

rationalizing accounts that made of Draco a human son of Ares and king of Thebes, e.g. Dercylus, cited by the scholia to *Phoen.* 7 (= *FGrHist* III 305F6). The mythological handbooks confirm this: Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.4.1 and Hygin. *Fab.* 178. The Sown Men are therefore on one account grandsons of Ares, and show themselves worthy of their seed when they fight one another – Seneca describes the martial atmosphere at 732–4.

What may have made the allusion a bit less obscure is Seneca's reliance (as I should suppose) upon his audience's knowledge of Ovid's account of the foundation of Thebes in *Metamorphoses* 3. There he briskly referred to the *Martius anguis* (32) and left his own readers to recall the issue of the snake's paternity. Granting, however, that *Martius* is really no more decisive than Euripides' genitive *Ἀρεος*, it is the more significant that Pentheus calls the Thebans *anguigenae*, *proles Mauortia* at *Met.* 3.531. All of this paves the way to Seneca's highly allusive formulation, for which there is almost a commentary in the *Thebaid* of Statius. At 10.806–9 the mother of Menoeceus complains that the *Martius anguis* had engendered in his heart *nimius ... Mauors*. So Menoeceus too like the Sown Men is *digna ... semine proles*.

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NERO ON THE DISAPPEARING TIGRIS

quique pererratam subductus Persida Tigris
deserit et longo terrarum tractus hiatu
reddit quaesitas iam non quaerentibus undas

(Nero, fr. 1 Morel)

This is the only undisputed fragment of Nero's poetry which is longer than a single line. It is preserved for us by the scholiast on Lucan 3.261, who gives us the additional piece of information that it belongs to Nero's 'first book'. It is overwhelmingly likely that this refers to the first book of Nero's epic *Troica*, his most famous work and the only one, as far as we know, to have been comprised of several books.¹ Since the fragment is the most significant surviving, but this attribution to the *Troica* cannot be quite certain, Morel and Büchner list it as fragment 1 with the simple heading 'E libro primo' and scrupulously keep it entirely separate from Servius' two testimonia (frr. 9 and 10) on the content of the poem. This entirely sensible procedure, however, may trap the unwary reader into assuming that not a word of Nero's epic actually survives.

The passage of Lucan to which the scholiast compares our fragment reads as follows:

at Tigrim subito tellus absorbet hiatu
occultosque tegit cursus rursusque renatum
fonte novo flumen pelagi non abnegat undis.

(Luc. 3.261–3)

The 'scientific' background to all this can be found in Strabo (11.14.8, 16.1.21) and Pliny (*N.H.* 6.128), the first of whom could have been known directly to Lucan and Nero, while the latter was also no doubt using earlier sources also available in Nero's reign. Strabo and Pliny both inform us that, after crossing lake Thospitis, the Tigris disappears and flows underground for a considerable distance before re-emerging at Chalonitis (Strabo) or Nymphaeum (Pliny). This distance is twenty-two miles according to Pliny, while Strabo (11.14.8) says more vaguely *πολὺν τόπον*

¹ H. Bardon, *REL* 14 (1936), 347 'de tous les poèmes néroniens, seuls les *Troica* furent assez importants pour comprendre plusieurs livres'. d'où, scol. "in primo libro".

ἐνεχθεῖς ὑπὸ γῆς, cf. Nero's 'longo terrarum tractus hiatu'. The point of *iam non quaerentibus* is therefore that it is so long since the local inhabitants saw the river that they have given up hope of ever recovering it.

It is impossible to say which poet is imitating which. Indeed, the attention of either or both could have been drawn to the phenomenon by Seneca, who alludes to it at *Med.* 723 'altum gurgitem Tigris premens', and, at *Ep. Mor.* 104.15, seems to think of it, along with the rising of the Nile and the wanderings of the Maeander, as a universally popular poetic topos:

sive ut Nilus aestivo incremento tumet, sive ut Tigris eripitur ex oculis et acto per occulta cursu integrae magnitudinis redditur, sive ut Maeander, poetarum omnium exercitatio et ludus, implicatur crebris anfractibus et saepe in vicinum alveo suo admotus, antequam sibi influat, flectitur.

Compare especially *per occulta cursu* to Lucan's words *occultosque tegit cursus*.

What is clear is that Lucan and Nero shared at least some of their material and ideas, as well as that taste for the geographical excursus in epic which is common in this period – their famous rivalry, whether or not it had yet become hostile when the passages in question were composed, accordingly comes more vividly before our eyes. Nero, however, is noticeably more allusive and epigrammatic, especially in the idea and expression of 'reddidit quaesitas iam non quaerentibus undas'. A reasonable (if unprovable) hypothesis is that it is perhaps Nero who is trying to 'improve' on the rival who so excited his jealousy. The other quality to note in Nero's treatment of the topos is his greater concentration on sound effects. In particular he combines a traditional Roman taste for alliteration (*terrarum tractus*) with sensuous Greek forms (*Persida Tigris*) and internal rhyme (*quaesitas ... undas*). To *Persida Tigris* one should especially compare Morel, fr. 4.2 (= Pers. 1.94) 'Nerea delphin', another hexameter ending of the same shape, tone and grammatical structure. Fr. 1 thus exhibits a stylistic feature which Persius, whether he is truly quoting Nero, as the scholiast alleges, or some other contemporary, castigates as effeminate.²

It remains for us to place fr. 1 in the context of the *Troica* as a whole. Such geographical details might conceivably be introduced into the narrative at any one of many places – a simile comparing the Tigris to some other river, for example, or an ecphrasis of the Orient – but the most likely context is, as in Lucan, a catalogue of forces. Peoples and nations in catalogues of armies are frequently identified by the river running through their homeland from Homer on, e.g. *Il.* 2.522 οἷ τ' ἄρα παρ ποταμὸν Κηφισὸν δῖον ἔναιον, 825 πίνοντες ὕδωρ μέλαν Αἰσίοιο.³ The passage of Lucan under discussion here occurs in the splendid catalogue of Greek and Oriental peoples who flocked to join Pompey and the Republicans at Pharsalus (Luc. 3.169–297). That such details about geographical wonders were something of a standard feature of the catalogues of Silver Latin epic may be surmised from the existence of a very similar passage in Statius' description of the Argive forces marching against Thebes:

auget resupina maniplos
Elis, depressae populus subit incola Pisae,
qui te, flave, natant terris, Alphee, Sicaniis
advena, tam longo non umquam infecte profundo

(*Theb.* 4.237–40)⁴

² Pers. 1.103f. 'haec fierent si testiculi vena ulla paterni | viveret in nobis?'

³ Cf. Virg. *A.* 7.683, 715 'qui Tiberim Fabarimque bibunt', 738, 801f., Stat. *Theb.* 4.116ff., 227.

⁴ Statius also uses the myth in his epithalamium for Stella and Violentilla: *Silv.* 1.2.203–8 'nitidae sic transfuga Pisae | amnis in externos longe flammatus amores | flumina demerso trahit intemerata canali, | donec Sicaniis tandem prolatus anhelio | ore bibit fontes; miratur dulcia

A different river, and one which disappears into the sea rather than underground, before reappearing far away. The general idea is nonetheless the same, and Statius may be giving his audience a conscious variation on well-known models.⁵ Compare also these lines from Claudian's brief list of the troops who marched with Stilicho against Alaric:

quosque rigat retro pernicio unda Garunnae,
Oceani pleno quotiens impellitur aestu.

(*Ruf.* 2.113f.)⁶

Catalogues most naturally occur at the point in the narrative of an epic where troops muster for a battle or war to begin. This need by no means only be in the first book of a poem: the catalogue of ships begins half-way through *Iliad* 2, and Virgil's Italian catalogue appears in *Aeneid* 7, at the beginning of the *maius opus* of the war between the Trojans and the Italians. The first book is, however, a likely candidate for such catalogues, as can be seen from those of the Argonauts in the first books of the *Argonautica* of both Apollonius Rhodius and Valerius Flaccus, and the catalogue of Caesar's Gaulish legions in *De Bello Civili* 1. If all this is granted, which peoples will have made up the army described in *Troica* 1? Probably the allies who came to the aid of Priam from all over the East. Homer himself speaks of Priam's πολύκλητοι ἐπίκουροι (*Il.* 10.420), who indeed were so varied that he comments on their babel of many languages: *Il.* 2.803f. πολλοὶ γὰρ κατὰ ἄστυ μέγα Πριάμου ἐπίκουροι, | ἄλλη δ' ἄλλων γλῶσσα πολυσπερέων ἀνθρώπων. In including troops from the banks of the Tigris, Nero would have been extending Priam's influence far beyond the boundaries given in Homer's catalogue of Trojans, but one need only think of the Amazons or Memnon's Ethiopians to see how this exotic romanticism could easily have been shown to enjoy ancient precedent. Any doubt that Nero could have included the Tigris valley among the lands that sent troops to Troy is in fact easily dispelled by a glance at the opening passage of one of his tutor's tragedies. The *Troades* of Seneca

Nais | oscula nec credit pelago venisse maritum.' The poet well-trained in rhetoric can, by giving it the suitable *color*, adapt the same material to quite different types of subject.

⁵ It should be stressed, however, that if Statius has any one particular model in mind it need not necessarily be an epic catalogue. Learned Hellenistic poetry seems to have had a taste for descriptions of such miraculous rivers, and references to them appear in various genres. Both Callimachus and Lycophron, for example, mention the Inopus, which rose and sank at the same time as the Nile and was therefore believed to be fed by the Egyptian river, which was supposed to pass untainted under the sea from Egypt to Delos. See Call. *Hymn* 3.171 ἀγχόθι πηγῶν Αἰγυπτίου Ἰνωποῖο and Lyc. *Alex.* 575f. Ἰνωποῦ πέλας | Αἰγύπτιον Τρίτωνος ἔλκοντες ποτόν. Parthenius would appear to have alluded to a similar tradition concerning the river Aous in a poem written in elegiacs: see *Supplementum Hellenisticum*, ed. H. Lloyd-Jones and P. Parsons (Berlin and New York, 1983), no. 641 (p. 307). As for the myth of Arethusa and Alpheus it appears elsewhere in epic at Virg. *A.* 3.694–6 and Ov. *Met.* 5.572–641, but also in lyric at Pind. *Nem.* 1.1–4 and in pastoral at Virg. *Ecl.* 10.4–6. Nonetheless, it is most likely that Statius actually has in mind Lucan's Greco-Oriental catalogue: see *De Bello Civili* 3.176f. 'Pisacaeque manus populisque per aequora mittens | Sicaniis Alpheos aquas'. The self-same catalogue also mentions the Danube (3.201f.) and the geographical oddities of the Maeander (3.208), the Ganges (3.230–2 'toto qui solus in orbe | ostia nascenti contraria solvere Phoebo | audet et adversum fluctus impellit in Eurum') and the Tanais (3.272–6 'vertice lapsus | Rhipaeo Tanais diversi nomina mundi | inposuit ripis Asiaeque et terminus idem | Europae, mediae dirimens confinia terrae, | nunc hunc nunc illum, qua flectitur, ampliat orbem').

⁶ Perhaps ultimately inspired by Lucan's digression on the causes of tides in his Gaulish catalogue (1.409–18).

begins with Hecuba's lament for her fallen city, whose lost glory she evokes by an enumeration of the far-flung peoples that came to her aid:

columen eversum occidit
pollentis Asiae, caelitum egregius labor;
ad cuius arma venit et qui frigidum
septena Tanain ora pandentem bibit
et qui renatum primus excipiens diem
tepidum rubenti Tigrin inmiscet freto,
et quae vagos vicina prospiciens Scythas
ripam catervis Ponticam viduis ferit,
excisa ferro est;

(Sen. *Tro.* 6–14)

Fantham is undoubtedly right to see here highly stylized references to Priam's three most famous foreign allies.⁷ The drinker of seven-mouthed Tanais is Rhesus, king of Thrace, 'he who first catches the new dawn and sends the warm Tigris into the reddened sea (the Persian Gulf)' is clearly Memnon son of Aurora, king of the "Ethiopians" in the far East,⁸ and the leader of the Amazons is Penthesilea. Geographical precision is not highly prized by the Roman poets, and if Thrace is a very long way from the Don (Tanais) and tradition appears to make no particular close connection between Memnon and the Tigris, that is of no real consequence. The Tanais stands for the extreme North and the Tigris for the extreme East: Hecuba's hyperbole is intended to show that Priam's influence extended to the ends of the earth. If Nero's *Troica* did include such a catalogue of Priam's allies, the reference to the Tigris, far from being out of place, would thus conform with both the poetry and the scientific prose of his tutor. A last point is that such a lengthy description of oriental troops fighting for Troy would surely have invited comparison on many other points with Lucan's list of Pompey's eastern forces. The rivalry – friendly or hostile – between the two poets may well have centred on the competitive composition of such set pieces.

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⁷ E. Fantham, *Seneca's Troades* (Princeton, 1982), ad loc. (p. 208).

⁸ *Ibid.*

NOTES ON LUCAN¹

3.696f.

pugna fuit unus in illa
eximius Phoceus animam servare sub undis

'Phoceus' is ambiguous. It could mean 'Phocian, of Phocis', and thus 'Massilian'. Massilia was founded by refugees from Phocaea; but Latin writers sometimes put instead *Phocis*,² a name which Lucan also used for Massilia.³ Alternatively it could be a proper name appropriate to a Massilian.⁴ It is difficult to decide between the two readings: while no other participant is mentioned simply as a Roman or a Greek, some do appear unnamed.⁵ I prefer to see 'Phoceus' as the swimmer's name. It seems

¹ Professor R. G. M. Nisbet and Dr D. P. Fowler kindly read parts of this article and made many helpful suggestions. I should also like to thank the anonymous referee for bringing to my notice a number of points needing clarification.

² Sen. *Cons. Helv.* 7.8; Luc. 3.340; 5.53; Gell. 10.16.4.

³ Luc. 4.256; cf. Sid. Ap. *Carm.* 23.13.

⁴ Cf., e.g., Tyrrhenus in 3.709ff.

⁵ E.g. 603ff.; 652ff.