

SHORTER NOTES

METAL POLISH

Aena quibus utetur lavare tergere
 unguere adipe e recenti tricensima
 quaque die recte debeto. (CIL 2. 5181 = ILS 6891)

Part of the baths regulations preserved on a bronze plaque, engraved more or less identically on each side, from the copper mine at Vipasca, Lusitania. The manager is to wash, clean and grease the waterheating vats once a month. Such vats, as mentioned by Vitruvius in his discussion of public baths (5. 10. 1), were three in number: *aena supra hypocaustum tria sunt componenda*. They were sizeable articles: Propertius (3. 24. 13) seems to see himself tortured in one: *Veneris torrebar aeno*. The greasing was to keep *aerugo*, copper rust, at bay; for this purpose Cato (*Agr.* 98. 2) in general recommends *amurca*, lees of olive oil: *ahena omnia amurca unguito . . . et aerugo non erit molesta*; and also for greasing axles (106) *amurca axem unguito*. For bronze tablets exposed to the weather such as the numerous public records on temple walls and the like (including the present document) Pliny (*HN* 34. 99) recommends olive oil: *aera . . . robiginem celerius trahunt . . . nisi oleo perunguntur*. The phrase *e recenti* which occurs in both versions of the text is unexampled, and the *CIL* editors suggest that it means *ex integro*, afresh. However I am inclined to think that the engraver had a faulty copy in front of him and we should read *adipe recenti*. *Adeps recens* makes several appearances in Pliny (though usually in a medical context), and was perhaps a fairly pure and odourless form of *adeps*. It is listed in Diocletian's *Edict* (4. 10), and placed next to *axungia*, grease:

adipis recentis, per pound, 12 denarii,
axungiae, the same;

laridum optimum (4. 7) cost 16 denarii per pound. Diehl, *Pomp. Wand.*, 410, records (apparently) the quantity of *adeps* held in stock after sales by a shopkeeper in Pompeii: p(ondo) adipe CXXVI CXX CXII.

A stock of 200 pounds of *axungia* is recorded elsewhere in Pompeii (*ibid.* 402).

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VIRGIL, *AEN.* 6. 304

iam senior sed cruda deo viridisque senectus

In his note on Hesiod, *WD* 705 M. L. West tentatively suggests *adeo* for *deo*, saying rightly that 'Charon is not a god in the literary tradition generally or in Virgil's scheme' (see now Austin *ad loc.*). Palaeographically nothing could be more attractive than this emendation. But for all Virgil's fondness for *adeo* (see my note on *Aen.* 3. 203, Fordyce on 7. 427) he (like other authors) does not use it in this intensifying sense with adjectives other than those indicating number (*Aen.* 3. 203, 7. 629, *Geo.* 3. 242), nor does he ever use it later than the second foot (3 times out of 31, the other 28 being in the first foot).

The difficulty which West is combating is a very real one, but it is not solved by the removal of *deo*. Virgil's dilemma was that the old ferryman must be as timeless as all the other members of Pluto's establishment, and to achieve this object of portraying an unchanging picture of the machinery of the underworld he has elevated Charon to the rank of *deus*. In Olympus the gods are frozen at the point suitable for the anthropomorphic vision of them: Cupid is always a boy, Apollo young and handsome, Neptune older and more austere. Similarly Charon is frozen just as he has reached (iam *senior*) vigorous old age. He may not be, indeed is not, a real god, but he is a necessary part of the world of the gods and so must share their agelessness.

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TWO NOTES ON PROCLUS

The translation of Proclus' *Commentary on the Republic* by A. J. Festugière¹ includes some useful notes which identify many of Proclus' allusions to earlier authors as well as expounding some of the difficulties in his text and offering parallels. A couple of allusions in the sixth essay of the *Commentary* remain unsatisfactorily identified. In 1. 83. 12–18 Kroll Proclus says

πέπονθεν γὰρ τοῦτο καὶ ταῦτα τὰ μυθικὰ πλάσματα, ὅπερ ὁ Πλάτων πού φησι τὰ θεῖα καὶ παναγέστατα τῶν δογμάτων πεπονθέναι. καὶ γὰρ ταῦτα τοῖς μὲν πολλοῖς ἐστὶ καταγέλαστα, τοῖς δὲ εἰς νοῦν ἀνεγειρομένοις ὀλίγοις δὴ τισιν ἐκφαίνει τὴν ἑαυτῶν πρὸς τὰ πράγματα συμπάθειαν, καὶ τὴν ἐξ αὐτῶν τῶν ἱερατικῶν ἔργων παρέχεται πίστιν τῇς πρὸς τὰ θεῖα συμφυοῦς δυναμέως.

Neither Kroll in his Teubner text nor Festugière has correctly identified the Platonic allusion. Kroll suggests *Rep.* 5. 452a. Festugière points out that this cannot be right and suggests a series of passages in the *Theaetetus*: 172c 4 ff.; 174c 3; 174d 1; and 175d 4 ff. He also adduces a couple of parallels from the *Hermetica*.² In fact Proclus here is alluding to Plato's *Second Letter* 314a. πρὸς τοὺς πολλοὺς καταγελαστότερα there is picked up by Proclus' τοῖς μὲν πολλοῖς... καταγέλαστα: cf. τοῖς πολλοῖς... καταγέλαστος and 'risui' in Festugière's Hermetic parallels and also Menander Rhetor in Spengel, *Rhetores Graeci* III. 337. 28, concerning φυσικοὶ ὕμνοι which are not to be divulged to the multitude. I suspect that the *Second Letter* has influenced all these passages, even if indirectly. This letter, which may be a Neopythagorean forgery, was accepted as genuine in antiquity and much used and interpreted by both Middle and Neoplatonists.³ Proclus himself discusses the celebrated 'three kings' of 312e in *Platonic Theology* 2. 8–9. The statement in the *Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy* 26. 8 Westerink that Proclus ἐκβάλλει the Platonic *Letters* cannot mean that he regarded them as spurious, any more than the *Republic* and the *Laws* which he also ἐκβάλλει. The word in its context probably implies exclusion from a list of works in real dialogue-form.⁴

At 1. 113. 29–30 Kroll Proclus mentions Homeric comparisons of Athene to Mentor, of Hermes to a *λάρος* and of Apollo to a *ἰεραξ*. The transformation of Athene into Mentor is familiar from *Od.* 2. 401 and 4. 653–6. Festugière notes that Hermes is

¹ 3 vols. (Paris, 1970).

² Stob. *Hermet.* fr. 11. 4 (3. 57 Festugière) and Asclepius 25 (329. 5 ff. Nock and Festugière).

³ See H. D. Saffrey and L. G. Westerink, *Proclus: Théologie platonicienne*, II (Paris, 1974), introduction §2, pp. xx–lix: 'Histoire des exégèses de la *Lettre II* de Platon dans la tradition platonicienne'.

⁴ cf. L. G. Westerink, *Anonymous Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy* (Amsterdam, 1962), p. xxxvii.