



University  
of Glasgow

Panayotakis, Costas (2013) *The collection of sententiae associated with the mimographer Publilius and its portrayal of laughter, tears, and silence*. *Logeion*, 3 . pp. 101-119.

Copyright © 2013 Crete University Press

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge

Content must not be changed in any way or reproduced in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holder(s)

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details must be given

<http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/92655/>

Deposited on: 20 June 2014

Enlighten – Research publications by members of the University of Glasgow  
<http://eprints.gla.ac.uk>

THE COLLECTION OF *SENTENTIAE* ASSOCIATED  
WITH THE MIMOGRAPHER PUBLILIUS AND ITS  
PORTRAYAL OF LAUGHTER, TEARS, AND SILENCE\*



I.

The alphabetically arranged collection of at least 734 Latin apophthegms, from which I draw material for my discussion, almost certainly existed in some form in Aulus Gellius' time (and perhaps even earlier, at the time of the Elder Seneca; see section II, below), and was then associated with a person whose name was in all likelihood Publilius, *not* Publius Syrus<sup>1</sup> or Publius (a reading which is found in some manuscripts and which I take to be the result of haplography). He seems to have been a mimographer and mime-actor, and is said to have come from Syria to Italy as a slave in the mid-first century B.C.<sup>2</sup> Originally some (not all) of the sayings would have formed part of amusing and possibly indecent mime-plays, composed and acted by Publilius himself and destined for live performance. Their context is now lost. Therefore, it is impossible to say whether or not the humorous or serious remarks expressed in the sayings would have been conveyed ironically or sin-

---

\* I would like to thank the following funding bodies for generously sponsoring my project on the *sententiae*: The John Robertson Bequest at the University of Glasgow, The Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland, and the British School at Rome. My source of inspiration for writing this piece has been the excellent work of Donald Lateiner on non-verbal behaviour in the ancient world, including the portrayal of tears and laughter in narrative (especially Lateiner (1977) 173-182 and Lateiner (2009) 277-295). I am most grateful to Stavros Tsitsiridis for encouraging me to send my work to *Logeion*, and I thank the anonymous referee for his/her comments.

1. See Reeve (1983) 328 n. 14.
2. The best starting point on all aspects of Publilian studies continues to be Skutsch's comprehensive entry on Publilius in the *RE* 23.2 (1959) columns 1920-1928. The *sententiae* are discussed in columns 1924-1927.

cerely in their original context. The fragments of the plays of Publilius do not elucidate the matter further, because all that remains from his non-apophthegmatic corpus are two titles and four lines. It is clear, however, that already in antiquity Publilius was greatly admired by members of the Roman upper classes for the brilliance of his style.<sup>3</sup>

A large part of the maxims associated with Publilius deals with popular morality, social and cultural values, and emotions, such as friendship, love, greed, anger, hatred, and fear,<sup>4</sup> and many of them preach self-control in a witty fashion. Although the collection of *sententiae* contains sayings on non-verbal behaviour other than those I select to discuss in this paper (for example, it contains a large number of sayings on *ira* “wrath”, as can be seen from the list in footnote 4), my aim is to focus only on the sayings of the collection on tears, laughter, and silence. This is because they form a discreet unit of non-verbal behaviour, the display of which played a crucial role in the social, cultural, and political spheres in the Roman world.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, recently published excellent studies on Roman popular morality and on Greco-Roman dacryology do not examine the groups of maxims I discuss here.<sup>6</sup> I wish therefore to add to the modern bibliography on the subject by exploring what sort of image was projected through the *sententiae* with regard to the above manifestations of non-verbal behaviour, and also by thinking

3. On the evidence for this see section II, below.

4. FRIENDSHIP: A10; A41; A53; A54; A56; C6; C43; D28; I16; I32; P25; P52; Q24; Q40; Q69; R8. – LOVE: A6; A13; A15; A16; A18; A19; A22; A29; A31; A34; A37; A38; A39; A42; B13; C22; I18; I38; I39; I44; I46; N57; O15; Q34. – GREED: A14; A21; A23; A25; A26; A46; A47; A55; C37; I5; I7; M1; N10; S30; T3. – ANGER: A13; A19; B10; B31; B32; B35; B37; C11; C22; C28; E11; F13; F19; G2; H2; I18; I19; I20; I22; I33; I43; I51; L13; L14; N34; P17; P34; P53; R2; R12; S1; S37; T4. – HATRED: A6; A56; O10; Q47; Q73. – FEAR: A3; A43; A49; C13; D15; F29; H3; I26; I40; M10; M30; M36; M49; M51; M56; N37; N38; N50; P3; P45; Q7; Q12; Q24; Q40; Q42; Q52; Q65; R2; S6; S13; S15; S24; S37; V3; V6; V21; V29. In my citations of the *sententiae* throughout this paper I follow the numeration and text of Meyer (1880).

5. On the importance of employing tears, observing silence, and laughing when appropriate in Roman oratory and historiography, and especially in court speeches, the other major performance space in antiquity, see Corbeill (1996), Montiglio (2000) 116-157, Pernot (2005) 121-125, and de Libero (2009).

6. Morgan (2007) 84-121 (= chapter 4) is dedicated to a discussion of Greek and Roman *γῶμαι* (including Publilius), which she analyzes under the following sub-headings: “wealth”; “good social relations: the more and less powerful”; “friendship”; “intelligence and foolishness”; “speech and lies”; “women, family, and love”; “justice and the law”; “gods, the metaphysical and humanity”; and “*variā*”. But Morgan does not deal with tears, laughter, and silence. Fögen (2009b) 6-11 and 14-15 lists important, modern, studies on tears, crying, and laughter. The only parts of Fögen (2009a) that mention Publilius are Fögen (2009c) 187 n. 11 and 200 n. 39.

about how this projection squares with the portrayal of laughter, tears, and silence in the so-called “Menandrian” collection of one-line apophthegms. There are two reasons why I bring into my discussion the collection of the Greek *γνώμαι*: it is easily and usefully comparable to the collection of the Latin *sententiae* in length and variety of subject-matter, and, owing to the striking similarities and differences which the two collections present, it enables us to make interesting observations about crying, laughing, and being silent in the Greco-Roman world. It is not my intention to argue that the collection of the Latin *sententiae* contains sayings that have been faithfully translated or loosely adapted from the Greek anthology, although it is conceivable that the two collections were created through a similar process, and that the unknown compiler of the Latin collection knew of the existence of a Greek anthology of one-line sayings, and perhaps drew from it (more on this in section III, below).

## II.

The evidence on the reception of Publilius in the early Imperial period and in late antiquity suggests that his reputation as a comic playwright was almost non-existent when compared to his popularity and fame as a stylistically brilliant composer of *sententiae*, which seem to have made him not only fashionable in theatres and important to those who practised rhetoric, but also part of the school curriculum perhaps as early as the first century A.D. According to the Elder Seneca, who was reporting Cassius Severus’ views on the fashion for *sententiae* in the rhetorical culture of his time (*Contr.* 7.3.8), Publilius’ fondness for moral maxims was taken to extremes by young men, who were poor imitators of his talent.

memini Moschum, <cum> [add. *Kießling*] loqueretur de hoc genere sententiarum, quo infecta iam erant adulescentorum omnium ingenia, queri de Publilio quasi ille [iam] [del. *Baumm*] hanc insaniam introduxisset. Cassius Severus, summus Publili amatore, aiebat non illius hoc vitium esse, sed eorum, qui illum ex parte qua transire deberent imitentur, <non imitentur> [add. *Bursian*] quae apud eum melius essent dicta quam apud quemquam comicum tragicumque aut Romanum aut Graecum; ut illum verum quo aiebat unum verum inveniri non posse meliorem: “tam dest avaro quod habet quam quod non habet” [T3 Meyer; the saying appears only in *collectio* Ψ (only in MS F),<sup>7</sup> and it is also cited by Quintilian 8.5.6, 9.3.64, and by Jerome *Ep.* 53.11]; et illum de eadem re dictum: “desunt luxuriae multa, avaritiae omnia” [17 Mey-

7. On the sigla Σ, Π, Ψ, Υ, Ο, and Φ, see the first paragraph of Section III.

er; the saying appears in *collectiones* Σ, Π, and Ψ, and it is also cited by Seneca, *Ep.* 108.9]; et illos versus qui huic quoque ter abdicatione possent convenire: “o vita misero longa, felici brevis!” [O3 Meyer; the saying appears only in *collectio* Ψ (only in MS F)] et plurimos deinceps versus referebat Publili disertissimos.

Seneca, *Contr.* 7.3.8

I remember that Moschus, speaking of this type of epigram, which had infected all the bright young men even in those days, complained of Publilius for introducing this foolish feature. Cassius Severus, a great lover of Publilius, said it wasn't his fault, but the fault of those who imitated the side of Publilius that they should have passed by, while failing to imitate things that were better put by Publilius than by any comic or tragic writer, Greek or Roman — for example, one verse which could not (according to Cassius) be matched by any other single line: “The greedy lack what they have as much as what they do not have”; and this on the same subject: “Luxury lacks much, avarice everything”; and (verses that might fit our thrice-disinherited son too): “O life — long for the wretched, short for the happy!” And he went on to recall in turn many of Publilius' cleverest lines.

transl. M. Winterbottom, Loeb Classical Library

The Elder Seneca calls Publilius' verses *disertissimos* ('cleverest' in M. Winterbottom's translation, or 'most skilfully expressed', according to the *OLD*), an adjective picked up by the Younger Seneca (*Ep.* 8.8.9) in his explicit comparison of Publilius' *dicta* with those found in tragedy (*Ep.* 8.8.9 and *Tranq. An.* 11.8):

quantum disertissimorum versuum inter mimos iacet! quam multa Publilii [*P<sup>1b</sup>*: *publii cett. codd.*] non excalceatis sed coturnatis dicenda sunt! unum versum eius, qui ad philosophiam pertinet et ad hanc partem quae modo fuit in manibus, referam, quo negat fortuita in nostro habenda: “alienum est omne quidquid optando evenit.” [A1 Meyer; the saying appears in *collectiones* Σ and Ψ]

Seneca, *Ep.* 8.8-9 Reynolds

What a quantity of sagacious verses lie buried in the mime! How many of Publilius's lines are worthy of being spoken by buskin-clad actors, as well as by wearers of the slipper! I shall quote one verse of his, which concerns philosophy, and particularly that phase of it which we were discussing a moment ago, wherein he says that the gifts of Chance are not to be regarded as part of our possessions: “Still alien is whatever you have gained by coveting.”

transl. R. M. Gummere, Loeb Classical Library

numquam me in bona re mali pudebit auctoris. Publilius [*Haupt*: *publius codd.*], tragicis comicisque vehementior ingenii quotiens mimicas ineptias

et verba ad summam caveam spectantia reliquit, inter multa alia coturno, non tantum sipario, fortiora et hoc ait: “cuius potest accidere quod cuiquam potest.” [C34 Meyer; the saying appears in *collectiones* Π and Ψ] hoc si quis in medullas demiserit et omnia aliena mala, quorum ingens cotidie copia est, sic aspexerit tamquam liberum illis et ad se iter sit, multo ante se armabit quam petatur; sero animus ad periculorum patientiam post pericula instruitur.

Seneca, *De tranq. an.* 11.8 Reynolds

I shall never be ashamed to quote a bad author if what he says is good. Publilius, who, whenever he abandoned the absurdities of farce and language directed to the gallery, had more vigour than the writers of comedy and tragedy, among many other utterances more striking than any that came from the buskined — to say nothing of the comic curtain’s — stage, has also this: “Whatever can one man befall can happen just as well to all”. If a man lets this sink deep into his heart, and, when he looks upon the evils of others, of which there is a huge supply every day, remembers that they are free to come to him also, he will arm himself against them long before they attack him. It is too late to equip the soul to endure dangers after the dangers have arisen.

transl. J. W. Basore, Loeb Classical Library

Seneca expresses his unqualified admiration for Publilius’ sayings (*Ep.* 94.28 and 94.43),<sup>8</sup> and testifies to their impact on, and popularity with, the

8. See Seneca, *Ep.* 94.28 Reynolds: numquid rationem exiges cum tibi aliquis hos dixerit versus? “iniuriarum remedium est oblivio.” [I21 Meyer; the saying appears in all the extant *collectiones* Σ, Π, Ψ, Υ, Ο, and Φ] “audentis fortuna iuvat, piger ipse sibi opstat.” advocatum ista quaerunt: adfectos ipsos tangunt et natura vim suam exercente proficiunt (“Shall you not call yourself to account when someone repeats to you lines like these: ‘Forgetting trouble is the way to cure it.’ ‘Fortune favours the brave; but the coward is foiled by his faint heart’. Such maxims need no special pleader; they go straight to our emotions, and help us simply because Nature is exercising her proper function.”) (transl. R. M. Gummere, Loeb Classical Library); and Seneca, *Ep.* 94.43 Reynolds: quis autem negabit feriri quibusdam praeceptis efficaciter etiam imperitissimos? velut his brevissimis vocibus, sed multum habentibus ponderis: “nil nimis”. “avarus animus nullo satiatur lucro.” [A55 Meyer; the saying does not appear in any of the MSS] “ab alio expectes alteri quod feceris.” [A2 Meyer; the saying appears in *collectiones* Σ, Π, Ψ, Ο, and Φ] haec cum ictu quodam audimus, nec ulli licet dubitare aut interrogare “quare?”; adeo etiam sine ratione ipsa veritas lucet (“Moreover, who can deny that even the most inexperienced are effectively struck by the force of certain precepts? For example, by such brief but weighty saws as: ‘Nothing in excess,’ ‘The greedy mind is satisfied by no gains,’ ‘You must expect to be treated by others as you yourself have treated them.’ We receive a sort of shock when we hear such sayings; no one ever thinks of doubting them or of asking: ‘Why?’ So strongly, indeed, does mere truth, unaccompanied by reason, attract us”) (transl. R. M. Gummere, Loeb Classical Library).

members of the audience in the theatre (*Ep.* 108.8-9 and 108.11-12).<sup>9</sup> In the writings of the Younger Seneca we may also witness how the pithy sayings started to become intellectually separated and perhaps also textually dissociated from the theatrical genre and the farcical space to which they belonged:

egregium versum et dignum qui non e pulpito exiret: “cuivis potest accidere quod cuiquam potest!” [C34 Meyer; the saying appears in *collectiones* Π and Ψ’]

Seneca, *Consol. ad Marc.* 9.5 Reynolds

A striking verse this — too good to have come from the stage: “Whatever can one man befall can happen just as well to all!”

transl. J. W. Basore, Loeb Classical Library

It is plausible that during Seneca’s era *some* of Publilius’ sayings were taken out of their mime-scripts and were embedded either individually or as a collection into the set texts taught, according to Seneca, because of their edifying and linguistic virtues, in the schools of the first century A.D.:

Nec dubito quin multum conferant rudibus adhuc et extrinsecus auscultantibus; facilius enim singula insidunt circumscripta et carminis modo inclusa. ideo pueris et sententias ediscendas damus et has quas Graeci

9. See Seneca, *Ep.* 108.8-9 Reynolds: non vides quemadmodum theatra consonent quotiens aliqua dicta sunt quae publice adgnosimus et consensu vera esse testamur? “desunt inopiae multa, avaritiae omnia.” [17 Meyer; the saying appears in *collectiones* Σ, Π, and Ψ’, and is cited by Seneca, *Contr.* 7.18] “in nullum avarus bonus est, in se pessimus” [15 Meyer; the saying appears in *collectiones* Σ, Π, and Ψ’]. ad hos versus ille sordidissimus plaudit et vitiiis suis fieri convicium gaudet (“Have you not noticed how the theatre re-echoes whenever any words are spoken whose truth we appreciate generally and confirm unanimously? ‘The poor lack much: the greedy man lacks all.’ ‘A greedy man does good to none; he does most evil to himself’. At such verses as these, your meanest miser claps applause and rejoices to hear his own sins reviled.”) (transl. R. M. Gummere, Loeb Classical Library); and Seneca, *Ep.* 108.11-2 Reynolds: magis tamen feriuntur animi cum carmina eiusmodi dicta sunt: “is minimo eget mortalis qui minimum cupit.” [156 Meyer; the saying appears in *collectiones* Π, Ψ’, and Φ] “quod vult habet qui velle quod satis est potest.” [Q74 Meyer; the saying does not appear in any of the MSS] cum haec atque eiusmodi audimus, ad confessionem veritatis adducimur (“But our minds are struck more effectively when a verse like this is repeated: ‘He needs but little who desires but little.’ or, ‘He hath his wish, whose wish includeth naught save that which is enough.’ When we hear such words as these, we are led towards a confession of the truth”) (transl. R. M. Gummere, Loeb Classical Library).

chrias vocant, quia conplecti illas puerilis animus potest, qui plus adhuc non capit.

Seneca, *Ep.* 33.6-7 Reynolds

Doubtless they [i.e. some passages] would be of much benefit to those who are still novices and worshipping outside the shrine; for single maxims sink in more easily when they are marked off and bounded like a line of verse. That is why we give to children a proverb, or that which the Greeks call *Chria*, to be learned by heart: that sort of thing can be comprehended by the young mind, which cannot as yet hold more.

transl. R. M. Gummere, Loeb Classical Library

This is important for my argument, because it is possible to see how a school-teacher or a private tutor would have exploited *sententiae* on, say, the value of silence or the connection between female deception and tears in order to encourage social stereotypes, promote self-control, discourage hasty actions, and enhance gender-biased perceptions with regard to non-verbal communication.

We know that in the fourth century Jerome (*Ep.* 107.8) studied as a pupil some of the *sententiae*, and it is possible to argue that the corpus of the *sententiae* existed as a collection already in Neronian times, because the Younger Seneca in his letters cites three *sententiae* starting with the letter A (A1, A2, and A55; *Ep.* 8.8-9 and 94.43) and four starting with the letter I (I5, I7, I21, and I56; *Ep.* 94.28, 108.8-9, and 108.11-12).<sup>10</sup> The fourteen sayings that are quoted by Gellius (17.14.1-4) and are attributed by him to Publilius are neither grouped under obvious thematic categories nor listed in any strict alphabetical order.<sup>11</sup> But is it accidental that Gellius cites three *sententiae* starting with F, two with C, two with I, and two with N?

Sententiae ex Publili [FON: publilii IIð: publilii X] mimis selectae lepidiores Publilius [F2Z: publilii cett. codd.] mimos scriptavit, dignusque habitus est qui subpar Laberio iudicaretur. C. autem Caesarem ita Laberii maledicentia et adrogantia offendebat, ut acceptiores et probatiores sibi esse Publilii [edd.: publilii codd.] quam Laberii mimos praedicaret. huius Publilii [edd.: publilii codd.] sententiae feruntur pleraeque lepidae et ad communem sermonum usum commendatissimae, ex quibus sunt istae singulis versibus circumscriptae, quas libitum hercle est adscribere: malum est consilium, quod mutari non potest. [M54 Meyer; in Ψ and O]

10. See Skutsch (1959) column 1924.

11. Macrobius (*Sat.* 2.7.10-11, copying almost exactly Gellius' account) is not an independent witness to the transmission of the collection, and for this reason I do not assess separately the validity of his evidence.

beneficio dando accepit, qui digno dedit. [B12 Meyer; in  $\Sigma$ ,  $\Psi$ , and  $\Upsilon$ ]  
 feras, non culpes, quod vitari non potest. [F11 Meyer; in  $\Sigma$ ,  $\Psi$ , and  $\Upsilon$ ]  
 cui plus licet, quam par est, plus vult, quam licet. [C46 Meyer; not in the MSS]  
 comes facundus in via pro vehiculo est. [C17 Meyer; in  $\Sigma$ ,  $\Pi$ ,  $\Psi$ , and  $\Upsilon$ ]  
 frugalitas miseria est rumoris boni. [F28 Meyer; in  $\Pi$  and  $\Psi$  (only in F)]  
 heredis fletus sub persona risus est. [H19 Meyer; in  $\Sigma$  and  $\Psi$ ]  
 furor fit laesa saepius sapientia. [F13 Meyer; in  $\Sigma$ ,  $\Psi$ , and  $\Upsilon$ ]  
 inprobe Neptunum accusat, qui iterum naufragium facit. [I63 Meyer; only in  $\Upsilon$ ]  
 ita amicum habeas, posse ut <facile> fieri hunc inimicum putes. [I16 Meyer;  
 in  $\Sigma$  and  $\Psi$ ]  
 veterem ferendo iniuriam invites novam. [V16 Meyer; in  $\Psi$  and O]  
 numquam periculum sine periculo vincitur. [N7 Meyer; in  $\Sigma$ ,  $\Psi$ , and  $\Upsilon$ ]  
 nimium altercando veritas amittitur. [N40 Meyer; in  $\Psi$  and O]  
 pars benefici est, quod petitur si belle neges. [P20 Meyer; only in  $\Psi$ ]

Gellius 17.14.1-4 Marshall

Neat sayings selected from the *Mimes* of Publilius

Publilius wrote mimes. He was thought worthy of being rated about equal to Laberius. But the scurrility and the arrogance of Laberius so offended Gaius Caesar, that he declared that he was better pleased with the mimes of Publilius than with those of Laberius. Many sayings of this Publilius are current, which are neat and well adapted to the use of ordinary conversation. Among these are the following, consisting of a single line each, which I have indeed taken pleasure in quoting:

Bad is the plan which cannot bear a change.  
 He gains by giving who has given to worth.  
 Endure and don't deplore what can't be helped.  
 Who's given too much, will want more than's allowed.  
 A witty comrade at your side, to walk's as easy as to ride.  
 Frugality is misery in disguise.  
 Heir's tears are laughter underneath a mask.  
 Patience too oft provoked is turned to rage.  
 He wrongly Neptune blames, who suffers shipwreck twice.  
 Regard a friend as one who may be foe.  
 By bearing old wrongs new ones you provoke.  
 With danger ever danger's overcome.  
 'Mid too much wrangling truth is often lost.  
 Who courteously declines, grants half your suit.

transl. J. C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library

Almost all of these sayings appear in five manuscript collections of the direct tradition (more on them in section III, below), and one of them does not appear in any of them. This suggests that Gellius, who uses the signifi-

cant phrase *sententiae feruntur* ‘<his> sayings are spoken of (as)’ (see *OLD* s.v. *fero* 34b), had at his disposal the original collection (or a large part of it), which incorporated all the manuscript collections that have so far been transmitted to us in various forms and lengths, and was larger than all of them put together.

Most of the ‘proverbial’ sayings, as they have come down to us, are composed in the metres of the comic stage, *senarii* or *septenarii*, and the assumption is that they were originally part of mime-plays written in verse. But we are nowhere told who gathered the sayings and to whom they were addressed.<sup>12</sup> The identity of the editor and of the person(s) for whom the collection was compiled are crucial issues for our appreciation of the sayings as genuine expressions of Roman popular morality and beliefs on social values and forms of non-verbal communication. Was Publilius himself the original editor, who gathered all of his most successful maxims, because he wished posterity to profit from his edifying wit? Was it a fan or theatrical associate of Publilius who compiled the *dicta*, not necessarily a century after Publilius’ death, but even during Publilius’ lifetime, because he thought it a pity if such elegant humour was wasted? Was Cassius Severus, the *summus amator Publili*, as the Elder Seneca calls him (*Contr.* 7.3.8), the editor of the original collection? And if the editor was not Publilius, one wonders how this person could have recorded the sayings and with what criteria he selected them. Did he memorize the words of the actors? Did he consult the scripts of Publilius? And if the *sententiae* were originally compiled as a school text, can we be sure that the vocabulary of some of them was not modified to suit the target audience? There are no easy answers to these questions and, despite the absence of obvious stylistic, linguistic, and metrical variations in the extant corpus of the *sententiae*, it might be best to understand them as the work of one individual that may have been altered and augmented by others in the process of the compilation and the dissemination of the anthology.

### III.

Some of the *sententiae*, cited in passages by the Elder Seneca, the Younger Seneca, Gellius, and Macrobius have been *explicitly* attributed by them to a person, whose name appears in the manuscripts as either *Publius* or *Publilius*. However, there are also some one-line sayings in the Younger Seneca (*Ep.* 9.21, 94.28, 94.43, 108.8-9, 108.11-12, and *Consol. ad Marc.* 9.5),

12. See the useful discussion of Giancotti (1967) 335-338.

Jerome (*Ep.* 53.11-12 and 107.8), and Salvianus (*De Gub. Dei* 1.10.46-7), which are not attributed to any author, but it is assumed that Publilius wrote them. This is so, because the overwhelming majority of these sayings appears also in one or in more than one out of six collections of mostly alphabetically arranged *sententiae*, which were circulating in the Middle Ages in France, Germany, and Italy, and are now represented by about 160 manuscripts, unevenly spread out in each of the collections. In modern critical editions of the *sententiae* and in scholarly publications on them these six collections are conventionally known under the following names and with the following *sigla*: Σ, *collectio Senecae*; Π, *collectio Palatina*; Ψ, *collectio Frisingensis*; Υ, *collectio Vindocinensis*; Ο, *collectio Veronensis*; Φ and φ, the longer and the shorter versions of an anthology (wrongly) associated with a ‘Ps. Caecilius Balbus’.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, one *senarius* (C46), which Gellius (17.14.1-4) attributes to Publilius, and four *senarii* of unidentified authorship (A55, A56, N61, Q74), which the Younger Seneca (*Ep.* 9.21, 94.43 and 108.11-12) and Porphyry (ad Hor. *S.* 1.3.32) quote, do not appear in any of the manuscript collections. The overall picture that emerges is relatively straightforward in its complexity, and Reeve, who currently offers the best discussion on the textual transmission of Publilius’ *sententiae*, rightly concludes: “The medieval collections that survive show no sign of having been compiled from anything but one original collection larger than any of them.”<sup>14</sup>

The original collection (Ω) would have been circulating in Imperial times<sup>15</sup> and would have borne a title somehow associated with Publilius: this may have been PUBLILII SYRI MIMI SENTENTIAE. The reason for this title is to be found in *collectio Veronensis*, which takes its name from its sole witness, Verona Biblioteca Capitolare 168 (155), a *florilegium* containing FLORES MORALIUM AUTORITATUM and dated to 1329 (O). It includes 60 Publilian *sententiae*, 16 of which do not appear in any of the other collections. The *sententiae* are transmitted not in alphabetical order but under thematic categories, such as *De uitio*, *De fide*, *De spe*, and are introduced by the name of the playwright in one of the following forms: PUBLIUS or PUBLIUS SYRUS or PUBLIUS MIMUS or EX SENTENTIIS PUBLII or DE SENTENTIIS PUBLII. Owing to the explicit and consistent mention of Pub<li>lius’ name in the *collectio Veronensis*, Meyer thought that MS O

13. On these manuscript collections see Giancotti (1963), Reeve (1983), and Panayotakis (2013).

14. Reeve (1983) 327.

15. I base this hypothesis on the observations I made in the penultimate paragraph of section II.

drew its material from a much larger, alphabetically arranged, collection of *sententiae* entitled PUBLILII SYRI MIMI SENTENTIAE. No MS with such a title preceding the text of the *sententiae* associated with Publilius has been found yet.<sup>16</sup>

The sayings of the original collection ( $\Omega$ ) (including those on laughter, tears, and silence) would probably have been alphabetically (not thematically) arranged on the basis of the first letter in each sentence. The production of the Latin collection may have been linked with the production of an anthology of Greek sayings, whose date of composition is uncertain, and which comprised one-line sayings (including a few on laughter, tears, and silence, as we will see below), known as *γνώμαι μονόστιχοι*. They were primarily associated with Menander, although the collection contained also lines from other playwrights (including Euripides). An argument linking the two collections was put forth for the first time in 1928, when the discovery of a Greek papyrus (*PGiss* 348, 11-12), dated to the second or third century A.D. and entitled *MENANΔΡΟΥ ΓΝΩΜΑΙ*, led Kalbfleisch to hypothesize that a similar Greek anthology of the first century A.D. had been the model for the creation of the Latin anthology associated with Publilius. Skutsch saw a parallel between the production of the two collections, and it may not be coincidental that Gellius' wording *sententiae ... singulis versibus circumscriptae* (Gellius 17.14.3) can be interpreted as the equivalent Latin wording of the Menandrian ascription *γνώμαι μονόστιχοι*.<sup>17</sup> Giancotti rejected Kalbfleisch's view and the possibility of any link between the collections, because the corpus of Publilian *sententiae*, according to Giancotti, lacks the heterogeneous nature of the Menandrian anthology.<sup>18</sup> Reeve agreed only partly with Giancotti:<sup>19</sup>

Accretions from other authors might have been expected, but the versification and style are uniform and rival attributions do not occur. In that respect Publilius' *sententiae* differ from the Greek set ascribed to Menander, which includes lines from other authors; but the ascription may be a later curtailment of a fuller title. When these 'Menandri *sententiae*' were compiled is not known, but in their transmission they closely resemble Publilius'.

16. On the *collectio Veronensis* see Meyer (1877) 47-54, Meyer (1880) 5-6, Giancotti (1963), Reeve (1983) 328, and Panayotakis (2013) 29-30.

17. It is also possible to point out closely corresponding sayings in the two collections: *sent.* A11  $\approx$  *Monost.* 759; A51  $\approx$  425; A53  $\approx$  815; A54  $\approx$  224; A56  $\approx$  804; C2  $\approx$  740; C34  $\approx$  514; F27  $\approx$  732 (I follow Meyer (1880) in the numeration of the *sententiae* and Pernigotti (2008) in the numeration of the *γνώμαι*).

18. Kalbfleisch (1928) 102; Skutsch (1959) 1924; Giancotti (1967) 338.

19. Reeve (1983) 327 n. 1.

It is not entirely accurate to say that the collection of Publilian *sententiae* does not include lines from other authors. Three of the extant *antiquiores* (two of them most valuable for different reasons), belonging to different ‘collections’ of the *sententiae*, include lines from Terence’s *Andria* without any indication by the scribe in the text that there is a change of authorship from one line to the next: after *sententia* A13 MS H (dated to the ninth century; it belongs to the *collectio Palatina*) has Ter. *Andr.* 555 *Amantium ira (irae codd. Ter.) amoris inte gratia est (integratiost codd. Ter.)*; after A36 MSS F and V (belonging to the *collectio Frisingensis*) cite Ter. *Andr.* 555 as follows: *Amantium ira (irae codd. Ter.) amoris integratio est (integratiost codd. Ter.)*; finally, after D27 MS M, which belongs to the *collectio Vindocinensis* that normally includes sayings in a paraphrased manner, has Ter. *Andr.* 940-1 *Dignus es odio (odium ed. Ter.) cum tua religione qui (om. codd. Ter.) nodum in scirpo queris (quaeris codd. Ter.)*. Terence’s lines may, of course, have been added into the corpus of the *sententiae* after the original large collection ( $\Omega$ ) associated with Publilius was broken into different anthologies at some point between the second and the ninth centuries.

It is not known when the original collection ( $\Omega$ ) was divided into the different strands that are now represented by the medieval collections. But it would be instructive for the purpose of my investigation to see not only which *sententiae* on laughter, tears, and silence  $\Omega$  contained, but also how these *sententiae* were then distributed in the different collections that stemmed from  $\Omega$ . Is it possible to argue that the person or persons unknown who compiled “collections”  $\Sigma$ ,  $\Pi$ ,  $\Psi$ , and  $\Upsilon$ , had thematic criteria in mind, although he/they had arranged the sayings in alphabetical order rather than under thematic headings? Such a view cannot be sustained. For the only collection that contains the majority of the group of sayings on laughter, tears, and silence is  $\Psi$ , the *collectio Frisingensis*. This was created when someone collated a full witness of the  $\Sigma$  collection, which contained *sententiae* from A1 to N10 (a maximum of 265 verses are recorded, 159 of which are found only in the  $\Sigma$  collection), against a complete descendant of the  $\Pi$  collection, which contained *sententiae* from A to V (the collection originally contained probably 384 verses but in its current state it lists only 60 *sententiae*). Therefore, we should expect witnesses of the  $\Psi$  collection, such as MS F, to contain the largest number of *sententiae* relevant to our discussion, because (if complete) these witnesses give the closest picture to what the original collection would have looked like.

## IV.

In order to consider the evidence from the sayings themselves I list below in three groups the relevant *sententiae* on laughter, tears, and silence, and next to the text of each one I indicate in which collection each of them is attested. Important textual variants are noted in footnotes. I print Meyer's Latin text (1880), but the variant readings I selectively record are taken from my own collation of the manuscripts. The English translation of the *sententiae* is by Duff and Duff (1934). This is then followed by another list of three more groups of maxims (on laughter, tears, and silence) selected from the collection of "Menandrian" *γνῶμαι*. The Greek text and the numeration are from Pernigotti (2008); the English translation is my own, although it has been heavily influenced by the excellent comments of Liapis (2002). Comparing and contrasting the two collections with regard to the areas of laughter, tears, and silence will allow the reader to reach his/her own conclusion about the possible points of contact (and perhaps influence) between the collection of the *sententiae* and the collection of the *γνῶμαι*.

## LAUGHTER

Deos ridere credo cum felix †fovet. (D24; attested in Π and Ψ [derived from Π])  
 Heredis fletus<sup>20</sup> sub persona risus est. (H19; attested in Σ and Ψ [derived from Σ];  
 also cited by Gellius 17.14 and Macrobius *Sat.* 2.7)  
 In calamitoso risus etiam iniuria est. (I27; attested in Σ and Ψ [derived from Σ])

I trow the gods smile when the lucky man [Latin text uncertain]. (D24)  
 Beneath the mask an heir's weeping is a smile. (H19)  
 When a man is ruined, even a laugh is a wrong. (I27)

## TEARS

Ab amante lacrimis redimas iracundiam. (A19; attested in Σ and Ψ [derived from Σ])  
 Amor ut lacrima oculis oritur, in pectus cadit. (A39; attested in Π and Ψ [derived from Π])

20. All the early extant MSS (dated to the period from the ninth to the twelfth centuries) of the direct tradition of the *sententiae* have *heres factus* or *heres fictus* or *heredis fictus* or *here fictus*; in other words, the scribes of these MSS thought that the saying was referring to heirs and illegitimate claim to an inheritance, not to hypocritically behaving heirs who are legitimately claiming their inheritance. The reading *heredis fletus* "an heir's weeping" occurs only in the later MSS C (Paris lat. 8049, s. XIII-XIV) and S (Munich Clm 484, s. XV), but it is clearly correct.

- Crudelis lacrimis pascitur, non frangitur. (C29; attested in  $\Sigma$ ,  $\Pi$ , and  $\Psi$  [derived from  $\Pi$ ])
- Contubernia sunt lacrimarum, ubi misericors miserum adspicit.<sup>21</sup> (C44; attested in  $\Upsilon$ )
- Didicere flere feminae in mendacium. (D8; attested in  $\Sigma$  and  $\Psi$  [derived from  $\Sigma$ ])
- Heredis fletus sub persona risus est. (H19; see above)
- Inimico extincto exitium<sup>22</sup> lacrimae non habent. (I58; attested in  $\Pi$  and  $\Psi$  [derived from  $\Pi$ ])
- Muliebris lacrima condimentum est malitiae. (M35; attested in  $\Psi$  [derived from  $\Pi$ ])
- Muneribus est, non lacrimis, meretrix misericors. (M50; attested in  $\Psi$  [derived from  $\Pi$ ])
- Necessitatem ferre, non flere addecet. (N58; attested in  $\Psi$  [derived from  $\Pi$ ])
- Paratae lacrimae insidias, non luctum<sup>23</sup> indicant. (P39; attested in  $\Psi$  [derived from  $\Pi$ ])

Tears may buy off a lover's wrath. (A19)  
 Love, like a tear, rises in the eye and falls on the breast. (A39)  
 Cruelty is fed, not broken, by tears. (C29)  
 When pity sees misery, there comes the comradeship of tears. (C44)  
 Woman has learned the use of tears to deceive. (D8)  
 Beneath the mask an heir's weeping is a smile. (H19)  
 When an enemy is destroyed, tears have no outlet. (I58)  
 A woman's tear is the sauce of mischief. (M35)  
 Not tears but gifts can touch a courtesan. (M50)  
 'Tis fitting to bear and not bemoan necessity. (N58)  
 The ready tear means treachery, not grief. (P39)

- 
21. This is Haupt's emendation for the MSS' unmetrical reading: *contubernia illic sunt lacrimarum quando misericors conspicit miserum* "when a pitiful man catches sight of a wretched man, there comes the comradeship of tears".
22. *exitium F*; *exitum HD* $\psi$ : *officium Spengel*: *vitium Baehrens*: *pretium vel causam Ribbeck*<sup>2</sup>. The meaning is not clear, and those who adopt F's reading take it to mean *exitus* "outlet" on the evidence of Paul. Fest. p. 81 M (see *OLD* s.v. *exitium* 4). Buecheler rewrites the saying as *inimico extincto non habent lacrimae fidem* "when an enemy is destroyed, [his?] tears are untrustworthy", and Nauck as *inimico extincto risum lacrimae non tegunt* "when an enemy is destroyed, tears do not conceal the laughter". Flamerie de Lachapelle (2011) 68 n. 326 wonders whether there is a political meaning behind this saying, in that it may contain an "allusion aux larmes que versa César devant la tête tranchée de Pompée" (Val. Max. 5.1.10).
23. *luctum* 'grief' is Bothe's emendation for the unanimously transmitted reading *fletum* 'lamentation', which scans but is perhaps superfluous and tautological in this context (or is it?).

## SILENCE

- Iactum tacendo crimen facias acrius. (I23; attested in Σ and Ψ [derived from Σ])  
 Miserum est tacere cogi, quod cupias loqui. (M6; attested in Σ and Ψ [derived from Σ])  
 O tacitum tormentum animi conscientia! (O8; attested in Ψ [derived from Π])  
 Peiora multo cogitat mutus dolor. (P8; attested in Ψ [derived from Π])  
 Sapiens quod petitur, ubi tacet, breviter negat. (S12; attested in Ψ [derived from Π] and O)  
 Taciturnitas stulto homini pro sapientia est. (T2; attested in Ψ [derived from Π] and Υ)  
 Voluptas tacita metus est magis quam gaudium. (V21; attested in Ψ [derived from Π])
- You aggravate a charge thrown at you, if you meet it with silence. (I23)  
 It's wretched to be forced to conceal what you'd like to reveal. (M6)  
 O conscience, silent torture of the mind! (O8)  
 Dumb grief thinks of much worse to come. (P8)  
 It's a curt refusal when the wise man meets a request with silence. (S12)  
 For a fool it is wisdom to hold his tongue. (T2)  
 Dumb pleasure is rather fear than joy. (V21)

## LAUGHTER

- Γέλως ἄκαιρος κλανμάτων παραίτιος.* (144)  
*Γελαῖ δ' ὁ μῶρος, κἄν τι μὴ γελοῖον ᾗ.* (165)  
*Γέλως τὰ σεμνὰ τοῦ βίου τοῖς σώφροσιν.* (172)
- Ill-timed laughter causes tears. (144)  
 A stupid man laughs even when there's nothing amusing. (165)  
 Pompous things in life make men of sound mind laugh. (172)

## TEARS

- Γέλως ἄκαιρος κλανμάτων παραίτιος.* (144)  
*Ὅμοια πόρνη δάκρυα καὶ ῥήτωρ ἔχει.* (584)
- Ill-timed laughter causes tears. (144)  
 The tears of whores and public speakers are identical. (584)

## SILENCE

- Γυναιξὶ πάσαις κόσμον ἢ σιγὴ φέρει.* (139)  
*Διὰ τῆς σιωπῆς μικρότερον κατηγορεῖ.* (201)  
*Ἐδκαταφρόνητός ἐστι σιγηρὸς τρόπος.* (240)  
*Ἐνίοις τὸ σιγᾶν κρεῖττον ἐστι τοῦ λαλεῖν.* (258)  
*Ἥ λέγε τι σιγῆς κρεῖττον ἢ σιγῆν ἔχε.* (292)  
*Ἥ δεῖ σιωπᾶν ἢ λέγειν τὰ καίρια.* (306)

- Ἡ γὰρ σιωπὴ τοῖς σοφοῖσιν ἀπόκρισις.* (307)  
*Ἡ γὰρ σιωπὴ μαρτυρεῖ τὸ μὴ θέλειν.* (308)  
*Κρεῖττον σιωπᾶν ἔστιν ἢ λαλεῖν μάτην.* (409)  
*Νοεῖν γὰρ ἔστι κρεῖττον καὶ σιγῆν ἔχειν.* (516)  
*Νέωι δὲ σιγᾶν μᾶλλον ἢ λαλεῖν πρόπει.* (521)  
*Ξένωι δὲ σιγᾶν κρεῖττον ἢ κεκραγέναι.* (555)  
*Οὐκ ἔστι σιγᾶν αἰσχρόν, ἀλλ' εἰκῆ λαλεῖν.* (566)  
*Σιγὴ ποτ' ἔστιν αἰρετωτέρα λόγον.* (709)  
*Σιγᾶν ἄμεινον ἢ λαλεῖν ἂ μὴ πρόπει.* (710)

- Silence for all women is an ornament. (139)  
 Through silence you accuse yourself more harshly. (201)  
 A way of life disposed to silence is contemptible. (240)  
 For some people silence is better than words. (258)  
 Either say something better than silence or keep silence. (292)  
 You should either keep silence or make timely remarks. (306)  
 Silence, you see, is an answer for the wise. (307)  
 Silence is evidence of unwillingness. (308)  
 It's better to keep silence than to speak without reason. (409)  
 It's better, you see, to understand and yet say nothing. (516)  
 It's fitting for a young man to keep silence rather than to speak. (521)  
 It's better for a stranger to keep silence than to shout. (555)  
 Keeping silence is not shameful; speaking at random is. (566)  
 Sometimes silence is preferable to words. (709)  
 It's better to keep silence than to say what's not appropriate. (710)

## V.

Reading the extant *sententiae* on laughter and tears out of context conveys a message of caution: tears may not be an indication of grief but can be hypocritical (H19). Likewise, laughter can be cruel (I27), and may foreshadow disaster, since good fortune is not everlasting (D24; cf. Men. *Monost.* 172). The juxtaposition between the well concealed joy an heir feels and the false tears he sheds occurs also in Lucretius (*DRN* 3.72 *crudeles gaudent in tristi funere fratris*) and [Varro] (*Sent.* 11 *Riese sic flet heres ut puella viro nupta: utriusque fletus non apparens est risus*), but in their passages the hypocrisy of the heir is expressed in much more personal terms than in our *sententia* (H19), which uses theatrical terminology (*persona*) and does not state whether the dead man is a husband or a brother or a father. Furthermore, an ill-timed joke when witnessing others' adversities (I27; cf. Men. *Monost.* 144) is characterized as *inhumanus* 'inhuman' by Quintilian (6.3.33).

In the world of the *sententiae* tears may well be void of pain; often they

are an artificially contrived means of female manipulation and cunning deception in matters of the heart: *sententiae* A19, D8, M35, M50, and P39 (cf. also Men. *Monost.* 584) seem to have been constructed with Terence's prostitutes in mind.<sup>24</sup> Tears do not soften but strengthen the cruelty of implacable characters (C29), such as the comic pimps of Plautus and Terence (*Pseud.* 274, *Rud.* 585, *Phorm.* 497-98), and are associated with merciless people in moments of self-centred victory (I58). Sayings A39, which conceptualizes in similar terms the origin of a tear and of 'love at first sight', and C44, which links pity and misery through the manifestation of tears as external indicator of sharing in pain (cf. Sen. *De Clem.* 2.6.4), seem to stand bizarrely isolated in terms of sincere emotional value, and it may be that they were rendered heavily ironic by their (now lost) context.

The extant corpus of *sententiae* gives out mixed messages with regard to silence. Saying as little as possible or nothing at all is a behavioral pattern associated with wisdom (S12; cf. Men. *Monost.* 307, 308, 409, 516, 555, 566, 709, 710), and indeed keeping quiet is recommended for stupid people who may make inappropriate remarks or laugh at the wrong time (T2; cf. Men. *Monost.* 144, 165, 258). Prejudices regarding gender and age are obvious: adult men are advised to speak only when appropriate (Men. *Monost.* 292, 306), women and youths should keep quiet (Men. *Monost.* 139, 521). But in most cases the decision not to verbalize thoughts or emotions (P8 and V21) is presented as an unwise option, which indicates suppression or loss of freedom of speech (M6), and has dangerous implications for the person who is keeping quiet (I23; cf. Men. *Monost.* 201, 240).

In conclusion, moral maxims, which advertised social values in a pithy, accessible, and witty fashion, are "good to think with", when demonstrating emotions involving laughter and tears, and when contemplating whether or not to speak in a public context. Such decisions were important for the successful creation of the social profile of upper-class men and women, who should know when to speak/laugh and what to say, and should control or conceal emotional outbursts of joy and tears, even when they had ulterior motives for their actions. The realization of the importance of self-control as

24. Ter. *Andr.* 558-559; *Eun.* 65-69; cf. also Fögen (2009c) 187 n. 11 and 200 n. 39; *AP* 5.186 (Posidippus) and 9.420 (Antipater); Alciphron 4.9.5; Catullus 66.15-18; Martial 1.33; Juvenal 6.272-277; Petronius 17.2; 'Ps. Caecilius Balbus' 67 *feminae uno oculo dolorem flent, insidias altero* "women shed tears of pain through one eye and hatch a plot through the other"; and *Disticha Catonis* 3.20 *coniugis iratae noli tu verba timere; | nam lacrimis struit insidias, cum femina plorat* "do not fear your wife's words when she's angry; | it is with tears, you see, that a woman hatches a plot, when she cries".

a moral, social, and political duty in Rome was cultivated and promoted also through *sententiae* in areas of life in which large numbers of audiences participated: private education for the young, schools of rhetoric for adult boys, and the theatre for the people at large.<sup>25</sup>

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Corbeill, A. (1996), *Controlling Laughter. Political Humor in the Late Roman Republic*, Princeton.
- Duff, J.W. & A.M. Duff (1934), *Minor Latin Poets*, London and Cambridge, Mass.
- Flamerie de Lachapelle, G. (2011), *Publilius Syrus: Sentences*, Paris.
- Fögen, T. (ed.) (2009a), *Tears in the Graeco-Roman World*, Berlin, New York.
- Fögen, T. (2009b), "Tears and Crying in Graeco-Roman Antiquity: An Introduction", in Fögen (2009a), 1-16.
- Fögen, T. (2009c), "Tears in Propertius, Ovid, and Greek Epistolographers", in Fögen (2009a), 179-208.
- Giancotti, F. (1963), *Ricerche sulla tradizione manoscritta delle Sentenze di Publio Siro*, Messina-Firenze.
- Giancotti, F. (1967), *Mimo e Gnome: Studio su Decimo Laberio e Publio Siro*, Messina-Firenze.
- Kalbfleisch, K. (1928), "ΜΕΝΑΝΔΡΟΥ ΓΝΩΜΑΙ", *Hermes* 63, 100-103.
- Lateiner, D. (1977), "No Laughing Matter. A Literary Tactic in Herodotus", *TAPA* 107, 173-182.
- Lateiner, D. (2009), "Tears in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*", in Fögen (2009a), 277-295.
- Liapis, V. (2002), *Μενάνδρου Γνώμαι Μονόστιχοι*, Athens.
- Libero, L. de (2009), "Precibus ac lacrimis: Tears in Roman Historiographers", in Fögen (2009a) 209-233.
- Meyer, W. (1877), *Die Sammlungen der Spruchverse des Publius Syrus*, Leipzig.
- Meyer, W. (ed.) (1880), *Publii Syri Mimi Sententiae*, Leipzig.
- Montiglio, S. (2000), *Silence in the Land of Logos*, Princeton.
- Morgan, T. (2007), *Popular Morality in the Early Roman Empire*. Cambridge.
- Panayotakis, C. (2013), "Towards a new critical edition of the *sententiae* associated with Publilius", *Alianto* 5 (2013) 15-50.
- Pernot, L. (2005), *Rhetoric in Antiquity*, Washington, DC.
- Pernigotti, C. (2008), *Menandri Sententiae*, Florence.
- Rawson, E. (1987), "Speciosa locis morataque recte", in Whitby, M., Hardie, P. and Whitby, M. (eds.) *Homo Viator. Classical Essays for John Bramble*, Bristol, 79-88 = E. Rawson, *Roman Culture and Society. Collected Papers*, Oxford 1991, 570-581.

25. On the tradition of *sententiae* on the Roman comic stage see Rawson (1987) 79-88 = (1991) 570-81.

Reeve, M. (1983), "Publilius", in L.D. Reynolds (ed.), *Texts and Transmission. A Survey of the Latin Classics*, Oxford, 327-329.

Skutsch, O. (1959), "Publilius Syrus, der Mimendichter", *RE* 23.2, columns 1920-1928.

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW  
Costas.Panayotakis@glasgow.ac.uk



### *Abstract*

The purpose of this paper is two-fold: to provide an up-to-date overview of the main problems pertaining to the purpose and transmission of a collection of apophthegms (*sententiae*), associated with the mime-actor and mimographer Publilius, and to discuss the portrayal of laughter, tears, and silence in the collection. I explore the image that was projected through the *sententiae* with regard to the above manifestations of non-verbal behaviour, and show how this projection squared with the portrayal of laughter, tears, and silence in select literary writings, including the collection of one-line apophthegms associated with Menander. I finish by suggesting reasons for this portrayal.