

**BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND OTHER
STUDIES ON THE PERVIGILIUM
VENERIS, COMPILED FROM
RESEARCH IN THE LIBRARY OF
THE BRITISH MUSEUM**

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Bibliographical and Other Studies on the *Pervigilium Veneris*, Compiled from Research in the Library of the British Museum by Cecil Clementi

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PERVIGILIUM VENERIS

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TO MIND
ABSTRACT

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It appears from a passage in the *Adagia* of Desiderius Erasmus (A. D. 1467-1536), the second edition of which was printed at Venice in 1508,¹ that Aldo Manuzio,² his publisher, had recently shown him the MS., found in a very ancient French library, of a *Carmen de Vere*, ascribed by the copyist to Catullus. The fact that Manuzio showed his discovery to Erasmus leads De la Monnoye³ to conjecture that in 1504 Jacopo Sannazaro⁴ had, on his

¹ Erasmi Roterodami Adagiorum Chiliades tres ac Centuriae fere totidem: Aldi Studiosi S.: Aldus, 1508 [Brit. Mus. No. 634.1. 2^o]. See folio 94, chiliad I, 829, where Erasmus, illustrating the proverb *Amyctas Perdidit Silentium*, writes:—'Meminit de Amyctarum silentio Silius Italicus—*quasque exarere silentia Amyctas*. Meminit et Catullus nisi fallit inscriptio carminis DE VERE, quod nuper nobis Aldus Manutius meus exhibuit, in antiquissima quadam Galliae bibliotheca repertum, *Sic Amyctas, dum locabat, perdidit silentium*.' The first edition of the *Adagia* was published at Paris in 1509. There is no copy of it at the British Museum, but I have ascertained from Mr. G. Vine, sub-librarian of the John Rylands Library at Manchester, where there is a copy, that the first edition, which is quite a small volume containing only about 800 proverbs, does not include the proverb *Amyctas perdidit silentium*. Presumably, therefore, it was between the years 1509 and 1508 that Manuzio showed the MS. in question to Erasmus.

² The editor of the famous Aldine editions of Greek and Roman classics. He lived A. D. 1449-1515. His original name was Teobaldo Manucci (also written Manuzzi). Erasmus was living at Venice as the guest of Manuzio when he produced in 1508 the second edition of the *Adagia*.

³ *Menagiana*, vol. iii, pp. 12-15 (*vide infra* under the year 1716). The passage in question reads:—'Érasme, au proverbe *Amyctas perdidit silentium*, est le premier qui ait fait mention de cette pièce attribuée, dit-il, à Catulle dans le manuscrit qu'il en vit chez Aldo Manuce. Comme c'est dans une ancienne Bibliothèque de France qu'elle avoit été trouvée, j'ai opinion qu'en 1504 Sannazar, à son retour de ce pays-là, pouvoit bien l'en avoir rapportée avec d'autres manuscrits curieux qu'il y avoit découverts, tels que les fragments des Italiens d'Ovide, les Cynégétiques de Gratinus et de Nemesianus, l'Itinéraire de Rutilius, et peut-être quelques autres.'

⁴ An Italian poet; A. D. 1458-1530 (or 1532).

return from France, brought with him this MS. as well as certain other curious codices, which he had discovered there, such as the fragments of Ovid's *Halientica*, the *Cynogetica* of Gratius and Nemesianus, and the *Itinerary* of Rutilius. But all we know for a fact is that Erasmus quotes from the poem in question one line, and one only, in the following form:—

Sic Amyclas, dum tacebant, perdidit silentium.

Neither of the two extant codices of the *Pervigilium Veneris* contains the line in precisely this form: for the *Codex Salmasianus* (hereinafter referred to as S)⁵ reads in its ninety-second line:—

sic amidas cum taceret perdidit silentium,

and the *Codex Thuaneus* (hereinafter referred to as T)⁶ has as its ninety-first line:—

sic amidas cum taceret perdidit silentium.

Either, therefore, Erasmus had before him some MS. other than S or T, or else he himself somewhat arbitrarily altered *cum taceret* into *dum tacebant*, or perhaps, having seen S or T (probably the former as it does not miswrite the name *Amidas*), he quoted the line incorrectly from memory. The fact that the MS., which Erasmus saw, ascribed the poem to Catullus would appear, as the poem is not so ascribed by S or T, to support the theory that the Codex discovered in the ancient French library was neither S nor T, but some other MS. since lost. Against this argument Jo. Christian Wernsdorf⁷ contends that in T the *Epithalamium* of Caius Valerius Catullus Veronensis precedes the *Pervigilium* by a short interval only, and that for this reason Erasmus ascribed the poem to Catullus, although he had before him no other MS. than T. But I find it difficult to believe that so sound a scholar as Erasmus would have attributed the quotation in question to

⁵ For a further account of this MS. see pp. 7-8 *infra*.

⁶ For a further account of this MS. see pp. 6-7 and note 13 *infra*.

⁷ *Poetae Latini Minores*, vol. iii, pp. 423-88 and 535-42 (*vide infra* under the year 1782). The passage referred to reads:—'Catulli Veronensis hoc esse Aldus Manutius, Erasmus et Meursius existimaverunt, quae opinio inde orta videtur, quod in Pithoei vetustissimo codice non longo intervallo praecedebat Epithalamium C. Val. Catulli. Et quum Aldi Manutii exemplar, quod ille Catullo tribuisse dicitur, in antiquissima Galliae bibliotheca reportatum sit, suspicor hoc ex eodem codice, quem postea Pithoeus vidit, descriptum fuisse.'

Catullus, adding *nisi fallit inscriptio carminis*, if the MS. before him had not expressly ascribed the poem to Catullus. Indeed, so far from attributing the poem to Catullus, Erasmus appears to have doubted whether the MS. was not at fault in its ascription of the work to that author. It should also be noted that T reads *amibus cum taceret*, not *Amiculis dum tacebant*, and I cannot think that Erasmus would, without mentioning the fact, have made so considerable an alteration in the text. Still less am I disposed to believe that Erasmus would have trusted to his memory in such a matter. Moreover, the *Pervigilium* is next mentioned in 1545 by Giglio Gregorio Giraldi of Ferrara (A. D. 1479-1552), who says:—'Aldum Manutium memini dicere, se Catulli poema habere quod VER inscribitur. Idem et Erasmus fatetur: necdum tamen mihi videre contigit.'⁸ Thus apparently Manuzio as well as Erasmus had noticed that the Codex in question ascribed the poem to Catullus: and neither of these eminent scholars referred to the poem as *Pervigilium Veneris*, which title occurs both in S and T. Erasmus spoke of it as *Carmen de Vere*, and Manuzio described it as *poema quod VER inscribitur*. It, therefore, seems certain that in their MS. the opening line of the poem was not the refrain, as in S and T, but the line *Ver nouum, uer iam canorum*, &c.; and I would in passing note this as a further confirmation of the conjecture that the refrain should be omitted from the beginning of the poem.⁹ On the whole, therefore, (a) because the penultimate line of the poem as quoted by Erasmus differs from that line as written in S and T; (b) because S and T do not ascribe the poem to Catullus; (c) because the poem in S and T is expressly entitled *Pervigilium Veneris*, which cannot have been the case in the MS. which Erasmus and Manuzio saw; and finally (d) because the poem in S and T begins with the refrain and not with the line *Ver nouum*, &c., I conclude with some confidence that Manuzio and Erasmus had before them a MS. (other than S or T) which has since been lost.

⁸ *Historiae poetarum tam Graecorum quam Latinorum Dialogi decem, quibus scripta et vitae eorum sic exprimentur, ut ea perdiscere cupientibus, minimum iam laboris esse queat*: Lilio Gregorio Gyraldo Ferrariensi auctore: cum indice locupletissimo: Basileae, 1545 [Brit. Mus. No. 1161. b. 2]. See book x. p. 1089.

⁹ At pp. 9-10 of my edition (see the year 1912 *infra*).

Joseph Justus Scaliger¹⁰ is the next scholar who mentions the *Pervigilium*. He suggested, in 1577,¹¹ that the author of the *Carmen de Vere*, referred to by Erasmus, was not C. Val. Catullus Veronensis, but a certain Catullus Urbicarius Mimographus, mentioned by Juvenal and Martial.¹² It was in the same year that Pierre Pithou (Petrus Pithoeus or Pythoeus; A.D. 1539-96) discovered the poem in the *Codex Thuaneus*,¹³ from which he prepared the first printed text of the *Pervigilium Veneris*.¹⁴ This edition was printed towards the close of 1577 in small 4to size (230 × 160 mm.) on two sheets, making four pages in all. On pages 1-3 the *Pervigilium* itself is printed and on page 4 the verses known as *Floridi de qualitate vitae*, which form Nos. 245-52 in Alexander Riese's *Anthologia Latina*.¹⁵ The text is a faithful transcript of the *Codex Thuaneus* (now No. 8071 in the National Library at Paris) and is preceded by the following preface, dated Jan. 1, 1578:—

Lectori.

Qui mos veteribus cum desperatos ante ianuas collocarent, ut vel extremum spiritum redderent terrae, vel possent a transeuntibus forte curari; idem mihi consilium fuit in disponendis huius poematis, sane antiqui, sive Catulli, sive alterius sit, reliquiis; quarum ego salutem commendatam cupio vel Medicorum pueris, dum quâ fide a nobis exhibentur de vetus-

¹⁰ The family name was *dellu Scola*, or *de l'Escole*: the father Julius Caesar Scaliger lived A. D. 1484-1558 and the son Joseph Justus Scaliger lived A. D. 1540-1609.

¹¹ Iosephi Scaligeri Iul. Caes. filii Castigationes in Catullum, Titulum, Propertium: Lutetiae, apud Mamertum Patissouium, in officina Rob. Stephani; 1577 [Brit. Mus. No. 1002, b. 5]. At p. 4 Scaliger writes:—'Id tantum dicam: Urbicarium et Mimographum poetam huic nostro cognomine fuisse: cuius meminit Iuvenalis. Et fortasse is fuit auctor carminis DE VERE, ex quo hoc citat Erasmus:—*Sic Anyclas, dum tacebat, perdidit silentium.*'

¹² Juv. *Sat.* viii. 186 and xiii. 111; Martial v. 30. 3.

¹³ So called because on its second folio are inscribed the words 'Iac. Aug. Thuanj', indicating that it once belonged to Jacques Auguste de Thou (A. D. 1553-1617), owner of the famous library, known as *Bibliotheca Thuanica*, at Paris. The *Pervigilium* is written on folio 52sqq. in this MS., and a facsimile of the pages in question will be found in my edition of the poem.

¹⁴ See *Revue de Philologie* ix, pp. 124-6 (under the year 1885 *infra*). H. Oment was the scholar who rediscovered this *editio princeps* of the poem.

¹⁵ Vol. i (see also under the year 1869 *infra*).

tissimo, sed unico exemplari. eadem. ut par est, ab omnibus tractentur. Kl. Ian. CIOCLXXVIII.

Pithou sent copies of this booklet to Joseph Justus Scaliger, to Jan van der Does, the Elder (Janus Dousa, pater; A. D. 1515-1601), and to Joest Lips (Justus Lipsius; A. D. 1547-1606). Scaliger returned his copy some time later to Pithou approving a certain number of the conjectured emendations, which Pithou had printed in the margin of his text, and suggesting to him certain others. This copy of the *editio princeps*, with Scaliger's comments, is now bound up in vol. 395 (fols. 68-9) of the 'Collection Dupuy' in the National Library at Paris.¹⁶ It is interesting to note that, at the head of his comments on the text, Scaliger somewhat modified his opinion as to the authorship of the poem, saying:—'Poeta iste floruit post Antoninorum tempora, quod facile ex caractere deprehenditur; et, si verum auguror, post Constantinum; quibus temporibus non temere alio quam trochaico metro scribebant. Non alias crebrior eius metri usus.'

We learn from Achille Estaço (Achilles Statius; A. D. 1524-81) that only three or four copies of Pithou's *editio princeps* were printed.¹⁷ All of them, except the one now preserved at Paris, appear to have been lost. Estaço himself could not procure a printed copy, but obtained in 1578 a transcript for his own use, and this MS. copy, together with the marginal annotations of Estaço, is now preserved as MS. B. 106 in the Vallicellana Library. We do not know what became of the printed copy of the *editio princeps* sent by Pithou to Jan van der Does; but it seems probable that this scholar also

¹⁶ Scaliger wrote to Pithou from Poitiers on June 2, 1578: 'Je ne sai si vous avés reçeu la responce que je vous feis touchant le *Pervigilium Veneris*. Je la baillai à M^{re} Henri Simon, qui a esté receveur des fortifications'. . . . Also on June 29, 1578, he wrote in a postscript:—'Je vous envoie ce que j'ai cotté sur le *Pervigilium Veneris* et ce que m'en semble, mais ne prenés pas mon avis *tanquam scriptar* M^{re}gar. Je l'ai faict pour vous obéir'. . . . 'Collection Dupuy, vol. 496, fols. 178 and 180).

¹⁷ See *Revue de Philologie* ix, pp. 121-6 (under the year 1885 *infra*). E. Chatelain was the scholar who first drew attention to the MS. of Estaço on the *Pervigilium*. Estaço writes:—'Mons. Pythoeus n'ha fatti stampare 3 o 4 solasse. Non n'ho potuto haver in stampa, ma l'ho traseritto come elle sta.' Estaço must have received this copy early in 1578, for the letter addressed to Pinelli, which follows in the MS., is dated '8 eid. April 1578'.