Intersections of Gender and Genre: Sexualizing the *Puella* in Roman comedy, lyric and elegy

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My discussion poses a series of questions about the Latin word *puella*, a diminutive noun literally meaning sexually immature "young girl", and its use in three different Latin literary genres[1]. First, when and how do

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1 — See the entry s.v. *puella* in Glare, 1983, 1514, which gives four definitions of the noun:

"1. A female child, girl." [with examples from Plautus, Terence, Cicero, Horace, Ovid, *Tristia* 3.12.5; the elder Seneca, Petronius, Tacitus, Juvenal, Paulus] "b. (w. gen. or poss. adj.) a daughter" [examples from Horace, Martial, Gellius].

"2. A young woman (married or otherwise), girl, maiden" [examples from Plautus, Catullus 2b on Atalanta; Horace, *Carmina* 3.22.2; Tibullus 1.6.15; Ovid, *Fasti* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*; Germanicus, Martial, Tacitus, Suetonius, Galba, Apuleius]."b. applied to nymphs, goddesses" [examples from Vergil, Propertius 2.26.14; Martial].

"3. A young woman as an object of sexual interest" [examples from Horace's *Epistulae*; Ptopertius 1.1.5; Petronius, Martial; Juvenal]."b. (spec) one's girl, sweetheart" [examples from Catullus 2.1.1, *passer deliciae meae puellae*; Tibullus 1.10.59; Propertius 3.15.21; Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 2; Martial].

"4. A slave girl [examples from Terence, Horace, Tibullus 1.3.87; Martial, Juvenal].

The following *OLD* entries, also on 1514, are also of relevance and interest: *puellaris* ["of, befitting, or characteristic of a girl, girlish", with examples from Ovid, the elder Seneca, Mela, Quintilian, the younger Pliny, Juvenal and Martial]; *puellariter*, ["in a girlish manner", example from the younger Pliny]; *puellasco* ["to become girlish or effeminate", example from Varro]; *puellitor* ["to act like a girl,

several Roman men who write about love in lyric and elegiac verse meters from the mid-first century BCE through the early first century CE – Catullus, Horace, Propertius, Tibullus, "Lygdamus" and Ovid – employ this term? Why, in particular, do they use the noun *puella* to designate women whom they depict not only as sexually mature and sexually active, but also as emotionally and erotically valued by themselves in their literary roles as poet-speakers, and as bestowing their erotic favors out of wedlock and apparently free of charge[2]? When, how and why does their female colleague, the Augustan elegist Sulpicia, employ this same noun in her elegies to characterize herself as both poet-speaker and sexually desirable, affectionately regarded love object, one who – unlike a rival she scornfully mentions – does not take payment for her erotic favors[3]?

How, moreover, does the use of the noun *puella* in elegiac and lyric verses by these male and female poets of the late Republican and Augustan era compare with the use of the same word by earlier Roman comic playwrights? As studies have long emphasized, certain Plautine and Terentian dramatic scenarios bear strong resemblances to those of Latin love poetry[4]. Various plays of Plautus and Terence feature sexually active female characters regarded affectionately and desired erotically by verbally adept, if not exactly literarily gifted, young males[5]. These Roman comedic texts depict these women as, like the *puellae* of later Roman elegy and lyric, unmarried, and unlikely to be married, to their youthful *amatores*[6].

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example from Laberius]; *puellula* ["a young girl or maiden", examples from Terence, Pomponius, Catullus 57.9 and 61.175 and Sulpicius]; and *puellus* ["a young boy b. (in erotic context) a catamite," with examples from Ennius, Lucilius, Varro, Lucretius, Suetonius, Apuleius and b. *Inc. Poet.*"]. None of these words – an adjective, an adverb, two verbs and two nouns – describes a quality, mode of action, individual or activity associated with mature, sexually active females.

2 — For the *puella* in Catullus and the Roman elegists, see, most recently, the essays by Frederick, Gold, Hallett, James, Keith and Liveley in Gold (2012); for Horace as a "*puella*-poet", see Thorsen (2012). For Lygdamus, who uses the word *puella* at [Tibullus 3.] 2.1 and 4.58 for a female beloved that he calls by the literarily flavored pseudonym Neaera, and that he represents as his former wife whom he hopes to remarry, see Hallett (2008).

3 — For the term *puella* in the eleven Sulpicia-elegies, see [Tibullus 3.] 8.15 and 24, 10.1 and 11, 11.3, 12.2 and 9, 14.3, 15.1 and 17.1. Sulpicia's use of this term for herself as poet-speaker is not cited by the *OLD* (1983) entry s.v. *puella*. As Thorsen (2012) observes, Ovid, *Heroides* 15 also presents Sappho as a *puella,* and (like Sulpicia) both a "love object and lover". At 3.16.4, Sulpicia uses the term *scortum* for the rival "in a [prostitute's] toga" laden with a wool basket; for *scortum*, see Glare (1983) 1709, who gives "a prostitute, courtesan, harlot" as the second definition of the word, as well as Adams (1983) 322-327.

4 — For the affinities between the female "sex-workers" of Plautine and Terentian comedy and the *puellae* of Roman elegy and lyric, see, for example, James (2012) in Gold, *Companio*n. James in fact argues, on 160, that "the elegiac *puella* is based on the independent *meretrix* of New Comedy. She cannot be either a brothel slave or a wife. The circumstances, structures, and arguments of elegy make sense only if the *puella* is a highly educated, well-practiced courtesan".

5 — Consider, for example, the youthful *amator* Calidorus in Plautus' *Pseudolus*. See Hallett (2011) for his display of his own literary knowledge – including the lyrics of Sappho – when assessing the language employed by his beloved, the brothel slave Phoenicium.

6 — Several *puellae* depicted in Roman lyric and elegy are evidently Greek women of servile

After all, like at least some elegiac and lyric *puellae*, these comic female characters do not occupy a social position legally entitling them to wed these lovers. In these Roman comedies, like their Greek literary models, these sexually desirable and active female characters sometimes turn out to be long lost daughters of citizen fathers, and hence marriageable after all[7]. But in most instances these women dispense erotic favors without benefit of marriage, and never free of charge.

In replying, very tentatively, to these questions about the use of *puella* in these three literary genres, I will be raising some further questions. My replies primarily draw on and respond in detail to the findings of two articles, both published in 1983: "*Puella* and *Virgo*", by Patricia Watson, and "Words for 'Prostitute' in Latin", by J. N. Adams[8]. While Adams himself never explains what he signifies by the English word "prostitute", I would define the term, at least when applied by Roman writers to females, as a woman who receives payment for her sexual favors from a male partner other than her husband[9].

Adams includes a lengthy discussion of the word *puella*, its semantic evolution, and its different connotations, on the grounds that *puella* can

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birth, like the freedwoman Volumnia Cytheris celebrated by the metrically equivalent pseudonym of "Lycoris" in the elegiac poetry of Cornelius Gallus. But the woman called "Lesbia" by Catullus is known to have been the noble matron Clodia Metelli, and Sulpicia identifies herself at 3.14.4. as the daughter of a nobleman, Servius Sulpicius. For the identification of "Lycoris" as Volumnia Cytheris, see Servius, *ad Bucolica* 10.1 and 6. Apuleius, *Apology* 10, furnishes evidence on the actual identities of certain lyric and elegiac *puellae*: not only Catullus' Lesbia but also Ticidas' Perilla, Tibullus' Delia and Propertius' Cynthia. See also the discussions of Hallett (2012a) and Keith (2011 and 2012).

7 — Such for example, are the circumstances of the title character in Plautus' final play, the *Casina*, and Pamphila in Terence's final play, the *Adelphoe*.

8 — Both of these articles were also published in the same year as the *OLD*. While it seems likely that Adams and Watson were not acquainted with one another's articles, it is not clear if Adams and Watson were familiar with the *OLD* entry on *puella,* or, conversely, if the *OLD* editor was familiar with the articles of Adams and Watson. Whatever the circumstances, there are major differences between the approaches adopted by Adams and Watson on the one hand, and the *OLD* on the other. Most important, unlike both of these articles, the *OLD* entry does not attempt to explore in detail the semantic evolution of Latin words, although it lists the examples attesting to the appearances of individual words, under each of the sub-definitions for that word, in chronological order.

Furthermore, the *OLD* is much more circumspect than Adams in the English words it chooses when defining Latin words referring to sexual activity, even if its concern for verbal propriety requires erasing the nuances of the word in question. Consequently, whereas Adams uses "prostitute" and "whore" interchangeably, the *OLD* does not employ the word "whore", presumably because "whore" is less elevated in diction than the technical term "prostitute", and more derogatory in its connotations.

9 — *The American Heritage Dictionary* (2011) 1415 gives as its definitions of the agent noun "prostitute" "a person who engages in prostitution" and (figuratively) "a person considered as having compromised principles for personal gain". It then defines the action noun "prostitution" as "the practice of engaging in sex acts in exchange for money", "the criminal offense of engaging in or offering to engage in sex in exchange for money" and (figuratively) "the practice of offering oneself or using one's talents for an unworthy purpose, especially for personal gain". While this contemporary definition does not address the legal relationship between the parties involved, the marital status of sexually active women is all-important in classical Roman society and its literature.

refer to a woman who receives payment – or is thought to receive payment – for performing sexual acts[10]. As we will see, Adams couches his observations in language that reflects and perpetuates unfair and presumably outdated assumptions about female sexual conduct, Roman and post-Roman, thereby limiting the value of his analyses[11]. My discussion will call attention to instances in which his choice of English words to describe ancient Roman conduct seems to blur and misrepresent important distinctions among the usages of *puella* by certain Latin authors. Yet Adams' findings, however flawed, merit closer attention than they have so far attracted from specialists in Latin love poetry; those of Watson warrant further heed as well.

But I will at the same time be responding to a paper presented by Paul Allen Miller at a 2012 American Philological Association seminar on the *puella* in Latin love poetry. Here Miller seeks to explain what he perceives as a rapid and radical transformation of how we scholarly specialists understand "who and what the *puella* is, and of her relationships to the speaking subject in elegiac poetry". Miller notes that two, opposing and yet "comforting mythologies", one of them "conservative, the other progressive" are adduced to explain "the speed of these transformations" in literary interpretation. He then offers what he calls a "third position, which is that of meta-commentary and historical analysis" as his own explanation for these interpretive shifts. Miller rightly emphasizes that working from within a specific theoretical paradigm when attempting to illuminate Latin poetry prevents a critical analysis of the position that this paradigm adopts, because each paradigm "assumes the truth of its position before the arguments begin". His own adoption of what he calls "meta-commentary" and "historical analysis" as explanatory tools endeavors to get beyond these bi-polarizing paradigms: by examining five "key moments" in the history of the *puella* as a concept over the past half-century, in the "romantic moment in elegiac criticism", formalism, historicism, post-structuralism and feminism respectively; and by exca-

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10 — Adams (1983) 344-348. Curiously, Adams (1982), on "the Latin sexual vocabulary" does not discuss the word *puella*. Furthermore, while the index to the book contains an entry on 271 for "prostitutes, prostitution" and lists fifteen pages as containing material relevant to the topic, he does not include a discussion of the Latin vocabulary for these words. The word "whore" is not among the index entries.

11 — Adams opens his article, for example, with the statement "Few objects attract as many names as the prostitute", erasing the fact that prostitutes are human beings, engaged in a "profession", by referring to them with the word "objects". He then proceeds to use the noun "whore" interchangeably with "prostitute". As I have argued in n. 8, American English observes a distinction between the two terms, with "prostitute" functioning as the technical, more refined word, and "whore" carrying more derogatory connotations. Although the *AHD* does not explicitly contrast the two words, it implies that "whore" is more insulting through the second definition it provides for the noun, which associates "whores" with a reputation for sexual promiscuity: "1. A prostitute. 2. A person considered sexually promiscuous. 3. A person considered as having compromised principles for personal gain".

vating the operative assumptions "regarding the *puella* and the speaking subject that makes these positions possible"[12].

Yet Miller does not refer to the articles by Adams and Watson, much less pay attention to the linguistic evidence about the word *puella* itself, presented and analyzed by Adams and Watson in accordance with traditional philological research protocols. Indeed, Miller implicitly associates philology with the anti-theoretical, "conservative mythology" inadequate to account for the radical transformations that have occurred in how scholars have come to understand the *puella*. He even represents philology as, in the eyes of self-justifying theoreticians, a form of "fundamentalism"[13]. Like Adams with the term "prostitute", though, Miller does not define what he means by "philology" or why he regards "philological basics" as perceived, at least by some classicists, as incompatible with innovative theoretical approaches to literary interpretation[14].

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12 — Miller (2012). To be sure, Miller is concerned with the changing concept of the poetic *puella*, not – like Adams and Watson – the semantic evolution of the Latin word *puella.* By "meta-commentary" he presumably means his own analysis of different scholarly studies adopting different theoretical perspectives, and thereby involving different notions of what the *puella* signifies. Yet Miller uses the term "historical" solely in reference to the past half-century of scholarship, and does not consider the larger ancient Roman historical context in which the Latin word *puella* came and continued to be used by Catullus, Horace and the Augustan elegists in a specific sense that has almost nothing to do with its technical meaning. Miller does not address such issues as why (and by whom) the word *puella* was originally selected to describe this concept, what the word *puella* signifies in earlier Latin texts, what else the word *puella* signifies in the poetry of Catullus and the Roman elegists, and when Catullus and the Roman elegists do not use this word when one might expect them to. Rather, he is concerned with the assumptions and concepts of scholars subscribing to different theoretical approaches, none of them exclusively philological.

13 — Miller (2012) 1: "For the more traditionally minded, the rapidly changing paradigms of the last century are proof that too many scholars are victims of changing intellectual fashion. One moment, they become advocates of the 'new criticism,' the next persona theory rules the day, soon comes feminism, deconstruction, psychoanalysis, Marxism, intertextuality and the New Historicism. How can all these various – isms be correct? Their very plurality demonstrates that they cannot in fact be pointing to the same fundamental truth. These various 'approaches' are nothing more than intellectual fads that are dated as soon as they are articulated. What is needed is a return to philological basics. Give us good texts, a solid understanding of the historical facts, and a real knowledge of the ancient languages and the rest will fall into place. The opposite, but equally self-justificatory mythology, makes a very similar argument. Only in this case, rather an a return to philological fundamentalism, we are called on to advance toward a new vision of truth...".

14 — The entry on "philology' in the *AHD* (2011) 1319 first defines the noun as "Literary study or classical scholarship", then states "see historical linguistics"; it defines "historical linguistics" on 833 as "the study of linguistic change over time in language or in a particular language or language family, sometimes including the reconstruction of unattested forms of earlier stages of a language. Also called philology". Yet although it identifies "philology" with "classical scholarship" the *AHD* does not furnish details about how the study of Greco-Roman antiquity relates to either literary scholarship or historical linguistics.

Of interest in this connection is Feeney (2013), a message to the membership about why the American Philological Association Board of Directors voted to change the name of the organization to the Society for Classical Studies (with "Founded in 1869 as the American Philological Association" as a permanent subtitle). Here Feeney describes the classicists who founded the Association as "scholars who were, in the broadest sense, students of language – 'philologists'". After observing that in

My own goal in trying, simultaneously, to build upon the traditional philological work of Adams and Watson, and engage with the innovative theoretical work of Miller, is to argue for the importance of analyzing Latin texts concerned with issues of gender through traditional philological lenses as well as lenses afforded by feminist, new historicist, and other theoretically informed approaches. In fact, I would view the lens afforded by philology, sorely neglected and undervalued in so-called progressive classical interpretive circles, as radical in its possibilities for illuminating Greek and Roman literary representations of gender. What Adams and Watson have to say about the word *puella* illustrates the benefits of applying this lens, at least after adjusting its field of vision with some significant corrections.

The analyses of the word *puella* by Adams and Watson do much to answer the questions I have posed. Adams' study covers far more linguistic and literary territory than that of Watson, although without full consideration of the evidence at hand, and in (to my mind) inappropriate language. Hence I will foreground its findings, and treat it at greater length. Adams introduces his discussion of how, when and where *puella* is employed in classical Latin literary texts by considering comparative linguistic data from a diachronic perspective. Furnishing illustrations from German, Vulgar Latin, Provencal and French, he claims that "words for 'girl' often deteriorate in meaning and acquire the sense 'whore, lewd woman'" in various languages. He adds that, in some languages, there is a constant process of replacement, with what he calls "deteriorating" words getting replaced, and replacement words "suffering the same fate". But Adams then notes that in Latin the word *puella* "tended to degenerate. By "degenerate", as with "deteriorate", he apparently means "become employed to describe sexually experienced women, actively involved with men other than their husbands, and possibly viewed in a pejorative way". Thus, Adams continues, "[the] history [of *puella*] is not exactly the same" as that of the examples he cites from these other languages, because the word *puella* "does not survive in the Romance languages"[15].

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the first issues of the *Transactions of the American Philological Association* articles on other languages (German, Algonkin, Creole, and English) outnumbered those on Greek and Latin, he relates that "as time went by, sub-groups of 'philologists' developed new group identities and broke off to found their own organizations" (e.g. the Modern Language Association, the Linguistic Society of America). Feeney concludes by remarking that "Classicists were left as the custodians of 'Philology', a term which had originally had a much broader application than what it fairly soon came to represent, 'Classics.'" He does not, however, discuss how the term "philology" has been applied to characterize the close reading of classical texts, with special attention not only to grammatical, semantic and other linguistic detail, but also to formal qualities of language such as figures of speech, style and prosody, and historical context.

15 — Adams (1983) 344-345. As noted earlier, Adams' use of "whore" and "prostitute" as interchangeable is troubling. For one thing, "whore", at least in American English, is a more nega-

Adams first explores the testimony of Roman comedy. He observes that in Plautus "the predominating use of *puella* is in reference to small female children". He notes that in a few places Plautus also employs *puella* for innocent – and sexually inexperienced – young girls who have just reached nubile age; and that Terence uses *puella* in the same way as Plautus (since most of the six instances of the noun *puella* in Terence's plays refer to small female children). Watson arrives at similar conclusions. After observing that both comic playwrights "most commonly" use *puella* for "newborn babies", she claims that, "when used of older girls" the term usually refers to slave women (*ancillae*) or sexually inexperienced free-born young women, either masquerading as sexually experienced, fee-charging, one-client-at-a-time "courtesans" (*meretrices*) or in the possession of a *leno*, a male manager of and profiteer from the ownership of female prostitutes[16].

According to Adams, "a *leno* in Plautus is as a rule spoken of as possessing *mulieres*, not *puellae*". So, too, Adams says, "a whore could be called a *mulier meretrix*... but *puella meretrix* does not occur". Adams then turns to the use and distribution of the word *puella* in texts from the late Republic onwards, highlighting the rarity of the word in epic poetry and what he labels "educated prose". Roman "educated [prose] writers", he asserts, "tend to restrict [*puella*] to the early sense" of "female child". But, Adams continues, "the preferred word in educated prose [for a young female child] was *virgo*... frequently used in contexts in which it might have been replaced by *puella*"[17]. Here, too, his findings agree with those of Watson.

After noting, and by way of explaining, the rarity of the word *puella* in "educated Latin prose", Adams observes and opines: "By the late Republic the word is frequently applied euphemistically to women past puberty, who in the context may be treated as of easy virtue. Indeed it approaches the meaning 'whore' often, or at least is used of women who are whores". Adams then adduces eleven Latin passages in support of this

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tively-charged word than "prostitute"; what is more, in classical Greek and Roman antiquity many women were forced to sell their sexual services (forking all their profits over to the pimps who controlled them) because they were brothel slaves and had no choice over who used their bodies and how.

16 — Watson (1983) 123-125. She distinguishes the connotations of *puella* from those of *virgo* in Roman comedy by asserting "*Puella*, then, is a general term which can occasionally be substituted for *virgo* but may also be used of *meretrice*s. *Virgo*, by contrast, is always applied to girls of a specific status (that is, girls who are unmarried and not *meretrices*)". However, in the instances Watson discusses, *puella* is used for freeborn, sexually inexperienced young women who are merely *thought* to be *meretrices*. Watson's contention that the term *virgo*, but not necessarily *puella*, marks a young woman in Roman comedy as free-born and of citizen family, and therefore respectable and marriageable, seems more accurate.

17 — Adams (1983) 345-346. I have provided my own definition of the noun *leno* in the text; the definition in the *OLD* (1983) 1016 – "a brothel-keeper, bawd, procurer" – does not make it clear that *lenones* in classical antiquity, like Ballio in Plautus' *Pseudolus*, owned and profited from the sexual activities of the female prostitutes they controlled. Adams does not define the term.

claim, several passages of poetry (but not love poetry) from Horace's and Juvenal's *Satires*, Martial's epigrams, the *Carmina Priapea*, and Statius' *Silvae*. In addition, he cites several obscene Pompeian graffiti as evidence that the word *puella* had, by the mid-first century CE, acquired the sense of "women who were no doubt thought of as disreputable"[18]. Watson, by way of contrast, does not even consider the use of *puella* to mean "prostitute" in Latin prose and poetic texts that postdate Plautus and Terence, much less use the word "prostitute" in discussing the use of *puella* in "the erotic sphere"[19].

Adams' concluding remarks merit quotation: "Colloquial usage had changed since the time of Plautus [whose characters] fall in love with or engage in amatory activities with *mulieres*, not *puellae*. *Mulier...* continued to be employed in sexual contexts in the late Republic, and Empire... but in the colloquial language it was rivaled by *puella*, which is perhaps the preferred term of disreputable women. Clearly *puella* was by no means a perfect synonym of *meretrix...* 'Correct' prose writers tended to avoid the use of the word in reference to mature young women, and they also showed some reluctance to use it of children. The semantic degeneration of *puella* clearly did not consist in its wholesale acquisition of an unfavourable meaning. It became no more than suggestive, and it could still, even at a late date, be used neutrally"[20].

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18 — Adams (1983) 346-347. In addition to using "whore" as a synonym for "prostitute", Adams here employs the quaint phrase "of easy virtue" to describe women who engage in sexual activities with men other than their husbands, implying – with the word "virtue" – that such behavior constituted a moral failing. Again, he does not take into account the circumstances under which women in ancient Greco-Roman society, particularly female slaves, took part in sexual activities. To assume that these activities were consensual and that the women in question even had the option of marriage reveals a serious misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the cultural context in which the texts he analyzes were produced. The word "disreputable", too, passes unwarranted moral judgment on female behavior: while the women in question may not have been legally eligible to wed freeborn Roman males, the males who sought, or paid for, their sexual services, such as the poet-speakers in Roman elegy themselves, may not have regarded them negatively. In 3.13 Sulpicia represents herself as caring nothing for *fama*, her reputation, but she is an elite, marriageable woman, the type targeted by the Augustan moral and marriage laws.

19 — Watson (1983) 125-143. Indeed, she summarizes the results of her linguistic investigation as follows: "*Virgo*, a young unmarried female, is basically a term which defines the girl's social position; there is an increasing emphasis over the centuries on physical virginity. *Puella*, a more general term, has the emotional associations of a diminutive and so can be applied to other female children and older girls viewed as erotic objects; it is also used of young married women. In later times, *puella* may sometimes replace *virgo* in the sense "virgin"'.

20 — Adams (1983) 347-348. Here, too, Adams uses the phrase "semantic degeneration" in a moralistic and inappropriate sense: to describe the increasing application of a word originally used for sexually immature and inactive female children to women who were sexually active outside the confines of Roman marriage, and whose sexual services earned their owners/employers, and/or these women themselves, financial compensation. By the same token, he uses the phrase "unfavorable meaning" to cast his own negative judgment on women whose sexual services did not come free of charge, a judgment that may not have been shared by their sexual partners.

The discussions of both Adams and Watson merit commendation for clarifying, in traditional philological fashion, how Roman authors taken as a totality use the noun *puella* over the course of Roman historical time, and for spotlighting some distinctive features of the word's Latin linguistic and literary usage. First, that notwithstanding the thematic similarities between the scenarios of comedy and those of later lyric and elegiac poetry, *puella* does not convey the same, sexual, connotations in Roman comedy that it does in late republican and Augustan amatory verse. Second, that by the time of the late republic, prose writers rarely use the noun *puella* for sexually mature and desired young women or even prepubescent female children. Third, that soon after the fifties BCE, the time in which Catullus wrote, the noun *puella* begins to describe what Adams would term "disreputable" women and to carry, occasionally and suggestively, "an unfavorable meaning": that is, to designate women who engaged in sexual activity outside of marriage and may or may not have been judged morally delinquent by others for that reason.

Nevertheless, Adams relegates the topic of how the term *puella* is used in love poetry – as opposed to satire, epigram and other types of Latin sexual invective – to a brief footnote. Here he states: "So in Catullus *puella* is used partly of Lesbia", citing five instances in the hendecasyllabic poems 3 and 5, and in the choliambic 8, and "partly of low women of mature age", citing five instances in the hendecasyllabic poems 10 and 41. "In elegy", he asserts, "it is the standard term for the mistress of the poet, often in the phrase *mea puella*"[21].

In this brief footnote Adams oversimplifies Catullus' use of the Latin noun *puella*. He does not, for example, acknowledge here that in poem 34, the hymn to Diana, which is written in stanzas of three glyconics followed by a pherecratean, Catullus also uses the noun *puella* in lines 2 and 4 to designate females who are not what he quaintly terms "low women of mature age" but youthful and supposedly virtuous religious celebrants. Nor does Adams indicate that, as we have seen, a female

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21 — Adams (1983) 347 n. 76. The five passages that Adams cites as examples of Catullus' use of *puella* to refer to his beloved Lesbia – in the hendecasyllabic poems 3 and 5, as well as in the choliambic 8 – are 3.3, 3.4, 3.17, 5.4 and 8.7. However, Catullus does not refer to his *puella* as "Lesbia" in either 3 or 8. What is more, although he does refer to her as "Lesbia" in 5, he does not use the word *puella* anywhere in that poem, and I assume that 5.4 is a misprint for 8.4 (*cum ventitabas quo puella ducebat*). By "low women of mature age", Adams presumably means sexually mature women of the lower classes, and cites 10.16, 41.1, 3. 5 and 7 as illustrations. To be sure, at 10.6, Catullus uses *scortillum*, "little prostitute", to characterize the woman he calls a *puella* at 10.16, which may imply her lower class status (although he may merely be insulting her). But there is no reason to believe that Ameana, – described as the *amica*, "paid girlfriend": of Julius Caesar's aide Mamurra, and referred to as a *puella* in 41.1, 3, 5 and 7 – is of low social status. In this poem Catullus merely seeks to insult her ugly appearance. Oddly, while Adams claims that *puella* is the standard term for the poet's mistress in love elegy, he provides no references to any supporting texts.

erotic elegist, Sulpicia, repeatedly uses *puella* when referring to herself as poet-speaker[22].

Nor, for that matter, does Adams mention that Horace employs *puella* for sexually mature, amorously regarded women in his *Odes*. Consider, for example, Horace's use of *puella* at *Odes* 1.9.22, in the final stanza of the Soracte poem, written in the Alcaic meter, to describe a female erotic possibility for his addressee, the young slave boy Thaliarchus. Or in the first line of another poem written in Alcaics, 3.26, where Horace bids farewell to his own service in erotic warfare (*vixi puellis nuper idoneus/et militavi non sine gloria*). Nor does Adams acknowledge that Horace also uses *puellae*, in the phrase *puellae iam virum expertae*, to describe respectably wed "young wives" in *Odes* 3.14.10. Like Catullus 11, in which the poet-speaker asks Furius and Aurelius to take a message to *mea puella* at line 13, *Odes* 3.14 is written in the Sapphic meter. Yet Horace also follows Catullus in using *puella* for sexually inexperienced young girls performing religious rites in the *Carmen Saeculare*, also written in Sapphics. Here Horace refers to the chaste young maidens singing the festival hymn first as *virgines* in line 6 and later as *puellas* in line 36[23].

Just as seriously, Adams does not relate the use of *puella* for "the elegiac mistress", beginning, insofar as we can determine, with Catullus in the mid first century BCE, to the relatively infrequent appearances of this noun outside of this love elegiac and lyric literary realm. Nor does Adams consider the metrical versatility of *puella*: a first declension trisyllabic noun consisting of a short syllable, followed by a long syllable, and a final syllable that can, depending on the case, be either short or long. To be sure, Catullus' poems written in the elegiac meter, 65 through 116, only use the noun *puella* four times: all of them to designate the female sexual partners of other, disparaged males, rather than his own female beloved[24]. But he could easily have used it to refer to his own beloved in those poems. Metrically speaking, *puella* works beautifully as the end of a dactylic hexameter line, and within the second half of the pentameter line as well. By the same token, it fits into limping iambics, Alcaics, Sapphics and whatever one calls Catullus' meter in the hymn to Diana.

To be sure, Watson, unlike Adams, observes that "*puella*, as diminutive in form, and a word used often to express pathos, erotic feelings or other emotions, is more at home in intimate, less elevated styles of

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22 — For the meter of Catullus 34, see Garrison (1989) 110.

23 — For the meters of Horace, *Odes* 1.9, 3.26, 3. 14 and the *Carmen Saeculare,* see Garrison (1991) 216, 316, 330 and 379; for the Sapphic meter of Catullus 11, see Garrison (1989) 100.

24 — For *puella* in Catullus 65-116, see 69.8, attacking Rufus (*bestia, nec quicum bella puella cubet*); 78.4, attacking Gellius (*cum puero ut bello bella puella cubet*); 78a.1 (*sed nunc id doleo quod purae pura puella/suavia comminxit spurca saliva tua*); 89.3, attacking Gellius again (*tamque bonus patruus tamque omina plena puellis*).

writing". This important observation about the affective resonances of *puella* may help account for its use by Catullus, Horace and the Augustan elegists for women to whom they accord emotional value. Watson also remarks that "the most noteworthy development in usage of *puella* is in the erotic sphere, where it becomes the standard term for a woman viewed as a potential object of love. The elegists, of course, make abundant use of the word; it is frequently employed with reference to *meretrices* (the *cultae puellae* of the *Ars Amatoria*, for example) or married women behaving as such"[25].

After citing several passages in elegiac poetry where both *virgines* and *matronae* are referred to as *puellae*, Watson asserts "It is to Catullus also that the elegists owe their most frequent use of the word: namely to allude to the girl who is the subject of their verse". She notes that Horace, and various other Roman writers use *puella* to describe young married women, "where emotional connotations may well be to the fore". Yet Watson's discussion, like that of Adams, does not take metrical considerations into account when considering word choice, although many of the texts she analyzes are works of poetry. Unlike Adams, moreover, Watson does not acknowledge that the word *puella* eventually acquires negative associations, through implying that the women referred to by this term engage in sexually transgressive conduct that at times involves payment for their favors[26].

The omissions as well as the findings of Adams and Watson prompt additional questions. Granted that Catullus evidently deserved credit for the use of *puella*, previously a noun for female child, to designate an affectionately regarded, erotically desired female not the wife or paid sexual partner of the male poet/speaker. Granted that his choice of this word seems to have influenced Sulpicia, a female poet-speaker emotionally and erotically engaged with a young and perhaps younger male lover free of charge, to employ it in describing herself. Why, however, did Catullus choose this noun as his operative term for his beloved rather than ano-

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25 — Watson (1983) 140 and 135. In associating the noun *puella* with "intimate, less elevated forms of writing", Watson is responding to scholars who have argued that *puella* and *virgo* can be differentiated purely "in terms of stylistic level as opposed to meaning and connotation". She argues that in most of the cases she discusses "the pair have been shown to possess their own distinct range of meaning" but that in the case of Horace's poetry "the choice of vocabulary is determined by the tone, or stylistic level of the passage in question". Nevertheless, she seems to associate stylistic level with literary genre, remarking that Horace "uses *puella* in the 'lower' *Satires* and *Epistles* but *virgo* in the *Odes*". Such a generalization, however, does not account for Horace's use of *puella* in the *Carmen Saeculare*, which she herself cites: written in the Sapphic meter, these lyrics have far more in common with Horace's *Odes* than his poems in dactylic hexameter.

26 — Watson (1983) 136 and 134. Her obliviousness to the negative connotations at times carried by *puella* is striking, perhaps because she is eager to emphasize what she terms the word's "pathetic associations".

ther word, such as *amatrix*, the feminine counterpart of *amator*[27]? Most important, when do the elegists fail to use the term *puella* in reference to women valued both emotionally and sexually by men other than their legal husbands? What might their omission of this word imply about its connotations?

I would submit that the metrical adaptability of the noun *puella* initially appealed to Catullus, who wrote lyric, elegiac and "standard" hexameter verses, and that Catullus' precedent authorized this noun, not only for the later male and female elegiac love poets Tibullus, Propertius, Sulpicia, "Lygdamus" and Ovid, but also for the lyric and sometime "amatory" poet Horace. Admittedly, and as those such as Miller seeking to theorize about "the" *puella*, should recognize, Catullus uses *puella* for women other than his female beloved, too; Horace, as we have seen, follows him in this practice. Some are young and sexually inexperienced girls; others what Adams would call "disreputable females of easy virtue", and I would call sexually experienced women erotically active outside the bonds of marriage. These multiple meanings of *puella* in Catullus warrant scrutiny because they provide further testimony to its metrical usefulness. But Catullus' memorable use of this noun for his female beloved Lesbia, albeit in his lyric rather than elegiac poems, powerfully cemented its connections with sexually mature and active women emotionally and erotically valued by a poet-speaker. It is these connections that earned *puella* the definite article "the" in Anglophone scholarly discussions about the women portrayed as sexually involved with, and emotionally cherished by, the first-person speakers in Roman erotic elegies.

I would also argue that, owing to its prominent use by elegiac and lyric poets during Augustus' principate, the noun *puella* came to be associated with women, both elite and non-elite, whose sexual conduct transgressed the marriage and moral laws enacted by Augustus around the time Horace's *Carmen Saeculare* was written, in 18 through 17 BCE[28]. This association of *puellae* with sexually transgressive behavior helps account for the uses of *puella* by post-Augustan authors to describe prostitutes, a usage which Adams regards as derogatory. It would also explain why Ovid does not use the word *puella* in two of his elegies from exile that seek to justify his life and exonerate his poetry: *Tristia* 3.7, addressed to his young female poetic protégée (and presumed stepdaughter) Perilla, and the autobiographical *Tristia* 4.10. By the time Ovid left Rome, in official disgrace, in 8 CE, the word *puella* had become sexualized, and illicitly so.

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27 — For *amatrix*, " a woman who loves in the sexual sense, lover", see Glare (1983) 113: he cites its use by Plautus as well as by the later Martial (referring to Sappho) in 7.69.9 and Apuleius.

28 — For Augustus' marriage and moral legislation, see, for example, Hallett (2012b).

Owing to the dwindling number of those among "the educated public" aware of what the word "philology" means, much less how it relates to the study of Greco-Roman antiquity, the membership of the American Philological Association has voted to remove the word "philological" from its "official" name and its "brand"[29]. While there are legitimate and compelling reasons for this change of name, I hope that those of us who study gender as well as other aspects of Greco-Roman antiquity will not abandon philological approaches, and will use them in combination with other theoretical approaches foregrounded by scholars such as Miller, in our investigations and analyses. Philology has radical potential that other approaches lack. It enables us to accord informed, if speculative, consideration not only to artistic, cultural and historical motivations for literary production, but also to individual authorial intent, in our efforts to illuminate classical texts. In this instance, philologically based analysis, analysis that takes into account the changing connotations of words from genre to genre and the exigencies of meter, enables us to ask and formulate gender-sensitive, historically-grounded answers to the question of when, how and why an influential group of poets employed the noun *puella*. Both our questions and our answers encourage reflection on the gendered Roman linguistic, literary and cultural contexts that shaped the writings of these poets, contexts that they themselves shaped in return[30].

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29 — See the October 2, 2013 American Philological Association Election results. As the message to the organization's membership by President Denis Feeney cited in n. 14 documents, the new name will be the "Society for Classical Studies", although the former name will appear in a permanent subtitle.

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