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The New Amoebaeon Gallus

In their *editio princeps* of a new poetic papyrus fragment from Qasr Ibrim, Anderson, Parsons, and Nisbet argued that the text preserved “several consecutive epigrams in a book of elegies,” (“Elegiacs by Gallus from Qasr Ibrim” *JRS* 69, (1979) 149) which they attributed to the lost works of C. Cornelius Gallus. The editors could not explain, however, the mysterious eta-shaped marks in the margins after the last line of the each of the three quatrains. On the basis of evidence from Propertius and Vergil, Janet Fairweather (*CQ* 34 (1984), 167-74) has argued, and James O’Hara (*CQ* 39 (1989), 561-2) has sought to confirm that the marks indicate a change of speaker in an amoebaeon verse contest. An examination of the responsion within the fragment in conjunction with a reading of Propertius 1.10 and Vergil’s seventh and tenth *Eclogues* will support an argument for reading the fragment as a love poem composed in amoebaeon verse, and will show that the Augustan poets, while honoring Gallus for his influence, tended to fault him for his lowly style and his tendency to mix genres — also a characteristic of the papyrus fragment.