# CATULLUS 63.5: *DEVOLSIT*?

> Super alta vectus Attis celeri rate maria,
> Phrygium ut nemus citato cupide pede tetigit
> adiitque opaca silvis redimita loca deae,
> stimulatus ibi furenti rabie, vagus animis
> devolsit ili acuto sibi pondera silice. (5)[1]

In Catullus 63.5 *devolsit* ('has pulled out') is Haupt's conjecture for the MSS. *devolvit* ('has rolled down'), which does not make sense. Although others speak about cutting (Ov. *Ib.* 453, Juv. 6.513–14) or amputation (Plin. *HN* 35.165), the conjectured word is apt here as it contributes to the highly dramatic effect of the scene: Attis has brutally stripped his genitals off using a sharp rock he found on the ground nearby; Lucan has a similar image of Pompeius' headless body (Luc. 8.711): *una nota est Magno capitis iactura revulsi*. It also seems plausible palaeographically, as only one letter is modified in the MSS. text.

A problem remains, though. The well-known fact that *vello* and its derivatives show perfect tense forms either *–volsi*[2] or *–velli* probably makes it easy to overlook what the *TLL* reports: that the perfect *devolsi* in Catull. 63.5 is a hapax. In other words, Haupt's perfect of choice does not exist. What does exist is *develli* (Plaut. *Poen*. 872).

It may be argued that *devello* is seldom used, that a lack of a form may well be accidental and that the common variation *–velli/–volsi* makes *devolsi* correct, even if not attested. Unattested words can sometimes be reconstructed if a form suggested by other considerations is morphologically correct,[3] and this seems to be the case here.

First of all, the variation is not common: there is no *–volsi* in *pervello* or *convello*, even if the latter is quite frequent. The *OLD*, which lists *–volsi* as a valid perfect for *vello* and many of its compounds, provides only three relevant quotations. What is even more striking, the writers being quoted are exclusively Lucan and his uncle Seneca.

Further inquiries show that these perfects, although they do appear outside Lucan and Seneca, are hardly found in Republican writers. And, even in the Empire, some instances such as Ov. *Met*. 11.38 *divulsere* or 12.300 *revulsit* look suspicious, since what Ovid prefers elsewhere is *–velli*.[4] This is essentially a regular form in the Republican and Imperial periods, and is also recommended by grammarians.[5]

I am not, of course, questioning authenticity of all the instances of *–volsi* before Seneca.[6] My suggestion is that the perfect *devolsi* may not be conjectured in a

[1] C.J. Fordyce, *Catullus* (Oxford, 1961).

[2] I will suppress adding the obvious variant *–vulsi* to every *–volsi* printed henceforth.

[3] An example may be *volsera* (K.M. Kokoszkiewicz, 'Fest. 508L Voisgram', *Mnemosyne* 62 [2009], 477). Another one – *pace* B. Currie, 'A note on Catullus 63.51', *CQ* 46 (1996), 579–81 – is the word printed next to *devolsit* in most editions of Catull. 63.

[4] Ov. *Met*. 2.351, 8.585; Ov. *Am.* 3.10.14.

[5] Diomedes GLK 372.11: *sunt quaedam verba, quae habent perfecta duplicia, ut … vello, vellis, vulsi, sed melius velli et avelli*. Servius *Aen*. 4.427: *'revelli' non 'revulsi', nam 'velli' et 'revelli' dicimus; 'vulsus' vero et 'revulsus' usurpatum est tantum in participiis contra naturam.*

[6] Priscian. 10.35 (GLK 526.18): *'vello velli', sed et 'vulsi' dicitur*. Quotations: Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.26, Verg. *Ecl*. 6.3–4 (*velli*) and Luc. 4.414, 6.545, 6.562, 9.765 (*vulsi*).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838811000292 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Republican writer. It is true that Diomedes *GLK* 372.11 seems to certify *–volsi* as a Republican perfect by quoting Laberius (*inc.* 137 Bonaria). But this choice of the author in fact proves my point: namely, Laberius was known for introducing many *vulgar* words to his Latin.[7] Thus the absence of *–volsi* in Republican writers other than him indicates that such perfects, though they did exist in that period, were considered vulgar. Being vulgar, they would have been avoided by Catullus, a poet sensitive to misdemeanours of the language.[8]

Nevertheless I would be reluctant to reject Haupt's conjecture if the form preserved in the MSS. pointed strongly, from a palaeographical point of view, to *devolsit*. But the palaeographical argument is not strong. I do not know (nor can imagine) a script, either majuscule or minuscule, where misreading *s* as *u* is easy, or even possible. So the only possible mechanism of corruption here is an interpolation inspired by the preceding, corrupt *amnis* (the MSS. tell us that *vagus amnis devolvit ... acuto ... pondere silices*: a 'wandering river rolled down sharp and weighty flints'). However, an interpolation is not necessarily confined to one letter: a scribe may have adjusted several of them in order to obtain the mock sense presented by the MSS. Consequently, it is of no advantage that Haupt modified only one letter.

Notice that his *devolsit* is apparently a palaeographically motivated improvement of an earlier conjecture *devellit*, proposed by Achilles Statius in 1566. As shown above, *devellit* is the expected Republican perfect, but palaeography forbids the substitution, as it seems hard to explain how the word might have been corrupted into *devolvit*.

I think, however, that the corruption is not unlikely, and that it has been caused by betacism: a confusion of *b* and *v* observable in later Latin, which contributes to forms such as *biolaberit* visible on inscriptions, errors such as *Savini* (Varro, *Ling*. 5.41), confusions of *vobis* and *bovis* (Varro, *Ling*. 7.67), instances of perfect tense where future tense is expected (Catull. 5.11, 11.2, 29.7), and so forth.

A copyist aware of the phenomenon, facing a word that contains *b* or *v* and does not make sense, might change the one letter into the other to see if it makes things any better. And it really happened to Catull. 63.81 *verbera*: a copyist, seeing it misdivided, has expanded *ver* into *verum*[9] and transformed the rest into a more familiar *vera*. Another instance is Catull. 63.51 *erifugae*: *herifugae OR*, *verifugae G*. What probably happened is that *G* misread *h* as *b*[10] and, assuming that it was an instance of betacism, has 'amended' it appropriately, because this was apparently the first thing that came to his mind.

This, I believe, has also happened to Catul. 63.5: a copyist first misread *devellit* as *develbit* – Catull. 61.176 (*cubile GR*, *cubibe O*) confirms that a confusion of *b* and *l* does happen. Since *develbit* makes no sense, our copyist is now trying to obtain it by altering *b* into *v*: after that, the word seems more familiar (*develvit*), so he finally turns it into *devolvit* by altering *e* into *o*, another 'standard amendment' he is probably used to. Regarding the similarity of *o* and *e* in most minuscule

[7] Gell. 19.13.3: *quae (verba) a Laberio ignobilia nimis et sordentia in usum linguae Latinae intromissa sunt*.

[8] Catull. 43.4, 84 and probably 10.26.

[9] cf. Catull. 63.68 *ferar*] *ferarum V*

[10] cf. Catull. 63.87 *bumida O*; 3.16 *bonus ille V* (< *ho miselle*); 6.15 *babes O*; 17.13 *himuli O*; 28.10 *trahe V*; etc.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838811000292 Published online by Cambridge University Press

scripts, and tons of resulting errors,[11] the copyist might have begun by misreading the word as *devolbit*.

Therefore my suggestion is to abandon Haupt's *devolsit* in Catull. 63.5 in favour of Achilles Statius' *devellit*.

*University of Warsaw* KONRAD KOKOSZKIEWICZ
draco@ibi.uw.edu.pl

doi:10.1017/S0009838811000292

[11] Catull. 63.18 *erocitatis O*, *crocitatis GR* (< *ere citatis*); 63.38 *cibellos O*; 63.90 *omne GR* (< *oe*), *esse O* (< *ee*); etc.

# TWO TEXTUAL EMENDATIONS IN APPIAN (*HANN.* 10.43; *B CIV.* 1.6.24)

## I

τοὺς μὲν ἐκ τῶν συμμάχων φιλανθρωπευσάμενος ἀπέλυσεν ἐς τὰ ἑαυτῶν, θηρεύων τῇ φιλανθρωπίᾳ τὰς πόλεις

Showing generosity to those from the allies, he dispersed them to their own territories, hunting the cities through his generosity. (Appian, *Hannibalic Wars*, 10.43)[1]

This passage is from the description of Hannibal's propaganda offensive in the aftermath of the Battle of Lake Trasimene. White's Loeb translation of the last clause ('sent them home without ransom, *in order to conciliate their towns*')[2] smoothes over a jarring metaphor in the transmitted Greek text. Appian, as the passage stands, does not in fact speak of 'conciliating the towns'. Rather, he says that Hannibal was *hunting* them: θηρεύων.

In itself, the idea of metaphorically 'hunting' good will through φιλανθρωπία is a perfectly natural idiom in classical Greek. Compare Xenophon, *Cyr.* 8.2.2: τούτοις ἐπειρᾶτο τὴν φιλίαν θηρεύειν. This very parallel, however, reveals the awkwardness of Appian's apparent expression here. It is natural to speak of hunting a city's *good will* in such a context. In Xenophon, we note, the object of the verb of hunting is φιλίαν. It is much less natural to speak of hunting the city *itself* with φιλανθρωπία, as Appian seems to be doing. Metaphors this cryptic and elliptical

* The author thanks *CQ*'s anonymous referee for comment and correction.

[1] The texts of Appian used as a basis for this discussion are the 1905 Teubner of L. Mendelssohn and P. Viereck for the *Civil Wars* and the 1939 Teubner of P. Viereck and A.G. Roos, as revised by E. Gabba in 1962, for the remainder of the corpus.

[2] H. White, *Appian's* Roman History *I* (London, 1912), 321. Compare K. Brodersen, *Appian von Alexandria: Erster Teil: Die römische Reichsbildung* (Stuttgart, 1987), 128: 'um durch solche Vergünstigung ihre Städte für sich zu gewinnen'; D. Gaillard, *Appien* Histoire Romaine *livre VII: Le livre d'Annibal* (Paris, 1998), 9: 'cherchant à prendre les cités au piège de ses bons sentiments'.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838811000292 Published online by Cambridge University Press