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## *Mergere* and Priap. 65

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piece of news. This would be expressed in the reading.

qui nuper fecit servo currenti in via  
decesse populum *quot is in annos serviat.*

Luscius' absurdity may be held to consist partly in the choice of incongruous conditions, but especially in implying that servitude limited to a term of years foreordained was usual at Athens. The only mention of a precise term of years of slavery that I have discovered yet is in Cic. *Phil.* VIII. 11. 32, 'cum in spem libertatis sexennio post sumus ingressi diutiusque servitutum perpassi quam captivi frugi et diligentes solent.'

Wallon's *Histoire de l'Esclavage* seems not to recognise such a case. Perhaps some reader of the *Classical Review* can help with an instance.

*Heaut.* 958 (V. ii. 6.) Menedemus says :

scio tibi esse hoc gravius multo ac durius  
quod fit; verum ego haud minus aegre patior.

'I know it is much harder and crueller for you, to whom the thing happens in fact, but I am just as dreadfully sorry about it as you.'

So far good : but here the MSS. go off into nonsense.

id qui nescio  
nec rationem capio, nisi quod tibi bene ex  
animo volo.

Mr. Gray (in his ed. of 1895, Cambridge) translates this as follows : 'I who don't understand it and cannot comprehend the meaning of it, only from my heart I wish you well.' To which one may object that *nescio* is not the Latin for 'I do not understand,' nor *nec rationem capio* for 'I cannot comprehend the meaning.' But the drift of the sentence is plain, and there is very little amiss with the reading. Make it—

verum ego haud minus aegre patior. *Qui id fit?*  
Nescio,  
nec rationem capio etc.

'I feel it as much as you do. How that can be? I don't know, and I can't account for it, unless it is the force of sympathy, because I am so fond of you.'

*Tibi bene volo* is stronger than our 'I wish you well': it is the Italian *ti voglio bene*.

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### MERGERE AND PRIAP. 65.

Hic tibi qui rostro crescentia lilia mersit  
caeditur e tepida uictima porcus hara.  
ne tamen exanimum facias pecus omne, Priape,  
horti sit facias ianua clausa tui.

THE first volume of Buecheler's collected opuscula has just been published, and it includes the celebrated 'uindiciae libri Priapeorum' from *Rhein. Mus.* xviii pp. 381-415, written at the age of twenty-six, but inferior to none of its author's work in his special characteristic of patient ingenuity. The note upon the first verse of this poem runs as follows (*Rh. M.* p. 405, *kl. Schr.* I p. 352, where there are two misprints):

'oscitantia incredibili propagabatur qui rostro lilia mersit, Heinsius tamen carpsit uel rasiit uel rosit proposuerat. nimirum Ovidius rode caper uilem dixit, Martialis uile nocens rosa hircus. at rostro rodere dedecet poetam. hic ut ego emendauit sic Ovidius uile caper morsa,

Iuuenalis haedulus inscius herbae necdum ausus  
uirgas humilis mordere salicti, Vergilius signata admorso in stirpe cicatrix.'

His emendation, as he calls it, was *morsit*. This he had printed already in his smaller Petronius of 1862, he repeated it in 1871 and 1882 and 1904, and it is piously preserved by Mr Heraeus in the 5th edition. Yet all that Buecheler has to say for it is said above: there is no defence of the form; no sign of any suspicion that defence is needed; not even a reference to Gellius vi 9 7. And then it is others who are charged with 'oscitantia incredibilis.' It is incredibilis oscitantia to believe for forty years and more that in the age of Ovid (for that is the age to which Buecheler assigned the Priapea) they said *morsit* for *momordit*.

The verb *mordere* is not even suitable. Goats, it is true, damage vegetation by nibbling it; but the devastation spread by M. Grunnius Corocotta, soliuertiator, when he and his snout get into the garden, consists much rather in routing up and in breaking down, and is much better described by *mersit*, which means *obruit*, *afflxit*, *perdidit*, *pessum dedit*. This use begins with cases where the metaphor is still clearly discernible and the disaster in which a thing is whelmed is expressed by the presence of an ablative: Verg. *Aen.* vi 429, xi 28 '*funere mersit acerbo*,' vi 512 '*me fata mea et scelus exitiale Lacaenae | his mersere malis*' (compare Liu. iii 16 4 '*superantibus aliis ac mergentibus malis*'), Liu. vi 17 2 '*mersam et obrutam fenore partem ciuitatis*,' Plin. *n.h.* vii 132 '*quam multos accepta adflixere imperia! quam multos bona perdidere et ultimis mersere suppliciis!*' Flor. i 47 (iii 12) 8 '*illae opes atque diuitiae adflixere saeculi mores, mersamque uitis suis quasi sentina rem publicam pessum dedere.*' Then this ablative disappears and *mergere* by itself means *ruin*, *crush*; and if an ablative is present it expresses that *by which*, not *in which*, the thing is whelmed: Liu. ix 18 1 '*Alexandro nondum merso secundis rebus*,' Ouid. *trist.* iii 11 38 '*carnifici fortuna potest mea flenda uideri, | te tamen est uno iudice mersa parum*,' Vell. ii 91 3 '*cum esset omni flagitiorum scelerumque conscientia mersus, nec melior illi res familiaris quam mens foret*,' Sen. *ep.* 55 3 '*quotiens aliquos amicitiae Asinii Galli, quotiens Seiani odium, deinde amor merserat*,' Luc. i 159 '*publica belli | semina, quae populos semper mersere potentes*,' vi 8 '*placet alea fati | alterutrum mersura caput*,' vii 655 '*trahere*

*omnia secum | mersa iuuat gentesque suae miscere ruinae*,' viii 509 '*regesque timet, quorum omnia mersit*,' anth. Lat. Ries. 472 1 '*non satis est quod nos mergit furiosa iuuentus | transuersosque rapit fama sepulta probris*,' Sil. viii 287 '*cernebat Paulus . . . labi, mergente sinistro | consule, res pessumque dari*,' Iuu. x 57 '*quosdam praecipitat subiecta potentia magnae | inuidiae, mergit longa atque insignis honorum | pagina*' (compare Cic. *pro Sull.* 87 '*rei publicae praecipitanti subueni, patriam demersam extuli*'), xiii 8 '*ut mediocris | iacturae te mergat onus*,' Plin. *n.h.* ix 67 '*nullusque prope iam mortalis aestimatur pluris quam qui peritissime census domini mergit*,' Verg. *Aen.* vi 615 '*ne quaere doceri . . . quae forma uiros fortunaue mersit*' is not easily intelligible but appears to contain another example. So *mersare* in Lucr. v 1008 '*tum penuria deinde cibi languentia leto | membra dedit, contra nunc rerum copia mersat*'; so *demergere* in Hor. *carm.* iii 16 13 '*concidit auguris | Argiui domus ob lucrum | demersa exitio*,' Sen. *Med.* 528 '*his adice Colchos, adice et Aeeten ducem, | Scythas Pelasgis iunge: demersos dabo*'; and so βαπτίζω and καταποντίζω in Greek, Lobeck *Soph. Ai.* pp. 357 sq.

It will be noticed that in these examples the metaphor signifies ruin of fortune or health or character: Priap. 65 1 is singular, so far as I know, in extending it to material destruction, such as laying a row of lilies flat. The French *abîmer* has acquired and often enjoys this meaning, as in Hugo *Les Misérables* v 13 '*j'ai eu tort d'abîmer le chapeau de ce monsieur.*'

A. E. HOUSMAN.

## SOME CODICES VOSSIANI AND THE METAMORPHOSIS OF OVID.

In a Berlin Programm<sup>1</sup> on the text of Book xv., the testimony of Nicolaus Heinsius, that at xv. 804 '*Aeneaden*' is the reading of a '*Codex Vossianus*' of the poem, was dismissed as '*falsch*'

by Dr. Hugo Magnus, who arrived somewhat hastily at this conclusion on ascertaining from Dr. de Vries that the three MSS. of the *Metamorphosis*, from the library of Vossius, now at Leyden,<sup>2</sup> read

<sup>1</sup> *Studien zur Überlieferung und Kritik der Metamorphosen Ovids* (Berlin, 1893).

<sup>2</sup> These three Vossiani are quite distinct from the three MSS. of the *Metamorphosis*—