

Apollo in Love: Pursuing Elegy in his Wake

The Pursuit of Daphne by Apollo, comprising Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 1.478-567, is an often read and studied standard of Latin literature. In an effort to investigate the passage further and introduce an additional layer of meaning, I examine this section of Ovid's epic through a lens of a different genre: erotic elegy. As the author of the *Amores* and *Ars Amatoria*, certain themes and motifs previously explored in earlier works certainly reappear throughout Ovid's epic. Indeed, many scholars have noted references to earlier elegists in the Pursuit of Daphne scene, including Propertius and Ovid's own works. The similarities between the opening lines of Propertius 1.1, *Metamorphoses* 452-453, and parallels to language used in Ovid's own *Amores* 1.1 create a preliminary link to love elegy. Moreover, the intertextuality between this episode in the *Metamorphoses*, Tibullus 2.3, Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* 117-123, and the characterization of Daphne as a *candida puella* further demonstrate the presence of erotic elegy in the passage.

Due to the extensive elegiac references in *Metamorphoses* 1.478-567, I assert that certain nuances particular to the genre of erotic elegy can be applied onto this scene in the epic; specifically, that the *puella* in elegy is not only inseparable from the text with which she is composed but can also stand as a metaphor to represent the elegiac poem itself, as asserted in the scholarship of Wyke and Frederick. Once applied, the Pursuit of Daphne scene can be read not only as an etiological account narrating Daphne's forced metamorphosis into the laurel tree, but as a passage depicting the forced metamorphosis of an entire genre. The stoic drumbeat of hexameter drowns out the patter of elegiac couplets just as roots bury into the ground and soft skin is covered by coarse bark.