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The Epitaph Of Helvia Prima.

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THE EPITAPH OF HELVIA PRIMA.

(Bücheler, *Carm. Epigr.* 960.)

Tu qui segura spatiaris mente uiator
 et nostri uoltus derigis inferieis,
 si quaeris quae sim, cinis en et tosta fauilla,
 ante obitus tristes Heluia Prima fui.
 coniuge sum †Cadmō fructa Scrateio†
 concordisque pari uiximus ingenio.
 nunc data sum Diti longum mansura per aeuom
 deducta et fatali igne et aqua Stygia.

Bücheler assigns this epitaph to the Caesarian epoch: and it is clearly not of later date. The fifth line is corrupt. Bücheler suggests tentatively the insertion of the word *dilecto* after *Cadmō*. That will indeed give us a verse of six feet. But we shall not be much the happier. We shall still have to believe that a member of the *gens Heluia* married, circa 100-50 B.C., a husband of the name of Cadmus Scrateius. He must have been the public executioner: for I know of no other Cadmus in Rome; and he bore no very good reputation, and very little deserved the epithet *dilectus*, for the commentators upon Horace S. i. 6. 39 speak of him as ‘notae crudelitatis.’ He must be supposed to have taken the name Scrateius to make himself more terrible. But where in all the Graeco-Roman world he found it, it is impossible to guess.

We must begin again, and try and arrive at a more plausible result. Cadmus Scrateius is a stone-cutter’s blunder. But surely it is one not very difficult to correct. CADMO is a misreading of CADVLO, and Cadulo is a mispronunciation of *Catulo*. *Scrateio* can be nothing but *Isocrateio*. But our verse is still metrically deficient, and we want moreover a substantive to go with our adjective *Isocrateio* and to stand in apposition to *Cadmō*. We shall remedy both defects at once if after the word *fructa* we insert the word *actore* (lost by haplography *ucta-acto*):—

coniuge sum Catulo fructa actore Isocrateio.

(*actore* = *patrono*, *oratore*).

Two Catuli of the first century B.C. were distinguished for their oratory. The one, Q. Lutatius Catulus, was consul with Marius in 102 B.C. The other, his son, Q. Lutatius Catulus Capitolinus, held the consulship in the year in which Sulla died. Either of these might very well be the Catulus of this epitaph. The oratory of the father is highly praised in Cicero, *De Oratore*; and the qualities for which it is praised are precisely those which might merit the epithet Isocratean. In *De Orat.* 3. § 28-29 he is actually brought into connection with Isocrates. He himself wrote epigrams in verse, of which one has been preserved to us in Cicero *De Nat. Deor.* 1. 79. The style of that piece makes it quite possible that our epitaph should be assigned to the age of Marius rather than to that of Caesar. The elder Catulus, however, is known to have married Domitia, the sister of Cn. Domitius, Trib. 104 B.C. We must, therefore, if we are to connect him with this epitaph, suppose him to have been twice married. If on the other hand we prefer to bring the date of the epitaph down to a later generation, there is nothing to prevent our identifying its Catulus with Q. Lutatius Catulus Capitolinus. His oratory is said to have resembled that of his father. Cicero in the *Brutus* (§ 133) refuses to rank either with the great orators at all (despite the praise bestowed on the father in the *De Oratore*). Both, however, seem to have achieved in oratory a reputation which was not merely contemporary.

H. W. GARROD.