



Ianua Vota:
Propertius 1.16 and
Inscribed Epigram

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Prop. 1.16: Inscribed Epigram

Inscribed Epigram:

- Elegiac Meter
- First-Person Monologue (object)
 - Occasionally a dialogue
- To Passersby
- Dedicated to Divinity*

Prop. 1.16:

- Elegiac Meter
- First-Person Monologue (door)
- To Passersby? (*miseri amantes*)
- Dedicated to Divinity:
“Vota Pudicitiae”

Prop. 1.16, ll. 1-8

Quae fueram magnis olim patefacta triumphis

Ianua Tarpeia vota Pudicitiae;

Cuius inaurati celebrarunt limina currus,

Captorum lacrimis umida supplicibus;

Nunc ego, nocturnis potorum saucia rixis,

Pulsata indignis saepe queror manibus,

Et mihi non desunt turpes pendere corollae

Semper et exclusi signa iacere faces.

I who once had been opened to great triumphs, a door devoted to Tarpeian chastity, ... I now complain, injured by the nightly brawls of drunks and beaten often by their unworthy hands.

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- Vota: erroneously edited to “nota”
- Pudicitia: recipient divinity, not virtue

Prop. 1.16: Ironic Veneration of impudicitia

Door as Venerated Object of *Pudicitia*

- “Captorum lacrimis ... supplicibus”
Supplicant tears of captives
- “Vota” dedicated to *Pudicitia*
- Temple doors decked with *corollae*

Figurative Veneration for *impudicitia*

- “Supplicis longis excubiis”
Long vigils of a supplicant-lover
- “Furtivas ... preces” stealth prayers
- “Vota” offerings to door for mistress
- “Turpes corollae” left on the door

Prop. 1.16: Elegiac Metamorphosis

- Door: object-speaker of epigram
 - Elegiac Meter
 - First-Person Monologue
 - To Passersby? (*miseri amantes*)
 - Dedicated to Divinity: “Vota Pudicitiae”
- Transforms into Elegist
 - “Queror” I complain
 - Lover’s “*graibus querelis*”
 - Futility of Complaint

Prop. 1.16: Metapoetics

“si quae miseri nouistis amantes...”

Who are “you wretched lovers”? Passersby? The readers of Propertius’s collection? Both?

Literal Reading:

- Criticism of lover’s behavior
 - But sung like the lover to unreceptive audience

Figurative Reading:

- Criticism of elegiac convention
 - But as an elegy to an elegiac readership

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Captorum lacrimis umida supplicibus;
Nunc ego, nocturnis potorum saucia rixis,
Pulsata indignis saepe queror manibus,
Et mihi non desunt turpes pendere corollae
Semper et exclusi signa iacere faces.
Nec possum infamis dominae defendere noctes,
Nobilis obscenis tradita carminibus;
Nec tamen illa suae reuocatur parcere famae,
Turpior et saecli uiuere luxuria.
Has inter grauibus cogor deflere querelis,
Supplicis a longis tristior excubiis.
Ille meos numquam patitur requescere postis,
Arguta referens carmina blanditia:
“Ianua uel domina penitus crudelior ipsa,
Quid mihi tam duris clausa taces foribus?
Cur numquam reserata meos admittis amores,
Nescia furtiuas reddere mota preces?
Nullane finis erit nostro concessa dolori,
Turpis et in tepido limine somnus erit?
Me mediae noctes, me sidera plena iacentem,
Frigidaque Eoo me dolet aura gelu:

Tu sola humanos numquam miserata dolors
Respondes tacitis mutua cardinibus.
O utinam traiecta caua mea uocula rima
Perussas dominae uertat in auriculas!
Sit licet et saxo patientior illa Sicano,
Sit licet et ferro durior et chalybe,
Non tamen illa suos poterit compescere ocellos,
Surget et inuitis spiritus in lacrimis.
Nunc iacet alterius felici nixa lacerto,
At mea nocturno uerba cadunt Zephyro.
Sed to sola mei tu maxima causa doloris,
Uicta meis numquam, ianua, muneribus.
Te non ulla meae laesit petulantia linguae,
Quae solet ingrato dicere pota loco,
Ut me tam longa raucum patiare querela
Sollicitas triuio peruigilare moras.
At tibi saepe nouo deduxi carmina uersu,
Osculaque impressis nixa dedi gradibus.
Ante tuos quotiens uerti me, perfida, postis,
Debitaque occultis uota tuli manibus!”
Haec ille et si quae miseri nouistis amantes,
Et matutinis obstrepat alitibus.
Sic ego nunc dominae uitiis et semper amantis
Fletibus aeterna differor inuidia.