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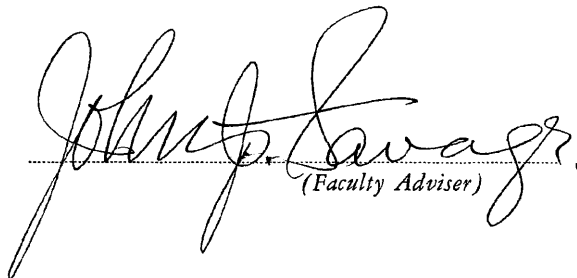
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LITERARY CRITICISM IN THE

NOCTES ATTICAE

OF AULUS GELLIUS

BY

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LITERARY CRITICISM IN THE NOCTES ATTICAE  
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## CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

## LIFE OF AULUS GELLIUS

The antiquarian movement saw its greatest vogue in the reign of Hadrian and the Antonines. Although there is hardly a period in Rome's literary history where this movement was not cultivated, the disappearance of the genius of the glorious golden age, a renewed interest in Hellenism and the steadily increasing influence of the grammarians and the professors of rhetoric and philosophy tended to make the second century particularly favorable to antiquarianism. Aulus Gellius in his Noctes Atticae gives a most interesting view of the influence it had upon literary achievements.

Save for what he tells us in the Noctes Atticae, we have very little information on the life of Gellius. The exact year of his birth is not certain, but Nettleship says that 123 A.D. is the most probable date.<sup>1</sup> Rome appears to have been his home.<sup>2</sup> In accordance with the custom of the time he studied the usual courses of grammar and rhetoric. The former subject he studied under Sulpicius Apollinaris, "vir in memoria nostra praeter alios doctus,"<sup>3</sup> through whose influence he acquired his interest in literature both Greek and Latin.<sup>4</sup> Titus Castricius,

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1. Henry Nettleship, Lectures and Essays on Subjects Connected with Latin Literature. First Series, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1885, p.249. Cf. also, Ludwig Friedländer, Roman Life and Manners Under the Early Empire. English Translation by J. H. Freese, Leonard A. Magnus. London, George Routledge & Sons, 1928, Vol. IV, p.326.
  2. Aulus Gellius, The Attic Nights, with an English Translation by John C. Rolfe, New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1927, Book XX, 6, 1.
  3. N. A. XVIII, 4, 1.
  4. N. A. IV, 17, 9.

also esteemed for his learning, was one of his masters in rhetoric.<sup>1</sup> Antonius Julianus, the other, was an ardent antiquarian and directed, no doubt, Gellius's subsequent interests in the same field.<sup>2</sup> That Gellius heard Fronto during his early life at Rome would also explain his leanings toward antiquarianism. Upon the completion of his studies here, he went to Athens where he studied philosophy under Calvisius Taurus, "vir memoria nostra in disciplina Platonica celebratus."<sup>3</sup> In addition to this formal education his friendship with Herodes Atticus, "vir Graeca facundia praeditus," gave him access to the cultured society of Athens and the contacts he made during visits to the scholar's home further contributed to Gellius' interest in the liberal arts.<sup>4</sup> His sojourn in Athens was not spent entirely in study. A stroll with the admired Antonius Julianus, an excursion, a boat trip, all contributed to make his student days a pleasant memory.<sup>5</sup>

It was during his stay in Athens that Gellius began the Noctes Atticae as he tells us in the Praefatio:

Sed quoniam longinquis per hiemem noctibus in agro, sicuti dixi, terrae Atticae commentationes hasce ludere et facere exorsi sumus, idcirco eas inscripsimus Noctium esse Atticarum . . .<sup>6</sup>

His purposes in compiling his "notes" were he declares to provide reading matter for his children, when professional duties did not occupy their attention and, to furnish mentally alert readers with an incentive

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1. N.A. XIII, 22, 1.

2. N.A. I, 4, 1.

3. N.A. VII, 10, 1.

4. N.A. I, 2, 1.

5. Cf. Gaston Boissier, La Fin Du Paganisme, Paris, Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1907, pp. 178-180.

6. Praefatio, 4.

to study further the topics he has only touched upon.

Upon his return from Athens, he kept up his interest in philosophy and literature. This is evident from the friendship he contracted with Favorinus, a "philosophus," with whom he spent many an hour. Fronto, though inactive due to an attack of gout, attracted the scholars of the day to his home where Gellius tells us all listened with admiration to the learned savant (II,26).

Just what was Gellius' profession at Rome after he had completed his studies at Athens cannot be gleaned from the Noctes. He has a vague mention of legal business (XI, 3) and later a more explicit reference to judicial office, "cum Romae a consulibus iudex extra ordinem datus" (XII,13). Certainly his interest in literature was not a professional one, but rather that of a litterateur. In any case his notes are a valuable contribution to Roman literature for as Laurand says, "Aulu Gelle a su choisir . . . il se montre homme de gout."<sup>1</sup>

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1. L. Laurand, Manuel des Etudes Grecques et Latines, V. 312, Paris, Editions Auguste Picard, 1933.



## THE NOCTES ATTICAE

The Twenty books of the Noctes Atticae are divided into chapters which consist of notes varying in length from a few lines to several pages. Sandys describes the work as an "interesting and instructive compilation of varied lore on the earlier Latin Language and Literature."<sup>1</sup> Apart from this there are other subjects treated by Gellius -- philosophy, ethics, religion, grammar, philology and literary criticism. Interesting little anecdotes, such as Androclus and the Lion,<sup>2</sup> the lark in the grain field<sup>3</sup> and unusual events, as for example, what Aristotle has recorded about the birth of quintuplets<sup>4</sup> and the peculiar power of Pontic ducks<sup>5</sup>, find their place here also. For the many extracts from ancient authors and remarks on incidents in the lives of the Roman poets, the Noctes are invaluable.<sup>6</sup>

The earliest manuscripts divide the Noctes Atticae into two parts, containing respectively, Books I -- VII and VIII -- XX. These were not united into a single codex before the fourteenth or fifteenth century. The eighth book is lost except for the chapter headings and some inconsiderable fragments. The most important manuscripts are:

P. Codex Parisinus 5765, of the thirteenth century in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris.

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1. Sir John Edwin Sandys, A History of Classical Scholarship, Third Edition, Cambridge University Press, 1921, Vol. I, p.210.
  2. N. A. V, 14.
  3. N. A. II, 19.
  4. N. A. X, 2.
  5. N. A. XVII, 16.
  6. George Middleton and Thomas R. Mills, The Student's Companion to Latin Authors, London, Macmillan & Co., 1896, Appendix A., p.351.

R. Codex Lugduno - Batavianus Gronovianus 21, formerly Rottendor-  
fianus. This manuscript is written in various hands, for the most  
part of the twelfth century.

V. Codex Vaticanus 3452, of the thirteenth century.

Older than these three is the palimpsest A. (Palatino - Vaticanus XXIV)  
of about the seventh century. It supplies lacunae and corrects some  
erros found in P, R, and V.<sup>1</sup>

There is an English translation by W. Beloe, London, 3 vols., 1795.  
An excellent version is that of Weiss into German (1876).<sup>2</sup> There is  
a good French translation in the edition of Apuleius, Gellius and  
Petronius by Nisard.<sup>3</sup> The best English rendering is that of Professor  
Rolfe in the Loeb Library (1927 - 28).

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1. Aulus Gellius, The Attic Nights, with an English Translation by John  
C. Rolfe, New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1927, Introduction p.XVIII.
  2. A. Gellii, Noctium Atticarum, Liber I, Edited by Hazel Marie Hornsby,  
London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1936, Introduction, p.XXII.
  3. Ibid., p.XXII.

## CHAPTER II

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERARY CRITICISM AT ROME

A chapter on literary criticism is rarely, if ever, included in an account of the beginnings of the literary efforts of a people. Longinus gives us a reason for this when he says that "the judgment of style is the last and crowning fruit of long experience."<sup>1</sup> This is evident in the history of literary criticism among the Romans. Just as early Roman literature until it came under the influence of the Greek, was crude and inartistic, so also literary criticism was meagre and showed little insight. For criticism in the highest sense of the term presupposes a certain amount of literary production in order that definite rules and standards may be established or as one writer puts it "a literary self consciousness prompting in men's minds the question 'why and how does an author write' not merely 'what does he say to us.'"<sup>2</sup>

In the third century B.C., when the Romans first came into contact with the Greek literary masterpieces, the works of Andronicus, Naevius, Pacuvius and Accius were produced. As might be expected, their work was based upon Greek models. Andronicus was satisfied with translation while Naevius strove to bend the Latin tongue in an original work. But to Accius must be attributed the distinction of being the first Roman

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1. Longinus On The Sublime, W. Rhys Roberts, Text and Translation, London, Cambridge University Press, 1935, p.55.
  2. The Mind of Rome, Ed. Cyril Bailey, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1926, p.353.

writer to deal with questions of criticism. In the Didascalica he gives a brief history of Greek and Latin literature and comments upon tragedy and lyric poetry.<sup>1</sup>

The second century B. C. saw the further development of Latin literature and also the beginning of criticism. The plays of Plautus and Terence are evidence of this. The remarks of the earlier playwright on certain comic devices then in vogue and the essential difference between tragedy and comedy indicate the development of critical activity.<sup>2</sup> In this respect Terence shows greater skill than his predecessor. In the prologues which often serve as answers to the attacks of his rivals he gives instances of literary criticism. Those who accused him of "contamination" he refers to the works of Naevius, Ennius and Plautus. When charged with plagiarism he answers, "nullumst iam dictum quod non sit dictum prius."<sup>3</sup> The hackneyed comic devices and stock characters also receive comment from Terence and justify placing him among the early Roman critics.

C. Lucilius is another early but most important figure in the growth of Roman criticism. The fragments that remain of his work furnish interesting information upon the culture and literature of his day. The question of Analogy vs. Anomaly which divided the Greek scholars from Alexandria and Pergamum<sup>4</sup> was taken up by the Romans and is evident in the Satires of Lucilius. Especially does he censure the

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1. Rev. J. F. D'Alton, Roman Literary Theory and Criticism, London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1931, p.51.
  2. J. W. H. Atkins, Literary Criticism in Antiquity, London, Cambridge University Press, 1934, p.5.
  3. D'Alton, op.cit., p.9.
  4. W. R. Hardie, Lectures on Classical Subjects, London, Macmillan & Co. 1903, p.272.

solecisms and provincialism of his contemporaries and, on the other hand, lauds the beginning of "urbanitas."<sup>1</sup> Apart from his comments on diction, those on style are also important. The well known quarrel between Albucius and Mucius Scaevola furnishes Lucilius a description of the style which he likens to "a tessellated pavement in which the cubes are wrought with a cunning intricate pattern."<sup>2</sup>

Contemporary poets receive their share of Lucilius's attacks. Even Ennius, "noster ille Ennius," is satirized, while the tragic poets are a special object of his attacks.

To this same period belongs the famous canon of the Roman Comic Poets of Volcacius Sedigitus which Aulus Gellius cites in Book XV, 24. This canon is likewise evidence of Pergamene influence where such lists were drawn up to supply a standard for professional criticism in a particular branch of literature.<sup>3</sup>

The next period we meet in tracing the development of Roman literary criticism, that of Varro and Cicero, is according to Sikes, the one in which a start was made.<sup>4</sup> His reason for this statement rests on that principle mentioned in the beginning of this paper that criticism can exist only when authors have produced a considerable amount of work. Though he declares Varro "the first Roman who can be called a critic," the loss of his works "de poetis" and "de poematis," compel us to begin

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1. D'Alton, op. cit., p.41.

2. D'Alton, op. cit., p.45.

3. Hardie, op. cit., p.269

4. E. E. Sikes, Roman Poetry, London, Methuen & Co., 1923, p. 31.

the history of Latin criticism with Cicero.<sup>1</sup> However the influence that Varro exercised upon Cicero and Latin writers of this genre seems to demand a few words concerning the contributions he made to the stream of literary criticism at Rome. He was a man of wide learning, but of his many works only two have come down. He has drawn up canons of early Latin poetry and established the authenticity of many of the comedies of Plautus. His critical interests lay in the controversy so characteristic of the grammarian, the question of Analogy versus Anomaly. He decides in favor of a compromise arguing that both contributed to the development of language. In the matter of style he was an advocate of the doctrine of three styles.<sup>2</sup>

With Cicero literary criticism at Rome attained a high peak and laid the formulations of a movement that continued to exercise its influence on subsequent critics. Although his most outstanding work was in his own field of oratory, his judgments on poets and poetry are not insignificant. His knowledge of Greek poetry and the early Latin poets tended to make him more interested in form, though strangely enough, he did not seem to appreciate the poetry of his contemporaries, in particular, Catullus and Lucretius. His remarks on the De Rerum Natura in his letter to his brother Quintus are an example of this. In oratory or rather in rhetoric did he acquire greatest fame both with regard to his own achievements and to his profound critical acumen in appraising his own and the efforts of others. The De Oratore, the Brutus and Orator make up his three most important works on rhetoric

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1. Sikes, op. cit., p.32.
  2. D'Alton, op. cit., p.465.

and criticism. His use of the historical method and his enrichment of the critical vocabulary of the Latin language surpassed the work of all his predecessors and laid down the principles for future work of this type. But the most important result of his criticisms was the return to the guidance of the Greeks of the classical period, and with it the return to the classical creed.<sup>1</sup>

The influence on criticism of the literary circle which had begun with the Scipionic group is likewise seen in those formed under Augustus and Maecenas. The practice of recitations instituted by Pollio also aided in the growth of the criticism of poetry that was beginning at Rome.<sup>2</sup> It was through his contacts with these circles that Horace learned the dicta of true criticism. The Satires were Horace's first contribution when he defines the genre Satire and lays down the rules that should govern the writing of satire.<sup>3</sup> But it is by the Epistle to the Pisos (the Ars Poetica) that Horace gains his distinction as a literary critic. The principle of the Golden Mean runs throughout the poem both in the choice of subject matter and of style.<sup>4</sup> Like Cicero he urges writers to keep to the classical creed.

Criticism in post-Augustan times did not undergo the decline that literature did, but instead achieved a perfection that has made it a model for succeeding ages. Not only the inferiority of the literature, but the extravagance and insincerity of the style in prose and poetry furnished ample material for the critics.

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1. Atkins, op. cit., p.46.
  2. Cf. Hardie, op. cit., p.281.
  3. Cf. D'Alton, op. cit., p.367.
  4. Ibid, p.475.

The work of the elder Seneca contributed much to the development of criticism. He levels his censures against the extravagances of the schools of Declamation whom he blames for the literary decline. Apart from the Controversiae, in which Seneca's criticism of the new oratory is contained, his Prefaces are replete with comments on literature and art. Apart from its intrinsic value, the work of Seneca is important in the influence it had in an uncritical age when simplicity and good taste were gradually disappearing and also in a re-assertion of the classical creed established by Cicero and Horace.<sup>1</sup>

Persius, following Seneca likewise took up the task of criticism of contemporary literature, in particular, the poetry. His criticism is always completely destructive in nature and attacks on the insincerity of the poets, the low level of their standards. Though of a different kind, Petronius Arbiter, joins Persius in attacking the literary evils of the day. A novel, the Satyricon, oddly enough, is the form he uses for his criticism upon the conditions of literature. The root of the evil is, he claims, the schools. His comments on poetry constitute the finest made in the history of criticism.<sup>2</sup>

In the same strain, but with deeper insight and skill, Tacitus in his Dialogue carries on the critical output of the first century A.D. His analysis of the causes of the decline of oratory and the means by which he proposes to remedy them surpass work done by his predecessors in this field. In his use of the historical method he throws much light on the relation of literature to

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1. Atkins, op. cit., p.153.

2. Ibid, p.165.



environment, both social and political, with the subsequent effect upon style. For the first time the canons of rigid classicism are challenged.<sup>1</sup>

The name of "Longinus" given to the anonymous writer of the first century A.D. demands a place at this point as a most important contributor to critical literature. He advocates the doctrine put forth by Cicero, Horace, and Seneca, namely, a return to the Greeks. Strangely enough though the last of the classical critics, he is at the same time most modern in his departure from adherence to form the part imagination and feeling play, and especially in his broad outlook and rational explanation of literature.<sup>2</sup>

In Quintilian the history of criticism finds an outstanding figure. His great work, Institutio Oratoria has commended itself to posterity by its wisdom, its sanity and its common sense.<sup>3</sup> The attack upon stylistic abuses prevalent at the time which earlier critics had denounced is summarized in detail by Quintilian. Apart from his analysis of the causes of the decay in contemporary literature which he likewise attributes to the schools, he also points out the evils of the freedom of expression the teachers demanded on the grounds that their inspiration must be free of the bounds of rules. He differs from Cicero, Horace and Longinus in advocating a return to the models of the classical Greeks as a cure for the literary evils of the times. He would lay the foundations of his theory on nature, reason, experience, which though maintaining the principles of

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1. Atkins, op. cit., p.196.

2. Atkins, op. cit., p.251.

3. Ibid, p.255.

classicism in regard to order, design and fitness, adjusted itself to the demands of the age.<sup>1</sup> In addition to his long discussion on the subject of style, which is his chief contribution to criticism, Quintilian has also included in the first chapter of the tenth book of the Institutio, a summary of the literature of Greece and Rome in their classical periods. His chief interest, rhetoric, colors his judgment however. Poetry is of value in so far as it would contribute rhetorical training.<sup>2</sup>

With Quintilian the chief part of criticism at Rome in the latter half of the first century A.D. may be said to have been written. Critical writing did not cease, it is true, for in the work of authors of the following century there is evidence that literary criticism was still a part of contemporary literature. The Epigrams of Martial, the Satires of Juvenal contained comments on the subject matter of poetry of the day. Both are uncompromising in their attacks upon the false classicism of the times. The Letters of Pliny likewise contain critical material on style and on literary standards of the day. He is more inclined to appreciate contemporary writers, than Persius, Martial, or Juvenal.<sup>3</sup>

In the second century very little criticism of the type that the preceding centuries saw was produced. The antiquarian movement colors all the literature of this century. However, it is the purpose of this paper to attempt to show that Aulus Gellius, a scholar of the

- 
1. Atkins, op. cit., p.297.
  2. D'Alton, op. cit., p.445.
  3. Atkins, op. cit., p.306.

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age of the Antonines, possessed to some degree a critical attitude towards literature that evidences good taste and sound judgment.

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## CHAPTER III

## CRITICISM OF POETS IN THE NOCTES ATTICAE

In Book XII, 4 Gellius gives us a clue to the spirit which guided him in writing those notes of the Noctes Atticae which might be termed "literary criticism." Before quoting from the 7th book of the Annals of Quintus Ennius in which he describes the qualities of one Geminus Servilius, "vir nobilis," Gellius declares that apart from the intrinsic value of the lines, which he considers of more worth than the rules of philosophers themselves, there is:

ad hoc color quidam vetustatis in his versibus  
tam reverendus est, suavitas tam inpromisca  
tamque a fuco omni remota est, ut mea quidem  
sententia pro antiquis sacratisque amicitia  
legibus observandi, tenendi colendique sint . . .

The "venerable flavor of antiquity" in literature and the judgment of a man of letters,<sup>1</sup> influence the criticisms of this scholar of the second century.

ENNIUS

The fourth chapter of Book XI contains an interesting criticism of Ennius. Gellius refers to those verses of Euripides' Hecuba<sup>2</sup> which Ennius translated and which "non sane incommode aemulatus est." Here we see Gellius use the principle of rivalry, an accepted feature of ancient literary technique to appraise Ennius' translation. Though

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1. Cf. Henry Nettleship, Lectures and Essays on Subjects Connected with Latin Literature, (Second Series) Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1885, p.44.
  2. Johannes Vahlen, Ennianae Poesis Reliquae, Leipzig, Teubner, 1903, p.152.

he praises Ennius for his successful rendering of Euripides, he points out with fairness that "ignobiles" and "opulenti" are not the best translations of ἀδούκτους and δοκούκτους for "neque omnes ignobiles ἀδούκτοι neque omnes opulenti εὐδούκοι".

In Book II, 26, Gellius again refers to the Annals of Ennius. The chapter, an account of the discourses of Marcus Fronto and the philosopher, Favorinus, on the varieties of colors and their Greek and Latin names, concludes with the comment on these lines from the fourteenth book of the Annals:

Verrunt extemplo placide mare marmore flavo  
Caeruleum, spumat sale conferta rate pulsum:

in which Gellius says Ennius "pulcherrime" has called the foam of the green sea, "golden marble." This in the opinion of D'Alton is an instance of Gellius' aesthetic appreciation.<sup>1</sup> Again in Book XIII, 21, Gellius pays tribute to Ennius' choice of words based on their pleasing sound which he declares, with Valerius Probus as his authority, is more advantageous in composition than the rules of grammarians. Ennius in the passage from the Annals, "Cautibus nutantis pinos rectosque cupressos,"<sup>2</sup> speaks of "rectos cupressos" because, says Gellius, "firmior ei, credo et viridior sonus esse vocis visus est, 'rectos' dicere 'cupressos' quam 'rectas.'" He gives further criticism of this quality in Ennius from the 18th book of the Annals in which the poet used "aere fulva" instead of "fulvo" and Gellius adds he did so not because

1. D'Alton op. cit., p.315.

2. J. Vahlen, Ennianae Poesis Reliquae, Leipzig, 1903, p.89

Homer said ἤερα βαθεῖαν but "quod hic sonus, vocabillior visus et amoenior." In these criticisms, Gellius, as has been said, shows appreciation of artistic writing and a certain freedom from the rule of comparison used by the ancient critics. In other words, he appreciates the genius of Ennius apart from his "Homeric" qualities. In Book II, 29, he again praises Ennius' ability to render a Greek piece in Latin: "Hunc Aesopi apologum Q. Ennius in Satiris<sup>1</sup> scite admodum et venuste versibus quadratis composuit." That admiration of Ennius was characteristic of the period can be seen in various chapters of the Noctes Atticae. For example, Book XVI, 10 relates that during one of the holidays at Rome which was being joyfully celebrated one of the books of the Annals<sup>2</sup> of Ennius was read "in consessu forte complurium" and in Book XVIII, 2, recalling his student days in Athens, he says they spent the Saturnalia discussing questions destined to divert their minds by "iucundis honestisque sermonum inlectationibus." One of these questions was to explain these verses in the Saturae<sup>3</sup> of Quintus Ennius in which one word is used in many different senses.

Nam qui lepide postulat alterum frustrari  
 Quem frustatur frustra eum dicit frustra esse  
 Nam qui sese frustrari quem frustra sentit  
 Qui frustatur is frustra est, si non ille est frustra.

In the fifth chapter of the same book (XVIII) we learn of the title given to one of Ennius' "worshippers" as "Ennianista" referring to a

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1. Vahlen, op. cit., p.207.
  2. Ibid p.34.
  3. Ibid p.210.

man "non indoctus" who was reciting the Annals of Ennius to the people in theater.<sup>1</sup> This same chapter contains also what might be called textual criticism. Referring to the lines of Ennius recited by the "Ennianista" mentioned above, Gellius states that Apollinaris, one of the group, was uncertain whether Virgil in Georgic III, 115 used "eques" or "equus" as Ennius had done. This scholar therefore bought at great expense a copy of Ennius, "librum summae atque reverendae vestustatis, quem fere constabat Lampadionis manu emendatum" and was satisfied to discover that Ennius had used "eques" as had Virgil and not "equus."

#### CAECILIUS

In Book II, 23, is found one of the longest and best examples of literary criticism in the Noctes Atticae;<sup>2</sup> a discussion and comparison of passages taken from the comedy of Menander and that of Caecilius, entitled Plocium.<sup>3</sup> Here Gellius makes use of the principle of comparison in his criticism of the two poets. He and a group of friends had been reading some comedies of Menander, Apollodorus and others whom the Latin poets had translated. By themselves they appeared rather good, but when compared with originals they became very ordinary and he concludes "ita Graecarum quas aemulari nequiverunt, facetiis atque luminibus obsolescunt." Gellius then proceeds to prove this statement by comparing the Plocium of Caecilius with that of Menander, through parallel passages of sixteen verses from each play. First he

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1. Vahlen, op. cit., p.42.
  2. Sandys, op. cit., p.211. Cf. also R. Pichon, Histoire de la Litterature Latine, Paris, Librairie Hachette, 1930, p.720.
  3. O. Ribbeck, Comicorum Romanorum Fragmenta, Leipzig, Teubner, 1898, p.68.

comments upon the "venustatem autem rerum atque verborum" which is very different in each, drawing attention first to a general fact:

quod quae Menander praeclare et apposite et facete scripsit, ea Caecilius, ne qua potuit quidem, conatus est enarrare, sed quasi minime probanda praetermisit et alia nescio quae mimica inculcavit et illud Menandri de vita hominum media sumptum, simplex et verum et delectabile, nescio quo pacto omisit.

In this passage Gellius shows real critical acumen, discriminating between the comedy of Menander and the farce of Caecilius and above all the realism that characterized the play of the Greek, but which was absent in the artificial lines of the Roman. In Menander the emotions are, "mirabiliter acres et illustres," but in Caecilius "pigra . . . et rerum dignitate atque gratia vacua." Lastly, and again departing from the usual method of criticism among the Romans, Gellius speaks of inspiration as a requisite for a poet, "ad horum autem sinceritatem veritatemque verborum an adspiraverit Caecilius, consideremus." It is thus that he characterizes those lines of Menander that Caecilius borrowed and which he put together so poorly "consarcinantis verba tragici tumoris." He concludes his criticism with a sentence that reveals his common sense "non puto Caecilium sequi debuisse quod assequi nequiret," and justifies the judgment Laurand makes of him, "d'ailleurs, l'auteur ne se contente pas de compiler, il juge, raisonne, apprecie."<sup>1</sup>

Gellius has other criticisms on Caecilius, but these are from the point of view of the grammarian. In Book XV, 9 he illustrates an

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1. L. Laurand, Manuel des Etudes Grecques et Latines, Paris, Editions Auguste Picard, 1933, Tome II, p.610.



imitation by Caecilius of a Greek idiom and in chapter fifteen of the same book he quotes Caecilius to support his statement that from the verb "pando" the ancients said "passum" not "pansum" and with the preposition "ex" they formed "expassum" not "expansum." In the ninth chapter of the same book there is a very interesting criticism based on the old argument of analogy. The title of the chapter also is interesting in the terseness by which Gellius distinguishes between "poetic license" and the grammarian's term "analogy," "quod Caecilius poeta 'frontem' genere virili non poetice, sed cum probatione et cum analogia appellavit." The lines in the Subditio which evoked the criticism are those which Gellius says Caecilius wrote, "vere ac diserte":

Nam hi sunt inimici pessumi, fronte hilaro,  
 corde tristi,  
 Quos neque ut adprendas neque uti dimittas  
 scias.<sup>1</sup>

One of the group to whom Gellius quoted these lines draws attention to the solecism, "fronte hilaro." Gellius answers the criticism basing his argument upon the principle of analogy and the authority of earlier writers.

#### PLAUTUS AND TERENCE

Gellius in Book III, 3 tells us of the method used by literary men of his day to decide upon the genuineness of the comedies of Plautus. They did not rely upon the list of Sedigitius, for example, or on those of Aelius, ~~Sedigitius~~, Claudius, Aurelius, Accius or

1. Ribbeck, op. cit., p.56.

Menilius, but on internal evidence, "ipse Plautus moribusque ingeni atque linguae eius," which was also, he adds, the "norma" that Varro used. Favorinus, too, says Gellius, was convinced from the citation of one verse of the authenticity of the Nervularia in the same manner, "hic versus Plauti esse hanc fabulam satis potest fidei fecisse." The difficulty of making a final decision, he continues, was due to the fact that although Lucius Aelius, "homo eruditissimus," thought only twenty five of the hundred or so comedies circulated in the name of Plautus were really his, some were the work of the poets of old, but revised and touched up by Plautus and so have a Plautine style in places. In conversation with a grammarian as to the meaning of the word "obnoxius," Gellius quotes Plautus as his authority describing him "Plautus, homo linguae atque elegantiae in verbis Latinae princeps," (VI,17), and in Book I, 7 he pays tribute to Plautus' diction, --- "Plautus verborum Latinorum elegantissimus" and in XIX, 8, Plautus is "linguae Latinae decus."

It is strange to find these praises of Plautus' diction and nothing of the kind on that of Terence especially when we recall the great esteem with which Caesar held him, "puri sermonis amator," and Quintilian, "Terenti scripta ---elegantissima."<sup>1</sup>

In Book VI, 14, with Varro as authority, Gellius speaks of Terence as an example of the middle style, "mediocritatis Terentium." Apart from these the other references to Terence are slight and only in connection with correct usage of a word. (Cf. XVII, 21; XV, 6).

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1. Quintilian X, 1, 99.

WRITERS OF THE MIMES AND ATELLAN PLAYS

The love of antiquity and the early literature which characterized Gellius and his contemporaries may also be seen in the interest they had not only in the comedies of Plautus, but also in the Mimes and Atellan plays, though the greatest attraction of these second century scholars was the discovery of an unfamiliar word or some rare grammatical construction.<sup>1</sup> The latter, a type of comedy of the time of Sulla and Cicero's youth, was an adaptation of the ancient Oscan farce by Pomponius and by Novius.<sup>2</sup> The references Gellius makes to Pomponius (X,24; XII,10; XVI,16; XVIII,6) and Novius (XV,13; XVII,2) are, however, concerned with an unfamiliar word (XII,10; XVII,2) or some unusual grammatical construction (XVIII,6). Book XVII,14 contains a group of the Sententiae of Publius Syrus whose Mimes Gellius says were considered equal to those of Laberius. Laberius, Gellius states (X,17) has written a scene in the farce Restio<sup>3</sup> "versibus quidem satis munde atque graphice factis." The other two references (XVI,7 and XVI,13) are again from the grammarian's point of view. The first (XVI,7) discusses the habit Laberius had of coining "praelicenter" new words, for example, "abluvium" for "diluvium," and of using obsolete and obscene words as only the lowest type of people use, "ex sordidiore vulgi usu." This last defect is also criticized in Book XIX,13.

LUCILIUS

The popularity of Lucilius in Quintilian's day<sup>4</sup> was evidently as great in that of Gellius. He is mentioned twenty two times in the

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1. D'Alton, op. cit., p.315.
  2. J. Wight Duff, A Literary History of Rome in the Golden Age, New York, Scribner, p.221.
  3. Ribbeck, op. cit., p.353.
  4. Inst. orat., XI, 93.

Noctes Atticae. Most of these however are concerned with grammatical questions (I,16; III,14; IV,1; IV,16; IV,17; IX,15) or use of an obsolete word (XI,7); toward the close of chapter twenty-one in Book XVII, Gellius passes a very apt criticism on one of the characteristics of the Satires of Lucilius, namely, his ability to judge upon questions of literature, --- "clariorque tunc in poematis eorum obtrectandis Lucilius fuit." In Book XVIII,7 one reads "Lucilius adeo, vir adprinae linguae Latinae sciens," Chapter eight of the same book has a very sound criticism on a passage in the fifth book<sup>1</sup> of Lucilius in which he refers to those ornaments of style which pedants use in their compositions, affecting imitations of Socrates. Gellius remarks upon the wit Lucilius shows in his criticism and agrees that such niceties of style the satirist attacked are, "insubida et inertia et puerilia." Lucilius is the only satirist apart from a mention of Varro and Ennius as writers of this genre that Gellius discusses. Horace he mentions by name only once in Book II, 22 which is a discussion on winds, "ut est Horatianus quoque ille Atabulus." (Sat. I, 5,78).

#### CATULLUS

Gellius mentions Catullus only three times in the Noctes, but each is in appreciation of the most famous of the Neoterics. In Book VI, 20 towards the end of a criticism on Virgil's choice of euphonic vowels we read "Catullus quoque elegantissimus poetarum in hisce versibus:

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1. F. Marx, Lucilii Carminum Reliquiae, Leipzig, 1904-5. vv. 181f.

Minister vetuli puer Falerni,  
 Inger mi calices amarioreas  
 Ut lex Postumiae iubet magistræ  
 Ebria acina ebriosioris.<sup>1</sup>

Gellius then points out that Catullus through love of the melody of the Homeric hiatus used "ebria" because it blended with the following "a" though he adds, he might have said "ebrio" and used "acinum" in the neuter gender, as was more usual. In this same chapter, Gellius also gives us an example of his knowledge of textual criticism. Apparently some thought that Catullus wrote "ebriosa" or "ebrioso" --- "nam id quoque temere scriptum invenitur." Gellius explains that those who have done so read from editions copied from corrupt texts, "libros---de corruptis exemplaribus factos."

Munro has a very interesting comment on this passage of Catullus which Gellius has cited. The Paris Codex <sup>San</sup> Germanensis and Oxford Codex indicate that Catullus wrote "ebriosa acino." We have seen what Gellius declares was the true reading. Bæhrens accepts "ebria acina" as the genuine reading, but Haupt rejects it as a vain fancy of Gellius and reads with most of the editors --- "ebriosa" acina" (Merrill ed.). Munro himself says he doubts the existence of "acina" at all and believes Gellius is following a mere "chimerical crotchet with no more foundation for it in fact than what he says of Virgil just before regarding the removal of "Nola" from one of his lines and substituting "ora."<sup>2</sup> The second reference to Catullus was on the unusual use of "deprecor" in the one of the Lesbia poems.<sup>3</sup>

1. XXVII, 1-4.

2. H.A.J. Munro, Criticisms and Elucidations of Catullus, London, George Bell and Sons, 1878, p.67.

3. AGII,3.

Gellius defends Catullus who used the word "deciuscule," in verses that were in the opinion of all men most charming "versus --- venustissimos." He knew the poems of the other members of the group Galvus and Cirna (XIX,9) and describes a poem of the latter as "non ignobilis necue indocti poetae." (XIX,13).

#### LUCRETIUS

Book I, 21 though concerned chiefly with Virgilian criticism contains a reference to Lucretius. Quoting Hyginus, Gellius says that Virgil was not the first to use the word in question (amaror) but that he had found it in the poems of Lucretius and did not disdain to follow the authority of a poet "ingenio et facundia praecellentis." Comparing the two poets by parallel passages

et ora  
Tristia temptantum sensu torquebit amaror<sup>1</sup>

and

dilutaque contra  
Cum tuimur misceri absinthia, tangit amaror<sup>2</sup>

Gellius comments on Virgil's imitation not only of single words of Lucretius "non verba autem sola," but after almost whole lines and passages.<sup>3</sup> In X, 26, XII, 10 and XVI, 5, Gellius cites Lucretius as an example of good diction. Book XIII, 21 he speaks of Lucretius'

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1. Geog. II, 246-7.
  2. De Rerum Natura, IV, 224, W. A. Merrill, New York, American Book Co., 1907.
  3. Cf. Lucretius (ed. W. A. Merrill), Book IV, 224. Merrill states that "amaror" is elsewhere found only in Aeneid VI and Geog. II, 247 and that some editions do not admit the word in Vergil; Cf. also Alfred Ernout, Lucrece De Rerum Natura Commentaire, Tome V, Paris Societe D'Edition "Les Belles Lettres," 1926, p.204, "amaror, mot repris par Vergile, Geog. II, 247.

regard for euphony, "Lucretius aequè auribus serviens" by making "funis" feminine in the lines,

Haut, ut opinor, enim mortalia saecula superne  
Aurea de caelo demisit funis in arva.<sup>1</sup>

though, Gellius continues, with equal good rhythm (manente numero) he might have used the more common, "aureus funis."

#### VIRGIL

That Gellius appreciated Virgil apart from his veneration for one whom he describes as "multae antiquitatis --- studio peritum" (V,12) the thirty Virgilian references in the Noctes Atticae prove. Some of these passages furnish examples of Gellius' ability to base his criticisms on aesthetic principles, others indicate the influence of the grammarians on literary criticism or of that based on the ancient principles of comparison and "rivalry;" lastly there are instances of pure textual criticism.

In Book II, 6, Gellius defends Virgil against those critics, Annaeus Cornutus especially, who point out words which the poet used carelessly and negligently, "incuriose et abiecte," in these lines:

candida succinctam latrantibus inguina monstris  
Dulichias vexasse rates et gurgite in alto  
A! timidos nautas canibus lacerasse marinis.<sup>2</sup>

The critics say that "vexasse" is a weak word, "verbum leve," and does not express the emotion that the lines suggest. Gellius answers this criticism by explaining the original meaning of the verb thus proving the correctness of Virgil's use and also quotes a familiar use of

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1. De Rerum Natura, II, 153 -4.

2. Ecl. VII, 75-77.

"vexare" in a passage from Cato's De Achaëis and Cicero's In Verrem,  
IV. The second criticism, on the use of "inlaudati" in

Quis aut Eurysthea durum  
 Aut inlaudati nescit Buriridis aras?<sup>1</sup>

as being inadequate to describe the wicked Eurystheus, Gellius refutes at some length. As in the case of "vexare" he uses the argument of the meaning of "laudare" in early Latin and its converse "inlaudari" to justify the correctness of Virgil's use in the line cited. He refutes the third criticism on Virgil's use of "squalere" in "tunicam squalentem auro" on the same principle.

The sixteenth chapter in the same book, though concerned chiefly with Sulpicius Apollinaris' criticism of Caesellius Vindex for his explanation of a passage from the sixth book of the Aeneid (760 ff.), concludes with a criticism by Gellius upon that of the famous rhetorician and his own opinion of the passage in question. In the lines,

Ille, vides, pura iuvenis qui nititur hasta  
 Proxima sorte tenet lucis loca. Primus ad auras  
 Aetherias Italo commixtus sanguine surget  
 Silvius, Albanum nomen, tua postuma proles,  
 Quem tibi longaevo serum Lavinia coniunx  
 Educet silvis, regem regumque parentem,  
 Unde genus Longa nostrum dominabitur Alba

Caesellius thought that between "tua proxima proles" and

Quem tibi longaevo serum Lavinia coniunx  
 Educet silvis

there was inconsistency, "videbantur haec nequaquam convenire." He decides therefore that "postuma proles" refers to Silvius who was born when Aeneas was an old man. Gellius criticizes this statement

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1. Geog. III, 4.



of Caesellius on the grounds that he has no adequate authority for his version, "sed huius historiae auctorem idoneum nullum nominat." On the contrary, he points out, that Silvius was born after the death of Aeneas has ample testimony; "multi tradiderunt." Sulpicius Apollinaris in criticising the interpretation of Caesellius places the cause of its error on the phrase "quem tibi longaevo." "Longaevo" he defines as meaning admitted into a life that is now long and unending, made immortal. This again contradicts Caesellius' version. But Gellius while admitting that Apollinaris has made a fairly good criticism, "hoc sane Apollinaris argute," gives us his own opinion "sed aliud tamen est 'longaeuum aevum' aliud 'perpetuum' neque dii 'longaevi' appellantur sed 'immortales'."

In Book V, 8, Gellius defends Virgil against Julius Hyginus' assertion of an error in the verses,

Ipse Quirinali lituo parvaque sedebat  
Subcinctus trabea laevaue ancile gerebat.<sup>1</sup>

The grammarian declares that Virgil failed to notice that the words "ipse Quirinali lituo" lacked something and that the sentence seemed to mean "lituo et trabea subcinctus." This would render the sentence utterly absurd, "absurdissimum," since the meaning of "lituus," a short wand, would not permit its being used with "subcinctus." Gellius then shows that it is Hyginus himself who erred by not noticing that the expression contains an ellipsis. Rolfe<sup>2</sup> points out that Gellius'

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1. Aeneid VII, 187-8.

2. John C. Rolfe, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 400 (note).

explanation of "Quirinali lituo" as an ablative of quality is wrong as we have zeugma in "subcinctus," "equipped with" and "girt with." Book VII, 6, is again a defense by Gellius of Julius Hyginus' criticism of "pennis praepetibus" in

Daedalus, ut fama est, fugians Minolia regna  
Praepetibus pennis ausus se credere caelo<sup>1</sup>

as "quasi improprie et inscite dictum." Another criticism of Hyginus in Book X, 16, "quos errores Iulius Hyginus in sexto Vergilii animadvertit in Romana historia erratos," Gellius records without making any comment.

Book VI, 20 contains an interesting account of a correction Virgil made on one of his own lines and also a criticism by Gellius upon the music of this verse:

-Talem dives arat Capua et vicina Vesevo  
Nola iugo.<sup>2</sup>

Gellius says he read in a certain commentary that this was the form Virgil used in his first publication of the poem, but later changed "Nola" to "ora" because the inhabitants of Nola had refused him water. As to the truth or falsity of this story Gellius is not concerned, but that "ora" has a more agreeable and musical sound than "Nola" "melius suavisque ad aures" and gives an explanation of this poetic device. In X, 2 he points out Virgil's skillful use of "properare" and "maturare" in Georgics I, 259 ff, which the poet has done "elegantissime." Later in XX, 1 he calls Virgil "elegantissimus"

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1. Aen. VI, 14.
  2. Geog. II, 244.

poeta."

Criticism of Virgil that was characteristic of the times<sup>1</sup> is seen in Book IV, 1 regarding the meaning of "penu" (Aen. I, 704); in Book IV, 16 on the inflection of fourth declension nouns (Aen. IV, 195); in Book IV, 17 on the natural quantity of certain particles; in Book V, 8 on the meaning of "lituus" (Aen. IV, 167); Book IV, 17 on the meaning of "obnoxius" (Geog. II, 438 and Geog. I, 395-6); in Book IX, 12 on words which are used with two opposite meanings, both active and passive, e.g. "vulnus in et vulnere --- tardis Ulixi" (Aen. III, 436); in Book XV, 13 of verbs called "common" by grammarians that are found in Virgil, "dignor," "veneror" and "testor" (Aen. III, 475 & 460); in Book X, 29 a passage from Georgics I, 199 in which according to Gellius "atque" is used "obscure et insequenter;" in Book XVI, 5 on the meaning of "vestibulum" (Aen. VI, 273) and of "bidentes" (Aen. VII, 93) in XVI, 6.

Four chapters of the Noctes Atticae deal with comparison of Virgil and the Greek authors he "rivalled." In Book IX, 19 Gellius declares that whenever striking expressions from the Greek poets are to be translated and imitated an exact literal rendering of every single word is not advisable for "perdunt --- gratiam pleraque si quasi invita et recusantia violentius transferantur." It was in this respect Gellius says that Virgil showed skill and good judgment. He illustrates this by giving parallel passages from the Eclogues (III, 64 ff.) and Theocritus (Idyl. V, 88). In Book XIX, 1 he again remarks upon

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1. Sikes, op. cit., p.69.

Virgil's use in Aeneid IV, 366 of lines from the Iliad, XVI, 33. The twenty seventh chapter of Book XIII criticizes the use Virgil made of verses of Homer and Parthenius. Gellius declares that in (Georgics I, 437); "Glauco et Panopeae et Inoo Melicertae," Virgil "aemulatus est et itaque fecit duobus vocabulis venuste immutatis parem," this verse of Parthenius,

Πλαύκῳ καὶ Νηρεῖ καὶ εἰναλίῳ Μελικέρτῃ

In his criticism of Aeneid III, 119, however,

"Taurum Neptuno, taurum tibi, pulcher Apollo" and

Ταῦρον δ' Ἀλφειῷ ταῦρον δέ Ποσειδάωνι

he favors that of Homer as "simplicior et sincerior," while he characterizes Virgil's lines as *et quodam quasi ferumine inmisso fucator.*" To the criticism of Favorinus in Book XVII, 10, concerning Virgil's imitation of Aeneid III, 570, of Pindar's description of an eruption of Mount Aetna, Gellius adds no remarks of his own. It cannot be stated therefore whether he agreed or not with this unfavorable criticism made by Favorinus.

Textual criticism of Virgilian manuscripts are discussed in four chapters of the Noctes Atticae. In Book I, 21 Gellius notes the assertion of Julius Hyginus in his commentaries on Virgil that the customary reading of Georgics II, 246,

At sapor iudicium faciet manifestus et ora  
Tristia temptantum sensu torquebit amaro

is not what Virgil wrote, but rather

et ora  
Tristia temptantum sensu torquebit amarior."

His authority for this reading is a copy he found which had come "ex domo atque ex familia Vergilii."

In Book II, 3 after discussing the reason why the early Romans inserted the aspirate "h" in certain nouns and verbs, Gellius states the following to support his observations. One Fidus Optatus, "multi nominis Romae grammaticus," showed him a very old copy of the second book of the Aeneid of extraordinary value -- a volume "quae ipsius Vergili fuisse credebatur." In this book Gellius noticed that in the lines (II, 469 ff.)

Vestibulum ante ipsum primoque in limine Pyrrhus  
Exultat telis et luce coruscus aena,

the letter "h" was added above the line thus changing "aena" to "ahena" and the same correction was done in (Georg. I, 296)

.aut foliis undam trepidi despumat aheni.

Gellius refers, in Book IX, 14, to a manuscript "idiographum librum Vergilii" to support his statement that "dies" is used for "diei", "Libra dies somnique pares ubi fecerit horas" (Georg. I, 208). In Book XIII, 21 after mentioning the comments of Valerius Probus upon Virgil's use of euphony from a copy of the first Georgic, "librum manu ipsius correctum," Gellius gives the results of his own studies in this respect. In the tenth book of the Aeneid, (350-351):

Tres quoque Threicios Boreae de gente suprema,  
Et tris quos Idas pater et patria Ismara mittit

Gellius points out that Virgil has used "tres" and "tris" in the same passages "iudicii subtilitate" and that any other reading would spoil the "suavitatem sonitus" of the line. Again in "Haec finis Priami

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fatorum" (Aen. II, 554) Cellius remarks that to change "haec" to "hic" would render the line harsh, "durum atque absonum," while on the contrary to change another verse of Virgil (Aen. I, 241),

quem das finem, rex magne laborum

would make it "insuavis" since in "quam das finem" for some reason or other the sound of the words is "iniucundum et laxiorem."

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## CHAPTER IV

## CRITICISM OF PROSE WRITERS IN THE NOCTES ATTICAE

In ancient times literary criticism at Rome developed in the schools of Rhetoric. There was little "criticism for criticism's sake."<sup>1</sup> Between the fourth century B.C. which saw the great development of prose and the age of Augustus, the influence of the Greek scholars of Alexandria and Pergamon is evident both in the literature of Rome and the literary criticism that these scholars engendered.<sup>2</sup> The Alexandrian theory of poetry greatly influenced the Latin poets.<sup>3</sup> The grammarians' controversy over the principle of ἀναλογία<sup>4</sup> upheld by the Alexandrians and that of ἀνωμαλία<sup>5</sup> upheld by the Pergamenes became that of the Romans also and formed the basis of much of their literary criticism.<sup>4</sup> With Cicero came criticism which had a touch of what might be called genius.<sup>5</sup> The principles which he formulated governing criticism of oratorical prose were those followed by subsequent critics.

Criticism of prose writers, like the other subjects discussed in the Noctes Atticae, is scattered throughout the entire work. This chapter will attempt to group these writers according to genre -- historians, orators, and men of learning.

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1. Atkins, op. cit., p.9.
  2. Hardie, op. cit., p.269.
  3. Ibid, p.280.
  4. Nettleship, op. cit., (2nd Series), p.54.
  5. Sikes, op. cit., p.35.

## HISTORIANS

In Book V, 18 Gellius discusses in what respect and to what degree history differs from annals. He quotes first the opinion of Valerius Flaccus who maintained that while each is a narration of events, history is an account of events in which the narrator took part. The Greek *ἱστορία* he declares, "rerum cognitionem praesentium" supports this definition. Gellius apparently considered history to be different from annals using a passage from the first book of Sempronius Asellio as authority. One of the early Roman historians who wrote in Latin, he introduced philosophy into history and attacked the annalistic method of recording deeds.<sup>1</sup>

In the passage cited by Gellius he likens the "annales" to a "diarium quam Graeci ἐφ' ἡμερῶν vocant." The defect of such a method, he continues, lay in the omission of motives and causes underlying the facts recorded, "sed etiam quo consilio quaque ratione gesta essent demonstrare." He notes another difference or defect rather in the annalistic method, namely, that it does not make men eager to defend their country or refrain from doing wrong. Further references to Sempronius Asellio in the Noctes Atticae are on such subjects as interested the literary men of Gellius' age --- the difference in meaning between *necessitudo* and *necessitas* (XIII, 3) in the history of Asellio; his use of "liberi" in the plural number even of a single son or daughter (II, 3): his peculiar use of "facundiosus" (IV, 9).

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1. J. W. Duff, A Literary History of Rome From the Origins to the Close of the Golden Age, New York, Scribners, p.252-253.



### C. CALPURNIUS FRUGI

Another early writer of history at Rome mentioned by Gellius is L. Calpurnius Piso Frugi. Book VII, 9 contains a passage from the Annals he wrote which Gellius describes as having been told "pure et venuste." In Book XI, 14 is an even more favorable criticism of Piso. Referring to the first book of his Annals which relates the life and habits of King Romulus, Gellius says "simplicissima suavitate et rei et orationis L. Piso Frugi usus est in primo Annali." Though Piso's old-fashioned Latin satisfied Gellius it had practically the opposite effect upon Cicero who criticized it as "annales sane exiliter scriptos."<sup>1</sup>

### Q. CLAUDIUS QUADRIGARIUS

Q. Claudius Quadrigarius to whom Gellius refers in fifteen chapters, due no doubt to the archaic flavor of his works, was an historian of the first century B.C. In Book XV, 1 he is described as "optimus et sincerissimus scriptor." Book XIII, 29 contains accounts of the discussion of a passage of Claudius Quadrigarius in which he used the expression "cum multis mortalibus." A criticism of the phrase "inepte frigideque in historia nimisque id poetice" was submitted to Fronto and provoked a defense from the second century scholar. The language of Quadrigarius he declares as "modesti atque puri ac prope cotidiani sermonis." Furthermore, he continues, the use of "mortales" for "homines" is preferable because it is "longe, longeque esse amplius, prolixius, fusius, in significanda totius prope civitatis multitudine."

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1. Duff, op. cit., p. 232, note, Brutus, XXVII, 106.

In Book IX, 13 we see again why Quadrigarius had such a charm for Gellius when referring to a passage from the Annals he says, "purissime atque illustrissime simplicique et incompta orationis antiquae suavitate scripsit." Book XVII, 2 contains a lengthy criticism of the early historian. Gellius had jotted down certain words from the first book of the Annals to which he adds a criticism, for example, in the sentence "arma plerique abiciunt atque inermi inlatebrant sese." Gellius says that though the verb "inlatebrant" seems poetic it is "non absurdum neque asperum." Quadrigarius used "sole occaso" for 'at sunset.' This expression Gellius explains is "non insuavi vetustate, si quis aurem habeat non sordidam nec proculcatam." Another criticism of Quadrigarius in his use of "in medium" instead of the more common "in medio" he defends from the Greek "ΒΕΤΥΛΙ ΕΙΣ ΜΕΣΟΝ." The chapter is filled with similar references which show the usages of the early writers as well as Gellius' critical insight.

#### CATO AND C. GRACCHUS

Notes on Cato are more numerous than on any other writer mentioned in the Noctes Atticae. Some of these are concerned with questions that were so important to the scholars of Gellius' age. The lengthening of certain vowels (II, 17); the change in meaning certain verbs undergo, e.g. "religiosus" (IV, 9); on the correctness of "compluriens" (V, 21); the meaning of the word "insecunda" in Cato (XVIII, 9). The third chapter of Book VI, one of the longest in the Noctes, deals with a criticism Tiro, Cicero's freedman, made on Cato's speech Pro Rodiensibus and Gellius' reply. Duff says that Gellius' criticism of

Cato is one that cannot be surpassed<sup>1</sup> and Teuffel, that it is the best characterization of Cato's style.<sup>2</sup>

The chapter opens with a discussion of the historical background of the speech. There follows a brief description of Tiro "sane quidem fuit ingenio homo eleganti haut quoquam rerum litterarumque veterum indoctus." After this Gellius records the criticism of the Pro Rhodiensibus Tiro made in a letter he wrote to Quintus Axius, "familiaris patronus." His first criticism was on Cato's introduction which, he declares, he delivered "inerudite et ἀραγώγως" and not in accordance with the nature of the case. Tiro had declared that Cato used arguments that were "parum honestis et nimis audacibus - - - et quasi Graecorum sophistarum sollertis." Gellius refutes this accusation by showing that Cato did not use specious arguments nor the sophistries of the Greek philosophers. It is, however, his criticism of the literary value of the speech that is interesting. Gellius points out the rhetorical skill Cato manifests in the speech, "omnia disciplinarum rhetoricarum arma atque subsidia." In all fairness he admits that Cato might have spoken more smoothly and in more orderly fashion, "distinctius numerosiusque," but, he adds without as great strength or vividness, "fortius atque vividius." His next remark evidences his own sense of justice and that which a literary critic would do well to acquire. Gellius points out that Tiro was unfair to single out for bitter criticism a small part of the speech and overlook its many excellent qualities. He concludes the chapter with

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1. Duff, op. cit., p.256.
  2. Teuffel, op. cit., p.174.

the suggestion that the entire speech of Cato be read together with Tiro's and his own criticism in order that a fair appraisal of the ancient orator be made. Book XI, 18 again notes the quality which distinguished Cato as an orator, his forceful and choice language, "vehementibus et inlustribus verbis," as seen in his speech De Praeda Militibus Dividenda. A discussion of the meaning of "manubiae" in Book XIII, 25 includes a criticism of Cato by Favorinus. He states that a rhetorical device employed by Cicero, that of repetition and recapitulation, was frequently used in the early times by Cato. He quotes a few lines from Cato's De Decem Hominibus to prove his point, adding that these words of Cato are "eloquentiae Latinae tunc primum exorientis lumina quaedam sublustria." Book X, 3 contains a criticism of the orators Gaius Gracchus, Marcus Cicero and Marcus Cato by a comparison of passages from the speeches of each.

Gellius criticizes first a part from Gaius Gracchus' De Legibus Promulgatis. The speech includes the incident so vividly described by Cicero in the second Verrine of the atrocious treatment accorded a Roman citizen in the forum of Messana. The inferiority of Gracchus, Gellius maintains, is due to his language which was neither fluent, nor brilliant nor capable of arousing any emotion. He points out the qualities of the early orator "brevitas -- venustas et mundities orationis," which, he continues, are seen also in the early playwrights, "in comoediarum festivitatis." Gracchus is simply a narrator, "narrantis vicem," and as such causes no reaction upon his listeners. Cicero, on the other hand, inspires his audience with hatred for Verres by those familiar words, "O nomen dulce libertatis," etc.

To those however who preferred Gracchus' oration which though it lacked the brilliance and harmony of Cicero's, has a charm of its own and above all a flavor of antiquity "umbra et color quasi opacae vetustatis," Gellius recommends Cato. For Cato possessed a rigor and fluency Gracchus never attained though he had endeavored to do even in his time what Cicero later accomplished. Gellius points this out by quoting a passage from the De Falsis Pugnis, of Cato, but makes no further criticism.

#### CAESAR

That Gellius esteemed Gaius Caesar's talent and wisdom is evident in Book I, X in which he quotes the following from the De Analogia, "habe semper in memoria atque in pectore, ut tamquam scopulum sic fugias inauditum atque insolens verbum."<sup>1</sup>

Gaius Caesar is referred to in Book IV, 16 as "gravis auctor linguae Latinae" and in Book X, 24 Augustus is mentioned as an imitator of his father's elegance in speaking. Fronto in Book XIX, 8 speaks of Caesar's genius, "vir ingenii praecellentis," and mentions the De Analogia.

In the same chapter is a very interesting remark regarding the meaning of the word "Classic" as applied to literature. A modern author<sup>2</sup> discussing the matter quotes from an essay by Sainte-Beuve who used Gellius (VI, 13) as his authority. The French critic traces the origin of "Classic" to the Romans. Though he does not give Gellius as authority, his explanation is the same as is found in Book VI, 13,

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1. Cf. Teuffel, op. cit., p.333.

2. William Chase Greene, The Achievement of Rome, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1933, p.429.

where Cato declares that not all men were called "classici," but only those of the first class who were rated at a hundred and twenty five thousand "asses" or more. All those who were rated at a smaller sum were called "infra classem." Sainte-Beuve continues "in the figurative sense, the word classicus is used in Aulus Gellius (XIX, 8) applied to writers; a writer of value and mark "classicus assiduusque scriptor," a writer who counts who has position in the world."<sup>1</sup> Gellius apart from description quoted by Sainte -Beuve adds that the classic writer is "non proletarius."

#### SALLUST

Criticism of Sallust mentioned in that of Titus Castricius (II,27) is cited by Nettleship as an example of literary criticism in the Noctes Atticae.<sup>2</sup>

In Book III, 1, Favorinus defends Sallust against Valerius Probus' charge that the historian used "circumlocutione quadam poetica" calling his master of conciseness, "subtillissimum brevitatis artificem." It is in Book IV, 15 that Gellius himself answers a criticism made upon a passage in the "Catilinae Historia" of Sallust. In General the elegance of Sallust's style and as Gellius calls it "verborumque fingendi et novandi studium" were the chief points which critics attacked. That there was some justification for criticism Gellius admits, though towards the close of the chapter he calls Sallust's critics "malivoli" and defends Sallust. The discussion resulted from Sallust's use of the word "arduus" to describe the problem the writing of history entailed. His critics maintained that Sallust used "arduus" incorrectly in this

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1. Greene, op. cit., p.430.

2. Nettleship, op. cit., p.85.

instance. Gellius answers that Sallust used "arduus" not in its strict meaning but equivalent of  $\chi\alpha\lambda\epsilon\pi\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ , that is, both difficult and troublesome."

In Book X, 26 the criticism Asinius Pollio made upon Sallust's use of "transgressus" for "transfretatio" is discussed. Gellius cites Cato's use of "ambulare" where speaking of ships, "naves ambulans"<sup>1</sup> and Lucretius who also used such figures and regarded them as ornaments of diction, "pro honestamentis orationis" as may be seen from his use of "gradior" in the lines:

Praeterea radit vox fauces saepe, facitque  
Asperiora foras gradiens arteria clamor<sup>2</sup>

Chapter twenty of Book X discusses Sallust's propriety of language, "proprietas in verbis retinentissimus." Gellius' interest in textual criticism is perceivable in Book IX, 14 where a manuscript of Sallust's Jurgurtha, "summae fidei et reverendae vetustatis", is used to support the spelling of "die" for the dative of "dies." Again in Book XX, 6 regarding the correctness of "vestrum" rather than "vestri", Sulpicius Apollinaris declares that in sound copies of Sallust's Catilina, "maiores vestrum" is found, but that some persons, however, have erased "vestrum" and wrote "vestri" over it and he adds "ex quo in plures libros mandae istius indoles manavit."

#### CICERO

References to Cicero in the *Noctes Atticae* are many and all of them show Gellius' esteem for one whom he calls "doctissimus vir." In

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1. De Re Rustica, I, 3.
  2. De Rerum Natura, IV, 526.

Book I, 3 are notes and quotations from passages of Theophrastus and Cicero's work De Amicitia. Gellius declares that Cicero evidently read Theophrastus' treatise when he was composing his own, adding that the Roman author's "ingenium facundiaque" guided him in translating and utilizing the work of the Greek, "commodissime aptissimeque." In the fourth chapter of the same book, Antonius Julianus, "rhetor," comments upon the artful substitution of one word for another in Cicero's Pro Cn. Plancio. The particular passage referred to hinges upon Cicero's use of the word "debitio" when used with regard to money and gratitude. Julianus pays tribute to the artistry of Cicero's language, "crispum sane agmen orationis rotundumque ac modulo ipso numerorum venustum." Chapter seven of this same book contains a lengthy discussion of "hanc sibi rem praesidio sperant futurum" in the fifth oration against Verres. Gellius says that many thought there was an error in the last word--that "futuram" should be written instead of "futurum." A friend, "amicus noster," whose description fits Gellius himself, "homo lectione multa exercitus cui pluraque omnia veterum litterarum quaesita, meditata evigilataque erant," answers the criticism. He declares that Cicero had made no mistake, but rather that he had written "probe ac vetuste," and quotes similar uses of this form from Gaius Gracchus, Claudius Quadrigarius, Plautus and Laberius.

Book I, 22 discusses a topic dear to second century scholars, whether it is correct Latin for counsel for the defense to say "supersesse se" for those whom he is defending. Cicero is cited as



authority. In Book II, 17 Gellius criticizes some observations Cicero made in the Orator on the nature of prepositions "in" and "con" when prefixed to nouns and verbs.

Book VII, 16, contrasts the use Catullus made of the word "deprecor" in ECII and that of Cicero. The poet used the word to mean "denounce or avert by prayers," while Cicero in his Pro P. Sulla uses it in the sense of "begging off." Gellius quotes from the Pro Aulo Caecina, the De Republica and the In Verrem (II) as further examples of the more usual meaning of "deprecor." In Book X, 21, Gellius states that Cicero did not use many words which are in use today and also were in his time, for example "novissimus" and "novissime." The reasons Cicero acted thus were that he did not regard these words as good Latin, "tamquam non Latino videtur" and because Lucius Aelius Stilo, "doctissimus eorum temporum," had likewise avoided the use of this word, labeling it, "novo et improbo verbo."

Gellius writes in Book XIII, 17 that "humanitas" has not the meaning generally attributed to it, namely what the Greeks call  $\phi\iota\lambda\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\iota\acute{\alpha}$ . The correct use is rather from  $\pi\alpha\iota\delta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$  that is, "eruditionem institutionemque in bonas artes" and since this is characteristic to man alone of all the animals it is called "humanitas." Gellius says that Marcus Varro and Cicero used the word in this sense and gives a quotation from Varro's Rerum Humanarum to prove his statement, "Praxiteles, qui propter artificium egregium nemini est paulum modo humaniori ignotus." Oscar E. Nybakken<sup>1</sup> states

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1. Nybakken, O.E., "Humanitas Romana", Transactions of the American Philological Association, Vol. XX, 1939, p.396.

that Gellius set too narrow limits to the meaning of the word "humanitas" even though it was often used in the sense that Varro did in the example given. "Humanitas" has a much broader meaning than simply learning and training in the liberal arts. Gellius' remarks, Nybakken declares, are of interest because they show that the meaning attached to "humanitas" in his day was the same as the Stoics had given it.

Chapter XXI of Book XIII, a discussion of the attention paid to euphony by the most elegant writers, "scriptoribus elegantissimis," has this reference to Cicero. In the Quinta in Verrem, Cicero thought it smoother and more polished "mollius teretiusque" to write "fretu" rather than "freto" for, says Gellius, "freto" would have been "cassius ---vetustiusque." Likewise in his Secunda in Verrem, again paying attention to euphony in a sentence "simili usus modulamine" Cicero uses "peccatu" instead of "peccato." Gellius gives another example of Cicero's attention to euphony in a sentence from the Quarta in Verrem in which the orator used the form "antistitae" instead of "antistites," and remarks upon the skill of Cicero "usque adeo in quibusdam neque rationem verbi neque consuetudinem, sed aurem secuti sunt, suis verba modulis pensitantem." Chapter 25 of Book XIII, referred to previously in this paper in connection with Cato, has some interesting criticism of Cicero. Favorinus is the chief speaker of a group which has been discussing the meaning of "manubiae." One person in the gathering had stated that "manubiae" was a synonym for "praeda." Favorinus questions that and gives Cicero, "verborum homo diligentissimus," as his authority.

Cicero in the De Lege Agraria would scarcely have used these two words if they had the same meaning, he claims. Such a device is rather a means by which Cicero illustrates the dignity, characteristic of his speeches and the copiousness of his diction. Chapter XXVII of the same book notes Cicero's debt to Panaetius. Gellius says that Cicero modeled his work with very great care and labor on the second book of Panaetius, De Officiis. The chapter is concerned more with the work of the Greek philosopher than with that of Cicero. Book XV, 3 discusses at length what Cicero wrote in the Orator about the prefix in the verbs "aufugio" and "aufero." In Chapter six of Book XV Gellius discusses the evident mistake, "manifestum erratum," in the second book of Cicero's De Gloria. Our critic concedes that it is not a very great mistake, "error est non magnae rei," nor one which requires learning to detect, "quem errorem esse possit cognoscere non aliquis eruditorum." Anyone, he continues, who has read Homer would be capable of doing so. Gellius refers to the verses Cicero composed, "versus quos Cicero in linguam Latinam vertit," based on the seventh book of Iliad regarding the encounter of Ajax and Hector. These verses, according to Gellius, do not convey the same impression as those of Homer. Book XVII, 1 contains a defense of Cicero by Gellius against Asinius Gallus and Largius Licinus who criticized a passage of the Pro M. Caelio. Gellius is most indignant at the daring of these two men who in their book entitled Ciceromastix declared that Cicero spoke "parum integre atque inproprie atque inconsiderate." The use of "paeniteat" in the sentence "ut eum paeniteat non deformem esse natum,"

was the word the critics declared Cicero had used absurdly, "Id prope ineptum etiam esse dicunt." For, they continue, "paenitere" is used to express regret at something we ourselves have done and hence Cicero's use of it in the passage quoted is decidedly incorrect. Gellius grants this but points out that Cicero in his use of "paenitere" in this sentence has shown wit and elegance, "festivissimum adeo et facetissimum est," for Cicero has clearly turned the accusation made against Marcus Caelius into an argument for his defense. In chapter five of the same book (XVII) Gellius again defends Cicero against some meticulous artists in rhetoric, "minutis quibusdam rhetoricae artificibus," who found fault with a passage of the De Amicitia in which Cicero made use of a faulty argument and postulated the "disputed for the admitted." A long discussion of the question is then given with a complete vindication of Cicero.

#### VARRO

References to Varro, whom Gellius describes in Book XVII, 18, as a man of great trustworthiness both in his writings and in his life "in litteris atque vita fide homo multa et gravis," are frequent as might be expected. The "best representative of encyclopedic learning<sup>1</sup>" would naturally appeal to the scholars of the second century. The antiquarian movement found support in the Antiquitates Rerum Humanarum et Divinarum. It is, however, from the De Lingua Latina and the De Imaginibus that Gellius borrows most freely. The original contents and part of the Saturae Menippeae are found in Book II, 18<sup>2</sup>

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1. Duff, op. cit., p.330.
  2. Teuffel, op. cit., p.256.

where Gellius writes that Marcus Varro emulated the works of Menippus in his satires which some call "Cynicas," but which Varro called Menippean, "ipse appellat Menippeas."

In Book XIII, 11, Gellius quotes from one of the Menippean Satires, Nescis Quid Vesper Serus Vehat. Varro has been giving his views about the proper dessert to be served at a banquet, namely "bellaria." Gellius explains that this word is borrowed from the Greeks Πέπματα or τραγήματα and adds that in the earlier comedies "in comoediis antiquioribus" this term was also applied to the sweet wines called "Liberi bellaria." A further quotation from the Satires entitled Ὑδροκύκω discusses the meaning of "caninum prandium." The fifteenth chapter of Book XVIII records an observation made by Varro in his work Disciplinarum regarding the metres in hexameter verse. He declares that in an hexameter verse the fifth half foot always ends a word---the caesura would then fall in the fifth foot according to Varro. Such an arrangement he maintains is in accordance with a certain grammatical ratio, "idque ipsum ratione quadam geometrica fieri disserit." It is, however, as an authority on etymology or on his knowledge of ancient customs that Gellius cites Varro most frequently.

#### SCHOLARS

On the subject of etymology and grammar Gellius seems to consider Nigidius Figulus an outstanding scholar, "Nigidius Figulus, homo, ut ego arbitrator, iuxta M. Varronem doctissimus." (Book IV, 9).

References to the Commentarii Grammatici are numerous in the Noctes Atticae. Gellius admits in Book XIX, 14 that though Figulus and

Varro were the most learned men of their time, the work of the former is not so widely known as that of the latter. The reason for this he adds is due to the obscurity and subtlety which rendered his writings of little practical value.

Aelius Stilo, is also mentioned by Gellius with reference to scholarship, "L. Aelii, docti hominis, qui magister Varronis fuit." In Book II, 3, which is concerned with Plautine criticism, Aelius is mentioned as maintaining that of the hundred or more comedies circulated under the name of Plautus, only twenty-five of these were actually his.

C. Julius Hyginus whose antiquarian learnings were pronounced<sup>1</sup> receives frequent mention in the Noctes Atticae. Book I, 21, a criticism of lines from the Georgics (II, 246) Gellius agrees with, while in Book V, 8, he declares that Hyginus erred marking out an apparent error in the Aeneid VII, 137. In Book, VII, 6 Gellius goes so far as to call Hyginus foolish and hasty in criticising Virgil's use of "praepetes" to describe the wings of Daedalus. Later, however, he acknowledges Julius Hyginus as an authority on pontifical law "Iulius, qui ius pontificum non videtur ignorasse."

Verius Flaccus is referred to only four times by Gellius who does not think very much of his scholarship. In Book XVII, 6 which discusses what Valerius Flaccus wrote about "servus recepticius" in his second book De Obsuris Catonis, Gellius answers holding that Flaccus' interpretation is not correct. He is quite sincere in his criticism of Flaccus insinuating that few people are influenced by his authority

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1. Duff, op. cit., p.628.

"cum pace autem cumque venia istorum, si qui sunt, qui Verrii Flacci auctoritate capiuntur."

Though Gellius makes but few criticisms on the writers of the first century A.D. he pays due tribute to the scholarship of Valerius Probus. Book I, XV and Book III, 1 though concerned chiefly with criticism of Sallust refers to Probus, "grammaticum illustrem." In Book IV, 7 Gellius notes a letter which Probus wrote to Marcellus regarding the accent of Punic names. Probus is quoted again as an authority on pronunciation in Book IX, 9. The chapter opens with a discussion of the method to be used in translating Greek expressions and proceeds to those which Virgil translated from Theocritus. Gellius writes that pupils of Valerius Probus, "docti hominis et in legendis pensitandisque veteribus scriptis bene callidi," said their master declared that Virgil had never translated Homer less successfully than in those lines of the Odyssey (VI, 102 ff.) which he used in the Aeneid I, 498 ff. In Book XIII, 21 Probus advises writers to discard the rules and precepts of grammarians and consult one's ear as to what is to said in any given place. Other references are concerned in the spelling and original meaning of certain words. (XV, 30; XVII, 9).

## CHAPTER V

## CONCLUSION

Criticism of poetry in the Noctes Atticae follows those principles which guided ancient Latin literary criticism. Rivalry, the use of figures, evidence of learning, the ethical aspects of literature and conventional terms are present, plus the influence of the antiquarian movement so strong in the age in which Gellius wrote. The modern concept of the aim of poetry, enjoyment, with the appeal to the emotions rather than to the understanding is perceivable in some of the chapters. Another principle of poetic criticism which was considered to be of great importance by the Roman literary critic was the use of language peculiar to the genre.<sup>1</sup> Gellius pays great attention to this principle. Comparison with the Greek models, "Graeca exempla," a favorite device of the Roman critic finds place also in the Noctes Atticae.

A criticism of Ennius (XI, 4) refers to those verses of Euripides which the Roman poet had translated and rivalled successfully, "non sane incommode aemulatus est." In four other chapters Gellius has criticisms of Virgil and the Greek authors he rivalled. Book IX, 9, a criticism of Virgil's Bucolics and those of Theocritus which he had translated, points out the skill and good judgment which the Roman poet used in either the omission or substitution of certain Greek words which could not be carried over into Latin. Chapter ten of Book XVII, another example of the principle of rivalry in ancient poets, contains

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1. Sikes, op. cit., p.221.



a long and adverse criticism by Favorinus on Virgil's (Aeneid III, 570 ff.) imitation of Pindar's (Pyth.I, 21 ff.) description of an eruption of Mount Aetna. If, as one writer,<sup>1</sup> has suggested, Gellius is really giving his own views, through the persons of Fronto, Favorinus and others, the criticism of Virgil is a further proof of Gellius' critical ability. For though Gellius was not one of "obtrectatores Vergilii,"<sup>2</sup> in this chapter he contrasts the realism of Pindar's description of Mount Aetna with that of Virgil, who struggling to find grand sounding words, "Vergilius autem, dum in strepitu sonituque verborum conquirendo laborat," has failed to "rival" his Greek model. In connection with this chapter the following lines from Saintsbury are interesting. Referring to Aulus Gellius' criticism on Virgil's "Aetna," the English author writes:

This stricture, partly repeated almost word for word in Macrobius, shows, first a criticism of definite passages not very common in the ancients, and secondly, that horror of the excessive which dominates "classical" criticism. It forms Book XVII 10 of the Noctes Atticae, a most interesting and constantly imitated miscellany of the second century after Christ.<sup>3</sup>

In Book XII, 1 however, Gellius praises Virgil's skillful use of lines from Homer, "scite igitur et perite noster Maro, quod, cum versus illos Homeri consecraretur" and also in Book XIII, a criticism of verses of

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1. C. Knapp, "Archaism in Aulus Gellius" Classical Studies in Honour of Henry Drisler, New York, Macmillan & Co., 1894, p.126.
  2. D'Alton, op. cit., p.305.
  3. George Saintsbury, Loci Critici - Passages Illustrative of Critical Theory and Practice from Aristotle Downward, New York, Ginn Company, 1903, pp.74 - 75.

Homer and Parthenius which Virgil followed.

These chapters are illustrative of Gellius' knowledge of the principle of comparison as well as that of rivalry. There are, however, chapters in the Noctes Atticae in which Gellius discards the conventional standards of poetic criticism in antiquity and bases his remarks upon the modern concept of poetry--aesthetic appreciation.

Examples of this type of criticism are seen in Book II, 26 in which Gellius comments upon Ennius' beautiful description of the foam of the sea as golden marble "pulcherrime prorsus spumas virentis maris \*flavom marmor<sup>d</sup> appellavit." Again in Book XII, 21 in which Gellius praises Ennius' excellent choice of words, he does so, not according to the standards of poetic criticism formulated by the grammarians, but from the pleasure received from the harmonious sound of the words. In this same chapter, he makes a further departure from the canons of ancient literary criticism<sup>1</sup> when, comparing Ennius and Homer, he gives Ennius the appreciation due to him apart from his "Homeric" qualities.

Criticism of this type is seen in Book II, 23, a comparison of the Plocium of Caecilius and that of his model, Menander. Apart from the various distinctions he makes between the farcical comedy of the Roman poet and the non-artistic comedy of the Greek, Gellius mentions a quality of poetry which Roman critics as a rule did not demand, inspiration, and gives this as a reason for Caecilius'

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1. Rev. J. F. D'Alton, Horace and His Age, London, Longmans, Green & Company, 1917, p.252.

inability to measure up to Menander. He concludes the criticism with the observation that Caecilius was unwise in attempting to imitate one who was so superior to him and whom he could hardly "rival" "non puto Caecilius sequi debuisse quod assequi nequiret."

The influence of the grammarians upon literary criticism is very pronounced. There are nine chapters referring to Virgil which Gellius uses to illustrate a particular word or grammatical construction. Yet these very passages furnish an idea of the trend of Virgilian criticism from the poet's own time onward.<sup>1</sup> Plautine criticism in the Noctes Atticae is also concerned with such references. Gellius cites Plautus in at least thirty five places touching upon almost all the extant plays. It was, a modern scholar says due to Gellius' love of Plautus that we are indebted to the main facts of the playwright's life.<sup>2</sup>

The chapters in the Noctes Atticae dealing with textual criticism of the poets are valuable. Especially is this true of the four on Virgil for, as D'Alton points out,<sup>3</sup> they show that textual criticism of the poet had begun early. Gellius speaks of copies of the Aeneid from Virgil's own time and even emended by him. There are chapters of textual criticism of the Annales of Ennius and of Catullus.

#### PROSE WRITERS

The prose authors criticized in the Noctes Atticae are those favored by the archaists of Gellius' time. The old historians, C.

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1. D'Alton, op. cit., p.317.

2. Knapp, op. cit., p.132.

3. Rev. J. F. D'Alton, Roman Literary Theory and Criticism, London Longmans, Green & Co., 1931, p.315.

Calpurnius Frugi, Sempronius Asellio and especially Claudius Quadrigarius receive favorable criticism from Gellius. It is however, in the chapters on Sallust that Gellius' critical ability is manifest. In Book X, 20 he comments upon Sallust's propriety of language "proprietas in verbis retinentissimus." Again in Book IV, 15 he cites his elegant and terse style "subtilissimus brevitatis artifex." The ever present influence of the lovers of language is felt in Book I, 15 where Sallust is referred to as "novator verborum."

Quotations from the works of Cato are very numerous in the Noctes Atticae. He stood highest in the estimation of Gellius as the sixty five citations to Cato as an authority show. Gellius' criticism of the ancient writer in Book VI, 3, already referred to in this essay is proof of his good judgment and common sense in forming literary criticisms. This is true also of the criticism he makes in Book X, 3 of Cato, Gracchus and Cicero in parallel passages from speeches of each.

The prose author whom Gellius regarded with highest esteem was Cicero. He was familiar with almost all the works of Cicero. Among the orations he refers to are, The Philippics, Pro Caccina, Pro M. Caelio, Pro Cluentio, Pro Milone, In Pisonem, Pro Cn. Plancio, De Imperio Cn. Pompeio, De Provinciis Consularibus, Pro Quinctio, Pro C. Rabirio, Pro Sex Roscio, Contra Rullum, De Lege Agraria, Pro Sestio, Pro Sulla, In Verrem Contra Contionem Q. Metelli. The rhetorical works Brutus, Orator and the De Oratore are mentioned in nine places. There are three references to the

De Amicitia, but none to the De Senectute. Gellius mentions the De Republica in three chapters, the De Divinatione, the Tusculan Disputations and the Oeconomicus in two. The De Fato, De Finibus, De Officiis are cited only once as is the De Gloria. References to the letters are not frequent, three in all. There is one to the ninth book of the Epistulae Ad Atticum,<sup>1</sup> one to the Ad Ser. Sulpicium<sup>2</sup> and Ad L. Plancum.<sup>3</sup> With all of his antiquarian learnings he shows great perspicacity in acknowledging Cicero's supremacy over the "veteres." The influence of the grammarian is evident in many criticisms, as, for example, in chapter seven of Book I, where a solecism is cited in a passage from the fifth oration against Verres. One of the few references that Gellius makes to the writers of the first century is in Book XII, 2. Annaeus Seneca had criticized Ennius and Cicero. Gellius calls the opinion of Seneca trifling and futile, "levi futtilique iudicio fuit."

There are, then, chapters in the Noctes Atticae which may be called literary criticism. Poetic criticism followed the conventional standards. The tendency to criticize by "kinds"<sup>4</sup> was part of the critical apparatus Gellius inherited from his predecessors in the field. His criticism of prose authors was guided by the norm that influenced all Roman criticism of prose, that set by the schools of Rhetoric.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Att. IX, 5,2.

2. Fam. IV, 4,4.

3. Cf. Fam. X, 83, 5 (From Pollio to Cicero).

4. D'Alton, op. cit., p.378.

5. Ibid., p.438

The love of antiquity, veneration for the early literature and a genuine love for letters combined with common sense and good taste enabled Gellius to pass judgment upon the work of the famous authors he had read and appreciated.

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