

Maria Marsilio, October, 2008, CAAS Panel

I'm fondly recalling the Centennial Meeting of CAAS in Washington, DC, Saturday morning October 6, 2007. I was scheduled to co-preside with Helen Cullyer at a paper session entitled "New Lenses on Greek Literature" beginning at 8:30 am, and I decided that my ideal breakfast would be a cup of coffee in my hotel room. However, my wonderful husband Patrick had other plans for us. Hungry for food and social engagement, he asked for my company at the breakfast sponsored by the Women's Classical Caucus. Looking at him with exhaustion and resignation, I said yes, I would join him.

Patrick must have known something. Among the attendees were Ann Raia and Barbara McManus, my beloved undergraduate mentors at the College of New Rochelle. As Patrick and I were energized by the warm greetings we received, incoming CAAS President Raia stood at the speaker's podium and graciously invited contributions to her online *Companion to the Worlds of Roman Women* which she and Judith Sebesta designed to accompany their Latin reader *The Worlds of Roman Women*. Patrick looked over at me to make sure I heard this announcement, knowing that I greatly admired Ann's and Judith's textbook and that I had both teaching and research interests in gender and sexuality in Greek and Roman literature and society.

The timing of this invitation could not have been more perfect for me, for in fall 2007 I was taking my first sabbatical since beginning my tenure-track appointment in Classics at Saint Joseph's University in 1996. My sabbatical project, an article exploring Catullus' and Martial's self-representation as impoverished poets, was advancing successfully and I had time to make a contribution to the online *Companion*. What was especially attractive to me about the *Companion* project was that it would be an ideal opportunity to unite my research and teaching. Throughout my career I had heard

academics speak volumes about the importance of linking one's teaching and scholarship, but that was certainly not my own experience during my pre-tenure years at Saint Joseph's University, when most of my research and publications focused upon the Greek poet Hesiod and most of my undergraduate teaching was in Latin literature. My recent scholarly research and publications on Catullus and Martial have moved my research and teaching into a closer and more fruitful association, and my future work on *Companion* would be the genuine "wedding" of my research and my undergraduate teaching, both in Latin literature and in gender and sexuality in antiquity.

As I began thinking about a Roman woman I wished to contribute to *Companion*, I surveyed the fine selection of authors and texts that Ann and Judith had published. A formidable lady was absent from the *Companion* table of contents: Clodia Metelli. I smiled as I imagined how happily or unhappily Clodia Metelli herself might receive the news that she would take her place in the gallery of famous (and infamous) *Companion* women. The passage I chose was the "tour de force" in *Pro Caelio* 33-34, where Cicero assumes the *persona* of Clodia's noble ancestor Appius Claudius Caecus in order to reprimand Clodia for her failure to model the qualities of the proper Roman *matrona*. I had a strong, long-term connection with the *Pro Caelio*, which I had read in Latin literature courses and Honors Classical civilization courses with post-baccalaureate students at University of Pennsylvania and with undergraduate students at Saint Joseph's University. I contacted Ann, who was pleased by this choice of passage because it would be a nice addition to the existing *Companion* texts in the world of "Family."

I had never worked extensively on any project of a pedagogical nature, but I certainly had fifteen years of work and experience with the *Pro Caelio* in the classroom to draw upon. My undergraduates were fascinated with the *Pro Caelio*, which sparked their interests in Roman rhetoric and stylistics, gender and sexuality, and Roman political

and social history. I always carefully noted where my students had difficulties with a Latin text. My upper-division undergraduates had a solid grasp of grammar and vocabulary, but they wrestled with periodic style, and they were not always sensitive to Cicero's humorous and suggestive use of diction and word order. Therefore, when I started drafting the notes, I vividly remembered the needs of my undergraduates in vocabulary, diction, grammar, syntax, the political and social climate of Rome in the late Republic. I also used several published *Companion* texts as templates for my own, so that I had a gauge for what was appropriate for inclusion in my notes. Ann and Judith know their audience well: college and secondary school Latin students who have completed an introduction to Latin vocabulary, grammar, and syntax and are now working to gain facility in Latin through careful reading of "real" authors and texts. I wanted to be sure that my own contribution would always keep that audience in mind and would be especially helpful to that audience.

Accomplished teachers and scholars thoroughly familiarize themselves with the work that other accomplished teachers and scholars have contributed to the understanding of their subjects. Accordingly, for my notes and commentary on *Pro Caelio* and Clodia Metelli I consulted the masterful commentaries of R. G. Austin, Walter Englert, and Stephen Ciruolo. I also had Marilyn Skinner's landmark *TAPA* article "Clodia Metelli" permanently etched into my brain. The monographs of Judith Hallett, Suzanne Dixon, and Katherine Geffcken were also influential as I crafted my notes and commentary. This scholarly work provided my firm foundation and it armed me with the most credible and convincing argumentation about the many problems and questions arising from a reading of my passage. Of course, my contribution would be my own, and my challenging and joyful collaboration with Ann and Judith and other scholars ultimately

produced, I think, an informative set of notes and commentary for intermediate/advanced level Latin students reading the *Pro Caelio*.

Please allow me to elaborate on some key aspects of this process of collaboration on *Companion*. I found working on the notes and commentary, which I drafted first, to be extremely hard and time-consuming work. But I also had enormous fun. In addition to all the above mentioned scholarly commentaries and articles and books, I had the magnificent *Oxford Latin Dictionary* and the Allen & Greenough *New Latin Grammar* always at my side. Every Latin word in the notes and glosses, even the most elementary, I checked in the *OLD* for accuracy. All grammatical and syntactical points were checked in the *New Latin Grammar*. The commentary on points of style, sound, word order, history, politics, Clodia's family and ancestors, Roman customs and practices, were written with my own intermediate and advanced level undergraduate Latin students and their needs and interests in mind. Ann and Judith read every gloss carefully: adding, deleting, editing, and improving my work at every turn.

I learned very early in my career that assessment without complete candor and without the overall aim of making the work and the teacher/scholar better, is meaningless. A gift that Ann and Judith share is the ability to deliver the right criticisms in the most professional, tactful, concrete, and helpful way. Preparing this commentary in virtual conversation with colleagues made me a better teacher and scholar.

Good scholarship requires good judgment. I got all fired up contemplating Cicero's highlighting of female examples for Clodia to emulate: Quinta Claudia and the Vestal Claudia. My unchecked zeal produced a long and speculative commentary arguing for connections between Quinta Claudia's successful defense of her chastity and Clodia's alleged lack of chastity. I further added that Cicero's allusion to Cybele's role

as a mother goddess and a fertility goddess also rebuked Clodia, whose marriage to Metellus produced only one child, a daughter Metella, and therefore Clodia did not model the ideal Roman mother. Ann rightly judged that my observations about Cicero's comparison of Quinta Claudia to Clodia encouraged readers to accept the validity of Cicero's representation of Clodia rather than to view it as the brilliant rhetorical manipulation it is. Still, Ann showed me all professional respect and courtesy by assuring me that if I felt strongly about restoring my commentary, she would restore it. This decision was not about her editorial control, or about my need to be proprietary and defensive about my work. Ann and I both knew that her editorial decision to strike it from the notes was correct.

On a couple of complicated notes, Ann and Judith and I consulted other scholars to verify or to correct my statements and argumentation. I admired Ann and Judith for their readiness to consult other colleagues to ensure the overall quality of the contribution. I am aware that Judith has had a successful collaboration with colleagues in the Classics listserv on behalf of *Companion* texts. Ann and Judith contacted other scholars regarding my own contribution with my full knowledge and approval. Specifically, Marilyn Skinner was consulted on the question of Clodia's presence at the trial and she also read carefully through the entire essay, notes, and commentary. Barbara McManus was consulted on the *imagines* and, like Marilyn Skinner, she read my entire contribution. Both Marilyn and Barbara provided valuable suggestions that improved the notes and commentary. This collaborative process with distinguished scholars in Latin literature was truly exciting and enhanced the integrity and quality of my work for *Companion*.

I devoted many hours of hard work to the notes and commentary. The essay on Clodia introducing the passage was even harder work. One short paragraph had to state

the most important facts about Clodia, what her social and political connections were, why Cicero redirects the entire *Pro Caelio* toward her, what Cicero's strategy and tactics suggest about ancient gender roles, and why we have great difficulty finding the "real" Clodia in Cicero's *Pro Caelio* and in Catullus' poems about "Lesbia." In fact, I had drafted no fewer than four different versions of the essay, all of them with varying strengths and weaknesses. I learned after several attempts that I simply did not have the space to say everything I wanted to say, and that I had to remain keenly focused upon Clodia herself, since this was, after all, the *Companion to the Worlds of Roman Women*. Observations about Ciceronian style and comedy in the *Pro Caelio* and thoughts about what political machinations lay behind the complex charges against Marcus Caelius Rufus, while they are fascinating topics to explore, they were not directly relevant to the introduction focusing on Clodia Metelli the elite Roman noblewoman. Ann and I found that during our repeated drafts and revisions and improvements, which operated on the level of every word and phrase, we often moved parts of the essay into the notes and parts of the notes into the essay. Many observations and points of discussion were worth making, but we had to decide where they were most logically and appropriately placed so that students could best understand and learn from them. Ann has a great talent for this master organization, and her meticulous writing and thinking showed their influence everywhere in my "Clodia Metelli" essay. As for the images and links, I owe nearly all of them to Barbara McManus, who always has the perfect visual and substantive connections to key areas of the text. Specifically, Barbara's monumental work on the impressive VRoma website provides a wealth of resources for links to *Companion*, and vice versa. Take as one example her textual and visual links for the *imagines*: they give the student a very clear understanding of this important aspect of Roman culture. This

generous sharing of resources on all aspects of the classical world is one of the hallmarks of *Companion*.

My first experience working on *Companion* was extremely engaging, challenging, and rewarding. During my sabbatical, I completed my Catullus and Martial article, forthcoming in *Latomus* this year, and the “Clodia Metelli” for *Companion*. With encouragement from Ann and Judith, I prepared three additional text commentaries for *Companion*: Livy’s Tarpeia in the world of “State” and Catullus’ “Postumia” and Horace’s “Chloe” in the world of “Flirtation.” My work with Ann and Judith on these more recent contributions was as stimulating and as collaborative as my work had been with them on “Clodia Metelli.” Other scholarly collaborators were also very generous; specifically, my colleague Dr. Jean Turfa at Saint Joseph’s University was a fountain of knowledge for my note on *armillae* in the Livy Tarpeia passage. All my contributions to *Companion* will remain alive in my Latin classroom, where I will continue to teach these passages from Cicero, Livy, Catullus, and Horace in my undergraduate intermediate and advanced level Latin courses. My students and I will keep thinking about them, and together we may find ways to improve the notes, commentaries, essays, and links. One major advantage to online publishing is that it allows the editors and authors to make additions, corrections, and improvements quickly and continually as needed. How fortunate we all are to have *Companion to the Worlds of Roman Women*, an exciting and always evolving resource for teaching and scholarship.