The aim of the paper is to illustrate that despite his overall stylistic elegantia Tibullus's language is by no means colourless and undifferentiated. His style is capable of considerable elaboration and variety which is all the more effective in contrast with his general purity of diction. In the excursus on cheese-making at II 3.41a-16, for example, T.'s use of technical terms puts him closer to Theocritus than to his Roman contemporaries in pastoral or elegy. The same delight in technical display, which may owe something to his patron Messalla's interest in the Latin language, can be seen in T.'s description of road-building at I 7.57-60 and in his frequent use elsewhere of technical terms connected with textiles and agriculture.

1. Introduction

In an earlier study on Tibullus and the language of Roman elegy, it was argued that while Tibullus is certainly more restrained than Propertius in his use of such features as diminutives, Greek loan-words and compound adjectives, nevertheless his elegantia does not imply a monotonous and undifferentiated style. His language is, on occasion, capable of considerable elaboration and variety which is all the more effective in contrast with his overall purity of diction. One area in which this variety is displayed is in the use of technical vocabulary. This is a feature of Tibullus's restrained Alexandrian doctrina which marks him out, to some extent, from his fellow elegists.

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Propertius and Ovid. This paper will briefly explore Tibullus's exploitation of technical registers in the areas of cheese-making, road-building, spinning and weaving, and agriculture.

2. Cheese-making

The passage occurs as part of the only developed mythological allusion in Tibullus, the story of Apollo feeding the cattle of Admetus at II 3.11-32. As Murgatroyd has shown², the Alexandrian colouring in Tibullus's treatment of the myth is clearly marked both in style and in content. Apollo is stripped of all divine status, his actions and those of his sister, embarrassed at his plight, are humanised and the humorous and degrading aspects of his service are played up. There is particular humour in the application of the theme of the first inventor to the somewhat trivial invention of cheese-making and the incongruity of Apollo's involvement in this task is underlined by the accumulation of technical vocabulary³. The term *coagulum* 'rennet'⁴ is attested earlier only in Varro's description of cheese-making at *Rust.* II 11.4 *in lactis duos congios addunt coagulum magnitudine oleae, ut coeat.* The Thesaurus entry for *coagulum* in this technical sense *in caseo faciendo* shows that it occurs mainly in agricultural and medical writers in prose, but Tibullus is followed in verse by Ovid (though not in his amatory elegiac

3 For the technical details of ancient cheese-making see *RE* X 1490.64-1492.48 (Kroll).
4 The rennet used to set milk in modern cheese making is an enzyme removed from the inner stomach lining of sucking animals such as calves and lambs. It is clear from passages such as Arist., *Met.* 381a6, Varro, *Rust.* II 11.4, Ov., *Met.* XIII 830, *Fast.* IV 545 that the ancients used not this liquid extract, but rather semi-solid curdled milk, removed from the stomach of the animal, which would contain the enzyme and when dissolved in milk (cf. *liqueficta at Met.* XIII 830 and *Fast.* IV 545) would cause it in turn to curdle, see further Gow on Theocr., *Id.* 7.16.
The use of the verb obrigesco to denote the curdling of the milk occurs only here. Fiscella in the general sense of a basket made from rushes occurs earlier in Varro Rust. II 2.14 and Virg. Ecl. 10.71. It is one of Tibullus’s few diminutives and is obviously being used as the terminus technicus for the pliant reed basket employed in cheese-making for extracting the liquid whey from the solidifying curds, as in Colum.VII 8.3 et confestim cum concreuit liquor, in fiscellas aut in calathos uel formas transferendus est, a passage which also illustrates the technical use of liquor of the liquid milk prior to curdling. Again Tibullus is the first to describe the use of this type of basket in cheese-making in Latin verse and again he is followed by Ovid in a passage which appears to echo a number of the technical terms found here:

Fast. 4.769-70 ubera plena premam, referat mihi caseus aera,  
dentque uiam liquido uimina rara sero.  
cf. in Tib. uia 16, uimine 15, raraque 16, sero 16.

The term nexus used of the interstices of the basket occurs only in Tib. II 3.16; earlier at Virg. Georg. III 423 it had been used of the coils of a snake. Serum in the sense of ‘whey’ had occurred earlier at Virg. Georg. 3.406 and is then picked up by Ovid at Fast. 4.770 (quoted above), later examples are restricted to technical prose writers. The implications of this passage for Tibullan linguistic innovation are quite important.

The fact that there are no descriptions of cheese-making elsewhere in Roman elegy is perhaps not surprising. The nearest parallels in earlier Latin verse come, as is to be expected, from Virgilian pastoral and didactic, but

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6 See OLD s.v. 2
8 fiscella again in this sense at Colum. VII 8.6, cf. fiscina at Copa 17 sunt et caseoli, quos iuncea fiscina siccat and see ThLL 6.1.45ff. For a description of the fiscella and its use in cheese-making see J.M. Frayn, Sheep-Rearing and the Wool Trade in Italy during the Roman period = ARCA 15, Liverpool., 1984, pp. 131-5.
9 Cf. also Ovid, Met. XII 436 fluit, ueluti concretum uimine querno/ lac solet, Copa 17 (quoted in n.8 above) and Nemes., Ecl. II 33-4 ipse ego nec iunco molli nec uimine lento/ perfeci calathos cogendi lactis in usus.
10 Cels. V 26.20e, Colum. VII 8.3, Plin., Nat. XXVIII 126, XXX 144.
even the most developed of these lacks the sustained use of technical language to be found in Tibullus. Compare Virgil's description of the two types of cheese to be made by the shepherd, one soft, to be sold the next day in the town, and the other to be coated in salt and preserved for the winter:

_Georg._ III 400-403:
quod surgente die mulsere horisque diurnis,
nocte premunt; quod iam tenebris et sole cadente,
sub lucem exportant calathis (adit oppida pastor);
aut parco sale contingunt hiemique reponunt.

Here it could be argued that _premunt_ is being used in the technical sense when applied to pressing of whey out of the curds, but the only unambiguous technical term here is the Greek loan-word _calathus_, which we have seen above occurs in Columella VII 8.3 in the sense of a cheese-basket, equivalent to _fiscella_ or _forma_ and is here used for transporting the cheese to market. Cheese references in the _Eclogues_ are even less technical: _Ecl._ 1.33-4 _quamuis .../ pinguis...premeretur caseus urbi_; 1.81 _pressi copia lactis_.

Two further passages on plaiting baskets may look forward to Tibullus II 3.15, but again the technical language is not sustained and the use to which the baskets are to be put is not specified: _Ecl._ 2.71-2 _quin tu aliquid saltem potius, quorum indiget usus, / uimi nibus mollique paras detexere iuncis_; _Ecl._ 10.71 _dum sedet et gracili fiscellam texit hibisco_. In fact the nearest parallels for Tibullus's apparent delight in technical terminology in this context come not from Latin but from Greek verse. At _Odyssey_ IX 246-7 there is a description of the Cyclops making cheese: οὔτικα δ' ἢμισυ μὲν ἁρέως λευκοίο γάλακτος / πλέκτοις ἐν ταλάροισιν ἀμησίμωνος κατέθηκεν “next he curdled half the white milk and gathered it in wicker baskets”. Here τρέφω, like πίηγνυμι, is the technical term for “setting” or “coagulating” cheese, while the _πλέκτοι_ τάλαροι are the Greek equivalent of Tibullus’s _fiscella_ _detexta uimine iuncis_. In the _Iliad_ the swift effect of

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11 See ThLL 10.2.1173.62-4 and cf. Virg., _Ecl._ 1.81 _pressi copia lactis_, Calp., _Ecl._ 5.34-5 _premetur / mane quod occiduac mulsar redegerit horae_, Prud., _Cath._ III 70 _lac premitus calatho_.

12 Cf. Eur., _Cyclops_ προτό γάλακτος τ' ὅπειρα τρυφέωσα, "and a goody number of cheeses made of curdled milk".

13 For τρέφω, cf. [Theocr.] 25.106 ἄλλος τρέφε πίονα τύρον “another set the rich cheese” and for τάλαροι of the wicker baskets used for pressing cheese, cf. Ar., _Ran._ 560,
fig-juice as a coagulant in cheese-making appears in a simile describing the speed of Paeon’s healing powers: *Iliad* V 902-3 ὧς δ’ ὀπὸς γάλα λευκὸν ἐπειγόμενος συνέπηξεν / ύγρὸν ἐόν, μάλα δ’ ὄσκα περιτρέφεται κυκόωντι “as when fig-juice quickly thickens white milk that is liquid, but is quickly curdled as a man stirs it”. In the Hellenistic period descriptions of cheese-making find their way into pastoral and, as in *Odyssey* IX and the Euripidean examples cited in nn. 11 and 12, the main context in which they occur is in the description of the Cyclops’ pastoral life-style in Theocritus *Idyll* 11.14

The importance of this theme is foreshadowed in the Cyclops’ opening description of pale Galatea as λευκότερα πακτάς 20 “whiter than curdled milk”.15 His “cheese racks” ταρσοὶ 37 are heavy both in summer and winter. At 66 he asks Galatea to consent to join him in his rustic existence and τυρόν πάξαι τᾶμισιν δριμέται ἑνέσσα “to set cheese with drops of acid rennet”. Here the term τᾶμισις is the equivalent to Tibullus’s *coagulum*, and had occurred earlier in *Id.* 7.16 where Lycidas’s goat-skin is described as νέας ταμισοῦ ποτόσθον “reeking of fresh rennet”. Tibullus, then, would appear to be more willing than his fellow elegists, and even perhaps than Virgil, to reproduce in Latin this Greek love of technical vocabulary. The most obvious model, in this case, would appear to be Hellenistic Greek pastoral, but it would be tempting to see here also the influence of his Roman patron, who, apart from being a *Latini utique sermonis observator diligentissimus*17, is known to have composed pastoral and erotic verse in Greek.18 What subtler display of Hellenistic *doctrina* than to...
reproduce in Latin an interest in technical vocabulary that his patron may have shared with his Greek models? Before leaving this passage it is worth underlining the fact that nowhere in it is the word for cheese, *caseus*, mentioned. The term is extremely rare in verse before Tibullus\(^{19}\). It occurs once only in Tibullus at II 5.38 in a list of rustic gifts and is not found elsewhere in Love Elegy. In Ovid it is restricted to two occurrences in the *Fasti* (IV 371, 769), and its distribution in later verse suggests that it was not felt suitable for high-style genres\(^{20}\). More frequently circumlocutions of the type *pressi copia lactis* (Virg., *Ecl.* 1.81), *lactis massa coacti* (Ov., *Met.* VIII 666) or *lac coactum* (Ov., *Met.* XIII 796) are found\(^{21}\). In the same way Tibullus’s mention of *coagula* in 14b, and perhaps also of *sero* in 16, could serve to suggest *caseus*, without actually mentioning the word, by alluding to etymological derivations of *caseus* from *lac coactum* and *serum*\(^{22}\). Etymological play is clearly one of the elements in the *doctrina* of the passage, as the complex *lacte / lacteus ... liquor* in significant positions in lines 14b and 14c, hinting at the derivation of *lac* from *liquor* shows\(^{23}\). Finally, after Tibullus had introduced the technicalities of cheese-making to Latin verse, this, like a number of other Tibullan innovations\(^{24}\), was seized upon by Ovid, who has no fewer than six references to it in the *Fasti* and the *Metamor-

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\(^{19}\) Only Plaut., *Poen.* 367, 390 (in both cases as a term of endearment), *Cap.* 851, frg. 1.103, Lucil. 484 M., Virg., *Ecl.* 1.34 (a rustic feature of the language of Tityrus?).


\(^{21}\) Further examples in Bömer on Ov. *Met.* 8.666.


\(^{23}\) Cf. Cassiod. *In Psalm.* 118.70 l. 1193A *lac dictum est a liquore* and see Murtagroyd *ad loc.* A similar play may be intended by the use of the phrase *lactis liquor* at Lucr. II 398, Manil. I 751, Sen. *Oed.* 566.

\(^{24}\) See R. Maltby, *op. cit.*, p. 388.
phoses, though he obviously did not consider it an appropriate topic for amatory elegiac verse.

3. road-building

Tibullus I 7, like II 3, is a poem in which Alexandrian learning and mannerisms are once again very much to the fore. The elegy is a birthday poem for Messalla which also praises his patron for his military victories and thus combines the genres of genethliakon and epinikion. The date of composition must be shortly after Messalla’s triumph over Aquitania in September 27 B.C. There are clear echoes from Callimachus frgs. 383 and 383 Pf., which were probably epinikia. Towards the end of the poem Messalla is praised for his repair of the Via Latina in the following terms:

\[ I 7.57-60 \quad \text{nec taceat monumenta uiae quem Tuscula tellus} \]
\[ \text{candidaque antiquo detinet Alba Lare.} \]
\[ \text{namque opibus congesta tuis, hic glarea dura} \]
\[ \text{sternitur, hic apta iungitur arte silex.} \]

The historical background is that in 27 B.C. Augustus himself undertook the repair of the via Flaminia as far as Ariminum and assigned the repair of other roads to triumphing generals whose booty (cf. opibus ... tuis 59) was to pay for the work. The section of the Via Latina repaired by Messalla ran from Rome to Tusculum and the Alban Hills. Other parts of the road were repaired by C. Calvisius Sabinus and L. Arruntius. The couplet 59-60 is remarkable for the accumulation of technical language in relation to roadbuilding. The most obvious interpretation is that the clauses introduced by

\[25 \text{Fast. IV 371 candidus elisae miscetur caseus herbae, 769-70 (quoted above), Met. XII 435-7 (in a simile) cerebrum / molle fluit, ueluti concretum uimine querno / lac solet, XIII 797 mollior ... lacte coacto, 829-30 (spoken by the Cyclops and based loosely on Hom. Od. V IV 246-9) lac mihi semper adest nieuem: pars inde bibenda / seruatur, partem liquefacta coagula durant, X IV 273 cum lacte coagula passum.} \]
\[26 \text{On Roman road-building techniques see RE 4.2.2547 (Bergier), Chevallier, R, Les Voies Romaines, Paris, 1972, pp. 89-90.} \]
\[27 \text{Suet., Aug. 30 quo autem facilius undique urbs adiretur, desumpta sibi Flaminia uia Arimino tenus munienda, reliquas triumphalibus uiris ex manubiali pecunia sternendas distribuit. Cf. Dio 53.22, Mon. Anc. c. 20, CIL XI 365.} \]
\[28 \text{See the full discussion in G. McCracken, «Tibullus, Messalla and the Via Latina», AJP 53, 1932, pp. 344-352 and cf. Murgatroyd ad loc., pp. 230-231.} \]
\[29 \text{See CIL X 6895 (Sabinus) and CIL X 5055 (Arruntius). Sabinus triumphed from Spain in 28 B.C.} \]
hic ... hic refer to the two main stages in road construction: namely the laying of the gravel (glarea 59) base and the fitting of the paving stones (silex 60) over the top30. Alternatively hic ... hic could suggest that Messalla’s section of the road had examples of two types of surface, the one consisting of compacted gravel, the other of closely joined slabs of volcanic rock. Both types are mentioned in Livy XLI 27.5 censores uias sternendas silice in urbe, glarea extra urbeem substruendas marginandasque primi omnium locauerunt, which suggests that, at least at this early period (174 B.C.), the more expensive paved silex type was found mainly in the city, whereas country roads were made of glarea. It is possible that Messalla’s section started off in Rome with silex and then used glarea once outside the city. In a letter to his brother Quintus, Cicero complains of a country road which had been repaired with sand or dust rather than gravel ad Q.Fr. III 1.4 eo loco puluis, non glarea iniecta est (sc. uiiae). The two types are still being mentioned at Ulp. Dig. XLIII 11.1.2 in uiam terrenam glaream inicere aut sternere uiam lapide, quae terrena sit. There is no reference to road-making in verse before Tibullus. The term glarea occurs earlier in verse in Virgil Georgics II 212 of porous gravel, and then is not found until Calp., Ecl. 6.65 (describing the gravel of a river bed).31 All other cases of silex in elegy are restricted to metaphorical contexts of hard-heartedness or endurance32. The use of glarea and silex in connection with road building, and of the verb sternere in the technical sense of “laying” a road can all be paralleled from prose and inscriptions33. Whereas for the technicalities of cheese-making it

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30 Most archaeological evidence suggests the roads consisted of a gravel base with a paved surface, see Chevallier op.cit., p. 89 and cf. Vitruv. VII 1.11f., Stat., Silu. IV 3.40-53 (quoted below).
31 There is one late verse example connected with road-construction at Auson. 399.15 iteratarum qua trita uiarum / fert ... ad Blaviam.
was suggested Tibullus may have looked to Greek sources for inspiration, in the specifically Roman activity of road-building it is the contemporary Roman historian Livy who seems to provide the closest parallels for Tibullan usage. As a serving soldier Tibullus himself may actually have witnessed such operations at first hand. The combination of *silex* and *glarea* in Liv. XLI 27.5 has already been mentioned. A further interesting Livian parallel, this time for the idea of the road as a memorial *monumenta viae* (57), can be found in the description of Appius Claudius’s road-building at Liv. IX 25.9 *memoriae tamen felicioris ad posteros nomen Appi, quod uiam muniuit et aquam in urbem duxit.* As for future poetic treatments of road-making, it was not Ovid whom Tibullus inspired on this occasion but rather Statius, who in *Siluae IV* 3 gives the most detailed account to survive in Roman literature of the phases of road-construction. The road in question is Domitian’s *Via Domitiana* which was constructed in 95 AD and ran along the marshy coast-line from Sinuessa to Pozzuoli:

Statius, *Silvae IV* 3.40-55

hic primus labor incohare sulcos
et rescindere limites et alto
egestu penitus cauare terras;
mox haustas aliter replere fossas
et summo gremium parare dorso,
ne nutent sola, ne maligna sedes
det pressid dubium dubilum saxis;
tunc umbonibus hinc et hinc coactis
et crebris iter alligare gomphis.
o quantae pariter manus laborant!
hi caedunt nemus exuuntque montis,
hi ferro scolopas trabesque levant;
illic saxa ligant opusque texunt
coco puluere sordidoque tofo;
hi siccant bibulas manu lacunas

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34 There are no fewer than nine road-building references in Livy: V IV 29.5, 43.25, X 23.13, 43.4, XXXVIII 28.3, XXXV IV 2.10, XL IV 6, XLI 27.5, 7.

35 For the army’s involvement in road-making, cf. Liv. XXXV IV 2.10 (187 B.C.) (*Aemilius*) *exercitum in agrum Gallicum duxit uiamque a Placentia ut Flaminiae committeret Ariminum perduxit.*

et longe fluııos agunt minores\textsuperscript{37}.

There are no direct echoes of Tibullus although Statius could have taken from him the idea of treating such a subject in verse. The passage obviously outdoes Tibullus in technical detail and language and in this respect it is a typical product of its age, when poets could draw on an impressive body of learned compilations and treatises and had no compunction about tricking out their verse with such material. The phrase \textit{rescindere limites}, according to Coleman \textit{ad loc.}, refers to the “cutting back” of an original track and the widening and clearing of the vegetation and topsoil to a width of 16-20m. The material in between was then hollowed out to provide a firm foundation (\textit{gremium}). This trench was then filled with other material (43), which was built up into a camber \textit{summo ... dorso} (44). This surface was covered by paving stones \textit{saxa} (46, 52), held in place by a kerb \textit{umbo} (47). Other wedge-shaped stones \textit{gomphi} (48) were jammed in to secure both the kerb and the paving. Finally a mortar made of baked sand and volcanic ash \textit{sordidus tofus} (53) was used to bind the stones together.\textsuperscript{38}

It remains to point out that, as with the passage on cheese-making, so also with Tibullus's description of road-making, technical language goes closely together with etymological learning. The etymology of \textit{Alba} in \textit{candida} is a clear-cut case\textsuperscript{39} while in 57-8 Cairns\textsuperscript{40} suggests an as yet unexplained complex of etymologies based on Etruscan.

The only verbal echo of Tib. I 7.57-60 in later verse is to be found in the Pseudo-Virgilian \textit{Catalepton} 9. Interestingly this was also a poem of praise for Messalla on the occasion of his Aquitanian triumph. The verse occurs not in a description of road-making but in a list of the hardships of military campaigning suffered by Messalla: 45-6 \textit{immoderata pati iam sidera iamque}

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{38} See the useful stylised cross-section in Coleman \textit{op. cit.}, p. 114 fig. 3
\textsuperscript{40} Francis Cairns, «Ancient “Etymology” and Tibullus», \textit{PCPS} 42, 1996, p. 41 points to the coincidence of \textit{tura Lari} in 1 3.34 and \textit{Tuscula tellus} / ... \textit{Lare} here in 57-8 as evidence of possible Etruscan based etymologies. \textit{tus} lies behind the ancient etymologies of \textit{Tusculum, Tusci} and \textit{Tuscia} (see Maltby \textit{LALE} s.vv.) and \textit{Lar} was thought in antiquity to be an Etruscan word (\textit{ibid. s.v. Lars}).
References to spinning and weaving in Greek and Latin poetry are numerous, both in literal contexts and used metaphorically as an image for poetic composition. Spinning had been the archetypal activity of the faithful wife from the time of Homer’s Penelope. In Latin literature this theme is found in Ter., Heaut. 275ff. and in Livy’s description of the faithful Lucretia at I 57.7ff. Tibullus’s first use of the spinning motif belongs to this tradition. At I 3.86ff. he imagines himself returning unexpectedly from a military campaign and finding Delia in the company of her maids and an old nurse, who tells stories as they spin:

I 3.85-8 haec tibi fabellas referat positaque lucerna
deducat plena stamina longa colu,
ac circa, gravibus pensis affixa, puella
paullatim somno fessa remittat opus.

41 See Westendorp Boerma ad loc. vol. 2, p. 23
46 Cf. Ter., Heaut. 286 texentem telam studiose ipsam offendimus, Liv. I 57.9 nocte sera deditam lanae inter lucubrantes ancillas in medio aedium sedentem inuient.
Not all the Tibullan passages on spinning are equally technical in their language and only I 6.77-80 and II 1.61-6 contain technical terms which are rare elsewhere in verse.

Parallels for the present passage I 3.85-8 can be found in Catullus’s description of the Fates spinning at 64.311-3:

\[
\text{laeua colum moli lana retinebat amictum,}
\text{dextera tum leuiter deducens fila supinis}
\text{formabat digitis.}
\]

The \textit{colus} ‘distaff’ full of wool to be spun was held in the left hand, while the right ‘drew out’ \textit{deducere} the ‘threads’ \textit{stamina} (Tibullus) or \textit{fila} (Catullus). The \textit{pensum} was the ‘stint’ of wool to be spun by a maid in a day. Most of the vocabulary related to spinning in this passage can be paralleled from elsewhere in elegy and was probably not considered particularly unusual for this genre. Propertius twice treats the theme of the mistress weaving in the absence of her lover. At I 3.41 Cynthia describes her activity as follows: \textit{nam modo purpureo fallebam stamine somnum}. As Fedeli argues ad loc. Cynthia, like Penelope, must have been weaving rather than spinning, which was a task for the servants. In such contexts the term \textit{stamen < stare} has the technical sense of the vertical thread or warp. At III 6.15-16 it is clear that the maids spin while the mistress weaves: \textit{tristis erat domus, et tristes sua pensa ministrae / carpebant, medio nebat ipsa loco}.

A more developed and technically detailed account of spinning and weaving occurs next in the description of the impoverished life of the faithless mistress in old age at I 6.77-80:

\[
\text{at quae fida fuit nulli, post uicta senecta}
\text{ducit inops tremula stamina torta manu}
\text{firmaque conductis adnectit licia telis}
\text{tractaque de niueo uellere ducta putat.}
\]

Each of lines 78-80 describes a different process. Line 78, like I 3.86, describes the “drawing out” \textit{ducit} and “twisting” \textit{torta} of threads from the

\[\text{47 For } \textit{deducere} \text{ in this context see ThLL 5.1.279.69-76 and cf. Ov., } \textit{Am.} \text{ 1 14.7 (of a spider spinning its web). For } \textit{stamen}, \text{ cf. Tib. I 6.78, I 7.2, Lygd. [Tib.] III 3.36, Prop. I 3.41, Ov., } \textit{Ars} \text{ I 695, } \textit{Epist.} \text{ 3.76, V IV 79, XV IV 49, 197. For } \textit{colus}, \text{ see ThLL 3.1743.45ff. and cf. Tib. II 1.63, Prop. I 4.72, IV 9.48, Ov., } \textit{Epist.} \text{ 3.76. For } \textit{pensum} \text{ see ThLL 10.1.1048.7-60 and cf. Tib. II 1.10, 63, Prop. III 6.15, 11.20, IV 3.33, 7.41, 9.48, III 15.15.}\]
wool on the distaff. For the use of *ducere* in place of the more common *deducere* here see *ThLL* 5.1.2147.17-19 and cf. Lygd. [Tib.] III 3.36 (of the Fates) *stamina* ... *ducunt*. For the twisting of the thread implied in *torta*, cf. Cat. 64. 312-14 *dextera tum leuiter deducens fila supinis / formabat digitis, tum prono in pollice torquens / libratum tereti versabat turbine fusum*. Line 79 describes the fixing *adnectit* of the vertical warp-threads *licia* (here equivalent to *stamina*) to the crossbeam *iugum* (not mentioned) of the loom *tela*. This was the first task of the weaver before beginning the actual weaving process by passing the horizontal weft-threads through them by means of the shuttle. The line has no parallel in elegy and goes back to Virg. *Georg.* I 285-6 which states that the seventeenth day is lucky for ... *licia telae / addere* “fixing the warp-threads to the loom”48. In this and the following line Tibullus once again departs from the norms of elegiac diction to display his taste for technical language. Examples of *licium* in this context are collected by *ThLL* 7.2.1373.77-1374.11. Before Tibullus and Virgil it occurs only at Lucil. 681 M. in what appears to be a list of the possessions of a frugal wife of old *cribrum, incerniculum, lucernam, laterem in telam, licium* “a riddle, a sieve, a lamp, a weight for the loom and thread”49. The use of *firmus* = ‘strong’, applied to wool or textiles, is found elsewhere only in Varro and Pliny50. The participle *conductus* = “hired” occurs elsewhere in elegy only in Ovid *Amores* 1.10; once in a legal context (37) *conducti ... testes*, and once with reference to a hired prostitute (44) *conducto ... toro*. The verb *adnecto* ‘attach’ is described by *ThLL* as *uerbum in uariis artibus technicum*51. It occurs in verse before Tibullus only twice. Once in a nautical context in Cicero, *Carm. frg.* 69.4 *nauem ... adnectunt nauitae*, and once in Lucretius III 688 of the connection between the soul and the body *neque ... adnecti potuisse putandumst*. After Tibullus it is not found again in verse.

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48 Virgil in turn is elaborating on a more general statement in Hes. *Op.* 799 that on the tenth day τῇ δ’ ἱστὼν στηράσιον γονῆ προβάλλοιτο τε ἔργον “on that day the woman should fix up her loom and set out her work”.

49 On the meaning “loom weight” for the disputed *laterem* in this passage see the discussion of Tib. II 1.66 *a pulso tela sonat latere* below.


51 See *ThLL* 1.777.81-2. It occurs mainly in technical prose writers on medicine and agriculture from Varro on, *ibid.* 778. 1-52.
until Statius. In the context of weaving the closest parallel is Pliny’s description of the spider weaving its web at Nat. XI 81 *circinato orbe subtemina adnectens*. Verse 81 describes the logically prior operation of cleaning the wool before spinning. The term *tractum* describing a “flock” of wool drawn out from the fleece prior to spinning is found elsewhere only at Varro, *Men.* 325 of a small wool-worker who takes his flocks by hand to the dyer *denique etiam suis manibus lanea tracta ministrasset infectori*. The participle *ducta* here seems to be used in a slightly different sense from 78, where the reference was to “drawing out” threads from the wool on the distaff. Here the reference must be to “pulling out” flocks of wool from the fleece, or possibly to the drawing of the flocks through the hands to soften them before cleaning. Finally the verb *putat* in its literal sense of “clean” is rare, being used of wool elsewhere only at Titin., *Com.* 22-3 *da pensam lanam: qui non reddet temperi / putatam recte, facito ut multetur malo* and Varro, *Rust.* II 2.18 *ne lana ... recte possit uluari ac putari*. It may be significant that the destitute woman described in this section is not employed in weaving itself, but only in the more mundane preparatory tasks of cleaning and spinning the wool and setting up the loom.

Tibullus’s next spinning reference is to the Fates spinning the thread of Messalla’s future life at I 7.1-2: *Parcae, fatalia nentes / stamina*. This recalls the theme of Cat. 64.311ff. and is imitated by Lygdamus at [Tib.] III 3.35-6 *tristesque sorores / stamina quae ducunt quaeque futura neunt*. As always in Tibullus, *stamina* is used here in its general sense of “thread”, rather than in the technical sense of “warp”. At II 1.9-10 Tibullus asks the women to rest from their spinning in order to honour the deity on a festival day: *omnia sint operata deo: non audeat ulla / lanificam pensis imposuisse manum*. A Tibullan innovation here is the adjectival use of the compound *lanificus*, which is picked up by Ovid in his imitation of the line at *Am.* I 13.23-4 (of Dawn) *tu, cum feminei possint cessare labores / lanificam reuocas ad sua pensa manum*. Later in the same poem Tibullus develops further the spinning and weaving theme with characteristic technical elaboration:

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54 See *ThLL* 7.2.929.67ff.
2.1.61-6 rure etiam teneris curam exhibitura puellis
molle gerit tergo lucida uellus ouis;
hinc et femineus labor est, hinc pensa colusque,
fusus et apposito pollice uersat opus:
atque aliqua adsiduae textrix operata Mineruae
cantat, et a pulso tela sonat latere.

The phrase *femineus labor* occurs here for the first time. The adjective is rare and probably elevated in tone. It is used in a similar context with reference to Camilla in the *Aeneid* VII 805-6: *non illa colo calathisue Minervae / feminea adsueta manus*. It is echoed in the same couplet of Ovid in which he picks up the adjective *lanificus* from 10 in *Amores* I 13.23-4 (quoted above). For *pensum* and *colus* see n.47. The delayed *et* in 64 is typical of such passages of Alexandrian *doctrina* and can be paralleled in the description of Apollo working for Admetus with which this paper began.

The spindle onto which the twisted yarn was spun. It occurs first in a line of Lucretius in which technical terms from spinning and weaving are accumulated: V 1351 *insilia ac fusi radii scapique sonantes*. This comes from a passage on the development of textile trades V 1350-60, which describes how these were originally men’s work 1354-5 *et facere ante viros lanam natura coegit / quam muliebre genus*. If Tibullus had this in mind it would give added point to his *femineus labor*. Spindles are mentioned most often in the context of the spinning Fates as in Cat. 64.327ff. and Virg., *Ecl.* 4.46. The word *fusus* occurs here only in Tibullus and is not found in Propertius. In Ovidian erotic elegy it is found in *Ars* I 695, *Epist.* 12.4 and 18.37. The phrase *apposito pollice* refers to the fact that the down-turned thumb of the right hand set the spindle in motion, cf. Cat. 64.313-4 *tum prono in pollice torquens / libratum tereti uersabat turbine fusum*. For *opus* in the technical sense of the product of spinning or weaving, equivalent to the Greek *œrgon* (see n.48), cf. Cat. 64.315 *decerpens aequabat semper opus dens*, Tib. I 3.88 above.

The very rare *textrix* in 65 (which appears in A and, as the lectio *difficilior*, must be preferred to *textis* of the later MSS), occurs here for the

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55 Tib. II 3.22 *uenit et a templis irrita turba domum*
56 For full details see *ThLL* 6.1.1661. 17-63
57 Cf. also Ov., *Met.* VI 22 *leui teretem uersabat pollice fusum*, *Eleg. in Maec.* 1.73 *torsisti pollice fusos*.
58 Further examples in *ThLL* 9.2.847.25-52.
first time and is not found again until Mart. IV 19.1. Finally the reference in
66 a pulso tela sonat latere must be to the noise made by the terra cotta
weights which were attached to bunches of stamina or “warp-threads” at the
bottom to keep them tight 59. When the comb (pecten), which was used to
press the threads of the weft together, was brought down firmly 60, the loom,
tela, would sound out as the weights (laterē must be poetic singular for
plural) knocked together. The only other occurrence of later in this sense is at
Lucil. 681 M. laterem in telam discussed above 61. In this final passage, as in I
6.78-80, Tibullus is clearly displaying his doctina by intentionally
accumulating rare and technical words in Alexandrian fashion.

Before leaving textiles one further example of Tibullus’ use of technical
languages in this area should be mentioned. At II 3.53-4 he expresses the wish
that Nemesis should wear fine Coan silk: illa gerat uestes tenues quas femi-
na Coa / texuit, auratas dispositique uias. This expensive and almost trans-
parent silk from Cos appears to have been fashionable with the demi-monde
in the time of Augustus and is frequently mentioned in elegy 62, what is unus-
ual here is Tibullus’ use of uias in the technical sense of stripes (the normal
word for which would be virgae) and of the verb disponere for the arrange-
ment of the stripes in the silk. There is no clear parallel for disponere in
this sense, but a clue that uiae was the technical word for stripes comes, as
Murgatroyd shows ad loc., from Servius’ explanation of virgatis lucent
sagulis “they glitter in striped cloaks” (of the Gauls) at Virg., Aen. VIII 660
with quae habebant in virgarum modum deductas uias.

5. Agricultural terms

Unlike Propertius and Ovid, who were essentially urban poets, Tibullus,
at least in his first book, lays great stress on the importance of country
pursuits to his elegiac ideal.

As a consequence his elegies contain a number of words and phrases
concerning agriculture, which, although not restricted to technical prose

59 Cf. Senec. Epist. 90.20, where the weights are called pondera, and see Murgatroyd ad
loc. and Mynors on Virg., Georg. I 293-4.
60 Cf. Ov., Met. VI 57-8 ... inter stamina ductum / percusso pauiunt insecti pectine
dentes. Fast. III 820 ... et rarium pectine denset opus.
61 See ThLL 7.2.1000.47-53.
writers, would nevertheless be more at home in the writings of Varro, Pliny the elder or Columella than in the works of his fellow elegists. It should suffice simply to list some of the more striking examples. At I 1.8 the phrase grandia poma is used to refer to “sturdy” fruit trees. As can be seen from the ThLL article grandis is the standard adjective for “big” when referring to corn, fruit, trees and vegetables in technical writings on agriculture from Varro to Palladius. Other examples of its application to trees occur at Varro, Rust. III 5.12, Paul., Dig. VII 1.11 and Pallad. I 6.9. For pomum referring to the tree rather than the fruit (cf. II 1.43 tum consita pomus) parallels can be found in prose at Cato, Agr. 133.1, Varro, Rust. I 31.5 and in verse at Lucr. V 1377, Virg., Georg. II 426, and Ov., Met. XIII 719. It is not found elsewhere in elegy. At I 3.62 floret odoratis terra benigna rosis Tibullus describes the rich earth of Elysium with the phrase terra benigna. Here the adjective benignus in its etymological sense of “fertile” (<bene + gigno) appears to be the technical term for soil that produces abundant crops, cf. Plin., Nat. XVIII 1 benigna tellure proueniunt, cf. XXIII 2 tamquam parum benigna fertilique. It occurs in verse in this sense first in Tibullus and then at Ov., Am. I 10.56 praebeat Alcinoi poma benignus ager. Lygd. [Tib.] III 3.6 et magnas messes terra benigna daret with terra benigna in the same sedes as in Tibullus probably echoes I 3.62. Its opposite malignus had already occurred in Virg., Georg. II 179 collesque maligni. Another Tibullan epithet normally found in agricultural writers is novellus, referring to the young of animals e.g. Varro, Rust. I 20.2 nouvellos iuuencos. At II 2.22 Tibullus transfers the term to the crowd of young children that he wishes for Cornutus after his marriage: ludat et ante tuos turba novella pedes. The reason for this rather strange epithet here is perhaps that Tibullus is inspired by a passage of Lucretius, where the subject is calves: I 259-61 hinc noua proles (cf. Tib. II 2.21 prolemque ministret) / artubus infirmis teneras lasciuas per herbas / ludit lacte mero mentes perculta nouellas. It is subsequently used in verse by Ovid of a lamb at Ars. I 118 and of a young bull at Pont. III 7.16. Although horse-riding is not specifically a rustic pursuit, it is convenient to list under this heading Tibullus’ use of the phrase angustis ... habenis of the

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60 ThLL 6.2.2182.12-57 under B de frumentis, uïridibus, fructibus sin.
64 See ThLL 2.1904.22-46 i.g. large praebens, copiosus, abundans, fertili.
65 See OLD s.v. novellus 1 (a).
skilled young horse-rider at I 4.11-12 *hic placet angustis quod equum com-
pescit habenas*. Here *angustis* is used in the active sense of ‘constraining’,
referring to “tight” reins. The suspicion that this may be a technical term
from horse-riding arises out of its use in a similar context by Varius Rufus
(ap. Macrobr. VI 2.19) frg. 3 (Courtney): *quem non ille sinit lentae moder-
tor habenae / qua uelit ire, sed angusto prius ore coercens/ insultare docet
campis fingitque morando*. Here the adjective appears to be used in the
passive sense of the horse’s mouth “held tight” by the reins and the bit66.

Returning finally to a more strictly agricultural context, Tibullus’s frequent
references to the vintage often contain technical terms:

> I 1.9-10 *nec spes destitut sed frugum semper aceruos praebet et pleno pingua musta lacu*
> I 5.23-4 *aut mihi seruabit plenis in lintribus uuas pressaque ueloci candida musta pede*
> I 7.35-6 *illi iucundos primum matura sapore expressa iucultis uua dedit pedibus*
> II 1.45 *aurea tum pressos pedibus dedit uua pedibus*
> II 5.85-6 *oblitus et musto feriet pede rusticus uua dolia dum magni deficientque lacus*

For the characterisation of the grape juice, *mustum*, as *pinguis* “rich”, cf.
Manil. III 153, III 663, Colum. X 432, “White” juice *album mustum* is often
referred to by Pliny, cf. *Nat*. X IV 78, 100, XVIII 102, XX IV 129 and the
adjective *candidus* (as in I 5.24) is used of it at *Nat*. XXIII 29 *musta diffe-
rentias habent naturales has, quod sunt candida aut nigra aut inter utrum-
que*. For *lacus* in the technical sense of a wine vat in I 9.10 and II 5.8667 most
of the parallels come from agricultural prose writers such as Cato, *Agr.*,
Varro, *Rust.*, Pliny, *Nat.* and Columella. Examples in verse occur first in
Tibullus, but not elsewhere in elegy, then in Manil. V 679, Ov., *Fast.* III 558,
*Trist.* III 10.72, Mart. IV 44.2, VII 28.4, Sil. VII 211. *linter* is normally a
hollowed-out log used as a boat (cf. Tib. II 5.34) but here in I 5.23 it is found
in the technical sense of a trough in which grapes were transported or pressed
at vintage time68. The only parallels for its use in this sense are Cato, *Agr.*

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66 Unless with Courtney ad loc one accepts the correction of L. Torrentius ad Hor.,
67 See *ThLL* 7.2.863.76-864.44 and cf. *Isid., Etym.* XX 14.12 *lacus, quo liquat pro-
fluat, quo ab uuis vel oliuis torquendo oleum winunque exigitur.*
68 See *ThLL* 7.2.1466.53-61. For a description see K.D. White, *Farm Equipment of the
11.5 where two *luntres* are prescribed for each hundred *iugera* of vineyard and Virg., *Georg.* I 262 where the ploughman in winter *cauat arbore lintres.* For *exprimo* of pressing grapes in I 7.36 most of the parallels come again from Cato, *Agr.*, Varro, *Rust.* and Columella; Tibullus is the only verse author to use the verb in this context. At II 1.45 *aurea... uua,* referring to the golden colour of ripe white grapes, is unique; but *aureus* is used of apples in Virg., *Ecl.* 3.71 and 8.52 and of flowers at Plin. *Nat.* XXV 32. Finally *dolia* in II 5.86 are the large earthenware vessels in which the pressed grape juice was left to ferment and settle. It occurs again mainly in technical agricultural prose writers, cf. Cato, *Agr.* 113 *de lacu quam primum uinum in dolia indito.* Its use by Propertius at III 17.17-18 *dum modo purpureo spument mihi dolia musto, / et noua pressantis inquinet uua pedes,* seems to be inspired by a combined reminiscence of Tib. I 1.10 and II 5.85-6.

I hope to have shown within the scope of this brief paper that Tibullus’s occasional use of technical vocabulary is no mere accident of the subject matter of his elegies but arises from a genuine attempt to reproduce in Latin the lexical diversity of his Hellenistic Greek forerunners. This characteristic of Tibullan elegy is imitated to some degree by Ovid in his amatory elegiacs but is not a feature of the language of Propertius, whose style in other respects is admittedly more flamboyant.

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69 See *ThLL* 5.2.1782.73-80. For *presso* in this sense, cf. Tib. II 1.45, Prop. III 17.18 (quoted below).

70 See *ThLL* 5.1.1833.44-1834.22.

71 A further verse usage at *Aetna* 267 *tumeant et dolia musto* is perhaps based on Prop. 3.17.17.