

## THE TEXT OF CATULLUS 64.24

O nimis optato saeculorum tempore nati  
 heroes, salvete, deum genus! o bona matrum  
 progenies, salvete iter(um, salvete, bonarum!)  
 vos ego saepe meo vos carmine compellabo.

24

24 meo V, mero Palmer: post meo pungunt Lafaye, Lenchantin de Gubernatis, post saepe Mynors, Fordyce, Quinn.

The reading *meo* in line 24 is accepted by practically all editors, but it poses two problems. The first of these is a matter of rhetorical structure and rhythm. The repeated *vos* implies a division of the line into two balanced halves. Catullus is fond of this kind of anaphora. In poems 63 and 64 alone there are at least ten examples, of which the following four are typical.<sup>1</sup>

ubi cymbalum sonat vox, ubi tympana reboant	(63.21)
toto animo, tota pendebat perdita mente	(64.70)
qualis adest Thetidi, qualis concordia Peleo	(64.336)
currite ducentes subtegmina, currite, fusi	(64.337)

In all examples of this kind of anaphora in Catullus, we see balancing or contrasting elements in the two halves of the line.<sup>2</sup> In most cases each half is grammatically independent of the other. In 64.70, however, one half has the common subject and verb, while in 64.336 these elements are divided between the two halves. In the refrain of the song of the Fates, there is no real opposition between the two halves. Instead of two balancing vocatives, we have a vocative in the second part and its modifier in the first. The refrain therefore might be seen as providing something of a parallel to line 24 as it appears in the manuscripts, where *carmine* in the second half is modified by *meo* in the first. A moment's reflection, however, shows that while *ducentes subtegmina* provides a satisfactory counterbalance to *fusi*, *meo* will not do as a counterbalance to *carmine*. It is too insignificant, too colorless, and too dependent on *carmine*. This is why Mynors and most subsequent editors punctuate after *saepe*. But this does violence to the natural rhythm of the line and runs counter to Catullus' practice, as is clear from the examples cited above.

The suspicion that *meo* is corrupt gains strength from the second difficulty it poses: what can Catullus mean by *meo . . . carmine*? The natural interpretation, "in my poem," is belied by the evidence of the poem itself. As Fordyce observes, "the promise is not fulfilled."<sup>3</sup> Quinn gamely argues that the phrase means "in my poetry,"<sup>4</sup> but while *carmen tout court* occasionally does mean "poetry," it is hard to believe that when qualified with a modifier like *hoc* or *meum* it could ever bear that

1. The other examples are: "Phrygiam ad domum Cybebes, Phrygia ad nemora deae" (63.20); "ego gymnasi fui flos; ego eram decus olei" (63.64); "ubi cerva silvicultrix, ubi aper nemorivagus" (63.72); "alios age incitatos, alios age rabidos" (63.92); "Pharsaliam coeunt, Pharsalia tecta frequentant" (64.37); "sed conubia laeta, sed optatos hymenaeos" (64.141).

2. In his discussion of this passage, G. P. Goold, *Interpreting Catullus* (London, 1974), p. 8, argues that "anaphora requires the balance of like words in the separate limbs of the sentence." He is right to insist on balance but the balance may be more subtle than he suggests.

3. C. J. Fordyce, *Catullus: A Commentary* (Oxford, 1961), p. 282.

4. K. Quinn, *Catullus: The Poems* (London, 1973), p. 305.

meaning. Quinn offers no parallel that would justify his interpretation and I can find none in the *OLD* or *TLL*. In the present context, Roman readers would, I believe, inevitably understand *meo* . . . *carmine* as meaning "in my poem."

The criteria for an adequate emendation for *meo* are unusually constraining. It must be metrically equivalent to *meo* and balance or contrast with either *carmine* or *compellabo* or, on the analogy of the refrain of the Fates, it must make the first half as a whole a suitable counterbalance to the second. These constraints are obviously helpful. They narrow the possibilities for conjecture considerably. A verb seems unlikely, for a future ending in "o" will not fit, and presents such as *voco* sit awkwardly with *compellabo*. But nouns are almost as difficult. The number of nouns whose ablative forms an iamb (or, in the case of those with an initial vowel or *h*, an anapaest) is surprisingly limited. Practically none of them makes sense with *compellabo*. Palmer's *mero*, which is one of the best suggestions in this category, indicates the problem. As a reading, it is unquestionably superior to *meo* and is paleographically plausible. It has recently been revived by Goold.<sup>5</sup> The insuperable difficulty is the distinctly awkward zeugma.<sup>6</sup>

The solution to this line lies, I believe, in abandoning the search for a word to oppose *compellabo* or *carmine*. The correct reading, I would suggest, is *memor: vos ego saepe memor, vos carmine compellabo*. This creates a line which, like the refrain in the song of the Fates, is really a single unit divided by a repeated word rather than two discrete units. Yet since *memor* is closely linked with *ego* rather than with *carmine*, the first half of the line is a satisfactory phrase in itself: object, subject, and modifier of subject. There is no "hanging effect," such as we experience with *meo*. Also, there is no doubt as to the significance of *memor*. It has long been realized that in this line Catullus is imitating the formula that closes most of the *Homeric Hymns*: αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ὑμέων τε καὶ ἄλλης μνήσομ' ἀοιδῆς.<sup>7</sup> *Memor* shows that the imitation is closer than has been suspected. In conjunction with *compellabo*, it fully translates μνήσομαι. *Carmin*e renders ἀοιδῆς, while *saepe* does the work of ἄλλης and more. As in the *Hymns*, the personal pronouns are juxtaposed.

While it is clear that line 24 is closely modelled on the closing formula for the *Hymns*, Catullus' choice of language and of *memor* in particular reflects wider concerns of his poetry. Many scholars have drawn attention to the central importance of *fides* and *pietas* in Catullus' *Weltanschauung*. In his emotional poems to Alfenus (30) and Lesbia (76), he portrays them as violating these traditional values, which he himself has staunchly upheld. *Immemor* (30.1) is the adjective he uses to characterize Alfenus' failings. Similarly, in poem 64 itself, the stories of Theseus and Ariadne and Theseus and Aegeus are linked by the theme of *immemor mens*.<sup>8</sup> In the epilogue, Catullus attributes the gods' estrangement from mortal society to *spreta pietate* (386). It is significant therefore that at the beginning of the poem his

5. G. P. Goold, *Catullus* (London, 1983), p. 140.

6. For a parallel, Palmer cites Hor. *Carm.* 4.5.33 *te multa prece, te prosequitur mero*, but there both nouns go naturally with *prosequitur*, whereas in our passage *mero* sits very awkwardly with *compellabo*.

7. *Hymns* 25, 27, 29, and 33 close with this line. *Hymns* 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 19, 28, and 30 close with the same line except that καὶ σεῖο is substituted for ὑμέων τε.

8. Cf. *immemor at iuvenis* (57); *immemori discedens pectore* (123); *immemor a!* (135); "sed quali somlam Theseus me mente reliquit, / tali mente, deae, funestet seque suosque!" (200–201); "qualem Minoidi luctum / obtulerat mente immemori, talem ipse recepit" (247–48).

rendering of the tag from the *Homeric Hymns* suggests a poet who respects those very values of *fides* and *pietas* which he considers so profoundly violated by Alfenus, Lesbia, and Theseus.<sup>9</sup> Thus *memor*, besides being superior in rhythm and sense to *meo*, links, by contrast, the inner theme of *immemor mens* to the outer frame. It also, in a very modest way, tends to confirm the view held by many readers that poem 64, while ostensibly dealing with mythological themes, is deeply imbued with feelings that reflect the poet's own experiences.<sup>10</sup>

The corruption is an easy one. A scribe confronted with "*mēoruos*" would readily have read the words as "*meo uos*," particularly with *ego* nearby. If *memor* is the correct reading here, the corruption has an important bearing on the manuscript tradition of Catullus. The lost Veronensis (*V*) has been variously dated from the sixth to the thirteenth century, with more recent scholars favoring the later dating.<sup>11</sup> Now, if, as the readings of *O*, *R*, and *G* indicate, *V* had *meo* here, the correct reading *mēor* has to be attributed to *V*'s exemplar. Since contraction of intervocalic "*m*" is very rare before 1050,<sup>12</sup> it would appear that not only *V* but even *V*'s exemplar was written after this date.

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9. Ariadne's indictment of Theseus in lines 133–35 ("perfide, deserto liquisti in litore, Theseu? / sicine discedens neglecto numine divum, / immemor a! devota domum periuria portas?") is remarkably similar in thought and language to the reproaches Catullus levels against Alfenus and Lesbia in poems 30 and 76.

10. For an influential but rather extreme view of the autobiographical element in Catullus 64, see M. Putnam, "The Art of Catullus 64," *HSCP* 65 (1961): 165–205.

11. See D. F. Thomson, *Catullus: A Critical Edition* (Chapel Hill, 1978), pp. 9–11 and R. W. Hunt et al., *The Survival of Ancient Literature* (Oxford, 1975), p. 80; cf. L. D. Reynolds, *Texts and Transmission* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 43–45.

12. D. Bains, *A Supplement to Notae Latinae* (Cambridge, 1936), p. 57.

## PROPERTIUS' HOROSCOPE: A SUGGESTED BIRTHDATE

*nec si rationem siderum ignorat poetas intellegit*  
Quintilian 1.4.4

### I. THE PROBLEM

Convincing evidence for the date of Propertius' birth has not been adduced. Informed guesses range from 57 B.C. to 47 B.C. (L. A. MacKay presciently made it as late as 41 B.C.).<sup>1</sup> The evidence consists of inferences drawn from three passages: Ovid *Tristia* 4.10.45–54, mentioning the four elegists Gallus, Tibullus, Propertius, Ovidius; Propertius 4.1.127–32, describing land confiscations 41/0

1. Th. Birt, "Die Fünffzahl und die Properzchronologie," *RhM* 70 (1915): 253–314, esp. 307–9 (he cannot have been born after 55 B.C., most likely is 57/6 B.C.); H. Mersmann, *Quaestiones Propertianae. Quo Tempore Propertius natus sit* (Münster, 1931), pp. 5–26 (48/7 B.C.); H. E. Butler and E. A. Barber, *The Elegies of Propertius* (Oxford, 1933; repr. Hildesheim–New York, 1969), pp. xix–xx, xxv–xxviii (54–48 B.C.); P. J. Enk, *Sex. Propertii Elegiarum Liber I (Monobiblos)* (Leiden, 1946), pp. 5–6, 16–19 (47 B.C.); R. Helm, "Sex. Propertius (2)," *RE* 23 (1957): 758–60; W. A. Camps, *Propertius Elegies Book I* (Cambridge, 1961) pp. 6–7; L. A. MacKay, "Umbrian Rimbaud," *G&R* 17 (1970): 177–83; and