

138th Annual Meeting of the APA in San Diego
Committee on Education-Sponsored Panel: *Literate to Visual and Back Again*
Lillian Doherty & Terence Tunberg, Organizers
Saturday, January 6, 2007, 8:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Section 33 Marina G

“Exploring the Worlds of Roman Women Through Text and Image”

Ann R. Raia, The College of New Rochelle



<http://www.cnr.edu/home/sas/araia/companion.html>

General Suggestions for Use of the Site:

- 🏺 Go to *Companion's* **Syllabi** for curriculum ideas and **Activities** for classroom exercises
- 🏺 Create your own sourcebook of texts and images by ordering the readings thematically, according to **Worlds**, or by sequencing them according to level of difficulty (refer to **Textmap**), genre (e.g., funerary inscriptions), time period (e.g., Augustan Rome), gender role (e.g., the *matrona*), class (e.g., slaves, freedwomen, workers, noblewomen).
- 🏺 During the Empire, the imperial family introduced an interesting female iconography. To the Roman repertoire of artistic representations of the clothed and veiled female head or bust or full figure, often displaying the *pudicitia* pose, was added the depiction of women in the guise of goddesses. Several **Worlds** offer texts and images of women *in forma deorum* which can be used to examine the political use and commemoration of matronal virtues.
- 🏺 Compare the late 1st century BCE eulogy *Laudatio Turiae* in *The Worlds of Roman Women* with the *Furia Spes* inscription in *Companion*: both are Augustan, both can be found in the **World of Marriage**. While funerary texts tend to idealize the deceased and conform to cultural norms, nevertheless, the male voice of the *Laudatio* and the female voice of the *Furia Spes* inscription offer venues for comparison and contrast of expression, tone and gender values.
- 🏺 Texts are read with greater understanding in the context of their ancient sites, e.g., Ovid in the Circus, Aurelia Nais in the Emporium on the banks of the Tiber, Hortensia and Tullia Minor in the Roman Forum, Metilia Acte in Ostia, the *caupona* of Salvius in fast-food and drink shops in *VRoma*, Ostia, or Pompeii, *Gladiatrices* in amphitheaters and the training *ludi* (see **Resources** for on-line links to *VRoma*, the *Pompeii Project*, *Ostia Antica*).
- 🏺 As a counterbalance to traditional literary emphasis on the Roman elite class, read the Columella passage (**Work**) about slave women in a *villa rustica* in conjunction with *WRW's* passages from Cato and Columella on the *vilica* and on slave mothers (**Work**), or with any intermediate Latin textbook that includes slave characters in the plot.
- 🏺 Enter the lives of ancient women through simulation: by searching **Worlds** and **Resources** for data and models, students can create letters (cf. the Vindolanda site), epitaphs (cf. Euodia's inscription), poetry (cf. Calenus' Sulpicia and Sulpicia's poems in *WRW*), family histories, or personal journals of real or fictional Roman women, identifying them by age, class, and occupation and setting them in specific physical, social and temporal circumstances.

Exemplum I: Activity using *The Online Companion with VRoma*

LIVIA: Rome's First “First Lady”

GOALS:

- ☞ ability to discuss the relationship of two Latin texts with regard to content, tone, etc.
- ☞ understanding of how our perceptions of an historical woman are colored by the way she is presented by ancient writers
- ☞ ability to analyze how ancient statues, coins and monuments may have affected the attitudes of the Roman people themselves toward an historical woman

INSTRUCTIONS:

Part I. Textual Representations:

Using the *Online Companion's* [World of State](#), read/translate [Livy AUC 1. 34, 39, 41: Tanaquil](#) and [Tacitus *Annales* 1. 3-6: Livia](#). Then answer the following questions on the attached sheets (see [printable version of the worksheet](#) in an Adobe Acrobat file):

1. What similarities do you see between the character and actions of the legendary queen Tanaquil as described by Livy and the historical empress Livia as presented by Tacitus? Be specific in discussing their similar qualities, actions and effect on the Roman state.
2. How does Tacitus in chapter 5. 5-6 draw upon Livy 41 to describe the actions of Livia after the death of Augustus? Why do you think he did this? What effect does the strong similarity between the actions of the two women have on your perception of the literal truth of Tacitus' account of events?
3. Compare and contrast the tone of the two authors. What is Livy's attitude toward Tanaquil? Do you think that Tacitus' attitude toward Livia is the same or different? Explain by referring to specific words and phrases chosen by each author to describe the women and their actions. When reading Tacitus, did you feel that the author was making judgments about Livia? Why or why not?

Part II. Visual and Material Representations:

Visit the Portico of Livia in Region III of *VRoma's* virtual city of Rome. Connect as a guest by going to the [Web Gateway](#) and clicking the Login button (leave the password box blank). Proceed to the Portico of Livia by typing **@go Portico of Livia** in the Input window on the lower left of the screen and pressing Enter. You can also get there by clicking on the exit to *Rome* at the bottom of the Web window on the right of the screen, then clicking on *Region III* in the map, and then clicking on *Porticus Liviae* in the map of Region III.

1. Explore the Portico, looking at its plan and reading about its history. What is significant about the location, function, and symbolism of this site? How do you think the people who frequented this portico would regard the woman who was its patron?
2. Then visit the *West Portico* by clicking on the exit link. After looking around, visit the *Exhibition* by clicking on the sign. Read the brief life story of Livia and information about allusions to her on coins, then view her portrait statues and read their descriptions. What impression of Livia do these give you, and do you think they would have affected the Roman people in the same way?
3. How do these visual representations of Livia differ from the verbal portrait painted by Tacitus? Do you think it is important to consider visual and material evidence alongside textual evidence when studying ancient women? Why or why not?

Call for Collaboration

The *On-Line Companion* to the Latin anthology *The Worlds of Roman Women* expands the book's wide representation of Latin texts by and about women who lived from the earliest periods of Roman history to the 4th century CE. The medium of a website, moreover, facilitates the integration of visuals to texts, thus enabling readers to make meaningful connections between language and material culture.

The *Companion* has two major parts: the **Worlds** section includes the following categories: Childhood, Learning, Marriage, Family, Body, State, Class, Work, Flirtation, and Religion. Each World opens to reveal a thematic image of women in the World, a brief essay describing women's experience of the World, and a list of on-line text-commentaries and hyperlinked images of women relevant to the World. Each Latin passage is linked to vocabulary-commentary glosses and images as well. For example, the introduction to the funerary inscription for *Gnome Pierinis* (**Work**), a Flavian *ornatrix*, is hyperlinked to an image of an elite woman with a hairstyle typical of the Flavian period. For ease of reference, the **Textmap** contains a complete list of passages on the site, arranged according to Worlds and hyperlinked.

Explore the Worlds of Roman Women in Texts and Images

 CHILDHOOD	 STATE
 LEARNING	 CLASS
 MARRIAGE	 WORK
 FAMILY	 FLIRTATION
 BODY	 RELIGION

To Browse the Latin texts on the *Companion* website, click on [TEXTMAP](#)

The **Instructional** portion of *Companion* contains a Guide for use of the site, an annotated Bibliography hyperlinked to on-line materials where available, Syllabi and Lesson plans, Activities for the classroom, Credits and Contributors, and Resources for translation and interpretation of the Latin passages.

INSTRUCTION COMPANION WORLDS



[Guide to Using the Site](#)

[Annotated Bibliography](#)

[Syllabi and Lesson Plans](#)

[Activities for Classroom Use](#)

[Resources for Translation and Interpretation](#)

[Credits, Contributors, Collaborators](#)

This presentation is offered both to announce the availability of this resource for purposes of research and teaching and to invite teachers of Latin at all levels to contribute to the site in any way they choose. Collaboration includes but is not limited to: adding text-commentaries, images, links, lesson plans, activities, annotated bibliography; critiquing on-line materials for accuracy and completeness; assessing the effectiveness of the site for advancing Latin comprehension through classroom use.

To make suggestions or to volunteer for collaboration, please contact either of us as follows:

Ann R. Raia: araia@cnr.edu Judith Lynn Sebesta: jsebesta@usd.edu

Exemplum II: Complete a Latin Inscription Activity



sarcophagus lid with portrait of deceased girl and inscription, J. Paul Getty Villa

This poignant sarcophagus lid commemorates the early death of a young girl who probably lived during the reign of the emperor Hadrian, as suggested by her carefully sculpted hairstyle (note also the holes in her ears, indicating that she originally wore earrings, which are now lost). With her right hand, she pets a small dog, whose body is now mostly broken off. At the foot of the couch are propped two small dolls (partly broken off), so her memorial refers to the playthings that delighted her during life. On the back of the couch, over her right shoulder, sprawls a small sleeping Cupid, whose left leg is crossed under his right in imitation of the pose of the girl; this Cupid may symbolize the premature death of the girl or her beauty and charm. We do not know her name or anything more about her, but there is an inscription on the bottom front of the lid. Unfortunately, because of breakage in the stone, only part of the inscription survives, a common occurrence with ancient inscriptions. One of the tasks that classicists undertake is to try to conjecture what words may be missing in the inscription, using as clues other inscriptions of similar type, the contours of fragmentary letters, and the space allotted for the missing parts of the inscription. This is an opportunity for you to try your hand at completing a Latin inscription. Below you will see a close-up of the bottom of the sarcophagus lid, with the surviving letters marked out in red for easier reading; the surviving words are typed below the image. How would you complete this inscription? Can you imagine a scenario for this girl's life and death?



HIC SPECIES ET FORMA IACET MISERA... [small gap] ...ETAS EFF... [large gap] ...IS

This activity can complement study of texts from the world of childhood; students should have read and discussed one or more funerary inscriptions for young girls from the *Worlds of Roman Women* reader and/or from the [Online Companion](#). With this as background, introduce students to the [grave monument of a young girl](#) from the Hadrianic period (on display at the Getty Villa). Encourage them to look carefully at the various views of the sarcophagus and details of its sculpture and inscription, since for this particular piece we have nothing but its own visual evidence.

Explain that this is often the case with material artifacts from classical antiquity. Sometimes the physical piece, frequently broken, is all we have, without context, external references, or even information about where and when it was found. Classicists then have to interpret the piece by drawing upon knowledge gained from study of many different facets of the ancient world. For example, knowledge of female hairstyles, sculpting techniques, and stone-cutting of inscriptions enables scholars to date this piece to the late Hadrianic era, c. 120-140 CE. Although very little remains of the object beneath the girl's right hand, other funerary sculptures suggest that this was a pet dog (see, for example, the [funerary altar of Anthus](#) or this [sarcophagus of a youth](#)). The dolls are an unusual detail for sarcophagi, but jointed ivory dolls were found in the tombs of Roman girls (see this [doll with a diadem](#), and this [doll with the hairstyle of the empress Julia Domna](#)). Images of Cupid were not uncommon on grave monuments of young girls. See, for example, this [elaborately carved sarcophagus](#) where the girl's portrait is held up by two Cupids; on both ends is a depiction of [Cupid and Psyche](#), perhaps alluding to the fact that Psyche gained immortality in this myth. As on our sarcophagus, where the unusual pose of Cupid's legs (left crossed under right) echoes that of the deceased girl, here the [melon hairstyle of Psyche](#) resembles that of the [dead girl](#).

The following assignment can be done individually, but may work best in small groups: After students have carefully viewed all these images, ask them to write in Latin a plausible conjecture of what the full inscription might have said. They should take into consideration the shape of the fragmentary letters, the size of the gaps (the full inscription is approximately 50 inches long), and the style of the extant parts of the inscription (fairly simple declarative sentences). Their conjecture should be grammatically correct and make sense in relation to the rest of the inscription and the Roman traditions relating to the commemoration of young girls. Each group should present their completed inscription to the rest of the class, explaining why they made the choices they did. At the end of the session, the class can discuss all the conjectures and choose which they think is best. A further activity might be to imagine what this girl's life might have been like: what kind of family did she have? how old was she when she died? how did she die? how does she compare to other Roman girls they have read about?

The goal of this activity is to encourage meaningful Latin composition in an engaging and imaginative way, embedded in authentic cultural context, and emulating a real-life activity of classical scholars.

Submitted by Barbara F. McManus, October 2006