

The *Copa*: Poetry, Youth and the Roman Bar

While researching ideas about Roman food I came across the poem known as the *Copa* which is included in the *Appendix Vergiliana*.¹ The *Copa* or *Innkeeper* has intrigued scholars since antiquity because of its depiction of a scene in a Roman inn, and this fascination, coupled with its supposed authorship by Virgil, has ensured its survival to the present day.² But what exactly elicits this fascination? There are tough textual problems, controversies over the *persona* of the poet, contradictions in the very description of the inn and thoughts that seem awkwardly expressed. As a result the text has been thoroughly examined and plausible suggestions made about the correct readings. Yet, despite this attention, I do not feel that the poem has been placed in its proper social milieu, nor do I hold as satisfactory the usual interpretation that the bulk of the poem is an address by the innkeeper to some passer-by. My intention is therefore to substantiate this premise by considering the evidence for Roman adolescence and placing the *Copa* within this context, but it lies outside the scope of this discussion to support any claim to authorship by Virgil. Let me first offer a relatively literal translation of the poem.³

The innkeeper Surisca has a lovely bandeau tied around
her head,
is skilled at moving her lubricious hips to the castanets,
drunkenly dances sexily in the smoky bar,
thrusts her arms out to the piercing pipes.
What is the point of staying out exhausted in the summer dust, 5
when you could be lying down on a couch and drinking?

There are box hedges, arbours, wine jugs, roses, flutes, lyres,
and eating areas cool with shady rushes.

MARK GRANT

Yes, and there plays in the shepherd's way the rustic reed
which warbles sweetly in the Arcadian grotto. 10
There is cheap wine too, just decanted from a jar sealed
with pitch,
and a stream of water babbling with splashing sighs.
There are violet garlands made from crocus flowers
and crocus garlands entwined with dark red roses
and lilies which, picked from the virgin river, 15
the daughter of Achelous brings in wicker baskets.
There are lovely cheeses as well which the rush rack dries.
There are waxy plums for an autumn day,
and chestnuts, walnuts and mellow apples that are reddening.
Here is pure Ceres, here is Love, here is Bacchus. 20
There are both blood-red mulberries and grapes on
pliant stems,
and there is also hanging a green cucumber from its stalk.
There is a guardian of the hut armed with a willow sickle,
but he is not frightening despite his huge groin.
Come here and spend some time in an arbour, now
the exhausted ass sweats. 25
Look after it, the ass is loved by Vesta.

Now cicadas burst the trees with their repeated refrain,
now a lizard hides in a pot cool in the brambles.
If you have any sense, lie back now and pour from summer
glass,
or you can take and use new crystal goblets if you wish. 30
Hey, come on, you are tired – rest under the vine's shade
And wreath your heavy head with a garland of roses
And tear with bites the lips of a supple girl.
Huh, whoever has old-fashioned eyebrows can die.
Why keep sweet-smelling garlands for the ungrateful ashes? 35
Or do you want them to rest on your garlanded gravestone?

Serve the wine neat and the dice. Whoever worries about
tomorrow can die.
Death is pulling at my ear and says 'All of you live – I am
coming.'

It is more than just a hunch that identifies this as a young man's poem. Literary tradition certainly has it that it was written by Virgil in his youth and tradition can contain a grain of truth although, to be more cautious, the internal evidence ought to be examined. The theme is an inn. Here, obviously, is drink and fun. This is not to circumscribe such themes to an older poet, yet three ideas in particular militate against this: a respectable Roman would, for reasons which will become apparent later, hesitate to write verses about an inn unless as a satirical skit, yet satire this poem probably is not; the sexual undercurrents of the poem do not preclude an older poet, but the absence of experience or explicitness suggest a younger writer; and the reference to 'old-fashioned eyebrows' (*prisca supercilia*, 34) surely has relevance only if the author is by contrast young. Let us test this youthful hypothesis by examining the poem as a whole. By way of comparison a body of poetry written by young Roman men is needed and this requirement is amply fulfilled by the graffiti on the walls of Pompeii.

Adolescence is a time of heated emotions. An anonymous writer of the late empire ascribed the temper, sexual drive and bullying among this age group to yellow bile, one of the four humours that was by nature hot, with blood as the other hot humour lending passion and love.⁴ Adolescence can also be a time for experiment with words, trying to understand these heightened feelings whether through diaries, song or poetry. Listen to the lyrics of many popular songs today, and the frustration of thwarted love, jealousy and physical attraction comes over strongly. There is an audience out there avid to match its experiences with those of the singers, both as a way of building up courage with the opposite sex and the reassurance of learning about universal feelings. Adolescence has not changed in its physical and emotional attributes since Roman times – the human body then was physiologically the same as now – even if in many ways the means of expressing it have. Modern parallels can easily be found for the sentiments expressed in this violently charged graffito from Pompeii:⁵

'Come over here, whoever is in love. I want to get a club and break the ribs of that goddess of love and put her limbs out of joint. If she has the power to pierce my soft heart, why can I not beat her head in with a club?'

Growing up too quickly in Roman times was a sinister premonition of an early death.⁶ As Seneca (*ep.* 77.5) wrote:

MARK GRANT

‘You know Tullius Marcellinus very well, a reserved young man who grew old prematurely. Overtaken by illness that although not incurable was nevertheless chronic, troublesome and made great demands, he began to debate about death.’

The key word here is ‘reserved’ (*quietus*). The sequence of events seems to be that Tullius Marcellinus was reserved before his illness, that is his character was at sinister odds with the cheerfulness and exuberance expected of youth, for instead of rushing towards a grave and respectable maturity, a Roman boy was encouraged to work and play hard as soon as he reached puberty. Only by his mid-twenties when he had married would a Roman male be expected to settle down and leave behind the excitement of youth. Enjoy that moment, have sex and set your spirit dancing: so says the nurse in Seneca’s *Phaedra* (444–53). Admittedly this play is about Greek mythology, but in its social *mores* it is definitely Roman, Stoicism blending with a peculiarly nihilistic view of the world. The plays of Plautus are full of partying by the young. Plautus has fun with the slave Tranio trying in the *Mostellaria* (367–406) to bustle Philolaches and his wild friends into their house before his master Theopropides arrives back from the harbour. Where the Plautine fantasy lies is in the ubiquity of the fun, for in reality only the wealthy could afford this extravagant life. And money was needed to afford the fine clothes and special haircuts that would bestow social acceptability on young men with their peers. A case in point is the indulgent Micio in Terence’s *Brothers* complaining about Demea’s harsh attitude to the defrayment of expenses on girls, clothes and drinking.⁷ Hormones and consumerism were aided by rhetorical exercises at school which laid demands on the imagination, to create fantastic scenarios involving pirates, murderers, heroic figures from ancient history, and boys and girls who had been sexually compromised.⁸ Moreover, some youthful writing was marked by clumsiness of expression, strained syntax, padding and ineffective imitation.⁹

Clumsiness of expression in the *Copa* has led to what Goodyear has described as ‘the old and complex controversy’ of who should be imagined as speaking in the poem.¹⁰ Various illogical sequences of thought throughout the piece make it difficult to ascertain who exactly is the narrator. Three suggestions have been posited: either the poet is expressing his own thoughts, or he is taking the role of the innkeeper, or there is a mixture of these two ideas, with the poet having the first four

lines and the innkeeper the rest. Coupled to this problem of *persona* is the intention of the piece as a whole, whether it is a literary expansion of the sort of epigrammatic advertisements that really did appear on the walls of bars, or a satire on the pretensions of the lower classes in the style made familiar through the work of Petronius. What by contrast I would like to suggest is that the poem is not only a literary expansion of contemporary graffiti, but also should be read as if delivered by a typical *adulescens* (to borrow a term from comedy). This means doing away with the generally established notion of Surisca addressing a passer-by and instead regarding the poem as a train of thought. Now whether the piece is the actual work of a youth sitting in a bar or of someone who adopted this *persona* cannot be ascertained, although certain characteristics of style as well as Roman social conventions argue for the former interpretation. Certainly lingering in a bar long enough to compose at this length is not impossible, witness an inn by the city wall in the northern part of Pompeii which has a large graffito probably written by a customer to the effect that everyone lingered at Gabinius's inn.¹¹ And finally, while Drew once held that the poem belongs to the golden age of Latin literature, more recent stylistic and metrical analyses place the writing in the time of Statius and Martial, which makes acceptable comparison with the graffiti of Pompeii.¹²

What are these stylistic elements and social conventions which support the idea that these are the thoughts of a Roman *adulescens*? Rosivach thought the poem would have drawn the aristocratic reader into a plebeian environment.¹³ When Surisca describes her garden, the predominantly Greek vocabulary is held to be foreign to such a reader. The wine and women on offer at the establishment are similarly held to be socially unacceptable to the presumed readers of the poem. Surisca is described as running a sort of brothel and it has been argued that in real life an educated reader would rarely have encountered such a person. All this may have been applied in theory to an adult Roman, but for an adolescent of the Roman aristocracy it was expected that there would be considerable contact with the prostitutes who hung around the local inns. Even the moralistic Cato could congratulate a youth on restricting his burgeoning libido to the brothel.¹⁴ A bachelor like Horace might continue without opprobrium to act like a young man: when describing his famous journey across Italy in 36BC, he recounts his frustration at lying awake until midnight in an inn, expecting the appearance of a girl with whom an appointment had been arranged earlier.¹⁵

MARK GRANT

Pinning the sobriquet of prostitute on Surisca is therefore missing the point, for any woman working behind a bar was considered in law to be available, although there was no need for such a woman to register with the local town council as the main source of her income was not held to be from serving men but rather drinks.¹⁶ A Pompeian graffito chronicles the rivalry of two men for a barmaid called Iris: Successus the weaver wanted to go out with Iris, but Severus had stepped in, claiming that he was far sexier and better looking, and that Iris anyway preferred him to Successus.¹⁷ In fact slaves and attractive boys could also find themselves fancied, so that it is not surprising to find an example of such love on the wall of a Pompeian peristyle:

‘If you are trying to feel the flames of love, muleteer, you should hurry more to witness some real sex. My choice is a sexy young man. I ask: “Come on, let us go. You have had a drink, let us go, take the reins and shake them, take me to Pompeii where love is sweet. You are mine.”’¹⁸

That muleteers and weavers feature in this graffito does not mean that they were the writers, for it would be putting too great a faith in Roman schools to suggest that they scratched such verses on the walls. What the graffito does show is the social mix in these bars, with both manual workers and educated clientele, an idea of some relevance given the reference in the poem to an ass, a beast of burden from the world of the peasant rather than the preferred means of transport for someone with money. All these ideas are taken to a humorous extreme in the paintings of the bar on Mercury Street in Pompeii, where a woman is simultaneously drinking a glass of wine, putting a wine jug on a low table, and being taken from behind by an excited young man.¹⁹ The graffiti from Pompeii reinforce this casualness of sex, one man desperately scribbling on a wall:

‘He loves Felicla, he loves Felicla, he loves Felicla.’

Another man resorted to the four-letter word to describe bluntly what he got up to with presumably the same Felicla.²⁰ Of course no one is going to write a poem of thirty-eight lines on the wall of an inn; if they tried the innkeeper would no doubt have had them evicted for

vandalism. So on the whole graffiti tend to be short and, at their best, sharply witty. In other words this poem only contains the spirit and nuances of graffiti; it cannot be said to represent an expanded exercise in graffiti on paper.

I want now to look at why I think the poem works as a train of thought rather than as an address by the innkeeper. Read like this there are three parts to the poem. The two words that open the first part state the general theme of the poem: it is about a *copa* or innkeeper called Surisca. But there is more to these words than just a bland translation would suggest, for the foreignness and diminutive nature of the name Surisca ('little Syrian woman') lend a touch of the exotic and erotic, whilst the colloquial spelling of *copa* (*o* for *au*) conjures up the low-life. And just in case there is any doubt as to her intentions, Surisca is introduced as wearing a headband. The headband is described in the diminutive (*mitella*, 1), although this has probably less to do with its size than its teasing appearance, for headbands were often an indication that a woman was a prostitute. Rosivach is perhaps being too fanciful when he argues for the significance of the headband being the only piece of clothing to be mentioned, there being no need to elaborate on sartorial details.²¹ Her dancing is provocative. Not only were undulating hips considered alluring, but there is probably a play on words at work here: the adjective *crispus* (2) used to describe these undulations can be linked phonetically with the verb *criso* which can suggest the movements of a woman when making love.²² Now if the poem is broken up between the voices of the poet and the innkeeper, then an obvious piece of humour is damaged. Rather the poet plays on the erotic opening theme by closing this section of six lines with images of heat, exhaustion and lying down on a couch. It makes for smoother writing if only the poet is putting his thoughts into poetry, perhaps as he sits at the bar, because after this metaphorical climax on the couch the train of thought changes from the torrid to the descriptive, with hedges, cups and cool dining areas shaded by reeds. This couch is for drinkers, but it is not soaked with drink as commentators once assumed.²³ The Romans would not have appreciated sodden furniture, as a wry poem from Pompeii shows:²⁴

'Water should wash the feet, a slave must wipe away spillages, a cover ought to protect the couch, take care with our linen.'

MARK GRANT

The second part begins with a description of the inn, the poet playing on several senses, whether sight, sound, smell, touch or taste. Jashemski gives pictures of similar establishments found during the course of excavation at Pompeii.²⁵ For example, just inside the Herculaneum Gate beneath the city walls diners could recline outdoors under the shade of a vine-covered pergola and travellers could stay the night in rooms over the indoors dining room. Or there was a large hotel belonging to Aulus Cossius Libanus which boasted a bar by the entrance selling food and drinks, a bakery next door, a large indoor dining room and an eating area in the garden. As the archaeological record shows, these Pompeian gardens were planted with fruit trees, vines, flowers and vegetables. The garden in the *Copa* follows a very similar pattern. Roses are a particularly sensual flower. Their mention conjures up an important literary connection, for their delicate red colour and velvet petals were linked in Greek poetry with women's bodies.²⁶ This allusion is reinforced by the image in the following line (15) of a nymph delivering a basket of fresh lilies. Goodyear is far too harsh in his attack on this escape from reality.²⁷ Leaving aside fumbling imitation and mockery of ostentation, it could be that the poet is merely dreaming of his perfect girl, the white of her flowers emphasising the freshness of her youth. Roses and flutes are symbols too for the joy of being alive, features of innumerable literary scenes involving love, wine and pleasure.²⁸ If Virgil lies behind these words, then this is no more than the literary echo expected of a novice poet. Such poems appear all over Pompeii, so Ovid features on a wall near the basilica:

'What can be as hard as rock or as soft as water? Yet hard rocks
are hollowed out by soft water.'

Similarly Propertius:

'Can the porter please stay awake for those bringing presents,
but remain asleep if someone skint knocks, deaf to the bolt
being drawn back all the way.'²⁹

Rosivach picks on the Greek descriptive vocabulary which is concluded with the reference to Arcadia.³⁰ There is nothing foreign, however, about the choice of Greek terms, for an educated Roman would have moved

between these two languages with ease. Wallace-Hadrill has shown that the way a Roman used his Greek was vitally important.³¹ It was fashionable and accepted to hellenize in the gymnasium or the peristyle, but it could be socially awkward to parade hellenization in Roman public life. The inn is at the same time public and private: it is a place to meet friends and a place to lose dignity. Although the number of bars and restaurants in Roman cities mirror what we might expect to find in a similar modern city, the general literary verdict on these establishments was not favourable, nor does the archaeological evidence refute this. An examination of Pompeii has shown that the entrances to the houses of the wealthy were rarely situated near a bar, for bars were the haunt of prostitutes, and distinguished guests and visitors would not want to compromise their reputation by being seen in what might be construed as a sleazy situation.³² The submergence on the one hand of the Roman bar and restaurants in literary opprobrium, but their apparent physical ubiquity on the other hand, might at first sight appear as somewhat of an enigma. The key to this puzzle is to remember who set down their disapproval on paper, the answer being satirists like Juvenal or politicians like Cicero, both of whom had strong points to make. The link between the opponents of the bar must be the humour arising from an inappropriate action. When Cicero (*Pis.*53) upbraids Piso, the consul of 58BC, who had helped to engineer the orator's exile, a sense of farce accompanies the suggestion that the object of the attack preferred bars to cities, particularly when his inebriated condition is likened less to a distinguished general than a pallid corpse. Similarly when Juvenal (8.171–6) launches his tirade against some provincial governor, he places him in a bar with a selection of seedy characters ranging from sailors to runaway slaves, and once again the comic hyperbole is crowned, this time with the outrageous picture of a priest who is not only dead drunk but castrated to boot.

An inn was inappropriate because of the nature of its clientele. Micio in Terence's *Brothers* (51–77) argues that, by allowing his son a free rein in his youth, he will guide him towards sobriety in later years, which means that he pays for girlfriends and parties and wild nights at the inn. If the inn had an aura of licence, if it was a magnet for wealthy young men and those of the plebeian class, then the derogatory remarks about it hold rather more subtlety than has been acknowledged up to now. A contemporary parallel might be locating a middle-aged politician at a nightclub: there might be a clash of generation, culture and expected behaviour. Yet

MARK GRANT

there are middle-aged habitués of nightclubs who, in their ordinariness, attract as much bad press as the characters drinking wine in a Roman inn. In addition, the use of Greek terms can be taken as a rebellious note. If it was the custom to adorn a garden with sculpture, then the references to food, love and wine can perhaps be taken as metaphorical statues, a window on the hellenizing world of myth, pleasure and transgression. Before the one real statue is described, the erotic tone is heightened by blood-red mulberries and cucumbers hanging down. Plautus has fun with a cucumber in his *Casina* (912), whilst blood is a symbol of adolescent passion. The climax is reached with Priapus and his enormous erection. Then follow, as in the first part, two lines about sweating and exhaustion. But there are two further points that can be made here: first, the commonplace that many people would have arrived at an inn on an ass; but second and more important, the allusion to the sexual powers of an ass, so forcefully exploited by Apuleius in his *Metamorphoses*.³³ This second part is twenty lines in length.

Totalling twelve lines, the third and final part commences. Now all is peaceful again – cicadas rasp in the bushes and a lizard hides in a cool spot. It is time to drink. If the glasses are crystal, a symbol of wealth, it may be no more than the drunken illusions of the poet as his head grows heavy (*gravidum*, 32). Certainly he loses any inhibitions as the poem reaches its conclusion, for he wants to bite (*decerpens*, 33) the lips of a supple girl. Goodyear here criticises the choice of words with the suggestion that ‘love-bites are commonly applied to the neck, rather than the lips or face.’³⁴ But that is a subjective statement, for in Lampedusa’s *The Leopard* Tancredi finds it delicious to bite and taste the blood from the inside of Angelica’s lip.³⁵ The sexual tensions are shattered at this point. Just as Ovid (*Am.*1.5) breaks off his account of exploring Corinna’s youthful thighs in a shuttered room during the siesta with the admonition that the reader can imagine the rest, so the poet now berates anyone who raises eyebrows at what is to come. As a Pompeian graffito declaims:

‘Long life to whoever is in love, death to anyone who does not have a clue about love, so much the more complete obliteration to anyone who blocks love.’³⁶

As noted earlier, the adolescence of the poet is reinforced by the contrasting epithet applied to the eyebrows, for they are ancient and

old-fashioned (*prisca*, 34). Young life is for living, drinking and dice, because death will inevitably snatch everything away at the end. As a Pompeian wrote on a wall in a similar vein:

‘If you can but you don’t want to, what is the point of putting off fun, nurturing my hope and always asking me to come back tomorrow? So make him die whom you force to live without you. It will certainly be the duty of the good not to inflict torture. Whatever hope has snatched away, hope as a matter of course returns to the lover.’³⁷

Set beside polished literary works, the *Copa* does look decidedly rough in places, although there is clear evidence overall of acceptable poetic thought. Thus Cutolo has argued for an organic approach, positing a series of topoi from Surisca’s dance and the inn to the bucolic scene, love and death.³⁸ His conclusion is that its metrical form places it within the tradition of Latin elegy. Yet what has not been acknowledged is the tripartite division just examined, each of the three sections of six, twenty and twelve lines (i.e. 1–6, 7–26, 27–38) respectively prefaced by idyllic description and concluded on a more fervid note. With the ratio of lines between each section being 3–10–6, a classic numerical pattern is established. There may be some strange words that have caused editorial problems. After wondering whether anyone would dare flaunt a cheap wine (*uappa*, 11) as the toast at an inn or base a joke around it being poured from a jar sealed as if it were a vintage, Goodyear suggests that the sense of the line remains a puzzle, whilst Rosivach writes of an inferior wine being appropriate to a humble establishment.³⁹ But why not envisage a colloquialism appropriate to youthful argot? The extremely rare diminutive *caseoli* (17) would similarly fit with the sort of colloquial Latin that spawned the Romance languages, paralleling for example *aucella* for *avis* that turns into *oiseau*. If artists could by their pictures break the sexual codes set by the *élite*, then there is no reason why a young poet could not be expected to employ some jarring words.⁴⁰

The style of the *Copa* is therefore reminiscent of graffiti outside the bar of a Pompeian inn. If that statement is taken a little further – and I think it can justifiably be done – it records a man frustrated in love, writing verses suggestive of an educated and consequently wealthy Roman, with lyrics evocative of a contemporary popular song and thus

MARK GRANT

pointing a finger at an adolescent for whom love was once such an easy game to play. The *Copa* should therefore be read as an elegy to youth. Taken as such, it reflects the carefree life that any wealthy adolescent in the Roman world could expect to enjoy. The *Copa* then has its previous label of a satire on the pretensions of a plebeian clientele removed, and instead it can be read according to a literary tradition, that is an adolescent's dabbling in poetry, love and wine.⁴¹

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MARK GRANT

Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was read at Liverpool University to the 1999 Annual General Meeting of the Classical Association. I am grateful to Jonathan Foster for his perceptive comments on this initial draft.

2. P. Cutolo, 'The genre of the *Copa*,' *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* 6 (1990), 115.

3. I have generally followed the text as printed by R. Ellis, *Appendix Vergiliana* (Oxford 1907), although I have taken into account emendations suggested by later editors.

4. Ps.Gal.Hum. = 19.489K (translated by M. Grant in *Galen on Food and Diet* (London 2000), 14–18). The humoral doctrine of this text by and large complies with notions current in the first century AD.

5. *CIL* 4.1824.

6. E. Eyben, *Restless Youth in Ancient Rome* (London 1993), 10.

7. Ter.Ad.60–3. In the course of discussing the ages of man, F. Dupont (*Daily Life in Ancient Rome* (Oxford 1992), 230) underlines the concept of *adulescentia* with its 'pleasures of banquets, female company and nocturnal forays with ... companions into the night-clubs of Suburra.' From the beginning of the first century AD young men's organisations were encouraged so that some control could be exercised over a period of life that occasionally seemed dangerous (A. Frascetti, 'Roman Youth' in G. Levi and J.-Cl. Schmitt (eds), *A History of Young People in the West*, vol.1 (Cambridge, Massachusetts 1997), 81–2).

8. E.g. Sen.Contr.1.2.1: A girl is captured by pirates, sold to a pimp and forced to work as a prostitute. She begs her clients for alms. When one particular soldier refuses to give her alms there is a struggle, in the course of which she manages to kill him. After a trial she is acquitted, returns to her family and then tries to become a priestess.

9. Eyben (note 6, above) 194 in discussing the poetry of Propertius.

10. F.R.D. Goodyear, 'The *Copa*,' *BICS* 24 (1977) 118. This is an excellent and detailed commentary on the poem.

11. *CIL* 4.1314 and W.F. Jashemski, 'A Pompeian *Copa*,' *CJ* 59 (1964) 344.

12. D.J. Drew, 'The *Copa* I,' *CQ* 17 (1923) 73 and, contrastingly, R.J. Tarrant, 'Nights at the *Copa*: Observations on Language and Date,' *HSPH* 94 333. The dating of the poem is

THE COPA: POETRY, YOUTH AND THE ROMAN BAR

not crucial to the argument here: Pompeian graffiti can be discussed equally well in relation to poetry both of the early and also later 1st century AD.

13. V.J. Rosivach, 'The Sociology of the *Copa*,' *Latomus* 55 (1996) 606.
14. Hor.S.1.2.31-2.
15. Hor.S.1.5.82-5.
16. R. Lawrence, *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society* (London 1994) 72: 'Women workers in bars or *popinae* were considered to have been prostitutes.' The original source of this statement is *Dig.*23.2.43.
17. *CIL* 4.8259.
18. *CIL* 4.5092.
19. J.R. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking: Constructions of Sexuality in Roman Art 100BC-AD250* (Berkeley 1998) 206-12.
20. *CIL* 4.8917, 2200, 2199.
21. Rosivach (note 13, above) 608.
22. Rosivach (note 13, above) 608, n.14 and A. Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humour* (New Haven 1983) 54.
23. R.F. Thomas, 'A bibulous couch ([Verg.] *Copa* 5-6)?' *CPh* 86 (1991) 41-3.
24. *CIL* 4.7698.
25. Jashemski (note 11, above) 339-44.
26. M.E. Irwin, 'Roses and the bodies of beautiful women in Greek poetry,' *EMC* 38 (1994) 1-13.
27. Goodyear (note 10, above) 124: 'Anyone who has perused the *Culex* will hesitate to set limits to the absurdities Latin poetasters can commit when pillaging the works of their betters.'
28. A. Frazoi, *L'ostessa: poemetto pseudovirgiliano* (Padua 1988) 69-70.
29. *CIL* 4.1893 (*Ov.Am.* 1.8.77-8) and 4.1894 (*Prop.*4.5.47-8).
30. Rosivach (note 13, above) 609.
31. A. Wallace-Hadrill, 'To be Roman, go Greek: thoughts on hellenization at Rome' in M. Austin, J. Harries and C. Smith (eds), *Modus Operandi* (London 1998) 84.
32. R. Lawrence (note 16, above) 75.
33. A wealthy woman falls so desperately in love with Lucius – who has been changed into an ass – that she takes him to bed with her. By describing the subsequent scene of unbridled lust in great detail, Apuleius (*met.*10.22) underlines the popular belief in rampant asses. See also J. Annequin, 'Lucius-asinus, Psyché-ancilla: escalvage et structures de l'imaginaire dans les *Métamorphoses* d'Apulée,' *DHA* 24 (1998) 117-8: 'il retrouve alors les amours humains puisqu'une "dame de haut rang et fort riche" vient se donner à lui, il est vrai, plus attirée par sa vigueur d'âne que par son côté humain!'
34. Goodyear (note 10, above) 127.
35. See also *Sen.contr.* 7.5.10 where Licinius Nepos talks of the bites of playful lovers resembling wounds.
36. *CIL* 4.4091.
37. *CIL* 4.1837.
38. Cutolo (note 2, above) 115.
39. Goodyear (note 10, above) 123 and Rosivach (note 13, above) 610.
40. Clarke (note 19, above) 2.

41. To give a modern parallel, *Le Défi* by Philippe Sollers (Paris 1958) contains many of the ideas inherent in the *Copa*. The adolescent subject of this short story wanders ‘dans mes labyrinthes où je ne croisais que torbillons qui me parlaient de ma mort.’ In a similar vein ‘L’habitude m’était venue d’écrire, ce qui me permettait d’entrevoir une solution à mon malheur.’