

ὥς δ' ὅτ' ἂν ὠδίνουσιν ἔχῃ βέλος ὀξὺ γυναῖκα
 δριμύ, τό τε προΐεισι μογοστόκοι Εἰλείθυιαι
 'Ἡρῆς θυγατέρες πικρὰς ὠδίνας ἔχουσιν
 ὥς ὀξεῖ' ὀδύναι δύνον μένος Ἀτρεΐδαιο.

This passage was so highly praised in antiquity for its *ἐνάργεια*, that women believed it could not have possibly been written by a man: as Plutarch (*De Am. Prol.* 496d) puts it,

ταῦτ' οὐχ 'Ομηρον αἱ γυναῖκες ἀλλ' 'Ομηρίδα γράψαι λέγουσι τεκοῦσαν ἢ τίκτουσαν ἔτι καὶ τὸ νύγμα τῆς ἀλγηδόνος ὁμοῦ πικρὸν καὶ ὀξὺ γινόμενον ἐν τοῖς σπλάγχνοις ἔχουσιν.

It is possible that *σπλάγχνα* in our line is indebted to this passage of Plutarch or to an earlier, analogous piece of Homeric exegesis (the idea can be found in schol. bT *Α* 269/71, p. 175, 34–5 Erbse). But what is more important, the allusion to the Homeric passage has a very strong contextual value, because in her monologue the Virgin Mary focuses precisely on the opposition between her present suffering and her previous painless pregnancy and delivery: see especially ll. 64 *τόκους φυγοῦσα καὶ φθορὰν νῦν καὶ πάλαι* and 70 *πόνους φυγοῦσα πῶς ὀδυνῶμαι κέαρ*;

The allusion we have just detected displays a sort of Alexandrian refinement: the two words *δριμὺ βέλος* (without the help of any other textual evidence) allude simultaneously to an evangelic passage and to a famous Homeric simile: via the latter, they subtly refer to the paradox of Mary's childbirth, which had been the main object of the Virgin's monologue in the foregoing lines of the drama.

Dubbio a posteriori:
 i veri grandi poeti
 sono i 'poeti minori'?

(Giorgio Caproni).

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A CONJECTURE IN BENVENUTO CAMPESANI'S *VERSUS DE RESURRECTIONE CATULLI*

Ad patriam venio longis a finibus exul;
 causa mei reditus compatriota fuit,
 scilicet a calamis tribuit cui Francia nomen
 quique notat turbae praetereuntis iter.
 quo licet ingenio vestrum celebrate Catullum,
 cuius sub modio clausa papyrus erat.¹

The discussion on this obscure poem has been dominated by the question of the identity of the unknown *compatriota Catulli* who brought about the return of the poet to his native town.² Perhaps the least debated passage was the fifth verse, where

¹ The text is quoted after Mynors' OCT (1958).

² See G. Billanovich, 'Il Catullo della cattedrale di Verona', in S. Krämer and M. Bernhard (edd.), *Scire litteras. Forschungen zum mittelalterlichen Geistesleben* (Munich, 1988), 35–57, at 48–9.

the author says that the inhabitants of Verona should celebrate their Catullus *quo licet ingenio*. This verse does not seem perfectly clear in the form transmitted by the manuscripts, as one can hardly find an explanation of the imperative *celebrate* standing near *licet*. The translation 'with all the wit you may, celebrate your Catullus'³, offers an awkward meaning and the sentence is loosely connected with the preceding part of the poem, not to mention that such a use of *licet* would be rare if not unique.

There is a simple way to make the verse sound. What I suggest is to emend the text as follows:

quo licet ingenio vestrum celebrare Catullum

Reading *celebrare* instead of *celebrate* gives an infinitive dependent on *licet* and thus clarifies the sense. The text would mean: 'thanks to this cleverness (i.e. thanks to the rediscovery of Catullus by his fellow-citizen) you may now celebrate your Catullus, whose codex was hidden under the bushel.' Such an understanding of the passage connects the verse well with the previous part of the poem.

Palaeographically the corruption is simple and apart from the similarity of the letters 'r' and 't' its cause may have been the influence of *vestrum* which suggested an imperative to the amanuensis. Numerous analogies of this kind of corruption are registered in both manuscripts transmitting Campesani's poem, G and R, for example 22.8 *detecta* instead of *derecta*; 36.19 *turis* instead of *ruris*; 64.392 *tuentes* instead of *ruentes*; 116.2 *batriade* instead of *Battiadae*.

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³ R. Wray, *Catullus and the Poetics of Roman Manhood* (Cambridge, 2001), 5.