

THEA S. THORSEN

Introduction

Latin love elegy

'If only Christ had read the Latin love elegists!'
 – Joseph Brodsky¹

Ever since antiquity the art form of elegy has proved astonishingly vital. Elegy provided inspiration for artistic achievements throughout the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and even today.² Nevertheless, compared with its rich reception history, the period during which Latin love elegy flourished is surprisingly brief. The poetic body of Latin love elegy was fashioned by a relatively small group of poets who were active some fifty years in ancient Rome, during the transition between the Roman Republic and the monarchy of Augustus.

The Latin love elegists revived and refined an existing art form, that is poetry in a certain metrical pattern known as elegy, attested in ancient Greece from around 700 BC. During the centuries when elegies were composed in Greek, this literary form was to accommodate an astonishingly wide range of themes.³ However, at the time when the Latin love elegists were active,

I am grateful to Stephen Harrison and the anonymous reader at the Press for precious feedback on this introduction.

¹ According to the Polish poet Adam Zagajewski, as confided to me in oral communication.

² For examples of such artistic achievements throughout these and other periods, see 'Part V: Receptions' in this volume. Two recent, particularly noteworthy examples are Ezra Pound's *Hommage to Sextus Propertius* (1919) and Nobel laureate Derek Walcott's 'A Propertius Quartet' from his *Arkansas Testament* (1987). Walcott's 'A Propertius Quartet' is partly addressed to and partly written about the Latin love elegist Sextus Propertius and his beloved Cynthia (for further details about the couple, see below) and the fatal love between 'she whose first syllable was Sin, as yours was Sex' (1987: 97). I am grateful to Lars Morten Gram and Steffen Hope for drawing my attention to these poems.

³ It remains hard to reconcile the modern understanding of elegy as 'lament' with pre-Alexandrian Greek elegy, despite several insightful attempts made by outstanding scholars (cf. e.g. Francke (1816), Page (1936) and Nagy (2010); see also Harvey (1955) 168–72). Existing specimens of Greek literature marked by an 'elegiac mode' before the age of Alexander the Great belong to a great extent to well-defined genres that are not elegy, such as epic and tragedy, while examples of poems in the metre of elegy (i.e. the elegiac couplet; see below) rarely seem 'elegiac' in the modern sense of the word, despite dealing with many types of subject matter (see West (1974) 1–21, Aloni (2009) and

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elegy was principally associated with a tradition of loss and lament.⁴ The great achievement of the Latin love elegists was that they merged the mode of lament with a concept of totalitarian love.

Love

The ideal of love in Latin love elegy represents a turning point in the literary history of the West. This is not to say that love is an unimportant theme in classical literature outside Latin love elegy, but rather that love within this literary genre is of a different kind. Love for love's sake: that is the rule in the world of Latin love elegy. Latin elegiac love has no explanation; it appears as its own cause and effect and seems self-sufficient.

In other ancient literature,⁵ love may regularly be explained by factors that are external to the experience of love itself.⁶ Thus, love may be represented as madness due to divine will, as is often the case in the literary genres of

Hunter in this volume). In this context the 'elegy' of Andromache in Euripides' eponymous tragedy (ll. 103–16), where a lament occurs in the elegiac metre within the framework of tragedy, remains unique.

⁴ The explanation of the origin of elegy as lament is attested in Horace, who writes *uersibus impariter iunctis querimonia primum, / post etiam inclusa est uoti sententia compos; / quis tamen exiguus elegos emisit auctor, / grammatici certant et adhuc sub iudice lis est* (Ars P. 75–8, [elegy was] first a lament composed with unequally joined verses, thereafter a thought with the power of a granted prayer was included; but grammarians fight over which author first produced little elegies, and the debate is still awaiting its final judgement). See also *miserabilis . . . elegos* (Hor. Carm. 1.33.2–3, 'sad elegies') in an erotic context. Similarly, Ovid explicitly stresses the plaintive quality of elegy throughout his poetic career: *elegi quoque flebile carmen* (Her. 15.7, 'elegy is also a tearful form of poetry'); *flebilis . . . Elegia* (Am. 3.9.3, 'tearful Elegy'); *flebilis ut noster status est, ita flebile carmen* (Tr. 5.1.5, 'as tearful as my life now is, is my song'). Later authors refer to a tradition that precedes these testimonies of elegy as lament, such as the dedicatory inscription by Echembrotus (fl. during the latter half of the sixth century BC), quoted by Pausanias 10.7.6 (see West (1971), 4 and Nobili (2011): 34–6). Among attempts at establishing a connection between elegy and lament by means of (false) etymologies, Horace's contemporary Didymus, based in Alexandria, launched the suggestion that the term stems from εὖ λέγειν ('to speak well', quoted in Orion *Etymologicum* 58.7 Sturz). Later sources repeat this explanation, along with the suggestion that the term 'elegy' derives from ἔλεγεῖν ('to say "woe", "woe"', cf. e.g. Marius Plotius Sacerdos, *Gramm. lat.* 4.509.31 Keil, Porph. *ad Hor.* Carm. 1.33.2 and *Suda* E 774). For more recent attempts at unlocking the origin of elegy by means of etymology, see West (1971) 8.

⁵ For love in ancient literature, see esp. Calame (1999). Nilsson (2009) is also helpful.

⁶ The subsequent survey focuses on the *function* of love in ancient literature, rather than on love as *problem*, which is how philosophical writings in prose and poetry alike tend to conceive the emotional state in question. For an exposition of the similarities and differences between the concept of love in philosophy compared to that of Latin love elegy, see Allen (1950) 259–64, Caston (2012) 21–47 and Piazzi (Chapter 14) in this volume.

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epic and tragedy. Love may also be linked to simple sexual satisfaction, as in Attic comedy. A pretext for marriage is a further function of love in classical literature, as exemplified by the theatrical genre of New Comedy. Here, the love of a young man for his girl has the precise purpose of unfolding a plot, which is destined to close with the marital union between the two.

There are reminiscences of almost all these kinds of love in Latin love elegy. To be sure, the elegiac concept of love may occasionally resemble a divine curse. Especially the child-god Amor (Love), also called Cupid (Lust), is prone to inflict pain and misery on the Latin elegiac lover. However, because of the inconstancy with which the elegiac child-god is depicted, this divinity never seems to acquire the rationale of a wronged god in search of vengeance, as in epic and tragedy. Furthermore, the concept of Latin elegiac love does include sexual pleasure. Yet such pleasure rarely provides lasting satisfaction for the Latin elegiac lover, who longs for his beloved's affection as much as her body.⁷ Finally, a number of features of New Comedy reverberate through Latin love elegy.⁸ However, marriage as a consequence of love remains a concept starkly alien to this poetic genre. The ambition of Latin elegiac love is decidedly neither marriage nor offspring.

Latin elegiac love has no objective but to worship the beloved, even in the face of danger, rejection and humiliation. As such, Latin elegiac love resembles most closely the kind of love which in other ancient literature is most vigorously explored in the homoerotic tradition. In Greek archaic lyric, the woman poet Sappho (latter half of the seventh century BC) is one of the most prominent exponents of this tradition, which is later extended by the body of pederastic love-poetry for beautiful boys. In the homoerotic tradition of same-sex longing and despair, love can have no cause other than the beauty and person of the beloved and no aim other than the bliss that the lover may experience if the beloved should grant him – or her – access. This is also the case in Latin love elegy.

In contrast to the tradition of homoerotic and pederastic poetry, Latin elegiac love is employed in predominantly heterosexual relationships.⁹ The

⁷ A body to which the elegist rarely gains access, cf. Connolly 2000.

⁸ Cf. James (1998, 2003, 2006 and 2012), Konstan (1986) and Piazzzi (Chapter 14) in this volume.

⁹ In fact, homoeroticism appears to be an evanescent feature in the Latin erotic-elegiac corpus when considered as a whole. In Tibullus there are the Marathus poems (Tib. 1.4, 1.8 and 1.9), which are outright homoerotic, while Propertius models his very first poem (Prop. 1.1) on a homoerotic epigram by Meleager (*Anth. Pal.* 12.101) and later compares homoeroticism and heterosexual love (e.g. Prop. 1.20). Finally, Ovid considers – just the once, as a preliminary option – the possibility of loving a boy in the first poem of his *Amores*, where the future poet-lover pleads that in order to become an elegist, he must find someone to love: *aut puer aut . . . puella* (*Am.* 1.1.20, 'either [with] a boy or a girl').

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heterosexual relationships of Latin love elegy regularly consist in a male character featured as the elegist himself and a female character featured as his beloved. Latin love elegy is in fact the classical genre that most systematically combines heterosexual relationships with a concept of love presented not as divine retribution, carnal hedonism or social function serving the establishment by producing heirs, but as love for love's sake. The fact that the couple consists of a man and a woman, normally the prerequisite for upholding family and tradition by producing heirs, enhances the elegiac experience of impossible, yet inescapable and therefore irrational love.

From the point of view of our present day the concept of such 'impossible' love between a man and woman may seem trivial. However, the seeming triviality is a sign of success: after Latin love elegy, love for love's sake in heterosexual relationships is the rule in Western literature and indeed in Western culture.

Genre

Latin love elegy is a perfect case for studying a literary genre. A distinct unity makes this genre easily identifiable among ancient literary forms;¹⁰ this unity concerns the genre's era (50–1 BC), location (Rome), theme (love) and form (the elegiac couplet). An elegiac couplet consists of a dactylic hexameter, followed by a dactylic pentameter (see Chapter 23), and the Latin love elegists adapted it from Greek elegy to the prosody of the Latin language. When considering the genre of Latin love elegy from a metrical perspective, it is useful to recall that the elegiac couplet also occurs in a different yet similar poetic genre known as epigram. This Greek term means 'inscription' and originally denoted inscribed verses in various metres, often on tombs in commemoration of deceased persons. From the third century BC, Greek epigram was cultivated as a literary genre, accommodating a wide range of topics. At the time of the Latin love elegists, there was a considerable body of epigrammatic poetry in elegiac couplets on such topics as grief and love (cf. Keith 2011). Consequently, there are overlaps in form as well as content between the genres of epigram and elegy. However, epigrams are normally short, often no more than two couplets (= four lines) long; in Latin love elegy a poem usually runs for more than four couplets (= eight lines). The genre's appearance in one place at one time is thus matched not only by one theme, but also one form, namely a certain number of elegiac couplets.

¹⁰ Thus, of all the ancient genres available, Latin love elegy is the case in point of Farrell's exposition of 'classical genre in theory and practice', since "Latin love elegy" is... easy to define': Farrell (2003) 397. I am grateful to the author for a copy of the article.

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Furthermore, Latin love elegy is profoundly *literary* in a way that facilitates meta-generic reflection. In the universe of this genre, there is a mostly insurmountable gap between what the elegiac lover desires and what he experiences. The contrast between what the Latin elegiac lover longs for (joy, mutual fidelity and love until death) and what he gets (disillusionment) creates the very *raison d'être* of Latin love elegy – as poetry. When the Latin elegiac lover does not get what he wants, he writes about it instead. The continuous experience of non-fulfilment urges the elegiac lover to vent his frustration in verse, along with repeated attempts at seduction, sometimes accompanied by memories of occasional bliss, which explains the erotic-persuasive (cf. *blanda* . . . *Elegia*, Ov. *Rem. am.* 379, ‘charming Elegy’) and, more frequently, erotic-pathetic (cf. *flebilis* . . . *Elegia*, Ov. *Am.* 3.9.3, ‘tearful elegy’) modes of Latin love elegy. In the Latin elegiac world, life can in fact consist in one of only two activities: love-making, if the beloved is present and accessible, and writing about past joys, future hopes and imminent anguish, if the lover is denied access to his beloved (not infrequently by the beloved herself). Making love and making poetry are thus the only two modes of existence in the world of Latin love elegy. The fiction of Latin love elegy is consequently that there is no fiction. The artistic accomplishment of such non-fictional fiction is enhanced by the use of the elegists’ own names and, allegedly, pseudonyms for the names of the ‘real’ girls they love (cf. Ov. *Am.* 2.17.29–30, *Ars* 3.538 and Apul. *Apol.* 10) in their elegiac outputs.

Canon

To the characteristics one time, one place, one theme and one form that mark Latin love elegy, ‘one canon’ can be added. In Chapter 1 Richard Hunter points out a number of features that must have proved fruitful to the Roman elegists in the wide diversity of Greek elegy.¹¹ The rich chapter includes a

¹¹ From the viewpoint of ancient Rome, there seems to have been a Greek canon of erotic elegists as well. The names that may be included in such a canon are Mimnermus of Smyrna, later claimed for Colophon, see fr. 9 West (latter half of the seventh century BC); Antimachus (fl. c.400 BC), Hermesianax (early third century BC), both from Colophon, and Hermesianax’s friend Philitas from Cos; and the contemporary of the latter two, Callimachus of Cyrene. Hermesianax clearly regards Mimnermus, whom he calls the ‘inventor of the pentameter’ and inflamed lover of the woman Nanno, a canonical representative of the elegiac genre, along with Antimachus, whom Hermesianax portrays as a sad mourner of his beloved Lyde (fr. 3.35–46 Lightfoot). In the same fragment, but outside Hermesianax’s literary canon *sub specie amoris*, where elegy features among the genres of epic, lyric and tragedy, the elegist Philitas, reportedly in love with the woman Bittis, is paired with a contemporary philosopher (3.75–8 Lightfoot). As many as four Greek elegists are thus evoked through Hermesianax’s fragment, if the very work to which this fragment belongs, the elegiac

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large number of poets from different places and spans several centuries. By contrast, ancient sources (Ov. *Tr.* 4.10.53–4, cf. *Ars* 3.536–8 and Quint. *Inst. Or.* 10.1.93) provide us with a neat canon of four Latin love elegists, who all flourished in Rome during the last half of the first century BC:

- Cornelius Gallus (70/69–27/26 BC), who is said to have composed four lost books of elegies entitled *Amores* (Servius *ad Buc.* 10.1, ‘Loves’), centred on the female figure of Lycoris
- Tibullus (between 55 and 48 to 19 BC), the author of two poetry books (centred on the female figures of Delia and Nemesis, respectively), both of which are transmitted together with a third book of compositions by other poets, also known as the *Appendix Tibulliana* (cf. Tränkle 1990)
- Propertius (born between 54 and 47, died after 16 BC), who produced four books of elegies where Cynthia is the leading lady
- Ovid (43 BC–AD 17), who composed a number of erotic-elegiac works, among which the three books of elegies entitled *Amores*, centred on the female figure of Corinna, are the most conventional.

Appearance in one place, then, during the course of one half-century, of one kind of theme, one metrical form and one canon of poets, these are the hallmarks of the genre of Latin love elegy. But despite these well-defined features, problems in defining Latin love elegy remain.

The dispute continues over whether Catullus (c.84–54 BC) should be counted among Latin love elegists (cf. Wray 2012). The ambiguity of Catullus’ elegiac status is reflected in this *Companion*, where the poet is represented as an elegiac predecessor by Federica Bessone in Chapter 2 and as an elegist proper by Paul Allen Miller in Chapter 10. Catullus uses the elegiac couplet in longer elegies as well as in epigrams. However, the love for his

Leontion, presumably named after Hermesianax’s beloved, is taken into account. In addition to Hermesianax, Callimachus also seems to regard Mimnermus as an erotic-elegiac ideal (cf. *Aet.* 1.11 Pfeiffer), as does Propertius (cf. *Prop.* 1.9.11). Antimachus may also be mentioned as an elegist in Callimachus (fr. 398 Pfeiffer), but in Rome he is recorded as an epic poet (*Prop.* 2.34.45 and Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.53), while Philitas, who is probably also invoked by Callimachus (cf. *Aet.* 1.9–10), is mentioned by both Propertius and Ovid (cf. *Prop.* 2.34.29–32; 3.1.1–2, see also *Prop.* 3.3.51–2, 3.9.43–6 and 4.6.1–4 and Ov. *Ars* 3.329 and *Rem. am.* 760). Of Hermesianax and Callimachus, the former is never named by the Roman elegists, whereas the latter is acknowledged as extremely influential (see Hunter in this volume, with references). Nevertheless, Hermesianax’s catalogue of poets may indeed anticipate conceptions of canons of Greek and Latin erotic elegy at Rome (see below), as Farrell (2012) argues. It should however be kept in mind that Philitas, Sappho and Anacreon (also included in Hermesianax’s *Leontion*, cf. fr. 3.48–52 Lightfoot) are repeatedly mentioned in the Greek sections of Ovid’s literary catalogues (*Ars* 3.329–33, *Rem. am.* 759–62), which are therefore perhaps better understood as histories of *love* literature than as canons of elegy.

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puella ('girl') Lesbia, which is as obsessive and tormented as the love of any of the canonical elegists, does not know the metrical boundaries of Latin love elegy. The lyrical versatility of Catullus, who masters many metres, marks his distance from canonical erotic elegy. Nevertheless, Catullus' portrayal of Lesbia and the feelings he claims that she provokes in him aligns him with the other Latin elegists.

Even within the canon of Latin love elegists, there are problems concerning chronology. Ovid, who must be responsible for the self-serving concept of *four* canonical elegists, repeatedly mentions Tibullus before Propertius among them (cf. *Ov. Rem. am.* 763–4, *Tr.* 2.445–68 and *Tr.* 4.10.51–4). In Chapter 2, Bessone draws a suggestive picture of the intense literary activity that marked the end of the Roman Republic, whose fragmentary poetic remains are still being recovered. In Chapter 3 Emmanuelle Raymond challenges the notion that Gallus was the 'first inventor' of the genre and suggests that the fragmentary state of the generation of poets to which Gallus belongs allows for well-founded doubts as to whether he single-handedly introduced the genre, or rather refined an existing trend.

In Chapter 6 on Propertius, Alison Keith corroborates the general view that Propertius' first book of elegies, the *Monobiblos* ('one book'), preceded the first book of Tibullus' elegies (for a different view, see Knox 2005). On this assumption, Propertius' elegiac debut is the earliest complete work we possess of Latin love elegy. But the four poetry books of the Propertian corpus certainly did not precede Tibullus' two collections of elegies in their entirety. Rather, the chronology of the oeuvres of the two poets intertwined, with Tibullus' first book seemingly appearing before the second book of Propertius, which in turn preceded the second book of Tibullus (cf. Lyne 1998a = 2007: 251–82).

The Ovidian order of canonical elegists is reflected in this *Companion* in the sense that the chapter on Tibullus comes before Propertius. This organization is not meant to challenge the ruling opinion that Propertius' *Monobiblos* is the first extant elegy book in Latin so much as to reflect the principal place of Tibullus in a different kind of order, based on *auctoritas* ('authority'), that certain ancient literary critics recognized in his elegiac works, and that forms the intriguing point of departure for Parshia Lee-Stecum's Chapter 4. From another point of view – of retrospect, with Ovid – Tibullus' work certainly terminated earlier than Propertius', and fame 'beyond the reach of carping criticism' conventionally began with the poet's death and its elegiac lamentation (*Ov. Am.* 1.15.39–40); for the funeral of Tibullus and Tibullan elegy, see *Ov. Am.* 3.9.¹²

¹² I owe this formulation to the anonymous reader for Cambridge University Press.

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Lee-Stecum's chapter also treats the non-canonical poet Lygdamus, whose elegies are transmitted as a part of the Tibullan corpus along with a number of other poets in the *Appendix Tibulliana*. The much discussed date of Lygdamus, whose identity has remained a puzzle throughout the centuries, may be as late as the Flavian period (cf. Antolín 1996; see however *OCD*: 899). The fact that Lee-Stecum's chapter gives ample space to Tibullus, the poet who may be regarded as the principal erotic elegist in terms of ancient conceptions of authority, *but also* includes Lygdamus, who was possibly the latest of the classical (but non-canonical) elegists, should serve as a reminder of the uncertainty besetting established chronologies of ancient literature.

Ends

The self-contained universe of Latin love elegy reveals an obsession with its own well-defined borders. In fact, the genre's unity – i.e. one time, one place, one theme, one form, one canon – proves an excellent point of departure for exploring the 'other' by means of both contrasts and similarities. The genesis and immediate development of the genre that is so easy to pinpoint allows us to observe Latin love elegy as a literary laboratory, where poetic experiments are carried out. During these experiments, not only the drawing but also the violation of the genre's limits occurs, two processes that both – however paradoxically – contribute to the ultimate assertion of the generic identity of Latin love elegy. This dynamic is most obvious in the case of Ovid, whose erotic output in elegiac couplets sports a wide range of diverse realizations of the genre, as I try to demonstrate in Chapter 7.

Nonetheless, even the classic examples of Latin love elegy, Ovid's arch-elegiac *Amores* included, encompass features that herald the genre's end. Most shocking, perhaps, is that none of the extant canonical elegists remains true to the 'one' love they profess, as Roy Gibson shows in Chapter 13, directly challenging orthodox erotic-elegiac scholarship. Similarly, in Chapter 14, Lisa Piazzì demonstrates how erotic-elegiac promiscuity extends through the field of literary genres as she points out how Latin love elegy frequently engages in 'adulterous' liaisons with other forms of poetry. However, Piazzì concludes her chapter by suggesting that the elegists' zealous interest in other genres expresses nostalgia for a literary past, rather than anticipation of its own closure. Perhaps the marked genesis, *floruit* and end of the erotic-elegiac genre enhanced a particular elegiac consciousness, as it were, of the literary landscape it 'left behind'? Perhaps this would be equally true of what lay ahead for the genre? In Chapter 15 John F. Miller demonstrates how the power of the erotic-elegiac genre prevails even as the last two

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canonical love elegists, Propertius and Ovid, explicitly distance themselves from the genre by turning to aetiological projects.

Gender

felix Eois lex funeris illa maritis
 quos Aurora suis rubra colorat aquis.
 namque ubi mortifero iacta est fax ultima lecto,
 uxorum fuis stat pia turba comis,
 et certamen habent leti, quae uiua sequatur
 coniugium: pudor est non licuisse mori.
 (Prop. 3.13.15–20)

Happy is that funeral custom [= suttee] for the husbands of the East, whom reddening Aurora colours with her waters. For when the last torch is thrown onto the corpse-bearing pyre, the righteous crowd of wives stand with dishevelled hair, and there is a competition between them to be the one who follows her husband alive: it brings shame not to be allowed to die.

A complex representation of gender is a hallmark of Latin love elegy. This passage from Propertius 3.13 is as an example of how Latin love elegy may serve as a vehicle for male chauvinist ideals. Here, the elegiac lover's envy of Indian men for the practice of suttee, according to which it is morally unacceptable for a woman to live after her husband's death, discloses a destructive wish to control women. The ideal in this passage is that a woman should exist only for her man; when he is dead, her reason for living ceases. The fact that the passage contains a reference to an historical practice (which persisted in India until the nineteenth century) should serve as a reminder of the intimate way in which Latin love elegy is interwoven with a world of historically real men and women, where sexism is the rule.

However, it is precisely against this socio-historical backdrop of sexism and male chauvinism that Latin love elegy frequently represents both genders in irregular, counter-cultural and even subversive ways. There is dispute over the extent to which Latin love elegy is in fact counter-cultural or rather a symptom of the general promiscuity and increased liberty for women that evidently marked the end of the Roman Republic. At any event, the all-consuming nature of Latin elegiac love alienates the lover from *traditional* Roman society and ideals of masculinity. In Chapter 9 Alison Sharrock brilliantly captures the dynamics of this alienation in the concept of *nequitia* ('badness'), which renders the life of the poet-lover pointless, yet naughty and therefore ultimately potent as a socially subversive form of existence from the traditionalist's point of view.

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In Latin love elegy, the poet-lover is regularly portrayed as being just as weak as the beloved woman is strong. The poet-lover excels in *mollitia* ('softness'), a quality associated with the feminine and effeminate. As Sharrock points out in Chapter 9, Propertius even casts himself – outrageously – in the position of an *uniuira* ('woman who has had only one husband', cf. Prop. 2.1.47–8). By contrast, the beloved is normally portrayed not only as *dura* (hard), but also as *domina* (owner/mistress). The unequal relationship between the elegiac man and woman is consequently represented as the elegiac lover's *seruitium amoris* ('slavery of love'), which is the topic of Chapter 11 by Laurel Fulkerson. The concept of the poet-lover's slavery entails not only the subversion of traditional roles of men and women, but also of social class, again to the ultimate empowerment of the elegiac poet-lover. Fulkerson points out how this seemingly paradoxical process has literary consequences in that there seems to be a closer relationship between the elegiac lover and the *seruus callidus* ('clever slave') of comedy than has previously been recognized in erotic-elegiac scholarship.

Scholarly awareness of the complexities and importance of gender in Latin love elegy has transformed our conception of that genre during the last few decades. Feminist approaches and studies of erotics have not only contributed to profounder insights into the genre proper, but have challenged and changed our understanding of Latin literature and literary culture in general.¹³ As with the genre of Latin love elegy itself, issues concerning gender now permeate studies on the topic (see below). A similar approach is applied in this *Companion*: no single chapter is allotted to gender, and the issue is instead addressed throughout the various chapters. Furthermore, one entire chapter is dedicated to Sulpicia, who is usually assumed to be the daughter of the Servius Sulpicius Rufus, who died in 43 BC (cf. *Serui filia Sulpicia* [Tib.] 3.16.4, 'Sulpicia, daughter of Servius', see Lyne (2007), 341–67 and Skoie (Chapter 5) in this volume). Sulpicia is the only woman among Augustan poets, and she is a composer of elegiac couplets, whether her poems are considered epigrams (her longest poem runs to ten lines) or *elegidia* ('little elegies').

Sulpicia is of great significance to Latin love elegy, although she does not make the elegiac canon, and her corpus, which is transmitted in the *Appendix Tibulliana*, is even smaller than that of Lygdamus (see above). For centuries even the possibility of her existence was in doubt. Sulpicia is nevertheless important because she embodies the subversion of established gender models that is so fundamental to the dynamics of Latin love elegy. While the beloved

¹³ I owe much of this formulation to the anonymous reader of the *Companion* for Cambridge University Press.