

AUGUSTAN LOVERS

The language of marriage
Banquet scenes

Between matron and mistress

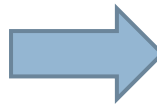
- We have previously explored Sharon James' theory of the *puella* as an upper-class prostitute
 - ▣ May be combined with notions of the *puella* as a vehicle for poetological discourse
- Yet elegy appropriates the language of marriage throughout: Prop. 2.6.41 f: **Never will a wife, never will a mistress seduce us / ever will you be my mistress and ever my wife.**
- “Cynthia is to be *matrona* and *meretrix* in one, and consequently from the perspective of traditional Roman ideology she can be nothing at all since these categories are mutually exclusive.” (Miller, 2004, 63)
- Or, the beloved is a no-one, only a reflection of the male narrator, as discussed in the lectures on womanufacture

The language of marriage

- Elegy continually uses words associated with marriage and marital status to describe extramarital relationships – mentions of wedding torches, and ‘foedera’ (treaty, contract) are many
- Both male and female lovers are described by ambiguous terms:
 - ▣ Vir, used of rivals, or by the beloved of the narrator, means both ‘man’ and ‘husband’
 - ▣ Coniunx, of the beloved, normally means ‘wife’, but is often used of the beloved by the narrator
- NB: Elegy also uses a range of typically elegiac pet names: domina, lux, vita etc.
 - ▣ ‘Lux’ and ‘mea vita’ also occur in contemporary prose passages, e.g. Cicero to Terentia

Relevance

- This is particularly relevant to the discussion of banquet scenes in elegy since they are one of the situations where the rival
 - ▣ Is present on 'stage'
 - ▣ Is referred to as having privileged access to the *puella*
- But consider how the narrator skews reader perception of the relationship



- Your husband will be there at the same dinner – I wish your husband his last meal tonight. (Ov. Am. 1.4.1 f)

At night he'll lock her in; in tears I'll follow to his cruel door – where I shall have to stand. Now he'll take kisses, now not only kisses. You'll give him as his right, **because you must**, what you give me in secret. (Ov. Am. 1.4.59-63)