

10. 160 "tentarat precibus saevum lenire furorem." Similarly, Claudian *In Eutropium* 1. 84 sets *lenire* against *indomitus*: "indomitasque mora, pretio lenibat avaras." It is significant that Eutropius, like Silo, is performing the *lenonis opus* by approaching married women on behalf of would-be lovers. Placed in antithesis to *leno*, *saevus et indomitus* might well trigger a latent pun on *leno/lenire*. This neat verbal touch would emphasize Catullus' caustic observation that for a man in Silo's dubious moral position the appropriate attitude is not patrician arrogance but pliant servility.⁴

MARILYN B. SKINNER
Northern Illinois University

4. I wish to thank my colleagues E. Spofford, L. Stephens, and M. Wigodsky for helpful advice and comments. This note has greatly benefited from the criticism of the anonymous *CP* referee.

THE MEANING OF *IRRUMARE* IN CATULLUS AND MARTIAL

foedasti miserum, marite, moechum,
et se, qui fuerant prius, requirunt
trunci naribus auribusque voltus.
credis te satis esse vindicatum?
erras: iste potest et irrumare.

You have made the wretched adulterer revolting, husband,
and his face, shorn of nose and ears,
looks in vain for itself as it had been before.
Do you believe you have been sufficiently revenged?
You are wrong; he can still irrumate.¹

It is hard to see the point of Martial 2. 83 as it stands. The problem can be isolated in one word—*irrumare*—in line 5. Why should Martial point out to the offended, vengeful husband that the adulterer can still irrumate? If the point is that the husband should cut off the penis in addition to the nose and ears, it seems strained to use irrumation as an example of what the adulterer can still do. Moreover, the phrasing of the question and answer in lines 4–5 suggests no shift in focus from the present punishment to the possible future activity of the adulterer. The retention of *irrumare* in the text calls for some defense, but a sound defense is hard to find.

The first possibility is to take *irrumare* literally,² to mean that the adulterer still has a penis with which to commit adultery with the wife and irrumate her. Martial 3. 85 has been adduced as a parallel:

quis tibi persuasit naris abscidere moecho?
non hac peccatum est parte, marite, tibi.
stulte, quid egisti? nihil hic tibi perdidit uxor
cum sit salva tui mentula Deiphoi.

I am indebted, as always, to Gordon Williams, for his stimulating criticism and for his very helpful and material suggestions on this article.

1. All translations presented here are original. Throughout, *irrumare* ("force to fellate"—in tone, something like "fuck [someone's] mouth") will be translated "irrumate"; the difference between irrumation of a man and of a woman will be discussed below.

2. Thus, for example, T. Farnaby, *M. Val. Martialis epigrammaton libri* (Sedan, 1624), ad 2. 83; refuted by A. E. Housman, "Praefanda," *Hermes* 66 (1931): 407–9.

Who persuaded you to cut off the adulterer's nose?
 Not by this part, husband, was the crime committed
 against you.
 Stupid man, what have you done? Your wife has lost
 nothing here, you'll find,
 since your Deiphobus' prick is safe.

In other words, "iste potest et irrumare" (2. 83) is to be taken as the equivalent of "nihil hic tibi perdidit uxor / cum sit salva tui mentula Deiphobi" (3. 85). But a comparison of 2. 83 and 3. 85 is a red herring. The two poems resemble each other somewhat, not only in topic but in form (the question in 2. 83. 4, 3. 85. 3), but this resemblance does not mean that both poems must have the same punch line. The adulterous wife, who figures as a character in 3. 85, is not mentioned at all in 2. 83, which deals only with the punishment for adultery; she appears in 2. 83 only when one already has 3. 85 in mind.

Thus a literal interpretation of *irrumare* in 2. 83. 5 is unconvincing. A more complex interpretation was suggested by A. E. Housman,³ who took *irrumare* here to have a weakened slang meaning, "cheat." The point of 2. 83 then would be that the adulterer, even without ears and nose, still has what he needs to irrumate—cheat—the poor husband. As parallel examples of this weakened slang usage of *irrumare* Housman cites Catullus 10. 9–13 and 28. 9–10, 12–13, as well as Martial 4. 17. If *irrumare* indeed meant "cheat" in these other passages, then it could be taken to mean "cheat" in Martial 2. 83.

This proposed explanation of a small crux in Martial has surprisingly wide ramifications. It can be shown to be an invalid explanation, but it is more important to realize that its acceptance results from asking a misleading question. For example, when Catullus writes "bene me ac diu supinum / tota ista trabe lentus irrumasti"—"You irrumated me well and for a long time / as I lay flat on my back, coolly, with the whole of that beam of yours" (28. 9–10)—the question, "did Catullus really mean what he says?" misdirects criticism. It does not matter whether the event occurred or not. What is important is that the situation con-

3. "Praefanda," p. 408. Housman attributes this interpretation to Baehrens ad Catull. 10. 9–13, 28. 9–13 (E. Baehrens, *Catulli Veronensis liber* [Leipzig, 1893]). There is some confusion in Baehrens' interpretation of *irrumare* in Catullus. In commenting on "irrumator / praetor" (10. 12–13), Baehrens says *irrumator* is used "ut convitium" and lists Catull. 16, 37, 74, and 28 as parallels. In his comments ad locc., however, he takes 16. 1, 14 literally; while ad 21. 8, 13 (left out of the list ad 10. 12) he takes *irrumare* to mean "ludificare cum multo risu." As criticism, Baehrens' evaluation of 10. 12 is better than that of 28. 9. At 28. 9, Baehrens was assessing the words of the poem in relation to the reality of the situation they describe, which is a critical blind alley (see p. 42); he concludes "haec dicta sunt figurate, nec ulla verbis obscenis subest res obscena." At 10. 12, he adduces Lucil. 398–99 Marx, a passage describing Scipio as praetor throwing men out of his camp; the aggrieved speaker says "praetor noster . . . quam spurcos ore," "how filthy a mouth our praetor has." In fact it is ad 21. 13, 37, 8, and 74. 6 that Baehrens claims that *irrumare* = *ludificare*. The only support he gives for this is Suet. *Div. Iul.* 22, which he compares with Catull. 37. 8. Caesar's boast ("insultaturum omnium capitibus") does seem to be a periphrasis for *irrumare*, since it is taken as such and in no weakened sense by Caesar's opponent, who sneers that a woman will not find this easy to do ("negante . . . per contumeliam facile hoc ulli feminae fore").

The strength of Baehrens' argument for a weakened meaning of *irrumare*, then, rests solely on 10. 12 *irrumator* and its parallel in Lucilius, which lacks a context. For the meaning of *irrumator*, cf. below, p. 43. Most recently the idea that *irrumare* meant "cheat" has been taken up by K. Quinn, *Catullus: The Poems* (London, 1970), who finds that the weakened meaning is used at 16. 1, 14, 21. 8, 13, 28. 10, 37. 8, and 74. 5, although it often suggests the literal meaning (ad 16. 1).

ceived was possible and not a purely fantastic one. Obscene poetry is meant to be funny and shocking at the same time; the reader is meant to laugh, but it is the literal, obscene picture which produces the harsh comic impact. Attempts to remove the obscenity—by replacing, for example, “force to fellate” with “cheat”—do away with the outrageousness as well. Nor was this particular outrage bizarre or unheard of. Irrumation was associated with extreme virility in the Priapic poems; performing punitive irrumation was, in Latin poetry, something to boast about. Indeed, it is the boasts themselves which constitute most of the poems studied here.

To move from critical principle to lexical observation: no other primary obscenity in Latin shows signs of any weakening—*futuere*, *pedicare*, *fellare* are always used with their sexual meaning. Latin simply shows no sign of a phenomenon of which English affords a rich variety of examples;⁴ if *irrumare* were used to mean “cheat,” it would be the only word in Latin to be so weakened. Even if such a unique usage were really the case, the sexual connotations of *irrumare* would certainly be the first to strike the reader who found it in a sexual context in a poem.

A weakened sense of *irrumare* is then not only unlikely in itself but could be expected to yield before the original sense, were the word to be used in a context which naturally invites the sexual meaning. In fact there seems to be no reason in the first place to think there was such a weakened meaning, since all the examples in Catullus and elsewhere work extremely well with *irrumare* meaning “force to fellate.” Catullus uses *irrumare* in contexts similar to those in which it is used in the *Priapea*, where irrumation is one of the punishments Priapus reserves for thieves. A whole class of Priapic poems deals with threats by the god to punish thieves who enter his garden: generally the punishment for women is rape; for boys, anal rape; and for adult males, oral rape (irrumation). One example will serve to illustrate this (*Pr.* 22):⁵

Femina si furtum faciet mihi virve puerve,
haec cunnum, caput hic praebeat, ille nates.

If a woman or a man or a boy steals from me,
the one shall offer her cunt, the next his head, and
the last, his butt.

In other Latin invective writing, the poet may adopt Priapus’ menacing attitude, and threaten, or boast of having carried out, brutal sexual punishments. Some poems speak of irrumation as a general punishment, used to prove one’s virility against another; a few poems specifically cite irrumation as a punishment

4. This phenomenon does exist in Greek, although only with certain words for intercourse which can mean “deceive” or “give a raw deal to” (J. Henderson, *The Maculate Muse* [New Haven, 1975], p. 40). Housman cites *λαικάζειν* as a parallel for the weakening of *irrumare*; Henderson says (*The Maculate Muse*, p. 153) that *λαικάζειν* is used “with an unmistakably violent tone” of “fornication . . . [and] also the unseemly behavior that accompanies wenching and debauchery” but that it can be used to mean “hoodwink or deceive.” It is interesting that Martial himself used *λαικάζειν* as an expletive (11. 58. 11–12 “lota mentula laeva / *λαικάζειν* cupidae dicet avaritiae,” “My prick, when my left hand is washed, / will say ‘fous-moi la paix’ to your grasping greediness”); cf. Petron. *Sat.* 42. The closest Latin equivalent is something like “ire in malam rem,” since stronger words like *futuere* do not change their meaning in this way.

5. See also *Pr.* 13 and 74, which delineate the three types of punishment; 28, 35, 44, 56. 5–6, and 70. 13, specific threats of irrumation; 30 and 59, both referring to the *os impurum*.

used by a cuckolded husband or lover against an adulterer or seducer. This second type is part of a larger category of *topoi* concerning the punishment of adulterers (see p. 45). But the attitude borrowed from Priapus is in itself notable for the violence of its imagery and its likening of the irrumator to the crude statue of the god, with his giant phallus and his comically horrific threats. Sometimes the irrumator is a husband keeping adulterers from his wife, as Priapus keeps thieves from his garden; sometimes the irrumator rails like Priapus against any who annoy him.

The general threat is made by an irrumator who is claiming to be enormously virile; he sneers at his irrumated victim as effeminate, or at best emasculate. This is seen in its most famous setting in Catullus 16. 1, 14, in which Catullus proclaims to Aurelius and Furius, "Pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo, / Aureli pathice et cinaede Furi . . .," "I will bugger you and irrumate you, / Aurelius, you pathic—you queer, Furius." The reason for Catullus' avowed hostility is that the two have accused him of being effeminate because his verse is delicate; thus he says he will prove his virility upon them.⁶ Catullus 28. 9–13 is a reversal of this sort of threat; Catullus describes himself as a victim of the Priapus-figure:

bene me ac diu supinum
tota ista trabe lentus irrumasti . . .
nam nihilo minore verpa
farti estis . . .

You irrumated me well and for a long time as I lay
flat on my back,
coolly, with the whole of that beam of yours . . .
but now you two are stuffed yourselves
by no smaller schlong . . .

In much the same way, Catullus refers to Memmius as "irrumator / praetor" in 10. 12–13, or calls Mamurra "Mentula" (e.g., especially 115. 8, "non homo, sed vero mentula magna minax"—"not a man, but rather a big threatening prick"). And the similarity of these Catullus passages to the tone of the Priapic poems is underscored by similarities in wording. *Priapea* 35, which ends "pedicaberis irrumaberisque" is close to Catullus 16. 1, 14; compare, for example, Catullus 21. 12 ("dum licet pudico") with *Priapea* 59. 2 ("inpudicus ito"), or Catullus 21. 13 ("tangam te . . . irrumatione") with *Priapea* 28. 5 ("altiora tangam").

Irrumation as a punishment for adultery also appears in Catullus; he adopts the stance of the brutal, extremely virile male in order to cow seducers of his lovers.

6. Cf. C. W. Macleod, "Parody and Personalities in Catullus," *CQ* 67 (1973): 300. Catull. 74 contains a similar description of irrumation as a cruel humiliation of a less virile opponent; the poem not only uses the word literally, but plays with the very concept of irrumation, by saying Gellius will make his lecturing uncle into a Harpocrates (the god of silence who held his finger to his lips). Gellius will shut the uncle's mouth by irrumating him. The man-against-man situation also appears in graffiti; it is probably implied in the Pompeian inscription "ir irrumabilit(e)r" (E. Diehl, *Pompeianische Wandinschriften und Verwandtes* [Bonn, 1910], no. 628); cf. Diehl 627 "inclinabilit(e)r ceventinabiliter," "bend-overably, shake-ass-ably," and 626 "Trebonius Eucini ceventinabiliter arrurabiliter," "Eucinus' Trebonius shake-ass-ably, plow-ably"; also the graffito published by H. Comfort ("An Insulting Latin Graffito," *AJA* 52 [1948]: 321) "i(r)rumo te, Sex-(te)." Mart. 3. 82. 33 proposes irrumation as a punishment for nothing worse than giving an overly luxurious dinner party—the catch being that it would be no punishment, for the proposed victim enjoys fellating other men. See also the anecdote told of Caesar, n. 3.

At 21. 13 Catullus warns Aurelius to leave his boy alone; if the boy is touched, says Catullus, "tangam te prior irrumatione . . . quare desine, dum licet pudico, / ne finem facias, sed irrumatus," "I will tag you first, by irrumating you . . . so stop, while you can still do so and keep it clean—lest you pull it off, irrumated." He claims he could irrumate all Lesbia's suitors (37. 8), "me una ducentos irrumare sessores," "that I will [dare to] irrumate two hundred suitors at once."

Thus all the uses of *irrumare* in Catullus are similar to the sort of threats made by Priapus; Catullus does not use *irrumare* to mean "cheat." The only other suggested parallel to Martial 2. 83 is Martial 4. 17. Can it be shown that *irrumare* means "cheat" here? Or should 4. 17 rather be taken literally?

facere in Lyciscam, Paule, me iubes versus
quibus illa lectis rubeat et sit irata.
o Paule, malus es; irrumare vis solus.

You tell me, Paulus, to write verses against Lycisca,
so she'll blush and be angry when she's read them.
O Paulus, you're wicked; you want to be her only irrumator.

The objections to a literal interpretation of this poem are not very serious ones.⁷ 4. 17 depends for its humor on the implications of accusing someone of irrumating a woman. When one man irrumated another, he was being brutally virile; when a man irrumated a woman, he was getting himself fellated, and women who performed fellatio were not respectable (Catull. 58, 59; Mart. 4. 84, 9. 4, 9. 67, 12. 55; 2. 50 and 6. 69 deal with the *os impurum*). Moreover, a penchant for being fellated was somewhat laughable (Mart. 9. 40, 11. 40), and oral sex was for old men who have trouble getting a firm erection (as in Mart. 4. 50. 2; see especially 11. 46).

Generally *fellare* is the verb used of fellatio performed by a woman, but Martial does use *irrumare* of a man and a woman again at 4. 50:

Quid me, Thaïs, senem subinde dicis?
nemo est, Thaïs, senex ad irrumandum.

Why do you always call me an old man, Thaïs?
No one, Thaïs, is an old man when it comes to irrumating.

As with the poems describing fellatio, both the process and the woman have unpleasant associations. Martial is threatening Thaïs for calling him an old man; "Thaïs" is a name he often gives to prostitutes (cf. 4. 84, where she is a *fellatrix*).

Thus 4. 17 is a double insult. The presupposed situation is that Martial and Paulus are rivals; Paulus asks Martial to insult Lycisca, thereby giving himself a clear field. Martial then writes a poem implying that Paulus customarily enjoys Lycisca only through irrumation. This, unlike irrumation as punishment for an adulterer, is a sign of lack of virility; and it is also a sign that Lycisca is cheap and sluttish, since she allows Paulus to do this to her all the time (her name, too, points in this direction; cf. Juv. 6. 123). The further implication is that Martial himself did not care very much about Lycisca in the first place. The literal meaning of *irrumare*, then, is not only adequate but necessary in this context; the idea in

7. Housman, "Praefanda," pp. 407–8: that Paulus would be enjoying not her but her mouth; why would a *fellatrix* be faithful to Paulus even with Martial out of the way, and who ever disposed of a rival by such a trick?

irrumare vis solus is "you wish to be her one and only—irrumator." The joke is a surprise, *irrumare solus* a parody of the common concept "be the one and only lover of . . .";⁸ the compressed idea is, "You want to be her one and only lover but all you can really do is irrumate her." A figurative use of the word is not needed here.

On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, punishment for adultery constitutes a *topos* in Roman satire and epigram, and there are several passages which cite irrumation as one option. The punishments for adultery that are cited in epigram and satire are as follows: being beaten, paying a fine, or being insulted by servants (Hor. *Sat.* 1. 2. 41–44, 1. 2. 133; Juv. 10. 315–16); castration (Hor. *Sat.* 1. 2. 44–46; Mart. 2. 60, 3. 85, 3. 92, 6. 2⁹); the *supplicium puerile*, anal rape (Mart. 2. 47, 2. 49, 2. 60—applied to adult males as well, Hor. *Sat.* 1. 2. 132–33; Catull. 15. 19; and Juv. 10. 317 [radishes and mullets substituted for the phallus]); having one's ears and nose cut off (Mart. 2. 83. 1–3, 3. 85. 1). Irrumation appears at Catullus 21. 8, 13; 37. 7–8; and at Martial 2. 47. 4:

Subdola famosae moneo fuge retia moechae,
levior o conchis, Galle, Cytheriacis.
confidis natibus? non est pedico maritus:
quae faciat duo sunt: irrumat aut fuit.

I warn you to shun the treacherous snares of the notorious adulteress,

Gallus, you who are smoother than Cytherean shells.
You rely on your buttocks? The husband is no bugger.
There are two things he likes to do: he irrumates or
he fucks.

That an epigram could be written entirely about the punishment for adultery is thus nothing extraordinary; it is Martial 2. 47 which in this respect might provide the closest parallel to Martial 2. 83.

For with the meaning "cheat" eliminated as a possibility, *irrumare* at Martial 2. 83. 5 has lost its defense. Therefore, and with the poems about punishment for adultery in mind, the emendation of *irrumare* to *irrumari* offers a solution to the problem:

foedasti miserum, marite, moechum,
et se, qui fuerant prius, requirunt
trunci naribus auribusque voltus.
credis te satis esse vindicatum?
erras: iste potest et irrumari.

You have made the wretched adulterer revolting, husband,
and his face, shorn of ears and nostrils,
looks for itself as it had been before.
Do you believe you have been sufficiently revenged?
You are wrong; he can still be irrumated.

8. For sources and discussion, see G. Williams, "Some Aspects of Roman Marriage Ceremonies and Ideals," *JRS* 48 (1958): 23.

9. This epigram refers to Domitian's revival of two separate laws—one against male prostitution and castration of male children, and the *lex Julia de adulteriis coercendiis*. The *inmeritos* in line 2 possibly implies that there were some who merited castration, e.g., as punishment for adultery.

The idea is that the husband has cut off the adulterer's nose and ears, but the mouth is still left to be befouled (possibly recalling *foedasti* in line 1). This emendation is in line with the poem's concentration on punishment and mentions a possible penalty for adultery, keeping the focus on the head of the adulterer; as if the cuckold, in the act of slicing off nose and ears, were tapped on the shoulder by Martial and the further humiliation suggested.

AMY RICHLIN
Dartmouth College

ATEDIUS MELIOR'S TREE: STATIUS *SILVAE* 2. 3

The second book of Statius' *Silvae* was dedicated to the wealthy and elegant Atedius Melior.¹ The first poem in the collection is an epicedion composed in memory of his *puer delicatus* Glaucias, whose physical beauty and intellectual precocity were a subject of wonder in his life and of regret after his premature death.² In the third and fourth poems Statius turned to lighter themes, of which he remarks in his prose preface to Book 2: "in arborem certe tuam, Melior, et psittacum scis a me leves libellos quasi epigrammatis loco scriptos." In them, then, we find the poet claiming to handle subjects that required above all deftness of touch and a playful tone; indeed, they would have been fitting material for epigram, but Statius did not essay the specialty of Martial, who also enjoyed Melior's patronage.³ Statius' words in the preface—which have the usual self-deprecatory tone⁴—need not imply that the poems are no more than *jeux d'esprit*, though clearly they could be quite properly classified and appreciated as such; they are not necessarily devoid of deeper significance and a wider reference than first reading may suggest. When publishing 2. 3 and 4, Statius perhaps wished them to be regarded as simply *leves libellos*; but when they were written they may have had purposes other than merely to amuse. This paper will examine the *arbor*-poem to test this hypothesis.

2. 3 was written as a birthday offering for Melior (62). Its basic form is that of an aition, which permits Statius to use his favorite device of inventing a myth to act as the structural core of a poem.⁵ It has, too, relationships with ecphrasis and laudatio, respectively at its beginning (1–5) and its end (64–77). The myth (8–61) is strongly reminiscent of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, especially of the tale of Arethusa at 5. 572–642.⁶ The three sections, as will be shown, form a unity, from

1. For Atedius Melior, see P. White, "The Friends of Martial, Statius, and Pliny and the Dispersal of Patronage," *HSCP* 79 (1975): 270–75.

2. Cf. *Silv.* 2. 1. 36–55 (beauty), 113–19 (precocity); D. Vessey, *Statius and the "Thebaid"* (Cambridge, 1973), p. 21.

3. Cf. White, "The Friends of Martial, Statius, and Pliny," pp. 273–74, on Melior's relations with Martial.

4. On the apologetic and deprecatory nature of Statius' prefaces, see Vessey, *Statius and the "Thebaid"*, pp. 36–40.

5. Cf. S. Newmyer, *The "Silvae" of Statius: Structure and Theme*, Mnemosyne Suppl. 53 (Leyden, 1979), p. 62; also D. Vessey, "Aspects of Statius' Epithalamion," *Mnemosyne*, ser. 4, 25 (1972): 183–84 on Statius' use of invented myths.

6. Cf. F. Vollmer, *P. Papinii Statii "Silvarum" libri* (Leipzig, 1898), p. 356; L. Håkanson, *Statius' "Silvae": Critical and Exegetical Remarks with Some Notes on the "Thebaid"* (Lund, 1969), pp. 70–71.