

To give added support to this interpretation of the Latin and perhaps to increase the plausibility of the thesis that the proverb is originally and essentially a Near Eastern one, I want to call attention to an ancient Babylonian proverb hitherto unnoticed in this connection. On one of the many bilingual (Sumero-Akkadian) tablets that have been preserved from the Babylonian civilizations there is found a series of proverbs among which are the following:<sup>28</sup>

na-da-nu šá šarri ū-bu-bu šá šá-qí-i  
 <na-da-nu šá šarri> dum-mu-qu šá a-ba-rak-ku

Though at the early stages of Assyriology it was not altogether clear what these meant,<sup>29</sup> there now seems to be agreement and Lambert's translation represents the generally accepted view. We have here, in effect, two versions of the same proverb: 1) "Giving per-

tains to a king, doing good to a cup-bearer"; and 2) "Giving pertains to a king, showing favour to a steward."<sup>30</sup> It is hardly necessary to point out that we have here essentially the same proverb as in the Talmud and, most likely then, in Petronius. Also, the Near Eastern origin of the saying is made even more probable, especially when one realizes that the Babylonian version (not the tablet) may go back to the third millennium.

In brief, the Aramaic and Babylonian proverbs make it highly likely that the sentence in Petronius should be read as two clauses, and they also give added substance to Hadas' suggestion that Oriental elements are present in Petronius.<sup>31</sup>

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28. The text is that of W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford, 1960), pp. 258–59.

29. See, for example, the interpretation of S. Langdon in *Amer. J. Sem. Lang.*, XXVIII (1912), 231, which is quite different from the currently held view.

30. Lambert, *loc. cit.*

31. It is heartening to note that P. Walcot, *Hesiod and the Near East* (Cardiff, 1966), p. 17, has recently suggested that Near Eastern literature "is a legitimate field of research if one tries to identify Ovid's source material." Indeed, the

ancient world was smaller than scholars usually suppose. Let me express here my sincere thanks to three scholars whose help was invaluable to me in the writing of this paper: to Professor Moshe Held, who gave freely of his learning on Assyriological matters; to Professor Henry A. Fischel, who allowed me to make use of his forthcoming article cited in n. 25 and also criticized an early version of this article; and especially to Professor Louis Feldman, who read a draft of this paper and made numerous valuable suggestions, nearly all of which have been incorporated.

#### ARISTOTLE *RHET.* 1413b3

ἐὰν γάρ τις τὰ τοιαῦτα (i.e., repetition) μὴ ὑποκρίνηται (i.e., μὴ ὡς ἐν λέγοντα τῷ αὐτῷ ἦθαι καὶ τόνῳ εἰπεῖν) γίνεται "ὁ τὴν δοκὸν φέρων."

The expression ὁ τὴν δοκὸν φέρων, when commented on explicitly or implicitly, is referred to monotony ("chi non sa bene atteggiarle & pronuntiarle, porge, come si dice per proverbio, un piattellino di quei medesimi," A. Caro [1570]; "monotonian notat," Spengel [1867]), or sometimes to stiffness, in which latter case English-language commentators refer to the expression, "like one who has swallowed a poker" (Cope-Sandys [1877]; Welldon [1886]; Freese [LCL, 1926]; L. Cooper [1932]). But it is often enough translated without comment (as by Jebb-Sandys [1909]; Rhys Roberts in Ross; Gohlke [Paderborn, 1959], "wenn man soetwas nämlich nicht richtig vor-

trägt, kommt heraus 'der Balken Tragende'"). Only one scholar, so far as I can see, openly admitted the puzzling nature of the expression. Knebel (Stuttgart, 1838) in a note *ad loc.* (p. 205) wrote, "Der Sinn ist unstreitig: 'so kommt eine unerträgliche Monotonie heraus.' Was aber 'der Mann der den Balken trägt' mit diesem Sinne zu schaffen habe, vermögen wir nicht zu erklären."

No doubt Aristotle, if he had ever heard of a man swallowing a poker, could see some similarity between his condition and that of one carrying a beam; but I doubt if he would have found the comparison any apter than that involved in the "scream of Calliope" (*Rhet.* 3. 2. 11). In any case, neither of the expressions, *per se*, has any obvious reference to repetition, which is what he is here talking about (τὸ αὐτὸ λέγειν), the *διλογία* that was

of old an object of censure (see Radermacher on Aristoph. *Ran.* 1154 [p. 307]). He is saying that the thing must be done with feeling and expression (cf. schol. on Hom. *Il.* 1. 287 ff.: ἴδιον τῶν θυμουμένων ἐπανακυκλοῦν τὰ αὐτά, and Aquila Romanus 30, "Aristoteli et iteratio ipsa verborum ac nominum et repetitio frequentior . . . actioni magis et certamini quam stilo videtur convenire"). But what is the point about the man carrying the beam? I believe there can be little doubt but that this was an allusive phrase like Διὸς Κόρυθος (Aristoph. *Ran.* 439), and capable, like it, of being applied

to tiresome or pointless repetition; and that it was based on a comical remark made by (or fathered on) Diogenes, of whom we read (D. L. 6. 41; cf. 66) that once, when a man carrying a beam accidentally hit him, and then, very humanly, cried, "Look out!" Diogenes replied, "Why?—are you going to hit me again?" (πρὸς τὸν ἐπιτινάξαντα αὐτῷ δοκόν, εἶτα εἰπόντα: "φύλαξαι," "πάλιν γάρ με," ἔφη, "παίειν μέλλεις;").

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### HIRCUS IN ERVILIA (PETRON. 57. 11)

"Quid nunc stupes tamquam hircus in ervilia?" is the concluding sentence of a long tirade by Hermeros, one of the freedmen at Trimalchio's dinner party, against Ascylos. The only serious attempt before Friedländer to explain the last three words was that of W. Goes,<sup>1</sup> who claims that vetch is unpalatable to animals unless it has been crushed and mixed with water in the manner described by Columella 6. 3. 4. This was rejected, quite rightly, by Friedländer in his edition (Leipzig, 1891). In reality vetch, whether dry or mixed with water, is good fodder for cattle, sheep, and goats, and is recommended by Columella in several places; in one of these he says that it is ideal for sheep, but expensive.<sup>2</sup> But Friedländer can make no sense of the words in Petronius' context and in his commentary recommends the emendation *hircus in ovili* or *hircus ovilia*, both suggested to him by Fleischmann. A further refinement is O. Keller's *hircus inter ovilia*, which would at least give the goat a reason for gaping.<sup>3</sup> All these conjectures are dismissed by W. Süss<sup>4</sup> and have found no favor with more recent editors.

But while the manuscript reading is now universally accepted, its meaning remains unexplained. E. T. Sage (New York, 1929) suggests "Goat in a garden" as a fair paraphrase, and A. Otto finds a parallel in the German expression "Storch im Salat."<sup>5</sup> Both miss the main point, which must be that Ascylos looks distressed and helpless; in the following chapter the same speaker says to Giton, "Curris, stupes, satagis, tamquam mus in matella," and a little later he compares him to a *volpis uda* (58. 9, 12). Other commentators give up. Neither Paratore nor Sedgwick (2d. ed.; Oxford, 1950) has anything to say about this sentence, and Marmorale (Florence, 1962) takes it as a piece of generalized abuse with no particular relevance to Ascylos. Coming at the very end of the chapter this would be extremely lame, unworthy both of Petronius and of Hermeros whose abuse, with all its coarseness, reveals considerable force of the imagination.<sup>6</sup> If Hermeros' analogy is at all appropriate, he must mean that vetch can produce symptoms of distress in goats similar to those he claims to find in Ascylos; our

1. Quoted in P. Burman's *Variorum Edition*<sup>2</sup> (Amsterdam, 1743).

2. Columella *RR* 7. 3. 19 ff.; cf. 6. 3. 3–4. It is also recommended as a cure for indigestion in cattle, 6. 6. 2, and for humans by Dioscorides 2. 108; cf. Plin. *NH* 18. 38. 139.

3. *Wien. Stud.*, XXXI (1909), 175; Keller thinks that the goat is uncertain which of two folds to enter, and compares Buridan's ass. He is criticized by L. Radermacher, *ibid.*, XXXII (1910), 204 f.; cf. Heraeus' addenda to Bücheler's edition of Petronius (1922<sup>6</sup>, 1958<sup>7</sup>), *ad loc.*

4. *De eo quem dicunt inesse Trimalchionis Cenae sermone vulgari* (Dorpat, 1926), p. 41. Keller and Radermacher regarded *ervilia* as an accusative plural, but Süss points out that it is in fact the ablative of the feminine first-declension form *ervilia*.

5. *Sprichw. . . . der Römer* (Leipzig, 1890), quoted by P. Perrochat, *Pétrone: Le Festin de Trimalcion*<sup>3</sup> (Paris, 1962), *ad loc.*

6. Cf. E. Paratore, *Il Satyricon di P.*, II (Florence, 1933), 189.