

The identification of Octavius as Octavius Musa receives strong support from a curious feature of the prologue of the *Culex* that does not seem to have been noticed hitherto. The jocular tone of this part of the poem is unmistakable. The poet refers to the composition as a *ludus* three times and emphasizes that later he will produce something on a higher plane. One product of this is the apparent play on the word *Musa*, as in line 6: "quisquis erit culpae iocos Musamque paratus." *Culpae iocos* is a self-contained phrase, with the result that *Musamque* gives the impression of having been added as an afterthought.<sup>43</sup> This suggests that there might be a reference to the person Musa and to some recent criticism made against him, deftly introduced by means of lexical ambiguity.

A similar type of wordplay seems to be employed in lines 8–9: "posterius graviore sono tibi Musa loquetur / nostra." The ambiguity here is not only lexical but also syntactical. The *Musa* that follows *tibi* could naturally be taken as vocative; indeed it is not until the following line that it is made clear that *Musa* is nominative. Again, it is the idea of criticism that is involved. "Graviore sono tibi loquetur" could mean that someone "will speak to you in an angrier tone," and the

reader (or listener) might have expected a reference to be made to the "someone" in the following line, instead of the nominative *nostra*.<sup>44</sup>

There is a strong likelihood, then, that Musa was the recipient of the *Culex*.<sup>45</sup> This knowledge does not enable us to assign a precise date to the poem; we can say little about the chronology of Musa's life beyond that he held a minor magistracy in 42 B.C.<sup>46</sup> and was possibly still alive in 35 B.C.<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, there is nothing to deny that Musa was the recipient of the *Culex* when Vergil was sixteen, perhaps when they were fellow students. On the basis of this identification of Octavius there is no justification for altering the text of Donatus.

The following conclusion emerges. The date that the MSS give for the *Culex* is consistent with the other information on the life of Vergil given by Donatus. The external evidence, Statius *Silv.* 2. 7, is not reliable; the internal evidence, in the form of a reference to Octavius, is inconclusive. Unless and until new evidence is unearthed the figure XVI should be allowed to stand.

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43. *Musam* (for poetry) introduced after *iocos* produces a very weak hendiadys. There is no reason why the poet should have allowed this awkward formation unless he had some ulterior motive. *Musam iocosque* is metrically impossible but it can be assumed that it would not have been beyond his ingenuity to insert the two words in that order in a way that would be metrically acceptable. One might compare Catullus 68. 10: "muneraque et Musarum hinc petis et Veneris."

44. That the Romans engaged in this sort of play on verbal ambiguity is clearly shown by Hor. *Epist.* 1. 13. 6–9: "si te forte meae gravis uret sarcina chartae / abicito potius quam quo perferre iuberis / clitellas ferus impingas *Asinaeque paternum / cognomen vertas in risum et fabula fias.*"

45. The use of the epithets *sancte* and *venerande* need cause no difficulty. Funaioli, *op. cit.* (n. 5), p. 226, shows that the words can have a purely moral value without any religious or quasi-religious overtones.

46. K. Mraz, "De Culicis auctore," *Studi in onore di Luigi Castiglioni* (Florence, 1960), p. 625, is surely wrong in claiming that Octavius Musa the magistrate would have been too old to be the recipient of the *Culex*, and that the recipient was in fact his son. If Musa was the same age as Vergil, he would have been twenty-eight at the time of the proscriptions, old enough to hold a minor magistracy.

47. The date of Hor. *Sat.* 1. 10.

## AN EMENDATION IN THE *EPITOMA METENSIS*

The so-called Metz epitome has in § 49 the following sentence: "ultra id flumen quidam Mophis, Taxili filius, qui iam patre uiuo Alexandri amicitiae ob eius res gestas cupidus fuisset, patre mortuo legatos ad Alexandrum

misit *oratum*, qui renuntiarent quid uellet, utrum se regnum paternum obtinere, an aliquem missurus esset."<sup>1</sup> Recognizing (as most readers will) that *oratum* is *à propos de bottles*, O. Wagner replaced it in his text with

1. Available editions are O. Wagner, *Jahrb. f. klass. Philol.*, Suppl. 26 (1901), and P. H. Thomas, *Epitoma rerum gestarum Alexandri et liber de morte eius*<sup>2</sup> (Leipzig, 1966). For other

textual problems see my "Notes Critiques sur l'*Epitoma Metensis*," *AC* (forthcoming).

*iterum*. But the corruption of *iterum* into *oratum* is far from obvious and the resultant word order minimally satisfying, not to mention the aimless emphasis of a second *legatio* imported into a context which allows no reference to a first. This would be condemnation enough were it not for a piece of external evidence which Wagner claimed as support and which therefore deserves our passing attention. In Diodorus Siculus 17. 86. 4 we read: Ταξίλου γὰρ τοῦ βασιλέως προτετελευτηκότος υἱὸς αὐτοῦ Μῶφης διαδεξάμενος τὴν ἀρχὴν διεπέμψατο μὲν καὶ πρότερον πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον ἐν τῇ Σογδιανῇ διατρίβοντα, ἐπαγγελλόμενος αὐτῷ συστρατεῦν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀνταταττομένους τῶν Ἰνδῶν καὶ τότε πρέσβεις ἀποστείλας ἔφησεν αὐτῷ παραδιδόναι τὴν βασιλείαν. If with Wagner we infer from this passage two *legationes*, the genitive absolute with perfect participle (Ταξίλου . . . προτετελευτηκότος) indicates that they both occurred after Taxiles' death; whereas, if in the Metz epitome we have "patre mortuo legatos ad Alexandrum misit iterum," the temporal ablative absolute (*patre mortuo*) makes the presumed second *legatio* occur strictly after Taxiles' death, whence it is fatally implied that the unspecified "first" occurred before Taxiles' death—a time when (it should be added) Mophis would have been in no position to send a *legatio*. Concluding, then, that Diodorus and our epitomator present two different

and not quite reconcilable accounts, we may now with clear conscience reject Wagner's *iterum* and seek a remedy which eliminates the symptoms and cures the ill without damaging side effects. In this sentence *oratum* is stylistically inept; it disrupts syntax, and it contributes absolutely nothing to the sense. By its very nature it cries aloud for deletion, with (it so happens) not only perfect contextual results but also further external justification and full transcriptional probability. The proper parallel to invoke at this point is Curtius 8. 12. 4 f., which plainly gives the same account as our epitome and virtually confirms the proposed deletion: "regnabat in ea regione Omphis (i.e., Mophis), qui patri quoque fuerat auctor dedendi regnum Alexandro et post mortem parentis legatos miserat, qui consulerent eum regnare se interim uellet an priuatum opperiri eius aduentum." It only remains to adduce two passages verbally resembling and shortly preceding § 49—namely, § 42 "*legatos ad Alexandrum . . . mittit oratum, uti ignosceret ipsis*" and § 43 "*ad Alexandrum legatos miserunt oratum, uti ex oppido exire suaque exportare liceret*"—and to observe how understandably a copyist, his mind still dominated by their phrasing, subconsciously interpolated the unwanted *supine*.<sup>2</sup>

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### "CHIRON'S LAUGHTER" (PYTH. 9. 38)

As he begins to counsel Apollo on the god's plans for Cyrene, Pindar's Chiron laughs in a way which has caught the imagination of scholars but, in a disputed text, has also ultimately frustrated it.<sup>1</sup> In Snell's most recent edition of the *Epinicia*,<sup>2</sup> *Pyth.* 9. 38–39 read as follows:

1. Cf. Wilamowitz, *Pindaros* (Berlin, 1922), p. 268, n. 1: "38 steht eine für uns unverständliche Vokabel χλαρόν γελάσσαις. Das war überliefert, denn die Scholien zeigen, dass χλαρόν ein Deutungsversuch der hilflosen Grammatiker war." According to R. W. B. Burton, *Pindar's Pythian Odes* (Oxford, 1962), p. 43, "the quality of Chiron's smile cannot be determined with any accuracy, as there is no means of discovering exactly what the phrase χλαρόν γελάσσαις . . . can

τὸν δὲ Κένταυρος ζαμενής, ἀγανᾶ χλοαρόν γελάσσαις  
ὀφρύϊ, μήτιν ἔαν  
εὐθὺς ἀμείβετο.

χλαρόν Nv, χλαρόν Σ: χλοαρόν Schr[oeder].

*Χλοαρόν*, proposed by Schroeder in 1900, has been widely accepted by subsequent scholars.<sup>3</sup>

have conveyed in Greek." Cf. W. J. Slater, *Lexicon to Pindar* (Berlin, 1969), p. 546: "χλαρός: sens. dub. ? softly, gaily."

2. B. Snell–H. Maehler, *Pindari carmina* I<sup>5</sup> (Leipzig, 1971).

3. Cf. the editions of Bowra and Snell; also Burton (*op. cit.*, n. 1), A. S. F. Gow, *CR*, LVIII (1944), 38; C. M. Bowra, *Pindar* (Oxford, 1964), p. 246; R. P. Winnington-Ingram, "Pindar's Ninth Pythian Ode," *BICS*, XVI (1969), 10.