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A HOMERIC REMINISCENCE IN CATULLUS

pro quo dilaceranda feris dabor alitibusque
praeda, neque iniacta tumulabor mortua terra.
(64.152f.)

That Ariadne is alluding here to *Iliad* 1.4f. is recognized by most commentators; e.g. Quinn: "... that birds and beasts of prey feed on unburied corpses is a theme which goes back to the opening lines (1.4-5) of Homer's *Iliad*."¹ Quinn does not cite the Greek text, but other editors (e.g. Kroll² and Fordyce³) quote it as follows:

... αὐτοὺς δὲ ἐλώγια τεῦχε κύνεσσιν
οἰωνοῖσι τε πᾶσι.

That is the reading of all manuscripts of the *Iliad*, of the scholia, and of the Oxford Text. Other editors, however, prefer the variant that was accepted by Zenodotus: instead of πᾶσι, they read δαῖτα.

It seems to me that it is possible to tell which reading Catullus preferred, and that is not without interest for students of the techniques of neoteric poetry at Rome. The imitation of Homer in these lines of Catullus is extremely close: he divides the fate of Ariadne's corpse into two parts, *dilaceranda feris* and *alitibus praeda*. The two are in chiasmic order, with *feris* and *alitibus* in the center; this clearly imitates the opposition of κύνεσσιν and οἰωνοῖσι in the Greek. Likewise, *dilaceranda* will serve as an equivalent to ἐλώγια. But *praeda* is an exact translation of neither δαῖτα nor πᾶσι; it certainly includes the idea of the former, and there is no word at all that could be taken as equivalent to the latter. The obvious question must be asked: why, if Catullus is using Zenodotus' text, as I feel certain that he is,⁴ is δαῖτα not translated more

¹ K. Quinn, ed., *Catullus: The Poems* (London 1970) 322.

² W. Kroll, ed., *C. Valerius Catullus*⁴ (Stuttgart 1960) 164.

³ C. J. Fordyce, *Catullus: A Commentary* (Oxford 1961) 297; R. Ellis, *Commentary on Catullus* (Oxford 1889) does not cite the *Iliad* here.

⁴ That Catullus is translating δαῖτα was seen by M. Lenchantin de Gubernatis, *Il Libro di Catullo*² (Turin 1953) 157, whose note reads:

precisely? *Cena* would certainly fit the verse. A reading of the Greek sources, however, offers an explanation: *δαῖτα* was objected to by Aristarchus because the word is used elsewhere in Homer exclusively to refer to human meals; that objection would apply to *cena* as well.⁵ Thus, it would seem, Catullus is alluding not only to the (correct) Zenodotean text, but to the objections of Aristarchus as well.

That Roman poets used commentaries to understand the Greek texts that they employed is not new. I have shown elsewhere that Ennius appears to have extended some Homeric anomalies because of their wider diffusion in Hellenistic times;⁶ not only Virgil, but Cicero in the *Aratea* and Varro Atacinus in the *Argonautae* made use of Hellenistic commentaries.⁷ It should come as no surprise that Catullus employed the same methods. It is, however, of some note that Catullus' source for Zenodotus' reading is no longer available to us. *Δαῖτα* is not preserved in the scholia to the *Iliad*; it is attested only in Athenaeus *Epit.* 1.12f. (and, drawing from him, in Eustathius). It was, however, a very early reading; it is the only one attested in allusions from the fifth century,⁸ and the fact that Catullus used it shows that it was better known in Hellenistic and Roman times than our evidence would suggest.

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"*dilaceranda . . . praeda*: chi non ricorda *Il.* 1.4 ' . . . ed i lor corpi in preda lasciava de' cani Ed agli uccelli per pasto . . . ?'"

⁵ On the controversy about this reading, with full citations, see R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford 1968) 111-13.

⁶ "Ennian Experiments" *AJP* 95 (1974) 137-40.

⁷ On Virgil, see now R. Schlunk, *The Homeric Scholia and the Aeneid* (Ann Arbor 1974); On Cicero, C. Atzert, *De Cicerone Interprete Graecorum* (Diss. Göttingen 1908) 3-7; on Varro of Atax, E. Hofmann, "Die literarische Persönlichkeit des P. Terentius Varro Atacinus," *WS* 46 (1928) 160f.

⁸ For references, see Pfeiffer (above, n. 5).