

## Hypersexism: Hypermnestra in Horace's *Odes* 3.11

The ambiguity of the relationship in Horace's *Odes* 3.11 between the speaker and the internal audience, Lyde, has been a subject of much debate (Bradshaw 1978, Cairns 1975, Leach 2008). A feminist analysis of *Odes* 3.11 illuminates the relationship between the mythological reference of the poem, the Danaids, and the internal audience, Lyde, as invoked by the male speaker of the poem. The speaker of the poem and Lyde seem to be near strangers, yet the speaker instructs her in how to be a virtuous woman utilizing the myth of Hypermnestra. The use of the name Lyde (commonly the name of a *hetaera*; see *Odes* 2.11) suggests a romantic nature of this meeting. Therefore, the way that the male voice in *Odes* 3.11 invokes female mythological figures should be viewed through this lens.

The male speaker's treatment of both Hypermnestra and the Danaids gives insight into the dynamic between the speaker and Lyde. The speaker refuses to name Hypermnestra, even while using her myth for his own purposes: taming Lyde ("equa trima", Garrison 3.11.9). He also depicts the Danaids only mid-torment; the speaker's manipulation of this myth for his own romantic pursuit nearly strips it of its depth. When viewed through a feminist lens, this relationship becomes an older man trying to woo a younger woman by co-opting and manipulating the myth of Hypermnestra and the Danaids; in doing so, he diminishes the agency of all involved: Lyde, Hypermnestra, and the Danaids.

### Bibliography

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