

Socius Amor: Propertius, Gallus, and *Amicitia* in *Elegies* Book I

Allusions to and representations of *amicitia*, or friendship, found within the first book of the *Elegies* of Propertius have long been of interest among scholars. Found situated within numerous poems about heterosexual love, poems referring to male friendship in Propertius' work comprise an important feature of the *Elegies*. As Craig Williams (2012) notes, "Roman friendship, then, was represented as one of the most richly rewarding and deeply meaningful of interpersonal relationships" (17). The importance of the study of friendship in elegy can be explored in the representation of the relationship between Propertius and his friend Gallus, whom he addresses in four poems within his first book. The question of whether this is the famed poet C. Cornelius Gallus is up for debate, but recently some scholars have taken a different approach to determining the identity of this man. Instead of searching for biographical congruency between the Galli mentioned in Propertius' work and the famed elegist, a newer approach is to look at the thematic similarities and coherent issues raised within the poems addressed to the Galli and how they relate to each other; this new approach is helping to define the man/men addressed as "Gallus" (Pincus 2004).

This paper will investigate the friendship between Propertius and Gallus represented in the first book of the *Elegies*, examining its defining thematic feature of shared emotion and how this affects the relationship between the two men. By looking closely at the poetic depictions of their particular interactions, I aim to come to a more nuanced understanding of what sort of friendship they shared, and indeed, how Propertius chose to depict that friendship in his elegies. This paper will look specifically at Propertius' use of the phrase *socius amor* (*Elegies* I.5), and will explore the meaning of the phrase by evaluating it against the representations of their friendship as shared misery and passion found in the other poems. Taking the representation of

socius amor (I.5), and setting it alongside the ideas reflected in poem I.10 in the phrases *vestris conscius in lacrimis* “partner in your tears” (I.10.2) and *commissiae laetitiae* “shared happiness” (I.10.12), I hope to tie them into constant themes of Propertius’ friendship with Gallus throughout Book I. While we may not be able to prove that this friend of Propertius is C. Cornelius Gallus, my investigation suggests that only another elegiac poet could share in this particular type of emotion and this could lend further validity to the idea of the man represented being *the* Gallus. In doing so, this paper aims to contribute to the study of *amicitia* in Roman elegiac poetry by relating the theme of friendship as shared misery and passion to the larger construct of elegy as an expression of powerful personal emotions.

Bibliography

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