

A farewell to love and elegy in Horace *Ode* 4.13

Scholars have long discussed the supposed rivalry between Propertius and Horace (Solmsen, Sullivan, Dimundo), and recent studies have turned to Horace's incorporation of elegiac themes and elements in *Odes* 1-3 (Lowrie, Sutherland). The influence of elegy on Horace's final collection has, by contrast, gone largely unstudied. Horace's *Odes* 4, published c. 13 BCE, is programmatically belated poetry by a poet who describes himself as too old for love (4.1.2-7). Nonetheless, it contains several poems on erotic subjects (1, 10, 11, 13). *Ode* 4.13 is Horace's last lyric on erotic themes, and I propose that it articulates a lyrical farewell to elegiac poetry through thematic and lexical intertextualities to Propertius. The poem, furthermore, engages broadly with previous Latin love poetry in order to position itself as a prime, and final, exemplar of the lyric and elegiac tradition of love poetry.

If Horace felt that love elegy was done, he had good reason to think so: Tibullus had died in 19 BCE; Propertius' Book 4 was published in 16 BCE; and Ovid, though possibly writing his *Amores* as Horace was composing *Odes* 4, did not issue the second edition until c. 8 BCE (McKeown). I will argue that *Ode* 4.13 offers a refiguring of, and homage to, Propertian elegy. It has strong affinities to Propertius 3.24-25, the farewell to Cynthia and to elegiac poetry (Putnam 1986). Each speaker remarks pointedly on wrinkles, the loss of youthful color, and the beloved's old age. The elegiac *puella*, although she is destined to become too old for love, is always presented as young. In this ode, Horace innovates on the elegiac *topos* by creating a mistress who has actually aged (*fis anus*, 4.13.2). While Propertius closes his third book of elegies in a bitter state of disillusionment with Cynthia's false beauty (3.24.1-2), Horace reworks the Propertian tradition by incorporating it into the mode of his own earlier iambic and lyric poems on old age and the loss of beauty (e.g. *Ep.* 8, 12; *Odes* 1.25, 3.10, 3.15).

Horace's use of Propertian elegiac *topoi* in 4.13 falls into a larger scheme of metapoetic reflection on Roman love poetry. The tone of this poem has occasioned controversy (Fraenkel, Putnam, Ancona, Johnson). The speaker shifts from virulent mockery of Lyce's old age (*di mea vota, di | audivere, Lyce: fis anus et tamen vis formosa videri*, 1-2) to sympathetic lament for the shared loss of youth and love (*quo fugit venus, heu, quove color? decens | quo motus*, 17-18). This shifting tone, I argue, reveals the poet at work capping earlier moments in Roman love poetry, including Catullan despair at Lesbia's infidelity, Horatian iambic attack, and the *paraclausithyra* of *Odes* 1-3, as well as Tibullan and Propertian elegy.

Horace's last lyric ode on erotic themes appears distant from the panegyric of much of book 4. Yet in *Ode* 4.13, I argue, Horace shifts his praise towards his most important rival genre in erotic poetry, the love elegy that he had teasingly disparaged in 1.33, addressed to Tibullus, as *miserabilis...elegos* (2-3).

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