

EPIGRAMMATA BOBIENSIA 36

In the year 1493, a manuscript was discovered in the library of St Columbanus at Bobbio that contained, among other texts, a hexameter poem of Sulpicia and seventy epigrams.¹ The manuscript no longer survives,² but the poem of Sulpicia and some of the epigrams (though only a minority) found their way into print by the early 16th century, mostly in editions of Ausonius; the rest were effectively lost. In the middle of the 20th century, Augusto Campana discovered a complete text of Sulpicia's poem and the epigrams in the Vatican Library, on ff. 268^r–278^v of *Vaticanus latinus* 2836. This revealed that the poem of Sulpicia had apparently not been transmitted apart from the epigrams (as the early reports seemed to suggest) but very nearly in the middle of them, as the thirty-seventh in a series of seventy-one poems; it also emerged from some names of authors and addressees that the epigrams for the most part had been composed around A. D. 400.³ Franco Mu-

1) In announcing the discovery to the world, Raffael Maffei (*Commentarii Urbani* [Rome 1506]) began his enumeration of the works with "Rutilius Naumatianus [sic], Heroicum Sulpici [sic] carmen, LXX epigrammata," but a slightly earlier list, made by Jacob Questenberg and preserved in the manuscript Hannover, Staatsbibliothek XLII 1845, has six other texts ahead of "[7] Rutilius Naumatianus ... [8] Heroicum Sulpitiae carmen de temporibus Domitiani et statu reip. conuerentis. Puellam Martialis commendat. [9] LXX Epigrammata. auctoris nomen non extat." This list seems likely to derive directly from Giorgio Merula, who claimed credit for the discovery, and perhaps even repeats his own words (cf. the comment on another of the works listed, "Primus liber perit: quem forsan recuperabimus. Ab inquisitione non desistimus"). Since Questenberg correctly names the author as Sulpicia, "Sulpici" is presumably a slip by Maffei or his printer. In fact it was probably Merula's secretary Giovanni Galbiati who discovered the manuscript, and certainly Galbiati who made the transcript through which the texts were disseminated. For the Bobbio discoveries see M. Ferrari, *Le scoperte a Bobbio nel 1493*, *IMU* 13, 1970, 139–180.

2) See however M. Ferrari, *Spigolature bobbiesi*, *IMU* 16, 1973, 1–41, identifying Turin, B. N. F IV 25 f. 21/22 (which contains some lines of the otherwise lost Book 2 of Rutilius' *De reditu*) as a probable remnant of it and dating the script to about A. D. 700.

3) See especially F. Munari, *Epigrammata Bobiensia: Detextit A. Campana*, ed. F. Munari, vol. II, *Introduzione e edizione critica a cura di Munari*, Rome 1955, 21–30; W. Speyer, *Naucellius und sein Kreis. Studien zu den Epigrammata Bobien-*

nari soon published the editio princeps of the entire assemblage, calling it *Epigrammata Bobiensia* even though he was aware that two components are not in fact epigrammatic in nature.⁴

One, of course, is Ep. Bob. 37, the hexameter poem of Sulpicia. Three considerations led to her identification as the author: line 8 implies that it was written by a woman (*primaque ... docui*); it appears to be Flavian in date, since it alludes to an expulsion of philosophers such as occurred under both Vespasian and Domitian; and line 62 mentions someone called Calenus, and Sulpicia is known from Martial to have had a husband of that name. It was universally accepted as genuine until near the end of the 19th century, when J. C. G. Boot proposed that it was a forgery of the Renaissance, and Emil Baehrens in turn dated it to the 5th century. Though reputable scholars long defended its authenticity, and though the discrepant arguments adduced to “prove” a late date do not survive serious examination, it remains neglected,⁵ and the current scholarly consensus appears to be that we have a single scrap of Sulpicia’s poetry, two corrupt iambic trimeters supposedly preserved in a manuscript of an ancient commentary on Juvenal that was used by Giorgio Valla when he edited the satirist in 1486.⁶

While no one could ever have mistaken the seventy hexameters of Ep. Bob. 37 for an epigram, the non-epigrammatic character of Ep. Bob. 36 should have been just as obvious. It does not fit any of the standard categories of epigram, such as inscriptional, dedicatory, ecphrastic, epideictic, or skoptic, nor is there any epigrammatic “point”. Moreover, at 16 lines, it already lies near the upper limit of what is possible in the genre, but it must originally

sia, Munich 1959 (Zetemata 21); S. Mariotti, *Epigrammata Bobiensia*, RE Supplementband IX (1962) 37–64; S. Mariotti, *Naucellius*, RE Supplementband IX (1962) 411–415.

4) Cf. Munari (above, n. 3) 31 n. 1, in reference to Ep. Bob. 37: “Sarà caso che l’unico altro componimento di carattere non strettamente epigrammatico, voglio dire il nr. 36, sia accostato a *Sulpicia*? Se non erro, anche questo particolare tradisce la mano del raccoglitore antico.”

5) For a review of scholarship on the poem and a defense of the attribution to Sulpicia see J. L. Butrica, *The fabella of Sulpicia* (Ep. Bob. 37), *Phoenix* 60, 2006 (forthcoming).

6) For this fragment see E. Courtney, *The Fragmentary Latin Poets*, Oxford 1993, with the discussions in H. Parker, *Other remarks on the other Sulpicia*, *CW* 86, 1992, 89–95; J. Hallett, *Martial’s Sulpicia and Propertius’ Cynthia*, *CW* 86, 1992, 99–123; and A. Richlin, *Sulpicia the satirist*, *CW* 86, 1992, 125–139.

have been longer: someone who is twice addressed as “you” is nowhere identified, and many scholars have acknowledged a loss of lines at beginning or end or both, with some suggesting further losses from within what survives. It was first published in 1499 by Taddeus Ugoletus, who expanded Avantius’ 1496 edition of Ausonius, which already contained eighteen of the epigrams, by adding this poem and six others. It ceased to circulate with Ausonius towards the end of the 19th century, and there has been only slight recent interest since Campana’s discovery of Vat. lat. 2836. One reason for its neglect, beyond the general obscurity and poor reputation of the *Epigrammata Bobiensia*, is simply the sheer difficulty of understanding it: in addition to the losses mentioned above, which have effectively denied us the context of the lines we do have, there is substantial verbal corruption as well. But another obstacle has been the title under which it was first printed and continues to be printed, *De Penelope*. Every scholar who has discussed it has assumed that it concerns Penelope; but trusting in the titles of late manuscripts or early editions is methodologically dubious, and there is no reason to regard this one as authorial – for example, while some of the titles in the collection must be original, Ep. Bob. 37 was certainly transmitted without one.⁷ Someone who copied or studied this collection and devised titles for poems that lacked them might well have assumed from the context and from a hasty glance at *Telemacho* in line 2 that Ep. Bob. 36 was yet another epigram and that it concerned Penelope. Nevertheless, modern scholars ought to have been more alert to the possibility that *De Penelope* is a late invention. While “About Penelope” fits an epigram, it does not fit a poem in which (as nearly all modern scholars have so far agreed) Penelope herself writes or speaks. In fact, those scholars have generally supposed the poem to be not an epigram but an epistle, whether fragmentary or complete, in Penelope’s voice, of the kind that we find in Ovid’s *Heroides*, but “About Penelope” is

7) Modern scholars often refer to it as the *Sulpiciae Conquestio de statu rei publicae et temporibus Domitiani*, the “title” found in Vat. lat. 2836, but this has simply been crafted from a scholar’s note that must have stood in the transcript of the Bobbio manuscript, preserved verbatim in the first two printed editions (“Queritur de statu rei p. & Temporibus Domitiani”) and paraphrased in Questenberg’s list of the discoveries (“Heroicum Sulpitiae carmen de temporibus Domitiani et statu reip. conquerentis”). The fact that Maffei (above, n. 1) referred simply to “a poem of Sulpicius in hexameters” is additional evidence for the lack of a transmitted title.

again a most unlikely title; authorial or not, the titles in our manuscripts of the *Heroides* follow the pattern *Penelope Ulixi*, identifying both “author” and addressee. In any case, it is the contents, not a dubiously authentic title, that should decide whether or not this is meant to be the voice of Penelope, and this paper will argue that little or nothing here is consistent with Penelope’s involvement; instead, the poem from which these lines survive contained a first-person narrative by a “real” woman who related her emotional and sexual experiences.

The following study of Ep. Bob. 36 has four parts. The first lays the groundwork by reconstructing the text as it stood in Galbiati’s transcript of the Bobbio manuscript. The second offers a detailed commentary, with emphasis on both text and interpretation. The third presents a critical edition, followed by a summary and a translation. Finally, the conclusion attempts to summarize what can be said with certainty about Ep. Bob. 36, then goes on to propose a new hypothesis concerning the identity of its author: that the juxtaposition of Ep. Bob. 36 and 37 does reflect, as Munari speculated, “the hand of the ancient compiler” (cf. n. 4), not because both are non-epigrammatic in nature but because both share a common author – like 37, 36 is a poem by the Domitianic Sulpicia, or at least the fragmentary remnants of one.

I. The Text as Transmitted

As the editio princeps of Ep. Bob. 36, Ugoletus’ 1499 Ausonius is designated V by editors. This was the only independent witness⁸ until the discovery of Vat. lat. 2836, which is designated B. The availability of a second witness was hardly a boon to editors; B was not necessarily a better witness than V, though some editors have assumed that it is,⁹ perhaps on the mistaken principle that a text in a manuscript must be of higher quality than a text in an edition. In

8) Peiper, Munari, and Speyer have all cited A as well (Avantius’ 1507 edition of Ausonius), but this is only a reworking of V with nothing original to offer except an occasional conjecture of Avantius (the only example here being *ausae* in 11, where *ause* seems to have been transmitted).

9) Cf. W. Speyer, ed., *Epigrammata Bobiensia*, Leipzig 1963, v: “Scriptorem codicis Vaticani . . . aut codicem illum Bobiensem deperditum aut apographon ex illo dependens fideliter descripsisse verisimile, immo certum est.”

fact, the discovery of B simply posed a new dilemma: to distinguish cases where BV disagree because the scribe of B introduced a fresh corruption from those where BV disagree because Ugoletus emended in V. The six disagreements of BV in Ep. Bob. 36 probably represent a combination of errors in B and corrections in V, and obviously a third independent witness would be valuable; but until one is discovered, our best hope of understanding the witnesses we do have is by inference from their behaviour as observed in Ep. Bob. 37, for which there are three independent sources: the editio princeps of 1498 (printed at Venice and therefore called V), Ugoletus' 1499 Ausonius (which is called P as a witness to the text of Ep. Bob. 37), and B. For a manuscript that Speyer, at least, considered so faithful, B proves to be a most unreliable witness in Ep. Bob. 37, introducing eleven fresh errors into eight of the seventy lines, its fidelity only slightly redeemed by the absence of conjectural corrections.¹⁰ (By contrast, the editio princeps probably introduced only five fresh errors.¹¹) On the other hand, Ugoletus' edition appears to have introduced fresh typographical errors into two or three lines while also introducing seven or eight conjectural alterations, three of them unquestionably correct.¹² One might therefore confidently ignore the distinctive readings of B as scribal errors – were it not for the evidence that Ugoletus corrected extensively and sometimes skilfully. In order to be sure of not ignoring any clue to what was transmitted in the Bobbio manuscript, editors should record every case of disagreement between B and V, even when B has subsequently been corrected.

The text below reconstructs the common source of B and V, except that, where B and V disagree, I give the reading of both, with B reported first. These cases are evaluated in the discussion that follows, with the aim of determining which reading was transmitted in Galbiati's transcript. Finally, the apparatus criticus collects all

10) The fresh errors of B are found in 32 (*ipsis*), 36 (*in; albas*), 42 (*toreuma*), 44 (*forale*), 55 (*apex*), 56 (*ples; fratresque*), 64 (*nec*), and 68 (*comitae* [the only one corrected by the scribe]; *egregia*).

11) These occur in 15 (*egentes*), 21 (*amicus*), 23 (*artes*), 63 (*facundos*), and 67 (*fonteisque*).

12) The typographical errors are 4 (*phaleuco*; there is, however, at least a chance that this one is a conjecture), 12 (*quid non*), and 25 (*uelit*). The conjectures (of which those in 3 and 43 are clearly correct) are 3 (*secessi*), 4 (*nec*), 15 (*tacitas*), 43 (*sic; senes*), 53 (*monetae*), and 55 (*fauorum*).

the published conjectures of which I am aware, as well as some of my own:¹³

*intemerata procis et tot seruata per annos
 oscula uix ipsi cognita Telemacho
 hinc me/mea uirginitas facibus tibi lusit adultis
 arsit et inuidia principe uerus amor
 saepe ego mentitis tremui noua femina somnis 5
 lapsaque non merito sint/sunt mihi uerba sono
 et tamen ignotos sensi experrecta dolores
 strataque temptaui sicca pauente manu
 nam tibi anhelanti supremaque bella mouenti
 paruit indulgens et sine uoce dolor 10
 dente nihil molare/uiolare fero nihil unguibus ausa/ause
 foedera nam tacita pace peregit amor
 denique non animam/auiam trepido/tremulo clamore
 uocauit*

*nec prior obsequio serua cucurrit anus
 ipsa uerecundo tetigi pallore puellas 15
 impositum teneri fassa pudoris opus*

*et initium et finem deesse perspexit Vinetus
 1 et] sum vel eo Baehrens : ego Peiper dubitanter
 lacunam post v. 1 statuit Fuchs
 uersum post v. 2 excidisse suspicatus est Peiper
 3 hinc] nunc Brandes : tunc Fuchs
 me B : mea V
 luxit Canter : fulsit Peiper : gliscit Peiper olim : fluxit Baehrens :
 iunxit Munari dubitanter
 tibi lusit] te allexit temptaui
 adustis Cazzaniga
 4 inuidia ... amor B^{pc}V : inuida ... umor B^{ac}
 in uidua Heinsius, Sebisius
 serus Heinsius : certus temptaui
 lacunam post v. 4 statui
 vv. 3–4 et 5–6 inter se sedem mutare iussit Bernardini*

13) For readings of V I rely on Peiper's 1886 Teubner of Ausonius and Speyer's 1963 Teubner of *Epigrammata Bobiensia*; for B I have used the facsimile printed in Speyer. Conjectures are taken from these editions as well as Munari's, and from S. Mariotti, *Adnotatiunculae ad Epigrammata Bobiensia et Anthologiam Latinam*, *Philologus* 100, 1956, 323–326. I make no discrimination between probable and improbable, since the goal is not to show what I think the author wrote but to show how scholars have proposed to alter this difficult text.

- 5 phasmata *temptavi*
 6 nunc *temptavi*
 certo *vel* grato *Fuchs* : recto, solito, noto *temptavi*
 sint B : sunt V
 lacunam post v. 6 statui
- 7 at tandem *temptavi*
vv. 7–8 post 12 transtulit Baehrens
lacuna post v. 8 fort. statuenda
 sicca] et lecta et saepe *temptavi*
- 9 nunc *Giordano Rampioni*
 10 calor *Baehrens* : pudor *Peiper*
lacunam post v. 10 suspicatur Fuchs
- 11 molare B : violare V
 ausa B : ause V : ausae *Avantius* : ausus *temptavi*
- 12 nam tacita] tum facta *temptavi*
- 13 animam B : auiam V : famulam *Cazzaniga, Fuchs* :
 Triviam *Mariotti*
 nec quemquam *Traina*
 trepido B : tremulo V
- 15 didici (= *docui*) *Munari dubitanter*
 pepigi . . . tabellas *Mariotti*
 puellum *Peiper*
- 16 depositum . . . onus *temptavi* (onus iam *Sebsius*)
 fessa *Å. Josephson* : lassa *aeque temptes*

Notes

The behaviour of B and V as witnesses to the text of Ep. Bob. 37 suggests that we should find both errors in B and corrections in V, in a proportion of something like 3:2.

3. It is impossible to decide with certainty whether *me* (B) is a corruption of *mea* (V) or whether *mea* is Ugoletus' correction of *me*.

4. *Inuuda . . . umor* is presumably an error of B corrected after consultation of the exemplar.

6. Here too certainty is impossible; *sunt* would be an exceptionally easy correction, but the scribe of B just might be careless enough to have turned *sunt* into *sint*.

11. *Molare* is probably an error of B, the correction of this to *uiolare* being perhaps bolder than one might expect of Ugoletus. At the end of the line, neither *ausa* nor *ause* can be construed; perhaps the Bobbio manuscript had *ausae*, with the *-ae* written as a superscript *a* over an *e*, a combination that somewhat resembled an *E* (cf. Ferrari 1973, 21, with Tav. iv, illustrating the “new” lines of Rutilius).

13. It seems far more likely that *animam* is an error for *auiam* (misread as *aniam*, an abbreviation of *animam*) than that *auiam* is a conjecture of Ugoletus; I also suspect that it is more likely that *trepido* is an error by the scribe of B than that *tremulo* is a conjecture (or typographical error) by Ugoletus.

Given the evident uncertainty about distinguishing fresh errors in B and conjectures in V, an editor should try not to prejudice the reader about these difficult choices, and should report readings fully in a positive apparatus rather than make explicit or implicit assumptions in a negative one; for example, if *mea* is read in 3, it is better to report “*mea* V : *me* B” than simply “*me* B” or “*me* B, corr. V”.

II. Commentary¹⁴

1–2

The kisses mentioned here are certainly Penelope's, but damage to the context obscures their relevance; a reference by Penelope herself to those kisses (in the kind of letter that most scholars have imagined) seems unlikely, since it imparts an unsavoury sexual dimension for her to say that she was so chaste that she scarcely kissed her own son, especially given the sexual connotations possible for *cognitus* (cf. OLD s.v. 2b). Instead, the author probably alluded to her own youthful purity by comparing her kisses (presumably reserved for relatives) with those of the virtuous Penelope who fended off the suitors.

Intemeratus occurs first in extant Latin literature at Ov. Am. 3.4.24 in reference to Penelope herself, then at Grat. 224 and three times in Virgil (Aen. 2.143, 3.178, 11.584, the last in reference to the virginity of Camilla); in prose before the 4th century it is confined to Tacitus (Hist. 4.58; Ann. 1.42, 49, 12.34, 16.26) and Apuleius (Met. 2.30; Fl. 16), but it enjoys a certain vogue in Flavian verse (of natural or man-made objects at Sil. 3.499, Stat. Silv. 1.2.205, and Val. Fl. 4.271, of human or animal virginity at Stat. Theb. 1.573, 2.724, 4.579 and Silv. 5.1.63). Fourth-century authors like Ausonius and Claudian do not use it in reference to sexual purity. *Servata* probably means “set aside,” “reserved” (i. e., for her husband; cf. OLD s.v. *servo* 8).

Not surprisingly, *per annos* is a common line-ending in Latin hexameters (2 cases in Lucretius, 1 each in Horace, Tibullus, and Propertius, 6 in Ovid, 11 in Virgil, 3 in Manilius, 4 in Lucan, 1 in Martial, 4 in Silius, 7 in Statius); of special relevance here is the occurrence of *servata per annos* at Lucr. 1.1029; Verg. Aen. 2.715, 7.60 (cf. also *tot . . . per annos* at Verg. Georg. 3.47; Luc. 2.256).

The fact that *oscula* lacks both context and construction shows that something has been lost before this couplet; so does the fact that the man addressed in 3 as *tibi* goes unnamed, which would be intolerably ambiguous in a complete poem. Conjectures that ar-

14) For another commentary (based of course on the premise that this poem concerns Penelope) see M. Giordano Rampioni, *Ep. Bob. 36: De Penelope*, Sicularum Gymnasium 42, 1989, 241–252, at 246 ff.; reference is also made below to S. Bernardini, *Ricerche, annotazioni e osservazioni sul c. 36 “De Penelope” Epigrammata Bobiensia*, Quaderni dell’ Istituto di Lingua e Letteratura Latina, 1979, 7–14.

tificially restore an opening by replacing *et* with *sum* or *eo* (Baehrens) or with *ego* (Peiper) are misguided.¹⁵ Equally misguided is Mariotti's suggestion that *intemerata* is a feminine singular nominativus pendens; there are no other lapses from "correct" Classical syntax. Giordano Rampioni, wanting *intemerata* to modify *uirginitas* (3), follows Mariotti in printing verse 2 in a parenthesis, with *sunt* to be supplied. Bernardini proposes inverting the order of the second and third couplets so that *intemerata* and *seruata* now modify *ego* (5), but this disturbs what appears to be an acceptably logical sequence without introducing one that is equally logical.

3–4

This badly corrupted couplet probably described the growth of a mutual affection, first in the male addressee, then in the female author.

Brandes conjectured *nunc* for *hinc* in 3, but corruption is more likely to go in the other direction, from the less common to the more common word, and *hinc* could well be causal, not temporal, in any case (hence Fuchs' *tunc* could be equally unnecessary): i. e., the author's modesty and chastity, symbolized by the purity of her kisses, inspired the addressee's affection.

A major difficulty in 3 is the choice between *me* (B) and *mea* (V); whichever was transmitted in Galbiati's transcript, I suspect that the author wrote *mea uirginitas*, with the sense *ego uirgo*, which occurs several times in Ovid (ep. 2.115; Met. 6.536, 14.133; Fast. 2.158; cf. also [Ov.] ep. 17.104). This could allude to the same modesty that was expressed through the reference to her kisses; alternatively, *uirginitas* might refer simply to age, as at Stat. Ach. 1.291 (cited below on line 16).

Facibus (used, as often, of strong desire; cf. OLD s.v. *fax* 7) refers to the addressee's romantic or sexual attraction to the author, but the epithet *adultis* is problematic. It is unlikely to mean "adult", whether "[passion] felt as an adult" or "[passion] felt toward an adult [rather than toward a child]"; when *fax* in this sense is modified at all, it may be modified in a way that comments on the (im)morality of the passion but never on the age of the partici-

15) Both Baehrens and Peiper, however, acknowledge that lines have been lost at the end.

pants. Munari derived it instead from *adoleo*, which can be used as a synonym of *incendere*; for the combination, cf. Apul. Met. 11.24 *flammis adultam facem*. Cazzaniga's conjecture *adustis*, approved by Giordano Rampioni, seems otiose.

Most editors recognize that *lusit* must be corrupt, though Bernardini attempts an impossible defence by reference to *ludis* in Ov. Am. 3.7.77, spoken to the impotent Ovid by the woman with whom he was unable to perform sexually (I do not see what sense *tibi* or *facibus adultis* could have in this interpretation). Mariotti somehow found the meaning "I burned with love for you, deceived by my own innocence" ("mea ipsius simplicitate decepta tuo amore flagraui"). Giordano Rampioni adopts Canter's conjecture *luxit*, which may be just barely possible with the meaning "became known to" (cf. OLD s.v. *luceo* 3), but this seems weak, especially in conjunction with blazing torches of passion. Munari, who read *me* rather than *mea*, hesitantly proposed *iunxit*, though in combination with torches (a common symbol of wedlock as well as of passion) this would seem to suggest marriage rather than the mere growth of affection (and *adultis* would serve no particular purpose). Peiper's *fulsit*, which does introduce an image consistent with (literal) burning torches, is presumably inspired by passages like Laev. fr. 18.5 *fulgens decore et gratia* or Hor. Carm. 4.11.4–5 *hederae uis/multa, qua crinis religata fulges*, but in both cases the word in the ablative case defines the source of the "shining", which *facibus* would not do here.

Another approach is to read *mea uirginitas* while emending *tibi* to *te* as object of some verb meaning "attract", "entice", vel sim. that is now disguised behind *lusit*; one obvious and palaeographically plausible suggestion is *te allexit*, which gives excellent sense with *facibus adultis* if *adultis* is from *adoleo*: "my virginity kindled the torches [of your passion] and drew you [to me]." For *allicio* in an erotic context, cf. Ov. Ars 3.300 *allicit ignotos ille [sc. incessus] fugatque uiros*, 510 *comibus est oculis alliciendus amor*. (*Illexit* is also plausible palaeographically, but the verb tends to have a negative rather than positive sense.)

Arsit probably has the meaning "blazed up", i. e., "was kindled," and corresponds to the "torches" of the previous line as an expression of passionate attraction conveyed through the image of fire. It probably does not mean "burned with love for" the *uidua princeps*, which would simply repeat the idea of the previous line;

while *ardere in* is twice used by Ovid in that sense (Am. 1.9.33, Met. 9.725), the subject in both cases is a person, not the emotion itself. A reference to the woman's affection suits the following lines, which apparently describe a woman who is suffering symptoms of erotic distress.

Heinsius' *in uidua* for *inuidia* is perhaps the only absolutely convincing emendation ever proposed in Ep. Bob. 36. *Vidua princeps* is not elsewhere attested, but is presumably a variation of *femina princeps*. In Republican Rome and Republican Latin, the *principes* were leading male citizens; in the Empire, however, we encounter *feminae principes*, presumably wealthy and socially prominent women¹⁶ (Hyg. fab. 274.13 applies the phrase to ancient Athens, Plin. Nat. 8.119 and Tac. Ann. 13.42 to contemporary Rome). The singular *femina princeps* was originally applied to Livia (Ov. Trist. 1.6.25, Pont. 3.1.125; [anon.] Epic. Drusi 303; cf. also Macr. Sat. 2.5.6, where the plural refers to Livia and Julia), but Pliny the Younger used it of Ummidia Quadratilla (ep. 7.24.4).

The OLD s.v. *uiduus* 2 recognizes only "widow" and "divorcée" as meanings of *uidua*, but according to the jurist Antistius Labeo the word could apply not merely to a woman whose marriage had ended but to one who had never married at all.¹⁷ Giordano Rampioni (who does not explain *princeps*) notes that Plautus used *uidua* of Penelope in Ulysses' absence (St. 2a); in fact *uiduus* is often used in poetry in reference to both persons and things alike in situations where a partner is merely absent. If the author has represented herself as a widow or divorcée at this point in her life, and if the encounter described in 7–8 really is her first sexual experience (see below on ll. 7–8 and 9–10), we must assume that her previous marriage had for some reason remained unconsummated; in the absence of any clear evidence of that marriage, it seems best to take *uidua* as "unmarried woman".

16) It is tempting to speculate that these women are somehow connected with the *conuentus matronarum* attested at Suet. Galba 5. 1.

17) D. 50.16.242.3 "*Viduam*" *non solum eam quae aliquando nupta fuisset sed eam quoque mulierem quae uirum non habuisset appellari ait Labeo*. Cf. Sen. Med. 214f., where the Amazons are called *cohors . . . uidua*. In this sense, *uiduus* is the female equivalent of *caelebs*, which applies only to males; for this gender-distinction between *caelebs* and *uidua* see Liv. 1.46.7 *et se rectius uiduam et illum caelibem futurum fuisse contendere quam cum impari iungi* and Plin. Nat. 10.104 *nisi caelebs aut uidua nidum non relinquit* [sc. *columba*].

While modern speakers of English naturally take *uerus amor* as “true [i. e., deep or sincere] love”, it is more likely to have suggested “genuine [i. e., not feigned] love” to a Roman; cf. Cic. Fam. 9.16.2 *non facile diiudicatur amor uerus et fictus*, Ov. Ars 1.618 *fiet amor uerus qui modo falsus erat* (and cf. Ars 2.639). Moreover, the phrase is used predominantly with the sense of “true friendship” between men (cf., in addition to the passage of Cicero already cited, Cic. Fam. 12.16.1; Ov. Met. 5.61, Trist. 1.5.21, 4.4.71, Pont. 4.6.23; Laus Pis. 213; Sen. Thy. 551, Ben. 6.42.1; Stat. Silv. 4.6.12; Mart. 10.13.6; Fro. Ver. 2.2.1, 7.2), and only rarely of love between man and woman (cf. the passages cited from Ov. Ars, along with Prop. 2.15.30, Sen. Med. 416; Virgil uses it of patriotism at Aen. 11.892). If correction is needed (and there seems to be no “false” love here to which this “true” love can be contrasted), Heinsius’ conjecture *serus* is not particularly plausible palaeographically given what we know about the script of the Bobbio manuscript, and the implication that this love had grown from an acquaintance of long standing may be incompatible with the implications of *pudor tener* in 16, where the author seems to be quite young still (see below ad loc.). I suggest instead *certus amor*, which does have the sense conveyed by English “true and abiding love”; cf. Prop. 1.8.45, 2.29.19, 3.8.18; Ov. Am. 3.6.30, Med. 45, Ars 2.248, 3.575, Met. 4.156.

5–6

In one sense, these lines seem to follow on appropriately from the couplet before: being a *noua femina* – if that phrase has been transmitted correctly (see below) – either sexually or merely in years is the natural next step after *uirginitas*, whether the reference concerns sexual activity or age. Nevertheless, the jump from an awakening of mutual love to the emotional upsets that follow seems too abrupt for some transitional material not to have been lost after 4; and something has surely been lost after 6 that made a transition to the erotic scenario that follows. In addition to these losses, there are reasons to suspect verbal corruption as well.

For *somnus* in reference to dreams cf. OLD s.v. 1c. Giordano Rampioni writes of “immagini di sogni rivelatori di timori e di desideri inconsci”, but it is more likely that the author intends us to think of disturbing images that connected the man she loved with other women; *tremui* certainly establishes that they were a

source of fear – perhaps a symptom of infatuation or of jealousy (cf. Prop. 3.8.15 *seu timidam crebro dementia somnia terrent*). As to *mentitis somnis*, it cannot mean “because of lying [i. e., false] dreams”; *mentitus* is sometimes used passively (cf. Ov. ep. 11.73 *mentitaque sacra*), but these dreams are real, not “feigned”. If the text is sound, the phrase must be an ablative absolute, “when [or because] my dreams lied”, perhaps too vague an expression to be tolerated. It is far more common to find *mentitus* used actively with an object expressing what is feigned (cf., for example, Hor. Carm. 4.6.13 f. *equo Mineruae/sacra mentito*, Luc. 2.612 *uictum mentitis Thesea uelis*); hence I wonder whether *femina* could be a corruption of such an object here (with *somnus* perhaps used in its basic sense of “sleep”). *Phasmata*, especially if spelled *fasmata*, has some palaeographical plausibility; though the word occurs only twice in Classical Latin (in Terence and Juvenal, both times as the title of a literary work or a character in one), it is well enough established in Greek (cf. LSJ s.v. φάσμα). *Noua* of course would have the sense “strange”, for which cf. OLD s.v. *nouus* 2, 3.

The phrase *noua femina* is unique; if correctly transmitted, it presumably means “a new woman”, i. e., “newly a woman” (cf. OLD s.v. *nouus* 15), though it remains unclear whether it is years alone or sexual activity that has made the difference. I do not see how *noua* could be taken as “*rudis, imperita*”, the sense given to it by Munari (see also Giordano Rampioni 248), or what that would mean here; and, unless there has been a disruption in the order of the lines, it cannot mean that she has become a woman sexually in the meantime if 7–8 refer to her first experience of intercourse. I do not understand at all what Giordano Rampioni means in saying that the phrase underlines “la nuova realtà di Penelope come donna”.

Giordano Rampioni understands verse 6 as referring to statements made by Penelope against Ulysses that Penelope now thinks were spoken unjustly because Ulysses has since returned (“le sfuggirono parole ingiuste contro Ulisse, cioè parole che in quel momento considera pronunciate non giustamente perché ormai Ulisse è tornato”), but “with undeserved [or undeserving] sound” will not convey that idea. Other examples of *uerba* with *labor* or compounds suggest that the speaker means that words “slipped out” contrary to her intentions, either because she meant not to speak them at all or because they came out other than intended; cf. Cic.

Font. 28 *ne quod ab aliqua cupiditate prolapsum uerbum esse uideatur* and especially Ov. Trist. 3.5.48 [*non*] *lapsaue sunt nimio uerba profana mero*. *Merito* is still impossible, of course, and must be a corruption of some adjective modifying *sono*, with the corruption perhaps influenced by the shape of *mentitis* and/or *tremui* directly above. Fuchs' suggestions [*non*] *grato* and *certo* are uninspired, but the latter probably gives the general idea of what the author wrote (one might also suggest, without any conviction, *solito*, or *noto*, or *recto*). On the other hand, *non* might be a corruption of *nunc*, initiating an enumeration of other symptoms of (erotic) anxiety that continued in the lacuna that follows.

7–8

This couplet is crucial to our understanding of the author's meaning, but important aspects of its interpretation must remain uncertain. Not only can *dolores* refer both to mental and to physical anguish; there is the even more fundamental question of whether the couplet expands the comments made in 5–6 (and thus offers further emotional symptoms of infatuation) or instead introduces the scene that unfolds in 9 ff. (and thus presents the early stages of the love-making there); unfortunately, neither interpretation is without difficulties. However the question is to be resolved, the lack of anything to account for *tamen* (“nevertheless”)¹⁸ suggests that at least one couplet has been lost before 7, unless *tamen* is corrupt – though if it is corrupt, it is impossible to feel certain about such possible corrections as *at* and/or *tandem* (i. e., after an extended period of attraction if 7–8 expand the thought of 5–6, after an extended period in bed if they introduce the scene in 9 ff.). The line-ending *experrecta dolores* occurs at Prop. 4.5.73, in reference to a watchdog.

Earlier scholars have regarded 7–8 as expanding the earlier comment about the author's frightening dreams; for example, Giordano Rampioni 249 implicitly connects *experrecta* with Penelope awakening from the dreams mentioned in 5. It might well seem that there is a natural connection between dreams that caused fear and trembling and the “fearful hand” with which the speaker feels the

18) Mariotti (above, n. 13) suggested that it is used “*vi debilitata*” with a sense equivalent to “*d'altra parte*” (“on the other hand”), but again the language in general appears to be too classical for this.

bed-clothes in 8 (for *tempto* in the sense “test by feeling”, cf. OLD s.v. 2). However, while those dreams were frequent (cf. *saepe*), *sen-si* and *temptaui* do not express repeated action; hence we would have to imagine a reference to a specific dream, in the absence of any transition signalling the passage from general to specific. In addition, Giordano Rampioni defines the *dolores ignoti* as “turbamenti mai provati prima” due to a sense of loneliness deriving from Ulysses’ long absence, but it is hard to see what new or unknown forms of emotional disturbance Penelope could now experience for the first time some 10 to 20 years after Ulysses’ initial departure, or how exactly they are related to the fear expressed in 5 and in 8. Finally, *sicca* is difficult, whether feminine nominative singular, describing the speaker, or neuter accusative plural, describing the bed-clothes. To judge by the loci similes they have cited (Ov. Ars 2.686; [Ov.] ep. 15.134; Mart. 11.81.2), some editors choose the former, understanding a reference to the speaker’s lack of sexual excitement (“dry” from the absence of vaginal secretions associated with sexual arousal); but I fail to see why the author would emphasize a lack of sexual excitement in the aftermath of frightening dreams, and I feel strongly that an allusion to secretions is incompatible with the reticence displayed later when intercourse and sexual climax are described. Giordano Rampioni, however, takes *sicca* as neuter plural, arguing that, in an example of metonymy, the dry bed-clothes represent a bed “su cui non hanno luogo scene d’amore”, but the relevance of this to the speaker’s fear is again unclear.

If, on the other hand, 7–8 are connected to what follows, we have perhaps reached a new stage in the narration where the writer, lying in bed, has been awakened in a manner that brings on physical *dolores* of a sort not previously experienced, and gropes the bed-clothes in fear. Given the sexually explicit couplets that follow, it seems at least possible that the writer, still a virgin at this point, has been taken by surprise while asleep; the unfamiliar pain is that of penetration, and she wants to determine whether she has bled.¹⁹ Again, however, *sicca* is simply inexplicable, whether it is neuter plural (implying that the violation did not lead to bleeding) or femi-

19) With due hesitation and even trepidation, I wonder whether the reference could be to anal rather than vaginal penetration; for this in Roman marriage see P. A. Watson, *Non tristis torus et tamen pudicus: The sexuality of the matrona in Martial*, *Mnemosyne Ser. IV*, LVIII, 2005, 62–87, at 68, with nn. 23 and 25.

nine singular (again referring to a lack of sexual excitement). Though it may be just barely possible for *sicca* to refer to an initial lack of excitement, overcome later when a more passionate engagement with her partner is described, it is surely better to confront the likelihood that *sicca* is corrupt.

As to how it might be emended, perhaps *lecta* might be considered; neuter *lectum* is attested securely in the Digest (32.1.52.9, 34.2.19.8) and in CIL 2.4514, from the end of the 2nd century, and cf. Prop. 3.6.11 *strato . . . lecto*, Ov. Fast. 2.337 *strati . . . lecti*. On the other hand, if 7–8 expand upon the description of emotional upset presented in 5–6, perhaps *sicca* is a corruption of *saepe*, despite the word's earlier appearance in 5 (less awkward, of course, if there is a lacuna after 6). On the other hand, other corrections might be considered if *strata* is not “bed-clothes” (as it is in the other passages where *strataque* begins a pentameter, Ov. ep. 10.54, 106, 14.32, and Fast. 6.316) but “prostrated” (OLD s.v. *sterno* 5), a meaning fully consistent with the distress expressed in *pauente manu*.

That the groping of the bed-clothes is performed “with fearful hand” is of course consistent either with the aftermath of terrifying dreams or with an unexpected nocturnal approach. Emotions are frequently attributed to a part of the body, especially in verse; at Sil. 17.581, the only other passage where this iunctura occurs, the *manus pauens* is a group of soldiers rather than a hand, but *manus pauida* can be found at Ov. Trist. 3.3.48, Petr. 123, l. 226, and [Sen.] Her. O. 985, 1719.

9–10

Nam implies that what follows is adduced as explanation, though it is difficult to see what in lines 7–8 could possibly be explained by this sentence. Indeed, it is difficult to see how 9–10 could follow immediately after 7–8 in any case. If the “unknown pain” is that of a first penetration, and 9–10 describe a continuation of that encounter, we have obviously lost some stages intervening between initiation and “the final battle”; and if 7–8 and 9–12 refer to completely different occasions rather than consecutive stages of the same one, we have even more obviously lost some intervening material. Given the presence of yet another lacuna, it is difficult to feel certain that *nam* really needs to be corrected; if correction is necessary, Giordano Rampioni's *nunc* is palaeographically easy, though I suspect that, if it is right, it was originally co-

ordinated with at least one other *nunc* in one or more earlier couplets that described those previous stages.

The panting of the addressee (for this in an erotic context [and for the rhythm of 9] cf. especially Tib. 1.8.37 *et dare anhelanti pugnantis umida linguis/oscula et in collo figere dente notas*) not only identifies a sexual situation but shows that the love-making is by now far advanced; so does *suprema bella mouenti*, which means “beginning the final [or the last part of the] battle” (for *bellum mouere* cf. OLD s.v. *moueo* 17b), i. e., “approaching climax”.

Speyer retained *dolor* in 10, while Peiper printed his own conjecture *pudor*. Certainly correction seems necessary, and *dolor* could well be an accidental substitution influenced by *dolores* in 7. Baehrens’ *calor* seems more suited to the context than *pudor*, and is well established in the sense of “desire” or “passion”; cf. Prop. 1.12.17, 3.8.9; Hor. Carm. 4.9.11; Ov. Ars 1.237; [Ov.] ep. 15.12, 19.173; Sen. Phaed. 292; Stat. Theb. 3.701. Nevertheless, I would not entirely exclude the possibility that *pudor* is correct, albeit used with a very particular colour; by having her “modesty” cooperate in a situation where it might be expected to inspire resistance, the author perhaps meant that her love for her partner (cf. 12) made her failure to resist a kind of *pudor*²⁰; of course a sexual *calor* would more obviously “obey” under such circumstances and even be *indulgens*. Both *sine uoce* and especially *indulgens* show that the response now attributed to the woman is entirely voluntary and represents her own choice. Hence *paruit*, rather than indicating conscious obedience of specific commands and instructions or a metaphorical obedience of silence, probably has the milder sense of “accede” or “pay attention to” (cf. OLD s.v. *pareo* 2b, c); it may even denote a kind of respension, suggesting that the woman pants along with her partner as she too approaches climax. For *indulgeo* in reference to bestowing sexual attentions, cf. Petr. 86.3 *indulsi ergo sollicito*; and for the combination of a modifier and the prepositional phrase *sine uoce*, cf. Suet. Nero 42 *sine uoce et prope intermortuus iacuit*.

Fuchs’ suggestion that there is a lacuna after 10 appears unlikely, given what ought to be a close connection between *sine uoce*

20) One might compare the statement by the Augustan Sulpicia, *tandem uenit amor qualem texisse pudori/quam nudasse alicui sit mihi fama magis* ([Tib.] 3.13.1–2).

(10) and *tacita pace* (12, if the latter phrase is not corrupt: see below).

11–12

At the end of 11 B gives *ausa* (which Speyer prints), while V has *ause*. The latter is the *lectio difficilior* and therefore more likely to be what Galbiati decided he saw. Avantius is presumably responsible for *ausae*, a natural interpretation of *ause* in V.

If *ause* is correct, it must be a vocative, addressing the man who deflowered the author; but, while men in Latin elegy do sometimes use their teeth in love-making, scratching is generally left to women, and so we presumably have a feminine form of some sort, referring to a lack of active resistance on the woman's part.

If *ause* is correctly interpreted as *ausae* (and if there is no lacuna before these lines), then it might be either a dative of interest (awkward, however, with *tibi* also present in the sentence but referring to someone else) or a subjective genitive with whatever noun stood at the end of 10. The prudent course for an editor is perhaps to obelize *ause*, or perhaps to print *ausae* while indicating a lacuna after 10 (as suggested by Fuchs); one could read *ausa* and do the same, but I think it more likely that *ausa* is an error in B than that *ause* is a conjecture in V. Perhaps the correct reading is *ausus*, modifying whatever noun stood at the end of 10, despite the perhaps unpleasant assibilation (though even Ovid, for example, has a number of line-endings like *maioribus usus* [Ars 2.725]). For the combination of *audeo* and a personified abstract subject, cf. Hor. Ep. 2.1.259 f. *nec meus audet rem temptare pudor quam uires/ferre recusent*. Given that the encounter at this point seems to be mutually agreeable, *audeo* (whatever the form used) presumably has a sense closer to “venture” (cf. OLD s.v. 2) than to “dare”; and presumably the failure to “venture” resistance is explained by *amor* (or *Amor*) in 12 rather than by fear of retaliation for resisting.

For “fierce tooth” or “teeth”, not elsewhere used of a human being, cf. Ov. Ibis 460; [Sen.] Her. O. 1935; Sil. 4.379. It can be argued that qualifying the teeth as *feri* does not seem appropriate to a mutually satisfying encounter, but perhaps that ferocity is evoked precisely because it explains why she chose not to use them.

In erotic contexts, teeth are deployed as a part of love-making (Ov. Am. 1.7.42, 3.14.34; Prop. 4.3.25, 5.40; Tib. 1.6.14, 8.38), nails, on the other hand, as a means of angry attack (Ov. Am. 1.7.50,64,

2.7.7, Ars 2.452, 3.568; Prop. 3.8.6, 4.8.57). Here, perhaps, both identify means of self-protection that the speaker might have been expected to deploy (to preserve her *pudor*?), but did not.

Though *uiolare* can be used in a purely neutral sense equivalent to *uulnerare* (cf. OLD s.v. *uiolo* 4), it more often implies that a wrong is committed by the “violation”. Presumably that neutral sense applies here if the author did not regard the sexual encounter as itself a “violation”, or perhaps it expresses a degree of respect or even reverence for a man she now acknowledges as a lover.

An erotic sense for *foedus/foedera*, in both marital and non-marital contexts, is extremely common; cf. *foedera lecti* (Tib. 1.5.7; Prop. 4.3.69; Ov. ep. 5.101, Ars 3.593, Met. 7.710,852), *foedera tori* (Luc. 2.377 f.), *concubitus foedera* (Ov. Ars 2.462), *foedera aman-tum* (Sil. 2.416), *thalami foedus* (Ov. Met. 7.403), and esp. *Veneris* . . . *foedus* or *foedera* (Ov. Met. 3.294; Sen. Phaed. 910; Sil. 2.83; arg. Aen. 4.4). It can also be applied to a marriage bond, not just in verse (cf. Cat. 64.335,373; Hor. Carm. 3.4.23; Ov. Pont. 3.20.21; and cf. *foedera taedae* at Luc. 5.766, 8.399; Sil. 5.291, 6.447) but in prose as well (cf. Flor. 2.13; D. 23.2.47.pr [Paulus]; Serv. Aen. 8.701). In an appropriate context, unqualified *foedus/foedera* can identify a sexual relationship (Tib. 1.9.2; [Tib.] 3.19.2; Ov. ep. 4.147, Ars 2.579; Verg. Aen. 4.339; Stat. Theb. 5.138, Ach. 1.926; Sil. 3.110, 6.517).

The basic meaning of *perago* is “bring to completion”, “fulfill”. If that sense applies here, then the author meant that “love fulfilled [the obligations of?] a bond” that, presumably, existed already between the pair. However, the verb is nowhere else used with *foedus* as its object, and in the closest parallel, *foedus agens* (used of Aeneas at arg. Aen. 7.27), a pact does not yet exist but instead is being sought (cf. Aen. 7.155 *pacemque exposcere Teucris*); this suggests that the meaning could be “negotiated [to completion]” an entirely new bond, “sealed” by the act of sexual intercourse, though it is still not clear whether *foedera* represents an ad hoc pact that heals the violation initiated in 7–8 (if 9–12 do indeed follow directly or involve the same situation) or a more permanent bond between the lovers. The “love” that negotiates the bond is presumably the god, not the emotion, and so we should print *Amor*, not *amor*, as previous editors have done.

The unique expression *tacita pace*, if correctly transmitted, presumably means “in silence and peace”. It can be defended by analogy with, for example, *pax quieta* (for which cf. Sen. Thy. 566;

Sil. 5.40, 17.210; Stat. Theb. 3.372), but there is a contradiction between the war described above and the peace prevailing here, which cannot coexist simultaneously (nor can the latter explain the former, which casts doubt upon the soundness of *nam*). If correction is needed, perhaps the author wrote *facta pace*, a standard idiom for the conclusion of a war in both prose (cf., e. g., Caes. BG 2.29.5, 3.1.4; Liv. 29.12.3, 16, 37.19.3, 45.11.7) and verse (Verg. Aen. 5.587; Ov. Fast. 3.673; *facta pace* occurs at this point in a pentameter at Ov. Pont. 2.9.46); for a figurative occurrence of the phrase (in a different context), cf. Pl. Am. 390 *non loquar nisi pace facta*. If *facta pace* is read here, the further correction of *nam* to *tum* is surely required since the content of 12 must now represent a further stage in the sequence of events instead of explaining why the author chose not to deploy her teeth and nails. If *foedera peregit* does indeed mean “offered a treaty” after the warfare represented by the man’s assault, then *facta pace*, “when peace had been concluded”, means “when the love-making was over” and both parties had reached climax (a condition for which Ovid too employs a military metaphor at Ars 2.728, *pariter uicti*). The completion of the *foedera* could itself be a metaphor for simultaneous orgasm, a sexual goal advocated in Ars 2 and 3, rather than a purely emotional bond.

13–14

In 13 *denique* is ambiguous; it might mean “finally”, enumerating the last of the actions that she did not take in self-defense (i. e., “in addition to not clawing or biting, I did not call my grandmother”), or it might mean “next” (i. e., “when the experience I’ve described was over”). The latter seems more likely: instead of summoning her grandmother for support and assistance or waiting for an *ancilla*, the author did her own face afterwards to conceal the flush that bore witness to her sexual activity.

The attempts to emend *auiam* are probably misguided, especially if based on the assumption that *animam* should be taken seriously because B is an allegedly reliable witness. I see nothing to commend the idea that the *auia* and the *serua anus* are one and the same person. For maid-servants in the aftermath of a sexual encounter, cf. Ov. Am. 3.7.83, where the woman with whom Ovid has been impotent tries to hide his lack of success from her *ministrae*.

For *prior* = *ultra*, *sponte*, cf. OLD s.v. 4b. For *obsequium* defining the activities of slaves (here, presumably, the application

of cosmetics), cf. Stat. Theb. 1.525, Silv. 5.1.235–6 *consuetaque turba/obsequiis*; Serv. Aen. 2.456 *obsequia famulorum*. For the adjectival use of *anus* cf. OLD s.v. 2a.

The statement that the author did not cry out after the encounter she has described surely implies that such a response might conventionally have been expected. I regard *trepido* in B as a banalization of the more challenging *tremulo* offered by V; the latter, which is not specific about the cause of the troubled cry, is therefore more effective poetically, not to mention that the author's fear seems by now to be long past. *Tremulus* is applied to the human voice in *iuncturae* with *ululatus* (Verg. Aen. 7.395, then Stat. Theb. 7.482 and Silv. 5.5.71) and *uox* (Petr. 70.134; Quint. 11.3.91); cf. also Lucr. 2.367 *tremulis . . . uocibus* (of young goats) and Cic. fr. 23.15 *tremulo . . . clangore* (of a bird that has lost its chicks).

Clamore uocare is confined to Latin verse, where it can provide a convenient ending for hexameters; cf. *clamore uocabat* (Verg. Aen. 12.312; Sil. 4.595, 8.86), *clamore uocabam* (Ov. Met. 9.294), *clamore uocantem* (Sil. 1.380), *clamore uocarat* (Sil. 8.122).

15–16

The last preserved couplet is again very difficult. If nothing has been lost immediately before it, then it gives further details of the aftermath of the encounter described in 9–12 (or 7–12). In this context, the “modest pallor” with which the author “touched” something (the verb can be used of various kinds of application) would appear to be white make-up, applied perhaps to hide a flush that followed her deflowering (whether as a sign of shame or as a sign of “womanhood”). *Pallor* is unexampled in the sense of “white make-up”, but for “painting” with *pallor* cf. Lucr. 4.311 *quae [sc. semina] contage sua palloribus omnia pingunt*. Since *rubor* is the complexion normally associated with modesty, *uerecundo pallore* may be paradoxical here; for *rubor uerecundus* cf. Ov. ep. 4.72 and Met. 1.484, as well as Hor. Epod. 17.21 *uerecundus color* (“*pro rubore*” Porph. ad loc.). For *tango* as, in effect, a synonym of *tinguo* cf. OLD s.v. 3a.

Obviously such an interpretation is incompatible with *puellas*; we need instead a reference to the cheeks or to the face generally. Speyer justifies *puellas* with “i. e. ancillas”, but I do not see why one would apply white make-up to one's serving girls under these or any other circumstances. Peiper's conjecture *puellum* is, if anything, worse (it is supposed to refer to the writer's son, i. e.,

Telemachus!), and Mariotti's *pepigi ... tabellas* seems irrelevant (nor does it provide the effective "conclusion" that he imagined). Whatever the author wrote here, the corruption *puellas* was probably influenced by the preceding *pallore*.

Tib. 1.3.88 has *fessa ... opus* at the same position in a pentameter.

The very last line is exceptionally difficult; something is surely corrupt, and only *teneri ... pudoris* seems to be above suspicion. Though the context has been sexual, and *opus* can have a sexual meaning (cf., among other passages, Ov. Am. 1.4.48, 2.10.36, 3.14.28 and the many examples in *Ars* at 2.480 and elsewhere; Mart. 7.18.5, 11.60.7, 11.104.11), that sense is probably not applicable here. Instead, *pudoris opus* should probably be regarded as an original variation of such phrases as *uirtutis opus* (Verg. Aen. 10.469; Luc. 9.381; Stat. Theb. 8.421) or *honoris opus* (Stat. Theb. 6.232), which refer to actions performed by persons who possess *uirtus* or *honoris* or display it in those actions; hence *pudoris opus* ought to be something done by someone possessing or displaying *pudor*. It may therefore be just possible to take the line as transmitted, understanding that by "confessing the imposed work of youthful modesty" the author means "admitting [by her action in applying make-up] that the effort she is making is imposed by her youthful modesty" (i. e., by the need to preserve the impression that her modesty is as yet unstained), though I am far from certain that such a meaning can be extorted from the Latin, especially once the author's *pudor* has been compromised in any conventional sense: surely she cannot still possess or display *pudor* after the actions just related, except perhaps in the special sense discussed above in connection with the corrupt *dolor* in 10.

On the other hand, Sebisius' conjecture *onus* may deserve consideration (*impositum ... onus* occurs at the same position in the line at Ov. Trist. 3.4.62). The word is often construed with a genitive that defines the nature of the burden, and this may be abstract as well as concrete: cf. Liv. 24.22.2 *seruitii onus*; Ov. ep. 3.102 *nominis ... onus*, Trist. 5.6.4 *officii ... onus*, 5.14.16 *non parui ... honoris onus*, Pont. 3.9.20 *longi ... laboris onus*; and esp. Luc. 5.725 *coniugii ... onus* (= Pompey's wife Cornelia). Presumably "the burden of modesty" would be the sexual self-restraint dictated by *pudor*; but since that "burden" seems to have been rejected in the behaviour just described, a further emendation of *impositum* would

be needed, perhaps *depositum* – “admitting that the burden of young modesty had been laid aside” is conceivable as an expression of the idea that the young woman has decided no longer to comply with her society’s (or her parents’) expectations about the conduct of young women. *Fassa* might appear suspect in a passage that involves concealment; however, the obvious conjectures *fessa* and *lassa* seem to contribute nothing to the meaning, and perhaps the author intended a paradox, that her attempts at concealment were effectively an admission.

For *pudor tener* with the adjective referring not to *pudor* itself but to the age of the person who displays it, cf. Ov. ep. 2.143 *tenerum pensare pudorem* and especially Stat. Ach. 1.291 *expleto teneri iam fine pudoris/uirginitas matura*. In Statius the “end of tender modesty” that is opposed to “ripe virginity” is apparently the end of puberty; thus this experience may have occurred at a comparably early point in the author’s life. For *pudor* concealing love in the young, cf. [Sen.] Oct. 538f. *teneris in annis haud satis clara est fides, / pudore uictus cum tegit flammam amor*.

III. Critical Edition, Summary, and Translation

The following is a provisional edition of Ep. Bob. 36. There is no doubt that the surviving lines suffered seriously in their transmission; I would guess that more lines have been lost than are preserved, and there are several corruptions of individual words.²¹ This text, however, is intentionally conservative (the lack of context, after all, makes it difficult to be certain about emendations); it aims to admit only the very few absolutely certain corrections while obelizing the deep corruptions²²:

21) The lack of any overt nonsense or *voces nihili* can surely be attributed to an effort on Galbiati’s part to ensure that every word he transcribed was Latin (and would scan); unfortunately, this means that every word is potentially suspect. Given the extensive corruption, it is all the more remarkable how few steps may separate us from the author’s original. Our primary witnesses are all derived from a transcript made in 1493 from a manuscript written about A. D. 700, itself transcribed from an original roll or codex written a little after A. D. 400; the lack of references to Sulpicia between Martial and Ausonius may imply that there was no active copying tradition during the intervening two and a half centuries. The difficult script of the Bobbio codex is undoubtedly a major factor in this corruption.

22) See the Appendix, however, for a more speculative text.

* * * * *

*Intemerata procis et tot seruata per annos
Oscula, uix ipsi cognita Telemacho*

* * * * *

*Hinc mea uirginitas facibus tibi †lusit† adultis,
Arsit et in uidua principe uerus amor.*

* * * * *

*Saepe ego mentitis tremui noua femina somnis, 5
Lapsaque non †merito† sunt mihi uerba sono*

* * * * *

*Et tamen ignotos sensi experrecta dolores
Strataque temptaui sicca pauente manu*

* * * * *

*Nam tibi anhelanti supremaque bella mouenti 10
Paruit indulgens et sine uoce †dolor†*

*Dente nihil uiolare fero, nihil unguibus †ause†,
Foedera nam tacita pace peregit Amor.*

*Denique non auiam tremulo clamore uocauit,
Nec prior obsequio serua cucurrit anus:*

*Ipsa uerecundo tetigi pallore †puellas† 15
†Impositum† teneri fassa pudoris opus*

* * * * *

*et initium et finem deesse perspexit Vinetus lacunam post 2 statuit Peiper
3 hinc] nunc Brandes : tunc Fuchs mea V : me B luxit Canter : fulsit
Peiper : (me) iunxit Mumari te allexit temptaui adustus Cazzaniga 4 in
uidua Heinsius : inuidia B^pV inuida ... umor B^{ac} serus Heinsius : cer-
tus temptaui lacunam post v. 4 statui 5 phasmata temptaui 6 vel certo
vel grato Fuchs : recto, solito, noto temptaui sunt V : sint B lacunam
post v. 6 statui 7 at et tandem temptaui 8 sicca] saepe temptaui lacunam
post v. 8 statui 9 nunc Giordano Rampioni, fort. recte 10 calor Baehrens
a pudor Peiper lacunam post v. 10 statuit Fuchs 11 uiolare V : molare B
ause V : ausa B : ausae Avantius : ausus temptaui 12 tum facta temptaui
13 auiam V : animam B tremulo V : trepido B 16 depositum ... onus
(onus iam Sebisius) temptaui fessa A. Josephson : lassa aequae temptes*

Summary

An indeterminable number of lines has been lost at the beginning. After a reference to the purity of Penelope's kisses (1–2), the author describes how a mutual attraction developed between herself and a man who knew her as a young woman (3–4). She attributes to herself traits typical of someone infatuated, such as troubling dreams and difficulty in speaking (5–6). In the following couplet, she either expanded the depiction of her infatuation or perhaps related an experience in which the man she loved initiated intercourse with her while she slept (7–8); in the same encounter, or perhaps in another, she did not resist him, and may have reached cli-

max with him (9–12). In the aftermath, she sought assistance from neither her grandmother nor from a nurse (13–14), but herself applied make-up, perhaps to conceal the result of the encounter (15–16). Whatever followed has been lost.

Translation²³

... kisses unsullied by the suitors and held back so many years, scarcely known even to Telemachus. ... Hence my virginity (played to) you with torches kindled, and a genuine love burned in a prominent unwed lady. ... Newly a woman, I often trembled when my dreams lied [5], and my words slipped out with a sound not (deserving) ... and yet, on being awakened, I felt an unfamiliar pain, and with fearful hand tested the dry bedding, ... for as you panted and began the final battle, my (pain) obeyed, indulgently and wordlessly [10], (daring) to violate nothing with savage tooth, nothing with nails, for Love negotiated his treaty in peace and silence. Afterwards, I did not summon my grandmother with quavering shout, nor did an elderly slave woman come running first to serve me: I myself tinted my (girls) with becoming paleness [15], confessing the (imposed) work of young modesty ...

IV. Conclusion

Nearly all the scholars who have discussed Ep. Bob. 36 have regarded it as a literary epistle in the manner of Ovid's *Heroides*, whether whole or truncated, written in the voice of Penelope.²⁴

But Ep. Bob. 36 cannot have been a letter. Its contents were evidently narrative in nature (the course of a relationship was described, from initial acquaintance through sexual consummation), and the literary epistle is not a likely medium for such narratives (except perhaps under special circumstances which we have no reason to think applied here). In particular, an epistle will not concern itself with the narration of events that are known to the correspondent (again apart from exceptional circumstances that we have no reason to invoke here). This narrative concerned the author's

23) To accommodate inevitable uncertainties about the text as transmitted, words that are obelized in the text above are translated within parentheses, with the words in brackets being a literal translation of the paradosis rather than a suggestion of what the author might have intended; for a translation of a bolder attempt at restoring the text, see the Appendix.

24) Giordano Rampioni (above, n. 14) suggests that it is an ecphrasis of a painting that depicted a meeting of Penelope and Ulysses (“[n]on si tratterebbe ... di un’epistola, quanto piuttosto della descrizione di un’opera figurativa in cui si immagina che Penelope dichiara ad Ulisse il suo amore mai interrotto ... Dunque un componimento epidittico” 243; “descriverebbe uno dei noti dipinti il cui soggetto doveva essere l’incontro di Penelope con Ulisse” 245); but there is too much here that could not even have been suggested in a static work of art.

earlier years, to judge by the reference to *pudor tener* (16); but if this is a letter, the detailed description of a sexual encounter is seriously problematic, whoever the putative author, whenever the putative date in her life, whoever the putative addressee.

In particular, that sexual content is a serious obstacle to the view that the lines are supposed to be in the voice of Penelope. Hence some scholars have sought to eliminate it, claiming that it merely represents the contents of the dreams mentioned in 5, but this is impossible for two reasons: there cannot be a backward reference to those dreams across the reference to awkwardness in speaking that intervenes in 6, and (whatever the reason for the “fearful hand” in 8) lines 9–12 clearly describe an experience that the narrator found a source of pleasure, not of fear, as the dreams clearly were.

If Penelope is supposed to have written this shortly after the events described, there are three possible scenarios: she is describing the consummation of her marriage to Ulysses (but surely not to Ulysses, and if not to him, then to whom?); she is describing a sexual encounter with Ulysses before their marriage (but pre-marital sex is as damaging to a woman’s reputation for modesty as infidelity); she is describing a sexual encounter with someone else, either before or soon after her marriage to Ulysses (utterly at odds with her reputation for fidelity). None of these is plausible.

Hence scholars have instead imagined that Ep. Bob. 36 is to be read as having been written in Penelope’s maturity. Mariotti suggested that she sent it to one of the suitors, during Ulysses’ absence, as a confession of her love for that suitor (“Penelope nescio cui absente Ulixē amorem prior fatetur”). While a minority tradition of an adulterous Penelope undoubtedly existed, this scenario cannot be reconciled with what would be Penelope’s own description of her kisses as “unsullied by the suitors”, an especially odd comment to make to a suitor that she is trying to “seduce” (“as yet unsullied” could be appropriate, of course, but that is not what the Latin says), and a reference to an earlier sexual experience with someone else hardly belongs in such a poem, whether or not the partner was Ulysses. Alternatively, Mariotti suggested that the letter might have been written to Ulysses after his return but before the recognition (“Cogites fort. de epistula a Penelope Ulixi sibi adhuc incognito post huius reditum missa”). In this case it is unclear why she would write at all (in contrast, her interviews with the disguised

Ulysses in the *Odyssey* all have a strategic and tactical purpose), and the decision to include a description of a sexual act is again problematic, whoever the partner. In short, it is difficult to imagine any situation in which Penelope would write a letter containing an account of her sexual activity, or to whom she would write it.

It is quite unlikely, therefore, that Ep. Bob. 36 has anything to do with Penelope. Instead, it represents the scant remnants of a substantially longer poem containing a highly personal narrative by a woman. While we will never be able to understand fully a text that is so fragmented and so corrupted, a few things do appear to be certain or at least very likely: the narrative was chronological – this section of it, at least, described the origin and development of a mutual attraction between the author and the addressee (3–4), based for the latter upon her virginal modesty (1–3); this or some other situation somehow involved emotional anxieties for her (5–6); she described at least one sexual experience that reflected their shared affection (perhaps 7–8, certainly 9–12); and that experience demanded some sort of concealment (13–16). A confident interpretation would depend upon answers to some questions that the loss of context has left unanswerable, two in particular. One is whether 7–8 do indeed continue the description of the author’s infatuation or instead introduce the sexual situation that reaches its climax in 9–12; if that could be resolved, we could determine whether the *dolores ignoti* of 7 are emotional pangs or physical ones deriving from the violation of the author’s virginity, and whether she represented the “treaty” negotiated by Love as an eventual consequence of that violation, or perhaps as a “correction” of it. The other is whether the sexual encounter in 9–12 (or 7–12) occurred within or outside a marriage. If it occurred within a marriage, then this might be its consummation, presumably on the wedding night; in that case, however, one must explain why (if 7–8 are part of this scene) the woman seems to be awakened not so much for this activity as by it, why the possibility of “daring” to resist is even suggested, why there is such emphasis on silence, why the woman conceals the effects of her love-making. These aspects are more easily understood if the sex is pre-marital or extra-marital; but in that case, we must explain how and why the man approached her as she slept (again if 7–8 are part of this scene), and it is also troubling that the author would represent an act that could

have been prosecuted under Augustus' *Lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis*²⁵; on the other hand, perhaps their relationship was eventually "regularized" through matrimony.

If Ep. Bob. 36 does indeed represent the remnants of a woman's first-person narrative of her emotional and sexual history with a man she loves, passing from initial attraction to sexual fulfillment and beyond, then I suggest (while conceding that proof will never be possible) that there is only one author to whom it can be attributed, the Sulpicia celebrated in Martial 10.35 and 10.38. More speculatively still, I suggest that it was composed for the fifteenth anniversary of her marriage to Calenus.

A variety of observations can be used to support an attribution to Sulpicia.

Not all the components of the *Epigrammata Bobiensia* were written around A. D. 400; in particular, there are two epigrams on Atia, mother of Augustus, attributed to Domitius Marsus (Ep. Bob. 39, 40). Not all of the components are epigrams, and Ep. Bob. 36, which is not an epigram, was transmitted immediately before the other non-epigrammatic component, Ep. Bob. 37, perhaps implying some connection. As to the nature of that connection, Ep. Bob. 37 does appear to be an authentic work of the Domitianic Sulpicia, and poems by the same author are often juxtaposed in such collections.

Some linguistic features are particularly consistent with a Flavian date, and none are obviously "late" or inconsistent with one. Vocabulary and syntax have been discussed implicitly in the commentary. The unique phrase *uidua princeps* recalls *femina princeps*, which is not found in Republican Latin at all and is applied in Augustan literature only to Livia, while a broader application to upper-class women is attested only in Flavian writers. The relatively uncommon *intemeratus* (1) enjoyed some popularity in Flavian poetry, which offers more than half the occurrences in verse before the 4th century (one each in Silius and Valerius Flaccus, five in Statius).

25) *Stuprum* was punished the same as adultery under this law; cf. D. 48.5.6.1 *Lex stuprum et adulterium promiscue et καταχρηστικώτερον appellat, sed proprie adulterium in nupta committitur ... stuprum uero in uirginem uiduamue committitur.*

If this piece was written by a man, it is difficult to imagine a context in which a male writer could have situated such a narrative by a female character.²⁶ If it was written by a woman, there is surely no other woman that we can imagine writing poetry about the loss of her virginity or describing a sexual experience. More importantly, however, though the poem has undoubtedly suffered corruption in its transmission, what we find when we can read through those errors matches in quality of craftsmanship, in style, and in content what Martial indicates we should expect in Sulpicia.

As to metrical craftsmanship, the couplets are entirely consistent with the standards of the Augustan elegists Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid; and, though they are especially close to Ovid's, they are nonetheless distinctive in some respects (all observations in this section must, of course, be qualified on the grounds that the eight surviving couplets may not be entirely typical of their author).

In the eight extant hexameters, we find seven different patterns of dactyls and spondees in the first four feet (1 DDSS, 5 DSDD, 7 DSSS, 9 DSSD, 11 DDDD, 13 DDDS, 15 DSDS; 3 matched either 11 or 13, depending on how it is to be emended). This is closest to the practice of Ovid; these seven patterns all figure among the eight that are most frequent in Ovid, who uses them with relatively little variation in frequency (51, 50, 45, 40, 38, 36, 34, and 25 times respectively²⁷), but only five of them are among the eight most frequent in Tibullus, and only four among the eight most frequent in Propertius, and both of these elegists show a marked preference for DSSS over their second choice (in Platnauer's sample, there are 74 occurrences of DSSS in Tibullus, against only 53 each of DDSS and DSDS, and 61 of DSSS in Propertius, against only 44 of SDSS [Platnauer 1951: 36–37]). The poet's practice with regard to elision, caesuras, and diaereses is entirely consistent with Augustan practice, and reveals nothing awkward

26) Some extravagant claims about literary impersonation of women by male writers are made in T. K. Hubbard, *The invention of Sulpicia*, CJ 100, 2004–2005, 177–194, but his arguments that the poetry of the earlier Augustan Sulpicia is really by Tibullus are open to objection on a number of grounds, especially their naïveté about (inter alia) the transmission of those poems, about the simplicity of feminine nomenclature, about the size of the *gens Sulpicia*, and about the poetic traditions of that family in the late Republic.

27) Figures here are taken from M. Platnauer, *Latin Elegiac Verse*, Cambridge 1951, 36–37, most of them based on a sample of 373 couplets from each author, with Ars 2 his Ovidian sample.

or controversial. The elision at the strong 1st-foot caesura in 5 and at the diaeresis after the 1st foot in 9 are common types that Platnauer regards as “need[ing] no comment” (83; the same is true of the elision at the strong caesura in the 4th foot of 3 if my conjecture *te allexit* is right). The elision at the diaeresis after the 3rd foot in 7 is “not uncommon” when there is a strong 3rd-foot caesura (84), as is the case here. The weak caesura in the 2nd foot of 1 is “common”, but “must be followed by a disyllabic word constituting an iambus” (Platnauer 1951: 5), which is the case here. On average, only 8% of hexameters in the Augustan elegists have a weak 3rd-foot caesura, and only one out of eight in Ep. Bob. 36; “[i]n practice this means that mostly it is followed by a disyllable of iambic form” (Platnauer 1951: 8), which is the case here. Weak 4th-foot caesuras, rare in the Augustan elegists (Platnauer 1951: 10), are non-existent here. Four of the hexameters have a diaeresis after the 1st foot and two have one after the 5th; these diaereses “seem to occur in about 50% of the hexameters of the elegists” (Platnauer 1951: 18). “Over 80% of ... hexameters” in the Augustan elegists end in substantives or verbs (Platnauer 1951: 40); 100% of the hexameters in Ep. Bob. 36 end that way.

As to the pentameters, “[a]bout 80% of all the pentameters of the three elegists ... end with a substantive or verb” (Platnauer 1951: 40); 100% of the pentameters in Ep. Bob. 36 end with a substantive. The consistent use of a concluding disyllabic word is of course Ovidian (the only exception is 2, where the proper name *Telemacho* must be accommodated, but this is itself done in a manner consonant with Ovidian practice). The complete absence of elision is again closer to Ovidian practice than to Tibullan or Propertian (Platnauer 1951: 90). The caesuras that occur are all common varieties that Platnauer regarded as requiring no comment. Four of the pentameters have a diaeresis after the 3rd foot (i. e., the first complete foot of the second half); this “occurs as often as not” in the Augustan elegists (Platnauer 1951: 24), i. e., about 50% of the time. On the other hand, a diaeresis after the 1st foot where the 1st foot is a dactyl “occurs about as often as not” in the Augustan elegists (Platnauer 1951: 23), but in seven out of eight cases in Ep. Bob. 36. This, however, is consistent with a feature that may perhaps have been typical of this author, namely a tendency toward lightness and speed that “out-dactyls” Ovid himself. Platnauer (37) notes that in the Augustan elegists “the lines beginning with a

dactyl . . . greatly outnumber those beginning with a spondee” and that “this preference for a dactylic opening, marked even in Propertius, is stronger in Tibullus and stronger still in Ovid”: yet Ep. Bob. 36 has not a single spondaic opening in any line, hexameter or pentameter (in contrast, there is an initial spondee in 32.9% of Propertius’ pentameters, in 17.4% of Tibullus’, and in 16.7% of Ovid’s). In addition, Ep. Bob. 36 has five pentameters beginning DD against three beginning DS, which reverses the pattern in the Augustan elegists, where DS predominates (218 to 89 in Tibullus, 161 to 90 in Propertius, 191 to 115 in Ovid [Platnauer 1951: 37]). To judge by these eight couplets, the author of Ep. Bob. 36 might have exhibited as many as three distinctive tendencies: an avoidance of elision in the pentameter; an avoidance of spondees in the first foot of all lines; and a strong preference for diaeresis after the 1st foot of the pentameter. The first two are Ovidian preferences also, but this author appears to have gone further with them than Ovid himself.

More generally, there is no sign of awkwardness in the placement of words or in the structure of lines, and there are even signs of deliberately contrived elegance, such as the symmetrical arrangement of *dente nihil . . . nihil unguibus* (11). Rhythm is used effectively; note, for example, the way that the spondaic *anbelanti* in 9 reflects the effort that causes the panting, while the dactylic movement of *supremaque bella mouenti* reflects the release that comes in its aftermath.

Of course, the serious corruption makes it difficult to judge exactly how good the poem was before the accidents of transmission that affect it, but the level of verbal expression seems to have been more than respectable. Words are not wasted, and every modifier serves a purpose. The very first couplet is an example of how the original elegance can shine through when the state of preservation allows it. In addition, while it has often been observed that *intemerata procis* echoes *intemerata procos*, in reference to Penelope herself, at Ov. Am. 3.4.24, it should be noted that this is a conscious reminiscence, not theft or pastiche, since the author of Ep. Bob. 36 has varied both the phrase and its position in the couplet. Other signs of good writing include the ability to deploy and develop effective metaphors, such as the extended warfare imagery in the scene of love-making (9–12), which transcends what can elsewhere be merely cliché. In addition, there are effective examples of original or rare

iuncturae (though it must be emphasized that this list might be modified if we had a better text), such as *femina noua, manus pauens, suprema bella mouens, pax tacita, clamor tremulus, pudoris opus*.

Above all, there is exactly that combination of *nequitia* and *castitas* within a first-person account of sexual relations that Martial would lead us to expect in Sulpicia.²⁸ The most detailed allusions to her poetry²⁹ are found in 10.35:

*Omnes Sulpiciam legant puellae
 Uni quae cupiunt uiro placere:
 Omnes Sulpiciam legant mariti
 Uni qui cupiunt placere nuptae.*
Non haec Colchidos adserit furorem 5
*Diri prandia nec refert Thyestae,
 Scyllam, Byblida nec fuisse credit,
 Sed castos docet et probos amores,
 Lusus, delicias facetiasque.*
Cuius carmina qui bene aestimarit 10
*Nullam dixerit esse nequiores,
 Nullam dixerit esse sanctiores.*
*Tales Egeriae iocos fuisse
 Udo crediderim Numae sub antro.*
Hac condiscipula uel hac magistra 15
*Esses doctior et pudica, Sappho:
 Sed tecum pariter simulque uisam
 Durus Sulpiciam Phaon amaret.*
Frustra: namque ea nec Tonantis uxor
Nec Bacchi nec Apollinis puella 20
Erepto sibi uiueret Caleno.

Let every girl who wishes to please one man alone read Sulpicia: let every husband who wishes to please one bride alone read Sulpicia. She doesn't defend Medea's fury [5] or recount grim Thyestes' lunch, and

28) For a discussion of these elements in Martial's account of Sulpicia see especially S. Mattiacci, *Castos docet et pios amores, lusus, delicias facetiasque*, ovvero la poesia d'amore secondo l'altra' Sulpicia, *Invigilata Lucernis* 21, 1999, 215–241.

29) I ignore here, as useless for the present discussion, what Sidonius Apollinaris and Fulgentius say about Sulpicia, which appears to be entirely derivative (from Martial [?] in the former case, from Ausonius in the latter); Ausonius' statement in the preface to his *Cento nuptialis* that *prurire opusculum Sulpiciae, frontem caperare* is discussed in the article mentioned above, n. 5, as a possible reflection of the recovery of both Ep. Bob. 36 and 37 in the 4th century.

doesn't think Scylla or Byblis existed; instead she teaches chaste and honourable loves, games, delights and whimsies. Whoever has a good appreciation of her poems [10] will say that no woman is more naughty, will say that no woman is more virtuous. Such, I'd believe, were Egeria's jests within Numa's damp grotto³⁰; with her as fellow-pupil or with her as teacher [15], you'd be more learned as well as chaste, Sappho – but hard-hearted Phaon would love Sulpicia if he saw her together with and at the same time as you. In vain: for neither as the Thunderer's wife nor as Bacchus' or Apollo's girlfriend [20] would she go on living if Calenus were snatched from her.

In short, Martial's Sulpicia writes sexy poetry about her love-life with her husband. It can be a source of erotic pleasure to its readers, and can even – he suggests, with his usual good humour – improve a relationship,³¹ and from both sides: women will understand better what men like and want, and vice versa. Moreover, the reference to Sappho implies that Sulpicia made sex with a man so appealing that she could have “converted” Antiquity's most famous Lesbian to the “modesty” of heterosexuality. Another poem of Martial, quoted below, implies that Sulpicia made love “with the light on”, a “modern” trait, of some sexual appeal, to judge from Martial himself.³² Sulpicia is *nequam*, of course, because of the sexual content of her verse (defined by *lusus*, *deliciae*,³³ and *facetiae*), but she is also *sancta*, no doubt because that content concerns sexuality within a marriage (hence *amores probi*). There may also be implied an element, at least, of *sanctitas* in her style; i. e., though its content is explicitly sexual, the language is as chaste and decent as Sulpicia herself (see OLD s.v. *sanctus* 4c for the word as a stylistic term). As to Ep. Bob. 36, we can see that it contained at least one depiction of love-making, without a single word more suggestive than *anhelanti*. Of course the man who “starts the final battle” in Ep. Bob. 36 is Calenus if Sulpicia is the author, but there is no direct evidence for this in the poem's scant remnants.

30) In Ep. Bob. 37.67–8 Sulpicia has Calliope associate herself with Egeria and the “laurel-groves and springs” of Numa.

31) *Docet* seems to imply exemplarity; in any case, this is surely something more than a reference to “Sulpicia's loyalty to her husband” (Watson [above, n. 19] 75).

32) Cf. 11.106.5–6 *tu tenebris gaudes, me ludere teste lucerna... iuuat*. The trimeter fragment, which speaks of Sulpicia being displayed nude in bed, shows a similar character.

33) For the sexual connotations of these words, cf. (for example) Mart. 11.16.7–8, 106.5.

Martial also discusses Sulpicia and Calenus in 10.38, a poem which has been drastically misunderstood in recent scholarship:

*O molles tibi quindecim, Calene,
 Quos cum Sulpicia tua iugales
 Indulsit deus et peregit annos!
 O nox omnis et hora quae notata est
 Caris litoris Indici lapillis! 5
 O quae proelia, quas utrimque pugnas
 Felix lectulus et lucerna uidit
 Nimbis ebria Nicerotianis!
 Vixisti tribus, o Calene, lustris:
 Aetas haec tibi tota computatur 10
 Et solos numeras dies mariti.
 Ex illis tibi si diu rogatam
 Lucem redderet Atropos uel unam,
 Malles quam Pyliam quater senectam.*

Oh, the fifteen langorous years of marriage, Calenus, that the god has indulgently conceded to you and negotiated! Oh, every night and hour marked with precious stones of India's shores! [5] Oh, what battles, what struggles back and forth your happy little bed has witnessed, and the lamp drunken on Nicerotian clouds³⁴! You have lived three lustra [i. e., 15 years], Calenus: this is the totality of life that you calculate [10], and you count only your days as husband. If after much begging Atropos were to give you even one of them again, you'd take it over four of Nestor's life-times.

Astonishingly, this has been read as a *consolatio* to Calenus upon the death of Sulpicia,³⁵ despite the absence of any reference to that death or "consolation" for it. On the contrary: the cheerful tone shows that it is meant to congratulate him on fifteen years of happy marriage to her – he would repeat any single day of it in preference to living four times as long as Nestor – with no sign that there

34) This refers to perfumes made and/or sold by a certain Niceros, to whom Martial also alludes at 6.55.3 and 12.65.4; presumably Sulpicia mentioned him too.

35) So Parker (above, n. 6), following Kroll (RE IVA [1931] 880–882), and Hallett (above, n. 6), following Parker. Richlin (above, n. 6) 128 makes the equally strange suggestion that the poem commemorates their divorce! Watson (above, n. 19) 76 n. 58, observes that *peregit annos* "suggests a funerary context," but surely it is possible to observe (on a birthday, for example) that someone has completed a certain number of years without implying that that person has died. Courtney (above, n. 6) 361 more sensibly comments "it does not look . . . as if Sulpicia has just died; I think that [Martial] is celebrating an anniversary."

are not more to come. Though we need not go so far as to suggest that Martial has actually adopted Sulpicia's own "voice" here,³⁶ it is natural to suspect that he consciously echoed her writings when writing about her.³⁷ Certainly claims of this kind have been made in reference to some of the language in 10.35 as well as 10.38.6 in particular (*o quae proelia, quas utrimque pugnas/felix lectulus et lucerna uidit*),³⁸ but there could well be even more allusions that we can no longer trace. For example, when Martial says in 10.35 that Sulpicia would not live as the bride of a god if she lost Calenus, perhaps he is not "expressing his own opinion of Sulpicia's loyalty to Calenus" (Merriam 1991: 304) but echoing a sentiment that she expressed in her poetry – and the same just might be true of his assertion that Calenus counts the years of his life from his marriage to Sulpicia (I see no reason to think that Sulpicia could not have "impersonated" Calenus in her poetry). It is also tempting to speculate that, since 10.38 refers to a specific moment in Sulpicia's life, namely the fifteenth anniversary of her marriage, Martial might be referring to a poem written for that occasion.³⁹ Certainly it would not be surprising if a woman celebrated for writing poetry about her love-life with her husband commemorated an important anniversary in verse (or if Martial chose to concentrate on such a poem when celebrating her); and a commemorative poem of this kind might well contain features like a retrospective survey of their romantic and sexual relationship, perhaps even a review of its entire course: in other words, it might well resemble what we find in Ep. Bob. 36. As to specific verbal echoes of Ep. Bob. 36 in Martial 10.38, we should not expect to find much, especially given that Ep. Bob. 36 represents, in effect, an essentially random sample of lines

36) Cf. C. Merriam, *The other Sulpicia*, CW 84, 1991, 303–305, at 303 (Martial "uses her *persona* in 10.38"), 305 ("Martial uses Sulpicia's own poetic voice").

37) Cf. Courtney (above, n. 6) 361, "[Martial] is probably adapting phrases of Sulpicia herself." J. Farrell, *Latin Language and Latin Culture: From Ancient to Modern Times*, Cambridge 2001, 72 comments "It is probable . . . that [10.35 and 38] allude to her work in ways that we cannot now recover", a consideration applicable to his earlier observation that it "is curious that Martial praises Sulpicia while hardly mentioning her actual work" (70) – Martial would not need to mention explicitly what he is constantly evoking in his language.

38) Parker (above, n. 6) 92 (following Kroll), 94.

39) Since the final lines of 10.38 are clearly a complement to those of 10.35, which emphasize how unwilling Sulpicia would be to live without Calenus, even with a god as her lover, both of Martial's poems about Sulpicia might derive from the hypothetical anniversary-poem.

from a substantially longer work, but we can certainly find a sexual “war” in both Mart. 10.38.6 and Ep. Bob. 36.9–12. Far more intriguing, however, is *indulsit . . . peregit* in Mart. 10.38.3, to which we can compare *indulgens . . . peregit* in Ep. Bob. 36.10–12, with the same god apparently the subject of *peregit* in both cases⁴⁰; though the two authors use both verbs with a different sense (and even, in the case of *indulgeo*, with a different construction), can this really be only a freakish coincidence rather than a deliberate echo that celebrates Sulpicia’s marriage in language that Sulpicia herself had used in describing the first time they made love?

If written by Sulpicia, Ep. Bob. 36 may inform us further about aspects of her life and her relationship with Calenus not attested elsewhere (though the possibility of a disjuncture between poet and poetic persona must always be borne in mind). For example, the reference to her grandmother (*auia*) may indicate that she grew up in her grandmother’s household rather than in her parents’ (for a parallel, cf. Ummidia Quadratilla and her grandson in Plin. ep. 7.24.5), and this may indicate that she was orphaned at an early age. The reference to her *pudor tener* in the aftermath of her sexual initiation with Calenus would put their union quite early in her “adult” life.

Unfortunately, the loss of so many lines and the extensive corruption create such uncertainties that some of the most important issues about her relationship with Calenus as reflected in these fragments can probably never be answered; there will always be numerous possible readings that depend upon editorial decisions about the presence of lacunae and textual corruptions and, of course, upon the interpretation of what survives. Frustration is only exacerbated by the fact that, if it survived complete, Ep. Bob. 36 would surely be the most significant sexual statement by a woman of ancient Rome and of vital importance for our understanding of women’s self-representation and attitudes to sexuality.

Perhaps the most controversial reading of these fragments is one that results from taking 7–8 as the beginning of the sexual encounter described in 9–12 and understanding that encounter as extramarital and as the author’s first sexual experience. After Calenus fell in love with Sulpicia and she with him, she lost her virginity to

40) Mart. 10.38.3 says simply *deus*, but it is difficult to see what other god this could be.

him outside a marriage bond; the intensely affectionate relationship celebrated by Martial would then predate their marriage, and their sexual relationship would have begun under irregular, perhaps even illegal circumstances – and Calenus would surely have been not only the first but also the only man with whom she ever made love. It would be especially intriguing – though some might say troubling – if their sexual relationship began in an initially nonconsensual encounter to which she effectively gave consent after it began (though it must be emphasized that a love-bond between the two seems already to have existed at the time). This would surely be a remarkable scene for a Roman woman to depict. There is a literary parallel for a nonconsensual sexual encounter in AP 5.275, written in the 6th century by Paulus Silentiarius but presumably based upon a lost Hellenistic original; here a man rapes the sleeping courtesan Menecratis, who had long denied him her favours, and the poem ends with her stinging rebuke to him. The lost original was apparently imitated by Propertius in 1.3; he contemplates assaulting Cynthia as she sleeps, but dares not. If Sulpicia did indeed depict such a scene, we should surely read it in the light of Ovid's assertions that women consent to a degree of *uis* in sexual relations with men because it allows them to preserve an illusion of personal modesty that would be shattered if they were themselves the aggressors,⁴¹ but the fact that a love-bond has already been established softens what could otherwise seem a deeply offensive scene.

The circumstances under which Ep. Bob. 36 survived deserve special attention if it is the work of Sulpicia. Many of the individuals who composed the elements of the *Epigrammata Bobiensia* or had elements dedicated to them appear in the correspondence of Q. Aurelius Symmachus: the consul Probinus, for example, author of Ep. Bob. 65, and Nonius Atticus, whose baths are celebrated in Ep. Bob. 48 and to whom Ep. Bob. 57 dedicates a poem or small collection. In particular, Ep. Bob. 2 and 6 refer to a poet named Naucellius, who not only was among Symmachus' correspondents (ep. 3.10–16) but even sent him a collection of poetry (ep. 3.11.4); Naucellius' collection is unlikely to be the *Epigrammata Bobiensia* as we have them, but there is no reason to reject the hypothesis that

41) Ars 1.673–4 *uim licet appelles: grata est uis illa puellis: / quod inuitae saepe dedisse uolunt*, 705–6 *ut pudor est quaedam coepisse priorem, / sic alio gratum est incipiente pati*. See, however, 716 ff. for his awareness that a woman may firmly say “no”.

the *Epigrammata* represent a version, at least, of his gift. In addition, Ferrari has shown that the manuscript that preserved the *Epigrammata Bobiensia* for posterity resembles other manuscripts in the library of St Columbanus at Bobbio that were copied from manuscripts that must have come from the library of the Symmachi (Ferrari 1973). Whether the (as I believe) two poems of Sulpicia preserved here were part of Naucellius' gift cannot be known, but it appears that Ep. Bob. 36 and 37 did find a welcome in the very highest ranks of the pagan élite around A. D. 400. It is tempting to connect their survival with the revival of interest in Flavian literature around the same time, which (for example) rescued Juvenal for posterity, or to suggest that they were a happy though accidental product of the search for old manuscripts of "classic" texts like Virgil or Livy.⁴² One can see more easily why the hexameter poem on the expulsion of the philosophers would appeal in this milieu, above all in its sense of moral outrage and insistence on old Roman values, both relevant to an age that saw the vestiges of those values being eliminated from public life. But the reasons for preserving a poem about her relationship with Calenus seem less obvious – unless we take seriously Martial's implication that such poetry could find an appreciative audience as long as it concerned sex within marriage, an indication perhaps that the importance of sexuality within marriage (and of sexual and romantic "love" rather than cold respect) was recognized not only in Martial's time⁴³ but three centuries later.

Nevertheless, Richlin (above, n. 6) 125 comments that "It is one of the mysteries of Latin literature that a culture in which women were literate and literary should have so totally destroyed those women's writings", adding later "I want to pause here to mark, like a memorial plaque, the grief and anger appropriate to a scholar beginning an assessment of a woman writer of whose work remain only two lines" (126). This is misguided, except to the extent that the loss of any skilled writer's work deserves to be mourned. We have no evidence that Sulpicia "published" her poetry rather than simply circulating it among friends and acquaintances (such as Martial), and absolutely no evidence that anyone consciously "destroyed" her work or that of any other woman. Indeed, it appears that, around

42) See, in general, A. Cameron, Literary allusions in the *Historia Augusta*, *Hermes* 92, 1964, 363–377.

43) For this phenomenon, see Watson (above, n. 19) (74–77 for Sulpicia).

A. D. 400, one prominent pagan preserved at least two of her more substantial works, and a contemporary (?) commentator on Juvenal appears to have cited two of her trimeters. Those two poems at Bobbio did suffer damage in their subsequent transmission, but censorship was not involved, to judge by the preservation of what must have one of the most sexually explicit passages.⁴⁴ Certainly there is no evidence of anything more sinister or “sexist” than what befell Rutilius Namatianus; his *De reditu* was transmitted in the very same codex, and the loss of Book 2 is clearly accidental, not deliberate.⁴⁵ If there is a real cause for grief here, it is perhaps that modern scholars who study Roman women have rejected the 70 lines of Sulpicia preserved in Ep. Bob. 37 on the basis of arguments advanced by a scholar a century and a quarter earlier that many reputable authorities have rejected as mistaken or inadequate and that they themselves have not read, much less evaluated critically. If the arguments of this paper are valid, and if the two trimeters are also authentic, then we have no fewer than 88 lines composed by Sulpicia, far more than by such renowned male authors as Calvus and Cinna, though not a single complete poem.⁴⁶

Appendix

The text offered earlier was deliberately limited to the few corrections that could be considered highly or reasonably certain. The following text, though it necessarily acknowledges the presence of some corruptions that resist emendation, presents a more speculative version that may be closer to the author’s original:

44) See again Butrica (above, n. 5) for a detailed demonstration of losses and corruptions in that poem that can best be explained as the result of physical damage to the Bobbio codex. That damage seems to have affected Ep. Bob. 36 even more severely than Ep. Bob. 37, to judge by the loss of so many lines at beginning and end and by the apparent presence of so many lacunae in the first eight extant lines, perhaps representing places where smearing or staining made it impossible for Galbiati to recover anything at all.

45) There is a tantalizing possibility that more fragments of Ep. Bob. 36 (or even other works of Sulpicia) could be discovered among the paste-downs in books from the same monastery; Ferrari (above, n. 2) printed some fragments of *De reditu* 2 recovered in this way.

46) Ep. Bob. 37, however, is nearly complete, with 70 lines extant and perhaps five to ten lost.

* * * * *

*Intemerata procis et tot seruata per annos
Oscula, uix ipsi cognita Telemacho*

* * * * *

*Hinc mea uirginitas facibus te allexit adultis,
Arsit et in uidua principe certus amor.*

* * * * *

*Saepe ego mentitis tremui noua phasmata somnis, 5
Lapsaque nunc †merito† sunt mihi uerba sono*

* * * * *

*Et tandem ignotos sensi experrecta dolores
Strataque temptaui sicca pauente manu*

* * * * *

*Nunc tibi anhelanti supremaque bella mouenti
Paruit indulgens et sine uoce calor, 10
Dente nihil uiolare fero, nihil unguibus ausus:
Foedera tum facta pace peregit Amor.*

*Denique non auiam tremulo clamore uocaui,
Nec prior obsequio serua cucurrit anus:*

*Ipsa uerecundo tetigi pallore †puellas† 15
Depositum teneri fassa pudoris onus*

* * * * *

Translation

... kisses unsullied by the suitors and held back so many years, scarcely known even to Telemachus. ... Hence my virginity kindled your torches and attracted you, and a devoted love blazed up in a prominent lady. ... I often trembled at dreams that feigned strange visions [5], and now my words slipped out with a sound (deserving) ... and at length I was awakened and felt an unfamiliar pain, and with fearful hand I tested the dry bedding, ... now, as you panted and began the final battle, my passion obeyed, indulgently and wordlessly [10], daring to violate nothing with savage tooth, nothing with nails: then we made peace, and Love negotiated the treaty. Afterwards, I did not summon my grandmother with quavering call, and an elderly slave woman did not come running first to serve me: I myself tinted my (girls) with a becoming pallor [15], confessing that the burden of my young modesty had been laid aside ...