

Two Virgilian Notes

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1. Dido, Naevius and Lactantius*

To judge from recent discussion, the debate for and against Niebuhr's hypothesis that the relationship of Dido and Aeneas in Naevius' *Bellum Poenicum* served to explain the outbreak of hostilities between Carthage and Rome (rather as in Virgil) has been taken about as far as it can go¹ and is now dying down for lack of fresh fuel. A recent discussion,² while conceding to Naevius the 'germ' of such an explanation, denies vigorously and at length the presence of an aetiological element in the *BP*. Now that is rather curious, and the issue is important, for if it can be shown that Naevius was not inhospitable towards Alexandrian aetiology, then the use of Dido as an action on a grander scale becomes altogether likelier. We might therefore first note fr. 13Strz. (SDan. *ad Aen.* 9.712); it has been clear for half a century that, without risking much reproof for our foolhardiness, we may make use of *OGR* 10 to reconstruct the story as it was told in the *BP*. Even if we leave *OGR* out of the discussion, we have Prochyta the toponym (mod. Procida), on the map, and Prochyta the *cognata* of Aeneas in *BP* 1: to deny any aetiological link between the two might seem to smack of hypercriticism. It is also worth bearing in mind that Strzelecki goes on (without claiming the rest of the note in SDan. as *explicitly* Naevian) '*post haec ita Serv.Dan. pergit*': not, that is, certain Naevius, but an elegant way of suggesting to the attentive reader of his Teubner edition that it is worth pondering as potentially Naevian the rest of the note, a learned consideration of the many

* By great good fortune, I am able to offer Antonie Wlosok, a dear and true friend for twenty years, a little tribute both Lactantian and Virgilian, in keeping with her two main lines of research, in celebration of her retirement, from teaching but emphatically not from *wissenschaftliche Tätigkeit*. I am much obliged to Pamela Bleisch (Athens, Georgia) for asking the question which brought this problem to my attention.

¹ So I suggested in *GR* 38, 1991, 205 and in *A Companion to the Study of Virgil*, Mnem.Suppl. 151, Leiden 1995, 105, 134.

² Sander M. Goldberg, *Epic in republican Rome*, Oxford 1995, 54ff.; for Ennius, there is no room for doubt: cf. J.J. O'Hara, *True names*, Ann Arbor 1996, 51f.

ancient names of Ischia and their aitia. Metonomasia, that is, as well as aetiology; irreproachably Alexandrian,³ but I do not want to suggest that Naevius played with polyonymy as giddily as did Virgil two centuries later.⁴ We might, though, do well to remember that Prochyta could only too easily have stood alongside Aenaria/ Inarime/ Pithecussa in his text. Certainly the idea had crossed the mind of W. Strzelecki, the editor who restored sense to studies of the *BP* by his minute respect for the *testimonia*. But let us return from the small print to the text, of Lactantius, *DI* 1.6.9, on which both Antonie Wlosok and I have worked in the past.⁵ No wish to re-fight old battles here, but we would do well to remember just what Lactantius, following Varro, *Res divinae*,⁶ actually says: *quartam* (sc. *Sibyllam*) *Cimmeriam in Italia, quam Naevius in libris belli Punici, Piso in annalibus nominet*. Now if we knew that Ischia was Naevian, we could also refer to ancient discussion of the geography of *Il.* 2.783. But we cannot, and have to make do with the name 'Cimmerian' in isolation: they are Homeric in origin (*Od.* 11.14) and wonderfully mobile.⁷ Only a day's sail from Circe's abode, and Circe was regularly located in western Italy from ps.Hes. *Theog.* 1011ff. on.⁸ So if Naevius' Aeneas consulted the Sibyl at Cumae, then some sort of aetion of the Sibyl's name ('the Cimmerian'), and of her presence on the Bay of Naples (and still a day's sail from Circe's home!), will have been practically obligatory and you do not have to be a prophet yourself to detect the lines along which it is likely to have been developed (briefly enough, one would imagine). Either, therefore, Naevius filled his poem with unexplained, learned mythological names, or else he indulged in (at least a minimum) of explanation, aetiological and onomastic. Now these few cases do not make Naevius into a learned Alexandrianising poet, but they do, it may be suggested, establish that he was to some modest extent demonstrably interested in aetiological themes and that in turn seems to make it a good deal likelier that he really did after all use Aeneas and Dido as an aetion too.

³ O'Hara (n. 2), 88ff.

⁴ The most spectacular example is admirably explained by Richard Thomas in his note on *G.* 3.146-56.

⁵ A. Wlosok, in *Forma futuri. Studi in onore del cardinale Michele Pellegrino*, Torino 1975, 705f., = *ead.*, *Res humanae — res divinae*, Heidelberg 1990, 313f.; N.M. Horsfall, *CR* 29, 1979, 47f.

⁶ Cf. A. Heubeck on *Od.* 11.14-19 (Oxford 1989).

⁷ See note 6.

⁸ Cf. West on 'Hes.' *cit.*, pp. 435f., Heubeck on *Od.* 10.135-9, M. Cancellieri, *Enc. Virgil.* 1, 794; note the Western Circe at *AR* 3.312.

2. The parade of heroes: some neglected peculiarities of style*

Though three commentaries on *Aeneid* 6 have appeared since 1970 (Williams 1972, Austin 1977, Paratore 1979), not to mention a vast mass of periodical literature, it remains true as ever that numerous new discoveries both about the content and about the language remain to be made, not least since the detailed study of Virgil's style has regained a marked vitality, thirty years after Quinn's very useful survey.¹ These 'new discoveries' lurk even in those famous passages on which it might be thought that nearly everything had already been said: when Woldemar Görler pointed out that in *excudent alii spirantia mollius aera ... uiuos ducent de marmore uoltus* (6.847f.) the verbs have been 'switched', for *ducere* applies naturally to bronze and *excudere* to marble (*Enc. Virgil.* 2, 276; possibly to be called a 'double zeugma'), the observation was not in itself new, but it had not reached the three commentators, though the admirable Austin realised that there was something odd about the wording of the Latin. Until I began rewriting my old unpublished commentary on *Aeneid* 7 (in part my thesis, DPhil. Oxon. 1971) just over two years ago, I did not realise even that not all Latin grammar and usage was codified in the great manuals of Kühner-Stegmann and Leumann-Hofmann, but it is indeed not. I take one example: to cite Kennedy's *Latin Primer* (really, a classic), the ablative absolute is so called 'because the Noun and Participle are independent of the rest of the sentence in Construction' (p. 130 of my undated copy). But they are *not* independent, often, in prose (so e.g. Leumann-Hofmann, *Lateinische Grammatik* 2 (München 1965), 139f.); in verse (and in Virgil, that is), Kennedy's 'rule' does appear to apply. Why the distinction? The grammars say nothing about it; on *Aen.* 7.307 *merentem* I shall suggest a possible line of explanation. And perhaps only the few people who have written seriously about Virgil's Latin (so appendix 1 to W.F. Jackson Knight's *Roman Vergil*, even in the Penguin reprint, Quinn (n. 1) and Görler, *Enc. Virgil.* 2, 262-78, summarising much work elsewhere) have suspected just how deeply odd some of it is (cf. my remarks in *Companion*, above, 226f.). Let us be clear: not just odd sometimes, but burgeoning with surprises; thirty instances of enallage (transferred epithet) and hypallage (transference of e.g. direct and indirect objects) in the 817 lines of *Aeneid* 7 (cf. my commentary, Leiden, forthcoming). At 6.831 Pompey is *gener aduersis instructus Eois*, as though he

* I came to know Woldemar Görler through a review of mine (*CR* 41, 1991, 272f.) of the *Pratum Saraviense. Festgabe für Peter Steimetz* which he had co-edited (Stuttgart 1990). From his offprints and letters it quickly became clear to me that he had altered fundamentally the way in which we study Virgil's Latin, as I ought to have realised sooner and try to make clear in *Companion, cit.*, 216-48). Now he too has retired, and I am delighted to be able to offer him a fresh crop of anomalies, from a passage we all thought we knew well.

¹ *Virgil's Aeneid: a critical description*, London 1968, 350-440.

were himself drawn up like an army; logically, we might want to say, Pompey *faces* Caesar (*aduersus*), with the Easterners (*Eoi*) drawn up (*instructis*). A sort of double enallage, then, involving a participle, too, and suggesting that Pompey is *ipse agminis instar*. At 6.832 Anchises warns Pompey and Caesar *ne tanta animis adsuescite bella*; clearly hypallage, for ‘logically’ you habituate your *animi*² to war, and not the ‘other way round’! And at 6.841 he looks at Cato the Censor² *quis te, magne Cato, tacitum aut te, Cosse, relinquat?* But it is not Cato or Cossus who cannot keep silence, but the beholder who cannot remain silent at the sight of them. Yet by hypallage the adjective has slipped into the accusative. That concentration (6.831, 832, 841) is itself of interest, for I have indeed found elsewhere that Virgil does tend to group or concentrate his stylistic extravagances: that suggests he well knew just how odd they were, and how little suited (e.g.) to a relatively bald diplomatic exchange. But to pursue these ‘concentrations’ with care and objectivity, we would need an appropriately detailed stylistic commentary on the whole of Virgil!

Rome

² I say ‘the Censor’ deliberately; D.A. West, in *Tria lustra, Liverpool Classical Papers* 3, 1993, 293 is perfectly right to challenge certain fashionable readings of the passage as ‘riddling’ or ‘ambiguous’. Cf. my remarks at *Companion, cit.*, 145-9, not to deny V.’s tendency to ambiguity, but to question its relevance just here.