

## A TYPE OF SEXUAL EUPHEMISM IN LATIN

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A COMMON FORM of euphemism is the omission of a sexual word which can be supplied from the context. The writer or speaker may deliberately break off an utterance, perhaps adding an apology or explanation for his silence (aposiopesis: see the examples given at *Rhet. Her.* 4.41, Quint. 9.2.54), or he may adopt a well established elliptical usage which had its origin in the deletion of a sexual term. A striking example of protracted avoidance of sexual terminology can be found at Pliny *HN.* 11.261 f., a passage which concerns the male and female genital organs. *Genitalia* occurs once at the outset, but thereafter in an extended discussion no other noun is used. Of particular note is the sentence *contra mulierum paucis prodigiosa adsimulatio* (262), where allusion is made to both the male and female organs with neither named (the sense is that in a few women the sexual organs are remarkably similar to those of men).

Analogous to euphemistic ellipse is the replacement of an indelicate word (usually a noun) in various ways (usually by a pronoun).

Various omissions in Latin can be paralleled in Greek, and in some cases can be put down to direct imitation of a Greek usage. When Virgil at *Ecl.* 3.8 expressed both subject and object, but omitted an obscene verb (*nouimus et qui te transuersa tuentibus hircuis*), it is not unlikely that he recalled a passage of Theocritus with the same structure (1.105 οὐ λέγεται τὰν Κύπριν ὁ βουκόλος; cf. 5.149 ὁ δ' αὖ πάλιν). The aposiopesis at Ter. *Eun.* 479 (*ego illum eunuchum, si opus siet, uel sobrius . . .*) has parallels at Men. *Epir.* 1118 ff. (οὐμὸς δεσπότης / τοῖς Ταυροπολίοις, Σωφρόνη, ταύτην λαβὼν / χορῶν ἀποσπασθεῖσαν—αἰσθάνει γε;) and Philem. 126 Kock (μῦς λευκός, ὅταν αὐτὴν τις—ἄλλ' αἰσχύνομαι / λέγειν). Terence may well have been translating closely. The speakers' comments in these two passages on their failure to complete the utterance are also reminiscent of Plaut. *Pseud.* 215 ff.: *ibi tibi adeo lectus dabitur ubi tu hau somnum capias, sed ubi / usque ad languorem—tenes / quo se haec tendant quae loquor*. For similar comments, see *Mil.* 1092 *neque te remoror neque tango neque te—taceo*' (cf. *Priap.* 82.6, quoted below), *Pseud.* 1178 *etiamne—facere solitum es—scin quid loquar?* Ter. *Heaut.* 1041 *non mihi per fallacias adducere ante oculos . . . pudet / dicere hac praesente verbum turpe* (sc. *scortum*).

But euphemistic omissions would undoubtedly have been made in ordinary Latin speech (note the various graffiti quoted below). In a passage of literature it is sometimes difficult to pin down the determinant

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of an omission. On the one hand it may have had a place in the spoken language, but on the other the existence of the same type of omission in the corresponding Greek genre could have influenced the writer. One can only speak of complementary factors determining the omission. It would be rash, for example, to maintain that the numerous omissions in Latin epigram were either exclusively Grecising, or based solely on Latin usage. Epigrammatists used the current low sexual language of Latin, but they also imitated their predecessors in Greek.

There follows a classification of the main types of omission and replacement.

(1) In numerous cases an obscene verb is omitted. Often *futuo* (or the like) is the implied complement of an auxiliary verb, but occasionally a subject and object are expressed, and the verb omitted without the support of an auxiliary verb: see Ter. *Eun.* 479 and Virg. *Ecl.* 3.8 quoted above, and also *Priap.* 82.6 *hunc tu—sed taceo: scis, puto, quod sequitur*.<sup>1</sup> The aposiopesis at Ter. *Heaut.* 913 (*qui se uidente amicam patitur suam*. . . ; a euphemistic equivalent of *futui* has to be supplied) is of the same type, though superficially different. *Amicam* is grammatically the subject (accusative) of an implied passive infinitive, and is therefore the logical object of the verbal process. The graffito *CIL* 4.2310b (*Euplia hic cum hominibus bellis*) also differs only superficially from the pattern subject + object, with verb omitted. The remark could no doubt have been rewritten in the form of an explicit statement of what Euplia did to *homines belli*, or what *homines belli* did to Euplia (for the sexual proclivities of Euplia, see *CIL* 4.10004 *Eupla laxa landicosa*). The prepositional expression is simply a rephrasing of an underlying object or subject (see below on Plaut. *Cist.* 36 and ps.-Theod. Prisc. *Add.* p. 303.20 for similar uses of *cum*-expressions).

A different variation on the pattern is seen at Plaut. *Merc.* 791 *me numquam quicquam cum illa*. Unless *quicquam* is adverbial, Plautus has omitted the pro-verb *facio* (for which see below, p. 123). Hence there has been only a partial deletion, and the partially deleted phrase is not inherently obscene.

For omission of a verb in Greek, with subject and object, but no auxiliary, expressed, see the passages of Theocritus, Menander and Philemon quoted above, and also Aristoph. *Vesp.* 1178 *ὥς ὁ Καρδοπίων*

<sup>1</sup> It is worth drawing attention here to the special type of ellipse (without an auxiliary present) at Juv. 1.131: *cuius ad effigiem non tantum meiere fas est* (sc. *sed etiam cacare*). E. Courtney, *A Commentary on the Satires of Juvenal* (London 1980) 111, notes that the elliptical use of *non tantum* is quite common in Silver Latin, and cites Ovid *Am.* 1.4.63 (*oscula iam sumet, iam non tantum oscula sumet*) and 2.5.59 (*nec tamen hoc unum doleo, non oscula tantum/iuncta queror, quamuis haec quoque iuncta queror*). As these examples show, the suppression of the *sed etiam*-clause could produce either a verbal or a nominal ellipse.

τὴν μητέρα, Meleager, *A.P.* 5.184.5 οὐχ ὁ περίβλεπτός σε Κλέων, Philodemus, *A.P.* 5.4.5 καὶ σύ, φίλη Ξανθῶ με, Antipater, *A.P.* 9.241.5 f. Εὐαγόρας . . . / πάντας καὶ πάσας.

The elliptical use of the auxiliary *possum* occurs in a variety of genres at widely separated periods, and was no doubt an established euphemism in spoken varieties of the language. It is used both absolutely, and with an accusative or equivalent complement. See *CIL* 4.1837 *si potes et non uis*, Hor. *Epod.* 12.15 *Inachiam ter nocte potes*, Mart. 3.32.1 “*non possum uetulam?*” *quaeris* (cf. 3.32.1 f., 3 twice), 3.76.4 *cum possis Hecaben, non potes Andromachen*, 11.97.1 *una nocte quater possum* (cf. 11.97.2), *Mul. Chir.* 744 *hic equus usque in annos XV idoneus in admissuram erit, potest et usque in XX*, Marc. Emp. 33.49 *qui potuit et non potest, ut reparetur in uenerem, radices cucumeris agrestis . . . decoquat et . . . unguat sibi in balineo interius et exterius omne uertrum*, ps.-Theod. Prisc. *Add.* p. 303.20 *ad eum qui cum muliere non potest* (here *cum muliere* is syntactically equivalent to an accusative), Maxim. *Eleq.* 2.57 *si modo non possum, quondam potuisse memento*. Cf. Strato, *A.P.* 12.11.1 ἐχθὲς ἔχων ἀνὰ νύκτα Φιλόστρατον οὐκ ἐδυνήθη, id., *A.P.* 12.213.2 οὐ δύναται.

*Volo (nolo)* is equally widespread: see Ter. *Eun.* 813 *nolunt ubi uelis, ubi nolis cupiunt ultro* (this utterance need not be specifically sexual), Catull. 8.9 *nunc iam illa non uult: tu quoque, inpotens, noli*, *CIL* 4.1837 (see above), Mart. 11.58.1 *cum me uelle uides tentumque, Telesphore, sentis*, Apul. *Met.* 8.3 *si uellet, quamquam uelle non posset*, *H.A., Carac.* 10.2 *cum . . . dixissetque Antoninus, “uellem, si liceret”, respondisse fertur, “si libet, licet”* (in direct speech, and no doubt reflecting ordinary usage). Cf. Alcaeus, *A.P.* 12.29.1 f. Πρώταρχος καλὸς ἐστί καὶ οὐ θέλει, ἀλλὰ θελήσει / ὕστερον, Automedon, *A.P.* 11.326.5 f. νῦν ὅτι βούλει / οἶδαμεν (‘we know that you want it now’), Rufinus, *A.P.* 5.42.2 ἡ μὲν γὰρ βραδέως, ἡ δὲ θέλει ταχέως. When *uolo* is used with a nominal or pronominal object, an infinitive (= *futuere*) is also perhaps sometimes to be understood (e.g. Mart. 6.40.4 *hanc uolo, te uolui*).

An elliptical use of *soleo* is attested both with male and female subjects: Catull. 113.1 f. *duo, Cinna, solebant / Maeciliam*, Plaut. *Cist.* 36 *uiris cum suis praedicant nos solere*. In the second example the *cum*-expression, indicating the male participants in the act, is identical in function to that at *CIL* 4.2310b. One cannot readily supply an infinitive with *solere* here; *futuo* is not as a rule used of the female role in intercourse. If speakers thought of any specific verb as complementing the *cum*-phrase in this idiom, it may perhaps have been *facio* (see below, p. 123).

The use of *consuesco* at (e.g.) Ter. *Phorm.* 873 (*cum eius consuevit olim maire in Lemno clanculum*) presumably derives from ellipse of a verb = *futuo*. Indeed at Plaut. *Amph.* 1122 (*is se dixit cum Alcumena clam consuetum cubitibus*) the verb does have a complement (a nominal

dative, which of course can be interchangeable with an infinitive);<sup>2</sup> this example surely points to the origin of the usage. *Consuesco* in its sexual sense no doubt had some currency: cf. Plaut. *Cist.* 87 (with the female as subject; cf. *soleo* above), Cic. *Verr.* 5.30. The example at Caecil. 149 (*ea me clam se cum mea ancilla ait consuetum*) should be compared with those quoted above from Plautus and Terence. In all cases *clam* (or its equivalent *clanculum*) accompanies the verb; the phraseology would have been formulaic on the stage.

For a few other auxiliaries used with an implied infinitive complement, see Petron. 92.9 *puto illum pridie incipere, postero die finire*, Mart. 4.84.3 *cum multi cupiant rogentque multi (futuo occurs in the preceding line)*.

The ellipse at CIL 4.10234 *fac mi copia* (sc. *futuendi* or the like; cf. 4.4304) is similar to those above, in that *copia* is a nominal equivalent of an auxiliary verb. For literary examples of the idiom, see Plaut. *Cas.* 842 *Venus multipotens, bona multa mihi / dedisti, huius quom copiam mi dedisti*, Prop. 2.33B.44 *eleuat assiduos copia longa uiros*, Nonius p. 684 L. *nam mene-trices a manendo dictae sunt, quod copiam sui tantummodo noctu facerent*.<sup>3</sup>

In the above cases a sexual verb has been deleted. The alternative type of euphemism (replacement) is seen in the substitution of the pro-verb *facio* ("do (it)") for an indelicate verb (*futuo, futui, pedico, caco, masturbo*).<sup>4</sup> Sometimes *facio* is accompanied by a neuter demonstrative, as at Ter. Eun. 657 *qui istuc facere eunuchus potuit?* and Schol. Juv. 9.73 *nostri quemadmodum me rogasti, ut hoc facerem*. This usage in turn gives rise to another elliptical euphemism: *facio* may be deleted, leaving the demonstrative to indicate the sexual act (see further below, p. 126 for demon-

<sup>2</sup>*Consuesco* here (as elsewhere: see, e.g., *Cist.* 87) is clearly used of physical intimacy. On the other hand *consuetudo* may sometimes in comedy have rendered *συνήθεια*, which indicated nothing more specific than a long-standing love affair (see A. W. Gomme and F. H. Sandbach, *Menander, a Commentary* [Oxford 1973], on *Sam.* 625, citing Ter. *Hec.* 404 for *consuetudo* = *συνήθεια*). *Consuevit* at *Ad.* 666 appears to be used as the verbal correspondent of *συνήθεια*. The verb and its derivative noun do not always have the same implications in early Latin.

<sup>3</sup>Further examples from comedy can be found in K. Preston, *Studies in the Diction of the Sermo Amatorius in Roman Comedy* (Diss. Chicago 1916) 29.

<sup>4</sup>E.g. Plaut. *Pseud.* 1178, Petron. 45.8, 47.4, 62.4, 66.2 (note the frequency of the idiom in the speeches of the freedmen), 87.9, Mart. 1.46.1 (of *pedicatio*), Juv. 7.240. See further *ThLL* 6.1.121.40 ff., G. Friedrich, *Catulli Veronensis Liber* (Leipzig and Berlin 1908) 542 (with a large collection of examples, along with some of *πράττειν*), I. Opelt, "Euphemismus," *RAC* 6.951 (also on *πράττειν* and *δρᾶν*), M. Citroni, *M. Valerii Martialis Epigrammaton Liber Primus* (Florence 1975) 151. It is not clear why P. Howell, *A Commentary on Book One of the Epigrams of Martial* (London 1980) 210, asserts that the word was originally used of heterosexual intercourse, and later transferred to homosexual intercourse. As a substitute for any more specific verb it could from the beginning have been applicable to sexual acts of various types. In reference to heterosexual intercourse *facio* could be employed of the female role (e.g. Lucr. 4.1195, Ovid *Am.* 3.4.4) as well as the male.

stratives used as the object of an expressed verb). One example has already been seen (Plaut. *Merc.* 791, above, p. 121). Cf. Plaut. *Bacch.* 897 *neque osculatur neque illud quod dici solet*, Pseud. 780 *necque ego illud possum quod illi qui possunt solent*, Ter. *Eun.* 143 *ad virginem animum adiecit*. PH. *etiamne amplius?*, 666 *sed nil potesse (eunuchos)*, 957 *nunc minatur porro sese id quod moechis solet*, Cic. *Tusc.* 3.43 *si uero aliquid etiam, tum plane luctum omnem absterseris*, Pliny *HN* 10.177 *feminae (sc. canes) hoc idem sidentes* (of urination), Apul. *Met.* 8.3 *et tamen ad hoc ipsum, quod non potest, contentiosa pernicie, quasi posset, impellitur*.<sup>5</sup>

(2) I move on now to the large category of nominal ellipse and replacement. It is usually *mentula* which is deleted or replaced.

For the omission of nouns which would stand as the object of a verb, see *CIL* 4.10568 *Masueti, tene* (sc. *mentulam?*), Mart. 3.70.4 *non potes arrigere* (cf. 3.75.2, 3.76.1, 4.5.6, Suet. *Aug.* 69.2, a letter of M. Antonius; for an object expressed, see *Priap.* 83.43 *inquietus inguina arrigat tumor*), *Priap.* 12.10 ff. "*tolle*" *inquam* "*procul ac iube latere / scissa sub tunica stolaque rufa . . .*" (sc. *cunnum*).

But usually ellipse of *mentula* takes place in the presence of a feminine demonstrative or adjective which makes the meaning clear. Demonstratives used thus might perhaps better be classified as examples of replacement: the demonstrative is a euphemistic substitute for the noun, and not a genuine abbreviation of a full expression *haec* (etc.) *mentula*. The distribution of this use of *haec* (etc.) shows that it was a well-established idiom: see *CIL* 10.8145 *hanc ego cacaui* (with a phallus), Petron. 24.7 "*haec*" *inquit* "*belle cras in promulside libidinis nostrae militabit*", 132.7 *totum ignem furoris in eam conuertere, quae . . .* (cf. 132.8, 11), Mart. 3.68.7 *aperte nominat illam / quam . . .*, 9.40.4 *illam lingeret . . . / quam*, 11.15.8 *nec per circuitus loquatur illam, / ex qua . . .* (but *mentula* occurs two lines later), *Priap.* 6.4 *totamque hanc . . . / tormento citharaque tensiorem / ad costam tibi septimam recondam*, 56.3 *eheu me miserum, quod ista lignum est*, Maxim. *Eleg.* 5.79 *successibus haec tamen ipsa / grandior est hostis, quo minus ardet amor*. For a similar ellipse in Greek, see Automedon, *A P.* 11.29.3 *αὐτῇ* (sc. *κέρκος, οὐρά* or *πόσθη*). At Ovid *Am.* 3.7.73 (*hanc etiam non est mea dedignata puella / molliter admota sollicitare manu*) *partem* is probably to be understood with *hanc* (cf. 69 *pars pessima nostri*).

For feminine adjectives of other types used elliptically (= *mentula*), see Catull. 56.7 *rigida mea cecidi*, Petron. 132.9 *erectus igitur in cubitum hac fere oratione contumacem uexauit*, Mart. 6.54.4. *tantos et tantas Sextilianus amat*, 9.47.6 *in molli rigidam clune libenter habes* (taken from Catul-

<sup>5</sup>At *Fam.* 9.22.4 (*si dicimus "ille patrem strangulauit," honorem non praefamur: sine Aurelia aliquid aut Lollia, honos praefandus est*; lit. "if we say something about Aurelia or Lollia . . .") Cicero in effect means "if we say that Aurelia or Lollia did something." *Aliquid* is used in much the same way as the demonstratives listed.

lus, or a current idiom?), *Priap.* 37.11 *ponetur tibi picta*.<sup>6</sup> The nursery (?) word for "penis" found at Mart. 11.72.1 (*pipinna*) presumably developed from the ellipse of *mentula* in the phrase *mentula pipinna* (cf. the colloquial adjectives *pisinnus*, *pitinnus*). It is also possible that there is a similar adjective used elliptically in the obscure graffito *CIL* 4.9189 [G]uonis *pusilla cresca[t]* (for *pusilla* used of the *mentula* see Mart. 7.55.6). A slightly different type of ellipse is found at Catull. 80.6 *grandia te medii tenta uorare uiri*: it is presumably *membra* which has to be supplied with *grandia*.

For comparable ellipse in Greek, see Strato, *A.P.* 12.216.1 *νῦν ὀρθή . . . καὶ εὖρονος* (the penis is addressed; one of the feminine nouns listed above was in the mind of the writer). The Greek examples above differ from the Latin in that it is not the basic obscenity for the male organ (πέος) which is understood with the demonstrative or adjective. One of the feminine nouns in question must have been such a well-established slang term that it would have been automatically supplied with an elliptical adjective.

Sometimes a neuter pronoun is substituted for an obscene noun. There are scarcely grounds for supplying a specific neuter complement such as *membrum*; a writer would have had no need to omit such a euphemism. Moreover neuter pronouns are used euphemistically to indicate various parts and objects other than the *mentula* (see below), not all of which could have been described by a neuter anatomical term such as *membrum*. See Plaut. *Cas* 903 *hoc magnumst* (Olympio uses the neuter pronoun because he does not know what he has touched, but the audience are meant to take *hoc* = *mentula*; cf. the equally suggestive expressions 907 *oh, erat maxumum*, 914 *quidquid erat, grande erat*, where the implied neuter demonstrative is not expressed), Catull. 67.27 *neurosus illud*, Phaedr. 1.29.8 *simile est hoc rostro tuo* (cf. *pene*, line 7), Petron. 134.11 *illud tam rigidum reddidero quam cornu*, Mart. 3.73.2 *non stat tibi . . . quod stat illis* (the subject of the first *stat* could be either the *quod*-clause, or an unexpressed neuter demonstrative antecedent), *CIL* 3.14964 *inuidis hoc* (with a stone phallus), Theod. Prisc. *Eup.* 1.81, p. 86.9 *Rose nascitur in hoc saepissime indignatio uel feruor* (= "anus"). A recognition that a neuter demonstrative could be substituted for a word from the sexual sphere is contained in Donatus' (false) interpretation of Ter. *An.* 483 *fac istaec [ut] lauet*, where *istaec* is strictly feminine singular:<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup>At *Mulomedicina Chironis* 473 E. Oder prints *oblinies erectam* (= *mentulam*), but in his Addenda, pp. XXXIV f. he suggested *cretam*. *Cretam* is certainly right. It suits the context better, and in any case even an implied (elliptical) example of *mentula* would be unacceptable in a technical work. The author's usual word for "penis" is *ueretrum*. I am grateful to Dr. K.-D. Fischer for advice on this point.

<sup>7</sup>See G. P. Shipp, *P. Terenti Afri Andria*<sup>2</sup> (Melbourne 1960) *ad loc.*

"ista" [sic] *quae ex puerperio sordebant*; cf. *ibid.* Terentius propius ad significationem accessit "ista" dicendo, ne pudenda nominaret.

Parallel to the above examples is the use of *res* in reference to a sexual organ: Mart. 11.43.11 *parce tuis igitur dare mascula nomina rebus / teque puta cunnos, uxor, habere duos*, Arnob. Nat. 3.10 *Priapum inter deas uirgines atque matres circumferentem res illas proeliorum semper in expeditionem paratas*; cf. CGL 3.600.4 *emoruidas eruptio sanguis circa anum, similiter circa milierum causas euenire solet* (*causa* = *res*, > Fr. chose, etc.). For comparable neuter pronouns in Greek, see Aristoph. Ach. 1149 τὸ δέῖνα,<sup>8</sup> Philodemus, A.P. 11.30.3 τοῦτ' αὐτό, Argentarius, A.P. 5.104.6 τοῦτο, id., A.P. 9.554.2 κείνο.

Another form of replacement is the substitution of a local adverb for an anatomical term: Hor. Serm. 2.7.52 *ne / ditior aut formae melioris meiat eodem*, Mart. 11.104.16 *illic Penelope semper habere manum*, Mul. Chir. 853 *et in pesso, cum pepererunt mulieres, suppones ibi, ut melius purgentur*. In Greek, of course, an article could be used with an adverb (Aristoph. Thesm. 216 τὰ κάτω δ' ἀφένειν). For adverbs (without an article) used instead of anatomical terms, see Gallus, A.P. 5.49.2 τῷ δ' ὑπὸ τῷ δ' ὀπιθεν (the referent served one man below, another at the rear).

(3) In most of the examples which have been discussed above, a single word has been deleted or replaced. It is generally possible to guess with fair certainty what has to be supplied. But sometimes the omission or substitution is more complex, and one cannot readily insert a single missing word.

I take first a small group of substitutions. A neuter demonstrative (with or without an accompanying adjective) acting as object of an expressed verb may stand for a verbal noun or verbal construction indicating a sexual act. The writer need not have had in mind a specific verbal noun (*fututio*, for instance, is very rare) or construction. See Ter. Eun. 829 *num id lacrumat virgo?*, Catull. 64.145 *quis dum aliquid cupiens animus praegestit apisci*, Prop. 2.4.2 *saepe roges aliquid, saepe repulsus eas*, 2.22A.11 *quae si forte aliquid uultu mihi dura negarat*, Ovid Met. 10.345 *ultra autem spectare aliquid potes, in pia uirgo*, Ovid Am. 3.2.83 *risit et argutis quiddam promisit ocellis*, Petron. 100.1 *etiam cum uoluerit aliquid sumere, opus anhelitu prodet*, Mart. 9.67.3 *fessus mille modis illud puerile poposci*, 5 *inprobius quiddam ridensque rubensque rogauit*, Juv. 9.73 *scis certe quibus ista modis, quam saepe rogaris / et quae pollicitus*, 10.207 *anne aliquid sperare potest haec inguinis aegri / canities?*<sup>9</sup> Similarly *res* could be used of sexual intercourse (as too of a sexual organ: see above):

<sup>8</sup>For τὸ δέῖνα, see A. C. Moorhouse, "The origin and use of O, H, TO ΔΕΙΝΑ," CQ 13 (1963) 22 f.

<sup>9</sup>See further O. Hey, "Euphemismus und Verwandtes im Lateinischen," ALL 11 (1900) 532, H. Tränkle, *Die Sprachkunst des Properz und die Tradition der lateinischen Dichtersprache* (Wiesbaden 1960 [Hermes, Einzelschriften 15]) 163 f., Opelt (above, n.4).

Varro *Men.* 369 *si non plus testiculorum offenderis quam in castrato pecore in Apulia, uincor non esse masculum ad rem*, Petron. 77.1 *tu dominam tuam de rebus illis fecisti*, *Priap.* 15.7 *magnis testibus ista res agetur*, *CGL* 5.462.1 *isquitallus puer cum primum ad res accedit*.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand there is a widely attested group of verbs (*do*, *nego*, *rogo*, *promitto*) used in the pregnant sense "grant etc. intercourse," without a complement expressed.<sup>11</sup> The frequency of these elliptical usages is such that they were undoubtedly well established in the ordinary language. Comparable expressions in Greek are parallel to rather than determinants of the Latin expressions. They presumably originate in the ellipse of a noun such as *stuprum* (note Sen. *Contr.* 2.7.6 *rogata stuprum tacet*), or of a verbal construction (such as an *ut*-clause, with *rogo*, or an accusative and infinitive with *nego* and *promitto*), or of a neuter demonstrative or adjective (*illud*, *aliquid*, etc.: see above) which would itself stand for a verbal noun or construction.<sup>12</sup> But in most cases it is impossible to say with certainty what complement a writer would have supplied; indeed different writers (and speakers) would probably have had different complements in mind in different contexts.

One should stress that the distinction between the elliptical uses of, say, *uolo* and *rogo* is a superficial one. Despite the difference between the surface complements of the two verbs (unlike *uolo*, *rogo* does not as a rule take a plain infinitive), one could argue that at a deeper level both take the same type of complement (a verb-phrase with final function). I have treated the four verbs listed above separately, not because their pregnant use was necessarily in every case inherently different from the elliptical use of the verbs listed earlier, but merely because one cannot say that there was a specific single-word complement in the user's mind.

For *do*, see, e.g. Catull. 110.4, Ovid *Am.* 1.4.70, *Ars Am.* 1.454, 3.462, Mart. 2.31.1, 2.49.2, 3.90.1, *Priap.* 50.3. Cf. *praebeo* at Lucil. 866 (?). For *δίδωμι*, see anon., *A.P.* 12.19.2, Strato, *A.P.* 12.237.2.<sup>13</sup>

For *rogo*, see, e.g. Catull. 8.13, Prop. 1.5.32.<sup>14</sup> Cf. *αἰρέω* at e.g. Antiphrilos, *A.P.* 5.111.6, anon. *A.P.* 12.19.2, Strato, *A.P.* 12.218.3.

For *nego*, see, e.g. Sen. *Contr.* 2.7 tit., Mart. 4.71 (5 times). *Nil nego* in Martial tends to take on the sense *fello*: 12.79.4 *quisquis nil negat*, *Atticilla*, *fellat*, 4.12.2 *hoc saltem pudeat*, *Thai*, *negare nihil* (cf. 11.49.12, 12.71).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup>See further W. Heraeus, *Die Sprache des Petronius und die Glossen* (Gymn.-Programm Offenbach a.M. 1899) 34, = J. B. Hoffmann (ed.), *Kleine Schriften von Wilhelm Heraeus* (Heidelberg 1937) 116 f.; cf. Preston (above, n.3) 35, n.57.

<sup>11</sup>See also Hey (above, n.9), Opelt (above, n.4).

<sup>12</sup>Most of the examples of *aliquid* etc. listed above stand as object of one of the four verbs listed, or of a comparable verb.

<sup>13</sup>See further Preston (above, n.3), 34.

<sup>14</sup>See Tränkle (above, n.9), 163 for numerous examples.

<sup>15</sup>See F. C. Forberg, *Antonii Panormitae Hermaphroditus, primus in Germania edidit et apophoreta adiecit F.C.F.* (Cobourg 1824), 299 n.



For *promitto*, see, e.g. Tibull. 1.8.63, Ovid *Ars Am.* 3.461, Sen. *Contr.* 2.7.6. In this last example it is clearly *stuprum* which is deleted (*quod proximum est a promittente, rogata stuprum tacet*).<sup>16</sup>

The elliptical use of *appellare* (= "proposition;"; see Sen. *Contr.* 2.7.6 *cum semel appellassem, . . . non corrupti*, Dig. 47.10.15.20 *appellare est blanda oratione alterius pudicitiam adtemtare*) has a slightly different type of complement understood, as can be seen from Sen. *Contr.* 2.7 tit. *ter illam appellauit de stupro*.

A few general observations can be made about the nature of the euphemisms illustrated above. Indelicate verbs are omitted primarily in the presence of certain auxiliaries. In a few cases when an omission takes place without an auxiliary present, there is a suspicion that the writer had a Greek usage in mind (Ter. *Eun.* 479, Virg. *Ecl.* 3.8; cf. the aposiopesis at *Priap.* 82.6, in a highly Grecising work). That is not to say that such omissions were felt to have a Greek flavour. But it can certainly be concluded that the idiomatic use of various auxiliaries with an improper sense had some currency in ordinary Latin speech. It is reasonable to make a distinction between examples of auxiliaries used with an accusative complement (*possum*, *soleo*), and those which are unaccompanied. Cases which are complemented are found only in epigram (Catullus, Martial) and Horace's *Epodes*, in the material collected above. Uncomplemented examples have a wider distribution. It is likely that the use of an accusative with *possum* or *soleo* had a colloquial or slangy flavour. When the accusative was expressed there could be no doubt what infinitive the writer had in mind.

More than twenty examples have been given of adjectives (usually in the feminine) or demonstrative pronouns used elliptically to indicate the *mentula*, but I have found no comparable example of an adjective or pronoun alluding to the female sexual organs. The evidence collected may not be exhaustive, but it scarcely gives a false impression. The *mentula* could obviously be referred to suggestively in this way, but the *cunnus* could not. There was a difference of attitude to the two organs in antiquity. The penis, representations of which played an important part in Italian life, was mentioned more freely (Catullus, for example, hardly ever refers to the female parts), and it attracted more names (and perhaps jokes) than the female organ in Latin. The frequency of elliptical substitutes for *mentula* presumably reflects the greater acceptability in Roman society of risqué allusion to the male parts.

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<sup>16</sup>Whereas K. F. Smith, *The Elegies of Albius Tibullus* (New York 1913), on 1.8.63 suggests that in elegy it is *noctem* which is understood with *promitto*. Here is a clear demonstration that one should not look for a single understood complement. Note too that the second example of *do* at Ovid *Ars Am.* 3.462 has *gaudia* as object.