

VIRGIL *ECLOGUES* 4. 60–63

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Incipe, parve puer, risu cognoscere matrem
(matri longa decem tulerunt fastidia menses);
incipe, parve puer: qui non risere parenti,
nec deus hunc mensa, dea nec dignata cubili est.

62 cui non risere parentes *codd. Verg. et Quint.* (9. 3. 8), qui *Quint. ipse, ut apparet.*

THE reading of line 62 is still a matter of dispute. The majority of the editions of the last fifty years—Geymonat, Holtorf, Saint-Denis, Sabbadini, Fairclough (like Conway, Nettleship, Page, Conington, Ribbeck before them) have *cui* (or *quoi*) . . . *parentes*. Mynors, Castiglioni, and Hirtzel have *qui* . . . *parenti*; Perret has *qui* . . . *parentes*. The aim of this note is first to summarize the inconclusive paleographical evidence, and then to offer a firm decision based on contextual and stylistic considerations, with special regard to the rhetorical use of repetition.

The unanimous testimony of the MSS of Virgil and of the MSS of Servius is in favor of *cui* . . . *parentes* (but it should be noted that Servius does not prove the reading of his lemma by his comment). This is of course a powerful argument, but it must be observed that a misreading or misunderstanding of *qui* as a dative form—and it seems to have been an acceptable dative spelling at certain times (cf. Donatus on Ter. *Phorm.* 69)—would lead to consequential alteration of *parenti*.

In opposition to the manuscript reading is the testimony of Quintilian, who quotes (9. 3. 8) Virgil's sentence as an example of the singular following the plural. Having illustrated the plural following the singular with "gladio pugnacissima gens Romani," he goes on, "vel ex diverso 'qui non risere parenti / nec deus hunc . . .': ex illis enim, 'qui non risere,' hic quem non dignata est." The MSS of Quintilian have all corrupted his reading to that of the MSS of Virgil (*cui non risere parentes*), but it is absolutely certain from the context that Quintilian read *qui* (and very likely that he read *parenti*, because *ridere* with the accusative means "deride" and is not [*pace* Phillimore, Birt, and Perret] tolerable Latin for "to smile at"). Can we then trust Quintilian's reading and thus get several centuries closer to Virgil than the earliest MSS? It is notorious that authors like Quintilian or Seneca sometimes misquote Virgil from memory, but this is a different case from most. Quintilian must have been certain that he had read *qui* . . . *parenti* in Virgil for it to have come to his mind as a grammatical example of *qui* (plural) followed by *hunc* (singular). His memory as such cannot be at fault, but it is of course possible (as Sabbadini powerfully argues) that he had misread his Virgil originally, and formed a false conclusion. Nevertheless Quintilian's evidence seems at least to shed doubt on the reading of Virgil's MSS. A fairly close parallel for the grammatical construction is

Lucretius 5. 857–59 (cited by Rose): “nam quaecumque vides . . . id . . .” Cf. also Cicero *De finibus* 5. 94 (cited by Birt): “hic si Peripateticus fuisset . . . qui dolorem malum dicunt esse.”

We come now to the stylistic aspects of these four lines. The triple repetitions (*matrem . . . matri*; *incipi parve puer . . . incipi parve puer*; *risu . . . risere*) have a rhetorical force in reinforcing the meaning which must not be overlooked. The repetition of *matrem . . . matri* insists on a relationship between lines 60 and 61 which can in the context only be causal: “recognize your mother with a smile (because) for your mother the long period of pregnancy has been hard to bear.” The baby’s smile is a reward for the mother’s suffering. The meaning “recognize your mother with a smile” is clearly paraphrased by Servius (on line 60): “Sicut enim maiores se sermone cognoscunt, ita infantes parentes risu se indicant agnoscere. ergo hoc dicit—incipi parentibus arridere.” For the construction, which is entirely natural, Birt compared Petronius *Satyricon* 113 *risu exceperet fabulam*, and Jerome *Epistulae* 107. 4 *patrem risibus recognoscat*. A few commentators, however, including Heyne, have taken *risu cognoscere matrem* to mean “recognize your mother by her smile”; this not only makes very feeble sense but is quite contrary to the force of the rhetorical repetition *matrem . . . matri* and is finally disproved¹ by the famous passage in Catullus which Virgil certainly has in mind here: “Torquatus volo parvulus / matris e gremio suae / porrigens teneras manus / dulce rideat ad patrem / semihiantem labello” (61. 216 ff.).

Similarly the repetition *incipi parve puer . . . incipi parve puer* insists in line 62 on some causal relationship with what preceded, on some explanation of why the baby should begin to do what it is urged to do: “Begin (I say), little boy, (because) those who do not smile on their parents have no glory.” If the meaning were “Begin (I say), little boy; those on whom their parents do not smile have no glory,” then the powerful rhetoric of the repetition *incipi parve puer* would be meaningless. It must call for action on the part of the child.

Finally, let us take these two disputed places together. The arguments that *risu* means “by smiling” seem overwhelming, as most scholars agree; if that is so, then it would be stylistically very weak indeed and quite contrary to the force of the repetition *risu . . . risere* to shift the smile to the parents in line 62 (as so many editors do, and as Ernout has recently argued in his reviews of Perret and Mynors: “on voit le rire de l’enfant et celui de la mère se répondre. . .”). It would be clumsy and most un-Virgilian to say “Recognize your mother by smiling at her; babies upon whom the parents do not smile (in return) win no glory.” Such a view is only possible if we allow the manuscript reading to prevail over the sense of the passage. Norden rightly insisted on this point, and R. C. Seaton long ago (*CR* 7 [1893]: 199 f.) was correct in saying that there is no question of an answering smile.

1. C. Fantazzi, *Latomus* 33 (1974): 280 f., points out that Pan and Zoroaster were both said to have smiled at birth; cf. also the passages cited by E. Norden, *Die Geburt des Kindes* (Leipzig, 1924), p. 64. n. 2.

The triple repetitions (*matrem . . . matri, incipe parve puer* [bis], *risu . . . risere*) make the meaning stylistically so clear that not even the scribal corruption can conceal it. We should read *qui non risere parenti*, and translate: "Begin, little baby, to recognize your mother by smiling: the ten months have caused your mother long suffering. Yes, begin, little baby, to do that, because those who have not smiled on their mother—no god thinks such a one worthy of his table, no goddess of her bed."

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