

Save Ancient Studies Alliance

Summer 2023 Texts-in-Translation Reading Group

## She's Just Not That Into You: Unrequited Love in Antiquity



*"Two Masks," marble. 3rd century Rome. from The Cleveland Museum of Art,*

How did single ancients find their hookups without being able to swipe right?  
Badly, apparently.

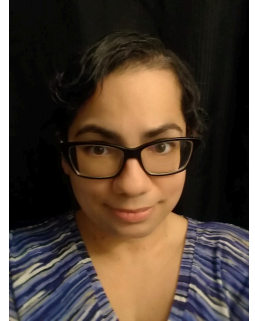
Antiquity is full of instances where love was rejected, and the pain of a heartbroken poet is sometimes more unreliable than it is sincere. This proposed group features a set of ancient texts in translation which revolve around the concept of unrequited love in the ancient world, while also looking through a lens that considers what might make one party undesirable to the other. We'll talk about Sappho's struggles to hold a date, Catullus and his unfortunate pining over Lesbia, and take a visit to Horace's Misogyny Corner. And then we'll deal with Ovid...

Older texts are most enjoyable when they've been unbuckled from their dustiness. There's something universally appealing about the cycles of ancient heartbreak. Some of them choose to cry into their metaphorical pillows while others denounce entire genders because they've been rejected by a single member of it. And then there's Ovid, who earned an entire exile partly because he just couldn't stop writing tasteless commentary. There's both a sincerity and a hilarity to this poetry that feels particularly universal.

### **Your SASA Educational Ambassadors:**

**Jessica Lugo** is a doctoral candidate in English at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Her primary scholarly interest is in the use of the classics in early English drama, specifically the ways in which Greek and Roman mythologies become linguistic tools to subvert binary gender roles.

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### **[Session Recordings Playlist - Youtube \(Private\)](#)**

### **[Reading Group Folder Link](#)**

*(All readings will be available in English for the purposes of accessibility. If anyone has Greek and/or Latin under their belts and would like to take a look at original-language texts, they can be provided upon request.)*

Please be aware that due to the nature of both period and subject matter, many readings may engage with themes of self-harm and misogynistic language.

#### **Week 1 / June 8 (Sappho: Incel or Icon?)**

- selected Sapphic fragments (Anne Carson, translator)
- Anne L. Klinck, "Sleeping in the Bosom of a Tender Companion": Homoerotic Attachments in Sappho

#### **Week 2 / June 15**

- (Technical hiccups! Session ended up rather impromptu. A takeaway: read Alcestis by Euripides! Nothing is funnier than a drunken Hercules diving into the underworld to revive a dead wife because her husband is stressed out by the notion of doing his own laundry.)

#### **Week 3 / June 22 (An Horatian Heartache)**

- selections from Horace's *Odes* (David West, translator)
- Ronnie Ancona, "Female Figures in Horace's *Odes*"

#### **Week 4 / June 29 (Catullus: Should we tell him why Lesbia isn't interested?)**

- selected poems from Catullus (Guy Lee, translator) {Note: this translation is raunchy in places!}
- Ronnie Ancona, "(Un)Constrained Male Desire: An Intertextual Reading of Horace *Odes* 2.8 and Catullus Poem 61"

#### **Week 5 / July 6 (Ovid: Satire or Sexual Harassment?) / (Ovid's "Error" and Exile)**

- combined from the original weeks 4 and 5 plans
- selections from Ovid's *Ars*, *Heroides*, and *Tristia* (James Michie and Peter Green, trans.)
- Peter Green, Exile Poem Foreword

**Group Size**

This group will ideally be a space that welcomes a healthy discussion - it's more exciting to hear from more voices! If people want to come along for the vibes, I'm happy to spend time with anyone who wants to partake in the discussion.