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THE CASE OF *ILBulg* 248: A LA RECHERCHE DES NOMS PERDUS

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Abstract. – The author proposes a new reading of the Roman epitaph from Lădžane near Lovech, Bulgaria. Much of his interpretation of this heavily fragmented text is about various possibilities and relative probabilities of restitution of its lost parts. Beside battered phrases and trivialities the epitaph seems to relate a rather extraordinary case of death in the marital bed, not without connexion to the myth of Atalante as told by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*. The author also suggests that the few palpable oddities of language and style may have had their motive in as many puns intended on the (now mostly lost) personal names of the deceased and her family members.

Key words. – Roman Epigraphy, Latin Verse Inscriptions, Epitaphs,
The Language of Latin Poetry.

In the early years of the 20th century the remains of a Roman mausoleum were discovered in the village of Lădžane (Лъджане) in northern Bulgaria, near the location of the ancient town of Melta, modern Lovech (Ловеч). It was¹ a square-based structure (8×8 m) with thick walls (2 m) built of large blocks of limestone. In the eastern wall there was a doorway framed with two pillars on the outside. Of the architrave, which was decorated in relief, an inscribed fragment remains (*ILBulg* 247):]MATPONASACMARIT[---|---]TERRENO ET LAPIDE[---. This inscription makes it safe to assume – in spite of the uncertainties² – that the mausoleum belonged to a woman called Matrona and her husband (and possibly to their family and descendants), the assumption being corroborated by the fact that beneath the northern wall two pedestals were found, together with headless fragments of two statues – a male and a female figure.³

The interior or the mausoleum was a square room (4×4 m) with the ceiling decorated in relief (the pattern consisted of floral/faunal motifs). Of the marble plates that once covered the walls one is preserved, bearing an

¹ As described by Seure 1916, 364–9.

² Discussed by Seure 1916, 371–8. The upper line has been read as MATPONA·SAC·MARIT, with the abbreviation hesitatingly resolved as either *sac(erdos)* (Filov (see n. Error: Reference source not found below), followed by Gerov in *ILBulg*) or *sac(rum)* (Seure 1916, followed by Gerov in “Romanity” 2, 378, no. 382). Judging by the photograph in *ILBulg*, there may be another dot after the *s*, which would permit us to read *Matrona s(ibi) ac mari[o] ---* : for the abbreviated *s(ibi)* outside formulas such as *sibi et suis* or *sibi vivus*, cf. e.g. *CIL* 5.3684, 3844, *AE* 1979.452, 1993.963; for the use of *ac* (instead of the more frequent *et*) in similar contexts, *ILS* 1289 *marito dulcissimo ac sibi*, *CIL* 14.5146 *sibi... ac Iulio Sege[o]*.

³ On examining their facture Seure concluded that these must have been ready-made generic figures with portrait heads fixed upon.

* Чланак представља резултат рада на пројекту: *Антички најпјисни на јџлу Илирика: критичко издавање и интјердисциплинарна истрја-живања епиграфских стоменика* (бр. 147003) који финансира Министарство за науку и технолошки развој Републике Србије.

inscription, which may well not have been the only one. And there was another room below, the hypogeum, in which stood at least three sarcophagi.⁴

The inscription⁵ from the upper room of the Lădžane mausoleum is a marble *tabula ansata* broken into pieces but preserved up to more than a half of its original size. The bigger, left-hand part consists of four contingent fragments, with two more pieces reaching the right-hand border and the upper-right corner of the inscriptional field. The original dimensions of the plate were about 30×39×3 cm. There are 15 lines of text in Latin, the preserved portion amounting to more than two thirds of the original extent. The carving is equal and the letters read well despite their being rather small (varying around 1 cm of height) and occasionally ligatured.

I am reading from the photograph given in *ILBulg*.⁶

(in the upper pits of the ansae) *D || M ||*

- 1 *siste viator iter animu[---]lchro*
et lege quam dure sit mihi v[---]ata · ipsum
margebam florenti caro m[---]ito in XIII
annum mors mihi saeva fuit · [---]isceptarunt
- 5 *fata ne pia esse patri · nec ma[---]TEMRE*
pie faemine caste · pro piet[---].rimas
satiavi fata superba · nom[---]
restt[---]bar · qui nuncquam sc[---]
ab impia fata · disceptata die ut n[---]
- 10 *marito · crudelis thalamos post mor[---]*
reliqui · teque rog · com.s dolea tibi pulc.[---]
quod mea virginitas mort[---]i somn[---]
isque tuas cineres aurea ter[---]
ego nunc moneo genitore[---]
- 15 *.umpere · nemo · [?---]*

This is the epitaph of a young female (the age of fourteen is mentioned in *ll.3–4*) whose parents were alive at the time of her death (cf. *l.14, l.5*) and who was married (cf. the mention of a husband in *l.10* and probably *l.3*). This last observation, common enough in an epitaph, becomes remarkable in view of the phrase *mea virginitas* occurring in *l.12*. While it is true that use of *virgo* to refer to a young married woman is not entirely strange to the language of Latin poetry,⁷ the actual term *virginitas* does, by all accounts, imply and mean virginity.⁸ Its present occurrence, then, will not only call for an explanation but could also serve as a clue.

Clues, indeed, are much needed if we are to advance beyond isolated remarks towards a veritable reading of the epitaph. This has not been fully achieved, despite several good observations and a valuable attempt at restitution by Seure:¹⁰

- Siste, viator, iter, animu[que intende sepulchro,*
et lege quam dure sit mihi v[ita d]ata.
Ipsa immarcebam caro florent[e] marito,
in (quartum decimumque) annum. Mors mihi saeva fuit.
- v.5 *[Nam d]isceptarunt fata ne pia esse patri*
nec mat[ri possem] te[ne]r(a)e, pi(a)e.f(a)emine(a)e, cast(a)e.
Pro piet[as! <inter> pr]imas satiavi fata superba;
nomine v[.....] rest(i)t[ue]bar(?).
Qui nunc quam sci[s raptam, illa sed] ab impia fata
- v.10 *disceptata die, ut n[ondum coniuncta] marito*
crudelis thalamos post mor[tem invita] reliqui,
teque ro[go], comis dolea[s]: tibi pulch[rius illud],
quod mea virginitas mort[al]i somn[o abolevit];
isque tuas cineres aurea ter[ra teget].
- v.15 *[Ast hoc tantum vos] ego nunc moneo, (o) genitore[s]!*
[Quid fletis? nam fata potest quis] rumpere? Nemo.

Of this text Seure admitted that no proper translation could be given, which is why he chose to set out its meaning in rather wide terms. According to his explanations,¹¹ the daughter of Matrona and husband died at the age of fourteen, having been engaged to a man but yet unmarried, or, more probably, married so shortly before her death that she hadn't had time to become her man's woman; whence the kind of consolation she now

⁴ As he sorted the fragments by their facture and ornament, Seure identified what he referred to as the "Sarcophagus of the Winged Genii", the "Pan Sarcophagus", and the "Sarcophagus of Hercules' Labours".

⁵ Described and provisionally published by B. Filov (Б. Филов) in the *Известия на Българското археологическо дружество* 3 (1912), 322, with a facsimile (Fig. 252). Edited with supplements and a commentary by Seure 1916, 378ff., no. 150 (with Filov's facsimile reproduced as Fig. 48); whence *AE* 1916.122. Revised and republished by Gerov as *ILBulg* 248 (with a photograph). – The monument and the inscription are thought to date from the 2nd or 3rd century (Seure 1916, 370; 2nd century, Gerov, "Romanity" 2, 378, no. 382).

⁶ This is reproduced here as Fig. 1. Note, however, that on Fig. 1 the two top-right fragments have been relocated where they belong (which is the position they occupy on Filov's facsimile), while their shaded image has been left where the original photograph has them.

⁷ Cf. Verg. *Ecl.* 6.47 and Hor. *Carm.* 3.11.35.

⁸ To prove this Latin verse inscriptions are as good as any text: see Fele & al. 1988, s.vv. *virginitas, virgo*.

⁹ Cf. Bojadžiev 1983, 57: "le texte... est si mutilé que le sens en demeure obscur".

¹⁰ Seure 1916, 380. Note that his bracketing does not quite follow the system that prevails today. – From this point on I shall be using the prefix "v.", "vv." for lines of verse, as opposed to "l.", "ll." for lines of text.

¹¹ Seure 1916, 386.



Fig. 1. The Lădžane epitaph, *ILBulg 248*

Сл. 1. Надгробник из Лаџана код Ловча, *ILBulg 248*

offers to her husband: let his grief be “calm” (*comis*),¹² since he will have done better without the joys of a union which would have left him regretting his loss (v.12). The rest of the epitaph Seure deemed to be all pad-outs and banalities: death was particularly cruel to the deceased (v.4), who died among the first of her generation (v.7) and did not live to fulfil the last duty to her parents (vv.5–6); but destiny’s verdicts can only be recognized for what they are (vv.15–16); her young husband will also die one day (v.14). Fashionwise, this whole composition would be a cento of lines and half-lines that are found elsewhere in funerary poetry;¹³ these would have been forced into an awkward unity, inconsistencies of syntax and metre bearing witness to the process.¹⁴ Seure also seems to assume that at least two mistakes were made by the stonemason (*florenti caro* for *caro florente* in v.3; omission of *inter* in v.7).

The general picture drawn by Seure must be true – it looks probable that the parents of the deceased were the same persons who owned the mausoleum, and I am convinced by what Seure suspected of the girl’s marriage, too.¹⁵ Yet when it comes to details, Seure’s restitution of the epitaph does not seem wholly acceptable,¹⁶ and, more importantly, his understanding of some of the preserved portions was arguably wrong. I propose, then, to

reopen the file and look for more insight into the form and meaning of the Lădžane epitaph.

¹² In Seure’s opinion the locution *comis dolea[s]* would be an “error of signification”, as the adjective *comis* stands for the adverb *comiter*, this, again, being an equivalent of the more normal *leniter* (Seure 1916, 381).

¹³ Believing (as many did then and some do today; see Wolff 2000, 58–9) that the ancients must have had handbooks of epitaph-writing for the use of whoever needed funerary formulas and/or verse, Seure suspected imitation of models even at v.7 *satiavi fata superba*, v.11 *crudeles thalamos post mortem – U reliqui*, v.16 *fata potest quis rumpere? nemo* (Seure 1916, 383–5). In fact, all these places not only are unparalleled in our sources but also show some remarkable features that I shall discuss later in this article.

¹⁴ E.g. in v.6 *pie faemine caste* Seure reckons that the actual dative preserves the scansion of a nominative which would have stood in the model (*pia femina casta*); in v.11 *reliqui* he thinks that the verb looks back to v.10 *ut* and supposes that the unexpected indicative mood comes from the model.

¹⁵ Cf. Ulp. *Dig.* 50.17.30 *nuptias non concubitus sed consensus facit*.

¹⁶ My impression is that, as the text goes on, his supplements become ever less plausible. It should be noted, though, that Seure never thought it possible to arrive at anything exact in the way of supplement for the longer lacunae that appear towards the end of the text (Seure 1916, 381).

* * *

The beginning of *ILBulg* 248 goes along with no less than six epitaphs from Buecheler's collection:¹⁷

CLE 1083 (Capua)

[tu] qui praeteriens spectas mortis monu[mentum]
aspice quam i[ndigne] sit data vita mihi:
quattuor anno[rum]
in qu[into] scande[ns] deposui heic animam.

1084 (Venafrum)

tu qui praeteriens legis hoc mortis monumentum
aspice quam indigne sit data vita mihi:
xv annorum quint[o] dulcissima vixi,
in sexto et decem ascendes deposui hanc anima.

1539 (Segusio)

tu qui praeteriens spectas monumentum meum,
aspice quam indigne sit data vita mea:
annorum septem vixi dulcissima patri,
octavo ingredies animam deposui meam.

1540 (Rome)

tu qui stas et spectas mortem monimenti mei
aspice quam indigne sit data mihi:
vixi annis vi, in vii descendens animam deposui meam.

1541 (Rome)

tu qui praeteriens spectas mortis monumentum meum
aspice quam misere sit data vita mihi:
annorum viii vixi dulcissima parentibus meis,
in x ascendens anima deposui meam.

1542 (Luca)

tu [q]ui s[atas] atque spectas] m[o]nimentum meum
[aspice quam indign]e sit data vita m[ihi]:
[quinque] annos sui [pare]ntes,
sextu[m] annum insc[ri]bens anim[am] deposui mea[m].

All of these are from Italy, and all stood on children's graves, the eldest being a girl of fifteen in *CLE* 1084; none were married. In all cases the initial distich draws the attention of the passer-by to the fact that the deceased "had been given life under one outrageous condition", that of dying soon. The second distich always contains a sentence amounting to this, "Having lived for *n* years I died at the age of *n*+1", and always the child was about to "step up to" his or her next year of age (the verb used is *scandere* or one of its compounds) when death came – which event is invariably referred to as "giving up the ghost" (*animam deponere*).

It appears that the author of the Lădžane epitaph not only understood this cliché properly¹⁸ but also felt he could improve on it. The instances of the model he was adopting¹⁹ were not without flaws: there was the uneasy ending of the initial hexameter, *mortis monumentum*; the less-than-logical distribution of the verbs *spectare*,

aspicere, *legere*²⁰ to convey the two ideas of "looking at" the monument and "reading" the inscription; and, with *quam indigne* in v.2, a harsh elision on the monosyllable. In face of these shortcomings the author of *ILBulg* 248 acted judiciously. He replaced the "tu qui" formula in v.1 with another conventional interpellation²¹ which not only scanned more easily but also permitted him to drop the hypotaxis, put *et* at the beginning of v.2 and use *lege*, the right word, to fill up the first dactyl. Similar considerations seem to lie behind the substitute he gave for *quam indigne*. *CLE* 1541 with *quam misere* proves that indeed a substitute was desired; but while *quam misere* was an easy solution that flatly missed the point, the alternative that we find in *ILBulg* 248, *quam dure* "how cruelly", clearly preserved the sense by giving even more relief to the original idea: the adverb *dure* was distinctly unpoetical,²² but it was – again – the right

¹⁷ Two of these were already pointed at by Seure 1916, 384. Another epitaph, the badly mutilated *CLE* 2082 from Ostia, is best left aside as an instance on which this very cliché was applied by the modern editor: see Lommatzsch *ad loc.* (he was aware of the Lădžane epitaph, too).

¹⁸ Which was not always the case. In *CLE* 1540 the cliché was misconstrued – instead of "having been given life", the deceased was now "given death", and this in turn seems to be the reason why in v.1 we have the words "see the death of my memorial" instead of "...the memorial of my death" – the accusative *mortem* was needed to support the intended prolepsis (*mortem aspice quam indigne sit data mihi*). The whole confusion was maybe due to contamination with another cliché, the one we have e.g. in *CLE* 1007 *praeteriens quicumque legis consistere viator et vide quam indigne raptus inane querar*.

¹⁹ One may note that in spite of the location of the plate, which was inside the mausoleum, the epitaph itself preserves the fiction of a traveller's passing by the grave. However, as we have no clue to who the author was, we cannot take it for granted that he was aware of the actual form of the monument or the exact location in which his verse would be displayed.

²⁰ With one of these, *aspicere*, the original intention may have been to draw the reader's attention to an image of the deceased ("look how I was given life..." = "look at me: I was given life...") rather than the inscription itself. Of the six Italian epitaphs cited above, this condition is maybe met by *CLE* 1083 ("infra cernitur persona stans", Buecheler *ad loc.*).

²¹ For "tu qui" and other forms of interpellation in the epitaphs, see Conso 1996, 299.

²² In classical and classicizing Latin prose the adverb *dure* is unfrequent and mostly confined to the notion of expressing oneself "roughly" or "harshly" (cf. e.g. Cic. *Phil.* 12.25, Quint. *Inst.* 1.5.67). The sense we are dealing with here appears in post-classical prose, e.g. Sen. *Ep.* 82.2 *male mihi esse malo quam molliter*; "male" *nunc sic excipe quemadmodum a populo solet dici: dure, asperae, laboriosae*; id. *Dial.* 1.4.12 *quid mirum si dure generosos spiritus deus temptat? numquam virtutis molle documentum est*; Plin. *Ep.* 1.15.3 *dure fecisti*; Dig. 35.2.54 *quod videndum ne dure constituatur*. The word

word. In the other half of v.2 we find *sit mihi vita data*, as opposed to *sit data vita mihi*, which is in the other epitaphs. Now anyone with a taste for the elegances of Latin verse would have felt that this new word order degraded the pentameter quite perceptibly, but the author of *ILBulg* 248 was reasoning along different lines: as he was making his words meet his sense as closely as possible, he found it appropriate to move the pronoun *mihi* to a position of lesser prominence.

The first distich, then, appears to show that whoever wrote the Lădzane epitaph had a conscious approach to the model he had chosen. The insistence on the logical and the quest for the right word give the impression of someone who may have been no wizard of Latin verse but certainly knew what he was doing as he aimed to produce a meaningful text on the stone. This is why I find no reason to believe, as Seure did,²³ that the author of the epitaph did not have Latin as his first language.

The second distich (vv.3–4, ll.2–4) is where my reading of *ILBulg* 248 begins to part from Seure's. The photograph reads *ipsum*, not *ipso*, and there seems to be no way out of taking this *ipsum* to look forward to *annum* in l.4. With *ipsum marcebam... in XIII annum*,²⁴ I take it that instead of following the cliché closely by saying “I lived for thirteen years and died as I became fourteen”, our epitaph has it this way: “I withered all along to my fourteenth year of age”. *Marcebam*²⁵ suggests a lingering illness; it appears that the girl was chronically feeble.²⁶ Note the imperfect tense, which leaves us yet exspecting until the perfect comes with the point: *mors mihi saeva fuit*, “I met a ferocious death”.²⁷ The words *ipsum... in XIII annum* make it seem that she died on her fourteenth birthday.²⁸ The verb *marcere*, which often adds the implication of inactivity or even apathy to the notion of feebleness,²⁹ stands here in obvious contrast to what comes immediately after it. *Florenti* was taken by Seure to be part of an ablative absolute, *caro florente marito*, and the actual wording *florenti caro marito* had to be a mistake one way or another.³⁰ It is true that Latin verse inscriptions sometimes exhibit traces of spoiled hyperbatons,³¹ but in this case caution is needed. On the one hand, the avoidance of hyperbaton, by which the original word order would have degraded into what is found on the stone, cannot explain the actual form *florenti* in place of the (supposedly) original *florente* (care for the metre could hardly be invoked in view of the subsequent *carō*). The other question is one of purpose. Why should we be told specifically that, while the poor girl was ill, her husband was healthy? Is it all about mentioning the fact of their marriage? This cannot be the only motive, since the

is virtually non-existent in poetry. Seneca's own *Thy.* 314–5 *istud quod vocas saevum, asperum, agique dure credis et nimium impie* bearing an obvious resemblance to his prose passage cited above.

²³ Seure 1916, 382.

²⁴ For the number, Seure 1916, 383, insisted on a verbal resolution and gave *in quartum decimumque annum*: together with the subsequent *mors mihi saeva fuit* this would make v.4 into a hypermetric pentameter. But there is no necessity to do so; it may be safely assumed that the number stands ametrically.

²⁵ The actual spelling *margebam* (unduly ignored by Gerov in *ILBulg*) used to be invoked by Romanists discussing the etymology of *merg* in Romanian (from Latin *mergere*: REW, no. 5525; cf. Bourciez 1967, § 202 c). However, its opposition to the subsequent *florenti* (see below) suggests that it does represent *marcere*, not *mergere*. Seure had his own reasons for believing the same: to him, the form *margebam* not only had an *a* for *e* (but note that *ar* for *er* is in fact a common feature of Vulgar Latin) and displayed a “faulty conjugation” (intransitive active instead of the expected passive – which is exactly what the Romanists had been looking for to connect the Romanian word back to *mergere*: “submerge” > “sink” > “disappear” > “go away” > “go”), but was also deprived of any complement (one should have expected *immergebar in mortem* or sim.) (Seure 1916, 381 n. 1). It is difficult to say whether *margebam* for *marcebam* represents anything more than a casual misspelling. Phonetically, *rc* > *rg* is not easily supported (see Väänänen 1982, §§ 104–8; B. Löfstedt 1961, 138–49), and the parallels are meagre: cf. *DVulg* 143 (3rd-century Gaul; see Pirson 1901, 66) *Vergelleses*, i.e. *Vercellensis*, in an inscription which is otherwise full of errors; yet the same word with the same feature stands in *ILS* 2483 (Egypt under Augustus) *C. Vibius C. f. Ani(ensi tribu) Verg(ellus)*.

²⁶ For mentions of fatal illness in the epitaphs, see Lattimore, 153.

²⁷ Do these words mean that the girl died a particularly ugly death that made a gruesome impression on those who witnessed it? (For one such impression cf. *Pass. Perp. Fel.* 7.5 (a seven-year old boy) *facie cancerata male obiit ita ut mors eius odio fuerit omnibus hominibus*.) The adjective *saevus* does often qualify physical suffering (pain, e.g. *Pac. trag.* 267, *Lucr.* 5.997; disease, *Luc.* 9.629–30, *Tac. Ann.* 2.69; thirst, *Sen. Tro.* 583; hunger, *Luc.* 4.94). But death can also be *saeva* in itself. This is the underlying idea in *Tac. Ann.* 13.17 *tradunt... crebris ante exitium diebus illis isse pueritiae Britannici Neronem, ut iam non praematura neque saeva mors videri queat*: clearly no ugly death is meant here; a premature death is *saeva* by that fact alone and is apt to cause indignation (cf. *CLE* 69 *pueri virtus indigne occidit, quous fatum acerbum populus indigne tulit*). In *CLE* 980 *immatura iacent ossa relata mea: saeva parentibus eripuit Fortuna m[eis] me nec iuenem passast ulteriora frui*, the key words are conspicuously the same as in the Tacitus passage cited above. It is no wonder, then, that the same idea appears within the scheme of the “unfinished year”, *CLE* 1058 *cum mihi bis quinos annos mea fata dedissent, undecimum me non licuit perducere annum... saevos Pluto rapuit me ad infera templa*. In Christian epitaphs the epithet *saeva* often accompanies the *mors* that is vanquished by Christ's faith; cf. *ILCV* 267, 991, 1312. An interesting case is *ILCV* 170 *iaces casu prostrata ruinae, heu dulcis coniunx... clausisti subito crudeli funere vitam... sed tibi non potuit mors haec tam saeva nocere: de meritis veniens nam tua vita manet*: here the actual “ferocious death” under the ruins is dubbed *crudele funus*; the subsequent *mors haec tam saeva* is a variation of the same, but in a context where the narrative has given way to a sort of contemplation.

husband reappears in *l.10* anyway. As we look for a possible answer we may do well by reading the text as we have it. Assuming that the phrase *florenti caro marito* was always there in its actual form, nothing prevents us from taking *florenti* as a dative, not ablative,³² and the text seems to make enough sense as it stands. The dative would be one of (dis)advantage, to be taken with *marcebam*: “I withered before the eyes of my dear husband, a vigorous man”. This would still be the sort of truism we have wondered at; but *marcebam florenti caro marito* can also mean “I withered before the eyes of my dear husband Florens”. The sentence, then, would be aimed at producing a double entendre, and the motive for mentioning the husband’s vigour would have been no other than to neatly communicate his name.

The possibility of taking *Florenti* as the husband’s name was briefly considered by Seure: “Je soupçonne, sans pouvoir en apporter la preuve...”³³ Much of what I have to say from this point on should be taken with the same caveat, as I will be putting forward a construct largely based on my own suspicions. What is certain, though, is that allusions to and puns on personal names are not uncommon in Latin verse inscriptions.³⁴ In their authors’ and readers’ eyes they were not inappropriate; even to us, as far as one can judge, they are not always absurd or tasteless: one has only to remember the delightful epitaph of T. Statilius Aper, *CLE* 441:³⁵ “There you lie, you kind-hearted boar (*innocuus aper*), stricken not by the Virgin’s wrath...” I will argue that in the case of *ILBulg* 248 it is possible to follow this path beyond the one mention of *Florens maritus* at *v.3*. This will ultimately lead me to the hypothesis that the “name game” was an important aspect of the Lădžane epitaph as a whole.

* * *

At present, however, let me adopt what I should call the order of probability and discuss the least difficult places first, rather than proceed line by line. The text as we have it admits the conclusion that the epitaph ended with two distinct messages to the living. The first began with *teque rogo* at *l.11*, and the other was the one which has the words *ego nunc moneo genitore* at *l.14*. For *vv.12–14 (ll.11–13)* I propose the following reading with supplements:

*v.12 Teque rog(o), com[e]s, dolea(t) tibi, pulch[ra futura]
quod mea virginitas mort[al]i somn[o sepulta est],
isque tuas cineres aurea ter[ra] tegat.*

“And I beseech you, my life’s companion, to feel sorry that my virginity, which was about to become full of beauty, now

lies overcome by the sleep of death. And may it [the *mortalis somnus*] once cover your own ashes with earth of gold.”

As for the details, the impersonal construction of *dolere* followed by a dative of person (*doleat tibi quod* instead of *doleas quod*) is well attested as something of a colloquialism.³⁶ For *pulch[ra futura]... virginitas* I rely on *CLE* 1517 *vitam... brevem puellae, crescebat modo que futura pulcra multorumque amor*. The supplement *mort[al]i somn[o]* is almost certain in this context (with *mort[---]is om[n]---* we don’t seem to come at anything); for the eternal sleep of death cf. *CLE* 1997 *hic tumulata silet aeterno munere somni*.³⁷ At the end of *v.13* I supply *somn[o sepulta est]* as a stereotyped phrase.³⁸ The image of someone’s ashes being covered

²⁸ This inference looks natural in view of the very prominent position the word *ipsum* is given, standing at the beginning of the distich and waiting for the rest of its phrase to come. The meaning of *ipsum* here is the one that the pronoun normally has in phrases like *triennio ipso minor* (Cic. *Brut.* 161) or *decem ipsos dies* (id. *Fam.* 2.8.3); see *OLD*, s.v., 8c.

²⁹ For examples see *OLD*, s.v., 3.

³⁰ Seure 1916, 385.

³¹ For a particularly clear example among many, see Hernández Pérez 2001, 12 (on *CIL* 2.7.478).

³² The present participle in Latin was just about the last type of a 3rd-declension word to be affected by the vulgar confusion between *e* and *i* in the ablative: the ending *e* persisted as a feature that could set apart a genuine participle from what was to be taken as an adjective (or a noun) – see Leumann 1977, 438, and Stotz, *HLSMA* 4, VIII §35.9. The ablative absolute may still stand, participle or no participle, as *florenti* may simply be the ablative of *florens* the adjective (cf. *OLD*, s.v.); but my point is that *florenti* does not have to be an ablative here.

³³ Seure 1916, 386 n. 1. He was also aware of the difficulty with the participle ending (see Note Error: Reference source not found above).

³⁴ See Wolff 2000, 104–5, and Hernández Pérez 2001, 55–8. Classic examples from Latin literature are Cic. *Rosc. Am.* 124 (*nomen aureum Chrysogoni*) and *Ver.* 2.121 (*ius verrinum*); for a negative appreciation of the latter cf. Tac. *Dial.* 33.1.

³⁵ = Courtney 1995, no. 176, with a bibliography *ad loc.*

³⁶ Cf. e.g. Ter. *Ph.* 132 *tibi quia superest dolet*, Brut. ap. Cic. *ad Brut.* 25.6 *dolet mihi quod tu nunc stomacharis*, Sen. *Nat.* 4b.13.3 *nobis dolet... quod solem emere non possumus*, Pass. *Perp. Fel.* 6.5 *doluit mihi casus patris mei*, and on the other hand Cic. *Vat.* 31 *quis non doluit rei publicae casum?*, Caes. *Civ.* 1.9.2 *doluisse se quod populi Romani beneficium sibi extorqueretur*. See Kühner/Stegmann 1976, 2.276; Krebs/Schmalz 1905, s.v. *dolere*. Seure’s unconvincing reading *dolea(s) tibi* is a mark of deference to the “correct” usage.

³⁷ For similar uses of another word for “sleep” see Fele & al. 1988, s.v. *sopor*.

³⁸ Cf. Lucr. 1.133, 5.974, Verg. *Aen.* 2.265, Quint. *Decl.* 272.13.

with golden earth (v.14) is known from *CLE* 1308 = *ILS* 8132 *quisque huic tumulo possuit ardente lucernam, illius cineres aurea terra tegat*. According to Buecheler *ad loc.*, “ardentem lucernam adponunt parentantes (*monumento meo mensibus lucernam accendant* dig. XL 4, 44)”:³⁹ the idea is that the goodness of whoever makes a grave shine with light should once be rewarded with a burial shimmering with gold.⁴⁰ In *ILBulg* 248 the original motivation is disappeared, but the wish remains – may the husband once receive a burial equal to his loyalty and grief. The term *comes* in the epitaphs typically refers to wives rather than husbands;⁴¹ consequently *teque rog(o) com[e]s*⁴² in *l.*12 should mean “I, your life’s companion, beseech you”, which, however, is inconsistent with the apparent need to identify the one to whom the request (*te rogo*) goes: we must therefore accept *comes* as a vocative and masculine here. This particular detail puts a mark of inferiority on the person of the husband;⁴³ which sort of inferiority, one can only guess, but we may relate this to the observation that the healthy young man Florens had married a sick daughter of wealthy parents, and that, notwithstanding the marriage, the girl’s burial took place in her parents’ mausoleum.

The other message goes to the parents (*genitores*) of the deceased. The lacuna in *l.*13 cannot hold as much text as was proposed by Seure – it cannot contain both the ending of v.14 and the whole first half of v.15. This means that we have the caesura of v.15 coming between *moneo* and *genitore[s]*; and, if this is true, the next lacuna (the one in *l.*14) occupies such a position that the subsequent [*r*]umpere *nemo* (*l.*15) cannot possibly be the ending of v.15. Again, these words cannot constitute the beginning of v.16, since there does not seem to be room enough for v.16 to stretch out thereafter. It is therefore necessary to take the words [*r*]umpere *nemo* as belonging to the second hemistich of v.16, to be supplied with a final word which must have stood in *l.*15 at roughly the same distance from *nemo* as is the one between *nemo* and the foregoing [*r*]umpere. Now if the final hemistich begins with a dactylic word, then it must be the latter half of a pentameter, and we shall have to supply an iambic word at the end, while the first half of the pentameter must be covered by the lacuna in *l.*14. I propose, then, to read vv.15–16 (*ll.*13–15) as follows:

v.15 *Vosque] ego nunc moneo, genitore[s]:
fatorum legem r]umpere nemo [potest.*

“And I remind you too, my parents: no one can break the law of destiny.”

Seure was perhaps right in suspecting that the lacuna contained another mention of *fata* (two previous being

found in *ll.* 5 and 9), but he was almost certainly wrong in supplying the phrase *rumpere fata*, which does not have the sense he credited it with (“change destiny”), but rather the opposite (“cut short a mortal life”).⁴⁴ This is why I prefer to supply *fatorum legem*;⁴⁵ other supplements are possible, though.⁴⁶

The previous line of verse (v.15) should be an hexameter, the beginning of which is easily restored, *vosque* being parallel to the beginning of the first message (cf. v.12 *teque*); for the rest cf. *CLE* 1494 *vos ego nunc moneo* etc.⁴⁷ This, however, is the point where the calculation we attempted a moment ago yealds one significant result: if v.16 is to begin immediately after *genitore[s]*, then v.15 must be an unfinished hexameter line. The fact is that unfinished lines of verse are not uncommon in the inscriptions and cannot always be reduced to errors committed by the stonemasons. Nevertheless, our v.15 might be an instance of this type of error. As already observed by Seure, the carving of *ILBulg* 248 is such that the letters become more and more condensed as the text goes on⁴⁸ – but then suddenly there comes a point

³⁹ For lamps lit on graves cf. also *ILS* 8366 and 8368, and see Toynbee 1971, 63.

⁴⁰ The parodic occurrence of *cuius cineres aurea terra tegat* in an erotic graffito from Ostia, Courtney 1995, no. 94e, suggests that the formula was known and used rather more widely than we would infer from the extant epitaphs.

⁴¹ Cf. *CLE* 96, 110, 516, 1187; markedly so in 1432 *thalami tumuliq(ue) comis*; a surviving wife referring to herself in 2099 *dulcis vita fuit tecum, comes anxia lucem aeternam sperans hanc cupit esse brevem*.

⁴² The actual form of the word may have been *com[i]s* as well, cf. *CLE* 439, 1409, 1432.

⁴³ Note that even the use of *comes* for “wife” is rather uncommon outside the epitaphs. Literary texts show a clear preference for *coniux* or *consors*, presumably because *comes* was all but a blunt statement of inferiority – cf. *OLD*, s.v., 2: “a companion, friend, comrade (often in an inferior capacity or of humbler rank)”.

⁴⁴ Cf. *CLE* 1156 *Parcae crudeles, nimium properastis rumpere fata mea*, with an obvious reliance on clichés like *ruperunt fila sorores* or *ruperunt stamina Parcae* or *tuos/meos mors ruperit annos*, which is by far the most common use of *rumpere* in the epitaphs (see Fele & al. 1988, s.v.).

⁴⁵ Cf. *CLE* 386 *invida .. fati lex*, 432 *vota supervacua fletusque .. naturae leges fatorumque arguit ordo*, 1021 *fati quod lege necessit*, 1278 *fati .. lege*, 1530 *A fatorum lege*.

⁴⁶ E.g. *Parcarum legem*, cf. *CLE* 428 and 1160; or even *aeternam legem*, cf. *CLE* 104.

⁴⁷ Parataxis after *moneo* also in *CLE* 627 *alios mone: vita brevis est* and 1231 *qui legitis, moneo: vivite, mors properat*, as well as in the cliché *vivite victuri/mortales/felices, moneo, mors omnibus instat* (485, 486, 803).

⁴⁸ Seure 1916, 379.

ever since her girlhood that her marriage someday would bring misfortune; prior to the fateful race that would make her Hippomenes' wife, she tries to dissuade him by delivering an impeccable piece of oratory, the sum of which is this:

*dum licet, hospes, abi, thalamosque relinque cruentos:
coniugium crudele meum est.* (620–1)

I believe that this line of Ovid was the model for *crudeles thalamos relinquere* in *ILBulg* 248: the author appears to have used the very words that he found in the best-known literary version of a myth whose central motif, love-making at the wrong time, closely corresponded to the real case he was illustrating. From his point of view, the fact that Ovid's *thalamos relinquere* now described a very different reality – not the act of shying away from a marriage but the one of dying in the marital bed – was a legitimate and agreeable effect of the transference he had made.

* * *

The central part of the epitaph begins with the old and much-favoured *topos* of the natural order of human deaths reversed⁵⁸ – the girl died too early to be able to bury her own parents:

v.5 [Sic d]isceptarunt fata, ne pia esse(m) patri
nec mat[ri]] TEMRE pie faemine caste.

“Fate decided that I should never perform the [last] duty to my father or my mother [...] a pious and virtuous woman.”

At the beginning of v.5 I propose [sic d]isceptarunt *fata, ne* eqs., rather than the less idiomatic *nam* eqs. (as supplied by Seure).⁵⁹ The main interest, however, lies in the occurrence of *disceptare* here and again later (v.10). This verb seems entirely absent from *CLE*: in this respect the verse inscriptions comply with the usage of high poetry, in which neither *disceptare* nor *disceptatio* is anywhere to be found.⁶⁰ What is more, *ILBulg* 248 has the unpoetic *disceptare* in a derived meaning which, while attested in classical Latin prose, belonged to the judiciary-administrative jargon – based on the primary sense of looking into, and arbitrating in, a quarrel or lawsuit, it acquired the more general sense of determining, ruling, or deciding.⁶¹ The unexpected occurrence of a word from this register⁶² in an epitaph sheds more light on the personal profile of the author: with his apparent belief that the solemnity of what he had to say would be improved with a bit of bureaucratism here and there, he must have been of the half-educated kind.

The lacuna in v.6 (*I.5*) and the few letters beyond it are perhaps best left as they stand. Seure's idea was that *TEMRE* meant *tenerae*, but such a spelling is in fact difficult to account for – granted that the form is syncopated,⁶³ the *M* for *n* still remains unexplained. Moreover, it would be startling to find the epithet *tenera* attributed to the mother rather than to the dead girl herself. The epitaphs often have *tenera aetas*, *teneri anni*, *tenerum corpus*, *tenera membra* etc., to the point that the qualification *tener* seems virtually reserved for the young deceased.⁶⁴ Another hypothesis would be that the mutilated part of *I.5* contained the name of the mother: *nec mat[ri] ---]te M(a)tr(on)e, pie faemine caste*; the woman called ...*ta Matriona* would of course be the one whose name appears on the architrave of the mausoleum.⁶⁵ Still, to take *MRE* as a contractive abbreviation looks much too forced, the more so as the *hedera* at the end of the line proves there was no lack of space.⁶⁶

* * *

With *I.6*, v.7, we come to the point where the right-hand fragments of the inscription offer just a few more letters; from *I.7* on only the left part remains, so that any

⁵⁸ For the origin and diffusion of this *topos*, see Lier 1903–04, § 4.

⁵⁹ Cf. e.g. *CLE* 417 *sic denique fata tuler[unt]*, 490 *sic fata dederunt*, 1339 *sic rerum natura iubet, sic temporum ordo*, 2156 *sic se fata ferebant*; for the cataphora, 382 *sic tulerat fatus, non exsuperasse parentes*.

⁶⁰ The only exception being Sil. 16.186 *disceptentque armis terrarum uter imperet orbi*.

⁶¹ E.g. Cic. *Ver.* 5.183, *Mil.* 23, *Fat.* 46; its occurrence in *Leg.* 2.21 suggests that the usage was ancient.

⁶² More generally, *disceptare* as a “popularized technicality” appears to have had some currency in Late Latin. The Vulgate offers a number of examples of *disceptare*, *disceptatio* in contexts where *contendere*, *contentio* would have been preferred in Classical Latin.

⁶³ As are the reflexes of *tenerum* in Western Romance: see e.g. *REW*, no. 8645.

⁶⁴ See Fele & al. 1988, s.v.

⁶⁵ *ILBulg* 247; see above, p. 00.

⁶⁶ One may further speculate that the both *hederae* in *ILBulg* 248 (*ll.* 3 and 5) were used to label ametric places in the text; if so, their position at line-ends would be incidental. This would explain why space was used sparingly in *I.5* (cf. the ligatured *AT* before the lacuna) only to finish with a *hedera*. To my knowledge, however, the use of *hederae* with this specific purpose is unparalleled. (Not close enough comes the interesting and yet unnoticed role of *hederae* in an inscription from Capidava, *IScM* 5.31 *sibi et... coniugi sue posuit titulum vibus ■ vixit annis ■ item coniux annis ■ avete*: the two latter *hederae* were seemingly meant as placeholders for numerical data to be inserted when the time came.)

attempt at restitution becomes more difficult and less definitive. A lucky circumstance, though, is that of the vv.8–11 the beginnings and endings are preserved. Here is how I read v.7:

v.7 *pro piet[ate lac]rimas satiavi fata superba,*

“Instead of [doing this] duty [of mine], I sated the arrogant fate with tears”,

with an obvious connection to vv.5–6: the girl was forced to give her parents *pro pietate lacrimas*, “tears instead of *pietas*”. *Pro pietate* is a phrase typical of many tomb inscriptions in prose and verse, mostly within the formula *pro pietate posuit*, “[this monument] dutifully erected by...”. The *pietas* in this phrase is normally the one shown to the dead by the living; but as, on the other hand, the inscriptions very often call the dedicatees *pietissimi*, it is no wonder that *pro pietate* was sometimes taken to mean “in return for his/her *pietas*”, referring to the deceased.⁶⁷ This sort of shift makes it easier to accept *pro pietate* in *ILBulg* 248 in the sense that it apparently has, “instead of being *pia*”.⁶⁸

After *pro pietate lacrimas* one anticipates *praestiti* or the like.⁶⁹ What comes instead is an unexpected turn. It looks as if two consecutive ideas had been squeezed together to form an indistinct unity. What would normally be worded like this, (*parentibus*) *pro pietate praestiti lacrimas quibus fata superba satiavi*, became *pro pietate lacrimas satiavi fata superba*. To say *lacrimas fata satiavi* (literally “I sated Fate tears”) instead of using the ablative (*lacrimis*, “...with tears”) was not impossible. The double accusative was an occasional solution for the ever-present dilemma concerning the choice of a direct object for a number of different verbs: the possibility of saying, for instance, *complere vas aqua* and also *complere aquam* gave rise to constructions which are ultimately similar to the English “feed somebody something”: e.g. *alqm alqd nutrire* (cf. Soran. 1.87), *potare* (cf. Iren. lat. 2.33.2), *curare* (“cure”, cf. Aug. Civ. Dei 22.8), *alqd alqd perfundere* (cf. Apic. 6.9.13), *perunguere* (cf. Orib. lat. Eup. 4.64 (Aa)).⁷⁰ In the inscriptions we have *CIL* 5.1863 *titulum immanem montem Alpinum ingentem litteris inscripsit* and especially *CLE* 737 *qui tantum properasti matris foedare senectam senilemque aetatem tantos onerare dolores*.⁷¹

So, with *satiavi fata superba* the sentence suddenly turns towards the topic of fatal destiny. The motive for this may appear straightforward – the author of the Lădzane epitaph simply liked to talk about destiny (he mentions *fata* three times). This, however, does not ex-

plain the choice of the other word, *satiare*, which is unparalleled in the epitaphs. *Satiare fata*, if taken literally, makes for an odd picture.⁷² True, if we assume that *satiare* here means “fulfil, accomplish, realize” (a figurative sense occasionally found in Late Latin),⁷³ then *satiavi fata* would mean “I fulfilled my fate” (viz. by passing away); but the doubt remains whether we can take the verb metaphorically and still allow for the double accusative. The literal interpretation, therefore, looks more probable, with a further suspicion that, if the author built an awkward sentence around a bizarre expression and did so in the middle of a text for which he was relying on commonplace ideas and ready formulas, he must have had some strong motive to depart from the conventional.

Judging by the extant beginning of v.8 (*nomine*), this segment of the epitaph is where the name of the deceased was given. For this line and the next I venture to propose the following restitution:

v.8 *nomine [quae Satia genitori Eva]restit[o voca]bar,*
qui nuncquam sc[eleratus erat, quoad] eqs.

“I was called Satia by my father Evarestus, who had never been wretched until the moment when...”

⁶⁷ E.g. *CIL* 13.8650 *nepoti suo pro pietate sua f. c.*

⁶⁸ Seure took *pro* to be exclamative, whence *pro piet[as]*; after which he supposed that an originally hypermetric verse had been curtailed by the carver: <inter> *pr]imas satiavi fata superba* (he offered *per lac]rimas* as an alternative, though: Seure 1916, 382, n.1). I find *pro piet[ate]* preferable to *pro piet[as]* not only in view of the stereotype mentioned above, but also because of this: the normal (and very common) use of the exclamative *pro* in the epitaphs is the one equivalent to “What a... this is!”: cf. e.g. *CLE* 501 *pro dolor*, 750 *pro nefas*, 1061 *pro superum crimen, fatorum culpa nocentum*, 1535 *A pro scelus infandum detestandum(ue) legenti*. In this respect the epitaphs again seem to follow the post-classical literary usage, in which the presence, rather than the absence, of the thing mentioned after *pro* is what causes the indignation: e.g. Sen. *Suas.* 7.11 *pro facinus indignum*, Flor. *Epit.* 1.36 (3.1.9) *pro dedecus*; contra, Sen. *Dial.* 11.17.4 *pro pudor imperii*.

⁶⁹ Phrases like *supremum officium praestare* are often found in the epitaphs (see Fele & al. 1988, s.v. *praestare*). In *pro pietate lacrimas praestiti* the direct object *lacrimas* would be standing ἀπὸ κοινοῦ – cf. *CLE* 826 *nomen titulus praestat suisque dolorem*.

⁷⁰ Cf. Svennung 1935, 226–31. For the very wide diffusion of the double accusative in Late Latin see also Bonnet 1890, 525–6.

⁷¹ Löfstedt 1933–42, 1.250.

⁷² The similarity with Apul. *Met.* 11.1 *fato... iam meis tot tantisque cladibus satiatio* – is only superficial. In Apuleius, *cladibus fatum satiatio* means to “live through many calamities”, after which his hero finally arrives at a *spes salutis*.

⁷³ E.g. Cypr. *Op. et el.* 5 ni .. *operum accessione satientur (deprecationes)*.

This would mean that the oddities of v.7 were there to prepare the ground for the subsequent pun on the personal name, *satiavi-Satia*. For the name, cf. *AE* 1982.677 (*Satia Maxsuma*), *CIL* 8.7710 (*Satia Ruf* ()), 13.2125 (*Satia Heliane*).⁷⁴ The rest of my supplements is based on the assumption that *qui* at the beginning of v.9 refers back to some male person mentioned in v.8. This person is very probably the father. As already shown, there is a strong possibility that both the husband and the mother of the deceased were mentioned by name in v.3 and v.6 respectively; the father's name would now, so to speak, conclude the list of mourners. *Genitori* would be a dative of the agent, looking forward to *vocabar*: “my father used to call me *Satia*”.⁷⁵ In the epitaphs the mention of the parents as the “callers of the name” is often purely conventional; a well-known early example of this is *CLE* 52, in which the name of the deceased is thus introduced: *nomen parentes nominarunt Claudiam*.⁷⁶ Both this wording and the one I have supplied for *ILBulg* 248 may appear strange; as Matteo Massaro puts it, there was little point in referring to a gentile name as specifically given or used by the parents: a parental couple in which the male partner was a Claudius could not help calling any daughters *Claudia*.⁷⁷ However, other examples suggest that this point should not be pressed too far. Take *CLE* 98: after *D. M. Xanthippes sive Iaiae C. Cassius Lucilianus alumnae dulcissimae*, a *carmen* begins by restating the name of the deceased; a section follows by way of a *laudatio*, and the epitaph closes on these lines:

*Quam, si qua pietas insitast caelestibus,
viventis ingenio soli et luci reddite
altoris memorem, quem parentes dixerant,
cum primum natust, Lucilianum Cassium.*

There was no need here to restate any names, and even with the names the epitaph could have finished off a whole line earlier (*altoris memorem Luciliani Cassii* would have done nicely); the parents of the *altor* had nothing to do with the fact that his name appeared on a third person's tombstone, but they ended up there nonetheless, as the man “whom his parents had called Lucilianus Cassius as soon as he was born” was building a lasting memory not so much to his *alumna* as to himself.

Back to the Lădzane epitaph, any attempt at filling the lacuna which opens after “who never...” (*qui nuncquam* sc[, end of l.8)⁷⁸ has to be based on what comes after the lacuna: “a day chosen by fate” etc. The text in its present state still allows us to grasp the general sense: the father has never been as utterly devastated by anything as he is now by his daughter's death. With sc[immediately

before the lacuna the choices are few: *qui nuncquam* sc[*ierat* leaves us in want of an accusative object (a subordinate clause would be too clumsy for the space), and it is difficult to see how this could be provided without really vexing the idiom; on the other hand, *sceleratus* is a genuine “tombstone word”,⁷⁹ and with *qui nuncquam* sc[*eleratus erat* in v.9 we come fairly close to the required sense.

My next point is about a mere, or even faint, possibility. Suppose that the supplement I have proposed for v.9 is correct: the middle section of the epitaph then reads:

“I was called [name] by my father [name], who had never been *sceleratus* until one day, – the day that wicked fate had chosen for me to be overly charming to my husband, – I passed away from the cruel bedroom after an onset of disease.” (vv.8–11)

Now why should the very natural idea of a father's being shaken by his daughter's death be put in words in such an oblique manner, by saying that he had *not* been devastated *before* that event? This again is an oddity, not unlike the two that we have seen previously – the one with “sating one's fate” in v.7 and especially the one with the girl's being ill “while her husband was healthy” in v.3. With the supplement *genitori Eva]restt[o* in v.8,

⁷⁴ The name *Gesatia* (*Gisatia*, *Cisatia*, *Isatia*), which is even better attested in the inscriptions, should also be borne in mind; the pun would then be somewhat less pronounced.

⁷⁵ An adnominal ablative of origin (*Satia, genitore Evaresto*) would be less probable. Sporadically found ever since Archaic Latin (e.g. *Pl. Asin.* 499 *Periphanes Rhodo mercator dives*, *Caes. Civ.* 1.24.4 *N. Magius Cremona*; see Löfstedt 1933–42, 1.297, and Hofmann & Szantyr 1965, 105), this construction seems confined to indicating the *land or city* of origin. An exception, at least in terms of frequency, is the *tribus* within the full-name formula (e.g. *ILS* 2149 *T. Iulius T. f. Voltinia Paternus*), but texts like *ILBulg* 248 cannot seem to have been modelled on this.

⁷⁶ A further example in *CLE* 384 *Samnis sum genere, Proculam dixere parentes*; also in many Greek epitaphs, e.g. Vélilhac 1978–82, no. 70 υἱὸς ἐγὼ γενόμεν Ἀγαπωμένου, ᾧ με μιγεῖσα Κουίντα τέκεν Θαλερῆ... ἐνδुकέως δὲ τρέφοντες Ἀτείμητρον μ' ἐκάλεσαν, 79 Ἡρόφιλον δ' ἐκάλουν με πατὴρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ, 123 οὐνομα δ' ἐν τοκέεσσι φίλοις κέκλητ' Ἀσιάρχης. The whole thing can be traced back to an Homeric scheme, cf. *Il.* 9.561–562 τὴν δὲ τότε ἐν μεγάροισι πατὴρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ Ἀλκυόνην καλέεσκον, *Od.* 8.550 εἶπ' ὄνομα ὅτι σε κείθι κάλεον μήτηρ τε πατὴρ τε, 9.366–7 Οὐτίς ἐμοί γ' ὄνομα: Οὐτὶν δέ με κικλήσκουσι μήτηρ ἠδὲ πατὴρ ἠδ' ἄλλοι πάντες ἐταῖροι.

⁷⁷ Massaro 1992, 95.

⁷⁸ For the not uncommon spelling *nuncquam* cf. e.g. *CLE* 161, 1107, 1171, 1988 (twice).

⁷⁹ Common in prose and verse inscriptions alike: cf. e.g. *CIL* 6.9961, 15160, 21899, *ILCV* 4191, 4191A, *CLE* 1569, 1994.

I propose to explain this last quirk as another pun on a personal name. It is conceivable that the girl's father had a *cognomentum* dubbing the bearer a good man;⁸⁰ it is in this sense that he might be called *numquam sceleratus* ("never wicked", or "Never Wicked"); he became *sceleratus*, "wretched", only after he lost his daughter. A pun based on the two meanings of *sceleratus* is actually attested in one of Martial's epigrams, 9.15 *inscripsit tumulis septem scelerata virorum se fecisse Chloe. quid pote simplicius?:* the "candidness" of the seven-time widow appears in the fact that the tombs of her husbands are all inscribed with the words *Chloe coniunx scelerata fecit*.⁸¹

* * *

Let us now take a wider look at the text again. The Lădzane epitaph seems to consist of three sections. The first (vv. 1–4), without being purely generic, follows a cliché and is marked by the predominance of the conventional:

v.1 *Siste, viator, iter, animum[que intende sepulchro,
et lege quam dure sit mihi v[ita d]ata.
Ipsium marcebam Florenti caro m[ar]ito
in XIII annum: mors mihi saeva fuit.*

The middle section (vv. 5–11) concentrates on the specific with an obvious leaning towards the narrative. This is where all the key persons come into sight (let me emphasize that in making them appear under their names my intention has been to point at an interesting possibility without ever thinking it could be made into a probability), while some expressions and images that first came as vague hints to an untold reality acquire a fuller meaning in the scene of the girl's death:

v.5 *[Sic d]isceptarunt fata, ne pia esse(m) patri
nec mat[ri]---] TEMRE pie faemine caste.
Pro piet[ate lac]rimas satiavi fata superba,
nomine [quae Satia genitori Eva]rest[o voca]bar;
qui nuncquam sc[eleratus erat, quoad] ab impia fata
v.10 *disceptata die ut n[imis essem blanda] marito,
crudelis thalamos post mor[bi accessum] reliqui.**

The third section (vv. 12–16), with its two apostrophes and messages of a rather common sort, is smoothly but not very tightly connected to the previous:

v.12 *Teque rog(o), com[e]s, dolea(t) tibi, pulch[ra futura]
quod mea virginitas mort[al]i somn[o sepulta est],
isque tuas cineres aurea ter[ra tegat].
v.15 *Vosque] ego nunc moneo, genitore[s]:
fatorum legem r]umpere nemo [potest.**

This division appears to be the underlying factor when it comes to the form of the epitaph. The most salient formal feature of *ILBulg* 248 is the sporadic appearance of pentameter lines in a composition consisting mainly of hexameters. This phenomenon occurs in quite a number of epitaphs and is usually attributable to the authors' inability to compose proper elegiacs.⁸² In the Lădzane epitaph, however, the pentameters do not seem to come chaotically.⁸³ It rather looks as if the first section was composed in elegiacs and the second in hexameters, while in the third section each of the two pentameters marks the finale of its own message. The whole scheme is alien to the classical canons of verse composition, but I still do not believe that the author simply wanted to write elegiacs throughout but could not do it properly.⁸⁴ On the contrary, I think that in *ILBulg* 248 the pentameters were used on purpose.

* * *

As he worked on the restitution of the Lădzane epitaph, Seure visibly followed one important rule: any text he was proposing to bridge the lacunas had to be prosodically correct. This is unquestionably a sound principle, but its application in this case proved contrary to its purpose, which of course is probability of

⁸⁰ For the name *Evarestus* cf. *CIL* 6.13088, 17299, 17300, 10.2328. Another name, *Euchrestus*, would also do in the context and is actually attested more frequently. There is, however, the additional problem of the beginning of l.8, which alone in *ILBulg* 248 cannot be made to coincide with the beginning of a word (Seure's *rest(i)t[ue]bar* does not seem to fill the gap; my own first idea was *Rest[uta voca]bar*, which again requires too much space). It is therefore necessary to conclude that the name was divided between l.7 and l.8, in which case the smoother division, *Eva]rest[o]*, looks preferable to *Euch]rest[o]*. For the spelling *-st-* cf. *ILS* 8223 *damnas esto*, *AE* 1988.195 *posterisq[ue]*, and especially *AE* 1996.1221 (Siscia, third century) Ὀπτῶτα... Κάλιστος... Κέρτα.

⁸¹ Zarker 1966, 150.

⁸² See e.g. Mariné Bigorra 1952, 168–9, and Courtney 1995, no. 27. See also n. Error: Reference source not found below.

⁸³ For some similar cases see Galletier 1922, 287–8.

⁸⁴ Seure 1916, 382. According to Seure, the main reason for such "derailments" was that the authors tended to reuse lines of verse they found elsewhere, so that sometimes a stolen hexameter was used to convey an idea for which, in the actual context, a pentameter was needed, or vice versa; in other words, the correct handling of elegiacs required a degree of versatility hardly achievable to those who heavily depended on external (and disparate) models. This is a clever explanation, but I do not think it should be unreservedly applied to the case of *ILBulg* 248.

the restitution. As one examines Seure's supplements one cannot help noticing that the least fortunate solutions appear wherever he refused to hypothesize the features that, apart from being sufficiently attested elsewhere in the epitaphs, were already present in the preserved portions of *ILBulg* 248 itself: the possibility of granting an ametric status to numeric or onomastic data, and, more importantly, the acceptance of certain incorrect prosodies. It looks neither arbitrary nor unfounded to assume, in view of v.5 *pīa*,⁸⁵ that in v.12 too *cōm[e]s* is the substantive, not the adjective, despite the quantity; or to supply *somn[ō]* in v.13, with the wrong quantity of the ultima, after actually seeing *carō* employed in v.3, *faeminē* in v.6, and *disceptatā* in v.10. On the other hand, the quantity of the pretonic syllable was handled correctly by the author even in some delicate positions, cf. v.3 *Flōrenti*, v.11 *crūdelis*; this may be incidental; still, it is the reason why the restitution of *sepulta est* at the end of v.13 should be preferred to anything like *sōpita est*.⁸⁶ In the supplied part of v.9 I have used the standard spelling *quoad* only to avoid confusion; what I really assume is the monosyllabic form of this word spelt in any of the attested fashions (*quad*, *quod*, *quot* etc.).⁸⁷

As far as metre is concerned, the main difficulty lies in the first half of v.7, *pro piet[ate lacr]imas*. My supplement here is based on what the size and context of the lacuna seem to suggest or even impose, with little or no regard for the metre. On the assumption that the supplement is correct, the faultiness of v.7 would not consist simply in erroneous syllable-quantities. The whole first half of this line would have to be scanned *pró pietáte lacrimás*, with the second ictus falling on two syllables (*tate*). In verse inscriptions this is no strange phenomenon;⁸⁸ one may even argue that it is attested more frequently than is usually admitted. There is, for example, the case of *CLE* 1988, v.21 *quid crura? Atalantes status illi comicus ipse*, which once elicited the following explanation: "This line is a real monster – it has seven feet and can be scanned only under the double condition of allowing the ultima in *status* to lengthen before the caesura and making the ultima of *crura* into a long syllable too, with the hiatus left open before *Atalantes*, etc."⁸⁹ As a matter of fact, the line contains no incorrect prosodies but only an anapaest in the second foot – before the caesura it scans *quíd crur(a) átalantés*, i.e. 1– 2 3–, and it continues normally (...*status ílli cómicus ípse*).⁹⁰ Similarly I assume that in v.7 of *ILBulg* 248 the words *pro piet[ate lacr]imas* metrically stand for 1– 2 3–, with the second foot having its first half resolved in two

light syllables. This presupposes the wrong quantity of the accented syllable in *pietáte*, which, again, is paralleled by *esse* actually standing in v.5.⁹¹

* * *

Those are the details that complete the picture of the Lădzane epitaph. In many aspects, including vocabulary, grammar, versification, and even invention, this epitaph clearly deviates from classical literary usage. Yet there are palpable limits to this deviation. The author obviously knew some good poetry and was relatively skilful in putting his models into use. To claim that he composed his little poem "in the style of the Augustan poets"⁹² may be an overstatement, but it would be even more wrong to think of the Lădzane epitaph as a prime example of ineptitude set in stone. If nothing else, it represents a coherent whole – the segmentation is logical, the first-person strategy is consistently carried out, and, as far as one can see, some ingenuity was invested in the arrangement of the conventional data. No reader accustomed to Latin literary texts can help recalling how much poetry was superior to this, and how far; but the comparison is unfair. The testimony of Latin epigraphy reminds us that the scale of literary (and/or sub-literary) value and achievement was longer than we usually assume, and there are a great many epitaphs which, by any fair measure, must rank inferior to this one.

⁸⁵ However, see n. 91 below.

⁸⁶ For *somno sopitus* cf. Nep. *Dio* 2.5, Verg. *Aen.* 1.180, Phaedr. 3.10.31, Curt. 8.3.9, 6.22, 9.30, Plin. *Nat.* 2.223 and 11.185.

⁸⁷ See Fele & al. 1988, s.v. *quoad*, and Mihăescu 1978, § 317.

⁸⁸ To resolve the first half of a dactyl is an occasional licence which the verse inscriptions share with the early dactylic poetry: cf. Enn. var. 36 *Mitylenae est pecten*, 42 *melanurum turdum* (and also *Ann.* 490 *capitibus nutantis*, according to Drexler 1967, 85; alternatively (e.g. Leumann 1977, 91) a syncope is assumed in *cap(i)tibus*, for which cf. the hexameter ending *facilia faxeis* in *CLE* 248).

⁸⁹ Galletier 1922, 301.

⁹⁰ Neither is there really a reason to follow Lommatzsch *ad loc.*: "lege *Atlantes*".

⁹¹ Seure scanned the latter part of v.5 as *né pia esse patri*, making it into the second half of a pentameter, in which case neither *pīa* nor *esse* would be true. I find Seure's scansion unconvincing, since (1) the line would then amount to a half-hexameter plus half-pentameter (a structure unparalleled in *ILBulg* 248) and (2) at *pia esse* it leaves an hiatus open before the ictus, while in the extant portion of *ILBulg* 248 the only hiatus, that in v.10 *die ut*, is duly eliminated even though it occurs under the ictus, where it could have been easily left open.

⁹² Gerov, "Romanity" 2, 378, no. 381.

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Резиме:

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ЕПИТАФ *ILBulg* 248: У ПОТРАЗИ ЗА ИЗГУБЉЕНИМ ИМЕНИМА

Кључне речи. – Римска епиграфика, латински натписи у стиху, епитафи, језик римске поезије.

Овај чланак посвећен је читању и тумачењу једног давно објављеног али мало разјашњеног римског надгробног натписа у стиху, чији су значајни фрагменти својевремено нађени у области Ловча (Бугарска). Аутор чланка предлаже овакво читање:

сти. 1 *Siste, viator, iter, animum[que intende sepu]lchro,
et lege quam dure sit mihi v[ita d]ata.
Ipsum marcebam Florenti caro m[ar]jito
in XIII annu[m]: mors mihi saeva fuit.*

5 *[Sic d]isceptarunt fata, ne pia esse(m) patri
nec mat[ri---] TEMRE pie faemine caste.
Pro pie[ate lacr]imas satiavi fata superba,
nomine [quae Satia genitori Eva]rest[o voca]bar;
qui nuncquam sc[eleratus erat, quoad] ab impia fata
10 disceptata die ut n[imis essem blanda] marito,
crudelis thalamos post mor[bi accessum] reliqui.*

*Teque rog(o), com[e]s, dolea(t) tibi, pulch[ra futura]
quod mea virginitas mort[al]i somn[o sepulta est],
isque tuas cineres aurea ter[ra] tegat.*

15 *Vosque] ego nunc moneo, genitore[s]:
fatorum legem r]umpere nemo [potest.*

Чини се, наиме, да је тај епитаф, и што се садржине и што се метра тиче, рашчлањен на три релативно оделита сегмента. Први сегмент, који почиње зазивањем путника-пролазника, ослања се најпре на један клише познат из неколико других споменика (који су, међутим, сви из Италије), а иза тога дознајемо за младу покојницу која је, хронично болујући, једва »довенула до четрнаесте«, и за њеног мужа, на чијем се имену сместа заснива један каламбур којим нам

се саопштава да је он, насупрот својој несретној супрузи, био »здравствујући«. Места најтежа за тумачење налазе се у средишњем сегменту, чија би садржина била ова: иза неких необичних, по себи тешко објашњивих склопова, који би се можда могли мотивисати, опет, каламбурима заснованим на изгубљеним именима покојнице, њеног оца и можда мајке, долази нешто као минијатуран извештај о смрти младе жене чија би хронична болест била ескалирала у брачној постељи при (првом?) покушају конзумације брака, на дан њеног четрнаестог рођендана; та чудновата прича из стварног живота испричана је не без извесног ослонца на мит о Аталанти како га је испричао Овидије у *Метаморфозама*. Завршни сегмент састоји се од двеју порука које покојница упућује мужу односно родитељима; ту, као при почетку, имамо посла са овешталим формулама.

Превод епитафа реституисаног на понуђени начин био би овај: »Застани, путниче, и обрати пажњу на овај гроб, и прочитај под каквим ми је суровим условом било дато да живим. Свом драгом мужу Флоренту [»Цветку«] ја сам венула тачно до у четрнаесту годину. Смрт ми је била свирепа. Судбина је одредила да се не одужим оцу нити мајци... доброј и чедној жени. Уместо тога, ја сам охолу судбину наситила сузама: именован Сација [»Сита«] називао ме је мој отац Еварест [»Добрица«], који никад није био злехуд, све док, на дан који је немилоствива судбина одредила да се исувише умилим своје мужу, по наступу болести не преминух из окупне брачне постеље. Тебе пак молим, сапутниче мој: нек ти буде жао што моје девичанство, које се развијало у лепоту, лежи укупано смртним сном. Он нек и твој пепео покрије златном земљом. А сад велим и вама, родитељи: закон судбине нико не може прекршити.«