

NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

CINNA, THE *CIRIS*, AND OVID

In lines 129–62 of the *Ciris* the poet relates the origin of Scylla's love for Minos. Her passionate infatuation is retribution for an act of desecration at the shrine of Juno, which she then compounds by perjury. The incident at Juno's temple is without parallel in the other extant versions of the myth and fits awkwardly into the surrounding narrative. Its appearance here in an obviously derivative work is suspicious, and the passage has been explained as a borrowing from the *Io* of Calvus,¹ a conclusion which receives confirmation in the recent commentary on the poem by R. O. A. M. Lyne.² A curious and still unexplained detail: Cupid, who first prodded Juno to action (133–39), himself acts as the instrument of revenge (*Ciris* 158–62):

at leuis ille deus, cui semper ad ulciscendum
quaeritur ex omni uerborum iniuria dicto,
aurea fulgenti depromens tela pharetra
(heu nimium certo, nimium, †thirintia uisu†)
uirginis in tenera defixerat omnia mente.

This passage presents serious problems of interpretation beyond the corruption in line 161. Cupid is portrayed in the otherwise unexampled role of a punisher of perjury and in an association with Juno which is likewise unprecedented.³ The plot does require some erotic stimulus, and it is not inconceivable that in a version of the myth not known to us Cupid acts to bring about Scylla's affliction. But while such a precedent might well account for the appearance of Cupid here, it cannot account for the language, in particular the anomalous phrase *uerborum iniuria* (159).⁴ As Lyne has shown,⁵ this poet has a marked predilection for patching together phrases taken from the Neoterics. The seam shows at line 158, and it is likely that another influence is at work here. Calvus in this instance will not do; his Jupiter would have no need of Cupid to rouse his amorous instincts,⁶ nor

1. See S. Sudhaus, "Die *Ciris* und das römische Epyllion," *Hermes* 42 (1907): 499–500; W. Ehlers, "Die *Ciris* und ihr Original," *MH* 11 (1954): 77–78.

2. "*Ciris*": *A Poem Attributed to Vergil* (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 154–55.

3. Cf. Ap. Rhod. 3. 1–110, where Hera and Athena are unwilling to solicit Eros directly. There is a further oddity at *Cir.* 138 noticed by Ehlers, "*Die Ciris*," p. 77, n. 58: "Überhaupt werden beleidigte Götter nicht von Amor aufgehetzt, sondern umgekehrt."

4. For the difficulties of this phrase, which is nowhere found with the meaning "perjury," see Lyne, "*Ciris*," ad loc.

5. "*Ciris*," esp. pp. 36–47.

6. Sudhaus, "Die *Ciris*," pp. 499–500, and Lyne, "*Ciris*," pp. 164–65, both detect the influence of Calvus in the introduction of Cupid. B. Otis, *Ovid as an Epic Poet*, (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 382–84, attributes the entire Cupid episode to Calvus' *Io*, but cf. Lyne on *Cir.* 160–62: "In fact the signs are that the poet has left Calvus (in mind in previous lines) by 160: he now leans on other sources as he extricates himself from Calvan motifs."

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would this account for the linguistic anomaly in line 159. As an alternative source I suggest the *Zmyrna* of Helvius Cinna.

In the version of the *Zmyrna* story ascribed to Panyassis at [Apollodorus] *Bibliotheca* 3. 14. 4, *Zmyrna's* passion for her father is the consequence of Aphrodite's anger: αὕτη κατὰ μῆνιν Ἀφροδίτης (οὐ γὰρ αὐτὴν ἐτίμα) ἴσχει τοῦ πατρὸς ἔρωτα.⁷ Another source provides the information that *Zmyrna's* offense against the goddess was verbal (schol. Theoc. 1. 109): [Σμύρνα] ἦτις κατὰ μῆνιν Ἀφροδίτης ἠράσθη τοῦ πατρὸς, ὅτι λύσασα τὰς τρίχας οὐδὲ Ἀφροδίτην ἔχεν ἔφη τοιαύτας.⁸ The casual manner in which the role of Aphrodite is mentioned throughout the secondary sources points to the existence of at least one literary version of considerable authority which included the motif of Aphrodite's revenge. Parthenius is a reasonable conjecture, all the more attractive since we may assume that he would be followed rather closely by his friend and disciple, Cinna;⁹ a different Hellenistic source, however, is not out of the question.¹⁰

In Cinna's lost epyllion, of course, the myth received its definitive treatment—for Latin poetry at least, and that is what concerns us in examining the testimony of the *Ciris*. If, as the evidence suggests, the prevailing account of *Zmyrna's* story contained a vengeful Aphrodite, it is unlikely that Cinna would have forgone the opportunity to include in his epyllion a portrayal of the angry goddess and her willful accomplice. Indeed, the first appearance of Cupid at *Ciris* 133–39 has already been plausibly traced to Cinna,¹¹ and Cupid is surely more at home in the role of Venus' agent.¹² Given the demonstrable tendency of the poet of the *Ciris* to plunder the Neoteric epyllia for set scenes and phrases, it seems reasonable to suggest that Cupid's second appearance at *Ciris* 158–62 should also be attributed to the *Zmyrna*. In the two opening lines of this passage, I believe, traces may be discovered of Cinna's portrayal of Cupid avenging (158 *ad ulciscendum*) an insult to Venus (159 *uerborum iniuria*).¹³ The remainder of the scene may well be lifted whole from Cinna. The author of the *Ciris* has grafted these lines to the scene at Juno's shrine in order to supply the erotic motivation his heroine requires. The

7. Cf. [Plut.] *Parallel. min.* 310F; Opp. *Hal.* 3. 405. Serv. auct. *Ecl.* 10. 18 refers to *solis ira*, apparently a solitary confusion.

8. Cf. Hyg. *Fab.* 58: "[Smyrna] cuius mater Cenchreis superbius locuta quod filiae suae formam Veneri anteposuerat. Venus matris poenas exsequens Smyrnae infandum amorem obiecit adeo ut patrem suum amaret"; [Lactant. Plac.] *Narrat. Fab.* 10. 9: "Myrrha, Cinyrae et Cenchreidis filia, iracundia Veneris, quod mater eius praeferretur deae, patrem impio amore dilexit." (Burneus 311, a fifteenth-century MS, reads—perhaps conjecturally: "quod eam mater praeferret deae.")

9. See Parth. frags. 23, 24, and 37 for Parthenius and the story of Adonis. For Parthenius, Cinna, and the *Zmyrna*, see W. Clausen, "Callimachus and Latin Poetry," *GRBS* 5 (1964): 190–91; also T. P. Wiseman, *Cinna the Poet* (Leicester, 1974), p. 49.

10. *Ant. Lib.* 34, the most extensive narrative apart from Ovid, has been attributed to Nicander (A. Kalkmann, *De Hippolytis Euripideis quaestiones novae* (Bonn, 1882), p. 83) and may well be traceable to a Hellenistic source. This source may also have included the motif of Aphrodite's revenge (*Ant. Lib.* 34. 1): δεινὸς γὰρ αὐτὴν ἔρως ἐξέμηνεν ἐπὶ τῷ πατρὶ. For this construction I can find only one parallel, Ar. *Ecl.* 966: Κύπρι τί μ' ἐκμαίνεις ἐπὶ ταύτῃ; Perhaps ἔρως should be printed with a capital. For δεινός as a standard epithet of ἔρως, see Kost on Musaeus 245.

11. Sudhaus, "Die *Ciris*," p. 498; Lyne, "*Ciris*," pp. 154–57. This is disputed by Ehlers, "Die *Ciris*," p. 77, n. 57.

12. Compare the scene at Ovid *Met.* 5. 363–84, where Venus exhorts Cupid to defend her honor and in her address includes the same *topos* of love's power developed at *Cir.* 133–37. Cinna's rendition must have been famous.

13. This is the meaning of the only other appearance of the phrase at [Aur. Vict.] *Epit.* 11. 9 (cited by Lyne, "*Ciris*," ad loc.). *Iniuria* commonly has the meaning "insult"; cf. *Rhet. Her.* 4.35 "iniuriae sunt quae . . . conuicio auris . . . uiolant"; *TLL* 7.1671. 16 ff.

result is a Cupid who avenges perjury and consorts with Juno: in short, a contrivance of necessity.

Ovid certainly was familiar with the well-known motif of Aphrodite's revenge; he refers to it in the introduction to his story of Adonis (*Met.* 10. 524–26):

iam placet et Veneri matrisque ulciscitur ignes.
namque pharetratus dum dat puer oscula matri,
inscius exstanti destrinxit harundine pectus.

The inversion of the motif is in Ovid's best manner. Myrrha is avenged on Venus by the goddess's own instrument, but Ovid's earlier portrayal of Myrrha is the more powerful because her emotional state has a different cause (*Met.* 10. 311–14):

ipse negat nocuisse tibi sua tela Cupido,
Myrrha, facesque suas a crimine uindicat isto.
stipite te Stygio tumidisque adfluit echidnis
e tribus una soror.

Cupid's denial has a function in the narrative; it also contains a note of polemic. The brief allusion which alerts the reader to a specific mythological variant is a feature of the learned style.¹⁴ Here the reference is made by the figure of Cupid himself—an innovation by Ovid, whose rejection of the conventional scene is an assertion of originality within a tradition defined by Cinna.¹⁵

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14. Thus Virgil, in a parenthesis referring to the metamorphosis of Cynus (*Aen.* 10. 188): *crimen, Amor, uestrum*.

15. For other possible variations of Cinna's treatment by Ovid, see Lyne on *Cir.* 257 ff.; 260; 286 ff.; 369–77.

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Foedasti miserum, marite, moechum,
et se, qui fuerant prius, requirunt
trunci naribus auribusque uoltus.
credis te satis esse uindicatum?
erras: iste potest et irrumare.

Et = *etiam* was sometimes used to introduce the second member of what was in essence a *non modo* . . . *sed etiam* construction, though its surface form might vary, as, for example, in Martial 6. 27. 9–10 “Caecuba *non solos* uindemia nutriat orbos: / possunt *et* patres uiuere, crede mihi” (= *non modo orbi, sed etiam patres uiuere possunt*; or, in other words, *non modo orbos, sed etiam patres uindemia nutriat*). The first member of the correlation could be deleted, leaving *et* alone to imply the whole construction, as in Martial 3. 32. 1–2 “possum / *et* uetulam,