CIRIS 137:
WHAT HAS CUPID DONE TO THE GODS?

> *Sed malus ille puer, quem nec sua flectere mater*
> *iratum potuit, quem nec pater atque auus idem*
> *Iuppiter (ille iram Poenos domitare leones*   135
> *et ualidas docuit uires mansuescere tigris,*
> *ille etiam diuos †homines – sed dicere magnum est)*

135 iram *Skutsch* : etiam Φ   137 homines] omnes *Heinsius*

Scholars agree that line 137 is corrupt. In fact, as was observed by Lyne, the pro-
gression *diuos – homines* is anticlimactic.[1] One would expect that the poet would
have put these two words in the opposite order, and thus Cupid should be able to
tame (1) animals, (2) people and (3) the gods. Heinsius' conjecture therefore has an
obvious advantage over the transmitted reading, and is made even more plausible
by the facility of the corruption of *homines* into *omnes*.[2] One question, however,
remains to be answered, namely, what is the implied verb that governs the object
diuos? In other words, what has Cupid (*ille*) done to the gods (or to all of the gods –
diuos omnes)?

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1) R. O. A. M. Lyne, Ciris. A Poem Attributed to Vergil, Cambridge 1978, 158.
2) Another solution was adopted by F. R. D. Goodyear (ed.), Appendix Ver-
giliana, Oxford 1966, 107: he preserves the MS reading *homines* and prints a lacuna
after line 135. Recently, B. Kayachev (B. Kayachev, *Ciris* 137: an emendation, CQ 64,
2014, 859–861) conjectured *diuis* instead of *diuos*, which would mean that "Cupid
makes men (*homines*) in some way related to gods (*diuis*)"; the implied meaning,
however, ("Cupid's effecting a conceptual, rather than physical, affinity of men to
gods. […] what Cupid does is to assimilate men to gods") could hardly be guessed.

According to Lyne, the implied supplement is *flectere potuit*, or *flexerat*.[3] This, however, is hardly convincing, as there is another verb that stands closer to *ille etiam diuos*, namely *docuit*. Yet this verb should not necessarily be implied here; in fact, *docuit* in line 136 is related to *domitare* and *mansuescere* (*docuit leones domitare iram et docuit vires mansuescere*) and does not concern lovers, but those who use love as a device, whereas the gods are the direct object of Cupid's action and are tamed by him. *Ille etiam* can have a different verb, as the following example of a similar repetition in Vergil[4] shows:

> … *ille etiam caecos instare tumultus*
> *saepe monet fraudemque et operta tumescere bella;*
> *ille etiam exstincto miseratus Caesare Romam,*
> *cum caput obscura nitidum ferrugine texit.*
>
> (Verg. G. 1.464–467)

That being so, one can suspect that the undoubtedly corrupt *homines* hides another verb in the perfect tense. I suggest that *homines* should be replaced by *domuit:*

> *ille etiam diuos domuit – sed dicere magnum est*

Cupid has even tamed the gods – but it is too long a tale (to recount it all).[5] The following arguments can be cited to support this suggestion:

(1) *domuit* gives a sound and expected sense. For Cupid to be able to subdue (*domare*) the gods, cf. for example, Sen. Her. O. 558: *Tu* (sc. *timende matri saevae puer*) *fulminantem saepe domuisti Iouem*.

(2) The form *domuit* is used within the same position in the hexameter by Vergil, G. 2.456: *ille furentis / Centauros leto domuit, Rhoecumque Pholumque*.

(3) The conjectured word produces an alliteration, which is one of the author's favourite stylistic devices: *Ille etiam d i uos d o muit, sed d i cere magnum est*. In the *Ciris*, numerous similar alliterations[6] can be found in which three words in a verse begin with the same letter, sometimes with *d*, for example: *D i ctynnam d i xere tuo d e nomine Lunam* (305) or: *prima d e um mihi quae d u lcem te d o nat alumnam* (246).

(4) The suggested reading preserves the figure of aposiopesis. The poet breaks the sentence after the words *ille etiam diuos domuit* without entering into details about Cupid's sovereignty over the gods.

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3) "Whereas Venus and Jupiter were not able *flectere* Cupid, *omnes deos flectere potuit vel flexerat Cupido*" (Lyne [n. 1 above] 158).

4) For the dating of the poem (pre- or post-Vergilian), see B. Kayachev, Allusion and Allegory: Studies in the Ciris, Berlin / Boston 2016, 1–6 and 1 n. 3 (bibliography on the Cirisfrage).

5) I agree with Lyne's interpretation of *sed dicere magnum* (Lyne [n. 1 above] 158: "but it is <too> big, too long a tale, to recount it all"). A different understanding of *magnum* – as 'arrogant' – is postulated by Kayachev (n. 2 above) 861.

6) On alliteration in the Ciris, see Lyne (n. 1 above) 29.

(5) The process of corruption can well be explained by a similar beginning of the two words *dom-* and *hom-*; also, the two following letters – *-ui-* and *-in-* – can easily be mistaken. Finally, *homines* could have come to the scribe's mind as it often forms a pair with *dii / diui* (likewise in Ciris 379: *nec possunt homines nec possunt flectere diui*).

Warszawa   Włodzimierz Olszaniec