

This project aims to provide the first comprehensive study of love, sexuality, and violence in Neo-Latin pastoral poetry composed between the 15th and 18th centuries. While erotic love has always been a central motif in bucolic literature, there has been little scholarly attention to its more disturbing aspects — particularly the representation of sexual violence. Through a multi-perspective approach combining literary analysis, historical contextualization, and psychological theory, this research seeks to fill a major gap in the study of Neo-Latin literature and early modern cultural history.

The project will examine a large corpus of Neo-Latin pastoral poems from across Europe, analysing various forms of love (erotic, marital, spiritual) alongside depictions of coercion, rape, and domination. It will explore how these themes reflect broader social, religious, and philosophical discourses, such as legal approaches to sexual violence or Christian conceptions of the body and gender. Special attention will be paid to the role of women in these narratives, interpreted through feminist theory, gender studies, and trauma theory. Issues such as internalised misogyny and the dynamics of victimhood and power will be central to the inquiry.

The methodology combines digital and traditional approaches. Tools from digital humanities, such as stylometry and *similia* (intertextual similarity) detection, will be used alongside close philological reading and intertextual analysis. The project will trace literary traditions from ancient Greek and Roman bucolics (Theocritus, Virgil), through medieval pastourelles, to Neo-Latin pastoral poetry, identifying inherited tropes and the poetic memory of love and violence. A regionally differentiated approach will be employed, covering Latin pastoral poetry from the Italian Peninsula, France and the Iberian world, Northern Europe, and Central-Eastern Europe (including Polish-Latin works), thus allowing for a culturally nuanced interpretation of the texts.

Pastoral poetry, often taught in schools and widely disseminated, played a key role in shaping early modern attitudes toward love, femininity, and power. This project will investigate how Neo-Latin texts — composed by elite male authors, but deeply rooted in inherited literary and educational models — contributed to constructing gender roles and normalising violence against women. It will also explore possible counter-narratives and spaces of subversion within the genre. By analysing these texts as both literary and socio-cultural documents, the project will uncover the ideological structures embedded in early modern Latin literature.

Ultimately, this study will enrich our understanding of the intersections between literature, power, and gender in the early modern period. It will also contribute to ongoing discussions in classical reception studies, Neo-Latin scholarship, and feminist literary history. By highlighting neglected texts and forgotten voices, the project aims to reshape how we understand the cultural function of Latin literature and the enduring legacy of the pastoral tradition.