

OVID *FASTI* 3. 557–58

In Vergil *Aeneid* 4. 682–83, when Anna discovers the corpse of Dido, she exclaims: “exstinxti te meque, soror, populumque patresque / Sidonios urbemque tuam.” Servius (on line 682) distracts with a reference to the version of Varro, in which it was Anna, not Dido, who killed herself on the pyre. More likely, Vergil’s allusion is to the version that underlies the accounts in Ovid *Fasti* 3. 545–656 and in Silius Italicus *Punica* 8. 50–201.¹

In this version, Dido’s death is followed immediately by the invasion of Iarbas and the Numidians, who capture Carthage. Anna is driven into exile and eventually drowns in the river Numicus, to be transformed (in the form of the story given by Ovid and Silius) into the nymph Anna Perenna. Hence Dido’s suicide literally does lead to the destruction of Carthage and the death of Anna (a level of meaning that Anna does not herself perceive when she utters her words).

The version in Silius is agreed by all to be indebted to Ovid, whether or not Ovid and Vergil are Silius’ only sources. In Silius (8. 54–55), Anna flees before the ashes of Dido’s pyre have cooled: “despectus taedae, regnis se imponit Iarbas, / et tepido fugit Anna rogo.” But in the transmitted version of Ovid, there is a strange intrusion between the mentions of Iarbas’ invasion and of Anna’s flight. I give verses 551–77 as they are printed in the most recent Teubner edition;² the lines immediately follow mention of Dido’s death and of the inscription on her tomb:

protinus invadunt Numidae sine vindice regnum, et potitur capta Maurus Iarba domo, seque memor spretum “thalamis tamen” inquit “Elissae en ego, quem totiens reppulit illa, fruor.”	
diffugiunt Tyrii quo quemque agit error, ut olim amisso dubiae rege vagantur apes.	555
tertia nudandas acceperat area messes, inque cavos ierant tertia musta lacus: pellitur Anna domo, lacrimansque sororia linquit moenia; germanae iusta dat ante suae.	560
mixta bibunt molles lacrimis unguenta favillae, vertice libatas accipiuntque comas, terque “vale” dixit, cineres ter ad ora relatos pressit, et est illis visa subesse soror.	
nacta ratem comitesque fugae pede labitur aequo moenia respiciens, dulce sororis opus.	565
fertilis est Melite sterili vicina Cosyrae insula, quam Libyci verberat unda freti. hanc petit, hospitio regis confisa vetusto: hospes opum dives rex ibi Battus erat.	570

1. See my “Dido’s Puns,” *CP* 82 (1987): 50–59. Lines 144–223 of Silius are of suspect authenticity, but the question of authenticity does not affect this paper.

2. E. H. Alton, D. E. W. Wormell, E. Courtney, eds., *P. Ovidi Nasonis “Fastorum” Libri Sex* (Leipzig, 1978).

qui postquam didicit casus utriusque sororis,
 "haec" inquit "tellus quantulumque tua est."
 et tamen hospitii servasset ad ultima munus;
 sed timuit magnas Pygmalionis opes.
 signa recensuerat bis sol sua, tertius ibat
 annus, et exilio terra paranda nova est.
 frater adest belloque petit.

575

As in Silius, Iarbas invades immediately (551 *protinus*). He gains possession of the palace (552 *domo*). The Carthaginians flee in different directions (555 *diffugiunt Tyrii*). After the couplet 555–56, we expect 559, in which Anna is driven from her home (*domus*): after the statement of the fate of the class (*diffugiunt Tyrii*) we expect a mention of the fate of the member of the class with whom the poet is concerned (*pellitur Anna domo*). Instead we have a couplet, 557–58, which seems to say that three years intervened between the time when Iarbas captured the *domus* (and the Tyrians fled) and the time when Anna fled from her *domus*. Further, before leaving, Anna performs the funeral rites for Dido (560–64), which can hardly have waited until three years after Dido's interment (547–50). To repeat the funeral rites after three years would be a sign that they had never been properly performed: compare the renewal of the funeral of Polydorus in *Aeneid* 3. 62–68 together with Servius on *Aeneid* 3. 68.³ The couplet 557–58 is evidently an intrusion.

The clue to the problem, I believe, is the version of Silius, who has no time elapse between the invasion of Iarbas and Anna's flight but does, in *Punica* 8. 61–63, describe with Ovid the passage of almost three years between Anna's arrival in the realm of Battus (Cyrene in Silius, Malta in Ovid) and her flight to Italy:

Atque ea dum flavas **bis** tondet messor aristas,
servata interea sedes: nec longius uti
 his **opibus** Battoque fuit.

I have placed certain words in boldface, since they (and the general concepts expressed in the lines) suggest that Silius found *Fasti* 3. 557–58 placed between 573–74 and 575–76:

573 et tamen hospitii **servasset** ad ultima munus;
 574 sed timuit magnas Pygmalionis **opes**.
 557 tertia nudandas acceperat **area messes**,
 558 inque cavos ierant tertia musta lacus;
 575 signa recensuerat **bis** sol sua, tertius ibat
 576 annus: et exilio terra paranda nova est.

3. Note that the correct reading in Servius on 3. 68 is "CIEMVS autem est hoc loco 'dicimus more sollemni ter, 'vale; nos te ordine quo natura permiserit cuncti sequemur.'"" The text of this passage was discussed in my "Critical Notes on the Text of Servius' Commentary on *Aeneid* III–V," *HSCP* 72 (1968): 319–20. For the saying of *vale* three times (in origin a device to make sure that the corpse is really dead), see also Servius on *Aen.* 2. 644, where the reference is to Anchises' request in that line, "sic o, sic positum adfati discedite corpus," which implies that Anchises wanted to be treated as if he were already dead and his funeral were being celebrated. When Aeneas later celebrated the anniversary of Anchises' death, he did so with distinctive rituals (including the sprinkling of violets) that would characterize the *parentalia* (*Aen.* 5. 72–79, *Ov. Fast.* 2. 537–46), and he addressed Anchises not with *vale*, but with *salve* (*Aen.* 5. 80).

Both Silius and Ovid (in 557, but not in 575–76) mark the passing of the interval by reference to the harvest; but Silius does share with Ovid's line 575 (but not 557) the use of *bis*. It appears then that Silius knew both 557–58 and 575–76 in a context of Anna's exile with Battus. The couplet 557–58 seems to have been misplaced into its transmitted position either by accident or through a scribe's attempt to eliminate redundancy.

In support of a theory of accidental misplacement, R. A. Kaster acutely points out to me the similarity of ending of 556 (*apes*) and 574 (*opes*). Kaster suggests that 557–58 had accidentally fallen out and that a corrector, writing the omitted lines in the upper or lower margin and intending to insert a *signe de renvoi* in the text to indicate the place of omission, mistakenly placed the mark after *apes* rather than after *opes*. This is one way in which misplacement could have occurred. But the process of corruption in a manuscript is often more complex than we can securely reconstruct. Here, though it appears to us that one couplet has been misplaced, if the corruption is understood genetically it may be rather that lines 557–58 never moved, but that lines 559–74 are misplaced. That is, lines 559–74 originally followed immediately after 556 *apes* and preceded 557–58; by *saut du même au même* (the scribe's eye skipping from 556 *apes* to 574 *opes*) 559–74 were omitted. The scribe may have recognized his omission immediately after copying the next couplet (557–58) and, so as not to mar the beauty of the codex, continued on to copy the omitted lines, with marks placed in the text to indicate that the section 559–74 should be read before 557; the next scribe to copy this manuscript may then have ignored the marks and copied the lines as transposed, rather than as corrected. I think this the most likely explanation (since it explains both the initial omission and the subsequent misplacement, and since all the processes involved, including the ignoring of marks of transposition, are very common). But other explanations are also possible: for instance, the omission of 559–74 may have occurred as above, but may have escaped the attention of the first scribe, with the transposition then resulting from the carelessness of a corrector in marking the place where 559–74 were to be inserted (or even from the mere chance that 557–58 fell at the bottom of a page, with 559–74 added in the bottom margin or on a tipped-in piece of parchment following that page).

The question is bound to arise, since the *Fasti* is a late and supposedly unfinished work, whether both couplets (557–58 and 575–76) were intended by Ovid to stand in sequence or were originally alternative versions. My own opinion is that Ovid intended both couplets to be read in sequence. If they are read together, they form a tricolon crescens based on three occurrences of *tertius*. As the third year of Anna's exile draws to a close, she is destined for a third place of exile (Italy), her fourth land in all (after Tyre, Carthage, and Malta): "The third threshing floor had received the harvests to be stripped, and the third must have gone into the hollow pools; the sun had finished counting his constellations twice, the third year [circuit of the sun through the constellations] was passing: for exile as well, a new [that is, third] land must be readied."

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