

Tib.1.1 notes

Commentaries: None online that I am aware of. The best one is Maltby, R. 2002. *Tibullus: Elegies. Text, Introduction and Commentary*. ARCA Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs 41. Maltby also did notes to Juster's translation (below). There is also P. Murgatroyd, ed., *Tibullus I, Edited with Introduction, Notes & Vocabulary* (Pietermaritzburg 1980); M.C.J. Putnam, ed., *Tibullus, A Commentary* (Norman OK 1973); K.F. Smith (ed.), *The Elegies of Albius Tibullus* (New York 1913).

1 fulvo auro: possibly instrumental with congerat, more likely ablative of material with divitias (Maltby).

2 multa: magna in the MSS (Maltby).

2 culti: "cultivated" (with cereals or vines) and be more valuable (Maltby).

4 fugent: See OLD sv fugō (āre, ~āuī, ~ātum tr.) sense 4 :To dispel (physical or abstract states, etc.), banish, put to flight.

4 classica pulsa: "the blast of the trumpets" (Maltby).

5 traducat: See OLD sv trādūcō (cere, ~xī, ~ctum tr. (transf.)) sense 1c: to move (from one context, etc., to another; also, from one temporal situation to another). traducat: lead through, perhaps with suggest of being paraded in a procession or exposed to disgrace (inerti implying cowardice); ablative of way or route: "may my poverty lead me through a life of inaction" (Maltby).

6 focus: See OLD sv focus (ī) (m.) sense 1: A domestic hearth or fireplace, especially that in the atrium, centre of the worship of the Lar Familiaris.

25 [after 6 in loeb]: a wish.

25 parvo: See OLD sv paruus sense 4b (neut. as noun) little (in the way of fortune, property, etc.).

26 deditus: military metaphor. The soldier is "handed over" as a prisoner to constant travel (Maltby).

27 ortus: See OLD sv ortus (~ūs m.) sense 1 The rising (of a heavenly body).

30 stimulo: See OLD sv stimulus sense 1 A goad (for urging on animals).

30 tardos: See OLD sv tardus sense 1 Slow in movement, moving slowly.

30 increpui: See OLD sv increpō (increpō~āre, ~uī, ~itum tr. , intr.) sense 4: (tr.) To utter noisy or violent reproaches at (persons, especially laggards), chide, reprove, upbraid.

31 capellae: See OLD sv capella sense 1: A she-goat.

7 maturo tempore: "in due season" (Maltby).

8 facili: See OLD sv facilis sense 11c: acting without restraint, free, liberal.

9 spes: Maltby personifies Spes as a goddess;

9 destitui: See OLD sv destituō (uere, ~uī, ~ūtum tr.) sense 6 To cease to serve or be available to, fail. Maltby says absolute use of destituo is unusual; verb often used of deserting comrades in battle and could have been chosen here for its military connotations.

10 musta: See OLD sv mustum (ī neut.): Unfermented or only partially fermented grape juice, must. Musta: poetic plural (Maltby).

11 stipes: See OLD sv stīpes (itis m.) sense 1b the remains of a tree trunk left in the ground, stump.

12 in trivio: See OLD sv triuium (~(i)ī neut.) sense c The meeting place of three roads, especially as a place of public resort: c (sacred to Diana or Hecate).

12 florida: See OLD sv flōridus (a, um) sense 1b composed of flowers; having the nature or characteristics of flowers.

13 novus ... annus: Maltby translates annus as "season". OLD has under sv nouus sense 8f ~us annus, the new year, the coming year.

13 educat "bring to maturity" (Maltby).

- 14 libatum: “as an offering” (Maltby).
- 14 ponitur: See OLD sv pōnō sense 8c: to deposit in a temple, dedicate. ponitur ante: the equivalent of anteponitur with the dative (tmesis) (Maltby).
- 16 spicea “of wheaten spikes” (Maltby).
- 17: red-painted figures of Priapus, a fertility god with a huge phallus, were used as scarecrows from Hellenistic times (Maltby).
- 17 pomosisque: See OLD sv pōmōsus Full of fruit, fruitful.
- 18 terreat: See OLD sv terreō sense 1: To constrain or inhibit by fear, terrorize, overawe, etc. mock-heroic (Maltby)
- 18 saeva: See OLD sv saeuus sense 2e (of things involving or associated with savagery, cruelty, etc.) e (of weapons etc).
- 18 falce: See OLD sv falx, (cis f.) An agricultural implement with a curved blade, hook, bill, scythe, sickle: sense 1c (as a symbol of agriculture; associated with Priapus).
- 19 felicis See OLD sv fēlix sense 6: Prosperous, wealthy.
- 20 fertis: fero “accept an offering” (OLD 36) (Maltby).
- 20 munera See OLD sv mūnus (~eris neut) sense 3: Something given as a duty, a tribute, offering (to deities, the dead, etc.).
- 20 Lares: See OLD sv Lar sense 1b: One of a widespread class of Roman gods, associated with the protection of certain places b (as protector of roads or crossroads).
- 21 lustrabat: See OLD sv lustrō (~āre, ~āuī, ~ātum tr. , (intr.)) sense 1 To purify ceremonially (with cathartic or apotropaic rites, usu. including a procession), lustrate.
- 23 quam circum: postposition of circum, as usual in Tibullus (Maltby).
- 23 rustica: See OLD sv rusticus sense 3 (of persons, etc.) Living in the country, practising country pursuits.
- 23 pubes: people (Maltby).
- 24 clamet: See OLD sv clāmō 1 To shout, utter a loud noise; sense 2a (with direct speech). jussive subjunctive (Maltby).
- 30 increpuisse: perfect infinitive is used for present (metrically convenient) (Maltby).
- 33 exiguus: See OLD sv exiguus sense 2c numerically small.
- 35-6 hic: the sequence of thought is “wolves, seek your prey elsewhere, for here (hic) Pales protects my flocks” (Maltby).
- 35 lustrare: See OLD sv lustrō sense 1: To purify ceremonially (with cathartic or apotropaic rites, usu. including a procession), lustrate.
- 36 spargere: “sprinkle” (Maltby).
- 36 lacte: See OLD sv lac sense 1: Milk.
- 36 Palem: See OLD sv Palēs (is) A tutelary deity of flocks and herds.
- 37 divi: archaic plural (Maltby).
- 37 paupere: See OLD sv pauper sense 2: Of, belonging to, or characteristic of a poor man.
- 38 puris: “clean” as demanded by the ritual, also carrying morally positive association of “plain”, “unadorned” (Maltby).
- 38 fictilibus: See OLD sv fictile: An earthenware vessel, dish, or plate.
- 40 de facili...luto: “de” with material used not found in Classical prose (Maltby).
- 40 composuitque: See OLD sv compōnō sense 7b (pass.) to be composed, constituted or compounded (of).
- 41 fructus: produce as well as profits (Maltby).
- 41 requiro: OLD has under sv requirō sense 3b to expect to find, look for. Maltby : “feel the loss of”, “miss” (OLD sv 5).
- 43 lecto: See OLD sv lectus sense 1 A bed, couch.
- 44 solito: See OLD sv solitus sense 1 Usual, accustomed, normal.
- 44 levare: OLD has under sv leuō sense 7 To refresh, restore, make well. “rest” (Maltby).

45 immites: See OLD sv immītis sense 2b Lacking pity, harsh, merciless b (of inanimate or non-material things).

45 cubantem: See OLD sv cubō sense 1b to be in bed or on one's couch.

46 tenero: See OLD sv tener sense 5c (of movement, actions) gentle.

46 continuisse: See OLD sv contineō sense 2c to grasp firmly, hold tightly. A witty use of a technical military term for “hemming in” the enemy (Maltby.).

47 aquas: See OLD sv aqua sense 2 (especially pl.) Rain, rainfall.

49 furorem: See OLD sv furor sense 5 Rage, fury (of storms, etc.).

51f. “O, may as much gold and emeralds as exist perish rather than...”. genitive with quantum only here in Tibullus (Putnam). quantum est + genitive is colloquial (Maltby).

54 praeferat: See OLD sv praeferō sense 3b (of inanimate or abstract things) to display, reveal

54 domus: “town house” (Maltby).

55 vinctum: “bound” i.e. “encased in” (Maltby).

55 vincla See OLD sv uinculum sense 1 A bond or chain confining a prisoner's limbs, a fetter, shackle (usu. pl., often put on for imprisonment or captivity)

56 sedeo: See OLD sv sedeō sense 1c: to sit in the performance of a specific occupation.

57 mea Delia: first mention of mistress' name.

58 segnis: See OLD sv segnis sense 1: Disinclined for exertion (physical or mental), wanting in energy, slothful, inactive.

61 arsuro: See OLD sv ardeō sense 1b :(of corpses) to be cremated

61 lecto: See OLD sv lectus sense 3: A bier.

62 mixta: See OLD sv misceō sense 8: (usu. with abstract object) To have, perform, experience, etc., at the same time or in close succession, combine (distinct activities, feelings, attributes, etc.).

63 ferro: See OLD sv ferrum sense 2 A piece of iron, an iron object.

64 stat: See OLD sv stō sense 13: To be situated (in a particular position), be set or located; also, to be placed (with a particular aspect).

64 sicca: See OLD sv siccus sense 1b not wet (with blood).

69 iungamus: See OLD sv iungō sense 8 To enter into, form (a friendship, marriage, etc.) by joining.

70 tenebris: Putnam says grammar is ambiguous: word may be taken as a moment in time, as an implement time uses, or as the darkness around the head of death. The latter seems especially fitting.

70 adoperta See OLD sv adopertus sense 2 Covered (to avoid recognition), veiled.

71 subrepet See OLD sv subrēpō sense 2 (of non-material things, conditions, sensations, etc.) To come on gradually or imperceptibly, steal on, insinuate itself

71 iners: See OLD sv iners sense 2b (of behaviour, etc.) marked by inactivity or sloth.

72 blanditias: See OLD sv blanditia sense 1 (especially in pl.) Ingratiating behaviour or speech, blandishment(s), flattery. “Blandishments” (Maltby).

73 frangere See OLD sv frangō sense 5 To break open (buildings, etc.), break down (barriers).

73 levis: “light” in sense of carefree” and “fickle” (Maltby).

73 tractanda: carry out, practice (Maltby).

74 rixas inseruisse “to introduce brawls” (Maltby). inseruisse: “introduce”, here in the sense of start (Putnam).

76 cupidis uiri:s a double pun, as Lee points out: uiris can refer to soldiers or husbands and they can be cupidis “greedy” for money or sex (Maltby). OLD cites under sv cupidus sense 1 (of things) showing alacrity, eager.

77 securus: See OLD sv sēcūrus sense 1 Free from fears or anxieties, easy in mind, untroubled.

77 acervo: See OLD sv aceruus sense 1b a (large) quantity (of money, etc.), pile; a treasure, stock, repository.

Tibullus Elegies. Translated by A.M. Juster. Introduction and notes by R. Maltby (2012)

Tibullus 1.1

Diuitias alius fuluo sibi congerat auro
et teneat culti iugera magna soli,
quem labor assiduus uicino terreat hoste,
Martia cui somnos classica pulsa fugent:
me mea paupertas uitae traducat inert
dum meus assiduo luceat igne focus.
ipse seram teneras maturo tempore uites
rusticus et facili grandia poma manu,
nec Spes destituat, sed frugum semper aceruos
10 praebeat et pleno pingua musta lacu:
nam ueneror seu stipes habet desertus in agris
seu uetus in triuio florida sarta lapis,
et quodcumque mihi pomum nouus educat annus
libatum agricolam ponitur ante deum.
flaua Ceres, tibi sit nostro de rure corona
spicea quae templi pendeat ante fores
pomosisque ruber custos ponatur in hortis
terreat ut saeua falce Priapus aues.
uos quoque, felices quondam, nunc pauperis agri
20 custodes, fertis munera uestra, Lares;
tunc uitula innumeros lustrabat caesa iuuenkos,
nunc agna exigui est hostia parua soli:
agna cadet uobis, quam circum rustica pubes
clamet 'io, messes et bona uina date'.
iam modo, iam possim contentus uiuere paruo
nec semper longae deditus esse uiae,
sed Canis aestiuos ortus uitare sub umbra
arboris ad riuos praetereuntis aquae.
nec tamen interdum pudeat tenuisse bidentem
30 aut stimulo tardos increpuisse boues;
non agnamue sinu pigeat fetumue capellae
desertum oblita matre referre domum.
at uos exiguo pecori, furesque lupique,
parcite: de magno est praeda petenda grege.
hic ego pastoremque meum lustrare quotannis
et placidam soleo spargere lacte Palem.
adsitis, diui, neu uos e paupere mensa
dona nec e puris spernite fictilibus:
fictilia antiquus primum sibi fecit agrestis,
40 pocula de facili conposuitque luto.
non ego diuitias patrum fructusque requiro
quos tulit antiquo condita messis auo:
parua seges satis est, satis est requiescere lecto
si licet et solito membra leuare toro.
quam iuuat immites uentos audire cubantem

et dominam tenero continuisse sinu
 aut gelidas hibernus aquas cum fuderit Auster
 securum somnos igne iuuante sequi.
 hoc mihi contingat: sit diues iure furorem
50 qui maris et tristes ferre potest pluuias.
 o quantum est auri pereat potiusque smaragdi
 quam fleat ob nostras ulla puella uias!
 te bellare decet terra, Messalla, marique
 ut domus hostiles praeferat exuias:
 me retinent uinctum formosae uincla puellae,
 et sedeo duras ianitor ante fores.
 non ego laudari curo, mea Delia; tecum
 dum modo sim, quaeso segnis inersque uocer.
 te spectem suprema mihi cum uenerit hora;
60 te teneam moriens deficiente manu.
 flebis et arsuro positum me, Delia, lecto,
 tristibus et lacrimis oscula mixta dabis.
 flebis: non tua sunt duro praecordia ferro
 uincta nec in tenero stat tibi corde silex.
 illo non iuuenis poterit de funere quisquam
 lumina non uirgo sicca referre domum.
 tu manes ne laede meos sed parce solutis
 crinibus et teneris, Delia, parce genis.
 interea, dum Fata sinunt, iungamus amores:
70 iam ueniet tenebris Mors adoperta caput,
 iam subrepet iners aetas neque amare decebit
 dicere nec cano blanditias capite.
 nunc leuis est tractanda Venus dum frangere postes
 non pudet et rixas inseruisse iuuat.
 hic ego dux milesque bonus. uos, signa tubaeque,
 ite procul; cupidis uulnera ferte uiris,
 ferte et opes: ego composito securus aceruo
 dites despiciam despiciamque famem.

Translation

May someone else assemble wealth of gleaming gold
 and hold vast plots of cultivated land,
 one who would fear the constant toil of lurking foes,
 one whose sleep flees when Mars' trumpets* blare.
 May poverty provide me with an idle life
 while steady fire burns within my hearth.
 In season may I plant tall fruit-trees and young vines
 myself—and with a farmhand's skilful touch.
 May Hope not disappoint, but always send stacked crops
10 and fill my vats with juice from bursting grapes
 because I pray by lonely tree-stumps in the fields
 or weathered stone* at crossroads decked with flowers,
 and all first fruit that is produced for me is offered
 as a gift before the farmer-god.*
 Upon the temple threshold, golden Ceres,* may

my farm-grown cornhusk crown be hung for you
and red Priapus* be on guard in fruitful gardens
so his vicious scythe may scare off birds.
You, Lares,* also take in gifts as guardians
20 of threadbare land that once was prosperous.*
Back then a slaughtered calf would bless vast herds; today's
small victim is a lamb from meagre soil.
The lamb will die for you; around her country boys
will cry, 'O give us crops and vintage wine!'
If only I could live with little, happy now
at last, and not be given to long trips,
but shun the rising Dog Star's heat* in shade beneath
a tree beside the ripples of a brook
and never feel ashamed to wield a hoe at times
30 or scold reluctant cattle with a prod
or carry home a cradled baby goat or lamb
abandoned by an inattentive mother.
But all you wolves and robbers, spare my meagre flock!
Pursue your plunder from some massive herd!
I purify my shepherd in this place each year
and sprinkle gentle Pales with some milk.*
Gods, be with me, and never scorn what's offered from
a humble table or clean earthenware—
an old-time countryman first fashioned for himself
40 some earthen cups he made from pliant clay.
I do not miss my fathers' wealth or profits built
from yields that my old grandfather had saved.
A small crop is enough; it is enough to rest
in bed and loll upon familiar sheets.
How sweet it is while lying down to hear fierce winds
and hold a mistress with a tender grasp!
Or when cold Austral winds* are spreading sleet, what joy
to slumber safely with a fire's help!
Let this befall me: may wealth be earned by one
50 who bears grim rain and seas that froth and foam.
O how much better that our gold and gems be lost
than any girl be crying as we roam!
Messalla,* it is right *you* fight on land and sea
so spoils of war* may decorate your home!
Chains of a gorgeous girl* restrain *me*, and I linger
like a doorman* at her stubborn door.
I want no praise, my Delia;* if I am with you,
I'm asking to be labelled weak and dull.
May I behold you* when my final hour comes;
60 as I die, let me hold you as hands fail.
Delia, when flames engulf my bier you'll weep for me,
and then you'll mix your kisses with sad tears.
You'll weep, for stubborn iron doesn't wrap your breast,
nor is there flint inside your tender heart.
Nobody, neither man nor maiden, could return

home from that funeral and be dry-eyed.
 Do not do damage to my spirit! Delia, spare
 your unbound hair and spare your tender cheeks.*
 Meanwhile, as long as fate allows, let's join in love!
 70 First Death will come, his features cloaked in gloom,*
 then age will sneak up, and it won't be right to love
 or speak seductive words with snowy hair.
 Lighthearted love must be indulged while there's no shame
 in breaking doors and brawling gives us pleasure.
 I'm a good soldier and good leader* here. You troops
 and trumpets, move it! Bring harm to the greedy,
 and bring their lucre! Made secure by stacks I stored,*
 I'll hate starvation and I'll hate great wealth.

Notes

Elegy 1.1

First poems of a collection were programmatic, setting out the author's distinctive approach to the genre and giving the audience an idea of the themes and motifs which are to dominate the book. Here Tib.'s dream-world of a simple rural existence on his modest ancestral farm, inspired by traditional religion and love, is contrasted with the harsh life of the soldier, devoted to the acquisition of wealth and glory.

In the first half of the poem (1–40) soldiering in pursuit of wealth is rejected in favour of a simple rural life spent in pious devotion to the rustic gods. In the second half (53–74) soldiering in pursuit of glory, as exemplified by his patron Messalla, is rejected in Tib.'s case in favour of a life in the service of love. The central section (41–52) links these two halves by summing up the earlier rustic themes and gradually introducing the theme of love for his mistress, Delia, which is to dominate the second half. In a final concluding section (75–8) the main themes of love, war, wealth, and the simple country life are recapitulated.

Unlike his contemporary, the elegist Propertius, whose mistress Cynthia dominates his opening poem, Tib. delays the love theme until much later in the elegy. Delia is not mentioned until [line 57](#). Love is just one of the elements of his ideal existence.

Tib.'s opening elegy, then, exemplifies the type of poetry to follow: a discreet blend of bucolic and emotional themes, inspired both by the Hellenistic Greek and the contemporary Roman poetic tradition, especially the Eclogues and Georgics of Virgil.

4 *Mars' trumpets*: war trumpets. Loud military horns were used by the commanders in the field to give such signals as the start of battle.

11–12 *lonely tree-stumps ... weathered stone*: boundary markers in the fields, seen as representations of the boundary god Terminus and decorated with garlands on his feast day, 23 February.

14 *the farmer-god*: intentionally vague. Perhaps a reference to the Roman rustic god Silvanus, to whom offerings of first fruits were made at harvest time.

15 *golden Ceres*: a native Italian harvest goddess (hence the epithet 'golden'), equivalent to the Greek Demeter.

17 *red Priapus*: a red-painted fertility god with a huge phallus and a reaping hook (scythe), used as a scarecrow in gardens and orchards. He was not a native Italian god, but arrived from Asia Minor via Greece.

19 *Lares*: guardian spirits of the hearth and farm, often depicted as young men holding a drinking horn and dancing. As promoters of fertility in the fields they were especially important to Tib., who mentions them a number of times in his works.

20 *of threadbare land that once was prosperous*: Tib.'s ancestral estates, like those of Propertius and Horace, may have suffered in the land confiscations of the civil wars that followed the battle of Philippi.

27 *Dog Star's heat*: the Dog Star, Sirius, rose shortly after the summer solstice. Its intense and destructive heat is a commonplace of ancient literature.

36 *sprinkle gentle Pales with some milk*: a native Italian goddess (or, sometimes, god) who presided over the fields and herds. Her festival was on 21 April, Rome's foundation day, and is described in detail by Tib. at [2.5.87–104](#). Its main purpose was the purification of the fields and shepherds. As a peaceful deity, she was given only non-blood offerings of milk.

47 *Austral winds*: the south wind, Auster, was supposed to bring clouds and rain.

53 *Messalla*: Tib.'s patron, the aristocrat M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus, an important military figure and literary patron (see the [Introduction, p. ix](#)). He took a keen interest in his own ancestry and added to his family's long line of victories by his own campaigns, especially in Illyria, Egypt, and Aquitania (celebrated in [Elegy 1.7](#)).

54 *spoils of war*: enemy spoils were fastened up before the door or in the hall of the triumphant general's house.

55 *Chains of a gorgeous girl*: the image is of the lover as the chained prisoner or slave of his mistress. It is introduced naturally after the mention of the spoils of war in 54, which suggest chained prisoners.

56 *doorman*: the excluded lover imagines himself as his mistress's slave door-keeper. These were often chained at the house-door.

57 *Delia*: this is the first mention of his mistress's name, by which she is addressed again at [61](#) and [67](#).

59 *May I behold you*: as a lover Tib. wants to die facing his mistress, in contrast with the soldier who would die facing the enemy.

67–8 *Do not do damage ... spare your tender cheeks*: Delia could weep and unbind her hair at Tib.'s funeral, but more extreme tokens of grief such as cutting her hair and scratching her cheeks would spoil her beauty and thus pain his departed spirit.

70 *his features cloaked in gloom*: literally 'his head veiled in darkness', a striking and original image, perhaps influenced by pictures of Death personified in art or on the stage.

75 *a good soldier and good leader*: the image of the soldier of love was common in elegy. Ovid devotes a whole poem to the idea at *Amores* 1.9.

77 *by stacks I stored*: 'stacks' translates the Latin *acervo*, literally 'a heap of produce'. This picks up the use of the same word in [line 9](#) above, where it is translated as 'stacked crops'.