Literary Love(r)s: Recognizing the Female Outline and its implications in Roman Verse Satire

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And Its Implication in Roman Verse Satire

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ABSTRACT

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The existence of a metaphoric female standing in for poetic style was only plainly discussed in a paper from 1987 concerned with Roman elegiac poetry. This figure is given the title of *scripta puella* or written woman, since her existence depends solely on the writings of an author. These females often appear to have basis in reality; however there is insufficient evidence to allow them to cross out of the realm of fantasy. The term *scripta puella* in poetry refers to a perfected poetic form, one the author prefers over all others, and a human form creates the illusion of a mistress. Using this form, usually described in basic terms which create an outline of a woman, a poet easily expresses his inclination towards specific poetic styles and elements.

While other scholars recognize the *scripta puella* in elegiac poetry, little research has been done into other genres. For this thesis, the focus is on the genre called Latin verse satire. The genre contains four recognized authors: Lucilius, Horace, Persius, and Juvenal. In order to prove her existence, each collection of satires is examined in its original language and analyzed with heavy emphasis on recognizing key phrases and attributes of *scriptae puellae*. Her appearances can be difficult to determine, as some examples will show, yet the existence of *scriptae puellae* enrich modern understanding of ancient texts.

In addition to the four authors, articles and books dealing with women, satire, and women in satire are consulted to aid in explanation and support. With this body of proof, *scriptae puellae* are shown to exist within the Latin verse satirists’ texts; they act as a link between the four authors and as a link to Greek poetry, which has been considered a possible predecessor for satire. This knowledge allows for a better explanation of satire as a genre and opens up the possibilities for further study in other genres which contain women of various forms.

Keywords: *scripta puella*, verse satire, women, poetry, mistress, Horace, Juvenal, Persius, Lucilius, Callimachus, Catullus
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Identifying and Creating *Scriptae Puellae*

Female figures appear in much of the world’s literature, including the small collection of Roman verse satire. Authors use particular images or figures within the lines of their texts to evoke reader responses; figures, including female ones, can have various roles within the same work. Readers need to recognize the differences between various female figures since each type has a unique meaning. The multiplicity of female roles relates to directly to male authors since “man identifies that which he wants and desires, or has acquired or fears acquiring, as Woman”.¹ This means authors use females to articulate desires: desire to obtain or avoid a particular object, idea, or person. One specific female figure appears as a living woman and sometimes appears based upon a living woman. This figure embodies poetic ideals of an author. By placing desired poetic elements into the shape of a woman, an author can write poetry as his lover, his mistress. It incorporates both the craving and frustration from a human lover into the difficulties of writing. Additionally, an author can use a female with undesirable characteristics to criticize writing styles he dislikes.

The best name for this figure is *scripta puella* or “written girl”.² Maria Wyke uses the term to refer specifically to metaphorical version of Propertius’ mistress Cynthia found in three poems. While her paper refers to only three poems of Propertius, the name is appropriate for a figurative woman who embodies an author’s literary preferences. This under recognized figure is documented in elegiac poetry. *Scriptae puellae* appear as the

desired love object in elegy, the ideal form for which the author struggles to reach and create.

With this definition, readers can become aware of *scriptae puellae* in other works of literature. Authors tend to pass on poetic ideals among themselves. The figurative woman appears to have origins in Greek poetry with the author Callimachus; many authors follow his example in their treatment and description of *scriptae puellae*. The woman, or poetry, not only has a pleasing sound, but a pleasing appearance; it is no surprise that poets use similar language to describe poetics and beautiful women since they are appealing to similar aspects of form and perfection.

Several Roman poets receive and develop *scriptae puellae* from Callimachean poetics. These authors use the written girl to express their poetic theories – some are very close to the standards set forth by Callimachus while there is one who takes the *scripta puella* and constructs a figurative woman with the ideals of satirical verse instead of the desirable elegiac version. By using this vehicle for poetic expression, an author tells readers what he finds appealing in the literary world. This thesis considers in several instances exactly what a poet gains by expressions of desire for the *scripta puella*, as an embodiment of poetic ideals.
Women and Scriptae Puellae in Literature

In order to identify the differences between scriptae puellae and other female figures, readers need to familiarize themselves with the most common feminine forms in Latin literature. Most of these are traditional archetypes for women, which still exist in modern thought and literature. Frequently these various appearances are easily sorted between two basic categories: desirable and undesirable. Each category is directly related to Roman societal norms and expectations of the female gender within the greater context of Roman life.

For the most part female figures are presented within a quasi-historical context, which often has fantastic elements that are difficult to attribute to any direct source. These stories are passed down as history; women hear them and learn the behaviors they should either emulate or avoid. For example, the devotion of Penelope is something all women should attempt to emulate while they should abhor the murderous tendencies of Clytemnestra. The Roman world is a man’s world, and women often only have legitimate involvement on the outer fringes of important activities.

Lives Defined: What it means to be a Roman woman

Out of the differences between men and women, rich and poor, society creates the expected behaviors. A matriarchal society would have very different ideas regarding property, inheritance, and governance when compared to a patriarchal one. Norman Levine, *The Discourses of Love: Paganism*, New York: The University Press of America, Inc., 1997: 77.
society is patriarchal. Many women are known from formulaic descriptors including “Lucilia spun wool” or “Wife of the consul” found on tombs.³

The basis for all interactions between freeborn Roman women and their world: the idea that women, having weak minds and characters, depend upon the protection brought by a male.⁴ All children are placed under the protection of the paterfamilias, the oldest male in the household. A paterfamilias’ power over his children’s lives only ended upon his death.⁵ Marriage would not free a woman from male control since a woman either remained under her father’s control, including the right to terminate the marriage, or she is placed under the power of her husband’s family. In cases of spousal death, the woman could remarry or could get a male relative to act as her guardian; he would help her to care for money and attend to legal issues since the weakness of female minds meant she would be unable to do such activities herself.

With this emphasis on weak intellect and belief in the woman’s inability to govern herself, men become the link through which women interact with the rest of the Roman world. Girls were given the female version of their family name; multiple daughters would lead to either maior or minor (bigger or smaller) or numerical names such as prima, secunda, and tertia (first, second, third) to help differentiate the girls until marriage. After marriage, women are most often known through their husbands:

“It was standard practice to use the husband’s name to identify married woman, for women could be identified only through their connections with men. This was the passport required for a woman’s entry into history.

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Men, who were more visible, had to provide the point of reference for women."⁶

Women are recognized in Roman literature through connections with men; it does not matter whether that man is a father, brother, husband, son, or lover. He becomes the link between her sheltered private world and the public male-dominated Roman universe. Some women are only known by a pseudonym. However, even these pseudonyms are connected with a male name. This comes from the Hellenic poetic model and is a way to protect the desired woman from overt scrutiny. For example it is thought Catullus obscures Clodia, the sister of Clodius, behind the mask of Lesbia.⁷ The names are often selected based on prosodic equivalency between the poetic name and real name (again confer Clodia to Lesbia), which makes an interesting but weak case.⁸

This then is what is left for the modern scholar to examine: names of women tied to names of men through blood, marriage, love, or infatuation which, in some cases are highly likely to be false names. While women are named in mythology, history, and poetry, their names always tie to a male’s in some fashion: Lesbia to Catullus, Cynthia to Propertius, Corinna to Ovid.

The Who of Lesbia

Catullus, known for his Carmina, mentions the name Lesbia frequently in his poetry. For most of the academic record, scholars argue Lesbia was a real woman and link her with the historical figure Clodia. There are three main points for the traditional view:

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⁸ Ibid.
1) Poems are historical and true autobiographical documents.\(^9\)  

2) Poets obscure the true name of their mistresses in order to protect their identity and reputation; there are examples of historical mistresses being translated into the poetic forum.\(^10\)  

3) Poets’ use of names enhances the meaning of the texts where those names occur.\(^11\)  

Traditionalists point out texts always contains truth. A poet draws inspiration from his life, including the use of real events and people. For example the mistress of Gallus, a known historical figure, appears within his poetry and Cicero mentions he had dinner with her. She appears in two texts and moves fluidly between reality and poetics.\(^12\) Horace, in one of his *Epodes*, accurately describes battles from the recent civil war – battles he had participated in, which became a part of his history.\(^13\)  

In contrast, there is a theory less than thirty years old which dismantles the traditional viewpoint by point. Even if a woman appears in life and literature, there is a pressing need to separate the living from the literary which means while a *scripta puella* may be based upon a living woman, *she* stands as a distinct figure.\(^14\) The supporters of *scriptae puellae* state:

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\(^12\) Griffin, 1976, 90.  
1) Authors often use the real world as their setting: this includes using real names, locations, and events. By placing their creations in the “real” world, they lend a sense of reality towards it.\textsuperscript{15}

2) One of the points of love poetry is to create an object for the poetic voice to fall into love with, to show desire towards. The most common love object is \textit{scripta puella}, described in the same language as woman.\textsuperscript{16}

3) The name which the poet bestows on his \textit{scripta puella} often relates to a poetic element. In addition to her name relating to poetry, the descriptors often have poetic connotations.\textsuperscript{17}

Catullus \textit{Carmina 86} shows a \textit{scripta puella} by comparing two texts written as women and judges their appearances. For Catullus, there is only one winner in such a contest: his own desired Lesbia:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Quintia formosa est multis. mihi candida, longa,}
\textit{recta est: haec ego sic singula confiteor.}
\textit{totum illud formosa nego: nam nulla uenustas,}
\textit{nulla in tam magno est corpore mica salis.}
\textit{Lesbia formosa est, quae cum pulcerrima tota est,}
\textit{tum omnibus una omnis surripuit Veneres.}\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

“Quintia is [considered] lovely shaped by many. To me, she is white, long, straight: these [attributes] I concede in the manner described. I deny that she is so great a beauty: for no loveliness, no grain of salt is in so large a

\textsuperscript{15} Maria Wyke, 1987, 47.
\textsuperscript{18} Catul.86
Lesbia is beautiful, indeed she is the most beautiful of them all, besides she has stolen away all the charms of the others.”

The description of Quintia is a quick sketch of the female form put forth before the eyes of the audience, or an outline. By accepting that Quintia is metaphoric, the comparison to Lesbia means one of two ideas. Either Lesbia is better because she is real instead of fictitious or Lesbia is a better style of poetry. Catullus gives the answer through his poetic works; his literary collection pulls elements from other authors – in essence the *Veneres* from his predecessors to make his own work more alluring.

He desires his Lesbia over all other forms of literature, particularly this heavy Quintia. Both contain elements which are desired for both women and texts. By presenting his poetic theory as a woman, Catullus can frame good and bad poetics as desirable/undesirable women. His desire for Lesbia encompasses more than just sexual desire; it also contains his desire for his poetic style.

The poem presents both sides of the argument within its text, however, it leans more towards Lesbia as a *scripta puella* than the traditionalist view. The outline of Quintia is brief, leading to the comment *nulla in tam magno est corpora mica salis*. There is no grain of salt, nothing interesting in the outline despite the large area it covers. Quintia is most likely a large historical literary work, which Catullus is using to point out the appeal of his light, charming (*omnis Veneres*) work.

**Desirable versus Undesirable**

There is one important idea to remember when discussing women in literary texts: nearly all of the existent texts are written by men. This means nearly all the information gleaned about women through these sources are subject to the heavy filter of male
Nearly all writings concerning women are “largely history of male-female” or the musings of men about women and their relationships with and to men. These musings often focus on the sexual and reproductive capabilities of women; a woman is seen either as a matron or a sexual object – it is rare to have one woman seen in both contexts. Vestal are defined by their inability to have sex, matrons by their having sex and children, mistresses by their sexual needs and the desires of their lovers, and prostitutes and slaves by their inability to deny the male in sexual desires. All of these women are subject to heavy moralizing since men use women as the other to show their superiority over their desires and their bodies.

Women are often divided into two basic categories based upon male views: desirable and undesirable. It is impossible to separate out the male opinion from the woman found there; she is under the control of the male author and her voice, behaviors, and attributes are all defined by his pen. For a *scripta puella*, the male opinion and desire determines every facet of *her*, from appearance to behavior.

**Desire, Love, and Poetry**

Female figures play a large part within elegiac texts. These women are often in the role of mistress – a love-object for which the poet expresses his desires for and his inability to leave her alone. A *scripta puella* appears as a beloved mistress to the poet’s

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20 Dixon, 2001, 16.
lover persona. A mistress has specific attributes which he plays up to increase the romantic tension and give in to the voyeuristic tendencies of male-centric love poetry.23

She is always presented as beautiful, most likely a younger woman who has a physically perfect physique along with shining hair, pale skin, and flashing eyes. She is charming: a delight to talk to, to hear sing, and to be around for the evening. In addition, she may be willful and faithless to her lover. Many poems discuss the mistress going off with another lover or even sitting with another man during dinner. She teases and taunts her poet lover to increase his ardor.

In addition, the sexual pleasure of the woman is obscured by the masculine prerogative. For a male author, his needs and desires are more important than those of his love-object. Poets have two categories for mistresses which are based upon the assertiveness the love-object shows. A meek woman is one who arouses desire in men and then attends to this aroused desire.24 An assertive mistress loudly expresses her desires and wants.

In elegy it is far more common to find the meek figure who willingly subjects herself to the male desires and demands. This female figure not only submits in the realm of sexual desire but in the physical as well. A love-object or scriptra puella finds herself dressed and groomed in a way the poet finds attractive.

For example, Cicero compares language to women in Orator 23. He discusses the beauty of unadorned language by comparing it to a woman who wears only her natural beauty.25 Plain speech is far more appealing, just as a woman who only uses

natural beauty instead of applying heavy make-up and jewels. Most poets dress their
*scriptae puellae* simply, commenting on natural and delicate charms.

**Undesirable Women In Topoi**

In contrast, the most common woman in satire is the undesirable: pushy, opinionated, old, ugly, etc. Many of the elements specifically create shock and disgust in the audience including caricatures – Cornelia in Juvenal *Satire* 6 is treated as haughty and arrogant, instead of simply taking pride in her sons. All satirical writings thrive on the author’s ability to draw in his audience emotionally which causes the reader to react more strongly to the accusations presented in the text.26 The misogynistic slant found in satire is a standard rhetorical topic given over to ancient students called a *topos.*27

Every school boy would learn the *topos* which contains the misogynistic arguments against marriage and women in *thesis* experiences. The *grammaticus* gives a topic for the class to defend or rebuke in a debate. Quintilian lists the *thesis ei gameteon,* or question to whether one should marry, as one of the regular topics.28 Many of these boys would turn to the epics and mythology taught in schools; for the most part, the marriages of the immortals show the ugly side of matrimony and female behavior:

“These immortal relationships illustrate many anti-marriage characteristics that become conventional in the literature of the Greeks and, in turn, the Romans: weak husbands manipulated by domineering wives, male

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28 Richard Hawley, “‘In a Different Guise’: Roman Education and Greek Rhetorical Thought on Marriage,” in *Satiric Advice on Women and Marriage: From Plautus to Chaucer,* edited by Warren S. Smith, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 2005: 28.
suspicions of female infidelity, female abuse of sexual charms, nagging wives, cuckolded husbands who are the butt of jokes.”

Thus the women presented in rhetorical exercises, and later in satire, are bad females. Juvenal willingly takes the topos of marriage and undesirable women and uses the genre of satire to exaggerate the arguments. The sight of a woman behaving as a man turns the accepted gender roles upside down and robs men of their phallic superiority. The goal is to shock the readers.

Indeed, Satire 6 focuses on male fears: while the poem may actually be misogynist in nature, the misogyny is a large portion of the misogamy. The poem needs to denounce one of the two people in marriage. With a male speaker, it makes sense that the villain will be played by women. Juvenal is using tried and true methods in his poetry: if the woman cannot be desirable (which she cannot be since this is a deposition against marriage), then she must appear undesirable (and in this particular case, the worse the speaker can make her seem, the better for his point). Therefore, woman becomes the perfect target when writing about misogamy due to her otherness and ease in which the author can make her undesirable.

Indeed Juvenal leaves out two specific archetypes of women which would be expected in satirical works. Witches and prostitutes present obvious satiric opportunities for the author and Juvenal would be unlikely to pass over such an occasion; yet in a poem concerned with marriage, their absence is expected: “men do not marry witches or

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29 Ibid.
prostitutes”.\textsuperscript{31} Even the perfect woman has too many imperfections and problems to allow for a good marriage.\textsuperscript{32}

This single-minded focus of the speaker and his irate obsession against women show his feelings about marriage. The easiest way for him to attack marriage is to attack women because they are the other; the main problem, as he sees it, is the rampant adultery. Adultery leads to abortions and murder; it is the reason for the downfall of Rome since women want more of everything and feel they can take it from males. Despite men having faults, this attack on women stems from “their capacity as females”.\textsuperscript{33} Despite the fact that these claims are outrageous, there is still the fear that there is a small grain of truth somewhere within.\textsuperscript{34} Since the readers are male, they are more willing to look about to see if they can see these murdering females.\textsuperscript{35}

Authors not only treat marriage harshly in the satires. It is a well-established tradition in classical literature that love is a sickness, madness: as early as the seventh century B.C.E. the poet Sappho compares love to a sickness affecting her body.\textsuperscript{36} Satire uses this to its advantage: Satire 6 uses the connection made between ardor and the ideas of rabies and furor to bring up the madness of murdering spouses. The madness becomes intimately linked to tragedy through the use of Clytemnestra and Medea. These two

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
  \bibitem{32} Juv.6.161-169
\end{thebibliography}
women were so in love that “the passion… wipes out their reason and is even a mitigating circumstance for their crimes”.  

This unappealing female is not only given over to her madness but stands in opposition to the traditional appearance of Roman marriages. Based on tombstone inscriptions and written sources, it is highly likely that many Roman couples were devoted towards each other and developed, if not love, a healthy respect towards each other. So if Roman marriages often were tolerable, why is satire so determined to show the ugly side of women and relationships? Once again, the reason is to make a deep impression upon the reader and to help show the absurdity of certain behaviors currently tolerated in society by having women indulge.

This is one reason why the scripta puella is so difficult to find within the satiric text: satire is out to show the ugly and undesirable side of life and human behaviors. For example, while many behaviors are treated harshly in Satire 6, Juvenal returns to many of the same behaviors in his eighth satire yet focuses on men doing the exact same actions as the women in the sixth. Within satire, appearances of scriptae puellae are rare, especially when compared with elegy. Many authors, regardless of genre preferences, use them in place of human mistresses and extol the virtues found in loving scriptae puellae.

**Scriptae Puellae Emerging in Satire**

Authors use scriptae puellae to illustrate their personal poetic ideals and express their desires for literary pursuits. The determination from woman or metaphor can be

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difficult for readers. Each time a woman appears in ancient text, her appearance needs to be noted and profoundly examined before a classification of her function is granted. Context is very important to determine the actual category for a female figure in any piece of literature.

For most of the authors discussed in this thesis, the *scripta puella* has a set elegiac appearance. Authors aware of Callimachus and his poetic theory follow his ideals in creating their own poetry. Since most of the poets are copying his standards, the Callimachean *scripta puella* remains consistent for several centuries. Horace, with his knowledge of Callimachus, creates *scriptae puellae* in most of the genres he writes. Lucilius and Persius appear to not be aware of Callimachus which means they lack *scriptae puellae* in their works. Finally, Juvenal takes the Horatian *scriptae puellae* and twists them to suit satirical verse poetics instead of elegiac.
Early *Scriptae Puellae*: Transitioning from the Greek Callimachus into the Latin Sphere

In order to understand the implications of *scriptae puellae*, it is useful to show the origins of the poetic connotations in Callimachus. It is his poetic style embodied in the *scripta puella* which many Augustan Age poets mimic in their own works.\(^1\) He is known for his elegiac poems. While elegy was originally designed for oral delivery in various social gatherings, it moved into the personal sphere and became known for its expression of love, along with mythological themes.\(^2\) This personal poetic form opens the way for a poet to express his devotion to poetry by turning it into a woman. Callimachus refers not only to his own poetry but uses the female form to describe works written by other poets.

Callimachus takes elegy and its personal expression to new heights. However the interest in his writings comes centuries later in Rome during the Augustan Age. The Roman author Quintilian in his *Institutio Oratoria* claims Callimachus is the elegiac *princeps*.\(^3\) Those authors turn towards Callimachus for inspiration and imitation. He is the link between Greek and Roman elegy, the man from who the *scriptae puellae* trace their origins and base nature.

A prolific author, of which mostly fragments remain, Callimachus blends his poetic, critical, and scholastic sides together to create his style. The longest text of his is the *Aetia* or *The Causes*.\(^4\) It is this particular text that shows the beginnings of the *scripta puella*. During the *Aetia* Prologue, Callimachus prominently discusses his poetic theory

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3. Quint.*Inst.* 10.1.58
in this programmatic section. He utilizes metaphor and personification to distinguish between and discuss two different works of literature. The identification of poetry using feminine names and descriptions emerges in the Prologue, blurring the line between work and woman. Indeed, Callimachus describes works ambiguously – poems are called “big” or “outweighs” in relation to another work. By using physical descriptors and single names such as Demeter or Philitas’ Demeter instead of The Demeter, Callimachus shows he knows about the scripta puella and how to draw her outlines with his words.

Callimachus expresses dislike for larger, heavier thematic elements and styles while showing a preference for shorter, more delicate poetry. He prefers and enjoys love poems concerning female figures possibly construed to be literary versions of living flesh. Callimachean poetics, including the inclination for love poetry and distaste for other genres, are mimicked in the poetic styling of Catullus and Horace. By giving the literary works human attributes, Callimachus can easily discuss his poetic ideas. This goes beyond traditional personification – the lighter writing style and elegiac themes which Callimachus shows preference for is similar to a mistress for him. She develops into the perfect woman for an author to love and express.

Indeed, his preference is clearly stated later in the prologue with a warning to authors to “make your sacrifice as fat as you can, poet, but keep you Muse on slender rations”. A “slender Muse” refers to the lighter love poetry Callimachus favors over the heavy affairs of epic, history, and tragedy. He wishes to “judge poetry by the art, not by the mile”. By giving the attributes of heaviness to a poem, Callimachus marks the poem

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6 Callim.Aetia Prologue.25-26
clearly as one that which focuses on length and weighty themes. He finds these poems unattractive.

Callimachus sets up his argument in two parts. First, he introduces the two works in metaphoric terms as Girl A and Girl B. Then he professes his penchant for Girl B by describing Girl A as large in comparison to Girl B. There are multiple reasons for a literary work to be called big or heavy. Epic poems, weighty themes including religious elements, tragic poems and plays, historical writings – these are topics Callimachus dislikes. He prefers poetry containing love and all it entails. Below are verses from the Aetia Prologue with both girls highlighted: Girl A in italics, Girl B underlined.

“Born eaters

Of your own hearts [the Coan poet]

Was not, admittedly, a man of few verses

But all the same his bountiful Demeter far

Outweighs the woman he celebrated

At length.

And of the two books

Mimnermus wrote, not the one that tells

Of the big woman, but the one composed

With a delicate touch, displays

The poet at his sweetest.”

First Callimachus mentions “the Coan poet”, well accepted to be Philitas.

“Bountiful Demeter” refers to an elegiac poem of length discussing the goddess. She is

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7Callim. Aetia Prologue.10-20
described as Ὄμπνιος or large (in the sense of “well-fed”).⁸ A poem discussing the
goddess is often long and contains heavy thematic elements about her worship and
mythology. In contrast, readers assume Girl B, an unnamed poem, is not only a shorter
work but one containing the lighter thematic elements of love which Callimachus prefers.
While unnamed, there are only four possibilities for Girl B: *Hermes, Telephus,*
*Epigrammata,* and *Paegnia.* Of those, the most likely candidate is the *Paegnia* – the
name means “little trifles” or “playthings” and the closest Latin word is *nugae.* Catullus
uses the term *nugae* for his own light elegiac poetry including the ones about Lesbia and
it is often translated as “frivolities”.⁹ The *Paegnia* collection contains poems about a
woman called Bittis, who like Lesbia becomes the object of adoration for the poet. Girl A
is Demeter and Girl B is the one within the *Paegnia.* For Callimachus, Girl B is more
interesting and he considers her to be far more appealing than Demeter, since she is
“celebrated at length”. In terms of Callimachean poetics, “at length” most likely refers to
multiple poems concerning the same subject: Bittis. The *Demeter* “far outweighs” the
other since it is a poem about a goddess with a more serious subject matter and tone.

Callimachus then focuses upon Mimnermus and two of his works. In the *Aetia,*
the titles are not given. Based on contextual clues in the Callimachean work the two
books are the *Smyrnaeis* and the *Nanno. Smyrnaeis* is a ktistic and epic poem discussing
the founding of Smyrna by an Amazonian woman.¹⁰ In contrast, the *Nanno* contains
elegiac love-poetry about a flute-girl. Once again, Girl A is the heavier topic and called
“the one that tells of the big woman” while Girl B is a book “composed with a delicate

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⁸ Ὄμπνιος, *LSJ* s.v. ὀμπνειος, “an epith. of Demeter” 2 and “well-fed, flourishing: hence large” 2.II.
⁹ *Nugae,* *OLD,* s.v. nugae-arum “things not serious, frivolities” 3a AND “(applied to literary work of a
light character)” 3b.
touch, displays the poet at his sweetest”.\textsuperscript{11} The founding of a city certainly outweighs the love for a single woman. Callimachus also hints at the Amazon queen with “big woman” since Amazons are larger-than-life women in mythology. Callimachus’ personal preference for elegy and lighter themed literature over other genres is apparent in his choice of Girl B in both situations.

Callimachus exploits the ambiguous link between woman and work in another place. During the course of the Prologue he mentions the “Telchines”, a slight at other authors including Asclepiades and Posidippus. These two authors both write about the \textit{Lyde} by Antimachus using the blurred personification Callimachus employs in his Prologue. The commentary on the work makes Lyde the subject, living out the descriptions of its text. Callimachus calls it “a fat piece of writing and not smart”.\textsuperscript{12} It can also be phrased as “Lyde is fat and uncharming”. While \textit{Lyde} is thought to be an elegiac poem for a mistress, Callimachus found it lacking when evaluated against his poetic ideals. Since the poem does not survive, it is difficult to say what about \textit{her} causes Callimachus to dislike \textit{her}. While it would be interesting to know, it is more prudent to point out Callimachus’ expression of his dislike. He uses personification for emphasis: \textit{She} is fat, \textit{she} is big, \textit{she} outweighs. Within the ambiguous spot where work is woman and woman is work, the human descriptions add validation to Callimachus’ stance by invoking the human form instead of a literary appearance.

In terms of the focus for this thesis, Callimachus and his poetry only become remarkable when Augustan Age authors use his poetics to create their own writings.\textsuperscript{13}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[11] Callim.\textit{Aetia} Prologue.15-19
\item[12] Callimachus Fragment 398.
\end{footnotes}
The oldest commentary on Callimachus that currently exists is from that particular time period; with the evidence it is safe to claim that many Roman authors from the Augustan Age know about Callimachus’ works. These links include the use of *scriptae puellae* in elegy and other formats including satire.

**Moving Callimachus to Rome**

Despite his popularity in Rome nearly two full centuries span between Callimachus and the Roman poets who derive influence from him. There are few examples of Callimachean influence in Rome during the third and second centuries B.C.E. The author Ennius begins his *Annales* with a dream sequence similar to the *Aetia* Prologue, while Lucilius’ *Satires* appear to owe some influence to the *Iambi*. Yet, it is a Greek poet who acquaints Roman poets with Callimachean poetic theory.

A man arrives in Rome during the first century B.C.E. Due to his education, he acquaints himself with writers. This group of poets is known as “new poets”. Based on his fragments, this Greek called Parthenius is familiar with Callimachean poetics himself and has a Callimachean slant to his own works. Parthenius takes his knowledge of Callimachus and introduces Rome to his poetic theory.

The group of new poets takes the Callimachean poetics and molds their own ideas of poetry from it. Several take the *scripta puella* Callimachus shows in his *Aetia* Prologue and create female outlines for love poetry. Two of them are of particular interest: Gaius Cornelius Gallus and Gaius Valerius Catullus. Parthenius himself mentions Gallus by

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15 Clausen, 1964, 186-7.
name at the opening of his *Erotica Pathemata.* The fragments of Gallus show his possible acquaintance with the *scripta puella:* his elegies are addressed to Lycoris, a name identified with multiple meanings. It is linked to a courtesan, a location, and a cult-title for Apollo – god of poetry. It is likely that Lycoris is similar to “Girl B” in the Callimachus discussion above, an aspect given female form in order to more readily describe an author’s preference for more delicate poetic style. In addition, the use of a cult-title of Apollo for the name of their “girl” is seen in the writings of Propertius and Tibullus who are later Roman poets who use *scriptae puellae* in their own works.

In contrast with Gallus, the poetry of Catullus survives with more text intact. While this poet has already been discussed in terms of recognizing the *puella scripta,* Catullus C. 86 needs to be discussed in historical context. Looking again at the poem, the relationship between Callimachus and Catullus is recognizable when framing the Girl A and Girl B argument:

> Quintia formosa est multis. mihi candida, longa,
> recta est: haec ego sic singula confiteor.
> totum illud formosa nego: nam nulla uenustas,
> nulla in tam magno est corpore mica salis.
> Lesbia formosa est, quae cum pulcerrima tota est,
> tum omnibus una omnis surripuit Veneres.

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20 Ibid.
21 See “The Who of Lesbia”, pages 7-10 above for previous discussion.
22 Catul.86
The dynamic is familiar to Callimachean poetics: Girl A (Quintia) is introduced to
the reader with a discussion of her qualities. Quintia is seemingly the perfect *scripta
puella* except *nulla in tam magno est corpore mica salis*. Again the author describes Girl
A as larger than Girl B (*magno corpore*). The poem introduces Girl B (Lesbia) as a foil to
Girl A and points out that she is the preference of the author.

Lesbia emerges as the form Catullus prefers over Quintia in the same way
Callimachus prefers lighter poetic works. The name Lesbia evokes the island of Lesbos,
home of the poet Sappho. As stated previously, Lesbia appears in both the traditionalist
and new theory as evidence for her existence as a woman and a *puella scripta*. Using the
evidence of the relationship between Callimachus and Catullus, Lesbia’s appearance in
Catullus C. 86 frames her as a *scripta puella* distinct from any human influence.\(^{23}\)

Catullus takes his readers into his process of creating a *scripta puella* in Catullus
C. 50. He speaks of him and his friend Calvus Licinius spending the day *otiosi multum
lusimus in meis tabellis* or “we played at leisure with many things in my tablets”.\(^{24}\) He
admits to trying various meters *ludebat numero modo hoc modo illoc* but the lines are
described as *versiculos* or literally, little lines.\(^{25}\) The pair passes time not only writing but
drinking *per iocem atque uinum*.\(^{26}\) He then shifts focus in Catullus C. 51. For Catullus,
this poem is also considered to be an *ad Lesbiam*; the phrase evokes the idea of a
mistress. When read in the context of *ad Lesbiam* and the traditional view, Lesbia is
flirting with another man in front of Catullus yet he cannot stop himself from feeling the
effects of love and jealousy. However when taken in context with Catullus C. 50, this

\(^{24}\) Catul.Carm.50.1-2.
\(^{25}\) *versiculos*, *OLD* s.v. versiculus, versiculi, “a brief line of verse (pl. often = poetry of a light or
epigrammatic nature)” 2.
\(^{26}\) Catul.Carm.50.18-21
poem becomes an example of Sapphic poetics especially when one realizes Catullus copied this poem from one of hers.

With his poetry, Catullus shows the difficulty in fully separating *scriptae puellae* from real women. There are elements of both within his Lesbia. However in Catullus C. 86, the treatment of Lesbia embodies the elements of *scriptae puellae* and Callimachean poetics. This Lesbia stands distinct from a Lesbia who stands for a real woman. Catullus shows the difficulty in keeping the two aspects separate while also firmly entrenching the *scripta puella* into Latin literature.

**Scripta Puella and Desire: Propertius’ Poetry Creates the Perfect “Mistress”**

After Catullus and Gallus are the more famous Augustan authors: Ovid, Virgil, and Propertius. Each of these authors takes elements from their predecessors and put their own unique spin on these. Indeed the use of a *scripta puella* acts as a chain through all these authors; the changes to *her* form through each author’s perception help the movement into the satirical genre. *She* gains defining characteristics and a more solid form.

Propertius takes the idea of the *scripta puella* to create an image he calls Cynthia; since the time of Apuleius, scholars give a real name and identity to Cynthia. 27 While there may be an outside influence for her, there is a version of Cynthia which is a *scripta puella*. Book 4 of his poetry gives him claim to be called the Roman Callimachus. His knowledge and usage of Callimachus’ poetry and themes show prominently within that

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It is his relationship through Cynthia which allows him to express these themes.

All literature blends reality and fiction; many times readers find separating the two complex at times. However it increases the difficulty when a *scripta puella* is added:

> “Direct addresses to a beloved ‘Cynthia’ who is allocated physical and psychological characteristics suggest that the narrative’s female subject has a life outside the text as Propertius’ mistress. The illusion of a real world populated by real individuals is then sustained by various other formal mechanisms such as the regular deployment of addresses to the historically verifiable figure of Tullus or occasional references to the landscape of Baiae, Umbria, and Rome. Having established a recognizable setting, the poetry-book seems even to account for its own existence as literary discourse with the claim that composition is a method of courtship.”

The main concerns are simply and directly stated: Propertius writes Cynthia to have the same emotions and responses as a real woman and places *her* in a setting which is easily recognizable and verifiable to his audience. Since he presents Cynthia as existing in real locations, the readers are more willing to accept *her* existence as a living, breathing human being. Indeed, many authors place their creations within real backgrounds to create a sense of authentication.

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28 Proper.4.1.72
29 Wyke, 1987, 47. Emphasis is my own.
Propertius explains his poetry has a purpose: it is to woo a woman. Readers then fall into a tempting trap. If the author is writing about a woman, to woo her, then this woman must be real. Each description becomes a reaffirmation of this belief. Propertius *Elegiae* 2.2 and 2.3 describe Cynthia’s appearance. She is as lovely as Ischomache with her long yellow hair, slender figure and hands, and a noble walk. Her face is white and compared to lilies: *lilia non domina sint magis alba mea.* Her dancing and singing abilities are compared to mythological figures. Propertius claims she is a second Helen: *post Helenam haec terris forma secunda reedit.*

He bemoans her use of foreign embellishments in *Elegia* 1.2 including Coan silk and Orontean perfumes. He points out *natura sunt mercato perdere cultu, nec sinere in propriis membra nitere bonis?* Cynthia’s figure cannot be improved (*non ut tuaest medicina figurae*) and the speaker goes on to demonstrate mythological females who ensnared their loves with natural, modest beauty. Her voice is pleasing to her lover; indeed, “it is everything Venus approves, everything Minerva approves”.

Later, Propertius mentions her *pedibus teneris* and *formosos...pedes* (tender feet, lovely feet). She is more beautiful than a chorus of beautiful heroines. He reiterates

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31 Prop.2.2.2-12
32 Prop.2.3.10
32 Prop.2.3.17-22
34 Prop.2.3.32
35 Prop.1.2.5-6
36 Prop.1.2.7 and Prop.1.2.15-24
37 Prop.1.2.29-30
38 Prop.1.8a.7 and Prop.1.18.12
39 Prop.1.19.15-16
her love of exotic jewelry: *Eois lapillis* or Eastern stones lay on her breasts.\(^{40}\) She is stubborn and the poet compares her to the harsh Sicilian coast, steel, and iron.\(^{41}\)

The Propertian image of Cynthia shows a beautiful blonde woman with long hair, a lovely singing voice and dainty feet who can dance well. While interesting, the image is incomplete. These are general characteristics which could fit multiple women and lacks distinctive, unique identifying features to distinguish Cynthia from other women. Despite this lack of specific description, scholars believe Cynthia to be a literary stand-in for a real woman. Even as recent as 1980, one author finds Cynthia “coherent…rounded and credible” in the poetry and believes Roman love poetry reflects life.\(^{42}\) The repetition of a name lends credence to “the impression of a series of poems about one consistent female figure”.\(^{43}\) However, throughout the collection of poems, Propertius changes Cynthia’s appearance and description to mimic other poets, hinting at her dual existence as a *scripta puella*.\(^{44}\)

Cynthia is also an elegiac-styled *scripta puella*, not only a flesh-and-blood woman, who is “portrayed as a beloved receiving or inspiring poetry but as a narrative subject to be continued or abandoned”.\(^{45}\) The most important piece of that phrase is “to be continued or abandoned” – Cynthia’s existence becomes entangled in the continuation of verses. Now it is Propertius who determines to continue his love affair by continuing his writing or to end his affair by putting down his stylus. It is similar to the idea of

\(^{40}\) Prop.1.15.7  
\(^{41}\) Prop.1.16.29-30  
\(^{43}\) Wyke, 2002, 27.  
\(^{44}\) Ibid. “Yet the discovery of Gallan, Tibullan, Horatian, and Virgilian Cynthias in the Propertian corpus argues against the helpfulness of this process.”  
\(^{45}\) Wyke, 1987, 50.
singing the blues – oftentimes the singer sings about a female who stands in for the artistic endeavor itself.

Programmatic appearances solidify the movement from human love object to *scripta puella*. 2.12.24 states *molliter ire pedes* “to go tenderly on foot”. There is the instant connection with the word *pedes* which is used not only for the physical manifestation but the literary division of a poetic line.46 *Molliter*, or tenderly, can refer to a gentle walk or the gentle rhythm of the effeminate elegiac poetry.47 By using ambiguous terms which could refer to a human or literary body, Propertius writes a woman who stands for more than herself; an elegiac mistress who can also become a *scripta puella*. He teases readers discussing a woman who stands for his poetry.

This wooing does not occur between a man and his lover, but a man and his creation. He animates her, the poetry, to allow himself a dynamic relationship and elegiac intercourse between them. By giving the poetry a female shape and “life”, the love object becomes a *scripta puella* and the poetry becomes a unique living figure within its own context and in eyes of the readers.

Along the path of transition for the *scripta puella*, Propertius remains firmly in the elegiac style with his *puella*. His poetry shows *her* residing comfortably in Latin. The authors of Rome know *her* and write *her* well. From elegy, the *scripta puella* moves from strictly elegy in Rome into dactylic hexameter with another Augustan poet.

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46 *pedes*, *OLD* s.v. pes, pedis, “the lowest part of the leg, the foot,” 1A. Also “(pros.) a metrical foot” 11A AND “(sg. or pl.) the feet of a line, etc., considered together, rhythm, or meter,” 11B.
47 *molliter*, *OLD* s.v. molliter, “effeminately, erotically,” 8B.
The *Amores* and *Metamorphoses*: Ovid Blends Callimachus and Emulates the *Aetia*

The next link in the chain leading to the *scriptra puella*’s movement into satirical verse forms is Ovid. Considered Rome’s most self-conscious poet, he dabbles in many writing styles including elegy and epic. 48 He acts as one link between the *scriptae puellae* found in elegy and the version found in dactylic hexameter.

Out of his many works, an early collection of elegiac poetry contains a *scriptra puella*. Her name is Corinna and her first named appearance gives an impression of a daydream. *Amores* 1.5 opens with the author relaxing in bed during a hot late afternoon when *ecce, Corinna venit* (Look! Corinna comes). 49 She wears a *tunica velata recincta, candida dividua colla tegente coma*. 50 Her hairstyle and clothing are compared to both a queen and a courtesan. 51

However, the poem darkens when the speaker pulls away her clothing seemingly against her will: *deripui tunicam... pugnabat tunica sed tamen illa tegi*. 52 Once nude, the speaker examines Corinna with his eyes declaring *in toto nusquam corpore menda fuit* (a fault existed nowhere on her entire body) and later *singula quid referam? Nil non laudabile vidi et nudam pressi corpus ad usque meum* (Why recall each individual aspect? I saw nothing unpraiseworthy and I pressed her naked body even to mine). 53 He then exclaims over each portion of her body creating an outline of a beautiful woman:

*Quos umeros, quales vidi tetigique lacertos!*

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49 Ov.*Am.*1.5.9
50 Ov.*Am.*1.5.9-10
51 Ov.*Am.*1.5.11-12
52 Ov.*Am.*1.5.13-14
53 Ov.*Am.*1.5.18, 23-24
Forma papillarum quam fuit apta premi!

Quam castigato planus sub pectore ventur!

Quantum et quale latus! Quam iuvenale femur!^{54}

The pair has an enjoyable time and the speaker hints at their actions: *cetera quis nescit*?^{55} Yet, this poem has the markers of a dream. The speaker begins alone in his room, resting in the middle of his bed. While it is possible for Corinna to appear in a flimsy gown, it seems unlikely for several reasons. A mistress would most likely not live with her lover so Corinna would need to travel from her home to Ovid’s while wearing this very revealing outfit. Dreams hold unique places in elegy as places for reflection and an open forum for erotic fiction.^{56} In this case, the poet indulges in his afternoon fantasy.

Further *her* actions are the perfect reactions of a young virgin: *pugnabat*.^{57} She fights him for a brief moment for the sake of modesty. This is expected behavior for a modest Roman woman, even a mistress. Then Ovid describes Corinna’s figure in succinct terms with quick references to arms, breasts, belly, waist, and legs in lines 19-22. Despite this seemingly detailed examination, the overall picture of Corinna remains blurred. Instead of a simplistic outline (similar to the woman symbol on a bathroom door), this outline has more distinctly feminine shapes for torso and limbs.

Book 3 opens with a poem contrasting two different kinds of poetry: both personified as real women and both trying to seduce the poet into following them. Ovid demonstrates his understanding of previous works by basing this poem upon heracles’ choice between Virtue and Vice; the demi-god meets the two ladies at a crossroad and

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^{54} Ov.*Am.* 1.5.19-22

^{55} Ov.*Am.* 1.5.25


^{57} Ov.*Am.* 1.5.14
each presents her case for him to take her path. Heracles chooses Virtue, even though her path contains the twelve labors.\textsuperscript{58} In the Greek work, Virtue and Vice are personified as beautiful women. While Ovid uses similar personification in his poem, the focus is on two versions of \textit{scriptae puellae} instead of vice or virtue. The poet can only submit himself to one mistress, or writing style, at a time.

\textit{venit odoratos Elegia nixa capillos,}

\textit{et, puto, pes illi longior alter erat.}

\textit{forma decens, vestis tenuissima, vultus amantis,}

\textit{et pedibus vitium causa decoris erat.}

\textit{venit et ingenti violenta Tragoedia passu:}

\textit{fron\textae torva, palla iacebat humi;}

\textit{laeva manus sceptrum late regale movebat}

\textit{Lydius alta pedum vincla cothurnus erat.}\textsuperscript{59}

Elegy arrived having fastened back her perfumed hair,

And, I think, a foot that was longer than the other.

A becoming appearance, most slender clothes, most lovely face

And the defect of her foot was a source of elegance.

And forcible Tragedy came with enormous steps:

Forehead wild with hair, mantle thrown upon the ground;

Her left hand moved a royal scepter broadly

Lofty Lydian boots are bound to her feet.

\textsuperscript{58} Xen.\textit{Mem.}2.1.21-34
\textsuperscript{59} Ov.\textit{Am.}3.1.7-14
Both are women described in terms of their poetic identities with distinct physical characteristics related to her genre. Elegy is dainty and lovely; however, she has a limp (pes illi longior alter erat)\(^{60}\). Metrically, the second line in an elegiac couplet is one foot short which creates a first line longer than the second and imitates limping.\(^{61}\) In comparison, Tragedy appears with noticeable strides: venit... violenta passu.\(^{62}\) Ovid clothes her in Lydus alta... coturnus which specifically refers to the boots worn by actors during tragedies.\(^{63}\) While the reader could suppose that two are real women, the names display realistic portrayals of their poetic forms attempting to charm a poet into choosing them for his life’s devotion. With the Amores published over a decade before the Metamorphoses, Ovid cannot claim ignorance to the existence of scripta puella or her charms.

Ovid listens to both scripiae puellae as they argue their case. Tragedy insists she is a mightier work (maius opus) and therefore more worthy of his attentions.\(^{64}\) In comparison, Elegy points out how light she is (sum levis).\(^{65}\) However, she points out that Corinna learned all her tricks from Elegy: per me decepto didicit custode Corinna (through me Corinna learned how to deceive guards).\(^{66}\) Based on the text, Corinna emerges as a scripta puella who willingly follows the tenets of elegiac behavior.\(^{67}\)

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\(^{60}\) Ov.\textit{Am.}\textit{3.1.8}


\(^{62}\) Ov.\textit{Am.}\textit{3.1.11}

\(^{63}\) Wyke, 1989, 120-121. Also, Ov.\textit{Am.}\textit{3.1.14} and κόθορνος, \textit{LSJ} s.v. κόθορνος, “buskin, high boot; emblem of Tragedy” 2 AND corturnus, \textit{OLD} s.v. cot(h)urnis-I, “the style of tragic poetry, solemnity of expression” 2A.

\(^{64}\) Ov.\textit{Am.}\textit{3.1.24}

\(^{65}\) Ov.\textit{Am.}\textit{3.1.41}

\(^{66}\) Ov.\textit{Am.}\textit{3.1.49}

\(^{67}\) Wyke, 2002, 126.
In the end, Ovid chooses one *scripta puella* to devote himself and his writing to. Elegy’s limping foot and sweet character are the polar opposite to the powerful striding and solemn appearance of Tragedy. He dives into elegiac poetry with abandon, showing the intense feelings an author can have towards his own creation. His devotion to elegy emerges in his long dactylic hexameter poem.

As a link into satirical verse, the *Metamorphoses* is a long dactylic poem in which Ovid shows his preference for and expertise of elegiac style. He takes many mythological themes and poetic abilities, blending them into a powerful and moving work. The choice of meter shows how important Ovid feels his own creation to be – he uses the meter of epic to enforce his belief. While this work distinguishes itself from Ovid’s previous texts, it still links itself into the past – specifically, it resembles the *Aetia* of Callimachus.

However, the thematic elements in his *Metamorphoses* are not that different from the *Amores* as Ovid appears unwilling to move completely from elegy. While he turns his eye towards the idea of metamorphosis, he still uses elegy and elegiac elements in his poetry. Ovid creates order in his poetry, despite or perhaps in spite of the chaos that occurs within its lines. He is not afraid to show how poetry should be written, how a *scripta puella* can be camouflaged into the semblance of flesh or how the poetry can mimic the form in such a way that the undiscerning eye is easily fooled. He also shows his preference for elegy throughout the work.

An example occurs in Book 12, during the battle between the Lapiths and the Centaurs. While the battle is described in epic Homeric terms, Ovid takes time to express his elegiac style using two centaurs. The first, called Cyllarus, has flowing golden hair, with his beard in “early growth”, his human portion well formed like a statue, and his
horse portion fit for Castor – elegiac descriptions of a beautiful young man.\textsuperscript{68} Only the lovely female Hylonome manages to claim his heart. Ovid illustrates her as the epitome of centaur loveliness in his elegiac description of long hair and lovely face.\textsuperscript{69} Their love ends tragically with a blend of Homeric and elegiac during the battle from one spear. A spear pierces Cyllarus in the heart and Hylonome, unable to live without him, throws herself upon the spear to embrace him in death.\textsuperscript{70}

Hylonome contains some characteristics of an elegiac love object: her loveliness and charm are reminiscent of earlier descriptions of mistresses. The utter devotion Cyllarus has for her is common to elegiac lovers in the first blush of romance. While Cyllarus dies a heroic death, Hylonome appears to choose a romantic death: she throws herself upon the same spear that has killed her beloved to die in the same manner. In this way, she acts as a \textit{scripta puella} in her death. A \textit{scripta puella} cannot exist without the author and if he dies, or moves on from \textit{her} poetry, then \textit{she} too in a sense dies.

The best example of a \textit{scripta puella} exists in the tale of Pygmalion, the center tale of Orpheus’ song in \textit{Metamorphoses}. The central theme of the story is the manufacturing of the perfect woman - \textit{ficta puella} or “created girl” instead of merely written (\textit{scripta puella}); Ovid’s main point with his work is to manufacture a \textit{perpetuum carmen} that contains perfect poetic form and harmony throughout its entirety.\textsuperscript{71}

Pygmalion is not only the artist shaping his love from ivory but a poet writing elegy. The statue moves between being a love-object that is an art-object and an art-object that is a love-object; it is both a physical manifestation of his love and the

\textsuperscript{68} Ov.\textit{Met}.12.393-403
\textsuperscript{69} Ov.\textit{Met}.12.407-415
\textsuperscript{70} Ov.\textit{Met}.12.419-428
metaphorical representation at the same time. Part of this unique combination comes
from the existence of the narrations of Orpheus, the rest from the phrasing within the text
itself. Ovid balances the perfect female form with the perfect poetic form.

Orpheus, the narrator, is best described as an elegiac story-teller. His descriptive
flare is found throughout Book 10 and his poetic song adeptly wielded by Ovid.

Pygmalion manages to do the one thing that Orpheus failed: bring his lover to life
through his art. This makes him the artist’s artist: a perfect artist who has exact control
over his creations’ form and function. Using the voice of Orpheus, Ovid weaves the
story of Pygmalion together to show how perfect art can create the perfect woman –
however, Ovid is creating perfect poetry and both take the utmost skill and care of the
respective creator, while also moving into the realm of perfect artist. This poem will
come alive when it is read, allowing for Ovid to claim the same grand status of
Pygmalion and bowing to the same forces.

Ovid is not the only person to create a beautiful female statue. Propertius in
_Elegia_ 1.3 comes into his lover’s bedroom at night and describes her sleeping. He
describes her as a beautiful perfect statue instead of a flawed living creature. Ovid’s
_Amores_ 1.7.51-52 show another woman who stands bloodless and appearing like marble
cut from the Parian Hills. These two examples show a woman who becomes a visual
work of art by deanimation; in 10.252-3 Ovid writes _miratur et haurit pectore Pygmalion
simulati corporis ignes_ (Pygmalion marvels and drinks into his chest the fires of the piece
imitating a body) which states point-blank the _scripta puella_ is nothing more than

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something to be admired.\textsuperscript{74} The admiration of the female form and not of the individual person allows for the translation of woman to \textit{scripta puella}; while the poem needs to say something, if the form is done poorly, there is little point in writing or reading the poem.

Various words throughout the section also relate to elegiac female forms: \textit{eburneus} and \textit{niveis} are often used in elegiac poetry to describe the mistress. \textit{Forma}, while relating to the shape of the female body, can also relate to the appearance of the poetic form – the meter and its composition. Ovid uses the elegiac terminology to describe the creation of perfect art, which is the only thing an artist should love. Distractions of real women only detract from the poet’s ability to write beautiful love poetry; the best woman (\textit{scripta} or \textit{ficta puella}) and mistress is one created by the artist.

By creating the \textit{ficta puella} from ivory, Pygmalion has manufactured his perfect wife and created her from nothing.\textsuperscript{75} Ovid has done the same thing with his words and created the perfect poetic form out of nothing as well. These parallel processes occur without the acknowledgement of the reader, who becomes so intensely focused on the story of Pygmalion and his wife that the reader believes for a moment it is real. This is the ultimate homage to the \textit{scripta puella} and her perfect form.

However, before Pygmalion’s triumph of the \textit{ficta puella}, readers are told the sorrowful tale of Eurydice. Orpheus marries the beautiful Eurydice who tragically dies on their wedding day from stepping on a snake. He willingly heads to the underworld and convinces Hades to give a chance to gain her back. Sadly, he fails when he turns to look

\textsuperscript{74} Sharrock, 1991, 40.
\textsuperscript{75} Sharrock, 1991, 48.
back at her (to ensure she is following him) before she emerges completely from the underworld.\textsuperscript{76}

Eurydice exists as a perfect \textit{scripta puella}. As a figurative female, her name is intimately tied to Orpheus’. He earns life for her by singing to Hades; he gives her life while he sings about their love after his failure to bring her fully into the world of the living. Her existence concludes each time Orpheus stops singing and recommences when he begins again.

Beyond the heavy use of \textit{scripta puella} in his works, Ovid acts as one link between elegy and dactylic hexameter. His use of elegy within a dactylic work shows the ease with which the \textit{scripta puella} can adapt to any meter. The next author in this thesis crosses the genre gap. Horace writes both elegy and satire, he is familiar with the formats and he knows about the \textit{scripta puella}.

\textsuperscript{76} Ov.\textit{Met}.10.1-85
Leaving Marks on the Genre – Horatian Poetry

Horace comes slightly after Ovid and Propertius. He knows of their writings, including their use of Callimachean poetics. He learns from these two authors while adding his own distinct flair. His need to prove himself along with an understanding of different genres leads to a varied collection of text. Within several of these, Horace uses *scriptae puellae* as examples of poetry for men to both desire and avoid.

*Scriptae Puellae in the Odes*

While the *Odes* are dated after the *Sermones*, Horace shows an intimate familiarity with *scriptae puellae* within these poems. A reader can easily find multiple examples of *her* inside the text of the *Odes* – both as the epitome of perfection and as the embodiment of failure. While the poems show the good and bad side of writing poetry, the *scriptae puellae* Horace presents are of two kinds: one is able to make a poet’s life miserable as *her* servant while the other can be controlled and molded by the poet.

*Ode 1.5: The Fickleness of Pyrrha*

*Quis multa gracilis te puer in rosa*

*per fusus liquidis urget odoribus*

*grato, Pyrrha, sub antro?*

*cui flauam religas comam,*

*simp lex munditiis? Heu quotiens fidem*

*mutatosque deos flebit et aspera*

*nigris aequora uentis*

*emirabitur insolens,*
qui nunc te fruitur credulus aurea,
qui simper uacuam, semper amabilem
sperat, nescius auroe
fallacis. Miseri, quibus
intemptata nites. me tabula sacer
uotiuu paries indicat uuida
suspendisse potenti
uestimenta maris deo.¹

“What slender boy smelling with perfumed odors presses you among roses in the pleasant grotto? For whom do you comb your yellow hair, simple with elegances? Alas! How often he will lament faith and the mutable gods and unaccustomed will be amazed at the sea perilous with black winds, who believing now is delighted with you golden one, who hopes always for leisure, hopes always for being worthy of love, ignorant of the deceitful breeze. Wretched ones, to whom you glitter untried. For me the temple wall with dedicated votive declares the wet garments are able to hang for the god of the sea.”

The above poem appears to show a lover commenting on the behavior of a previous mistress, including faithlessness. Yet there are hints that this mistress is a *scripta puella*; lines 1-3 mention a *grato antro* with roses for a bed. While this could be overstatement of the romantic feelings found in the beginning of a relationship, grottos are also a place where goddesses live. However, the speaker’s tone conveys his disenchantment with Pyrrha’s behaviors while attempting to warn others away.

¹ Hor. *Carm.* 1.5
Young men, entering into the world of literature, find the poetry Pyrrha represents irresistible. At first look, writing appears easy and enjoyable – authors believe the fame comes quickly and they will never run into difficulty writing. Within the poem, the speaker laments the young men who are blinded by Pyrrha’s beauty and “golden” appearance with dreams of leisure and eternal favor.\(^2\) However, Pyrrha’s first appearance is deceiving.

Soon her volatile moods will shock and frighten the young men.\(^3\) Pyrrha shares her tempestuous nature with the sea (aspera/nigris aequora ventis/emirabitur insolens) and the wind (nescius aurae/fallacis).\(^4\) Even the modern world is aware of the speed with which sea or wind can change from friend to foe and the devastation which can follow.\(^5\) Pyrrha’s behaviors have driven the speaker away. He willingly hangs up his garments soaked from his experiences as an offering to the sea god for his escape.\(^6\) He seems to hope that his story will serve as a warning for other young men and allow them to escape before they are trapped.

The choice for the *scripta puella*’s name is cause for a deeper look at the poem. Pyrrha is the name of the wife of Deucalion and the daughter of Epimetheus. The couple is famous for the ancient Greek flood tale: they are the sole survivors of Zeus’ wrath in the form of a world flood to destroy all life. By tossing “the bones of their mother” or stones, over their shoulders, the world is repopulated. Pyrrha can be considered the

\(^2\) Hor.*Carm.*1.9-11  
\(^3\) Hor.*Carm.*1.5-8  
\(^4\) Hor.*Carm.*1.6-8, 12-13  
\(^5\) Referring to the Pacific Tsunami which struck Japan on March 23, 2011.  
\(^6\) Hor.*Carm.*1.13-16
foremother of the human race. From this, readers can relate the *scripta puella* in *Ode* 1.5 to a type of poetry which many authors try first.

Pyrrha is intimately connected to the idea of creation through the mythology; Horace choosing a mythological creator’s name for one of the most personal creative processes a male can experience, shows his knowledge of connotations and imagery. He also gives the lovers of Pyrrha anonymity – the *gracilis puer* could be any young man in his first creative writing experience. The unnamed boy has little understanding of the true toll poetry takes on the soul since he has yet to have experienced writer’s block or a difficult experience unlike Horace and his *persona* who have experienced them.

The speaker appears to have moved on with his life – there is a votive offering in a temple praising his escape from Pyrrha’s unstable ways. Based on the context, *she* represents a form of writing Horace appears to dislike and moved away from himself. No matter her “real” form, Pyrrha represents a style that the speaker finds to be far too fickle and trying for his preference; he has willingly moved away from *her* although *her* appearance still seduces unwary young men. Due to that fact, Horace uses poetry to warn others away from Pyrrha’s alluring but dangerous style.

**Displays of *Scriptae Puellae* in Other *Odes***

The above example is only one of several which exist in Horace’s *Odes*. Multiple examples can be found within Books 1 and 2; the name he gives to the various *scriptae puellae* may change but their function remains the same. Once again, the context of *her* appearance and the language are the vital determinates for *her* existence in each of the following examples.

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7 *Ov. Met.* 1.120ff and 1.260-415
urit me Glycerae nitor,
splendentis Pario marmore purius;
urit grata proteruitas
et uoltus nimium lubricus aspici.⁸

“The brightness of Glycera burns me, shining more pure than Parian marble; the impudence burns agreeable and her face too dangerous to look at.”

Ode 1.19 is a plea to Venus concerning a scripta puella he calls Glycera. The speaker is in love with her and wishes for the goddess of love to soften her heart. Glycera comes from the Greek adjective γλυκύς which means “sweet to the taste”.⁹ Her description contains echoes from Pygmalion’s tale in Ovid’s Metamorphoses. She reminds the reader of Wyke’s scripta puella and the elegiac love object. Glycera is not given a real description beyond nitor, splendentis Pario marmore purius and her face is called lubricus. Lubricus is a Latin adjective that means “slippery, slimy, easily moved, uncertain, hazardous, or critical”.¹⁰ This mutability in Glycera’s features reminds readers of the female outline – she cannot be described in definitive terms because she does not correlate to a real woman. In addition, one can consider lubricus an element of poetry in view of the fact that it lends itself to multiple meanings. Glycera, as poetry, is indefinable and nearly impossible to pin down into one appearance or meaning. Horace explains a basic premise of poetry in the simple description of a scripta puella.

Within Ode 1.22, Horace mentions another scripta puella he calls Lalage. The speaker is so taken with Lalage that he is surprised by a wolf. While the speaker is

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⁸ Hor. Carm. 1.19.5-8
⁹ γλυκύς, LSJ s.v. γλυκύς, “sweet to the taste or smell” I.1a AND “of persons, sweet, dear” I.2.
¹⁰ lubricus, OLD s.v. lubricus, “of a soft, oily, or greasy consistency, slippery, difficult to hold,” 2a.
distracted for a few lines by the wolf, he returns to Lalage at the end of the poem: *dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo, dulce loquentem.*\(^{11}\) The speaker never describes Lalage beyond “sweetly laughing, sweetly talking” at the very end of the poem. Her name most likely comes from the Greek λαλέω which means “to talk, chat, prattle, babble”.\(^{12}\)

For Lalage, the focus is on how *she* sounds more than how *she* appears. Poetry, particularly love poetry, has specific vocabulary and meter. Combined together, elegiac often sounds sweet and pleasant. This *scripta puella* represents the sound of well-written poetry. The speaker sings *her* into existence during the course of the poem and also finds *her* to be sweet sounding. As a metaphoric woman, Lalage shows intense focus on only one element of poetics, yet it is an element that is readily identifiable to every listener.

Sometimes a *scripta puella* appears during a plea to the Muses, as seen in *Ode* 1.26:

*Musis amicus tristitiam et metus*  
*tradam proteruis in mare Creticum*  
*portare uentis, quis sub Arcto*  
*rex gelidae metuatur orea,*  
*quid Tiridaten terreat, unice*  
*securus. O quae fontibus integris*  
*gaudes, apricos necte flores,*  
*necte meo Lamiae coronam,*  
*Pimplea dulcis. nil sine te mei*  
*prosunt honores: hunc fidibus nouis,*

\(^{11}\) *Hor.Carm.* 1.22.23-4  
\(^{12}\) *Λαλέω, LSI,* s.v. *λαλέω,* “talk, chat, prattle” I.1 AND “chatter, opp. articulate speech as of locusts, chirp” II AND “of musical sounds” III.
hunc Lesbio sacrare plectro
teque tuasque decet sorores.¹³

“I, a loved one to the Muses, may surrender sorrow and fear to the violent winds to carry towards the Cretan Sea, who stands in fear of the king of the frozen boundaries beneath the north pole, what would frighten Tiridates, uniquely [I am] untroubled. Oh you who rejoice in untouched springs, tie flowers warmed by sunshine, bind a wreath for my Lamia, sweet ones of Pimpla. My honors serve nothing without you: consecrate him with new meters, consecrate him with a Lesbian lyre and shaped with you and your sisters.”

The speaker wishes for his lover, Lamia, to be remembered as a poem. The Muses can aid him in his endeavor by blessing his creative process: hunc fidibus nouis, hunc Lesbio sacrare plectro teque tuasque decet sorores. Several of the words are used as synecdoche: fidibus refers to chords which can be divided into measures, while plectrum refers to the implement which is used to pluck the lyre. Overall the poem shows the speaker cares more for his poetry than himself.

Sweet Lamia is a scripta puella a speaker presents as a worthy subject to the Muses. She deserves a garland consecrated by the Muses since needs their aid to create a commendable tribute. The name Lamia is intriguing - it comes from the Latin lamia and Greek λάμια, which both have unpleasant meanings. Lamia in Latin means “a witch”. The Greek definition is even more disturbing: “a monster said to feed on man’s flesh”.¹⁴ However, looking at this metaphorically, calling the poem or poetic process something

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¹³ Hor. Carm. 1.26
¹⁴ lamia, OLD s.v. lamia¹, “a female monster supposed to devour children, witch, bogey,” I AND Λάμια, LSJ, s.v. λάμια, “a fabulous monster said to feed on man’s flesh” I.
which “feeds on man’s flesh” or “a sorceress” may not be far from the truth. Authors for centuries have written that they feel under a spell when working, that they must write. This could be the explanation for Lamia. The poetic experience is so overwhelming to the speaker that he feels he is bewitched by it or that it consumes him.

Few poems contain multiple *scriptae puellae*, yet *Ode* 1.33 contains two. The speaker attempts to soothe Albus, a lover who cannot catch the attention of Glycera. The speaker mentions others who appeared indifferent to the attempts made by their lovers; however, he mentions at the end that he was given a gentle love who responds to him.

Two lines in the final stanza focus on the match made between the speaker and his love Myrtale: *ipsum me melior cum peteret Venus, grata detinuit compede Myrtale libertina.* He states that Venus herself has given him a better love than the others he mentioned during the course of his poem. Myrtale is described as *grata libertina* or “beloved freedwoman”. She probably has some education while not having the high expectations of aristocratic life. In addition, freedwomen are considered safer than upper class women to retain as a mistress.

Myrtale, which comes from the word meaning “myrtle”, appears to have an intense hold on her lover described by the word *compede* or “fettering, shackling”. Again, this could refer to the intense hold many writers feel their works hold over their heads. Conversely, this shackling may be the way in which writers become entangled with their works. They are often associated with their chosen style. Horace attaches himself to elegy and satire but does not wish to be associated with history or epic.

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15 *Hor. Carm.* 1.33.13-15
16 *compede, OLD* s.v. *compedus*, “that fetters or restrains”.
For the opening of Book 2 in the *Odes* Horace defends his choice of lyrical poetry over weightier styles of epic or history. It appears to have been written to another writer known as Pollio and contains his refusal to write a history about the Civil Wars. He claims that it is dangerous for to write on this topic: *incedis per ignis suppositos cineri doloso*: “you proceed through fires being set under deceitful ashes”. Though the war appears to be over, there are still people who would object to the work.

He goes through and shows that it is not lack of talent stopping his writing, it is personal preference. However, it is the end that shows his feelings plainly:

*Sed ne relictis Musa procax, ioci*

*Ceae retractes munera Neniae,*

*mecum Dionaeo sub antro*

*quaere modos leuiore plectro.*

“But lest having left behind, insolent Muse, mere sports you would undertake anew tributes to a Cean dirge, seek with me measures with a lighter plectrum beneath the Dionean grotto.”

The speaker has no desire to write on the Civil War or its heavy themes. He wishes to retire to a grotto with his poetry and continue writing his light-hearted themes. The muse stands in for poetry – the speaker does not wish to abandon the *iocis* for the *Neniae*. A Muse is a goddess who can inspire poets but can also stand in for the poetic process as well. In these verses, the Muse is not the goddess, she is poetry and a type of *scripta puella*.

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17 *Hor. Carm.* 2.1
18 *Hor. Carm.* 2.1.7-8
19 *Hor. Carm.* 2.1.37-40
Ode 2.12 also shows the unwillingness of the speaker to take on the harsher themes of war, violence, history, and blood. Three of the seven verses are directed towards Maecenas, insisting that he would be a better choice to write the history of Caesar than Horace himself. Yet the last four verses focus on the mistress Licymnia and the muse that bids the speaker to focus on her charms in his writings:

me dulcis dominae Musa Licymniae
cantus, me uoluit dicere lucidum
fulgentis oculos et bene mutuis
fidum pectus amoribus;
quam nec ferre pedem dedecuit choris
nec certare ioco nec dare bracchia
ludentem nitidis uirginibus sacro
Dianae celebris die.
num tu quae tenuit diues Achaemenes
aut pinguis Phrygiae Mygdonias opes
permutare uelis crine Licymniae,
plenas aut Arabum domos,
cum flagrantia detorquet ad oscula
ceruicem, aut facili saeuitia negat,
quae poscente magis gaudeat eripi,
interdum rapere occupet? 20

“The Muse has determined me to relate the sweet singing of Mistress Licymnia, the flashing of bright eyes, and good heart faithful with mutual

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20 Hor. Carm. 2.12.13-28
affections; neither does she lead out to carry her foot for the dance nor to
fight with jests nor to grant her frolicking arms to shining maids on the
sacred day of celebrated Diana. Now would you wish to exchange the
hairs of Licymnia for that which wealthy Achaemenes had held or for the
Mygdonian wealth of fertile Phrygia, or the full homes of the Arabians,
when she turns her neck towards [your] eager kisses, or she refuses in
good-natured cruelty, she who would delight to have them snatched more
than having them demanded, sometimes she would seize to snatch [kisses
first]?”

Again the speaker does not give a physical description of his lover beyond her
fulgentis oculos and bene mutuis fidum pectus amoribus. He claims that he would not
trade the riches of various parts of the world for a lock of her hair. Licymnia appears to
act as a normal woman: she dances, plays coy, enjoys jesting, celebrates the festivals of
the gods, and pretends to be cruel. Unlike the women mentioned during Sermones 2.3 and
2.7 who are intentionally cruel, Licymnia is described as facili saeuitia negat. Her cruelty
is done to tease her lover; she does not lock him out or drench him water.

She has a hold over the speaker, causing him to feel that me dulcis dominae Musa Licymniae cantus, me uoluit dicere lucidum fulgentes oculos. The speaker finds himself
desiring to write about his mistress instead of the violence that has permeated the world.
Licymnia is a scripta puella and the Greek words which comprise her name are the
equivalent of the phrase dulcis cantus in Latin. It means “sweet-sounding singing” or
“melodious poetry”. The speaker uses her name to evoke the idea of elegiac poetry. He prefers the lighter themes of celebrations, dances, and love; the *scripta puella* mentioned is merely a stand in for his personal preference for elegy over weightier poetry.

Within the previous examples, Horace shows his knowledge of *scripta puella* in the bounds of an elegiac framework. *She* emerges in his *Odes* as his muse, poetic goddess, and lover in addition to showing his preference for lighter poetics. Due to the exceptionally perceptive use of *scripta puella* displayed in the text of the *Odes*, it is not difficult to state that Horace learned Callimachean poetics well. This Augustan Age poet certainly makes his mark on the genre while keeping traditions from previous centuries. His use of *scripta puella* as the perfect mistress and poetry in his *Odes* shows his knowledge of her. Later authors, seeing *scriptae puellae* solidified within the works of Horace, find the figurative female intriguing and important enough to use within the texts of their own works.

*Scriptae Puellae in Horatian Satire*

Since Horace uses and shows *scriptae puellae* in his *Odes*, he presents a strong starting point for a discussion on her existence in Roman verse satire for several reasons. First, there is Quintilian’s assertion that Horace is “smoother and more plain than many and, unless I am unstable by the affection of him, he is taken before others”. His use of plain language makes finding her easier. For Horace, the genre of satire is the only that lacks a capable author: pastoral poetry had Virgil while comedic writings had the author Fundanius. With the lack of capable author in satire, Horace could develop the genre to

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21 Cantus, *OLD* s.v. cantus ~us, “singing, song (with or without instrumental accompaniment” 1 AND “(poet.) Poetry” 2. Dulcis, *OLD* s.v. dulcis~is~e, “sweet sounding, melodious” 4a AND “(of persons, etc.)” 4b.
22 Quint.*Inst.*10.1.1-4
his own specifications and still bow to the special place Lucilius holds as a pioneer within the style.\(^{23}\) His place of honor within the satirical genre means his use of *scriptae puellae* leads to later authors using *her* in their own works.

**Making Satire His Own with Elegy and Format**

In order to understand Horatian satire, one needs to understand his position within the generic timeline. Lucilius holds enough influence over satire for Horace to feel the need overthrow his place as inventor. To justify his style and poetry, Horace writes a poem to set “the main features of the genre as he saw it”.\(^{24}\) Naturally this poem contains criticism of Lucilius’ poetry. Horace needed to prove the authority of Lucilius as an inventor yet then force his readers to see the “flaws” within his text in order to make the *Sermones* to stand out as the stylistic example to follow.

For Horace, the main issue is not how to be a satirist but an issue on how the satirical poems should be written.\(^{25}\) According to Niall Rudd: “Horace could see no reason why the genre should be associated with slapdash writing, and so in vindicating his own approach he says quite frankly that Lucilius was harsh and careless in his composition and that he wrote too much”.\(^{26}\) This is the crux of Horace’s superiority – while Lucilius may have the nature of satire down, his style is rough, rambling, and harsh; there is only one authority that Horace trusts when it comes down to the “question of relating the movement of the verse to the rhythms of educated conversation”.\(^{27}\)

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\(^{24}\) Rudd, 1966, 88.  
\(^{26}\) Rudd, 1966, 92.  
\(^{27}\) Rudd, 1966, 107.
Undeniably these two authors greatly influenced those who came later. Yet the emphasis given to Horace can be puzzling. Fiske attributed the reasons why Horatian satire is so appealing to Horace’s conscientious artistry:

And so while we may well give all praise to Lucilius, the inventor of Roman satire, our deepest affection and devotion go out to Horace, to Horace the conscientious artist, to Horace our kindly and quizzical guide on a long but friendly journey, to Horace the humane discoverer of our daily life.28

The coarse and vulgar treatment found in Lucilius causes readers to wince in recognition while the lighter tone in Horace makes them more willing to examine their behaviors and motives. His consummate attention to detail, style, diction, and tone catches the eye and appreciation of his readers. There is little debate that while Lucilius finds himself an inventor of the genre, Horace is the one who molds it into the recognizable genre passed down to later authors.

Horace appears unafraid to point out the stylistic flaws of his predecessor and the blind devotion found in his followers. In this manner, Horace supplants Lucilius as the father of the genre in terms of style, meter, and appearance all while stating that he cannot fight against the loyal Lucilian followers. Lucilius, though, retains his title as a strong-armed, strong-willed, and loudly opinionated satirist. In addition, Lucilius is unlikely to have Callimachean influence in his works. Horace takes and blends elegy into his *Sermones* to create a blueprint for other authors to follow.

**Scriptae Puellae in the Sermones**

Even though the *Sermones* are considered to come before the *Odes*, this thesis sees the necessity of putting the discussion on Horace’s satirical verses after his elegiac poems. Readers hopefully understand the value of this particular move. Having shown Horace’s knowledge and ability to use *scriptae puellae* in their traditional medium, it is now possible to show his capacity in satirical dactylic hexameter.

Female figures are common in satirical verse. The difficulty emerges when attempting to separate *scriptae puellae* out from other forms. In particular, it is rare to find *scriptae puellae* in satire. This is due to the fact *scriptae puellae* are often used as mistresses in love poetry and mistresses are rare in satire. However, there are a few appearances in Horace’s *Sermones*. They are again clothed as mistresses, with the speaker stressing his preference for a poetic mistress over a real woman.

**Sermones Book I**

It is within *Sermones* 1.2 that a *scripta puella* emerges, clothed in the appearance of the perfect mistress. Horace suggests his figurative mistress is a far safer choice for any man over a real woman. He can see all of her so he knows she lacks many of the traditional downsides found with a real woman. For example:

\[
\text{adde huc, quod mercem sine fucis gestat, aperte} \\
\text{quod venale habet ostendit nec, siquid honesti est,} \\
\text{iactat habetque palam, quaerit quo turpia celet.}^{30}
\]

“Moreover add to these she bears her wares without deceits,
what she has for sale she displays uncovered, and, if she has honesty,

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29 Hadas, 1952, 165
30 Hor.S.1.2.83-85
she does not toss it about openly, nor would she conceal shameful things from one who seeks it.”

The scripta puella cannot hide herself from her lover poet while living women cover themselves with makeup and clothing. She is transparent to her writer because he is the one who creates and continues her existence. He knows every facet of her being. The speaker presents his mistress as an example of a perfect companion and his relationship with her is far preferable than any other.

The sermo cautions against unhealthy relationships with real women and argues against chasing an upper class woman by framing the literary dynamic inside the outline of a middle class scripta puella. Throughout the poem the undercurrent of love for the poetic art emerges, the scripta puella is the perfect mistress for a multitude of reasons.

She cannot have a husband to cause fear in the heart of the lover from an unexpected return, as mentioned in lines 1.2.127-131. Her body and mind are open to the author at all times.

Men run into trouble when they blindly fall in love with women who have hidden their blemishes or worse, the men who can see those faults and still love her: Hypsaea caecior illa/ quae mala sunt spectes. “o crus, o brachia!” uerum/ depugis, nasuta, breui latere ac pede longo est – “blinder than Hypsaea when you would behold those things that are bad [deformities]. ‘What a shapely leg, what lovely arms!’ certainly she has skinny hips, with a big nose, with a short waist and splay foot.” The poet lists visible faults that the lover is willing to put up with because he is blinded by his infatuation. The last two comments can certainly be related to bad poetry: breui latere ac pede longo. The “short waist” could mean a poem that has no substance or length while the splayed foot

31 Hor.S.1.2.91-93
refers to the metrical divisions. These elements are similar to the treatment of Girl A by both Callimachus and Catullus in their poems. While there is no Girl B mentioned at this particular portion of the poem, the *scripta puella* shows element Horace does not find attractive in poetry. The speaker points out readers are willing to pick out the small elements they do enjoy and turn a blind eye to a multitude of other problems.

Of course the purpose of *Serm.1.2* is to warn the readers away from vice and to turn them towards virtue. An easy solution to the adulterous behavior found in Rome would be to turn the hearts of men from women to *scriptae puellae*. These metaphoric women are moldable to their particular author’s desire. This mutability makes *scriptae puellae* the perfect mistresses and still allow for passionate expression. The poet goes on to explain how a *scripta puella* should appear, including a comparison to having a less acceptable companion who might have a husband:

*candida rectaque sit; munda hactenus, ut neque longa*

*nec magis alba uelit quam dat natura videri.*

*haec ubi supposuit dextro corpus mihi laeuum,*

*Ilia et Egeria est; do nomen quodlibet illi,*

*nec vereor ne, dum futuo, uir rure recurrat,*

*ianua frangatur, latret canis, undique magno*

*pulsa domus strepitu resonet, vepallida lecto*

*desiliat mulier, miseram se conscia clamet,*

*cruribus haec metuat, doti depresnsa, egomet mi.*

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32 Thesis pp. 18-21 and 22-23.
33 Hor.S.1.2.123-131
“She must be fair and straight; elegant as far as that she will wish to seem neither longer nor whiter than nature delivers. When she placed her body on the left side to my right, she is Ilia or Egeria; I give any pleasing name to her, and I am not afraid, while I have a carnal connection, that a man might return from the country, the door broken, the dog bark, the house resound from all parts with a great clatter from the striking, the excessively pale woman leaps down from the bed, the miserable accessory cries out with her, she fears for her legs, she fears the seizure of her dowry, I for myself.”

There are several elements to the above text: the first section describes poetic perfection and the second states the problems the speaker does not have in his relationship since he loves his poetry. In the description of the woman she is called candida, recte, munda. While the words can refer to a beautiful woman, they also have poetical connotations. Candidus can mean “white, shining” in respect to appearance but it also has the meaning of “clear”.\textsuperscript{34} Recte can either be an adjective meaning “rightly, vertically, correctly, properly or suitably” which can refer to the posture of a woman or the quality of a literary work.\textsuperscript{35} Finally mundus is an adjective meaning “elegant or refined” which can refer to physical characteristics and language.\textsuperscript{36}

Each of these words has been discussed before in this paper and evokes the remembrance of a particular poem: Catullus C. 86. Within that poem, the speaker

\textsuperscript{34} candidus, \textit{OLD} s.v. candidus, “fair-skinned, fair (usually implying beauty),” 5a AND “(of writers or writings) clear, lucid, unambiguous,” 9.

\textsuperscript{35} recte, \textit{OLD} s.v. recte, “in an upright position,” 1 AND “as it out to be or be done, properly, correctly,” 4a.

\textsuperscript{36} mundus, \textit{OLD} s.v. mundus\textsuperscript{1}, “elegant or refined in appearance, manners, or taste,” 2a AND “elegant or refined in respect to language,” 2b.
describes a competitor to his Lesbia as *candida, longa, recta*. Lesbia, in contrast, he describes as *formosa est... pulcerrima tota est* which includes the previous descriptions. The duality inherent in the phrasing allows for Horace to bring his *scripta puella* to life in this section.

The phrase *do nomen quodlibet illi* brings up the idea of the *scripta puella*. The speaker blatantly states “I give a name that is pleasing to her” or “I give any name that is pleasing to her”; this female lacks a name of her own. Relating to a *scripta puella*, this makes perfect sense. Poetry has no name until the author gives it one that suits the style or his personal taste. The creative process and poetic ideals are nameless; poets give their personal muses various names over the years and throughout the collections of poems.

Finally the section ends with a sharp warning of what can happen if a man chooses an unsuitable mistress: the unexpected return of her husband. It is a loud, terrifying moment – the husband is enraged, the mistress white with terror and fearing that she will lose her dowry, the servant worrying over her legs, and the lover fears for his own life. There is no such fear associated with loving *scriptae puellae*; there is no husband to return unexpectedly in the midst of a tryst. *Neque uereor* “and I am not afraid”, this statement is powerful in its simplicity: an author having an affair with his own creation has nothing to fear from another man.

Here is an important element to distinguish a *scripta puella* from another type of female. The contrast between reality and text is stark with this section in the *Sermones*. Horace uses the safety found in loving *scriptae puellae* to point out the preference for

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37 Catul.86.1-2  
38 Catul.86.5  
39 Hor.S.1.2.127-131  
40 Hor.S.1.2.127
writing over other activities. In addition, he lists qualities for good poetics which double as desirable qualities for women.

While the poem appears to be focusing on appropriate human loves, there is the hint of the metaphoric one as well. There are many problems with a human woman – she may be married, she can be unfaithful, her appearance is subject to the ravages of disease and age. A scripta puella is perfect and always ready for her poet lover. For Horace the best female companion is poetry. The speaker of Sermones 1.2 tries to show others the veracity of his belief that she is the perfect mistress for any man.

Sermones Book II

Book II of the Sermones mentions women as mistresses in Sermones 2.3 and 2.5. The speaker finds himself at the mercy of her mercurial nature: she throws him out, call him back, begs for money. She appears to be greedy and self-centered while the speaker debates on the proper response to her multitude of vacillating demands. Horace uses paraklausithyron to contrast with his pliable scripta puella in Book I.

Sermones 2.3 focuses on a Stoic belief: πάς ἀϑρων μαίνεται or “every foolish person is himself mad”. Another way to phrase it is “everyone save the wise man is mad”. Horace uses this theme to examine the various behaviors mankind indulges in, only to point out how foolish every man actually is behaving. He relates the terrible choice of choosing a real woman to be his mistress; her treatment leaves much to be desired: “nec nunc, cum me uocet ultro,/ accedam? an potius mediter finire dolores?/ exclusit; reuocat: redeam? non, si obsecret.”

42 Hor. S.2.3.262-4

The speaker has entered into the mind of
the shut out lover and relates the argument within: “Shall I not enter now, when she
summons me of her own accord? Or rather shall I consider to finish my anguishes? She
shut [me] out; she calls me back; shall I return? Not at all, if she would beseech me.”

The man wavers between accepting the return of his lover’s good mood and
denouncing her completely due to her early hurtful treatment. It appears that real women
are worth more trouble than the release they could offer any lover. Between her violent
mood swings and chance of discovery, a real woman offers little more than pain and
heartbreak for her lover. She may be an inspiration but her counterpart scrip\-ta puella
offers a far more stable relationship, as shown in the first book of the Sermones.

Later in Sermone 2.7, the speaker points out that a mistress not only eats up her
lover’s time but also his money: quinque talenta/ poscit te mulier, uexat foribusque
repulsum/ perfundit gelida, rursus uocat… 43 The poor lover in these lines gives up five
talents, a rather large sum of money. Despite the multitude of variations in the size of a
talent, the lover has apparently given his beloved a startlingly large sum of money and
then is treated rather rudely: “a woman asks you for five talents, she vexes and drenches
you in cold water thrusting you through the door, she calls you back”.

A scrip\-ta puella would never demand such from her lover; indeed her presence
could increase his net worth if the volume of poetry does well. The speaker points out
that the relationship with a real woman is balanced against the man in all situations. The
Sermones are heavy on the warnings against adultery and how choosing the wrong lover
can ruin a life; Horace is content with his scrip\-ta puella and wants to share his secret with
the world. His preference is revealed through his treatment of real women and the heavy
emphasis on the extremely poor choice she makes for a lover. While these poems show

43 Hor.S.2.7.89-91
preferential treatment to *scriptae puellae*, Horace also takes time to present the poetic elements as physical attributes.

**The Epodes**

Here Horace turns his eye towards another writing style: the *iambi* of Archilochus. While Horace’s interest in establishing himself as an inventor is fascinating, the *Epodes* show another facet of the *scripta puella*. *Epode* 12 contains three distinct female figures within its twenty-six lines. At first glance the poem seems to have little to do with *scriptae puellae*.

It opens with a string of vitriol from the speaker towards an unnamed woman he finds repulsive. She is often referred to as a *vetula*, “old woman” or “hag”. She apparently sends him presents (*tabellas*) for a reason he cannot fathom since he *nec firmo iuueni neque naris obesae*. The term *tabellae* means “small table” or “tablet”; these gifts are most likely written in nature and perhaps poetic as well. The speaker rejects the gifts while he insults the woman’s appearance with her heavy make-up dripping. Her appearance contrasts sharply with the dainty and natural charms given to *scriptae puellae* in other Horatian works.

So in *Epode* 12, there is a *scripta puella* representing an unfavorable writing style. *She* manages to defend *herself* from the speaker’s unfavorable comments by turning the tables on him:

*Inachia langues minus ac me;*

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46 Hor.*Epod*.12.2-3
47*Tabulae*, *OLD* s.v. *tabulae*–ae, “a board coated with wax and used for writing, a writing-tablet” 6a.
Inachiam ter nocte potes, mihi Semper ad unum
mollis opus. pereat male, quae te
Lesbia quaerenti taurum monstravit inertem.⁴⁸

“You are weary with me and less with Inachia;
You are able [to do] Inachia three times a night, with me you always
soften after one deed. May she pass away badly that Lesbia, who
proved you to be an impotent bull, herself lusty”.

The vetula does more than compare Inachia to Lesbia, she calls Inachia quae Lesbia (this Lesbia).⁴⁹ In addition to the hag calling her rival the quintessential scripta puella name, she also points out the speaker seems to have little problem enjoying her company three times in an evening while vetula receives only one half-hearted attempt which cannot be repeated since the speaker softens immediately after. Relating to poetry, instead of only churning out an apathetic attempt on a poem in the style of the vetula the poet willingly goes all out on multiple attempts with Inachia’s.

Beyond her Stoic roots, the vetula is Roman in contrast to Inachia. This name often stands for Greek in poetics.⁵⁰ The Greek poetics Inachia symbolizes are far more tempting than the style which the vetula represents. The poet is moving away from Roman literature to look at Greek ideals – a move which Horace himself does when he looks towards Greek poetry to inspire and craft his own Latin poetry.

The speaker paints an unflattering picture of the vetula to show his disgust for the poetic style– heavy make-up and crocodile dung she’s wearing are ruined from her

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⁴⁸ Hor. Epod. 12.14-17
⁴⁹ Hor. Epod. 12.16-17
⁵⁰ Inachia, OLD s.v. Inachius–a–um, “(poet., often used for Argive, Greek)” 1b.
sweat. Her appearance leaves the speaker feeling repulsed while Inachia is not described at all. There are no hints about her appearance beyond the vetula’s complaint: Inachiam ter nocte potes, mihi Semper ad unum/ mollis opus. Inachia is far more attractive than the vetula. This argument has a similar appearance to Callimachus’ Girl A and Girl B comparison. The speaker begins with Girl A, describing her in unflattering terms, and then Girl B emerges as the preferred partner. Epode 12 varies from the Callimachean method by having Girl A (the vetula) not describe Girl B (Inachia) but point out the speaker’s preference for Girl B by complaining about the speaker’s inability to satisfy her. Desires play a large portion of this poem: the vetula’s desire for the speaker, the speaker’s desire for Inachia, and the revulsion of the vetula towards Inachia coupled with the speaker’s loathing of the vetula.

Horace uses scriptae puellae throughout his collection of texts. They appear as desirable elegiac mistresses, far preferred over real women. They also appear as undesirable women for warning other authors away from unsuitable poetics or genres. Horace uses each figure to display portions of his poetic theory: some display his preferred ideals while others show elements he dislikes. The appearances for his poetic theory are startlingly similar to each other and to Callimachean ideals. The poetics Horace presents are all based on elegiac standards even in his Sermones and Epodes.

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51 Hor. Epod. 12.10-12
52 Hor. Epod. 12.15-16
53 See pages 21-24 in this thesis.
Missed Opportunities - Lucilius

Lucilius uses several meters over the course of his writing including septenarii and senarii. These meters are commonly used in stage plays. However, he eventually changes his focus to the dactylic hexameter and almost exclusively writes in this meter afterwards. The political atmosphere of Rome during the 120s BCE also had heavy influence on the author; he stops writing for several years and possible left Rome due to sentiments against non-Romans.¹ These upheavals and political circumstances made their way into the poetry: an author is the product of his time.²

For Lucilius, the genre of satire becomes a way for him to speak his mind and insert himself into the poetry.³ He willingly insults the enemies of his friends and points out various flaws in Roman life. There is nothing considered sacred: all occurrences, people, politics are free for his use and fodder for his pen. After all, satire presents a version of reality; one in which the world does not seem correct and the distortion of the mirror helps to show the author’s focus.⁴

Along with the social issues, Lucilius pushed against the Greek culture flourishing in Rome. Various other authors in multiple genres also show the Romanized Greek culture in poor light: it is destroying the Roman way of life. The use of Greek models appears to be against his particular ways of thought; later though, Horace criticizes his use of Greek vocabulary. The Greek culture was steadily moving into Rome and while it

¹ Hadas, 1952, 53.
² Coffey, 1976, 38.
can be assured that Lucilius knew Greek philosophy and its philosophers, the other genres, including the elegiac works of Callimachus, appear to be less well-known to him.\(^5\) While he follows Callimachus in chronology, Lucilius lives before Parthenius brings Callimachean poetics to Rome. *Scriptae puellae* are unknown in his works. Yet there are tantalizing glimpses in several fragments which hint towards Lucilius’ possible comprehension of his own version.

**Working with Lucilius: Victim of Time**

A prolific writer who wrote around thirty books of *Satires*, Lucilius did not survive into modern age intact. Many of the fragments are preserved second-hand. His unique use of words causes many grammarians to examine his text. Therefore this probing of Lucilius is incomplete due to the lack of evidence; a fragment without context is difficult not only in terms of translation but in terms of the overall meaning. While there are books that could change the meaning of this paper, they are lost to time.\(^6\)

The fragments discussed in this section are used to show how closely an author can come to using a *scripta puella* without appearing to actually reach *her*, since the lack of complete context makes a definite determination impossible. There is a delicate balance between personification and metaphor; on occasions the text appears to contain a *scripta puella* when in reality she is the personification of a city or is acting as a *persona* for the author. The key to determining the existence of a *scripta puella* comes down to understanding the deeper context of the text. When other options are removed, *she* is the only viable one left.

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\(^5\) Hadas, 1952, 52 & 56.

\(^6\) Hadas, 1952, 54.
Each of these fragments appears to come close to the use of *scrip\-t\-a\-\-\-\-\-t\-a puella* – however, there is something not quite complete with the image. Since a definite determination cannot be made, these fragments are to merely show the near possibility within Lucilius’ texts. Few do come close to exhibiting *scrip\-t\-n\-\-\-\-\-t\-e\-\-\-\-\-t\-e puellae* and these examples will be discussed in detail.

**Book XXI**

Book XXI is perhaps one of the most frustrating issues found when attempting to find a *scrip\-t\-a puella* within the satirical works of Lucilius. Written around 123 BCE, this book is written entirely in dactylic hexameters.\(^7\) There is some evidence concerning the nature of XXI’s content from one of the many authors who copied down Lucilius; this book, if fragments could be found from it, may contain irrefutable evidence of *scrip\-t\-a puella* in the writings of Lucilius and show the Callimachean treatment of poetic theory may be an incomplete representation.

The only evidence of Book XXI comes from a note which actually refers to Horace written by grammarian Pomponius Porphyrio. The earliest copies of his text are dated to the fifth century CE and it through this man that the subject matter of Book XXI can even be guessed at.\(^8\)

\[Porphyrio, ad Hor., C., I, 22, 10: ‘dum meam canto Lalagen.’ Id est carmen in Lalagen nomine amicam compositum sicut scilicet liber Lucilii XVI (XXI?) Collyra inscribitur eo quod de Collyra amica scriptus sit.\(^9\)\]

\(^7\) Hadas, 1952, 53, 55. \\
\(^8\) Porphyrio, *OCD*, s.v. “Pomponius Porphyrio,” 1218. \\
\(^9\) Lucil.XXI W
Porphyrio, about Horace, *Carmina* 1.22.10: ‘while I sing my Lalage.’ It is a poem composed to a mistress named Lalage just as you may know Book XVI (XXI?) of Lucilius was entitled Collyra since it is written about his mistress Collyra.

Porphyrio mentions a female name, Collyra, as the main subject of Book XXI and equates her to Lalage from the *Odes* of Horace. Lalage is most likely a *scripta puella*.\(^\text{10}\) Similar to several *scriptae puellae*, Collyra appears to come from Greek. Without a link to Callimachus, her name could indicate preference, either conscious or unconscious, towards using Greek names to distinguish poetic theory.

Beyond the Greek names is Porphyrio’s use of the term *amica* to describe the relationship between author and woman. While *amica* is the feminine form of *amicus*, over time the connotation of mistress becomes attached to it. Without any existing text from the book, definitive conclusions cannot be made. However, there is the possibility of Collyra being a *scripta puella* instead of a name for a living woman of flesh and blood which means Lucilius is aware of clothing poetic theory in the shape of a woman without Callimachean convention.

**Fragment 923-4**

*Hic corpus solidum inuenies, hic stare papillas pectore marmoreo* - “Here you will find a firm full body and breasts standing out on a marble-white chest.”\(^\text{11}\) For this fragment, the interest lies in the description of the chest as *marmoreo* or “marble, made of marble”. Elegiac love poetry likes to describe the female love object as a beautiful marble statue. Propertius, Catullus, and Ovid all use the elegiac tradition of equating the

\(^{10}\) Confer pp. 42 -43 of this thesis.

\(^{11}\) Lucil.923-4 W
beautiful woman with a marble statue; however this illusion is often ruined by the woman breathing.

The statue is the perfect representation for the poet: unmoving, elegant, and perfect in its design. Equating the skin of a woman to the color of marble makes her unearthly, divine. Live human beings are flawed by their nature, while a statue is frozen in perfection from the moment of its creation. Due to the elegiac connotations of marble, it is likely this fragment relates to either an elegiac love-object or a scripta puella.

Fragment 742

At metuis porro ne aspectu et forma capiare altera- “But furthermore you fear lest you are seized by the appearance and figure of another female.” 12 Now this fragment has a fair amount of potential when it comes to metaphoric women. It uses the term forma which means form or appearance. It is the term used to discuss the formatting of a poem; it is possible for both a woman and a poem to have a pleasing appearance.

Along with its specific wording, the possible relationship between poet and poetry is echoed later in Ovid’s Amores 3.1: Elegy and Tragedy fight over the attentions of the poet.13 The pair of women shows off their many attributes in attempt to seduce the poet into worshiping and following her particular style. Naturally, a poet who has found fame with one particular style of poetry may have concerns about branching out into another.

On the other hand, it must be stated once more that Lucilius could merely be warning his readers against the temptations of female flesh. Roman society had expectations for behaviors of men and women; the temptations of the opposing gender are common warnings. Roman men often slept with slaves or prostitutes, while women

12 Lucil.742 W
13 Ov.Am.3.1.7-14, 17-30
might have affairs with younger men or slaves. The elegiac poetry shows a specific process to woo a woman; the abandonment of the love object can be the rejection of a specific poetic style.

**Fragment 324-5**

*Quod gracila est, pernix, quod pectore puro, quod puero similis* - “Because she is slender, nimble, because she is with a pure heart, because she is similar to a boy”. The echoes of the *Aetia* are strong in this fragment. Callimachus uses similar phrasing when he discusses his poetry: a delicate muse. While this could be a description of the perfect woman, it can also be the perfect description of a poetic form. “Slender and nimble” could relate to the lighter subjects of Callimachus’ poetry or the deftness with which satirists deal with their subjects. The “pure heart” could relate to the honesty of the work but it is difficult to say. The male appearance is puzzling and somewhat harder to determine.

There are several possible theories for this particular image (*quod puero similis*). The first theory is the fragment refers to a real woman’s appearance and there is no deeper metaphoric meaning. Another is that the boyish appearance could allude to the dactylic hexameter form of the poem: this meter is well known as the “epic meter” since it is the same meter used by Homer for the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, mimicked by Virgil for the *Aeneid*. In epic, the topics have heavy masculine slants toward topics such as warriors, battles, honor; the “boyish appearance” could be referring to the masculine connotations of dactylic hexameter.15

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14 Lucil.324-5 W
15 Kennedy, 1993, 32.
The use of *gracila* also hints towards a *scripta puella*. The word means “slender” when referring to limbs but it can also refer to having “little density or substance” or literary works which are “not on the grand scale, modest” and “simple, plain, unadorned”. So it could refer to a female who is very slim in build, so slim she looks like a boy, or it could refer to text concerning light themes written in a style which is considered masculine.

Sadly this is one fragment where the lack of context irrevocably hurts any possible dissemination of the meaning. It is a simple matter to claim that it refers to a woman of flesh and blood; any other connotation becomes an intricate and complex matter to determine. However, the fragment, even if it does not show a *scripta puella’s* presence, does show Lucilius has an affinity for women and their appearance.

**Fragment 124**

*Cernuus extemplo plantas conuestit honestas* - “Stooping forwards he immediately clothed her pretty foot”. For this fragment, the main point of interest is *plantas honestas* or “pretty foot”. There is a long relationship between feet and poetry: the most basic, and the smallest, element of a poem is an individual foot. Ovid, in *Amores* 3.1, mentions that Elegy has “a limping foot” due to the specific metrical rules of the poetic form. In contrast, the word in this fragment *planta*, technically means the “sole of the foot” which is extremely particular in comparison to *pedes*, the more common word used to describe the metrical element.

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16 *Gracila, OLD* s.v. gracilis–is–e, “(of a person or animal, the limbs etc.) slender, slight, thin” 1a AND “having little density or substance” 3a AND “(of poets, their themes, etc.) not on the grand scale, modest, unambitious” 4a AND “(w. ref. to style of composition) simple, plain, unadorned” 4b.  
17 Lucil.124 W  
18 Wyke, 1989, 119.
Warmington states that the fragment appears to have “mock-tragic” diction in his note concerning it.19 While the tone is interesting and could have an effect on the appearance of a scripta puella, there is not enough to the fragment to make a firm statement on either side of the argument. There is a man who is clothing a woman’s foot, the relationship between female feet and poetic feet is known, yet with the lack of context makes definitive answers difficult. The lack of Callimachean antecedents for Lucilius means these figures cannot be scriptae puellae in the same way as Lesbia, Corinna, or the ones in Horace.

Despite the missing elegiac element in Lucilius, his writings are influential to later authors. The possible female figures in these fragments could show a Roman scripta puella with different poetic limitations and expectations. However, there is not enough text to make any statement for this stance. Lucilius appears to have influenced later authors with his sharp voice and stinging rebukes, not in poetic theory or scriptae puellae.

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Persius, the Stoic Writer

The next author in Latin verse satire blends the worlds of poetics and philosophy. Persius blends Lucilius and Horace in his poetry while keeping a strong focus on Stoic philosophy.\(^1\) His *Satires* contain a “sincere, outspoken criticism” which can be seen as its main essence.\(^2\) There is some Callimachean influence in his works; however Persius fails to implement *scriptae puellae*.

Persius shows that while an author acknowledges predecessors, there is no need to implement all the stylistic elements. He takes the elements which suit his particular style while leaving out those which do not interest him. Even though he chooses to exclude *scriptae puellae* the prologue contains Callimachean influence.

Callimachean Styling in Persius

Persius uses choliambic meter for his prologue. That meter is also called *scazon* or “limping”. Originally developed with Hipponax, a sixth century BCE poet, Callimachus uses it in his own poetry.\(^3\) This particular meter is well known for the damage its poets inflicted on their enemies within its text; there are rumors that Hipponax managed to drive two of his enemies to commit suicide.\(^4\) While distancing himself from traditionalists, Persius still shows his close relationship to Callimachus in the fourteen lines of the prologue:

\[
\textit{Nec fonte labra prolui caballino}
\]

\(^1\) Hadas, 1952, 279.
\(^3\) *scazon*, *OCD* s.v. “Metre, Greek II (3)”: 565.
nec in bicipiti somniasse Parnaso
memini, ut repente sic poeta prodirem.

Heliconidasque pallidamque Pirenen
illis remitto quorum imagines lambunt
hederae sequaces; ipse semipaganus
ad sacra uatum carmen adfero nostrum.

quis expediuit psittaco suum “chaere”
picamque docuit nostra uerba conari?

magister artis ingenique largitor
uenter, negates artifex sequi uoces.

quod si dolosi spes refulserit nummi,
coruos poetas et poetridas picas
cantare credas Pegaseium nectar.⁵

“I have neither washed my lips in the spring of a horse, nor have I remembered dreaming on twin-peaked Parnassus, that I would thus suddenly come forth a poet. I send the Heliconians and pale Pirene back to those whose statues clinging ivy licks; I this half-rustic bring as my song to sacred bards. Who prepared the parrot with his “Hail!” and taught the magpie to undertake our words? The master of practical arts and granter of talent the belly, a master to imitate denied sounds. Whereby if the hope of deceitful money were glistening, you would believe the raven poets and magpie poetesses sing the nectar of Pegasus.”

⁵ Pers.Prol.1-14
Persius takes the traditional images of poetic inspiration, drinking from a fountain and falling asleep on a mountain, and twists them into mockeries of themselves. He calls himself *semipaganus* or “half-rustic” since he does not come from the city of Rome but from an Etruscan town. He distinguishes himself from other authors by emphasizing his “outsider” qualities, much in the same way as Horace. This otherness allows for Horace and Persius to stand outside of Roman life and comment on the excesses and problems they perceive. If the pair did not emphasize their separation from the upper class Roman lifestyle, readers would be willing to minimize the flaws discussed in the texts.

Beyond the separation which allows for Persius to assert his criticisms against Roman life, it also shows his rejection of society; this poetry is not meant to be personal in the traditional standard.Persius finds the traditional standards of poetry distasteful and mocks them in his prologue. The final three lines show his opinions concerning his fellow “poets”: *quod si dolosi spes refulserit nummi,/ coruos poetas et poetridas picas/ cantare credas Pegaseium nectar.* Ravens and magpies do not have beautiful songs, however if enough money is involved, people will swear that the songs are more beautiful than a songbird’s. These birds are also an Ovidian allusion. Persius shows his rejection early in his collection, then continues to reject society and its standards throughout its contents. His poetry is for the eyes of few, not the crowds of Rome.

Even within the prologue there is heavy mention of Stoic beliefs. Lines 10 and 11 bring up the divine - *magister artis ingenique largitor/ uenter, negates artifex sequi uoces.* The *uenter* or “belly” means more than just the stomach area of the body; it is the

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7 Pers.Prol.12-14
8 Hadas, 1952, 280.
place from which many emotions arise according to ancient beliefs. Stoics believe that every human being contains a portion of the divine within him or herself and so the stomach is the area where the divine resides within an individual. Since the divine is what allows mankind to think, to reason, and to create, the two lines calling it “the master of the arts”, “the granter of talent”, and the place from which imitation occurs are to show the heavy leaning towards Stoicism that will continue throughout the rest of the work. It also mocks the greedy poets who write only to increase their own wealth. In a way, this prologue warns readers to put the work down if they dislike Stoicism, since it will be a large presence during the Satires.\textsuperscript{10}

**Persius and Scriptae Puellae**

Persius contains heavy Stoic influences in his writing. In addition he enjoys poetic essentials from Callimachus. Verse satirists, while linked together by format and topic, do not all use elegiac forms originally created by Callimachus in his own poetry. However intriguing Persius and his writings may be, he does not fully realize *scriptae puellae* in his works.

\textsuperscript{10} Niall Rudd, 1986, 26.
Creating New *Scriptae Puellae* – Juvenal’s Satirical Figure

This author, the final in the chain of Latin verse satirists, appears to have learned well from his predecessors. Juvenal takes the elements that have the most emotional effect on his audience, blends them with his own flair, and creates *Satires* that are a fine end cap to a genre. Later authors use him as example, some follow and others warn against his vitriolic verses;¹ while others state that “Decimus Iunuis Iuvenalis is the last, and in the opinion of many, the greatest of the Roman verse satirists”.² His ability to write the extreme righteous anger against the many issues of his time resonates powerfully with the readers and authors of centuries later despite the lack of direct successors in his own day.³

One thing people can say about Juvenal is that his satire, while mimicking the authors before, definitely contains its own unique flavor. Each of his poems makes a distinct impression on readers. One author states that he is “a satirist of comparatives and superlatives… sets out to look bigger, denser, ruder, slyer, angrier, fleshier, more sophisticated and bilious, to the power of ten, than all the other satirists before him put together”.⁴ This statement, while verbose, does clearly show the way in which Juvenal sets himself apart: he stands out by making his text impossible to ignore.

While Juvenal knows Horatian satire and therefore the Callimachean *scripta puella*, he twists *her* to suit his writing style. Juvenal appears to have little elegiac

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³ Coffey, 1976, 146.
influence within his *Satires*. Instead he takes the element of *scriptae puellae* created by Callimachus and makes the *scripta puella* in his works satirical. He is not interested in a docile poetic mistress – his figurative woman embodies his satirical style.

**Juvenal’s Satirical *Scripta Puella***

During the course of *Satire* 2, Juvenal creates a character to declaim against the moral degradations in Rome. This character is a woman, who is willing to tell the truth despite the opposition.\(^5\) This poem continues ideas brought forth in *Satire* 1 – hypocrisy, sexual deviance, and the spread of moral degradation.\(^6\) Yet this *scripta puella* blasts out against hypocrites, pointing out the flaws in their arguments and shedding light on the perversions found in Rome. While the poem opens with a discussion on the speaker’s inability to remain silent when faced with such behavior, Laronia, an adulterous *scripta puella* who is not willing to remain silent any longer, introduces herself with a smile.

*Non tulit ex illis toruum Laronia quendam*

*clamantem totiens ‘ubi nunc, lex Iulia, dormis?’*

*atque ita subridens: “felicita tempora, quae te moribus opponent. habeat iam Roma pudorem: tertius e caelo cecidit Cato.”*\(^7\)

“Laronia had not tolerated of this man shouting so often heretofore with grim face, ‘Where do you sleep now, Julian law?’ and smiling [said] in this manner: ‘Happy times, which set you against customs. Let Rome have modesty now: a third Cato has fallen from the sky.’”

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\(^5\) Freudenburg, 2001, 252.  
\(^6\) Juv. 1  
\(^7\) Juv. 2.36-40
Her words are pointed against a man who holds himself up above the rest of Rome. Laronia compares the hypocrite to the Cato family, well-respected and up-held examples of Roman morality and Stoicism during the Republic era who spoke loudly for Roman values. 8 Juvenal uses her “to defrock these men” in addition to place an opposing view to the traditional male-dominated one. It raises the question “does it take a woman to know a woman, to know men as men cannot know themselves?”9

Laronia, an adulterous female, points out that men behave worse than women but have safety in numbers.10 Then she moves on to complain about the prevalence of homosexual behavior men indulge in which she states non erit ullam / exemplum in nostro tam detestabile sexu or “no [person] will be able [to find] any example of such detestable [behavior] in our sex.”11 She lambasts men, using satirical elements to full advantage.

In one way, Laronia turns into a persona of Juvenal: “for she, allegedly the poem’s only non-hypocrite, is exposed as none other than Juvenal himself, the censor-satirist, in drag!”12 It is vital for the poem’s standing that the speaker is a scripta puella, for she claims that men are worse than women and offers up examples of their behavior and goes on for twenty eight lines about their depravity; in a way this is section is similar to the later Satire 6 which also focuses on the faults of one gender with a speaker of the

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10 Juv.6.44-5.
11 Juv.6.47-8.
opposing gender pointing out each one. She has the function of a persona yet her speech pattern and heavy satirical elements also mutate her into satire itself.

Laronia, most likely, comes from the Greek word λαρός which is an adjective meaning “pleasant to the taste, pleasant to the eye, pleasant to the ear, or sweet to hear”. The name is a link to the Callimachean scriptae puellae using a Greek word which often relates to a poetic element. Her name is ironic within the context of the poem since her words are not ones that the hypocrites of Rome wish to hear. She is the duplicity of satirical poetry: her appearance (shown in her name) lead to particular assumptions about her until she opens her mouth to speak. Indeed, male readers could consider Laronia to be some type of demon.

Similarly, Latin verse satire has the appearance of grand heroic epic yet delivers harsh truths about the world and its depravity. Juvenal, instead of creating an elegiac female, creates one who is satirical; she suits his poetry and style far better than the traditional elegiac scripta puella, standing as the love-object for the poet. He is the last in the chain of verse satirists and has learned from his predecessors: take the things that work to give the work credence but create unique elements to set his own collection apart.

She is given more credence from the poem’s second speaker who details the reaction of the hypocrites: Fugerunt trepidi uera ac manifesta canentem/ Stoicidae; quid enim falsi Laronia? This set of two lines sums up Laronia’s, or satire’s, effect on people; the people who are specifically pointed out by satire do their best to flee from the

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13 Ibid.
14 λαρός, LSJ, s.v. λαρός, “pleasant to the taste, dainty, sweet” 1 AND “pleasant to the ear, sweet to hear, uttering sweet sounds” 4.
15 Juv.2.63-64
accusations lobbed against them. Yet the taunting *quid enim falsi Laronia* haunts all the victims of a satirical attack. The truth, even if it is twisted by the satiric mirror, still has the small grain within its center; the appearance in satire causes the reader to “imagine it (you just did!)… now who is being turned on?” since the reader places him or herself into the satire.¹⁶ Satire thrives on shocking its audience and then forcing them to become disgusted with either their own reactions or with the actions of the figures in the text. Laronia functions the same way.

Later in *Satire* 6, Juvenal pays homage to the traditional elegiac *scriptae puellae* by mentioning Cynthia and Lesbia, the female figures from Propertius’ and Catullus’ poetry. The two appear briefly near the beginning of the poem: *haut similis tibi, Cynthia, nec tibi, cuius/ turbavit nitidos extinctus passer ocellos…*¹⁷ Cynthia is named but Lesbia is implied by the line *nec tibi, cuius/ turbavit nitidos extinctus passer ocellos* “nor to you, whose dead sparrow unsettled her bright eyes”. In one of Catullus’ poems he mentions the distress of his lover over the death of *her* sparrow.¹⁸

These two *scriptae puellae* do not behave like Laronia in *Satire* 2 – they are shown to be love objects with the delicate tendencies and behaviors expected of elegiac *scriptae puellae*. This nod to his predecessors in the elegiac field is brief but is not merely recognition. Juvenal is using the two *scriptae puellae* as mistresses, to show how in the beginning of Rome’s existence there were no mistresses: *haut similis tibi* “not at all similar to you”. The *scripta puella* has changed along with the poetic form she represents.

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¹⁶ Freudenburg, 2001, 259.
¹⁷ Juv.6.7-8
¹⁸ Catul.3.3-5, 17-18
Later the speaker presents poetry as a *scripta puella* changing her shoes: *fingimus haec altum satura sumente coturnum/ sciliet.*\(^{19}\) “It is obvious satire has handled these high tragic boots by assumption,” presents the image of a *scripta puella* wearing a pair of boots which are not associated with elegy or satire. The *altum coturnum* are calf-high boots worn by the actors in tragic plays; the boots are often used in the metamorphic sense for tragedy itself.\(^{20}\) The image left in the mind of the reader is the *scripta puella* appearing as another genre. This is appropriate due to satire’s blurred generic lines and willingness to take elements from other literary forms into itself. Juvenal is not content with only showing elegiac poetic theory. He uses *scriptae puellae* for satire and shows the ease with which *they* can take on elements from other genres.

*Scriptae puellae* originally appear in literature as perfect examples of elegiac theory, as presented by Callimachus. Roman authors in the Augustan Age take the Callimachean ideals and use *scriptae puellae* in their own works as a vehicle for their similar poetic stance. Ovid further copies Callimachus by creating a long epic-metered poem yet he cannot give up his elegiac preference and places figurative females in the *Metamorphoses.* Horace willing writes elegiac poetry and uses *scriptae puellae* to explain his poetic desires and theories towards his readers. In particular, he uses *them* to exhibit his inclination to elegy, even in his *Sermones* and *Epodes.* Despite the lack of *scriptae puellae* in Persius, he still understands Callimachean poetics and Lucilius could possibly have his own versions without direct Callimachean influence. Finally, Juvenal looks at *scriptae puellae* as able to embody any form of poetry and not just elegiac structure. He takes the accepted figures and creates Laronia, the written form of satire, as an example

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\(^{19}\) Juv.6.634-5

\(^{20}\) Coturnum, *OLD* s.v. cot(h)urnus–1 m, “a thick soled boot worn by tragic actors to increase their height” 1b AND “(in fig. expr., used for) the style of tragic poetry, solemnity, of expression.” 2a.
of a non-elegiac based *scripta puella*. It shows his lack of interest in elegy when compared to his predecessors. *Scriptae puellae* are a way for an author to show his acceptance or denial of the desires for Callimachean poetics.
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