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O VER THE CENTURIES, LATIN LOVE ELEGY HAS INSPIRED LOVE POETRY IN THE WEST FROM PETRARCH TO POUD.

A Latin Lover in Ancient Rome: Readings in Propertius and His Genre offers a critical reevaluation of the Latin elegiac poet Propertius, situating him within the social and political milieu of first-century BCE Rome. W. R. Johnson’s study is centered on close readings of the poems in Propertius’ four books that emphasize both his celebration of erotic freedom as a manifestation of the sovereignty of the individual and his insistence on the value of this freedom, especially when it is threatened by autocratic ideology. Many recent titles on Propertius have tended to minimize or ignore this aspect of the poet’s work, concentrating instead on neo-formalism or Lacanian psychology. Johnson restores Propertius’ erotic creed and his politics to the core of his poetics and his career. He offers a vivid picture of the sociopolitical and erotic world of the late Roman Republic and the early years of the Empire which hatched Latin love elegy and allowed it to flourish. This study aims to redirect attention to the pleasures and energies Propertius provides that later generations of poets and readers discovered in and through him.

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