



Augustan Lovers

Love in Arcadia

Lecture aims

- We've defined elegy as a genre with certain limitations depending on how it deals with
 - Love (as a 'choice of career')
 - Writing poetry ('anything but epic')
 - Cast
 - Amator, puella, friends, patrons, bawds, slaves
 - division of characters into lovers and non-lovers
 - Textual interaction (the 'in-crowd')
- If this is true, we should see love as a topic elicit a different response in other writings of the period

Contemporary poetry

Slightly earlier:

- Catullus: *Epigrams*

Contemporary:

- Vergil: *Eclogues (35 BC), Georgics, the Aeneid*
- Horace: *Satires, Epodes, Odes (23BC), Letters (incl. Ars Poetica)*

Slightly later:

- Ovid: *The Medea, The Metamorphoses...*

Elegy timeline

- Gallus: c. 35 BC
- Prop. 1: 28 BC
- Prop. 2: 26 BC
- Prop. 3: 24 BC
- Prop. 4: 16 BC
- Tib. 1: 27 BC
- Tib. 2: 19 BC
- Ov. *Am.* 1-3: Likely after 16 BC

Vergil's *Eclogues*

- Vergil's *Eclogues* are pastoral poetry, a genre honed by Vergil but building on Hellenistic poets such as Theocritus
 - Written throughout in hexameter
- The setting is 'Arcadia' in reference to Theocritus, but this country side area is also closely linked to Rome.
 - *Ecl.* 4 and 6 explicitly political, but *Ecl.* 1 too makes known the influence of politics on rural life; describes Rome as within distance
- Published c. 35 BC
- There are several love stories in the *Eclogues*, but they are pursued alongside other duties of the characters, and also the subject of singing contests (e.g. *Ecl.* 8)
 - The literary quality of descriptions of love therefore clearer
- The landscape and its characters stand for rural simplicity – but also for *otium* and leisure
- Time limits – these poems are represented as short breaks from work

Vergil's *Eclogues*

1. Tityrus and Meliboeus: M. driven from his home
2. 'The shepherd Corydon burned for fair Alexis, his master's darling, and found no hope: only among the thick shady-topped beeches he would continually come, and there alone utter in idle passion these artless words to the hills and woods.' (Verg. *Ec.* 2.1-5)
3. Shepherd discussion about love
4. Dedicated to Ausinius Pollio – new golden age dawning
5. Songs of Daphnis
6. Silenus, god of the countryside
7. Shepherd song contest
8. On a witch, song contest, in the style of magic incantation (cf. Ov. *Am.* 1.6)
9. Moeris headed to the city
10. Gallus the poet

Elegy and *Eclogues*

- *Ecl.* 10 one of our main sources for reconstructing Gallus' poetry: that it contained many of the typical features of elegy we have outlined
- *Ecl.* 10 is also different from elegy:
 - Cast: A pastoral narrator, a river goddess, dryads, Apollo, the shepherd Menalcas, 'Arcadians'
 - Setting: rural landscape: laurels, tamarisks, pines, crags, sheep
 - Elegy: What is Tibullus' rural landscape like? What are typical elegiac settings?

Elegiac country scenes

Let him whom the soil of Tusculum or white Alba's ancient hearth detains not be silent about your mighty Way, since, heaped by your wealth, hard gravel's laid here, and here flint slabs are joined together deftly. Let the farmer sing you, come late from the great City, returning home safely without stumbling. (Tib. 1.7)

Cornutus, my girl's in the country, at a villa: ah, he's made of iron who can stay in the city. Venus herself has gone now to open fields, and Love's learning the farmer's rustic words. Oh if I could only gaze at my girl, how firmly I'd turn the rich soil there with my strong hoe, and follow the curving blade as a ploughman, while the bullocks carved clod for the sowing! (Tib. 2.3)

- Tibullus has several country side scenes strongly reminiscent of Vergil's *Arcadia*
 - E.g. cf. nearness of the city in Tib. 1.7
- But in contrast to the narrators of Vergil's *Eclogues* – the Tibullan narrator is rarely, if ever, there himself
- Tibullan elegy adopts, in effect, a wholly urban perspective where *otium* is placed in the country and *negotium* (whether of love or otherwise) in the city

Comparison: Prop. 2.19

Even though you're leaving Rome against my wishes, **Cynthia, I'm glad you'll be in rural isolation**. Clean fields will harbour no youthful seducer to tempt your virtue with sweet words. There will be no brawling under your window, no shouting of your name to spoil your sleep. You'll be alone with nothing to see but lonely hills, cattle, and small farms, Cythia. No public shows there to seduce you, or temples that so often excuse your sins. Nothing to watch but oxen ploughing and vines being shorn by skilled sickles. Once in a while at some rough shrine you'll offer incense when a kid is killed at the altar; and afterwards bare-legged you'll copy country dances provided no strange men are present. **Myself, I'll take up hunting**. I'm keen now to perform Diana's rites and break my vows to Venus. **I'll learn to net wild beasts, to dedicate their horns on pinetrees and control the eager hounds**. Not that I'd dare to take on huge lions, or get to hasty grips with wild boar. Daring, for me, would be to net innocuous hares or fix birds with extending lime-rod, where with his sacred woods Clitumnus overlays the lovely stream and washes cattle white. Whenever you are tempted, life of mine, remember that a few Morning-Stars will lead me to you. **But neither lonely woods nor wandering streams that pour down moss-grown screes can stop me while I'm here from fearing that your fame will be on every tongue**; to hurt the absent is a human weakness.

Prop. 2.19 and Prop. 1.1

- To Cynthia, the country side should be void of any risk to her loyalty
 - Bear in mind the reader's knowledge of Vergil's *Eclogues* here: what are the effects?
- To Propertius' poet lover, the country side is a setting for him to act out the example of Milanion pursuing Atalante (cf. Faidra and Hippolytus)
- To Propertius, the countryside represents absence of elegiac life
 - No risk to the *puella*
 - Acceptance of the role of *exclusus amator* for the lover – but with no rival and with (some) hope
 - Both *puella* and *amator* are different than the other country folk – they are not part of the countryside themselves
- This difference is dramatised in Verg. *Ecl.* 10:

The *Eclogues* on Gallus

- He suffers shrewd pangs of love as the narrator says ‘while, hard by, the flat-nosed she-goat browse the tender brush’
 - What does the change of setting (‘outstretched beneath a lonely rock’) mean for our appreciation of Gallus’ actions?
 - What does the setting of the telling of his story mean?
- **‘We sing not to deaf ears’ – but what of Gallus in this poem?**
- ‘such as Lycoris may fitly read’? Or a comment on the ostensive addressee and effectiveness of elegy as werbende Dichtung?
- Apollo is Gallus’ immediate audience here: a hint that elegy is about more than getting the girl?

Gallus and Apollo

- ‘All with one accord exclaim: ‘From whence this love of thine?’ Apollo came; ‘Gallus, art thou mad?’ he cried, ‘thy bosom’s care another love is following.’
- Little understanding for Gallus, but why?
 - Because he doesn’t know when to give up pursuing a lost cause?
 - Because he is in the wrong setting, and not addressing the *puella*?
 - Because elegiac love itself is an impossible project? Cf. Pan’s comments ‘his heart no more with tears is sated than with streams the grass’ and contrast ‘Here are cool springs, soft mead and grove, Lycoris; here might our lives with time have worn away’ from a more productive genre?
 - Classic *locus amoenus* – this is what a Roman SHOULD appreciate

Ecl. 10

- Gallus as an escapee from elegy?
- Entertains the notion of joining the pastoral life: 'And would that I, of your own fellowship, or dresser of the ripening grape had been, or guardian of the flock! [...] reclining my lover would have lain with me.'
 - Cf. Tibullan daydreams: '*Enough is a small crop, enough is sleeping in a bed and lightening the limbs on the familiar couch. How pleasant lying there at night to listen to wild winds and contain a mistress in tender embrace.*' (Tib. 1.1.46-50)
- Contrast: 'But me mad love of the stern war-god holds armed amid weapons and opposing foes'?
- How does this relate to Gallus' current situation?
 - The metaphor of *militia amoris*
- What does it (in turn) say about elegy in general

A Propertian Response?

Yes, this lonely place will hush up my complaining; the grove is Zephyrus' empty property. Here one can safely voice unspoken sorrows, if solitary rocks can keep a secret. To what shall I first trace, my Cynthia, your disdain? Where, Cynthia, do I begin to weep? I who was lately numbered among the lucky lovers must now incur a black mark in your love. Where is my guilt? What slander changes you toward me? That I've taken a new girl to make you jealous? So come you back to me, light as you are: no other woman's pretty feet have crossed my threshold. This suffering of mine may owe you many a hurt, yet I could never feel such savage anger as justified your being mad at me and made your bright eyes dull with flooding tears. [...] If trees can know love, they shall be witnesses – beech and pine that's friend to Arcadia's god. Ah, and in their tender shade how often my words echo and written on their bark is Cynthia. [...] (Prop. 1.18)

Metapoetics in the woods

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- Clear links to Verg. *Ecl.* 10
 - Rocks, 'Arcadia's god', carving her name on the tree trunk
 - Cf. also 'Gallan/Vergilian' imagery in Prop. 1.8.7f corresponding to *Ecl.* 10.49
 - 'Slander' – i.e. a story told by someone else, perhaps in a poem?
- Metapoetics
 - 'a new girl': a new genre and a new scene, incompatible with earlier Propertian elegy?
 - 'pretty feet': twofold meaning, also referring to verse feet and metre
 - Prop. less fond of such play than Ovid
 - 'Cynthia' within quotation marks alluding to the title of the monobiblos
 - Thus, a tribute to Propertius' Gallan inspiration: Propertian elegy stems from Gallus

Reading:

- Cairns, F. (1969) 'Propertius 1.18 and Callimachus, *Acontius and Cydippe*', *CR* 20, 131-134
- Keith, A. (2008) *Propertius: Poet of Love and Leisure*, 65-73
- Wyke, M. (1989) 'Mistress and Metaphor in Augustan Elegy', *Helios* 16, 25-47.