

XXII.—*Servitium amoris* in the Roman Elegists

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The figure of the lover as slave is common in Roman elegy, but is rare in extant Greek erotic literature. An examination of the Greek and Latin evidence reveals that the Roman elegists showed considerable originality in their use of the figure and may be credited with having developed it as a vehicle for the expression of the romantic-sentimental view of love.

Of all the figures used by the Roman elegists, probably none is quite so familiar as that of the lover as slave. It appears again and again in their poems, sometimes in simple form, sometimes considerably elaborated. It is an expression of the lover's humility and abasement, of his willingness in the name of love to undergo punishments and to undertake duties which in real life were felt to be peculiar to the slave alone, and entirely unworthy of a free man. By its very nature, therefore, the figure is romantic-sentimental, for it idealizes love out of all relation to reality, and, perhaps as does no other figure used by the elegists, transports the poets into a phantasy-world created out of their own imagination. In thought, if not in actuality, they debase themselves for love to a social level to which in their saner moments they would never have condescended. This figure, therefore, is especially worthy of study as illustrative of the degree to which the romantic-sentimental concept of love had taken hold in the ancient world.<sup>1</sup> It is the purpose of this paper to determine the sources of the *servitium amoris* figure, to trace its development down to Roman times, and to indicate to what degree the Roman elegists showed originality in its use.

In at least one of its forms, the figure of *servitium amoris* is to be traced back to the myths which told of the enslavement of gods to men. A number of the gods were subjected to such indignity, among them Demeter, Hephaestus, Poseidon, Apollo, and Her-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Denis de Rougemont, *Love in the Western World* (English edition, New York, Harcourt-Brace, 1940). This whole book is devoted to the theory that romantic love, in answer to pressure from an uncongenial world, creates its own language, morality, and standards, which are almost always at variance with their counterparts in the real life of the times.

cules.<sup>2</sup> Best known of these myths are those concerning Apollo's enslavement to Admetus, and Hercules' to Omphale. Neither of the latter was originally a love-story; in both instances the gods were condemned to a term of servitude in expiation for a crime, Apollo for the killing of the Cyclopes, Hercules for the murder of Iphitus. In themselves, therefore, these stories offer no clew to the origin of the figure of love's slavery. The Alexandrians, however, with their characteristic predilection for the sentimental,<sup>3</sup> interjected the erotic element into them both. According to the scholiast on Euripides,<sup>4</sup> Rhianus depicted Apollo as voluntarily serving as slave to Admetus because of his love for that young man; the existence of the erotic version of the story is confirmed by Plutarch.<sup>5</sup> A hint dropped by the same author may indicate that the erotic version of the Hercules-Omphale story even antedated the Alexandrian period;<sup>6</sup> in any event, Palaephatus' rationalistic attack on that version of the myth makes it clear that it was well known to the Alexandrians.<sup>7</sup> Doubtless others of these "enslavement" myths suffered a similar erotic treatment, but of them very little is known, and they never attained the popularity of the Apollo-Admetus and Hercules-Omphale stories.<sup>8</sup>

As for the manner in which the Alexandrians treated these stories, the scant extant evidence does not reveal that they expended upon them any great effort of the imagination. Callimachus, in the *Hymn to Apollo*, depicts Apollo serving as herdsman to Admetus, and takes occasion to inject a little of the pastoral element into the story:

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Panyasis *apud* Clem. Alexandr. *Protrept.* 2.10: τλῇ μὲν Δημήτηρ, τλῇ δὲ κλυτὸς Ἀμφιγυήεις, τλῇ δὲ Ποσειδάων, τλῇ δ' ἀργυρότοξος Ἀπόλλων, ἀνδρὶ παρὰ θνητῷ θηγευόμεν εἰς ἐνιαυτόν, τλῇ δὲ καὶ ὄβριμόθυμος Ἄρης ὑπὸ πατρὸς ἀνάγκης (Meineke *Analect. Alexandr.* [1843], 180). Apollo figures in a number of such stories: Plut. *Numa* 4; cf. also Callim. *Hym.* 2.47-54.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Rohde, *Der griechische Roman* (Leipzig, 1900) 104-123.

<sup>4</sup> On *Alcestis* 2: Ῥιανὸς δὲ φησιν ὅτι ἐκὼν (Ἀπόλλων) αὐτῷ (Ἀδμήτῳ) ἐδούλευσε δι' ἔρωτα. Cf. Wilhelm, "Tibulliana," *RhM* 59 (1904) 280-282.

<sup>5</sup> *Eroi.* 17 (761E): καὶ γὰρ τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα μυθολογοῦσιν ἐραστὴν γενόμενον "Ἀδμήτῳ παραθηγεῖσθαι μέγαν εἰς ἐνιαυτόν." Cf. *AP* 9.241 (Antipater Thess.).

<sup>6</sup> *Pericl.* 24, where Plutarch reports that Aspasia was styled the "new Omphale" (Ὁμφάλη νέα) in the comedies. Cf. Preller, *Griech. Myth.* 2.2 (1921) 593-594.

<sup>7</sup> Palaeph. 44 (45) (*Mythog. Graeci* 3.2, ed. N. Festa [1902] 65-66); cf. Preller, *op. cit.* 593 and note 4; 594, note 3.

<sup>8</sup> Zeus and Hades are styled *λάτρες* Ἔρωτος in an anonymous epigram: *AP* 5.100: cf. Wilhelm, *op. cit.* (above, note 4) 280.

Φοῖβον καὶ Νόμιον κικλήσκομεν ἐξέτι κείνου  
 ἐξότ' ἐπ' Ἀμφρυσσῶ ζευγίτιδας ἔτρεφεν ἵππους  
 ἡθέου ὑπ' ἔρωτι κεκαυμένος Ἀδμήτοιο.  
 ρεῖα κε βουβόσιον τελέθει πλέον, οὐδέ κεν αἶγες  
 δέουιντο βρεφῶν ἐπιμηλάδες ἦσιν Ἀπόλλων  
 βοσκομένησ' ὀφθαλμὸν ἐπήγαγεν· οὐδ' ἀγάλακτες  
 οὔεις οὐδ' ἄκυθοι, πᾶσαι δέ κεν εἶεν ὑπαρνοί,  
 ἢ δέ κε μουντοτόκος διδυμητόκος αἶψα γένοιτο.<sup>9</sup>

It must be noted, however, that Callimachus is far less interested in the pastoral than in the miraculous, and that he does not assign to Apollo, to any degree, the humility and abasement which, in a truly romantic version, would be of paramount importance. Apollo is not humbled; in fact, he is every inch the god, slave or no slave. No doubt such humility would have been out of place in a hymn, and its absence here is no proof that other and truly romantic versions of the story were not current in Callimachus' times. Still, even Nonnus, who might be expected to exaggerate any of the romantic or sentimental element that he found in his sources, although he lays more emphasis on Apollo's passion, does not convey any idea of his abasement, or of a servile conduct or attitude on his part:

οὐχ οὕτω λασίης Μαγνησσίδος ἔνδοθεν ὕλης  
 βουκόλος Ἀδμήτοιο βόας ποίμαινεν Ἀπόλλων,  
 παιδὸς ἐρωτοτόκου βεβολημένος ἥδ' ἐν κέντρῳ,  
 ὅσσον ἐπ' ἡμέῳ φρένα τέρπετο Βάκχος ἀθύρων.<sup>10</sup>

These two passages represent for all practical purposes the sum total of the extant evidence as to the manner in which the god-slave myths were treated by the Alexandrians. The treatment is sentimental to a degree, in that it ascribes overwhelming power to the passion of love, but it goes no further than that. Indeed, it is chiefly by a somewhat dubious inference from the works of the Roman elegists themselves that we may claim the existence, in the Alexandrian period, of truly romantic-sentimental versions of either myth. Tibullus and Ovid, in making use of them as *exempla*, do translate Apollo and Hercules into romantic lovers, and it is their very lowliness and servility that are in point, for it is their conduct

<sup>9</sup> *Hymn.* 2.47-54.

<sup>10</sup> *Dionys.* 10.322-325.

and attitude, rather than the mere fact of love's power over them, that are alleged in defense of a similar conduct and attitude on the part of the lover.<sup>11</sup> If we may assume that Tibullus and Ovid, in writing these passages, were imitating some unknown Greek source, then it is obvious that such a source, exhibiting such a treatment of the stories, must have existed. This, it will readily be seen, is a feeble argument at best, and rests primarily on two further assumptions, first, that other stories which are extant show that the Alexandrians had a predilection for the romantic, and it is therefore likely that they wrote romantic versions of these two, and second, that the Roman writers lacked the imaginative power to have devised them *ipsi per se*. All that the actual extant facts permit us to assert is that the Alexandrians did know the Apollo-Admetus and Hercules-Omphale myths as stories of enslavement in the name of love. There is no evidence that the romantic-sentimental aspect of this slavery was developed to any degree.

As to the use to which these two stories were put by the Alexandrians, there is again only scanty evidence. The reference in Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* is aetiological in character, an explanation of the epithets Φοῖβος and Νόμος. In Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*, the Apollo-Admetus story is an *exemplum* comparing Apollo's love for Admetus to that of Bacchus for Ampelus. In an anonymous epigram (*AP* 5.100), Zeus and Poseidon are *exempla* of the λάρπης "Ερωτος, cited by the poet in defense of his own enslavement to passion. That Menander once used the Hercules-Omphale story as *exemplum* is suggested by a passage in Terence's *Eunuchus*, where it is used for comic effect.<sup>12</sup> These passages permit at least the conclusion that the myths of god-slaves appeared as *exempla* in Alexandrian poetry, but it should be noted that in no extant instance do these *exempla* bring into clear focus the indispensable hall-mark of the romantic poet, the humility, the *servility* of the slave. The Alexandrians' use of the figure of the god-slave as *exemplum* shows no evidence that, for them, it was expressive in any striking way of the phantasy-world of romantic love. Rather, it illustrates merely the power of love, which sways gods as well as men, and in the end it is little more than a poetic conceit, sparingly used and of no special moment.

<sup>11</sup> Tib. 2.3.11-14, 29-32; Ov. *Ars Am.* 2.217-222; *Her.* 9.73-74; cf. *Met.* 2.680-685; 10.171-173.

<sup>12</sup> Ter. *Eun.* 1026-27.

*Servitium amoris* does appear in another, and completely different guise in Alexandrian literature. This is the figure in which a woman, rather than a man, proclaims her willingness to serve her beloved as slave. One instance has been preserved, in the *Alexandrian Erotic Fragment*.<sup>13</sup> It is seriously to be doubted, however, that the woman-slave figure has any generic relation to *servitium amoris* as it appears in the god-slave myths or in the other forms in which it was used by the elegists. The feminine form, if I may so term it, of love's slavery has a long history, going back as far as Homer,<sup>14</sup> and having its roots in the sociological fact that in many instances the woman actually was a slave. Although, especially in poems like the *Alexandrian Erotic Fragment*, it has a romantic tinge, still the figure is scarcely more than traditional, a commonplace of what might be termed the "song of the woman scorned." In nearly every instance, it shows the stamp of the original Homeric verses, and appears to be used with conscious reminiscence of them.<sup>15</sup> It belongs, one might almost say, to a sort of "woman's language," a form of speech which the Greek, and above all, the Roman poets, with their exclusively masculine viewpoint, would not have thought of applying to themselves.<sup>16</sup> Thus, even if the figure did appear in other songs of the type represented by the *Alexandrian Erotic Fragment*, it need not concern us here.<sup>17</sup> It is a separate literary phenomenon which had no discernible influence on the romantic figure of the lover as slave.

There is, however, one further possible source of this figure, which however difficult it may be to isolate and describe, cannot be left unmentioned. This is the common language of the people, the real-life language of love, as distinct from the literary dialect of passion. In other words, it is altogether likely that the popular mind, in Greek times, had seized on the similarity between the lover's fawning conduct, his humility and abasement, and the demeanor of the slave, with the result that the figure of love's slavery passed into common speech and became accepted and used there.

<sup>13</sup> *Alex. Er. Frg.* 27-28 (J. U. Powell, *Collectanea Alexandrina* [Oxford, 1925] 177-180): Κύριε, μή μ' ἀφῆς ἀποκεκλειμένην· δέξαι μ'· εὐδοκῶ, ζῆλῳ δουλεύειν.

<sup>14</sup> *Iliad.* 3.409.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Eur. frg. 132 Nauck; Cat. 64.158-163; *Ciris* 443-445; Nonnus, *Dionys.* 47.390-395.

<sup>16</sup> For Ovid's treatment of this form of the figure, see below, note 39.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Wilamowitz, "Des Mädchens Klage," *NGG* 1896, 230; Crusius, "Grenfells Erotic Fragment," *Philologus* 55 (1896) 382.

In point of fact, this could have happened both in Greece and in Rome, for lovers have ever exhibited the same behavior-patterns, and the conduct of the slave was known all over the ancient world. To put the two together would have required no great effort of the imagination. Unfortunately, evidence that this was the case is almost non-existent. The extant Greek erotic poets with their very limited use of the figure are of no assistance at all. Only a passage in Plato's *Symposium* remains to suggest that the Greek popular mind thought of lovers as acting like slaves: Plato describes them as *ἐθέλοντες δουλείας δουλέειν οἷας ἂν δοῦλος οὔδεις*.<sup>18</sup> Since there is little, if anything, in Greek literature that would have suggested this idea to Plato, then, unless Plato himself conceived it, it must have been derived from the speech of the people.

In sum, about all that can be said of the figure of *servitium amoris* in Greek literature of the classic and Alexandrian periods, is that the figure was known and occasionally employed. It was current chiefly, if not exclusively, in the form of the god-slave myth, used as *exemplum*. It connotes primarily the power of love, rather than the lover's humility and abasement, and there is no proof that it ever was endowed with the romantic-sentimental ideas with which later writers surrounded it. It may have been present, in a more fully developed and truly romantic form, in popular speech, or in literature no longer extant, but this remains nothing more than a conjecture. It is certainly significant that the figure does not appear in the idyll, and that the single instance of it in the comedy — in Terence's *Eunuchus* — shows no evidence of romantic-sentimental development. The one epigram which preserves the figure (*AP* 5.100) is anonymous and cannot be dated with any assurance; even if it could be definitely assigned to the Alexandrian period, it would remain an isolated instance and one of no great importance, since it displays the figure only in a rudimentary form. As for the reasons for its restricted use, when other romantic figures of the lover's language were wide-spread,<sup>19</sup> nothing can be said. The figure simply was not popular, and apparently never struck the poets as being worthy of their attention.

With the Roman elegists, the figure of *servitium amoris* appears at once in its full romantic-sentimental guise. The lover is adjoined

<sup>18</sup> *Symp.* 183A.

<sup>19</sup> E.g. the "pain" of love: cf. Arist. *Ecl.* 956-957, 972; *AP* 5.280.1-2; 167.1-2; 189; 23; 166; 190; 191; 211; *AP* 12.72; 167; Theocr. 3.12-13, 15-17; 7.123-125; *Alex. Er. Frg.* 3-8, 15-17, 23-24; and many others.

to strip off his pride and manly dignity — “exue fastus!” cries Ovid.<sup>20</sup> No duty is too low, no punishment too degrading, for him to suffer in the service of love. In the use of this figure there exists, between the Greek and the Roman writers, a gap not only of time but of ideas. Even if it may be assumed that the Greeks, in writings no longer extant, developed the romantic-sentimental aspect of *servitium amoris* to a degree higher than that exhibited in the extant literature, it seems safe to assert that they did not find the idea interesting or provocative; if they had, surely the epigram, the idyll, and the comedy would have preserved some evidence of the fact. Yet with the Romans, the figure is not only fully developed, but omnipresent. Love’s slavery is an idea which seems constantly in the mind of the elegists; in fact with them *servitium* is virtually a synonym for *amor*. With the loss of the intervening Greek and Roman erotic literature, the gap will never be satisfactorily filled. The fragments of early Latin literature and the works of Plautus show no example of the figure. The single instance in Terence is of the earlier, simple type. Catullus does not use it.<sup>21</sup> I have found but one example in Horace, and that one not sentimental in character, but intended rather as a sardonic comment on lovers’ behavior, somewhat in the manner of Plato’s remark.<sup>22</sup> The evidence at hand does not permit the tracing of a development from the figure as it appears in Alexandrian literature to the form in which we find it in the elegies of Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid. Any significant study of the figure will have to be based primarily on the writings of those authors alone.

It has been shown that the Greek writers used *servitium amoris* chiefly in the form of the god-slave *exemplum*, the two favorite stories being those of Apollo-Admetus, and Hercules-Omphale. These two appear again as *exempla* in the Roman elegists. In an elegy which begins by striking the note of love’s power (quid mirare, meam si versat femina vitam), Propertius uses the Hercules-Omphale myth much in the manner of the Greek writers:

Omphale in tantum formae processit honorem,  
Lydia Gygaeo tincta puella lacu,  
ut qui pacato statuisset in orbe columnas,  
tam dura traheret mollia pensa manu.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Ars Am.* 2.241.

<sup>21</sup> The woman-slave figure does occur in Ariadne’s complaint, 64.158–163, but of this see above.

<sup>22</sup> *Hor. Od.* 2.8.18.

<sup>23</sup> 3.11.17–20.

Here the *exemplum* expresses the thought, "If love was strong enough to set Hercules' hard hand to the performance of women's tasks, why should anyone be surprised that I am subject to its sway?" The humiliation of Hercules is little if at all in point; indeed, the poet himself does not speak of his own humiliation, but merely of his inability to break the bond that holds him. No other instance of such an elementary treatment either of this or of the Apollo-Admetus myth occurs in Roman elegy. One cursory reference in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* shows Apollo subject to love's power and become, as a result, a rather careless herdsman,<sup>24</sup> but these two instances do no more than suggest that the elegists found the elementary form of the figure of no special interest, even when they were writing something other than elegy.

In the other passages in which the elegists use the god-slave myths as *exempla*, the full range of romantic-sentimental development is present. Tibullus proclaims himself willing to undertake the hardest of farm-labor, if only he may be with his lady; in his defense, he cites the Apollo-Admetus story, and in great detail describes the tasks which Apollo performed in the service of love: he pastured the cattle, drove the cows from the stable, made cheese (and incidentally invented the *fiscella*).<sup>25</sup> Degrading enough in themselves as these tasks would have been even for a gentleman, let alone a god, Tibullus drives home Apollo's humiliation: his sister blushed when she saw him carrying a calf (17-18); his oracle was mute (21-22); Leto mourned his dishevelled locks (23-24); his glories were gone, and he lived in a miserable hut (27-28); he was even made ridiculous, for the lowing of the cattle disrupted his *docta carmina* (19-20). Yet, he was unashamed, for it was all in the name of love (29-30).

Ovid also uses the Apollo-Admetus myth to drive home to the tyro the lesson of love's slavery.<sup>26</sup> The man who would win his mistress must be willing to undergo, like the soldier, the long road, night, winter, rain, the cold couch of earth; to the tacit objection that this is no life for a free-born Roman, Ovid replies with the *exemplum*:

<sup>24</sup> *Met.* 2.680-685.

<sup>25</sup> 2.3.5-32; cf. Wilhelm, *op. cit.* (above, note 4) 282.

<sup>26</sup> *Ars Am.* 2.233-242.



Cynthius Admeti vaccas pavisse Pheraei  
fertur et in parva delituisse casa.  
quod Phoebum decuit, quem non decet? exue fastus,  
curam mansuri quisquis amoris habes.<sup>27</sup>

Thus neatly does he combine his two points: the lover must be ready to undergo hardships like those of the soldier, and must accept them with the humility of the slave.

Exactly similar is his treatment, in the passage just preceding this one, of the Hercules-Omphale story.<sup>28</sup> Here the lover is urged to undertake a series of menial tasks for his mistress: he is to carry her parasol, make way for her in the crowd, pull out her footstool, take off or put on her shoes, hold her mirror, run her errands, escort her home by night, hasten through heat or cold to do her bidding. These are not merely servile duties; in many instances they are peculiarly the duties of the woman-slave. And let no man object, for Hercules did as much for Omphale:

ille fatigata praebendo monstra noverca  
qui meruit caelum quod prior ipse tulit,  
inter Ioniacas calathum tenuisse puellas  
creditur et lanas excoluisse rudes;  
paruit imperio dominae Tirynthus heros:  
i nunc et dubita ferre quod ille tulit!<sup>29</sup>

It would be unforgiveable to miss, in either of these passages, the characteristic Ovidian humor; in point of fact, Ovid's sly teasing of the romantic lover only serves to indicate the degree to which the romantic-sentimental version of love's slavery had been developed. Clearly, the humble self-abasement of the lover was only too well known, for only if it were would Ovid's irony have point for his readers.

The Roman use of the god-slave *exemplum* differs from the Greek in two important ways, first, in the extent to which the story is elaborated, and second, in the emotional or poetic significance which is attached to it. Callimachus, it is true, introduced a few pastoral details into his account of Apollo's service as herdsman, but as we have seen, these details were embellished with the miraculous, and the total effect is to make the duties of the *βουκόλος*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* 239-242. The reminiscence of the Tibullus-passage (above, note 25) is obvious.

<sup>28</sup> *Ars Am.* 2.209-232.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* 217-222.

worthy of the god, rather than to debase the god to the lowly level of the slave. No such attempt is made either by Tibullus or Ovid. On the contrary, not only do the Roman writers, especially Tibullus, recount in great detail the duties of the god-slave or of the lover whose conduct is to be justified by the god-slave *exemplum*; in addition, they do exactly the thing which Callimachus avoided doing: they debase the god to the position of the slave, humiliate and embarrass him, and the very point of the *exemplum* lies in this humiliation and embarrassment. Thus, through the god-slave *exemplum* they create the paradoxical atmosphere of romantic-sentimental love: godhead accepts a position, standards of conduct, and an attitude which are at the opposite pole from the appropriate and generally accepted — not only accepts them, but glories in them. This is the canonical position of the romantic lover, writ large in the figure of the god.

However, the god-slave *exemplum* is only one of several forms in which the figure of *servitium amoris* appears in Roman elegy. It will be noted that the two passages discussed above suggest two different types of slave, the city slave and the country slave, and that the lover is urged, by mythological precedent, to undertake the duties now of the one, now of the other. But the elegists did not feel themselves in any way bound to cite precedent for such behavior and attitude. Tibullus and Ovid depict the lover in the role of both country and city slave, quite without the defense of an *exemplum*. Thus, Tibullus has him loyally performing the duties of *paedagogus*, clinging ever to his lady's side, making way for her in the crowd, escorting her to the homes of her friends, and — crowning touch of humility — removing her shoes after she gets there.<sup>30</sup> Again, Tibullus himself carries the torch for Marathus, when the boy embarks on an intrigue of his own with a girl; he is the loyal slave whose discretion may be trusted.<sup>31</sup> Ovid longs to change places with the *ianitor*, if only he may enjoy the delights of love,<sup>32</sup> and proclaims that he, too, has been the faithful *custos* of his beloved.<sup>33</sup> In his didactic elegy on boy-love, Tibullus instructs the lover to show complete subjection to the boy's whims: obsequio

<sup>30</sup> 1.5.61–66; cf. Smith *ad loc.* (K. F. Smith, *The Elegies of Tibullus* [New York, 1913]).

<sup>31</sup> 1.9.41–42.

<sup>32</sup> *Am.* 1.6.45–47.

<sup>33</sup> *Am.* 3.11.17–18.

plurima vincit amor.<sup>34</sup> When he travels by land or sea, in winter or summer, the lover is to be at his side, his faithful *comes*; in the boat, he is to take the oars himself.<sup>35</sup> On the hunt, his are the heavy duties of beater and net-carrier.<sup>36</sup> "Do anything, submit to anything, *dum placeas*," he says. Even Sulpicia offers to be net-bearer, tracker, and dog-keeper to Cerinthus when he goes hunting.<sup>37</sup> Her sentiments here have no relation whatever to those of the conventional woman-slave;<sup>38</sup> instead, she adopts masculine phraseology, and uses the language of the true *servus amoris*. In fact, her offer to perform the duties of the male slave — and peculiarly masculine duties, at that — is the logical complement of Ovid's instructions to the lover to submit to the performance of female slave's tasks.<sup>39</sup> The very absurdity of the situation points up, as clearly as can be, the complete unreality of the world of romantic love, its entire divorce from actual standards of thought and conduct.

In all of these passages, both those with the *exemplum* and those without, the Roman elegist reduces the lover to a social level to which in real life he could not have condescended without suffering humiliation and disgrace, or at least keen embarrassment. And not only is he taught to submit, but to submit willingly, even eagerly, for only thus can he win his love, and to win his love is all that counts. It does not matter whether he actually performed the duties prescribed for him, or performed them only in imagination, in his dreams, so to speak. The point is that by the acceptance of *servitium amoris* he enters into the phantasy-world of love, where, at least in his thoughts, he is released from the laws and standards of every-day life, and lives the life of that imaginary man to whom nothing but love has meaning and value.

Obviously, the Roman elegists did not create this world; it had been in existence for many years in the erotic literature of the

<sup>34</sup> 1.4.40.

<sup>35</sup> 1.4.41-46.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* 47-50; cf. Ovid, *Mel.* 10.171-173.

<sup>37</sup> 3 (Ps.-Tib. 4.3) 11-14.

<sup>38</sup> Above, 289. The same can be said of Prop. 2.26b.1-2, and to a lesser degree of the passages in Ovid's *Heroides* in which the figure of the woman-slave appears: *Her.* 3.75-76, 99-100, 153-154; 4.103-104; 5.19-20; 7.167-168; 9.73-80 (with reference to the Hercules-Omphale myth), and even of 19.75-80, in which a man, Acontius, is the speaker.

<sup>39</sup> *Ars Am.* 2.209-232.

Greeks. But the Greeks seem not to have found access to it through *servitium amoris*, for the figure plays no significant part in their writings, whereas to the Romans it is of prime importance. Indeed, they view love as a very slavery, a *dulce servitium* perhaps, but nonetheless a *servitium*.

hic mihi servitium video dominamque paratam:  
iam mihi libertas illa paterna, vale.  
servitium sed triste datur, teneorque catenis,  
et numquam misero vincla remittit amor.

Thus Tibullus describes his love for Nemesis: chains and slavery. Nor was it only the unsympathetic Nemesis that could call forth such images; Delia, too, held him in chains: me retinent vinctum formosae vincla puellae.<sup>40</sup> Ovid, too, would wear the chains of love, if only he might have its delights;<sup>41</sup> when he is finally wearied of it, it is from chains and slavery that he escapes; he even uses the legal language of emancipation: adserui iam me.<sup>42</sup> When he has hurt his mistress, he prays that his hands be chained like those of an insubordinate slave.<sup>43</sup> In a moment of self-pity during a temporary estrangement from Cynthia, Propertius declares that no other woman shall ever put the *dulcia vincla* of love about his neck.<sup>44</sup> To Sulpicia, the happy love is that of mutual slavery, with Venus casting her chains about both herself and Cerinthus.<sup>45</sup>

Sometimes *servitium amoris* wears an aspect even harsher than that of chains. Ovid instructs the lover to learn, like any slave, to bear the curses and the lash of his mistress, and to kiss her feet in abject submission.<sup>46</sup> Tibullus, his hands bound behind his back, has learned the lesson of love's power from the lash of Venus herself; he will never refuse to submit to her chains and whips;<sup>47</sup> his *saeva puella* burns him with the torch; the proud and the unfaithful lover alike, he says, must expect the fire, the rack, the steel, and the twisted lash across his back.<sup>48</sup>

Thus in a fashion unparalleled in Greek literature, do the Roman

<sup>40</sup> 2.4.1-4; 1.1.55.

<sup>41</sup> *Am.* 1.6.47.

<sup>42</sup> *Am.* 3.11.1-4; cf. Prop. 2.21.5-6, and Rothstein *ad loc.*

<sup>43</sup> *Am.* 1.7.1-4.

<sup>44</sup> 3.15.9-10.

<sup>45</sup> Sulp. 5 (Ps.-Tib. 4.5) 13-16; 6 (Ps.-Tib. 4.6) 7-10; cf. Ov. *Mét.* 4.678-679.

<sup>46</sup> *Ars. Am.* 2.533-534.

<sup>47</sup> 1.8.5-6; 2.3.80.

<sup>48</sup> 1.5.5-6; 2.4.5-6; 1.9.21-22.

elegists elaborate the figure of *servitium amoris*. With them it is no longer a mere figure of speech or poetic conceit; it is a veritable doctrine of love. In proclaiming that the lover must perform the duties of the slave, and must submit to those forms of punishment which befit only the slave, the elegist creates for himself a whole world, in which, as long as he is to love, he must live. His consciousness of this world reaches its ultimate development when he can use the term *servitium* as a synonym for *amor*, and in so doing call to mind the whole slave's-world, with all its connotations of humility, abasement, and suffering. Thus Tibullus can say:

iam faciam quaecumque voles, tuus usque manebo,  
nec fugiam notae servitium dominae.<sup>49</sup>

And to Ovid *servire puellae* is the same as *amare puellam*:

siquis erit qui turpe putet servire puellae,  
illo convincar iudice turpis ego,

and again:

accipe, per longos tibi qui deserviat annos,  
accipe, qui pura norit amare fide.<sup>50</sup>

Of all the elegists, Propertius is the one to whom the idea of slavery seems most readily to occur when he thinks of love. He begs Bassus not to try to entice him away from his *assuetum servitium*;<sup>51</sup> he warns Gallus that if he persists in his interference he will learn of the *grave servitium* which is Cynthia's love.<sup>52</sup> He taunts Ponticus with an "I-told-you-so":

dicebam tibi venturos, irrisor, amores,  
nec tibi perpetuo libera verba fore:  
ecce iaces supplexque venis ad iura puellae,  
et tibi nunc quaevis imperat emptā modo.<sup>53</sup>

No man is free, he says, who would be in love:

libertas quoniam nulli iam restat amanti:  
nullus liber erit, siquis amare volet.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>49</sup> 4.13 (3.19) 21-22.

<sup>50</sup> *Am.* 2.17.1-2; 1.3.5-6.

<sup>51</sup> 1.4.1-4.

<sup>52</sup> 1.5.19-20.

<sup>53</sup> 1.9.1-4.

<sup>54</sup> 2.23.23-24; cf. 1.10.29-30; 2.8.13-16.

In the fictitious epitaph he writes for himself, he styles himself "the slave of a single love";<sup>55</sup> for five years, he says in another elegy, he was Cynthia's faithful slave.<sup>56</sup> Finally, in three passages Propertius uses *servitium* quite without illustrative context, to mean *amor*; in these instances the two terms have become mutually identified.<sup>57</sup> Thus the figure of *servitium amoris* reaches the extreme point of its development; the romantic-sentimental concept is established, and no further significant changes can be made in it.

The difference between Greek and Roman usage in the matter of *servitium amoris* is then well established: to both Greek and Roman, it is an expression of romantic-sentimental love, but to the Greek it was a mere conceit, of only passing interest; to the Roman it represented a whole concept, a whole system, of love, and one which was constantly present to his mind. It remains to be seen from what sources the Roman derived this concept.

In some cases, the source is fairly obvious. The god-slave *exemplum* was doubtless derived from Alexandrian writers. We are not in a position to say from what particular writers, since their works have been lost, but Rhianus and Callimachus probably played their part in establishing this form of the figure as part of the literary language of love. The various slavish services imposed upon the lover probably also had an Alexandrian inspiration, for Callimachus recounts the duties performed by Apollo for Admetus, and it may be taken for certain that Rhianus did the same, perhaps in even greater detail. Tibullus and Ovid both place the stamp of their own individualities on these services, and give them a Roman character and setting, but the basic idea here must be considered in all reason as Greek in origin, whether it came to Tibullus and Ovid directly from some Greek writings now lost, or through the mediation of earlier Latin writings, now equally lost.

At this point, all indication of Greek influence abruptly ends. There is extant no evidence to show that Greek literature had any part to play in the interpretation given by the Roman elegists to the god-slave *exemplum* or to the lover's slavish services. The romantic-sentimental idea of the lover's humble abasement, of his

<sup>55</sup> Unius hic quondam servus amoris erat: 2.13.36.

<sup>56</sup> Quinque tibi potui servire fideliter annos: 3.25.3.

<sup>57</sup> Sunt quoque translato gaudia servitio: 1.12.18; quod si nec nomen nec me tua forma teneret, posset servitium mite tenere tuum: 2.20.19-20; tu (sc. Bacche) modo servitio vacuum me siste superbo: 3.17.41.

servile attitude, is unexampled in any Greek writings now available from the period before the first century B.C. It is not to be found even in the Comedy, the source from which it is so often asserted that the elegists drew their inspiration.<sup>58</sup> Even if it be argued that the Romans did no more than extend to these forms of the figure of *servitium amoris* the general aura of romantic-sentimental ideas which was present under other guises in Greek erotic literature, still they must be granted that degree of originality which enabled them to make such an extension.

Love's chains, and the slavish punishments of torch, steel, and lash again are associated with *servitium amoris* only by the Romans, by whom they are used to build up and vivify the atmosphere of servility and humble self-abasement which to the Romans is the *raison d'être* of the figure itself. It should be particularly noted that this atmosphere, rather than the physical pain which such torments might be presumed to cause, is of first interest to the elegists: it is not so much that the lover suffers; rather it is the peculiarly slavish manner in which he suffers, and the spirit with which he accepts his sufferings that are brought out by these features of *servitium amoris*. There is, therefore, no direct relation between the chains and torments of the lover-slave as they appear in Roman elegy, and the fetters and fire of love as these are to be found in the Greek epigrammatists and Theocritus. These latter do not associate either fetters or fire with slavery: the fetters are those of the captive-suppliant, the fire is that of Eros' torch, and symbolizes only the consuming flame of passion.<sup>59</sup> Even if the Romans borrowed the idea of fetters and flame from such Greek passages, and transferred them to the figure of *servitium amoris*, there casting them in the particular forms which the slave-figure required, they must be credited with no inconsiderable degree of originality and independence of poetic thought.

Finally, there is extant no Greek precedent for the use of *servitium* as a synonym for *amor*, especially as the term is used by Propertius, with full consciousness of all its romantic-sentimental

<sup>58</sup> E.g. Leo, *Plautinische Forschungen* (1912) 144.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Meleager, AP 12.119.3-4: ἐν πυρὶ γενναθεὶς στέργεις φλόγα τὰν ἐν ἔρωτι, καὶ με πάλιν δῆσας τὸν σὸν ἄγεις ἱκέτην; Paul Sil., AP 5.230 (Doris, with one golden hair, binds her lover's hands, like those of a captive of war, in an unbreakable bond); Theocr. 3.17: ὅς (sc. Ἔρως) με κατασμύχων καὶ ἐς ὀστέον ἄχρῃς ἰάπτει; Alex. Er. Frag. 15-16: συνοδηγὸν ἔχω τὸ πολλὸν πῦρ τοῦν τῇ ψυχῇ μου καιόμενον.

connotations. Unless, as was suggested earlier, Greek popular speech, the real-life language of love, had made the necessary association, the Romans must themselves have developed this form of the figure. Again, even if they found it in Greek popular speech, or in a literature of which no trace has survived, they must be allowed to have possessed sufficient imagination to see the poetic possibilities latent in it.

It is clear, therefore, that the concept of *servitium amoris* as it is found in Roman elegy, is almost entirely the invention of the Roman writers themselves, the fruit of their own imagination, the outgrowth of their own conception of the nature of the literary love-affair. In its development they were doubtless aided by the practice of the rhetorical schools, in which stories like those of Hercules and Omphale may well have received the very sort of embellishment which we find, for example, in Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*.<sup>60</sup> They may have had help too from the common speech, the real-life language of love, although no evidence remains by which this may be substantiated.<sup>61</sup> To whatever degree extraneous influences may have been present, the significant fact, from the point of view of literary history, is that it was to the Roman elegists that the figure of love's slavery first seemed of poetic importance and value. It was they who first realized the vividness with which the figure could be employed to illustrate the romantic-sentimental concept of love, and it was they who finally made it a canonical feature of the literary language of love.

<sup>60</sup> Above, 293; cf. A. A. Day, *The Origins of Latin Love-Elegy* (Oxford, 1938) 69-75.

<sup>61</sup> I have found, for example, no instance of the figure in the Pompeian *graffiti*.