



Athenaeus, The Deipnosophists

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There is also another way of playing this game with a platter. This platter is filled with water, and in it there are floating some empty saucers, at which the players throw their drops out of their cups, and endeavour to sink them. And he who has succeeded in sinking the greatest number gains the victory. Ameipsias, in his play entitled *The Men playing at the Cottabus* or *Mania*, says—

Bring here the cruets and the cups at once,
The foot-pan, too, but first pour in some water.

And Cratinus, in his *Nemesis*, says—

Now in the cottabus I challenge you,
(As is my country's mode,) to aim your blows
At the empty cruets; and he who sinks the most
Shall, in my judgment, bear the palm of victory.

And Aristophanes, in his *Feasters*, says—

I mean to erect a brazen figure,
That is, a cottabeum, and myrtle-berries.

And Hermippus, in his *Fates*, says—

Now soft cloaks are thrown away,
Every one clasps on his breastplate,
And binds his greaves around his legs,
No one for snow-white slippers cares;
Now you may see the cottabus staff
Thrown carelessly among the chaff;
The manes hears no falling drops;
And you the *πλάστιγξ* sad may see
Thrown on the dunghill at the garden door.

And Achæus, in his *Linus*, speaking of the Satyrs, says—

Throwing, and dropping, breaking, too, and naming (*λέγοντες*),
O Hercules, the well-thrown drop of wine!

And the poet uses *λέγοντες* here, because they used to utter the names of their sweethearts as they threw the cottabi on the saucers. On which account Sophocles, in his *Inachus*, called the drops which were thrown, sacred to Venus— [p. 1067]

The golden-colour'd drop of Venus
Descends on all the houses.

And Euripides, in his *Pleisthenes*, says—

And the loud noise o' the frequent cottabus
Awakens melodies akin to Venus
In every house.

And Callimachus says—

Many hard drinkers, lovers of Acontius,
Throw on the ground the wine-drops ([λατάγας](#)) from their cups.

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