
MORE OBSERVATIONS ON MARTIAL


1.46

Cum dicis ‘propero, fac si facis,’ Hedyli, languet protinus et cessat debilitata Venus. expectare iube: velocius ibo retentus. Hedyli, si properas, dic mihi ne properem.

46.1 et 4 Hedyli *Bentley:* -le γ (deest β).

SB (in AJPh 110 (1989), 131-2) having discovered the name Hedylis in CIL X.4613, believes that its attestation alone can give the entrée to Bentley’s conjecture into M.’s text. Hardly so. Varying the tempo of love-making has nothing whatever to do with the sex of the lovers, and Howell’s comment (209) that “the epigram might seem to have more point if applied to heterosexual intercourse” is without foundation (for the authors he quotes in support, *AP* 5.42 [Rufinus] and Ovid *A.A.* 2.717 f. and 725 f., a heterosexual context was a given). *propero* v.1 and v.4 = ‘to be in a hurry’ to attend to other things—a situation equally applicable to male and female slaves; *ne properem* v.4 = ‘not to be in a hurry’ over the foreplay.

Hedylus appears in M.9.57 as a receptive homosexual male, almost cer-
tainly a slave-boy, M.’s preferred type of partner. He reappears in M.4.52, and although this epigram “need not concern homosexuality” (SB), it must, if it is to have more than punning point. The continuity of Hedylus’ identity may be assumed, as it is by Sullivan (192 n.8 and cf. Philologus 129 [1979], 295 n.1), over a period of some ten years (M.’s Book I was published in 85/6 A.D., Book IX in 95 A.D.).

The case for Hedylis would be stronger if no such assumption could be made, and SB claims that “M. does not as a rule carry over name-associations from book to book”, a claim which, if true, would wreck one of the main planks of Martial-interpretation (see Mnemosyne 47 [1994], 687)—and all for the sake of Bentley’s wanton conjecture, which has nothing to recommend it.

3.84
Quid narrat tua moecha? non puellam
dixi, Gongylion. quid ergo? linguam.

SB translates: ‘What does your wife’s female lover have to tell?’ I was not referring to a girl, Gongylion. What then? Your tongue.

The addressee is not however a husband, or even a man. Gongylion (-tov), unlike e.g. Chaeremion (-tov) (M.10.65.15), is a Greek female name, in form a diminutive of Γογγύλα (Sappho frg. 217 Page). As M. represents the situation, tua moecha might lead the demi-mondaine to suppose that he is referring to a competing paelx, her own rival (cf. Pl. Merc. 689-90 i hac mecum, ut uideas semul/tuam Alcumenam paelicem, Iuno mea). But no! He is claiming that she is herself her own rival, offering her clients her tongue ad fel-landum in lieu of her vagina. Conversely, Nanneius (M.11.61.1) is charged with cumnilinctus in the words lingua maritus, moechus ore.

3.92
Ut patiar moechum, rogat uxor, Galle, sed unum.

huic ego non oculos eruo, Galle, duos?

eruo and oculos (in the literal sense) go together like a horse and carriage (examples in OLD s.v. eruo 1d). Two eyes is the standard number, and the explicit addition of duos makes such meagre point as the epigram has—the arithmetic contrast between the numbers at the end of each line. oculos here = ‘eyes’ as surely as at M.3.85.1 naris = ‘nose’ in the punishment inflicted by another cuckolded husband.

The suggestion that oculos here = testiculos lacks any supporting evidence and could have originated with a reader who found the epigram flat if taken at its face value (M. might have agreed: cf. M.1.16).

6.46
Vapulat assidue veneti quadriga flagello

nec currit: magnam rem, Catiane, facit.