
The genesis of this work lies in the author’s view, shared with (and, one guesses, possibly inspired by) Professor R.G.M. Nisbet’s influential paper (1995. *Collected Papers* (Oxford), 76-100), founded on the belief that the text of Catullus, conservatively edited by R.A.B. Mynors in the Oxford Classical Texts series, ought to be opened more widely to admitting emendatory proposals. At all events, this belief was active in a number of articles published by Trappes-Lomax in the years 2001-2003, and has now become the leading principle of an important and useful book.

An Introduction carefully explains in general terms the underlying foundations of the work; it is followed by a detailed “Schedule of Suggestions” for the improvement of the text in “some 450” passages. This schedule is set out in three columns: first, Mynors’ reading; next, the preferred reading; and lastly, the source(s) of the proposal in the second column. After this begins the detailed textual commentary on each of these passages, with the caution that only those suggestions are discussed where in the author’s opinion there seems to be “a fair probability” that Mynors’ text may be modified or improved. The book concludes with a bibliography of works (other than standard editions) that are either used or referred to in its pages.

This review will not be concerned with textual proposals that either have been discussed by the author in earlier publications, or else are merely matters of spelling or punctuation.

In the Introduction, referring to emendations “published comparatively recently or recorded in standard editions”, Trappes-Lomax suggests that “to have them collected in one place may be of some utility to readers”; extended as this category is to proposals ignored by editors or forgotten (p. 5, ii and iii), then so far as the 450 problems go this work may stand *inter alia* as the closest equivalent for Catullus to W.R. Smyth’s critical thesaurus to Propertius (Mnemosyne Suppl. 12, Leiden 1970); hence perhaps the allusion on p. 6 to a hypothetical “Repertory of Conjectures”. Pages 6-9 discuss the patterns of corruption to be found in Catullus, whose scribes, it is emphasized, are often misled by the poet’s use of archaic or at least old-fashioned verbal features such as echthipsis of final *s*, prodelision, *ecf* for *eff*, instrumental *qui*, and so forth. Included here is a section on hiatus (or rather its absence; six examples are cited, which “can all be removed with significant ease and usually with poetic advantage”, a view still open to challenge, as we shall see). Pages 10-1 discuss the presence of interpolated lines. Here the author’s surgery has been unusually drastic: 72 lines are to be expelled. Some of these expulsions are incontestable (63.9 and 54; 84.5 and 6; 90.3 and 4, for example); others are less easily justified. Pages 11-3 add particular discussions of interpolations,
in three kinds: repetitious, unsatisfactory, metrical. One paragraph is devoted to
transpositions, and two to Catullus’ handling of Greek forms. After three more
brief discussions on similar matters, Trappes-Lomax presents “for readers new to
this field” an account of the primary manuscripts, with a glance at those of sec-
ondary importance. Only one of these (BL add. 11915) was consulted for this
book; three of its readings are mentioned, including a corrector’s descendat at
112.2, with a reference to “the true reading, which is te scindat if Schwabe and
Mynors are right”—from which the reader may well suppose that they are right.
No mention is made, here or elsewhere in the book, of the present reviewer’s mod-
est proposal est qui / discumbit, first published in 1987.1)

On p. 18, the claim is made that four passages in the writings of Agius of Cor-
vey (9th century) indicate that Agius had access to “a significantly better MS than”
the source of V; but the reasoning under passage iii at least seems not entirely
sound. It depends on accepting as axiomatic that the hiatus in 68B.158 a quo sunt
primo omnia nata bona is itself a proof of corruption, and hence on substituting
tanta parata for omnia nata (Agius’ line reads in qua sunt una perdita tanta bona).
Agius’ words are in fact quite commonplace, and the corruption just mentioned
receives a rather implausible explanation. It is maintained that since Agius seems
to imitate Catullus, and since his wording can be used to emend Catullus, there-
fore Agius had a better text. But those who do not accept the author’s premises
have no need to emend Catullus in this passage (and in a few others). Paragraphs
follow on the authority of the MSS and its limitations, and on orthography. Then
comes the “Schedule of Suggestions” (pp. 21-32).

The textual commentary occupies pages 33 to 301. Each of several hundred
proposals is discussed in detail; obviously it would be impossible to evaluate each
of them singly. In this review we have tried to establish—though it must rest
largely on subjective preference—three or four classes of acceptability or attrac-
tiveness. It should be said at once that at least the first two classes yield readings
that, once adopted en masse, would present a version of our poet to which even the
most conservative critic would find it hard to take exception.

The first class may be dealt with quickly since it consists of readings that the
reviewer clearly has to endorse inasmuch as they agree with those printed (or, in a
very few cases, marked by a capital C, merely commended) in his own edition:2)

1)Phoenix 41.2, 191-2. Discumbere would here be used in the attested sense of ‘take one’s
place at dinner’; a parallel emendation is suggested by W.S. Watt for the crux descendentem
at [Quint.] Decl. Min. 296.2. See the translation offered in the Phoenix article.
(Toronto; corrected reprint 1998).