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Catvllvs II^b

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CATVLLVS II^b.

IN the second poem of Catullus, verses 9 and 10 :

tecum ludere sicut ipsa possem
et tristis animi leuare curas,

are followed by three :

tam gratum est mihi quam ferunt puellae
pernici aureolum fuisse malum
quod zonam soluit diu ligatam,¹

which, in spite of the inappropriateness² of the simile, some scholars have attempted to join with them. Grammatical justification for the indicative *est* has been half-heartedly offered,³ or *possem* has been changed to *posse*,⁴ or to *passer*,⁵ or to *possum*,⁶ or, on the theory of a lacuna,⁷ such a verse as

tecum ludere sic ut ipsa ludit⁸

has been proposed for insertion between lines 10 and 11, or *est* has been either replaced by *id*⁹ or ejected that the reader might supply mentally a *foret*,¹⁰ or *tam gratum est* has been altered to *gratum sit*,¹¹ or, finally, a lacuna of more than one line has been assumed.¹² Others, feeling that verses 1–10 make a unit and have

¹ My text is that of the 1904 edition of Ellis. Well known editions I cite by page.

² Compare Baehrens (I use the Baehrens-Schulze edition), *Comm.* p. 80, especially the words: 'mala Atalantae tulerunt nuptias: quid auicula Catullo? non (quod expectares) Lesbiae amorem, quo iam gaudet ille quamquam etiam tunc cum curis mixto, sed solacium: quae comparatio est ridicula.' Palmer, *Hermath.* iii. p. 302, offers the best defence that I have found.

³ Ellis, *Comm.* p. 6; Baehrens, *Comm.* p. 80. Riese, p. 5, is, however, satisfied with the parallels adduced.

⁴ Voss, *Observ.* p. 7; Owen, p. 150.

⁵ Housman, according to Postgate, p. 2.

⁶ Birt, *Comment. Cat. Tertius*, pp. v ff., and *Philol.* 1904, pp. 426–428. Although one must admire the ingenuity that Birt shows in these articles, he seems to me to play a sorry joke on Lesbia when he makes vs. 9–13 a *iocus* of hers to which *iocari* in vs. 6 refers. However *carus* a *iocus* containing such sentiments might be to Catullus the lover, as a poet he could hardly welcome the text that Birt gives him. Not to mention the pointless

presence of *ipsa* (= *domina*) before his emendation *possum* and his interpretation of line 8, the explanations: (p. vi) 'sperat enim poeta Lesbiam a lusu uenusto quem cum passere habeat, mox eo progressuram ut zonam diu ligatam religet et ipsa,' and (p. x) 'ad zonam denique soluendam propensioem reddet Lesbiam lusus hic quem gerit cum passere' speak, it seems to me, their own condemnation.

⁷ Cf. Huschke, *Anal. Lit.* p. 67; Pfeiffer, *Symb. Cat.* p. 20, note.

⁸ Ellis, *Comm.* p. 6; cf. text (1878), p. 7: 'dixerat fortasse peream nisi tecum ludere tam gratum est.' Merrill, p. 5.

⁹ E.g. by Heyse, p. 4, and Uschner, p. 4.

¹⁰ Doering, p. 3; Hand, *Obs. Crit.* p. 41; Sillig, p. 6; Pohl, *Spec. Lect. Cat.* p. 25; Conington, acc. to Ellis (1904 ed.), note on II. 11.

¹¹ Palmer, *Hermath.* iii. p. 301.

¹² Fröhner, *Philol.* xiv. p. 575: 'die mangelnden Verse vor *tam gratumst* standen (weil obscön) schon hier nicht mehr.' For such a lacuna we have the dubious testimony of Alex. Guarinus and of Perreius, acc. to Lachmann (1829 ed.), p. 2. Schulze, p. 5, notes a marginal sign in O.

a perfectly satisfactory close,¹ have deemed the following three lines a fragment, and seek to unite it with other verses of the poet, with poem XXXVIII,² or with the three lines that constitute XIV^b. :³

si qui forte mearum ineptiarum
lectores eritis manusque uestras
non horrebis admouere nobis,

assuming, then, that the new six-line poem belonged either before II.⁴ or after II. I-IO.⁵ One scholar has even ventured to claim a place for it after III. I5.⁶

But no ingenuity has made the simile a natural⁷ addition to XIV^b,⁸ and we would gladly spare Catullus such a succession of tenses⁹ as we should have in *eritis* and *est*. Upon the whole, the view that II. I I-13 are the fragment of a lost poem¹⁰ of the Lesbia-cycle would seem the most probable. Earle¹¹ proposed to make it a four-line poem by prefixing *passer deliciae meae puellae*, the verse which some expel from III. 4. The repetition of *puellae* would, of course, explain why the line might be omitted, but, not to speak of the grammatical objection, the principle of *uariatio*,¹² which seems to be observed in the first fourteen poems of Catullus, would be broken, since we should then have three sparrow-songs in succession.¹³

If the fundamental requisite of a poet's simile is that the thing compared shall resemble that to which it is compared, the subject of the erotic poem to which I should assign this fragment is not quite beyond our ken. Catullus says that the golden apple brought about the union of Atalanta and her lover. In his own love-affair, then, we must find something that brought about his union with Lesbia. Evidently that will be what he terms as *gratum* to him as the *malum* was to Atalanta. His own verses tell us of the initial difficulties which he had in meeting his married mistress. These were finally removed by Allius, whose great services he cannot refrain from celebrating in LXVIII^b. I f.:

non possum reticere, deae, qua me Allius in re
iuuerit aut quantis iuuerit officiis,

¹ The words of Westphal, p. 51: 'Man wird zugeben müssen dass jeder weitere Vers, der noch hinzukommen würde, der Schönheit des Gedichtes Abbruch thun müsste,' have my cordial assent.

² Froehlich, *Abh. d. I. Cl. d. k. Ak. d. Wiss. v. Bd. iii. Abth. p. 1.*

³ Pleitner, *Des. Q. V. Cat. Hochzeitgesänge*, pp. 90-91, note, shows how the separation might have arisen. Cf. Süs, *Catulliana*, I. pp. 2 ff.

⁴ Pleitner, p. 90, note; Schwabe, *Quaest. Cat.* p. 298, and others.

⁵ Süs, *Catulliana*, I. p. 2; Baehrens (text, 1876 ed.), p. 5; Benoist, p. 361.

⁶ Weise, *Zur Kritik des Catull*, p. 17.

⁷ The objections of Pohl, *Lect. Cat. Spec.* pp. 21-22; Schöll, Fleckeisen's *Jahrbücher*, cxxi. p. 495; Richter, *Catulliana*, p. 1, and Riese, p. 5, far out-

weigh with me such interpretations as those of Baehrens, *Comm.* p. 81, and of Benoist, p. 362. Cf. Schmidt, p. cix.

⁸ XIV^b. may be the beginning (Süs, *Catulliana*, I. p. 3) of a lost introductory poem. See von Leutsch, *Phil.* xxxv. p. 695. Westphal, p. 200, would connect it with the poems to Furius and Aurelius.

⁹ Richter, *Catulliana*, p. 1, and Baehrens, *Comm.* p. 81, have done their best to support this sequence.

¹⁰ Cf. Munro, *Crit. and Eluc.* p. 9.

¹¹ *Rev. de Phil.* 1903, p. 270.

¹² Westphal, pp. 2 ff.; Süs, *Catulliana*, I. p. 28; Harnecker, *Beitrag zur Erklärung des Catull*, pp. 3-4.

¹³ Spengel also (acc. to Ellis, Text ed. 1878, p. 7) thought that its subject was the sparrow. Cf. Schmidt, *Prol.* p. xcvi.

and in 109 f. :

hoc tibi, quod potui, confectum carmine munus
pro multis, Alli, redditur officiis.

How sore his need had been appears from 23 ff. :

hic, uelut in nigro iactatis turbine nautis
lenius aspirans aura secunda uenit
iam prece Pollucis, iam Castoris implorata,
tale fuit nobis Allius auxilium

in conjunction with 103 ff.

nec tamen illa mihi dextra deducta paterna
fragrantem Assyrio uenit odore domum,
sed furtiua dedit mira munuscula nocte,
ipsius ex ipso dempta uiri gremio.

The *auxilium* which Allius bore him consisted in introducing him to some *matrona*, at whose house he met Lesbia on that *mira nocte* and, no doubt, often later. See 27 ff. :

is clausum lato patefecit limite campum,
isque domum nobis isque dedit dominam,¹
ad quam communes exerceremus amores.
quo mea se molli candida diua pede
intulit . . .

Compare also 90–92.

If, then, we have in 11^b. a poem of gratitude, set between the two sparrow-songs, it makes a pleasing variety in subject matter. The comparison drawn between the *auxilium*² and the *malum* would, of course, be even closer for Lesbia than for Catullus, if poems LXXXIII. and XCII., which apparently antedate the *mira nox*, when compared with V. and VII., which surely postdate it, justify the belief that she did not feel the full force of her passion for Catullus until this *auxilium* had removed the irritating difficulties of their earlier association; for Theocritus, III. 42, says that it was at sight of the apple³ that Atalanta ἐς βαθὴν ἀλατ' ἔρωτα. But I should hardly venture the theory that this poem, 11^b, stood in Lesbia's name. If one begrudges the recipient of the long, formal poem LXVIII^b, these earlier verses of gratitude, composed, I imagine, at the time that the service was performed, they are not too indelicate to bestow on that *lenonia domina*, on whose head Catullus calls down blessings in 115–116 :

seitis felices et tu simul et tua uita,
et domus in qua olim lusimus et domina.

¹ I subscribe fully to the views of Postgate in the *Journ. of Phil.* xvii. p. 252.

² We need not, of course, insist on this particular noun, nor, in fact, on a noun-construction at all;

various suggestions as to the actual words in the preceding line or lines are possible.

³ Ovid, however, makes Atalanta already in love with Hippomenes. *Met.* x. 635.

The poet would then be showing his benefactress that gratitude which Hippomenes (or Milanion) failed to accord to his, the goddess Venus, with such tragic results.¹ If the reader is to see in LI. 15-16,

otium et reges prius et beatas | perdidit urbes,

an allusion to the fatal love of Paris for Menelaus' wife,² and a subtle significance in the comparison of Lesbia's love to that of Laodamia in LXVIII. 33 ff.,³ he may suspect that in this reference to the myth of Atalanta our poet was similarly half-conscious that he was courting Nemesis, the *Rhamnusia uirgo*, as well as his *candida diua*, Lesbia.

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¹ Servius on the *Aen.* iii. 113.

² Westphal, p. 49.

³ This is perhaps dubious. Cf. Merrill, p. 185, note on 73-130.