Latin 3b 2026 Word Study 2 Compilation

As you read through each word study, carefully evaluate each element on the following scale:

1=100% (truly excellent) I'm humbled and amazed

2=92% (pretty good—there was something great that got my attention)

3=84% (neither here nor there—got the job done but barely)

4= 76% (**not** a good job— there was something poorly done that got my attention in a big way)

5= (68%) evaluation element is extremely poor or missing entirely

Do NOT evaluate your own word study!
Skip the rating grid and leave the comment box completely blank for YOUR word study. Proceed with caution.

Evaluations must be completed no later than

April 21

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You should be old pros at reviewing now, but remember ***the goal is to help your classmates create scholarly assessments.*** This is best done by providing helpful remarks and avoiding overly-inflated praise or thoughtless, generic commentary. ***There is never a situation in which personal comments are warranted or beneficial. I reserve the right to eliminate all such commentary.*** Remember that your conduct as a reviewer needs to be as professional as your study and will be assessed accordingly. **Every study has something good that can be praised and some improvement that can be suggested.**

I, your trusty Latin teacher, will also be providing feedback as well. Feedback from all of us SHOULD **accurately** reflect the work and thought put into each study. The final grade will be from me.

These are the things you'll be ranking:

- **Provided good examples so that I better understand how the word is used**
- **Provided good, useful, and accurate translations and citations so that I can go and find it**
- **Defined the word clearly based on examples (adapted well to the data presented)**
- **Analysis of the word was helpful -- made good observations and drew relevant and appropriate conclusions**
- **Final overall impression of this word study – a "gut feeling" response to this work**

On the survey form there is a "**Free Response**" section for each essay. Provide a couple specific sentences of written feedback to help each writer. This should include both praise for what was done well and suggestions for improvement and should be professional in every way (see highlighted comments above). Please follow all instructions to the letter – especially the ones about not reviewing your own study! This will make my job compiling the grades and reviews go much more quickly!

Word Study 1

Dear Author: You needed to adhere to the instructions about removing spaces following paragraphs and using 1.15 spacing.

Ardor: Flaming Forests, Smoldering Souls

In the third chapter of Exodus, Moses, the chosen prophet of God, encounters a bush that is blazing with crimson flames, but the waxy leaves are not consumed into gray ash. Moses, stepping forward, encounters the face of God, blazing brightly before his eyes. Moses, ignited with devotion to the Lord, falls to the ground, removing his sandals in honor of the Face before him. The Latin word *ardor* describes both the burning bush and Moses' passion as he looks upon the divine. For the Romans, both a branch and a heart could burn; *ardor* is used in a physical and in a spiritual sense. *Ardor*, bearing both a literal and metaphorical meaning, refers to any spark from a forest fire to a pop of color, all culminating in the passions of the heart.

In its most literal sense, *ardor* refers to a burning flame that threatens to consume its surroundings in ash. Cicero uses *ardor* to describe his presence in the Roman senate, which has brought tension throughout the dying Roman Republic: *mea domus ardore suo deflagrationem urbi atque Italiae toti minaretur*: my house seemed to bring the destruction of the city and all of Italy into its burning (Cicero, *Pro Cn. Plancio*, 95). As tensions smoldered in the Roman Republic, Cicero's family seemed to bring all of Italy into the chaos, which he describes as a blazing fire. *Ardor* is the vehicle of Cicero's metaphor that reveals the destruction that his political position seems to wreck on the Eternal City, much like that of a mass conflagration. Cicero employs *ardor* to refer to a fire that threatens to create a wasteland of Italy if it is not kept in check, just like the friction in the Republic that might devolve into a ruinous blaze.

Ardor, likewise, can also refer to the close associate of burning: heat, particularly the warmth of the atmosphere. In Book V of his *Histories*, Tacitus establishes the setting of the Romans' conquest of Judea by describing the Levant. Tacitus writes: *Praecipuum montium Libanum erigit, mirum dictu, tantos inter ardores opacum fidumque nivibus*: the principal mountain is Lebanon and, odd enough to say, remains constantly among snows even amidst the burning climate. Lebanon, Tacitus marvels, is constantly cloaked with snows despite the intense heat of the climate, which Tacitus describes as *ardor*. By employing *ardor*, Tacitus implies that the temperature feels like a fire that scorches the skin, making it even more wonderful that snow can lie on the mountain year-round. *Ardor*'s connection with fire allows it to refer to intense heat as well.

The internal heat of the body, too, can blaze like a fire, and *ardor* is perfectly suited to describe it. Often, *ardor* refers to the warmth of wine, and it is the use that Lucretius employs in his *Quaestiones Naturales*: *denique cor, hominem cum vini vis penetravit acris et in venas discessit diditus ardor*: then the heart, when the harsh strength of the wine has penetrated a man, and the burning, after he has given it to himself, has dispelled into his veins (Lucretius, *Quaestiones Naturales*, 3.477). *Ardor*, as Lucretius uses it, refers to the warmth of wine, which causes a burning sensation as it flows into man's veins. Just as *ardor* refers to flames and to the warmth of the atmosphere, it also alludes to the heat inside of the human body, particularly that which is derived from wine.

The etymology of *ardor*, therefore, is derived from the root of fire and heat: dryness. *Ardor* brings with it a host of related Latin words, including *ardeo, ardere*, the verb form (meaning "to burn"). Both verbs most likely originate from *aridus* and *ardus,* meaning "dry." According to *An Etymological Dictionary of the Latin Language*, the most likely origin of *ardus* (and, therefore, *ardor* and its neighbors)

is Greek ἀέω (also spelled αὔω or εὔω), meaning "dry." *Ardor*'s possible connection with "dryness" is a logical explanation, as dryness is necessary for a fire to light. In fact, its more distant root, the Proto Indo-European *es*, most likely meant "to burn," and the specificity was maintained in the Latin. *Ardor* is the natural companion of words for burning and dryness in both Latin and Greek, its most likely direct origin.

Ardor, however, can also refer to the smallest spark: the light of the eyes. A man with *ardor* in his eyes is bright and vibrant, illumined by passion. Thus does Cicero write in his speech *Pro Balbo*: *Quod si vultus C. Mari, si vox, si ille imperatorius ardor oculorum*: but in the face of C. Marius, and in his voice, the burning of his eyes was very commanding (Cicero, *Pro Balbo*, 49). Cicero employs *ardor* to refer to the "burning of the eyes," the sign of the soul's spark. Here, *ardor*, though alluding to a small spark externally, symbolizes an internal state of intense emotion, which animates the soul and makes Marius (and every other rhetor) a brilliant and beloved speaker. By using *ardor* to refer to the "fire" behind the eyes, Cicero alludes to a person's fiery personality.

Ardor, in fact, refers to agitation itself as well as the physical manifestation of it: glinting eyes. *Ardor*, in this way, refers to a smoldering heart, one that burns with passion, most often negative emotion. Catullus uses *ardor* in this way when he writes of the sparrow of Lesbia, his love: *credo ut tum gravis acquiescat ardor: tecum ludere sicut ipsa possem et tristis animi levare curas!* I believe that her grave anxiety then goes away: if only I might be able to play as she does, and the cares of my sad soul might lift! (Catullus, 2.7-10). Here, Catullus employs *ardor* to refer to Lesbia's burning agitation, which seems to consume her in worry before she plays with her sparrow. Catullus wishes that his own *ardor*, his own concerns, might be lifted from his sorrowful mind by frolicking with the bird. *Ardor* frequently describes a literal fire, but it can also refer to the blazing cares of the soul, which threaten to burn one's mind with anxiety.

Ardor, too, can describe a burning desire to perform an action. Just as the word can refer to worry, it may also illustrate immense eagerness. Livy uses *ardor* in this sense when he writes of the young soldiers of the early Republic: *quo minus consules velle credunt, crescit ardor pugnandi*: the less the consuls desire it, the more the desire for fighting grows (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 2.45.9). Here, Livy employs *ardor* to allude to the burning longing in young soldiers to go to war, even when the consuls are hesitant to do so. By using *ardor* in this sense, Livy illustrates the severity of the soldiers' bloodlust, which seems to consume them like a forest fire. *Ardor* frequently translates as a "burning desire."

Ardor means "burning" in all senses. On a literal level, it refers to a blazing fire that threatens to consume all that is around it, combined with heat and dryness. On a metaphorical level, however, *ardor* can also refer to the light of the eyes, and therefore passion and eagerness. It is little wonder that this vivid word has translated directly to English, with "ardor" meaning passion, with *ardor* (Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian), *ardore* (Italian), and *ardeur* (French) carrying the same meaning. The passion that animated Moses' heart, the flames that tickled the miraculous bush, will always remain in the world as the descendants of *ardor* and, more importantly, echo of the universal longings of the human soul. May all manage the ardor of their own lives well, ever seeking virtue in all their actions today.

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Word Study 2

Freeing the inner meaning of *Exsolvo*

Exsolvo is a Latin verb meaning to unloose, release, or free (Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, A Latin Dictionary, *exsolvo*). While this word can have a very physical sense, it can also relate to a more metaphysical or metaphorical releasing. A releasing where a person ‘leaves behind’ or ‘abandons’ something (Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, *exsolvo*). It can even mean paying off a debt (Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, *exsolvo*). Yet more, it can mean more metaphorical meanings of removing something from somewhere. Catullus, the Ancient Roman Poet of the first century BC, has used this word. In Catullus 64, a retelling of the old Greek tale of Ariadne and Theseus, retold in the form of a small epic poem, Catullus calls upon exsolvere to reference paying something.

He says “*Androgeoneae poenas exsoluere caedis electos iuvenes simul et decus innuptarum Cecropiam solitam esse dapem dare Minotauro.*” This can be translated as: “Cecrops was accustomed to pay the penalties for the slaughter of Androgeos and simultaneously to give chosen young people and the finest of maidens as the feast to the Minotaur”. Here Catullus has used *exsolvere* to refer to paying a debt. This has been often used by merchants in reference to debts (Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, A Latin Dictionary, *exsolvo*). For this, it can mean to discharge or pay a debt.

This usage comes up again in Livy, another Ancient Roman writer, this time a Historian, from the end of the first century BC and the early first century AD. He wrote a very famous book, called *Ab Urbe Condita*, or From the Founding of the City, the city being Rome, of course. In this book, he wrote “*multiplici iam sorte exsoluta, mergentibus semper sortem usuris*,” (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, VI.14.14). This means “already having paid off the share multiple times, always the share having immersed interest,”. Since the people of the story are speaking of shares, it can be assumed that this may have to do with paying things.

Lucretius, the Roman poet and philosopher of the early first century BC, uses *exsolvo.* In his *De Rerum Natura*, or On the Nature of Things, he says “*quae partibus eius discidium parere et nexus exsolvere posset*” (Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, I.219-20). This means “which with the parts of him it would be possible to arrange a disagreement and would be able to loosen the connection”. Here we see *exsolvo* being used to give an example of something being loosened, or freed.

Exsolvo comes from two Latin words, *Ex-*, and *Solvo*. The first means "out of" or "from", and the second is a verb meaning "to untie, free, or release" (D. P. Simpson, Cassell's Latin Dictionary, 1977, *Solvo*."). This definition is very similar to that of *exsolvo*, which makes sense because it is practically a variation of the same word. Nevertheless, *exsolvo* retains its differentiation by implying a motion out of, as opposed to merely becoming free of something. More importantly, it takes on the occupation of being a reliable medium for paying things. Indeed, many of its Latin examples refer to paying things.

Exsolvo has cognates in a few romance languages, however not nearly as many as its counterpart *solvo*. One example is exsolve, in English. Exsolve, as opposed to dissolve or absolve, primarily means the process whereby solids split into two separate solids in a solution. It is used often in geology. *Exsolvo* also has a cognate in Italian. The Italian word *sciogliere* comes from *exsolvo*, and means "to melt, undo, untie, loosen, or release" (Istituto dell'Enciclpedia Italiana, vocabolario Trecanni on line, *sciogliere*). It is evident that, while the actual spelling of the word has changed somewhat, the overall meaning is nevertheless very similar. *Exsolvo* is an example of a Latin word whose siblings, *absolvo* and *dissolvo*, have common cognates in the English and other languages, whose parent *solvo* also has many cognates, but who itself has not survived into common usage beyond a technical term. As is the fate of many Latin words.

Word Study 3

Curiosus Didn't Kill the Cat

Curiosity is an innate part of human nature. From ancient Rome to modern-day New York City, people exhibit curiosity in all eras. The Latin word *curiosus* comes from the word *cura*, which means care, caution, anxiety, and attention. The first meaning of *curiosus,* careful or diligent, derives from *cura*. The second meaning, inquisitive, comes from *cura* in a more abstract sense.

In his *Naturalis Historia*, Pliny the Elder, an author, naturalist, and government official, wrote *excepit hanc Romae Fanni sagax officina, tenuatamque curiosa interpolatione principalem fecit e plebeia et nomen ei dedit,* the shrewd man took this [paper] over with the workshop of Fannius at Rome, and he made the first [paper] having been dissolved with careful interpolation from the plebian and gave his name to it. (Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, 13.12.75). In this passage, Pliny talks about the origins of a specific quality of paper. He says that the process of interpolating the paper is done carefully, emphasizing the importance of its creation. Here, *curiosa* could also be translated as diligently. Either translation of the word shows the great care taken in this man's line of work. About 100 years before Pliny wrote *Naturalis Historia,* Varro, a polymath, author, and great inspiration to Pliny, wrote in his work *De Re Rustica: De quibus admirandum illut, quod etiam Archelaus scribit: non ut reliqua animalia naribus, sed auribus spiritum ducere solere pastores curiosiores aliquot dicunt.* About which [animals] there is an astonishing thing, what even Archelaus writes: some rather diligent shepherds say that [goats] are accustomed to guide breath not like the remaining animals with their nostrils, but with their ears. (Varro, *De Re Rustica*, 2.3.5). Here, Varro tells of how some farmers have observed goats breathing through their ears. In this excerpt, *curiosiores* is best translated as diligent rather than careful because the word diligent better reflects the relationship between the farmers and their goats. In these passages, *curiosus* is best used as a word that signifies the amount of care and conscientiousness that people exhibit.

Curiosus isn't just used to represent carefulness, however. There is a second prominent meaning of the word: curiosity. In Catullus' seventh poem, he writes *tam te basia multa basiare / vesano satis et super Catullo est, / quae nec pernumerare curiosi / possint nec mala fascinare lingua.* so many kisses that you kiss / is enough and more than enough for mad Catullus, / which neither curious men may be able to

count up / nor evil speech may be able to bewitch. (Catullus, 7). In this poem, Catullus describes the large number of kisses he and Lesbia share. In Roman culture, it was taboo to share the exact number of kisses in poems because that number could be used in hexes against you. The word *curiosi* in this passage has a negative connotation. These curious men want to know the number of kisses they share so that they may cause harm to Catullus and Lesbia. When used to represent curiosity, *curiosus* doesn't only have negative connotations. In a letter to Atticus, Cicero writes *Tu velim, si me nihilo minus nosti curiosum in re publica quam te, scribas ad me omnia, quae sint, quae futura sint.* Truly you, if you know me to be by no means less curious than you about the republic, you may write all things to me, which may be, which may be about to be. (Cicero, *Epistulae ad Atticum*, 5.14.3). Here, Cicero is asking Atticus to gossip with him about politics. Within this letter, *curiosum* is used in a more positive and self-aware way. Cicero isn't careful about politics; he is curious about them. *Curiosus* is used by authors to mean curiosity in both positive and negative contexts.

The word *curiosus* has been used by authors such as Pliny, Catullus, Varro, and Cicero in Latin literature spanning from the golden age to the post-Augustan era. Originating from the word *cura*, it eventually took on another dimension with its second meaning of curious. That meaning has survived into many modern-day languages like German, French, Italian, and English. The word *curiosus* contains two main definitions: either careful/diligent, showing the amount of intention that people exhibit, or curious, both in a positive and negative sense, representing the innate inquisitive nature of human beings.

Word Study 4

Word Study 2 – The Cover of *Tenebrae*

The Latin noun *tenebrae,* primarily meaning darkness, or night, is interesting as it provides an example of a *plurale tantum*: a word that is used almost exclusively in the plural, often conveying a sense of multitude or totality across contexts. The meaning of *tenebrae*, similar to that of another Latin noun, *nox*, possesses one unique distinction from the latter: while *nox* denotes the time and setting, *tenebrae* constitutes the very fabric of the environment being described, an interpretation that was favored by many Latin authors due to the feeling or emotion that it could convey. Therefore, even though it can be used in much the same way as *nox*, its usage is preferred in detailed or descriptive texts, particularly satires and tragedy, that use distinctive imagery to communicate with the reader.

Ecce illa tempestas, caligo bonorum et subita atque improvisa formido, tenebrae rei publicae: look at that storm, fog of good men, both a sudden and unforeseen terror, darkness of the state (Cicero, *De Provinciis Consularibus* 18.43). Here, Cicero writes in favor of Caesar and the first Triumvirate in an attempt to expose the destruction caused by his political rivals. Through his use of strong language and metaphorical comparisons of their political decisions to apocalyptic storms, Cicero tactfully introduces his political viewpoints to those reading his work. His usage of *caligo* as a fog that clouds the morals of good men, is further reinforced by his usage of *tenebrae* as a highly connotative word to explain the darkness and ruin that he believes the Roman state is coming to.

In the passage: *qui nunc it per iter tenebricosum/ illuc, unde negant redire quemquam./ at vobis male sit, malae tenebrae/ Orci, quae omnia bella devoratis/:* who now goes through the dark path there, from which place they deny that anyone returns, but may it be bad for y'all, evil darknesses of Orcus, which consume all beautiful things, Catullus writes a satire poem condoling the death of his girlfriend Lesbia's pet sparrow (Catullus *Carmina* 3). He describes the dark and dangerous path that the tiny sparrow must traverse upon leaving the world of the living and curses the evil darknesses that have stolen it away from Lesbia. His use of *tenebrae* to vividly describe the situation adds on to the comedy of his

satire, as he is really happy that the sparrow that once took up all Lesbia's attention is now dead. Catullus's usage of the adjective *tenebricosum,* derived from *tenebrae*, as well as *tenebrae* itself, adds a layer of depth to the imagery that he creates, and shows how the evils that Catullus seemingly berates, ironically bring him the greatest joy.

In Book 2 of his Metamorphoses, Ovid writes about the tragic story of Phaethon, the demigod son of the sun Titan Helios, who flew the sun chariot for a single day. *Ut vero summo despexit ab aethere terras/ infelix Phaethon penitus penitusque iacentes,/ palluit et subito genua intremuere timore,/ suntque oculis tenebrae per tantum lumen/ obortae/:* indeed, when unhappy Phaethon looked down from the highest heaven to the earth lying deeply and deeply, he paled and suddenly his knees trembled with dread and darkness has risen up to his eyes through such great light (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 2.178-81). Ovid uses *tenebrae* here to shift into focus the ironic nature of Phaethon's situation: he is at the top of the world, governor of the heavens, and yet darkness still covers his eyes. In the original myth, this occurs just before Phaethon and the sun chariot are shot out of the sky by Jupiter's lightning, highlighting how Ovid uses *tenebrae* as a clever nuance to foreshadow the eventual tragic outcome of Phaethon's adventure.

Livy writes: *priusquam in provincias novi magistratus proficiscerentur, supplicatio triduum pro collegio decemvirorum imperata fuit in omnibus compitis, quod luce inter horam tertiam ferme et quartam tenebrae obortae fuerant:* before the new magistrates had set out for their provinces, a prayer of three days was commanded in all crossroads for the College of Ten Men, because between about the third and fourth hour, the shadows had risen up (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 38.36). In this short passage, *tenebrae*, due to grammatical context, differs slightly from its root meanings, and is best translated as shadows, a collection of darkness, rather than the singular unit of darkness itself, demonstrating the idea of multitude. *Tenebrae*, here, are references to the shadows caused by a solar eclipse, and as they were considered a bad omen by the Romans, Livy uses the literal meaning of *tenebrae* to describe the strange and sudden darkness they bring.

Petronius writes about a shipwreck: his descriptive imagery providing a clear depth of foreshadowing to the tragedy soon to occur. *Et quod omnibus procellis periculosius erat, tam spissae repente tenebrae lucem suppresserant, ut ne proram quidem totam gubernator videret:* and what was more dangerous than all storms; such dense darkness had suddenly suppressed the light that the helmsman could not even see the entire prow (Petronius, *Satyricon* 114). *Tenebrae* takes its principal meaning here, with Petronius using the adjective *spissae* to physically describe the characteristics of *tenebrae* as a dense darkness that renders sailing perilous. *Spissae* also adds another layer of depth to the imagery of the scene as it refers back to the idea of plurality: it is not just one darkness that blankets the travelers, but layer upon layer of stifling shadows that compound into a web of darkness.

Derived from the Proto-Indo-European root ***témHos*** and the Proto-Italic root ***temazros*** meaning dark or darkness, *tenebrae* has only evolved away from the literal meaning of its roots and towards many of the metaphorical interpretations that it has come to be recognized for through the work of many Latin authors. Continuing the evolution of *tenebrae*, in the Romance language French, it retains essentially the same meaning, darkness, as well as the same grammatical usage since *tenebres*, just like *tenebrae*, continues to be used exclusively in the plural. While the plural *tinieblas* is also primarily used in Spanish, the singular, *tiniebla* does make the occasional, if rare, appearance. Even though the translations of *tenebrae* do not vary too greatly amongst Latin authors, its meaning as a noun that takes on and explains

the characteristics of darkness as if it were a physical substance, differentiate it from the more common *nox*, leading *tenebrae* to be associated with more vivid imagery and properties of realism.

Word Study 5

Dear Author: You needed to adhere to the instructions about removing spaces following paragraphs.

What is Love

The Latin language had two words for a kiss, *osculum* and *savia*, that is until a certain author decided to come into the picture. The word kiss might sound dull, but it has many different interpretations which *osculum* and *savia* answered. *Osculum* pertained towards a more formal kiss, a peck on the cheek, towards relatives or senators. For instance, these lines from Aulus Gellius show a possible use of osculum. *abstinuisse dicunt, institutumque ut cognatis osculum ferrent deprehendi causa, ur odor indicium faceret, si bibissent*: They say they abstained, and arranged for relatives to kiss each other so for the cause to be detected, so their odor would make evidence, if they drank (Aulus Gellius, Attic Nights, 10.23.1-2). Aulus Gellius (125-180 A.D.) was a 2nd century Roman author best known for his work Attic Nights, a miscellaneous compilation of notes on law, history, and anecdotes alongside fragments and notes. This particular section is featured in Book 10 where Gellius remarks on the sobriety of Roman woman. Beyond stating that Roman women were expected not to drink wine, they in fact had to kiss their kin in order for them to determine whether they were drinking. The notion of *osculum* is not in a passionate kiss between lovers, but it is merely a formal kiss between relatives. While a kiss may be thought of as intimate, *osculum* is not a romantic gesture. It is merely a Roman breathalyzer test.

Apart from these occasions, *savia* identifies the passionate side as in this example from Plautus. *ibidem una aderit mulier lepida, tibi savia super savia quae det*: There will be a charming woman there, who will give you kiss upon kiss (Plautus, Pseudolus, 948-949). Titus Maccius Plautus (254-184 B.C.E) was a Roman director of comedic plays. Pseudolus is one of his works that involves a slave, Pseudolus, and his witty schemes. In these lines, Pseudolus has recruited someone, previously named Simia, to be a customer for a brothel manager. In order to bribe this gentleman to venture to the pimp, with whom Pseudolus has a grudge, Pseudolus remarks of the charming woman in the abode, who would give kisses upon kisses to Simia. The use of the word *savia* is in a passionate indication of a kiss. It is meant to be intimate and erotic, much unlike the formal connotation of *osculum*.

It may seem that this is the end of the story as these words do accurately describe the range of a kiss, but Catullus introduced another Latin word with the same meaning. *da mi basia mille, deinde centum, dein mille altera*: Give me a thousand kisses, then a hundred, then another thousand (Catullus, The Complete Poems, 5.7-8). Gaius Valerius Catullus (84-54 B.C.E) was a Roman poet that was involved with all directions of life. Coming from a middle-class family, Catullus immersed himself in the culture of Rome and became a major figure in literature. His primary work is his "The Complete Poems," which stem on a variety of topics. Primarily, they concern Lesbia, a token name for Catullus's love interest. In this poem, Catullus fears that Lesbia might put too much attention on rumors ignited by their relationship, so he urges that she put aside the gossip and share thousands of kisses together. Curiously, the word *basia* and its inflections first appeared in Catullus's writings, poems specifically. *Basia* has a direct translation of kisses, but it is much more versatile than that. In this particular example, kisses refer to actions of affection between Catullus and Lesbia. Largely, this viewpoint of love is what Catullus mentions through *basia*. For instance, *quaeris, quot mihi basiationes tuae, Lesbia, sint satis superque*: You ask, how many

kisses of yours, Lesbia may be enough and more for me. (Catullus, The Complete Poems, 7.1-2). This section of Catullus's poetry homes in on more kissing. The use of *basiationes* is again in an intimate way to describe a warm kiss between lovers. With *basia* comes the ability to use it in sadder contexts as Catullus does so here: *Quem nunc amabis? Cuius esse diceris? Quem basiabis? Cui labella mordebis?* Whom do you now love? To whom will you be said to be? Whom will you kiss? Whose lips will you bite? (Catullus, The Complete Poems, 8.17-18). This section of Catullus's poetry points towards heartbreak. Lesbia loves him no more, so Catullus releases his emotions in the form of words. It is essential to note that he feels a sense of longing towards Lesbia still, so he employs *basiabis* in a verb that contemplates the love that Catullus feels. While this is in a different context than the previous examples, the core part is being able to use *basia* in an affectionate way.

Later authors, such as Martial in the 1st century A.D., used *basia* in varied situations such as *Basia dimidio quod das mihi, Postume, labro, laudo: licet demas hinc quoque dimidium*: I praise you, Postumus, for you give me half the kisses with your lips: although you may also take away this half (Martial, Epigrams, 2.10.1-2). Marcus Valerius Martialis (38-104 A.D.) was a Roman poet famous for his books of Epigrams, which feature satire and observation of life under Roman rule. A key point in Martial's work was his numerous attempts at patronage. Here Postumus is a character that is allegedly a bad patron, although this isn't necessary in the lines mentioned. The overall point is that Postumus is a comedic relief as a person that Martial pokes fun of. In this example, Martial references Postumus's habit of giving half-kisses to some people. Typically, a kiss is meant to be full, but Postumus detracts from this, and Martial calls him out on it. The last part of "you may take away this half" implies that Martial does not want a kiss from Postumus. Since the tone of these lines aren't intimate (it is not explicitly mentioned that Postumus is a love interest of Martial's), *basia* does not involve a romantic gesture. Rather, *basia* could either be a formal kiss or a neutral connotation. Perhaps this kiss is meant for relatives or important senators, or this may just be a kiss without any meaning behind it. More evidence is needed to make a substantial claim on this. While it is certainly possible to consider *basia* and its inflections in happy or sad situations, it can also be used to further insults. *Cur non basio te, Philaeni? Calua es. Cur non basio te, Philaeni? Rufa es. Cur non basio te, Philaeni? Lusca es:* Why do I not kiss you, Philaenis? You are bald. Why do I not kiss you, Philaenis? You are red-haired. Why do I not kiss you, Philaenis? You are blind (Martial, Epigrams, 2.33.1-3). In this example, Philaenis is a Roman woman that Martial heaves insults upon. He calls her bald, red-haired, and blind. Noticeably, these are facial features, essentially looks, that Martial dislikes. Hence, Martial is making the point that Philaenis is too ugly to be kissed. Therefore, it is implied by *basio* that the supposed kiss is meant to be intimate or neutral. Either Martial believes that a passionate kiss is not for Philaenis or he uses *basio* as an impartial kiss without feelings. That being said, the harsh emotions that Martial implies on Philaenis may exhibit something more than neutrality.

Having seen Martial use *basium* and its inflections in a negative view, it is not surprising that there exist uses of it in even more vulgar contexts. *Consumptis versibus suis immundissimo me basio conspuit*: Having finished his verses he spat on me with the most impure kiss (Petronius, Satyricon, 23.4). Petronius (1st century A.D.) was a Roman author employed under Emperor Nero. He is best known for the Satyricon, a fragmented novel that satirizes the vulgar decadence and immoral taste of Roman society. In the lines preceding this, a rather lewd piece of poetry was presented to a prostitute, which she was rather unfond of. The poet then began to kiss her with a most evil desire and complexion, which is best identified through *immundissimo*, a superlative emphasizing this disgust. This is a rather curious reference since *immundissimo* directly contradicts that which is *basio*, typically an affectionate kiss. It can be

speculated that Petronius chose this word to highlight the contrast between these words although more evidence is required to reach this conclusion. While Petronius considers one aspect of *basio*, he employs another in a previous line: *Hilarior post hanc pollicitantionem facta mulier basiavit me spissius*: The woman more cheerful after this promise kissed me more intensely (Petronius, Satyricon, 18.3-4). In this section of the Satyricon, a priestess has caught the two main characters, who secretly witnessed her rites to her god, Priapus. Understandably, she is inconsolable after this and begins sobbing deep tears until the characters promise that they will never divulge her secrets. At this notice, Quartilla, the priestess, reverts her composure and kisses her saviors. The use of the verb form *basiavit* alongside *spissius* is that Petronius refers to the intimate side of the kiss, one that is deep and intense. Clearly, Quartilla shows care for these characters, and she exhibits that in a kiss.

Having been exposed to many different uses of the form *basium*, it is natural to question what etymology this word comes from and where Catullus possibly took this from. It is believed to be derived from Celtic or Germanic origin rather than the typical Proto-Indo-European roots. Moreover, there are many standard words for "kiss" that are descendants of *basium*, such as Bacio in Italian, Beso in Spanish, and Baiser in French. Additionally, there are modern words descending from the verb *basiare* such as Baciare from Italian and Besar from Spanish. A common link between these words is the "Ba" sound in the beginning. To directly connect it to how Catullus derived it would require more evidence on his side.

Beyond the use of the words *osculum* and *savia* that were known to mean kisses, Catullus opted for an entirely new word with a similar definition of a romantic gesture in the form of a kiss. After Catullus's time, *basium* and its inflections have been used by authors Martial, Petronius, and others in a wide variety of circumstances including heartbreak or disgust, deep love for someone, or a neutral connotation. More evidence is required to make a definite conclusion on whether *basium* was more popular than inflections of *osculum* and *savia*, but it is certainly true that *basium* escaped Catullus's work and was featured in later prominent Roman author's pieces with an array of contexts that it served to ultimately mean a passionate kiss.

Word Study 6

A Passion for *Aestuosus*

Derived from the Proto-Italic **aissus*, and from the Proto-Indo-European **h₂eydʰ,* meaning "burn" or "fire," and from the Latin noun *aestu,* the Latin adjective *aestuosus* means raging, burning hot, seething. While the word describes something physically hot or burning, *aestuosus* is also used to describe anger and passion. The adjective retained the same meaning throughout ancient Latin with a few descendants remaining in Italian and English today.

Although there is no recorded first use of the word (Some of the earlier forms that appear in Plautus' works, for instance are the noun *aestus*, not the adjective *aestuosus*), one of the earliest uses of *aestuous* appears in Catullus' *Carmina,* a collection of one hundred and thirteen poems written between 62 and 54 BC. *Quaeris, quot mihi basiationes/tuae, Lesbia, sint satis superque./quam magnus numerus Libyssae harenae/lasarpiciferis iacet Cyrenis/oraclum Iovis inter aestuosi/et Batti veteris sacrum sepulcrum.* You ask how many of your kisses are enough for me, Lesbia, and more than enough. However many Libyan sands lie at the Silphium-bearing Cyrene plant between the oracle of the raging Jupiter and the sacred tomb of the ancient Battus (Catullus 7.1-6). In this example, the adjective describes Jupiter, calling him "raging." This use could be interpreted two different ways. The first interpretation that

aestuosus could mean raging as in "raging hot" in a physical sense. In the passage, Catullus is telling his Lesbia that as many grains of sand there are in Libya would be enough kisses for him. The Libyan sands are incredibly hot in the light of the sun, and so the word "raging" could be describing the physicality of the hot sands. However, the second interpretation is that *aestuosus* could mean "raging" as in angry or passionate, and could be drawing parallels between the sand and Jupiter, describing the hot sand as tumultuous and raging as Jupiter himself. Evidently, Catullus tends to write in extremes in this particular poem, and in general, and thus, the second interpretation best suits the idea of the poem, that the infinite number of sands will be only be enough to satisfy him.

Approximately a century after Catullus' *Carmina,* Pliny the Elder wrote his *Naturalis Historia,* which also uses the word *aestuous* when explaining the wind's tendencies and temperatures. *Aestuosus auster, tepidi vulturnus et favonius. iidem subsolano sicciores, et in totum omnes a septentrione et occidente sicciores quam a meridie et oriente.* The south wind is burning hot, while the west and south-east winds are warm. The same winds are drier in the south-east, and, overall, winds from the north and west are drier than those from the south and east (Pliny the Elder 2.53.4). Again, in Pliny's passage, as well as Catullus', the meaning of the adjective could be ambiguous, meaning either literally "hot," or, if the definition was swapped and the word "seething" or "raging" was placed here instead, the sentence would read something like this: "The south wind is raging." This would change the meaning from a purely physical sense to a metaphorical sense, and the word would personify the wind, revealing its tumultuous and angry nature. However, since Pliny the Elder had a vastly different writing style than Catullus and since he was a philosopher and not a poet, the first interpretation is the more likely interpretation: the literal version over the metaphorical and personified version.

Around 392 to 405 AD, Aurelius Prudentius Clemens wrote his Peristephanon Liber, a collection of Christian poems emphasizing the struggles of martyrs in the church. He writes, *ut febris atro felle venas exedit/vel summa pellis ignis obductus coquit/papulasque fervor aestuosus excitat.* As the fever eats away the veins with black poison or the whole skin, having been covered, boils from a flame, and burning heat excites papules (Prudentius, 10.487-89). In this excerpt, Prudentius specifically describes the boiling fever, the physical turmoil and struggle of martyrs, in a graphic way. The only conclusion that can be gathered from this example is that the connotation is purely physical and non metaphorical.

Roughly around 1410–1475 AD, Georgius Sisgoreus wrote his *Carmina,* a collection of Medieval Latin poems, which were primarily reflections on sorrow, celebration, and divine influence. He uses the word *aestuous* to depict the "burning" passion or dedication of someone praying for rain and blessings. *Huius orantis calor aestuosus/Rore complebat steriles aristas,/Nigra pellebat, faciebat astra/Porro serena.* The burning passion of this one praying was filling up the barren harvest with dew, was expelling the dark, and was making the stars beyond serene (Sisgoreo, 1.16-20). Instead of a physical flame, Sisgoreo describes the emotional state of the one praying. Therefore, it is evident from the excerpt that there is only one interpretation and it is that the word *aestuosus* is used in a intellectual sense, describing the yearning of a desperate man.

The latin word *aestuosus* has survived throughout history, with its root belonging to many contemporary languages. A few of the descendants include Italian and English. In Italian, "aestuoso" means fiery, raging, or passionate. Similar to the Italian descendant, in English, the word "aestuous" means fiery or fervent. Additionally, because the uses of the word mean burning, seething, and raging are spread all throughout ancient Latin in both physical and metaphorical senses, depending on context, the word did not change over time, but retained its meaning.

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Word Study 7

Dear Author: You needed to adhere to the instructions about using 1.15 spacing.

Venenum: Poison and Destruction from Within

The Latin noun *venenum* often translates into English as "poison." *Venenum* still carries the broader idea of something that works from within, often with an element of attraction. With this starting point, *venenum* describes literal poison, emotional damage, corruption, and attractive indulgences. These meanings also tend to align with genre, as prose authors often use *venenum* in concrete or ethical contexts, while poets expand the meaning to the metaphorical.

Presumably, *venenum* is connected to the Proto-Indo-European root *wen-* meaning "to desire" or "to strive for." *Wen-* is also associated with Venus, the Roman goddess of love and seduction, which gives *venenum* the charm and attractive poison meaning. Similar to the Greek word *pharmakon* (φάρμακον), meaning medicine or poison, *venenum* could refer to any powerful substance that can help or harm, depending on the context. The connected Latin verb *veneno* means "to poison," but also to slander or corrupt, while *veneficus* means poisoner, sorcerer, or wizard. Some descendants of *venenum* include venom, Spanish *veneno*, and Italian *veleno*. These modern words mostly lose their abstract meanings and become deadly poison.

The first and most common meaning of *venenum* is literal poison or venom. When Cicero defends Marcus Caelius Rufus in court in 56 BCE, he addresses accusations tied to Clodia, Catullus's mistress. *Necare eandem voluit; quaesivit venenum, sollicitavit quos potuit, paravit, locum constituit, attulit.* He wanted to kill her; he sought poison, he stirred up whom he could, he prepared it, he fixed the place, he brought it (Cicero, *Pro Caelio* 31). *Venenum* must mean literal poison because the language is concrete and forensic; this use establishes venenum as a deliberate force acting from within. In another example, Cicero tells a story about a deserter who offers to kill Pyrrhus with poison. *Cum a Pyrrho perfuga senatui est pollicitus se venenum regi daturum et eum necaturum.* When a deserter from Pyrrhus promised the senate that he would give poison to the king and kill him (Cicero, *De Officiis* 1.40). Since the deserter is proposing an assassination, *venenum* can be framed as dishonorable poison. The meaning stays relatively constant with shifts in context from crime to moral corruption.

While there are numerous examples where *venenum* means literal poison in Cicero, other authors also used the word. Ovid writes in his Metamorphoses about poison being breathed in and destroying the body. *Inspiratque nocens virus piceumque per ossa / dissipat et medio spargit pulmone venenum.* and she breathes in harmful poison and scatters black venom through the bones and spreads poison in the middle of the lung (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 2.800-801). *Venenum* is literal here because it is a toxin that penetrates the body and physically acts within it, with the emphasis on movement through the body highlighting how *venenum* works internally. There is also a parallel between *virus* and *venenum*—they both mean "poison" on a surface level, but *virus* is more associated with snake venom and *venenum* means poison with a false allure and charm. In Apuleius's Metamorphoses, written in the 2nd century CE, *venenum* has a slightly changed meaning in context. *Quod inmixtum vino soporiferum gerebat venenum.* Which carries a sleep-bringing poison mixed into the wine (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 8.11). Because of *soporiferum*, *venenum* cannot mean deadly poison because it only induces sleep. This expands the meaning of venenum beyond death, showing that it can alter the body without destroying it.

The second meaning of *venenum* starts to shift towards poison affecting the mind. In one of Catullus's poems, he writes to a friend who betrayed him. *Eripuisti, heu heu nostrae crudele venenum / vitae, heu heu nostrae pestis amicitiae*. You have snatched away, alas alas, the cruel poison of my life, alas alas, the plague of our friendship (Catullus, *Carmina* 77.5-6). *Venenum* cannot be literal, because Catullus equates a friendship with metaphorical poison and emotional toxicity. The parallel with *pestis*, meaning plague or disease, shows how the betrayal is destroying Catullus from the inside. *Venenum* is no longer a substance at all, but a mental corruption that functions like poison. Seneca the Younger debates snake venom with a metaphorical type of poison, but he uses *venenum* for both. *Illud venenum quod serpentes in alienam perniciem proferunt, sine sua continent; non est huic simile: hoc habentibus pessimum est.* That poison which snakes bring forth for another's destruction they contain without their own [hurt]; this is not like that: this is worst for those who have it (Seneca, *Epistulae Morales* 81.23). Here, the pronouns all refer to *venenum*, but *illud venenum* is clearly snake venom, and *hoc [venenum]* is a metaphorical poison, because it is an inner corruption that harms the bearer most.

The third meaning of *venenum* shifts from a poison affecting the mind to a poison in politics and language. In Livy's histories, the word is applied directly to the state itself. *Discordia ordinum et venenum urbis huius, patrum ac plebis certamina.* The discord of the orders and the poison of this city, the struggles of patricians and plebeians (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 3.67). Here, *venenum* is not literal, as the city's poison is political conflict. Instead, this struggle functions like poison, working internally to weaken and damage the state. Jerome tweaks this meaning in late Christian Latin. *Venenum aspidum sub labiis eorum.* The poison of asps is under their lips (Jerome, *Psalmi* 139.4). When Jerome says that venom is under the lips, he means that the venom is poisoning a person's words. *Venenum* describes an internal toxin that poisons politics and language.

The fourth meaning of *venenum* shows a different view of the word as something attractive and harmful at the same time. Catullus uses this idea for literature when he receives terrible poetry as a gift. After building mock outrage about a horrible and sacred little book, he threatens revenge. *Curram scrinia, Caesios, Aquinos, / Suffenum, omnia colligam venena.* I will run to the booksellers' stalls, / I will gather up all the poisons of Caesii, Aquini, and Suffenus (Catullus, *Carmina* 14). *Venena* cannot mean literal poison because it refers to poetry, framing it hyperbolically as poisoning the mind with awful literature. Seneca uses *venenum* more seriously while critiquing luxury. *Illos boletos, voluptarium venenum, / credis cibos esse?* Those mushrooms, a pleasure-giving poison— / do you believe them to be food? (Seneca,

Epistulae Morales 95). This is a paradox—it is *voluptarium venenum*, desirable poison. The point is that pleasure can conceal venom, drawing someone in before harming them. This makes attraction itself a means of harm. In both Catullus and Seneca, *venenum* does not just destroy, but is attractive and draws people in before harming them from within.

In conclusion, *venenum* resists a single definition. The closest translation is something that destroys from within in various ways. Its connection to charm and attraction from its etymology and connection to Venus further complicates the word. Across all these meanings, *venenum* consistently describes harm that is internal, often hidden, and sometimes even desired.

Word Study 8

Formulating the idea of *Auctōritās*

The noun *auctōritās, auctōritātis* means, most literally, a giving of increase. The word is formed from *auctor* and the suffix *-tas*. Although *auctor* is nearly always translated as an author, particularly of a creative written work or sometimes of other types of creative works, that root has the much broader meaning of an originator, or more abstractly a giver of increase. The suffix *-tas,* meanwhile, modifies a noun or adjective to mean an instance of something, indicating the state of being of the compound word. Thus *auctōritās* is best thought of as the action that *auctores* take to create a work. At the same time, *auctōritās* is not constrained to creative works—as the ancient authors demonstrate, it can also simply be the action of bettering a particular thing, whether a creative work or a civilization.

One use of auctōritās is by Cicero, who lived from 106 BC to 43BC. In his *De Officiis*, Cicero reminds his son Marcus that the philosopher Cratippus is a great man, writing *...propter summam et doctoris auctoritatem et urbis* On account of both the greatest prestige of the educated man and [on account of] the city (Cicero, *Officiis* I.1.3–4). Cicero uses *auctōritās* to refer to the fame Cratippus holds among scholars in Athens. However, in this context, *auctōritās* can convey another meaning as well, that of Cratippus' leadership and support. *Auctōritās* is derived from *auctor*, which, in its more general form, is one who gives increase, hinting at meanings of originator or ancestor. Thus *auctōritās* is an instance of such originating design—that of a teacher forming his student, as Cratippus is a formational figure for Cicero's son. The idea in that meaning is that Marcus the lesser is becoming the brainchild of Cratippus, his *auctor*.

Caesar, a contemporary of Cicero, uses *auctōritās* differently. In his *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* Caesar writes, *quem sibi fidelem esse arbitrabatur cuiusque auctoritas in his regionibus magni habebatur…* whom he was considering to be faithful to himself, and whose influence was being held [as] great in these regions… (Caesar, *Gallico* IV.21.7.3–4). Casear is describing his own relationship to Commius, a political leader he has ties to. Rather than Commius being prestigious or acting as an *auctor*, in this passage Caesar is most plausibly describing Commius as useful to himself because of his command—Caesar values, or literally "considers to be great," that Commius has influence over the region. Thus, in this case, it's less that Commius is renowned or prestigious, but rather that he is in a position of power and holds it well.

Livy, living from 59BC to 17 AD, a few decades later than Cicero and Caesar, writes in his *Ab Urbe Condita* the following: *mirer si uana uestra, patres conscripti, auctoritas ad plebem est?* Should I wonder, O conscript fathers, if your prestige is worthless to the common man? (Livy, *Ab Urbe* III.21.4). While this could be referring again to the idea of authority over another in this passage, it makes more

sense here for *auctōritās* to refer to the prestige of the conscript fathers because that is something that the common man can more easily consider to be worthless than physical political power. This strengthens the point that *auctōritās* has many different applications.

Pliny the Elder, living a couple generations later, in the first century AD, uses *auctōritās* as well. In a passage in his *Naturalis Historia*, Pliny is describes the various kinds of paper that the Romans prefer, and the history of writing materials. As he concludes, he writes, *ob haec praelata omnibus Claudia, Augustae in epistulis auctoritas relicta* [But] with Claudian[-style paper] preferred for everything on account of this, the prestige of the Augustan [style] survives in letters (Pliny, *Hist.* 13.80.2–3). This use of *auctōritās* refers to the credibility or prestige associated with the particular use of paper for the purpose of letter-writing. It could also be translated appropriately as having the authority or command over this particular use of paper, that it dominates the market. *Auctōritās* evokes a sense that this Augustan paper is the gold standard for letter-writing in particular, despite Claudian paper being preferred for general-purpose use.

Perhaps a better way to convey the idea of *auctōritās* in English is the idea of bringing more to the table. An *auctor* in the broad sense is one that gives increase or betterment to a work or a system, and *auctōritās* is the betterment that the *auctor* delivers. This manifests itself in a variety of ways, whether it's through the formation of students, the benevolent power over a region, or the unrivaled qualities that a certain type of paper brings to a particular use. *Auctōritās*, then, is multifaceted if anything. As a concept, *auctōritās* is very abstract and applies in a wide variety of contexts. This is largely in contrast to its root, *auctor*, which often can be translated to a relatively narrow and specific idea: an author, designer, artist, or creator. A great direction for further research would be to explore whether *auctōritās*'s root word *auctor* is ever used in such abstract senses as well.

Word Study 9

Not submitted