TWO NOTES ON OVID

I

At *Heroides* 21.121–2 Cydippe puts the following question to Acontius:

> verba quid exultas tua si mihi verba dederunt
> sumque parum prudens capta puella dolis?

Of Cydippe's description of herself as *parum prudens* Kenney ad loc. notes that this equates to *imprudens* and offers the translation 'incautious and taken unawares'. Yet it is possible that there is slightly more point to this term than simply the admission that Cydippe would have done better had she hesitated before acceding to her nurse's request and reading out the fateful words carved on the apple.[1] For the Callimachean master-text to which Ovid responds would suggest that a Cydippe who is *parum prudens* is not only incautious but also untrue to her lineage: *Aetia* fr. 67.7 Pfeiffer summarizes the ancestry of Acontius and Cydippe by stating that he is a descendant of Euxantius and she of Promethus.[2] The latter figure is relatively obscure but his connection with Naxos is established by Pausanias.[3] His potential significance for *Heroides* 21.121–2 stems, however, from the implications of foreknowledge in his name and the tradition relating to his virtual namesake, the more famous Prometheus. *Prudentia*, it will be noted, is connected etymologically with *providentia* by Cicero.[4] More significantly, when Latin writers seek to reproduce the proverbial Greek association of Prometheus with the wisdom of foresight, they do so by emphasizing his quality of *prudentia*.[5] The best evidence for this is supplied by the following extract from the note of Servius on Vergil, *Eclogue* 6.42:

Prometheus vir *prudentissimus* fuit, unde etiam Prometheus dictus est ἀπὸ τῆς προμηθείας, id est a *providentia*. hic primus astrologiam Assyriis indicavit, quam residens in monte altissimo Caucaso nimia cura et sollicitudine deprehenderat. hic autem mons positus est circa Assyrios, vicinus paene sideribus, unde etiam maiora astra demonstrat et diligenter eorum ortus occasusque significat. dicitur autem aquila cor eius exedere, quod θυμοβόρος est sollicitudo, qua ille adfectus siderum omnes deprehenderat motus. et hoc quia per *prudentiam* fecit, duce Mercurio, qui *prudentiae* et rationis deus est, ad saxum dicitur esse religatus.[6]

Cydippe, it must be concluded, has fallen from the high standards of her ancestors.

II

At *Metamorphoses* 4.416–19 Ovid effects a return from the storytelling and metamorphosis of the daughters of Minyas to the principal thread of his Theban narrative. He does this by introducing the character of Ino in the following terms:

> tum vero totis Bacchi memorabile Thebis
> numen erat, magnasque novi matertera vires

---

[1] Ov. *Her.* 21.109–10.

[2] Call. *Aet.* fr. 67.7: αἷμα τὸ μὲν γενεῆς Εὐξαντίδος, ἡ δὲ Προμηθ[ίς.

[3] Paus. 7.3.3.

[4] Non. 60.15-22 L cites Cic. *Hort.* fr. 96 Grilli, *Cato Maior* 78 and *Rep.* 6. 1 for three separate versions of the same claim. See also Cic. *Leg.* 1.60 and *Div.* 1.111 with Pease ad loc.

[5] For Greek etymological play on the name Prometheus, see Aesch. *PV* 85–7; Schol. Pind. *Ol.* 7.44.

[6] See also Isid. *Orig.* 10.20 'prudens quasi porro videns'.

> narrat ubique dei de totque sororibus expers
> una doloris erat, nisi quem fecere sorores.

What is striking here is the suggestion that Ino spends her time telling of the great power of the new god (*magnasque novi matertera vires / narrat ubique dei*). For it is my contention that buried in this claim, and particularly in the phrase *vires / narrat*, is a translinguistic play suggesting that Ino has become a composer of ἀρεταλογίαι.

The Greek term ἀρεταλογία is recorded only twice in extant literature and the earliest of these is in the late second or early first century B.C. (*Jesus Sirach* 36.17).[7] Yet the *aretalogus* or teller of tales illustrating the power of a divinity was a familiar figure at Rome as well as in Greece,[8] and a number of famous pieces of ancient literature are clearly recognized as aretalogies.[9] It is therefore important to note Bömer's identification of Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 4.20–30 as a typical catalogue of aretalogies within a hymn.[10] For verses 4.22–4 pick out from the many triumphs of Dionysus those over Pentheus, Lycurgus, and the Lydian sailors:

> Penthea tu, venerande, bipenniferumque Lycurgum
> sacrilegos mactas, Tyrrhenaque mittis in aequor
> corpora.

Two points must here be made. First, though Ovid has had little to say regarding Lycurgus, the hymn at the start of Book Four follows on immediately from the story of Pentheus which closes Book Three, the large part of which has in turn been given over to Acoetes' account of Dionysus and the Lydian sailors.[11] Second, all three stories feature in a very similar passage from Propertius in which the poet promises to devote the rest of his life to the celebration of Dionysus, 3.17.17–28:

> dum modo purpureo spument mihi dolia musto,
>   et nova pressantis inquinet uva pedes,
> quod superest vitae per te et tua cornua vivam,
>   virtutisque tuae, Bacche, poeta ferar.
> dicam ego maternos Aetnaeo fulmine partus,
>   Indica Nysaeis arma fugata choris,
> vesanumque nova nequiquam in vite Lycurgum,
>   Pentheos in triplicis funera rapta greges,
> curvaque Tyrrhenos delphinum corpora nautas
>   in vada pampinea desiluisse rate,
> et tibi per mediam bene olentia flumina Diam,
>   unde tuum potant Naxia turba merum.

When Propertius informs the god that he will become *virtutis tuae ... poeta*, he renders in Latin the promise that he will be his aretalogist.[12] Moreover, the same concept has clearly been current in Latin literature for almost a century and a half: at Terence, *Adelphoe* 535–6 the slave Syrus informs Ctesipho that *laudarier te audit*

---

[7] For discussion, see V. Longo, *Aretalogie nel mondo greco* (Genova, 1969), 11.

[8] See Juv. 15.16 with Courtney ad loc. and Suet. *Aug.* 74.

[9] An obvious case is the Erysichthon story in Call. *Hym.* 6. On this point, see A. Henrichs, 'Thou shalt not kill a tree: Greek, Manichean and Indian tales', *BASP* 16 (1979), 85–108, esp. 85–92.

[10] See Bömer at Ov. *Met.* 4.11.

[11] Ov. *Met.* 3.511–733 tells the story of Pentheus, but all of 3.572–700 is devoted to the story of the Lydian sailors.

[12] See R. Reitzenstein, *Hellenistische Wundererzählungen* (Leipzig, 1906), 151 and Fedeli at Prop. 3.17.20.

lubenter: facio te apud illum deum; / virtutes narro. When the much later scholion on Juvenal 15.16 defines aretalogists, it states that they *miras res, id est deorum virtutes loquuntur.*[13] The resemblance of all these phrases to Ovid's *magnasque novi matertera vires / narrat ubique dei* cannot be accidental.[14]

Ovid's narrative has taken a strongly aretalogical turn with the close of Book Three of the *Metamorphoses*. This is underlined by the opening of Book Four, where the Thebans' hymn to the new god is gradually usurped by the primary narrator.[15] Only the daughters of Minyas boycott the rites,[16] and the stories which they tell one another as they spin must be understood as an alternative to participation.[17] Their metamorphosis into bats confirms the error of their ways and is one last proof of the might of the god.[18] When the narrative finally swings back to Ino, the aunt of Dionysus, she is found doing exactly what Ovid himself has done before her: making λόγοι out of the new god's ἀρεταί and composing aretalogies.[19]

St Anne's College, Oxford   MATTHEW LEIGH

[13] For Terence and the scholion to Juvenal, see Reitzenstein, op. cit. 8–9.

[14] For etymological links between 'vis', 'vir' and 'virtus', see Isid. *Orig.* 11.2.17; cf. Lactant. *Opif. Dei* 12.

[15] See esp. the apostrophe to Liber at Ov. *Met.* 4.17 and the hymnic *Du-stil* which marks all of Ov. *Met.* 4.17–30.

[16] Ov. *Met.* 4.32–5.

[17] Ov. *Met.* 4.36–415, esp. 390 'urguet opus spernitque deum festumque profanat'.

[18] Ov. *Met.* 4.391–415.

[19] Ino does not profit by her aretalogies. At Ov. *Met.* 4.419–31, Juno catches sight of her and resentfully catalogues the different achievements of Dionysus—the Lydian sailors, the daughters of Minyas, Pentheus—before resolving to cap them. Ino and her family will be the victims. Ovid engineers an artful transition and now becomes the aretalogist not of Dionysus but of Juno.

GETTING OUT OF HELL: PETRONIUS 72.5ff.

When Trimalchio proposes a visit to the baths at the end of his *cena*, Encolpius suggests to Ascyltos that they make good their escape; but they and their companion Giton find their way blocked by a dog at the door whose barking scares Ascyltos so much that he falls into the fish pond. The drunken Encolpius is dragged in too while trying to give assistance and they have both to be extracted by the hall-porter, who also quietens the dog. As for Giton (Petr. 72.9):

'. . . iam dudum se ratione acutissima redemerat a cane; quicquid enim a nobis acceperat de cena, latranti sparserat, at ille avocatus cibo furorem suppresserat'.

It was noted long ago by commentators on *latranti* that Petronius alludes here to Cerberus,[1] and P. G. Walsh comments further[2] that 'Petronius evokes Virgil here; when Aeneas journeyed to the realms below, Cerberus was likewise quietened by Aeneas [*sic*], who fed the beast a honeycake as soporific (*Aen.* 6.419ff.)'. Nevertheless it seems to me that such earlier scholars have not explored quite far enough Petronius' use of the Cerberus motif, although M. S. Smith[3] appears on course in

[1] E.g. by W. B. Sedgwick, *The Cena Trimalchionis of Petronius* (Oxford, 1925) and E. V. Marmorale, *Cena Trimalchionis* (Florence, 1947).

[2] P. G. Walsh, *Petronius: The Satyricon* (Oxford, 1996), 180, regarding his translation 'Giton . . . bought off the dog'.

[3] M. S. Smith, *Petronius: Cena Trimalchionis* (Oxford, 1975).