

NOTES ON CLAUDIAN *

(A) *Carmina maiora*

1.36-38 *audii et gelido si quem Maeotica pascit
sub Iove vel calido si quis coniunctus in axe
nascentem te, Nile, bibit.*

“[The name of Probus] has been heard of both by those who are nurtured by the land of Maeotis under the frozen sky and by those near neighbours(?) who in the region of heat drink the Nile at its source.”

It is very difficult to make sense of *coniunctus*, whether one supplies *axi calido* (so Delphin and Platnauer) or *Nilo nascenti* (so Heinsius and Birt). In “CQ” 33, 1939, 8, W.H. Semple suggests that the inhabitants of the far north of the temperate zone and those of the far south are “conjoined” by their mutual interest in hearing about Probus; this is an incredible explanation of the word. Nor are the available conjectures (*cognatus*; *contentus*; *calidum si quis coniectus in axem*) worthy of consideration. I suggest *confectus* (a word used by Claudian at 15.446), “worn out”, “exhausted”, by the excessive heat, which causes thirst (at *Carm. min.* 28.37 *defectis cultoribus* is used of the inhabitants of the Nile region in summer). “It was an old poetic way of identifying the inhabitants of a country to mention the river which they drank” (Nisbet-Hubbard on Hor. *Carm.* 2.20.20); if *confectus* is right, Claudian here injects new life into a hackneyed geographical expression (which is copiously illustrated in *TLL* 2.1964.39 ff.).

1.150-153 *Pieriis pollent studiis multoque redundant
eloquio; nec desidiis dapibusve paratis
indulgere iuvat nec tanta licentia vitae
arripit aut mores aetas lasciva relaxat.*

Praise of the brothers Olybrius and Probinus (coss. 395). “They excel in their devotion to the Muses and abound in great eloquence; it gives them no pleasure to indulge in idleness or splendid banquets, nor does *such great* licentiousness of life attract them or unbridled youth relax their morals.”

The demonstrative *tanta* is not appropriate here. This was realized by Birt, who conjectured *blanda*, a feeble word in the context. Perhaps *laxa*, as at Prud. *Ham.* 245 *laxa licentia rerum*.

* The latest and by far the best edition of Claudian is that of J. B. Hall (Leipzig 1985). Other editions referred to are the Valpy ‘Delphin’ edition (London 1821) and those of Th. Birt (Berlin 1892), J. Koch (Leipzig 1893), and M. Platnauer (Loeb edition 1922). Occasional reference is made to J. B. Hall, *Prolegomena to Claudian*, “BICS” Suppl. 45 (1986).

5.476-480

quaesitor in alto
conspicuus solio pertemptat crimina Minos
et iustis dirimit sontes. quos nolle fateri
viderit, ad mala transmittit verbera fratris;
nam iuxta Rhadamanthus agit.

“Seen afar on his lofty throne the judge Minos examines the charges and separates the wicked from the righteous. Those whom he sees unwilling to confess their sins he remits to the lash of his... brother; for he, Rhadamanthus, is busy close at hand” (Platnauer).

Hall makes the point that, of the various readings offered by the manuscripts (*mala, mala mox, mali mox, saevi, saeva, duri, rigidi*), the oldest is *mala*; he therefore conjectures *validi*. I agree that an epithet of *fratris* seems to be the only possible solution, but preferable to *validi* would be *magni*; forms of *magnus* and *malus* have, I believe, been interchanged at [Quint.] *Decl. mai.* 2.6 (p. 25.24 H.), *Decl. min.* 302.1, *Sen. Nat.* 3.28.3, *Anth.* 193.7.

5.498-499

huc superum labes, huc insatiabilis auri
proluviis pretioque nihil non ause parato, ...

Rhadamanthus begins to pronounce sentence on Rufinus. “Hither, scourge of the world, bottomless sink of gold who wouldst dare aught for money, ...” (Platnauer).

Parato makes sense (he had been paid in advance), but *parando* (dative of purpose) would make possibly better sense.

5.523-526

vacuo mandate barathro
infra Titanum tenebras infraque recessus
Tartareos nostrumque Chaos, qua noctis opacae
fundamenta latent.

Rhadamanthus sentences Rufinus. “Thrust him down into the empty pit beneath the lightless prison of the Titans, below the depths of Tartarus and Chaos’... realm, where lie the foundations of thickest midnight” (Platnauer).

Nostrum is not an impossible epithet of *Chaos* in the mouth of Rhadamanthus, but it is a very feeble one. Hall puts in his text a conjecture of H.L. Levy, *imum*; this looks like an emendation not of the *paradosis nostrum* but of Birt’s conjecture *ipsum*. I think that Burman’s *vastum* is indubitably right; it is palaeographically excellent, and a very appropriate epithet of *Chaos* (cf. *Ov. Met.* 10.30, *TLL* 3.991.50, 992.15); similar epithets of *Chaos* are *ingens, immane, immensum*.

8.244-247

cumque omnia secum
duceret et requiem membris vesana negaret,
invenit pulmonis opem madidumque furenti

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praebuit, *ut tumidae ruerent in mollia fibrae.*

“Then, since anger swept everything away with it and in its fury gave the limbs no rest, Prometheus invented the lungs to aid the body and applied their humidity to the raging of anger to soothe our wrath-swollen flesh” (Platnauer).

Hall reports that Goodyear suggested *praesuit* in place of *praebuit*, and indeed, even if some sense can be wrung from it, *praebuit* is extremely feeble. But *praesuo* is a very rare word and quite unsuitable in sense. That could not be said of *praestruit*, a word which Claudian uses three times elsewhere.

17.193-194 †*nitidis*† *quisquis te sensibus hausit*
inruet intrepidus flammis.

“Whosoever has drunk of thee [Justice] with pure heart will rush fearless through flames” (Platnauer). But *nitidis* cannot mean “pure”; that is *puris* or *mundis*, both of which are found as variants. Palaeographically *mundis* would be a good emendation of *nitidis*; at Manil. 1.848 the two words are variants, and at 1.739 *nitido* is accepted for the manuscript reading *mun-do*. The word is common in Christian Latin; for its use as an epithet of *spiritus*, *pectus*, *cor*, see *TLL* 8.1632.41 ff.

18.229-230 *iamque oblita sui nec sobria divitiis mens*
in miseris leges hominumque negotia ludit.

“And now his [Eutropius’s] mind, forgetful of its true nature and drunken with riches, makes sport of wretched law and the affairs of men” (Platnauer).

It is difficult to accept *miseris* as an epithet of *leges*. Hall reads his own conjecture *inversas*, “overturned”, for which one could adduce 20.556, *totas vertere leges*, but there is no reason why the preposition *in* should not be sound; it is true that Birt (p. CV, n. 5) says that *in* is certainly wrong because *ludere* always governs a direct accusative, but he is adequately refuted by the passages listed in *TLL* 7.2.1778.56 ff. However, rather than *in versas* I should read *in nostras*, and attribute the corruption to a confusion of abbreviations; both *noster* and *miser* were regularly abbreviated. For *noster* = *Romanus* see 383 below, *nostris signis* (“Roman standards”), and other passages listed in Birt’s Index; for the plural *leges* in the sense of “constitution” see *OLD* 3 (at 26.38 Platnauer translates *leges* by “civilization”).

18.263-264 *perque suam tremula testatur voce sororem*
defecisse vagas ad publica commoda vires.

“In tremulous tones he [*sc.* Eutropius] calls his sister to witness that he has spent his strength for his country’s need” (Platnauer).

This translation just ignores *vagas*; not surprisingly, because it is difficult

to see its meaning. Birt suspected the word and tentatively proposed *avidas* or *datas*, neither of which deserves consideration. *Suas* would suit the context, and the supposed corruption could be explained (initial *s* lost after *se* and the remnant *uas* expanded to mend the metre), but whether Claudian would have repeated *suus* here so soon after *suam* in 263 I do not know.

18.500-502 *quid trahor ulterius? Stilicho, quid vincere differs,
dum certare pudet? nescis quod turpior hostis
laetitia maiore cadit?*

“What need of further words? Why, Stilicho, doest thou delay to conquer because ashamed to fight? Knowest thou not that the viler the foe the greater the rejoicing at his overthrow?” (Platnauer).

Dum certare pudet is one possible answer to the question *quid vincere differs?* There ought therefore to be a question-mark after *differs* as well as after *pudet*.

22.400-402 *spectabunt cupidae matres, spargentur et omnes
flore viae, superes cum Pincia culmina consul
arduus, antiqui species Romana senatus.*

“Eager mothers will watch, and all the roads will be strewn with flowers, when you [Stilicho], a majestic consul, the Roman image of the ancient senate, climb the summit of the Pincian hill.”

It is impossible to believe that the ‘transferred’ epithet *Romana* is genuine, and I have no doubt that König’s conjecture *germana* is what the author wrote. The same corruption has occurred at *Carm. min. app. 2* (= *Anth. 494b*).10 f., addressed to Hercules, *germana Tonantis / progenies*, where the transmitted reading is *Romana*; in our passage the natural association of *Romanus* with *senatus* would help the corruption. The only point made against *germana* is that of Birt (Index p. 517), that Claudian does not use *germanus* in the sense of *genuinus*; I think that he undoubtedly does so here.

24.125-129 *per quem fracta diu translataque paene potestas,
non oblita sui, servilibus exulat arvis,
in proprium sed ducta larem victricia reddit
fata solo fruiturque iterum, quibus haeserat olim,
auspiciis capitique errantia membra reponit.*

“Thanks to him [*sc.* Stilicho] power, long degraded and all but transferred [*sc.* to Constantinople], no longer, forgetful of itself, is exiled in lands of servitude but, returned to its rightful home, restores to Italy its victorious destiny, enjoys *the promised auspices of its foundation* and gives back its scattered limbs to the head of the empire” (Platnauer).

This rendering of *quibus haeserat olim* is a translation not of Claudian’s

In the battle between the gods and the giants Mars despatches Pelorus. “Then exulting in his victory he drives his chariot over the dying giant’s limbs till the wheels ran red with blood” (Platnauer).

This translation ignores *avidus*, which has aroused justified suspicion. The available replacements are *avido*, *rapido*, *gravidus* (the last presumably in its very rare sense of *gravi*). The easiest change (involving little more than the insertion of an initial letter) would be *ravidus*, which would suit both the immediately preceding narrative and the gruesome content of these two lines; Birt’s Index lists five occurrences of the word.

(C) *Carminum minorum appendix*

The poems which editors of Claudian print as an appendix appear also in fasc. 2 of Riese’s edition of the *Anthologia Latina* (Leipzig 1906), whose numbering I give in brackets. In an article published in “Class. et Med.” 47, 1996, I have proposed the following emendations: 2 (*Anth.* 494b).66 *taetris* (for *totis*), 106 *fulvoque* (for *soloque*), 135 *occupat* (for *accipit*); 5 (*Anth.* 742).2 *placido... pectore* (for *tacito... carmine*); 15 (*Anth.* 747).2 *non reor est* (for *at*); *Chloris*.

2 (*Anth.* 494b).48-51

*neve haec monstra tibi faciant, Alcmena, pavorem;
sic mater potes esse dei. iam tolle serenum
laeta animum, tantoque libens haec aspice vultu
ut deceat genuisse Iovem.*

“And do not let these monstrous creatures [the two snakes that are attacking baby Hercules] cause you fear, Alcmena; in this way you can be the mother of a god. Now joyfully lift up your heart in peace, and look upon them gladly with such(?) a countenance that it becomes Jupiter to have begotten him [Hercules]”.

Birt takes *vultu* in the sense of *despectu*, “contempt”. That *tanto vultu* can have this or any other relevant sense I do not believe; *tanto* must be corrupt. The sense which we expect in view of line 48 (*pavorem*) is *seculo*, “free from fear”; if Riese’s discarded *tuto* can have this sense, it is the easiest change; otherwise either Baehrens’s *lento* or (I suggest) *placido* (> *tacito* > *tanto*) could be considered. But irrespective of what we read in 50 the *ut* clause in 51 is unsatisfactory: how could the honour which fatherhood confers on Jupiter be either the consequence or the purpose of Alcmena looking upon the snakes without fear? I suggest that *deceat* should be *doceas*, “in order that you may prove that Jupiter is the father”; *doceas* derives support from *fidem* at 15 (*fecisti de patre fidem*) and *probabit* at 41 (*patremque probabit... patrem*). I take the *ut* clause as final, not however expressing the

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conscious purpose in Alcmena's mind but a "rhetorical pseudo-final" clause expressing the "voluntas fati" (Hofmann-Szantyr 642).

2.79-80

*heu quanta virorum
funera! quam multos stravit cum dentibus apros!*

"Alas how numerous the deaths of men! How many boars did he [the Nemean lion] lay low with his teeth!"

Hall records seven ways of rewriting the latter exclamation, most of them violent and most involving the change of *apros* to *agros*; but Birt is justified in objecting to *agros* on the ground that no one has ever heard of lions devastating fields and crops. A note in the edition of Lemaire (Paris 1824) takes *cum dentibus* as equivalent to the expression of a second object of *stravit*: "laid low boars together with their tusks"; but this distinction between boars and their tusks seems improbable. Surely *dentibus* are the lion's teeth; in which case *cum* has the instrumental sense which is common in late Latin, and the sense of *stravit cum dentibus* is repeated in 83, *morsu fudit*; cf. also 91 *in nova sanguineos armantem vulnera rictus*.

14 (*Anth.* 746).3-6

*te, mea bella Cythere,
aspicio venientem et tu mea limina grato
introitu dignata rosas et lenis amomi
delicias miras tecum allicis.*

"I see you coming, my beautiful Cythere, and you, deeming my threshold worthy of your welcome entry, bring(?) with you roses and the wonderful delights of mild perfume."

Secum allicere is not a convincing phrase. Should *allicis* be *advehis*?*

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