

LETTERS

from Women
in the Roman World



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**LETTERS FROM WOMEN
IN THE ROMAN WORLD**

An Anthology of Latin Texts with
Running Vocabulary and Commentary

THE EXPERRECTA SERIES

Women Latin Authors

Volume 1: The Passion of Perpetua

Volume 2: Isotta Nogarola's Defense of Eve

Volume 3: Westonia. Select Works of Elizabeth Jane Weston

Volume 4: Willetrudis. Verses about Susanna

Volume 5: Letters from Women in the Roman World

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Title: Letters from Women in the Roman World

Subtitle: An Anthology of Latin Texts with Running Vocabulary and Commentary

First Edition

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ISBN (paperback): 978-1-967785-11-7

ISBN (ebook): 978-1-967785-12-4

First published May 2026 by Pixelia Publishing (pixeliapublishing.org)

Cover design by John Lanier

Font: Cardo, an open source font in the Google Fonts collection, designed by David Perry

Front Cover: milkweed seeds, photo by Natalie Wagner via Unsplash

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An Anthology of Latin Texts
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PIXELIA PUBLISHING

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Stanford Online High School for providing the opportunity for the authors to produce this edition as part of an advanced Latin course. Administrators Josh Carlson, Tomohiro Hoshi, and Christine Gosnay provided logistical aid. We received invaluable feedback and advice on the manuscript from Christine Gosnay, Caedmon Haas, John Lanier, Anna Pisarello, Vivien Wang (at the Bryn Mawr School), and Ben Wiebracht. More broadly, the supportive community at Stanford Online High School has fostered this project in countless ways.

We would also like to extend special gratitude to Joan Ferrante, whose work on the letters of medieval women was a major inspiration and resource for our anthology. We are likewise grateful to Julia Hillner for her work on the letters of empresses and queens from the fifth and sixth centuries. Without their work, we never would have been able to gather so many letters written by women in the late Roman world.

In addition, we would like to express our gratitude to several others who helped inspire the larger Experrecta Series. Among the leaders in bringing to light Latin texts written by women, we would especially like to highlight the work of Laurie Churchill, Phyllis Brown, and Jane Jeffrey (*Women Writing Latin*); Jane Stevenson (*Women Latin Poets*); and Skye Shirley (skyeshirley.com), who in fact suggested to us the idea of an

anthology of letters by women in ancient Rome. Carlos Noreña provided a model for student-teacher co-publication in the humanities. Dickinson College Commentaries, Faenum Publishing, and Geoffrey Steadman (geoffreysteadman.com) have led the way in offering open-access editions of Greek and Latin texts for students. Steadman has also kindly provided us with advice and support.

Finally, we would like to thank the many friends and family members who helped and supported us over the course of this past year. The words expressed here can hardly convey the depth of our appreciation.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Joint authorship is uncommon in the humanities. A byline with 11 names might well prompt questions, so we wanted to say a few words about our methods.

This book is the culmination of a project undertaken in an advanced Latin course at Stanford Online High School in the academic year 2025–2026. Hendrickson taught the course and organized the project. Each student took on responsibility as an editor for a portion of the text. As a first stage in the project, student editors created the on-page vocabulary, making sure that in each case we had the right word with the right definition. As a second stage, student editors wrote a commentary for their section, deciding what needed to be explained in the Latin text and how to explain it. Student editors also provided peer review for each other after every stage of the project, and Hendrickson provided a final round of revisions. Hendrickson wrote the main introduction, which the students then revised in turn. The students also drafted many of the various author introductions, as well as the appendix included in this anthology. Given this truly collaborative effort, a shared byline seemed the most appropriate way to describe the authorship of this edition.

ABOUT THE EXPERRECTA SERIES

Women have written a substantial amount of Latin literature, but there are very few editions of that literature geared towards student use. The goal of the Experrecta Series is to create student editions of Latin texts written by women. Each edition aims to assist students in reading the works of these authors in the original Latin. To that end, each edition includes help with the author's vocabulary and grammar, as well as an introduction to provide historical background on her life and works. The name of the series comes from Vibia Perpetua, who was among the first women to write a surviving work in Latin. In her narrative, Perpetua recounts a series of visions, each of which ends with the phrase *Et experrēcta sum* ("And I awoke"). This series is populated by texts that have long been slumbering and are now waking to a new dawn and a new readership in Latin classrooms.

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INTRODUCTION

I. THE PURPOSE OF THIS EDITION

Letters are a staple of the Latin curriculum. In particular, the letters of Pliny the Younger have a regular place in the Latin classroom, and some lucky students might have a chance to read the letters of Cicero or Seneca. Yet there are no student editions of the surviving Latin letters written by Roman women, nor even any single list of these letters.

Epistolography, the art of letter-writing, was the genre of writing that was most accessible to women in ancient Rome. There are only a few women known to have written poetry, and even fewer who composed works in other genres, but many Roman women wrote letters. As with the letters of any period, most are now lost; still, Latin letters or letter fragments do survive from fifteen Roman women. This anthology presents the surviving epistolary work of all fifteen—mostly in whole, though sometimes, in the case of long letters or large collections of letters, in excerpted or selected form.

These letters are interesting in part because of the sheer variety of voices: an aristocratic woman in Rome advising her son not to run for public office; a woman at a military fort sending a birthday invitation to a friend; a traveler abroad writing back to her community at home. The women in these letters come from varied backgrounds: a range of geographic areas within the

Roman world, a range of eras, and, although they all belonged to the upper echelons of Roman society, a range of economic and social circumstances.

This variety provides students with a unique chance to explore the history of Latin, the history of the Roman state, and the nuances of ancient authorship and textual history. The letters here range from the 120s BCE to the 530s CE, offering a survey of forms and usage from Old Latin to Late Latin and Proto-Romance. This same breadth also affords a series of interesting glimpses into the long history of Rome: from the politics of the late republic, to military life in the empire, to the rise of Christianity, to the gradual disintegration of the Roman empire in the West and the rise of the papacy and the various early medieval kingdoms. Finally, the varying forms in which the letters survive—transcribed, edited, excerpted, dug up in archaeological sites—provide students a chance to learn about textual transmission and its implications. Indeed, precisely on account of issues with their transmission, many of the texts in this volume have faced questions about their authenticity. The answers to these questions will provide an opportunity to explore the complexity inherent in the very notion of authorship, as well as some relevant facets of how texts in ancient Rome were composed and disseminated.

II. LETTERS IN ANCIENT ROME

Letters could be written on many different materials.¹ Papyrus (the material used for scrolls) was the most common, but people could write on whatever was available. At the Roman fort of Vindolanda, for instance, letters were written in ink on small scraps of wood, about the size of a postcard (for an image, see Figure 9 in the Appendix).

In ancient Rome, writing of any sort was rare before the third century BCE.² Letters are known to have been written in the second century BCE, and fragments of letters from that time period survive for a few figures, like Cato the Elder (three fragments) and Cornelia (whose two fragments are presented in this anthology).

By the middle of the first century BCE, letters had become a major form of communication. We can get a sense of the importance and prevalence of letter-writing by looking at the correspondence of Cicero. A large portion of Cicero's correspondence, over 900 letters, began to circulate publicly after his death—these letters survive today in the 16 books of letters to friends (*Ad Familiārēs*), 16 books of letters to Atticus (*Ad Atticum*), 3 books of letters to his brother Quintus (*Ad Q. Frātre*), and 2 books of letters to Brutus (*Ad M. Brutum*). It is perhaps no surprise that a literary figure like

¹ For more detail on the material aspects of letters, see Sarri 2018.

² Although some inscriptions survive from the sixth century BCE, or possibly earlier, it seems that literary texts in Latin only started to be composed late in the third century BCE.

Cicero was a prolific letter-writer, but it is notable that he had numerous correspondents, both male and female, and that they too seem to have been habitual letter-writers.³

The communicative webs of letter-writing stayed strong through the following centuries. The most extensive collection from the high Roman empire of the second century consists of the 276 surviving letters of the orator Marcus Cornelius Fronto (c. 95-167 CE). These letters are mostly to and from the future emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180 CE), who was Fronto's pupil.

Even in less elite circles, letter-writing was apparently common. At the Roman fort of Vindolanda, in modern-day northern England, chance has preserved a cache of some 1,700 letters from around 100 CE. Here too, we catch a glimpse of a world that relied heavily on epistolary communication for its basic functioning—everything from formal military reports to informal social plans for travel and parties. These letters are still a part of a relatively elite world. A large portion of them, for instance, come from the household of Flavius Cerialis and Sulpicia Lepidina, who had equestrian status (the highest social rank below senators). Yet the prefect of a military cohort at the margins of the empire was still a world away from the likes of Cicero and Marcus Aurelius, who operated at the pinnacle of the Roman state.

³ Hemelrijk (1999: 180-183) surveys the evidence of women letter-writers from Cicero's correspondence. She concludes that "upper-class women wrote and received letters almost as frequently as the men of their class. They wrote letters on all kinds of subjects varying from love to political advice" (180).

Letters were not just a means of private communication; they could also be literary works meant for wider circulation. The two most famous collections of Roman letters meant for public circulation are those of Seneca (4 BCE - 65 CE) and Pliny (61-112 CE). Seneca's letters are, in effect, a collection of short essays on a variety of topics, from old age to bathing to travel, all from a philosophical angle. Seneca addressed these letters, 124 in total, to his friend Lucilius. Pliny's letters likewise cover a variety of topics. Pliny circulated nine books of these letters himself, and a tenth book (his correspondence with the emperor Trajan) started to circulate after his death. There were also collections of stylized letters in verse by poets like Horace (*Epistulae* in two books) and Ovid (the *Epistulae ex Ponto* in four books and the *Epistulae Heroidum*, which were written from the perspective of a variety of famous women).⁴

There was not always a strict division between the letters that served as private documents and those that were public works. Private letters might start to circulate publicly, even against the wishes of the author. Letters for a public audience, like those of Seneca and Pliny, may well have also been delivered to their stated recipients. Sometimes, the author may have hoped that the letter would at least be read out loud and circulated in the familial and social circles of the recipient.

⁴ Apart from poems that explicitly pretend to be letters, epigrams in general sometimes had a quasi-epistolary nature, in that they might have a message that is addressed to a named recipient.

The importance of letters continued into the later Roman world.⁵ Large letter collections survive from early Christian authors like Jerome of Stridon (c. 342–420 CE), translator of the Latin Vulgate Bible, Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE), author of the *Confessions* and *City of God*, and the poet Paulinus of Nola (c. 354–431 CE).⁶ There are no surviving letter collections of women in this era, although 11 letters in the collection of Paulinus were jointly written with his wife, Therasia. Yet women were certainly still writing letters, as we can see from the fact that Jerome, Augustine, and Paulinus were still writing letters *to* women that clearly reply to letters that those women had written to them.⁷ Jerome, in particular, corresponded frequently with women, and the fragments of Marcella, Hedybia, and Algasia that survive, do so because they are embedded in his letters back to them. In addition, the letter of Paula and Eustochium to Marcella survives because it was copied whole along with Jerome’s corpus.

The correspondence of popes also began to be collected in the later Roman world, particularly as the papacy grew in power.⁸ One particularly notable collection is the *Collēctiō Avellāna*, which preserves 244 letters (and other documents) from the fourth to

⁵ For an overview of epistolography in late antiquity, see Sogno, Storin and Watts 2016.

⁶ For studies of these epistolary collections, see Ebbeler 2012 and Ebbeler 2016 on Augustine, Cain 2009 and Cain 2016 on Jerome, Conybeare 2000 and Trout 2016 on Paulinus of Nola.

⁷ Ferrante 1996 explores the many late antique and early medieval women whose letters are known from the surviving replies of men.

⁸ On early papal correspondence see Neil 2016. On the *Collēctiō Avellāna* in particular, see Testa and Marconi 2019.

sixth centuries. This collection includes not only letters *by* popes, but also letters *to* popes, as well as letters about papal controversies. Among these letters are several written by women in the imperial family, including three⁹ by Galla Placidia, two by Anicia Juliana, one by Anastasia, and one by Euphemia—all of which are included in this anthology.

The fifth and sixth centuries also saw the collection of letters by several figures within the Ostrogothic royal family, which ruled the remains of the Roman empire in the West. These letters were, to one degree or another, co-written with Cassiodorus (c. 485–585 CE), who gathered them together in his *Variae Epistolae*.¹⁰ Among these letters are four by Amalasuintha, the queen who ruled as regent for her son, Athalaric, and who attempted to continue her rule after his death by elevating her cousin Theodahad to be her co-ruler. The collection also includes two letters by Gudeliva, Theodahad's wife. Of these, our anthology includes three of the four letters of Amalasuintha and both letters of Gudeliva.

III. GENDER, SOCIAL STATUS, AND LITERACY

Women held a subordinate role in Roman society. They could not hold public office, for instance, or vote in elections. In the home, husbands were in charge of the household, both by custom and by

⁹ As we discuss in the author introduction for Galla Placidia, there is one letter whose authorship is uncertain, and which might have been written by her brother.

¹⁰ On the letter collection of Cassiodorus, see Bjornlie 2016.

law. Yet Roman women had more legal rights, and more social freedom, than women in other ancient Mediterranean societies, such as those of the Greeks and Etruscans. Indeed, it is often noted that Roman women had comparatively more freedom than many women in modern European countries: A woman in Jane Austen's England, for instance could not keep control of her property once she married, nor could she easily¹¹ obtain a divorce—both of which were rights that Roman women held as a matter of course.¹² And while husbands had great control over their children, wives were generally¹³ under the authority of their own fathers, which gave them a degree of independence from their husbands. Men dominated Rome's cultural and political life, yet women could sometimes take up significant roles, particularly when they were enabled by their wealth and social connections, or by their position in a prominent or dynastic family.

¹¹ To get a divorce, a woman in early nineteenth-century Britain would need to face the high bar of proving both infidelity and some concomitant life-threatening cruelty, and even then the divorce could only be granted by an act of parliament. A Roman woman, by contrast, could simply walk out the door, taking her property with her as she went.

¹² For more detail on the legal status of Roman women, see Riggsby 2010: 165–71.

¹³ Rome had several different forms of marriage, each of which entailed different rights for women. In *manus* marriage, for instance, a woman did go under the authority of her husband. Yet this type of marriage was already rare by the late republic. In the most common form of marriage, *ūsus*, the woman stayed under the authority of her father rather than her husband.

Most Roman women could not read or write, but neither could most Roman men. It is difficult to get a precise measure of the literacy rate in ancient Rome, both because we lack solid numerical evidence and because literacy itself is not a bright-line presence or absence, but rather a continuum of related skills.¹⁴ It is one thing, for instance, to be able to recognize or sound out a few basic words, and another thing entirely to be able to write hendecasyllabic verse. Yet however we define literacy, the rate was certainly low, at least by modern standards. All education was private, which narrowed the pool of those who received it. This is not to say that literacy was restricted to the elite. On the contrary, literary production in ancient Rome relied on a host of enslaved (and formerly-enslaved) copyists, reciters, and other literary workers, all of whom must have received some degree of literary education.¹⁵

Whatever the literacy rate was among men, it was undoubtedly lower among women. All the same, there have recently been indications that some level of literacy among women was more common than might be expected. Such evidence has been found in studies of the archaeological remains of inkwells in women's tombs, for instance, and in studies of the papyrological remains of

¹⁴ For an overview on what is known about literacy in the Roman world, see Eckardt 2017: 3–20.

¹⁵ For the role of enslaved workers in Roman literary production, see Howley 2020 and Coogan, Moss, and Howley 2025.

letters in Greek and Coptic by women in ancient Egypt.¹⁶ There is even some evidence of literacy among lower-status women.¹⁷

In regard to letters, it should be noted that literacy was not required to send or receive correspondence. As will be discussed in more detail below (see Introduction VI, “Authorship and Authenticity”), the sender might well dictate their letter to an enslaved copyist for convenience, and the receiver might likewise have the letter read aloud to them. However, women who could afford to have a letter dictated were often wealthy enough to be educated themselves, and when the physical materials of a letter do survive, the closing farewell is often written in a different hand from the main text; presumably this would be the hand of the author.¹⁸ We see this very practice in the letters from Vindolanda printed in this edition (see Appendix), which are the only Latin letters by women that survive as material objects.

¹⁶ On the inkwells, see Eckardt 2017: 154–75, who also provides an overview of other forms of evidence for literacy among Roman women. For women’s letters on papyrus, see Bagnall and Cribiore 2006.

¹⁷ Eckardt (2017: 156–57) provides some evidence for women in low-status literate jobs, such as teachers, copyists, and reciters. Thōma (2025: 129–30 and 143–47) surveys several Greek letters that were likely written by low-status women.

¹⁸ For an overview of issues regarding women, literacy, and the authorship of letters in particular, see Bagnall and Cribiore 2006: 5–11 and Hemelrijk 1999: 180–97.

IV. PRINCIPLES OF SELECTION

This anthology is a collection of letters written in Latin by women in the ancient Roman world, broadly defined. We include at least some material from every single woman for whom there are surviving letters, or even fragments of letters.¹⁹ In this section, we clarify more precisely the boundaries of what is included and excluded.

First, we only include *Latin* letters. There are surviving letters from ancient Roman women in other languages. In fact, because of how well papyrus survives in Egypt, there are over three hundred letters by women in the main languages spoken there: Greek and Coptic.²⁰ Several of the women in this collection have letters surviving in Greek too, such as Empress Galla Placidia and Queen Amalasuintha. In those cases, we will list all surviving letters (in any language) in the author's introduction.

In addition, we did not include the full epistolary output of every woman treated. Therasia was the co-author of 11 letters along with her husband Paulinus, some of which are quite lengthy. The letter of Paula and Eustochium to Marcella is 8,000 words long on its own, which is longer than all the other letters in this anthology put together—apart from Egeria's letter, which is around 18,000 words long. To keep this anthology balanced and of a reasonable

¹⁹ At least, we included material from every woman that we are aware of. There is no single resource that lists all such letters, so there may be some that we have missed.

²⁰ See Bagnall and Cribiore 2006.

length, we only included selections from them. Likewise, we left out one of Amalasuintha's letters to Justinian.

This anthology focuses on the letters of women from ancient Rome, but the term "ancient Rome" deserves further clarification: when does "ancient Rome" end? The date most commonly given is 476 CE, which is when the last Roman emperor in the West (Romulus Augustulus) was deposed. Yet as scholars commonly point out, this date is somewhat arbitrary, and it could be seen as both too early and too late. The year 476 CE is too late in the sense that the Roman empire, as an institution, had been broken up in 284 CE by Diocletian, who split the empire into a Western Rome and an Eastern Rome, each with their own separate emperors. Yet the year 476 CE is too early in that the Eastern Roman Empire continued all the way until 1453 CE, when Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II. Even within the Western Empire, the year 476 CE is not as decisive as it might seem. When the Germanic king Odoacer deposed Emperor Romulus Augustulus in 476 CE, he did not create a new state, but declared himself essentially to be in charge of the Western Empire—an arrangement that the Eastern emperor agreed to, albeit reluctantly. The Eastern Roman emperor Zeno later sent Theodoric to overthrow Odoacer. Theodoric the Great was king of the Ostrogoths, but, like Odoacer, he was still nominally in charge of the Western Roman empire and subordinate to the Eastern Roman emperor. After the death of Theodoric, the Eastern emperor Justinian reconquered much of Italy in the Gothic War of 535-554 CE, only to lose it to the invading Lombards. At this point, even the pretense of a Roman empire in the West dissolved.

We decided to end our anthology in the 530s with the letters of Amalasuintha and Gudeliva, members of the Ostrogothic royal family from the generation after Theoderic. Amalasuintha had a traditional Roman literary education, and her correspondence is still part of a recognizably Roman world: she writes to the Roman Senate, to Empress Theodora, and to Emperor Justinian. Gudeliva was her contemporary. Both saw themselves as being part of the Roman empire, and both acknowledged themselves to be ultimately under the authority of the (Eastern) Roman emperor.

V. THE AUTHORS IN THIS ANTHOLOGY

Most of the authors in this anthology are not household names, although some of them were extremely famous in their own day, and so we provide here a short overview of who they were and what survives of their letters. More detailed overviews, with bibliography, can be found in the introduction to each woman's letters.

1. Cornelia (c. 190s-115 BCE): Cornelia came from one of the most famous aristocratic families of the Roman republic. She was the daughter of Scipio Africanus, the general who defeated Hannibal in the Second Punic War. Her sons were Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, the charismatic populists whose social and political reforms rocked the republic. Cornelia was a public figure in her own right, and her letters were known to Cicero (*Brutus* 211) and Quintilian (*Inst. Orat.* 1.1.6) almost 200 years later. We

present the two surviving fragments, which warn her son, Gaius Gracchus, not to seek the tribunate in 123 BCE.

2. The women of Vindolanda (c. 95-107 CE): In the Roman fort at Vindolanda in modern-day northern England, over 1,700 small wooden writing tablets have been found. Among these, several were written by women. There is a birthday party invitation from Claudia Severa to Sulpicia Lepidina, as well as fragments of several other letters from Severa to Lepidina, and two others from different women, possibly named Paterna and Vallata. These letters are short, and some survive only in pieces, but they provide a glimpse into life outside the imperial center, expressed in Latin that is Classical and yet more colloquial than most surviving Classical Latin.

3. Pompeia Plotina (late first and early second century CE): Plotina was an aristocratic woman who lived in Spain before marrying Trajan (emperor 98-117 CE). One of the most interesting sources for her life is a letter that she wrote in 121 CE to the succeeding emperor, Hadrian, after Trajan had died. In this letter, she interceded on behalf of the school of Epicurean philosophy in Athens, seeking the right for the head of the school to write his will in Greek and to choose a successor who was not a Roman citizen. In the letter, she describes herself as particularly interested in Epicureanism. The letter survives because the citizens of Athens had it inscribed in stone, along with Hadrian's response and a letter from Plotina to the Athenian Epicureans, which announced the grant.

4. Egeria (late fourth century CE): Egeria was a Christian woman (perhaps from Spain) who traveled to the Holy Lands. She went on a pilgrimage to famous sites from scripture and visited with the monks and nuns who were living there. While traveling, she wrote about her journey, as well as about the liturgical details of Christianity as it was practiced there. Her letter preserves evidence of many changes in Latin that seem to anticipate characteristics of the various Romance languages. This letter was addressed to her “sisters,” who were presumably other Christian women from her home community. The letter is long (over 18,000 words survive), so we present only an excerpt, which recounts her journey to the site of the burning bush at Mount Sinai.

5. Paula (347–404 CE) and Eustochium (c. 368–420 CE): Paula was an aristocratic Roman woman, and Eustochium was her daughter.²¹ The pair eventually left Rome with Jerome to take a pilgrimage to the Christian Holy Lands. They decided to stay, establishing a monastery in Bethlehem. Paula was particularly close to Jerome, whom she supported financially. In the letter in this anthology, Paula and Eustochium write to their mentor, Marcella, who was a central figure in the Christian community in Rome. The letter urges her to leave Rome and come to live with them. The letter is 8,000 words long, so we present only a portion.

²¹ As Vuolanto (2025: 384n.1) notes, Eustochium’s name was in fact the feminine (Julia) Eustochia, but Jerome used the gender-neutral “Eustochium” to highlight her ascetic, asexual ideals (although, as Vuolanto adds, we do not know which version of her name she herself preferred).

6. Marcella (325–410 CE): Marcella was the recipient of the letter from Paula and Eustochium (above). She was a central figure in the Christian community in fourth-century Rome, and she had considerable expertise as a biblical scholar. She hosted Jerome during his stay in Rome, and the two frequently corresponded about theological and linguistic topics. The fragments we print here are from a letter in which she posed him a number of questions about the scriptures. Although Paula and Eustochium urged Marcella to move to Bethlehem, she stayed in Rome, where she was killed when Gothic forces sacked the city in 410 CE.

7. Hedybia (late fourth and early fifth century CE): Hedybia was a Gallic woman who likely lived in Burdigala (modern Bordeaux). She was born into a family that boasted notable literary scholars in previous generations, and Hedybia herself seems to have been highly engaged in the textual and theological controversies of her day. She wrote to Jerome with a dozen questions about how to interpret difficult scriptural passages. Her own letter does not survive, but we do have Jerome's response, in which he quotes (and in doing so, preserves) her questions.

8. Algasia (late fourth and early fifth century CE): Like Hedybia, Algasia was a Gallic woman (perhaps from Cahors or Bordeaux) who sent Jerome a list of questions about the text of the Christian Bible. Our knowledge of her, including what questions she asked, comes entirely from Jerome's letter in response.

9. Therasia (late fourth and early fifth century CE): Therasia was an aristocratic Christian woman from Spain. She prevailed

upon her husband, Paulinus, to convert to Christianity, and the two of them set up a monastic establishment in the town of Nola in southern Italy. There, they apparently lived in a celibate partnership. There are 11 surviving letters that were written jointly by the two of them. In this anthology, we print a portion of their letter to another semi-monastic husband and wife pair, Aper and Amanda. The letter was written in praise of Amanda, who took on management of their household and estate so that Aper could devote himself to an ascetic Christian existence.

10. Galla Placidia (392/3–450 CE): Galla Placidia was a Roman empress who effectively ruled the Western Empire from 425–437 CE. She was the daughter of Theodosius I, the last emperor to control both halves of the empire. As a young woman, she was in Rome when it was sacked by the Goths in 410 CE (when Marcella was killed), and she was taken away as a hostage by the Gothic army. She later married the Gothic king, Ataulf, perhaps with dynastic aims, as any son resulting from the union would have been well positioned for the imperial throne. As it turned out, the marriage did produce a son, Theodosius, but both the boy and his father died before Placidia's hopes could be realized, and she returned to Rome where she married Constantius, the emperor's chief military commander. Constantius then became emperor but soon died himself, leaving Galla Placidia as empress and regent for their young son, Valentinian. The letters in this anthology survive from Galla Placidia's correspondence with a number of bishops (including Paulinus of Nola, who had become a bishop after the death of Therasia) in an attempt to settle a disputed papal election.

11. Anicia Juliana (c. 461–527 CE): Anicia Juliana was a wealthy aristocrat in Constantinople. She was the daughter of Emperor Anicius Olybrius and Placidia (not Galla Placidia, but rather her grand-daughter). Juliana's family no longer ruled, but she tried to position it to swoop in if the occasion arose. At one point, she planned to marry Theoderic, the Gothic king who was ruling the Western Empire, though the marriage never materialized. At other times, her husband and son were almost made emperors. Anicia Juliana was also famous for her monumental building projects and her involvement in religious controversies. Among the building projects, Juliana is perhaps best known for building the monumental Church of Saint Polyeuctus, which was the largest church in Constantinople until Emperor Justinian (perhaps hoping to out-do her) built Hagia Sophia a few years later. In regards to religious controversies, her surviving Latin letters are addressed to Pope Hormisdas, with whom she corresponded in hopes of ending the Acacian Schism that had caused a break between the churches of Rome and Constantinople.

12. Anastasia (early sixth century CE): Anastasia was a friend of Anicia Juliana and traveled in some of the same social circles, but she was a less powerful player. She was married to a certain Pompeius, who was the nephew of the Eastern Emperor Anastasius. After the death of Pompeius, she founded a monastery on the Mount of Olives and lived out her life as its abbess. Her surviving letter is addressed to Pope Hormisdas, and it was sent along with one of the letters of Anicia Juliana in hopes of ending the Acacian Schism.

13. Euphemia (early sixth century CE): Euphemia was a Roman empress. Named Lupicina at birth, she had been an enslaved concubine. She was then bought by Justin, a peasant and soldier, who freed her and took her as his wife. Justin was rising through the military ranks, and he eventually became emperor. It was Justin who finally negotiated an end to the Acacian Schism. As part of this effort, he organized several barrages of letters to Pope Hormisdas, including the letters by Anicia Juliana and Anastasia. Euphemia's surviving letter is likewise part of the same campaign addressed to Pope Hormisdas.

14. Amalasuintha (495–535 CE): Amalasuintha was a Gothic queen who ruled over the Western Roman Empire (which, at this time, had been largely reduced to the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy). When her father, the Gothic king Theoderic the Great, died in 526 CE, Amalasuintha took control of the kingdom and ruled as a regent for her young son, Athalaric (c. 516–534 CE). When Athalaric died as well, Amalasuintha attempted to stay on the throne by elevating her cousin Theodahad to the status of co-ruler. A few months later, Theodahad betrayed and murdered her in an attempt to take sole rule. In this anthology, we print three of her surviving letters: a greeting that she sent to the Eastern Roman Empress Theodora, and two letters announcing her elevation of Theodahad, which were addressed to the Roman Senate and to the Eastern Roman emperor Justinian.

Timeline of Letters and Events of the Roman World

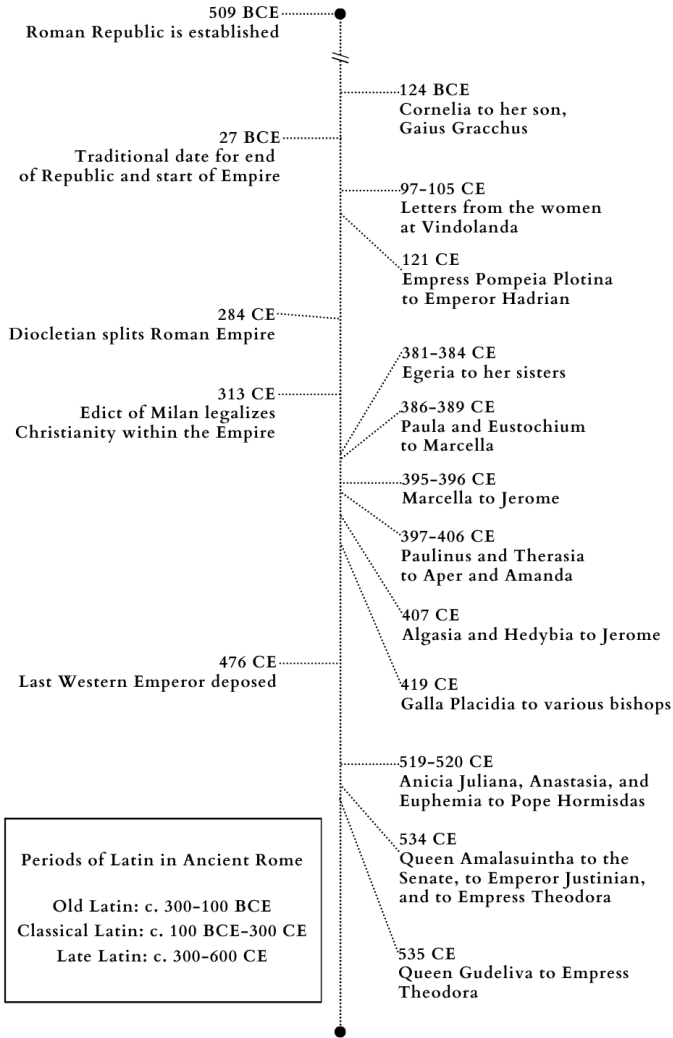


Figure 1. Timeline of Letters

15. Gudeliva (early sixth century CE): Gudeliva was married to Theodahad, who had been elevated to the status of co-ruler by Amalasuintha. We do not know whether she received a classical education like Amalasuintha and Theodahad. After Theodahad betrayed and murdered Amalasuintha, the Eastern Roman emperor Justinian invaded Italy. Theodahad and Gudeliva at first offered to abdicate, but the plan fell apart. Theodahad was then overthrown in a coup by Wittiges, a veteran commander of the Ostrogothic military. Theodahad was killed in 536 CE, and we do not know the fate of Gudeliva. The two surviving letters of Gudeliva are both addressed to Empress Theodora, the wife of Justinian. The letters, sent in 535 CE, seek to establish goodwill with Theodora following the murder of Amalasuintha.

VI. AUTHORSHIP AND AUTHENTICITY

Nearly every letter in this edition has had its authorship questioned. Was Cornelia really the author of the surviving fragments to Gaius Gracchus? Or Egeria the author of the pilgrimage letter? Or Queen Amalasuintha the author of her letter to the Roman Senate? These questions deserve to be addressed. In an edition seeking to make available the voices and perspectives of women in ancient Rome, it matters whether they really are the voices and perspectives of these women. Yet the answer, as we will see, is not a simple yes or no. Part of the difficulty has to do with the complexity of authorship in ancient Rome, and especially the authorship of *letters*. In some cases, more specific objections have

been raised to the attributions of these letters as well. We will consider these challenges, the general and the specific, in turn.

Who is the true author of a letter?

It might seem simple: the author of a letter is the person who wrote it. Yet in ancient Rome, most authors did not write their works by hand: they would dictate them to an enslaved or freed amanuensis (a literary worker who could take dictation and draft documents).²² In that case, most modern observers would probably say that the person who *physically wrote* the letter is not the author. Instead, the author would be the person who came up with the words.

What about if someone instead tells a skilled amanuensis, or some other subordinate, “Write a letter conveying X, and I’ll review it afterwards to make any changes I see fit”? In this case, the amanuensis did the writing *and* came up with the words, although they were not responsible for the content or even (depending on corrections) the final form of the ultimate expression. Such is the practice that we suspect was followed by members of the imperial family, who would have had a staff of highly educated letter-writers at their disposal.

²² For more on the mechanics of literary composition in ancient Rome, see Horsfall 1995, McDonnell 1996, and Dorandi 2007: 47-64.

What about if a married couple sends a letter, with one person writing the entire letter and the other just signing at the bottom, as seems to have been the case with Paulinus and Therasia? The letter communicates most obviously the perspective of the writer, but does it also communicate the perspective of the person who signs at the bottom?

For most of the women in this volume, we do not know how they composed their letters. The one exception here is Claudia Severa. In her letters to Sulpicia Lepidina, the handwriting changes at the final farewell and on the back of the letter, suggesting that the letter had been dictated and that she wrote those final, and perhaps more personal, words in her own hand.

Several women in this volume were members of the imperial family (Pompeia Plotina, Galla Placidia, Anicia Juliana, Anastasia, Euphemia), or members of the Ostrogothic royal family that ruled Italy after the last Western Emperor had been deposed (Amalasuintha and Gudeliva). Their surviving letters are official ones, and they would have had access to a skilled staff, although for the most part we cannot know whether they used that staff and, if they did, whether it was simply for transcribing dictation or whether it was for drafting language.

Are These Letters Authentic?

A shared feature of nearly all these letters is that their authenticity has been challenged. In particular, most of the letters have, at one

point or another, faced the charge that they were in fact written by a man. It's hard not to suspect that there is latent misogyny in the assumption that a literary work from an ancient woman must have actually been written by a man.²³ Yet in many cases there is genuine cause for doubt and scope for reasonable disagreement.

In ancient Rome, there really were pseudepigraphic works—that is, works falsely ascribed to an author who did not write them. There is a whole volume of poetry, for instance, falsely attributed to Vergil (the so-called *Appendix Vergiliāna*). In particular, there were many falsified letters, like the correspondence between the apostle Paul and the philosopher Seneca. There was even a letter purporting to be written by Sarpedon, the mythical son of Zeus, who fell in battle outside the city of Troy (cf. Plin. *NH* 13.88). Pseudepigraphic fakes were common enough that, at one point, the physician Galen described the surreal experience of walking into a bookshop and seeing two people argue about whether a certain book was a genuine Galen (*De librīs propriīs* pref.).

Among modern scholars, disputes over authenticity have been common: Did Plato really write the *Lovers*, or Tacitus the *Dialogus*? (Current consensus on these questions: no and yes,

²³ It should be kept in mind that misogyny could also be a factor in arguments for the authenticity of these letters. In the case of Cornelia, for instance, J. H. Thiel (1929: 357-58) argued that the speaker of the letter seemed irrational and overly-emotional, and that these characteristics showed it to be the work of the feminine mind. Thiel was able to buttress this claim with contemporary psychological research: Gerard Heymans 1910 *Die Psychologie der Frauen* (pp. 71 and 76).

respectively.) In that sense, it's not surprising that there have been questions about the authenticity of the letters in this volume. Yet, because these letters are less commonly studied than the works of Plato or Tacitus, the questions of authenticity are less settled. In consequence, we wanted to examine the merits of each case where there has been some doubt about authorship.

Doubts about the two fragments of Cornelia were first raised in the nineteenth century and have continued into the present.²⁴ Cicero (*Brutus* 211) and Quintilian (*Inst. Orat.* 1.1.6) both remark on the letters of Cornelia, so there can be no doubt that there were letters circulating under her name in antiquity. It is also universally agreed that the language of the fragments is consistent with the Latin of the second century BCE. The question of authenticity has largely boiled down to subjective assessments of whether Cornelia is being too hard on her son Gaius and too critical of his political program. In particular, the phrasing used to criticize Gaius in the letter is similar to criticism used by Gaius's enemies (a group loosely referred to as "optimates"). So perhaps the letter was forged by political enemies looking to embarrass Gaius. Yet Cornelia's feelings might have been complex and ambivalent. And the argument about her rhetoric could cut either way: it has also been

²⁴ Instinsky 1971 surveys the history of the question in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Instinsky argues that the letter is a fake, since the language of the letter resembles the sorts of arguments made by Gaius's personal enemies. A recent monograph on Cornelia likewise takes the fragments to be inauthentic, citing Instinsky's analysis (Dixon 2007: 27), but the question remains unsettled (cf. the assessment in Hemelrijk 1999: 185-188, with detailed bibliography).

argued that the language is in perfect sync with Cornelia's particular self-framing and political stance.²⁵

There have been no doubts raised as to the authenticity of the Vindolanda letters, since these letters are documents found at an archaeological site rather than ones circulating as literary texts in antiquity. However, it is worth noting that there might in fact be more letters by women at Vindolanda than we are able to identify. Most of the letters are fragmentary, and for many we are missing the name of the author. In these cases, we might not know whether a given letter was written by a man or a woman, unless it is clear from context or from a feminine adjective describing the speaker; for instance, the *sim salva* in the letter from a woman possibly named Paterna.

In the case of Egeria, there has been no doubt that the work was written by a woman, yet there has been great uncertainty over *which* woman wrote it because the name of the author does not survive along with the text. The work is preserved in a single manuscript which lacks the beginning and end of the text: the places where an author's name is most likely to be found. When the manuscript was first noticed, in 1884, a variety of authors were proposed, from Galla Placidia to Silvia of Aquitaine. The attribution to Egeria was made on the basis of a seventh-century text that describes a woman named "Egeria" making a journey that seems identical to the one described in the surviving manuscript.²⁶

²⁵ See the analysis of Hallett 2002 and 2018.

²⁶ On the attribution of this text to Egeria, see McGowan and Bradshaw 2018: 3-12.

The letter of Paula and Eustochium to Marcella has, until recently, been attributed to Jerome himself. Ville Vuolanto has helpfully surveyed the scholarship on the question and summarized the case for Jerome's authorship as resting on "the letter's presence in his letter collection, on its style, and on the assumed incompetence of female authors" (2025: 385-92). Vuolanto systematically debunks each of these three arguments.²⁷ First, it was common for letters that were simply related to an author to be preserved in their corpus; and indeed, there are ten other texts not by Jerome that are preserved with his letters. Second, although many scholars have claimed that the letter shares stylistic similarities with Jerome, the only actual stylistic analyses show differences instead. Finally, contrary to assumptions of female incompetence, Paula was highly educated, and indeed she was part of a circle of erudite, aristocratic Roman women (along with the letter's recipient, Marcella).

Jerome has also been suspected to be the author of the fragments of Hedybia and Algasia. These fragments consist of questions that they had written to Jerome, and these questions survive embedded in the letters he sent back in response. In the nineteenth century, it was noticed that Hedybia's questions 3-5 were taken almost verbatim from the *Marinus* of the fourth-century Greek scholar Eusebius. As a consequence, it was argued that Jerome created "Hedybia" as a kind of rhetorical conceit, a fictional addressee whose questions he could use as a pretext to write on these topics.

²⁷ Vuolanto 2025 provides the following three rebuttals, as well as positive arguments in favor of Paula and Eustochium's authorship.

And if Hedybia was fictional, then perhaps Algasia was as well.²⁸ Yet there is another obvious possibility for why some of Hedybia's questions came from Eusebius: she might have simply been reading Eusebius. Andrew Cain (2003) has argued that this is the far likelier option, based on the internal evidence for Hedybia (the details about her location, her family, and the messenger who brought the letter) and on the broader context of Jerome's epistolary practices. In addition, there is no particular reason to doubt the fragment of Algasia, whether one accepts Hedybia as genuine or not.

In the corpus of Paulinus of Nola, there are 11 letters that list both Paulinus and Therasia as the senders.²⁹ We can only speculate about how this collaboration might have worked, but Paulinus seems to have been the primary author: the letters sometimes use the first person singular to describe actions that took place in his life, not hers (though they also sometimes use the first person plural in cases that clearly refer to both of them). Therasia may have had some influence on what went into these letters, and she may have agreed with their sentiments; certainly, her name on the letters represented them as in some way hers (along with her husband). Still, it seems that they were primarily written by Paulinus. Given the primary authorship of Paulinus, such letters

²⁸ Cain 2003 surveys the development of the question of Hedybia and Algasia's authenticity (15-17). The same argument has not been made about the fragments of Marcella, presumably because Marcella's historical existence is well attested even apart from Jerome's letters to her.

²⁹ These are letters 3-4, 6-7, 24, 26, 39, 40, and 43-45 in the corpus of Paulinus of Nola, which includes 51 letters in total.

might seem out of place in this anthology. Yet in this volume we hope to help students grapple with both the complexity of authorship and the difficulty of recovering the voices and perspectives of women from ancient Rome. The case of Therasia provides ample opportunity for both.

Finally, there is the matter of the letters from the women in the imperial family (Pompeia Plotina, Galla Placidia, Juliana Anicia, Anastasia, Euphemia) and, later, the Ostrogothic royal family (Amalasuintha and Gudeliva). These letters are not pseudepigraphic fakes, but it is possible that they were written by men who worked for these women.³⁰ The imperial family would have had a large staff, and they may well have asked that staff to draft their letters.³¹ In the case of the imperial women, there is no way to know how the letter was composed, and how much of the ideas and phrasing was due to the named author and how much to any staff. However, it is worth noting that the same statement is true of letters written by the *men* of the imperial family. If we were to treat Pompeia Plotina's authorship of her letter as uncertain or tenuous, then we would also have to question, for instance, Trajan's authorship of his letters to Pliny.

The case of Amalasuintha and Gudeliva is different because some of their letters survive in a collection *by* a member of that staff:

³⁰ Hillner 2019b argues for the letters being largely the product of the staff rather than of the women in question.

³¹ Hillner (2019b: 367-70) outlines the evidence for some of the figures in the imperial (and royal) systems who might have been involved in letter-writing.

Cassiodorus (c. 485–585 CE). Cassiodorus, a highly placed advisor, served under both Amalasuintha and her father, Theoderic the Great, as well as under her cousin Theodahad. He published a collection of letters and other documents, the *Variae*, that he had produced during his time of service. So, in a sense, the letters bearing Amalasuintha's name and Gudeliva's name were probably written by Cassiodorus, or at least in conjunction with Cassiodorus. (The same is true, of course, for the letters of Theoderic and Theodahad.) In that sense, there might be less of Amalasuintha and Gudeliva than we might like. However, particularly for Amalasuintha, Cassiodorus was there to serve *her* purposes, and not the other way around: she would have directed him on what to write, and she would have reviewed and had the final word on the ultimate product. This would have been true not only for the four letters that survive under her name, but also the 25 letters published in the name of her son, Athalaric, on whose behalf she served as regent.³² In that sense, there might be more of Amalasuintha than has been realized.

VII. THE FRAGMENTARY VOICES OF ROMAN WOMEN

The vast majority of ancient Latin texts were written by men. As a result, our understanding of the world and experiences of Roman women is largely shaped by how Roman men thought, or did not think, of women. Granted, historians can and do evaluate these

³² The four letters in Amalasuintha's name are 10.1, 10.3, 10.8 and 10.10 in Cassiodorus's *Variae*. The 25 letters of Athalaric make up Book 9 of the *Variae*.

male perspectives critically rather than accepting them whole cloth, but the texts left behind by women are so rare that they give a sense of being fragments of a larger whole.

In a literal sense too, women's writing survives in fragments. For about half the authors in this anthology—Cornelia, the women of Vindolanda, Plotina, Egeria, Marcella, Hedybia, and Algasia—only portions of their letters survive.

Generally, when literary works survive into the present, it is because their manuscripts were copied and recopied for hundreds of years—usually in medieval monasteries—before the creation of the oldest copy that now survives. Caesar's *Gallic War*, for instance, was composed in the 50s BCE. Our oldest manuscripts, however, date to the ninth century CE. So, presumably, it had been copied and recopied numerous times during that nearly thousand-year interval.³³ Fragments are an exception to this process.

After all, most ancient works did not make the jump and are now lost to us. However, sometimes pieces of those works survive. For instance, Julius Caesar wrote a book on Latin linguistics, the *Dē Analogiā*. There are no surviving copies. However, we know about the work because we have some little pieces of it. That is, it survived in fragments.³⁴

³³ The oldest surviving copy of any given ancient work varies. *Brutus* is fairly late (at 1422), but for most ancient Roman works, the oldest copies date to the 8–12th centuries. A few works, like the *Aeneid*, have copies that go back as far as the fourth or fifth centuries.

³⁴ For the fragments of Caesar's *Dē Analogiā*, see Garcea 2012.

The term “fragment” is a broad umbrella, and there are three ways that pieces of a work might survive. First, bits of a work might survive because they get quoted in other works that do survive, which is the case for Caesar’s work on linguistics. This is how most fragments are preserved. Second, we sometimes find actual ancient writing materials at archaeological sites, but they are damaged and incomplete because of the ravages of time. The vast majority of such fragments are bits of papyrus that survive in the deserts of Egypt, and so they largely preserve works in Greek and Coptic. A much smaller number survive in other places and preserve Latin works, such as the wooden tablets at the Roman fort of Vindolanda. Third, there are times when a work does survive to be copied in the middle ages, but then the copy itself loses pages or becomes unreadable in some parts before it can be copied again. This can result in a work that is largely whole, but misses some sections, usually where pages are lost at the front or back of the book, as in Suetonius’s *Lives of the Caesars*. Technically, a work in this condition is considered to be “lacunose” rather than “fragmentary,” but here we group lacunose works with fragmentary works since they are all works that do not survive whole.

In this anthology, fragments of all three sorts survive. Each has its own challenges and complications for readers. In the case of Cornelia, Marcella, Hedybia, and Algasia, their words survive because they are quoted by other authors. The two fragments of Cornelia were copied by the first-century BCE author Cornelius Nepos (the dedicatee of Catullus’s *Cui dōnō* poem). Nepos quoted these fragments in his collection of biographies, *On Latin*

Historians. As it happens, the *On Latin Historians* does not itself survive. Instead, in a copy of Nepos's *Lives of Famous Generals*, a scribe simply copied down these two quotations and remarked that they were from a letter of Cornelia in the *On Latin Historians*. In the case of Marcella, Hedybia, and Algasia, we do not have the letters that they wrote to Jerome, which apparently asked him a set of questions. But their fragments are preserved in the letters that Jerome wrote back to them, in which he answered those questions (*Epist.* 59, 120, and 121 respectively).

One complication of fragments preserved as quotations is that we have no way to be sure that the quotations are accurate. After all, the literary work that preserves the quotation might have paraphrased it, or might simply have made mistakes. For Marcella, Hedybia, and Algasia, Jerome certainly paraphrased some of their questions, but likely not all of them.³⁵ In the case of Cornelia, the fragments are unlikely to be paraphrases, since they use various archaic forms.

In the case of the women of Vindolanda, the actual letters themselves survive and have been recovered at an archaeological site. These letters were written in ink on small, thin pieces of wood. Some of these pieces of wood have survived almost entirely intact, like Claudia Severa's birthday invitation to Sulpicia Lepidina (see Appendix). Others are badly mangled, like the letter to Lepidina from an anonymous woman, possibly named Paterna,

³⁵ The fragments of Marcella seem to be paraphrased, whereas the fragments of Hedybia and Algasia seem to be largely direct quotations.

offering some kind of fever medication; this piece of wood was broken in half, and we only have the left-hand side of the message, resulting in a message of which the meaning can only be partially recovered.

The letter of Pompeia Plotina to Hadrian likewise survives as a material object: in this case, the people of Athens had inscribed a copy of the letter onto stone and set it up for display. The stone itself survives, but there are some gaps in the text where the stone has crumbled.

Unlike the fragments that survive as quotations, the fragments preserved on objects at archaeological sites are not always complete utterances, and sometimes we can't make sense of the words that survive. In this anthology, we have decided to include all letters securely identified as being by women, even when they are unintelligible, because the fragmentary nature of these remains is significant in itself.

In the case of Egeria, her work was recopied whole, but it survives in a single manuscript, which is in poor condition and has lost substantial parts of the text (*Codex Aretinus* 405). In particular, it has lost the beginning and end of the text, presumably due to wear and tear at the front and back of the codex. In this case, the key issue to be aware of is that by losing the opening and closing of the work, we lose the identity of the author and the addressees, as well as any explanation she might have included about why she was writing.

VIII. NON-STANDARD LATIN IN THE LETTERS

The letters in this anthology do not just offer students a diversity of perspective, but a diversity of Latin.

Readers of this anthology will come across grammatical forms and usage that differ from what they might have learned in standard textbooks, which focus on “Classical Latin.” In part, that is because some of the letters do not fall into the period of “Classical Latin,” but in part it is also because the very notion of “Classical Latin” is an oversimplification. For this reason, we want to explain these particular differences, and also to take the opportunity to explore what counts as “Classical Latin.” Until recently, such differences were frequently termed “Vulgar Latin” and were assumed to be evidence of the spoken language. More nuanced studies have shown that these differences spring from a variety of factors such as the date, the geographical region, the level of formality of the text, and the social background of the speaker.³⁶

“Classical Latin” is a term that usually denotes the Latin of the late republic and early empire, from roughly the first century BCE (with Cicero, Catullus, and Lucretius on the early end) to the second century CE (with Suetonius, Juvenal, and Gellius on the late end).

³⁶ These more nuanced perspectives on “Vulgar Latin” have been driven in particular by Adams 2013 and Adams 2016.

Yet the notion that there even was a “Classical” Latin is somewhat misleading. Since the Latin of this period survives mostly in a few authors, their usage has had an undue influence, especially in the case of Cicero, and there are some cases where a particular usage has been taken as a grammatical rule when it is actually just a stylistic preference.³⁷ For instance, students are typically taught that the verb *imperāre* sets up an indirect command with *ut* + subjunctive (which is generally the case in Cicero and Caesar), yet other authors of the era (like Vitruvius) use *imperāre* with an infinitive to express a command. In addition, what students encounter in textbooks is a simplification. For example, students typically learn that the ablative expresses time when or within which, while the accusative expresses duration of time. In reality, the ablative frequently denotes duration of time in post-Classical Latin, and sometimes in Classical Latin as well.³⁸ In regard to matters of spelling, modern editions generally follow the medieval manuscripts on which they are based, rather than on what we know about period usage. For instance, the word “cause” is usually printed as *causa* in modern editions of classical texts, although Quintilian reports that Cicero and Vergil (and other authors of the era) spelled the word as *caussa* (Quint. *IO* 1.20).

In this section, we will briefly outline the relationship of our various authors to the “Classical Latin” that readers will likely have encountered in textbooks.

³⁷ Adams (2016: 641) provides a list of such usages.

³⁸ For more on this construction, see Pinkster 2015: 845–46.

Cornelia lived in the second century BCE. The Latin of the third and second centuries BCE is often called “Old Latin” or “Archaic Latin.”³⁹ The bulk of the surviving Latin from this period comes from the plays of Plautus and Terence, and (to a lesser extent) the various works of Cato the Elder. Cornelia uses several grammatical forms that largely fell out of usage before the classical era, such as the future imperative *petitō* (“seek!”) and the perfect active subjunctive *ausim*.⁴⁰ Cornelia also uses the ablative to express duration of time (*multō tempore*).

The women of Vindolanda lived in the heart of the Classical Latin era. Interestingly, they feature some characteristics that we would normally associate with other periods. The writers of these letters frequently spell *cārissima* with a K (*kārissima*), which is typically seen as an archaic spelling, since Latin originally preserved three different consonants to express the sound that is roughly [k] in English: C (used before e and i), Q (used before o and u), and K (used before a). Additionally, the letters include the pluperfect form *locūta fueram*. Latin textbooks teach the pluperfect rather as *locūta eram*, but this is an over-simplification. Pluperfect passives using a pluperfect (rather than imperfect) auxiliary verb were common in the classical era, particularly for deponent verbs. In later Latin, this usage spread to non-deponent verbs as well.⁴¹

³⁹ On the basic periodization of Latin, see Weiss 2020: 24–25.

⁴⁰ The future imperative differs from the typical imperative in that it indicates a more remote circumstance, less connected to the present circumstance. The verb *audere* is semi-deponent in Classical Latin.

⁴¹ For an overview of this formation, see Pinkster 2015: 473–76.

Most of the remaining letters in this anthology fall in the period known as “Late Latin,” from the fourth to sixth centuries. Yet even within this period, there are some differences between the earlier and later letters, and between those that are more formal or less.

The most notable change during the Late Latin period is that indirect statements are regularly expressed with *quod* (or *quia*) and an indicative verb. The accusative-and-infinitive construction still gets used, but it comes to have a more formal, classicizing tone.⁴² So, for instance, the formal letters written by women in the imperial family tend to use the accusative-infinitive construction, while the other letter-writers tend to use *quod* and the indicative. The sixth-century letters sometimes use the second-person plural (*vōs*) as an honorific, a usage that would become quite common in the middle ages and the Romance languages.

In terms of language, Egeria’s letter is in a category of its own. When the letter came to the attention of scholars in the late nineteenth century, it generated great interest because of how much her vocabulary and grammar anticipated developments in later Romance languages (i.e., French, Spanish, Italian, etc.). The topic of Egeria’s Latin is worth exploring in more detail, not only because it highlights one reason for the significance of Egeria’s letter, but also because it can inform students about the history of Latin. As such, we want to say a few words about the development of Latin into the Romance languages.

⁴² Cf. Adams 2016: 646–47.

It is well known that Latin developed into the various Romance languages: Portuguese, Spanish, French, Sardinian, Italian, and Romanian (among the more well-known ones), not to mention Catalan, Occitan, Helvetian, Dalmatian, and a host of others, not all of which survive. However, the timing and process of that development have been controversial. Latin was the primary *written* language of the middle ages, so people would write in Latin even if they were speaking something else, which makes it hard to know just what they were speaking.

Most linguists hypothesize the existence of a language called Proto-Romance.⁴³ This language is what people might have been speaking when they were writing Latin in the early middle ages. To give an example of why we suspect there was a Proto-Romance, consider the future tense of Romance languages, which is clearly not descended from the future tense in Latin.

Take the phrase “(I) will sing”:

- *chanterai* (French)
- *cantaré* (Spanish)
- *canterò* (Italian)

None of the endings are descended from the Latin future tense, which would be *canam* in Classical Latin or *cantābō* in Late Latin, in which frequentative verbs like *cantāre* often replaced simple

⁴³ For an overview of the changes from Latin to Proto-Romance, see Weiss 2020: 541–74.

verbs like *canere*. Instead, all three forms are composed of an infinitive with a conjugated form of “to have”:

- *chanterai* from *chanter* + *ai* (French)
- *cantaré* from *cantar* + *he* (Spanish)
- *canterò* from *cantare* + *ho* (Italian)

So, we would expect that they would descend from something like *cantāre habeō*, which is what we hypothesize must have been the future tense in Proto-Romance.⁴⁴

Egeria’s letter includes frequent grammatical forms and vocabulary choices that seem to match the hypothetical Proto-Romance. These include the loss of the neuter gender, the word *sēra* (rather than *vesper*) as “evening,” and a future tense composed of an infinitive with a conjugated form of “to have.” The reason that Egeria’s language includes these forms is a matter of controversy. It could be that she was less educated, and so her written speech was closer to what she spoke. It could be that she expected her *audience* to be less educated, and so she used language that was closer to daily speech. It could simply be that, for whatever reason,

⁴⁴ For more on the infinitive + *habeō* and the development of the future tense, see Adams 2013: 652–60 and Pinkster 2015: 436–40.

Egeria felt less constrained by the strictures of classical grammar and usage.⁴⁵

IX. ABOUT THIS EDITION

The goal of this edition is to help students read these letters in the original Latin. In order to aid in this goal, this anthology presents these texts with macrons, and with an on-page vocabulary and commentary. In this section, we explain the presence of each in order to help readers make the best use of them.

We included macrons in order to aid comprehension. Ancient Latin texts did not make use of macrons, but neither did they use modern punctuation, spacing, or letter-forms. Yet all of these features make life easier for readers. Even so, macrons were a difficult decision for us as editors. After all, the vowel system of Latin gradually changed, which in many cases led to non-Classical

⁴⁵ Some of these Proto-Romance forms in Egeria's letter could have been scribal errors rather than the usages of Egeria herself. As Classical Latin texts got recopied over the centuries, copyists sometimes mistakenly used their own Proto-Romance forms when copying. Modern editors can recognize these as errors and restore the original forms. With a text like Egeria's, which exists in only one copy and clearly includes some Proto-Romance forms, it is hard to know whether a given form was Egeria's own or the mistake of a copyist. For example, at one point she uses the preposition *per* with the ablative (*per valle illā mediā*). This could be an example of the decline in the distinctions between cases, or it could simply be an error on the part of the copyist.

differences in vowel length.⁴⁶ Since we do not know how the senders, recipients, or other readers of these letters would have pronounced the vowels in any given text, there is no way to be certain of what the real vowel length would have been for them. Ultimately, we decided that even given these uncertainties, the helpfulness of the macrons for students outweighed the drawbacks.

Given that students have dictionaries at their disposal, why include an on-page vocabulary? The reason is simply to help students read faster. By reading faster, they will be able to read and comprehend more Latin, which in turn will better help them internalize the language. Because there is a limited amount of space on any page, we have put the most common Latin words in a glossary at the back, since these are words that students are likely to know already.⁴⁷

Likewise, the purpose of the on-page commentary is to help students read the Latin as smoothly and efficiently as possible. These texts bring up a host of interesting historical, linguistic, and religious questions, but we generally limit ourselves to exploring these issues only in as much as they help to make sense of the Latin itself.

⁴⁶ For more detail on the changes of the Latin vowel system in Proto-Romance, see Weiss 2020: 547-50.

⁴⁷ To determine which words belong in the back glossary, we chose the 250 most common words in Latin (with some modifications) from the DCC Latin Core Vocabulary list (<https://dcc.dickinson.edu/latin-core-list1>).

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ABBREVIATIONS

abl. = ablative	i.e. = that is (id est)
acc. = accusative	ind. = indirect
act. = active	indic. = indicative
adj. = adjective	inf. = infinitive
adv. = adverb	lit. = literally
cf. = compare to (cōnfer)	masc. = masculine
CL = Classical Latin	neut. = neuter
comp. = comparative	nom. = nominative
dat. = dative	obj. = object
dir. = direct	pass. = passive
e.g. = for example (exemplī grātiā)	perf. = perfect
etc. = and the rest (et cētera)	pl. = plural
fem. = feminine	pred. = predicate
fut. = future	prep. = preposition
gen. = genitive	rel. = relative
Grk. = Greek	sg. = singular

CORNELIA

Cornelia (c. 190s-115 BCE) was born into one of the most prominent families in the Roman republic, the *Cornēlii Scīpiōnēs*. Because there were few avenues by which Roman women could achieve public fame, she is largely known in connection with the various men in her life: her father was Scipio Africanus, who defeated Hannibal and brought the Second Punic War to an end; her sons were Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, the political reformers; and her son-in-law was Scipio Aemilianus, who was both a military leader and a literary patron.

Yet Cornelia forged a relatively independent path. After the death of her husband, she chose not to remarry, despite a proposal from the ruler of Egypt, Ptolemy VIII Euergetes (Plut. *Ti. Gracch.* 1.4). She took charge of her estate and cared for her twelve children, nine of whom died in childhood (Plut. *Ti. Gracch.* 1.3-5). She was very involved in her children's education, and later sources attributed the oratorical skills of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus to her influence (Cic. *Brutus* 211; Quint. *Inst. Orat.* 1.1.6). In fact, it seems that she cultivated a public image of devotion to her children, and she was often known as the “mother of the Gracchi” (*māter Gracchōrum*), a term that she herself favored (Plut. *Ti. Gracch.* 8.5).

Cornelia's letters were known to subsequent generations, but it is not clear whether she circulated them herself. Two fragments of

CORNELIA

these letters survive as quotations in the *On Latin Historians* by Cornelius Nepos. The two fragments, which are both addressed to her son Gaius, might be from the same letter. In both, she urges Gaius not to run for the office of tribune of the plebs, which has a specific responsibility for the wellbeing of the common people. Tiberius, Gaius's older brother, had been elected as tribune in 133 BCE. He used the office to reclaim and redistribute public land that had been taken over by the wealthy, and was soon assassinated. In the fragments, Cornelia expresses a fear that Gaius will provoke further strife. In the first fragment, she writes that she approves of him seeking revenge on his enemies, but not at the cost of harm to the state. In the second fragment, she criticizes him for seeking the tribunate in defiance of her will.

Select Bibliography

Our Latin text comes from Marshall 1977. There are good English translations in Hallett 2002 and 2018.

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Figure 2. A statue base with an inscription (*CIL* VI.31610), which reads *Cornēlia, Africānī f(ī)lia, Gracchōrum* (“Cornelia, daughter of Africanus, of the Gracchi”). The statue does not survive, but Pliny the Elder reports that it was bronze and depicted Cornelia sitting (*NH* 34.31). He adds that Augustus moved it from the Porticus Metelli to the Porticus Octaviae. (Line drawing by Hannah Nakagome)

Cornelia to her son, Gaius Gracchus (2 Fragments)

c. 124 BCE

1. Dīcēs pulchrum esse inimīcōs ulcīscī. Id neque maius neque pulchrius cuiquam atque mihi esse vidētur, sed sī liceat rē pūblicā salvā ea persequī.

inimīcus, -a, -um: hostile; (as a masc. substantive) enemy

persequor, -sequī, -secūtus sum: pursue

pulcher, -chra, -chrum: beautiful; noble

rēs pūblica, reī pūblīcae f.: state

salvus, -a, -um: safe; unharmed

ulcīscor, ulcīscī, ultus sum: take vengeance on

Dīcēs pulchrum esse inimīcōs ulcīscī: *You say that it is noble to take vengeance on (your) enemies; esse is the verb of the ind. statement with the inf. phrase inimīcōs ulcīscī as its subject*

Id: *This;* refers back to sentiment expressed in the previous sentence

maius . . . pulchrius: neut. acc. comp. adjs.

atque mihi: *than to me;* *atque* can mean “than” when following a comp., although this sense is rare in Classical prose; *cuiquam* and *mihi* are both dats. of reference

sed sī liceat . . . persequī: *sed* can occasionally mean “but only”; the conditional in this sentence is mixed and has a fut.-less-vivid protasis (with the pres. subjunctive *liceat*) and a simple pres. apodosis (namely, the previous *vidētur* clause)

rē pūblicā salvā: *with the state (being) unharmed;* abl. absolute; as usual, the verb “being” is left implicit

ea persequī: *to pursue those things;* the *ea* (“those things”) refers to taking vengeance on one’s enemies

Sed quātenus id fierī nōn potest, multō tempore multīsque partibus inimīcī nostrī nōn perībunt, atque utī nunc sunt erunt potius quam rēs pūblica prōflīgētur atque pereat.

inimīcus, -a, -um: hostile; (as a masc. substantive) enemy

prōflīgō (1): strike down; bring to an end

pereō, -īre, -ī, -itum: pass away, perish; (here) be ruined

quātenus: to what extent; since
rēs pūblica, reī pūblīcae f.: state

multō tempore: *for a long time*; the abl. is sometimes used for duration of time instead of the acc., especially before and after the Classical era

multīs partibus: *in many respects*; a common idiom

utī nunc sunt: *as they are now*; *utī* is a somewhat archaic alternate form of *ut* (here “just as”)

erunt: *they will be*; we might expect a subjunctive, since Cornelia is expressing a wish that her family’s personal enemies should continue on as they are rather than any harm coming to the state; the indicative makes the statement more emphatic

potius quam: *rather than*; the phrase takes the potential subjs. *prōflīgētur* and *pereat*

2. Verbīs conceptīs dēierāre ausim, praeterquam quī Tiberium Gracchum necārunt, nēminem inimīcum tantum molestiae tantumque labōris, quantum tē ob hās rēs, mihi trādidisse;

audeō, audēre, ausus sum: dare

conceptus, -a, -um: formal, in set form

dēierō (1): swear

inimīcus, -a, -um: hostile; (as a masc. substantive) enemy

molestia, -ae f.: trouble

necō (1): kill

ob (prep. + acc.): on account of

praeterquam: except for, other than

trādō, -ere, trādidī, trāditum: hand over; give

Verbīs conceptīs: *With formal words*; abl. of means; this phrase is used to describe set formulae for swearing oaths

ausim: an archaic form of the perf. subjunctive *ausus sim* that was preserved into CL as a potential subjunctive translatable as “I may well have dared”

nēminem inimīcum...mihi trādidisse: *that no enemy...has given me*; ind. statement introduced by *dēierāre*

tantum molestiae tantumque labōris: *so much (of) trouble and so much (of) suffering*; the nouns are partitive gens.; the phrases are correlative with *quantum* (i.e., “so much...as”)

tē: this acc. is another subject of *trādidisse* (i.e. so much trouble “as you have...given”)

quem oportēbat omnium eōrum, quōs antehāc habuī liberōs, partīs eōrum tolerāre atque cūrāre ut quam minimum sollicitūdinis in senectā habērem, utīque quaecumque agerēs ea vellēs maximē mihi placēre atque utī nefās habērēs rērum maiōrum aduersum meam sententiam quicquam facere,

aduersus, -um: against

antehāc: previously, formerly

cūrō (1): care; take care

maior, maius: greater

nefās n. (indecl.): crime

oportet, -ēre, -uit: it is necessary for (someone) to; ought

placeō, -ēre, -uī, -itum: be

pleasing, please

quicumque, quae-, quod-:

whoever, whatever

senecta, -ae f.: old age

sollicitūdō, -inis f.: uneasiness of mind

tolerō (1): bear, support

quem oportēbat omnium eōrum: (*you*) for whom of all those (children) it was necessary or, more smoothly, *you who were supposed to*; this relative pronoun has the *tē* from the previous clause as its antecedent; it is the subject of *tolerāre atque cūrāre*

omnium eōrum, quōs antehāc habuī liberōs partīs eōrum: of all those children whom I formerly had, to bear their duties; *omnium eōrum* is a gen. dependent on *partīs* (= *partēs*), with a sense of “duties” (as *pars* often means in the pl.); the word *liberōs* would normally be gen. but has been attracted into the relative clause

cūrāre ut...habērem, utīque...vellēs...atque...habērēs: the *cūrāre* sets up three ind. commands; *utī* is an archaic form of *ut*

quam minimum sollicitūdinis: as little as possible of trouble; *quam* with a superlative is “as...as possible”; *sollicitūdinis* is partitive gen. with *minimum*

quaecumque agerēs: whatever things you might do; rel. clause of characteristic **ea:** refers back to *quaecumque*

nefās habērēs rērum maiōrum...quicquam facere: you might consider as a crime to do anything (of) rather important (matters); *habēre*, from its literal sense of “to have” or “to hold,” *habēre* can mean “to consider”

praesertim mihi cui parva pars vītae restat. Nē id quidem tam breve spatium potest opitulārī quīn et mihi adversēre et rem pūblicam prōflīgēs? Dēnique quae pausa erit? Ecquandō dēsinet familia nostra īnsānīre?

advertor, -ārī, -ātus sum: be

against

brevis, -e: short

dēnique: finally

dēsīnō, -ere, -ī, -itum: cease, stop

ecquandō: ever (intensive

interrogative adv.)

familia, -ae f.: family

īnsānō, -īre, -īvī, -ītum: be insane

opitulor, -ārī, -ātus sum: help

pausa, -ae f.: end

praesertim: especially

prōflīgō (1): strike down, bring to an end

quīn: (here) introducing a clause of prevention

rēs pūblica, reī pūblīcae f.: state

restō, -āre, restitī: remain

spatium, -ī n.: space; (here) span

Nē...quidem: *not even*

quīn et...adversēre (= adversēris) et...prōflīgēs: *you from both opposing. and*

...ruining: clause of prevention

Ecquandō modus eī reī habērī poterit? Ecquandō dēsinēmus et habentēs et praebentēs molestiīs īnsistere? Ecquandō perpudēscet miscendā atque perturbandā rē pūblicā?

dēsinō, -ere, -ī, -itum: cease, stop

ecquandō: ever (intensive interrogative adv.)

īnsistō, -ere, -stī: stand upon, follow, pursue (+ dat.)

miscēō, -ēre, -uī, mixtum: mix; (here) disturb

molestia, -ae f.: trouble

perpudēscit, -ere, -uit: feel great shame at (+ abl.)

perturbō (1): throw into disorder

praebēō, -ēre, -uī, -itum: offer; (here) cause

rēs pūblica, reī pūblīcae f.: state

eī reī: dat. with *modus* (“limit”)

habērī: *to hold fast*; lit., “to be held”

Equandō dēsinēmus...molestiīs īnsistere: *Will we ever stop...pursuing troubles*; the *dēsinēmus* sets up the inf., not the participles

et habentēs et praebentēs: *both having and causing (them)*; nom. participles agreeing with the implicit subject; in other words, Gaius should not be seeking further troubles by running for tribune if his family already has had and has caused enough, in the form of Tiberius’s death incited by his own campaign for tribuneship

perpudēscet (nōs): *will (we) be ashamed*; the *nōs* is implicit from context; while the impersonal *pudēre* regularly uses the gen. for the thing ashamed of, *perpudēscere* uses the abl.

miscendā atque perturbandā rē pūblicā: *at disturbing and throwing the republic into disorder*; a gerundive phrase equivalent to a gerund with a direct object: *miscendō atque perturbandō rem pūblicam*

Sed sī omnīnō id fierī nōn potest, ubi ego mortua erō, petitō tribūnātum; per mē facitō quod lubēbit, cum ego nōn sentiam. Ubi mortua erō, parentābis mihi et invocābis deum parentem.

invocō (1): call upon

lubet = libet, -ēre, -uī, -itum:

(impers.) it is pleasing

morior, morī, mortuus sum: die

omnīnō: altogether, at all

parēns, parentis m./f.: parent

parentō (1): offer a sacrifice

(specifically to a dead relative)

sentīō, -īre, sēnsī, sēnsus: feel

tribūnātus, -ūs m.: tribuneship

ubi ego mortua erō: temporal clauses often take a fut. perf. indicative such as *mortua erō* in place of a fut. indicative for the sake of emphasis; cf. the equivalence between the fut. and the fut. perf. in the protasis of a fut.-more-vivid conditional

petitō: *you shall seek*; the third person sing., fut. act. imperative form of *petō*; the fut. imperative is an archaic form usually found in the decrees of laws (although it continued to be used into the modern era) and can simply be translated with a more forceful fut. sense

per mē: *as far as it concerns me*; an idiom

facitō: another third person sing., fut. act. imperative, this time of *faciō*

deum parentem: the *deum* can be construed as a gen. pl., resulting in a reference to “the parent of the gods,” namely Jupiter. Alternatively, *deum* is an acc. sg. in apposition to *parentem*, suggesting the translation “the parent god” that alludes to the practice of deified ancestors in Ancient Rome.

In eō tempore nōn pudēbit tē eōrum deum precēs expetere, quōs vīvōs atque praesentēs relictōs atque dēsertōs habuerīs? Nē ille sīrit Iuppiter tē ea persevērāre nec tibi tantam dēmentiam venīre in animum.

dēmentia, -ae f.: madness	persevērō (1): continue; persevere
dēsērō, -ere, -uī, -tum: leave, desert	praesēns, praesentis: present
expetō, -ere, -īvī (-īī), -ītum: seek, desire	prex, precis f.: prayer
Iuppiter, Iovis m.: Jupiter	pudeō, -ēre, -uī, -itum: shame
	sinō, -ere, sīvī, situm: allow
	vīvus, -a, -um: living

In eō tempore: *at that time*; the abl. of time when can sometimes take a prep.; the *eō* here functions as a demonstrative adj.

nōn pudēbit tē: *will it not shame you*; the subject is the inf. phrase *precēs expetere* (“to seek the prayers”)

eōrum deum: *of those gods*; *deum* = *deōrum*

quōs vīvōs atque praesentēs relictōs atque dēsertōs habuerīs: *whom, (while) alive and present, you held as abandoned and deserted*; a relative clause contained in an ind. statement takes a subjunctive main verb (here *habuerīs*)

Nē ille sīrit Iuppiter: very lit. “May that Jupiter not allow” or, more smoothly, “Jupiter forbid”; *sīrit* is another archaic version of a perf. subjunctive, this time of *sīverit*, preserved in this idiom; grammatically, *Nē...sīrit* is a negative optative subjunctive

tibi...venīre in animum: the dat. *tibi* indicates for whom the madness “comes into the mind,” so a smooth translation would be “to come into your mind”

CORNELIA

Et sī perseverās, vereor nē in omnem vītam tantum labōris culpā tuā recipiās utī in nullō tempore tūte tibi placēre possīs.

culpa, -ae f.: fault	recipiō, -ere, -cēpī, -ceptum: take
perseverō (1): continue; persevere	back; receive
placeō, -ēre, -uī, -itum: be	tūtē: emphatic version of <i>tū</i>
pleasing, please; (here) satisfy	vereor, -ērī, -itus sum: fear

vereor nē...recipiās: *I fear...that you may receive*; fear clause

in omnem vītam: *for all (your) life*; the prep. *in* + acc. (with a word denoting time) regularly has a sense of “into” or “until” or (as here) “for”

tantum labōris: *so much (of) suffering*; partitive gen.; the *tantum* here is not the adv. (“only”) but the acc. of the adj. *tantus* (“so much”)

culpā tuā: abl. of cause

utī...possīs: result clause anticipated by *tantum labōris*

THE WOMEN OF VINDOLANDA

At the Roman fort of Vindolanda, in what is now northern England, more than 1,700 small wooden writing tablets have been discovered. These tablets were used by the people of the camp for writing letters during the period of 97-105 CE, shortly before the construction of Hadrian's Wall nearby. The letters have yielded new discoveries about the Latin language, about Roman military life, and about women and literacy.

This anthology includes all seven letters that were certainly or likely written by women: letters 257, 291-294, 324, and 635. While this number is a very small percentage of the overall whole, there may be other unnoticed letters by women; most of the letters are fragmentary and it is not always clear who wrote them. In the case of the letters from Claudia Severa (Vind. 291-293 and 635), we know the identity of the sender because it is written on the letter itself. In the case of Vind. 257 and 324, the sender's name appears to be feminine, though in each instance they could be first declension masculine. In the case of Vind. 294, the writer refers to herself with a feminine adjective (*sim salva*) and she has a name that is likely feminine. (The name is usually reconstructed as "Paterna," but only the final -a is certain.) It is possible that other tablets were written by women: we would not know unless the letter included the sender's name (or at least a portion of it) or a feminine adjective that clearly modified the first-person speaker. Yet it was originally a surprise that *any* of the letters would be

THE WOMEN OF VINDOLANDA

written by women, since Roman military forts were believed to be almost entirely inhabited by men—a belief that the letters themselves have proven incorrect.

The two best-known women from Vindolanda are Claudia Severa (author of most of these letters) and Sulpicia Lepidina (recipient of most of these letters), both of whom were married to high-ranking soldiers at the fort. Claudia Severa's letters indicate a high level of literacy. Where she was born remains unknown, but her husband, Aelius Brocchus, came from the eastern Roman Empire and commanded a cavalry unit in Pannonia (largely corresponding to modern-day Hungary). Sulpicia Lepidina was the wife of Flavius Cerialis, prefect of the Ninth Cohort of Batavians, stationed at Vindolanda around 103 CE. Both couples were of the equestrian class, the second highest class in Roman society (below the senatorial class). Letters 291–3 and 635, addressed to Lepidina, were dictated by Severa; the body of each is likely the work of a scribe, while the closings are probably in Severa's own hand.

The letters in this anthology are the following:

- Letter 291: Claudia Severa to Sulpicia Lepidina. Severa invites Lepidina to her birthday celebration; this letter is largely intact.
- Letter 292: Claudia Severa to Sulpicia Lepidina. Severa writes that she has asked and been granted her husband's permission to visit; there are some gaps and uncertainties in the text.

THE WOMEN OF VINDOLANDA

- Letter 635: Claudia Severa to Sulpicia Lepidina. This tablet is very fragmentary; only the address (to Lepidina) and the final farewell survive.
- Letter 293: Claudia Severa to an unknown female recipient (perhaps Sulpicia Lepidina?). Only the closing farewell survives.
- Letter 294: An unknown woman (perhaps named “Paterna”) to Sulpicia Lepidina. The woman writes that she will send what may be a remedy for fever; the right-hand side of this tablet is missing, making the meaning difficult to understand.
- Letter 257: Valatta to Cerialis (husband of Lepidina). She makes a request of Cerialis, to be carried out by Lepidina; the right-hand side of this tablet is missing, making the meaning difficult to understand.
- Letter 324: From an unknown woman (whose name ends in -inna) to an unknown recipient. It is too fragmentary to reconstruct more than a few phrases.

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Our Latin text comes from *Roman Inscriptions of Britain* (<https://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org/>), which includes images, translations, and commentary. In order to aid legibility for students, we have expanded abbreviations and removed brackets around missing or incomplete letters and words. For a more detailed view of Vind. 291, without the brackets and editorial interventions, see the Appendix.

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Claudia Severa to her friend, Sulpicia Lepidina (Vind. 291)

c. 97–105 CE

Claudia Sev̄era Lepidīnae suae salūtem.

III Īdūs Septembrēs, soror, ad diem sollemnem nātālem meum
rogō libenter faciās ut veniās ad nōs iūcundiōrem mihi diem
interventū tuō factūra sī... .

Īdūs, Īduum f. (pl.): Ides, the 15th
day of March, May, July, Oct., the
13th of all others

interventus, -ūs m.: a coming up,
appearance

iucundus, -a, -um: pleasant

libenter (adv.): with pleasure

natalis, -e: birthday, of birth

salūs, -ūtis f.: greetings; health

September, -bris: of September

sollemnis, -e: annual; usual

Lepidīnae suae: *to her dear Lepidina*; greeting showing intimacy

salūtem (dīcit): *sends greetings*; lit. “says ‘health’”; this is the standard greeting at the start of Latin letters (the *dicit* is, as usual, left implicit)

III Īdūs Septembrēs: *three days before the Ides of September*; namely Sept. 11, which is three days (counting inclusively) before the Ides of September (Sept. 13)

ad diem...meum: *for my annual birthday celebration*; the *ad* here expresses purpose

rogō...faciās ut veniās ad nōs: *I ask that you make sure to come to us*; the *faciās* is an ind. command introduced by *rogō*; *ut* is missing, as is typical with second person verbs in ind. commands introduced by *rogāre*; the *ut veniās* is a substantive clause acting as the obj. of *faciās*

interventū tuō: *by your coming*; abl. of means

factūra: *in order to make*; fut. act. participle expressing purpose; this participle has two direct objects: make “the day” (*diem*) “more joyful” (*iucundiōrem*)

sī...: the ellipsis here marks a missing word, perhaps something like *aderis* (“you will be present”)

THE WOMEN OF VINDOLANDA

Ceriālem tuum salūtā. Aelius meus...et filiulus salūtant. Spērābō tē,
soror.

Valē, soror, anima mea, ita valeam, kārissima, et havē!

Aelius, -ī m.: Aelius (name)	haveō, -ēre (= aveō): hail
Ceriālis, -is m.: Cerialis (name)	kārus, -a, -um (= cārus): dear
filiulus, -ī m.: little son	salūtō (1): greet, say hello
	spērō (1): hope

Ceriālem: Flavius Cerialis, the husband of Sulpicia Lepidina

salūtā: imperative

Aelius: Aelius Brocchus, the husband of Claudia Severa

Spērābō tē: *I will be hoping for you*

Aelius meus...et filiulus salūtant: the ellipsis marks three missing letters, perhaps *eum*

Valē...havē: these words are written in a different hand; presumably, the main body of the letter was dictated to a scribe but Claudia Severa herself wrote the closing by hand, which was a common practice

anima mea...kārissima: vocative; the spelling of *kārissima* is archaic; in older Latin texts, K- was regularly used rather than C- when the following letter was an -A (a practice reflected in words like *Kalendae* and *Karthāgō*)

ita valeam: *so may I be well*; this is a parenthetical exclamation (like “on my life” or “so help me” in English); it emphasizes the *kārissima*

havē: imperative coordinated with *Valē* (“Farewell and hail”), similar to the *avē atque valē* from Catullus 101

THE WOMEN OF VINDOLANDA

Sulpiciae Lepidinae Cerialis, ā Sevērā.

Cerialis, -is m.: Cerialis (name)

Sulpiciae...Sevērā: these words are the address, which written on the other side of tablet by Severa herself

Sulpiciae Lepidinae Cerialis: *to Sulpicia Lepidina, (wife) of Cerialis*; the standard way to express the name of a married woman

ā Sevērā: *from Severa*

Claudia Severa to her friend, Sulpicia Lepidina (Vind.292)

c. 97–105 CE

...salūtem. Ego, soror, sicut tecum locuta fueram et promiseram ut peterem a Brocchō et venirem at tē, petī et respondit mihi ita corde semper licitum unā...

Brocchus, -ī m.: Brocchus (name)

cor, cordis n.: heart

licet, licuit, licitum: be allowed

loquor, loquī, locutus sum: speak

petō, -ere, -īvī/-īī, -ītum: seek;
ask

promittō, -ere, -mīsī, -missum:
promise

respondeō, -ēre, -dī, -sum:

respond, answer

salūs, -ūtis f.: greetings; health

sicut: just as

unā (adv.): together

...salūtem (*dīcit*): *sends greetings*; lit. “says health” (*dīcit* implied); the ellipsis here marks a line that is missing from the tablet, which would have the names of the sender (in the nom.) and the recipient (in the dat.); these must have been Claudia Severa and Sulpicia Lepidina, as is clear from the rest of the letter
locūta fueram: = *locūta eram*; the pluperfect pass. with forms of *fueram* rather than *eram* do occur sometimes in the classical era, and they become common over time

ut peterem a Brocchō et venirem at tē: *that I would ask Brocchus (lit. “seek from Brocchus”) and come to you*; noun clause

at (= ad): *to*

petī: = *petīī*; *I asked*

ita corde: *yes with (all my) heart*; this part of Brocchus’s response seems to be a direct quotation, while the following phrase shifts into ind. statement

licitum (esse): *that it was allowed*

unā...: this is most likely the adv. *unā* (“together”), but it could be the fem. form of *ūnus, -a, -um* (“one”); the ellipsis marks a missing line

THE WOMEN OF VINDOLANDA

...quōmodocumque possim at tē pervenīre. Sunt enim necessāria
quaedam quae... -rem meum epistulās meās accipiēs quibus sciēs
quid sim āctūra. Haec nōbīs... -ra eram et Brigae mānsūra.
Cerialem tuum ā mē salūtā.

Briga, -ae f.: Briga (place)	pervenīō -īre, -vēnī, -ventum:
Ceriālis, -is m.: Cerialis (name)	come, reach
epistula, -ae f.: letter	quōmodocumque: in whatever
maneō, -ēre, mānsī, mānsūm:	way, however
remain	salūtō (1): greet, say hello
necessārius, -a, -um: necessary	

...quōmodocumque possim: *in whatever way I may be able*; the ellipsis marks a missing line

at (= ad): *to*

...-rem meum: the ellipsis marks some missing letters, possibly something like *per familiarem meum* (“through my friend”) or *per frātre*m (“though my brother”)
sim āctūra: *I am going to do*; fut. act. periphrastic, which is the usual way to express futurity in an ind. statement

Haec nōbīs...-ra: because of several missing letters, the meaning of these words is not clear

Brigae: locative; the location of Briga has not been identified

mānsūra: fem. fut. act. participle; because it was preceded by *eram*, it likely modifies the speaker (Claudia Severa), so “(I) will remain”

THE WOMEN OF VINDOLANDA

Valē, mea soror kārissima et anima mea dēsīderātissima.

Sulpiciae Lepidīnae Ceriālis ā Sevērā Brocchī.

Brocchus, -ī m.: Brocchus (name)	dēsīderātus, -a, -um: desired
Ceriālis, -is m.: Cerialis (name)	kārus, -a, -um (= cārus): dear

Valē...Brocchī: these words are written in a different hand on the back of the tablet; presumably, the main body of the letter was dictated to a scribe but Claudia Severa herself wrote the closing by hand, which was a common practice; the first line is a final farewell, the second is the address

mea soror kārissima et anima mea dēsīderātissima: *kārissima* agrees with *soror*; for the second *mea*, the text in fact reads only *ma*, but we take the omission of E to be a hand-writing error

Sulpiciae Lepidīnae Ceriālis: *to Sulpicia Lepidina, (wife) of Cerialis*; the standard way to express the name of a married woman

ā Sevērā Brocchī: *from Severa, (wife) of Brocchus*

Claudia Severa to her friend, Sulpicia Lepidina (Vind.635)

c. 97–105 CE

...Aelius meus tē et filiōlus salūtant...

Valē mī soror kārissima...

Sulpiciae Lepīdinae...

Aelius, -ī m.: Aelius (name)

kārus, -a, -um (= cārus): dear

filiōlus, -ī m.: little son

salūtō (1): greet, say hello

Aelius meus: this letter is very fragmentary, but we can identify the sender as Claudia Severa, whose husband was Aelius Brocchus (“my Aelius”)

mī: = *mihī*; because the sentence breaks off after *kārissima*, it is not clear how this dat. fits in

Sulpiciae Lepīdinae: dat.; these words were written on the other side of the tablet by Severa herself

Claudia Severa, perhaps to Sulpicia Lepidina (Vind.293)
c. 97–105 CE

...valē...soror kārissima...

...ā Sevērā

kārus, -a, -um (= cārus): dear

vale...ā Sevērā: these words are all that remains of one small tablet fragment.
The first line is on one side of the tablet fragment, and the second line on the other.

Paterna(?) to Sulpicia Lepidina (Vind. 294)

c. 97–105 CE

Paterna Lepīdinae suae salūtem.

Ita sim salva, domina...

ut ego duās an...

feram tibi alteram...

alteram febric...

et ideō mē tibi e...

sed quātenus m...

domina, -ae f.: mistress

febricōsus, -a, -um: having a fever

ideō: therefore, for this reason

salūs, -ūtis f.: greetings; health

salvus, -a, -um: safe, sound

quātenus: in as much as, at what point

Paterna: this name is a reconstruction; the only letters surviving here are *.a...na*; for the rest of the letter, the right-hand side of the tablet is broken off, so we can only make partial sense of the meaning

Lepīdinae suae: *her dear Lepidina*

salūtem (dīcit): *sends greetings*; lit. “says health” (*dicit* implied)

Ita sim salva: *Thus may I be safe and sound*; an exclamation similar to “may I so live” or “so help me” in English; the phrase is similar to *ita valeam* in Vind. 291 above

salva: this fem. ending is the single definitive indication we have that this letter was written by a woman; the letter also starts with a first declension name (-na), but some first declension names are masc.

ut ego duās an...: *I [missing verb] two*

alteram febric...: *another fever-*; the text breaks off in the middle of the second word; by context it seems to mean some sort of cure or remedy for a fever

et ideō mē tibi e...: *and therefore, [missing verb] me to you*

Valatta to Flavius Cerialis (Vind.257)

c. 97–105 CE

Valatta Cerialī suō salūtem.

Rogō, domine, re...

-teritātem tuam...

et per Lepidīnam quod...

mihi concēdās...

Cerialis, -is m.: Cerialis (name)

salūs, -ūtis f.: greetings; health

concēdō, -ere, -cessī, -cessum:

grant, bestow

Valatta: likely an alternative spelling of the known female name Vallata

salūtem: *sends greetings*; lit. “says health” (*dicit* implied)

Rogō, domine, re: the *Rogō* seems to set up an ind. command with a verb that starts *re-*, such as *reddās* or *remittās* or *referās*, although the tablet is broken off along the right-hand side, making the exact verb uncertain; as usual, ind.

commands omit the *ut* when the verb in the command is second person

-teritātem: the first few letters of this word are lost because of the break at the end of the previous line; it might perhaps have been something like *austeritātem* (“severeness”) or *dexteritātem* (“readiness”)

per Lepidīnam: Valatta seems to be asking that her request, which is expressed in the ind. question, be carried out “by Lepidina”, lit. “through Lepidina” (*per* + acc. can express agency)

concēdās...: following this word is an unexpected blank; possibly explained by the following word being too long to fit on the same line and needing to be written below

Erinna(?) to an unknown recipient (Vind.324)

c. 97–105 CE

...

que...

rēs scrībere...

pervēnissēs Vind...

rog...c...

...o

...is fēlicissima

...na et nōs amāre

...a...

...innā

fēlix, fēlicis: happy, lucky, blessed

perveniō, -īre, -vēnī, -ventum:

come up, arrive

Vind...: likely Vindolanda but possibly Vinovia, a nearby Roman fort; while Vindolanda seems more likely, Vinovia may be supported by letter 185 which is likely an expensive report for a journey from Vindolanda to Vinovia

...a...innā: written on the back of the letter by the same hand

...a: if this follows the pattern of addresses in the letters to Lepidina, it is likely that the name of the author's husband would be here

...innā: the name of the author of the letter; likely Erinna

POMPEIA PLOTINA

Pompeia Plotina (died 121/122 CE) was an aristocratic woman from Spain. Her husband, Trajan, became emperor in 98 CE after the assassination of Domitian and the brief reign of Nerva. Plotina seems to have publicly portrayed herself as a demure, traditional matron. Upon first stepping into the imperial palace, she declared to the crowd outside, “I enter here the kind of woman I would like to be when I depart” (Dio Cass. 68.5). Yet there are indications that she could and did exercise power to secure her preferred political and policy outcomes, and that she had some philosophical interests (Carucci 2024). One such indication is the letter presented in this anthology.

Little is known about the life of Plotina, which makes this letter all the more significant. It is one of the few pieces of evidence we have about her, and the only piece that preserves her own words. Her husband Trajan had died in 117 CE, and in 121 CE she wrote this letter to the succeeding emperor, Hadrian, whom she and Trajan had adopted. In the letter, she intercedes on behalf of the school of Epicurean philosophy in Athens, seeking the right for the head of the school (Theotimus) to write his will in Greek and to choose as his successor someone who was not a Roman citizen. In the letter, she describes herself as having “a concern for the school of Epicurus” (*studium...ergā sectam Epicūri*). The letter survives because the citizens of Athens had it inscribed in stone, along with Hadrian’s response and a letter in Greek from Plotina

to the Athenian Epicureans, informing them of the petition's approval.

It is not clear whether Plotina herself was an Epicurean, although she may well have been. Either way, the letter shows her to be deeply involved in the institutional concerns of a philosophical sect. This fact is all the more surprising given her reputation as a woman who tried to avoid any public hint of exercising power (an accusation that had been leveled against previous imperial women, and against her). If this inscription had not happened to survive, we would not have known about her interest in Epicureanism or her intervention with Hadrian.

Select Bibliography

The Latin text in this anthology is from *IG II² 1099* (= *ILS 7784* = *SEG 55.250*), except that we have expanded the abbreviations, removed the brackets around the words that had to be reconstructed where letters had crumbled, and added an R to *succurendum* (to *succurrendum*).

van Bremen, R. 2017. "Plotina to All her Friends': The Letter(s) of the Empress Plotina to the Epicureans in Athens." *Chiron* 35: 499-532.

Carucci, M. 2024. "Plotina and the (Re)Invention of the Tradition of Womanhood," in S. Betjes, O. Hekster, and E. Manders, eds., *Tradition and Power in the Roman Empire, 156-170*. Brill.

POMPEIA PLOTINA



Figure 3. Aureus, 112-115 CE. The inscription reads *Plōtīna Aug(usta) Imp(erātōris) Traiānī* (“Empress Plotina, [wife] of Emperor Trajan”). On the reverse is the goddess Vesta, seated on a curule chair and holding a scepter and a palladium (a small statue of Athena). ([RIC II Trajan 730](#))

**Empress Pompeia Plotina to her nephew, Emperor Hadrian
121 CE**

M. Anniō Vērō II Cn. Arriō Augure cōsulibus.

Ā Plōtīnā Augustā.

augusta, -ae: venerable; a title for
an empress

cōsul, cōsulis m.: consul

M. Anniō Vērō II, Cn. Arriō Augure cōsulibus: *with Marcus Annius Verus for the second time (and) Gnaeus Arrius Augur (being) consuls*; an abl. absolute where the verb *esse* is left implicit; in Ancient Rome, years were commonly identified by the names of the consuls governing at the time, allowing us to date Plotina's letter to 121 CE exactly; the *II* here indicates *secundō* ("for the second time"); Marcus Annius Verus happened to be the grandfather of the emperor Marcus Aurelius and was consul three times in total

Ā Plōtīnā Augustā: *from the Empress Plotina*; this prepositional phrase is referring to the sender. The title *Augusta* was not automatically granted to the emperor's wife, but was rather an honorific that the emperor could choose to bestow on his wife (or other female members of the imperial family); Trajan granted Plotina the title of *Augusta* in 100 CE, but she did not accept it until 105 CE; she continued to hold the title even after Trajan's death in 117 CE

Quod studium meum ergā sectam Epicūrī sit, optimē scīs, domine. Huius successiōnī ā tē succurrendum est. Nunc quia nōn licet nisi ex cīvibus Rōmānīs adsūmī diadochum, in angustum redigitur ēligendī facultās.

adsūmō, -ere, -psī, -ptum: take, accept, choose

angustus, -a, -um: narrow

cīvis, -is m./f.: citizen

diadochus, -ī m.: successor (from Grk. διάδοχος); head of a philosophical school

ēligō, -ere, ēlēgī, ēlēctum: choose, elect

Epicūrus, -ī m.: Epicurus

ergā: towards (+ acc.)

facultās, -ātis f.: capability, ability

optimē (adv.): best, very well

redigō, -ere, redēgī, redāctum: (here) reduce, render

Rōmānus, -a, -um: Roman

secta, -ae f.: sect, school

studium, -iī n.: eagerness, zeal; concern for (+ *ergā*)

successiō, -ōnis f.: succession

succurrō, -ere, -ī, -cursum: run to the aid of, assist in (+ dat.)

Quod studium meum...sit: *What my eagerness...is;* *Quod* is an interrogative pronoun modifying *studium meum* that introduces the ind. question with the subjunctive verb *sit*; the main verb that leads up to the ind. question is *scīs*

huius successiōnī ā tē succurrendum est: *you must assist in the succession of this man (or this school);* lit. “it must be assisted by you in the succession of this”; an impersonal pass. periphrastic construction; an abl. of agent such as *ā tē* can be used when the expected dat. of agent would lead to confusion with a dat. ind. object such as *successiōnī*

nōn licet nisi . . . adsūmī diadochum: *it is only allowed for a successor to be chosen . . .*; the *nōn...nisi* (“not...except”) is functionally “only”; *adsūmī* is a pass. complementary inf. to *licet*

in angustum redigitur: lit. “is reduced into something narrow” but, as an idiom, “is in a difficult condition”

ēligendī: *of choosing;* a gerund dependent on *facultās*

Rogō ergō nōmine Popillī Theotimī, quī est modo diadochus Athēnīs, ut illī permittātur ā tē et Graecē testārī circā hanc partem iūdiciorum suōrum quae ad diadochēs ordinātiōnem pertinet et peregreinae condiōnis posse substituere sibi successorum, sī ita suāserit prōfectus persōnae;

Athēnae, -ārum f.: Athens
condiciō, -ōnis f.: (here) position, situation, legal status
diadochē, -ēs f.: succession (endings are Grk. 1st decl.)
diadochus, -ī m.: successor
Graecē (adv.): in Greek
iūdicium, -iī n.: judgment
ordinātiō, -ōnis f.: ordination
modo (adv.): now
peregreinus, -a, -um (= peregrīnus): foreign

persōna, -ae f.: person
pertineō, -ēre, -uī: pertain
prōfectus, -ūs m.: success
suādeō, -ēre, suāsī, suāsum: advise, persuade, encourage
substituō, -ere, -uī, -ūtum: substitute
testor, -ārī, -ātus sum: testify; (here) make a will

nōmine Popillī Theotimī: *in the name of Popillius Theotimus*; the current head of the Epicurean school

Athēnīs: *at Athens*; locative; Athens was the location of Epicurus’s famous “Gardens,” where he taught people of all genders and all walks of life

ut...permittātur: an ind. command set up by *rogō*; the subjunctive *permittātur* governs the complementary infns. *testārī* and *posse*, which are preceded by *et...et* (“both...and”)

Graecē testārī: *to make a will in Greek*; it seems Theotimus did not speak Lat.

posse substituere sibi successorum: *to be able to substitute (one) of the successors...for himself*

sī ita suāserit prōfectus persōnae: *if the success of the person persuades (him) so*; that is, if a foreign candidate is so fitting that it convinces Theotimus to name that person as successor

et quod Theotimō concesserīs, ut eōdem iūre et deinceps ūtantur futūrī diadochī sectae Epicūrī, eō magis quod opservātur, quotiēns errātum est ā testātōre circā ēlēctiōnem diadochī,

circā: around; about, in respect to
(prep. + acc.)

concedō, -ere, -cessī, -cessum:
(here, + acc. and dat.) allow
(something) for (someone)

deinceps (adv.): next; successively;
one after another

diadochus, -ī m.: successor

ēlēctiō, -ōnis f.: choice, selection

eō (adv.): for this reason

Epicūrus, -ī m.: Epicurus

errō (1): (here) err

futūrus, -a, -um: future

iūs, iūris n.: right

opservō (1) (= observō): observe;
ensure, take care

quotiēns (adv.): as often as,
whenever

secta, -ae f.: sect, school

testātor, -ōris m.: witness

ūtōr, ūtī, ūsus sum: use (+ abl.)

quod Theotimō concesserīs: *and that which you might grant to Theotimus;* the antecedent is the two requests: to make a will in Greek and choose a foreign successor; the verb is a potential subjunctive, perfect in tense to emphasize completed aspect

ut...ūtantur futūrī diadochī: (*I ask*) *that...future successors may use;* ind. command, still following *Rogō* above; Plotina does not simply want Hadrian to provide a single exception, but establish a rule

eōdem iūre: obj. of *ūtantur*

eō magis: *especially;* lit. “for this reason all the more”

quod: here the causal conj. “because,” not the relative pronoun

opservātur: the subject of this verb is the *ut...substituātur* below; in regard to the spelling, ancient Romans often wrote BS as PS (e.g. *urps* for “city”), which is how this letter combination was pronounced

errātum est: *there has been an error;* impersonal passive

ut commūnī cōnsiliō substituātur ā studiōsīs eiusdem sectae quī
optimus erit: quod facilius fiet sī ex complūribus ēligātur.

commūnis, -e: common, joint

complūrēs, -a: very many, several

ēligō, -ere, ēlēgī, ēlēctum:

choose, elect

facilis, -e: easy

secta, -ae f.: sect, school

studiōsus, -a, -um: (here) learned

substituō, -ere, -uī, -ūtum:

substitute

ut...substituātur: this noun clause is the subject of *opservātur*; the subject of *substituātur* is the implicit antecedent of *quī* ("that he, who will be best, be substituted")

commūnī cōnsiliō: abl. of means

quod facilius fiet: *which will happen more easily*; the antecedent is the whole previous clause

sī...ēligātur: *if he should be chosen*; fut.-less-vidid protasis, mixed with a fut. more vivid apodosis (*fiet*)

EGERIA

The following excerpts come from a larger text usually known as the *Itinerarium Egeriae* (“The Itinerary of Egeria”),¹ a long letter from a Christian woman to her “sisters” (*sorōrēs*) back home, who were presumably other Christian women. The letter describes her three-year pilgrimage to holy sites in Egypt, Sinai, Palestine, Syria, Roman Mesopotamia, and Asia Minor, and it outlines the liturgical practices she found in Jerusalem. The letter seems to have been written around 381-384 CE and is preserved in a single copy, *Codex Aretinus* 405. Beyond the letter’s importance for the history of Christianity, it provides valuable evidence about the development of Latin into proto-Romance (see Introduction VIII, “Non-Standard Latin in the Letters” for more detail).

The single manuscript that preserves this letter is missing several pages at the start and finish, where the name of the author would likely appear. Yet a number of external factors all point to the author as a woman named Egeria, who was known to have gone on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the late fourth century.² The letter describes her as having traveled “from the very most distant lands” (*dē extrēmīs porrō terrīs*, XIX.5), which might suggest she

¹ The letter itself has no title, and modern scholars have used other names as well, such as the *Peregrinātiō Egeriae* (or *Aetheriae*, or *Silviae*) *ad loca s̄ancta*. In recent decades, the name *Itinerarium Egeriae* has become the most common.

² On the identification of the author as Egeria, see McGowan and Bradshaw 2018: 3-12.

originally set out from Spain. Although we have almost no information about Egeria and her life, we can tell from her surviving letter that she had a deep interest in biblical texts and liturgical practices.

In this anthology we print chapters IV.5-V.6, in which Egeria describes visiting the Sinai peninsula. There she encounters the site of the Burning Bush through which God spoke to Moses (Exodus 3:2-4:14), the place where the Israelites worshipped the Golden Calf (Exodus 32:1-4), and the place where Moses broke the tablets of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 32:19).

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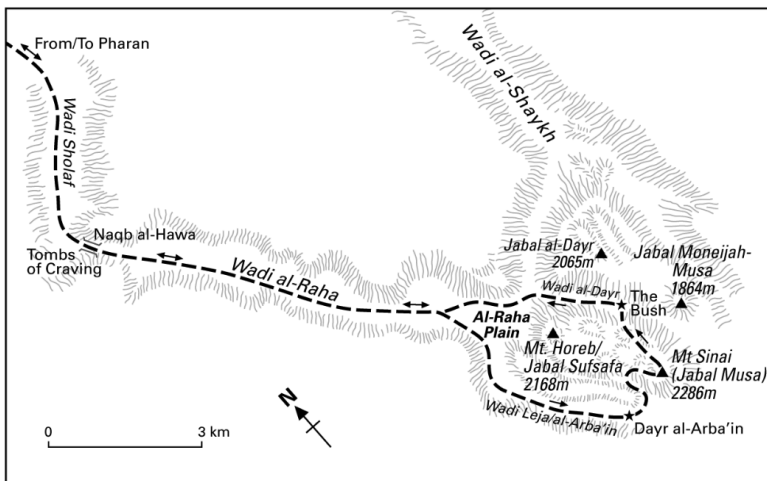


Figure 4. A map of Egeria's journey around Mount Horeb, to Mount Sinai, which she calls the *mōns Deī*, and the Burning Bush (*rubus*). (Image from Caner 2010: 291, courtesy of Daniel Caner)

Egeria to her sisters
c. 381–384 CE

IV. 5. Ecce et coepit iam esse hōra forsitan octāva, et adhūc nōbīs
 superābant mīlia tria ut perexīrēmus montēs ipsōs quōs ingressī
 fuerāmus prīdiē sērā;

adhūc: thus far, to this point; still

coepī, -isse: begin

ecce: behold

forsitan: perhaps

hōra, -ae f.: hour

octāvus, -a, -um: eighth

perexeō, -īvī, -īre: exit, go out
 from

prīdiē: the previous day

sērus, -a, -um: late

superō (1): remain

trēs, tria: three

coepit...octāva: *and perhaps the eighth hour has already begun; hōra octāva* is the nom. subject of *coepit*; Roman timekeeping practice divided daylight into twelve hours, so the eighth hour would fall about two thirds of the way between sunrise and sunset

nōbīs superābant mīlia tria: *three miles remain for us; nōbīs* acts as a dat. of reference

mīlia tria (passuum): *three thousand (of paces);* i.e., three Roman miles

ut perexīrēmus: *ut* introduces a purpose clause

montēs ipsōs: *those mountains;* post-classical Latin uses the intensive adj. *ipse, ipsa, ipsum* for the demonstrative adj. *is, ea, id*

ingressī fuerāmus: = *ingressī erāmus;* this form is mostly post-Classical, although it sometimes occurred in CL as well

sērā: = *sērā diē* (“in late day”), abl. of time when; the term *sērā diēs* gradually replaced CL *vesper* as the term for “evening,” hence *sera* (Italian) and *soir* (French)

sed nōn ipsā parte exīre habēbāmus quā intrāverāmus, sicut superius dīxī, quia necesse nōs erat et loca omnia sāncta ambulāre et monastēria, quaecumque erant ibi, vidēre et sīc ad vallis illīus, quam superius dīxī, caput exīre, id est huius vallis, quae subiacet montī Deī.

ambulō (1): walk; (here) walk through	quicumque, quae-, quod-: who-, whatever
exeō, -īre, -īvī, -itum: go out of, go forth	sicut: just as
intrō (1): enter	subiaceō, -ēre, -iacuī: lie beneath (+ dat.)
monastērium, -īī n.: monastery; (here) monastic cell	superius (comp. adv.): above
necesse (indecl.): necessary	vallēs, -is f.: valley

ipsā parte: *by that very part*; abl. of route

exīre habēbāmus: *we were (not) going to exit*; in Late Latin, the formation *habēō* + inf. expressed a fut. tense (equivalent to “I’m going to X” in English); this formation became the standard fut. tense in proto-Romance, cf. *chanterai* from *chanter* + *ai* (French), *cantaré* from *cantar* + *he* (Spanish), *canterò* from *cantare* + *ho* (Italian)

quā: has *ipsā parte* as its antecedent

necesse nōs erat: *it was necessary that we*; this phrase introduces three complementary infs.: *et...ambulāre* (“both...walk”), *et...vidēre* (“and...see”), *et...exīre* (“and go out”)

monastēria: direct obj. of *vidēre*

quaecumque erant ibi: *whatever ones were there*

ad...caput: *at the head*; the prep. and its noun are widely separated (by a gen. and a rel. clause); the *caput* here is the “head” (or more idiomatically in English, “the mouth”) of the valley

id est: *that is to say*

montī: *Mount Sinai*, where Moses received the Ten Commandments (Ex. 19)

6. Proptereā autem ad caput ipsius vallis exīre nōs necesse erat, quoniam ibi erant monastēria plūrima sānctōrum hominum et ecclēsia in eō locō, ubi est rubus; quī rubus ūsque in hodiē vīvet et mittet virgultās.

ecclēsia, -ae f.: (here) church	proptereā: moreover
exeō, -īre, -īvī, -itum: go out, depart	rubus, -ī m.: bush
monastērium, -iī n.: monastery; (here) monastic cell	ūsque: still, continuously
necesse (indecl.): necessary	vallēs, -is f.: valley
	virgulta, -ae f.: shrubbery, shoots
	vīvō, -ere, vīxī, vīctum: live

Proptereā...quoniam: *for this reason...since*

ad caput ipsius vallis: *at the head of that valley;* “at” or “near” is a common secondary meaning of *ad*

plūrima: superlative of *multus*, meaning *very many*

rubus: *the bush;* in Exodus (3:2–4:14), Moses came across a bush that was burning, but not consumed by fire. Through the burning bush, God called Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

quī rubus: *and this bush;* connecting relative

vīvet et mittet: *lives and sends;* pres. tense; in Late Latin, the vowel <i> was converging with <e>

mittet virgultās: *sends (out) shoots*

virgultās: this word is neut. in CL (*virgultum*); as the neut. gender fell out of usage in proto-Romance, some neut. pls. were reinterpreted as fem. nouns

7. Ac sīc ergō perdēscēnsō monte Deī pervēnimus ad rubum hōrā forsitan decimā. Hic est autem rubus, quem superius dīxī, dē quō locūtus est Dominus Moysī in igne, quī est in eō locō, ubi monastēria sunt plūrima et ecclēsia in capite vallis ipsius. Ante ipsam autem ecclēsiā hortus est grātissimus habēns aquam optimam abundantem, in quō hortō ipse rubus est.

abundō (1): have in abundance

aqua, -ae f.: water

decimus, -a, -um: tenth

ecclēsia, -ae f.: (here) church

forsitan: perhaps

grātus, -a, -um: beloved

hōra, -ae f.: hour

hortus, -ī m.: garden

loquor, loquī, locūtus sum: speak,
talk

monastērium, -iī n.: monastery;
(here) monastic cell

Moysēs, -is m.: Moses

perdēscendō, -ere, -scendī, -scēnsūm: descend

perveniō, -īre, -vēnī, -ventum:
come up, arrive

rubus, -ī m.: bush

superius (comp. adv.): above

vallēs, -is f.: valley

perdēscēnsō monte Deī: abl. absolute; *with the mountain of God having been descended*

dē quō locūtus est Dominus Moysī in igne: *from which the Lord spoke to Moses in fire; see Exodus 3:1-12*

plūrima: superlative of *multus*, meaning *most* or *very many*

hortus est grātissimus habēns aquam optimam abundantem: *before the church itself is a most pleasing garden, having the greatest and most abundant water; the participial phrase habēns...abundatem modifies hortus grātissimus*

8. Locus etiam ostenditur ibi iuxtā, ubi stetit s̄anctus Moys̄s, quandō eī dīxit Deus: “Solve corrigiam calciāmentī tuī” (Exodus 3:5) et cētera. Et in eō ergō locō cum pervēnissēmus, hōra decima erat iam, et ideō, quia iam sēra erat, oblātiōnem facere nōn potuimus.

calciāmentum, -ī n. (= CL calceāmentum): shoe	ostendō, -ere, -tendī, -tentum: point out, show
cēterus, -a, -um: the rest	pervenīō, -īre, -vēnī, -ventum: come up, arrive
corrigia, -ae f.: shoe-tie	quandō: when
decimus, -a, -um: tenth	sērus, -a, -um: late
hōra, -ae f.: hour	solvō, -ere, -solvī, -solūtum: loosen, unbind
ideō: for that reason	stō, stāre, stetī, statum: stand
iuxtā (adv.): near to, near by	
Moys̄s, -is m.: Moses	
oblātiō, -ōnis f.: offering	

“Solve corrigiam calciāmentī tuī”: *unbind the ties of your shoes*; the full quotation of Exodus 3:5 reads, “And he said: Come not nigh hither, put off the shoes from thy feet; for the place, whereon thou standest, is holy ground.”

et cētera: *and the rest*

hōra decima: nom. subject of *erat*

sēra (diēs): *late (in the day)*; in Late Latin this phrase becomes equivalent to CL *vesper* (“evening”)

oblātiōnem facere nōn potuimus: the phrase *oblationem facere* refers to the receiving of the Eucharist (i.e., consuming consecrated bread and wine as symbols of the body and blood of Christ)

Sed facta est oratio in ecclesia nec non etiam et in hortō ad rubum; lectus est etiam locus ipse de libro Moysi iuxta consuetudinem: et sic, quia sera erat, gustavimus nobis loco in hortō ante rubum cum sanctis ipsi: ac sic ergo fecimus ibi mansiōnem. Et alia die matūrius vigilantēs rogāvimus presbyterōs ut et ibi fieret oblatio, sicut et facta est.

cōnsuetūdō, -inis f.: custom, tradition; habit	mānsiō, -ōnis f.: a stay
ecclesia, -ae f.: (here) church	matūrus, -a, -um: (here) early
gustō (1): eat; have a meal	Moysēs, -is m.: Moses
hortus, -ī m.: garden	oblatio, -ōnis f.: offering
iuxta (prep + acc.): in accordance with	oratio, -ōnis f.: (here) prayer
locō (adv.): there	presbyter, -erī m.: priest
locus, -ī m.: (here) passage (of literature)	rubus, -ī m.: bush
	sērus, -a, -um: late
	sicut: thus
	vigilō (1): wake up

oratio: in Christian texts, *oratio* can refer to “prayer” rather than “speech”
nec non etiam: *also*; instance of litotes, or double-negative
ad rubum: *at the bush*; “at” or “near” is a common secondary meaning of *ad*
de libro Moysi: *from the book of Moses*; the name “Moses” has shifted into the second declension here; foreign names often had variable declensions in Latin
iuxta consuetudinem: *in keeping with our habit*; Egeria and her fellow travelers seem to have read the relevant biblical passages as they visited famous sites from the Bible
sera (dies): *late (in the day)*
cum sanctis ipsi: *with the holy (ones)*; abl. of accompaniment
alia die = altera die (“on the next day”)
ut...fieret oblatio: ind. command introduced by *rogavimus*
oblatio: referring to the Eucharist

V. 1. Et quoniam nōbīs iter sīc erat ut per valle illā mediā, quā tenditur per longum, īrēmus (id est illā valle, quam superius dīxī, ubi sēderant filiī Isrāhēl dum Moysēs ascenderet in montem Deī et dēscenderet), itaque ergō singula, quemadmodum vēnimus per ipsam tōtam vallem, semper nōbīs sānctī illī loca dēmōnstrābant.

ascendō, -ere, -ī, ascēsum: ascend	sedeō, -ēre, sēdī, sessum: sit; settle
dēmōnstrō (1): point out, show	singula, -ae f.: (here) each one individually
dēscendō, -ere, -scendī, -scēsum: descend	superius (comp. adv.): above
Isrāhēl (indecl.): Israel	tendō, -ere, tetendī, tēsum: extend, stretch out
medius, -a, -um: middle	vallēs, -is f.: valley
Moysēs, -is m.: Moses	
quemadmodum: when, just as	

ut...īrēmus: *that...we would go*; result clause

per valle illā mediā: *per* typically takes the acc., but there are examples in Late Latin where it takes the abl.; alternatively, this could be a place where scribal error has caused a final -m to be missing from each word

quā tenditur per longum: *through which extends along its length*

filiī Isrāhēl: *the sons of Israel*; i.e., the Israelites

dum...dēscenderet: in CL, we expect a *cum* in this circumstantial *cum* clause, but in post-classical Latin, *dum* starts to get used for *cum*

singula: agrees with *loca* (“each individual...place”)

semper: (here) *constantly*

2. Nam in p̄rimō capite ips̄ius vallis, ubi mānserāmus et vīderāmus rubum illum dē quō locūtus est Deus s̄anctō Moys̄i in igne, vīderāmus etiam et illum locum, in quō steterat ante rubum s̄anctus Moys̄es quāndō eī dīxit Deus (Exodus 3:5): “Solve corrigiam calciāmentī tuī; locus enim, in quō stās, terra s̄ancta est.”

calciāmentum, -ī n. (= CL calceāmentum): shoe

corrigia, -ae f.: shoe-lace

loquor, loquī, locūtus sum: speak, talk

maneō, -ēre, mānsī, mānsum: remain, stay

Moys̄es, -is m.: Moses

quāndō: when

rubus, -ī m.: bush

solvo, -ere, solvī, solūtum: loosen, unbind

stō, stāre, stetī, statum: stand

vallēs, -is f.: valley

in p̄rimō capite: here, the redundancy of *p̄rimō* emphasizes the location; *right at the very mouth of the valley*

vīderāmus etiam et: we would expect a perf. (rather than pluperfect), because this is subsequent in time to *ubi mānserāmus et vīderāmus* (“where we had stayed and seen”); the *etiam et* (“even also”) is pleonasm, an emphatic redundancy of words

in quō steterat: the pluperfect to indicate that the *steterat* took place before *dīxit*

3. Ac sīc ergō cētera loca, quemadmodum profectī sumus dē rubō, semper nōbīs coepērunt ostendere. Nam et mōnstrāvērunt locum ubi fuērunt castra filiōrum Isrāhēl hīs diēbus, quibus Moysēs fuit in montem. Mōnstrāvērunt etiam locum, ubi factus est vitulus ille; nam in eō locō fīxus est ūsque in hodiē lapis grandis.

cēterus, -a, -um: the other, rest

coepī, -istī, -isse: begin

fīgō, -ere, fīxī, fīxum.: set up

grandis, -e: great (in size)

Isrāhēl (indecl.): Israel

lapis, -idis m.: stone

mōnstrō (1) point out, make known

Moysēs, -is m.: Moses

ostendō, -ere, -tendī, -tentum:

point out, show

proficīscor, -ficīscī, -fectus sum:

set forth, set out (from)

quemadmodum: (here) as

rubus, -ī m.: bush

ūsque: still, until

vitulus, -ī m.: calf

cētera loca: *other places*; as usual, *locus* is neut. in the pl. when it refers to physical places rather than passages of literature

castra: *the camp*; as usual, grammatically pl., and so the subject of *fuērunt*; this camp refers to the Israelites' camp in front of Mt. Sinai (see Exodus 19:2)

hīs diēbus: abl. of time when; antecedent of *quibus*

in montem: *on the mountain*; in CL, we expect this to be abl.; in post-classical Latin, the distinction between the acc. (motion toward) and abl. (location) was breaking down

vitulus ille: the golden calf that the Israelites worshipped when Moses left for Mt. Sinai (Exodus 32:1-4)

ūsque in hodiē: *up to this day*

lapis grandis: this *great stone* likely refers to the altar Aaron built for the golden calf (Exodus 32:5)

4. Nōs etiam, quemadmodum ībāmus, dē contrā vidēbāmus
summitātem montis, que īnspiciēbat super ipsā valle tōtā, dē quō
locō sānctus Moysēs vīdit filiōs Isrāhēl habentēs chorōs hīs diēbus,
quā fēcerant vitulum.

chorus, -ī m.: dance

contrā (adv.): opposition to

īnspiciō, -ere, -spexī, -spectum:
look at/on/out

Isrāhēl (indecl.): Israel

Moysēs, -is m.: Moses

quā: where

quemadmodum: in this manner,
how

summitās, -ātis f.: summit

super (+ abl.): over

vallēs, -is f.: valley

vitulus, -ī m.: calf

dē contrā: *from the opposite side*; this is a post-Classical idiom, sometimes written
as a single word

summitātem montis: antecedent of the following *quae*

que īnspiciēbat: the *que* here is a later form of *quae* (nom./fem./sg. rel. pronoun),

Moysēs vīdit filiōs...diēbus: Moses saw the Israelites dancing and worshipping
an idol, the golden calf (Exodus 32:17-19)

habentēs: agrees with *filiōs*, its direct obj. is *chorōs*

quā fēcerant vitulum: *where they had made the (golden) calf*; Aaron collected gold
from the Israelites in the form of jewelry and other objects and molded them
into the golden calf (Exodus 32:1-4)

Ostendērunt etiam petram ingentem in ipsō locō, ubi dēscendēbat sānctus Moysēs cum Iēsū, filiō Navē, ad quem petram īrātus frēgit tabulās, quās afferēbat.

afferō, -erre, attulī, allātum: carry
to, bring

dēscendō, -ere, -scendī,
-scēsum: descend

frangō, -ere, frēgī, frāctum: break
in pieces, shatter

Iēsus, -ū m.: Joshua

īrātus, -a, -um: angered, enraged

Moysēs, -is m.: Moses

Navē (indecl.): Nun (a name)

ostendō, -ere, -tendī, -tentum:
point out, show

petra, -ae f.: rock

tabula, -ae f.: board, (here) tablet

cum Iēsū, filiō Navē: *with Joshua, son of Nun*; abl. of accompaniment, the name *Iēsūs* can refer both to Jesus and Joshua

ad quem petram: *at which rock*; there is no mention of a rock in Exodus 32:17-19; it is possible that the rock was placed as a physical symbol of the biblical event for pilgrims

īrātus: agreeing with *Moysēs*

tabulās: the tablets on which the Ten Commandments were written

5. Ostendērunt etiam quemadmodum per ipsam vallem
ūnusquisque eōrum abitātiōnēs habuerant, dē quibus abitātiōnibus
ūsque in hodiē adhūc fundāmenta pārent, quemadmodum fuērunt
lapide girāta. Ostendērunt etiam locum, ubi filiōs Isrāhēl iussit
currere sānctus Moysēs “Dē portā in portā” (Exodus 32:27),
regressus ā monte.

abitātiō, -ōnis f. (= habitātiō): a
dwelling

adhūc: thus far, to this point, still

currō, -ere, currī, cursum: run

fundāmentum, -ī n.: foundation

giro (1) (= CL gyrō): make in a
circle

lapis, -idis m.: stone

Isrāhēl (indecl.): Israel

Moysēs, -is m.: Moses

ostendō, -ere, -tendī, -tentum:
point out, show

pāreō, -ēre, -uī, -itum: appear; be
visible

porta, -ae f.: gate

quemadmodum: in what manner,
how; in as much as

regredior, regredī, regressus sum:
return, go back

ūnusquisque: each one

ūsque: up to

vallēs, -is f.: valley

ūnusquisque eōrum...habuerant: *each one of them...had had*; although the
subject is grammatically sg., the verb is pl. to agree with the sense

fuērunt...girāta: = CL *gyrāta sunt* (“were made in a circle”); the implicit subject
is the *fundamenta*

lapide: abl. of means; i.e., there seem to have been foundations made of stone in a
circular shape

“Dē portā in portā”: (*run*) *from gate to gate*; in Exodus 32:27, Moses commands
the Levites to scour the entirety of the Israelites’ camp and punish those involved
in idol worship; CL would use *in portam*, but the distinction between the acc.
and abl. in regard to motion was breaking down

regressus ā monte: the participle refers to Moses; the mountain is Sinai

6. Item ostendērunt nōbīs locum ubi incēnsus est vitulus ipse (iubente sānctō Moÿse), quem fēcerat eīs Aārōn. Item ostendērunt torrentem illum, dē quō pōtāvit sānctus Moÿsēs filiōs Isrāhēl, sicut scrīptum est in Exodō.

Aārōn, -ōnis m.: Aaron, brother of Moses	ostendō, -ere, -tendī, -tentum: point out, show
Exodus, -ī f.: Exodus (second book of Moses)	pōtō (1): drink; cause to drink
incendō, -ere, -endī, -ēsum: set fire to, burn	sicut: just as
Isrāhēl (indecl.): Israel	torrēns, -ntis m.: torrent, a stream/river
item: likewise, (here) also	vitulus, -ī m.: calf
Moÿsēs, -is m.: Moses	

ubi incēnsus est vitulus: a reference to Exodus 32:20 where Moses took the golden calf and burned it in a fire; *vitulus* is the antecedent of *quem*

iubente sānctō Moÿse: abl. absolute with a causal (or perhaps temporal) sense (“when/since holy Moses commanded it”)

pōtāvit: causative use of the verb meaning [Moses] *made them drink*; see Exodus 32:20: “And laying hold of the calf which they had made, he burnt it, and beat it to powder, which he strewed into water, and gave thereof to the children of Israel to drink.”

PAULA AND EUSTOCHIUM

Paula (347–404 CE) was an aristocratic Roman woman. She was a Christian, and after her husband’s death she devoted herself to an increasingly monastic spiritual path. She did not remarry, and she seems to have studied the biblical texts extensively, learning Greek and Hebrew (cf. Jerome *Epist.* 108.27–29). She befriended Jerome of Stridon when he visited Rome in 382–385 CE, and the two developed a close relationship that would last a lifetime. When Jerome left Rome in 385 CE, Paula went with him, and the pair traveled to Egypt and the Holy Lands. She then settled in Bethlehem and founded a monastery (headed by Jerome) and a convent (of which she was the abbess). Paula provided for Jerome financially during these years, which is when he made the Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible.

Eustochium (c. 368–419 CE) was one of Paula’s five children. She traveled along with her mother and Jerome to Bethlehem. There she became a nun in her mother’s convent, and eventually its abbess. Eustochium’s birth-name was Julia Eustochia, but she is commonly referred to as “Eustochium,” the gender-neutral form of her name that Jerome used as a way to praise her celibate, ascetic ideals (Vuolanto 2025: 384n.1).

In this letter, which has been dated to the late 380s CE,³ Paula and Eustochium write to Marcella, the woman who had been the

³ On the date see Vuolanto 2025: 400–401.

informal leader of their religious community in Rome. Marcella was a frequent correspondent of Jerome, and her fragments are also presented in this anthology. Paula and Eustochium urge Marcella to leave Rome and come to live with them. The letter begins with a simile comparing Marcella to a mother-hen, who should not leave them alone in the world, and it is densely packed with scriptural references.

Select Bibliography

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Paula and Eustochium to their teacher, Marcella

c. 386–389 CE

1. Mēnsūram cārītās nōn habet, et impatientia nescit modum et dēsīderium nōn sustinet. Unde et nōs, oblītāe vīrium nostrārum et nōn quid possīmus sed quid velimus tantum cōgitantēs, magistrāram cupimus docēre discipulae et, ut est vulgāre prōverbium: “Sūs artium reppertrīcem.”

ars, artis f.: art; the arts (pl.)

cārītās, -ātis f.: dearness, love

cōgītō (1): ponder, think

cupiō, -ere, -īvī, -ītum: desire

dēsīderium, -iī n.: desire

discipula, -ae f.: student

doceō, -ēre, -uī, -tum: teach

impatientia, -ae f.: impatience

magistra, -ae f.: teacher

mēnsūra, -ae f.: measure

nesciō, -īre, -īvī, -ītum: not know

oblītus, -a, -um: forgetful (+ gen.)

prōverbium, -iī n.: proverb

reppertrīx, -īcis f.: discoverer

sūs, suis m.: pig

sustineō, -ēre, -tinuī, -tentum:

hold up; hold back

unde: whence, that's why

vulgāris, -e: common

impatientia nescit modum et dēsīderium nōn sustinet: *impatience knows no limit and cannot hold back its desire; impatientia is the subject of both verbs*

nōn quid possīmus...cōgitantēs: *thinking not of what we can do, but only of what we wish to do; the quid possīmus and quid velimus are ind. questions*

discipulae: *delayed nom. with concessive force: “although (being) students”*

ut est: (here) “as is”

“Sūs artium reppertrīcem”: *a pig (teaches) the discoverer of the arts; the word docet is left implicit in this common Roman proverb “a pig teaches Minerva,” which implies the ridiculousness of someone teaching an individual of vastly greater intellect than themselves*

Tū, quae p̄ma scintillam nostrō fōmitī subiēcistī, quae ad hoc studium nōs et sermōne hortāta es et exemplō et quasi gallīna congregāstī sub ālās pullōs tuōs, nunc nōs līberē absque māt̄re volitāre pateris et accipitris pavēre formīdinem et ad omnem umbram praetervolantium avium formīdāre?

accipiter, -tris m.: hawk	paveō, -ēre, -ī, pastum: fear
āla, -ae f.: wing	praetervolō (1): fly past
avis, -is f.: bird	pullus, -ī m.: chick
congregō (1): gather	quasi: as if, just like
exemplum, -ī n.: model, example	sermō, -ōnis m.: sermon, speech
fōmes, -itis m.: kindling	scintilla, -ae f.: spark
formīdō (1): dread	studium, -iī n.: zeal, pursuit
formīdō, -inis f.: dread	subiciō, -ere, -iēcī, -iectum: cast
gallīna, -ae f.: hen	below, place below
hortor, -ārī, -ātus sum: urge; encourage	umbra, -ae f.: shadow
	volitō (1): fly

Tū...pateris: *You...allow*; the subject and main verb of this sentence are separated by two relative clauses in asyndeton (the second of which is compound): *quae...subiēcistī* and *quae...hortāta es et...congregāstī*
et sermōne...et exemplō: *both by speech...and by example*; the phrases modify “you encouraged” (*hortāta es*)
et quasi gallīna congregāstī (= congregāvistī): *and, like a hen, gathered*; this clause is coordinated with *hortāta es*, and is still within the second relative clause; the simile of a protective mother-hen continues into the main clause
absque (ab + -que) māt̄re: *and without (their) mother*; the prep. *ab(s)* can have a meaning of “without” in post-classical Latin
volitāre...pavēre...formīdāre: all three inf̄s. are complements to *pateris* (“you allow”); the subject of all three is *nōs*
praetervolantium: pres. act. part. in the gen., agreeing with *avium*

Igitur, quod solum absentēs facere possumus, querulās fundimus precēs et dēsiderium nostrum nōn tam flētibus quam hēiulātibus contestāmur ut Mārcellam nostram nōbīs reddās et illam mītem, illam suāvem, illam omnī melle et dulcēdine dulciōrem nōn patiāris apud eās esse rigidam et trīstem rūgāre frontem, quās affābilitāte suā ad simile vītae studium prōvocāvit.

absēns, -tis: absent	mītis, -e: mild, gentle
affābilitās, -ātis f.: kindness	prex, precis f.: prayer
contestor, -āri, -ātus sum: assert, appeal	prōvocō (1): provoke, encourage
dēsiderium, -iī n.: desire	querulus, -a, -um: complaining, lamenting
dulcēdō, -inis f.: sweetness	rigidus, -a, -um: rigid, harsh
dulcis, -e: sweet	rūgō (1): wrinkle
flētus, -ūs m.: weeping; tears	similis, -e: similar, same
frōns, frontis f.: forehead, brow	studium, -iī n.: zeal, pursuit
fundō, -ere, fūdī, fūsum: pour	suāvis, -e: sweet
hēiulātus (= ēiulātus), -ūs m.: wail	trīstis, -e: sad; stern
mel, mellis n.: honey, sweet	

quod...possumus: (*a thing*) which we...can; the antecedent is the general idea of the following two clauses (“we pour out complaints...and assert”)

nōn tam flētibus quam hēiulātibus: *not so much with tears as with wailing*; the *tam...quam* is correlative

ut...reddās et...nōn patiāris: an ind. command set up by the noun *dēsiderium* (“a desire *that you return...*”)

illam omnī melle et dulcēdine dulciōrem: *that woman, sweeter than all honey and sweetness*; abl. of comparison

apud eās...quās: *with those...whom*; i.e., with Paula and Eustochium

esse...rūgāre: complementary infś. of *patiāris*

rūgāre frontem: to furrow one’s forehead, to be stern

ad simile vītae studium: *to a similar way of life*; i.e., to Christianity

2. Certē, sī sunt meliōra quae poscimus, nōn est impudēns dēsīderium. Sī cūnctae scrīptūrārum vōcēs nostrae sententiae congruunt, nōn faciāmus audācter ad ea tē prōvocantēs, ad quae tū nōs saepissimē cohortāta es.

audācter: boldly, rashly

certē: certainly

cohortor, -ārī, -ātus sum: urge

congruō, -ere, -ī: agree, coincide
with (+ dat.)

cūnctus, -a, -um: all, together

dēsīderium, -iī n.: desire

impudēns, -ntis: bold, shameless

poscō, -ere, poposcī: ask urgently,
demand

prōvocō (1): provoke, encourage

scrīptūra, -ae f.: writing; (here)
scripture

meliōra: neut. pl. substantive, predicate nom.

quae poscimus: *which we demand*; the antecedent is the implicit subject of *sunt*

Sī cūnctae...congruunt: *if all voices of the scriptures align with our view*

nostrae sententiae: *our opinion*; namely, that Marcella should leave Rome and come to them

nōn faciāmus audācter: *we would not be acting boldly*; the verb is subjunctive, making this a mixed condition, with a simple present protasis and a fut.-less-vivid apodosis

prōvocantēs: pres. act. participle agreeing with the implied “we”

Přīma vōx Deī ad Abrahām (Gen. 12:1): “Exī,” inquit, “dē terrā tuā et dē cognātiōne tuā et vāde in terram quam mōnstrābō tibi”...

Abrahām (indecl.): Abraham (name)	exeō, -īre, -īī, -itum: go forth, leave
cognātiō, -ōnis f.: blood-relation, family	mōnstrō (1): indicate, show vādō, vādere, vāsi: go (rapidly); go

vōx: here not “voice” but “utterance”

Abrahām: in the Book of Genesis, he was instructed by God to leave his country and travel to a new land: “*Egredere dē terrā tuā*” (Genesis 12:1)

“**Exī**”: *Leave*; imperative

vāde: *go*; imperative; the verb *vādere* originally implied a fast or startling motion, but it gradually replaced *īre* as the standard verb for simply “to go” (which can be seen in most Romance languages)

tibi”...: at this point, we leave out a large portion of Paula and Eustochium’s letter, returning at the letter’s climax

...

13. **Ō** **quandō** illud tempus adveniet, cum anhēlus nūntium viātor adportet, Mārcellam nostram ad Palaestīnae lītus adpulsam, et tōtī monachōrum chorī, tōta virginum agmina concrepābunt?

adpellō, -ere, -pulī, -pulsum:
bring (a person to a place); land (a ship), disembark

adportō (1): bring

adveniō, -īre, -ī, -tum: come

agmen, -inis n.: crowd

anhēlus, -a, -um: out of breath, panting

chorus, -ī m.: dance

concrepō, -āre, -uī, -itum: sound

monachus, -ī m.: monk

nūntius, -a, -um: message, news

Palaestīna, -ae f.: Palestine

quandō: when

vērūm: but

viātor, -ōris m.: traveller

virgō, -inis f.: virgin

Ō quandō: at this point, we resume the letter of Paula and Eustochium. They hope for Marcella's arrival and look forward to visiting a variety of pilgrimage sites.

quandō: this conjunction goes with both *adveniet* and *concrepābunt*

Mārcellam nostram ad Palaestīnae lītus adpulsam: *that our Marcella has (been) landed at the shore of Palestine;* ind. statement introduced by the noun *nūntium*

tōtī monachōrum chorī, tōta virginum agmina: Paula and Eustochium imagine all the monastic men (*monachī*) and women (*virginēs*) in Jerusalem rejoicing at Marcella's arrival; this reference to men dancing in choirs and women in crowds is hyperbole.

Obviam iam gestīmus occurrere et nōn expectātō vehiculō
 concitum pedibus ferre corpus. Tenēbimus manūs, ōra cernēmus
 et ā dēsiderātō vix āvellēmur amplexū. Ergōne erit illa diēs quandō
 nōbīs liceat spēluncam salvātōris intrāre? In sepulchrō dominī flēre
 cum sorōre, flēre cum mātrem?

amplexus, -ūs m.: embrace	obviam (adv.): towards; so as to meet
āvellō, -ere, āvulsī, āvulsum: tear away, separate	occurrō, -ere, -currī, -cursum: run to meet
cernō, -ere, crēvī, crētum: discern, see	quandō: when
conciō, -ēre, -ivī, -itum: move swiftly	salvātor, -ōris m.: savior
dēsiderātus, -a, -um: desired	sepulchrum, -ī n.: tomb
expectō (1): await	spēlunca, -ae f.: cave
flēō, -ēre, -ēvī, -ētum: weep	vehiculum, -ī n.: carriage, cart; conveyance
gestiō, -īre, -ivī, -itus: be eager	vix: scarcely, hardly
intrō (1): enter	

Obviam...occurrere: *to run to meet*; *obviam* is often paired with motion verbs
gestīmus: this verb sets up the inf. *occurrere* and *ferre*

nōn expectātō vehiculō: *with a carriage not having been waited for*; abl. absolute; i.e., they are so eager that they'll carry her themselves rather than wait for a carriage; Paula and Eustochium speaking of carrying Marcella suggests she might have had mobility issues; she would have been in her late 60s at this date

pedibus: *on foot*; abl. of means

ōra: *face*; *ōs* is lit. "mouth" but often means "face"; sometimes in the pl. ("faces") with a sense of "facial features"

dēsiderātō vix āvellēmur amplexū: *we will hardly be pulled apart from the desired embrace*; an abl. of separation

spēluncam salvātōris: the cave where Jesus was buried after crucifixion

Crucis deinde lignum lambere et in olīvētī monte cum ascendente dominō vōtō et animō sublevārī? Vidēre exīre Lazarum fasceīs conligātum et fluenta Iordānis ad lavācrum dominī pūriōra?

ascendō, -ere, -ī, ascēnsum: ascend	lambō, -ere, -uī, -ītum: lick; kiss; caress
conligō (1): bind	lavācrum, -ī n.: bath; baptism
cruX, -ucis f.: cross	Lazarus, -ī m.: Lazarus (name)
exeō, -īre, -iī, -itum: go forth, leave	lignum, -ī n.: wood
fascea, -ae f.: binding cloth; shroud	olīvētum, -ī n.: olive orchard
fluentum, -ī n.: river	pūrus, -a, -um: pure
Iordānes, -is m.: the river Jordan	sublevō (1): lift up
	vōtum, -ī n.: prayer

lambere...sublevārī...Vidēre: the inf.s. here (and after) are still complements of *quandō nobīs liceat* (“when will it be allowed to us”)

olīvētī monte: *Mount of Olives*; mountain ridge east of Jerusalem; the Acts of the Apostles (1.9-12) suggests that this was the place where Jesus ascended into heaven

cum ascendente dominō: *with the ascending Lord*; abl. of accompaniment

vōtō et animō sublevārī: *to be lifted through our prayer and our heart*; abl. of means

Vidēre: this verb takes both an inf. complement (*exīre Lazarum*) and a dir. obj. (*fluenta*)

exīre Lazarum: (*to see*) *Lazarus depart*; i.e., depart from the tomb; in John 11:1-44, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead

fasceīs: winding-cloths for burial

fluenta...pūriōra: *the flows...more pure*; i.e., the water of the Jordan is now more pure for Jesus having been washed there

ad lavācrum dominī: *at the place where the Lord was baptized*; lit. “at the washing of the Lord”; “at” or “near” is a common secondary meaning of *ad*

Inde ad p̄stōrum caulās pergere, in Dāvīd ōrāre mausōlēō, Amōs prophētam etiam nunc būcinā p̄stōrālī in suā cōnspicere rūpe clangentem? Ad Abraham, Isaac et Iācōb, trium quoque illūstrium fēminārum vel tabernācula properāre vel memoriās?

Abrahām (indecl.) m.: Abraham
(name)

Amōs (indecl.) m.: Amos (name)

būcina, -ae f.: horn

caula, -ae f.: sheepfold

clangō, -ere, -uī: make noise

cōnspiciō, -ere, cōnspexī,

cōnspectum: observe, see

Dāvīd (indecl.) m.: David (name)

fēmina, -ae f.: woman, wife

Iācōb (indecl.) m.: Jacob

illūstris, -e: bright; (here) famous

inde: from that place

Isaac (indecl.) m.: Isaac (name)

mausolēum, -ī n.: mausoleum

memoria, -ae f.: memory;

memorial monument

ōrō (1): pray

p̄stor, -ōris m.: shepherd

p̄stōrālīs, -e: pastoral

pergō, -ere, perrēxī, perrēctum:

proceed

properō (1): hurry

prophēta, -ae m.: prophet

rūpēs, -is f.: cliff

tabernāculum, -ī n.: tent; shrine

trēs, -ia: three

pergere...cōnspicere...properāre: these inf.s. are still complements of
quandō nobīs liceat ("when will it be allowed to us")

ad p̄stōrum caulās: perhaps a reference to Luke 2:8-12, where angels announce the birth of Jesus to shepherds

Dāvīd ōrāre mausōlēō: referring to King David's Tomb, another pilgrimage site

clangentem: pres. act. participle, modifying *Amōs prophētam*; the prophet Amos is described as a shepherd at Amos 1:1 and 7:14

Abrahām, Isaac et Iācōb: the three patriarchs of the Hebrews

trium quoque illūstrium fēminārum: *and their three famous wives*; Sarah (wife of Abraham), Rebecca (wife of Isaac), and Leah (wife of Jacob); the burial site is mentioned at Genesis 49:29-32

Vidēre fontem, in quō ā Philippō eunūchus est tīnctus? Samarīam pergere et Iōhannis baptistae Helisaeīque et Abdiae pariter cinerēs adōrāre? Incredī spēluncās, in quibus persecūtiōnis et famis tempore prophētārum agmina sunt nūtrīta?

Abdiās, -ae m.: Obadiah (name)	nūtriō, -īre, -īvī, -ītum: feed,
adōrō (1): honor	nourish
agmen, -inis n.: crowd	pariter: equally; together
baptista, -ae m.: baptist	pergō, -ere, perrēxī, perrēctum:
cinis, -eris m.: ashes	proceed
eunūchus, -ī m.: eunuch	persecūtiō, -ōnis f.: persecution
famēs, -is f.: hunger; famine	Philippus, -ī m.: Philip (name)
fōns, -ntis m.: fount, spring	prophēta, -ae m.: prophet
Helisaeus, -ī m.: Elisha	Samarīa, -ae f.: Samaria
ingredior, -ī, ingressus: advance,	spēlunca, -ae f.: cave
enter	tingō, -ere, tīnxi, tīnctum: wet,
Iōhannis, -is m.: John (name)	baptize

Vidēre...pergere...adōrāre...Incredī: these infs. are still complements of *quandō nobīs liceat* ("when will it be allowed to us")

ā Philippō eunūchus est tīnctus: a eunuch is baptized by the apostle Philip at Acts 8:36–38

Samarīam: *to Samaria*; central region of ancient Israel; the prep. *ad* is omitted as if it were a town name

Iōhannis baptistae Helisaeīque et Abdiae: John the Baptist was believed to be buried in Samaria, as were the Hebrew prophets Elisha and Obadiah

spēluncās...sunt nūtrīta: a reference to 1 Kings 18:4, where Obadiah hid 100 prophets to keep them from being killed by Jezebel

Ībimus ad Nazareth et iuxtā interpretātiōnem nōminis eius 'flōrem'
vidēbimus Galilaeae. Haud procul inde cernētur Cāna, in quā
aquae in vīnum versae sunt.

aqua, -ae f.: water

Cāna, -ae f.: Cana

cernō, -ere, crēvī, crētum:
discern; see

flōs, -ōris m.: flower

Galilaea, -ae f.: Galilee

haud: not

inde: from that place

interpretātiō, -ōnis f.:

interpretation

iuxtā: in accordance with (+ acc.)

Nazareth (indecl.) f.: Nazareth

procul: away, not far off

vertō, -ere, -ī, -sum: turn

vīnum, -ī n.: wine

Nazareth: the hometown of Jesus, in the region of Galilee

Cāna: *Cana*; a town in Galilee where Jesus turned water into wine for a wedding
(John 2:1-10)

Pergēmus ad Itabyrium et ad tabernācula salvātōris, nōn (ut Petrus quondam volvit) eum cum Moysī et Heliā, sed cum Patre cernēmus et Spīritū Sānctō. Inde ad mare veniēmus Gennesareth et dē quīnque et septem pānibus vidēbimus in dēsertō quīnque et quattuor mīlia hominum saturāta.

cernō, -ere, crevī, crētum: discern, see	quattuor (indecl.): four
dēsertum, -ī n.: desert	quīnque (indecl.): five
Helia, -ae m.: Elijah (name)	quondam: once
inde: from that place	salvātor, -ōris m.: savior
Moysēs, Moysis m.: Moses (name)	saturō (1): satisfy
pānis, -is m.: bread; loaf	septem (indecl.): seven
pergō, -ere, perrēxī, perrēctum: proceed	spīritus, -ūs m.: breath; spirit
Petrus, -ī m.: Peter (name)	tabernāculum, -ī n.: tent; shrine
	volvō, -ere, volvī, volūtum: turn

Itabyrium: *Mount Tabor*; a mountain in Galilee, known for being the site of the transfiguration of Jesus (Matt. 17.1-9, Mark 9:2-10, Luke 9.28-36)

Petrus: *Peter*; a fisherman from Galilee who became an apostle of Jesus

volvit: *thought*; from the idiom *volvere in animō* (“to turn it around in your mind”)

eum cum Moysī et Heliā: *him (Jesus) with Moses and Elijah*; Peter believed he saw Jesus together with Moses and Elijah

cum Patre...et Spīritū Sānctō: Paula and Eustochium re-envision the transfiguration, with Jesus as part of the trinity rather than in the company of Moses and Elijah

Gennesareth: *Gennesareth*; small region next to the Sea of Galilee; the prep. *ad* is dropped

dē quīnque et...saturāta: Jesus shares five (or seven) loaves of bread and is able to feed thousands, with food leftover (cf. Matt. 14:15-21 and 15:32-38)

Appārēbit oppidum Naīm, in cuius portīs viduae fīlius suscitātus est. Vidēbitur Hermonin et torrēns Endor, in quō superātus est Sisara. Capharnaum quoque signōrum dominī familiāris, sed et omnis pariter Galilaea cernētur.

appāreō, -ēre, -uī, -itum: appear

Capharnaum, -ī n.: Capernaum

cernō, -ere, crevī, crētum:

discern, see

familiāris, -e: familiar with (+ gen.)

Galilaea, -ae f.: Galilee

Naīm (indecl.) f.: Naim

oppidum, -ī n.: town

pariter: equally

porta, -ae f.: gate

signum, -ī n.: sign; miracle

Sisara, -ae m.: Sisera (name)

superō (1): overcome, defeat

suscitō (1): sustain, raise

torrēns, -entis m.: stream

vidua, -ae f.: widow

Appārēbit oppidum...est: referring to Naim, a small village where Jesus revived a widow's son as he was being carried to his burial (Luke 7:11-17)

Hermonin...Endor...Sisara: Sisera was a Canaanite general defeated by the Israelites, who were advised by the prophet Deborah (Judges 4-5); Hermon is a nearby mountain (cf. Psalm 89:12), and the location of this event as "Endor" is found in Psalm 83:9

Capharnaum: a town in Galilee; it was "familiar" (*familiāris*) with the "miracles of the Lord" (*signōrum dominī*) since many events from the gospels happened there

cernētur: *will be seen (by us)*

Tunc, comitante Chrīstō cum per Sēlō et Bethel et cētera loca, in quibus ecclēsiae quasi quaedam victōriārum dominī sunt ērēcta vēxilla, ad nostram spēluncam redierimus, canēmus iūgiter, crēbrō flēbimus, indēsinerter ōrābimus et vulnerātae iaculō salvātōris in commūne dīcēmus:

Bethel (indecl.): Bethel (city)	iūgiter: continuously
canō, -ere, cecinī, cantum: sing	ōrō (1): pray
cēterus, -a, -um: other, remaining	quasi: as if, just like
comitō (1): accompany	redeō, -īre, -ī, -itum: return, come back
Chrīstus, -ī m.: Christ	salvātor, -ōris m.: savior
commūnis, -e: common	Sēlō (indecl.) m.: Shiloh (city)
crēbrō: frequently; continuously	spēlunca, -ae f.: cave
ecclēsia, -ae f.: church	vexillum, -ī n.: flag, (military) standard
ērigō, -ere, ērēxī, ērēctum: erect, build	victōria, -ae f.: victory
flēō, -ēre, -ēvī, -ētum: weep	vulnerō (1): wound
iaculum, -ī n.: javelin	
indēsinerter: ceaselessly	

comitante Chrīstō: *with Christ accompanying*; abl. absolute

cum...redierimus: *when...we will return*; temporal *cum* clause with a verb in the fut. perf.

cētera loca: *the other places*; the word *locus* is neut. in the pl. when referring to places (rather than passages of literature)

in quibus ecclēsiae...vēxilla: *quaedam* modifies *vēxilla* and *victōriārum* is dependent on *vēxilla*

vulnerātae: nom.

in commūne: *collectively*; idiom

PAULA AND EUSTOCHIUM

“Invenī quem quaesīvit anima mea: tenēbō eum et nōn dīmittam illum” (Song of Songs 3:4).

dīmittō, -ere, dīmīsī, dīmīssum:

send away

inveniō, -īre, -vēnī, -vēntum:

come upon, find

quem: (*the one*) *whom*; the antecedent is the implicit obj. of *Invenī*

MARCELLA

Marcella (c. 325–410 CE) was an aristocratic Christian woman in Rome. She was a mentor to Paula and Eustochium, and the recipient of their letter printed in this anthology. Like Paula, she led a semi-monastic life after the death of her husband, and she was intensely dedicated to the study of biblical texts, for which she learned Greek and Hebrew. Marcella died during the Gothic sack of Rome in 410 CE. This is the same event in which Galla Placidia, whose letters are presented in this anthology, was abducted by the Goths.

Marcella embraced an ascetic life after becoming a widow: she avoided earthly pleasures and rejected remarriage, as Paula would (and as Hedybia, whose fragments are also printed in this anthology, was apparently considering). Ascetic Christianity might have been a pragmatic choice for these women as it offered more freedom and independence than remarriage. Yet their devotion was clearly genuine: Jerome's letters to them show highly detailed engagement with the scriptures, and the ascetic life was not an easy one.

Marcella hosted Jerome when he came to Rome in 382–385 CE, and the two struck up a lifelong friendship. She wrote numerous letters to him, peppering him with linguistic, textual, and theological questions. Marcella's letters themselves do not survive, but Jerome's responses often give a clear sense of what she had

written about. In one particular letter (*Epist.* 59), dating to 395/6 CE,⁴ Jerome responds to five scriptural questions she had sent him. Because he begins each response by repeating each question, we are printing these five questions as Marcella’s fragments. It should be noted that Jerome may well have paraphrased her questions, which is always a possibility when fragments are preserved as quotations by other authors (see Introduction VII, “The Fragmentary Voices of Roman Women”).

Marcella’s questions here mostly concern apparent discrepancies in the various books of the Christian scriptures. There is, however, one question (the second) where she gently corrects an error of interpretation Jerome had made in one of his other works—a point he concedes. As Jerome noted about her questions at the start of the letter, “when you ask, you teach” (*dum interrogās, docēs*).

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Our Latin text is from Hilberg 1910, and an English translation can be found in Scheck 2023: 233–239. A summary of the evidence available for Marcella can be found in *PLRE* I (“Marcella 2”). Cain (2009: 68–98) grapples with the fact that much of what we know about Marcella comes from Jerome’s portrayal of her and is shaped by his own concerns.

⁴ For the date see Scheck 2023: 234.

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Marcella to Jerome (5 Fragments)
395/6 CE

1. Quae sint illa “quae nec oculus vīdit nec auris audīvit nec in cor hominis ascendērunt, quae praeparāvit Deus hīs quī dīligunt eum” (1 Cor. 2:9)? Et quōmodo rūsum īdem apostolus īferat, “nōbīs autem revēlāvit Deus per spīritum suum” (1 Cor. 2:10)? Et, sī revēlātum est apostolō, intellegere dēbeāmus quōmodo et ille aliīs revēlārit?

<p>apostolus, -ī m.: apostle</p> <p>ascendō, -ere, -ī, -cēsum: ascend</p> <p>auris, -is f.: ear</p> <p>cor, cordis n.: heart</p> <p>dīligō, -ligere, -lēxī, -lēctum: value highly, love</p> <p>īfero, īferre, intulī, illātum: bring forward, add on (a point)</p>	<p>intellegō, -ere, -lēxī, -lēctum: understand</p> <p>praeparō (1): prepare</p> <p>quōmodo: in what way, how</p> <p>revēlō (1): reveal</p> <p>rūsum (adv.): (here) conversely</p> <p>spīritus, -ūs m.: spirit</p>
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Question: Marcella asks about Paul’s claim that there are things “which the eye has not seen nor the ear heard” (1 Cor. 2:9), and how to reconcile this with his statement that those things have been revealed to him (1 Cor. 2:10).

Quae sint illa: *What might those (things) be;* subjunctive because the question is embedded in Jerome’s letter as an ind. question

hīs quī: *to those who*

revēlāvit: the implicit obj. is the *illa* above

revēlātum est: take as the impersonal phrase “it has been revealed”

intellegere dēbeāmus quōmodo et ille aliīs revēlā(vē)rit: *dēbeāmus* is a deliberative subjunctive; *quōmodo* introduces an ind. question

Reply: Jerome responds that such things cannot be known, and that if they were revealed to Paul, that does not mean that he revealed them to others.

2. ...quod agnī (quī stent ā dextrīs) et haedī (quī ā sinistrīs)
 Chrīstiānī sint atque gentīlēs, et nōn potius bonī et malī.

agnus, -ī m.: lamb

Chrīstiānus, -a, -um: Christian

dexter, -tra, -trum: right

gentīlis, -e: (here) gentile,
 non-Christian

haedus, -ī m.: young goat

potius (adv.): rather

sinister, -tra, -trum: left

Question: Marcella remarks that Jerome had claimed that the lambs on the right-hand side of God (Matt. 25:33) are Christians and the goats on the left non-Christians, and she asks whether they are not rather the good and bad. This fragment begins with an ind. statement because it is preserved in Jerome's response, and he had preceded this ind. statement with "You say that you read in my works that (*quod*)..."

...quod...sint: *that...would be*; this *quod* begins an ind. statement whose verb (*sint*) is subjunctive because it is subordinate to another ind. statement

stent: relative clauses within ind. statements typically take subjunctive verbs

ā dextrīs...ā sinistrīs: *on the right...on the left*; the terms left/right frequently follow the prep. ā rather than *in*

Chrīstiānī sint atque gentīlēs et nōn potius bonī et malī: all the adjs. are predicates of the *agnī* and *haedī*, with *nōn potius*, "not rather," qualifying that Marcella considers the latter descriptors (*bonī* and *malī*) as more correct than the former (*Chrīstiānī* and *gentīlēs*)

Reply: Jerome concedes the point. He writes that he does not recall writing any such thing, but that if he did so he would not remain "stubborn in (my) error" (*in errore pertināx*).

3. ...quod dicit apostolus in adventū dominī salvātōris rapī quōsdam vīventēs obviam in nūbibus, ita ut nōn praeveniantur ab hīs, quī in Chrīstō dormiērunt...

adventus, -ūs m.: arrival

apostolus, -ī m.: apostle

Chrīstus, -ī m.: Christ

dormiō, -īre, -iī, -ītum: sleep

nūbēs, -is f.: cloud

obviam: towards, so as to meet

praeveniō, -īre, -vēnī, -ventum:

come before, precede

rapīō, -ere, rapuī, raptum: seize,

carry off

salvātor, -ōris m.: savior

Question: Marcella asks how to reconcile an apparent conflict: Paul writes that those who are alive on Judgment Day will be taken up into heaven (1 Thess. 4:15), while John (author of the *Apocalypse*) writes that even Enoch and Elijah will die (cf. Rev. 11:3-7). This fragment is preserved in Jerome's response, and he had introduced this phrase with "you had asked about..."

...quod dicit apostolus: *the fact that the apostle says*; quod can have a sense of "the fact that" (setting up a noun clause)

in adventū: *at the arrival*

rapī...obviam in nūbibus: *are carried off to meet in the clouds*; rapī is the inf. main verb of the ind. statement introduced by dicit; the acc. subject is quōsdam vīventēs

ita ut: *in such a way that*; introduces a result clause

nōn praeveniantur ab hīs: Marcella seems to be quoting 1 Thessalonians 4:15 incorrectly, claiming that the people who have slept in Christ (i.e. died) will not precede the living, even though Paul states the opposite, that the living will not precede the dead; it is possible that the nōn here is a scribal error

ab hīs, quī: *by those (people) who*

quī in Chrīstō dormiērunt: *who have slept in Christ*; that is, who died as believers

...utrum sīc occurrant in corporibus et nōn ante moriantur, cum et dominus noster mortuus sit et Enoch atque Hēliās secundum Apocalypsin Iōhannis moritūrī esse dīcantur, nē scīlicet ūllus sit quī nōn gustāverit mortem?

Apocalypsis, -is f.: the Apocalypse, the Book of Revelation	occurrō, -ere, -ī, -cursum: run to meet, meet
Enoch (indecl.) m.: Enoch	scīlicet (adv.): of course; (here, less strongly) evidently
gustō (1): taste	secundum (prep. + acc.):
Hēliās, -ae m.: Elijah	according to
Iōhannēs, -is m.: John	ūllus, -a, -um: anyone
morior, morī, mortuus sum: die	utrum: whether

...**utrum:** at the point in Jerome's letter from which this fragment was taken, he added "and you want to know whether (*utrum*)"; for the purposes of keeping only what Marcella wrote, we omit those words, picking up at the start of the ind. question

occurrant in corporibus: *whether they would meet (while) within their (physical) bodies;* ind. question

ante: *ante* here is an adv. meaning "before" or "first"

cum et dominus noster mortuus sit: *although even our Lord died*

secundum Apocalypsin Iōhannis: *according to the Apocalypse of John;* the *Apocalypsin* is a Greek acc.; the book is attributed to a "John" (Rev. 1:1), who was probably not the apostle John; in Rev. 11:3-7, John mentions "two witnesses" who will die, and Marcella interprets them to be Enoch and Elijah, both of whom were believed to have ascended to heaven while living

moritūrī esse dīcantur: *are said to be going to die*

nē...ūllus sit: negative purpose clause

quī nōn gustāverit mortem: rel. clause of characteristic

Reply: Jerome writes that the living will still be in their physical bodies when they are taken up, but that those bodies will be transformed.

4. Quōmodo in Iōhannis ēvangeliō post resurrēctiōnem dīcātur ad Mariam Magdalēnē: “Nōlī mē tangere; nōndum enim ascendī ad patrem meum” (John 20:17), et rūsum in Mathēō scrīptum sit quod ad vestīgia salvātōris mulierēs corruerint (Matt. 28:9), cum utique nōn sit id ipsum tangere post resurrēctiōnem pedēs eius et nōn tangere?

ascendō, -ere, -ī, ascēsum: ascend	quōmodo: in what way, how
corruō, -ere, -ī, -itūrus: collapse	resurrēctiō, -ōnis f.: resurrection
ēvangeliū, -īī n.: Gospel	rūsum (adv.): back, again; (here) conversely
Iōhannēs, -is m.: John	salvātor, -ōris m.: savior
Magdalēnē, -ēs f.: Magdalene	tangō, -ere, tetigī, tāctum: touch
Mathēus, -ī m.: Matthew	utique (adv.): in any case
nōndum (adv.): not yet	vestīgium, -īī n.: footprint; sole

Question: Marcella asks how to reconcile Jesus telling Mary Magdalene not to touch him in John (20:17) with the statement that women fell to his feet in Matthew (28:9). This is similar to Hedybia’s fifth question.

Quōmodo...dīcātur...et...scrīptum sit: ind. question (contained in a longer sentence in Jerome’s letter)

Mariam Magdalēnē: Mary Magdalene, one of the followers of Jesus; Marcella uses the Greek form of the acc.

Nōlī mē tangere: *Don’t touch me;* negative imperative

quod...corruerint: *it is written that;* ind. statement; in the fourth century and after, ind. statements are often formed with *quod* rather than acc. + inf.

cum...nōn sit id ipsum tangere ...et nōn tangere: *since it is not the same to touch...and not touch;* the inf. phrases function as predicate subjects

Reply: Jerome replies that Mary Magdalene did not deserve to touch Jesus at that time because she had not realized he was the Lord.

5. Utrum post resurrēctiōnem quadrāgintā diēbus cum discipulīs dominus conversātus sit et numquam alibī fuerit an latenter ad caelum ascenderit atque dēscenderit et nihilōminus apostolīs suī praesentiam nōn negārit?

alibī (adv.): elsewhere

apostolus, -ī m.: apostle

ascendō, -ere, -ī, ascēsum:

ascend

conversor, -ārī, -ātus sum: spend

time with (+ *cum* and abl.)

dēscendō, -ere, -ī, dēscēsum:

descend

discipulus, -ī m.: student, disciple

latenter (adv.): in secret

negō (1): deny

nihilōminus (adv.): nevertheless

praesentia, -ae f.: presence

quadrāgintā (indecl.): forty

resurrēctiō, -ōnis f.: resurrection

utrum . . . an: whether . . . or

Question: Concerning the time after the resurrection, Marcella asks whether Jesus was with his disciples and nowhere else (as told in Acts 1:3) or whether he ascended into heaven and came back.

quadrāgintā diēbus: an abl. of duration of time, which in CL would have been more commonly expressed with an acc.

conversātus sit . . . fuerit . . . ascenderit . . . dēscenderit . . . negārit: these perf. subjunctives are the main verbs of an ind. question

suī praesentiam: *his presence*; the reflexive pronoun *suī* is acting as an objective gen. where we would rather expect the reflexive possessive adj. (*suam*)

Reply: Jerome answers that Jesus's divine power meant that he was able to be in more than one place at once.

HEDYBIA

Hedybia's existence is known largely⁵ from a single letter of Jerome (*Epist.* 120), traditionally dated to 407 CE.⁶ The letter preserves a dozen questions on scripture that she had sent him. From Jerome's letter, a few details emerge about Hedybia's life: she was a Gallic woman who likely lived in Burdigala (modern Bordeaux). She was a wealthy widow, and she seemed to be considering avoiding remarriage and embarking on an ascetic life, as Marcella and Paula had. She was born into a family that boasted notable teachers of rhetoric in previous generations,⁷ and Hedybia herself seems to have been highly engaged, engaging in the textual and theological controversies of her day. Three of her questions (fr. 3–5) are taken from the *Marinus* of Eusebius, a work of early biblical scholarship that would only have been available in Greek. The specific biblical quotations from one of these questions (fr. 5) also feature in a question Marcella sent to Jerome (fr. 4), which suggests a hot topic of discussion.

Hedybia's questions largely concern discrepancies, or apparent discrepancies, between the various gospels, although her very first question is about her lifestyle.

⁵ Jerome also mentions Hedybia briefly in Letter 122.

⁶ On the date, see Cavallera 1922: 52.

⁷ Specifically, Jerome mentions as her ancestors Attius Patera (*PLRE* I "Patera") and his son, Attius Tiro Delphidius (*PLRE* I "Delphidius"), who were both teachers of rhetoric in fourth-century Bordeaux.

HEDYBIA

In most manuscripts of Jerome's letter 120, two different versions of Hedybia's questions survive. First, there is a list of the questions before the letter begins. Then, the body of the letter begins and each question is followed by its answer. The only previous edition that treats Hedybia's questions as her own fragments (Ferrante 2014), prints the first version of the questions. Yet this version is certainly a later scribal insertion, as Hilberg noted in his critical edition of Jerome's letters (1912: 470): the questions at the start are shorter versions, which often omit long quotations from scripture, and Jerome's answers show that he was responding to the longer versions embedded into the letter itself. Therefore, we print here the longer versions of the questions, as they are likely closer to Hedybia's original letter.

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Our Latin text is from Hilberg 1912. An English translation can be found in Scheck 2024: 123–170. For more on the letter see Cain 2003 and Cain 2009: 180–188.

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Hedybia to Jerome (12 Fragments)

c. 407 CE

1. Quōmodo perfectus esse quis possit, et quōmodo vīvere dēbeat vidua quae sine līberīs dērelicta est?

dērelinquō, -ere, -līquī, -lictum:
leave behind

quōmodo: in what way, how
vidua, -ae f.: widow

līber, -ī m.: child

perfectus, -a, -um: perfect,
complete

Question: Hedybia asks how someone in her position can best follow a Christian path. It is possible that she is considering whether to remarry or to live a life of ascetic chastity, like Marcella and Paula. (Jerome had also written a letter to a woman named Furia on this topic: *Epist.* 54.) In addition, based on Jerome's answer (about the necessity of giving up one's possessions), it seems that she was considering giving up all her possessions but felt hesitant because she has no husband or children who might support her.

quis: *someone*; although *quis* most often has an indefinite sense of "someone" after *sī*, *nisi*, *num*, and *nē*, it can also have an indefinite sense when used in a generalizing question like this one.

possit...dēbeat: the subjunctives here could be potential or deliberative, or Jerome might be restating her words as a kind of ind. question; which is why *quis* does not require typical conjs. such as *nisi* or *si*.

vidua: *a widow*; Hedybia is presumably referring to her own situation

sine līberīs dērelicta est: *has been left behind without children*; the *dērelicta est* is in the perf. pass. tense

Reply: Jerome responds that it is necessary to give up all possessions to follow Jesus, even for a woman in her position.

2. Quid sit quod in Mathēō scrīptum est: “Dīcō autem vōbīs: nōn bibam ā modo dē hōc genimine vītis ūsque in diem illum, quō illud bibam vōbīscum novum in rēgnō patris meī” (Matt. 26:29)?

bibō, -ere, bibī: drink, take in
genimen, -minis n.: product, fruit

ūsque: continuously; up until
vītis, vītis f.: vine, grape vine

Question: Hedybia asks how to interpret Matthew 26:29.

Quid sit: *what might it mean*; lit. “what might it be?” Once again, the subjunctive might be potential, deliberative, or because is implicitly an ind. question

quod: *that which*; the antecedent is the previous *quid*

in Mathēō: i.e., in the Gospel of Matthew

ā modo: *from now*

dē hōc genimine vītis: *from the fruit of the vine*; the *dē* here has an almost partitive sense (as it will in later Romance languages): to drink “(some) of”

quō: *on which*; abl. of time when; antecedent is *diem illum* (“that day”)

illud...novum: *it...anew*; referring back to the “fruit of the vine”

vōbīscum: *with you*, the standard combination of *cum* and *vōbīs*

patris meī: *my father*; i.e., God

Reply: Jerome responds with several passages that mention wine, in particular passages relating to the Last Supper, where Jesus declares the wine to be his blood (e.g. Matt. 26:26-28).

3. Quae causa sit ut dē resurrēctiōne et appāritiōne dominī ēvangelistae dīversa nārrāverint...cūr Matthēus dīxerit vespere Sabbatī illūcēscēte in ūnā Sabbatī dominum resurrēxisse, et Mārcus māne resurrēctiōnem eius factam esse commemoret, ita scrībēns:

appāritiō, -ōnis f.: appearance	nārrō (1): narrate
commemorō (1): recall	resurgō, -ere, -surrēxī,
dīversus, -a, -um: different	-surrēctum: rise again
ēvangelista, -ae m.: evangelist, gospel-writer	resurrēctiō, -ōnis f.: resurrection
illūcēscō, -ere, inlūxī: shine in	Sabbatum, -ī n.: the Sabbath
māne: in the morning	vesper, vesperis n.: evening; evening star

Question: Hedybia asks about an apparent discrepancy in the gospels: although Matthew (28:1) says Jesus was resurrected in the evening, Mark (16:9-11) writes that he appeared in the morning.

Quae causa sit: *why might it be;* lit. “what may be the cause”

ut...nārrāverint: *that/why the Evangelists narrated...*; ind. question; this broad question about divergences between the gospels introduces the various specific questions in fragments 3-7 (and perhaps 9)

nārrāverint...cūr: this fragment is preserved in Jerome’s letter of response, and in this ellipsis we leave out the phrase *in quibus primum quaeris* (“in which you first ask”), which are the words of Jerome

vespere...illūcēscēte: *when the evening star was shining*, abl. abs.; both take this phrase to refer to the evening; yet the “evening star,” the planet Venus, also shines in the morning, which seems to be what Matthew was referring to

in ūnā (diē) Sabbatī: *on (day) one of the Sabbath*; the Sabbath is Saturday, and “Day 1 of the Sabbath” is Sunday

dominum resurrēxisse: ind. statement introduced by *dīxerit*

factam esse: *happened*, perf. pass. inf. in ind. statement

ita scrībēns: *thus writing*; the *ita* sets up the following quotation

“Cum autem resurrēxisset, ūnā Sabbatī māne apparuit Mariae Magdalēnae, dē quā ēiēcerat septem daemonia; et illa abiēns nūntiāvit hīs quī cum eō fuerant, lūgentibus et flentibus. Illīque audientēs quod vīveret et quod vīdisset eum credidērunt” (Mark 16:9-11)?

daemonium, -īī n.: demon	resurgō, -ere, -surrēxī,
ēiciō, -ere, ēiēcī, ēiectum: cast out	-surrēctum: rise again
lūgeō, -ēre, lūxī, lūctum: mourn	Sabbatum, -ī n.: the Sabbath
māne: in the morning	septem (indecl.): seven
nūntiō (1): announce	

Cum autem resurrēxisset: *When, however, he had risen*; circumstantial *cum* clause
ūnā (diē) Sabbatī māne: *early on (day) one of the Sabbath*; i.e., the day after the Sabbath (Saturday), namely Sunday

Mariae Magdalēnae: *to Mary Magdalene*; a follower of Jesus

dē quā...daemonia: the story of Jesus casting seven demons out of Mary Magdalene is never directly narrated in the gospels, but it is mentioned here and at Luke 8:1-3

hīs quī...fuerant: *those who had been with him*; Mary Magdalene tells other followers of Jesus about his resurrection

lūgentibus et flentibus: agrees with *hīs*

quod vīveret et quod vīdisset eum: *that he (Jesus) was alive and that she (Mary) had seen him*; two ind. statements; in the fourth century and after, ind. statements are often formed with *quod* rather than acc. + inf.

crēdidērunt: the Vulgate reads rather *nōn crēdidērunt* (i.e. that they did not believe), although the Grk. text lacks the negation

Reply: Jerome responds that Mark may be incorrect (and he notes that many Grk. manuscripts of Mark lack this passage), or that perhaps Jesus was resurrected in the evening but was not seen until the following morning.

4. Quōmodo (iuxtā Mathēum) vespere Sabbatī Maria Magdalēnē vīdit dominum resurgentem et Iōhannēs ēvangēlista refert māne ūnā Sabbatī eam iuxtā sepulchrum flēre?

ēvangēlista, -ae m.: evangelist,
gospel-writer

Iōhannēs, -is m.: John

iuxtā: near; according to (+ acc.)

māne: in the morning

quōmodo: in what way, how

**resurgō, -ere, -surrēxī,
-surrēctum:** rise again

Sabbatum, -ī n.: the Sabbath

sepulchrum, -ī n.: tomb, grave,
place of burial

vesper, vesperis n.: evening;
evening star

Question: Hedybia asks about another discrepancy in the gospels: if Maria Magdalene saw Jesus resurrected on the evening of the Sabbath (Matt. 28:1 and 28:9), then why was she crying at his tomb the following morning (John 20:1 and 20:11)?

vespere: *in the evening*; abl. of time when

Maria Magdalēnē: *Mary Magdalene*, follower of Jesus; the *Magdalēnē* retains the Grk. form of the nom.

resurgentem: *rising*; an acc. sg. fem. pres. act. participle which completes the ind. statement and is in agreement with the acc. subject *Maria Magdalēnē*

Iōhannēs ēvangēlista: *John the Evangelist*, referring to the Gospel of John

ūnā (diē) sabbatī: *on (day) one of the Sabbath*; i.e., the day after the Sabbath (Saturday), namely Sunday

eam...flēre: *she was weeping near his grave*; *eam* is the acc. subject of *flēre* in this ind. statement, which is introduced by *refert* (“reports”)

iuxtā sepulchrum: *iuxtā* means “near” in this clause, contrasting with its meaning of “according to” earlier in the question

Reply: Jerome answers by claiming that Matthew and John actually recorded the same thing in different terms—that a weeping Mary witnessed the Lord’s resurrection at midnight on the Sabbath.

5. Quōmodo (iuxtā Mathēum) Maria Magdalēnē vespere Sabbatī cum alterā Mariā advolūta pedibus salvātōris, secundum Iōhannem māne ūnā Sabbatī audit ā dominō: “Nōlī mē tangere; necdum enim ascendī ad patrem meum” (John 20:17)?

advolvō, -ere, -volvī, -volūtum:

roll to; fall to (+ dat.)

ascendō, -ere, ascendī, ascēsum:

climb up, ascend

Iōhannēs, -is m.: John

iuxtā: near; according to (+ acc.)

māne: in the morning

necdum: not yet

quōmodo: in what way, how

Sabbatum, -ī n.: the Sabbath

salvātor, -ōris m.: savior

secundum: according to (+ acc.)

tangō, -ere, tetigī, tāctum: touch

vesper, vesperis n.: evening;

evening star

Question: Hedybia asks about another discrepancy: Matthew (28:1-9) says that Mary Magdalene encountered Jesus on the evening of the Sabbath, while John (20:1-18) says that she encountered him the following morning. This is similar to Marcella’s fourth question, which deals with the same passages of scripture, but while Marcella was concerned with whether Jesus could be touched after the resurrection, Hedybia is more concerned with the apparent contradiction in the timing of the resurrection.

Maria Magdalēnē: *Mary Magdalene*, follower of Jesus; the *Magdalēnē* retains the Grk. form of the nom.

cum alterā Mariā: *with the other Mary*; referring to Jesus’s mother Mary, who was at his grave with Mary Magdalene

ūnā (diē) Sabbatī: *on (day) one of the Sabbath*; i.e., the day after the Sabbath

“Nōlī mē tangere”: *“Don’t touch me”*; negative imperative, formed (as usual) from *nōlī* + inf.

Reply: Jerome answers that both accounts were true: Mary knelt at Jesus’s feet the evening of the Sabbath and returned to see him throughout the night and into the next morning.

6. Quōmodo, cūstōdiente mīlitum turbā, Petrus et Iōhannēs liberē ingressī sunt sepulchrum nūllō prohibente cūstōdum?

cūstōdio, -īre, -īvī, -ītum: guard

cūstōs, -ōdis m.: guard

ingredior, -gressus sum: walk
into, enter

Iōhannēs, -is m.: John

liberē (adv.): freely

prohibeō, -ere, -buī, -bitum:

prohibit; keep out

quōmodo: in what way, how

sepulchrum, -ī n.: tomb

turba, -ae f.: uproar; crowd

Question: Hedybia asks about an apparently implausible event caused by another seeming discrepancy in the gospels: Peter and John enter the tomb of Jesus (John 20:3-9) even though it was guarded by soldiers (Matt. 27:62-28:15).

Quōmodo...Iōhannēs: *how did Peter and John*; Hedybia asks how Peter and John entered Jesus's heavily guarded grave.

cūstōdiente mīlitum turbā: *although a crowd of soldiers was on guard*; abl. absolute with concessive force

Petrus: *Peter*; one of the disciples of Jesus

Iōhannēs: *John*; one of the disciples of Jesus

ingressī sunt sepulchrum: (*how did they*) *enter the tomb*; the *ingressī sunt* is the perf. pass. tense; the subject is Peter and John, obj. is the tomb

nūllō prohibente cūstōdum: *without prevention from the guards*; lit., "with no one of the guards prohibiting (them)"; abl. absolute

Reply: Jerome answers that an earthquake happened and that the guards either fainted or fled in terror.

7. Quōmodo Mathēus scribit (et Mārcus) quod mandātum sit apostolīs per mulierēs ut praecēderent salvātōrem in Galilaeam et ibi eum vidērent, Lūcās autem et Iōhannēs in Hierusalem eum ab apostolīs vīsum esse commemorant?

apostolus, -ī m.: apostle

commemorō (1): recall

Galilaea, -ae f.: Galilee

Hierusalem (indecl.): Jerusalem

Iōhannēs, -is m.: John

Lūcās, -ae m.: Luke

mandō (1): command (+ dat.)

mulier, -eris f.: woman

praecēdō, -ere, -cessī, -cessum:

precede, go before (someone)

quōmodo: in what way, how

salvātōr, -ōris m.: savior

Question: Hedybia asks why Matthew (28:10) and Mark (16:7) say that it was women who informed the apostles about the resurrection of Jesus and told them to go to Galilee to see him, while Luke (24:36) and John (20:19) say that the resurrected Jesus appeared to the apostles directly in Jerusalem.

quod mandātum sit: *that it was commanded*; ind. statement

per mulierēs: *through women*; the prep. *per* + acc. can be used to express agency; the women are Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus

ut praecēderent...vidērent: ind. command

Galilaeam: *Galilee*, Jesus's home region in Israel; at that time the apostles were in Jerusalem, where Jesus had been crucified

eum...vīsum esse: *he was seen*; ind. statement with the acc. *eum* (Jesus) as its subject and the inf. *vīsum esse* ("was seen") as its verb

Reply: Rather than reconciling the accounts, Jerome highlights that there are even further discrepancies in the accounts of what Jesus did and to whom he appeared after the resurrection.

8. Quid significet quod in ēvangelistā Mathēō sc̄riptum est: “Iēsus autem clāmāns vōce magnā ēmīsī sp̄iritum. Et vēlum templī scissum est in duās partēs ā summō ūsque deorsum, et terra mōta est, et petrae scissae sunt, et monumenta aperta sunt, et multa corpora s̄anctōrum, quī dormierant, resurrēxerunt et exeuntēs dē monumentīs post resurrēctiōnem eius vēnērunt in s̄anctam cīvitatē et appāruērunt multīs” (Matt. 27:50-53)?

aperiō, -īre, -uī, apertum: open
cīvītās, -ātis f.: citizenship; city
clāmō (1): call; cry out
deorsum (adv.): downwards
ēmīttō, -ere, ēmīsī, ēmissum:
 send forth
ēvangēlista, -ae m.: evangelist,
 gospel-writer
exeō, -īre, -īī, -itum: go out
Iēsus, -ū m.: Jesus

monumentum, -ī n.: monument;
 memorial; tomb
petra, -ae f.: rock
resurrectio, -ōnis f.: resurrection
scindō, -ere, scidī, scissum: split
significō (1): signify, mean
resurgō, -ere, resurrēxī,
resurrēctum: rise again
vēlum, -ī n.: cloth; veil

Question: Hedybia asks about the meaning of Matt. 27:50-53, which describes many bodies being resurrected after the resurrection of Jesus.

ēmīsī sp̄iritum: *he sent forth his spirit;* that is, he died

ā...deorsum: *from the highest point all the way down*

aperta sunt: *were opened;* perf. pass. tense, subject is *monumenta*

dormierant: *had been asleep;* i.e., who were deceased

exeuntēs: *going out;* pple. referring to the *multa corpora s̄anctōrum* (“many bodies of saints”); it is masc., and so technically modifying just *s̄anctōrum*

post resurrēctiōnem eius: *after his resurrection;* i.e., the resurrection of Jesus

s̄anctam cīvitatē: *holy city;* i.e., Jerusalem

Reply: Jerome answers that this event was a sign of the resurrection to come.

9. Quōmodo salvātor (secundum Iōhannem) īnsufflat Spīritum Sānctum apostolīs et (secundum Lūcam) post ascēsiōnem missūrum esse sē dīcit?

apostolus, -ī m.: apostle

ascēnsio, -ōnis f.: ascension

īnsufflō (1): breathe into

Iōhannēs, -is m.: John

Lūcās, -ae m.: Luke

quōmodo: in what way, how

salvātor, -ōris m.: savior

secundum: according to (+ acc.)

Question: Hedybia asks about differing descriptions of the Holy Spirit between John (20:22), who says that Jesus inspired the Holy Spirit in his apostles while he was with them, and Luke (24:49 and Acts 1:4-8), who records that Jesus said he would send the Holy Spirit later.

secundum Iōhannem: *according to John [the Evangelist]*, referring to the Gospel of John

secundum Lūcam: *according to Luke*, referring to the Gospel of Luke

missūrum esse sē: *that he was going to send (it)*; ind. statement; the acc. subject is *sē* (Jesus), the inf. is *missūrum esse*, and the obj. is implicitly the Holy Spirit

Reply: Jerome replies that both accounts are true because the Holy Spirit has many different graces, and that while John describes them receiving the power to baptize and forgive sins, Luke describes them receiving the power to perform miracles and speak many languages.

10. Quid significet illud quod apostolus Paulus disputat, ad Rōmānōs scrībēns: “Quid ergō dīcimus? Numquid inīquitās apud Deum? Absit!” (Rom. 9:14) ūsque ad eum locum ubi ait: “nisi dominus sabaoth relīquisset nōbīs sēmen, sicut Sodoma factī essēmus et sicut Gomorra similēs fuissēmus” (Rom. 9:29).

absum, abesse, āfuī, āfutūrum: be absent; be away

aiō: say (defective verb; *ait* is 3rd sg. pres.)

apostolus, -ī m.: apostle

disputō (1): discuss, debate

inīquitās, -ātis f.: iniquity; unfairness; injustice

numquid: surely...not

relinquō, -ere, relīquī, relictum: remainder, left over

Rōmānus, -a, -um: Roman

sabaoth (indecl.): hosts

sēmen, -inis n.: seed

significō (1): signify, mean

Question: Hedybia asks about the meaning of Paul’s letter to the Romans 9:14-29, which speaks about God’s mercy, particularly in regard to the Jewish people who choose not to follow the new Jesus movement.

Quid significet: *What might it mean;* the subjunctive might be potential, deliberative, or because it is implicitly an ind. question

quod: *that which;* the antecedent is the previous *illud*; it is the obj. of *disputat*

Paulus: the apostle Paul, whose letters are the earliest surviving texts in the Christian scriptures

Absit: *God forbid!*; a negative interjection lit. meaning “let it be absent”

nisi...fuissēmus: this last sentence in the passage from Paul is a quotation from Isaiah 1:9

dominus sabaoth: *the Lord of Hosts;* that is, God

relīquisset nōbīs sēmen: *he had left us seed,* i.e., God; his “seed” is his prophets who spread the word to others

Sodoma...Gomorra: Sodom and Gomorrah were cities God punished for their sins (Gen. 19)

Reply: Jerome provides various explanations for each part of the passage.

11. Quid sit quod apostolus scribit in secundā ad Corinthiōs: “Aliīs odor mortis in mortem et aliīs odor vītāe in vītā. Et ad haec quis tam idōneus” (2 Cor. 2:16)?

apostolus, -ī m.: apostle

odor, -ōris m.: scent

Corinthius, -a, -um: Corinthian

secundus, -a, -um: second

idōneus, -a, -um: sufficient

Question: Hedybia asks about the meaning of a passage from Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians.

Quid sit: *what might it mean*; lit. “what might it be?” the subjunctive might be potential, deliberative, or because it is implicitly an ind. question

quod: *that which*; the antecedent is the previous *Quid*

in secundā: the word “letter” (*epistula*) is implicit

Aliīs...aliīs: *to some...to others*

odor mortis...odor vītāe: Paul uses the metaphor of smells to describe how his teachings of Christ do good for some but leave others unaffected

ad haec: *for these things*; i.e., for being an apostle and teaching about Jesus; Paul is speaking about his suitability to act as an apostle

Reply: Jerome provides a full quotation of 2 Cor. 2:12-17 and adds commentary for each part.

12. Quid sit quod scrībit in epistulā ad Thessalonīcēnsēs prīmā:
 “Ipse autem Deus pācis sānctificet vōs per omnia, et integer spīritus
 vester et anima et corpus sine querellā in adventū dominī nostrī
 Iēsū Chrīstī servētur”(1 Thess. 5:23)?

adventus, -ūs m.: arrival

Chrīstus, -ī m.: Christ

epistula, -ae f.: letter

Iēsus, Iēsū m.: Jesus

integer, -gra, -grum:

undiminished, whole

querella, -ae f.: complaint

sānctificō (1): make holy

servō (1): save; preserve

spīritus, -ūs m.: spirit, life; breath

Thessalonīcēnsis, -ēs:

Thessalonian

Question: Hedybia asks the meaning of 1 Thess. 5:23, where Paul writes of the spirit and soul and body all being preserved until Christ returns. Based on Jerome’s response, the point of contention is particularly the word *spīritus*, for how could the spirit not be preserved?

Quid sit: *what might it mean*; lit. “what might it be?” the subjunctive might be potential, deliberative, or because it is implicitly an ind. question

quod: *that which*; the antecedent is the previous *Quid*

sānctificet vōs: *may he [God] make you all holy*, *sānctificet* is a jussive subjunctive

per omnia: *in all respects*, lit. “through all things,” idiom

in adventū: *until the arrival*; the prep. *in* can have a sense of “until” with word of time

Iēsū: since Latin-speakers used the Grk. form of the name “Jesus,” the Grk. gen. (Ἰησοῦ) is typically used instead of the Latin gen.

servētur: *may...be preserved*; jussive subjunctive

Reply: Jerome explains that he takes *spīritus* to be each person’s soul and rather than a part of the Holy Spirit.

ALGASIA

Like Hedybia, Algasia's existence is only known from a letter of Jerome (*Epist.* 121), traditionally dated to 407 CE.⁸ The letter preserves eleven questions on scripture that she had sent him. Jerome's letter preserves little detail about Algasia herself, but she may have lived either in Bordeaux or in Cahors, Aquitania (located in south-central modern-day France).⁹

Like Hedybia, Algasia's questions largely concern apparent discrepancies between the different gospels, though Algasia shows more of an interest in the letters of Paul.

Finally, as with the questions of Hedybia, the questions of Algasia occur in two versions: in the body of the letter itself, and in a list appended to the start of the letter, where they are sometimes shortened or paraphrased. We take the initial list to be a later scribal insertion (see the author introduction to Hedybia), and so we print the questions as they appear in *Epistle* 121 itself.

⁸ On the date, see Cavallera 1922: 52.

⁹ On Algasia's possible location, see Cain 2009: 188-189.

Select Bibliography

Our Latin text is from Hilberg 1918. An English translation can be found at Scheck 2024: 171-230. For more on the letter see Cain 2003 and Cain 2009: 188-194.

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Algasia to Jerome (11 Fragments)

c. 407 CE

1. Cūr Iōhannēs discipulōs suōs mittit ad dominum ut interrogent eum, “Tū es quī ventūrus es, an alium expectāmus?” (Matt. 11:3) cum prius ipse dē eōdem dīxerit “Ecce agnus Deī, ecce, quī tollit peccāta mundī” (John 1:29)?

agnus, -ī m.: lamb

discipulus, -ī m.: disciple

ecce: behold

expectō (1): look for

interrogō (1): ask

Iōhannēs, Iōhannis m.: John

mundus, -ī m.: world

peccātum, -ī n.: sin

prius (adv.): previously, earlier

tollō, -ere, sustulī, sublātum: take away

Question: Algasia asks why John the Baptist would send his disciples to ask if Jesus was the messiah (Matt. 11:3), when (according to John 1:29) he had already declared this to be so.

Iōhannēs: John the Baptist

ut interrogent eum: purpose clause

an alium expectāmus: *or are we waiting for another;* alternative direct question

cum prius...dīxerit: *although earlier...he said;* perf. subjunctive in a concessive *cum* clause

ipse: *himself;* referring to John

dē eōdem: *concerning the same one/man;* referring to Jesus

Reply: Jerome responds that John sent his disciples not because he himself was in doubt, but so that they may leave John, who is about to die, and follow Jesus.

2. Quid significet quod in Matthēo sc̄r̄ptum est: “Harundinem quassātam nōn cōnfringet et līnum fūmigāns nōn extinguet” (Matt. 12:20)?

cōnfringō, -ere, -frēgī, -frāctum:

break, shatter

extinguō, -ere, -tinxī, -tinctum:

quench, extinguish

fūmigō (1): smoldering, smoking

harundō, -inis f.: reed

līnum, -ī n.: thread, wick

quassō (1): shake, batter

significō (1): mean

Question: Algasia asks the meaning of an enigmatic statement in Matthew (12:20). The quotation here is not complete; it ends “till he sends forth judgment into victory.”

Quid significet: *What might it mean;* the subjunctive might be potential, deliberative, or because it is implicitly an ind. question

quod: *that which;* the antecedent is the previous *Quid;* it is the subject of *sc̄r̄ptum est*

“Harundinem quassātam nōn cōnfringet et līnum fūmigāns nōn extinguet”: the verse is Matt. 12:20, which paraphrases Isaiah 42:3

Harundinem quassātam: *a battered reed;* i.e., a reed that has been snapped but not totally broken apart

fūmigāns: neut. acc. agreeing with *līnum*

Reply: Jerome compares several different Greek translations of this passage (Matth. 12:20) with the original Hebrew of the passage from Isaiah that Matthew is quoting from (Isaiah 42:3). Jerome interprets the passage allegorically, with the battered reed referring to the Jews and the smoking wick referring to the Gentiles.

3. Quem sēnsūm habeat quod in ēvangelistā Matthēō sc̄riptum est: “Sī quis vult post mē venīre, abneget sē ipsum” (Matt. 16:24)? Quae est suī abnegātiō aut quōmodo, quī sequitur salvātōrem, sē ipsum negat?

abnegātiō, -ōnis f.: denial, refusal

abnegō (1): deny, refuse

ēvangelista, -ae m.: evangelist,
gospel-writer

negō (1): deny, refuse

quōmodo: how, in what way

salvātor, -ōris m.: savior

sēnsus, -ūs m.: thought, feeling,
sense

Question: Algasia asks what Matthew means (16:24) by “the denial of oneself” and how one who follows the savior denies themselves. Jesus had just predicted his suffering and death, which Peter said should not happen.

habeat: the subjunctive might be potential, deliberative, or because it is implicitly an ind. question from Jerome’s response to this question

quod: the antecedent is the unexpressed subject of *habeat*

Sī quis: *If anyone;* as usual, *ali-* drops away from *aliquis* before *sī*

post mē venīre: *to come after me;* i.e., to be his follower

abneget: jussive clause

sē ipsum: *ipsum* marks the *sē* as emphatic (lit. “his very self”)

Quae est: *What is;* *Quae* is an interrog. adj. agreeing with *abnegātiō*

suī abnegātiō: *denial of the self;* *suī* is an objective gen.

quī sequitur salvātōrem: the antecedent of this rel. clause is the implicit subject of *negat*

Reply: Jerome responds that one must deny oneself so that Christ lives in the believer’s conduct, thoughts, and actions.

4. Quid vult significāre quod in eōdem Matthēō scrīptum est: “Vae praegnantibus et nūtrientibus in illīs diēbus” (Matt. 24:19) et “Ōrātē nē fiat fuga vestra hieme vel Sabbatō” (Matt 24:20)?

fuga, -ae f.: escape, flight

hiems, -is f.: winter

nutriō, -īre, -īvī, -ītum: nursing

ōrō (1): pray

praegnāns, -ntis: pregnant

Sabbatum, -ī n.: the Sabbath

significō (1): mean

vae: woe to (+ dat.)

Question: Algasia asks about two verses of Matthew (24:19-20) foretelling difficulty for people fleeing a disaster in Jerusalem.

Quid vult significāre: *What does it mean;* lit., “What does it intend to mean?”

quod: the antecedent is *Quid*

Ōrātē: pl. imperative

nē fiat: ind. command

hieme vel Sabbatō: *during winter or on the Sabbath;* abl. of time within which

Reply: Jerome responds that some take the disaster to be the sack of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE (which is how modern scholars read this passage), but that he himself takes the disaster to be the arrival of the anti-Christ.

5. Quid sibi velit quod sc̄riptum est in ēvangeliō secundum Lūcam: “Et nōn recēpērunt eum, quoniam faciēs eius erat vādēns in Hierusalem” (Luke 9:53)?

ēvangeliū, -ī n.: gospel	recipiō, -ere, recēpī, receptum: receive
facies, faciēi f.: face	Sabbatum, -ī n.: Sabbath
Hierūsālem (indecl.): Jerusalem	secundum: according to (+ acc.)
Lūcas, -ae m.: Luke	vādō, vādere, vāsī: go

Question: Algasia asks how to interpret a verse of Luke (9:53) about a village in Samaria that refused to take Jesus in when he was on his way to Jerusalem.

Quid sibi velit: *What does it mean*; lit., “What does it intend for itself?” The subjunctive (*velit*) might be potential, deliberative, or because it is implicitly an ind. question from Jerome’s response to this question

quod: the antecedent is *Quid*

recēpērunt: the subject is the people of a town in Samaria

faciēs: the phrase here seems strange (“his face was going to Jerusalem”); this word is a translation of the Grk. (πρόσωπον), which means “face” but can have a sense of one’s person or presence

erat vādēns: = CL *ibat*; the CL imperfect has been replaced by a compound form, and the CL word for “to go” (*ire*) has been replaced by *vādere*, which came to be the standard word for “to go” in Late Latin and Proto-Romance

in Hierusalem: *to Jerusalem*; although the prep. is usually omitted, *Hierusalem* is an indeclinable Hebrew name, causing it to often appear with a prep.

Reply: Jerome responds that the Samaritans are enemies of the Jews, and so would not want to take in one traveling to Jerusalem; he also suggests that perhaps it was the will of God that the Samaritans rejected Jesus, because if they had taken him in, it would have delayed his death and resurrection.

6. Quī sit “vīlicus inīquitātis” (Luke 16:8), quī dominī vōce laudātus est?

inīquitās, -ātis f.: iniquity,
unfairness

vīlicus, -ī m.: manager, overseer,
steward

laudō (1): praise

Question: Algasia asks what was meant by the term “the unjust steward” (Luke 16:8). The “unjust steward” is a character in Jesus’ parable. He is about to be fired for mismanaging his master’s property. He corruptly reduces the debts of his master’s clients, in hopes that they will in turn help him after he loses his position. He is then praised by his master for being shrewd, and he keeps his job.

Quī sit: *Who is;* the subjunctive might be potential, deliberative, or because it is implicitly an ind. question from Jerome’s response to this question

vīlicus: this term, often translated as “steward” in biblical translations and “overseer” elsewhere, refers to the manager of a country estate (*villa*) left in charge by the owner

inīquitātis: *the unjust steward;* lit. “the steward of iniquity”; gen. of characteristic
dominī vōce: *through the voice of his master;* i.e., by his master; the term *dominī* here most directly refers to the boss of the steward, but it easily doubles for “the Lord”

Reply: Jerome replies that the steward found justice for himself in an unjust situation (assuming his impending firing was unjustified). In addition, because the steward offered mercy to the debtors, mercy was also extended to him.

7. Quō sēnsū accipiendum sit quod in epistulā legimus ad Rōmānōs: “Vix enim prō iūstō quis moritur; nam prō bonō forsitan quis audeat morī” (Romans 5:7)?

accipiō, -ere, accēpī, acceptum:	laudō (1): praise
receive, accept; (here) understand	moriōr, morī, mortuus: die
audeō, -ēre, ausus sum: dare	Rōmānus, -ī m.: a Roman
epistula, -ae f.: letter	sensus, -ūs m.: sense
forsitan: perhaps (+ subjunctive)	vix: scarcely, hardly
iūstus, -a, -um: just, righteous	

Question: Algasia asks how to interpret Rom. 5:7, about God’s love. Human beings seldom risk their lives for others, even for righteous people.

Quō sēnsū: *In what sense; abl. of means*

accipiendum sit: *must be understood*

quod: *that which; antecedent is the unexpressed subject of accipiendum sit*

prō iūstō...prō bonō: *on behalf of a just (man)...on behalf of a good (man)*

quis...quis: *someone...someone; although quis most often has an indefinite sense of “someone” after sī, nisi, num, and nē, it can also have an indefinite sense when used in a generalizing statement like this one*

morī: *to die; inf. of moriōr, morī, mortuus sum*

Reply: Jerome responds that Paul’s statement highlights that Christ’s death for sinners reveals a divine love far surpassing ordinary human love.

8. Quid sibi velit quod ad Rōmānōs scribit apostolus: “Occāsiōne acceptā peccātum per mandātum operātum est in mē omnem concupiscentiam” (Rom. 7:8)?

accipiō, -ere, accēpī, acceptum: receive, accept	occāsiō, -ōnis f.: opportunity, chance
apostolus, -ī m.: apostle	operor, -ārī, operātus sum: accomplish, bring about
concupiscentia, -ae f.: desire	peccātum, -ī n.: sin
mandātum, -ī n.: commandment; the Law	Rōmānus, -ī m.: a Roman

Question: Algasia asks how to interpret Rom. 7:8, in which Paul writes that sin worked through the Law.

Quid sibi velit: *What does it mean;* lit., “What does it intend for itself?” The subjunctive (*velit*) might be potential, deliberative, or because it is implicitly an ind. question from Jerome’s response to this question

quod: the antecedent is *Quid*

apostolus: i.e., Paul

Occāsiōne acceptā: *once the opportunity was taken up;* abl. absolute

peccātum...operātum est...omnem concupiscentiam: *sin brought about...all desire;* Paul writes that he would not have known desire if the Law had not told him about it

per mandātum: the prep. *per* + acc. can express agency

Reply: Jerome writes that in some ways, prohibiting something makes it seem more appealing.

9. Quārē apostolus Paulus in eādem ad Rōmānōs scrībit epistulā:
 “Optābam ego ipse anathēma esse ā Chrīstō prō frātribus meīs et
 propinquīs meīs iuxtā carnem, quī sunt Isrāhēlītae,

anathēma, anathēmatis n.: accursed; cut off from others	Isrāhēlīta, -ae m.: Israelite
apostolus, -ī m.: apostle	iuxtā: according to, near, in accordance with (+ acc.)
carō, -nis f.: flesh	optō (1): wish
Chrīstus, -ī m.: Christ	propinquus, -a, -um: near; relatives (substantive)
epistula, -ae f.: letter	quārē: for which reason, why
glōria, -ae f.: glory	

Question: Algasia asks how to interpret Rom. 9:3, in which Paul writes that he wishes he could be accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of his fellow Jews. Paul is grieving over the general rejection of Jesus among most Jews. This passage opens a long section wrestling with why God’s chosen people have not accepted Christ.

ego ipse: *I myself*; emphatic pronoun

anathēma...ā Chrīstō: *cut off from Christ*; the Grk. ἀνάθημα (“an offering”) was borrowed into Latin, almost always with a pejorative sense of a cursed or doomed offering, or an animal destined for sacrifice, and so something cut off from others

prō frātribus meīs: *for my brothers*; i.e., his fellow Israelites

iuxtā carnem: *according to the flesh*; i.e., by natural descent

quōrum adoptiō et glōria et testāmenta et lēgislātiō et cultus et reprōmissiōnēs, quōrum patrēs, ex quibus est Chrīstus iuxtā carnem, quī est super omnia Deus, benedictus in saecula, āmēn” (Rom. 9:3-5)?

adoptiō, -ōnis: adoption, selection

āmēn (indecl.): amen, truly

benedīcō, -ere, benedīxī,

benedictum: bless

carō, -nis f.: flesh

Chrīstus, -ī m.: Christ

cultus, -ūs m.: worship,
cultivation, reverence

glōria, -ae f.: glory

iuxtā: according to, near, in
accordance with (+ acc.)

lēgislātiō, -ōnis f.: legislation

reprōmissiō, -ōnis f.: promise

saeculum, -ī n.: age, generation

super: above, over (+ acc. or abl.)

testāmentum, -ī n.: covenant,
testament

quōrum adoptiō: *whose is the adoption;* refers to God’s adoption of the Israelites as the chosen people

et lēgislātiō: *the giving of the law;* specifically, the Law of Moses

quōrum patrēs: *whose are the fathers;* that is, the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph)

ex quibus est Chrīstus: *from whom Christ is;* that is, from whom Jesus descended

Reply: Jerome writes that Paul is willing to be cut off from Christ’s love himself if it would further spread Christ’s love. He writes that this makes Paul a good shepherd, willing to put his life on the line for his sheep.

10. Quid velit intellegī quod īdem apostolus scribit ad Colosēnsēs:
 “Nēmō vōs superet volēns in humilitāte mentis et religiōne
 angelōrum, quae nōn vīdit ambulāns frūstrā inflātus sēnsū carnis
 suae et nōn tenēns caput,

ambulō (1): walk

angelus, -ī m.: angel

apostolus, -ī m.: apostle

carō, -nis f.: flesh

Colo(s)ēnsēs, -ium: the

Colossians

frūstrā: in vain

humilitās, -tātis f.: humility

inflō (1): inflate, puff up

intellegō, -ere, intellēxī,

intellēctum: understand

mēns, mentis f.: mind, spirit

nexus, -ūs m.: connection

religiō, -ōnis f.: religion

sēnsus, -ūs: feeling, emotion, sense

superō (1): overcome, defeat

Question: Algasia asks how to interpret Col. 2:18, where Paul warns against false teachers. And indeed, the meaning of these lines is not very clear.

Quid velit intellegī: *What does it mean; lit., “What does it intend to be understood?”* The subjunctive (*velit*) might be potential, deliberative, or because it is implicitly an ind. question

quod: the antecedent is *Quid*

īdem apostolus: *the same apostle; i.e., Paul*

vōs superet: *overcome you; jussive subjunctive*

volēns in humilitāte mentis: *being willing in humility of spirit; it is not entirely clear what this means, which is part of what Algasia is asking*

quae nōn vīdit ambulāns: *lit. “what things he did not see, walking,” but the sense seems to be “walking (living) the things he did not see,” with the antecedent of quae being some sort of complement to ambulāns; the grammar here is very unclear, both in the Latin and in the original Greek it is translated from (ἃ ἐώρακεν ἐμπατεύων), which lacks the negation*

et nōn tenēns caput: *and not holding fast to the head; perhaps Christ as the head of the body (the Church)*

ex quō tōtum corpus per nexūs et coniūctiōnēs subministrātum et cōnstrūctum crēscit in augmentum Deī” (Col. 2:18-19) et reliqua?

augmentum, -ī n.: increase, benefit

crēscō, -ere, crēvī, crētum: grow, increase

coniūctiō, -ōnis f.: connection; joint

nexus, -ūs m.: bond

cōnstruō, -ere, cōnstrūxī, cōnstrūctum: build, construct

reliquum, -ī n.: remainder, the rest

subministrō (1): supply, furnish

ex quō: the antecedent is *caput*

per nexūs et coniūctiōnēs...cōnstrūctum: *held together through joints and ligaments*; each believer is a part of the Church, connected through spiritual joints and ligaments

et reliqua: *and the rest*; a synonym for *et cētera*, referring to the rest of the material in the passage

Reply: Jerome grants that the language is obscure, and he makes his best attempt to consider the possible meaning of each part of the quotation.

11. Quid sibi velit quod idem apostolus ad Thessalonīcēnsēs scrībit: “Nisi discessiō vēnerit prīmum et revēlātus fuerit homō peccātī” (2 Thess. 2:3) et reliqua?

apostolus, -ī m.: apostle	reliquum, -ī n.: remainder,
discessiō, -onis f.: departure;	leftover
separation; schism	revelō (1): reveal
peccātum, -ī n.: sin	Thessalonīcēnsēs, -ium m. pl.:
prīmum (adv.): first	Thessalonians

Question: Algasia asks how to interpret 2 Thess. 2:3, where Paul writes about when Judgement Day will arrive.

Quid sibi velit: *What does it mean;* lit., “What does it intend for itself?” The subjunctive (*velit*) might be potential, deliberative, or because it is implicitly an ind. question from Jerome’s response to this question

quod: the antecedent is *Quid*

apostolus: i.e., Paul

vēnerit...revēlātus fuerit: *will have come...he will be revealed (to be); fut. perf.* verbs in the protasis of a fut.-more-vivid conditional

homō peccātī: *man characterized by sin;* gen. of quality (lit. “a man of sin”)

Reply: Jerome replies that Paul is writing of certain signs that must precede Christ’s return.

THERASIA

Therasia was an aristocratic Christian woman from Spain who lived in the late-fourth and early-fifth centuries. She married Paulinus of Nola, a poet and senator who had served as consul in 377 CE. Paulinus had followed traditional Roman religion, but Therasia convinced him to convert to Christianity. After their first child died in infancy, they decided to take up an ascetic life, and the two set up a monastic establishment in the town of Nola in southern Italy. There, their marriage apparently became a celibate partnership.

Therasia and Paulinus were not alone in deciding to live a celibate life together as a married couple. They corresponded with another married couple, Amanda and Aper, who had likewise turned towards ascetic Christianity. While Therasia and Paulinus used their worldly wealth to establish a monastic community, divided between men and women, Amanda and Aper followed a different path. Amanda took control of the household and all worldly affairs (especially the management of their estates) so that Aper could live a life apart, dedicated to asceticism and free from worldly commitments. Therasia and Paulinus wrote a letter to Amanda and Aper (*Epist.* 44 in the corpus of Paulinus) in which they praised Amanda for taking on this role. The letter is a long one, and so in this anthology we present only two excerpts.

This letter is one of eleven that were written jointly by Paulinus and Therasia.¹⁰ As explained in the Introduction VI (“Authorship and Authenticity”), these letters seem to have been largely written by Paulinus. Indeed, in the letters Therasia’s identity is almost entirely subsumed under that of Paulinus. When Augustine of Hippo responds to a letter they had sent him, his reply is addressed only to Paulinus and barely mentions Therasia, “whom...I greet in you alone” (*quam...in tē ūnō resalūtāmus*), she “having been received and rendered into your unity” (*in tuam ūnitātem redāctam et redditam*, Aug. *Epist.* 27.2).¹¹ Paulinus and Therasia use an almost identical phrase to describe Amanda (*in tuam ūnitātem reductam et redditam*) in the letter presented in this anthology; however, the letter itself makes clear that Amanda has, in a sense, taken over Aper’s identity as head of household so that Aper can take on a new identity as an ascetic. Paulinus and Therasia frame Amanda’s actions as entirely in support of her husband, yet this supporting role has paradoxically provided Amanda with a wide scope for independent action in her own life.

¹⁰ These are letters 3–4, 6–7, 24, 26, 39, 40, and 43–45 in the corpus of Paulinus of Nola, which includes 51 letters in total.

¹¹ For further analysis of this passage and the dynamic more generally, see Conybeare 2000: 80–84.

Select Bibliography

Our Latin text comes from de Hartel 1894, and an English translation can be found in Walsh 1967.

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Paulinus and Therasia to Aper and Amanda
c. 397–406 CE

Sānctīs meritō venerāndīs ac dīlēctissimīs frātribus Aprō et
Amandae Paulīnus et Thērasia peccātōrēs.

...

3. Illīc et coniūnx (nōn dux ad mollitūdinem vel avāritiam virō
suō, sed ad continentiam et fortitūdinem redux in ossa virī suī)

<p>Aper, Aprī m.: Aper avāritia, -ae f.: greed coniūnx, coniugis m./f.: spouse continentia, -ae f.: temperance dīlēctus, -a, -um: beloved fortitūdō, -inis f.: strength illīc (adv.): in that place, there meritō (adv.): deservedly</p>	<p>mīrābilis, -e: admirable mollitūdō, -inis f.: softness os, ossis n.: bone peccātor, -ōris m.: sinner redux, reducis: that leads back; (as a substantive) a guide back veneror, -ārī, -ātus sum: venerate</p>
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venerāndīs: lit. “to be venerated,” but with a weaker sense of “venerable”

peccātōrēs: *sinner*; in apposition to *Paulīnus et Thērasia*; there is an implicit
salūtem dicunt (“say ‘health’”), a common epistolary greeting

Illīc: this excerpt picks up in the third chapter of Paulinus and Therasia’s letter;
this *Illīc* refers to a letter that Aper and Amanda had sent to them

nōn dux...sed...redux: in apposition to *coniūnx*, referring to Amanda

virō suō: *for (her) husband*

in ossa virī: a reference to Gen. 2:21–23, where Eve is made from a bone of
Adam

magnā illā dīvīnī cum ecclēsiā coniugīi aemulātiōne mīrābilis est, quam in tuam ūnitātem reductam ac redditam spīritālibus tibi tantō firmiōribus quantō castiōribus nexibus cāritās Chrīstī cōpulat, in cuius corpus trānsīstis ā vestrō.

aemulātiō, -ōnis f.: emulation
 cāritās, -ātis f.: (here) love
 castus, -a, -um: chaste
 Chrīstus, -ī m.: Christ
 coniugium, -ī n.: marriage
 cōpulō (1): bind together, join
 dīvīnus, -a, -um: divine
 ecclēsia, -ae f.: church

firmus, -a, -um: firm, strong
 nexus, -ūs m.: bond
 redūcō, -ere, redūxī, reductum:
 bring back, restore
 spīritālis, -e: spiritual, religious
 trānseō, -īre, -īī, -itum: pass over
 ūnitās, -ātis f.: oneness, unity

magnā illā...aemulātiōne: abl. of respect with *mīrābilis*; it brackets the gen.

dīvīnī...coniugīi, which in turn contains the prep. phrase *cum ecclēsiā*

dīvīnī cum ecclēsiā coniugīi: *of the divine marriage with the church*; a reference to

Ephesians 5:24, which describes a marriage between Christ and the church

quam in tuam ūnitātem reductam...tibi...cāritās Chrīstī cōpulat: (*she*)

whom, restored into your unity, the love of Christ binds together with you;

quam...reductam brackets the *in tuam ūnitātem* within the participial clause; *quam*

is the dir. obj. of *cōpulat* while *tibi* is the ind. obj.

spīritālibus...tantō firmiōribus quantō castiōribus nexibus: *through spiritual*

bonds (which are) as much stronger as (they are) more chaste; all the adjs. modify the

abl. of means *nexibus*; the *tantō* (“by so much”) and *quantō* (“by how much”) are

correlative adverbs; the “chaste bonds” refers to their decision to reject sex

while still remaining married

cāritās Chrīstī cōpulat, in cuius: *caritas* is the highly delayed subject of the rel.

clause introduced by *quam* with the antecedent *coniūnx*; the subsequent rel.

clause introduced by *cuius* has the antecedent *Chrīstī*

trānsīstis: syncopated form of *trānsīvistis*

ā vestrō: *corpore* is implicit

4. *Benedictī vōs dominō*, “*quī fēcit utrumque ūnum*” (Eph. 2:14), “*condēns in sēmet ipsum duo, faciēns mīrābilia sōlus*” (Eph. 2:15), *quī convertit nōn sōlum animās sed et affectūs, temporālia in aeterna*. *Manētis ecce īdem coniugēs ut fuistis, sed nōn ita coniugēs ut fuistis; estis ipsī nec ipsī; et sicut Chrīstum, ita vōsmet ipsōs iam secundum carnem nōn nōstis*.

aeternus, -a, -um: eternal

affectus, -ūs m.: feeling

benedīcō, -ere, -dīxī, -dīctum:
bless

carō, carnis f.: flesh

condō, -ere, -didī, -dītum: join
together

coniūnx, coniugis m./f.: spouse

convertō, -ere, -ī, -versum:
transform

ecce (interj.): behold

maneō, -ēre, mānsī, mānsum:
remain

mīrābilis, -e: admirable

nōscō, -ere, nōvī, nōtum: know,
become acquainted with

secundum (prep. + acc.): in
accordance with

sēmet: emphatic version of *sē*

sicut: just as

temporālis, -e: temporary

uterque, utraque, utrumque: each
(of two); (in the pl.) both

vōsmet: emphatic version of *vōs*

Benedictī vōs dominō (estis): *you are blessed to the lord*; the *dominō* is probably a dat. of ref., but it could be a dat. of agent if the verb is taken rather as a perf. tense (“you have been blessed by the lord”)

“quī fēcit utrumque ūnum”: *who made each (of two) into (a single) one*; the antecedent of the rel. clause is *domino*,

“condēns in sēmet ipsum duo...”: *joining together two into his very self*; the *ipsum* modifies *sēmet*

temporālia in aeterna: temporary (things) into eternal (ones); this last obj. for *convertit* is joined in asyndeton

nōstis: syncopated form of the perf. *nō(vi)stis*

“Haec mūtātiō dexteræ excelsī” (Psalm. 76:11), quæ in sē manēns omnia innovat et “convertit mare in āridam” (Psalm. 65:6), ad continentiae siccitātem stringēns fluenta vitiōrum. Benedicta haec inter mulierēs et hāc quoque dēvōtiōne fidēlis et acceptissima dominō,

acceptus, -a, -um: welcome

ārida, -ae f.: dry land

benedictus, -a, -um: blessed

continentia, -ae f.: moderation

convertō, -ere, -ī, -versum:
transform

dēvōtiō, -ōnis f.: devotion

dexter, -tera, -terum: right

excelsus, -a, -um: lofty, on high

fidēlis, -e: faithful

fluentum, -ī n.: river

innovō (1): renew; change

maneō, -ēre, mānsī, mānsūm:
remain

mūtātiō, -ōnis f.: change

siccitās, -ātis f.: dryness

stringō, -ere, strīnxī, strictum:
squeeze; wring out

vitium, -iī n.: vice

Haec (est) mūtātiō: *This (is) a change;* the *est* is implicit

dexteræ (manūs) excelsī: *of the right (hand) of (God) on high;*

Benedicta (est) haec inter mulierēs: *Blessed (is) she among women;* referring to Amanda; the angel Gabriel uses a similar phrase for Mary at Luke 1:28

quā sē necessitatibus saeculī prō tē velut quaedam procellīs in
immōbilī scopulō stabilīta turris opposuit.

immōbilis, -e: immovable

necessitās, -ātis f.: necessity

oppōnō, -ere, -posuī, -positum:
set against (+ acc. and dat.)

procella, -ae f.: storm

saeculum, -ī n.: age; world

scopulus, -ī m.: cliff

stabilīō, -īre, -īvī, -ītum: make
stable, fix

turris, -is f.: tower

velut: just as, like

quā sē...opposuit: *hāc ...dēvōtiōne* is the antecedent of this rel. clause, where *quā* is an abl. of means; Amanda is the subject, and the idea is that she is taking on all worldly responsibilities on behalf of Aper

velut quaedam procellīs...turris: *like a tower fixed on immoveable rock (set against) storms*; the *opposuit* is to be taken again

Vērē in ipsā petrā illā, super quam aedificāta domus nōn cadet, solidō strēnuae mentis fundāta vestīgiō facta est tibi “turris prōtēctiōnis ā faciē inimīcī” (Psalm. 60:4),

aedificō (1): build

faciēs, -ēī f.: face

fundō (1): found, secure

inimīcus, -a, -um: hostile; (as a masc. substantive) enemy

petra, -ae f.: stone

prōtēctiō, -ōnis f.: protection

solidus, -a, -um: firm, solid

strēnuus, -a, -um: vigorous

super (prep. + acc.): above, upon

turris, -is f.: tower

vērē (adv.): truly

vestīgium, -iī n.: footprint; track

super quam aedificāta domus nōn cadet: *upon which (stone) having been built, a house will not fall*; a reference to Matt. 7:24, where Jesus says that those who hear his words and act on them will be like a house on a foundation of stone, while those who hear but do not act will be like a house built on sand

solidō...vestīgiō: abl. of place with by *fundāta*, which is modifying the upcoming *turris*, which is the subject of *facta est*

tibi: *for you*; that is, for Aper; although some parts of this letter speak to both Aper and Amanda, much of the letter uses the second person singular and speaks to Aper about Amanda

ā faciē inimīcī: *from the face of the enemy*; *faciē* is an abl. of separation

undās et turbinēs saeculī frangēns piae servitūtis obiectū ut tū
 sēclūsus ā pelagō tūtam in ecclēsiae portū mentis inconcussae
 ratem in meditātiōne continuā studiōrum operumque caelestium
 quasi quōdam rēmigiō salūtis exerceās.

caelestis, -e: of heaven, divine
 continuus, -a, -um: continual
 ecclēsia, -ae f.: church
 exerceō, -ēre, -uī, -itum: make
 use of; work at
 frangō, -ere, frēgī, frāctum: break
 inconcussus, -a, -um: unshaken
 meditātiō, -ōnis f.: contemplation,
 meditation
 obiectus, -ūs m.: opposition; an
 outcropping
 opus, operis n.: work
 pelagus, -ī n.: sea
 pius, -a, -um: pious

portus, -ūs m.: harbor; refuge
 quasi: as if, like
 ratis, -is f.: raft
 rēmigiū, -iī n.: rowing; oars
 saeculum, -ī n.: age; world
 salūs, -ūtis f.: salvation
 sēclūdō, -ere, -clūsī, clūsum: shut
 off, seclude
 servitūs, -ūtis f.: servitude
 studium, -iī n.: study; pursuit
 turbō, -inis m.: whirlwind
 tūtus, -a, -um: safe, secure
 unda, -ae f.: wave

undās et turbinēs frangēns piae servitūtis obiectū: *breaking waves and wind
 with the outcropping of pious servitude*; the participle *frangēns* modifies the implicit
 subject: the tower on a rock (Amanda), who breaks the waves of worldly
 responsibilities with the outcropping (*obiectū*) into the sea of her pious service, so
 that Paulinus can be safe in the harbor of his contemplation

ut tū...exerceās: a purpose clause; the subject of *exerceās* is Aper, and the object
 is the *tūtam...ratem*

ā pelagō: abl. of separation

tūtam in ecclēsiae portū: *safe in the harbor of the church*; the *tūtam* modifies *ratem*
 mentis inconcussae ratem: *the raft of an unshaken mind*; an appositional gen.

quōdam rēmigiō salūtis: an abl. of means

“Corporālis enim,” inquit, “exercitātiō ad modicum; nam pietās ad omnia ūtilis est” (1 Tim. 4:8), quae tē subdidit Chrīstō praeferentem vel “iacēre in domō dominī quam in peccātorum tabernāculīs” (Psalm. 83:11) ēminēre, et cōservam tuam in labōrēs corporeōs ex affectū spīritālī prō tuā animā pignōrāvit,

affectus, -ūs m.: feeling

cōserva, -ae f.: a fellow servant

corporālis, -e m.: corporeal,
pertaining to the body

corporeus, -a, -um: of the body

ēminēō, -ēre, -uī: stand out, be
prominent

exercitātiō, -ōnis f.: exercise

modicus, -a, -um: moderate

peccātor, -ōris m.: sinner

pietās, -ātis f.: piety

pignorō (1): pledge

praeferō, -ferre, -tulī, -lātum: put
forward; prefer

spīritālis, -e: spiritual

subdō, -ere, -dīdī, -dītum: put
under, subject

tabernāculum, -ī n.: tabernacle,
shrine

ūtilis, -e: useful

ad modicum: *to a modest (degree); modicum* here is a neut. substantive

quae...subdidit: the antecedent is *pietās*

praeferentem vel “iacēre...quam...ēminēre: *preferring even to lie
down...(rather) than...to stand out*

cōservam tuam...pignōrāvit: the subject is still *quae*, referring to *pietās*

labōrēs corporeōs: *labors of the body;* probably not physical labor, but rather
work on matters of the physical (rather than spiritual) world

ex affectū spīritālī: *out of spiritual affection;* Amanda’s love for Aper is spiritual,
rather than bodily

ut pretium libertātis tuae faceret servitūtem suam, nōn illā in saeculāribus negōtiīs mundō sed Chrīstō serviēns, propter quem mundum patitur, nē tū patiāris.

Chrīstus, -ī m.: Christ	pretium, -iī n.: price, money
illā (adv.): in that respect; there	propter: on account of (+ acc.)
libertās, -ātis f.: liberty, freedom	saeculāris, -e: worldly
mundus, -ī m.: world	serviō, -īre, -īvī, -ītum: be a slave
negōtium, -iī n.: business	servitūs, -ūtis f.: service, slavery

ut pretium...faceret servitūtem suam: *so that she might make her own servitude the price of your freedom*; a purpose clause where *servitūtem* is the obj. and *pretium* is a predicate acc.

nōn...mundō sed Chrīstō serviēns: *being a slave not to the world, but to Christ*; even though Amanda is taking care of worldly responsibilities, she is working ultimately in service of Christ

illā: *in that respect*; the adv. *illā* originally came from the phrase *illā parte*, here referring to Amanda's work out in the world

in saeculāribus negōtiīs: *in worldly business*; "worldly" in the sense of non-spiritual; Amanda is apparently taking care of their material needs: managing their estate and raising their children

propter quem: *on whose account*; referring to Christ

nē tū patiāris: *in order that you not endure (the world)*; a negative purpose clause

Vērē iuxtā dīvīnum opus et verbum facta in adiūtōrium tibi et ad tē habēns conversiōnem suam dē nūtū tuō pendet et in tuō statū sistit, in vestīgīs tuīs ambulat, in animā tuā animātur, prō vītā tuā dēficit, ut in tuā vītā reficiātur. Cūrat illa saeculī cūrās, nē tū cūrēs; cūrat ut caelī cūrēs. Possidēre vidētur, nē tū possideāris ā mundō et ut possideāris ā Chrīstō.

adiūtōrium, -ī n.: help, aid

animō (1): animate

Chrīstus, -ī m.: Christ

conversiō, -ōnis f.: convert

cūrō (1): care for

dēficiō, -ere, -fēcī, -fectum: fail,
be weakened

dīvīnus, -a, -um: divine

iuxtā: near; according to (+ acc.)

mundus, -ī m.: world

nūtus, -ūs m.: a nod; will

opus, -peris n.: work

pendeō, -ēre, pependī: hang

possideō, -ere, -sedī, -sessim:
possess; to have possessions

reficiō, -ere, -fēcī, -fectum:
restore, renew

sistō, -ere, -stitī, -statum: stand

saeculum, -ī n.: age; world

vērē: truly

vestīgium, -iī n.: footstep, track

iuxtā dīvīnum opus et verbum: *in accordance with the divine work and word; cf.*

Gen. 2:18, where God decides to make a helper (*adiūtōrium*) for Adam

facta: a perf. pass. participle agreeing with an implied fem. subject (Amanda)

in adiūtōrium tibi: *as a help for you; in + acc. here indicates a purpose*

ad...suam: *having her own transformation in regard to you; a reference to the earlier remarks about God's ability to "transform" (convertere) things*

ut in tuā vītā reficiātur: *so that she may be remade in your life; purpose clause*

nē tū cūrēs: negative purpose clause

caelī cūrēs: *so that you mean care for (the concerns) of heaven; cūrās is implicit*

Possidēre vidētur: *she seems to possess (things); that is, she manages their material possessions*

nē tū possideāris...et ut possideāris: negative and positive purpose clauses

Nōn illam ā prōpositō tuō discors abiungit voluntās, sed quod magis mīrum est, concors fidēs opere dīvidit voluntāte coniūctam. Nam sine animī captīvitāte rem captīvitātis in libertāte spīritūs administrāns, “firmāvit manūs suās in operā virtūtis” (cf. Prov. 31:19);

abiungō, -ere, -iūnxi, -iūnctum: separate	dīvidō, -ere, -vīsī, -vīsum: divide
administrō (1): manage, serve	firmō (1): strengthen
captīvitās, -ātis f.: servitude	libertās, -ātis f.: liberty
concors, -cordis: united, of the same mind	mīrus, -a, -um: wonderful
coniungō, -ere, -iūnxi, -iūnctum: join together	opus, -eris n.: work, labor
discors, -cordis: disagreeing, discordant	prōpositum, -ī n.: purpose
	spīritus, -ūs m.: breath; (here) spirit, soul, mind
	voluntās, -ātis f.: will, choice

illam: refers to Amanda

quod magis mīrum est: *a thing which is more miraculous*; a parenthetical relative clause where *quod* refers to the entire following idea

opere dīvidit voluntāte coniūctam: *divides her in respect to work, (she) who is united in respect to will*; *opere* and *voluntāte* are abls. of respect and *coniūctam* is a perf. pass. participle modifying the obj. of *dīvidit*, Amanda; Amanda and Aper are united in faith, but divided their work

sine animī captīvitāte rem captīvitātis: *managing the business of captivity without captivity of the mind*; Amanda performs the metaphorical slavery of worldly labor, but she does so out of her free will

“firmāvit manūs...ā longinquō”: chapter 31 of Proverbs outlines the qualities of a “valiant woman” (*mulier fortis*)

“bracchia sua extendit ad ūtilia, accīncta fortiter lumbōs suōs et escās pigritiae nōn edēns facta est tibi tamquam nāvis, quae mercātur ā longinquō” (cf. Prov. 31:14-17), necessāriā dīvīsione reddēns per sē Caesarī quae sunt Caesaris, ut quae Deī sunt per tē ministret Deō.

accingō, -ere, -cīnxī, -cīnctum:	longinquus, -a, -um: long
gird on; tie around oneself	lumbus, -ī m.: loin; hip
bracchium, -iī n.: forearm	mercōr, -ārī, -ātus sum: trade
Caesar, -aris m.: Caesar	ministrō (1): serve
dīvīsio, -ōnis f.: division, separation	nāvis, -is f.: ship
edō, edere, ēdī, ēsum: eat	necessārius, -a, -um: inevitable
ēscā, -ae f.: food, a dish	opera, -ae f.: work, labor
extendō, -ere, -tendī, -tēnsum:	pigritia, -ae f.: laziness
stretch out, extend	tamquam: as much as, just as
fortiter: strongly	ūtilis, -e: useful

accīncta fortiter lumbōs suōs: *accīncta* is a perf. pass. participle and *lumbōs suōs* is an acc. of respect

escās pigritiae: *the food of laziness*; appositional gen.; *escās* is the obj. of *edēns*

facta est tibi tamquam nāvis: *she has become just like a ship for you*; just like a ship, Amanda brings what the household needs from the “afar” of the world

ā longinquō: *from afar*; a common idiom

reddēns per sē Caesarī quae sunt Caesaris: a paraphrase of a famous saying, where Jesus says to give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and give to God what is God’s (Matthew 22:21, Mark 12:17, Luke 20:25); here, “Caesar” represents worldly obligations, and household management; *per sē* emphasizes that Amanda takes these burdens upon herself

ut...per tē ministret Deō: purpose clause; contrast between *per sē* and *per tē* is the center of Paulinus’s argument: Amanda handles the world so that Aper can focus on God

Nam cum tribūtum, sicut sc̄iptum est, dederit cui dēbet tribūtum, tunc et “manūs suās adaperiēns pauperī” (Prov. 31:20) et frūctum operae suae porrigēns inopī sp̄iritāle vectīgal pēnsitat et reditum possessiōnis in tuae mīlitiae stīpendium suggerit, salūtāris damnī avārior quam lētālis lucrī.

adaperiō, -īre, -aperuī, -apertum:

throw open

avārus, -a, -um: greedy, eager

damnum, -ī n.: loss

frūctus, -ūs m.: fruit, product

inops, -opis: helpless, weak

lētālis, -e: deadly

lucrum, -ī n.: advantage, gain

mīlitia, -ae f.: military service

opera, -ae f.: work, labor

pauper, -eris: poor

pēnsitō (1): weigh out, pay

porrigō, -ere, -rēxī, rēctum:

extend, put forth

possessiō, -ōnis f.: a possession

reditus, -ūs m.: a return; (here)

revenue

salūtāris, -e: healthy, advantageous

sicut: just as

sp̄iritālis, -e: spiritual

stīpendium, -iī n.: pay for military

service

suggerō, -ere, -gessi, -gestum:

supply

tribūtum, -ī n.: tribute

vectīgal, -ālis n.: tax

Nam cum...dederit: *For when she has given;* the sentence opens with a temporal *cum* clause using the fut. perf. indicative *dederit*

sicut sc̄iptum est: a reference to Romans 13:7 to “render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due”; here it refers to Amanda handling the taxes and any other money owed to other parties

sp̄iritāle vectīgal pēnsitat: *she pays a spiritual tax;* by giving to the poor she pays a “spiritual tax”

salūtāris damnī avārior quam lētālis lucrī: *more greedy for a healthy loss than for a deadly gain;* this is a rhetorical paradox where the comp. adj. *avārior* takes the gens. *damnī* and *lucrī*

Quae tālis est, “fīdit in eā cor marītī eius” (Prov. 31:11). “Operātur enim,” ut scrīptum est, “virō suō bona tōtā vītā suā et nōn mala” (Prov. 31:12), et ideō nōn sollicitus agis quae in domō tuā terrēna aguntur; quod in domō caelestī agitur strēnuē līber exequeris.

caelestis, -e: heavenly

cor, cordis n.: the heart

exsequor, -sequī, -secūtus sum:
pursue

fīdō, fīdere, fīsus sum: trust

ideō: for that reason, therefore

marītus, -ī m.: husband

operor, -ārī, -ātus sum: work;
labor over; produce

sollicitus, -a, -um: anxious

strēnuus, -a, -um: strenuous

terrēnus, -a, -um: earthly

Quae tālis est: (*she*) *who is of such a sort*; the antecedent of this rel. clause is the following *eā*

“fīdit in eā cor marītī eius”: *the heart of her husband trusts in her*; the neuter *cor* here is the subject

Operātur...virō suō bona...nōn mala: *she produces...goods for her husband...not misfortunes*; *bona* (“goods”) and *mala* (“misfortunes,” but lit. “bads”) are substantives; both are objects of *Operātur*

tōtā vītā suā: *through all her life*; abl. of extent of time, which would typically be expressed with an acc. in CL

ideō nōn sollicitus agis: *therefore you manage, not being anxious*; *sollicitus* is a nom. adj. modifying the subject of *agis*

quae...terrēna aguntur: *what earthly things are done*; *terrēna* is a substantive adj., referring to the management of the the earthly (as opposed to heavenly) needs of the estate

quod...agitiur: the antecedent is an implicit *id* (obj. of *exequeris*)

līber: *you, free*; modifies the implicit subject of *exequeris*

exequeris: = *exsequeris*, the second person sg. pres. indicative of *exsequor*

“Nec cōfundēris, cum loquēris inimicīs tuīs in portā” (Psalm. 126:5), quia sapientiae mulier, quālis tibi dōnāta est, pretiōsior lapidibus pretiōsīs circumspectum tē facit in foribus ecclēsiae. Et “duplicia pallia,” inquit, “fēcit virō suō” (cf. Prov. 31:21).

circumspectus, -a, -um: carefully regarded; (here) respected, distinguished
cōfundō, -ere, -fūdī, -fūsum: confuse; confound
dōnō (1): present, give
duplex, -icis: double, twofold
ecclēsia, -ae f.: a church
foris, -is f.: door

inimīcus, -a, -um: hostile; (as a substantive) an enemy
lapis, -īdis m.: stone
loquor, loquī, locūtus sum: speak
pallium, -īī n.: a cover, cloak
porta, -ae f.: gate
pretiōsus, -a, -um: precious
quālis, -e: of what kind, what
sapientia, -ae f.: wisdom

“Nec cōfundēris, cum loquēris...in portā”: “*You will not be confounded...at the gate*”; both verbs are fut. indic.

quālis tibi dōnāta est: *such as has been given to you*; referring back to the “woman of wisdom” (*sapientiae mulier*), Amanda

pretiōsior lapidibus pretiōsīs: *pretiōsior* is a comp. adj. agreeing with *mulier*, and *lapidibus pretiōsīs* is an abl. of comparison

circumspectum tē facit: *makes you distinguished*; the adj. *circumspectum* functions as a predicate acc. describing *tē*

“**duplicia pallia...fēcit virō suō**”: a slight reworking of Proverbs 31:22; there it is rather the woman’s servants who have double-clothes, which protect them from the cold

inquit: the subject is implicitly King Solomon, who was believed to be the author of the biblical Book of Proverbs

Nōnne tibi vidētur et haec duplicia tibi pallia ac “purpurea vel byssina sibi vestīmenta contexere” (cf. Prov. 31.22), cum et illius fidēs grātiā tuā duplicet, quia “mulier bona corōna est virō suō” (Prov. 12:4), et vicissim illī honor tuus purpura est, quia temperante dominī grātiā simpliciter fidei ūnitāte vestītī superinduitis vōs invicem spīritālīum operātiōne virtūtum?

byssinus, -a, -um: of fine linen
contexō, -ere, -texuī, -textum:
 weave
corōna, -ae f.: crown
duplex, -icis: double, twofold
grātia, -ae f.: esteem; grace
honor, -ōris m.: honor; office
invicem: in turn
nōnne: (in a direct question,
 expecting a positive answer)
operātiō, -ōnis f.: working
pallium, -iī n.: a cover, cloak

purpura, -ae f.: purple
purpureus, -a, -um: purple
simpliciter: simply
spīritālis, -e: spiritual
superinduō, -ere, -iī, -ūtum: put
 on (one thing over another)
temperō (1): govern, rule
ūnitās, -ātis f.: unity
vestiō, -īre, -īvī, -ītum: clothe
vestīmentum, -ī n.: clothing
vicissim: in turn

purpurea vel byssina...vestīmenta: purple clothing often denotes royal or high-ranking status, while fine linen signifies purity and sanctity

contexere: acts as the complementary inf. to *vidētur*

cum et illius fidēs grātiā tuā duplicet: *since her faith also doubles your esteem;* a causal cum clause

bona: agrees with the preceding *mulier* rather than the following *corōna*

vicissim illī honor tuus purpura est: *your honor is a purple (cloth) for that woman;* *illī* is correlated with *purpura*, paralleling *virō suō* and *corōna*

temperante dominī grātiā: *with the Lord's grace in command;* abl. absolute

superinduitis vōs invicem: *you clothe each other in turn;* the *vōs* is a reflexive pronoun in the acc.

Tū illī in Chrīstō caput, et illa fundāmentum tibi, cuius opere pēs tuus stat in viā dominī et quam capitis tuī participem faciet commembrāta in dominī corpore fideī conpāgō, quia et in sollicitūdinis dīversitāte, salvō tamen cōnsonae mentis assēnsū,

assēnsus, -ūs m.: agreement

Chrīstus, -ī m.: Christ

commembrātus, -a, -um: united
(lit. “with limbs joined together”)

conpāgō, -pāginis f.: a composite structure

cōnsonus, -a, -um: harmonious

dīversitās, -ātis f.: difference

fundāmentum, -ī n.: foundation

opus, operis n.: labor

particeps, -ipis: participant

salvus, -a, -um: safe, sound,
preserved

sollicitūdō, -inis f.: concern,
responsibility

Tū illī in Chrīstō caput, et illa fundāmentum tibi: *You [are] for her a head in Christ, and she [is] a foundation for you; illa is the antecedent of the following cuius (and quam); a reference to Ephesians 5:23*

quam...commembrāta...fideī conpāgō: *whom...the united structure of faith (will make a participant)*

et in...dīversitāte: *even in...the difference of responsibility; that is, Amanda’s worldly responsibilities and Aper’s spiritual ones; the et (“even”) correlates with tamen (“nevertheless”)*

salvō tamen cōnsonae mentis adsēnsū: *with the agreement of a harmonious mind nonetheless preserved; an abl. absolute where the verb “to be” is omitted because salvō is an adj.*

ad prōpositī tuī iūncta sententiam, dum tū crēditam tibi dispēnsātiōnem fidēlis et sollers talentōrum herīlium multiplicātor exercēs, nec illa quod dē terrēnīs ēlabōrat frūctibus thēsaurizat in terrā, sed tuīs potius operibus quam damnōsīs avāritiae quaestibus fēnērātur.

avāritia, -ae f.: greed	iūnctus, -a, -um: united
damnōsus, -a, -um: destructive; loss-causing	multiplicātor, -ōris m.: a multiplier
dispēnsātiō, -ōnis f.: management	opus, operis n.: labor
ēlabōrō (1): labor	potius: rather
exerceō, -ēre, -uī, -itum: work	prōpositum, -ī n.: plan, purpose
fēnerō (1) (= CL faeneror): loan with interest; invest	quaestus, -ūs m.: an acquiring
fidēlis, -e: faithful	sollers, -tis: skilled
frūctus, -ūs m.: fruit, product	talentum, -ī n.: a talent, sum of money
(h)erīlis, -is: belonging to one's master	terrēnus, -a, -um: earthly
	thēsaurizō (1): hoard

iūncta: *united*; fem. in agreement with Amanda; take closely with *ad...sententiam* (“to the idea”)

crēditam tibi dispēnsātiōnem: *the management entrusted to you*; obj. of *exercēs*; this refers to Aper’s spiritual labor

talentōrum herīlium multiplicātor: *a multiplier of your master’s money*; a reference to the parable of the bags of gold (Matt. 25:14–30), where the wise servant invests his master’s money rather than burying it in the ground

quod dē terrēnīs ēlabōrat fructibus: *that which she works from earthly produce*; the antecedent is an implicit *id* (obj. of *thēsaurizat*)

potius...quam: *rather...than*

fēnērātur: Amanda “invests” in the spiritual works of Aper rather than in soul-imperiling earthly acquisition

Et ideō “dabitur illī frūctus ā manibus suīs, et laudābitur in portīs filiae Sīōn marītus eius in dominō” (Prov. 31:31), quī vōbīs ab operis eiusdem labōre dīversō sed parī studiō cōnsitam segetem in commūnem praeparat messem, ut in illā diē pariter in exultātiōne veniātis afferentēs manipulōs vestrōs, ministra illa sēminis et tū ministeriū sēminātor.

afferō, -ere, -tulī, -lātum: bring

to

commūnis, -e: common

cōnserō, -ere, -sevī, -situm: sow,
plant

dīversus, -a, -um: different

exultātiō, -ōnis f.: exultation

frūctus, -ūs m.: fruit, product

ideō: for that reason, therefore

laudō (1): praise

manipulus, -ī m.: a handful; sheafs
of wheat

marītus, -ī m.: husband

messis, -is f.: harvest

ministra, -ae f.: servant

ministerium, -iī n.: service

opera, -ae f.: work, labor

pār, paris: equal

porta, -ae f.: gate

praeparō (1): prepare

seges, -etis f.: a grainfield

sēmen, -inis n.: seed

sēminātor, -ōris m.: producer

Sīōn, Sīōn f.: Zion

studium, -iī n.: eagerness

quī vōbīs...praeparat: *who prepares...for you*; the antecedent is God, who is preparing the final “common harvest” for Aper and Amanda

ab operis eiusdem labōre dīversō sed parī studiō: *from the different labor of the same work but with equal eagerness*; a series of abls.: *labōre dīversō* is an abl. with *ab* and *parī studiō* is an abl. of manner; both modify the “field sown” (*cōnsitam segetem*), which is the obj. of *praeparat*

in commūnem...messem: hyperbaton

ut...veniātis adferentēs: a purpose clause whose subject is a nom. participle (*afferentēs*)

in illā diē: refers to the Day of Judgment

Nōn enim dēfraudābitur cōnsortiō mercēdis tuae per meritum compēnsātiōnis istius, quā nōn voluntātī suae obtemperāns sed salūtī tuae, huius ipsius operis documentō probat iūdicium fideī suae, satis indicāns quantō et ipsa potiōrem saeculī contemptum quam ūsum iūdicet, quae spīritālia tibi māluit, nōn hoc saeculum Chrīstō sed tē sibi praeferēns. ...

7. Grātia Deī vōbīscum.

Chrīstus, -ī m.: Christ	opus, -eris n.: work, labor
cōnsortium, -iū n.: fellowship	potis, -ē: moreso, rather
contemptus, -ūs m.: contempt	praeferō, -ferre, -tulī, -lātum: prefer
dēfraudō (1): cheat	probō (1): approve
documentum, -ī n.: evidence	saeculum, -ī n.: age; world
grātia, -ae f.: grace	salūs, -ūtis f.: salvation
indicō (1): indicate	satis: enough, sufficient
iūdicium, -ī n.: judgment	spīritālis, -e: spiritual
iūdicō (1): judge	ūsus, -ūs m.: use
mercēs, -cēdis f.: reward	voluntās, -ātis f.: will, desire
meritum, -ī n.: merit	
obtemperō (1): obey (+ dat.)	

dēfraudābitur cōnsortiō mercēdis tuae: *cheated of the fellowship of your reward;*
cōnsortiō is an abl. of separation

per meritum compēnsātiōnis istius: namely, salvation

huius ipsius operis documentō probat iūdicium fideī suae: *by the evidence of this very work she proves the judgment of her faith*

quantō...iūdicet: *by how much...she judges;* ind. question

nōn hoc saeculum Chrīstō sed tē sibi praeferēns: *not preferring this world to Christ, but you to herself;* *praeferēns* is a circumstantial participle, *Chrīstō* and *sibi* are dat. ind. objects compared against the acc. objects *saeculum* and *tē*

Grātia Deī (sit) vōbīscum: this is the final farewell

GALLA PLACIDIA

Aelia Galla Placidia (c. 392/3–450 CE) ruled the Western Empire as regent from 425 to 437 CE. She was the daughter of Theodosius I, who set up his sons, Honorius and Arcadius, as emperors of the Western and Eastern Roman Empires, respectively. During the sack of Rome in 410 CE, Placidia was captured by the Visigoths. Within a few years, she married their king, Athaulf I, and had a son, Theodosius, who died in infancy shortly before her husband's untimely death. Placidia then returned to the Romans and was married in 417 CE to Constantius, the top military commander of Emperor Honorius. Placidia was skilled at political strategy, successfully maneuvering both herself and her husband into the roles of *Augusta* and *Augustus*. Following the deaths of both Constantius and Honorius, Placidia served as regent for her son, Valentinian III. Even after his ascension in 437 CE, she continued to assist him in governing the empire until her death in 450 CE.

Placidia's surviving Latin correspondence, preserved in the *Collēctiō Avellāna*, primarily addresses the religious and political instability that followed the death of Pope Zosimus in 418 CE. When the simultaneous election of two rival popes, Eulalius and Boniface, triggered violent riots in Rome, Honorius intervened to organize a synod in Ravenna. When that synod proved inconclusive, Honorius decided to hold another in Spoleto. Placidia took a hand in organizing the synod: she sent letters to

several high-ranking clergy members, including Aurelius, Bishop of Carthage; Augustine of Hippo; and Paulinus of Nola (husband of Therasia, who had died c. 408–410 CE). At the time these letters were sent, Placidia supported Eulalius's claim, and she hoped that the bishops she contacted would attend the synod and aid in his selection. However, before the synod could take place, Eulalius entered Rome in violation of a prohibition that Honorius had imposed on both claimants. In consequence, Placidia (and others) abandoned Eulalius and supported Boniface, whose election was then ratified. These letters are a rare testament to a woman's direct political activity in the fifth century. They reveal Placidia as a calculated strategist who used diplomacy to exercise imperial authority over the church.

There are six surviving letters that could be ascribed, with varying degrees of certainty, to Placidia. Three of these letters survive in their original Latin:

- To Aurelius of Carthage, 20 March 419 CE, preserved as *Epist. 27* in the *Collēctiō Avellāna*
- To seven bishops in Africa (Augustine, Alypius, Euhodius, Donatian, Silvanus, Novatus, and Deuterius), 20 March 419 CE, preserved as *Epist. 28* in the *Collēctiō Avellāna*
- To Paulinus of Nola, 20 March 419 CE, preserved as *Epist. 25* in the *Collēctiō Avellāna*

In the surviving manuscripts of the *Collēctiō Avellāna*, all three are attributed to Emperor Honorius, yet these attributions were later written in by copyists, and the letters themselves clearly show the

author to be Placidia. In the case of the letters to Aurelius and to the bishops of Africa, the author refers to Honorius as “my lord brother” (*domnī germānī meī*), which indicates that Placidia must be the author. The letter to Paulinus of Nola is less certain. The letter has sometimes been attributed to Placidia because some of the phrasing is repeated from the other two letters, although those similarities could also be the result of the same administrative staff producing the letters.

There are also three letters of Placidia that survive in Greek (one of which was jointly written with her son, Valentinian III, and his wife, Licinia Eudoxia). These letters were originally composed in Latin but then translated into Greek for their addressees in Constantinople. In a complicated twist, the original Latin versions of these letters were lost, but the Greek translations were translated back into Latin in the sixth century, and these Latin translations of the Greek translations of the Latin originals do survive.¹² These letters are:

- To Emperor Theodosius II, 450 CE, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* 2.1.1, Letter M3; Latin translation in *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* 2.3.1 Letter 20
- To Empress Pulcheria, 450 CE, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* 2.1.1, Letter H14; Latin translation in *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* 2.3.1 Letter 18
- To Emperor Theodosius II (written jointly by Galla Placidia with Valentinian III and Licinia Eudoxia), 450

¹² On the history of these letters, see Hillner 2019a: 221–223.

GALLA PLACIDIA

CE, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* 2.1.1, Letter M2;
Latin translation in *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* 2.3.1
Letter 19

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Figure 5. Solidus, 426–430 CE. Galla Placidia, crowned by the hand of God. The inscription reads *D(omina) N(ostra) Galla Placidia, P(ia) F(elix) Aug(usta)* (“Our Lady Galla Placidia, pious, fortunate, empress”). On the reverse is a winged Victory. ([RIC X Valentinian III 2012](#))

Galla Placidia to Aurelius, bishop of Carthage
 March 20, 419 CE

Aliam quidem videndae Venerātiōnis Tuae causam optāverāmus
 ēvēnisse ut dēsīderātō Benedictiōnis Tuae fruērēmur aspectū.

aspectus, -ūs m.: sight, appearance	fruo, fruī, fructus sum: enjoy (+ abl.)
benedictiō, -ōnis f.: blessing	optō (1): want
dēsīderō (1): desire	venerātiō, -ōnis f.: veneration, highest respect
ēveniō, -īre, -vēnī, -ventum: come out; happen	

Aliam...causam...ēvēnisse: *that another...reason...had come about;* this inf. phrase is the obj. of *optāverāmus*

videndae Venerātiōnis Tuae causam: *a reason to see Your Veneration (= you);* the gen. is objective; as often happens, this gerundive phrase is equivalent to a gerund with a direct obj. (*causam videndī Venerātiōnem Tuam*)

ut...fruērēmur: *why...we might enjoy;* the noun *causa* can take an *ut* clause specifying what it is a cause of

dēsīderātō...aspectū: *fruērēmur* takes an abl. direct object

Sed quia adversus pāpam urbis Rōmae ambitio reprehendenda certāmen indīxit et sānctam vītam in episcopō aestimat nōn quaerendam, coeptum super hāc discussiōne iūdicium minor numerus sacerdotum, quam synodi cōsuētūdō dēposcit, in plūrēs doctissimōsque virōs, quōrum Sānctitās Tua prīnceps est, prōrogāvit.

aestimō (1): value

adversus: regarding (prep. + acc.)

ambitiō, -ōnis f.: ambition

certāmen, -inis n.: contest

coepī, -isse, coeptum: begin

dēposcō, -ere, -poposcī: demand

discussiō, -ōnis f.: discussion

docēō, -ēre, -uī, doctum: teach

episcopus, -ī m.: bishop

indicō, -ere, -dīxī, -dictum:
declare

iūdicium, -ī n.: judgment

numerus, -ī m.: number

pāpa, -ae m.: father; the pope

prīnceps, -cipis: foremost

prōrogō (1): extend

reprehendō, -ere, -dī, -sum: hold
back, restrain; blame

Rōma, -ae f.: Rome

sacerdōs, -dotis m.: priest

sānctitās, -ātis f.: sanctity

super: about, concerning (+ abl.)

synodus, -ī f.: synod, church
council

ambitiō reprehendenda: *a reprehensible ambition*; referring to Boniface,

suggesting that he has decided that it is not good enough for him to just be a bishop, he has to be the pope; this is the subject of both *indīxit* and *aestimat*

coeptum...iūdicium: *the judgment begun*; the direct obj. of the *prōrogāvit*

minor numerus sacerdotum: *a smaller number of priests*; subject of *prōrogāvit*

quam synodi cōsuētūdō dēposcit: *than the custom of the synod demands*; the *quam* here goes with the comp. *minor*

in plūrēs doctissimōsque virōs: *to more (and) very learned men*; *in + acc.* here has a sense of “extending out to”

Neque enim praemia castitātis et meritī summōtīs vitiīs, quae respuit dīvīnae religiōnis sacrōsāncta praeceptiō, per aliōs quam tālēs virōs oportuit revēlārī.

castitās, -ātis f.: purity	respuō, -ere, -uī: reject
dīvīnus, -a, -um: divine	revēlō (1): reveal
meritum, -ī n.: merit	sacrōsānctus, -a, -um: sacred
oportet, -ēre, -tuit: it is necessary; it is proper	summoveō, -ēre, -mōvī, -mōtum: move out from under; remove
praeceptiō, -ōnis f.: teaching	vitium, -ī n.: flaw, vice
praemium, -iī n.: reward	
religiō, -ōnis f.: religion	

Neque...oportuit: *Nor...was it proper*; the negation goes with the main verb (*oportuit*)

praemia: the subject of an ind. statement where *revēlārī* is the verb

summōtīs vitiīs: *with the vices having been removed*; abl. absolute

quae respuit dīvīnae religiōnis sacrōsāncta praeceptiō: *which the sacred teaching of divine religion rejects*; a relative clause with *vitiīs* as the antecedent of *quae*; this “sacred teaching” may refer to the outline of characteristics that should be looked for in a bishop in the Pauline letters 1 Tim. 3:2-7 and Titus 1:7-9

per aliōs quam tālēs virōs: *through others than such men*; the prep. *per* + acc. can indicate agency

2. Et quamvīs sufficere domnī germānī meī Augustī prīncipis sc̄rīpta potuērunt, etiam mea tamen, quibus adventum Sānctitātis Tuae precārer, adiūnxī. Quaesō itaque, domine sāncte, pater meritō venerābilis,

adiungō, -ere, -iūnxī, -iūnctum: add on	prīnceps, -cipis: emperor
adventus, -ūs m.: arrival	quaesō, -ere, -īvī: seek; ask
Augustus, -ī m.: Augustus; at this date a title for the emperor	quamvīs: although
germānus, -a, -um: own, related by blood; brother/sister	sānctitās, -ātis f.: sacredness; holiness
meritō: deservedly	sc̄rīpta, -ōrum n.: the writings
precor, -ārī, precātus sum: ask	sufficiō, -ere, -fēcī, -fectum: suffice
	venerābilis, -e: venerable

domnī (= CL dominī) germānī meī Augustī prīncipis sc̄rīpta: *the writings of my brother the emperor; referring to the Western emperor Honorius, who ruled 393–423 CE; this sentence is how we know this letter is written by Placidia, even though manuscripts attribute it to Honorius himself*

etiam mea tamen: *nevertheless mine in addition; the mea is the direct obj. of adiūnxī; the word sc̄rīpta is implied*

quibus...precārer: *in order that by them...I might ask; rel. clause of purpose; the antecedent of quibus is sc̄rīpta*

Quaesō itaque...(continued on next page) ut...tē praestāre dignēris: *I ask that...you would deem it worthy to be present; ind. command*

ut duplex beneficium tribūtūrus et dēsīderātae nōbīs benedictiōnis tuae et necessārii prō beātitudīne iūdicīi prōferendī intermissīs omnibus Deum intuēns, dē cuius sacerdotē firmandō labor veniendī nōn dēbet recūsārī, tē praestāre dignēris.

beātitudō, -dinis f.: blessedness

benedictiō, -ōnis f.: blessing

dēsīderō (1): desire

dignor, -ārī, -ātus sum: deem
worthy

duplex, -icis: double

firmō (1): strengthen

intermittō, -ere, -mīsī, -missum:
omit

intueor, -erī, -itus sum: look
upon; consider

iūdicium, -ī n.: judgment

necessārius, -a, -um: necessary

praestō, -āre, -stitī, stātum: stand
before; (here) be present

prōferō, -ferre, -tulī, -lātum:
bring forth

recūsō (1): refuse

sacerdōs, -dōtis m.: priest

tribuō, -ere, -buī, -būtum: give,
grant

duplex beneficium: *a double favor; each favor introduced by et + gen. ("both...of your blessing...and...of offering judgement")*

tribūtūrus et...intuēns: *in order to grant...and considering; these participles modify the implied subject of the ind. command, which is tū*

dēsīderātae nōbīs benedictiōnis tuae: *of your blessing desired by us; in Late Latin, a dat. agent is often used with a perf. pass.*

et necessārii...iūdicīi prōferendī: *of putting forward...the necessary judgment; as often happens, this gerundive phrase is equivalent to a gerund with a direct obj. (prōferendī necessārium iūdicium)*

dē cuius sacerdotē firmandō: *concerning the strengthening of whose priest; the antecedent is God; once again, the gerundive phrase is equivalent to a gerund with a direct obj. (dē firmandō sacerdotem)*

**Galla Placidia to seven African Bishops:
Augustine, Alypius, Euhodius, Donatian, Silvanus, Novatus,
and Deuterius
March 20, 419**

1. Pervēnisse ad Venerātiōnem Tuam certa est Pietās Nostra
adversus pāpam urbis Rōmae vitia cum castitāte pugnāre et huiusce
reī tam diūturnum esse cōnflīctum ut inter tot sacerdotēs, quī ad
synodum convēnerant,

adversus: regarding (prep. + acc)

castitās, -ātis f.: purity

certus, -a, -um: sure, fixed

cōnflīctus, -ūs m.: conflict

conveniō, -īre, -vēnī, -ventum:

come together, meet

diūturnus, -a, -um: long-lasting

papa, -ae m.: father; the pope

perveniō, -īre, -vēnī, -ventum:
arrive

pietās, -ātis f.: sense of duty

pugnō (1): fight

sacerdōs, -dōtis m.: priest

synodus, -ī f.: church council

tot: so many

venerātiō, -ōnis f.: veneration

vitium, -ī n.: fault, vice

Pervēnisse ad Venerātiōnem Tuam: *that it has come to Your Veneration (= you);*
the 2nd sg. is because Galla Placidia sent a copy of this letter to each of the seven
bishops; ind. statement introduced by *certa est* (“is certain”); this ind. statement in
turn introduces another: *vitia...pugnāre et...tam diuturnum esse cōnflītum* (“that
vices fight...and that the contest is so long-lasting”)

Pietās Nostra: *Our Piety;* Placidia is referring to herself

vitia cum castitāte pugnāre: *that vices are fighting with purity;* an abstract way of
referring to the two factions: that of Eulalius (whom she supported at the time)
and Boniface (whom she opposed at the time)

huiusce: *of this;* a form of *huius*, the *-ce* is an enclitic particle that adds emphasis
ut...(continued on next page) nōndum potuerit: result clause

quibusdam dissentientibus nōndum potuerit apostolicā
 praeceptiōne firmāta vīta praeferrī. 2. Tuam tamen sē interim bene
 scīre astipulantī quoque eā parte quae discrepat, sine dubitātiōne
 cōfessī sunt ut plānē fuerit manifestum expectārī Tuae iūdicium
 Sāncitātis,

apostolicus, -a, -um: apostolic, relating to the apostles	interim: meanwhile
astipulō, -āre, -atus: agree	iūdicium, -ī n.: judgment
cōnfiteor, -ērī, cōnfessus sum: confess; profess	manifestus, -a, -um: evident
discrepō (1): disagree	nōndum: not yet
dissentiō, -īre, -sensī, -sensus: disagree	praeceptiō, -ōnis f.: teaching; instruction
dubitātiō, -ōnis f.: uncertainty	praeferrō, -ferre, -tulī, -lātum: put forward
ex(s)pectō (1): expect, await	plānus, -a, -um: clear
firmō (1): strengthen	sāncitās, -ātis f.: sacredness; holiness

quibusdam dissentientibus: *because certain ones were disagreeing;* an abl. absolute with a causal sense

apostolicā praeceptiōne firmāta vīta: *a life strengthened by the apostolic teaching;* the “apostolic teaching” might be a reference to the outline of characteristics that should be looked for in a bishop in the Pauline letters 1 Tim. 3:2-7 and Titus 1:7-9

Tuam (vītam): obj. of *sē scīre* (“that they know”)

astipulantī...eā parte: *since that faction agrees;* abl. absolute

ut plānē fuerit manifestum expectārī Tuae iūdicium Sāncitātis: *that it was clearly evident that the judgment of your holiness would be awaited;* this noun clause is functioning as an ind. statement; *fuerit* (perf. subjunctive) is used impersonally with *manifestum*, which sets up the ind. statement *expectārī Tuae iūdicium Sāncitātis*

GALLA PLACIDIA

in cuius praesentiā prōmenda sententia differrētur, quī meritō vītae praecēdēns rēctē etiam ex trānsmarīnīs regiōnibus, ut iūdicāre possīs, expeteris.

differō, -ferre, distulī, dilātum:

delay

expetō, -ere, -īī, -ītum: seek out

iūdicō (1): judge

meritum, -ī n.: a merit

praesentia, -ae f.: presence

praecēdō, -ere, -cessī, -cessum:

precede; excel

prōmō, -ere, -mpsī, -mptum: put

forward

rēctus, -a, -um: straight; right

regiō, -ōnis f.: region

trānsmarīnus, -a, -um: overseas

quī: *who*; referring to the addressee(s) of the letter; it is the subject of the verb *expeteris* (“you who are being sought”)

meritō vītae: *in the merit of his life*; an abl. of respect with *praecēdēns*

ex trānsmarīnīs regiōnibus: *from overseas regions*; i.e., from Africa

ut iūdicāre possīs: purpose clause

3. Sed quamvīs sacra domnī germānī meī Augustī p̄ncipis ad Ītaliae synodum convocāns auctōritās nōn negligenda pervēnerit, socianda speciāliter etiam Serēnitātis Nostrae sc̄rīpta iūdicāmus, quibus precor ut dēsiderābilem aspectum Benedictiōnis Tuae sine excūsātiōne concēdēns omnipotentī Deō grātum iūdicēs hunc labōrem,

aspectus, -ūs m.: appearance	iūdicō (1): judge
auctōritās, -ātis f.: authority	neglegō, -ere, -lēxī, -lēctum: neglect
Augustus, -ī m.: Augustus; at this date a title for the emperor	omnipotēns, -tis: almighty
benedictiō, -ōnis f.: blessing	perveniō, -īre, -vēnī, -ventum: arrive
concēdō, -ere, -cessī, -cessum: grant	precor, -ārī, precātus sum: pray
convocō (1): convene	p̄ncipis, -cipis: emperor
dēsiderābilis, -e: desirable	quamvīs: although
excūsātiō, -ōnis f.: excuse	sacer, -cra, -crum: sacred
germānus, -a, -um: own; related by blood; brother/sister	serēnitās, -ātis f.: serenity
grātus, -a, -um: pleasing	sociō (1): ally with
Ītalia, -ae f.: Italy	speciālis, -e: specific, special
	synodus, -ī f.: synod, church council

domnī (= CL dominī) germānī meī Augustī p̄ncipis: *of my brother the emperor; referring to the Western emperor Honorius, who ruled 393-423 CE; this sentence is how we know this letter is written by Placidia, even though manuscripts attribute it to Honorius himself*

nōn negligenda: *[it is] not to be neglected; a pass. periphrastic construction that modifies auctōritās and is intensified by using litotes*

socianda (esse)...Serēnitātis Nostrae sc̄rīpta: *that the writings of Our Serenity (= me) must be allied; ind. statement introduced by iūdicāmus; Galla Placidia portrays her own request as an ally to the request of her brother*

quod et prō eximiō sacerdotē et prō s̄anctae v̄itae meritīs
sententiam prōlātūrus remūnerātiōnem vexātiōnis huius in
praemiō dīvīnō intellegis cōstitūtā.

Data XIII. Kal. Aprīl. Rāvennae.

Aprīlis, -is m.: of April	meritum, -ī n.: a merit
cōstituō, -ere, -stituī, -stitūtum: establish	praemium, -iī n.: reward
dīvīnus, -a, -um: divine	prōferō, -ferre, -tulī, -lātum: put forward
eximius, -a, -um: distinguished	Rāvenna, -ae f.: Ravenna (city)
intellegō, -ere, -lēxī, -lēctum: understand	remūnerātiō, -ōnis f.: repayment
Kalendae, -ārum f.: first day of the month	sacerdōs, -dōtis m.: priest
	vexātiō, -ōnis f.: hassle

quod...intellegis: *because...you understand*; explaining what makes the journey a
labōrem...grātum

sententiam prōlātūrus: *in order to put forward an opinion*; i.e., to vote; the fut.
pple. expresses purpose

remūnerātiōnem vexātiōnis huius in praemiō dīvīnō...cōstitūtā (esse):
that the repayment for this hassle has been established in a divine reward; ind.
statement following *intellegis*

Data: *sent*; Latin regularly uses the verb *dare* for sending letters

XIII. Kal. Aprīl.: *on the 13th day before the Kalends of April (i.e. March 20)*;

Roman dates are specified by counting backwards (inclusively) from one of
three named days in the month: the Kalends, the Nones, and the Ides. Because
the Kalends of April is the 1st, this date would be March 20.

Rāvennae: locative; Ravenna was the capital of the Western Empire for most of
the fifth century

Galla Placidia(?) to Paulinus of Nola
 March 20, 419 CE

Sānctō ac venerābilī patrī Paulīnō episcopō.

1. Iam tunc fuit apud nōs certa sententia nihil ab hīs sacerdotibus, quī ad synodum convēnerant, posse finīrī, cum Beātītūdō Tua dē corporis inaequālītāte causātā itineris nōn potuerit iniūriam sustinēre.

beātītūdō, -dinis f.: blessedness

causō (1): give as an excuse

certus, -a, -um: certain, fixed

conveniō, -īre, -vēnī, -ventum:

come together, meet

episcopus, -ī m.: bishop

finiō, -īre, -īvī, -ītum: limit;

finish, finalize

inaequālītās, -tātis f.: unevenness;

unfitness

iniūria, -ae f.: injury; harm

sacerdōs, -dōtis m.: priest

sustineō, -ēre, -tinuī, -tentum:

endure

synodus, -ī f.: synod, church

council

venerābilis, -e: venerable,

respected

Sānctō et venerābilī patrī Paulīnō episcopō: *To the holy and venerable father*

Bishop Paulinus; this is a dat. of address, common for the openings of letters

fuit...certa sententia: *it was a fixed opinion*; introduces an ind. statement

synodum: refers to a previous, inconclusive synod at Ravenna

cum...potuerit: *since Your Blessedness was not able*; causal cum clause with a verb in the perf. subjunctive

Beātītūdō Tua: *Your Blessedness*; referring to Paulinus; this is the nom. subject of the cum clause

dē: here means something like “as a result from” or “because of”

causātā: likely modifies *inaequālītāte*, but it could be nom. with *Beātītūdō Tua*; the verb *causō* is usually deponent in CL

Et per absentiam s̄anctī virī, nōn quidem optentūra, interim tamen vitia grātulantur, cum prāva et vetus ambitiō et cum benedictō virō s̄anctaeque vītae diū velit habēre certāmen et contrā haec apostolicae īnstitūtiōnis bona dē praesūmptīs per vim parietibus exīstimet cōnfidendum.

absentia, -ae f.: absence

ambitiō, -ōnis: election campaign

apostolicus, -a, -um: apostolic,
relating to the apostles

benedictus, -a, -um: blessed

certāmen, -inis n.: contest

cōnfidō, -ere, -fīs sum: rely
upon

diū: for a long time

exīstimō (1): value; reckon

grātulor, -ārī, -ātus sum: rejoice

īnstitūtiō, -ōnis f.: institution

obtimeō, -ēre, -tinuī, -tentum:
obtain; succeed

pariēs, -etis f.: wall

praesūmō, -ere, -sūmpsi, -sūmptum: take beforehand

prāvus, -a, -um: crooked

vetus, veteris: old

vitium, -ī n.: fault; vice

nōn quidem optentūra (= obtentūra): *not indeed about to succeed*; this participle anticipates the upcoming “vices” (*vitia*); the “vices” (*vitia*) are not going to succeed, although they are rejoicing now; the “vices” here are an abstract way of referring to the faction of Boniface

cum...ambitiō...et...velit...et...exīstimet: *since...ambition both wishes to...and reckons*; a causal *cum* clause with two main verbs (*velit* and *exīstimet*), which both have *ambitiō* as their subject

cum benedictō virō: a contest “with (i.e., against) a blessed man,” Eulalius

contrā haec apostolicae īnstitūtiōnis bona: the adj. (*haec*) and its noun (*bona*) sandwich the dependent gen. phrase (*apostolicae īnstitūtiōnis*)

dē praesūmptīs per vim parietibus: (*trust in*) walls taken by force; *cōnfidere* can take a dat.

cōnfidendum: *there must be trust in*; an impersonal pass. periphrastic

2. *Ō vērē digna causa, quam nōn nisi corōnae tuae beāta vīta discingat. Dilātum itaque iūdicium nūntiāmus ut dīvīna praecepta ex Venerātiōnis Tuae ōre prōmantur, quī ea secūtus implēstī. Nec potest alius eōrum praeceptōrum lātor existere, quam quī dignus apostolī discipulus approbāris speciāliter.*

apostolus, -ī m.: apostle	impleō, -ēre, -plēvī, -plētum:
approbō (1): approve	fulfill
beātus, -a, -um: happy, blessed	iūdicium, -iī n.: judgment
corōna, -ae f.: crown	lātor, -ōris m.: a bringer
differō, differre, distulī, dilātum:	nūntiō (1): announce
delay, defer	ō: oh! (exclamation)
discingō, -ere, -cīnxī, -cīnctum:	praeceptum, praeceptī n.:
ungird; untie	command
discipulus, -ī m.: student; follower	prōmō, -ere, -prōmpsī,
dignus, -a, -um: worthy	-prōmptum: bring forth
dīvīnus, -a, -um: divine	speciālis, -e: especially
existō, -ere, -stitī: come forth	venerātiō, -ōnis f.: veneration,
	highest respect
	vērē: truly

nōn nisi: *only*; lit. “not unless”

discingat: a potential subjunctive

Dilātum (esse): *has been deferred*; perf. pass. inf. of *differō*

nūntiāmus: sets up the ind. statement *Dilātum itaque iūdicium*

ut dīvīna praecepta ex Venerātiōnis Tuae ōre prōmantur: *so that the divine commands may be given from the mouth of Your Reverence*; a purpose clause

explaining a decision has been delayed so that Paulinus can give his opinion

ea: referring back to the *dīvīna praecepta*

implēstī: = *implē(vi)stī*

Nec potest alius...quam: *Nor could another...than*

3. Itaque, domine s̄ancte, meritō venerābilis pater, iūstus Deī famulus, dīvīnum opus contemptō labōre tribūtūrus hoc nōbīs vīsītātīōnis tuae, sī ita dīcendum est, mūnus indulgē,

contemnō, -ere, -temp̄sī,

-temptum: scorn

dīvīnus, -a, -um: divine

famulus, -ī m.: servant

indulgēō, -ere, -dulsī, -dultum:

grant

iūstus, -a, -um: just

meritō: deservedly

mūnus, -eris n.: duty, service

opus, -peris n.: labor

tribuō, -ere, -buī, -būtum: give, contribute

venerābilis, -e: venerable, respected

vīsītātīō, -ōnis f.: a visit

dīvīnum opus: *divine labor*; referring to Paulinus convincing the others at the synod; this word is the direct obj. of the participle *tribūtūrus*

contemptō labōre: *with labor being scorned*; abl. absolute, in reference to the effort of making the journey

tribūtūrus: *in order to grant*; fut. act. participle with a sense of purpose

hoc nōbīs...mūnus indulgē: *grant us this service*; imperative of *indulgere* because it is a direct command being issued by Galla Placidia to Paulinus to come to the synod; also the main verb of the clause

sī ita dīcendum est: *if it must be said*; lit. “so to speak” (in reference to calling his visit a *mūnus*); a conditional clause and pass. periphrastic

ut postpositīs omnibus, quoniam temperātī āeris tranquillitās suffrāgātur, synodō praefutūrus sine intermissiōne etiam dēsideriīs nostrīs et benedictiōnī, quam cupimus, tē praestāre dignēris.

āēr, āeris m.: air; weather

benedictiō, -ōnis f.: blessing

cupiō, -ere, -īvī, -ītum: desire

dēsiderium, -iī n.: longing, desire

dignō (1): deem worthy

intermissiō, -ōnis f.: interruption

postpōnō, -ere, -posuī, -positum:

put aside

praestō, -āre, -stitī, -statum:

stand before; (here) be present

praesum, -esse, -fuī: preside over
(+ dat.)

suffrāgor, -ārī, -ātus sum: vote (in support)

synodus, -ī f.: synod, church council

temperātus, -a, -um: temperate

tranquillitās, -ātis f.: tranquility

ut...dignēris: *so that you may deem it worthy*; purpose clause

quoniam...suffrāgātur: *since the tranquility of the temperate weather votes in support*; Placidia writes that the temperate weather of spring should make the journey easier

dēsideriīs nostrīs et benedictiōnī: *for our desires and the blessing*; dat. with *praestāre*, meaning Paulinus is asked to present himself for both of these things

tē praestāre: *that you be present*; the complementary inf. of *dignēris*; *tē* is the acc. subject of *praestāre*

ANICIA JULIANA

Anicia Juliana (461-527 CE) was an aristocratic woman in the Eastern Roman Empire. Juliana was the daughter of the Roman emperor Anicius Olybrius and Placidia (granddaughter of the empress Galla Placidia), and she had immense wealth and prestige even though her family was no longer in power. Yet she seems to have aimed to regain power, or at least to have her family ready to take advantage of any opportunities to do so. There was a plan for her to marry Gothic king Theoderic (who would become the father of Amalasuintha), but the marriage never took place. She later married Flavius Areobindus Dagalaiphus, with whom she had one son, Flavius Anicius Olybrius Junior. There was an attempt to put her husband on the imperial throne, and later her son as well, but neither attempt succeeded. Juliana seems to have served as a kind of counterweight to the emperors of her lifetime in various ways. During the rule of Anastasius (r. 491-518 CE), who had continued a split with the Roman Church in favor of the toleration of miaphysite Christians, Juliana was vehemently against miaphysitism and in favor of reunion with Rome. During the reigns of emperors Justin (r. 518-527 CE) and Justinian (r. 527-565 CE), both of whom were born as peasants, Juliana was a symbol of the old aristocracy.

Juliana is perhaps best known for building the monumental Church of Saint Polyeuctus, which was the largest church in Constantinople until Emperor Justinian (perhaps hoping to outdo

her) built Hagia Sophia. The Church of Saint Polyeuctus contained an epigram inscribed on the walls that lauded Juliana and compared her to former emperor Constantine and the biblical Solomon in her wisdom and philanthropy.¹³ She was also the patron of a magnificent illustrated codex of medical texts that still survives today: the Vienna Dioskourides.

Two of Anicia Juliana's letters survive in the *Collectiō Avellāna*; these are letters 164 (from 22 April 519 CE) and 198 (from 9 July 520 CE). Both letters were written to Pope Hormisdas concerning the Acacian Schism. The schism had begun over a disagreement in the nature of Christ. Some Christians believed that Jesus had a single nature, which was both human and divine. These Christians are sometimes called "miaphysite" from Greek *mia* ("one") and *physis* ("nature"). Other Christians believed that Christ had two natures, human and divine, within a single person. These Christians are sometimes called "Chalcedonian" since their belief was affirmed at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE. The Eastern Roman emperor Zeno had favored toleration of miaphysitism, as had Patriarch Acacius, the bishop of Constantinople. In consequence, Pope Felix III, the bishop of Rome and a Chalcedonian, excommunicated Acacius in 484 CE. In Juliana's letters, she expresses her support for Hormisdas and her hostility to the miaphysite Christians, whom she calls "rabid dogs" (*rabidōs canēs*). Her letters were part of a "barrage" sent to Hormisdas

¹³ The epigram was also copied down and survives in the *Greek Anthology* 1.10.

ANICIA JULIANA

regarding this schism.¹⁴ Other writers included fellow aristocrat Anastasia and Empress Euphemia, whose letters are likewise included in this anthology.¹⁵

Select Bibliography

Our Latin text comes from Günther 1898: 615 and 657-658, and there are English translations in Hillner 2019a: 238-239 and 241. On the life of Anicia Juliana, see *PLRE* II “Iuliana 3”; on her letters in particular see Hillner 2019a and 2019b; on her patronage of the Church of Saint Polyeuctus, see Stroth 2024, and of the illustrated Vienna Dioskourides codex, see Thomas 2019.

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¹⁴ Julia Hillner argues that such a “barrage” of letters would demonstrate to Hormisdas “unity at the imperial court and harmony between the emperor and individuals of influence in Constantinople” (2019b: 362).

¹⁵ For more on this letter barrage, see Hillner 2019a: 224-231 and 2019b: 362-363.

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Figure 6. Detail of portrait of Anicia Juliana, flanked by personified Magnanimity and Prudence, from the Vienna Diskourides Codex copied for her in 512/513 CE. It is the oldest surviving manuscript portrait of a patron. (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. med. gr. 1, fol. 6v).

Anicia Juliana to Pope Hormisdas

April 22, 519

Dominō beātissimō patrī Hormisdae Iūliāna Anicia.

Precibus Vestrae Beātitudinis adventū lēgātōrum p̄ncipālis sēdis apostolicae,

adventus, -ūs m.: arrival

apostolicus, -a, -um: apostolic
(relating to an apostle)

beātitudō, -inis f.: blessedness

beātus, -a, -um: happy, blessed

Hormisdas, -ae m.: Hormisdas
(name)

lēgātus, -ī m.: legate, ambassador

prex, precis f.: prayer, request

p̄ncipālis, -e: principal

sēdēs, -is f.: see (ecclesiastical)

Dominō beātissimō patrī Hormisdae Iūliāna Anicia: *Juliana Anicia (says hello)*
to the blessed lord Father Hormisdas, with an implied salūtem dicit

Precibus: *because of the prayers; abl. of cause*

Vestrae Beātitudinis: *of Your Blessedness, referring to Hormisdas; the*
second-person pl. for a sg. person as a form of respect is generally medieval

adventū lēgātōrum: *at the arrival of the legates; abl. of time when*

p̄ncipālis sēdis apostolicae: *of the chief apostolic see (i.e. Rome); a “see” is a*
region of the church governed by a bishop

ēlīsīs errōribus haereticōrum ūnitāte fideī catholicae convēnimus,
 congregātī simul ad ūbera māterna ecclēsiae in diē sānctae
 resurrēctiōnis.

catholicus, -a, -um: universal,

Catholic

congregō (1): congregate

conveniō, -īre, -vēnī, -ventum:

convene, come together

ecclēsia, -ae f.: church, (here) the

Church

ēlīdō, -ere, -līsī, -līsūm: shatter

haereticus, -ī m.: heretic

māternus, -a, -um: maternal

simul: at once

ūber, -eris n.: breast

ūnitās, -ātis f.: unity

ēlīsīs errōribus haereticōrum: *with the errors of heretics shattered*; abl. absolute; the “heretics” here are the miaphysite Christians, who believed that Christ had a single nature (which was both human and divine), while Hormisdas and Anicia Juliana believed that Christ had two natures (human and divine) in a single person

ūnitāte fideī catholicae convēnimus: *we have come together in the unity of the catholic faith*; not referring specifically to the Catholic Church in the modern sense, but rather the Church as a whole

convēnimus, congregātī: *we came together, having gathered*; *congregātī* modifies the implicit subject of *convēnimus*; it seems that Hormisdas has requested this gathering in order to celebrate or formalize the return to communion between the Churches of Rome and Constantinople, which had been broken in the Acacian Schism when Pope Felix III had excommunicated Patriarch Acacius of Constantinople for his toleration of miaphysite Christianity

ūbera māterna ecclēsiae: *the maternal breasts of the Church*; receiving spiritual nourishment from the Church, presumably communion

in diē sānctae resurrēctiōnis: *on the day of the holy resurrection*; i.e., Easter; *diē* is an abl. of time when, which would not take a prep. in CL

2. Quāpropter stilō venerātiōnis alloquentēs Sānctitātem Vestram admonēmus ut intimētis dēstinātīs ā vōbīs reverentissimīs virīs nullō modō abscēdere,

abscēdō, -ere, -cessī, -cessum: depart, retreat	quāpropter: wherefore, for which reason
admoneō, -ēre, -uī, -itum: remind	resurrēctiō, -ōnis f.: resurrection reverentus, -a, -um: reverent
alloquor, -loquī, -locūtus sum: address, greet	sānctitās, -ātis f.: sanctity, holiness stilus, -ī m.: stylus (writing implement); language
dēstinō (1): choose, appoint	venerātiō, -ōnis f.: veneration
intimō (1): tell	

stilō venerātiōnis: *in reverent language; lit. with language of veneration; the stilō is an abl. of means with alloquentēs*

alloquentēs: *addressing, pres. act. participle; subject of admonēmus*

Sānctitātem Vestram: *Your Sanctity; i.e., Hormisdas; direct obj. of alloquentēs*

admonēmus: *sets up the ind. command ut intimētis*

ut intimētis: *that you tell; ind. command; the verb intimāre here takes an ind. obj. (dēstinātīs ā vōbīs reverentissimīs virīs) and a complementary infinitive (abscēdere)*

antequam, sicut pervideritis, ut oportet, firmentur ea, quae bene disposita sunt ab eis, ut amputatis omnibus reliquiis transit erroris impendii Vestrae Beatitudeinis roborata unitas ad effectum perpetuum deducatur.

amputō (1): cut away

antequam: before

beātitudō, -inis f.: blessedness

dēducō, -ere, -dūxī, -ductum:
lead

dispōnō, -ere, -posuī, -positum:
arrange

effectus, -ūs m.: effect, purpose

firmō (1): strengthen

impēdium, -iī n.: expense; (here)
effort

oportet, -ēre, -tuit: be fitting

perpetuus, -a, -um: perpetual

pervideō, -ēre, -vidī, -vīsum:
observe

reliquus, -a, -um: remnant

rōborō (1): strengthen

sicut: just as

trānseō, -īre, -iī, -itum: cross, pass
over

ūnitās, -ātis f.: unity

antequam...firmentur ea: *before...those things might be firmed up; ea* is the subject of *firmentur* and the antecedent of *quae*; the conjunction *antequam* regularly takes the subjunctive when it refers to a future (and hence uncertain) action

ab eis: refers to the *reverentissimis viris*

ut...deducatur: purpose clause

amputatis omnibus reliquiis transit erroris: *with all the remnants of the transient error cut away; amputatis...reliquis* is an abl. absolute

Anicia Juliana to Pope Hormisdas

July 9, 520

Dominō beātissimō atque apostolicae sēdis probātissimō pontificī
Hormisdasē pāpae patrī Iūliāna Anicia.

Quae p̄ma sunt, Tuae Beātitudinī salūtātiōnis obsequium
persolvimus, optantēs ut hanc pāginam tuīs venerandīs optutibus
dīvinitās faciat recēnsērī

apostolicus, -a, -um: apostolic
(relating to an apostle)

beātitudō, -inis f.: blessedness

beātus, -a, -um: happy, blessed

dīvinitās, -ātis f.: divinity

Hormisdas, -ae m.: Hormisdas
(name)

obsequium, -iī n.: compliance

optō (1): hope, wish

optūtus, -ūs (= CL obtutus) m.:
sight, eye

pāgina, -ae f.: page

pāpa, -ae m.: father, papa; pope

persolvō, -ere, -solvī, -solūtum:
fulfill

pontifex, -icis m.: priest

probātus, -a, -um: esteemed

recēnsēō, -ēre, -suī, -sum:
examine

salūtātiō, -ōnis f.: a greeting

sēdēs, -is f.: see (ecclesiastical)

venerōr, -ārī, -ātus sum: revere

Dominō...Iūliāna Anicia: *salūtem dicit* implied

Quae p̄ma sunt: *First of all*; lit. “Which things are first”

Tuae Beātitudinī: *to Your Blessedness*; title referring to Hormisdas

salūtātiōnis...persolvimus: *we fulfill the compliance of a greeting*; essentially “we greet”

optantēs: pres. act. participle, referring back to the “we” in *persolvimus*

ut...recēnsērī: *that divinity makes this page to be examined by your venerable eyes*;
subject is *dīvinitās*, main verb is *faciat*, *hanc pāginam* is the direct obj. of *faciat*,
recēnsērī is the pres. pass. inf. complementing the causative *faciat*

ANICIA JULIANA

et prō suae ecclēsiae vigōre augmenta salūtāria vestrae vītae suffrāgāre dignētur, quātenus tē pervigilī poterit contrā adversōs et rabidōs canēs status ecclēsiae vindicārī.

<p>adversus, -a, -um: adverse, opposite</p> <p>augmentum, -ī n.: augmentation</p> <p>canis, -is m./f.: dog</p> <p>contrā: against</p> <p>dignor, -ārī, -ātus: deem worthy</p> <p>ecclēsia, -ae f.: church, (here) the Church</p> <p>pervigil, -ilis: watchful</p>	<p>quātenus: to what point, to which extent</p> <p>rabidus, -a, -um: rabid</p> <p>salūtāris, -e: healthy, advantageous</p> <p>status, -ūs m.: status, state</p> <p>suffrāgō (1): support</p> <p>vigor, -ōris m.: power, strength</p> <p>vindicō (1): liberate</p>
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augmenta salūtāria: *advantageous augmentations*; neut. acc. pl., direct obj. of *suffrāgāre*

vestrae vītae: *of your life*; referring to Hormisdas; in this letter Anicia Juliana shifts between referring to Hormisdas with the more classical second-person sg. (e.g. *Tuae...tuīs...tē*) and the more medieval honorific second-person plural

dignētur: subject is *dīvinitās*

tē pervigilī: abl. absolute; *pervigilī* is a third declension adj.

poterit: subject is *status ecclēsiae*

adversōs: *opponents*; substantive adj.

rabidōs canēs: *rabid dogs*; referring to the miaphysite Christians whom she referred to in the previous letter as “heretics”

status ecclēsiae: *the standing of the Church*; refers to the position that Christ had two natures (human and divine) in one person, which had been the holding of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE; the miaphysite Christians held rather that Christ had a single nature (both human and divine)

vindicārī: complementary inf. with *poterit*

Etenim, venerābilis pater, quod dē nostrae fideī integritāte cūram geris, vicārīūs glōriōsī Petrī apostolī ista conveniunt, cui Dominus pāscendārum ovium iniūnxit officium.

apostolus, -ī m.: apostle

officium, -iī n.: job, duty

conveniō, -īre, -vēnī, -ventum:

ovis, -is f.: sheep

fit, suit (+ dat.)

pāscō, -ere, pāvī, pāstum: feed

etenim: for in fact

Petrus, Petrī m.: Peter (name)

glōriōsus, -a, -um: glorious

venerābilis, -e: respected,

iniungō, -ere, -iūnxī, -iūnctum:

venerable

impose

vicārius, -iī m.: vicar

integritās, -ātis f.: integrity

quod: *because*

quod...geris: subject of this clause is the “you” from *geris*; direct obj. of *geris* is *cūram*

dē nostrae fideī integritāte: *concerning the integrity of our faith*; *nostrae* is used as a larger idea of “we” here, not just referring to Juliana but possibly everyone in the faith

cūram geris: *you take care* (lit. *you bear the responsibility*)

glōriōsī Petrī apostolī: *of the glorious apostle Peter*; gen. with *vicārīs*

Dominus: while this word is used to refer to Hormisdas earlier in the letter, it now refers to God

pāscendārum ovium: gerundive phrase, “of feeding the sheep,” equivalent to a gerund with a direct object (*pāscendī ovēs*)

2. Cognōscat ergō tua prō nōbīs sāncta sollicitūdō nōs firmiter tenēre rēctae fideī firmitātem immōbilem, prō quā, nē eius violārēmus sānctimōniam, hāctenus repugnāvimus.

cognōscō, -ere, -nōvī, -nitum:

know

firmitās, -ātis: strength, firmness

firmius: more strongly, firmly

(comp. adv.)

hāctenus: thus far

immōbilis, -e: immovable

rēctus, -a, -um: upright, correct

repugnō (1): oppose, fight against

sānctimōnia, -ae f.: sanctity,

holiness

sollicitūdō, -inis f.: concern,

responsibility

violō (1): violate

Cognōscat...sollicitūdō: *therefore, let your sacred concern for us recognize; cognōscat*

is a jussive subjunctive and introduces the following ind. statement

nōs firmiter tenēre: *that we hold more strongly;* ind. statement introduced by *cognōscat*

rēctae fideī firmitātem immōbilem: the gen. *rēctae fideī* is dependent on *firmitātem immōbilem*

nē eius violārēmus sānctimōniam: negative purpose clause; *eius* refers to *rēctae fideī*

ANICIA JULIANA

Quod vērō tuus apostolātus prō tantae pietātis causā cūram ferre praecēpit, in quantum potuimus, prō nostrīs vīribus, nōn dēsīvimus spīritū lēvitātis adversōs admonēre Deī nōbīs grātiā cooperante.

admoneō, -ēre, -uī, -itum:

admonish

adversus, -a, -um: adverse,

opposite

apostolātus, -ūs m.: apostolate

cooperor, -ārī, -ātus: cooperate

dēsīnō, -ere, -sīī, -situm: cease

grātiā, -ae f.: grace

lēvitās, -ātis f.: smoothness,
gentleness

pietās, -ātis f.: piety, sense of duty

praeceptiō, -ere, -cēpī, -ceptum:
order

quantum: as much as

spīritus, -ūs m.: spirit

vērō: but

Quod vērō: *but because*

tuus apostolātus: *your apostolate*; refers to Hormisdas' term as pope

prō tantae pietātis causā: *for the cause of such piety*

cūram: direct obj. of *ferre praecēpit*

in quantum potuimus: *in as much as we were able*

prō nostrīs vīribus: *with all our strength*; lit. *in accordance with our strength*

spīritū lēvitātis: abl. of manner

adversōs: *opponents*; substantive adj., direct obj. of *admonēre*

Deī nōbīs grātiā cooperante: *with the grace of God cooperating with us*; abl. absolute

ANASTASIA

Anastasia lived in Constantinople during the early sixth century, where she traveled in the same circles as Anicia Juliana. She married a certain Pompeius, who was the nephew of the Eastern Emperor Anastasius. Like Anicia Juliana, she was against miaphysite Christianity and wanted a reunion with the Roman Church (see the author introduction for Anicia Juliana). Her husband Pompeius was executed, along with Anicia Juliana's son Olybrius, for his role in the Nika riots: an uprising against the emperor Justinian in 532 CE. After the death of Pompeius, Anastasia founded a monastery on the Mount of Olives just outside Jerusalem and lived out the rest of her life as its abbess.

Anastasia's sole surviving letter is addressed to Pope Hormisdas, who had reached out to her about ending the Acacian Schism. Her letter was evidently sent in April of 520 CE as part of a batch of letters, including ones by Justin (the emperor), John (bishop of Constantinople), Pompeius (her husband), and Anicia Juliana.¹⁶ The letter is preserved in the *Collectiō Avellāna* as Letter 165.

¹⁶ For more on this letter batch, see Hillner 2019b: 362-363.

ANASTASIA

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Anastasia to Pope Hormisdas

22 April 519 CE

Dominō sānctō et beātissimō patrī patrum Hormisdas,
archiepiscopō ūniversālī ecclēsiae Anastasia.

Dīvinī mūneris illūxisse nōbīs grātiam meritō profitēmur,
apostolātūs vestrī reverentiam in sānctō corde nostrī tenēre

apostolātus, -ūs m.: apostleship	illūceō, -ēre, -lūxī, -lūctum:
archiepiscopus, -ī m.: archbishop	illuminate, shine on (+ dat.)
beātus, -a, -um: blessed	meritō (adv.): deservedly
cor, cordis n.: heart	mūnus, -eris n.: gift; duty
dīvinus, -a, -um: divine	profiteor, -ērī, -fessus sum:
ecclēsia, -ae f.: church	profess
grātia, -ae f.: favor; gratitude	reverentia, -ae f.: reverence
Hormisdas, -ae m.: Hormisdas	ūniversālis, -e: universal

Dominō...Anastasia: *salūtem dicit* implied

grātiam: subject of *illūxisse*; modified by *dīvinī mūneris* (“of the divine gift”); the meaning is a little opaque, but Anastasia seems to be saying that she feels God’s grace shining on her, with the cause expressed by the circumstantial participle *nōscentēs* (“because we know”)

apostolātūs vestrī reverentiam: *the reverence of your apostleship*; = you; Anastasia uses the second person pl. forms throughout her letter as a form of respect, which is a generally medieval usage

in sānctō corde: *in (your) holy heart*; that is, in the heart of Hormisdas

nostrī tenēre (continued on next page) memoriam: *remembers us (lit. “holds the memory of us”)*; ind. statement, whose subject is *reverentiam*

memoriam pāginālī assertātiōne nōscētēs; vērācī namque spē cōnfīditur supernae misericordiae propitiātiōnem dē pontificālī intercessiōne subsistere, domine beātissime et apostolicō honōre suscipiende pater.

assertātiō, -ōnis f.: assertion
 apostolicus, -a, -um: apostolic
 beātus, -a, -um: blessed
 cōnfīdō, -ere, -fīsum: trust
 honor, -ōris m.: honor; office
 intercessiō, -ōnis f.: mediation,
 intervention
 memoria, -ae f.: memory
 misericordia, -ae f.: mercy, pity
 namque: for indeed
 nōscō, -ere, nōvī, nōtum: know

pāginālī, -e: on a page
 pontificālī, -e: pontifical
 propitiātiō, -ōnis f.: propitiation,
 appeasement
 subsistō, -ere, -stitī: stand firm,
 persist
 supernus, -a, -um: celestial, divine
 suscipiō, -ere, -cēpī, -ceptum:
 take, receive
 vērāx, -ācis: true

pāginālī assertātiōne: *through (your) written assertion; an abl. of means with nōscētēs*

nōscētēs: *because we know; this circumstantial participle introduces the ind. statement reverentiam...tenēre...memoriam*

cōnfīditur: *it is trusted*

supernae... subsistere: *(that) the propitiation of divine mercy through pontifical intervention will stand firm; Anastasia is referring to Hormisdas's role in the resolution of the Acacian Schism*

dē pontificālī intercessiōne: *dē pontificālī intercessiōne is an abl. of means, which often uses a dē in post-classical Latin*

domine beātissime: *voc. with pater referring to Hormisdas*

apostolicō honōre suscipiende: *this gerundive phrase is equivalent to a gerund with a direct obj. (= suscipiende apostolicum honōrem, "undertaking the apostolic office"); we would expect the apostolicō honōre to agree with the voc. suscipiende in this construction*

2. Pervigilēs vestrārum ōrātiōnum excubiae et mīranda
victōriōsissimī p̄ncipis fidēs splendōre catholicō semper irradiāns
diū expetītam sacrōsāctīs ecclēsīis concordiam p̄cis restituit,

catholicus, -a, -um: universal;

Catholic

concordia, -ae f.: harmony

diū: for a long time

ecclēsia, -ae f.: church

excubiae, -arum f.: guard, watch

expetō, -ere, -īvī (-iī), -ītum:

seek, strive for

irradiō, -āre: radiate

mīrandus, -a, -um: wonderful

ōrātiō, -ōnis f.: prayers

pervigil, -is: ever watchful

p̄nceps, -cipis m.: chief, leader;
(here) emperor

restituō, -ere, -uī, -ūtum: restore

sacrōsāctus, -a, -um: sacrosanct,
sacred, most holy

splendor, -ōris m.: splendor

victōriōsus, -a, -um: victorious

mīranda: modifies *fidēs*

victōriōsissimī p̄ncipis: referring to Justin I, the emperor at the time

splendōre catholicō semper irradiāns: the participle *irradiāns* is modifying
mīranda fidēs; the *splendōre catholicō* is an abl. of means

sacrōsāctīs ecclēsīis concordiam p̄cis: *the harmony of peace to the sacrosanct
churches*; Anastasia is mentioning the reunion of the churches in Rome and
Constantinople

restituit: the subject is both *excubiae* and *fidēs*; the verb is sg. simply in agreement
with the nearest of the two

quam omnibus triumphīs suīs solidissimē firmātīs invictum iūre exultat praetulisse vēxillum, ideōque illībāta vestrae paternitātis sānctimōnia prō incolomitāte atque prōsperitāte praedictī domnī nostrī Augustī vōta precēsque omnipotentī Deō offerre indēsinentī continuātiōne persistat,

Augustus, -ī m.: (here) emperor
continuātiō, -ōnis f.: continuity
exultō (1): exult; rejoice
firmō (1): affirm, declare; support
ideō: for this reason
illībātus, -a, -um: undiminished
**incolomitās (= CL incolumitās),
 -ātis f.:** safety
indēsinentis, -entis: ceaseless
invictus, -a, -um: unconquerable
iūs, iūris n.: right
offerō, -ferre, obtulī, oblātum:
 offer

omnipotēns, -ntis: almighty
paternitās, -ātis f.: fatherly care
persistō, -ere, -stitī: persist
praedīcō, -ere, -dīxī, -dictum: say
 before, aforementioned
praefērō, -ferre, -tulī, -lātum:
 carry, bear before
prex, precis f.: prayer
sānctimōnia, -ae f.: sanctity
triumphus, -ī m.: triumph
vēxillum, -ī n.: flag; standard
vōtum, -ī n.: vow

quam...invictum iūre exultat praetulisse vēxillum: *which (it) exults to have carried the rightly invincible standard before it;* this clause is somewhat unclear, and editors have suspected a textual problem; the subject is presumably still *fidēs* (from the previous clause), and the verb *exultat* introduces an ind. statement in which the subject acc. is *quam* (antecedent is *concordiam*), the verb is *praetulisse*, and the obj. is the *invictum...vēxillum*

omnibus triumphīs...firmātīs: abl. absolute

sānctimōnia: subject of *persistat*, which is a jussive subjunctive

domnī: = CL *dominī*

vōta precēsque: direct obj. of *offerre persistat*; ind. obj. is *omnipotentī Deō*

offerre: complementary inf. with *persistat*

indēsinentī: abl. with *continuātiōne*

ut ineffabilem tantōrum bonōrum grātiām, quam ipse piīs eius
sēnsibus īnspīrāvit, ad futūrae quoque beātitudinis prōfectum
cōservāre dignētur.

beātitudō, -īnis f.: happiness,
blessedness
cōservō (1): preserve
dignor, -ārī, -ātus: deign, deem
worthy
futurūs, -a, -um: future
grātia, -ae f.: favor; gratitude

ineffābilis, -e: unutterable
īnspīrō (1): inspire, breathe into (+
dat.)
pius, -a, -um: pious, dutiful
prōfectus, -ūs m.: success, sake
sēnsus, -ūs m.: sense, feeling, habit
of mind

ut...dignētur: *so that he may deign; purpose clause*

ineffabilem tantōrum bonōrum grātiām: *the inexpressible favor of such great
things; the grātiām is the antecedent of quam*

quam ipse...beātitudinis prōfectum: *which he inspired in the mind of him towards
the success of future happiness*

ipse: God

eius: the emperor, Justin

cōservāre dignētur: the implicit subject is God, and the obj. is the
ineffabilem...grātiām

3. Domnō etiam iugālī filiō vestrō et mihi pecūliārī cultrīcī vestrae cum subole, quam nōbīs dominus dōnāre dignātus est, ā vestrō pontificātū ōrātiō benigniter impendātur, cuius suffrāgātiōne dīvīnī favōris prōtēctiō nōbīs clēmēter aspīret.

aspīrō (1): breathe, blow upon;
assist (+ dat.)

benigniter: kindly

clēmēter: mercifully, calmly

cultrīx, -īcis f.: cultivator;
supporter

dignor, -ārī, -ātus: deign, deem
worthy

dīvīnus, -a, -um: divine

dōnō (1): give, bestow, grant

favor, -ōris m.: favor

impendō, -ere, -ī, -sum: lay out,
expend; pay out

iugālīs, -e: of a yoke, yoked
together; through marriage

ōrātiō, -ōnis f.: prayer

pecūliārīs, -e: one's own,
belonging to one; special

pontificātus, -ūs m.: pontificate

prōtēctiō, -ōnis f.: protection

subolēs, -is f.: offspring

suffrāgātiō, -ōnis f.: support

Domnō (= CL dominō)...**filiō vestrō**: Hormisdas was married and had a son before becoming the pope; this was before clerical celibacy was standard, and in any case it may be that his wife had died

filiō...et mihi: ind. objects of *ōrātiō...impēdātur* ("let a prayer be said," lit., "let a prayer be paid out"); *mihi* is taken with *subole* (lit., "to me with my offspring")

quam nōbīs...dignātus est: *which the Lord has thought worthy to give to us*; referring to Anastasia's offspring

cuius suffrāgātiōne: *through the support of which*; abl. of means, with *ōrātiō* as the antecedent of the rel. pronoun

cuius suffrāgātiōne...clēmēter adspīret: rel. clause of purpose clause with *prōtēctiō* as subject

EUPHEMIA

Euphemia's birth name was Lupicina, and she was probably born in the late fifth century outside the bounds of the empire, since Procopius, her contemporary, describes her as a "barbarian" (*Secret History* 6.17). She had been an enslaved concubine before being bought by Justin, a peasant and soldier who freed her and took her as his wife (*Secret History* 6.17). Justin eventually became the Eastern Roman Emperor, ruling in Constantinople from 518 to 527 CE. Upon becoming empress, Lupicina took the name Euphemia. Euphemia supported Justin's efforts to end the Acacian Schism (see the author introduction for Anicia Juliana) and reunite with the Church in Rome. Among the few things known about Euphemia's life as an empress is that she would not allow the future emperor Justinian (nephew of Justin) to marry Theodora, who had been a sex worker. Justinian did marry Theodora after the death of Euphemia, and Theodora later received letters from Amalasuintha and Gudeliva, which are printed below in this edition.

As part of the effort to end the Acacian Schism, Justin organized several batches of letters to Pope Hormisdas, which included the letters by Anicia Juliana and Anastasia. Euphemia's one surviving letter is part of the same campaign addressed to Hormisdas. The letter praises Hormisdas for his efforts on behalf of the "right faith" (*rēctae fidei*) and asks for his prayers for herself, her husband, and the state. It is Letter 194 in the *Collēctiō Avellāna*.

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Euphemia to Pope Hormisdas
9 July 519 CE

Eufīmia Augusta Hormisdae pāpae.

Beātītūdinis Tuae litterās grātō iocundōque suscēpimus animō.

Augusta, -ae f.: empress (title)

beātītūdō, -īnis f.: blessedness

grātus, -a, -um: grateful

iōcundus, -a, -um (= iūcundus):
 pleasant; delighted

litterae, -ārum f.: a letter

pāpa, -ae m.: father; pope

suscipiō, -ere, -cēpī, -ceptum:

receive

Eufīmia: = Euphēmia

Eufīmia...pāpae: *salūtem dicit* implied

Beātītūdinis Tuae: *of Your Blessedness (= you)*; dependent on *litterās*

litterās: as usual, a letter (epistle) is grammatically pl.

animō: here, “heart”

Quem etenim nōn solum apostolicae sēdis auctōritās celebrat sed vītāe quoque commendat integritās et studiōsa rēctae fideī sollertia, huius verba quis nōn libentissimīs suscipiet auribus?

apostolicus, -a, -um: apostolic

auctōritās, -ātis f.: authority

auris, -is f.: ear

celebrō (1): celebrate, praise

commendō (1): commend

etenim: for

integritās, -ātis f.: integrity

libēns, -tis: pleased, joyful

rēctus, -a, -um: upright; proper;

orthodox

sēdēs, -is f.: seat; see (area under a bishop's jurisdiction)

sollertia, -ae f.: expertise; care

solum: only

studiōsus, -a, -um: studious, zealous

suscipiō, -ere, -cēpī, -ceptum:

receive

Quem: *Whom*; the antecedent is *huius* below (referring to Hormisdas)

nōn solum...sed quoque: *not only (auctōritās)...but also (integritās et studiōsa sollertia)*

apostolicae sēdis: *apostolic see*; area under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome

rēctae fideī: Euphemia is referring to their shared belief in Christ having two

natures (divine and human), which had been affirmed at the Council of

Chalcedon in 451 CE; several previous Eastern Roman emperors and patriarchs

of Constantinople had tolerated miaphysitism, which is the belief in Christ

having a single nature (which is both divine and human)

huius: antecedent of *Quem*; for a smoother translation in English, start with this clause, then continue with *Quem* (at the beginning of the sentence)

quis: *someone*; the *quis* here is indefinite

suscipiet auribus: *hear*; lit. “receive by means of ears”

2. Igitur poscimus ac monēmus ut ōrātiōnibus vestrīs numquam excēdat nōmen meum ac praecipuē serēnissimī coniugis nostrī, sed tam utrīque nostrum quam reī pūblīcae supernum precibus vestrīs placētur praesidium.

coniūnx, -iugis m./f.: spouse

excēdō, -ere, -cessī, -cessum:
depart

moneō, -ēre, -uī, -itum: remind

ōrātiō, -ōnis f.: prayer

placō (1): reconcile, restore; to
make (something) favorably
disposed (to something)

poscō, -ere, -oscī: ask, request

praecipuē: especially, chiefly, most
of all

praesidium, -iī n.: protection

prex, precis f.: prayer

rēs pūblīca, reī pūblīcae f.: state

serēnus, -a, -um: serene, bright

supernus, -a, -um: celestial, divine

poscimus ac monēmus: *we ask and remind [you]; refers to Hormisdas*

ut...excēdat: ind. command

ōrātiōnibus vestrīs: *from your prayers; abl. of separation; Euphemia had used the more classical second-person sg. form earlier (Tuae), but here uses the second-person plural as an honorific, which is a more medieval construction*

nōmen meum ac praecipuē serēnissimī coniugis nostrī: *my name and especially (the name) of our (= my) most serene spouse; referring to the emperor Justin; the nōmen is implicitly taken with the following genitive as well, and the first person pl. is being used for the sg., as is common in Latin of all eras*

sed: *but (rather)*

tam...quam: “so much”...“as well as”

utrīque nostrum: *for each of us*

placētur: here, “granted” may be an appropriate translation

AMALASUINTHA

Born in Ravenna, Italy, around 495 CE, Amalasuintha ruled the Ostrogothic kingdom as regent (526–534 CE), then as queen (534–535 CE), redefining female rulership in late antiquity.

In 493 CE, Theoderic the Great had successfully led the Ostrogoths in an invasion of Italy, where he named himself king and sought to establish harmony between the Goths and the Romans. Amalasuintha was the only child of Theoderic and his wife, Audeflada. She was raised under heavy Roman influence, and she was well-educated and fluent in Latin, Greek, and Gothic. Upon her husband Eutharic's early death, her son, Athalaric, became the heir to the throne. But when Theoderic died in 526 CE and Athalaric was only 10 years of age, Amalasuintha stepped up as regent, taking over management of the kingdom.

Amalasuintha was widely acknowledged as a successful and capable ruler. Yet she faced resistance from conservative Gothic aristocracy, who opposed both the queen's pro-Roman stance and female power in a male-dominated monarchy. With the kingdom fraught with internal tension and external threats from invading tribes, Amalasuintha sought out alliances with the Roman Senate and the newly ascended Byzantine Emperor Justinian I. When Athalaric's health seriously declined in 534 CE (he died in the same year), Amalasuintha formulated a plan to continue ruling in her own right. She created the *cōnsortium regnī*, a paradigm of power

drawn from imperial examples that allowed her to legitimize her status while giving some deference to conservative Gothic tradition. She appointed her cousin Theodahad as consort, not in the sense of husband and wife, but as male and female co-rulers and, most notably, with a reversal of gender roles: Amalasuintha held the typically male position of political governance, while Theodahad would hold the typically female position of consultation and support. The arrangement did not last long. Theodahad betrayed and imprisoned Amalasuintha on an island in Lake Bolsena, where she was murdered in May of 535 CE. Having been in negotiations with the queen, Justinian took Amalasuintha's death as a pretext for his long-desired invasion of the Ostrogothic kingdom, thus beginning the Gothic War (535-554 CE) that would lead to the Eastern Roman Empire's costly reclamation of Italy.

Our anthology includes three of Amalasuintha's letters from Cassiodorus's *Epistulae Variae* that give a glimpse into her political career and ruling image.¹⁷ In the first, she addresses a salutation to Theodora (*Variae* 10.10), asking after the empress's welfare while mentioning the ambassadors that she had sent to Justinian. The second letter ("to the Roman Senate," *Variae* 10.3) was written during one of the most significant turning points of her rule: in

¹⁷ There is one short Latin letter of Amalasuintha from the *Variae* (10.8) that we did not print, which is addressed to Justinian and concerns the acquisition of some statues. Amalasuintha also has two surviving letters in Greek, which are preserved in Procopius's *History of the Wars* 4.5.19-25 (to Belisarius), 5.3.17-28 (to Justinian).

AMALASUINTHA

light of her son's death, and to solidify her own position, she had just appointed her cousin Theodahad as co-ruler, and she entreats the Roman Senate to support her decision. In the third letter, she writes to Justinian (*Variae* 10.1) in order to inform him of Athalaric's death and her promotion of Theodahad, for which she hopes to have Justinian's approval.

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AMALASUINTHA



Figure 7. Ivory diptych (outer boards of a writing tablet), 530 CE, which celebrates the consulship of Rufus Gennadius Probus Orestes. The figures in each panel are identical. Probus (seated) is flanked by personifications of Rome and Constantinople. At the top of each panel are busts of a teenage King Athalaric (left) and his mother and regent, Queen Amalasuintha (right). (Victoria and Albert Museum)

Queen Amalasuintha to Empress Theodora

c. 534 CE

Theodoraē Augustae Amalasuintha Rēgīna.

Cum prōpositī nostrī sit illa quaerere quae probantur ad glōriam
piī prīncipis pertinēre,

Augusta, -ae f.: empress (title)

glōria, -ae f.: glory

pertineō, -ēre, -tinuī: pertain to

pius, -a, -um: pious, dutiful

prīnceps, -cipis m.: prince; ruler;
(here) emperor

probō (1): approve

prōpositum, -ī n.: plan, purpose,
intention

rēgīna, -ae f.: queen

Theodoraē Augustae Amalasuintha Rēgīna (salūtem dicit): *Queen*

Amalasuintha sends greetings (lit. “says ‘health’”) *to Empress Theodora*; the *salūtem dicit* is implicit, which is common in Latin letters

Cum prōpositī nostrī sit: *Although it is (of) our intention*; *prōpositī nostrī* is a gen. of quality; *Cum* is used in a concessive sense; Amalasuintha begins this letter with a line roughly meaning, “Although it is my plan to reach out to the Emperor, it is also proper to send my respects to you, Theodora”

illa...quae probantur ad glōriam piī prīncipis pertinēre: *those things which are approved to pertain to the glory of a pious emperor* (i.e. things related to the administration of state); *glōriam piī prīncipis* refers to Emperor Justinian I; *illa* is substantive, a direct object of *quaerere* and antecedent of *quae*; these unspecified “things” are presumably what Amalasuintha had her ambassadors request from Justinian

dignum est vōs sermōne venerārī, quās bonīs omnibus cōnstat semper augērī. Concordia nōn est sōla praesentium: quīn immō illī sē melius respiciunt quī animī cāritāte sē coniungunt.

augeō, -ēre, auxī, auctum: augment, increase	dignus, -a, -um: worthy, proper
cāritās, -tātis f.: love, affection	immō: on the contrary
concordia, -ae f.: harmony, friendship	praesēns, -entis: present
coniungō, -ere, -iūnxī, -iūnctum: join together	quīn: indeed, in fact
cōnstō, -āre, -stitī, -stātum: stand firm; to be certain	respiciō, -ere, -spexī, -spectum: regard, respect
	sermō, -ōnis m.: word, speech
	veneror, venerārī, venerātus: worship, venerate, honor

vōs: Amalasuinthia addresses Theodora with the honorific second person plural, a generally medieval construction

quās bonīs omnibus cōnstat semper augērī: *you, whom it is certain are always augmented in your every virtue* (lit. *with every good thing*); rel. clause with antecedent *vōs*; the manuscript reads *quōs*, which would be a pronoun in the masc. pl., taken to refer to both Justinian and Theodora; we have emended to *quās* because the letter seems addressed only the Empress (*Augustae*); due to a paucity of Latin writing addressed to women, it would be an understandable mistake for a later copyist to have mistakenly copied *quōs* for *quās*

cōnstat: impersonal, meaning *it is established* or *it is certain that* (+ inf.)

Concordia nōn est sōla praesentium: *Friendship does not only exist among those (people) present*; *praesentium* is a gen. pl. substantive adj. (lit. “of those present”); bonds formed through the mind or spirit (*animī cāritāte*) can be stronger than those formed directly in each other’s presence

illī sē melius respiciunt: *those (people) regard each other all the better*; *illī* is the nom. pl. subject of *respiciunt*; *melius* is a comp. adv. of *bonus*

quī: starts a relative clause with the antecedent *illī*

animī cāritāte: *with affection of the spirit*; abl. of means

Atque ideō reddēns Augustae reverentiae salūtātiōnis affectum
spērō ut, redeuntibus lēgātīs nostrīs quōs ad clēmētissimum et
glōriōsissimum p̄ncipem dēstināvimus, dē vestrā nōs faciātis
sospitāte gaudēre,

affectus, -ūs m.: affection

Augusta, -ae f.: empress (title)

clēmēns, -entis: mild, merciful

dēstinō (1): destine, appoint, send

gaudeō, -ēre, gāvīsus sum: rejoice

glōriōsus, -a, -um: glorious

ideō: for this reason

lēgātus, -ī m.: ambassador

p̄ncipis, -cipis m.: prince; ruler;
emperor

reverentia, -ae f.: reverence

salūtātiō, -ōnis f.: greeting,
salutation

sospitās, -tātis f.: safety, welfare

spērō (1): hope

reddēns Augustae reverentiae salūtātiōnis affectum: *returning to the Empress the affection of a reverent salutation; Augustae is the dat. ind. object of reddēns, a title that can be granted to a female member of the imperial family (here, it refers to Theodora, wife of the Emperor)*

spērō: usually sets up a fut. inf.; here, it sets up ind. command with *ut*

redeuntibus lēgātīs nostrīs: *when our ambassadors return; abl. absolute*

clēmētissimum et glōriōsissimum p̄ncipem: i.e. Emperor Justinian I

dē vestrā...sospitāte: *concerning your safety*

faciātis...gaudēre: *(that you) make us rejoice; faciātis is the main verb of the ind. command, carrying a causative sense with gaudēre*

quia prōspera vestra ita nōbīs grāta videntur ut propria, et necesse est sospitātem dēsīderanter suscipere, quam nōs iūgiter cōnstat optāre.

cōnstō, -āre, -stītī, -stātum: stand together, stand firm; to be certain

dēsīderanter: eagerly

grātus, -a, -um: dear, pleasing

iūgiter: continually

necesse (indecl. adj.): necessary

optō (1): choose, desire

proprius, -a, -um: one's own

prōspera, -ōrum n.: good fortune, prosperity

sospitās, -ātis f.: safety, welfare

suscipiō, -ere, -cēpī, -ceptum: hear, receive (information)

prōspera vestra ita...ut propria: *your prosperity just...as our own; vestra and propria both refer back to prōspera; English word order would be prōspera vestra videntur nōbīs ita grāta ut propria*

nōbīs...videntur: *seems to us*

necesse est sospitātem dēsīderanter suscipere: *it is necessary (for us) to eagerly receive (news of) your safety*

quam nōs iūgiter cōnstat optāre: *it is certain that we hope for this continually; cōnstat starts this ind. statement; the antecedent of quam is sospitātem*

Queen Amalasuintha to the Roman Senate
534 CE

Senātuī Urbis Rōmae Amalasuintha Rēgīna.

Post flēbilem filiū nostrī dīvae recordātiōnis occāsū vīcit animum
piae mātris generālītātis affectiō, ut nōn maerōris suī causās, sed
vestra potius augmenta cōgitāret.

affectiō, -ōnis f.: feeling, affection

augmentum, -ī n.: increase,
benefit

cōgitō (1): think, reflect

dīvus, -a, -um: divine

flēbilis, -e: mournful

generālītās, -tātis f.: the people,
the nation

maeror, -ōris m.: grief

occāsus, -ūs m.: falling, death

pīus, -a, -um: pious, dutiful

potius: rather

recordātiō, -ōnis f.: remembrance

rēgīna, -ae f.: queen

senātus, -ūs m.: senate

urbs, urbis f.: city

Senātuī...Amalasuintha Rēgīna (salūtem dīcit): *Queen Amalasuintha sends greetings* (lit. “says ‘health’”) *to the Senate*; the *salūtem dīcit* is implicit, as usual

Post flēbilem filiū nostrī...occāsū: her son Athalaric died in October 534, the same year this letter was written; *flēbilem* modifies *occāsū*

nostrī: = *meī*; Latin frequently uses pl. for sg. forms in the first person

dīvae recordātiōnis: *of divine remembrance*; modifies *filiū nostrī*

animum piae mātris: *a dutiful mother’s heart*; direct obj. of *vīcit*

generālītātis affectiō: *affection for the people*; subject of *vīcit*; *generālītātis* is an objective gen.

ut nōn maerōris suī causās, sed vestra potius augmenta cōgitāret: *so that it reflects not upon the causes of her own grief, but rather on your benefits*; a result clause; the subject of *cōgitāret* is Amalasuintha (or her *animus*, from the previous clause); the verb takes both *causās* and *augmenta* as its direct objects

Quaesivimus rēgālēs cūrās quō sōlāciō fulcīrēmus. Sed auctor ille castitātis et misericordiae singulāris, quī nōbīs prīmaevum subtractūrus erat filiū, mātūrī frātris reservāvit affectum.

affectus, -ūs m.: affection, devotion	prīmaevus, -a, -um: youthful, in one's "first age"
auctor, -ōris m.: source, Father	quaesō, -ere, -sīvī, -sītum: seek
castitās, -tātis f.: purity, love	rēgālīs, -e: royal
fulciō, -īre, fulsī, fultum: support, strengthen	reservō (1): reserve
mātūrus, -a, -um: mature	singulāris, -e: singular, remarkable
misericiōdia, -ae f.: pity, compassion	sōlācium, -iī n.: solace, assistance
	subtrahō, -ere, -trāxī, -trāctum: withdraw, deprive

Quaesivimus rēgālēs cūrās quō sōlāciō fulcīrēmus: *We sought assistance, the kind with which we may strengthen royal administration; sōlāciō is the direct obj. of Quaesivimus, abl. by attraction into the relative clause of characteristic started by quō; such "assistance" refers to Amalasuinthā's seeking for a partner in rulership*
rēgālēs cūrās: the obj. of *fulcīrēmus*; here, *cūrās* carries a political sense, meaning the "care" or management of state affairs

auctor ille castitātis et misericordiae singulāris: *that source of love and singular mercy, i.e., God*

nōbīs...subtractūrus: *about to deprive from us; subtractūrus is a fut. act. participle, a predicate nom. of quī...erat; nōbīs is an abl. of separation*

mātūrī frātris reservāvit affectum: *reserved (for us) the affection of a mature brother; Amalasuinthā refers to her cousin Theodahad, juxtaposing his maturity with the youthfulness of her son (prīmaevum filiū) as one replaces the other in ruling alongside her*

Ēlēgimus, Deō auspice, cōnsortem rēgnī nostrī fēlicissimum Theodahadum, ut quae hāctenus reī pūblīcae mōlem sōlitāriā cōgītātiōne pertulimus, nunc ūtilitātēs omnium iūctīs cōsiliīs exequāmur, quātenus in tractātibus duo, in sententiīs ūnus esse videāmur.

auspex, auspiciis m.: augur; (here) director, protector
cōgītātiō, -tiōnis f.: deliberation
cōnsors, -sortis f./m.: partner, co-ruler
ēligō, -ere, -lēgī, -lēctum: select
exequor (= exsequor), exequī, execūtus sum: pursue, carry out
fēlix, fēlicis: excellent, blessed
hāctenus: thus far
iungō, -ere, iūnxī, iūctum: join

mōles, -is f.: burden
perferō, -ferre, -tulī, -lātum: carry through
quātenus: inasmuch as
rēs pūblica, reī pūblīcae f.: state
sōlitārius, -a, -um: solitary
Theodahadus, -ī m.: Theodahad, Amalasuinthā's cousin
tractātus, -ūs m.: management
ūtilitās, -tātis f.: usefulness, service, benefit

Ēlēgimus...cōnsortem rēgnī nostrī fēlicissimum Theodahadum: *We have selected the most blessed Theodahad (to be) co-ruler of our kingdom;* the verb *ēligere* here takes a double acc.

Deō auspice: *with God (as as our) guide;* abl. of attendant circumstances
cōnsortem rēgnī: *a partner of rule;* the “partnership of rule,” was created by Amalasuinthā to solidify her ruling position; she and Theodahad are to reign not as husband and wife, but male and female co-rulers, with Amalasuinthā in the male position, retaining the bulk of the political power

ut: starts a purpose clause that governs subjunctives *exequāmur* and *videāmur*
quae...pertulimus: nom. fem. pl.; antecedent is Amalasuinthā, still referring to herself in the plural

ūtilitātēs omnium: *the benefit of all (people)*

AMALASUINTHA

Astra ipsa caelī mūtuō reguntur auxiliō et vicāriō labōre participāta mundum suīs lūminibus administrant.

administrō (1): administer

astrum, -ī n.: star, heavenly body
(stars, planets)

auxilium, -iī n.: support, aid

lūmen, -minis n.: light

mundus, -ī m.: world

mūtuus, -a, -um: mutual

participō (1): partake in, make a partner of

regō, -ere, rēxī, rēctum: govern, guide

vicārius, -a, -um: vicarious, mutual

Astra . . . caelī: Amalasuinthā may be referring to how the sun, moon, and stars work together to “administer the world with their light,” an analogy for the proposed partnership between her and Theodahad

vicāriō labōre participāta: *having been made partners by mutual labor; participāta* is a perf. pass. participle modifying *Astra*; *vicāriō labōre* is an abl. of means

Ipsī quoque hominī duplicēs manūs, sociās aurēs, oculōs geminōs dīvīna tribuērunt, ut rōbustius peragerētur officium quod duōrum fuerat societāte complendum.

auris, -is f.: ear

compleō, -ere, -ēvi, -ētum: fulfill

dīvīnus, -a, -um: divine

duplex, -plicis: double

geminus, -a, -um: twin

officium, -iī n.: service, duty

peragō, -ere, -ēgī, -āctum: carry through, accomplish

rōbustus, -a, -um: strong

societas, -tātis f.: society, union

socius, -a, -um: allied, companion

tribuō, -ere, -buī, -būtum:
bestow upon

Ipsī...hominī: *to humankind itself*; ind. obj. of *tribuērunt*

dīvīna: *divine forces*; substantive n. pl. subject of *tribuērunt*; governing the trio of direct objects: *duplicēs manūs, sociās aurēs, oculōs geminōs*; Amalasuintha uses the dual nature of body parts as an extended metaphor for the benefits of a two-person rulership

rōbustius: *with greater strength*; comp. adv.

quod duōrum fuerat societāte complendum: *(the duty) which had to be fulfilled by a union of two*; *officium* is the antecedent of the relative clause; such a “duty” refers to human action—tasks that must be performed with two hands, two eyes, etc.

duōrum...societāte: abl. of means

fuerat...complendum: gerundive nom. in a pluperf. pass. periphrastic construction; *quod* is the subject

Exultāte, patrēs cōnscrīptī, et factum nostrum supernīs
commendāte virtūtibus. Nihil reprehēnsibile dēsīderāvimus agere,
quae cum alterīus cōnsiliō cūncta dēlēgimus ōrdināre.

commendō (1): commend

cōnscrībō, -ere, -scrīpsī,

-scrīptum: write together

cūnctus, -a, -um: all

dēligō, -ere, -lēgī, -lēctum: select,

choose

dēsīderō (1): desire greatly

exultō (1) (= CL **exultō**): rejoice

factum, -ī n.: deed, achievement

ōrdinō (1): order, (here) govern

reprehēnsibilis, -e: reprehensible,
blameworthy

supernus, -a, -um: above,

heavenly

patrēs cōnscrīptī: a traditional title for Roman senators; *cōnscrīptī* is a participle of *cōnscrībō* (lit. “the fathers having written together”)

supernīs commendāte virtūtibus: *commend* (our deed) to the heavenly powers; *virtus* often means “power” (rather than the usual “courage”) in post-classical Latin; Amalasuinthā asks for the Senate’s approval of the *cōnsortium rēgnī*, while stating that she desires to do nothing the Senate may criticize (*Nihil reprehēnsibile dēsīderāvimus agere*)

quae...cūncta dēlēgimus ōrdināre: *we, who chose to govern all things; quae* is nom. fem. pl., referring back to Amalasuinthā herself; *cūncta* is an acc. substantive adj., direct obj. of *ōrdināre*

cum alterīus cōnsiliō: *with the consultation of another (person)*; referring to Theohadad, who, as co-ruler, will have a “consulting” role in royal affairs, while Amalasuinthā herself retains the “governing” role (*dēlēgimus ōrdināre*)

Commūniō sīquidem rēgnī mōrēs asserit, quandō plācābilis esse iūstē crēditur, quī potestātis suae habēre participem comprobātur.

asserō, -ere, -seruī, -sertum: assert, defend	particeps, -cipis: sharing, partaking; (as subst.) partner
commūniō, -ōnis f.: communion, sharing	plācābilis, -e: mild; moderate
comprobō (1): approve; prove, show	potestās, -tātis f.: power
iūstē: justly	quandō: since
	sīquidem: since indeed; actually

Commūniō...rēgnī mōrēs asserit: *the sharing of rule asserts one's character;* Amalasuinthā asserts that a shared rule indicates the good character of the rulers. Shared rule had been common in the imperial Roman tradition, going back to the first century CE, although it usually involved two (or more) men. More recently, there had been instances of imperial male and female co-rulership, which Amalasuinthā may have taken as a model for her notion of the *cōnsortium regnī*. The primary example is Pulcheria, the older sister of Emperor Theodosius II, who effectively served as a co-ruler with him in the fifth century CE.

plācābilis esse iūstē crēditur, quī potestātis suae habēre participem comprobātur: *(that person) is justly believed to be mild, the one who is shown to have a partner in his power;* the antecedent of *quī* is *plācābilis*; both are masc. because they are indefinite, not referring to Amalasuinthā specifically

Reserāvimus itaque, Deō iuvante, palātia virō nostrī generis
clāritāte cōspicuō, quī, Amālōrum stirpe prōgenitus, rēgālem
habeat in āctibus dignitātem: patiēns in adversīs, moderātus in
prōsperīs et, quod difficillimum potestātis genus est, ōlim rēctor
suī.

āctus, -ūs m.: action

adversus, -a, -um: opposed to; (as
subst.) adversity

clāritās, -tātis f.: nobility, glory

cōspicuus, -a, -um: distinguished

difficilis, -e: difficult

dignitās, -tātis f.: dignity; rank

Amālī, -ōrum m. pl.: the Amals

iuvō (1): help

moderātus, -a, -um: moderate

ōlim: formerly; (here)
long-standing

palātium, -iī n.: palace

patiēns, -entis: patient, enduring

potestās, -tātis f.: power

prōgignō, -ere, -genuī,
-genitum: produce

prospera, -ōrum n. pl.: prosperity

stirps, stirpis f.: trunk; (here)

family, lineage

rēctor, -ōris m.: master

rēgālis, -e: royal

reserō (1): unbolt; open

Deō iuvante: *with the help of God (lit. with God helping);* abl. absolute

virō...clāritāte cōspicuō: *to a man of our race, distinguished with respect to his
nobility; that is, Theodahad; virō...cōspicuō is an ind. obj. of reserāvimus and
antecedent of quī; clāritāte is an abl. of respect*

Amālōrum stirpe prōgenitus: *descended from the clan of the Amals; an appositive,
with stirpe as an abl. of source; the Amals were the ruling family of the Goths,
and Theodahad (nephew of Amalasuinthā's father, Theoderic the Great) was the
last living male member*

quod difficillimum potestātis genus est, ōlim rēctor suī: *that which is the most
difficult kind of power, (to be) a long-standing master of himself; Amalasuinthā paints
her cousin in virtues of self-control and moderation; in reality, Theodahad was
infamous for his avarice and impulsive behavior*

Accessit hīs bonīs dēsīderābilis ērudītiō litterārum, quae nātūram
laudābilem eximiē reddit ōrnātam. Ibi prūdēns invenit unde
sapientior fiat;

accēdō, -ere, -cessī, -cessum:
approach; (here) increase, add to
dēsīderābilis, -e: desirable
ērudītiō, -ōnis f.: knowledge
eximiē: very much
inveniō, -īre, -vēnī, -ventum:
discover

laudābilis, -e: praiseworthy
littera, -ae f.: a letter; (pl.)
literature
ōrnātus, -a, -um: adorned,
illustrious
prūdēns, -entis: skilled, knowing
sapiēns, -entis: wise
unde: from where

Accessit hīs bonīs: *adds to these excellent things*; referring to the aforementioned virtues; *accessit* goes with a dat. when carrying the idea of “to add”

quae nātūram laudābilem...reddit ōrnātam: *which renders an (already) laudable nature illustrious*; the antecedent of *quae* is *ērudītiō*; the *ōrnātam* is a predicate acc.

Ibi: *there*; referring to literature

prūdēns invenit unde sapientior fiat: *the prudent man finds (a place) from where he can be made wiser*; ind. question

ibi bellātor reperit unde animī virtūte rōborētur; inde prīnceps accipit quemadmodum populōs sub aequālitate compōnat; nec aliqua in mundō potest esse fortūna quam litterārum nōn augeat glōriōsa nōtitia.

aequālitās, -ātis f.: equality

augeō, -ēre, auxī, auctum:

augment

bellātor, -ōris m.: warrior

compōnō, -ere, -posuī, -positum:

bring together

glōriōsus, -a, -um: glorious

inde: from there

littera, -ae f.: a letter; (pl.)

literature

mundus, -ī m.: world

nōtitia, -ae f.: knowledge

prīnceps, -cipis m.: prince; ruler;

emperor

quemadmodum: how

reperiō, -īre, repperī, repertum:

find out

rōborō (1): strengthen

unde: from where

unde...quemadmodum: starts two more ind. questions

animī virtūte: *with the power of his mind*; abl. of means

accipit: *learns*; lit. "receives"

aliqua: modifies *fortūna*

quam litterārum nōn augeat glōriōsa nōtitia: *(the kind) which the glorious knowledge of literature does not augment*; relative clause of characteristic with antecedent *fortūna*

Accipite quid maius generālitātis vōta meruērunt: p̄ncēps vester etiam ecclēsiasticīs est litterīs ērudītus. Ā quibus semper quicquid est p̄rō homine commonēmur: iūdicāre rēctē, bonum sapere, dīvīna venerārī, futūra cōgitāre iūdicia.

cōgitō (1): think, reflect

commoneō, -ēre, -uī, -itum:

remind of, exhort to

dīvīnus, -a, -um: divine; (subst. n.

pl.) divinity

ecclēsiasticus, -a, -um:

ecclesiastical

ērudīō, -īre, -īvī/-īī, -ītum:

educate

futūrus, -a, -um: future

generālitās, -ātis f.: the people, the nation

iūdicium, -īī n.: judgement,

decision

iūdicō (1): judge

littera, -ae f.: a letter; (pl.)

literature

maior, maius: greater

mereō, -ēre, -uī, -itum: gain

p̄ncēps, -cipis m.: prince; ruler; emperor

quisquis, quicquid (= quidquid):

whoever, whatever

rēctē: rightfully

sapiō, -ere, -īvī/-īī: taste, be wise; (here) understand

veneror, venerārī, venerātus:

worship

vōtum, -īī n.: vow, prayer

quid maius generālitātis vōta meruērunt: *that greater thing which the prayers of the people have gained; maius* is a neut. comp. adj. of *magnus*, taken as a substantive direct obj. of *meruērunt*

est...ērudītus: *has been educated;* Amalasuinthā highlights Theodahad's education in ecclesiastical literature in particular

Ā quibus: *from these things;* a connecting relative, referring back to *ecclēsiasticīs litterīs*

p̄rō homine: i.e. *for the good of humanity*

Necesse est enim ut sequātur iūstītiaē vestīgium, quī dē suā sententiā causam sē crēdit esse dictūrum. Vīderim quae lēctiō acuat ingenium: dīvīna semper efficere nītitur pium.

acuō, -ere, -uī, -ūtum: sharpen
dīvīnus, -a, -um: divine; (subst. n. pl.) divinity
efficiō, -ere, -fēcī, -fectum: bring about, produce
ingenium, -ī n.: ability, talent; intellect

iūstītia, -ae f.: justice
lēctiō, -ōnis f.: reading
necesse (indecl. adj.): necessary
nītor, nīti, nīsum / nīxum sum: strive
pīus, -a, -um: pious, dutiful
vestīgium, -īī n.: footstep, track

Necesse est enim ut sequātur: *For it is necessary that he follow;* the *ut* clause is substantive, functioning as the predicate of *est*; the implicit subject of *sequātur* is the antecedent of *quī*

quī dē suā sententiā causam sē crēdit esse dictūrum: *(he) who believes that he will plead his case concerning his own sentence; causam dicere,* taken in a legal sense, means to defend oneself in a lawsuit; in the context of Christian literature, Amalasuinthā may be alluding to Judgement Day: i.e., Theodahad knows that he will have to explain himself to God, and will therefore act justly.

esse dictūrum: fut. act. inf.; verb of ind. statement started by *crēdit*

Vīderim: *I might know;* potential subjunctive in perf. tense with pres. meaning; *vidēre* can have a sense of know or understand, and here Amalasuinthā is referring to her extensive literary education

quae lēctiō acuat ingenium: *the reading which sharpens the intellect;* *lēctiō* is the obj. of *Vīderim*, but it is nom. because it has been attracted into the rel. clause of characteristic

dīvīna: supply *lēctiō;* *divine reading* refers back to the *ecclesiasticis litteris*

Veniāmus ad illam prīvātae vītae largissimam frūgālitātem, quae tantam prōcūrābat dōnīs abundantiam, convīviīs cōpiam, ut cōnsiderātō eius antīquō studiō nihil novī habēre videātur in rēgnō.

abundantia, -ae f.: abundance
antīquus, -a, -um: ancient, former
cōnsiderō (1): consider
convīvium, -iī n.: a feast
cōpia, -ae f.: abundance
dōnum, -ī n.: gift
frūgālitās, -tātis f.: frugality

largus, -a, -um: copious, generous
prīvātus, -a, -um: private, apart from public office
prōcūrō (1): procure, bring about
studium, -iī n.: eagerness, zeal; pursuit, concern

Veniāmus: *Let us come*; jussive subjunctive

largissimam frūgālitātem: *lavish frugality*; the oxymoron suggests an extreme frugality, which was quite at odds with his actual life

dōnīs abundantiam, convīviīs cōpiam: *an abundance from gifts, a wealth from feasts*; two abl. of means; Theodahad is so frugal that rather than spending money on gifts and dinner parties, he earns money from them

ut...videātur: result clause

cōnsiderātō eius antīquō studiō: *in consideration of his former activity* (lit. *with his former activity considered*); abl. absolute

nihil novī: *nothing (of) new*; partitive gen.

In hospitālītāte prōmptus, in miserātiōne piissimus: sīc cum multa expenderet, cēnsus eius caelestī remūnerātiōne crēscēbat. Tālem ūniversitās dēbuit optāre quālem nōs probāmur ēlēgisse, quī ratiōnābiliter dispōnēns propria, nōn appetat aliēna:

aliēnus, -a, -um: belonging to another
appetō, -ere, -īvī/-iī, -ītum: strive after
caelestis, -e: heavenly
cēnsus, -ūs m.: wealth, property
crēscō, -ere, crēvī, crētum: grow, increase
dispōnō, -ere, -posuī, -positum: put in order
ēligō, -ere, -lēgī, -lēctum: select
expendō, -ere, -pendī, -pēsum: spend

hospitālītās, -ātis f.: hospitality
miserātiō, -ōnis f.: pity, compassion
optō (1): choose, desire
pius, -a, -um: pious, dutiful
probō (1): approve, esteem
promptus, -a, -um: ready
proprius, -a, -um: one's own
quālis, -e: of such kind
ratiōnābiliter: reasonably
remūnerātiō, -ōnis f.: reward
ūniversitās, -ātis f.: the whole; everyone

In hospitālītāte prōmptūs, in miserātiōne piissimus: (*He is*) ready in hospitality, most pious in compassion; supply an est
cum multa expenderet, cēnsus eius caelestī remūnerātiōne crēscēbat: cum has a concessive sense of *although* and *multa* is a subst. adj.
caelestī remūnerātiōne: in heavenly reward; abl. of means; Theodahad's spending is so noble and pious that it earns him a heavenly reward
Tālem...quālem: such (a person)...as
propria...aliēna: his own possessions...that of others; substantive adj.

tollitur enim necessitās p̄ncipibus excēdendī, quotiēns assuēverint propria moderārī. Laudāta est nīmīrum sententia, quae rērum praecepit modum, quia nimium nōn placet etiam quod bonum putātur.

assuēscō, -ere, assuēvī, assuētum:

be accustomed to

excēdo, -ere, -cessī, -cessum: go

out, overstep

laudō (1): praise

moderor, -ārī, -ātus sum):

moderate

modus, -ī m.: measure, limit

necessitās, -tātis f.: necessity

nīmīrum: certainly

nimius, -a, -um: too much

placeō, -ēre, -cuī, -citur: be
pleasing, be acceptable

praecipio, -ere, -cēpī, -ceptum:
instruct, teach

p̄ncipis, -cipis m.: prince; ruler;
emperor

proprius, -a, -um: one's own

quotiēns: as often as, whenever

tollō, -ere, sustulī, sublātum: raise
up; (here) remove

tollitur enim necessitās p̄ncipibus excēdendī: *for the necessity to overstep is removed from princes; excēdendī is a gerund in the gen. that modifies necessitās (lit. “the need of overstepping”); Amalasuintha indicates how, as a prince used to putting his own affairs into order (moderārī propria)*

sententia, quae rērum praecepit modum: *the maxim which teaches the limit of all things (i.e. moderation)*

nimium: *too much (of anything); take as substantive; antecedent of quod*

bonum putātur: *considered (to be) good; supply esse*

Gaudēte nunc, patrēs cōnscrīptī, et supernae grātiaē prō nōbīs vōta persolvite, quandō tālem mēcum cōnstituī prīncipem, quī et dē nostrā aequitāte bona faciat et propria suae pietātis ostendat.

aequitās, -tātis f.: equity, fairness

cōnscrībō, -ere, -scrīpsī,

-scrīptum: write together

cōnstituō, -ere, -tuī, -tūtum:

establish, appoint

gaudeō, -ēre, gāvīsus sum: rejoice

grātia, -ae f.: gratitude, favor

ostendō, -ere, -ī, -entum: show

persolvō, -ere, -solvī, -solūtum:

pay off (a debt), fulfill (a vow)

pietās, -tātis f.: duty, piety

prīnceps, -cipis m.: prince; ruler;

emperor

proprius, -a, -um: one's own

quandō: since

supernus, -a, -um: from above,

heavenly

vōtum, -ī n.: vow, prayer

patrēs cōnscrīptī: a traditional title for Roman senators; *cōnscrīptī* is a participle of *cōnscrībō* (lit. “the fathers having written together”)

vōta persolvite: *fulfill your vows*; generally, the verb (*per*)*solvere* means to carry out an action you have promised to do if your prayer is fulfilled; here, the sense is that the senators' prayers have been answered, for the reason explained in the following causal clause

quī: starts a rel. clause of characteristic, governing the subjunctive verbs *faciat* and *ostendat*; the antecedent is *prīncipem*

dē nostrā aequitāte bona faciat: *the sort who will do good deeds in accordance with our (= my) justice*; the preposition *dē* can sometimes have a sense of “in conformity with”

et propria suae pietātis ostendat: *and show his own (good deeds) (to be characteristic) of his sense of duty*; *suae pietātis* is a predicative gen.; *bona* is implicitly repeated with *propria*

AMALASUINTHA

Hunc enim et maiōrum suōrum commonet virtūs et avunculus
efficāciter excitat Theoderīcus.

avunculus, -ī m.: uncle

commoneō, -ēre, -uī, -itum:

advise, impress upon

efficāciter: effectually, powerfully

excitō (1): excite, enliven; rouse up

maiōrēs, -ōrum m. pl.: ancestors

Theoderīcus, -ī m.: Theoderic;

Amalasuinthā's father, former

King of the Ostrogoths

Hunc: i.e. Theodahad

commonet...excitat: *advices...and rouses him (to do so)*; these two verbs implicitly assume take as complements the actions from the previous sentence (doing good deeds)

avunculus...Theoderīcus: Theodahad was the son of Theoderic's sister, Amalafriada

Queen Amalasuintha to Emperor Justinian
534 CE

Iustīniānō Imperātōrī Amalasuintha Rēgīna.

Adeō vōbīs, clēmētissime p̄ncipum, distulimus hāctenus
indicāre filiū nostrī glōriōsae recordātiōnis occāsū, nē amantis
laederēmus animum per trīstia nūntiōrum:

adeō: to such an extent

clēmēns, -entis: mild, merciful

differō, differre, distulī, dīlātum:
defer, postpone

glōriōsus, -a, -um: glorious

hāctenus: thus far, until now

imperātor, -ōris m.: commander,
general; (here) the title of a
Roman emperor

indicō (1): make known

laedō, -ere, laesī, laesum: injure

nūntius, -ī m.: messenger, news

occāsus, -ūs m.: falling; death

p̄ncēps, -cipis m.: prince; ruler;
emperor

recordātiō, -ōnis f.: remembrance

rēgīna, -ae f.: queen

trīstis, -e: sorrowful

Iustīniānō Imperātōrī Amalasuintha Rēgīna: *Queen Amalasuintha sends greetings to the Emperor Justinian*; there is an implied *salūtem dicit*, the common epistolary greeting

Adeō: take closely with *distulimus*

vōbīs: take with *indicāre*; Amalasuintha addresses Justinian with the honorific second person plural, a generally medieval usage

filiū nostrī...occāsus: *the death of our (= my) son, of glorious memory*; referring to the death of Athalaric (516-534 CE), for whom Amalasuintha was regent

nē: starts a negative purpose clause

amantis: substantive participle of *amō*, “of a loving friend”

trīstia nūntiōrum: *the sorrows of the news*; *trīstia* is a n. pl. substantive adj.

sed nunc iuvante Deō, quī cōnsuēvit cāsūs asperōs in prōspera commūtāre, illa magis ēlēgimus in vestram dēferre nōtitiam, dē quibus nōbīscum possītis participātā exultātiōne gaudēre: iuvat enim dīvīna mūnera dīligentibus cōnfitērī.

asper, -era, -erum: harsh, cruel

cāsus, -ūs m.: hazard, misfortune

commūtō (1): transform

confiteor, -fitērī, -fessus sum:

profess, announce

consuescō, -ere, -suēvī, -suētum:

be accustomed to (+inf.)

dēferō, -ferre, -tulī, -lātum:

bring, convey

dīligens, -entis: faithful, loving

dīvīnus, -a, -um: divine

ēligō, -ere, -lēgī, -lēctum: choose

exultātiō, -ōnis f.: exultation

gaudeō, -ēre, gāvīsus sum: rejoice

iuvō, -āre, iūvī, iūtum: help;

delight, please

mūnus, -eris n.: gift

nōtitia, -ae f.: knowledge,

awareness

participō (1): share

prospera, -ōrum n. pl.: good

fortune, prosperity

iuvante Deō: *with the help of God*; abl. absolute

cāsūs asperōs in prōspera commūtāre: *transform cruel misfortunes into good fortune*; note the consonance between *asperōs* and *prōspera*; Amalasuinthia refers to how the elevation of Theodahad will be the “good fortune” that arises from the death of her son

illa...in vestram dēferre nōtitiam: *to bring to your attention those matters*; *illa* is a substantive n. pl., antecedent of *dē quibus*

participātā exultātiōne: *with shared exultation*; abl. of means with *gaudēre*

iuvat...cōnfitērī: *it is pleasing to acknowledge*; *iuvat* is frequently impersonal; can also be taken as “I am delighted to...”

dīligentibus: *to those who are faithful*; a substantive ind. obj.

Perdūximus ad scēptra virum frāternā nōbīs proximitāte
 coniūctum, quī rēgiam dignitātem commūnī nōbīscum cōnsiliī
 rōbore sustinēret, ut et ille avōrum suōrum purpureō decore
 fulgeret et animōs nostrōs sōlācium prūdentis ērigeret.

avus, -ī m.: grandfather, ancestor
 commūniō, -ōnis f.: communion
 coniungō, -ere, -iūnxī,
 -iūctum: join together
 decus, -oris: glory, honor
 dignitās, -ātis f.: dignity; rank
 ērigō, -ere, -rēxī, -rēctum: uplift
 frāternus, -a, -um: fraternal
 fulgeō, -ēre, fulsī: gleam, be
 resplendent
 perdūcō, -ere, -dūxī, -ductum:
 lead through, brought

proximitās, -ātis f.: proximity,
 kinship
 prūdēns, -entis: skilled, prudent
 purpureus, -a, -um: purple
 rēgius, -a, -um: royal
 rōbur, -ōris n.: a hard oak;
 strength
 scēptrum, -ī n.: scepter (a royal
 staff)
 sōlācium, -iī n.: solace, assistance
 sustineō, -ēre, -tinuī, -tentum:
 uphold, sustain

Perdūximus ad scēptra: *we have brought to royal authority;* the word *scēptrum* is typically pl. when used as a symbol for rulership over a kingdom
virum frāternā nōbīs proximitāte coniūctum: *the man joined to us by brotherly kinship;* referring to Theodahad, although he was technically her cousin
quī: *(the kind of man) who would...*; starts a relative clause of characteristic with antecedent *virum* and subjunctive verb *sustinēret*
commūnī cōnsiliī rōbore: *by the shared strength of counsel;* abl. of means
purpureō decore: purple was considered a color of royal authority
et...et...: *both...and;* involves two purpose clauses under one *ut*
sōlācium prūdentis: *the solace of a prudent man;* *sōlācium* is the subject of *ērigeret*

Iungite nunc vōta fēlīcia ut, sicut nōs in imperiō Pietātis Vestrae omnia fierī prōspera dēsīderanter expetimus, ita nōbīs favēre Vestram Benivolentiam comprobēmus.

benivolentia (= benevolentia), -ae

f.: benevolence

comprobō (1): approve, attest; to be certain

dēsīderanter: eagerly

expetō, -ere, īvī/-iī, -ītum: seek after, desire

faveō, -ēre, fāvī, fautum: favor (+dat.)

fēlīx, fēlīcis: fortunate, blessed

iungō, -ere, iūnxī, iūnctum: join together

pietās, -tātis f.: duty, piety

prosperus, -a, -um: prosperous

sicut: just as

vōtum, -ī n.: vow, prayer

ut...comprobēmus: purpose clause

sicut...ita: *just as...so we*

Pietātis Vestrae: title for the emperor; the gen. is possessive with *in imperiō*

omnia fierī prōspera: (*we desire that*) *all things be made prosperous*; *omnia* and *prospera* are substantives in the n. pl. acc.

nōbīs favēre Vestram Benivolentiam: *that Your Benevolence (= you) favors us*; ind. statement with main verb *comprobēmus*

Perāctō itaque nūntiō, quod vōbīs prō ingenitā clēmēntiā crēdimus esse vōtīvum, addimus etiam grātissimae lēgātiōnis officium ut pācem, quam mente semper geritis et iam mihi speciāliter retinētis esse collātam, adiectiōne quoque temporum prōtēlētis.

addō, -ere, -didī, -ditum: add
adiectiō, -ōnis f.: addition
benivolentia (= benevolentia), -ae f.: benevolence
clēmēntia, -ae f.: mercy
cōnferō, -ferre, contulī, collātum: collect, bring to
gerō, -ere, gessī, gestum: bear, manage
grātus, -a, -um: grateful
ingenitus, -a, -um: innate
lēgātiō, -ōnis f.: embassy

nūntium, -iī n.: announcement
officium, -ī n.: service, duty
peragō, -ere, -ēgī, -āctum: carry through; complete
prōtēlō (1): drive away; (here) extend, prolong
retineō, -ēre, -tinuī, -tentum: retain; remember (post-classical)
sīcut: just as
speciāliter: especially
vōtīvus, -a, -um: wished for

Perāctō...nūntiō: *to the message that has been sent; dat. ind. object of addimus; the nūntium here is the death of her son and the elevation of Theodahad; at this point in the letter, Amalasuinthā turns to the peace between her and Justinian*
ut pācem...prōtēlētis: *that you...extend the peace; an ind. command conveying the request of the embassy*
quam mente semper geritis: *which you always carry in your mind; quam refers to pācem of the previous line, and is the object of geritis and retinētis*
mihi speciāliter retinētis esse collātam: *that you especially remember has been conferred upon me; Amalasuinthā had received Justinian's support and protection*
adiectiōne quoque meōrum prōtēlētis: *that you extend (that peace) with the addition of time; adiectiōne is an abl. of means; temporum ("time") is sometimes plural when describing time in general*

Nam licet concordia p̄ncipum semper deceat, vestra tamen
absolūtē mē nōbilitat, quandō ille redditur amplius excelsus quī
Vestrae Glōriae fuerit ūnānimitātē coniūctus.

absolūtē: absolutely

amplius (comp. adv.): more
greatly

concordia, -ae f.: harmony,
concord

**coniungō, -ere, -iūnxī,
-iūnctum**: join together

deceat, decēre, decuit (impers.): it
is fitting, suitable

excelsus, -a, -um: exalted

glōria, -ae f.: glory

nōbilitō (1): render noble

p̄nceps, -cipis m.: prince;
emperor

quandō: since

ūnānimitās, -tātis f.: unanimity

licet...deceat: *although...it is fitting*; the verb *licet* can function almost as a
concessive conjunction (“although”) with a verb in the subjunctive

vestra: supply *concordia*

quandō ille redditur amplius excelsus, quī vestrae glōriae fuerit ūnānimitātē

coniūctus: *since that man is rendered more exalted, he who is joined to Your Glory
in unanimity*; Amalasuinthā uses *ille* indefinitely, but she is referring to herself

here: she has asked that Justinian continue his peace, and she writes that the
union renders her more all the more exalted for being joined with him; the fut.
perf. essential stands in for the present, which often happens in indefinite
statements (e.g. “he is all the more X, who will have been Yed”)

Sed quoniam epistulārum brevitate ūniversa sufficienter nequeunt expediri, salūtantes reverentiā competentī quaedam lēgātis nostris verbō vōbīs insinuanda commīsimus, quae cōnsuetūdine Vestrae Serēnitātis libenter accipite,

brevitās, -tātis f.: brevity

committō, -ere, -mīsī, -missum:

join; (here) entrust to (+dat.)

competō, -ere, -īvī/-īī, -ītum: be

appropriate, suitable

cōnsuetūdō, -inis f.: custom,

tradition

epistula, -ae f.: letter

expediō, -īre, -īvī, -ītum: settle,

put in order

insinuō (1): introduce, make

known

lēgātus, -ī m.: ambassador

libenter: with pleasure

nequeō, -īre, -quīī/-quīvī,

-quitum (irr.): be unable

reverentiā, -ae f.: reverence

salutō (1): greet

serēnitās, -ātis f.: serenity

sufficienter: sufficiently, enough

ūniversus, -a, -um: entire,

universal

epistulārum brevitate: *because of the brevity of letters*; abl. of cause

ūniversa: substantive n. pl. meaning “everything”; subject of *nequeunt*

salūtantes reverentiā competentī: *greeting you with appropriate reverence*; *salūtantes* is a nom. participle agreeing with the subject of *commīsimus* (i.e. “we”); *reverentiā competentī* is an abl. of manner

lēgātis nostris: dat. ind. obj. of *commīsimus*; the direct obj. is *quaedam*

quaedam...verbō vōbīs insinuanda: *certain matters to be made known to you verbally*; *insinuanda* is a n. pl. gerundive modifying *quaedam*; *verbō* is an abl. of means indicating “orally” or “by word of mouth”

quae cōnsuetūdine Vestrae Serēnitātis libenter accipite: *those which, in the accustomed manner of Your Serenity, (we hope you) accept with pleasure*; *quae* refers to the *quaedam* of previous clause; *accipite* is an imperative

ut ab omnibus ēvidenter possit agnōscī quod iūstē nōbīs probāmus dē Vestrā Mānsuētūdine pollicērī. Convenit enim dē vōbīs indubitanter praesūmī, quandō et nōs prō dēsideriō vestrō in hīs quōs commendāstis tālia facimus, quālia vōs spērāsse cognōvimus.

agnōscō, -ere, -nōvī, -nitum:	iūstē: justly
know well, recognize	mānsuētūdō, -inis f.: gentleness
cognōscō, -ere, -nōvī, -nōtum:	polliceor, -ērī, -citus sum:
know	promise
commendō (1): commend; (here)	praesūmō, -ere, -sūmpsī,
entrust	-sūmptum: presume
conveniō, -īre, -vēnī, -ventum:	probō (1): approve
(here) be fitting	quālis, -e: of what kind
dēsiderium, -īī n.: desire	quandō: since
ēvidenter: evidently	spērō (1): hope, expect
indubitanter: without a doubt	

possit agnōscī quod: *it may be recognized that*; the *possit* is impersonal, and the *quod...probāmus* is an ind. statement; in the fourth century and after, ind. statements are often formed with *quod* rather than acc. + inf.

nōbīs probāmus...pollicērī: (*which*) *we attest is promised to us (= me)*; *polliceor* is deponent, but in the fourth century and afterwards, it is sometimes used with active forms, or with passive forms and a passive meaning, as here

dē Vestrā Mānsuētūdine: *from Your Mildness*; the *dē* here verges into expressing agency

et nōs: *we too*; she has asked him to act in line with her expectations, and here she emphasizes that she “too” is acting in accordance with his expectations

tālia...quālia: (*we do*) *such things...as...*

in hīs quōs commendāstis: *in these things that you have entrusted (to us)*;

commendāstis = commendāvistis; referring to Justinian’s support for her rule

vōs spērāsse: *that you expected (us to do)*; *spērāsse = spērāvisse*; ind. statement with main verb *cognōvimus*

GUDELIVA

Gudeliva was a Gothic woman who lived in early sixth-century Italy. She was married to Theodahad, the man who was elevated by Queen Amalasuintha to the status of king and co-ruler of the Ostrogothic Kingdom. Gudeliva did not wield the same power as Amalasuintha had as queen; whereas Amalasuintha was a co-ruler, and the superior co-ruler at that, Gudeliva was queen only in the sense of being married to the king, Theodahad. Virtually nothing is known about her outside of her relation to Theodahad: her upbringing and education are unknown, and it is unclear what happened to her after Theodahad's death in 536 CE at the hands of his successor, Wittiges.

Gudeliva has two surviving letters, both of which survive in Cassiodorus's *Variae* (10.21 and 10.24). Both letters were sent to the Eastern Roman Empress Theodora alongside Theodahad's letters to Theodora and her husband, Emperor Justinian. The letters extol Theodora's virtues and seek her goodwill. At this point, Theodahad had already murdered Amalasuintha, and he and Gudeliva were looking to secure Justinian's support. Their attempt failed, and Justinian used the death of Amalasuintha as a pretext to invade Italy. This invasion resulted in the Gothic War (535-554 CE), in which the Ostrogothic Kingdom collapsed and the Eastern Roman Empire took control of Italy, only to lose it within a few years to the Lombards.

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Queen Gudeliva to Empress Theodora
535 CE

Theodōrae Augustae Gudeliva Rēgīna.

[1] Aestimāre tē convenit, Augustārum prūdentissima, quantīs cupiam nīsibus grātiā vestram quaerere, quam etiam domnus iugālis meus magnō studiō dēsīderat optinēre.

aestimō (1): value, estimate	iugālis, -e: wedded
Augusta, -ae f.: empress	nīsus, -ūs m.: effort
conveniō, -īre, -vēnī, -ventum: be fitting	optinēō (= optineō), -ēre, -tinuī, -tentum: have, possess
cupiō, -ere, -īvī, -ītum: desire	prūdēns, -entis: wise
dēsīderō (1): desire	quaerō, -ere, -sīvī, -sītum: seek, look for
domnus (= CL dominus), -ī m.: lord	quantus, -a, -um: such great
grātia, -ae f.: grace; goodwill; influence	studium, -iī n.: eagerness, zeal

Theodōrae Augustae Gudeliva Rēgīna: *Queen Gudeliva (says hello) to Empress*

Theodora; the phrase *salūtem dicit* is implied

tē convenit: *it's fitting that you*; sets up inf. *Aestimāre*

quantīs...nīsibus: *with which great efforts*; abl. of value following *Aestimāre*

cupiam: *I desire*; subjunctive in an ind. question

vestram: referring to Theodora; addressing a single person with the second-person pl. as an honorific is a generally medieval usage

quam: antecedent is *grātiā vestram*

etiam domnus iugālis meus: *my lord husband, too*; referring to Theodahad

magnō studiō: abl. of manner

Nam licet hoc illī sit omnimodīs cārum, mihi tamen cognōscitur esse praecipuum, quandō mē tantae dominae ita potest amor ērigere ut suprā rēgnum cognōscar maius aliquod invenīre.

cārus, -a, -um: dear	maior, maius: greater, larger
cognōscō, -ere, -gnōvī, -gnitum: know, recognize	omnimodīs (adv.): in all ways, in every way
domina, -ae f.: lady (f. equivalent of “lord”)	praecipuus, -a, -um: most important
ērigō, -ere, -rēxī, -rēctum: raise up, elevate	quandō: since, because
inveniō, -īre, -vēnī, -ventum: find	rēgnum, -ī n.: rule, reign; kingdom
licet (+ subjunctive): although	suprā: above (+ acc.)

Nam licet hoc illī sit omnimodīs cārum: *hoc* is the subject of *sit*, and the pred. nom. object is *cārum*; to rearrange into a word order more similar to English, *Nam licet hoc sit cārum illī omnimodīs*

hoc: *this (thing)*; receiving the grace of Theodora, as mentioned earlier

illī: *to that (man)*; dat. of reference, referring to Theodahad

mē...potest...ērigere: *can elevate me*

tantae dominae: poss. gen. of *amor*; *dominae* refers to Theodora

ita...ut: introduces result clause

suprā rēgnum...maius aliquod: *something greater than (lit. “above”) rule*; the *suprā* here is almost equivalent to the comparative *quam*; Gudeliva is saying that Theodora’s love would elevate her more than being queen

Quid enim grātius quam sī Glōriae Vestrae videar cāritātis participātiōne sociārī, ut, quia vōs abundē fulgētis, nōbīs libenter dē propriō splendōre mūtuēminī, cum damnum nōn est lūminī alterī dē suā clāritāte largīrī?

abundē: abundantly, exceedingly
cāritās, -ātis f.: dearness, love
clāritās, -ātis f.: brightness
damnum, -ī n.: loss, harm
fulgeō, -ēre, fulsī: shine, flash
glōria, -ae f.: glory, honor
grātus, -a, -um: pleasing, gratifying
largior, -īrī, -ītus sum: bestow

libenter: eagerly
lūmen, -inis n.: light
mūtuor, -ārī, -ātus sum: borrow, loan
participātiō, -ōnis f.: sharing
proprius, -a, -um: one's own
sociō (1): unite, ally
splendor, -ōris m.: splendor

Quid enim grātius: *For what would be a more gratifying (thing);* there is an implicit *sit*

quam sī: *than if;* following the neuter comp. adj. *grātius*

Glōriae Vestrae: *of Your Glory;* an honorific referring to Theodora; the gen. is dependent on *cāritātis*

videar: *videō* in the pass. can mean “to seem” or “to to be seen as”

participātiōne: *through the sharing of the love;* abl. of means

ut...mūtuēminī: result clause

abundē fulgētis: *you shine abundantly;* Gudeliva begins an astronomical metaphor, in which Theodora shines so brightly that she can make lesser objects radiant without losing anything from her own brightness

nōbīs: *to us;* i.e., that Theodora would be borrowing from her own splendor (*dē propriō splendōre*) to give it to Gudeliva

cum...largīrī: causal use of *cum*, meaning “since” or “because,” despite the main verb being indic.; a subjunctive verb would be expected

damnum nōn est: *it is not a loss;* *damnum* is a pred. nom. as the obj. of *est*

Fovēte dēsīderia nostra, quae cognōscitis sincērītate praecipuā.
Grātia vestra per omnia nōs rēgna commendet. Dēbētis enim nōs
clārōs reddere, quī dē vestrā volumus lūce fulgēre.

clārus, -a, -um: bright; famous,
glorious

cognōscō, -ere, -gnōvī, -gnitum:
understand, know

commendō (1): commend

dēsīderium, -iī n.: desire, longing

foveō, -ēre, fōvī, fōtum: nourish,
foster; support

fulgēō, -ēre, fulsī: shine, flash

grātia, -ae f.: grace

lūx, lūcis f.: light

praecipuus, -a, -um: special,
notable

reddō, -ere, -didī, -ditum: return;
render

rēgnum, -ī n.: rule; kingdom,
realm

sincērītās, -ātis f.: purity, integrity

cognōscitis sincērītate praecipuā: *you know by their integrity*

per omnia...rēgna: *through all (our) rule;* here *rēgnum* is an abstract noun (in the pl., as often happens) referring to Theodahad and Gudeliva's time and actions as rulers

commendet: jussive subjunctive

nōs clārōs reddere: *to render us bright;* *clārōs* continues the astronomical metaphor of Theodora as a star illuminating lesser objects; *reddere* is a complementary inf. with *Dēbētis*

quī: (*we*) *who;* antecedent is *nōs*

dē vestrā...lūce: *from your light*

[2] Quāpropter Serēnitātī Vestrae reverentiam salūtātiōnis impertiēns affectiōsā mē animīs vestrīs praesūmptiōne commendō, spērāns ut sīc omnia mīrābilis prūdentia vestra compōnat, quātenus fidūcia, quae nōbīs dē animō vestrō data est, ūberius augeātur.

affectiōsus, -a, -um: affectionate

augeō, -ēre, auxī, auctum:

increase, augment

commendō (1): commend

compōnō, -ere, -posuī, -positum:

compile, compose

fidūcia, -ae f.: trust

impertiō, -īre, -īvī, -ītum:

bestow, impart

mīrābilis, -e: wonderful,

miraculous

praesūmptiō, -ōnis f.:

presumption, boldness

prūdentia, -ae f.: prudence

quāpropter: for which reason

quātenus: to such an extent

reverentia, -ae f.: reverence

salūtātiō, -ōnis f.: greeting

serēnitās, -ātis f.: serenity

spērō (1): hope

ūber, -era, -erum: abundant

Serēnitātī Vestrae: *to Your Serenity*; a title referring to Theodora

reverentiam salūtātiōnis...impartiēns: *bestowing the reverence of a greeting*

mē...commendō: *I entrust myself*; ind. obj. is *animīs vestrīs*

affectiōsā...praesūmptiōne: *with affectionate boldness*

spērāns ut: *hoping that*; expected construction would be *spērō + a fut. inf.*, but

here *spērāns* takes an *ut*, similar to a noun clause or ind. command

prūdentia vestra: agreeing with *mīrābilis*, which is the subject of *compōnat*

data est: perfect passive verb; in pairing with the comp. adj. *ūberius*, Gudeliva

feels as if there is already a relationship between herself and Theodora and

wishes to increase that trust

quātenus fidūcia...ūberius augeātur: *fidūcia* is the subject and antecedent of the rel. clause; *ūberius* is a comp. adv. modifying the jussive subjunctive verb *augeātur*

Nam cum nūllam inter Rōmāna rēgna deceat esse discordiam, ēmersit tamen et quālitās reī, quae nōs effīcere cāriōrēs Vestrae dēbeat Aequitātī.

aequitās, -ātis f.: justice, fairness	ēmergō, -ere, -mersī, -mersum: emerge
cārus, -a, -um: dear	quālitās, -ātis f.: quality, nature, kind
deceat, -ēre, -cuit: be fitting	rēgnum, -ī n.: rule, reign; kingdom
discordia, -ae f.: discord, disagreement	Rōmānus, -a, -um: Roman
efficiō, -ere, -fēcī, -fectum: make, render	

cum...deceat: *although it would (not) be fitting*; concessive clause

Rōmāna rēgna: refers to the Ostrogothic Kingdom in the west that Theodahad rules, and the Eastern Roman Empire which Justinian, Theodora's husband, is emperor of

quālitās reī: *the quality of a situation*; a delicate reference to the murder of Amalasuintha by Theodahad

Vestae...Aequitātī: it is not clear if Gudeliva is using this phrase as an honorific title for Theodora, or if she is referring to Theodora's actual sense of justice

quae...cāriōrēs: *which ought to make us more dear*; rel. clause of characteristic; Gudeliva is acknowledging that this situation could cause discord between the Eastern Roman Empire and the Ostrogothic Kingdom, and that in turn she and Theodahad are relying all the most on Justinian's goodwill, which in turn renders herself and Theodahad "more dear"

Queen Gudeliva to Empress Theodora
535 CE

Theodōrae Augustae Gudeliva Rēgīna.

[1] Veniente virō sapientissimō Petrō ita nōs amor Vestrae Serēnitātis explēvit ut vīdisse nōs aestimēmus cuius colloquia benigna suscēpimus.

aestimō (1): value; consider, judge
benignus, -a, -um: kind
colloquium, -iī n.: conversation,
 discussion
explēō, -ēre, -plēvī, -plētum: fill
 up

Petrus, Petrī m.: Peter (name)
sapiēns, -entis: wise
serēnitās, -ātis f.: serenity
suscipiō, -ere, -cēpī, -ceptum:
 take up, receive

Theodōrae Augustae Gudeliva Rēgīna: *Queen Gudeliva (says hello) to Empress Theodora*; the phrase *salūtem dīcit* is implied

Veniente...Petrō: abl. absolute; Peter is the legate of Justinian and Theodora
ita: anticipates the result clause with *ut* and *aestimēmus*

Vestrae Serēnitātis: *Your Serenity*; a title referring to Theodora

ut vīdisse nōs aestimēmus: *that we feel like we have seen*; lit. *that we consider ourselves to have seen*; *vīdisse* is a perf. inf., *aestimēmus* is subjunctive as part of the result clause begun by *ut*

cuius colloquia: (*you*) *whose conversation*; the antecedent of *cuius* is the implicit obj. of *aestimēmus*

suscēpimus: *we have received*; that is, “we have heard”

Quis enim tantā affābilitāte susceptā nōn reddat venerātiōnis
eximia, cui ante dignātiōnis ēloquium iūre ab omnibus
commendātiōnis suae dēbētur officium?

affābilitās, -ātis f.: kindness	iūre: rightly, justly
commendātiō, -ōnis f.: commendation; praise	officium, -iī n.: duty
dignātiō, -ōnis f.: esteem; favor, grace	reddō, -ere, -didī, -ditum: give back, return
ēloquium, -iī n.: speech; declaration	suscipiō, -ere, -cēpī, -ceptum: take up; receive
eximius, -a, -um: outstanding	venerātiō, -ōnis f.: veneration

Quis...nōn reddat: *Who...would not return?*; that is, Gudeliva is writing in response to an earlier communication from Theodora; the verb is a deliberative subjunctive

tantā affābilitāte susceptā: *with such great kindness received*; abl. absolute
venerātiōnis eximia: *an outstanding (amount) of veneration*; *venerātiōnis* is a partitive gen. dependent on *eximia*, which is acting as a n. pl. substantive adj. and the dir. obj. of *reddat*

cui: *to whom*; Theodora is the implied antecedent

ante dignātiōnis ēloquium: *before a declaration of favor*; in Late Latin, *dignātiō* can indicate the “favor” or “grace” shown by a superior figure to a subordinate one; here, Gudeliva seems to be referring to the positive message she has apparently received from Justinian and Theodora’s messenger Peter

ab omnibus: *by everyone*; abl. of agent with pass. verb *dēbētur*

commendātiōnis suae...officium: *a duty of one’s own commendation*; *officium* is the subject of *dēbētur*

[2] Et ideō per illum virum venerābilem, lēgātum domnī iugālis nostrī ad vōs speciāliter dīrēctum, salūtiferōs apicēs cūrāvimus dēstinandōs ut recurrēns Vestrae Serēnitātis affātus et dē optātā incolumitāte laetificet et dē firmissimae grātiaē nōs faciat exultātiōne gaudēre.

affātus, -ūs m.: speech, message
apex, -icis m.: high point; (here) a letter (epistle)
cūrō (1): care for, take care that
dēstinō (1): destine, intend; send
dīrigō, -ere, -rēxī, -rēctum: direct
domnus (= CL dominus), -ī m.: lord
exultātiō, -ōnis f.: exultation
firmus, -a, -um: firm, steady
gaudeō, -ēre, gāvīsus sum: rejoice, be glad
grātia, -ae f.: grace

ideō: for that reason
incolumitās, -ātis f.: safety
iugālis, -e: yoked together, married
laetificō (1): make glad, gladden
lēgātus, -ī m.: ambassador, legate
optō (1): desire, long for
recurrō, -ere, -currī, -cursum: return, run back
salūtifer, -era, -erum: conveying greetings
serēnitās, -ātis f.: serenity
speciāliter: specifically, particularly
venerābilis, -e: venerable

per illum virum venerābilem: an unnamed envoy of Justinian and Theodora
lēgātum domnī iugālis nostrī: *the legate of my lord husband (Theodahad)*; this phrase is in apposition to *illum virum venerābilem*

ad vōs speciāliter dīrēctum: *having been directed especially to you*; *dīrēctum* is a perf. pass. part. modifying *lēgātum*

salūtiferōs apicēs cūrāvimus dēstinandōs: *we have taken care that letters of greeting (are) to be sent*

ut: begins purpose clause with verbs *laetificet* and *faciat*

Vestrae Serēnitātis affātus: *the speech of Your Serenity*; *affātus* agrees with *recurrēns* and is the subject of *laetificet* and *faciat*

nōs faciat...gaudēre: *makes us rejoice*; *faciat* is causative

Tālī enim compendiō et causārum bene dispōnitur ōrdō et Vestrae Tranquillitātis gemināta crēscit affectiō. Suscipiāmus ergō vestrī animī bona, quia hoc est vērē rēgāle prōpositum: glōriōsē vīvere amōre cūnctōrum.

affectiō, -ōnis f.: love, affection

compendium, -ī n.: saving,
gaining

crēscō, -ere, crēvī, crētum: come
forth, increase

cūnctus, -a, -um: entire, all

dispōnō, -ere, -posuī, -positum:
arrange, disperse

geminō (1): double; unite

glōriōsē: gloriously

ōrdō, -dinis m.: rank, order

prōpositum, -ī n.: way of life,
purpose

rēgālis, -e: regal, of a king

suscipiō, -ere, -cēpī, -ceptum:
take up, receive

tranquillitās, -ātis f.: tranquility

vērē: truly

Tālī...compendiō: abl. of means with the pass. verb *dispōnitur*

et...et: both...and; connects two clauses that are modified by *tālī...compendiō*,
with verbs *dispōnitur* and *crēscit* respectively

causārum...ōrdō: the arrangement of affairs; this phrase looks back to the *grātia*
("favor") in the previous sentence, which seems to suggest a belief that Justinian
has approved of Theodahad's sole rule; this belief was evidently mistaken

Vestrae Tranquillitātis: title describing Theodora, poss. gen. modifying *affectiō*

gemināta...affectiō: the doubled affection; *gemināta* is a perf. pass. participle

bona: benefits; neuter substantive adj., object of *suscipiāmus*

rēgāle prōpositum: a royal way of life; *rēgāle* is a neut. adj. and *prōpositum* is the
pred. nom. of *est*

cūnctōrum: of all (people); masculine substantive adj.

[3] Quaedam vōbīs per hārum portitōrem verbō suggerenda commīsimus, quae prō ingenitā mānsuētūdine et libenter accipite et effcāciter Deō auxiliante praestāte.

auxilior, -ārī, -ātus sum: help
effcāciter: effectively, with effect
committō, -ere, -mīsī, -missum:
 bring together; entrust, commit
ingenitus, -a, -um: innate
libenter: eagerly
mānsuētūdō, -inis f.: gentleness,
 mildness

portitor, -ōris m.: carrier (of
 messages)
praestō, -āre, -stitī, -stātum: be at
 hand; do, carry out
suggerō, -ere, -gessī, -gestum:
 carry, bring

hārum portitōrem: *the carrier of these things*; refers to Peter, with the substantive pronoun *hārum* possibly referring to the letters to Theodora

verbō suggerenda: *suggerenda* is a fut. pass. participle, modifying *verbō*; lit. *with words which are to be carried*; the sense of obligation with this participle implies that these “certain things” are to be relayed to Theodora verbally by Peter, instead of included in the letter

prō ingenitā mānsuētūdine: *in accordance with (your) innate clemency*
et...et: *both...and*

accipite...praestāte: *receive...carry out*; second person pl. imperatives

Deō auxiliante: *with God helping*; abl. absolute

APPENDIX

Claudia Severa's Birthday Invitation to Sulpicia Lepidina (Vind. 291)

Very few original documents survive from ancient Rome. Most of the Latin works that we now possess have come down to us because they were copied out, at some point, and those copies survive (or, more likely, copies of those copies, or copies of copies of those copies, and so on). The letters recovered from the archaeological site at Vindolanda are a rare exception. These letters, written in ink on small wooden tablets, let us see the actual letters sent and received by ancient Romans.

The Vindolanda letters are written in what is called Old Roman Cursive. This is the same script that can be seen (with some changes) in graffiti at Pompeii, and in some papyri in Egypt. The letter shapes can be written quickly, so the script *runs* (the word “cursive” is ultimately derived from the verb *currō, currere*).

The Old Roman Cursive at Vindolanda has characteristics that make it difficult for modern readers. There are no distinct “uppercase” and “lowercase” letters. Words often lack spaces in between them, and dots or periods can be confused with a random ink blot or drip. Abbreviations sometimes get used, like “cl” for “Claudia.”

In this anthology, we present all the Vindolanda letters that are likely to have been written by women. For any students who would like to try their hand at reading a letter directly, we provide below an image of Vind. 291, Claudia Severa’s birthday invitation to Sulpicia Lepidina. Note that the text at the bottom right of the tablet is smaller and in a different handwriting. This post-script was presumably hand-written by Claudia Severa herself, while she would have dictated the words in the main text to an enslaved or freed copyist (on composition practices, see Introduction VI, “Authorship and Authenticity”).



Figure 8. The Old Roman Cursive Alphabet (drawn by Isobel Lewis)

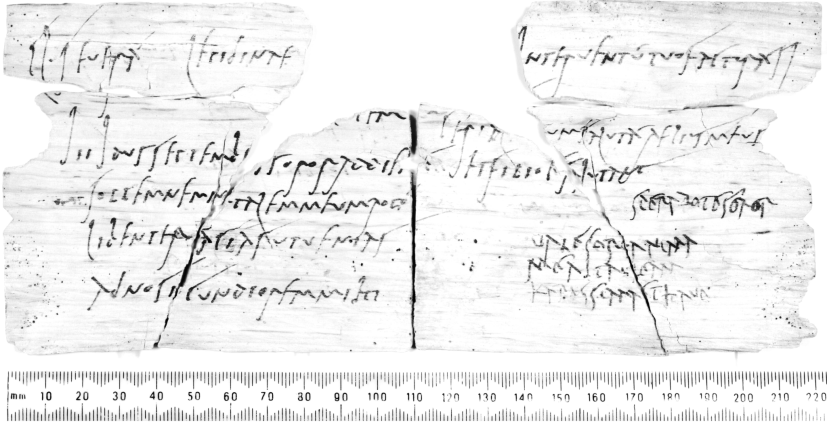


Figure 9. Vindolanda Tablet 291. (Courtesy of the Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents)

Transcription (dots designate places where letters are missing):

cl seuera lepidinae

...m

iii idus septemb...soror ad diem
sollemnem n.talem meum rogo
libenter .acias ut uenias
ad nos i.cundiozem mihi

...interuentu tuo factura si

...

cereal...um saluta aelius meus...
et filio..s .alutant

 sperabo te soror
uale soror anima
mea ita ...eam
karissima .t have

GLOSSARY

ā/ab (+ abl.): by; from; away from
abeō, -īre, -iī, -itum: go away
ac: and, also; (after comparatives) than
accipiō, -ere, -cēpī, -ceptum: accept, receive; learn
ad (+ acc.): to, toward, at
adveniō, -īre, -vēnī, -ventum: come to a place, arrive
agō, agere, ēgī, āctum: drive, lead; do; act
aliquī, -quae, -quod: some, any
alius, -a, -ud: other, another; at another time
alter, altera, alterum: other (of two)
amō (1): love
amor, -ōris m.: love
anima, -ae f.: breath, spirit
animus, -ī m.: spirit, mind, heart
ante: before, in front of (adv. and prep. + acc.)
appāreō, -ēre, -uī, -itum: appear, become visible
apud (+ acc.): near; in the presence of; at
atque: and; and also
audiō, -īre, -īvī/īī, -ītum: hear, listen to
autem: however
bene (adv): well
beneficium, -ī n.: benefit, service, kindness
bonus, -a, -um: good
caelum, -ī n.: sky, heavens
caput, -itis n.: head

castra, -ōrum n. pl.: camp
causa, -ae f.: cause, reason
cīvitās, -ātis, f.: citizenship, state
cōnsilium, -ī n.: plan, council
contrā: (prep. + acc) contrary to; (adv.) on the contrary
corpus, -oris n.: body
crēdō, -ere, -didī, -ditum: trust, believe
cum: with (prep. + abl.); when, while, since, although
 (conjunction)
cūr: why, for what reason
cūra, -ae f.: care, concern; political administration
custōs, -ōdis, m.: guard
dē (+ abl.): from; down from; about, concerning
dēbeō, -ēre, -uī, -itum: owe
deinde: then
deus, -ī m.: god
dīcō, dīcere, dīxī, dictum: say
diēs, diēī m./f.: day
dīversus, -a, -um: different, diverse
dominus, -ī m.: household master, lord
dormiō, -īre, -ivī/īī, -ītum: sleep
dum: while, until, provided that
duo, duae, duo: two
ego, meī, mihi, mē, mē: I, my, me (first person pron.)
enim: for, indeed
eō, īre, iī/īvī, itum: go
epistula, -ae, f.: letter
ergō: therefore
error, -ōris m.: error

et: and
etiam: also, even
faciō, -ere, fēcī, factum: make
ferō, ferre, tūlī, lātum: bear, bring
fidēs, -eī f.: faith
fīlius, -ī m.: son
fīō, fierī, factus sum: be made, be done; become; happen
fleō, -ēre, -ēvī, -ētum: weep
fortūna, -ae f.: fortune
frāter, -tris m.: brother
genus, -eris n.: origin, lineage, kind
gerō, -ere, gessī, gestum: bear, manage
habeō, -ēre, -uī, -itum: have
hic, haec, hoc: this, these
hodiē: today
homō, -inis m.: person
iaceō, -ēre, -uī: lie down
iam: now; already
ibi: there
īdem, eadem, idem: the same (man/woman/thing)
īgitur: therefore
ignis, -is m.: fire
ille, illa, illud: that
imperium, imperiī n.: command, power; empire
in: in, on (+ abl.); into, onto (+ acc.)
ingēns, -entis: huge, enormous
ingredior, -gredī, -gressus sum: enter, step in
inquam/inquit: say
integer, -gra, -grum: untouched, fresh, complete

interim: meanwhile
ipse, -a, -um: him-, her-, itself
is, ea, id: he/she/it/they (third person pron.)
iste, ista, istud: that, that of yours, that near you
ita: thus, so, like
itaque: and so, therefore
iter, itineris n.: journey
iubeō, -ēre, iussī, iussum: bid, order
labor, -ōris m.: toil, exertion, suffering
legō, -ere, lēgī, lēctum: gather; read (as)
liber, -brī m.: book
liber, -era, -erum: free; (as a masculine substantive plural)
 children
licet, -ēre, licuit, licitum: it is allowed, it is possible (+ dat. + inf.)
lītus, -oris n.: shore
locus, -ī m.: place; *loca* (n. pl.) region
longus, -a, -um: long, far
magis (adv.): more
magnus, -a, -um: great
mālō, māvīs, māluī, mālle: want more; prefer
māne: in the morning (adv)
manus, -ūs f.: hand
mare, -is n.: sea
māter, -tris f.: mother
mēns, mentis f.: mind; intention
meus, -a, -um: my, of me
mīles, -itis, m.: soldier
mīlle, (pl.) mīlia: thousand
mittō, -ere, mīsī, missum: send, let go

modo: just now
modus, -ī m.: manner, way, method; measure, size; limit
mōns, montis m.: mountain
mors, mortis f.: death
mōs, mōris m.: manner, custom; (pl.) character
moveō -ēre, -mōvī, mōtum: move
mulier, -eris, f.: woman
multus, -a, -um: much, many
nam / namque: for, for in fact
nārrō (1): to relate, recount
nātūra, -ae f.: nature
nē: not; that not (negation with subjunctives)
nec/neque: nor; and not
nēmō, -inis: no, not any
nihil (indecl.): nothing
nisi, nī: if not, unless
nōlō, nōlle, nōluī: not want; be unwilling
nōmen, -inis n.: name
nōn: not
nōs, nostrī/nostrum, nōbīs, nōs, nōbīs: we, us
noster, -stra, -strum: our
novus, -a, -um: new
nūllus, -a, -um: no, none, not any
numquam: never
nunc: now
oculus, -ī m.: eye
omnis, -e: all, every
pars, partis f.: part, share, portion
parvus, -a, -um: small

pater, -tris m.: father
patior, patī, passus sum: permit, endure
pāx, pācis f.: peace
per: through (+ acc.)
pēs, pedis m.: foot
petō, -ere, -īvī/-īī, petītum: seek; aim at
populus, -ī m.: people
possum, posse, potuī: be able, can
post: after (adv. and prep. +acc.)
prīmus, -a, -um: first
prō: for, on behalf of (+abl.)
prohibeō, -ēre, -uī, itum: prohibit; keep; withhold
putō (1): think
quaerō, -ere, -sīvī/sīī, -sītum: seek, inquire
quantus, -a, -um: how great, of what size
-que: and (postpositive enclitic)
quī, quae, quod: who, which
quia: because
quīdam, quaedam, quoddam: a certain one, someone
quidem: certainly; at least; indeed
quis, quid: who, what, which
quisquis, quidquid: whoever; whatever
quōmodo: in what way?
quoniam: since
quoque: also
reddō, -ere, -didī, -ditum: return, give back, make, render
referō, reffere, rettulī, relātum: to report; bring back
rēgnum, -ī n.: kingdom; kingship; rule
relinquō, -ere, -līquī, -lictum: leave behind, abandon; give up

reliquus, -a, -um: remaining, rest
rēs, reī f.: thing; matter, affair
rogō (1): ask
saepe: often
sānctus, -a, -um: holy, sacred
sciō, -īre, -īvī/-ī, -ītum: know, understand
scrībō, -ere, scrīpsī, scrīptum: write
secundus, -a, -um: following; favorable; second
sed: but
semper: always, ever
sententia, -ae f.: sentence; opinion; judgement
sepulchrum, -ī n.: tomb, grave, place of burial
sequor, sequī, secūtus sum: follow
servō (1): save; preserve
sī: if
sīc: in this manner, thus; **sīc ... ut:** in the same way as
similis, -e: like, similar
sine: without (+ abl.)
sōlus, -a, -um: only, alone
soror, -ōris f.: sister
spēs, speī f.: hope
spīritus, -ūs m.: breath; spirit
stō, -are, stetī, stātum: stand
sub: under, close to (+acc. or abl.)
sui, sibi, sē, sē: him/her/itself, themselves
sum, esse, fuī: to be
superus, -a, -um: situated above, upper
suus, -a, -um: his own, her own, its own
tālis, -e: such

tam: so, so much
tamen: nevertheless
tangō, -ere, tetigī, tāctum: to touch
tantum: only
tantus, -a, -um: of such size; so great, so much
templum, -ī n.: temple; consecrated ground
tempus, temporis n.: time, period, season
teneō, -ēre, -uī, tentum: hold, keep
terra, -ae f.: land
tōtus, -a, -um: whole, entire
tū, tuī, tibi, tē, tē: you (second person pron.)
tunc: then
turba, -ae f.: crowd, uproar
tuus, -a, -um: your
ubi: where; when
ūnus, -a, -um: one
ūsque: all along; up to, continuously
ut/utī: to, in order to (+ subjunctive); how, when, as (+ indic.)
uterque, utraque, utrumque: each (of two)
valē: farewell
vel: or
veniō, venīre, vēnī, vēntūm: to come
verbum, -ī n.: word
vester, -stra, -strum: your
via, -ae f.: road, path
videō, -ēre, vīdī, vīsum: see; seem (pass.)
vincō, -ere, vīcī, victum: to conquer
vir, virī m.: man
virtūs, -ūtis f.: virtue, manliness; power

vīs, vīs f.: force; strength (pl.)

vīta, -ae f.: life

vīvō, -ere, vīxī, vīctum: to live

vocō (1): to call

volō, velle, voluī: to wish, want; be willing

vōs, vestrum/estrī, vobīs, vōs, vobīs: you all (second person pl pron.)

vōx, vōcis f.: voice