

NOTES

Lucian *Timon* 4: another case of σκηπτόν/σκήπτρον?

Lucian's *Timon* accuses Zeus of negligence: even his statue at Olympia has not punished the temple-robbers who despoiled it, although it had a δεκάπηχυν κεραυνὸν ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ (*Tim.* 4). But according to Lucian's contemporary Pausanias (v 11.1), the Zeus at Olympia possessed no such weapon; it held a Nike in the right hand, a sceptre in the left. A. M. Harmon (*LCL* Lucian ii 331) notes that since Pausanias' testimony is confirmed by numismatic evidence,¹ Lucian must be wrong and 'the error is odd in so good an observer'. In fact Lucian could be rather careless over such details; but in this case we can hope to account for his mistake. While he must have seen the Zeus at Olympia at some stage, the statue was also an obvious subject for rhetorical ephrasid and literary elaboration: one thinks of Dio Chrysostom's *Olympicus* (*Or.* xii); and Lucian may well have been as bookish in his approach to works of art as he was in so many 'cultural' subjects.² In this case the error would easily have arisen if he had read, misread, or misremembered an accusative of σκηπτός ('thunderbolt') for σκήπτρον ('sceptre') in a previous written source; he would then only have had to supply a synonym κεραυνός for the wrong object. The fact that the thunderbolt is in the wrong hand would then have followed easily from the initial error: one does not hurl thunderbolts with the left hand! The obvious risk of confusion between σκηπτόν and σκήπτρον is illustrated by the problem at Plutarch, *de Alex. fort.* ii (*Mor.* 338b), where Clearchus becomes tyrant of Heraclea, takes to carrying a σκήπτρον—and calls his son Κεραυνός. The Teubner editor³ rightly adopts Valckenae's σκηπτόν for MSS σκήπτρον: a tyrant sufficiently uninhibited to call his son Thunder would also be uninhibited enough to carry a replica of a bolt.

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¹ See Frazer's *Pausanias* (London 1895) iii 532, fig. 72.

² See J. Bompair, *Lucien écrivain, Imitation et création* (Paris 1958) 707–34.

³ W. Nachstädt, *Moralia* ii (1935, repr. 1971). This emendation is unnecessarily challenged by S. M. Burstein, 'Sceptre or Thunderbolt: Plutarch, *Moralia* 338b', *Calif.SCA* vii (1974) 89–92. Burstein rightly pays attention to the context, and notes that 'all but one of (Plutarch's) other examples seem to involve an unjustified claim to divinity or divine power'. But the context also offers close parallels to the carrying of a bolt. Clitus sinks three or four triremes, takes the title Poseidon—and carries a trident, parallel to the bolt of Zeus and clearly a symbol of destructive power rather than kingship (338a). Lysimachus, with similar arrogance, boasts that he touches heaven with his spear: the Byzantine ambassador tells him not to puncture it with the point (338a–b)—again a symbol of aggressive arrogance, and Clearchus is entitled to the same.

Rufinus, *AP* v 60

παρθένος ἀργυρόπεζος ἐλούετο, χρύσεια μαζῶν
χρωτὶ γαλακτοπαγεῖ μῆλα διανομένη·
πυγαὶ δ' ἀλλήλαις περιηγέες εἰλίσσονται
ὑδατος ὑγροτέρῳ χρωτὶ σαλευόμεναι
τὸν δ' ὑπεροιδάινοντα κατέσκεπε πεπταμένη χεῖρ
οὐχ ὄλον Εὐρώταν ἀλλ' ὅσον ἡδύνατο.

An interesting poem, though not without its difficulties. Eurotas in the last line has traditionally been regarded as an obscene synonym for the female genitals. Sir Denys Page, however, challenged this in his recent edition of Rufinus.¹ Other matters of language and style are also worth discussing for the light that they may throw on the techniques of a late Greek epigrammatist.² Hence the following analysis takes the form of a commentary.

The subject of the poem is a girl bathing. Page claims that it has no parallel in the Anthology. That overlooks the adumbration of this same theme by Antiphilus (*AP* v 307)—instructive, in that it describes Leda bathing in the Eurotas.

Otherwise, Rufinus doubtless intended his readers to think of such mythological sequences as the Artemis/Acetaon episode. The Ovidian version (*Met.* iii 181 f.) exhibits the motif of concealment of the *pudefenda*. Most relevant is the description of Semele bathing in Nonnus (vii 237 f.), where the phrase παρθένον ἀργυρόπεζαν is strikingly similar to Rufinus' opening words. The Nonnan treatment offers a variant of the motif of concealment: Zeus, with modest eyes, averts his gaze from Semele's αἰδοῖα.

1. ἀργυρόπεζος. Only here in this form, according to Page. In fact, it occurs in Pollux ii 192, as an epithet of Thetis, which suggests that it co-existed with the Homeric formula in the poetic tradition (cf. *Il.* i 538, *Od.* xxiv 92, and elsewhere). Girls and goddesses regularly have silvery limbs in poets of the Anthology.³ But it seems most likely that Rufinus here has Thetis in mind; elsewhere⁴ he ascribes silver feet to her.

χρύσεια. Page translates as 'shining', regarding this usage as uncommon outside Rufinus.⁵ But it may be more effective to translate it literally. The girl has silver feet and golden breasts—quite a metallurgical miscellany! Along with this consider

2. γαλακτοπαγεῖ. The suffix has no force, Page claims, adducing *AP* xii 204, where that might be the case.⁶ But Rufinus surely has in mind Theoc. xi 20, where Polyphemus apostrophises Galatea as λευκοτέρα πακτᾶς ποτιδείν.⁷ The full force of the epithet adds to the overall humour of Rufinus' description of the girl's body.

3. Page rightly takes ἀλλήλαις as a dative of competition, defending it against the abysmal conjectures advanced by earlier critics. Rufinus *AP* v 36 (on girls in a

¹ *The Epigrams of Rufinus* (Cambridge 1978) 91–2.

² Page makes out a convincing case for a late date. See one or two additional remarks below in support. For completeness' sake, it may be noticed that Page was unaware of J. M. Dryall, *The Poems of Rufinus* (Ottawa 1974), in which (7) it is asserted without argument that Rufinus was 'an Ionian of the second century before Christ'.

³ E.g. v 255 (silver knee); v 272 (silver neck); xii 72 (silver shoulders).

⁴ *AP* v 48; cf. v 90 (also by Rufinus) for Thetis' distinctive feet.

⁵ Page claims the usage for *AP* v 27 and v 48, both serious poems; also for *AP* xii 93 (Rhianus).

⁶ Though not necessarily so, since Strato's poem is a light-hearted comment on traditional epithets and poetic formulae.

⁷ The full meaning is emphasised in Ovid's imitation (*Met.* xiii 796): *mollior et cygni plumis et lacte coacto*; cf. Theoc. xi 20–6. The Theocritean flavour may be enhanced by recollecting that Polyphemus is there in the role of a komast, with the sea-shore as his mistress's threshold; cf. F. Cairns, *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry* (Edinburgh 1972) 145.