

NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

PSEUDO-OCELLUS *DE UNIVERSI NATURA* 3. 4. 41 (HARDER): A FRAGMENT OF ARISTOTLE'S *ON PHILOSOPHY*?

Pseudo-Ocellus (Lucanus) *De universi natura* 3. 4. 41 (ed. Harder) relates that "destructions and violent changes occur and can be observed in the different regions of the earth. This is so because at times the sea engulfs other regions, at times the land itself expands (into the sea) and splits up owing to the effects of the winds and of the waves. But a total destruction of the entire orderly structure of the earth never took place nor will it ever take place."

In Aristotle's *Meteorologica* 351a19–351b8, we are told that the same regions of the earth are not always either wet or dry, nor are the same regions always sea or land. When rivers reach the sea, they fill it with silt and push it back, thereby forcing it to inundate some other regions. And when, owing to climatic changes, rivers dry up, the sea recedes from the inundated regions and floods the land created by the river's silt. This happened, for instance, in Egypt (352b20 ff.) and in the regions around Lake Maeotis (353a2 ff.). Aristotle also observes (353a17 ff.) that poorly informed people are of the opinion that the ultimate cause of these events or phenomena "is a universal process of change . . . It is true that there is an increase in the number of regions that have become dry which formerly had been submerged. But the opposite is also true . . . [and there are] many regions which the sea has inundated. But we must not suppose that the cause of all this is the growth of the universe. For it is absurd to argue that the whole universe is in a process of change because of some small changes of brief duration like the ones mentioned above . . ."

It would appear that the passage from Pseudo-Ocellus *De universi natura* 3. 4. 41 has been influenced by or perhaps is an abridgment of Aristotle's *Meteorologica*. It is also possible, as M. Untersteiner, *Aristotele: Della Filosofia* (Rome, 1963), pp. 62–63, 300–301 (Frag. 31), and B. Effe, *Studien zur Kosmologie*

und Theologie der Aristotelischen Schrift "Über die Philosophie" (*Zetemata*, L [Munich, 1970]), pp. 19, 31 ff., have argued, that this passage ultimately is a fragment of Aristotle's *On Philosophy*. This thesis finds some support in the likelihood that it may also be a clumsy abridgment of Philo of Alexandria *De aeternitate mundi* 5. 20–24, which has been called a fragment of Aristotle's *On Philosophy* (Book 3) by V. Rose (Frag. 19 Rose³), R. Walzer (Frag. 19a), W. D. Ross (Frag. 19a), and M. Untersteiner (Frag. 29).

In support of the thesis that the passage from Pseudo-Ocellus *De universi natura* 3. 4. 41 is possibly a fragment of Aristotle's *On Philosophy*, the following argument may be advanced. It is generally admitted that in his *On Philosophy* (and in some of his other writings) Aristotle propagated and defended the uncreatedness and indestructibility of the universe (or of the earth). But if the universe (or earth) is without beginning or end, then its several "parts" must also be without beginning or end, including the cultural and intellectual attainments of mankind which, after all, are an essential aspect or part of the universe (or earth). This being so, there cannot be an absolute beginning or absolute end of philosophy, but merely temporary (and relative) declines and revivals of philosophy. Natural, though essentially local, catastrophes which occur in certain intervals, such as the periodic flooding or drying up of certain regions of the earth, almost extinguish or at least seriously reduce the economic, technological, cultural, and intellectual (philosophic) achievements of the inhabitants in the regions visited by these catastrophes, forcing them to start again "from scratch." One might argue, therefore, that in his *On Philosophy* Aristotle propagated the theory of recurrent local disasters and their attendant impact upon man and man's cultural and intellectual history in order to reconcile his

thesis of the uncreatedness and indestructibility of the earth and its constituent parts with his thesis of the "eternal return" or "eternal recurrence"—the theory that philosophic truth progresses and declines in certain cyclic intervals (*Metaphysics* 1074b1 ff.; *De caelo* 270b19–21; *Meteorologica* 339b28; *Politics* 1264b3 and 1329b25–27). Pseudo-Ocellus *De universi natura* 3, 4, 41 possibly reflects a remote echo of this Aristotelian argument that, despite the uncreatedness and indestruc-

tibility of the universe (or of the earth) as a whole, the economic, technological, cultural, and intellectual achievements of mankind have their cyclic "ups and downs," and that these cyclic "ups and downs" are a result of periodic inundations and desiccations of certain parts of the earth.

ANTON-HERMANN CHROUST

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

ANTHOLOGIA LATINA (RIESE) 679 IN REG. LAT. 1669 AND PAL. LAT. 1341

Alexander Riese has published as item 679 of his edition of *Anthologia Latina* a poem of twelve (sixteen) verses entitled *De sideribus* and ascribed to Priscianus Grammaticus.¹ Riese based his text of the poem on well over twenty manuscripts, ranging in age from the ninth to the twelfth centuries. Since the vast majority of these manuscripts have a version of the poem made up of twelve verses, Riese printed in the body of his work a poem comprised of these twelve verses. Three of the manuscripts utilized by Riese, however, have four additional verses: *Dresdensis* Dc 183, saec. ix (= Dr); *Reg. Lat.* 2078, saec. ix (= r) and *Parisinus* 12117, saec. xi (= N). For this reason Riese included these additional four verses in his apparatus criticus, with an indication that they had been accepted as genuine by some of the earlier editors, but with no listing provided of the variant readings from the different manuscripts.

I have recently come upon two tenth-century manuscripts of this poem not mentioned by Riese and presumably unknown to him. One is included among miscellaneous items found on fol. 192^r of *Codex Vat. Reg. Lat.* 1669.² The second new manuscript of the poem is at the bottom of fol. 109^r in *Codex Vat. Pal. Lat.* 1341, a manuscript which was almost certainly written at Lorsch.³ The former will henceforth be designated *Regin.*; the latter, *Pal.*

A feature of *Regin.* which makes it especially

worthy of note is that, in addition to the regular twelve verses found in all manuscripts, it also has the additional four verses previously known from only three documents (Dr, r, and N). The text of these four verses in *Regin.* is exactly as it appears in the apparatus of Riese's edition with the exception that in the second line *coque* appears in place of *quoque*. For these lines, therefore, *Regin.* is considerably more accurate than r. As noted above, Riese listed no variants for these last four verses in r or in either of the other two manuscripts containing them. I have a microfilm copy of r at my disposal, however, and on checking its version of the lines in question (fol. 143^r), I find the following variants: 3: et] est || omnia sidera lucens] hoc saturnia stella; 4: Saturnus] cunctis et. The text of the first twelve verses in *Regin.* as revised by the contemporary corrector is also very accurate, with only minor orthographical errors appearing. The variants are: 1: Anguis] angues; 2: Arctophylax] artophilax || hercules inserted above genuque by the corrector; 3: Cassiopea] casiephia; 4: above Deltoton the word Triangulus was inserted by the corrector; 5: Anguitenensque] anguis tenensque; 7: Virgo] virga (changed to virgo by the corrector); 8: Libra om., but added in margin by corrector || Arcitenens] arquitenens; 10: Procyon] prochion; 11: quoque] coque; 12: Eridanique] heridanique. The title of the poem in *Regin.*

1. A. Riese, *Anthologia Latina*, I² (Leipzig, 1906), 154–55.

2. Information about the four Vatican manuscripts cited in this paper is based on microfilm copies of these documents placed at my disposal by The Knights of Columbus Vatican Film Library at Saint Louis University.

3. See Chauncey E. Finch, "Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* in *Codex Vat. Pal. Lat.* 1341," *TAPA*, XCVII (1966), 184.