

The Greater and Lesser Aventine, and the cleft running between them. The church of S. Balbina, on the Lesser Aventine, marks the location of the *Saxum*, and the black lines above S. Balbina the walls that have been supposed to be part of the enclosure of the Bona Dea sanctuary. The image is from Murray's *Handbook of Rome and its environs* (London, 1869[9]).

CIRIS 137: AN EMENDATION*

As the narrator of the *Ciris* prepares to describe Cupid's attack on Scylla, daughter of Nisus, he offers a concise aretalogy of this powerful god (133–9):

> sed malus ille puer, quem nec sua flectere mater
> iratum potuit, quem nec pater atque auus idem
> Iuppiter (ille etiam Poenos domitare leones
> et ualidas docuit uires mansuescere tigris,
> ille etiam diuos homines – sed dicere magnum est),
> idem tum tristis acuebat paruulus iras
> Iunonis magnae ...

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The first two lines of the parenthesis in 135–7 are certainly not without problems,[1] but their general meaning, whether in the transmitted form (as printed) or variously emended, is clear: Cupid can even tame lions and tigers. The third line (137) is more difficult to make sense of, as it is far from obvious what verb is suppressed by the aposiopesis after *homines*. The most banal solution is to interpret both *diuos* and *homines* as direct objects of this suppressed verb, assuming that it refers to Cupid exercising power over gods and men.[2] As Lyne justly objects, 'the progression *diuos, homines* is undeniably anticlimactic'.[3] A more elaborate approach is to take *diuos* as a direct object with *docuit* and to supply an infinitive, for example *amare*, which would have as its direct object *homines*.[4] Although not entirely impossible, this seems too forced a construal; perhaps the most tangible objection may be that a second *ille* should rather require a second finite verb (and just one verb rather than a construction such as *docuit amare*, if it is to be easily guessed). Heinsius' *omnes* for *homines* therefore comes as a welcome solution: '*omnes* removes the anticlimax; the ellipse is now easy to make up: whereas Venus and Jupiter were not able *flectere* Cupid, *omnes deos flectere potuit uel flexerat Cupido*'.[5]

Heinsius' conjecture, however, does not take into account the fact that here the *Ciris* is apparently alluding to Catullus (68.137–42):[6]

> ne nimium simus stultorum more molesti.
> saepe etiam Iuno, maxima caelicolum,
> coniugis in culpa flagrantem concoquit iram,
> noscens omniuoli plurima furta Iouis.
> atqui (nec diuis homines componier aequum est),
> ingratum tremuli tolle parentis onus.

The Catullan passage is no doubt an interpretative problem in its own right,[7] which this is not the place to discuss; but thematic points of contact with the *Ciris* are obvious enough, even if not very specific. Only a few lines earlier Catullus was actually mentioning Cupid (68.133–4: *quam circumcursans hinc illinc saepe Cupido | fulgebat crocina candidus in tunica*). Here he speaks of Juno's anger (68.138–9: *Iuno, maxima caelicolum, | coniugis in culpa flagrantem concoquit iram*), which is precisely the driving force of the narrative in the *Ciris* (138–9: *idem tum tristis acuebat paruulus iras |*

[1] See R.O.A.M. Lyne, *Ciris: A Poem Attributed to Vergil* (Cambridge, 1978), 157–8. I give the transmitted text (possibly corrupt), whereas Lyne, for example, follows O. Skutsch ('Pseudovergiliana', *CR* 21 [1971], 11) in changing *etiam* at 135 into *iram*, and F.R.D. Goodyear (in W.V. Clausen [et al.], *Appendix Vergiliana* [Oxford, 1966]) posits a lacuna after 135.

[2] This solution is adopted, for example, in Goodyear's OCT (n. 1).

[3] Lyne (n. 1), 158.

[4] This interpretation is often ascribed to O. Ribbeck, *Appendix Vergiliana* (Leipzig, 1895^2), 36, but it was already proposed by L. Schwabe, *In Cirin carmen observationum pars I* (Dorpat, 1871), 13.

[5] Lyne (n. 1), 158.

[6] Catullus' presence in the *Ciris* is well known; in particular, *Ciris* 242–3, *nam te iactari non est Amathusia nostri | tam rudis ut nullo possim cognoscere signo*, is evidently modelled on Catullus 68.17, *non est dea nescia nostri*, and 68.51–2, *nam mihi quam dederit duplex Amathusia curam | scitis*; *Ciris* 104, *quarum non ulli fama concedere digna*, on 68.131, *aut nihil aut paulo cui tum concedere digna* (the collocation *concedere digna* is unattested elsewhere); and *Ciris* 44, *haec tamen interea quae possumus*, on 68.149, *hoc tibi quod potui* (in both cases referring to poetic compositions).

[7] Again, I give a conservative text (as printed and discussed by G. Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* [Oxford, 1968], 712), though it may conceivably be in need of more intervention. For a recent and more radical treatment, see J.M. Trappes-Lomax, *Catullus: A Textual Reappraisal* (Swansea, 2007), 242–5.

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Iunonis magnae). And 68.141, *nec diuis homines componier aequum est* ('it is not right that men should be compared with gods'),[8] is apparently echoed in *Ciris* 137: *ille etiam diuos homines – sed dicere magnum est*.[9] While securing *homines* from intervention, the Catullan parallel also appears to locate the textual corruption in *diuos* and suggest an obvious course of emendation, changing *diuos* into *diuis*.

How does this affect our understanding of the text? Let me begin with what has not so far attracted our attention, the seemingly unproblematic phrase *sed dicere magnum est*. Lyne takes it to mean 'but it is <too> big, too long a tale, to recount it all' or, slightly modified, 'that's (too) momentous a topic to embark on'.[10] Lyne was neither the first nor the last to understand *dicere magnum est* in that way,[11] but such an interpretation is arguably mistaken; I suggest that a more natural reading is to take *magnum* in its idiomatic sense, as roughly equivalent to Catullus' *nec … aequum*: 'but it is arrogant to say'.[12] If this is right, the narrator will have a different reason for his reticence, and accordingly we should look for a different way to fill in the omission. Whether or not the reader is expected to recognize the allusion and supply *componit* from Catullus, the combination of the dative *diuis* and the accusative *homines* is made intelligible enough by the sheer semantic force of the cases: Cupid makes men (*homines*) in some way related to gods (*diuis*). What sort of relation does Cupid effect between men and gods, of which it is not safe to speak? It might be conceivable that what is implied is Cupid's bringing about amorous unions of men with gods, although it is certainly doubtful whether mentioning this well-known fact can be considered an act of arrogance. I propose a different interpretation, namely that we should take the suppressed verb to refer to Cupid's effecting a conceptual, rather than physical, affinity of men to gods. In other words, what Cupid does is to assimilate men to gods,[13] which apparently can be taken to allude to the idea that sex makes men godlike.[14] This *is* an arrogant thing to say.

University of Leeds BORIS KAYACHEV
boriskayachev@gmail.com
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[8] Williams's (n. 7) translation.
[9] The allusion is noted by Schwabe (n. 4), 13.
[10] Lyne (n. 1), 158.
[11] For example, Schwabe (n. 4), 13, paraphrases it as *sed haec furta deorum enarrare longum est*. P.L. Gatti, *Pseudo Virgilio, Ciris* (Milan, 2010), 65, translates it as 'ma sarebbe lungo narrarlo'.
[12] *OLD*, s.v. *magnus* 15. Note that *magna loqui* is the idiom for 'talking big': see e.g. R. Maltby, *Tibullus, Elegies: Text, Introduction, and Commentary* (Cambridge, 2002), 469.
[13] If we are to supply a form of *componere*, perhaps the closest meaning would be *OLD*, s.v. 3d: 'to put together for comparison, to compare; to treat as comparable'.
[14] On the *topos*, see e.g. P. Fedeli, *Properzio, Elegie Libro II: introduzione, testo e commento* (Cambridge, 2005), 422.

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