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Cerberus Amator: Underworld Imagery in the Elegies of Tibullus and Propertius

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THESIS

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Abstract

In my thesis, I explore the mythological figure of Cerberus in the *Elegies* of Tibullus and Propertius. My objective is to bring to light the imaginative and provocative way that both of these poets employ the imagery and history of Cerberus and by so doing to illustrate the way in which both poets present Cerberus as a depiction of the poet lover.

My thesis begins with an analysis of the representations of Cerberus, both literary and in pottery, and his mythological history. I follow with a chapter exploring Tibullus' use of Cerberus as a stand-in for the elegiac poet-lover as the *exclusus amator,* with which he is associated through his position outside of the doors of the Underworld. Next, I turn to the poet Propertius and his presentation of Cerberus as a stand-in for the poet-lover by means of marked vocabulary and a limited freedom that aligns the canine with the poet-lover through his ability to speak elegiacally. To conclude, I emphasize how the poets take a traditional mythological figure and employ it in order to create and manipulate an elegiac world and the figure within it.

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INTRODUCTION

Elegy, Cerberus, and the *Exclusus Amator*

Among the many themes and tropes explored by the Roman elegists, the use of classical mythology and more specifically the imagery and *exempla* of the Underworld play a significant role in their verses. The elegists Tibullus and Propertius both make use of Underworld imagery to develop erotic and elegiac themes in a distinctive way that elucidates the position of the poet-lover. Within the genre-specific paradigm of Roman erotic elegy, Tibullus and Propertius developed characters, situations, and allusions that produce rich comparisons with the mythological Underworld. By offering these allusions, the elegists are able to enrich their audience's understanding of their own subjective circumstances as elegiac poet-lovers.

This thesis explores how Cerberus, the guard-dog of the Underworld, stands in for the elegiac figure of the poet-lover in two specific poems: Tibullus 1.3, and Propertius 4.7. In the first chapter, by examining the elegiac trope of the *paraclausithyron* and the figure of Cerberus in the work of Tibullus, I identify similarities and important connections between the canine figure as presented by Tibullus and the traditional *exclusus amator* figure in Roman elegy. Then in the second chapter, by further engaging with the vocabulary and imagery of Propertius 4.7, I identify how Propertius positions Cerberus as a substitute for the elegiac poet via specific elegiac vocabulary and imagery.

Roman Erotic Elegy: Origins and Meanings

Roman erotic elegy has fascinated scholars over generations for a variety of reasons. Praised by Paul Veyne as "one of the most sophisticated art forms in the entire

history of literature,"[1] Roman elegy has been studied for its powerful and influential themes of love, loss, and erotic deception, its practice of poetic imitation, and its allusive use of mythology. Moreover, elegy performs a very specific narrative subjectivity in which the elegists write about their own erotic experiences in the first person. This subjectivity achieves, as Francis Cairns has noted, "a logical expansion and development of Greek subjective elegy," in which "the contribution of each Roman poet can be seen clearly."[2] Indeed, the Roman elegists expanded upon Greek elegy and enhanced the genre not only with respect to subjectivity, but also with respect to the use of mythological *exempla* and allusions.

In addition to its use of subjectivity, mythology, and a range of themes of an amatory nature, elegy has from its very beginnings often been concerned with another subject area, that of death and funerals.[3] The elegiac meter was associated with mourning and funeral dirges of both lamentation and praise from early in its existence as an archaic Greek meter.[4] With such ancestry for the elegiac meter and its occasion for performance, it is not surprising that death and its corresponding elements became a favored trope in the Roman elegists' work.[5] The elegists engaged closely with death, picturing the demises and funerals of themselves or their lovers.[6] While the mournful topic may have been conventional to the meter, the Roman elegists take it to the limits of obsession.

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[1] Veyne (1988) 1.
[2] Cairns (1979) 224.
[3] For a thorough analysis of elegy's concern with death, see Raucci (2011) 119-144.
[4] Luck (1979) 25-32 traces the history and reception of the elegiac meter.
[5] See the discussion of the trope in Papanghelis (1987) 1-9.
[6] Examples include Propertius 4.7 and Ovid *Amores* 2.16.

Scholars have long been interested in the Roman elegists' preoccupation with death, especially the fact that Propertius deals heavily with the topic.[7] Theodore Papanghelis claims that the subject matter of the elegists ties in neatly with the concept of death: "(The elegists) could fly in the face of their contemporaries' conception of love by endorsing, in varying degrees of seriousness, a type of lover consumed by the *morbus*, intent on the *militia* and wallowing in the *servitium amoris*. These are metaphors on which the idea of death will naturally thrive, although not in order to militate against, but rather in order to confirm the idea of love."[8] Thus, the elegiac concept of love's relationship to illness, war, or slavery suggests a very real level of lethal danger, or as Stacie Raucci states: "Put bluntly, love can kill you."[9] But to the elegists, the pain, disease, and hardships of love were worth it, since such metaphors of adversity and privation served as perfect oppositions with which to compare the hoped-for blissful life of love.

The elegists imagine their own funerals where their lovers are present to lament them; they visualize their epitaphs and the mourning of their mistresses. They also consider their unavoidable destiny of being locked forever in the potentially fatal "battle of love," or *militia amoris*. One example is Propertius 1.19, the funeral poem *par excellence*, where Propertius imagines his own death and hopes for the continued fidelity of his lover, Cynthia.[10] Propertius knows that he will be faithful to her after death, yet he eventually concludes that they have to make the most of their love while they still live.[11]

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[7] For example, see Lake (1937), Papanghelis (1987), and Foulon (1996).
[8] Papanghelis (1987) 1.
[9] Raucci (2011) 122.
[10] Propertius 1.19 will be discussed and analyzed in Chapter Two.
[11] See Richardson (2006) 199 for more discussion on this poem.

To the Roman elegists, death is inevitable but their suffering for the sake of love and poetry during their lifetimes will be their legacy after they are gone.

With such a strong focus on representations of death in Roman elegy, the occurrence of Underworld imagery and mythological *exempla* is hardly surprising. In fact, each of the major elegists portrays the Underworld in his work. Whether imagining it as a place from which one's lover returns as a ghost to the real world, as we shall see that Propertius does in poem 4.7, or imagining Orpheus' *katabasis* and visit to the Underworld as Ovid does (*Metamorphoses* 10.11-37, discussed below), the nexus of mythological themes and images surrounding the classical Underworld provides a set of stirring imagery and characters with which the elegists could showcase their poetic prowess. The Underworld is a place full of the most famous heroes and the most nefarious sinners. What poet would not want to engage with characters such as Orpheus or Herakles and envision such wicked figures as the cunning Tantalus or the dreaded hell-hound Cerberus?

Cerberus as a Mythological Figure

In the ancient sources, both textual and visual, the figure of the dog Cerberus serves as the gatekeeper of the Underworld, posted at that dangerous liminal point to prevent the dead from leaving the Underworld and to keep the living from entering. He is also a character who undergoes significant alterations in different epochs and genres before he appears in Roman elegy. The character is alluded to as far back as Homer: he is mentioned in Book 8 of the *Iliad* when Hera goes to Athena to ask for her help to

convince Zeus to aid the Achaeans. In their exchange, Athena reminds Hera how she aided Herakles on behalf of Zeus after Eurystheus sent Herakles to the Underworld:

> εἰ γὰρ ἐγὼ τάδε ἤδε᾽ ἐνὶ φρεσὶ πευκαλίμῃσιν
> εὖτέ μιν εἰς Ἀΐδαο πυλάρταο προὔπεμψεν
> ἐξ ᾽Ερέβευς ἄξοντα κύνα στυγεροῦ Ἀΐδαο,
> οὐκ ἂν ὑπεξέφυγε Στυγὸς ὕδατος αἰπὰ ῥέεθρα.[12]
>
> For if I had known this in my wise heart
> when he sent him to Hades the gate-keeper
> to bring from Erebus the hound of loathed Hades,
> he would not have escaped the deep waters of the river Styx.
>
> (Homer *Iliad* 8.366-369)

Cerberus is also mentioned in Book 11 of the *Odyssey*, when Odysseus comes upon the ghost of Herakles in the Underworld. In these lines, Herakles describes how Eurystheus sent him on his final labor:

> καί ποτέ μ᾽ ἐνθάδ᾽ ἔπεμψε κύν᾽ ἄξοντ᾽: οὐ γὰρ ἔτ᾽ ἄλλον
> φράζετο τοῦδέ γέ μοι κρατερώτερον εἶναι ἄεθλον:
> τὸν μὲν ἐγὼν ἀνένεικα καὶ ἤγαγον ἐξ Ἀίδαο:
> ᾽Ερμείας δέ μ᾽ ἔπεμψεν ἰδὲ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη.[13]
>
> Once he even sent me here to fetch the hound: for he could
> plan no other task for me that is mightier than this:
> that dog I myself carried up and led out of Hades:
> Hermes and flashing eyed Athena sent me.
>
> (Homer *Odyssey* 11.623-626)

The allusions to Cerberus in the Homeric tradition usually refer to him only by his epithet κύνα Ἀΐδαο, "the hound of Hades" (e.g. *Iliad* 8.368) or simply as a κύνα "hound" (e.g. *Odyssey* 11.623) and do not give him a name. The two references cited above in particular also narrate the early myth of Herakles going to the Underworld to bring Cerberus up as one of his final labors. Note that even in these earliest examples Cerberus'

[12] The text of Homer's *Iliad* is from Monro and Allen (1920); all translations are my own unless otherwise noted.
[13] The text of Homer's *Odyssey* is from Monro and Allen (1922).

role is that of a prize or captive of the hero, Herakles. The captive status of Cerberus is iconic, as we shall see, and is part of his character throughout his representational history.

It is not until Hesiod that the menacing canine is actually given a name and more of a family background. During Hesiod's narration in the *Theogony* of the offspring of the viper Echidna and the dragon Typhaon, Hesiod mentions Cerberus by name.

> δεύτερον αὖτις ἔτικτεν ἀμήχανον, οὔ τι φατειὸν
> Κέρβερον ὠμηστήν, Ἀίδεω κύνα χαλκεόφωνον,
> πεντηκοντακέφαλον, ἀναιδέα τε κρατερόν τε.[14]
>
> Then again she bore a second one, unmanageable and unspeakable
> Cerberus, consumer of raw flesh, the brazen-voiced hound of Hades
> Fifty-headed, both shameless and strong.
>
> (Hesiod *Theogony* 310-312)

The hell-hound Cerberus, here luridly described with fifty heads, instead of the later more commonly depicted three, is presented as the sibling of the snaky Hydra, another monstrous being that shares a similar narrative with Cerberus, as they are both many-headed monsters who serve as labors for Herakles. These monsters are captives or prizes and serve only as the objects for the hero to conquer. In addition, another important feature of Cerberus' characterization is mentioned in this passage: his piercing bark. Hesiod describes Cerberus with his "brazen voice" (*Theogony* 311), as the conventional mythological figure of Cerberus becomes well known for his threatening barks and snarls. The idea of a terrifying howl echoing through the Underworld only adds to the intimidating figure of the canine.

[14] The text of Hesiod is from Solmsen (1990).

Later on in the *Theogony* Hesiod catalogues the duties of Cerberus and describes many of his characteristics. It is here that Cerberus becomes better defined and takes on the traits that are traditionally attributed to him.

> ἔνθα θεοῦ χθονίου πρόσθεν δόμοι ἠχήεντες
> ἰφθίμου τ᾽ Ἀίδεω καὶ ἐπαινῆς Περσεφονείης
> ἑστᾶσιν, δεινὸς δὲ κύων προπάροιθε φυλάσσει
> νηλειής, τέχνην δὲ κακὴν ἔχει: ἐς μὲν ἰόντας
> σαίνει ὁμῶς οὐρῇ τε καὶ οὔασιν ἀμφοτέροισιν,
> ἐξελθεῖν δ᾽ οὐκ αὖτις ἐᾷ πάλιν, ἀλλὰ δοκεύων
> ἐσθίει, ὅν κε λάβῃσι πυλέων ἔκτοσθεν ἰόντα.
>
> There, in front, stand the roaring halls of the god of the netherworld,
> of strong Hades and of dread Persephone,
> and a terrible hound stands guard in front of the house
> ruthless, and he has a cruel trick. On those who go in
> he fawns at the same time with his tail and both his ears,
> but does not permit them to go back out again, but watching closely
> he devours whomever he catches going out of the gates.
>
> (Hesiod *Theogony* 767-773)

As indicated by this passage, Cerberus was frequently presented as a threatening and merciless creature, whose purpose was to guard the gates of Hell. According to Hesiod, Cerberus has a duplicitous nature: he is gentle and fawning to those going into house of Hades (771), but eats those who try to exit from the gates (773). That is, he would allow in the ghostly shades on their way to the Underworld, but cruelly treat all who tried to escape. As we can see, Cerberus' presence in these early representations functions in two main ways, as a barrier against those wishing to leave the Underworld, and as a prize or captive to be apprehended. Thus, the characterization of Cerberus begins to take form as the canine monster assumes his position of guardian of the Underworld.

A few centuries later, the philosopher Plato, writing in Athens in the early fourth century B.C.E., identifies the tradition of Cerberus as being developed in myths before

his present time. In the *Republic*, a dialogue on the nature of justice, Socrates represents the soul of man as a many-headed beast, and thus as a *comparandum* refers to the figure of Cerberus.

> τῶν τοιούτων τινά, ἦν δ᾽ ἐγώ, οἷαι μυθολογοῦνται παλαιαὶ γενέσθαι φύσεις, ἥ τε Χιμαίρας καὶ ἡ Σκύλλης καὶ Κερβέρου, καὶ ἄλλαι τινὲς συχναὶ λέγονται συμπεφυκυῖαι ἰδέαι πολλαὶ εἰς ἓν γενέσθαι.[15]
>
> "One of those sorts," I said, "those natures that are told of in ancient tales, as of the Chimaera or of Scylla or of Cerberus, and the other many things that are told of many forms grown together into one."
>
> (Plato *Republic* 9.588c)

Even in the late classical period, Plato refers to Cerberus as an ancient figure and at the same time acknowledges his diverse representations and the way he was adapted to newer traditions. Because of his hybridized form as being part canine and part snake, Cerberus serves as a recognizable monster alongside the similarly compound monsters, the Chimaera and Scylla. Plato's reference shows both the endurance of Cerberus and the importance of the character as a traditional figure together with his fellow monsters, the Chimaera and Scylla.

The development of the figure of Cerberus was also taking place in the material arts just as he was being portrayed in literature. The earliest representations of Cerberus as the three-headed dog are found not in literature, but rather on pottery from the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.E. A famous Caeretan Black Figure vase dating from 530 B.C.E. depicts Herakles bringing Cerberus up from Hades to King Eurystheus.[16] The hound Cerberus is shown as a large, almost lion-sized figure positioned in front of the hero, Herakles. Cerberus' three heads are painted white, black, and red (respectively, from top

[15] The text of the *Republic* is from Slings (2003).
[16] Paris, Musée du Louvre, E701.

to bottom) and are adorned with snakes at various intervals. This vase shows Cerberus as a three-headed dog, while adding some serpentine aspects: although snakes are not mentioned in the earliest texts as part of Cerberus' appearance, this early visual representation may arise from the Hesiodic association of Cerberus with the family of the serpintine monsters, Echidna and Hydra. Note that this vase painting conveys pictorially the actions associated with the Homeric descriptions of Cerberus as a labor of Herakles found in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* passages quoted above. In this visual depiction, Herakles takes the menacing Cerberus captive and drags him out of the Underworld on a leash.

At the same time, some of the depictions of Cerberus from the Archaic period portray him with only two heads, possibly influenced by the portrayal of Cerberus' older monstrous two-headed canine brother, Orthus.[17] For instance, an Attic Black Figure vase dating from 530-520 B.C.E. represents Cerberus as a two-headed dog being led by Herakles, although this Cerberus, similar to the Caeretan Black figure vase mentioned above, is also represented with snakes adorning his body.[18] Likewise, an Attic Red Figure plate dating from 525-520 B.C.E. shows a two-headed Cerberus being led from the Underworld by Herakles, attached to a chain.[19] From these visual representations we can see that the figure of Cerberus during the Archaic period was in flux, with the number of heads represented being reduced from the Hesiodic fifty heads, down to a more manageable two or three. Significantly, moreover, Cerberus is captive and chained in these representations, which shows his subservience and lack of freedom.

The next extant images of Cerberus in vase painting show a distinct favoring of the three-headed Cerberus. An amphora dated from the end of the fourth century B.C.E.

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[17] On the tradition of the two-headed dog Orthus and his death, see Beck (1991).
[18] Toledo, Museum of Art, 50.261.
[19] Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 01.8025.

shows an almost boar-like Cerberus with three heads.[20] The snakes that in previous pottery of the Archaic period haphazardly adorned the necks and back of the creature are noticeably absent as the canine sits, bound by a chain around one of its necks; instead, a single snake is twisted to represent the dog's tail. This is most likely the first fictile representation of Cerberus as a chained dog where Herakles is totally absent. That is, rather than being chained as a captive or prize, Cerberus is shown chained due to his position as a guard-dog.

Another vase dating from the same period (*ca.* 330-310 B.C.E.) shows a three-headed Cerberus.[21] This late Classical/early Hellenistic Apulian Red Figure vase depicts the journey of Herakles and Orpheus into the Underworld accompanied by the gods Hermes and Hekate. In this depiction, the triple-headed Cerberus is painted a bright white and the figure is clearly canine. The brightness of the dog stands out in contrast against a dark background and reddish-golden figures. Here too, Herakles leads him on a chain, although this time the chain is fastened around each of the three necks of Cerberus. As in earlier representations, Cerberus is chained and unable to move freely.

Therefore, the scant record of vase paintings during this time suggests how the figure of Cerberus may have been altered or adapted over the generations as a many-headed, occasionally serpentine creature, sometimes a two-headed canine and often a triple-headed dog, yet always chained or leashed. The creature that became known as a fixture of the Greek idea of Hades clearly began to assume his own mythology, as he developed into the figure that the Roman artists and authors would later use in their own representations.

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[20] Orvieto, Museo Civico, Coll. Faina, 124.
[21] Munich, Antikensammlungen, 3287.

As the Romans took up the mythological figure of Cerberus and worked him into their own literature and art, we see the guard-dog featuring prominently in Latin literature as an established Underworld figure. Indeed, by the time the Romans began regularly portraying Cerberus in their literature, his three heads, his bark, and most importantly, the chains around his necks were also there to define him. One of the most famous Roman depictions of Cerberus and the Underworld can be found in Book 6 of Vergil's *Aeneid*. Here Cerberus appears as a prominent character in Vergil's Underworld, since by now he has been well established as an important traditional mythological character in many other literary and pictorial representations of the classical Underworld. In Vergil's description of the Underworld in Book 6 of the *Aeneid*, Cerberus is the final obstacle in the initial descent of Aeneas and the Sibyl into the Underworld.

> Cerberus haec ingens latratu regna trifauci
> personat aduerso recubans immanis in antro.
> cui uates horrere uidens iam colla colubris
> melle soporatam et medicatis frugibus offam
> obicit. ille fame rabida tria guttura pandens
> corripit obiectam, atque immania terga resoluit
> fusus humi totoque ingens extenditur antro.
> occupat Aeneas aditum custode sepulto
> euaditque celer ripam inremeabilis undae.[22]
>
> Huge Cerberus sounds through these kingdoms with
> a triple-jawed roar, enormous, reclining in the opposite cave.
> The seer, seeing the snakes now bristling on his neck
> tosses a morsel sleepy with honey and with drugged herbs.
> He, opening his triple throats in ravenous hunger
> catches it after it is thrown and then relaxes his huge frame
> sinking to the earth and his immensity is extended over the whole cave.
> With the guardian buried in sleep, Aeneas wins entrance
> and quickly leaves the bank of the stream from which no one returns.
>
> (Vergil *Aeneid* 6. 417-25)

[22] The text of Vergil is from Mynors (1969).

Blocked by the immense three-headed dog, the Sibyl tosses a honey-sweet, sleep-inducing morsel to the animal to calm him (420-21) and make possible their passing, and so the great canine *custos* (424) is subdued and Aeneas and the Sibyl are able to get past him. Note how Vergil's Cerberus is described with many of his traditional aspects in place. His bark is emphasized (*latratu… personat*, 417-18), as are his three heads (*trifauci*, 417; *tria guttura*, 421), and the snakes so commonly associated with his appearance (*colubris*, 419). Vergil emphasizes Cerberus' size, and he describes him twice as *ingens* (417, 423), and twice as *immanis* (418, 422). Furthermore, as in the Homeric passages and several of the vase paintings described above, Cerberus is once again an obstacle to the hero, who must overpower him in order to gain passage into the Underworld, in this case by means of the drugged honey-cake.

In addition to Vergil, other Roman authors such as Propertius, Ovid, Cicero, and Seneca, among many others, as we shall see, also represented Cerberus in their descriptions of the Underworld. With these authors' repeated references to the guard-dog of Hades as an important Underworld denizen, Cerberus assumes the qualities of an intimidating figure closely associated with the Underworld and tied in seamlessly with all of the spooky geography and characters located therein.

Although the physical attributes of Cerberus exhibited different elements over the centuries of literary and visual mythological representations, his occupation and purpose remained the same. Cerberus must protect the Underworld from any living soul entering and prevent the dead from escaping their intended doom. Very rarely did any living soul pass by him, and when one did, it was either by trickery or force. Throughout his entire mythological life, Cerberus voluntarily left his post.

The Chains of Cerberus

In the classical mythological tradition, as we have seen, one of the most frequently emphasized characteristics of the figure of Cerberus is the fact that he is presented as immovable and bound by chains or a leash. Cerberus is depicted or described as being chained, either to a doorpost or attached by a leash to the hero Herakles as he brings the canine up to the world of the living. Just as the figure of Cerberus is often depicted in the Greek artistic representations, discussed above, as chained or leashed, the Romans maintained and even emphasized the imagery of bondage as they took up the traditional figure.

Numerous Roman authors mention the presence of chains in their descriptions of Cerberus, thereby stressing the notion that these chains bind the canine firmly. For instance, in his poem 4.11 Propertius refers to the way Cerberus would strain at his chain, which was attached to the door of the Underworld. In this elegy where the ghost of Cornelia protests her innocence, she describes the denizens of the Underworld as pausing in her regard; just so, she asks that the chain of Cerberus be temporarily slackened and the door-bolt be silenced, so that for one day he might be relieved of his usual duties assailing the shades as they passed by the door.

> Cerberus et nullas hodie petat improbus umbras;
> et iaceat tacita laxa catena sera.[23]
>
> Let Cerberus, the shameless one, go after no shades today,
> but let his chain lie loose from a quiet bolt.
>
> (Propertius 4.11.25-26)

[23] The text of Propertius is from Barber (1954).

Ovid (43 B.C.E.-17/18 C.E.) also portrays Cerberus with chains on many occasions. One such example is from his epic *Metamorphoses* during the narration of the Orpheus and Eurydice story in Book 10. The story of Orpheus and his failed attempt to reclaim his wife Eurydice from the Underworld is iconic for its expression of intense amatory feelings and the association between love and loss. After Orpheus reaches the Underworld in Ovid's account, he addresses Persephone and Pluto, assuring them that he has no ill intentions in being there:

> …non huc, ut opaca viderem
> Tartara, descendi, nec uti villosa colubris
> terna Medusaei vincirem guttura monstri.[24]
>
> …I have not come down here to see
> shadowy Tartarus, nor to bind the three throats
> of the Medusean monster, loathsome with snakes.
>
> (Ovid *Met*. 10.20-22)

Orpheus goes on to say that he entered the Underworld only so that could retrieve his wife, Eurydice. In these three lines, Cerberus, described as the monster of serpent-haired Medusa perhaps because of his association with snakes, is practically equated with the Underworld, as Orpheus sets him right alongside the realm of Tartarus. Yet what is even more striking is that Orpheus assures the rulers of the Underworld that he is not intending to do as Herakles did, that is, to bind Cerberus and haul him to the world of the living: Orpheus is not the kind of hero to chain and steal the guard-dog as plunder. Once again, the traditional bound nature of Cerberus is emphasized, while intriguingly Ovid also accentuates the binding of all three of Cerberus' necks (22). This passage echoes the imagery on the Hellenistic Apulian Red Figure vase described above, which shows Orpheus on his descent to the Underworld.

[24] The text of Ovid is from Tarrant (2004).

In the following lines Orpheus pleads his case, assuring the masters of the Underworld that Love has compelled him to come after Eurydice. His speech so moves the entire population of the Underworld that he is allowed to take Eurydice with him, if only he does not look back at her during the ascent. Of course, the happy ending is not to be and Orpheus glances back at his beloved. After Eurydice falls back with a final "*vale*" (62), Ovid describes Orpheus' reaction.

> Non aliter stupuit gemina nece coniugis Orpheus,
> quam tria qui timidus, medio portante catenas,
> colla canis vidit, quem non pavor ante reliquit,
> quam natura prior, saxo per corpus oborto.
>
> Orpheus was stunned at the double death of his wife,
> not unlike the frightened one who saw the dog's three necks
> with the middle neck bearing chains, whom dread did
> not before abandon sooner, than did nature formerly
> when stone arose throughout his body.
>
> (Ovid *Met*. 10.64-67)

At the famous moment of extreme pain, when Orpheus looks back upon Eurydice and she falls away from him forever in a "double death" (*gemina nece*, 64), Ovid chooses to compare Orpheus' shock with that of a man who has just seen the triple-headed Cerberus, with his middle neck covered in chains. The description of the man who has seen Cerberus as *timidus* (65) encapsulates the fear that someone who has seen the feared canine feels, the word itself conveys the meaning of one being afraid for oneself as the dread of an irreversible event takes over. In this passage, Orpheus is likened to a man who looks upon Cerberus and immediately recognizes that all is lost. Indeed, the fear of both looking upon Cerberus and of looking upon Eurydice as she falls to her final death is likened to the physical reaction of literally turning to stone, a nice Medusan overtone that coincides with the traditional serpentine features of Cerberus himself. The vivid image of

a terrifying Cerberus heightens the emotion of the poem, and serves to add a layer of bone-chilling fright to the story as it reaches its tragic end.

The Roman dramatist Seneca (4 B.C.E.- 65 C.E.) also describes Cerberus as wearing chains, and yet he seems to suggest that all of Cerberus' necks are chained. This is similar to the image on the Apulian Red Figure vase, which depicts the journey of Herakles and Orpheus into the Underworld, where Herakles is leading Cerberus on a lead fastened around each of his necks.

> qui colla gerit vincta catenis
> imo latitans Cerberus antro.[25]
>
> the one who bears necks bound with chains,
> Cerberus, lurking in the deepest cave.
>
> (Seneca *Hercules Furens* 1107-1108)

The multiple chained necks of the canine make him all the more terrifying. The sounds of the heavy shackles against the stone ground and the shaking of the dog fighting against his bonds create an even more frightful figure for the mythological Cerberus. But there is even more to the significance of the chains of Cerberus. Since he is always bound, chained, or leashed, Cerberus is unable to exercise his own freedom to move around. He is immobile, captive, and stuck at the liminal entrance to the Underworld, where he can only be removed as a prize by the force of a hero. These stationary and immobile aspects of Cerberus are emphasized throughout his mythological tradition in both literary and material depictions, which suggest a passive Cerberus who has no control of his own movements.

Thus, from the very earliest representations, Cerberus exists as an object to be conquered. Herakles boasts that he performed the actions himself: "that dog I myself

[25] The text of Seneca is from Zwierlein (1986).

carried up and led from Hades" (*Odyssey* 11.625). Cerberus did not voluntarily accompany Herakles: instead, he was carried and dragged from his liminal Underworld station. This same situation is portrayed in the vase paintings discussed above, where Cerberus is depicted either chained around his neck to a doorpost, or to a leash that Herakles holds. He is a restrained figure, a prize.

Yet Cerberus is also a described as a figure of might and menace. The earliest examples portray him as being both strong and cruel. According to Hesiod he is "terrible" (δεινὸς, *Theogony* 769), and "ruthless" (νηλειής, *Theogony* 770), as well as "both shameless and strong" (ἀναιδέα τε κρατερόν τε, *Theogony* 312); of course, these features make him even more worthy to be a heroic prize. In an ambivalent but otherwise intriguing traditional representation, Cerberus is a powerful, loud, frightening figure, but one who is at the same time captive, immobile, and stuck in a liminal position.

The *Paraclausithyron* and the *Exclusus Amator*

The *paraclausithyron* is a motif with a dynamic literary history that comes down to Roman Elegy via Roman New Comedy.[26] The Roman elegists adopted the motif so completely that it has almost become synonymous with their poetry. Elegy becomes the major literary vehicle for the *paraclausithyron*, and the elegists adapt it, rethink it, and make it an instrument to express their emotional turmoil and the many frustrations of the poet-lover. The following discussion provides a brief overview of the trope, its scholarly background, and its literary history. The ways in which the Roman erotic elegists adapted

[26] For the origins and evolution of the *paraclausithyron*, see Copley (1956) 1-42.

the *paraclausithyron* in their own poetry are diverse and distinctive, even to the point of comparing the *exclusus amator* with unexpected mythological figures.

In 1956 Frank O. Copley published his book, *Exclusus Amator: A Study in Latin Love Poetry*, a short monograph that chronicles the history and evolution of the trope of the *exclusus amator* or "shut-out lover." For more than half a century, Copley's publication has been the seminal and abiding work on the topic owing to its comprehensive overview of the *exclusus amator* figure and its importance. The work also surveys the evolution of the *exclusus amator* and corresponding figures in nearly all time periods and genres since the *paraclausithyron*, or "lament of the shut-out lover," as Copley calls it, became widely used.[27]

Copley traces the history of the *paraclausithyron* from its beginnings as a "boisterous street ballad" to its fundamental expansion into a literary motif by the Greeks, who "make it a song expressive of the sorrows and sufferings of lover."[28] In his explanation of the elaborations to the motif that were added by the Romans, Copley notes that the Romans enriched the *paraclausithyron* with respect to "psychological and erotic interest, to become in the end a key element in the literary version of love."[29] While Copley looks in detail at how the *paraclausithyron* worked in a variety of genres, the signal contribution of this work was to demonstrate how it developed into a trope that is recognized to have shaped Roman erotic elegy and to have separated the Roman elegists from the Greek epigrammatists.

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[27] Copley (1956) vii.
[28] Copley (1956) vii.
[29] Copley (1956) vii.

The *paraclausithyron* trope, according to Copley, requires a few main elements to be considered a true example of a *paraclausithyron* and to function properly.[30] First, there must be a relationship between a lover and his beloved. Second, the lover has to have been denied entry into the home either because his beloved is occupied with a different lover or perhaps even spouse, or because his beloved has simply decided that they cannot be together. Third, the lament must be spoken either at the door or to the door, depending on the context. Writers could incorporate a number of other elements, including drunkenness, garlands, processionals, and physical retaliation against the door itself, to name just a few. As the Roman authors adopted the *paraclausithyron* into their own literature and it became more and more popular, they began to play with some of the traditional tropes of the *paraclausithyron* and adapt them to various situations.

Scholars generally agree that the *paraclausithyron* trope was first expressed in the Roman literary imagination in the genre of Roman New Comedy, where many of the traditional Greek comic aspects of the *paraclausithyron* can be found.[31] The Roman comic playwrights adopted and adapted Greek theater, as they favored specific plays, authors, and tropes and avoided other features.[32] As Oliver Taplin (2001) describes the process of Roman adaptations of Greek New Comedy originals: "[T]he pieces which won such favour with Roman audiences were those which adapted the domestic, bourgeois New Comedy of late fourth- and early third-century authors."[33]Accordingly, it seems that the Romans found the domestic, amatory, and subversive aspects of the *paraclausithyron* attractive enough to Romanize them in their brand of comedy.

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[30] For more on these elements, see Copley (1956) 1-2.
[31] Copley (1956) 28-32.
[32] For further discussion on Roman comedy's adaptations of Greek New Comedy and Greek comic themes, see Taplin (2001) 14-17.
[33] Taplin (2001) 15.

For example, Plautus (254-184 B.C.E.) makes extensive use of the *paraclausithyron* theme in his play *Curculio*. In the *Curculio*, the door assists in the love affair of Phaedromus and the slave girl, Planesium, by being accommodating of their relationship. In the first scene, Phaedromus, holding a torch, sets out of his house to visit his beloved and then dotingly addresses her door. When one of his slaves, Palinurus, asks him why he would do such a thing, Phaedromus replies:

> bellissumum hercle vidi et taciturnissumum,
> numquam ullum verbum muttit.[34]
>
> By Hercules, I look upon the loveliest and quietest (door)
> never does it utter a word.
>
> (Plautus *Curculio* 1. 20-22)

For Phaedromus, the door has been sympathetic to his love affair and as such deserves a thankful greeting.[35] The door's silence is its greatest benefaction to him, for it helps keep his secret love affair just that, secret. This address to the door in the very first scene of his play suggests that the *paraclausithyron* trope may have already become familiar in the minds of the Romans. While Copley acknowledges Plautus, in composing the *Curculio*, most certainly had before him a Greek play that contained a *paraclausithyron*, he also points to some important additions and alterations invented by the playwrights of Roman New Comedy and Plautus in particular.

One of the most important of these alterations that would become conventional in the later Roman *paraclausithyron*, especially in Roman elegy, is the theme of "stolen love" or *furtivus amor*. In Roman New Comedy *furtivus amor* is represented as the object of the lover's affection, typically a woman who is unable to choose for herself whom she

[34] The text of the *Curculio* is from Lindsay (1922).
[35] Copley (1956) 35 notes that the personification of the door seems to be an invention of Plautus.

may love. For the *furtivus amor* theme to function, the girl must usually go behind the back of the man who is in control of her life—this may be the man to whom she is betrothed or even her husband or her master/pimp—in order to be with the lover she chooses. Thus the man she must avoid so that she may be with her lover can often be the *leno* or pimp, who is in charge of the girl's well being.

In the plays of Roman New Comedy, the role of the *leno* acts as the essential impediment to the union of the lover and his beloved. However, the *leno* often is not the actual human blockade between the lover and beloved. Rather, a third character is employed to be the real warden of the door charged with keeping the lover and beloved separated: this character is the *custos*. The *custos* may be a compassionate figure, who allows the lover access to his beloved, or conversely may be a harsh, unyielding obstacle.[36] Just as the *custos* becomes a major figure in the *paraclausithyron* of Roman New Comedy, the *custos* also features prominently later on, as we shall see, in the poetry of the Roman elegists.

It was not until many years later after the heyday of Roman New Comedy that the *paraclausithyron* was developed further. Some of the most lasting and poignant elements of the Roman *paraclausithyron* trope can be found together in one passage from Lucretius (*ca*. 99-55 B.C.E.). In his famous harangue against love and its worthlessness,[37] Lucretius deliberately brings the *exclusus amator* into the mix, deriding him for his foolish attempts.

> At lacrimans exclusus amator limina saepe
> floribus et sertis operit postisque superbos
> unguit amaracino et foribus miser oscula figit.[38]

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[36] Copley (1956) 39.
[37] See Betensky (1980) for more on Lucretius' tirade against love in Book 4.
[38] The text of *De Rerum Natura* is from Bailey (1922).

> But weeping, the shut-out lover often covers
> the thresholds with flowers and garlands and
> wets the haughty doorposts with ointments and
> the wretched one affixes kisses to the doors.
>
> (Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* 4.1177-79)

Lucretius and his audience were so familiar with the many aspects of the *paraclausithyron* that he could use them in the context of an Epicurean lecture to illustrate the foolishness of a lover. This shows that the trope was still popular even if it had not changed much from what the playwrights of Roman New Comedy were dealing with in their work. Many aspects of the *paraclausithyron* trope are alluded to here, such as the leaving of garlands and gifts on the threshold (1177-79), the weeping lover (1177), and the entreating of the door (1179). Most significantly, Lucretius refers directly to the *exclusus amator* and his actions at the door: this is the first time the actual phrase appears in extant Roman literature.

After Lucretius, other poets of the Late Republic took up the theme and changed it for their own, most notably Catullus (*ca*. 85-55 B.C.E.). Copley and others have studied Catullus' use of the *paraclausithyron* in his poems, especially with regard to his augmentation of the trope of the *paraclausithyron*.[39] A prime example of the *paraclausithyron* motif is found in Catullus' poem 68, a lengthy poem that Daniel Garrison calls "an early example of Augustan love elegy" and one that "anticipates many of (its) elements."[40] Catullus 68 is apparently a poem of thanks addressed to a friend who aided Catullus in his love affair with Lesbia: in this poem Catullus addresses the Muses and then enumerates the ways in which his friend has aided him. He then presents a vast

[39] See Copley (1956) 47-53.
[40] Garrison (2012) 151.

array of *exempla* and mythological references, which serve to enliven and also complicate the poem. In addition to this assortment of tropes and mythological allusions that challenge any easy interpretation of the poem, Catullus uses the sort of stream-of-consciousness style that later becomes identified with Tibullus, a style that may be the culprit behind readers' confusion at the structure of the poem.

Within the complex narrative structure of Catullus 68, K.M.W. Shipton (1985) explores the specific elements of the *paraclausithyron*.[41] She wades through the numerous and complicated mythological *exempla* and finds references to the motif within Catullus' use of geographical allusions (52-54), his concerns about love-cares (51), and even his references to storms (63-65), alongside the most obvious reference of Catullus crossing a threshold with Lesbia as his bride (67-72). It is within the paradigm of these allusive amatory motifs that she claims that Catullus "is a considerable innovator" and that he modified the traditional *paraclausithyron* in two main and important ways.[42] The first of these is that Catullus provides a happy ending for his *paraclausithyron* in poem 68 by describing the crossing of the threshold with his lover, which, as Shipton notes, flies in the face of the traditional *paraclausithyron*, where the lover is often left bereft of his beloved and with no recourse. Second, Shipton claims that Catullus innovates by associating the *paraclausithyron* motif with the theme of marriage, which she claims has never before been done by another poet. By adapting the trope with the addition of elements such as the happy ending and marriage motifs, Shipton claims: "Catullus has elevated the *paraclausithyron* genre above its traditional sphere."[43] Thus Catullus, in his

[41] Shipton (1985) 503-520.
[42] Shipton (1985) 517.
[43] Shipton (1985) 519.

adaptation of the traditional trope, adds extra layers of nuance to it, which points to the adaptability of the trope in the hands of the later Roman elegists.

Most importantly, however, Catullus augments the trope by inserting a representation of the *paraclausithyron* within a mythological paradigm: Catullus compares his own relationship with Lesbia to the mythological relationship of Herakles and Hebe, thereby associating the *paraclausithyron* both with a realistic relationship and with a mythological couple for the first time. This augmentation of a traditional motif serves to associate allusive mythology with the poet-lover's relationship by means of discursive and suggestive language, giving a layered effect to his poetry. As a precursor to the later elegists, though not strictly an elegist himself, Catullus' use of the *paraclausithyron* is significant because he exemplifies the way in which the Romans could take a traditional motif and make it their own especially through the use of mythology. In many ways, Catullus re-imagined the *paraclausithyron* for a new generation and paved the way for the later elegists.

After Catullus' innovative use of the trope in poem 68, the Roman elegists also adopted the *paraclausithyron* motif. For the elegists, the *paraclausithyron* was an attractive means by which they could express their own emotions and circumstances, as Copley states: "Not only do Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid give final form to the Roman *paraclausithyron*; in addition they show that to them it occupied a central and dominating position in the poetry of love."[44] Each of the major elegists – Tibullus (*ca.* 55-19 B.C.E.), Propertius (*ca.* 50-15 B.C.E.), and Ovid – made use of the *paraclausithyron* motif in their work.

[44] Copley (1956) 70.

But it was specifically in the hands of the two contemporary elegists, Tibullus and Propertius that the *paraclausithyron* developed and flourished. While many of the features of the trope are present in the elegists' work, they were attracted to the motif, in large part, because the *exclusus amator* figure could be logically associated with the poet-lover himself. As R.O.A.M. Lyne describes the specific use of the *exclusus amator* figure by Tibullus and Propertius: "In the hands of Propertius and Tibullus the topic of the lover's exclusion and plaint had been used with care: they made of it an effective vehicle of romantic expression. Exclusion reveals the lover in an inglorious, humiliated, lonely role: that suited their purpose and in consequence they exploited the scene."[45] Both Tibullus and Propertius, as we shall see, used the *exclusus amator* figure as a channel through which they could present the personalized and subjective situation of the elegiac lover.

These poets, as the chief narrators of their own work, easily fulfilled the role of the *exclusus amator*, which was clearly a subjective one.[46] The subjective voice of the poet, master and main character of his own poetry, engages with the *paraclausithyron* on a more personal and therefore more vivid level. In elegy, the figure of the *exclusus amator* is never presented as a character in a play or in any way removed from the author: rather, the *exclusus amator* functions as the elegist's *ego*, and indeed is a figure in which the subjectivity of the Roman elegist can be fully appreciated.

The poets could also weave the position of the subjective elegiac *ego* together with allusions to mythological heroes or find further innovative ways to associate themselves with other mythological figures, such as Cerberus. As scholars of Roman

[45] Lyne (1980) 247.
[46] On the poetic subjectivity of the elegists, see Greene (1998) 1-17.

elegy continue to claim, it is within the elegiac poet's subjective nature to "describe his situation in quasi-mythological terms"[47] and also to "map himself and his circumstances onto a Hellenistic myth"[48] or other mythological *exempla*. Therefore, the poets are not only able, but even likely to represent themselves as the *exclusus amator* through a subjective, mythological figure like Cerberus. Throughout his history, Cerberus is represented as an object to be conquered, but he is also presented as an ominous, threatening character that is feared and powerful. Indeed, certain aspects of his character easily associate themselves with a subjective, heroic, poet-lover figure.

Thus, the *paraclausithyron* trope and especially the figure of the *exclusus amator* lend themselves to the subjective *ego*, the genre of elegy, and especially to the works of both Tibullus and Propertius. Besides their exploration of the situation of the *exclusus amator*, the authors explored other elements as well, including mythological settings and figures such as Cerberus, who, in addition to functioning as a stand-in for the poet-lover as the *exclusus amator*, could also easily fit into the role of the *custos*. Moreover, not only did the elegists explore the figures and situations representative of the *paraclausithyron* motif, but they also explored the imagery of the door, especially with reference to its *limen* and its function as a barrier.

Conclusions: Cerberus at the *Limen*

The elegiac trope of the *paraclausithyron* became so famous that even the mention of the *limen* or *limina* could bring to mind the fated threshold of an unwilling mistress. Accordingly, the anatomy of the door that excluded the lover also became a

[47] Greene (1998) 42.
[48] Cairns (2006) 211.

subject of concern and focus for the Roman elegists. Jerry DeBrohun (2003) devotes an entire chapter of her book to the study of the *limen* in Propertius.[49] She describes the poetic significance of the doorway: "The *limen*, more than any other single element, was so completely transvalued and incorporated into love elegy's world in the first three books of Propertius (and in love poetry generally) that its presence alone could evoke the entire poet-lover's situation as well as signify the values associated with the process of writing elegy."[50] The *limina* of the Roman world could delineate a variety of thresholds, a fact that the elegists used to their advantage. The threshold could refer to the door of the poet's mistress, the threshold of a temple, the boundaries of a kingdom, the entrances of a city, and indeed even the boundary between life and death.

It is at this ultimate boundary of the *limen* that I suggest the Roman elegists ingeniously locate the figure of Cerberus and negotiate his characteristics in such a way as to emphasize his depiction as a chained, immobile guardian stuck between two worlds. The *limen* of the Underworld, the final boundary across which all humankind must eventually pass, serves as a ready-made example for the threshold of the beloved, where the lover lingers and yearns to enter. The eventuality of crossing into the Underworld after death is juxtaposed against the figure of the shut-out poet-lover, who, try as he might, cannot get across the threshold of his mistress' door. It is the fate of the poet-lover never to achieve what it is he most desires, and what it is he most thinks that he deserves.

On this threshold stands Cerberus, the definitive liminal mythological character, immobile and chained to the gates of the Underworld, once taken captive by the hero Herakles and finally held hostage by the Underworld itself, who serves to illustrate the

[49] For an extensive discussion of the *limen*, see DeBrohun (2003) 118-155.
[50] DeBrohun (2003) 118.

poet-lover, captive to his mistress, but ultimately captive to the act of love and to elegy itself. Not only does Cerberus represent the shut-out poet-lover because of his position at the *limen*, but also because as soon as someone comes into contact with Cerberus, either as the hero to conquer him or as a soul seeking to gain entrance to the Underworld after death, he immediately assumes an either dominant or submissive attitude.[51] He fawns upon the soul who is allowed into the Underworld, but he barks at and is vicious towards those who try to transcend their bounds into a realm where they do not belong. Cerberus' physical and vocal attributes express aspects of the canine as a poet-lover who can use his voice and his poetry to be either seductive or frightening; thus these attributes associate him closely with the ambiguous role of the poet-lover, both aggressive and docile, allowing Cerberus to function even as the *exclusus amator* himself.

The shut-out poet-lover, the *exclusus amator*, is bound to his mistress and to love in the same way that Cerberus is chained to the Underworld. It is this correlation between poet-lover and the mythological monster, Cerberus, to which we now turn in the following two chapters. Chapter One explores the depiction and function of Cerberus in Tibullus 1.3 as the *exclusus amator* figure and as a character that illuminates the broader experience of the elegiac poet-lover through his physical aspects and bound condition. Chapter Two considers the image and function of Cerberus as the poet-lover in Propertius 4.7, where he is presented not as an inescapably chained figure as in Tibullus 1.3, but where he appears in a partially liberated depiction and is able to engage with pointedly elegiac experiences that offers another suggestive expression of the elegiac poet-lover.

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[51] See Hesiod, *Theogony* 767-773 (discussed above).

CHAPTER ONE

Cerberus as the *Exclusus Amator* in Tibullus 1.3

This chapter investigates the role of Cerberus in Tibullus 1.3 and its correlation to the *exclusus amator* figure. I begin with an introduction to the poet Tibullus, his works and legacy, including the fact that scholars have afforded him very little critical attention, especially with respect to his use of mythological themes and *exempla* in his poetry. Following the introduction on Tibullus' larger reception, I focus primarily on his representation of the Underworld in the latter half of poem 1.3.

After the discussion of Tibullus' imaginative adaptation of mythological figures to fit into an amatory framework, I begin the discussion of Cerberus, the one figure in Tibullus' description of Tartarus whose complete purpose has not been fully examined by scholars. I claim that Tibullus included Cerberus purposefully and very carefully situated him within a mythological paradigm, surrounded by the amatory language of the *exclusus amator*, in order to create a direct analogy between Cerberus with his specific guardian function in the Underworld, and the poet-lover, who acts as the *exclusus amator*, *custos*, and *ianitor* figures within the *paraclausithyron* motif.

Furthermore, I argue that Tibullus provided the figure of Cerberus, and presented him as an elegiac lover, both to delineate to his readers the difficult nature of love and to underscore the dismal situation of the poet-lover. Tibullus meticulously adapts the dark and traditionally unsympathetic character of Cerberus into a substitute for the poet-lover, an unexpected but quite ingenious turn. Like the poet-lover neglected on the doorstep, pining after a mistress and a love he cannot obtain, Cerberus is trapped in a liminal space

where he is shackled and alone. He is a fixture in the Underworld and he is ultimately needed for that world to function, but he is fettered and has no authority or even ability to wield any personal agency. This makes him a suggestive figure for the poet-lover, fixed and immobile at the door of his beloved.

Tibullus: an Introduction

Tibullus' canon is rather small, containing only two full books of elegies numbering a total of sixteen poems.[52] Many of his poems deal with the theme of his desire for an idyllic pastoral existence, in which he often contrasts city life with country life. Although his work is imbued with idyllic and pastoral contexts, Tibullus maintains the typical poetic stance of the urbane Roman elegist through his firm positioning in a variety of elegiac themes and motifs.[53] For example, Tibullus presents the elegiac themes, among others, of the famously "shut-out lover," the unattainable and fickle *puella*, and the lover enslaved in *servitium amoris.*

The relative importance and even ranking of the Roman elegists continue to hold the attention of scholars.[54] A famous quote by the Roman rhetorician Quintilian has long puzzled scholars, leaving them to wonder at the comparative merits of the elegists and their popularity in their own time.

> Elegia quoque Graecos provocamus, cuius mihi tersus atque elegans maxime videtur auctor Tibullus. Sunt qui Propertium malint. Ovidius utroque lascivior, sicut durior Gallus.[55]

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[52] On the elegies of Tibullus in general, see Putnam (1973); Lyne (1980); Murgatroyd (1980); Cairns (1979), (2002).
[53] For more on the subject matter of the elegists and Tibullus in particular, see Lyne (1980) 62-81.
[54] See Cairns (1979) 1-7.
[55] The text of Quintilian is from Winterbottom (1970). All translations of Greek and Latin are mine unless otherwise noted.

> We also rival the Greeks with respect to elegy, of whom the author Tibullus seems to me especially polished and graceful. There are those who prefer Propertius. Ovid is more roguish than both, just as Gallus is harsher.
>
> (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 10.1.93)

Readers have speculated about the nuanced meanings of these descriptions. Did the *tersus* and *elegans* Tibullus exert a fastidious and succinct Callimachean-style poetic authority, or was some other meaning of the adjectives attached to his work? Was Ovid considered playful or luxuriant or even lustful? Was Gallus really harsher because he was less refined in his style? Why does Propertius receive no descriptive adjectives? Although Quintilian articulates his own sentiments, there are few who deny that he was writing a type of Roman literary criticism and that his opinions were most likely held by many.[56] The pressing question, then, is why Tibullus was held in such high esteem and heavily lauded in his contemporary times,[57] but Propertius was seemingly discounted? While these questions may never be adequately answered, the significance the ancients gave Tibullus lends a particular validity to his works that has been, to some extent, ignored by modern scholars.

Some scholars have grappled with the notion that Tibullus may have been considered by the Romans to be a more adept and even better poet than Propertius.[58] However, the comparative amount of current secondary literature written about Tibullus and Propertius speaks unequivocally to the modern popularity of the latter. While the secondary literature about Tibullus is scant and chiefly emphasizes his expression of pastoral yearnings in his poetry, books on nearly every literary theme in the works of Propertius can be found.

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[56] For further analysis of Quintilian's quote, see Cairns (1979) 4.
[57] In addition to Quintilian's quote, Tibullus is also praised by Ovid at *Amores* 3.9.31-32.
[58] For example, see Luck (1979) 78-80.

One of the elegiac themes for which Propertius has been celebrated and Tibullus has been largely ignored is the poetic use of mythological allusion. An example of this critical imbalance is R.O.A.M. Lyne's enthusiastic appraisal of Propertius and his use of mythology: "Fabulous peaks and fabulous troughs are characteristic of him, and so is an uncertain attitude towards his own fabulous feelings. And to express these characteristic moods myth was a favoured and most useful medium."[59] Yet note that in the same study, Lyne also claims: "Mythology did not, it seems, offer Tibullus a necessary or attractive medium for communicating ideas and feelings."[60] Thus, not only does Lyne overtly praise Propertius for his "fabulous" use of mythological allusion, but he also goes out of his way to discount Tibullus' poetic expertise or even interest in mythology.

Most scholars, if they afford Tibullus any attention at all, focus on his so-called *stream of consciousness* writing style. For example, E.J. Kenney states: "As a poet, Tibullus is, perhaps, more self-centred than the other elegists. He seems to live in a dream-world of his own."[61] A bit later in the same chapter, Kenney continues: "Often, it seems as use though he lets his mind, his imagination, wander from theme to theme."[62] In a provocative contrast to such interpretations, Paul Allen Miller offers a reading of Tibullus that may help to explain why scholars have given him less attention with respect to his mythological prowess.[63] Miller claims that critics have been reading Tibullus as "real" and have subsequently grappled with understanding his style, rather than accepting that Tibullus was consciously working within a "dream world." Additionally, Miller

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[59] Lyne (1980) 86.
[60] Lyne (1980) 149.
[61] Kenney (1982) 412.
[62] Kenney (1982) 413.
[63] See Miller (2004) 95-125 for a recent and thorough analysis of the dream-world state in Tibullus and for a discussion of Tibullus' use of mythology.

argues, the fact that Tibullus was writing in post-civil war Rome contributed to his imaginative style and so separates it from the likes of Propertius, who was most likely writing a few years later. As Miller notes: "The dream through its ability to maintain contradictory relations, therefore, becomes the sole medium able to achieve a momentary and longed-for coherence."[64] Thus, Tibullus cannot always be read as the other poets are and instead must be viewed through the lens of his presentation of an imaginary and symbolic world that occupies a specific moment in time.

While there is no doubt that Tibullus' style of writing demands the reader's careful attention because of its uniquely connective compositional structure, other facets of his work also require attention. Specifically, in contrast to Lyne, but in accordance with Miller, I claim that Tibullus did make frequent and allusive use of mythological *exempla* within his dream-like writing. In the following analysis, I demonstrate how Tibullus uses mythological *exempla* to provide an effective medium for presenting his own thoughts and feelings as a poet-lover, and that he did so specifically using Underworld mythology and the character of Cerberus.

The Elegiac Underworld in Tibullus 1.3

As a remarkable showcase of his writing style, Tibullus 1.3 in particular illustrates how he knits together various scenes, ending with a well-crafted and layered description of a mythological Underworld. The first half of the poem (1-56) elucidates the situation of the poem, namely that Tibullus has left his beloved Delia and gone on an expedition, and that by so doing he has disobeyed Love. The beginning of the poem (1-12) sets the real-time scene of the poem: his companion Messalla has left Tibullus, who has been

[64] Miller (2004) 125.

taken ill on the island of Phaeacia.[65] The reference to the island of Phaeacia immediately brings to mind Homer's epic poem, the *Odyssey*, when on his journey home from the Trojan War, Odysseus is shipwrecked on this island after setting out from Kalypso's grasp on Ogygia.[66] Though his ultimate goal is to return to Penelope, Odysseus is also apprehended on Phaeacia and is thereby kept away from his wife/beloved for an even longer duration. Thus Tibullus suggests an allusion between Odysseus and himself, as well as between Penelope and Delia as the beloved from whom they are separated, and thereby lends a mythological tone to the poem.[67]

In his sickness, Tibullus laments that he left Delia and Rome in the first place and beseeches *Mors* to stay away. Tibullus then looks back at the many omens that should have prevented his departure (13-20). Tibullus exhorts that no one make a mistake such as his:

> Audeat invito ne quis discedere Amore,
> aut sciat egressum se prohibente deo.[68]
>
> Let no man dare to depart when Love is unwilling,
> or he may learn that he left when the god was forbidding it.
>
> (Tibullus 1.3.21-22)

Because Delia did not want Tibullus to leave on account of his safety (hence her making sacrifices for him) and because Tibullus himself did not wish to go because they were in love, the personified Love was prohibiting the journey from happening at all. As Paul

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[65] Phaeacia is the name Tibullus gives to the island of Corcyra. For more on the name and its mythological undertones, see Murgatroyd (1980) 103.
[66] See *Odyssey* Books 6-8 for the Phaeacian episode.
[67] In the ancient tradition, the island of Phaeacia lies near Elysium in mythical geography. Thus the mention of this island located near Elysium also resonates with Odysseus' journey to the Underworld, which he must undertake in order to be reunited with his wife. See Cairns (1979) 44-48 for further discussion on Tibullus as a "pseudo-Odysseus."
[68] The text of Tibullus is from Putnam (1973).

Murgatroyd notes: "(I)n making the journey Tibullus was disobeying Love, and his present situation is described as a punishment for this bold disobedience, since Love is a god and must be obeyed."[69] It is this punishment that Tibullus accepts, for he knows he was disobedient, and he warns other lovers to not be as foolish as he was.

Tibullus then wonders if all the sacrifices that Delia made on his behalf (23-32) and all of his own pious observations of his family gods (33-34) will work to keep him alive even though he has sinned against Love. Tibullus looks back at the ages gone before, at a peaceful and ideal Golden Age when there were no expeditions on which to travel and when men would not have to leave their homes and lovers.[70]

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 terris
presserat externa navita merce ratem.
Illo non validus subiit iuga tempore taurus,
non domito frenos ore momordit equus,
non domus ulla fores habuit, non fixus in agris,
qui regeret certis finibus arva, lapis.
ipsae mella dabant quercus, ultroque ferebant
obvia securis ubera lactis oves.
Non acies, non ira fuit, non bella, nec ensem
immiti saevus duxerat arte faber.
Nunc Iove sub domino caedes et vulnera semper,
nunc mare, nunc leti mille repente viae.

How well they were living when Saturn was king, before
the earth was thrown open for distant travels!
Not yet had the pine despised the sea-blue waves,
nor offered the spread sail to the winds.
Nor the wandering sailor, seeking profits in foreign lands,
had loaded his raft with foreign merchandise.
In that time, the strong bull had not yielded to the yoke,

[69] Murgatroyd (1980) 107.
[70] For a broad discussion of the "Golden Age" and the Augustan poets' treatment of this theme, see Reckford (1958).

the horse did not chew on the bit in its oppressed mouth,
nor did any house have doors, no rock was laid in the pastures,
which would rule the field with fixed boundaries.
The very oaks were giving honey, and of their own accord
sheep were bearing udders exposed with serene milk.
There was no battle-line, no anger, no wars, nor had
the fierce blacksmith forged a sword with his savage skill.
Now, under the rule of Jove, slaughter and wounds, always,
now the sea, now a thousand ways to die suddenly.

(Tibullus 1.3.35-50)

Tibullus knows that this idyllic Golden Age has passed, and no matter how much he wishes for animals that are not tamed and for lands that are not visited, he knows that he lives in a different time.[71] No longer are men and animals free to be as they should, but they are bound by want of gain and by the literal yokes of their masters. No longer are doors unnecessary as they once were (43), but now they are both needed and barred shut. The contemporary doors are not only shut to ensure security, but this image is also suggestive of the elegiac *paraclausithyron* motif, when lovers are left to pine beside shut doors bereft of the beloved. Because he cannot exist in a time in which he would not have left Delia and Rome in the first place, Tibullus accepts that he may die in his sickness on the island, and, in true epic fashion, hopes that at the very least he will be remembered.

Following his description of the excellence of the Golden Age and his lament at its loss, Tibullus imagines his own death has come to pass (51-56). In his fantasized epitaph, Tibullus suggests the wording for his stone, should he actually die on the island:

Quod si fatales iam nunc explevimus annos,
fac lapis inscriptis stet super ossa notis:
HIC IACET IMMITI CONSUMPTUS MORTE TIBULLUS,
MESSALLAM TERRA DUM SEQUITURQUE MARI.

[71] For a further discussion of Tibullus' interest in the Golden Age in poems 1.3 and also 1.10, see Murgatroyd (1980) 101, 280.

> But if even now I have completed my destined years,
> see to it that a stone stands above my bones with these
> engraved characters:
> HERE LIES TIBULLUS CONSUMED BY A HARSH DEATH,
> WHILE FOLLOWING MESSALLA ON LAND AND SEA.
>
> (Tibullus 1.3.53-56)

As Tibullus imagines his own epitaph, he mentions himself by name in the actual composition of the poem, setting himself between the ideal Golden Age (35-50) he just described and the ideal Elysium (57-64) that is yet to be delineated. In fact, Tibullus only mentions himself by name on one other occasion in his entire corpus, in a dedication at 1.9.83.[72] Therefore, the inclusion of this epitaph here is significant: it places Tibullus textually between his two representations of a perfect and preferred life. The fact that he includes a tangible, textual representation of his separation in the composition of the poem itself emphasizes the liminal state that he occupies.

In the second half of the poem, following the epitaph and Tibullus' ideas about his own death and funeral, Tibullus describes Elysium. The consolation following his death is that he will have a happy afterlife. Tibullus describes the gorgeous landscape of the Elysian Fields:

> Sed me, quod facilis tenero sum semper Amori, 57
> ipsa Venus campos ducet in Elysios
> hic choreae cantusque vigent, passimque vagantes
> dulce sonant tenui gutture carmen aves; 60
> fert casiam non culta seges, totosque per agros
> floret odoratis terra benigna rosis;
> ac iuvenum series teneris immixta puellis
> ludit, et adsidue proelia miscet Amor.
> Illic est, cuicumque rapax mors venit amanti, 65
> et gerit insigni myrtea serta coma.
>
> But, because I am always easy to soft Love, 57
> Venus herself will lead me into the Elysian fields.

[72] So noted by Putnam (1973) 82.

There the songs and dances flourish, and wandering everywhere
birds sing a sweet song from their tender throats;
the untilled field bears wild cinnamon, and through all the fields
the gentle earth blooms with fragrant roses;
and the group of youths plays joined with gentle maidens,
and Love constantly mixes up his battles.
He is there, whatever lover violent death overtakes,
and he wears myrtle garlands on his illustrious hair.

(Tibullus 1.3.57-66)

Here is Tibullus' Elysium, full of happy lovers and idyllic pastoral fields and flowers. This is the first full description of Elysium in Latin literature,[73] and it is striking that it takes place in an amatory context. Furthermore, in contrast to Vergil's later description of the Underworld in *Aeneid* 6 (628-897), Tibullus' portrayal focuses on the lovers and not the heroes. Tibullus' Elysium, shining and aromatic, is suitable for lovers, who, for Tibullus, are the true heroes. Indeed, the beauty of the description of Elysium serves to provide a greater contrast to the following description of Tartarus.

Tibullus' version of Elysium, like the Golden Age he described earlier, is a world free from cares: it is a *terra benigna* (62) and it represents the future of fortunate lovers. In poem 1.3, Tibullus compares Elysium with the Golden Age because of its association with peace and lovers, while he links his own present day to the image of Tartarus because of their savagery and wickedness.[74] To Tibullus both the past and the hoped-for future hold a similar appeal, one in which animals are untethered (41-42), doors are unnecessary (43), the land is open and free of boundaries (44), and where, most importantly, lovers are happy.

Moreover, in this poem, Tibullus the poet-lover suggests that he occupies a liminal state between the Golden Age and Elysium. His contemporary life is full of

[73] See Putnam (1973) 82.
[74] Murgatroyd (1980) 117 makes this association.

warfare and complications, a world in which he as a poet-lover does not fit. In fact, Tibullus presents himself as occupying a liminal state in five different ways in the poem: (1) spatially, (2) physically, (3) emotionally, (4) textually, and (5) symbolically. He is (1) spatially located on the island of Corcyra, stuck between Rome where Delia is and the expedition on which he was originally heading with Messalla. He is (2) physically ill, stuck between health and possible death. He is (3) emotionally torn between his love for Delia and his duty to Messalla. He is (4) textually in a liminal state via the location of his imagined epitaph in the text itself, situated between the description of the Golden Age and the description of Elysium. Finally, Tibullus presents himself as a liminal character through the (5) symbolic representation of himself, the poet-lover as the figure of Cerberus later in the poem. Tibullus uses the liminal position of the poet-lover to explore the nature of the poet and his location within the world. This liminality will be further explored later in this chapter.

From the rewards of Elysium, Tibullus then turns his attention to the gloomy part of the Underworld, where all the sinners are gathered together. It is here, listed among his fellow Underworld residents, that Cerberus is first presented.

at scelerata iacet sedes in nocte profunda
    abdita, quam circum flumina nigra sonant:
Tisiphoneque impexa feros pro crinibus angues
    saevit, et huc illuc impia turba fugit:
tum niger in porta serpentum Cerberus ore
    stridet et aeratas excubat ante fores.
Illic Iunonem tentare Ixionis ausi
    versantur celeri noxia membra rota,
porrectusque novem Tityos per iugera terrae
    assiduas atro viscere pascit aves.
Tantalus est illic, et circum stagna: sed acrem
    iam iam porturi deserit unda sitim.

But a profane place lies in the vast night

hidden, around which black rivers resound:
Tisiphone, tangled with wild snakes in her hair
rages, and here and there the wicked crowd flees:
then at the gate, black Cerberus hisses with a
mouth of snakes and keeps watch before the bronze doors.
Here the hurtful limbs of Ixion, who dared to
assail Juno, turned on a quick wheel.
And Tityos extended over nine acres of earth
feeds the greedy birds with his dark guts.
Here is Tantalus, and around him pools: but again and
again, the waves escape the sharp thirst for drinking.

(Tibullus 1.3.65-78)

In contrast with the fragrant roses and happy youths of Elysium, Tibullus' Tartarus is full of darkness, snakes, and pain. Tisiphone, the chief of the Furies, rules over Tartarus just as Venus or Amor rules in Elysium. And Cerberus, the custodian of the gates of the Underworld, stands guard, while no such guard is needed in safe Elysium.

The wicked Tartarus, full of wicked souls, specifically presents some of the most famous sinners against love: Ixion, Tityos, and Tantalus. Tibullus here repositions the stories of these notorious figures, who are well-known for trying to cross the boundary between mortals and immortals, and who are eternally punished for trying to do so, as he focuses primarily on how their actions represent depravity against love itself. Ixion's great sin against love (and his most famous sin in general) was that he attempted to assault Hera. Zeus, in his wrath, sentenced Ixion to be bound on a wheel in the Underworld, which could never stop spinning.[75] Tityos attempted to rape Leto and was killed – either by her children, Apollo and Artemis, or by Zeus – and then stretched out in the Underworld. Because he was a giant he covered *novem iugera* (74) with his mass

[75] See Pindar *Pythian* 2.21-43 for a description of Ixion's transgression and torment; see Gantz (1978) 21-26 for discussion.

easily.[76] Additionally, his liver was pecked out by a different number of birds and later on grows back again.[77] Tantalus' story is more varied and the crimes that landed him in the Underworld occupy a longer list. In the most common versions of the story, Tantalus either disclosed secrets entrusted to him by Zeus or fed his son Pelops to the gods for dinner.[78] However, the most appropriate reason why Tantalus would fit into Tibullus' elegiac Underworld is his lesser-known crime of abducting Ganymede.

Ganymede was a beautiful Trojan youth whom Zeus brought to the heavens to be the cupbearer of the gods and Zeus' own lover.[79] Paulus Orosius, a fifth-century C.E. theologian and historian, who wrote the longest surviving summary of ancient Roman history spanning eleven centuries, preserves the story of Tantalus stealing away Ganymede in his *Histories*, and claims as his source the Hellenistic poet, Phanocles.[80] The literary work of Phanocles, a Greek elegiac poet whose works date from the fourth century B.C.E., survives in only a few extant fragments and shows that he was the author of a poem on pederasty, which confirms a possible interest in the Ganymede account.[81] It is possible, given the Roman elegists' familiarity with and predilection for Hellenistic poetry, that Phanocles himself may have been the source for this unique and seldom-

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[76] See Homer *Odyssey* 11.576-581 for a description of Tityos' transgression and torment; see Sourvinou-Inwood (1986) 37-58 for discussion.
[77] See Lucretius *DRN* 3.992-994 for a description of the vultures as part of the punishment of Ixion.
[78] For a description of Tantalus' transgression and torment, see Homer *Odyssey* 11.582-592. For further discussion on the sins of Tantalus, see Murgatroyd (1980) 123.
[79] For the earliest account of Ganymede being brought to join the immortals, see Homer *Iliad* 20.232-235.
[80] Orosius *Histories* 1.12.
[81] For more on the extant fragments of Phanocles and their subject matter, see Watson (2014).

referenced version of the Tantalus transgression story in Tibullus.[82] Whatever the source, the story of transgressed love fits nicely into the Tibullan Underworld.

It is important to notice the absence of one particularly famous Underworld sinner: Sisyphus. There is hardly an Underworld representation that omits the famous Sisyphus, locked in his endless torment of rolling a large boulder up a hill, only to watch it roll back down again, repeating this deed endlessly.[83] Yet, Tibullus does not include him. The reason for Sisyphus' absence here is the fact that there is no story, not even an obscure Hellenistic one, situating Sisyphus as a sinner against love; as such, he does not fit into Tibullus' Tartarus. Readers of the Tibullan Underworld would expect to find Sisyphus in an account of Tartarus and yet Tibullus omitted him, which demonstrates the very specific repositioning towards an amatory orientation of Tibullus' representation. There is no room in the Tibullan elegiac Underworld for a figure whose history does not include a transgression against love, even if such a depiction goes against the dominant mythological tradition.

In further assessing Tibullus' engagement with the literary mythological tradition, the most comprehensive and recent study of Tibullus' representation of the Underworld in poem 1.3 has been done by Luke Houghton (2007), who claims that the Underworld section of Tibullus 1.3 can be appreciated "as a model of the means by which an author can manipulate traditional material to fulfill a particular generic purpose." In agreement with Houghton's argument, other scholars have presented evidence that Tibullus modeled his description of Tartarus after Lucretius' representation in book 3 of *De Rerum Natura*,

[82] See the suggestions of Hunter (2006) esp. 50-68.
[83] For a depiction of the torments of Sisyphus, see Homer *Odyssey* 11.593-600.

but changed it in such a way as to fit his own elegiac purposes.[84] Scholars have noted verbal and linguistic echoes, similar imagery and inverted aims, all of which show a relationship between the two accounts.

The Lucretian and Tibullan Underworlds

While proving that Tibullus explicitly copied Lucretius' version of the Underworld is nearly impossible, there is compelling evidence that Tibullus was, in fact, responding in part to Lucretius' Underworld. According to A.A.R. Henderson, who has done a thorough analysis of the two representations: "Tibullus is here concerned to make a stand against Lucretius' teaching on death and romantic love."[85] Both authors presented similar figures and geography, though their ultimate goals in describing the Underworld were quite different. The similarities between the two presentations are well worth investigating in order to show the perceptible manipulation of Underworld figures and geography by both authors, and how their treatment of the material suited their own generic purposes.

While Tibullus had a specific elegiac purpose in describing his Underworld, for Lucretius, the purpose of his representation of the Underworld is to inform his readers that these stories are not true, but rather that the experiences of life are represented via the stories. Lucretius then goes through specific parts of the Underworld, listing the figures therein and giving real-life meanings to the symbolic stories.

> Atque ea nimirum quaecumque Acherunte profundo
> prodita sunt esse, in vita sunt omnia nobis.
> Nec miser impendens magnum timet aere saxum
> Tantalus, ut famast, cassa formidine torpens,

[84] For example, Henderson (1969) 649-652.
[85] Henderson (1969) 649.

> sed magis in vita divum metus urget inanis
> mortalis, casumque timent quem cuique ferat fors. [86]
>
> And indubitably, whatsoever such things are revealed
> to be in deep Acheron, all those things exist in life for us.
> Wretched Tantalus does not fear a huge hanging rock in the
> air, as the story goes, stiff because of unnecessary fear,
> but rather, in life an empty fear of the gods drives mortals
> and they fear the misfortune which chance may bring to each.
>
> (Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* 3.978-983)

For the next forty lines, Lucretius enumerates the Underworld sinners and explains their symbolism in real life. For example, in the passage quoted above, Tantalus is a representation of mortals' fear of the gods and misfortune (980-981). Later on in this lengthy section, Lucretius mentions Sisyphus, so noticeably absent from Tibullus' list of transgressors against love, who appears on Lucretius' list of sinners as a figure for political ambition (995-997).

But it is the figure of Tityos that is significant on this list, for Lucretius claims he is symbolic of the real-life torture of love-cares (984-994). In the mythological tradition, as Tityos lies bound – covering not only his traditional *novem iugura*, but even *terrai totius orbem* (989) – and vultures peck out his liver. However, in Lucretius' version, it appears something a little different is happening.

> Sed Tityos nobis hic est, in amore iacentem
> quem volucres lacerant atque exest anxius angor
> aut alia quavis scindunt cuppedine curae.
>
> But for us Tityos is this one, lying there in love
> whom the winged creatures mangle and anxious worry eats
> or whom cares cleave by any other sort of desire.
>
> (Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* 3.992-994)

[86] The text of Lucretius is from Kenney (1984).

Lucretius, in an ingenious turn, presents the traditional story of Tityos being eaten by "winged creatures" (*volucres*, 993), presumably the vultures of tradition, but takes it even further in order to strengthen his own interpretation of the story. For Lucretius, the story of Tityos is symbolic of the pains of love and teaches mortals the perils of such pursuits. First, Lucretius describes Tityos as *iacentem in amore* (992), very much as an elegiac lover lies in inactivity.[87] Second, the *volucres* (993), while perhaps standing in for the traditional vultures of Tityos' story, also refer simply to "winged things," which could be an allusive reference to the flying Cupids. Third, Lucretius claims that "cares" (*curae*, 994) cut at Tityos by means of "desire" (*cuppedine*, 994).[88] The relation of *cuppedine* with Cupid and sexual desire is evident in the word itself; indeed, Kenney claims that Lucretius is "playing with words" and that "such etymologizing is… characteristic of him."[89] Furthermore, the noun *cura* is often used to refer specifically to "love pains" or as a synonym in elegy for the beloved and is a pointed reference to the lover's plight,[90] especially because of its relationship with *cuppidine* in the same line.

Although both Tibullus and Lucretius are using the figure of Tityos in an amatory context, each of them is doing so in an entirely different way. For Tibullus, Tityos is a transgressor against love and his back-story affirms that fact; as such he is forever tortured in Tartarus for his crime. However, for Lucretius, Tityos is a representation of the perils of love and the earthly experiences that mortals suffer on account of pursuing an amatory existence.[91] The Lucretian Tityos is not tortured for his crimes against love,

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[87] For more on the verb *iaceo* and its place in amatory contexts, see Fletcher (1968) 887.
[88] On the unique spelling of this word, see Kenney (1984) 226.
[89] Kenney (1984) 226.
[90] So noted by Miller (2002) 165, 170.
[91] For further discussion on this section, see Kenney (1984) 224-225 and Wallach (1976).

but for the very desire of love itself.[92] Thus the Lucretian Tityos can be read as a stand-in for the elegiac poet lover, while the Tibullan Tityos is its criminal antithesis. If it were, as some claim, Tibullus' goal to counter the rationalizing, anti-romantic feelings of Lucretius with his own representation of the Underworld, it appears he did so by inverting Lucretius' Underworld and using his own elegiac portrayal of the Underworld as a place to explore the multi-faceted nature of the lover. Moreover, just as Tibullus uses mythological allusion to reposition and augment Homeric and Greek mythological traditions about the Underworld, here too he is seen as an innovator of Lucretius and the Roman literary traditions of the Underworld. In so doing, Tibullus orients the Underworld to fit his very specific amatory purposes.

Finally, after his lengthy description of the figures of the Underworld, Lucretius mentions the Furies and Cerberus. With only three lines for both figures, it seems that Cerberus and the Furies are mentioned in a cursory manner, almost as an afterthought to Lucretius' Underworld. As such, these figures are mentioned only for their traditional presence in the Underworld and seem to hold no significant symbolic meaning.

> Cerberus et Furiae iam vero et lucis egestas,
> Tartarus horriferos eructans faucibus aestus,
> qui neque sunt usquam nec possunt esse profecto.
>
> Cerberus and the Furies now truly and the lack of light,
> Tartarus belching forth from its jaws terrible heat-swells,
> who are not anywhere nor are actually able to exist.
>
> (Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* 3.1011-1013)

[92] Yet note at the outset of the *DRN*, Lucretius asserts that the very creation of the Universe is predicated on Venus as *voluptas* (1.1) and striking *amor* into the hearts of all living things (1.20).

While there may or may not be some error in the transmission of the text here,[93] the general sense of the lines remains, which is that according to Lucretius, the Underworld cannot exist as it is traditionally presented.[94] With this brief summary, Lucretius indicates that he has given a satisfactory account of the Underworld, how each sinner therein symbolizes the irrational fears of mortals and how the entire image is a figurative setting that cannot truly exist. The fact that he ends his account of the Underworld with a brief mention of Cerberus and the Furies shows how they serve as fixtures of the Underworld, even though they have no real or significant meaning for Lucretius' ultimate goal of providing real-life meaning to his symbolic Underworld.

In comparing the Lucretian and Tibullan Underworlds, the manipulation of the Underworld figures by both authors for their own respective generic purposes becomes apparent. Lucretius used the setting and characters to teach that the Underworld is merely a representation of the fears of men, while Tibullus uses the Underworld to illustrate the afterlife of those who love, and those who sin against love. Each author presents a similar list of sinners – Lucretius mentions Tantalus, Tityos, and Sisyphus, while Tibullus situates Ixion, Tityos, and Tantalus within his Underworld – yet Tibullus omits Sisyphus and Lucretius leaves out Ixion. The probable reason for the absence of Sisyphus in Tibullus' Underworld is the lack of any backstory where he could be considered a "sinner against love." Kenney discusses the omission of Ixion from the Lucretian account at length, and concludes: "Ixion would have duplicated Sisyphus; as a type of those who act without *consilium*, *ratio* or *virtus* he would have lacked definition."[95] In addition, both authors include Cerberus and the Furies in their Underworlds; however, Lucretius

[93] Kenney (1984) 228.
[94] On the difficulty of these lines and postulated emendations, see Kenney (1984) 229-230.
[95] Kenney (1984) 229.

mentions them only by way of summary while Tibullus specifically mentions Tisiphone, the chief of the Furies, to stand in opposition to Venus, thereby once again highlighting his amatory theme and the elegiac purpose of his Underworld.

Tibullus places Tisiphone in his Tartarus in a direct and obvious contrast to Venus in Elysium. Tisiphone is described by Houghton as a "sadistic dominatrix" and he claims that it was her purpose as the presiding goddess of Tartarus to "ruthlessly driv(e) the shades of the wicked in confusion before her," while Venus similarly "leads her willing votaries into the happiness of Elysium."[96] Houghton also highlights the comparison of Tisiphone to the characteristics of the elegiac mistress. One example is that Tisiphone is described with respect to her hair (*crinibus,* 67), which points to the physical descriptions that the elegiac poets often use for their lovers.[97] Therefore, Tisiphone as a harsh mistress easily fits into the elegiac Tartarus among the sinners against love.

While it is not surprising that Cerberus would be included among the conventional list of residents of the Underworld among such ominous figures as Ixion and Tantalus, the fact remains that Cerberus traditionally has no direct amatory relevance such that he would be included in Tibullus' love-themed Tartarus. It has become evident in this analysis that Tibullus presents each of the other figures for their relevance to the theme of love, including the sinners against love and in the case of Tisiphone, as a direct counterpart to the Venus of Elysium. Therefore, the presence of Cerberus in Tibullus' Underworld requires further investigation since it seems Tibullus would not include a figure in his Underworld that did not have amatory significance.

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[96] Houghton (2007) 161.

[97] For the focus on the hair of the mistress, see Ovid *Amores* 3.1.7, when even the personified Elegy is described in terms of her perfumed hair and its knotted style.

Cerberus in Tibullus' Underworld

What stands out most in Tibullus' description of Cerberus is the elegiac language used to portray him, in that his location is suggestive of the *paraclausithyron* motif.

> tum niger in porta serpentum Cerberus ore
> stridet et aeratas excubat ante fores.
>
> Then at the gate black Cerberus hisses from his mouth
> of snakes and keeps watch before the bronze doors.
>
> (Tibullus 1.3.71-72)

Cerberus, that traditional fixture of the Underworld, is presented as all alone, keeping watch before bronze doors, hissing from his mouth of snakes. While the entire image adds to the uncanny feeling of Tartarus, the specific vocabulary and imagery of these two lines is particularly expressive, as Houghton notes: "The language in which his vigil is described… can scarcely fail to evoke the position of the prostrate lover-poet of elegy before his mistress' bolted door… although there is perhaps a hint here too of the *custos* whose vigilance thwarts the lover's attempts to gain admission."[98] Houghton's suggestion that the Tibullan Cerberus can be read as a *custos* figure who blocks the lover's entry would thereby represent an adaptation of his Greek mythological role; in the Hesiodic narrative, Cerberus is seen to "fawn on" (σαίνω) souls as they enter the Underworld, but eventually his main task is to guard that they do not leave.[99]

The differentiation between the *custos* and the "prostrate lover-poet" or *exclusus amator* figure is important, since both characters are essential to the elegiac trope of the *paraclausithyron*. The *custos* is a guardian, an attendant, or even a jailor. The *exclusus*

[98] Houghton (2007) 161.
[99] See Hesiod, *Theogony* 767-774. For a comprehensive discussion about the entrance to the Underworld, especially with regard to how those within are confined, bound, and unable to escape, see Garcia Jr. (2013) 221-229.

amator is the "shut-out lover," who is locked out of the doors of his mistress, typically lying prostrate and miserable on her doorstep. As Frank Copley notes, the *custos* is "a barrier between the lover and his lady" and also "stands as a subsidiary line of defense against the lover, who must get by two obstacles if he is to gain possession of his beloved."[100] But the *exclusus amator* is famously the lover who is shut out by the doors and away from his lover, and who must often persuade the *custos* figure to allow him entry – hence Copley's "two obstacles," both door and *custos*.

Houghton's reference to language that is characteristic of the shut-out lover with respect to the description of Cerberus is evident in the use of the words *excubat*, meaning "keeps watch" or "sleeps outside of the house," and *ante fores*, "in front of the doors" (72).[101] Note, too, that the language and imagery in this couplet also point to the traditional role of the *custos* figure, which is to guard the gates of the *domina*, just as Cerberus guards the gates of Hades. The specific nuance lies within the verb *excubo*,[102] which can mean simply "to sleep outside" or, in a military sense, "to keep watch" or even "to guard"; here the ambiguity of the verb positions Cerberus firmly within both character descriptions, both *custos* and *exclusus amator*. Thus, the language of this passage illuminates the dual role of the poet as both a shut-out lover as well as the *custos* of the door, and thereby advocates a comparison of the lover-poet to Cerberus.

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[100] Copley (1956) 39.
[101] For the use of *excubo* in elegiac amatory contexts, see Propertius 2.30.9 and Ovid *Amores* 3.11.12. For the use of the phrase *ante fores*, see Propertius 3.7.72 and 4.9.32.
[102] On the verb's use in military contexts, see *OLD s.v. excubo*.

***Ante Fores*: the Location of the Lover**

Let us now look further at such language and imagery in Tibullus in order to fully appreciate its significance. In Tibullus 1.1 the poet has been captured and enslaved by his *puella*, as he sits outside of her door pining for her:

> me retinent vinctum formosae vincla puellae,
> et sedeo duras ianitor ante fores.
>
> The fetters of the beautiful girl hold me conquered,
> and I sit, a doorkeeper before harsh doors.
>
> (Tibullus 1.1.55-56)

Here the fate of the lover is characterized by the same location phrase used to describe Cerberus in poem 1.3, which is *ante fores*, "in front of the doors."[103] The phrase *ante fores* appears a total of four times in Tibullus' poems: besides the two times just mentioned, the phrase also appears at the beginning of poem 1.1, referring to the crowns fashioned from the wheat of Tibullus' farm that will hang before the doors of the blonde goddess Ceres.

> Flava Ceres, tibi sit nostro de rure corona
> spicea quae templi pendeat ante fores.
>
> Blonde Ceres, for you let there be a garland from my farm
> made of grain, which may hang before the doors of the temple.
>
> (Tibullus 1.1.15-16)

At the beginning of Tibullus 1.1, the phrase *ante fores* denotes the offering that Tibullus wishes to present to Ceres. Such offerings were also a traditional part of the *paraclausithyron*, which brings the amatory motif to the forefront of the reader's mind in

[103] For more on the phrase *ante fores* and its significance as a signal phrase for the *paraclausithyron*, see Anderson (1964) 6.

interpreting these lines.[104] It is striking that a suggestive reference to the *paraclausithyron* motif, the hanging of garlands *ante fores*, shows up in the first few lines of the entire corpus of Tibullus. Its presence from the outset of his work shows Tibullus' deft and purposeful use of the motif.

The phrase *ante fores* also appears in poem 1.2, when Tibullus describes an old man waiting outside the doors of his beloved, who is so passionately in love that he is not even ashamed to seek the affection of a girl when, because of his advanced age, it is no longer fitting for him to do so.

> Stare nec ante fores puduit caraeve puellae
> ancillam medio detinuisse foro.
>
> He was not ashamed to stand before the doors of the dear girl
> nor to detain the maidservant in the middle of the forum.
>
> (Tibullus 1.2.95-96)

In these two other instances of the phrase *ante fores* in Tibullus' work, the phrase is used in reference either to an erotic context of a beseeching lover or in reference to the sacrifice, which Tibullus himself has provided, before the temple of the goddess. Thus, each reference brings to the reader's mind the *paraclausithyron* motif. In fact, the phrase *ante fores* is a signal phrase to indicate a *paraclausithyron*. Nothing brings to mind the *exclusus amator* more than the doors in front of which the bereaved lover must remain. So if the lover is shut out *ante fores*, when Tibullus situates Cerberus there in poem 1.3 it points toward something specific.

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[104] For garlands in an amatory context, see for example: Propertius 1.16.7, where the door itself speaks and bemoans the *exclusus amator's* offerings; Lucretius *DRN* 4.1177-1179, where he lists the typical actions of the *exclusus amator*; and especially Tibullus 1.2.13-14, where he references garlands in his own version of the *paraclausithyron.*

***In Antrum*: the Kennel of Cerberus**

Let us return specifically to poem 1.3: here Tibullus draws a further connection between the lover and Cerberus by positioning Cerberus *ante fores*. This is in contrast to the more traditional location of Cerberus at the mouth of a cave, as Roman authors often describe the position of Cerberus. For example, in poem 3.5, Propertius describes Cerberus as standing guard at a cave in his version of the Underworld. In this puzzling elegy, Propertius examines his own intentions and way of life as a poet. Some scholars have read a connection between Propertius' argument in 3.5 against the afterlife and the rationalizing delineation of Underworld figures in Lucretius (*De Rerum Natura* 3.978-983), though no direct verbal parallels exist.[105] Yet Propertius' presentation of the Underworld and the figures therein is important to the present analysis of the elegists' use of mythological allusions. Here Propertius muses about whether or not the afterlife and Underworld exist at all:

> sub terris sint iura deum et tormenta Gigantum,
> Tisiphones atro si furit angue caput,
> aut Alcmaeoniae furiae aut ieiunia Phinei,
> num rota, num scopuli, num sitis inter aquas,
> num tribus infernum custodit faucibus antrum
> Cerberus, et Tityo iugera pauca novem,
> an ficta in miseras descendit fabula gentes,
> et timor haud ultra quam rogus esse potest.[106]
>
> (if) underground the authority of the gods and the pains of the giants exist,
> if Tisiphone's head rages with a black snake,
> or the furies of Alcmaeon or the hunger of Phineus,
> whether there is a wheel, or cliffs, or thirst among the water,
> whether Cerberus with triple jaws guards hell's cave,

[105] On the connection between Lucretius' and Tibullus' representations of the Underworld, see Richardson (2006) 333.
[106] The text of Propertius is from Barber (1954).

and for Tityos, nine acres are too few,
or whether a deceptive tale came down to wretched men,
and fear is hardly able to exist beyond the funeral pyre.

(Propertius 3.5.39-46)

In Propertius 3.5, Cerberus is placed in a similar landscape as he is in Tibullus 1.3. In fact, many of the same players that we find in Tibullus 1.3 are also present in the description of Propertius, including Tisiphone, Tityos, Ixion, and Tantalus.[107] The main difference between Tibullus' Cerberus in 1.3 and Propertius' Cerberus in 3.5 is the precise description of Cerberus' location: Tibullus puts him *ante fores* while Propertius keeps him guarding the *infernum antrum*, what W.A. Camps calls "the entry to the underworld, and the cave serves him as a kennel."[108] Moreover, other evidence points to Propertius' traditional representation of Cerberus in poem 3.5. For instance, the typical, horrific feature of Cerberus' triple jaws is included, cementing him as the customary Underworld monster familiar from the mythological tradition. In addition, Propertius describes Cerberus' vigil via the verb *custodit* "guards" (43). The verb *custodio* allows for no ambiguity, unlike the verb *excubo* in Tibullus 1.3 (*excubat*, 72), which intimates other nuances; *custodio* simply means "to guard" or "to watch" and is the appropriate verb to use in reference to Cerberus' traditional occupation as guard dog. Furthermore, the verb shares its semantic field with the noun *custos*, which points very clearly to the singular purpose of Cerberus in Propertius 3.5 as a guardian. There is no ambiguous verb to describe the canine as both watching and reclining: as such, Propertius' Cerberus in 3.5 is in the Underworld to be frightening and to fulfill his traditional purpose, to guard the entrance.

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[107] For more on the other Underworld figures presented in Propertius 3.5.39-46, see Camps (1985) 77-78, and Heyworth and Morwood (2011) 143-144.
[108] Camps (1985) 78.

In the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, Vergil also describes Cerberus within a cave.

> Cerberus haec ingens latratu regna trifauci
> personat adverso recubans immanis in antro.[109]
>
> Huge Cerberus sounds through these kingdoms with
> a triple-jawed roar, reclining enormous in the facing cave.
>
> (Vergil *Aeneid* 6.418-419)

Vergil's representation of Cerberus resonates with both Propertius' and Tibullus' descriptions. Vergil also mentions Cerberus' three throats (*trifauci*, 6.418), conjuring a similar image to Propertius' portrayal of the dog with *tribus… faucibus* (3.5.43). Another similar element is the verb used to describe Cerberus: Vergil uses a derivative of *cubare* (*recubans*, 6.419) just as Tibullus does (*excubat*, 1.3.72). Most important for the current discussion, however, Vergil positions Cerberus *adverso… in antro*, "in the opposite/facing cave" (6.419), but makes no mention of any doors. Vergil's Cerberus surveys the Underworld realm (*regna*) from his kennel-like cave just as Propertius' Cerberus does.

Later on in Book 8 of the *Aeneid*, Vergil mentions the figure of Cerberus again, this time listing him among the traditional labors of Herakles. In this passage, during the holy rites performed in honor of Herakles by the Arcadians, priests praise the many deeds of Herakles, among them his labor of Cerberus.

> te Stygii tremuere lacus, te ianitor Orci
> ossa super recubans antro semesa cruento.
>
> at you quivered the Stygian Lakes, at you quivered the doorkeeper of Orcus
> reclining above half-eaten bones in the bloody cave.
>
> (Vergil *Aeneid* 8.296-297)

[109] The text of Vergil is from Mynors (1969).

Vergil's representation of Cerberus in book 8 amplifies the description of Cerberus in book 6, while maintaining a few key aspects. Note that he uses the exact same participle to describe Cerberus' orientation: *recubans* (6.419; 8.297). However, Vergil goes further in these two lines. First, he does not call Cerberus by name; instead he calls him the *ianitor Orci* (8.296), which would be a learned allusion to refer to the dog and his duties, and easily understood in the context. Cerberus, as the *ianitor* of the Underworld, remains by the doorway in his *antro*. Second, Cerberus is still referred to as reclining in a cave, except instead of the *adverso antro (*6.419), it is the *cruento antro* (8.297). Cerberus' cave, his kennel, is described as bloody and strewn with the half eaten bones – no doubt from those who tried to go past him – upon which he is reclining. This description of Cerberus in book 8 adds to the character's representation in the *Aeneid* and corroborates that his traditional location is within a cave.

Moreover, in a later literary representation of Cerberus, the dramatist Seneca also refers to him as being in a cave. Seneca, writing during the time of the Emperor Nero, took much of his inspiration for his dramas from early Roman tragedians, such as Ennius (239-169 B.C.E.) and Pacuvius (220-*c.*140 B.C.E.), and also, as some scholars have noted, from the style and texture of the popular Roman elegist, Ovid (43 B.C.E. –*c.*16 C.E), while also copiously quoting Vergil.[110] Though only traces of influence in his work can be found through the extant literature, scholars are relatively comfortable positioning Seneca as a Silver Age author who drew on a variety of literary traditions.

Seneca, no doubt drawing from such literary and mythological traditions during the composition of his play *Hercules Furens*, provides a vivid and traditionally accurate portrayal of Cerberus and his location in the Underworld.

[110] On Seneca's literary influences, see Coffey and Mayer (1990) 10-15.

Qui colla gerit vincta catenis
imo latitans Cerberus antro.

The one who bears necks bound with shackles
Cerberus, lurking in the deepest cave.

(Seneca *Hercules Furens* 1107-1108)

Seneca's Cerberus resides in a deep, dark cave (*imo… antro*, 1108), where his multiple necks are chained and he is unable to move. Seneca adds more description to his characterization of Cerberus and still retains the location of the character *in antrum*. Seneca's Cerberus is explicitly bound with chains (*vincta catenis*, 1107) and prowls in his kennel-like cave as a fearful monster that ought to be avoided at all costs.

All of these examples reveal similar vocabulary surrounding the figure of Cerberus. He is a frightful character who lingers in a cave. Whether the cave is bloody because of half-eaten bones, or whether it is the deepest cave, the *antrum* houses the menacing canine throughout a variety of Roman literary genres. From these instances, then, it is likely that the noun *antrum* is the traditional place to describe Cerberus' position. Therefore, Tibullus' use of *ante fores* for the location of his Cerberus is both allusive and striking, and it suggests Tibullus' pointed intention to connect the figure of Cerberus to the shut-out lover-poet, the main actor within the trope of the *paraclausithyron*.

Tibullus' Elaboration of the *Paraclausithyron*

Tibullus makes frequent use of the *paraclausithyron* throughout his work, and in doing so he wields the motif and its constituent parts adeptly in his elegies, making connections and allusions in a variety of settings. Tibullus deals with the motif in two of

the poems in his first book, 1.2 and 1.5. In fact, Tibullus 1.2 in its entirety is a great example of the *paraclausithyron* motif in which the narrator desperately seeks the solace of wine and addresses the door itself.[111] The poem is full of emotional extremes as Tibullus mourns the fact that he cannot be with his beloved Delia.

> Adde merum vinoque novos compesce dolores,
> occupet ut fessi lumina victa sopor,
> neu quisquam multo percussum tempora Baccho
> excitet, infelix dum requiescit amor.
> Nam posita est nostrae custodia saeva puellae,
> clauditur et dura ianua firma sera.
>
> Bring the strong stuff and lessen new pains with wine,
> so that sleep may seize the conquered eyes of me, weary,
> and let nobody rouse me, temples beaten by much
> Bacchus, while unlucky love takes a rest.
> For a fierce guard has been placed over my girl,
> And the door is shut tight with a harsh bolt.
>
> (Tibullus 1.2.1-6)

Poem 1.2 has been a source of consternation for many scholars because of, among other issues, a locative discrepancy.[112] In a poem of 100 lines, lines 1-4 are often treated as a separate opening vignette, while the remainder of the poem is admired from a topical level as a great example of the *paraclausithyron*. Lines 1-4 seem to indicate that Tibullus is at a symposium and calls for more wine, yet by line 5, it becomes clear that Tibullus is beginning a *paraclausithyron* and he will exhort his mistress' door shortly. Indeed, the remainder of the poem engages enthusiastically with the *paraclausithyron* motif and its constituent parts. While the opening of the poem may entertain various interpretations,

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[111] Murgatroyd (1980) 71-74 details the variety of techniques that Tibullus employs in 1.2 and discusses Tibullus' additions to the *paraclausithyron* motif.
[112] For more on the composition of Tibullus 1.2 and its issues, see Putnam (1973) 61-62; Cairns (1979) 166-167; Miller (2002) 129.

for the present discussion it only matters that most scholars agree that Tibullus ends up outside of his mistress' door for the beginning of the *paraclausithyron*.

In this poem, Tibullus uses a variety of typical *paraclausithyron* elements such as the leaving of garlands, the drunkenness of the *exclusus amator*, the lamenting of the presence of the *coniunx*, and the address to the door and the mistress.[113] However, Tibullus also adds a variety of new additions to his *paraclausithyron*, including multiple objects of his address (the mistress, himself, the mocker, and Venus), as well as the entirely Tibullan trope of the rejection of wealth and glory. Among these amplifications, the most important thing that Tibullus plays up in 1.2 is the position and importance of the *custos*.

In line 5, Tibullus mentions the *saeva custodia*, which describes the guardian of the door. The abstract noun *custodia* stands in for the expected *custos*, and enhances the ambiguity of the figure; this is the "watch" or the protection of the door, which does not necessarily even have to be a single person, but rather broadly indicates the harsh situation of *custodia* that is set to keep Tibullus away from his lover, Delia. It is important to note that any actual *custos* would have been set most likely by Delia's *coniunx,* whether that is her husband, her betrothed, or her regular male partner. As elucidated in the introduction, the *custos* was an important stock figure in the *paraclausithyron* motif and one that was frequently employed by the playwrights of Roman comedy; Tibullus, however, is the first Latin author to suggest the character since Plautus. Thus, Tibullus' inclusion of the *custodia* situation in his *paraclausithyron* in 1.2 indicates the stolen nature of his love affair with Delia; as Copley states, it is the *custos* "whose task it is to see that her favors are reserved for those who are entitled to them, in

[113] Copley (1956) 7-27.

this case Delia's *coniunx*."[114] It is obvious, then, that Tibullus is not entitled to his affair with Delia,[115] since if it were a legal and proper relationship there would be no need for a guard at her door.

After a section in which Tibullus addresses the door, berating and threatening it for being closed to his advances, he turns his attention to Delia, and exhorts her to listen to him:

> Tu quoque ne timide custodes, Delia, falle.
> Audendum est: fortes adiuuat ipsa Venus.
>
> You too, Delia, do not fearfully trick the guards.
> Be bold: Venus herself helps the brave.
>
> (Tibullus 1.2.15-16)

Here Tibullus mentions *custodes* again (15) and entreats Delia to dodge them bravely so that the two of them can be together. In poem 1.2, the multiple and constant *custodes* engaged in *custodia* (5) are Tibullus' opponents and stand in the way of him and his beloved. Thus, as evinced by the above passages, poem 1.2 shows Tibullus' familiarity with the *paraclausithyron* motif, his ability to adapt and augment it for his own needs and purposes, and most importantly, his inclusion of the once traditional *custos* figure, customary in Roman comedy, whose purpose it was to thwart an illicit love affair. The *custos* figure as security guard underscores the stolen nature of the affair, and points to the shut-out lover's lack of agency. This inability to act is intensified in the poems as a kind of servitude, which the lover-poet must endure.

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[114] Copley (1956) 93.
[115] On the "stolen" nature of Tibullus' relationship, see Copley (1956) 94.

The Ties That Bind: the Poet's Servitude

Another favorite theme of Tibullus' *Elegies* is that of *servitium amoris*, the slavery of love.[116] The trope comes down to Tibullus via a lengthy trajectory, and would enjoy a varied history, especially in Hellenistic poetry and Roman comedy, both of which would add to the theme by elaborating upon the duties and characteristics of the *servus amoris* and by using mythological examples.[117] But scholars agree it was in the hands of the Roman elegists that the trope of *servitium amoris* found its most exalted expression.

The trope requires a *servus*, who slaves on behalf of his/her beloved or *domina/dominus*. In early examples of the motif, the *domina/dominus* figure could sometimes be Venus or Amor, but was always one who could punish a disobedient slave easily and passionately. The trope also later requires that the *servus amoris* perform certain duties for his mistress, and perhaps even enjoy such servile employments. In the hands of the Roman elegists, and of Tibullus in particular, the trope would gain a further material aspect, the presence of real chains or shackles. As Murgatroyd notes: "One novel idea that they (the elegists) did produce was that of chains. To be in fetters was made synonymous with to be in love."[118]

Now let us look back once again to the beginning of the Tibullan corpus at poem 1.1, when Tibullus speaks of his attachment to his lover.

> Me retinent vinctum formosae vincla puellae,
> et sedeo duras ianitor ante fores.
>
> The fetters of the beautiful girl hold me conquered,

---

[116] For an explication of the trope, see Murgatroyd (1981).
[117] See Sophocles *Antigone* 756 for the earliest example of the trope, where Haemon is accused by Creon of being enslaved in love to Antigone; see also Callimachus *Hymn* 2.47-54 for an early example of the *servus amoris* as a country-slave; and see Terence *Eunuchus* V.vii.1025-1027 for a mythological comparison of the *servus amoris* to Hercules and his attachment to Omphale.
[118] Murgatroyd (1981) 596.

and I sit, a doorkeeper before harsh doors.

(Tibullus 1. 1. 55-56)

As we have already established, Tibullus here is clearly evoking the *paraclausithyron* motif because of his use of the signal phrase *ante fores*; yet there is even more to glean from this couplet.

In these lines, Tibullus goes so far as to call himself a *ianitor*, which only reinforces his helplessness as a captive lover experiencing the separation from his beloved. In Roman society, according to Allen Miller, "the *ianitor* was among the lowest ranking of the slaves in the household and was chained to the door."[119] In this couplet, Tibullus occupies not only the place of the *exclusus amator* or shut-out lover as well as the place of the *custos,* guardian of the mistress' door, but he also occupies the place of the *ianitor*, a low-status slave who is forced to remain constantly outside of the door of his masters.[120] C. J. Putnam, in his commentary on Tibullus, notes that the slave-doorkeeper-lover is "chained helplessly to his post but without the power to open the door."[121] Thus, in this threefold role by the door, Tibullus is first of all pining for his mistress as the shut-out lover; second, he is protecting her door from other possible suitors as the *custos*; and finally, as the *ianitor*, he is unable to move from his place, neither to go in through the door nor to leave the house entirely, constantly locked in the shackles of his *servitium amoris*. Indeed the forceful alliteration of the *vinctum ... vincla* in line 56 adds to the powerful imagery of the couplet. All of these factors, the chains, the inability to move, and the position near the door as the *ianitor*, invigorate the analogy of Cerberus and the lover-poet as one and the same figure.

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[119] Miller (2002) 127.
[120] Note the description of Cerberus as *ianitor Orci* at *Aeneid* 8.296-297, as discussed earlier.
[121] Putnam (1973) 58.

Traditionally in the ancient myths, as described in the introduction, Herakles has to chain Cerberus up when the hero brings the hellhound from the Underworld as his final labor. Also, as we have seen, several vase paintings show Herakles leading Cerberus from the Underworld in chains. [122] Cerberus is often described as being bound or chained at the liminal entrance that he guards: this particular representation is used by Seneca when he describes Cerberus as one whose "necks are shackled with chains" (*Hercules Furens* 1107-1108). In fact, the two most often depicted portrayals of the chained Cerberus are that of Herakles bringing him up from the Underworld as a bound prize, and Cerberus shackled to the post at the entrance to the Underworld. Therefore, the position of the servile *ianitor* chained to the doorpost is closely connected to that of the traditional mythological depiction of the chained guard-dog Cerberus. Both figures have a place they must occupy within a low servitude they cannot escape.

So the Tibullan image of the chained *ianitor* at the mistress' door is striking. Lyne claims that "Tibullus concentrates on servile physical humiliations – which he embraces almost masochistically"[123] throughout his work. Lyne vigorously asserts his belief that Tibullus and Propertius popularized and perfected, to a certain extent, the use of the trope of *servitium amoris* as well as established its particular definitions, though he believes that the two poets differed in their appropriation and acceptance of the motif. They each had different intents when they used the motif and ideas of what it meant to each of them as poet-lovers. In short, Lyne believes that Tibullus enjoyed *servitium amoris* to a certain extent and that Propertius always fought against it.[124] From the lines quoted above, it appears Tibullus accepts his lot as the shackled *servus amoris*, and willingly wears the

[122] See my introduction for a discussion of these various myths and vase paintings.
[123] Lyne (1980) 81.
[124] For more on this distinction, see Lyne (1980) 78-81.

chains of his mistress. Whether or not Tibullus enjoyed his servitude is up for debate, but he does tolerate it with, at the very least, an air of complacency.

Indeed, Tibullus seems to accept *servitium amoris* via his willingness to endure the pain and torment of being controlled, as noted above in the discussion of 1.5. However, Propertius may deal with it differently. Take, for instance, when he bemoans the pains of love in his programmatic first poem.

> Fortiter et ferrum saevos patiemur et ignes,
> sit modo libertas quae velit ira loqui.
>
> Bravely I will endure both sword and terrible fires,
> if only there is freedom to speak what anger wishes.
>
> (Propertius 1.1.27-28)

Propertius only accepts the pain and control of *servitium amoris* if there is an end to the process, that is, if he can become freer as a poet by first becoming enslaved.

Whether or to what extent Tibullus and Propertius popularized the trope of *servitium amoris*, it would have a long life among the elegists. The lover was a self-confessed slave, an admitted abject wretch, shackled metaphorically to his mistress and sometimes represented as physically shackled to a door. One of the more elaborate and famous representations of the chained doorkeeper (and later, chained lover) would come from the poet Ovid.[125] Though the *paraclausithyron* had been fully popularized and was even a bit past its prime by the time Ovid made use of it, his *Amores* 1.6 provides a vivid and witty illustration of the servile *ianitor* and indeed, the chains of the lover.[126] Ovid begins the poem in the following way:

> Ianitor - indignum!- dura religate catena,

[125] Scholarship on the Ovidian corpus is vast and constantly increasing. For more on the specific use of elegiac tropes in the *Amores*, see Boyd (2002); Holzberg (2002); and Hardie (2002).
[126] For more on Ovid *Amores* 1.6, see Copley (1956) 125-134; Laigneau (2000).

difficilem moto cardine pande forem!
Quod precor, exiguum est – aditu fac ianua parvo
obliquum capiat semiadaperta latus.

Doorkeeper bound fast - shameful! - by a harsh chain,
with the hinge in motion open up the obstinate door.
What I ask for is a small thing: open the doorway with a small entrance
so that, half-open, it might receive my sideways body.

(Ovid *Amores* 1.6.1-4)

In *Amores* 1.6, Ovid addresses the *ianitor*, who is keeping him separate from his beloved. He begs any sort of entrance, even a slight one (*parvo*, 3), so that he may be able to access his mistress. The entire poem consists of Ovid entreating and then ridiculing the *ianitor*, even chiding him for assuming that Ovid, as the lover, would do any harm to the mistress. As the poem continues it becomes obvious that the *ianitor* will not acquiesce to Ovid's pleas, with the result that Ovid becomes annoyed and lashes out:

Forsitan et tecum tua nunc requiescit amica:
heu, melior quanto sors tua sorte mea!
Dummodo sic, in me durae transite catenae.
Tempora noctis eunt; excute poste seram.

Perhaps even now a girlfriend rests with you:
Alas, how much better your lot is than my lot!
While it is thus, harsh chains, come over to me.
The hours of night go by; throw off the bolt from the doorpost.

(Ovid *Amores* 1.6.45-48)

Ovid only wants the chains that accompany the fate of the *ianitor* if they provide him with the enjoyment of having a girlfriend. Ovid's inversion of traditional tropes is a favorite technique, one that he wields deftly in this poem.[127] As is Ovid's playful way, here he undermines the trope of *servitium amoris* since he claims he does not want to endure any servitude unless it provides him with some enjoyment. Indeed, Ovid's

[127] On Ovid's playful nature and inversion of traditional tropes, see Murgatroyd (1994).

subversive treatment of the *ianitor* figure and the *servitium amoris* trope sheds light on the earlier way in which Tibullus deals with them for his own thematic purposes.

In Tibullus 1.1, Tibullus is himself the *ianitor*, therefore he will not be receiving affection from his mistress, but will remain outside of her doors protecting them while lamenting his own lot. In Ovid's formulation, the lover-poet has to bypass the *ianitor*; and though he knows that the *ianitor* is a slave, he jokes that the *ianitor* may even have his own *amica* and suggests that the *ianitor* may be sleeping with her (*requiescit*, 45). Thus Ovid plays with the idea that the *ianitor* is a desirable role and one that he would be willing to take on if the reward were access to his beloved; but in this instance, Ovid does not become the *ianitor* and eventually he leaves the scene when he realizes he will not get through the door. Essentially, the role of the *ianitor* can be understood to be a severe one, which requires being chained to the door as a stationary object by which lovers may try to pass, but never can. While Ovid plays with the idea and ultimately passes over the opportunity to become the *ianitor* in *Amores* 1.6, Tibullus presents himself as the *ianitor* and accepts the inherent fate of the character.

Conclusions: the Chained Guard-Dog Cerberus as the *Exclusus Amator*

As the guard-dog of the Underworld, the role of Cerberus is to keep the dead within Hades and to keep the living out. He remains constantly vigilant outside of the gates; only a few chosen individuals ever make it past him. Therefore, the fact that in poem 1.3.69-70 Tibullus represents Cerberus using language to describe the shut-out lover-poet and includes him on his list of inhabitants of the Underworld is significant. Certainly, the allusion to the lover-poet as the *custos* corresponds to the guardianship

position of Cerberus, who is the *custos* of the entrance to the Underworld. However, the allusion to Cerberus as the *exclusus amator* is more ambiguous.

The *exclusus amator* is by definition shut out from his lover and unable to penetrate through her door. Instead, he must be content to lament and pine for her at the door, and is destined to suffer at her whim. Thus, Tibullus' positioning of Cerberus as the elegiac lover-poet, indeed in the guise of the *exclusus amator*, is as significant as it is bold. With this allusion, Tibullus not only gives Cerberus more depth than the figure is usually afforded, as Cerberus is traditionally presented as an obstacle in the Underworld that must be overcome only by a hero's force, a poet's music or by drugged honey-cakes; but in so doing Tibullus also provides the lover-poet figure a substantial mythological backstory with which the audience would have been familiar.

Tibullus uses the figure of Cerberus in poem 1.3 to imply to his reader the essentially shackled nature of elegiac love. He appropriates the chained figure of Cerberus as a suggestive figure to stand in for the immobile, servile lover, and positions him firmly within the *servitium amoris* trope. Furthermore, Tibullus uses the figure of Cerberus as a stand-in for the lover in order to suggest that the lover is a multi-faceted character for which no one trope is adequate. The lover-poet is a complex figure, who is in constant pursuit of the ideal life, but is stuck in an unforgiving world where he struggles to accept his position. The lover can be both demanding and servile, abrasive and loving, a guardian and an unwelcome guest.

Cerberus is seldom allowed to leave his post, except chained as the final prize of the last of Herakles' labors, dragged from below in order to secure at last Herakles'

freedom from service to Eurystheus.[128] Tibullus adopts this usually immobile figure and links the guard-dog to the lover who is bound to his mistress in poem 1.1. Instead of being allowed to roam around freely, Cerberus must remain a vigilant doorkeeper and can never escape the punishment of his position, neither backward into the world of the living, nor forward into the world of the dead. Like Cerberus, the lover-poet figure is doomed to be stationary and motionless in front of an irreconcilable and, by definition, liminal fate.

The fact that Tibullus gives a richer back-story to the previously overlooked Cerberus in the role of a chained lover sheds light on the dismal fate not only of Cerberus himself, but also on the lowly status of the lover-poet with whom he is being compared. Both of the doomed figures are unable to escape their shackled fate, yet they must continue to live on, occupying their important spaces where, ultimately, they are needed. Cerberus was not a sinner against love; in fact, much of his back-story is unknown. Yes, he was the son of two monsters, Ekhidna and Typhaon (Hesiod, *Theogony* 310-312), but what made him wicked enough that he deserved to be relegated to the Underworld with the likes of Ixion, Tityos, and Tantalus, all of whom were proven sinners against love? Much like the poet-lover, who has done nothing to threaten love but through no fault of his own is stuck on the doorstep of his mistress, in great duress, Cerberus is stuck within a gloomy world occupying a sad post that he seems not to deserve. Tibullus carefully and cleverly makes a traditional, terrifying monster into a sympathetic character with only a few lines, by comparing him to the subject of Roman erotic elegy, the poet-lover.

There may also be a resonance here with the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, a tale serving to illustrate that the fate of the lover is to realize the power of love is limited. The story of Orpheus and Eurydice has been described as one that "poignantly illustrates the

[128] See Apollodorus 2.5.12 for a description of the twelfth labor of Heracles.

Greeks' realistic assessment of such romantic notions as Love having the power to overcome Death."[129] Similarly, Tibullus uses the Underworld figure of Cerberus in his elegies to demonstrate an analogous idea: love cannot overcome inevitable death, so it is perhaps better for the lover to sit on the border, neither participating in life nor passing forward to experience love. Both the lover-poet at the doorway and the guard-dog Cerberus are immovable and essential to love, destined to live a life separate from the fulfillment of freedom. Thus, what Tibullus is doing with this particular allusion is referring to the Underworld and specifically to the figure of Cerberus to illustrate the liminal nature of the elegiac lover, who can neither pass through the door to his lover nor proceed to the finality of death. Tibullus plays on the figure of Cerberus in order to provide an appropriate *comparandum* for the elegiac lover-poet.

It remains surprising, right after stating in poem 1.3 that happy lovers go to the Elysian Fields, that Tibullus would so fully illuminate the character of Cerberus with descriptions befitting the elegiac lover.[130] While in his representation of the Underworld Tibullus expresses the ultimate hope that all lovers will attend the happy part of the afterlife, he nevertheless illustrates the temporal and liminal placement of the lover as the shackled guard-dog Cerberus. This suggests Tibullus' view that for the lucky few the afterlife may be pleasant, but the present life of living for the lover is a kind of inescapable torture.

Tibullus' ingenious use of the character of Cerberus to illustrate the liminality and helplessness of the lover-poet in the upper world is a clear indication of his skillful use of

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[129] Harris and Platzner (2001) 159.

[130] Although poem 1.3 concludes with Tibullus' return to Delia, this imagined homecoming emphasizes the Odyssean overtones without diminishing the effects of the imagery of the liminal Cerberus figure.

mythological *exempla* in his elegies. Additionally, the use of Cerberus to stand in for the elegiac poet-lover affords the canine character a deeper, richer, and perhaps more relatable backstory than he would otherwise have had. Building off the analysis in this chapter of Cerberus as the *exclusus amator* in Tibullus 1.3, in the following chapter we will explore Propertius' use of the figure of Cerberus as the elegiac poet-lover in his poem 4.7 in order to further ascertain the full function and meaning of such a mythological monster in Roman erotic elegy.

CHAPTER TWO

Cerberus as the Elegiac Poet in Propertius 4.7

This chapter investigates the role of Cerberus in Propertius 4.7 and its affiliation with the elegiac poet-lover. I begin with an introduction to the poet Propertius, his proficiency in the use of mythological allusion, and the relationship of his poetry to the generic opposition between elegy and epic. The introduction first explores Propertius' larger thematic interests in the *Elegies*, and then focuses primarily on his representation of death and dying in his poetry.

After a discussion about funerary imagery in the poems of Propertius, I discuss the controversial poem 4.7, in which Cynthia, Propertius' beloved, comes up from the Underworld as a ghost and appears to Propertius. I investigate the dark and abrasive tone in 4.7 and the contours of the relationship between Cynthia and Propertius as presented in this elegy, especially with respect to Cynthia being the narrator and thus the main speaker of the poem. Next I discuss Propertius' representation of Cerberus within the Underworld and how he is situated as an analogue to the poet-lover in 4.7. I argue that Propertius used specific and directed vocabulary in order to present Cerberus as the poet-lover. While my argument here is consistent with my discussion in Chapter One about how Tibullus presented Cerberus in his poem 1.3, my claim in this chapter is that Propertius presents Cerberus in a way that is completely unconventional in Roman poetry. That is, not only does Propertius present Cerberus within his description of the Underworld in this poem, but he also gives the traditionally uncommunicative and immobile canine figure a way to speak and the means to move around unfettered.

This freedom of movement and agency provided to Cerberus by Propertius in this poem is unprecedented in the traditional mythology relating to Cerberus. These factors, in addition to the use of pointed vocabulary and imagery, offer an innovative representation of Cerberus as a liberated figure and an advocate for Cynthia, with significant overtones associating him with the poet-lover. This exemplification both adds to conventional representations of the character of Cerberus and gives the poet-lover more depth and descriptive details within a mythological paradigm.

Propertius: An Introduction

Arguably the most famous of the Roman erotic elegists, Propertius has held the attention of scholars for many generations and for a variety of reasons.[131] As a poet who is concerned with both politics and passion, themes that exist alongside complete adoration and servitude in his poetry, with an emotionally twisted mix of love and loathing on top, Propertius is a favorite among scholars and fans of love poetry alike. Numerous scholars have struggled for years to understand Propertius, and have long tried to organize and even pluck apart his poems and put them back together again in order to gain a different understanding.[132] The multiple layers of his poetry, the enticing mythological *exempla*, the Callimachean references, all have held readers' close attention and continue to do so.[133] For each reader, Propertius becomes what each one wants Propertius to become.

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[131] For in-depth discussions of Propertius and his work, see Sullivan (1976), Cairns (2006), Greene and Welch (2012).
[132] On the vexed textual tradition of the books of elegies, see Fedeli in Greene and Welch (2012) 31-41.
[133] For the Alexandrian style of Propertius' elegies, see Pinotti in Green and Welch (2012) 116-137.

Propertius wrote four books of poetry,[134] of which the first, the so-called *Monobiblos*, has received the most scholarly attention.[135] Lawrence Richardson (2006) describes the *Monobiblos* as a book "about love, unhappy and hopeless love, an obsession that dominates his life and blinds him to anything else."[136] The main topic of the *Monobiblos* is Cynthia, Propertius' beloved, whose name appears as the very first word of his first poem (*Elegy* 1.1).[137] Propertius' programmatic declaration of love to a single woman, Cynthia, has been well noted, as has his intention that she be the sole focus of the first book.[138] Joy King (1976) claims that the *Monobiblos* "is a sophisticated, unified, book-length demonstration of why and in what way Propertius is committed to love and love poetry."[139] The structure of the *Monobiblos* has been much studied because of its apparent designation as a single book, separate from the rest of Propertius' elegies in name and in thematic structure.[140] Even though only half of the poems of the *Monobiblos* are addressed to Cynthia, as King notes, "the subject is ultimately Cynthia."[141]

Cynthia is the main focus of the *Monobiblos*: she is the sole beloved of his single book. But she is also ubiquitous throughout all of Propertius' work, and much more than her name has garnered the attention of scholars.[142] No proper study of Propertius can occur without the mention of Cynthia; and just as Propertius does in his poetry, scholars

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[134] Regarding the enumeration of the books, see Richardson (2006) 7-13.
[135] See Baker (2000) for a more complete discussion of the *Monobiblos*.
[136] Richardson (2006) 146.
[137] For a complete discussion of the role of Cynthia and the organization of the *Monobiblos*, see King (1976).
[138] King (1976) 108-110.
[139] King (1976) 110.
[140] See Courtney (1968) for relevant discussion on the structure of the *Monobiblos.*
[141] King (1976) 124.
[142] Cynthia's role as beloved, mistress and *domina*, for example, has excited the interest of feminist scholars, in Miller (2002), see Hallett (1973), Wyke (1989), and Gold (1993).

always come back around to Cynthia and her depictions in the poems. Many scholars have focused on the mythological representations of Cynthia in Propertius's work.[143] Brian Breed (2003) discusses the much-debated poem 1.3, in which Propertius returns home late and drunkenly caresses and praises his beloved Cynthia as she sleeps. In his work, Breed focuses on Propertius' comparisons between Cynthia and the three sleeping mythological heroines to whom Propertius likens her at the beginning of the poem, Ariadne, Andromeda, and a Maenad. Similarly, Nancy Wiggers (1976) considers the epically themed poem 2.9, in which Propertius places Cynthia alongside the Homeric heroines Briseis and Penelope.

In addition to these examples of direct mythological allusions, the variety of other mythological representations that relate to Cynthia are even more complex, including the fact that even the very name "Cynthia" has mythological undertones. The name Cynthia, considered by some to be a pseudonym for Propertius' real-life mistress Hostia,[144] has garnered attention in its own right. *Cynthius* is an epithet of Apollo, derived from the name of the mountain Cynthos on Delos, celebrated as the birthplace of Apollo and Diana. In its feminine form, it is used as an epithet for Apollo's twin sister, the goddess Diana, who in classical mythology became closely associated with the personified Moon goddess Luna and also with the Underworld goddess Hecate. It seems likely that "Cynthia" is the feminine version of the divine name from which Propertius gleaned his choice of pseudonym, and many scholars therefore interpret the name Cynthia as an epithet to suggest a connection between his mistress and the classical Moon goddess.

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[143] See, for example, Otis (1965), Wiggers (1976), and Breed (2003).

[144] For a consideration of the veracity of the identification of Cynthia as Hostia, see Cairns (2006) 66-68, who ultimately concludes that her true identity does not affect her role as a character within Propertius' poems.

Moreover, Diana, Hecate, and Luna became so associated with one another that they formed the *triformis dea* or "triple-faced goddess," and were closely linked together as the guardians of the crossroads, considered a ghoulish location by most classical authors.[145] Thus the resonance between Cynthia and especially the Underworld goddess, Hecate, immediately alludes to the presence of a dark mythology within Propertius' poetry.

Mythology and Callimachean Influence on Propertius

Propertius favored mythology, as scholars have long noted, as a means of conveying imagery and making sense of the life of the poet-lover.[146] Mythological allusion showed him to be a learned poet who could present the most obscure versions of a myth in order to illustrate his purposes, occasionally even too obscure for the modern reader to puzzle out.[147] The inclusion of obscure mythological references goes back to the style of Callimachus, who, as J.P. Sullivan (1976) writes, "not only wanted unfamiliar myths to be used as the subject of poetry, but he also wished the poems utilizing this material to be constructed in a different way from the standard epic approach."[148] As the preeminent source among the authors of Hellenistic poetry, Callimachus (*ca.* 320-240 B.C.E.) was especially influential on the Roman elegists.[149] Though few of his writings survive, his extant fragments show that Callimachus was a poet who frequently utilized

[145] For a more extensive discussion of the connotations of the pseudonym "Cynthia," see O'Neil (1958), who argues for an association of Cynthia with the moon in the *Monobiblos*.
[146] For more on the use of mythology by Propertius, see Lyne (1980) 82-102.
[147] One such example is the story of Atalanta that Propertius presents in 1.1. On the difficulty of mythological allusion in Propertius and scholarly responses to it, see Booth (2001) 63-74.
[148] Sullivan (1976) 116.
[149] For more on Callimachus and his influence on the Roman elegists, see Sullivan (1976) 107-127.

mythology in his work, who set his poetry against epic, and who favored a learned, polished style. Callimachus was the standard to which writers like Propertius, Tibullus, and even Catullus aspired.[150]

Another poetic element that Propertius inherited from the Hellenistic and particularly Callimachean tradition is the especially interesting and relevant trope of the *recusatio*, or "refusal" to write a certain genre of poetry. One of the main principles to which Callimachus adhered was his opposition to the epic poetic style and its long-winded tendencies. Propertius also assumed the trope of the *recusatio* in his poetry to serve as a vehicle to help situate his elegies within the larger context of Latin literature, as well as to use it as an effective means to situate himself, as the elegiac poet, within a vast framework of Classical authorship and tradition. The *recusatio* was, in essence, a refusal to write epic, which in the hands of Callimachus was "simply a matter of defending his literary views and obliquely denigrating his critics."[151] Then Propertius took up the Callimachean tradition and made it his own, and under Propertius' influence the *recusatio* "becomes a whole new genre, that simultaneously displays his poetic abilities, rejects Augustan pressures, and defines the true nature of his art."[152] Propertius uses the *recusatio* to define his status as an elegiac poet and to articulate that elegiac poets are partially defined as *not* being writers of epic.

The opposition between epic and elegy became associated with specific vocabulary, which appears throughout Propertius' work. The fact that a specific set of marked vocabulary served to remind the audience of the opposition between elegy and

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[150] Catullus, for instance, translated Callimachus' *Coma Berenices* into Latin; see Jackson (2001) 1-9.
[151] Sullivan (1976) 124.
[152] Sullivan (1976) 124.

epic is demonstrated by the terms *mollis* and *durus*.[153] Epic is the genre of heroes, full of stories of men who fought for their countries and their ideals. Roman elegy is the genre of lovers, where the elegists struggle in the eternal fight of *militia amoris*.[154] The opposition between the two genres is constantly at play within Roman elegy, and is exemplified between the relationship of the two words *mollis* and *durus*. Elegy constantly defines itself as *mollis*, or "soft," throughout, while *durus*, or "hard," is the term for epic. As Paul Allen Miller (2002) explains, "The sexual connotations of such terms do not need to be belabored, but there is an elaborate pun here that is foundational to the genre: for *mollis* is a stylistic term as well as a sexual one. *Mollitia* represents the soft style of composition advocated by the Alexandrian poet Callimachus, as opposed to the harsh style of epic associated with Homer."[155] Propertius is *mollis* because he has rejected epic and as a poet-lover he is subject to the authority of his mistress, his *domina*, and together they represent the opposite of epic.[156] Because of the constant opposition between the two genres throughout elegy, the terms *mollis* and *durus* become keywords for the elegists. The use of each word is purposeful and pointed in elegy and they cannot be discounted when they appear. Propertius even uses an adjectival form of word *molle* to link the mythological figure of Cerberus with the elegiac poet-lover, which will be discussed at length below.

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[153] Miller (2002) 4-5.
[154] See Gale in Greene and Welch (2012) 273-301, for more on the trope of *militia amoris.*
[155] Miller (2002) 5.
[156] For more discussion on the association of the *dura* woman and the *mollis* poet-lover within the study of gender and further insight into the long-enduring discussion of power within elegy, see Miller (2002) 329-347, 386-409, and 430-456.

Although Propertius sets himself at odds with epic as a genre, he still employs epic themes and mythology in his work.[157] Andrew Dalzell (1980) acknowledges Propertius' allusions to Homer: "His debts are plain to see and they encompass half the books of the *Iliad* and more of the *Odyssey*."[158] Propertius could not only evoke famous scenes such as a summary of the entire *Odyssey* (3.12.25-36) but also refer to minor details like the fact that the Homeric king of Cos was Eurypylus, the son of Herakles (4.5.23). It is within the most obscure mythological references that Propertius could show his use of *doctrina,* another element borrowed from Callimachus. *Doctrina* "learnedness" is one of the most important tools in the employ of the *doctus poeta* or "learned poet."[159] Propertius fashions himself as a *doctus poeta* "through the use of recognizable vocabulary, themes, and conceits and through the dramatic situations in which he involves his *ego*, his *puella*, and the other characters of his poems."[160] Furthermore, beyond the situations and characters that Propertius presents, the mythological *exempla* that he fashions and includes in his work show his true nature as a *doctus poeta*. The fact that Propertius was erudite enough to be familiar with obscure references and stories would intimate to his reader that he is an authority who should be taken seriously and that his poetry would require more than just a quick read in order to appreciate it fully.

R.O.A.M. Lyne (1980) is so drawn to Propertius' use of mythology that he devotes considerable attention to analyzing the mythology that Propertius employs and its function: "(Mythology) could illustrate his elation, his despair, his uncertainty—and

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[157] See Falkner (1977) and Dalzell (1980) for studies of epic and Homeric mythology in Propertius' corpus.
[158] Dalzell (1980) 29.
[159] For more on Propertius as a *doctus poeta*, see DeBrohun (2003) 2.
[160] DeBrohun (2003) 2.

disillusionment. It had just the right ambiguities."[161] For Propertius, mythology was a means by which he could express his feelings and also add layers to his poetry that could communicate a variety of meanings, often simultaneously. Propertius makes extensive use of mythology in his work for the purpose of enhancing his amatory motifs and themes. [162] In addition to exhibiting a broad array of mythological references,[163] he also emphasizes Underworld mythology specifically: for example, Propertius 4.7 offers an original and specifically amatory illustration of the Underworld, as we shall discuss below.

The influence of mythology upon Propertius and the other Roman elegists is apparent in nearly all of their work. Because of their association with Hellenistic and Callimachean poetry and because of their use of mythology as a means to communicate effectively their amatory and other emotional feelings, the elegists, and Propertius especially, were able to subvert their narratives and present an amatory world interwoven within a mythological framework. As is demonstrated by his adoption of the Callimachean use of mythology and the concept of *doctrina* within his work, Propertius drew heavily upon the Hellenistic aesthetic and he did so in a conscious and original way that complemented and even helped to define the elegiac genre.[164] Throughout his work, Propertius emphasized and instituted a broad range of motifs and genre-specific tropes which became fully associated with the Roman elegiac genre as a whole, including his interest in and representation of death.

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[161] Lyne (1980) 86-87.
[162] On Propertius' use of mythology, especially symbolically, see Sullivan (1976) 130-134.
[163] For example: Propertius gives a detailed description of the rape of Hylas by the Nymphs as a cautionary tale for protecting one's lover from rivals (1.1.20), and also includes minor references to mythological characters such as Prometheus (2.1.69-70).
[164] On the Roman fascination with and adopting of Hellenistic ideals and motifs, see Cameron (1995), Hutchinson (2008), and (2013).

Propertius on Love and Death

As a poet working within a complex genre who integrated traditional poetic aspects with original interpretations, Propertius explored a variety of themes in a variety of ways, some of which demonstrate a fascination with death and funerary themes. The fact that death and funeral poems are a favorite subject for Propertius has been addressed by numerous scholars.[165] The most comprehensive work on the subject has been done by Theodore Papanghelis (1987), who writes, "Propertius brings a sensuous temperament to bear on the themes of love and death," which he further claims must be predicated on the fact that "he treats these themes as a Hellenistic poet."[166] Just as Callimachus, Catullus, and Tibullus before him, Propertius was also fascinated by death and all of its imagery.[167] Lyne, who dedicates a section of his book to the study of Propertius and his fixation with death, explains, "Throughout his work Propertius exhibits a preoccupation, even an obsession, with death. Thoughts of his own death and burial frequently intrude into unobvious contexts."[168] Yet Propertius also presents his "obsession" with death in more obvious contexts, and Propertius took the most liberties with the theme and he had more poems dealing with the subject than the rest of the elegists.

The poem most representative of Propertius and his relationship with death is 1.19, in which Propertius imagines his own death and funeral.[169]

> non ego nunc tristes vereor, mea Cynthia, Manes,
> nec moror extremo debita fata rogo;
> sed ne forte tuo careat mihi funus amore,

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[165] The most representative of these scholars are Papanghelis (1987), Lyne (1998), Deutsch (1993).
[166] Papanghelis (1987) 7.
[167] See Catullus 5 and Tibullus 1.59-60, 3.5-8 for representative examples.
[168] Lyne (1980) 141.
[169] Poem 1.19 has attracted much scholarly attention; see Boyle (1974), Falkner (1975) 9-31 and Papanghelis (1987) 10-19.

hic timor est ipsis durior exsequiis.
non adeo leviter nostris puer haesit ocellis,
ut meus oblito pulvis amore vacet.
Illic Phylacides iucundae coniugis heros
non potuit caecis immemor esse locis,
sed cupidus falsis attingere gaudia palmis
Thessalus antiquam venerat umbra domum.
Illic quidquid ero, semper tua dicar imago:
traicit et fati litora magnus amor. [170]

I do not now fear, my Cynthia, sad ghosts,
nor do I delay the fates owed to the final pyre;
but I fear lest by chance my funeral be missing your love,
this fear is harsher than the death rites themselves.
Not so lightly does the boy cling to my eyes,
that my dust might be void with love forgotten.
There in the dark regions the hero Protesilaus was not able to be
forgetful of his beautiful wife,
but longing to touch the joys with his ghostly hands
the Thessalian came to his ancient home as a shade.
There, whatever I will be, I will always be called your image.
Great love crosses even the shores of death.

(Propertius 1.10.1-12)

No poem better represents Propertius' feelings about death and, in particular, about love after death. Propertius starts off his poems with a reference to the "sad ghosts" (*tristes… Manes*, 1). The *Manes* were generally considered to be ghosts of the dead,[171] and they were also used to refer to ghosts of the Underworld, specifically.[172] Propertius claims that he no longer fears death because of ghosts in the Underworld, but that he fears death because it will mean the absence of love and that Cynthia will forget him. He claims that a hero such as Protesilaus (*Phylacides*, 7) could not forget his wife after he had died, and that he will feel the same about Cynthia. He even claims that "I will always be called your image" (*semper tua dicar imago*, 11), and that he will not be unfaithful to

[170] The text of Propertius is from Barber (1954). All translations are my own.
[171] See the *OCD* (2012) 891, entry for *Manes*.
[172] See *Aeneid* 10.34 and 10.39, where Vergil uses *Manes* to refer to the ghosts of the dead in the Underworld.

her in the afterlife. The dichotomy between the physical remnants of the body and the ghostly afterlife in the poem illustrates Propertius' own feelings about the everlasting nature of love, or at least the possibility of such, since, after all, "Great Love crosses even the shores of death" (*traicit et fati litora magnus amor*, 12).

Following this emotional opening, Propertius continues his poem by emphasizing the Underworld geography, in order to amplify the pseudo-reality of himself as the dead lover awaiting his beloved after death.

Illic formosae veniant chorus heroinae,
quas dedit Argivis Dardana praeda viris;
quarum nulla tua fuerit mihi, Cynthia, forma
gratior, et (Tellus hoc ita iusta sinat)
quamvis te longae remorentur fata senectae,
cara tamen lacrimis ossa futura meis.
Quae tu viva mea possis sentire favilla!
Tum mihi non ullo mors sit amara loco.
quam vereor, ne te contempto, Cynthia, busto
abstrahat heu nostro pulvere iniquus Amor,
cogat et invitam lacrimis siccare cadentes!
Flectitur assiduis certa puella minis.
quare, dum licet, inter nos laetemur amantes:
non satis est ullo tempore longus amor.

There let the beautiful heroines come as a chorus,
whom the Trojan plunder gave to the Greek men.
None of these women will be more pleasing to me, Cynthia
than your beauty, even (may the good Earth allow this)
should the fates of long old age delay you,
nevertheless, your bones will be dear to my tears.
Which, may you, while living, feel for my embers!
Then death would not be bitter to me in any place.
How much I fear lest, with my tomb despised, Cynthia,
unfair Love may drag you away, alas, from my dust,
and force you unwilling to dry your falling tears!
A faithful girl is bent by constant threats.
Therefore, while it is allowed, let us rejoice together as lovers:
At no time is love long enough.

(Propertius 1.19.13-26)

The locative adverb *illic*, emphatically placed at the beginning of three sentences (7, 11, 13), repeatedly positions the lover within the "dark places" (*caecis locis*, 8) of the Underworld. By removing the lover from the upper world of the funereal ashes, bones, and dust, the poem situates the afterlife of love in the Underworld. Ashes, bones, and dust are incapable of love, for they are simply remains, but ghostly spirits are capable of sadness (*tristes*, 1), longing (*cupidus*, 9), and even tears (*lacrimis*, 18). Yet the living lover, Cynthia, must rely on the physical remains of Propertius and must show her love to his "embers" (*favilla,* 19) until fate no longer delays her own death (*te longae remorentur fata senectae*, 17). This dichotomy between the upper and the lower worlds – the physical and the ghostly – illustrates Propertius' own fascination with the relationship between love and death. Death is not the end of Love, or at least that is his hope.

Propertius' preoccupation in this poem is not that he dreads dying because he fears the afterlife, but rather that he worries that Cynthia will not mourn him and respect his physical remains after he has died. Propertius fears for the care of his body, or what remains after he has died. He fears that his "dust" (*pulvis*, 6) will be void and forgotten. But he also looks forward to the time when he can cherish Cynthia's bones (*cara… ossa*, 18) after she has died and he further hopes that while she lives she will hold the same regard for his smoldering ashes (*mea… favilla*, 19), that is, hold them dear. Yet the bodily remains of the two lovers in the upper world of the funeral are only one part of this poem, for Propertius also imagines the ethereal remnants of the lovers as ghostly images after death. In this poem, Propertius worries about where the ghosts, or what remains after the body has been burned, will go – and his answer is to the Underworld.

***Sunt Aliquid Manes*: Cynthia's Ghostly Appearance in 4.7**

Throughout his work, Propertius interrogates the relationship between love and death, how they interact with each other, and whether love overcomes or ultimately succumbs to death. Propertius 4.7, which opens with the famous phrase, "Ghosts do exist" (*Sunt aliquid manes*, 1), is a captivating poem that explores the pains and rituals of death through the voice of Propertius' Cynthia.[173] In this poem, Cynthia has died and comes back as a shade to chastise Propertius for forgetting her so soon and to instruct him on how to punish those who wronged her while she was living. Cynthia, in emotional verses, speaks of the pains of being a ghost and in doing so presents a brief geography and representation of certain figures of the Underworld.[174]

Poem 4.7 offers a provocative inversion of poem 1.19 that invites close analysis. In 1.19, as we have seen, Propertius is the imagined deceased, who laments his own lot and who hopes that Cynthia will be faithful to him even though he has passed on. In 4.7, as a direct contrast to 1.19, Cynthia has died and returned as a ghost to berate Propertius for being unfaithful, though he emphasizes his misery over her death from the beginning of the poem.

Sunt aliquid Manes: letum non omnia finit,
luridaque evitos effugit umbra rogos.
Cynthia namque meo visa est incumbere fulcro,
murmur ad extremae nuper humata viae,
cum mihi somnus ab exsequiis penderet amoris,
et quererer lecti frigida regna mei.

Ghosts do exist: death does not end all things,
and a pale shade flees the ruined pyres.
For Cynthia seemed to lean on my bedpost,
she, recently buried at the hum near the end of the road,
when for me sleep was hanging from the death rites of love,

[173] Compare *Iliad*.23.65-92, as source material for poem 1.19.

and I lamented the cold kingdoms of my bed.

(Propertius 4.7.1-6)

The beginning of 4.7 presents verbal similarities to Propertius' opening in poem 1.19. In the very first line of 4.7, "Ghosts do exist," *Sunt aliquid Manes* (1), there is an echo of the first line of 1.19, "I do not now fear, my Cynthia, sad ghosts," *non ego nunc tristes vereor, mea Cynthia, Manes* (1). Both lines acknowledge the existence of ghosts, which becomes a necessary narrative construct for the validity of the remainder of both poems. In the second line of poem 4.7, the words *umbra* "shade" and *rogos* "pyres" (4.7.2) echo the *umbra* "shade" (1.19.10) and *extremo… rogo* "final pyre" (1.19.2) found in poem 1.19. Also, poem 4.7 uses the phrase *ab exsequiis* "from the death rites" (4.7.5), which resonates with the phrase in poem 1.19, *hic timor est ipsis durior exsequiis*, "this fear is harsher than the death rites themselves" (1.19.4). Love, death, ritual, and a concern for the afterlife bring the two poems together.

After chastising Propertius for being "faithless" (*perfide*, 4.7.13) and lamenting the figures that led to her demise, Cynthia draws Propertius and the reader into the Underworld.

non tamen insector, quamvis mereare, Properti:
longa mea in libris regna fuere tuis.
iuro ego Fatorum nulli revolubile carmen,
tergeminusque canis sic mihi molle sonet,
me servasse fidem. si fallo, vipera nostris
sibilet in tumulis et super ossa cubet.

Nevertheless, I don't chide you, although you deserve it, Propertius:
my kingdoms lasted a long time in your books.
I swear by the song of the Fates that can be unraveled by no one,
may the three-fold dog thus sound a soft sound for me,
that I guarded fidelity. If I lie, may the viper hiss upon my
grave and rest above my bones.

(Propertius 4.7.49-54)

Cynthia, convinced that she will live up to the glorious name that Propertius has provided her in his work, swears that she was never unfaithful. The powerful wording and vocabulary of this section illustrate the intense emotion being communicated by Cynthia. She acknowledges the fame given to her by Propertius' writing when she says, "my kingdoms lasted a long time in your books" (*longa mea in libris regna fuere tuis*, 50). As Richardson notes, "it is more important to her to have been the subject of his poems than to have been the object of his love."[175] Similarly, Gregory Hutchinson (2006) writes that this section "denotes domination of the books through domination in love, with a possible hint to the reader that the latter was all a literary fiction."[176] Whether Cynthia is suggesting that she was the ultimate *domina* or not, referring to her life as *regna* indicates her importance in Propertius' corpus.

After the transition couplet where she rather insincerely claims that she is not going to scold Propertius, Cynthia then swears that she was never unfaithful, and does so in language that evokes spells of the sort found in Theocritus.[177] She swears by the Fates,[178] and conjures the images of two ghoulish figures, Cerberus, the *tergeminus canis* (52) and a viper, which would "hiss upon her grave and rest upon her bones" (*sibilet in tumulis et super ossa cubet*, 54). The language Cynthia uses in this section and the imagery she invokes not only speak to her determination about her fidelity, but also emphasize her present location in the Underworld and introduce the subsequent otherworldly imagery, as we shall discuss next.

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[175] Richardson (2006) 459.
[176] Hutchinson (2006) 181.
[177] For a discussion of this poem's resonances with the theme of magic in the verses of Theocritus, see Dickson (1927) 488-498.
[178] See Theocritus *Idylls* 2.160 for the invocation of the Fates during a spell.

Because of her role as Propertius' mistress, Cynthia, who throughout the *Elegies* has been a figure of consternation and heartache for Propertius while she was alive, now after her death is justified in not leaving him alone and continues to insist that she was a good and faithful lover while she was alive. Propertius makes Cynthia the voice of poem 4.7, and as such he allows her to bring her own distinctive sharpness of attitude and tone to the description of the Underworld, and Cynthia's Underworld is specifically inhabited by feminine figures.

Propertius' Feminized Underworld

In the next lines of 4.7, Propertius describes the Underworld through Cynthia's own voice. The fact that Cynthia is the speaker of the poem affects the way the Underworld is presented and what sort of place it is, which, as Papanghelis states, "is the function of its female denizens."[179] Indeed, Propertius' entire Underworld is predicated on the women present therein and on the tone of the poem delivered in the voice of the scorned woman herself, Cynthia. Propertius chooses to populate his Underworld with women alone, rather than the more obvious and popular tradition involving a variety of male occupants and sinners. By modifying the more conventional illustrations of the Underworld to include only women in his own description, Propertius shows off his *doctrina* by alluding to a slighter and less obvious tradition.[180] Cynthia proceeds to narrate the presence and function of a variety of female Underworld characters, presenting her distinctively feminized Underworld.

Nam gemina est sedes turpem sortita per amnem,

[179] Papanghelis (1987) 170.
[180] The presence of women in the Underworld is not unprecedented. See, for example, *Odyssey* 11.225-270 and *Aeneid* 6.442-449 for examples of Catalogues of Women within the Underworld.

turbaque diversa remigat omnis aqua.
Una Clytaemestrae stuprum vehit, altera Cressae
portat mentitae lignea monstra bovis.
Ecce coronato pars altera rapta phaeselo,
mulcet ubi Elysias aura beata rosas,
qua numerosa fides, quaque aera rotunda Cybebes
mitratisque sonant Lydia plectra choris.
Andromedeque et Hypermestre sine fraude maritae
narrant historiae tempora nota suae.

For two places are assigned across the foul river,
and the entire crowd rows on opposite currents.
One carries the lust of Clytemnestra, another carries
the wooden monstrosity of the fake Cretan cow.
Behold another part swept up in a garlanded vessel,
where the lovely air caresses Elysian roses,
where the tuneful string, and where round bronze of the cymbal,
and the Lydian lyres sound to the turbaned dancers.
Andromeda and Hypermestra, matrons without blame
tell the well-known times of their own story.

(Propertius 4.7.55-64)

Here are the two parts (*gemina… sedes*, 55) of the Underworld, Tartarus and Elysium. Across the river (*turpem amnem*, 55), is the current that leads to Tartarus, and it is described by means of its relation to two notoriously "wicked" women, Clytemnestra and Pasiphaë, who were both unfaithful in their relationships. Clytemnestra was famous for committing adultery with Aegisthus and killing her husband Agamemnon.[181] Pasiphaë had Daedalus build a wooden costume of a cow so that she could satiate her lust for the Cretan Bull, by which she bore the famous Minotaur.[182] From Propertius' description, it seems as though Pasiphaë's wooden cow-suit is floating in the river, perhaps with her still in it as part of her eternal punishment.

Propertius' Elysium, on the other hand, is full of music and singing and dancing women. Here is the place where righteous matrons, like Andromeda and Hypermestra,

[181] Homer *Odyssey* 11.404-434; Aeschylus *Oresteia* 1331-1674.
[182] Bacchylides Fragment 26. The story is also taken up later by Ovid *Met.* 8.131-136.

reside: both were women famous for being faithful to their husbands. Andromeda was saved by the hero Perseus after being sacrificed to the sea monster, Cetus, by her parents.[183] She then followed Perseus and bore him seven sons – the paragon of a faithful wife.[184] Hypermestra refused to kill her husband at the command of her father, thus proving her fidelity to her husband.[185] Women who are faithful live in Elysium, where the fragrant flowers and gentle music are present. However, the wicked, unfaithful women reside in Tartarus, or at least are described as being on the waters leading up to Tartarus, where the most wicked of sinners traditionally dwell. In poem 4.7, Propertius adapts his version of the Underworld to suit the specifically feminized purpose of Cynthia's description.

The feminization of the Underworld in poem 4.7 is also foreshadowed in Propertius' other death-obsessed poem, 1.19. Note the description in 1.19 of the feminine chorus: "There let the beautiful heroines come as a chorus, whom the Trojan plunder gave to the Greek men" (*Illic formosae veniant chorus heroinae/ quas dedit Argivis Dardana praeda viris*, 1.19.13-14). In poem 1.19, where Propertius is claiming his own fidelity to Cynthia after death, he describes the beautiful heroines in the Underworld. There the reference to the *heroinae* (1.19.13) is to illustrate that although there are beautiful and good women in the Underworld whom Propertius could pursue, he would not do so because of his loyalty to Cynthia. Cynthia's version of the Underworld in 4.7 is likewise populated with women; yet, in her version, the women of the Underworld are captive and some are there to be punished for their wicked actions. The difference between the representations of the female inhabitants of the Underworld is striking, since

[183] Ovid. *Met*. 5. 1-238.
[184] Andromeda is a favorite Propertian character: see 1.3.3-6 and 2.28.21-22.
[185] Aeschylus Fragment 24.

the male-centered view of the Underworld in 1.19 focuses on the women there as possible pursuits, while Cynthia's view in 4.7 presents women who are captive and some of whom are being punished for their sins. Nonetheless, the feminine Underworld figures that Cynthia presents serve to situate her, as another female figure, within the Underworld.

Like the Tibullan representation of Elysium in Tibullus 1.3, the realm of the righteous dead in Propertius 4.7 is reserved for lovers only. But unlike the heaven depicted in Tibullus 1.3, only women are described as being in Propertius' Elysium in 4.7. Francis Cairns (1979) claims that Propertius crafted 4.7 as a "compliment" to Tibullus' version of the Underworld in Tibullus 1.5. Because Tibullus' description of Elysium is the first in extant Roman literature, Cairns believes that it was based on his Underworld that Propertius crafted his own. As Cairns argues: "Whereas Tibullus described first the erotic heaven and second the hell for sinners against love, both at similar length, in Propertius the hell for offenders against love comes first in abbreviated form and the heaven for lovers second."[186] Cairns' observation that Tibullus' version of Elysium is the first in surviving Latin literature means that Propertius almost certainly must have seen it, if not worked directly in relation to it.

While it is probable that Propertius modeled his Underworld in 4.7 on Tibullus' in 1.3, it can at least be assured that they were working in a similar tradition with respect to their understanding and orientation of the Underworld as a whole, perhaps from a similar, now lost mythological source. Both of their versions of the Underworld have amatory significance and the figures presented therein are consistent with the nature of erotic

[186] Cairns (1979) 54.

elegy. However, one particular character is present in both Tibullus 1.3 and in Propertius 4.7, and that character is Cerberus.

Propertius and Cerberus: A favorite figure

Propertius represents Cerberus multiple times in his third and fourth books of the *Elegies*, including poem 4.7. The figure seems to have been a favorite for Propertius, one that fits well into his Underworld imagery and one that he adapts for a variety of uses. For example, in poem 3.5, Propertius meditates on natural phenomena and the very existence of the Underworld. In his deliberation on whether certain elements of the Underworld exist, or even the Underworld in its entirety, he presents Cerberus as the guardian of the underground cave, his traditional location.[187]

> num tribus infernum custodit faucibus antrum
> Cerberus, et Tityo iugera pauca novem…
>
> whether Cerberus with triple jaws guards hell's cave
> and the scant nine acres of Tityos exists...
>
> (Propertius 3.5.43-44)

In poem 3.5 Propertius describes Cerberus as guarding the cave at the entrance to the Underworld, and he describes him as doing so by means of his menacing triple jaws.

Another example is poem 3.18, a lament for M. Claudius Marcellus, nephew, son-in-law and possibly adopted son of Augustus,[188] who died at Baiae in late 23 B.C.E. Propertius writes an intricate poem in which the waters of Baiae flow into the waters of death. He then begins to discuss the Underworld, in which he presents the figure of Cerberus in a brief narration.

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[187] See my introduction 10-12.
[188] See Richardson (2006) 391 on the importance of Marcellus.

Sed tamen huc omnes, huc primus et ultimus ordo:
est mala, sed cunctis ista terenda via est.
Exoranda canis tria sunt latrantia colla,
scandenda est torvi publica cumba senis.

Nevertheless all come here, here the highest and lowest rank:
it is evil, but such a path must be walked by all.
The three barking necks of the dog must be appeased,
the communal boat of the wild old man must be boarded.

(Propertius, 3.18.21-24)

Propertius' point in 3.18 is that in death all men are equal and no one can avoid the two wardens of the Underworld, Charon and Cerberus.[189] Once again, Propertius mentions the triple-headed figure of Cerberus to enhance the sense of danger of his Underworld. The presence of Cerberus in the Underworld is as traditional as the presence of Charon. Moreover, Cerberus appears more than once in Propertius' subsequent book, including in two illustrations of the Underworld (4.7.52-53, 4.11.25-16).

Book 4 as a whole has been the subject of great interest to scholars, many of whom note the tone of discontinuity within it,[190] as it portrays a variety of speakers and several thematic discrepancies.[191] Yet, despite an array of oppositions within the poems collected in Book 4, the major themes of the book clearly relate to death and the exploration of female integrity. The focus on women and death is an overarching theme of the book, and many of the poems therein engage with female virtue and death. As Hutchinson concludes, "the stress on female death underlines the women's defining

[189] On the use of the future passive periphrastic of purpose to express the inevitability of death, see Heyworth and Morwood (2011) 289.
[190] For the discontinuity of Book 4, see Hutchinson (2006) 1-21; Miller (2004); Janan (2001).
[191] For example, Cynthia is portrayed as dead and a ghost in 4.7, but is alive and well in 4.8.

morality."[192] Therefore, despite its debated inconsistencies, its organization, relating to its primary subject of death, is effective.

Propertius 4.5 is similar in mood to 4.7 because of the presence of women, witches, ghosts, and Underworld imagery. In this poem, Propertius gloats at the death of a *lena*, a "procuress" or "madam," who he claims has caused his mistress to be faithless and fickle. The poem starts off with Propertius' wishes for the *lena*:

> terra tuum spinis obducat, lena, sepulcrum,
> et tua, quod non vis, sentiat umbra sitim;
> nec sedeant cineri Manes, et Cerberus ultor
> turpia ieiuno terreat ossa sono!
>
> May the earth cover your grave with thorns, madam,
> and what you don't want, may your ghost feel thirst;
> and may your shades not rest among your ashes, and may vengeful Cerberus
> terrify your shameful bones with a hungry bark.
>
> (Propertius 4.5.1-4)

Propertius leaves little to the imagination as he describes the punishment that he curses upon this woman who kept him and his beloved separated. He wants her to be miserable in the afterlife and wishes that Cerberus will be part of her punishment. He calls Cerberus the "punisher" or "vengeful one" (*ultor*, 3), and hopes that the guard-dog will cause the *lena*'s very bones to be frightened by his "famished barking-sound" (*ieiuno… sono*, 4). The description of Cerberus by means of his ominous bark and his open jaws is characteristic of depictions of the figure,[193] and adds a level of rabid monstrosity to the menacing canine, who appears to be about to eat passersby. This dog snarls and has a singular purpose: to terrorize souls with his frightful appearance and loud barking.

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[192] Hutchinson (2006) 20.
[193] See my introduction 6.

From these three examples (3.5.43-44, 3.18.21-24, and 4.5.1-4), it becomes clear that Cerberus is a figure that Propertius intentionally invokes in his poetry in order to enhance the frightful elements of his descriptions of the Underworld. Cerberus, as a traditional mythological fixture of the Underworld, serves as a familiar character to illuminate the imagery of the Underworld. However, in contrast to the majority of the times that Propertius describes Cerberus in his poems, he does something different with his representation of the canine character in 4.7: he imbues Cerberus both with an exceptional agency and with specific associations to the figure of the poet-lover, something that is elsewhere in Propertius' canon not given to the hound of hell.

Cerberus Speaks

In linking Cerberus to the figure of the poet-lover, Propertius grants Cerberus a kind of agency, something the static guard-dog does not usually enjoy in any other depiction. In poem 4.7, Propertius has his ghost-Cynthia say: "may the three-fold dog thus sound a soft sound for me, that I guarded fidelity" (*tergeminusque canis sic mihi molle sonet, me servasse fidem*, 4.7.52-53). Indeed, it is in these lines that Propertius presents Cerberus with more freedom than he is usually afforded in the ancient sources. In addition, Propertius represents Cerberus by means of very specific elegiac vocabulary, which draws a comparison between Cerberus in poem 4.7 and the elegiac poet-lover himself.

Cerberus, typically shackled to the entrance of the Underworld, as we have seen, is described by his ominous bark, indicated by the verb *sono*. Propertius also uses the related noun *sonus* in poem 4.5 to indicate the sound of Cerberus (*ieuno… sono*, 4.5.4,

discussed above). Cerberus' bark and howl are so much a part of his iconic character that these descriptive elements appear in nearly every literary representation of him. According to Richardson, "[Cerberus'] insatiable hungry snapping and snarling is his most famous characteristic."[194] His bark is something that is depicted in verse to frighten other figures and to add to the ominous atmosphere of the Underworld.

The verb *sono* in its simplest sense means to make a sound, which Cerberus, as a dog with multiple mouths, does by barking.[195] Yet, in poem 4.7, Propertius alters the traditional voice of Cerberus by adding an internal adjective *molle* to designate "a soft sound" (52), and this radically changes the effect of the verb. This means that instead of Cerberus' usual loud bark, Cynthia would have him utter sounds in a completely different and less menacing way than he usually does. Indeed, this appears to be an overt reference to the language of the *recusatio* outlined above,[196] indeed, Cerberus makes a *mollis* sound, that is, an *elegiac* sound. The word *molle* immediately brings to mind its association with elegy as an opposition to epic and the harshness (*dura*) the elegists associated with the genre. In this line, Cerberus is not barking harshly, but utters soft words that indicate and even confirm Cynthia's fidelity.

Moreover, contrary to other representations where the guard-dog can do no more than bark, snarl, or howl, Propertius gives Cerberus an actual message to convey. He is to give voice to the fact "that (Cynthia) guarded fidelity" (53). The placing of such a sentiment into the mouth of the usually brazen and barking figure is striking. Propertius gives Cerberus a voice, and a surprisingly soft one at that. The indirect statement that Cerberus is providing shows that the character has more depth than he is typically granted

[194] Richardson (2006) 442.
[195] *OLD s.v sono*.
[196] See above 76-77.

in ancient representations, in that he is allowed to become an advocate, who vouches for Cynthia with his *molle* "elegiac" sound. The verb *sonet* (4.7.53) is a stand-in for the standard *dicit*, wherein follows reported speech in indirect statement. The subject accusative and infinitive (*me servasse fidem,* 53) leaves little doubt that Cerberus is reporting Cynthia's sentiment.

In fact, given that Cerberus is specifically delivering an elegiac message, it suggests that he is standing in the place of the poet-lover, perhaps even Propertius himself, in the poem. This analogy is confirmed by the fact that only a single couplet beforehand, the ghost-Cynthia acknowledges her long reign as the subject of Propertius' poetry: "my empires lasted a long time in your books" (*longa mea in libris regna fuere tuis*, 50). In life, Cynthia was long praised by Propertius, the elegiac poet-lover, and she is similarly praised for her fidelity by the unexpected figure of Cerberus, speaking his elegiac message (*sic mihi molle sonet*, 52), after her death.

By representing Cerberus as an elegiac messenger, Propertius, through the voice of Cynthia, grants the canine figure an astonishing and unparalleled speaking feature. As the guard-dog of the Underworld, Cerberus' purpose is usually twofold: both to keep the living out of the deeper parts of the Underworld, and to keep the dead within them.[197] Thus the expansion of the conventional description of the well-known canine by adding an advocate aspect to the figure achieves a threefold purpose. First of all, it assures the audience of the poem that Cynthia was faithful while, at the same time, sustaining and even enhancing the Underworld themes of the poem. Second, by transforming the audience's expectations of Cerberus, Propertius subsequently enhances the eerie and otherworldly aspects of the poem, which point to the larger theme of Propertius' own

[197] See my introduction 4-12.

confusion at the sight of the ghost of Cynthia at the beginning of the poem. Third, and most importantly, by giving Cerberus the ability to speak *molle*, softly or even elegiacally, the description pointedly associates the Cerberus figure with the elegiac poet-lover.

Thus, in this section of poem 4.7, Propertius expands the conventional depiction of Cerberus by granting him a voice. In doing so, Propertius gives to Cerberus a vocal freedom and an agency that he has never before possessed and thereby allows him to "speak" (*sonet,* 4.7.53). Letting Cerberus speak provides the character with a vocal liberation, which sets Propertius' depiction of Cerberus apart from all previous and many later depictions. The representation of the figure of Cerberus as the elegiac poet-lover is significant because it shows the malleability of traditional literary and mythological *exempla*, while at the same time it leads the reader to understand more deeply the plight of the poet-lover. However, the character of Cerberus is not only augmented because of his vocal liberation and ability to speak, but also because of his physical liberation.

The Physical Liberation of Cerberus

Nearly forty lines later in poem 4.7, after ordering Propertius to burn the verses he wrote for her and instead to write an epitaph over her tomb, the ghost of Cynthia describes how by night dreams have truth and the inhabitants of the Underworld are able to be released for a short time. It is in her description of the nocturnal wandering figures of the Underworld that Cerberus is mentioned again, and this time he is called by name.

> nocte vagae ferimur, nox clausas liberat umbras,
> errat et abiecta Cerberus ipse sera.
> luce iubent leges Lethaea ad stagna reverti:
> nos vehimur, vectum nauta recenset onus.
>
> By night we are borne as wanderers, night frees imprisoned shades,

even Cerberus himself roams when the bolt is cast aside.
By day the laws order us to return to Lethe's waters:
we board, and the ferryman numbers the loaded cargo.

(Propertius 4.7.89-93)

The imagery in this section is striking, as it presents the company of the Underworld, Cerberus included, as wandering nocturnally in the world of the living. Many scholars have noted that Propertius' representation of the Underworld in poem 4.7 exhibits clear parallels to Vergil's Underworld,[198] when at the end of the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, Vergil describes the portals through which the shades float (*Aeneid* 6.893-901).[199] Yet here in 4.7 Propertius takes a slightly different approach to the scene than Vergil and even pushes it further to suggest that the shades are roaming the earth *nocte* "by night" (89). Indeed, this representation serves to explain how Cynthia was able to appear to Propertius in the first place.

Most relevant to the current discussion is the line, "even Cerberus himself roams when the bolt is cast aside" (*errat et abiecta Cerberus ipse sera*, 90). As we have seen, Cerberus traditionally occupies a stationary place at the entrance to the Underworld and never moves, yet here he is able to roam around in the upper world with the unconfined shades, until the morning when Charon ferries them back down. As Richardson notes of Cerberus' task in this poem: "he seems to keep the ghosts of the dead below ground by day and is himself allowed out by night, but usually he is thought to guard the entrance to hell and not stray from his post."[200] This line describing Cerberus' physical liberation adds to the unprecedented idea of his ability to speak referred to earlier in the poem, in

[198] Hutchinson (2006) 188; Richardson (2006) 462.
[199] In this passage, Vergil also uses the noun *Manes* (*Aeneid* 6.896) to refer to the ghosts that go through one of the portals.
[200] Richardson (2006) 442.

line 52; but even more so, this depiction indicates the freedom that Propertius gives to the oft-shackled Cerberus in these lines.

Certainly, the idea that the famous triple-headed canine would be roaming about in the upper world during the night might serve to frighten people, but the image is even more drastic. In this section, Cerberus, whose only movement outside of the Underworld depicted elsewhere is when Herakles drags him up from the Underworld as one of his labors, is able to wander about at his pleasure, free of his chains. Cynthia describes Cerberus in the company of the spirits, including her, freed from the Underworld, "By night we are borne as wanderers, night frees imprisoned shades" (*nocte vagae ferimur, nox clausas liberat umbras*, 89). Cerberus, the forever shackled and imprisoned figure, is capable of being physically liberated with the other shades of the Underworld, almost as an equal. Thus, in a reversal of the traditional *katabasis* down to the Underworld, such as Orpheus undertakes to retrieve Eurydice, or Herakles to fetch Cerberus, Propertius presents the longed-for inhabitants of the Underworld rising up on their own, illustrating that in poetry the dead may never truly be gone forever. Here, Cerberus is not the object of Herakles' retrieval, rather he seems to journey to the upper world of his own volition. Furthermore, when Cerberus' physical freedom is taken in combination with his vocal freedom (*sic mihi molle sonet*, 52) described earlier in the poem, it suggests that Propertius was purposefully presenting a sympathetic illustration of Cerberus, perhaps so that his audience would associate the canine with a softer, more familiar character, such as the poet-lover himself.

The verb *erro*, to "roam" or "wander," indicates that there is neither purpose nor even direction to the way that Cerberus moves about when he is free. The lack of

direction that Cerberus experiences as an unrestricted figure stands in contrast to his traditional, immobile depiction and more fully illustrates the dramatic nature of his liberation. Indeed, this section of the poem serves to present a Cerberus figure that is physically liberated, even if it is conditional on the time of day and the unlocking of the bolt, *abiecta… sera* (90).[201] The noun *sera* is most frequently used to refer to the bolt or bar that would fasten a door or gate.[202] Thus, the image of letting Cerberus free by unlocking the bolt of a door also lends itself to the image of the poet-lover figure because of its association with the *exclusus amator* begging for the door to be opened, as delineated in my previous chapter.

In a clever turn, Propertius adopts the traditional imagery of Cerberus as the *ianitor* or *custos*, guarding the gates of the Underworld, but rather than stationing Cerberus at a door to keep the figures of the Underworld inside, the poet suggests that Cerberus himself is locked in the Underworld and it is only after the bolt is removed that he can escape his imprisonment. The elegiac image of the *servus amoris*, figuratively chained to the whims of his mistress because of his devotion and locked outside of her door, hoping for it to be opened, fits in closely with the image of the chained dog, who is finally freed when the gates of the Underworld are unlocked.

For Cerberus, it is the coming of night and the unlocked door that allow him to leave the confines of the Underworld and roam about the upper world. He is able to wander as one with the shades of the Underworld, while at the same time Cynthia is able to leave the confines of the Underworld and joins Propertius at his bed again. Cerberus is

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[201] Compare Propertius 4.11.25-26, discussed above, where Cornelia asks that Cerberus' chain be slackened and the door bolt become quiet. In 4.11, Cerberus is relieved from his daily duty of straining against his chain, but he is still stuck on the *limen*, while here he is freed from the door because the bolt is *abiecta*.

[202] *OLD s.v sera*.

effectively afforded the same agency and freedom as the other inhabitants of the Underworld, an unprecedented amount of volition for a traditionally bound, speechless figure. Furthermore, perhaps Propertius is suggesting that it is the nighttime that allows the poet-lover reprieve from the pains of the wakeful life of the lover. Unlike Cerberus, however, Propertius is still subject to the ghostly appearances of his dead beloved at his headboard.

Conclusions: The Liberated Cerberus as the Poet-Lover

The physical and vocal liberation that Propertius affords to Cerberus in poem 4.7 provides a vivid and enticing representation of the Underworld from which Cynthia has exited to visit her former lover. In an expertly crafted Underworld, full of traditional descriptions of the landscape and explicitly feminized elements, Propertius skillfully wields his poetic genius by both heightening and subverting readers' expectations. This augmentation serves a twofold purpose: first, it enhances the eerie effects of the Underworld atmosphere and the ghostly poem in general; second, and most importantly, it provides an allusion to the poet-lover figure himself by means of the liberated figure of Cerberus. Propertius gives agency to Cerberus through his freedom of movement and speech, an unprecedented poetic endeavor.

Like Tibullus in his poem 1.3, Propertius adjusts the traditional role of Cerberus in his poem 4.7 to associate the mythological monster with the poet-lover. Cerberus is traditionally presented as immobile, both because of his bound position near the entrance of hell and because of his character as an object to be conquered. Yet, his character is augmented in 4.7 to enhance the narrative effect of the poem and to obscure the

audience's expectations of the afterlife. In addition, the figure of Cerberus and the elegiac language with which he is described brings forth a comparison with the mortal life of the poet. Just like the elegiac poet, Cerberus sounds softly (*molle*, 4.7.52), and also like the elegiac poet confined in the *servitium amoris*, Cerberus is traditionally confined to his position in the Underworld. It is the night that liberates Cerberus from his confinement, and he wanders around after his release perhaps enjoying the reprieve from his traditional bound position. This representation of Cerberus is much like the poet-lover, who tries to escape the *curae* of his love affairs and be free, yet is always compelled back into submission. Cerberus is forced back to his Underworld position when he is ordered to do so, as "the laws bid" (*leges iubent*, 92). Just as Propertius, who fights against the bondage of *servitium amoris*, but is never able to be free, must always return to his lover, no creature – canine or human – can escape his destiny.

In 4.7, Propertius presents his own unique version of the Underworld. His underworld is furnished with figures and imagery that coincide with the traits of his beloved, Cynthia, who would stop at nothing, even death, to come back to Propertius. Yet, even in death, while residing in an Underworld full of powerful female characters, Cynthia still needs an elegiac advocate to support her statement of fidelity; and in the case of Propertius 4.7, this advocate is Cerberus. Thus the figure of Cerberus in 4.7 becomes a stand-in for the elegiac poet himself. Cerberus is a representative figure who, through unparalleled agency, is able to traverse the vocal and physical boundaries of both the elegiac poet-lover as well as his traditionally static mythological self.

CONCLUSION

Cerberus as the Elegiac Lover

Tibullus and Propertius use the unexpected but fitting canine figure of Cerberus to symbolize the subjective figure of the poet-lover within their poetry. I have investigated how Tibullus characterizes Cerberus as the shut-out poet-lover locked in the circumstance of the *exclusus amator*. For Tibullus, the image of Cerberus fettered outside of the doors of the Underworld serves as a provocative illustration of the liminality and helplessness of the poet-lover. I have also shown how Propertius puts elegiac oaths into the mouth of Cerberus as Cynthia promises her fidelity. Propertius provides Cerberus with an agency that gives the character the ability to navigate the vocal and physical limitations of the poet-lover.

Both of these poets make a striking decision in choosing Cerberus to serve as a substitute for the subjective figure of the poet-lover. Cerberus, who is both a bound, captive victim and a powerful, menacing force, suggests the nature of the elegiac poet-lover, who is both *mollis* as an elegiac poet and a servant to his mistress, figuratively chained to her love, but who is also *durus*, as the subjective agent and author of his own poetry. Cerberus thereby functions as a vivid representation of the poet-lover, indicating that the elegists themselves were conscious of their own ambiguous, even contradictory position as male subjective elegists writing poetry that detailed their captivity and submission to their *dominae*, or female mistresses. This use of Cerberus as a stand-in for the poet-lover demonstrates how the elegists adopted a traditional mythological figure

and adapted it in such a way to create and manipulate the depiction of an elegiac world and a specific figure within it.

The correlation between Cerberus and the poet-lover exhibits both physical and communicative aspects. Cerberus, as a chained figure, is physically representative of the elegiac poet-lover, who is under the authority of, or even enslaved to, a mistress. In addition, Cerberus is stationed outside of the doors of the Underworld, just as the poet-lover, in the elegiac role of the *exclusus amator*, is positioned outside of the doors of his beloved. Therefore, they are both physically located in analogous situations from which they cannot feasibly move. Moreover, in terms of communication, the use of Cerberus as a stand-in for the poet also offers a way to read the emotions, messages, and literary purpose expressed by the poet through his ability to communicate in specific ways. The poet-lover can reflect both a *mollis* capacity, being a speaker of love, but he may also occupy a *durus* position, being a speaker and even a teacher of truths.

Just like Cerberus, the poet-lover is at the same time both a terrifying and a sympathetic character. Cerberus is forbidding because his purpose at the gates of the Underworld is to terrify and intimidate through his barking and menacing of those who approach him. The poet is also fearsome because his didactic purpose is inherent in his status as a poet. His audience, as the ones who experience his poetry, are subjects he can teach, warn, and even threaten by means of his powerful voice and message. But conversely, Cerberus is also a sympathetic character: because he is chained and unable to move, he arouses sympathy. The poet-lover also can be a sympathetic character based on his choice of vocabulary and the illustrations that he uses to present himself as a captive to his mistress and slave to love.

Thus, within their poetry, Tibullus and Propertius are able to adapt and utilize the physical and communicative aspects of this canine figure, who is both terrifying and sympathetic, both *durus* and *mollis*. This adaptation and negotiation of the Cerberus figure illuminates the prowess of the poets as wielders of mythological *exempla*, and also as masters of presenting the identities and *personae* of the poet-lovers. By associating themselves with well-known, traditional characters such as Cerberus, the poets indicate to their readers the nuances and depths of their own situations as elegiac poets and lovers.

Tibullus and Propertius set up the figure of Cerberus as the stand-in for the poet-lover within specifically amatory Underworlds, which then become analogues for the elegiac world in which the poet-lover resides. The Underworlds of both authors are filled with figures of lovers and sinners against love, all of which are presented through particular amatory language. The very fact that these elegists present a poet-lover figure within the mythological Underworld lends a certain tone to the representation of the poet-lover and gives more specific meaning to the character by revealing a darker and gloomier view of his lot. In their elegiac Underworlds full of human lovers and sinners against love, Tibullus and Propertius identify the poet-lover as a monstrous figure.

Mythological Manifestations of the Lovers' World

My work in identifying the poet-lover with a mythological character has centered on Tibullus and Propertius and their use of the figure of Cerberus. It would be profitable, however, to take the discussion further by investigating other mythological and specifically Underworld figures that are presented in the elegiac poets' work and explore their place and purpose in their poetry. One way that this project could be achieved would

be to examine more closely the depictions of the Underworld and its many denizens throughout the elegists' works and to investigate the way each image or figure is illustrated and situated therein.

Such a project applied primarily to the elegiac depiction of the Underworld could also be focused on representations of the "monstrous" in Roman elegy. The concept of what defines the "monstrous" in the ancient world has been much studied in recent years.[203] According to classicist Dunstan Lowe, what constitutes a monstrous being is an "abnormal body,"[204] and in the ancient world, "mythical monsters sometimes encroached upon reality,"[205] because of the close association with mythology and day-to-day life. As a figure so prevalent not only in descriptions of the Underworld, but also ubiquitous in Herculean mythology, Cerberus fulfills the definition of the monstrous easily: he not only had an abnormal hybridized body, but he also occupied an important place in the common mythology where his presence could be vividly imagined.

Taken in conjunction with the vast and ever-growing scholarship on monstrosity in the ancient world, the current project and its conclusions could provide the foundation for examining not only monstrous mythological representations of the elegiac poet-lover, but also the elements and figures that surround him: namely, his beloved mistress and the elegiac world in which he is a fixture.[206] That is, the concept of the monstrous and its meaning within the context of elegy could be explored using the methodology established by the current project in order to investigate further how the amatory world is not only

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[203] For a broad overview on the topic in both Greek and Roman culture see Atherton (1998). On monstrosity in Augustan literature, see Lowe (2015).
[204] Lowe (2015) 44.
[205] Lowe (2015) 45.
[206] Some work as been done in recent years on the representation of Propertius' beloved, Cynthia, and the monstrous. For example, on Cynthia presented as a snake in Propertius Book 4, see Walin (2009) 137-151.

analogous to the Underworld but how the lover and beloved might also be associated with the monstrous.

In conclusion, my thesis identifies certain vocabulary and phrases that describe images of and associations to the Underworld present in specific elegies of Tibullus and Propertius as indicative of the analogy between Cerberus and the poet-lover as depicted in the poems. This analogy provides an alternate way of interpreting the position of the elegiac poet-lover through the figure of Cerberus, a reading that illuminates the complex and sometimes opposing and even confusing characteristics of the subjective poet-lovers as portrayed in their verses. This work has established that the elegists Tibullus and Propertius utilized the figure of Cerberus in order to provide a more nuanced understanding of their own position as poet-lovers within the elegiac world and that, in doing so, they show their prowess with respect to employing mythological associations and allusions in their work.

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