

Preface – Acknowledgements

Recent years have witnessed a growing interest in the poetics of Late Antiquity. Two years ago, in my book *Maximianus' Elegies: Love Elegy Grew Old*, Berlin – Boston 2023, I predominantly studied the metaliterary dimensions of the work by the 'last love elegist of Antiquity', offering a metapoetic reading of his *Elegies*. My main conclusion was that the poet, while simultaneously acting as a literary critic, expresses his thoughts for the literary trends of his age, in particular insisting on the fate of love elegy and suggesting methods for the genre's renewal. For about five hundred years – between Ovid's death (17 AD) and Maximianus' *Elegies* (at the beginning of the 6th century AD) – the genre of love elegy disappears. Does this mean that love poetry in general was no longer being written? This was certainly not the case. Poets continued to compose love poetry, merely in other forms than elegy. Thus, love was the subject matter of several other genres (such as epigram, epyllion or miniature epics, lyric poetry, pastoral, and epithalamium). This fact led me to the following research question: what literary genres are hosted within this love poetry? What are the features of this poetry? Does it share common features with the love poetry of classical Antiquity, or did the new social and religious circumstances give it a different character? Also, did these Late Antique poets include a metapoetic discourse in their works? In this book, I will try to answer these questions.

I should note that I study three Latin love poems of Late Antiquity – the *Pervigilium Veneris*, Reposianus' *De concubitu Martis et Veneris*, and the *Aegritudo Perdicae* – and one poetic collection, Ausonius' *Bissula*. This does not mean that these were the only love poems of this era, as there were plenty of others. However, I believe that the four poems under study represent a good overall sample of the Latin Late Antique non-elegiac love poetry.

For the four works studied here, I will note the editions that I follow within the chapters of the book. For the texts of the other authors I cite, I follow the texts hosted at the websites of The Latin Library (<https://www.thelatinlibrary.com/>) and the Lacus Curtius (<https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/home.html>). All the translations of Greek and Roman authors are my own unless otherwise indicated. Regarding the names of classical Greek and Roman authors and the titles of their works, I follow the abbreviations of *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*.

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