AUTOMEDON, THE MORDANT WIT

The little we know about Automedon can be found in Reitzenstein's brief note in Pauly-Wissowa: *Real-Encyclopädie*, II col. 2605. He probably came from Cyzicus, lived during the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, may have been acquainted with the rhetorician Nicetes, and did have eleven of his poems included in the Garland of Philip. He is described by the Author of the introduction to the Anthology as „ivy“ amid the brilliant flowers and decorative leaves of the other contributors. Acquaintance with his poems reveals that he is original, lively, and witty; satiric without being too acidulous, amusing without being silly; and his style is neat, fond of puns, and in general both subtle and at the same time very clear. Those who have waded through the turgid versifying and thin imitations which make up much of the Anthology will remark at once how promising he sounds

One may collect his poems into two groups: the first deals in one form or another with sex; the second is more varied, but three of these epigrams may be grouped loosely together on the grounds that they refer acidly to people or practices of Automedon's day and may have been part of his own direct observation. Let us begin with these.

*Anth. Graec.* 10.23 deals with the rhetorician Nicetes. As E. K. Borthwick remarks, he is likely to have been one of two Nicetes mentioned by the elder Seneca and by Philostratus, both of whom describe the men’s styles as full-blown and melodramatic. Borthwick

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1 4.2". Not that 'ivy' is likely to be significant here. The 'Crown' of Meleager, at the beginning of Book IV has a much more varied selection of flowers and plants, the ascription of which, as Waltz points out in his Budé edition *Paris* 1928, 104—5' may well have made sense to Meleager's contemporaries. But our ignorance of the Alexandrian 'language of flowers' makes our attempt to understand these attributions difficult. Philip's 'Crown', however, appears to be a poorly organised jumble in which the meaning of the plants, if any such existed in the first place, has almost certainly been lost. Better, then, not to make anything of Automedon's identification with the ivy.

2 "Emendations and Interpretations in the Greek Anthology," *Classical Quarterly*, n. s. 21 (1971), 434.

gives a very useful commentary on the poem to which I do not propose to add much.  

Νικήτης ὀλίγος μὲν ἐπὶ πρωτόνοισιν ἄήτης  
οὐχ θε προηινη ἀρχεται ἐκ μελέτης,  
ἀλλ’ ἄπων ἐμπνεύση, κατὰ δ᾽ ἱστία πάντα φέρηται,  
λαέσα παπτώσας μέσσα θέει πελάγη  
ναῖς ἄτε μυριόφρους, ἐνεὶ ἐπὶ τέρματα μύθων  
ἐλθη ἀκομάντους ἃ ἐμπροσθέν ἃ εἰς λυμένας.

Line 1. Nicetes is likened to a little wind on the forestays, the two ropes from the masthead to the forepart of the ship. Frankly, I do not think this makes much immediate sense. It is not Nicetes who blows but his rhetoric and (pace Borthwick) I find Gow and Page's logical distinction between the subject of ἐμπνεύση the wind, and Nicetes as the ship, a good deal more convincing than likening the man himself to his own rhetoric. Something like this identification does happen but not until later in the poem.

Line 2. He begins with gentle practice; but what does „practice“ mean here? Μελέτη can refer simply to declamation, but more often it means rehearsal for a speech, or voice-production exercises, and on at least two occasions there is a hint of empty verbiage or bookish posing about the word. The adjective, as Borthwick points out, is part of the sea and wind imagery of the whole poem, so we may understand πρηείης ἐκ μελέτης as the gentle, wafting, almost tentative start to the set oration. Nicetes begins with perhaps a little hesitation before launching into the full flood of his discourse. There is a hint of this unease in Philostratus' account of Nicetes of Smyrna. We are told he was nervous of speaking in the public assembly and it may be that he needed time to warm up. On the other hand, one must not emphasise this interpretation. To begin a speech πιάνο and gradually increase its vigour until he speaks fορτισσιμο is an obvious declamatory technique open to the public speaker. Nicetes' slow start may mean nothing more than this.

Line 3. κατὰ δ᾽ ἱστία πάντα φέρηται. It is worth seeing Gow and Page on this technical term; the sails are lowered to take advantage of the wind. There is also a clear explanation and illustration of the manoeuvre in L. Casson: Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World, (Princeton 1971), 275 and plate 81.

Line 6. ἃ ἐμπροσθέν ἃ. Borthwick suggests εὔπορος that is, easy to pass or travel through; also glib or inventive.

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Let me now attempt to give a diagrammatic explanation of the poem in which the two themes, Nicetes and his eloquence / the ship and the speech, will become clearer.

A. Nicetes . . . . tentative start to speech . . . . his eloquence gains fluency.

[Parallel with this —]
Breeze . . . . blows gently on the ropes . . . . it gains confidence, thereby filling the canvas; blows hard, and the sails are let out.

B. Nicetes becomes a sailor, that is, master of his speech (ship).

He allows Eloquence (wind) to take over.

Nicetes becomes the ship, that is, Eloquence uses him as her instrument.

At the beginning the ship and the oration were two; half way through the poem they become one and Nicetes is no longer master of Rhetoric but her servant — hence Gow and Page’s distinction between the wind and Nicetes as the subject of ἐμπνεύση which I think not only logical but necessary to the sense of the poem.

The gradual identification of User and Instrument must remind one of Philostratus’ description: ὕπόβακχος καί διθυραμβώδης, where the first adjective, at least, implies a lack of normal control. We are to imagine, therefore, an orator who begins uncertainly, unsure of himself or merely playing a low key to start with, but then, warming to his theme and feeling the audience beginning to respond to his words, is seized by Eloquence and Frenzy and storms into the main body of his speech full of self-confidence, a new personality altogether, until his „inventiveness“ comes to rest in „a waveless harbour.“

I do not propose to comment on Anth. Graec. 11.346 since Borthwick has already done so and helped to make very good sense of a difficult poem; nor does 11.319 need a great deal of explanation. But it is a very good example of Automedon’s particular talent for sly bitchiness and so perhaps a more interesting example of his work than 10.23. Its argument is that Athenian citizenship can be bought so cheaply it has become a matter for amusement. The first four lines simply list the kind of gifts you must bring to buy the honour. 'Ανθρακιών δέκα μέτρα, that is, a load of coal, is quite sufficient to make you a citizen. If you can do better, let us say a pig, you can become Triptolemos himself. Now, by Automedon’s time Triptolemos has grown from a figure of increasing importance at Eleusis into a panhellenic hero whose mission encompassed the universe.
Clinkers and a pig are therefore enough to raise you to divine honours — an acid comment on the Eleusinian mysteries themselves, since the initiates' common sacrifice was a pig, and there seems to have been some notion that the successful candidates were assured of divinity in themselves or of especial happiness hereafter.\(^\text{11}\) The go-between who arranges this transaction is not left out, of course. He receives cabbage stalks, lentils, and snails. The cabbage appears to have been an object of amusement to the comic writers; at least, Athenaeus records a number of mock oaths — „So help me, Cabbage!“ — etc., created by the early writers, and there also seems to have been agreement that the cabbage was cheap but tasty.\(^\text{12}\) Hors d'oeuvres, then, go to the middle-man. Collect all these together, says Automedon, and you may consider yourself a Founding Father (Έρεχθέα, Κέκροπα, Κόδρον) — nobody gives a damn!

Now, there can be no doubt that after Claudius' reign citizenship was rapidly devalued. Dio Cassius tells us it became so cheap that it gave rise to the common saying that anyone could become a citizen by giving the right man bits of broken glass.\(^\text{13}\) Let us remark how Automedon sandwiches his climax in between two pieces of comment. The promises in return for various objects are (1) citizen, (2) god, (3) local ancestor. The finest and most extravagant is in the middle. This makes one suspect he has chosen his list of gifts quite carefully. Citizenship is given in return for fire and the agent bribed with the ingredients of a cheap but enjoyable meal. The pig which transmogrifies man into divinity was at Eleusis the powerful agent of cleansing; it absorbed the impure spirit which indwells in human beings; it rendered one more fit for an uplifting, wholly spiritual, experience.\(^\text{14}\)

But Automedon's advice links this offering with the other two —, ψευδέ καί δν άγάγης\(^\text{15}\) — and so he is saying that an agent of purification allied to greedy materialism will turn one into a god. Is this a sly but piercing hit at Eleusis itself? Had Commerce infected that holy place, as it did many a Mediaeval shrine and has done many a modern spot of miracles? No doubt Automedon's criticism is slanderous but it has perhaps sufficient root in truth to render the sting uncomfortable. Such a wounding remark, carefully placed, not only implies there are no bounds to venality in Athens but, by leaving the corruption of the go-between until last, allows the dubious behaviour of an 'official' to reflect on the monstrosity of people's attitude towards religion. Compared with the latter Heracleides’ being bribed is an...
anti-climax, but the anti-climax permits one to realise more fully the gravity of what has gone before, so that what appears to be a specific complaint about the immorality of a single man turns out to be a critique with social and religious dimensions of a much wider scope.

Anth. Graec. 11.324 also involves food and corruption, both quite openly this time in a religious context.

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First of all let us remark that the first three lines begin with a positive word, δέξα, δέξομαι, ουδένα each of which trails away into qualification; ήν, ειτα, πλην the word play on Φοίβε/φοβή underlines this initial impression of weakness and uncertainty. Therefore when the fourth line begins with άρπαγος we are prepared for it to be toned down. But our expectation is disappointed, for the word is strengthened — κραταιότερήν — and the climax arrives in line 5 — άκνίσου βωμοῖο νεωκόρος, a good and telling example of bathos. Automedon has so contrived his first three lines that the fourth is rammed home with unmistakeable ferocity. The robber-kite is stigmatised as unpleasant and shameful by Dionysius the naturalist.

16 De Avibus 1. 7.
17 See Headlam on Herodas, 4. 41.
18 Moreover, in his Budé edition of Anthology XI, Aubreton points out that άρας, which usually refers to the priest’s lifting the offerings from the altar to present them to the god citing Iliad 10.465 here refers to the theft which deprives the god of them. What is more, the god has not even had a chance to smell them (άκνίσου) before Arrius impiously snatches them away. The theme is quite common in comedy. See Aristophanes: Plu t u s 676-81. Pax 1118. Perhaps also Phrynichus fr. 23(K) who writes of ολιγόσθανος Ἡρακλής. In 411 food in Athens was in short supply. Has Heracles lost his meal to a thief?
fairly obvious joke. It is as though even here Automedon wished only to record the commonplace: it makes Arrius that much more petty.

Anth. Graec. 11.325 is a very amusing piece of sarcasm at the expense of a mean dinner-host and needs no comment just for the moment. Consequently we come to the last poem in this first group 11.361.

ήμιονοι σύγγηροι ἐμῆν κομέουσιν ἀπήνην ταῖσιν Ὀμηρείους πάντα Λιταῖς ἔκελαι, μολαί τε ρυσαί τε παραβλώπες τ' ἄθθωλμω,19 Ἡφαιστος πομητή, σκύτινα δαίμόνια, οὔποτε γευσάμεναι μᾶ τὸν Ἡλιον οὔδ' ἐν οὖνερο οὖ θέρεος κριθήν, οὐκ ἐσθιος βοτάνην τοὐνέκε' ἐμεύ μὲν ἔκητι βλον ζώοτε νερώνης κε νεὴν ἱέρᾳ βοσκόμεναι.

The subject matter is most unusual, probably, as Gow and Page say, taken from real life. Automedon here uses one of Strato’s tricks, quoting Homer out of context. But Strato always perverts the tag into a sexual allusion; Automedon is content with a zeugmatic effect.

Line 4. Σκύτινα δαίμόνια: a very striking phrase. It is just possible that there is also, apart from the obvious meaning „ghosts of skin and bone“ a pun on the proverb σκύτινη ηπικουρία, „useless help."

Lines 5, 6, 7. Notice the accumulation of οὖ — not, never, nor — negatives which emphasise the disembodiment of δαίμόνια But what I have called the zeugmatic effect is the principal technique of the poem. It begins with ήμιονοι and Λιταῖς, continues with σκύτινα δαίμόνια, and dominates the next two lines. Words or ideas appropriate to living, healthy bodies are juxtaposed against those of after-life and the spirit: γευσάμεναι and οὖνερο; μᾶ τὸν "Ηλιον (light=life) and οὖνερο; and therefore, of course, παραβλώπες τ’ ἄθθωλμω and μᾶ τὸν "Ηλιον. since the mules are like ghosts dragged up from below ground, blinking and squinting, unused to the sunlight. Notice too that almost every positive idea is made negative — οὔποτε γευσάμεναι …… οὖ θέρεος κριθὴν, οὐκ ἐσθιος βοτάνην.

Line 7. The crow was a long-lived bird. D’Arcy Thompson gives full references.20 Dorville’s suggestion η έλάφου would do quite well to fill the lacuna in the next line. The deer also was long-lived, and Automedon’s contemporary, Lucilius, links the two creatures as examples of longevity.21 Whatever the correct phrase, notice that the poem ends with a final unlikely pairing, ἱέρᾳ βοσκόμεναι. This provides an end completely without sentimentality, even without compassion. Perhaps we are misled by the original σύγγηροι which may convey the idea of aged retainers voluntarily growing senile in happy servi-

19 Iliad 9.503.
tude. Carphyllides uses the word in a sepulchral epigram to describe the happy relationship of a husband and wife who grew old together, and Antiphilus of Hierocleides' faithful fishing partner, his boat, which aged along with him. So if a sentimental touch really is there in the Greek at the beginning, Automedon has stung us at the end with an unexpected flick of wit. The slightly acid dash would be in character.

It will be clear from the poems we have just considered that Automedon has an original voice which adopts a tone not heard elsewhere in the Anthology. So far I have not provided another poet against whose work Automedon's can be judged, but now we come to the second group of his poems in which he writes of sex, and for the purposes of comparison no better contrast than Strato could be desired.

A common theme among writers of paederastic verse is the lament that body-hair spoils a boy's beauty. Strato is the main exponent of the theme to which is often added, as in Automedon's poem, A nth. G r a e c. 11.326, the bitchy rider — „I told you not to be so proud! Now look at you. You've come round to my way of thinking, but too late.” Automedon, however, has his own way of saying it.

πώγων καί λάσιαι μηρών τρίχες, ώς ταχύ πάντα
ό χρόνος ἀλλάσσει: Κόννικε, τοῦτο ἐγένεν;
οὐκ ἔλεγον — μή πάντα βαρύς θέλε μηδὲ βάναυσος
eίναι· καί κάλλους εἰσί τινες Νεμέες· —
ξύλες ἔσω μᾶνδρης, ὑπερήφανε, νῦν ὅτι βούλει
οἴδαμεν· ἅλλα ἢζην καί τότε ἐχειν σε φρένας.

Line 2. Κόννικε. F. Bechtel gives cognates: χόννος a trinket, a beard or fringe of hair; Κόννας, the famous harpist who died in want; χόννις, κοννιών, κοννίως. It is unlikely that Automedon is hinting at the harpist who came to grief, so presumably the name is meant to convey an idea of hair or „hairy.“ Κόννικας a prickly evergreen, is another possible reference. The skin of this fruit is marred and made unpleasant to handle because of tiny excrescences on the surface.

Line 3. βάναυσος. This is rather a difficult word. Aristotle uses it of the working class, particularly mechanics as opposed to those in agriculture or trade, and once to describe someone who was vulgar enough to spend too much money. Neither Philodemus nor,
Axiopistus help shed much light;27 Plato, on the other hand, is more interesting. He compares his conduct in befriending Dion with that of two other Athenians who betrayed him in Sicily when political pressures became great.28 His was no venal friendship, he says, (οὐ διὰ βαναύσου φιλότητος ἐγενέναι φίλος) and it may be this idea of venality which lies, in part, behind Automedon’s adjective. Let us compare the way Strato uses it in Anth. Graec. 12.237. There Strato is furious with a boy who has refused to sleep with him and he says, „I know — and you can’t hide it from me, — where you’ve just done it, how, with whom, and for how much.“ He describes this hirfeling hypocrite as βάνως, and I suggest therefore that although „rude“ has a perfectly adequate double meaning which encompasses both the lower-class associations of βάνως and the impoliteness of βαρύς, it is perhaps a little closer to Automedon’s intention if we understand βαρύς, as „overbearing“ or „difficult“ and βάνως as „cheap tart.“ Νεμέσεις is another convention. Both Meleager (12,33) and Strato (12.123; 229) use it to mean hair.29

Line 5. ἤλθες ἐσω μάνδρης. Pace Gow and Page, I think Jacobs’ suggestion „in caulam venisse videris, hirco similior quam puero“ does not go too far. The boy’s sudden shagginess, his name with its connotation „hairy“ and the words which follow in the line — νυν ὅτι βούλει — which imply his present frustrated randiness, are quite possibly reminiscent of the goat, a common symbol of lechery. Another, anonymous, poet has a couplet which makes much the same kind of implication,

τῆς ὀρας ἀπόλαυε· παρακμάξει ταυτί πάντα·
ἐν θέρος ἐξ ἐρίφου τρήχων ἔθηκε τράγον;30

and with both this and Automedon’s poem one may compare 11.216 by Lucilius who is sarcastic for the same reasons to a youth called Cratippus. The Avengers (Νεμέσεις) have overtaken him, that is to say he has become hairy.

HeaderText Τοῦτο, Κράτιππε· μακάσομαι εἰ, λύκος εἶναι
πάσι λέγων, ἐφάνης ἐξαπίνης ἐρίφος;

Cratippus the paederast used to be the active lover (λύκος), but now he has turned passive, the victim (ἐρίφος) rather than the ravisher. „Wolf“ and „lamb“ were obviously quite common terms for these roles31 and I think it likely that there is an allusion to these or similar

28 Epistle 7 (334b).
29 Cf. 12. 12 (Flaccus): 12. 160 (Anon.).
30 Anth. Graec. 11. 51.
31 Apart from the loci cited in the text, see also Anth. Graec. 12. 250 (Strato) and Plato: Phaedrus 241d and the Scholiast ad locum. See also G. Luck: „Kids and Wolves," Classical Quarterly n. s. 9 (1959), 34—7.
metaphors in Automedon's \( \zeta \lambda \theta \varepsilon \varepsilon \sigma \omega \mu \acute{\alpha} \nu \delta \rho \varepsilon \). Hence, "hirco similior quam puero" may be justified.

The tone of this poem is closer to Lucilius than to Strato, perhaps not as cutting as the former but not at all abusive; there is none of Strato's passionate dismissal of the \( \beta \alpha \alpha \alpha \omega \sigma \sigma \varepsilon \). Automedon chooses rather to be allusive and fastidious. "We know you want it now, but you might have had sense in those days too."

The only poem by Automedon to appear in the enlarged edition of Strato's \textit{Musa Puerilis} is 12.34 which has a theme similar in certain respects to two by Strato himself, 219 and 222. In the former Strato mockingly exclaims: "Fancy schoolmasters wanting payment as well, when they can kiss a pretty boy whenever they choose!"

The latter depends on everyone — the reader, the actors in the poem, and Strato — being aware of the sexual implications of the scene but never quite admitting them. A paidotribes allows himself to take liberties with a boy during a wrestling exercise, is discovered by the master of the house, pretends he is merely engaging in a genuine wrestle, but does not manage to deceive the master. He is not in the least abashed; nor is Strato who tells his story with a wealth of physical innuendo which is intended to be enjoyed by the reader. Not the least of this is the initial pun on \textit{παίδοτριβῆς}.

Automedon, on the other hand, while making use of the same pun, adopts an entirely different approach. He begins by saying he went to dinner with Demetrius, a paidotribes, the most blessed and fortunate man on earth. We have two lines in which to digest this information and speculate on Demetrius' good fortune. Has someone died, perhaps, and left him a large legacy? The poem goes on, however,

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eλς \alphaυτού \kappaατέκειθ' \\upsilon\nuκόλπιος, \ eλς \\upsepsilon \ \omicron, \ eλς \ \varepsilon\phi\varepsilon\varepsilonν \ \tau\delta \ \phi\alpha\gamma\varepsilon\varepsilon\nu, \ eλς \ \delta \ \pi\epsilon\varepsilon\varepsilon \ \varepsilon\delta\iota\sigma\upsilon, \ \eta \ \tau\varepsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}ς \ \eta \ \pi\varepsilon\ri\beta\varepsilon\lambda\varepsilon\pi\tau\upsilon\upsilon\upsilon\upsilon, \ \gamma\upsilon \ \pi\alpha\iota\zeta\upsilon\upsilon \ \delta \ \pi\rho\upsilon \ \alpha\upsilon\tau\upsilon\upsilon\upsilon \ \phi\nu\mu - \ \acute{\iota} \ \kappaαι \ \nu\upsilon\kappa\tau\omega\rho, \ \phi\iota\lambda\tau\alpha\tau\epsilon, \ \pi\alpha\iota\delta\o\mu\tau\rho\iota\beta\varepsilon\epsilon\iota, - -
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In line 3, \( \upsilon\nuκόλπιος \) is neatly balanced between \( e\lambdaς \) and \( e\lambdaς \), the trainer between the two boys. \( \kappaατά, \ \upsilon\tau\delta, \ \upsilon\pi\epsilon\rho, \ \pi\varepsilon\iota, \) so many prepositions, implying so many different directions and conveying the idea of many more boys than four; \( \pi\varepsilon\ri\beta\varepsilon\lambda\varepsilon\pi\tau\upsilon\upsilon\upsilon\upsilon \) in particular, "looked at" or "coveted" from all around makes the omnipresence of youths appear more vivid.\(^{32}\) It is worth noticing, too, that \( \tau\varepsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}ς \) is a feminine noun and that \( \eta \) is repeated, a situation unavoidable if you choose to employ \( \tau\varepsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}ς \) and that particular construction; but the choice itself may be significant, intended to feminise the boys in our eyes, and so act as a tiny signpost directing our attention to \( \pi\alpha\iota\zeta\upsilon\upsilon \). Here we are to be surprised. So far Automedon has given the impression that Demetrius alone is enjoying the attention and favours of

\(^{32}\) I am aware that 'coveted' stretches the meaning a little, but \( \beta\lambda\epsilon\pi\si\nu \) can have the sense of longing to do something, as in Aristophanes: \textit{Acharn.} 376 and \textit{Vespae} 847.

6 Živa Antika
his quartette, but now, by means of the emphatic ἐγώ and a play on words inherent in παίζων he not only brings himself back into the scene but makes himself part of it — „I, plaeying on words/ I myself, making a play“ and this in turn prepares us for παιδοτριβεῖς, the candid pun with which the poem eds.

Let us remark too that in the last line — σὺ καὶ νύκτωρ..... παιδοτριβεῖς — καί can go with σὺ or νύκτωρ and, if we remember the play Automedon has just made with παίζων, we can understand that final line and a half in two ways:

(a) I made a pun (παίζων) and said to him: Do you exercise them at night too (καὶ νύκτωρ)?
(b) I, showing my interest by making a sexual allusion, said to him: Do you too (σὺ καὶ) exercise them, at night?

Under such circumstances one cannot but admire the pun of φίλτατε, neatly placed just before that final, almost explicite, verb — „dearest friend“ or „much beloved.“

To compare this with Strato’s poem is to have a lesson in the difference between obscene and indecent wit. Despite his brilliance and mastery of invective, Strato begins to sound a little coarse when read in conjunction with Automedon. Let us compare them once again, this time on the subject of personal impotence. First, Automedon:

πέμπε, κάλεν πάντ’ ἔστιν ἑτοιμά σοι* ἡν δὲ πς ἔλθη, 
τι πρήξεις; σαυτω δόσ λόγον, Αύτομεδον. 
αύτη γάρ | λαχάνου σισαρωτέρη |, ή πριν άκαμπτης 
ζώσα, νεκρά μηρῶν πάσα δέδυκεν ἐσω. 
πόλλ5  επί σοι γελάσουσιν, άνάρμενος αν παραβάλη 
πλώειν, τὴν κώπην μηκέτι ἕχων ἑρέτης. (II. 29)

The joke of the first line is, of course, that everything is far from ready. Automedon cannot raise his penis, here referred to as a parsnip. There is a textual difficulty over the vegetable. As Gow and Page point out, λαχάνου σισαρωτέρη makes no sense, and Beckby’s proposed λαχάνου σαθροτέρη is not very convincing. There is no good reason why a vegetable should be „unsound“ in the way in which ideas or foundations are weak or cups cracked, and Gow and Page’s suggestion σισάρου λαγαρωτέρη is much happier in that it preserves the image of the parsnip and uses an adjective which means hollow, emaciated, thin-waisted, slack or loose. This, as we shall see, fits the general tenor and ideas of the poem admirably. Moreover, Dioscorides and others considered the parsnip diuretic, promoting abundance of urine, and able to restore the strength of convalescents.

33 I adopt the admirable translation of Gow and Page which thus conveys in English the implication of ἡ τετράς in Greek.
34 It is impossible to do the pun justice in English, but 'making a play for someone' implies sexual overtures.
35 It is adopted too by Aubreton in his Budé edition.
The σίσαρον is, therefore, one of those cunningly suitable images of which Automedon was fond.

Strato, on the other hand, likens his penis more often to a reed, an image in which sexual technique is as often openly referred to as hinted at. Once, he calls it a cucumber, but that is part of a vituperative poem against women. "When it ripens, it is food for pigs;" the imagery is scornful and dismissive. Automedon's parsnip is simply amusing. We are meant to smile at his predicament not sympathise with it because he too is amused not angry. His exasperation is comic; hence the sudden and ludicrous intrusion of a vegetable into his dilemma. Having once begun to laugh he cannot stop. "Άκαμπτής is his next joke. To call the penis on its better days "unbendable" is unexpected and, incidentally, prepares us for the second metaphor when it is likened to a straight piece of wood, an oar.

"Unbendable" it was while alive. Now it is dead and has sunk underground, as it were. The metaphor of impotence as sleep, or more frequently death, can be found in Philodemus, Scythinus, and Rufinus. But none of them is motivated by a sense of the ridiculous where-as Automedon has obviously been led to the cliché by his picture of the off-white, wrinkled appearance of a parsnip, looking for all the world like a corpse lying in a shallow grave (μηρών .......... δέδυκεν ἐσω) Let us note too that the stiffness associated with rigor mortis is in these lines attributed to the living penis (ή πριν άκαμπτής/ζώσα) so that despite our natural expectations that the living penis not the dead would be stiff, we are taken by surprise to find that, after all, the penis is actually "dead", and ζώσα is left hanging in the air, looking a little foolish. Moreover, we must recall that the penis was called λαγαρός, hollow or emaciated, an adjective designed to emphasise death — perhaps by starvation? The cross-play between the various parts of these two lines shows what can be done with a cliché; other poets treat their affliction with a good deal more gravity.

By now Automedon is highly amused, as we are meant to be, and our laughter acts as the spur to further amusement. Everybody starts to join in, a laughter which Automedon anticipates will swell up in answer to his next pleasant exaggeration — πόλλες ἐπί σοι γελάσουσιν. This next ludicrous image which springs to mind is triggered off, perhaps, by άκαμπτής and δέδυκεν which lead to the idea of something stiff being plunged or dipped — an oar, of course.

He is so taken by the thought that he coins a new word for the occa-

39 Anth. Graec. 11. 30; 12. 232; 5. 47.
41 Or exasperation, as Strato does in 12. 216. Even when he makes a joke it is in the form of a dreadful pun, a play on Astyanax and α-privative, στύειν to make the penis erect.
42 δύω is used of diving, e.g. Iliad d. 18. 140.
sion, ἄνάρμενος, which is linked with άρμενα, ship’s tackle or sails. Thus his picture is complete. As I said before, the wit is indecent but cannot be called obscene. Nothing is crudely explicit; it is Automedon’s way to veil sex under a series of allusions or, as here, images which are ludicrous but apt. It is a technique which works well because he does not appear to be involved emotionally in his predicament. Automedon’s detachment from sex is what marks him out from the other poets of the Anthology and from Strato in particular.43

A poem on the blessings of being a bachelor (11.50) seems to be an exercise in another literary vein and should not be taken as autobiographical although, in view of the detached amusement or cynicism which we have just noted as typical of Automedon, the choice of subject may, again, be significant. Lucilius has an epigram about marriage (11.388). If you are a rich bachelor, he says, everyone will love you and want to be your child. Once married, however, you will be poor and find no affection in your offspring. Complaints about the trials of married life have always been a common satiric theme and Lucilius’ poem contains many of the standard jibes: a wife makes a man poor; a rich man is beset by legacy hunters; a poor man is loved by nobody. Once more, Automedon treats the subject in his own peculiar fashion.

Don’t marry or have children, he says, if you want to be happy. If you must wed, choose someone rich then bury her quickly — a cynical piece of advice which is followed by an odd final couplet.

τιμὶ εἴδως σοφὸς ἵσθι, μάτην δ’ Ἐπίκουρον ἔσσειν
ποῦ τὸ κενὸν ζητεῖν καὶ τίνες αἱ μονάδες.

Epicurus said various things about atoms and the void, and about marriage too. Here are some of them:

1. The universe consists of bodies and space. Among some bodies are compounds (συγκρίσεις) and others, those of which compounds are formed. They are indivisible (άτομα).
2. The atom is a hard body free from any admixture of void: the void is intangible existence.
3. Epicurus said that the wise man will marry and have children.
4. Sexual intercourse has never done a man good and he is lucky if it has not done him harm.44

„Void“ in the poem obviously stands for non-marriage, that which is „unloaded“ and „fruitless,“ and the monads — presumably

43 I am aware that Cephalas described Strato’s poetic activity as παίζων, playing with words, but it is obvious to anyone who reads his corpus that even if he improvised poems to commemorate someone else’s love, pain, anger, cynicism, or whatever, he was so wrapped up in his own sexual emotions that he could identify himself very easily and quickly with those of another, so that to all intents and purposes the emotions conveyed to the audience by his verses are his.

equivalent, as Gow and Page say, to ἄτομα — are indivisibles that is, confirmed bachelors. Since ζητεῖν means to look for, what Automedon’s verses probably mean is: Epicurus asks where he can find absolute celibacy and confirmed bachelors, but asks in vain (μάτην) because no one can resist marriage. The message is, therefore, that bachelors are much better off than married folk and don’t need the theories of a professional crank to support them.45

As a final point it is worth remarking on the form of the poem. First comes a philosophical statement and at the end mention of a philosopher and his daft ideas, the implication being, it is easy to theorise about this. Wedged in between is a piece of sound practical advice, the sting in the tail, so to speak. But Automedon keeps his advice neatly tucked away between his two philosophy remarks so that it can inject comment back and forwards at the same time, a device we have already seen him use (10.23).

A. Celibacy is best.
B. Ah, but men do marry, don’t they?
C. Philosophising about it doesn’t help.
A. But perhaps philosophers have a point — celibacy is best.
B. It’s much better to be practical about it.

Now, I think it will be agreed that what we have seen so far of this second group of Automedon’s poems, those with a sexual theme, should warrant our being surprised if we suddenly read overt, not to say crude, descriptions of sexual activity taking place in what would appear to be a brothel. Yet this is the subject matter of 5.129.

τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀσίης ὀρχήστριά, κακοτέχνους
σχήμασιν ἐξ ἀπαλῶν κυνμένην ὀνύχων,
ἀινέω οὐχ ὅτι πάντα παθαίνεται οὐδ’ ὅτι βάλλει
τὰς ἀπαλὰς ἀπαλῶς ὡδὲ καὶ ὡδὲ χέρας,
ἀλλ’ ὅτι καὶ τριβακῶν περὶ πᾶσαλον ὄρχησασθαι
οὐδὲ καὶ οὐ φεύγει γηραλέας ρυτίδας*
γλωττίζει, κνίζει, περιλαμβάνει ἵν ἡ ἐπιρῆψη
τὸ σκέλος, ἐξ "Αιδου τὴν κορύνην ἀνάγει.

Line 1. Κακοτέχνους means either using evil practices, or fraudulent. Liddell and Scott suggest „lascivious,“ citin Anth. Graec. 5.1325 (Philodemus) which has κατατεχνότατος κινήματος, the accomplished movement of a woman, obviously meaning lascivious in the context. Κατατεχνότατος however, is not the same word as κακοτέχνος. Plutarch uses it to describe imes, songs, and tunes which are badly written and in bad taste.46 If the girl is using evil or fraudul-
lent arts it is possible that we are meant to understand that there is an element of insincerity in them. This is not to say they are not obscene — obviously they are — but there is a difference between what the poet says and what Liddell and Scott want him to say. Perhaps „crude postures“ is a translation which preserves both possible senses.

Line 2. Κυμαμένην — setting herself in motion. Κινείν should be taken in its obscene sense, for which there are plenty of parallels. Παθαίνεται in line 3 is a word derived from the expressive gestures of the rhetorician and may well help both to convey an idea of playing and insincerity in the girl’s sexual miming, and to underline a similar suggestion in κακοτέχνοις.

Line 3. Αἰνέω This comes as a deliberate shock after the seedy and disreputable figure portrayed for us in the first two lines. Praise is not what we expected to hear. Moreover, it is followed by negatives which leave it the more isolated. „Here is a lascivious dancing-girl. I praise her. But not for her dancing.“ This technique of springing a verbal surprise is very much in Automedon’s vein; we have seen him do much the same thing with ζώσα in 11.29.

Line 4. It is remarkable how many rough breathings are gathered together in this line; no accident, of course, so are we to understand them figuratively to represent the heavy breathing or panting of one of the actors in the scene and if so, which, the girl or the poet? Once again, we recognise Automedon’s way with ambiguous hinting. It is a trick similar to παίζω in 12.34.

Line 5. Τριθοφων περὶ πάσσαλον ὄρχησασθαι Aristophanes uses πάσσαλοι once to refer to the penis and twice to mean something inserted into the mouth, first, to extend it and prop open the jaws, second, to gag it. The double entendre, part of which may refer to fellatio is obvious and links the use of πάσσαλος here with the explicit γλωττίζει which comes later. By this point in the poem a pun on ὄρχησασθαι — ὄρχεῖς is possible. The girl knows how to dance about the penis, but she may well know also how to make the penis dance or leap around. This innuendo would require us to take ὄρχησασθαι in its full Middle sence, as though it were derived from ὄρχεω, an unusual verb but one which had been used both by Plato and Ion, the tragedian.

It is worth noting how the poem is building itself up to a climax of disgust. First, the slight air of tattiness about the girl herself, and the surprise of finding that the poet apparently is prepared to approve

47 Aristophanes: R a n a e 148. P a x 867. N u b e s 1103, 1371. E q u i t e s 364. Cf. Herodas: 5.2 Eupolis fr. 100, 233, etc.
49 E c c l e s i a z u s a e 1020.
50 E q u i t e s 376.
51 Θ e s m o p h o r i a z u s a e 222.
52 C r a t y l u s 23 (407a). Ion trag. fr. 50.
of her; next, we find he does not praise her dancing so much as her prostitutional skill; then we have a hint of that skill in πάσσαλον and ὀρχήσασθαι. But now that Automedon has brought us to the point of ὀρχεῖς, he reminds us of exactly what they look like — γηραλέας ρυτίδας the shrivelled wrinklings of old age, crammed into the second half of a pentameter, and brought more especially to our notice by their rhyming with the previous pentameter. These are what the girl does not hesitate (οὐ φεύγει) to put into her mouth, and if we were in any doubt about the implications of πάσσαλον, γλωττίζει removes them. The verb is carefully chosen — ψεύτειν. How natural it would be for anyone to run away from such a sight! Yet the girl knows full well what she is about (οίδε) and still does not run away.

At this point Automedon throws off the veil of innuendo and tells us what is happening in three words of harsh explicitness, in which three stages of love-making — the kiss, the touch, the embrace — correspond to greater and therefore more degrading efforts on the part of the girl whose actions are directed, not to the man himself, but only to his sexual organ. It is affection reduced to worship of the phallos, crude sex and nothing more.

Nothing, indeed, can follow save the sex act itself, and having descended to this level Automedon closes the poem before it begins. The girl gets astride the man and so „leads forth“ (ἀναγεί) the club from Hades. ‘Hades’ appears to be another variation on the theme of death-impotence, such as we have come across before. Κορύνη is an unusual word to use of the penis. Only Nicander can be found to provide a parallel and there it refers to the penis of a donkey.53 Heracles was famous for his club, of course, and ventured into the underworld at one point in his career, so the reference may mean that the man has regained his full „heroic“ virility.54 But somehow what has gone before has been too pervaded with distaste to end with a complimentary metaphor. The ass’s yard would be more appropriate, but we have too little evidence to be sure of the exact allusion intended.

The savage disgust and revulsion at the sight of physical details remind one in places of Juvenal or Swift, a tone which is so unlike anything else in Automedon’s corpus that inevitably one asks oneself if he is indeed the author. It is unfortunate that we have so few of his poems because we are unable to tell whether this one represents a completely isolated example of a mood which was alien to him — and nothing could be more different from the acid, fastidious tone which is his hallmark — or was once accompanied by others as biting and as enraged. Despite one’s initial doubts, however, I think it likely that he is indeed the author for, as we have seen, his poetic technique is

53 Alexipharmaca 409.
54 Aristophanes takes advantage of Heracles’ club to make an obscene joke involving sodomy. See Ranae 47—8 and the Scholiast ad locum. Leonidas too uses ‘club’ of Priapus’ member (Anth. Graec. 15. 261), but in both cases the word is ἰόπαλον and one cannot be quite sure that κορύνη carried exactly the same overtones.
present and observable throughout. An accomplished poem, then, and when compared with his others a remarkable one.\textsuperscript{55}

So what remains to be said about Automedon? Gow and Page are both complimentary. "Both in subject and in style,\" they say,\" Automedon shows more originality than is usual in the Garland. His phrasing is generally neat and clear, the tone lively and good-humoured.\"\textsuperscript{56} With the latter adjective I cannot quite agree, though the rest is just enough. Automedon is undoubtedly one of those writers of whose work one would like more. His moods are varied; they range from witty to satiric, from wry to scornful, from indecent to savage. He is adept at the taunt, the sarcastic or insulting reproach which leaves its recipient hurt and exposed. Comparison with other Anthology poets does him no harm, but comparison with Strato is the most revealing. Where Strato sparkles, a humour of brilliants scattered upon commonplace material, Automedon glints, the dangerous pricks of his wit lying in ambuscado, an attraction and a danger to the unwary reader.

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\textsuperscript{55} For further comments on the style see P. Coloaidès and M. McDonald: "Horace et Automédon," Latomus 33 (1974), 382—4.

\textsuperscript{56} Gow and Page: \textit{The Garland Of Philip H.} 186.