Social Navigation in Elegiac Worlds:
Travel, Immobility, and Identity in Roman Love Elegy

By

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Abstract

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In this dissertation, I explore the spatial dynamics of Roman love elegy, how its poets imagine their place in the world both physically and socially. Specifically, I argue that Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid use spatial tropes to explore the challenges of sharing an elegiac identity, as well as the difficulties of coexisting with those who do not share one’s identity. Drawing upon the growing body of scholarship on the social dynamics of Roman spaces, I reevaluate the programmatic spatial tropes of elegy: the lover’s unmoving vigil, the propempticon, which contemplates travels abroad, and the triumphal poem, which returns itinerant soldiers back to Rome. I show that through these tropes Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid offer competing visions of the role of elegiac identity in their contemporary world. Elegy is often characterized as a self-obsessed genre; I instead emphasize the social quality of this self-consciousness, how it explores the challenges of inhabiting a homogenized and marginal identity within an ideologically diverse world.

In my first chapter, I reexamine the paraclausithyron, the lover’s vigil in the doorway. Scholars have tended to read this programmatic trope in terms of how it represents the dynamics of unrequited desire. I instead show that it draws upon the traditional role of doorways in elite self-presentation in republican Rome. In light of this connection, the lover’s laments in the doorway should be viewed not only as persuasion directed at the beloved within, but also as a performance of identity directed towards external audiences. By dramatizing both the performance of identity in the doorway and misrecognition of it by other figures, elegiac poets raise questions about the stability of identity and its dependence on external characteristics. Moreover, close readings of Propertius 1.16, Tibullus 1.2, and Amores 1.6, reveal how the three poets conceptualize the performance of their identity, and its significance, in markedly different ways: Propertius focuses on the challenges of either truly knowing or successfully communicating one’s identity in a world ruled by subjective experience, while Tibullus instead highlights the physical dangers of being recognized as a lover and the need to disappear from the view of a hostile unelegiac world. Ovid, by contrasting the lover with an actual slave and depicting the end of his vigil, emphasizes the artificiality of this elegiac identity and its compatibility with mainstream society.
My second chapter looks at elegiac propemptica. Elegiac poets typically use this trope to convey the lover’s distaste for travel. However, I show that in their rejections of travel Propertius, Ovid, and Tibullus advance very different ideas about their own power to resist the demands of the real world and about what it would mean to acquiesce to the demands of mainstream culture by traveling abroad. In Propertius’ first book, the paired propemptica 1.6 and 1.8 use contrasting interpretations of journeys to show how subjective experience is shaped by physical realities and specific points-of-view, making the lover’s physical station in Rome essential to his existence as a lover. 3.7 and 3.21, however, return to and test this idea, exploring the possibilities of elegiac emotional experiences outside of Rome, and even outside erotic contexts. Tibullus’s propempticon, 1.3, through a careful melding of Odyssean references and elegiac motifs, offers a model for how elegiac figures can yield to mainstream demands, and travel abroad on campaign, while still maintaining a distinctively elegiac outlook and identity. Finally, in Amores 2.10, instead of wrestling with the pressures of the external world, through extensive references to the propemptica of his predecessors, Ovid reflects on the pressures of writing within a genre, with its potential for both tedium and creative union.

These differences in how the elegiac poets conceptualize their relationship to their world, both social and geographic, also inform their triumphal poems, in which the poets confront the figure of the soldier returning to Rome. In my third chapter, I analyze how elegiac poets negotiate questions of identity and their relationship to mainstream culture by looking at elegiac responses to triumphs, which at least ostensibly center traditional Roman masculinity. I argue that Propertius and Tibullus both adopt and disrupt triumphal representational strategies, in particular through representations of foreign geographies and manipulations of the triumphal route through the city. Propertius and Tibullus manipulate the mobility of the triumph, redirecting it in ways that allow the poet-lover to benefit from and thrive amidst Roman imperialism. For Tibullus this means using the triumph and Roman conquest to create a Roman cosmopolitanism that allows the lover to survive, contribute, and thrive under the radar, amongst many other minority identities. For Propertius, the triumph instead offers an opportunity for the elegiac lover to assertively shape public narratives around elegy, just as generals do around conquest. Ovid, in contrast, includes no representations of literal triumphs in his Amores, instead translating the ritual into entirely elegiac terms in the triumph of love. This omission is reflective of Ovid’s focus, in the Amores at least, on his relationship to other elegiac poets rather than on his relationship to a broader unelegiac community.
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Introduction

Ferte per extremas gentes et ferte per undas,
    Qua non ulla meum femina norit iter.  30
Vos remanete, quibus facili deus annuit aure,
    Sitis et in tuto semper amore pares.
Nam me nostra Venus noctes exercet amaras,
    Et nullo vacuus tempore defit Amor.
Hoc, moneo, vitate malum: sua quemque moretur
    Cura, neque assueto mutet amore locum
Quod si quis monitis tardas adverterit aures,
    Heu referet quanto verba dolor e mea!

Carry me through the furthest races and carry me through the waves, where no woman may know my journey. You remain, to whom the god nods with an easy ear, and be always equals in a safe love. For our Venus always employs me in bitter nights and idle love is never far away. I warn you, avoid this evil: let each man tarry with his own love, and do not change places once a love has become accustomed. If anyone turns slow ears to my warnings, alas, with what grief he will recall my words!

Propertius 1.1.29-38

Whatever you do, do not move, Propertius warns his fellow lovers at the end of his programmatic opening poem, even as he himself plans an escape from the tortures of love through a journey abroad.1 While the first half of the poem focuses on Propertius’ unique amorous travails with Cynthia (1-18), these lines instead place the speaker within a broader community of male lovers, a community that Propertius defines in substantial part through images of mobility and immobility. Like Propertius, these other young men also dedicate themselves to pursuing love affairs (31-2, 36), though unlike him, they seem to have better hope of success and so will remain in Rome with their beloveds. They are bound together—at least in Propertius’ mind—by a shared set of values. Love is not merely an activity or feeling, but an entirely engrossing calling that creates a distinctive and shared world-view, what we might call an elegiac identity. This elegiac identity is a social identity, that is to say, it is not unique to any individual, but is an iterable role, performed and interpreted in social settings, through established behaviors, mannerisms, modes of speech, and even movements and locations.2 In this

1 There is a well-established problem of terminology in referring to the speakers of Roman love elegy, who bear the same names as their historical authors, but should not be mistaken for representing the actual experiences and emotions of those historical authors (the bibliography on the fictionality of the elegiac persona is extensive, but see especially Wyke 1989, Kennedy 1993: 43, James 2003: 1-7, McCarthy 2010). The problem becomes more acute when writing on multiple elegiac poets, which can make the terms “speaker” or “poet-lover” insufficiently descriptive, since there are important differences between the speakers of the different poets. Throughout this dissertation, then, I will refer to this speaking voice both as the speaker and by the proper names Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid, though this should not be mistaken as conflating the historical authors with their speakers.

2 As Louise Revell argues identity is “something which is reinforced on a daily basis through the interaction between the individual, other members of the society, and the social structures through which that society is organized. Similarly, identity can change through the progression of a person’s life, not only in terms of age categories, but also the ways in which gender is understood, or professional identities created” (2016: ix). For a similar approach to elegiac identity, see Welch 2005: 8-9.
introduction to his poetic corpus, Propertius represents his elegiac values in markedly spatial terms, commanding his fellow-lovers to stay put a full three times.\(^3\) The immediate implications of these injunctions are clear: lovers must not cheat on their beloveds, must not “step out” or “stray.”\(^4\) To remain physically immobile is to maintain faith, to move is to break it. The other lovers’ immobility in Rome, presumably in their beloved’s beds or doorways, stands in contrast with Propertius’ proposed journey abroad, which will mark the end of his participation in love and love poetry.\(^5\)

Propertius thus opens his poetic collection by asserting the power of movement to shape and reflect one’s social existence and identity, but in doing so he also hints at the contradictions and tensions that exist within shared identities. Lovers are marked by their immobility; those not part of this community of lovers, what we might call the unelegiac, by their movement.\(^6\) There is a certain physical, concrete logic to this distinction: lingering with, or at the very least near, one’s mistress self-evidently involves one in love.\(^7\) Conversely, fleeing Rome and breaking off all contact with a mistress would seem to demonstrate something other than love. There is also, however, a cynical logic to Propertius’ insistence on elegiac immobility: if other lovers remain loyal to their mistresses, if they stay put, they cannot steal Propertius’ mistress.\(^8\) The shared amorous priorities of lovers make them natural rivals for each other. As much as Propertius’ calls for immobility may be read as a declaration of shared values and identity, it may also be read as self-interested manipulation. Moreover, the complications of this shared elegiac identity expand outside of Propertius’ own poetic world. The historical Propertius was not alone in writing elegiac love poetry, but rather was one member of a roughly contemporaneous community of elegiac poets, all of whom actively assert their participation in this shared genre and identity in their love poetry.\(^9\) Tibullus and Ovid, the two most prominent other surviving elegiac poets, each likewise use images of travel and immobility to define their elegiac identities and their

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\(^3\) \textit{Vos remanete} (36), \textit{sua quemque moretur cura} (35-6), \textit{assueto mutet amore locum} (36)  
\(^4\) For more on spatial metaphors, see Kennedy 1993: 46-54 and Short 2012. There is likely a metapoetic implication as well, that these men should remain loyal to elegiac love poetry, and continue to write in the genre—as it turns out Propertius himself will, in spite of his protestations.  
\(^5\) For further discussion of the implications of this proposed journey, which is promptly forgotten by the next poem, see Chapter 2, note 2. The immobility of the lovers in Rome most likely also implicitly contrasts with the movements of more typically successful Roman men, who would be expected to frequent the Forum, participate in campaigns or imperial governance (e.g., Prop. 1.6).  
\(^6\) The category of unelegiac, or non-lover, of course makes little sense in the real world: since most people are not lovers, the category encompasses a vast diversity of human experiences and identities, who would never identify themselves in terms of their relationship to elegy (see my second chapter for a further discussion of elegiac engagement with the diversity of non-elegiac identities). But Propertius, as well as Tibullus and Ovid, nevertheless often make use of this binary, in a manner somewhat reminiscent of how Christians would later organize the world into Christians and pagans, in spite of the incoherence of the category “pagan” (Cameron 2011: 15-25).  
\(^7\) Though Am. 2.8 and 2.9 nicely demonstrate the possibility of being unfaithful even while remaining in the same place, as Ovid conducts an affair with Corinna’s slave-girl inside Corinna’s own home.  
\(^8\) An anxiety reflected in Propertius’ hope that each enjoy a “safe love” (\textit{tuto amore}, 32).  
\(^9\) There is even some evidence that these historical poets interacted with each other socially, and may even have been friends. Ovid claims a relationship with Propertius in his \textit{Tristia} (4.10.45-6), while Propertius’ repeated incorporation of Gallus into his first book implies a personal relationship. All biographical claims by elegiac poets should be approached with a healthy dose of skepticism, but given the close-knit literary world of Roman elite, it would be more surprising if they did not have any relationships with each other.
relationship to broader unelegiac communities. However, differences between how Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid represent the importance of immobility and travel reveal significant tensions within this elegiac community over what it means to be an elegiac lover and poet.

In this dissertation, I explore the spatial dynamics of Roman love elegy, how its poets imagine their place in the world both physically and socially. Specifically, I argue that Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid use spatial tropes to explore the challenges of sharing an identity, as well as the difficulties of coexisting with those who do not share one’s identity. Drawing upon the growing body of scholarship on the social dynamics of Roman spaces, I reevaluate the programmatic spatial tropes of elegy: the lover’s unmoving vigil, the propempticon, which contemplates travels abroad, and the triumphal poem, which returns itinerant soldiers back to Rome. I show that through these tropes Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid offer competing visions of the role of elegiac identity in their contemporary world. Elegy is often characterized as a self-obsessed genre; I instead emphasize the social quality of this self-consciousness, how it explores the challenges of inhabiting a homogenized and marginal identity within an ideologically diverse world.

In order to lay the groundwork for these arguments, in this introduction I will 1) offer an overview of the vigil, propempticon, and triumphal tropes, and show how Propertius, Tibullus and Ovid programatically invoke them to define themselves in relationship to non-elegiac others, but in doing so also raise questions about the stability and malleability of these categories, 2) examine the social implications of space and tropes, situating my arguments within the context of both spatial and generic analyses of elegy, and 3) briefly outline how Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid use the spatial tropes to navigate markedly different social worlds.

Vigils, Journeys, and Triumphs

The locked-out lover singing laments on the threshold is one of the quintessential images of Roman love elegy, but its history can be traced back centuries earlier, all the way to Greek lyric. Especially in earlier Greek representations of the motif, it is often connected to the

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10 This dissertation will focus on the first three books of Propertius, the first book of Tibullus, and Ovid’s Amores. This collection of works should not be mistaken as representing the complete genre as Romans in the 1st century BCE would have experienced it. The absence of Gallus’ poetry, almost entirely lost, is the most striking, as he is the widely acknowledged father of elegiac love poetry. It is also worth noting that poets writing first-person Latin love poetry in elegiac couplets, notably Catullus, Sulpicia, as well possibly as Quintilius and Calvus. However, there are good reasons to look at Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid together as a close grouping. Unlike Catullus, they consistently use elegiac couplets and explicitly imagine themselves as part of a group identity of poet-lovers. Sulpicia fits more easily into the category of elegy, but her elegiac identity works in markedly different ways because of her gender, and notably, she does not engage in the tropes that are the focus of my study. Finally, this dissertation does not touch upon all the works of these three canonical elegiac poets—notably, I leave aside Propertius Book 4, Ovid’s Ars Amatoria and Remedia Amoris, as well as the Heroides and Tristia, all of which offer important responses to elegiac spatial tropes, but might be categorized more as commentary on the genre than as primary manifestations of it.

11 For the most comprehensive history of the vigil, see Copley 1956. Francis Cairns categorizes propemptica and paraclausithyra (which he refers to as komoi) as genres, effectively types of poems that make use of the same primary elements, even if their formal features differ: “The primary elements of the komos are a lover, a beloved, and the lover’s attempts to come to the beloved, plus an appropriate setting. These primary elements will be present in every example of the genre, either explicitly or implicitly…This is because it is only by recognizing these primary elements that an ancient audience could know to which genre a poem or speech belonged” (1972: 6). I prefer the
kamos, a drunken procession into the streets after a party, which could rather organically feed into a late night attempt to gain access to a love-object. In Latin literature the trope first appears in Plautus’ Curculio, and is widely associated with the stereotypical figure of the young man in love. It is worth noting, however, that although the vigil in Latin literature is closely associated with this stock character of the young lover, before elegy it appears as merely one of many characteristic behaviors, rather than a preeminently defining one. Additionally, outside of elegy, the lover’s attempts to achieve access sometimes actually succeed, while in elegy, the vigil is generally assumed to be inevitably futile. Although many different topoi appear in relation to the motif, the most essential elements that make it recognizable are locked doors, a lover lingering outside, and a love object within. In addition to using this image to define their lives of love throughout their corpora, especially in contrast to traveling peers, Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid also each include in the first books of their love poetry one paraclausithyron, a poem whose dramatic setting is a lover’s lament in the doorway.

If the vigil defines the elegiac lover, asserting who and what he is, travels abroad are regularly used to describe what he is not. As the vigil is associated with paraclausithyron, which uses the vigil as a dramatic context, so too travels in elegy are closely linked with the propempticon, a poetic type with roots also going back to Greek lyric. Its most basic component parts involve an address to someone departing on a journey. Common topoi include warnings of the dangers of travel, attempts to persuade the addressee to remain, and descriptions of foreign geographies. In elegy, these journeys are most frequently associated with political or military activity abroad, though not necessarily. Moreover, this notion of travel and mobility in the wider Roman Empire is regularly invoked in contrast to the vigil as a way of distinguishing between lovers and non-lovers, as Propertius’ proposed journey abroad was contrasted with the immobile lovers above. Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid show more diversity in their placement of and participation in propemptica than in the paraclausithyron: Tibullus includes one in his first book, Ovid one but not until his second book, and Propertius multiple in each of his first three books.

Cf. the contemporary practice of “booty-calling.” For an example of the kamos and vigil occurring together, see Theoc. Id. 3. In elegy, this context is most strongly hinted at in the opening of Tib. 1.2. Francis Cairns, arguing that this context is inherently implied by the vigil, instead uses the term komos (1977). Frank Copley, in his foundational monograph on the trope, primarily refers to it as the paraclausithyron, a term traditionally associated specifically with the song sung in the doorway by the locked-out lover. Although I do use the term paraclausithyron, especially with reference to songs represented as being produced from the doorway, I use “vigil” as the more encompassing term, since the elegiac poets often reference the action of staying in doorways all night long without specifically referencing singing (e.g., Prop. 1.5.20, 3.7.71–2, Am. 1.9.19–20).

Roman Comedy only contains the one paraclausithyron, in spite of the ubiquitous presence of the adulescens character. See Cic. Phil. 2.45, for a readily legible description of the behavior of a young lover without a vigil. On this futility, see Pucci 1978.

For a comprehensive discussion of the trope, its history, and full range of possibilities, see Cairns 1972. See, e.g., my discussion of Prop. 3.7 in Chapter 2, p. 63–72.

The examples from Propertius Book 3 stretch many of the normative aspects of the poetic type, as I will discuss in my third chapter.
Finally, the triumph also operates as a complete context for poems and as a regularly invoked symbol of traditional notions of masculinity, success, and power. The triumph, a celebration of Roman victory that involved the procession of a triumphant general, his soldiers, and foreign spoils into the city, represented the height of achievement for elite Roman men. Elegiac poets invoke this ritual regularly both through reference to the parade and to the spoils, which would then be placed around the doorways of the triumphant general and soldiers. In spite of their professed distaste for political and military topics, and their use of triumphs and triumphal paraphernalia to describe the topics and lifestyles they would not engage in, Propertius and Tibullus each include celebratory descriptions of triumphs in their collections.20 Ovid, interestingly does not, though he does prominently engage in an elegiac appropriation of the triumph, the so-called triumph of love.21

The Programatics of Elegiac Space

In addition to the full poems dedicated to the tropes, which will be the focus of my chapters, the elegiac poets also programmatically invoke the vigil, travel, and triumph throughout their corpora to communicate differences between lovers and unelegiac others. The vigil, travels abroad, and triumphal glory at home all present clear, visual symbols for readers and internal viewers. However, the very clarity of travel and immobility as markers of elegiac and non-elegiac identity also leads them to be used to test and explore the boundaries of those identities. These tropes function as stable markers of a lover’s difference from non-lovers, while also suggesting the very instability of lover as a category.

The contrast between the unmoving vigil on the one hand and travels and triumph on the other was not predestined to become central to distinguishing lovers and non-lovers, but rather Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid actively make it so.22 In moments of explicit self-definition, they regularly compare their vigils with the foreign military campaigns of other men as an encapsulation of their life and its distinctiveness. Propertius’ opening poem, as discussed above, offers one example of this, and Tibullus’ programmatic first poem offers another:23

Te bellare decet terra, Messalla, marique,
Ut domus hostiles praeferat exuvias;
Me retinent vinctum formosae vincla puellae,
et sedeo duras ianitor ante fores.
1.1.55-6

20 Tib. 1.7. Prop. 2.1. 3.4. For the triumph of love, see Prop. 3.1.9-16, Am. 1.2 and 2.12.
21 Am. 1.2, 2.9, 2.12, 2.18. Outside of the Amores, Ovid does include representations of literal triumphs, see Ars am. 1.213-28, Tr. 3.12 and 4.2 and Pont. 2.1 and 3.4. Propertius also engages in the elegiac reinterpretation of the triumph, see 2.8, 3.1.
22 Though the beginnings of this contrast may date back to Gallus; there are indications that he wrote a propempticon (see Ch. 2, note 8), and the lines from the Qasr Ibrîm papyrus describe Caesar bringing triumphal spoils back to Rome.
23 Although without any reference to a doorway, Propertius’ opening poem cannot be said to explicitly invoke the vigil, nevertheless, the contrast between immobility and travel, and the association between immobility and fidelity, are strongly suggestive of the vigil. On Propertius’ use of the vigil as a symbol of fidelity, see especially Copley 1956: 75-79, Debrohun 2003: 127-34.
For you, Messalla, it is proper to make war on land and sea in order that your house’s façade may sport spoils; me a beautiful girl’s chains hold bound, and I sit as doorkeeper before hard doors.

The perfectly balanced couplets beginning with *te* and *me* emphasize campaigning abroad and maintaining an erotic vigil as essentializing characteristics of the two men. Furthermore, the reference to Messalla’s triumphal spoils, which will convey his prestige to all who pass by his house, positions the lover’s vigil in the doorway as a similar form of advertisement, but of a very different message. Where Messalla will show the world his martial conquests abroad by displaying his *excuviae*, Tibullus will instead reveal the hardship of his life of powerless desiring by effectively becoming *excuviae*. The two men use the same visual spaces to articulate divergent ideas about who they are, what they have accomplished, and what they value. In Ovid’s famous *militia amoris* poem, the contrast between the place of lovers and soldiers likewise is foundational: “That one besieges great cities, this one the threshold of a harsh mistress, this one breaks gates, that one doors” (*ille graves urbes, hic durae limen amicai / obsidet; hic portas frangit, at ille fores, 1.9.19-20*). These behaviors of besieging cities and doorways are not incidental, but characteristic. Moreover, the shared verbs and ambiguous demonstratives of these lines (note the reversal in the referents for *hic* and *ille*) make the spaces of action the only means of distinguishing lover from soldier. The poem raises the possibility that a lover displaced might be indistinguishable from a soldier, might in fact simply be a soldier.24

In his third book, Propertius similarly distances himself from Paetus, who travelled abroad in pursuit of profit, by reiterating his fixed dedication to the vigil: “But you, savage North Wind, will never see my sails: it is proper that I be settled unmoving before the doors of my mistress” (*at tu, saeve Aquilo, numquam mea vela videbis:/ ante fores dominae condar oportet iners*, 3.7.71-2).25 The verb *oportet* situates Propertius’ vigil within social obligations, while *condar* and *iners* both hint at a vigil that has no end and will thereby distinguish him from more ambitious men forever.26

In addition to differentiating between different walks of life, movement and immobility are also used to draw boundaries between literary genres. In pointing to overtly metapoetic examples, I do not mean to draw a clear line between narrative and metapoetic levels in elegy—the instances in the previous paragraph likewise contain metapoetic overtones—but rather to illustrate the full range of significance attributed to these spatial discourses.27 In Propertius’ third book Calliope distinguishes between elegy and epic through movement and space. After telling the speaker to forget about horses, battles, and slaughters in Germany and Boeotia (3.3.43-46), the muse defines an elegiac project substantially in terms of the doorway: “But rather you will sing crowned lovers at another’s doorway, and the drunken signs of nocturnal delay” (*quippe coronatos alienum ad limen amantes/ nocturnaeque canes ebria signa morae*, 3.3.47-8). The difference between doorways and external travels, between doorways in Rome and battlefields in Germany, not only defines lovers against soldiers but also elegy against epic. But although epic

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24 Ovid being Ovid, this likely is meant to be at least partially humorous, but it nevertheless raises real questions about how we identify difference and its limits. On *militia amoris*, see especially Kennedy 1993: 51ff.

25 For a fuller discussion of this poem, and contrast, see pages 62-71. Notably, this contrast does not involve military travel, but trade and the mercantile pursuit of profit.

26 For more on the complexities of this final gesture in a complex poem, see pages 70-1.

27 For the tendency of metapoetic commentary to infuse representations of characters and events in elegy, see especially Wyke 1987.
is the obvious generic comparison, it is not the only one. Ovid’s personified Elegy, competing against Tragedy, invokes the vigil *topos* of fixing verses to the door as part of her defining accomplishments: “Or how often I have hung nailed to hard doors, without fear of being read by the people passing by” (*vel quotiens foribus duris illisa pependi, / non verita a populo praetereunte legi*, 3.1.53-4). Propertius’ announcement of an intended journey to Greece (3.21) and farewell to Cynthia’s threshold (3.25.9-10) are widely read as a declaration of his intention to move on to non-elegiac poetics, although he does not offer a singular or clear poetic alternative.²⁸ To leave the threshold behind is to leave behind the entire poetics of the doorway—to leave elegy.²⁹ To move and travel abroad is to write something else.

In these dichotomies between lover and non-lover, the speakers regularly imagine, both explicitly and implicitly, how others will see and interpret their placement in the doorway and the travels of other men. This is to say that, as they include vigils as symbols of wider differences between themselves and others, they represent these external others as an intended audience of their vigil. Elegy’s boast that she is read in the doorways by bystanders offers one of the more overt examples, as her declaration that she does not fear public reading acknowledges that it might reasonably be feared, and also emphasizes the importance of the public audience for the ostensibly private elegiac poetics. Propertius and Tibullus offer somewhat more subtle interpolations of external audiences. When Propertius asserts that Aquilo will not see his sails, he implicitly frames his vigil as a visible and interpretable endeavor. Aquilo may not observe him, but Romans on the street will. By comparing his vigil to the triumphal spoils in Messalla’s doorway, Tibullus likewise depicts his vigil as directed to an external audience. Identifying himself as a *ianitor* further envisions the vigil as creating a relationship with outsiders rather than as an attempt to get inside.³⁰

But even as elegiac authors use the images of the vigil and travel to publicly mark the lines between lover and other Romans, between elegy and other literary endeavors, they also use them to explore the possibility of movement across those lines. Propertius’ repeated threats to travel as a means of escaping love and love poetry offer an immediate example; if the lover is defined by his immobility in the doorway, Propertius can cease to be a lover by doing the opposite, by moving through non-elegiac spaces. Conversely, both Propertius and Tibullus use the threat of woe-filled vigils as a way of assimilating either unruly lovers or anti-elegiac figures into a kind of ‘orthodox’ erotic perspective.³¹ Unelegiac men are imagined falling victim to love, ending up powerless in a doorway, without any hope of entrance. Propertius 1.4, for instance, draws a comparison between the speaker, dedicated to one woman, and Bassus, who encourages seeing multiple partners. The speaker warns that Cynthia will ensure that Bassus “will, alas, be welcome in no doorway” (*heu nullo limine carus eris*, 22). Bassus’ punishment for trying to lure the speaker away from Cynthia is that he will be doomed to his own unhappy vigils. He will in

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²⁸ E.g., Jacobson 1976, Clarke 2004. For a further discussion of 3.21, see pages 71-75.
²⁹ In a typically Propertian move, reports of his departure turn out to have been greatly exaggerated.
³⁰ The *servitium amoris* theme of course also does work to structure the lover’s relationship with the *domina*, for which see especially McCarthy 1998. However, the specific servile position of the *ianitor* is notable in that it also precisely mediates between those outside the house those inside, and in this case, it sets aside the importance or hope of getting inside.
³¹ Prop. 1.4.22, 1.5.13, 1.9.28 and Tib. 1.2.89-95.
effect be made more like the faithful lover. In the very next poem, Propertius takes this idea a step further: warning Gallus away from Cynthia, he imagines Gallus running to his threshold (a, mea contemptus quotiens ad limina currens, 1.5.13) singing complaints (querenti, 17). Gallus’ enslavement to Cynthia will actually facilitate his desire for the speaker; however, unlike Cynthia, the speaker will not lock Gallus out, but join him in shared lamentation. The two men end weeping together in a mutual embrace (29-30). Ellen Oliensis argues that “Propertius has transformed his rival into a mirror image of himself.” Thus, although apparently posed as a warning, the poem also suggests that by learning “what sort of a thing it is to go home after being denied entrance” (discere et exclusum quid sit abire domum 20) Gallus can become like the speaker, and can in fact gain intimacy with other lovers. In both of these examples, the vigil differentiates the Propertian speaker from other young men who are not engaged in the same kind of all-consuming affairs as he is, but also allows for their assimilation. By taking up a post in the doorway, by visibly living the life of erotic failure, they too can become like the lover, and unlike other Roman men.

While travel and the vigil can mark the successful transformation of lovers into non-lovers and vice versa, they can also identify those who do not belong. In Tibullus 1.2, the speaker attacks a man laughing at him by warning that he has seen those who mock youthful love be subjected in old age to the hardships of love, including the vigil: “nor refrain in shame from standing before the doors” (Stare nec ante fores puduit, 95). Although this old man engages in the same behaviors as the speaker—who is, after all, in the midst of a nocturnal vigil himself—his age makes erotic adventures inappropriate and shameful. The speaker threatens his interlocutor with this unsavory future, but also makes the argument that his vigil is actually an appropriate and correct manifestation of his life. When performed by the old man, the vigil appears as a displaced signifier, the indicator of an identity to which the old man can no longer properly belong. Similarly, the final poem of Propertius’ third book uses the vigil to differentiate between himself and Cynthia. As he bids adieu to the vigil, and the life and poetics it represents, he wishes a life full of vigils for Cynthia, but in doing so highlights how inappropriately she will fill the role of lover. In particular, she will be an old woman, an anus (3.25.16), complete with white hair and wrinkles (3.25.12-14). Thus, although participation in the vigil can facilitate mutual understanding through shared experience, its attribution to figures who do not fit the traditional mold of lover can also accentuate the ways that they do not belong.

The programmatic use of the contrast between vigils and travel, and vigils and triumphs, places all three of these tropes at the center of questions about what elegy is, what it means to be

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32 Peter Heslin’s theory that Bassus is in fact a pseudonym for Horace adds additional flavor to this interaction (2011). If true, then this poem is playing with the distinction between Horace as someone who writes erotic poetry, but not in an exclusive way, and Propertius, who is actively defining himself through this pinpointed focus on erotics. It is worth recalling that whether it originates with Gallus or Propertius, the idea of narrowly defining an entire corpus of work around love for one woman seems to have been rather unusual (compare, for instance, the varied corpus of Catullus).

33 1997: 158.

34 For further discussion of this poem, see 30-34.

35 For more the risks of aging for the puella, see James 2003, Gardner 2013.

36 Kennedy’s comments on metaphor are applicable to the phenomenon of the displaced vigil: “the use of any term involves the simultaneous projection of ‘sameness’ and ‘difference’: if something is ‘like’, sameness is asserted, but not total identity—that is difference is also asserted” (1993: 53-4).
an elegiac lover, and also how elegiac lovers relate to unelegiac others. Immobility and movement are used to define the boundary between elegy and not-elegy, but also, as I have begun to show above, to test the permeability of that boundary. To what extent is being a lover defined by the performance of the behaviors of being a lover, like vigils? To what extent is it based on internal, inalterable characteristics, like the feeling of love? How do societies collectively read identities, and how stable are those categories?

The Social Implications of Generic Space

Part of the programmatic effectiveness of these tropes lies in their tropic nature, in the reiterations of these scenarios and symbols across corpora and authors. This repetitiousness, moreover, helps to create one of the defining tensions of elegy, between its generic quality and its specificity, and has sometimes led to these tropes being overlooked in scholarly analyses. The romantic travails of elegiac poetry are set in the historically specific moment of the poets’ present but the experiences and settings of elegiac poetry often feel generic and timeless. This tension between specificity and generality is also apparent in the character of the speakers of elegiac poetry. Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid each write in the first-person under their own names and seem to demand that we read these poems as the outpourings of their personal anguish and emotions. But their pose as pathetic young lover would also have been readily legible to Romans as a stock character that appears regularly in Roman literature, going back to the *adulescens* of Roman Comedy. Likewise, the genre is structured by these poetic tropes and *topoi* that ostensibly describe the specific, contemporary experiences of these elegiac speakers, but which through their reiterations and long literary history also carry a self-consciously fictional, ahistorical veneer. The repetition of these tropes both within and across the elegiac poets creates an almost wonderland quality, as these young lovers run through nearly the same scenarios over and over again, seemingly without end or evolution. The marked repetition of the same tropes across the three elegiac authors, moreover, reinforces their close alignment, as well as their separation from other poets and poetic traditions.

The tendency of elegiac speakers to assertively reject non-elegiac subjects as well as the representation of a fictionalized present has led to a widespread perception of elegy as set apart, almost hermetically sealed off from the world outside of elegy. Gian Biagio Conte has offered a particularly influential version of the argument articulating the exclusivity of elegy as a genre: “The elegiac poet…asserts that he is enclosed within part of the world (let us call it love for now) which seems to him to be self-sufficient and to contain in microcosm all that is necessary for a full life.” In Conte’s reading, references to traditional values occur only as appropriations and translations into an elegiac ideology, defined by the poet-lover’s limited point-of-view. While

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37 Particularly common are analyses of individual instantiations of tropes that show how this instance innovates upon the tired cliché. For examples, see my discussion of the vigil on pages 16-17.
38 And indeed, have even succeeded in provoking biographical readings from scholars, e.g., Griffin 1985.
40 On the peculiar temporality of Roman love elegy, see especially Gardner 2013.
41 Even poets and poetic traditions that make use of these tropes as well. This peculiarity is particularly distinctive with Catullus, whose love poetry bears marked similarities to that of the elegiac poets, but who does not present himself as part of this collective identity. Catullus 67, for instance, plays with the paraclusithyron trope, but rather than an eager lover, the interlocutor in the doorway is a curious gossip.
42 1994: 37
 Conte makes this argument in the context of a wider argument about genres—an argument, it must be noted, that reads elegy’s exclusivity as differing from other genres in scale rather than in kind—the sense of elegy as fundamentally set apart, and more, as actively separating itself from its context, appears also in more historicizing approaches to the genre.\textsuperscript{43} So more recently, Luke Roman argued that in their first books Propertius and Tibullus, along with Vergil’s \textit{Eclogues} and Horace’s \textit{Satires} 1, “strive to create a world apart from the chaos that surrounds them, even as they recognize that their own powers to do so are limited and that any autonomy they achieve may be short-lived and dependent on the whim of those in power.”\textsuperscript{44} These early elegiac books appear to be defined precisely by their struggle to remain outside of the public square, by their unwillingness to engage with other perspectives and poetics. Even as Roman situates elegiac resistance within the context of Late Republican conflict, and interrogates the dependence of Propertius and Tibullus on historical patrons, he nevertheless sees an impulse towards separation and isolation similar to that observed by Conte.

The programmatic spatial tropes are centrally implicated in this sense of elegy as a genre set apart, through their role in defining elegiac identity in contrast to a mainstream, through their generic repetition, which creates an experience of fictionality, and through their physical separation of lovers from non-lovers within these elegiac worlds. Indeed, the language of elegiac scholarship, which so often uses geographic images of worlds, boundaries, and retreats, already hints at the influence elegy’s representation of its physical world has had on our understanding of elegy as a genre. But if these tropes draw boundaries and define the category of lover in opposition to non-elegiac others, they do not represent a simple act of exclusion or opposition. As I have begun to show in the previous section, these tropes centered around immobility, departure and return, also explore the permeability of boundaries, geographic and ideological, as well as the challenges of living with such divisions. Far from creating a hermetically sealed-off elegiac world, these tropes function as the site of robust social negotiations, occurring on multiple levels simultaneously: between lovers and their non-elegiac communities, between lovers and other lovers, and between the elegiac poets who collectively engage in these tropes.

My readings of the elegiac spatial tropes find meaning in the repetitious, generic quality of elegy. The recurring motifs do not merely create a context for innovative riffs on clichés, nor do they isolate elegiac poetry from its contexts. Rather, the reiterations actively construct a shared identity for lovers within their poetic worlds, and help to construct a legible genre of love elegy for the historical poets. By programmatically deploying vigils, travel, and triumphs, the elegiac poets assert a collective identity and demand to be read together. But even within this close community, each poet maintains a clear sense of individuality and difference. Even as the shared participation in paraclausithyra in their first books declares their shared generic identity, it also makes the differences between the paraclausithyra, and their constructions of elegy, that much more apparent. The trope, thus, by its very nature is social and connective, drawing authors into conversation with each other and foregrounding the tension between individuality and collectivity.

\textsuperscript{43} Though there have also been several strands of elegiac scholarship in recent decades interested in how elegiac poetry actually upholds traditional power structures and values through its apparent subversion of them. See especially James 2003, Bowditch 2011, Keith 2014.
\textsuperscript{44} 2014: 27.
Inasmuch as the generic repetition of the spatial tropes creates a shared poetic space from which the nature of elegiac identity can be contested from within, the spatial quality of these tropes also puts the elegiac authors in conversation with broader cultural discourses about space and identity. Space is social, which is to say, that although there are objective realities to the physical world, the ways that we interpret and shape these physical realities are largely culturally determined and subjective. In the last several decades, analyses of space, movement, and their representations have proliferated within Roman studies, exploring how Romans performed, contested, and shaped values and power through the manipulation of space and movement and literary representations of it.\textsuperscript{45} And, more specifically, the spaces and movements of concern in the vigil, propempticon, and triumph, were all socially charged ones in Roman culture. Elite families performed their prominence through visual cues around the doorway (like the triumphal spoils mentioned above), and performed normative relations with their peers and the rest of Roman society through its openness and accessibility. Questions about the meaning and impact of travel on Roman citizens, and their Romanness, abound in Roman moralizing literature, and in particular with reference to the consequences of reincorporating soldiers who have spent time abroad.\textsuperscript{46}

Moreover, these questions were particularly salient during the time period when the elegiac poets are writing. The genre of Roman love elegy flourished for a peculiarly brief span of time, approximately fifty years, from roughly 45BCE-2CE.\textsuperscript{47} These years coincide with one of the most tumultuous and transformational periods of Roman history: the death of Julius Caesar and ensuing civil wars, the triumvirate and its ensuing civil conflicts, and the rise of Augustus, with his religious, cultural, and political revolution.\textsuperscript{48} As the elegists wrote about their long nights in doorways and abhorrence for travel, the very fabric of Roman social and political life were being renegotiated, often violently, and regularly through spatial discourses. In my individual chapters I will draw out in more detail the specific resonances between elegiac spatial tropes and Roman discourses around the doorway, travel, and triumphal returns, but here I would like to draw out two larger scale transformative trends during the time that are relevant for elegy’s spatial dynamics. Kristina Milnor has shown how representations of domestic space during the Augustan period reflect contestations and transformations in how Romans conceptualized the gendered spaces of the home, and in particular, made “domestic life…the

\textsuperscript{45} It would be impossible to cite all of the voluminous scholarship that might fall under this category, but particularly influential studies for my own thinking include, Wallace-Hadrill 1988, Edwards 1996, Milnor 2005, Hudson 2013, Russell 2016.

\textsuperscript{46} See, e.g., Livy 39.6.7; Polyb. 31.25; Sall. Cat. 10.

\textsuperscript{47} Dating the elegiac books is extremely difficult and debates rage on. The dating of the first and last canonical elegiac works, of Gallus and Ovid respectively, offer extreme though distinct challenges. Gallus suffers from a lack of evidence. Only ten odd fragmentary lines have survived, and contemporary testimony is minimal. On the whole, it seems most likely that his reference to Caesar’s campaigns refers to Gaius Julius Caesar rather than Octavian, and that his four books of love poetry date from approximately 45-43 BCE (see especially Anderson, Parsons, and Nisbet 1979: 151-5, Hollis 2007: 243; cf. Hutchinson 1981, who instead dates them to 35-33 BCE). Ovid, on the contrary, suffers from an overabundance of contradictory evidence presented by the ever-unreliable Ovid himself. According to Ovid’s preface to the \textit{Amores}, he wrote a five book edition early in his career (perhaps in the late twenties or teens), before revising down to the three book edition that has survived, which seems to have been published after the \textit{Ars Amatoria} and \textit{Remedia Amoris}, sometime between 7BCE and 2CE. However, there is some reason to be skeptical of Ovid’s claims (Barchiesi 1988). For a thorough explanation of the evidence and difficulties of dating the \textit{Amores}, see McKeown 1987: 74-89.

\textsuperscript{48} This correlation has long piqued the interest of scholars; see, e.g., Miller 9-32.
central space around which the rest of civic life might be built.” The increasing consolidation of power around Augustus’ household made the inner workings of households a public concern. Questions about the proper functioning of households, about the implications of private and public spaces for gender and identity, were being worked out across Roman society during this time period. Similarly, mobility was a particularly charged issue and undergoing significant discursive shifts during this time period. Elena Isayev has argued that mobility, in various forms, was more common than has been generally supposed, and that conceptions of it altered dramatically over the course of the 1st century BCE. Combining demographic and literary evidence, Isayev argues for a fundamental shift in the Late Republic “as a more absolute conception of space came to the fore, privileging fixedness to particular sites. It vied with the more fluid, relational approach. This was uninterested in defining place spatially, but preferred to see it as a site of convergence of life-pathways conducted through time and space.”

While Isayev is more inclined to include elegiac authors within this “more absolute conception of space” than I am, the historical context both of prevalent mobility and shifting attitudes form an important backdrop for elegy’s programmatic contrasts between mobility and immobility.

In seeking to better understand how the programmatic spatial tropes of elegy engage in both generically and historically grounded discourses, I contribute to a growing scholarly interest within elegiac studies on how elegy responds to and represents the physical world. One significant trend within spatial analyses of elegy has been to examine elegiac responses to Augustus’ building projects and the changing Roman cityscape. Perhaps most prominently in this category, Tara Welch has analyzed how Propertius’ fourth book responds to Augustus’ rebuilding of the city, specifically through representations and etiologies of public monuments. This work has offered important insight into elegiac interest in and response to the changing Roman landscape, but can tell us less about elegy as a genre, given that monuments and identifiable locations in Rome feature infrequently in most of the elegiac corpora. There have been a few recent studies examining the dynamics of elegiac retreats or travel, but none that approach these spatial tropes in their fullness—that is, not just a single poem or instance, but a wide view of the instantiations of a trope—and in relation to each other. A reevaluation of these tropes which so fundamentally structure the imaginary spaces of elegy is thus overdue in the contemporary discussions of elegiac worlds.

A Plurality of Elegiac Worlds

One of the major through-lines of my dissertation is the diversity within elegy and the ways in which the close alignment of the elegiac poets allows them to explore substantial differences in how they understand their place in the world. In emphasizing these intrageneric differences, I am to some degree reading against the grain of elegy and the insistency these poets that love elegy represents a coherent, self-evident category. Moreover, I argue their differences are not incidental or merely stylistic, but rather concern fundamental questions about the

49 2005: 3.
50 2017: 8.
51 2005. For other analyses of elegiac responses to the cityscape, see Boyle 2003, Keith 2015b, MacDonald 2016.
52 Propertius Book 4 and Ovid’s Ars Amatoria represent the obvious counterexamples, and have consequently attracted a disproportionate amount of scholarly attention on elegiac space.
54 An insistence further belied by the newness of the genre.
experience of living as an elegiac lover: the degree to which an elegiac lover can assimilate while maintaining his elegiac identity, whether it is desirable, or even safe, to live openly as an elegiac lover, to what extent being an elegiac lover represents a real identity at all. In emphasizing these substantial divergences within the genre, I differ from scholars who accept an essentially coherent and singular genre, albeit with some distinctive elements between authors. So, for instance, Sharon James treats “elegy itself as a nearly conscious creator of poetry, rather than as a collection of texts written by poets” and argues that Ovid’s more overt elegiac poetry can act as a key to decoding some of the genre’s mysteries.\(^5\) My analysis instead emphasizes the contested and unstable nature of love elegy as a category. Ovid’s readings and representations of elegy can give us access to precisely that, his take on the genre, a take that differs markedly from that of his predecessors, as indeed their interpretations differ from each other. There is no singular, preexisting elegiac world.

Propertius and Tibullus offer substantially different visions of how identity is constituted and how lovers, can, or should, relate to the non-elegiac community that they live within. Propertius, particularly in his first book of poetry, emphasizes the importance of the external manifestations of elegiac identity. To be a lover is to do the things lovers do—to stay put, as he instructs fellow lovers to do in 1.1, to write songs of erotic persuasion to a mistress (1.7.5-7), to spend your days in a narrow bed or a hard doorway (1.6.32, 1.16.17-44)—and to be seen to do these things by others, so that they can correctly interpret your identity. To engage in unelegiac endeavors or unelegiac poetry risks altering your perspective, and how others interpret your identity. However, even as Propertius emphasizes the importance of these signifiers of elegiac identity, he also explores their unreliability and vulnerability to misinterpretation. In his later books, especially Book 3, Propertius increasingly explores the possibilities of taking elegy outside of Rome and erotic contexts through the emotional experiences elegy shares with other types of poetry and identities.

Tibullus offers a radically different framework for thinking about elegiac identity and experience than that of Propertius’ early poetry. While Propertius struggles to make elegiac identity legible to his wider community, Tibullus represents himself as engaged in a much more ambivalent relationship with the world he inhabits. Tibullus’ lover highlights the physical dangers and circumscribed choices he experiences as a member of a marginal identity. Where Propertius’ lover at times rather aggressively performs elegiac identity, Tibullus often represents his speaker performing assimilation to mainstream culture. He goes to war (1.3) and unreservedly celebrates his patron’s triumph (1.7), actions which Propertius represents as antithetical to an elegiac identity. But for Tibullus’ lover, they are necessary concessions that do not fundamentally compromise the lover’s identity. Rather, the lover’s ability to bend to external pressures and pass in mainstream culture, even as he continues to see the world through an elegiac lens and to seek his own erotic goals, is precisely what defines the elegiac experience.

Finally, Ovid represents a third and further distinct case. Propertius and Tibullus, in their constructions of elegy as a genre and their elegiac worlds, are fundamentally interested in questions of how members of marginal identities relate to and communicate with the communities they inhabit. Although Propertius and Tibullus offer different answers over how identity is constructed—and in particular the consequences of assimilation and the dangers of

\(^{55}\) 2003: 31-2.
being seen—both nevertheless seek to understand their speaker’s identity through his relationship with a wider, non-elegiac community. The spatial tropes of Propertius and Tibullus negotiate the lover’s place both geographically and socially in a world that does not reflect his values. This is not the case with Ovid’s use of spatial tropes. Rather, Ovid seems far more interested in negotiating his relationship to his elegiac predecessors than with any non-elegiac community. This is evident in his selective use of spatial tropes: while he does include a paraclausithyron in his first book, the *Amores* contains only one propempticon in the second book, and this propempticon cuts out any non-elegiac rival, instead using this trope, which in Propertius and Tibullus negotiates this boundary between elegy and non-elegy, as an internally oriented meditation on elegiac aesthetics. Perhaps most tellingly of all, the *Amores* contains no poetic representation of a literal triumph, only the allegorical triumphs of love. For Ovid, the latecomer to the genre, his relationship with the poetic genre is a greater source of concern than any relationship with outsiders.

The Itinerary

My dissertation, in its exploration of elegiac space and movement, follows a roundtrip journey, beginning in the doorway with the lover’s vigil before taking flight across the Mediterranean, and finally returning to the streets of Rome with the triumphal celebration.

In my first chapter, I reexamine the paraclausithyron, the lover’s vigil in the doorway. Scholars have tended to read this programmatic trope in terms of how it represents the dynamics of unrequited desire. I instead show that it draws upon the traditional role of doorways in elite self-presentation in republican Rome. In light of this connection, the lover’s laments in the doorway should be viewed not only as persuasion directed at the beloved within, but also as a performance of identity directed towards external audiences. By dramatizing both the performance of identity in the doorway and misrecognition of it by other figures, elegiac poets raise questions about the stability of identity and its dependence on external characteristics. Moreover, close readings of Propertius 1.16, Tibullus 1.2, and *Amores* 1.6, reveal how the three poets conceptualize the performance of their identity, and its significance, in markedly different ways: Propertius focuses on the challenges of either truly knowing or successfully communicating one’s identity in a world ruled by subjective experience, while Tibullus instead highlights the physical dangers of being recognized as a lover and the need to disappear from the view of a hostile unelegiac world. Ovid, by contrasting the lover with an actual slave and depicting the end of his vigil, emphasizes the artificiality of this elegiac identity and its ultimate compatibility with mainstream society.

My second chapter looks at elegiac propemptica. Elegiac poets typically use this trope to convey the lover’s distaste for travel. However, I show that in their rejections of travel Propertius, Ovid, and Tibullus advance very different ideas about their own power to resist the demands of the real world and about what it would mean to acquiesce to the demands of mainstream culture by traveling abroad. In Propertius’ first book, the paired propemptica 1.6 and 1.8 use contrasting interpretations of journeys to show how subjective experience is shaped by physical realities and specific points-of-view, making the lover’s physical station in *Rome* essential to his existence as a lover. 3.7 and 3.21, however, return to and test this idea, exploring the possibilities of elegiac emotional experiences outside of Rome, and even outside erotic...
contexts. Tibullus’s propempticon, 1.3, through a careful melding of Odyssean references and elegiac motifs, offers a model for how elegiac figures can yield to mainstream demands, and travel abroad on campaign, while still maintaining a distinctively elegiac outlook and identity. Finally, in *Amores* 2.10, instead of wrestling with the pressures of the external world, through extensive references to the propemptica of his predecessors, Ovid reflects on the pressures of writing within a genre, with its potential for both tedium and creative union.

These differences in how the elegiac poets conceptualize their relationship to their world, both social and geographic, also inform their triumphal poems, in which the poets confront the figure of the soldier returning to Rome. In my third chapter, I analyze how elegiac poets negotiate questions of identity and their relationship to mainstream culture by looking at elegiac responses to triumphs, which at least ostensibly center traditional Roman masculinity. I argue that Propertius and Tibullus both adopt and disrupt triumphal representational strategies, in particular through representations of foreign geographies and manipulations of the triumphal route through the city. Propertius and Tibullus redirect the path of the triumph in ways that allow the poet-lover to benefit from and thrive amidst Roman imperialism. For Tibullus this means using the triumph and Roman conquest to create a Roman cosmopolitanism that allows the lover to survive, contribute, and thrive under the radar, amongst many other marginal identities. For Propertius, the triumph instead offers an opportunity for the elegiac lover to assertively shape public narratives around elegy, just as generals do around conquest. Ovid, in contrast, includes no representations of historical triumphs in his *Amores*, instead translating the ritual into entirely elegiac terms in the triumph of love. This omission is reflective of Ovid’s focus, in the *Amores* at least, on his relationship to other elegiac poets rather than on his relationship to a broader unelegiac community.
Lovers in the Streets: The Elegiac Vigil and its Public Audiences

Introduction

There is perhaps no more paradigmatic image of elegy than that of the vigil. It appears across the corpora of Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid, but more significantly, the figure of the lover in the doorway operates as a powerful symbol, encapsulating an entire lifestyle of reaching for the unattainable. The anguish and zeal of the lover in the face of the immoveable obstacle embodied by the door represent concretely an entire life of obsession, futility, and lamentation. In this vein, Francis Copley calls the vigil “the chief, and the most characteristic manifestation and symptom of love.”¹ Focusing specifically on Propertius, Jeri Debrohn similarly views the vigil as the ultimate expression of elegiac experience, but also as a metapoetic representation of composition: “the exclusus amator was not merely one theme among many, but rather the characteristic theme used by Propertius to define the dynamics of not only his affair with Cynthia but of love itself and, perhaps most importantly, of the poetic process of elegiac composition.”² Pietro Pucci argues that the limen, the threshold upon which the exclusus amator lies, is a central metaphor of elegy, as the elegiac lover constantly reaches for a presence that remains eternally just out of reach.³ These readings of the vigil, although divergent in their interests, all base the importance of the vigil in its ability to illustrate truths about the experience of the elegiac speaker as both poet and lover.

But if there is agreement that the vigil is central to elegy, there is also a pervasive sense that it is a tired theme, an undesirable inheritance that elegiac authors must spruce up through innovation. Scholars regularly refer to the vigil in openly disparaging terms—a “hackneyed theme,”⁴ “an erotic motif whose possibilities had been pretty well exhausted,”⁵ “perfunctory”⁶—to say nothing of the more coded characterizations of it as a “quite regular and conventional type”⁷ or a “traditional literary theme,”⁸ inevitably contrasted with the “new twists”⁹ or an “original and ingenious idea”¹⁰ brought to bear in the instance a scholar is addressing. Sharon James’ evaluation of the generic, repetitious nature of the vigil gets to the heart of the critique:

So expected and standardized are these postures and behaviors [the vigil, militia amoris, and servitium amoris] that...they sometimes appear to be offered up in elegy almost as a receipt—a proof to the puella that another elegiac graduation requirement has been fulfilled (e.g., the garland, the empty bottle of wine, and the

¹ 1956: 70.
² 2003: 127.
³ “…the poet’s representation of his love affairs emerges as the production brought forth by endless transgressions and detours aiming at coming closer and closer to the presence and fulfillment. But this line, as LIMEN, withdraws ceaselessly, for it always retraces its ambivalent, undecidable track” (1978: 55).
⁴ Canter 1920: 365.
⁵ Jones 1992: 308.
⁶ James 2003: 133.
⁹ Id.
¹⁰ McKay 1956: 18.
poem left at her door). As a result, the instances of these elegiac topoi can seem perfunctory, not only to the puella but to the reader as well, a quality that further reveals the disingenuities of Roman love elegy, which sometimes gives the impression of being formulaic while claiming to express uncontrollable passion spontaneously.¹¹

James here asserts explicitly what often lurks implicitly in discussions of the vigil, that poet-lovers must engage in it precisely in order to demonstrate that they are elegiac poet-lovers.¹² Although James is primarily concerned with the speaker’s efforts to demonstrate to the puella specifically that he is a lover, the same notion animates more genre-oriented analyses, which likewise tend to explain the vigil away as prerequisite proof of writing elegy. From this perspective the vigil and its accoutrements can be easily explained away as compulsory evidence of the lover’s elegiac bona fides for both the puella and readers.

But the idea of “generic necessity” does not satisfactorily explain the role of the vigil in elegy or its prominence. After all, Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid are not writing within a clearly delineated and established genre, but rather are actively inventing one, albeit with reference to established genres.¹³ The apparently inseparable association between elegy and the vigil was by no means a foregone conclusion at the moment when Propertius and Tibullus wrote their first books of poetry.¹⁴ There are other symbols, other ways of representing the tortured dynamics of desire. Incontrovertible evidence of this lies in the fact that we actually have love poetry, and even elegiac poetry, that contains no references to doorways and vigils—most notably, the poetry of Sulpicia and her circle.¹⁵ It bears further consideration, then, why these three authors choose to return to this “hackneyed theme,” and make it central to the self-representation of their poetic projects.

In this chapter, I argue that the focus on the lover’s exclusion from the house, and on his relationship with the absent puella, has obscured equally important dynamics in the elegiac vigil that help to account for its prominence. Specifically, I show that the elegiac poets explicitly draw on and manipulate elite modes of self-presentation in the doorway, and in particular the use of the doorway to negotiate the relationship between individual and society. The vigil plays not only to the harsh mistress within the house, but like the doorways of elite households, it also

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¹¹ 2003: 132.
¹² The notion of receipts and proof accords well with Copley’s description of the vigil as a “manifestation and symptom”—that is, concrete, external indications of what is otherwise internal and unknown.
¹³ Gallus, likely writing in the mid-40s (see Introduction note 47 for further discussion of the problems dating his poetry), was apparently the first love elegist. Roman love elegy draws on authors and traditions as diverse as Hellenistic epigram, Roman comedy, Callimachus, Catullus, and Vergil, but is nevertheless new and distinct from all that came before. It is one of the peculiar features of elegiac poetry, that even as its authors are creating this innovative genre, they maintain the pretense that it is a preexisting, stable category.
¹⁴ Although the situation is rather different for Ovid, composed and published his love poetry some ten to twenty years after Propertius and Tibullus. Additionally, it is worth recalling that the adulescens of Roman comedy, who is often (justifiably) invoked as the direct predecessor of the elegiac lover, is not so much defined by the act of the vigil (which occurs only rarely in comedy) as by a more general state of desire and helplessness. For more on the relationship between comedy and elegy, see James 1998 and 2003.
¹⁵ It is also impossible to be certain of the role of the vigil in the poetry of Gallus. Catullus, a slightly more distant forefather of the genre, also manages to convey his desire, (alleged) powerlessness, and obsession without using the vigil as proof or central symbol (though he does include a poem centered around a speaking door, 67).
plays to external audiences—to Romans on the street, to the rest of Roman society more broadly, and to readers. If the lover’s position in the doorway represents his alienation from his beloved, it also represents a public and very visibly ambivalent position with respect to the rest of Roman society. The vigil is one of the tools that elegiac speakers use to position themselves as part of a counter-cultural minority group and to depict this identity and its differences from the majority as “prediscursive”—as natural and obvious, grounded in immutable physical realities, even as they are in fact socially produced. The visibility of the vigil to other Romans, its ability to communicate to other Romans that the speakers are lovers and therefore different, apart, often appears to be more important than any mistress inside. But even as elegiac speakers embrace the vigil as a clear marker of their difference, Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid each deploy the vigil in ways that suggest the challenges of successfully communicating identity, particularly to those not part of your community. Lovers in the doorway face the limiting forces of subjective interpretation, misinterpretation, and even time. By focusing on the vigil’s external orientation, I show that it not only reflects the elegiac experience, but interrogates the very processes of creating and communicating that experience within a social context. Furthermore, differences in how authors treat the vigil reveal significant divergences in how they imagine the nature of identity and the relationship between individual and society, as well as poet and reader.

My argument contains two parts. First, I offer a historical overview of the domestic doorway’s role in mediating the relationship between Roman elites and the rest of Roman society, arguing both that this function of the doorway was deeply embedded in the symbolic meaning of doorways for Romans and drawing out specific precedents with which elegiac authors explicitly engage. Then I analyze how the three fully rendered paraclausithyra, Propertius 1.16, Tibullus 1.2, and Amores 1.6, negotiate inclusion and exclusion from the category of poet-lover, as well as wider Roman society. The fact that all three authors include explicit, fully rendered paraclausithyra in their first books of erotic poetry—and nowhere else in their corpora—further implicates the vigil in questions of group inclusion and exclusion. These three paraclausithyra perform poetic participation in the larger group of love-poets, but also, through the process of adaptation, explore their differences. A close analysis of all three paraclausithyra shows that they do not merely offer elegiac “receipts,” but rather dramatize discursive processes of communicating and interpreting one’s own identity and that of others. To read these poems from an internal orientation—as primarily about desire—or as solitary laments misses an essential part of what they are doing. The three paraclausithyra in fact devote the majority of their space not to appeals to their hard-hearted mistresses, but rather to confrontations between lovers and unelegiac figures, standing in for some other element of Roman society. These poems use the doorway to explore a question regularly worked out in Roman doorways: how the relationship between private individual and wider public is managed and negotiated. In one of the apparently most clear and definite assertions of elegiac identity, all three authors examine the fragility of that identity, the ease with which socially—or poetically—constructed difference can disappear.

The Door in Context

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16 Butler 1990: 11.
17 This anxiety is not isolated to elegiac poets, but rather animates Roman society more broadly. So Roman masculinity was simultaneously viewed a natural, inborn trait, and also a quality that could be undermined or even lost through failure to behave sufficiently like a man (Gleason 1995: 55-81).
The use of the doorway in elegy to assert identity and to control—or attempt to control—external perception emerges out of and in conversation with the social functions of the doorway in Roman culture. The doorway’s ambiguity, belonging neither properly to inside or outside but connecting the two, makes it a natural focal point in the management of the relationship between those inside and those outside. Even in contemporary American culture wreaths, quirky doormats, and “no solicitors” signs are common indications of the character of those within and the reception a visitor might expect. For Roman elite, the importance of the doorway, as both entry-point and space for articulating a relationship with the external world, was significantly greater than for contemporary Americans. Roman elites mediated their relationship with the wider citizen body through their houses, which were themselves semi-public spaces. Consequently, the doorways of these houses, and in particular visual cues on and around them, helped shape public narratives about the household as a whole. In this section, I offer an overview of this social function of the doorway in Roman life and also draw out how displays in and around the doorway could prompt anxiety among Romans about performance and authenticity.

In focusing on the doorway’s function as a performative space, I differ from previous attempts to situate the vigil in a cultural context, which have primarily focused around the limen’s ambiguity and associations with transition/transgression. Pietro Pucci and Jeri Debrohun offer the two most prominent such readings. Both preface their discussions of vigils by exploring the role of the limen in Roman rituals, including weddings (as the bride anoints the hinges and is carried over the threshold), and draw out the doubleness of the doorway with its connection to the two-headed god Janus. The doorway also features in the transitional moments of familial mourning (when the door would be closed) and triumphs (a final procession would accompany the conquering general to his doorway, together with spoils that would mark his house out for all time). In the public life of the state, the closing of the doors of the Temple of Janus would demarcate the transition from war to peace. Even with this cursory list, it is clear that the doorway was—quite naturally—associated with the ambiguity of transitions and the management of transgressions. However, this focus on the liminality of the threshold as a cultural backdrop for the elegiac vigil has left unexplored the door’s role as social mediator, which recent scholarship in Roman domestic architecture and culture has shown to be a crucial aspect of the door’s role in Roman life and the Roman imagination.

The semi-public nature of elite Roman houses involved domestic doorways in the daily processes of locating elite families within Roman social and political life. Since Wallace-Hadrill’s seminal article on the social function of Roman houses, scholars have explored how the

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18 The American front yard probably offers a closer approximation to the communicative power of the Roman door, as a space belonging to the family, visually accessible to the public, and widely used to convey identity and negotiate relationships with the external world—prominently achievement of the “American dream” and (non)conformity. The American front yard also offers an interesting example of the bilateral nature of communication possible in these public/private spaces. Although the family inside mostly controls the messaging of the lawn, outsiders can also intervene in highly visible ways, e.g., by toilet-papering the front yard.


21 On the general’s procession back home, see Beard 2007: 29-30; on the visual impact of elite houses (and in particular Augustus’), see Wiseman 1987.
houses of elite Romans defy clear categories of private and public, rather acting as important spaces of social, political, and economic activity. Contrary to contemporary Western custom, the house doors of elite Roman families typically remained open throughout the day, allowing both access and visibility. Clients and friends freely entered the atrium to conduct their business with the master of the house; passersby could glance inside and catch a glimpse of the business being conducted. Although entrance to the atrium was widely accessible, this did not mean unrestricted access to the entirety of the house: series of doors secluded spaces only intended for friends and family, or only family. This gradated access to domestic houses reflected a consensus that although some of the work of the state might be done in private homes, those spaces should be correspondingly open to the public.

Indeed, the openness of elite doorways and the visibility that they provided became closely associated with civic virtue during the Republic. Domestic visibility could offer apparently concrete evidence of integrity. In one demonstrative example, Marcus Livius Drusus, tribune of the plebs in 91 BCE, allegedly instructed his architect to build his home so that whatever he did could be seen by all. Cicero seems to point to a similar ethos when he proclaimed that his house was “in sight of nearly the whole city,” although the conspicuousness that demonstrated his own probity perversely also gave Clodius a wider audience in his “redecoration” of Cicero’s house. Conversely, conducting business in fully private parts of the house, far from the doorway and atrium, was often associated with treachery and treason. So, when Catiline collected his adherents, he did so in “a private room of the house…with all witnesses removed at a distance.” Thus, open doors, and the view they provided, visually represented both the virtue of inhabitants and normative relationships between elites and the rest of the population, which could be subverted by closed doors and secretive undertakings.

Likewise, many of the rituals based in the doorway not only negotiate transitions, but also advertise them and manage the consequently altered relationship between inside and outside. The closed door after a death in the family might sequester the family while they confront the passage of a loved one, but would also immediately let outsiders know of the family tragedy and temporarily redefine the relationship between the family and the outside world: for the time being, the family was not available, was not engaging with other Romans. Tacitus gestures to both the semantic force of closed doors (as well as other forms of public mourning), and the possibility that such signs could be dislocated from the realities they were supposed to represent in his depiction of public mourning following news of Germanicus’ death (Ann. 2.82). Upon hearing of Germanicus’ fatal illness, the people abandon public business and close up their private residences in mourning (clauderentur domus). Tacitus immediately clarifies, however, that this ostentatious mourning was not for show (nihil compositum in ostentationem), but rather these outward signs (insignibus) corresponded to true internal feeling (altius animis).

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23 Wallace-Hadrill 1988: 46; see Livy 5.41.7, Tac. Ann. 2.82.
24 si quid in te artis est, ita compone domum meam, ut, quidquid agam, ab omnibus perspicci possit. Vell. Pat. ii.14.3.
26 Sall. Cat. 20: in abditam partem aedium secedit atque ibi omnibus arbitris procul amotis orationem huiusce modi habuit.
Tacitus raises through rejection the possibility that people might disingenuously put on the outward markers of mourning, presumably for political purposes. As an external signifier of unknown internal truths, doors could, potentially, be used to deceive.

Military spoils affixed above the doorway acted as another prominent form of display in the doorway, and one particularly significant to elegy. These spoils marked out households to all who passed by, thereby pulling them into a specific relationship with the house and its inhabitants. Although the precise history of the practice of displaying spoils in domestic doorways remains obscure, it was clearly a well-established practice by the second century BCE, and may date back to the fourth. The practice is perhaps most closely associated with triumphant generals, but common soldiers, especially in the middle Republic, also had opportunities to earn such public accolades. Authors describing decorated doorways tend to emphasize their visual prominence and the feeling they provoke in viewers. The Greek historian Polybius admiringly observes that spoils are displayed as “signs and proof of [a soldier’s] virtue” (σημεῖα ποιούμενοι καὶ μαρτύρια τῆς ἐμφανὸς ἀρετῆς, 6.39.10) and that fellow citizens “are called into rivalry in facing dangers and emulation” by such displays (ἐκκαλοῦντα πρὸς τὴν ἐν τοῖς κινδύνοις ἄμιλλαν καὶ ζῆλον, 6.39.8). The spoils communicate a message about the inhabitant’s bravery and virtue, but this characterization does not exist in a vacuum, but rather it places him in a specific relationship with his peers. He has excelled them, and now they must hope to match his deed in order to be distinguished as well. Because these spoils would remain fixed and unmoved so long as the house existed, they could continue to inspire patriotic admiration and envy in other Romans for centuries. When Suetonius describes the destruction of the Great Fire of 64 CE, he groups annihilation of “the houses of ancient generals still adorned with enemy spoils” together with that of ancient temples as particularly irredeemable losses.

And yet, as clear and concrete a proof of martial success as spoils appeared to be, this public performance also inspired some anxiety in Romans over the possibility that this external display might misrepresent the internal reality of the household. One quite early piece of evidence for this concern exists in the title for one of Cato the Elder’s lost speeches: “Do not let spoils be displayed unless taken from a captured enemy” (ne spolia figerentur nisi de hoste capta). Although it is difficult to know precisely what Cato is responding to without the speech itself, the title suggests that spoils ought to reflect military victory, but that instead spoils acquired through other means are misrepresenting the accomplishments of individual Romans. Although spoils seem to be a physical, objective proof, in fact they can easily be counterfeited, and it may be difficult for citizens on the street to distinguish between true and false displays.

27 hos vulgi sermones audita mors adeo incendit ut ante edictum magistratum, ante senatus consultum sumpto iustitio deserentur fora, clauderentur domus. passim silentia et gemitus, nihil compositum in ostentationem; et quamquam neque insignibus lugentium abstinerent, altius animis maerebant. 28 Mary Beard’s observation that “The triumph was about display and success—the success of display no less than the display of success” (2007: 31) is apt for the spoils in the doorway as well as for the parade itself. For ordinary soldiers’ use of spoils, see Rawson 1990: 584. 29 Rawson 1990: 585-6. 30 Ner. 38.2: domus priscorum ducum arserunt hostilibus adhuc spoliis adornatae deorumque aedes ab regibus ac deinde Punicis et Gallicis bellis uotae dedicataeque, et quidquid usendum atque memorabile ex antiquitate durauerat. Tacitus also lists losses of temples and “the treasures acquired by so many victories” (opes tot victoriis quaestae, Ann.15.41), which might include spoils in private domiciles, although he does not explicitly specify as Suetonius does. 31 ORF, fr. 97 = Cugusi, OR, fr. 71.
especially as the passage of time blurs the memories of the individuals involved.\textsuperscript{32} Furthermore, even if the original honoree acquired spoils correctly, the spoils in the doorway remained in place even if the occupants of the house moved, and so unworthy men could come to inhabit houses publicly marked for glory.\textsuperscript{33} Mary Beard has argued that Cicero’s impassioned lament over Antony’s misuse of Pompey’s house plays off of the emotional responses the house and its symbolic decorations created in viewers.\textsuperscript{34} Pliny addresses the tension between new owners and old triumphal spoils by offering the houses themselves independent agency: “the houses were celebrating triumphs eternally even with the masters changed.”\textsuperscript{35} The very permanence of the triumphal spoils in private doorways could create the problem of an external symbol that does not reflect internal realities.

The decoration of Augustus’ doorway—which clearly drew inspiration from the display of spoils, even as it stretched the possibilities of communication through the doorway—likewise offers a powerful example of the way that domestic doorways could mediate relationships between individual and community. In 27 BCE, in addition to endowing him with the title ‘Augustus,’ the Senate voted that Augustus’ doorway be adorned with two laurel trees and a \textit{corona civica}.\textsuperscript{36} The symbolic valences of these items and their placement were multilayered. Both the laurel trees and \textit{corona civica} clearly symbolize Augustus’ martial successes: the laurel trees both denote victory and evoke Augustus’ patron deity, Apollo, while the \textit{corona civica}, traditionally was awarded to soldiers who save the life of a comrade (although it was typically worn, not hung above a doorway).\textsuperscript{37} Furthermore, the closest analog of this adornment of a private citizen’s doorway to celebrate martial success is triumphal spoils. The use of a \textit{corona civica} and laurel trees instead of triumphal spoils avoids the awkwardness of reminding citizens that Augustus’ victories were over other Romans and also serves to distinguish Augustus from other successful generals, to suggest that he is something more. The \textit{corona civica} and laurel trees in the doorway achieve this distinction by visually referencing Roman temples. Laurel trees, in addition to indicating victory, adorned the doorways of several temples in Rome, and oak wreaths were also associated with Jupiter.\textsuperscript{38} Thus these door decorations, particularly in combination with the recent commingling of Augustus’ house with the Temple of Apollo, suggested the divine qualities of Augustus’ house and person.\textsuperscript{39} By incorporating religious iconography into the tradition of marking out the doorways of triumphant generals, the doorway of Augustus simultaneously represented him as part of longstanding traditions of Roman prestige, and also as rising above them into a realm of his own. It in effect instructed citizens on how to understand their relationship with a new type of public figure, the \textit{princeps}.

But even this extremely authoritative display in the doorway was subject to the interpretation of viewers and could be contested or misinterpreted. In the \textit{Tristia}, Ovid plays off

\begin{footnotes}
\item[32] Rawson 1990.
\item[33] See Rawson 1990 for more on the future lives of triumphal spoils.
\item[34] \textit{Phil.} 2.68; Beard 2007: 29-30.
\item[35] \textit{HN.} 35.7: \textit{triumphabantque etiam dominis mutatis aeternae domus}. This representation of the house as possessing triumphal prestige independent of the humans involved is similar to the way the door in Prop. 1.16 remembers its role in triumphal celebrations (1.16.1-4), which is to say, at the center of them.
\item[36] \textit{Res Gestae} 34: \textit{laureis postes aedium mearum vestiti publice coronae civica super ianuam meam fixa est}.
\item[37] Zanker 1990: 92-3; Pl. \textit{HN.} 15.39.
\item[38] Id.
\item[39] Zanker 1990; Milnor 2005: 47ff.
\end{footnotes}
of the ambiguities raised by this manipulation of religious and civic iconography in the doorway. In *Tristia* 3.1, Ovid guides his book through its first arrival in Rome. When the book sees the doorway of Augustus, it attempts to interpret the visual cues in order to understand what the building contains, what it is. The book’s very instinct to read the doorway exemplifies the symbolic function I have been discussing in this section. The book first infers from the oak crown that the building must be a temple of Jupiter, drawing out openly the divine implications that were perhaps meant to operate at less explicit levels (37-8). The book then poses several possible reasons for the presence of the laurel trees next to the doors: they indicate that the house has earned eternal triumphs (41), or that it is always loved by Apollo (42), or that it is festive and makes all other things festive (43). The earnest struggle to make sense of the conflicting signifiers plays upon the tension between triumphal tradition and divine innovation in Augustus’ doorway. At last the book realizes the answer is written below the crown: “citizens were saved by the help of this man” (*seruatos ciuis indicat huius ope*, 48). Although the book’s initial attempts at interpreting the space of Augustus’ doorway emphasize a positive, reassuring relationship between viewers and the door (it is *festa, amata*), the book’s fascination turns into fear as soon as it reads the inscription labelling the owner as the one who had saved citizens and realizes that this is Augustus’ house. Knowing that the door belongs to Augustus, the decorations take on a more ominous meaning: the door has good reason to know that not all citizens are saved by Augustus and that this wreath in the doorway points to Augustus’ power to both protect and destroy. Physically shaken by the fear the door inspires, the book rapidly departs (53-4). The decorations, the speaking symbols of Augustus’ door, cannot override the book’s personal experience and knowledge of who and what Augustus is. Ovid is not an unbiased interrogator of Augustus’ imperial iconography, but he nevertheless offers a useful example of how doorways could provoke both interpretation and challenges. Taken together, the Senate’s decision to display these honors in Augustus’ doorway, Augustus’ approval of and dissemination of these symbolic honors on coins, and Ovid’s interrogation of them offer an illustrative example of how domestic doorways could be used to construct specific relationships between inhabitants and the outside world and how that relationship was also open to contestation and revision by those outside.

In addition to mediating transitions and transgression, the Roman doorway was an important, if not entirely reliable, space for the performance of identity and the management of the relationship between the inhabitant and those outside. Romans looked to a house’s doorway for an initial impression of the character, status, and life events of those who lived within. Inhabitants could use the visual cues of the doorway to communicate their position in Roman society, their virtue, glory, and even grief. However, Roman authors also show an awareness that these external significations of identity could potentially become displaced from internal realities, as is evident in Cicero and Pliny’s anxiety over the fate of triumphal spoils separated from their natural owners, and Tacitus’ acknowledgement of the possibility of false shows of grief. The elegiac vigil thus appropriates and intervenes in a complex identity discourse already occurring in Roman doorways, and like this historical discourse, the elegiac vigil is oriented in important ways towards an external audience, towards the eternal problem of positioning oneself within a larger community. An analysis of paraclausithyra shows that elegiac vigils are indeed involved in negotiating the lover’s relationship to his wider community, apparently delineating clear difference and separation, but simultaneously gesturing to the possibility of re incorporation and assimilation.
Drawing upon parallels from contemporary culture, Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid each offer the vigil as an explicitly visual, publicly interpretable demarcation of elegiac identity. The delineations of those boundaries are not identical across the three authors—Propertius’ preoccupation with fidelity, for instance, is not reflected in Tibullus or Ovid—so it is not that the vigil describes precisely the same experience for all three authors. But all three use it self-consciously to advertise their sense of self, and to negotiate inclusion and exclusion from the category of poet-lover, as well as wider Roman society. The fact that all three authors include explicit, fully rendered paraclausithyra in their first books of erotic poetry (Propertius 1.16, Tibullus 1.2, Amores 1.6)—and nowhere else in their corpora—further implicates the vigil in questions of group inclusion and exclusion. These three paraclausithyra perform poetic participation in the larger group of love-poets, but also, through the process of adaptation, explore their differences. A close analysis of all three paraclausithyra shows that they do not merely offer elegiac “receipts,” but rather dramatize discursive processes of communicating and interpreting one’s own identity and that of others. To read these poems from an internal orientation—as primarily about desire—or as solitary laments misses an essential part of what they are doing. The three paraclausithyra in fact devote the majority of their space not to appeals to their hard-hearted mistresses, but rather to confrontations between lovers and unelegiac figures, standing in for some other element of Roman society. These poems use the doorway to explore a question regularly worked out in Roman doorways: how the relationship between private individual and wider public is managed and negotiated. In one of the apparently most clear and definite assertions of elegiac identity, all three authors examine the fragility of that identity, the ease with which socially—or poetically—constructed difference can disappear.

The Failure of Communication in Propertius 1.16

Propertius’ paraclausithyron, 1.16, vividly dramatizes the fragility of the boundaries between elegiac lover and unelegiac other. The poem stages a conflict between an anonymous lover and a door vocally espousing traditional values. It is not a confrontation between lover and puella so much as one between lover and a traditionalist, non-elegiac Roman worldview. In a dramatic shift from the poet-lover speaker of the surrounding poems, this poem is narrated by the door, and we hear the lover’s laments only through the door’s recitation of them. Readings of this poem have fruitfully drawn out the hypocrisy of the door, and in particular its complicity in the elegiac world it abhors, but this is only part of the story. By incorporating the complaints of both door and lover, the poem offers competing ways of interpreting the identity of the door, the lover, and their relationship with each other. It dramatizes the struggle—and failure—to characterize a relationship in a stable way and thereby reveals the vulnerability of their deeply-

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40 By “fully-rendered” I mean poems that do not merely reference the vigil in passing as a way to articulate elegiac identity, but actually set themselves narratively as taking place in a vigil in the doorway. Although scholars have pointed out other poems that engage with the vigil theme—notably Propertius 1.3, 2.29 (see Cairns 1977), 4.9 (Anderson 1964; Debrohun 2003), and Tibullus 2.4 (Veremans 1989)—none of these poems definitively set themselves in the doorway.

41 Tibullus 1.2 presents problems for a precise break-down between addresses to Delia and other figures because it is frequently unclear when addresses begin and end. However, even there, substantial space is dedicated to other characters. The situation is rather clearer in Ovid and Propertius.

held senses of self to changing social situations and (mis)interpretation. In the confrontation between traditional Roman *mores* and radical elegiac ones, Propertius highlights the plasticity of *both* self-conceptions and the possibility that both are substantially dependent upon the perspective of their audiences.

As the poem opens, the door aligns itself overtly with traditional, martial ideologies. It fondly recalls its previous life as a bastion of traditional Roman glory:

> Quae fueram magnis olim patefacta triumphis,  
> ianua Patriciae vota Pudicitiae,\(^43\)  
> cuius inaurati celebrarunt limina currus,  
> captorum lacrimis umida supplicibus…

1.16.1-4

I, who formerly stood open for magnificent triumphs, a door devoted to Patrician Chastity, whose threshold, made wet by the suppliant tears of captives, golden chariots thronged…

The door places itself at the heart of the most important Roman celebration of martial success, the triumph, thereby setting up an explicit contrast between traditional and elegiac uses of the doorway.\(^44\) In this memory of triumphal glory days, the door, in its role as representative of ongoing familial glory, entirely displaces its individual masters. It is the direct object of *celebrarunt*, its threshold receives the suppliant tears. The masters receive no mention.\(^45\) Furthermore, *triumphis* suggests that the door was acting as a repository for the ongoing accumulation of familial honors, rather than as a commemoration of any individual triumph. Masters come and go, but the door continues to operate as the singular site of martial prestige. During this time period, the door, perfectly aligned with the values of both those outside and inside, existed at the center of honors, as the protagonist in the story of its household’s glory.

The door’s openness similarly ties it to traditional displays of elite virtue by way of accessibility and openness discussed earlier in this chapter. The door remained open (*patefacta*), allowing for both the reincorporation of the *triumphator* and a free exchange between the inhabitants of the house and the adoring crowds outside the house. Given the close relationship between open doors and civic virtue in Roman culture, this openness may offer a logical connection between lines 1 and 2: the household’s devotion to *pudicitia* can in fact be

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\(^43\) The text here is difficult. I follow Heyworth in accepting Phillimore’s *patriciae for tarpeiae* and manuscript A’s reading of *vota*, rather than *nota* as appears in N and A. *Tarpeiae* is difficult to accept given the name’s strong associations with a lack of virtue; see Heyworth 2007 70-71 and Phillimore 1957 for further discussion of the textual difficulties.

\(^44\) I do not accept Corbeill’s reading that this poem actually takes place at the Temple of Fides on the Capitoline, thereby placing the triumphal festivities in the purely public sphere (2005). Corbeill reads the anonymity of 1.16 as pointing to identifiable, concrete locations and characters; I think that the anonymity so striking in 1.16 rather allows it to interact more directly with elegy as a genre by employing characters that have no identity beyond the generic.

\(^45\) As in Catull. 67, the door here has priorities as a door that are distinctive from human ones. The door’s memories deemphasize people in favor of objects or collectives: it lies open for *triumphis*, which surely included human participants, but also many objects and animals; chariots, rather than humans, celebrate it. In the door’s memories humans only appear as captives, who inhabit an intermediate place between human and object as owned humans. There may be an implicit critique here that the preoccupation with humans, human feelings and accomplishments is in fact a specifically human preoccupation.
demonstrated through an open door that hides nothing. The suppliant slaves’ tears further suggest the permeability of the door in this social context. Although the door does not describe the slaves actually crossing the threshold, presumably they are crying on their way into the house, to take up their positions as domestic slaves. The door’s function in this context is not to act as a barrier between its inhabitants and those outside, but rather to preserve and communicate the honor of the household by facilitating appropriate interaction between inside and outside, according to the traditional mores of accessible elite houses.

The door marks the shift between its former existence and its current one sharply. The temporal markers *oolim* (1) and *nunc* (5), reinforced by a shift from pluperfect (*fueram patefacta 1*) to present (*queror 6*), separate the door’s experience as marker of martial glory and its experience as elegiac scapegoat into two distinct time periods. Although theoretically these two modes of understanding the door could have coexisted—and historically these two symbolic uses of the door did coexist—the poem is emphatic that they occur sequentially. Moreover, both are imagined as continual, even though this is in tension with the inherently finite nature of both vigils and triumphs. The vigil and triumphal celebrations appear representative of entire lifestyles and identities. The door’s memory of the past does not include any days when triumphs did not occur, and the plural *triumphis* creates the impression of an unending stream of them. Similarly, the door presents the current siege of lovers as perpetual, making pointed use of temporal adverbs when describing the lover’s assaults: *saepe (6), semper (8, 47), numquam (15)*. The use of plurals (*nocturnis...rixis 5; turpes...corollae 7; faces 8; longis...excubiis 14*) likewise reinforces the sense that this is a perpetual phenomenon. The door sees no respite from its suffering, not even the coming dawn, which presumably will lead to the lover’s departure. On the contrary the elegiac cooption of the doorway appears absolute. The door’s experience has fundamentally and irrevocably shifted from elite prestige to elegiac lament and it is now isolated by the traditionalist values that previously placed it in the mainstream.

In spite of the door’s insistence on an absolute separation between these two time periods, the elegiac and triumphal uses of the door also bear marked similarities. Most prominently, “the suppliant tears of captives” (*captorum lacrimis...supplicibus, 4*) reappear in the guise of the lover’s suppliant vigil (*supplicis a longis...excubiis, 13*). In both cases, the tears point to the door’s power over the fates of others, in particular its role as mediator between the inhabitants and the outside world. And although the verbal echoes are less direct, the wreaths and torches left by the lover act as “a distorted reflection of triumphal past.” The door mourns the respect and glory provided by triumphal celebrations, but the lover adorns the door with

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46 Although an explicitly elite, patrician *pudicitia* works well for my argument, the reading *Tarpeiae* would not significantly impact my arguments. *Pudicitia* evokes traditional Roman conceptions of virtue and modesty, which were dependent on the appearance of purity as well as the actuality of it.

47 It is difficult to establish the historical (un)reality of paraclausithyra as a social practice. Copley assumes it must have been a standard and ongoing behavior (1956: 43-44). Erotic verses inscribed in doorways in Pompeii would seem to provide evidence of at least 1st century paraclausithyra, but it is hard to say to what extent these verses might actually be playing with the literary/fictional nature of paraclausithyra (see Milnor 2014: 38-9). Regardless of whether or not paraclausithyra occurred in real Roman doorways, they certainly exist in the Roman imagination, as a defining characteristic of young lovers (Lucr. 4.1175ff). It can similarly somewhat difficult to reconstruct the precise history of triumphs and specific triumphal rituals before the first century BCE, but certainly the houses of triumphant generals were being decorated with spoils.

48 This absolute distinction between moral and immoral occupants recalls Catull. 67.

49 Nappa 2007: 63.
offerings of his own, kisses and prayers. The door still plays a central role in the drama—perhaps more so—as the lover directs his full attention to the obstacle in his way. The parallels between triumphal and elegiac activities in the doorway pose the elegiac vigil as both a break and continuation in how Romans engage with each other. The symbolic language remains the same, but the meanings have shifted. The lover, apparently unaware that he is part of a transformation of Roman values, views his actions as legitimate, sincere, and reverent, while the door, unable to let go of past meanings, reads this behavior as egregiously insulting. The misery of both the lover and the door in the poem then is grounded substantially in miscommunication, in a set of public symbols meaning differently to the lover and to the door.

The lover’s attentions to the door characterize the door as an extension of the beloved within. The strategies deployed reflect those used elsewhere in elegiac poetry for persuading girls. As ever, the most important weapon in the lover’s arsenal is his song, which he offers to the door in the place of his beloved. The door strikingly refers to the lover’s use of blanditía (16), a description that highlights the enticing qualities of his songs, and hints perhaps that the door is not entirely immune.50 Many of the modes of addressing the door that the lover uses evoke previous addresses to Cynthia. The lover opens his song by addressing the door as “crueler even than the mistress herself within” (ianua vel domina penitus crudelior ipsa, 17), explicitly drawing a connection between the door and the beloved. In the next line the “harsh doors” (duris foribus, 18) conjure the use of the same adjective programmatically against the puella, but with a more strictly literal meaning now.51 In an even more striking parallel, the lover’s complaint that “you are the only, the greatest cause of my sorrow” (sed tu sola mei, tu maxima causa doloris, 35) closely echoes the speaker’s impassioned address to Cynthia in 1.11: “You only are my home, you, Cynthia, only are my parents” (tu mihi sola domus, tu, Cynthia, sola parentes, 23). The linguistic and semantic similarities are striking: both lines repeat the personal pronoun tu in the first and third feet, contrasted by a first-person personal pronoun or adjective, both describe the subject as sola in the second foot, both stress the addressee’s absolute power over the speaker’s emotional state, and the address to Cynthia even assimilates her to a domus.52 This is to say, the lover of 1.16 appeals to the door in ways that nearly quote Propertius’ own appeals to Cynthia earlier in the book. The lover also calls the door perfida, an accusation more usually associated with the beloved, and which makes little sense unless you accept the door as an avatar for the woman living inside.53 The gifts the door has shunned—verses (41) and kisses (42)—are more suited to a beloved than a door.54 The lover’s attempts to persuade the door precisely replicate attempts elsewhere in the corpus to persuade the beloved.

It is worth acknowledging, however, that the assimilation of the door to mistress also distinguishes between the two. In the beginning of his song, even as the lover draws a connection between the mistress and the door, he accuses the door of being crueler than the mistress. The door sees the lover’s distress, hears his laments, and yet does not pity the lover. The mistress’

50 A few lines previously the door offered a rather different description: obscenis...carminibus (10). Several scholars have argued that the door may not be quite as resistant as it appears, and that it may have previously acceded to the lover’s requests; see MacKay 1956, Nappa 2007.
51 1.7.6; for another instance of play between the literal and figurative meanings of dura see 1.8.6; for discussions of dura and mollitia, see especially Kennedy 1993: 30-33.
52 For more on the relationship between puella and domus see Gardner 2010.
53 1.11.16, 1.15.2, 34; the closely related periura 1.8.17.
54 E.g., kisses: 1.3.16; verses: 1.7.6.
very absence allows the lover to hope that she would be moved, even if she is currently sleeping with someone else (28-34). These attempts at distinguishing the beloved from the door do not, however, change the fact that the lover is treating the door as an extension of the beloved. Rather, they make clear that the lover sees in the door a particular aspect of the puella, the resistance that she shows to him. The door becomes for the lover a literalized metaphor of the puella’s harshness.55

But the lover has fundamentally misunderstood the door because of an asymmetry in the lines of communication in the poem. The door can hear the lover, the lover cannot hear the door, and readers have access to both voices. This structure puts the lover at a distinct disadvantage, dramatizing his ignorance as well as his limited understanding of his own suffering. The lover who literally cannot hear is a poignant symbol of the limited horizon of elegiac speakers, their apparent inability to escape their own perspective. But the door, although it can hear the lover, seems equally incapable of understanding or empathizing with the lover’s perspective. It cannot imagine the lover’s devotion and vigil as anything other than a display of moral failure.56 The apparently more broadly encompassing view of traditional Roman identity is just as limited as that of the elegiac lover—it can parrot elegiac poetics, but cannot understand them. These two voices, inhabiting the same physical space, making use of the same language and symbols, cannot successfully communicate with each other. Reading with the benefit of both voices, readers can understand the internal characters better than they can understand themselves or each other.

The door is not an avatar for the mistress within as much as a doppelgänger for the elegiac lover outside. As much as the door misses the martial glory of its prior life, the actual content of its song is elegiac, not martial, and not just because it quotes the lover. The door characterizes its output using the words queror and querela, which are programmatically used of the production of elegiac poetry.57 The door mirrors the lover in more than just its lamentation. The lover’s vigils ensure that the door too must stay awake (14-15), and the door’s anguish reflects that of the lover (tristior, 14). Furthermore, the door, not unlike the lover, sees itself as a victim of its mistress. She has given herself over to a life of licentiousness, thereby tarring the household honor (11-12), a complaint that is echoed in the lover’s later accusation that she is sleeping with someone else (33). The door ends its lament by blaming both its mistress’ vice and the lover’s weeping for its misery (47-8). Neither the door nor the lover view themselves as able to resist or change their victimized state. The lover presents himself as completely at the mercy of the door, a miserable suppliant who will have to sleep out in the cold if the door shows no mercy. The door, on the other hand, argues that he is held at the mercy of the lover and his mistress: he is not able to protect his mistress (nec possum, 9), he is compelled to sing complaints (cogor, 13), and the lover does not allow him to sleep (numquam patitur, 15). Both characters understand their fates to lie in the hands of other figures who are unwilling to spare them.

55 For the use of duritia of the puella as emotional blackmail against her, see James 2003: 123-4.
56 Nappa 2007 suggests that the door’s parroting of the lover’s lament means it must be aware of alternative, more elegiac, interpretations of events, but this seems to me to assume rather more successful listening on the part of the door than the poem shows.
57 1.4.28, 1.7.8, 1.8.22, 1.18.1, 1.18.26-30. The verb also appears remarkably often of Cynthia producing elegiac style complaints: 1.3.43, 1.8.8, 11, 1.17.9.
In terms of the quality and content of its speech, its relationship with the *puella*, and its agency in its own life, the door closely resembles the lover rather than the beloved. And yet, the door does not recognize a kinship with the lover, but rather groups the lover together with the mistress as twin authors of its misery. In the final lines it seems to attribute equal blame to both the mistress’ vice and the lover’s laments: “thus I am now always being defamed by alternating ill-will, because of the vices of my mistress and the laments of the lover” (*sic ego nunc dominae vitiis et semper amantis / fletibus alterna differor invidia*, 47-8). Although both share in the blame for the door’s state, they are not assimilated in the same way that the lover associates the door with the beloved. The separating out of causes—*vitiis* and *fletibus*—and the *alterna invidia* highlight that the lover and beloved are not working together, but rather represent two related but distinct attacks on the door’s well-being. The mistress through her profligacy has dishonored the door, the lover has further advertised the house’s new state of dishonor and disturbed the door’s peace. The two are logically related: both lover and beloved engage in immoral and inappropriate affairs, and publish them for the world to see. The final image of the poem imagines the door under attack both from within and without, caught in the midst of an erotic battle it never wanted any part of, misunderstood and abused by all involved, perhaps including itself.

Even as the door voices elegiac laments, it continues to make use of morally charged language to differentiate itself from the elegiac lover and beloved. The contrast between the door’s prior and current experiences is couched in ethical terms. The world of the triumph was one of honor, “patrician chastity,” and uncontested symbolic value. The current day is an age of luxury (*turpior et saecli...luxuria*, 12). Public reputation no longer matters to anyone except for the door; its mistress does not take care of her *fama*, she engages in vice (*vitiis*, 47), and scandalous speeches (*infamis voces*, 9) malign her. Or more accurately, the problem is not that the lover and beloved do not care for public reputation, but that they promote a very different set of values and accomplishments. The indecent songs (*obscenis carminibus*, 10), the wreaths and torches left in the doorway all indicate an interest in advertising the performance of the vigil. The door’s morally loaded vocabulary paints the change from triumphal to elegiac display in terms of a moral decay. The door no longer inhabits the star role in the filtering of familial reputation; instead, a rejected lover continuously elides the door with a promiscuous, obdurate, mistress. The door’s use of moral language maintains ties to its former life of openness and glory and creates a sense of continuity, even as the form of the door’s discourse has been transformed. Ironically, it is the door’s very resistance to the elegiac lifestyle that turns it into an elegiac figure. If the door cared less for traditional modes of honor and glory, if it were less resentful of the elegiac hostile takeover, it would presumably complain about the misery inflicted upon it by a promiscuous mistress. This irony suggests the difficulty of resisting the mainstream discourses in which one is immersed. Opposition to the immorality of the elegiac worldview only redirects the door back into an elegiac style discourse.⁵⁸

This paraclausithyron generates layered and contradictory ways of understanding the identities of the lover, the door, and the mistress. The door and lover each reads the relationships between the three figures differently—the door sees itself as the morally upright victim of the immoral cadre of the mistress and the lover; the lover conversely interprets the door as an extension of the mistress, and himself as the long-suffering victim of their disregard—and the

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juxtaposition of these two contradictory understandings of the situation allows readers to see the limits of both.\textsuperscript{59} Scholars have read this poem as a satirical take-down of elegiac tunnel vision or of the hypocrisy of traditional oriented door.\textsuperscript{60} Although undeniably humorous, this poem nevertheless raises serious questions about the ability of individuals to successfully communicate and interpret the identity of others and themselves. The lover’s inability to see himself—or the door—clearly is not a quality unique to lovers and elegiac poetry, but rather appears as a function of identity and ideology more widely. The door is just as blind to its ridiculousness as the lover is to his.

I Wander the City, Afraid:
Tibullus 1.2 and the Dangers of Difference

Propertius uses the contrast between two very different forms of communication in the doorway—triumphal spoils and the lover’s vigil—to explore the subjective nature of the differences between the characters engaged in these performances and dramatize their failure to understand each other or themselves. Tibullus’ paraclausithyron likewise interrogates how the relationship between lover and non-lover is constructed and negotiated, and the challenges of controlling the interpretations of others, but imagines the publicness of the vigil in a less bilateral fashion. Propertius focuses on the destabilizing impact of subjectivity by offering two irreconcilable perspectives, both inhabiting the contested space of the doorway; Tibullus likewise explores the limitations of communication, but in the context of a far more dangerous, diverse, and competitive world. While in Propertius’ paraclausithyron the inability of characters to imagine external perspectives is a central problem, Tibullus instead suggests that the problem is not a failure to understand non-elegiac perspectives, but that these other perspectives and figures are hostile and dangerous to the elegiac lover. In the poem, the speaker encounters, or imagines encountering, numerous characters on and around the street, all potentially a threat. The speaker responds to perceived dangers by seeking to persuade other characters of the sacrosanct status endowed upon him by his identity as an elegiac lover. He depicts elegiac lovers as divinely protected, and specifically possessing the power to escape detection through the use of spells, prayers, and curses. In contrast to Propertius’ depiction of lovers as proudly—if rather obliviously—self-promoting, Tibullus characterizes the lover as a shadowy figure, invested in what other characters think and feel, if only for his own self-preservation. Furthermore, the speaker’s danger-filled encounters with these anonymous pedestrians ultimately also function as a model for the poet’s relationship with the reader. The poem thus suggests the tenuousness and discursive nature of fiction itself: pedestrians and readers both must assent to not know what they know in order for the spell to work. Danger for both poet and lover lies in the fact that they cannot entirely control the responses of their interlocutors.

In defiance of the traditionally immobile nature of vigils, this poem seems to wander freely, emphasizing that the doorway does not exist in the abstract, but rather embedded in the public cityscape. The poem is universally categorized as a paraclausithyron because it opens and closes in the doorway, but the door receives a surprisingly small share of the lover’s attention. Rather, the lover’s rambling monologue shifts rapidly from addresses to Delia to imagining or enacting encounters with other Romans from his vulnerable position in the street to invoking

\textsuperscript{59} It is worth observing that the woman’s perspective on these relationships are entirely omitted.

\textsuperscript{60} Nappa 2007, MacKay 1956.
Venus herself. The speaker never reports the rejoinders of these addresssees, although the speaker at times seems to react to an implied response. The contrast between the speaker’s constant interpolations and the silence of other voices reflects the tension between the lover’s place in a crowded society and his isolation and alienation. To survive as a lover in the streets of Rome, one must constantly be engaging with a variety of other characters, but these interactions are competitive, with clear winners and losers. Although only eight out of a hundred lines of the poem are explicitly directed towards the door, the speaker’s tenuous place in the door informs the entire poem. More so than any of the other three paraclausithrya, Tibullus’ actively confronts the speaker with the public audiences implied by the vigil.

Indeed, throughout much of the poem the lover is preoccupied with the dangers the lover might face from other characters because of his vulnerable position. From within are those who would keep Delia from him: a “savage guard” (custodia saeva, 5), and Delia’s spouse (vir, 21, coniunx, 43), whom the speaker sets out to deceive using witchcraft. Given the punishments for adulterers, the speaker has good reason to fear these internal characters. But even to reach Delia’s door the lover must evade the risk of robbers and busybodies who might wound or frighten him (volneret, 28; neu…terrete, 38), as well as forces of nature to which the open-air leaves him vulnerable (31-2). Although in these lines the speaker boasts of his safety, in doing so he recalls the many and very real physical risks of wandering through cities at night and lurking in other people’s doorways. Indeed, towards the end of the poem, the speaker seems to be verbally assaulted, presumably because of his visibility to all who pass by (89-90). By framing the speaker’s vigil through diverse agonistic encounters with other characters, Tibullus, like Propertius, envisions elegy as actively negotiating its place in a wider social-political world. But where Propertius represents a world of false binaries, Tibullus offers a more diverse and ambiguous world into which the speaker must insert himself. Tibullus’ speaker operates from a far less secure position than Propertius’ speaker, constantly aware of the manifold threats surrounding him.

The lover’s safety in the face of an antagonistic world relies largely on the unique ability of lovers to vanish in plain sight. In an appeal to Delia, the speaker boasts of the skills Venus teaches, specifically the ability “to place one’s foot without any noise” (20), and “to exchange speaking nods in front of [your] husband” (21). These abilities draw on the topos of furtivus amor, the idea that lovers must use stealth and trickery to engage in their elicit love affairs, but it is worth pausing to unpack its implications. It imagines lovers operating in a world opposed to their interests, in which they can only succeed by evading notice, by disappearing. The interests

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61 E.g., the speaker’s precipitous shift from threatening the door to apologizing suggests some change or context that we cannot see (8-9). This example is the more striking following Propertius’ talking door, which makes a reply from the door not utterly unimaginable.

62 The precise nature of the relationship between Delia and her vir has been the subject of debate, and is probably intentionally ambiguous. However, in this poem Tibullus refers to him as her coniunx (perhaps specifically to invoke the physical penalties that cuckolded spouses could enact), and so I refer to him as her spouse. For discussion of the ambiguous nature of the puella, see James 2003, Wyke 1987.

63 As with so much of this poem, because we are restricted purely to the consciousness of the speaker, it is possible to interpret this encounter as hypothetical rather than dramatically occurring. However, given the use of the present indicative (At tu, qui laetus rides mala nostra, 89), and the ensuing story about observing the embarrassing vigils and misadventures of an aged lover (vidi, 91), it makes sense that the speaker would be addressing a snickering passerby. Either way, the interaction draws attention to the vulnerability of existing in public spaces.

64 For more on furtivus amor see Copley 1956: 38-9, 94-97.
of lovers and those who hold the power in this world appear intrinsically opposed; lovers can
only safely exist at the fringes. The speaker’s ensuing description of his journeys through the city
further expands upon how lovers escape the physical realities of their environs. He wanders
through the entire city, afraid (anxius, 25), but Venus does not permit anyone to rob him (25-8).
The cold and rain of the night likewise do not harm him (31-2). The speaker describes an
existence that defies the realities and dangers of living in a physical world, full of people with
conflicting interests and desires. The lover’s almost supernatural ability to disappear, and thereby
to remain unharmed, appears a defining quality.

As the speaker continues to imagine his journeys through the city, he takes on a more
assertive role in enacting his invisibility. In a direct address to anonymous, and perhaps
hypothetical pedestrians, the speaker orders them not to see him: “turn away your eyes, whether
you be man or woman in the way: Venus wishes her deceptions to be hidden” (Parcite
luminibus, seu vir seu femina fiat/ Obvia: celari volt sua furta Venus, 35-6). The ritualistic
language in combination with the invocation of Venus imbue these words with apotropaic power,
reminding readers of the ability of the correct words to shape the physical world.65 The religious
overtones and Venus’ authority also give greater weight to the second line as a generalizing
dictum for lovers: concealment is not merely a pragmatic desire on the part of lovers, it is an
essential and defining quality. The speaker continues to emphasize the importance of this
secrecy, as he instructs the pedestrians not to run after lovers, or ask their name, or approach
them with torches (37-8). If nevertheless they do recognize the lover, they must swear otherwise
by all the gods, or they will soon learn that “Venus was born from blood” (41). The speaker
articulates a set of normative relations between lovers and non-lovers, requiring non-lovers to
avoid perceiving or interacting with lovers, because of a religiously protected status. He
weaponizes religiously charged language. The relationship depicted here between lovers and
non-lovers differs markedly from that imagined by Propertius: while Propertius imagines a world
of mutual misunderstanding between lovers and more traditional Roman values, Tibullus
envisions a lover who understands the antagonism of his world all too well, and attempts to
deflect it by persuading his fellow Romans not to hear or see him.

The speaker’s next attempt to escape detection, a spell that will prevent Delia’s spouse
from suspecting the speaker, draws readers into the question of how far to trust their own ears.
The speaker boasts that even if a bystander on the street reports back to Delia’s spouse, the
spouse will not believe the report (43). The speaker has acquired a spell from a “truthful” witch
(verax...saga, 43-4), whose powers the speaker himself has seen transform the physical
landscape and defy the laws of nature (vidi, 45; 45-54). The spell, performed correctly, will
prevent Delia’s husband from perceiving the speaker:

Haec mihi conposuit cantu quis fallere posses:
   Ter cane, ter dictis despue carminibus.
Ille nihil poterit de nobis credere cuiquam,
   Non sibi, si in molli viderit ipse toro.
Tu tamen abstineas alii: nam cetera cernet
   Omnia, de me uno sentiet ipse nihil.

55-60

65 Many scholars have observed the hymnic structures of the poem, notably Watson 1982.
This woman composed songs for me, with which you can deceive: three times sing it, three times spit out, once the songs have been spoken. That man will not be able to believe anything from anyone about us. He will not even believe himself, if he should see us on a soft couch. You nevertheless stay away from other men: for he will perceive all other things, about me alone he will sense nothing.

The spell operates at the juncture between perception and cognition, preventing Delia’s spouse from believing Delia’s affair with the speaker, even if he sees or hears evidence of it. Once again, the divine powers that the speaker claims access to offer this specific gift of disappearing, of escaping from the perception of fellow Romans. But the quick amendment the speaker offers—this spell will only apply to him, not to any potential rivals—serves as a humorous reminder that this description of the spell is itself an act of persuasion directed towards Delia. The belated, and clearly self-interested, clarification sounds like a lie, and breaks the spell of the witch story, raising unanswerable questions. How far does the lie extend—might the spell actually work for other rivals as well, or did the speaker invent the witch altogether, as a source of efficacious words that Delia would trust more than his own? But this question is likely to remind readers that the witch was never real. She was always the product of fictional world-building, whether that of the speaker or the poet Tibullus. The obviousness of the speaker’s lie that his spell only applies to him thus blurs the line between the speaker’s persuasion of Delia and the poet’s persuasion of the readers. It reminds the reader of what they have agreed not to see: that behind this poem is a poet weaving poetic fictions. And yet, even that reminder of the suspension of disbelief, that this is fiction, does not provide real clarity. Tibullus’ world is not, in fact purely fiction, if such a thing can even exist; it draws on realities of Roman life, and presumably even the historical poet’s life. This episode may serve as a reminder that just as it is impossible to know how far back the speaker’s lies go within this fictional universe, so too it is impossible to know how far Tibullus the poet’s lies go. Although the speaker’s lies may fail to persuade Delia, Tibullus has demonstrated the all too real obscurity that fiction can generate.

The final episode of the poem, in which the speaker accosts someone laughing at him, continues to blur the distinction between internal and external audiences, situating both as engaged in an antagonistic relationship with the speaker and poet. After a plaintive assurance to Venus that he does not deserve her wrath, as his vigils demonstrate, the speaker suddenly turns to address an anonymous figure: “But you, who laugh happily at my misfortunes, take care soon for yourself: the god will not savage one person forever” (At tu, qui laetus rides mala nostra, caveto/ Mox tibi: non uni saeviet usque deus, 89-90). It is unclear what motivates the sudden shift in the speaker’s attention. If the readers have allowed themselves to be seduced back into the dramatic world of the poem after the questions raised by the episode of the “truthful witch,” the easiest reading is that a pedestrian has passed the lover in the doorway and begun mocking him. On the other hand, the strength of the dramatic second person address—at tu—might naturally draw in the reader as interlocutor, especially given the prior disruption to the suspension of disbelief and the fact that readers can most likely identify with laughing at the speaker. The ambiguity, the impossibility of deciding between this address as dramatic street encounter or acknowledgement of readers, again draws the relationship between Tibullus and reader and speaker and urban society into alignment, and represents both as contentious, discursive struggles.
As in his earlier altercations with pedestrians, the speaker attempts to deflect the threat by invoking the bulwark of divine retribution. But he goes further in this instance, by continuing on to provide a detailed recollection of such a punishment: “I have seen one, who had mocked the miserable love affairs of youths, later, as an old man, lower his own neck for the chains of Venus” (*Vidi ego, qui iuvenum miseror lusisset amores*/Post Veneris vinclis subdere colla senem, 91-2). The parallel structure of lines 89-90 and 91-92—two words directing attention towards a relative clause describing a group hostile towards lovers, and an invocation of a divinity in the second line—strengthens the implication that the jeerer could end up with the same fate as the old man. The aged lover suffers all the more because he feels no shame at pursuing his affairs in public: standing in vigil in front of his beloved’s doors (95), and detaining her maid in the middle of the forum (96). Indeed, the very publicness of his behavior makes him physically vulnerable, as a crowd of youths encircles him and spits into his lap (97-8). A karmic reversal allows young men, who suffered mockery at the old man’s hands, in turn to degrade him. And yet, the whole threat is once again suspect—not only does the speaker have a clear motivation to try to persuade the jeerer, the use of the verb *vidi* to set off the story recalls the speaker’s earlier affirmation that he had seen (*vidi*) the witch. The verbal echo makes clear that this threat too relies upon the credibility of the speaker, places it in the same category of uncertain truth in a fictional world. This threat then may represent within the world of the poem another lie—of questionable efficacy—which encourages readers to contemplate how effective the poet’s lies have been.

Tibullus’ paraclausithyron, although wandering in its structure, continually circles back around to the lover’s struggle to control his relationship with other people through an identity imbued with mystical, verbal, powers. This struggle between lover and internal audiences on the street also reflects the relationship between poet and external reading audience, as both audiences are ultimately asked to reject, or restrict, their own cognizance. By self-consciously pointing to his own deceptions and dramatizing the lover’s quest to disappear from the sight of his peers Tibullus emphasizes the participatory nature of fiction: it is a kind of contest, in which the poet attempts to conceal, and audience attempt to unveil, how far the lies extend. This conception of fiction, and of the relationship between poet and audience, stands in stark contrast to that suggested by Propertius’ paraclausithyron, in which the shift in speakers—from an elegiac ego in most of the rest of the *Monobiblos* to the door—align the reader and poet in their knowledge of both the elegiac speaker’s propensity for misinterpretation, and their own. The balance of the door and the lover’s failures to communicate, and the reader’s access to both, creates a sense of parity, and suggests that even if individuals cannot communicate any identity free from the danger of misinterpretation, then at least the poet can communicate that instability of identity to the reader. The juxtaposition of the two paraclausithyra reveals related but distinct anxieties over the production of elegiac poetry and personas: Propertius presents the yearning for, and impossibility of, communication and true mutual understanding—not just with the *puella*, but with the wider Roman world—as a defining tension of elegy, while Tibullus instead suggests that mutual understanding was never the point, but rather more effective persuasion and lies.

66 Maltby explains that the spitting is likely “a means of avoiding contagion from a lunatic” (2002: 182).
67 Such a relationship between audience and speaker recalls Hesiod’s articulation of poetic fiction, spoken by the Muses: “We know how to speak many lies similar to the truth, and we also know, when we wish, how to speak true things” (*τόμεν ψεύδεα πολλά λέγειν ἐτύμοις ὁμοία, τόμεν δ’, ἐντ’ ἑθέλωμι, ἄλληθα γηρύσασθαι*, Theog. 26-8).

The crux of the problem of fiction is not that it is untrue, but that audiences cannot distinguish between what is true and untrue in fiction.
Gone by Dawn: 
*Amores* 1.6 and the Limits of Elegiac Identity

Although they conceptualize the lover’s relationship to the larger Roman world in different ways, both Propertius and Tibullus’ paraclausithyra share a concern over the subjective nature of identity, and in particular with the ways that identity can be interpreted differently by different audiences. In both poems, speakers’ clear convictions about their own identities are undermined by alternative interpretations and deceptions, ultimately resulting in a vision of identity as a discursive, ongoing, and contested process, rather than an objective reality. Ovid offers a markedly different picture of the relationship between identity and performance in his paraclausithyron. While Tibullus and Propertius both suggest that identity, rather than being an intrinsic and stable category, is instead discursively formed in social settings, and thus in some sense variable and external, open to negotiation, Ovid’s paraclausithyron instead reinforces the idea that at least some identities are objectively clear and stable, though perhaps not that of the lover. The poem reimagines the vigil as a confrontation not between a lover and a door, or a lover and pedestrians, but between a lover and a *ianitor*, the slave in charge of guarding the household door. The contrast between the lover, who imagines himself in explicitly servile terms, and the actual figure of a slave playfully highlights the ridiculousness of the lover’s attempts to depict himself as a powerless slave. His attempts to assimilate his experience to that of a slave paradoxically highlight the real and substantial difference between the two, suggesting that at least some identities—like those of slave and free person—have clear and absolute meanings, and are not susceptible to the vagaries of persuasion and interpretation.

Throughout the poem, the lover emphasizes the power the slave has over him. The entire address borrows much of its tone and structure from hymns, starting with the elaborate vocative address of the first line. The lover “prays” to the *ianitor* (*precor*, 3), and goes so far as to imagine the *ianitor* as a kind of Jupiter, in possession of lightning bolts he can use to smite the lover (*tu, me quo possis perdere, fulmen habes*, 15). The *ianitor* is *ferreus* in the face of the lover’s prayers (*orantem*, 26). The recurring refrain, a peculiar feature of this paraclausithyron, may also recall hymnic or magical poetic structures, further characterizing the free-born lover as a suppliant to the slave who controls his fate. Scholars have long seen the inversion of normal power dynamics that this represents as crucial to the poem. McKeown, for instance, notes that “[i]t is humorous that Ovid, a free man of equestrian status, should suffer the indignity of having to wheedle a slave.” The lover’s willingness to debase himself before the lowest slave makes him ridiculous, but also demonstrates how his values apparently differ from those of the larger society within which he lives.

The lover, moreover, repeatedly draws parallels between the *ianitor* and himself, and inevitably finds the *ianitor* is freer, more successful, and happier than the lover. The speaker asserts that by opening the door, the *ianitor* will be freed from his “long chain” and ensure that

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68 See Watson 1982 for a more in depth discussion of the hymnic parallels for this line.
69 For a detailed discussion of hymnic parallels, see Watson 1982: 92-3. It is also strongly reminiscent of incantatory poems, such as *Ecl.* 7 and Theoc. *Id.* 2.
70 1989: 122.
he does not drink “servile water” forever (25-6). The speaker thus locates the experience of slavery in concrete, physical items of the chain and water, which can be changed easily enough. The lover’s bondage, in contrast, is far more permanent: “Even if I should want to, I can never send away Love; sooner I myself would be torn from my own limbs” (hunc ego, si cupiam, nusquam dimittere possum; ante vel a membris dividar ipse meis, 35-6). The image self-mutilation not only emphasizes the permanence of the lover’s subservience to love, but also suggests a contrast between identities based in inalterable internal qualities and ones grounded in external, physical conditions. Love’s hold on the lover is so deep and intrinsically bound within him that even dismemberment and death cannot stop it. Moreover, the internal constraints of the lover’s bondage are also physically manifested: love has wasted away the lover’s body (3-5) and he sits unmoving in the doorway, just like the ianitor. In the lover’s telling, the physical, externality of the ianitor’s literal slavery actually makes it easier to shrug off, unlike the marrow-deep sufferings of the lover, which result in similar physical bondage, but one which cannot be removed, because it is internally based. Slavery becomes a contingent, alterable category, as opposed to the intrinsic, inalterable category of lover.

This argument that slaves are actually freer than elite young men in love is clearly intended to be a ridiculous inversion of reality, but it also points to real tensions and questions within Roman beliefs about identity and slavery. Slavery should obviously be the permanent category as opposed to the transitory youthful passions of young lovers, and as I will discuss in greater detail, the lover has to ignore gruesome, physical realities in order to make this argument. And yet, it is worth noting that it is not entirely ridiculous: slavery, in point of fact, was not an inalterable category, a clear outward reflection of a person’s internal servile nature. Free people could be sold into slavery; slaves could in turn be freed, or escape. Slavery was a physically enforced and socially codified status, which could be lifted through the legal process of manumission, or even resisted through open revolt or covert subversion. Although the lover’s promise of freedom for the ianitor seems unlikely in the extreme, nevertheless, it serves as a reminder that although typically conceived of as a lifelong, innate status, the reality was somewhat more complicated. But the contrast between the externally oppressed slave and the internally oppressed lover, and the tensions within Roman conceptions of both, does not suggest that these categories are indeterminable or unknowable, as Propertius and Tibullus might imply, but rather that the external, physical realities offer objective determiners of identity.

The lover pushes the comparison even further by envisioning the ianitor as a successful lover. If the lover is a slave, but less free, the ianitor is a lover, but more successful. Frustrated by the lack of response from the ianitor, the lover wonders what the ianitor could be doing on the other side of the door:

Lentus es: an somnus, qui te male perdat, amantis
verba dat in ventos aure repulsa tua?
at, memini, primo, cum te celare volebam,
You are slow: or does sleep—may it destroy you—give to the winds the words of a lover, driven from your ears? But, I remember, at first, when I was wishing to deceive you, you stayed up under the midnight stars. Perhaps your girlfriend now rests with you—alas, how much better your lot is than mine! So long as it is so, would that your chains would pass onto me!

The lover continues to interpret the physical captivity of the ianitor as a greater freedom and happiness than the bondage of his own exclusion. The ianitor, since he is not engaged in an unending struggle to be admitted into the house, could perhaps spend the night sleeping. Although the lover ultimately dismisses the idea, he imagines the slave as having a choice over how to spend his night that he himself does not. The lover, furthermore, cannot help but associate being inside the house with amatory access and success: he envisages the ianitor spending the evening with a girlfriend of his own, as the lover imagines he himself would do, if admitted. This physical aspect of the ianitor’s servitude—his captivity inside the home of the puella—is in fact the lover’s dearest desire. The lover’s wish to become enslaved, so that he too could be inclusus, reinforces this representation of slavery as a permeable state. If the lover puts on his chains, and sits inside the doorway, he too can have the ianitor’s “happy lot” (46). Thus, the speaker both imagines the life of the ianitor as the fulfillment of his goals as lover, and envisions easy transformations into and out of slavery, in contrast to the apparently inalterable life of the exclusus amator.

And yet, even as the lover constructs his arguments on the basis of his inferiority, he repeatedly gestures to the violently physical constraints the ianitor endures, thereby confronting readers with the harsh physical reality of the literal slave. The address of the opening line is telling: “Doorkeeper— unworthy!—bound by a hard chain” (ianitor—indignum—dura religate catena). The participial description pulls out the ianitor’s chain, his physical imprisonment, as his most significant aspect. The hymnic structure of the line, the assimilation of the ianitor to a god, makes the contrast with the physical reality of his chain all the more striking. Later in the poem it comes out that the lover is intimately familiar with the violence to which the ianitor is subject: “Certainly, when you were standing with your tunic removed to be beaten, I spoke words on your behalf to the mistress, as you trembled” (certe ego, cum posita stares ad verbera veste, ad dominam pro te verba tremente tuli, 19-20). The removed garments and the slave’s tremors crystallize the visceral quality of the threat: this will be no metaphorical beating. The logic of the recollection depends upon the unequal status of the lover and the ianitor; the lover is able to intervene precisely because he is not a slave. Furthermore, the lover’s use of this memory is calculating and itself gestures to their inherent inequality. The lover reminds the ianitor of his physical vulnerability in order to demand sexual access to the puella in repayment.

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74 On hymnic elements of the opening address, see Watson 1982.
75 Moreover, in spite of the lover’s insistence of helplessness, elegiac lovers themselves are known to use physical violence themselves, see Am. 1.7. Amusingly, the speaker never actually asserts that he is successful in his pleas. The lover might here be reminding the ianitor of merely an attempt to protect him, rather than actual protection.
for services rendered (23). The lover casts his demand in the terms of reciprocal favors, but there is a major difference here: a favor for the ianitor is a respite from threats of brutal bodily harm; a favor for the lover is the freedom to enter places forbidden to him. The horrifying details of the ianitor’s physical slavery juxtaposed with the lover’s metaphorical, internally enforced bondage undermine the lover’s arguments about his own powerlessness.

The temporal structure and the ending of the poem, moreover, unravel the worldview advanced by the lover and accentuate the very literal ways in which paraclausithyra are by their nature finite and represent an exertion of freedom, rather than a demonstration of powerlessness. Amores 1.6 organizes its narrative around the notion of a time-limit. Scholars have long acknowledged the peculiarity of the refrain in this poem; refrains appear in none of the other elegiac paraclausithyra, or indeed anywhere else in elegy.76 This refrain creates a dramatically different temporal experience of this paraclausithyron. Five times the lover demands “the time of night passes, open the door” (tempora noctis eunt; excute poste seram, 24, 32, 40, 48, 56), thereby placing the lover’s persuasive attempts within an interval that is not only finite, but rapidly slipping away. Unlike the timeless and almost perpetual quality of the paraclausithyra of Propertius and Tibullus, this poem consistently reminds readers that the vigil is a temporary, finite experience. The ianitor must open the door precisely because time is running out for the lover and he will be leaving at the end of a set period of time.77 The repetition of this line five times continues to build this sense of urgency, until finally the feared passage of night occurs.

The arrival of dawn annihilates the lover’s claims about his unending misery and hardship. The speaker describes the coming dawn in strikingly poetic fashion: “And now hoary Lucifer sets his wheels in motion, and a bird urges miserable men towards their work” (Iamque pruinosus molitur Lucifer axes/ inque suum miserum excitat ales opus, 65-6).78 The reference to the birds evokes the experience of morning, but also reminds us of the real world of work and business that exists beyond the lover’s vigil. The lover’s miseries, moreover, are not unique: many experience toil, of a rather more mundane and less self-indulgent sort than the lover. With this the lover begins the process of departing, leaves a wreath as a “witness of time spent so badly” (70), and bids farewell to the door (71-4). This poem thus not only warns of the temporariness of the vigil, but actually shows its end with the dawn. Ovid demystifies the vigil; it is not some eternal state of being, the external manifestation of the lover’s perpetual suffering. Rather, it is a temporary and voluntary act which the lover can, and does, leave when the time comes. The doorway can be left just like any other space—so long as physical chains don’t hold you down.

The argument advanced over the course of the poem by Ovid’s speaker—that internal bonds and senses of self are more powerful and stable than external, physical ones—is powerfully and persistently undercut by his own words and actions. While slavery may not be an entirely static category—the ianitor might, hypothetically, one day be freed, although it seems unlikely—it is nevertheless real and concrete in a way that the metaphorical slavery of elite men

76 Although Catullus makes use of them with some frequency (see 61, 62, 64.327ff.). For an overview of the magical and komastic comparanda, see McKeown 1989: 136.
77 Contrast this with the Propertian lover’s plea that the door open, because otherwise there will be no end (finis) to his grief (1.16.21).
78 Watson 1982 points out that this use of a refrain is anomalous in elegy, but quite common in hymns.
cannot be. The question of what a lover is, and what it means to be a lover, is in its larger parameters neither subjective nor truly negotiable. The lover’s revisionary interpretations and radical self-representations cannot obviate the objective realities that lie behind his existence and experience. The lover’s declarations of unending bondage cannot negate the fact that he leaves with the dawn, unbound, unlike the ianitor. Thus, where Propertius and Tibullus drew into question our ability to definitively understand either lovers or ourselves, Ovid instead reintroduces some stable ground. In the face of a misleading representation of identity, it is still possible to differentiate—at least in broad strokes—between clear and stable categories. A slave is fundamentally different than an elite lover, and objectively worse off. While some questions may remain—for instance, does the lover sincerely believe his own rhetoric, or do his arguments rather derive from cynical self-interest?—this uncertainty is contained by clear boundaries. While Propertius and Tibullus emphasize the malleability and uncertainty attendant upon the apparently clearly codified identities taken up by Roman people, Ovid instead points precisely to points of wide consensus and physical certainty. In this poem, Ovid contrasts the artificiality of elegiac identity with the relative stability of other, more physically grounded, identities, like that of the ianitor.

**Conclusion**

Although most frequently read as either commentary on the relationship between lover and beloved or the solitary act of composition, Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid dramatize and interrogate the relationship between lover and non-lovers through the elegiac vigil. Just as the doorway itself does not exist in isolation, but embedded within a larger urban and social context, so too the excluded lovers do not sing their laments in solitude, cut off from the rest of the world. On the contrary, the elegiac paraclausithyra instead are substantially concerned with the problem of the lover’s relationship with the rest of the Roman world, with the non-elegiac. Elegiac poets explicitly pose the vigil as a performative, social act in parallel with traditional elite display in the doorway, but rather than communicating participation in a broad community and shared values, the vigil instead demonstrates difference, a set of values and activities utterly at odds with those of the majority. The lover’s position in limine represents an alienation from the external world as much as the internal one.

While the lover’s status with regards to the mistress within is in some sense straightforward—she, or her keepers, reject him, and keep him out with the physical force of the door—the lover’s status in the external world is more ambivalent. Although excluded, he is not quite external. He sits at some remove from the street, and the bustle of everyday life. This separation, however, is more tenuous than that between lover and beloved: no physical obstruction, no harsh door, separates him from this external world. Elegiac lovers respond to this ambivalence by asserting a separation based on their innate identity as lovers, maintaining the fictions both that vigils are compulsory for them in ways that are more concrete than physical doors or chains, and that they are unending. The imbalance between the clear, and clearly enforced, absence of the beloved, and the physical proximity—but ideological distance—of other Romans generates the somewhat counter-intuitive outcome that the elegiac paraclausithyra substantially dedicate themselves to defining and describing how the lover relates to, and fits into, Roman society.
Furthermore, close analysis of the three paraclausithyra from this external perspective reveals significant differences between the elegiac poets in how they conceptualize what it means to be a lover in a Roman world. Even on the most basic level, the three elegiac authors disagree about the nature of the relationship between lovers and society at large. In Propertius’ world, more conservative values are explicitly rendered outdated, as the age of triumphal glory has given way to that of elegiac vigils. Although the lover continues to be misunderstood, nevertheless, he fears neither violence nor discovery, and his ability to impose upon the door, and even to turn the door into an elegiac figure, suggests a rather surprising amount of power and influence. Ovid, likewise in his paraclausithyron envisions a lover remarkably free and empowered. Far from actually fearing for his own physical safety, he wields credible threats against the *ianitor*. But where Propertius’ lover derives a kind of power from converting other characters into elegiac-adjacent figures, Ovid’s lover’s security originates from the opposite transition: the lover leaves the doorway and melts back into the normal operations of Roman elite society. Tibullus, on the contrary, sees an openly hostile and dangerous world for lovers. The only safety for lovers in the Tibullan world lies in the ability to disappear from sight altogether.

These three distinct visions of the lover’s relationship with the rest of Roman society, moreover, imagine the nature of identity and communication in dramatically different ways. Tibullus and Propertius both dramatize encounters in which it becomes ever more difficult to locate a clear and objective sense of character’s identities and what they mean. Propertius’ door and lover misunderstand each other and themselves so thoroughly as to throw into question the existence of clearly delineated identities with absolute meanings. The uncertainty of Tibullus’ world is not the result of communication, but rather the inherently competitive and dangerous nature of living and articulating a marginal identity in the world. The lover must persuasively craft and perform an identity that compels others to leave him alone. The performance of identity obscures and it ultimately becomes impossible to know what realities lie behind the performance. Ovid seems to react against both Propertius and Ovid in his representation of the performance of identity in the doorway; he instead emphasizes the certain, physical realities that underlie many identities, suggesting that these realities are more determining than any internal sense of self or deceptive persuasion.

The vigil thus engages with central questions about what it means to be a lover and how lovers relate to the larger Roman world, and reveals fissures within the genre on these questions. For all three authors, the vigil does not represent elegy as a genre isolated and utterly cut off from all that is elegiac, but rather continuously engaged in discursive processes of negotiating its place in a larger Roman world that does not share its values. The vigil, however, does not itself exist in isolation within elegiac corpora, but rather stands in opposition to yet another spatial trope: that of the journey outside of Rome. If the vigil explores processes of articulating elegiac identity, and confronting its limitations, then elegiac travel narratives conversely explore the nuances and contradictions of non-elegiac identities.
Journeys Untaken: 
Propemptica and the Worlds Beyond Elegy

Introduction

In his programmatic opening poem, Propertius, desperate in the face of his failed love affair, makes a final request of his friends: “Carry me through the furthest races and carry me through the waves, where no woman may know my journey” (ferte per extremas gentes et ferte per undas,/qua non ulla meum femina norit iter, 29-30). Propertius has at this point already considered, and discarded, witchcraft and surgery as solutions to love.¹ In these lines departure appears as the last resort, the only true cure to love. Physical separation, not only from Cynthia, but from any woman who might hold romantic appeal, is the only escape from the travails of love. And indeed, although the proposed journey of 1.1 is promptly forgotten, throughout his corpus Propertius repeatedly returns to the idea that travel is antithetical to love and to being a lover.² Along similar lines, Tibullus, in his opening poem, describes Messalla’s campaigns abroad as a defining contrast to his own life as a lover:³

Te bellare decet terra, Messalla, marique,  
Ut domus hostiles praeferat exuvias,  
Me retinent vinctum formosae vincla puellae…  

53-5

For you, Messalla, it is proper to make war on land and sea in order that your house’s façade may sport spoils; me a beautiful girl’s chains hold bound…

As much as vigils are an essential part of defining the elegiac world-view, so too travel also operates as its natural opposite and as an essential part of defining non-elegiac experiences and values.⁴ Furthermore, like the vigil, the envisioned journeys of elegy represent the poet-lover’s relationship not just to his beloved, but to his fellow elegiac poets and the wider community within which they live.

In spite of—or we might say because of—the oft repeated elegiac distaste for travel, the elegiac corpora are full of descriptions of far-off lands and the itineraries of journeys, both taken and untaken. As the vigil has its own dedicated generic form in the paraclausithyron, so to the

¹ For further discussion of Prop. 1.1, see pages 1-2.  
² Already this narrative of travel’s inherent opposition to elegy is complicated by two elements: 1) Propertius is opening his collection of elegiac poetry by calling for a journey he then does not seem to take, and 2) this called-for journey can also clearly be read meta-poetically as a metaphor for publication and literary distribution. Thus, in terms of the narrative these lines seem to describe a journey that the poet-lover never actually embarks upon, but metaphorically they describe a poetic circulation that is occurring precisely through our reading of this poetic work. The tension between these two readings, the narrative and the metaphoric, points towards the fact that the lover’s rejection of travel and participation in Roman imperial systems is dependent upon these very systems (Keith 2015a).  
³ Kennedy’s view that we should read Tibullus’ character as a travelling soldier already in 1.1, while provocative, is still not widely accepted (1993: 13-15). The import of these lines, however, as I will argue later in this chapter, is complicated by 1.3.  
⁴ It is already evident in these examples that travel, and the world outside of Rome, does not represent a coherent or uniform whole. That is to say, travel for the sake of military campaigns carries different motivations, consequences, and nuances than journeys taken for the sake of education (Prop. 1.6, 3.21) or mercantile profits (3.7).
theme of travel is closely associated with the generic form of the propempticon. In its most basic form, this is a an occasional poem, responding to an impending journey. As with the paraclausithyron and the lover’s vigil, the elegiac poets were neither the first nor the last to make use of the trope, as the propempticon’s roots go all the way back to Homer and the Greek lyric poets. Although it appears across meters and genres, its basic narrative framework ensures that it is always invested in representing the uncertainties of separation and the consequences of departure. Many smaller-scale elements commonly appear, ranging from prayers for safe passage, recriminations, encomium, apprehensive or eager descriptions of foreign lands and seas, etc. The trope seems to have risen to particular prominence in the Augustan era, as instances of it appear not only in the elegiac poets, but also in Horace and Vergil.

However, as with the vigil, the Roman elegists give this poetic form, which had an ancient and widespread history, unprecedented centrality in the articulation of their poetic identities. Within elegy, travel is closely associated with the pressures to conform to normative Roman masculinity—to serve as a soldier, or an administrator in imperial government, or at least to make money through trade. Poems about travel thus tend to be more or less explicitly invested in foundational questions about how elegiac lovers could, and should, relate to mainstream Roman society and its values, which were so at odds with elegiac ones. Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid each include at least one propempticon in their collections, and there is reason to believe that Gallus, the father of Roman love elegy, also included one in his Amores. Even more strikingly, many of these propemptica have clearly programmatic force. Indeed, as may already be apparent in the above mentioned examples from Propertius and Tibullus’ opening poems, the poet-lovers persistently represent their willingness or unwillingness to travel as tied to their identity, their relationship to other Roman men, and the wider poetic landscape. Moreover, as was the case with the elegiac paraclausithyron, close readings of elegiac propemptic poems reveal substantial differences in how the poets conceptualize these relationships.

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5 Men. Rhet. 395.4-32. Cairns offers a broad definition as a set of “logically necessary elements,” namely, “someone departing, another person bidding him farewell, and a relationship of affection between the two, plus an appropriate setting” (1972: 6).
6 Od. 5.203-13, 15.125-9; for some examples from Greek lyric, see Sappho 5, 94, Sol. 19, Pind. (Ol. 6.103-5), Theoc. Id. 7. Cairns 1972: 3-33 lays out the case for a propempticon genre, relying heavily upon Menander Rhetor, who describes the trope and its main variations (but cf. Russell and Wilson 1981); Fedeli 1980: 202-8 provides a useful overview of the genre’s evolution into Roman poetry. Hollis 2007: 22 suggests that Cinna’s lost Propemptikon Pollionis may have exerted significant influence on all later Latin examples of the trope.
7 Cinna’s Propemptikon Pollionis exists only in fragments; Hor. Epod. 1, 10, Carm. 1.3, 14, 3.27, Verg. Ecl.1, Aen. 4.305ff.
8 Servius’ claim that lines from Eclogue 10 lamenting the departure of Lycoris for Gaul were taken from the poetry of Gallus (ad v. 46) strongly suggest that Gallus wrote some kind of propempticon concerning Lycoris’ departure (Yardley 1980, Maltby 2002: 184). It would be particularly interesting to read Gallus’ propempticon given the fact that, unlike the other elegiac poets (as far as we know), he did have a very successful military and political career and travelled extensively (until, of course, he was forced to commit suicide). It seems likely that he would have conceptualized the relationship between love and empire in rather different ways from Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid.
9 Prop. 1.6, 1.8, and 3.21 and Tib. 1.3 most obviously fall into this category. In this chapter I will also discuss Prop. 3.7 and Am. 2.11, which although they are not overtly programmatic, nevertheless both treat questions of how elegy fits into a wider poetic landscape.
In offering a reevaluation of how the elegiac propempticon positions elegiac identity within the Roman world, this chapter intervenes in a bifurcated scholarly tradition. Most earlier treatments of propemptica analyzed these poems along formalist lines. As with the paraclausithyron, there is a vibrant tradition of analyses focused on conventions and innovations within this generic form, although disdain for the trope is rather less than that of the paraclausithyron. Francis Cairns’ *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry* in particular offers a remarkably comprehensive view of the possibilities within the propempticon genre and interactions between propemptica. His analysis, however, focused as it is on the broadest possible view of the trope, does not focus on the specifically elegiac engagement, or questions of why it appealed to elegiac authors to such an extent. More recently, scholars have been bringing feminist and post-colonial approaches to propemptic poems to reveal how the lover’s relationship to the *puella* is implicated in the imperial systems the lover seems to hold at arm’s length in propemptica. Although my readings will draw on the intertextual analysis of the formalists, and accept the fundamental insights of the post-colonialist and feminists, this chapter will approach these poems with a new set of questions.

The propemptic poems are by their very nature relational poems, explicitly engaged in managing the lover’s relationship to the pressures and expectations of a society that does not (apparently) share his values. In this chapter, I will explore what these poems can reveal about the poet-lover’s social existence. Through close readings of a series of travel poems from Propertius (1.6, 1.8, 3.7, and 3.21), Tibullus (1.3), and Ovid (*Am. 2.11*), I will explore how these poets use propemptica to negotiate their relationship not only with other Roman men, but also with other poetic traditions, and with each other. My analysis ultimately makes a case for the dynamism of this *topos*, showing how the elegiac poets use it at once to articulate substantial differences in how they view the nature of identity and the boundaries of the elegiac genre and to express a solidarity that defies these differences.

**Propertius and Embodied Elegiac Poetics**

Of the elegiac poets, Propertius is by far the most preoccupied with travel and the world beyond Italy. The topic dominates multiple poems in each of his four books of poetry, to say nothing of briefer references that dot his works even more regularly. In this chapter I will focus

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12 James 2003 observes the contiguities between propemptic and paraclausithyron when she argues for categorizing the propemptic as a subset of the paraclausithyron (134). Although there are important differences in what these two tropes do for elegy—I would in particular point to the wider view and more intensely intertextual impulses of propemptica—I also see continuity between them and the ways that they negotiate the lover’s place in his society.
13 While I will be focusing on poems that roughly fall into the category of propemptic, travel and foreign landscapes also feature significantly in many of Propertius’ poems. Notably 1.11 and 12 deal with Cynthia’s trip to Baiae, 1.20 tells of the loss of Hylas while journeying with the Argonauts, 2.10 simultaneously maps out a poetic journey up Mount Helicon and Augustus’ campaigns to the East, 2.26 envisions a journey that Propertius and Cynthia could take together, and 3.14 celebrates the looser sexual customs of the Spartans. 2.26 is particularly interesting, in that contrary to the spatial-ideological world built up throughout the rest of his corpus, in this poem Propertius seems to imagine the possibility of an elegiac life with Cynthia at sea. The fragmentary nature of this
on three propemptica and one closely related travel poem from his first and third books, 1.6, 1.8, 3.7, and 3.21. Together, these poems demonstrate how Propertius uses the image of the journey to explore a central node of questions around the relationship between embodied experience, truth, and poetic composition. Furthermore, this sampling of his earlier and later elegiac poetry also reveals how his approaches to these questions evolve over the course of his career. Specifically, I will argue that, by juxtaposing incompatible perspectives of travelers and those they leave behind the paired propemptica 1.6 and 1.8 emphasize the subjectivity of truth and the importance of embodied experiences and literal points-of-view. A soldier leaving on a boat and an abandoned lover literally see different things, and consequently are likely to piece together mutually exclusive, but still true, understandings of what this departure means. To the extent then that our understanding of the world is shaped by our physical experiences of it, a lover can only be a lover by doing the things lovers do, in the spaces of Rome. To leave is to stop seeing an elegiac world, and to fundamentally leave the identity of elegiac lover. These poems, moreover, apply this subjectivity to genre, highlighting the blind-spots and limitations of not just elegy, but all generic perspectives. In Book 3, however, Propertius re-evaluates the possibility of decoupling elegiac identity from the physical experiences of a lover in Rome. 3.7 and 3.21, in dramatically different ways, imagine how the internal, emotional experiences of lovers can be replicated in non-erotic contexts, offering the possibility of a new dispersed elegiac perspective.

**Competing Points of View in 1.6 and 1.8**

The paired propemptica, 1.6 and 1.8, offer the first extended discussions of travel in the Propertian corpus and a striking example of the ways that Propertius layers evaluations and re-evaluations of what journeys mean for those involved. The basic plots of the poems correspond closely, as one character convinces another to remain in Rome for the sake of their relationship rather than travelling abroad with a rival involved in Roman imperial government. The large-scale argument made in both poems appears straightforward, at least initially: lovers, and those involved in love affairs, must remain in Rome, but soldiers and others may travel abroad. But in making this argument, the poems explore the ways that the same symbolic act of a journey can be interpreted in different ways depending on perspective and context. Furthermore, the reinterpretations are offered from perspectives with marked generic associations, posing the conflict between genres as an insoluble one of perspective.

1.6 contrasts Propertius, who remains at home, with Tullus, the “man of action,” who is about to embark on a journey to the east. The poem presents difficulties in its apparently contradictory representations of travel, and how this proposed journey reflects upon Propertius poem, however, makes it very difficult to pinpoint precisely how it fits into Propertius’ broader spatial discourses. Moreover, although anomalous in Propertius’ collection, it exerts a clear influence on Ovid’s propempticon. 14 1.6, 1.8, and 3.21 each fall straightforwardly within the propempticon trope, though they each rearrange the relationships, departures, and stakes in important ways. 3.7, which narrates a journey already taken and ended in death, differs in clear structural ways. However, it also plays with propemptic tropes and explicitly invokes 1.6 and 1.8, making it a useful referent in this discussion.

15 The contrast between the two men has regularly been interpreted as the heart of the poem (e.g., Fedeli 1980: 168, Clarke 2012: 367); this is surely correct, but obscures the importance of the process by which this contrast occurs. My argument in this section is that the multivocal, dialogic nature of the evaluations of Tullus and Propertius is essential to the meaning of the poem.
and his addressee Tullus. Initially Propertius contrasts the boldness and courage required for travel with the lover’s weakness in the face of his beloved’s complaints. The second half of the poem, however, flips the frame, as Propertius emphasizes the difficulties of his life in Rome, and the relative ease and luxury of Tullus’ life abroad. The tension between the halves of the poem, and between apparently contradictory ways of viewing Propertius and Tullus (and lovers and soldiers more broadly), has been a primary point of interest for interpreters. Does the poem ultimately reinforce traditional notions of virtue and accomplishment (by sincerely complimenting Tullus and showing the ridiculousness of Propertius and lovers), or conversely subvert them by showing the strength of lovers and softness of military travel?

I argue that these contradictory interpretations of characters, their actions, and what they mean, do not conceal a single true solution, but rather are symptomatic of the poem’s interest in the ability of different characters, and genres, to interpret the same places, people, and actions differently—in effect, the multiplicity of truth, the subjectivity involved in it. Propertius’ relationship with Tullus undergoes a repeated process of interpretation and revision, which ultimately leaves their relationship dependent upon the stability of signs whose meanings have been shown to be open to contestation.

1.6 offers three distinct views of the same journey—a sea voyage (1–4), a tour of Athens and the riches of Asia (13–14), and finally a procession through cities in Asia (31–6)—which present contradictory images of what travel will mean for the characters involved and for their relationship to each other. In the first four lines of the poem, the speaker voices his willingness to follow Tullus across seas, and even to the ends of the earth:

Non ego nunc Hadriae vereor mare noscere tecum,  
Tulle, neque Aegaeo ducere vela salo,  
cum quo Rhipaeos possim conscendere montes  
ulteriusque domos vadere Memnonias…

1-4

I do not fear to experience the Adriatic Sea with you, Tullus, nor to set sail on the Aegean Sea [with you], with whom I could climb the Rhipaean Mountains and stride beyond than the Halls of Memnon.

Travel acts as a means of masculine bonding and an opportunity for epic-style proofs of courage. The lines closely intertwine the speaker’s relationship with Tullus, bravery, and travel. A voyage across the Adriatic and then the Aegean is a test of fortitude (non vereor 1), but that

16 1.6 is in fact remarkable for how little interest it has attracted from scholars. Cairns in 1972 commented on the “relatively unproblematic nature of the elegy” (16), while Clack claimed in 1977 that “Propertius 1.6 is a victim of silence” (187). This relative obscurity has not substantially changed in the ensuing decades. For the most significant treatments see Cairns 1972: 3–17; Cairns 1974; Clack 1977; Fedeli 1980: 167–85; Stahl 1985: 79–98; Heyworth 2007a: 23–6.

17 Especially Cairns 1972: 4–5; Clack 1977.


20 Little is known about Tullus outside of Propertius’ verse; he is generally agreed to be the nephew of the proconsul L. Volcacius Tullus (Jones 1955 provided the epigraphic evidence for the proconsular Tullus). Tullus has been widely interpreted to be a patron of Propertius’, though the precise nature of that dynamic has been debated, see especially Griffin 1985: 56–7; White 1993; Heyworth 2007b; Roman 2014: 140–1, 150-162.
mettle is itself dependent upon the presence of Tullus (\textit{tecum, / Tulle} 1-2). The close relationship between poet and Tullus is accentuated structurally as the two men frame the first line (\textit{Non ego...tecum}) and link together both the first couplet (\textit{non ego...Tulle}) and the first couplet to the second (\textit{Non ego...cum quo}). The intimacy and co-dependence between these characters structures the lines grammatically as well as thematically.

The intimacy of Propertius and Tullus is predicated upon the world that they are imagined as inhabiting, namely, an epic world.\textsuperscript{21} Propertius and Tullus appear in a vast landscape of opportunity; all other figures drop out of view. Apparently unsatisfied by the dangers of the actually planned expedition, Propertius boasts of his willingness to go to the ends of the Earth with Tullus. The Rhipaean Mountains were commonly conceived of as the Northernmost reaches of the world, while the Halls of Memnon similarly point to a Southern extreme. The four lines taken together contain encompassing opposites, stretching both within and across the two couplets: sea and land, north and south, mountains and deserts, real and mythic itineraries.\textsuperscript{22} The references to the Rhipaean Mountains and Halls of Memnon in addition to framing a vast world to be explored also may offer further epic coloring: Memnon fought in the Trojan War and features prominently in Trojan War cycles.\textsuperscript{23} Taken altogether then, these lines use travel to enable masculine bonding through the shared experiences of adventure in a vast, epic landscape.\textsuperscript{24}

The ensuing lines, however, offer a markedly different way to interpret such epic-style journeys, as Propertius reports Cynthia’s complaints about his intended travels. Propertius informs Tullus that he cannot go abroad after all, because Cynthia has persuaded him to stay.\textsuperscript{25} She—perhaps not unreasonably—understands the proposed journey not in terms of intimacy with Tullus, but rather through its cost to her. The same action, going abroad, can be interpreted simultaneously as accompanying Tullus and abandoning Cynthia. If Propertius departs, it will mean the end of his relationship with Cynthia \textit{(illa meam mihi iam se denegat, 9)}: he cannot maintain both relationships equally, simultaneously. Far from marking loyalty and camaraderie, from Cynthia’s perspective Propertius’ departure would break vows he has made and prove his

\textsuperscript{21} These lines may already evoke some of the most famous voyages across the Aegean—those of the Iliadic heroes, and the Argonauts.

\textsuperscript{22} This last dichotomy was obviously less clearly delineated in antiquity than in contemporary times; nevertheless, there will have been a substantial difference in geographic areas regularly traversed, as opposed to those primarily (or only) experienced through myth and literature.

\textsuperscript{23} Although interestingly, not in the \textit{Iliad} or \textit{Odyssey}, where he only appears once (\textit{Od. 11.522}). However, he was the protagonist of the lost epic the \textit{Aethiopis}, which seems to have potentially both been influenced by and influenced the \textit{Iliad}.

\textsuperscript{24} As Fedeli notes (1980: 171), similar lists of extreme places where one might go appear also in Catullus (11) and Horace (\textit{Carm. 2.6, 3.4.29-36, Epod. 1.11-14}). But these examples actually reaffirm the association of these landscapes with epic/non-lyric poetics even though they appear in lyrical works. For example, in Catull. 11, Catullus’ future travels are presented as an occasion for Catullus to break off his relationship with Lesbia (and presumably also to stop writing erotic poetry).

\textsuperscript{25} Her efforts at persuasion are reported through indirect speech, which may reasonably inspire us to wonder to what extent we are meant to view Propertius as the true author of her words (see James 2010). Regardless of how we view Cynthia’s fictional presence and voice, what is important for my argument is that she is represented as a distinct source of perspective and interpretation.
ingratitude (*ingrate*, 10).\(^{26}\) Further, the speaker’s unpunished broken vows would prove that the whole cosmic system had fundamentally failed, that “there are no gods” (*et queritur nullos esse relicta deos*, 8). Cynthia interprets this journey—already imagined as capable of defying natural boundaries by the speaker—as dangerously transgressive and as reflecting the disloyal nature of the speaker. The content of Cynthia’s critique thus maintains the premise that a journey can define both one’s character and relationships, as the first four lines also imply. Within the context of the poem, however, the juxtaposition of the initial—masculine, epic—interpretation of Propertius’ proposed journey with Cynthia’s critique not only points to the limitations of the first perspective on travel, but also, potentially, of Cynthia’s as well. The two interpretations of travel and its meaning for the lover are simultaneously irreconcilable and true.

Furthermore, these two conflicting interpretations are represented not merely as a clash between individual perspectives, but between generic ones. The initial image of the journey has clear epic overtones, while Cynthia poses as an elegiac figure, albeit one that links elegy to a long poetic tradition of poetic critiques of epic and epic figures. In the initial description of Cynthia’s complaints, she is clearly represented as a cipher for an elegiac lover. She uses language and behavior typical of the elegiac lover, uttering “complaints” (*querela*, 8, *querelis*, 11) and “prayers” (*preces*, 6), which are typically the modes of Propertius’ own songs.\(^{27}\) It is not only that she appears here to be the desiring partner, as Propertius usually is, but that she is in fact represented as producing elegiac poetry; she is marked as an authoritative elegiac voice. Her scathing interpretation of Propertius’ intended travels thus represents an elegiac response to travel and aligns elegiac song with the specific perspective of those left behind, of those who stand to lose through heroic travels.

Moreover, by focalizing this elegiac critique of epic travel through the figure of Cynthia, Propertius aligns the elegiac with a long history of feminine critiques of epic. Propertius explicitly gestures to “the generic nature of [Cynthia’s] words”\(^{28}\) by describing her as “threatening those things which an aggrieved woman is accustomed [to say] to an ungrateful man” (*illa minatur/ quae solet ingrato tristis amica viro*, 10). Stephen Heyworth suggests Catullus’ Ariadne and Euripides’ Medea as possible antecedents for this category of *tristis amica*, an argument well supported by the similarity of Medea and Ariadne’s complaints to Cynthia’s, especially in their concerns over broken faith and the apparent impotence of the gods.\(^{29}\) Both Euripides’ Medea and Catullus’ Ariadne offer reevaluations of epic heroes and journeys from epic-adjacent literary forms, tragedy and epyllion respectively. These forms, which take as their point of interest the ancillary, and especially the female, characters of epic

\(^{26}\) Manuscripts read *irato*, but the humanists’ emendation *ingrato* has been widely accepted. It is extremely difficult to make sense of *irato*, since the departing lover would seem to have no reason for anger. Moreover, 1.16.38 may offer a parallel corruption of *irato* for *ingrato*. For further discussion, see Heyworth 2007a, Cairns 1974, Kershaw 1991.

\(^{27}\) On elegiac *querela* as a characteristic attribute of elegiac persuasion see James 2003: 108ff; McCarthy 2019: 62-66.

\(^{28}\) Heyworth 2007a: 24.

\(^{29}\) E.g., *nunc iam nulla viro iuranti femina credat,/nulla vi ri speret sermones esse fideles* (64.143-4); ὁδὸν ἔχω μαθείνει θεοῖς νομίζεις τοὺς τότ’ οὐκ ἄρχειν ἐτυχή καυήταθα θέσμι/ἀνθρώποις τὰ νῦν, ἐξει σύνοισθα γ’ ἐς ἔμ’, οὐκ ἐδώρκος δόν. (*Med.* 492-5). Apollonius of Rhodes’ Medea might offer another possible influence (*Argon.* 4.35ff.). Dido also touches upon similar themes (*Aen.* 4.305-30), but had not been written at the time of the *Mononbiblos*’ publication.
cycles, reveal the human costs of the behavior of heroes, and the dependence of heroes upon feminine knowledge and skill. There is humor to Cynthia adopting the position of Ariadne or Medea—ingrato in particular may pick up on the distance between mythic antecedents, who betrayed their families to assist their lovers, and Cynthia, who presumably has rather less extreme claims to gratitude from Propertius—but the humor need not undermine the critique of masculine epic journeys presented.

The contrast between Propertius’ and Cynthia’s readings of his travels thus both highlights how genres can interpret the same events differently and also how genres are themselves constituted by specific, human, perspectives. Both interpretations are grounded in bodily experiences, are located in points-of-view limited in the same way that human sight is limited. If the first four lines look at the journey through an epic lens, that is a point of view situated in the ship, focused on the heroic men searching out the next horizons. Cynthia and the mythological women who came before her in contrast take the view from shore (15-18). They can no more see the opportunities awaiting the travelers abroad than the travelers can see the suffering they leave behind them. Both figures, both genres, are circumscribed by their line of sight. The assimilation of Cynthia and her elegiac complaints to this longer tradition of feminine complaints—occurring in a variety of meters and genres—both provides historic precedents for elegiac poetry and priorities, and also suggests a way of thinking about poetics that privileges point of view and experience over formal attributes. This impression of genre as embodied, each with a particular and necessarily limited perspective, provocatively places epic and elegy on an equal footing, with equal, albeit distinct, claims to truth.

Exposed to Cynthia’s non-heroic perspective, Propertius re-envisions the journey once again. The speaker questions the value of travel abroad for Tullus and himself, but now separately:

an mihi sit tanti doctas cognoscere Athenas
atque Asiae veteres cernere divitias,
ut mihi deducta faciat convicia puppi
Cynthia et insanis ora notet manibus,
osculaque opposito dicat sibi debita vento,
et nihil infido durius esse viro?
tu patrui meritas conare anteire secures,
et vetera oblitis iura refer sociis.

13-20

30 Both Theseus and Jason are only able to achieve their aims through the assistance of Ariadne and Medea, and furthermore their betrayals are represented as the result of thoughtlessness (Med. 475-491; Catull. 64.246-8). Interestingly, this poem sets Cynthia up as not merely inspiration for Propertius’ poetry, but as a possible creator of it (Propertius will appropriate her language from 1.6 in his own propemptic complaint in 1.8).
31 These generic connections further strengthen the argument for ingrato as opposed to irato.
32 This notion of genre as closely tied to perspective is in fact pervasive in Propertius, and common in other elegiac authors as well. The representation of elegiac poetry as querela, for instance, similarly identifies the genre as about this specific experience of pain and lament. Compare with Am. 1.1.1-4, which instead emphasizes the importance of meter for genre.
Would it be worth so much to me to acquaint myself with learned Athens and to look on the ancient wealth of Asia, that I could endure that Cynthia should hurl abuse and mark her cheeks with crazed hands when my ship has been launched, and say that she owes her kisses to an opposing wind and that nothing is harder than a faithless man? You go ahead and try to surpass the well-deserved fasces of your uncle and carry ancient obligations to forgetful allies.

Propertius and Tullus’ journeys diverge; Propertius’ shifts to a purely hypothetical trip to Athens and Asia, while Tullus’ proceeds further east. Tullus’ travels continue to function in a system of martial, masculine competition and achievement. His patriotic and familial duties align with his own personal ambition: by striving to outperform his uncle, he can bring honor to himself and his family, and ensure that Rome keeps its promises.33 This is a more culturally specific image of achievement abroad than appeared in the first four lines: Tullus works not merely for his own individual honor, but for a specifically Roman imperial system into which his familial and personal achievements are interwoven. But the values are not radically altered: this journey once again appears to balance the requirements of proper relationships between men (now between Tullus and his uncle, between Rome and her allies) and the possibility of adventure and accomplishment (the “forgetful” allies in particular dangle the possibility of martial glory).

Propertius’ own imaginary journey, in contrast, re-envisions the itinerary east through the lens of Cynthia’s critique, drawing out Propertius’ isolation and the tensions between personal ambition and natural obligations. The verbs cognoscere and cernere frame travel as an act of perception, of knowledge acquisition, echoing noscere in the first line of the poem. The prominent placement of mihi in line 13 (and its reappearance in the same metrical position in line 15) presents the benefits, and costs, of travel as personal and individual, in contrast to the homosocial view suggested by tecum in line 1. The personal benefit of traveling abroad is directly contrasted with the cost of leaving (an mihi sit tanti...ut). Moreover, Ariadne, and perhaps Medea, may lurk in the background of this itinerary: after all, Athens was the destination of Theseus when he abandoned Ariadne on the beach, while the “wealth of Ancient Asia” might similarly describe the golden fleece Jason sought—that is to say, Propertius here still seems to be imagining an epic itinerary, but reading it through the lens of non-epic critique.34

33 The precise context for this expedition east and the allies in question are fraught. K.M.T. Atkinson (1958) argued that the action of “carrying ancient obligations to forgetful allies” specifically referred to legislation linked to the “restoration of the Republic” in 27 BCE, and that Lucius Volcacius Tullus’ proconsulship in Asia occurred in 26/25 BCE. The ensuing scholarly consensus has tended instead to date his proconsulship to 30/29 BCE, and has read line 20 instead as referring to Augustus’ assertion of control of Asian territories following the end of the Civil War (Cairns 1974: 156-63, Fedeli 1980: 179). Heslin 2010, in a provocative but appealing argument, instead dates this poem to 33-2 BCE, thus placing it in the context of Augustus’ pre-Actium maneuvering against Antony. I am inclined to accept Heslin’s dating and historical explanation, but it is worth noting as well that part of the scholarly problem derives from the generic quality of the poetic description. Although the line would have resonated with contemporary contexts, they are vague enough to resonate with any number of eras of Roman history.

34 This set of destinations could also be read through a thoroughly contemporary lens, as James 2003 does when she reads “the riches of Asia” as “indicat[ing] the profit motives of the rejected military mission and thus imply a lost financial opportunity” (232). Doctas Athenas may also recall the custom of sending young Roman men to Greece to be educated. Far from requiring us to choose between these interpretations, I would argue that the alignment of the itineraries of epic heroes and upper-class Roman men continues one of Propertius’ persistent rhetorical strategies of associating traditional Roman masculinity with weightier, and often epic, poetic topics (e.g., 1.7).
This possibility is further supported by the ensuing image of Cynthia hurling abuse at the departing ship (15), which clearly recalls Ariadne on the beach. Propertius imagines Cynthia not merely calling him unfaithful, but also placing him in a larger category of unfaithful men (“nothing is harder than an unfaithful man”). Through the lens of elegiac reassessment, epic journeys not only prove the moral failings of heroes, they are also isolating and selfish. Travel now generates differences in character, and place, for Tullus and Propertius—a voyage will take Propertius to Athens, Tullus to the cities of Lydia, will prove Propertius’ selfishness, Tullus’ patriotism. Paradoxically, it is in fact by remaining home that Propertius can best maintain his bond with Tullus, by honoring values they share. If Propertius were to travel, it would in fact make him less like Tullus: he would become infidus, while Tullus was enforcing fidelity by restoring iura. The proposed travels of Tullus and Propertius are in effect being read through different lenses now, with the result that the same action undertaken by these two men generates different meanings for their characters, and opposite actions create the same meaning.

The following lines attempt to explain and explore how this double vision can exist, how travel and immobility can be simultaneously opposites and the same. On the one hand, lines 21-30 show an awareness of the difference between Propertius and Tullus, between love and war, and open with a clear dichotomy to communicate this: Tullus never yielded to amori, but rather always had a passion for armatae patriae (21-22). Tullus cannot be read through the same elegiac lens as Propertius, because he has no beloved to lament his departure, because he does not engage in erotics. However, the implied distinction between the two men here is already muddled with similarity: cura, a noun describing emotional attachment, is regularly used in Propertius to describe erotic affairs and their tribulations. Its use here presents the pursuits of the two men not so much as opposites, but complementary venues for passion. Later, Propertius reverses the direction of metaphorical borrowing, insisting “I’m not a man cut out by nature for glory, or for war: this is the campaign the fates want me to undertake” (non ego sum laudi, non natus idoneus armis: hanc me militiam fata subire volunt, 29-30).

On the one hand, a clear distinction can once again be read here, between literal military campaigns and the metaphorical campaigns of love. But by occluding the explicit language of love in favor of the militia amoris motif here, the lines actually withhold a clear contrast: arms and praise versus “this” campaign. The grammatical structure of two negatives (non...non) followed by a positive makes a contrast simultaneously comprehensible and entirely dependent upon importing external information into words that do not in themselves signify difference. Both cura and militia suggest the shared attributes of love and war, of Tullus and Propertius’ lives apart, but also the vulnerabilities of words and signs to context. Just as the meaning of the journey east has turned out to be dependent upon perspective, so the very language describing the activities of these two men in love and war reveals these to be simultaneously the same and diametrically opposed.

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35 E.g., 1.1.36, 1.3.46, 1.5.10.
36 Kennedy 1993 draws into question the viability of metaphor as a useful term in elegy (46-7); although I take his points about how blurry the distinctions over original spheres of language can be, it nevertheless seems both clear and important that cura more regularly refers to erotics, and that the motif of militia amoris does precisely draw its impact from a displacement.
37 Cf. Conte’s reading of the elegiac use of militia amoris and other traditional Roman values as acting as an “act of reinterpretation [that] retains a full awareness of the substantial difference between the text of origin and that of arrival” (1994: 40), and thus as a rhetorical strategy that emphasizes differences rather than lines of similarity.
The instability of symbols in a world in which there is no such thing as absolute truth, where different perspectives can interpret the same journey in opposite ways, and opposite endeavors can make men more alike, haunts the final lines of the poem. Propertius attempts to provide stable signs as a supplement for the uncertainty created by his separation from Tullus:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{at tu seu mollis qua tendit Ionia, seu qua} \\
\text{Lydia Pactoli tingit arata liquor,} \\
\text{seu pedibus terras seu pontum remige carpes,}^{38} \\
\text{ibis, et accepti pars eris imperii:} \\
\text{tum tibi si qua mei veniet non immemor hora,} \\
\text{vivere me duro sidere certus eris.}
\end{align*}
\]

But you, whether where soft Ionia stretches, or where the water of Pactolus stains Lydian fields, whether you traverse the earth with feet or the sea with oars, you will go and be part of an accepted authority; then if an hour not forgetful of me should come to you, you will be sure that I live under a harsh star.

These lines draw attention to the uncertainty created by geographic distance. As Propertius begins to imagine a leg of the journey that does not include him, his inability to know where Tullus is or what he is doing becomes more apparent. The repetition of four \textit{seu} clauses emphasizes precisely this uncertainty, which is further compounded by the fact that the grammatical construction started by \textit{at tu} in line 31 is held in suspense until three lines later. Propertius can map neither Tullus’ location nor his path. He is left guessing at Tullus’ possible itineraries and modes of travel. Tullus too is left to imagine Propertius’ fate—if he can find the time. The conditional nature of Tullus’ recollection of Propertius highlights a further uncertainty: Propertius will not even be able to know whether or not Tullus remembers him and continues to value their relationship. The geographic distance between the two men, which occurs as a direct result of their ideological distance, of the incompatible perspectives through which their actions must be interpreted, prevents Propertius from knowing how, or even if, Tullus thinks of him and his decision to remain in Rome.

In the face of this uncertainty, Propertius offers two stabilizing pieces of information. Propertius knows that Tullus will be “part of an accepted authority” (\textit{accepti pars eris imperii}, 34), while in turn, if Tullus does think of him, Propertius instructs that he should rest assured that Propertius lives “under a harsh star” (\textit{vivere me duro sidere certus eris}, 36). Neither of these characterizations actually locates the character physically, but rather places them in large, apparently immutable, systems that determine the quality of their life: the empire and fate (as determined by the stars).\textsuperscript{39} These two systems offer markedly different meanings for Propertius and Tullus, as the empire guarantees acceptance and ease, while Propertius’ star portends unending suffering. Propertius and Tullus’ mutual understanding of each other, their ability to

\textsuperscript{38}I follow Skutsch’s conjecture of \textit{remige carpes} for \textit{carpere remis} (see Skutsch 1973 and 1952), as Heyworth does.

\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Imperium} could here operate in a relatively limited sense of the specific command that Tullus will take on, but also allows for the wider implications of the Roman Empire understood broadly. The representation of the empire as essentially part of a larger cosmic system appears elsewhere in Augustan literature, see especially \textit{imperium sine fine} (\textit{Aen.} 1.279), and \textit{astra ferar, nomenque erit indeliebile nostrum./quaque patet domitis Romana potentia terris} (\textit{Met.} 15.876-7). For more on the cosmic implications of empire in the \textit{Aeneid} see Hardie 1986.
imagine each other, must rely upon the permanent implications of their decisions to remain behind or to leave Rome, insofar as it even is a voluntary decision. The only solution the poem can offer to maintaining intimacy across distances—geographic, ideological, generic—is the stability of external signifiers, which the poem has already demonstrated are vulnerable to subjective interpretation. Indeed, even these two final signifiers, of the “accepted government” and “harsh star” are framed through a specifically elegiac sense of success and hardship.

The instability of signifiers in 1.6, and the dominance of subjective perspective in determining meaning, offers relatively little hope for the ability of language, or symbolic actions, to generate true understanding between people. The poem moves from a clear, singular meaning of this journey for both Tullus and Propertius, to a cascading series of interpretations and reinterpretations, which dislocate the journey from any singular meaning, or even itinerary. The end of the poem seems to land on the analysis that travel is the same for Tullus as staying is for Propertius, that opposite actions can in essence mean the same thing when placed in different contexts or looked at from a different perspective. But the dialogic process of the poem as a whole circumscribes the power of any one analysis.

Moreover, the poem repeatedly frames subjectivity as a metapoetic, generic issue. The types of stories that poets write are necessarily constrained by their point of view, by what they see and what they do not. If there is no absolute truth preexisting interpretation, then there is also no universal, all-knowing genre in contrast to the limited sphere of elegiac complaint. Epic’s view from the sea, from the heights of masculine endeavors, blinds it to Cynthia and Ariadne calling out from the shore. 1.6 thus envisions the relationship between elegy and epic, and truly between all different poetics, as occurring on equal footing, but speaking from different points of reference. Elegy and epic both communicate incomplete truths, and the distance created by disparate subjective experiences seems to doom attempts to bridge the gaps.

**Sharing Space in 1.8**

1.8 offers a solution—of a kind—to this problem of how people can relate to each other, in spite of the divisive forces of difference. Instead of exploring the relationship between the contrasting genres of elegy and epic, between those viewing the world from disparate vantage points, 1.8 addresses the problems latent in working within a tradition, in sharing vantage points. 1.6 imagined elegy, and Propertian poetics, as voicing critiques voiced before—“the types of things an angry woman is accustomed to say” (1.6.10). The point of Propertian poetics—at least in this representation—is not originality but alignment with a specific perspective, one with a long tradition. In 1.6, this alignment offers a way of thinking about epic’s blind spots and elegy’s access to truth. 1.8 instead leans into the tension inherent in the experience of sharing a point-of-view, of sharing a voice—in short, of speaking from a shared identity and writing in a shared genre. 1.8 is on several levels a poem constituted by shared spaces and echoed words, notably those of Gallus, Vergil, Catullus, and Cynthia herself. Propertius represents himself as

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40 The use of the term acceptus, the natural opposite of the lover’s status as exclusus, seems particularly pointed.  
41 A point not lost upon Catullus, as Theseus fails to regard either Ariadne left behind on the island or his father, left behind in Athens. Catullus even describes Theseus’ thoughtlessness through the image of a mental fog (64.207-11), connecting Theseus’ callousness to this question of sight and perspective.  
42 Propertius does offer contrasting representations of what his poetic corpus is and is for; see note 62 below on 1.7 for further discussion.
inhabiting and voicing an already voiced world and testing his ability to simultaneously speak from a communal perspective and establish his own voice and space. Even as the shared perspectives generate tension, both in the speaker’s ability to inalienably possess his work, or beloved, they also create opportunities for intimacy across the boundaries of space and time, the possibility of a stability of meaning and understanding that seemed impossible in 1.6.

It is important before more closely analyzing 1.8 to observe how its very existence in a pairing with 1.6 raises questions about shared spaces and experiences. A propempticon like 1.6, 1.8 tells an eerily similar story, but all the characters inhabit different roles. Where Cynthia sang laments to convince Propertius not to travel abroad with an imperially-employed rival, now Propertius sings laments in order to persuade Cynthia not to leave with a new, unnamed, government official. The parallels, moreover, extend beyond the structural, as Propertius’ propempticon in 1.8 linguistically echoes Cynthia’s inset propempticon in 1.6. The flip-flopping of these two characters in the roles of abandoner and abandoned suggests both a tension and an opportunity. On the one hand, the identities of lover and beloved are far more fluid than the characters acknowledge because they are based in sets of shared experiences, grounded in perspectives from specific spaces. Altered contexts—the passage of time and poems, the decisions of others, movement itself—can alter one’s status as lover or beloved. Moreover, the contrast between Cynthia-as-lover and Propertius-as-lover opens the door for against-the-grain readings of the entire corpus, for the possibility that perhaps from Cynthia’s perspective she has always been the lover to Propertius’ beloved. And yet, in addition to the uncertainty created by these flipped roles, the pairing of these poems also offers a glimpse of a truer, more complete union and understanding possible through the power of shared experience. If Propertius and Cynthia can mirror each other and inhabit each other’s roles as lover and beloved, then this also creates the possibility for a kind of sublime parity, with both partners desiring and desired, both intimately familiar with the sufferings and joys of the other.

As the poem opens, Propertius attempts to dissuade Cynthia from following a praetor to Illyria by describing the bitterly cold Illyria through Vergilian, and perhaps Gallan, precedent. Specifically, Cynthia’s journey closely tracks the travels of Lycoris, as narrated in Vergil’s Eclogue 10. Lycoris, like Cynthia, leaves behind a desolated lover, but unlike Cynthia, follows an itinerary northward:

43 Cynthia’s Illyrian praetor re-emerges in 2.16. Dzino 2008 offers a possible identification of the praetor with Cnaeus Baebius Tamphilus Vála Numonianus, but acknowledges that the evidence is thin. The very anonymity of the praetor, given the many other named rivals in the Propertian corpus, is probably significant.
44 Even in this very poem, Propertius rejects the possibility of being anything other than Cynthia’s lover (21-2), even as the poem recalls his role as Cynthia’s beloved in 1.6.
45 The role reversal in 1.6 and 1.8 preview the much more explicit rereading of the corpus through Cynthia’s eyes which occurs in 4.7. It is also worth keeping in mind that the representation of Cynthia as lover to Propertius as departing beloved in 1.6 is of course entirely mediated through Propertius’ voice and imagination (see especially James 2010).
46 See Oliensis 1997 for a discussion of mirrored experiences of desire in the homoerotic relationships of elegy. But also, for another ancient idealized conceptions of love based on parity/sameness, see Symposium 189e-193b; Konstan 1994.
47 Servius claims that these lines are taken from Gallus (ad v. 46), and scholars have widely, and reasonably, accepted the idea that these lines are substantially adapted from Gallus and that Vergil’s Eclogue 10, which concerns itself with the laments of Gallus after his love Lycoris has abandoned him, makes extensive use of Gallus’ poetry.
Tu procul a patria (nec sit mihi credere tantum)
Alpinas, a, dura, niues et frigora Rheni
me sine sola uides. A, te ne frigora laedant!
a, tibi ne teneras glacies secet aspera plantas!

You, far from your fatherland (let me not believe such a thing), will behold the Alpine snows, ah, hard one, and the chill of the Rhine, without me. Ah, may that chill not harm you! Ah, let the bitter ice not cut your tender feet!

According to Servius, Lycoris followed Antony to Gaul,\(^{48}\) which matches well with both the landmarks and the extreme weather referenced in Vergil’s lines. But Lycoris’ surroundings also clearly reflect the internal, emotional, experience of Gallus. From the beginning of the tenth Eclogue the natural world reacts to human emotions and actions: the very landscape mourns Gallus’ fatal grief.\(^{49}\) Even as Gallus lies in an idealized pastoral setting, he envisions Lycoris in a location that embodies his feelings of loss and alienation. As Gallus dies from the feelings of loneliness and loss that Lycoris has created, he imagines her surroundings as isolated and dangerously cold. The repetition of *a*, first as a preposition expressing separation and then as an exclamation of distress, dramatically plays on separation as sorrow.\(^{50}\) These lines may reflect some reality of the experience of travel in the Alps and Gaul, but also clearly use these spaces to communicate the emotional anguish of separation.\(^{51}\)

Cynthia’s journey bears a striking resemblance to that of Lycoris in Vergil, as scholars have frequently observed.\(^{52}\) The closest parallels occur as Propertius worries specifically about Cynthia’s ability to bear the cold:

\[
\text{tune audire potes vesani murmura ponti}
\text{fortis, et in dura nave iacere potes?}
\text{tu pedibus teneris positas fulcire pruinas,}
\text{tu potes insolitas, Cynthia, ferre nives?}
\]

\(^{5-8}\)

Are you able to hear the roar of the insane sea—without quailing—and are you able to lie on a hard deck? Are you able to place your tender feet on the fallen frost, and are you able, Cynthia, to bear unaccustomed snows?

\(^{48}\) Which Antony is a vexed question. Mark Antony was not in Gaul during the time of Cytheris’ affair with Gallus, so other lovers have been proposed, including Lucius Antonius. But the confusion might reasonably lead one to question whether there was a historical journey, or if Gaul was chosen precisely because it suited the emotional landscape Vergil/Gallus wished to create. Keith 2010 also notes the potential relevance of Gallus’ cognomen—which means “Gallic”—to this itinerary (28).

\(^{49}\) In addition to presumed influences from Gallus’ poetry, *Ecl. 10* is based on Theoc. *Id.* 1, in which the natural world mourns the death of Daphnis.

\(^{50}\) Ford 1995 suggests that the repeated exclamatory *a* may be an imitation of Gallus’ elegiac style; see Kershaw 1980 as a feature of Propertian and Tibullan poetics.

\(^{51}\) Cucciarelli 2017 suggests additionally metapoetic implications to these lines in the hard/soft dichotomies, so regularly used in elegy.

\(^{52}\) In depth discussions of the intertextual relationship include Pasoli 1977, Gagliardi 2012, Heslin 2018.
Propertius closely evokes the images of Lycoris’ travels, without actually using very many of Vergil’s words—note una for Vergil’s sola, pedibus for Vergil’s plantas, and that Cynthia hears, lies upon, and bears the harsh world around her rather than seeing it, as Lycoris does. There is a dramatic repetition, as in Vergil, but here it is potes rather than a.\(^{53}\) The itineraries of Lycoris and Cynthia do not match up in their entirety—Propertius prominently pulls the dangers and difficulties of sea-travel into his lament—but cold and isolated Illyria closely corresponds to the Alps and Rhine of Lycoris. Vergil’s stamp on the physical world Propertius here imagines is further underscored by the presence of Vergil’s own name in the form of the Pleiades (Vergiliae): “O, let the time of cold winter be doubled, and let the sailor be unmoving because of slow Pleiades” (\textit{o utinam hibernae duplicentur tempora brumae,/ et sit iners tardis navita}\textit{ Vergilii\textit{s}, 9-10}). Vergil, via the Pleiades, appears as part of the very cosmic fabric of Propertius’ poetic world.\(^{54}\) Propertius thus voices his anxiety and sadness over the potential loss of Cynthia through the images and landscapes that Vergil used to express the loss Gallus felt at Lycoris’ departure, in a poem describing the world’s grief at the loss of Gallus.\(^{55}\) Propertius’ depiction of Illyria simultaneously communicates in poignant terms the feelings of loss and alienation Cynthia’s travels cause for the speaker and also the communion, the poetic solidarity, possible in the shared experiences of grief.\(^{56}\)

At this moment, the poem shifts, as Propertius focuses back upon his own geographic perspective and becomes his own guiding poetic reference by appropriating Cynthia’s laments from 1.6. Propertius prays that Cynthia’s ship will not depart, and that “an unfriendly breeze will not carry away my prayers, nor tolerate that I should remain fixed on an empty shore, repeatedly calling her cruel with an unfriendly hand” (\textit{neve inimica meas elevet aura preces/ et me defixum vacua patiatur in ora/ crudelem infesta saepe vocare manu}!14-16). Propertius now inhabits precisely the same position as Cynthia in 1.6, hurling abuse at a departing ship. Furthermore, he echoes the language from 1.6, in effect quoting himself quoting Cynthia.\(^{57}\) As in Propertius’ use of Vergil, the progression of images closely echoes that of 1.6, with the ship’s rope being

\(^{53}\) The emphasis on ability and endurance rather than separation/loss seems particularly poignant in a metapoetic reading. Given the tendency in especially Propertius to collapse the distinction between Cynthia as person and Cynthia as his poetic project, we might read in 1.8 something like: “Can my poetry hear, experience the travels, achievements, of my predecessors?”

\(^{54}\) It is worth noting that \textit{Pleiades} was more commonly used than \textit{Vergiliae}. Fedeli 1980: 212-3 suggests that Propertius may even have altered the prosody of \textit{Vergiliae} in order to further draw attention to the “homage to Virgil” (213). Heslin is inclined to read \textit{tardis Vergilii\textit{s}} as an insult—“dull-witted Vergil” (2018: 142)—but most other scholars have seen it in the light of an homage (Fedeli 1980, Pasoli 1977).

\(^{55}\) Fedeli (1980: 208) suggests that Vergil may re-echo Propertius 1.8 in Dido’s \textit{schetlasmos} to Aeneas (4.305-11), which would bring this set of intertextual ties full circle.

\(^{56}\) See Oliensis 1997: 158-61 on the erotic possibilities of \textit{amicitia} in Propertius and the desire for homosocial bonding. My reading of this Illyrian landscape as a complex site of non-epic poetic interactions differs from other scholars who have read this landscape as straight-forwardly epic (Keith 2015a: 144). If Vergil is drawing upon an original Gallan text for his depiction of this landscape, it seems quite plausible that the original geographic contrast was one between elegy and epic. But with the weight of both Gallus and Vergil so present in this space, it seems difficult to read it as straight-forwardly, or even primarily, epic in character.

\(^{57}\) The ordering of these two poems—placing Cynthia’s indirectly reported propempticon before Propertius’ echo of it—is interesting in the way that it represents Cynthia’s voice and laments as the point of origin for his own, rather than the other way around. A similar reversal occurs in the early placement of 1.3, which likewise reports complaints from Cynthia that the speaker proceeds to echo in later poems. For more on elegiac female speakers, see James 2010.
loosened (1.6.15, 1.8.11), futile words given to the winds (1.6.17, 1.8.14), the scratching of the lover’s face in despair (1.6.16, 1.8.16), and the charge of faithlessness (1.6.18, 1.8.17). Propertius responds to and interprets Cynthia’s journey in the same way that she previously responded to his. This mirroring both raises insoluble questions of primacy and authorship—is Cynthia not only the inspiration, but the source of the speaker’s words? Or must Cynthia as poet-lover be read entirely as a construct of Propertius?—but also dangles the possibility of true mutuality through shared experience. As echoed geographies of loss and isolation in the Alps/Illyria paradoxically also enacted a communion between poetic experiences across space and time, so this beach allows a synchronic experience of loss to create a diachronic union.

Furthermore, this connection extends metapoetically as well. The prominent use of 1.6 as a controlling precedent in these lines might initially seem like a move away from the metapoetic discourses that dominated the descriptions of Illyria, with the beach offering a somewhat less crowded location (vacua ora, 15) from which to speak—except that this iconic image of lament from the beach is immediately recognizable as Catullan and has in fact been marked as such in 1.6. As Illyria was both Vergilian and Gallan, the beach now appears as a space of layered reference and ownership, simultaneously Catullan, Propertian, and perhaps even Cynthia.

As the first half of 1.8 draws to a close, the speaker envisions Cynthia’s travels using vigil imagery in an assertion of his ability to defy the constraints of time and space. In a remarkable statement of his persistence even in altered circumstances, Propertius declares:

nam me non ullam poterunt corrumpere de te
quid ego, vita, tuo limine verba querar;
ec me deficiet nautas rogitare citatos
'Dicite, quo portu clausa puella mea est?'
et dicam 'Licet Artaciis considat in oris,
et licet Hylaeis, illa futura mea est.'

21-26

For no women will be able to seduce me away from singing complaints in your doorway, my life; nor will I cease to ask swift sailors, “Tell me, in what port is my girl enclosed?” And I shall say, “She may inhabit Artacian shores, and she may inhabit Hylaean shores, [but] she will be mine.”

These lines continue to imagine elegiac poetic production as grounded in a specific perspective, but have moved from imagining that as a view from the shore to a view from the doorway. In one sense, this is no less a crowded space from which to sing, given the long history of the

58 See Cairns 1972: 150-1. Admittedly the “unfriendly hand” of 1.8 is less explicit than Cynthia “marking her face” in 1.6, and might be read either as Propertius making hostile hand-gestures at Cynthia, or cruelly marking his own face. The recurrence of hostile hand gestures, whether internally or externally oriented, is still significant. It is also rather striking, although not necessarily meaningful, that these lines occur in precisely the same line in both poems.

59 For a discussion of the gendered politics of female speech in elegy, see James 2010.

60 Which is, in fact, as discussed in the previous chapter, a more common articulation of the spatial perspective of Propertian poetics.
vigil. But this doorway scene contains a rather striking difference: there is no girl inside. There can be no hope of admission if the object of desire is at the farthest ends of the empire. Thus, in this articulation of his poetics, Propertius rejects the generally assumed purpose of the vigil and elegiac poetry: access. On the contrary, the purpose of the vigil here appears to be the ability to express emotion and as a proof of his faithfulness, his character. By imagining a vigil entirely divorced from pragmatic purpose, Propertius speaks from the same position as many other poets but still from a perspective somehow his own. Propertius offers a new meaning for this shared poetic space by rejecting the central cause and purpose of the song sung from the doorway, the girl inside. His absolute, nearly inexplicable, immobility, places him within a tradition, but also distinguishes him, as he has altered the stakes and meaning of this position.

The speaker’s imagined attempts to locate Cynthia from his station in Rome play out the tensions between the speaker’s desire for stability and independence and the challenges—and opportunities—posed by a world where the ubiquity of other people’s experiences undermine any such singularity of meaning. Even as the speaker has declared his ability to continue in the same activities and poetics regardless of Cynthia’s decisions and location, this claim of permanence is undercut both by his continuing obsessive desire to know where she is (24) and by the structures of this poem discussed earlier, which have emphasized the fluidity of the roles of lover and beloved. The lover’s claims here, notably that Cynthia “will be [his]” (26) regardless of where she may go, is striking precisely because it flies in the face of the apparent realities of the situation. Propertius cannot hope for possession of Cynthia in any common understanding of the word if she has left with another lover. The only alternative is an understanding of possession that is not physical but psychological and emotional. Can the shared experiences, the moments of shared perspective apparent in 1.6 and 1.8, bind them together in a way that defies the boundaries of the physical world?

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61 For more on the elegiac vigil see my previous chapter; for an overview of bibliography on the elegiac vigil see pages 16-17. In understanding just how crowded a space the doorway is for Propertius, it would of course be useful to know whether or not Gallus wrote a paraclausithyron and similarly positioned the vigil as an essential aspect of the genre (or to what extent he conceptualized his work as embodying a genre). Given its place of prominence in both Propertius and Tibullus, writing at approximately the same time and both clearly influenced by Gallus, it seems at least a strong possibility that Gallus wrote a paraclausithyron.

62 Contrary to the articulation of his poetics just one poem previously in 1.7.5-6, which imagines his poetry as something to be used pragmatically against his mistress (aliquid duram quaerimus in dominam). The juxtaposition of these different articulations of why Propertius writes elegiac poetry—as a pragmatic means of persuading a recalcitrant girl and as a form of futile but self-sufficient lament—itself suggests the power of perspective and context. Propertius explains himself quite differently to different audiences. A tempting solution to the discrepancy would be to view one of these interpretations as “genuine” and the other as “pragmatic,” e.g., elegy really is about persuading girls, the speaker only says it isn’t to Cynthia, because he has to in order to persuade her (see especially James 2003, Stroh 1971). But in fact, the speaker is no less suspect in his relations with other men than he is in relation to Cynthia.

63 Cf., 1.1.27-8: fortiter et ferrum saevos patiemur et ignes/sit modo libertas quae velit ira loqui.

64 It is true that Propertius does not have any good options in this situation, but his odds of getting access to Cynthia would seem rather better if he camped outside of her door in Illyria, if still quite bad. We might also compare the romantic dimensions of Greek novels, in which lovers often chase their beloveds across the Mediterranean as a demonstration of love and fidelity.

65 It is perhaps also worth considering the narrative context—that Propertius is competing with an erotic rival—as relevant to the metapoetic levels of the poem, which exhibit some ambivalence over whether these other poets with similar experiences are rivals or friends.
Furthermore, these lines also clearly offer the possibility of metapoetic reading. As Maria Wyke most influentially explored, the narrative figure of Cynthia frequently appears as a metaphor for the poetic output that describes her and bears her name.\(^{66}\) Read through this lens, these lines strikingly split poetic speaker from poetic output, as the former remains immobile and the latter roams freely. This disjunction offers an image for how poetry itself can agilely move across space, interact with various poetic traditions, traverse boundaries, even as the poet maintains a clear and fixed vantage point.\(^{67}\) But while there may be truth to this freedom of poetry, the speaker’s anxious inquiries to sailors, and the way he envisions Cynthia closed up as if by a vigil in her foreign travels, represents the relationship between fixed poet and mobile poetry as far from comfortable. The claim of singular ownership of Cynthia seems to reject the shared poetic experiences which so dominated the first half of the poem and to emphasize the importance of independence rather than shared experiences. However, this final-sounding word on the subject, a declaration of independence that rather pointedly ignores the contexts that have shaped and challenged its reality, is itself immediately undercut by a sudden change in the narrative context.

A sudden shift occurs in between lines 26 and 27. Without any intervening explanation, the speaker suddenly exclaims, “Here she will be! Here she remains, loyal to her oaths!” (\textit{Hic erit! hic iurata manet!}). Cynthia has, evidently, decided to remain in the space between lines 26 and 27. The jarring narrative transformation has caused some scholars to interpret the poem as actually two poems, 1.8A and B.\(^{68}\) However, such a division, although productive in that it draws attention to a real interpretive problem posed by the suddenness and opacity of the transition, does not actually resolve the problem. The experience when reading, of drastically altered conditions without explanation from line 26 to 27 remains even if editors add an extra line break in modern texts. Rather, I agree with other scholars who have argued that the sudden reversal and consequent reversal of the speaker’s rhetorical strategies must be understood as part of the meaning.\(^{69}\) The lack of narrative context reminds readers of their own distance from the speaker, that not only is this view itself limited, but also that he does not provide readers with all of it. Furthermore, the suddenness of the transition, which results in a similarly sudden reinterpretation of Cynthia’s proposed travels, makes the juxtaposition of entirely contradictory visions of these travels all the more striking and draws attention to the transience and alterability of perspective. By the end of this poem it seems that it is in fact precisely the alterability of experience and perspective—the unlikeliness of remaining eternally in a doorway, or on a beach, and hence the likelihood of sharing experiences with others—that actually creates the opportunities for more lasting and deeper connections between people and poetics. It is by sharing spaces, by experiencing other people’s experiences, that connections are built.

\(^{66}\) Wyke 1987.

\(^{67}\) This works particularly well given the close association between Cynthia and Propertius’ poetic output, perhaps most evident in the fact that his first books was in fact known as \textit{Cynthia}. For more on the equivalence between Cynthia and Propertius’ poetry see Wyke 1987. The most famous instance, of course, of a poet declaring his independence from his poetic output occurs in Catull. 16.


\(^{69}\) Cairns 1972: 150.
Cynthia’s decision to remain in Rome with Propertius completes the narrative parallel with 1.6, thereby bringing to fruition both an immediate physical intimacy and a less concrete one, based on mirrored experiences and choices. 1.6 and 1.8 set up Propertius and Cynthia as mirror images, as experiencing and speaking the same desire and emotional anguish, but true symmetry requires Cynthia to make the same final decision as Propertius, that is, to stay and reject travel, as he had in 1.6. The language at the beginning of the second half of 1.8 responds to both the beginning of 1.8 and 1.6, drawing attention to itself as completing both narrative arcs. Specifically, Propertius declares that Cynthia will remain, bound by her oath (iurata, 28), recalling both Propertius’ earlier accusation of perjury (periura, 1.8.17) and Cynthia’s condemnation of his faithlessness (infido, 1.6.18); likewise, his boast that Cynthia could not endure his “constant prayers” (assiduas...preces, 1.8.28) directly corresponds to the prayers he imagines sending to the winds (1.8.14) and the “heavy prayers” Cynthia uses to stop Propertius (graves...preces, 1.6.6). Propertius’ assertion that “without me, [Cynthia] rejects sweet kingdoms” (sine me dulcia regna negat, 1.8.32) provides an answer to his earlier tortured question, “And does he seem worth so much to you, whoever he may be, that you wish to go with any wind whatsoever, without me?” (et tibi iam tanti, quicumque est, iste videtur./ ut sine me vento quolibet ire velis? 1.8.3-4), and may even recall Propertius’ command to Tullus in 1.6, “allow me to…give up my last breath to worthlessness” (me sine...huic animam extremam reddere nequitiae 25-6). These echoes represent the experiences of Cynthia and Propertius in 1.6 and 1.8 as mirror images of each other: both have, even when faced with real alternatives, chosen each other, proven their faithfulness, and remained committed to viewing the world through these local elegiac values.

In the wake of Cynthia’s decision to remain, her previously planned travels and her rejection of them take on a new set of meanings. Far from an arduous test of strength that mapped Illyria onto the Alps, Illyria now appears a test of greed and virtue as it is mapped onto Greek and eastern riches. Cynthia denies “sweet kingdoms” (dulcia regna, 32), she prefers Propertius’ “narrow bed” (angusto...lecto, 33) to the “ancient kingdom of dowered Hippodamia and whatever riches horse-rearing Elis could provide” (quam sibi dotatae regnum vetus Hippodamiae,/ et quas Elis opes apta pararat equis, 35-6). Hippodamia’s kingdom is Elis, in the Peloponnese of Greece, and the riches won by the Elian horses appear to refer to the treasuries of Olympia. The geography and stakes have shifted east, and correspondingly tie the foreign world with wealth and Rome with hardship and poverty. Over the course of the poem, then, Propertius has written over Illyria first with the Alps and Gaul, and then with Greece and the east. Cynthia’s reversal is the cause for this geographic reappraisal. A change in perspective is brought about both by the progression of time (the change wrought in the interstices between
lines 26 and 27) and by Cynthia’s own movements. In this way, 1.8 adds nuance to the embodied poetics of 1.6; point-of-view is determined not just by place, but by time, and by interpersonal dynamics.

The final lines of the poem emphatically reiterate Propertius’ declaration of ownership of Cynthia—and by extension, his poetry—leaving readers with the question of whether the altered circumstances, between 1.8A and B and between 1.6 and 1.8, have ultimately made this statement of independence and permanence more or less persuasive. The final lines of the poem turn back to the implications of Cynthia’s decision to remain, as he declares:

sunt igitur Musae, neque amanti tardus Apollo,
quis ego fretus amo: Cynthia rara mea est!
nunc mihi summa licet contingere sidera plantis:
sive dies seu nox venerit, illa mea est!
nec mihi rivalis certos subducet amores:74
ista meam norit gloria canitiem.

1.8.41-6

So there are Muses, and Apollo is not slow for a lover; I lean on them as I love: the rare Cynthia is mine! Now I may touch the highest stars with my feet: whether day or night should come, she is mine! Nor will a rival take away proved loves. This glory will be familiar to my old age.

The repeated possessive declarations—“the rare Cynthia is mine,” “she is mine”—echo the poet’s earlier assertion “she will be mine” at the end of 1.8A, but now the tense has shifted to the present. The emphasis on ownership as a means of connection and union already reveals tensions; “Cynthia is mine” communicates a different power dynamic, a different kind of union than the mutuality suggested by Cynthia and Propertius’ mirrored experiences and language of 1.6 and 1.8.75 Moreover, in these last lines, Cynthia shares space somewhat uncomfortably with Propertius’ rivals. In a poem that has been so obsessed, on the metapoetic level, with Propertius’ relationship with other poets writing in erotic genres and with poetic tradition more broadly, the rivalis must allow for the possibility of poetic rivals as well. Cynthia’s potential loss brought Propertius, his point-of-view and emotional experiences, his very words, into alignment with those of other influential poets, namely Vergil, Gallus, and Catullus, as well as with his own words from 1.6. The shared experience of loss, or potential loss, draws these poets and narrative figures into a kind of empathy with each other, an empathy that defies the strictures of space, time, genre, and fiction. But, as these last lines make clear, the desire for such connection exists in tension with the desire for individuality, for independence, for victory.

74 I agree with Heyworth that the future subducet makes considerably more sense than the present subducit in the manuscripts.
75 We can, of course, take this mutuality with a grain of salt: since we only get Cynthia’s words and actions through Propertius, there is still a clear element of control and ownership at work here. Nevertheless, this mirroring, even if not reflective of a reality, communicates a desire for a relationship in which Cynthia and Propertius operate as equals, and as equally driven by desire.
1.6 and 1.8 imagine the consequences of a world in which truth, connection, and poetics are all delimited by embodied point-of-view. The constantly shifting, reinterpreted landscapes of both poems, in conjunction with the ever-shifting roles played by the characters involved, paint a picture of a world inherently unstable, ruled by subjectivity, even as the individuals inhabiting it persistently insist on the truth of their interpretations and their own unchanging natures. However, as 1.8 shows through its layered poetic echoes, such fluidity can also actually enable truer connections between people and poetics: it is the consuming experience of subjective view-points, and the inevitability of experiencing different ones, that allows humans to understand each other at all, even if only transiently.

Disembodying Elegiac Identity in Book 3

But while the propemptica of Book 1 embrace embodied subjective experiences as central to defining identity, travel poems of Book 3 substantially revise this idea. Published in 23 BCE, some three to ten years after Book 1, Book 3 has long confounded scholars. On the one hand it continues and closes out the project of Propertius’ first two books, recording the laments and foibles of a first-person poet lover and his tortuous affair with Cynthia. The book’s close with a “final” rejection of Cynthia seems to offer a neatly packaged metapoetical autobiography, previewing Propertius’ final turn away from love poetry and ascent towards a higher aetiological poetics, as well as the end of his relationship with Cynthia. On the other hand, Book 3 also feels different from the previous two books, and its “unelegiac” poems share much in common with its aetiological successor, Book 4. It is thus a book that has been read both as a transition and a conclusion, as an embrace and a repudiation of elegy.

These interpretive challenges in Book 3 cannot be easily or simply resolved, but Book 3’s focus on the image of the journey offers a useful way into further defining both the continuities and new developments of Book 3. In this section, I will offer readings of two poems, 3.7 and 3.21, both of which engage with the propempticon trope even as they contemplate departures from elegy. 3.7 seems to abandon elegiac content as it tells the story of young Paetus’ death at

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76 I am inclined to accept Heslin’s dating of the Monobiblos to 33 BCE, making it a full ten years between the books. Indeed, the substantial differences in tone, subject, and outlook between Books 1 and 3 tend to rather support the idea that they originate from rather different political and social contexts.


78 This neat narrative is substantially undercut, however, by the fact that Cynthia and love poetry reemerges in Book 4 as well. I am inclined to view this apparent rejection as more of a feint in line with 2.10, than as a genuine transformation. See Butrica 1996 and Fear 2005 for particularly good discussions of the problems of this trope.

79 Marr 1987, Putnam 1980. The connections between Books 3 and 4 are real and substantial, but the distinction between traditional elegiac content and non-elegiac content tends to obscure the fact that Propertian elegy was never restrained to erotic content, or even to the voice of a single coherent narrator (see, e.g., 1.16, 1.21, 1.22, Miller 2004).

80 The reading of Book 3 as a transition into Book 4 (published soon after 16 BCE) might sound teleological and anachronistic in almost any literary age other than the Augustan era; but with Vergil’s famous advertising of his literary ascent in the Eclogues and Georgics, such metapoetic autobiography was in vogue.

sea, while in 3.21 Propertius seems to explicitly reject elegy as he declares his intent to leave Rome and Cynthia. I will argue, however, that both of these poems do not so much turn away from elegy as explore a different way of imagining what elegy is and does. More specifically, 3.7 and 3.21 reformulate the image of the journey so as to produce a new model of a geographically de-centered elegiac genre. 1.6 and 1.8 tied genre to specific, embodied points of view, which generate shared experiences and poetics; 3.7 and 3.21 instead dramatize shared emotional experiences originating from disparate physical trajectories. Although both 3.7 and 3.21 posit travel as the antithesis of elegy, their descriptions of journeys envision that central emotional experiences of elegy, and in particular of lament and desire, can be experienced outside of Rome and in non-erotic contexts. They thus offer a new model of disembodied genre, one tied together by shared experiences that defy specific geographic or narrative contexts.

3.7 and the Poetic Body

Following a light-hearted poem in which Propertius interrogates a slave about his mistress, the lament for Paetus represents a dramatic shift in tone and subject. The poem follows the journey, death, and dismemberment of Paetus, before ending with an assertion of Propertius’ own elegiac values and refusal to travel. The poem has been interpreted both as a continuation of Propertian elegiac polemics and as a turn away from elegy towards “serious, non-love, themes.” And indeed, these contradictory readings stem from the poem’s own ambivalence over its place in the Propertian corpus: for the vast majority of the poem, the speaker and the poem’s relationship to elegy is uncertain. Because the speaker does not explicitly identify himself as an elegiac lover until the final two lines and does not treat conventionally elegiac topics, the poem poses questions about its relationship to Propertius’ wider collection of elegiac poetry, and to the usual elegiac ego. Can an elegiac ego be defined and instantiated outside of specific, embodied, erotic contexts? Can elegiac love poetry encompass topics and characters outside of love? Far from clearly pitting elegy against non-elegiac other, the ambiguities within the characterization of both the speaker and Paetus end up exploring alignments between elegy and non-elegiac worldviews, and the possibility of a more

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82 3.7 is not strictly speaking a propempticon, since it addresses a dead man after his journey, but rather might be categorized as an epicedion, a type of lament for the dead. However, given how closely it engages with images from 1.6 and 1.8, and in questions of what travel means for elegists, it makes sense to read it together with Propertian propemptica.

83 Even in a corpus famous for textual problems, the Paetus elegy stands out as a remarkably corrupt and challenging text. Scholars have proposed various transpositions to make sense of jarring shifts in addressee and grammatical constructions (see especially Walsh 1987, Goold 1989, Liberman 1996, Orlebeke 1996, Heyworth 2007a). For the purpose of this reading I will use Fedeli’s text, which is relatively conservative in both emendations and transpositions. However, my reading is not substantially dependent upon the order of controversially ordered verses.

84 E.g., L.B.T. Houghton reads the poem “as a conflict between the ideologies of the elegiac genre and other, hostile value-systems against which it defines itself” (2007: 171), effectively continuing the (apparent) polemics of 1.6 and 1.8.

85 Robertson 1969: 386.

86 This poem also breaks the mold in approaching travel, and its meanings, through what might more accurately be called a lament than a propempticon. Although the direct address to Paetus, and the indictment of travel, and ultimate contrast with elegiac values, is strongly reminiscent of the elegiac propemptica, the belatedness of the poem, occurring after Paetus has already departed and died, differentiates it. The poem’s lament for the dead Paetus, moreover, connects the poem to the wider traditions of elegiac poetry, outside of Roman love poetry.
dispersed model of elegiac perspective and genre, one that can exist outside of the bounds of Rome and specific love affairs.

The speaker opens the poem with a diatribe against the influence of wealth, which represents travel as a lethal symptom of money’s excessive power over men. In the first eight lines, the speaker attacks Money (Pecunia), blaming her for the troubles of life, for bringing men to death, and in particular for causing Paetus’ death (1-5). Wealth’s evils are specifically associated with her ability to instigate movement and travel: “Through you, we approach the untimely journey of death” (per te immaturum mortis adimus iter, 2). The use of the metaphor of death as a journey connects travel, wealth, and death. The interrelationship between the three becomes explicit when Paetus is introduced into the poem: “For while he follows you, he miserably departs from his young life” (nam dum te sequitur, primo miser excidit aevo, 7). These lines map Paetus’ metaphorical journey to the afterlife—his departure from life—onto his literal journey in search of profit. The unfortunate Paetus set sail in search of profit and found death instead. This moralizing opening thus sets a narrative scene and advances an argument for understanding travel as a symptom of larger social ills.

By linking the evils of travel and wealth, this opening recalls discussions of travel and greed earlier in Propertius. The elegiac antipathy towards money and greed of course pervades the entire elegiac corpus: the anxiety over rich rivals and greedy girls (avara puella) is a mainstay of the genre. Although discussions of greed are by no means limited to propemptica and descriptions of travel, extended descriptions of travel regularly associate it with greed and ambition. Notably, as discussed previously in this chapter, in the second half of 1.8 Propertius closely associates travel with greed: “she does not greedily flee my lap” (38). This anxiety over the influence of foreign wealth reappears explicitly and prominently when the Illyrian praetor returns in 2.16 as a source of “greatest booty” for Cynthia (maxima praeda tibi, 2). Foreign wealth poses a specific threat for elegiac lovers, as the rivals who acquire this foreign wealth are able to offer elegiac puellae financial security inaccessible to the lovers who remain in Rome. Lovers, at least of the Propertian mode, are caught in a bind: they cannot travel because it would separate them from their beloveds, but other men’s travels also pose a threat, by creating remunerative alternatives to the elegiac lover. In representing Paetus’ journey as a natural result of greed, then, the speaker of 3.7 reflects broader elegiac critiques of travel and those who travel.

87 Cf. Juv. 1.112, August. De civ. D. 21, 24. 88 See Short 2012 on the prevalence and flexibility of journeys as cultural metaphors. 89 The identity of this Paetus is unknown and probably unknowable, although there has been speculation that Paetus may have been related to the poet. For discussion see Robertson 1969, Syme 1986: 302 n. 25, Cairns 2006: 20-1, Houghton 2007: 164. 90 Other images in these opening lines—Pecunia offers “cruel feed” (crudelia pabula, 3), and the “seed of cares springs from her head” (semina curarum de capite orta tuo, 4)—emphasize Pecunia’s ability to induce change through a kind of malignant growth. Both the travel and growth imagery characterize wealth as an agent of change, in contrast to elegy’s interest in maintaining the status quo, in remaining both in the same phase of life and the same place. 91 See especially James 2003: 77-107. 92 Keith 2015a. 93 See also 1.8.31-38 94 The problem posed by returning soldiers, and elegiac strategies for negotiating this relationship, is a substantial concern of my next chapter on triumphal poems.
And yet, although broadly reminiscent of elegiac complaints about travel and greed, this is a complaint with a difference. Propertius’ elegiac critiques of foreign wealth and travel occur within specifically erotic contexts and choices. The rejection of wealth is also inevitably an embrace of love, of a specific relationship. Propertius’ decision to remain in Rome with Cynthia in 1.6 constitutes a refusal of the spoils and glory that he might have acquired with Tullus, but it simultaneously, and probably more significantly, affirms his dedication to Cynthia and love (“the words of my clinging girl hold me back,” sed me complexae remorantur verba puellae, 1.6.5). Cynthia’s decision not to greedily flee Propertius’ lap is likewise a choice to prioritize love, even in meager settings. Propertius emphasizes this when he boasts that Cynthia says that “Rome is dearest because of me” (per me carissima Roma, 31). In the opening to the Paetus elegy, there is no such explicit reference to elegiac life or values. Indeed, the very character of the speaker, his viewpoint, his relationship to Paetus and to the “usual” ego of the corpus, remains opaque until the final couplet of the poem. Without the grounding of references to an erotic relationship or other familiar characters, without familiar settings like the beach or the threshold, this poem’s relationship to the larger corpus is unclear. The poem’s context within a book of poetry that has already declared itself elegiac (3.3), surrounded on either side by poems explicitly engaged in elegiac poetics, in combination with the broad ideological consistency in a distaste for travel, encourage the reader to find continuity, to see an elegiac speaker even when he does identify himself as such or discuss clearly elegiac subjects. But the lack of elegiac subject matter, and the fact that the speaker does not frame the entire discussion through his own experiences, create an undeniable difference from the traditional elegiac ego of Propertius. It is—so to speak—unmoored.

Moreover, absent the erotic context, this diatribe looks a lot like other, non-elegiac critiques of wealth and travel. A suspicion of both wealth and foreign influences was a mainstay of Roman thought. Catharine Edwards, in a discussion of how Roman authors interweave ideas of luxury and moral decline, observes the consistency of Roman moralists on the role of wealth in Roman decline: “While they differ as to the precise point marking the beginning of the end of Roman virtue, Roman moralists generally agree on the nature of the changes which took place. Prosperity and foreign influence stimulated appetites until they became insatiable and Rome consumed itself.” Authors ranging from Livy and Polybius to Sallust attribute the beginning of Roman moral decline to military conquests that resulted in the importation of foreign wealth home to Rome. Wealth softens Romans and provokes greed, which in turn leads to conflict and civil war. Roman authors of the Late Republican and Augustan periods viewed money as a

95 And indeed, it is never made entirely clear who Paetus is to the poet, or why the poet is writing about this particular young man at all. Some scholars have pointed out that this poem seems unlikely to actually comfort anyone actually grieving Paetus (Robertson 1969).
96 There are also poems that have more or less seemed (or been) out of character, and so have drawn questions over their relationship to the elegiac ego, notably 1.16, 1.21 and 1.22. This pattern of an ego that appears mostly consistent, but with several interruptions over the course of the corpus, makes the identification of the ego a salient question at the beginning of poems. See Miller 2004 for one attempt to conciliate the inconsistencies in Propertius’ elegiac ego.
97 1993: 178.
98 Livy 39.6.7; Polyb. 31.25; Sall. Cat. 10.
99 Though outside of Roman historical narratives, there is a long tradition of critiques of travel based both upon its transgressive nature and its associations with greed, often tied to narratives of the Golden Age (see pages 78-9).
serious social danger. Thus, Propertius’ diatribe on the dangers of Pecunia recalls not only elegiac discourses, but broader Roman moralizing ones. Points of alignment between elegiac and traditional Roman values have always been present in Propertian poetry, but the similarities are generally disrupted by the decidedly non-traditional erotic settings. Indeed, scholars sometimes describe the elegiac adoption of moralizing vocabulary for erotic settings as appropriation or even satire, because of the apparent incongruity. But with the specifics of an erotic setting removed, the line between elegiac speaker and traditional morality blurs.

Throughout the poem, the speaker continues to describe Paetus’ decision to travel in ways that recall elegiac rejections of travel but avoid tying his critiques to uniquely elegiac concerns. In an impassioned address to Paetus, the speaker demands: “Would an anchor hold you, whom Penates could not hold?” (ancora te teneat, quem non tenuere penates? 33). Although there is no verbal echo, the central conceit of this question comes quite close to the opening line of 1.8: “Are you out of your mind then, does no feeling for me delay you?” (Tune igitur demens, nec te mea cura moratur? 1.8.1). Both rhetorical questions convey indignation at the thought that the traveler could disregard the pull of ties that ought to keep them home. They frame leaving home as an act of abandonment—of Penates or a beloved—as a devaluing of relationships that ought to hold highest priority. The difference between the two questions, however, remains significant: the slide from mea cura to penates shifts this highest priority from an erotic affair to the touchstone of Roman religious and familial identity. The speaker does not argue that Paetus should have been a lover, should have been loyal to a girlfriend or wife left behind—as he does to another addressee later in this book—but rather that he ought to have placed greater value on his family. The speaker avoids advocating against travel and greed on specifically elegiac lines, even as his emotional response recalls elegiac reactions to travel. But this recasting of the evils of travel into a more generic Roman moral discourse underlines the common ground shared by conservative moral critiques and elegiac ones. For all of the ways that the elegiac poet-lover represents himself as counter-cultural and radical, and for all that it is a puella rather than religious observance that would keep him home, the way of realizing both elegiac values and certain conservative Roman ones is the same: by living a minimalist life at home in Rome. This is a markedly different image from that presented in 1.6 and 1.8, where specific embodied experiences determined one’s worldview and experience, allowing everyone only partial and usually mutually-incompatible access to truth. Instead, 3.7, by drawing out the similarities between apparently disparate worldviews of elegy and moralizing discourses,

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100 It is worth noting that this is also specifically money derived from outside of Rome—foreign wealth.
102 Readers might also recall Tibullus’ impassioned complaint about his separation from his penates while trapped in Phaeacia (1.3.33).
103 Though the example of Tibullus 1.3 demonstrates how a poet-lover could prioritize both erotic and familial simultaneously.
104 For a Propertian elegy offering the former critique, see 3.12, which opens “Postumus, how could you abandon Galla in tears, and as a soldier carry the strong standards of Augustus?” (Postume, plorantem potuisti linguer Gallam/miles et Augusti fortia signa sequi?). Note that although Galla will turn out to be a properly wedded wife, as opposed to the less legitimate girlfriends typical of elegy, the emotional appeal of this opening question bears a close resemblance to the appeals of 1.6 and 1.8.
105 This merging of traditional and elegiac values through rural fantasy is reminiscent of Tibullus. It is worth considering whether the shifts in Propertius’ approach to elegiac identity in Book 3 may have been influenced by Tibullus’ elegiac work.
suggests the limitations of an embodied vision of difference. Disparate life paths can nevertheless generate the same internal, emotional experiences.

Furthermore, until the final couplet, the speaker himself seems curiously unembodied. Unlike the descriptions of travel in 1.6 and 1.8, in which the speaker imagines future travels, the speaker of 3.7 claims intimate knowledge of a journey that has already occurred, and that furthermore, he cannot have knowledge of through normal processes of human perception. Although the elegiac ego regularly imagines events that have not occurred, or that he cannot personally see, nevertheless, his narration generally seems to be bound by his embodied experience, by the limitations of a human perspective. But the speaker of 3.7 does not appear to be so bound. He was not on this journey, but he offers an incredibly detailed account of Paetus’ death and the fate of his body, all in the perfect indicative, complete with a direct speech (57-64) and a description of a funerary monument (25-8). The speaker possesses a narratorial omniscience, as he seems to have observed these events without ever being physically present for them. The speaker’s ability to apparently not just imagine but see events outside of a human field of vision, differentiates him from the elegiac ego in surrounding poems, who explicitly works around the limitations of his human vision.106 Far from the physically entrenched lover of Book 1, this speaker’s ambiguous relationship to the story he tells suggests an unembodied existence, one that defies the limitations of human sight.

I have thus far suggested that by occluding specifically erotic content and contexts and emphasizing a distaste for travel shared with Roman moralizing discourse, 3.7 raises questions about whether those specific content and contexts are necessary for elegy and, consequently, about whether elegy is, or must be, so truly different than other genres and discourses. But the situation is even more complicated, because although the speaker avoids marking himself as a lover, and there is no conventionally elegiac content, Paetus himself is represented in ways that invoke the experience of the elegiac ego. And in fact, he, and his dismembered body, operate as a possible symbol of what elegy might look like loosed from its particular geographic and narrative contexts.

Although the diatribe against Pecunia is abstract and lacks any kind of direct reference to erotics, nevertheless the representation of Paetus’ relationship with Pecunia eerily reflects the relationship between lover and puella. The speaker personifies the abstract wealth with a persistent and emphatic personal address (six personal pronouns and adjectives altogether), and the grammatical gender of Pecunia ensures that she will be imagined as a woman. Furthermore, several words used to describe her suggest a parallel between Pecunia and the elegiac puella.107

106 The case of 3.6 is particularly striking, because like 3.7 it contains a direct speech the speaker cannot have been present for, but the speaker imbeds his process for accessing it within the poem: the slave Lygdamus reports it to him. The framing of the poem as an address and set of instructions to Lygdamus further centers the question of how the speaker accesses truth. In 3.8, the speaker invites the puella to come and physically vent her anger upon him, both so that he can know her passion, and so that rivals can know by the physical marks. In its own way, this poem too is concerned with what humans can and cannot see.

107 This association between Pecunia and the puella is further aided by the tendency of elegiac speakers not only to accuse puellae of greed, but also to represent them as almost constituted by the foreign luxuries they apparently demand (see especially Prop. 1.2 and 2.1; Wyke 1994 on the materiality of the elegiac puella). See Keith 2015a for a nuanced look at how elegiac puellae function as both instigators of Roman colonial activities and themselves as products of Roman colonial activities.
The first line posits *Pecunia* as the *causa* of a “worried life” (*sollicitae vitae*). Throughout the Propertian corpus *causa* is used repeatedly to mark out the *puella* as the fountain of suffering, joy, and creativity. The most striking example occurs when Propertius declares in the first book “whatever I am, I shall say, ‘Cynthia was the cause’ (*seu tristis veniam seu contra laetus amicis/ quicquid ero, dicam ‘Cynthia causa fuit.’* 1.11.25-6).¹⁰⁸ *Pecunia* has similar sway over the emotional well-being of men to that of a *puella* does. *Pecunia* “furnishes cruel food to the vices of men” (*vitiis hominum crudelia pabula praebes*, 3) and “overwhelms Paetus” (*tu Paetum...obruis*, 5-6). The dynamics, too, of an uncontrollable and immoral woman who wreaks destruction on a weak man must sound all too familiar to the reader of elegy. The accusation that *Pecunia* is the “seed of cares” (*semina curarum* 4) also recalls the elegiac uses of *cura* as an affair or the feeling of love for an erotic object.¹⁰⁹ As Tullus took on the language of love, consumed by a “passion for the fatherland in arms” (1.6.22), so here wealth appears as another potential object of passion, but markedly more like the *puella* than the relatively impersonal *patria armata*. The personification of *Pecunia* pushes the parallel further than occurred in 1.6, allowing Paetus to get caught up in a self-destructive love affair that rivals those of lovers. The representation of *Pecunia* as almost a *puella dura* introduces the possibility that Paetus could in fact experience the same suffering and destruction as elegiac lovers, even as he engages in an activity diametrically opposed to erotic pursuits.

Furthermore, when the speaker imagines Paetus’ final thoughts and words, Paetus behaves in ways that recall elegiac figures. Propertius contrasts Paetus’ desire for erotically charged luxuries with the hardship he finds at sea:

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Non tulit haec Paetus, stridorem audire procellae
et duro teneras laedere fune manus;
sed thyio thalamo aut Oricia terebintho
eculfultum pluma versicolore caput.
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47-50

Paetus could not bear these things, to hear the shriek of the gale, and to hurt his tender hands with a hard rope, but rather he wanted his head to rest upon multicolored down in a bed made of cedar or Orician terebinth.

Paetus has himself misinterpreted what travel is and means, as he finds out too late. But these lines also clearly reference two lines from the first half of 1.8: “Are you then able to hear the roar of the insane sea?” (*tune audire potes vesani murmura ponti*, 1.8.5) and “are you able to place your tender feet on the fallen frost?” (*tu pedibus teneris positas fulcire pruinas*, 1.8.7).¹¹⁰ Like Cynthia, Paetus was not made for the hardships of travel. Although lines 49-50 appear corrupt and it is difficult to parse the grammar, the distinction between the harsh realities of travel and the luxurious objects Paetus prefers is clear. The inclusion of the adjective *Oricia* may further

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¹⁰⁸ See also 1.16.35 (addressed to the door); 1.18.10 *an nova tristitiae causa puella tuae?*; 2.1.11-12 *seu cum poscentis somnum declinat ocellos/,invenio causas mille poeta novas*; 2.3.35-6 *quod tanti ad Pergama belli/Europae atque Asiae causa puella fuit.*

¹⁰⁹ E.g., Prop. 1.1.36, 1.5.10, 1.8.1, 1.11.5.

¹¹⁰ The “tender” feet and hands also of course harken back to Vergil’s Lycoris, as discussed in my reading of 1.8, see pages 53-5. Houghton 2007 makes similar observations about the elegiac qualities of Paetus’ final moments and the reference to 1.8/Ecl. 10.
invoke 1.8, in which Propertius hopes that “Oricos accepts [Cynthia] with mild waters” (accipiat placidis Oricos aequoribus, 20). Paetus’ final lament is similarly framed in words frequently associated with elegiac lovers. As he approaches certain death, he is “miserable” (miser, 54), “weeping” (flens, 55), and his speech is characterized as “final complaints” (extremis…querelis, 55). Taken together, and in the midst of an elegiac corpus, the use of 1.8 as intertext and the generically loaded descriptors collectively depict Paetus as an elegiac figure, producing elegiac poetry in his final moments.

This is all the more remarkable, because Paetus’ lament does not draw heavily upon elegiac tropes or vocabulary, instead much more closely resembling Hellenistic epigram and epic. Houghton argues that the reference to the Halcyons recalls Propertius 1.17 (nunc ego desertas alloquor alyconas, 2), but if so, this is a relatively scant reference, and one that picks up on a form of elegiac complaint relatively uncommon in Propertius: one addressed to nature. Paetus’ lament makes use of several Grecisms—lanuginis 59, and alcyonum 61—which may further suggest the intervention of Greek genres. The primary similarity to elegiac complaints hinges upon the shared experience of misery and helplessness, upon the genre of lament construed broadly. Given the inexorably metapoetic and self-referential power of the term querela, its use here first depicts Paetus as producing elegiac lament and poetry, but the un-elegiac content of his complaints encourages readers to consider broader meanings of lament. If 1.6 and 1.8 advance a model of elegiac genre as one perspective competing with other, equally partial, perspectives, 3.7 suggests the ability of that elegiac perspective to speak to a wider array of experiences outside of love affairs in Rome. Laments need not occur on a beach, or in a doorway, for them to be relatable and understandable to elegists. The interplay of desire, powerlessness, and suffering are not unique to love elegy, but elegists are perhaps uniquely qualified to address them.

In the context of both Paetus’ status as a quasi-elegiac figure and the larger dynamics of the poem, which challenge the centrality of embodied erotic contexts for elegy, the fragmentation and dispersal of Paetus’ body may offer an alternative vision of elegy. In my readings of 1.6 and 1.8, I have shown how Propertius uses embodied experiences of space and movement as a way to think about the differences between genres and their access to truth. Read in this context, Paetus’ body offers a striking new image of disembodied genre, of an elegy not so much grounded in a single location and limited set of experiences, but rather as a floating viewpoint capable of speaking from different places and perspectives.

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111 These are the only two places that the port town is referenced in the Propertian corpus. The phrase Oricia terebintho does show up in the Aeneid: vel quale per artem/inclusum buxo aut Oricia terebintho/lucet ebar (10.135-7), and Cairns argues that both Vergil and Propertius may be borrowing from Gallus, who may himself have adapted the line from Parthenius (2006 158-9).
113 2007: 166.
114 There has been an impulse amongst scholars to see in the body of Paetus a metapoetic symbol, though usually one of the ravages of textual transmission. Alison Orlebeke offers a particularly vivid example: “To some, the inherited poem presents a catastrophe equal to Paetus’ own dismemberment: Aquilo blew the pages around, Neptune took pleasure in his own power to change, while the uncontrollable seas of error scattered couplets far and wide and altered the shape of words and letters” (1996: 416).
Throughout the poem, Paetus defies singular, definite location. Even when he first appears on a set itinerary, his actual location is obscure: he is on the move somewhere in the sea between Italy and Egypt (tu Paetum ad Pharios tendentem linea portus, 5). As Propertius narrates Paetus’ death, repeatedly, Paetus’ body is deconstructed and dispersed. First, Paetus “swims, a new delicacy for distant fish” (nova longinquis piscibus esca natat, 8), he receives no funeral from his family (9-10), but instead “sea birds stand over [his] bones” (sed tua nunc volucres astant super ossa marinae, 11). The transition from fish food to bones attended by gulls confronts readers with the reality that Paetus’ body will be picked away at by various creatures until there is little left: he will become part of a wide-ranging ecosystem. He will become so dismembered and dispersed that it will be impossible to locate him in one place: “now the entire Carpathian Sea will be your tomb” (nunc tibi pro tumulo Carpathium omne marest, 12). But the Carpathian Seas turns out to be only one of Paetus’ tombs, as the speaker later returns to the question of Paetus’ corpse, and reclaims it (or at least part of it) from the sea:

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\begin{align*}
\text{reddite corpus humo, posita est in gurgite vita;} & \text{\textsuperscript{116}} \\
\text{Paetum sponte tua, vilis harena, tegas;} \\
\text{et quotiens Paeti transibit nauta sepulcrum,} & \\
\text{dicat ’et audaci tu timor esse potes.’} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Return the body to the land, his life was given up in the whirlpool; worthless sand, cover Paetus willingly; and whenever a sailor shall pass by the tomb of Paetus, let him say, “Even to the brave, you are a source of fear.”

No matter how the lines are arranged, there is a redundancy between this narrative of Paetus’ movement from sea to land and that expressed in 8-12, and differences in these images that are difficult to merge.\textsuperscript{117} And indeed, Paetus himself offered a third possible fate for his body when he prayed that “the tide carry [his body] to Italian regions” because “it will be enough of me if only it will be my mother’s” (at saltem Italie regionibus evehat aestus:/ hoc de me sat erit si modo matris erit, 63-4). The duplication and fragmentation of narratives about the fate of Paetus’ body mirrors the fate of Paetus’ body, which no matter where it ends up, is not getting there in one piece.\textsuperscript{118}

\textsuperscript{115} Many editions separate lines 1-8 from 9-16 because of the unmarked shift in addressee (Heyworth, Goold, cf. Orbeleke 1996). Putting Paetus’ lament and death in between makes for a more linear narrative than the order in the text, which shifts between the time before and after Paetus’ final death. However, whether or not these lines are separated, the experience of a dispersed body remain.

\textsuperscript{116} Heyworth, following Damsté and Sandbach, reads \textit{aquae} for \textit{humo}, which appears in all of the manuscripts, and also transposes these lines to much later in the poem. I acknowledge the difficulty of the vocative in line 25, but still feel that \textit{humo} makes sense in context and does not clearly require emendation.

\textsuperscript{117} E.g., if sand covers the bones, it seems unlikely that birds will stand over them; the \textit{sepulcrum} seems to suggest some form of burial as opposed to the use of the entire Carpathian Sea as a tomb. Solutions have ranged from the mundane (more aggressive reordering of verses) to morbid (Robertson reads the decomposition process as occurring to a still living Paetus, 1969: 382). But fundamentally Propertius has provided doubled narratives of Paetus’ death and dispersal, ones that while not entirely contradictory, are also not entirely at ease with each other.

\textsuperscript{118} Narratively speaking, this is in many ways not so different than what we saw in 1.6, which splintered a single journey into three different interpretations and narrations, or even 1.8, which left out the logical connections between parts A and B. But in 1.6 and 1.8 the speaker and Cynthia rejected the alternative interpretations and narratives, choosing a singular, Rome-bound elegiac perspective. 3.7, on the other hand, engages rather more deeply with the possibilities for elegy abroad.
The final couplet of the poem, in a dramatic turn, reintroduces the voice of the elegiac ego, seemingly re-inscribing the divisions between elegiac speaker and non-elegiac other which have become so blurred over the course of the poem. While much of the verse-order of this poem is vigorously debated, it is important to note that the placement of these final lines is not. Their placement earlier in the poem would dramatically alter the impact of the poem. As the poem stands, the lack of clearly elegiac figures until the last couplet removes the possibility of a stark contrast between elegy and unelegiac others and heightens the prominence of Paetus’ elegiac qualities. However, the final two lines reintroduce the traditionally elegiac perspective in clear contrast to what has come before: “But you, savage North Wind, will never see my sails: it is proper that I be settled unmoving before the doors of my mistress” (at tu, saeve Aquilo, numquam mea vela videbis: ante fores dominae condar oportet iners, 71-2). The references to the doorway and a mistress jarringly reveal that this has all along been the elegiac ego speaking. And indeed, it is telling that it is this specific embodied experience, immobility in a mistress’s doorway, that clearly categorizes the speaker’s worldview. The revelation of the elegiac ego at the end of the poem raises questions about how to read what has come before in the poem. In this final couplet, the speaker reemphasizes the differences between his own elegiac values and those of Paetus and traditional morality. Paetus’ choice to travel apparently marks a clear and absolute divergence in values and life experiences, but the speaker’s explanation of his own experience and values also no longer appears to share much with conservative Roman values. These last two lines thus seem to reject Paetus as an elegiac figure, or the possibility of shared experiences and values between disparate figures and genres.119

And yet, there are reasons to read these last two lines as a piece of the puzzle rather than a key to reading the entire poem. The jarring re-imposition of the specifically elegiac worldview in the final couplet cannot negate the experience of the previous seventy lines. And, indeed, this claim of singular devotion to the limen rings rather hollow after a poem almost entirely devoted to the non-erotically based sufferings of a young man, who was not a lover in any typical sense of the word.120 Although the emotive experiences and the values of the poem share much in common with elegy, its content differs from the traditional content of elegy. And contrary to the speaker’s claims of immobility, over the previous seventy lines he has set his sails upon the sea and confronted the North Wind as he engaged with the genres of epigram and epic. And in the context of Propertius’ third book, which explores different ways of constituting an elegiac project, and poses Greek spaces ranging from Helicon to Athens to Sparta as potentially appropriate spaces for elegy, this sense of immobility seems out of place.121 Rather, I would suggest that this final turn in the last couplet explicitly contrasts within this single poem two radically different ways of doing elegy: between “dismembered” and “embodied” elegy. The former, unencumbered by specific geographic-narrative contexts, engages with shared experiences across geographic, temporal, and social boundaries. The latter, defined by, and

119 Except, perhaps, for the shared experience of death, as suggested by condor’s potential implications of burial.
120 It is important to distinguish between this poem’s preoccupation with Paetus’ non-erotic sufferings and poems commenting on the sufferings of non-elegiac men who are then struck by love (e.g., Prop. 1.5, 1.7, 1.9). The latter category of poems is clearly and actively rooted in an explicitly elegiac point-of-view, as they portray conversions to elegiac experiences. Paetus, although he engages in elegiac-style lament, and an elegiac style relationship with Pecunia, nevertheless never actually engages with the erotics of the elegiac experience—and indeed, until the final couplet, the speaker never suggests in any way that Paetus ought to have lived as a lover.
121 3.3, 3.21, 3.14.
deeply interested in, the limitations imposed by living in a singular body, emphasizes difference and the tragic difficulties of truly sharing experiences or worldviews with others.

**Remapping Elegy in 3.21**

3.21 returns to a more traditionally defined elegiac context and speaker, but like 3.7 uses a journey to explore what elegy might look like outside of its typical narrative and geographic boundaries. In this poem the speaker, exasperated with Cynthia, plots out a journey to Athens that will free him of Cynthia’s tyranny. The poem has unsurprisingly been read as a dramatic rejection of Cynthia and elegy in preparation for the shift in poetics that will occur in Book 4. While this poem certainly is engaged in defining important shifts in Propertius’ poetics, I would suggest that those shifts are already well underway, as seen in 3.7, and that these shifts involve a reimagining of the boundaries of elegy rather than a break with it. Specifically, in spite of the speaker’s assertions that distance will set him free, his descriptions of his future endeavors communicate surprising continuities between his life as a lover in Rome and as an elegiac exile in Athens. These continuities ultimately suggest the limitations of the embodied poetics articulated in the *Monobiblos*.

3.21 frames the speaker’s decision to leave as one that will be determinative of his worldview, poetics, and character, just as travel did in the *Monobiblos*. There, Propertius represented travel as inherently incompatible with love, at least in part through the idea that identity is determined by physical location, that viewpoint is determined by line of sight, in the literal sense. The speaker of 3.21 calls upon precisely this same set of ideas, but as an explanation for why he must leave rather than why he must stay: “I must go on a great journey to learned Athens so that a long road may free me from heavy love” (*Magnum iter ad doctas profisci cogor Athenas, ut me longa gravi solvat amore via*, 1-2). These lines in fact directly recall 1.6, as *doctas Athenas* was one of the destinations rejected by the speaker in 1.6 in favor of remaining with Cynthia. The stakes remain the same, even as he has reversed himself: where before he rejected Athens in order to maintain a life of love with Cynthia, now he embraces Athens to reject Cynthia. Furthermore, love is again imagined as being cured through embodied perspective, through what the speaker can or cannot physically see: “once I have gone to another land, as far as Cynthia will be from my eyes, so far will love depart from my heart” (*mutatis Cynthia terris quantum oculis, animo tam procul ibit amor*, 9-10). By altering what he sees, he will alter what he feels. Given the intratextual reference to *doctas Athenas*, this opening reads almost as a reenactment of the speaker’s decision in 1.6, but this time he commits to the view from the ship and all that encompasses.

Moreover, the description of the speaker’s imagined departure from Rome underscores the primacy of location for identity, by invoking both the programmatic opening poem of the *Monobiblos* and 1.8. Having made up his mind, he calls upon his friends to send him off: “Come now, friends, push a ship into the sea, and take equal turns rowing” (*nunc agite, o socii, propellite in aequora navem, remorumque pares ducite sorte vices*, 11-12). The situation sounds remarkably similar to the speaker’s command to his companions in the opening poem of the

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123 Clarke suggests that these lines may also evoke the incipit *Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis* (2004: 141), which would only further strengthen these connections between 3.21 and Book 1.
corpus, to “carry [me] through the furthest races and the waves” (*ferte per extremas gentes et ferte per undas*, 29). This decision to leave Rome in the third book finally enacts the departure promised, and so quickly forgotten, in the very beginning of the corpus. Moreover, the decision to reject elegiac love affairs here adheres closely to the privileging of place and embodied experience set out in the first book: to leave Rome is to leave love, to stay is to remain active in love and elegy. The speaker’s adieu further highlights this logic of place: “farewell Roman towers and you, friends, and you, girl, however you were to me, farewell” (*Romanae turres et vos valeatis, amici, / qualiscumque mihi tuque, puella, vale*, 15-6). The speaker of 1.8 voiced a similar association between Rome and love, but in the context of the affirmative decision to remain in Rome, in love: “I am dear to her, and through me Rome is dearest” (*illi carus ego et per me carissima Roma*, 31). The geography cannot be extricated from the love affair and poetics. The logic of this poem rests upon the broad geographic-generic map constructed in 1.6 and 1.8, that closely links Rome to love and elegiac poetics. The second half of the poem, however, complicates that picture significantly. The speaker’s contemplation of his life in Athens highlights continuity with his elegiac life and thus draws into question whether identity and outlook can be altered merely by changing places. Scholars inclined to take this poem seriously as a repudiation of love and elegy have been somewhat troubled by the choice of Athens as a destination. For a poet seeking to become the *Callimachus Romanus*, Alexandria would surely make more sense as a destination. But largely, Athens has been accepted as symbolically representing Greek culture and not-elegy: “Athens symbolizes and represents many forms of art, but erotic elegy was certainly not one.” But, already this reading presents some problems. First of all, the uncertainty of the intellectual influences and endeavors that Propertius is moving towards is marked and significant. This is no clear Vergilian declaration of a move from bucolic to didactic poetics or didactic to martial epic. Propertius’ imagined future looks much more like a life without a plan (*nullo vivere consilio*, 1.1.6) than an evolution to a more mature poetics.

Furthermore, Propertius’ vision of his cultural pursuits in Athens betrays striking similarities to his erotic pursuits in Rome. As he imagines his arrival in Athens, the speaker proposes a conversion to a philosophic life, only to immediately undermine his own seriousness. He begins by considering lofty, serious intellectual endeavors which would indeed represent a significant split from his erotic antics:

Illic vel stadiis animum emendare Platonis
Incipiam aut hortis, docte Epicure, tuis;
Persequar aut studium linguæ, Demosthenis arma…

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124 As I will discuss in the ensuing two sections, this geographic-generic mapping is actually peculiar to Propertius; Tibullus and Ovid are both much more open to the possibilities of love outside of Rome.
125 Fear 2005. It is worth noting, though, that Propertius has a penchant for deceptive advertisements about endings; e.g., 1.12 seems to set up an ending focused on Cynthia, like the beginning of the book (*Cynthia prima fuit, Cynthia finis erit*, 20), but in fact, the book ends with Gallus and Tullus.
There I will begin to emend my mind in Plato’s Academy, or in your gardens, learned Epicurus; or I will pursue the study of language, the arms of Demosthenes…

Any of these endeavors individually might have looked like a genuine intention to change. Line 25 especially appears—at least initially—promising for the hope of a true break with elegy. Platonist philosophy is a suitably serious intellectual pursuit, and indeed, in 3.5 Propertius had already predicted that he would spend his maturity studying natural philosophy. The use of *emendare*, a verb frequently used of textual as well as moral correction rather nicely aligns the proposed change to both Propertius’ character and his writing. Furthermore, the postponement of the main verb holds out, at least initially, the possibility of a stronger verb than simply beginning. The intrusion of *incipiam aut* undermines the speaker in two ways. First, there is the weakness of beginning. He will undertake these studies (*incipiam*), but will he continue, or finish? And the *aut* is perhaps even more troubling, as it reveals that this is not a concrete plan, but merely the first in a series of options he seems to weigh equally. Indeed, he sees no conflict between these divergent courses of study, but rather with his emphasis on their respective geographies (*illic, hortis tuis*) presents them as if stops on a tour. However, Platonism, Epicureanism, and Demosthenic oratory in fact represent incompatible approaches to the purpose of life, the requirements of political engagement, and writing. To present them as reasonable alternatives to each other suggests a fundamental disinterest in all that these intellectual schools hold most dear and makes a true philosophical conversion seem far-fetched at best.

It is at this point that the speaker abandons serious pursuits altogether and the ensuing options look ever more reminiscent of the elegiac experiences he is trying to leave behind. After a series of incompatible, but individually plausible, studies that might reform the lover, he turns to more sensual options:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Libaboque tuos, docte Menandre, sales;} \\
\text{Aut certe tabulae capient mea lumina pictae,} \\
\text{Sive ebore exatae, seu magis aere, manus.}
\end{align*}
\]

And I will taste your wit, learned Menander, or certainly painted pictures will seize my eyes, or works wrought in ivory, or better yet, bronze.

The speaker imagines Menander as a sensory experience, specifically an experience for taste (the salty flavor of *sales* may be activated by the drinking verb *libo*). Menander sounds like a hedonistic, intellectual pleasure. This sense that Propertius has turned away from philosophical and serious pursuits in favor of sensory pleasures is confirmed in the following

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129 3.5.21ff.  
130 Fedeli notes that the gardens of Epicurus were popular with Roman visitors (1985: 619).  
131 Papanghelis makes the point that the Epicurean emphasis on pleasure might also suit an elegiac lover well (1987: 209), though Lucretius’ rejection of erotic attachment (4.1141-84) marks a significant shift for especially the Propertian elegiac lover.  
132 Heyworth notes the “sequence of pastimes declin[e] in intellectual content” (2007a: 398). Given the similarities between New Comedy’s young men and the lovers of elegy, moreover, Menander would seem like a particularly poor distraction from love. There is some question whether Menander’s epithet, *docte*, represents a corruption, given its presence only a few lines previously describing Epicurus (Fedeli 1980: 620, Heyworth 2007a: 398).
lines which turn to visual pleasures. In the first four lines of his imagined stay in Athens the speaker took an active role: he acted as the grammatical subject of active verbs, undertook studies, pursued, study, and drank. Now suddenly he appears in a grammatically passive position. The visual arts will capture him, echoing the famous incipit to the Monobiblos: “Cynthia first seized me, miserable, with her eyes” (Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis). Propertius imagines a relationship with the visual arts of Athens that mirrors his relationship with Cynthia, one that controls him, that inspires obsession, and, perhaps most importantly, artistry. In one sense, then, this move to Athens changes nothing for the lover. In spite of all of his faith that changing places will free him from futile love, the end of his imagined journey to Athens finds him ensnared by statues and paintings literally incapable of returning his affections.133 What had started as a credible sounding plan for self-improvement in Athens quickly devolves into the poet-lover engaged in his usual antics.

This is not to say that the removal of Cynthia, and of Rome, is without significance, or that there is a perfect continuity between the lover’s life in Rome and his imagined life in Athens. There are hints of danger in this escape, and not just because of the hedonistic nature of his plans. Propertius will be consumed by the artistic output of Athens, but there is little indication that he himself will be creating in response to it. He will be captured by it and pursue it; he will not sing or lament, nor even declaim or perform in response to it. He has not imagined here a “move towards Greek models” so much as being consumed by them.134 There is perhaps here a warning on the potential risks of removing the puella from the puella scripta for the poet-lover. The puella’s domination defined the lover and made him recognizable; it is not at all clear that Greek arts will offer him the same rewards for his suffering.

The final two couplets reassert Propertius’ desire for a cure to his pains and his confidence in his success, but hint at potential continuity:

et spatia annorum et longa intervalla profundi lenibunt tacito vulnera nostra sinu: seu moriar, fato, non turpi fractus amore; atque erit illa mihi mortis honesta dies.

31-4

Both the passage of time and the sea’s far-sundering will ease the wounds that linger in my silent breast: or if I die, it will be naturally and not laid low by a shameful love; and the day of my death will bring me no dishonor.135

Distance—of both time and space—will work, Propertius will die free of love. Although he continues to believe in the efficacy of travel as a cure for love, it is worth noting that the formula has shifted. Where initially Propertius had suggested an almost instantaneous cure from his love purely through physical distance—“as far from my eyes, so far from my heart”—now the process does not appear so immediate. Instead, it will require the duration of years in addition to physical distance. The final couplet further muddies the question of what kind of change these distances

133 Cf. Met. 10.243ff.
134 Clarke 2004: 140.
135 Goold 1990.
of time and space will generate. The vision of the poet’s death re-enacts one of Propertius’ favorite elegiac tropes—reference to his own death—but with the twist that love will not be the cause. Although the rejection of a death for the sake of love does represent a substantial change—just as leaving for Athens does—it is a shift that still fundamentally marks itself as elegiac. Put another way, he continues to use the language and imagery of elegiac love and poetics in his attempt to escape them.

Rather than imagining a complete change through travel to Athens, in fact the poet’s imagined life after love reflects in substantial ways his life as an elegiac lover. And so the question becomes, how essential is Cynthia, love, or Rome, for an elegiac poet? Although 3.21 uses a more traditional elegiac narrative as its premise, it raises a similar set of issues to those raised by 3.7. Both poems experiment with what elegiac output might look like stripped of its context within Rome, within a specific love affair. In Paetus, this took the form of an omniscient narrator, roaming as freely as the scattered parts of Paetus’ body; in 3.21, the speaker imagined himself in a new specific, geographic context, but as roaming freely between genres, passions, and perspectives within that singular space. Taken together, and in contrast with 1.6 and 1.8, they reflect a re-conceptualization of what it means to write elegiac poetry, and of what constitute generic boundaries. The determinative quality assigned to embodied experience in Propertius’ early poetry shifts into something a bit more complicated by his third book: context, embodied experiences are not irrelevant to identity and ideology, but neither are they necessarily entirely determinative.

Finding the Elegiac in an Epic World: Tibullus 1.3

For Propertius, travel is the embodied experience that most defines the perspectives of non-elegiac characters. It marks a boundary between elegiac and non-elegiac—a boundary that he breaks down in Book 3, but a boundary nevertheless—and operates as an essential symbol for negotiating the lover’s relationship with the non-elegiac other and their respective relationships to truth. Stated in another way, Propertian travel poems question how elegy coexists with non-elegy and how its embodied experiences generate different truths for elegiac lovers, questions that presuppose that both elegy and not-elegy can, and do, coexist in the world. Tibullus comes at travel with a different set of assumptions. As was also apparent in his paraclausithyron, for him, what is at stake is less coexistence than survival. The Tibullan lover does not so much manage boundaries and status relative to the non-elegiac, as seek to manage an elegiac life within an entirely unelegiac world. Travel is not the antithesis of love, not the signifier of all that is not love or elegy; rather, travel is yet another obstacle, another travail inflicted upon lovers by a world not built for them. In 1.2, Tibullus demonstrates how lovers can negotiate the unelegiac world they inhabit, using the power of fiction to disappear from sight; in 1.3, on the contrary, he teaches readers to recognize the elegiac qualities, values, narratives already subtly dispersed throughout the world. Engaging closely with Propertian elegy and with the *Odyssey*, Tibullus rejects the embodied poetics of Propertius, instead modelling how the elegiac lover can simultaneously assimilate to mainstream society and maintain a distinctive sense of identity.

In 1.3, Tibullus rejects an understanding of travel as antithetical to love and elegy, a rejection highlighted through reference to Propertian propemptica. The first lines of the poem

136 On Propertius’ intertwining of the themes of love and death, see especially Papaghelis 1987.
appear to set up a Propertian style propemptic scenario: “Without me, you will go through Aegean waves, Messalla. Oh, may you and the regiment remember me!” (Ibitis Aegaeas sine me, Messalla, per undas/ O utinam memores ipse cohorisque mei, 1-2). The opening phrase, sine me, opens up a complex set of intertextual relationships, recalling the prominent use of this phrase in Propertius 1.6, 1.8, and Eclogues 10.137 Moreover, there are other linguistic and narrative echoes of Propertius 1.6: the Aegean appears in the first two lines of both poems, the future of eo is used to imagine the patron’s future travels,138 and a request is made that the departing patron remember the lover left behind (Propertius 1.6.35-6).139 These lines thus set up a familiar situation: a patron journeying abroad leaves the lover behind. Through echoes of Propertius this scenario suggests binaries between immobility and travel, lover and other, and an elegiac rejection of travel. A reader familiar with Propertius might reasonably expect Tibullus to proceed from here to explain why the lover cannot leave his beloved in Rome and the life of love.140 And indeed, such a binary between travel and immobility might even seem to have been set up by the first two poems of the Tibullan corpus, which play with the opposition, even as they also undermine it.141

But information in the second couplet requires us to dramatically revise our sense of the circumstances of the poem and lays the groundwork for a non-binary understanding of travel. In this couplet, the speaker upends expectations: “Phaeacia holds me, ill, in unknown lands; just keep your greedy hands away, dark Death!” (Me tenet ignotis aegrum Phaeacia terris,/ Abstineas avidas, Mors, modo, nigra, manus, 3-4). While the facts of the first two lines—that Messalla is leaving Tibullus behind—remain, the speaker’s newly revealed setting dramatically alters their meaning. Tibullus does not remain in Rome, but in Phaeacia, and does not do so out of loyalty to Delia or elegiac poetics, but rather because of an illness. The location of Phaeacia specifically is obviously pivotal, but it is also worth observing how radical an act departure is. Such an act would be character and genre defining in Propertius, marking either a departure from elegy, or a self-consciously subversive revision of what constitutes elegy.142 But not so in Tibullus. Indeed, Tibullus has introduced a third possibility between travel and immobility, as he

137 Prop. 1.6.25, 1.8.4 (echoed yet again in 1.8.32), and Ecl. 10.48. In 1.8 Propertius is clearly citing Ecl. 10; the reference in 1.6 is less certain because, although identical in form, the meaning is different, as sine is the imperative rather than the preposition. Regardless of Propertius’ references, the appearance of the phrase three times in Propertius’ two propempticas makes its appearance in the opening line of Tibullus’ a pointed evocation. There is perhaps also a suggestive tension here between the isolation suggested by the phrase sine me and the way it draws Tibullus into conversation with at least two predecessors. See page 60 for further discussion. Myers 2008: 78 also notes similarities between Prop. 1.6 and Tib. 1.3’s opening.
138 ibitis, ibis in Prop. 1.6.34; see also Hor. Epod. 1.1
139 None of these echoes individually rises above circumstantial: the appearance of the Aegean Sea, a verb of motion, a request for memory, and the phrase sine me might reasonably be anticipated in a propempticon (Maltby 2002: 184). However, taken together, the echoes with Prop. 1.6 are compelling.
140 So also Myers 2008: 77-8.
141 1.1.51-6, 1.2.65-6; so Lee-Stecum sees Tibullus’ departure as an “inconsistency” (1998: 101-3). Kennedy, on the other hand, reads the speaker of the first poem as already being a soldier, wishing for a different life (1993: 13-15). These lines certainly set up travel as an undesirable activity for lovers, and even envision an idealized dichotomy between immobile lovers and traveling soldiers. But the structure of 1.1 defies the idea of binary with the incorporation of the pastoral ideal as a tertiary option; additionally, as discussed in the previous chapter (pages 30-34), 1.2’s expansion upon the pastoral reveals a rather more mobile and nuanced elegiac existence than might be supposed from 1.1.51-6.
142 As I argue occurs in 3.7 and 3.21; see pages 62-75.
lies immobilized by illness halfway through a journey, separated from both Delia and Messalla. The halted journey already significantly reconfigures the meaning of the journey vis-à-vis Propertius. Tibullus undoes the binary of immobility and travel.

Although Tibullus does not cast travel—or halted journeys—as antithetical to love, he does present them as inimical to it. Throughout the poem, Tibullus articulates a vision of travel as part of broader cultural systems that are simultaneously hostile to the lover and constitute the lover’s experience, an experience specifically of suffering and alienation. The narration of how Tibullus came to end up on Phaeacia portrays travel not as a unique antithesis to elegy and love, but as an unavoidable obligation foisted upon the lover by a world unsympathetic to his desires. In stark contrast to Propertius 1.6, the Tibullan speaker has no right of refusal. Although reluctant to leave Rome (Quaerebam tardas anxius usque moras, 16), the speaker never even hints at an alternative, at the possibility that he might say no and stay in Rome with Delia. Both the speaker and Delia, moreover, see the speaker’s impending journey as a problem not because it constitutes on its face a rejection of the relationship, but because of the dangers and hardships it brings. Unlike Cynthia’s threat that she will no longer be his if Propertius leaves Rome (1.6.9), Delia prays for Tibullus’ safe return (1.3.23-6) and worries about whether she will end up mourning his journey (1.3.13-14). In so doing, she interprets departure and travel not as a fundamental dividing point or an indicator of true loyalties, but as another hardship lovers may face, one which cannot be avoided, but may be overcome.

In the midst of the narration of the lead-up to his departure, Tibullus does play with the possibility of an elegiac prohibition on travel, but only to immediately reject the binary in the following line. Recalling his attempts to delay his departure, and apparently overcome with regrets, he exclaims “Let no one dare to leave if Amor disapproves, or let him leave knowing that he goes against the will of the god” (Audeat invito ne quis discedere Amore / Aut sciat egressum se prohibente deo, 21-2). The progression of these lines mirrors that of the first four lines of the poem—Tibullus once again dangles before the reader a Propertian style dichotomy between lovers who remain immobile and non-lovers who travel, before revealing that this was always a false dichotomy. The aut transforms the prohibition into simply one alternative. Lovers should either not leave Rome or should leave knowing that in doing so they offend the god Amor.

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143 Reading back to 1.1 after 1.3, lines 51-6 can be understood in this context: lovers can hate travel even as they may not be able to avoid it.

144 Or, to be more precise, the speaker represents Delia as seeing travel as a problem for these reasons. Both Lee-Stecum 1998 and Keith 2014 suggest that these lines offer an against-the-grain reading that Delia may be on the contrary eager to send her lover off on campaign (quae me cum mitteret urbe, 9), in hopes of either more uninterrupted time with other lovers, better gifts from Tibullus, or both.

145 Cf. Cynthia, 1.6.9-10. Scholars have long noted this difference with interest, but rarely interrogated what this difference suggests about how Propertius and Tibullus conceive of their world and their place in it. See, e.g., Cairns 1972: 5, Murgatroyd 1980: 99-100, 102, Maltby 2002: 184. Rather, explanations tend towards understanding the shift in the poem revealing that Tibullus has in fact already left Rome behind as an innovation for innovation’s sake; so Murgatroyd argues that “T. produces an original reversal of the propempticon, which contrasts with the brief, conventional propempticon at the opening of the poem [lines 1-4]” (100). Cf. Myers 2008: 79ff. On similarities between Propertius 1.6 and Tibullus 1.3, see Wimmel 1976: 95-99.

146 Scholars have tended to focus on the way this line represents travel as contrary to Love’s will, rather than the alternative posed (e.g., Murgatroyd 1980: 107). But by presenting the possibility that a lover might leave so long as
retribution—like Tibullus’ own illness—but that such sufferings are not actually incompatible with love itself. By setting up, and immediately rejecting, a binary between travel and immobility, Tibullus draws attention to how differently Propertius and he conceive of the lover’s place in society. In Tibullus’ world, assimilation is often necessary and inevitable, but is not assumed to compromise identity or loyalties.

And indeed, although the lovers anticipate Tibullus’ departure with abhorrence, the journey generates typically elegiac outcomes and poetry. In another subtle invocation of Propertius, the impending journey motivates Tibullus to seek “slowing delays” (tardas moras, 16). This is the first appearance in Tibullus of the word mora, a term used programmatically in Propertius for the time spent conducting love affairs. To try to stretch out a finite amount of time indefinitely and to seek to defy temporal demands through futile persuasion and trickery are quintessential activities of the lover. The use of mora to describe Tibullus’ machinations in response to his marching orders suggests that this challenge and the lover’s response to it can also be understood as part of the normal functioning of love. Further confirmation emerges from the fact that the travelling lover is not incorporated into a martial poetics and worldview, as Propertius imagined in 1.6. Rather, Tibullus’ journey leaves him isolated and suffering at the hands of forces he cannot control—a familiar pose for an elegiac lover. The hardship of the journey and the alienation it causes precipitate Tibullus’ lament, in which he voices his frustration over his powerlessness, his desire for Delia, and his fear of death. In short, travel provokes the usual emotional experiences and topics of Tibullan elegiac song. Even the resort to poetic landscapes that ensues is, likewise, a familiar element of Tibullan elegiac poetics. For Tibullus, thus, the journey seems to function in this poem like a locked door or rich rival in others, each a challenge that simultaneously reveals the world’s hostility to the lover and constitute the lover’s recognizable experiences.

Tibullus further reinforces this sense of travel as a systemic part of the contemporary world and characteristic of the lover’s experience in this world when he traces its origins to the overthrow of Saturn. After detailing Delia’s extensive religious efforts on his behalf, Tibullus turns to visions of a time and place friendlier to lovers:

Quam bene Saturno vivebant rege, priusquam
Tellus in longas est patefacta vias!
Nondum caeruleas pinus contempserat undas,
Effusum ventis praebueratque sinum,
Nec vagus ignotis repetens compendia terries
Presserat externa navita merce ratem...

1.3.35-40

How well they lived when Saturn was king, before the Earth was laid open in long roads! Not yet had a pine tree defied the blue waves and furnished a filled sail to

he accepts the divine consequences, Tibullus actually allows for the alignment of elegy and travel. It is not a comfortable alignment—it will result in further suffering—but a possible one.

147 Gardner 2013. Prominently, the verb moror appears towards the beginning of both 1.6 and 1.8, but see also 1.3.44, 1.9.6.
148 Death fantasies: 1.1.59-68, 1.1.69-72, 1.10.13-16; in 1.5 Tibullus instead fears for Delia’s life.
149 e.g., 1.1.1-48, 1.5.19-35, 1.10.39-44.
the winds, nor had a wandering sailor seeking profit in unknown lands loaded a
ship up with foreign wealth…

On the one hand, longing for a simpler Golden Age is a fairly typical way of critiquing travel in
the ancient world, and closely resembles other depictions of the Saturnian Golden Age. Such a
critique, however, has significant implications for how we understand the problem of travel.
Travel appears not as not a unique problem, but part of a larger system of technology and human
daring that has overthrown the natural order. And indeed, travel is only the first technology that
Tibullus decries; in the next eight lines he also longingly recalls that during that time animals
were not yoked, houses had no doors, fields no divisions, oak trees and ewes offered sustenance
freely, and there were no wars (40-48). Travel is merely one symptom of a much broader set of
problems originating from human technologies. Additionally, as part of the fabric of the world
under Jupiter’s reign, travel appears not so much as a matter of individual choice, but an
inevitability. Lovers can no more rebel against travel than against agriculture. This description of
the Golden Age thus serves to situate Tibullus’ current problem—stalled in his journey, ill in
Phaeacia—as the natural result of the Iron Age in which he lives, rather than as a result of his
desire, or willingness, to leave behind love.

Tibullus’ invocations of the Golden and Iron Ages reveal something fundamental about
how he views elegy’s place in the world. In short, the conditions of the Iron Age—the conditions
of contemporary human life—ensure the lover’s failures, exclusions, and involvement in systems
he dislikes, such as war and commerce. It is a world governed by profit and war, not love and
poetry, a world with no place for lovers. And yet, it is also this very alienation from the world in
which he lives, this inability to safely and freely pursue his own ambitions (as we also saw in his
paraclausithyron), that recognizably defines the lover in Tibullus. The escapes to fantasy worlds
and pastoral offer precisely the kind of safe havens for love that seem not to exist in Tibullus’
“real world.” And yet, the ease and freedom provided in these fantasy havens also mean that
lovers do not have to invest time and energy in managing their love affairs—and that their
devotion to love correspondingly no longer differentiates or identifies them. The pastoral fantasy
with which Tibullus opens this collection, for instance, only incorporates Delia after fifty-two
lines. Until that point a reader might reasonably think they were reading poetry written in the
fashion of the Theocritus and Vergil’s Eclogues, rather than the love poetry of Propertius and
Gallus. The world’s general hostility to lovers and love affairs—which forces lovers to
deceive, evade, and at times assimilate to the rest of society, in effect to hide their presence—
paradoxically also makes them recognizable as a category.

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does not invoke stories of the Golden Age.
151 Propertius, on the contrary, mostly treats travel as the product of individual agency, interpreting it as both
reflecting and creating mutually incompatible values and experiences. 3.7 comes the closest to seeing it from a
systemic point-of-view, and even there Paetus’ own agency in his destruction is emphasized.
152 It bears remembering that the real world of Tibullus’ poetry is of course also a fictional world.
And indeed, elegiac love is implicated in the Iron Age in even more insidious ways. It is not just that the struggles imposed upon lovers by the Iron Age world compel lovers to react in ways that then make them a recognizable group; the objects of their desire and their entire poetic aesthetic are inextricable from war and commerce, and specifically from Roman imperialism. As Alison Keith and Sharon James have observed, the elegiac *puella* and elegiac poetry itself both depend upon Roman systems of imperialism and commerce.\(^{154}\) With her Greek name, the elegiac *puella* might herself be imagined as an import from abroad, not unlike the elegiac couplet and the poetic traditions upon which elegy draws. Without conquest and commerce, and the cultural exchange they enable, there can be no learned girl with a Greek pseudonym, no Callimachean aesthetics or Theocritean landscapes.

Or—more to the point in this particular poem—Odyssean narratives of return. For throughout this poem, Tibullus imposes an Odyssean framework onto his own elegiac misadventures. This narrative begins with the speaker’s location on Phaeacia, picks up again with his vision of the underworld, and brings the poem to a close with his own imagined *nostos* and reunion with Delia.\(^{155}\) Scholars have tended to view this comparison between an elegiac lover and an epic hero as a way of emphasizing the difference between the two, and consequently, the distance between elegy and epic. So Lee-Stecum argues that “the gulf between the Homeric version of the myth and the Tibullan realization of it reflects the gulf between the poet’s professions and his actions.”\(^{156}\) But if the comparison draws out expected contrasts between an elegiac and epic hero, it also draws into focus surprisingly genuine similarities. While it is the nature of comparisons to highlight both similarity and difference, the expectation of marked opposition between elegiac and epic figures may have caused scholars to over-emphasize the contrast and disregard, or not take as seriously, the similarities. In what follows I will argue that the incorporation of Homeric elements serves to deconstruct Propertian-style elegiac binaries and to find common ground between elegy and its supposed opposite. Tibullus does not so much rewrite Homeric epic as remind readers that it always contained within it elegiac attributes. Elegists need not reject epic, just as they need not remain in Rome; rather, the task is to uncover and work with the parts of epic amenable to elegy, to find common ground.\(^{157}\)

Phaeacia, with its associations with story-telling and its precarious relationship to reality, offers just such a common ground. Tibullus uses his location in Phaeacia to break down binaries between travel and immobility, fiction and reality, epic and elegiac. Scholars have been quick to

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\(^{154}\) James 2003, Keith 2014.

\(^{155}\) Bright 1971 offers an extensive discussion of both explicit and implicit echoes between the narrative of 1.3 and the *Odyssey*. See also Mills 1974, Lee-Stecum 1998: 101-104, 128-131, Maltby 2002. Cf. Murgatroyd (1980: 100), who acknowledges parallels but thinks that they have been somewhat overstated in scholarly readings of the text.\(^{156}\) 1998: 103. See also Bright 1971: “This antithesis [between Odysseus and Tibullus] is, I believe, the point of the comparison throughout the elegy. Tibullus has chosen one of the great heroes and taken upon himself that hero’s identity, only to turn the entire world it inhabits inside out. The values are completely reversed. Travel and war lead not to glory but to decline, to suffering and to pointless death” (207). Cf. Murgatroyd, who argues for a narrower comparison between Odysseus and Tibullus.

\(^{157}\) This approach to elegiac identity shares much in common with Propertius Book 3, and it seems plausible that Tibullus played some role in Propertius’ evolution. However, while Propertius also seems interested in the question of shared ground with non-elegiac identity, the motivation for that within the book seems to originate from a voluntary choice and poetic ambition. Propertius still does not represent himself as motivated by fear of or compulsion by mainstream culture, as Tibullus does.
note that Phaeacia corresponds to Corcyra, the island that ancient commentators typically identified with Odysseus’ mysterious final stop.\textsuperscript{158} But such an easy equation obscures the invocation of a markedly fictional space and of Odyssean poetics. Phaeacia’s unreality derives not only from its appearance in an epic poem, but also from its specific depiction within the Odyssey. Surrounded by mist, separated geographically from other peoples, Phaeacia physically inhabits a liminal space. This liminality is further reflected in its narrative role in the epic: Phaeacia is Odysseus’ final stop before his return to Ithaca and the location from which he tells the story of his travels.\textsuperscript{159} Phaeacia marks the boundary between Odysseus’ travels and his homecoming, between home and abroad, a boundary mediated by narrative. Odysseus secures his return through acts of persuasion and storytelling. The invocation of Phaeacia thus places Tibullus in a space both produced and defined by storytelling, and also draws a parallel between Tibullus and Odysseus.

Such a resemblance between an elegiac lover and an epic hero might initially seem unlikely. Elegy and epic are, after all, supposed to be intrinsically opposed in their topics, values, and aesthetics.\textsuperscript{160} And there are obvious and significant differences in all of these spheres.\textsuperscript{161} But the use of Phaeacia as a point of anchor highlights genuine areas of overlap between Odysseus and Tibullus, between at least Odyssean epic and elegy. Odysseus is actually a remarkably plausible elegiac hero: he is, after all, is a long-suffering man who uses the power of his persuasive—and often deceptive—words to overcome the obstacles that stand between him and reunion with his beloved.\textsuperscript{162} He even shares with lovers a certain affinity for weeping. Tibullus’ lamentations on Phaeacia, for instance, do not sound so entirely different from Odysseus’ lamentations on Calypso’s shore.\textsuperscript{163} The resemblance between Tibullus and Odysseus need not be complete or total for it to nevertheless effectively lay out common ground between these two genres so regularly contrasted. This poem’s specific focus on the Odyssey, may also serve as a

\textsuperscript{158} Murgatroyd’s introduction to the poem, for instance, consistently refers to Tibullus’ location as Corcyra, rather than Phaeacia (1980: 98-100). For association between Corcyra and Phaeacia, see Thuc. 1.25, Callim. Aet. fr. 13 and 14, Pl. HN. 4.52.

\textsuperscript{159} Segal describes the peculiarity of Phaeacia saying “The Phaeacians provide a restorative framework in which [Odysseus] can integrate the real with the unreal, the imaginary with the familiar…Hence they face backward as well as forward, back to the adventures after Troy and to Troy itself, and forward to the future struggle with the suitors” (1962: 23). See also Myers 2008: 84-86 on Phaeacia’s liminal role in Tib. 1.3. Interestingly, in Latin poetry more broadly, the Phaeacians are often associated with epicurean values and wealth rather than with their specific role in the Odyssey; see Duffy 2011: 44-71, Lucr. 2.20-33, Hor. Epist. 1.2.27-31, 1.15.22-25, Prop. 1.14.16-24.

\textsuperscript{160} E.g., Prop. 1.7.1-5, Am. 1.1. But the dichotomy between elegy and epic often turns out to be more complex, or less explicitly focused on a monolithic concept of epic, than it first appears; see Prop. 2.10, Am. 3.1; Cameron 1995.

\textsuperscript{161} Bright highlights narrative differences, in particular Odysseus’ ultimate success as opposed to Tibullus’ powerlessness, Odysseus’ quest to move from supernatural/fictional realms back towards reality while Tibullus moves in the opposite direction, and Odysseus’ high status and goals (kingship) as opposed to Tibullus’ desire for a humble life (1971: 206). The second of these strikes me as the most persuasive and provocative.

\textsuperscript{162} He also only goes to war reluctantly (see Cic. Off. 3.97), sneaks into and out of cities and residences (e.g., Od. 4.22-64), further demonstrating elegiac skillsets. That he engages in dalliances along the way may likewise make him only resemble an elegiac lover more closely. Of course, these similarities only go so far: his martial and athletic prowess, his dedication to traditional family structures, and his political power all make for very different experiences than elegiac lovers. My argument here is that Odysseus was actually an elegiac lover, but that there is much in Odysseus for elegiac lovers to relate to.

\textsuperscript{163} Od. 5.81-4: ἀλλ᾽ ὀ γ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀκτής κλαίει καθήμενος, ἐνθα πάρος παρὰ δύκως καὶ στοσχῆσθαι καὶ ἄγησε θυμὸν ἔργῳν/ πόντον ἐπ᾽ ἀτριγγετον δερκέσκετο δάκρυα λείβων. Note, in particular, Odysseus’ immobile pose and utter helplessness.
reminder that epic is not a monolithic genre. The *Iliad* might offer sparser fodder for the elegiac lover, compared to the *Odyssey*’s rather fertile grounds.\(^{164}\)

Similarly, Tibullus’ underworld scene, which corresponds structurally to Odysseus’ visit to the underworld, teaches readers to find the elegiac hidden within traditional discourses. In two carefully balanced passages, Tibullus first envisions Elysium and then Tartarus, reproducing the inherited tropes of underworld scenes with only a few significant alterations, which illuminate the elegiac tint of traditional motifs. After dictating a funereal epitaph for himself, Tibullus finds comfort in the fact that Venus will lead him into Elysium, because he has “always been pliable to tender Love” (*quod facilis tenero sum semper Amori*, 57). Venus’ usurpation of Mercury’s traditional role as psychopomp appears to be a Tibullan innovation, one that dramatically announces a specifically elegiac vision of the underworld.\(^{165}\) And yet, outside of Venus’ unexpected role, and Tibullus’ insistence that obeisance to love will get one there, Tibullus’ Elysium allows itself to be read as simultaneously specifically elegiac and broadly generic. So, as several scholars have noted, the choruses and flowers strewn about this Elysium could have elegiac resonances but are also a normal feature of Elysium scenes.\(^{166}\) L.B.T. Houghton gets to the heart of the problem when asking, “But how far is the erotic resonance of these details merely incidental, a fortuitous convergence of the motifs of love poetry with the traditional features of the underworld familiar to Tibullus’ first-century audience?”\(^{167}\) I suggest that this overlap between the elegiac and the broader tradition is not fortuitous or incidental, but precisely the point. The introduction of Venus as psychopomp explicitly activates an elegiac reading of a scene that otherwise largely adheres to traditional representations of Elysium. The fact that in Venus’ shadow, roses and myrtle, choruses and youths, suddenly look obviously and specifically elegiac does not so much appropriate Elysium for elegy as reveal that the elegiac has always already been present there.

Likewise, Tibullus’ depiction of Tartarus draws attention to the ways that traditional representations of Tartarus also have always included plenty of erotic material, specifically in the erotic crimes for which many of the criminals are being punished. One of the abiding scholarly quandaries about this poem is instructive. For decades scholars, reading Tibullus’ Elysium as a space dedicated purely to lovers, were puzzled that his representation of Tartarus did not seem to be similarly defined in purely elegiac terms. Specifically, the inclusion of Tantalus, best known for feeding his son to Zeus, and not famous for any sexual crimes, seemed discordant.\(^{168}\) Various, at times far-fetched, attempts were made to force Tantalus into a reading of a Tartarus exclusively focused on erotic crimes.\(^{169}\) Eventually, a somewhat obscure story of Tantalus

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\(^{164}\) Though Paris makes for an equally viable elegiac figure, the more sustained focus on warfare in the *Iliad* seems more obviously at odds with elegiac aesthetics. And indeed, epic foils are regularly invoked in elegy through reference to the subject matter of warfare, which aligns more closely with the *Iliad* than with the *Odyssey* (cf. Aen. 1.1).

\(^{165}\) On Venus’ role as psychopomp, see Houghton 2007b. Scholars have long noted the innovative nature of Tibullus’ elegiac Elysium, e.g., Eisenberger 1960: “Er hat hier offenbar aus den alten Elementen völlig Neues gestaltet.”

\(^{166}\) See Murgatroyd 1980: 117-120, Cilliers 1974. *Casia* doesn’t appear in Elysium scenes before Tibullus, but seems a reasonable extension of the flowers so common in these scenes.

\(^{167}\) 2007b: 155.


\(^{169}\) E.g., Drews 1952.
violating Ganymede was found, and this story is now widely used to explain his presence in Tibullus’ underworld. This scholarly effort rather dramatically illustrates one of the central effects of this poem: it encourages readers to look for the parts of tradition and life that can fit into an elegiac narrative. Motivated by the context of an elegiac poem, and by their elegiac reading of Elysium (set off to no small degree by the inclusion of Venus as psychopomp), scholars set out on a quest to rediscover an elegiac past for a mythical figure not usually associated with erotics. The fact that they were not wrong, that there was in fact an erotic crime that could be charged to Tantalus, perhaps proves Tibullus’ point: even in spaces and characters that do not appear obviously compatible with elegy, there is plenty for lovers and elegiac poets to work with.

Tibullus’ meditations on the underworld—and his hopes that any rivals trying to take advantage of his absence might end up there (81-2)—lead him to contemplations of an Odyssean style return and reunion with Delia. This fantasy, which aligns the hopes and fears of Tibullus and Odysseus, again encourages readers to re-read the Odyssey as compatible with elegy, and even as a proto-elegy. The details of the scene Tibullus imagines clearly evoke Odysseus’ nostos and reunion with Penelope. The presence of an “old woman guard” (custos anus, 84) and Delia’s late night spinning (86-7) recall Eurycleia and Penelope’s famed weaving: Tibullus’ sudden appearance without announcement—“as if heaven sent” (Sed videar caelo missus adesse tibi, 90)—likewise mirrors Odysseus’ secretive arrival in Ithaca, which actually was aided by the gods. Many aspects of Odysseus’ return are, of course, neglected or omitted in this reimagining, notably his tests for his family and enemies and the battle against the suitors. But in this selection, Tibullus focuses on the aspects of the Odyssey most compatible with elegy: a desire for reunion with a beloved, seemingly eternally deferred. In reading this elegiac impulse in the Odyssey, and applying it to his own experiences, Tibullus does not truly misread Homer. This romantic, erotic narrative exists in the Odyssey, just in a more complicated context.

And indeed, this nostos scene also reveals how the Iron Age, unelegiac world can simultaneously cause the lover’s sufferings and offer solutions, of a sort, to them. Over the course of the poem, Tibullus suggests several different causes of his predicament: the personal intervention of Messalla, but more, the degraded state of human existence, which privileges war and profit over other endeavors. Tibullus did not choose to travel, but he also could not choose not to travel. Homer’s Odyssey too represents part of this Iron Age world as a poem that, if it can be described as the story of a man desperately seeking union with his beloved, could equally well be described as the story of a travelling warrior. And yet, it is by incorporating this epic superstructure that Tibullus achieves a narrative, if not an actual, reunion with his own beloved. The narrative momentum of the Odyssey pushes towards homecoming and reunion, and from the moment Tibullus locates himself on Phaeacia, his return, like Odysseus’, feels inevitable. His suffering becomes a necessary step on the way to success and fulfillment. The epic intervention in 1.3 offers the promise of closure ever absent in elegy.

This fulfillment and closure, however, remain in the realm of fantasy and fiction. The present subjunctives dislocate this scene from reality, like most moments of union between

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170 The virtuous woman spinning will also naturally recall Lucretia, and perhaps Prop. 1.3.41.
Tibullus and Delia. If the contemporary necessity of travel both caused Tibullus suffering and offered a provocation for Tibullus to express typically elegiac laments, the Odyssean superstructure provides Tibullus a literary model that can offer the fulfillment of elegiac desires, if only within this fictive context. And indeed, the occurrence of this reunion within a fantasy may highlight the most important difference between elegy and epic, at least from an elegiac point of view: that epic narrative both demands and promises an end, while elegy resists such narrative movement. But even this distance can be closed, or at least narrowed, through the resort to fiction. Through the power of imagination, we nearly get the experience of a Tibullan homecoming, of narrative completion.

By weaving both Propertian and Odyssean strands into his propempticon, Tibullus creates a poem, and a speaker, that defy expectations and traditional binary categories. For Propertius travel constituted identity and consequently reflected a person’s personal agency in determining their own identity and values. Embodied experiences generated both perspective and identity: you are what you see, what you do. Tibullus’ meditation on travel in 1.3 offers a dramatically different theory of how identity is experienced and constituted. Tibullus’ world does not allow for the perfect expression of personal agency, especially for those whose values and identities do not adhere to the mainstream. But assimilation does not make these alternative, minority identities any less real. Tibullus need not remain in elegiac spaces to see elegiacally or to live elegiacally: he only needs to see the world around him through an elegiac lens, to find the aspects of the world he inhabits that are consonant with his values. Even epic turns out not to be immune to his elegiac gaze.

Reassessing the Propempticon in Amores 2.11

Ovid, unlike Tibullus and Propertius, includes no propempticon or other travel poem in the first book of his collection. This is a rather striking omission as both Tibullus and Propertius place propemptica prominently in their first books. Propertius included not one, but two, nestled around another explicitly programmatic poem (1.7), while Tibullus opens his book with a tour de force of spatial tropes: a programmatic opening (complete with pastoral fantasy), a paraclausithyron (1.2), and a propempticon (1.3). The prominence of the propempticon in Propertius and Tibullus suggests that this trope offers something useful in defining the lover, that its focus on travel and immobility can get at important aspects of what it means to be an elegist—at least for Propertius and Tibullus. But it also suggests, certainly when Tibullus is adopting the trope, and probably also when Propertius is, that like the paraclausithyron, part of the usefulness of the propempticon is its status as an inherited trope within this emerging elegiac genre. These poets use the trope as a self/genre-identifier, as a way of drawing themselves into

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172 1.1.59-60, 1.5.19ff.
173 At least in the form that we have the Amores. In a prefatory epigram to the Amores Ovid famously claims that this is a revised version, reduced from five books to the three we now see. Scholars have been split on how seriously to take Ovid’s editorial claims. However, even if we accept Ovid’s claim that this is a second, and substantially altered, version of the Amores, the editorial process he records is one of reduction rather than reordering, and so there is no reason to suppose that this propempticon would have appeared earlier in such a hypothetical earlier collection.
conversation with each other. The fact, then, that Ovid shapes his first book so closely around domestic spaces and includes no propempticon or other travel poem until a third of the way through his second book marks a meaningful omission and divergence from his elegiac predecessors.

While I hope to avoid a simplistic or unitary explanation for Ovid’s delayed propempticon, I would like to suggest that one underlying, and undiscussed, factor is that the central node of issues that make the propempticon so productive for Tibullus and Propertius is not as salient for Ovid and his elegiac world. As I have argued in this chapter and in the previous one, Tibullus and Propertius are both deeply concerned with the lover’s relationship to other elite men, with his social existence because, to one degree or another, they see their elegiac lives as disrupting and problematizing their relations with the society they live in. Patrons, rivals, other elegiac lovers, and rival poets all figure largely in their corpora. The propempta of Tibullus and Propertius negotiate questions of how lovers relate to the societies they inhabit and non-elegiac literary traditions. For Ovid, however, these questions have less immediacy, because elegiac life does not disrupt his social life and existence. And indeed, this disjuncture was apparent also in Amores 1.6—Ovid’s lover breaks his vigil with the dawn, reintegrating seamlessly into elite Roman society, unlike Propertius and Tibullus’ lovers.

A close reading of Ovid’s first foray into the propempticon, Amores 2.11, supports the idea that Ovid relates to the propempticon in dramatically different ways from his predecessors. Ovid organizes his poem so as to largely suppress questions of interactions with unelegiac perspectives or poetics, and instead is far more interested in his relationship to Propertius and Tibullus and in the experience of generic composition. Rather than addressing the travel of rivals—thereby setting up the question of the difference and relationship between the successful traveler and the immobile lover—Ovid instead focuses on Corinna’s travels abroad and upon her imagined return, all while making use of extended references to Propertius and Tibullus. Furthermore, the poem frames the question of Corinna’s travels and ultimate return in aesthetic and overtly metapoetic terms, turning this propempticon into a commentary not just on travel, but on the propempticon trope itself. The poem offers both a critique of generic composition associated with the monotony of sea travel and a defense of it, voiced through the creative possibilities of the view from the shore. In Amores 2.11, Ovid asks not how a lover can and should live in a hostile world but rather how an elegiac poet can and should write in a genre already so thoroughly written. Ultimately, the poem celebrates the innovative possibilities of re-incorporation and re-creation, of creating something new out of existing parts.

Amores 2.11 pulls material extensively from both Propertian and Tibullan propemptica, especially Propertius 1.8 and Tibullus 1.3, both structurally and linguistically. The large-scale narrative of the poem, like Propertius 1.8, focuses on the imminent travel of the beloved, but in

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174 Propertius’ apparent engagement with a Gallan propempticon in 1.8 (itself referenced in Ecl. 10) strongly suggests that Propertius is deliberately adopting a trope used by Gallus first. We cannot know where such propempta would have appeared in Gallus’ collection, and to some degree it does not really matter: Propertius clearly picks it up as an essential part of defining elegy, and Tibullus does as well, albeit with rather different meanings attached.

175 A great deal of the scholarly treatments of 2.11 have focused on parsing poetic influences on 2.11; see especially Görler 1965, Morgan 1977: 75-78, Bobrowski 1991.
the second half shifts into a vision of her return and their reunion (43-56). While it bears some resemblance to the reunion of 1.8B, this explicitly fictional reunion more immediately recalls Tibullus’ vision of his own return in 1.3, complete with a reference to Lucifer in the final line. Moreover, as has been widely observed, linguistic echoes between the three poems are ubiquitous, and Ovid often invokes Tibullus and Propertius nearly simultaneously. Lines 7-8, which introduce the context of the poem, offer an illustrative example of Ovid’s layered invocations of his elegiac predecessors: “Look, Corinna flees our familiar bed and kindred *penates* and she prepares to travel deceitful paths” (*Ecce, fugit notumque torum sociosque Penates/ fallacisque vias ire Corinna parat*). Ovid channels Tibullus’ anxiety over his separation from his *penates* in 1.3 (33), all the more strikingly since Ovid uses the word nowhere else in the *Amores*. But this line simultaneously responds to, and inverts, Propertius’ declaration of victory in 1.8B: “nevertheless she does not greedily flee my embrace” (*non tamen illa meos fugit avara sinus*, 1.8.38) and “she stops travelling unknown roads” (*destitit ire novas Cynthia nostra vias*, 1.8.30). The density of allusion here flags the generic nature of the trope and draws attention to Ovid’s close relationship to his elegiac predecessors. But by merging Propertian and Tibullan anxieties about travel together into these two lines, Ovid also papers over the substantial differences in how Propertius and Tibullus respond to travel. Tibullus, after all, was mourning his own departure while Propertius was celebrating Cynthia’s aborted travel plans. By so thoroughly merging Propertian and Tibullan references, these lines transform them into a monolithic elegiac precedent, which straightforwardly rejects travel.

The invocation of Tibullus 1.3 and Propertius 1.8 draws into starker relief the ways that *Amores* 2.11 is engaging with a different set of questions and values through the propempticon. For all that Propertius and Tibullus differ on whether a lover can travel and remain a lover, they both engage with travel as a serious endeavor, with potentially existential consequences. Both poets are actively concerned with the question of why men and women travel, what motivates or compels them, and what this action means for their identity and relationship to the wider world. Ovid’s narrative choices in this poem circumvent these questions. No explanation is offered for Corinna’s impending departure, no rival like the Illyrian praetor haunts the poem. Likewise, no narrative explanation is given for her imagined return; instead, her eventual return to a still entirely viable relationship with Ovid is essentially taken for granted (44-56). Ovid questions the wisdom of travel, but never suggests that it can or should be used to understand character or relationships. Both travel and return appear disconnected from the moral and existential concerns they raise for Propertius and Tibullus.

Instead, for Ovid, travel more prominently poses an aesthetic, poetic, concern. After a perfunctory exclamation about his fear of all the dreadful north winds (9-10), Ovid turns to a somewhat surprising warning:

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non illic urbes, non tu mirabere silvas;
una est iniusti caerula forma maris.
nec medius tenuis conchas pictosque lapillos
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176 Tib. 1.3.93-4.
177 Bobrowski 1991.
178 An absence that has been noted by a number of scholars commenting on the poem (Bobrowski 1991: 205, Lee 1965: 167, McKeown 1987: 224).
There you will not marvel at cities, nor woods; there is only the blue shape of the unjust sea. Nor does the middle of the sea hold slender conch shells and carved gem-stones; that is the cause for delay of the absorbent shore…

The problem with sea travel is not the danger, or the romantic separation it causes. No, the real problem is its tediousness. The sea lacks the variety and beauty of the land: it has a “single blue form” (una...caerula forma, 12). And even the beautiful things produced from the sea—the “shells and carved gem-stones” (conchas pictosque lapillus, 13)—are actually encountered on land. Ovid here plays with a semantic ambiguity; conchas pictosque lapillos might be either “pearls and colorful gemstones” or “sea shells and colorful pebbles.”179 As McKeown notes, this ambiguity conveys a thinly veiled, and quite conventional, hint that Corinna ought not concern herself with foreign wealth.180 But I would suggest that this ambiguity also has metapoetic resonances. The treasures on the shore may be either the raw material or the decorative products humans create with such raw products. The detail of specifically pictos stones both responds directly to the monochrome nature of the sea and hints at the craftsmanship only possible on the land.181 The contrast between the monotonous sea and the shore with its artful decorations suggests a poetic, aesthetic contrast rather than a moral one. The context of these lines, within a long-delayed propempticon that has already represented itself as intertwined with previous elegiac iterations of the trope, and the emphasis Ovid gives in these lines to typically poetic concerns of tedium and artistry, all offer strong reasons for reading these lines as a commentary on the elegiac propempticon itself.182 Ovid’s warning may be as much about the dangers of embarking on yet another boring poem about the dangers of travel as it is about the dangers of travel.183

If tedium is a risk of writing propemptica—and perhaps elegy more broadly—Ovid offers an alternative model of poetic creation that can bypass this danger. In contrast to the single-note tedium of the sea and storms, Ovid instead aligns himself with the land and especially the shore, in a distorted echo of Propertius. But where for Propertius the view from the shore represented the insularity of human perspective, for Ovid it is precisely the opposite. On the contrary, “the absorbent shore” (bibuli litoris, 14) is where all things come together. The pearls and “colored gem-stones” the sea does not provide are in fact the “cause for lingering on the absorbent shore” (bibuli litoris illa mora est, 14). The shore, as the boundary between land and sea, gets the best of both zones, the raw resources derived from the sea, the craftsmanship of the land, and the

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179 Cf. Prop. 1.8.39.
181 Although the sense of pictos here must be colored, it is commonly associated with decorative coloration achieved specifically through human intervention—painting, embroidering, and especially dying, see OLD “Pingo,” especially 1-4; cf. Verg. Aen. 4.525, G. 4.13, 4.342.
182 McKeown observes that “it had become a poetic cliché that only the sea and the sky were visible to sailors on the open sea” (1987: 238), citing examples Homer, Moschus, and Horace. However, it is significant that this cliché does not appear in elegiac propemptica, and works in contrast to the prominent arguments against travel in elegy, namely the dangers of travel and dangerous lure of foreign wealth.
183 In voicing this critique, Ovid preempts many of the contemporary critiques of elegy and elegiac tropes as cliche and tired. It is also worth noting that simply because Ovid voices this critique, does not necessarily mean that he endorses it.
variety of access to multiplicity. Ovid emphasizes the plasticity of this boundary space, and the artistry it allows, with his ensuing command to other girls who might be tempted by travel: “Girls, imprint the shores with marble feet” (litora marmoreis pedibus signate, puellae, 15). This line works on multiple levels simultaneously. The famous image of Lycoris’ and Cynthia’s feet cut up in the snow is here transformed: on the pliable beach, it is instead the sand that adapts to the impenetrable shape of the girls’ feet. The shore offers a malleability absent in the wider world of travel, a malleability that lends itself to creation and artistry. The description of the girls’ feet as “marble,” although it can be taken on its face as describing their paleness, also recalls the status of the elegiac puellae as works products of human poetic craftsmanship, like the marble statues they are compared to here.184 Ovid’s shore, and the poetics he locates there, are defined by impressionability, the ability to absorb everything around it.

In the ensuing eight lines, Ovid returns to the sea and builds upon his critique of travel and travel poetry. Rather than directly addressing the dangers of travel, Ovid proceeds upon a praeteritio: “Let others narrate for you the battles of the winds, what waters Scylla infests, or which ones Charybdis” (et vobis alii ventorum proelia narrent, quas Scylla infestet, quasve Charybdis aquas, 17-18). The praeteritio allows poets to have their cake and eat it too, as they get to at once dabble in topics or genres and also distance themselves from them. But the dabbling need not be taken as entirely undermining the critique. Ovid’s praeteritio here specifically draws attention to the generic and repetitious nature of propemptica and travel poetry. The use of narrent works almost as an Alexandrian footnote—let other poets tell you of these topics, as indeed, they have already, perhaps too many times.185 And although the most obvious referent for Scylla and Charybdis is Homer’s Odyssey, by framing the question around where these monsters hide out—a question only salient for post-Homeric authors and audiences—the more immediate point of reference is actually the non-epic travel narratives that engage with Homeric geographies.186 And indeed, several of the items in the list have parallels in elegiac or Latin lyric travel poetry.187 If readers had wondered at Ovid’s lack of a propempticon earlier in his collection, this poem and this praeteritio seem to address the question head-on, rejecting the trope as overly trite and formulaic.

However, the final two lines of the praeteritio soften this stance slightly, acknowledging a pragmatic usefulness to the clichés. Having committed not to address any of these questions himself, Ovid nevertheless continues to impress upon Corinna that she should listen to other authorities: “Let others report these things to you; believe whatever anyone tells you! No storm ever hurts the credulous” (haec alii referant ad vos; quod quisque loquetur, / credite! credenti nulla procella nocet, 21-2). This instruction can be read, in effect, as an instruction to Corinna to

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184 There may also be some punning off of metrical feet going on here, as often happens in elegy (see, e.g., Henkel 2014).
185 There is perhaps some irony in the fact that Ovid will go on to tell these stories in his Metamorphoses (Scylla 8.1-151, Charybdis 13.750ff.).
186 Ovid may have in mind a couple of lines from the end of a Propertian travel poem not discussed in this chapter, due to space constraints and its fragmentary state: 2.26B: crede mihi, nobis mitescet Scylla, nec umquam/ alternante vacans vasta Charybdis aqua (2.26c.53-4). This question of decoding Homeric locations also has obvious relevance for Tib. 1.3.
187 The Ceraunian mountains, a mountain range in modern Albania, show up in Prop. 1.8 (ut te felici post victa Ceraunia remo) as well as this passage; the “greater and lesser Syrtes,” sandbanks off the African coast, show up in Horace (Carm. 1.22.5, 2.6.3). All of these dangers of travel appear in Apollonius of Rhodes’ Argonautica.
read the older travel poetry Ovid does not wish to create himself.\textsuperscript{188} Elegiac propemptica still have a use in persuading girls to stick to the shore. But even this acknowledgement of the pragmatic uses of elegiac propemptica comes with a subtle dig: the indefinite \textit{quisque} suggests that the source, authority, and artistry of travel stories is unimportant. They are valuable \textit{only} for their pragmatic use, for the story of danger they convey. Similarly, the emphatic polyptoton \textit{credite! credenti} downplays the importance of both author and story: rather the power lies with the listener to believe. And although Ovid here is instructing Corinna to believe these other authorities, such credulity would presumably only help Ovid—who is about to veer into the explicitly fictional in this poem.

Ovid’s fantasy of Corinna’s return further develops the image of the shore as a space conducive to innovation and re-creation. While the first half of the poem occurs in the present tense, the second half, describing Corinna’s journey and return, shifts into the subjunctive and future and an explicitly fictional landscape. After regretting her departure, Corinna will return, and they will reunite on the shore. Once he has swept her up into an embrace and offered a sacrifice, Ovid imagines a beach picnic to celebrate her return: “and soft sand will be strewn into the shape of a bed and any old heap of sand can be our table” (\textit{inque tori formam molles sternentur harenae, et cumulus mensae quilibet esse potest} 47-8).\textsuperscript{189} Like the image of the sand pliant to the marble feet of girls, the table and bed made out of sand offer a symbol of the powers of fiction itself.\textsuperscript{190} Sand sculpture lends itself to the idea of fiction in several ways. First, it is, fundamentally, a mimetic act, as Ovid himself draws attention to: the sand is moved into the “form” of a couch. The sand heaps may function well enough, but they are not \textit{actually} tables or couches. Second, this mimetic creation occurs specifically by rearranging countless smaller, preexisting, component parts into a new form. Ovid’s use of the plural \textit{harenae}, rather than the more common collective singular \textit{harena}, may highlight this quality.\textsuperscript{191} Sand allows for creation and mimesis precisely because it is not singular, because it is constituted by countless individual grains that can be formed and reformed together. This offers, perhaps, another way of thinking about well-worn genres and intertextual relationships: that if they present the danger to younger poets of retracing boring monotonous journeys, they also present a vast array of building blocks and the potential for recreation.

The immediate transition from the creation of sand furniture to Corinna’s travel stories (49-52) further reinforces the connection between the sandy shore and poetic creation. There, on the sand heaps of the shore with a bottle of wine, Corinna will tell the stories of her adventures (\textit{Illic adposito narrabis multa Lyaeo}, 49).\textsuperscript{192} Ovid questions the truthfulness of Corinna’s account

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\item 188 Although he also is in a sense recreating these types of poems precisely through this list of traditional geographic questions and clichés.
\item 189 \textit{Tumulus} appears in some more recent texts, but \textit{cumulus} is both better attested and makes rather more sense.
\item 190 The use of \textit{molles}, an adjective often used in elegy to programmatically denote elegiac poetics (e.g., Prop. 1.7.19, \textit{Am.} 1.12.22, 2.1.22), to describe the sand further heightens the relationship between this sand sculpture and poetic creation.
\item 191 Aulus Gellius records that Julius Caesar attacked the plural \textit{harenae} as a linguistic error in his \textit{de Analogia} (19.8). As McKeown notes, Ovid does not seem to have felt terribly bound by this prescription—he uses the plural 29 times throughout his works—but his 48 uses of the singular suggest nevertheless a marked preference.
\item 192 Rimell’s characterization of Corinna’s stories as a “foray into adulterous epic” (2006: 13) oversimplifies the context. While sea journeys are often associated with epic, Tibullus and Propertius in his later books both rewrite sea voyages into elegiac territory, so to speak. Moreover, within this poem, as I have argued, sea journeys have been
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precisely by promising not to question her truthfulness: “I will believe all things as true, even if they are false” (omnia pro veris credam, sint ficta licebit, 53). He thereby characterizes Corinna’s travel stories as products of artistic creation, like the sand furniture, rather than unadulterated material. Ovid’s explanation for his acceptance of what may be fiction, “Why shouldn’t I delude myself?” (Cur ego non votis blandiar ipse meis? 54), reads as a broader reflection on the human willingness to accept fiction both in daily life and in art. The important thing is that the stories be pleasurable, that they be what we wish to hear, not that they be original, unique, or true. Corinna’s stories—as Ovid imagines them—are formulaic, generic stories of near death at sea, but they are the stories Ovid wishes to hear. These lines, then, may offer a more direct response to the critique of the praeteritio: we tell these stories again and again, not because they are original or because they are true, but because they are what we wish to hear.

The final couplet, closely echoing the ending of Tibullus 1.3, refocuses the poem on Ovid’s relationship with his elegiac predecessors, and elegiac propemptica in particular. Having reached the conclusion of his fantasy of reunion with Corinna on the shore, Ovid wishes for the arrival of this day of reunion: “Let the brightest morning star bring this moment to me as soon as possible with his horses loosed in the high sky” (haec mihi quamprimum caelo nitidissimus alto/ Lucifer admisso tempora portet equo! 55-6). This couplet brings the ending of the poem into close alignment with Tibullus’ propempticon: “This I beg, that shining dawn bring that morning star to me with rosy horses” (Hoc precor, hunc illum nobis Aurora nitentem/ Luciferum roseis candida portet equis, 93-4). This wish does not make a great deal of narrative sense in Ovid’s poem, since Corinna does not appear to have already left: fugit is present, but also Ovid’s attempts to persuade her to stay only make sense if they could theoretically work. A wish that she not depart at all would make much more sense. Through a metapoetic lens, however, we might view these lines as self-referentially continuing the critique of the praeteritio, a sort of ‘I hope that the end of your journey—your dabbling with propemptica—comes as soon as possible, so we can be done with this tired trope.’

But these lines could also be read as actually acknowledging the complexity and nuance possible in the well-trod ground of propemptica. The attack upon propemptica has depended upon representing previous elegiac propempticon as generic and monotonous, and many of the selective invocations of Tibullus 1.3 and Propertius 1.8 seem designed to flatten the two authors’ approaches to elegiac travel into a single monolith. But by appropriating Tibullus 1.3’s ending, Ovid recalls Tibullus’ specific take on the topos, which is distinctive, surprising, and is precisely interested in boundary crossing. His ending, featuring an Odyssean fantasized reunion with Delia

193 McKeown 1987: 259-60. They closely echo Hor. Carm. 1.3.12.
194 Morgan 1977 reads this allusion as strengthening the fictional quality of the Ovid’s ending by recalling Tibullus’ purely fictional reunion with Delia. I broadly agree with this, though I do not see the poignancy that Morgan does, either in Tibullus or in Ovid. Both poets, on the contrary, as I read their poems, embrace the possibilities that fiction provides them.
(complete with an epic flavored rosy Dawn), defies the critiques offered in Amores 2.11, and the nearly full quotation of the final couplet, following a narratively similar fantasized reunion, brings into focus the complexity of Ovid’s elegiac precedents. And indeed, this quotation also nicely exemplifies the recreative powers pointed to in the metapoetic image of the sand-furniture. Ovid adapts, rearranges, heaps together the raw material from elegiac predecessors like sand on a beach, creating something new and varied. But he is not alone in this—his quotation of lines of Tibullus directly engaging with Homer, and his earlier reference to Propertius’ adaptation of Gallus (Amores 2.11.15, Propertius 1.8.7) may offer an implicit acknowledgement that his elegiac predecessors are themselves involved in similar processes of assimilation and recreation.

In Amores 2.11, Ovid belatedly participates in an elegiac propempticon, and uses the opportunity to hold a referendum on the trope, and through it, the aesthetics of generic composition itself. While Propertius and Tibullus also prominently addressed poetic concerns in their propemptica, these poetic concerns were grounded in social ones; questions of elegy’s relationship to other genres were framed through the lover’s relationship to non-elegiac men. The social and poetic concerns aligned and were both significant. For Ovid, on the contrary, the focus is on his relationship with his elegiac predecessors, making the social purely poetic, rather than grounded in a contemporary social world. Within this realm, Ovid offers models for both critiquing the repetitious, monotonous quality of elegiac generic composition and for defending its multiplicity and incorporative nature. It seems possible, given the belated presence of Ovid’s propempticon and his disinterest in thematic aspects of it that were so central to Propertius and Tibullus, that he does genuinely find this trope less defining, interesting, and useful than his predecessors. Even so, the flexibility of elegiac generic composition is such that while closely following his predecessors he can drastically reconfigure the trope to address his own poetic concerns.

Conclusion

While elegiac propemptica have often been analyzed in terms of “form and innovation,” the repetition of the trope and differences within its use do not merely represent rhetorical cleverness and formal experimentation. Rather, the trope functions as a site of dynamic discourse over how elegy can—and should—relate to the wider world it inhabits, socially, geographically, and poetically. The propempticon, which by its very form implies comparisons between travelers and non-travelers, between home and abroad, offers a particularly fruitful ground for elegists to negotiate questions of elegy’s place in the world, its relationship to non-elegiac figures and poetics. Unlike the paraclausithyron, it takes a more global view, placing elegy not just in the context of its place on the margins within Rome and Roman society, but within a larger Greco-Roman Mediterranean poetic tradition. The form effectively requires elegiac poets to take their narratives out of Rome and Italy, into poetic landscapes long traversed by other genres and poetics.

Propertius and Tibullus’ propemptica share a focus on how elegy can and should relate to non-elegiac people and poetics, an issue which raises questions on the nature of truth and subjectivity as well as the usefulness of resistance and assimilation. The propemptica of Propertius’ first book use the split focalizations of travelers and non-travelers to suggest that genres and truth are dependent upon limited human perspectives, and that any given human and
genre can only ever attain partial access to truth. These poems place elegy and epic on equal footing and make clear that it is only through inhabiting elegiac spaces and points of view that one can truly be elegiac. Tibullus, on the other hand, in 1.3 denies the existence of truly elegiac spaces in the real world. Instead, with his itinerant lover’s jaunt through Odyssean narrative, he illustrates how the elegiac lover can maintain his distinctive identity within a non-elegiac world by uncovering the elegiac hidden within dominant culture. The elegiac point of view is maintained internally, through a willingness to find the elegiac, rather than externally, through specific embodied experiences. Interestingly, Propertius’ engagements with the trope in his third book go even further than Tibullus, suggesting that elegiac experiences and views can be found not only outside of Rome, but even outside of erotic contexts.

Ovid, although he too addresses the question of what it is that constitutes elegy in his propempticon, shifts the conversation inwards. Ovid is less concerned with the relationship between elegy and epic, or non-elegy more broadly, than Propertius and Tibullus, and he is notably unconcerned with the relationship between lover and non-lover. Rather, he uses his propempticon to reflect upon the trope in elegy, and generic composition more broadly. He critiques the propempticon for its monotony and also uses the beach as a model for the plasticity and incorporative power of elegy at its best. The question is not where elegy can exist, as it is for Propertius and Tibullus, but where it should, where it can create poetic worlds sufficiently pleasurable and entertaining. This is restricted by aesthetic and pragmatic concerns—what an audience will want to believe—rather than moral ones. For Propertius and Tibullus, the pressures and compulsions they worried about were coming from mainstream society, from outside of elegy, notably the pressure to participate in the Roman military, to make money, to be traditionally successful. *Amores* 2.11, on the contrary, reflects the difficulties and pressures of adhering to expectations within an elegiac genre that is defined by repetition and similarity.

Thus, all three elegiac poets use the image of the journey to define elegy in meaningfully different ways—different both across authors and even, in the case of Propertius, within one—and to wrestle with the existential problems of conformity, resistance, and assimilation.
Paths Diverted:
Triumphal Return and Elegiac Departures

Introduction

Lurking at the margins of my discussions of the lover’s vigil in the doorway and of the elegiac narratives of departure have been the elegiac narratives of return, most prominently of triumphal return. Just as much as departing rivals, triumphal spoils and gloriously returning soldiers have stood in contrast to the immobile lovers in the doorway. So, for example, when Tibullus stakes out his position in Delia’s doorway in his programmatic opening poem, he does so in contrast to Messalla who travels land and sea “in order that your house’s façade may sport spoils” (Ut domus hostiles præferat exuvias, 54). The lamenting door in Propertius 1.16 likewise compares its elegiac squatter with its previous triumphal glory (1-4). Juxtapositions with spoils and returning soldiers highlight the distinctiveness of elegiac ideology, but also hint at the complexity of the elegiac spatial experience. It is not so simple as “lovers remain in the doorway, while soldiers travel abroad,” because soldiers come back home; departure and travel abroad are not eternal, stable categories.¹ I argued in my first chapter that through their positions in the doorway elegiac lovers adopt and engage with traditional elite display to represent and question their relationship to their wider community. Paraclausithyra, however, center elegy in their interrogation of its relationship to that wider community. In this chapter, I will analyze how elegiac poets use depictions of triumphs, which ostensibly center traditional Roman masculinity, to articulate a place for themselves in the public sphere of a global empire.

Given the elegiac protestations of distaste for non-elegiac subjects, the mere existence of poems describing and celebrating historical triumphs in these collections might be surprising. In the travel poetry discussed in the previous chapter, the elegiac poets wrestled with whether it was possible to travel and dabble in other poetic genres while still maintaining an elegiac identity, or to put it differently, to what extent you are what you do and write. The incorporation of triumphs into elegiac books raises similar questions. Messalla’s triumph in 27 BCE and Augustus’ triple triumph from 29 BCE are ostentatiously un-elegiac topics.² The celebration of Roman military power taking place in the streets draws the lovers into contact with militarism and military figures and forces the two to share space, in a context in which the military figure is—at least apparently—centered. Representations of triumphs make the soldiers seem larger than life, eating up the spaces formerly inhabited by lovers. The return of triumphant soldiers and the enemy spoils may also reveal the complicity of elegiac lovers in systems of imperial conquest.³ What does it mean for elegiac poets to participate, literarily, in this public, martial celebration? To have apparently succumbed to the pressures exerted by powerful political figures and mainstream culture?⁴

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¹ Prop. 2.16 offers one of the most explicit examples of this problem.
² Messalla’s triumph is the subject of Tib. 1.7, while Augustus’ features prominently in Prop. 2.1. Although he had not taken on the name of Augustus in 29 BCE, I will use that name throughout this chapter for the sake of consistency.
³ See especially Keith 2015a, Bowditch 2011.
⁴ Propertius in particular regularly writes about the pressures to write celebrations of Augustus—see especially 2.1 and 2.10. Though for some skepticism on the actual pressures of “patron” requests, see White 1993: 64ff.; more broadly on patronage relationships in Rome, see the essays in Gold 1982, Saller 1982, Roman 2014.
In this chapter, I analyze how elegiac triumphal poems both adopt and disrupt triumphal discursive strategies to articulate their own place in the Roman imperial world. The Roman triumph was itself a complex and contradictory ritual, which simultaneously “glorified military victory and the values underpinning that victory” but also “provided a context within which those values could be discussed and challenged.” The triumph, as a communal and performative spectacle, was dynamic. Audience responses could at times be unpredictable: contempt for a vanquished enemy, for instance, could be transformed into sympathy and grief for their plight.

The procession of prisoners and images of conquered territories visually represented their subordination to Rome, while their scaled-down size allowed them to be visually subsumed within the city of Rome. But their presence in the procession could also be seen as representing their ultimate incorporation and the conquered territory’s future participation in the Roman political system. Propertius and Tibullus exploit these ambivalences in the triumph, and even to a certain degree deploy them against the triumph. Both poets emphasize the representational quality of the triumph by referencing placards that would have been carried in these two triumphs, and engage with questions over audience response. On a structural level, as the triumph brought vast external territories into the city of Rome at a containable scale, so Propertius and Tibullus incorporate the triumph in small set-pieces that isolate and contain it within larger elegiac corpora, which substantially shape the meaning of these miniaturized triumphs.

Furthermore, both Propertius and Tibullus disrupt and manipulate the route and directionality of the triumphal parade. The pathway of the Roman triumph, which began outside the pomerium and made its way to the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, was fundamental both to its ritual meaning and to the way that Romans experienced it. The movement of the general, soldiers, and foreign spoils, from outside into the center of Rome was one of the indispensable attributes of the ritual. Propertius 2.1 and Tibullus 1.7 each represent this outward-in trajectory of the triumph in the first halves of the poems, only to reverse the directionality of the poems in the second half, through the incorporation of processions or individual journeys out of the city. The poets thus, in a sense, reroute the triumphs, transforming them and contrasting them with itineraries that allow more space for elegiac priorities. Although Propertius and Tibullus both use modified routes to mediate their relationship with returning soldiers, their divergent routes define those relationships in dramatically different ways. Propertius’ opening poem to his second book contextualizes Augustus’ triple triumph within his own trajectory from

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5 Beard 2007: 4.
6 Julius Caesar’s triumph over Egypt in 46 BCE offers a useful example of the unpredictable reactions of Roman spectators: the thirteen-year-old Princess Arsinoë (sister of Cleopatra VII) played the role of star prisoner, but inspired pity in the Roman onlookers, rather than scorn (Dio 43.19.3-4, Gurval 1995: 22-3, Beard 2007: 124, Lange 2013: 77). On the importance of audiences, and authors, in constructing the meaning of triumphs, see also Pandey 2018: 185ff.
7 “Just as the ceremony itself was no less the beginning of peace than it was the culmination of war, so the victims were both the humiliated and defeated enemies of Rome and at the same time new participants, in whatever role, in the Roman imperial order. The triumph was a key moment in the process by which the enemy became Roman” (Beard 2007: 140). See also Östenberg 2009: 160 ff.
8 And in fact, they are contained and isolated even within the poems they inhabit: Messalla’s actual triumphal parade receives a scant four lines, while Augustus’ in Propertius 2.1 receives an only slightly longer seven.
9 For recent debates on the triumphal route, see Östenberg 2010.
Cynthia’s bedroom to a burial outside the city of Rome, a trajectory that claims for Propertius a prominent place in the public sphere in parallel to Augustus. Tibullus, in contrast, performs an almost perfect assimilation to mainstream culture as he seems to set aside elegiac subjects altogether, blurring Messalla’s triumph into a birthday parade, and eventually a lone farmer’s journey out of the city. However, through a winding path through the Mediterranean, and through the over-determined figures of Messalla and Osiris, he ultimately offers a vision of the world that, if hierarchical and dangerous for the less-powerful, nevertheless can be shaped and manipulated to make space for peacetime, and even elegiac, arts.

Thus, both Propertius and Tibullus manipulate the mobility of the triumph, redirecting it in ways that allow the poet-lover to benefit from and thrive amidst Roman imperialism. For Tibullus this means using the triumph and Roman conquest to create a Roman cosmopolitanism that allows the lover to survive, contribute, and thrive under the radar. For Propertius, the triumph instead offers an opportunity for the elegiac lover to assertively shape public narratives around elegy, just as generals do around conquest.

Propertius and Tibullus’ use of the triumph to define a place for themselves in relation to non-elegiac power structures appears all the more significant in contrast to Ovid’s omission of any literal triumphs in the Amores. Although Ovid makes broad use of the triumph of love motif, which presents either the lover triumphant or conversely being triumphed over by love, he avoids descriptions of any actual soldiers or generals in triumph.\(^\text{10}\) The two phenomena—the allegorical triumph of love and the literal representations of triumphs—are obviously related. However, by repopulating the triumph with elegiac figures and excluding the non-elegiac, Ovid focuses much more closely on the internal world of elegy than on his relationship to an external world.

**Quaeritis unde:**

**Elegy on Parade in Propertius 2.1**

Propertius 2.1 interrogates the poet's relationship with his community, and Rome's newly ascendant authority figures, through the image of the public procession, and in particular, the triumph and the funeral.\(^\text{11}\) This poem has received extensive scholarly attention, as one of the most significant programmatic poems of Propertius’ corpus, as an important representation of Augustus’ triple triumph, and as a complex and fascinating poem on its own merits.\(^\text{12}\) My reading supports the broad consensus that this poem repositions the Propertian speaker in important ways, but I am specifically interested in how it does so spatially, through a new embrace of a limited, but nevertheless marked, poetic mobility. The poem taken as a whole charts a disjointed, but persistent, itinerary from the domestic realms into the triumphal center of

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\(^{10}\) See Am. 1.2, 2.9, 2.12, 2.18, but also Prop. 2.8, 3.1. For more on the motif of the triumph of love, see especially Galinsky 1969, Athanassaki 1992.

\(^{11}\) Book 2 reflects a very different socio-political context than Book 1, which I believe was written before the Battle of Actium (Heslin 2010). Even under a later, more traditional dating of the first book, the second book’s newfound interest in Augustus and Maecenas seems to reflect Augustus’ consolidation of power in the years after Actium.

Rome and ultimately to the tombs outside its walls. This trajectory, and the funerary and triumphal processions that propel it, articulate an overtly public role for the poet that parallels that of Augustus, even as it runs in a literally different direction. However, even as Propertius explores the power of poets and princes to shape narratives in and through the public spaces of Rome, the poem’s very existence, as an assertion of Propertius’ independent trajectory and as an ambivalent response to Augustus’, suggests the limitations of this power as well.

The opening couplet of the poem raises the problem of Propertius’ relationship with a wider reading public through a series of spatial questions and in miniature plays out both the powers and limitations of authorship. The poem begins in medias res, as the speaker responds to unnamed interrogators: “You ask from what source I continually write love poems, from where my book arrives softly in the mouth” (Quaeritis unde mihi totiens scribantur amores./unde meus veniat mollis in ora liber, 1-2). The query quaeritis unde recalls a similar question from the end of the Monobiblos (qualis et unde genus…quaeris, 1.22.1-2), but the pointed shift to the second person plural dramatically highlights a new social context for this book. Propertius is now directly engaging with anonymous, plural, interlocutors rather than with the singular, named Tullus. But who are these interlocutors, and what is the tone of the questions Propertius imputes to them? The easiest, and most common, reading of these interlocutors is as a general and somewhat skeptical reading audience—in effect, asking why Propertius is so obsessed with this soft, amatory poetry, why he will not write on some other topic in his second book. However, it is also possible to read the “you” as sympathetic to elegy, as seeking to understand Propertius’ unprecedented successes within the genre and in love, if the totiens suggests surprise at how prolific Propertius is, rather than at Propertius’ fixation on his topic. The ambiguity allows readers, interpolated by the ambiguous second-person address, to choose whether to align themselves with an elegiac perspective or a more mainstream one skeptical of elegy. This immediate interpretive choice, with all of its ideological implications, highlights the dialogic nature of poetry, the ways that readers bring their own meanings and interpretations to the poetry Propertius creates.

And yet, even if Propertius cannot control the ideological convictions of his readers and whether they align with his group identity, he can nevertheless delimit their interpretive options, can compel them to speak his words, even if they understand them differently. With his second-person plural address, Propertius puts words into his audience’s mouths, facing them with an interpretive choice that encourages them to take sides—in a division, it may be noted, over which most Romans presumably felt no stakes. But to set up the question in this way already assumes elegy as the central ideology through and against which others must understand themselves; even if readers align themselves with an adversarial non-elegiac perspective, in doing so they in effect reinforce an elegiac world-view. The second question in the couplet draws attention to the ability of Propertius to put words in the mouths of others “softly” (2). This is surely, as Fedeli notes, a reference to the popularity of Propertius’ first book, but also envisions

13 Although Fedeli reads these queries as reflecting a somewhat more neutral “curiosita” (2005: 42) from Propertius’ readers, such a curiosity fundamentally aligns with an elegy-skeptical public. An audience of elegiac interlocutors would presumably not question Propertius’ decision to continue writing love poems. Wiggers acutely notes how this quaeritis draws in the audience, but sees the role as unambiguously on of an “adversary” (1977: 334).
the way that readers physically experience Propertius’ poetry as they read it out loud. By
enjoying the soft, aural pleasures of Propertius’ words, readers are co-opted into an elegiac
aesthetic whether they wish to be or not.

Furthermore, this dynamic, dialogic, relationship between author and reading public is
framed in terms of space and movement. The interrogators’ two questions are introduced by the
conjunction unde, which in its basic sense implies movement from some point of origin, a
trajectory. The spatial dynamics of these unde’s operate on two levels. First, they frame the
poetic process and reception as a kind of journey—from inspiration, to poet, and finally to
readers. Poetry appears not so much as a solitary or instantaneous act, but as a dynamic process.
Second, through their intertextual references, these lines imagine that Propertius’ poetic career is
a kind of journey. The final poem of the Monobiblos also began with an unde question, in which
the question of “from where” has an explicitly geographic sense, and leads Propertius back to his
origins in war-torn Umbria and a rumination on his relationship to his local Italian identity
(1.22.1-2). The echo of the earlier question, now reframed around Propertius’ poetic process and
relationship to his reading public, highlights how far Propertius has come, and the moves he is
about to make in his sophomore work. While he will continue to write on love, the emphasis on
mobility and the second-person plural addressee already suggest that this lover is not writing
from quite the same vantage point. Even if his poetics are still grounded in Cynthia, the lover
himself has left the doorway.

And indeed, after this introduction, the poem continues to reenact this trajectory from the
inside outwards, at the small and at the large scale. It is not a linear or consistent itinerary that
the poem offers, but rather a sense of persistent directionality. So, on the macro level, after these
opening questions, Propertius responds with fourteen lines describing the various ways in which
Cynthia functions as his inspiration (3-16), followed by a recusatio listing the globally scattered
mythological and historical topics he will not write about, concluding with Augustus’ career and
triumphs (17-38). He eventually turns back to his narrow bed and Cynthia (39-56), only to turn
back outwards, to the outside of the city, in his fantasy of his death and funerary procession (55-
77). The narrative path of the poem thus zig-zags between the domestic and public, between
Propertius’ relationship with Cynthia and his relationship with the rest of his community.

On the micro level, even the apparently domestically oriented passages are self-
consciously directed outwards. So, in lines 5-16, Propertius offers a series of intimate, erotic
snapshots of his domestic life with Cynthia, beginning with his declaration that “if I see her
approaching gleaming in Coan silk, there will be an entire volume from this Coan garment” (sive
illum Cois fulgentem incedere cerno,/ hac totum e Coa veste volumen erit, 5-6). These

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14 Fedeli 2005: 44. Debates have raged over the course of the 20th century and into the 21st over the existence and
frequency of silent reading in antiquity (see especially Balogh 1929, Knox 1968, and Johnson 2000). While the
emergent consensus is that Romans could and did read silently, it is nevertheless also apparent that poetry, such as
elegy, would commonly be enjoyed through recitation. Beyond the historical reality of readers speaking Propertius’
words, however, Propertius’ poetry—and Latin lyric more broadly—remains invested in its status as song and its
oral existence, in spite of its written transmission.

15 Cerno, in line five, is Leo’s emendation for the manuscripts’ clearly incorrect reading of cogis. Heyworth sets out
persuasively the case against cogis, and its likely origination through a dittography of Cois (2007: 105). Vidi, a 15th
century suggestion supported by Camps (1967: 66), seems equally plausible. Even Fedeli, who does print cogis,
acknowledges its difficulties (2005: 49).
snapshots—of Cynthia gleaming in thin silk, Cynthia sleeping, playing the lyre, fighting naked—anchor the opening portion of the poem in the domestic realms most associated with elegy in Propertius’ previous book. Indeed, they explicitly recall scenes and poems from the *Monobiblos*—so, for instance, Cynthia approaching gleaming in Coan silk directly references the opening of 1.2 (*Quid iuvat ornato procedere, vita, capillo/et tenuis Coa veste movere sinus*, 1-2). But if the protases of these couplets suggest domestic settings, their apodoses reflect on how these apparently private poetics already faced towards the public realm. These lines allegorize the *puella*’s body, making it stand in for poetic form, blurring the line between poetic subject and poetic product. Propertius views Cynthia (*cerno, 5, vidi, 7, miramur, 10*), and then commodifies her for public consumption in the form of a literary work (*volumen, 6, novas...causas, 13, longas...Iliadas, 14, maxima historia, 16*). I have previously argued that Propertius’ apparent positioning of his poetry internally, towards a “harsh mistress” (*duram...dominam, 1.7.5*), is belied by his actual persistent engagement with external figures and ideologies. Nevertheless, it represents a remarkable shift here for Propertius to openly acknowledge this, and in fact to veer to the other extreme, by representing his poetry as inspired by Cynthia, but intended for this anonymous second-person plural audience.

Having offered a model of how elegiac poetry can flexibly mediate between the private and public, Propertius turns to a rejection of overtly public poetics, through which he offers a vision of Augustus’ career culminating in Augustus’ triumphs. In this passage, Propertius effectively stages a poetic triumph for Augustus that draws attention to how both Propertius and Augustus act as authors. Propertius marks the transition by turning to a new interlocutor, Maecenas, and explaining how he would have written of Augustus and Maecenas, if he had been fated to write such grand themes:

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quod mihi si tantum, Maecenas, fata dedissent, 17
   ut possem heroas ducere in arma manus… 18
bellaque resque tui memorarem Caesaris, et tu 25
   Caesare sub magno cura secunda fores.
nam quotiens Mutinam aut, civilia busta, Philippos 28
   aut canerem Siculae classica bella fugae,
eversosque focos antiquae gentis Etruscae, 30
   et Ptolomaeei litora capta Phari,
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16 The other snapshots similarly echo poems from Propertius’ first book: Cynthia sleeping and playing the lyre invokes 1.3 (7-8, 41-2), while the erotic quarrel may call to mind 1.4 (17-18).
17 Wyke 1987 describes this phenomenon in other poems from Propertius’ second book.
18 This representation of and engagement with Augustus as author is more frequently associated with Ovid, and especially Ovid’s exile poetry. See, e.g., Oliensis 2004. More recently, Pandey has explored the preoccupation of Augustan poets, especially Vergil, Horace, Ovid, and Propertius, with “the interdependence of author and audience, emperor and subjects” (2018: 2) and makes arguments congruent with mine on Propertius 2.31/32 and 3.4 (2018: 92-108, 206-210).
19 Many scholars have taken the incorporation of Maecenas into this book as evidence that Maecenas became Propertius’ patron between the publication of Books 1 and 2, or at least that Propertius was moving further into an Augustan circle (e.g., Janan 2001: 12, Miller 2004: 130, Roman 2014: 173). Heyworth (2007: 102ff), however, makes a compelling case for more caution, especially given the scarcity of poems Propertius addresses to Maecenas and of external evidence of their relationship (in contradistinction to Horace and Vergil). I incline more towards Heyworth’s caution, especially given the ambivalence of Propertius’ relationship with Maecenas in this poem.
aut canerem Aegyptum et Nilum, cum attractus in urbem
septem captivis debilis ibat aquis,
aut regum auratis circumdata colla catenis,
Actiaque in Sacra currere rostra Via;

25-34

If, Maecenas, fate had given me the ability to lead heroic bands to arms…I would
memorize the wars and deeds of your Caesar, and you would be a second
theme after great Caesar. For as often as I sang of Mutina or Philippi, burial
grounds of our citizens, or the naval battle and Sicilian flight, and the overturned
hearth of the ancient Etruscan race and the captured shores of Ptolemaic Pharos,
or [as often as] I sang of Egypt and the Nile, when having been dragged into the
city and feeble, he proceeded with his seven captive streams, or the necks of kings
circled with golden chains, and the Actian ship-beaks running along the Via
Sacra…

This representation of Augustus’ career and triumph, organized around discrete tableaus,
translates itself easily into the visuals of triumph and creates the literary experience of a single
triumphal procession encompassing a broad view of Augustus’ deeds. Propertius envisions each
entry in Augustus’ career through a concrete image—citizen graves, ships in flight, overturned
hearth of the ancient Etruscan race, and the captured shores of Ptolemaic Pharos, or [as often as] I sang of Egypt and the Nile, when having been dragged into the
city and feeble, he proceeded with his seven captive streams, or the necks of kings
circled with golden chains, and the Actian ship-beaks running along the Via
Sacra…

This creative scaling of Augustus’ triumph to include a broader view of his career
highlights Propertius’ editorial powers and presents him as a parallel figure to the triumphator.23

20 Gurval reads it as the first entry of the representation of Augustus’ triumph (1995: 177-8). This reading is
perfectly justifiable, but would not be possible on the first reading of the line, when it would not have been obvious
or clear that a description of Augustus’ triumphs would ensue. Moreover, the placement of the second canerem
between the litora and the Nile encourages seeing a division there instead.
22 In broadening the scope of this poetic triumph, Propertius in one sense merely expands upon what Augustus has
done with his triple triumph. Augustus was not content to celebrate one victory, but rather offered an all-
comprising vision of his victories over the past six odd years. Propertius accepts this notion of representing an
entire career within a triumphal celebration but offers a different selection for it. It is also worth noting that through
this snap-shot narrative, Propertius collapses Augustus’ three-day parade into a single triumphal vision (e.g., the
Actian beaks and the image of the Nile would have appeared in two different triumphs on successive days).
Conquering generals had wide latitude in how they framed and represented their victories in triumphal processions. 24 Within his elegiac corpus, Propertius exerts this same power of representational control over Augustus’ triumph and career. The repeated canerem and aut, in addition to the counterfactual itself, highlight Propertius’ artistic control over the representation. He further emphasizes this power through an overtly controversial framing of Augustus’ triumphs: he contextualizes Augustus’ triumph over Egypt within his decades-long and brutal involvement in civil wars. The first four images he presents (Mutina, Phillipi, Naulochus, Perusia) were battles fought primarily or exclusively against other Romans. Propertius emphasizes the communal tragedy of these victories, choosing to sing of the “citizen graves” at Philippi and Mutina (civilia busta, 27) and “the overturned hearths of the ancient Etruscan race” (eversosque focos antiquae gentis Etruscae, 29). 25 He keeps his gaze focused on the losers, on those suffering violence at Augustus’ hands, rather than on Augustus as victor. 26 Moreover, by associating these images of civil war with the triumph, Propertius adds to their horrifying power: the triumph was supposed to align Romans in victory over foreign others. Romans abhorred the idea of triumphing over other Romans. 27 Indeed, these images of Roman tragedy mixed into a triumphal scene may well recall a specific triumph from recent memory. In 46 BCE, Julius Caesar celebrated four triumphs (over the course of a month, rather than sequentially as Augustus did), and in the fourth, over Africa, he apparently included gruesome images of the suicides of his Roman enemies, Scipio, Petreius, and Cato. This incorporation of Roman casualties into the triumph provoked outrage and grief from the Roman onlookers. 28 Augustus, having learned the lessons of his adoptive father’s failures, carefully avoided such displays. In this passage, Propertius demonstrates his power to rewrite and restage Augustus’ triumph by incorporating similarly problematic images of civil violence, which Augustus had excluded.

But if Propertius’ appropriation of Augustus’ triumph as a space for imperial critique demonstrates his poetic power, it also draws the two men into a kind of communion. As Nandini Pandey has observed, the poet and the triumphator wield similar forms of creative and narrative control. 29 Propertius accentuates this commonality through the disjuncture between his depiction

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25 Scholars have been divided on precisely how to read these references to civic violence. Many, including Camps 1967 and more recently Roman 2014 have been inclined to view these lines as potentially awkward, but no more: “The topics listed in these lines might well have painful associations for Octavian…But it would be rash to see much significance in this. The list of wars waged is historical” (Camps 1967: 69). I would argue that the subjective discretion allowed in historical lists and narratives is precisely the point of this passage. I am sympathetic to Roman’s reluctance to attribute pro- or anti-Augustan sentiments to Propertius’ inclusion of these lines, but disagree that reading these lines as openly at odds with Augustan narratives requires that we read Propertius as being so. My reading instead sees the critical narrative, and its contrast with a more overtly Augustan one, as commentary on precisely the subjective and dynamic nature of these kinds of discourses, rather than evidence of Propertius’ own true feelings. Pace Heslin 2018.
26 Vergil’s representation of the Battle of Actium on the Shield of Aeneas offers a useful counter-example of how a poet of this era might instead emphasize Augustus’ military glory and downplay his involvement in civic violence (Aen. 8.765-716). Though for arguments that Vergil too complicates and undermines clean Augustan narratives, albeit in less overt ways than Propertius here, see Rossi 2010. Pandey 2018: 194-201.
27 This did not stop them from doing so, however; see Lange 2013.
29 In particular, she emphasizes the authorial agency of the triumphator, with which Augustan poets then engage: “like an artist or impresario, a triumphing general carefully curated words, images, and actions to create a moving, speaking text felt to be almost as important as the victory that engendered it” (2018: 186).
of Augustus’ civil wars and the victories Augustus actually celebrated in triumph. After so strongly emphasizing the context of Augustus’ sacrilegious wars, Propertius’ representation of Augustus’ triumphs is curiously sanitized. There is no mention of Antony or of the Roman citizens who fought on those Actian ships. Instead, the external nature of the victories is dutifully underscored with the foreign landscape and captive kings. This divide between the civil war context and Augustus’ triumph arises because in the triumphal section Propertius depicts Augustus’ representation of his own career. Augustus famously promoted the idea that he was fighting a war against Cleopatra, not Antony. By contextualizing the sanitized “foreign war” representation of Augustus’ victories within a larger narrative of Augustus’ involvement in civil war, Propertius primes readers to see the ways that Augustus has rewritten his history. Such commentary may well have been unwelcome to Augustus, but perhaps not as entirely as modern readers sometimes assume. For if Propertius challenges Augustus’ self-presentation, in doing so he also reproduces that self-presentation and continues the discourse on essentially Augustan terms. In the opening couplet of this poem Propertius scripts questions for his readers and controls both critiques and celebrations of his success. In this passage, he shows Augustus in effect doing the same to him.

Moreover, the implications of this critique expand beyond questions of pro- or anti-Augustan. Augustus as triumphator appears as a kind of author, not unlike the elegiac speaker who stages a triumph in this poem. If these two visions of Augustus’ achievements reflect nearly irreconcilable interpretations, both with some, though not total, grounding in facts, this is in some sense the conflict between the lover and the door in 1.16, cast in a specific, contemporary context rather than a generic one. Just as the door and the lover ultimately appeared as two sides of the same coin, so too Propertius and Augustus, although offering nearly mutually exclusive interpretations of recent history, nevertheless play similar roles as editors and creators of subjective narratives. By drawing attention to the unreliable nature of Augustus’ self-representations, Propertius also highlights the unreliable nature of his own.

The final third of the poem, which re-centers Propertius through a fantasy of his death and funeral, continues to develop him into a public figure parallel to Augustus, even as it moves him in a very different direction. The set-up of the death fantasy gestures to how it will function as a continuation of tropes and values from Propertius’ first book even as it repositions them.

30 Although I speak of Augustus’ self-representation, I acknowledge that of course much of Augustus’ image was generated by poets, politicians and other figures around him, and it is impossible to know precisely how much independent agency Augustus expressed in this self-presentation. However, the triumph—like the Res Gestae—is a representation that clearly points to Augustus specifically and directly as author, unlike e.g., senatorial decrees honoring him, or coinage.

31 E.g., Res Gestae 25, Hor. Carm. 1.37. Heslin suggests that Propertius may also here be critiquing Vergil’s representation of Augustus’ career and acceptance of Augustus’ emphasis on the externality of the war (2018: 178).

32 Tacitus, writing over a century later, and with the benefit of a great deal of hindsight, represents citizens debating between broadly favorable and critical evaluations of Augustus after his death (Ann. 1.9-10). The critical voices draw attention to precisely the problem of Augustus’ rewriting of recent history.

33 The question of how to understand Augustus’s career and the history of the triumviral period thus poses for the speaker a similar quandary to the one the opening questions pose for readers. Once Augustus, or elegy, has been accepted as a fundamental organizing principle for the world and identities, both positive and negative evaluations will continue to empower them.

34 See my discussion of Prop. 1.16 on pages 24-30.
within a larger social scene: “It is glorious to die in love: further glory, if one is able to have but one love; oh may I alone enjoy my love!” (laus in amore mori: laus altera, si datur uno/posse frui: fvar o solus amore meo! 47-8).35 This is, as has been broadly acknowledged, another assertion of Propertius’ enduring faithfulness to elegy and, perhaps, Cynthia: the poet hopes to continue writing elegy unto his very death.36 This death fantasy will look familiar to readers of Propertius’ first book: in particular it recalls the lover’s plaintive call in 1.6, “Let me give my final breath to this worthlessness [i.e., Love]” (hui animam extremam reddere nequitiiae, 26), and the death fantasies in 1.17 and 1.19 (1.17.21-4, 1.19.21-23), in which Propertius imagines Cynthia mourning over his grave. The introduction of laus, however, marks a significant shift. In his death fantasies in Book 1, the lover hopes for the attention and devotion of Cynthia. Here he has repositioned this death-for-love towards an external audience. Laus, related to the Greek κλέος, implies not admiration of a single person, but a more dispersed societal approbation and memory.37 Like the description of Cynthia and his poetic output at the beginning of the poem, Propertius takes a trope familiar from the first book, but explicitly reorients it outwards. What is perhaps as striking is that while the lover found himself so frequently misunderstood by the wider public in Book 1 (and misunderstanding it), here Propertius seems to suggest that his own values are held more widely, and that he can find traditional acclaim through an elegiac path.

And indeed, as the poem progresses into a fully-wrought death fantasy, Propertius emphasizes both his poetic trajectory into a public sphere and his ability to shape a public understanding of his life and death. After noting the impossibility of curing the disease of love, Propertius, apparently resigned to his fate, declares: “since one woman has taken my senses as booty, from her house my funeral will be led” (una meos quoniam praedata es femina sensus/ex hac ducentur funera nostra domo, 55-6). This death fantasy evolves in markedly different ways from the ones of Book 1, which focused narrowly on the image of Cynthia mourning at the poet’s grave.38 Now, Cynthia and her house appear as a point of origin for Propertius’ commemoration after death, but only that.39 Indeed, Propertius’ funerary parade will explicitly move him away from her house, into the streets of Rome.40 What is more, the deceased Propertius will be incorporated into a traditional, social, Roman ritual: the funeral procession. In one sense, this funeral procession picks up on and redirects the other public procession of the poem, the triumph. But it also provides an alternative to the triumph, offering a distinct model and directionality for Propertius’ relationship with his community. Where Augustus’ trajectory is from the periphery into Rome, and his relationship to his fellow citizens is defined by his violent

35 Heyworth offers the emendation semper for solus, but, although the switch from his own fidelity to Cynthia’s is surprising, I do not think it requires the emendation.
36 E.g., Roman 2014: “This is another way of stating the permanence and inflexibility of his generic position and literary identity: he cannot bend to other topics and modes, such as panegyric of Augustus, because love is the permanent pattern of his life” (175).
37 The secondariness of the call for fidelity, and the complete absence of Cynthia from this articulation, further suggest this laus comes from elsewhere.
38 1.17.21-4, 1.19.21-23; see also 2.13 and 4.7. Tibullus’ death fantasies likewise typically focus on Delia mourning for him, e.g., 1.1.59-66.
39 Congruent with Cynthia’s overarching role in this poem as an origin rather than a destination. There is also an obvious metapoetic reading of these lines—Propertius’ legacy sets out from his first book of poetry, Cynthia. In a poem in which the triumph features prominently, the depiction of Cynthia as an almost conquering general herself helps to glue together the two processions.
40 Cf. 1.17 and 1.19. The prepositional phrase ex hac domo and the verb ducentur emphasize this movement.
conquest of them, Propertius’ funerary procession leads him from the center outwards, eventually to his grave outside Rome.\footnote{Interestingly, at this point in time, Augustus has already mapped out his own final trip outside of the pomerium, in the form of the great Mausoleum in the Campus Martius.} Strictly speaking, we might expect Propertius’ future funeral to take him in the same direction as Augustus’ triumph, towards the forum for a laudatio.\footnote{On the path of elite funerals, see Toynbee 1971, Bodel 1999.} But rather than actually depicting his funeral procession, Propertius instead skips narratively forward, to a scene of mourning over his tomb outside of Rome, further separating his trajectory and destination from Augustus’.

The poem’s final image, of Maecenas mourning at Propertius’ future tomb, closes out the poem’s overarching trajectory by apparently moving the poet from domestic realms fully into the public, prioritizing his social relationships over his erotic ones. Maecenas plays the part of chief mourner:

\begin{verbatim}
quandocumque igitur vitam mea fata reposcent, 
et breve in exiguo marmore nomen ero, 
Maecenas, nostrae spes invidiosa iuventae, 
et vitae et morti gloria iusta mea
si te forte meo ductet via proxima busto, 
esseda caelatis siste Britanna iugis, 
taliaque illacrimans mutae iace verba favillae:
'Huic misero fatum dura puella fuit.'
\end{verbatim}

\[71-78\] 

And so, whenever my fate demands my life, and I am a short name on slender marble, Maecenas, enviable hope of our youth, and just glory of my life and death, if by chance a nearby road will lead you by my grave, stop your British chariot with its embossed yoke, and weeping throw to my silent ashes words like this: “A harsh girl was this miserable man’s fate.”

The emphasis on the funerary epitaph and the setting of his tomb further reinforce the public, social nature of Propertius’ legacy. Propertius imagines when he “will be a short name on slender marble,” reducing himself in death to a literary output—but one that centers his name, rather than Cynthia’s.\footnote{Poetic verses on his tomb would, appropriately, still be in elegiac couplets. The fact that Propertius does not actually provide his name here, and that Cynthia’s name has featured prominently earlier in this poem, may somewhat undercut his claims here.} Furthermore, while earlier in the poem Propertius had identified his poetic output with a “narrow bed” (angusto lecto, 45), now his poetry is transformed into this “slender marble” located next to a road (via proxima, 75). The shift from the narrow bed to a slender marble maintains the aesthetic value of brevity and precision, but a dramatic shift in the purpose and accessibility of his poetry. The slender marble places Propertius in full view of the world—at least as many as pass by this road—and offers a sense of permanence at odds with the quotidian quality of a bed.
Furthermore, Maecenas’ intrusion into the death fantasy ensures that the ending of the poem, like its opening lines, centers on Propertius’ relationship with other Roman men and his ability—or inability—to co-opt them. In the more typical elegiac death fantasies, both in Propertius and Tibullus, the death fantasy is used to envision a communion with the beloved that defies death or that was not possible in life: the beloved will grieve the lover’s death, show all the emotion she withheld in life. In this passage, however, Propertius dramatically inverts the trope. Maecenas, not Cynthia, is called to mourn at Propertius’ grave. Although his funeral may proceed from Cynthia’s home, it is his relationship with Maecenas, with other Roman elite men, which Propertius envisions through his death. Furthermore, although these lines focus specifically on Propertius’ relationship with Maecenas, the reference to Maecenas’ status as an influential figure among the youth (73) suggests that this relationship has wider implications for Propertius’ relationship with other young men. And indeed, historically speaking, there is an obvious truth to this: Maecenas wielded considerable cultural power as the famous cultivator and patron of many of the luminaries of the Augustan age.

And yet, if these lines seem on one level to have translated the Propertian lover into a newly social and traditional position, it also suggests his power to rewrite narratives and norms in this public sphere. As scholars have previously noted, Maecenas’ appearance in this scene is, at a minimum, elegiacaully tinged.44 While the description of Maecenas as envy of the youth may reflect a historical reality, it also reflects the typical company of lovers. Propertius’ dramatic acclamation of him as his iusta gloria “suggests that the speaker regards Maecenas at least as much the source of his potential fama as the mistress herself.”45 And in addition to taking on the role usually played by the mistress in elegiac death fantasies, Maecenas plays the part in dramatic fashion, weeping in front of Propertius’ silent ashes.46 Finally, although the chariot at first might seem to add an epic—or even triumphal—flavor to the fantasy, at this point in time in the Roman imagination this type of chariot was seen as a “luxuriant vehicle of choice for pleasure driving by urbane fops and/or wastrels.”47 Taken together, then, this fictional Maecenas is both recognizable as Maecenas, and has also been drawn into elegiac modes.

This point is made much more dramatically with the final line of the poem, in which Propertius ventriloquizes Maecenas. Propertius’ ownership of Maecenas’ words functions on several levels. Although these words are imagined as a spontaneous expression of grief from Maecenas, because it is a fantasy, the speaker is explicitly scripting this response. Moreover, these final eight lines together closely echo generic conventions of funerary epitaphs, which regularly invoke passersby.48 Although the words attributed to Maecenas do not function coherently as an epitaph, their place within this larger pseudo-epitaph serves as a further reminder of the poet’s control.49 For all of the distance this poem has covered, it ends as it began, with Propertius placing words into the mouths of his readers. Propertius’ tomb has the same effect as his books of poetry, to compel others to speak his words and truths. Moreover, this final lament blames Propertius’ fate on a dura puella (77), anchoring, in the last, Propertius’ poetic

45 Greene 2005: 75.
46 Cf. 1.19.23.
48 For a detailed analysis of the similarities, see Herrera 1999.
49 Maecenas’ lament is contained within a single pentameter, making it an impossible epitaph.
legacy back to its erotic origins. Propertius’ story will continue to be one of love and a harsh mistress—but it will be a story told in public spheres, to and for other elite men. The power of authorship means that Propertius can make these men say his words, make them grapple with his story on his terms, even if they disagree with him and his values.\textsuperscript{50} The true limiting factor appears in the caveat “if by chance a nearby road will lead you by my grave.” As an author Propertius is able to put his words into the mouths of others, but only if the readers find his work. In this context, the importance of a prominent place in the public sphere, which puts one in the way of audiences more easily, becomes clear. Moreover, to have Maecenas, specifically, demonstrate Propertius’ poetic power to ventriloquize is surely pointed. Although descriptions of Maecenas as de facto Minister of Propaganda for Augustus may be overblown, nevertheless he clearly was involved in the creation of Augustan narratives.\textsuperscript{51} To co-opt him to proclaim a Propertian once more illustrates the similarities between Augustus and Propertius as authors (and as companions of Maecenas) and also highlights the vast differences in the ends to which they aim these powers. While Augustus seeks to obscure the tragic career that has brought him to power in Rome, Propertius seeks to memorialize precisely the pain and failures of his elegiac life that led him to fame. 

In this programmatic opening to his second book of poetry, Propertius’ speaker stakes out a new position for himself as author and lover, and he does so at least in part through spatial imagery. In contrast to the famously immobile lover of his first book, Propertius opens this book with a lover who has left the shadows of the doorway and assumed a prominent place in public life. Through a staging of Augustus’ triple triumph and his own funeral and burial, Propertius draws a parallel between himself and Augustus as authors and shapers of public stories. The limitations imposed by subjective experience, such a touchstone of Propertius’ first book, remain a problem for Propertius and Augustus, as their interpretations and values can be challenged or rejected by their audiences. And yet, on the whole, this poem is optimistic about the power of successful authors to set the terms of the discussion and to propagate their words and interpretations, even in the mouths of those who might disagree.

\begin{center}
\textbf{A River Runs Through It:}
\textit{The Interconnected World of Tibullus 1.7}
\end{center}

Tibullus’ triumphal poem, 1.7, differs markedly from Propertius 2.1, both in its focus on the spaces outside of Rome and its elision of the figure of the poet lover. The speaker of Propertius 2.1 overtly stakes out his elegiac position from the start and negotiates his relationship with Augustus, Maecenas, and the rest of the Roman world by means of a disjointed trajectory through the city, encompassing a counterfactual triumph and a future funeral.\textsuperscript{52} Tibullus’ speaker in 1.7 takes almost the opposite tack. Although the first-person speaker does not disappear entirely, he retreats from center-stage, making way for Messalla, Osiris, and a bird’s-eye view of the conquered Mediterranean. There is no explicit engagement with the elegiac experience, Delia, or Marathus, or with how returning soldiers and captives interact with elegiac priorities

\textsuperscript{50} Admittedly, Maecenas represents probably a fairly receptive audience to elegiac values and priorities, given his participation in poetic circles, and non-traditional masculinity (Gleason 1995: 113).

\textsuperscript{51} E.g., Syme 1939: 242, Janan 2001: 19.

\textsuperscript{52} 2.1.17-38.
The poem thus poses substantial questions about how it relates to the Tibullan corpus as a whole and how to understand the speaker’s relationship to the traditional elegiac speaker. Is this still the elegiac speaker and how can we know, if he does not speak about elegiac subjects? 54

I will argue in this section that 1.7 is closely intertwined in the elegiac identity discourses of the corpus as a whole, and in fact performs the kind of assimilative strategies Tibullus has modelled in more partial ways in previous poems. 1.7’s apparent embrace of a military subject-matter and omission of elegiac figures is belied by the fact that the poem actually relegates martial topics, while emphasizing the interdependence of realms of war and peace. So too, 1.7’s digression to Egypt and focus on figures that are neither martial nor Roman provides a vehicle for the exploration of elegiac values. Like the underworld scene in Tibullus 1.3, the elegiac context encourages us to search for elegiac overtones and meanings in a poem that on its own terms would not be evidently elegiac. But aspects of the elegiac lover appear in a variety of figures and places within this world, associated both with conqueror and conquered, foreign and Roman landscapes. This dispersal of elegiac qualities suggests both the tenuousness of the elegiac position within the Roman Empire, and also its power and flexibility to adapt to power systems. Central to the success of this elegiac assimilation is the overdetermination of figures and contexts, allowing elegiac subtext to underlie other narratives and figures. As in 1.2, when the speaker sought to conceal himself from the threats presented by passersby, and in 1.3, when the speaker found the elegiac possibilities in Odyssean epic, then, the speaker of 1.7 seems to have acceded to the demands of power in his social world by offering a celebration of martial triumph, but actually, subtly, redirects this submission towards elegiac ends. Far from a blip in an otherwise elegiac book, 1.7 embodies an extreme version of Tibullus’ elegiac survival tactics and suggests the compatibility and interdependence of elegy and the imperial systems that impose upon it. 55

1.7 opens with an overdetermined context. The first four lines of 1.7 immediately announce the martial and triumphal subject of the poem, but in a way that also immediately

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53 In this regard, the poem resembles Propertius 3.7, excluding the final couplet of that poem, which reintroduces the explicitly elegiac values of the speaker.
54 Though this has not been the most pressing question within scholarship on this poem, which instead has overwhelmingly been preoccupied with making sense of the prayer to Osiris, both within the context of this poem about a triumph celebrated over the Aquitani (Gaisser 1971, Ball 1975, Bright 1975), and within the political context of Augustus’ own triumph over Egypt (Lambert 2003, Berrino 2008, Bowditch 2011). Leach 1980 offers a significant exception, as she both argues that shared concerns over agriculture and Vergil tie this poem into the wider collection, and suggests a distinction in the speaking voice: “the elegist drops his mask a bit to speak with the voice of the historical Tibullus” (1980: 90). Cf. Maltby, who raises the issue more directly: “This is the first example in extant Latin literature of occasional poetry in elegiacs from which the love theme is almost entirely absent” (2002: 281).
55 My argument differs significantly in focus from Lowell Bowditch’s post-colonial reading of the poem, which emphasizes the ways that the poem replicates the colonial experience through the figure of Osiris, but nevertheless broadly agrees with her findings. Although I argue Tibullus sees both possibilities and escape in the non-martial, non-Roman, identities he describes in the east, this does not suggest equality. Indeed, I would suggest that the very reticence of the speaker about his own identity and relationship to events, within the context of this first book, may point to the violence of the hierarchies of the world he inhabits.
evokes the birthday celebrations and the arts of peace that will dominate the latter half of the poem:

Hunc cecinere diem Parcae fatalia nentes  
Stamina, non ulli dissoluenda deo  
Hunc fore, Aquitanas posset qui fundere gentes,  
Quem tremeret forti milite victus Atax

1-4

The Fates prophesied this day, spinning the fatal threads that cannot be loosened by any god, predicting that this day would come, which would pour into flight the races of Aquitania, a day at which the Atax River, conquered by a brave soldier, would tremble.

Taken as a whole, these four lines overtly introduce a martial focus for the poem. But the first couplet actually allows for ambiguity that is only cleared up with the relative clauses in lines 3-4. The Fates sang of a day—but what day and why? The most immediate hint lies in the echo of the Fates’ prophecy in Catullus 64 (cecinerunt... Parcae, 384), when they foretell the birth of Achilles, as well as the widespread slaughter that will accompany his life and death (343 ff.).

The emphatic repetition hunc...diem...hunc fore in combination with the reference to the prophecy of Achilles’ birth offers at least the possibility that this poem too might be about a birth and birthday—“the Fates sang of this day, the day of your birth Messalla.” The relative clauses announcing Messalla’s conquests instead clarify that the day in question is the day of victory and triumph, as the ensuing lines make even more explicit (5-9). However, the later reemergence of the birthday celebration (49ff.) suggests that this initial uncertainty between birth and conquest, between peace and war, is meaningful.

Both birthday and triumphal poetry were popular genres during the Augustan period, but the combination of the two into a single poem is unprecedented. And while the flattery implicit in the allusion to Achilles’ birth in Catullus offers one explanation for this generic blurring, the ambiguity concerning setting and genre in the opening lines is emblematic of the poem’s broader interest in subtly making space for more peaceful, elegiac compatible subjects in the ostensibly martial context of a triumphal poem.

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56 See Gaisser 1971 and Ball 1975 for further discussion of the Catullan influences on this opening.
57 So Gaisser 1971. Lee-Stecum argues that these lines might actually evoke an amatory context, withullo deo perhaps referring to Amor (1998: 206-7). Though, as Catullus 64 and the prophecy of Achilles’ birth themselves masterfully demonstrate, birth and conquest can be inextricably linked.
58 Earlier readings of this poem argued for either a birthday or a triumphal referent in these lines (see especially Gaisser 1971 and Bright 1975), but more recent scholarship has tended to embrace the hybridity of the poem (e.g., Lambert 2003, Berrino 2008).
59 It is also perhaps telling that even as these four lines apparently announce a martial subject matter, the actions of singing and weaving (cecinere, nentes) come before routing and trembling (fundere, tremeret).
60 Tib. 2.2. Sulpicia 2, 3 (=Tib. 3.14, 3.15), Prop. 3.11, Ov. Tr. 3.13, 5.5, Hor. Carm. 4.11; for more on the genre of birthday poems see Cesareo 1929, Argetsinger 1992. It is interesting that Propertius’ first major triumphal poem, 2.1, also overtly blurs generic lines, though in his case between funereal and triumphal modes rather than birthday and triumph.
61 It is true, of course, that shifting settings and contexts are a regular feature of Tibullan poetics, but this poetic opening blurring two distinctive poetic contexts is distinctive even in this corpus. Lambert 2003 and Berrino 2008 have suggested that the historical-political context may have motivated this mixture: Augustus’ own birthday occurred two days before Messalla’s triumph.
And indeed, the commingling of these genres is not an esoteric point, but rather gestures more broadly to the inseparability of the realms of war and peace. Birthdays and triumphs, although they are both festive occasions, celebrate diametrically opposed life events. The evocation of the Catullan prophecy, which foretells a birth that leads to conquest, suggests from the outset the interdependence of the apparently disparate realms of procreation—later in this poem also embodied through agriculture—and war. Furthermore, the blending of birthday and triumph, of love and war, occurs specifically through connective imagery, namely thread and liquid streams. The Fates’ thread links the present to the future, and also intertextually links Tibullus to a recent poetic past embodied in Catullus, and perhaps also the more distant ones with which Catullus himself was engaging. These connections, across time and between poets and poetic traditions, cannot be sundered even by divine forces (2). The relative clause Aquitanas posset qui fundere gentes uses fluid imagery to convey the violence and fear of the relationship between conquered and conqueror and to suggest the ongoing connection it guarantees. Although fundo is regularly used for routing enemies, I agree with Bright, within the wider context of this poem, it may retain some liquid overtones. Furthermore, while the first relative clause points to the moment of victory, of turning the enemy to flight, the second points towards the aftermath of war, of the relationship between conquered and conquerors after the war is over. The Atax River (the modern-day Aude), personified and standing in for the peoples of Aquitania, now exists in an enduring relationship of fear and respect for Messalla, operating as representative of Rome.

The ensuing description of Messalla’s triumphal parade seems to solidify the genre and the relationship between conqueror and conquered, even as it also opens up complexities in both through echoes of the elegiac lover. The two couplets envision the full glory of Messalla’s procession through Rome:

Evenere: novos pubes Romana triumphos
Vidit et evinctos bracchia capta duces;
At te victrices lauros, Messalla, gerentem
Portabat nitidis currus eburnus equis.

5-8

It has come true: the Roman youth saw new triumphs and the conquered generals with their arms bound; and an ivory chariot with shining horses was carrying you, Messalla, wearing victorious laurels.

The explicitly occasional nature of these lines seems to definitively settle the question of the genre and purpose of this poem, though in typical Tibullan fashion, this too will be undercut as

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62 Bright 1975 has noted that, although on its own perfectly normal, in the context of this poem, the verb fundere here may activate some sense of flowing (34).

63 We might think both of the heroic tradition, whose narrative Catullus draws upon, and Hellenistic poetic traditions, which also animate the poem (see Schrijvers 2009: 152-3).

64 1975: 35.

65 The personified Atax here also likely corresponds to and references a representation of the river carried in Messalla’s triumph.
the poem continues. These lines also, at first glance anyway, crystalize the nature of the ongoing relationship between conqueror and conquered: it will be one of unequivocal domination of the conquered. The Atax’s abject fear is now manifested in the bound Gallic generals, who serve as entertainment for the Roman youth. Messalla offers a very different form of spectacle, crowned in laurel and riding in an extravagant triumphal chariot.

But, as unmarked a depiction of a Roman triumph as this could be in another context, when it is read within the Tibullus’ first book of poems, parallels between the conquered and elegiac lovers allow for a more complicated view. In particular, these two couplets recall the programmatic couplets contrasting Messalla and Tibullus in the first poem. On a narrative level, the first poem lays out Messalla’s desire to bring enemy spoils back to the city (ut domus hostiles praeferat exuvias, 54), an aim here fulfilled in magnificent fashion. On a structural level, the couplets in the first poem compare the lover in vigil to triumphal spoils, which now appear in human form, looking not unlike the lover. Like the lover, the Gallic generals are overwhelmed by Messalla’s power, are bound (me retinent...vincula, 1.1.55, evinctos bracchia capta, 1.7.6), and made objects of public scorn.

In 1.1 the comparison of elegiac lovers to enemy spoils explores the contrasts between the lover’s life and Messalla’s, but by introducing real conquered peoples as spoils, Tibullus raises the stakes of this image. The use of triumphal spoils to depict the lover in a prominent and programmatic passage ensures that the portrayal of actual human spoils, described in similar terms, will evoke the lover in turn. The parallel between these captive generals and the elegiac lovers may remind us of the ways that lovers are not like slaves, of the agency Tibullus wields as a citizen of Rome in contrast to enslaved captives: there are, after all, no literal chains holding him to Delia’s door. Such distinctions may appear particularly salient in a poem in which the speaker seems so aligned with Messalla and the powerful forces of imperial conquest. But the implicit comparison may also, reciprocally, raise the possibility that these generals are not quite as dominated as they appear. Throughout this collection, Tibullus has navigated the threats and dangers of his world through a combination of persuasion, evasion, and assimilation. Even after seven lines of encomium for Messalla and his conquests, a reader well-acquainted with elegy might well be prepared for a subsequent disavowal or dodge in the face of seemingly insurmountable pressure from above. If enemy captives offer an image of powerlessness for the lover, perhaps the elegiac lover conversely can offer an image of invisible power for the captives—that is, they may well be able to work around the demands of a society

66 This recalls in particular 1.2, in which the traditional paraclausithyron address is rapidly abandoned, albeit not quite as rapidly as the triumphal parade is abandoned in this poem.
67 And indeed, with this specific triumphal context, readers might now read the reference to the cringing Atax through the representations of foreign rivers commonly carried in Roman triumphs.
68 The emphatic placement of the second person address to Messalla at the beginning of the couplets (Te bellare, 1.1.53, At te, 1.7.7) may underline this progression.
70 Cf. Amores 1.6, in which the contrast between the lover and an actual slave deconstructs the servitium amoris metaphor.
71 For persuasion and evasion, see especially my reading of 1.2 in Chapter 1; for assimilation see my reading of 1.3 in Chapter 2.
72 Recusationes, a common feature of elegy, are of course a performance of agency, but are often deployed in ways that allow the more powerful to, at least theoretically, save face. They also regularly deliver at least part of what was allegedly asked for.

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hostile to them, that they may find ways to seek their own ends even as they bend and compromise to the powers that be, like Tibullus does.\textsuperscript{73}

And indeed, even as the next fourteen lines of the poem seem to more firmly align Tibullus with Messalla and imperial power, they also emphasize Tibullus’ own unique powers as poet. It is worth quoting this passage at some length:

\begin{quote}
Non sine me est tibi partus honos: Tarbella Pyrene
Testis et Oceani litora Santonici,
Testis Arar Rhodanusque celer magnusque Garunna,
Carnutis et flavi caerula lympha Liger.
An te, Cydne, canam, tacitis qui leniter undis
Caeruleus placidis per vada serpis aquis,
Quantus et aetherio contingens vertice nubes
Frigidus intonsos Taurus alat Cilicas?
Quid referam, ut volitet crebras intacta per urbes
Alba Palaestino sancta columba Syro,
Utque maris vastum prospectet turribus aequor
Prima ratem ventis credere docta Tyros…
\end{quote}

9-20

Not without me was honor born to you; let the Tarbellian Pyrenes be a witness, and the shores of Santonician Ocean, and Arar and swift Rhone, and great Garunna, and the Loire, the blue stream of the blond Carnutes. Or shall I sing you, Cydnus, and how gently you creep with silent waves through the shallow waters, and how cold Taurus touching the clouds with an ethereal peak nourishes the unshorn Cilicians? Why should I relate how the white dove sacred to the Syrian of Palestine flies untouched through the crowded cities, and how Tyre, which first learned to entrust its ships to the winds, looks out over the vast plane of the sea from towers…

Tibullus marks the transition from triumphal parade to global geography with a bold claim of his own importance in this scene, invoking foreign landscapes to witness that Messalla’s “glory was not born without me” (\textit{Non sine me est tibi partus honos}, 9). This line has sometimes been read as a strictly literal, historical gesture towards Messalla’s campaigns in the East, and Tibullus’ abortive participation in them.\textsuperscript{74} But such a reading does not fit entirely comfortably: Tibullus, according to his own poetic self-representations, did not actually make it to the Eastern campaign, instead falling ill along the way. Moreover, the geographical digression leads to Egypt, which was not a location of Messalla’s campaigns, and which, furthermore, he may have never even visited.\textsuperscript{75} Another, more appealing, interpretation of this line reads it as a reference to

\textsuperscript{73} McCarthy 1998.

\textsuperscript{74} Cf. 1.3, Lee-Stecum notes that \textit{sine me} in fact specifically recalls 1.3.1, which specifically emphasizes in the first line that Messalla shall continue on “without me” (1998: 208).

\textsuperscript{75} The evidence on Messalla’s campaigns and career is scant and challenging; he does seem to have held a governorship in Syria (Dio Cass. 51.7.7), which may at least partially inform the poem’s trajectory east. For a discussion of the difficulties, see Syme 1986: 209ff.
the role of Tibullus’ poetry in generating glory for Messalla’s accomplishments. In the sense that an honos was the public acknowledgement of achievement, rather than an achievement itself, Tibullus’ poetry may be seen as drawing attention to Messalla’s victories and commemorating them for future generations. Such a reading also elevates the importance of Tibullus’ poetry, representing it as an essential, if non-violent, part of the imperial system, and as acting in parallel with the triumphal parade in the streets. The use of the verb partus est, although it can simply and idiomatically mean “acquired,” in context seems likely to recall the idea of birth from the first lines, hinting at the depth of complicity and interdependence. Tibullus is himself almost like one of the fates, singing future glory into being from its very beginning.

Tibullus further centers himself, and emphasizes his agency in this passage, by drawing attention to his own poetic decision-making, as Parshia Lee-Stecum has pointed out. In a move reminiscent of Propertius’ description of Augustus’ triumph, Tibullus, after calling several geographies to witness, asks a series of first-person rhetorical questions set off first by, “Or shall I sing you, Cydnus” (An te, Cydne, canam, 13) and then by “what should I say” (Quid referam, 17). These compositional, subjunctive questions, center Tibullus as a creator, reminding readers that he controls where this poem goes, what we as readers see and hear. By emphasizing the poet’s choices, these questions also further highlight the oddities of his decisions. It may be no coincidence that the rhetorical questions arise as Tibullus moves East, away from the campaigns which this triumph is supposed to be celebrating, and from a more conventional triumphal poetic structure. Messalla might have been holding the reins of the triumphal chariot, but Tibullus is driving this poem.

A shift in cartographic modes midway through the geographic description further underlines Tibullus’ claims to poetic autonomy and the possibilities of his poetic medium. Specifically, as he moves from Aquitania eastwards and ultimately to Egypt, Tibullus shifts from geographic snapshots that could be easily translated onto triumphal placards to vignettes more suggestive of subjective human experiences, in effect from viewing geographic features as boundaries to view them as points of connection. Tibullus delineates his world primarily through mountains and rivers, with rivers in particular taking on a place of prominence: Oceanus, the Arar, the Rhone, the Garonne, the Loire, and the Cydnus all feature, and finally the Nile, which dominates the next portion of the poem. The first four lines of the geography take a view from

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76 Leach 1980: 90.
77 Though the perfect tense of the verb seems a bit deceptive in that case, since none of Tibullus’ previous poems have spent more than a couple of passing lines praising Messalla’s military victories; so Lee-Stecum 1998: 211. Cf. Vergil’s representation of his role in Augustus’ glory, G. 3.1-48.
78 And indeed, for all who could not attend Messalla’s triumph first hand, this poem, and other triumphal poems, offer an access and commemoration that must have served an important role in preserving and replicating the glory of the event; see Pandey 2018: 185ff.
80 This rhetorical move echoes Propertius’ use of subjunctives to discuss Augustus’ triumph in 2.1.
81 It is true that Messalla probably did campaign in the East as well (certainly 1.3 seems to imply so, see also note 75 above); it is not, however, clear that he spent time in Egypt. Schrijvers 2009, looking also at the Panegyricus, an anonymously authored panegyric poem dedicated to Messalla, argues that both the Panegyricus and Tib. 1.7 reflect and pay homage to Messalla’s interest in geography.
82 On the prominence of rivers in Roman geography, see Jones 2005, Murphy 2004: 138-148. As Nicholas Purcell has shown, rivers functioned both to divide and to connect: “such a great number of subdivisions evokes a
above that directs a conqueror’s gaze towards the spaces of Gaul. These initial lines of the geographic section operate primarily from a bird’s-eye-view, taking in the vast boundaries of the empire as if from above. The bodies of water listed, together with mountain ranges in lines 9-15, offer rough boundaries for Aquitania, as Piet Schrijvers has observed: the Pyrenees and the Santonian Ocean define the south-western boundaries of Aquitania, while the Rhone and the Garonne offer northern and southern edges. The rivers are imagined as entire entities, described with single adjectives (“swift,” “great,” “blue”). While the geographic features are associated with nearby tribes (the Tarabella, the Santoricini, and the Carnutes), there is little sense of the experience of living near these particular rivers or mountains. This point-of-view, the gaze from above, has been particularly associated with imperialism: “To the imagination of the ancients, surveying a place from on high is logically prior to owning or conquering it.” The list of geographic features presents them as if a catalogue of possessions, and indeed, it is easy to imagine this list of features being translated into—or perhaps, more accurately, from—the images of rivers featured in Messalla’s triumphal parade.

But with the first rhetorical question—“Or shall I sing you, Cydnus” (An te, Cydne, canam, 13)—Tibullus shifts into a geographic mode that traces an itinerary instead of boundaries, drawing out the unique aspects of local identity, and universally shared aspects of life across the Mediterranean. Indeed, even the jump from the Loire River to the Cydnus suggests a different way of thinking about rivers and what they do. The two rivers, after all, are not connected and far from collectively marking the boundaries of a coherent, singular territory, they are on nearly opposite ends of the orbis terrarum. Rather the transition is metonymic, arising from the fact that the Cydnus is another river, and broadly from the global similarities and interconnectedness of rivers. The repetition of caerulus underscores this connection between the Loire and Cydnus, the reasonableness of substituting one for the other as poetic subject. But the description of the Cydnus differs markedly from that of any of the previous rivers: in the full couplet describing the river, Tibullus imagines the quality of the Cydnus’ movement in evocative terms—it “creeps with silent waves” (tacitis…undis…serpis)—and its trajectory through “the shallows” (per vada). These descriptions reflect the experience traveling on the river, of the close-up view of its gentle undulations, rather than the view from above. In contrast to the previous descriptions of rivers, this one, and the following descriptions, would be rather difficult to encapsulate in a single image in a triumph. Instead, Tibullus highlights motion and a sensory experience of the geography.

The ensuing four geographic descriptions likewise offer not so much a bird’s-eye still-photo from above as a close-up, dynamic vision of the experiences of living in and around these geographies. Even when Tibullus literally imagines the perspective of a bird—the “white dove”

fragmented world composed of abutting lands bounded by rivers, so that the totality of the land is envisaged as tessellation, and every river joins two territories. But the really long river, as it flowed through inevitably differentiated spaces, joined up many regions and helped imagine their contiguities and overall sequence” (2012: 376).

83 On the associations between views-from-above and conquest, see Murph 2004: 142.
84 2009: 160-61. The inclusion of Oceanus demonstrates the completeness of Roman conquest; they have reached to the ends of the inhabited world.
85 Murphy 2004: 132.
86 Rather like the snapshots in Propertius 2.1.27-36.
(alba...columba, 18)—it highlights human experience of living in bustling Palestinian cities (crebras intacta per urbes, 17) as well as their specific religious beliefs (Palaestino sancta columba Syro, 18). Similarly, the next couplet emphasizes both the technological accomplishments of the Tyrians, and also suggests the feelings of fear and possibility the vast sea inspires.\(^87\) Moreover, the ordering of these geographic areas—the Cydnus, Mount Taurus, Palestine, Tyre, and the Nile—do not offer the encompassing boundaries that the Gallic rivers and mountains did, but rather themselves suggest an itinerary, moving east and south along the Mediterranean. This geographic passage thus does not merely function as a clever transition or a crescendo leading to the introduction of the Nile and Osiris, but rather performs a competing way of imagining and engaging with and representing the wider world now under Roman control.\(^88\) The western geography, with its triumphal-style snapshots, views Gaul as if from above, emphasizing the subordination the conquered territories. The powerlessness of the Gallic peoples and geographies offer one possible locus for elegiac experience. With the shift to the eastern provinces, however, Tibullus demonstrates the power of his peaceful, poetic arts, by redirecting the poem towards peoples, subjects, and modes of viewing more amenable to his own priorities. While his representations of the eastern geographies still incorporate them into hierarchy with Rome, his own assumption of poetic control over this triumphal celebration, along with the peaceful and humanizing representations of foreign peoples, suggest a more dialogic and nuanced relationship within this hierarchy.

It is this second mode of viewing the world that informs Tibullus’ ensuing extended digression on the Nile and Osiris, and which allows for more overt intrusions of Tibullus’ elegiac interests within this apparently unelegiac poem. The description of Egypt and Osiris, extending a full twenty-eight lines, consumes nearly half of this poem, a poem ostensibly about Messalla’s triumph over Aquitania. Unpacking Egypt’s prominence and the peculiarity of making Osiris a double for the Roman Messalla, has been one of the primary focuses of scholarly attention on this poem.\(^89\) I will consequently keep my remarks on his intrusion somewhat briefer, emphasizing first, how the digression broadly centers subjects and activities compatible with Tibullus’ elegiac interests, and secondly, how the overdetermined nature of the figure of Osiris once again blurs the distinctions between lover and soldier, war and peace, and thereby allows elegiac priorities to coexist with and underlie more mainstream ones.

The Egyptian digression emphasizes the ability of figures and spaces to be multiple things simultaneously through the association of the Nile, Osiris, and Bacchus. The sense of fluid connections continues from the previous section, as the shift from Tyre to Egypt occurs through another waterway, the Nile River. In a couplet that seems initially to simply continue the geographic vignettes of the previous lines, Tibullus contemplates the Nile River’s fertility (21-2).

\(^{87}\) The adjective vastum suggests a certain awe at the sheer inhuman scale of the sea, and while the phrase ratem ventis credere is idiomatic for sailing, it also emphasizes the trust required to travel by sea, the very real possibility of loss (cf. Prop. 3.7).

\(^{88}\) Gaisser similarly observes this shift between Tibullus’ treatment of east and west, calling it a “a shift in mood from the objective to the lyric, from war to peace, from the real to the marvelous,” but still views it as a “prelude” to the discussion of Egypt and Osiris (1971: 221).

\(^{89}\) The role of the Osiris hymn has regularly been pointed to as the pivotal interpretive question in this poem, ever since Wilamowitz called it "eine anorganische Einlage" (1924: 301). See especially Gaisser 1971, Ball 1975, Bright 1975, Berrino 2008.
Father Nile (*Nile pater*, 23) then provides the impetus for the introduction of Osiris: “You the youth sing and worship as their own Osiris” (*Te canit atque suum pubes miratur Osirim*, 27). With the predicate accusative *Osirim*, Tibullus collapses the distinction between river and god. The structure, with *te* and *Osirim* encompassing the line, emphasizes the unity of the river-god, even as the surprise of *Osirim* at the end of the line might subtly disrupt that unity. The ensuing lines relate Osiris’ role as inventor of agriculture (29-32) and viticulture (33-6), and the power of wine in turn to teach humans to dance. The discussion of wine glides directly into an invocation of Bacchus, which then circles back to Osiris:

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Bacchus et agricolae magno confecta labore
   Pectora tristitiae dissoluenda dedit.
Bacchus et adlictis requiem mortalibus adfert,
   Crura licet dura conpede pulsa sonent.
Non tibi sunt tristes curae nec luctus, Osiris…
   39-43
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And Bacchus caused the heart of the farmer, worn out with hard labor, to be released from sadness, and Bacchus brings rest to afflicted mortals, even if their legs clank with harsh chains. Not for you are sad cares and griefs, Osiris…

The relationship between Osiris and Bacchus is less explicit than the assimilation of the Nile to Osiris, as Bacchus appears as an independent subject, rather than a predicate. Nevertheless, the overlap in attributes between Osiris and Bacchus, the historical identification of Bacchus/Dionysus with Osiris, and the unmarked transition back to Osiris make it clear that Bacchus is not a distinct character here, but “another manifestation of Osiris.”

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  90 The invocation of Osiris through a Greco-Roman deity transforms the foreign god into one more familiar to Roman audiences. The prompt return back to the Egyptian form within a few lines further suggests certain, fundamental compatibilities between these cultures, in spite of their vast differences. 91 Although the cultural syncretism on display in this passage is fairly standard within Roman culture, nevertheless the engagement with three distinctive faces of Osiris is striking, and suggests Osiris’ power to translate across different contexts and cultures. Moreover, the multiplicity and quick, smooth transitions between the various forms of the god may also draw attention to Tibullus’ own mobility and prowess, his ability to bind together disparate geographies, cultures, and interests. And indeed, to do so in ways that end up centering his own elegiac identities. This geographic trajectory has, after all, moved the poem from war and triumph to agriculture, wine, and song.
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In addition to Tibullus’ explicit association of Osiris with the Nile and Bacchus, Osiris also functions in fairly clear ways as a double for Messalla, and in somewhat more subtle ways also recalls elegiac figures. Osiris, like Messalla, is imagined at the center of worshipful processions of youth (*Te canet atque suum pubes miratur Osirim*, 27). Likewise, as Osiris is sung by the youth, so Messalla is celebrated in song by a farmer at the end of the poem (*Te canit agricola*, 61). The final description of Osiris implicitly depicts him as part of a *pompa* of his

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91 Differences marked, for instance, by the description of the Egyptians as *barbara* (28).
own, in parallel to both Messalla’s previous triumphal parade and imminent birthday procession.\footnote{On the parallel between Messalla’s parades and Osiris’, see Konstan 1978: 181.} This association between Messalla and Osiris, and their parades, is further underlined by the invitation to Osiris to join Messalla’s birthday celebration (49). Finally, the poem ends with images of Messalla’s peaceful accomplishments, especially the Via Latina (57-62). Although Messalla’s construction of a road differs in scale and kind from Osiris’ invention of agriculture, nevertheless, it emphasizes Messalla’s own multiplicity, as soldier and builder, and his ability to not just violently conquer, but draw connections between expanses of empire. The implicit comparison between Osiris and Messalla has variously been read as a compliment to Messalla’s learnedness and peaceful arts and as a possible dig at Augustus.\footnote{Ball 1981, Lambert 2003, Berrino 2008.} Both of these are plausible, but I would argue the doubleness of Messalla and Osiris also relate to Tibullus’ wider interest in the multiplicity of human experience.

And indeed, as Lowell Bowditch has argued, Osiris also evokes elegiac figures and spheres.\footnote{Bowditch 2011: 97-101.} As with the description of Messalla’s triumph earlier in the poem, in another context this description of Osiris might not read as engaging at all with elegiac discourses; but, within the context of Tibullus’ corpus, it has the potential to create the impression of overlap with elegy in several ways. The focus on Osiris as the inventor of agriculture, and on the fertility of Egypt, may call to mind Tibullus’ many dreams of an agrarian retreat from his urban elegiac existence. And indeed, the language of farming seems particularly sexually charged, e.g., “He first entrusted his seed to the virgin earth” \textit{(Primus inexpertae conmisit semina terrae, 31)}, “He first taught people to wed the tender vine to stakes” \textit{(Hic docuit teneram palis adiungere vitem, 33)}.\footnote{See Bowditch 2011 for a more extensive discussion of the sexually charged language of this passage (97).} The alignment of these vocabularies, of sexual and agrarian production, places erotics into a (re)productive context, as a cultural good when directed towards acts of creation.\footnote{This is a tenuous position, however, given that the elegiac lovers are defined by their desire for the erotic outside of the familial, procreative context (James 2003: 173-83). Agriculture, specifically, however, offers Tibullus something of a way around the problem: agricultural production is perfectly compatible with his elegiac world, just not human reproduction.}

Moreover, as the poet continues to Osiris’ more Bacchic arts, further areas of overlap between the lover and Osiris emerge. He is the creator of wine which teaches people how to sing \textit{(Ille liquor docuit voces inflectere cantu, 37, cf. 1.2.1-2)}; choruses, songs, and light love are his concerns \textit{(Sed chorus et cantus et levis aptus amor, 44, cf. Hic choreae cantusque vigent, 1.3.59)}, and he is crowned with flowers \textit{(Sed varii flores et frons redimita corymbis, 45, cf. 1.2.14, 1.3.66)}. Osiris’ interests line up remarkably well with those of Tibullus’ elegiac speaker: wine, love, farming, songs. It is worth noting that this alignment is not perfect; notably, Osiris is not concerned with “sad cares and griefs” \textit{(tristes curae nec luctus, 43)}, which are certainly typical elegiac fare, and his saffron tunic is more exotic and feminized than even the elegiac lover’s typical wear (46). But these differences tend to underscore the impression of Osiris as a successful lover, as the divine embodiment of Tibullus’ fantasies about an elegiac life without the persecution, external pressures, and grief. Rather like Tibullus’ dream of an agricultural life...
with Delia in 1.5, Osiris appears a blissfully successful poet-farmer, concerned with love, but not defined by it precisely because of his success.\textsuperscript{98}

We need not decide between Osiris’ affinity with Messalla and with Tibullus; rather, the multiplicity of Osiris seems to be the point. Indeed, just as Osiris can be understood both in the Nile River in Egypt and in the Roman deity Bacchus (38-42), so too he can be seen in two such disparate figures as Messalla and Tibullus. He acts almost as a river connecting the two men. They may find similarity and common ground through the figure of Osiris, who reflects Messalla’s preeminence and Tibullus’ agricultural and artistic aspirations. And indeed, in the structural context of the poem, Osiris leads Tibullus precisely back to Messalla, but Messalla in a peaceful context, as the description of Osiris’ cultic celebrations leads into Tibullus’ invitation to Osiris to join Messalla’s birthday procession: “Come to this place and celebrate his genius with games and choruses” \textit{(Huc ades et Genium ludis Geniumque choreis/ Concelebra, 49-50)}.\textsuperscript{99} The geographic digression has ultimately brought Tibullus back to a procession in the streets of Rome, but one transformed into a markedly more elegiac friendly celebration centered on wine and reproduction (50, 55-6).

The evolution of the poem towards contexts that make space for elegiac or para-elegiac figures, even if they do not explicitly appear, reaches its culmination in the penultimate couplet. In a striking parallel to Propertius 2.1, this poem ends with the image of a road back out of Rome. Now celebrating Messalla as a master of the arts of peacetime rather than as a militant conqueror, Tibullus imagines that “a farmer will sing about you, when he has come from the great city late, and has lifted his foot without stumbling” \textit{(Te canet agricola, a magna cum venerit urbe/Serus inoffensum rettuleritque pedem, 61-2)}. This figure of the \textit{agricola} encapsulates many of the interpretive possibilities and challenges of the poem as a whole. There is nothing explicitly elegiac about him, nothing to clearly suggest that he should be read as anything other than a simple farmer. But the broader context, both of the poem and the Tibullan corpus, allows for the possibility that this figure might have elegiac overtones. First, Tibullus’ agrarian fantasies throughout his elegiac poetry, and the erotically tinged description of farming during the Osiris hymn in this poem, create a loose association between farming and elegy.\textsuperscript{100} While farming does not imply elegiac values, it is compatible with them, and seems often to co-exist with them. Second, the farmer’s role in singing Messalla’s praise places him in a rather clearer alignment with Tibullus, who is also singing Messalla’s praise, and even in this moment through the figure of the farmer. My point in drawing out these, admittedly subtle, resonances, is not to suggest that this farmer must be read as a possible cipher for elegy and elegiac values, but rather to suggest that through the overdetermined figures and emphasis on vast interconnections throughout this poem, Tibullus has opened the door to such a reading. If in 1.3, Tibullus taught readers how to find the elegiac in epic and mainstream contexts, 1.7 offers an opportunity for readers to do precisely that. Furthermore, this figure apparently makes use of the resources provided by the “great city,” but then retreats to the countryside, making use of Messalla’s road.

\textsuperscript{98} E.g., 1.5.19-32.
\textsuperscript{99} 20-30.
\textsuperscript{100} This \textit{agricola} might also recall figures from Vergil’s \textit{Eclogues}, particularly Tityrus who goes to Rome, thereby acquiring the ability to return to the countryside, and returns singing the praises of the young man who enabled his return.
to do so. In doing so, he offers a model of simultaneous dependence and separation that works remarkably well for Tibullus’ elegiac self-positioning.

Tibullus’ wide-ranging poetic journey in 1.7 ultimately celebrates multiplicity. It offers a roadmap for lovers on how to assimilate while maintaining one’s core identity, on how to create space in the interstices of mainstream culture. In the opening of the poem, and in particular in its representation of Messalla’s triumph and triumphal geography, Tibullus represents the dangers and violence of the world he lives in, but through liquid connections and overdetermined figures, he shows how it is possible to adapt, find common ground, and even disappear from plain view. Like Propertius, he exerts his poetic powers to redirect and transform the Roman triumph into a celebration more concordant with his own priorities. Unlike Propertius, however, Tibullus does not feel free to reject military poetics outright, or to speak publicly from an openly elegiac perspective, but rather performs acquiescence even as he manipulates contexts to create the possibility of elegiac readings at the margins of this Roman imperial world. Propertius 2.1 centers Propertius’ power in his ability to reach and ventriloquize readers, much as Augustus does in his triumph, a power substantially dependent upon individual fame. In contrast to Propertius’ relatively overt presentation of himself, Tibullus suggests that his power rests precisely in his ability to avoid detection, to influence the representations of triumph, imperial conquest, and Rome without ever seeming to.

Ovidian Postscript

Where Tibullus assimilates and builds elegiac compatible settings around the demands of triumphal celebration, Ovid instead bends the triumph entirely to elegiac demands. The Amores contains no literal triumphs, but instead prominently stages allegorical triumphs of love, in which either Love triumphs over Ovid, or Ovid himself triumphs. Although the triumph of love motif also responds to and engages with the triumphal discourses of the Augustan era, these allegorical triumphs of love work in rather different ways than the literal triumphs of Propertius and Tibullus. The questions raised by Propertius 2.1 and Tibullus 1.7, about how elegiac lovers can, and should, respond to the demands of a Roman imperial system and about how they relate to the power centers of mainstream society, are substantially cordoned off by the allegorical triumph. While Propertius and Tibullus also interrogate the representation of triumph—as itself a form of authorship, and one susceptible to reader, and poetic, intervention—this question of representation is still rooted in their social experience. Ovid, by translating the triumph into a purely elegiac context, centers and dramatizes processes of representation in the triumph, but removes his elegiac lover from more direct contact with non-elegiac demands and perspectives.

Part of the explanation can likely be traced to Ovid’s later date. Although perhaps only ten years younger than his elegiac predecessors, these ten years difference were likely formative. Born in 43BCE, Ovid never knew a time when Rome was not ruled by Augustus. The dispersed

101 Especially 1.2 and 2.12.  
102 Although the final couplet of 1.2 does make a marked gesture to the political power structures of the real world: adspice cognati felicia Caesaris arma./ qua victi, victos protegit ille manu (51-2). Even this invocation of Augustus, however, seems as much about calling him into elegy as relating elegy to a non-elegiac world. That is to say, by defining Augustus in terms of his familial relationship to Amor, Ovid reads him in largely elegiac terms.
elite networks visible in the various addressees of Propertius and Tibullus’ first books are largely absent from Ovid’s *Amores*. Moreover, in the last two decades of the first century BCE the triumph metamorphosed from the pinnacle of elite competition and success to a celebration of imperial power. Cornelius Balbus was the last general not associated with the imperial family to celebrate a triumph in 19 BCE.\(^{103}\) The kind of triumphal poem that Tibullus wrote, honoring the ascendency of a non- imperial figure, was impossible during most of the years in which Ovid wrote the *Amores*. The social function of the triumph had changed in the intervening years between early and late elegy, and it is not entirely surprising that elegiac responses to the triumph would in turn change.\(^{104}\)

But even with such cultural and political changes, Ovid might still have depicted imperial triumphs, as Propertius does in 2.1 and 3.4, and as Ovid does elsewhere. Indeed, even elsewhere in his love poetry, in the *Ars Amatoria*, he includes a passage detailing how lovers can use the context of triumphal parades to seduce women (1.213-28). In this passage, Ovid emphasizes the power of audiences to rewrite the meaning of triumphal imagery, as he instructs lovers to make up explanations for images, even if they do not know the truth (223-28).\(^{105}\) This passage takes inspiration from Prop. 3.4, in which the speaker imagines himself observing an Augustan triumph with his girlfriend in his lap, reading the placards to her (15-6). Propertius’ place on the sidelines both distinguishes him from the military lifestyle and poetics implied by Augustus’ triumph, but also allows him to act as an authoritative translator of Augustus’ glory.\(^{106}\) Ovid’s passage, on the contrary, represents a more competitive relationship as he asserts the ability of lovers to rewrite and reinterpret Augustan iconography from their position as observers.\(^{107}\) So why does no such triumphal description occur in the *Amores*?

Although it is more tenuous to pose explanations for absences than presences, I would suggest that the omission of a literal triumph in the *Amores* reflects a different set of assumptions than those that undergird Propertius’ and Tibullus’ elegiac works. This distinction was also apparent in the ways that these three poets approached the paraclausithyron and propempticon. In their paraclausithyra, Propertius and Tibullus wrestle with the question of how, and whether, to communicate their identity to non-elegiac figures around them. Ovid, in contrast, uses the figure of the *iantor* to highlight the artificiality of that elegiac identity and the ease with which he melts back into elite society. Similarly, Propertius and Tibullus’ propemptica explore the limits of elegiac identity and the consequences of assimilation, while Ovid’s belated propempticon instead turns inward and focuses on the possibilities and limits of generic composition, of writing within a tradition already so well-traversed. Finally, as I’ve argued in this chapter, Propertius uses a depiction of Augustus’ triple triumph in 2.1 to comment on Augustus’ role as author and to articulate an empowered and public position for himself as poet. Tibullus, on the contrary, in celebrating Messalla’s victories offers a vision of how elegiac lovers can hide in plain sight, apparently assimilating to mainstream culture while in fact carving out space for elegiac values and concerns. Ovid’s transformation of the literal triumph, which features prominently in his predecessors, into a purely allegorical one yet again privileges intra-generic and aesthetic

\(^{103}\) See note 47 in my introduction for a more detailed discussion of the problems on dating Ovid’s early works.

\(^{104}\) For a discussion of the representational strategies of 1.2, see Pandey 2018: 210-12.


\(^{106}\) 3.4, unlike 2.1, describes a triumph that has not actually happened yet.

\(^{107}\) Rather like Propertius’ assertion of his ability to rewrite Augustus’ career and triumph in 2.1.
questions—about his relationship to his elegiac predecessors, about the experience of writing belatedly, about the nature of representation—rather than the more externally oriented questions about his place in a non-elegiac society. In his obsessive focus on elegy as a genre and his relationship to his elegiac predecessors, Ovid actually distinguishes himself from Propertius and Tibullus.108

The divergent journeys Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid take by way of the triumph are illustrative the distinctive elegiac worlds each of the poets has built, and the different challenges they experience in navigating the social dynamics of those worlds. The stakes and possibilities available to each elegiac speaker appear vastly different, from Propertius’ anxiety over the destabilizing impact of subjectivity to Tibullus’ efforts to evade the physical threats of a non-elegiac mainstream culture. The relative consistency of the tropes and settings of elegy highlight these differences and the ability of the same scene and experiences to take on dramatically different meanings. Although they conceptualize their relationship to the worlds outside of elegy in distinctive ways, together they create a genre that dramatizes the search for one’s place and the challenges of living with those who do not share your identity—and with those who do.

108 I discussed in my introduction the perception that elegy is hermetically sealed-off (see pages 9-10), that it is a world set apart. Although this description does not fully account for Propertius and Tibullus’ social poetics, it more accurately describes the internal orientation of the Amores.
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