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978-0-521-29683-0 - Tibullus: A Hellenistic Poet at Rome

Francis Cairns

Excerpt

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THE SETTING

In the years from around 31 BC to 19/18 BC¹ a poet from Pedum² in the Latian countryside wrote and circulated at Rome two books of elegies. There are only sixteen poems in all; and the longest of them contains only one hundred and twenty-two lines. But they pose a considerable critical problem. This shows itself most clearly in the divergence of ancient and modern views of Tibullus. His contemporaries and immediate posterity considered him to be a great elegiac poet and a majority of them regarded him as the greatest Roman elegist. The evidence for this assessment is clear: from the Augustan age comes the testimony of Ovid;³ that of Velleius Paterculus is Tiberian;⁴ and the verdict of Quintilian, which is not just a personal judgement but a report of current views, derives from the latter half of the first century AD.⁵ The 'Life of Tibullus', medieval in its present form but probably Suetonian in origin,⁶ echoes this ancient appraisal: *hic multorum iudicio principem inter elegiographos obtinet locum*. Modern scholars have found this attitude difficult to understand: the more factual of the ancient observations seem hard to substantiate from Tibullus' poetry; and the more evaluative seem exaggerated or even misapplied. Tibullus' contemporary and fellow-elegist, Propertius, is less problematic in this respect. Whether or not his work has found favour for the same qualities in antiquity and today, there is at least a consensus about his merit.⁷ This sharpens the problem of Tibullus.

The strongest modern reaction to it was that of Felix Jacoby.⁸ In 1909 Jacoby denied the validity and relevance of the ancient assessment. He

¹ The exact date is disputed. For a judicious summing-up of the controversy see M. J. McGann, 'The date of Tibullus' death', *Latomus* 29 (1970) 774ff.

² He lived in *regio Pedana* (Hor. *Ep.* 1.4.2). A conjecture of Baehrens on the anonymous *Vita Tibulli* would make him born at nearby Gabii.

³ *Esp. Am.* 1.15.27; 3.9; *Tr.* 2.445ff.

⁴ Velleius 2.36.3.

⁵ *Inst. Or.* 10.1.93 (on which see below, pp. 3ff.).

⁶ Cf. G. Townend, 'Suetonius and his influence' in *Latin Biography* ed. T. A. Dorey (London 1967) p. 81.

⁷ The *testimonia* on Propertius, which show the favourable ancient view of him, are collected in *The Elegies of Propertius* ed. H. E. Butler and E. A. Barber (Oxford 1933) introd. pp. ix f. For a characteristically favourable modern assessment of Propertius see M. Hubbard, *Propertius* (London 1974), and cf. also Smith introd. pp. 67f.

⁸ 'Tibullus erste Elegie', *RhM* 64 (1909) 601ff.; *RhM* 65 (1910) 22ff. = *Kleine philologische Schriften* (Berlin 1961) II pp. 122ff.

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declared that Tibullus, although a sympathetic personality, was a minor poet who lacked inspiration and poetic merit. Jacoby's views were unrepresentative of his generation and they were promptly criticised.⁹ But the ensuing controversy showed that, however extreme, they reflected to some extent the misgivings of many scholars. Moreover the defenders of Tibullus, then and since, have not been able to make a truly cogent case for the poet. In some ways they have even enlarged the gulf between ancient and modern views instead of closing it.

Such a defence was made fairly soon after Jacoby's attack by Kirby Flower Smith in 1913. In the introduction to his commentary on Tibullus¹⁰ Smith first poses the critical problem outlined above. He then turns to characterising the two other major elegiac poets of the Augustan age, Propertius and Ovid. In this field he is happy and eloquent. Finally, and almost reluctantly, Smith closes issue with Tibullus. In his hands Tibullus becomes a string of negatives. He is 'not a man of brilliant passages . . . there is no elaborate use of mythological lore, no deep and recondite learning, no signs of the close and fervid study of specific literary models'. His diction, style and metrical technique are simple and natural. He possesses neither 'the daring imagination' nor 'the ardent temperament' of Propertius; nor does he have 'the inexhaustible vivacity and wit, the infectious animal spirits, of Ovid' (pp. 68ff.).

Several useful positive suggestions accompany these negatives. Smith points out, for example, that Tibullus' work is not artless, but an example of art concealing art; he declares that Tibullan elegy may reflect a particular type of Greek elegiac poetry – in Smith's view, that of 'Mimnermus as modified by Philetas' (p. 69); finally he adduces the humour of several Tibullan elegies as an answer to that unhelpful critical commonplace, 'the gentle elegiac melancholy' of Tibullus (p. 70). But Smith's defence of Tibullus is inevitably unsatisfactory. His list of negatives could never make a writer the greatest of Roman elegists. Moreover in dealing with particular adverse criticism of Tibullus, such as lack of learning, or lack of the energy, ambition or ability to perfect his work, Smith does not fight hard enough for him. Instead he falls back on the common resort of Tibullan scholars who favour their poet. He makes repeated assertions of Tibullus' merits, but either leaves them unsupported or else tries to justify them with reference to critical canons reserved for Tibullus alone.

Since 1913 many valuable contributions to a more positive view of Tibullus have been made. The work of Mauriz Schuster,¹¹ Georg Luck,¹²

⁹ Cf. R. Reitzenstein, 'Noch einmal Tibulls erste Elegie', *Hermes* 47 (1912) 60ff.

¹⁰ pp. 65ff. Views similar to those of Smith are still found in M. Schanz and C. Hosius, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur* (Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft ed. W. Otto 8,2, 4th ed. 1935) II p. 183 §281.

¹¹ *Tibull-Studien* (Vienna 1930, repr. Hildesheim 1968), usefully reviewed and summarised by H. T. Rowell, *AJP* 63 (1942) 230ff.

¹² *The Latin Love Elegy* (2nd ed. London 1969).

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J. P. Elder,¹³ J. K. Newman¹⁴ and other scholars has advanced understanding of Tibullus' compositional methods, of his techniques of transition within single poems and of his indebtedness to his Hellenistic predecessors. But it seems fair to say that the case for Tibullus has not yet been made satisfactorily. The view is still widespread that individual elegies of Tibullus consist of loosely-connected themes and, in part due to confusion between Tibullus the man and Tibullus the poet, the old characterisation of him as an anaemic dilettante still survives in modern criticism. How much real advance has been made since 1913 is shown in the assessment of Tibullus offered by Gordon Williams in 1968.¹⁵ Williams discusses several elegies of Tibullus and details many positive aspects of his work: his power to unify a diverse collection of themes in a single poem; his ability in transitions and structuring, and the consequent subtlety and delicacy of the movements of his ideas; the economy and precision of his language; his humour and his tendency to surprise the reader with new twists to old ideas. But there is still emphasis on negative traits (esp. pp. 499ff.): Tibullus' 'reflective, musing tone', his 'muted, gentle, humorous, melancholic' voice, his lack of drama and intensity of feeling, his small range and lack of architectonic qualities, his failure to employ 'arresting phrases' and to use language in a novel way. In this representative modern account, Tibullus is a good poet but not a great one: in comparison with Propertius and Ovid he seems dull and uninteresting.

It would clearly be wrong to demand a description of Tibullus couched totally in positive terms, or one which made no distinction between his work and that of Propertius and Ovid. It is obvious that Tibullus' poetry differs in texture from that of his fellow elegists and that he lacks certain qualities which they possess. But he himself ought to possess the qualities of the greatest Roman elegist, unless ancient critical opinion was wrong or has been misunderstood. Now there is no reason why the literary critics of antiquity should always be trusted. However the judgement of qualified contemporaries and near-contemporaries of Tibullus, native Latin speakers, fully acquainted with the literary background of elegy, must carry weight. A better understanding of their assessment of Tibullus can be achieved by close scrutiny of what they say. The most important text is from Quintilian:

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

(*Institutio Oratoria* 10.1.93)

¹³ 'Tibullus: *Tersus atque Elegans*' in *Critical Essays in Roman Literature: Elegy and Lyric* ed. J. P. Sullivan (London 1962) pp. 65ff.

¹⁴ pp. 383ff.

¹⁵ *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford 1968) pp. 496ff.

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With rough equivalents for the critical terms, the following rendering can be offered:

*In elegy too we Romans challenge the Greeks. In this field the writer who seems to me most polished and elegant is Tibullus. There are those who prefer Propertius. Ovid is more exuberant than either, just as Gallus is harsher.*¹⁶

An objection to treating this text as evidence of a general verdict might be that Quintilian is expressing a personal opinion in putting Tibullus first. Quintilian certainly does not record his judgement as one universally accepted in his own time: he grants that 'some' prefer Propertius. But this statement implies that the majority favoured Tibullus.

It might also be felt that Quintilian's critical terms are vague and non-significant. The exact meaning of *tersus* and *elegans*, *lascivus* and *durus*, is indeed hard to determine. But they are applied by Quintilian in a precise way and they are all technical terms of literary criticism. Tibullus is said to be *tersus atque elegans maxime*; but no adjective is applied to Propertius. However, Propertius and Tibullus are compared and Quintilian prefers Tibullus. The implication is that Quintilian regards Propertius, like Tibullus, as *tersus* and *elegans*, but less so than Tibullus. Gallus is *durior* than Tibullus and Propertius, Ovid *lascivior*. Both therefore diverge from being *tersus atque elegans*: Gallus is not refined enough in his style and so is over harsh; Ovid has gone too far in the opposite direction and is too exuberant, showy and self-indulgent.¹⁷

The status of such terms in Roman literary criticism can be gauged fairly well from a passage in one of the younger Pliny's letters. Pliny is describing the work of a contemporary poet, Passennus Paulus, a descendant of the Augustan poet Propertius. Passennus not only wrote elegies like his ancestor Propertius but also lyrics. Pliny therefore elegantly compliments Paulus by comparing him as an elegist with Propertius before going on to compare him as a lyric poet with Horace:

praeterea in litteris veteres aemulatur, exprimit, reddit, Propertium in primis, a quo genus ducit, vera suboles eoque simillima illi, in quo ille praecipuus. si elegos eius in manum sumpseris, leges opus tersum, molle, iucundum et plane in Properti domo scriptum. (Epistles 9.22.1f.)

Besides, in his literary work he rivals, imitates and reproduces the work of

¹⁶ M. Hubbard, *Propertius* p. 2 translates the passage as follows: 'We challenge the Greeks in elegy too. Here the most polished and choice writer is, I think, Tibullus; others prefer Propertius. Ovid is less pruned than either and Gallus harsher.' She rightly stresses that Propertius and Tibullus are being praised for the same qualities.

¹⁷ This analysis is brief because it coincides with that of Hubbard, *Propertius* pp. 1ff. who is primarily concerned with Propertius.

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the classical poets. In particular he is a true descendant of his ancestor Propertius and most resembles him in the literary field in which Propertius was master. If you read Passennus' elegies you will find them polished, tender and charming, and very much a product of the family of Propertius.

Here is the same range of critical vocabulary applied again, and quite independently of Quintilian, to an elegist. The terms used by Quintilian and Pliny clearly denote recognised standard qualities of elegy; and Pliny is attributing to Passennus, and hence implicitly to Propertius, the same virtues as Quintilian explicitly finds in Tibullus and Propertius.

Quintilian's judgement then is a meaningful one in terms of ancient criticism of elegy; and his award to Tibullus of the primacy in Roman elegy is confirmed by other ancient references to him.¹⁸ Most of these simply speak of Tibullus in general terms: but several Ovidian passages add interesting details to Quintilian's sketch. In Ovid's eyes Tibullus is *cultus* (*Amores* 1.15.28; 3.9.66) and *ingenium come* (*Tristia* 5.1.18); *cultus* and *ingenium come* lie in the same range of vocabulary as *elegans* and *mollis*. Finally Tibullus himself supplies a useful piece of information about his literary aims, when indirectly he claims to be *doctus*: *Pieridas, pueri, doctos et amate poetas* (1.4.61).

The qualities attributed to Tibullus by Quintilian, by Ovid and by himself are related to the literary ideals espoused by the Hellenistic Greek poets of the third century BC and later claimed by many of their Roman successors. *Doctrina* refers to the best known characteristic of Hellenistic poetry.¹⁹ *Tersus* and *cultus* relate both to the *πόνος* (*labor*) which Hellenistic poets claimed as a necessary part of their poetic activity²⁰ and to the *λεπτότης* (fineness) which was the result of it.²¹ Being *mollis* and *iucundus* and *ingenium come* is to some extent connected with the Hellenistic emphasis on small scale composition (*nugae*);²² it is also linked with the 'sweetness' of the Hellenistic poet²³ and of the honey-bee, that frequent

¹⁸ Esp. Velleius 2.36.3: *inter quae maxime nostri aevi eminent princeps carminum Vergilius Rabiriusque et consecutus Sallustium Livius Tibullusque et Naso, perfectissimi in forma operis sui; Vita Tibulli* (quoted above p. 1); Diomedes p. 484 17(K) (quoted and discussed below, p. 6).

¹⁹ For the evidence see Kroll pp. 37ff.; chh. 8, 12, 13, 14; and see below, pp. 11ff. and nn. 47ff.

²⁰ Cf. Kroll pp. 38ff.; Puelma Piwonka pp. 125f.; 130; 139 n.2; Wimmel, *Kallimachos* Stichwortindex s.v. *labor*, *lima* Mühsamkeit; F. Cairns, 'Catullus 1', *Mnemosyne* s.v. 22 (1969) 153ff.; and see below, n. 24 and pp. 28f.

²¹ Cf. Puelma Piwonka pp. 160ff.; Wimmel, *Kallimachos* Stichwortindex s.v. *λεπτός*; Kambylis pp. 81, 119, 141f.; and see below n. 23.

²² On Callimachus see Fraser i pp. 625, 641f., 749, 754f., ii pp. 1058f. nn. 287f.; Puelma Piwonka pp. 138ff.; Wimmel, *Kallimachos* pp. 39 n. 1, 83ff.; Pfeiffer i pp. 136f.; Cairns, *Mnem.* s.v. 22 (1969) 153ff.

²³ Cf. Call. *Aet. Fr.* 1.11 (of Mimnermus), 15 (Pf.) and Pfeiffer *ad loc.*; *Epigr.* 27 (Pf.) (of Aratus, combining τὸ μελιχρότατον with λεπταί/ρήσιες).

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symbol of the Hellenistic poet.²⁴ It is no surprise to find Tibullus regarded in these terms by ancient critics: the other two major Roman elegiac poets whose work survives, Propertius and Ovid, implicitly acknowledge their indebtedness to Hellenistic masters and Propertius does so explicitly.²⁵ Tibullus makes no such acknowledgement and mentions no literary predecessor. But his indebtedness to Hellenistic poetry was just as great. This was understood by the ancient critics when they wrote of him in the terms discussed above and it is explicitly stated by the grammarian Diomedes:

Elegia est carmen compositum hexametro versu pentametroque
alternis (in)vicem positis, ut
divitias alius fulvo sibi congerat auro
et teneat culti iugera multa soli
quod genus carminis praecipue scripserunt apud Romanos Propertius et Tibullus et Gallus imitati Graecos Callimachum et Euphorionem. (Diomedes p. 484.17(K))

Elegy is a type of poem composed alternately in hexameters and pentameters, e.g.

*Let another heap up for himself wealth in yellow gold
and be master of many arable acres.*

[Tibullus 1.1.1f]

At Rome the principal writers of this type of poem were Propertius and Tibullus and Gallus, who imitated the Greek poets Callimachus and Euphorion.

That Diomedes is correct about Tibullus' literary ancestry is confirmed both by his independently attested information about Propertius and Gallus, and by a number of known imitations of Callimachus in Tibullus.²⁶ In addition, Tibullus' pre-eminence in Roman elegy is implicitly supported by Diomedes' use of the first couplet of his first elegy as an example of the elegiac metre.

Since all the ancient critics lay stress on what Tibullus has in common with the other Roman elegiac poets rather than on the differences between them, and describe him in terms applicable to a follower of Greek Hellenistic poetry, it seems sensible for a modern critic to begin by trying to fit Tibullus into this background. In this way the Roman evaluation of Tibullus in terms of cultivated and polished elegance may become more comprehensible.

To see Tibullus as a 'Hellenistic' poet it is necessary to arrive at a

²⁴ Cf. Pfeiffer 1 p. 284; Wimmel, *Kallimachos* Stichwortindex s.v. Bienen. The concept is of course also related to that of *labor* (see above, n. 20).

²⁵ *Callimachus*: Prop. 2.1.40; 2.34.32; 3.1.1; 3.9.43; 4.1.64; *Philetas*: Prop. 2.34.31; 3.1.1.

²⁶ Collected by A. W. Bulloch, 'Tibullus and the Alexandrians', *PCPhS* 199 (1973) 71ff. Cf. also M. Pino, 'Echi Callimachei in Tibullo', *Maia* 24 (1972) 63ff.

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description of Hellenistic poetry. This is not easy, since Hellenistic poetry involves a great range of subjects and styles. Some differences between Hellenistic poets may be reflected in the alleged 'battle of the books',²⁷ whether or not this had a historical reality or is based in part, like the polemical language of Callimachus, on the ancient scholiasts' misunderstandings of Pindar.²⁸ But the very range of Hellenistic poetry is in one sense helpful and reassuring where Tibullus is concerned. It is not necessary, in order to show that Tibullus can meaningfully be described as a Hellenistic poet, to depict him simultaneously as a Callimachus and a Lycophron. If he professes at least some of the literary principles which Hellenistic poets espouse and if his work lies somewhere within the range of subject and style found in Hellenistic poetry, then the description is applicable. It is all the more applicable since the concept of being a Hellenistic poet was paradoxically more significant for the Romans than for the Hellenistic Greeks. Roman 'Hellenistic' poets were converts to a foreign literary tradition which stood in contrast to an older Roman view of literary excellence²⁹ still widely held in their own day. This increased their zeal, as did their realisation that the great achievements of Greece in literature remained still to be equalled and surpassed by Roman writers. Of literary forms practised in the late Roman Republic and early Empire, elegy, along with its close relative pastoral, was the most heavily influenced by Hellenistic poetry. This means that it makes excellent literary-historical sense to aim, whatever the difficulties and whatever the risk of oversimplification, at a general characterisation of Hellenistic poetry in the study of a Roman elegist.

How is this to be done? K. J. Dover has emphasised recently how it should not be done:

The least profitable way of attempting to characterize Hellenistic poetry as a whole is to begin with second-hand generalizations about it (or about Greek morals, politics or intellectual developments), find passages in Hellenistic poetry which bear out these

²⁷ For a summary of the evidence about literary controversies involving Callimachus, cf. Fraser 1 pp. 741ff. and esp. pp. 749ff.

²⁸ For the links between Pindar and Callimachus' vocabulary of literary criticism cf. Newman pp. 45ff. Much of the 'autobiographical' material in Pindar is now generally regarded as literary convention (cf. e.g. E. L. Bundy, *Studia Pindarica* 1, II (University of California Publications in Classical Philology 18, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1962); D. C. Young, *Three Odes of Pindar* (Mnemosyne Suppl. 9, Leiden 1968); *Pindar Isthmian 7, Myth and Exempla* (Mnemosyne Suppl. 15, Leiden 1971); W. J. Slater, 'Futures in Pindar', *CQ* n.s. 19 (1969) 86ff.; 'Pindar's house', *GRBS* 12 (1971) 141ff.; 'Doubts about Pindaric interpretation', *CJ* 72 (1977) 193ff.). The Callimachean imitations of Pindaric literary polemic may also be at least in part conventional, just as many Augustan reworkings of Callimachean literary apologetic material clearly involve an element of fiction.

²⁹ Expressed e.g. by Cicero in the *Pro Archia* (62 BC).

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generalizations, and omit to ask to what extent archaic and classical poetry bear out the same generalizations.

(*Theocritus Select Poems*, ed. K. J. Dover, Introd. p. lxxvii)

Dover points out (pp. lxxviff.) that Hellenistic poetry has in common with archaic poetry some of the very features which are supposed to be Hellenistic – new words and senses of words, the incorporation of epic words, the use of epic material to a different point, mythological allusiveness and inventiveness, humanisation of the gods and a flippant attitude to mythology, contrived naivety. He concludes that if most of the poetry of the fourth century BC had not been lost, it might well be thought that ‘Hellenistic’ poetry began with the deaths of Euripides and Sophocles. It is to the fourth century that Dover dates the change from a ‘primary’ to a ‘secondary’ stage in tragedy; and he observes that Homeric exegesis of a philological type goes back in poetry to Antimachus of Colophon (circa 400 BC).³⁰

Dover’s observations are undoubtedly correct and could be pressed further. In particular his point about ‘Hellenistic’ poetry starting in the late fifth century could be amplified. In that period, in Aristophanes, *Frogs* 785–1481, the literary criticism and terminology later associated with Hellenistic writers and surviving most prominently in Callimachus, *Aetia* Fr. 1 (Pf.), is already found in a detailed if embryo form.³¹ In the contest between ‘Aeschylus’ and ‘Euripides’ Aeschylus represents the older school and Euripides the beginnings of the new poetry. First the chorus speaks of a κρίσις . . . τέχνης (judgement of art) (785f.), cf. *Aetia* Fr. 1.17f.: τέχνη . . . [κρίνετε] (judge by art). They also mention the process of weighing and measuring which will take place (797) and which will provide a visual basis for the last section of the poetic contest (cf. also 797ff., 958 and 1378ff., esp. 1398: καθέλξει (will outweigh) and *Aetia* Fr. 1.9: καθέλκει (outweighs) and 18: σχοίνῳ Περσίδι (measuring-tape)). In their preliminary remarks the chorus speak of Aeschylus as a ‘thunderer’ (814) – contrast Callimachus’ rejection of thunder as a symbol for his work (*Aetia* Fr. 1.20). Aeschylus, according to the chorus, has a ‘giant’s breath’ (825), while Callimachus speaks of the giant Enceladus in contrast to himself (*Aetia* Fr. 1.35f.). Aeschylus’ words are said to be ἵπποβάμονα (horse-prancing) (821), whereas Callimachus is told by Apollo to avoid the chariot road (*Aetia* Fr. 1.25ff.).

In the actual contest Euripides criticises Aeschylus’ bombast (838f., 923ff., 961, 1056f. – compare Callimachus, *Aetia* Fr. 1.19f., the refusal of a μέγα ψοφέουσαν ἀοιδήν (a mighty sounding song)). Euripides also speaks of slimming tragedy³² (938ff. – compare *Aetia* Fr. 1.24, where Callimachus

³⁰ Cf. Pfeiffer 1 General Index s.v. Antimachus of Colophon.

³¹ See Wimmel, *Kallimachos* p. 115 n. 1, where a number of the links discussed below are listed.

³² ‘Thinness’ is linked with the concepts of ‘smallness’ and ‘poverty’ which are also

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is told by Apollo to keep his Muse thin) and of the upper air as feeding him (892 – compare *Aetia* Fr. 1.34 where Callimachus wants to be the cicada ἐκ . . . ἠέρος εἶδαρ ἔδων (eating food from the air)). Finally Euripides contrasts his own humble characters with those of Aeschylus (948ff. – cf. *Aetia* Fr. 1.3ff. where Callimachus says he is criticised because he does not write long accounts of the deeds of kings and heroes). Aeschylus had introduced the question of Euripides' low characters earlier (840ff.); and there is a third mention of the topic at lines 1038ff., where Aeschylus contrasts his own heroic characters with Euripides' loose women and again later, at 1062ff. where he criticises Euripides for portraying royalty in rags. Euripidean practice, of course, conforms to the general Hellenistic tendency to give emphasis to the representation of humble characters and to humanise gods and heroes. In Roman Hellenistic poetry this process is taken one step further: real people, in particular the poet and his mistress, take the place of the humanised gods and heroes of Greek Hellenistic poetry in analogous situations.³³

Aeschylus also criticises Euripides' interest in incest as a theme for his plays (850, 1081). With this may be compared the considerable use of this theme in Hellenistic literature: the largest collection of such material is to be found in Parthenius' *Erotika Pathemata*, which contains summaries of a number of legends involving incest treated by earlier Hellenistic poets. Again, Aeschylus attacks Euripides' introduction of procuresses (1079). Here New Comedy, and in its train Roman Comedy and Roman Elegy, may be compared. Euripides is also criticised for teaching immorality and this criticism is linked with a statement of the didactic function of poetry (1043ff. and esp. 1053ff.). Here a didactic emphasis broader than that of Hellenistic poetry is involved although the latter is not unconcerned with that area (see below, pp. 29ff.). Finally Aeschylus takes issue with Euripides over the latter's interest in Cretan monodies (848), drinking songs, Carian flute songs, dirges and dance-music – that is, in music of highly emotional types. Again, Hellenistic literature seeks in music, as in every area, the unusual and the emotionally vivid;³⁴ Roman elegy is above all associated with the *tibia*, the Phrygian ἀλλός, with its notorious capacity to arouse the feelings.³⁵

Euripides for his part invokes novel personal gods, including 'Hyper-

part of the Callimachean literary manifesto. Cf. above, n. 22; below, nn. 85 and 93. Aristophanes is of course primarily being humorous and Euripides almost immediately is made to say that he nourished up tragedy again (944).

³³ For an example see F. Cairns, 'Propertius i.18 and Callimachus, *Acontius and Cydippe*', *CR* n.s. 20 (1969) 131ff.; and see below, pp. 111f.

³⁴ Gow–Page, *HE* II Index to Commentary – B. English *s.v.* Music and Musicians; Catullus 63.8ff.; and see Nisbet–Hubbard on Hor. *Od.* 1.18.13.

³⁵ Cf. for the connections between elegy and the *tibia* R–E *s.v.* *Elegie* pp. 2262f., 2270. For the capacity of the *tibia* to arouse feelings see e.g. Dioscorides 35 (GP); Lucr. 2.620; Cat. 64.264 and Kroll *ad loc.*; Hor. *Od.* 3.19.18f.; Ov. *Met.* 11.16; *Fast.* 4.341.

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Intelligence' and 'Over-fastidious Criticism'³⁶ (891ff., cf. also 973f.). There is of course a gap between the novelty of Euripides' gods and the novelty and originality which was a desideratum for Hellenistic poets.³⁷ Nevertheless there is a line of descent. Similarly the idiosyncratic character of Euripides' gods is related however remotely to the notion of poetic individuality which is conveyed through various other Hellenistic programmatic concepts.³⁸ The critical acumen of Euripides, as it is seen in action in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, again relates to Hellenistic literary controversy.³⁹ Euripides goes on to speak of his metrical subtlety (958), cf. 1309ff.: metrical niceties were another Hellenistic preoccupation.⁴⁰ The banausic metaphor he employs, probably from building (cf. 799ff.), is analogous to the wood- and metal-working and weaving metaphors used by Hellenistic poets of their work.⁴¹ Finally Euripides notes that his prologues are brief and informative (1177ff.); and brevity is one of the main aspects of Hellenistic poetry.⁴² The chorus contributes the concepts of subtlety, epigrammatic quality, sharp-wittedness, learning, word-play (875ff.), urbanity, smoothness and refinement (901f.) (cf. also 1099ff.), all concepts which recur in the Hellenistic period.⁴³ An interesting point is that Euripides' diction is said to be 'filed' (902), a symbol which does not appear in extant Callimachus but is standard in manifesto-literature deriving from Callimachus.⁴⁴

Dover's remarks are therefore fully justified. Nevertheless the career of Alexander the Great, as Dover admits, does stand between two distinct literary and cultural epochs. Moreover some of the generalisations Dover offers about the second can stand as valid characterisations of it, particularly his remarks about the concern of Hellenistic poetry with learned reflection on the literature, myth and cult of the past, its interest in real human life and high technical aims; and its connection with the transition from a primary to a secondary stage in literature, a transition marked by the formation of a canon of 'classical' authors within each area of writing. It does not particularly matter if some characteristics of Hellenistic poetry can also be found here and there, or even widely, in fifth century or archaic Greek writers. To begin with, what is peculiar to Hellenistic as opposed to

³⁶ These translations of *ξύνησις* and *μυκτῆρες ὀσφραντήριοι* are derived from Stanford *ad loc.*

³⁷ Cf. Kroll pp. 12ff.; Ch. 7; Puelma Piwonka pp. 167ff.; Nisbet-Hubbard on Hor. *Od.* 1.26.6; 1.26.10 [*novis*]; Wimmel, *Kallimachos* p. 98; Stichwortindex *s.v.* *primus*-Motiv, *Ersttheitsidee*; Kambylis pp. 155f., 159ff., 203.

³⁸ Notably those of novelty and originality (see above, n. 37); and 'purity' (see Nisbet-Hubbard *loc. cit.*, above, n. 37); Wimmel, *Kallimachos* pp. 222ff.

³⁹ Cf. Kroll Ch. 6; Puelma Piwonka pp. 127ff. Also see above, n. 27.

⁴⁰ Cf. Gow-Page, *HE* II Index to Commentary – B. English *s.v.* *Metre*; P. Maas, *Greek Metre* (Oxford 1962) pp. 11ff., 61ff., 79f., 85ff.

⁴¹ Cf. Puelma Piwonka p. 161; Prop. 2.34.43 and Rothstein *ad loc.*; 3.1.5.

⁴² See above, n. 22.

⁴³ See above, nn. 21, 23, 32, 38.

⁴⁴ See above, n. 20.