

the ancient Near East. Now, more than fifty years after its first appearance in Roman histories, it is time to excise it—along with the ploughing up of the whole site—from the tradition.²⁰

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20. There is a bizarre recent note on the *consecratio* of Carthage. In 1966 there was published what purports to be an old inscription concerning this act, restored *ad formam tituli et litterarum* by a procurator Augusti, Classicius: see *CRAI* (1966): 61–76. As soon as the inscription was presented to the Academy, it was pronounced a forgery by L. Robert, J. Carcopino, and others, because of aberrant grammar, letter-forms, forms of proper names, and, not least, the suggestive name of the restorer: Classicius!

ACHAEMENIDES' UNFINISHED ACCOUNT: VERGIL *AENEID* 3. 588–691

Vergil's Achaemenides episode (*Aen.* 3. 588–691) is based on *Odyssey* 9. 177–566, with the Ben Gunn elements (*Aen.* 3. 590–95) perhaps suggested by Apollonius' description of the prophet Phineus (*Argon.* 2. 197–201) in a passage drawn on earlier by the poet, first for the encounter with the Harpies (3. 225–69; cf. *Argon.* 2. 263–83) and subsequently for its prophetic content (*Argon.* 2. 318–425; cf. Helenus' prophecy at *Aen.* 3. 374–462).¹ Vergil's lines are designed as a kind of replay of the Sinon episode (2. 57–198), except that now the tone is reversed: Achaemenides' despair is genuine, and this Greek helps the Trojans to escape from danger instead of treacherously exposing them to it. Doubtless Vergil is already moving away from the anti-Greek atmosphere of *Aeneid* 2, and toward the reconciliation that will gather pace later in the epic; and the formal balance serves to underline this aspect of the episode's function. It is in a similar spirit that Achaemenides is allowed to express pity (613) and admiration (628–29) for Ulysses, before an audience who but lately cursed the island of Ithaca for nurturing such a man (273).²

But there is a feature of Vergil's treatment that may be worth a closer look. There can be no doubt that what the poet gives us in these lines is essentially the Homeric version of the episode, suitably modified. It is appropriate, for example, that in this now peripheral account Homer's two days should be conflated into one, with just two Greeks devoured by the giant instead of the original six. Similarly the Noman trick, so crucial in the mouth of the boasting Odysseus, could now disappear, since it had no real relevance to Achaemenides' plight. Otherwise Vergil has followed Homer quite closely, from the initial description of Polyphemus (619–20; cf. *Od.* 9. 190–93) to the eventual blinding of his single

1. Since Vergil was clearly bent on exploiting the Phineus episode to the full in *Aeneid* 3 and Achaemenides is his own original creation, it may well be that Apollonius' striking description of the emaciated Greek triggered off the whole idea of the later episode. Certainly it emerges as an ideal way of putting those features to use in the new epic context.

2. For a much fuller treatment of the episode, and a particularly fruitful discussion of Achaemenides' name and its possible implications, see A. G. McKay, "The Achaemenides Episode," *Vergilius* 12 (1966): 31–38. Cf. also E. Römisch, "Die Achaemenides-Episode in Vergils *Aeneis*," in *Studien zum antiken Epos*, ed. H. Görgemanns and E. A. Schmidt (Meisenheim-am-Glan, 1976), pp. 208–27.

eye (630–38; cf. *Od.* 9. 371–96). At this point, however, when the climax of the story is at hand, involving the trick with the rams and ewes that effects the actual escape, Achaemenides suddenly breaks off, and urges the Trojans to flee (639 “sed fugite, o miseri, fugite”). No doubt he has a point, since Polyphemos and his friends are about to appear; but before they actually do he nevertheless finds time for fourteen more lines, of which ten describe the conditions under which he has been living, and only four refer to the imminent danger. So he could at least have mentioned that final trick, and how he came to be left behind in spite of it.

Or could he? Vergil, I would suggest, deliberately left this part of Odysseus’ story well alone, because this is where the Achaemenides episode breaks down as a possible sequel to *Odyssey* 9. In Homer, six of Odysseus’ companions survive Polyphemos’ onslaughts out of the original twelve. Odysseus’ plan ensures that each emerges safely from the cave, hidden under the middle animal in each group of three; and last of all (9. 444) Odysseus himself escapes, clinging to the fleece of a prize ram. It matters little, then, whether we think in terms of Homer’s six survivors, or of Vergil’s figure (ten?): the notion that anyone could have been left behind by this wily hero in his finest hour is surely inconceivable. There was simply no room for such a blunder in the Homeric story. So although the omission of relevant detail is only to be expected when Achaemenides first blurts out “immemores socii uasto Cyclopis in antro / deseruere” (617–18), his later and more obtrusive silence about that final maneuver may well indicate Vergil’s awareness that hereabouts there was indeed a problem.

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SENECA *EPISTULAE MORALES* 66. 12

Mortalia minuuntur cadunt, deteruntur crescunt, exhauriuntur implentur; itaque illis in tam incerta sorte inaequalitas est: divinorum una natura est.

If, as the OCT punctuation implies, and D. R. Shackleton Bailey assumes, the verbs of the first sentence are to be grouped into three sets of contrasting pairs, then the first pair, which lacks a contrast, requires emendation. “Hence the conjectural substitutes [for *minuuntur*] *eminent*, *nituntur*, *muniantur*, *oriuntur*, of which only the last (Ernout’s) is acceptable,” says Shackleton Bailey, according to whom “transcriptional probability demands *minuuntur* < *augentur*, *oriuntur* > *cadunt*.”¹ But the second and third pairs present their contrast in the order “decrease-increase.” So in the first pair less suspicion must fall on *minuuntur* than on *cadunt*, for which a number of possible corrections leap to mind, including *aluntur*.

Even basic assumptions, however, cannot go unquestioned. Seneca occasionally employs a congeries of *three* verbs, roughly synonymous or at least mutually

1. “Emendations of Seneca,” *CQ* 20 (1970): 353. OCT = L. Annaei Senecae “*Epistulae Morales*,” ed. L. D. Reynolds (Oxford, 1965).