

Diaklausithyron: Picking Locks and Invading Domestic Space in Tibullus' *Elegies*, Book 1

Poems 1.2 and 1.5 of Tibullus' *Elegies* have traditionally been noted as examples of the Hellenistic sub-genre, *paraklausithyron*, the lament of the lover at the door of the beloved. In this paper, I argue that the theme of domestic space inherent in such poems is also recurrent throughout the rest of Book 1 and that Tibullus' deviations from the genre expectations allow significant insight on the sanctity of the house. Robert Maltby notes that poem 1.2 deviates from the normal conventions of *paraklausithyron* by exploring a "variety of addressees" (2002, 152). To this I would add Tibullus' insistence on the potential success of entering the house, since throughout the poem, the lament at the door returns to the possibility of Delia, Tibullus' initial love interest, unlocking the door despite her husband. While Copley's (1942) assertion that the door typically remains unopened in normal instances of *paraklausithyron* is intact here, as Tibullus does not manage to enter the house, the possibility of entry is explored throughout the other poems. In poem 1.6 for example, Tibullus, no longer the object of Delia's affection, relates to her husband all the things he had taught Delia to carry out their love affair, namely picking locks. In doing so Tibullus reflects on his own past actions as a threat to the husband and the home.

This presentation also examines how the theme of external dangers and the risk of their entry into the home repeats throughout the first book of *Elegies*. In poem 1.5, as Alex Kennedy (2016, 52-53) notes, Tibullus temporarily reverses the conventions of *paraklausithyron* through his use of *fingebam* ("I was imagining"; 1.5.20) in constructing an imagined experience. This may be expanded, however, to an analysis of the relative safety of the outdoors. Within this imagined experience Tibullus depicts the external world as an idealized country scene within which he and Delia may live together happily; but when the dream has ended, Tibullus wishes

that the witch responsible for his curse fall victim to a series of inauspicious acts, all of which are distinctly public. The contrast between the safe private home and the dangerous external public is echoed also in poem 1.3, when Tibullus evokes the mythical reign of Saturn in claiming that at that time there was no need for doors on houses (1.3.43-44). Tibullus, sick as a result of traveling, says this to contrast the present risk of leaving the home with a former era of safety that had not demanded the security of an enclosed personal space. In order to heal this sickness, he plans to pray to the household gods instead of Venus; by evoking the *Lares* as the providers of personal well-being, the house is encoded as a site of religious healing, one which wards off dangers outside the home.

This paper concludes by showing how throughout the poems of Tibullus' *Elegies* Book 1 the traditional themes of the *exclusus amator* and the genre conventions normally present in *paraklausithyron* poetry are crafted in a way that consistently frames the house as a defense from the external world. Through the act of picking locks, however, Tibullus explores the threat inherent in the violation of domestic security. Public space is, in Tibullus' poetry, violent, and the literary trope of the lover's lament offers Tibullus a means to explore the possibility of that violence making its way inside the otherwise safe home.

Bibliography

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