

NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

A LACUNA IN THE *AENEID*

There is a small problem in Vergil's account of Amata's madness (*Aen.* 7. 373–405). After rushing wildly through the streets, the queen flees into the woods and mountains. All the married women leave their homes and follow her as shrieking bacchantes, loosening their hair, donning animal skins, and carrying *thyrsi* wreathed with vine leaves. In their midst Amata holds a flaming torch.

The problem is a matter of two adjectives. Vergil writes:

fama uolat, furiisque accensas pectore matres	392
idem <i>omnis</i> simul ardor agit noua quaerere tecta.	393
deseruere domos, uentis dant colla comasque.	394
ast <i>aliae</i> tremulis ululatibus aethera complent	395
pampineasque gerunt incinctae pellibus hastas.	396
ipsa inter medias flagrantem feruida pinum	397
sustinet. . . .	398

They *all* left their homes. But *others* filled the air with shrieks. The logic is wrong.

This was noticed in antiquity by a corrector in the Medicean manuscript, who changed *aliae* to *illae*.¹ And indeed *ast* occurs six times in the *Aeneid* juxtaposed to a form of *ille*. However, in each case a strong opposition is implied: 1. 116 *ast illam (nauem) × magister*; 3. 330 *ast illum (Pyrrhum) × me (Andromachen)*; 5. 468 *ast illum (Dareta) × Aeneas et Entellus*; 5. 676 *ast illae (matres Troianae) × Aeneas et agmina Teucrum*; 9. 162 *ast illos (bis septem) × centeni*; 12. 951 *ast illi (Turno) × Aeneas*. But in the passage from the seventh book there is no such opposition between *omnis (matres)* and *aliae (matres)*. How to explain *ast aliae*?

Peerlkamp, in his edition of 1843, printed the text as given above, but, in a note, suggested transposing lines 395 and 396. "Prius vestitum aliarum mulierum descripsit, tum dixit, quid illae facerent, mox quid ipsa, princeps, regina mater." Ribbeck printed the lines transposed, crediting Peerlkamp in the apparatus.² Yet this transposition does nothing to solve the problem: it still makes Vergil write *omnis* followed by *ast aliae*.

Forms of *alius* appear with *ast* elsewhere in the poem. In each case the person or persons denoted by *alius* is linked to, but contrasted with, a group previously mentioned. So in 2. 465–67 the Trojans push a tower over upon Greek soldiers, crushing them; *ast alii subeunt*. In 4. 487–88 the Massylian witch claims power to set free from the pangs of love "mentes / quas uelit, ast aliis duras immittere curas." Charon in 6. 315–16 admits now this group and now that to his boat; "ast alios longe summotos arcet harena." When the Trojans are driven back into their

1. Given as *ALLAE* in Ribbeck's apparatus. Servius, by the way, makes no comment.

2. Curiously, he omits any mention of Peerlkamp on p. 82 of his *Prolegomena*, writing, "Turbatum versuum ordinem perverse insertis quae in marginem coniecta fuerant deprehendi vv. 395 sq."

camp, Pandarus closes the gate, leaving many of his own people outside; "ast alios secum includit," among them the enemy Turnus (9. 727).

On the basis of these parallels it seems likely that in 7. 392-96 one term of the contrast implied by *ast aliae* is missing. *Omnis* will not stand in opposition to *ast aliae*. The pattern desiderated is (1) *omnis*; (2) *x*; (3) *ast aliae*. What is *x*, the missing second term?

The answer is suggested by one of the passages which were at the back of Vergil's mind: Catullus' description of the bacchantes in 64. 254-64.

quae tum alacres passim lymphata mente furebant
 euhoe bacchantes, euhoe capita inflectentes.
 harum *pars* tecta quatiebant cuspidē thyrsos,
pars e diuolso iactabant membra iuuenco,
pars sese tortis serpentibus incingebant,
pars obscura cauis celebrabant orgia cistis,
 orgia quae frustra cupiunt audire profani;
 plangebant *aliae* proceris tympana palmis
 aut tereti tenuis tinnitus aere ciebant;
multis raucisonos efflabant cornua bombos
 barbaraque horribili stridebat tibia cantu.

Here the first two lines describe in general terms the women's frenzy. (Catullus' *euhoe bacchantes* has suggested Vergil's *euhoe Bacche fremens* in 7. 389, and his *passim furebant* reappears in Vergil as "furiisque accensas pectore matres . . . omnis.") Thereafter Catullus describes six typical manifestations of bacchic excitement, distinguishing them by *pars*, *pars*, *pars*, *pars*, *aliae*, *multis*.

Similarly Vergil begins by describing the bacchic frenzy in general terms (392-94). But thereafter only one single group of the bacchantes appears, introduced by a phrase, *ast aliae*, which implies that there were others.

There are a number of gaps in the texture of the *Aeneid*: places where Vergil, having worked on a passage, left it temporarily unfinished, even if its logical or imaginative sequence was incomplete. Two clear cases are 10. 721-29, where one stage in the simile is lacking, and 10. 328-44, which stops long before the incident comes to an end.³ I suggest that there is a similar gap in this passage—not a lacuna in the manuscript tradition, but a lacuna in the poet's composition. Vergil intended to describe one or several groups of revellers (introducing them by *pars*, *pars*) before *ast aliae*. Had he lived to do so, the passage would have been complete and the logical inconsistency would have ceased to exist. Therefore an editor of the poem who takes account of such gaps (as all modern editors by their typography acknowledge the existence of unfinished lines) will print the passage thus:

deseruere domos, uentis dant colla comasque.

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ast aliae tremulis ululatibus aethera complent . . .

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3. Discussed in Highet, *The Speeches in Vergil's "Aeneid"* (Princeton, 1972), pp. 167-68.