



# Lycoris Galli/Volumnia Cytheris: a Greek Courtesan in Rome<sup>1</sup>

ALISON KEITH  
*University of Toronto*  
[akeith@chass.utoronto.ca](mailto:akeith@chass.utoronto.ca)

In the nearly four decades that have followed the publication of Sarah B. Pomeroy's *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves* (New York 1975), feminist classical scholarship has expanded and enriched our understanding of the lives of ancient women and their representation in the material and textual records of classical antiquity. Historians of gender have recovered the traces of ancient women's lives left in documents and on monuments while feminist literary critics have explored the constraints of genre and other cultural traditions that shape the depiction of women in Greco-Roman art and literature. Marshall McLuhan's famous phrase, 'the medium is the message'<sup>2</sup>, well describes how the textual and/or material form in which the evidence of classical women's lives is preserved can exert pressure on that evidence, limiting or distorting the historical 'facts' to

1 — I am grateful to Jacqueline Fabre-Serris for the invitation to contribute to the inaugural issue of *EuGeStA*; to Andreas Bendlin, Jonathan Edmondson, Elaine Fantham, Allison Glazebrook, Judy Hallett, Sharon James, and Hugh Mason for their assistance with various points of detail as I was preparing this article; and to the two anonymous referees for their comments on an earlier version. Naturally, I alone am responsible for any errors that remain.

2 — McLuhan 1964, 7-21.

conform with generic codes and conventions. As Suzanne Dixon puts it, ‘the *genre* of the text determines what it treats, how it treats it and what it leaves out’<sup>3</sup>. Thus, lyric poetry may celebrate a bride’s wedding without recording its date or location, let alone the culinary details of the feast or the identity of the cook who prepared it. Similarly, an archaeological site may preserve loom weights and other evidence of wool working without furnishing any indication of the numbers of woolworkers (presumably female, as they are in classical iconography from the archaic period to late antiquity), let alone their names, ages, or provenances<sup>4</sup>.

As a feminist scholar with a professional specialization in Latin literature and Roman culture, I analyze the rhetoric of the representation of women in Latin literature, aiming thereby to enrich our knowledge not only of ancient attitudes to women but also of women’s lived experience in Roman antiquity. Some feminist historians have expressed skepticism about using literary evidence to elucidate the lives of women in antiquity<sup>5</sup>, but others recognize that in a discipline such as Classics, in which relatively little textual and/or material evidence produced by or dealing with women survives (especially in comparison with modern European literatures and document archives), it is crucial to scrutinize every scrap of evidence at our disposal<sup>6</sup>. To this end, I wish here to ask what we can know about Gallus’ elegiac mistress, Lycoris, and her supposed inspiration, the mime-actress Volumnia Cytheris, by investigating ancient literary and material evidence for the light they can jointly shed on the figure of the Greek courtesan in late republican Rome<sup>7</sup>. I employ the tools of philology and intertextual analysis, methods of critical literary exegesis traditionally applied to classical texts, as well as the technique of prosopography (which uses onomastic evidence to illuminate an individual’s regional origins, social standing, and family relationships), in my examination of the sources for Gallus’ elegiac mistress and her onomastic kin in Latin literature and the Roman epigraphic record<sup>8</sup>. French narratological

<sup>3</sup> — Dixon 2001, ix; cf. Bodel 2001, 34 on epigraphic bias.

<sup>4</sup> — On the regular use of female labour in the production of fabrics and clothes in Rome, see *Dig. 24.1.31 pr.* (Pomponius), cited by Tregiari 1976, 83-4, with the full discussion of Tregiari 1976, 81-5 and 91-2 with Table 1.

<sup>5</sup> — Culham 1990; cf. Hillard 1989.

<sup>6</sup> — See, e.g., the exemplary studies of Delia 1991 on Fulvia; Hejduk 2008 and Skinner 2011 on Clodia Metelli, Catullus’ Lesbia; Dixon 2007 on Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi; Fantham 2006 on Julia Augusti; Hallett forthcoming on Sulpicia and 2011 on Greek courtesans in Roman comedy; and cf. Olson 2008, which focuses on material culture.

<sup>7</sup> — On Cytheris/Lycoris, see Mazzarino 1980-1981, who focuses on the chronology of her relations with Antony, Brutus and Gallus; and Traina 2001[1994], who builds a professional biography for her.

<sup>8</sup> — Philology is defined by the *OED* as ‘the branch of knowledge that deals with the historical, linguistic, interpretative, and critical aspects of literature’ in the *OED*<sup>3</sup> online version June 2011 s.v., <<http://www.oed.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/view/Entry/142464>>; accessed 19 July

and feminist theory, as well as gender theory and transnational feminist criticism (derived from post-colonial theory), inform my analysis of this evidence throughout, as I seek to illuminate the gendered socio-political and imperial context that shapes the representation of a courtesan bearing a Greek name in Latin letters and Roman inscriptions<sup>9</sup>.

My study begins by analyzing the textual life ascribed to Lycoris in Gallus' elegiac poetry and its contemporary reception in the pastoral poetry of his friend Vergil, in the elegiac poetry of Gallus' younger contemporaries, Propertius and Ovid, and in the epigrams of Martial. I situate this literary evidence in the context of the documentary and historiographical evidence we have for her putative inspiration, the freedwoman Volumnia Cytheris, and other contemporary courtesans in republican and Augustan Italy who bore the Greek names Lycoris and Cytheris. A primary goal of this study is to explore the generic pressures that inform (and deform) the portrait of this *meretrix*, or courtesan, in Latin letters<sup>10</sup>. But I also aim to document the contemporary currency of the Greek names of Gallus' mistress and elegiac *pueriae* in late Republican and early imperial Rome, where the names Lycoris and Cytheris are resonant of Rome's conquest of Greece; and to argue that Roman elegy is intimately correlated with Roman imperialism in its celebration of the

---

2011. On onomastics and prosopography, see Hornblower and Spawforth 1996; Solomies 2001; and Saller 2001.

9 — Narratology, the scientific study of narrative structure, flourished among French scholars in the second half of the twentieth century; I draw primarily on Girard 1961, an early discussion of the triangular structure of love narratives (lover-beloved-rival), heavily indebted to C. Lévi-Strauss's influential theory of structuralism. The French feminist critics H. Cixous, L. Irigaray, and J. Kristeva, writing in the last thirty years of the twentieth century, build on the insights of psychoanalysis to theorize female subjectivity, especially its representation in art and literature. I cite Irigaray 1977 for her development of Girard 1961. In many ways, Irigaray 1977 anticipates Sedgwick 1992, an important American contribution to gender theory and sexual diversity studies, which further refines our understanding of the close relationship that develops between lover and rival as they vie for the attention of the same beloved in a love triangle; see n. 38 below. Transnational feminist criticism is that branch of postcolonial theory that examines the different roles women can play in the imperial contest (e.g., mother/wife/daughter of the imperial adventurer; his sexual spoils; his racialized domestic servant or slave). On the widely varying relationships of women to nineteenth-century European imperialism as evidenced in art, advertising, literature, and politics, see McClintock 1995; Cooper and Stoler 1997; McClintock, Mufti, and Shohat 1997; and Stoler 2002.

10 — For careful discussion and definition of the social status of the *meretrix*/courtesan at Rome, see James 2005, 271-77 (= James 2006, 225-28), who argues that she should be distinguished, in her independent sexual relations with Roman men, from the Roman citizen daughter and the prostituted brothel slave, both of whom were normatively the objects of sexual exchange by men in classical Rome: on the former, see Treggiari 1991; on the latter see McGinn 2004. Volumnia Cytheris, however, was not an independent courtesan. Rather, as the freedwoman of P. Volumnius Eutrapelus, she owed her patron 'services' (*operae*), including sexual services, under Roman law, whether he chose to require them for himself or to direct them to his own friends, patrons and/or political allies (as, e.g., Marc Antony); cf. Traina 2001[1994]. On the *operae* owed to her patron by a freedwoman, apparently normally conceived as sexual, see Treggiari 1969, 79-80 and 142; and cf. Gardner 1986, 226-7.

sexual spoils of military conquest<sup>11</sup>. The contrast between the legal Italian names of the Roman elegists (and the historical mime-actress Volumnia) and the exotic Greek names of their beloveds (including Volumnia's stage and elegiac names, Cytheris/Lycoris) encoded in their verse documents the Latin elegists' recognition of the social changes resulting from the Roman imperial project that is otherwise occluded in an ostensibly un- or anti-political presentation of elegiac themes<sup>12</sup>.

### **I. Lycoris Galli**

Current scholarly consensus suggests 'that the women who form the subject of Latin love poetry bear little relation to "real" women'<sup>13</sup>. But the late antique grammarian Servius records the information that C. Cornelius Gallus – soldier, statesman, and the first Latin elegist – 'wrote four books of love poems about his mistress Cytheris' (*amorum suorum e Cytheride scripsit libros quattuor*, Serv. ad *Buc.* 10.1), 'whom he called Lycoris' (*quam Lycorin uocat*, Serv. ad *Buc.* 10.6)<sup>14</sup>. Moreover, Heikki Solin, in his indispensable three-volume compilation of Greek personal names in Rome, provides considerable inscriptional evidence for women bearing the names of celebrated Greek *hetaerae* (courtesans) at Rome, amongst them 'Lycoris'<sup>15</sup>. I begin, therefore, by examining the representation of Gallus' Lycoris in Latin literature and papyri, before considering some inscriptional attestations of her name from ancient Rome.

In the final poem of his bucolic collection, Vergil promises 'a few verses for his friend Gallus', Latin poet and Roman politician, 'of a kind that Lycoris herself might read' (*Buc.* 10.2-3): *pauca meo Gallo, sed quae legat ipsa Lycoris, | carmina sunt dicenda*. These opening words make clear the pastoral poet's affection for 'his' Gallus, and link his friend closely to Lycoris in a relationship that Vergil explicitly characterizes as amatory, though troubled, when he announces his decision to 'relate Gallus' troubled loves' (*sollicitos Galli dicamus amores*, *Buc.* 10.6). He thereby signals his engagement with Gallus' erotic verse, probably entitled

11 — In this regard, my study complements those of McGinn 2004 and Glazebrook and Henry 2011.

12 — *Contra* Sullivan 1973.

13 — Dixon 2001, 13, citing Wyke 1987a and 1987b; Hallett 1989 and 1993; Henderson 1989a and 1989b; and Gold 1993; to her list we may add Wyke 1989a and 1989b, and Keith 1994; *contra* Balsdon 1962. More nuanced positions can be found in James 2003, concerning the elegiac *puella*; Keith 2008, 86-114, concerning Propertius' Cynthia; and in Parker 1994 and Hallett forthcoming, on Sulpicia.

14 — The identification is commonly accepted: see, e.g., Hollis 2007, 242-3.

15 — Solin 2003, 272-6; he assigns only four names to this section, I.8: Thais, Lais, Lycoris, and Phryne. Contrast Solin 1996, 263-4, which includes the name Cytheris in addition to the four cited above.

*amores*<sup>16</sup>, but also symbolized by the name of his beloved ‘Lycoris’. Critics from antiquity to the present have accordingly interpreted Vergil’s poem as a meditation on Gallan elegy<sup>17</sup>. Vergil portrays Gallus as wasting away over the unworthy Lycoris (*indigno cum Gallus amore peribat*, 10), who has abandoned him to follow another lover across the Alps (46-49), as Apollo explains (21-23): *uenit Apollo: | ‘Galle, quid insanis?’ inquit. ‘tua cura Lycoris | perque niues alium perque horrida castra secuta est’* (‘Apollo came: “Why are you in a passion, Gallus?”, he said. “Your girlfriend Lycoris has followed another through the snowdrifts and shuddering war-camps.”). The mistress’ cruel abandonment of her lover and the unworthiness of his unrequited love are standard features of the elegiac *mise-en-scène* a generation later, in Augustan elegy, as Vergil suggests they also were in Gallan elegy<sup>18</sup>.

Vergil movingly evokes Gallus’ concern for his mistress on her travels through the Alps (46-49):

tu [sc. Lycori] procul a patria (nec sit mihi credere tantum)  
Alpinas, a! dura niues et frigora Rheni  
me sine sola uides. a, te ne frigora laedant!  
a, tibi ne teneras glacies seget aspera plantas!  
Lycoris, far from your homeland (nor let me believe such a thing) –  
ah! harsh mistress – you will see the Alpine snows and the snows of the  
Rhine, alone without me! Ah, may the snows not harm you! Ah, may the  
rough ice not cut your tender feet!

These lines contain a notable concentration of the stylistic features characteristic of Gallus’ older contemporaries Catullus, Cinna and Calvus (the so-called ‘neoteric’ poets), such as the interjection *a!* in anaphora, and second-person apostrophe (*tu, te, tibi*) in polyptoton, of a maiden wandering far from home – all in a rhetoric of heightened emotionality such as seems to have characterized neoteric verse<sup>19</sup>. The mannered artistry and emotional expressivity of Vergil’s lines have therefore been taken to confirm Servius’ notice ad 10.46 that ‘all these lines are Gallan, transfer-

16 — For the title, see Hollis 2007, 235, on *Serv. ad V. Buc.* 10.1.

17 — Servius ad *Buc.* 10.1, 6, 46; Skutsch 1901 and 1905; Ross 1975; Breed 2006, 117-35; Cairns 2006, 70-249; Fabre-Serris 2008, 62-76.

18 — On the conventional portrait of the elegiac *puella*, see Wyke 1987a, 1987b, 1989a, and 1989b, conveniently collected in Wyke 2002 with further bibliography. On the conventional figures and tropes of elegy, see further Kennedy 1993, 46-63.

19 — For the neoteric predilection for the interjection *a!*, cf. Cat. 64.71 and 135, and Calvus fr. 20 Hollis. For the neoterics’ employment of anaphora, cf. *V. Buc.* 6.47, 52, quoting Calvus fr. 20 Hollis, in a poem also addressed to Gallus. For their employment of second-person apostrophe, cf. Cat. 64.253 and Cinna fr. 10 Hollis; for its use in polyptoton, cf. Cat. 64.19-21. For their interest in myths about maidens wandering far from home, cf. Ariadne in Cat. 64.52-75, Smyrna (Myrrha) in Cinna fr. 10 Hollis, and Io in Calvus fr. 20, 23-24 Hollis.

red from his poetry' (*hi autem omnes uersus Galli sunt, de ipsius translati carminibus*)<sup>20</sup>.

Vergil's lovelorn Gallus emphasizes not only the impropriety but even the unnaturalness of Lycoris' trip over the Alps, so far from her homeland (*tu procul a patria, Buc.* 10.46) and her elegiac lover (*me sine sola*, 48), in the frigid landscape of the Rhine (*niues et frigora Rheni*, 47), where a series of military campaigns (cf. *horrida castra*, 23) in this period extended Roman hegemony into Gaul (59-49 BCE) and Germany (12 BCE-9 CE). Vergil sharply contrasts the impropriety of Lycoris' Alpine travels with the expectation of Gallus' service in just such a military context, by showing him explicitly acknowledging his own martial commitments in the immediately preceding lines (44-45): *nunc insanus amor duri me Martis in armis | tela inter media atque aduersos detinet hostis* ('now a mad passion for harsh war restrains me under arms in the midst of weapons and hostile enemies'). Although Vergil does not draw attention to the significance of Gallus' cognomen, meaning 'Gallic', at this point in the poem, it may be implied earlier in the pointed juxtaposition of Apollo's apostrophe of the poet (*Galle*, 22, at line beginning) with the name of his beloved (*Lycoris*, 22, at line end), in conjunction with the description, in the next line, of her travels 'through snow and shuddering war-camps' (*perque niues ... perque horrida castra*, 23), i.e., into Gaul (*Alpinas ... niues et frigora Rheni*, 47).

Whether or not Vergil implicitly alludes to the Gallan provenance of Gallus' cognomen here, it is clear that he represents his friend – a Roman politician and military officer, as well as Latin elegist – as out of place (and his elegiac poetry as out of generic context) in the Arcadian setting of his own pastoral poetry<sup>21</sup>. A series of optative subjunctives (33-36) and contrary-to-fact conditions (37-41, 43) underlines Gallus' generic

<sup>20</sup> — Coleman 1977, 288; Clausen 1994, 305-6. Hollis 2007, 236-7, observes that 'here one must make the obvious qualification that Gallus wrote his *Amores* in elegiacs', but he accepts that 'in this case it seems likely that not only the theme but also the wording closely follows the model', and he summarizes the evidence thus:

'me sine sola vides?' (48) could well end a pentameter ... 'Tu procul a patria' ... might begin a new poem ... [comparing] Prop. 1.81.1 'Tune igitur demens ...?' It seems highly probable that Prop. 1.8A.7-8 ... imitate a lost elegy of Gallus rather than the tenth *Elogue*. Virgil's threefold 'a' might be a mannerism of Gallus' elegy ... humorously overdone.

Clausen 1994, 291-2, even interprets the passage as originating in a Gallan propempticon, presumably to Lycoris, in the light of Propertius' imitation at 1.8.5-8 in a propempticon to Cynthia; contra Hollis 2007, 236, who sees in *Buc.* 10 rather 'the outlines of an elegy (or series of elegies...) describing how Gallus' beloved Lycoris left him for a soldier rival, with whom she went to Gaul or Germany'. For the prominence of the propempticon in neoteric verse, see Hollis 2007, 21-9, on Cinna's *Propempticon Pollionis*.

<sup>21</sup> — Fabre-Serris 2008, 11-162, has argued that Gallus composed his own pastoral poetry set in Arcadia.

dislocation, but facilitates Lycoris' seamless immersion in the Arcadian landscape (41-43):

serta mihi Phyllis legeret, cantaret Amyntas.  
hic gelidi fontes, hic mollia prata, Lycori,  
hic nemus; hic ipso tecum consumerer aeuo.

Phyllis would pluck garlands for me, Amyntas would sing. Here are cold springs, Lycoris, soft meadows, a glade; here with you I could waste away in the passage of time.

Not only is her name Greek, like those of the other pastoral beloveds whom Gallus names in these lines, but the specific setting of his lament, in Arcadia (26, 31-33), may also intimate the generic propriety of situating Gallus' harsh mistress Lycoris (named at 2, 22, and 42, always at line end) in the pastoral landscape where her poet-lover wanders, specified by Vergil as beneath Mt Maenalus (14-15) and the 'rocks of cold Mt Lycaeon' (*gelidi ... saxa Lycaeui*, 15). The implication of an etymological relationship between 'Lycoris' and 'Lycaeon' removes Gallus' mistress from the ambit of Apollo, whose cult-title Λυκωρεύς is feminized in her name, into the company of the Arcadian god Pan, to whom Mt Lycaeon ('Wolf Mountain') in Arcadia was sacred and whose animal sexuality is reflected in the Latin slang use of *lupa* ('she-wolf') for prostitute<sup>22</sup>. Vergil thus simultaneously naturalizes Lycoris in his own Arcadian landscape and bluntly alludes to a Greek courtesan's social standing in contemporary Rome.

A similar ethnically charged tension emerges in Gallus' anguished address to Lycoris as she travels over the Alps. Although he emphasizes her dislocation from home (*tu procul a patria*, 46), we may well wonder whether her fatherland is Greece or Rome. Commentators usually take *patria* as a reference to 'the real world beyond the pastoral myth'<sup>23</sup>, i.e., to Roman Italy where we meet Cytheris (the mime-actress whom Servius records as the inspiration for Gallus' Lycoris) in the contemporary correspondence of Cicero (see below). But her Greek name (like the stage name Cytheris) implies Greek lineage and hints at a slave provenance, thereby aligning her status with that of the rustics Phyllis (the name

<sup>22</sup> — Fabre-Serris 2008, 68, likewise argues that Gallus derives the etymology of Lycoris from the root *lyk-* that pervades Arcadian patronyms and toponyms; and she proposes (*ibid.* n. 42) that Gallus' inspiration was the Hellenistic Greek poet Philetas, whom Theocritus represents by the name *Lycidas* in *Id.* 7. For *lupa* in the sense of prostitute, see *OLD* s.v. 2, and see further Adams 1982, index s.v. I am grateful to an anonymous referee for the information that Pollux 4.150 uses the Greek equivalent, *lukaia* ('she-wolf'), of a woman; s/he also notes, in connection with *lukos/lupa*, that Dionysius of Halicarnassus uses the word *Lukaia*, 'the feast of Lycaean Zeus', to refer to the Roman festival of the *Lupercalia* (D.H. 1.80); cf. also Plut. *Ant.* 12.

<sup>23</sup> — Coleman 1977, 288 ad loc.

of Iollas' *contubernalis* at *Buc.* 3.76) and Amyntas (the name of the herdsman's lover at *Buc.* 3.66).

All four Greek names, moreover, are resonant of Roman conquest<sup>24</sup>. Attested epigraphically before and after Augustus, the names Phyllis and Amyntas bear witness to the circulation of Greeks within the empire, not only in the Greek east but also in the Latin-speaking west, where they appear in the Italian epigraphic record of Greek slaves and freedpersons<sup>25</sup>. The name Lycoris too (like Cytheris) is securely attested in early imperial Rome of freedwomen and slaves<sup>26</sup>. Surprisingly, however, scholars of Latin elegy have only rarely taken the inscriptional evidence into account in their discussions of the elegiac *puella*<sup>27</sup>. Nor have historians of prostitution pressed the evidence of Roman elegy far in their consideration

24 — On the sexual exploitation of colonized women in later European imperialism, see McClintock 1995; Cooper and Stoler 1997; McClintock, Mufti, and Shohat 1997; and Stoler 2002.

25 — Phyllis is widely attested of slaves and freedwomen in the early principate: see Solin 2003, 606. Of Augustan date are Phylis (*CIL* 6.4304), probably a slave, and *Iulia Phyllis* (6.26608), presumably a freedwoman; and of Julio-Claudian date are *Aurelia M. l. Phyllis* (6.38076) and *Claudia Phyllis liberta* (6.15178), both clearly freedwomen; *Antoniae Phyllidi* (6.12064), *Domitia Phyllis* (6.35359), *Viselliae Phyllidi* (6.29033), and *Phyllis l.* (6.16308), presumably freedwomen; and two other Phyllides (6.6501, 8834; cf. Solin 2003, 3463), both probably slaves. *Phyllis Statilia sarcinatr(ix)* (6.5023), of Tiberian to Neronian date, was a 'mender of clothes', perhaps a slave attached to the household of the Statili; on lower class women's jobs in grand households, see Treggiani 1976, 1979a, and 1979b. On the possible Gallan resonance of the name Phyllis, see Fabre-Serris 2008, 65 n. 34.

Amyntas is the exception that proves the rule: a dynastic name of the Macedonian royal house (borne by the grandfather of Alexander the Great), it had contemporary currency during the triumviral period as the name of a Roman client king in Asia Minor, who had served at Philippi in 42 BCE on the side of the Liberators, commanding the Galatian auxiliaries, but deserted after the first battle to Marc Antony and in 35 received the surrender of Sextus Pompey. Solin 2003, 206 records two Amyntae of uncertain status in Roman Italy, datable to the first century CE (*P. Iegii Amyntiae*, *CIL* 6.19670; *L. Tullius Amunta*, 6.27727), and draws attention to a shepherd by that name at Mart. 11.41.1: on the generic and class affiliations of Martial's Amyntas, see Kay 1985, 159-60. For Amyntas in pastoral poetry, cf. Theocr. *Id.* 7.2, 132, and Verg. *Buc.* 2.39, 3, 5, 8; and see also Fabre-Serris 2008, 65 n. 34.

Solin 2003, 206, also reports one freedmen and five slaves of the related name Amyntianus from Augustan Rome: the freedman *M. Livius Aug. l. Anteros Amyntian(us) ab supelectile* (*CIL* 6.4035); and the slaves *Alexander Amynt(ianus) atr(iensis)* (6.8738), *Apollonius Amynt(ianus)* (6.10395.24, 1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE), *Damocrates Amynt(ianus)* (6.10395.29), *Epinicus Caesar. ser. Amyntian(us) Mediast(inus)* (6.8894), and *Gaa Amynt(ianus)* (6.4715 = 6.10395.23), whose former master was the client king Amyntas of the Galatians.

26 — On Lycoris, see Solin 2003, 275-6; on Cytheris, see nn. 70-3 below. Solin includes his register of Lycrides under the heading 'Heteren', in a section that gathers the names of historical personalities and literary characters (2003, 272-6 § 1.8). Their number is considerably lower than that of women bearing the name Thais (57) and Lais (97), though slightly higher than that of women named Phryne (4). Athenaeus, who seems to mention every Greek courtesan, knows of none named Lycoris. It is therefore presumably her appearance in Gallus' elegiac poetry that led Solin to include her amongst the famous Greek heterae. I am grateful to Allison Glazebrook for the information about Athenaeus.

27 — Exceptions, all discussing Cynthia/Hostia, include Boucher 1965 and Coarelli 2004, whose excesses may have warned others off; more recently, see Keith 2008, 86-114.

of the classical courtesan<sup>28</sup>. Yet Sharon James has argued that the *puella* of Latin elegy is an avatar of the high-priced Greek courtesan familiar from new comedy and Hellenistic epigram<sup>29</sup>, both literally and literarily available to the Roman elites as a result of the expansion of their military empire into Greece. The elegiac mistress herself must thus be counted another luxury import from the eastern Mediterranean, like the silks, gems and perfumes in which she conventionally dresses<sup>30</sup>.

Ovid assures his readers in his handbook on erotic seduction that Rome provides an abundance of foreign women from whom to choose a mistress (*Ars* 1.171-6):

quid, modo cum belli naualis imagine Caesar  
Persidas induxit Cecropiasque rates?  
nempe ab utroque mari iuuenes, ab utroque puellae  
uenere, atque ingens orbis in Vrbe fuit.  
quis non inuenit turba, quod amaret, in illa?  
heu, quam multos aduena torsit amor!

175

Why, did Caesar not recently bring on Persian and Athenian ships in the guise of a naval engagement? Surely youths and maidens came from either sea, and the whole huge world was in the City. Who did not find something to love in that crowd? Alas, how many men did a foreign love overthrow!

And his boast is borne out by the inscriptional evidence of the sexual availability of freedwomen, *libertae*, in Italy with the Greek names ascribed by the Roman elegists to their mistresses<sup>31</sup>. Solin identifies fourteen Lycorides in the Roman epigraphic record: eight of uncertain status, one probably freed, five slave and freed, all of them dating from the prin-

<sup>28</sup> — McGinn 1998 and 2004 are important exceptions. Cf. Kurke 2002, 58-63, on the analogous problem of reconciling inscriptional and poetic evidence in interpreting Machon's *Chreiai* in the context of Hellenistic history and poetics.

<sup>29</sup> — James 2003. As the elegiac *puella* also has much in common with aristocratic, married adulterous women like Catullus' Lesbia, other scholars have maintained that the *puellae* of Augustan elegy are modeled on a combination of Catullus' Lesbia and Gallus' Lycoris. I am grateful to an anonymous referee for reminding me that Metella/Perilla and Sulpicia continue the 'Lesbia' tradition and even extend it, by writing in their own aristocratic voices.

<sup>30</sup> — The Augustan elegiac mistress is often criticized by the poet-lover for her costly garb: see, e.g., Prop. 1.2, Tib. 2.3, Ov. *Am.* 1.10; cf. [Tib.] 3.8 (of Sulpicia, expensively decked out in luxurious clothes and jewels). On the importation of luxury products, including the elegiac mistress, from the provincial periphery into the imperial capital, see Bowditch 2006 and Keith 2008. On Greek prostitutes, see Henry 1985 and 1995; Davidson 1998; and Glazebrook and Henry 2011. On Greek prostitutes in Rome, see now Hallett 2011; and on Roman prostitution, see the important studies of McGinn 1998 and 2004.

<sup>31</sup> — I give a sample of parallels here with Ovid's mistress Corinna (*Am.* 1.5, *et passim*) and her slave Cypassis (*Am.* 2.7-8), and with Propertius' mistress' Cynthia: *Corinna libr(ariae)*, *CIL* 6.3979; *Fabiae Corinnae l.*, 6.17588; *?utridia Cynthia*, 6.33672; *Annaeae Cypasis*, *Arch Class* 23 (1971) 242 Nr. 2. See further Solin 2003, s.v. 'Corinna', 'Cypasis', and 'Cynthia'; on Cytheris, see below, nn. 70-3.

cipate (early 1<sup>st</sup> c.-3<sup>rd</sup> c. CE), with the majority (nine of fourteen) from the first century CE<sup>32</sup>. In the report of their nomenclature, epigraphic conventions suggest that the nine Lycorides datable to the first century CE were originally slaves who gained their freedom. Of particular interest are *Lycoris Augustae li[b.]* (*CIL* 6.8888) and *Saenia C. l. Lycoris* (6.25748), both datable to the first century CE, whose status as freedwomen is clearly marked by the onomastic formula ‘li[b].l.’ (= *liberta*) that appears on their inscriptions. The Roman patron of the former, Augusta (whether Livia or a later Julio-Claudian princess), is also telling in the association of the freedwoman with the leading *domus* of the early principate. Similarly august early imperial gentilician names are borne by the (probable) freed-women *Statilia Lychoris* (6.6571) and *Claudia Lycoris* (6.8554), both datable to the reigns of Augustus’ Julio-Claudian successors (Tiberius to Nero) and from households associated with the imperial *domus*.

Attestations of the name Lycoris in Rome are concentrated in the first century CE, a temporal distribution that may also be significant, as a reflection of the continuing popularity of Gallus’ *amores* in the century after his death. By contrast, for example, the most commonly reported courtesan’s name, *Lais*, occurs in the Italian epigraphic record as early as the late republican period<sup>33</sup>. However that may be, and it must be acknowledged that the evidence does not allow us to draw firm conclusions<sup>34</sup>, we can securely date all the extant references to Gallus’ *amores* in Latin literature to a little over a hundred years following his death.

We have already seen that Vergil includes both Gallus and Lycoris as characters in the final poem of his *Bucolics*, whose publication is traditionally dated to the years 37-35 BCE. A decade later, in the mid-20s BCE, the elegiac poet Propertius identifies Gallus as his immediate predecessor in a catalogue of Roman amatory poets, and ‘Lycoris’ as the mistress with whom he was famously associated (Prop. 2.34.85-94):

haec quoque perfecto ludebat Iasone Varro,  
Varro Leucadiae maxima flamma sua;  
haec quoque lasciuu cantarunt scripta Catulli,

85

32 — Solin 2003, 276.

33 — Solin 2003, 274, identifies two freedwomen of the name *Lais* from the Republican period (Sulla – Caesar): *Auruncleia D. l. Lais* (*CIL* 1<sup>2</sup>.3002) and *Fabia C. l. Lais* (6.21230 = 1<sup>2</sup>.1326); as well as five freedwomen of the name, of Augustan date: *Aemilia l. meae Laini* (6.11038), *Aquillia Lais l.* (6.5891), *Lais lib.* (6.6038), *Lais L. l.* (6.23822), and *Pollia M. l. Lais* (6.926).

34 — It is also significant that these famous prostitutes are Greek. Prostitutes were often from the east, as Juv. 3.62-6 implies; on ‘recruitment’ of prostitutes, see McGinn 2004, 55-71, with abundant evidence of importation into Rome of female slaves from the eastern empire for prostitution. On the Roman association of sex with Greek luxury imports, see also Dalby 2000, 125-33. Hallett 2011 discusses an Athenian prostitute in Plautus’ *Pseudolus* whose name, *Phoenicium*, implies her Semitic/Carthaginian background.



90

Lesbia quis ipsa notior est Helena;  
 haec etiam docti confessa est pagina Calui,  
 cum caneret miserae funera Quintiliae.  
 et modo formosa quam multa Lycoride Gallus  
 mortuus inferna uulnera lauit aqua!  
 Cynthia †quin etiam†<sup>35</sup> uersu laudata Properti,  
 hos inter si me ponere Fama uolet.

Such passionate verse Varro too composed when his *Jason* was finished, Varro the greatest flame of his own Leucadia; this passion too the writings of playful Catullus celebrated, by which Lesbia is more famous than Helen herself; this too the page of learned Calvus confessed, when he lamented the death of pitiful Quintilia. And how many wounds from beautiful Lycoris does the dead Gallus now bathe in the rivers of the underworld? Why, even Cynthia has been praised in the poetry of Propertius, if Renown will wish to set me among these poets.

Concluding the sphragis to Propertius' second book, these lines show Propertius measuring his elegiac fame against that of the most illustrious Roman love poets of the period. The reference to Gallus' recent death – by suicide in 27 or 26, after Augustus renounced his friendship – suggests a date of 28-25 BCE for the composition of Propertius' book<sup>36</sup>, and bears witness to the continuing fame enjoyed by Gallus and his mistress Lycoris in the immediate aftermath of the poet's death. Propertius' faithful and loving Lycoris, however, differs significantly from the fickle Lycoris of Vergilian bucolic, though the wounds of the dead Gallus may recall Vergil's reference to the historical Gallus' military commitments, in addition to his recent political indiscretion and suicide<sup>37</sup>. In Propertius' lines, moreover, the parallelism of syntax in his citation of the Latin amatory poets, each named in the final position of the couplet's hexameter, establishes them in a symmetrical relationship that distinguishes the poet-lovers sharply from the mistresses whom they celebrate in their verse, and downplays any hint of literary rivalry. Propertius finds this structural congruence on male 'homosocial' desire, by harnessing the sexual and textual exchange of women for the consolidation of literary bonds between men<sup>38</sup>.

35 — On the textual problem, see Fedeli 2005, 1009 ad loc.

36 — A publication date of 26-25 BCE is widely accepted for Propertius' Book 2: see Butler and Barber 1933; Fedeli 2005, 21; and cf. Cairns 2006, 257, 300, 321-42. On the problematic size of the book and particularly whether it represents one or two books of Propertian elegies, see Keith 2008, 181 n. 138.

37 — Knox 1986, 15 (following Tränkle 1960, 22-5, and Barigazzi 1962), argues that Propertius alludes here to a passage or passages in Gallus that link the deaths of Adonis and/or Hyacinth to the *topos* of the inability of Apollo to cure Hyacinthus. I am grateful to one of the anonymous referees for this reference.

38 — The adjective 'homosocial', coined by Sedgwick 1992[1985] describes social bonds

Subsequent references to Lycoris by Ovid and Martial lack the specificity with which Vergil and Propertius endow her, but exhibit a similarly homosocial dynamic in their textualization and circulation of the elegiac mistress/book. Thus Ovid repeatedly links Lycoris' name with Gallus', although he does not refer to specific events in their textual lives but rather to their literary repute. Already in the *Amores*, he represents their fame as extending to the western and eastern ends of the earth (1.15.29-30): *Gallus et Hesperiis et Gallus notus Eois, | et sua cum Gallo nota Lycoris erit* ('Gallus will be known both in the West and the East and, along with Gallus, his darling Lycoris will be known')<sup>39</sup>. Scholars agree that Ovid here echoes Gallus' own poetry, which seems to have proclaimed the 'world-wide fame'<sup>40</sup> that Lycoris won through his verse and, indeed, as the embodiment of his verse. The *Amores'* most recent commentator has observed that her name 'here connotes both Gallus' mistress and his poetry about her'<sup>41</sup> as it does also at *Ars* 3.537: *Vesper et Eoae nouere Lycorida terrae* ('Evening and the Eastern lands know Lycoris'). In the exile poetry too, Ovid briefly mentions Lycoris as Gallus' poetic subject (*Tr.* 2.445, *non fuit opprobrio celebrasse Lycorida Gallo*, 'it was not commemoration of Lycoris that disgraced Gallus') and, at the end of the first century CE, the Flavian epigrammatist Martial memorializes 'beautiful Lycoris' as the inspiration of Gallus' verse (*Mart. Epigr.* 8.73.6): *ingenium Galli pulchra Lycoris erat* ('beautiful Lycoris was Gallus' inspiration').

A central gender dynamic of the Latin literary reception of Lycoris, both in Gallus' own lifetime and increasingly after his death, is thus the textualization of Lycoris (as his mistress comes to symbolize his verse)<sup>42</sup> and her concomitant circulation among men (as these passages set in play a tension between the mistress' erotic and literary circulation)<sup>43</sup>. For

between members of the same sex in such arenas as 'friendship, mentorship, entitlement, rivalry, and hetero- and homosexuality' (Sedgwick 1992, 1). Sedgwick argues that the structure of male homosocial desire lies 'in an intimate and shifting relation to class; and that no element of that pattern can be understood outside of its relation to women and the gender system as a whole' (1992, 1). Her analysis of homosocial desire engages the theoretical paradigm of triangulation elaborated in Girard 1961 and applies it to non-novelistic texts: see Sedgwick 1992, 21-4. Between Girard 1961 and Sedgwick 1992, Irigaray 1977, 167-93, offers an important treatment of this triangular dynamic under the term 'hom(m)osexualité': see Sedgwick 1992, 26-7.

39 — The dating of Ovid's early amatory verse is notoriously uncertain, but it is commonly accepted that, in their final form, the *Amores* belong to the last decade of the first century BCE: see Cameron 1968; McKeown 1987, 74-89.

40 — McKeown 1989, 412.

41 — McKeown 1989, 413.

42 — This dynamic has been well documented by Maria Wyke in a series of important articles on Propertian (and Ovidian) elegy: see Wyke 1987a, 1987b, 1989a, and 1989b, now collected in Wyke 2002; cf. Keith 1994.

43 — On the metaphor of prostitution in the circulation of Latin books in the Augustan period, see Pearcy 1994; Fear 2000; Keith 2008, 86-126. For the 'homosocial' dynamic of this metaphor, see Girard 1961, Irigaray 1977, and Sedgwick 1992[1985].

we have seen first Vergil, then Propertius and Ovid, and finally Martial pass Lycoris around in their verse, repeatedly handling Gallus' fickle mistress, by synecdoche for his poetic *materia*, and thereby increasing not only his literary fame but also her erotic circulation. Vergil's representation of a promiscuous Lycoris, who has left his friend for another soldier-lover (*Buc.* 10.22-23, 46-49), doubtless follows the lead of Gallus himself, one of whose extant lines of poetry characterizes his mistress as causing him pain because of her *nequitia*, 'idleness' in the moralizing sense of sexual 'depravity' often used in erotic contexts<sup>44</sup> (Gallus fr. 145.1 Hollis): *tristia nequit[ia fact]a, Lycori, tua (<? made> sad, Lycoris, because of your misbehaviour)*<sup>45</sup>. This, the first legible line of the famous papyrus fragment (*P.Qasr Ibrim* inv. 78-3-11/1) discovered in 1978 in the fortress of Qasr Ibrim in Egyptian Nubia, secured the attribution of the authorship of the verses to Gallus through the reference to Lycoris<sup>46</sup>.

The lines that follow, moreover, expressly articulate the gendered dynamic of the mistress' textualization and circulation that we have already traced in her later literary reception (Gallus fr. 145.2-9 Hollis):

fata mihi, Caesar, tum erunt mea dulcia quom tu  
maxima Romanae pars eris historiae,  
postque tuum redditum multorum templorum deorum  
fixa legam spolia eius deiuitoria tueis.  
] . . . . tandem fecerunt c[ar]mina Musae  
quae possem domina dicere digna mea.  
.atur idem tibi, non ego, Visce,  
] . . . . 1. Kato, iudice te uereor.

5

My fate will then be sweet, Caesar, when you are the greatest part of Roman history and after your return I shall see the temples of many gods the wealthier, decorated with the spoils of your campaigns . . . at last the Muses have fashioned poems worthy for me to be able to utter of my mistress . . . the same I do not fear for you, Viscus . . . though you be judge, Cato.

Scholars have debated everything about these famous lines, including how many poems they represent. Like many, I accept the suggestion of

44 — *OLD* s.v. *nequitia* 1, 3 (the latter esp. in erotic contexts); cf. *L-S* s.v. *nequitia* II and II A. For the cliché of the elegiac mistress' *nequitia*, cf. Prop. 1.15.38, 2.5.2, 3.10.24. As Sharon James reminds me, *per literas*, 'the lover's resentment makes him use this kind of description', though the issue is really his mistress' 'inexplicable willingness to go to the frozen north (apparently barefooted) and her intolerable willingness to leave her poet-lover'. This is 'a perfectly logical decision, given the life of the *meretrix*, but not to a poet-lover who refuses to admit that his girl is in fact a courtesan'.

45 — Text and translation from the *editio princeps* of R.D. Anderson, Parsons, and Nisbet (1979), with the addition of Nisbet's conjecture *facta* (1), printed and discussed by Hollis (2007), 224 and 242.

46 — Anderson, Parsons, Nisbet 1979.

the first editors of the papyrus that lines 2-5 and 6-9 constitute two short self-contained epigrams, while the first legible line of the papyrus forms the conclusion of an elegy of unknown length<sup>47</sup>. However many poems we posit, it is clear that the papyrus moves directly from a description of Lycoris' misbehaviour (the details of which are no longer extant) to the poet-lover's apostrophes of Caesar (2-5), the arbiter of Roman politics<sup>48</sup>, and then of Viscus and Cato (8-9), adduced here as the arbiters of Latin letters<sup>49</sup>. The latter in particular are closely linked to Lycoris' textualization and circulation between men, for the pair seems to be invited to judge (*iudice te uereor*, 9) the speaker's achievement in composing poems worthy of his mistress (*c[ar]mina ... | quae possem domina deicere digna mea*, 6-7).

The literary renown that Lycoris' general circulation brings the poet-lover is thus an important factor to consider in his characterization of his mistress' *nequitia*. For while the opening line of the papyrus may comment on the poet-lover's passionate relationship with his mistress, the remaining couplets seem to introduce a larger social and cultural context into his poetry collection, since they are addressed to an important political and military patron and to contemporary literary critics. Lycoris, both Gallus' mistress and his literary material, is thereby subsumed into an object trafficked between the poet and his friends Caesar, Viscus, and Cato. In this way, Gallus' extant verses give evidence of enacting the trope that figures the publication of his elegiac poetry as the mistress' sexual circulation among men – the theme of Vergil's final pastoral poem and the dynamic that animates later references to Lycoris in Latin erotic verse. The Gallus papyrus thus makes explicit the elegist's participation in the elite male homosocial network central to Latin political, military, and literary culture. For his poetry circulates among the Roman political elite within a culture of institutionalized social relations that consolidate male authority in and through women's bodies. The erotic cliché of feminine *nequitia*, to which Gallus' (and Vergil's) portrait of Lycoris appeals, not only strengthens male social bonds and elite authority (over female, foreigner, and slave) but also naturalizes the hierarchy of the sexes – as also

<sup>47</sup> — Anderson, Parsons, and Nisbet 1979, 129; Hollis 2007, 242, 250-2; *contra*, Cairns 2006, 410-12.

<sup>48</sup> — On the identity of the Caesar addressed here (Julius Caesar or his grand-nephew Augustus Caesar?), see Anderson, Parsons, Nisbet 1979, 152, and Hollis 2007, 243-4, both of whom favour the identification with the dictator. My argument is not materially affected by either identification, though I also favour the identification with Julius Caesar.

<sup>49</sup> — For literary Visci, cf. Hor. *Sat*. 1.9.22, 1.10.83, 2.8.20; for a literary Cato, cf. P. Valerius Cato, mentioned by Cinna (fr. 14 Hollis), Ticida (fr. 103 Hollis), Furius Bibaculus (frr. 85-86 Hollis), and the probable recipient of Cat. 56. For full discussion of the identities of the Visci and Cato, see Anderson, Parsons, Nisbet 1979, and Hollis 2007, 248-50, 429.

the rule of the Roman elite over other nations and classes – on display in Latin literature and Roman society.

Lycoris' circulation, in Gallus' verse, amongst powerful members of the Roman military and cultural elite implicates both Gallus and his mistress in the wider literary and political contests of the late Republic. The famous papyrus fragment also constitutes crucial evidence concerning the intimate commerce of Greek courtesan and Latin literature with the business of Roman imperialism. The find spot of the papyrus fragment, in Egyptian Nubia, bears material witness to the dissemination of Gallus' poetry – and the concomitant circulation of 'Lycoris' (attested also in Vergil, Propertius, Ovid, and Martial) – throughout the Roman-controlled Mediterranean littoral. The editors of the papyrus dated its context and handwriting to the last quarter of the first century BCE, likely 25–20 BCE, and connected the papyrus closely with Gallus himself who in 29 BCE, as Augustus' first prefect of Egypt, put down a rebellion at Thebes and marched south, beyond the first cataract of the Nile, to the vicinity of Ibrîm<sup>50</sup>. Four years later, after Gallus' disgrace and suicide in 27/26 BCE, his successor in the position of prefect of Egypt, C. Petronius, actually occupied the site of Ibrîm in the course of his military operations against the Aethiopian queen Candace (Strabo 17.820–21; Plin. *NH* 6.181–82; Dio 54.5.4–6)<sup>51</sup>. The editors of the papyrus therefore concluded that 'we can assume that the Gallus-papyrus . . . arrived at Ibrîm in the baggage of a Roman officer'<sup>52</sup>. Gallus' connection with Egypt, and particularly with the Philean border of Nubia, offers an additional reason why their putative Roman officer might have brought Gallus' elegiac poetry with him<sup>53</sup>.

The Gallus papyrus thus provides tantalizing evidence of the co-implication of literary pursuits and military commitments in the imperial contest of the Roman elite for wealth, political power, and erotic success, even as Gallus' verse documents the poet's apparently sharp contrast between his patron's service to Roman imperialism (2–5) and his own service in the company of Lycoris (1) and literary camp of love elegy (6–9). In its textual materiality and its literary orientation, the papyrus implies a complex interdependence of Roman military service on the margins of empire with the life of literature, love, and leisure in the capital. While the papyrus was found in Egypt, the extant verses document the importation into Rome of the wealth of the Greek

<sup>50</sup> — Anderson, Parsons, Nisbet 1979, 126.

<sup>51</sup> — On C. Petronius, see further *RE* s.v. 21.

<sup>52</sup> — *Ibid.* 127.

<sup>53</sup> — I thank an anonymous referee for this formulation of the connection between Gallus and the find site of the Gallus papyrus. See also Myers 2008, 110–42, on the 'Gallus periphery theme'.

east (*postque tuum redditum multorum tempa deorum | fixa legam spolieis deiuitiora tueis*, 4-5) and their momentum links Gallus' dalliance with a dissolute Greek courtesan to the wealth and leisure that imperial service abroad has bestowed upon Caesar's compatriots at home. The sexual spoils that accrue to the elegist (the enjoyment of his mistress' bed and/or a day spent idling in love/love-elegy) are, it seems, as much the fruits of Roman imperialism as the rich booty Caesar exhibits in the capital. Lycoris thus emerges from Gallan elegy (and its reception in Latin literature) as a Greek courtesan, circulating throughout the empire among Roman magnates and men of letters<sup>54</sup>. What light can the textual and material record shed on the 'real woman' who inspired the elegist's verse?

## ***II. Volumnia Cytheris***

We have seen that Servius preserves the information that the woman who inspired Gallus' 'Lycoris' was the mime-dancer Volumnia Cytheris, the freedwoman of a certain Volumnius (Serv. ad *Buc.* 10.1): *hic autem Gallus amauit Cytheridem meretricem, libertam Volumnii, quae, eo spreto, Antonium euntem ad Gallias est secuta* ('this Gallus loved the courtesan Cytheris, a freedwoman of Volumnius, but she spurned him [Gallus] and followed [Marc] Antony when he went to Gaul'). Another late source records the information that M. Junius Brutus too, 'along with Antony and Gallus, loved the mime-actress Cytheris' (*Vir. Ill.* 82.2): *Cytheridem mimam cum Antonio et Gallo amauit*<sup>55</sup>. The phraseology of this notice evokes the homosocial dynamic of Lycoris' circulation among Gallus, Caesar, Cato and Viscus implied by the Gallan papyrus fragment, and obliquely acknowledges the traffic in Greek courtesans among members of the Roman elite. G. Traina has therefore suggested that Cytheris' patron Volumnius, to whom she would have owed sexual services upon her manumission, lent her to various powerful friends, as it suited his political purposes<sup>56</sup>. Certainly her attested lovers, like her patron, were adherents or protégés of Caesar in the mid-40s BCE<sup>57</sup>. Competitive

54 — On Greek prostitutes in the Roman world, see McGinn 2004 and 2011; and cf. Hallett 2011.

55 — See Anderson, Parsons, Nisbet 1979, 153 n. 145, on the difficulty of identifying which Brutus loved Cytheris: M. Brutus (reported in *Vir. Ill.*) or D. Brutus (proposed by Nisbet in Anderson, Parsons, Nisbet 1979, 153).

56 — Traina 2001[1994], 91.

57 — Marc Antony served under Caesar in Gaul from 54-50 BCE; acted for Caesar as tribune in Rome in 49 until the *senatus consultum ultimum* was passed, when he fled to Caesar's camp; participated in the Italian campaign and was left in charge of Italy when Caesar campaigned in Spain; served in Greece in 48, commanding the left wing of Caesar's army at Pharsalus, and as *magister equum* in Italy in 47; and was Caesar's colleague in the consulship of 44, when the dictator was assassinated. Gallus first appears in the literary record in 43 BCE as a friend of Asinius Pollio (who had supported Caesar as praetor in 45, commanded an army in Spain in 44, and then gone over to Antony

homosocial bonding would thus seem to have obtained among the different men who shared and circulated Cytheris physically; and, as I argued above, Vergil, Propertius, Ovid and later Martial then reiterate her sexual circulation among members of the Roman republican elite in their circulation of Lycoris on the poetic plane.

In Cytheris' case, we are in the fortunate position of possessing important contemporary evidence of her circulation among Roman magnates, for Cicero mentions both Cytheris and her patron, P. Volumnius Eutrapelus, in his correspondence from the 40s BCE; and, indeed, Volumnius himself figures among Cicero's correspondents (*Fam.* 7.32-33). Cicero also refers to Cytheris in his second *Philippic*, an oration delivered in the fall of 44 BCE denouncing Antony's political actions after Caesar's murder, and the sharp contrast in tone that distinguishes the references to her in his correspondence from those in his Antonian invective has occasioned astute analysis, by feminist scholars and Roman historians alike, of the distinct generic pressures exerted by the two very different literary forms. Here I wish to build on this earlier scholarship, but with the goal of documenting the application of the same themes to Volumnia Cytheris that emerged from our discussion of Lycoris Galli: the textualization and circulation of a Greek-named demi-mondaine among Roman elite men, or the representation of a Greek courtesan at Rome as one of the spoils of imperialism.

We may begin with Cicero's correspondence, where we find the orator writing to his friend Paetus, in November 46, from and about a dinner party he attended at the house of Volumnius (*Cic. Fam.* 9.26.1):

---

after Caesar's murder), and appears to have played a role in the land confiscations in Transpadane Gaul in 41; in 30 he campaigned in Egypt and Octavian appointed him the first prefect of Egypt. P. Volumnius Eutrapelus appears as a friend of Caesar's in Cicero's correspondence (see *infra*) and, after his murder, as an adherent of Antony (*Cic. Phil.* 13.3); as such Shackleton Bailey (1977, 254) accepts his identification 'with the P. Volumnius mentioned by Nepos as Antony's *praefectus fabrum* in 43-42 (*Att.* 12.4').

The two Junii Brutii (i.e., D. and M.) also enjoyed Caesar's favour, although both participated in the conspiracy to assassinate him. Like Antony, D. Junius Brutus Albinus, son of D. Brutus (*c.* 77 BCE) and the Sempronius reviled by Sallust in the *Bellum Catilinam*, served with Caesar in Gaul, where he won a naval victory over the Veneti in 56 BCE; later commanded Caesar's fleet at Mallaia in 49; defeated the Bellocaci in revolt, when he was governor of Transalpine Gaul in 46; and was designated consul for 42 by Caesar, though he took part in the assassination and was ultimately killed on Antony's order in 43. By contrast, M. Junius Brutus served the Republican cause under Pompey's leadership after Caesar crossed the Rubicon in 49 BCE. But after the Battle of Pharsalus he won Caesar's pardon and enjoyed Caesar's favour, being made pontifex and sent to govern Cisalpine Gaul in 47, appointed *praetor urbanus* for 44, and designated consul for 41, though he became the *de facto* leader of the conspiracy against Caesar and, with C. Cassius, commanded the Republican forces at Philippi, committing suicide after losing the second engagement with the Caesarian forces.

Accubueram hora nona cum ad te harum exemplum in codicillis exaraui. dices ‘ubi?’ apud Volumnium Eutrapelum, et quidem supra me Atticus, infra Verrius, familiares tui.

I had reclined at the ninth hour when I drafted the text of this letter to you in my tablets. You will say “Where?” At Volumnius Eutrapelus’ place, and indeed above me reclined Atticus, below me Verrius, your cronies.

Although Cicero did not correspond solely with men, his extant correspondence (with the exception of *Fam.* 14, addressed to Terentia, her parents, and their children) was entirely conducted with men. Moreover, the whole of the extant correspondence (including *Fam.* 14) can be seen to exhibit the characteristic features of elite Roman homosociality in its implicit documentation of their social and political entitlements. In this regard the letter to Paetus is exemplary, not only in Cicero’s emphasis on the friendship of the diners and the clubby atmosphere of the dinner party<sup>58</sup>, but also in his extension of the convivial contexts of friendship and dining to the act of letter writing itself.

Cicero sets the scene in order to regale Paetus with the titillating information that the participants at this dinner party were not exclusively male (*Fam.* 9.26.2):

Audi reliqua. infra Eutrapelum Cytheris accubuit. ‘in eo igitur’ inquis  
conuiuio Cicero ille  
“quem aspectabant, cuius ob os Grai ora obuertabant sua”?  
non mehercule suspicatus sum illam adfore. sed tamen ne Aristippus  
quidem ille Socratus erubuit cum esset obiectum habere eum Laida.  
‘habeo’ inquit, ‘non habeor a Laide’ (Graece hoc melius; tu, si uoles, interpretabere). me uero nihil istorum ne iuuenem quidem mouit umquam,  
ne nunc senem. conuiuio delector; ibi loquor quod in solum, ut dicitur,  
et gemitum in risus maximos transfero.

Listen to the rest. Cytheris reclined below Eutrapelus. ‘And so’, you say, “in such a party was the famous Cicero

“to whom they looked, upon whose face the Greeks turned their own countenances”?

By god, I had no inkling that she would be present. But nonetheless, not even Aristippus the follower of Socrates blushed when someone cast it up to him that he kept the courtesan Lais. ‘I keep her’, he said, ‘I am not kept by Lais’ (this works better in Greek<sup>59</sup>; you translate, if you want). But as for me, nothing of the kind interested me even as a young man, much less now that I’m an old one. I enjoy the party; there I converse on whatever comes up, as they say, and I transform a groan into great laughs.

---

58 — On the dangerous pleasures of the Roman banquet, see Booth 1991; James 2005 and 2006; and Roller 2006, 40-180.

59 — For the pun, see Shackleton Bailey 1980, 189.

The homosocial networks underpinning the cultural and political structures of republican Rome emerge clearly from this gossipy letter. For just as Volumnius sets his freedwoman Cytheris into circulation amongst his friends at the dinner party, so Cicero immediately traffics her to Paetus in a letter ostensibly composed at that very dinner party<sup>60</sup>. Although Cicero implies that Cytheris' attendance at the party lowered the tone of the gathering considerably, it is clear that her presence implicitly strengthened the bonds of male friendship, elite entitlement, and Roman solidarity between Volumnius and his friends, and between Cicero and Paetus. Cytheris functions both at the dinner party and in the letter to cement male friendships<sup>61</sup>.

We may note, in addition, that unlike Lycoris in *Bucolic* 10, who has run out on both Gallus and his friend's pastoral poetry, Cytheris attends Volumnius' party, though she apparently has nothing to say for herself. Her presence affords Cicero, however, an opportunity for a display of his wit and an occasion to show off his cultural capital, not only in his self-comparison to Socrates' pupil Aristippus, who dedicated two treatises to the famous Corinthian courtesan Lais, but also in his Latin rendering of two Greek quotations, including Aristippus' double-entendre (for which another English rendering might be 'I hold her, I don't cling to her'). Roman convivial participation and epistolary composition can thus be seen as exercises in masculine co-operation and competition, cementing the homosocial bonds of social privilege, literary culture, and heterosexual desire that unite Cicero in friendship with Atticus, Verrius, Volumnius and Paetus. And the ground of their homosocial intercourse, as Cicero represents it in his letter, is Volumnius' freedwoman, Cytheris. In other words, the letter founds a structural congruence between host and guests, letter-writer and recipient, on male homosocial desire, by harnessing the sexual and textual exchange of a mime actress for the consolidation of literary and affective bonds between elite Roman men. A similar rhetorical strategy, as we have seen, undergirds the citation and circulation of 'Lycoris' in the poetry of Gallus, Vergil, Propertius, Ovid, and Martial.

As a freedwoman of Volumnius, Cytheris will have received the legal Roman name of Volumnia on her manumission (as Servius implies in his comment on Verg. *Buc.* 10.1, quoted above). And so Cicero styles her some years later, in a passage of the *Philippics* that underlines the impro-

---

60 — Cf. Wray's characterization of the circulation of Catullus' occasional poems, addressed to his friends, as 'passing notes': Wray 2001, 88–109.

61 — The display and/or exchange of slave- and freedwomen to consolidate male bonds on singular occasions such as Volumnius' dinner party can be paralleled in the contemporary construction of marriage alliances among the Roman elite for political advantage. On the exchange of elite women in marriage by their male kin in this period see, e.g., Delia 1991; Fantham 2006, 56–91; Tregiari 2007, *passim*, esp. 30–32, 40–55, 83–99, 118–42; Skinner 2011, *passim*.

priety of her public appearance in the retinue of Caesar's deputy Marc Antony during the general's absence from Italy in 49 BCE (*Phil.* 2.58):

uehebatur in essedo tribunus plebis; lictores laureati antecedebant, inter quos aperta lectica mima portabatur, quam ex oppidis municipales homines honesti, obuiam necessario prodeuentes, non noto illo et mimico nomine, sed Volumniam consalutabant. sequebatur raeda cum lenonibus, comites nequissimi; reiecta mater amicam impuri fili tamquam nurum sequebatur.

[Antony, although] a tribune of the people [and therefore not legally entitled to lictors,] was riding in a luxurious chariot; before him walked laurel-bearing lictors, between whom was conveyed in an open litter the mime-actress – whom local aristocrats and prominent citizens from the towns met, by necessity, as they advanced, and greeted not by her well known stage-name [Cytheris] but by the name of Volumnia. Another car followed with pimps, the most worthless of companions! His mother, relegated behind, followed her disgraceful son's girlfriend, as if she were her daughter-in-law.

In this designedly prejudicial picture of Marc Antony's performance of his administrative duties, Cicero describes Antony appearing in public on official business in, and flanked by, luxury vehicles (the *essedus* and *raeda*) associated with women and wastrels<sup>62</sup>; accompanied by his girlfriend, a mime-actress tainted with the legal disadvantage (*infamia*) conferred by association with the stage<sup>63</sup>, and pimps, who were regarded as even less respectable company than actresses; and disdaining to show his mother and, by implication, his then wife (Antonia), due respect.

As instances of the rhetorical genre of invective, the *Philippics* were carefully shaped to impugn the reputation of Cicero's political opponent and in this they certainly succeeded, for a hundred years later, Plutarch not only repeats but even elaborates Cicero's charges (*Ant.* 9)<sup>64</sup>. But it is also striking that Cicero's sketch of Volumnia in this passage of invective

---

62 — Ramsey 2003, 244-5.

63 — On actors as *infames*, see Edwards 1993, 98-136.

64 — Pelling 1988, 139 ad loc. In the second *Philippic*, Cicero himself elaborates his picture of Cytheris as a second wife (*alteram uxor*, *Att.* 10.10.5), when he applauds Antony for 'divorcing' her (*Phil.* 2.69):

huius in sedibus pro cubiculis stabula, pro conclaibus popinae sunt. etsi iam negat. nolite querere; frugi factus est: illam suam suas res sibi habere iussit, ex duodecim tabulis clavis ademit, exigit. quam porro spectatus ciuis, quam probatus! cuius ex omni uita nihil est honestius quam quod cum mima fecit diuortium.

In this man's house, there are brothels instead of bedrooms, taverns instead of dining rooms. Even if he now denies it. Don't ask. He became frugal. He bade that notorious girlfriend of his take her things and go; he stripped her of her keys, according to the Twelve Tables; he drove her out. How well respected a citizen, how upstanding! Of the whole of his life, nothing is more honourable than the fact that he divorced a mime-actress.

appears in a markedly homosocial context, such as also structures his reference to Cytheris in the epistle to Paetus. Antony's retinue of lictors announces his (illegitimate) assumption of the trappings of Caesar's (illegitimate) *imperium* and embeds him in the fraying networks of male political and military patronage and prestige in the late republic. Cytheris' unparalleled presence between Antony's lictors embeds her in these male political networks and vividly demonstrates her status as a woman for the display to, and handling of, men. Her discreditable profession as a mime-actress is particularly well suited, Cicero implies, to her dramatic role in Antony's spectacle, even though she is not only displayed here to Italian aristocrats but also shamelessly greets Roman citizens as one herself.

Tom Hillard has demonstrated that suspicion is always warranted when women are represented as involved in political activity in late republican Rome, because

(1) practically all such information is transmitted as allegation, which highlights the unsubstantiated nature of each claim and the fact that an active political role for women was regarded as undesirable; and

(2) the women concerned were politically irrelevant in that they were not the primary targets of this hostile material; rather, their alleged roles were a means of attacking the politically potent, that is, their male kinsfolk or associates<sup>65</sup>.

While these strictures certainly seem valid for Cicero's references to Cytheris in the *Philippics*, which were explicitly designed to discredit Antony for his abuse of political office and legal process in the aftermath of Caesar's assassination, in this particular case we possess contemporary evidence (albeit from Cicero, in private correspondence with his friend Atticus) from the spring of 49 BCE, that has been taken to confirm the slurs of the *Philippics*. Thus on 3 May 49, Cicero wrote to Atticus (*Att.* 10.10.5) that Antony carried 'Cytheris with him in an open litter, [like] a second wife. Seven litters of mistresses are joined together besides; and there are boyfriends too' (*hic tamen Cytherida secum lectica aperta portat, alteram uxorem. septem praeterea coniunctae lecticae amicarum; et sunt amicorum*). He repeated the charge a few days later, on 14 May 49, in another letter to Atticus (*Att.* 10.16.5): *collega noster Antonius, cuius inter lictores lectica mima portatur* ('our colleague Antony, whose mime-actress is carried in a litter between lictors'). Both letters also engage the homosocially-inflected rhetoric we have identified in Cicero's letter to Paetus.

In his correspondence with Atticus, Cicero explicitly dissociates Antony from legitimate masculine networks of patronage and politics, by

---

65 — Hillard 1989, 176.

emphasizing the disgraceful (female and feminized) company he keeps and by referring to him contemptuously as *hic* and *collega noster*. As in his later invective, moreover, he comments on Cytheris' appearance in a public spectacle and thus characterizes her as a woman who circulates among men. His designation of her as a second (or alternate) wife to the legally married Antony, implies not only the illegitimacy of Antony's spectacle but also the invalidity of a courtesan's aspiration to marriage above her station<sup>66</sup>. The courtesan's illegitimate public circulation among men documents Antony's (and Caesar's) illegitimate usurpation of political authority at Rome. Cicero's references to Cytheris in these letters to Atticus thus anticipate those in his invective *Philippics* not only in their presentation of the 'facts', but also in their strategic representation of Antony's relations with Cytheris to figure the perversion of his political and social bonds with other men.

It is particularly notable that when Cicero names her in his correspondence with friends (*Att.* 10.10.5, *Fam.* 9.26.2), she is Cytheris the mime-actress, a freedwoman of Greek name and dubious morals who is appropriately trafficked between men. By contrast, when he writes to his wife Terentia in a letter of 47 BCE, he calls her Volumnia (*Fam.* 14.16): *Volumnia debuit in te officiosior esse quam fuit, et id ipsum quod fecit potuit diligentius facere et cautius* ('Volumnia ought to have been more respectful to you than she was, and she could have done what she did more attentively and carefully'). Scholars have not universally accepted the identification of Volumnia here with Volumnia Cytheris, on the assumption 'that a Roman matron like Terentia would not have had dealings with such a person'<sup>67</sup>. Shackleton Bailey has noted the naivety of this view, however, and rightly observes that when writing to his wellborn, extremely wealthy, and respectable wife, Cicero appropriately refers to Volumnia Cytheris by her Roman gentilician<sup>68</sup>. Indeed, the very different epistolary context of *Fam.* 14.16 from that of his letters to his intimates may be taken to illustrate Cicero's punctilious observance of

66 — See Tregiari 1991, 37–80, on legal capacity as a requirement for a valid Roman marriage, and 60–5 on Augustus' marriage legislation, which later invalidated marriage between Senators and freedwomen. In 49 BCE, Antony was still married to his cousin Antonia, the daughter of his uncle C. Antonius Hybrida; he divorced her two years later to marry Fulvia, the widow of P. Clodius Pulcher (*tr.* 58) and C. Scribonius Curio (*tr.* 50). Cicero claims that Antony promised Fulvia, on his return from Narbo in fall 45, to break off his relationship with Cytheris: *sibi cum illa mima posthac nihil futurum* (*Phil.* 2.77). In the context of Cicero's invective against Antony in the *Philippics*, the passage demonstrates the political capital an astute orator could make of a rival's sexual license; cf. Hillard 1989. For a freedwoman named Cytheris, married to a Roman citizen Rusticelius, see below.

67 — H. Gundel in *RE* IX A (883 #18) rejects the identification, but see *contra* Shackleton Bailey 1977, 502; Shackleton Bailey 1991, 48; and Hollis 2007, 242–3. The quotation is from Shackleton Bailey 1977, 502.

68 — Cf. Shackleton Bailey 1977, 502: 'in writing to his wife Cicero would naturally use the more decorous name'.

generic propriety. But his reference to ‘Volumnia’, in writing to his wife, throws into sharp relief the circulation, between Cicero and his cronies, of the mime-actress ‘Cytheris’, whose name implies Greek lineage, slave provenance, and the carnal sexuality associated with Venus/Aphrodite, from whose association with the island of Cythera her stage name was derived<sup>69</sup>.

In this context it is worth considering, as a coda to our discussion of Volumnia Cytheris, the ample attestation of her stage-name among slave- and freedwomen in the early principate. Solin marshals nineteen women of the name from the Roman epigraphic record: six of uncertain status<sup>70</sup>, one probably freed, and twelve freed former slaves<sup>71</sup>. The name proves durable, being attested from the late republic (Volumnia Cytheris herself) all the way down to late antiquity (third- or fourth-century CE); again, however, attestations cluster in the first century CE (fifteen of nineteen). Given the associations of the name with Venus, it is perhaps not surprising to find women of the name memorialized as *Cytetris delicium* ('darling Cytheris')<sup>72</sup> and *Cytheri dulcis* ('sweet Cytheris')<sup>73</sup>; both may have been slave 'pets'<sup>74</sup>. The affectionate tone in which both are named confirms the erotic propriety of the name Cytheris for Volumnius' freed-woman, mime-actress cum courtesan.

Especially notable is a Rusticelia Cytheris of Augustan date, for on her tombstone were inscribed six elegiac couplets in two blocks of three couplets each (*CIL* 6.25617 = CE 965)<sup>75</sup>:

R U S T I C E L I A M. L. C Y T H E R I S  
debitum redditit X K. Sept. Maluginense et Blaeso cos.

Quandocumque leuis tellus mea conteget ossa

69 — Cicero calls Antony ‘Cytherius’, deriving the nickname from his association with Cytheris, at *Att.*15.22: *hic autem noster Cytherius nisi victorem neminem victurum* ('but this Cytherian of ours tells us that only the victors will survive').

70 — *Sallustia Citheris* (*CIL* 6.8187), *Iulia Citheris* (6.24024), *Attiae Cytheridi* (6.9817), *Manlia Cytheris* (6.21973), and *Cominia Cytheris* (6.34991), all dated to the first century CE.

71 — *Memmiiae* ((C)). *L. Chiterini* (6.7802) and *Sulpicia P. l. Cytheris* (AE 1980,84), both of Julio-Claudian date; *Durdeneae P. l. Cytheridi* (*CIL* 6.1818), of the first- or second-century CE; *Macriana* ((C)). *l. Chiteris* (6.33602), *Citharis libert.* (*BullCom.* 43 [1915(1916)], 307), *Marcia* ((C)). *L. Cytheris* (*CIL* 6.22130), and *-a Citheris* [- -]aes. lib. (6.16712), all dated by Solin to the first century CE.

72 — *RAL* 1984, 294 Nr. 165, 1<sup>st</sup>- or 2<sup>nd</sup>-century CE.

73 — *ICUR* 23507, 3<sup>rd</sup>- or 4<sup>th</sup>-century CE.

74 — *OLD* s.v. *delicium*; cf. *OLD* s.v. *dulcis* 7. Of course, the women named Cytheris in the second, third and fourth centuries CE are more likely to have been named for their charm and beauty (or if so named as children, rather than renamed as adults, for their hoped-for charm and beauty) than with reference to Volumnia Cytheris. Nonetheless, the name speaks to their sexual availability as slaves. I am grateful to one of the anonymous referees for this clarification.

75 — I quote the corrected version of the text, rather than the original, from *CIL* 6.25617.

incisum et duro nom[en] erit lapide,  
 quod si forte tibi [fuerit] fatorum cura meorum,  
 ne graue sit tumulum uisere saepe meum,  
 et quicumque tuis umor labetur ocellis,  
 protinus inde meos defluet in cineres.

5

Quid lacrumis opus est, Rusticeli carissime coniunx,  
 extinctos cineres sollicitare meos?  
 una domus cunctis nec fugienda uiris<sup>76</sup>,  
 ut quae uolui, tempore tempus habet  
 nondum (bis) uic[e]nos annos compleuerat annus,  
 supremum Parcae sorte dedere mihi.

10

Rusticelia Cytheris, freedwoman of Marcus Rusticelius, died ten days before the Kalends of September in the consulship of Ser. Cornelius Lentulus Maluginensis and Q. Junius Blaesus [10 CE].

Whenever the light earth will cover my bones and my name be inscribed on hard stone, if perchance you will feel concern for my fate, let it not be painful to visit my tomb often, and whatever moisture slips from your little eyes, will drip thence immediately down into my ashes.

What need is there Rusticelius, dearest husband, to trouble my dead ashes with your tears? One house [*sc.* Hades] cannot be avoided by all men, though what I wanted, time has provided by time. Not yet had a year filled up twice twenty years each, when the Fates gave me the last by lot<sup>77</sup>.

By contrast to the silent Lycoris Galli, who occasions the elegiac verses of Gallus (and others), and Volumnia Cytheris, who appears in the letters and later invectives of Cicero, Rusticelia Cytheris has something to say and does so in elegiac couplets at that. Let me close, therefore, by considering both the similarities and differences between these two distinct Cytherides, separated by at least a generation, but both memorialized in elegiac verse.

---

76 — Line 11 of the inscription (= line 9 of the elegiacs) is not a hexameter, but a pentameter: see Galletier 1922, 287–8. This is only one of a number of metrical problems presented by the text, however. Others include: *nomine*, corrected to *nomen*, in line 4; otiose *fuerit*, in line 5; the unmetrical vocative *Rusticeli carissime*, in line 9; otiose *coniunx* at the opening of line 10 (whose removal turns the line into a regular pentameter); unmetrical *uolui* (from *uôlô*), which must be scanned *uôlûi* for the metre, in the first hemiepes of line 12; otiose *bis* in line 13; and the spelling *uicenos* for *uicenos*, in line 14. See Buecheler 1972, 445 ad CLE 965.

77 — I am grateful to Elaine Fantham, Judy Hallett, Sharon James, and Hugh Mason for discussion concerning the translation of the elegiac couplets, especially the penultimate couplet, though they do not necessarily agree with the translation I offer here.

### **III. Rusticelia Cytheris**

Spoken in the dead woman's voice, the elegiac verses that adorned her tomb were, in all likelihood, not only composed by someone other than the speaker herself but also probably commissioned by someone other than her – perhaps by her widower, M. Rusticelius, or by the supplier from whom he purchased the gravestone<sup>78</sup>. Traditional conceits of Roman funerary commemoration appear in references to the light earth covering her bones (*leuis tellus mea conteget ossa*, 3), the incised gravestone (*incisum et duro nomen ... lapide*, 4), and the one house (i.e., Hades), which receives all comers (*una domus cunctis nec fugienda uiris*, 11)<sup>79</sup>. Also conventional is the reference, before the elegiacs even begin, to death as payment of a debt (*debitum reddidit*, 2)<sup>80</sup>.

Like the late-republican Volumnia Cytheris, the Augustan Rusticelia Cytheris was a freedwoman legally bound to her patron. But unlike Volumnia Cytheris, who circulates among Roman magnates in the notices of Cicero, Servius, and others (even, perhaps, under the name Lycoris, in the verse of Gallus and Vergil), Rusticelia Cytheris appears to speaks for herself on her tombstone, addressing her patron as her husband (*coniunx*, 9) and reserving the affective language of love for her relationship with him (*cura*, 5; *carissime*, 9)<sup>81</sup>. Throughout the text, in fact, the speaker expresses sentiments that conform closely to Roman ideals of conjugal affection in the formulaic clichés of Roman funerary epitaphs<sup>82</sup>. Thus Rusticelia Cytheris addresses her patron/husband Rusticelius (whose metrically intractable name is included, unmetrically, in a hexameter line) as 'dearest husband' (*Rusticeli carissime coniunx*, 9). She assumes that he will be saddened at her death (*quod si forte tibi [fuerit] fatorum cura meorum*, 5) and find visiting her tomb so painful (*ne graue sit tumulum uisere saepe meum*, 6) that he will weep (*quicumque tuis umor labetur ocellis*, 7; *lacrumis*, 9). Her concern for his grief may well reflect his sorrow, but also shows her to advantage as she focuses from beyond the grave on her husband's emotional well-being. Although the speaker has gone to join 'all men' in the house of Hades (*cunctis uiris*, 11), her husband

78 — On the *carmina epigraphica*, see Galletier 1922; Lissberger 1934; Lattimore 1962; Chevallier 1972; Mayer, Miró, and Velaza 1998; Cugusi 2003 and 2007; and Schmidt forthcoming.

79 — For references to the gravestone, see Lattimore 1962, 81; for references to the house of Hades, see *id.* 168; for the sentiment that death comes to all, see *id.* 255, with n. 313, which cites line 11 of our inscription (= 9 of the elegiacs, *CE* 965.9).

80 — Lattimore 1962, 171, who cites it as the earliest instance of this figure in a Latin inscription.

81 — Lattimore 1962, 284, notes that 'the *liberta* may also be *coniunx*', citing *CIL* 3.5563, 7868; 5.580; 6.2584. See also Tregiari 1991, 572, 'Index of Subjects' s.v. *libertae, - liberta et coniunx*.

82 — See Tregiari 1991, 243-9 on the formulaic expression of *coniugalis amor* in Latin inscriptions.

fills her thoughts (*tibi*, 5; *tuis ocellis*, 7; *Rusticeli carissime coniunx*, 9), as she assures him that time has brought all that she wanted (*ut quae uolui, tempore tempus habet*, 12).

This ‘picture of an ideally happy family’<sup>83</sup> is consistent with the funerary conventions of classical antiquity, and stands in striking contrast to the portraits of Volumnia Cytheris and Lycoris Galli on display in Latin literature. From another perspective, however, the apparently divergent representation of Rusticelia Cytheris admits of some reconciliation with those of her more famous literary namesake and her elegiac avatar. Richmond Lattimore observes that ‘we must allow for a good deal of falsification in inscriptions composed, for the most part, by owners and patrons who were anxious to pose as benefactors’<sup>84</sup>. This formulation invites us to attend to the ‘ventriloquization’<sup>85</sup> of the dead woman’s voice on her tombstone and to recognize once again, in the masculine composition and circulation of women’s words on tombstones, the traffic in women that subtends and supports the patriarchal heterosexual economy of classical Rome, realized in this case quite literally with the freedwoman’s marriage to her patron. The elegiacs spoken in the voice of Rusticelia Cytheris thus also repay analysis according to the pattern of textual trafficking we have explored in connection with Lycoris Galli and Volumnia Cytheris, women whose sexuality was both guarded and displayed in contests of Roman male literary and political rivalry and entitlement.

Like her literary sisters, Lycoris Galli and Volumnia Cytheris, Rusticelia Cytheris is constructed within the homosocial economy of desire that grounded the social relations of patriarchy in classical antiquity and contributed to Rome’s military hegemony over the Mediterranean littoral in this period. Her bipartite name testifies not only to her Greek lineage and slave provenance (Cytheris), but also to her achievement of manumission and Roman citizenship (Rusticelia), and her social standing was further elevated by legal marriage to her Roman patron Rusticelius. Her social mobility may be interpreted as having outstripped that of Gallus’ literary mistress Lycoris, who remains a Greek courtesan in Gallan elegy and its literary reception, and even that of Volumnia Cytheris, who remained socially disreputable as a mime-actress and courtesan although she gained her freedom and, with it, limited legal rights. The common themes that emerge from this study of three ‘scripted’ women, however,

---

83 — Lattimore 1962, 299.

84 — Lattimore 1962, 285.

85 — The title of Harvey 1992, a study of early modern English literature, where, she notes (5), that ‘ventriloquizations of women in the Renaissance achieved the power they did partly because so few women actually wrote and spoke’.

well illustrate the generic pressures that shape the ancient textual and material evidence concerning women's lives and still hinder the (literary) historian's unmediated access to 'real' Roman women. Nonetheless, the gendered dynamic of women's textualization by, and circulation among, elite men in the pan-Mediterranean context of Rome's empire, illustrates important constraints on, and conventions in, the lives of women in ancient Rome.

### **Works cited**

- Adams, J.N. 1982. *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary*. Baltimore.
- Anderson, R.D., Parsons, P.J., and Nisbet, R.G.M. 1979. 'Elegiacs by Gallus from Qasr Ibrim', *JRS* 69, 125-55.
- Balsdon, J.P.V.D. 1962. *Roman Women: their history and habits*. London.
- Bariggazzi, A. 1962. 'Properzio, Ovidio e Euforione Fr. 43 P', *RFIC* 40, 295-8.
- Bodel, J. (ed.) 2001. *Epigraphic Evidence: ancient history from inscriptions*. London and New York.
- Booth, A. 1991. 'The Age for Reclining and Its Attendant Perils', in W.J. Slater (ed.), *Dining in a Classical Context*, 105-20. Ann Arbor.
- Bowditch, L. 2003. 'Propertius 2.10 and the Eros of Empire,' in P. Thibodeau and H. Haskell (eds.), *Being There Together: essays in honor of Michael C. J. Putnam on the occasion of his seventieth birthday*, 163-80. Minneapolis MN.
- 2006. 'Propertius and the Gendered Rhetoric of Luxury and Empire: A Reading of 2.16,' *Comparative Literature Studies* 43, 306-25.
- Breed, B.W. 2006. *Pastoral Inscriptions: Reading and Writing Virgil's Eclogues*. London.
- Buecheler, F. (ed.) 1895-1897. *Carmina Latina Epigraphica*, 2 vols. Leipzig; repr. Amsterdam 1972.
- Cameron, A. 1968. 'The First Edition of Ovid's *Amores*', *CQ* n.s. 18, 320-33.
- Chevallier, R. 1972. *Épigraphie et littérature à Rome*. Faenza.
- Cooper, F. and Stoler, A.L. (eds.) 1997. *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London.
- Cugusi, P. 2003. 'Per una nuova edizione dei Carmina Latina Epigraphica. Qualche osservazione metodologica', *Epigraphica* 65, 197-213.
- 2007. *Per un nuovo corpus dei carmina Latina epigraphica. Materiali e discussioni, con un appendice sul lusus anfibologico sugli idionimi a cura di M.T. Sblendorio Cugusi*. Roma.
- Culham, P. 1990. 'Decentering the Text: the case of Ovid', *Helios* 17, 161-70.
- Dalby, A. 2000. *Empire of Pleasures: luxury and indulgence in the Roman world*. London and New York.

- Delia, D. 1991. 'Fulvia Reconsidered', in S.B. Pomeroy (ed.), *Women's History and Ancient History*, 197-217. Chapel Hill and London.
- Dixon, S. 2001. *Reading Roman Women: sources, genres and real life*. London.
- 2007. *Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi*. London and New York.
- Edwards, C. 1993. *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome*. Cambridge.
- Engström, E. ed. 1912. *Carmina Latina Epigraphica*. Göteborg.
- Fabre-Serris, J. 2008. *Rome, l'Arcadie et la mer des Argonautes*. Lille.
- Fantham, E. 2006. *Julia Augusti, the Emperor's Daughter*. London and New York.
- Fear, T. 2000. 'The Poet as Pimp: elegiac seduction in the time of Augustus', *Arethusa* 33, 217-40.
- Galletier, E. 1922. *Étude sur la poésie funéraire romaine d'après les inscriptions*. Paris.
- Gardner, J. 1986. *Women in Roman Law & Society*. Bloomington and London.
- Girard, R. 1961. *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque*. Paris.
- Glazebrook, A. and Henry, M.M. (eds.) 2011. *Greek Prostitutes in the Ancient Mediterranean, 800 BCE-200 CE*. Madison WI.
- Hallett, J.P. 2011. 'Ballio's Brothel, Phoenicium's Letter, and the Literary Education of Greco-Roman Prostitutes: the evidence of Plautus's *Pseudolus*', in Glazebrook and Henry 2011, 172-96.
- Forthcoming. 'Recovering Sulpicia: the value and limitations of prosopography and intertextuality'.
- Harvey, E.D. 1992. *Ventriloquized Voices*. London.
- Hejduk, J.D. 2008. *Clodia: a sourcebook*. Norman OK.
- Henry, M. 1985. *Menander's Courtesans and the Greek Comic Tradition*. Frankfurt.
- 1995. *Prisoner of History: Aspasia of Miletus and Her Biographical Tradition*. New York.
- Hillard, T. 1989. 'Republican Politics, Women and the Evidence', *Helios* 16.2, 165-82.
- Hollis, A.S. 2007. (ed.) 2007. *Fragments of Roman Poetry c. 60 BC-AD 20*. Oxford.
- Hornblower, S. and Spawforth, A.J.S. 1996. 'Proposopography', in S. Hornblower and A.J.S. Spawforth (eds.), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*<sup>3</sup>, 1262-63. Oxford.
- Irigaray, L. 1977. *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un*. Paris.
- James, S.L. 2003. *Learned Girls and Male Persuasion: Gender and Reading in Roman Love Elegy*. Berkeley.
- 2005. 'A Courtesan's Choreography: Female Liberty and Male Anxiety at the Roman Dinner Party', in W. Batstone and G. Tissol (eds.), *Defining Genre and Gender in Roman Literature*, 269-301. New York. Revised and reprinted in C. Faraone and L. McClure (eds.), *Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World*, 224-62; Madison 2006.

- Keith, A.M. 1994. ‘*Corpus Eroticum*: Elegiac Poetics and Elegiac *Puellae* in Ovid’s *Amores*’, *CW* 88, 27-40.
- 2008. *Propertius, Poet of Love and Leisure*. London.
- Kennedy, D.F. 1993. *The Arts of Love: five studies in the discourse of Roman love elegy*. Cambridge.
- Knox, P.E. 1986. *Ovid’s Metamorphoses and the Traditions of Augustan Poetry*. Cambridge.
- Kurke, L. 2002. ‘Gender, Politics and Subversion in the *Chreiai* of Machon’, *PCPS* 48, 20-65.
- Lattimore, R. 1962. *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs*. Urbana IL.
- Lissberger, E. 1934. *Das Fortleben der römischen Elegiker in den Carmina Epigraphica*. Diss. Tübingen.
- Mazzarino, S. 1980-1981. ‘Contributo alla lettura dei Nuovo Gallus (*JRS*, 1979, 157 ss) e alla storia della mima “lycoris”, *Helicon* 21-22, 3-26.
- Mayer, M., Miró, M., and Velaza, J. 1998. *Litterae in titulis, tituli in litteris. Elements per a l'estudi de la interacció entre epigrafia i literatura en el món Romà*. Barcelona.
- McClintock, A. 1995. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. New York and London.
- Mufti, A., and Shohat, E. (eds.) 1997. *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, nation, & Postcolonial Perspectives*. Minneapolis and London.
- McGinn, T.A.J. 1998. *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law in Ancient Rome*. Oxford.
- 2004. *The Economy of Prostitution in the Roman World*. Ann Arbor.
- 2011. ‘Conclusion’, in Glazebrook and Henry 2011, 256-68.
- McLuhan, M. 1964. *Understanding Media: the extensions of man*. New York.
- Mommsen, T. et al. 1863 – . *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Berlin.
- Myers, M. 2008. *The Frontiers of the Empire and the Edges of the World in the Augustan Poetic Imaginary*. Diss. Stanford.
- Olson, K. 2008. *Dress and the Roman Woman: self-presentation and society*. London and New York.
- Parker H.N. 1994. “Sulpicia, the *Auctor de Sulpicia*, and the Authorship of 3.9 and 3.11 of the *Corpus Tibullianum*”, *Helios* 21, 39-62.
- Pearcy, L.T. 1994. ‘The Personification of the Text and Augustan Poetics in *Epistles 1.20*’, *CW* 87, 457-64.
- Pelling, C.B.R. (ed.) 1988. *Plutarch, Life of Antony*. Cambridge.
- Pomeroy, S. B. 1975. *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: women in classical antiquity*. New York; repr., with a new preface, 1995.
- Ramsey, J.T. (ed.) 2003. *Cicero, Philippics I-II*. Cambridge.

- Roller, M.B. 2006. *Dining Posture in Ancient Rome: bodies, values, and status*. Princeton.
- Ross, D.O., Jr. 1975. *Backgrounds to Augustan Literature: Gallus, Elegy and Rome*. Cambridge.
- Saller, R. 2001. 'The Family and Society', in Bodel 2001, 95-117.
- Salomies, O. 2001. 'Names and Identities: Onomastics and Prosopography', in Bodel 2001, 73-94.
- Sanders, G. 1991. *Lapides Memores: Païens et chrétiens face à la mort: le témoignage de l'épigraphie funéraire latine*. Bologna.
- Schmidt, M.G. Forthcoming. 'Carmina epigraphica', in C. Bruun and J. Edmondson (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of Roman Epigraphy*. Oxford and New York.
- Sedgwick, E.K. 1992. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*<sup>2</sup>. New York.
- Skinner, M.B. 2011. *Clodia Metelli: the tribune's sister*. Oxford.
- Skutsch, F. 1901. *Aus Vergils Frühzeit*. Leipzig.
- 1905. *Gallus und Vergil*. Leipzig.
- Solin, H. 1996. *Die stadtömischen Sklavennamen: ein Namenbuch*. 3 vols. Stuttgart.
- 2003. *Die griechischen Personennamen in Rom*. 3 vols. Berlin.
- Stoler, A.L. 2002. *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London.
- Sullivan, J.P. 1973. 'The Politics of Elegy,' *Arethusa* 5, 17-34.
- Tränkle, H. 1960. *Die Sprachkunst des Properz und die Tradition der lateinischer Dichtersprache*. *Hermes Einzelschriften* 15. Wiesbaden.
- Traina, G. 2001. 'Lycoris the Mime', in A. Fraschetti (ed.), *Roman Women*, 82-99; tr. L. Lappin. Chicago. [Originally published in Italian as *Roma al femminile*. Roma-Bari 1994]
- Treggiari, S. 1969. *Roman Freedmen During the late Republic*. Oxford.
- 1976. 'Jobs for Women', *AJAH* 1, 76-104.
- 1979a. 'Lower class women in the Roman economy', *Florilegium* 1, 65-86.
- 1979b. 'Questions on women domestics in the Roman West', in *Schiavitù, manomissione e classi dipendenti nel mondo antico*, 185-201. Rome.
- 1991. *Roman Marriage: justi coniuges from the time of Cicero to the time of Ulpian*. Oxford.
- 2007. *Terentia, Tullia and Publilia: the women of Cicero's family*. London and New York.
- Wray, D. 2001. *Catullus and the Poetics of Roman Manhood*. Cambridge.
- Wyke, M. 1987a. 'Written Women: Propertius' *Scripta Puella*', *JRS* 77, 47-61.
- 1987b. 'The Elegiac Woman at Rome', *PCPS* 213, 153-73.



- 1989a. 'Mistress and Metaphor in Augustan Elegy', *Helios* 16, 25-47.
- 1989b. 'Reading Female Flesh: *Amores* 3.1', in A. Cameron (ed.), *History as Text*, 113-43. London.
- 2002. *The Roman Mistress: ancient and modern representations*. Oxford.



