Roman Wolves, Worries, and Wasting Disease

1. Ovid Fasti 2.413-414

venit ad expositos, mirum, lupa feta gemellos: 
quis credat pueris non nocuisse feram?

A wolf who had recently whelped happened upon the exposed twins: / who would believe that the wild animal did not harm the boys?

2. Suetonius De Poet. (Virg.)

Cum Georgica scriberet, traditur cotidie meditatos 
mane plurimos versus dictare solitus ac per totum 
diem retractando ad paucissimos redigere, non 
absurde carmen se more ursae parere dicens et 
lambendo demum effingere. 
(Cf. Quint. Inst. 2.4.5-6; Soranus Gyn. 2.12, 2.15; 
Plut. Mor. 288c; 685e)

When he was writing the Georgics, he is said to have had the habit of recording the many verses he’d thought of in the morning and spending the rest of the day editing them down to just a few, saying quite aptly that he was licking his poem into shape in the manner of a she-bear [her cub].

3. Plutarch Quaest. Rom. 102

[The umbilical cord] usually falls off on the seventh day; until it’s gone, the newborn resembles a plant more than it does an animal.

4. Horace Ars Poetica 340

neu pransae Lamiae vivum puerum extrahat alvo 
don’t pull a live boy out of the belly of a Lamia who has had lunch

5. Ovid Fast. 6.137-140

carpe dicuntur lactentia viscera rostris 
et plenum poto sanguine guttur habent. 
est illis strigibus nomen 
They are said to tear at the guts of infants with their beaks, and fill their throats with blood. They are called “screech-owls”…

6. Envy and its associations

Plut. Mor. 681e παραφαρµαγµένα βέλη Verg. Ecl. 1.11 Non equidem invideo; miror magis…

7. Abel 1881: 188-190, #34

Lapis Galactites: …amplius etiam adversus invidiam 
et fascinum resistit; qui eum portat, numquam 
fascinabitur….sed infantibus pueris aptus congruit, 
et non permittit eos macerari, si quando intimidaverit 
si quando intimidaverit eos horrida mulier.

“Galactite”: it’s even more resistant to envy and the evil eye; the one who carries it will never fall prey…It is particularly good for baby boys, and it does not allow them to waste away if ever the “horrible woman” threatens them.

8. Effects of milk:

Milk as the most nourishing food: Varro Rust. 2.11.1 
Milk as antidotes to poisons: Plin. HN 28.158-162 
Milk for firming erections: Plin. HN 26.96

Contrast with wine: Plut. Quaest. Rom. 57 (cf. 
Varro Rust. 2.11.5) Fig “milk” as rennet: Varro Rust. 2.11.4

9. Hor. Sat. 1.8.1, 1.8.46-47

olim truncus eram ficulnus, inutile lignum… 
I farted with a sound like a burst bladder, a fig tree with split butt cheeks; they ran city-ward.

10. Porphyrio ap. Hor. Epod. 8.18

fascinum pro virile parte posuit, quoniam 
praeascinditis rebus haec membri diffimitas 
apponi solet… 
He writes “fascinum” to mean the male member, since the deformity of this body part is normally placed next to things which might arouse envy.

11. Mangling ways of wolves: e.g. Ov. Ibis 150; Livy 27.37.3, 32.29.2; Petr. 62
12. Prophylactic and medical uses of wolf parts
Wolf fat on door posts *ne quid mali medicamenti inferretur*, Plin. *HN* 28.142

13. Columella *Agr.* 7.12.5
*satis est severos esse nec blandos, ut nonnumquam etiam conservos iratius intueantur, semper excandescant in externos…*
cf. 7.12.13

14. Envious Telchines protect Zeus:
See Diod. Sic. 5.55-56; Strabo 10.3.7, 11, 19; 14.2.7
Fathers cast evil eye on own children: Plut. *Mor.* 682a-f
Metal workers and *fascinum*: Pollux 7.108

15. 4th C CE, Isurium Brigantum, Aldborough

16. “Hercules” didrachm 265 BCE

17. Ovid *Fasti* 2.418
*fingit lingua corpora bina sua*

18. Spitting at an infant: e.g., Plin. *HN* 28.39
Coating newborn in noxious liquids: Soranus *Gyn.* 2.12-13

19. *[Plin.] De Medicina* 3.33
*Antidotum contra venena. Antidotum Mithridaticum laudant medici eiusdemque compositiones diversas afferunt…*
Antidote for poison. Doctors praise Mithridates’ antidote and report different mixtures of it…

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