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**Autor:** Booth, Joan

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## Tibullus 1.8 and 9: A Tale in Two Poems?<sup>1</sup>

By Joan Booth, University of Wales, Swansea

In the first of these elegies Tibullus<sup>2</sup> taxes his one-time boy-friend, Marathus, with furtive and unsuccessful love of the girl Pholoe, whose presence all along is eventually revealed when she is urged to treat Marathus better and keep her mercenary demands for her *canus amator*. In the second he excoriates an unnamed boy-beloved for deserting him in favour of a decrepit but rich old man, whose own wife deceives him with a young lover; the errant boy also has a girl-friend. The prevailing view has been that 1.8 shows an essentially benevolent Tibullus, whose mockery of Marathus' naivety is good-humoured, and whose ultimate intention is to help him along in his first heterosexual affair<sup>3</sup> (whether or not this spells the end of his own erotic relationship with him<sup>4</sup>); and that 1.9 deals with events which must be understood to precede those of

\* The following are cited by author's name only:

D. F. Bright, *Haec mihi fingebam: Tibullus in his World* (Leiden 1978)

A. W. Bulloch, "Tibullus and the Alexandrians", *Proc. Camb. Phil. Soc.* n.s. 19 (1973) 71–89

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R. Macmullen, "Roman attitudes to Greek love", *Historia* 31 (1982) 484–502

M. J. McGann, "The Marathus elegies of Tibullus" in: W. Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.30.3 (Tübingen 1983) 1976–1999

P. Murgatroyd, *Tibullus I. A Commentary* (Pietermaritzburg 1980, rpt. Bristol 1991)

K. F. Smith, *The Elegies of Albius Tibullus* (New York 1913, rpt. Darmstadt 1971)

R. Wilhelm, "Zu Tibull 1.8 und 9", *Philologus* 60 (1901) 579–592

W. Wimmel, *Der frühe Tibull* (Munich 1968)

1 The initial version of this paper was presented to seminars at Concordia University, Montréal, and the University of Alberta, Edmonton, and I am grateful for comments made on those occasions; the Fondation Hardt provided an agreeable ambience for further reading. I am much indebted to Professor W. J. N. Rudd, Professor E. J. Kenney and Mr A. G. Lee for criticism of subsequent drafts, but, naturally, none of them should be assumed to endorse everything I say. Thanks are due too to Dr David Levene for assistance with computerised word-searching and to the editors of *Museum Helveticum* for helpful advice.

2 Modern critical trends make it perhaps as well to say that I refer to the authorial character in the poems as 'Tibullus' purely for convenience; I do not mean to imply that Tibullus the man is necessarily the same.

3 See e.g. Bright 247: "Tibullus is the interested onlooker who places his expertise at the disposal of his heartsore young friend". Cf. Smith 52; Wimmel 77–78; M. C. J. Putnam, *Tibullus: a Commentary* (Norman 1973) 127; R. J. Ball, *Emerita* 44 (1976) 192; Cairns 149; McGann 1988, 1996.

4 Murgatroyd (234) and Cantarella (129) imply that it need not do so.

1.8 – if, indeed, they can be chronologically related to them at all<sup>5</sup>. The purpose of this paper is to challenge both of these judgements and to reassess the originality of 1.8 and 1.9 in the light of what emerges.

### 1. The aims of 1.8

Over twenty years ago a lone voice was raised in dissent from the orthodox view of this poem: Bulloch (88–89) pronounced Tibullus' tone to be "wounding", "sharp and canny" and his motive to be to *get Marathus back*. He pointed to the psychological impact of all the dwelling on the boy's painful lack of progress with Pholoe<sup>6</sup> combined with oblique reminders of his continuing paederastic appeal. And rightly so, I think; but there is much more to it than that.

#### 1.1.

The portrayal of Marathus is specifically damning to an adult male seeking to pursue a sexual relationship with a woman, for, above all things, his *unmanliness* is highlighted. He is berated for his foppish obsession with clothes and personal grooming in the effort to please the girl (9–14)<sup>7</sup>, and the one feature of his looks commended to her is the pre-adolescent beardlessness classically prized by a male lover (31–32, *iuuenis, cui leuia fulgent / ora nec amplexus aspera barba terit*)<sup>8</sup>. Venus, it is true, famously prized it in Adonis, but the very abnormality of her passion is almost the *raison d'être* of the story, and the oddity of her taste could well be what Tibullus hopes to bring to mind by echoing Theocritus' telling of it (*Id.* 15.130 οὐ κεντεῖ τὸ φίλημ'· ἔτι οἱ περὶ χεῖλεα πυρρά, 'his kiss does not rasp, he is still auburn [i.e. only downy] about the lips'). Not only Marathus' appearance, however, but also his circumstances and attitudes in 1.8 are made to seem unmasculine. In lines 35–38 Tibullus insists, apparently attempting to forestall some objection from the girl<sup>9</sup>, that there are ways and means of enjoying love-play with a boy who is 'afraid':

5 Scholars once liked to imagine the events of 1.8 taking place after those of 1.9 in order to improve Tibullus' moral image (see Bright 229 for further discussion). Bright (232) denies all possibility of a straight sequential relationship, while Cantarella (130–131), apparently unaware of any problems, takes it for granted. Murgatroyd (257–258) at least well appreciates the contrasts arising from the juxtaposition.

6 She is named after a mountain in a wild part of N. Greece, which may in itself be meant to suggest that she is a 'tough cookie'; cf. Hor. *Carm.* 1.33.7 with Nisbet-Hubbard's note.

7 All elaborate attention to dress and toilette by a man the Romans considered effeminate (see Murgatroyd on Tib. 1.8.9–10), and associated effeminacy with passive homosexuality (see Macmullen 494). The frustrated lover of a girl is upbraided on much the same grounds as Marathus in a sixth-century AD epigram by Paulus Silentiarius (*Anth. Pal.* 5.228), perhaps based on a Hellenistic original.

8 Cf. *Theognidea* 1327–1328 West; Straton, *Anth. Pal.* 12.10; Statilius Flaccus, *Anth. Pal.* 12.25.1–3, 27.1–3; more examples in Murgatroyd's note on Tib. 1.8.31–32.

9 For the refutatory function of *at*, which introduces these lines, see Murgatroyd's note *ad loc.*

*at Venus inuenit puero concumbere furtim,  
dum timet et teneros conserit usque sinus,  
et dare anhelanti pugnantibus umida linguis  
oscula et in collo figere dente notas.*

His earlier admission of the cause of the boy's infatuation (25–26) suggests that these ways and means have been tried and tested at least once before:

*sed corpus tetigisse nocet, sed longa dedisse  
oscula, sed femori conseruisse femur.*

Neither passage, however, indicates clearly whether the venue for this earlier sexual encounter is supposed to have been Pholoe's premises or Marathus', but the usual assumption is that it was Pholoe's. Yet the complaint attributed to Marathus in lines 55–66 seems to point to a different situation:

55 *'quid me spernis?' ait, 'poterat custodia uinci;  
ipse dedit cupidis fallere posse deus.  
nota Venus furtiua mihi est – ut lenis agatur  
spiritus, ut nec dent oscula rapta sonum.  
et possum media quamuis<sup>10</sup> obrepere nocte*  
60 *et strepitu nullo clam reserare fores.  
quid prosunt artes, miserum si spernit amantem  
et fugit ex ipso saeua puella toro?  
uel cum promittit subito sed perfida fallit  
et mihi nox multis est uigilanda malis?*  
65 *dum mihi uenturam fingo, quodcumque mouetur  
illius credo tunc sonuisse pedes.'*

These lines (which are clearly linked to 35–38 by the echo in *Venus furtiua*, 57, of *Venus ... furtim*, 35) beg comparison with Tibullus 1.2.15–24, where the female Delia is encouraged by Tibullus the *exclusus amator* to get up secretly in the night, trick the guard and unlock the door of her house from the inside:

15 *tu quoque, ne timide custodes, Delia, falle;  
audendum est: fortes adiuuat ipsa Venus.  
illa fauet seu quid iuuenis noua limina temptat  
seu reserat fixo dente puella fores.  
illa docet furtim molli decedere lecto,*  
20 *illa pedem nullo ponere posse sono,  
illa uiro coram nutus conferre loquaces  
blandaque compositis abdere uerba notis;*

<sup>10</sup> *quamuis* is the reading of all the MSS and has to be taken adverbially with *media nocte* (see Murgatroyd *ad loc.*). But the slight awkwardness of this commends Kraffert's emendation to *quouis* or *quauis*, '(to) anywhere you please'.



*nec docet hoc omnes sed quos nec inertia tardat  
nec uetat obscura surgere nocte timor.*<sup>11</sup>

The close correspondence between what Delia was apparently not prepared to do for Tibullus, but did for another, and what Marathus claims that he is prepared to do for Pholoe strongly suggests that Marathus in 1.8 is supposed to be in a position exactly comparable with Delia's in 1.2, i.e. under guard inside his own house. There is nothing in the language of the passage to preclude this. Lines 55–58 give no clue at all as to whether the venue is Marathus' house or Pholoe's, but *reserare* (60) points, if anything, towards Marathus', for when this verb is used in Augustan Latin of the opening of a door or gate, the opener is normally someone in a position to employ legitimate means, e.g. turning a key or lifting a bar<sup>12</sup>. A person inside a house, even under surveillance, would obviously be able to contrive this much more easily than would an *exclusus amator*<sup>13</sup>. The *torus* from which the heartless girl flees (61–62) could just as well be Marathus' as her own, and *nox uigilanda* (64) is an expression just as appropriately used of a disappointed lover's sleepless night in his own bed as of the street vigil of an *exclusus amator*<sup>14</sup>. Finally, *uenturam* (65) positively suggests that Pholoe is envisaged arriving from outside, for in the context of an

11 Cf. also Tib. 1.6.7–10, where Tibullus regrets instructing Delia in the tricks which have now been used against him.

12 See e.g. Verg. *Aen.* 7.613 (of the Gates of War being opened) *insignis reserat stridentia limina consul*; *Aen.* 12.584 (of the Latins confronted with the Trojan army) *urbem alii reserare iubent et pandere portas*. Cf. Tib. 1.2.18 (quoted in § 1.1.) and 33–34 *non labor hic laedit, reseret modo Delia postes, / et uocet ad digiti me taciturna sonum*; Prop. 1.16.19 (an *exclusus amator* to a door) *cur numquam reserata meos admittis amores?*

13 Cf. the clear suggestion of an excluded lover's use of *illegitimate* means at Prop. 4.5.74 *cum fallenda meo pollice clatra forent* (Murgatroyd on Tib. 1.8.59–60 collects examples of lovers manipulating doors and locks from the outside). Ov. *Her.* 4.141–142, *non tibi per tenebras duri reseranda mariti / ianua, non custos decipiendus erit* (Phaedra pointing out to Hippolytus the amatory advantages of their domestic situation), appears to be an exception to the general association of *reserare* with the furtive activity of the immured beloved rather than the *exclusus amator*. But Ovid is not above blurring hitherto clearly demarcated linguistic usages (see J. Booth in: W. Haase, ed., *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II.34.4, Tübingen 1981, 2690–2691), and anyway there is something to be said for regarding *tibi* at *Her.* 4.141 as dative of advantage rather than dative of agent with *reseranda* (and *decipiendus*), i.e. = 'the door would not have to be opened (and the guard tricked) for you' rather than 'by you'. This would mean that the first four lines (139–142) of the eight (139–146) which illustrate Phaedra's basic proposition *nec labor est celare* (137–138) would present the advantages of the situation essentially from Phaedra's point of view and the second four (142–146) essentially from Hippolytus' (*laudabimur ambo*, Phaedra has insisted in 139); such a balanced approach would be entirely in keeping with Ovid's rhetorical manner. The use of *reserare* in relation to metaphorical rather than literal 'opening' was never so clear-cut, and in late Augustan and post-Augustan writing it appears to have become virtually synonymous with *recludere*; see Skutsch on Enn. *Ann.* 210.

14 Cf. Tib. 1.2.77–78 *quid Tyrio recubare toro sine amore secundo / prodest, cum fletu nox uigilanda uenit?*; Prop. 3.15.1–2 (to Cynthia) *sic ego non ullos iam norim in amore tumultus / nec ueniat sine te nox uigilanda mihi*.

elegiac tryst *uenire* is very much more frequently used of the visitor than of the visited<sup>15</sup>. Marathus, too, could be much more easily imagined being able to pick up a noise on the outside, with all quiet around him within, than out in the street straining to hear movement inside the house<sup>16</sup>. But then the water seems to be muddied again by lines 75–76:

*nunc omnes odit fastus, nunc displicet illi  
quaecumque opposita est ianua dura sera.*

The general implication of lines 70–76 is that retribution for frustrating his own admirers has come to Marathus in the form of similar frustration for him now that he too is a lover, and at first sight the *fastus* and the *opposita ianua dura sera* in lines 75–76 look like allusions to Pholoe's cruel treatment. But the emphatic generality in the expression, 'all stand-offishness' and 'the barrier of any bolted door', militates against this, and it is difficult anyway to relate this couplet specifically to the scenario in lines 55–66, regardless of whose bolted door should be in question there, since Marathus claimed in lines 59–60 to be perfectly capable of dealing with it. Lines 75–76 suggest rather that experience has turned Marathus *in principle* against the idea of *anyone* obstructing a lover *by any means at all*.

If, then, a house where *Marathus* is kept under guard is supposed to be the scene of the previous and any future encounter, the boy's 'fear' in line 36 is well explained as that of being caught by *his* guard or keeper in the same way as the conventional elegiac mistress fears being caught by hers<sup>17</sup>. Pholoe's lack of enthusiasm for a repeat session, too, would be understandable if she had been disappointed or alarmed in some way on an earlier visit to him, and I think there are some hints that this *is* what is supposed to have happened. Firstly, although the sentence-structure (tricolon abundans) in lines 25–26 may seem to imply a 'heavy petting' session culminating in full intercourse, the expression *femur conseruisse femur*, does not in itself imply penetration<sup>18</sup>, and something tantalisingly short of it is a possibility. Secondly, when Tibullus says in line 35 'Venus found<sup>19</sup> the way to lie with a boy in secret', as well as alluding to lines 25–26, these words are also *per se* capable of evoking the myth of Venus

15 See e.g. Tib. 1.6.61–62 (of Delia's obliging mother-chaperon) *haec foribusque manet noctu me affixa proculque / cognoscit strepitus me ueniente pedum*; cf. Prop. 2.18B.30; Ov. *Am.* 1.5.9, 6.33, 11.5; 2.2.20; 3.11.26, *Ars* 2.228–229; 3.245, 676, 751. *uenire* is used of the beloved within coming to meet her lover only at Tib. 2.1.76 and (possibly) Prop. 2.22B.43, 46.

16 Cf. Ov. *Her.* 18.53–56 (Hero listening for the arrival of Leander).

17 Cf. Tib. 1.2.15–22; 2.1.75–78.

18 See J. N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (London 1982) 180.

19 *inuenit* is surely a true and not, as many suppose, a gnomic perfect. The late variant *inueniet*, favoured by e.g. J. P. Postgate (*Tibulli aliorumque carminum libri tres*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1915) and Putnam (n. 3 above), is totally unnecessary.

and Adonis<sup>20</sup>. That this story was in Tibullus' mind has already been suggested by an echo of the Theocritean version (see above), but lines 35–38 are more reminiscent of a passage in the *Lament for Adonis* generally ascribed to Bion (1.40–53), where Venus' sensual kissing of the dead (or dying) Adonis is clearly a substitute for intercourse<sup>21</sup>. The reminiscence arguably helps to suggest that the sensual touching and kissing of Pholoe and Marathus stopped short of intercourse too. And, thirdly, although Marathus' complaint that Pholoe 'spurns' him and 'runs away from bed' (61–62) is usually taken to refer to her general rejection of his advances, it could conceivably refer to a particular occasion when Pholoe literally fled from his bed on the point of giving and receiving full sexual satisfaction (the intensifying *ipso* with *toro* in line 62 lends weight to this idea). If Marathus is supposed to be the one immured at home, this is a startling reversal of the usual Latin elegiac gender-roles<sup>22</sup>, and his allegations against Pholoe in lines 55–66 reveal also what modern psychologists would perhaps call his confused sexual identity. For, although he aspires to the active masculine role in a heterosexual relationship, he is shown still to be thinking like a juvenile passive; and in domestic circumstances which are normally those of the female partner or, indeed, the homosexual passive (some sort of guard on the boy-beloved seems to be indicated in Hellenistic poems which intimate that his mother controlled access to him<sup>23</sup>) he expects his female beloved to behave exactly as would a male lover. He is upset because Pholoe, who may herself have had to take something like the evading action of the conventional *amator* surprised *in flagrante delicto*<sup>24</sup>, is not being a sufficiently enterprising *exclusa amatrix*.

Details reinforce the general impression that Pholoe's would-be lover is hardly a real man at all. Told to dry his eyes, swollen with weeping (*fletu lumina fessa tument*, 68), Marathus is made to sound distinctly like the Catullan Lesbia grieving for her sparrow (Catul. 3.18 *flendo turgiduli rubent ocelli*):

20 So A. G. Lee, *Tibullus: Elegies* (2nd ed., Leeds 1982) *ad loc.*

21 There are perhaps some traces of *verbal* echo of Bion in Tibullus' lines. Cf. *conserit usque sinus* (36) with ὥς σε περιπτύχω (Bion 1.44, Venus to Adonis) and *dare anhelanti ... oscula* (37–38) with με φίλησον ... / ἄχρις ἀποψύχης (Bion 1.46–47, again Venus to Adonis). Cf. also *femori conseruisse femur* in 25–26 (linked to 35–38 by *conserit* in 36) with ὥς ... χεῖλεα χεῖλεσι μίξω (Bion 1.44); for the sexual connotations of μίγνυμι see Adams (n. 18 above) 180–181.

22 Bright (246) and McGann (1989, n. 55), who speak of Marathus' "sneaking" or "creeping" to unlock the door from the inside, apparently do see him as the one under guard, but without appreciating the wider significance of this.

23 A procession of nocturnal callers at 'his mother's door' is predicted for the lovely Demophilus in an epigram by Dioscorides (*Anth. Pal.* 12.14.3–4), and the mother of the beautiful Euthydemus, whose loss to a rich rival is lamented in Callimachus' third *Iambus* (see further § 3.1., 3.2.), was apparently responsible for introducing him to the rich man. Note too that at Ov. *Met.* 4.85 the young Pyramus as well as Thisbe is guarded.

24 Cf. Hor. *Sat.* 1.2.127–143, Ov. *Ars* 3.605–608; see further J. C. McKeown, *Proc. Camb. Phil. Soc.* n.s. 25 (1979) 74–76.

the implication is that he is behaving just *like a woman*. And then there are the very complex lines 49–52:

*puero quae gloria uicto est?  
in ueteres esto dura, puella, senes.  
parce, precor, tenero. non illi sontica causa est,  
sed nimius luto corpora tingit amor.*

On the surface of it, here is but a variation on the old adage ‘No kudos in an unequal fight’. Tibullus asks ‘What glory is there in defeating a youngster?’ (49) and advises Pholoe to save her toughness for seasoned elderly campaigners (*ueteres senes*). ‘I beg of you, spare a tender lad (*tenero*)’, he goes on (51); ‘he does not have a *sontica causa*, but excessive love is giving his skin a yellow’ [i.e. pallid] tinge’. *sontica causa* is an expression with both legal and medical connotations – a ‘valid excuse’ or ‘case’ (often for dispensation from something or other<sup>25</sup>) – and so what Tibullus seems to be saying is that although Marathus may not deserve the complete dispensation from all harsh treatment due to the genuinely sick, his dose of love, bad enough to make him look distinctly off-colour, should win him some consideration from Pholoe because he is young and inexperienced (*tenero*)<sup>26</sup>. But since *tener* with reference to *puer* has exactly the same connotations as *delicatus*<sup>27</sup>, Tibullus’ appeal to Pholoe can carry a much less benign secondary meaning: ‘What sort of a conquest is a juvenile passive (*puer*)? Save your toughness for old men’ (we already know she has a *canus amator*). ‘Go easy on a “delicate” one – not that he’s sick, but he’s suffering from (a type of) *amor* which is too much (for him)’<sup>28</sup>. In other words, in apparently urging Pholoe to accept Marathus, Tibullus actually hints that she would do well to drop him altogether. All in all, it is difficult to believe that if the speaker of 1.8 had been out to smooth the course of Marathus’ new-found love-life, he would have made such a hash of it.

## 1.2.

It is true that, irrespective of what it says to Pholoe, the praise of Marathus’ looks in lines 31–32, “implicitly suggests [to Marathus] the advice of all

25 See Murgatroyd’s note *ad loc.*

26 A. G. Lee, *Tibullus: Elegies* (3rd ed., Leeds 1990) takes the couplet to mean that there is no need for the girl to avoid the sick-looking Marathus out of fear of contagion, since he is only suffering from love, not plague (*uel sim.*). But it is hard to understand *parce* as ‘do not avoid coming near him’ (*parcere* is one of Tibullus’ favourite words, but nowhere else in his work does its meaning approximate to this); and in any case the indications from the rest of the poem are that it is not supposed to be Pholoe’s complete aloofness so much as her unreliability which is upsetting Marathus.

27 Cf. Tib. 1.4.9 *o fuge te tenerae puerorum credere turbae*; 1.4.58 *iam tener assuevit munera uelle puer* (warnings to men with paederastic tastes).

28 For *nimius* + dative (which here can be understood from *illi* in line 51) = ‘more than a person or thing can bear or cope with’ cf. Tac. *Agr.* 7.3 *legatis quoque consulibus (legio) nimia erat*.



Hellenistic paederastic poetry that the boy should make full use of the short time during which he is attractive to a male lover”<sup>29</sup>. Furthermore, in the direct reminder to Marathus of Pholoe’s ability to attract him without cosmetics etc. (1.8.15–16) there is an indirect one of the appeal of his *own* looks *unadorned* to a man; and in lines 33–34 (*huic tu candentes umero suppone lacertos, / et regum magnae despiciantur opes*) Tibullus arguably hints at his own continuing interest by commenting on the erotic attractions of the boy in words which echo his longing for a life which could include the erotic attractions of the girl Delia (1.1.77–78 *ego composito securus aceruo / dites despiciam despiciamque famem*). At the same time, however, he seems to be hinting that the limited period for which the homosexual alternative has been ‘on offer’ for Marathus is all but expired already. For his parting warning to Pholoe in lines 77–78 of how one day (sc. when she is no longer attractive to men) she will rue not taking her chance while she had it (*at te poena manet, ni desinis esse superba. / quam cupies uotis hunc reuocare diem!*) implies – since she is clearly supposed to take a lesson from what has happened to Marathus<sup>30</sup> – that Marathus’ current amatory suffering is due punishment for his past rejection of an opportunity *now gone*. One more small detail: when Tibullus commends Marathus’ looks to Pholoe (31–32), he calls him not *puer*, as always elsewhere in 1.8, but *iuuenis*. This normally denotes a male well beyond pubescence (between about sixteen and forty-five) and is appropriate enough for one whose appeal to a woman is supposedly being emphasised, but it is simultaneously another reminder of Marathus’ precariously borderline status as a *puer delicatus*<sup>31</sup>. So, the Tibullus of 1.8 insinuates on the one hand that the role of *puer delicatus* is the only one Marathus is ever likely to succeed in, but on the other that he is already more or less past it. In short, he seems to be trying to panic Marathus into feeling immediate need to prove his continued paederastic viability and, in settling for the easier homosexual alternative, to put his fine new principles (see § 1.1) into practice. From all of which, needless to say, Tibullus himself would stand to gain!

### 1.3.

The reader who knows Callimachus well enough may be put on the track of Tibullus’ scheme at an early stage. For there is in his claim to privileged insight into the ways of love in lines 5–6, *ipsa Venus ... / perdocuit*, a distinct echo of the story of Acontius and Cydippe as told in ‘what was clearly to the

29 Bulloch 88. The idea in fact goes back at least to the Theognidean corpus of the fifth or even sixth century BC; see e.g. *Theognidea* 1305–1306 West. Cf. Cantarella 36–40.

30 Burman’s conjecture *et*, adopted by Lee (n. 26 above), has the advantage of making this clearer, whereas the resumptive or adversative *at* of the MSS seems unnecessary.

31 For *iuuenis* of one all but ‘time-expired’ as a passive cf. Tib. 1.4.33–34 *uidi iam iuuenem premeret cum senior aetas / maerentem stultos praeterisse dies*. For recognition of the transformational, yet not unattractive, stage cf. Straton, *Anth. Pal.* 12.4.5–8.

Augustan poets the best-loved episode of the *Aetia*<sup>32</sup>: αὐτὸς Ἔρως ἐδίδαξεν Ἀκόντιον .../... τέχνην, ‘Eros himself taught Acontius ... the art’ (of winning the woman he loved)<sup>33</sup>. Since Acontius’ crafty and devious method of obtaining Cydippe was legendary, here is perhaps a hint that the supposedly detached Tibullus in 1.8 will be manipulating the situation in his own amatory interest.

## 2. The relationship of 1.8 and 1.9

Bulloch did not enquire whether the design he detected in 1.8 was supposed to have succeeded. ‘And why should he?’, one might ask, ‘Where could he possibly have found the answer?’ I think extremely close at hand: in 1.9.

### 2.1.

The unnamed boy-beloved and his girl-friend in 1.9 are generally recognised as Marathus and Pholoe from 1.8, and Cairns (151–153) has further observed that the girl-friend (i.e. Pholoe) in 1.9 is surely the same person as the wife of Marathus’ decrepit old lover. That in turn means that the boy’s decrepit lover in 1.9 can be identified with Pholoe’s *canus amator* in 1.8<sup>34</sup>. It is worth pausing to defend this identification of the characters. (i) The fact that the wife at 1.9.67–70 is explicitly alleged to go in for dolling herself up does not, despite superficial appearances, conflict with what is said about Pholoe at 1.8.15–16, *illa placet, quamuis inculto uenerit ore / nec nitidum tarda compserit arte caput*. For *quamuis* with the perfect subjunctives *uenerit* and (*nec*) *compserit* can be taken to express a hypothetical rather than a real concession (literally: ‘to whatever degree she may have come with face unpainted and hair uncoiffed ...’)<sup>35</sup>, and the implication is not, therefore, that ‘that girl’ *never* titivates herself but only that her sex-appeal is not *dependent* on titivation. (ii) It is generally agreed that the ways and means of Pholoe and Marathus getting together alluded to at 1.8.35–38 (see § 1.1.) are explained by 1.9.41–44:

*o quotiens, uerbis ne quisquam conscius esset  
ipse comes multa lumina nocte tuli!  
saepe insperanti uenit tibi munere nostro  
et latuit clausas post adoperta fores.*

32 E. J. Kenney, *CQ* 43 (1993) 462.

33 *Aet.* fr. 67.1–3 Pfeiffer. Bulloch (77, 80) notes the echo but does not speculate on its significance.

34 There is no reason why an *amator* should not also be, or become, a *coniunx*, though this is a scenario not ordinarily contemplated by the Latin love-poets.

35 For the construction cf. Tib. 1.4.41–42 *neu comes ire neget quamuis uia longa paretur / et Canis arenti torreat arua siti*, Cic. *Off.* 1.35 *ii qui armis positis ad imperatorum fidem confugient, quamuis murum aries percusserit, recipiendi sunt*, and see E. C. Woodcock, *A New Latin Syntax*, London 1959, § 249c.

I have argued that the meeting(s) referred to in 1.8 took place on Marathus' guarded premises, and I would similarly argue that there is nothing in the Latin of 1.9.41–44 to preclude the idea that Tibullus (at one time taking the view that Marathus' threatening new interest was better humoured than opposed?) brought Pholoe to him, rather than *vice versa*<sup>36</sup>. Indeed, this hypothesis offers a slightly easier answer to the still puzzling question of why the girl would have found it necessary to be disguised (*adoperta*), when the door was still shut and would therefore conceal her presence anyway from whomever might be on the other side. Possibly the expression is compressed, and what is meant is that she waited behind a door which remained closed as long as an attempt was being made to communicate her presence to her boy-friend within, but had her head already covered so as to be able to 'hide' in case it should turn out *not* to be Marathus who opened it<sup>37</sup>. Furthermore, if Marathus' girl-friend is the old man's wife and she is able to 'leave the house' (*prodeat*<sup>38</sup>), dressed to kill, without suspicion (1.9.70), a guard on her at night seems hardly likely. (iii) This woman's freedom to go out squares with that which the Pholoe of 1.8 had to attend a 'counselling session' with Marathus on what appears to be neutral ground.

## 2.2.

As well as having their principal characters in common, 1.8 and 1.9 show notable similarities in form and structure. They are both dramatic monologues, roughly even in length (1.8 has 78 lines; 1.9 has 84). In both Tibullus directly addresses two other persons, and in both the harangue is punctuated by comparable-length passages of virtual soliloquy (1.8.19–26; 1.9.5–16) and supposedly verbatim quotation (1.8.55–66; 1.9.17–28). Both poems play heavily on the reader's expectations and only gradually reveal the full picture. And, most significantly of all perhaps, there are striking verbal links between them. (i) *celari* occurs at 1.8.1 and *celat* at 1.9.3; *difficilis* at 1.8.27 and 1.9.20;

36 (i) Some take *clausas post ... fores* to establish that Pholoe was inside (e.g. Putnam, n. 3 above; Murgatroyd *ad loc.*) But *post*, especially in expressions of concealment, is relative to point of view. From the viewpoint of anyone inside, the girl would be *post clausas fores* if she were on the outside of the door, because the door would conceal her. Cf. Caes. *B Gall.* 7.83.7 *ille ... post montem se occultauit*, where *ille* would be behind the mountain from the point of view of those beyond it, but in front of it from the point of view of anyone behind *him*.

(ii) As far as I can see there is nothing in *comes* (1.9.42) to preclude its being used of a man who accompanies a woman as opposed to another man. Indeed, the connotations of inferior status it sometimes carries, and which are in keeping with idea of Tibullus here assuming the normally servile duty of lamp-bearer (see Murgatroyd's note on 41–42), are perhaps even intensified if the recipient of the service is a woman.

37 The usual assumption that the girl waited, head covered, on the inside of her own bolted front-door leads to even greater difficulty: until the door were opened, she could not have been seen by anyone at all on the outside, and the disguise would scarcely have fooled her own husband or guard, should one or both of them appear unexpectedly from either inside or outside.

38 For *prodire* = 'go out (of the house)' cf. Hor. *Carm.* 2.8.7 with Nisbet-Hubbard's note.



*auro* at 1.8.32 and 1.9.17; *poena* at 1.8.77 and 1.9.81; and *superba* at 1.8.77 and 1.9.80. Note how these echoes cluster within a relatively few lines at comparable points in each poem, particularly the beginning and the end. (ii) At 1.8.15 the plain *illa* announces the girl's existence for the first time (*illa placet*), and at 1.9.40 the plain *illa* follows hard on the very first mention of a *puella* (*quid faciam, nisi et ipse fores in amore puellae? / sit precor, exemplo sit levis illa tuo*). (iii) In each of the two poems the boy is referred to as both *puer* and *iuuenis*<sup>39</sup>. It is well known that there is a unusually high incidence of recurring words and expressions throughout Tibullus' work<sup>40</sup>, but when verbal similarity enhanced by form and context occurs in two consecutive poems, it cannot but strengthen the possibility that those poems are especially closely connected.

### 2.3.

If, then, 1.8 can be seen as Tibullus' bid to reclaim Marathus exclusively for himself, there seems to be nothing to prevent and much to commend reading 1.9 as a sequel which reveals how it fared. For Marathus has indeed resumed the passive role there – but with a different man!<sup>41</sup> What is more, he still has the girl (Pholoe) *as well*. With horrible irony, the rival man proves to be none other than Pholoe's despised *canus amator*, who *has* stumped up the gifts Tibullus recommended Pholoe to extort from him rather than from Marathus (1.8.29–30), but to bring Marathus, not her, to his bed. And, if anything, Tibullus' scheming has made Pholoe more, rather than less, interested in his boy. So the last laugh is on Tibullus. Marathus has both Pholoe and the old man; the old man has both Marathus and (in a fashion) Pholoe: Tibullus has neither. He does not yet have the replacement for Marathus which he threatens (79–80), nor can he be sure of the satisfaction he envisages of one day seeing the boy's beauty spoilt (13–16)<sup>42</sup>. 1.9, where Tibullus has cast off all pretence of detachment in favour of open outrage and vindictive anger<sup>43</sup>, is the poem

39 As the old man's beloved in 1.9 he is called *puer* (lines 11, 53, 75), and as the old man's wife's lover *iuuenis* (lines 55, 71). Cf. § 1.2.

40 E.g. *parcere*, *precari*, *uerberare* and *urere* appear not only in both 1.8 and 1.9 but also throughout the *oeuvre* in a wide variety of contexts. The reason for this recurrence of apparently insignificant vocabulary is debatable; see Murgatroyd 15–16.

41 The claim at 1.9.6 that Marathus has only sinned *semel* shows an altered attitude to the boy's flirtation with Pholoe: it is a mere nothing compared with his defection to another male lover.

42 Exposure to physical hardship on some unspecified kind of expedition (*uia longa*) seems to be envisaged. This vagueness is perhaps itself an indication that Tibullus' vision of suitable punishment for Marathus is more melodramatic than realistic. McGann (1993) points out that what Tibullus wishes on Marathus parallels or inverts what the poetic lover conventionally predicts for the mistress who deserts him for a campaign-bound soldier.

43 Some take the plea for divine clemency towards Marathus at 1.9.5–6 to indicate a lingering concern for him on Tibullus' part (so e.g. Murgatroyd 257). But it rather seems designed to intimidate, for the implication is that perjury is a capital offence, and the boy is simply lucky that dispensation is not unknown in cases like his – the gods were traditionally thought to turn a blind eye to the dishonoured oaths of beauties (cf. *Ov. Am.* 3.3.29–32) and lovers (cf. *Tib.*

which tells us that his gamble with the oblique approach spectacularly mis-fired<sup>44</sup>.

### 3. Tradition and originality in 1.8 and 1.9

In many respects the conventional assessment remains valid.

#### 3.1.

These pieces (together with 1.4) offer the first (and only) Augustan elegiac exploration of the theme of paederastic love from a personal point of view. The homosexual relationship is romanticised on standard Greek poetic lines<sup>45</sup>: it is presented as something no different from heterosexual love in emotional intensity, with the boy-beloved just as haughty, fickle, greedy and temperamental as any female counterpart, and just as capable of inspiring servitude and frustration in the lover<sup>46</sup>. Various motifs from Hellenistic and earlier Greek erotic, and especially homoerotic, poetry have been pressed into service<sup>47</sup>, and 1.9

1.4.21 with Smith's note; Ov. *Am.* 2.8.17–20) and to be lenient to any kind of first offender (see Smith's note on Tib. 1.9.9–10, and cf. Ov. *Am.* 2.14.43–44).

44 In Tibullus' one other homosexual poem, 1.4, he elicits from Priapus a long lecture on boy-love, belatedly revealing that it was intended for the benefit of one Titius, whose wife told him to forget it; there will be other clients, he says, who will acknowledge his expertise – though his own troublesome Marathus may make a fool of him yet (*parce, puer, quaeso – ne turpis fabula fiam, / cum mea ridebunt uana magisteria* [83–84]). Murgatroyd (228) observes that the contrast between supposed detachment and actual involvement within 1.4 is mirrored in the juxtaposition of 1.8 and 1.9, and the new reading of 1.8 and 1.9, if anything, enhances this connection, for it shows how laughably ineffective are the expert's devious methods of self-help. 1.9 offers another corrective to 1.4, too: the old man who can finally claim conspicuous success is not the adulated Professor Tibullus of the future (cf. 1.4.79–80 *tempus erit cum me Veneris praecepta ferentem / deducat iuuenum sedula turba senem*) but a disgusting moneybags of the present. Cf. E. Leonotti, "Per una interpretazione di tre elegie de Tibullo (1.4, 8, 9)", *Prometheus* 1 (1980) 259–270, especially 268.

45 The invariably cynical and coarse treatment of it in Aristophanic comedy is a striking exception to the general Greek picture. See further Dover 135–153; Cantarella 45–48.

46 Tib. 1.4.81 *eheu quam Marathus lento me torquet amore!* The placing of the Marathus poems within the collection of those on Delia, together with use of some of the same themes, helps to establish the homosexual relationship on a comparably romantic footing.

47 See §. 1.1., 1.2., 1.3. and nn. 7, 8, 23, 29. Nemesis in the form of cruel treatment for the lover once cruel him/herself makes an appearance at *Theognidea* 1327–1334 West, and nemesis in the form of loss of beauty with the passage of time at Callimachus, *Anth. Pal.* 5.23 (= *Epigr.* 64 Pfeiffer). Meleager, *Anth. Pal.* 12.109 deals with a boy-beloved fallen in love with a girl, and this situation (perhaps not uncommon in reality; see the graffito from Stabiae published by L. D'Orsi, *Parola del Passato* 120, 1968, 228–230) appears to have been the starting-point of the Callimachean Acontius and Cydippe story as well (*Aet.* fr. 68–70 Pfeiffer; see also the adaptation at Aristaenetus 1.10.1–20). If this episode of the *Aetia* was an important source of inspiration for Tibullus (as seems probable in view of the verbal echo at 1.8.5–6; see § 1.3.), he must be credited not only with an unusually detailed development of the Callimachean theme but also with exploring the bisexual angle which other Latin poets either ignore or exploit only

may be substantially modelled on Callimachus' third *Iambus*<sup>48</sup>, in which a male lover complains of the loss of his boy to a rich rival paederast (we rely on a brief *Diegesis* for an outline of the whole poem, since only a truncated and incomplete text survives). The gradual unfolding of the full situation, which is one of the most innovative elements in Tibullus' work as a whole<sup>49</sup>, is never deployed to better effect than in the Marathus series, and the use in 1.8 of a form so nearly, yet not fully, dramatic<sup>50</sup> is new in elegy (even if perhaps inspired by the triangular confrontation scenes of New Comedy and mime).

### 3.2.

In the light of the suggested new reading of 1.8 and 1.9, however, the existing assessment of Tibullus' originality is incomplete. The humbug in 1.8 – the self-interest behind the façade of dispassionate expertise – is faintly reminiscent of that of Socrates' invented paederast in Plato's *Phaedrus* (237B–240D), whose strategy for winning over a boy is to advise him to steer clear of a 'lover' and his self-serving influence<sup>51</sup>, and to grant 'favours' instead to a 'non-lover' (like himself). But although there are two parts to the monologue this character is given, they do not form anything like Tibullus' two-poem dramatic sequence. The monologue of Euthydemus' rejected lover in Callimachus' third *Iambus* seems a more probable source of inspiration for this: it is easy to imagine Tibullus asking himself 'What could happen, if a Euthydemus-type deserted his established lover for a woman instead of a man?'<sup>52</sup>, and cutting out the figure of the rich paederast to pursue that question in 1.8 – only to see the entertaining possibilities of bringing him back into the picture unexpectedly in 1.9. Whatever the genesis of the idea, however, the two-poem sequence is a strikingly original feature. The technique, whereby two successive 'scenes' of an action are played out through dramatic monologues in two successive poems (or parts of a single poem), with a marked change of tone or attitude in the second poem (or part), is long acknowledged to have been explored by

in an incidental way; see E. J. Kenney, *Illinois Class. Stud.* 8 (1983) 48–49. Wilhelm traces numerous other motifs to Hellenistic sources, but sometimes only very dubiously through their occurrence in later Greek epistolography and fiction.

48 See C. M. Dawson, 'An Alexandrian prototype for Marathus', *AJPh* 67 (1946) 1–15; Bulloch 81. Some scholars, however, question the overriding influence of *Iambus* 3; see e.g. Wimmel 83, n. 4; McGann 1991, n. 66; Leonotti (n. 44 above) 266, n. 26 (with further bibliography).

49 See Cairns 147ff.

50 Careful pointers (*at* in line 36 and *desistas lacrimare* in line 67) allow the reactions of non-speakers to be deduced from speaker's own words.

51 He imputes to the 'lover' *inter alia* almost exactly the aims I detect in Tibullus himself, claiming that this type will try to keep a boy from 'many other beneficial associations, especially those through which he would become a man' (239B) and will want him to 'remain as long as possible unmarried, childless and homeless because he wishes to indulge his own pleasure as long as possible' (240A).

52 The theme of the boy's defection to a male rival had already been explored in considerable depth (and a very different spirit from Tib. 1.9) by Virgil in *Ecl.* 2.

Propertius and perfected by Ovid<sup>53</sup>, and Ovid's pair *Amores* 2.7 and 8 is generally counted unique for the entirely new complexion that the second poem puts on the first. But if I am right about Tibullus 1.8 and 9, they constitute a precedent of some importance.

### 3.3.

Finally, what of the *attitude* shown by the Tibullus of these two poems towards the breakdown of his paederastic relationship? Many would say that it is perceptibly Greek<sup>54</sup> – that he reacts in 1.9 in a way typical of the rejected lover in the romanticised liaisons of Greek homoerotic poetry<sup>55</sup>, and behaves in 1.8 in accordance with the Greek social principle that the older, active partner should become and the mentor and friend of the juvenile passive, and remain so even after his outgrowing of the passive role<sup>56</sup>. The attitude, however, which I have detected in the Tibullus of 1.8 – one of unscrupulous self-interest – is neither distinctively Greek<sup>57</sup> nor especially literary, and that prompts the question of whether it and the attitude in 1.9, too, in any way reflect contemporary *Roman* feelings about homosexual liaisons. What these were is itself a much-debated issue<sup>58</sup>, but some points are largely uncontentious, and a simple listing of those I consider relevant will suffice for the present purpose. (i) The passive at Rome, unlike his Greek counterpart (except in comic drama), commanded no respect from anyone, but was rather, by very virtue of his undominant role, a figure of contempt and ridicule<sup>59</sup>. Only a slave

53 See J. Booth, *Ovid, Amores II* (Warminster 1991) 30.

54 Paederasty has traditionally been considered excusable in the ancient Greeks, and in them alone (cf. Macmullen 486–487), and the largely uncritical acceptance of the idea that Tibullus adopts an entirely Greek persona in the Marathus poems has resulted at least in part from some scholars' unease about a *Roman* poet's interest in a sexual practice condemned either by the moral standards of their own time (so e.g. Wilhelm) or by those they believe to have been upheld by respectable Romans of *his* time (so e.g. G. Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry*, Oxford 1968, 551, 556–557; cf. n. 58 below).

55 An exception is A. Ramírez de Verger, «L'elegia 1.9 de Tibullo», *Veleia* 4 (1987) 335–346, who sees Tibullus' attitude in 1.9 as romantic-poetic, but Roman, in being one of distress and despair at the dishonouring of a Catullan type of *foedus amoris*.

56 See Dover 81–91, 202–203.

57 The condemnation of self-interest by Socrates' paederast in the *Phaedrus*, disingenuous though he is, indicates that this attitude is at odds with the normal Greek ideal.

58 The pendulum of opinion has swung from belief in general Roman tolerance of virtually all types of homosexual involvement (examples in Macmullen 485, n. 5) to claim of equally complete – and effective – legal and moral condemnation of it (so e.g. Williams 551; see n. 54 above). More recently scholars have argued for positions somewhere between these extremes: one view is that homosexual involvement was officially and traditionally disapproved of as a moral wrong, but that some forms of it were privately condoned in rich and fashionable circles (J. Griffin, *JRS* 66, 1976, 101; Macmullen 496–498), and another (I think the more judicious) that there was open and widespread tolerance of homosexual activity as long as an unwritten, class-based code of behaviour was observed (Cantarella 97ff.).

59 See Macmullen 484–485, 494–495.



or a freedman, should play such a part. (ii) A free-born Roman who submitted at any point or, still more, offered himself unasked, was subject to the severest opprobrium<sup>60</sup>. (iii) The active partner incurred no penalty or censure for inducing the passive to submit, *provided that* the passive was not a free-born Roman youth, not procured by a third party, not filched by bribery from another, and not merely one of whole gaggle of catamites<sup>61</sup>. (iv) For the active partner, to succeed in inducing the passive to submit was, amongst other things, to maintain face: to fail was to lose it<sup>62</sup>. Now the Tibullus of 1.8 and 1.9 (by virtue of being *supposed* to be the poet himself) is clearly a free-born Roman: the boy Marathus (as his very name indicates<sup>63</sup>) clearly is not. Contempt disguised as concern characterises the attitude of his one-time male lover towards him in 1.8, and that lover's purpose (I have argued) is, by devious means, to reassert his claim to the boy and retain him for his exclusive use for as long as he still possesses any vestiges of paederastic appeal. In 1.9, having failed to reclaim Marathus, Tibullus' chief emotion is not the distress of frustrated passion, but the anger of humiliation. Humiliation by the boy, who has rejected his indirect approach (Tibullus now admits in lines 29–48 to having abased himself in various ways in the hopes of keeping his 'love'<sup>64</sup>). And humiliation by the successful rival paederast, whose conquest he attempts to diminish by accusing him directly of one kind of beyond-the-pale behaviour (seducing another man's boy-friend by money, line 53) and indirectly, perhaps, of another (the mention of the rival's sister's unbridled promiscuity in lines 59–64 may be an attempt to associate him with the likes of Publius Clodius, the brother of the notorious Clodia Metelli, who was alleged to have committed the ultimate sin for one of his class of playing the passive homosexual role himself<sup>65</sup>). In sum, the line of the Tibullus of 1.8 and 1.9 seems to me to be very much that which might be taken by a fairly conventional upper-class Roman involved in an unsatisfactory homosexual relationship of the generally tolerated kind<sup>66</sup>. An unrecognised, and perhaps even unconscious, element of origi-

60 See Macmullen 490–493.

61 See Griffin (n. 58 above) 101–102; Cantarella 101–119.

62 See T. P. Wiseman, *Catullus and his World* (Cambridge 1985) 10–12; Cantarella 97–101.

63 Whatever its possible symbolic significance (on which see B. M. Gauly, "*Lentus amor*. Zu einer Metapher bei Tibull und Horaz und zum elegischen Pseudonym Marathus", *Hermes* 123, 1995, 91–105), the fact that one of Augustus' freedmen rejoiced in it (Suet. *Aug.* 79.2, 94.3) points to its servile associations.

64 *tum miser interii, stulte confisus amari* (1.9.45). Cf. n. 36 (ii), and notice *pudet* at 1.9.30 and 48.

65 See Cic. *Dom.* 49; *Mil.* 55. It is true, however, that the old lover, wife and sister bear some resemblance to the kind of disreputable family group typical of New Comedy; see Wilhelm 590.

66 Catullus' depiction of a relationship with one Juventius (Poems 24, 48, 81 and 99, and probably also 15 and 21, though the boy there is anonymous) is a much more daring poetic venture, in that the boy's very name classes him as a free-born Roman youth; see Wiseman (n. 62 above) 12–13, and cf. Cantarella 121–128.

nality here, I therefore suggest, is the Roman colouring of the attitudes shown towards the paederastic liaison, despite its substantial romanticisation *Graeco more*. Tibullus' general liking for Romanising touches in his elegy is well-known (the rustic festivals and deities of Italy, the ancient institutions of Rome and the legends of its foundation are all preferred to bookish Greek mythology), but I can find only one possible hint that he was aware of bringing a Roman slant to his homosexual poems. The advice on paederastic courtship elicited from Priapus in 1.4 most obviously befits a Greek context<sup>67</sup>, but the man Titius whose wife told him to forget it has a stereotypically Roman name<sup>68</sup>. In this, perhaps, together with Tibullus' subsequent insistence (1.4.75–80) on the viability of paederastic love for properly instructed Romans<sup>69</sup>, which is itself followed by a strong twinge of doubt (1.4.81–84), there is an oblique pointer to what is demonstrated in 1.8 and 1.9: that the romantic perspective of Greek poetry can clash with the realities of Roman social life.

At all events, I submit that the two Tibullan poems 1.8 and 1.9 offer ample evidence of sharpness and originality in one who is conventionally regarded as the most anodyne and boring of the Latin elegists.

67 See Cantarella 133, and cf. n. 44 above.

68 This is not to deny that Tibullus may have had a real person in mind, perhaps “a reasonably well-known poet” (Murgatroyd 156; cf. Bright 236–237; Cairns 174), but it could at the same time have been a happy coincidence that the name was sometimes used in law as the Roman equivalent of ‘Mr X’— much as it was an unexpected stroke of luck for the media when the British Parliamentary Labour Party had a leader genuinely called John Smith.

69 McGann (1984) perceptively notes the Roman ring of *consultent* at 1.4.78.