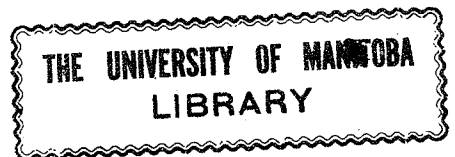


THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE  
IN THE POETRY OF CATULLUS, TIBULLUS AND PROPERTIUS

BY  
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The purpose of this thesis is to collect and utilize the material which the poetry of Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius provides in order to portray the contemporary life of Rome. The references at the end of each chapter are to be found in "Catullus" by Elmer Truesdell Merrill, "The Elegies of Albius Tibullus" by Kirby Flower Smith, and "Sexti Properti Opera Omnia" by H. E. Butler. The translations, except where expressly stated otherwise, are those of "Catullus" by F. W. Cornish, "Tibullus" by J. P. Postgate, and "Propertius" by H. E. Butler, all in the Loeb Classical Library.

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## CHAPTER I

### A. The Poets

Many authors of the golden age of Roman literature provide more abundant material concerning various aspects of this time than do Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius; nevertheless a careful survey of their works does afford new and interesting material on a variety of topics, material which assists in a reconstruction of the period. Because of the very fact that these poets were not exponents of any religious, philosophical or political creed, but rather wrote only what interested them and what was likely to appeal to the society in which they moved, references made by them to the contemporary scene in Rome are less likely to be coloured by partisanship and therefore present a truer picture of the life of that day.

Very little is known about the lives of any of these poets except what may be gleaned from their own writings and from a few scattered references in later writers. But brief references to a few of the circumstances and chief events in the life of each poet, together with descriptions of the main traits of temperament visible in their poetry, will be here made in order to assist us in forming a true estimate of the value of the opinions and ideas which the poets express. A brief historical outline, of the period during which Catullus lived and of the slightly later period of Tibullus and Propertius, will also be given to form a background for this study of their poetry.

Gaius Valerius Catullus was born in Verona in Cisalpine Gaul in 84 or 87 B.C.<sup>1</sup> His father must have been a man of some

importance since Caesar chose him as his host when passing through Verona. There were probably few opportunities for schooling, but the quick mind of Catullus must have made good use of what there was to be had.<sup>2</sup> He must have begun early to write poetry since he says, "I took the pure white toga in the days when my blooming youth was enjoying merry springtime; I made merry enough in light verse."<sup>3</sup>

In a short time Catullus felt the attraction of Rome, and went there, presumably to study and gain his fortune. Since there is little evidence of his being employed in anything but writing poetry we may assume that he had sufficient means for his support. His two summer villas, one at Tibur and other at Sirmio, support this assumption.<sup>4</sup> He refers to his poverty at times, but his tone is playful, with none of the bitterness which might be expected of one who was suffering the effects of poverty.<sup>5</sup>

The most important influence in Catullus' life seems to have been his passion for Lesbia, who has been identified with Clodia, wife of Metellus Celer and sister of the notorious Clodius Pulcher. Metellus Celer had been governor of Cisalpine Gaul and it is possible that Catullus had met Lesbia there.<sup>6</sup> At any rate, shortly after his arrival in Rome he became her devoted slave. It is significant in considering his character that although Lesbia is a married woman he evinces no feeling of guilt, nor does he suspect that since she has been false to her husband she may in turn be false to him. Catullus' love is so strong that he feels that it is a sacred thing that nothing can withstand, but Lesbia is merely flattered by his ardour and by his poems

addressed to her and has no intention of confining her favours to him.<sup>7</sup> At length even Catullus had to recognize that he had a rival in his former friend Marcus Caelius Rufus. Catullus at first blames only his rival and there is even a reconciliation, but finally his eyes are opened and he sees Lesbia in the true light.<sup>8</sup> About the same time he also suffered the loss of a brother whom he held very dear. Catullus made a supreme effort to overcome his love which he now considers a degrading passion. In order to gain strength in the struggle and to get away from Rome and its associations he joined the staff of Memmius and went to Bithynia. Although the venture does not appear to have been a complete success, his mind was somewhat distracted by the pleasure of travel and enriched by the new scenes and the visits to places rich in myth and legend.<sup>9</sup>

Shortly after his return he is again in Rome. Roman politics at this time were turbulent and Catullus with his ardent nature had strong likes and dislikes which he expressed with the utmost candour. He is particularly virulent towards Mamurra, Caesar's favourite; but he also expresses contempt for Caesar, who later by great tact and patience conciliated him.<sup>10</sup> Catullus' body must have been unable to bear the strain which his too passionate nature laid upon it for he died in his early thirties, probably about 54 B.C.<sup>11</sup>

Albius Tibullus was born perhaps in the year of Catullus death, about 54 B.C.<sup>12</sup> near Pedum, an ancient town beneath the Sabine Hills.<sup>13</sup> He was of equestrian rank and was one of the few great poets of Rome who came of Latin stock; he tells us that

his forbears were large landowners and that a great part of the property had been lost, but he does not indicate the cause; despite this loss he never seems to suffer from lack of money.<sup>14</sup>

His family apparently consisted of his mother and sister, both of whom survived him. Since he never mentions his father, it is likely that he died before Tibullus was old enough to have any definite recollection of him. He probably received the usual rhetorical-legal education at Rome, but this is merely surmise.<sup>15</sup>

A very important influence in Tibullus' life was his connection with Messala, who had sided with Brutus and Cassius and later with Antony but, alienated by the conduct of Cleopatra, had gone over to Octavianus who greatly appreciated his talents and entrusted him with many difficult missions. Soon after Actium Messala was sent to quell an insurrection in Aquitania and for his brilliant success there, he was awarded a triumph.<sup>16</sup> Tibullus wrote a congratulatory poem for the occasion and modestly tells us that he took part in this expedition,<sup>17</sup> but from another source we learn that he was decorated for distinguished service.<sup>18</sup> Messala was later sent by Augustus to settle affairs in the Orient and again Tibullus accompanied him as a member of his staff, but took ill at Corcyra and did not continue the journey.<sup>19</sup>

Messala was also literary patron of the circle which Tibullus frequented and as such had a very important influence on his work. Messala was admirably suited for this position of literary patron, for he was a man of fastidious taste, sane and sensible in all things and possessed of the ease which accompanies

noble birth and breeding. He was also a keen though gentle critic whose standards of taste had been formed by a severe training in the literary art.<sup>20</sup>

Tibullus' love poems are not in chronological order, but they nevertheless reveal some facts regarding this aspect of the poet's life. Several poems of the first book are addressed to a girl whom he calls Delia; it is not evident whether Delia was a freedwoman or not, but she was certainly a courtesan.<sup>21</sup> Although the theme of nearly every poem is conventional, there seems to have been real love on both sides for a time, but finally Delia proves herself untrue and prefers a rich lover.<sup>22</sup>

Delia appears to have been an agreeable young woman, but does not show any particular talent or trait of character which would be likely to influence the poet's work to any extent. Tibullus by his natural gentleness and refinement removes any ugliness from the situation and seems to represent Delia rather as wife than mistress.<sup>23</sup> Even after Delia proves faithless his gentle nature prompts him to speak kindly of her and to blame himself for having taught her to deceive.<sup>24</sup>

In the last four elegies of the second book we hear of a certain "Nemesis". The name suggests that Tibullus chose her as an instrument of vengeance. If he did so he must have soon realized that he had made a poor choice for she was the regular rapax meretrix of comedy. She had expensive tastes and expected him to satisfy them in return for her valuable time.<sup>25</sup>

In the fourth poem of the second book Tibullus pictures himself the slave of a degrading passion. There is more than convention in this thought. He had shown a melancholy trait

before, but in this passage he reveals himself as a man who has lost hope.<sup>26</sup> It has been suggested that this attitude is due not merely to his hopeless love, but to the realization at this time that his poetry is overshadowed by the more brilliant if less perfect work of Propertius.<sup>27</sup> Basing his observation on Tibullus' frequent references to his delicate appearance and constitution<sup>28</sup> and on Horace's epistle to Tibullus in which he sees an effort to encourage him, Kiessling referred to by Smith<sup>30</sup> seems to have been the first to discover that Tibullus was a hypochondriac. While this is an assumption which can not be proved, many details of the poet's life seem to corroborate this supposed condition. Certainly it explains his melancholy dwelling on death and his interest in the details of his own funeral.<sup>31</sup> This tendency to look on the dark side of life may well have influenced his point of view with regard to his work and may have led to despondency at this time because of the conviction that he would never achieve the permanent fame which he so ardently desired.<sup>32</sup> The effect of such a disappointment on a man of Tibullus' temperament and delicate constitution can be easily imagined and may account for his early death at the age of 35.<sup>33</sup>

Sextius Propertius was born in about 50 B.C. in Umbria,<sup>34</sup> probably in Assisi whose position suits the location described by Propertius.<sup>35</sup> That he is of equestrian rank is indicated by his mention of having worn the aurea bulla.<sup>36</sup> From his poems we also learn that his father died while Propertius was very young, that his ancestors were rich landowners, but that the property was considerably reduced by the time he received his inheritance.<sup>37</sup> Propertius' family suffered many losses in the Perusine war in

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42 B.C. and he himself was old enough at this time to be deeply impressed by the horrors of such a civil war.<sup>38</sup> Despite his reduced inheritance the poet must have received a superior education of which his poems give abundant evidence.

Soon after assuming the toga of manly freedom we find him with his mother in Rome where he was urged to study law; but he found his temperament unsuited to the life of an advocate, so he gave up this study and devoted himself to poetry.<sup>39</sup>

While still young he made the acquaintance of Lycinna.<sup>40</sup> We do not know how long the liaison lasted, but two years later a meeting with Cynthia has made him forget Lycinna. Cynthia was the great passion of his life. Her real name was Hostia and, although she was a courtesan, she was no ordinary one for she had inherited literary talent from her grandfather probably the poet Hostius.<sup>41</sup> Propertius paints a glowing picture of her beauty and accomplishments.<sup>42</sup> Her character as seen from his poetry does not appear very attractive; she was fickle, had an excessive love of finery and a violent temper.<sup>43</sup> Neither party was faithful and there were frequent quarrels and reconciliations. When Propertius finally breaks with her he claims to have been her faithful slave for five years.<sup>44</sup>

Cynthia with her imperious will completely dominated Propertius' weaker one. Then too, Propertius' somewhat soft nature made him particularly susceptible to praise and blame. Cynthia alternately lifted him to the heights by her tenderness and appreciation and then cast him down with coldness.<sup>45</sup> Such treatment drove him to excesses which no doubt shortened his life.<sup>46</sup> That Propertius had a delicate appearance, may be implied from several references



in his poetry,<sup>47</sup> and such a constitution allied to a weak will and inconstant temperament easily account for the frequent signs of melancholy noticeable in his poetry.<sup>48</sup>

After the publication of his first book of poems Propertius was recognized by Maecenas and became one of his literary circle. It was under his influence that Propertius wrote his poems glorifying Augustus and his regime.<sup>49</sup>

The exterior circumstances of the lives of the three poets are very similar; it is only by a comparison and contrast of their various characters that differences of attitude may be explained and proper evaluations made of the differing opinions which they expressed.

Catullus seems to have had considerable strength of character, judging from the effort he made to overcome his love for Lesbia when he finally sees her in the true light.<sup>50</sup> However, Catullus' ardent nature inclined him to be influenced by his feelings, and when this happened he seems to be utterly convinced that he is right. His attitude with regard to his affair with Lesbia illustrates this point.<sup>51</sup> From these characteristics we may expect to find his statements coloured by personal feelings which may have caused exaggeration or palliation of the truth.

Tibullus had a gentle nature and a correspondingly weak will. He had also a deep appreciation of beauty, particularly the natural beauty of the Italian countryside, which led him to represent everything in an idyllic fashion and to avoid all ugliness. This trait is illustrated by the manner in which he treats his love affair with Delia, speaking of her as if she were his wife rather than his mistress.<sup>52</sup> We shall therefore, expect to learn little of

the darker side of the picture from Tibullus. The gentleness of his character also accounts for the great love of peace which he often expresses. This sentiment was also in accord with the Alexandrian School of literature, to which he belonged. However in his admiration for Messala he praises his victories and even follows him into battle.<sup>53</sup>

How impressionable Propertius was may be seen by the manner in which he recalls scenes of the Perusine war<sup>54</sup> when he must have been very young at the time. This trait, together with his frail constitution and weak will probably account for the changeable mood so noticeable in his poetry. In the work of a poet of such a temperament we may expect to find exaggerated expressions and at times general pessimism.

#### B. THE WORLD THEY LIVED IN

Although the age in which these poets lived is generally divided historically by the accession of Augustus into two periods, the late Republic and the early Empire, there are several characteristics which apply to the age as a whole. These points will be considered first and then an endeavor will be made to differentiate the salient characteristics of the two periods.

The conquests in the east previous to the appearance of Augustus had opened up new means of acquiring wealth which resulted in great material prosperity at Rome. More fastidious tastes were acquired by contact with the oriental civilizations; these tastes together with the new prosperity introduced a demand for luxuries hitherto unknown, and the new quest for luxury was to increase until it became a fine art.<sup>55</sup> It exerted a softening influence on the virility of the people until by the last

century of Rome it had so weakened the nation that it is sometimes considered one of the leading causes of Rome's overthrow.

The increase in Greek influence in Rome was due to the influx of Greek scholars after the overthrow of Greece in 146 B.C. Roman literary tradition had for centuries been influenced by Greek literature, but the culture which these newcomers brought was not for the most part that of ancient Greece, but a more modern brand which had developed after Greece's military glory had decayed.<sup>56</sup> Greece then experienced a period of material prosperity similar to that through which Rome was now passing. The people of Rome, recognizing an outlook on life similar to their own, were particularly ready to adopt these latter day Greek ideas of culture. The School of literature which had flourished in Greece under these conditions was known as Alexandrian, and it was from this school that these poets chiefly chose their models in technique and theme.<sup>57</sup>

It was in a period of internal strife, during the outbreaks under Marius and Sulla that the allied states were able to achieve final equality with Roman citizens.<sup>58</sup> This led to the casting aside of many of the barriers of caste and to a truer democratic spirit which aided by the growing importance of wealth enabled the enterprising to rise in the social scale.

Such changes in the social fabric greatly affected the status of women. The place of the Roman matron had always been an honorable one, but it had been in the home.<sup>59</sup> Now the Roman woman began to take part in the social life outside the family. Many of the women of the age were highly cultured and accomplished and must have exerted a refining influence on the society in which they

moved. Several even showed no mean literary talent, but on the other hand some turned the new liberty granted them into license and vied with the worst characters among the men in the excesses they committed.

The period of the late Republic was one of trouble and strife. In fact the real republic no longer existed when a Marius or a Sulla could usurp the control of the state as they did. Nevertheless the Roman of that time was still passionately attached to the ideal of the Republic and demanded and practiced liberty of speech. Politics were seething and rivals attacked each other mercilessly, often employing poetry for the purpose.

After Augustus established peace and his new regime there was less danger, but there was also less liberty. Augustus contrived so thoroughly to place all power in his own hands that there was little incentive for a man of ability to enter a political career. Many such turned their attention to literature either as patrons or authors.<sup>60</sup>

Although many men had at first been opposed to Augustus, most of them soon came to appreciate his genius for organization and to see in his "new order" the best hope for Rome. Augustus' minister, Maecenas, led the way in promoting the new regime and since he was also patron of a literary group it became the fashion to encourage the new empire and to flatter the Emperor.

Catullus lived during the last days of the Republic. He was probably in Rome when Pompey received his great triumph and he witnessed Caesar's exploits abroad and machinations at home and his final rise to power. The influence of his age is recognizable in the liberty of spirit seen in his poetry.

Tibullus and Propertius belong to the Augustan Age. Tibullus who was one of Messala's circle shows little interest in the "new regime", but Propertius who belonged to Maecenas' circle is in many instances a striking example of the fashionable spirit of flattery toward the Emperor.

The span of time, then, embraced by the lives of these three famous Roman poets, covers what is often considered the most interesting period of the history of Rome, that of transition from Republic to Empire. Rome was at her zenith as the great cosmopolitan world capital; literature and life had never before been so closely connected, and it is of more than a mere passing interest to see just to what degree this life of Rome is reflected in the works of Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius.

REFERENCES

1. Catullus, ed. Merrill, p. xiv; Jerome, probably on the authority of the De Poetis of Suetonius, gives 87 B.C. as the date of Catullus' birth and 57 B.C. as that of his death. From internal evidence of the poems he is clearly wrong with regard to the date of his death which probably occurred in 54 B.C. This leads us to suspect that he may be inaccurate in the date of Catullus' birth also, although there is no other reason to dispute 87 B.C. as the date of his birth.
2. Harrington, Catullus and His Influence, p. 5-6.
3. Cat., LXVIII.15.
4. Harrington, op. cit., p. 8; Cat., ed. Merrill, p. xvi.
5. Cat., XIII.8.
6. Harrington, op. cit., p.6.
7. Cat., ed. Merrill, pp.xviii-xx; Harrington, op. cit., pp.23-27.
8. Ibid., pp. 34-37.
9. Ibid., pp. 38-39; Cat., X.7, XXXI.5, XLVI.4 and Merrill's p.xxviii.
10. Ibid., pp. xxx-xxxI, Cat., XI, XXIX, XLI, XLIII, LVII, XCIV, CV, CVIV, CXV.
11. Cat., ed. Merrill, p. XXXII; Harrington, op. cit., p. 44.
12. Tibullus, ed. Smith, pp. 30-31. Ovid names the poets Gallus (born 69), Tibullus, Propertius and himself (born 43) in chronological order. It is usual therefore to place the birth of Tibullus at not far from 54 B.C. In this case he would be 35 at the time of his death which would satisfy the assertion of the anonymous author of the vita that he died young, and he would also be old enough to find his age a handicap to success in the love affair mentioned by Horace Od. I.xxxiii.3.
13. Tib., ed. Smith, p. 33.
14. Ibid., p. 32.
15. Ibid., p.34; Fowler, Social Life at Rome, pp. 194-195. Almost every young man who desired a public career studied law; in order to make a successful appearance in the forum an elaborate training in rhetoric was considered a necessary accompaniment to legal training.
16. Tib., ed. Smith, p. 34.
17. Tib., I.vii, I.vii.9.

18. See vita referred to in note 12.
19. Tib., I.iii.
20. Tib., ed. Smith, pp. 36-37.
21. Ibid., p. 44.
22. Tib., I.v.47.
23. Tib., ed. Smith, p. 49.
24. Tib., I.vi.9.
25. Tib., ed. Smith, pp. 53-54.
26. Ibid., pp. 54-55.
27. Ibid., p. 58.
28. Tib., I.iii, II.iii.9.
29. Horace, Epistle I.iv.
30. Tib., ed. Smith, p. 57.
31. Tib., I.i.70, III.4-7.
32. Tib., ed. Smith, p. 58.
33. Ibid., p.30; There is good evidence for believing that Vergil died in 19 B.C. The epigram of Domitius Marsus in the text of the lost vita was evidently occasioned by the fact that the death of Tibullus was coincident (perhaps on the same day, certainly in the same year) with that of Vergil.
34. Prop., ed. Butler, p. 3-4. Propertius' birth falls between that of Tibullus (about 54 B.C.) and Ovid (43 B.C.) He was old enough in 40 B.C. to be impressed by the death of a relative in the Perusine War; his birth is therefore generally placed between 50 and 48 B.C.
35. Prop., I.xxii.
36. Prop., IV.i.131-134; Only sons of senators and knights wore the aurea bulla (Livy XXVI.36).
37. Prop., IV.i.127-130.
38. Prop., I.xxi, xxii.
39. Prop., IV.i.131-134.
40. Prop., III.xv. 3-6.
41. Prop., ed. Butler, p. 4.

42. Prop., I.ii.27, II.ii.5-8, II.iii.17-22, II.xii.23.
43. Prop., ed. Postgate, p.xix.
44. Prop., ed. Butler, p. 5.
45. Prop., ed. Postgate, pp. xxxvi-xxxvii.
46. Prop., ed. Butler; We know nothing of the later years of his life; all we know for certain is that he was dead by 2 A.D.
47. Prop., I.i.22, I.v.21, III.xv.21.
48. Prop., ed. Postgate, pp. xxxv-xxxviii.
49. Ibid., XXX.
50. See above, note 9, page 3.
51. See above, note 7, page 3.
52. Tib., ed. Smith, 49.
53. See above, note 17, page 4.
54. Prop., I.xxi, xxii.
55. Cary, A History of Rome, pp. 455-456.
56. Sellar, Horace and the Elegiac Poets, p. 206.
57. Ibid., p. 208.
58. Cary, op. cit., p. 322.
59. Ibid., p. 450.
60. Cary, op. cit., pp. 579-580.



CHAPTER II

WAR AND PEACE

During the period in which Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius lived Rome was experiencing a period of great material prosperity. Roman armies had conquered most of the known world and the practical Roman was not slow to realize the opportunity of acquiring wealth. Trade sprang up in every possible commodity.<sup>1</sup> The Tyrian dye, Coan muslin, Arabian perfumes and rubies and pearls of India bear witness to the extent of Roman trade at this time.<sup>2</sup> Roman industry flourished in supplying articles to exchange for such luxuries and there was also a brisk trade carried on in Italy itself. Companies were formed for the collecting of taxes, for the developing of the natural resources or for marketing the products of the conquered countries.<sup>3</sup> The sale of captives itself became a most important industry.<sup>4</sup> Fortunes were made quickly and money opened the door to higher social station.<sup>5</sup> With such opportunities for gain it is to be expected that men would be more interested in their business affairs than in increasing the glory of their country by war; this new period of prosperity led to an increased appreciation of peace and the peaceful virtues. But along with the greater wealth and increased knowledge of the older or more refined cultures there also grew up a desire for luxuries on a scale hitherto undreamed of.<sup>6</sup> Indulgence in luxury to any extent has, of course, a softening and weakening influence on a nation. Even in Catullus' time, when there were wars abroad and great political unrest at home, we see in his mention of the use of perfumes and garlands<sup>7</sup> that the seeds of luxury were already sown. By the time of Tibullus and Propertius the fever of

gain had reached such a height that both these poets consider greed the greatest evil of their time.<sup>8</sup>

Under Augustus there were additional factors which contributed to make the age one of peace. Augustus had put an end to the civil wars by winning the victory of Actium and had cleverly secured his power by claiming to restore the Republic, accepting only such titles as were constitutional, but by which he nevertheless managed to retain all power in his own hands.<sup>9</sup> His plans for the restoration of the country required peace for their execution and his policy of maintaining boundaries as they were rather than extending them, further encouraged a peaceful attitude.<sup>10</sup> The poets, particularly those who were followers of the Alexandrian School of poetry,<sup>11</sup> were more inclined to favour peace than war. However, the peace had been won by war and it was but natural that the poets should praise the victory and hail Augustus as "servator mundi" as Propertius does in his poem commemorating the victory of Actium.<sup>12</sup>

After a short time many even of those who had at first been opposed to Augustus saw the value of his firm hand and organizing ability and he became immensely popular.<sup>13</sup> It was considered a duty of patriotism to support his schemes. The interest which Augustus himself and his minister Maecenas took in literature encouraged poets to flatter the Emperor and to promote his work by favourable presentation of it in their poetry.<sup>14</sup> Thus the poets, who were by nature advocates of peace, write enthusiastically of coming campaigns, describe battles and give praise to the conqueror. However, this motive does not entirely account for the interest shown in war. It must also be remembered that Rome had

a long history of militarism behind it. A glance at the history of this nation will explain what might be called the traditional attitude of the Roman people toward war and will perhaps show how war could be so frequently glorified in an age which after many years of war had at last achieved peace and prosperity.

In the early days Rome belonged to a confederacy of equal states, but by strength of arms she soon became the dominant member.<sup>15</sup> She then began to extend her territory by war first with one neighbour and then another. Since all her power and prestige had been gained by force of arms it was only natural that war should be regarded as an honourable pursuit, and skill in arms as most praiseworthy. The early Roman was a religious man and attributed his successes in battle to the protection of the gods. Ceremonies and prayers were evolved which cemented the close relationship between religion and war.<sup>16</sup> As Rome progressed from victory to victory under the protection of her gods the idea grew that she was chosen to rule the world and that this was to be her divine destiny.<sup>17</sup>

From these remarks it is evident that the traditional attitude of the Roman people favoured war, while the fact that these poets, who were naturally opposed to war, reveal this traditional attitude in their references to battles, conquerors and other phases of war is an indication of its force even in their day. Augustus' effort to restore ancient religious ceremonies and to revive patriotism,<sup>18</sup> served to strengthen certain of the traditional attitudes, in particular the belief in the destiny of Rome because of the special favour of the gods. For this reason it is sometimes difficult to say whether expressions used show the

continued existence of a traditional attitude toward war or are the result of the propaganda of Augustus.

When Tibullus speaks in favour of war, it is generally in order to give honour to Messala for whom he had such great admiration. Twice he mentions Messala's triumph over the people of Aquitaine, and in referring to the triumph, he speaks in heroic strain of the glory Rome experienced in seeing the mighty captives march in shackles through her streets,<sup>19</sup> but such a mood does not last long with Tibullus. Even in the same poem he turns to describe the countries in which these battles were fought or to give an eulogy of agriculture.

In Tibullus' poem against war on the occasion of his being called for military service, he sums up nearly all that he has said elsewhere on the topic.<sup>20</sup> He also reveals many traits of character which explain his attitude. He begins by ranting against the "discoverer of the horrible sword", but then shifts the blame to those who use the sword against men rather than against the savage beast for whom it was intended; they do this because of greed, which Tibullus calls the real cause of war. His thoughts then turn to his call to military service and he says, "Now I am dragged to war and some foeman may be already bears the weapon that is to be buried in my side."<sup>21</sup> This shows both his unwillingness to go to war and his melancholy fear of death. Later in the same poem he says, "What madness it is to call black Death to us by warfare."<sup>22</sup> He invokes for himself in battle the protection of his Lares, promising that a victim shall be offered in thanksgiving. Here he would seem to show a belief in divine protection, although this may be only a con-

ventional expression. Tibullus' great love for the countryside<sup>23</sup> gives him an additional motive for disliking war and its devastating effect. This point is brought out in his praise of peace as the guardian of agriculture.<sup>24</sup> A final indication of his hatred of war may be seen in his attitude as a poet of love of the Alexandrian School, when he speaks of his bondage to Delia saying that he does not care for glory and that people may call him idler and sluggard as long as he may be with her.<sup>25</sup> He voices similar sentiments when he dedicates himself to love saying, "Tis here I am brave captain and private. Begone ye trumpets and ensigns! take wounds to the men of greed and take them wealth!"<sup>26</sup>

Propertius, as a member of Maecenas' literary circle, frequently flatters the Emperor and gives support to his schemes. His enthusiastic poem for Augustus' proposed eastern expedition is clearly written for this purpose.<sup>27</sup> In this poem he speaks of "the god Caesar"; he emphasizes the great reward of the battle, promising that Parthia shall be subdued and Crassus avenged. Fired by patriotic fervour he calls on "father Mars" and "holy Vesta" to bring success to this venture and finally in a burst of patriotic enthusiasm imagines the battle won and describes the triumph which Caesar will celebrate for this victory. Again in praise of Caesar, Propertius relates the story of Trojan Aeneas and recalls Caesar's supposed descent from him. He then goes on to speak of the glories of ancient Rome and of how the gods guided her destiny.<sup>28</sup> He further elaborates this theme in the poem on the victory of Actium which closes by recalling great Roman heroes, Curtius, Corbus, Scipio and Camillus.<sup>29</sup> There is some indication of the traditional attitude here, but in the

main this was written to please Augustus. Flattery of Augustus is even more patent in such expressions as, "While Caesar lives scarce should Rome fear the wrath of Jove."<sup>30</sup> Such poems were written for a purpose. But Propertius betrays his own feelings towards war even in the same poems, when he says, "Theirs be the prize whose toils have earned it, as for me enough that I clap my hands in the Sacred Street."<sup>31</sup> When he says, "Do you who take pleasure in battle take home the standards of Crassus."<sup>32</sup> he clearly implies that war is distasteful to him. On another occasion Propertius rebukes Postumus for his heartlessness in leaving his wife to go to war.<sup>33</sup> He expresses the belief that eagerness for battle is inspired by a desire for the spoils and he curses such covetous persons and those who care more for fighting than for wedded troth. When he protests against the law compelling bachelors to marry, he says, "What have I to do with furnishing sons to support ancestral triumphs? None of my blood will ever be a soldier."<sup>34</sup> He is here completely at variance with the patriotic ideal which he elsewhere upholds. Here he is the poet devoted to the Alexandrian ideal in that he puts love before all else.

The Perusine War and the war against Antony and Cleopatra receive more than the passing mention generally accorded to other wars. The theme of civil war no doubt appealed to the poet, while both of these wars were of interest because they affected the lives of the Italian people personally. Propertius' touching elegy for Gallus, a neighbor or relative, recalls the Perusine War.<sup>35</sup> The Poet is horrified at the tragedy of civil war, while the impression given of the sufferings of war is so vivid that the poem becomes a strong plea for peace. Who slew Gallus

we do not know, but the uncertainty serves only to enhance the idea of the horror and confusion of civil war. These same ideas are recalled in the next poem in the sadness with which he speaks of the "graves of Perugia" and by his reference to the "feud which drove her citizens to madness."<sup>36</sup>

The battle of Actium serves to reveal several attitudes of the people. The threat to Rome by Cleopatra is regarded as specially ignominious because she is a woman and an Egyptian whom the Romans regarded as a member of an inferior race.<sup>37</sup> Antony's connivance with Cleopatra is looked upon with horror because of his treachery to Rome and with disgust because of his enslavement to a woman, while the participation of Antony's troops in the battle against Rome recalls the horror with which civil war is always regarded.<sup>38</sup> The very mention of the name Actium was considered a tribute to Augustus, since by this victory he had put an end to Cleopatra's threat to Rome. Consequently Propertius, who is a supporter of Augustus, embellishes the description of the battle even to the extent of picturing Apollo appearing girt for battle and addressing Augustus in such flattering terms as these, "O deliverer of the world who art come from Long Alba, O Augustus, proved greater than thy grandsires who fought beside Hector, Conquer by sea the land is thine already!"<sup>40</sup> Beneath the patriotic exaggerations and the poetic fancies certain facts may be discerned. The two fleets faced each other forming twin curves; oars as well as sails were employed, while the prows of Cleopatra's vessels bore some kind of machine for hurling rocks. The waters were brilliant with the reflected lights cast by the weapons and a strange light flashed from the heavens. Cleopatra's

fleet seems, from the mention of the centenis alis, to have been very large. The idea that Rome has the special protection of the gods is brought out in the comparison of the two forces.

The Egyptian fleet is said to be doomed (damnata) to meet its end at the hands of Romans, while the sails of Augustus' vessel are filled with the "auspicious promise of Jove." Of the actual battle no description is given, but a complete victory is implied. Cleopatra's escape, however, disappointed the Roman's desire for revenge.<sup>41</sup>

Some idea of the art of war as practised by the Romans may be seen in Tibullus' praise of Messala as a master of this art.<sup>42</sup> He says that there is no one who excels Messala in choosing the location for the protecting ditch around the camp, in knowing where to build the enclosing mounds to the advantage of his own men and to the detriment of the enemy. He is also skilled in employing his army to the best advantage, in ascertaining which weapon is most effective in the hands of each soldier and finally in drawing up the line of battle in the formation best suited to the occasion.

An indication of the Roman admiration for military prowess may be seen in the custom of awarding "triumphs" to generals who completely overcame the foe. The general, wearing the bay wreath upon his brow and riding in a ivory chariot was preceded by a procession of the captives taken in his successful campaign and by his soldiers who shout the cry "io triumphe". Floats representing the towns or countries captured were also drawn in the procession which passed along the Sacred Way up to the Capitoline Hill. Here the general mounted the steps of the temple of Jupiter



and presented his laurel wreath to Jupiter Capitolinus.<sup>43</sup>

An extremely interesting custom which shown the connection between religion and war is revealed in Propertius' explanation of the origin of the title Jupiter Feretrius.<sup>44</sup> Romulus, he says, it was who originated the custom when he vowed to Jupiter to kill the leader of the enemy. Three historic instances of the fulfillment of such a vow are given. The spoils of war taken in such a case were called opima spolia. The epithet is derived, says Propertius, from the word "ferit" meaning either the "smiting" of one chief by another chief or to the "carrying off" of the spoils by the soldiers.

Some idea of the extent of the Roman Empire may be gained from a consideration of the various foes mentioned in the works of the poets. Catullus, when finally reconciled to Julius Caesar, refers to the "memorials of Caesar", the places of his triumphs.<sup>45</sup> Their names give a very good idea of the extent of Roman conquest in his time. In the East he speaks of the Hyrcani who lived by the Caspian Sea, the Indians, Arabians, and the Parthians and the Scythians, who lived northeast of Parthia. In the west he refers to Caesar's conquest beyond the Alps, along the Gallic Rhine and to his conquest of the Britons whom he calls "remotest of men". Tibullus shown other spheres of Roman expansion in his reference to battles in the Tarbellian Pyrenees and in the territory along the Rhone, Garonne and Loire Rivers.<sup>46</sup>

Propertius also mentions some of the enemies with whom the Roman armies engaged during Augustus reign. The names of these such as Sycambrians, Ethiopians and Parthians do not indicate an extension of Roman influence from the time of Julius Caesar, but

rather show that Rome was having difficulty maintaining her possessions.<sup>47</sup> Augustus' foreign policy was to guard the present boundaries rather than to expand the Empire.<sup>48</sup> From the fact that Rome under Augustus is still fighting some of the same enemies whom she fought in the time of Julius Caesar we can deduce that difficulties were experienced in maintaining the already far-flung boundaries.

From these poets' work we can also obtain some idea of the equipment used by the Roman soldiers and their enemies. Over his tunic the Roman soldier of this time wore a heavy cloak which is spoken of as if it were a distinctive part of a soldier's attire.<sup>49</sup> He also wore a helmet which probably served various uses while he was on a campaign. Propertius suggests one of these uses when he speaks of Postumus drinking water from the river in his helmet.<sup>50</sup> That some kind of armour was worn may be inferred from Propertius' words, "the primitive soldier was not a man all gleaming in warrior like menace".<sup>51</sup> At another time he makes Arethusa refer to the breastplate and the heavy spear of the soldier.<sup>52</sup>

From the earliest times the Roman army had been made up of pedites and equites.<sup>53</sup> The title equites was early transferred from army use to indicate the middle class business men of Rome who had the property qualifications of equites, but the title also survived in the army. It is clear that cavalry were still used in battle, since Propertius, in invoking the gods' favor on Augustus' coming campaign urges "the warrior steeds" to do "their practised duty";<sup>54</sup> and in another poem Galla, fearful of the dangers that beset her husband, imagines the capture of his richly capar-

isoned horse by the Medes.

The poets do not generally reflect the unpleasant aspect of war--the feelings of relatives and loved ones left behind. Propertius' representation of the woman's point of view in his Arethusa poem is something quite novel.<sup>56</sup> She shows a certain pride in her loved one's courage, but the loneliness caused by separation from him and the worry for his safety more than offset this pride and turn her against war. The tender solicitude for her husband's comfort so beautifully expressed by Arethusa presents a most pleasing picture of the loving wife of that time. The interest she takes in following her husband's journeys on the map and the questions which come to her mind about the various countries he visits are a very human touch.

The vigor and force with which the poets express the traditional attitude of the Roman people towards war in spite of their opposition to it, based on the natural connection between peace and poetry, is in itself an indication of the strength of this tradition even in their day, while the manner in which the Roman poet constantly refer to traditional customs and stories shows the Roman consciousness of the past. However, even when the poets express the traditional attitude toward war and patriotic pride in Rome's prowess in battle, they clearly show that they consider themselves temperamentally unsuited to war, and they no doubt had many followers in this. It was only the patriotic appeals of the Emperor and jingoism which prompted attention to war and warfare in Rome's history. Perhaps the deeper insight into the horrors of war may be attributed in part to the wider participation of women in Roman society, since women are

naturally against unnecessary war, because of the suffering and loss it entails. In any case Arethusa's complaint against war shows a different note in Roman feeling towards war, one which is still strong today.

REFERENCES

1. Cary, A History of Rome, pp. 453-455.
2. Tib., II.iv.27-30.
3. Cary, loc. cit.
4. Cary, op. cit., p. 451.
5. See Chapter I, p. 3, note 9.
6. Cary, op. cit., p. 451.
7. Cat., VI. 8.
8. Tib., I.x.7; Propertius, III.xiii.48-51.
9. Cary, op. cit. p.474, 478.
10. Ibid., p. 495-496.
11. Sellar, Horace and the Elegiac Poets, pp.206-215; See also, Chapter VIII, p.2 .
12. Prop., IV.vi.37.
13. Cary, op. cit., p. 516.
14. Ibid., pp. 579-580.
15. Ibid., p. 10.
16. See below, notes 43 and 44.
17. Cf. Vergil, Aen. VI.847-853.
18. Cary, op. cit., p. 491.
19. Tib., I.vii.8, II.i.33.
20. Tib., I.x.
21. Tib., I.x.13.
22. Tib., I.x.33.
23. See Chapter III, p.37.
24. Tib., I.x.45.
25. Tib., I.i.57.
26. Tib., I.i.76.
27. Prop., III.iv.

28. Prop., IV. i.
29. Prop., III.xi.61-69.
30. Prop., III.xi.66.
31. Prop., III.iv.22(translated by Phillimore).
32. Prop., III.v.48-50(Phillimore).
33. Prop., III.xii.
34. Prop., II.vii A(Phillimore).
35. Prop., I.xxi. Cary, op. cit., pp. 435-437. Lucius Antonius and Fulvia, wife of Antony, conscious of growing distrust between Antony and Octavian, stirred up the people whose lands were being confiscated to provide land for their victorious troops, and at the same time promised the soldiers even greater rewards. Finally without Antony's knowledge they aroused the people of Perusia to fight. Antony's troops in Italy would not give any aid without his orders, and the uprising was put down by Octavian's troops.
36. Prop., I.xxii.(Phillimore).
37. Prop., IV.vi.22.
38. Prop., III.xi.33.
39. Prop., III.xi.31-33.
40. Prop., IV.vi.37-39.(Phillimore).
41. Prop., IV.vi.63.
42. Tib., IV.i.82-106.
43. Tib., I.vii.5-8. According to Smith's notes on this passage, he now fulfilled the vows which he had made to the Capitoline Jove before starting upon his campaign and from that time until his return to the capitol he was actually the representative of the Capitoline.
44. Prop., IV.x.
45. Cat., XI.9-11.
46. Tib., I.vii.9.
47. Prop., IV.vi.78.

48. Cary, op. cit., p. 495. "The emperor perceived that by advancing the Roman frontiers he might strengthen the defences of empire at some points and open new avenues of trade at others. On the other hand he knew that foreign expeditions were a seed-bed of military usurpations. Furthermore, Augustus was acute enough to grasp that Rome had reached the turning-point in its history, at which foreign warfare would in general embarrass rather than relieve the public finances. Between these conflicting considerations the emperor for a long time pursued an opportunistic foreign policy, but towards the end of his reign he definitely called a halt to Rome's territorial expansion."
49. Prop., IV.iii.17.
50. Prop., III.xii.8-9.
51. Prop., IV.i.27(Phillimore).
52. Prop., IV.iii.23-25.
53. Cary, op. cit., p. 59.
54. Prop., III.iv.8(Phillimore).
55. Prop., III.xii.12.
56. Prop., IV.iii.1.

CHAPTER III

TOWN AND COUNTRY LIFE

Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius, as we have seen in the Introduction, grew up either in the country or in small towns, Catullus in Verona, Tibullus in the Sabine Hills and Propertius in Umbria, therefore they knew country life intimately. Although they came from well-to-do families they also knew the life of the poor man and had, perhaps, to a certain extent shared in the farm life, since agriculture was still considered by those who adhered to the more old-fashioned ideas a worthy occupation for the Roman gentleman. These poets describe the beauties of the country most enthusiastically and express delight in the soothing effect of life in the country in contrast to the feverish rush of city life; yet all chose to live in Rome and to leave it only for brief periods of rest or travel. Devoted as they were to literature of the Alexandrian type, which often chose its subject matter from the gay life and intrigues of the city and which required the polish of art and learning, they found in Rome the very breath of their poetry. Since they were also members of that gay society which followed the Epicurean doctrine of living life to the fullest, life would have seemed very dull to them away from Rome which offered all they considered worthwhile.

Propertius points a comparison between the quiet of the country and the noise of the city, when he rejoices that Cynthia is in the country where he considers her safe from the allurements of the city; but his approval of the country in this case is due to anxiety over Cynthia rather than to his own inclination for country life. In the country, he says, there are no brawls



beneath one's window and the view of sheep grazing, of bulls ploughing and the cutting of the vines is a serene one.<sup>1</sup> When he speaks of his determination to follow the countryman's way of life as a huntsman we may be sure he is not serious.<sup>2</sup>

A brief outline of the life of the well-to-do Roman will help to clarify and supplement the picture given in the works of the poets. The ordinary Roman gentleman rose early in the morning, partook of a light repast and read or wrote until his clients came. After the salutatio he went in company with his clients to the forum to transact business, listen to the speeches which might be given there or to defend a client if he were desired to do so. The rhetorical training received by the educated Roman fitted him for this, and this office was expected by the client in return for his services. He would probably return home for a light lunch and a siesta, after which he would go to the baths where he might bathe, indulge in physical exercise and converse with his friends. Dinner might be taken at home or with friends and some kind of entertainment might be provided for the evening.<sup>3</sup>

The poets' lives perhaps differed to some degree from this pattern as their pursuits were entirely literary, and Propertius expressly tells us that he gave up a legal career to devote himself to poetry.<sup>4</sup> Horace gives a picture of his day emphasizing its serenity and congratulating himself that he does not have to rise early for the salutatio as great men do, and that he is free to enjoy rest and simple pleasure without the cares and duties of the ambitious.<sup>5</sup> However, even in this picture in which Horace stresses his leisure he speaks of spending some time in reading or writing, work which no doubt involved serious study of

other authors and careful attention to his own composition. Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius probably devoted long hours to study, but they must have conformed in many details to the usual pattern of Roman daily life.

The poets, of course, had no intention of making their works an ancient Baedeker's Guide, but a careful reading of their writings serves as an introduction to many of the places of contemporary interest. As members of that restless metropolitan society they were forever visiting now this spot, now that, and with the keen observation of the poet, they have preserved for us a vivid description of the significant features of places and people as they saw them. Since they were comparatively well-to-do they scarcely mention the poorer classes. Indeed, this is an aspect of life which is generally ignored in Roman literature, but here and there in their poetry we do catch a glimpse of the poor.

Catullus' account of his search for his friend, Camerius,<sup>6</sup> gives a general idea of the places in the city which were most frequented. He begins in the lesser Campus, probably on the Caelian Hill, passes through the Circus Maximus, which was a haunt of idlers,<sup>7</sup> through the Forum, the centre of Roman public life, stops in the book shops near the Forum, climbs the Capitoline Hill on the summit of which stood the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, and descends again to Pompey's Portico which was a fashionable rendezvous, situated in the Campius Martius.

Other poems serve to give some idea of the aspect of the city he traversed and mention other points of interest. We know from Catullus that in his day tabernae still stood on the edge of the Forum, since he speaks of the taberna of ill repute, which

stood near the Temple of Castor and Pollux.<sup>8</sup> This was on the south side of the Forum at the foot of the Palatine. In earlier times there had been many shops in the Forum, but they were gradually giving way to public buildings.<sup>9</sup> Catullus tells us nothing of the appearance of these places, but knowing Augustus' boast that he found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of marble, we can picture the increased splendour of the public buildings in the time of Tibullus and Propertius, although we may be sure that even in Republican times the main temples did not lack beauty.

Propertius' description of the dedication of Apollo's portico on the Palatine in 28 B.C.<sup>10</sup> will help the imagination to clothe the other buildings with the proper magnificence and so to picture the splendour of the Forum as a whole. He tells us of the great size of the portico, that the columns were of Carthaginian marble, which is of a yellowish color veined with red, and that figures of the fifty daughters of Danaus stood between them. In the centre stood a small temple of brilliant marble, surmounted by a representation of the sun's chariots. The doors of this little temple were of ivory delicately carved. One door depicted the story of the "Casting Down of the Gauls from Parnassus' Peak", the other showed the story of Niobe, and Apollo himself was represented in a long robe playing the lyre, with his mother and sister beside him. This piece of sculpture must have been exquisite, as Propertius says of it that it seemed more beautiful than Apollo himself who is always represented as the most beautiful of the gods. Around the altar of sacrifice were four bulls, masterpieces of sculpture, the work of the famous Myron.<sup>11</sup>

In another passage Propertius speaks of "golden temples which

grew up for gods of clay"<sup>12</sup>, which may refer especially to the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, and certainly indicates great magnificence in the temples of his time.

In his description of Pompey's Portico,<sup>13</sup> Propertius speaks of the columns and the fine tapestries hung between them for shade; of the plane trees carefully laid out, the fountain of sleeping Maro, and of Triton's horn which by some mechanical device regulated the flow of water.<sup>14</sup> The character of the portico as a fashionable rendezvous may be gathered from Cynthia's forbidding Propertius to walk there, in punishment for his unfaithfulness.<sup>15</sup> That courtesans were also to be found there may be implied from Catullus' reference to the "naughty girls"<sup>16</sup> whom he meets in his search for Camerius.

The Sacra Via which ran between the Esquiline and the Palatine into the Forum with the Capitoline at the farther end, was the street along which triumphant processions passed.<sup>17</sup> Propertius mentions it as a haunt of courtesans also and as a street of shops where presents could be bought to please the ladies.<sup>18</sup>

Propertius speaks of the Subura, a poor quarter lying in the low land between the Viminal and Esquiline, as the home of his mistress who, we know, was a courtesan.<sup>19</sup> The noise and brawl of the streets<sup>20</sup> often spoken of by other writers, and the perils from fire and collapse of houses mentioned by Propertius indicate the flimsiness of the buildings and the lack of fire-fighting facilities.<sup>21</sup> Torches were carried at night, because the streets were not lighted and servants accompanied the gentleman to protect him against marauders.<sup>22</sup>

The Baths were large and magnificent in accordance with new

luxurious tastes, but the poets do not describe them. Catullus refers to thefts at the Baths<sup>23</sup> in such a manner as to indicate that these were of common occurrence. This is not surprising as the great numbers who resorted there must have made detection difficult.

The people whom the poets met as they went through the streets of Rome belonged to different classes which could be identified by their costume. There were senators in graceful flowing toga and tunic with broad purple stripe<sup>24</sup> and knights in toga and tunic with narrow purple stripe, free citizens in toga (or tunic only if they found the toga too cumbersome), freedmen in tunic and slaves in coarse tunics or in fine livery according to their position. Besides these there would have been the soldier in tunic, armour and helmet, the young boy in the toga praetexta<sup>25</sup> with the purple border, the wives and daughters of the nobles in the dignified stola and palla,<sup>26</sup> matrons with their hair bound in fillets and young girls, freedwomen or slaves with flowing hair.<sup>27</sup> Many nationalities might also have been observed especially among the slave or freedman class. Among others there were sure to have been Greeks, Syrians, Egyptians, Jews, Cappadocians and Teutons.<sup>28</sup> Complexions varied from that of the fairest Teuton to that of the darkest African, and many of these persons wore the costume of their native country, thus giving an additional touch to the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Rome.

Catullus mentions a distinctive vehicle which might be seen in the streets of Rome. This was the covered litter which could be used in the city where carriages were not allowed because of the congestion of the streets. The litter was popular especially if one had handsome, strong-backed slaves to carry it, and Catullus

tells us that Cappadocians were especially sought after for this purpose, because of their great stature and fine physique.<sup>29</sup> The lectica was generally curtained when used by women, in fact, it was at first used only by women and children, but later men adopted it for their own use.<sup>30</sup> Propertius refers to a stylish conveyance drawn by two clipped ponies, which Cynthia rather daringly drove herself. From the description of the spectacle Cynthia presented and of her daring in thus driving we may infer that this was an open vehicle and perhaps a two-wheeled one.<sup>31</sup>

There was a twofold aspect of Roman country life, that of the rich man who had a villa in the country or owned a rich estate, and that of the peasant. While little is told of the poor man of the city, the humble countryman is frequently mentioned, (but seldom discussed in detail) probably because his lot was happier than that of his brother in the city and because he formed part of the picturesque country scene.

Catullus rejoices in his lovely Sirmio which he affectionately terms ocelle insularum<sup>32</sup> and Propertius blesses the country as a safe retreat for Cynthia<sup>33</sup> and shows in his vivid pictures of nature his sensitiveness to natural loveliness, as when he describes the lush beauty of the watery haunt of the woodnymphs<sup>34</sup> or when he speaks of the beauty of the wild ivy and the sweetness of the wild bird's song.<sup>35</sup> Tibullus, it is, however, who really loves the country and gives most information about it. He would not be ashamed he tells us, to hoe, to drive the oxen or carry home the lamb forgotten by its mother.<sup>36</sup> Under the spell of the country he would worship content, at a deserted treestock or crossways, a real countryman.<sup>37</sup> He gives all praise for the growth of civilization to the country,

and pictures with homely beauty the development there of poetry, music and dancing.<sup>38</sup>

It is chiefly from Tibullus that we gain some picture of agriculture in his day. The frequent mention of heaped-up grain and grapes in the vat show these to be the main crops.<sup>39</sup> As to the methods used, Tibullus implies that irrigation has been employed from earliest times;<sup>40</sup> he speaks of a threshing floor which winnows the grain,<sup>41</sup> and of the curved plough driven by oxen.<sup>42</sup> "The grapes in brimming trough when quick feet tread the gleaming must"<sup>43</sup> is a favorite picture of his. The training of the vine to elm trees or to poles is referred to by both Tibullus and Catullus. The term, "wedded to the elm" familiar to the Romans in this sense was used by Catullus when he compares the marriage of two young people with the "wedding" of the vine and the tree.<sup>44</sup> Lopping the leaves of the vine with a curved pruning hook is also mentioned by Propertius.<sup>45</sup> Red Priapus takes the place of our scarecrow.<sup>46</sup> Tibullus' prayer for protection of the flock from thieves and wolves, and the frequent mention of wool for spinning, indicate that the woollen industry was one of great importance.<sup>47</sup> There were large sheep runs in the wild southern districts and there slaves of a rougher sort were kept in chains because of the difficulty of supervision.<sup>48</sup> It is probably to slaves of this sort that Tibullus refers when he says hope sustains them even though chains clank about their legs.<sup>49</sup> Besides the regular work of the farm Tibullus mentions fishing and snaring of birds.<sup>50</sup> The frequent mention of honey would indicate that bee-keeping was common,<sup>51</sup> while the reference to the goatherd shows that goats were kept also.<sup>52</sup>

Of the occupations of the country woman which must have been numerous Tibullus refers particularly to spinning and weaving.<sup>53</sup> The accuracy of his description of these domestic arts shows both familiarity and keen observation. In spinning the distaff with the mass of wool at the top was held in the left hand, while the right hand was held palm uppermost and the fingers shaped the fibres which the twirling of the spindle formed into thread. How closely Tibullus follows this process can be seen in his detailed description of "the weighted, wool the distaff, and the spindle that twists its work twixt thumb and finger". When he speaks of the loom which clatters as the clay weights swing he indicates the manner of weaving; the ancient loom was vertical and the warp hung down from the crossbeam; clay weights were attached to these to keep them taut and equidistant and they naturally clattered as the woof was driven home by the comb.<sup>54</sup>

Most of the festivals of the country were religious in character and are discussed in the chapter on religion, but they were also part of country life and their ceremonies were peculiarly suited to the country. When they were introduced into the city under the revival of religion encouraged and promoted by Augustus, they ceased to appeal to the people.<sup>55</sup> At these country festivals the countryman, mellow with wine, enjoyed himself whether it was in jumping through the wisps of lighted hay, which was part of the ceremony of purification, or at the picnic lunch which followed. The picture drawn of the slaves sharing in the festivities reveals the friendly relations between master and slave which prevailed in the country.<sup>56</sup>

The wayside shrine was then, as now a feature of the Italian



country scene. Garlands were placed on tree trunks or on cross-road stones as offerings to the country deities.<sup>57</sup> A rude chapel might be seen by the side of the road. Here the country people would assemble to perform their dances as a regular part of their worship,<sup>58</sup> and in the simple joy of this unsophisticated act of supplication or thanksgiving lay perhaps the truest spark of faith in that day.

Tibullus has made his country people very much alive and in his pictures of them, they seem not to belong to the dim past of two thousand years ago, but rather to some pleasant memory of our own time. Were we to travel through Italy today, we should see many an old shepherd slowly driving home his flock, exactly as in the days of which Tibullus wrote. We should expect now as then to find his wife at home heating water for his weary limbs.<sup>59</sup> A wagon-load of boys and girls laughing, singing and chatting would surely recall those merry country folk whom Tibullus knew.<sup>60</sup> His gift of tender sympathy enabled him to depict feelingly the poor, the little, the unfortunate, and he is at his best in his pictures of the child who takes hold of his father's ears to snatch a kiss,<sup>61</sup> of the old grandfather sitting contentedly by his grandson's side, or of the serf child in his loving mistress' lap.<sup>62</sup>

The ancient Italian countryside was traversed by many excellent highways, built with the durability and permanence which have preserved remains of the Roman roads down to the present time. On these roads might be seen the city gentleman and lady on their way to their country home, a "Cynthia" hurrying in her fashionable carriage to some temple, a pedlar with his pack or the countryman in rough tunic and heavy boots on his way to the city or unsteadily

wending his way home again.<sup>63</sup>

Concerning the country villas of the Roman gentleman, such as Catullus' villas at Sirmio and Tibur, we can gather from the lyric poets only that their situation was chosen for the beauty of view and its restful quality.<sup>64</sup> Catullus speaks feelingly of the antic-

ipated comfort of his bed at Sirmio.<sup>65</sup> Sirmio, the modern Sirmione is a long narrow peninsula running out at the southern end of the Lago di Garda.<sup>66</sup> Catullus' villa built on such a narrow strip of

land would no doubt be within sound of the water on one or more sides. He indicates a keen pleasure in the rippling waters in

his delightful expression, "Ridete, quidquid est domi cachinorum."<sup>67</sup>

Catullus jokes about his villa at Tibur being so close to the Sabine hills, for Tibur was a fashionable watering place on the Anio, while the word Sabine was synonymous with the frugality of the simple country.<sup>68</sup> Propertius speaks of Tibur where "gleaming

summits display their double towers";<sup>69</sup> in view of the fashionable nature of the place and the luxury of the times this may refer to the notorious magnificence of these summer homes which were considered so necessary by the wealthy Roman.<sup>70</sup> Large preserves of

game were kept on these estates and the sea was often enclosed to make artificial fish ponds.<sup>71</sup> Some villas were on farms which were

worked by tenants; others were built in some beauty spot merely as a place of retreat and had no farm attached. The life of the leisured owner might be one of mere idleness, literary effort, hunting, fishing or gentleman-farming according to his pleasure.<sup>72</sup>

Propertius speaks of the fashionable watering place, Baiiae, situated above the bay of Naples. He mentions the causeway on

which the sea waves spent their strength and which formed the

quiet bay on which Baiæ was situated. We may infer from his fears for Cynthia that Baiæ was noted for the loose morals of its society.<sup>73</sup>

It is difficult to form from the works of Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius a just estimate of the relative advantages of country and city life, because in the works of these poets the country it is the poor who are most frequently portrayed, while in the city it is the upper classes which are more often depicted. Then too, Tibullus who supplies our most elaborate descriptions of country life, is inclined to idealize the country which greatly attracted him. However, certain points can be made in favour of each. Propertius considers the country more favourable for the preservation of virtue. "The fields are pure",<sup>74</sup> he says; and from the descriptions given of both we should be inclined to agree with him. The countryman often drank too much wine at his festivals and perhaps even became quarrelsome on occasions,<sup>75</sup> but on the whole he seems a much more manly and decent fellow than the gentleman in the city who takes part in the drunken revels to which Propertius refers.<sup>76</sup>

That the country was freer from vice than the city may be attributed to the fact that the rural environment was more wholesome for mind and body and that the natural pleasure which were related by tradition to their agricultural pursuits satisfied the people, while in the city artificial pleasures were sought which often led to vice. Probably a stronger reason lay in the fact that the simple countryman spent most of his time working hard and an occasional over-indulgence during relaxation did not completely debauch him, while the rich city dweller was frequently

idle and his indulgence became more or less habitual and thus led to the demoralization of the wealthy class. In the growing capitol of the Empire idleness on the part of the poor, caused by the importation of slaves, the decay of agriculture and the consequent distribution of largesses to the people brought about a similar demoralization of the lower classes.

The poets, as was said, would not live anywhere but in Rome, and there were many others who could not resist the attractions of the city where the latest refinements in living and thinking, such as a speech of Cicero<sup>77</sup> or the conversation of such a one as Asininus Pollio,<sup>78</sup> could be shared and enjoyed. So essential did the things which the city had to offer seem to some, that we see even as early as the time of Catullus a growing contempt for the things of the country expressed. So when Catullus wishes to describe Suffenus' inability to write he says that he is "infaceto infacetior rure"<sup>79</sup>, "more clumsy than the clumsy country."

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7. Cf. Horace, Sat., I.vi.113.
8. Cat., XXVII; Cf. Horace, Sat., I.vi.71.
9. Showerman, Rome and the Romans, map on p. 510; and Merrill's notes Catullus, XXVII, notes 1 and 2.
10. Prop., II.xxxi.
11. Prop., II.xxxi.7, and Butler's note on this line.
12. Prop., IV.i.5 (Phillimore).
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14. Prop., II.xxxi.15-16, and Butler's notes on these lines.
15. Prop., IV.viii.75-76.
16. Cat., LV.10.
17. Prop., II.i.34.
18. Prop., II.xxiii.15, II.xxiv.14, and Butler's notes on these lines.
19. Prop., IV.vii.15.
20. Prop., II.xix.5..
21. Prop., II.xxvii.9.
22. Prop., II.xxix.1-2; Johnson, The Private Life of the Romans, 113.
23. Cat., XXXI.
24. Johnson, op. cit., 176-202. "Some authorities think that the badge of the senatorial tunic was a single broad stripe running down the middle of the garment in front and behind, but unfortunately no picture has come down to decide the question absolutely. It is probable that the knight's tunic had two stripes, one running from each shoulder."

25. Ibid. Curule magistrates, censors and dictators also wore the toga praetexta.
26. Ibid. The stola was the exterior tunic fastened with clasps on the shoulders. The palla was a shawl like wrap for use out of doors.
27. Tib., I.vi.67-68.
28. Cat., XV.14-16; Tib., I.iii.31; Prop., IV.viii.83.
29. Cat., X.
30. Cat., X.16, and Merrill's note on this line; Prop., IV.xiii.78.
31. Prop., IV.xiii.14-22.
32. Cat., XXXI.
33. Prop., II.xix.
34. Prop., I.xx.33-37.
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36. Tib., I.i.29-32.
37. Tib., I.i.7-14.
38. Tib., II.i.37-69.
39. Tib., I.i.9-10, I.v.22-23, II.i.3-4, II.v.34-86.
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42. Prop., II.xix.11; Tib., I.x.46, II.iii.7.
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44. Cat., LVii.48-58; Tib., I.vii.33.
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46. Tib., I.i.18.
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50. Tib., II.vi.26.
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56. Tib., II.i.
57. Tib., I.i.11-12.
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59. Tib., I.x.41-42.
60. Tib., I.x.51-52.
61. Tib., II.v.92-95.
62. Tib., II.v.28.
63. Tib., II.vii.57-58.
64. Cat., XXXI.44.
65. Cat., XXXI.10.
66. Cat., XXXI.1, and Merrill's note on this line.
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68. Cat., XLIV.1-3, and Merrill's note on line 3.
69. Prop., III.xvi.3(Phillimore).
70. Fowler, op. cit., p. 249-262; Cicero had six villas.
71. Tib., II.iii.45.
72. Cat., XXXI, XLIV; Tib., I.i.29-30; Prop., II.xix.16-26.
73. Tib., IV.iii, Prop., I.xi, III.xviii.
74. Tib., II.xix.3.
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76. Prop., II.xxix, IV.viii; Tib., II.v.87.
77. Cat., XLIX.
78. Cat., xii.
79. Cat., XXII.14.

CHAPTER IV

LOVE AND MARRIAGE

Rome, in the time of Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius, was experiencing a period of materialism and decay of national spirit, similar to that of Greece in the Hellenistic period. Her poets, accustomed as they were to look to Greek models turned to the Greek poets of Alexandria whose sentiments found an echo in their own age, while they drew the material for their poetry from the society of their own day. They thus depict very clearly that society and especially the attitude of that society to love--the chief motive of their poetry and the driving force of their lives. The frequent mention of love in this age is itself an indication of a change in the temper of society. The Roman of the old type scorned even to speak of love, much less to consider himself its slave, as these poets represent themselves. The old Roman gloried in his battles; the poets frankly admit they wish to avoid taking part in war.<sup>1</sup> Tibullus' delicate constitution and the peculiar temperament of all these poets<sup>2</sup> prevent them from being truly representative of their time, yet the fact that they dared express such sentiments and that their works had a popular following, show that the society of that day, if it did not share, at least understood such sentiments.

There are certain attitudes towards life and love which are common to the three poets and others which are the result of the individual temperament and experience of each of the poets. Each of them declares himself entirely devoted to the pursuit of love, and they at times show their admiration for wedded bliss, as when Catullus in his marriage hymns<sup>3</sup> represents the happiness of marr-



ied life or when Propertius makes Aretheusa say, "Love is mighty ever, but mightier far for an acknowledged husband; this flame Venus herself fans that it may live."<sup>4</sup> However, the love which their poetry expresses is not primarily the love of husband and wife, but the love of the poet for his mistress, a love which in their opinion transcends all bounds and which they worship in the person of Venus, the goddess of love. Tibullus says, "But me, for I have been pliable to gentle love, shall Venus self escort to the Elysian fields."<sup>5</sup>

In order to judge the sincerity of the poets' expressions, it is necessary to have in mind certain facts concerning the Roman attitude toward marriage. Catullus, in his marriage hymns, (LXI, LXII and LXIV), the first of which was probably written to pay honour to Manlius Torquatus and Vinia Arunculeia on their wedding day, expresses lofty sentiments and a high esteem for marriage, as would be expected for such an occasion. A consideration of these sentiments, contrasted and compared with other evidence found in this poetry and supplemented by a few historical facts will serve as a background for the study of this aspect of Roman life.

There were three ancient forms of marriage, confarreatio, coemptio and usus.<sup>6</sup> Marriage by confarreatio was so called because of a cake called far which had been offered to Jupiter Farreus and which was partaken of by bridegroom in presence of the Pontifex Maximus, the Flamen Dialis and ten other witnesses. For this ceremony of a highly religious character, the auspices had to be taken and probably a victim was slain. The shrine of the Penates in the household is a reminder to us that the household gods were members of the Roman family. The introduction

of a new member, the bride, who would then share in their worship, required that they should be propitious to the new member, hence the sacramental character of the ceremony. In former days, when the power of the paterfamilias was supreme, the bride passed from the manus of her father to that of her husband. Both the bride and her family often found it more convenient that she should remain under the manus of her father or guardian, rather than that her property should pass to her husband, as it would do, if she passed under his manus. Therefore the marriage cum manu was frequently abandoned. The parts of the ceremony which produced these legal consequences were then dropped, but the religious features were retained. All three forms were obsolete long before the last century of the Republic, but the distinctly patrician form of the confarreatio was sometimes revived for marriages of special significance. This may have been the case in the marriage described by Catullus, although he does not give sufficient detail to prove it. In any case the solemnity of the occasion and the lofty sentiments expressed recall the dignity of this form of marriage.

In his marriage hymns, Catullus presents views on marriage which must have been held from earliest times in Rome, where family life was the basis of society and duty to the family served in a large degree as a moral code for the preservation of society. Probably these sentiments were still maintained by the better type of Roman citizen who was able to look beyond his own selfish pleasure to the good of the country. The happiness of married life is commended and praised; there are, however, even in the marriage hymns, suggestions that the happy state of affairs

often represented was far from general.<sup>7</sup>

Catullus says that without marriage a country would not be able to produce guardians for its borders nor establish the family with its right and duties.<sup>8</sup> In this he calls attention to the fact that the rights and privileges of citizenship, including those of inheritance, were accorded only to legitimate children. The fact that legislation was passed in Hadrian's reign which gave equal rights to illegitimate and legitimate children proves that such was not the case at this time.<sup>9</sup> When Catullus says, "No pleasure can Venus take without thee, such as honest fame may approve,"<sup>10</sup> he implies that despite the general breakdown of restraint popular opinion still required the seal of marriage.

In the contest between the youths and maidens Catullus makes the argument of the youths in favour of marriage the most convincing.<sup>11</sup> The expression of the mutual love of Manlius and Vinia and of the hope that a little Torquatus who will resemble his father, will bless their union indicates an appreciation of family life. The accompanying picture of the child in its mother's lap smiling at its father with lips half parted is most charming.<sup>12</sup> Propertius' elegy for Cornelia, the wife of Aemilius Paullus, purports to give an actual example of such an ideal marriage,<sup>13</sup> while Cornutus' prayer for his wife's love shows Tibullus' appreciation for a marriage of true love.<sup>14</sup> However, even in these very expressions there is evidence of another sort. In asking Hymen to bind the heart of the bride with love for her bridegroom,<sup>15</sup> there is a suggestion that the marriage has been arranged by the parents and that the couple are not yet well acquainted with each other.<sup>16</sup> This principle that marriages should be arranged by the

parents and that love should develop after marriage has been held by many nations in the past (and seems still to be adhered to in China), but the fact that marriage was based, not on mutual love but on duty to the family and the state, was to have serious consequences in an age when devotion to duty was weakening.

That great liberty was allowed men before marriage is evident from Catullus' line, "We know you have known no unlawful joys, but the same liberty is not allowed a husband."<sup>17</sup> The same line shows some advance in thought, when it is considered that in Cato's time adultery on the part of the wife was punishable by death while that of a husband was considered negligible.<sup>18</sup> When Catullus promises the young wife that her husband will be faithful and not seek the company of a wicked paramour, he suggests that the adultera probra was a familiar figure and a common threat to any marriage.<sup>19</sup>

In advising the bride to be content to be mistress in the beautiful house of her husband, Catullus expresses the bride's position exactly--she was the mistress of the house and had complete charge of household affairs.<sup>20</sup> At the same time he recalls the fact that some were not content to be mistress of their homes, but desired to take an important place in society.<sup>21</sup>

It is in the expression of their love for their mistresses that the poetry of Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius reaches its greatest heights, because it is the result of strong personal emotion. They express the sentiment and passion, the pleasure and the pain of love, and in this they are representatives of the type of poetry known as Alexandrian, because its models were the Greek Alexandrian poets, especially Callimachus and Philetas.<sup>22</sup> In

writing of their love they also express the attitude of that gay society which saw its beginning in Catullus' day and which was in the later Empire to reach the low state of morals so vividly depicted in the satires of Juvenal.

The poetic themes which recur most frequently in the erotic poetry of Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius are (1) the consideration of love as an overpowering passion which puts the lover in bondage to his mistress, (2) the expression of a complaint of the infidelity or caprice of the poet's mistress, (3) the claim of special privileges for love which put it above the ordinary code of society. There are also indications of a certain softness of character, which, though it may have been inherent in the Italian temperament, now for the first time became apparent in this age of greater refinement. When this trait was allied to lofty minds and strong wills, it showed itself in a capacity for sympathy, such as Vergil shows for the fate of Dido, but in its weakest aspect, it reveals itself in a hatred of war and love of ease.<sup>23</sup>

Catullus, the earliest of the three poets chronologically, is perhaps more completely in the power of his passion than the other two. He does not muse upon it or express thoughts on love in general, but expresses his own intense feeling with such directness and force that it seems to burst from his very heart. He is indeed the slave of his love, but not in the weak sense of enjoying his slavery. While he feels that his love is returned, he is carried away by his supreme happiness,<sup>24</sup> but when he realizes Lesbia's unfaithfulness he suffers torment because he cannot free himself from his love although it is now mingled with loathing.<sup>25</sup> "I hate, I love", he says. "I know not why, I am in torment."

However, after a severe struggle and the diversion of travel he finally succeeds in overcoming it and his love turns to disgust.<sup>26</sup> If there were other loves he does not mention them. This was the great passion of his life, in fact it was his life and the source of his poetry. What little poetry he wrote after this passion had subsided, was generally in the form of a bitter diatribe against those who had offended him or his sense of the fitness of things.

To Catullus, Lesbia's infidelity was a shock from which he could never quite recover, while Tibullus and Propertius do not seem to be greatly surprised by the infidelity of their mistresses.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, Catullus differs from the others in that while he thinks his mistress is faithful, he sees no fault in her of which to complain, and when she is unfaithful, his complaint is more bitter, because such infidelity was totally unexpected. He tries once to be moderate in his expression, saying that even though Lesbia is not content with him alone he must bear with her in order not to appear a jealous fool,<sup>28</sup> but he merely succeeds in sounding angry with himself, and does not convince us of his resignation to her faults.

Catullus seems also more sincere in his claims for the omnipotence of love than Tibullus and Propertius, who seem to adhere more closely to the conventions of the Alexandrians.<sup>29</sup> Catullus speaks of his love as if it were most pure, and shows not the slightest feeling of guilt in having seduced the wife of another. Even considering the standards of that age, this is somewhat difficult to understand, but although he does not explain his

feelings on the subject, he gives the impression that he considers his intense love sufficient justification, if, indeed, any is needed. Even after his disillusionment, he never speaks of his love as being anything but the best. "I loved her as a father loves his sons"<sup>30</sup>, he says and "No one was ever loved as Lesbia."<sup>31</sup>

Catullus shows less softness of character than Tibullus and Propertius. This may be due to the greater vigor of his northern temperament, or to the fact that the times in which he lived were more tempestuous than those of the peace which followed Augustus' organization of the Empire. He is little concerned with the psychology of love. Only once or twice does he have anything to say on this subject; he does say, for instance, "What a woman says to her ardent lover should be written in wind and running water", a poetical conceit which has been frequently expressed by other poets before and since his time.<sup>32</sup>

Tibullus' attitude towards love is quite different from that of Catullus. While he professes to be "ever the loyal slave of Venus"<sup>33</sup>, love of his mistress is not his only love. He is enamoured with the beauty of the Italian countryside; from his description of it, it seems to have exerted an actual influence upon his character, as it certainly did upon his poetry. When Tibullus speaks of himself as the "captive bound in the bonds of a lovely girl"<sup>34</sup>, the playfulness of his tone is in direct contrast to Catullus' forgetfulness of all but his love. Even when Tibullus has found Delia unfaithful and speaks of himself as being "driven as a top that springs before the lash"<sup>35</sup>, the very artistry, which he uses to express his feeling, suggests that

his passion is less intense than that of Catullus when he utters those simple words, "I hate, I love."<sup>36</sup>

Tibullus is also subject to a gentle melancholy, which inclines him to muse upon his misfortunes in love, and even to enjoy the luxury of melancholy, as when he pictures Delia's sorrow at his death.<sup>37</sup> Under this same influence he feels that death may at any time swoop down upon him and end his pleasures, and consequently he is the more eager to enjoy life and love while he may. "Now let gay love be my pursuit",<sup>38</sup> he says; he seems to suggest that he is in love with love itself.

Among the privileges of love, Tibullus claims, in what is likely a conventional expression of love poetry, that heaven protects those who love and that Venus herself aids lovers to deceive their watchers.<sup>39</sup> "There are powers to guard lovers and Love will take vengeance on those who break her laws",<sup>40</sup> he says. He pictures the Elysian fields as the abode of faithful lovers and Hades the destination of those who have profaned love.<sup>41</sup> There is always much that is conventional in his expressions, and he sounds much less sincere than Catullus does in his claims for love.

Tibullus' complaints against his mistress' love of luxury, which make her reject him, a poor man, are typical of Alexandrian poetry.<sup>42</sup> In a similar strain he says "Alas! I see that maidens' hearts are set upon the rich"<sup>43</sup> and "Yet by crime and slaughter must I get gifts, that I may not lie lamenting before closed doors."<sup>44</sup> When Delia proves unfaithful he laments that it was he who taught her to deceive and that now she has turned this ability against him.<sup>45</sup>



The softness of the Italian temperament at this time is most noticeable in Tibullus. His is a gentle spirit which shows itself in his repeated expressions of sympathy for others and in his dislike of war. His sympathy may be seen in his kind words about Delia's mother, after Delia has proved unfaithful,<sup>46</sup> and in his thoughts of the little dead sister of Nemesis.<sup>47</sup> He will abandon all the wealth of the world rather than cause a girl to weep for his going.<sup>48</sup> Love, not war, is his pursuit, he plainly states and laughingly proclaims that in that he is a "brave captain and private"<sup>49</sup>.

The unevenness of temper which characterized Propertius greatly influenced his attitude toward love. He had an extremely powerful imagination, which in joy carried him to the heights of ecstasy, and in sorrow cast him into the depths of despair.<sup>50</sup> This trait induced in him a certain recklessness which led him to throw himself into revels of excess and debauchery, after which he would torment himself with his folly.<sup>51</sup> He had a very keen appreciation of his own talent and was extremely ambitious for literary fame, but a delicate constitution and weak will were poor companions for such great aspirations.<sup>52</sup> With these characteristics, falling under the fatal fascination of the imperious Cynthia, Propertius was bound for destruction. Cynthia alternately exalted him to the skies by her affection and tortured him with her infidelity and cruelty.<sup>53</sup> Such treatment, added to his vacillating character, account for the continual change of mood in his poetry. For this reason his own real attitude toward love is quite difficult to deduce.

Propertius is more the great lover than either Catullus or

Tibullus. Each man, he says was born with some vice and his is always to be in love.<sup>54</sup> Again he says that one love is not sufficient for him, but like a ship he must be held by twin cables.<sup>55</sup> Even in the period of his greatest love for Cynthia, he proved himself unfaithful.<sup>56</sup> He seems perhaps more than Catullus or Tibullus, a part of that reckless pleasure-loving society of which we see glimpses in the other poets. Certainly he shows less reticence in describing his part in its revels.<sup>57</sup> When he rejoices at the repeal of the law requiring bachelors to marry, he reveals a feeling, common at the time, of unwillingness to be bound by the ties of matrimony or the duties of parenthood.<sup>58</sup>

Propertius delights in picturing himself the slave of love. At one time Love's god treads upon his neck,<sup>59</sup> at another he is ill with love and can find no cure.<sup>60</sup> He dwells at length upon the condition to which love has reduced him--sick in body and tormented in mind. In a flight of fancy he depicts Love pursuing the lover. There is no escape, he says, not even were one to ride on Pegasus' back, with Perseus' pinion or Mercury's sandals. "Love" he says, "is a sharp-sighted sentinel and will not suffer you to raise your eyes, once captive, from the ground."<sup>61</sup> His complaints of his mistress' infidelity and caprice often take the form of a description of the misery to which they have reduced him. His pallor and sickly body he attributes to his passion for Cynthia, not to his excitable nature or to his excess in drink and debauchery which were probably the real cause.<sup>62</sup>

His rejection by Cynthia he considers a slight to his poetical genius and he rants against the luxury which he says makes girls greedy.<sup>63</sup> In a milder mood Propertius, in a sprightly and

graceful poem, reproves his lady's love of finery and of bedecking herself; he draws her attention to the beauty of nature in its natural state, saying, "ivies come kindlier after their own wild will and birds sing sweeter for no lore."<sup>64</sup>

Propertius is more concerned with expressing the power of love than in proclaiming its special privileges. He tells us that he has tried sterner studies only to find that love is but postponed.<sup>65</sup> At another time he tells us that his mistress herself is the source of all his poetry.<sup>66</sup> Death seems to have held for Propertius a strange fascination. He uses the thought of death in many striking ways to portray the power of love. "Only the lover", he says, "knows when and by what death he shall perish, even though he sit at the oar among the reeds of the Styx the faint whisper of his mistress voice will call him back."<sup>67</sup> During a period of separation, after both have been disloyal, he takes pleasure in thinking that death will reunite them;<sup>68</sup> this is of course merely a compliment to Cynthia and does not necessarily imply any belief in an after-life. In a similar strain he says that no matter what his condition in the next world his ghost will be known only as Cynthia's lover.<sup>69</sup> Propertius shows less softness than Tibullus; the force of restlessness and daring imagination giving the appearance of strength, but his disordered life is witness to his weakness of will. He, like Tibullus, claims Love as his warfare: saying, "Nature has not fitted me for glory or for arms."<sup>70</sup>

Propertius deals at greater length than Catullus or Tibullus with the psychology of love. The unreasonableness of love he depicts in Cupid, the childish archer whose wings represent love's

fickleness. In his own case, he says surely love has lost his wings as he never leaves him.<sup>71</sup> He frequently paints the dire physical effects of love and the torments to which love subjects the lover and states the amazing truth that love is the only disease that wants no cure.<sup>72</sup> Discussing the ways of a lover, he says that he is so under the domination of his love that he ends by blaming himself for the faults his love herself commits.<sup>73</sup> At one time he tells lovers to disdain their loves,<sup>74</sup> at another he advises utter submission and compliance with every wish of the loved one.<sup>75</sup>

If we endeavor to discount the personal elements in the opinions voiced by these poets, the general attitude towards love at this period seems somewhat to approach the modern point of view in the importance attached to love as a ruling factor of life. Yet marriage was still based on duty to the state and the choice of a partner still rested largely upon the wishes of the parents, and love, if it was considered necessary at all, was expected to develop after marriage.<sup>76</sup> From these opinions, so diametrically opposed to one another, the effect on society may be imagined. With such ideas on the rights and privileges of love as are advanced by these poets and the decline of a sense of duty also remarked in this period many Romans saw no reason for setting up a family with its many obligations, but preferred to choose a mistress.<sup>77</sup> Public opinion apparently considered this practice quite legitimate. If the Roman gentleman did marry, he might still have a mistress although he was not considered quite so free in this matter as the bachelor. If the Roman gentleman fell in love with his mistress, he might even wish to marry her, but this was seldom possible because a Roman citizen could not marry one of the class

to which she belonged.<sup>78</sup> If he became enamoured of a married woman a divorce was quite easily obtained, but more likely she would prefer to keep her status as it was and carry on an intrigue with her lover under the very nose of her husband who would not be too observant, occupied as he probably was with his own affairs. As might be expected such husbands and wives were not eager to have children and the decline of the birth rate amongst the upper classes was soon to become alarming.<sup>79</sup> Even the traditional desire of a father to have a son to bear his name seems to have lost some of its force, as little mention is made of it. However even these poets offer instances of happy married life and we may perhaps decide that collapse of family life was the exception rather than the rule. There was, however, observable at this time a dangerous trend of thought and action which must have caused all but the most heedless to wonder where it would lead. Strengthened by more vigorous stock from outlying provinces, Rome was able to retain her power for several centuries after this, but here was one of the leading causes of her eventual overthrow.

REFERENCES

1. Tib., I.x.11-14; Prop., III.v.47-48; see also, Chapter II, p.18.
2. See above, Introduction, Chapter I. p.3-note 11, p.6-note 28,  
p.8-note 47.
3. Cat., LXI, LXII.
4. Prop., IV.iii.49.
5. Tib., I.iii.47-49.
6. Fowler, Social Life at Rome, pp. 136-137; Marquardt, La Vie Privée des Romains, I, p.40; Johnson, The Private Life of the Romans, pp.67-68. The Coemptio began with a fictitious sale carried out in the presence of five witnesses. The single coin representing the purchase money was placed in the scales held by a libripens. The usus had certain ceremonies, but we are not certain what they were. The three forms came in time to be very similar although the cake of spelt could not be absent from the confarreate ceremony or the scales from the ceremony of coemptio.
7. See below, p.50, p.51, notes 15 and 19.
8. Cat., LVI.61-62.
9. Fowler, op. cit., p.138; Cary, History of Rome, pp.289-290.
10. Cat., loc. cit.
11. Cat., LXII.
12. Cat., LXI.
13. Prop., IV.xi.
14. Tib., II.ii.
15. Cat., LXI.33.
16. Fowler, op. cit., p. 140.
17. Cat., LXI. 146-148.
18. Fowler, op. cit., p.149.
19. Cat., LXI.101-102.
20. Cat., LXI.158; Fowler, op. cit., p. 144; Marquardt, op.cit., pp. 69-73, Vol.I.
21. Fowler, op. cit., p. 156; Marquardt, op. cit., p. 79; see also, Chapter VII p.106.
22. Sellar, Horace and the Elegiac Poets, p. 286.

23. Ibid., loc. cit.
24. Cat., LXVIII A.30-32.
25. Cat., LXXXV.1-2.
26. Cat., XI.14-18, LXXII.1.
27. Cat., LXXC; Tib., I.i.47-76; Prop., XII.
28. Cat., LXVIII A.95-97.
29. Sellar, op. cit., p.218. The omnipotence of love was conventional theme among the Alexandrian poets.
30. Cat., LXXII.3-4.
31. Cat., LXXXVII.1-2.
32. Cat., LXX.3-4; cf., Sophocles, frag., 741; Plat., Phaedr., 276.
33. Tib., I.ii.97.
34. Tib., I.i.55.
35. Tib., I.v.3-4.
36. Cat., LXXXV.1.
37. Tib., I.i.61.
38. Tib., I.i.73.
39. Tib., I.ii.16, 27-28.
40. Tib., I.v.57-58.
41. Tib., I.iii.57-82.
42. Sellar, op. cit., p.208.
43. Tib., II.iii.49.
44. Tib., II.iv.21.
45. Tib., I.vi.101.
46. Tib., I.vi.57-58.
47. Tib., II.vi.29-34.
48. Tib., I.i.51-52.
49. Tib., I.i.73-75.
50. Prop., I.viii. A.8.

51. Prop., IV.viii.
52. Tib., I.iii.3.
53. Sellar, op. cit., p.288.
54. Prop., II.xxii.17-18.
55. Prop., II.xxii.36-42.
56. Prop., III.xvi.9.
57. Prop., XXIX.
58. Prop., II.vii.
59. Prop., I.i.3-6.
60. Prop., I.v.21-22.
61. Prop., II.xxx.1-11(Phillimore).
62. See above, p.56 notes 50 and 53.
63. Prop., III.xiii.
64. Prop., I.ii.10-12 (Phillimore).
65. Prop., II.iii.7-8.
66. Prop., II.i.1-16.
67. Prop., II.xxvii.11-16.
68. Prop., II.xxvi.
69. Prop., I.xix.11.
70. Prop., I.vi.29-30.
71. Prop., II.xii.
72. Prop., II.i.57-58.
73. Prop., II.i.57-58.
74. Prop., II.xiv.
75. Prop., I.x.
76. Fowler, op. cit., pp.140-141.
77. Ibid., p. 149; Marquardt, op. cit., pp.86-89,(Vol.I).
78. Butler's note on Prop., II.vii.1, p. 183.
79. Fowler, op. cit., pp. 153-158.



CHAPTER V

SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The broad outlines of life in Rome in the age of Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius and something of the general aspect of the city and country have been described in the chapter entitled "City and Country Life". In this chapter the life of the people will be considered in greater detail in an effort to discover the trend of the times in the behaviour of society. Since this age is constantly spoken of as one of growing luxury this aspect of life especially will be noted in the details of social behaviour. Luxury is said to beget a degenerate nation. An attempt will be made here to ascertain where and to what extent this age corroborates the truth of this statement. However, the object of this chapter is not only to picture the growth of luxury and the subsequent degeneracy, but to present from the evidence found in these poets' works as true a picture as possible of society in this period. This will involve a consideration of the various classes of society and the attitude of these poets toward each section of it.

The division between the classes in Rome had always been and continued to be at this time very clearly marked. The Roman mind accepted class distinction quite naturally, and although the form of government was a republic the concept that all men are born equal never held sway at Rome. There probably was a certain amount of envy on the part of the lower classes of the privileges and luxuries of the higher classes, but resentment of class distinction itself does not seem to have been prevalent.

The senatorial order composed of senators and their sons

formed the highest class. Originally the senators had been entirely of the patrician class, but in the late Republic and early Empire senators were generally chosen from among those who had offices in the state and since plebeians could now hold all offices many senators were of plebeian stock. The great names of those who had done service for Rome in the old days still were held in great esteem, but once a novus homo became a senator he received for the most part the honour which had always been paid to that order.<sup>1</sup> Propertius says, "Love scorns to yield to ancestry,"<sup>2</sup> by which he implies that society in general attached great importance to ancestry. This impression is strengthened when Propertius makes Cornelia speak of her earthly glories in order to bring out the tragedy of her early death. She refers to her illustrious ancestors saying, "If ancestral trophies have ever won glory for any why, then, the statues of my house tell of Numantine ancestry, while yonder is gathered a not less glorious band, the Libones of my mother's line: on either side my house was pillared with glory."<sup>3</sup> By the word statua Propertius probably alludes to the custom of keeping in the ala of the house wax masks of dead ancestors who had borne curule offices. These masks were also carried in funeral processions, and when Propertius says, that he wants no long array of masks in his funeral procession he signifies that he is willing to give up something that was considered a great honour in Roman society.<sup>4</sup> The dead Cornelia is made to ask, "What availeth me the wedded love of Paullus? what the triumphal chariot of my ancestors, or those that live to bear such witness to their mother's glory?"<sup>5</sup> Here we see that the wives and families shared in the esteem in which their illustrious husbands

or fathers were held.

A senator had necessarily to be well-to-do since he was not paid for his duties of state, and tradition did not allow him to engage in business. The senators were generally large landowners, since this was considered the only investment suited to their dignity, although they frequently employed others to make investments for them.<sup>6</sup> A senator might also enrich himself as governor of a province by making exorbitant demands on the provincials. Catullus' complaint that he was unable to enrich himself in Bithynia because of the governor, suggests that Memmius may have been one of the few who tried to prevent this practice, while Catullus' attitude shows the general complete lack of conscience in this matter.<sup>7</sup>

The equestrian class stood next to the senatorial class. The equites engaged in business in the nature of banking or contracting for large enterprises. They were wealthy and generally well educated; and together with the senators they formed the nobility of Rome. Propertius and Tibullus were of equestrian rank;<sup>8</sup> the fact that they were able to live at Rome in the style in which they did, shows that their families must have had considerable wealth despite the losses which they had suffered. Propertius praises Maecenas, because although with his influence with Augustus and his wealth he could have become a senator, he preferred to remain an eques.<sup>9</sup> This remark also serves to show that it was possible to advance from the class of the equites to that of the senatores.

Below the knights were the free citizens who lacked sufficient wealth to be knights. They also wore the toga the sign of a citizen and were proud of their rights and privileges as

citizens.<sup>10</sup> Many free citizens worked alongside slaves, but because of the large numbers of slaves in Rome many trades were looked down upon by free citizens and the result was that many men, even impoverished nobles, became clients. The position of cliens in former times was an honourable estate in which a plebeian performed certain offices in return for the protection and advice of a patrician. During the republic it retained this aspect to a certain extent, but in the empire the position of client became a degrading one.<sup>11</sup> Although the poets were not, strictly, clients of Augustus or Maecenas or Messala, there was, in the praise offered by the poets and in the benefits received by them in turn, something which resembled the relationship between client and patron. A degrading type of clientship is often evident, and the "parasite", became a stock character in comedy. He might belong to any class free or slave, and his main attributes seem to be a dislike of work and a determination to live by the support of friends. Catullus hints at the existence of such a character when he speaks of his friends being forced to seek invitations to dinner because they did not enrich themselves in Spain under Piso.<sup>12</sup>

Beneath the free classes were the freedmen who had become citizens when freed from slavery, but who had only partial citizenship rights. Their sons born after manumission, and their grandsons could attain to any rank. Freedmen varies greatly in character. Some were men of note who had great influence on Roman culture, but on the vast majority the mark of slavery left its stamp in unscrupulousness and degraded tastes. Manumission was even during the late Republic carried on to such an extent as to cause concern to many.<sup>13</sup> Freedmen of Greek or oriental blood were considered a special menace to Roman society since by their cunning

flattery and lack of principle they were able to acquire great wealth and sometimes were placed in important positions, although the great day of the freedman's influence was of considerably later date than the time of these poets. Consequently, despite the admiration for Greek culture which many literary men and especially the followers of the Alexandrian movement felt, there arose in many Romans a strong dislike for this type of freedman. Tibullus shows that the rise of the freedman had begun in his day when he says, "every man has now a kingdom who on the barbarians' platform has often been forced to move his gysumed feet".<sup>14</sup> This quotation also throws light on another detail of slavery. The slaves, who were brought in, in large numbers to a slave market, were forced to strip so that no defects might be concealed, and to stand on a platform. If the slaves were orientals their feet were chalked. When a prospective buyer appeared the slave was forced to perform exercises to show his fitness.<sup>15</sup>

The slave was not considered a person but a thing. He had no rights and was supposed to have no conscience. It is not surprising that after the degradation of the slave market and years of servitude that he should turn out to be a freedman of unscrupulous character and vicious tastes.<sup>16</sup> It is not to be thought however, that the life of the slave was generally unbearable. A valuable slave was a valuable piece of property and was treated as such. Further, qualities of mind and heart in a slave often appealed to the master and won for the slave a real friendship. The slave was often employed in the position of tutor where he had great influence with his young master and might win his undying affection. The slave had no right to acquire property, but

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custom allowed him to keep a peculium which if he was assiduous in his labours, might eventually buy his freedom. Masters frequently manumitted their slaves for some special service. Propertius recalls this practice when he tells Lygdamus that if he effects a reconciliation with Cynthia that he will persuade her to free him.<sup>17</sup>

Slaves were the absolute property of their masters and could be punished in any way at all even by death. Propertius refers to punishments which might be inflicted upon slaves, when in his dream of Cynthia's return after death, she orders that Lygdamus, suspected of poisoning her, be tried by the ordeal of red hot irons, and complains that Lalage, her favourite, has been hung up by her hair and scourged, while Petale has been shackled to a log of wood.<sup>18</sup> A good master generally provided for the old age of his slaves; even such a firebrand as Cynthia is represented as having some consideration for her faithful slaves in asking Propertius to see that Parthenie is provided for in her old age.<sup>19</sup>

Fashion in types of slaves is a sign of the luxury of the times. Tibullus mentions negro pages as one of the luxuries which ladies desired. The possession of coloured servants was considered to be a sign of wealth and power. Attractive slaves and especially twins were in great demand for luxurious establishments.<sup>20</sup> Varus' mistress asks Catullus if he did not get some chair-bearer while he was in Bithynia. Cappadocians, tall and of fine physique, were considered especially suited for this work.<sup>21</sup>

The great pride of the ancient families and the desire of the new aristocracy to fill their new places of honour with credit, probably account for much of the magnificence in building, dress and entertainment evident in Rome at this time. We have noticed

in the chapter, "Town and City Life", the beauty of design and richness of material in the new temple of Apollo and there is evidence that the private individual was not slow to imitate this trend and beautify his home.<sup>22</sup> Some idea of the materials in fashion may be gained from Propertius' statement that the reason for his popularity with the ladies is not his wealth, for he has no house supported on Taenarian columns, nor ivory chamber with gilded beams,<sup>23</sup> while at another time he speaks of a threshold of Arabian onyx and silken hangings about the bed.<sup>24</sup> That care was given to the arrangement of the grounds about such homes may be seen from his reference to orchards and grottoes with fountains playing.<sup>25</sup> From Tibullus we learn of the large fishponds which were so popular on country estates and which were built by enclosing part of the sea by a mole.<sup>26</sup> Roman taste was inclined to over-elaborateness, and while the descriptions given are not sufficient to form a general estimate, it is probable that many, in their desire to attain the heights of magnificence, may have overstepped the bounds of good taste: while on the other hand the knowledge of art which Propertius displays in his reference to the masters of art and their work<sup>27</sup> indicates that many Romans had good esthetic taste.

The clothes which were desired by the extravagant young ladies of the poets' acquaintance, are either of Coan silk, a kind of chiffon, or garments of rich purple or crimson coloured by means of imported Tyrian dye. Sometimes the Coan material was embroidered with gold to make it more gorgeous.<sup>28</sup> Cynthia was anxious to have a fan of peacock feathers and a ball of crystal to hold in her hand.<sup>29</sup> Emeralds, pearls, crystal and amber seem

to have been favourite jewels. Rings were much in fashion and probably pins and necklaces.<sup>30</sup>

Tibullus and Propertius both decry the wide use of cosmetics by Roman women, although both were themselves gentlemen of fashion, and Propertius expressly speaks of his carefully arranged hair which was the sign of the gentleman. Fops also wore their hair long and used perfume.<sup>31</sup> The cosmetics which the poets mention are a kind of rouge obtained from Belgium and a powder which made the skin appear whiter. The hair was sometimes dyed with a German dye which gave an auburn shade.<sup>32</sup> Propertius echoes an age-old cry against fashion when he asks, "If Madam So-and-So had a fancy to colour her forehead with a mess of azure, is azure beauty good on that account?"<sup>33</sup> His complaint probably had as little effect as similar complaints in any age. Mention is also made of a black dye for gray hair and of some beauty process to remove wrinkles.<sup>34</sup> Women's hair must have been curled and elaborately arranged we deduce from the poets' frequent mention of ornatus capillus.<sup>35</sup> The hair was done up for outdoor wear, but was frequently worn long in the house. Flowers were often arranged in the coiffure.<sup>36</sup>

When Catullus playfully suggests that his friend Fabullus may enjoy a good dinner at his house if he brings everything with him, he names the essentials, a good dinner (and plenty of it), a pretty girl, wine, wit and plenty of laughter.<sup>37</sup> In his drinking song (number XXVII) he mentions an interesting custom. A ruler of the feast was chosen by lot. His decrees were absolute concerning the amount of water to mix with the wine. In Catullus' poem the ruler is a woman, suggesting the utmost abandon.<sup>38</sup> Prop-



pertius gives a description of a party which he held with two ladies of easy virtue to console himself in Cynthia's absence. Lygdamus had charge of the cups, a glass service was used and the wine was of Greek vintage. An Egyptian piper played, and Phyllis danced, while someone showered her with roses. There was also in attendance a dwarf who clapped his hands to the music while she danced.<sup>39</sup> At other times Propertius refers to golden goblets, Falernian and Chian wine and the use of a saffron ointment on the hair.<sup>40</sup> That garlands were frequently worn about the brow while drinking, we may infer from Propertius' lines, "Thou art beautiful, the wine does thee no hurt, when garlands hang over thy brow and droop into thy cups, and thou readest my verses with utterance soft and low."<sup>41</sup>

That the Romans of this time enjoyed considerable variety in entertainment may be seen from numerous references by the poets. Catullus is among those who enjoy sailing and his yacht must have been of considerable size and solidly built, as he refers to its being known by the "blustering Adriatic, by Rhodes and wild Thracian Propontis".<sup>42</sup> Baiae, a fashionable watering place, was a source of pleasure for some.<sup>43</sup> Others enjoyed the sport of hunting. Boars were hunted with dogs, and nets were used to form a cordon to shut in the quarry. Smaller animals and birds were also captured.<sup>44</sup> No doubt pets of many kinds were kept; Catullus mentions Lesbia's pet sparrow and from Propertius we hear of Molossian dogs and of the little lap dog, Craugis.<sup>45</sup> Great crowds attended the theatre. Awnings covered the hall and essence of saffron was sometimes sprinkled on the stage. Women were allowed only on the upper tiers of the theatre.<sup>46</sup> Musicians and other entertainers

appear to have been hired even for private dinner parties, while many ladies and gentlemen were themselves accomplished musicians. The writing of poetry was the pastime of nearly every educated man and of many women.<sup>47</sup> The baths were another source of pleasure with their opportunities for exercise, relaxation and social intercourse.<sup>48</sup>

The poets reveal many social customs which help complete this picture of society. A fairly complete picture of a typical wedding ceremony of the higher class has been drawn for us by Catullus. Striking similarities between this ceremony and its modern counterpart show that Rome was the source of many of customs with which we are familiar. The bride wore a veil of brownish yellow. This veil was really a mantle which also covered the head. She also wore a wreath of flowers, in this case of marjoram, and soft yellow slippers.<sup>49</sup> Weddings were often held at night, since torches were carried to escort the bride from her home to that of her husband.<sup>50</sup> Nuts were scattered as rice and confetti are today, and ribald songs were sung to the bride and groom to drive away ill-luck.<sup>51</sup> On her arrival at the new home the bride steps over the threshold to avoid the evil omen of stumbling.<sup>52</sup> Three boys carrying torches escorted the bride to the bed chamber. Then two women, chosen for their virtue and venerable age, led the bride to the lectus genialis where her husband finds her.<sup>53</sup>

The funeral of a noble was also an elaborate ceremony. When life had left the body a wail was sent up by the eldest son. During the conclamatio a trumpet was also sounded.<sup>54</sup> Then the body was richly dressed and laid out on a bed supported by pillars of fine wood or ivory and covered with rich tapestries. A coin was placed

in the dead person's mouth for the Ferryman's fare.<sup>55</sup> The funeral procession itself consisted of musicians playing the flute or trumpet, hired mourners who performed extravagant signs of mourning, shrieking or tearing their hair. Men wearing the masks of the ancestors of the dead man came next, then the body carried on the funeral bed, and finally the relatives dressed in black following the body. When the chosen spot was reached perfumes were poured on the body and a fire was kindled beneath the funeral pyre.<sup>56</sup> The ashes must have been consigned to some kind of tomb since Propertius asks that his tomb stand beneath a laurel tree and bear the inscription "He who now lies here all uncouth dust once owned Love and none but Love for his master".<sup>57</sup> Catullus speaks of bestowing gifts on the grave of his brother. This may have been his performance of the cena novendialis which was usually performed nine days after burial and consisted in leaving dishes of eggs, lentils and salt at the grave for the Manes.<sup>58</sup> Garlands were placed on the grave as a mark of affection much as wreaths are laid on graves today.<sup>59</sup>

The social aspect of the religious feasts has been discussed in the chapter on "Town and Country Life". Another interesting feast was the Saturnalia which Catullus calls the optimo dierum. It was characterized by a greater freedom, by an exchange of places at the table on the part of masters and servants, by the giving of presents, and by general rejoicing. Catullus complains that on the Saturnalia when he might have expected a choice present from his friend he received only the works of some wretched poets whose writings upset him because they were so bad.<sup>60</sup> The Matronalia referred to by Tibullus was the feminine counterpart of the

Saturnalia. Slaves were feasted by their mistresses and all women put on gala attire.<sup>61</sup>

A high degree of idealization of the olden days is traditional in poetry, but in general the poets sound a note of pessimism with regard to their own age. Propertius deplors the decline of morals evident in his day.<sup>62</sup> In a similar mood he maintains faithfulness on the part of women is the exception rather than the rule.<sup>63</sup> Particularly shameful he considers the matron who "flaunts the spoils of her reproach".<sup>64</sup> Both Tibullus and Propertius blame greed for gold and love of luxury for the decline of morals.<sup>65</sup> "Proud Rome is breaking beneath her prosperity",<sup>66</sup> says Propertius. If he was somewhat premature in his judgment he was right in recognizing the signs of decay. While the accomplished lady and gentleman made for a more agreeable society, the evil effects of slavery and idleness upon the rich, with the inclination to excess which was becoming apparent in the Italian temperament, robbed that society of moral strength and this in turn was to lead to national physical weakness. If it had not been possible for the lower classes to rise to a higher class the result might have been that the higher classes would have disappeared altogether, but as it was, the nation was strengthened by immigration from the provinces and the higher classes were supplemented by newcomers whose intelligence and energy enabled them to rise in the social scale of Rome.

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5. Prop., IV.xi.11-12.
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9. Prop., III.ix.
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22. See above, Chapter III, p.34; Prop., III.vii.41-50.
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33. Prop., II.xviii.30(Phillimore).
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36. Prop., III.x.16.
37. Cat., XIII.1-5.
38. Cat., XXVII.3.
39. Prop., IV.viii.37-42.
40. Cat., XIII.11; Prop., II.xxxiii.39-40, IV.vi.73-74; Tib., II.i.28 refers to Chian Wine. Smith (on Tib., II.iii.47-48) says that the inexpensive though handsome ware of Samos and Cumae, generally red and often decorated in some way, was commonly used by many Romans of the middle class who through moderate means or old-fashioned conservatism did not incline to silver.
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42. Cat., IV.8-9.
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CHAPTER VI

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF ROME

Religion in the late Republic and early Empire was a highly composite affair and this is borne out by the variety of references to it in the works of Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius, which present a multifarious array of gods, numerous rites and varying attitudes towards these gods and their worship. Religion had passed through several stages of development in earlier times and elements of each remained to form the religion as we see it in this period. Forms of worship or rites which belonged to the religion of each phase also survived and were carried out either in isolated instances or incorporated into the elaborate ritual of the state religion.<sup>1</sup> The Hellenization of Rome, which by this time was almost complete, resulted in the absorption of the Roman gods into their Greek counterparts, and the accompanying Greek literature filled with the tales of gods and men brought about an apparently complete change of attitude towards the gods, at least among the educated classes who were in contact with this influence.<sup>2</sup> The oriental deities which Rome, most tolerant in matters of religion, had allowed to be set up for worship, satisfied for many that emotional craving which generally seeks outlet in religion and to which the formalities of the state religion made no appeal.<sup>3</sup> The countryman still worshipped the ancient deities in grove and at the hearth and shows the truest spark of religious feeling, in a Rome which, while at the height of her material power, was slowly rotting from within. To this decay the loss of real religious faith was a contributing factor.<sup>4</sup> To gain an understanding of the different rites and various attitudes



towards religion at this time, it seems necessary to consider the various elements of which the Roman religion was composed and something of the development of the religion of the Roman people.

In order to be consistent it is necessary first to choose one of the many definitions of religion and to adhere to it. If with Warde Fowler we adopt that of Ira W. Howerth, "Religion is the effective desire to be in the right relation to the power manifesting itself in the universe"<sup>5</sup>, there are certain practices and customs which do not belong to religion in the strict sense because the supernatural force which they recognize is not an independent power, but resides in the object or action itself.

Three classes of such beliefs and practices may be distinguished at Rome: (1) belief in magical powers inherent in objects, (2) magical practices and (3) taboo. Although such beliefs are generally considered more primitive than religion, they will be discussed here in order to see their relation to religion and thus explain the frequently remarked intermingling and confusion of the two.

Religion and magic both recognize a supernatural power. The use of milk in worship of Pales<sup>6</sup> and the mention of lucky and unlucky days or actions,<sup>7</sup> which are considered ominous, indicate a belief in magical powers inherent in objects or actions. Tibullus gives as pretexts for not setting out on his voyage, stumbling at the threshold, the flight of birds or Saturn's Day. He is no doubt in playful mood and is endeavoring to convince his girl of his love by striking effects in his poem, but his words show that such beliefs were common in Rome. The mention of Saturn's Day is a curious reference, since it reveals a knowledge of the Holy day of the Jews and suggests the spread of the Jewish religion in

orthodox Roman ideas.<sup>8</sup> The bullae aureae of which Propertius speaks was a locket worn by the sons of senators or knights. It contained a charm against the evil eye and was laid aside when the manly toga was assumed.<sup>9</sup>

A magic practice may be said to be "one in which man, by act or word claims the power to alter the course of his events either to his own advantage or to some one else's hurt, without invoking the aid of any external power."<sup>10</sup> Some magic seems to date from a very early age, while other practices or beliefs seem characteristic of a decadent tendency which shows itself in the combination of medical treatment and charms, the excess formalism of the state rites, and the prevalence of recourse to astrologers despite their evident quackery.<sup>11</sup> The practice of witchcraft, a kind of sympathetic magic, probably dates from a very early period, but the great popularity of witchcraft at this time seems to be due to the widespread belief in the potency of witches' love charms.<sup>12</sup> Witches also dealt in poisons as we may see from Tibullus' reference to the witch who knew the "secret of Medea's herbs,"<sup>13</sup> and poisoning would appear to have been quite common. Tibullus' witch who draws stars down from the sky, turns the course of rivers with her spells and lures spirits from the tomb by her chants, presents rather a good picture of the activities attributed to the witches of his time.<sup>14</sup> The charm to deceive a jealous husband has a typical magic procedure. The person must chant it thrice and spit thrice.<sup>15</sup> Propertius invokes the witches to change his mistress' heart,<sup>16</sup> and Tibullus speaks of witches' spells being used to cure his loved one at the same time as he attributes the cure to vows made in her behalf.<sup>17</sup> Propertius describes a ceremony, used to obtain Cynthia's cure,

which seems to mingle magic with prayer or medical treatment. An instrument known as a rhombus, was whirled to a magic chant while laurel leaves were thrown on the altar fire.<sup>18</sup>

A taboo might be called a religious prohibition. It is the recognition of a mysterious force in persons or things which men shrink from in awe. This kind of awe the Romans came to describe as religio. The object of taboo is regarded as "dangerous, infectious, unclean or holy."<sup>19</sup> This type of magic is recalled in the country festival. The people are exhorted to let all things rest, because the sacrifice is considered useless if the priest saw any work performed.<sup>20</sup> According to Bailey the taboo, probably formerly involved the people as a whole, but had become concentrated in the person of the priest, who was hedged in by numerous prohibitions.<sup>21</sup>

Most authorities agree that the earliest phase of Roman religion proper and the most characteristically Roman was that of animism or belief in spirits.<sup>22</sup> These spirits were at first considered to be vague powers dwelling in particular functions. Later these spirits developed personalities, because while it is possible to imagine a pure spirit dwelling in some grove it is difficult to imagine a being whose function it is, say to look after the sheepfold, without imputing to that spirit a personality. In this way the Roman numen became a deus.<sup>23</sup> The Etruscan influence, which was early brought to bear on the Romans, encouraged this idea of gods, since they had been in contact with Greek anthropomorphic ideas.<sup>24</sup> When the spirits had acquired personalities a further development resulted in statues and temples. Propertius, in a poem on the origin of Vertumnus,<sup>25</sup> represents the

statue as speaking and he says that he was Tuscan born and that he was once a rough hewn stump of maple before the days of Numa. This shows both the Etruscan influence and the early use of statues.

Tibullus, with his ardent love for the Italian countryside, breathes the spirit of the early animistic period when he says that he bends in worship wherever flowery garlands lie on a deserted tree stock or old stone at the crossway.<sup>26</sup> The stone to which Tibullus refers is probably the crossroad stone which was considered sacred to the Lares Compitales.<sup>27</sup> Devotion to the Penates and the Lares retained until the end of Rome the true spirit of Roman animism, in the conception of the Penates as a vague group of spirits which presided over the penus, the store of food and the Lares as the spirits of the fields.<sup>28</sup> Tibullus gives evidence of sincere religious faith when he promises to be faithful to his fathers' Penates and to offer incense monthly.<sup>29</sup> In this passage he mentions the old Lar of his home and in another invokes the Lares or guardians of his estate.<sup>30</sup> This would seem to support the theory of Bailey that the Lares were guardians of the fields, while one of them, the Lar familiaris, for some reason came to be specially associated with the household spirits. He came to be regarded as a kindly spirit who watched over the family fortunes from generation to generation.<sup>31</sup>

The Roman conception of man's genius, a being which was neither the soul of man nor his guardian angel, but suggests our idea of both, and the juno of a woman with like office, show the same belief in indwelling spirits who help man when invoked. The genius was believed to be born with a man and was therefore wor-

shipped and invoked on his birthday with prayers and offerings.<sup>32</sup>

The country festival<sup>33</sup> described by Tibullus combines several forms of worship so that a consideration of it will serve to illustrate the means which the Roman of early days took to ensure the blessing of the spirits or gods on himself and his possessions. It will also show that many early practices survived and continued in use in this period. The ceremony begins with the familiar, "Quisquis adeat, faveat", a warning to prevent anyone inadvertently<sup>34</sup> destroying the efficacy of the rite by any ill-omened action. An invocation is made to Bacchus and Ceres, gods of the country. The victim or victims, in this case a lamb, followed by a procession of the people dressed in white, walk around the boundaries of the farm. This is the lustration or cleansing. It is accompanied by a prayer addressed to the "Gods of our sires" to drive evil things beyond the boundary and to grant good crops and protection for the flocks. Before the victim is sacrificed the entrails are viewed for favourable sign of the acceptance of the gods. This practice which had come to Rome by way of Etruria in the early days, was adopted by the Romans and came to be an important part of every sacrifice.<sup>35</sup> After the sacrifice the country folk turn to feasting, a feature of every festival which perhaps points to a strong reason for its survival.

Tibullus in another poem<sup>36</sup> describes the Parilia or shepherds' festival and gives more detail about the ceremony of lustration. The ashes of calves burnt at the Fordilicea and blood of the October horse, the means of purification, had first to be obtained from the Vestals. The lustration began at dawn. The stables were thoroughly cleansed and trimmed with flowers; both flocks and

stables were sprinkled with a branch of laurel, dipped in water and fumigated with sulphur and fragrant herbs. After a prayer, quantities of new wine were consumed in preparation for jumping through the burning heap of straw which was part of the ceremony.

The use of the votum, a vow to do something if the favour is granted, is illustrated by Tibullus who promises a pig to his Lares if he is protected in battle.<sup>37</sup> This aspect of religion greatly appealed to the Roman's practical sense and several instances may be noted in the poets. Propertius reminds Cynthia that, having been cured, she must render to Diana the dance she owes,<sup>38</sup> and at another time he promises that if his prayer is granted he will write a poem in honour of Jupiter.<sup>39</sup>

We have already seen that the Roman numina gradually acquired personalities and became gods, partly through a natural evolution and partly through foreign influence. A continuation of this trend of thought results in the conception of gods as men, known as anthropomorphism, which was a special characteristic of the Greek religion. Anthropomorphic ideas were first brought to Rome by way of Etruria, then through the cities of Magna Graecia and finally by direct contact with Greece.<sup>40</sup> Once a god is conceived as a man he is soon considered subject to the same passions and it is easily seen what a transformation such beliefs might make in the reverent character of the Roman religion. However not all former concepts were obliterated and it is this intermingling of various attitudes, derived from these very different concepts of the gods which makes the consideration of religion in this period such an intriguing study. Once Rome was in direct contact with Greece and enamoured of her literature and culture, the intro-

duction of Greek gods was rapid. Sometimes the characteristics of a Greek god or goddess and legends concerning them, were connected with the Roman god or goddess and the Roman name was kept, as in the case of Diana.<sup>41</sup> In other instances a Greek god was adopted for some special function with his Greek name, for instance in the case of Apollo who first became prominent in his capacity of healer.<sup>42</sup>

In the Hymn to Diana, Catullus shows the anthropomorphic concept of Diana, invoking her as "Latonia, maximi magna progenies Jovis";<sup>43</sup> he also refers to her as the moon goddess, an attribute she acquired from being paired with the goddess Artemis. At the same time something of her character as an Italian Goddess is presented in the title "Lady of the mountains and green woods and sequestered glens and sounding rivers".<sup>44</sup> The idea that she gives good harvests is also typically Italian, although it may be in some way associated with her power as moon goddess.

Jupiter, the god of both Greek and Rome, who seems to originate in the common Indo-European religious tradition, had from earliest times been considered chief of the gods.<sup>45</sup> Tibullus describes the conquering general presenting his laurels to the Capitoline Jove, a ceremony which signified that it was by his power that Rome had conquered again.<sup>46</sup> The honour paid to Jupiter so far exceeded that given to other gods, that his worship seems to have tended towards monotheism, but this tendency was counteracted by his connection with his Greek counterpart and the legends in which he becomes the husband of Juno whose jealousy he arouses by his many intrigues.<sup>47</sup> In a similar manner Venus, who was formerly the goddess of the vine or fertility, becomes with her son Cupid, the

personification of love, and displays the human passions of jealousy and anger.<sup>48</sup>

In Tibullus' poem to Messala on the installation of his son Messalinus into the college of the decemviri,<sup>49</sup> some indication is given of the development of the state cult and of the peculiar belief in the oracles of the sibyls, prophetic priestesses of Greece in early days. These oracles were consulted in time of public danger and they never failed to give answer that some new deity should be set up for worship.<sup>50</sup> The quindecimviri were appointed by the state for the care and interpretation of these oracles which had been officially collected. The oracles were thought to be inspired by Apollo, which explains the invocation to Phoebus on Messalinus' behalf. Apollo was believed to have given divine aid at the battle of Actium, in gratitude for which Augustus had dedicated a magnificent temple to him.<sup>51</sup>

In an effort to allay the decay of religion Augustus endeavored to revive the ancient religion and to fuse it with the new Greek elements which had been imposed upon it. To this end he reorganized the state cult with great care. Temples were rebuilt and rites reinstated. Augustus' new home on the Palatine was to be the centre of the worship of the old Roman Vesta and the Greek Apollo, but the natural worship of the Imperial house was of the Genius of the household and this led to Emperor worship.<sup>52</sup> While Augustus did not encourage this attitude directly, he allowed it in the provinces where oriental kings had always been considered gods.<sup>53</sup> The oriental elements in the population, which increased when conquered people came to Rome as slaves, may have encouraged this idea in Rome itself. The poets in a mixture of flattery and



of enthusiasm for the peace which Augustus brought about frankly called him a god.<sup>54</sup> This was probably purely a compliment with no deep religious idea behind it, but the fact that such expressions in poetry were acceptable indicates a change in the Roman religious attitude.

How much the common people knew of the gods of poetry is not certain. It is not likely that the influence of poetic mythology went beyond the educated classes who still composed only a small portion of the population. That the country districts kept up the old worship, at least in part, is evident. The people of the provinces were more influenced by the state cult than those of the city. The state cult, while it served Augustus' purpose of unifying the state, had the effect of divorcing religion from the lives of the people, as they felt that their interests, which were bound up with those of the state, were being cared for by the state priests. Since Rome was essentially an agricultural nation, her religious rites were bound up with country life, as we have seen those described. When Rome's population became largely urban, an attempt was made to transfer these ceremonies to the cities, but they had little meaning in these surroundings.<sup>55</sup> Influenced no doubt by these two conditions, numbers of the lower classes especially, found satisfaction for their natural religious feeling in the more emotional oriental religions such as that of Serapis or Isis.

Catullus in his remarkable poem which deals with Atys in Galliambic metre has admirably expressed the frenzy which seized the participants in the orgiastic rites of Cybele, the Magna Mater.<sup>56</sup> This cult had been introduced on the advice of the Sibylline oracle in 205 B.C. during the war with Hannibal. Rome sought to

suppress other oriental religions because of the frenzy they aroused and the dangers thereby incurred in respect to morals--always the care of the state--and to the solidarity of the state itself.

While she permitted the cult of the Magna Mater, she endeavored to suppress its more orgiastic aspects, and forbade any Roman to become one of the Galli or priests of the Magna Mater. Processions took place in Rome yearly in the Ludi Megalenses.<sup>57</sup> Catullus implies at least an acquaintance with the cult, and he reveals a disgust for the rite which required the mutilation of its priest.<sup>58</sup> The description of the goddess is probably taken from the statue which was carried in the annual procession. Atys repenting what he has done is pursued by the goddess in her chariot drawn by yoked lions.<sup>59</sup>

Tibullus also refers to worship of oriental deities; he describes Delia, as a votary of Isis, performing the usual worship to obtain his recovery from illness, and he mentions the ritual purification, which consisted in bathing in clean water and the practice of continence for a certain period.<sup>60</sup> It is significant to note that when he speaks of the vow Delia has made to Isis to join in her worship, he will take no part in it, but intends to pay his vows to his Penates and the old Lar of his home. This refusal to join in the worship may mean that he considers it suitable only for women or foreigners or merely that it does not appeal to him.

Tibullus speaks also of Osiris, the brother and husband of Isis, guiding man to the tilling of the soil. Set, the spirit of evil had overcome him, but he had revived under the care of Isis. The bull Apis, worshipped by the Egyptians, was the reincarnation of Osiris and on his death became Serapis.<sup>61</sup> Varus' mistress desires

to borrow a litter from Catullus to go to the temple of Serapis. Serapis was especially invoked for his supposed powers of healing.<sup>62</sup>

Tibullus also gives some idea of the worship of oriental deities in general when he suggests that dance, song, love garlands, robes of saffron and the light basket of holy things, give the worship suited to Osiris, the spirit of good.<sup>63</sup> The picture of Delia as she sits swathed in linen with loosened hair for nightly vigils adds to this description.<sup>64</sup> The basket of holy things and the sacra oculta<sup>65</sup> indicate the secret character of the worship; the tympanum, an instrument like a tambourine, the symbal, and the Phrygian pipes were used for the rites and had the effect of rousing the followers to a high pitch of frenzy.<sup>66</sup>

Perhaps one of the reasons why the oriental religions appealed to many Romans was that they promised happiness in another life while the Roman religion gave no such hope. The Romans never had any definite belief about an after life except as a sort of shadowy existence.<sup>67</sup> The Hades of Greek literature was familiar to them, but the levity with which the gods were treated by the later Greek writers seems to have shattered any faith in the torments of the underworld.<sup>68</sup> Propertius suggests that the after life is perhaps an empty dream, and that there is nothing to dread beyond the pyre.<sup>69</sup> At another time he asserts in the dream of Cynthia after her death that death is not the end of all, and that the pale ghost escapes the tomb;<sup>70</sup> but this line attests rather to Propertius' vivid imagination than to his belief in an after-existence. A somewhat superstitious attitude to the dead is suggested in the idea that the slighted spirit sends evil dreams.<sup>71</sup> Death, as pictured by our poets is something to be dreaded, not from fear of punishment in

after-life about which they are uncertain, but from fear of losing the pleasures of life.<sup>72</sup> Marcellus' death serves Propertius for a meditation on the uncertainty of life and happiness. "He is dead, cut short unhappy in his twentieth year. Such glory compassed in such narrow room!"<sup>73</sup>

The attitude of the early Roman to his gods was one of great reverence. This attitude is preserved in Tibullus' prayer which accompanies the lustration in the country festival.<sup>74</sup> References to the sanctity of an oath taken in the name of any god, especially Jupiter, indicate the awe in which the gods were held;<sup>75</sup> but when Catullus says that he must not expect Lesbia to be satisfied with him alone, because even Juno rages at Jove's many amours,<sup>76</sup> despite the fact that this is a poetical convention, all reverence seems to be gone, and one would expect all faith to vanish with it. There is evidence in the works of the poets to suggest that the educated Roman of this day, familiar with Greek literature, accepted the attitudes expressed therein, until such time as he felt a need for divine help. Then, if faith were not entirely gone, he turned to some god in the traditional manner, as Tibullus does when he invokes his Lares for protection in battle.<sup>77</sup> Catullus indicates some faith in the gods in a very real prayer to save him in his illness.<sup>78</sup> Tibullus calls upon the gods to witness the purity of his life and suggests the belief that the gods regard human action,<sup>79</sup> although it may be inferred from many passages that the gods are most concerned with preserving the sanctity of an oath taken in their name.<sup>80</sup> The notion that the gods gain by the worship of men is evident in the persuasive tone Propertius uses in asking Jove to heal Cynthia, promising to write a poem of praise if she is cured.<sup>81</sup> Those gods

of Rome who remained untouched by anthropomorphism, especially the Penates, are always spoken of with respect and devotion; the state religion was carried on with elaborate ritual and great precision, but probably without any real devotion, while votaries of the oriental divinities showed great enthusiasm for them and performed strenuous devotions to please them.

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## CHAPTER VII

## PHILOSOPHY, ETHICS AND MORALITY

A few facts concerning the introduction of Greek philosophy at Rome are necessary to explain the widespread knowledge of and interest in it at this time. According to Bailey, while the Romans must early have had some acquaintance with Greek philosophy through the works of the Greek poets, it was not until 173 B. C. that the first effort to establish any definite teaching of philosophy at Rome was made.<sup>1</sup> In this year two Epicurean philosophers began to teach and were promptly expelled; it is not certain whether this expulsion was caused by suspicion of philosophy as such or by the atheistic doctrines of Epicurus. A few years later the Stoic philosopher Crates started to give lectures and in 155 B. C. three of the great Greek teachers of the day, Critolaus the Peripatetic, Diogenes the Stoic and Carneades the sceptical Academic, began to teach. Shortly after this, Amalfinus the Epicurean commenced to give lectures and to publish treatises in Latin.<sup>2</sup> Thus by the middle of the second century B.C. Rome had become a centre of philosophical teaching and the study of philosophy became one of the main interests of the literary group which centred about the younger Scipio.<sup>3</sup> In this group were C. Lucilius the satirist, and Terence the writer of comedy. From this time on the educated classes at Rome were interested in philosophical thought. The age of Cicero was one of serious study of philosophy and Catullus belonged to the younger generation of this age; it is not surprising, therefore that he, with Tibullus and Propertius some years later, should show in their outlook on life some influence of the various Greek philosophies.

Bailey attributes the spread of philosophical thought to the fact that philosophy was able to answer, at least in part, three questions to which the old Roman religion had failed to give an answer.<sup>4</sup> These three questions had to do with first, - the nature of the deity and its relation to man; second, - the connection of religion with morality, and third, - the future life. These questions were becoming increasingly pertinent at this time, because of the decay of the old religion and the breaking down of the ideals of duty to the State and to the family which had served as sanctions for conduct, since the old religion gave none.

The three main schools of thought during the late Republic were the Stoic, the Epicurean, and the Academic.<sup>5</sup> This last was the school founded originally by Plato, but its philosophy was first altered by scepticism, so that the possibility of acquiring true knowledge was doubted; then it became eclectic, embracing theories of various schools and finally its tenets became similar to those of later Stoicism. A short exposition of the main ideas of Epicureanism and Stoicism will, therefore assist in showing wherein the poets express Epicurean and Stoic ideas. While both Epicureanism and Stoicism are based on a physical foundation, that aspect of philosophy never occupied the Roman mind as much as the more practical religious and moral aspects. Therefore, an explanation of the manner in which Epicureanism and Stoicism dealt with the religious and moral questions of the day, and of their physical theory, but only insofar as it is concerned with religion and ethics, will serve to show the probable influence those philosophies had on the thought of the day. Valuable sources of information about the philosophical views of this period

are Cicero's De Natura Deorum and De Finibus, which speak chiefly of Stoicism and Lucretius' great exposition of Epicureanism, the De Rerum Natura.

Lucretius answers the first question--on the nature of the deity and its relation to man, in this way. He will have nothing to do with the gods of mythology.<sup>6</sup> The great purpose of his poem is to remove the fear of the gods and of death, which he claims besets man and makes his life miserable. Lucretius uses the physical basis on which Epicureanism is founded to combat this fear. According to Epicurus, "all that exists is made up of atoms, tiny indivisible particles, and the void in which they move and have their being. By the combination of these atoms, as they meet in their movements in the void, all things are created and by their dissolution all things come to an end."<sup>7</sup> The nature of the gods too, is material, but they are immortal, because the supply of atoms never fails, for there is a perfect balance of supply and loss.<sup>8</sup> This equilibrium gives them perfect happiness in their abode in the vast empty spaces between world and world; man's pain comes from want and from the absence of the atomic supply and his distress of mind comes from fear; the gods cannot suffer fear, least of all the fear of death.<sup>9</sup> According, therefore, to the Epicurean theory, the gods have no contact with the world; nor do they govern it; every event is the result of a preceding action; no prayer can change the course of events and no sin can incur the wrath of the gods.<sup>10</sup> By this theory all usual forms of piety such as sacrifice, vow and prayer are shown to be useless, yet Epicurus himself was known to visit shrines. Bailey answers this seeming contradiction by explaining that the Epicurean

ideal of happiness was "to be able to contemplate all things with a mind at rest"<sup>11</sup>, and that Epicurus held that the contemplation of the gods in their blessed state aided man in attaining this ideal of happiness.<sup>12</sup>

With regard to morality, Epicureanism held that pleasure was the supreme aim of man, but that this was not violent emotional pleasure, which was to be avoided, because of the pain it eventually entails, but a passive pleasure, which meant freedom from trouble of the mind and freedom from pain of the body.<sup>13</sup> Actions were to be judged according as they led to or from this desired state of tranquillity. The contemplation of the gods in their blessed state was in some way intended to lead to imitation of them.<sup>14</sup> Lucretius speaks of the inclination of men to fear, to anger and complacency, but argues that these can be overcome in practice and ends by saying, that there is so little left of these which reason cannot dispel, that there is nothing to prevent us "living a life worthy of the gods."<sup>15</sup> Epicureanism therefore, presented a lofty ideal and gave a sanction of good conduct, which was adopted by some of the finest minds of Rome, but it was at best a selfish ideal and one that was easily debased.

To overcome the fear of death in men's minds, Lucretius explains the Epicurean theory that the soul is, like all being, a material thing, and all its sensations and thoughts are but movement of atoms united in a special compound;<sup>16</sup> that when the "fatal blow" reaches the compound, it is resolved into atoms again.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, Lucretius says, there need be no fear of death or of punishment in the next world, because the soul does not survive.<sup>18</sup>

This is in essence Epicurus' answer to the third question concerning the future life.

Stoicism has a physical theory, but this theory is religious in its origin and is subordinate to the religious basis. In direct opposition to the Epicurean theory that the gods are remote beings with no concern for the earth or man, Stoicism maintains that the universe is god.<sup>19</sup> There is some confusion in the expression of the Stoic theory, but in reality the Stoics admitted no distinction between mind and matter, soul or body.<sup>20</sup> The substance of the earth they called "fiery breath",<sup>21</sup> but to them this "fiery breath" was alive, had mind, was rational and showed itself in the workings of the world as reason.<sup>22</sup>

The Stoic philosophy served most conveniently to explain some beliefs of the older religion which would otherwise have been unacceptable to thinking men of the day. In particular it provided an explanation for the current acceptance of the traditional gods of mythology. Polytheism is not in itself inconsistent with pantheism but Stoicism believed in a monistic pantheism, which would not allow the dismemberment of the deity, and both Greek and Roman Stoicism forwarded the exaltation of Zeus or Jupiter above other gods.<sup>23</sup> Various explanations were given to overcome the difficulty. Some Stoics maintained that there was but one god, called by various names; others held that the various gods were but manifestations of the various forces of nature; still others declared that there was one supreme deity but with lesser powers both good and evil beneath him, and that these powers were the gods of mythology.<sup>24</sup>

The Stoics based their acceptance of divination on their

belief in destiny, as the expression of the will of the god, that is, of the universe. Since the "fiery breath" was present in all things, there was a sympathy between parts of the universe which would cause occurrences in one part to be reflected in others; therefore they argued that the expression of the divine will might be reproduced in natural phenomena and interpreted by divination.<sup>25</sup>

Neither the Stoic explanation of the gods of mythology nor that of divination was very satisfactory, and it is probable that few accepted them entirely, but the very fact that some argument was put forth to support them averted the ridicule which would otherwise have made them intolerable to the society of that day. Sincere Stoics were no doubt glad to have these troublesome questions explained, no matter how unsatisfactorily, and to give their attention to other aspects of their philosophy which rested on firmer ground.

Stoicism had a very definite moral code based on the theory that the universe was composed of the "fiery breath" which was also god; that man was but a spark of this "fiery breath" and would eventually be reunited to the great central fire; that since all men possess the spark of divine fire, they are brothers and have duties toward one another as well as to the divine universe.<sup>26</sup> While the ultimate end of man according to the Epicurean was pleasure, according to the Stoic it was virtue or living in accordance with the reason that is implanted in him, which is part of the divine wisdom. This was frequently expressed, as Cleanthes first put it, as living "according to nature", the nature of man and of the universe. Man, therefore, was to respect his own person and that of his fellow beings and to refrain from anything contrary to the

law common to all things.<sup>27</sup> This involved a consideration of the rights of others, and was in marked contrast to the Epicurean ideal of pleasure. It led the way for the development of altruistic and humanitarian ideas. There were difficulties, arising from the vagueness of the general principle of "living according to nature", but again Stoicism proved very adaptable to Roman ideal. The wise man of Stoic philosophy was an ideal so impossible to attain, that it led to ridicule; however, the philosophers met this difficulty by declaring that there were lower degrees of virtue to which the ordinary man could attain. The duties which the ordinary man was to carry out seem to correspond very closely to the practice of the old Roman qualities of virtus, gravitas and pietas.<sup>28</sup>

The theory of Stoicism with regard to the future life is somewhat uncertain. The soul or spark of "divine fire" must eventually be united to the divine being and could not therefore keep its identity or be immortal. The Greek Stoics held that the souls of the good would endure a long time, but those of the evil be quickly destroyed.<sup>29</sup> In this they agreed with the Epicurean in removing the possibility of eternal punishment. Stoicism maintained the doctrine of a purgatory in which the soul is refined from the contamination of earth and made fit to join the divine fire.<sup>30</sup>

Both by their natures and their devotion to poetry the three poets were more in sympathy with the lower type of Epicureanism which interpreted pleasure as ease or self-indulgence. Several expressions such as might have fallen from the lips of the Epicurean philosophers occur in the works of these poets, but the meaning which they intended is far from that which the philosophers would have given and probably more in accord with popular sentiment.

Propertius expresses the attitude of the three poets when he says, "We lovers adore peace."<sup>31</sup> The poet's ideal as expressed by Tibullus presents a delightful picture of a quiet life in the country free from pain or trouble.<sup>32</sup> In another instance Tibullus praises wine, because it eases pain.<sup>33</sup> The total impression given by Catullus' poetry is that of a desire to avoid pain and sorrow, and to seek pleasure. According to Tibullus death is loathsome, because it means the end of his pleasures,<sup>34</sup> and a similar attitude may be observed in Catullus and Propertius.<sup>35</sup>

Tibullus shows the attitude of a Stoic in accepting divination as an expression of the divine will, when he says to Apollo, "Tis thou dost guide the lots."<sup>36</sup> The Stoic belief in destiny is developed in the sibyl's prophecy to Aeneas of the founding of Rome.<sup>37</sup> In these prophecies the divine foundation of Rome is stressed and we can perhaps see the Stoic belief in divine Providence and the patriotic conviction that Rome was under the special protection of the gods, the theory which Augustus, for political reasons, did all in his power to further. This belief in destiny or fate is further brought out by several references to fortuna and to fatum. Propertius complains that fortune has decreed that he shall always be in love and at another time he says,<sup>38</sup> "While the fates allow, let us glut our eyes with love."<sup>39</sup> Tibullus speaks of fortune harassing him with her enmity.<sup>40</sup>

The poets' references to the after-life show the vagueness of the ordinary Roman's belief concerning this topic. There are expressions which would indicate their belief in some kind of survival after death, while other lines seem to contradict this. The separation of soul and body is frequently mentioned and the gen-



eral belief would seem to be in some kind of shadowy existence of the soul after death. Propertius says that Marcellus is now "one of the vapours that flit over the pools of hell," and asks that his shade, which is no longer tenanted by his soul, be conveyed to the stars with that of Caesar.<sup>41</sup> This is probably a conventional compliment and need not imply any particular belief regarding the after-life. Propertius sounds more sincere when after he imagines Cynthia's ghost has visited him, he says, "the dead have being and the lurid shadow escapes from the defeated faggot."<sup>42</sup> Tibullus voices a similar sentiment when he says that Delia's little dead sister will not bear with her for making him weep.<sup>43</sup> The frequent references to the Hades of Greek literature are quite conventional and need not indicate any strong belief in its existence.<sup>44</sup>

Propertius speaks of the fear of death and the uncertainty of life and rejects the divinations of astrologers.<sup>45</sup> Questions which Propertius says he will study in later life, such as "whether the stories of Hades are all a feigned legend and if there is aught to fear beyond the tomb"<sup>46</sup> show that he is aware of the Epicurean answer to questions regarding the other world. He speaks as a stern Stoic in decrying the vanity of human wishes and contemplating the certainty of death. The words, "Thou fool, naked must thou be conveyed to the barks of hell,"<sup>47</sup> might even have fallen from the lips of one of the early Christian fathers, but his concern would have been for the after-life, while Propertius is thinking rather of the end of his pleasures which death will bring. He suggests such an attitude when he says "that death is best which comes apace when we have had our joy of life."<sup>48</sup> Catullus reveals a similar lack of belief in an after-life when, in referring

to his dead brother, he says, "never shall I see thee again but love thee always."<sup>49</sup>

Few passages in Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius indicate the existence of specific philosophies of conduct and ethics, but the general Roman standard of morality at the time may be implied from the manner in which various evil actions are mentioned. Violation of the sanctity of the gods by false swearing is one sin which had probably always been abhorred. Tibullus says, "Spare me, sire. No broken oaths make me to fear and tremble, no wicked speech against the holy gods."<sup>50</sup> Catullus speaks of kindness, friendship, keeping sanctam fidem and refraining from perjuries as pious qualities which deserve reward from the gods.<sup>51</sup> While sancta fides was one of the old Roman virtues, it is also in harmony with the Stoic theory of man's duty to his fellow man, because each bears within him the "divine fire." The value placed on true friendship is in itself more in accord with the Stoic theory of the kinship of man than with the more selfish Epicurean creed.

Catullus says in his marriage hymn to Hymen, "The land that should want thy sanctities would not be able to produce guardians for its borders."<sup>52</sup> According to Merrill there is a reference here to the fact that in earlier days only Roman citizens could serve in the legions, and no man could be born a Roman citizen save within the strictly graded marriage-laws, and in the use of the word sacris there is revealed the regard of the early Roman for the sacred character of marriage--a sentiment which probably still existed in Catullus's day, despite the new freedom which was proclaimed by many. While divorce was common, Cordelia's boast that she was the wife of one husband,<sup>53</sup> indicates that per-

manent marital bonds were held in high esteem. The picture painted by Propertius when he asks, "What profits it for maids to found temples in honour of chastity, if every bride is permitted to be what she will?"<sup>54</sup> is indeed dark, yet the tone of the poet is definitely one of disapproval, and here he was likely supported by popular opinion.

Propertius blames luxury for the faithlessness of matrons,<sup>55</sup> but there were other reasons. While young girls were still rather carefully guarded, complete freedom to go and come as they pleased was accorded to matrons.<sup>56</sup> Most marriages were still arranged by the parents and resulted in many ill-suited unions.<sup>57</sup> The young wife finding herself totally unable to find a place in the life of the husband whom her parents had chosen for her, and being for the first time free to do as she pleased, was very susceptible to the temptations of the gay life at Rome.

Certainly a new age of freedom for women had come. Never again would women be excluded from society. Many had come to wield great power through their influence at court or in society, and the part played in politics by Clodia is well known.<sup>58</sup> That there were some good effects brought about by the coming of the "new woman", may be seen in the descriptions of the learning and grace of many of the women of the day, and in the exercise of real talent such as that which Sulpicia displayed in her poetry. Propertius gives high praise to the faithful wife in his beautiful eulogy of Cornelia,<sup>59</sup> a woman who combined a position of distinction in society with the true virtues of wife and mother. If this beautiful expression of praise affords any indication of the ideals of contemporary Roman society, there must have been much that was good in

that society, since ideals are after all as good, if not a better criterion for judging a society than individual cases of misconduct.

Propertius praises Galla's chastity, saying that her husband may safely leave her at Rome,<sup>60</sup> here he uses her fidelity as a contrast to the license practised by the gay society of the city. The poets have drawn for us a vivid picture of that gay society where men and women met on great terms of intimacy, where deception was applauded and women sought to further their emancipation by throwing away all restraint and decency. Excessive drinking was indulged in by both men and women;<sup>61</sup> the latest scandals were whispered about<sup>62</sup> and their perpetrators all too often commended for their cleverness. Tibullus draws such a picture when he warns Delia's husband to see, "that she speak not over much with young men, nor use nods to deceive, that she take not wine in her fingers to trace signs."<sup>63</sup>

While the poets praise chastity in women they do not indicate that there was any moral sanction to its preservation. When Catullus asks the gods to reward his piety<sup>64</sup> he shows no feeling of guilt for having seduced the wife of another. References by the poets to the failings of the gods and goddesses in this regard, in excuse for their own faults,<sup>65</sup> show an attitude of levity with regard to religion which was a contributing factor to the license practised in that day.

Certainly great licence was allowed a young man before marriage. Propertius says that when he put off the toga praetexta of boyhood he then acquired freedom to acquaint himself with the way of love.<sup>66</sup> Catullus mentions this freedom in the verse directed to the bridegroom, when he says, "We know that you are not acquainted with unlawful joys, but a husband has not the same liberty."<sup>67</sup>

Cynthia was a courtesan, but Propertius does not indicate that this attaches any stigma to her in his own opinion, but he urges her to be faithful to him and considers their love true. He says that no wife shall ever steal his Cynthia from him and that she shall be at once mistress and wife.<sup>68</sup> Cynthia and Propertius both rejoiced when the law against celibacy was swept away, since as a Roman Citizen he could not marry one of her station.<sup>69</sup>

When speaking of their own loves the poets show great leniency of judgment. Catullus' Lesbia was a married woman, yet he speaks as if his love were pure, saying, "I loved her not only as the common sort of mistress, but as a father loves his sons."<sup>70</sup> Propertius defends Cynthia's wantonness by saying that Rome is no longer as it was in the days of the Tatii and strict Sabine.<sup>71</sup> These sentiments are evidently coloured by personal feelings and personal relationships, so that they can hardly be said to express current ideas of morality at Rome. After their disillusionment in their loves, the poets speak of their mistresses' wantonness in a very different tone.<sup>72</sup> Here again personal feelings dictate their words, and they are indignant more because they feel that their love has been outraged than because they are horrified at the excesses in which these gay ladies indulged.

Tibullus and Propertius both blame greed for many evils of the day, in particular for the loose morals of women.<sup>73</sup> Hurt pride for having been slighted in favour of wealthier men may account for some of their indignation at this tendency to luxury and greed, but from their descriptions of the luxury in dress and living, which tally with those of other authors of the day we may be inclined to agree with the poets that the increase of luxury was

demoralizing the nation.

The practice alluded to in the poems to Juventius and Marathus is a more serious indication of the degeneracy which was sapping the strength of Rome. Catullus also mentions it in the fescennine verses in his Marriage Hymn, but here a good deal may be discounted because of the traditional coarseness of language used on such occasions.<sup>74</sup> The total lack of any shame in the expressions of the poets in referring to such unnatural practices, must be considered a serious blot on the moral consciousness of this period.

Several references to poisoning indicate that it was common. Propertius asks that Cynthia be judged leniently for her sins, because she has not resorted to poisoning.<sup>75</sup> This is the only form of murder referred to in the work of the poets (it was likely the most common form) and from the horror with which it is mentioned we may assume that human life was considered sacred and any unlawful taking of life condemned. The only mention of stealing is that of the petty theivery of the napkin thief<sup>76</sup> and the stealing of clothes which was carried on at the baths.<sup>77</sup> The distaste expressed for such conduct is as much for their pettiness as for the evil of stealing, yet we may be sure that the practical Roman, in this age as in any other, placed great importance on his property rights and regarded stealing with the disgust which it naturally inspires in civilized man.

In conclusion, the moral standards of Rome as far as we can see them expressed in the work of these poets, seem fairly high. It is difficult to determine to what degree philosophy is responsible for these standards, for although the old religion was apparently dead, certainly traditions of morality did survive. Philosophy enforced convictions of right and wrong which might otherwise

have fallen into oblivion, and that philosophy thereby delayed the decline of the nation. The laws passed by Augustus against luxury and immorality were powerless, of themselves, to change ideas. If they were effective with thinking men, it was likely through the assistance of philosophy and the writings of the philosophers.

While her ideals remained right and had some followers, there were many flagrant violations of the moral code and in practice the age provides many examples of loose living. In the pages of these three poets may be found all the instructions for wantonness for which Ovid's Art of Love was condemned. His instructions were not new, they are to be found in the works of Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius and their presence reveals that the society of Ovid's time which was condemned so severely had its counterpart in the earlier years in which Tibullus and Propertius wrote, and that evidence of it appears as early as the time of Catullus.

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## BOOKS AND LITERARY LIFE

A great period of literature is frequently a response to a period of momentous events. During the periods of civil discord commencing with the Gracchi the shackles of caste had been gradually thrown off, citizenship had at last been granted to all Italy and the result was a greater unity of purpose among the Roman people as a whole, while the expansion of Roman territory under such generals as Pompey and Caesar encouraged the Roman pride of conquest which is a prominent note in the literature of the Golden Age.<sup>1</sup> Vergil has expressed the highest hopes and ideas of the age in the sphere of religious and patriotic feeling, while Horace has depicted its life, manners and some of the deeper currents of serious feeling.<sup>2</sup> Rome's conquests also served to bring the Romans into contact to a greater extent with other peoples and their literatures and the result was a broadening of the Roman outlook, while a more prominent part was given to foreign elements introduced into the literature of this time.<sup>3</sup>

The Elegiac Poets, among whom are Tibullus and Propertius, did not generally appeal as Vergil did to the high traditions of the great governing class, nor did they aim to reconcile this class to the new conditions, but rather they tend to express those decadent tendencies of their age which made it so closely resemble the Alexandrian Age of Greece.<sup>4</sup> They followed, as we shall see, the Greek Alexandrian writers as models and chose their material from everyday life. Since the chief aim of the society for which they wrote and to which they belonged was the pursuit of pleasure their poetry is considered "light" by themselves and by contemporary

literary critics.<sup>5</sup> Like their models, the Greek Alexandrians, they considered love the greatest theme of verse.<sup>6</sup> By this love they meant the love of the poet for his mistress and their works conform to the conventions of this type of poetry, which were discussed in the chapter on love and marriage.<sup>7</sup> Catullus lived during the period of the Republic, but because of general subject matter and Alexandrian tendencies he may be classed with the Elegiac poets of the Augustan Age. There is, however, a vigor and freshness about his work which is not found in that of Tibullus and Propertius, and the liberty of spirit shown in his diatribes against Caesar's favourites is quite inconsistent with the personal ambition and adulation which marked the Augustan Age.

Literary patronage was not a new thing, but it exerted a peculiar influence during the Augustan Age.<sup>8</sup> Augustus may have been a lover of good literature, but he also most certainly appreciated its value in promoting his new regime. Accordingly he became the general patron of letters, and poets had the incentive of pleasing the Emperor and of the reward to be expected as a result. Augustus' aims of reviving the ancient religion<sup>9</sup> and of glorifying Rome's destiny provided excellent material for poetic inspiration, and the manner in which Augustus concentrated all power in his own hands<sup>10</sup> prevented many men of ability from following a political career. Hence many of these men turned their interest to literature, either writing or encouraging others to write. Literary circles were formed, usually with some noted man as patron; the most prominent of these patrons was Maecenas, Augustus' minister. He particularly encouraged poets whose works supported the aims of the new regime,

but he was also a true critic of literature and devoted to its encouragement generally.<sup>11</sup> Around Maecenas, the wise and beneficent patron, a group of writers formed a circle to enjoy his criticism and encouragement and the opportunity of exchanging ideas with one another. To Horace Maecenas gave the benefit of his society and the financial support which enabled him to devote himself to literature.<sup>12</sup> Although Propertius did not need financial support and was too much of an individualist to be greatly influenced by others, yet when Maecenas recognized his merit he became a member of his literary circle and the admiration which he felt for Maecenas was one of the stabilizing influences of his chaotic career.<sup>13</sup> Under this influence he made some attempts to try his hand at more lofty themes and thereby revealed possibilities the fulfillment of which was prevented by his early death.<sup>14</sup> Propertius shows that he considers Maecenas his literary guide when he says to him, "Do thou but grant thy kindly favours, take the reins that guide my youthful course."<sup>15</sup>

Maecenas and his circle were, in general, supporters of Augustus and his regime. There was another literary circle which did not support the Emperor and his regime, but rather expressed that tendency in literature toward "softness" and the perfection of form known as Alexandrianism. This circle was under the patronage of Messala, who although not in opposition to the Emperor never showed great enthusiasm for Augustus' rule: Tibullus belonged to it and his attachment to Messala is several times referred to in his work.<sup>16</sup> Tibullus pays tribute to Messala as his literary guide when he invokes him: "Hither come and breather upon me while with my song I pay thanksgiving to the powers that tend the fields."<sup>17</sup>

While Catullus makes no assertion of his adherence to Alexandrian principles of verse, from the evidence of poems such as his Coma Berenices, a translation from Callimachus, we may judge that he was thoroughly acquainted with the Greek Alexandrian poets and that he was influenced by their poetry. Tibullus refers to no models, but there are parallels between some of his sentiments and those of Mimnermus and the general simplicity of his style has been said to be reminiscent of some of the older Greek poets.<sup>18</sup> Propertius, however, calls himself the "Roman Callimachus"<sup>19</sup> and claims to be the first to have written of Italian subjects in the manner of the Greeks.<sup>20</sup>

From the words of Propertius we gain a rather complete picture of what constituted the Alexandrian tradition in poetry. We see that love of the poet for his mistress is considered the proper theme of poetry.<sup>21</sup> By the lips of Calliope, Propertius outlines the intrigues of which such poetry may treat and finishes by referring to Philetas as if to the model of such themes.<sup>22</sup> Propertius answers the questions, why love is so often his theme and why his books are found so "mollis in ore," by saying that his mistress herself is the author of his wit and fancy.<sup>23</sup> By the term mollis he refers to the polished elegance of verse at which the Alexandrians aimed, and in his answer he shows that he considers this refined type of verse particularly suitable because of its subject. He refers again to this "smoothness" of verse demanded by the Alexandrians when he imagines Phoebus speaking to him in these words, "Smoothed to perfection with fine pumice-stone must the verse proceed whereby soaring fame uplifts me from the earth."<sup>24</sup>

While Propertius chooses to write of love in the manner of

the Alexandrians he is not unaware of the power of a deeper and more elevated verse; but he explains his devotion to light verse by saying that he has not the talent for heroic song<sup>25</sup> or that ruggedness in verse does not suit his temper,<sup>26</sup> and he pleads for forbearance saying, "Let everyman spend his days at the trade he is best able to practice."<sup>27</sup> Upon several occasions he shows a desire to try other kinds of verse;<sup>28</sup> when in deference to Augustus he resolves to write of Rome's glory he invokes the muses, saying, "Quit your mean song, Peirides. It is high time to put on strength."<sup>29</sup> But a little later, after reconciliation with Cynthia, he again yields to the attraction of love poetry saying, "Love has forbidden me to despise these most slender muses."<sup>30</sup>

Believing in no after-world or at best in only a shadowy existence, the Roman was particularly attracted by the thought of immortalizing his name by winning fame. Propertius speaks of two ways by which he considers that this may be done, by writing poetry which brings him glory, or by being celebrated in the pages of an immortal poet.<sup>31</sup> The poets speak of their own fame since to the Roman there was nothing distasteful in what we would consider a boast. Catullus prophesies that he will last longer than one century,<sup>32</sup> and Propertius asserts that the fame which his wit has won will never perish.<sup>33</sup>

Horace and the writers of this age who did not conform to Alexandrian standards, maintained that the older Greek authors were the only models worthy of imitation.<sup>34</sup> In view of this it is interesting to see the opinion of these poets, who were professedly Alexandrian in sympathy, with regard to the classical models. Catullus uses the expression "pathetic as the tears of Simonides"<sup>35</sup>

and Tibullus compares Valgius to immortal Homer<sup>36</sup>, but they do not refer to any other of the poets of the classical Greek period. Propertius on the other hand has several references to them. His adherence to Alexandrian principles and his preoccupation with love as a theme influence his judgment; he prefers Mimnerus to Homer, saying that in love a line of Mimnerus is worth more than one of Homer,<sup>37</sup> and in another reference he rejects Aechylus as useless in love.<sup>38</sup> He shows an Alexandrian distaste for ruggedness of verse when he says, "Let Ennius encircle his speech with unkempt garlands."<sup>39</sup> However, elsewhere he seems to show a greater appreciation of early Latin poetry when he speaks of "putting his puny lips to the stream from which Ennius drank."<sup>40</sup> His attitude towards Ennius has changed here, because his topic is now a patriotic one--he is inspired to write of the glory of Rome; he thinks of Ennius who wrote of a similar theme and a growing pride in things Roman arouses his own pride in the Father of Roman poetry. When he goes on to speak of contemporary poets this sentiment is even more evident. In his enthusiastic praise of Vergil he says, "Give place you Roman writers, give place you Greeks! Here comes to birth a something greater than the Iliad."<sup>41</sup> Propertius then digresses to speak of the poetry which Vergil wrote. He praises him for his epic poem, the Aeneid, and for the Eclogues because they speak of love, and evidently takes more pleasure in the Eclogues because at the same time they draw upon the Hellenistic poetry of Theocritus. In the following lines<sup>42</sup> he paints a picture which shows that he himself can, when required to do so, handle the pastoral tradition--the idyllic picture of the simplicity of country life, -- the shepherd and his pipe or the simple rustic gift of an apple to the loved one



and the general atmosphere of peace and prosperity. The passage ends with praise of Vergil's precepts for agriculture derived from Hesiod.

From various references to the names of other authors of that day we see the varying reputations they enjoyed and at the same time gain some idea of the various types of poetry written at the time. Propertius defends his selection of erotic themes by grouping together the names of those who sang of the love of their mistress; in the order in which he places them they are Varro, Catullus, Calvus and Gallus.<sup>43</sup>

Catullus also expresses an opinion of some contemporaries. Such poets as Caesius, Aquinius and Suffenus he labels "poison"<sup>44</sup> and he calls Volusius the worst of poets.<sup>45</sup> He pays a pretty compliment to Caecilius after he has read the beginning of his Magna Mater;<sup>46</sup> he prophesies enduring fame for Cinna's Smyrna and at the same time shows scorn for a certain Hortensius who was evidently a most prolific writer.<sup>47</sup> In a complimentary speech the sincerity of which has been doubted by some he calls Cicero "best advocate of all."<sup>48</sup>

More can be learned of the various types of poetry from a consideration of Catullus' own works. Examples of the poetry of invective may be seen in his poems against, Caesar, Mamurra,<sup>49</sup> and his rivals for Lesbia's favour.<sup>50</sup> He refers to such poetry as "iambics" indicating that iambic metre was considered particularly suited to invective.<sup>51</sup> The epithalamia or poems written for use at weddings, show another popular type of poetry which was imitated from the Greek.<sup>52</sup> The interlude of the story of Ariadne interposed in the sixty-fourth poem of Catullus is in reality a

brief epic or epyllion which was becoming very popular at that time. Religious poetry for use at religious festivals is illustrated in Catullus' "Hymn to Diana".<sup>53</sup> He also uses the panegyric to praise his friends<sup>54</sup> and the threnode to console their grief.<sup>55</sup> Tibullus too, wrote a eulogy of Messala<sup>56</sup> and Propertius has likewise praised Maecenas.<sup>57</sup> The poetry of propaganda so familiar in the Augustan age is well represented in Propertius' poem on the battle of Actium in which he represents Augustus as the "servator mundi".<sup>58</sup> The popular epitaph poem is illustrated in Propertius' lines beginning, "Here lies Golden Cynthia in Tiburtine ground. A new glory has been added to thy bank, O Anio."<sup>59</sup> When Tibullus lay sick at Corcyra he wrote his own epitaph. "Here lies Tibullus, ravished by death's hand, Mesalla comrading o'er sea and land."<sup>60</sup>

Two further interesting points about the literary life are indicated by Catullus when he speaks of a contest of improvisation between himself and Licinius,<sup>61</sup> and again when he mentions the exchange between writers of copies of their poetry before publication in a reference to the beginning of Caecilius' Magna Mater.<sup>62</sup> The frequent mention by these poets of the "scholar maid"<sup>63</sup> implies that women were beginning to play a part in literary life. Propertius considers his mistress capable of literary appreciation,<sup>64</sup> which would indicate considerable training in the literary art. Frequent mention is also made of women who were accomplished singers, dancers and musicians;<sup>65</sup> accomplishments which were, especially in that day, closely connected with poetry. The references to special examples of the accomplished literary lady in Rome may well indicate that this type of interest is new for the Roman women. However, the most significant evidence of the role of women in the literary

society of that day is to be found in the real talent displayed in the poems supposed to have been written by Sulpicia and appended to the collections of Tibullus' poetry.<sup>66</sup>

Some interesting details about the Roman book are to be found in the poems themselves. Propertius speaks of the loss of his tablets which were evidently used to send messages and to write the first draft of poetry. He makes no claim of elegance for them saying they had no gold settings but were of common boxwood and coarse wax.<sup>67</sup> Catullus speaks of a less cumbersome writing material and more permanent written form, the papyrus roll and mentions the fact that its edges were smoothed with pumice stone as a finishing touch.<sup>68</sup> Some idea of an elaborate volume may be gained from Catullus' description of Suffenus' volumes.<sup>69</sup> He uses the best paper, new rolls, new bosses red ties and parchment wrappers and the whole volume is ruled with lead and smoothed with pumice. All this elegance Catullus considers wasted for such worthless poetry. He emphasizes the fact that the paper is new, which recalls the Roman custom of using old paper for rough writing and also suggests a scarcity of paper. Catullus also speaks of using sheets on which poor poetry had been written for wrapping up fish.<sup>70</sup> In this vigorous manner he indicates his distaste for Suffenus' poetry-- much paper expended on poor poetry might be better employed in some more practical way.

1. Duff, Literary History of Rome from the Origins to the Close of the Golden Age, p. 269-274.
2. Sellar, Horace and the Elegiac Poets, p. 2.
3. Duff, loc. cit.
4. Sellar, op. cit., p. 206.
5. Cat., VI.17.; Prop., II.x.25-26, and Butler's note on these lines.
6. Sellar, op. cit., p. 210.
7. Chapter IV, p.52.
8. Sellar, op. cit., p. 22; Cary, op. cit., p. 579.
9. Cary, op. cit., p. 491.
10. Ibid., pp. 474-480.
11. Sellar, op. cit., pp. 22-24.
12. Ibid., p. 25.
13. Prop., ed. Postgate, p. xxx.
14. Sellar, op. cit., pp. 321-322, 324; Prop., II.x, IV.vi etc.
15. Prop., III.ix.57-60; see also II.i.17-38, 71-78.
16. Tib., I.v.31-34, I.vii, II.i.31, 33, IV.i; Sellar, op.cit.,p.242.
17. Tib., II.i.35-36.
18. Sellar, op. cit., p. 245 and note 1.
19. Prop., IV.i.64, see also, II.i.39-40, II.xxxiv.32, III.ix.43.
20. Prop., III.i.1-4.
21. Sellar, op. cit., p. 210; see also Chapter IV, p.47-48.
22. Prop., III.iii.47-54.
23. Prop., II.i.1-5, II.xxxiv.42, III.i.19.
24. Prop., III.i.7-10 (Phillimore).
25. Prop., II.i.40-43, III.iii.14-15.
26. Prop., III.i.20.
27. Prop., III.i.46-47.

28. Prop., II.x, II.i.16-39.
29. Prop., II.x.11-13.
30. Prop., II.xiii.13.
31. Prop., III.ii.17-28, III.i.33-38.
32. Cat., I.10.
33. Prop., loc. cit.
34. Sellar, op. cit., p. 49; Horace, Ars Poetica, 268-9, 400 ff.
35. Cat., XXXVIII.8.
36. Tib., III.vii.108.
37. Prop., I.ix.11.
38. Prop., II.xxxiv.30.
39. Prop., IV.i.61 (Phillimore).
40. Prop., III.iii.5-7.
41. Prop., II.xxxiv.65-66 (Phillimore).
42. Prop., II.xxxiv.67-77.
43. Prop., II.xxxiv.184-196.
44. Cat., XIV.18-19.
45. Cat., XIV.19-23, XXII, XXXVI.1-10, XCV.7.
46. Cat., XXXV.16-17.
47. Cat., XCV.3.
48. Cat., XLIX.2.
49. Cat., LVII.
50. Cat., XL.
51. Cat., XIV.
52. Cat., LXII, LXIV.
53. Cat., XXXIV.
54. Cat., LXVIII.
55. Cat., XCVI.
56. Tib., III.vii.

57. Prop., II.i.25.
58. Prop., IV.vi.38.
59. Prop., IV.vii.85-87; see also, II.xi.16.
60. Tib., I.iii.55-56, I.ix.83-84. Cat., IV. is really a dedicatory epigram on his skiff.
61. Cat., L.
62. Cat., XXXV.
63. Cat., XXXV.16; Prop., I.vii.11, II.iii.19, II.xi.6.
64. Prop., II.xiii.11-12.
65. Prop., II.iii.18-24.
66. See Smith's edition of Tibullus, Introduction, p. 80., for discussion of authorship of "Sulpicia's Garland" and for an appreciation of the merit of these poems.
67. Prop., III.xxiii.7-10.
68. Cat., I, XXXV.
69. Cat., XXII.5-9.
70. Cat., XCV.8.

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