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## INDEX

|   |  |   |     |
|---|--|---|-----|
|   | HEIKKI SOLIN   | <i>Rolf Westman in Memoriam</i>   | 9   |
|    | RIA BERG   | <i>Toiletries and Taverns. Cosmetic Sets in Small Houses, Hospitia and Lupanaria at Pompeii</i>           | 13  |
|    | MAURIZIO COLOMBO                                     | <i>Il prezzo dell'oro dal 300 al 325/330 e ILS 9420 = SupplIt V, 253–255 nr. 3</i>                        | 41  |
|    | LEE FRATANTUONO                                      | <i>Pallasne Exurere Classem: Minerva in the Aeneid</i>  | 63  |
|    | JANNE IKÄHEIMO<br>JARI-MATTI KUUSELA &<br>EERO JARVA | <i>Buried Under? Re-examining the Topography and Geology of the Allia Battlefield</i>                     | 89  |
|    | BORIS KAYACHEV                                       | <i>Ciris 204: an Emendation</i>   | 111 |
|    | OLLI SALOMIES  | <i>An Inscription from Pheradi Maius in Africa (AE 1927, 28 = ILTun. 25)</i>                              | 115 |
|    | UMBERTO SOLDOVIERI                                   | <i>Una nuova dedica a Iuppiter da Pompei e l'origine di L. Ninnius Quadratus, tribunus plebis 58 a.C.</i> | 135 |
|    | DIVNA SOLEIL   | <i>Héraclès le premier mélancolique : Origines d'une figure exemplaire</i>                                | 147 |
|   | HEIKKI SOLIN   | <i>Analecta epigraphica 319–321</i>   | 167 |
|  | HOLGER THESLEFF                                      | <i>Pivotal Play and Irony in Platonic Dialogues</i>   | 179 |
|   |  | <i>De novis libris iudicia</i>  | 220 |
|   |  | <i>Index librorum in hoc volumine recensorum</i>  | 277 |
|   |  | <i>Libri nobis missi</i>  | 283 |
|   |  | <i>Index scriptorum</i>   | 286 |

## CIRIS 204: AN EMENDATION

BORIS KAYACHEV

In an apostrophe to Procne and Philomela, the narrator urges them to welcome Nisus and Scylla, likewise newly transformed into birds, as they fly into the sky (203–5):

*caeruleas praeuerrite in aethera nubes,  
qua nouus ad superum sedes haliaeetos et qua  
candida concessos ascendat ciris honores.*

Modern editors do not usually consider the change from the prepositional construction *ad superum sedes* at 204 to the direct-object construction *concessos ... honores* at 205 in any way conspicuous or objectionable. The only exceptions are, as far as I can see, Baehrens and Sillig. Baehrens printed *uisat* for *nouus ad* in the 1876 edition,<sup>1</sup> but returned to the paradosis in the 1880 edition.<sup>2</sup> Sillig found it necessary to defend the paradosis: "Variatio constructionis in verbo *ascendere* modo cum accusativo modo cum praepositione *ad* iuncto multis similibus locis defenditur, in quibus praepositio priori substantivo addita ante posterioris omittitur".<sup>3</sup> In support of this claim, Sillig cites Burman's comment on Claud. *Hon. IV cos.* 207–8 in *utroque relucet / frater, utroque soror*.<sup>4</sup> Burman in turn

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<sup>1</sup> A. Baehrens, *Catulli Veronensis liber*, vol. 1, Leipzig 1876, 124.

<sup>2</sup> A. Baehrens, *Poetae Latini minores*, vol. 2, Leipzig 1880, 139.

<sup>3</sup> I. Sillig, *P. Virgilii Maronis quae vulgo feruntur carmina Culex, Ciris, Copa et Moretum*, Leipzig 1831, 236.

<sup>4</sup> N. Heinsius, P. Burman, *Claudii Claudiani opera, quae exstant, omnia*, Amsterdam 1760, 142. Sillig also cites C. Garatonius (in G. G. Wernsdorf, *M.T. Ciceronis orationes Philippicae*, vol. 2, Leipzig 1822, 222) on Cic. *Phil.* 7,19 in *hac custodia et tamquam specula conlocati sumus* and

cites Ov. *rem.* 608 *laese uir a domina, laesa puella uiro* and Grat. *cyn.* 325 *ad caelum uirtus summosque tetendit honores*.<sup>5</sup> To be sure, more examples of this sort could be found,<sup>6</sup> but what we have here is enough to show that these parallels do not really justify the *Ciris* context. Such examples can roughly be divided into two categories. One will comprise contexts in which the two object phrases fulfil the same syntactic role in a single clause and are complementary (rather than analogous) in sense, sometimes to the point of producing a hendiadys. This is what we can see in the Grattian example. The other will include contexts in which the two object phrases both play the same syntactic role and are closely analogous (sometimes almost identical), but belong to two (analogous) clauses. This we find in the examples from Claudian and Ovid. The problem with the *Ciris* context is that there we have two clauses ([*ascendat*] *haliaeetos* and *ascendat ciris*), but the object phrases are not at all analogous: *ad superum sedes* unambiguously refers to a place, whereas *concessos ... honores* does not. To put it in simpler terms, the two parallel clauses are not similar enough for the change of construction to appear as a welcome variation rather than as a disruptive solecism.

The last point in fact suggests that, even if we ignored the variation in syntax, the two phrases would more naturally go with different verbs. If, then, we are to introduce a verb in 204, we should probably put it instead of *nouus* (though of itself it is unobjectionable).<sup>7</sup> What can it be concealing? Baehrens's *uisat* hardly has any attractions. We might consider *uenit* (in which case we would have to adopt K's *ascendit* for *ascendat*), but I doubt that it would be appropriate so shortly after 200 *uenit carissima uobis*. Our line has a relevant parallel in 522 *commotus talem ad superos uolitare puellam: ad superos* clearly evokes 204 *ad superum sedes* (these are the only two occurrences of *superi* in the poem). In view of *uolitare*, I think what we need is *uolet* (or *uolat*, if

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G. L. Walch, *Tacitus' Agrikola*, Berlin 1828, 361 on Tac. *Agr.* 35,4 *ne in frontem simul et latera suorum pugnaretur*; but these provide no better parallels than the examples from poetry, and anyway examples from prose would not be particularly relevant.

<sup>5</sup> Burman also adduces parallels for the omission of a preposition before the first rather than the second noun (Ov. *her.* 16,143, *ars* 1,333, Hor. *carm.* 3,25,2), but these hardly add anything new.

<sup>6</sup> See e.g. F. Leo, *Analecta Plautina: De figuris sermonis* I, Göttingen 1891, 42–4, though he mostly lists examples of the omission of a preposition before the first rather than the second noun.

<sup>7</sup> In theory something like this might also be possible: *qua nouus ad superos surgat haliaeetos* (though we would have to accept the irregular, if not impossible, lengthening in *surgat*).

we prefer K's *ascendit*). It is true that upprefixed *uolare* is not used elsewhere in the *Cirīs*, but it does appear as part of a prefixed verb at 214 (*euolat*, for which Némethy's *prouolat* should probably be adopted). Furthermore, it may be relevant that the verb appears in Cic. *Arat.* fr. 34, 48 *quae uolat et serpens geminis secat aera pennis*, a line that may also be echoed (directly or indirectly) in *Cirīs* 538 and 541 *secat aethera pennis*. As Lyne appositely comments on 204–5, "The ascent of Nisus and Scylla sounds more like καταστερισμός than ordinary metamorphosis";<sup>8</sup> so it does not seem unlikely that the *Cirīs* poet had in mind this particular line of Cicero's (or a similar one, now lost?) when he was composing 204.

*Trinity College, Dublin*

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<sup>8</sup> R. O. A. M. Lyne, *Cirīs: A Poem Attributed to Vergil*, Cambridge 1978, 184.