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Some Difficulties in the Letters of Cicero

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66 'ut forte legentem | aut tacitum impellat quovis sermone molestus: | "Communi sensu plane caret" inquit, where editors render by 'ordinary tact' (Palmer), 'the social sense' (Wickham), 'die taktvolle Rücksichtnahme auf seine Mitmenschen' (Kiessling), one may doubt whether this is necessary, whether in fact it means more than the feeling or perception which men in general have; the reader being left, as usual, to understand what the particular feeling or perception is. But this passage may be a bridge to Seneca *De Ben.* I. 12, 3 'Sit in beneficio sensus communis: tempus, locum observet, personas,' etc.,

or *Ep.* 105, sic vero invidiam effugies, si te non ingesseris oculis, si bona tua non iactaveris, si scieris in sinu gaudere. odium autem ex offensa sic vitabis, neminem lacescendo gratuito: a quo te sensus communis tuebitur.' Landgraf's statement that *sensus communis* is 'tact' or 'feeling of propriety,' while *communis sensus* is 'general feeling,' is refuted by *De Oratore* 2. 68 and by Phaedrus I. 7, 4; though it is true that in the post-Augustan writers, who show the former meaning, *sensus communis* seems to be the stereotyped form.

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SOME DIFFICULTIES IN THE LETTERS OF CICERO.

IT is the common lot of all ancient authors to be glossed sooner or later. The letters of Cicero have by no means been exempt from this fate, as is natural considering their difficulty; but it is worth noting that some MS. in the ancestry of the Medicean passed through the hands of a man who, though no very thorough scholar, had at least a smattering of Greek. This is shown, not only by the fairly numerous Greek words which are written more or less correctly in Latin letters instead of the usual clumsy uncials, but also by certain undoubted glosses which have survived into the text until they were ejected by modern editors. It is noteworthy that these glosses are pretty correct; thus, *Att.* XV. 21, 2, 'ἐποχὴν uestram de re Cani deliberationis probo,' where, save for the case, which a scribe may have corrupted, the Latin word translates the Greek one well enough. Again, XVI. 1, 5, 'sed Xenonem perexigue et γλίσχρως praeberē id est minutatim.' How many other glosses have not only got into the text, but displaced the Greek altogether we cannot say; I am inclined to think that one or two certain cases have been detected and that several more are at least probable.

Ad Fam. XII. 25, 3 M has: 'fuit enim illud quoddam graecum tempus seruitutis,' which most editors retain either with a dagger or with the reading of some of the dett., 'caecum' for 'graecum.'

But surely Cobet's emendation, δούλιον ἡμαρ, makes all clear, and is psychologically very probable, for Cicero was steeped in Homer to such an extent¹ that the Greek of so famous a passage would be probably more familiar to him than any Latin equivalent.

I suggest, with some diffidence, that a similar mistake has caused part of the corruption in *Att.* X. 12a, 2 (= 12, 5), where the MSS. give us the following: 'quare ui aut clam agendum est et si ui forte ne cum pestate clamaui emistis.' Following earlier conjectures at the beginning and end of the corrupt passage I would read: 'quare . . . est; etsi ui, μὴ σὺν ἄτῃ; clam autem—di istis!' I take it that the elliptical phrase μὴ σὺν ἄτῃ bothered the glossator, who wrote over it 'fort. ne cum peste,' and that this was copied into the text along with one word of the Greek, which thus produced the monster *pestate*. For 'di istis' (not 'istos,' as Tyrrel and Purser *ad loc.* suggest) cf. XV. 20, 3, 'di illi mortuo.' In the next sentence, for the MSS. reading 'uides quam turpe est. trahimur,' etc., the usual emendation 'turpe. est<o>; trahimur' is easy; but I am not absolutely certain that Cicero in familiar speech always

¹ He quotes him in fifty-six passages, according to R. B. Steele, *Amer. Jour. Phil.*, XXI. (1900) p. 394, who deals with the letters alone. Add the fairly numerous quotations in the philosophical works.

used the subjunctive in an indirect question. In the concluding section of the same letter, for 'est enim indoles, modo aliquod hoc sit ἦθος ακιμοσων,' I suggest that 'indoles' and 'hoc' are parts of a gloss, *hoc est indoles*, written over ἦθος, and would read: 'est enim ἦθος, modo aliquod sit ἀγχίμολον,' the last correction being Muecke's.

A very difficult letter—how difficult I do not think the commentators fully realise—is XV. 25. For the corrupt words, 'et tu etiam scire quo die Olympia mysteria scilicet,' two lines of emendation have been proposed. The first, that of Bosius, received in part by C. F. W. Müller, is very neat; 'et tu etiam scite, quo die olim piaculum,' i.e., 'and you put it neatly too, "the day when the sacrilege took place in a former year," meaning thereby the Mysteries,' i.e., 'come back by the festival of the Bona Dea.' The other suggestion, followed among others by Shuckburgh in his translation, is to bracket *mysteria scilicet* and read something like: 'uelim etiam scire quo die Olympia'; an intelligible question enough, for the date of the Olympia was not fixed, and Cicero seems to have had a passing fancy to be there, cf. XVI. 7, 5. But if we are to get rid of the Bona Dea altogether, we must also alter 'ex te quaesieram mysteriorum diem.' This surely is a rather pointless question, as Cicero, writing from Tusculum, would probably know such matters as well as Atticus, the more so as he was himself a priest, being of the college of augurs.

But there was another occasion on which he did ask when the ritual of the Bona Dea would take place, namely in B.C. 50, when he was not an augur and was in Cilicia, out of touch with local affairs at Rome, and anxious to have the dates towards the end of the official year exactly right (see V. 21, 14, VI. 1, 26.) Now it is a characteristic of

Cicero, as it is of most people, to repeat himself at short intervals when writing in a hurry. So e.g. *meministine te clamare* (XIV. 10, 1) is repeated almost word for word in 14, 3, written about a week later; *ἀναθέωρησις*, XIV. 15, 1, is echoed 16, 2; *agripetas*, XV. 29, 3, and again XVI. 4, 3; *ὁμοπλοῦς*, XVI. 1, 3; 4, 4; 5, 3. Now in this letter we have two distinct echoes of the language of the fifth and sixth books; 'mysteria' in the sense already mentioned, and the words 'casus consilium nostri itineris iudicabit,' with which cf. VI. 4, 1, 'sed haec fortuna uiderit, quoniam consilio non multum uti licet.' I am therefore much inclined to believe that this letter is badly out of place, and should come in Book VI. and be regarded as written on the long and leisurely journey home (June 29—November 25; anyone in a hurry could get from Rome to Cybistra in forty-six days, V. 19, 1). If this be so, the reference to Brutus has nothing to do with the meeting at Nesis, but arises out of the affair of Salamis, see e.g. V. 21, 10.

In the same letter, I would explain the corrupt *ut tu scires* thus: Cicero, I believe, wrote ὅφρ' ἐν εἰδήσις. This, corrupted into something like ΟΦΡΤ-ΕΙΔΙΙC, was taken for ὅφρα σὺ εἰδείης, and faithfully glossed *ut tu scires*, and this got into the text.

A slight corruption in XV. 11, 2 may, I believe, be healed thus: for 'et noster cito deiectus est de illo inani sermone uelle esse dixerat,' read 'noster cito deiectus de illo . . . belle esse dixerat.' *v* for *b* is one of the commonest of blunders, and for the somewhat unusual phrase ('belle se habere' is more common) cf. 'bellissime esse,' *Fam.* XIV. 14, 1. 'Our friend had soon got off his high horse and said, 'Oh, very well.''

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