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Ludus Latrunculorum

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LUDUS LATRUNCULORUM.

THIS subject has been fully treated with great learning and ability by Mr. Wayte in the new edition of the *Dict. of Antiquities*. I therefore merely wish to discuss one or two points as to which his interpretation of the evidence seems to be unsatisfactory. The chief and almost only prose passage which gives us any information as to the Roman method of playing the game is the well-known one from the *Origines* of Isidore, Bishop of Seville, an encyclopaedic writer, based largely on the *Prata* of Suetonius and written in the first half of the seventh century A.D. The passage runs as follows. *Calculi partim ordine moventur partim vage. Ideo alios ordinarios alios vagos appellant. At vero, qui moveri omnino non possunt incitos dicunt.* The meaning of the first part of this passage is tolerably certain. There were two classes of pieces: (1) common soldiers who moved one square at a time and only straight forward or backward,¹ (2) officers who could move along any number of squares at a time or in any direction. It has been conjectured, but without a shadow of evidence, that the officers were called *latrones* and the inferior pieces *latrunculi*. So far as our information goes we are only warranted in supposing that *latrunculus* was the ordinary name for both classes, while the form *latro* was used in poetry for metrical reasons. But it is the last clause of the passage from Isidore to which I wish especially to call attention. In the well-known phrase *ad incitas redigere* which occurs twice in Plautus (as Mr. Wayte points out, *calces* an older word for *calculi* must be supplied) and twice in *Lucilius* in the form *ad incita*, commentators and lexicographers invariably explain *incitus* as a piece which has become blocked and so cannot be moved. Thus according to this idea a player who is *ad incitas redactus* is in the position of a chess-player who has been stale-mated by his opponent. But this is not what Isidore says and is not, I think, what he means. As I understand him, the *inciti* are a third order of pieces which cannot be moved at all. And there seems to be a confirmation of this in a recent find of *latrunculi* in a tomb at Perugia. Here were found 816 glass *latrunculi*, hemispherical in shape, and of three colours—blue, yellow,

and white (*Notizie dei Scavi* 1887, p. 396). Now, although the descriptions of the game that have come down to us represent the opposing pieces as distinguished by colour, may it not have been sometimes the case that while shape distinguished the opposing pieces colour was used to distinguish the different classes of pieces? Thus the gentleman who was buried at Perugia took with him to the Elysian fields a plentiful supply of his own *latrunculi* and trusted to find there other persons similarly provided. The *latrunculi* in the British Museum, I am informed by Mr. Walters, are of very various colours and shades of colour, but practically of the same size and shape. It is curious to note that none of them are red or black.

But, be this as it may, I am confirmed in my view of the nature of the *inciti* by the fact that the game evidently represented the mimicry of war. The movable pieces were the armies drawn up in battle array, the officers being, I should conjecture, far fewer in number than the common soldiers. The supposition that they stood in a row, with the common soldiers like a row of pawns in front of them, is an analogy from chess for which there is no authority. On the other hand the immovable pieces, the *inciti*, represented the camp, and the man who was *ad incitas redactus* was in the position of a general whose army had been defeated and whose camp was being stormed. This stage in the game is apparently represented in the *Laus Pisonis* in the following lines:

*Sic ad maiora movetur,
ut citus ecfrecta prorumpat in agmina
mandra,
clausaque deiecto populetur moenia vallo.*

But this passage brings us face to face with another *crux*. What does *mandra* mean? The only other passage in which it occurs in connexion with the *ludus latrunculorum* is Mart. vii. 72, 7

mandris et vitreo latrone clusos.

Its primary meaning is a 'pen' but it is used by Martial v. 22, 7 of a drove of mules

longas mulorum . . . . mandras

and in a similar sense by Juvenal iii. 237

stantis convicia mandrae.

In the first quoted passage from Martial it is explained by Marquardt, whom Fried-

¹*Aemulus et coeptum saepe recurrit iter*, Ovid *A.A.* iii. 360. This however may refer only to the officers.

länder follows, to mean the common pieces, the *Bauern*, as distinguished from the *latrones* or officers. But this is a guess and a far-fetched one. Taking this passage in conjunction with the one from the *Laus Pisonis* it seems clear that *mandra* must be some sort of obstacle or barrier, to attempt to break through which denotes a bold game (*ad maiora movetur*) but which when successively accomplished results in victory. This would seem to connect it in some way with the *inciti*, especially as in the *Laus Pisonis* the breaking through of the *mandra* is either followed by or is synonymous with the overthrow of the *vallum*. I would therefore suggest as a possible interpretation that *mandra* or *mandrae* was a collective term for the *inciti* and that these were arranged in a square so as to represent a camp, with perhaps four gaps in the square for gates: within the square would be a few movable pieces representing the garrison of the camp. This interpretation will suit fairly well the

passage in the *Laus Pisonis*. But the passage in Martial

mandris et vitreo latrone clusos

is still very difficult to translate. I would suggest as a possible rendering 'hemmed in by the camp-enclosure and the glass soldiery,' and that the whole passage means: 'May you beat Novius and Publius having reduced them to the last extremity when they have nothing left but a few pieces hemmed in between their own *inciti* and those of your *calculi* which have forced their way through them.'

In conclusion I feel that I have thrown little light on this obscure subject—perhaps I have rather darkened it. But the point on which I lay stress is this, that any successful attempt to explain the working of the game must be based on analogies not from draughts or chess but from the Roman army and camp.

ARTHUR TILLEY.

*AV WITH THE FUTURE IN ATTIC.

In proposing a new treatment of certain apparent cases of *āv* with the future I had at first thought of calling attention to those cases only to which I considered the new treatment applicable. But on consideration it seemed better in every way to start with something like a complete list of the passages in Attic Greek, so far as they are known to me, in which the occurrence of *āv* with a future tense is supported by evidence of real weight. It is only when we have all the passages before us that we can weigh properly the considerations bearing upon any single one or upon a few. We cannot with safety isolate this or that passage and treat it separately. It is the more desirable too to collect the passages here, because it does not seem to have been done sufficiently in recent years. Goodwin (*Moods and Tenses*, 1889) gives very few of them and Kühner (*Gr. Gr.* 2nd edn. 1870) a very incomplete list. Stahl (*Quaest. Gramm.* p. 23), from whom I have derived some assistance, gives only those passages where the MSS. appear to be unanimous. The opinion of scholars is still divided as to the legitimacy of the construction. In England, not to mention other names, Shilleto (on Demosth. 19, 394 [342] and Thuc. 2, 80, 1 and 12), Riddell ('Platonic Idioms' § 58 β in

his *Apology*) and Jebb (*Selections from Attic Orators*, note on Isaeus 1, 23) admit it. Goodwin seems to hesitate. Against it are great foreign names, like Madvig and Cobet.

From the following list a great number of cases where *āv* is found in MSS. with some form of the future are excluded. These fall into two classes. First come cases in which, though there is MS. authority for it, there is greater MS. authority against it. Their evidence is however worth something and should not be left out of sight altogether. I shall mention some of them subsequently. In the second place I have omitted the very numerous class of cases, in which the change of a letter or two gives us another tense in place of the future, and in which there is now a very general, though not universal, consent that the future is wrong. On such cases, many as they are, no judicious defender of *āv* with the future will venture to lay stress (cf. Madvig, *Adv. Crit.* I. p. 167). Many, if not all, of them are given up even by the scholars who maintain instances less easily corrected. Cases of this second class may be sub-divided as follows:

(1) Confusion of future participle with first aorist participle. There are very many