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## Note on the Country Festival in Tibullus II. i

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In conclusion, what have we to gain by adopting these methods, if as we confess they will increase rather than decrease our work?

1. We shall awaken the interest of the boy. Few men will deny that the average boy hates Latin as it has been taught in the past. I believe that by a change of method quite elementary Latin may be made one of the most attractive lessons of the day.

2. Knowledge gained in this way is quite different from that gained in any other way. A Latin sentence becomes a piece of real language; it is not a problem to be solved by the identification of verb, subject, object and so on. As all its teaching is based directly or indirectly on classical Latin, nothing will be taught that is not to be found in a text that the boy is likely to read.

3. If, as in the great majority of cases, the boy will not proceed to a university, there to follow up his classical studies, he will still possess something tangible, viz. the power to translate straightforward Latin comfortably and fluently. He will not have spent his whole school life in laboriously laying a gigantic foundation destined never to hold the scantiest of superstructures. He will leave school possibly with a desire to extend his acquaintance with the classics, and will not throw aside his books with a sigh of relief for toil and drudgery ended.

4. Some change must be made if Latin is to remain a school subject at all. I am inclined to think that in the past the very

excess of time devoted to classics was in itself a curse, as, instead of employing it in the legitimate study of the language, the schoolmasters of the day so elaborated the work, and so widened the field of study, that even when practically nothing else was taught, only the really clever boys derived much benefit. Now that the time allowed by the modern time-table is so short, it is imperative that we throw overboard some of the lumber.

5. Let me set down exactly what, as a teacher of the modern method, I claim. Give me  $3\frac{3}{4}$  hours per week in school, and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  out of school, and at the end of 18 months 80 per cent. of an average class of boys beginning Latin at 11 or 12 will know the declensions and conjugations and the principal parts of the most important verbs; they will be acquainted with the chief uses of the subjunctive and the easier forms of Indirect Speech; they will be able to translate with ease a simplified form of Caesar or, with a little help, the original text; they will be able to answer, in Latin, questions asked in Latin on the subject-matter of the book, and the fluency with which they can speak long sentences of Latin, and their keenness for the subject, will more than compensate for the lack of some of that elaborate knowledge which examination-papers have, I fear, made appear most essential.

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#### NOTE ON THE COUNTRY FESTIVAL IN TIBULLUS II. i.

A CHANCE remark made by an old friend during the recent meeting of the Classical Association at Cambridge put me upon reading Tibullus more carefully than I had done before. When I reached the first poem of the second book, I found from the notes in Dr. Postgate's valuable edition of selections that I was reading about the *Feriae Sementivae*, or *lustratio pagi* after the winter sowing: a festival not fixed to a date, but usually held in January. Ovid described

this festival in *Fasti* i. 657 foll. and evidently had Tibullus' poem before him as he wrote: hence it has been inferred that both poets were writing of the same festival. But a careful examination of Tibullus' poem has strongly inclined me to believe that Ovid is only adopting his language and adapting it to the *Sementivae*; and that Tibullus' festival, as the older commentators thought, belongs really to the spring and not to the winter, and is one of the same kind as the *lustratio*

*agri* described in Virgil *Georgic* i. 339 foll. (which description Tibullus must have known well), and as the Roman Ambarvalia, and the lustratio of the farm described by Cato in *de Re Rustica* 141. On returning to the poem after a few days' interval and a correspondence with Dr. Postgate, I am confirmed in this opinion.

My reasons are as follows :

1. The poem taken as a whole seems clearly to belong to spring rather than to winter. Dr. Postgate for obvious reasons was obliged to cut it short at line 65; but if it be read to the end, where Amor plays a prominent part, it will be noticed that the operations of Amor in the farm are alluded to in lines 83-84. Those operations, as we learn from Varro *R.R.* ii. 2 foll., all took place, except in the case of the goats, in the spring or early summer.

2. The first line, which gives a kind of title to the poem, contains the words '*fruges lustramus et agros.*' Though I do not wish to lay too much stress on the word '*fruges,*' yet it would certainly suit the time of the Ambarvalia in May, when the corn was beginning to show the ear, better than the Sementiuae in January; we may remember that the word is used in Virgil's description (line 345):

Terque novas circum felix eat hostia fruges.

3. While Ovid, in his description of the Sementiuae, writes of the seed only and the crops that are expected, Tibullus includes in his ritual a prayer for man and beast also, as did Cato in his description of the lustratio *agri* :

Di patrii, purgamus agros, purgamus agrestes :  
uos mala de nostris pellite limitibus,  
neu seges eludat messem fallacibus herbis,  
neu timeat celeres tardior agna lupos.

4. Lines 5-9 suggest that ploughing has been going on : this is to cease on the day of the festival, and the oxen must rest. Now ploughing was going on more or less for the greater part of the year, and at different times according to the nature of the soil and the climate (see Columella ii. 4 and 8); but if there was a time in the year when ploughing did *not* go on, it was after the winter solstice and during the greater part

of January. Varro *R.R.* i. 36 makes it clear that from midwinter to February 7 (Favonius) there was no hard work of that kind done on the Italian farm; and Columella i. 8 init. says that prudent husbandmen would not plough within fifteen days of the shortest day, which shows that, as we might expect, there was difference of opinion and practice, but that it was unusual to plough at the very beginning of the year. I gather from Columella ii. 5 that ploughing was resumed for spring sowing, where that was the practice, when the days grew warmer.

5. My last reason is suggested by Dr. Postgate in a letter : the victim in Tibullus' ritual is an agnus (line 15), and lambs would hardly be old enough for sacrifice in January. This is not indeed a convincing argument, as lambs might be sacrificed when they were not less than seven days old (Plin. *N.H.* 8. 206, Marquardt, *Staatsverwaltung* iii<sup>2</sup>. 171); and the usual time for lambing, as Varro tells us (*R.R.* ii. 2), was the end of autumn. But remembering the line in Virgil's description, '*tum pingues agni et tum mollissima vina,*' I am inclined to guess that the agnus of Tibullus was not a *lactens* but a more fully developed lamb.

Supposing that these reasons are sufficiently cogent to make it at least very doubtful whether Tibullus is writing of January and the Sementiuae, there still remains a serious difficulty, which seems to have perplexed all the commentators. In order to indicate the nature of this difficulty, I must quote the whole of the passage in which the ritual is described :

Cernite, fulgentes ut eat sacer agnus ad aras  
uinctaque post olea candida turba comas.  
di patrii, purgamus agros, purgamus agrestes :  
uos mala de nostris pellite limitibus,  
neu seges eludat messem fallacibus herbis,  
neu timeat celeres tardior agna lupos.  
tunc nitidus plenis confisus rusticus agris  
ingeret ardenti grandia ligna foco,  
turbaque uernarum, satori bona signa coloni  
ludet, et ex uirgis extruet ante casas.  
euentura precor : uiden ut felicibus extis  
significet placidos nuntia fibra deos?

In the first two of these lines we see a procession, in the next four we have a prayer, answering in a condensed form closely to that in Cato 141; but what are we to make

of the next four, beginning 'tunc nitidus plenis confisus rusticus agris'? At first I was inclined to take them as referring to something done on the spot, *i.e.* to a part of the ceremonial here described; but Dr. Postgate has convinced me that this is wrong, and that the future tenses point to something that is to be done at a later time. The words 'euentura precor,' coming after them, seem too to prove that they are a part of the prayer, though inserted rather from the point of view of the poet than as really belonging to the actual ritual. They are not, I think, a promise of what is to be fulfilled if the god grants the prayer: that would make the whole operation of the nature of a *votum*, and I can find no example of a prayer in a lustratio which has this character, though I have looked at all I know of, including those in the *Tabulae Iguinae*. (See also my *Roman Festivals*, p. 346.) They rather take the form of a poetical prophecy of what will happen if the gods are propitious, as the omens show they will be, and taken in this sense they suit with the words 'euentura precor' which immediately follow them. But what is this to which the poet looks forward, and when is it to happen?

The lines have generally been taken to indicate some kind of 'jollification' in the winter, when logs are heaped on the hearth-fire, and when the *vernae* or their children sport in the house and build play-houses of twigs in front of the blaze: Dr. Postgate compares Horace *Sat.* 2. 3, 247, 'aedificare casas, postello adjungere mures,' of children's games. But from my point of view there is a fatal objection to this interpretation. If our festival is in the spring, or at any time before harvest, it would be quite out of place to look on so far as mid-winter, long after the crops had ripened and been harvested. At the winter solstice you are thinking of the grain already in the ground, and of the next year's crops: you may indeed examine the stored crops of the past year and beseech *Consus* and *Ops* to preserve them in the storehouses (*Consualia*, *Opalia*), but *you have begun a new year* of those agricultural operations of which *Tibullus'* mind is full all through this poem. I feel convinced that the festivity, at which big fires will be made

and sportive *vernae* will build houses or huts, is much nearer to the date of *Tibullus'* festival, and will in fact come off either before the crops are actually harvested, or represent some kind of harvest festival. There is no need, in my view, to make these lines refer to anything that is to take place inside the house or in winter.

The one hint that we get as to the time alluded to is in the line, 'Tunc nitidus plenis confisus rusticus agris'; but what are we to understand by *plenis agris*? The words might mean 'the fields full of the sown seed,' or 'full of the ripening or ripened corn.' If what has been said in this paper be accepted, the former meaning is put out of court; and we may observe that the word *confisus* suits better with crops that have come to maturity and thus passed through the greater part of the perils that beset them, than with seed that has yet to encounter so many natural dangers. *Arvis* has been conjectured instead of *agris*, by Scaliger I believe: we do not need to adopt this, but if we did prefer it, the lines would seem to indicate a harvest festival, which would not be out of keeping with our view.

The next line, 'ingeret ardenti grandia ligna foco,' raises yet another question. *Focus* may mean the hearth-fire, or a bonfire, or an altar-fire out of doors. If it were here the hearth-fire, winter would be indicated, and this, according to my view of the poem both as a whole and in detail, is most unlikely. I think the *pleni agri* point to a summer festival, and whether we take *focus* as a bonfire or an altar-fire, we need have no difficulty in guessing the kind of festival that the poet is thinking of. We must remember that we are in Italy in the country, not in Rome, and that we need not attempt to harmonise the festival with any particular one in the Roman calendar. We have the whole range of midsummer fires to bring to bear on this line, as described by Mannhardt, Dr. Frazer, and others (see *e.g.* the *Golden Bough*<sup>2</sup>, vol. ii. 126 foll. and iii. 266 foll.): these still take place in modern Italy, especially in the region of the *Abruzzi*, and all over Europe they are accompanied with rejoicings and festivity. Of such doings in ancient Italy we have hardly any traces;

but that the custom of leaping through the bonfire was in existence there we know both from the practice of the Roman Parilia (Tibull. 2. 5. 89 foll.) and from the curious rite of the Hirpi Sorani at Soracte (Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, p. 318 foll.); and the inference is that bonfires were well known, though it is only in such passages as this of Tibullus that we get a glimpse of them. That they are connected, as in our poem, with the growth of the crops and the fertility of man and beast, has been placed practically beyond doubt by recent researches.

But whether we take focus as a midsummer bonfire or an altar-fire at a summer festival, we are confronted by a still greater difficulty in the next two lines :

Turbaque uernarum, saturi bona signa coloni,  
Ludet, et ex uirgis extruet ante casas.

I confess that I cannot persuade myself that what is meant here is simply that the familia of slaves played at making toy houses in front of the fire. I believe we have here the survival of an ancient bit of custom or ritual, which I must now explain.

There are, in the Roman religious years, two examples of the widely spread custom of extemporising huts or booths as shelters during festivals. On the Ides of March, at the feast of Anna Perenna, which Ovid (*Fasti* 3. 523 foll.) describes as he saw it himself, the plebs came out and lay about all day in the Campus Martius near the Tiber. Some lay in the open, some constructed tents, and some made rude huts of stakes and branches, stretching their togas over them for shelter.<sup>1</sup> The date, March 15, makes it obvious that there was no particular need of avoiding the sun's rays; nor, as the festival lasted only one day, was there any material necessity to take the trouble to erect these shelters. Again, at the Neptunalia on July 23, booths or huts were erected made of the foliage of trees: 'Umbræ uocantur Neptunalibus casae frondeae pro tabernaculis' (*Festus* 377), and as this is the only thing that is told us about that festival, we may presume that the practice was constant and a part of the ritual. As the Neptunalia

was in the heat of the summer, we might suppose that shelter from the sun was the real object here: but (1) we do not hear of it at other summer festivals: (2) the number of parallel practices makes the rational explanation very doubtful.

I am here only concerned with the language of Tibullus, and will postpone any attempt to explain the religious meaning of the practice; but I may mention one or two parallel cases among other peoples. The Jewish feast of tabernacles naturally occurs to us: this was in the heat of summer, and the booths were here, as at the Neptunalia, made out of the branches of trees: Levit. 23, 40; but the explanation given to the Israelites was not that they were thus to shelter themselves from the heat, but to be reminded of their homeless wanderings in the wilderness. There are traces in Greece of the same practice, e.g. the σκιᾶδες at the Spartan Carneia (Athenaeus 4. 141 F), and σκηναί in several cases, e.g. in the inscription of Andania (*Dittenberger Sylloge*<sup>2</sup>, 653, lines 34 foll.), where the peculiar regulations for the tent-making point to a ritualistic origin. But perhaps the most curious instance is to be found in the famous letter of Gregory the Great about the British converts to Christianity, who were to be allowed to use their heathen temples as churches (Baeda *Hist. Eccl.* i. 30).

'Et quia boves solent in sacrificio daemonum multos occidere, debet iis etiam hic in re aliqua solemnitas immutari: ut die dedicationis, vel natalicii sanctorum martyrum, quorum illic reliquiae ponuntur, tabernacula sibi circa easdem ecclesias quae ex fanis commutatae sunt, de ramis arborum faciant, et religiosi convivii sollemnitatem celebrent: nec diabolo iam animalia immolent, et ad laudem Dei in esu suo animalia occident.'

We can hardly doubt that the custom to which he alludes was one which had been described to Gregory as part of the heathen practice, and which he was willing to condone. (See *Gregory the Great*, by Rev. F. H. Dudden, D.D., ii. 125 foll., to whom I am indebted for the reference to Baeda.)

To return now to Tibullus: I would suggest that the building of casae with virgae which was a part of the festivity to which he

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Tibullus 2. 5. 95 foll. for a similar description.

looks forward in the prayer, is a survival of this same widely spread religious practice, and not merely a children's game within the house. If that be so, then we need not suppose that he is looking forward to winter revelry, but rather that he is thinking of some local summer festival, otherwise unknown to us, in which the burning of fires and the building of casae and the revelry usual on all such occasions (cp. ii. 95 foll.) were all found together. The poem and the rustic lustratio it describes belong, as I hope I have shown, to the spring: the omens are favourable, the lustratio is successful, and the husbandman may look forward to the time when the crops are no longer in danger, and when he will be able to take his part in the general rejoicing with a light heart. This is as far as I can venture to go: Italy abounded in different customs, differing in time and character according to the great diversity within her limits, of soil, climate, elevation, and race; and we must be satisfied if we can

arrive at some reasonable conclusion as to the time of year of which the poet is thinking, and the general character of the festivities he indicates.

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I am glad to be allowed an opportunity of thanking Mr. Warde Fowler for his valuable contribution to the interpretation of a Latin classic, whose works in England at least are undeservedly neglected, and of saying that the explanation of the occasion of Tibullus II. i. given in the little book to which he has referred so kindly had already ceased to satisfy me. The objection on the score of the lamb raised by Herr K. P. Schulze in his notice of the *Selections* in the *Wochenschrift f. klassische Philologie* (1904) does not indeed seem fatal; but on the whole I think the festival must have been later than the *Sementivae Feriae*.

J. P. POSTGATE.

#### GODS IN THE *ECLOGUES* AND THE ARCADIAN CLUB.

IN nearly all the passages in which Phoebus or Apollo occur in the *Eclogues*, while the words naturally refer to the Olympian God there seems to be a further and secondary reference to Octavianus, who is known to have had a weakness for being regarded as Apollo incarnate, and liked all those who looked at him to lower their eyes as though dazzled by the brightness of the sun. Virgil, who was at this time engaged in deifying Augustus, seems in the *Eclogues* to have fallen in half playfully with this humour, although later on, in the opening passages of the first Georgic, he, with equal playfulness, professes uncertainty as to the exact title under which Caesar should be worshipped. The inconvenience of two Apollos is obvious, and the suggestion there seems to be that he might take on himself the heavenly counterpart of any office of state in the functions of any deity, but not the title of king—doubtless meant as a friendly warning. *Nec tibi regnandi veniat tam dira cupido.*

Virgil apologises for the obscurity of this allegory, *G. ii. 45, non hic te carmine ficto | Atque per ambages et longa exorsa tenebo.* Similar advice was afterwards given to Caligula when he meditated assuming a crown. He fell in with it, and proceeded at once to arrogate to himself divine majesty in aggravated forms (Suet. *Cal. 22*).

1. *In E. 1. 6.* Tityrus, who in this Eclogue represents Virgil, says that a god, to whom he will always do sacrifice with a lamb offering, had given him security against the general eviction then proceeding in the district. The god, though not named, is admittedly Octavianus.

2. *In E. 5. 64.* Daphnis, generally understood to be Julius Caesar, is raised to the stars by Menalcas (here Virgil as in *E. 3* and *9*): a voice from the woodlands proclaims Daphnis a god, and Menalcas begs him to be kind and propitious, and promises two altars to Daphnis and two to Phoebus—that is, if rightly interpreted, two to Julius and two to Augustus.