui saevus erit, scutumque sudemque
is gerat et miti sit procul a Venere.

Home from the sacred grove the farmer far from sober
drives wife and children in the wagon.
Then Venus' war flares up. The woman then bewailing
torn hair and broken door
weeps for soft cheeks bruised, & the winner also weeps
for the mad strength in his hands.

But Love, the mischief-maker, feeds the brawling
with abuse

& sits there obstinate between the angry pair.
Ah stone is he & steel who strikes his girl:
he drags down Gods from heaven.
It is enough to rip off the thin dress,
enough to disarrange the well-set hair,
enough to draw her tears. O four times happy he
whose anger makes a tender woman weep!

But the cruel-handed should carry shield & stake
& soldier far away from gentle Venus.

(Lee)

Love's 'war' is placed by Tibullus both implicitly and explicitly in complete opposition to real war; the life of love is totally (therefore) incompatible with it.

Propertius uses *militia amoris* to pacifist effect (for Propertius' pacifism see the splendid lines 2. 15. 41 ff.)¹⁷ More boldly than Tibullus (though not in the *monobiblos*); his use also tends to be more general and inclusive, combining an effectively pacifist dissociation from war with a dissident dissociation from current patriotic posturing. E.g. 3. 5. 1-2:

*pacis Amor deus est, pacem ueneramur amantes:
stant mihi cum domina proelia dura mea.*

Love is a god of peace, we lovers revere peace:
my hard battles are with my mistress.

That is not only effectively pacifist, it is bravely pacifist: it alludes to and passes mute comment on Propertius' previous poem, ostensibly a jubilant reaction to Augustus' military preparations (3. 4. 1):

*arma deus Caesar dices meditatur ad Indos.
Divine Caesar plans arms against the rich East*

pacis Amor deus est picks up and thus undermines the sincerity of *arma deus Caesar*. Note too 2. 14. 21-4:

*pulsabant alii frustra dominamque uocabant:
mecum habuit positum lenta puella caput.
haec mihi deuictis porior uictoria Parthis,
haec spolia, haec reges, haec mihi currus erunt.*

Others knocked on the door in vain and called her 'mistress';
relaxed, my girl rested her head by mine.
This victory for me will be more potent than the conquering
of Parthians,
this will be my spoils, this my [captive] kings, this my
triumphal chariot.

That implies a triumphant rejection of war (as a career as well as generally) and decries contemporary military aspirations. Finally let us look at 2. 7. 13-18:

*unde mihi patriis naros praebere triumphis?
nullus de nostro sanguine miles erit.
quod si uera meae comitarem castra puellae,
non mihi sat magnus Castoris iret equus.
hinc etenim tantum meruit mea gloria nomen,
gloria ad hibernos lata Borysthenidas.*

How should I furnish sons for our country's triumphs?
No one of my blood will be a soldier.
But if the soldiering for me was the true kind, soldiering
under my mistress,¹⁸
Castor's horse would not be big enough for me.
From love-soldiering my glory has earned its great renown,
glory that has been carried to the wintry inhabitants of
Borysthenis [on the Dnieper].

These brave lines also combine dissociation from current patriotic causes with a general rejection of war. They do it with splendid and brave insolence (*true* war is love-making . . .). And, as in the passages above, the *militia amoris* figure implies that the views uttered are part and parcel of the life of love. The life of love being war rules out cruder conceptions of war by definition.

4. The life of love (3): the lover and his beloved (*seruitium amoris*)

We have seen that Catullus' poetry embodied a romantic attitude toward society, and that the early Elegists then organized and emblazoned it. Catullus' attitude towards his beloved was also in a defined sense romantic. This the Elegists took up, but they also intensified it, and emblazoned their intensified form. We remember that Catullus introduced three main areas of non-erotic life to illuminate his feelings for, and attitudes towards, his beloved: marriage, family relations, and *amicitia*. Two of these provided Propertius with notable assistance.

First, the family. 1. 11. 21:
an mihi nunc maior carae custodia matris?

Would I guard more anxiously my own dear mother?

This implies a disinterested, protective concern analogous to that expressed in Catullus 72 (*sed pater ut gnatos diligit et generos*). Two lines later in the same poem we find a more general expression of devotion that uses family imagery:

tu mihi sola domus, tu, Cynthia, sola parentes.

You only, Cynthia, are my home, you only my parents.

We might notice that *tu sola parentes* implies devoted *dependere* rather than protectiveness, almost in fact the opposite emphasis to line 21 and Carullus 72.

Propertius is fond of marriage terminology, particularly in his second book. I quote two examples, one obvious, one not so. At the end of 2. 6 (which throughout views Cynthia rather as a wife)¹⁹ he protests devotion in these unambiguous terms:

nos uxor numquam, numquam seductet amica.
semper amica mihi, semper et uxor eris.

Never will a wife, never will a girl-friend separate me from you.

You will always be my girl-friend and always my wife.

The lines not only of course illuminate Propertius' feelings for Cynthia: they are also socially and politically provocative, against a background of legislation to enforce marriage: cf. 2. 7 and above, p. 348 (with note). In poem 13 he prophesies Cynthia's devotion to himself after his death (lines 51–2; some wishful or rhetorical thinking here):

tu tamen amisso non numquam flebis amico.
fas est praeteritos semper amare uiros.

Sometimes you will weep for your lost lover.

It is right to love departed men/husbands for always.

Discreetly Propertius claims to be no more than a friend. But in his heart he feels that he is, or he wants to be, Cynthia's *husband*. Though *uir* is an ambiguous term ('man' or 'husband', like German *Mann*), it was 'right' (*fas*, that is, right and proper according to divine or natural law) for a woman to continue love for a deceased husband, not lover: that way she remained honourably *uirgata*. In fact Propertius seems here to slip into marriage *thinking* rather than adopt marriage terminology. It is often his way: this Carullan mode of devotion was most congenial and natural to him, and is frequently discernible.²⁰ We can discern it (but not family imagery) in Tibullus too: it shapes (possibly) the way Tibullus imagines Delia waiting for him in 1. 3 (lines 83 ff.); it shapes his vision of Delia officiating at the beloved country estate (1. 5. 21 ff.).

Carullus' third area of non-erotic language, *amicitia*, was in some ways his most revealing. It expressed his romanticism most deftly: Carullus offered

the full and resonant equality of *amicitia* to a lover. The language of *amicitia* does not play a very significant role in Propertius and Tibullus; to be more precise, they are *not* customarily disposed to represent their relationships fully, systematically as *amicitiae*.²¹ On the contrary. Their romanticism now took a different direction – a direction incompatible in fact with their marriage dreams, but we should not look for consistency in romantics.

Conventional folk had derided or vilified abject lovers as sick, insane, and debased. The early Elegists, provocative spokesmen of an alternative morality, admitted as their inescapable (and, as we soon infer, elected) portion sickness or madness,²² and, too, debasement. And here, in debasement, was the material of a new romanticism, a possible trump. Carullus had offered the sacrifice of traditional superiority; Propertius and Tibullus would surrender equality. The altered emphasis that we observed in Propertius' use of family imagery was significant; but the Elegists found a more striking, a shocking way to play their trump.

The surrender of equality was emblazoned. Just as a telling method of projecting the lover's attitude towards society had been developed (*militia amoris*), so a way was evolved of concretely proclaiming the flagrantly provocative relation of the lover to his mistress – the personal condition of the life of love. Carullus had aspired to be the 'friend' of Lesbia; Propertius and Tibullus, debased and subject beyond such dreams, were their lovers' professed *slaves*. The *servitium amoris*, 'slavery of love', takes shape.²³

The emphases of the two poets in their use of the 'figure' (so to call it)²⁴ are again different, and characteristic. In his first book Propertius professes his slavery as something that he bears unwillingly, and he concentrates on servile loss of free speech. He would even, he says (in a neat paradox, conveyed by ambiguity),²⁵ submit to servile punishments, provided that he gained the opportunity to speak what his anger prompted – to speak as a free man (1. 1. 27–28). In fact he only finds such liberty when he is alone in a forest and far from Cynthia (1. 18). Note too his comments on love and its servile effects on poems to Ponticus (1. 9) and Gallus (1. 10). Tibullus concentrates on servile physical humiliations – which he embraces almost masochistically. The two poets' difference in emphasis is neatly demonstrated by Tibull. 1. 5, where Tibullus *rephens* of an outburst of brave, free words and *invites* servile punishments to prevent another such occurrence (lines 5–6).

ure ferum et torque, libeat ne dicere quicquam
magnificum posthac: horrida verba doma.

Brand me for my wildness, rack me lest it please me to speak
anything
grandiloquent again. Tame my rough words.

We see therefore (among other things) a by now familiar variation in the

degree to which the poets acquiesce in their state. But slavery as the state of both of them is sure and admitted. It is their most characteristic personal posture, proclaimed with increasing explicitness and generality.²⁶ It was, I think, Propertius and Tibullus who popularized, who gave effective shape to the *sentitium amoris* 'figure' as we know it. In it they found a concrete and provocative way of declaring the lover's avowed abjectness, the personal condition of the life of love, the new romanticism. The lover a self-confessed slave! Here was a focus for the appalled attentions of conventional sensibilities and a delightfully awful programme for the unconventional to rally to.

Notes

- 1 For Augustus' moral legislation (his law to curb adultery, the *Lex Iulia de adulteriis*; and his law to encourage marriage, the *Lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus* are those that particularly concern us) see *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. x, 441 ff.; P. A. Brunt, *Italian Manpower* (Oxford, 1971), 558 ff.; also Stroth, *Ovids Liebeskumst*.
- 2 Very helpful on this topic are Boucher's first chapter, Burck, Stroth, *Lebeselegie*, 222 ff.
- 3 18B is an interesting poem. Aurora who loved the (explicitly) aged Tithonus is held up as an *exemplum* for Gynethia. But the *exemplum* encourages her to love (it questions why she does not love) the youthful Propertius. Propertius' own old age is merely an hypothesis: *quid mea si canis aetas candelaverit aetati?* Here Propertius admits the full implications of love surviving into age but at one remove, in myth (in the *romantic* world). The admission is uncharacteristic – but not total. The poem is also uncharacteristic at the end. Bitterness makes Propertius advert brutally to Gynethia's coming old age (19) in Horatian fashion; he does this again in his bitter concluding poem: 3. 25. 11 ff. (cf. especially Horace, *Odes* 1. 25).
- Cf. too Prop. 2. 25. 9–10:

at me ab amore tuo deducet nulla senectus
sine ego Tithonus, sine ego Nestor ero.

But no old age will lead me from my love of you,
whether I shall be Tithonus or whether Nestor.
- Propertius refers to his possible old age but romanticizes it (puts it in mythical terms); and of course the main point of *sentitium* is not to evoke love accommodating senility but love enduring through life – a fabulously long life. He is in fact making his usual sort of romantic declaration, but choosing an unfortunate or half-honest word to do so.
3. 10. 17 shows a suppressed appreciation of Time's winged chariot: see GR 20 (1973), 43. The tenderness and sensitivity of this partial admission is in eloquent contrast to 3. 25. 11 ff.
- 4 If it is not *decreas* to love in old age and make 'pretty speeches with white hair', it is difficult to justify 1. 1. 59 ff. and (even more) 1. 6. 85–6. It is evident in fact that Tibullus had – at least he expresses – quite strong Horatian sympathies on the topic of Age and Love, Time and Love. Horatian beliefs are implicit at 1. 2. 89 ff., 1. 5. 70, 1. 8. 47 ff., 2. 1. 73 ff. (cf. also Bright, 234–5, Geiger, 11) and explicitly uttered by Priapus at 1. 4. 27 ff. Tibullus' romantic aspiration does seem odd

alongside these passages. It is of course not at all impossible that he should be inconsistent; or perhaps he means to distinguish more carefully than his language actually does between *ars* of love and affection-love. Or perhaps we have another and different spot of evidence that Tibullus' romanticism is not quite as earnest as may first appear: it may have its histrionic aspect.

- 5 Cf. poems 10, 28, 31, and 46.
- 6 It wasn't even profitable, as Catullus is not too romantic to point out: 10. 5 ff., 28, 7–10. Poems 46 and 31 capture Catullus' sense of relief and happiness at the ending of his provincial duty.
- 7 Cf. poem 95.
- 8 Note especially *Pro Sertio*, 136 ff.
- 9 When Catullus talks positively about a 'life of love' he uses neutral words (poem 5) or his own special positive vocabulary (109). When love torments him he can use conventional pejorative terms from a conventional point of view; he does not more or less willingly accept and emblazon 'disease' or 'madness' like Propertius or Tibullus (on this aspect of Propertius and Tibullus see further below); see poem 76. In this connection poem 51 is interesting. According to my reading of the poem, Catullus feels uncomfortable about the jealous feelings he describes in the first three stanzas – he feels uncomfortable about the effects of his romantic love – and in consequence reads a moralizing lesson to himself: 'you've got too much *otium* on your hands, Catullus', i.e. too much time to indulge in love (cf. *Ov. Rem. Am.* 139 ff., *otia si tollas, perire Cupidinis arcus* . . .). The choice of the word *otium* here, the assumption it implies that love is properly a marginal, leisure occupation, shows Catullus thinking again in conventionally moral terms. Catullus' attitude to a 'life of love' is natural, fluid, never tendentious.
- 10 Cf. Allen esp. sect. II, F. Cairns, *CQ* n.s. 24 (1974), 102–7. For condemnations of romantic love from a more or less conventional viewpoint cf. *Lucr.* 4, 1073 ff. and *Cic. Tusc.* 4. 68–76. Cf. also Plato, *Phaedrus* 231 C–D, *Symposium* 185A, etc.
- 11 e.g. Prop. 2. 15.41 ff., the delightful 2. 30B; Tibull. 2. 4.
- 12 Useful references on *militia amoris* in E. Spies, *Militia omnis amans* (Diss. Tübingen, 1930), Burck, *passim* esp. 177, Lilia (but she interprets them very oddly), 64–7. For Plautus' and Terence's use of the figure see G. E. Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy* (Princeton, 1952), 337 with refs. And bibliography, E. Fantham, *Comparative Studies in Republican Latin Imagery* (Toronto, 1972), 26–33 and 84.
- 13 It is interesting to observe that Apuleius uses *military* images for sex where the Greek author of *Lucius or the Ass* uses *wrestling* images (*Met.* 2. 17; L. o. A, 9, printed in Loeb edn of Lucian, vol. viii): we can gain insight here into the difference between Greek and Roman tastes.
- 14 Cicero's letters to Trebatius: *Fam.* 7. 6, 17, 18.
- 15 Cf. Tibull. 1. 3, 7. 9–12, 10. 11–13.
- 16 It seems likely to me that Cornelius Gallus encouraged the efflorescence of the *militia amoris* figure. He appears to have felt and expressed the rival claims of love and soldiering strongly – this is indicated by Verg. *Ecl.* 10 (note particularly the problematic lines 44 f.) And the famous Servian note on line 46. The *militia* figure could have provided him with some neat ironies and paradoxes.
- 17 It may be in fact that these lines exploit *militia amoris*: Camps thinks we should read Fontein's *praelia* instead of *poecula* in line 48.
- 18 Shackleton Bailey, 75 well explains this line. He concludes: "Translate then "But were I following my mistress' camp – real warfare that – then . . ." . . . The condition, it may be urged, is unwarranted since Propertius is already a soldier in this sense. True. He "contaminates" two ideas, one positive, "I follow my mistress"

camp, the true camp for me", the other conditional, "If Caesar's camp were the camp of my mistress, then I should be a mighty soldier." The couplet is influenced by both but properly expresses neither.

19 Cf. Camps, *Propertius Book II*, 92.

20 Cf. too 2. 5. 17, 8. 29, 9. 3 ff. and 17. 15. 27 f., 16. 22; also 1. 3.

21 Prop. 3. 20 which employs much *amicitia* vocabulary is from more than one point of view a special case (I do not think it concerns Cynthia). It is interesting that Cynthia uses *invidia* sarcastically at 1. 3. 35. *fade* is quite common in both poets but is too vague to suggest *amicitia* without supporting words; the same applies to an unqualified use of *amicus* or *amica*: Catullus 72.3 (for example) shows how casual *amicia* can be. In 2. 9 Propertius talks more in *amicitia* terms than in most poems.

22 Cf. too Tibull. 2. 5. 110, *et falso morbo, quin inuat tunc dolor*.

23 I have discussed *servitium amoris* at length in *CQ* n.s. 29 (1979), 117 ff. and I allow myself to be brief in the text – on admittedly contentious topics. I still do not believe that *servitium amoris* had very significant currency before Propertius, but a couple of qualifications need making (the article in *CQ* omits a few Greek references (see Stroth, *Liebeslegie*, 218 ff.) but my argument easily accommodates them). I omitted to mention that Lucilius (730 M) seems to have called one of his mistresses *domina*; and the new fragment of Cornelius Gallus (see *JRS* 69, 1979) shows that Gallus referred to Lycoris thus. This makes it more likely that part of the efflorescence of the 'figure' is due to Gallus. But Gallus may have had no more developed a system of *servitium* than Catullus, who refers to Lesbia as *era*; and for the reasons mentioned in my paper I still think that the efflorescence is largely to be put down to Propertius.

24 I explain my reasons for being chary of calling *servitium amoris* a figure, loc. cit. I also further discuss the difference between Propertius and Tibullus in their use of *servitium*.

25 On the interpretation of Prop. 1. 1. 27–8 see *CQ* n.s. 29 (1979), 129.

26 Cf. Prop. 2. 13. 36. Tibull. 2. 3. 5 f. and the concluding couplet; also 2. 4. Note how when Propertius 'renounces' romantic love in 2. 23 *servitium* occurs to him as, clearly, its most significant manifestation.

Works cited

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The most convenient commentaries in English are Fordyce and Quinn, *Catullus, The Poems* (Catullus), Camps (Propertius), Smith (Tibullus), Nisbet and Hubbard, Wickham, and Williams *The Third Book* (Horace), Bartsby, *Ovid Amores Book I* (on *Ovid Am.* 1: there is nothing convenient in English on *Am.* 2 and 3; Brandt's German commentary is still very useful).