

OBSERVATIONS ON LATIN POETRY

Abstract: Several passages of Minor Latin poets are explained.

Key words: Minor Latin Poets, textual criticism.

Resumen: Se explican diversos pasajes de poetas latinos *minores*.

Palabras clave: Poetas latinos *minores*, crítica textual.

TWO ELEGIES FOR MAECENAS¹

I. 19-20:

*vincit vulgares veluti beryllus harenas
litore in extremo quas simul unda movet.*

Duff explained that the poet refers here to Maecenas' fondness for jewels. I would like to add that, according to the ancients, in the east the beaches² were strewn with jewels and pearls which had been cast up by the sea. Thus Propertius (I. 2. 13) states that the shores gleam (*collucent*) with natural (*nativis*) gems (*lapillis*).

I. 21-27:

*quod discinctus eras, animo quoque, carpitur unum:
diluatur nimia simplicitate tua.
sic illi vixere, quibus fuit aurea Virgo,
quae bene praecinctos postmodo pulsa fugit.
livide, quid tandem tunicae nocuere solutae
aut tibi ventosi quid nocuere sinus?
num minus urbis erat custos et Caesaris hospes?*

line 27 *hospes* : *opes* v. l.

Maecenas is said to have been attacked because he loved luxury. Perfect sense can be made of this passage if we accept the reading *hospes*, in line 27, and translate as follows:

¹ Scaliger suggested that the elegies on Maecenas might be the work of Albinovanus Pedo: cf. J. W. and A. M. Duff, *Minor Latin Poets*, Loeb edition, 1968, re-print, page 115 ff.

² Cf. my *Studies In The Text Of Propertius* (Athens 2002), page 11 and Flower Smith, *ad Tibullus* 2, 2, 16.

Cf. also the excellent edition by Jacqueline Amat: "Consolation À Livie, Élégies À Mécène, Bucoliques

D'Einsiedeln, Paris 1997. Amat printed the mss reading *beritus* rather than the reading *beryllus*, which is found in early editions. She admits that *beritus* does not make sense, but adds that "malheureusement le béryl ne se trouve guère parmi les sables du rivage" (page 198). As Pliny states (*Hist. Nat.* 37, 79) the stone was found circa *Pontum*. Cf. *RE* s. v. *Beryllos* 320, 54 ff. (*Pontus*, Euphrat).

“That you were voluptuous (*discinctus*³) is the one thing which is complained about with violent passion too (*animo*⁴ *quoque*): it is dispelled by your excessive honesty. Thus did they live among whom dwelt the golden Maid, who soon fled from men who were besieged (*praecinctos*⁵)”.

The poet then points out that Maecenas was the friend of Caesar (*Caesaris hospes*), and made the streets of Rome safe⁶.

I. 37-38:

*marmorea Aonii vincent monumenta libelli:
vivitur ingenio, cetera mortis erunt.*

line 37 *marmora maeonii* ARMV *marmorea Aonii* Scaliger

The poet describes how Maecenas loved poetry. I would like to point out that the mss. reading *marmora Maeonii* makes perfect sense. We should translate as follows: “The monuments (*monumenta*⁷) of an Etrurian (*Maeonii*) will conquer marble. He lives due to the genius of his books, all else will belong to death”. In other words, Maecenas will be immortal due to his writings⁸.

I. 45-48:

*cum freta Niliacae texerunt lata carinae,
fortis erat circa, fortis et ante duces,
militis Eoi fugientis terga secutus,
territus ad Nili dum fugit ille caput.*

Duff noted that according to Dio (1i. 3. 5) Maecenas was in Rome when the battle of Actium was fought. I would therefore like to suggest that we should translate as follows:

“When our ships (*carinae*) covered the broad waters of the Egyptian woman (*Niliacae*⁹, i. e. Cleopatra) he was brave around and in front of his leader (i. e. Augustus).”

The poet states that Maecenas followed Antony to Egypt, after the battle of Actium¹⁰.

³ Cf. Lewis And Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s. v. *discinctus* 2(a): “Voluptuous, effeminate”.

⁴ Cf. Lewis And Short, s. v. *animus* II, B, 2, c: “Violent passion”.

⁵ Justice fled from the earth when men fought each other: cf. Aratus, *Phaen.* 125 ff. Cf. also Lewis And Short, s. v. *praecingo* II: “Transf., to surround, encircle”.

⁶ Amat prefers the reading *opes* (page 199), but admits that the word “surprend”.

⁷ Cf. Lewis And Short, s. v. *Maeonius* (2): “Of or belonging to Etruria, Etrurian”. Maecenas was an Etrurian: cf. line 13 *Etrusce*. For Maecenas’ literary works cf. *The Oxford Companion To Classical Litera-*

ture, compiled and edited by Sir Paul Harvey, Oxford 1969, s. v. *Maecenas*.

⁸ Note the use of enjambement: *libelli / vivitur ingenio* = “one lives due to the genius of books”.

Libelli is a collective singular; for *vivitur* cf. OLD, s. v. *vivo*, 10.

Amat accepts the ms. reading *marmora Maeonii*, but puts a colon after *libelli*.

⁹ Cf. Lewis And Short, s. v. *Niliacus* (2): “Transf., Egyptian... *amor*, an Egyptian amour, i. e. with Cleopatra, Luc. 10. 80”.

¹⁰ My explanation solves the problems mentioned by Amat, page 202, note 29.

I. 89-90:

*atque aquilam misisse suam, quae quaereret ecquid
posset amaturo signa referre Iovi*

line 90 *signa* mss. : *digna* Heinsius

The critics have not been able to understand *signa*, and changed it into *digna*. In reality the text is perfectly sound. The critics have forgotten that Jupiter changed his beloved Ganymedes into a constellation. Here *signa* is a *pluralis poeticus*, meaning “constellation” (cf. *O. L. D.*, s. v. *signum*, 13, b), and *ecquid* means “whether anything” (cf. e. g. Cicero, *Att.* 7, 8 *quaeris ecqua spes sit*).

The sense is therefore: “Jupiter sent his eagle to seek whether it could bring back anything to Jupiter, who was destined (note the future participle) to love a constellation”.

I. 131-132:

*Quem nunc in fuscis placida sub nocte nitentem
Luciferum contra currere cernis equis.*

Lucifer is mentioned in these lines. I would like to suggest that *in fuscis*¹¹, in line 131, refers to Indians. Lucifer is said to shine amongst dark men (*in fuscis*, i. e. Indians) beneath the quiet night.

2. 33-34:

*cum deus in terris divis insignis avitis,
te Venus in patrio collocet ipsa sinu.*

Line 33 *intereris* Vollmer: *in terris* mss.

The poet refers here to Augustus. I would like to point out that textual alteration is not necessary in line 33. We should translate as follows: “Since you are¹² a god on earth (*in terris*), distinguished due to your divine ancestors (*divis insignis avitis*), let Venus place you in your paternal bosom.”

Duff explained that Venus is imagined to place Augustus in the bosom of Julius Caesar, his adoptive father.

¹¹ Cf. Tibullus 2, 3, 55: : *illi sint comites fuscis, quos India torret.*

For the connection of Lucifer with the east cf. Flower Smith’s note on Tibullus I, 9, 62. Cf. also Duff *ad loc.* Amat (op. cit., p. 208, note 68) noted that “Lucifer est doté d’un cheval blanc.” Cf. Ovid, *Met.* 15, 188-190. She is therefore unable to understand the pas-

sage, because she takes *fuscis* to be an attribute of *equis*. *Fuscis* is of course a substantivized adjective, meaning “black men”.

¹² For the ellipse of the *verbum substantivum* cf. my *Studies*, page 67.

Amat noted that the mss reading may be defended if we understand that there is an ellipse of the verb *eris*.

NOTES ON THE CONSOLATIO AD LIVIAM

This poem was written in honour of Drusus¹³, who died in Germany in 9 B. C. At lines 445-446 the poet mentions Avernus:

*Ipse tibi emissus nebulosi in litore Averni
–sic liceat– forti verba tot ore sonet:*

Amat¹⁴ notes that scholars have been puzzled by the meaning of *emissus*. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. The poet is referring to the fact that the shade of a dead person was believed to be able to appear to the living during the night in dreams. However, at dawn the shade was forced to return to the Underworld¹⁵. Thus at Propertius 4, 7, 89 it is stated that “night frees the imprisoned shades” (*nox clausas liberat umbras*). According to Roman mythology, the entrance to the Underworld was near to lake Avernus¹⁶. Drusus’ shade is imagined to have been liberated (*emissus*) from the Underworld, and to speak on the shore of misty Avernus, i. e. at the entrance to the Underworld¹⁷.

451-452:

*Hoc atavi monuere mei proavique Nerones:
fregerunt ambo Punica bella duces.*

Drusus refers here to his ancestors, who destroyed the Carthaginians. Similarly at Horace, *Odes* 4, 4, 17 ff. Drusus’ victory in the Rhaetian Alps is mentioned together with the destruction of the Carthaginians by Drusus’ ancestors.

It should, moreover, be noted that Horace addresses Drusus and Tiberius as “the youthful Nerones”: cf. *Odes* 4, 4, 28 *pueros... Nerones*.

The victory of Tiberius and Drusus in the Rhaetian Alps is mentioned at *Consolatio* 175: *deletis Raetorum... armis*.

103-104:

*Te queritur casusque malos irrisaque vota
Accusatque annos ut diuturna suos.*

line 103 *malos irrisaque* : *etiam derisa* C D // *vota* Heins. : *malignos* C D H

¹³ For the historical background to the poem cf. Amat, *op. cit.*, page 28.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, page 194 (note 200).

¹⁵ Cf. *Veleia* 23 (2006), page 365 and my *Studies In The Text Of Propertius*, page 159.

¹⁶ Cf. Lewis-Short, s. v. *Avernus* (I), quoting Virgil, *Aen.* 6, 201. Cf. also Ovid, *Met.* 14, 105: *et ad manes veniat per Averna paternos / orat*.

¹⁷ It is logical to assume that the *Consolatio ad Liviam* was written soon after Drusus’ death in 9 B. C. Similarly Propertius wrote 3, 3, 18 in honour of Marcellus, who died in 23 or 22 B. C. at Baiae: cf. my *Studies In The Text Of Propertius*, page 109 ff. For the debate concerning the author and date of the *Consolatio ad Liviam* cf. Amat, *op. cit.*, page 26 ff.

Amat¹⁸ points out that “le vers 103 est corrompu.” I would like to suggest that we should print this line as follows:

Te queritur casusque etiam derisa malignos

Drusus’ mother is said to have lamented his sad fate even though she was derided (*etiam derisa*)¹⁹.

In other words, Livia’s lamentation for her son was considered to be excessive by some people, who mocked her.

374:

Fulminat et caecis caeca triumphat equis

Fortune is said to be blind and to triumph in her chariot. I would like to suggest that *caecis*²⁰ means “for blind men”. According to Cicero (*Lael.* 15, 54) Fortune makes people blind: *non solum ipsa fortuna*²¹ *caeca est, sed eos etiam plerumque efficit caecos, quos complexa est.*

387-388:

*Danubiusque rapax et Dacius orbe remoto
-Appulus huic hosti perbreve pontus iter-*

Amat²² notes that scholars have been puzzled by the meaning of line 388. Textual alteration is once again not necessary. We should translate as follows:

“and the Dacian in a distant land... —the Apulian sea (*Appulus*²³... *pontus*²⁴) is a very short (*perbreve*) journey (*iter*) for this enemy”.

The poet means that the Dacians²⁵ would soon have marched on Rome if they had not been dealt with by Drusus.

¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, page 170 (note 44).

¹⁹ Cf. Terence, *Eun.* 860 *etiam... derisum*. Cf. also Horace, *Ars* 452 *in mala derisum*.

²⁰ Amat (page 188, note. 170) suggests that Fortune is said here to ride a chariot which is led by blind horses. She adds, however, that this “image” was not “courante”.

²¹ Cf. Lewis-Short, s. v. *fortuna* II, A, 1.

²² *Op. cit.*, page 189 (note 178).

²³ Cf. Lewis-Short, s. v. *Appulicus: mare Apulicum* (=“the Adriatic”). *Appulicus* and *Appulus* mean “the same”, cf. Lewis-Short, s. v.

²⁴ Cf. Lewis-Short, s. v. *pontus* (1): “Lit., the sea”. Cf. Virgil, *Aen.* I, 556 *pontus Libyae*.

²⁵ For the threat to Rome posed by the Dacians cf. Nisbet Hubbard, *Horace, Odes Book 1* (Oxford 1970), page xxxiii (8).

Amat (page 189) states that *Dacius... Appulus* is a “*locus desperatus*”, and that “une glose du manuscrit B” connects *Appulus* with a city which was founded under the Antonines.

TEXTUAL PROBLEMS IN THE EINSIEDELN ECLOGUES

I, 6-9:

*sed nostram durare fidem duo pignora cogent:
vel caper ille, nota frontem qui pingitur alba,
vel levis haec et mobilibus circumdata bullis
fistula, silvicolae munus memorabile Fauni.*

line 8 *mobilibus* Hagen: *nobilibus* ms.

In this passage the poet mentions a goat and a pipe (*fistula*). Scholars have been puzzled by the description of the pipe. Moreover, Hagen proposed the textual alteration *mobilibus* in line 8. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. The poet is referring to the fact that the pipe was made of reeds. We should translate lines 8-9 as follows: “and this light pipe, which was surrounded by noble water (*nobilibus circumdata bullis*²⁶)”. The poet means that the pipe²⁷ was made from reeds which came from pure, clear water (*aquae nobiles* Vell. Paterc. II, 25, 4; *nobilis fons* Plin. *N.H.* 18, 190).

2, 15-16:

*cernis ut attrito diffusus cortice fagus
annua vota ferat sollennesque imbuet aras?*

Scholars have been puzzled by the meaning of line 15. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. We should translate as follows:

“Do you see how the beech tree (*fagus*) with well-worn bark (*attrito... cortice*²⁸), having ‘been cheered up (*diffusus*²⁹), offers its yearly vows and stains the annual altar?”

The poet is referring to the fact that altars were placed under trees. The personified beech tree³⁰ is cheered up by the libations which it receives.

²⁶ Cf. Lewis And Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s. v. *bullia* I: “A water-bubble, water.”

²⁷ Cf. Ovid, *Met.* I, 688 for the reed pipe. Cf. also Duff, *Minor Latin Poets*, ed. Loeb, 1968, reprint, page 325. Cf. e. g. Tibullus II, 5, 31.

For the meaning of *bullis* cf. also Amat’s note *ad loc.* Scholars have been unable to explain the reference to *bullis*. *Circumdata* denotes anteriority with respect to its apposition *munus*. Cf. Kühner-Stegmann II, page 757 b.

Cf. also Horace, *Odes* 3, 13, 13 *fies nobilium tu quoque fontium* (“you too will be numbered among far-famed fountains”).

Conclusion. The epithet *nobilibus*, which perplexed the critics, confirms my explanation. On the “revered”

nobility of *fontes* and rivers cf. Nisbet-Rudd *ad* Horace, *Odes* III, page 172.

²⁸ The poet is alluding to the fact that lovers wrote inscriptions on the bark of trees: cf. Propertius I, 18, 20-22: *fagus... corticibus*. Cf. also Gow’s note on Theocritus, *Idyll* 18, line 47.

²⁹ Cf. Lewis And Short, s. v. *diffundo* II, B, 2 and Ovid, *Met.* 3, 318 *Jovem... diffusum nectare*.

³⁰ Rutilius Namatianus mentions at I, 373-4 «the sacred rites of the beech tree» (*fagil... sacris*). Libations were poured at the time of the sacrifice. Amat prints the alteration *Bacchus*, rather than the ms. reading *fagus*. *Attritus* here means excoriated, cf. Lewis-Short, s. v. *attero*, and Forcellini, s. v. *attritus*.

NOTES ON THE LAUS PISONIS

Duff³¹ noted that in the missing Lorsch manuscript the *Laus Pisonis* was wrongly ascribed to Virgil. I shall argue, however, that the *Laus Pisonis* does in fact belong to the Augustan age. Horace refers at *Ars Poetica* line 6 to the *Pisones*, a father and two sons. Fairclough³² pointed out that some scholars think that Horace is referring to Cn. Calpurnius Piso, who fought under Brutus and Cassius at Philippi. One of Piso's sons was consul in 7 B. C. and another was consul in 1 B. C. The author of the *Laus Pisonis* states at lines 70-71 that Piso had been consul. Thus the *Laus Pisonis* could have been written for either of the two sons of Cn. Calpurnius Piso.

At lines 16-17 the poet explains that the surname of Piso is connected with the verb *pinso*:

*claraque Pisonis tulerit cognomina prima,
humida callosa cum pinseret hordea dextra.*

I would like to suggest that *prima*, in line 16, means "excellent". The Calpurnian house derived its name from Calpus, and obtained its illustrious (*claraque*) and excellent (*prima*) surname of Piso when it pounded damp barley with a hard-skinned hand.

Cf. Lewis And Short, s. v. *primus* II, B; "First in rank or station... most excellent."

For the employment of two adjectives asyndetically connected cf. *G. I. F.* 55, 2003, page 261.

The epithet *humida*, which puzzled scholars (cf. Baehrens' apparatus *P. L. M.* I, 1879, page 226) is correct: cf. Plin. *N. H.* XVIII, 56 (*umida*): barley needed dampness to grow.

line 24:

atque illos cecinere sui per carmina vates.

The poet states that the members of the house of Calpurnia were praised in the past by poets. We should translate as follows:

"and their own poets (*sui... vates*) celebrated in song those famous men (*illos*)."

Duff stated that this passage seems to indicate "belief in the existence of heroic lays in ancient Rome". Cf. moreover, Ovid, *Ep. Ponto* IV, 2, 1 *o vates magnorum regum*.

lines 70-71:

*cum tua bisenos numeraret purpura fasces,
Caesareum grato cecinisti pectore numen.*

³¹ Cf. J. W. Duff and A. M. Duff, *Minor Latin Poets*, Loeb edition, 1968 reprint, page 289 ff.

³² Cf. H. R. Fairclough, Horace, *Satires, Epistles And Ars Poetica*, Loeb edition, 1970, reprint, page 503, s. v. *Pisones*.

The poet refers here to the consulship. Duff explained that when he became consul, Piso delivered a complimentary speech to the emperor. We should translate line 71 as follows:

“you praised Caesar’s power (*Caesareum*³³... *numen*) with grateful heart.”

lines 238-240:

*Maecenas tragico quatientem pulpita gestu
erexit Varium, Maecenas alta tonantis
eruit et populis ostendit nomina Graiis.*

The poet refers in these lines to Maecenas and Varius. Duff explained that Varius was an epic poet as well as a tragic author. Maecenas is said to have helped Varius. We should translate as follows:

“Maecenas raised to fame Varius, who shook the stage with tragic mien; Maecenas drew out the high poetry of thundering Varius, and made his name known to the Greeks.”

Nomina has perplexed the critics (cf. Baehrens’ apparatus *ad loc.*): in reality, it is a poetic plural. Cf. *nomina tui* Ovid, *Ibis* 442; Sil. II, 311.

Alta tonantis means “the high poetry (*scil.* epic) of Varius”.

Conclusion. The references to Maecenas and the poets of the Augustan age (i. e. Virgil, Varius and Horace), together with the fact that two sons of Cn. Calpurnius Piso became consuls under Augustus, suggests that the *Laus Pisonis* belongs to the Augustan³⁴ age. Accordingly, the *Laus Pisonis* was ascribed by some ancient authorities to Virgil.

A TEXTUAL PROBLEM IN NEMESIANUS

Eclogue 2, 8-15:

*hinc amor et pueris iam non puerilia vota:
quis anni ter quinque hiemes et cura iuventae.
sed postquam Donacen duri clausere parentes, 10
quod non tam tenui filo de voce sonaret
sollicitumque foret pinguis sonus, improba cervix
suffususque rubor crebro venaeque tumentes,
tum vero ardentes flammati pectoris aestus
carminibus dulcique parant relevare querella; 15*

³³ Augustus is called Caesar at Ovid, *Tristia* I, 1, 30 *lenito Caesare*.

The emperor is here envisaged as a divine person, hence *numen*. Cf. *Caesareo numine* Ovid, *Fast.* I, 282.

³⁴ Cf. also line 26 where the poet states that wars have ended (*bella quierunt*). This is a reference to the fact that Augustus restored peace to the world: cf. Flower Smith’s note on Tibullus I, 10, 45 ff.

In this poem Idas and Alcon are said to have loved Donace. Scholars have been puzzled by the meaning of line 9. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. Idas and Alcon were fifteen years old, and suffered the troubles (*hiemes*³⁵) of youth, i.e. young love. (cf. Ovid, *Her.* 5, 34). The poet refers to the suffering endured by lovers, i.e. the torment which is inflicted upon young lovers by the god *Amor*.

Donace was imprisoned by her parents due to her two lovers. I would like to point out that the poet has employed a pun in line 13. The words *venaeque*³⁶ *tumentes* mean both “excited passion” and “swollen *membrum virile*”. In other words, Donace’s parents imprisoned her because she was impudent (*improba*) and because they noticed the excited passion (i.e. the sexual erections) of her lovers³⁷.

A NOTE ON PENTADIUS

I, 9-10:

*sanguine poma rubent Thisbae nece tincta repente:
candida quae fuerant, sanguine poma rubent.*

line 9 *tristi nece codd.*: *Thisbae nece* L. Mueller

In this passage Duff³⁸ printed Mueller’s alteration *Thisbae nece*. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. The poet alludes here to the story of Pyramus³⁹ and Thisbe. He states that due to a sad death (*tristi nece*) fruit was stained with blood. He is referring to the fact that the fruit of the mulberry⁴⁰ tree was said to have been stained by the blood of Pyramus and Thisbe. The reader will note that Pentadius refers to the story of the mulberry tree and the death of Pyramus in an allusive⁴¹ manner. Similarly in lines 21-22 Pentadius alludes to the story of Althaea without mentioning her.

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³⁵ Cf. Lewis And Short, s. v. *hiems* II, 1-2 : “Trouble”. Cf. also *Oxf. Lat. Dict.*, s. v. *hiem(p)s*, 1, fig.

³⁶ Cf. Lewis And Short, s. v. *vena* II, B: “The interior... feelings” and s. v. *vena* I, 6: “*membrum virile*”.

³⁷ Baehrens (*P. L. M.* III, page 180) altered *hiemes et cura iuventae* into *increscit cura iuvencae*; Volpillhac (Némésien, ed. Budé, Paris 1975) changed (page 47) *hiemes et cura iuventae* into *et mens et cura iuventae*.

³⁸ Cf. *Minor Latin Poets*, ed. Loeb, 1968, reprint, page 544. Duff noted that “Heinsius saw that the reference was

to the trysting-place of Pyramus and Thisbe”. On all this cf. the apparatus criticus in Baehrens, *P. L. M.* IV, page 343.

³⁹ Cf. Ovid, *Met.* 4, 89 ff.

⁴⁰ Cf. Lewis And Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s. v. *Pyramus* II: “*Pyrameus*... of or belonging to Pyramus, Pyramian: *arbor*, i. e. the mulberry-tree”.

⁴¹ For allusion to myths cf. *Mus. Phil. Lond.*, X, 1996, page 51.