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The literary and maternal legacy of Cornelia, *mater Gracchorum*

Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*

The 1970 entry, by AE Astin:

“Cornelia (1, P[aul]-W[issowa] 407), the second daughter of Scipio Africanus, married Ti. Sempronius Gracchus (q.v.2). Of her twelve children only three reached maturity: Sempronia, who married Scipio (q.v. 11) Aemilianus, and the two famous tribunes Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus (qq.v. 3 and 4). After her husband’s death she did not remarry (she refused an offer by Ptolemy VII Physcon) and devoted herself to the management of her estate and the education of her children. Traditions vary about how far she encouraged or attempted to restrain the political activities of her sons, but she did check Gaius’ attack on Octavius (q.v.2). Some of her letters were known to Cicero, who admired their style, but the authenticity of two fragments preserved in MSS. of Nepos has been much disputed and must be regarded as uncertain, although many have taken them to be genuine. She was cultured, with pronounced philhellenic interests, and after her sons were killed she continued to entertain many guests at her home at Misenum.

Plut. *Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus*. J. Carcopino, *Autour des Gracques* (1928), 47, 107; B Förtsch, *Die politische Rolle der Frau* (1935), 56; G. Corradi, *Cornelia e Sempronia* (1946); on the letters see also H. Last, *CAH* ix.56.n 1 and bibliography there”.

The 1996 entry, revised by Ernst Badian:

“Cornelia (1)(*RE*=Pauly-Wissowa ‘Cornelius’ 407), second daughter of P.*Cornelius Scipio Africanus), married Tiberius *Sempronius Gracchus (2). Of her twelve children only three reached adulthood: Sempronia, who married P. *Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus, and the two famous tribunes Ti.*Sempronius Gracchus and C.*Sempronius Gracchus. After her husband’s death she did not remarry (she is reported to have refused an offer by *Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II), devoting herself chiefly to the education of her children. Traditions about her attitude to the tribunes’ political activities vary, but she made Gaius abandon his attack on M.*Octavius (see Plut. *C. Gracch.* 4.3). Some of her letters were admired by Cicero (*Brut.* 211), but Quintilian (1.1.6) no longer knew them. The authenticity of two fragments addressed to Gaius and preserved in *Nepos MSS must be regarded as uncertain (see N. Horsfall, *Cornelius Nepos* [1989] 41 f.). After Tiberius’ death she retired to a villa at *Misenum (where she heard of Gaius’ death) and devoted herself to cultural pursuits and correspondence and conversation with distinguished men (Plut. *C. Gracch.* 19). She was dead by 100 BC. The base of a statue of her seen by Pliny (*HN* 34.31) survives (see *ILLRP* 336) and has been much discussed (see M. Kajava, *Arctos* 1989, 119 ff.).

B. Kreck, *Untersuchungen zur politischen und sozialen Rolle der Frau in der späten römischen Republik* (1975), 47 ff. collects all the evidence; Bauman, *WPAR* 42 ff.”

Some evidence on which these entries are based:

***For Plutarch on Cornelia’s spurned proposal from a Ptolemy, see Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus* 1.3.:**

For Valerius Maximus on Cornelia and her jewels, see 4.4, *praefatio De Paupertate: Maxima ornamenta esse matronis liberos, apud Pomponium Rufum collectorum libro *sic invenimus: Cornelia Gracchorum mater, cum Campana matrona apud illam hospita ornamenta sua pulcherrima illius saeculi ostenderet, traxit eam sermone, donec e schola redirent liberi, et ‘haec’inquit ‘ornamenta sunt mea.’

(When a Campanian matron staying at Cornelia’s villa insisted on displaying her own extremely beautiful jewelry, Cornelia detained her in conversation until Tiberius and Gaius returned home from school. She then announced, “These are my jewels.”)

***For Cornelia’s twelve offspring, see Seneca, *Consolatio ad Marciam* 16.3 and *Consolatio ad Helvidiam* 16.6; Pliny, *Natural History* 7.57; Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus* 1.2.**

***For Scipio Aemilianus and Cornelia, see Polybius 31.26 ff.**

*For Scipio Aemilianus' comment on Tiberius Gracchus' death, see Valerius Maximus 6.2.3, *Libere Dicta aut Facta*:

Cn. Carbo tribunus plebis, nuper sepultae Gracchanae seditionis turbulentissimus vindex idemque orientium civilium malorum fax ardentissima, P. Africanum, a Numantiae ruinis summo cum gloriae fulgore venientem, ab ipsa paene porta in rostra perductum quid de Ti. Gracchi morte, cuius sororem in matrimonio habebat, sentiret interrogavit, ut auctoritate clarissimi viri incohato iam incendio multum incrementi adiceret, quia non dubitabat quin propter tam artam adfinitatem aliquid pro memoria interfecti neccesarii miserabiliter esset locuturus, at is iure eum caesum videri respondit, cui dicto cum contio, tribunicio furore instincta, violenter succlamasset...

*For Scipio Aemilianus' death and its alleged perpetrators, see. e.g. Appian, *Bella Civilia* 1.20.

*For Valerius Maximus on Sempronia and Equitius, see 3.8.6, *De Constantia*
Quid feminae cum contione? Si patrius mos servetur, nihil: sed ubi domestica quies seditionum agitata fluctibus est, priscae consuetudinis auctoritas convellitur, plusque valet quod violentia cogit quam quod suadet et praecipit verecundia. Itaque te, Sempronia, Ti. Et C. Gracchorum soror, uxor Scipionis Aemiliani, non ut absurde gravissimis virorum operibus inserens maligna relatione comprehendam, sed quia ab tribuno plebei producta ad populum in maxima confusione nihil ad tuoru, amplitudine degenerasti, honorata memoria prosequar. Coacta es eo loci consistere ubi principum civitas perturbari frons solebat, instabat tibi torvo vultu minas profundens amplissima potestas, clamor imperitae multitudinis obstrepebat, totum forum acerrimo studio nitebar ut Equitio, cui Semproniae gentis falsum ius quaerebatur, tamquam filio Tiberii fratris tui osculum dares. Tu tamen illum, nescio quibus tenebris protractum portentum, execrabili audacia ad usurpandam alienam propinquitatem tendentem reppulisti.

*For Cicero on Cornelia's letters: *Brutus* 211 (Atticus is speaking) *sed magni interest quos quidque audiat cotidie domi, quibuscum loquatur a puero, quem ad modum patres paedagogi matres etiam loquantur. Legimus epistulas Corneliae matris Gracchorum; apparet filios non tam in gremio educatos quam in sermone matris.*

*For Quintilian on Cornelia's letters: 1.1.6 *In parentibus vero quam plurimum esse eruditionis optaverim, nec de patribus tantum loquor. Nam Gracchorum eloquentiae multum contulisse accepimus Corneliam matrem, cuius doctissimus sermo in posteros quoque est epistolis traditus.*

The text of Cornelia's letter:

The two epistolary fragments that we find in Nepos' manuscripts, attributed to Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi:

Verba ex epistula Corneliae Gracchorum matris ex libro Corneli Nepotis de Latinis Historicis excerpta.

1. *Dices pulchrum esse inimicos ulcisci. Id neque maius neque pulchrius cuiquam atque mihi esse videtur, sed si liceat re publica salva ea persequi. Sed quatenus id fieri non potest, multo tempore multisque partibus inimici nostri non peribunt, atque uti nunc sunt erunt potius quam res publica profligetur atque pereat.*

Eadem alio loco.

2. *Verbis conceptis deierare ausim, praeterquam qui Tiberium Gracchum necarunt, neminem inimicum tantum molestiae tantumque laboris, quantum te ob has res, mihi tradidisse; quem oportebat omnium eorum quos antehac habui liberos partis tolerare atque curare ut quam minimum sollicitudinis in senecta haberem, utique quaecumque ageres, ea velles maxime mihi placere atque uti nefas haberes rerum maiorum adversum meam sententiam quicquam facere, praesertim mihi cui parva pars vitae superest. Ne id quidem tam breve spatium potest opitulari, quin et mihi adversere et rem publicam profliges? Denique quae pausa erit? ecquando desinet familia nostra insanire? ecquando modus ei rei haberi poterit? ecquando desinemus et habentes et praebentes molestiis insistere? ecquando perpuDESCET miscenda atque perturbanda*

re publica? Sed si omnino id fieri non potest, ubi ego mortua ero, petito tribunatum; per me facito quod lubebit, cum ego non sentiam. Ubi mortua ero, parentabis mihi et invocabis deum parentem. In eo tempore non pudet te eorum deum preces expetere, quos vivos atque praesentes relictos atque desertos habueris? Ne ille sirit Iuppiter te ea perseverare, nec tibi tantam dementia venire in animum. Et si perseveras, vereor ne in omnem vitam tantum laboris culpa tua recipias uti in nullo tempore tute tibi placere possis.

These words are excerpted from a letter of Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, from the book of Cornelius Nepos about Latin Historians.

You will say that it is a beautiful thing to take vengeance on enemies. To no one does this seem either greater or more beautiful than it does to me, but only if it is possible to pursue these aims without harming our country. But seeing as that cannot be done, our enemies will not perish for a long time and for many reasons, and they will be as they are now rather than have our country be destroyed and perish.

The same letter in a different passage.

I would dare to take an oath solemnly, swearing that, except for those who have murdered Tiberius Gracchus, no enemy has foisted so much difficulty and so much distress upon me as you have because of all these matters. You, who should have shouldered the responsibilities of all of those children whom I had in the past, and to make sure that I might have the least anxiety possible in my old age. And that, whatever you did, you would wish to please me most greatly. And that you would consider it sacrilegious to do anything of great significance contrary to my feelings, especially as I am someone with only a short portion of my life left. Cannot even that time span, as brief as it is, be of help in keeping you from opposing me and destroying our country?

What end will there finally be? When will our family stop behaving insanely? When will we cease insisting on troubles, both suffering and causing them? When will we begin to feel shame about disrupting and disturbing our country? But if this is altogether unable to take place, seek the office of tribune when I will be dead; as far as I am concerned, do what will please you, when I shall not perceive what you are doing. When I have died, you will sacrifice to me as a parent and call upon the god of your parent. At that time will it not shame you to seek prayers of those gods, whom you had abandoned and deserted when they were alive and on hand? May Jupiter not for a single instant allow you to continue in these actions nor permit such madness to come into your mind. And if you persist, I fear that, by your own fault, you may incur such trouble for your entire life that at no time would you be able to make yourself happy.”

Cf. *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.22: *Exclamatio est quae conficit significationem doloris aut indignationem alicuius per hominis aut urbis aut loci aut rei cuiuspiam compellationem, hoc modo: “Te hunc adloquor, Africane, cuius mortui quoque nomen splendori ac decori est civitati. Tui clarissimi nepotes suo sanguine aluerunt inimicorum crudelitatem.* Apostrophe is the figure that expresses sorrow or courage by an address to some person or city or place or thing, in this way: “Now I address you, Africanus, the name of whom—though you are dead—is also a source of luster and glory to the state. With their own blood your most famous grandsons have nourished the cruelty of their personal enemies.”

Cf. the speech of Torquatus at Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 8.7.15:

“Quandoque,” inquit, tu, T. Manli, neque imperium consulare neque maiestatem patriam veritus adversus edictum nostrum extra ordinem in hostem pugnasti, et quantum in te fuit, disciplinam militarem, qua stetit ad hanc diem Romana res, solvisti, meque in eam necessitatem adduxisti, ut aut rei publicae mihi aut mei obliviscendum sit, nos potius nostro delicto plectemus quam res publica tanto suo damno nostro peccata luat. Triste exemplum sed in posterum salubre iuventuti erimus Me quidem cum ingenita caritas liberum tum specimem istud veritatis deceptum vana imagine decoris in te movet; sed cum aut morte tua sancienda sint consulum imperia aut impunitate in perpetuum abroganda, nec te quidem, si quid in te nostri sanguinis est, recusare censeam quin disciplinam militarem culpa tua prolapsam poena restituas—i, lictor, deliga ad palum”

Cf. also Livy 2.5.5 ff. on the death of Lucius Junius Brutus' sons

Echoes of Cornelia's letter [in Nepos' lifetime]: the speech of Veturia in Livy 2.40:
Coriolanus prope ut amens consternatus ab sede sua cum ferret matri obviam complexum, mulier in iram ex precibus versa "Sine, priusquam complexum accipio, sciam." inquit, "ad hostem an ad filium venerim, captiva materne in castris tuis sim. In hoc me longa vita et infelix senectia traxit, ut exulem te, deinde hostem viderem? Potuisti poplari hanc terram, quae te genuit atque aluit? Non tibi quamvis infesto animo et minaci perveneras ingredienti fines ira cecidit? Non, cum in conspectu Roma fuit, succurrit 'Intra illa moenia domus ac penates mei sunt, mater coniunx liberique'? Ergo ego nisi peperissem, Roma non oppugnaretur; nisi filium haberem, libera in libera patria mortua essem. Sed ego nihil iam pati nec tibi turpius nec mihi miserius possum nec, ut sum miserrima, diu futura sum: de his videris, quos, si pergis, aut immatura mors aut longa servitus manet."...Apud Fabium, longe antiquissimum auctorem, usque ad senectutem vixisse eundem invenio...Non inviderunt laude sua mulieribus viri Romani—adeo sine obtreptione gloriae alienae vivebatur —monumentoque quod esset, templum Fortunae muliebri aedificatum dedicatumque est.

Coriolanus, almost as if he were insane, confused in his mind, having risen from his seat, was holding out his arms in embrace for his mother as she came to meet him. The woman, turned into anger from her entreaties, said, "Allow me, before I receive an embrace, to know whether I have come to an enemy of the state or to a son, whether I am a captive or a mother in your camp. Have a long life and a wretched old age dragged me into this situation, that I looked upon you as an exile, and then an enemy of the state? Have you been able to devastate this land, which bore and nurtured you? Didn't anger vanish from you— even though you had come with a hateful and threatening attitude—as you entered the boundaries of your country? Didn't the thought come into your mind, when Rome was in your sight, 'Within those walls are my house and household gods, my mother, wife and children?' Thus if I had not given birth, Rome would not be under siege, if I did not have a son, I would have died a free woman in a free country. But I am able to endure nothing either more shameful for you or more miserable for myself nor, as I am extremely miserable, am I about to be so for long; you will see about these people for whom—if you proceed on your course—either an untimely death or a long slavery remain"...In the works of Fabius Pictor, by far the most ancient authority, I find that this man lived to old age... Roman men did not begrudge women their own praise—to such an extent did people live without disparaging glory earned by another—and it was as a commemoration of this event that a temple was built and dedicated to the Fortune of women.

Vergil's Amata and Cornelia:

Vergil, *Aeneid* 7.359-372 (C. Day Lewis translation): "Father, must our Lavinia be wed to a Trojan, and outcast? Have you no feeling for her? No sense of your own interests? No pity for her mother?—that false-hearted pirate will leave me as soon as a fair wind blows, and sail away with your daughter. It's Paris all over again—just so did Paris steal into Sparta, then carried Ledaean Helen away to Troy. What of your own solemn pledge? The love you had in the old days for your own people? The promise given so often to Turnus, your kinsman? If it is settled our son-in-law must be of foreign extraction—if thus your father Faunus enjoins you—I say that any land which is separate from ours and autonomous is in fact foreign, and this was what the oracle means. Now Turnus, if we go back to the origin of his family, is Mycenaean, descended from Inachus and Acrisius."

Aeneid 12.56-63 [C. Day Lewis translation): "By these tears of mine, by whatever love and respect you feel for me, I implore you, Turnus—since you are my one hope now, sole stay of my sad old age (*senecta*); since Latinus' honour, authority rest in your charge; but for you we should collapse together—one thing I beg, give up this idea of fighting the Trojan. Whatever hazards await you in a duel, the same await me too: if you die, then will I quit a life I hate; Aeneas shall not be my son, nor I his captive."

Echoes of Cornelia's letter in Propertius 4.11:

Cornelia, *mater Gracchorum*, talks about the obligations of survivors to replace the dead for those still living, and about the role of children in alleviating the difficulties of aging parents. She chastises her son Gaius Gracchus for failing to assume the responsibilities of departed kinfolk (specifically his elder brother Tiberius and the nine other children whom Cornelia has survived): *[te] quem oportebat omnium eorum quos antehac habui liberos partis tolerare atque curare ut quam minimum sollicitudinis in senecta haberem*. Similarly, Propertius' Cornelia orders her husband to take over the duties of a deceased family member. Here, though, the family member whom this man is told to replace is not a member of his own generation, but the dead Cornelia herself: 75 ff. *fungere maternis vicibus pater: illa meorum/omnis erit collo turba ferendo tuo./oscula cum dederis tua flentibus, adice matris:/tota domus coepit nunc onus esse tuum*.

In a comparable reversal of gender roles, just as the passage from Cornelia's letter discussed above states her expectation that her son Gaius would take care to minimize her own anxiety in her old age, Propertius' Cornelia asks her sons to keep her, still-living, husband from experiencing cares when old age overtakes him: 93 ff. *discite venturam iam nunc sentire senectam,/caelibis ad curas nec vacet ulla via./quod mihi detractum est, vestros accedat ad annos:/prole mea Paullum sic iuuet esse senem*.

Propertius further, albeit implicitly, contrasts his Cornelia with the mother of the Gracchi by having her voice pride in being survived by all three of her children: 97-98 *et bene habet: numquam mater lugubria sumpsi;/venit in exsequias tota caterva meas*.

Verbal reminiscences of Cornelia's letter to her son in Propertius 4.11: *Desine*, stop, is the first word which Propertius places in the mouth of his Cornelia. The letter of Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, employs this same verb twice, as the second word in the first and third of the four successive questions that begin with *ecquando: ecquando desinet familia nostra insanire? and ecquando desinemus et habentes et praebentes molestiis insistere?* (n.b. Propertius also places this verb in the mouth of the dead Cynthia at 4.7.78, who addresses him with *[et quoscumque meo fecisti nomine versus,/ure mihi:] laudes desine habere meas*).

In 4.11.2, with *panditur ad nullas ianua nigra preces*, Propertius' Cornelia immediately proclaims the uselessness of prayers, *preces*, by the living for her in the lower world now that she is dead; Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, asks her son if he will not be ashamed to seek the *preces* of his deceased ancestors once she is dead (*Ubi mortua ero...in eo tempore non pudet te eorum deum preces expetere...*).

At 4.11. 93 Propertius' Cornelia uses the phrase *sentire senectam* in telling her sons to perceive that old age now creeps up upon her husband; Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, employs *senecta* for her own old age and *sentire*, negatively, for her own, prospective, dead and unfeeling state (*per me facito quod lubebit, cum ego non sentiam*).

Most significantly, Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, gives her son Gaius Gracchus a string of orders about what to do when, in the future, she will be dead (*petito tribunatum...; per me facito quod lubebit, cum ego non sentiam...; ubi mortua ero, parentabis mihi et invocabis deum parentum*); For Propertius' Cornelia, death is no longer a thing of the future; the poetic fiction of delivering a posthumous speech nonetheless allows her to issue a string of orders to her male kin (69 ff.: *et serie fulcite genus.../fungere maternis vicibus pater.../oscula cum dederis tua flentibus, adice matris.../ut responsurae singula verba iace.../coniugium, pueri, laudate et ferte paternum.../nec matrem laudate nimis.../discite venturam iam nunc sentire senectam...; quod mihi detractum est, vestros accedat ad annos...*).

Vergil's Anchises and Cornelia's values:

Cf. Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.817 ff. (C. Day Lewis translation): "Would you see the Tarquin kings, and arrogant as they, Brutus the avenger, with the symbols of civic freedom he won back? He shall be first to receive consular rank and its power of life and death: when his sons awake the dormant conflict, their father, a tragic figure, shall call them to pay the extreme penalty, for fair freedom's sake. However posterity looks on that deed, patriotism shall prevail and love of honour (*vis et Tarquinius reges animamque superbam/ultoris Bruti fascesque videre receptos?.consulis*

imperium hic primus saevasque secures/accipiet, natosque pater, nova bella moventes,/ad poenam pulchra pro libertate vocabit,/infelix! Utcumque ferent ea facta minores,/vincet amor patriae laudumque immensa cupido). See over there the Decii, the Drusi, Torquatus with merciless axe (*saevumque securi/aspice Torquatium*), Camillus with the standards he recovered. See those twin souls, resplendent in duplicate armour: now they're of one mind, and shall be as long as the Underworld holds them; but oh, if they ever reach the world above, what warfare, what battles and what carnage they will create between them—Caesar descending from Alpine strongholds, the fort of Monoecus, his son-in-law Pompey lined up with an Eastern army against him (*aggeribus socer Alpinis atque arce Monoeci/descendens, gener adversis instructus Eois!*) *Lads (ne, pueri)*, do not harden yourselves to face such terrible wars! Turn not your country's hand against your country's heart! You, be the first to renounce it, my son of heavenly lineage, you be the first to bury the hatchet!...Who could leave unannounced the glorious Cato, Cossus, the family of the Gracchi, the two Scipios—thunderbolts in war and death to Libya...Let others fashion from bronze more lifelike, breathing images—for so they shall—and evoke living faces from marble; others excel as orators, others track with their instruments the planets circling in heaven and predict when stars will appear. But Romans (sic), never forget that government is your medium! Be this your art—to practise men in the habit of peace, generosity to the conquered, and firmness against aggressors (*tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento—/hae tibi erunt artes—pacis imponere morem,/parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*)....” Then father Anchises began, tears welling up in his eyes (*tum pater Anchises lacrimis ingressus obortus*), “My son, do not probe into the sorrows of your kin (*ingentem luctum ne quaere tuorum*). Fate shall allow the earth one glimpse of this young man—one glimpse, no more. Too puissant had been Rome's stock, ye gods, in your sight, had such gifts been granted it to keep. What lamentations of men shall the Campus Martiu echo to Mars' great city! O Tiber, what obsequies you shall see one day as you glide past the new-built mausoleum! No lad of the Trojan line shall with such hopeful promise exalt his Latin forebears, not shall the land of Romulus ever again be so proud of one she has given birth to...Alas, poor youth. Marcellus, you shall be (*heu, miserande puer.../tu Marcellus eris*).”

For “transgendering” in the *Aeneid*, see Barbara McManus, *Classics and Feminism: Gendering the Classics* (New York 1997) 91-118.

For Cornelia's “conservatism”, see Richard Bauman, *Women and Politics in Ancient Rome* (London and New York 1992) 42-43.

Reading Roman Women's Writings:

Assessing the words of Plautus' *Phoenicium* (*Pseudolus* 41-73)

Plautus, *Pseudolus* 3-74

PSEUDOLUS

Si ex te tacente fieri possem certior,
Ere, quae miseriae te tam misere macerent,
Duorum labori ego hominum parsissem lubens, 5
Mei te rogandi et tui respondendi mihi;
Nunc, quoniam id fieri non potest, necessitas
Me subigit ut te rogem. Responde mihi:
Quid est quod tu exanimatus iam hos multos dies
Gestas tabellas tecum, eas lacrumis lavis, 10
Neque tui participem consili quemquam facis?
Eloquere, ut quod ego nescio id tecum sciam

CALIDORUS

Misere miser sum, Pseudole. PS. id te Iuppiter
Prohibessit. CA; Nihil noc Iovis ad iudicium attinet:
Sub Veneris regno vapulo, non sub Iovis 15.
PS. Licet me id scire quid sit? Nam tu me antihac
Supremum habuisti comitem consiliis tuis.
CA. Idem animum nunc est. PS. face me certum quid tibist;
Iuvabo aut re aut opera aut consilio bono.
CA. cape has tabellas; tute hinc narrato tibi 20
Quae me miseria et cura contabefacit.
PS. Mos tibi geretur, sed quid hoc, quaeso? CA. Quid est?
PS. Ut opinor, quaerunt litterae hae sibus liberos:
Alia aliam scandit. CA. Ludis iam ludo tuo.
PS. Has quidem pol credo, nisi Sibulla legerit, 25
Interpretari alium posse neminem,
CA. Cur inclementer dicis lepidis litteris,
Lepidis tabellis lepida conscripta manu?
PS. an, opsecro hercle, habent quas gallinae manus?
Nam has quidem gallina scripsit. CA. Odiosus mihi es. 30
Lege, vel tabellas redde. PS. Immo enim pellegam,
Advortito animum. CA. Non adest. PS At tu cita.
CA. Immo ego tacebo, tu istinc ex cera cita;
Nam istic meus animus nunc est, non in pectore.
PS. Tuam amicam video, Callidore. CA. Ubi ea est, opsecro? 35
PS. Eccam in tabellis porrectam: in cera cubat.
CA. At te di deaque quantumst. PS. Servassint quidem.
CA. Quasi solstitialis herba paulisper fui:
Repente exortus sum, repentino occidi.

PS. Tace, dum tabellas pellego. CA. Ergo quin legis?	40
PS. ‘Phoenicium Calidoro amatori suo Per ceram et lignum litterasque interpretes Salutem mittit et salutem abs te expetit, Lacrumans titubanti animo corde et pectore?	
CA. Perii! Salutem nusquam invenio, Pseudole, Quam illi remittam. PS. Quam salutem? CA. Argenteam. PS. pro lignean salute vis argenteam Remittere illi? Vide sis quam tu rem geras. CA. recita modo: ex tabellis iam faxo scies Quam subito argento mi usus intento siet.	45 50
PS. ‘Leno me peregre mittit Macedonio Minis viginti vendidit, voluptas mea. Et priusquam hinc abiit quindecim miles minas. Dederat; nunc unae quinque remorantur minae. Ea causa miles hic reliquit symbolum, Expressam in cera ex anulo suam imaginem, Et qui huc adferret eius similem symbolum Cum eo simul me mitteret, et rei dies Haec praesituta est, proxuma Dionysia’ Cras, ea quidem sunt. CA. Prope adest exitium mihi, Nisi quid mihi in test auxilii. PS. Sine pellegam. CA Sino, nam mihi videor cum ea fabularier, Lege: dulce amarumque una nunc misces mihi. PS .Nunc nostri amores, mores, consuetudines, Iocus, ludus, sermo, suavisaviatio, Compressiones artae amantum corporum, Teneris labellis molles morsiunculae, +Nostrorum orgiorum os...nclulae+ Papillarum horridularum oppressiunculae Harunc voluptatum mi omnium atque itidem tibi Distractio discidium vastities venit, Nisi quae mihi in test aut tibist in me salus Haec quae ego scivi ut scires curavi omnia; Nunc ego te experiar quid ames, quid simules. Vale” CA. est misere scriptum, Pseudole. PS. Oh! Miserrume. CA. Quin fles? PS. Pumiceos oculos habeo: non queo Lacrumam exorare ut expuant unam modo. CA. Quid ita? PS. Genus nostrum semper sicco culum fuit.	55 60 65 67b 70 75

PSEUDOLUS: If I could get a better idea from you with your mouth shut, master, what sorrows hurt you so wretchedly, I would gladly have saved the effort of two men—of me asking you and you answering me. Since that cannot happen now, obligation forces me to ask you. Answer me: what’s the reason that you, after being a virtual vegetable for many days now, keep carrying these writing tablets with you, wash them with your tears, and don’t let anyone in on what you’re thinking? Speak up, so that I might know as well as you know what I don’t know.

CALIDORUS: Pseudolus, I am wretchedly wretched.

PS May Jupiter keep you from that condition.

CA This has no relevance to Jupiter's sphere of judgment. I am suffering under the reign of Venus, not Jupiter.

PS Is it allowed for me to know what the problem is? In the past you considered me your closest consultant in your thinking processes.

CA. That's my intention now.

PS. Give me an idea of what's bothering you; I will help—with money or work or good thinking.

CA. Take these writing tablets, and from reading them tell yourself what unhappiness and concern make me waste away!

PS. Your wish will be my command. But what's this, I ask you?

CA. What's this?

PS. As I ascertain, these letters are seeking to produce children; since they climb on top of each other.

CA. Are you now joking with a joke?

PS. Indeed by Pollux I believe that unless the Sibyl manages to read these letters, no one is able to make sense out of them.

CA. Why do you speak disparagingly of charming letters on charming tablets written by a charming hand?

PS: By Hercules I plead, what hands do hens have? For a hen has certainly written these letters.

CA. You are annoying to me. Read the tablets or hand them back.

PS. Why, I'll read them through. Pay attention in my direction.

CA. It's not here.

PS. Then you summon it.

CA. Why I will keep my mouth shut, you summon it from the wax; for my attention is now there, and not inside of me.

PS. I see your girlfriend-for-hire, Calidorus.

CA. Where is she, I appeal to you?

PS. Fully stretched out, on the tablets and lying as if in bed on the wax.

CA. May the gods and goddesses to you with all in their power—

PS. Be protectors of course.

CA. Just like grass at midsummer I stood tall for a while: suddenly I rose up, suddenly I withered.

PS. Keep your mouth shut, while I read the tablets.

CA. Fine, why don't you read, then?

PS. "Phoenicium sends good wishes to her lover Calidorus, through wax and wood and letters as intermediaries, and seeks good wishes from you, as she is weeping, with trembling mind, heart and breast."

CA. I'm done for, Pseudolus, nowhere do I find good wishes of the kind I can send back.

PS. What good wishes do you mean?

CA. Of a moneyed persuasion.

PS. Do you want to send her good wishes in the form of money in return for good wishes on a wooden tablet? Please consider what kind of business you're doing.

CA. Just read the text: now I'll arrange for you to know, from the tablets, how suddenly I need to have money found.

PS. "A pimp has sold me, abroad ,to a Macedonian soldier for twenty minae, my darling: and before he departed from here, this soldier had given fifteen minae: now only five minae hold up the sale. For that reason this soldier left a pledge, his own portrait from his ring stamped in wax so that whoever might bring him a pledge resembling his might at the same time send me with it, and the day for this transaction has been appointed beforehand, the very next festival of Dionysius." Why, that's tomorrow!

CA. My day of destruction is almost here, unless there's some kind of help for me in you.

PS. Let me read the words through.

CA. Fine with me, for I seem to myself to be having a conversation with her; read: now you mix sweet and bitter together for me.

PS." Now our love affairs, ways, routines, joking, playing, talking, sweet conversation, close cuddlings of loving bodies, on delicate little lips soft little bites...of our secret passionate rites, little squeezing of slightly stiffening nipples, a dragging apart, a tearing apart, a devastation of all these pleasures for me and likewise for you is coming, unless there are good wishes for me towards you or for you towards me. I have taken care that you may know all of these matters which I have known: now I will try to determine what you do by way of loving, and what you do by way of pretending. Farewell."

CA. That's wretchedly written, Pseudolus.

PS. O, most wretchedly.

CA. Why aren't you weeping, then?

PS. I have eyes made of pumice stone: I am not able to beg them to trickle out even one single tear.

CA. What's the problem?

PS. Our race has always been dry-eyed.

Emily Hemelrijk, *Matrona Docta: Educated Women in the Roman elite from Cornelia to Julia Domna* (London and New York 1999) 198-199: " A polished letter was a mark of good education and, therefore, of high social status. It was expected as a matter of course among the members of high society and imitated by those of less elevated descent who aspired to a higher status. In this respect women do not seem to have differed from men: by writing elegant letters according to the rules of the day, they could demonstrate their high social status, or try to lay claim to a higher status than was rightfully theirs. A mock example of such a claim is found in an imaginary letter of early date, the quaint love letter of a young slave girl, Phoenicium, in one of the comedies of Plautus...**Part of the fun of this letter lies in the contrast between the low status of the girl and the exuberant style of her letter, which bristles with unusual or invented words. By accumulating uncommon words and long-winded phrases Plautus makes fun of the slave girl's aspiration to use the language of the educated classes.**"

Plautus, *Casina* 134-138

Olympio: Quom mihi dicet, "mi animule, mi Olympio,

Mea vita, mea melilla, mea festivitas

135

Sine tuos ocellos deosculer, voluptas mea,

Sine amabo ted amari, meu' festus dies,

Meu' pullus passer, mea columba, mi lepus

.

When she will say to me, “My little soul, my Olympio, my life, my little honey, my holiday spirit, let me kiss your little eyes, my delight, please let yourself be loved, my day of vacation. My sparrow chick, my dove, my bunny rabbit.”

Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 13.12.25. 9ff.

Hoc ornatus genus in crimine uno vocibus multis atque saevis extruendo ille iam tunc M. Cato antiquissimus in orationibus suis celebravit, sicuti in illa, quae inscripta est De Decem Hominibus, cum Thermum accusavit quod decem liberos homines eodem tempore interfecisset, hisce verbis eandem omnibus rem significationibus usus est, quae quoniam sunt eloquentiae Latinae tunc primum exorientis lumina quaedam sublustria, libitum est ea mihi apomnemoneuein: **“Tum nefarium facinus peiore facinore operire postulas, succidias humanas facis, tantam trucidationem facis, decem funera facis, decem capita libera interficis, decem hominibus vitam eripis, indicta causa, iniudicatis, incondemnatis.”** Item M. Cato in orationis principio, quam dixit in senatu Pro Rodiensibus, cum vellet res nimis prosperas dicere, tribus vocabulis idem sententibus dixit. Verba eius haec sunt: **“Scio solere plerisque hominibus in rebus secundis atque prolixis atque prosperis animum excellere atque superbiam atque ferociam augescere”**...[Favorinus] Sed quia cum dignitate orationis et cum gravi verborum copia dicuntur, quamquam eadem fere sint et ex una sententia cooriantur, plura tamen esse existimantur, quoniam et aures et animum saepius feriunt.

Marcus [Porcius] Cato, that most ancient orator of ours, even in his day often employed this kind of embellishment, by heaping up in one charge many and harsh terms, in his speeches, as in that speech which was entitled “About the Ten Men” [190 BCE], when he accused [Quintus Minucius] Thermus because he had allegedly killed ten free men at the same time, Cato used all these words meaning the same thing, words which—since they are some bright lights of Latin eloquence, then coming into being for the first time—it is my pleasure to recall: “Then you demand to cover up an appalling deed with a worse deed, you commit so great a slaughter, you cause ten deaths, you kill ten free heads, you take away the life from ten men, with a case untried, unjudged, uncondemned.” Likewise M. Cato, in the beginning of the oration, which he delivered in the senate on behalf of the Rhodians [167 BCE], when he wanted to say that things were extremely prosperous, he said in three words which mean the same thing “I know that where most men are concerned, in circumstances favorable and successful and prosperous the spirit soars and pride and arrogance increase.”...[Favorinus] But because they are uttered in conjunction with the worthiness of the speech and the weighty abundance of its words, although they are almost the same and arise from one idea, they are thought to be richer in meaning, since they strike the ears and attention more frequently.

Plautus, *Pseudolus* 1246 ff., especially 1259-1262

PS. Nam ubi amans complexust amantem, ubi ad labra labella adiungit,

Ubi alter alterum bilingui manifesto inter seprehendunt,

1260

Ubi mamma mammicula opprimitur aut, si lubet, corpora conduplicant,

Manu candida cantharum dulciferum propinare amicissimam amicitiam.

For when a loving man squeezes a loving woman, when he joins little lips to lips, when they clutch one another, each probing the other in an unmistakable double tonguing kiss, when a breast is crushed by a little breast, or, if they desire, they double up their bodies, and a tankard full of sweet tasting wine, poured with a dazzling hand, toasts their most affectionate affection.

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Eleven Elegies about the Poet Sulpicia

3.8

Sulpicia est tibi culta tuis, Mars magne, kalendis
spectatum e caelo, si sapis, ipse veni.
hoc Venus ignoscet: at tu, violente, caveto
ne tibi miranti turpiter arma cadant.
illius ex oculis, cum vult exurere divos, 5
accendit geminas lampadas acer Amor.
illam, quidquid agit, quoquo vestigia movit,
componit furtim subsequiturque Decor.
seu solvit crines, fuis decet esse capillis;
seu compsit, comptis est veneranda comis. 10
urit, seu Tyria voluit procedere palla;
urit, seu nivea candida veste venit.
talis in aeterno felix Vertumnus Olympo
mille habet ornatus, mille decenter habet.
sola puellarum digna est cui mollia caris 15
vellera det sucis bis madefacta Tyros,
possideatque, metit quidquid bene olentibus arvis
cultor odoratae dives Arabs segetis,
et quascumque niger rubro de litore gemmas
proximus Eois colligit Indus aquis. 20
hanc vos, Pierides, festis cantate kalendis,
et testudinea Phoebe superbe lyra.
hoc sollemne sacrum multos haec sumet in annos;
dignior est vestro nulla puella choro.

Great god Mars, Sulpicia is arrayed for you on the Kalends, the first day, of March, your month. If you have any discernment, come down from heaven to look at her yourself. Venus will pardon this: but you, god of brute force, beware that your weapons do not fall shamefully from your arms as you marvel at Sulpicia. From her eyes, when he wishes to set the gods on fire, fierce Love lights his twin torches. Whatever she does, wherever she wends her way, Attractiveness stealthily grooms her and follows behind her. If she loosens her hair, it is attractive for her to wear flowing tresses; if she arranges it, she must be revered with tresses arranged. She sets hearts aflame, if she has wished to go out in a Tyrian gown; she sets hearts aflame, if she comes out gleaming white in a snowy robe. In this way, on eternal Olympus, the bountiful god Vertumnus wears a thousand modes of dress, and wears a thousand attractively. She is unique among girls in being worthy to receive from Tyre soft wools twice dipped in expensive dyes. Let her possess whatever the wealthy Arab, who tills the scented crop, reaps from his nicely smelling fields, and whatever jewels the black Indian, close to the waters of Dawn, gathers from the red sea. Sing of her on these holiday Kalends, Pierian Muses, and Phoebus Apollo, proud with your tortoise-shell lyre. Let her welcome this traditional holy rite for many years; no girl is more worthy of your choir.

3.9

Parce meo iuveni, seu quis bona pascua campi
seu colis umbrosi devia montis aper.
nec tibi sit duros acuisse in proelia dentes;
incolumem custos hunc mihi servet Amor.
sed procul abducit venandi Delia cura. 5
o pereant silvae deficiantque canes!
quis furor est, quae mens densos indagine colles
claudentem teneras laedere velle manus?

quidve iuvat furtim latebras intrare ferarum
 candidaque hamatis crura notare rubis? 10
 sed tamen, ut tecum liceat, Cerinthe, vagari,
 ipsa ego per montes retia torta feram,
 ipsa ego velocis quaeram vestigia cervi
 et demam celeri ferrea vincla cani.
 tunc mihi tunc placeant silvae, si, lux mea, tecum 15
 arguar ante ipsas concubuisse plagas;
 tunc veniat licet ad casses, inlaesus abibit,
 ne veneris cupidae gaudia turbet, aper.
 nunc sine me sit nulla venus, sed lege Dianae,
 caste puer, casta retia tange manu; 20
 et quaecumque meo furtim subrepat amori,
 incidat in saevas diripienda feras.
 at tu venandi studium concede parenti,
 et celer in nostros ipse recurre sinus.

Spare my young man, boar, whether you control the fine pastures of the plain, or whether you frequent the remote places of the shady mountain, nor may it be your lot to have sharpened hard tusks for a struggle: let the guardian god Love keep him unharmed for me. But Diana, goddess of Delos, leads him far away with a passion for hunting. O, if only the woods would perish and the hunting dogs disappear! What madness is it, what a state of mind, to wish to wound delicate hands circling the closely packed hills with a hunting net. Or why is it pleasing to enter, stealthily, the lairs of savage beasts and mark white legs with barbed brambles? But nevertheless, so that I may be allowed to wander with you, Cerinthus, I myself will bear twisted nets through the mountains, I myself will seek the tracks of the swift stag and I will remove the iron chains from the quick-darting hound. Then, then would the forests please me, if, light of my life, I should be proven to have bedded down with you in the presence of the very hunting nets. Then, although the boar may come to the nets, he will depart uninjured, so that he may not disturb the pleasures of desiring passion. Now, without me, let there be no passion, but according to the law of Diana, chaste young man, touch the nets with chaste hand; and whatever woman stealthily creeps up upon my beloved, let her fall, to be torn to pieces, among fierce beasts. But you leave the desire for hunting to your parent, and quickly return yourself to my embrace.

3.10

Huc ades et tenerae morbos expelle puellae,
 huc ades, intonsa Phoebe superbe coma.
 crede mihi, propera: nec te iam, Phoebe, pigebit
 formosae medicas applicuisse manus. 5
 effice ne macies pallentes occupet artus,
 neu notet informis languida membra color,
 et quodcumque mali est et quidquid triste timemus,
 in pelagus rapidis evehat amnis aquis.
 sancte, veni, tecumque feras, quicumque sapes,
 quicumque et cantus corpora fessa levant; 10
 neu iuvenem torque, metuit qui fata puellae
 votaue pro domina vix numeranda facit.
 interdum vovet, interdum, quod langueat illa,
 dicit in aeternos aspera verba deos.
 pone metum, Cerinthe, deus non laedit amantes. 15
 tu modo semper ama; salva puella tibi est.
 at nunc tota tua est, te solum candida secum
 cogitat, et frustra credula turba sedet.
 Phoebe, fave. laus magna tibi tribuetur in uno
 corpore servato restituisse duos. 20
 nil opus est fletu; lacrimis erit aptius uti,

si quando fuerit tristior illa tibi.
iam celeser, iam laetus eris, cum debita reddet
certatim sanctis tutus uterque focus.
tunc te felicem dicet pia turba deorum,
optabunt artes et sibi quisque tuas.

25

Be present and banish the illness of the tender girl, be present, Phoebus Apollo, proud with your unshorn hair. Believe me, make haste: nor will it now cause you disgust, Phoebus, to have lain your healing hands on a lovely woman. See to it that wasting disease does not take hold of her limbs that grow pale, and that no hideous color deface her legs that are limp and weak, and whatever of evil there is and whatever gloomy thing we fear, a river with whirling waters drives into the sea. Holy one, come, and may you bring with you whatever fragrances and whatever charms relieve weary bodies; nor torment the young man, who fears that death is ordained for this girl, and makes vows for his mistress, too many to enumerate. Sometimes he vows, sometimes, because she is weak from illness, he says harsh words to the gods everlasting. Put aside your fear, Cerinthus, the god does not harm lovers. Only you love always: your girl is safe. But now she is yours entirely, the luminous girl thinks to herself of you alone, and a trusting throng sits at her side in vain. Phoebus Apollo, show your favor. Great praise will be granted you for having brought two back to health by saving one body. There is no need for weeping: it will be more fitting to use tears, if at any time she will be rather gloomy about you. Then you will be famous, then happy, when each lover, safe, will vie to give back what he owes you on the hallowed hearths. Then the devoted throng of the gods will say that you are fortunate, and each will also desire your healing arts for themselves.

3.11

Qui mihi, Cerinthe, dies dedit, hic mihi sanctus
atque inter festos semper habendus erit.
te nascente novum Parcae cecinere puellis
servitium et dederunt regna superba tibi.
uror ego ante alias. iuvat hoc, Cerinthe, quod uror, 5
si tibi de nobis mutuus ignis adest.
mutuus adsit amor, per te dulcissima furta
perque tuos oculos per Geniumque rogo.
mane Geni, cape tura libens votisque faveto,
si modo, cum de me cogitat, ille calet. 10
quod si forte alios iam nunc suspirat amores,
tunc precor infidos, sancte, relinque focos.
nec tu sis iniusta, Venus; vel serviat aequae
vinctus uterque tibi vel mea vincla leva.
sed potius valida teneamur uterque catena, 15
nulla queat posthac quam soluisse dies.
optat idem iuvenis quod nos, sed tectius optat
nam pudet haec illum dicere verba palam.
at tu, Natalis, quoniam deus omnia sentis,
adnue: quid refert, clamne palamne roget? 20

Whatever day, Cerinthus, gave you to me, this day will have to be blessed by me and always celebrated among the holidays. When you were born the Fates sang of a new form of love's slavery for women, and gave you proud realms of power. But I am set on fire more than all other women. This thrills me, Cerinthus, that I am ablaze, if there is a shared fire in you that has spread from me. Let love that we share be on hand, I beg you, by our most delectable secret moments, by your eyes and by the spirit of your birthday. Birthday Spirit, stay, gladly receive offerings of incense and look favorably upon my vows, if only, when he thinks of me, he is heated with passion. But if by chance he already sighs for another love, then, I pray, holy one, abandon his faithless hearth. And may you not be unfair, Venus; either let each of us submit equally in bondage to love's slavery or remove my own bonds. But rather let us both be held in a powerful chain, which no day to come may be able to loosen. The young man wishes for the same thing that I do, but he wishes more secretly; for it

causes him shame to utter these words openly. But you, Birthday Spirit, since—as a god—you feel all things, nod favorably: what does it matter, if he seeks me secretly or openly?

3.12

Natalis Juno, sanctos cape turis acervos,
 quos tibi dat tenera docta puella manu.
 lota tibi est hodie, tibi se laetissima compsit,
 staret ut ante tuos conspicienda focos.
 illa quidem ornandi causas tibi, diva, relegat; 5
 est tamen, occulte cui placuisse velit.
 at tu, sancta, fave neu quis divellat amantes,
 sed iuveni quaeso mutua vincla para.
 sic bene compones: ullae non ille puellae 10
 servire aut cuiquam dignior illa viro.
 nec possit cupidos vigilans deprendere custos
 fallendique vias mille ministret Amor.
 adnue purpureaque veni perlucida palla:
 ter tibi fit libo, ter, dea casta, mero,
 praecipit et natae mater studiosa quod optet: 15
 illa aliud tacita tam sua mente rogat.
 uritur ut celeres urunt altaria flammae,
 nec liceat quamvis, sana fuisse velit.
 sis Juno, grata, ut veniet cum proximus annus,
 hic idem votis iam vetus adsit amor. 20

Juno of birthdays, receive hallowed heaps of incense, which a learned girl gives to you with her tender hand. Today she is all yours, most joyously she has groomed herself for you, so that she might stand before your hearth to be gazed upon. Indeed she credits her reasons for adorning herself to you, goddess; she is, however, the sort who wishes to have pleased secretly. You, hallowed goddess, show favor, so that no one may tear lovers apart. But prepare for the young man, I beseech you, chains that bind him in the same way. In this way you will match them well: to no girl is he, to no man is she more worthy to be a slave of love. Nor let a watchful guard be able to catch them fulfilling their desires and let the god Love furnish them with a thousand ways of deceiving. Nod favorably, and come, radiant in a purple robe: three times with a cake, three times with wine, chaste goddess, honor is paid you. Her attentive mother also teaches her what she should wish: she now asks for something different in her silent mind. She is set on fire as rapid flames set the altars on fire, nor although it may be possible, would she wish to have been of sound mind. May you, Juno, be pleased, so that when the next year will come, this same love, now old, may be present to their vows.

3.13

Tandem venit amor, qualem texisse pudori
 quam nudasse alicui sit mihi fama magis.
 exorata meis illum Cytherea Camenis
 attulit in nostrum deposuitque sinum.
 exsolvit promissa Venus: mea gaudia narret, 5
 dicetur si quis non habuisse sua.
 non ego signatis quicquam mandare tabellis,
 ne legat id nemo quam meus ante, velim,
 sed peccasse iuvat, vultus componere famae
 taedet: cum digno digna fuisse ferar. 10

Love has finally come, of such sort that the rumor of having hidden it from anyone would cause me more shame than the rumor of having laid it bare. Won over by the poems that my Roman Muses inspired, Venus of Cythera brought him to me and dropped him in my embrace. Venus has fulfilled her promises: let anyone tell of my joys if they will be said to have been without joys of their own. Nor would I wish to entrust anything to sealed tablets: may no one get to read what I feel before the

man that I love. But I delight in having misbehaved: it wearies me to wear a false expression for the sake of rumor. May I be said to be a woman worthy of having made love with a worthy man.

3.14

Invisus natalis adest, qui rure molesto
 et sine Cerintho tristis agendus erit.
 dulcius urbe quid est? an villa sit apta puellae
 atque Arretino frigidus amnis agro?
 iam, nimum Messalla mei studiose, quiescas:
 non tempestivae saepe, propinque, viae.
 hic animum sensuque meos abducta relinquo,
 arbitrio quam vis non sinit esse meo.

5

My hateful birthday is here, which must be celebrated as a gloomy occasion, in the troublesome countryside and without Cerinthus. What is more delightful than the city? Or is a country place—and the chilly river in the field of Arretium—suitable for a girl? Now, Messalla, excessively attentive to me, would you calm down. Often journeys are at the wrong time, kinsman. Although I have been led away, I leave behind my heart and my emotions, although he does not allow me to exercise my own judgment.

3.15

Scis iter ex animo sublatum triste puellae?
 natali Romae iam licet esse meo.
 omnibus ille dies nobis natalis agatur,
 qui nec opinata nunc tibi sorte venit.

Do you know that the gloomy journey has been lifted, like a weight, from the girl's heart? Now I have permission to be at Rome on my birthday. Let that birthday be celebrated by all of us, which has now come to you by a chance you never thought would happen.

3.16

Gratum est, securus multum quod iam tibi de me
 permittis, subito ne male inepta cadam.
 sit tibi cura togae potior pressumque quasillo
 scortum quam Servi filia Sulpicia:
 solliciti sunt pro nobis, quibus illa doloris,
 ne cedam ignoto, maxima causa, toro.

5

I am thankful that you, free from any care about me, are now so indulgent to yourself, in order that I, clumsy as I am, may protect myself from suddenly taking a bad fall. May your caring for a woman shamefully clad in a whore's toga and a partner-for-hire loaded with a wool-basket be stronger than Sulpicia, daughter of Servius. Still, men are anxious about me, to whom it is the greatest cause of sorrow that I may yield my position in your bed to a total nobody.

3.17

Estne tibi, Cerinthe, tuae pia cura puellae,
 quod mea nunc vexat corpora fessa calor?
 a ego non aliter tristes evincere morbos
 optarim, quam te si quoque velle putem.
 at mihi quid prosit morbos evincere, si tu
 nostra potes lento pectore ferre mala?

5

Cerinthus, do you possess devoted concern for your girl, seeing that now feverish heat attacks my exhausted body? Alas, I would not have wished to overcome gloomy illnesses if I did not think you wanted me to as well. But what is the benefit to me of conquering illnesses, if you are able to endure my misfortunes with an unresponsive heart?

3.18

Ne tibi sim, mea lux, aequae iam fervida cura
 ac videor paucos ante fuisse dies,
 si quicquam tota commisi stulta iuventa

cuius me fatear paenituisse magis,
hesterna quam te solum quod nocte reliqui,
ardorem cupiens dissimulare meum.

5

Light of my life, may I not now be to you as passionate a care as I seem to have been a few days earlier. Let your care for me subside if I, stupidly, have done anything in my entire youth of which I would admit to have regretted more than having left you alone, yesterday night, desiring to hide my blazing passion.

Ovid, the Roman Sappho?

A. Ovid, *Tristia* 2. 365-366

Lesbia quid docuit Sappho, nisi amare, puellas?

Tuta tamen Sappho...

“What did Sappho of Lesbos teach, other than girls to love [or how to love girls]? Yet Sappho was safe.”

B. *Tristia* 2. 421ff.

Neve peregrinus tantum defendar ab armis,

Et Romanus habet multa iocosa liber.

Utque suo Martem cecinit gravis Ennius ore—

Ennius ingenio maximus, arte rudis.

Explicat ut causas rapidi Lucretius ignis, 425

Casurumque triplex vaticinatur opus.

Sic sua lascivo cantata est saepe Catullo

Femina, cui falsum Lesbia nomen erat;

Nec contentus ea, multos vulgavit amores,

In quibus ipse suum fassus adulterium est. 430

Par fuit exigui similisque licentia Calvi.

Detexit variis qui sua furta modis.

Quid referam Ticideae, quid Memmi carmen, apud quos

Rebus adest nomen nominibusque pudor?

Cinna quoque his comes est, Cinnaque procacior Anser, 435

Et leve Cornifici parque Catonis opus.

Et quorum libris modo dissimulata Perillae

Nomine, nunc legitur dicta Metella suo.

Is quoque, Phasiacas Argo qui duxit in undas,

Non potuit Veneris furta tacere suae. 440

Nec minus Hortensi, nec sunt minus improba Servi

Carmina. Quis dubitet nomna tanta sequi?

Vertit Aristiden Sisenna, nec obfuit illi

historiae turpis inseruisse iocos.

Non fuit opprobrio celebrasse Lycorida Gallo, 445

Sed linguam nimio non tenuisse mero.

Credere iuranti durum putat esse Tibullus,

Sic etiam de se quod neget illa viro.

Fallere custodes idem docuisse fatetur,

Seque sua miserum nunc ait arte premi, 450

Saepe, velut gemmam dominae signumve probaret,

Per causam meminit se tetigsse manum:

Utque refert, digitis saepe est nutuque locutus,

Et tacitam mensae duxit in orbe notam;

Et quibus e sucis abeat de corpore livor 455

Impresso fieri qui solet ore, docet.
Denique ab incauto nimium petit ille marito,
Se quoque uti servet, peccet ut illa minus.
Scit, cui latretur, cum solus obambulet, ipsas
Cur totiens clausas excreet ante fores. 460
Multaque dat furti talis praecepta docetque
Qua nuptae possint fallere ab arte viros.
Non fuit hoc illi fraudi, legiturque Tibullus
Et olacet, et iam te principe notus erat.

“And so that I may not merely defend myself with the weapons of foreign poets, even the Roman book has many sexually amusing touches. And as serious Ennius has sung of war with his own lips,—Ennius the greatest in talent, in art primitive, and as Lucretius explains the reasons for torrid flame and prophesies the triple work about to collapse, often in this way his woman, to whom the false name of Lesbia was assigned, was celebrated in song by sexually playful Catullus. And not satisfied with her he broadcast his many love affairs/widely circulated many love poems, in which he himself admitted his own adultery.

The sexual misbehavior of pint-sized Calvus, who covered up his secret dalliances in various ways, was on a level with, and much like, his. What am I to say about the poetry of Tigidius or of Memmius, in whose writings there is an explicit naming of things and shame attached to the names? Cinna was also a companion of these men, and Anser more licentious than Cinna, and the light poetry of Cornificius, and similar writing of Cato. And in whose books Metella, recently disguised under the name of Perilla, now is read under her actual name. He also, who led the Argo into the waters of Phasis, was not able to be silent about the secret intrigues of his own passion. The poems of Hortensius, the poems of Servius are no less naughty. Who would hesitate to follow such great names? Sisenna translated Aristides, nor did it damage him to have inserted shameful jokes into his history. It was not a source of disgrace to Gallus to have celebrated Lycoris, but to have failed to hold his tongue after too much wine.

Tibullus thinks it difficult to trust his beloved under oath, because she apparently makes the same denials about him to her husband. The same poet admits to having taught her to deceive her guards, and now says that he, wretched, is being defeated by his own skill. Often, as if he were testing the gem and seal of the woman who controls his heart, he remembers that he touched her hand for a legitimate reason: and, as he recalls, often he spoke with his fingers and nodding, and traced a silent mark in the circle of the table. And he teaches from what juices bruising, which is accustomed to result from the pressed mouth, departs from the body; finally he seeks from the extremely wary husband that he also keep an eye on her, so that she may misbehave less. He knows why barking goes on, when a man walks on by, why coughing goes on so many times before the closed doors themselves. He offers many teachings for such a secret liaison, and instructs by what art brides are able to deceive their husbands. And the content of his poetry was not a detriment to him, and Tibullus is read and pleases, and already was renowned when you were first-citizen.”

C. Apuleius, Apology 10 Eadem igitur opera accusent C. Catullum quod Lesbiam pro Clodia nominarit, et Tigidam similiter quod quae Metella erat Perillam scripserit.

Ille tui vates operis, tua fama, Tibullus 5
Ardet in exstructo, corpus inane, rogo...
Si tamen e nobis aliquid nisi nomen et umbra
Restat, in Elysia valle Tibullus erit. 60
Obvius huic venias hedera iuvenalia cinctus
Tempora cum Calvo, docte Catulle, tuo
 “ If his mother lamented Memon, if his mother lamented Achilles, and sorrowful fates touch the great goddesses, tearful Elegy, loosen your unworthy hair, ah, now your name is extremely appropriate. The poet-prophet of your literary work, your source of renown, Tibullus, burns, an empty body, on a built-up pyre...If, however, anything from us survives besides a name and a spirit, Tibullus will be in the Elysian valley. May you come to greet him, your youthful temples wreathed in ivy, learned Catullus, with your friend Calvus.”

G. Ovid, *Tristia* 2.447-464. See B above.

H. Ovid, *Tristia* 3.7

Vade salutatum, subito perarata, Perillam,
Littera, semonis fida ministra mei.
Aut illam invenies dulci cum matre sedentem,
Aut inter libros Pieridasque suas...
 “tu quoque” dic “studii commuibus ecquid inhaeres
 doctaque non patrio carmina more canis?”
Nam tibi cum facie mores natura pudicos
Et raras dotes ingeniumque dedit.
Hoc ego Pegasidas deduxi primus ad undas 15
Ne male fecundae vena periret aquae;
Primus id aspexi teneris in virginis annis,
Utque pater natae duxque comesque fui.
Ergo si remanent ignes tibi pectoris idem
Sola tuum vates Lesbia vincet opus... 20
Dum licuit, tua saepe mihi, tibi nostra legebam;
Saepe tui iudex, saepe magister eram...
Forsitan exemplo, quo me laesere libelli,
Tu metuis poenae fata secunda meae.
Pone, Perilla, metum; tantummodo femina nulla
Neve vir a scriptis discat amare tuis...
Dumque suis victrix septem de montibus orbem
Prospiciet domitum Martia Roma, legar.
Tu quoque, quam studii maneat felicius usus,
Effuge venturos, qua potes, usque rogos!” 54

“Go to greet Perilla, speedily scratched letter, trustworthy attendant of my speech. You will either find her sitting with her sweet mother, or among her books and Muses. Say to her ‘are you still committed to our common pursuits, and compose learned poetry, though not in your father’s way?’ For nature has given you, along with physical beauty, virtuous ways and talent, an unusual dowry. I was the first to direct this talent to the stream of

Pegasus, so that the supply of fertile water might not badly perish. And I was the first to observe this talent, in the tender years of a maiden, and I was as a father to a daughter, and as a guide and comrade to you. Thus if the same flames remain in your heart, only the work of the Lesbian bard will surpass yours. When it was allowed, I often used to read your poems to me, and my poems to you; often I was your judge, often your teacher. Perhaps from the example, by which my poetry books have harmed me, you feel that the fate of my punishment will follow you. Perilla, lay aside your fear. Only make certain that no woman or man learn from your writings how to love...And while Mars' victorious Rome will look down at the conquered world from its seven hills, I will be read. You also, if a more fortunate use of your pursuit should abide, keep on avoiding, however you can, the funeral pyres to come."

I. Ovid, *Tristia* 2.207-208

Perdiderint cum me duo crimina, carmen et error,

Alterius facti culpa silenda mihi.

"Since two charges, a poem and a mistake, will have destroyed me. the guilt over one deed must be kept quiet by me."

Cf. also 211-212:

altera pars superest, qua turpi carmine factus

Arguor obsceni doctor adulterii.

"The other part remains, by which I am said to have become the teacher of disgraceful adultery by a shameful poem."

and 2.239-240

at si, quod mallet, vacuum tibi forte fuisset,

nullum legisses crimen in Arte mea.

"But if, as I would prefer, there had by chance been leisure time available to you, you would have read no grounds for charging me in my *Ars Amatoria*"

J. Ovid, *Amores* 3.14

Non ego, ne pecces, cum sis formosa, recuso,

Sed ne sit misero scire necesse mihi;

Nec te nostra iubet fieri censura pudicam,

Sed tamen, ut temptes dissimulare, rogat.

Non peccat, quaecumque potest peccasse negare 5

Solaque famosam culpa professa facit,

quis furor est, quae nocte latent, in luce fateri,

Et quae clam facias facta referre palam?

Ignoto meretrix corpus iunctura Quiriti

Opposita populum suumovet ante sera: 10

Tu tua prostitues famae peccata sinistrae

Commisi perages indiciumque tui?...

Est qui nequitiam locus exigat; omnibus illum

Deliciis imple, stet procul inde pudor!

Hinc sinul exteris, lascivis protinus omnis

<i>Absit, et in lecto crimina pone tuo.</i>	20
<i>Illic nec tunicam tibi sit posuisse <u>pudori</u></i>	
<i>Nec femori impositum sustinuisse femur</i>	
<i>Illic purpureis condatur lingua labellis,</i>	
<i>Inque modos Venerem mille figuret amor,</i>	
<i>Illic nec voces nec verba iuventia cessent,</i>	25
<i>Spondaque lasciva mobilitate tremat!</i>	
<i>Indue cum tunicis metuentem crimina <u>vultum</u>,</i>	
<i>Et <u>pudor</u> obscenum diffiteatur opus.</i>	
<i>Da populo, da verba mihi; sine nescius errem,</i>	
<i>Et liceat stulta credulitate frui!</i>	30
<i>Cur totiens video mitti recipique <u>tabellas</u>?</i>	
<i>Cur pressus prior est interiorque torus?...</i>	
<i>Tantum non oculos crimen deducis ad ipsos,</i>	35
<i>Si dubitas <u>famae</u> parcere, parce mihi!</i>	
<i>Mens abit et morior quotiens <u>peccasse</u> fateris,</i>	
<i>Perque meos artus frigida gutta fluit.</i>	
<i>Tunc amo, tunc odi frustra quod amare necesse est;</i>	
<i>Tunc ego, sed tecum, mortuus esse <u>velim</u>?</i>	40

“ I do not plea, since you are beautiful, that you not misbehave; rather, that it not be necessary for poor me to know about it. Nor does my judgmental stance order you to become virtuous. But it requests, however, that you try to hide what you do. A woman who is able to deny that she has misbehaved does not misbehave; only admitted blame makes a woman subject of ill-rumors.. What madness is this, to confess in the daylight the things that are hidden in the nighttime, and to describe openly the kinds of actions that you perform secretly. A paid sex worker who is about to join her body to an unknown Roman customer keeps the crowd at a distance by a bolted door: will you publicly broadcast your misbehaving deeds to unfavorable reputation and offer evidence of what you have done?.

There is a kind of place that demands sexual abandon: fill it with all delights, and let shameful stand away at a far distance. As soon as you have left that scene, let all sexual playfulness be absent at once, and put the charges of misbehavior on the couch. But when you are there, may it not cause you shame to have shed your tunic, nor to have had a thigh placed on top of yours. Let our tongue be buried in purple lips, and let love take shape into a thousand positions of passion. When you are there, let neither phrases nor words conducive to love-making stop, and let the bed frame tremble with sexually playful movement. Along with your tunic put on a face that fears charges of misbehavior, and let shame deny disgraceful conduct.

Say untruthful words to your public, say untruthful words to me, let me, ignorant, be in error, and let me enjoy foolish susceptibility! Why do I see writing tablets being sent and received so often? Why has the couch of your bedchamber been pressed down upon before I arrive? Just don't drag proof of your misbehavior in front of my very eyes; if you hesitate to spare your reputation, spare me! Every time you admit to having misbehaved, my mind leaves me and I die, and through my limbs a chill drop trickles. Then I love, then I hate in vain what is necessary to love. Then I would wish to have died, but with you ”

Cf. [Tibullus] Sulpicia 3.13

*Tandem venit amor, qualem texisse pudori
Quam nudasse alicui sit mihi fama magis...
Non ego signatis quicquam mandare tabellis,
Ne legat id nemo quam meus ante, velim,
sed peccasse iuvat, vultus componere famae
Taedet: cum digno digna fuisse ferar.*

10

Cf. Catullus 51. 9-12

*Lingua sed torpet, tenuis sub artus
Flamma demanat, sonitus suoapte
Tintinant aures, gemina teguntur
Lumina nocte.*

And Catullus 85

*Odi et amo. Quare id faciam, fortasse requires
Nescio, sed fieri sentio et excrucior.*

K. Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 3.

129-130

*Vos quoque non caris aures onerate lapillis
Quod legit in viridi decolor Indus aqua.*

“You also, do not weigh down your ears with expensive stones, with which the differently
hued man of India gathers in the green water.”

Cf. [Tibullus] Sulpicia 3.8.19-20

*Et quascumque niger rubro de litore gemmas
Proximas Eois colligit Indus aquis.*

“and whatever gems the dark man of India, near the waters of the dawn, gathers from the
shore of the Red Sea.”

329-348

Sit tibi Callimachi, sit Coi nota poetae

Sit quoque vinosi Teia Musa senis;

330

Nota sit et Sappho (quid enim lascivius illa?).

Cuive pater vafri luditur arte Getae.

Et teneri possis carmen legisse Properti,

Sive aliquid Galli, sive, Tibulle, tuum:

Dictaque Varroni fulvis insignia villis

335

Vellera, germanae, Phrixae, querenda tuae:

Et profugum Aenean, altae primordia Romae,

Quo nullum Latio clarius extat opus.

Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis,

Nec mea Lethaeis scripta dabuntur aquis:

340

Atque aliquis dicet “nostri lege culta magistris

*Carmina, quis partes instruit ille duas:
Deve tribus libris, titulum quos signat Amorum,
Elige, quo docili molliter ore legas:*

Vel tibi composita cantetur Epistola voce:

345

Ignotum hoc aliis ille novavit opus.”

O ita, Phoebe, velis! Ita vos, pia numina vatam,

Insignis cornu Bacche, novemque deae!.

“Let the Muse of Callimachus, let the Muse of the Coan Philetas be known to you; and also let the Teian Muse of the drunken old man Anacreon be known to you. And let Sappho also be known to you (what is more sexually playful than she?), and Menander, in whose comedies the father is deceived by the art of the clever Geta. And you would be able to have read a poem of tender Propertius, or something of Gallus, or something of yours, Tibullus: and the fleece described by Varro, marked with golden hairs, to be complained about, Phryxus, by your sister: and Aeneas the exile, the beginnings of lofty Rome, than which no work more brilliant exists in Latium. And perhaps my name will be mixed with those of theirs, and my writings will not be given to the waters of the underworld, and someone will say, ‘Read the sophisticated poems of our teacher, in which he instructs the two factions, male and female; or from his three books, which the title of “Love Poems” marks, choose, what you might read softly with gentle voice; or let one of his *Heroides* be sung with practiced voice: he originated this kind of writing, unknown to others’ O, Phoebus Apollo, grant that this be so! O you, devout spirits of prophetic poets, Bacchus remarkable for his horn, and the nine goddesses.”

312-320.

Monstra maris Sirenes errant, quae voce canora

Quamlibet admissas detinuere rates...

Res est blanda canor: discant cantare puellae

315

Pro facie multis vox causa lena fuit.

Et modo marmoreis referant audita theatris.

Et modo Niliacis carmina lusa modis.

Nec plectrum dextra, citharam tenuisse sinistra

Nesciat arbitrio femina docta meo.

320

“The Sirens were ocean-monsters, who brought to a halt, with their tuneful voice, ships welcomed in any which way. After they had been heard Odysseus almost untied his body, for wax had been smeared to plug the ears of his crew members. Song is a persuasive thing: let girls learn to sing; for many women their voice has served as their procuress, not their appearance. And now let them repeat songs heard in marble theaters, and now songs performed to Egyptian melodies. Nor should a woman deemed learned in my judgment be ignorant of having held a quill in her right hand and a lyre in her left.”

403-404

Quid petitur sacris, nisi tantum fama, poetis?

Hoc votum nostri summa laboris habet.

“What is sought by sacred poets, except for fame alone. The goal of our labor has this as its vow”

467-498

*Fert animus propius consistere: supprime habenas,
Musa, nec admissis excutiare rotis.*

Verba vadum temptent abiignis scripta tabellis:

Accipiat missas apta ministra notas... 470

*Sed neque te facilem iuveni **promitte** roganti,* 475

Nec tamen e duro quod petit ille nega...

Munda, sed e medio consuetaque verba, puellae,

Scribite: sermonis publica forma placet.... 480

Nec nisi deletis tutum rescribere ceris, 495

Ne teneat geminas una tabella manus

Femina dicatur scribenti semper amator:

Illam sit in vestris, qui fuit ille, notis....

“My mind spurs me to stand more closely: draw the reins in, Muse, and do not be shaken out by the wheels allowed to speed. Let words written on pinewood tablets make trial of the waters: and let a suitable female slave welcome the letters that have been sent... But do not promise yourself as an easy conquest to a youth who asks, nor, however, deny what he seeks stubbornly... Write elegant words, girls, but familiar and from common parlance: a kind of ordinary speech gives pleasure.... Nor is it safe to write in reply unless you use wax with all markings removed, so that one tablet may not contain two hands. When you write, let your male lover always be described as a woman, and who was he become she in your messages.”

Cf. 516-524

Odimus et maestas: Tecmessam diligat Ajax:

Nos hilarem populum femina laeta capit...

Scilicet Aiaci mulier maestissima dixit

“Lux mea” quaeque solent verba iuvare viros?

“We also hate gloomy women. Let Ajax cherish Tecmessa: a happy woman captures the hearts of us, a cheerful people... Did that most gloomy woman say to Ajax, ‘light of my life: and words which are in the habit of pleasing lovers?’”

cf. [Tibullus] Sulpicia 3.9.15 (*tunc mihi, tunc placeant silvae, si, lux mea, tecum/arguar ante ipsas concubuisse plagas*) and 3.18.1 (*Ne tibi sim, mea lux...*); cf. , too, 3.9 and 11 for Sulpicia’s promises of physical joys to her lover and 13. 5 for her representation of them as what Venus has made and fulfilled, *exsolvit **promissa** Venus*

L. *Heroides* 15.15-20

Nec me Pyrrhides Methymniadesve puellae, 15

Nec me Lesbiadum cetera turba iuvant.

Vilis Anactorie, vilis mihi canida Cydro;

Non oculis grata est Atthis, ut ante, meis,

Atque aliae centum, quas hic sine criine amavi;

Improbe, multarum quod fuit, unus habes. 20

“Nor do the girls of Pyrrha or of Methymna, nor the remaining crowd of girls from Lesbos delight me. Anactoria is worthless to me, bright Cydro is worthless to me; Atthis is not pleasing to my eyes as she was before, and a hundred other women, whom I have

loved without the charge of wrongdoing; disgraceful man, that which was of/for many women, you have alone.”

79-80 (Sappho is the speaker)

*molle meum levibusque cor est violabile telis,
et semper causa est, cur ego semper amem.*

“My heart is soft, and damageable by light weapons, and there is always a reason why I always love.”

Amores 2.4.10

Centum sunt causae cur semperque amem

“There are a hundred reasons why I always love”

Tristia 4.10. 65-66

Molle Cupidineis nec inexpugnabile telis

Cor mihi, quodque levis causa moveret, erat.

“My heart was soft and not unassailable by Cupid’s weapons, the sort of thing which a slight impulse would move.”