

## SOME DOUBLE ENTENDRES IN OVID AND VERGIL

## I

Ovid's editors have found it difficult to understand why Erysichthon should be called *Dryopeius* in *Metamorphoses* 8. 751, and his daughter, *Dryopeis* in 8. 872.<sup>1</sup> As A. S. Hollis notes on the first of these lines, *Dryopeius*, which he translates "the Thessalian," is "a *recherché* synonym."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, it is ἀπαξ λεγόμενον in Latin. \**Dryopeus*, the name presupposed by both *Dryopeius* and *Dryopeis*, does not occur at all. *Dryops*, on the other hand, is found in Vergil, Ovid, Lucan, and Statius, as either noun or adjective, but it never carries the sense "Thessalian."<sup>3</sup> There would thus appear to be no connection between *Dryops* and Thessalian Erysichthon. In support of Hollis' interpretation, the only evidence would seem to lie in Silver Latin prose, in a passage of Pliny the Elder (*HN* 4. 28) in which *Dryopis* is cited as equivalent to *Thessalia*. Thus, it is small wonder that all modern editors, Hollis alone excepted, have opted for *Triopeius*, "son of Triopas," in *Metamorphoses* 8. 751, and for *Triopeis*, "[grand]daughter of Triopas," in 8. 872, though the paleographical authority for either is slight.

I am willing to concede, pace Bömer, that *Dryopeius* means what Hollis thinks that it means—the testimony of Pliny the Elder cannot after all be ignored. Nevertheless, another, equally germane meaning emerges when we consider why Ovid should have preferred a *recherché* synonym to such standard poetic fare as *Thessalus* (applied to Erysichthon in 8. 768) or *Haemonius*. The *raison d'être* for *Dryopeius* and *Dryopeis* is to be found in Greek, and in the particular nature of Erysichthon's offense. Portrayed by Ovid as a *contemptor divum* comparable to Vergil's Mezentius, Erysichthon presumes to invade a grove of Ceres and to fell a sacred oak with the zeal of a true unbeliever.<sup>4</sup> The species of the tree is stressed repeatedly: five times within twenty-eight lines (743, 748, 752–53, 758, 769–70). Thus, while Erysichthon shares with Dryopians, as Hollis observes, a penchant for hybris,<sup>5</sup> the primary justification for the epithets in question lies in the relevance of the Greek stem δρυ- ("oak") to the context of Erysichthon's quercicide.<sup>6</sup> The particular Dryops underlying these epithets, moreover, is unlikely to be the eponymous ancestor of the Dryopians, whose connection with oaks is purely etymological. Ovid rather has in mind δρύοψ with a lower-case delta, which is the name of a variety of woodpecker mentioned by Aristophanes (*Av.* 304) and included by Callimachus in his lost treatise on birds.<sup>7</sup> Even if the etymological meaning "tree chopper" postulated for δρύοψ by

1. See esp. F. Bömer, ed., *P. Ovidius Naso: "Metamorphosen," Buch VIII–IX* (Heidelberg, 1977), p. 244.

2. *Ovid "Metamorphoses" Book VIII* (Oxford, 1970), p. 135.

3. See D. C. Swanson, *The Names in Roman Verse* (Madison, 1967), p. 113.

4. For the impiety of felling any tree at all, see R. F. Thomas, "Tree Violation and Ambivalence in Virgil," *TAPA* 118 (1988): 262–73.

5. For this proverbial trait of Dryopians, see J. Fontenrose, *Python* (Berkeley, 1959), pp. 35–43, 423.

6. Cf. A. H. F. Griffin, "Erysichthon—Ovid's Giant?" *G&R* 33 (1986): 57.

7. Frags. 421, 423 Pf.; I am indebted to Jeffrey Henderson for this reference.

Georg Curtius cannot be sustained,<sup>8</sup> this bird's characteristic behavior takes the same form as Erysichthon's sacrilege. Both woodpecker and Thessalian king are given to chopping at oaks, and hence *Dryopeius* = *Erysichthon* belongs in the company of other Ovidian characters who *ex re nomen habent*.<sup>9</sup>

Ovid never mentions Erysichthon by name, and in substituting an eponymous equivalent, he took his cue from Greek poetry. As early as the Hesiodic *Catalog of Women* (frag. 43[a]. 5 M.-W.)—and later in Lycophron (1396) and, probably, Nicander—Erysichthon is called Aethon, “The Burning One,” ἐπώνυμον εἵνεκα λυμοῦ, as the *Catalog* glosses the name. So did a Greek nickname recalling Erysichthon's burning hunger inspire the Roman poet to venture his own ἐπώνυμον εἵνεκα δένδρου.

There is also Greek precedent for the nature of Ovid's eponymous nickname. If it is legitimate to perceive a degree of droll irony in an eponym derived from the heat of a hero's hunger,<sup>10</sup> the same can be said for a name that, like *Dryopeius*, has a comically literal relevance to its context. Such names are legion in the comic onomasticon of Greek.<sup>11</sup> But the drollery of *Dryopeius* also derives from its form. The epic suffixes -ήιος and -ής commonly serve a patronymic function,<sup>12</sup> and hence *Dryopeius* features the incongruity of a patronymic suffix added to the name of a species of bird. Such absurd patronymics also constitute a large group of comic Greek names.<sup>13</sup> A protagonist named Wood Peckerson would be as familiar in Old Comedy and the *Batrachomyomachia* as in Ovid's characteristically wry narrative.

## II

Of the two Latin homonyms *pullulus* (n., “young sprout”) and *pullulus* (adj., “blackish”), the latter is precariously attested. It is listed, to be sure, in both Georges and Lewis and Short, as well as in the etymological dictionaries of Ernout-Meillet (4th ed., Paris, 1979) and Walde-Hofmann (4th ed., Heidelberg, 1965). In the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, however, it is missing, because it was ousted from *Columella* 2. 2. 19, presumably its sole attestation, in the edition used by the compilers (that of V. Lundström), where *pullulus* (adj.) is not even cited as a variant.<sup>14</sup> But if *pullulus* (adj.) is shadowy, its denominative \**pullulare* (“to blacken”; cf. *nigrare* from *niger*) is only the shadow of a dream. The denominative *pullulare*, from *pullulus* (n.), is abundantly attested, but of \**pullulare* from *pullulus* (adj.) there are apparently no examples.

8. *Grundzüge der griechischen Etymologie*<sup>5</sup> (Leipzig, 1879), p. 276, where -ον- is associated with, for example, *op-* in Lat. *opus*. It is likelier that ὀρύων was formed on the analogy of other names for animals, and for birds in particular, ending in -ων, e.g., ἔρωψ (“hoopoe”) and μέρωψ (“bee eater”); see H. Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 1 (Heidelberg, 1960), p. 421.

9. Cf. Dipsas in *Am.* 1. 8. 3 and the personified διπτυχα in *Am.* 1. 12. 27.

10. See J. N. Truesdale, *A Comic “Prosopographia Graeca”* (Menasha, Wis., 1940), pp. 18–19.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 35–44.

12. See W. Kastner, *Die griechischen Adjektive zweier Endungen auf -ΟΣ* (Heidelberg, 1967), pp. 57–60. For these suffixes added to names in -ων, cf. Πελοπῆιος / -ής and Δολοπῆιος / -ής; for other stems, see F. Dornseiff and B. Hansen, *Reverse-Lexicon of Greek Proper Names* (Chicago, 1978), pp. 186, 232.

13. See Truesdale, *Comic “Prosopographia,”* pp. 23–24.

14. The alternation between adj. *pullulus* and adj. *pullus* in 2. 2. 19 finds a parallel in *pullulare* vs. *pullare* in 3. 18. 4 and 4. 27. 1; see S. Hedberg, *Contamination and Interpolation: A Study of the 15th-Century Columella Manuscripts* (Uppsala, 1968), p. 115, n. 5.

Nevertheless, whether or not *\*pullulare* ("to blacken") ever existed in fact, Vergil would appear to have acknowledged at least its theoretical existence in *Aeneid* 7. 328–29, where he describes as follows the hateful monster Allecto: "tot sese vertit in ora, / tam saevae facies, tot pullulat atra colubris." Here *pullulat* ("sprouts") is from the noun; but *colubris* is ἀπό κοινοῦ, and, construed with it, *atra* renders the meaning of *\*pullulat* ("is blackish").<sup>15</sup>

Vergil was not the only Roman poet to indulge in the affectation of juxtaposing putatively related words. Indeed, as it applies to proper names, this procedure is familiar and well documented not only in Roman poetry but in Greek poetry of all periods. Among Vergil's Augustan contemporaries, however, it extends also to common nouns, as F. Cairns has documented in the elegies of Tibullus,<sup>16</sup> T. D. Papanghelis in the poems of Propertius, and J. C. McKeown in Ovid's *Amores*.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, there is a slight but significant difference between *Aeneid* 7. 329 and the examples that these scholars adduce from elegy. Juxtaposed with *pullulat*, *atra* suggests not merely a novel etymology but also an altogether different analysis of the word preceding it. This sort of juxtaposition finds a close parallel in Apollonius' *Argonautica*, where context often conceals an allusion to discrepant analyses of Homeric diction.<sup>18</sup> Thus, when Apollonius resurrects the Homeric rarity κουρίξ in 4. 18, he alludes to both of the etymologies that were current in his day: the phrase immediately following in 4. 19, ἐλκομένη πλοκάμους, evokes the derivation of κουρίξ from κουρά (hence "by the hair"); in 4. 20, however, κούρη fills the same, line-final position as κουρίξ two lines earlier and so suggests the alternative derivation from κοῦρος (hence "vigorously").<sup>19</sup> Ἐλκομένη πλοκάμους in Apollonius serves the same function as Vergil's *atra*, suggesting for the word preceding it an analysis different from that which the context would otherwise seem to require. Vergil's Apollonian conceit is the more piquant for its incongruity with the plainness of *pullulare*, which belongs to the unadorned language of technical treatises and the like.<sup>20</sup>

15. Although not used at all in *Ecl.*, *ater* occurs 11 times in *G.*, and it is ubiquitous in *Aen.*, occurring 72 times: in 3 of these 72 occurrences, it is construed with a dependent ablative (2. 272, 5. 2, 693); more commonly, as in 7. 329, it shares an ablative ἀπό κοινοῦ with a verb (1. 165, 2. 360, 6. 866, 7. 525, 565, 11. 523).

16. Tibullus: *A Hellenistic Poet at Rome* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 90–99. Cf. also the relationship implied between the name *Venerem* and the verb *vendere* in 1. 4. 59. French yields examples of syncope followed by the insertion of excrescent *d* into *-nr-*: e.g., *cinerem*—*ceudre*, *generum*—*gendre*, *tenerum*—*tendre*, *ponere*—*pondre*. Further afield there are parallels like Greek \*ἄνρῶς—ἄνδρῶς. It may be, therefore, that in the *sermo cotidianus*, *Venerem* and *vendere* came closer to being homonyms than their written form would suggest. Indeed, French offers an exact parallel in *Veneris diem*—*vendredi*. Abusing etymology much in the manner of Lucretius, Tibullus implies that the scourge of καλοὶ selling their favors follows from the very name of the goddess of love. Cf. the wicked interpretation given Aphrodite's epithet χρυσή by Antipater in *Anth. Pal.* 5. 30; Tibullus attaches the same innuendo to *aurea* in 1. 6. 58.

17. Papanghelis, *Propertius: A Hellenistic Poet on Love and Death* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 41–43; McKeown, ed., *Ovid: "Amores,"* vol. 1 (Liverpool, 1987), pp. 45–62.

18. See E. Livrea, "Una tecnica allusiva apolloniana alla luce dell'esegesi omerica alessandrina," *SIFC* 44 (1972): 231–43.

19. Cf. the reference, noted by D. O. Ross, Jr. (*Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry: Gallus, Elegy and Rome* [Cambridge, 1975], p. 69), to both the Ionic and the Doric forms of κόρη in Vergil's *tua CURa LyCORis* (*Ecl.* 10. 22).

20. It may be for this reason that it occurs only at 7. 329 in the *Aeneid*. Elsewhere in Vergil it is restricted to *G.* 2. 17.

Such a combination of prosaic diction and philological *doctrina* is thoroughly characteristic of the Hellenistic poets and their Roman epigones.<sup>21</sup>

### III

In Book 4 of the *Aeneid* Vergil slightly alters the second syllable of *hospes* to indicate the transformed relationship between Dido and Aeneas. In lines 323–24 Dido puts this question to Aeneas: “cui me moribundam deseris hospes / (hoc solum nomen quoniam de coniuge restat)?” Because of the stress that Dido here lays on verbal precision, one is apt to remember these words when, exactly one hundred lines later, Aeneas’ name changes again (424): “i, soror, atque hostem supplex adfare superbum.” As R. G. Austin notes on line 323, “Dido’s use of the word *hospes* here shows that she cannot yet believe the worst of Aeneas; it is not till later (424) that he becomes a *hostis*, a ‘foreign foe.’”<sup>22</sup> Here, then, a pun is employed to expressive effect: because the reader perceives *hostis* as an alteration of *hospes*, Dido’s hostility is presented not in isolation, but as a corruption of her former hospitality. This “foreign foe,” the poet reminds us, was once a friend.

Earlier in *Aeneid* 4 Vergil uses the same punning technique to open up a perspective that is radically different from the literal meaning conveyed by the text. In lines 80–83 Dido’s insomnia is described in these words:

post, ubi digressi, lumenque obscura vicissim  
luna premit, suadentque cadentia sidera somnos,  
sola domo maeret vacua stratisque relictis  
incubat.

In *sol-* at the beginning of line 82, immediately after a line that begins with *luna*, it is natural to expect a form of the noun *sol*.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, quite apart from their conventional pairing, the sun and moon are particularly relevant to the Vergilian drama of Dido and Aeneas, in which the Phoenician queen is associated with the moon, the Trojan king with the sun.<sup>24</sup> It is altogether in Vergil’s manner, moreover, to juxtapose related words vertically, so to speak, as *pullulat* and *atra* are juxtaposed horizontally. In *Aeneid* l. 337–38, for example, after a line that begins with *purpureus*, *Punicus* is placed at the beginning of the following line.<sup>25</sup> Thus, at the beginning of *Aeneid* 4. 82, Vergil predisposes his reader to assume momentarily that *sol-* belongs to a form of *sol*; nor is this predisposition entirely obliterated when *sol-* proves rather to belong to a form of the adjective *solus*. Behind dissyllabic *sola*, the thought of its metrical equivalent *sole* still lingers.

21. See Cairns, *Tibullus*, p. 16, for citations and bibliography.

22. P. Vergili Maronis “*Aeneidos*” *Liber Quartus* (Oxford, 1955), p. 103.

23. There is also an etymological link between *luna* and *lumen* in the preceding line.

24. For this imagery, see V. Pöschl, *The Art of Vergil: Image and Symbol in the “Aeneid,”* trans. G. Seligson (Ann Arbor, 1962), pp. 152–53; Pöschl’s view is supported by additional considerations that I plan to discuss elsewhere.

25. See R. G. Austin, ed., *P. Vergili Maronis “Aeneidos” Liber Primus* (Oxford, 1971), p. 125. For a more complex (and far more researched) case, cf. *G.* l. 429–33, where *ma-*, *ve-*, and *pu-* at the beginning of alternating lines suggested to E. L. Brown the first two letters of Vergil’s name written in reverse: see Ross, *Backgrounds*, p. 29, and the references cited there.

The technique is the same as that employed in *Aeneid* 4. 19: "huic uni forsan potui succumbere culpa." Here the context leads one to construe *huic* as a pronoun referring to Aeneas, and to interpret *succumbere* literally: "under this man alone," Dido would seem to be saying, "I could perhaps have lain." Even when *culpa* has transformed one's analysis of both *huic* and *succumbere*, the initial perception still lingers, so that *culpa* reads like a gloss on the preceding words.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, in *Aeneid* 4. 82, as Dido "grieves alone in the empty house," the meaning with *sole* still hovers in the background: "in the sunless house she grieves." The "sunless house" par excellence is, of course, the underworld—*tristes sine sole domos* (6. 534)—where Dido is fated to reside in the *lugentes campi* (6. 441; cf. *maeret* in 4. 82). Exploiting amphibology to achieve foreshadowing in the manner of a tragic poet, Vergil briefly parts the curtain and offers a fleeting glimpse of Dido's fate.<sup>27</sup> For an instant—and only, as it were, between the lines—Dido's empty palace is transformed into the house of the dead where she is soon to dwell.

In arranging the context of *Aeneid* 4. 82 in such a way that *sola* evokes *sole* in the reader's mind, Vergil resorted to a technique that Tibullus used as well. For example, in 1. 6. 6 "nescioquem tacita callida nocte foveat," although *callida* is not sufficient per se to suggest *calida*, the next word but one after *callida* is *fovet*, and hence the context serves to suggest a pun on the two adjectives.<sup>28</sup> In Tibullus' line *fovet* has the same effect on *callida* that *luna* has on *sola* in *Aeneid* 4. 82.

Some three hundred lines later in *Aeneid* 4 Vergil again exploits double entendre to convey a glimpse of Dido's palace as a house of the dead. Lines 388–92 follow Dido's threat to hound Aeneas from beyond the grave:

his medium dictis sermonem abruptit et auras  
aegra fugit seque ex oculis avertit et aufert,  
linquens multa metu cunctantem et multa parantem  
dicere. suscipiunt famulae conlapsaque membra  
marmareo referunt thalamo stratisque reponunt.

Although the context here requires that the words *auras . . . fugit* denote a swoon, this phrase would ordinarily suggest death.<sup>29</sup> In lines 391 and 392, the same connotation attaches to *conlapsa*, which elsewhere in Vergil always appears in a context of death.<sup>30</sup> The same implication is also present in lines 390–91, for they echo *Georgics* 4. 501–2 and *Aeneid* 2. 790–91, where Eurydice and Creusa

26. For the double entendre in *Aeneid* 4. 19, see W. Clausen, *Virgil's "Aeneid" and the Tradition of Hellenistic Poetry* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1987), p. 42.

27. For the tragic foreshadowing that permeates Dido's drama, see G. E. Duckworth, *Foreshadowing and Suspense in the Epics of Homer, Apollonius, and Vergil* (Princeton, 1933), pp. 41–42, 59–60, 63–66, 74, 76, 78–79, 97–98; and Pöschl, *Art of Vergil*, pp. 83–85. To the examples cited in these sources many others could be added.

28. See Cairns, *Tibullus*, pp. 95–96.

29. The phrase *auras fugere* is unique to *Aen.* 4. 388–89, but it resembles several epic periphrases for "die": see C. Weber, "The Diction for Death in Latin Epic," *Agon* 3 (1969): 59. The distinction between fainting and dying was in any case less sharp for the Romans than it is for us. Citing Tac. *Agr.* 3. 1, where the images of fainting and dying are combined in a single metaphor, David Ross has helpfully pointed out to me that a Roman reading *Aen.* 4. 388–92 would spontaneously think of Dido's swoon as a "mini-death."

30. See Clausen, *Virgil's "Aeneid,"* p. 50.

vanish into Tartarus as their husbands stand helplessly by. These intimations of death confer on *marmareo* . . . *thalamo* the aspect not only of a luxurious boudoir but also of a marble tomb.<sup>31</sup> Dido's palace is once again portrayed—briefly, subtly, but unambiguously—as a house of the dead. In 4. 80–82 all the same elements are present. Because the context causes *sola* to suggest *sole*, *sola domo maeret vacua* in 4. 82 conveys the same sinister connotation as *marmareo referunt thalamo* in 4. 392. The phrase *stratisque relictis incubat* in 4. 82–83 is paralleled in 4. 391–92, where *membra* . . . *stratis* . . . *reponunt* is as appropriate to laying out for burial (cf. 6. 220) as it is to putting to bed.<sup>32</sup> There is even an echo, in 4. 81, of the same passage from the *Georgics* recalled at 4. 390–91. For the unusual rhythm of this line, Austin cites three parallels: two concern sleep (*Aeneid* 2. 9, 5. 856), but the third describes the sleep of death falling over Eurydice's eyes in *Georgics* 4. 496: *conditque natantia lumina somnus*.

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31. Ibid. Dido herself comes to view her bedchamber as her tomb, and thus her bridal bed as her deathbed: *lectumque iugalem / quo perii*, as she says to her sister in lines 496–97. At the conclusion of this speech also, Vergil employs diction suggestive of death (499): “haec effata silet, pallor simul occupat ora.”

32. Here too we may speak of tragic foreshadowing, insofar as this detail anticipates Dido's actions in the hour of her death: cf. 4. 650 *incubuitque toro* and 659 *os impressa toro*. There is tragic irony here as well: the nature of the *strata* is soon to change, and so is the import of *relicta*.

### THE PROMOTION OF HADRIAN OF TYRE AND THE DEATH OF HERODES ATTICUS

Three inscriptions honoring M. Aurelius, Cn. Claudius Severus, and M. Vetulenus Civica Barbarus testify that Herodes Atticus was alive when Marcus and the imperial court visited Athens in late 176 while returning from the war against the rebel Avidius Cassius.<sup>1</sup> It is clear that Herodes died shortly afterwards, aged ἀμφὶ τὰ ἑξ καὶ ἑβδομήκοντα (Philostr. *VS* 565), since this frequently attested man does not appear again in epigraphical or other sources.<sup>2</sup> Herodes, then, lived probably from 101 to 177. However, 102–78 or even 103–79 cannot be ruled out, and it has recently been held that the last dating must be correct.<sup>3</sup> I suggest in this note that this security is illusory.

A *terminus ante quem* for Herodes' death is offered by the promotion of Herodes' pupil, the sophist Hadrian of Tyre, from the imperial chair of rhetoric at Athens to the chair at Rome, since while Hadrian was yet in Athens he spoke Herodes' funeral oration (*VS* 586). Hadrian ascended the Athenian chair in 176. The appointment was made by Marcus, while he was still in the East, on the basis of Hadrian's reputation; and on his arrival at Athens the emperor made sure of Hadrian's abilities by commanding a display of declamation (*VS* 588–

1. W. Ameling, *Herodes Atticus*, vol. 1 (Hildesheim, 1983), pp. 159–60; vol. 2, nos. 96, 187–88; on the presence of Severus, note Philostr. *VS* 588.

2. Cf. K. Münscher, “Herodes (13),” *RE* 8 (1913): 954; Ameling, *Herodes*, 2:2, n. 13.

3. Ameling, *Herodes*, 2:2, n. 13.