

NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

THE ETYMOLOGY OF VULGAR LATIN *MATUS* (*MATTUS*) AND *MATARE* (*MATTARE*)*

The etymology of *matus*, a word which first appears in Petronius (*Cena Trim.* 41. 12), has been the subject of considerable controversy. E. Forcellini was perhaps the first to attempt an explanation, connecting *matus* (*mattus*) with Greek μάττω (μάσσω) "pound" or "knead."¹ A second Greek-based explanation associated *matus* with μάταιος, "foolish," "mad."² Neither theory is credited today. Another school derives *matus* from a Semitic root, more specifically Arabic *mat* "dead," and argues that Medieval Latin *matare* and Spanish *matar* are denominatives based on this word.³ There are difficulties with this theory, as J. Corominas and others have pointed out.⁴ Latin-based theories take two forms: one connects the word with *madere* "to be moist," either through *madidus*⁵ or through a conjectured participle **maditus*,⁶ another sees *matus* as primitive.⁷

This note addresses itself primarily to the development of *matus* within Latin, while taking note of the evidence provided by the Romance languages. It is hoped that Romance specialists will investigate the explanations proposed here. The following questions will be addressed: (1) are *matus* and *mattus* variant spellings of the same word or do they represent different words? (2) what is the *etymon* (or *etyma*) of the word(s)? (3) what is the connection between *matus* and Latin *matare*/*mattare* (and Spanish *matar*)? Any attempt to establish the etymology of *matus*/*mattus* and its (their) relation to *matare*/*mattare* (as well as the Romance derivatives of both) must first take account of all the evidence, both literary and glossarial—a task which, to my knowledge, has not yet been performed.⁸

* I am grateful to the referee of this paper for a number of important corrections and suggestions.

1. *Totius Latinitatis Lexicon* (Leipzig, 1835), s.v. "matus."

2. F. Diez, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der romanischen Sprachen*⁵ (Bonn, 1887), p. 384.

3. W. Meyer-Lübke, *Romanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg, 1935), p. 442; cf. also M. Hadas, "Oriental Elements in Petronius," *AJP* 50 (1929): 380–81.

4. *Diccionario crítico etimológico de la lengua castellana*, vol. 3 (Berne, 1954), pp. 291–95; cf. also A. Stefenelli, *Die Volkssprache im Werk des Petron im Hinblick auf die romanischen Sprachen* (Stuttgart, 1962), pp. 67–68.

5. E.g., A. Walde and J. B. Hofmann, *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*⁴, vol. 2 (Heidelberg, 1965), p. 53.

6. A. Ernout and A. Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine: Histoire des mots*⁴ (Paris, 1967), p. 391.

7. Corominas, *Diccionario crítico*, 3:291–95.

8. I give below all the certain examples of *matus* and *mattus*, or at least those generally admitted to the texts. W. Heraeus, "Die Sprache des Petronius und die Glossen," *Kleine Schriften* (Heidelberg, 1937), pp. 69–70, notes *via mata* in the text tradition of Cic. *Ad Att.* 16. 13. 2; this has been discarded by editors in favor of *via mala* ("Longulum sane iter et via mala"), though *mata* in the sense of "wet" makes perfect sense and is the *lectio difficilior*. Heraeus also notes (as did DuCange) *mattus* in the codex Salmasius text of the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, p. 461. But this has not found favor with the editors and does not appear in C. Lessing's *Scriptorum Historiae Augustae Lexicon* (Hildesheim, 1964). I note also that W. von Wartburg, *Französisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 6.1 (Basel, 1969), s.v. *mattus*, ascribes to Isidore (?) the following gloss: "mattus: humectus, emollitus, subactus, maceratus." The first two gloss words appear in the so-called *Glossae Isidori* (= *Glossae Scaligeri*, cited below), but I could not find the alleged entry in the corpus of

Permission to reprint a note in this section may be obtained only from the author.

The first known (and most often cited) use of *matus* occurs in Petronius, as just noted. Dama, a freedman, proclaims: "et mundum frigus habuimus. vix me balneus calfecit. tamen calda potio vestiarius est. staminatas duxi, et plane matus sum." The meaning of *matus* here seems to be clear enough from the context. Dama has downed a few "jars" and is completely drunk ("soaked"). Thus the explanation of *matus* as a derivative of *madere* is semantically appropriate. There is one other certain literary (if post-classical) use of *matus* to be examined. The form *mata* occurs in the elegiac poem *Epitaphium Vitalis Mimi* printed in the *Anthologia Latina*: "O quotiens imitata meo se femina gestu / Vidit et erubuit totaque mata fuit."⁹ *Mata* is instructive for two reasons: (1) its position in the pentameter would indicate that the *a* of the stem was regarded as long; (2) the context rules out a connection with drunkenness: it is "embarrassment," "annoyance," or "astonishment" that is portrayed.¹⁰ The glossaries give conflicting testimony as to the meaning of our word (or words). In the following table I shall cite all instances of *matus* and *mattus* given by the *Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum* and by the *Glossaria Latina*.

To these we must add the following entries: "madidus: emollitus infectus" (*Gloss. Lat.*, 3. 144 = Abolita); "madidus: inollitus uel infectus" (*CGL*, 4. 114. 30); "fatuus: stultus sine sensum uacuum follis mattus" (*CGL*, 5. 568. 58).

This testimony is somewhat confusing, yet several facts emerge. First of all, it is clear that *matus* and *mattus*, where glossed by *tristis*, are merely variant spellings of the same word. *Trisus* (*CGL*, 4. 257. 35) is almost certainly a mistake for *tristis*, through a misreading of the two verticals in the *ti* of *tristis*. The fact that *mattus* is employed not only as a lemma but as a gloss word itself (*CGL*, 5. 568. 58) shows

TABLE 1

Source	Testimony
<i>Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum</i>	
4. 114. 4 = Glossae Cod. Vatican 3321.....	matus: tristis
4. 257. 35 = Glossae Cod. Sangall. 912.....	mattus: trisus
4. 536. 31 = Glossae Affatim.....	mattus: tristis
5. 465. 6 = Excerpta ex Glossis AA.....	matus: tristis
5. 542. 40 = Excerpta ex Cod. Vaticano 1471.....	mattus: tristes
5. 604. 41 = Glossae Scaligeri (so-called Glossae Isidori)	matum est: humectum est emollitum infectum
<i>Glossaria Latina</i>	
3. 56 = Abstrusa.....	matus: tristis
5. 86 = Abba.....	matus: tristis

Isidore's writings or in the edited glossaries. Another possible "ghost reference" is that given by DuCange for *mattus*: *Vita B. Aegidii Minoritae* (= *Act. Sanct.* 3, Aprilis, p. 221): "Multi vero deridebant eum dicentes, Mattus." *Mattus* has been replaced (?) by a circumlocution in the Paris-Rome edition of 1886 (cf. ch. 1. 1, p. 222), and no variants are given. However, because of the lateness of the text (Aegidius is connected to St. Francis of Assisi), nothing of real value is at stake.

9. 2. 2. 39 Bücheler-Riese-Lommatzsch. It should be observed that *mata* is preserved by the *inferiores* (one of which corrects to *mota*), while the older MSS give *compta*. *Compta* makes little, if any sense, whereas *mota* is a corrector's guess. *Mata* strikes me as well established, but see the discussion below dealing with length.

10. Riese glosses *mata* by *stupefacta*.

clearly that the meanings *stultus*, *vacuus*, *follis* for *mattus* were well established. More problematic is the entry at *CGL*, 5. 604. 41: "matum est: humectum est, emollitum, infectum." By itself, the entry might not carry much weight; but the glossing of *madidus* in two independent glossaries with two of the three synonyms (allowing for the obvious scribal slip *inollitus*) used to gloss *matus* argues for a close connection between *matus* and *madidus*. Further, *matum est*, followed by *humectum est*, gives good evidence that *matus* was in its origin a participle.

Most of the dictionary entries dealing with *matus/mattus* and related Romance words have assumed that all of the various meanings of the word can be traced to a single *etymon*. Here I should like to test Ernout-Meillet's suggestion that two *etyma* are involved.¹¹ *Matus* in Petronius and in the *Glossae Scaligeri* is evidently connected to *madere* and seems to be a different word from *matus/mattus* glossed by *tristis* and used as a synonym for *stultus*. (We shall deal with the example in *Anth. Lat.* 487 below.) These two words shall be referred to for the time being as *matus I* and *matus II*.

Let us now attempt to determine, as far as possible, the origin of *matus I*. The arguments for a derivation from *madidus* are summarized by Walde: "nach Specht KZ 55,12 aus *mad(i)dus* mit Ersatz der Doppelmedia durch Doppeltenuis im Anschluss an die expressive Gruppe lippus, flaccus vorrus (vgl. auch retere = reddere CIL V 5314, s.v. Planta I 192)."¹² It is not entirely clear from the passage whether *matus/mattus* is supposed to come from *madidus* or from *mad-* + *-us*, *-a*, *-um*, with "expressive gemination."¹³ (The latter seems to be the case, but why the inclusion of bracketed *i* in *mad(i)dus*, which indicates conjectured syncope?) A number of objections can be raised. Why is it necessary to justify gemination in *mattus*, if *mattus* does in fact come from *mad(i)dus*? If syncope is not assumed, how does one explain the geminate form **maddus*? We would then expect a geminate in all formations on **madd-*: **maddere* and **maddidus*, and so forth; compare *lippus*, *lippidus*, *lippio*; *flaccus*, *flacidus*, *flacceo* (for further derivatives, all consistent, see *TLL*, s.vv.). If syncope is alleged, how can it be justified? There are no sure examples of syncope occurring in adjectives in *-idus* formed on stems ending in *d*.¹⁴ Leumann rightly looks with suspicion upon the derivation of *claudus* from *claudidus*.¹⁵ If *reddere* in the above explanation is also meant as an example of syncope, the example is false. *Reddere* cannot come from *re* + *dēdere* because of the long *e* in *dedo* (among other reasons). Furthermore, *reddere* cannot be a compound of *re* + **dido*, as Leumann asserts,¹⁶ for the reason that **dido* does not replace *do* in any other compound. There is still the possibility that *matus* (rather than *mattus*)

11. *Dictionnaire étymologique*⁴, p. 391.

12. *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*⁴, 2:53.

13. For "expressive gemination," see A. Graur, *Les consonnes géminées en latin* (Paris, 1929), p. 89; also M. Leumann, J. B. Hofmann, and A. Szantyr, *Lateinische Grammatik*, vol. 1 (Munich, 1965), pp. 142-44.

14. For Latin syncope generally, see M. Niedermann, *Précis de phonétique historique du latin*⁴ (Paris, 1935), pp. 32-36; Leumann-Hofmann-Szantyr, *Lateinische Grammatik*, 1:91-95; also A. Burger, *Études de phonétique et de morphologie latines* (Neuchâtel, 1928), pp. 37-52. Following the more restrictive views of Burger, syncope would be possible in such forms as *candidus* and *splendidus*, yet it does not occur.

15. *Lateinische Grammatik*, 1:226.

16. *Ibid.*, 1:92, 303; cf. F. Sommer, *Handbuch der lateinischen Laut- und Formenlehre*³ (Heidelberg, 1948), p. 548. A new edition of this last work has been reissued under the editorship of R. Pfister. For full details and a review by C. Watkins, see *CW* 73 (1979): 38-39.

comes from *madus*; thus, *madus:madere::claudus:claudere*. But it can be objected that the scant evidence for the devoicing of intervocalic *d* in the Latin of the classical period is of a purely graphemic character; in the early Empire there is some evidence for the opposite tendency.¹⁷ Moreover, **madus*, like **maddus* and *madidus* itself, does not fit the glossarial evidence that *matus* is a participial form.

What of the possibility that *matus* comes from **maditus*? **Maditus* is not parallel to *nitidus*, *putidus* (so Ernout–Meillet), which yield **nittus*, **puttus*, but to **egreditus*, **confoditus*, which yield *egressus*, *confossus*. *T* added to a dental stem regularly yields *s* or *ss*, whether added directly to a stem (e.g., **vert-tus*, **lud-tus*), or occurring after syncope (**egreditus*, **confod-itus*).¹⁸ One would therefore expect **maditus* to yield **massus* or **masus*, or remain stable like *editus*. Niedermann explains a few exceptions to this rule (e.g., *attero* from *adtero*, *rettuli* from **retetuli*) as later developments.¹⁹ A further exception of the *rettuli*-type is *cette* from **cedate*.²⁰ However, the only certain participial exceptions that are clearly attested are the Ennian *adgretus* and *egretus* (both on the authority of Festus²¹). It is not impossible that *matus* constitutes an extension of this type.²²

If we proceed from the assumption that *matus* is a past participle from *madere*, the only explanation is that *matus* is very irregular.²³ It is not difficult to entertain the possibility of a popular perfect passive participle for *madere* (or just possibly, *madesco*), as *TLL* (s.vv.) lists scattered examples of transitive uses of both verbs and records a passive form of *madere*.²⁴ The precise formation of *matus*, however, as a participle from *madere*, is elusive. Is it possible that *matus* is a remnant of a lost verb meaning “to be moist,” “be soft,” “be ripe,” “be drunk” and that it was popularly treated as a perfect passive participle of *madere*? If so, can the lost verb be recovered?

Let us turn our attention to *matus* II (also spelled *mattus*). This word is almost certainly an assimilated form of *mactus* in a sense twice attested in classical literature, according to both *TLL* and *OLD*: Lucretius 5. 1339 “boues lucae ferro male mactae” and Accius *Tragedies* 306 “maneat, adsis autem, exilio macte ex terris.” The first example contains the meaning “slay sacrificially,” the second “vex,” “afflict,” “punish.” What is the origin of this *mactus*? It is obviously connected to

17. See V. Väänänen, *Le latin vulgaire des inscriptions pompéiennes*³ (Berlin, 1966), pp. 52–53.

18. Niedermann, *Précis*, pp. 148–49; Leumann–Hofmann–Szantyr, *Lateinische Grammatik*, 1:152; Sommer, *Handbuch*, p. 241. For confirmatory evidence in the Italic dialects, cf. C. D. Buck, *A Grammar of Oscan and Umbrian* (Hildesheim, 1974), pp. 86–87.

19. *Précis*, p. 149: “Le groupe *-dt-* dans *attenuo*, *attero* était donc trop récent pour être concerné par la loi en vertu de laquelle *fidtus* est devenu *fissus*. Pour la même raison, *-tt-* a subsisté dans *rettuli* . . . de *ret(e)tuli*.”

20. **Cedate* (*ce* + *do*) involves an adverbial prefix (so Leumann–Hofmann–Szantyr, *Lateinische Grammatik*, 1:286); hence the resulting *cette* after syncope (*ibid.*, 1:309). See also Sommer, *Handbuch*, p. 241, and Niedermann, *Précis*, p. 149.

21. Pp. 6, 68 Lindsay. (In both passages Festus attempts to smoothe over the anomaly by explaining the Latin as derivative from Greek, i.e., *egredi* from *ἐγείρωμαι*, which would yield a Greek verbal adjective in *-t-*. This rationalization points to the rarity of such forms in the early Empire.) Other apparent anomalies such as *tentus* and compounds (from *tendo*) and *exfuli* (hapax, from **exfundo*) can be explained by various complications that attended the development of the group *nd* in Latin; cf. Leumann–Hofmann–Szantyr, *Lateinische Grammatik*, 1:155, 342.

22. See E. P. Hamp, “Rattus,” *RhM* 117 (1974): 192.

23. Sommer, *Handbuch*, p. 241, suggests, “*mattus* . . . auf Grund eines vulgären, vielleicht nach *pōtus* umgebildeten **maditus*.”

24. *TLL* cites Gargilius Martianus *Med.* 41 “mala Punica per triduum . . . madentur.”

maclare, but how? Both *TLL* and *OLD* regard it as a retrograde participle of *maclare* and separate it from *mactus* "extolled," "glorified," from conjectured **magere*. It would seem that *mactus* in all the above senses derives from **macio* rather than **mago*²⁵ and that *mact-* is the supine stem on which the iterative *maclare* was formed (cf. *cantare* from *cantus*). *Maclare* subsequently ousted **macere*, with the exception of its fourth principal part, which survived in certain senses alongside "new" *mactatus*. *TLL* gives as synonyms for *maclare*: *cruciare*, *exagitare*, *exanimare*, *fatigare*, *ferire*, *trucidare*, *interficere*, *immolare*. The woman described in *Anthologia Latina* 487 was in all likelihood "vexed" or "annoyed" by the mime's performance (rather than "astonished," as Riese thought). *Tristis*, in its basic sense, according to Walde is closer to "vexation" than to "dejection": "nicht so sehr in Niedergeschlagenheit, als in einer Art Grimm und Trotz gegen das Unangenehme sich äussernd."²⁶ Thus the meanings *stultus*, *follicis*, *sine sensum* reflect a development of the notions of "perturbation," "affliction," "disturbance," that is, *afflictus mente*. That *mattus* and *tristis* were held in close relationship in the early vernacular is evidenced by Dante's "come persona triste e matta."²⁷

Matus I and *matus* II appear to have quite different meanings, as the foregoing evidence has shown. But do they really derive from different *etyma*? As argued above, the derivation of *matus* from *madere* is not entirely certain for phonetic reasons. However, if we accept Palmer's argument that *mactus* derives from **macio*, "make moist," have we not found the single *etymon* that would explain all senses of *matus*/*mattus*? The semantic development of *mactus* would then presumably have been: "moistened" → "softened" → "sacrificed" → "slain" → "smitten" → "harassed/punished." If this is right, then the semantic development of **macio* is very close to that of *macero*, for which *OLD* lists the meanings: (1) to make wet, soak, steep, (2) to soften, (3) to weaken, exhaust, (4) to torment mentally, vex, annoy. Direct confirmation for the connection between *matus* and *maceratus* is provided by the alleged Isidorian gloss cited by Von Wartburg (see n. 8 above): "*mattus*: humectus, emollitus, subactus, maceratus." Assuming that this entry comes from some genuine glossary, it provides a strong argument that the various meanings of *matus* can be reduced to a single *etymon* (*mactus*) and that *matus* and *mattus* are variant spellings of the same word. Interestingly, the sacral connotations of *mactus* continued to be preserved in the spellings *mactus* and *macte* (cf. *OLD*, *TLL*). *Mactus* in nonsacral senses, preserved only in the quotation of Accius cited above, gave way to popular *matus*, which, as we noted, was replaced in "good Latin" by *madidus* for one range of meanings through a presumed folk etymology *matus* ex *madere*.

A few points of phonetics and orthography remain to be treated: (1) the quantity of the *a* in the stem, (2) the treatment of medial *kt*, (3) the spelling with single versus double *t*. The quantity of the syllable *ma* in *mata* attested by *Anthologia Latina* 487 is long. Thus the *a* would have to be long, otherwise the form *matta* would be required to produce the long heavy syllable. *Mata*, however, if from **macio* rather than **mago*, would have a short stem-vowel, because the original perfect passive participle (*mactus*) would contain a long stem-vowel only if the

25. See the detailed argument of L. R. Palmer, *The Latin Language* (London, 1954), pp. 66–67.

26. *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*⁴, s.v. "tristis."

27. *Inferno* 28. 111; cf. Stefenelli, *Volkssprache*, p. 68.

present stem showed a voiced consonant.²⁸ Moreover, there is no justification for compensatory lengthening in the development of *macta* to *mata*.²⁹ Unfortunately, there is no evidence for the date of the *Epitaphium*. However, the representation of the group *kt* by the grapheme *t* was fairly common in popular contexts from the first to the third century; thus, *fata*, *autio*, *Otaus* stood for *facta*, *auctio*, *Octauus*.³⁰ Whatever the actual phonetic development of the cluster *kt*, the grapheme *t* did not represent a single consonant, as the evidence from Romance shows.³¹ Graphemes such as *fata* and *mata* came to be replaced by *fatta* and *matta* with the spread of the rule: short vowel + double consonant, long vowel + single consonant.³² This orthographical development does not, however, provide a reliable means of recovering original length. The Romance evidence tends to show identical treatment of "old" participles such as *āctus* and *fāctus*.³³ This in turn shows that vowels before consonant clusters or geminates were treated as short/open.³⁴ Thus the newer spelling *mattus* could as easily represent *māctus* as *māctus*, while older *matus* would do the same, with *t* representing a new cluster or a geminate.

On balance, a single-etymon theory for all the meanings of *matus/mattus* (I and II), though not yet proven, is certainly plausible, obviating, as it does, the positing of the coalescence of identical deformations of quite different words. Still it is not possible to refute arguments that *matus* I comes from **maditus* (like *egretus* from **egreditus*) and that *matus* II comes from a participial form of *magere* rather than *macere*.

Matus/mattus has survived in Romance mostly in the semantic range *afflictus*, *subactus*, *tristis*, *folis* (i.e., *mattus* II).³⁵ Italian gives some hint of the admixture of the meaning "drunken," mostly in some rare compounds.³⁶ Provençal alone has retained *matus* in the sense of "moist" in any clear way, though it too has preserved the senses "fou," "insensé."³⁷ French *mat*, Italian *matto*, and Spanish *mate* in the sense of "mate, checkmate" derive from Arabic *māt* or *māta*.³⁸ Whether French *mat* and its congeners, in the sense of "flat," "dull," "dead," derive from the above or from some extension of Latin *matus/mattus* remains to be investigated.

This brings us to the question of Vulgar Latin *matare/mattare* and Spanish

28. W. S. Allen, *Vox Latina: The Pronunciation of Classical Latin* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 68–71.

29. See the section "Dehnung von kurzen Vokalen" in Leumann-Hofmann-Szantyr, *Lateinische Grammatik*, 1: 103–5.

30. Väänänen, *Le latin vulgaire*, pp. 63–64; cf. also W. A. Baehrens, *Sprachlicher Kommentar zur vulgärlateinischen "Appendix Probi"* (Groningen, 1967), pp. 85–87.

31. Väänänen, *Le latin vulgaire*, pp. 63–64.

32. L. Spitzer, "Mélanges: la famille de mots *mattus* en roman," *Bulletin linguistique* 6 (1938): 232 (following G. Rohlfs).

33. Allen's view, *Vox Latina*, pp. 68–71, that vowel quantity of the stems of Latin past participles is reflected in the French derivatives raises a number of difficulties. The likelier picture is the older view based on the development of the Latin group *kt*; cf. M. K. Pope, *From Latin to Modern French* (Manchester, 1934), p. 134.

34. V. Väänänen, *Introduction au latin vulgaire*² (Paris, 1967), pp. 30–31.

35. For a somewhat different view, see L. Spitzer, "Mélanges," p. 232.

36. See S. Battaglia, *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, vol. 9 (Turin, 1975), s.v. "matto" ad fin.

37. F. Mistral, *Lou Tresor dou Felibrige ou Dictionnaire Provençal-Français*, vol. 2 (Osnabrück, 1886), p. 294.

38. J. Burke, "The Origins of Spanish *Matar*," *Romance Notes* 7.2 (1966): 3–4.

matar.³⁹ While it is true that there was a Medieval Latin *matare* meaning to “check-mate,” this verb is not evidenced before the middle of the thirteenth century.⁴⁰ It is difficult to believe that so basic a Spanish word as *matar* “to slay” could derive from so technical a phrase for which the evidence is so late. DuCange gives an example of *matare* “to slay” from a Spanish text, for which he gives the date 734: “et non matabunt hominem sine jussu de alcaide seu aluacile Sarraceno; se monstrabunt suos juzgos, et ille dicebit: Bene est, et matabunt culpatum.” This *matare* is clearly a spelling variant of *mattare* of *Glossaria Latina*, 1. 359: *mattant: interficiunt, occidunt. Matare/mattare* comes directly from *maclare* in the well-attested sense “to slay” and is not a denominative of *matus/mattus*. The spellings with single and double *t* can be explained by the same arguments used in respect of *matus* and *mattus* from earlier *mactus*. *Matare* is older than *mattare*, as *matus* is older than *mattus*. Its existence in imperial times has, I think, been satisfactorily demonstrated by G. R. Watson in his clarification of *Cena Trimalchionis* 62. 9, so that it now reads: “gladium tamen strinxi et matavi, tetavi, et umbras cecidi, donec ad villam amicae meae pervenirem.”⁴¹

MICHAEL HERREN
York University
Toronto

39. For a summary of theories advanced as to the origin of this word, see the item directly above.

40. See J. Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon*, s.v. “matare.”

41. “Petronius 62. 9,” *CP* 60 (1965): 118.

SULLA, THE MARSII, AND THE HIRPINI

Plutarch *Sulla* 4. 1 narrates an incident in the career of Sulla which took place in 103 B.C. while he was serving as a military tribune under Marius in Gaul.¹ This is the sole source and as printed by K. Ziegler in the latest Teubner edition (1972) it reads: καὶ χιλιαρχῶν μέγα καὶ πολυάνθρωπον ἔθνος †Μαρσούς ἐπεισε φίλους γενέσθαι καὶ συμμάχους Ῥωμαίων.

Long ago, one of Plutarch's finest commentators, E. H. G. Leopold, pointed out the problem posed by the obelized word and also proposed a possible solution.² Since his contribution is of great importance and has too often been ignored or simply forgotten, it is worthwhile to quote his words: “Haud dubie hi Marsi ad gentes Teutonicas sunt referendi. Nam de Marsis, Italica gente cogitari non posse, facile adparet. . . . Marsos, Germaniae populum, memorant Strabo i. VII, p. 444 et Tacitus *Annal.* I. 50, 56, II. 25, *de mor. Germ.* c. 2. Sedes habebant ad Luppiam flumen (hodie Lippe) in vicinia Bructerorum et Sicambrorum. . . . Huius igitur gentis, quae posteriori aevo sub Tiberio cladibus aliquot, a Germanico acceptis nobilitata fuit, haud improbabile est, magnam partem tunc temporis ceteros Teutonum gentes in Galliam secutam fuisse.”

Subsequent commentators have been less confident and sometimes considerably less surefooted. A case in point is H. A. Holden, who knew of Leopold's work but does not appear to have given it much attention at this juncture, since his note on

1. *MRR*, 1:564.

2. *Plutarchi “Marius,” “Sulla,” “Lucullus” et “Sertorius”* (Leipzig, 1795), p. 158.