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## DISTICH OF SULPICTA MINOR

*Abstract:* The two-verse poetical fragment, written by Sulpicia the Younger, the Roman poet-woman of Martial's times (2nd half of the first cent. AD), is here reviewed and analysed from the philological point of view. The ambiguous word *cadurcum*, used in this fragment and in Juvenal's *Satires*, is carefully discussed and explained. Finally, a new interpretation of Sulpicia's distich is suggested.

It the Roman literature we come across two poetesses under the name of Sulpicia. Both of them specialised in erotic poetry. The older was a niece to Marcus Valerius Messalla Corvinus (64 BC – 8 AD) – the poets' patron. She acted in his poetic circle and wrote elegiac poems, which would enchant with candour and the directness of expression. She wrote six short love elegies addressed to the man she loved, whom she called Cerinthus. Her poems survive in the third part of so-called *Corpus Tibullianum*<sup>1</sup>.

The other Sulpicia, the younger one, wrote during the reign of Domitian (AD 81 – 96), at approximately the same time as Martial – a well known Roman epigrammatist, who paid a tribute to her at two times, complimenting her on being a talented poetess and a faithful wife of Calenus (*Ep.* X 35, X 38). Most of all Martial praised her erotic poetry, while the poetess herself placed beyond Sappho. One of the preserved pieces of her poetry is *Satire on Philosophers' Eviction*, which is composed of 70 hexameters. Although the authorship of Sulpicia the Younger has been questioned, it is now widely accepted that the satire belongs to her poetic heritage. Unfortunately, her love poetry has survived in an extremely fragmentary form, i.e. as a distich, which I would like to present and analyse here.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. Świderek (ed.): *Słownik pisarzy antycznych* (Dictionary of Ancient Writers), Warsaw 1982, pp. 439-440; M. Cytowska, H. Szelest: *Literatura rzymska. Okres augustowski*. (Roman literature. Augustian period), Warsaw 1990, pp. 316-318.

The distich was transferred from ancient scholia to Juvenal's *Satires*<sup>2</sup>, which commented on a rare lexical item, i.e. *cadurcum* and its two meanings: 1) 'the female valve' and 2) 'a belt for tightening a bed'. Those scholia have not survived to the present time but it was reported that Giorgio Valla de Piacenza (c. 1430-1499) used them while preparing his edition of Juvenal's *Satires*, which was eventually published in Venice in 1486. He had some unique manuscript at his disposal, which contained scholia on Juvenal's 'Satires' signed with the name of Probus. Valla referred to Probus's comments as 'uniquely coherent' and expressed his regret that they could hardly be used due to antiquity and bad condition. Probus's comments, which according to contemporary researchers may have been created in 4<sup>th</sup> c., provide numerous remarks and quotations of unique nature<sup>3</sup>.

Thus, Giorgio Valla, while commenting on Juvenal's satire, no.6, verse 537: "*magnaque debetur violato poena cadurco*", gives his opinion on the word *cadurcum* ("de *cadurco*") in the following way:

*Membrum mulieris (inquit Probus) intelligitur, cum sit membra muliebris velamen. vel, ut alii, est instita qua lectus intenditur. unde ait Sulpicia<sup>4</sup>:*

1        *Si me cadurci restitutis fasciis  
nudam Caleno concubantem proferat*

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**App. Crit.:** Sulpicia: si me *Buecheler* ] *Sulpicius ne Valla*, *Sulpicia ne me Pithoeus* 1 *cadurci Muncker* ] *cadurcis codd.*, *cadurcus Russell*, *cadurcum Waterhouse* || *restitutis codd.* ] *dissolutis Buecheler*, *destitutam Pithoeus* 2 *nudam Caleno concubantem Pithoeus* ] *nudum Calaeno concubentem Valla* || *restitutis codd.* ] *proferas Muncker*

According to Parker the fragment provided by Giorgio Valla, although not devoid of misconceptions (e.g. the comments include the mention of Sulpitius, instead of Sulpicia) does not exceed the limits of 'textual corruption' and contains 'material that must go back to antiquity'<sup>5</sup>. It had been modified in different ways by subsequent edi-

<sup>2</sup> *Fragmenta poetarum Latinorum epicorum et lyricorum praeter Ennium et Lucilium*, post W. Morel novis curis adhibitis edidit Carolus Buechner editionem tertiam auctam curavit J. Blänsdorf, Stutgardiae et Lipsiae 1995, p. 334-335.

<sup>3</sup> H. Parker, "Other remarks on the other Sulpicia", *Classical World* 86, No 2, p. 90, fn. 10, emphasises that apart from Sulpicia's distich, Probus's ancient scholia which had been used by Valla are now the only source of the four preserved lines from Statius's *De Bello Germanico*. Cf. C. Buechner, *Fragmenta poetarum Latinorum*, Leipzig 1982, p.166.

<sup>4</sup> The fragment with its critical comments has been adopted from the edition: *Fragmenta poetarum Latinorum*, pp. 334-335.

<sup>5</sup> H. Parker, *op.cit.*, p.91.

tors, which I made visible in the critical apparatus. The most significant amendment was introduced in 1585 by Pierre Pithou of Troyes, the editor of Juvenal's *Satires*<sup>6</sup> who having taken into consideration the name of Calenus – Sulpicia's husband, managed to identify the author, i.e. the authoress, of the cited distich. Both Calenus and Sulpicia were mentioned in Martial's epigram 38, chapter 10<sup>7</sup> written to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of their marriage:

*O molles tibi quindecim, Calene,  
quos cum Sulpicia tua iugales  
indulsit deus et peregit annos!  
o nox omnis et hora, quae notata est  
caris litoris Indici lapillis!  
o quae praelia, quas utriumque pugnas  
felix lectulus et lucerna vidit  
nimbis ebria Nicerotianis.  
vixisti tribus, o Calene, lustris:  
aetas haec tibi tota computatur,  
et solos numeras dies mariti.  
ex illis tibi si diu rogatam  
lucem redderet Atropos vel unam,  
malles quam Pyliam quater senectam.*

(“O gentle fifteen years, years of wedlock with your Sulpicia, Calenus, divinely bestowed and completed! O each night, each hour, marked by precious pebbles of India's shore! What combats, what mutual bouts were witnessed by the happy bed and the lamp drunk with Nicerotian showers! You have lived three lusters, Calenus. This you reckon as your entire span, counting only your married days. If Atropos, long beseeched, gave you back a single one of them, you would rather have it than four times the Pylian's length of days [= Nestor's life”].)

(translated into English by D. R. Shackleton Bailey<sup>8</sup>)

Sulpicia herself mentions her husband Calenus in line 62 of her *Satire on Philosophers' Eviction* (see below, verses 58-70):

*Hoc fabella modo pausam facit. optima, posthac,  
Musa, velim moneas, sine qua mihi nulla voluptas  
vivere, uti quondam † zmyrnalibusque peribat †,  
nunc itidem migrare velis. vel denique quidvis*

<sup>6</sup> Pierre Pithou (Pithoeus) was the owner of Juvenal's manuscript of the 9<sup>th</sup> c. (Montepessulanus bibl. Med.125), which was named P after Pithoeus, cf. J. P. Hallett, “Martial's Sulpicia and Propertius' Cynthia”, *The Classical World* 86, No. 2, 1992, p.105; H. Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

<sup>7</sup> H. Parker, *op. cit.*, pp. 90–91; J. P. Hallett, *op. cit.*, p.104.

<sup>8</sup> Martial, *Epigrams*, edited and translated by D. R. Shackleton Bailey, vol. 2, Cambridge, Mass., and London 1993, pp. 361-363.

*ut dea quaere aliud: tantum Romana Caleno  
 moenia iucundes pariterque averte Sabinos.  
 haec ego. tum paucis dea me dignarier infit:  
 'pone metus aequos, cultrix mea: summa tyranno  
 haec instant odia et nostro periturus honore est.  
 nam laureta Numae fontisque habitamus eosdem  
 et comite Egeria ridemus inania coepta.  
 vive, vale. manet hunc pulchrum sua fama dolorem:  
 Musarum spondet chorus et Romanus Apollo'*<sup>9</sup>.

Since that time the identification of Sulpicia as the author of the distich has been generally accepted, and researchers cite the two lines as an authentic piece of Sulpicia's poetry<sup>10</sup>. The fragment is written in iambic trimeter, which according to Parker is a good indication of Sulpicia's authorship. Nevertheless, the scholar does not exclude the possibility of forgery under the name of Sulpicia<sup>11</sup>.

The present paper aims at providing a new reading and interpretation of the preserved piece of Sulpicia's poetry. It is also intended that further, other than focused on the word *cadurcum*, correspondences between the distich and the fragment commented on by Juvenal be found.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned aim I would like to start by determining the sense of the word *cadurcum* both on the literal and metaphorical level because the scholiast's comments are not thoroughly clear due to two main problems. First of all, the scholiast allows for two possible meanings, linked with the conjunction *vel*, which may suggest either interchangability or exclusion in relation to the two interpretations: *Membrum mulieris ... vel... instita qua lectus intenditur*. The other problem is that the scholiast, despite his pledge, in the version preferred 'by others' (*ut alli*) explicates the word *fasciis* rather than *cadurcum*.

At first I would like to concentrate on the interpretation of the word *aliorum*.

Thus, Probus, as rendered by Valla, claims: [*cadurcum*] *est instita qua lectus intenditur*. The meaning of the word *instita*, acknow-

<sup>9</sup> *Epigrammata Bobiensia*, ed. W. Speyer, Lipsiae 1963, pp. 46-47.

<sup>10</sup> W. Kroll, "Sulpicius.114", [in:] *REnc. IVA*, Stuttgart 1932, col. 880-882; M. Schanz, C. Hosius, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, vol. 2, München 1935, p. 560; W. Morel, *Fragmenta poetarum Latinorum*, Stuttgart 1963, p. 134; J. Blänsdorf, *op. cit.*, pp. 334-335; J. P. Hallett, *op. cit.*, p. 105, fn. 17; A. Richlin, "Sulpicia the Satirist", *The Classical World* 86, No. 2, 1992, pp. 125, 130-132.

<sup>11</sup> H. Parker, *op. cit.*, p.91.

ledged in ancient writers' texts, focuses on the notion of a belt, whether it be 'trimming of a woman's dress, a fringe'<sup>12</sup>, 'a thin band of cloth, a fillet'<sup>13</sup>, or finally 'a strap on the bed', as can be read in Petronius<sup>14</sup>:

*Imperavi Gitoni, ut raptim grabatum subiret annecteretque pedes et manus institis, quibus sponda culcitam ferebat, ac sic ut olim Vlices Cyclopis arieti adhaesisset, extensus infra grabatum scrutantium eluderet manus.*

(“I told Giton to get under the bed at once, and hook his feet and hands into the webbing (*instita*) which held up the mattress (*culcita*) on the frame, so that he might evade the grasp of searchers by staying stretched out under the bed, just as Ulysses of old clung on the ram of the Cyclops”).

(translated by W. H. D. Rouse<sup>15</sup>)

In the context of *lectus intenditur*, the meaning of *instita* as 'a strap on the bed' is sound<sup>16</sup>. The problem arises from the fact that the semantics of the word *instita* overlaps with the meaning of *fascia* used in the distich. One of the possible readings of the word is "a belt supporting a bed mattress", cf. in Cicero's *De divinatione* (II 134): *defert ... ovum pendere ex fascia lecti*. In conclusion, both the word *instita* and the word *fascia* denote 'a strap on the bed'.

Let us return to the comment: *inquit Probus... est instita qua lectus intenditur. Unde ait Sulpicia: "si me cadurci restitutis fasciis / nudam Caleno concubantem proferat"*.

Probus claims that *cadurcum* is understood as a strap with which the bed was tightened. That is why Sulpicia says:

"Should I be exposed naked when, the *cadurci* straps retightened, I make love to Calenus"

It is apparent that if we were to trust Probus's opinion and translate *cadurcum* into 'a strap/belt on the bed', i.e. 'with the strap

<sup>12</sup> Horatius, *Sat.* 1, 2, 29: *quarum subsuta talos tegat instita veste*; Ovidius, *Ars amat.* I, 32: *quae ... tegis medios instita longa pedes*; *Ibid.* II, 600: *in nostris instita nulla iocis*. Cf. M. Plezia (ed.), *Słownik łacińsko-polski* (Latin-Polish Dictionary), Warszawa 1959, vol. 3, p. 203 (s. v. *instita*).

<sup>13</sup> Scribonius Largus 47: *involvere ... eam pinnam fasciola tenui lintea quasi instita*. Cf. M. Plezia (ed.), *Słownik łacińsko-polski* (Latin-Polish Dictionary), Warszawa 1959, vol. 3, p. 203 (s. v. *instita* II 1).

<sup>14</sup> Petronius, fr. 97, 4. Por. *Petronii Saturae et liber Priapeorum*, ed. F. Buecheler, Berolini 1904. Cf. M. Plezia (ed.), *Słownik łacińsko-polski* (Latin-Polish Dictionary), Warszawa 1959, vol. 3, p. 203 (s. v. *instita* II 2).

<sup>15</sup> Petronius, with an English Translation by M. Heseltine, Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis*, with an English Translation by W. H. D. Rouse, Cambridge, Mass. and London 1966, p. 195.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. M. Plezia (ed.), *Słownik łacińsko-polski* (Latin-Polish Dictionary), Warszawa 1959, vol. 3, p. 203.

of the strap (*cadurci*) retightened', the translation would be meaningless. It would also suggest that Sulpicia used two different terms, *cadurcum* and *fasciae*, to refer to one item, i.e. the belt/s. It seems that the scholiast either used some kind of semantic short-cut or made a mistake. As a result *Scholia ad Iuvenalem* explicate not the word *cadurcum* but the word *fascia*<sup>17</sup> to the effect that the former word remains enigmatic.

Trying to determine the meaning of *cadurcum* we may refer to Pliny the Elder in whose *Naturalis Historia* (XIX 1, 8, 13) we can read: *Cadurci... immo vero Galliae universae vela texunt*, further on followed by: ... *in culcitis praecipuam gloriam Cadurci obtineret ... Galliarum hoc, et tomenta pariter, inventum. Italiae quidem mos etiam nunc durat in appellatione stramenti.*

In satire VII (v. 219-221) Juvenal, while lamenting over the mean, unfairly low income of a grammarian, says:

...*cede, Palaemon,*  
*et patere inde aliquid decrescere, non aliter quam*  
*institor hibernae tegetis niveique cadurci,*

(“But never mind, Palaemon; suffer some dimunition of your wage, like the hawker who sells rags and white Gallic blankets for winter wear”)

(translated by G. G. Ramsay<sup>18</sup>)

Thus, we learn from Pliny the Elder's writing that one of the Gaulish tribes, the Cadurci, made linen goods, such as linen cloth (*velum*), mattresses (*culcita*), and lining (*tomenta*). Two details in Pliny's text are of special importance. One is that the Cadurci invented their products themselves, the other that their invention resulted in the habit of using its name – *stramenta* – with reference to all kinds of lining throughout Italy<sup>19</sup>. Juvenal mentions *hibernae tegetes* and *nivea cadurca* and at least one of the two expressions by its very name, i.e. *nivea cadurca*, suggests a product of the Gaulish Cadurci.

Commenting on the verse quoted above (Iuv., *Sat.* VII, 221), Otto Lahn<sup>20</sup> provides further interpretations, such as: *cucullum*

<sup>17</sup> Cfr. Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 90, ft. 12; Cf. Cic., *De div.* II 134; Mart., *Ep.* XIV, 159.1. and A. Richlin, *op. cit.*, p.130.

<sup>18</sup> Juvenal and Persius, with an English Translation by G. G. Ramsay, London, New York 1918, p. 157.

<sup>19</sup> Aegidius Forcellinus, *Totius Latinitatis Lexicon*, Prati 1861, vol. 2, pp. 11-12: *stragulum lineum, quo lectus operitur*. Cf. M. Plezia (ed.), *Słownik łacińsko-polski* [Latin-Polish Dictionary], vol. 5, Warszawa 1979, pp. 223-224, s.v. *stramentum*.

<sup>20</sup> A. Persii Flacci, D. Iunii Iuvenalis Sulpiciae *Saturae*, recognovit O. Lahn, *editio tertia*, curam egit F. Buecheler, Berolini 1893. Lahn says in his comment:

*candidum* ('snow-white hood'), *tabernaculum aut tentorium* ('a hut or a tent'). The sources suggest that the word *cadurcum* was used with reference to various kinds of linen products made by the Gaulish tribe of the Cadurci or made out of their linen. It is most likely that those products were named after the name of the tribe<sup>21</sup>. In the context of bed we may thus cite the following senses: *culcita* ('mattress'), *stramentum* (according to Forcellini: *stragulum lineum, quo lectus operitur*) 'carpet, rug' (perhaps also 'bedspread, bed cover'), *hiberna teges* ('winter wear or blanket'). In Petronius a mattress (*culcita*) was placed on the straps (*institis*) attached to the edges of the bed.

It seems reasonable to accept that in Sulpicia's distich the word *cadurcum* has the same meaning as the word *culcita* as used by Petronius, i.e. it means 'a mattress', most likely with some kind of bed sheet<sup>22</sup>. As for *fasciae*, the word would refer to (linen) straps with which the frames of the bed (*sponda*) were connected crosswise and on which *cadurcum* was placed. The condition of a bed depended on the condition of such *fascii*, cf. the picture of a worn out, rickety, and broken bed in Martial (*Epigr.* V 62, 5-6):

*Nulla legit fractos nec inanis culcita lectos,  
Putris et abrupta fascia reste iacet.*

("No cushion – not even one without stuffing – covers my broken couches, and the rotten girth lies, its band burst, upon the floor")

(translated by Walter C. A. Ker<sup>23</sup>)

Having accepted that *fasciae* denoted straps placed under *culcita*, attached to the frames of the bed, and not to the mattress, the expression *cadurci restitutis fasciis* suggests that *cadurcum* was used by the poetess *pars pro toto*, with reference to the bed as a whole, i.e. *cadurcum* (mattress) for the whole bed (*lectulus*). Thus, the word *cadurcum* would have the same meaning as *lectus* / *lectulus*. However, can it really be held as certain that it was Sulpicia's intention that *cadurcum* should be synonymous with *lectulus*? There may have been another meaning intended, and if so, then it should be possible to

*cadurcum quidam cucullum dicunt candidum propter hiemes et nives comparatum. Alii tabernaculum aut tentorium dix. esse, quibus merces suas protegere consuerunt.* ("Some use the name *cadurca* for snow-white hoods worn because of winter and snow. Other state it was a hut or tent where they kept their articles").

<sup>21</sup> Cf. H. Parker, p. 90, fn.12.

<sup>22</sup> A. Richlin, *op. cit.*, p. 130, translates *cadurcum* as 'a kind of linen bed-sheets'. The same meaning is given by H. Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 90, fn. 12.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Martial, *Epigrams*, with an English translation by W. C. A. Ker, vol.1, London, New York 1919, p.341.

determine what it was and we should also be able to account for using the word in the poem.

If it is just a synonym, then, it seems, it should not be difficult to justify its use. However, even then, we may wonder why Sulpicia used such an exotic word involving, as it has been shown earlier, references to so many prosaic textile products instead of the non-ambiguous and widely used term *lectus*. Still more so that *lectulus*, which had often been used in amatory literature (both in elegies and epigrams), is a popular trope and as such is normally associated with the erotic side of human life (the realm of lovers)<sup>24</sup>. *Lectulus* can either be witness to intimate situations, e.g. in Propertius' poetry (*El.* II 15, 1-10) or as in Catullus and other poets, can reveal lovers' past pleasures<sup>25</sup>.

Sulpicia's distich matches, at least at the first sight, a popular motive, that of a loving couple *in lectulo* (not *in cadurco*) and whether we are to follow the lesson *restitutis fasciis cadurci* or *dissolutis fasciis cadurci*, in a completely non-ambiguous context the expression *nudam Caleno concubantem* projects a clear picture of a couple of lovers resting either on dropped (*dissolutis fasciis*) or on re-tightened anew belts (*restitutis fasciis*).

The literal interpretation of the scene cannot be doubted – it depicts a sexual intercourse. Yet we still do not know why the poetess used the word *cadurcum* instead of *lectus* if indeed *cadurcum* is equivalent to *lectus*. Even Martial, recollecting Calenus and Sulpicia's 15 years of blissful matrimony, refers to their *lectulus*, and not *cadurcum* (cf. Mart. X 38.6-7: *o quae praelia, quas utrimque pugnas / felix luctulus et lucerna vidit*). It seems that it would have been natural for the poet to have used the word from Sulpicia's own poetic lexis in the epigram which was dedicated to her, unless the two words were of different meaning.

<sup>24</sup> In literature (poetry) there are many descriptions of beds which suggest erotic (sexual) activity (*concubere*) through the picture of torn, loose straps, crooked legs and battered mattresses, cf. H. Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 93, fn.28, cf. Hor., *Epod.* 12.12: *tenta cubilia tectaque rumpit; Tib., El. I 9.57: Semper sint externa tuo vestigia lecto; Ov., Am. III 14.26: Spondaque lasciva mobilitate tremat; Ov. Am. 3. 14.32: Cur pressus prior est interiorque torus?*; Prop., *El.* II 29.35-36: *apparent non ulla toro vestigia presso, / signa voluptatis nec iacuisse duos; Iuv., Sat. 9. 77-78: testis mihi lectus et tu, / ad quem pervenit lecti sonus et dominae vox.*

<sup>25</sup> See e.g. Catullus, *Carm.* 6, 9-12: *pulvinusque peraeque et hic et ille / attritus, tremulique quassa lecti / argutatio inambulatioque. Nam nil ista pudet, nihil, tacere („The pillow equally this side and that / Dented, and the rickety bed's / Yackety perambulation. / It's no good keeping quiet about it“). The English translation is quoted after Guy Lee, cf. *The Poems of Catullus*, edited with an Introduction, Translation and Brief Notes by G. Lee, Oxford, New York 1990, p. 7.*

We may find some hint and be able to untangle the puzzle with the aid of Juvenal, recollecting the fact that the scholiast associated his verse with Sulpicia's poetry. Let us have a closer look at Juvenal's fragment VI 535-537 (commented on by Probus):

*Ille petit ueniam, quotiens non abstinet uxor  
Concubitu sacris obseruandisque diebus  
Magnaque debetur uiolato poena cadurco*

(“He it is that obtains pardon for wives who break the law of purity on days that should be kept holy, and exacts huge penalties when the coverlet has been profaned”)

(translated by G. G. Ramsay<sup>26</sup>)

The poet used the word *cadurcum* in the context of *violato cadurco*. Considering the meaning of the word *violare* ('to rape a woman'), this expression appears to be much ambiguous, the more so that the poet provides the context. He says that *cadurcum* was raped (*violato cadurco*) and further on adds that such an act was threatened with great punishment (*magna debetur poena*). Eventually, he also renders the reasons and circumstances under which the punishable act was committed. The wrongdoer did not respect "days forbidden by sacred laws" (*sacris obseruandisque diebus*) performing and allowing that the wife did not abstain from having an intercourse at the forbidden time (*non abstinet uxor concubitu*). We have determined, elaborating on this piece of Sulpicia's distich, that *cadurcum* refers to "a mattress with bed sheet/s" and that the word is or may be a synonym to 'bed'. In Juvenal's satire (and also in Sulpicia's distich) *cadurcum* may be understood as a bed and then the expression *violato cadurco* may be translated into "the stained bed". Within this interpretation the bed has been literally stained in an intercourse taking place during the woman's menstruation.

We cannot, however, conclude with the possibility or correctness of such an interpretation of the word *cadurcum* understood as 'a bed'. The meaning of Juvenal's fragment is ambiguous because of his use of the word *violato*, and also because *violato cadurco* understood as 'raped bed' is a metaphorical expression. The salient meaning of the verb *violo*, at least in all ancient literature contexts known to me, is associated not so much with metaphorical language but rather with actual violence, physical abuse of people, enslavement or rape performed on a woman.

<sup>26</sup> Juvenal and Persius, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

The ambiguity of the expression *violato cadurco*, which was in my opinion intended by the Roman satirist, due to its apparent sexual connotations leads us to the interpretation referred to as an alternative by the scholiast, to *membrum mulieris*, i.e. ‘intimate parts of woman’s body’. Let us recollect the comment: *membrum mulieris (inquit Probus) intelligitur, cum sit membri muliebris velamen* (‘[cadurcum], says Probus, is understood as an intimate part of woman’s body as it provides protection for female *pudenda*)<sup>27</sup>. *Cadurcum* as equivalent to *pudenda* is present in St. Isidore of Sevilla (*Gloss.* 295):

*Cadurca labra pudenda muliebris vel sponda lecti – Sed prima, quam dedimus notio aptissima omnium esse videtur.*

(“Cadurca are the labia of the coynte or the frame of the bed. Yet the former meaning which we have given seems to be the best of all”).

I believe that in Juvenal the word *cadurcum* is used with a double sense. In one sense it refers to a mattress with bed sheets, i.e. metonymically it means ‘bed’ (as it does in Sulpicia’s fragment), in the other – it refers to *membrum mulieris*<sup>28</sup>. Adopting the other, more tangible, sense we should translate Juvenal’s fragment (*Sat.* VI 537), commented on by Probus: *magnaque debeter violato poena cadurco* as ‘when great penalty must be suffered for the raping of *cadurcum*’.

Returning to the poetess’s distich, we may affirm that Sulpicia made use of a similar kind of ambiguity of the word *cadurcum*, even though it may not be present in the preserved verses. This assumption is based on the numerous correspondences between the two fragments.

Both in Sulpicia and Juvenal we find a scenario characterized with the same level of intimacy, in both cases the scenes involve married couples.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Parker, *op.cit.*, p.90, ft. 11, 12.

<sup>28</sup> In my recent paper “O niektórych nazwach określających γυναικεῖον αἰδοῖον u Arystofanesa” [On Some Aristophanean Terms Denoting γυναικεῖον αἰδοῖον.], [in:] G. Malinowski (ed.), *Thaleia. Humor w antyku*. Księga ku czci prof. Janiny Ławińskiej-Tyszkowskiej, “Classica Wratislaviensia” XXIV, Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis No. 2656, Wrocław 2004, pp. 49–57, I tried to derive the name *cadurcum* ‘female genitals’ from a particular (perhaps Italic or Gaulish) name for ‘hog’: κάδυρος (cf. the Hesychian gloss κάδυρος · κάπρος ἄνορχις). The relation between ‘female genitals’ and ‘hog’ is well known. In many comedies by Aristophanes we can find a number of Greek terms for ‘γυναικεῖον αἰδοῖον’, which demonstrate the semantic development of ‘piglet, hog, pig, sow’ ‘female genitals’ (e.g. δελφάκιον, ὑς, χοῖρος, χοιρίον and χοιρίδιον). A similar derivation is also attested in Latin. According to Varro, the Latin term *porcus* was used by the Roman women, especially by nurses, to denote ‘genitals of the young girl’. If my etymology is correct, then the relation between *cadurcum* (I) ‘a mattress with bed sheets; bed’ and *cadurcum* (II) ‘female genitals’ must be evidently secondary.

Furthermore, the ambiguity is triggered solely by the word *cadurcum*. It is not related to the content defined with the use of the clearly non-ambiguous words: *concubitu* (in Juvenal) and *concubantem* (in Sulpicia). It is understood why the belts on the bed supporting the mattress dropped, as a result the expression *restitutis* (or *dissolutis*) *fasciis* is also clear. We can then understand that there is punishment (*magna debetur poena*) because of *violato cadurco* in Juvenal.

In both cases there are almost identical ways of depicting a sexual intercourse between a married couple involving some ambiguity. On one level there is a literal description, cf. *nudam Caleno concubantem* in Sulpicia, and *non abstinet uxor concubitu* in Juvenal. On the other, metaphorical level, the consequences of the action are implicated, cf. *dissolutis (restitutis) fasciis* and *violato cadurco*.

Both fragments involve some anxiety that the intimacy is or may be disclosed. Sulpicia says: *si me... proferat*; or according to another lesson even: *ne me... proferat*. In the case of Juvenal it is known that the wrongdoer's, or rather the accomplice's, anxiety stems from the awareness that there may be imminent penalty (*magna debetur poema*) and that he should beg to be forgiven (*petit veniam*). On the basis of the distich it is not possible to determine who or what Sulpicia is afraid of and what kind of action she is going to take, if any at all. The fragment constitutes just one half of the original sentence. There is the antecedent of the conditional in conjunctive, but there is no subject up to the expression *proferat* (*si ... proferat*) and no latter part of the clause. The attempts at establishing the meaning of the entire sentence depending on both the lost fragment at the end and the subject preceding *proferat* had given rise to numerous hypotheses and resulted in three different interpretations<sup>29</sup>.

We have only two lines of Sulpicia the Younger's erotic poetry. The scholiast (Probus or someone else) may have known a more complete part of her poem. While commenting on Juvenal, he thought it appropriate to cite the very fragment of Sulpicia's verse and to precede it with his comments on the meaning of the word *cadurcum*.

<sup>29</sup> J. Balmer, *Classical Women poets*, Newcastle upon Tyne 1996, p. 104, fn. 10, in the comment to the English translation of Sulpicia's distich he summarizes briefly these three main interpretations: (1) a metaphor of a nuptial bed broken during a quarrel (Parker cites Morel similarly, p. 93, fn.25; A. Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus*, New Haven 1983, p. 232, fn.4; A. Richlin, "Sulpicia the Satirist", p. 131); (2) Sulpicia as a satirist wrote a satire on "marriage" (so A. Richlin, *ibidem*, p. 132; Richlin later on proposes the subject *lucerna*, as given by: W.C. Waterhouse, "The Words of the Second Sulpicia", *Classical World* 87, nr. 2, 1993, p. 51); (3) literal interpretation (Note that H. Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 93, states that both literal and metaphorical interpretations are possible).

It may be that Juvenal unintentionally provides complementary information and explicates what cannot be inferred from the preserved distich, but could be clearly visible to the critic commenting on a more complete version, i.e. the ambiguity of the word *cadurcum*, which confirms its double sense.

To the best of my knowledge, the word was used once in Sulpicia, twice in Juvenal (*Sat. VII* 221 and VI 537) and nowhere else apart from the glossaries. It is not known when *cadurcum* was first used in the sense of *membrum mulieris* and who was the first to create the metaphorical extension from textile-oriented sense to *rem veneram*, nor who introduced it into literature. The sources which confirm its erotic connotations are relatively late, much later than Sulpicia's and Juvenal's times.

However, the possibility that it was Sulpicia that was the forerunner, used the word in the erotic context and thus introduced it to the bedroom scenario cannot be excluded. Thus, *cadurcum*, whose original meaning was, as has been shown above, related to textile goods, was repeated after Sulpicia by Juvenal<sup>30</sup> in an almost identical context. Both numerous correspondences between their works and the chronology make this assumption probable. Juvenal may have known Sulpicia's work and may have adopted the word *cadurcum* as well as the satirical tone of her verse from her. This would mean that Sulpicia was a satirist. Thus, Amy Richlin may be right in her assumption that the preserved distich was part of a satire on married life written from a woman's perspective<sup>31</sup>. I would personally favour this hypothesis, especially that the later ancient sources comment on the poetess in the way which may support the interpretation<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> A. Richlin, "Sulpicia the Satirist", p. 130 and fn. 8. Martial's tenth book of epigrams in the second edition was published during the reign of Nerva (*terminus ante quem*). The sixth satire of Juvenal is quite certainly dated 116 A. D. due to the lines 407-412 (see E. Courtney, *A Commentary on the Satires of Juvenal*, London 1980, ad loc. and fn. 1). There is a great possibility that this piece of Sulpicia's work was a fragment of a poem (or poems) which either inspired Martial or brought out his reaction. In both cases Juvenal in a strange way could have taken *cadurcum* from Sulpicia, not vice versa.

<sup>31</sup> A. Richlin, *op. cit.*, p. 132; Richlin later on proposes *lucerna* as the subject. Quoted after W. C. Waterhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

<sup>32</sup> Sidonius Apollinaris considers her like this 9. 261-262; *non quod' Sulpiciae iocus Thaliae / scripsit blandiloquum suo Caleno*. "Thalia lasciva" was also Martial's patroness. The fact that Sulpicia was known to readers, not only from her time or a little later (Juvenal), but much later which testify paragraphs of writers from the IV/V century (Ausonius, Sidonius Apollinaris, Fulgentius, Probus).

Martial's testimony, which gave us his opinion on Sulpicia and her poetry (*Ep.* X 35, v. 8-12) may not have been true, or at least complete:

*Sed castos docet et probos amores,  
Lusus, delicias facetiasque.  
Cuius carmina qui bene aestimarit,  
Nullam dixerit esse nequiorem,  
nullam dixerit esse sanctiorem.*

(“She tells of pure and lawful love, playful caprice and merriment. A good judge of her verses will say there was never a girl more roguish or more virtuous”<sup>33</sup>)

The preserved fragment from her own poetry shows that Sulpicia, against the poet's claims, wrote about love in a more courageous, even more naturalistic way, without hesitating to name things, avoiding popular lexis and well-known tropes, not shrinking from near-common literalness, subtle ambiguity or even vulgarisms.

The fact that the scholiast selected Sulpicia's poem in order to comment on Juvenal's piece may strengthen the hypothesis. Juvenal's fragment, whose ambiguous nature has been discussed earlier in this paper, was taken from a stinging satire on married life. I also believe that the poetess used the word *cadurcum*, even if it had been used before as a synonym to ‘bed, precisely because of its ambiguity, with particular preference for *membrum mulieris*. This assumption may be clarified by another reading of the fragment.

Now I would like to present my interpretation of the distich. I suggest that we adopt the reading *cadurcum* (Nom. sing.) instead of *cadurci* (Gen. sing.) or some other lessons<sup>34</sup>. I would also suggest an alternative reading of *si* and *ne* (rather *ne*). Furthermore, it seems preferable to accept the reading *dissolutis fasciis* instead of *restitutis fasciis*, which I have been using so far. The new reading seems to be better as it projects a more dynamic and picturesque scene and invites spontaneity, all of which results in the scene being more suggestive. However, I do not claim that my reading is unfailing. *Restitutis fasciis*, in contrast to *dissolutis fasciis*, creates in my opinion a static, at least less dynamic, picture. It also deprives the scene of its comic effect, which, I believe, may be implied in the picture of a loving couple who have to struggle against the uneven surface of the mattress supported

<sup>33</sup> Translated by D. R. Shackleton Bailey (p. 357).

<sup>34</sup> W. C. Waterhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 51 claims that *cadurcum* in nominative is placed after the emphatically displaced *me*, which is the expected reading.

on, possibly, floor-level dropped straps. The reader – spectator is as if introduced into the very centre of the on-going action with its clearly seen consequences. It is in front of the spectators eyes that the loving couple is disclosed *in flagranti*. They continue the rape of *cadurcum*, they do not seem to be embarrassed by the awkwardness of the situation or mind the spectator's presence, even though the words *ne me... proferat* (or *si ne... proferat*) may suggest some anxiety. Moreover, I believe that the picture of the broken straps and the 'raped' *cadurcum* extend the meaning of the fragment, which as a result presents an intended ambiguity or absolute non-ambiguity of the facts, intentions, and declarations. I propose to approach the preserved fragment as a negative clause with the function of an object and as an expression of anxiety. Then, we could expect there to be a form of the verb *timeo* in the superlative clause. Finally, I propose the following form of the fragment:

*Ne me cadurcum dissolutis fasciis  
Nudam Caleno concubantem proferat.*

(“Let me not be exposed by the *cadurcum*, when naked on the dropped straps I give in to pleasures with Calenus”).

Sulpicia presents herself in an intimate situation. At the same time she implies to the reader her uneasiness that the intimacy may be disclosed: “let me not be exposed by the *cadurcum*”. This fear that the ‘secret’ may be revealed, in the situation in which she presents the scene so readily and clearly herself, creates a comic effect due to its being so illogical. It is nor irrelevant here, in my opinion, that Sulpicia’s sexual partner in the scene is her own husband - Calenus. The very fact makes her anxiety appear even more prudish. The hypocrisy beaming from her seemingly anxious words: *ne me ... proferat* suggests a satirical ridicule of Roman venerable matrons, such as *Catonis uxor et ... horribiles Sabinae* (Ep. XI 15,1–2) and virtuous Lucretias of various kinds. Martial wrote that these respectable matrons would read his poems only when they were alone (Ep. XI 15,9–10)<sup>35</sup>:

*Erubuit posuitque meum Lucretia librum,  
Sed coram Bruto: Brute, recede: leget.*

(translated into English by Iwona Witczak-Plisiecka)

<sup>35</sup> Cf. H. Szelest, *Marcialis i jego twórczość* [Martial and his works], Wrocław 1963, p. 77.