CATAL. 8 AND HELLENISTIC POETRY

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To U. and H. Sauerbaum.

Villula, quae Sironis eras, et pauper agelle,
verum illi, domino, tu quoque divitiae,
me tibi et hos una mecum, quos semper amavi,
si quid de patria tristius audiero,
commendo, in primisque patrem. tu nunc eris illi,
Mantua quod fuerat quodque Cremona prius.

Those fourteen poems collected in the Cata Lepton, alleged to be Vergilian, contain two pearls in the mud, epigrams 5 and 8. Much has been written to assist the reader in understanding and appreciating these poems; R. E. H. Westendorp Boerma particularly offers many a valuable detail and K. Büchner provides us with some allusions to their secrets; but W(estendorp) B(oeurma) offers hardly more than a number of detached comments and Büchner could merely supply hints – e.g. Catal. 8 still remains very much in

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1. This title is attested e.g. for Aratus: Strabo 10, 5, 3 speaks about the penury of certain small islands and quotes from a lament of an ageing woman: ἤδη λείπει δὲ τοῖς ἐπιφθαίνον καθ' Ἀρατος ἐν τοῖς κατὰ λεπτὸν ὧν Λητος καλά.

2. We read this poem now in J. A. Richmond's edition (Appendix Vergiliana, Oxford 1966, 137. A better edition is that of R. Ellis, because it avoids prejudices, which arise from whimsical punctuation, and offers many a valuable hint in the app. crit., which Richmond omitted. – For the discussion of the authenticity of Cata Lepton see e.g. Fr. Dornseiff, ‘Verschmähtes zu Verg., Hor. und Prop.’, SB Leipzig 97, 6; 1951, 7 ff.; M. Schmidt, Mnemos. 4, 16; 1963, 142 ff. Both scholars approach the collection from a structural point of view.

3. P. Vergili Maronis Libellus Qui inscribitur Catalepton, vol. 1, Assen 1949, 153–165. His main mistake is that he offers notes and no interpretation and that he asserts Vergilian authorship as soon as he has succeeded in removing all obstacles. From here to certainty there is a long way to go.

4. RE VIII A (second series R–Z), 1021 ff.: ‘P. Vergilis Maro, der Dichter der Römer’ (on Catal. 8 p. 1076 ff., p. 56 in the separate edition). Büchner does not fit the poem into the history of style and form, although he, if anybody, would have been able to do so.
the dark. I will try to add some light, but of course without hoping to solve the riddle once for all. Nor do I think that it is my task to prove the Vergilian authorship: let us read and observe the poem as it is and try to understand it a little bit better by fitting it into both its Hellenistic and its neoteric surroundings: *patet omnibus veritas, nondum est occupata, multum ex illa etiam futuris relictum est.*

I

A word in advance about the method: a Latin poem of the first century B.C. may with good reason be expected to mingle Roman and Greek elements and to have been written according to the strict rules of a certain poetical genre. And it may further be imagined as being composed in every single detail with the utmost care and with a great deal of what Horace called *callidae iuncturae.* We must, therefore, begin with a scrutiny of the detail, advance to the generic interpretation, proceed to the poetical form or forms applied and reach at last the highest and – for all its subjectivity – the most rewarding level, the interpretation of the mind behind the text.

**COMMENTS ON DETAILS**

V.1. *Villula* and *agalile* are placed in the first and last positions in the verse, thus receiving full emphasis. The qualifying words follow and precede respectively the first and the last substantive, which creates a perfect ‘chiasmus’. But what does this mean? *Villula* and *pauper agelle* are addressed, a small house somewhere in the country-side and a modest garden or field. This evokes a very specific atmosphere. Who praised the modest country-life if not the (later) Epicureans? In the chapter on arboriculture Lucretius says

*Inde aliam atque aliam culturam dulcis agelli temptabant* (5, 1367 f.)

Two things emerge from this: firstly, that *agellus* need not necessarily mean a field, but may also denote an orchard; secondly, that the affectionate

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6. I know that the ‘werkimmanente Interpretation’ is very dear to most South African scholars, but this means to remain on the lower steps of the ladder towards understanding. If we remain on this level, the ancient authors have written in vain.
9. The diminutive ‘like dulcis shows a certain tenderness; cf. Hor. *epi.* 1, 4, 1’ (Bailey *ad loc*). Bailey very rightly points to Lucr. 2, 29 ff. as proof of the poet’s love for the country-side; for the bucolic atmosphere see also V. Pöschl, *Virgilis Hirtenichtung*, Heidelberg
attitude towards a modest possession in the countryside was familiar, if not invented, within the later Epicurean circle. The _Th. L.L._ 1, 1279, 67 ff. shows that the Lucretian passage offers the first instance of the diminutive _agellus_ in Latin literature. The next example may be Verg. (?) _Priap._ 2, 3 as A. Rostagni has pointed out:10

_Ego_ (says Priapus)

_\textit{agellulum hunc sinistra et ante quem vides, eri que villulum hortulumque pauperis tuor.}_

We cannot be sure of the Vergilian origin of these verses,11 but they reveal a Catullan tinge, for it was Catullus who introduced these affectionate diminutives into literature12 (apart from comedy, of course, but there is little to be felt of any influence of comedy). Presumably both _Catal._ 8 and _Priap._ 2 and 3 are to a great extent indebted to Catullus.

In other words: two roots have been laid bare, Epicureanism and Catullus. Siro, who is mentioned in the very first line, was an Epicurean. The poem, then, issued from this circle13 and pays full homage to it. However, Catullus prepared the way. I do not mean the diminutives only; I prefer to draw the reader's attention to _carm._ 31:

_Poena insularum, Sirmio, insularumque ocelle......
quam ve libenter quamque laetus inviso._

But Catullus wrote a _salutatio_, something quite different from our poem14 which is apparently more of a _commendatio_ (v. 5). The _salutatio_ of a house goes back as far as Ar. _Ach._ 729ff., a mock-scene,15 making fun of such scenes as e.g. Eur. _Alic._ 1 or _Or._ 356ff. In comedy we find this type of scene e.g. in Plaut. _Most._ 43iff.16 Greetings are offered to a house also in Soph. _Aias_ 860ff., but here as a bidding of fare-well. All this is not very similar to our passage. But compare Aesch. _Agam._ 518ff. The herald enters after many

11. Büchner 1070 (50), 4 ff.
13. All that is known in Rostagni 173–175, n. 14 and 19 f., see also W.B. 99 ff.
16. _Mostellaria_ is based presumably on Philemon, _Bacchides_ on Menander.
years of grievous uncertainty abroad; he hails as well as beseeches the palace, which is also his home:

ιὼ μέλαθρα βασιλέων, φίλαι στέγαι, ...
εἴ που πάλαι, φιλοδρομί τοισίδ' ὁμμασίν
dέξασθε κόσμῳ βασιλέα πολλῷ χρόνῳ.

I do not maintain that this was the model of the poet who composed Catal. 8, but I do think that such a scene, a scene in which a man having been overwhelmed by grief and prolonged suffering begs a house to receive him and his king, may have been a reminiscence with the author of Catal. 8. At least Catal. 8 belongs to this genre.

To the two previous roots may then be added a third one, the address to a house, the formula of ἐκσετία. But let me make one last remark on this line. Pauper agelle has nothing to do with the well-known pride of rich Romans in their pompous villas; it means the Epicurean ideal of a modest, retired life, enhanced by the idea that such a life is best to be found far from the great cities, an ideal which we find so often in Horace. But on the other hand, pauper does not mean a poor hut, but a moderately comfortable house, since we know that Horace’s Sabinum, which he called ‘poor’, was a well-equipped farmhouse.

There we are, then: v. 1 evokes the atmosphere of Epicurean love for the unpretentious country-life expressed in Catullan language, if I may say so. Catullus certainly is to be felt here, since it was he who prepared Roman ears for the praise of the beloved trifles, the personal interest and concern, a horrible invention for the average Roman citizen, who was so fond of his calculi. And all this was apparently cast into the mould of the Greek entreaty of a house.

V.2. The house and the farmland were unpretentious. To Siro, however, they meant riches, because he was a follower of Epicurean philosophy. But is this very common interpretation right? It is based on the ἕλε taken to mean ‘such a man’. Of those who back this interpretation no one has, as far

17. This is a suggestion put forward by K. Gaiser, when I delivered a lecture on Catal. 8 in Tübingen. I want to thank my colleagues there for all their valuable contributions in the subsequent discussion, esp. J. Kroymann and H. Hommel.
19. Sat. 2,6; ep. 1,10; 1,14 and 1,16 (for a reinterpretation of the letters see my article in Acta Classica, vol. 11,1968).
20. See note 7.
21. This point was rightly stressed by J. Kroymann; one has to add, however, that Catullus was a man of the town, whereas Vergil was not, nor was the author of our Catal. 8, as far as one can judge.
22. Cf. the lovely and satirical description of the Roman frame of mind, which cannot aspire to anything higher than accounting, in the A. P. 323 ff. of Horace.
as I am aware, ever adduced any cogent proof.\textsuperscript{23} Of course I readily admit that \textit{ille} may at times mean as much as \textit{talis} in a laudatory sense. Vincent Bulhart has listed many an \textit{ille} under such a heading in his admirable \textit{Th. L. L.} article (7,1; 354,55). Perhaps Plaut. \textit{Merc.} 405 should not have been included here, but about Cic. \textit{Verr.} 2,4,91 and Verg. \textit{Georg.} 1,456 there cannot be the slightest doubt, although everywhere \textit{ille} retains much of its deictic character. But let us be reasonable: what would 'to such a master' really mean? It would mean that there are many kinds of masters; Siro however was such a type of a master that also his very modest possession meant riches to him. Here all the emphasis available is laid upon his being a master of a certain kind and mind. It is the character therefore which is stressed, and his being a master is relegated to the background, so that one feels justified in asking why the word \textit{dominus} occurs at all, if it is his philosophy that matters. But we need not be troubled. See e.g. Verg. \textit{Buc.} 1,68:

\begin{quote}
En, unquam patrios longo post tempore finis,
paupers et tuguri congestum caespite culmen,
post aliquot mea regna videns mirabor aristas?
\end{quote}

It is true that what precisely is meant by the \textit{aliquot aristas} is much debated\textsuperscript{24} but the idea behind all this seems to be pretty clear: a man loves his unpretentious possession, because he is the king there, 'my home my castle'. This, I think, is what the poet of \textit{Catal.} 8 wanted to say: but to Siro all this meant riches, because\textsuperscript{25} he was the \textit{dominus}; it was all his own, no matter whether it was a palace or a hut. And there are parallels in abundance for this use of \textit{ille}, which comes very near an \textit{is}: Hélin, \textit{REL} 5, 1927,60ff. has shown that Vergil loved to replace the simple \textit{is} by the more pretentious \textit{ille}, wherever the \textit{is} lacked colour, whereas he kept it in places where it was used emphatically. The simple 'anaphoric' \textit{is} was regularly replaced, and J. Marouzeau approved of this theory (\textit{loc. cit.}). This and a Catullan parallel\textsuperscript{26}

\begin{quote}
Lesbia mi praesente viro mala plurima dicit,
haec \textit{ille} fatuo maxima laetitiast.
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{24} I cannot follow Pöschl, \textit{Hirtenichtung} 51, n. 73 ('my tiny house behind some ears'), nor Ernout, \textit{Rev. de philol.} 36, 1962, who assumes a lacuna. I agree with \textit{Th. L. L.} 2,580,41: it means 'harvest', as in Catullus' \textit{carm.} 95,1.

\textsuperscript{25} For parallels see Hor. \textit{ep.} 1,16,1 (dominium); 1,10,8 (regnus).

\textsuperscript{26} There is a close parallel for this use of \textit{ille} in Cat. 83,2, the earliest passage, in which \textit{ille} has clearly no other function than an \textit{is}:

\begin{quote}
Lesbia mi praesente viro mala plurima dicit,
haec \textit{ille} fatuo maxima laetitiast.
\end{quote}

Cf. also Lucr. 1,611; Kühner-Stegmann are not right in asserting that this use is a peculiarity of poetry; there are some passages in prose texts also, see J. Marouzeau, \textit{REL} 8, 1930, 35; B. Axelsson, \textit{Senecastudien}, Lund 1933,31. – But we must not forget that this substitution was not a mechanical one. It is true, that metrical reasons may have played a rôle, but the main advantage of this substitution was that \textit{ille} was 'un équivalent moins banal' (Hélin 62), and that it had a tinge of praise to it, that it was used 'pour désigner une personne, dont on parle avec déférence'. This does not mean that I approve of Fairclough's rendering, it means that I see in \textit{ille} a certain 'déférence' without overlooking that \textit{dominus} bears the emphasis.
and Th. L. L. 7.1: 343.18ff. along with Kü.–St. 1,626, n. 11 seems to be proof enough.27 But this is not yet the end of line 2.

Also a modest possession therefore may mean complete satisfaction. I said 'also', because in the text there is quoque. An etiam would have been utterly offending and gross tactlessness: 'even you, although you are a worthless trifle, meant much to him' is far less appropriate than the quoque, which does not degrade and place the thing in question below the compared object, with which it is compared, but raises it precisely to the level of the object compared, as is shown by the grammar.28 The quoque is the only way of expressing the thought that no matter whether hut or palace the farm made Siro as happy as possible. These remarks are evidently necessary, since many of the translations translate as if a tactless etiam was intended.

V.3. Me tibi et hos una mecum: what is the situation? W.B. 157ff. and also 162 creates the impression that 'pater, mater, Flaccus frater, alii propinqui, servi fideles, denique familia tota' were standing in front of the house. So too Th. Birt imagined the situation to be (see n. 14 above). Is this poem really a speech delivered to the house? Is it not an epigram? K. Büchner does not reckon with a crowd standing in front of the villa,29 and indeed, there are parallels for a hic in cases where there is no bodily presence involved (Kü.–St. 1,621, n.1.). But let us leave this question open till we come to the formal interpretation.

V.4. Si quid audiero – nunc eris: what a queer sequence of tenses. Si of course means 'in case I should', or better: 'in the event of my......', a use easily paralleled.30 If the first clause means that Vergil takes precautions, how could he then continue with nunc and an assured future? If everything is placed into a future time, how does the nunc fit in? J. Martin31 wrote something about a licence belonging to the lower layers of Latin language, about vulgarisms and so forth. He pointed to the grammar of Stolz-Schmalz p. 773. But today this grammar is outdated and we have to go to Leumann-Hofmann-Szantyr. There, on p. 661, we find in § 360 that this licence is by no means vulgar. But fortunately we need not quarrel about the limits of vulgar Latin.

27. The licence of using ille for is begins with Catullus, which is significant enough: more than one pointer leads us towards the cantores Euphorionis.

28. Kü.–St. 2,53. Therefore every translation which uses the word 'even' is likely to miss the point.

29. P. 1077,41 ff., resp. 57,41 ff.: 'Wie der si-Satz zeigt, ist noch nicht von einem Einzug die Rede.'

30. Cf. e.g. Th. L. L. 1,292,84 ff. ('de morte'). W. B. interprets the si rightly as foreshadowing, but translates nevertheless as if the familia tota were standing in front of the door.

*Si quid tristius audiero* is a well-known euphemism, which may take the indicative or the subjunctive, the future simple or the future perfect or the perfect subjunctive—a flexible formula. We need not therefore be concerned about the strange sequence: 'in the case of my hearing something distressing I recommend ourselves to you'; of course, you will comply with our request, and so henceforth you will be our shelter. There is no longer anything strange about this, with the exception of the 'henceforth'. *Nunc* in this passage does not mean 'now'; it means 'under these circumstances' and it is a *nunc modale*. We need not therefore heed Martin's objections to a Vergilian origin; but of course this is not in question here. What is in question is the strange *tristius*. Why strange? If we compare, e.g. in the *Th. L. L.*, the parallels for the euphemistic formula we find that the normal usage would be *durius accidere, acerbius* or the like, but nowhere could I find a *tristius* in Vergil's time or before. Stylistically speaking this means a *callida iunctura*, but there is more to it: the poet does not confine himself to expressing the materially disastrous effect of the news about the loss of the estate, but he gives a hint of the effect on the soul: *tristius*.

V. 6. The interpretation of v. 4 shows: the poet loaded the very commonplace formula with affection. The same applies to the much discussed *fuerat*, the 'verschobene Plusquamperfekt'. I skip 1.5, as the reader will have noticed, and proceed from 1.4 to 1.6, because about the *commendo* and about the *semper amavi* I shall speak later on. Here I am solely concerned with this strange 'loading', as I call it. *Fuerat* may have a certain colloquial tinge to it, but this need not confuse us. The whole poem is extremely plain, and it will not astonish any reader to find colloquialisms in it, by which I mean unpretentious language. Colloquialisms were not alien to Vergil and their occurrence does not rule out the great *Mantuanus* as the author of *Catal.* 8. For it is really ridiculous to find people refusing to admit Vergilian authorship of poems in which there are slightly non-Vergilian features: the *Catalepton*, if it is to some extent Vergilian at all, belongs to Vergil's youth, so that

32. Already Klots' dictionary lists this use under euphemism (end of article on *si*). Cf. above all J.B. Hofmann's admirable booklet on *'Lat. Umgangssprache',* 1951,145 (e.g. Cic. *Phil.* 1,10).
33. W.A. Baehrens, the great connoisseur of Latin, comments upon Cat. 8,16 (Cat. *Veronis Lib.*, vol. 2. Leipzig 1885, 110): 'nunc' post ea quae acciderunt; cf. already Hor. Tursellinus, *De particulis libellus*, Leipzig 1734,654 and e.g. G. Lodge, *Lex. Plautin.* 2, p. 217 right: *nunc* = *ut res se habent*.
34. It is true: we do not care for the question of authenticity at the moment, but I cannot help but remember the sign of relief I heard from E. Zinn during my lecture in Tübingen: 'At last are we rid of this argument of Martin's, which caused so much disappointment'.
35. This 'verschobenes Plusquamperfekt' is to be found in comedy, in Cicero only in letters, once only in Caesar, oftener in Livy and the pseudo-Caesarian *bella*, but we read it in Catullus (cf. n. 27).
an argument which would have its full force in the Georgics must not be taken too earnestly in this context. Therefore the ‘verschobene Plusquam-perfekt’ need not bother us, even the purist Caesar used it once.

But there is more behind it. Büchner says beautifully: ‘In dem fuerat...... zeigt sich, daß die Befürchtung, die beim Namen zu nennen Vergil sich scheut, wohl schon konkreter ist als Vergil es wahrhaben will’ (1077, 24ff., resp. 57, 24ff.). If I understand this fine remark rightly, it means: the author uses the pluperfect, and this denotes that the estate is, in his imagination, already lost.36 Does one feel how cautiously – ‘verhalten’ is Büchner’s excellent expression for this – the author speaks, how plainly and nevertheless tactfully?

II

So much for the commentary on details. It has led us into the vicinity of Catullus and Lucretius, it has shown us how straightforward and nevertheless ‘verhalten’ the style of it is, full of affection and without exaggeration; and it has made us feel that we should go deeper into the question of genre and form, of the situation implied and the man behind all this.

THE INTERPRETATION OF GENRE

How do scholars interpret the situation? That Th. Birt is wrong in imagining that the poem was a speech delivered in the moment of entering, has been hinted at. But what of W. B.? Alas, on p. 163 we read a simply amazing explanation: ‘Dicas omnes ante fores stare et poetam villulam hortulumque eius ostendere’. Vergil – a cicerone. This is amazing in so far as there is commend, and not ostendo in the text.

Let us re-read the six lines: the poem consists of six lines which form one sentence; everything leads up to the main verb commend, put into relief by its position at the head of the verse. Why do commentators not quote Ed. Fraenkel, who showed in his admirable booklet on ‘Kolon und Satz’37 how

36. In 1.6 there is this sequence: first Mantua, then Cremona, prius refers, of course, to both names. We know from Suetonius (the first sentence is Suetonius, as we have learned from Bayer’s well-known dissertation Der suetonische Kern und die späteren Zusätze der Vergilvita, München 1952, dactyl. unfortunately) that Vergil was born near Mantua (the best work on the much-debated question about Andes is that of E.K. Rand, In quest of Virgil’s birthplace, Cambridge 1930; identical with Pietole Vecchio, which already Dante alleged to be the birthplace of his ‘Virgilio’, Purg. 18,82). After that he initia aetatis Cremonae egit usque ad virilem togam. There was a shift, then, and this is reflected by 1.6 of Catal. 8: apparently the author knew much about Vergil’s life.

37. NGG 1932, 198 ff. It is worth mentioning that the great classicist carried on with this kind of enquiry: NGG 1933,319 ff. (= Kleine Beiträge, Bd. 1,93 ff.) and ‘Noch einmal Kolon und Satz’, SB München, 1965, Heft 2,3 ff.
'elegantly' this poet handles the 'enjambment' in contrast e.g. to Cat. *carm.* 96? Fraenkel's acute remark throws new light on the skill displayed in this poem, and he shows us where the emphasis lies: namely with *commendo*. Let us then try to make something of this. *Commendo* is a well-known technical term. R. Ellis was well aware of this, since he added to the app. crit. the note '5: Cic. Fam. XIII 68', a note which Richmond unfortunately dropped. Apparently he did not grasp the significance of it, although the whole poem remains misunderstood without Cicero's *fam.* 13.

**A DIGRESSION ON COMMENDARE**

If any Roman wanted to be helped, he would perhaps turn to some grandee, his patron, and would ask him to recommend him and his affairs to some influential personality who could be of assistance in his case. E.g. Apollonius, the *libertus* of M. Crassus, turned to Cicero, who, he knew, had some influence with Caesar, to obtain a recommendation. Apollonius had to be well known to Cicero, he had to be a trustworthy client attending to the patron diligently, he was expected to have shown much *studium*. Such a *cliens-patronus* relation was called *ius quoddam et vinculum religiosae coniunctionis* (Gell. 13,3,1), or *necessitudo*. If Apollonius had kept to this *necessitudo religiosa*, diligently enough (*fam.* 13,19,1), he could be sure that Cicero would feel an obligation, feel indebted, so that he had to comply with Apollonius' request. Every *necessitudo* was based on reciprocal *beneficia*, which even created a *ius*. If to this obligation *familiaritas* and *diligere* is added - which was more than mere *necessitudo* - escape is impossible, and a letter of recommendation would have to be written.

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38. Leissner's good article in *Th. I.-L.* 3, notably 1837,5 – 1954,17, furnishes all the details.

39. *Fam.* 13,16. Compare this letter with the preceding one and you will see the difference between a normal letter and an out-of-the-way one. – The *formulae* of being well-known are e.g. *multum uto* (*fam.* 13,2,1; 29,2; 31,1 etc.); *consuetudo* (*fam.* 13,20 e.g.); *usus* (*fam.* 13,23,1) etc.

40. *Colere*: *fam.* 13,1,2; 22,1; *observare*: *fam.* 13,3,1; 13; 22,1; 31,1; 34 etc.

41. *Studiosissimum nostro*: *fam.* 13,3,1; 7,4; 10,2 etc.; *official*: *fam.* 13,6,2; 60,1 and so on.

42. *Debere*: *fam.* 13,7,4; 18 n, 1 etc.

43. The normal expression is *satisJacere*, *fam.* 13,32,1.

44. *Beneficia accepi*, *fam.* 13,12,1.

45. Cf. *fam.* 13,14,1: *omnia...lura summae necessitudinis*.

46. The *amor* of Praecilius meets with Cicero's *diligere* (*fam.* 13,15,1), so these notions mean nearly the same, *dilexi* and *amicitia* are coupled in 13,17,1, but this does not apply to every passage, see n. 48.

47. Read e.g. *fam.* 13,12,1: *familiares et necessarii* in comparison with 13,26,1: with L. Mescinius Cicero was connected only by *necessitudo*, but Mescinius made his case *iustiorem* through his *virtus et humanitas* so that a *familiaritas* came about.

This obligation was strengthened all the more if the *cliens* was known to Cicero for a long time, and in Cicero's special case, if he was a man of letters and of philosophical interests. But this is not all that can be learned from this interesting book of letters.

Perhaps all that has been said may have seemed to the reader very natural and trivial. But less trivial is the fact that to these degrees of intimacy there corresponded various degrees of intensity in recommending a person. In recommendations of *necessarii* the tone is less insistent than in those of *familiares*. The Romans made very clear distinctions, as may be gathered from *fam.* 13,28,1: *incredibile est..... quas mihi gratias omnes agant, etiam mediocriter commendati*, and mediocriter he recommends only *necessarii*. *Familiares* would get a *commendatio in maiorem modum* (*fam.* 13,13,2) Not even a *summa necessitas* is enough to elicit such a recommendation (*fam.* 13,13,4). But if it comes to recommending an old friend, immediately an *ut gravissime diligentissimeque* makes its appearance. It is true, at times also a *hospes et necessarius* (*fam.* 13,37) gets a recommendation in *maiorum modum* (see also *fam.* 13,39); but as a rule one may safely assume that *necessarii* would get a common or slightly intensified (*diligentius* e.g., *fam.* 13,12,1) *commendatio*, whereas *familiares* or *familiarissimi* would be furnished with a strong recommendation. *Amici* moreover would obtain a particularly urgent one. Therefore Cicero recommended his wife and daughter *diligentissime* (*fam.* 14,7,2), and also his freedman Tiro (*fam.* 16,12,6). Marcilius however, a man not very well known to him at the beginning, received a letter written only *studiose*. Later on, after having perceived the man's trustworthiness, Cicero recommended him *studiosius* (*fam.* 13,54). One notices therefore how carefully these words were weighed.

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49. Cicero complained at times at the number of letters he had to write, cf. e.g. *fam.* 13,5,1 _fin._

50. *Fam.* 13,5,2; 10,2; 16,1 and 4; 17,1; 32,2; 59 and 61. E.g. *semper me coluit*, 13, 22,1; *semper dilexit*: 13,21,1.

51. *Fam.* 13,1,2; 10,2; 12,2; 22,1.

52. H. Peter, _Der Brief in der lat. Literatur_, Leipzig 1901 (= Olms 1965), 57 f. has shown that there is a certain order in the 13th book, but there is more to it, apparently. Cf. e.g. the central letters:

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53. May I remind the younger readers that *amicitia* is by no means identical with our friendship or 'Freundschaft'? That it was more or less an union of interests? See above all F. Lossmann, _Hermes Einzelschriften_ 17, 1962, Introd. and chapter 1, and A. Heuss' dissertation from the year 1933.

54. *Fam.* 13,3,2; *peto a te in maiorem modum*.

55. *Fam.* 13,6,3; *fam.* 7,17,2; 9,13,2; 13,9,5 etc. Also in the case of *diligere* a particularly insistent *commendatio* was written: *fam.* 13,8,1; 15,1, cf. however 13,17,1–3.
If then Cicero recommended Apollonius to Caesar, he knew that he appealed to the great man’s sense of obligation and he knew that he placed a burden upon him. Cicero recommends e.g. in fam. 13,9 a certain Lyso from Patrai to Servius. Lyso was his hospes vetus, necessarius, familiaris. Lyso’s fortunae absentes had been protected by Servius and Caesar had finally secured them. So this could well have clinched the matter and Servius might have been expected to be rid of the affair. Instead of this we read in §2: nunc non modo non remittimus tibi aliquid ex nostra commendatione quasi adepti iam omnia, sed eo vehementius a te contendimus ut Lysonem in fidem necessitudinemque recipias. Two things become clear: to accept a recommendation was a burden, and it meant patronage.

But why is the addressee of such an appeal obliged to accept? Let us observe the commendaticiae once more. A recommendation is only possible when between say Cicero and Caesar a mutual esteem exists, benevolentia, necessitudo, familiaritas or amicitia. Such a mutual esteem is based on beneficia and it creates an obligation therefore to accept each other’s recommendations. But there is a strict law enabling the addressee to comply: he who recommends has to observe rigidly the fides, dignitas and pietas of the addressee. He must not put the man whose favour he solicits in a dilemma. Everything is here based on quasi-legal conditions which account for the fact that at times the words ius and iustitia turn up.

But this is not only deference, tact, humanity. If e.g. Cicero’s appeal to Caesar had been refused, how would Cicero have faced Apollonius, the man who had turned to Cicero because he thought that Cicero was mighty and influential? Apollonius was convinced that Cicero would pull some strings for him. If Cicero had failed, his reputation would have been questioned. One was therefore pretty cautious in answering the request to write a commendaticia. Recommendations burdened not only the addressee, but also the writer.

56. Servius Sulpicius, proconsul in Greece 46, see Tyrrell-Purser vol. 4, LXXXIX.
57. Fam. 13,4,1; 7,4; 8,1; 16,1 etc.
58. Fam. 13,4,4 (mutua); 6,1; 7,5 etc. Sometimes one reads about voluntas erga alqm. or benevolentia.
59. E.g. necessitudo (fam. 13,4,4), cf. 29,5 (pro paterna necessitudine); 55: pro nostra coniunctissima necessitudine plurimisque officiis paribus ac mutuis.
60. Cf. debere in fam. 13,49 and satisfacere 13,32,1.
61. Fam. 13,35,2 and 53: dignitas and fides. It is strictly forbidden to let ambitio come in: 13,7,4; 31,2 etc.: the request must be candid.
62. Fam. 13,4,3; fidei iustitiaeque tuae in 13,28 a,1. The feeling preventing a faux pas is often called verecundia (13,3,2 e.g.), see for this conception H. Hommel, Horaz, Heidelberg 1950, 127 and F. Lossmann, ’Verecundia’, in: Römische Werthbegriffe, Wege d. Forschg. 34, 1967, 330 ff. (an extract from the work mentioned in n. 53).
63. Bibulus, e.g., and Cicero were on no good footing, so Cicero refuses to write a recommendation to him on behalf of Sallustius (fam. 2,17,6).
64. Fam. 13,36,1. -- How difficult it was under all these circumstances is vividly expressed in Hor. ep. 1,18,78 ff. Read in this light ep. 1,9.
An unaccepted recommendation would disclose the sham-authority of the writer; the impression that he was able to exercise influence would be replaced by the disgrace of a rebuff, whereas an accepted recommendation created honor. These numerous precautions are the reason for the fact that a commendatio normally was accepted without question. It was an officium.

We are witnessing a very strict and well balanced mechanism. This is also the reason for the rigid form or rules which had to be observed in writing such letters. These rules demanded that a commendaticia began with a reminder of the relationship between writer and addressee, a relationship which could, of course, also be a necessitudo with a common friend or with the father of the addressee, i.e. with a third person; such a letter would continue by mentioning the name of the client and the degree of intimacy between the two. Thereupon the case would be explained and the request made, along with the assertion that its acceptance would mean much to the writer and would be of some advantage to the addressee as well. Let us listen for a moment to one of the best Ciceronian scholars describing this genre: 'Dem Hauptteil geht öfters eine Einleitung voraus, in der der Adressat etwa an die guten Beziehungen zwischen dem Absender und ihm erinnert oder ihm sonst etwas Liebenswürdiges gesagt wird. Dann folgt der Hauptteil, der sehr oft der einzige ist, beginnend mit dem Namen des Empfohlenen, übergehend zu seinen persönlichen Verhältnissen, oft auch zu seinen besonderen Anliegen; dann wird er gelobt und gezeigt, inwiefern er etwa dem Adressaten nützlich oder angenehm sein könnte, und schließlich der Dank des Briefschreibers im Voraus versichert.'

65. Th. L. L. 3,1837,79. Pondus and valere were used in this sense, cf. fam. 13,5,7. Of course the age-old obligation of precedents also enters in: see on this e.g. D. Page on Sappho fr. 1, p. 17, n. 3 in his Sappho and Alcaeus, Oxford 1955. Add e.g. Pind. Ol. 1,75 ff. 66. Honoris causa: fam. 13,1,4; 26,2; 31,1; 37; 65,1; 69,2. Mea causa: 78,2. 67. Cf. e.g. fam. 13,56,1. 68. Cicero returns e.g. in fam. 13,29,1 to the conjunctio between him and the addressee's father. 69. O. Plasberg, Cicero in seinen Werken und Briefen, Leipzig 1926 (= Darmstadt 1962), 27. 70. In order to confirm what has been said I want to interpret briefly a letter, in which Cicero could not return to a well-established necessitudo or the like, I mean fam. 13,50 (Tyrr.-Purs. 5,695, p. 131). Sumpsi – No other letter of recommendation starts in this way. Cicero knows, apparently, that there is no ius, he takes a liberty. And this is quite in keeping with the situation. For the addressee Acilius was a Caesarian, who in the year of this letter (44 B.C.) was proconsul in Achaia (Tyrr.-Purs. p. 215). Cicero can therefore refer only to the observantia which Acilius had shown in Brindisi during 48/47 (M. Gelzer, RE VII A, 1004, 10 ff.). That is why Cicero writes quasi pro meo iure, because he knows that there is no ius at all. Then Cicero expands upon his conjunctio with the client M'. Curius: this means that he really could not help writing this letter, for there are mutual officia. Instead of the usual mention of the degree of intimacy one reads now this urgent entreaty: if Acilius cherished any hopes as to Cicero's amicitia, which will allow him to expect favours from Cicero's side, if Acilius expected Cicero to be even more grateful for
Of course – if we now turn back to *Cat.* 8 – we perceive that this mechanism of obligations is not strictly reproduced by the poet. *Cat.* 8 is, fortunately, a poem, a poetical adaptation of a letter of recommendation. That it is such an adaptation is at least clear enough.

The poem starts with the usual reminder: the *villula* formerly belonged to Siro, the fatherlike friend of Vergil, which means that Vergil appeals to the intimacy that existed with a third person (see n. 68) The poet then recalls that the poor house was Siro’s riches: ‘Dem Hauptteil geht öfters eine Einleitung voraus, in der ... ihm etwas Liebenswürdiges gesagt wird’. – *me tibi ethos mecum,* a well-known formula in recommendations of this nature.71 Most interesting is the *quos semper amavi.* Is it not a very hackneyed phrase, reminding us of a hit-song? In a song one is accustomed to effusions such as ‘I’ll love you forever’, addressed to a partner in a short liaison; but in a good poem? However, now that we have read some *commendationes,* the expression may remind us of the fact that the longer an acquaintance had lasted the safer it was to recommend the man, that the *semper* or *diu* plays a vital role in letters of recommendation: *semper me coluit* (e.g. *fam.* 13,21,1 and 22,1) adds much weight to the appeal; and so does *in primisque patrem* (*fam.* 13,30,1 and 68,3) to which R. Ellis long ago drew our attention. Of course the phrase may easily be explained by the fact that Vergil loved his father, without calling in the *commendaticiae.* In this J. Martin72 was quite right; but his deduction of the phrase from the passage in Donatus’ *Vita* § 1 (*parentibus modicis fuit ac praecipue patre*) is ludicrous. I would not swear to the recommendations as the poet’s source, but since he has borrowed from elsewhere and profusely, nothing prevents us from correlating the phrase in question with Ellis’ *loci.*

The reader will perhaps recall that queer sequence of thought: ‘I recommend that in the event of my ...... you will now be a shelter’. We know now that a recommendation was normally accepted; the writer of such a letter, had he observed all the precautions necessary, could be sure that the addressee would reply favourably. This is the reason for the sequence of time: ‘I recommend herewith; since you will accept, I may say that henceforth you will take the place of the lost estate’.

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72. See above n. 31.

41
IV

Our attempt to interpret the genus has shown that Vergil is conceived of as writing a letter of recommendation or uttering a *commendatio* orally. But on the other hand this *commendatio* has the form of an epigram. Let us inquire into this more deeply. To what kind of *genus* have we to assign this poem? Let us try to interpret the form.

AN INTERPRETATION OF FORM

When I called the poem a *commendatio*, I tried to define its contents as belonging to a certain *genus*. The phrasing, however, the structure and the form into which this *commendatio* was fitted, is another problem. That is why I distinguish between *genus* and *form*.

*Catal.* 8 is an epigram in very plain speech, reflecting Epicurean love for the simple country-side, addressed to a house. There is, then, a variety of themes and elements, and one is tempted to try whether one could find a certain school of epigrammatist to whom our poet could have been indebted. There are, as far as I can see, no 'Epicurean epigrams'; for Callimachus' *ep.* 26 presents too great a difference, although it speaks about modesty, and Philodemus with one or two insignificant exceptions wrote only about love, though he was an Epicurean, related also to Siro. But country-life makes its appearance in epigrams for the first time in the so-called Peloponnesian school.74 Must one therefore link up *Catal.* 8 with them? Only partly, since the language of those poets, e.g. Nossis, Anyte and Leonidas of Tarentum, was heavy and pompous. As to the straightforward style of *Catal.* 8, can it be derived from the Alexandrinsians – or from Asclepiades, whose plain way of expression we know very well? Terseness is a predominant feature of Callimachus, but his language is all but plain; even that of the wonderful poem on Heraclitus is not to be compared with *Catal.* 8. And Asclepiades, like Callimachus, loved town-life and the life of the indefatigable lover; but there is nothing about the beauties of nature in his poems, although he describes at times night and storm which make the waiting lover shiver and suffer. With the exception of *Anth. Pal.* 6,349 everything hinges on love. But does not the skilful enjambment in *Catal.* 8 point to the Alexan-

73. Callimachus rarely speaks about anything not related to the town-life. About country-life he does not speak at all, but it was not completely alien to him, of course; cf. his *Hekale* e.g., v. 238, the beautiful description of rising heat.

And the mixing of forms? This however is not enough to prove such influence decisively.

It means that we should have to look for quite a number of influences, which is a hopeless task. I prefer therefore to try to find a close parallel, if there is one, in order to learn from it something about the period to which Catal. 8 belongs. I could find only one parallel, a poem by Antiphilus of Byzantium belonging to the first century B.C. (Anth. Pal. 9, 71):

\[
\text{Клодес ἀπηροιοι ταναῖς δρυός, εὔσκοιον ὤψος,}
\text{ἀνδράσιν ἄκρητον καῦμα φιλασσομένονι,}
\text{εὐπέταλοι, κεράμων στεγανώτεροι, οἰκία φαττόν,}
\text{οἰκία τεττήγων, ἐνδιοι ἄκρεμόνες,}
\text{κήμε τὸν ὀμμέτρασιν ὑποκλινήν κόμιασιν}
\text{ῥύσοσθ᾽ ἀκτίνον ἡμίλου φυγάδα.}
\]

This poem, overloaded with adjectives, is so overrefined that my suggestion that Vergil could hardly have drawn from this kind of style seems defensible. Nevertheless there are some similarities, and striking ones too. The six lines form a syntactical unit as does the Latin poem. Skillfully the thought is suspended till the end where the main verb comes in, as in Catal. 8. The love for the country-side is comparable, and above all we find here an epigram

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75. Beckby 28 offers some instructive examples, e.g. 12, 77. I shall shortly introduce another parallel.


77. W. Sontheimer, in: *Der Kleine Pauly* 1, 397, 27 ff.

78. *Клодес* was used in tragedy in the fifth cent. B.C., but also by Plato (*Prot.* 334 b, 2) and by Theophrastus in a very prosaic context (*caus. plant.* 1, 3, 1); it may therefore have been a common word in the later centuries: ἀπηροῖος, however, is a very choice word, perhaps only here used for ἄπηροιος, but this, too, is rare, used by Pindar e.g. (*Phyt.* 8, 86). This combination, then, must have sounded very refined. – Also ταναῖς δρυός – the comparison with *patulae fagi* comes, so-to-say, forcibly to one's mind – must have been a rare combination, τανάς was used by Euripides in lyrics (*Or.* 322), Qu. Smyrnæus used it in his epic, on the model of Hom. *Il.* 16, 589, and that it had a lofty tone, is corroborated by Menander: in *Samia* 111 Demea pours forth a prayer, which is a parody as fine as any in Aristophanes: ὁ πολύσωμα Κεκροπίας χθόνος, ὁ τανάς αἰθήρ, ὁ... Τί, Ἀλέκα, βοῖς; etc., which parody mocks, as Chr. Dedoussi has seen (*Men. Samia*, Athens 1965, 44), at the *Orestes* of Euripides. We are therefore in tragic surroundings. – Εὔσκοιον ὄψος – εὔσκοιος is Pindaric (*Pth.* 11, 21), but Euolis made use of it too (fr. 32 Kock and Edm.): ἐν εὔσκοιοι δρόμῳ τινι Ἀκαδήμου θεόν (text according to εω; apparently there is some mockery behind it, since Theocritus used the word, too. The combination, however, is again uncommon, for 'shadowy' was always connected with things offering shadow, hardly with abstract things, as the material of *Liddell-Scott-Jones* shows. In this way we could continue, the picture would not change: a very choice, deliberately lofty style.
consisting of a speech; but this speech has the form of a hikesia, an entreaty. Here we have at last a parallel for a speech in an epigram, for a speech similar to that of Catal. 8.

We may therefore say: it is quite possible that the Roman poet deliberately mixed this hikesia with the epigram. He made Vergil address the house in an imaginary speech, but the epigrammatic form renders the character of the speech volatile and somewhat unreal. One is tempted to compare Horace's speech to the Romans in Epode 16, whose character also becomes volatile by being cast into an iambic, although Horace applied very specific technical terms as the author of Catal. 8 did. By this means the speech gains something specifically Roman, as is the case with Catal. 8, since it expresses a commendatio. There are parallels for a speech consisting of a recommendation, e.g. the commendatio in Cicero's first Catilinarian speech or that in his Oratio pro domo sua.

But this definite Roman character recalls the specific Greek address to things, e.g. to a lantern or a house (see p. 31). By the mixture of various genera, that of a poetical form – the epigram – along with a very prosaic content, the commendatio vividly reminds us of the Hellenistic mixtures of this kind (see n. 76).

So our poet did not shrink from introducing a Roman conception, the recommendation with all its peculiar features, into a Greek form, and he did not hesitate to load all this with his personality, his very personal concern, grievances and experiences. This reminds us of Vergil, who also did not shrink from filling Greek forms with his sad experiences (Buc. 1,5 and 9). With this we have at last reached the last stage of our interpretation, the personal one. What mind or personality then lies behind Catal. 8?

V

But let us first summarise the results thus far obtained. The comments on details introduced us into the surroundings of Catullus and led us into the vicinity of Lucretius. There was the peculiar use of ille, and there was the fondness for country-life. In respect of its artistry the poem reflects the art and the sentiment of the Neoteroi, although the author, like Vergil, avoided the extravagances of a Cinna or a Furius Bibaculus. So we see a man who combined simplicity of sentiment with simplicity of style, a man who broke away from his contemporaries and went back to earlier poets as his models, without forgetting however to pay homage to the achievements of recent phases of poetry.

80. It is interesting to see how Vergil avoided extravagances of Furius. He wrote e.g. (Macrob. sat. 6,1,31) *interea Oceani liqueat Aurora cubile.*

This is, of course, an imitation of Hom. II. 19,1,cf. *Od.* 5,1 and 22 etc. See on the imitation 44
THE PERSONALITY BEHIND CATAL. 8

Much has already been said about our poet's personality, but the comparison with Vergil, to which I have alluded here and there, has not yet been drawn strongly enough. Vergil chose the bucolic genre, because no Roman before him had touched this genus and surely because he was a son of the countryside, for a long time out of touch with it, a circumstance which could only reinforce his love for the country. He found in Siro a congenial man, who deepened this love of his pupil and gave it a philosophical ground to stand upon i.e. the fondness for modest possession, free from care, far from the madding noise of the crowd. Exactly the same sentiment is reflected in Catal. 8.

This is the background. In the foreground we find a son full of pietas towards his father and his family. He stresses the fact that he has never ceased to love them all - quos semper amavi. This reflects an important trait in Vergil's life. We know that his father had longed to see him pleading in court, as a successful barrister. Young Vergil however did not succeed, his health was too weak and his voice could not stand the stress. So he stopped his law studies and went to Siro. The father did not protest; at least we hear of no breach. In this light the phrase semper amavi gains a new intensity. Apparently the poet was exceedingly well acquainted with the life of Vergil.

Then there is the sequence Mantua-Cremona. We know that Vergil was born near Mantua and that he has always regarded himself as a Mantuanus. But then he spent his next years at Cremona, and it is a justifiable conjecture that he did so because the school was good and because his parents moved, or that he went to school there with his father living in the same town. I do not hesitate to suggest that the sequence Mantua-Cremona reflects a feature of Vergil's life, since there is an allusion to this in the ancient Vita.

These biographical data and the parallels drawn between Vergil's poetry and the art of Catal. 8, along with the question as to who else but Vergil could have written this apparently very Vergilian poem, point to Vergil as the author of the poem. Indeed cogent proof cannot be offered, and I can therefore only express my personal belief. But how beautifully could we under-

by Vergil G. N. Knauer, 'Die Aeneis und Homer', Hypomnemata, Bd. 7,1964,501 left side, quoting Aen. 4,584 f. But nowhere in Homer is Oceani cubile to be found. But Qu. Smyrn. aecus combined the two indications, that the Tithoni cubile was on the shore of the Ocean in 6,1. Apparently Furius hinted at these two mythological facts by the very concise formula Oceani cubile, in which Oceani simply means the geographical position, and not that Oceanus was the husband of Aurora. Vergil, however, returned to the classical formula. - Vergil in Aen. 11,500 speaks about a cohort, which ad terram defluxit equis.

Furius had sung: in humum defluxit (Macr. 6,4,10). Now everybody may open Th. L. L. 6,3, 3121,81 ff, and observe the usages: passages substituting humus for terra in expressions such as humum quater, pellere etc. were clearly never imitated by Vergil. He returned to the classical use of terra in this context and did not follow Biaulus' extravagance.
stand this poem, if it was Vergilian, written before the *Bucolica* and leading up to them?

VI

In his last letter to me, written one day before his last illness overtook him, Ulrich Knoche touched upon *Catal.* 8, after I had put some questions to him about this poem, knowing how close it lay to his heart. He wrote: 'Ob's von Vergil ist, weiß ich nicht, aber ich finde, es ist ein außergewöhnlich schönes Gedicht. Die *villula* wird sozusagen zum *Patronus* (untersuchen: *commendare.*) Da kommt unter diesem gefühlsbeladenen Patronat die Familie wieder zusammen, die Herzensbindung war immer da: Südländer. Hervorgehoben wird der Vater. Er braucht zum dritten Male ein HeimsUitte, und er soll ja fast blind gewesen sein, er kommt mit dem Vertrauen auf die Vertrautesten, das eben ein Mann hat, dessen Augenlicht allmählich erlischt (ich bin ja selber auf diesem Weg).' Allow me to conclude this article in honour of Ulrich Knoche in my beloved native language:

Ulrich Knoche las dies Gedicht mit den Augen eines Vaters, der sich auf die *pietas* der Vertrautesten verließ. Es schmerzt mich heiß, daß ich diese *pietas* nun nicht mehr dem geliebten Lehrer zuteil werden lassen kann, doch es ist auch ein Gefühl tiefer Freude gewesen, mit dem ich zum letzten Male einen Auftrag meines Lehrers ausführte ('untersuchen: *commendare.*'). Er nannte einmal in einer Arbeit, die er besonders liebte, 81 Aeneas einen 'überragenden, einsamen, liebenden und geliebten Menschen'. Daß die Worte vom Überragen, von seinem Lieben und seiner Einsamkeit auf Ulrich Knoche selbst zutrafen, wissen die, welche ihm vertraut waren; muß ich betonen, daß diese Arbeit auch für das Geliebtwerden dieses Menschen Zeugnis ablegen will? 82

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82. Postscriptum: Arist. Skiadas strongly pleads for our poem's standing in the Peloponnesian tradition. He wrote the following letter to me on the 18.10.1969: 'Das Epigramm gehört in eine Reihe von Gedichten, deren dichterische Art auf die peloponnesische Schule zurückzuführen ist. . . Es gibt sehr viele Epigramme, die den Frieden der Natur, die kleinen Nippsachen und die Ruhe preisen, und in denen die große Leistung dieser Dichter, den Menschen zu der anmutigen Ruhestimmung der Natur zu bringen, klar zum Ausdruck kommt. In der späteren Zeit, bes. in der augusteischen Zeit, stehen Dichter wie Krinagoras, Antipatros v. Thessalonike, Philippos, Antiphilos v. Byzanz nicht selten in der peloponnesischen Tradition. So verstehe ich auch unser Epigramm'. – I think that Skiadas, an expert on epigrams, is quite right in stating that our epigram belongs to this tradition, but since there are other traditions discernible too, we cannot but indicate a variety of influences.
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