Elegiac Ascent
Plotting a Path through Propertius’ Poetic Landscape

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Abstract

This thesis argues that Propertius’ poetic development and growing Callimacheanism can be charted through a programmatic reading of his landscapes. It examines Propertius’ evolution as a poet from the beginning of book two onwards as he begins to move away from the intensely personal poetry of book one on his journey to becoming the Roman Callimachus as he presents himself in book four. It focuses on four poems – 2.10, 3.1, 3.3 and 4.9 – and argues that the landscapes depicted therein reveal a poet continually re-evaluating the status of elegy and the hierarchy of genres and ever increasing in confidence as he engages and aligns more explicitly with Callimachean ideals. It shows that Propertius constructs and responds to programmatic landscapes in a more self-aware fashion than has previously been demonstrated with a greater level of complexity than has been observed.
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