

CRAIG WILLIAMS : **The Meanings of Softness: Some Remarks on the Semantics of *mollitia***

Taking the adjective *mollis* and related words (*mollitia*, *mollire*, etc.) as my example, I suggest how some of the tools used by linguists working in the area of lexical semantics can supplement the rich resources of lexicography (TLL) by shedding further light on the question of what it means to ask what a word “means” in general, and how this set of words in particular fits into the sex-gender system informing the Latin textual tradition. Out of the wide range of topics in lexical semantics, I here focus on two: sense-relations and polysemy. The paper concludes with an illustration of how use of these tools can add nuance to our reading of the language of *mollitia* in Catullus 16.

**Mots-clés :**

lexical semantics – lexical semantics – lexicography – sense-relations – polysemy – *mollitia*