

IMAGES OF DEAD POETS IN ROMAN ELEGIAC AND LYRIC UNDERWORLD

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ABSTRACT: In this paper I analyse and compare the representations (or self-representations) of poets in the underworld in elegiac and lyric Roman poetry. I focus especially on five poems: Tibullus I.3; Propertius II. 34; Ovid, *Amores* II.6 (birds as poets) and III.9; Horace, *Odes* II.13. It is not my intention to give a detailed interpretation of the whole poems; my principal aim is to analyse how dead poets are pictured in two different genres, the elegiac and the lyric, which share certain features (for instance, we can have in some lyric poems the poetic *persona* of a lover, the *amator*, which characterizes erotic elegy discourse, and some similar topics, as the metaphor of love as illness, etc.). At the end of this paper, I will point to the images of dead poets that are (I think) the most representative of the difference between elegiac and lyric genres. In the footnotes I provide some bibliographical references on studies and commentaries about each of the poems I treat here.

KEYWORDS: Roman elegy; Roman lyric poetry; Ovid; underworld.

IMAGENS DE POETAS NO MUNDO DOS MORTOS DA POESIA ELEGÍACA E LÍRICA ROMANA

RESUMO: Neste artigo, analiso e comparo as representações (ou autorrepresentações) de poetas no mundo dos mortos na poesia elegíaca e lírica romana. Concentro-me, sobretudo, em cinco poemas: Tibulo I, 3; Propércio II, 34; Ovídio, *Amores* II, 6 (aves como poetas) e III, 9; Horácio, *Odes* II, 13. Não é minha intenção apresentar uma interpretação detalhada dos poemas; meu objetivo central é analisar como poetas mortos são retratados em dois gêneros poéticos diversos, o elegíaco e o lírico, que compartilham certas características (por exemplo, em certos poemas líricos podemos ter a *persona* do amante, o *amator*, elemento fundamental na elegia erótica romana, além de tópicos e imagens semelhantes, como

¹ I would like to thank FAPESP for the funds that made possible my research abroad on the underworld in elegiac and lyric Latin poetry (of which this paper is a little part); Ben Young, for correcting my English; and the anonymous referees for useful comments and corrections. Remaining errors are exclusively of my own.

a metáfora do amor como doença, etc.). No final deste artigo, salientarei as imagens de poetas mortos que são, a meu ver, as mais representativas da diferença entre os gêneros elegíaco e lírico.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Elegia romana; poesia lírica romana; Ovídio; mundo dos mortos.

THE TIBULLAN ELYSIUM AND AND HIS ELEGIAC AFTERLIFE

In elegy I. 3,² Tibullus, having fallen ill in Phaeacia, begs Death not to seize him in that unknown place, where his funeral would be unattended by his mother, his sister and the beloved Delia (1-10). Scholars have pointed out several echoes of the *Odyssey* in this elegy.³ The mention in the beginning of the poem of the Homeric *Phaeacia*, a place identified in Antiquity with the island of Corcyra, as it has been observed,⁴ would have evoked for the contemporary reader associations of similarity and contrast between Tibullus and Odysseus: Tibullus, as the Greek hero on a journey, is detained in *Phaeacia* far away from home, but in a more negative situation than Odysseus, because he is ill and imagines he could die there, without returning to rejoin the beloved woman he left behind.

A little sceptical about certain intertextual Odysseic echoes pointed to by scholars, Murgatroyd (1980, p. 100) affirms: “There does seem to be allusion to Odysseus in 1.3, but not as extensively as some scholars maintain”. Personally, I tend to agree with those who see subtle allusions to the *Odyssey* throughout the elegy. Kuhlmann (2006, p. 421), for instance, explores the echoes of Homer in I. 3 and mentions, among other similarities, the separation of the couple Tibullus/Delia, the nostalgia for home and family, and the final scene that places Delia in the situation of Penelope. There is even a description of the underworld, as in the famous *Odyssey* Book XI, and an imaginary νόστος that would reunite the separated couple again. Just like Odysseus after the Trojan war, Tibullus finds himself in a kind of limbo between two worlds: that of war (accompanying Messala) and that of the distant home, attainable only through memory and desire, a limbo then between past memories and hopes for the future. It is worth noting that, for Tibullus, his sufferings are a kind of revenge taken by Love, because he departed from the beloved woman (*audeat invito ne quis discedere Amore/ aut sciat egressum se prohibente deo*, vv. 21-22). Tibullus acted against Love’s will, and is punished by the vengeful god just as Odysseus’ misfortunes during his travels are attributed to the punitive will of a divinity.⁵

² Studies and commentaries on this elegy include: Kuhlmann (2006, p. 419-441); Müller (1995, p. 133-134); Maltby (2002); Morelli (1991, p. 175-187); Campbell (1973, p. 147-157); Wimmel (1968, p. 175-240); André (1965, p. 33-43); Eisenberger (1960, p. 188-197). Other references are indicated in the next note. Latin text from Maltby edition.

³ See Bright (1978, p.16-37); for other references, Houghton (2007, p. 153, n. 2).

⁴ For instance, Smith (1964, p. 234); Mills (1974, p. 226-233).

⁵ Bright (1978, p. 21); against this association, see, for instance, Morelli (1991, p. 176).

The aforementioned Kuhlmann (2006, p. 422) sees in the very structure of I.3 an *Odyssey* in miniature. Note that in the last lines of the poem we have a description of nature similar to those we find in epic poetry since Homer, a personified Dawn leads her pink horses:⁶

*hoc precor: hunc illum nobis Aurora nitentem
Luciferum roseis candida portet equis, 93-4*

Tibullus will return to Delia at Dawn, as Odysseus arriving in Ithaca, or Aeneas in Latium:

ἔϛτ' ἄσπτηρ ὑπερέσχε φαάντατος, ὃς τε μάλιστα
ἔρχεται ἀγγέλλων φάος Ἡοῦς ἠριγενείης, (*Odyssey*, XIII, 93-94)

*Iamque rubescebat radiis mare et aethere ab alto
Aurora in roseis fulgebat lutea bigis* (*Aeneid*, VII, 25-26)⁷

“Sunbeams reddened the sea. Yellow Aurora
Shone in her rosy chariot from on high”. (Translation by Sarah Ruden)

There is in the elegy at least a concrete textual echo of the Greek epic, as was pointed out by Wimmel (1968, p. 204-205, n. 60): in *Odyssey* book IV, Proteus says to Menelaus: ἀλλὰ σ' ἔς Ἠλύσιον πεδίον καὶ πείρατα γαίης / ἀθάνατοι πέμπουσιν (563-564), “but the gods will conduct you to the Elysian plain and the extremities of the earth”.⁸ Tibullus claims that Venus herself will conduct him to the Elysian Fields: *ipsa Venus campos ducet in Elysios*, 58. Note that Proteus’ words are followed by a description of the blessings in the Elysian Fields, and there is something similar in Tibullus I.3. Another parallel presented by Wimmel: just as Tibullus gives the reason why he is destined for Elysium (*quod...*), Proteus explains the motivation behind Menelaus’ destiny: οὐνεκ' ἔχεις Ἑλένην καὶ σφιν γαμβρὸς Διός ἐσσι (569), “because you have Helen and for then you are the son-in-law of Zeus”. Menelaus has a special relationship with Zeus, as Tibullus with Venus.

Finally, note that the parallel between Tibullus and Odysseus in the elegy generates layers of meaning that complicate its interpretation: Delia is placed in Penelope’s position, but as a Penelope from whom Tibullus needs to request chastity, a fine irony activated by intertextuality. Besides that, Delia has a *custos* to watch over her fidelity (*at tu casta, precor, maneat sanctique pudoris / assideat custos sedula semper anus*, 83-84; “but stay faithful, I beg you, and let an old woman always sit near you as a guardian of holy modesty”), a very heterodox Penelope, so to speak, and another example of epic grandiosity reduced to elegiac reality.

⁶ Cf.: “Il motivo dell’Aurora che annuncia il giorno percorre tutta la produzione epica greca e latina: il topos fa parte del bagaglio formulare di ogni ‘bravo’ poeta epico” (Montuschi, 1998, p. 71).

⁷ The Portuguese poet Luis de Camões, against the historical facts, makes his epic hero Vasco da Gama arrive in India at dawn (*Lusiadas* VI, 92, 1-4), a clear imitation of Vergil.

⁸ Note especially the echo: ἀλλὰ σ[ε] / *sed me*.

Death is a recurrent theme in Tibullus I.3. In lines 55-56, the poet, as do the other Augustan elegiac poets, presents his epitaph; from here to line 82, there is a description of the underworld:

*sed me, quod facilis tenero sum semper Amori,
ipsa Venus campos ducet in Elysios.
hic choreae cantusque uigent, passimque uagantes
dulce sonant tenui gutture carmen aues;
fert casiam non culta seges totosque per agros
florete odoratis terra benigna rosis:
ac iuuenum series teneris immixta puellis
ludit et assidue proelia miscet Amor.
illic est cuiusque rapax Mors uenit amanti,
et gerit insigni myrtea sarta coma. (57-66)*

“But me, for I have been ever pliable to gentle Love, shall Venus’ self escort to the Elysian fields. There never flags the dance. The birds fly here and there, fluting sweet carols from their slender throats. Untilled the field bears cassia, and through all the land with scented roses blooms the kindly earth. Troops of young men meet in sport with gentle maidens, and Love never lets his warfare cease. There are all, on whom Death swooped because of love; on their hair are myrtle garlands for all to see”. (Translation by J.P. Postgate)

In the Tibullan elegy there is an Elysium (*campos... in Elysios*, v. 58) that rewards elegiac lovers, just as there is (described in the sequence of the poem) a Tartarus (*scelerata... sedes*,⁹ 67) to punish those who have committed crimes against love; the underworld is then divided into two sections related to the erotic impulse. Tibullus will go to the first because he has always been *facilis* to Love, that is, susceptible to it (*quod facilis tenero sum semper Amori*, 57), a claim that can be interpreted also in a metapoetical way: having been always susceptible to “tender love” means *also* to have written elegiac poetry, since in the elegiac world loving and writing elegies are two sides of the same coin.¹⁰ *Tener* is an adjective typical of the elegiac

⁹ Literally, the “criminal house”, a metonym for “house of the criminals”, designating Tartarus, where wrongdoers are punished (Smith, 1964, p. 256).

¹⁰ In the first elegy of the *Amores*, constrained to write elegies because of a prank played by Cupid, who has stolen a foot from one of Ovid’s epic hexameters (4), the poet is hit, in a second moment, by the arrows of the naughty god (21-26): it is not possible to write elegies without having an object of affection. If the poet employs the elegiac meter, he must write erotic elegy and then of love. Paradoxically, Ovid begins to feel the effects of amorous passion without loving someone: *uror et in uacuo pectore regnat Amor*, 26. Cf. *ego semper amaui/ et si, quid faciam nunc quoque quaeris: amo* (*Remedia amoris*, vv. 7-8): Ovid keeps loving/writing elegies, as is attested by the elegiac distichs he is writing. Harrison (in Hardie, 2002a, p. 84) makes the excellent observation that “when the poet claims to Cupid in the opening scene that he has always loved and is still loving now... he is pointing not to his emotional

genre; although it appears in lyric poetry, its presence in elegy is abundant (see Pichon, 1966, p. 277-8).¹¹ When in *Amores* III, 1, 69, Ovid is convinced by Elegy to keep writing elegies, the composition of this kind of poetry is expressed as *teneri properentur amores*, that is, “using the same epithet as Tibullus does to describe both *Amor* singular at 1.3.57 and the girls cavorting in Elysium at 1.3.63” (so Houghton, 2007, p. 157).

It is Love’s goddess and *Amor*’s mother, Venus, who will conduct the poet to the underworld, not Mercurius, the god who is the mythic psicopompos in the other Greek and Latin poetic sources we have. Tibullan Elysium is imbued with features of the Golden Age (*fert casiam non culta seges totosque per agros / floret odoratis terra benigna rosis*, 61-62), and the song of the birds has elegiac qualities, being a sweet song emitted by a “delicate” (*tenuis*, another adjective characteristic of the genre) throat:¹²

*passimque uagantes
dulce sonant tenui gutture carmen aues* (59-60)

Note *carmen*, which can also refer to poetry.¹³

The only human beings that inhabit this Elysium are young lovers, typical characters of the elegiac universe, a world of *iuuenes amantes*, as we know:¹⁴

*ac iuuenum series teneris immixta puellis
ludit et assidue proelia miscet Amor.* (63-64)

The *puellae* are *tenerae* as is *Amor* himself, and the love is pictured according to the topic of the *militia amoris*: the military language is clear in the phrase *proelia miscere*.¹⁵ Once dead, young lovers keep doing what they did when death seized them: loving; in other words, elegiac lovers in the underworld keep reproducing a behaviour that is typical of the elegiac

biography but to his continuing commitment to erotic elegy in this poem”. Paradoxically (again!), Ovid presents remedies against the elegiac love in elegiac verses (Conte, 1994 *tenero*, p. 43-44), another example of the innovative way in which the poet handles the genre.

¹¹ Cf. “an epithet used repeatedly of elegiac love poetry” (Houghton in Thea S. Thorsen, 2013, p. 293).

¹² See Maltby (2002, p. 203). Cf. “it is a very familiar element of the Roman critical vocabulary: the opposition of *tenuis* and *grandis* runs through Augustus’ poetry, parallel to the conventional elegiac paring of *mollis* and *durus*” (Zetzel, “Poetic baldness and its cure” in Greene, Ellen; Welch, Tara S. (eds.), 2012, p. 207-208). Cf. Putnam (1976, p. 83): “*tenui gutture*: size of the throat is a metaphor for the delicate quality of voice... There is much about elegists and elegy that is ‘slender’”.

¹³ Cf. “In particular, and perhaps not surprisingly since this is the ideal of a poet/lover, this sound consists of *carmen*, which is given a high priority in Elysium”, Lee-Stecum, 1998, p. 120).

¹⁴ See Vasconcellos (2016, p. 106, 118). In *Remedia amoris*, when Ovid presents a “little grammar of elegy” (Conte, 1994, p. 58), among other requests to Love, we have: *fac coeant furtim iuuenes timidaeque puellae* (33).

¹⁵ OLD, s.v. *misceo*, 13b. There may be military overtones in *series* and *immixta* (Maltby, *Op. cit.*, p. 204); see also Lee-Stecum (*Op. cit.*, p. 120-121).

genre.¹⁶ Note the only mention of a physical aspect of the inhabitants of this Elysium: *insigni coma*; in Martial V, 30, 4, personified Elegy has *cultis ... comis*. We can also infer, from a suggestion of Kuhlmann,¹⁷ that in the Tibullan Elysium, where erotic *proelia* keep occurring, the elegiac suffering that is typical in the elegiac genre will be perpetual.

Concluding the section dedicated to Elysium, Tibullus says that all lovers (elegiac lovers, he means) will inhabit this region in the underworld:

*illic est cuicumque rapax Mors uenit amanti,
et gerit insigni myrtea sarta coma. (65-66)*

Having been always susceptible to love and having died loving – that is, having been an elegiac poet – Tibullus will inhabit an elegiac underworld. Therefore, I think Cairns (1979, p. 50) eludes the essential when he says “Elysium is the recompense which Tibullus deserves for enduring the suffering and death of a world deprived of its Golden Age”. In the elegiac universe, the poet/lover deserves a reward for having been faithful to elegiac song/love.¹⁸ If, according to the same Cairns (p. 52), “Tibullus has adapted his Elysian scenery to be consistent in all respects with its exclusively erotic nature”, the reward in Elysium also has an erotic and metapoetical motivation, since loving in the elegiac genre is equivalent to singing of love, as I have already mentioned.¹⁹

On the other hand, Tibullus’ Tartarus receives those whom Tisiphone, a counterpoint to Elysian Venus, pursues fiercely, the *impia turba* (70),²⁰ and some mythical criminals traditionally punished in the underworld, a bunch of *impii* that had sinned in the erotic field and then deserve their harsh fate for their anti-elegiac behaviour. That is more evident in the case of the Danaids, about whom the poet says: *et Danai proles, Veneris quod numina laesit*, v. 79. Ixion and Tityos are notoriously punished for having committed crimes that imply erotic impulses: the former tried to violate Juno, the latter Leto. Tantalus would also fit into this frame, if we accept Lee’s thesis, supported by Cairns (1979, p. 55-7) and Maltby (2002,

¹⁶ Note *ludit*, that can have an erotic connotation; cf. “*Ludo* could indicate the activities of both sexes in sexual behaviour viewed as mutually pleasurable” (Adams, 1982, p. 162), or, as says concisely the *OLD*, s.v. 4, “to sport amorously”.

¹⁷ “Das Elysium ist zum einen ein erfundenes ‘Märchen’ des Sprechers, und zum zweiten wurde es selbst im Falle der Realisierung nicht zum erhofften Liebesglück des Sprechers führen” (2006, p. 428).

¹⁸ Cf. “he [the elegiac poet] loves his suffering not only as the substance but above all as the very condition of his poetry-writing, for to live without the suffering of love would mean that the poet remained wordless, no longer a poet”, Conte, 1994, p. 41). Cf. “as has already been said several times, the elegiac condition requires that love and love poetry be the same thing” (Zetzel, *Op. cit.*, p. 219).

¹⁹ Cf. Houghton (2007, p. 156): “But this dichotomy between lover and poet, between love and poetry, is artificially schematic in the context of Roman love elegy, where the poet’s *persona* is (almost always) the lover, and the sole source of his literary inspiration the *puella*”.

²⁰ *Turba* seems a counterpoint to *series*, which implies a certain organisation (see *OLD*, s.v.).

p. 208),²¹ that Tibullus alludes to an obscure story about the violation of Ganymedes by that divine character,²² an example of the “Hellenistic erudition” of the Roman poet. Tibullus then mentions three mythical criminals that had offended against Jupiter’s loves (Juno, his wife; Leto, one of his mistresses; Ganymedes, his *puer*). Concerning the Danaids (with the exception of Hypermestra, something that the poem significantly doesn’t mention), they offended Venus by killing their men on their wedding night. To sum up, “all the mythological characters in hell are offenders against love” (Cairns, 1979, p. 55). They committed their crimes by offending divinities, Jupiter and Venus, an impiety that contrasts with the poet’s devotion to the goddess.

Concluding the description of the underworld, Tibullus wishes that in the “criminal house” should be “everyone who violate my loves/and desired to me a long military service” (81-82), that is, a perpetual punishment for his rivals in love.

The division of the underworld into two sections and its subordination to the erotic topic are clear; note the penultimate line at the end of the respective parts:²³

illic est cuicumque rapax Mors uenit amanti (65)

illic sit quicumque meos uiolauit amores (81).

The Tibullan elegy then submits the underworld to the sieve of the erotic elegy:²⁴ death comes when one is in love (and writing about it, we infer), while Venus assumes the role traditionally assigned to Mercurius, and Elysium and Tartarus are inhabited respectively by young lovers of the elegiac world and mythical characters that committed crimes against love.²⁵ Even Cerberus has elegiac features, according to Campbell (1973, p. 155),²⁶ being pictured as a *custos* of the door: *tunc niger in porta serpentum Cerberus ore/ stridet et aeratas excubat ante fores* (71-72), but, instead of taking care that the lover be always *exclusus*, this guardian

²¹ Cf. “Tantalus, however, has nothing in his record to warrant inclusion with these” (Henderson, 1969, p. 649) and “Tantalus ... was relegated to Hades for revealing the secrets of the gods and not, apparently, for any sin against Amor, as the context might suggest” (Putnam, 1973, p. 85).

²² For another explanation, see Houghton (2007, p. 162-163): in Lucretius, the insatiability of amorous passion is pictured as a perpetually insatiable thirst.

²³ Observed by, among others, Whitaker (1983, p. 75, n. 24).

²⁴ Concerning the reductive filter through which the elegiac discourse submits all matter, see Conte (1994, p. 37ff). Campbell (1973, p. 147-157) points to the elegiac elements in the description of the Golden Age in this same poem and sees in Elysium the cyclical return of this early phase of humanity: “The suggested link between the Golden Age and the world of elegy is further reinforced by depicting the Age of Saturn in terms of another elegiac *topos*: the conflict between the life of the country and the life of *negotium* and *militiae*” (p. 154); “This future is a regeneration of the Golden Age after death, corresponding in time to the return to the elegiac world of 29-34” (*ibidem*).

²⁵ Cf. “Thus all aspects of the violation and misery of love are represented in Tibullus’ Hell: unreasoning lust, infidelity, frustration and violence” (Bright, 1978, p. 31).

²⁶ Cf. Lee-Stecum (*Op. cit.*, p. 122): “Cerberus here, in guarding the doorway, is symbolic of exclusion, a lover’s nightmare especially familiar to the poet”.

prevents criminals leaving Tartarus. Another possible element we can link to the elegiac genre are the myrtle garlands the lovers wear; in *Amores* III, 1, 34, Ovid asks himself whether Elegy doesn't carry a myrtle bough in her right hand.²⁷

So we have in Tibullus I.3 an underworld that is fully elegiac.²⁸ Even the premature death that menaces Tibullus (*immiti...morte*, 55),²⁹ is by itself elegiac: that is how the young lovers that inhabit Elysium died. The elegiac death (a kind of predatory monster that seizes young male and female lovers – so *rapax*, 65, is significant) preserves for all eternity the *persona* of the elegiac poet, perpetually young, surrounded by *iuvenes* and *puellae*, and perpetually consecrated to love.

PROPERTIUS AND THE SURVIVAL OF GALLUS' ELEGIAC PERSONA

In II. 34,³⁰ in a catalogue of poets who dedicated themselves to erotic poetry, Propertius mentions the father of the Roman erotic elegy, Cornelius Gallus:

*et modo formosa quam multa Lycoride Gallus
mortuus inferna uulnera lauit aqua!* (91-92)

Gallus is represented as being still hurt in the underworld by love's wounds, which he washed in the waters of Hades. We have here the elegiac *persona*, pictured as the elegiac *ego* whose metaphorical wounds are taken literally; similarly, in the Vergilian underworld, the victims of love's wounds bleed perpetually, nurturing their painful loving feelings: *curae non ipsa in morte relinquunt* (*Aeneid* VI, 444); cf. *recens a uulnere Dido*, 450.

It is interesting to note what can be described as a play with ambiguity: reading the lines in the sequence, we have: "And, recently, how many³¹... because of the beautiful

²⁷ *Fallor, an in dextra myrtea uirga fuit?* (v. 34). The parallel is made by Houghton, (2007, p. 157), who explores other similar elements in Tibullus' Elysium and Ovid's description of Elegy and her surroundings.

²⁸ I cannot here analyse Tibullus I.10, a description of a gloomy underworld, which I would call the "anti-elegiac" underworld, as it provides a place for those who have died in war, the most anti-elegiac death!

²⁹ See *TbLL*, s.v. *immitis*, which, after handling the first meaning of the word, in reference to fruits (unripe), has *hinc de morte i.q. praematurus*, ἄωρος, and cites this Tibullian line (vol. VII, pars prior, p. 467). Cf. Maltby (*Op. cit.*, p. 201): "'cruel' ... but also 'untimely' in the word's original sense of 'unripe', 'immature'".

³⁰ Studies and commentaries on this poem include Ottaviano (2009, p. 165-174); Syndikus in Günther (2006, p. 315-318); Fedeli (2005, p. 946-1009); Cairns in Armstrong *et al.* (2004, p. 299-342); Cecchini (1984, p. 154-166); Camps (1967, p. 222-234); Boucher (1965, p. 279-300, 308-311); Enk (1962, p. 433-466); Buttler; Barber (1933, p. 255-262); Rothstein (1920, p. 433-456). Latin text from Fedeli edition (1984, Teubner).

³¹ The theme of the large number of wounds is present, for instance, in Propertius II, 13, 1-2.

Lycoris/having died”...³² In this case the metaphor of those who “die from love” is treated literally.³³ This interpretation, however, is discarded when we come to *uulnera* which is interpreted as: “how many wounds from/caused by the beautiful Lycoris”... The one interpretation doesn’t cancel the other; they coexist. Vergil had pictured Gallus as dying from love (*indigno cum Gallus amore peribat* – *Bucolics* 10, 10), a glory for the elegiac lover, according to Propertius (*laus in amore mori*, II, 1, 47). It seems probable to me that Propertius plays with ambiguity, making it possible that in a linear reading one takes for real the metaphorical image of the death by love.³⁴

A question needs to be raised before I conclude my brief analysis of these lines. Note the perfect *lauit*: has Gallus simply “washed” his wounds or has he “washed them off”, so that he is now healed in the underworld? Could this be an example of the meaning *abluendo tollere* (*TbLL* VII, s.v., 2, p. 1052) that this verb can take in some contexts?³⁵ I think that another interpretation is possible:³⁶ Gallus washed the blood of his many love wounds and will keep doing that in the underworld, his erotic suffering being relieved but not healed. We can compare the durative imperfect applied to Narcissus in Ovid *Metamorphoses* III, 504-505: the young boy, after his death, keeps contemplating himself in the mirror of the underworld waters: *tum quoque se, postquam est inferna sede receptus, / in Stygia spectabat*. About these lines Barchiesi (Barchiesi; Rosati, 2007, p. 206) says: “un chiaro rinvio all’ideologia elegiaca dell’amore elegiaco incurabile, che solo l’acqua dello Stige potrà sanare”. However,

³² Heyworth (2007, p. 280) hypothesises that the ablative is associated only to *mortuus*: “Possibly then the ablative belongs with *mortuus*”. Papangelis (1987, p. 68, n. 46) translates: “And lately Gallus, killed by beautiful Lycoris, / Bathed how many wounds in the water below”. I prefer to see ambiguity: initially, the reader may associate the ablative to *mortuus*, then corrects his analysis and associates it to *uulnera*, a construction that Hertzberg (apud Heyworth: 2007, p. 279) called *audacissimum*. The singularity of the syntax has been pointed out by scholars, for instance: “This is a *very* unusual syntax” (Camps, 1967, p. 234). Instead of reducing the matter to “a problem over the grammar” of *formosa ... Lycoride*” (Heyworth, *ibidem*), it seems to me more adequate to see here an ingenious use of word order and its effects over the linear reading.

³³ About *mori*, see Pichon (1991, p. 207): “*Mori persaepe per quandam exaggerationem sententiae dicuntur amantes cum affectum aliquem nimia uiolentia sentiunt, seu absentium desiderium*”.

³⁴ P. Fedeli, “Properzio e l’amore elegiaco” in Catanzaro; Santucci (1985, p. 291): “Quasi fosse morto d’amore e non per imposizione d’Augusto, come noi sappiamo e come Properzio sapeva”. Cf. Stahl (1985, p. 186): “Propertius does not mention the true cause of his death (he makes it look almost as if Lycoris were the reason, but only almost)”. According to Gagliardi (2013, p. 119), Gallus killed himself with a sword. It is troubling to project this biographical datum into the reading of the Propertian lines; under the representation of the poetic *persona*, a contemporary reader could see the real face of the empirical author and his real wounds. In any case, using the sword to inflict on himself the fatal wounds, Gallus’s corpse certainly didn’t have *multa uulnera*.

³⁵ Cf. Nisbet; Rudd’s note to Horace, *Odes* III. 12, 2.

³⁶ For (among others) Rothstein (1920, p. 455) and Stahl (1985, p. 186), dead, Gallus puts an end to his erotic suffering.

I think that in both cases, Propertian Gallus' as with Narcissus',³⁷ love is not healed in the underworld, and this is the case also with Dido, an elegiac lover³⁸ just as Gallus and Narcissus were.³⁹

On the other hand, the idea that Gallus' wounds were healed may find support in a line by Euphorio, if we see in Propertius an echo of it: Κόκυτός <τοι> μούνος ἀφ' ἔλεκα νίψεν Ἄδωνιν (Powell, 43; Lightfoot, 47), "Only Cocytos washed off Adonis' wounds". Note the proper name at the end of the verse, as in Propertius.⁴⁰ But the wording in the elegy is more vague (even in the mention of the infernal waters: neither Euphorio's Cocytos nor Ovid's Styx), and it allows, I think, the other interpretation, more apt to what we know about the elegiac genre and its *persona*. In *Bucolics* 10, Gallus doesn't find any medicine for his passion (*medicina furoris*, 60); we can suppose that this was a theme of Gallus' elegies.⁴¹ In Propertius' underworld Gallus finds relief for the wounds his beloved has inflicted on him and which he will have forever, in his forever-fixed image of elegiac poet/lover. Anyway, if Propertius really echoes Euphorio's line, I would see an erudite and ingenious homage to a predecessor, worth of a *doctus* poet, in this picture of Gallus as Adonis – a marker, in poetic terms, of the genetic filiation between both poets.⁴²

What we have for sure, I think, is the fact that for Propertius what is important here is the elegiac *persona* of Gallus, not the empirical author, and it is to his poetic *ego* that immortality is attributed. We have here an example of the phenomenon described by Holzberg: "When a poet talks about things connected with another poet's life, it appears to go without saying that the *vita* to which he alludes is not that of the author in question, but of his poetic ego".⁴³

³⁷ Cf. Hardie (2002b, p. 158), about Narcissus' afterlife: "the transformation of his pains on Earth into a literal Tartarean torture"; "the final horror of desire unfulfilled to eternity".

³⁸ See the chapter "Dido and the Elegiac Tradition" in Cairns (1989, p. 129-150).

³⁹ We can add Dido; intertextuality in the *Aeneid* (Vasconcellos, 2001, p. 135-140), associated with other textual elements, in the final encounter between Dido and Aeneas in the *Campi Lugentes*, may activate in the reader's mind the moving image of the hurt deer explored previously in a famous simile (IV, 68-73).

⁴⁰ Adonis is mentioned in *Bucolics* 10, 18, pictured as a shepherd: *et formosus ouis ad flumina pauit Adonis*; maybe Adonis was a character in Gallus' elegies. A line of another Propertian elegy is intriguing: *sed modo Permessi flumine lauit Amor* (II, 10, 26); cf. *ad flumina pauit Adonis*; it is not implausible that Propertius, as Vergil, celebrated Gallus here with echos of his poetry. Cf. Hollis (2007, p. 232).

⁴¹ Cf. "no doubt 'Gallus' is quoting Gallus here" (Clausen, 1995, p. 109). Like other scholars, Clausen refers to Propertius II, 1, 57-58: *omnis humanos sanat medicina dolores:/ solus amor morbi non amat artificem*. Elegiac love is an incurable disease: *cum mihi nulla mei sit medicina mali*, I, 5, 28, says Propertius, using medical jargon.

⁴² Cf. Gagliardi (2013, p. 120).

⁴³ Niklas Holzberg, 'A Sensitive, Even Weak and Feeble Disposition? C. Valgius Rufus and His Elegiac Ego' in: ARWEILER, Alexander; MÖLLER, Melanie (ed.), 2008, p. 21.

In the underworld readers will also find not the author but his *persona*, a poetical ego in which fiction and reality are inextricably mixed and confused. In elegiac poetry, the elegiac existence of elegiac authors survives their death.

Federica Bessone (Thorsen, 2013, p. 44), commenting on the catalogue of poets in Propertius II.34, says about the distich I have analyzed: “The list ends with the image of Gallus who washes in the infernal waters the love wounds received from Lycoris, held responsible for his death: here is the elegiac universe in a single distich”. In fact, besides the name of the poet, Gallus, and his beloved, Lycoris, we have the topics of the wretched lover and of the love wounds, but to these elements, I think we need to add the construction of the image of the dead poet as I have commented upon, a mixture of fiction (erotic wounds) and reality (the name of the poet, the real wounds) that is typical of the elegiac genre.

In other Propertian elegies that describe the underworld we can see the self-representation of “Propertius” as an elegiac lover in the afterlife. I will comment briefly on the elegiac undertones of elegy I.19. The mythical characters that inhabit the underworld are associated with the erotic impulse, as in Tibullus I.3. Protesilaus, referred by the solemn phrase *Phylacides ... heros*, 7, is represented as the lover that even when dead cannot extinguish his passionate feeling for the beloved (*cupidus*, 9). The Trojan heroines were given to men (*uiris*, 14) as war spoils (*praeda*, 14), a reelaboration of the topic of *militia amoris*. In sum, male and female characters, all linked to the Trojan war,⁴⁴ are associated with love, a reduction of epic myths to the erotic impulse that is so typical of the elegiac genre. Propertius himself, dead, will inhabit this erotic underworld as an elegiac lover. His elegiac *persona*, as that of Gallus, survives death.

OID’S METAPOETICAL UNDERWORLD

Amores II, 6⁴⁵ is an *epicedium* on the death of Corinna’s dear pet, a very clever parrot. We know that the funebre lament on the death of an animal was often treated in Hellenistic poetry;⁴⁶ in Latin the great first model is Catullus 3, on the death of Lesbia’s *passer*. Ovid’s imitation of Catullus is perhaps hinted at in the first line of the elegy, through the phrase *imitatrix ales*, as suggested by Hinds (1998, p. 4-5),⁴⁷ an ingenious “Alexandrian footnote”

⁴⁴ It is an elegiac *nékuia*, then, as in Tibullus I.3. Cf. Flaschenriem (1997, p. 266).

⁴⁵ Studies on this poem include Thorsen (2014, p. 162-166); Houghton (2000, p. 718-720); Schmitzer (1997, p. 245-270); Mckeown (1998, p. 108-145); Kim (1992, p. 881-891); Cahoon (1991, p. 368-376); Myers (1990, p. 367-375); Boyd (1987, p. 199-207), reprint in Knox (2006, p. 205-216); Schmidt (1985, p. 214-251); Cahoon (1984, p. 27-35); Thomas (1965a, p. 599-609). Ovid’s texts are extracted from the Keeney edition (Oxford).

⁴⁶ See *Anthologia Palatina* VII, poems 189 to 216, an information I give here following the suggestion of an anonymous referee of my article.

⁴⁷ Against this interpretation, see Conte (2014, p. 99). If we accept Hind’s analysis, it is interesting to point out that, though *imitatrix* of the human voice, Corinna’s parrot is not a mere repeater of alien words; at the moment of its death, the bird says its final words: *Corinna, uale!* (48), which doesn’t seem

signalling the intertextual relation. Metapoetical connotations that scholars have pointed to in this poem support Hind's suggestion.

Ovid describes the Elysium that the deceased bird inhabits in the afterlife:

*colle sub Elysio nigra nemus ilice frondet
 uadaque perpetuo gramine terra uiret.
 siqua fides dubiis, uolucrum locus ille piarum
 dicitur, obscenae quo prohibentur aues.
 illic innocui late pascuntur olores
 et uinax phoenix, unica semper auis;
 explicat ipsa suas ales Iunonia pinnas,
 oscula dat cupido blanda columba mari.
 psittacus has inter nemorali sede receptus
 conuertit uolucres in sua uerba pias.
 ossa tegit tumulus, tumulus pro corpore magnus,
 quo lapis exiguus par sibi carmen habet:*

COLLIGOR EX IPSO DOMINAE PLACUISSE SEPULCHRO.
 ORA FVERE MIHI PLVS AVE DOCTA LOQVI. (49-62)

“At the foot of a hill in Elysium is a leafy grove of dark ilex, and the moist earth is green with never-fading grass. If we may have faith in doubtful things, that place, we are told, is the abode of the pious winged kind, and from it impure fowl are kept away. There far and wide feed the harmless swans and the long-lived phoenix, bird ever alone of its kind; there the bird of Juno spreads for her own eye her plumage, and the winsome dove gives kisses to her eager mate. Our parrot, welcomed among them to this woodland seat, attracts to himself by his words the feathered faithful.

His bones are covered by a mound – mound such as fits his body's size – on which a scant stone bears a legend that just fits the space: –

“YOU MAY JUDGE FROM MY VERY MONUMENT MY MISTRESS
 LOVED ME WELL

I HAD A MOUTH WAS SKILLED IN SPEECH BEYOND A BIRD?”

(Translation by Grant Showeman)

to be a mechanical reproduction of heard words, but a creative act of speaking. In the imperial era, training parrots to say *Aue*, *Caesar* seems to have been a not rare phenomenon (cf. Mackeown, 1998:136); Corinna's parrot goes beyond its similarly talking companions... It is interesting to mention too the possibility of ambiguity in the final line: *PLVS AVE DOCTA LOQVI*: “mouth expert in talking more than [is common] in a bird”/ “mouth expert in talking more than ‘Ave!’”. II.6 then affirms the principle of imitation as a creative, not a mechanical process.

Sarah Myers (1990, p. 367-375) extensively explores the programmatic character of this elegy.⁴⁸ We can disagree with one or another interpretation, but it is clear, I think, that references to Callimaquian aesthetics and to the elegiac genre run throughout the poem, as if Ovid were in fact proclaiming his aesthetic ideals. Particularly significant is the characterisation of the bird as *rara* and having a *ingeniosa* voice; the exiguity of its funeral stone (*lapis exiguus*); and his extraordinary *doctrina* (*plus quam aue docta*).⁴⁹ Worth mentioning are also its non-belligerent tendencies (in opposition to other birds), fitting for the elegiac eulogy of Peace and rejection of war: *Pacis Amor deus est*, as says Propertius in III. 5,1.

It is interesting to compare the structure of the catalogue of birds in Ovid and catalogues of poets in Propertius and in the same Ovid (III.9, a poem intimately connected to this elegy). Note:

illic innocui late pascuntur olores
et uiuax phoenix, unica semper auis;
explicat ipsa suas ales Iunonia pinnas,
oscula dat cupido blanda columba mari.
psittacus has inter nemorali sede receptus (53-57)

In Propertius II.34, a poem whose lines on Gallus we have just analysed, a catalogue of erotic poets is explicitly presented:

haec quoque perfecto ludebat Iasone Varro,
Varro Lencadiae maxima flamma suae;
haec quoque lasciuu cantarunt scripta Catulli,
Lesbia quis ipsa notior est Helena;
haec etiam docti confessa est pagina Calui,
cum caneret miserae funera Quintiliae.
et modo formosa quam multa Lycoride Gallus
mortuus inferna uulnera lauit aqua!
Cynthia ¶quin etiam¶ uersu laudata Properti,
hos inter si me ponere Fama uolet. (85-94)

⁴⁸ As, in a preceding paper, Boyd (1987, p. 199-207); cf. “But that the *psittacus* is not to be seen simply as any kind of poet, but as a specifically Alexandrian poet, becomes clear from numerous details in this passage” (p. 200). Note that Ovid uses three different words to designate the bird(s): *ales*, *auis*, *uolucer*, employed in a clear intention of *uariatio*: *ales*, *auis*, *uolucres*, *alitis*, *auium*, *ales*, *uolucrum*, *auis*, *ales*, *uolucres*, *auis*. So, the parrot, who is described as having a *uox mutandis ingeniosa sonis* (18), has a quality that Ovid exhibits in this very elegy. Note also a sound-pattern like *psittACus, eois imitatrIX.../OCcidit* (1) e *OCcidit ille IOQuax humanae uOCis imago* (37).

⁴⁹ Cf. Boyd, *Op. cit.*, p. 203: “The parrot thus suggests, by its choice of words, that it is a neoteric bird; *docta* itself of course evokes the learning of an Alexandrian poet”.

“So too did Varro play once his Jason was finished, Varro the great flame of his Leucadia; so too did the writings of playful Catullus sing, through which Lesbia is better known than Helen herself; so also confessed the page of learned Calvus when he was singing the death of poor Quintilia. And recently how many wounds did Gallus wash in the water of the underworld, dead from the beauty of Lycoris. Yes, Cynthia will live, praised by the verse of Propertius, if Fame is willing to place me amongst these poets”.

(Translation by S.J.Heyworth).

Ovid, as well as Propertius, presents a list of names characterised by epithets; after the respective lists of dead birds/poets, there is the inclusion of the *psittacus* and Propertius himself, respectively: *psittacus has inter/ bos inter*, a significant parallel.⁵⁰

In *Amores* III. 9, 59-66, within a slightly different structure (Tibullus’ name is included at the beginning and at the end of the catalogue), we have a similar κατάλογος:

*si tamen e nobis aliquid nisi nomen et umbra
restat, in Elysia ualle Tibullus erit.
obuius huic uenies bedera iuuenalia cinctus
tempora cum Caluo, docte Catulle, tuo;
tu quoque, si falsum est temerati crimen amici,
sanguinis atque animae prodige Galle tuae.
his comes umbra tua est, si qua est modo corporis umbra;
auxisti numeros, culte Tibulle, pios.*

“Yet, if aught survives from us beyond mere name and shade, in the vale of Elysium Tibullus will abide, Mayst thou come to meet him, thy youthful temples encircled with the ivy, and thy Calvus with thee, learned Catullus; thou too, if the charge be false thou didst wrong thy friend, O Gallus lavish of thy blood and thy soul. To these is thy shade comrade; of shade there be that survives the body, thou hast increased the number of the blest, refined Tibullus.” (Translation by Grant Swoerman)

Note, especially, *psittacus has inter* (II.6) / *his comes ... si* (III.9) / *bos inter si* (Propertius II.34).⁵¹

⁵⁰ Curiously, Propertius’ *catalogus* is preceded by a mention of birds: *nec minor hic animis, [a]ut sit minor ore canorus/ anseris indocto carmine cessit olor* (83-84): On the difficulties of interpreting this distich, see Fedeli (2005, p. 2002-2003).

⁵¹ Another parallel is pointed out by Mckeown (1998, p. 116), significantly an unusual word-order in *Amores* 2.6. 9-10 and 3.9. 13: “the word-order is highly unusual (...) being paralleled closely in the *Amores* only in the lament for Tibullus at 3.9.13”.

Schmidt (1985, p. 223) points out connections between the birds in Ovid and certain poetic genres;⁵² even if you don't accept these associations (or part of them), the fact remains that the catalogue of the dead birds in the underworld has the form of a Propertian catalogue of dead poets.⁵³

As in Tibullus I.3, the Ovidian underworld is divided into two sections: the *piae uolucres* inhabit Elysium, away from which are driven the *obscenae aves* (who then inhabit another region, maybe a kind of Tartarus, as the impious criminals in Tibullus; but the poet is silent here). Dead, Corinna's parrot has a kind of Orphic power over the other birds: *conuertit uolucres in sua uerba pias* (58); it keeps exercising the extraordinary verbal ability it had in life.

The "pious birds" of the Ovidian Elysium can evoke the "pious *uates*" of the famous Vergilian Elysium; as is well known, *uates* can refer to "poets" as well as to "prophets".⁵⁴

quique pii uates et Phoebos digna locuti (VI, 662)

'and the pious 'uates', and those who spoke words worth of Phoebus'.

Note *et Phoebos digna locuti*. Norden (1957, p. 300) remarks that Menander the Rhetor applies a similar expression to Pindar. Menander says: προὔλαβε δὲ καὶ Πίνδαρος ὕμνους γράφων εἰς τὸν θεὸν ἄξιους τῆς ἐκείνου λύρας, "Pindar too has anticipated [this], writing hymns to the god [Apollo] worth of his lyre" (II, 439, Russel; Wilson). To say things worth of Phoebus/Apollo could be a defining characteristic of a poet, and this supports the idea that there is an ambiguity in Vergil's use of *uates* in *Aeneid* 6.

The comparison with *Amores* III. 9 e II. 6 makes clear to me that the adjective *pius*, applied in the latter to certain birds, refers to poetic qualities. In the Ovidian Elysium, Tibullus will increase the number of the *pii* poets of which Caluus, Catullus, and Gallus are examples.

I cannot mention here all the textual elements in Ovid *Amores* II. 6 that support a metapoetical interpretation of the poem; I refer the reader to the bibliographic indications in my footnote. In sum, I am convinced that the *blanda columba* represents the elegiac genre, and the *psittacus* an elegiac poet/lover. Note that the *psittacus* dies prematurely young, as does all that is excellent (*optima prima fere manibus rapiuntur auaris; / impleantur numeris deteriora suis*, 39-40); in Tibullus I.3, the poet imagines his premature death, which has "rapacious hands" (*auidas... manus*, 4). But if Tibullus pictures an exclusively elegiac Elysium, in Ovid's

⁵² "Ovids Vögel sind also auch solche, die als Verkörperung bestimmter Dichter und ihrer Gattung aufgefasst werden können". According to the author, the *pauo* would evoke Ennius and epic poetry; the *olor* Horace and lyric; the *columba*, qualified by an adjective typical of the genre, *blanda*, would suggest Propertius and elegy. For Schmitzer (1997, p. 263), the *phoenix*, an Egyptian bird, stands for Callimachus.

⁵³ The association between poets and birds is common in Greek and Roman literature; see, for instance, Schmitzer (1997, p. 252).

⁵⁴ "either prophets or poets" (Austin, 1977, p. 209). Lima Leitão, a Portuguese translator of Virgil (1819), exclaims in a Romantic note on his translation of this line: "Sublime genius! Insensibly thou made your vivid picture" ("Gênio sublime! Insensivelmente fizeste o teu vivo retrato"). Has Virgil represented himself here among these poets who have the same quality of the *pius* hero Aeneas? Virgil clearly pictures himself as a *uates* in VII, 41: *Tu uatem, tu, diua, mone*.

II.6 underworld there is place for other poetic genres, although the elegiac one seems to be picked out over the others due to its power of seduction: *conuertit uolucres in sua uerba pias* (58).⁵⁵

The parrot has Callimachean qualities. It is possible also to see in it, beside an elegiac poet, an elegiac lover. The idea that it “pleased” Corinna is expressed twice (*nostrae placuisse puellae*, 19/ *dominae placuisse*, 61). Here, *domina* seems ambiguous: the owner of the pet (as in Catullus 3) but also the mistress of the elegiac universe, to whom an elegiac poet consecrates all his energies and his verses.⁵⁶ Note too that the *puella* made pious promises (*pia uota*, 43) nullified by the winds (44). We see that Corinna asked the gods for the convalescence of the sick parrot; this is a well-known elegiac topic (Tibullus I, 5, 9-16; Propertius II, 28; Ovid, *Amores*, II, 13 and 14): the *amator*, facing the dangerous sickness of this beloved, appeals to the gods for her health.⁵⁷ And as in Tibullus and Propertius, the bird has its epitaph,⁵⁸ written as if it had been composed by the bird itself... In sum, Corinna’s parrot is an image of an elegiac poet and of an elegiac lover; these are the two sides of the same coin in elegiac genre, as I have already mentioned. Therefore, in II.6, we do have an underworld for an elegiac poet/lover, albeit allegorised as an extraordinarily gifted bird.⁵⁹

Finally, if the *psittacus* is not an allegorical Ovid (the bird dies...), it is clear that the poet projects his lover *persona* and his artistic principles on it. We have something similar in Catullus 3, where: 1. Lesbia’s *passer* is consecrated entirely to his “mistress” (*domina*), who loves it above all (*quem plus illa oculis suis amabat*, 5); in Catullus 68, Lesbia is referred as his “mistress” (*erae*, 136, which has a similar meaning). 2. The beloved pet had a pulcritude that is a Catullan aesthetic ideal. Therefore, we can see in the image of the bird in the underworld of *Amores* II.6 a self-representation of Ovid, who follows the footsteps of his model, Catullus 3.

If in Tibullus I.3, lover and poet are fused together in the underworld, in Ovid II.6, that is not the case. The parrot is not pictured as a lover in the afterlife, but as a kind of Orpheus, who attracts with his words the other birds. Other genres represented by *pias uolucres* are honoured with their place in Elysium, so that the quality of the poets, not the genre *per se*, is the most important. We can see that the parrot is a kind of lover in life, but this aspect of its image is not figured in Elysium; the erotic impulse of the elegiac genre is represented in the *columba*.

⁵⁵ Cf. Mckeown, 1998, p. 142: “the parrot not only gains the attention of the other birds ..., but also wins them over”.

⁵⁶ Schmidt, 1985, p. 220.

⁵⁷ Note the use of *uota* in elegy: Tibullus I. 5, vv. 10 e 16: *te dicor uotis eripuisse meis; uota nouem Triniuae nocte silente dedi*; Propertius II. 9, 25: *haec mihi uota tuam propter suscepta salutem*; Ovid, *Amores* II. 13, 24: *ipse feram ante tuos munera uota pedes*.

⁵⁸ For Schmidt, *ibidem*., a parody of Propertius: “Auch hier ist die Parodie von Properz offensichtlich: Prop. 2, 1, 72 *breue in exiguo marmore nomen ero* und vor allem 2, 13, 33 *et sit in exiguo laurus superaddita busto*”.

⁵⁹ Scholars (essential is Wyke, 2002) have shown that the elegiac *puella*, especially in Propertius, has qualities that seem to refer to Callimachean aesthetics; she is a character in a love story and a kind of metaphor of certain poetic ideals. Ovid’s *psittacus* seems to exhibit the same duplicity, another face of its elegiac conception.

Elegy III.9,⁶⁰ on the death of Tibullus, and II.6 are the only examples of *epicedium* in Ovid's *Amores*, but there are other similarities between them: as we have seen, there are catalogues in both, and they celebrate the perpetuation of poetry in the afterlife of poets.

Ovid's Elysium in III.9 has some similarities with that of Tibullus I.3. Ovid places Tibullus in an underworld among poets (two neoterics and the elegiac Gallus) who have celebrated love and to whom we could apply the Tibullian line *illic est cuicumque rapax Mors uenit amanti* (I.3, 65), if we interpret *amanti*, as I do, as ambiguous and metapoetical. The theme of premature death, death at a young age, characteristic of Tibullus, appears in the representation of Catullus: *iuuenalia ... tempora* (61-62).

Ovid mentions three poets, and Tibullus will increase this group of *pii*, if anything survives in the human afterlife (*si tamen e nobis aliquid nisi nomen et umbra/ restat*, 59-60). The Callimacheanism of the dead poets can be seen in the adjectives: Catullus, as the *psittacus* em II. 6, is *doctus*; Tibullus is *cultus*. Pious poets, as in II.6 pious birds: but in III.9 Ovid assimilates the *pietas* of poets to the more traditional religious *pietas*:

*uiue pius: moriere; pius cole sacra: colentem*⁶¹
Mors grauis a templis in caua busta trabet.
carminibus confide bonis: iacet ecce Tibullus;
uix manet e tanto, parua quod urna capit. (37-40)

“Live the duteous life – you will die; be faithful in your worship – in the very act of worship heavy death will drag you from the temple to the hollow tomb; put your trust in beautiful song – behold, Tibullus lies dead: from his whole self there scarce remains what the slight urn receives!”.

(Translation by Grant Swoerman)

Pietas doesn't save virtuous people from death, and the case of Tibullus is an example of this common topic. He was *bonus* (*cum rapiunt mala fata bonos*, 35), as were his verses (*carminibus confide bonis*, 39), an interesting association between a poet and his poetry.⁶² However this quality did not prevent Tibullus from being violently seized (*rapiunt*) by Death. Poets in *Amores* III.9 are *pii* cultivators of the Muses, to whom an Elysium inhabited by poets is destined: an underworld of erotic poets, as fits Tibullus' and Ovids elegies. In a poem in which the *persona* of the elegiac poet is concerned (there is practically nothing that is not extracted from Tibullus' elegies; a curious modern reader, fond of biographical realities, may therefore be disappointed to learn nothing new about the empirical author in this intertextual reworking of his elegies), Tibullus' fate in the afterlife is to inhabit an Elysium of poets. Even

⁶⁰ On his elegy: Thorsen (2014, p. 166-170); Huskey (2005, p. 367-386); Williams (2003, p. 225-234); Reed (1997, p. 260-269); Perkins (1993, p. 459-466); Cahoon (1984, p. 27-35); Taylor (1970, p. 474-477); Thomas (1965a, p. 599-609 and 1965b, p. 149-151).

⁶¹ I give here the punctuation of Jahn, defended by Conte (2013, p. 15-16).

⁶² Maybe there is a play with the meanings of *bonus* here: “morally good, well-behaved, virtuous” (*OLD* s.v.2) and “(of speech or writing) Well-expressed, fine, effective, good” (s.v.13).

after death, it is only this aspect of Tibullus' life that is important to the Ovidian elegiac discourse. Compared to the Tibullan Elysium, however, in Ovid's underworld metapoetry seems more evident, as we might expect from a poet so self-reflexive like him.

HORACE'S "LYRICIZED" UNDERWORLD

In the first three stanzas of *Odes* II. 13,⁶³ Horace addresses a tree that, in falling, almost killed its master, the poet himself. In the following two stanzas, a common Horatian theme is treated: death can surprise us at any moment, no matter how cautious we are. There follows a description of the underworld, that the poet almost saw as a consequence of the incident:

*quam paene furvae regna Proserpinae
et iudicantem vidimus Aeacum
sedesque discretas piorum et
Aeoliis fidibus querentem*

*Sappho puellis de popularibus,
et te sonantem plenius aureo,
Alcaeae, plectro dura navis,
dura fugae mala, dura belli!*

*utrumque sacro digna silentio
mirantur umbrae dicere, sed magis
pugnas et exactos tyrannos
densum umeris bibit aure vulgus.*

*quid mirum, ubi illis carminibus stupens
demittit atras belua centiceps
auris et intorti capillis
Eumenidum recreantur angues?*

*quin et Prometheus et Pelopis parens
dulci laborum decipitur sono
nec curat Orion leones
aut timidos agitare lyncas. (21-40)*

⁶³ Analyses and commentaries on this ode include: Harrison (2017, p. 155-167); Piccolo (2014, p. 272-282); Harrison (2007, p. 179-182); Syndikus (2001, p. 413-422); Jones (2001, p. 563-564); Lowrie (1997, p. 199-205, especially); Feeney, "Horace and the Greek lyric poets" in Rudd (1993, p. 48-50); Davis (1991, p. 78-89); Garrison (1991, p. 277-279); Quinn (1980, p. 223-224); Nisbet; Hubbard (1978, p. 201-222); Commager (1963, p. 139-141, 315-317, especially); Fraenkel (1957, p. 166-168). Text from the Bailey edition.

*“How nearly did we see the kingdom
of dark Proserpina, and Aeacus in judgement,
and the seats of the holy set apart,
and Sappho complaining*

*of her young countrywomen to her Aeolian lyre,
and you, Alcaeus, sounding in fuller tones
with your golden plectrum the rigours of shipboard,
the cruel rigours of exile, the rigours of war.*

*The shades listen in wonderment and sacred silence
to the words of both, but with more willing ear
the crowd packed shoulder to shoulder drinks in
battles and expulsion of tyrants.*

*Little wonder, when the hundred-headed monster,
struck dumb by the singing, lets down his black ears,
and coiling snakes come to life
in the hair of the Furies.*

*Even Prometheus and the father of Pelops
are cheated of their labour by the sweet music,
and Orion neglects to drive the lions
and the timorous lynxes.” (Translation by David West)*

The Elysium in this ode is clearly a lyric one,⁶⁴ inhabited by two lyric poets whom Horace almost joined; we infer that this is the place where he will go when he dies.

In the afterlife, Sappho and Alcaeus keep singing the themes of their poems, accompanied by the lyre. The lyric song is subtly compared to the Orphic one,⁶⁵ with its power even over as monstrous a beast as Cerberus – here significantly represented as having one hundred heads – and the snakes in the Eumenides’ hair; and moreover, by this lyric song, the (eternal!) suffering of Prometheus and Tantalus is relieved, and the giant Orion forgets his favourite pastime of hunting.

Poets inhabit *sedes... piorum* (23); they are *pīi* as Ovid’s birds/poets and Ovidian Tibullus. The underworld is divided, as in Tibullus I.3, into two sections: the first where pious lyric poets inhabit; the second where impious mythical characters (Prometheus, Tantalus, Orion) are located (something similar to Tibullus I.3), although the description is not precise: how do the poets’ songs reach the impious, if the poets are in a separate region (*sedesque discretas*, 23)? Anyway, the lyric song affects the whole underworld.

⁶⁴ “a lyricized underworld”, says Harrison (2007, p. 182).

⁶⁵ Cf. the effect of Orpheus’ song over the shades in the *Georgics* underworld (IV. 481). Note *cantu commotae... umbrae* (IV, 471-472). This parallel is constantly referred to by scholars.

In an indirect way, Horace represents himself as a lyric pious poet, who, dead, will go to a place destined for poets such as Sappho and Alcaeus, a way of marking his affiliation to Aeolian poetry, made very explicit in III.30:⁶⁶

*dicas, qua violens obstrepit Aufidus
et qua pauper aquae Daunus agrestium
regnavit populorum, ex humili potens*

*princeps Aeolium carmen ad Italos
deduxisse modos. (10-14)*

“I shall be spoken of where fierce Aufidus thunders
and where Daunus, poor in water,
rules the country people. From humble beginnings

I was able to be the first to bring Aeolian song
to Italian measures.” (Translation by David West)

One sees, however, the preference for Alcaeus: he sounds *plenius* with his *aureo... plectro* (26-27), singing his bellic and politic themes (*pugnas et exactos tyrannos*) that make him more popular (*magis ... densum umeris bibit aure vulgus*, 30-32). Significantly, this ode is composed in alcaics, and it is Alcaeus that Horace directly addresses (*Alcaee*, 27).⁶⁷ Note that a sweet song which relieves pain is directly associated with Alcaeus’ poetry in I.32, 14-15: *o laborum/ dulce lenimen* (cf. ***dulci laborem*** in II.13, an example of expressive word order, with the antithetic terms put side by side).

A sacred aura surrounds Sappho and Alcaeus; the “sacred silence” by which the shades admire their singing is the silence one observes in religious rituals;⁶⁸ we can infer that Horace foresees for himself the same religious respect and the same Orphic power of his Greek predecessors. However, this is not made explicit, a rhetoric strategy that attenuates his pretensions to be paired to Sappho and Alcaeus. Significantly, too, this anticipation of the afterlife as a lyric poet appears in a poem that adopts a biographical mood by narrating an incident as a real event in his daily life. There is fine irony in the fact that, treating the incantatory power of poetry and the grandiosity of Alcaeus’ themes in alcaic meter, Horace introduces such a description of the underworld after the tale of such a prosaic incident.⁶⁹ He passes smoothly from biographical realities (whether the incident be real or fictitious; mention of it in other odes convinces scholars of its reality) to metapoetical self-reflexiveness.

⁶⁶ Cf. *Epistle* I. 19, 32-33: Horace as a pioneer imitator of Alcaeus.

⁶⁷ On the relation between Horace and the Greek lyrics in general, see Feeney in Rudd (1993, p. 41-63).

⁶⁸ Nisbet; Hubbard (1978, p. 218): “εὐφημία is appropriate to a sacred occasion ... Here the language of religion is transferred to poetry”.

⁶⁹ Cf. Feeney in Rudd (1993, p. 50): “The immortality of poetry is linked to the quirkily, freakish individuality of one man’s quotidian life”.

In the description of the underworld in the *Odyssey's* *nékuia*, Odysseus many times uses the form “I saw” (ἶδον); nine times in the catalogue of the heroines alone (ll. 235, 260, 266, 271, 281, 298, 305, 321, 326). To know the underworld is to see things and persons there. Maybe there is an echo of the *Odyssey* here, although the Greek hero saw what he describes, while Horace describes an imaginary scene as if he had seen it, a description that has the likes of a religious vision. To see the underworld, in the context of this ode, is to die; it is ironic that Horace says he almost saw it (*quam paene ... vidimus*),⁷⁰ but can give a detailed description of it, as if he had in fact seen it. Other Odyssean echoes are plausible, I think. In the *Odyssey*, Tantalus is represented as someone who has “terrible evils” (καὶ μὴν Τάνταλον εἰσεῖδον χάλεπ' ἄλγε' ἔχοντα, XI, v. 582); in Horace, who employs an epic periphrasis to refer to the character (*Pelopis parens*), Tantalus, listening to Sappho and Alcaeus, forgets his pain (*laborem*). In the Greek epic, Orion is pictured hunting (XI. 572-575); in Horace, he neglects this activity under the sway of the lyric song. It seems thus that the epic predecessor is echoed in order to celebrate lyric power by contrasting the situation of the characters in the poems.⁷¹

In Sappho's case, empirical author and *persona* are clearly confused: she complains (*querentem*, 24) about the girls of her community, expressing in her song her feelings of love. *Querentem* and *puellis* are words full of elegiac resonance in Roman poetry.⁷² It is Sappho, not Alcaeus, who displays in her afterlife a behaviour similar to that of young elegiac lovers (as in Tibullus I.3 and in Propertius II. 34). In contrast to this image, which highlights personal affects (Horace doesn't say that the poetess sings the *puellae* of his folk, but rather her feelings about them), Horace's Alcaeus is a poet who treats themes of public interest, in a generalizing, more objective way.⁷³ We know that Alcaeus has been exiled, but this circumstance of his personal life is expressed in a generalizing mood: *dura fugae mala*, 28. There is a counterpoint between public and private, general and singular, objectivity and subjectivity. Sappho sings of something that is also a lyric theme, love, but it is significant that she is pictured in a way that evokes the elegiac genre: by her amorous complaints, her beloved *puellae* and – as I would point out – the lack of distinction between life and art that is so typical of the elegiac mimesis, in which composing erotic poems and being a lover are indissoluble faces of the same coin.

For Horace II.13, then, poets don't face the sombre destiny in the afterlife pictured in *Odes* IV.7, 16 as the human condition imposed upon all of us by death: *pulvis et umbra sumus*. The power of poetry survives and keep exercising its incantatory effects; great poets

⁷⁰ Cf. *visendus* in the following ode, I. 14, 17, which refers to the fatality of death.

⁷¹ Cf. Harrison (2007, p. 181).

⁷² Cf. “the *puella*, the characteristic focus of Latin elegy” (Miller, 2011, p. 245); the focus however can also be a *puer*, but that is relatively rare. Surely we can not forget the *puella* of a lyric poet as Catullus, but in elegiac poetry this character assumes a major role in the whole book. Propertius' first book could be referred as “Cynthia”, but Catullus' poems were not referred as “Lesbia”.

⁷³ Note that the contrast between Sappho and Alcaeus is marked in the syntax by a chiasmus: *querentem* A/ *Sappho* B *puellis de popularibus*,/ *et te* B *sonantem* A *plenius aureo* (24-26).

kept doing in the underworld exactly the same as they did in life, a poetic way of celebrating the immortality of the poetry of the *pii uates*.

Finally, scholars have suggested that the ode II.13 shows a movement that goes from the jambic mood (the imprecations against whoever planted the infelicitous tree) to the lyric one;⁷⁴ for Piccolo (2015, p. 279), “the every *persona* of Horace seems milder at the end of the composition, having left the initial imprecations.”⁷⁵ Therefore, the poet himself is affected by the incantatory power of lyric, as if he has in fact visited the underworld and listened personally to Sappho and Alcaeus’ songs and felt their effects on himself.

I decided not to analyse here the odes in which Horace foresees his immortality as a poet, because this theme has been extensively treated by scholars; I limit myself to noting that, for the lyric poet, what matters in the afterlife is the image of the poet as an artist, not the *persona* expressed, for instance, in love, symposiastic or imprecatory poems, the exception being the elegiac Sappho in II.13.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

In the elegiac and the lyric genres, descriptions of the underworld are a privileged occasion for the celebration of the respective genres, as we can see in the poems I have analysed. Other Latin poems that I could not examine here would confirm this, and I intend to return to this theme in another paper. This aspect is more evident in Propertius, Ovid and Horace; Elysium in Tibullus I.3 is less clearly metapoetical, but the duplicity of meaning of *amare* in the elegiac genre (to love/to write erotic elegies) lead us to see an Elysium for elegiac poets in that elegy, inhabited by lovers/erotic poets: that is the place Tibullus imagines for himself after his death.

In Tibullus and Propertius it is clear that it is the elegiac *persona* that survives death; the play with the elegiac mimesis continues in the representation of the underworld; the underworld of lovers is that of poets, and vice versa; in other words, the empirical author coalesces with his *persona* in an inextricable way. The most intriguing example for me is the Gallus of Propertius II.34, still bleeding from the elegiac love wounds even after his death, an image fused to the reference to the real wounds of the empirical author, a beautiful example of the celebration of the elegiac poet *in elegiac terms*.

Horace II.13 presents something similar to the elegiac indistinction in the image of a Sappho with elegiac undertones. Her *persona* is emphasised; it suffices to compare the way Horace characterises the actions of Sappho and Alcaeus in referring to their poetic singing: *querentem/sonantem*, personal feeling versus poetic activity. Maybe this querulous Sappho could be explained by her fame in Antiquity of having compounded elegiacs;⁷⁶ be that as it may, Sappho, in the Horatian ode, sings of the painful love she personally feels,

⁷⁴ See, for instance, Lowrie (1997, p. 201).

⁷⁵ “a própria *persona* de Horácio parece mais branda ao fim da composição, abandonadas as imprecacões iniciais”.

⁷⁶ Knox (1995, p. 281).

an essential feature of the elegiac scene. We can see here the same confrontation between lyric and elegy of, for instance, *Odes* I.33, and the same preference accorded to the former.

To conclude this paper, I point to the images of dead poets that seem to me the most representative of the corresponding genres. In the afterlife, the Propertian Gallus bleeds both from love and “real” wounds, while Horace’s Alcaeus sings...; the eternally wounded *lover* and the incantatory lyric *singer*: these two contrasting images could be taken as eloquent signals of the differences between the elegiac and the lyric genre.

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