

Classics Presents ...

2023-24 Colloquium Series

Dr. Joshua Paul

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Queen's University

Wednesday, March 27th, 2024

2:30 pm to 4:00 pm

Watson Hall Room 517

Flirting with the Enemy: Latin Love Elegy, Furies, and the Anxiety of Genre

Roman poets of the Augustan Age were generally expected to climb the hierarchy of genres, to gradually ascend from humble pursuits like bucolic, satire, and love elegy and eventually reach more prestigious aspirations like tragedy, didactic, and epic. I argue that the Latin love elegist Propertius raises but rejects the possibility of generic ascension by invoking the Furies at crucial junctures of his literary career. The Erinyes, in their capacity as guardians of boundaries and protectors of natural order, function as apt mythological metaphors through which Propertius might write polemic against incompatible genres. Latent and rationalized myths of the Furies signpost transgressions of genre (both hypothetical and realized) and serve as subtle *recusationes*, “refusals” to fully commit to tragedy, didactic, and aetiology.



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