

AUGUSTAN LOVERS

Paraklausithyra

Lecture overview

- Typical features of the elegiac genre
 - ▣ Cf. slavery of love and militia amoris (lover's warfare)
- Outside the door: paraklausithyra and shut-out lovers
 - ▣ Can be seen as an aspect of the servitium amoris (slavery of love)
 - ▣ Tibullus and Propertius
 - ▣ Ovid's readings

Exclusus amator – the shut-out lover

- One of the most frequent stances of the lover/narrator throughout elegy
- Most literal take: the narrator/lover outside the door of the mistress
 - ▣ While she is just being hard-hearted (if we trust the narrator's account) or off somewhere fun
 - ▣ While she is with a rival
 - ▣ These poems often contain addresses to doors or slaves guarding the doors or able to provide access: *paraklausithyra*, Greek for 'by the closed door': Tib. 1.2; Ov. Am. 1.6

Tib. 1.2 Context

- Tib. 1.1 establishes that the narrator is in an elegiac relationship with Delia
 - ▣ He strongly rejects the traditional military career for his relationship
 - ▣ He describes that relationship in typical elegiac terms (e.g. like a slave, he is bound by the fetters of love)
 - ▣ He strongly prefers the simple life in the countryside
- Tib. 1.1 (and the whole of the first book) has been read as being clearly political and considered more 'earnest' and 'serious' than Propertius and certainly Ovid

Tib 1.2 Context

- Tib. 1.3 (as you know) finds the narrator on his way abroad on a military expedition, although ill and homesick for Delia
 - ▣ Cf. earlier lecture for a reading deconstructing the idyllic return scene outlined by the narrator
- There, he is shown as quite well connected and as having the support of Messalla
- Tib. 1.5 moves on to another love interest, the boy Marathus
- Why is context important? Propertius' *Monobiblos* shows that linear reading is a significant structuring device – but some effects may depend on the contrasts between the first read-through and the second, and third!

Tib. 1.2

For now a cruel sentinel stands watch upon my girl and her heavy door is shut and firmly barred. Oh door, stubborn as your master, may the rainstorm lash you and launched at Jove's command may flash of lightning blast you! Please, door – open just for me, moved by my complaining. But silence, as you swing on slowly turning hinge! [...] Look, when in the dark I wander through the city streets distraught ... and stops me meeting anyone who stabs you in the back or steals clothes for a living [...] In the freezing winter's night no frost can bite me' no rain can damp my though it falls in floods. No harm in present hardship, if my Delia turns the lock and calls me silently – with one click of her finger. [...]

Tib. 1.2

- Is the narrator enduring rainstorms and thunder too, for the sake of love?
- 'Venus helps the brave' – are we encouraged to find the narrator brave?
- Does he face the dangers of the streets at night, for the sake of love?
- Are we encouraged to think that Delia will be onboard or impressed with his scheme?

The However Bit: Tib. 1.2.1-7

Pour it neat, boy. Discipline fresh misery with drink letting sleep invade these tired defeated eyes, and when the Wine-God in his strength has hit me on the temple, see that no one wakes me while unhappy love's at rest. [...] Venus helps the brave. She favours the young man who reconnoitres a new threshold, and the girl who opens a door with home-made key. She teaches the withdrawal by stealth from the soft bed, the inaudible positioning of feet, the conference by nod in the presence of a husband, concealment of sweet words in signals pre-arranged. Her teaching's not for everyone but only those with courage [...]

- The reader comes to the paraklausithyron passage knowing the narrator is safe at home, being plied with drink by a slave
- A **new** threshold: stands in contrast with the notion of Delia as the only one – are there more possible girlfriends out there?
- The narrator's following instructions for deceiving a husband suggests to the reader that Delia is actually with a rival at the moment (hence the door is barred) so that while the narrator sees himself as the successful rival, the reader may also see him as the one being cheated on

A.P. 5.23 and 5.145

- *May you sleep so,
Conopion, as you make
me sleep by these cold
portals; may you sleep
even so, cruel one, as you
send him who loves you
to sleep. Not a shadow
of pity touched you. The
neighbours take pity on
me, but you not at all.
One day shall the grey
hairs come to remind you
of this. (Callimachus)*
- *The night is long, and it is
winter weather, and night
sets when the Pleiads are
half-way up the sky. I
pass and re-pass her
door, drenched by the
rain, smitten by desire,
the deceiver. It is not love
that Cypris smote me
with, but a tormenting
arrow red-hot from the
fire. (Asclepiades)*

Ovid's paraklausithyron: Ov. Am. 1.6

Porter! (1) – too bad you're chained by your hard shackle (1.1) – Open this tiresome door, undo the bar. I don't ask much (2) – a little gap to take me squeezing through sideways when it's just ajar (3). Long love has shrunk me for this sort of business, slimmed me and shaped my body the right way (3). Love shows one how to slip past watching sentries and guides one's footsteps not to trip or stray (4). Yet once I feared the night and empty phantoms, amazed when people in the dark would go: Cupid laughed in my ear with his sweet mother, and whispered 'Ovid, you'll be brave, too.' And in a trice, love came (5). [...] It's you I fear, so stubborn, you I flatter; you wield the bolt to ruin me at will. Look (and draw back the ruthless bars to see it (2.1), look how the door my flowing tears bedew. You know that once when you stood stripped for flogging, I begged your mistress, I spoke up for you. So does that favour then that did you service – so much for gratitude! – serve me no more? (2) Give me my due: you've got the chance to give it. The night is slipping by; unbolt the door. (8)

Ov. Am. 1.6

1. Addresses the porter, not the door – less of a soliloquy, and lessened focus on the *puella*, thus leading to decreased pathos
 1. Shackles – an allusion to the slavery of love of the narrator: by making that concrete, a connection is established between the door slave and the narrator?
2. What do you think of the narrator's wheedling with the door slave?
 1. Or of him trying to trick the slave to let him in?
4. Note the allusion to Tibullus 1.2 in the description of love providing guidance and the narrator's way through the streets

Ov. *Am.* 1.6: Poetic comedy

3. By taking the metaphor of the slavery of love literally (indeed couching it in terms of the body) Ovid not only heightens it to the point of ridiculousness, but also hints at the notion of slavery of love being ridiculous in and by itself.
5. Cupid, then love – but no mistress: an allusion to Ov. *Am.* 1.1 where we saw Ovid highlighting the artificiality of his elegy – and in all likelihood hinting at the artificiality of his predecessors' elegiac mistresses.

Ov. *Am.* 1.6: Poetic comedy 2

- The refrain 'the night is slipping by, unbolt the door' recurs four times
- It may be seen as pulling the narrator's speech down since it gives the impression he's just rattling this off
- But it is a highly stylised literary device:
 - ▣ Used in Verg. *Ecl.* 8, a poem also dealing with unrequited love, and the composition of love poetry – hence our sensitivity for poetological games in Ovid should be heightened too
 - ▣ Similar devices used in prayer, hymn, and magical incantations (cf. Lindsay 1982)

Verg. Ecl. 8

ALPHESIBOEUS

[64] “Bring out water, and wind soft wool round this altar; and burn rich herbs and male frankincense, that I may try with magic rites to turn to fire my lover’s coldness of mood. Naught is lacking here save songs.

Bring Daphnis home from town, bring him, my songs!

[69] Songs can even draw the moon down from heaven; by songs Circe transformed the comrades of Ulysses; with song the cold snake in the meadows is burst asunder.

Bring Daphnis home from town, bring him, my songs!

[73] Three threads here I first tie round you, marked with three different hues, and three times round this altar I draw your image. In an uneven number heaven delights. Weave, Amaryllis, three hues in three knots; weave them, Amaryllis, I beg, and say, ‘Chains of love I weave!’

Bring Daphnis home from town, bring him, my songs!

Ov. Am. 3.4: The comedy of inconsistency

Guarding a pretty girl, you brute, gets you nowhere. A girl's good morals are the guard you need. A girl who doesn't since she mustn't, does it. A girl who is chaste unenforced is chaste indeed. The body you may guard, the mind is guilty; no means of guarding a girl's thoughts from sin. Nor can you guard the body, all doors bolted; bolt as you will, a lover lurks within. [...]
We fight for what's illicit, want what's vetoed, so for forbidden drink a sick man drools.

Collapsing the system

- *Am.* 3.4: The narrator/love teacher tells a *vir* not to guard his wife/mistress as then it is no fun for his rivals
- On the one hand, we can take the poem seriously as being about the faithlessness of women in general.
- On the other, it represents a collapse of the elegiac relationship as an ideal – here, it is not about the eternal bond between two lovers but only that the thrill is in the chase...
- ...or, for the real-life author and reader, in turning the *topos* of the *paraklausithyron* and the *exclusus amator* round and round again