Why is Sulpicia a Woman?

by

Stefanie Leigh Kletke

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Ancient Societies and Cultures

Department of History and Classics

University of Alberta

ABSTRACT

Today it is relatively unquestioned that Sulpicia, the elegiac woman of [Tib.] 3.8-18, was a historical woman of the same name who lived and wrote Latin elegies in Augustan Rome, and that the poems attributed to her are autobiographical records of love, thereby making Sulpicia a Roman version of Sappho. However, if the extant evidence is given a closer look, a different picture emerges. Specifically, if one recognizes the generic conventions at play in the poems, there is no longer reason to date them to the Augustan period, nor to read the figure of Sulpicia as different than any other constructed elegiac woman, nor to read the poems as disconnected from the rest of the genre of Latin love elegy. Rather, the poems quite likely date to after the heyday of the genre, and thus they appear to be *pseudepigrapha* or chronological fakes, written to recall and respond to the work of the canonical elegists and the Greek roots of the genre. And, if this is their correct context, it follows that the figure of Sulpicia was specifically chosen by the unknown author to provide a particular interpretation and/or comment on the genre, not unlike the fictional figure of Diotima in Plato's *Symposium*. The Sulpicia that then emerges is not a Roman Sappho in the sense that we would like her to be, but rather a purely literary figure such as she is portrayed in the first known post-classical construction of her by the humanist Giovanni Pontano. Though such a reading may result in the loss of what was previously thought to be the only extant work of a female Roman poet, this justifiably renewed line of research into male authorship for the poems brings with it much potential.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION: SULPICIA, ACCORDING TO THE POEMS

The current consensus on the identity of the figure named Sulpicia in the eleven Latin

love elegies, [Tib.] 3.8-18, herein collectively called 'the Sulpicia poems,'[1] can perhaps be

summarized best by the entry for Sulpicia in the 2013 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Ancient*

History:

> Sulpicia was an elegiac poet of the Augustan period and one of the few female
> writers in Latin whose work survives. Daughter of Servius Sulpicius Rufus
> and granddaughter of a famous jurist of the same name, Sulpicia was from an
> aristocratic family. Her maternal uncle, M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus, the
> Augustan statesman, is the addressee of one of her poems ([Tib.] 3.14).
> Sulpicia's poetry has been generally identified in the *Corpus Tibullianum*
> ([Tib.] 3.13-18 = 4.7-12), alongside other poets of Messalla's circle…The
> poems are short elegies on the love affair of Sulpicia and her beloved, given
> the pseudonym Cerinthus…Sulpicia has a distinctive style, which combines
> colloquialism and hypotactic syntax, and she avoids overt metaphor or mythic
> example, while still engaging with the conventions of elegy. This has
> provoked two responses: the older view sees Sulpicia's poetry as the
> emotional confessional of a young woman, expressed in 'feminine Latin'…
> More recently, this view has been seen as sexist, and a new appreciation for
> Sulpicia's artistic technique has developed…Another five poems in the
> *Corpus Tibullianum* are about Sulpicia's affair (3.8-12 = 4.2-6) and seem to
> have been written by an attentive early imperial reader of Sulpicia's poetry…[2]

According to this short entry, there appears to be no room for discussion as to whether or not

Sulpicia as a poet existed; the only discussion is in regards to the perceived quality of the

poems attributed directly to their persona, being only poems 13-18. And, while not

mentioned above, one familiar with the genre of Latin love elegy would understand that the

"new appreciation" for the Sulpicia poems is in part due to the fact that what is so striking

about the poems is that they are the only elegiac cycle in which the elegiac woman seems to

---

[1] See Appendix A for the poems. The Latin text for the Sulpicia poems is taken from Guy Lee's
edition (unless otherwise stated), as Lee has provided a fresh collation of the oldest manuscript of the
Corpus Tibullianum, the *codex Ambrosianus*, as well as other MSS (including the *codex
Guelferbytanus*, discussed in Chapter 3). All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.
[2] Duncan Macrae, *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), s.v.
"Sulpicia, Augustan poet." The alternate numbering provided in parentheses refers to the four-book
system used in some manuscripts and commentaries. I will use the three-book system here
exclusively. The *Oxford Classical Dictionary*'s entry on Sulpicia is relatively similar to the *EAH*'s,
though briefer and without mention of [Tib.] 3.8-12.

genuinely have her own voice. For, while there are a few other elegies in which the elegiac women 'speak,' such instances are always set up as quotations (e.g. Prop. 4.7 and 8), or the women are 'speaking' while dead (e.g. Prop. 4.3 and 11).[3] The closest parallel to the Sulpicia poems in Latin love elegy is Ovid's *Heroides*, each written in the persona of a mythological woman (or Sappho), though the reader of the *Heroides* never actually thinks he/she is reading the words of those women, due to the clear mythological setting and Ovid's palpable presence.[4] The Sulpicia poems, on the other hand, seem to take place in a real-life, everyday setting as do the majority of Latin love elegies, and thus it simply seems natural and obvious to read the figure of Sulpicia as real. What the consensus sees in these poems, then, is a window into the life of an upper-class Augustan woman, narrated by said woman herself. In other words, it seems as though the Sulpicia poems provide us with the closest Roman equivalent of the first-person subjective poetry of the female Greek poet, Sappho.[5]

However, summarizing the discussion on the poems as a dichotomy between those who think the poems are good and those who think they are bad is a brief and neutered treatment of the issue, and it does a disservice to the poems and to their readers. For the discussion did not use to center around whether or not the poems show artistic technique or not, but rather *who* the author of the poems was. And, if the current consensus is ignored for a moment and the evidence is reconsidered, the dating of the poems, the content of the poems, and the genre in which the poems are written suggest a reading of Sulpicia as any other elegiac woman; that is, the poems themselves suggest that Sulpicia is *not* meant to be

---

[3] There are perhaps closer parallels that can be found in archaic and Hellenistic poetry, which is not surprising given the other similarities between the Sulpicia poems and earlier elegy (as will be discussed in Chapter 2). For example, the following feature a female persona: the elegiac *Theognidea* 257-60, 579-82, 861-64 (with 579-82 being in the persona of a chaste woman, and 861-64 being in the persona of a prostitute); Alcaeus fr. 10 V; Theocritus *Idyll* 2. See E. L. Bowie, "Early Greek Elegy, Symposium and Public Festival," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 106 (1986): 16-17; Thomas K. Hubbard, "The Invention of Sulpicia," *The Classical Journal* 100, no. 2 (2004/05): 181-82.

[4] That said, some humanists read *Heroides* 15, the so-called *Epistula Sapphus*, as a Latin translation of an actual Sappho poem. This is likely due to the poem having a transmission history separate from the rest of the Heroides, at least between the Medieval period and the fifteenth century. See Chapter 3 below, and Thea Selliaas Thorsen, "Scribentis Imagines in Ovidian Authorship and Scholarship: A Study of the *Epistula Sapphus* (*Heroides* 15)" (PhD diss., University of Bergen, 2007), 76.

[5] Indeed, H. MacL. Currie states "if the woman named [in the Sulpicia poems] was also the authoress, then she had the precedent of Sappho." H. MacL. Currie, "The Poems of Sulpicia," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II 30.3 (1983): 1756.

read as an actual Augustan female poet, but simply as a literary construct. As such, contrary to the *EAH* entry, the real discussion seems to be, or at least should be, something completely different.

The Sulpicia poems as pseudo-Augustan

The Sulpicia poems were transmitted in Book 3 of the *Corpus Tibullianum*, which consists of a seemingly eclectic mix of poems: poems 1-6 are written in the persona of a Lygdamus; poem 7 is presumably in the persona of a young Tibullus, writing to his potential patron, Messalla (though Tibullus' name does not appear in the poem); poems 8, 10, and 12 are written in an unnamed persona about Sulpicia; poems 9, 11, and 13-18 are written in the persona of Sulpicia; poem 19, the only poem in Book 3 to have Tibullus' name, is presumably written in the persona of Tibullus; and poem 20 is written in an unnamed persona. The only portion of Book 3 that is generally thought to not be written in the first or early-second century AD are poems 13-18, i.e. the poems that are attributed by the current consensus to Sulpicia. While dating varies somewhat between scholars, it is generally agreed that all other poems in Book 3 are post-Ovidian, thus dating them no earlier than Ovid's death in AD 17, and as late as post-Flavian (i.e. early-second century AD). For those that adhere to the consensus of Sulpicia-as-poet, however, the dating of the Sulpicia poems is much more consistent between scholars, typically being around or shortly after Tibullus' death in 19 BC.[6] This agreement is not reflective of stronger proof within the Sulpicia poems for a date as opposed to the rest of the book, but rather is based both on the identification of Sulpicia as a poet and as the niece and ward of M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus (and thus contemporary with him),[7] and on the assumption that an upper-class woman such as the niece of Messalla would have written erotic poetry in her own persona before the *leges Juliae de*

---

[6] E.g. Judith P. Hallett, "Scenarios of Sulpiciae: Moral Discourses and Immoral Verses," *EuGeStA* 1, (2011): 83-85.
[7] The conclusion that Messalla was Sulpicia's maternal uncle was drawn in 1875 by M. Haupt, following the acceptance of Otto Gruppe's 1838 theory of an Augustan poet named Sulpicia. See Holt N. Parker, "Sulpicia, the *auctor de Sulpicia*, and the Authorship of 3.9 and 3.11 of the *Corpus Tibullianum*," *Helios* 21, no. 1 (1994): 55n2.

adulteriis et de maritandis ordinibus of 18 and 17 BC were enacted, as such laws would have made the writing of such poetry by a Roman woman dangerous.[8]

Even Robert Maltby's thorough analyses, the most recent discussion on Book 3's dating, seems to be skewed by an autobiographical reading. Maltby divides his analyses between the traditional supposed groups of Book 3 (1-6, 7, 8-12, 13-18, 19, and 20), immediately showing his adherence to the two-author theory for the Sulpicia poems, a remnant of the enormously influential reading of Otto Gruppe in 1838, which assigned the first poems to a male author and the rest to Sulpicia herself.[9] Based on his own metrical and stylistic analyses, Maltby dates poems 1-6 to "no earlier than the late nineties AD," poem 7 to the Flavian period, poems 8-12 as "early in the first century AD, perhaps shortly after the death of Ovid," poem 19 as post-late Ovid, and poem 20 as "perhaps the beginning of the first century AD."[10] As for poems 13-18, though Maltby notes that "there is too little material to provide statistically convincing conclusions," that "some of the medical language in poem 17 can only be paralleled from late writers," and that the poems could have been written by "a skilled male impersonator," he still dates the poems attributed to Sulpicia "in the last

---

[8] Hallett even goes so far as dating the poems to a specific year (19-18 BC, i.e. after Tibullus' and Virgil's deaths, but before the morality laws were passed), and argues for them being pre-*Amores* based on her reading of Ovid *Am*. 3.14 referring to Sulpicia specifically. See: Judith P. Hallett, "Authorial Identity in Latin Love Elegy: Literary Fictions and Erotic Failings," in *A Companion to Roman Love Elegy*, ed. Barbara K. Gold (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 283; Judith P. Hallett, "Ovid's Sappho and Roman Women Love Poets," *Dictynna* 6 (2009): sections 13-34; and Hallett, "Scenarios of Sulpiciae," 84n15. Hallett's stance is difficult not only because her theory requires such a narrow dating window without any textual evidence, but because she previously argued that scholars who could not read an Augustan Sulpicia as the author of poems 8-12 (as Hallett does) "should have first taken a closer look at our ancient Roman evidence about the actual conduct tolerated by other privileged women in Sulpicia's social circle." Judith Hallett,"The Eleven Elegies of the Augustan Poet Sulpicia," in *Women Writing Latin: From Roman Antiquity to Early Modern Europe,* Volume 1, eds. L. J. Churchill, P. R. Brown and J. E. Jeffrey (New York: Routledge, 2002), 54. Hallett sees in the example of Augustus' daughter Julia high tolerance for the sexual misbehaviour made illegal by Augustus' morality laws, simply because Augustus waited until 2 BC to exile Julia, after at least a decade of sexual misconduct. However, one would think that the fact Julia was the emperor's daughter would allow the assumption that she was granted more tolerance than other upper-class women. Furthermore, the fact that Julia was eventually exiled makes one think that the laws were, in fact, taken seriously.
[9] Note that Gruppe regarded poem 13 as part of the first group (i.e. not by Sulpicia), and he regarded Tibullus as the author of the first group. O. F. Gruppe, *Die römische Elegie* (Leipzig: Wigand, 1838). Beginning with A. Rossbach in 1855, poem 13 was 'reassigned' to Sulpicia, and was accepted as an amendment to Gruppe's otherwise accepted theory. See Parker, "Sulpicia," 40.
[10] Robert Maltby, "The Unity of *Corpus Tibullianum* Book 3: Some Stylistic and Metrical Considerations," *Papers of the Langford Latin Seminar* (2009): 324, 331, 334, 337, and 338.

decade or so of the first century BC, a date quite in keeping with her being Messalla's niece."[11] However, as the two-author theory is not proven fact but a repeated remnant of Gruppe's subjective reading, it harms any analyses done on the dating of the poems to presuppose that poems 13-18 have a separate date from poems 8-12.[12] It is a much less difficult reading to consider all of the Sulpicia poems to be written by one author, and thus to have the same dating. And, if poems 8-12 cannot be earlier than post-Ovidian, it follows that the same goes for poems 13-18.

For that matter, it is easiest to assume that all of the poems in Book 3 date to around the same time and that the poems attributed by the consensus to Sulpicia are not the exception. While a full discussion of the entirety of Book 3 would be preferable, due to the constraints of this thesis, I can focus here only on the Sulpicia poems. However, it should at least be noted that the traditional idea of up to six hands being involved in the book originates from the identification of Sulpicia as a poet and niece of Messalla, and thus the desire to explain the presence of a female's poems among others possibly connected to

---

[11] Ibid., 335-36.

[12] It should be noted that Gruppe (and his proponents) argued for a split not for completely arbitrary reasons, for the eleven poems do clearly vary in style and length. However, I do not feel the need to belabour the point that they should not be regarded as two cycles, as there is simply too little data to claim that such an editorial move that goes against the transmission history is supported. More importantly, however, a precedent can be found in Hellenistic and Roman literature for such variation existing in a single cycle and by a single author. As Francis Cairns says, "a poet is more likely to imitate his own and other poets' earlier work when it is both in the same genre and in the same form," using a principal source and a number of secondary sources, i.e. "the so-called *contaminatio* which seems to be a hallmark of much Hellenistic and post-Hellenistic literature." Francis Cairns, "Self-Imitation Within a Generic Framework," in *Papers on Roman Elegy: 1969-2003* (Bologna: Patron editore, 2007), 423. Among the elegists, this self-imitation alongside borrowing from others can be seen in Theocritus, Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius (Ibid., 426), and, I would add, the Sulpicia author. As Cairns explains,

> [t]he poet, having created or accepted from a generic tradition a particular conceptual structure in one work, may re-use it in varied form because this is easier or more interesting for him than inventing a new structure. He may feel that he is improving on his earlier performance, or merely that composing a variation on the same theme offers him more or different scope. This aspect of self-imitation probably has more to do with the poet's 'private' draft than the reader's response. On the other hand self-imitation can concern the reader more closely. The poet may by self-imitation be making a comment on his earlier work or indicating change in his attitudes or in his poetic personality. Here the amount which the reader ought to deduce from a particular case of self-imitation must depend on its obtrusiveness. If it is obvious and easy to grasp, then presumably he is intended to notice it and to speculate about it.

Ibid.*,* 437. The examples Cairns provides are: Tib. 1.8 and 9; Tib. 2.3 and 4; Catullus 5 and 7; Prop. 1.7 and 9; Ovid *Am.* 2.9 and 3.11.

Messalla. And while the resulting idea of a so-called 'circle of Messalla' has since been found to be an anachronistic concept, the division of the book into groups is still adhered to.[13] If this antiquated division is ignored and the book as a whole is considered, it can be seen that there are structural factors in Book 3 that hint towards either an extremely skilled editor;[14] or a group of authors who were either contemporary to each other or at least had similar ideas about what aspects of Latin love elegy were to be developed; or one author.[15] For example, the order and content of the first half of Book 3 seems to intentionally mirror Tibullus' Book 1: 3.1-6 parallels 1.1-6 in content as elegiac cycles; 3.6 ends in the word "*comas*" as 1.6 ends in "*coma*"; 3.7 and 1.7 are both panegyrics to Messalla; 3.8 mentions Sulpicia's different hairstyles and clothes as 1.8 mentions different hairstyles and clothes; 3.9, in the voice of Sulpicia but likely written by a male, has some homoerotic elements as does 1.9, which is about Marathus, Tibullus' male lover. And within Book 3 itself, the poems seem to respond to each other. The Lygdamus and Sulpicia cycles both deal with a type of relationship outside the elegiac norm, namely between social equals, with both relationships involving or hinting at marriage.[16] Furthermore, poem 19 seems to be the male beloved's response to the Sulpicia poems, and poem 20 both echoes the themes of poem 13 and ends the book with a quieting "*tace*."[17] As there are precedents for seemingly random collections being by a single author (e.g. Catullus' corpus and the *Catalepton*[18]), the possibility that such

---

[13] See Ceri Davies, "Poetry in the 'Circle' of Messalla," *Greece & Rome* 20, no. 1 (1973): 25-35. Cf. Irene Peirano, who rightly states that such an idea is anachronistic based on the dating of the Lygdamus and Sulpicia poems (Peirano sees the latter group possibly written by one hand). Irene Peirano, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake: Latin* Pseudepigrapha *in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 133-34. Niklas Holzberg also notes that the idea of a literary circle is anachronistic because the concept is a Romantic notion, not a classical one. Niklas Holzberg, "Four Poets and a Poetess or a Portrait of the Poet as a Young Man? Thoughts on Book 3 of the *Corpus Tibullianum*," *The Classical Journal* 94, no. 2 (1999): 175.
[14] As Maltby concedes. Maltby, "The Unity of *Corpus Tibullianum* Book 3," 338.
[15] As will be discussed in Chapter 3, Niklas Holzberg is probably the only scholar today to argue for one author for Book 3, namely a pseudo-Tibullus.
[16] As Maltby states, "the relationship at the heart of the [Lygdamus and Sulpicia] poems is not that of the traditional…elegiac poet…such as we find in the poems of Tibullus, Propertius and Ovid," indicating an "attempt to move the genre of elegy on into the new field of love (and marriage) between social equals." Maltby, "The Unity of *Corpus Tibullianum* Book 3," 321-22.
[17] Maltby points this out, but refers to poems 8-12 specifically (what he calls "the Sulpicia cycle" versus 13-18, "the Sulpicia elegies"). Ibid., 321-22.
[18] On the *Catalepton* possibly being the work of one author (or, at least an argument for the benefits of looking at it as such), see Chapter 2 of Peirano, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*, particularly 79-89.

is the case for Book 3 of the *Corpus Tibullianum* should be kept in mind. At any rate, the multi-leveled connection of the Sulpicia poems to the book within which they were transmitted increases the likelihood that they are post-Ovidian and possibly late-first century or early-second century just as the rest of the book seems to be, definitely categorizing them as post-Augustan and thus outside the timeline of canonical Latin love elegy.

Sulpicia as a pseudo-lover-poet

One unfortunate result of reading two hands in the eleven Sulpicia poems is that the content of 3.8-12 tends to be ignored in discussing the figure of Sulpicia. Granted, this tendency stems from the largely feminist discussion surrounding the discussion of poems 13-18, as the common reading of a later unnamed male author for these first few poems brings with it the interpretation that he treats Sulpicia merely as a figure for the male gaze, ignoring her supposed status of being more than just an elegiac woman. However, when it is realized that the division of the poems into two separate cycles is a product of Gruppe's reading and is not necessarily sound, the reader is allowed to read all eleven poems as a cohesive cycle. And the first poem, 3.8, reads as a programmatic poem for the cycle as a whole, providing us with the clues needed to interpret the poems that follow.

> *Sulpicia est tibi culta tuis, Mars magne, Kalendis:*
> *   spectatum e caelo, si sapis, ipse ueni.*
> *hoc Venus ignoscet. at tu, uiolente, caueto*
> *   ne tibi miranti turpiter arma cadant.*
>
> *Illius ex oculis, cum uult exurere diuos,*
> *   accendit geminas lampadas acer Amor.*
> *illam, quidquid agit, quoquo uestigia mouit,*
> *   componit furtim subsequiturque decor.*
> *seu soluit crines, fusis decet esse capillis;*
> *   seu compsit, comptis est ueneranda comis.*
> *urit, seu Tyria uoluit procedere palla:*
> *   urit, seu niuea candida ueste uenit.*
> *talis in aeterno felix Vertumnus Olympo*
> *   mille habet ornatus, mille decenter habet.*
>
> *Sola puellarum digna est cui mollia caris*

uellera det sucis bis madefacta Tyros,
        possideatque metit quicquid bene olentibus aruis
    cultor odoratae diues Arabs segetis,
et quascumque niger rubro de litore gemmas
    proximus Eois colligit Indus aquis.

Hanc uos, Pierides, festis cantate Kalendis,
    et testudinea Phoebe superbe lyra.
hoc sollemne sacrum, multos consummet in annos;
    dignior est uestro nulla puella choro.

Sulpicia is dressed for you, great Mars, on your Kalends: if you have sense, you yourself come from the heavens to observe her. This Venus will forgive. But you, violent one, beware that your arms do not fall from your shamelessly admiring self. From the eyes of that one, when he wants to inflame the gods, shrewd Love lights twin lights. That girl, whatever she does, wherever she moved her steps, elegance secretly composes and pursues. If she loosened locks of hair, it is right for her hair to be spread out; if she braided it, she is to be revered with braided hair. She inflames, if she wished to appear with a Tyrian palla; she inflames, if she came sparkling with a snowy garment. As lucky Vertumnus on eternal Olympus wears a thousand outfits, she becomingly wears a thousand. She alone of the girls is worthy, to whom may Tyre give soft fleeces soaked twice with dear juices, and may she possess whatever of the sweet-smelling field the rich Arab farmer reaps from the fragrant plains, and whatever jewels the dark India nearest to the Eastern waters collects from the red shore. Sing of this girl, Muses, on the festive Kalends, and Phoebus, proud with your tortoise shell lyre. This solemn religious rite, may she complete for many years; no girl is worthier of your chorus.

With "*Sulpicia*" as the first word of the cycle, Sulpicia is immediately set up as a literary figure to be read not as a lover-poet, but as any other elegiac woman. And the description which follows allows for a very metapoetic reading. For example, in line 8, "*componit furtim…decor*" Sulpicia, allowing for the reading that Sulpicia as a literary figure is composed or written, and in some disguised manner at that. Furthermore, the insistence on Sulpicia's hairstyle being acceptable no matter how it is done (lines 9-10) and her being able to inflame no matter what she is wearing (lines 11-12) in general can be read metapoetically, as "writing a poem and creating a look are [often] analogous" to each other in Roman

poetry.[19] Also, the focus on Sulpicia's literary appearance seems to have a secondary metapoetic meaning that Sulpicia is appropriate for any poetic setting, whether she is being spoken about or is speaking, and whether the poem is commemorating her as an elegiac woman who steals Venus' place beside Mars, or as an blameless and chaste woman (as will be discussed below).

Lastly, and perhaps most telling, Sulpicia is compared to Vertumnus, a male Roman god known to cross-dress, who here is described as wearing a thousand outfits just like Sulpicia, thus alluding to the role-playing to be expected of the poet and/or the gender-bending of the Sulpicia figure. As Thomas Hubbard reads it, Vertumnus "prefigures the collection's ability to gender-bend and speak in either male or female voice."[20] Indeed, this comparison of Sulpicia to a cross-dressing male god may at least partially explain the choice of festival used as a setting, being not the Kalends of April in honour of Venus, which one might expect with the topic of love and an unmarried female persona, but rather the Kalends of March, in honour of Mars. As Stephen Hinds notes, "there is evidence that on the Kalends of March in the late Empire men dressed up as women…[and] that this practice extended right back to early times."[21] While Hinds sees this as the male Sulpicia-impersonator hinting that he will be impersonating the 'real' Sulpicia, under the reading of one author for all eleven poems this cultural context could mean that for the *entire* Sulpicia cycle we are to read "a male poet in female dress."[22]

---

[19] Victoria Rimell's discussion about Ovid's *Medicamina*, quoted in Konstantinos P. Nikoloutsas, "The Boy as Metaphor: The Hermeneutics of Homoerotic Desire in Tibullus 1.9," *Helios* 38, no. 1 (2011): 35.
[20] Hubbard, "The Invention of Sulpicia," 181n15. This mention of Vertumnus in connection to a feminine yet male poetic voice also calls to mind the poet Agathon, as portrayed in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousai*, who dresses in women's clothes "to match his composition." Kate Gilhuly, "Why Is Diotima a Priestess? The Feminine Continuum in Plato's *Symposium*," in *The Feminine Matrix of Sex and Gender in Classical Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 84.
[21] Stephen Hinds, "The Poetess and the Reader: Further Steps Toward Sulpicia," *Hermathena* 143 (1987): 46. Beginning the Sulpicia cycle on the Kalends of March could also be read as the Sulpicia author's take on the elegiac convention of presenting love as an elegist's preferred war, as the first of March began the cycle of war in Rome's festival calendar. See page 42 below and Marcel Le Glay, Jean-Louis Voisin, and Yann Le Bohec, *A History of Rome*, 3rd ed., trans. Antonia Nevill (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 33-35.
[22] Ibid.

Indeed, even the poem thought to begin Sulpicia's 'own' cycle, 3.13, seems to emphasize the role-playing literary game introduced in 3.8, particularly in the last two lines which are traditionally read as Sulpicia describing the consummation of her relationship with her beloved, Cerinthus.

> *sed peccasse iuuat, uultus componere famae*
> *taedet. cum digno digna fuisse ferar.* (lines 9-10)

But it helps to offend, it offends to put on a false front for tradition. May I be displayed as worthy to be (written) with worthy.

Again, as in 3.8, we have the verb "*componere*," playing up the self-conscious written nature of the poems. But we also have the passive "*ferar*," alluding to the constructed nature of Sulpicia. Furthermore, while "*cum…fuisse*" has an obvious sexual connotation,[23] *fuisse* can also be translated as "to be written." In this sense, the last line can be read metapoetically, as "May I be displayed as worthy to be written among worthy."[24] Thus, in both the third-person and first-person perspectives, Sulpicia is ultimately portrayed not as a lover-poet, but as an elegiac woman who has simply been given a voice by her creator.

If we are to read Sulpicia as a literary figure, what then are we to make of her biography which, as is currently written, is rather detailed and seems to be complete?[25] Upon closer examination, it can be seen that the concept and identification of Sulpicia as a historical Augustan woman and poet is actually based on very little, five words to be precise. The reading of "*Messalla*" at 3.14.5 as M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus, the well-known Augustan orator, soldier, and literary patron of poets such as Tibullus and Ovid; "*propinque*"

---

[23] See Hubbard, "The Invention of Sulpicia," 178n5.

[24] In this line, I read an echo of Socrates' explanation in Plato's *Symposium* (174a9) for why he has adorned himself to go to Agathon's for dinner: …ἵνα καλὸς παρὰ καλὸν ἴω ("…so that I may go beautiful to beautiful"). See Chapter 2 for further parallels between the *Symposium* and the Sulpicia poems. All Greek text and Stephanus numbers for the *Symposium* are taken from Kenneth Dover, ed., *Plato: Symposium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

[25] Aside from identifying Messalla as Sulpicia's maternal uncle, Servius Sulpicius Rufus as Sulpicia's father, and Valeria (wife of said Servius and sister of Messalla) as Sulpicia's mother, it is also a common reading that the M. Caecilius Cornutus of Tib. 2.2 is Sulpicia's husband (or at least one of her husbands). Scholars such as Hallett have expanded this biography further, reading Lygdamus as a pseudonym for Sulpicia's supposed brother, Postumius Sulpicius, and Catullus as a relative. See, for example, Hallett, "The Eleven Elegies," 46-47; Judy Hallett, "Classics 320," *Diotima: Courses and Teaching Materials*. Accessed March 2014. http://www.stoa.org/diotima/syllabi/elite.shtml.

at 3.14.6 as "relative"; and "*Serui filia Sulpicia*" at 3.16.4 as "Sulpicia, daughter of Servius" seem to support the identification of the Sulpicia of 3.8-18 as the niece of said Messalla and daughter of one Servius Sulpicius Rufus, thus dating Sulpicia and the poems to the first century BC. However, contrary to the oft-repeated view that the poems "tell us exactly who she is," readings that do not involve an autobiographical interpretation can be provided for each of these words.[26]

First of all, the only mention in the Sulpicia poems of Messalla occurs in poem 14, in which Sulpicia is lamenting having to leave the city for a (possibly her own) birthday.

> *Inuisus natalis adest qui rure molesto*
> *et sine Cerintho tristis agendus erit.*
> *dulcius urbe quid est? an uilla sit apta puellae*
> *atque Arretino frigidus amnis agro?*
> *iam, nimium Messalla mei studiose, quiescas;*
> *†neu tempestiuae perge monere uiae.†*[27]
> *hic animum sensusque meos abducta relinquo,*
> *arbitrio quamuis non sinis esse meo.*

The detested birthday is at hand, a sad birthday which will have to be spent in the annoying country and without Cerinthus. What is sweeter than the city? Or is a country home and a cold river on a farm by Aretium to be suitable for a girl? Now Messalla, exceedingly devoted to me, be still and do not proceed to remind me of appropriate methods. If taken away, I abandon my soul and senses here by choice, though you do not allow the choice to be mine.

It should first be recognized that Messalla as a literary patron is addressed in other Latin elegy and poetry in general, and thus he is not an odd figure whose presence needs any conjectural explanation. There is even a precedent for Messalla being portrayed in a situation that may seem contrary to what one might expect given the societal norms of ancient Rome, namely being in close contact with an upper-class female who is not his own beloved or family member. This precedent in fact occurs elsewhere in the *Corpus Tibullianum*, in 1.5, where Messalla is portrayed not simply as a patron, but as a close friend who travels to see

---

[26] The full quote from Julia Haig Gaisser's introduction to Dennis and Putnam's Tibullus edition is: "The two references [*Serui filia Sulpicia* at 3.16.4 and *propinque* at 3.14.6] tell us exactly who she is..." Julia Haig Gaisser, "Introduction," in *The Complete Poems of Tibullus*, eds. Rodney G. Dennis and Michael C. J. Putnam (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 26.

[27] I have changed this line from Lee's edition, to reflect Baehrens' emendation, as discussed below and in note 29. I have retained the dagger marks to indicate the overall uncertainty of the line.

both Tibullus and his beloved, Delia, and as someone whom Delia is comfortable interacting with on her own (1.5.31-34). Indeed, though "elegiac poets normally kept their patrons, who are real personages of contemporary Rome, apart from their mistresses, who are imaginary composites of Hellenistic literature and life," in Tibullus' own poem, "he makes his patron interesting to the reader and brings him into the elegy in a most ingenious way."[28] The similar situation of familiarity between Messalla and the elegiac woman of 3.14 thus does not require the provision of an extra-textual context to explain the relationship of Messalla and Sulpicia.

And indeed, the second word used in Sulpicia's biographical identification, *propinque*, does not provide this presumed context of familial kinship, and definitely not of imagining Sulpicia as Messalla's ward. Though this word is in nearly every modern edition at 3.14.6, in the text I have provided above for the poem, *propinque* does not appear. My editorial choice here, suggested first by A. Baehrens in 1878, serves to indicate the fact that the entire line that contains this word generally is not thought to be sound, and some commentaries suggest emendations that remove *propinque* entirely.[29] Even if "*propinque*" is what was originally written, the common reading of "relative" is a difficult reading. For while *propinque* would be read as a substantive adjective in the vocative case presumably addressing Messalla, the word, normally translated as "near" or "neighbouring," does not necessarily mean "blood relative," as it has been interpreted to support the idea of Messalla as Sulpicia's maternal uncle. Such an informal word would not, in any event, be the expected form of address from a Roman female towards a male relative or guardian; as N.J. Lowe states, it "seems suspiciously forthcoming" that a female poet would be "obliging enough to

---

[28] Francis Cairns, *Tibullus: A Hellenistic Poet at Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 179.

[29] Baehrens' emendation was also adopted by B. Fabricius in 1881, and E. Hiller in 1885. R.O.A.M. Lyne also notes that the text of *propinque* "is far from certain." R.O.A.M. Lyne, *Collected Papers on Latin Poetry*, ed. S.J. Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 344. While Baehrens' emendation is one of the more extreme reconstructions of the line (Postgate's OCT text reads: *non tempestiuae saepe, propinque, uiae*), scholars have long been unhappy with the difficult/wrong Latin of the entire line, and emendations for every single word of the line have been suggested. See Figure 1 in Appendix B for a facsimile of the poem in codex A.

address her most distinguished relative, if the text is sound, as 'relative'," rather than by a more respectful title.[30]

Lastly, it is thought that Sulpicia provides a *sphragis* in 3.16.4 by presumably naming her father. And since a Servius Sulpicius did exist who had a familial tie to a Messalla (Valeria, the wife of the first-century BC senator Servius Sulpicius Rufus, was Messalla Corvinus' sister), this is read as reason for reading Sulpicia as an actual Augustan woman.

> *Gratum est securus multum quod iam tibi de me*
>   *permittis, subito ne male inepta cadam.*
> *sit tibi cura togae potior pressumque quasillo*
>   *scortum quam Serui filia Sulpicia.[31]*
> *solliciti sunt pro nobis, quibus illa dolori est*
>   *ne cedam ignoto maxima causa toro.*

> It's a welcome thing, that you now permit yourself to be very unconcerned about me, lest terribly silly me suddenly comes to nothing. May care for the toga and a prostitute mounted with a wool-basket be more important to you than Sulpicia, daughter of Servius. There are some worried for us, for whom the greatest cause for pain is that I might yield to a low-born bed.

However, there is no evidence that this Servius Sulpicius Rufus had a daughter. More importantly, identifying a particular Servius Sulpicius based on the presence of a Messalla is shaky. The *gens Sulpicia* were of one of the oldest patrician *gens* in Rome, and 'Servius' was one of the few *praenomina* used by the *gens*. Thus many Servius Sulpicii can be found in Roman history, with notable Servius Sulpicii stretching back as far as the first decade of the Roman Republic; and as any daughter of a Sulpicius would be named Sulpicia, there could

---

[30] N. J. Lowe, "Sulpicia's Syntax," *The Classical Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (1988): 197n22.

[31] Based on Cairns' discussion of a semantic phenomenon often employed by ancient poets that he calls "verbal tensions" (or, the "proximate use of at least two words which are near synonyms are near antonyms"; Cairns, *Tibullus*, 99-100), I am tempted to read such word play in the proximity of *quasillo* and *scortum* of lines 3 and 4. For a later/rarer definition of *scortum* is a skin or hide, and is but one letter-switch off from a word for a 'basket' made of skin associated with men (as the *quasillum* is a basket associated with women), namely *scrotum*. And as *scortum* was used to denote female and male prostitutes alike, one wonders if the author is playing not just with the gender and thus sexuality of the poetic persona, but also with the sexuality of the elegiac beloved, Cerinthus. Interestingly, the word *scrotum* is only attested in the first-century BC/AD Aulus Cornelius Celsus; as Maltby discusses, the medical phrase "*euincere morbos*" in [Tib.] 3.17.3 is only attested from Celsus on, and *calor* as fever (in [Tib.] 3.17.2) is otherwise in poetry first in Juvenal (12.98) and in prose first in Celsus. Maltby, "The Unity of *Corpus Tibullianum*," 335. These multiple parallels thus suggest that the author of the Sulpicia poems knew Celsus' work, allowing for a multiplied meaning of "*quasillo / scortum*."

be any number of *Seruiorum filiae Sulpiciae*.[32] The *gens Valeria* was also one of the oldest patrician *gens* in Rome, with 'Messalla' being one of the *cognomina* of that *gens*, meaning that there was not just one Messalla who could potentially be linked to a daughter of a Servius Sulpicius. Therefore, the idea of "*Serui filia Sulpicia*" being recognizable as one particular Roman is a bit of wishful thinking (in our own world, it would be akin to a modern day poem saying "Jane, daughter of Mr. Smith"), and thus the identification of a particular Servius Sulpicius hinges on a sound familial connection of Sulpicia to Messalla, the tenuousness of which was discussed above.

In any event, the phrase "*Serui filia*" could be read in at least a few ways that do not necessitate or produce a specific Augustan Sulpicia. For example, the phrase could be read as showing Latin love elegy's roots in Hellenistic poetry by referring back to the tendency of Hellenistic poets contemporary to Callimachus using "mock patronymics," i.e. purposely providing an incorrect name for a poet's father.[33] Or, this phrase may actually be a metaphorical reference that would fit within the normal confines of Latin love elegy. Given the lack of capitalization in classical Latin, Hinds recognized that *Serui* could be read as interchangeable with *serui* (i.e. as likely a proper name as the noun for slave, *seruus*), and thus as an allusion to the "learned Roman debate about the humble origins of the early [sixth century BC] king Servius Tullius."[34] To take Hinds' argument further, with this potential play on the mythology surrounding the ancient Roman king, the resulting translation would not necessarily be "Sulpicia, daughter of (some) Servius," where a contemporary Servius Sulpicius has to then be identified, but rather "Sulpicia, daughter of (that) Servius (the slave)," which, in effect, could be simplified into "Sulpicia, a daughter of Rome" or "Sulpicia, a Roman woman." Or, perhaps the word was never intended to be capitalized and

---

[32] In terms of consuls alone, various individuals named Servius Sulpicius held office between 500 BC (a Servius Sulpicius Camerinus Cornutus) and 51 BC (a Servius Sulpicius Rufus). See Christopher Mackay, *Consuls of the Roman Republic*. Accessed February 2014. http://www.ualberta.ca/~csmackay/Consuls.List.html.

[33] As Alan Cameron states, "[f]or whatever reason, poets of the age apparently called each other by mock patronymics." Alan Cameron, *Callimachus and His Critics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 79. For the strong Hellenistic influence on Latin love elegy, see, for example, Cairns, *Tibullus*, 1-35 and 214-30.

[34] Hinds, "The Poetess and the Reader," 45.

read as a proper name; it is a convention in Latin love elegy for the lover-poet to posture himself as a slave who serves his *domina* or mistress, and so Sulpicia's supposed identification in "*serui filia*" could simply be a play on the typical formula of a Roman woman's name used to refer to this elegiac convention, as being the daughter of a slave would make her a slave as well.

That said, the phrase "*Serui filia Sulpicia*" could perhaps be read as the consensus wants it to, as "Sulpicia, daughter of Servius," but with the Servius being far removed from the Augustan period. For example, given the dating of Book 3 and the underlying homoerotic nature of the Sulpicia poems if read as male-authored, it is tempting to read "*Serui filia Sulpicia*" as referring to a fictional or metaphorical daughter of Galba, the Roman emperor from 68-69 AD, whose full name was Servius Sulpicius Galba, and who was known for his homosexual activity.[35] Or, in light of the political nature of Latin love elegy, it could be an allusion to the imagined daughter who resulted from the affair between Caesar and the wife of the ancestor of Galba, also named Servius Sulpicius Galba.[36] Or, it could be an allusion to a known historical Sulpicia who both was a daughter of a Servius and would likely have been known to both the author and contemporary readers of the Sulpicia poems.

The latter possible reading in particular warrants consideration given the room for further investigation. For in 214 BC, a Sulpicia, daughter of Servius Sulpicius Paterculus and wife of Fulvius Flaccus, was chosen to consecrate a statue of Venus Verticordia (the 'changer

---

[35] Suetonius, *XII Caesares*, Galba 22. Interestingly, a panegyric quite similar in its pseudepigraphic nature to [Tib.] 3.7 is addressed to a Calpurnius Piso; while the exact Calpurnius Piso mentioned is unknown, there was a Lucius Calpurnius Piso who was the adopted son and appointed heir of Galba. For a discussion of the *Laus Pisonis*, see Peirano, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*, 148-72.

In regards to there being not just a fictional but a metaphorical reference to a daughter of Galba, it is also interesting to note that Clunia, a city that was very important to Galba, is called 'Colonia Clunia Sulpicia' in full. This city in Hispania's Tarraconensis province was an administrative capital that is said to have gained the epithet 'Sulpicia' from Galba, the governor of the province who resided in Clunia during the revolution against Nero up until Galba was named emperor. As Augustus could well be called *pater urbis* in regards to his paternal care for the city of Rome, it perhaps could also be said that Galba was the *pater urbis* of Clunia. In this sense, it would be tempting to read "*Serui filia Sulpicia*" as a reference to the city's connection to Galba. See E. W. Haley, "Clunia, Galba and the Events of 68-69," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, Bd. 91 (1992): 159-64; Diane Favro, "*Pater urbis*: Augustus as City Father of Rome," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 51, no. 1 (1992): 61-84; Francesc Tuset, Miguel Angel de la Iglesia, and Mike Elkin, "Clunia: Roman Failure, Archaeological Marvel," *Current World Archaeology* 32 (2009): 18-25.

[36] Suetonius, *XII Caesares*, Caesar 50.

of hearts') because she was regarded as the most chaste woman in Rome. As this Sulpicia is mentioned in Valerius Maximus and Pliny the Elder, both of whom wrote in the first century AD, it can be assumed that knowledge of her was accessible at least among the educated in early Imperial Rome, if not among the common people familiar with religious rites.[37] There is even the possibility that a physical monument of this Sulpicia, such as an inscription or statue or coin, existed at the time the Sulpicia poems were written,[38] given the abundance of post-classical commemorations (both literary and artistic) of this Sulpicia,[39] as well as the inscriptional intermediality seen elsewhere in Latin elegy.[40]

As the elegiac poets in no way tried to portray themselves nor their beloveds as morally chaste Romans, but rather seem to have striven to portray themselves as moral failures, appropriating such a figure from history only to lower her stature for the purposes of an elegiac text would not be shocking. Indeed, one of the most well-known post-classical portrayals of this third-century BC Sulpicia seems to hint that her reputation had suffered in the past. For his account of this Sulpicia in his seminal *De mulieribus claris*, the humanist Giovanni Boccaccio uses two known classical sources, Valerius Maximus and Pliny.[41] Boccaccio's account is far longer than either of his two sources, as each biography in his *De mulieribus* seeks not to simply tell the story of a historical or mythological woman, but also to provide a didactic tale with a moralizing bent. However, two specific phrases cause the reader familiar with Boccaccio's sources to pause, due to their extraneous nature: "*olim*

---

[37] V. Max. 8.15.12; Plin. *Nat*. 7.35.

[38] A nineteenth-century catalogue of Roman coins includes a description of a piece that may commemorate this Sulpicia, though no photo is included and the coin is noted to be "*sine epigraphe*." William Henry Smyth, *Descriptive Catalogue of a Cabinet of Roman Family Coins Belonging to His Grace the Duke of Northumberland* (London: Savill and Edwards, 1856), 232-33. Google books edition.

[39] E.g. Boccaccio's account of this Sulpicia in his *De mulieribus claris* (discussed above) reads as if he had access to or knowledge of a work of art commemorating her. Illuminated manuscripts of Boccaccio's work, at any rate, contain paintings of this Sulpicia, such as: Royal 16 G V, seen in the British Library's *Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts* (accessed March 2014; http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=43553); and Spencer Collection Ms. 033, seen in the NYPL's *Digital Gallery* (accessed March 2014; http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/id?427502). There is also an early seventeenth-century statuette to this Sulpicia at the Kunst Historiches Museum, seen in the KHM *Bilddatenbank* (accessed March 2014, http://bilddatenbank.khm.at/viewArtefact?id=90628).

[40] See Martin Dinter, "Inscriptional Intermediality in Latin Elegy," in *Latin Elegy and Hellenistic Epigram*, ed. Alison Keith (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 7-18.

[41] Boccaccio, *De mulieribus claris*, LXVII. See note 37 above.

venerandissima mulier" ("<u>once</u> a woman worthy of respect") and "*fere in inmarcescibilem gloriam*" ("in <u>almost</u> unfading glory"). While these phrases may provide no direct evidence, they do allow for a reading that, in Boccaccio's time, this third-century BC Sulpicia was no longer seen as worthy of respect, and that her unfading glory had faded to some extent for some reason. The only other post-classical mention of this Sulpicia previous to *De mulieribus* is also by Boccaccio, in the *De casibus*, where, in an imagined conversation between Tiberius, Gaius Caligula, and Valeria Messalina, Boccaccio has Messalina compare herself to Sulpicia:

> Though I was born of an illustrious father, Valerius Messalla Barbatus, and enjoyed the marriage-bed of an emperor, I died a shameful death in everlasting infamy...I am ashamed; I will not deny it. I was lascivious, licentious, and an adultress [*sic*]. And I always enjoyed the company of many men. Although I was sinful, still I was not without some excuse...Truly if Scipio Africanus or Marcus Cato had reproached me as you did, or if I had been Sulpicia, the wife of Fulvius Flaccus, or the ancient Lucretia, then I would have been quiet, and you would have reproved me justly.[42]

Given the existence of another Sulpicia in classical Latin literature mentioned alongside a Messalla, a Messalla assumed to be Messalina's great-grandfather, one may wonder if Boccaccio had access to a manuscript of the *Corpus Tibullianum* and had made a connection between the promiscuous elegiac Sulpicia and his morally pure third-century BC Sulpicia. If so, perhaps he felt that the chaste name of the historical Sulpicia had been borrowed and sullied by the elegiac Sulpicia. And, if such was the case, perhaps Boccaccio's return to and extended treatment of Sulpicia in his *De mulieribus*, and his use of "*olim*" and "*fere*" therein,

---

[42] Boccaccio, *De casibus illustrium virorum* VII.3. Translation from Louis Brewer Hall, ed. and trans., *Giovanni Boccaccio: The Fates of Illustrious Men* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1965), 176-77. The Latin text is:
> *...quod a clarissimi patris Barbati Messale ac ab imperiali thalamo in turpissimam mortem ac indelebilem infamism conciderim, ut deflerem veni...Etsi erubescam, non inficiar: lasciva luxuriosa adultera et concubitu plurimo semper avida fui, quod quidem, quantumcunque multum habeat criminis, non tamen aliquali caret excusatione...Verum si Affricanus Scipio aut Marcus Cato obiecissent quot obicitis, vel ego me Sulpitiam Fulvii Flacci coniugem seu Orgingontis uxorem aut antiquiorem illam Lucretiam dixissem, et ego tacuisse debueram et vos iuste iurgia inicere poteratis.*

Latin text from *Biblioteca Italiana*. Accessed November 2013. http://www.bibliotecaitaliana.it/indice/ visualizza_testo_html/bibit001350.

was meant to restore the name of Sulpicia to its rightful stature, i.e. a pre-elegiac Sulpicia stature.[43] While there is no direct extant proof that the elegiac Sulpicia was based on this third-century BC Sulpicia, the possibility is indeed interesting and worth noting.

At any rate, it can be seen from the discussion above that a number of readings vastly different from Sulpicia as an Augustan poet are equally supported by the text. And whereas it is impossible to say for sure which reading is correct, it is perhaps most important to remember that, regardless of how 'real' or invective any of the poems seem, no other elegiac poet was trying to blatantly spread libel about a contemporary Roman woman. Though we can and have speculated on what real women may lie behind the names of the canonical elegiac cycles, no elegiac woman apart from Sulpicia has a name that any upper class Roman woman would have had. And, given that the historical context of canonical Latin love elegy includes the enacting of laws which led to Augustus' own daughter being exiled for sexual immorality, it seems a much less difficult reading to have an unknown poet sullying the reputation of a historical Roman woman dead for over two centuries, or that of a completely fictional Roman woman, versus the reading of an actual Roman woman more or less providing her very street address.[44] As such, it is much more likely that Sulpicia should be read not as a lover-poet writing in her own persona, but rather as a pseudo-lover-poet,

---

[43] Boccaccio's repeated treatment of this Sulpicia is notable, as "under fifty percent of [the women who appear in *De casibus*] make it to the later work," i.e. *De mulieribus*. Stephen Kolsky, *The Genealogy of Women: Studies in Boccaccio's* De mulieribus claris (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003), 80.

[44] One of the central tenets of Augustus' political platform was to restore traditional Roman values, with himself as both the commissioner of moral reform and paragon of virtue (see Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Augustan Rome* [London: Bristol Classical Press, 2003], particularly Chapter 5). As part of his moral reform concerning the sexual morality of upper class women in particular, in 18 and 17 BC Augustus enacted the *leges Juliae de adulteriis et de maritandis ordinibus*; "under these laws, sexual union outside of marriage or concubinage became a criminal offence against the state, and penalties for conviction were severe." Alison Keith, "*Tandem venit amor*: A Roman Woman Speaks of Love," in *Roman Sexualities*, eds. Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 296. Augustus exiled his daughter Julia in 2 BC based on rumours of her adulterous affairs, and exiled or executed her alleged lovers (Wallace-Hadrill, *Augustan Rome*, 40-41). Ovid is said to have been exiled by Augustus (in AD 8) for his immoral poetry, possibly his *Ars Amatoria* (see Wallace-Hadrill, *Augustan Rome*, 42). Such moral judgment of a poet based on his poetry occurred before the *leges Juliae* as well, as seen in Catullus 16, a strongly invective poem against two of Catullus' critics who accused him of sexual immorality on the basis of his erotic poetry alone.

For evidence against a poet writing about a contemporary historical woman in her persona, see note 161 below.

occupying the space of the poet only in position, and otherwise joining the ranks of all the other constructed women of the genre.

The Sulpicia poems as pseudo-Latin love elegies

Indeed, what seems to be ignored time and time again in studies on the Sulpicia poems is that they are not simply poems written in a vacuum, untouched by a real historical context and unattached to the genre in which they were written. Of course, the historical context is impossible to pin down precisely due to the potentially unknowable author and lack of an exact date. However, it can definitively be said that the poems do fall within the genre of Latin love elegy, regardless of the differences between the Sulpicia poems and the canonical elegiac cycles. For, aside from the genders of the lover-poet and beloved being swapped, the Sulpicia poems meet all of the other generic criteria. Latin love elegy is written in elegiac meter, being a couplet composed of one line in hexameter, followed by one line in pentameter. It is written largely from the first-person perspective, in the persona of the lover-poet. An elegiac cycle centers on the extramarital and unstable love affair of the lover-poet and his beloved. The beloved is portrayed as being educated (a *docta puella*) and is given a name that is meant to be read as a pseudonym. The lover-poet postures himself as being subservient to his girlfriend, thus appearing to subvert the expected gender roles of Roman society. Love is often described in military terms, and is set as the elegist's preferred 'war'. Furthermore, there are set pieces in each elegiac corpus, such as the *genethliacon* (birthday poem), a *paraclausithyron* (where a door or other obstacle bars the lover-poet from the beloved), and a poem in which the girlfriend is sick. The Sulpicia poems check off all these boxes, just with the genders of the lover-poet and beloved switched.[45]

---

[45] I would argue that beginning the Sulpicia cycle on the Kalends of March sets up the elegiac love of Sulpicia and Cerinthus as a 'war', as that day began the cycle of war in the Roman festival calendar (see note 21 above, as well as page 42 below). Furthermore, I would suggest that the figure of Messalla in [Tib.] 3.14 could be read as an unusual *paraclausithyron*, comparable to that in Asclepiades III (see Cameron, *Callimachus and His Critics*, 499). Also, the use of 'Cerinthus' as the male beloved's name for the Sulpicia poems may be another allusion to earlier elegy, as the name shows up in Theognis 1.891.4.

As ancient readers were sensitive to genres, which were seen not as consisting simply of a particular meter but also of formulaic topics,[46] the fact that the Sulpicia poems can be categorized as Latin love elegies would not have been ignored simply because of the unexpected gender of the lover-poet. Indeed, the ancient poets often used a device which Francis Cairns calls "delayed identification," or doing something unexpected in a well-known genre "in order to whet the reader's appetite and engage his interest."[47] As Cairns further explains,

> [a]n ancient reader confronting any poem was looking right from the start for a clue which might tell him its genre. For this reason the poet could enhance the reader's alertness by frustrating him in the first part of a poem. Naturally, once the reader did succeed in identifying the genre, he could interpret the earlier part of the poem in retrospect in terms of its genre.

Thus, in flipping the expected genders of the elegiac duo, the author of the Sulpicia poems may simply be playing with the reader, but leaves the other generic clues intact to allow the reader to figure out the literary context in the end. For us as modern readers to ignore the generic context and separate the poems from the rest of the elegiac corpus simply because of this unexpected element thus is only detrimental to our understanding of the text, as clear

---

[46] Though there is no room to adequately discuss generic theory here, it is important to recognize that there is evidence from ancient writers of generic self-awareness, even in the archaic period. See Joseph Farrell, "Classical Genre in Theory and Practice," *New Literary History* 34, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 383-408. Also, it is useful to think of 'genre' not just as a category of meter and style, but, as Cairns uses the term, as a category of content. Francis Cairns, *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry* (1972; repr., Ann Arbor: Michigan Classical Press, 2007), 6-7. On ancient readers' sensitivity to genre, see Francis Cairns, *Papers on Roman Elegy: 1969-2003* (Bologna: Patron editore, 2007). Furthermore, it is useful to remember the orality of the ancient Greek and Roman cultures. Even in early Imperial Rome, the majority of people would have had access to literature through hearing it rather than reading it, whether due to illiteracy, lack of physical copies, or simply attendance at *symposia/conuiuia/recitationes*. Therefore the similarities between pieces of the same genre would become rather strongly reinforced by hearing, seeing, and discussing the performance of such shared elements over and over, as opposed to simply reading by oneself.

[47] Francis Cairns, "Further Adventures of a Locked-Out Lover: Propertius 2.17," in *Papers on Roman Elegy: 1969-2003* (Bologna: Patron editore, 2007), 159.

parallels between the Sulpicia poems and the rest of the genre then become hidden or ignored.[48]

And the very first Sulpicia poem just asks to be compared to other elegiac cycles and to be read as elegiac fiction. As mentioned above, the first word of 3.8 is "*Sulpicia*." This choice of word does not simply set up the subject of the poem and cycle, as it also calls to mind another elegiac cycle which begins with an elegiac woman's name, Prop. 1.1's "*Cynthia*." As no elegiac cycle (or any single elegiac poem for that matter) begins with the male poet's own name, the placement of Sulpicia's name therefore sets it up as a similar elegiac cycle. Also, the figure of Vertumnus, discussed above for setting the gender-bending tone in the programmatic [Tib.] 3.8 is perhaps best known in Latin love elegy from Prop. 4.2. There are also many general connections to the works of Catullus, whose work is an important prelude to the genre of Latin love elegy, such as: the alternating perspective of the poems (i.e. the poetic persona referring to himself in the first- and third-persons); extreme variations in the lengths of the poems; the seemingly non-allusive nature of the shorter poems; and the use of the term "*lux mea*" to address the beloved, found also in Propertius and Ovid, but not elsewhere in the *Corpus Tibullianum*.[49] Furthermore, one is tempted to read in poem [Tib.] 3.13 an echo of Gallus, regarded as the first canonical Latin love elegist.

> *Tandem uenit amor qualem texisse pudore*
> *quam nudasse alicui sit mihi fama magis.*
> *exorata meis illum Cytherea Camenis*
> *attulit in nostrum deposuitque sinum.*
> ...
> *...cum digno digna fuisse ferar.* ([Tib.] 3.13.1-4, 10)

---

[48] Carol Merriam notes that allusions in the poems (13-18, specifically) are ignored because the poems tend to historically be treated not as literature, and also because there have been numerous suggestions that there are no allusions to be found in the poems. Carol U. Merriam, "Sulpicia and the Art of Literary Allusion: [Tibullus] 3.13," in *Women Poets in Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. Ellen Greene (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), 158-59.

[49] See Hallett "The Eleven Elegies," 48-50. In general, Hallett reads too much into the texts, seeing allusions in shared single words that are not rare in themselves. The general connections between the Sulpicia poems and the Catullus corpus cited above, however, are useful, especially given that Hallett is one of the very few to consider all eleven Sulpicia poems to be written by the same author, and thus one of the few scholars willing to consider all eleven as a unified cycle. That said, Hallett considers an Augustan Sulpicia to be that author, and one of the reasons for the allusions being Sulpicia's supposed familial ties to Catullus. See note 25 above and Judith P. Hallett, "Women's Voices and Catullus' Poetry," *The Classical World* 95, no. 4 (2002): 421-22.

<div align="center">

……] ….. *tandem fecerunt c[ar]mina Musae*

quae possem domina deicere digna mea. (Gallus 6-7)[50]

</div>

      Even more interesting for our purposes, however, are the similarities between the

Sulpicia poems and the only poems outside of Ovid's *Heroides* in which the elegiac woman

speaks, being Cynthia in Prop. 4.7 and 4.8. First of all, Propertius' personal slave mentioned

in 4.7 and 4.8 is named Lygdamus. This name is not found elsewhere in Latin poetry except

in the *Corpus Tibullianum*, namely as the persona of the poems which precede the Sulpicia

poems, [Tib.] 3.1-6 (if not also 3.7[51]). Thus the shared mention of a rare name sets up a

parallel between at least the physical context of the Sulpicia poems (i.e. the *Corpus*

Tibullianum) and canonical Latin love elegy.[52] Also, Prop. 4.7 uses "*quasillo*," an extremely

rare word found nowhere else in Latin poetry except in the Sulpicia poems, particularly the

poem in which Sulpicia supposedly names herself ([Tib.] 3.16). Sulpicia's use of the word is

---

[50] Text from Qasr Ibrîm Gallus fragment taken from Roy K. Gibson, "Gallus: The First Roman Love Elegist," in *A Companion to Roman Love Elegy*, ed. Barbara K. Gold (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 182.

[51] As Holzberg says, there is no clear indication that the persona has changed from 3.1-6 to 3.7, so the reader reading through Book 3 in consecutive order may simply assume the persona of 3.7 is still Lygdamus. Holzberg, "Four Poets and a Poetess or a Portrait of the Poet as a Young Man?," 182.

[52] It should perhaps also be mentioned that Cynthia's slave in 4.7, Petale, provides an interesting literary link between the Propertian corpus and the Sulpicia corpus as defined by some scholars who follow the consensus of Sulpicia-as-poet. For a Roman inscription (*AE* 1928.73) dated to the first century BC that begins with the name Sulpicia commemorates a Petale, a deceased slave, as either being named Sulpicia upon manumission, or the slave of a Sulpicia: *Sulpiciae cineres lectricis cerne uiator / Quoi seruile datum nomen erat Petale*. Jane Stevenson has argued that this epitaph is another poem written by Sulpicia herself, using its meter (elegiacs), mention of a Sulpicia, and dating as support. Jane Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender, & Authority, from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 43-44. Hallett wholeheartedly agrees with this analysis, going as far to state that

> [s]ince the rediscovery of this epitaph by Jane Stevenson and Janet Fairweather in 2005, efforts to deny that an aristocratic Augustan woman named Sulpicia, the niece of Tibullus' patron Messalla, wrote the eleven Sulpicia-elegies in Tibullus Book 3 seem to have diminished.

Hallett, "Scenarios of Sulpiciae," 94. However, Stevenson's attributing the epitaph to an Augustan Sulpicia is of course contingent on the dating of Sulpicia "in the last decades of the Roman republic" (Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets*, 36), a date which I strongly disagree with. I find the Propertian name 'Petale' to be of much more significance with regards to the Sulpicia poems. I would not be all that shocked if the choice to use 'Sulpicia' in the Sulpicia poems was based on the author's knowledge of this inscription and the mention of a Petale in Prop. 4.7. In other words, the name 'Sulpicia' was perhaps meant as a literary allusion to Cynthia as an imagined Roman name behind Propertius' elegiac woman.

in reference to the *scortum* with whom Cerinthus seems to be fooling around with, while Cynthia's is in reference to a slave named Nomas. While it is uncertain to what degree rare words were purposely chosen to evoke previous texts, it does provide a notable connection between the two texts.

Lastly, and perhaps more interestingly, is the possible allusion to Venus Verticordia in both the Sulpicia poems and Prop. 4.8. As Carl Conrad argues, the feast of Venus Verticordia is alluded to in Prop. 4.5.35, thus setting up the reading of the ritual described at the end of Prop. 4.8 as connected to the ritual of this aspect of Venus, a celebration on the Kalends of April for Venus' marriage to Mars.[53] Similarly, Sulpicia in [Tib.] 3.8 is described as being the focus of a *sollemne sacrum*, dressed for Mars: *Sulpicia est tibi culta tuis, Mars magne, Kalendis*. Such a setting and connection to the poems in which Cynthia speaks leads us back to the possibility that the name 'Sulpicia' is an allusion to the third-century BC Sulpicia who was chosen to dedicate a statue to Venus Verticordia. In the elegiac re-imagining of her, however, Sulpicia has taken Venus' place beside Mars.

When the reader is allowed to look at all eleven Sulpicia poems as a possible cycle, it is seen that it is much more likely that the poems have a later date than they are currently given by the consensus. If a later post-Ovidian date is indeed the case, it then follows that the Sulpicia poems cannot have been written by an Augustan female poet named Sulpicia, leaving Sulpicia as a constructed elegiac woman. Furthermore, if the poems are post-Ovidian, they fall outside the time span in which the canon of Latin love elegy was formed, and yet are written in the manner of canonical or Augustan Latin love elegy. What the consensus now claims then falls on the side of speculative interpretation, and what has long been ignored are the actual limitations of the evidence that we do have. The question then arises why the claims of the consensus are so different from the readings I have outlined

---

[53] C.W. Conrad, *Course Materials from Years Past: Propertius 4.8*. Accessed March 2014. http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/~cwconrad/. The ritual, which involved Roman women bathing and adorning a statue of Venus, is described by Ovid in *Fasti* 4.

above.[54] Furthermore, if the readings proposed above are more likely than that of the current consensus, or at least equally as likely, how then are we to approach the poems? In other words, if Sulpicia is not the author but rather one constructed element of these poems, how can the poems be said to function as elegiac texts?

What I will propose in the following chapters is that the Sulpicia poems should be considered as *pseudepigrapha*, namely as intentional chronological *pseudepigrapha* or fakes, written in a cultural context in which fakes were a common and accepted form of literary discourse, thus allowing for the reading of them as reception texts for the genre of Latin love elegy.[55] A key underlying assumption in my study will be that ancient poets and readers alike were very aware of genre, not only in terms of the meter used but also the content of each poem. Recognizable generic conventions and clues allowed both a poet to speak on more than one level and a reader to interpret each poem presented, and so the genre chosen by the poet should not be regarded lightly; particularly in the form of *pseudepigrapha*, the poems can be read as reception texts that self-consciously interact with those very conventions. Therefore, while it is impossible to reconstruct the ancient reception and thus the ancient readers' perceptions of the Sulpicia poems without any extant witnesses, in Chapter 2 I will focus on how these poems seem to interact with the genre of Latin love elegy, i.e. how the author of the Sulpicia poems as a reader of canonical Latin love elegy read and interpreted the genre. In doing so, I will examine what the poems tell us about the identity and role of the Sulpicia poetic persona in the poems themselves and in the genre as a whole. In effect, this

---

[54] Here I follow Robert D. Hume's stages of verification or justification in historical scholarship:
> First, the scholar must understand (and make clear to others) exactly what is being claimed, and where those claims slide across the boundary between fact and speculative interpretation…Second, one must ask what pertinent evidence has been ignored or scanted…Third, the scholar (or the scholar's challenger) must ask how the claims advanced differ from the hypotheses or conclusions of predecessors… [recognizing that] sober analysis of why differences have arisen is more fruitful than partisan argumentation.

Robert D. Hume, "Historical Scholarship: Its Aims and Limits," *The Review of English Studies* 53, no. 211 (2002): 415-16.

[55] Thus I will carry out the reassessment Irene Peirano herself noted may be needed: "If the Messalla of the Sulpicia cycle is in fact to be taken as Messalla Corvinus, then it might be necessary to reassess the poems as chronological fictions." Peirano, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*, 134n54.

approach will "unedit" the poems as they currently exist,[56] for I will consider the poems not as they have come to be edited and presented, but rather as they were transmitted, i.e. somehow connected with Tibullus and the rest of Book 3 of the *Corpus Tibullianum*, undivided, and purportedly ensconced within the genre of Latin love elegy. Furthermore, I will discard the context that has been imposed on the poems due to the assumed knowledge of the author's gender and identity, and instead will consider the context that the poems themselves suggest. In Chapter 3, I will then compare the picture of Sulpicia that emerges from my reading first with the current Gruppian creation/artifact present in Sulpician scholarship, and then with the afterlife Sulpicia has enjoyed in post-classical literary constructions, looking particularly at the first known interpretation of her. Though I know I am challenging a view that has held the field since 1838, my intentions are to do this in a reflective rather than polemical manner, and to shift the focus of scholarship back to a place where progress can perhaps be substantiated.[57]

---

[56] Term borrowed from Leah Marcus, *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton* (London: Routledge, 2003). Taylor & Francis e-Library edition.

[57] My intentions are inspired by Cairns. In defending his use of Day (i.e. Archibald A. Day, *The Origins of Latin Love-Elegy* [1938. Reprint, New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1972]) over Jacoby in his "The Origins of Love-Elegy" (the last chapter in Cairns' 1979 *Tibullus: A Hellenistic Poet at Rome*) Cairns says "I was fully aware that in Cairns (1979) Ch. 9 I was challenging a view that had held the field since 1905, but I wanted to do this in reflective rather than polemical terms…" Francis Cairns, "Propertius and the Origins of Latin Love-Elegy," in *Brill's Companion to Propertius*, ed. Hans-Christian Günther (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 90.

CHAPTER 1: THE SULPICIA POEMS AS *PSEUDEPIGRAPHA*

Scholarship on the Sulpicia poems reaches back to 1475, when the first commentary was published on the work in which they were transmitted in, namely the *Corpus Tibullianum*. And whereas the majority of studies on the poems has been produced within the last thirty years, the topic in general and the breadth of the topic specifically is still relatively obscure within the study of Latin literature. It then comes as no surprise that nearly each new study provides a brief overview of the scholarship. From these repeated introductions and discussions, it may seem at first glance that progress in scholarship on the Sulpicia poems has been shaped by two specific studies, namely: that of Otto Gruppe in 1838, which changed the *communis opinio* from regarding all of the poems as written by the canonical Roman elegist, Tibullus, to reading the poem's feminine persona, Sulpicia, as the author of some of the poems (13-18), and an unnamed author for the rest (8-12);[58] and that of Matthew Santirocco in 1979, which reinstated the literary merit of the poems attributed to Sulpicia, and thus

---

[58] See note 9 above. Gruppe had not uncovered any previously-unknown fact or fragment to support his interpretation. Rather, as Mathilde Skoie has rightly pointed out, Gruppe was likely most influenced by his own historical context, as his study highlights parallels to contemporary women's writing that he saw in a few of the Sulpicia poems, i.e. the amateur and 'feminine' quality to them. As Skoie states,

> according to historians of women's literature, the female authors of the nineteenth century were in the forefront of bringing a 'new language of feeling, spontaneity and authenticity' into the realm of literature, though often claimed by its contemporaries to have some 'deficiencies of style' or 'unusual formulations' or a 'lack of smooth well-rounded perfection' - the same characteristics of those Gruppe attributes to Sulpicia. In support of such identification with contemporary women's writing is the notion of genre. By the end of the eighteenth century the epistolary genre was one associated in particular with women's writing and thus was a natural point of reference. In his analysis Gruppe indeed emphasizes the epistolary nature of the poems of Sulpicia and they are neatly compared precisely with Bettina von Arnim and Goethe's correspondence.

Mathilde Skoie, "Romantic Scholars and Classical Scholarship: German Readings of Sulpicia," in *Romans and Romantics*, eds. Timothy Saunders, Charles Martindale, Ralph Pite, and Mathilde Skoie (Oxford: Oxford University Press Online, 2012), 105-6.

reignited scholarly interest in the poems.[59] For example, Mathilde Skoie, in her seminal work on commentaries on the Sulpicia poems from 1475 to 1990, calls Gruppe's *Die römische Elegie* "probably the most important piece of scholarship in the entire history of Sulpicia's reception," and later names Gruppe and Santirocco as the two signposts of scholarship on the poems.[60] Also, various scholars such as Stephen Hinds and Alison Keith, as well as reference works such as *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, cite Santirocco's article as the earliest source to consult on the poems attributed to Sulpicia.[61] I myself in previous work on the poems have focused on the impact of these two studies.

However, these repeated treatments of the history of scholarship on the Sulpicia poems are similar in another way, in that they tend to disregard the historical variation in the focus of the scholarship, and thus the factors that have truly had the most impact on the scholarship. When this aspect of the reception of the poems is considered, it can be seen that: firstly, the studies of Gruppe and Santirocco are in fact only representatives of two scholarly modalities that shaped the landscape of scholarship on these poems; and, secondly, neither modality can necessarily be said to have brought about progress. The first of these modalities began in the seventeenth century, when questions on Tibullan authorship of Book 3 of the *Corpus Tibullianum* shifted the focus of scholarship to finding replacement *auctores* for the poems, newly minted as *pseudepigrapha*. The second modality began when Sulpicia as a

---

[59] Matthew Santirocco, "Sulpicia Reconsidered," *The Classical Journal* 74 (1979): 229-39. As a central tenet of Gruppe's theory was that the poems he ascribed to Sulpicia were amateur and inferior to those he still ascribed to Tibullus, Santirocco rightly felt the need to argue for the literary value of the poems. That said, Santirocco actually built on Gruppe's theory, as he treated two interpretations in nineteenth-century scholarship as "factual discoveries," namely Gruppe's division of the eleven poems between two authors, and the subsequent reading of the persona of Sulpicia as one of the authors and niece of the Augustan literary patron, Messalla. Ibid., 239. See also note 7 above.
[60] Mathilde Skoie, *Reading Sulpicia: Commentaries 1475-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 162; Mathilde Skoie, "*Corpus Tibullianum*, Book 3," in *A Companion to Roman Love Elegy*, ed. Barbara K. Gold (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 96.
[61] Hinds, "The Poetess and the Reader," 30; Alison Keith, "Critical Trends in Interpreting Sulpicia," *Classical World* 100, no. 1 (2006): 3; Patricia Anne Watson, *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), s.v. "Sulpicia." Hinds does cite older works in a general footnote on a bibliography for the poems, but names Santirocco and Currie in the body of the article as "good literary critical introductions" to the poems attributed to Sulpicia. Hinds, "The Poetess and the Reader," 29-30. Keith begins her discussion on "critical trends" in work on the Sulpicia poems by pinpointing Santirocco's article as what "inaugurated a new *saeculum* in Sulpician studies." Keith, "Critical Trends," 3.

27

historical poet was wholeheartedly accepted as one of the *auctores*, turning the study of the Sulpicia poems into a study of Sulpicia.

Given that reading the poems' Sulpicia as an Augustan poet gives us the only extant work by a female Roman poet, and given that there are very few today who disagree with this reading, my claim that neither of these modalities have brought progress requires two caveats upfront. First of all, as will be shown in this chapter, in saying that the poems may have been mishandled as *pseudepigrapha*, it is not my intention to say that the scholarship went awry in any manner when the poems were dismissed as Tibullan; if the poems were not written by Tibullus, as they very much seem not to have been, they should not be read as having actually been written by Tibullus.[62] However, it is my view that the tendency to focus on the identity of the author rather than on the function of the texts, or on unanswerable questions rather than on more useful literary and historical analyses, has sidelined the more verifiable side of the discussion.[63]

Secondly, at the heart of my argument is the belief that the adherence to the consensus of Sulpicia-as-poet says more about the modern desire (albeit an understandable desire) for a Roman Sappho than the evidence at hand. As discussed in the Introduction, beyond a precarious autobiographical reading, there is no concrete evidence that a historical Roman woman named Sulpicia is indeed the author of any of the Sulpicia poems, nor that the biography thus far constructed for an Augustan poet named Sulpicia is sound, and thus the attribution of any poems to such a figure is but one possible reading of the text. Furthermore,

---

[62] On support for the Sulpicia poems and Book 3 in general being definitely non-Tibullan, see Maltby, "The Unity of *Corpus Tibullianum* Book 3," 319-40. For an interesting non-classicist view, see Vittoria Sacco, "A statistical approach based on the correspondence analysis of two latin corpuses: *Historia Augusta* and *Corpus Tibullianum*," (Master of Science in Statistics thesis, University of Neuchâtel, 2011).

[63] As a methodological framework for analyzing previous scholarship on the Sulpicia poems, I use the factors which Hume states a historical scholar wants to know: "(a) what questions can usefully be asked; (b) the degree to which speculation is necessary or admissible; and (c) how hypotheses are to be tested and (in so far as is possible) verified." Hume, "Historical Scholarship," 410-11. Furthermore, I use the basis of Irene Peirano's study on Latin *pseudepigrapha* as my own:

> Moving away from the narrow focus on authenticity and attribution that has so far characterized the study of *pseudepigrapha*, I investigate instead some aspects of the *cultural* work performed by these texts in the original circumstances of production (in as far as these can be recovered).

Peirano, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*, 9.

the idea that the author of any of these poems can and has been identified, and the subsequent marginalization of opinions contrary to the consensus, has produced a polemical scholarly environment that is so different from that which existed centuries ago, that, with the knowledge that the same evidence was available then as now, i.e. the poems and only the poems, one must ask just why the claims accepted and advanced today differ from those of our predecessors. And as the current consensus is founded on the creation of Sulpicia-as-poet, which itself was founded on the recognition of the Sulpicia poems as non-Tibullan, at the heart of such a question is an inquiry into the potential mishandling of the poems as *pseudepigrapha*.

1.1 Tibullan, or not Tibullan…

With the majority of the Sulpicia poems being in the first person of Sulpicia (9, 11, and 13-18), it may seem odd to us today to collectively address *all* eleven poems as *pseudepigrapha*, as such a term under today's consensus implies that a historical poet named Sulpicia existed, but that she did not have a hand in any of the poems. Indeed, today the label of '*pseudepigrapha*' is generally used in scholarship on the Sulpicia poems only for poems 8-12 inclusively, under the common Gruppian reading that these were written by an unnamed later author inspired by Sulpicia's 'own' group of poems, 13-18.[64] It must be remembered, however, that for the majority of their lives, just as the other nine poems in Book 3 were though to be written by Tibullus in either his or another's persona, all eleven Sulpicia poems were thought to have been written by Tibullus in the persona of an elegiac woman, not unlike

---

[64] The Sulpicia poems are sometimes labeled indirectly as *pseudepigrapha* in general discussions of Book 3, as poems 1-7 and 19-20 are nearly universally considered *pseudepigrapha*. But, apart from Niklas Holzberg's single-author pseudo-Tibullus theory (which will be discussed in Chapter 3), such a treatment occurs only in sources unconcerned with the authorship debate surrounding the Sulpicia poems specifically (e.g. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Greece and Rome*, s.v. "pseudepigrapha, literary").

The reading of poems 8-12 as pseudo-Sulpician cannot be said to fall under the consensus per se, as various theories as to their authorship exist even amongst those who read Sulpicia as the Augustan author of 13-18. Judith Hallett, for example, sees Sulpicia as the author of all eleven poems; Hinds sees a male as the author of 8-12, and Parker sees Sulpicia as the author of all the first-person poems (9, 11, and 13-18). Thus the portion of Gruppe's two-fold theory regarding male authorship of poems 8-12 is regarded here only as a common reading. See Judith Hallett,"The Eleven Elegies," 45-65; Hinds, "The Poetess and the Reader"; and Parker, "Sulpicia."

each of Ovid's *Heroides*, for the simple reason that they were transmitted with the genuine works of Tibullus. Therefore, when Tibullan authorship of the Sulpicia poems specifically was first questioned by K. von Barth in 1624,[65] and of all of Book 3 by Johann Heinrich Voss in 1786, the Sulpicia poems were held to be written by a pseudo-Tibullus;[66] it was not until Gruppe separated the Sulpicia poems into two authorial groups that the idea of a pseudo-*Sulpicia* was created.

That said, the transmission history of the Sulpicia poems does not necessarily indicate that they would have actually been seen specifically as pseudo-*Tibullan* either by readers in antiquity, at least not by readers contemporary with their writing. The first known mention of a manuscript of the *Corpus Tibullianum* is in a Carolingian library catalogue, dated to 790 (Diez. B. Sant. 66); all later *florilegia* and manuscripts are thought to derive from this Carolingian codex.[67] However, the actual Carolingian catalogue entry says "Albi Tibulli lib. II," thus seemingly indicating that the manuscript in the library had only two books, rather than the normal three.[68] While B. L. Ullman's argument that this is simply a scribal mistake and is meant to read 'lib. III' seems to be accepted by most, this catalogue entry does call into question the assumption that all pre-modern Tibullan manuscripts like the Renaissance

---

[65] Barth identified the author of all of the Sulpicia poems as a female Roman poet named Sulpicia, but the Domitian Sulpicia Caleni praised in Martial 10.35 and 38, not the Augustan Sulpicia of today's consensus. Barth's view was followed by J. Broukhusius in 1708. C. G. Heyne was the first to suggest an Augustan Sulpicia, in 1755. Parker, "Sulpicia," 40; Skoie, *Reading Sulpicia*, 111.

[66] The view of non-Tibullan authorship for the Sulpicia poems in particular must have gained a few other proponents that are undiscussed in the scholarship, as James Grainger in his 1759 translation of and commentary on the *Corpus Tibullianum* physically separates 3.8-18 and 20 from the rest of the Tibullan corpus, under the section title "The Poems of Sulpicia" (attributing poem 19 to Tibullus). Furthermore, in his introduction to the section, Grainger says: "Some of the beſt modern Commentators contend, that the little Poems which compoſe this Fourth Book, are not the Work of Tibullus." James Grainger, ed., *A Poetical Translation of the Elegies of Tibullus; and of the Poems of Sulpicia, vol. II* (London: A. Miller, 1759), 225. Google books edition. Though Grainger elsewhere in his commentary discusses the views of Barth and Broukhusius, Grainger does not specifically note who these "modern Commentators" specific to the Sulpicia poems are, and thus it is possible that there were others who had published their doubts on the authorship of the Sulpicia poems specifically. In regards to Book 3 as a whole, however, Johann Heinrich Voss in 1786 seems to be "the first to make a clear distinction between the genuine Tibullan work (bks. I-II) and the work erroneously attributed to Tibullus (bk. III)." Fernando Navarro Antolín, ed. *Lygdamus: Corpus Tibullianum III. 1-6: Lygdami Elegiarum Liber*, trans. J. J. Zoltowski (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 5.

[67] Antolín, *Lygdamus*, 31-34.

[68] See Figure 2 in Appendix B for a facsimile of the Carolingian catalogue entry.

manuscripts were 'complete', i.e. containing Books 1 through 3.[69] Indeed, no portion of Book

3 is clearly alluded to or cited by ancient poets or grammarians, and the Sulpicia poems are

not excerpted in any known/extant medieval *florilegia*, which is otherwise the earliest post-

classical evidence of the Tibullan corpus as a whole.[70] The earliest direct mention we have of

Book 3 is actually a twelfth-century catalogue of Lobbes, which reads "Albini Tibulli lib.

III," and the first extracts from Book 3 are from a mid-thirteenth-century manuscript that

does not go beyond poem 3.6.[71] The first surviving witness of the Sulpicia poems specifically

then is the earliest extant manuscript of the *Corpus Tibullianum*, the *codex Ambrosianus R.

26 sup* (A), dated to approximately 1375 and assumed to be a copy of the lost ancestor of all

subsequent Tibullan manuscripts.[72] What the "relative recentness of the manuscript

tradition"[73] of the *Corpus Tibullianum* in general and perhaps Book 3 specifically means for

the Sulpicia poems is that it is difficult to say when the cycle was attached to the genuine

works of Tibullus. The earliest possible date is possibly Maltby's later dating of "by the

second half of the fourth century," based on "echoes" of Books 1 and 2 as well as poems 3.7

and 19 in the poetry of the fourth-century AD Ausonius.[74] And, since all of the poems of

---

[69] B. L. Ullman, "A List of Classical Manuscripts (in an Eighth-Century Codex) Perhaps from Corbie," *Scriptorium* 8 (1954): 26. A. Rostagni argued that "lib. II" means that Book 3 had not yet been added in the ninth century, while others read this as meaning Books 2 and 3 were originally combined. See Antolín, *Lygdamus*, 31n2.
[70] Antolín, *Lygdamus*, 5-6 (notes 8 and 18), 37; Skoie, *Reading Sulpicia*, 27-28. On the possible Late Antiquity allusions to Tibullus in Ausonius, see note 74 below.
[71] These extracts, which survive in Paris lat. 16708, were from Richard de Fournival's Tibullus manuscript (on Fournival's potential importance to the provenance of the Tibullan manuscripts, see note 72 below). Specifically, from Book 3, only 3.4.73-76 and 3.6.5-6, 35, 43-48 occur in this manuscript. M. D. Reeve and R. H. Rouse, "Tibullus," in *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics*, ed. L. D. Reynolds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 421-22.
[72] The assumption is that Richard de Fournival's copy, which ended up at the Sorbonne after his death, was a copy of the Orléans codex, which is a copy of the Carolingian codex. Reeve and Rouse, "Tibullus," 422; Ullman, "A List of Classical Manuscripts," 31; Antolín, *Lygdamus*, 33-34.
[73] Antolín, *Lygdamus*, 38.
[74] Maltby, "The Unity of *Corpus Tibullianum* Book 3," 339. Maltby, unfortunately, does not provide any citations for Ausonius. Roger P.H. Green does discuss particular instances of possible borrowing, but only from Book 1 and from 3.4; the possible borrowing of 3.4 amounts to only two words, in opposite order than how they appear in the *Corpus Tibullianum*. That said, Green indicates that "the echoes of Tibullus…are dubious, but his position in Ausonius is secure." R. P. H. Green, "Ausonius' Use of the Classical Latin Poets: Some New Examples and Observations," *The Classical Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (1977): 446. Also see Roger P.H. Green, "Latin Love Elegy in Late Antiquity: Maximianus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Latin Love Elegy*, ed. Thea S. Thorsen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 260-61.

Book 3 are datable to the first or second century AD (as discussed in the Introduction), if Book 3 was not attached to Books 1 and 2 until the fourth century or later, it is not certain that the Sulpicia (or any of the other Book 3) poems would have been read specifically as 'pseudo-Tibullan' for at least the first two or three centuries of their lives.[75]

That is not to say that the Sulpicia poems should not have been regarded as *pseudepigrapha* at all and that the poems should have been attributed to their persona all along. First of all, as discussed in the Introduction, a named first-person persona does not necessarily indicate the name of the poet, and interpreting it as such requires both an autobiographical reading and a disregard for the genre the poems are written in, being Latin love elegy. Whereas the majority of other first-person Latin love elegies are in the actual name of the poet, it is a generic convention that the elegiac women have pseudonyms, or names intentionally chosen to be read as fictitious. This fact likely led the majority of scholars in the seventeenth century up to Gruppe to still consider the Sulpicia poems as written by someone other than a woman named Sulpicia.

Furthermore, given the physical context in which the poems have survived, scholars seem to be justified in considering the Sulpicia poems as *pseudepigrapha* for reasons beyond an "allographic phenomenon."[76] For '*pseudepigrapha*' does not only describe works that have been mistakenly attributed to an author due to the text's reception history, but, more generally, all "works that falsely purport to have a specific provenance," i.e. either in terms of authorship *or* the chronological setting.[77] That is, since the poems of Book 3 together form

---

[75] Another question about the compilation of the *Corpus Tibullianum* that will not be addressed further in this thesis is when the epitaph and *Vita* for Tibullus were appended at the end of Book 3. Cairns notes that the *Vita* is "medieval in its present form but probably Suetonian in origin." Assuming that Cairns is simply saying the *Vita* is composed in the *manner* of Suetonius but not actually *by* Suetonius, it can provide no evidence for the dating of the Sulpicia poems. Cairns, *Tibullus*, 1. In the commentary of his Tibullus edition, Lee provides a list of "Suetonian parallels" for the *Vita*, and notes that while "the 'amatory epistles' [mentioned in the *Vita*] are usually taken to be poems 8-12 in Book 3…there is nothing to indicate that these poems are letters…It seems more likely that the epistles in question have not survived." Guy Lee, "Explanatory Notes," in *Tibullus: Elegies – Introduction, Text, Translation and Notes*, 3rd ed. (Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1990), 163. Thomas Hubbard, on the other hand, reads 13-18 as being by Tibullus himself (as will be discussed in Chapter 3), and thus sees the mention of short erotic epistles in the *Vita* as evidence for his theory. Hubbard, "The Invention of Sulpicia," 186.
[76] Phrase borrowed from Peirano, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*, 3.
[77] Ibid., 1.

a fairly cohesive book, since they recall Tibullus as well as the works of the other canonical Latin love elegists, and since they were attached to the *Corpus Tibullianum* in the first place, it can be presumed that, before Book 3 was appended to Books 1 and 2, all or most of the twenty poems of Book 3 were: possibly circulating together; were being read as anonymous or pseudonymous works; and, as all of the poems of Book 3 were likely written *after* the heyday of the Augustan genre of Latin love elegy, were seen as fakes in the chronological sense, as they purport to be written in the style or time of canonical Latin love elegy. Even if only the latter is true, it then follows that recognizing them as non-Tibullan allows for the possibility that the Sulpicia poems were written intentionally as *pseudepigrapha*, specifically as pseudo-Augustan elegy, and thus the possibility that the poems were recognized as such by contemporary readers. The poems' attachment to Tibullus' work specifically may be no more than an illustration of ancient Rome's "widespread tendency to ascribe anonymous works to famous writers in each genre,"[78] and thus the later assumption of genuine Tibullan authorship may then be a misattribution unintended by both the poems' author(s) and the compiler or editor of the *Corpus Tibullianum.*

There is in fact a precedent in classical Latin literature for such a scenario to occur, specifically in literature from the early Imperial period, when the Sulpicia poems were likely written. First and foremost, it must be recognized that it was not uncommon for authors in early Imperial Rome to purposely write in the name and/or style of another well-known author, willingly covering up their own name for the purpose of their text. This practice of writing "fakes," foreign to us in our world of copyright and plagiarism laws, in fact had a

---

[78] Ibid., 79. One poem in Book 3 contains the name of Tibullus (3.19), and the Messalla of 3.7 and 14 was Tibullus' patron, making Tibullus an obvious choice for an editor wanting to save pseudonymous works from obscurity.

Of course, anonymous or pseudonymous works that do not purport to be written by a particular author or in another time have also been attached to canonical works, and thus mere attachment to the works of Tibullus does not *ipso facto* make the Sulpicia poems intentional or self-conscious *pseudepigrapha*. It is in their dating as post-Augustan and interaction with the rest of the post-Augustan poems of Book 3 and with Augustan elegy that they can be viewed as intentional *pseudepigrapha*, rather than "pseudofakes." See Ibid., 3-4.

deep-seated history in the educational system of ancient Greece and Rome.[79] In particular, impersonations or role-playing of stock characters and mythological or historical figures in both rhetorical speeches and verse, especially through the re-working and expansion of canonical texts, were standard rhetorical exercises (*prosopopoeiae*). As Irene Peirano discusses in her insightful work on classical *pseudepigrapha*, in the early Imperial period, these rhetorical exercises became a literary type in their own right and came to exist outside of the educational context as part of a "literary tradition that encouraged and sustained the production of impersonations."[80] Authors producing such "creative supplementation" of canonical works were not attempting to dupe readers into thinking they were actually reading the works of well-known canonical authors, but were rather blatantly re-exploring well-known authors and texts by filling in blanks left by the original authors, imagining what the work of a young canonical writer might have looked like, or rewriting canonical texts in a parodic fashion to explore "what-if scenarios."[81] Even canonical authors employed such practices, such as how Ovid in his *Heroides* 7 "fills the blank in the Virgilian narrative by giving the words that Dido used."[82]

---

[79] I agree with Peirano, whose unique work was an invaluable resource for my thesis, in using the term "fake" for a translation of *pseudepigraphon* rather than the more often used "forgery," as the latter in the English language conveys a meaning of intentional deceit on the part of the author, while the former conveys that fact that the Greek word does not necessarily indicate authorial intent, just that the text has been misattributed for one reason or another. For a discussion of the definition and different categories of literature involved in the term *pseudepigrapha*, see Ibid., 1-7.

[80] Ibid., 31. Collectively, the written compositions used as preparatory exercises in the rhetorical instruction of Greek and Roman schools are called *progymnasmata*, which included "encomia, impersonation exercises (*ethopoeia* or *prosopopoeia*), fable, description (*ekphrasis*), anecdote (*chreia*), comparison (*synkrisis*), maxim (*gnomē*) and common place (*topos*)." Ibid., 19.

Peirano of course is not the first to point out the connection between pseudepigraphic texts and educational exercises. See, for example, Michael Gagarin, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), s.v. "pseudepigrapha, literary." However, the *OEAGR* simply states that "many pseudepigraphic texts…were exercises as part of a literary and rhetorical education or as literary imitation for entertainment," whereas Peirano argues for the fake being a separate literary type in its own right, with fakes accepted in their cultural context because of their beginnings as educational exercises.

[81] For example, the *Culex* expands on advice given in the *Georgics* 3.425-39, the *Catalepton* imagines the poetry of a young Virgil, and a school exercise preserved in the Pseudo-Hermogenes *Progymnasmata* II "asked students to demonstrate that 'it is impossible for Arion to have been saved by a dolphin'…" Peirano, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*, 21, and 10-31.

[82] Ibid., 19.

Indeed, as Peirano argues, fakes were part of "a continuum of reception practices" in Hellenistic and Roman poetry that would have been a common and recognized mode of discourse for the ancient reader.[83] The contemporary audience, familiar with this tradition, would have been "trained to appreciate impersonations as fictions."[84] How an ancient reader would approach a text which seems to contain biographical information that could not possibly belong to the actual author is thus entirely different from how we would. As Peirano states,

> [f]or modern readers, cues to a text's historicity…are taken *prima facie* as indication of a text's genuineness and reliability as a historical document. For ancient readers…history and fiction are not incompatible modes of discourse. In their eyes, a text that restaged the past could easily be interpreted as a teasing and playful piece of entertainment.[85]

Therefore, whereas pre-Voss scholars saw in the first-person persona of [Tib.] 3.7 (the so-called *Panegyricus Messallae*) genuine words of Tibullus, the ancient reader may have been focusing on how the panegyric interacted with not just Tibullus' own poetry, particularly his own poetry to Messalla, but also with the other poetry about Messalla. As Peirano argues, with knowledge of the cultural context in which they were written, fakes can be read as reception texts, showing how the author/impersonator interprets, interrogates, and interacts with a canonical text.[86]

And in terms of what poets and poetic texts were impersonated in early Imperial Rome, it seems that the authors were rather selective in what they re-imagined. Between the death of Ovid (i.e. what is traditionally thought of as the end of Latin love elegy, or at least of

---

[83] Ibid., 24.
[84] Ibid., 25.
[85] Ibid., 31.
[86] Ibid., 9-12. It should be noted that Peirano states that "fakes tend to cluster around genres such as encomium and lament, which traditionally accommodated role-play and fictional re-enactment in standard rhetorical exercises such as *prosopopoeiae*." Ibid., 243. To this list, I would add the genre of Latin love elegy, in which the lover-poet constructed a fictional world from the beginning with a fictional beloved, a fictional 'war' of love, and a fictional stance of slavery to a woman, not to mention the convention of lamenting over an unfair beloved. Furthermore, as will be discussed below, Peirano notes that there is a curious trope in the corpus of Latin *pseudepigrapha* of writing about Messalla long after he died. As this is presumably the same Messalla that is mentioned in [Tib.] 3.14, I read this similarity between the Sulpicia poems and other *pseudepigrapha* as supporting the reading of the poems as *pseudepigrapha*.

canonical Latin love elegy[87]) and the reign of Nero, "the main products…seem to be forgeries of Augustan poetry."[88] As Charles Murgia discusses in his analysis of the authenticity of *Heroides* 15 (the so-called *Epistula Sapphus*),

> it is in the period shortly after Ovid's demise that poets seem to have felt compelled to compose their amatory verse only under the *persona* of an Augustan poet…not necessarily because the poets maliciously wanted to deceive, but because that may have seemed the only safe way to compose amatory elegy (that and scribbling anonymously on the walls of such as Herculaneum and Pompeii). For the period between Ovid and Nero, pseudo-Augustan poetry is what poets did best.[89]

Even before the death of Ovid, the corpus of non-canonical Latin love elegy seems to have expanded through "a specifically Ovidian subculture"[90] that Ovid himself seems to have been aware of.[91] These *poetae Ovidiani* "selflessly supplemented or expanded upon the body of Ovid's work," including their own *Heroides* epistles, a choice which may have prompted Persius' criticism of contemporary "effeminate poets that wrote elegy on mythological heroines."[92]

Evidence of this "Ovidian subculture" and general continuance of Latin love elegy in fact clearly exists within Book 3 of the *Corpus Tibullianum*, namely the Lygdamus poems (3.1-6), which have often been attributed to a young Ovid or a pseudo-Ovid due to allusions such as the direct borrowing of an entire line from Ovid's *Tristia*.[93] And, as the Lygdamus

---

[87] For a discussion on the erroneous assumption that Ovid was the last Latin love elegist, see Stephen Wheeler, "Before the *aetas Ovidiana*: Mapping the Early Reception of Ovidian Elegy," *Hermathena* no. 177/178 (2004-2005): 9-26.

[88] Charles E. Murgia, "Imitation and Authenticity in Ovid: *Metamorphoses* 1.477 and *Heroides* 15," *The American Journal of Philology* 106, no. 4 (1985): 466n24.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Wheeler, "Before the *aetas Ovidiana*," 18.

[91] E.g. in *Am*. 2.18.27-34, Ovid says his friend Sabinus wrote his imagined addressees' (i.e. males') replies to the *Heroides*. See Ibid., 20.

[92] *Sat*. 1, particularly line 34. Ibid., 20.

[93] As noted by Wheeler and others, [Tib.] 3.5.18 is the exact same as Ovid *Tr*. 4.10.6. Ibid., 17.

poems show both a combination of Ovid and Tibullus[94] and the existence of pseudo-Ovidiana or pseudo-Augustan elegy without the direct use of 'Ovid' or another canonical name, it then follows that the same situation might apply in the case of other poems transmitted alongside the Lygdamus poems that seem comfortable in the worlds of both Tibullus and Ovid, i.e. the Sulpicia poems. For the Sulpicia poems, like the Lygdamus poems, do not purport to be by Tibullus or any other known writer; the poems are mostly in the persona of Sulpicia, and Tibullus' name is no where in the eleven poems. And, like the Lygdamus poems, they hint at both the world of Tibullus with the mention of Messalla and the style of Ovid, particularly in their use of a female persona, paralleled only in Ovid's *Heroides*, and in the type of direct speech that Ovid advises in his *Ars Amatoria* for women to use in their poetry.

Thus, with their use of the generic conventions of Latin love elegy in a period after the canonical works of the genre were written, as well as the internal clues about the poems' fakeness as discussed in the Introduction, the Sulpicia poems can be read as being what Peirano calls the "chronological fake." In this type, the author "remains hidden behind a generic historical type (e.g., Augustan writer),"[95] the generically anachronistic nature of the poems thus signalling to the reader both how the poems are meant to be read and what they are not. And though the ancient reader may have recognized that "the information about the author's persona does not identify him as a recognizable figure but serves rather to support more generally their pseudo-Augustan chronology," some such texts did become attached to the genuine works of a canonical author.[96] Thus, as the *Consolatio ad Liviam* came to be transmitted with Ovid's works though it did not advertise itself as specifically Ovidian or pseudo-Ovidian, and as the *Elegiae* came to be transmitted with Virgil's works though they did not advertise themselves as specifically Virgilian or pseudo-Virgilian, so too, perhaps, did

---

[94] As noted by Wheeler,

> [t]hematic affinities with Tibullus have led 'Lygdamus' to be transmitted in the *corpus Tibullianum*. It is unlikely, however, that the unknown poet was attempting to impersonate Tibullus because he also borrows openly from Ovid, and especially from Ovid's exilic elegy. If anything, this anonymous author may be an important witness for the combination of the erotic Tibullus with the exilic Ovid.

Ibid., 18.

[95] Peirano, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*, 206.

[96] Ibid., 220.

the Sulpicia poems in their non-author-specific pseudo-Augustan elegiac style come to be attached to the genuine works of Tibullus.

1.2 …that [was] the question

From this perspective, the perhaps uninformed focus on discovering the poems' real author(s) when the poems were recognized as non-Tibullan asked the wrong question, inasmuch as such a question could not be answered without speculation, and any proposed speculations could not be verified. If the poems' authorship was hidden from the beginning, and perhaps intentionally hidden by the author, it was in effect futile if not unnecessary to attempt to find out the truth over a millennium later. At the very least, when first viewed as *pseudepigrapha*, the poems' figure of Sulpicia should never have been read as the actual poet, as reading her as a literary construct should have been viewed as the most natural reading. In particular, if viewed as chronological *pseudepigrapha*, the borrowing of the name to allude to an earlier historical or pseudo-historical Sulpicia becomes a very plausible reading, and perhaps one which should have gained more attention as soon as the poems were recognized as non-Tibullan. For in early Imperial Rome, in both rhetorical exercises and other chronological *pseudepigrapha*, historical figures were appropriated from Roman history as characters in a re-imagining of a text or historical event, such as Maecenas (Propertius' patron) in the *Elegiae in Maecenatem*, and Livia, Antonia (Drusus' wife), and Tiberius in the *Consolatio ad Liviam*.[97] What is more, in the latter example, these figures appeared previously in one of the same works in which the aforementioned third-century BC Sulpicia comes down to us, Valerius Maximus' *Memorabilia*, "a collection of historical exempla"; as "the individual meaning of each character's story and therefore their exemplary status was often deeply contested," historical figures known from texts such as Valerius Maximus' were often re-imagined in less than a flattering light.[98] Even the canonical poets were re-imagined in parodic portraits, such as how the *Catalepton* put erotic poetry in the

---

[97] For a bibliography and discussion on these *pseudepigrapha*, see Chapter 5 in Peirano, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*.
[98] Ibid., 233.

mouth of Virgil "the virgin" and the now-lost pseudo-Horatian elegies put elegy in the mouth of the rather anti-elegiac Horace.[99] Thus, for *pseudepigrapha* to re-imagine an iconic Roman woman would not be surprising. And, given the elegiac penchant for flouting the morality expected in Augustus' Rome, a generic convention in its own right, for pseudepigraphic elegy to place one of chastest women in Rome's history in the forefront of Roman female-'authored' erotic poetry would simply be expected.[100]

Moreover, returning to the mention of Messalla in 3.14, his very presence in the cycle adds another level of fictitiousness, given his prominence in other *pseudepigrapha*. For three other poems in the canon of Latin *pseudepigrapha* exist that are addressed to him and written long after his death, being the pseudo-Virgilian *Catalepton* 9, *Ciris* in the *Appendix Vergiliana*, and the poem that directly precedes the Sulpicia poems, the so-called *Panegyricus Messallae* ([Tib.] 3.7).[101] Furthermore, Messalla is a character in another fictional text, the *Symposium* that Maecenas, another patron of Latin love elegy, is said to have written.[102] While this "clustering of so many fakes around the personality of Messalla" is rather curious, as Peirano states, it can perhaps be explained by the fact that "relatively little is known of Messalla as a patron," and so "the nature and extent of his relationship with

---

[99] The pseudo-Horatian elegies are mentioned in Suetonius' *Vita Hor.* 68-70, and Virgil's nickname (*parthenias*) is attested in Donatus' *Vita Verg.* 11. Ibid., 23.

[100] As will be seen in Chapter 3, this possible reading can be seen in Pontano's re-imagining of the elegiac Sulpicia in his *Baiae*.

[101] Peirano, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*, 120. Wheeler notes that *Catalepton* 9 has in the past been considered to be pseudo-Ovidiana. Wheeler, "Before the *aetas Ovidiana*," 19-20. Oddly, Santirocco reads Messalla's *puella* praised in *Catalepton* 9 as Sulpicia, without expanding on what this reading means for the *Catalepton* author's interpretation of the relationship between Sulpicia and Messalla. Santirocco, "Sulpicia Reconsidered," 230-31.

[102] As mentioned in Servius' commentary on Virgil's *Aeneid* 8.310: *Hoc etiam Maecenas in* Symposio *ubi Vergilius et Horatius interfuerunt, cum ex persona Messallae de ui uini loqueretur, ait 'idem umor ministrat faciles oculos, pulchriora reddit omnia et dulcis iuuentae reducit bona.'* See Shannon N. Byrne, "Maecenas and Petronius' Trimalchio Maecenatianus," *Ancient Narrative* 6 (2007): 38 (including note 33).

the poets might therefore have been a subject of speculation";[103] the figure of Messalla in [Tib.] 3.14 may simply be part of that speculation.[104]

There was and is then a disconnect between the search to establish a contemporary and familial link between Sulpicia as a historical poet and Messalla. Indeed, the idea that we know that Messalla had a 'circle of poets' that included his niece is so ingrained in modern scholarship that it is often forgotten that this concept is based on identifying Messalla as Sulpicia's uncle and searching for an explanation for the seemingly random collection of poems in Book 3.[105] Given the dating of the poems, Messalla's appearance in 3.14 alone should be seen as adding to the fictitiousness of the Sulpicia poems, rather than the presumed reality. Furthermore, the position of the Sulpicia poems right after an obvious *pseudepigraphon* in the guise of a panegyric to the same Messalla should factor into the discussion of the Sulpicia poems. For scholars have had no problem in the past discussing 3.7 as pseudo-Tibullan, even as it being written "perhaps as a school exercise";[106] why then could this not apply to the other poems of Book 3? For that matter, the poems which precede 3.7 should be brought into the discussion, as scholars have had no trouble discussing those also as chronological fictions. Indeed, as mentioned above, the Lygdamus poems and the Sulpicia poems are alike in how they read/re-imagine the elegiac relationship portrayed in

---

[103] Peirano, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*, 121-22.

[104] It may also be worth noting that the Augustan Messalla was a *Frater Arvalis*, a member of a brotherhood who served Mars in his capacity as the god of agriculture. See Cairns, *Tibullus*, 130; and Francis Cairns, "Cornutus, Messalla and Augury," in *Papers on Roman Elegy: 1969-2003* (Bologna: Patron editore, 2007), 382-84. As agriculture and the countryside were conventionally moral, the presence of Messalla in 3.14 may serve only to amplify the blatantly immoral stance that the poetic persona is taking by complaining about leaving the city. Furthermore, Messalla as connected to Mars also reminds us of the presence of Mars in 3.8, rather than Venus.

[105] For example, in stating how one who sees a hand other than an Augustan Sulpicia in the poems might present their argument, Currie says: "An objector's voice could perhaps be raised here, suggesting that these instances of reversal point to a literary game conducted by clever people within the Messalla coterie…" Currie, "The Poems of Sulpicia," 1758. Such phrasing suggests that Currie would not imagine that someone who did not read the name of Sulpicia to be biographical would also not read the name of Messalla to be. This idea of a circle of Messalla is still repeated more recently, such as by Stevenson:

> The reason why we have her verse at all is that, as good luck would have it, a volume of 'poems by friends and associates of M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus' was collected up…it is unusual for works by members of a coterie to be preserved together with the oeuvre of its leading poet.

Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets*, 36. See note 13 above.

[106] Maltby, "The Unity of *Corpus Tibullianum*," 331.

canonical Latin love elegy. If all the poems in Book 3 seem to occupy a similar literary space without convoluted notions of familial ties and anachronistic literary circles, does it then not follow that they should all be treated as pseudo-Augustan elegy?

Unfortunately, when they were recognized as non-Tibullan, reading them as pseudo-Augustan elegies similar to the rest of the book they were transmitted in was not regarded as a solution to the issue of the Sulpicia poems, as the discussion was immediately steered in an entirely different direction; as the only question that seemed to matter in pre-Gruppian scholarship was 'who wrote the poems if not Tibullus?,' scholars understandably thought the matter had been resolved when Gruppe's reading created a poet named Sulpicia. Now however, in light of the resuscitated discussion here, the more useful question arises: how do the poems function as *pseudepigrapha* and how do they interact with the canonical Latin love elegies they emulate?

CHAPTER 2: LATIN LOVE ELEGY, ACCORDING TO SULPICIA

If the physical context, likely dating, and subsequent anachronistic presence of Messalla argues for the poems' status as *pseudepigrapha*, the mere presence of a female persona argues for the reading of them as a response to canonical Latin love elegy. All other Latin elegiac *corpora* are obviously male-authored, with a named male poetic persona writing about his tempestuous relationship with his mistress (and, sometimes, young male lover). But beyond being love poetry, Latin love elegy has a more subtle dimension of meaning: in its focus on love and its specific dynamic of lover and beloved, the genre was used as a platform for these poets to convey their disagreement with societal expectations. Rather than becoming involved in a political or military life, these upper-class Roman men chose to write poetry. And rather than writing in a more respectable, masculine meter such as epic, a genre in which one could at least praise those who were leading a political or military life, these poets chose a genre thought to be base, immoral, and degenerate; elegiac poets even went so far as to write *recusatio* poems about being 'unable' to write about epic themes like war and Augustus, claiming that their only inspiration was their beloved.[107] Moreover, the elegists were not just content with making love their chosen war, but they sought to display themselves as unworthy as possible; not only were they cowards, unable/unwilling to fight or write about fighting, but they were subservient to loose women, women of uncertain status who were by no means social equals of the poets. In Augustus' Rome, there could be nothing less Roman.

As such, Latin love elegy can and should be read not as mere love poetry, but as a medium through which poets could voice their discontent with the status quo. Furthermore, the gender biases of the genre should not be read as a purposely sexist move on the part of the poets. This was a male-only fight. Roman women were not expected to go into politics or join military expeditions to expand the Roman Empire, and thus their voice simply had no place in the argument in which the Roman elegists took part. Yes, "every day people do fall

---

[107] For example, Prop. 2.1 and 2.10, and Ovid *Am*. 1.1 and 3.12. See Maria Wyke, "Written Women: Propertius' *Scripta Puella*," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 77 (1987): 52.

in love, people do become ill, people do celebrate birthdays, [and] people do write to those whom they love," and thus it seems that "[t]he content, tone and style speak firmly of reality, the reality of a young woman in love."[108] But these real life situations were used as generic set pieces by the male elegists to indirectly communicate their political views. To read a real Roman woman's voice in the role of poetic persona, then, strips this important generic context away from the poems, making the poems rather hollow and flat. To read a constructed Roman woman's voice in the role of poetic persona, however, allows us to pay attention to what this voice adds to the conversation.

2.1 Latin love elegy

According to Quintilian, the canon of Latin love elegy consists of Gallus, Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid.[109] All of these poets were roughly contemporary with each other, and

---

[108] Currie, "The Poems of Sulpicia," 1758. The full quote is as follows:

> The most economical way of dealing with the question is to take the compositions for what they appear to be - proud and passionate effusions of a Roman lady of flesh and blood. Their immediacy is convincingly strong. To assume that they are not authentic is to stir up a host of issues to which in turn there can be no definite answers. But every day people do fall in love, people do become ill, people do celebrate birthdays, people do write to those whom they love. The content, tone and style speak firmly of reality, the reality of a woman in love.

[109] As discussed by Joseph Farrell, Quintilian's list (*Inst.* 10.1.93) is likely influenced by Propertius' and Ovid's own lists (Prop. 2.34.85-94; Ovid *Tr.* 4.10.51-54). Joseph Farrell, "Calling Out the Greeks: Dynamics of the Elegiac Canon," in *A Companion to Roman Love Elegy*, ed. Barbara K. Gold (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 11-13 and 17. Gallus is largely regarded as the first Latin love elegist, particularly thanks to Ovid's canonical list (*Tr.* 4.10: ...*nec auara Tibullo / tempus amicitiae fata dedere meae. / successor fuit hic tibi, Galle, Propertius illi; / quartus ab his serie temporis ipse fui*). Though Propertius and Ovid both refer to the influence of Catullus, Catullus is generally considered not as an elegist per se, but as a proto-elegiac poet, particularly as he was a lyric poet who wrote only some of his collection in elegiac meter. Some scholars, however, do name Catullus as the first Latin elegist. For example, Gordon Williams argues that "Catullus invented the genre of love-elegy with poem 68 and Gallus developed it." Gordon Williams, "Roman Poets as Literary Historians: Some Aspects of *Imitatio*," *Illinois Classical Studies* 8, no. 2 (Fall 1983): 235. Also see David Wray, "Catullus the Roman Love Elegist?," in *A Companion to Roman Love Elegy*, ed. Barbara K. Gold (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 25-38.

the latter three frequently allude to each other in wording and/or in name.[110] Furthermore, each of these canonical poets follow the same generic conventions for the majority of their respective elegiac *corpora*, deviating only at the end of their work or career. Indeed, each of the canonical poets seem to speak of non-elegiac tropes, particularly in their last book or work, perhaps showing that they had grown bored of what they could do within the generic conventions as they were. For example, in his last book (Book 4), Propertius states that he will be abandoning the genre, and features a dead Cynthia. Also, in the last book of Ovid's *Amores*, there is a eulogy to the recently-deceased Tibullus (3.9), and a mention not of Ovid's elegiac mistress, Corinna, but of Ovid's wife (3.13), a type of elegiac woman not seen elsewhere in canonical Latin love elegy.[111] And if the works in the genre are looked at in chronological order, it is seen that each poet seems to push the boundaries a bit further than the previous poet, with Ovid of course pushing furthest with his exilic poetry.[112] Ovid is in fact seen by the majority of scholars as the end of the genre, as his poetry in elegiacs become so far removed from what is 'traditional' Latin love elegy, that some of his late poems are not even recognizable as love elegies.[113] And since Ovid is the last elegist named by Quintilian, it is assumed that Ovid in effect 'killed' the genre.

What tends to be ignored then in scholarship on Latin love elegy are the love elegies or pseudo-Augustan elegies written during and after Ovid. As mentioned in Chapter 1, there is evidence of a 'cult of Ovid' and texts in general that mimic canonical elegy, particularly texts dated between Ovid and Nero. Though such texts are not considered canonical by

---

[110] As we have only a fragment of Gallus, there is not enough extant text to see Gallus doing the same. That said, with the exception of Catullus, theoretically the canonical elegists could have all been in the same place at the same time, particularly as they all lived in Rome at some point in their lives, and were all connected either through friendship or patron. Gallus, for example, was a friend and possibly patron of Propertius (see Francis Cairns, *Sextus Propertius: The Augustan Elegist* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006]); Ovid was a friend of Propertius; and Tibullus and Ovid shared Messalla as a patron.

[111] Farrell, "Classical Genre," 399-400; Stephen Harrison, "Ovid and Genre: Evolutions of an Elegist," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, ed. Philip Hardie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 81-82. Accessed April 2013. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521772818.007.

[112] As Farrell puts it, "from the very beginning it was such a 'hot' genre and developed so rapidly that in the space of about fifty years its experiments in generic indeterminacy caused it to come apart at the seams." Farrell, "Classical Genre," 397.

[113] Cf. Wheeler (see Chapter 1, pages 35-37 above).

ancient grammarians or post-classical scholars, they do still occupy a place in the short timeline of Latin love elegy, namely a place that extends the timeline beyond what is currently believed, opening up this presumably limited field of scholarship to a larger corpus than previously assumed. And without a legitimate reason to not date the Sulpicia poems to this chronologically pseudepigraphic period (as discussed in the Introduction), this post-Augustan cycle can then be looked at as able to respond to the whole corpus of canonical Latin love elegy. The possibility that they do so provides a chance to see how ancient readers may have conceptualized this genre, often thought to exist only within the Augustan age.

Indeed, the poems do seem to respond to the previous elegiac cycles, particularly through exploring the facets of elegy that had not adequately been explored by the canonical authors. And there was much to be explored, given the rich roots that Latin love elegy had in both Hellenistic and archaic Greek elegy. Of course, as the old argument goes, Latin love elegy is thought to have no direct precursor and was pretty much an entirely Roman invention, pieced together from other genres, just not Greek or Hellenistic elegy. This, however, is nonsense. Genres were not created in vacuums, and will always have a precursor or two or more, even if they are not immediately identifiable from the limited amount of extant ancient literature. Indeed, as Francis Cairns brilliantly explored in 1979 and then again in 2006, the reason for the assumed non-influence of Greek and Hellenistic elegy over Roman elegy lies in the assumed dichotomy of 'subjective' versus 'objective' elegy.[114] For all agree that objective elegy has long been around, as early as the seventh century BC, but the fact that Roman elegy is the first to use the poet's name, a seemingly real persona rather than that of a mythological or historical figure, and a first-person perspective more often than a third-person perspective seems to indicate a completely separate use of the archaic meter. However, it is in how scholars have defined 'objective elegy' as fictional and 'subjective elegy' as autobiographical that has blinded us to the precedents in elegy previous to Latin love elegy, both those known and thought to have existed in archaic Greek and Hellenistic poetry. Not only are there actually examples of subjective erotic elegy in archaic and

---

[114] Respectively, Cairns, *Tibullus*, 214-30; and Cairns, "Propertius and the Origins of Latin Love-Elegy," 69-95.

Hellenistic poetry, but a progression can also be seen from archaic to Hellenistic to Roman elegy, particularly in the eventual creation of the authorial persona, beginning in Greek elegy as an analogy between the poets and mythological heroes, to the Roman elegists identifying with those heroes.[115]

Furthermore, there is a progression seen in Latin love elegy itself, from Catullus, who was presumably the first to develop Greek subjective erotic elegy by subordinating myth to reality; to Gallus, who was likely the first to concentrate on a live mistress; to Tibullus and (later) Propertius, who wrote elegy that was increasingly less mythocentric; to Ovid, who moved into all sorts of unexplored areas.[116] As Cairns states, "[t]he advantage of seeing Roman elegy not as a completely new departure but as a logical expansion and development of Greek subjective elegy is that the contribution of each Roman poet can be seen more clearly."[117] And as Ovid, the last canonical elegist to write before the composition of the Sulpicia poems, had re-opened up the avenue of writing not only in a female persona, but also in the personae of females known from history/mythology, a trope used in archaic and Hellenistic elegy, it simply seems like a logical progression (or, regression) for a post-Ovidian elegist to continue to explore the genre from that point of view. Furthermore, as the use of female personae was already a return to earlier elegy, it makes sense that an elegiac author, with the benefit of hindsight, would take a look back at the entire history of the genre and choose to (re-)develop other early generic elements for his own cycle, elements that had perhaps been forgotten by the canonical elegists. As such, the Sulpicia poet can be seen as exploring a variety of styles, commenting on all his predecessors, and, in a sense, re-opening the book that Ovid had supposedly closed, by adding his own chapter or epilogue to the genre.

---

[115] Cairns, "Propertius and the Origins of Latin Love-Elegy," 81 (originally Cairns, *Tibullus*, 224).
[116] Cairns, "Propertius and the Origins of Latin Love-Elegy," 82-86 (originally Cairns, *Tibullus*, 224-28).
[117] Cairns, "Propertius and the Origins of Latin Love-Elegy," 81 (originally Cairns, *Tibullus*, 224).

2.2 Latin love elegy's symposium

And when read in this way, another ancient text is immediately brought to mind that deals with a male-centric setting and topic, but features a constructed female voice as providing the final or most enlightened response, namely Plato's *Symposium*.[118] For in this text, in the male-only setting of a symposium, a group of males give their own rendition of what male love is, only to be capped by the speech of a woman, Diotima, spoken not from her own mouth (she is not present and likely did not exist), but from the mouth of Socrates.[119] And though she presumably should have no say about a topic that she would have no personal experience in, Diotima is the one that gives the most informed answer to the symposium's chosen topic, and provides the clearest picture of what male love should be, albeit through Socrates' speech. In the same way, Sulpicia's constructed voice offers her 'own' rendition of the male-centric genre of Latin love elegy.[120]

But why switch the gender of the poetic persona to do this, when the point was easily made by the canonical poets writing in their own (male) personae? To answer that, I would argue that David Halperin's argument for why Diotima is a woman in Plato's *Symposium* applies here too. In his systematic study of Socrates' contribution to the symposiasts'

---

[118] This section is an amended version of my paper for Greek 599, Winter 2013, entitled "Latin Elegy's Symposium."

[119] As Cameron says, "[f]rom the earliest times, one of the dominating structural elements in the conduct of the symposium was competition…Each man was expected to cap the contribution of his predecessor. Cameron, *Callimachus and His Critics*, 80. On whether Diotima is real or fictitious (or whether it matters), see Dover, *Plato: Symposium*, 137-38.

[120] Interestingly, S. C. Fredericks saw in the Sulpicia/Cerinthus relationship an echo of Aristophanes' dual-being in the *Symposium*, but, otherwise, no parallels have since been drawn between the *Symposium* and the Sulpicia poems. S. C. Fredericks, "A Poetic Experiment in the Garland of Sulpicia (*Corpus Tibullianum*, 3, 10)," *Latomus* 35 (1979): 767n12. Plato's influence on Ovid, on the other hand, has been discussed in detail. Vered Lev Kenaan's argument for Plato's influence on the narrative structure of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* and the *Remedia Amoris* are discussed below. Arum Park has also recently connected Ovid to Plato, arguing that Ovid's depiction of *amor* in the *Ars Amatoria* is modeled on Agathon's version of Eros in the *Symposium*. Arum Park, "Two Types of Ovidian Personification," *The Classical Journal* 104, no. 3 (2009), especially 231-36.

discussion by way of recounting the priestess Diotima's previous words, Halperin begins by noting that

> Diotima is better informed about the desires of men than are men themselves. Without her expert intervention in their affairs men would never be able to uncover the true sources, objects, and aims of their own desires. It takes a woman to reveal men to themselves. Diotima's instruction, moreover, does not consist in enlightening men about women, revealing to men only what they could not themselves be expected to discover about a realm of experience forever closed off to them by virtue of being, supposedly, the exclusive preserve of another sex. On the contrary, what Diotima propounds to Socrates is an ethic of "correct paederasty"…She thereby founds, or re-founds, an important institution of male society in classical Athens, providing at the same time an ideological (philosophical) justification for it.[121]

Halperin states that the quick answer to 'why is Diotima a woman' of 'because she is not a man' (i.e. because Plato did not want to implicate either Socrates or himself in the views Diotima recommends) is plausible but not the whole story.[122] For Plato does not simply make Diotima not-male, but "hints unmistakably that Diotima's gender is not without its significance," having her "[speak] of *erôs* as no male does, striking a previously unsounded 'feminine' note and drawing on a previously untapped source of 'feminine' erotic… experience."[123] But this 'femininity' comes off as "mimetic transvestitism," as Diotima's speech is not couched in feminist terms, trying to fight against the general silence of women in Greek society, but rather represents "a woman's perspective…in a form that is recognizable to men."[124] Furthermore, Diotima is clearly not meant to be read as an actual woman, as her fictionality is revealed when her words, which supposedly took place *before* the symposium (201d1-6), respond directly to Aristophanes' speech, the encomium that preceded Socrates' (205d10-206a1).[125] Halperin thus concludes that Socrates'/Plato's use of Diotima shows not a woman but a 'woman', i.e. a trope used to "[represent] two properly

---

[121] David M. Halperin, "Why is Diotima a Woman?," in *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality: and other essays on Greek love* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 113-14.
[122] Ibid., 116.
[123] Ibid., 117. Halperin is careful to note that his use of 'feminine' (and 'masculine') is not essentialist, hence the use of quotation marks to indicate that the term is used as it exists as a social construct.
[124] Ibid., 146.
[125] Ibid., 147.

philosophical (i.e., male) values: reciprocity and creativity."[126] That is, Diotima is not meant to be read as an actual woman involved in a masculine discussion/institution, but is instead a male-authored creation that is used to further Plato's philosophical program.

Similarly, Sulpicia seems to understand the male elegists' fight against the system better than they do, providing not just her first name, but her father's as well, thus willing to throw her entire family into dishonour by her choice to write elegy. Moreover, she does not even bother with the elegiac trope of the *recusatio*, in which elegists claimed the inability to compose more respectable poetry. Sulpicia, in fact, seems to revel in 'writing' the poetry she does.

Furthermore, the feminine perspective Sulpicia provides is not truly feminine; apart from her being a 'her', there is a pointed lack of insight into what an actual woman's life would be like. First of all, as the anachronistic ability of Diotima's previous words are able to respond to Aristophanes' future speech point to Diotima's fictionality, the post-Ovidian dating, pseudepigraphic presence of Messalla, and theme of constructed-ness throughout the cycle point towards Sulpicia's fictionality. Also, the most descriptive poem in terms of context has Sulpicia imagining herself hunting with Cerinthus, an activity that would presumably never occur in real Roman society.

> *Parce meo iuueni, seu quis bona pascua campi*
> *seu colis umbrosi deuia montis aper,*
> *nec tibi sit duros acuisse in proelia dentes:*
> *incolumen custos hunc mihi seruet Amor.*
>
> *Sed procul abducit uenandi Delia cura.*
> *o pereant siluae deficiantque canes!*
> *quis furor est, quae mens, densos indagine colles*
> *claudentem teneras laedere uelle manus?*
> *quidue iuuat furtim latebras intrare ferarum*
> *candidaque hamatis crura notare rubis?*
>
> *Sed tamen, ut tecum liceat, Cerinthe, uagari,*
> *ipsa ego per montes retia torta feram;*
> *ipsa ego uelocis quaeram uestigia cerui*
> *et demam celeri ferrea uincla cani.*

---

[126] Ibid., 149-50.

tunc mihi, tunc placeant siluae, si, lux mea, tecum
  arguar ante ipsas concubuisse plagas.
tunc ueniat licet ad casses, inlaesus abibit,
  ne Veneris cupidae gaudia turbet, aper.

Nunc sine me sit nulla Venus, sed lege Dianae,
  caste puer, casta retia tange manu;
et quaecumque meo furtim subrepit amori
  incidat in saeuas diripienda feras.

At tu uenandi studium concede parenti,
  et celer in nostros ipse recurre sinus.

Spare my young man, boar, whether you till the good pastures of a field or the wilderness of a shady mountain, and let it not be for you to sharpen your cruel tusks for battles: may Love as a guardian keep this man safe for me. But the Delian goddess leads him far away with his care of hunting. O may the woods be destroyed and the dogs disappoint him! What madness is it, what reason, to want to mar his tender hands in hemming in the dense hills with a dragnet? Or what does it help to secretly enter the hiding places of wild beasts and to mark his white legs with hooked bramble bushes? But yet, so that I may wander with you, Cerinthus, I myself would bear the twisted nets through the mountains, I myself would search for the tracks of a swift stag and remove the iron chains of the fast dog. Then to me, then the woods would give pleasure, if, my light, I could be proven guilty of having slept with you before the nets themselves. Then yes, let the boar come to the snare, it will go away unharmed, lest he disturb the joys of eager love. Now without me may there be no love, but by the law of Diana, chaste boy, handle the nets with a chaste hand; and whoever secretly creeps up on my love, may she, deserving to be ripped to pieces, come upon savage beasts. But you, leave the eagerness for hunting to your father, and run yourself swiftly back to my lap.

As noted by previous commentators, this poem brings to mind Ovid's story of Venus and Adonis (*Met.* 10.519-559).[127] However, with the seemingly real-life setting of the Sulpicia poems rather than a mythological setting, it is tempting to also read in 3.9 a homoerotic tone. In particular, given the fact that an upper-class Roman woman would not be allowed on a hunt and the likelihood that the poems are male-authored, one can read in the guise of Sulpicia a male elegist writing about his male beloved. While homoerotic elegies occur

---

[127] For example, Hinds, who notes that there is even a verbal similarity between the two texts, with "*parce meo iuueni*" of [Tib.] 3.9.1 mirroring "*parce meo, iuuenis*" of Ovid, *Met.* 10.545. Hinds, "The Poetess and the Reader," 34-36.

elsewhere in the genre, they are rather rare, and homoerotic Roman poetry in general is not as prevalent as in Greek poetry, given the less open attitude towards homosexuality in Rome. Thus, writing in a female persona would give the poet freedom to write an entire elegiac cycle about a male beloved, rather than just a poem here and there.[128] This then parallels the use of Diotima's voice in the *Symposium* to share Plato's views on pederasty; Plato may not have wanted to directly state his approval for the homoerotic institution, but the fictionality of Diotima allows her words to be read as his own.

Another possible parallel that should be pointed out is Plato's decision to not just make Diotima a woman, but a priestess. Her position portrays her not just as one of the women typically not allowed at the symposium, but as one whose religious expertise helps the symposiasts transcend the binary ideas of male/female and *erastes*/*eromenos*.[129] Similarly, [Tib.] 3.8's depiction of Sulpicia as involved in the annual religious rites for the Kalends of March sets her up not just as a typical elegiac woman (i.e. an immoral woman of uncertain status), but as an upper-class woman with a religious role in Roman society. Indeed, Sulpicia is portrayed almost as a goddess or priestess herself, not only worthy of Mars abandoning Venus to come down to observe (3.8.2), but the *worthiest* woman to take part in his rite (3.8.24). In other words, like Diotima as a priestess in a discussion of male love, Sulpicia is given the authority to speak in a male-centric genre by being placed on a higher moral/religious level. Of course, as she is then depicted in the remainder of the cycle as a more or less typical elegiac woman, Sulpicia's promiscuity and blatant stance against the expected morality of Roman society have an even more pronounced meaning than if she had simply been portrayed as a typical elegiac woman from the start. Moreover, if the reading of the name 'Sulpicia' as an allusion to the hyper-chaste third-century BC Sulpicia involved in the dedication of a religious statue is correct, the importance of her character being the one to further the political program of the elegists is purposefully flagrant.

---

[128] The love epigrams of Callimachus were exclusively homosexual, providing a Hellenistic precedent for the homoerotic nature of the Sulpicia poems. Cameron, *Callimachus and His Critics*, 518.
[129] For a discussion of the roles of the three different types of women not physically present in Plato's *Symposium*, see Gilhuly, "Why Is Diotima a Priestess?," 58-97.

Furthermore, the fact that the Sulpicia poems bring to mind a sympotic text brings us back to the roots of Latin love elegy. As briefly mentioned above, archaic Greek elegy can definitely be viewed as a direct ancestor of the Roman version of the genre. What is perhaps most interesting about the two versions of the genre which generally goes unnoticed is the shared performance and cultural context. As shown by E. L. Bowie, there were two main circumstances of performance of archaic Greek elegy: the longer narrative elegy, which primarily dealt with local history, was performed at public festivals;[130] and the shorter form elegy, which contained a number of stock themes, was performed at symposia.[131] As both of these contexts were competitive (i.e. symposiasts would compete with each other in speech or song, parallel to the competitions at public festivals) and were common social institutions, most archaic elegy can be seen as occupying a similar contextual space. Latin love elegy, on the other hand, is thought to have been at least initially performed in the context of a dinner party (*conuiuium*), where a poet could debut a piece he was working on for both the entertainment of those present and constructive criticism; a few Latin love elegies even have the symposium/*conuiuium* as their setting.[132]

Moreover, the very nature of Latin love elegy suggests a connection to Greek sympotic elegy in its cultural context. Greek sympotic poetry and the sympotic lifestyle in general found disapproval during the Republic from men such as Cato the Elder. As recalled by Aulus Gellius, Cato viewed both sympotic poetry and the frequenting of banquets simply un-Roman: *poeticae artis honos non erat. si quis in ea re studebat aut sese ad conuiuia*

---

[130] Bowie, "Early Greek Elegy," 27-33.

[131] See particularly Ibid., 15-21. Bowie systematically disputes the majority of West's list (in Martin L. West, *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus* [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1974]) of eight possible contexts (aside from the third, fourth, and eighth on West's list, being the symposium, the *komos*, and public festivals, respectively; Bowie does not really differentiate between the former two), stating that West's "other proposed contexts...are inadequately supported by the texts cited." Ibid., 21. Instead, Bowie shows that in any elegies that may seem to suggest a circumstance other than the symposium, *komos*, or public festival, such as martial elegy, sympotic images are still used.

[132] Beginning around 39 BC, this initially informal performance context "[became] more formalized...in the social institution of *recitationes*." Maria Wyke, *The Roman Mistress: Ancient and Modern Interpretations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 181.

For the symposium in Latin elegy, see, for example: Ovid *Am*. 1.4, 1.7; Prop. 2.15, 2.16; Tib. 1.6; [Tib.] 3.6. John C. Yardley, "The Symposium in Roman Elegy," in *Dining in a Classical Context*, ed. William J. Slater (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), 149-55. Note that Yardley more or less equates the *conuiuium* with the symposium.

adplicabat, grassator uocabatur.[133] Then, perhaps unsurprisingly, when this "Greek sympotic life style...became a dominant fashion...in the last generation of the Republic and the age of Augustus," Latin love elegy emerged.[134] Subsequently, just as Greek sympotic poetry and the sympotic lifestyle had once drawn disapproval, Latin love elegy and the 'elegiac lifestyle' became regarded conventionally as "morally inferior to epic and a public career"[135] and "outside the mainstream of Roman cultural life."[136]

Of course, Plato's *Symposium* is sympotic prose, not sympotic elegy, and so it does not exist in Latin love elegy's generic history per se. However, Plato himself was influenced by archaic sympotic elegy, and the Latin elegists are known to have been aware of Plato and his *Symposium*.[137] Granted, the Latin elegists have frequently been viewed as being in opposition to Plato and philosophy in general, as the elegists treat love as sexual in nature and a painful but necessary obsession, as opposed to either an irrational illness that should be avoided, or, in the Platonic sense, a noble desire for and journey to transcendent beauty; Propertius himself states in poem 3.21 that he would like to go away to Athens to study Plato

---

[133] Aulus Gellius 11.2.5, as cited in Oswyn Murray, "Symposium and Genre in the Poetry of Horace," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 75 (1985): 42.

[134] Ibid., 42. Murray, in fact, attributes the emergence of Latin love elegy to the Roman adoption of the Greek sympotic lifestyle. The full quote reads:

> The development in Rome of a Greek sympotic life style was part of that *elegantia* of which Cato disapproved. It began early, but became a dominant fashion only in the last generation of the Republic and the age of Augustus. It lay behind the creation of Latin love elegy and established new themes and new roles for the poet; it also brought tension and reaction, in the attempts of Augustus to reassert the values of *mos maiorum* through the *leges de sumptu*, *de adulteriis* and *de maritandis ordinibus*, and through the deliberate destruction of the leading poet of love in the exile of Ovid.

[135] Monica R. Gale, "Propertius 2.7: *Militia Amoris* and the Ironies of Elegy," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 87 (1997): 81.

[136] Paul Allen Miller, ed., *Latin Erotic Elegy: An Anthology and Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 3.

[137] After Richard Hunter's thorough comparison of Plato's image of the 'ship of state' in the *Republic* (6.488a2-489a2) to a fragment attributed to one of the most well-known (and well-preserved) archaic elegists, Theognis 667-82, in transitioning to his next argument he states (my italics): "If one contributory source of Plato's 'Ship of State' is the elite voice of archaic sympotic elegy, *a literary form whose influence, both general and particular, on philosophical dialogue is well recognised*, another is a much more 'popular' form, namely Attic Old Comedy." Richard Hunter, *Plato and the Traditions of Ancient Literature: The Silent Streams* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 73. Hunter does not provide any citations for this blanket statement, other than a footnote a couple pages earlier that lists where Plato cites the *Theognidea* in three of his dialogues, namely *Meno*, *Laws*, and *Gorgias*. Ibid., 70n92. At the very least, the sympotic content of the *Theognidea* and Plato's apparent familiarity with Theognis suggests a connection between Greek elegy and the *Symposium*. See also the discussion of the *komos*-like introduction of the *Symposium* below.

(among other things) in order to get away from Cynthia and his elegies.[138] However, a few elegiac cycles have been shown to occupy the same generic space as Plato's *Symposium*, at least generic space as Cairns would define it. As Richard Hunter discusses, Plato in general and his *Symposium* in particular is considered one of the main precursors of the ancient novel in its fictional narrative, paradigm of *eros*, and Socrates as hero.[139] And while up until the end of the twentieth century canonical Latin love elegy was generally thought to not have any sort of identifiable narrative,[140] recently the narrative nature of Latin love elegy, both canonical and non-canonical, has been gaining an increased amount of attention.[141] Vered Lev Kenaan, for example, has discussed Ovid's reliance on Platonic narrative structures for both the *Ars Amatoria* and the *Remedia Amoris*, arguing that both works are presented together as a cyclical narrative that mirrors the transformational narrative of Socrates'/

---

[138] For the comparison of the Latin elegists' view of love to the philosophy of the Stoics and Epicureans, see Ruth Rothaus Caston, "Love as Illness: Poets and Philosophers on Romantic Love," *The Classical Journal* 101, no. 3 (2006): 271-298. On the different definitions of love found in Greek literature, see Dover, *Plato: Symposium*, 1-2.

Propertius' desire to flee Cynthia for Plato was noted in Ruth Rothaus Caston, *The Elegiac Passion: Jealousy in Roman Love Elegy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 43. Accessed March 2013. DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199925902.001.0001.

[139] Richard Hunter, "Plato's *Symposium* and the Traditions of Ancient Fiction," in *Plato's Symposium: Issues in Interpretation and Reception*, eds. J. H. Lesher, Debra Nails, and Frisbee C. C. Sheffield (Washington: Center for Hellenistic Studies, 2006), 295-312.

[140] Paul Veyne is one proponent of such a view, though he seems to conflate the notion of elegies being narratives with them being autobiographical, which of course is not necessarily true. As Veyne states, "To believe that our elegists tell the story of their affairs, one must not have read them...It would be better to try to say what Roman elegy actually is. In the first place, it is a poetry without action, with no plot leading to a denouement or maintaining any tension, and this is why time has no reality in it." Paul Veyne, *Roman Erotic Elegy: Love, Poetry, and the West*, tr. David Pellauer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 50-51.

[141] A great collection of essays which originated from a conference entitled "Elegy and Narrativity" at Princeton in 2004 can be found in *Latin Elegy and Narratology: Fragments of Story*, edited by Genevieve Liveley and Patricia Salzman-Mitchell and published in 2008. The Fall 2010 issue of *Helios* was also dedicated to the topic, as noted in Genevieve Liveley, "Narratology in Roman Elegy," in *A Companion to Roman Love Elegy*, ed. Barbara K. Gold (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 423.

Diotima's speech in Plato's *Symposium*.[142] Moreover, Niklas Holzberg has even labeled two individual elegiac cycles as 'erotic novels', namely Ovid's *Amores* and the Sulpicia poems, each with a clear hero(ine) and a more or less linear romantic plot.[143] If the ancient novel – that is, a fictional narrative with a plot, a hero, and some aspect of love involved – is directly connected to Plato and his *Symposium*, a comparison of the narrative genre of Latin love elegy to Plato's sympotic prose work, then, is indeed warranted.[144] Furthermore, given that Propertius' patron, Maecenas, composed his own *Symposium*, featuring dinner guests such as Horace, Virgil, and Messalla,[145] it would seem that the gulf between sympotic prose and poetry was not so large, and that the trope of a symposium involving Augustan poets and literary figures was something available to early Imperial writers looking for material to re-work.

The argument that the Sulpicia poems respond to previous elegiac cycles as Diotima does to the male symposiasts in Plato's work then does not simply rest on each female figure being a constructed woman in a male-dominated literary setting. A whole host of similarities between the *Symposium* and Latin love elegy as a whole, in fact, exists. First of all, and perhaps most obviously, the focal point of both Plato's text and the Roman version of the genre is love, in one form or another; the chosen topic of the symposiasts' encomia in the *Symposium* is *eros*/*Eros*, with the speeches often focusing on the relationship between an

---

[142] Vered Lev Kenaan, "Platonic Strategies in Ovid's Tales of Love," in *Latin Elegy and Narratology: Fragments of Story*, eds. Genevieve Liveley and Patricia Salzman-Mitchell (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2008), 156-62. Lev Kenaan also argues for Ovid's use of the love narrative in Socrates' speeches in Plato's *Phaedrus* in his *Ars Amatoria* and the *Remedia*. Ibid., 148-56. In general, Lev Kenaan presents Ovid as an elegiac Plato, stating that,

> [i]n Ovid's erotodidactic writing, the lover's rhetorical skills are subjected to a deep motivation of gaining self-knowledge...Reading of the erotodidactic text is, according to Ovid, a transformational experience: the lover becomes aware of the power of words, expressions, and above all, the language of poetry.

Ibid., 146.
[143] Niklas Holzberg, *Ovid: The Poet and His Work*, tr. G. M. Goshgarian (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 16 and 46-70; and Holzberg, "Four Poets and a Poetess or a Portrait of the Poet as a Young Man?," 184. Holzberg notes that consideration of the Sulpicia poems as an erotic novel was first noted by S. C. Fredericks in 1976, though Fredericks only read poems 8-12 (the 'Garland' poems) as such, and not 13-18. Holzberg, in contrast, sees poems 8-18 inclusively to be one erotic novel, though divided plot-wise into two phases.
[144] And, if Plato himself was influenced by sympotic elegy (see note 137 above, and the discussion of the *komos*-like introduction of the *Symposium* below), the path of generic influence goes full circle.
[145] See note 102 above.

erastes and his *eromenos*, and the plot of each elegiac cycle centers around the love affair of the lover-poet and his/her beloved. Second, just as each of the *Symposium*'s symposiasts differ in both their style and description of *eros*/*Eros*, each Latin elegist's style and description of love differs and is notably unique to each poet.[146] Third, both are male-only institutions; the only female physically present in the *Symposium*, the aulos player, is sent out before the symposiasts begin their encomia (176e6-9), and all canonical Latin love elegy is male-authored. Fourth, though both consciously separate men from women, just as there is some gender ambiguity in the *Symposium* with the presence of Agathon (who had previously been characterized in the same literary setting as a cross-dressing and effeminate poet[147]), with Aristophanes' account of the origins of the sexes, and with Socrates speaking through a female persona (i.e. Diotima), there is much gender ambiguity in the Latin elegies when the lover-poets become mouthpieces for the elegiac *dominae*.[148] Fifth, Socrates, the hero or main character of the *Symposium*, presents a false modesty both in his wisdom (175d3-e7) and in being able to present a worthy speech (177e3-4, 194a2-4, 198b1-d3), just as the Latin elegists often do in their own works.[149]

The last general similarity that will be discussed here needs a bit more unpacking. At the beginning of the *Symposium*, Socrates stands in a neighbour's doorway for quite some

---

[146] For example, as Aristophanes takes a more aetiological approach to *Eros*, Propertius incorporates more mythology than other elegists do. And, as Agathon's speech is more poetic than those of the other symposiasts, Tibullus' elegies are thought to be more elegant than those of his fellow elegists. As Quintilian *Inst.* 10.1.93 says: *elegia quoque Graecos prouocamus, cuius mihi tersus atque elegans maxime uidetur auctor Tibullus. sunt qui Propertium malint. Ouidius utroque lasciuior, sicut durior Gallus.*

[147] Namely, in the opening scene of Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*, which also takes place at Agathon's house.

[148] This elegiac gender ambiguity is assumedly also in Greek sympotic elegy. As only men would be present at a symposium, it follows that only men could perform elegy at a symposium. And as there are at least a couple known instances of Greek sympotic elegy being written in a female persona (*Theognidea* 257-60, 579-80, 861-64), symposiasts performing such poetry would be taking on female personae themselves.

[149] E.g. Prop. 2.1, Ovid *Am.* 1.1. Indeed, I would read [Tib.] 3.13 as a parallel to Socrates' preamble to his/Diotima's speech, where he feigns stupidity at having thought he could praise *Eros* according to the agreed upon rules of the symposium (198d2-7). Socrates states that he cannot praise in the fashion of the previous symposiasts, saying the greatest and most beautiful things possible; instead, he can only tell the truth (198d7-199b2). Similarly, through Sulpicia, in saying *uultus componere famae / taedet* (it offends to put on a false front for tradition), the poet perhaps suggests that previous elegists had not paid true honour to their predecessor (i.e. Greek sympotic elegy) with the use of a female persona and connection to a sympotic literary context, so he will now.

time before he enters Agathon's house. To a reader familiar with Plato's Socrates, this may seem like simply another one of Socrates' humorous quirks; indeed, Aristodemus says in reference to this sojourn that Socrates often stops and stands wherever he happens to be (175b1-2). However, Socrates obviously intended on going into Agathon's house when he arrived there, as he had both agreed with Agathon that he would stop by that day (174a7-8), and he had washed and even put sandals on for the event (174a3-4). But, when he arrives, instead of going through Agathon's already opened door (174e1), he instead stands on the neighbour's porch and cannot be enticed to come into Agathon's house (175a7-9). Why would Plato (further) delay Socrates' entry into Agathon's house?

I would argue that this amusing detail of the *Symposium* has to do with the possible influence of Greek elegy on Plato.[150] One of the less common contexts of Greek elegy that is closely connected to (and perhaps conflated with) the symposium is the *komos*, which was the drunken but ritualistic procession that often preceded a symposium; the term '*komos*' is also used to denote the genre (as per Cairns' definition) of songs sung by the symposiasts/comasts in such a procession, sung from the perspective of a lover barred from his unresponsive beloved by the beloved's door.[151] This trope, often called a *paraclausithyron*,[152] is also a common set piece in Latin love elegy, where either the poem is set outside the beloved's door, or the locked-out lover-poet addresses his poem to the porter or door itself.[153] And whereas Socrates himself is by no means barred from entering Agathon's house, Socrates' positioning of himself at the neighbours' door and subsequent delaying of his entry into Agathon's house prompts Agathon to frequently ask for Socrates to be sent in (175a10-11, c3-4). In effect, Plato inverts the elegiac *komos*, not only having the *komos*

---

[150] See note 137 above.

[151] Cairns, *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry*, 6; A. M. Bowie, "Thinking with Drinking: Wine and the Symposium in Aristophanes," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 117 (1997): 2.

[152] As Bowie says: "...in the *komos*, the symposiasts might go boisterously into the street...to the house of some attractive person, there to perform the *paraklausithyron* in the hope of luring them out." Bowie, "Thinking with Drinking," 2. Cairns, on the other hand, states that *komos* is "often incorrectly termed *paraclausithyron*," though he does not provide any means to differentiate between the two genres. Cairns, *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry*, 6.

[153] E.g. Catullus 68.41-160, Prop. 2.17, Tib. 1.2, and Ovid *Am.* 1.6.

precede the symposium, but by having the person inside the house begging the person outside to come in.[154]

Together, these parallels, therefore, do not only suggest a generic similarity between Plato's work and Latin love elegy in terms of them both having a narrative structure, but they also show that the narrative structure of each is connected to/couched in a sympotic context, which, in turn, is connected to Greek elegy. These connections, in fact, also extend to a comparison of the *Symposium* to specific Latin elegiac cycles, connecting each encomium to each elegiac cycle. Particularly, I would peg Tibullus as a Roman Agathon with his elegant poetics and homoerotic content; Ovid as a Roman Alcibiades with his over-the-top style and changing of the prescribed topic/form; and, as discussed above, the Sulpicia author as a Roman Diotima/Socrates. That said, the argument for the genre's parallelism to Plato's work by it, in effect, forming an epistolary symposium, requires only one elegist to, with the benefit of hindsight, respond to the elegists who had gone before and more or less wrap up the discussion. And again, given the dating and form of the Sulpicia poems, that is, written after and responding to the canonical cycles of the genre (and being the last extant elegiac cycle to do so), its aforementioned structure as an erotic novel, and the more heightened similarity between it and the *Symposium*, the Sulpicia poems seem to function like Diotima's speech: just as Diotima's speech is the last in the *Symposium* to truly praise *eros* and thus is the final capping encomium on *eros*, the Sulpicia poems are a final capping encomium on elegiac love.[155]

2.3 Conclusion

While taking the Sulpicia poems out of their traditional dating of the first century BC removes the female authorship and status of Augustan poetry ascribed to them by the current

---

[154] With this reading, another element of the *Symposium*'s introduction that recalls the *komos/ paraclausithyron* is the journey of Socrates and Aristodemus to Agathon's. For, as K. Shipton notes, one feature of a *komos/paraclausithyron* is either a mention or underlying implication of the comast's journey to the door. K. M. W. Shipton, "A Successful kômos in Catullus," *Latomus* 44, no. 3 (1985): 506.

[155] Alcibiades' speech follows Diotima's/Socrates' and is technically the last in the *Symposium*, but Alcibiades praises Socrates instead of *eros*, the agreed upon topic of the symposium.

consensus, it does allow for a much richer reading of the poems. That is, rather than being poems written during the literary Augustan period but going presumably unnoticed, they can be seen as chronological fakes taking advantage of their post-canonical position to respond to the genre of Latin love elegy as a whole. And as the figure of Sulpicia can be read as parallel to the figure of Diotima in Plato's *Symposium*, this final extant elegist can be seen as providing the most enlightened encomium on elegiac love, not only by returning to the genre's sympotic roots, but also by providing a different perspective on the genre that had presumably been exhausted by Ovid. This highly literary Sulpicia should not be seen as a less interesting or less useful figure than the historical Augustan poet the current consensus has created, however. Indeed, such a reading of Sulpicia mirrors that which has existed for centuries in post-classical constructions of her.

CHAPTER 3: SULPICIA, ACCORDING TO HER AFTERLIFE

As mentioned throughout the previous chapters and perhaps most clearly seen in reference sources such as *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, the consensus on the identity of Sulpicia is vastly different from the readings I have proposed here. And as this is not the place to discuss all of the literature of the past thirty years given the already discussed vulnerable basis for the majority of the literature, it is perhaps more useful to discuss how views *contrary* to the consensus have been treated. Joseph Farrell stated over a decade ago that "it is worth asking again whether we can believe implicitly that Sulpicia's poetry is in fact the work of a Roman woman."[156] To date, only Niklas Holzberg and Thomas Hubbard have explored such a question, and both their views have been marginalized by fellow scholars.[157] Indeed, not only are their two completely separate theories generally addressed together by their critics as if they were one and the same, but their theories are also generally addressed briefly, if not scornfully, in a few dismissive sentences or an obligatory footnote. Judith Hallett, for example, who is probably the most prolific scholar on the topic of the Sulpicia poems, mentions Hubbard's view as "his and Niklas Holzberg's efforts to deny [Sulpician authorship]," and thereafter refers to those who do not follow the consensus she subscribes to as "such scholars" or "a scholar such as Hubbard."[158] Alison Keith, similarly,

---

[156] Joseph Farrell, *Latin Language and Latin Culture: From Ancient to Modern Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 57.

[157] The opening of N.J. Lowe's discussion appears to head in this direction when he says (my emphasis added):

> While these identifications [of the familial connections of Sulpicia/Servius/Messalla] seem, on balance, as secure as any in the prosopography of Augustan elegy, it is sobering to consider how haphazard has been the progress to the present consensus, and how vulnerable the assumptions on which it was first erected. *Even if we allow Gruppe to have intuited the right answer from the wrong preconceptions, an abundance of related questions remains...*"

Lowe, "Sulpicia's Syntax," 196. However, these "related questions" that Lowe goes on to list do not question Sulpicia's existence or identification, only Cerinthus', the *auctor de Sulpicia*'s (i.e. the supposed author of poems 8-12), and whether the affair was real or not; only in a footnote (cited above in note 30) does Lowe cast any bit of doubt on Sulpicia's identification as influenced by Gruppe's reading. Lowe's belief, rather, is that "the true damage done by Gruppe's hypothesis lies elsewhere," namely in his aesthetic judgment of them being amateur. Ibid., 197.

[158] Hallett, "Scenarios of Sulpiciae," 81-82.

discusses Holzberg's "mischievous" theory in conjunction with Hubbard's "tortuous logic," describing both as theories that "deny Sulpician authorship."[159]

Holzberg's theory, however, focuses on the dating and manuscript tradition of Book 3 as a whole, concluding that it was one post-Augustan (possibly Flavian) anonymous male author who wrote all of Book 3 of the *Corpus Tibullianum* with the intent of it being read as a prequel to Tibullus' Books 1 and 2. This then fits with Peirano's discussion of *pseudepigrapha* that take advantage of 'holes' left by the author being impersonated or supplemented.[160] For example, Holzberg reads Cerinthus, Sulpicia's beloved, as a pseudonym for the Cornutus in Tib. 2.2, and, as this Cornutus was about to marry in Tibullus' poem, Holzberg reads Sulpicia as the anonymous author's solution to who Cornutus' wife would be.[161] Hubbard, on the other hand, is closer to the consensus in seeing two hands involved, reading poems 8-12 as being later than 13-18. Furthermore, Hubbard agrees with the consensus on the identity of Sulpicia as a historical Roman woman, but argues that it was Tibullus who wrote the poems in the later part of his career to celebrate the marriage of

---

[159] Keith, "Critical Trends," 7-9. Keith also discusses another scholar who 'denies' Sulpician authorship, Thomas Habinek, saying that he does so by arguing against the existence of any female author in ancient Rome. Ibid., 6. However, Habinek does not actually deny the existence of female authors, but rather discusses how they were silenced in ancient Rome, and thus why their work did not survive (see Thomas N. Habinek, *The Politics of Latin Literature: Writing, Identity & Empire in Ancient Rome* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998], 122-36). Furthermore, Habinek does not mention the Sulpicia poems in his discussion, making discussion on his opinion of Sulpicia-the-poet's existence moot.

[160] As Peirano says in her introduction,

> [t]he text comes into being precisely when the reader fills in the gaps left in the narrative and bridges its omissions. Fakes are in effect creative and performative instantiations of such a strategy of reading. Taking their cues from questions left open by the text, impersonations fill in the not-saids of literary works as well as of various cultural narratives…aimed at expanding canonical texts and filling in their gaps.

Peirano, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*, 10. Oddly, however, Peirano does not see a connection between Holzberg's theory and her own work, saying: "I remain unconvinced by Holzberg's arguments for a coherent overall structure for the book, particularly the theory that Lygdamus and Sulpicia are pseudonyms for Tibullus." Ibid., 134n53. As she does not elaborate, I think that the problem is in Holzberg calling the anonymous author a 'pseudo-Tibullus' specifically, rather than just an anonymous author writing a book of chronological fakes, as I argue in this thesis.

[161] Holzberg, "Four Poets and a Poetess or a Portrait of the Poet as a Young Man?," 183-84. The identification of Tibullus' Cornutus as the man behind the pseudonym 'Cerinthus' has long been a common reading, due to the Greek stem of Cerinthus (κέρας, meaning 'horn') being equivalent to the Latin stem of Cornutus, *cornu*, and the metrical equivalence of the real name and pseudonym. Cf. David Roessel, "The Significance of the Name Cerinthus in the Poems of Sulpicia," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 120 (1990): 243-50.

Sulpicia and Cerinthus, whom Hubbard also sees as a pseudonym for the Cornutus of Tib. 2.2.[162] Hubbard even directly argues against Holzberg's view, calling it "fanciful at best."[163]

All that the two theories have in common, then, is that they both argue for male authorship. Yet they, along with Farrell (to my knowledge, the only proponent of Holzberg), have been chastised for their supposed unceremonious 'denial' of female authorship, and for a regress in scholarship.[164] However, given the uncertainty of the author's identity and thus gender, are such theories really 'denying' female authorship, any more than Hallett and Keith's theories 'deny' male authorship? And, if any so-called 'progress' made in scholarship is based on a rather questionable foundation as discussed in the previous chapters, is a so-called 'regress' in scholarship entirely negative? In truth, the theories of Holzberg and Hubbard are simply treating the Sulpicia poems as if they were any other ancient literature with unknown variables involved and, subsequently, providing their own conjectures on the matter, not unlike those who uphold the consensus. Therefore, the theories of Holzberg and Hubbard and assessment of the treatment thereof quite necessarily both bring into question and ground the consensus that should be neither presented nor considered as cold fact. And if it can be agreed that such questioning and grounding is allowed, the current consensus can perhaps be looked at from a more reflective position, from which sober analysis rather than partisan argumentation can take place.[165]

---

[162] Hubbard's theory comes across as too contrived for a variety of reasons. If the purpose was simply to honour his friend's marriage, Tibullus could have written the poems in Cornutus' persona, a fake female persona, his own persona, or in an unnamed persona, rather than in the persona of a contemporary woman actually named Sulpicia, who would be most at risk for being portrayed by name as promiscuous. Furthermore, Augustus had proposed prosecution for those who published defamatory poems under a false name (or anonymously), meaning Tibullus supposedly writing such poems would be a rather awkward and likely unwelcome wedding present. See Peirano, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*, 47; Suetonius, *XII Caesares*, Augustus 55; Ulpian, *Digest* 47.10.5.9-10.

[163] Hubbard, "The Invention of Sulpicia," 180.

[164] In response to Farrell's call for a reassessment of the author's gender as quoted above, Holt Parker says: "Farrell makes explicit the form of certain critics' unstated argument: Sulpicia is allowed to be a woman only when she's a bad poet; once (female/feminist) scholars began to find value in her poetry, those critics can no longer believe she was a woman." Holt. N. Parker, "Catullus and the *Amicus Catulli*: The Text of a Learned Talk," *Classical World* 100, no. 1 (2006): 27n32.

As to Holzberg and Hubbard presenting a regress in scholarship, Keith accuses both Hubbard and, rather ironically, Holzberg of "reviving a biographical reading of the Sulpician corpus," and states that Holzberg's theory "echoes an earlier scholarly tradition" shared by Scaliger, Vulpius, Lachmann, Radford, Provasi, and Herrmann. Keith, "Critical Trends," 8-9.

[165] See note 54 above.

3.1 A Roman Sappho

Why the current consensus on Sulpicia differs so greatly from the approach to the poems I have proposed here can perhaps be best interpreted with the same viewpoint voiced by Yopie Prins in her seminal work, *Victorian Sappho*, as well as that of Dimitrios Yatromanolakis in his *Sappho in the Making: The Early Reception*. First of all, Prins' post-modern/post-structuralist/deconstructionist approach to Sappho is perhaps for many readers controversial, given that Prins more or less reduces a historical figure to a name that embodies a constructed idea. As Prins says,

> [w]hat we call Sappho was, perhaps, never a woman at all; not the poet we imagine on the island of Lesbos in the seventh century B.C., singing songs to her Sapphic circle, but a fictional persona circulating in archaic Greek lyric and reinvoked throughout antiquity as 'the tenth muse.' If Homer was the Poet, the Poetess was Sappho, a name repeated over the centuries as the proper name for lyric poetry itself, despite the scattering of the Sapphic fragments.[166]

Prins' reasoning for this view is that the various incarnations of Sappho, particularly the Victorian poetic incarnations of her, show Sappho to be "an imitation for which there is no original."[167] I will admit that I do not find Prins' conclusions to be convincing in the case of Sappho, given the amount of extant data that does, at least for me, prove Sappho's historical existence. While I do agree with Prins that Victorian and modern ideas of Sappho were and are likely imperfect and based on whatever element of Sappho the reader likes or identifies with most, our mistakes and modern editorial/interpretational choices should not mean we must retroactively erase *actual* occurrences in the past, just as constructions of Cleopatra based on Elizabeth Taylor's interpretation could never mean that Cleopatra never existed.

However, regardless of my disagreement with Prins' conclusions, her theoretical methodology is entirely valid for cases of *fictional* personae being inadvertently turned into historical persons. Indeed, Prins' approach offers two important points that are relevant to any study of ancient literature, particularly in cases of unstable transmission history and

---

[166] Yopie Prins, *Victorian Sappho* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 8.
[167] Ibid., 13-14.

uncertain authorship, such as with our current subject of the Sulpicia poems. First of all, as seen in Gruppe's interpretation of the Sulpicia poems, it should be recognized that post-classical interpretations (and even non-contemporary classical interpretations, such as Ovid's Sappho in *Heroides* 15) can rather easily be based solely on the biases and context of the *reader*, and not the actual context of the text or author in question.[168] As such, one cannot and must not rely on non-contemporary interpretations to (re-)construct a biography for an ancient author. That said, a look at the nature of such constructs, particularly constructs occurring earlier in the social memory of a text (i.e. when more sources, direct and indirect, still existed), can be useful in comparing the reception of an ancient text in earlier times with our own and questioning why any differences may exist. Furthermore, as seen in how Prins fashions an argument on classical philology based on the reception of Sappho in Victorian poetry, a discussion of the afterlife of an ancient author should include not just scholarly interpretations/constructs, but also literary ones.[169]

Second, as shown in Prins' study, it should be recognized that the collective body of scholarship on a particular ancient work or author cannot always be said to progress in a linear fashion. To get this point across, Prins goes so far as to present the Victorian constructs of Sappho she examines in reverse chronological order, with her reasoning being (and as given in the book's conclusion) as follows:

> If *Victorian Sappho* offers a retrospective chronology, it is to be understood as another instance of the metaleptic logic that I have been tracing in the name of Sappho. This logic suggests an alternate model for literary history and reception studies, in as much as it complicates the assumption of historical progress and calls into question the seemingly fixed vantage point of the reader in the present…there is no *a priori* Sappho and no linear progression in the long history of reading Sappho, no single line of descent in declining the name. The study of Sappho's reception must proceed by analyzing our own

---

[168] Skoie has recently stated that Sulpicia the poetess may be a Romantic invention, particularly through the commentaries of Heyne (1755), Dissen (1835), and, most importantly, Gruppe (1838). Skoie's article, however, uses the Sulpicia poems merely as a case study to focus on how Romanticism shaped classical scholarship in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, rather than focussing on the still extant bias provided by Gruppe's historical context. Skoie, "Romantic Scholars and Classical Scholarship," 87-108.

[169] This will be discussed in the next section.

moment of reading as another displacement, a specular repetition rather than
an originary scene.[170]

Surely Prins cannot be correct in arguing that our interpretations of Sappho can undo her existence as, while Sappho may exist in fragments, she exists in 'new' fragments which continue to surface, thus fortifying her literary and historical presence.[171] Sulpicia's existence, on the other hand, has remained contained within eleven mere poems. Thus, in the absence of an autograph copy or contemporary attestations to the existence of both Sulpicia-the-poet and the Sulpicia poems, each scholar's take is but an interpretation. Furthermore, in the absence of emerging evidence, none of us have a more privileged take on the matter; indeed, as soon as the ancient witnesses of a particular text or personage are reduced to one (as in the case of the late fourteenth-century *codex Ambrosianus* being the earliest extant witness and assumed ancestor of all later Tibullan manuscripts), we are all put on a level playing field, as we are all as equally removed conceptually speaking from the time of writing.[172] Therefore, rather than adopting the newest theory because it seems the most progressive and deeming those who adhere to earlier ideas as promoting a regress in scholarship (as in the above-mentioned treatment of Holzberg and Hubbard), each theory should be continually examined and re-examined. As Prins would perhaps say it, we surely cannot be correct in arguing that our interpretations of Sulpicia can ascertain her existence in the ancient world; we can only be sure that it constructs an imagined existence for her.

The situation which produced and surrounds the consensus on the Sulpicia poems is also mirrored in Yatromanolakis' anthropological treatment of the reception of Sappho. Yatromanolakis argues that "theories on Sappho have all too often rested upon further

---

[170] Prins, *Victorian Sappho*, 246.

[171] Just this year, a papyrus with fragments of two previously unknown Sappho poems (referred to as the "Brothers Poem" and the "Kypris Poem") has been announced as having been discovered. See Dirk Obbink, "Two New Poems by Sappho," *ZPE* 189 (forthcoming).

[172] Here I do not mean to include the whole of the work done in the technical area of manuscript reconstruction and textual criticism, particularly as later scholars have the luxury of having access to multiple manuscripts at once. Indeed, emending an obviously corrupt text can be a progressive work that spans centuries. However, in the peculiar case of the Sulpicia poems with their assumed single-ancestor manuscript history, editorial choices such as separating poems 8-12 from 13-18 and providing headings to indicate the 'certainty' of two separate authors, choices not present in any of the manuscripts, cannot be said to be progressive exercises, only interpretations.

theories…all eventually based on the texts that Lobel-Page and Voigt offer," texts which are not based on the original papyri.[173] Similarly, as I have shown above, the current consensus on Sulpicia and, subsequently, modern editions of the text, are based on the theories of Gruppe, which themselves are based on an uninformed handling of the text as *pseudepigrapha*, rather than on evidence or even the oldest witness of the text, the *codex Ambrosianus*. In discussing such unstable theories in general, Yatromanolakis points out that

> statements that tend to generalize and provide information as something given and even substantiated constitute a scholarly modality especially applicable to such problematic figures as Sappho and Homer…Such generalizations, not substantiated through an investigation of the archaeological material or of the *poetics* and *discursivity* of the much later textual sources cited have been part and parcel of recent research on Sappho…The problem does not lie in the use of generalizations but rather in their tendency to be habitually internalized and become "ancient realities."[174]

I would add Sulpicia to Yatromanolakis' list of "problematic figures". Scholars have perhaps gotten so attached to the possibility that we may have the work of a Roman poetess whose biography we can fully lay out, that this idea has indeed become internalized to the point that other possibilities are automatically discarded. As Hubbard words it, "the allure of possessing one authentic female voice amid Roman literature's welter of uncontradicted masculinity has proven too strong for critics to resist."[175]

And the result of this allure is not only that scholarship on the topic has been placed in "the straightjacket of a single interpretation,"[176] but also that the field has unwittingly promoted what satirist Stephen Colbert calls "wikiality" or "truth by consensus."[177] The treatment of studies that differ from this consensus should be seen to be rather absurd and only detrimental to the potential depth the scholarship could explore, given the existence of

---

[173] Dimitrios Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making: The Early Reception* (Washington: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2007), 5.
[174] Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 17-19.
[175] Hubbard, "The Invention of Sulpicia," 177.
[176] Phrase borrowed from Stephen Kolsky, which he uses to describe the harmful tendency to interpret Boccaccio's writings as sexist. Kolsky, *The Genealogy of Women*, 80.
[177] Stephen Colbert, "The Wørd," on *The Colbert Report* (Comedy Central, July 31, 2006), cited in Mark C. Marino, "Ulysses on Web 2.0: Towards a Hypermedia Parallax Engine," *James Joyce Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (2007): 490.

other possible readings such as those proposed in the previous chapters. And whereas the proponents of the consensus likely all have the best of intentions, unfortunately scholarship outside of Classics, such as Jane Stevenson's study on women writers, is affected, so that the conjectures promoted by the consensus are assumed to be pure facts upon which other conjectures can be made. For example, in Stevenson's otherwise excellent work, Davies' theory of a circle of Messalla is cited as fact;[178] [Tib.] 3.10 and 12 are said to indicate that Sulpicia and Cerinthus are engaged and will be married in the upcoming year (while the poems do no such thing);[179] and the idea that any post-Augustan writer or literary figure named Sulpicia somehow supports the existence of an Augustan Sulpicia is repeated.[180] Furthermore, Stevenson's work is now cited in classical scholarship for its 'rediscovery' and discussion of a first-century BC elegiac epitaph mentioning a Sulpicia, which scholars such as Hallett now add to Sulpicia-the-poet's corpus.[181] Stevenson's work is but one example of how the perpetuation of Sulpician 'wikiality' can prove awkward, if not dangerous, for future

---

[178] Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets*, 36.
[179] Ibid., 39.
[180] Stevenson says in beginning her discussion of the Domitian Sulpicia: "A surprising number of women in the *gens Sulpicia* were remembered for one reason or another; and the existence of two poets suggests that the family may have maintained a tradition of educating their daughters." Ibid., 45. (Stevenson also makes it sound like the supposed Augustan Sulpicia and the Domitian Sulpicia appear in Boccaccio's *De mulieribus claris*, while neither of these Sulpicias are present in any of Boccaccio's writings. Ibid., 45n76.) While this reading of a familial connection is understandable if one follows the consensus of Sulpicia-as-poet, Hallett takes it even further by suggesting that the appearance of accounts of three historical Sulpicias in the first centuries BC/AD can be used to "contexualize [the Sulpicia poems] and their later [silent] Roman reception" (Livy 39.8-19 features a Sulpicia involved in the Bacchanalian conspiracy of 186 BC; Valerius Maximus 6.7.3 and Appian 4.39 mention a first-century BC Sulpicia, wife of Lentulus Cruscellio; and Val. Max. 8.5.12 and Pliny 7.35 feature the third-century BC Sulpicia, as discussed above in the Introduction). Hallett, "Scenarios of Sulpiciae," 83. Hallett even suggests that these historians used an Augustan woman's name for their historical accounts in order to make a point about the Sulpicia poems, which by all evidence seem to have gone unnoticed in antiquity, saying:

> While the explicitly moralizing author Valerius Maximus shared his *gentilicium nomen* with that of Marcus Valerius Messalla Corvinus and Valeria, mother of the Augustan elegist Sulpicia…he may well have regarded Sulpicia as somehow tarnishing the name of the Valerii with her provocative poetry. At the very least [he] uses the name for two different women he extols for virtuous behavior.

Ibid., 88. Hubbard is much safer in his assumption that all post-elegiac Roman Sulpicias (of which there are four known) "felt free to use the name as a pseudonym [which therefore] raises the possibility that they knew the name had already been appropriated even by the first poet who used it." Hubbard, "The Invention of Sulpicia," 189. And, as I have suggested in the Introduction, that "first poet who used it" may have appropriated it from a moral Sulpicia in Rome's past.
[181] On the epitaph, see note 52 above.

scholarship. We should not be comfortable with a Roman Sappho fashioned from unsubstantiated theories simply because we will not have a Roman Sappho otherwise. Though it is of course a possibility that a poet named Sulpicia existed, the more likely possibility that such a person did not exist should also be admitted and seriously entertained.

3.2 Pontano's Sulpicia/Sappho

Perhaps in a manner opposite to what Prins has found in scholarship on Sappho, there is a marked tendency of scholarship on the Sulpicia poems to ignore or at least be seemingly unaffected by the more productive afterlife that the figure of Sulpicia has enjoyed, namely her literary afterlife. For, whereas the Sulpicia poems have only received a decent amount of attention within the previous 30 years or so, Sulpicia as a literary figure has been appropriated in several literary texts, as early as the fifteenth century. And in each instance, these post-classical constructions of Sulpicia mirror the original: a constructed literary figure whose ambiguous nature allows the appropriating author to play with both gender and identity.

Mary Maxwell, who has provided some of the more unique insights into the Sulpicia poems, has said:

> …not only do vigorous (even far-fetched) poetic interpretations contribute significantly to our understanding of literary traditions, the very best of these (Catullan renderings of Sappho or Pound's *Homage to Sextus Propertius*, for example) themselves become canonical. And in the ongoing discussions of Sulpicia and her place in the poetic tradition, such translations may well turn out to be more influential than any scholarship.[182]

Maxwell adheres to the consensus of Sulpicia-as-poet, and thus the poetic interpretations she is referring to reference Sulpicia as a poet (such as in the Sulpician echoes she reads in the work of the twelfth-century female troubadour, Beatrice, Countess of Die). Indeed, Maxwell

---

[182] Mary Maxwell, "Sulpicia in Performance" (paper presented at the annual meeting for the ALSCW, Claremont, California, March 9-11 2012), 8.

sees Sulpicia "as a crucial link between the classical world and Medieval Latin and vulgate poetry, and thence to Renaissance and modern women poets and performers."[183]

Of course, given my reading of Sulpicia, I would apply the latter part of Maxwell's statement to the *scholarly* interpretations of Sulpicia. For they are but interpretations, and yet it is these interpretations which have already engendered our 'understanding' of the poems and their author. Indeed, it is not the poems themselves that have been added to the canon (if the poems' increase in popularity can be termed as such), but rather the Gruppian interpretation of the poems.[184] However, if the 'canonical' interpretations of the Sulpicia poems are to be challenged, and as literary interpretations of a literary figure are just as close to the source as scholarly interpretations in the case of the Sulpicia poems, I would argue that the literary interpretations that figure Sulpicia as a literary construct and not a poet should have the chance to contribute to our understanding of the text.

That said, as this is not meant to be a comparatist thesis, it is not my intention to point out different instances throughout literature in which a Sulpicia appears in an attempt to draw out parallels which support my reading over another.[185] It can be easily argued that modern constructions of Sulpicia are so far removed that they can only be looked upon with interest, and I do not have the room to provide a counter-argument here. I would, however, argue for the usefulness of a close reading of one particular post-classical construction of Sulpicia, namely the first known post-classical construction of Sulpicia, that of the Neapolitan humanist and poet, Giovanni Pontano.[186]

The seventy poems that make up Pontano's posthumously published collection, entitled *Hendecasyllaborum sive Baiarum libri duo* (herein called the *Baiae*), were presumably written during the last thirty years of Pontano's life, dating them to between 1470

---

[183] Ibid., 3.
[184] In addition to the increase in publications on the matter, at least one graduate seminar has been taught solely on the Sulpicia poems (LAMA 503 at Leiden University, in 2006/07, taught by Dr. Joan Booth).
[185] I am interested in the potential of such a study, however, and thus have attached a brief catalogue of potentially relevant post-classical literary constructs of Sulpicia in Appendix C.
[186] The rest of this section is an adapted version of my paper for LAT 599, Fall 2013, entitled "Sulpicia, According to Pontano."

and 1503.[187] As the title suggests, the poems were written largely in the style of Catullus, with the use of the hendecasyllabic meter and playful erotic themes Catullus was and is known for, and which Pontano had experimented with elsewhere. Indeed, some of the poems in the *Baiae* are Neo-Latin imitations of Catullus' own works.[188] However, Pontano also borrowed from another canonical Roman text in the *Baiae*, namely the *Corpus Tibullianum*. What is most interesting for our purposes is that the Sulpicia in *Baiae* 2.9 is clearly based on the Sulpicia of the *Corpus Tibullianum*.[189] That this is the first known post-classical construction of the elegiac Sulpicia – and is possibly the first documented mention of her since the time of her writing – should warrant a fair amount of attention in scholarship on the

---

[187] Julia Haig Gaisser dates the *Baiae* to the 1490s, citing Walter Ludwig for the chronology of Pontano's writing. Walter Ludwig, "Catullus Renatus," in *Litterae Neolatinae, Schriften zur neulateinischen Literatur* (Munich, 1989), 172-80, cited in Julia Haig Gaisser, *Catullus and His Renaissance Readers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 221. I could not access a copy of Ludwig's article at the time of writing, and will here defer to Rodney Dennis' dating, as he cites Ludwig elsewhere in his edition and thus was aware of Ludwig's arguments. Giovanni Gioviano Pontano, *Baiae*, The I Tatti Renaissance Library, ed. and trans. Rodney G. Dennis, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), vii. Dennis' dating is also in agreement with Carol Kidwell's dating of the majority of Book 1 to the 1470s, and the rest to the 1480s and 90s, based on internal evidence. Carol Kidwell, *Pontano: Poet & Prime Minister* (London: Duckworth, 1991), 120 and 125.
[188] E.g. *Baiae* 1.28 imitates Catullus 51 (Catullus' translation of Sappho 31), and *Baiae* 2.22 imitates Catullus 62. Other works of Pontano, such as the *Pruritus* (1449) and the *Parthenopeus sive Amores* (c. 1457) were also influenced by Catullus. See Gaisser, *Catullus*, 220-54.
[189] As will be seen below, in the *Baiae*, Pontano uses the Italian spelling for Sulpicia, being 'Sulpitia'. As Rodney Dennis and John Quinn (discussed below) both use only the Latin spelling in their respective discussions, I will only use the Latin spelling herein to avoid confusion. Likewise, I will only use the original spelling for Neaera, while Pontano uses the spelling 'Neera'.

Sulpicia poems, and yet it has gone relatively unnoticed.[190] And even though Pontano's

version of Sulpicia is quite different from that presented by the scholarship today, the general

silence on Pontano's picture of Sulpicia is particularly odd, given that the manuscript written

by his own hand, the *codex Guelferbytanus Aug. 82.6* (G) underlies nearly every post-

Victorian edition of the Sulpicia poems.[191] Indeed, when viewed through the lens of his

codex, Pontano's portrayal of Sulpicia in the *Baiae* is seen to be quite rich if not directly

informative, and can only add to our readings of the Sulpicia poems.

  It can be assumed that any serious humanist and Neo-Latin poet, especially one who

wrote in elegiacs, would have been familiar with Tibullus to some degree.[192] But Pontano's

interest must have been more, as, in addition to a mention and quotation (of Tib. 1.6.82) in

---

[190] To my knowledge, the first mention of Pontano's affinity for the *Corpus Tibullianum* is in Rodney Dennis' edition of the *Baiae*, the first English translation of the work, published in 2006; the second and only other mention to be found is a 2008 conference paper by John T. Quinn. As Dennis' notes are quite brief, and as the work obviously focuses on the Neo-Latin work and not on potential classical influences, Quinn's paper represents the only discussion in classical scholarship about Pontano's use of Tibullus in the *Baiae*. That said, the exact contents of Quinn's paper are unknown, as Quinn passed away soon after presenting the paper, and, apart from the abstract, neither a hardcopy of his paper nor memory of it can be tracked down. I here attempt to provide a discussion from a classical point of view, as may have existed in Quinn's paper, aided by Dennis' notes and Quinn's abstract.

 The abstract of Quinn's paper can still be found in CAMWS' archives of past conferences. John T. Quinn, "Sulpicia, According to Giovanni Pontano," (conference paper, CAMWS, 2008), abstract in *CAMWS Program of the 104th Annual Meeting*. Accessed May 2013. http://www.camws.org/meeting/ 2008/program/abstracts/04c4.Quinn.html. Presumably, Quinn either used Dennis' edition, or, given his interests in the classical tradition, came to the same conclusions independently, as in the abstract he mentions the same four points that Dennis does, being: codex G belonging to Pontano; the references to Tibullus himself in the *Baiae*; and Pontano's use of both the Tibullan Neaera and the Tibullan Sulpicia in the *Baiae*. What may be different in Quinn's paper is that he states with certainty in his abstract that Pontano's Neaera and Sulpicia were modeled on Tibullus' Neaera and Sulpicia, whereas Dennis' notes are worded as possibilities. That being said, whether Dennis was unsure or was simply being cautious, he was interested enough by the potential connection, as previously or around the same time as translating the *Baiae*, he completed his translation of the *Corpus Tibullianum* for his and Putnam's edition (published six years after Dennis' death in 2006). Perhaps ironically, however, Dennis only translated the first two books (Putnam translated [Tib.] 3.1-6 and 13-18; [Tib.] 3.7-12 and 19-20 were left out of the edition completely).

[191] Tibullus, *Tibulli Carmina, Sapphus Epistula Ovidiana, Codex Guelferbytanus 82.6 Aug.*, facsimile ed., preface by Friedrich Leo (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1910).

[192] E.g. Pontano's *De amore coniugali* (1480-84) is a collection of elegies addressed to the genre itself, to his wife, and to his daughters. Holt N. Parker, "Renaissance Latin Elegy," in *A Companion to Roman Love Elegy*, ed. Barbara K. Gold (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 479.

Charon, Pontano's mythological dialogue written in 1469,[193] Tibullus himself is mentioned by name in the *Baiae* twice.[194] Also, likely before writing the *Baiae*, Pontano himself copied out the entire *Corpus Tibullianum*, producing what is now known as the *codex Guelferbytanus Aug. 82.6* (G).[195] Therefore, Pontano was not simply aware of the Roman poet, but was well acquainted with each surviving word of the Tibullan corpus, and was thus able to speak with authority on what he saw as Tibullus' text.

Thus, when a Neaera appears in Books 1 and 2 of the *Baiae*, and elsewhere in Pontano's work, it is easy to read her, a pseudonym for his friend's sexually powerful girlfriend, as based on the elegiac *domina* named Neaera from [Tib.] 3.1-6.[196]

───────────────

[193] In a scene with Mercury on the banks of the Styx, a deceased grammarian named Pedanus asks Mercury to tell his still-alive students what he has learned from talking with notable figures he has encountered in the underworld, such as Virgil, Horace, Caesar, and Tibullus. Of Tibullus, Pedanus says to Mercury:

> *At a Tibullo Albio comiter fuisse exceptum, cumque Pedanum me vocari dicerem,*
> *gaudio eum exilisse, arbitratum Pedo, in cuius agro rus habuisset, oriundum esse;*
> *atque huius rei gratia docuisse me nomen senex apud vetustissimos Latinos*
> *communis fuisse generis proptereaque dixisse se cum de anicula loqueretur merito tot*
> *mala ferre senem.* (*Charon* 50)

Latin text taken from: Giovanni Gioviano Pontano, *Dialogues: Volume 1 - Charon and Antonius*, The I Tatti Renaissance Library, ed. and trans. Julia Haig Gaisser (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 90.

[194] Namely, in *Baiae* 2.24.5-6 (*dum molles Veneris reponis ignes, / quos dulcis tibi suggerit Tibullus* - "while you restore Venus' tender fires which sweet Tibullus suggested to you") and 2.25.6-9 (*illic Aonios legit libellos, / ediscens elegos Propertianos, / admirans numeros tuos, Tibulle, / et quos ad citharam refert Corinna* - "there he reads the little books of the Muses, learning by heart the Propertian elegies, admiring your rhythms, Tibullus, and those which Corinna reproduced on the lyre"). All Latin text for the *Baiae* is taken from Dennis' edition. All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

[195] For a discussion on the attribution of codex G to Pontano, see B. L. Ullman, "Pontano's Handwriting and the Leiden Manuscript of Tacitus and Suetonius," in *Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, 2nd edition (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1973), 407, 425-28, and 491-93. Codex G is generally dated as 'not before 1425', as Pontano's date of birth used to be assumed to be 1425 or 1426. Due to his allusions to the *Corpus Tibullianum* in the *Baiae*, it can be assumed that he copied out the manuscript before writing the *Baiae*, thus dating the codex to sometime between 1429 (his now known year of birth) and 1470, the approximate year when he began to write the *Baiae*.

[196] This is suggested by both Dennis and Quinn. As Dennis notes, 'Neaera' is also the name Pontano gives to the beloved of his friend, Pietro Summonte, in *Eridanus* II.15 and *De Tumulis* II.33. Pontano, *Baiae*, 211. It should be noted that Neaera is spelled 'Neera' in Pontano's text. However, as Pontano spells the Tibullan Neaera in his codex G as 'Neera', there should be no difficulty in reading two spellings as denoting the same literary figure. In contrast, Pontano retains the original spelling for Sulpicia in codex G, rather than changing it to the Italian 'Sulpitia', as he spells Sulpicia in the *Baiae*. That being said, Pontano's note beside [Tib.] 3.16 (where Sulpicia names herself) contains the Italian spelling: "*Serui Sulpiti pater*."

> *...Neera*
> *ipsa inter Veneres Cupidinesque*
> *incedit dominans regitque euntis*
> *et legem statuit diis deabusque.*
>   *O felix (mihi crede) Petre, felix,*
> *cui Formosa Neera, cui Cupido*
> *et Cypris favet et favent Amores...* (1.24.15-21)

…Neaera herself among Venuses and Cupids walks as a *domina*, and rules those passing and decrees laws for gods and goddesses.

   O lucky Petrus (believe me), lucky you, whom Beautiful Neaera, whom Cupid and Venus favour and Loves favour...

> *Ducit dum choreas Neera, linquunt*
> *et prata et virides agros Napeae;*
> *pulsat dum citharam Neera, currunt*
> *ad plectrum Dryadesque Oreadesque;*
> *cantat dum ad numeros Neera, cultae ad*
> *cantum Naiades ruunt frequentes;*
> *miscent hinc thyasos, Neera ducit,*
> *et ducit simul et canit...* (2.18.1-8)

While Neaera leads the dances, the Napeae leave both their meadows and green fields; while Neaera strums the lyre, both the Dryads and Oreads run to the plectrum; while Neaera sings in time, the numerous cultured Naiads hurry to the song; here the Bacchic dancers join, Neaera leads, she both leads and at the same time sings...

> *...quin ipsas Charites, Neera, et ipsam,*
> *dum rides, Veneris refers figuram.*
> *...*
> *Pruritum digitis, Neera, praefers,*
> *pruritum manibus, Neera, misces,*
> *prurigo tua dextera est, Neera.* (2.19.9-10, 18-20)

...while you laugh, Neaera, you bring back the Graces themselves, in fact, and the very figure of Venus…With your fingers, Neaera, you offer desire, with your hands, Neaera, you brew desire, your right hand, Neaera, is desire.

Having met this figure from the *Corpus Tibullianum* in the *Baiae*, it then follows to read the Sulpicia in *Baiae* 2.9, "suspiciously noble for one of the girls at Baiae," as a re-imagined Tibullan Sulpicia.[197] Pontano's Sulpicia, however, is quite different from the

---

[197] Pontano, *Baiae*, 217. In his abstract, Quinn states that he will examine "how Pontano re-imagined the Sulpicia he knew as Tibullan."

elegiac Sulpicia of antiquity, or at least the way the consensus reads her today. For in *Baiae* 2.9, 'Sulpicia' is not used as a pseudonym for the beloved of the poem's addressee, Francesco Pucci. Rather, Sulpicia is portrayed both as one of the girls at Baiae available to be bought for sexual purposes, and as a goddess-type figure, who can bring health to her supplicants.

> *Quid fontes calidos nemusque Avernum,*
> *Pucci, quid medicos petis recessus?*
> *Baianos habitant sinus Amores,*
> *Baianum Veneres colunt recessum,*
> *Baianis Charites aquis foventur.*
> *Adversis cupis an deis valere,*
> *iratas tibi et excitare Baias?*
> *Quin, Pucci mihi care, care Musis,*
> *cum primis Veneri Cupidinique,*
> *hoc, sis, hoc age pro tua salute:*
> *unam Sulpitiam precare, et uni*
> *rem sacram facias, roges et unam,*
> *stillet de roseis tibi labellis*
> *tris ut ambrosiae benigna guttas,*
> *spiret de teneris tibi papillis*
> *afflatus totidem fragrantis aurae,*
> *his risum adiciat benigniorem.*
> *Sic a Sulpitia salus petenda est,*
> *uno quam liceat tamen parare*
> *furtim basiolo repente rapto,*
> *demorsis labiis et ore hiulco*
> *spirantisque animae reflante flore.*
> *Sic fient tibi balneae salubres:*
> *una in Sulpitia salutis est spes.*

Why do you head for the warm springs and grove of Avernus, Puccius, why for healing retreats? Loves inhabit the bays of Baiae, Venuses care for the secluded spot of Baiae, Graces bathe in the waters of Baiae. Or do you desire to have influence with unfavorable gods, to rouse resentment between you and Baiae? Rather, dear to me Puccius, dear to the Muses, especially to Venus and Cupid, at this, pray you, work at this for your health: to Sulpicia alone pray, and for her alone may you perform the sacred act, and may you ask her alone, that for you she drop from her rosy lips three drops of ambrosia, being kind-hearted, that she blow from her tender breasts to you just as many breezes of fragrant air, that she add to these her rather favorable laugh. In this way health will be exacted from Sulpicia, whom one is still permitted to get secretly with a suddenly snatched little kiss, with bitten lips and an open mouth and the

breathing soul's flower blowing out again. Thus the baths will become
beneficial for you: in Sulpicia alone is hope of health.

Pontano's Sulpicia therefore reads not as the passionate and voiced elegiac persona of [Tib.]
3.9, 11, or 13-18, or even as the elegiac woman who requires divine help in the third-person
[Tib.] 3.10 and 12. Rather, Pontano's Sulpicia reads as the flat written woman from [Tib.] 3.8
inclusively. That is, she is presented as a relatively voiceless figure who is both worthy and
deserving of our gaze, not because Sulpicia herself demands it, but because the unnamed
author does.[198]

It is of course unsurprising that Pontano does not portray Sulpicia as a poetess, as
questions about Tibullan authorship had not yet arisen regarding Book 3 of the *Corpus*
Tibullianum. Indeed, at the time of *Baiae* 2.9's writing, the first commentary on the *Corpus*
Tibullianum had just or was just about it be published in 1475, and possibly was not even
available to Pontano.[199] However, it does seem relatively odd that Pontano's Sulpicia is not
given a voice at all, apart from her *risum benigniorem* (2.9.17), given that the majority of the
Sulpicia poems in the *Corpus Tibullianum* are in Sulpicia's voice, and given Pontano's
familiarity with all of the Sulpicia poems. Furthermore, Pontano knew of at least two female
poets from antiquity, both regarded even in Pontano's day to be female poets, namely
Corinna (cited alongside Tibullus in *Baiae* 2.25.9) and Sappho. In regards to the latter, even

---

[198] Perhaps Pontano's Sulpicia could be even said to be a conflation of the Sulpicia of [Tib.] 3.8 and
Boccacio's account in his *De mulieribus claris* of the third-century BC Sulpicia discussed above in
the Introduction. For Boccaccio's portrayal of that Sulpicia seems to go beyond the picture given in
the extant ancient sources, portraying her not just as a venerable person, but a person who has
somewhat of a divine quality.

> *...tanquam quoddam celeste pudicitie numen, omnium admiratione conspecta sit, sed*
> *futurorum omni evo etiam veneratione fere in inmarcescibilem gloriam nomen eius*
> *videatur esse delatum.* (LXVII.4)
> ...as a kind of celestial divinity of modesty, she was admired with the admiration of
> all, but also for all the ages of the future, with reverence her name seems to have been
> carried down in almost unfading glory.

Latin text taken from Giovanni. Boccaccio, *Famous Women*, tr. Virginia Brown, The I Tatti
Renaissance Library 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).
[199] Unless the concern for Pucci's health indicates Pucci's old age, there is nothing within *Baiae* 2.9 to
assign a specific date to the poem. Therefore, though Kidwell dates the poems in Book 2 to the 1480s
and onwards (see note 187 above), it is entirely possible that *Baiae* 2.9 was written either before the
first Tibullan commentary by Bernardinus Cyllenius was published in 1475, or around the same time.
At any rate, as Cyllenius' commentary was published in Rome (see Skoie, *Reading Sulpicia*, 31), it is
unknown when or if Pontano had access to a copy in Naples.

if Pontano was not aware that Catullus 51, which he imitates in *Baiae* 1.28, was more or less a translation of Sappho 31, he had knowledge of Sappho the poet via the so-called *Epistula Sapphus* (now known as *Heroides* 15), thought by some of Pontano's contemporaries, if not Pontano himself, to be a Latin translation of a Sappho poem.[200] There is, therefore, no reason to believe that Pontano would shy away from portraying a Greco-Roman poetess as a Neo-Latin poetess, or at least a ventriloquized Greco-Roman woman as a ventriloquized Neo-Latin woman. Furthermore, even Neaera, who does not have a voice in her Tibullan incarnation, is given a constructed voice by Pontano, as she is depicted in *Baiae* 2.18 as singing. Nonetheless, Sulpicia's sexual nature alone is depicted in *Baiae* 2.9, seemingly reducing her, at least at first glance, to simply a ghost of an ancient literary figure whose name allows Pontano to show off his erudition.

Does Pontano's one-dimensional and perhaps chauvinistic portrayal of Sulpicia thus justify its almost total neglect in scholarship, seeing as she has now been liberated and elevated to the level of historical poetess for nearly two centuries? The simple answer as to be expected from the discussion in the previous chapters is: no. Pontano had just as much evidence to support his reading of Sulpicia as the modern consensus does to support the reading of her as a Roman female poet. Perhaps he had more evidence, for that matter, given the possibility that other witnesses of Sulpicia, particularly other witnesses of Sulpicia-as-only-a-literary-construct, may have existed in Pontano's lifetime. Moreover, Pontano's reading is perhaps less skewed than today's consensus, since Gruppe's 1838 commentary had not yet affected the standard edition of the text, and thus the Sulpicia poems had not yet been divided between two authors, and the desire for a Roman Sappho had not yet suppressed varied readings of the poems.

Furthermore, though Pontano's Neo-Latin Sulpicia has been largely ignored, scholarship on the Sulpicia poems has chosen to adhere to Pontano's classical Latin Sulpicia. For, while the most attested version of line [Tib.] 3.13.6 is *dicetur si quis non habuisse suam* (as I have presented in my edition of the text in Appendix A), the line in Pontano's codex G ends with the variant *sua*. This variant has only one other witness, the sixteenth-century

---

[200] Pontano's familiarity with the *Epistula Sapphus* will be discussed in detail below.

Fragmentum Cuiacianum (F), and yet it exists in nearly every post-Gruppe edition of the

Corpus Tibullianum.[201] Aside from its rarity, the modern prevalence of this variant is odd,

given the likelihood that both witnesses are not independent of the earliest extant manuscript,

codex A, which is otherwise thought to be a copy of the ancestor of all Tibullan

manuscripts.[202] And, indeed, what goes unsaid in scholarship is that the *sua* in codex G is but

a suggestion, written faintly above the originally written *suum*, which itself differs from the

more attested *suam* of codex A; whether *sua* was intended by Pontano as an actual correction

or preferred variant rather than simply another possibility is unknown.[203] At any rate, this

---

[201] For a summary of the appearance of *sua* in [Tib.] 3.13.6 in pre- and post-Gruppe editions, see Appendix D.

  Of course, simply because the majority of MSS contain one variant does not make a less attested variant *ipso facto* incorrect, as seen in the case of *illas* versus *illa* in Ovid, *Met.* 1.2.2 (my thanks to Dr. Rebecca Nagel for making me aware of this discussion). However, the fact that [Tib.] 3.13.6's more attested *suam* and the now more prevalent *sua* both make sense grammatically and contextually sets this case apart from that of *Met.* 1.2. In that text, *illas* occurs in all MSS, and the variant *illa* only in two MSS. However, *illas* makes no sense either grammatically or contextually while *illa* does, thus rightly leading to scholars such as David Kovacs stating that "majorities…are frequently wrong" (David Kovacs, "Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.2," *The Classical Quarterly* 37, no. 2 [1987]: 458). In contrast, in the case of [Tib.] 3.13.6, though it is admittedly a tidy reading to have *sua*, *suam* makes perfect sense and, as a substantive possessive with no expressed antecedent, has a parallel two lines later (*meus*). Furthermore, *suam* increases the voyeuristic sense of the poem; not only does the reader see the persona of Sulpicia exposed (*nudasse*, line 2), but the girlfriend-less reader is invited to speak of Sulpicia's *gaudia*/*amor* as if he had shared them/it with her. At any rate, what is most interesting if not most important for our purposes here is that the variant *sua* was not accepted until the consensus changed to see a female as the author. One cannot help but think that such an editorial choice is then at least partially biased by the reading of who the author is, rather than based solely on textual analysis.

[202] As discussed below, though once thought to be not just independent of but also superior to codex A, codex G has been shown to simply be a manuscript based on codex A but full of emendations. As for F, which contains poems 3.4 (beginning at line 65) through 20, the fragment itself has not survived, but rather Joseph Scaliger's collation of it, found in his marginalia of a 1569 commentary, and in Scaliger's subsequent use of it in his own 1577 commentary (thus why it is also referred to as *Fragmentum Cuiacianum Scaligeri deperditum*). Antolín, *Lygdamus*, 37-38; Skoie, *Reading Sulpicia*, 29. Apart from its rather late dating, because of its removed nature, it is impossible to ascertain how faithful Scaliger's collation is, and thus it should not be relied on.

  Codex A is dated to around 1375. After codex A, the next oldest manuscripts date from the 1420s on. For the chronology of the earliest witnesses, see Maltby's introduction in his edition. Tibullus, *Tibullus: Elegies. Text, Introduction and Commentary*, edited by Robert Maltby (Cambridge: Francis Cairns, 2002), 21.

[203] See Figure 3 in Appendix B for a facsimile of [Tib.] 3.13 in codex G (36v). It can be assumed Pontano himself wrote in the *sua*, given that it appears to be in the same hand as the main text. See Ullman, "Pontano's Handwriting," 426-27, for a discussion on the majority of the corrections in codex G being Pontano's, in contrast to Leo's suggestion that two hands other than Pontano's are responsible for the corrections. Friedrich Leo, Preface to *Tibulli Carmina, Sapphus Epistula Ovidiana, Codex Guelferbytanus 82.6 Aug.*, facsimile ed. (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1910), i.

variant is more forgiving for today's normative reading of a female poet for poems 13-18. For the more attested *suam* would be a substantive possessive adjective that does not agree with any previously stated noun, thus rendering a translation of "his own girl." This would then produce a natural reading of a male poet writing for a male audience, as the gender of the speaker is not revealed until the final line of the poem (*digna fuisse ferar*, 3.13.10), or, in retrospect, a female poet writing for only a male audience.[204] The variant *sua*, on the other hand, could be taken to refer to the neuter plural *gaudia* of the previous line (*mea gaudia narret*, 3.13.5), rendering a translation of either "his own joys" or "her own joys," thus allowing for the more expected audience of a female poet, a female audience.[205]

However, if one were to actually take a look at codex G, it would be obvious that Pontano never would have intended a reading of Sulpicia as a female poet, writing for a female audience. First of all, codex G "is so full of supposedly correct readings (emendations by Pontano and others) that it reads like a printed text," and "[b]y its 'excellence' it fooled Baehrens and other scholars for many years," into thinking that it was independent of codex A.[206] However, the emendations are now known to simply show Pontano's normal practices in working with ancient texts. As Julia Haig Gaisser notes in her introduction to Pontano's dialogues,

> [Pontano] was a humanist to the core, studying, transcribing, correcting, and annotating the texts of ancient authors, as well as imitating and building on their ideas in his works. He was deeply interested in the usage and orthography of classical Latin – expertise that he brought to bear both in studying and correcting ancient texts and in his own writing. (Unlike many humanists, he wrote only in Latin.) He discussed Latin usage at length in several works, including his dialogues. His passion for orthography has made him the despair of editors, since he often changed his mind about a spelling if he had (or thought he had) new information about it.[207]

---

[204] As Skoie states, *suam* in effect "restricts Sulpicia's immediate audience to men or (more implausibly) lesbian women." Skoie, *Reading Sulpicia*, 145.

[205] In his 1755 commentary, Heyne notes that if this poem had been written by a female, *suum* (i.e. Pontano's original choice) would have been expected. Skoie, *Reading Sulpicia*, 144-45.

[206] Ullman, "Pontano's Handwriting," 407. Baehrens is the one who re-discovered and first used codex G in his 1878 edition. Antolín, *Lygdamus*, 35.

[207] Pontano, *Dialogues*, ix.

Thus, neither Pontano's *suum* nor *sua* necessarily reflect the original or correct version of the text, but rather Pontano's perhaps overactive editing mind.

Secondly, codex G ends with an unexpected inclusion that also goes unmentioned in the scholarship. On folio 38r, directly after [Tib.] 3.20, the final poem of the *Corpus Tibullianum*, "*FINIS*" is written, followed by half a page of blank space, presumably signalling the end of the codex. However, on the backside of the folio (38v), without explanation by way of title or marginalia, begins the *Epistula Sapphus*, or the Sappho *Heroides* letter, written in the same hand as the rest of the codex; this poem fills up the remaining four folios, copied out by Pontano in its entirety, until it ends with its own "*FINIT*" at the end of the codex (42r).

For scholars familiar with Renaissance manuscripts, the inclusion of the *Epistula Sapphus* may not seem odd at first glance.[208] For the *Epistula Sapphus* has a different transmission history than the rest of Ovid's *Heroides*, having been separated from the rest of the work at some point during the Medieval period (if it was indeed originally with the rest of the work) and subsequently lost.[209] When it resurfaced around 1420, the *Epistula Sapphus* was not immediately attributed to Ovid, having "no tag or title that indicated an Ovidian origin," but rather was attributed to Sappho herself, albeit translated into Latin by an unknown hand.[210] For this reason, the poem tended to get appended to different works before being rejoined with the rest of the *Heroides*; apparently, the *Corpus Tibullianum* was "its most frequent carrier."[211] As no one to date has gone through all of the estimated 100-180 manuscripts of the *Corpus Tibullianum* produced during the fifteenth and sixteenth

---

[208] Indeed, in his preface to the facsimile edition of codex G, Leo mentions the presence of the *Epistula Sapphus* and discusses Pontano's emendations to the poem, but he does not comment on why it is there in the first place.

[209] For the poem's transmission history, see R. J. Tarrant, "Ovid," in *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics*, ed. L. D. Reynolds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 268, 272-73; John Richmond, "Manuscript Traditions and the Transmission of Ovid's Works," in *Brill's Companion to Ovid*, ed. Barbara Weiden Boyd (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 453 and 467. For a summary of the debate on the Ovidian authenticity the *Epistula Sapphus*, see Thorsen, "Scribentis Imagines in Ovidian Authorship and Scholarship," 74-120.

[210] Thorsen, "Scribentis Imagines in Ovidian Authorship and Scholarship," 76.

[211] Albert R. Baca, "Ovid's Epistle from Sappho to Phaon (*Heroides* 15)," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 102 (1971): 37.

centuries,[212] it is uncertain how many manuscripts contain the *Epistula Sapphus*, or, most importantly for our purposes, how many such manuscripts existed and were accessible to Pontano when he compiled his codex G.[213]

That being said, I would argue that Pontano's inclusion of the *Epistula Sapphus* in codex G still deserves notice. Even if Pontano was copying a Tibullan manuscript that had the *Epistula Sapphus* appended to it, given Pontano's enthusiasm as a scholar and penchant for 'correct' texts, one would assume that Pontano would not have just copied out what was in front of him like a mindless copyist. On the other hand, if Pontano was copying from a manuscript that did not have the extra poem, it seems unlikely that the inclusion of the *Epistula Sapphus* would have been an afterthought. As codex G reads as an almost perfect text with its numerous worked-in emendations, we can imagine that Pontano had a preceding rough or working copy, and that codex G, what he meant to survive, is the clean copy. As such, Pontano would have known how much room the *Corpus Tibullianum* would take up, and thus the inclusion of the *Epistula Sapphus* cannot be reduced to Pontano needing to fill up the last few extra pages of costly parchment. Even if there were some extra pages due to oversight, Pontano, as a devoted scholar, must have had a reason to include this poem specifically.

And, indeed, if one takes a look at the other extant manuscripts where the *Epistula Sapphus* and *Corpus Tibullianum* are known to coincide, one will see that Pontano's pairing is different and, thus, perhaps telling. For, of the manuscripts I was able to find with both works, Pontano's codex G is the only one to both include nothing other than the *Corpus Tibullianum* and the *Epistula Sapphus*, *and* have no indication of Ovidian authorship for the extra poem; the other compiled manuscripts include other works (by Ovid or others) as well,

---

[212] Reeve and Rouse, "Tibullus," 420-24; Antolín, *Lygdamus*, 33-37; Skoie, *Reading Sulpicia*, 26-29.
[213] See note 195 above on the approximate dating of codex G.

and/or name Ovid as the author/translator of the *Epistula Sapphus*.[214] Therefore, as the *Epistula Sapphus* is the only addition to Pontano's copy of the *Corpus Tibullianum*, its inclusion does not result in a reading of the codex G as a collection of different works, a common occurrence in Renaissance manuscripts and printed editions. Furthermore, as the author of the *Epistula Sapphus* is not indicated, but is also presumably not being indirectly attributed to Tibullus on account of the "*FINIS*" after 3.20 and the *Epistula Sapphus* beginning on the backside of the same folio, Pontano's inclusion does not read as a statement of his view on the authorship of the poem. Instead, the unexpected and unexplained inclusion of the *Epistula Sapphus* at the back of the *Corpus Tibullianum* reads as if there is an implied 'cf.' at the beginning of the unattributed poem, with the implied comparison likely referring to what had just preceded. In other words, the inclusion and placement of codex G's *Epistula Sapphus* reads as a type of commentary on what precedes it, being the *Corpus Tibullianum*, or, more specifically, the end of the *Corpus Tibullianum*, i.e. the Sulpicia poems.[215]

---

[214] See Appendix E for a table summarizing the contents of these compilation manuscripts. In five of the seven other available manuscripts (including the first printed edition of the *Corpus Tibullianum* that did not include Catullus, Propertius, and Statius), other Ovidian or pseudo-Ovidian works can be found between the end of the *Corpus Tibullianum* and the *Epistula Sapphus*, and/or Ovid is clearly stated as the 'translator'. In MS. Lat. class. e. 17, dated to 1453, the *Epistula Sapphus* immediately follows the *Corpus Tibullianum* with presumably no indication of authorship; however, this manuscript also includes Catullus, thus making any additional appended works less conspicuous. In the codex Chisianus, dated to 1467, Ovid *Am.* 3.9 is placed between the *Corpus Tibullianum* and the *Epistula Sapphus*, but Tibullus is clearly named as the author of the *Epistula Sapphus*. This latter manuscript is likely an anomaly, as Ovid had been named as the author/translator of the poem for at least 15 years prior (in the pre-1453 MS D'Orville 166), and codex A had already been around for almost a century, thus firmly establishing what was considered Tibullan. In fact, according to H. Sedlmayer, this may be the only time the poem is attributed to Tibullus. H. Sedlmayer, "Epistula Phaonis ad Sappho," in *Wiener Studien*, Volume 10, eds. W. v. Hartel and K. Schenkl (Wien: H. Böhlaus, 1888), 167.

[215] Of course, due to Pontano's borrowing of Neaera from [Tib.] 3.1-6, one could say that the inclusion of the *Epistula Sapphus* has something to do with the still extant idea that there was a link, either familial or simply literary, between Ovid and Lygdamus (e.g. Ovid and a historical Lygdamus were related by blood, or 'Lygdamus' was a pen-name for Ovid himself, or the poems are simply written in the style of Ovid under the pseudonym 'Lygdamus'). See Baca, "Ovid's Epistle from Sappho to Phaon," 37-8; Antolín, *Lygdamus*, 3-20. While this certainly might have been one reason for why some copyists/scholars linked the two works, it is interesting to note that the *Epistula Sapphus* appears to always *follow* the *Corpus Tibullianum*, rather than come before. Therefore, if one reads the poems in succession as they appear in one of the compilation manuscripts, by the time the reader gets to the *Epistula Sapphus*, the reader always has the Sulpicia poems freshest in their mind, not the Lygdamus poems.

In the absence of any title or marginalia to indicate the inclusion of the *Epistula Sapphus* as a type of extended note by Pontano on the Sulpicia poems, one can at least see the parallel between the two texts that Pontano himself likely noticed, highlighted by the physical juxtaposition of the two texts. For, regardless of who Pontano thought to be its author/translator, the voice of the *Epistula Sapphus*, that of Sappho, is a ventriloquized female voice; Sappho is named in the text as the author (*autoris nomina Saphos*, line 3), and yet the reader knows that Sappho herself is not directly saying the Latin words.[216] In a strikingly similar fashion, the feminine voice in eight of the twelve physically preceding poems in the codex, that of Sulpicia, in Pontano's day was also read as ventriloquized; Sulpicia names herself as the speaker (in 3.16), and yet she was not regarded at the time as the actual poet. Therefore, both the Sappho of the *Epistula Sapphus* and the Tibullan Sulpicia can be read as simply female literary personae whom a male writer is speaking through.

If this was Pontano's view of the Tibullan Sulpicia, it then follows that he felt free to experiment with the figure of Sulpicia in his *Baiae*, treating her as a malleable literary construct whom he could use for his own purposes. Indeed, Pontano's Sulpicia, if read through the lens of his codex G, is portrayed similarly to codex G's Sappho. The Sappho of the *Epistula Sapphus* is a figure twice-removed from her normal context. Firstly, she is a translation, either in the traditional sense (as some of Pontano's contemporaries thought) or simply in the cultural sense, being in a Latin rather than a Greek poem. Secondly, she is placed in a different poetic environment than is to be expected, both in terms of the genre/ meter, and in the gender of her beloved. Likewise, Pontano's Sulpicia can be seen as a 'translation' of the classical Latin Sulpicia into a Neo-Latin Sulpicia, becoming a girl that a fifteenth-century man could both see and pray to at the Baiae. Moreover, Pontano's Sulpicia is placed in a poetic context different than one might expect, being praised in hendecasyllabics, and not given her own voice. Therefore, though the Sulpicia of *Baiae* 2.9 is not the one that we have come to know through the currently held consensus, Pontano has not simply reduced her to a now outdated and flat figure, written for the male gaze. Rather, when Pontano's codex G is taken into consideration, she is seen as having been created out of

---

[216] Latin text taken from codex G.

an interest and respect for the ancient tradition, not unlike the Sappho of the *Epistula Sapphus*. In that sense, Pontano's Sulpicia is perhaps the closest we can get to a Roman Sappho.

3.3 Conclusion

The readings I proposed in the previous chapters may seem to border on the heretical given the concreteness with which the consensus is disseminated these days in reference books and new scholarship alike. However, when compared to the way Sappho's reception has perhaps drastically altered the way in which she is read, it can be seen that the consensus' picture of Sulpicia is but one reading that is not the result of progress, but rather of unsubstantiated interpretations that have been repeated to the point of internalization. Furthermore, when the very first treatment of the Sulpicia figure is looked at, that is both in Giovanni Pontano's *Baiae* and *codex Guelferbytanus*, it is seen that a much richer reading that is just as (if not more) possible as today's consensus is available for study. It is rather limiting for scholarship on the Sulpicia poems to ignore readings such as Pontano's, which multiply the possible readings of Sulpicia and only add to the provenance of these peculiar poems.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

The Sulpicia poems have traditionally received less commentary and study than the rest of the *Corpus Tibullianum*. This historical trend as well as the immediate focus of early scholarship to identify the author as soon as he/she was seen to not be Tibullus makes sense, given the period within which this authorial debate occurred. As Karl Enenkel and Henk Nellen discuss in regards to early modern commentaries,

> [o]ne of the most deadly means of textual de-authorisation was to deprive a text of its alleged and often quite prominent author, thus denoting it to a lower plane or even making it anonymous. Anonymity was considered the same as insignificance. From the thirteenth to the eighteenth century, *auctoritas* was always dependent on an author who was clearly identified as a person. Without an *auctor*, *auctoritas* did not exist. As a rule, it was of the utmost importance that the commentators confirmed the existence of the author as a historical person.[217]

Thus, when the Sulpicia poems fell in stature, so to speak, from Tibullan to non-Tibullan, it is understandable that though scholars felt the poems as *pseudepigrapha* required a replacement *auctor* for whom a biography could be recited, as that *auctor* could no longer be identified as a canonical Roman poet, scholars' interest in the poems paled in comparison to their interest in the rest of the *Corpus Tibullianum*. Furthermore, it is understandable that when Otto Gruppe read some of the poems as amateur in quality and subsequently interpreted the author for some of the poems to be their poetic persona, the discussion around the poems' authorship ended and the justification for the poems' lessened attraction was accepted, at least for some time.

Similarly, it is understandable that the increasing interest in the poems over the last three decades, amounting to the first observable revival of these poems since they were written, has focussed on arguing for the literary merit of the poems, particularly as the majority of new studies done on the poems have been from a largely feminist perspective.

---

[217] Karl Enenkel and Henk Nellen, "Introduction: Neo-Latin Commentaries and the Management of Knowledge," in *Neo-Latin Commentaries and the Management of Knowledge in the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period (1400-1700)*, eds. Karl Enenkel and Henk Nellen (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013), 16-17.

With a female hand already seemingly ascertained by Gruppe, these new studies on the Sulpicia poems more or less build on the groundwork laid by Matthew Santirocco, seeking to fortify his arguments for the literary merit of the poems in laying out an Augustan Sulpicia's literary and biological pedigrees, but perhaps seeking also to prove wrong Santirocco's statement that "Sulpicia is no Roman Sappho."[218]

As I hope I have shown in this thesis, however, Sulpicia is indeed no Roman Sappho in the sense that we would like her to be, in that we cannot be sure of Sulpicia's existence as a historical poet, and thus we cannot hold her to be the Roman equivalent of the epitome of female Greek talent, nor a parallel example of presumably unconventional behaviour.[219] "If the tendency to invoke [Sulpicia] as a female persona with an original [elegiac] voice seems overdetermined to us now, it is because this reading of [Sulpicia] is inherited" from the early 1800s and has been perpetuated by scholars up to today.[220] The use of 'Sulpicia' as a historical poet's name is now matter-of-fact, and explanations as to her identity are only provided for those unfamiliar with the presumed canon of ancient women writers. However, if we allow ourselves to question the basis of the modern assumption that the author of any of the Sulpicia poems is their poetic persona, and subsequently question why the poems have been treated differently than the rest of the poems in the book within which they were transmitted, it seems much more likely that Sulpicia is a Roman Sappho only in the sense that she is a literary figure. Therefore, it should no longer be expected nor warranted that all studies ought to begin from the same assumption or be dictated by previous trends in scholarship. Rather, more caution should be used in presenting any theory as fact, and the unspoken indefinite moratorium on non-Sulpicia-as-poet theories should be lifted.

That said, the work done by previous scholars should not be seen as a waste by any means. Identifying the poems as non-Tibullan and then arguing for their merit regardless of their then non-canonical status were necessary steps for our appreciation of the poems. If in

---

[218] Santirocco, "Sulpicia Reconsidered," 239.
[219] In the *OCD*, Sappho and Sulpicia are named together as examples of women's views on gender in the ancient world possibly differing from those of men. Mark Golden, *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, s.v. "gender." Interestingly, the only other specific names in the entry are of Greek gods.
[220] Quote changed from Prins' discussion of the Victorian readings of Sappho affecting the twentieth-century readings of Sappho, with "Sappho" changed to "[Sulpicia]" and "lyric" changed to "[elegiac]." Prins, *Victorian Sappho*, 5.

the nineteenth century the poems had been unanimously attributed to an anonymous male without any identifiable ties to Messalla, they likely would have been regarded as too insignificant to continue to be printed alongside Tibullus' poetry; if the poems had not been identified as female-written in the nineteenth century, feminist scholars in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries would likely not have bothered with them. Now, given the evolution of the consensus on the poems, entire book chapters, journal issues, and even graduate seminars are devoted to the poems specifically.[221] Because of this increasing body of work, a large number of possible nuances and allusions that went unnoticed in the first 500 years of extant scholarship have been pointed out, and possible readings of the poems if written by a Roman woman have been thoroughly explored. What is now left to be more thoroughly explored are those equally possible readings and nuances if the poems were written by a Roman man. Since that thread of scholarship has been relatively untouched for nearly two centuries, the possibility of new discoveries is both promising and exciting.

And indeed, as I hope I have at least indirectly shown in the previous chapters, the potential loss of the only female Roman elegist should not be seen as a tragedy, for considering the potential gain of the only male Roman elegist to hide himself in a female persona opens up a whole world of possibilities for how these poems can be interpreted. Furthermore, allowing for a discursive environment prevents us from unknowingly internalizing subjective generalizations as 'ancient realities'.[222] By releasing the Sulpicia poems from "the straitjacket of a single interpretation"[223] that has been imposed on them for far too long, the number of assumptions needed to interpret the poems is reduced. Likewise, the number of elaborate theories on how the authors of Book 3 (if there is more than one) were personally linked, and how and when their possibly separate works come to be transmitted together all become unnecessary. Moreover, the need to look at the poems as an utter anomaly that places them outside the reach of general studies is removed, and the

---

[221] E.g., see *Classical World* 100, no. 1 (2006); Mathilde Skoie, "'The Woman'," in *The Cambridge Companion to Latin Love Elegy*, ed. Thea S. Thorsen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 83-96; Alison Keith, "Sartorial Elegance and Poetic Finesse in the Sulpician Corpus," in *Roman Dress and the Fabrics of Roman Culture*, ed. Jonathan Edmondson and Alison Keith (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 192-201; and note 184 above.
[222] Yatromanolakis, *Sappho in the Making*, 19. See note 174 above.
[223] See note 176 above.

poems are made available for broader studies of Book 3 of the *Corpus Tibullianum*, Latin love elegy, classical *pseudepigrapha*, and ancient readers' responses to such. Likewise, as I have shown in Chapter 3, a greater understanding or at least multiplied meanings of post-classical readers' responses to the Sulpicia poems can also be gained under this broader and more dynamic reading. Perhaps most importantly, when approached as *pseudepigrapha*, the Sulpicia poems will finally be positioned to teach us "about the tacit assumptions that we, as scholars, use in approaching the material."[224] Thus, even if Sulpicia is not a woman, there is much we can learn from her.

---

[224] Peirano, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*, 31.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Antolín, Fernando Navarro, ed. *Lygdamus: Corpus Tibullianum III.1-6: Lygdami Elegiarum Liber*. Translated by J. J. Zoltowski. Leiden: Brill, 1996.

Baca, Albert R. "Ovid's Epistle from Sappho to Phaon (*Heroides* 15)." *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 102 (1971): 29-38.

Boccaccio, Giovanni. *Famous Women*. Translated by Virginia Brown. The I Tatti Renaissance Library 1. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.

———. *The Fates of Illustrious Men*. Edited and translated by Louis Brewer Hall. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1965.

Bowie, A. M. "Thinking with Drinking: Wine and the Symposium in Aristophanes." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 117 (1997): 1-21.

Bowie, E. L. "Early Greek Elegy, Symposium and Public Festival." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 106 (1986): 13-35.

Byrne, Shannon N. "Maecenas and Petronius' Trimalchio Maecenatianus." *Ancient Narrative* 6 (2007): 31-49.

Cairns, Francis. *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry*. 1972. Reprint, Ann Arbor: Michigan Classical Press, 2007.

———. *Papers on Roman Elegy: 1969-2003*. Bologna: Patron editore, 2007.

———. "Propertius and the Origins of Latin Love-Elegy." In *Brill's Companion to Propertius*, edited by Hans-Christian Günther, 69-95. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

———. *Sextus Propertius: The Augustan elegist*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

———. *Tibullus: A Hellenistic Poet at Rome*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Cameron, Alan. *Callimachus and His Critics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.

Caston, Ruth Rothaus. *The Elegiac Passion: Jealousy in Roman Love Elegy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. Accessed March 2013. DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199925902.001.0001.

———. "Love as Illness: Poets and Philosophers on Romantic Love." *The Classical Journal* 101, no. 3 (2006): 271-98.

Conrad, C.W. *Course Materials from Years Past: Propertius 4.8*. Accessed March 2014. http://www.artsci.wustl.edu/~cwconrad/.

Currie, H. MacL. "The Poems of Sulpicia." *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II 30.3 (1983): 1751-64.

Davies, Ceri. "Poetry in the 'Circle' of Messalla." *Greece & Rome* 20, no. 1 (1973): 25-35.

Day, Archibald A. *The Origins of Latin Love-Elegy*. 1938. Reprint, New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1972.

Dinter, Martin. "Inscriptional Intermediality in Latin Elegy." In *Latin Elegy and Hellenistic Epigram*, edited by Alison Keith, 7-18. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011.

Dover, Kenneth, ed. *Plato: Symposium*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

Enenkel, Karl and Henk Nellen. "Introduction: Neo-Latin Commentaries and the Management of Knowledge." In *Neo-Latin Commentaries and the Management of Knowledge in the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period (1400-1700)*, edited by Karl Enenkel and Henk Nellen, 1-76. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013.

Farrell, Joseph. "Calling Out the Greeks: Dynamics of the Elegiac Canon." In *A Companion to Roman Love Elegy*, edited by Barbara K. Gold, 11-24. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

———. "Classical Genre in Theory and Practice." *New Literary History* 34, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 383-408.

———. *Latin Language and Latin Culture: From Ancient to Modern Times*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Fredericks, S. C. 1979. "A Poetic Experiment in the Garland of Sulpicia (*Corpus Tibullianum*, 3, 10)." *Latomus* 35: 761-782.

Gaisser, Julia Haig. *Catullus and His Renaissance Readers*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

———. "Introduction." In *The Complete Poems of Tibullus*, edited by Rodney G. Dennis and Michael C. J. Putnam, 1-28. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012.

Gale, Monica R. "Propertius 2.7: *Militia Amoris* and the Ironies of Elegy." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 87 (1997): 77-91.

Gibson, Roy K. "Gallus: The First Roman Love Elegist." In *A Companion to Roman Love Elegy*, edited by Barbara K. Gold, 172-86. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Gilhuly, Kate. "Why Is Diotima a Priestess? The Feminine Continuum in Plato's *Symposium*." In *The Feminine Matrix of Sex and Gender in Classical Athens*, 58-97. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Grainger, James, ed. *A Poetical Translation of the Elegies of Tibullus; and of the Poems of Sulpicia*, Vol. II. London: A. Miller, 1759. Google books edition.

Green, Roger P.H. "Latin Love Elegy in Late Antiquity: Maximianus." In *The Cambridge Companion to Latin Love Elegy*, edited by Thea S. Thorsen, 257-70. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCO9781139028288.023.

Green, R. P. H. "Ausonius' Use of the Classical Latin Poets: Some New Examples and Observations." *The Classical Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (1977): 441-52.

Gruppe, O. F. *Die römische Elegie.* Leipzig: Wigand, 1838. Google books edition.

Habinek, Thomas N. *The Politics of Latin Literature: Writing, Identity & Empire in Ancient Rome*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.

Hallett, Judith P. "Authorial Identity in Latin Love Elegy: Literary Fictions and Erotic Failings." In *A Companion to Roman Love Elegy*, edited by Barbara K. Gold, 269-84. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Hallett, J. P. "The Eleven Elegies of the Augustan Poet Sulpicia." In *Women Writing Latin: From Roman Antiquity to Early Modern Europe*, Volume 1, edited by L. J. Churchill, P. R. Brown and J. E. Jeffrey, 45-65. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Hallett, Judith P. "Ovid's Sappho and Roman Women Love Poets." *Dictynna* 6 (2009): 2-10. Accessed September 2011. http://dictynna.revues.org/269.

———. "Scenarios of Sulpiciae: Moral Discourses and Immoral Verses." *EuGeStA* 1, (2011): 79-97.

———. "Women's Voices and Catullus' Poetry." *The Classical World* 95, no. 4 (2002): 421-24.

Hallett, Judy. "Classics 320." *Diotima: Courses and Teaching Materials*. Accessed March 2014. http://www.stoa.org/diotima/syllabi/elite.shtml.

Halperin, David M. "Why is Diotima a Woman?" In *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality: and other essays on Greek love*, 113-51. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Harrison, Stephen. "Ovid and Genre: Evolutions of an Elegist." In *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, edited by Philip Hardie, 79-94. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Accessed April 2013. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521772818.007.

Hinds, Stephen. "The Poetess and the Reader: Further Steps Toward Sulpicia." *Hermathena* 143 (1987): 29-46.

Holzberg, Niklas. "Four Poets and a Poetess or a Portrait of the Poet as a Young Man? Thoughts on Book 3 of the *Corpus Tibullianum*." *The Classical Journal* 94, no. 2 (1999): 169-91.

———. *Ovid: The Poet and His Work*. Translated by G. M. Goshgarian. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002.

Hubbard, Thomas K. "The Invention of Sulpicia." *The Classical Journal* 100, no. 2 (2004/05): 177-94.

Hume, Robert D. "Historical Scholarship: Its Aims and Limits." *The Review of English Studies* 53, no. 211 (2002): 399-422.

Hunter, Richard. "Plato's *Symposium* and the Traditions of Ancient Fiction." In *Plato's Symposium: Issues in Interpretation and Reception*, edited by J. H. Lesher, Debra Nails, and Frisbee C. C. Sheffield, 295-312. Washington: Center for Hellenistic Studies, 2006.

———. *Plato and the Traditions of Ancient Literature: The Silent Streams*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Keith, Alison. "Critical Trends in Interpreting Sulpicia." *The Classical World* 100, no. 1 (2006): 3-10.

———. "Sartorial Elegance and Poetic Finesse in the Sulpician Corpus." In *Roman Dress and the Fabrics of Roman Culture*, edited by Jonathan Edmondson and Alison Keith, 192-201. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008.

———. "*Tandem venit amor*: A Roman Woman Speaks of Love." In *Roman Sexualities*, edited by Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner, 295-310. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Kidwell, Carol. *Pontano: Poet & Prime Minister*. London: Duckworth, 1991.

Kolsky, Stephen. *The Genealogy of Women: Studies in Boccaccio's* De mulieribus claris. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003.

Kovacs, David. "Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.2." *The Classical Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (1987): 458-65.

Le Glay, Marcel, Jean-Louis Voisin, and Yann Le Bohec. *A History of Rome*. 3rd ed. Translated by Antonia Nevill. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

Leo, Friedrich. Preface to *Tibulli Carmina, Sapphus Epistula Ovidiana, Codex Guelferbytanus 82.6 Aug.*, facsimile ed., i-xi. Leiden: Sijthoff, 1910.

Lev Kenaan, Vered. "Platonic Strategies in Ovid's Tales of Love." In *Latin Elegy and Narratology: Fragments of Story*, edited by Genevieve Liveley and Patricia Salzman-Mitchell, 142-62. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2008.

Liveley, Genevieve. "Narratology in Roman Elegy." In *A Companion to Roman Love Elegy*, edited by Barbara K. Gold, 410-25. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Liveley, Genevieve, and Patricia Salzman-Mitchell, eds. *Latin Elegy and Narratology: Fragments of Story*. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2008.

Lowe, N. J. "Sulpicia's Syntax." *The Classical Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (1988): 193-205.

Lyne, R.O.A.M. *Collected Papers on Latin Poetry*. Edited by S.J. Harrison. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Mackay, Christopher. *Consuls of the Roman Republic*. Accessed February 2014. http://www.ualberta.ca/~csmackay/Consuls.List.html.

Maltby, Robert. "The Unity of *Corpus Tibullianum* Book 3: Some Stylistic and Metrical Considerations." *Papers of the Langford Latin Seminar* (2009): 319-340.

Marcus, Leah. *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton*. London: Routledge, 2003. Taylor & Francis e-Library edition.

Marino, Mark C. "Ulysses on Web 2.0: Towards a Hypermedia Parallax Engine." *James Joyce Quarterly* 44, no. 3 (2007): 475-99.

Maxwell, Mary. "Sulpicia in Performance." Paper presented at the annual meeting for the ALSCW, Claremont, California, March 9-11, 2012.

Merriam, Carol U. "Sulpicia and the Art of Literary Allusion: [Tibullus] 3.13." In *Women Poets in Ancient Greece and Rome*, edited by Ellen Greene, 158-68. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005.

Miller, Paul Allen, ed. *Latin Erotic Elegy: An Anthology and Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Murgia, Charles E. "Imitation and Authenticity in Ovid: *Metamorphoses* 1.477 and *Heroides* 15." *The American Journal of Philology* 106, no. 4 (1985): 456-74.

Murray, Oswyn. "Symposium and Genre in the Poetry of Horace." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 75 (1985): 39-50.

Nikoloutsas, Konstantinos P. "The Boy as Metaphor: The Hermeneutics of Homoerotic Desire in Tibullus 1.9." *Helios* 38, no. 1 (2011): 27-57.

Park, Arum. "Two Types of Ovidian Personification." *The Classical Journal* 104, no. 3 (2009): 225-40.

Parker, Holt N. "Catullus and the *Amicus Catulli*: The Text of a Learned Talk." *The Classical World* 100, no. 1 (2006): 17-29.

———. "Renaissance Latin Elegy." In *A Companion to Roman Love Elegy*, edited by Barbara K. Gold, 476-90. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

———. "Sulpicia, the *auctor de Sulpicia*, and the Authorship of 3.9 and 3.11 of the *Corpus Tibullianum*." *Helios* 21, no. 1 (1994): 39-62.

Peirano, Irene. *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake: Latin* Pseudepigrapha *in Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Pontano, Giovanni Gioviano. *Baiae*. The I Tatti Renaissance Library. Edited and translated by Rodney G. Dennis. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.

———. *Dialogues: Volume 1 - Charon and Antonius*. The I Tatti Renaissance Library. Edited and translated by Julia Haig Gaisser. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012.

Prins, Yopie. *Victorian Sappho*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Quinn, John T. "Sulpicia, According to Giovanni Pontano." Conference paper, CAMWS, 2008. Abstract in *CAMWS Program of the 104th Annual Meeting*. Accessed May 2013. http://www.camws.org/meeting/2008/program/abstracts/04c4.Quinn.html.

Reeve, M. D. and R. H. Rouse. "Tibullus." In *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics*, edited by L. D. Reynolds, 420-25. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.

Richmond, John. "Manuscript Traditions and the Transmission of Ovid's Works." In *Brill's Companion to Ovid*, edited by Barbara Weiden Boyd, 443-83. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

Roessel, David. "The Significance of the Name Cerinthus in the Poems of Sulpicia." *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 120 (1990): 243-250.

Sacco, Vittoria. "A Statistical Approach Based on the Correspondence Analysis of Two Latin Corpuses: *Historia Augusta* and *Corpus Tibullianum*." Master of Science in Statistics thesis, University of Neuchâtel, 2011.

Santirocco, Matthew. "Sulpicia Reconsidered." *The Classical Journal* 74 (1979): 229-39.

Sedlmayer, H. "Epistula Phaonis ad Sappho." In *Wiener Studien*, vol. 10, edited by W. v. Hartel and K. Schenkl, 167. Wien: H. Böhlaus, 1888.

Shipton, K. M. W. "A Successful kômos in Catullus." *Latomus* 44, no. 3 (1985): 503-20.

Skoie, Mathilde. "*Corpus Tibullianum*, Book 3." In *A Companion to Roman Love Elegy*, edited by Barbara K. Gold, 86-100. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

———. *Reading Sulpicia: Commentaries 1475-1990*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

———. "Romantic Scholars and Classical Scholarship: German Readings of Sulpicia." In *Romans and Romantics*, edited by Timothy Saunders, Charles Martindale, Ralph Pite, and Mathilde Skoie, 87-108. Oxford: Oxford University Press Online, 2012. Accessed September 2013. DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199588541.003.0005.

———. "'The Woman'." In *The Cambridge Companion to Latin Love Elegy*, edited by Thea S. Thorsen, 83-96. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCO9781139028288.009.

Smyth, William Henry. *Descriptive Catalogue of a Cabinet of Roman Family Coins Belonging to His Grace the Duke of Northumberland*. London: Savill and Edwards, 1856. Google books edition.

Stevenson, Jane. *Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender, & Authority, from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Tarrant, R. J. "Ovid." In *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics*, edited by L. D. Reynolds, 257-84. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.

Thorsen, Thea Selliaas. "Scribentis Imagines in Ovidian Authorship and Scholarship: A Study of the *Epistula Sapphus* (*Heroides* 15)." PhD diss., University of Bergen, 2007.

Tibullus. *The Complete Poems of Tibullus: An En Face Bilingual Edition.* Edited and translated by Rodney G. Dennis and Michael C. J. Putnam. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012.

———. *Tibulli Carmina, Sapphus Epistula Ovidiana, Codex Guelferbytanus 82.6 Aug.* Facsimile ed. Preface by Friedrich Leo. Leiden: Sijthoff, 1910.

———. *Tibullus: Elegies – Introduction, Text, Translation and Notes*. 3rd ed. Edited and translated by Guy Lee. Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1990.

———. *Tibullus: Elegies. Text, Introduction and Commentary*. Edited by Robert Maltby. Cambridge: Francis Cairns, 2002.

Ullman, B. L. "A List of Classical Manuscripts (in an Eighth-Century Codex) Perhaps from Corbie," *Scriptorium* 8 (1954): 24-37.

———. "Pontano's Handwriting and the Leiden Manuscript of Tacitus and Suetonius." In *Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, 2nd ed., edited by B. L. Ullman, 401-28. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1973.

Veyne, Paul. *Roman Erotic Elegy: Love, Poetry, and the West*. Translated by David Pellauer. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988.

Wallace-Hadrill, Andrew. *Augustan Rome*. London: Bristol Classical Press, 2003.

West, Martin L. *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1974.

Wheeler, Stephen. "Before the *aetas Ovidiana*: Mapping the Early Reception of Ovidian Elegy," *Hermathena* no. 177/178 (2004-2005): 9-26.

Williams, Gordon. "Roman Poets as Literary Historians: Some Aspects of *Imitatio*." *Illinois Classical Studies* 8, no. 2 (Fall 1983): 211-37.

Wray, David. "Catullus the Roman Love Elegist?" In *A Companion to Roman Love Elegy*, edited by Barbara K. Gold, 25-38. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Wyke, Maria. *The Roman Mistress: Ancient and Modern Interpretations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

———. "Written Women: Propertius' *Scripta Puella*." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 77 (1987): 47-61.

Yardley, John C. "The Symposium in Roman Elegy." In *Dining in a Classical Context*, edited by William J. Slater, 149-55. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994.

Yatromanolakis, Dimitrios. *Sappho in the Making: The Early Reception*. Washington: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2007.

APPENDIX A: THE SULPICIA POEMS

The purpose of this study is not to provide a new edition of the Latin text and thus it would seem expected to use Postgate's OCT text here. However, the purpose of this study discourages against the use of such a text, as it reflects some of the Gruppian biases introduced to the text based on the reading of Sulpicia as a historical poet. For in Gruppe's *Die römische Elegie*, he translates his dual author theory to a physical separation of the poems, from the rest of the corpus, from the rest of Book 3, and from each other; poems 3.8-13 are renumbered as 4.1-6 under the heading "LIBER IV: SULPICIA," while poems 3.14-18 are renumbered as 1-5 under the heading "ACCEDUNT SULPICIAE SERVI FILIAE EPISTOLAE." Though poem 3.13 was later incorporated into the group assumed to be written by Sulpicia herself, the division of the Sulpicia poems into two groups has since been preserved in post-1838 editions up until today, including the OCT.[225]

It should be noted that Gruppe was not the first to alter the presentation of the Sulpicia poems in relation to the rest of the corpus. In 1582, Janus Dousa proposed that the Sulpicia poems, though still considered Tibullan, be viewed as an enclosed cycle independent of the rest of Book 3, due to its difference in persona and/or subject from the rest of the poems. This separation was reinforced in the mid-late 1700s by the argument of various scholars such as Johann Heinrich Voss that none of the poems in Book 3 could have been written by Tibullus. In both cases, all eleven Sulpicia poems are considered as being by a single author. The format of the text provided below is thus closer to Voss' edition, in terms of offering the poems as a complete cycle independent of the rest of Book 3 (which, I would warn, may or may not be accurate), and without headings to indicate dual authorship. The text itself is largely taken from Guy Lee's edition, a fresh collation of the *codex Ambrosianus* and other early manuscripts. In the three places where I have changed Lee's text, I have taken advantage of reconstruction suggestions that do not appear to be biased by assumptions on authorial identity, and/or that reflect my preferred collation of the *codex Ambrosianus* with the *codex Guelferbytanus*. These changes will be explained in the footnotes.

<div align="center">

[Tib.] 3.8

</div>

Sulpicia est tibi culta tuis, Mars magne, Kalendis:
    spectatum e caelo, si sapis, ipse ueni.
hoc Venus ignoscet. at tu, uiolente, caueto
    ne tibi miranti turpiter arma cadant.

Illius ex oculis, cum uult exurere diuos,   5
    accendit geminas lampadas acer Amor.
illam, quidquid agit, quoquo uestigia mouit,
    componit furtim subsequiturque decor.
seu soluit crines, fusis decet esse capillis;

---

[225] See note 9 above.

seu compsit, comptis est ueneranda comis.　　10
　　urit, seu Tyria uoluit procedere palla:
　　　urit, seu niuea candida ueste uenit.
talis in aeterno felix Vertumnus Olympo
　　　mille habet ornatus, mille decenter habet.

Sola puellarum digna est cui mollia caris　　15
　　　uellera det sucis bis madefacta Tyros,
possideatque metit quicquid bene olentibus aruis
　　　cultor odoratae diues Arabs segetis,
et quascumque niger rubro de litore gemmas
　　　proximus Eois colligit Indus aquis.　　20

Hanc uos, Pierides, festis cantate Kalendis,
　　　et testudinea Phoebe superbe lyra.
hoc sollemne sacrum, multos consummet in annos;
　　　dignior est uestro nulla puella choro.

Sulpicia is dressed for you, great Mars, on your Kalends: if you have sense, you yourself come from the heavens to observe her. This Venus will forgive. But you, violent one, beware that your arms do not fall from your shamelessly admiring self. From the eyes of that one, when he wants to inflame the gods, shrewd Love lights twin lights. That girl, whatever she does, wherever she moved her steps, elegance secretly composes and pursues. If she loosened locks of hair, it is right for her hair to be spread out; if she braided it, she is to be revered with braided hair. She inflames, if she wished to appear with a Tyrian palla; she inflames, if she came sparkling with a snowy garment. As lucky Vertumnus on eternal Olympus wears a thousand outfits, she becomingly wears a thousand. She alone of the girls is worthy, to whom may Tyre give soft fleeces soaked twice with dear juices, and may she possess whatever of the sweet-smelling field the rich Arab farmer reaps from the fragrant plains, and whatever jewels the dark India nearest to the Eastern waters collects from the red shore. Sing of this girl, Muses, on the festive Kalends, and Phoebus, proud with your tortoise shell lyre. This solemn religious rite, may she complete for many years; no girl is worthier of your chorus.

[Tib.] 3.9

Parce meo iuueni, seu quis bona pascua campi
　　　seu colis umbrosi deuia montis aper,
nec tibi sit duros acuisse in proelia dentes:
　　　incolumen custos hunc mihi seruet Amor.

Sed procul abducit uenandi Delia cura.　　5
　　　o pereant siluae deficiantque canes!
quis furor est, quae mens, densos indagine colles

claudentem teneras laedere uelle manus?
quidue iuuat furtim latebras intrare ferarum
    candidaque hamatis crura notare rubis?   10

Sed tamen, ut tecum liceat, Cerinthe, uagari,
    ipsa ego per montes retia torta feram;
ipsa ego uelocis quaeram uestigia cerui
    et demam celeri ferrea uincla cani.
tunc mihi, tunc placeant siluae, si, lux mea, tecum   15
    arguar ante ipsas concubuisse plagas.
tunc ueniat licet ad casses, inlaesus abibit,
    ne Veneris cupidae gaudia turbet, aper.

Nunc sine me sit nulla Venus, sed lege Dianae,
    caste puer, casta retia tange manu;   20
et quaecumque meo furtim subrepit amori
    incidat in saeuas diripienda feras.

At tu uenandi studium concede parenti,
    et celer in nostros ipse recurre sinus.

Spare my young man, boar, whether you till the good pastures of a field or the wilderness of a shady mountain, and let it not be for you to sharpen your cruel tusks for battles: may Love as a guardian keep this man safe for me. But the Delian goddess leads him far away with his care of hunting. O may the woods be destroyed and the dogs disappoint him! What madness is it, what reason, to want to mar his tender hands in hemming in the dense hills with a dragnet? Or what does it help to secretly enter the hiding places of wild beasts and to mark his white legs with hooked bramble bushes? But yet, so that I may wander with you, Cerinthus, I myself would bear the twisted nets through the mountains, I myself would search for the tracks of a swift stag and remove the iron chains of the fast dog. Then to me, then the woods would give pleasure, if, my light, I could be proven guilty of having slept with you before the nets themselves. Then yes, let the boar come to the snare, it will go away unharmed, lest he disturb the joys of eager love. Now without me may there be no love, but by the law of Diana, chaste boy, handle the nets with a chaste hand; and whoever secretly creeps up on my love, may she, deserving to be ripped to pieces, come upon savage beasts. But you, leave the eagerness for hunting to your father, and run yourself swiftly back to my lap.

[Tib.] 3.10

Huc ades et tenerae morbos expelle puellae;
    huc ades, intonsa Phoebe superbe coma.
crede mihi, propera, nec te iam, Phoebe, pigebit

formosae medicas applicuisse manus.
effice ne macies pallentes occupet artus,   5
    neu notet informis candida membra color;
et quodcumque mali est et quicquid triste timemus
    in pelagus rapidis euehat amnis aquis.

Sancte, ueni tecumque feras quicumque sapores,
    quicumque et cantus corpora fessa leuant.   10
neu iuuenem torque metuit qui fata puellae
    uotaque pro domina uix numeranda facit.
interdum uouet, interdum, quod langueat illa,
    dicit in aeternos aspera uerba deos.

Pone metum, Cerinthe; deus non laedit amantes.   15
    tu modo semper ama: salua puella tibi est.[226]
at nunc tota tua est; te solum candida secum
    cogitat, et frustra credula turba sedet.
Phoebe, faue: laus magna tibi tribuetur in uno
    corpore seruato restituisse duos.   20

Nil opus est fletu: lacrimis erit aptius uti
    si quando fuerit tristior illa tibi.
iam celeber, iam laetus eris, cum debita reddet
    certatim sanctis laetus uterque focis.
tunc te felicem dicet pia turba deorum,   25
    optabunt artes et sibi quisque tuas.

Be present and drive out the ailments of a tender girl; be present, Phoebus, proud with your unshorn hair. Believe me, be quick, and soon you, Phoebus, will not regret having applied your healing hands to a beautiful girl. Bring it about that thinness does not attack her paling limbs, nor ugly colour marks her white limbs; and whatever is bad and whatever sad thing we fear, may the river with its consuming waters carry out to sea. Sacred one, come and bring with you whatever tastes and whatever songs relieve worn bodies. And don't torment the young man who fears the fate of the girl, and makes vows to be counted with difficulty for his mistress. Sometimes he vows, sometimes, because that girl is faint, he says harsh words

---

[226] Both Lee's and Postgate's OCT texts have the lines after 16 in the following order: 21-22, 17-20, 23-26. Voss and Gruppe have the same order as Lee and Postgate, but they do not indicate via line numbers that the lines are in a different order than in the manuscripts. This standard order makes for an easier read, with the revised second last stanza (lines 15-16, 21-22, 17-18) clearly addressing only Cerinthus, and the last stanza (lines 19-20, 23-26) clearly addressing only Phoebus. The order presented here, however, is not entirely unreadable; it creates the picture of the poet having to go back and forth between Cerinthus and Phoebus, with us only reading the transcript and unable to automatically detect who the poet is speaking to. This is the order found in both the *codex Ambrosianus* and the *codex Guelferbytanus*.

to the eternal gods. Put aside fear, Cerinthus; the god does not harm lovers. Only always love: your girl is safe. But now she is all yours; happy, she considers only you with herself, and the unsuspecting crowd sits in vain. Phoebus, be favourable: great praise will be given to you that in one body having been protected you have restored two. There is no need for crying: it will be more suitable for tears when if at any time that girl is more stern to you. First famous then happy you will be, when each repay their debts to the scared hearths, happy in rivalry. Then the dutiful crowd will call you favorable of the gods, and they will desire your skills each for themselves.

[Tib.] 3.11

Qui mihi te, Cerinthe, dies dedit, hic mihi sanctus
    atque inter festos semper habendus erit.
te nascente nouum Parcae cecinere puellis
    seruitium et dederunt regna superba tibi.
uror ego ante alias; iuuat hoc, Cerinthe, quod uror,   5
    si tibi de nobis mutuus ignis adest.
mutuus adsit amor, per te dulcissima furta
    perque tuos oculos per Geniumque rogo.

Mane Geni, cape tura libens uotisque faueto,
    si modo cum de me cogitat ille calet.   10
quod si forte alios iam nunc suspiret amores,
    tunc precor infidos, sancte, relinque focos.

Nec tu sis iniusta, Venus: uel seruiat aeque
    uinctus uterque tibi, uel mea uincla leua.
sed potius ualida teneamur uterque catena,   15
    nulla queat posthac quam soluisse dies.
optat idem iuuenis quod nos, sed tectius optat;
    nam pudet hic illum dicere uerba palam.

At tu, Natalis, quoniam deus omnia sentis,
    adnue. quid refert clamne palamne roget?   20

The day which gave you, Cerinthus, to me, this for me must always be held sacred and indeed among the festivals. When you were born the Fates sang of a new slavery for girls/ boys[227] and gave you proud kingdoms. I burn more than the others; this delights me, Cerinthus, because I burn, if for you there is a mutual fire present in respect to us. Let there

---

[227] The word *puellis* is ambiguous in gender, as it could mean either 'girls' or 'boys'. Given the gender ambiguity of the Sulpicia poems in general, and the possibility that the relationship between Sulpicia and Cerinthus can be read as homoerotic, it would not be unexpected for Sulpicia to imagine her competition being male.

be a mutual love, I ask you by the sweetest intrigues and by your eyes and by the Genius. Stay Genius, take my incense gladly and be favourable to my vows, provided that when he thinks about me he is hot. But if by any chance he sighs even now for other loves, then I pray, sacred one, abandon his untrustworthy hearths. And may you not be unjust, Venus: either let each be a slave bound equally to you, or lighten my bond. But, rather, let us both be held by a strong chain, which no day hereafter can loosen. The young man prays for the same thing that I do, but he prays more secretly; for he is ashamed to speak the words on that matter openly here. But at least, Natalis, since you as a god perceive everything, nod assent. What's the difference if he asks privately or openly?

[Tib.] 3.12

Natalis Iuno, sanctos cape turis aceruos
  quos tibi dat tenera docta puella manu.
lota tibi est hodie, tibi se laetissima compsit,
  staret ut ante tuos conspicienda focos.
illa quidem ornandi causas tibi, diua, relegat;[228]   5
  est tamen, occulte cui placuisse uelit.

At tu, sancta, faue, neu quis diuellat amantes,
  sed iuueni, quaeso, mutua uincla para.
sic bene compones. ullae non ille puellae
  seruire aut cuiquam dignior illa uiro.   10
nec possit cupidos uigilans deprendere custos,
  fallendique uias mille ministret amor.
adnue purpureaque ueni perlucida palla:
  ter tibi fit libo, ter, dea casta, mero.

Praecipit et natae mater studiosa quod optet;   15
  illa aliud tacita, iam sua mente rogat.
uritur ut celeres urunt altaria flammae,
  nec, liceat quamuis, sana fuisse, uelit.
sis iuueni grata ac, ueniet cum proximus annus,
  hic idem uotis iam uetus extet amor.   20

Birthday Juno, accept the sacred piles of incense which the learned girl offers you with a tender hand. Today she bathed for you, for you she adorned herself very full of joy to stand before your altars worthy to be admired. At least that girl ascribes the reasons for her being adorned to you, yet there is one whom secretly she wishes to please. But you, sacred one, be favourable, and may no one tear apart lovers, but, please, prepare mutual bonds for the young

---

[228] The use of *relego* in the sense of attributing or ascribing something to someone or something (rather than sending someone or something away) is noted in Lewis and Short as a post-Augustan use of the verb. The only poetic example given of using the verb in this way is this very poem.

man. In this way, you'll match them up well. That man is to serve not any girl or that rather worthy girl any man. And may the watchful guard be unable to catch the lovers, and let love provide a thousand ways of deceiving. Nod assent and come, very bright with your purple robe: three times a sacrifice is offered to you with cake, three times, chaste goddess, with wine. The daughter's eager mother teaches what she should desire; though that girl had been silenced, now on her own with her heart asks for something else. She is burned as the swift flames burn altars, and, no matter how healthy it is permitted for her to be, she would not wish it. Let her be pleasing to the young man and, when next year comes, may this same love by her vows then stand out as long-standing.

[Tib.] 3.13

> *Tandem uenit amor qualem texisse pudore*
> *   quam nudasse alicui sit mihi fama magis.*
> *exorata meis illum Cytherea Camenis*
> *   attulit in nostrum deposuitque sinum.*
> *exoluit promissa Venus. mea gaudia narret,*   5
> *   dicetur si quis non habuisse suam.*[229]
> *non ego signatis quicquam mandare tabellis,*
> *   me legat ut nemo quam meus ante, uelim,*
> *sed peccasse iuuat, uultus componere famae*
> *   taedet: cum digno digna fuisse ferar.*   10

At last love has come, of such a kind that to have hidden it for shame would truly be more a scandal for me than to have exposed it to someone. Appeased by my Muses, Cytherea brought that man and deposited him into my lap. Venus has kept her promises. Let him speak of my joys, if anyone is said to not have had his own girl. I would wish to not commit anything to sealed tablets so that no one does not read it before my man. But it helps to offend, it offends to put on a false front for tradition. May I be displayed as worthy to be (written) with worthy.

[Tib.] 3.14

> *Inuisus natalis adest qui rure molesto*
> *   et sine Cerintho tristis agendus erit.*
> *dulcius urbe quid est? an uilla sit apta puellae*
> *   atque Arretino frigidus amnis agro?*
> *iam, nimium Messalla mei studiose, quiescas;*   5

---

[229] Lee's text has *sua*. See the discussion in Chapter 3 (pages 76-78) and Appendix D regarding the use of *sua* versus *suam*.

<p style="text-align:center">†<i>neu tempestiuae perge monere uiae.</i>†[230]</p>
<p style="text-align:center"><i>hic animum sensusque meos abducta relinquo,</i></p>
<p style="text-align:center"><i>arbitrio quamuis non sinis esse meo.</i></p>

The detested birthday is at hand, a sad birthday which will have to be spent in the annoying country and without Cerinthus. What is sweeter than the city? Or is a country home and a cold river on a farm by Aretium to be suitable for a girl? Now Messalla, exceedingly devoted to me, be still and do not proceed to remind me of appropriate methods. If taken away, I abandon my soul and senses here by choice, though you do not allow the choice to be mine.

<p style="text-align:center">[Tib.] 3.15</p>

<p style="text-align:center"><i>Scis iter ex animo sublatum triste puellae?</i></p>
<p style="text-align:center"><i>natali Romae iam licet esse suo.</i></p>
<p style="text-align:center"><i>omnibus ille dies nobis natalis agatur,</i></p>
<p style="text-align:center"><i>qui necopinanti nunc tibi forte uenit.</i></p>

Did you know that the miserable trip has been lifted from your girl's soul? Now it's permitted to be at Rome for her birthday. Let that day be spent by us all as a birthday which comes to unexacting you by chance.

<p style="text-align:center">[Tib.] 3.16</p>

<p style="text-align:center"><i>Gratum est securus multum quod iam tibi de me</i></p>
<p style="text-align:center"><i>permittis, subito ne male inepta cadam.</i></p>
<p style="text-align:center"><i>sit tibi cura togae potior pressumque quasillo</i></p>
<p style="text-align:center"><i>scortum quam Serui filia Sulpicia.</i></p>
<p style="text-align:center"><i>solliciti sunt pro nobis, quibus illa dolori est</i>   5</p>
<p style="text-align:center"><i>ne cedam ignoto maxima causa toro.</i></p>

It's a welcome thing, that you now permit yourself to be very unconcerned about me, lest terribly silly me suddenly comes to nothing. May care for the toga and a prostitute mounted

---

[230] As discussed in the Introduction and in notes 27 and 29, I have changed this line from Lee's edition to reflect Baehrens' emendation. While this emendation is one of the more extreme reconstructions of the line, scholars have long been unhappy with the difficult/wrong Latin of the entire line, and emendations for every single word of the line have been suggested. The word *propinque* is especially difficult, as such an informal word would not be expected as a form of address from a Roman female to her male relative; the word, in general, is quite rare in Latin literature. Given the uncertainty of its usage, and as *propinque* has been used as 'evidence' for the construction of Sulpicia's biography (i.e. pinpointing Messalla as her maternal uncle), it is perhaps preferable to do without the word altogether for the purposes of returning to a simpler text that is not encumbered with connotations which have been applied by modern scholarship. That said, I have retained the dagger marks to indicate the overall uncertainty of the line.

with a wool-basket be more important to you than Sulpicia, daughter of Servius. There are some worried for us, for whom the greatest cause for pain is that I might yield to a low-born bed.

[Tib.] 3.17

Estne tibi, Cerinthe, tuae pia cura puellae,
  quod mea nunc uexat corpora fessa calor?
a, ego non aliter tristes euincere morbos
  optarim quam te si quoque uelle putem.
at mihi quid prosit morbos euincere, si tu   5
  nostra potes lento pectore ferre mala?

Is concern for your girl, Cerinthus, not dutiful for you, because a fever now torments my weak body? Ah, I would not wish to overcome these harsh ailments unless I thought you wished it too. But of what use is it to me to overcome these ailments, if you are able to bear our hardships with an indifferent heart?

[Tib.] 3.18[231]

Ne tibi sim, mea lux, aeque iam feruida cura
  ac uideor paucos ante fuisse dies,
si quicquam tota commisi stulta iuuenta
  cuius me fatear paenituisse magis
hesterna quam te solum quod nocte reliqui,   5
  ardorem cupiens dissimulare meum.

Let me not be for you, my light, as much a burning concern now as I seem to have been a few days previously, if I, being foolish, committed any offence in all my youth which I should confess I regretted more than how I left you alone yesterday's night, desiring to conceal my flame.

---

[231] Note that in both the *codex Ambrosianus* and the *codex Guelferbytanus*, poems 17-18 are not separated into two poems, as they are in all other print editions of the Sulpicia poems. Whether this is a common occurrence in the Renaissance manuscripts is unknown (it does appear in at least one other Renaissance manuscript, the Beinecke MS 186, dated to between 1450 and 1500), and thus whether it is a scribal mistake is unknown.

APPENDIX B: FACSIMILES FROM MANUSCRIPTS

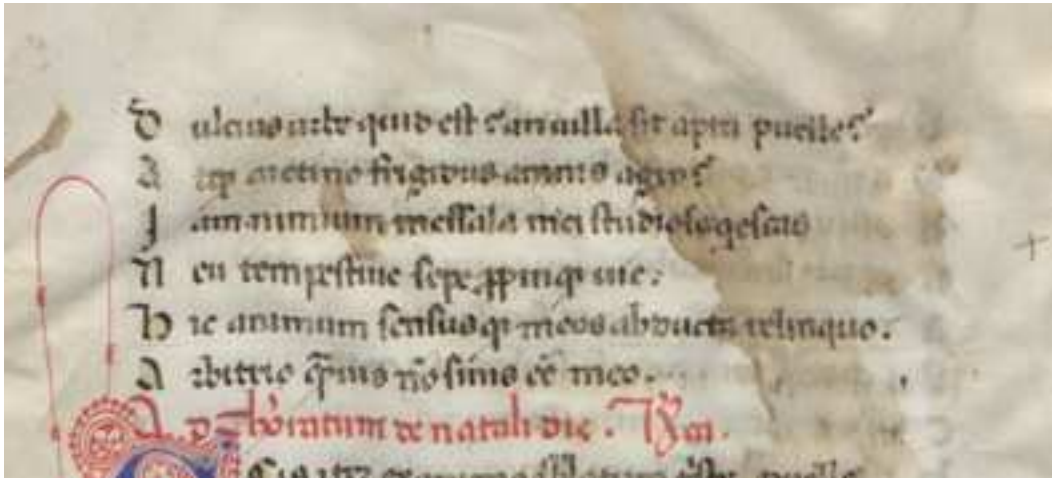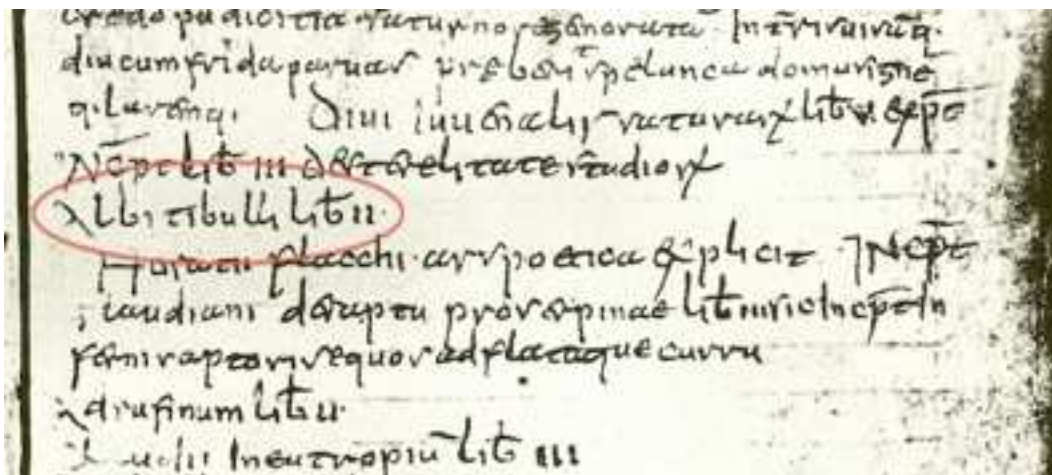Figure 1 - Facsimile of [Tib.] 3.14.3-8 from the *codex Ambrosianus*[232]

Figure 2 - Facsimile of section of Diez B. Sant. 66[233]

---

[232] Taken from the digital copy available on *DAI - Digital Ambrosiana on Internet*. http://dai.ambrosiana.eu.

[233] Taken from Ullman, "A List of Classical Manuscripts," 218. My emphasis added in circling the Tibullus manuscript entry in orange.

Figure 3 - Facsimile of [Tib.] 3.13 from the *codex Guelferbytanus 82.6 Aug.* (36v)
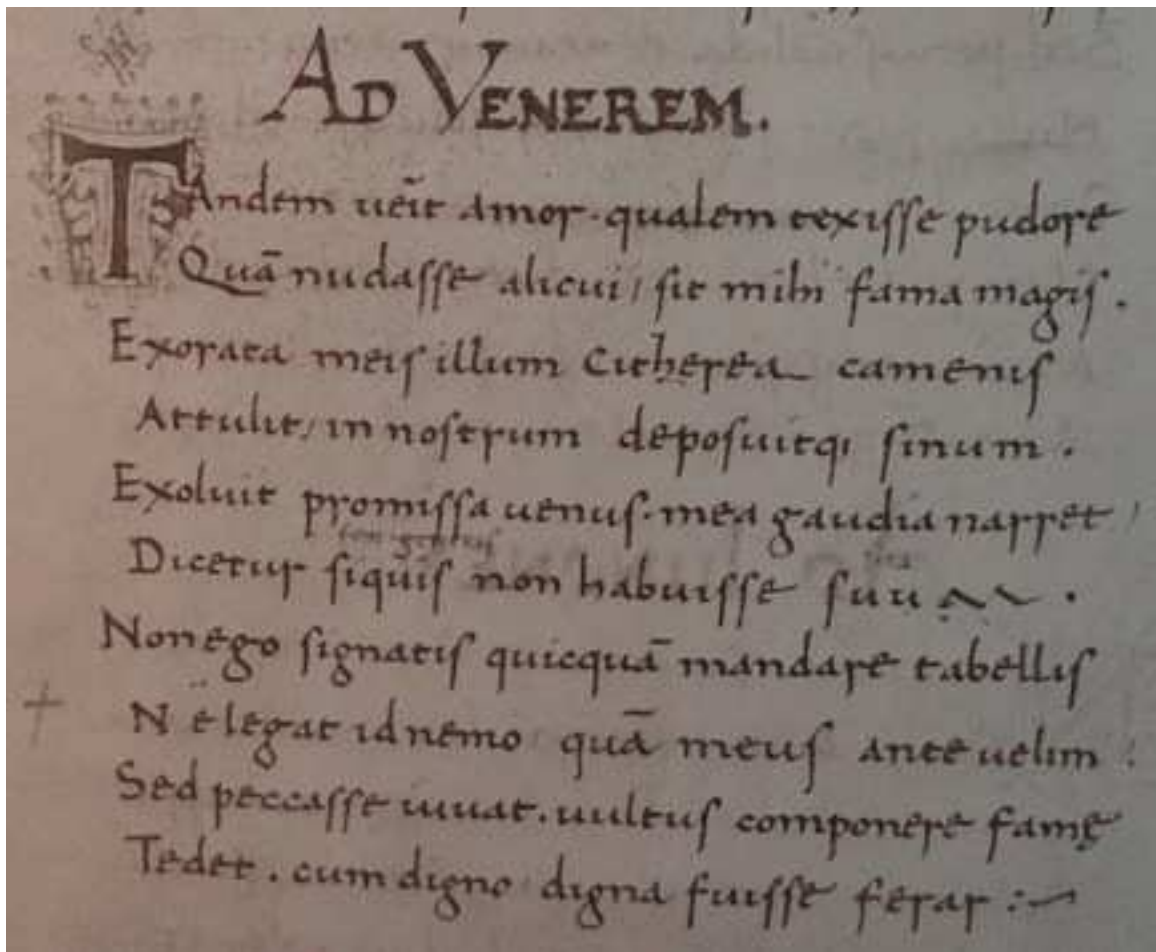
APPENDIX C: CATALOGUE OF POST-CLASSICAL LITERARY CONSTRUCTIONS OF SULPICIA

- One of the first appropriations of Sulpicia that I accidentally stumbled upon was a blog entitled *Fragments of Sulpicia*, with the author, a PhD student in Classics, naming herself 'Sulpicia III', the 'III' indicating the convention by which the so-called Augustan Sulpicia is often referred to as 'Sulpicia I', and the Domitian Sulpicia as 'Sulpicia II'.[234] While the blog has nothing to do with the poems themselves (and actually mention ancient philosophy more than literature, and have a lot to do with bread recipes), in the author's profile, Sulpicia III says: "In order to write freely, I have taken up [Sulpicia's] name, and the names of her characters, to refer to people in my own life." While the anonymous author does adhere to the consensus that Sulpicia is an Augustan poetess, she does at least subconsciously read Sulpicia as an elegiac construct whose name can shield, if not herself, a post-classical writer.

- Ezra Pound portrays his lover H.D. as Sulpicia in his *The Cantos*.[235] Given H.D.'s bisexuality, perhaps the gender ambiguity of the elegiac Sulpicia made Sulpicia a more likely parallel for the Imagist poet than, say, Sappho.

- Probably the most interesting post-classical construction of Sulpicia appears in Cervantes' *Los Trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*. Cervantes was obviously very familiar with ancient literature, given the plethora of classical allusions in his *Don Quixote*. Therefore, when a Sulpicia shows up in his final novel (Book II, Chapter 14), it is the Sulpicia of the *Corpus Tibullianum* that comes to mind. What is striking is that Cervantes' Sulpicia is a cross-dressing pirate, dressed as a man in armour, leading a squadron of women who attack and kill an entire crew of men in revenge for the murder of Sulpicia's husband. This Sulpicia, furthermore, identifies herself as the niece of a king, making her not a common criminal, but an upper-class woman who had no need or leave to act in such a way. Of course, as Cervantes alludes to Boccaccio elsewhere, it is possible that the Sulpicia Cervantes is alluding to is Sulpicia wife of Lentulus Cruscellio (and daughter of a Servius Sulpicius Rufus), who was commemorated by Boccaccio for her devotion to her husband.[236] That said, Cervantes' quotations from Terence and Virgil make it possible that Cervantes was quite familiar with Latin poetry, and thus that it is the Sulpicia of the *Corpus Tibullianum* that was his inspiration.[237] Furthermore, when Fletcher and Massinger in 1620 appropriate

---

[234] The blog can be found at http://fragmentsofsulpicia.blogspot.com.
[235] See Mary Maxwell, "H.D.: Pound's Sulpicia," *Arion* 10, no. 2 (2002): 15-48.
[236] Boccaccio, *De mulieribus claris*, LXXXV. According to the translation notes in Celia Richmond Weller and Clark A. Colahan's edition, Cervantes refers to Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium* in Book III, Chapter 4.
[237] According to the translation notes in Weller and Colahan's edition, Cervantes quotes Terence in Book I, Chapter 5, and Virgil's *Georgics* in Book IV, Chapter 12.

Cervantes' work for their comedy *The Custom of the Country*, their Sulpicia is figured not as a dutiful or vengeful wife, but as a bawd who forces a male character, Rutilio, into prostitution.[238] This then brings the interpretation of Sulpicia back to her starting point as an elegiac woman, i.e. a woman of uncertain profession, with power over a man.

- Adrienne Ho's MFA thesis ("Sulpiciae Elegidia," University of Iowa, 2006) includes not only three different translations of the Sulpicia poems, but also 'transcriptions' of fictional telephone 'interviews' between Ho and Sulpicia, modelled on Anne Carson's Mimnermos interviews in *Plainwater*. Many of the questions and answers in these interviews center around the idea of existence and persona.

- A very minor character in Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* novel series is named Sulpicia, the wife of a vampire named Aro. Many fan-fiction stories have been written about Sulpicia to fill in the holes left by Meyer, expanding the *Twilight* 'canon' to tell Sulpicia's story. "Arcana," for example, written under the pseudonym 'solareclipses', focuses on the homosexual love of Sulpicia and her husband's sister, Didyme. The story is told through the narrative voice of Sulpicia in a tone reminiscent of Sappho.[239] While I would make no argument for the literary value of such a story, the fact that there are Latin references in "Arcana" make one think the members of the *Twilight* fan community know that Meyer chose the name from Latin literature. Furthermore, the fact that the Sulpicia portrayed in the fan-fiction stories is primarily a sexualized character allows the reading of her being modelled on the elegiac woman of the same name.

---

[238] See Celia E. Weller and Clark A. Colahan, " Cervantine Imagery and Sex-Role Reversal in Fletcher and Massinger's *The Custom of the Country*, *Cervantes: Bulletin of the Cervantes Society of America* 5, no. 1 (1985): 27-43.
[239] I freely admit I have never read the *Twilight* books (or seen the films). However, this Sulpicia is the second one that comes up in a Google search on 'Sulpicia', and fan-fiction on this *Twilight* character is similar in function to ancient *pseudepigrapha* clearly linked to canonical classical literature as I have discussed in this thesis, and so I thought it relevant to include here. I rely on the information provided on by the *Twilight* wiki page, http://twilightsaga.wikia.com/wiki/Sulpicia. "Arcana" can be found at https://www.fanfiction.net/s/6367110/1/Arcana.

APPENDIX D: TABLE 1 - Variants of [Tib.] 3.13.6's *suam*

Note that the following is not a comprehensive list, nor does it include all of the editions considered to be most important in scholarship on the Sulpicia poems. Rather, the list represents all of the editions that are easily accessible through Google books and the University of Alberta libraries.

Editor (or publisher), year edition published (in chronological order)	Variant used
A. Statii, 1567	ſuam
J. Scaliger, 1622	ſua
M. de Marolles, 1653	ſua
J. Broukhusii, 1708	ſuam
J. Brindley, 1749	ſuam
(J. Barbou), 1754	ſuam
J. Grainger, 1759	ſuam
De Lonchamp, 1793	suam
D. F. Koreff, 1810	suam
J. H. Voss, 1811	ſuam
(Regensburg, Gedrukt bei H. Augustin), 1816	suam
C. G. Heyne, 1817 and 1821	ſuam/suam
(Tauchnitz), 1819 and 1829	suam
I. G. Huschkii, 1822	suam
L. Dissen, 1835	sua
O. Gruppe, 1838 and 1839	**sua**
C. H. Weise, 1843	suam
A. Rossbach, 1855 and 1866	sua
A. Mauricio Hauptio, 1868	sua
A. Baehrens, 1878	sua
B. Fabricius, 1881	sua
E. Hiller, 1885	sua
K. F. Smith, 1913	sua
J. Postgate, 1915	sua
Les Belles Lettres, 1924	sua
F. W. Lenz, 1959	sua
F. W. Lenz and G. C. Galinsky, 1971	sua
G. Lee, 1990	sua
G. Luck, 1988	suam
P. A. Miller, 2002	sua
R. G. Dennis and M. Putnam, 2012	sua

APPENDIX E: TABLE 2 - Manuscripts containing both the *Corpus Tibullianum* and the *Epistula Sapphus*

Manuscript	Works before the *Corpus Tibullianum*	Works between the *Corpus Tibullianum* and the *Epistula Sapphus*	Indication of author for the *Epistula Sapphus*	Works after the *Epistula Sapphus*
MS. Lat. class. d. 5 (1420-21)	---	Ovid's *Amores* (all three books), 4-line epigram	Ovid	the *Priapeia* (attributed to Virgil)
Codex Traguriensis Paris. lat. 7989 (pre-1423)	---	Propertius, Catullus	?	Petronius, Virgil
MS D'Orville 162 (15th century)	---	Ovid's *Amores*, three pseudo-Ovidian poems	Ovid	---
MS D'Orville 166 (pre-1453)	---	---	Ovid as 'translator'	---
MS. Lat. class. e. 17 (1453)	Catullus	---	?	---
Codex Chisianus H. 4.121 (1467)	Catullus	Ovid, *Amores* 3.9	Tibullus	---
Codex Guelferbytanus Aug. 82.6 (1429-c.1470)	---	---	---	---
Florentius de Argentina, Venice (1st printed edition of Tibullus without Catullus, Propertius, and Statius) (1472)	---	---	Ovid as 'translator'	---