the spring, the fleet would neither reach the Timavus nor come at it from the right direction.

The geography of the passage matches Pollio's mission much better than Octavian's. The deciding factor will then be the reference to *sola Sophocleo tua carmina digna coturno* (10). If the reference is to Pollio's tragedies, the description rings true.[20] Conversely, grave difficulties will remain for interpretations which would identify the Sophoclean *carmina* (note the plural) with Octavian's aborted attempt at an *Ajax*.[21] In fact, the only *carmina* Octavian is known to have completed and made public during this period were obscene political elegies.[22] Bowersock's thesis, then, has shortcomings of a geographic, chronological and literary character. All in all, it seems best to allow the identification of the addressee with Pollio, and to preserve with it the traditional date for the poem's *ultima manus*, 39 B.C.

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[20] Tarrant (n. 4), 197—9; Farrell (n. 4); and Nisbet and Hubbard (n. 4), on Hor. *Carm.* 2.1.
[21] See esp. Farrell (n. 4).
[22] Attacking Pollio, among others. See Macrobius *Sat*. 2.4.21 and Martial 11.20 with Courtney, *FLP*, pp. 282–3.

VERGIL'S MYSTERIOUS *SILER*: A POSSIBLE IDENTIFICATION FROM A LOUSY CLUE

Vergil mentions a plant called *siler*. Its identification has proved difficult since the word seems to be used only three other times in all Latin literature.

1. *Georgics* 2.9—13:

> Principio arboribus varia est natura creandis.
> namque aliae nullis hominum cogentibus ipsae
> sponte sua veniunt camposque et flumina late
> curva tenent, ut molle siler lentaeque genistae,
> populus et glauca canentia fronde salicta;

To begin with, nature has different ways of making trees. For some, with no man forcing them, come of their own accord and hold far and wide both the fields and the curving rivers, such as the soft siler and the pliant broom, the poplar and the willow groves growing grey with shining leaves.

2. Servius (ad loc.) is no help, but he does let us know that by his time the word *siler* had vanished from the vocabulary:

genus arboris est. et notandum genus neutrum de arbore, quod est admodum rarum.

A type of tree. Note the neuter gender for a tree, which is quite unusual.

3. We do, however, get some pointers from two passages in Pliny (*HN* 16.77):

non nisi in aquosis proveniunt salices, alni, populi, siler, ligustra tesseris utilissima, item vaccinia Italiae in aucupiis sata, Galliae vero etiam purpurae tinguendae causa ad servitiorum vestes.

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Willows, alders, poplars, the siler, privets[1] (very useful for making account slips) only grow in watery places; likewise bilberry,[2] which is sown in Italy in game bird preserves, but in Gaul also for the sake of a purple used to dye the clothes of slaves.[3]

4. Pliny, *HN* 24.73:

Sileris folia illita fronti capitis dolores sedant. eiusdem semen contritum in oleo phthiriasis coercet. serpentes et hunc fruticem fugiunt, baculumque rustici ob id ex eo gerunt.

The leaves of the siler, applied to the forehead, cure headaches, and its seed ground in oil cures lice infestations. Snakes flee this shrub, and for that reason peasants carry a stick made out of it.

So what do we know about the *siler*?

1. Vergil ties it to broom (*genista*, *Spartium junceum* L.), which likes 'dry hills, hedges'.[4]

2. On the other hand, Pliny *HN* 16.77 links it with willow, alder, poplar and privet as a river bank plant. However, this is much less of a clue than it seems. First, Pliny is apparently drawing directly on this passage of Vergil, as his language indicates (*proveniunt*; *G.* 2.11: *veniunt*). Second, Pliny is not entirely consistent, having just claimed (16.73) that the poplar loves mountains (*montes amant*), nor are privet (*ligustra*) or bilberry (*vaccinia*) fond of wet ground.[5]

La Cerda seems to be the first to have noticed that Vergil arranged the four species in an ABAB pattern, two bushes in the fields, and two taller trees by the rivers: *campos implent siler & genista: littora populus, & salices*.[6] He was on the right track: *Explicui non de illo, quod nascitur in aquosis, ut auctor est* Plin. lib. 16 c. 18*, sed de montano, tum quia Poetae venustior sententia, si binas species campis attribuas, binas fluminibus : tum quia huius prae illo frequentior mentio in scriptoribus herbariis*. ('I explain *siler* not as the plant that grows in the marsh, for which the authority is Pliny 16.18 [77], but as a mountain plant, both because of the Poet's elegant formulation in giving two species to the fields and two to the rivers, and because there is more frequent mention of the latter than the former in the botanical writers.')[7] Abbe came independently to the

[1] *Ligustra vulgare*: L. O. Polunin, *Flowers of Europe* (Oxford, 1969), 982 (ref. by number). Pictures of the plants mentioned in the *Georgics* may be found at the web site: http://classics.uc.edu/~parker/hortus/vergilsgarden.html. The site is searchable by text, by scientific name or by the common name in Latin, English, French, German and Italian.

[2] *Vaccinium myrtillus:* Polunin (n. 1), no. 936.

[3] *in aucupiis* MSS. Changed by Turnebus and others to *mancupiis*, comparing 21.170, where hyacinthus is grown in Gaul, used as an additive to dye and whose root in sweet wine is used by slave dealers to prevent the growth of pubic hair (on the slaves one presumes): *hyacinthus in Gallia maxime provenit. hoc ibi fuco hysginum tingunt. radix est bulbacea, mangonicis venaliciis pulchre nota, quae e vino ducli inlita pubertatem coercet et non patitur erumpere.* However, *mancupiis* next to *servitiorum* would be strange, and there is no reason to equate *vaccinium* with *hyacinthus.* For this concrete sense of *aucupium* 'bird hunting' (not separately noted by *OLD* or *TLL*), see *CIL* 14.4328: *conductor aucupiorum.*

[4] Polunin (n. 1), no. 982.

[5] Privet is found in 'Hedges, forest clearings, uncultivated ground' and bilberry in 'Heaths, moors, open woods', according to Polunin (n. 1). Willow and poplar are closely related as the two main genera of the Salicaceae family.

[6] J. L. de la Cerda, *P. Virgilii Maronis Bucolica et Georgica* (Cologne, 1647), 267. These rare volumes are available online though the kindness of Joseph Farrell and the University of Pennsylvania Library; http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/%7Ejfarrell/index.html.

[7] J. Martyn, *P. Virgilii Maronis Georgicorum libri quatuor. The Georgicks of Virgil* (Oxford, 1827), 112, swayed by the authority of Pliny rejected this explanation: 'But this seems too trifling an exactness, to be worth insisting upon.'

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same conclusion: 'It appears that Virgil intends *siler* and *genista* to go with *campos*, and *populus* and *salicta* to go with *flumina* . . . Thus *siler* and *genista* are released from the superficial bond with *flumina* and, consequently, with *populus* and *salicta*. Pliny's reference (16.18.31 [i.e. 16.77]) may be based at least partially on Virgil's lines'.[8] Our best clue seems to have evaporated.

3. Vergil calls it *molle*, an adjective which he applies to reeds (*Ecl*. 2.72: *iunco*) and acanthus (*Ecl*. 3.45) and to flowers: bilberries (*vaccinia*, *Ecl*. 2.50), violets (*Ecl*. 5.38), and hyacinth (*Ecl*. 6.53, *G*. 4.127, *Aen*. 11.69). As Mynors says, 'This does not help here.'[9]

4. It is a bush or shrub (*frutex*) rather than a tree proper; that is, it is something with individual stalks or shoots, rather than a single trunk or bole.[10] This point seems to have been universally ignored. It has leaves and seeds. Also you can make a stick out of it.[11] (The flight of snakes before it does not offer much aid in identification).

There have been various attempts at identification, most proceeding from the idea that *siler* should be some sort of tree that grows by river banks, or else from an assumption that *siler* must be some other plant whose name looks something like *siler*.[12] Top candidates (in chronological order) have included:[13]

Euonymus latifolius (L.) Miller (Polunin (718); under the name *Euonymus Theophrasti*), Eng. Spindle-tree.[14]
Laserpitium siler L (Polunin 905; under the name *Siler montanum* Crantz;), Eng. Sermountain. This was La Cerda's own choice (1647).
Salix caprea L. (Polunin 29), Eng. Goat Willow, Great Sallow.[15]
Salix appendiculata Vill. (not in Polunin; under the name *Salix grandifolia* [Ser. 1815]), Eng. Large-leaved Willow.[16]
Salix alba subsp. *vitellina* (Polunin 25; under the name *Salix vitellina* L.), Eng. White Willow.[17]
Vaccinium oxycoccos L. (Polunin 937), Eng. Cranberry.[18]

[8] E. Abbe, *The Plants of Virgil's Georgics* (Ithaca, 1965), 150.
[9] R. A. B. Mynors *Virgil: Georgics* (Oxford, 1990), ad loc.
[10] For the distinction, see Verg. *G*. 2.21; Col. *Arb*. 1.2; Plin, *HN* 13.36, 18.1, etc.
[11] The only other plant specifically mentioned by Pliny (13.123) for sticks is *Ferula communis* 'giant fennel'.
[12] The -i- of *siler* is short as Vergil's scansion shows (incorrectly marked long in Lewis and Short; correctly unmarked in *OLD*.) The word has no etymology and is probably pre-Italic.
[13] I have no doubt missed some. Lists—without citation—are given by P. Bubani, *Flora Virgiliana* (Bologna, 1869—70), 105, and R. Billiard, *L'agriculture dans l'antiquité d'après les Georgiques de Virgile* (Paris, 1928), 524–5.
[14] So A. Cesalpino, *De plantis libri XVI* (Florence, 1583), followed by many others. P. Fournier, 'Le siler des anciens botanistes romains, *Bulletin de la Société Botanique de France* 95 (1948), 279—80. J. André, *Pline L'Ancien: Histoire naturelle XVI* (Paris, 1962; Budé), 45, 126: 'fusain à larges feuilles'
[15] K. Sprengel, *Caroli Linnaei Systema vegetabilium*, 16th edn (Göttingen, 1825—8).
[16] A. Bertoloni, *Flora Italica* (Bologna, 1833—57).
[17] A. L. Fée, *Flore de Virgile* (Paris, 1822). So too K. Fraas, *Synopsis plantarum florae classicae* (Munich, 1845). W. H. S. Jones, *Pliny: Natural History*, Loeb (Cambridge, MA, 1956) 7.537. André was more cautious in *Pline L'Ancien: Histoire naturelle XXIV* , Budé (Paris, 1972), 45, 126, leaving *siler* untranslated and noting *Euonymus latifolius* as an alternative to the usual identification as *Salix vitellina*, but by 1985 he had settled on *Salix vitellina* in *Les noms de plantes dans la Rome antique* (Paris, 1985). Also R. König, *C. Plinius Secundus d. Ä. Naturkunde XXIV* (Munich, 1973; Tusculum), 58, 149. See also W. Schneider, *Lexikon zur Arzneimittelgeschichte* (Frankfurt, 1968—75), 5.2, 70, 5.3, 211.
[18] J.-J. Paulet, *Flore et faune de Virgile* (Paris, 1824).

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Hippophae rhamnoides (Polunin 761), Eng. Sea Buckthorn.[19]
Frangula alnus Miller (Polunin 724; under the name *Rhamnus frangula* L.), Eng. Alder Buckthorn.[20]

Abbe was more adventuresome: 'An unidentified plant, probably one of the Umbelliferae',[21] mostly, as far as I can tell from her references, because of a fancied resemblance of the name to *silphium* (the famous extinct plant) and *sil*, *seseli* (hartwort, *Tordylium officinale*).

None of these has much to recommend it and argumentation is sparse to nonexistent.[22] Most editors and commentators have been content to call *siler* some kind of willow and get on with things;[23] others are more properly agnostic.[24]

However, there is one further clue that curiously does not seem to have been followed up by anyone and which points to a single plant. Fact 5: Pliny says *siler* is useful for curing phthiriasis. Celsus tells us about this particularly loathsome disease (6.6.15):

Genus quoque viti est, quom inter pilos palpebrarum peduculi nascuntur: phthiriasin Graeci nominant.

There is also a type of disease in which lice are born between the eyelashes; the Greeks call it phthiriasis [φθειρίασις < φθείρ 'louse'].

Celsus also gives us the cure:

Medicamenta vero intus quidem lenia danda sunt, ne quid acrioris pituitae concitent, super ipsos vero peduculos alia, quae necare eos, et prohibere, ne similes nascantur, possint. Ad id ipsum spumae nitri P.*-; sandaracae P.*-; uvae taminiae P.* I simul teruntur, adiciturque vetus oleum pari portione atque acetum, donec mellis ei crassitudo sit.

The medicines taken internally must be gentle so as not to provoke the already acrid discharge from the eyes. Others should be applied directly to the lice themselves to kill them and to prevent others from being born. For this: 1/12 denarius [*c.* 0.36 gr.] foam of nitre [a naturally occurring form of calcium carbonate], 1/12 denarius sandaraca [realgar, arsenic sulphide, As_4S_4], and 1 denarius [*c.* 4.31 gr. = Attic drachma] of taminia grape are ground together; equal parts of old oil and vinegar are added until it is the thickness of honey.

Pliny agrees with the treatment (*HN* 26.138):

[19] P. Bubani, *Flora Virgiliana : ovvero sulle piante menzionate da Virgilio* (Bologna, 1869—70), under the non-existent name *Hypophae phamnoides*.
[20] Attributed simply to 'Autres auteurs' by Billiard (n. 13), 525.
[21] Abbe (n. 8), 149.
[22] Rightly, R. Thomas, *Virgil: Georgics* (Cambridge, 1988), 1.158.
[23] L. Anguillara, *Semplici* (Venice, 1561), 86: 'Nasce questo albero in luoghi aquosi, ove son valle. E specie di Salice, & fa le folgie larghe piu d'ogni altro Salice. Sul Padovano si chiama Salice aquaruolo. sono i suoi rami molto lenti.' C. G. Heyne, *P. Virgilii Maronis Opera* (Leipzig, 1767), ad loc: *salicis forte genus* and most commentators after him. So Martyn (n. 7), 112: 'I have followed the general opinion, in translating *Siler*, an *osier*. I do not meet with any thing certain, in the other Latin writers, to determine exactly what plant they meant.' J. Sargeaunt, *The Trees, Shrubs, and Plants of Virgil* (Oxford, 1920), 119: 'It is impossible to identify "siler." It is a tree or shrub of wet places, and probably some willow.' Billiard (n. 13), 524, 'Arbre ou arbrisseau auquel il est impossible de constituer un état civil . . . Pour ma part, j'y verrais fort bien quelque espèce de saule.'
[24] H. Rackham, *Pliny: Natural History*, Loeb (Cambridge, MA, 1945), 4.438 (Pliny 16.77): 'unidentified'; Mynors (n. 9): 'unidentified'.

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Phthiriasi Sulla dictator consumptus est, nascunturque in sanguine ipso hominis animalia exesura corpus. resistitur uvae taminiae suco aut veratri cum oleo perunctis corporibus; taminia quidem in aceto decocta etiam vestes eo taedio liberat.

Sulla the dictator was consumed by phthiriasis, and there are born in man's very blood creatures that will eat away his body. It is combated by anointing the entire body with the juice of taminia grape or hellebore in oil. In fact, taminia grape boiled in vinegar frees even clothes from this pest.[25]

Celsus has already told us what taminia grape is (3.21.7):

uva taminia quam σταφίδα ἀγρίαν Graeci nominant

taminia grape, which the Greeks call σταφὶς ἀγρία ['wild raisin'].

The plant σταφὶς ἀγρία is *Delphinium staphisagria* L. (Polunin 212), known in English as staveacre[26] and, significantly, licebane or lousewort. Staveacre is a close relative of the familiar larkspur (*Consolida ambigua* (L.) P. W. Ball and Heywood, formerly auct.; Polunin 213), which it closely resembles, having a tall central stalk up to 1.5 m., broad leaves, and small purple flowers. Staveacre has a long history as a cure for lice, used well into the twentieth century, since it contains three poisonous alkaloids, delphinine, its isomer delphisine, and delphinoidine.[27]

Pliny gives us more information. In his book on medical uses of fruits, he treats first grape vines and then things that resemble vines (*HN* 23.17):

Astaphis agria sive staphis, quam uvam taminiam aliqui vocant falso—suum enim genus habet—cauliculis nigris, rectis, foliis labruscae, fert folliculos verius quam acinos, virides, similes ciceri, in his nucleum triangulum. maturescit cum vindemia nigrescitque, cum taminiae rubentes norimus acinos sciamusque illam in apricis nasci, hanc non nisi in opacis. his nucleis ad purgationem uti non censuerim propter ancipitem strangulationem, neque ad pituitam oris siccandam, quia fauces laedunt. (18) phthiriasi caput et reliquum corpus triti liberant, facilius admixta sandaraca, item pruritu et psoris. ad dentium dolores decocuntur in aceto, ad aurium vitia, rheumatismos cicatricum, ulcerum manantia. flos tritus in vino contra serpentes bibitur; semen enim abdicaverim propter nimiam vim ardoris. quidam eam pituitariam vocant. plagis serpentium utique inlinunt.

Astaphis agria, or *staphis*—which some incorrectly call *uva taminia*, although that is a separate species[28]—has dark erect stalks, leaves like wild vines, and bears pods rather than grapes, green, like chickpeas, with a three-sided stone inside. It matures and grows dark at the same time as the wine harvest, but we all recognize the still reddening grapes of the *taminia* and we know that *staphis* grows in sunny spots but the *taminia* only in shaded areas. I would not advise the use of *staphis* seeds for purging due to the danger of choking, nor for drying up phlegm in the mouth, because they harm the throat. When ground they rid the head and the rest of the body of lice infestation, more easily when *sandaraca* is mixed in. Also works for itching and psoriasis. They

[25] Phthiriasis is also helped by wild cucumber (20.8), radishes (20.24, or their oil 23.94), garlic (20.53), mustard (20.239), bay berries (23.154), juniper oil (24.18), tamarisk (24.72), privet (24.73), ivy (24.79), hellebore (25.61), hyssop (25.136), and finally, snake skin or fresh whey (30.144), but none of these are the sovereign cure that staveacre is, and all are well-known plants.

[26] A nice example of folk-etymological deformation, from staphisagria.

[27] Polunin (n. 1), 99, no. 212; O. Polunin and A. Huxley, *Flowers of the Mediterranean* (London, 1967), 68. See also the classic, M. Grieve, *A Modern Herbal (*New York, 1931; repr. 1971), 770; J. M. Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy and Medicine (*Austin, 1985), 221 (chart); D. Bown, *Encyclopedia of Herbs and their Uses* (New York, 1995), 117, 272.

[28] Pliny (16.19—20) believes that *uva taminia* should in strict usage be reserved for the wild grape, also called *labrusca*, *Vitis vinifera* L. sups. *sylvestris* (C. C. Gemelin) Hegi, but he is inconsistent in his usage.

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are cooked in vinegar for toothache, for ear complaints, seeping scars,[29] and weeping ulcers. The flower ground in wine is drunk against snakes. The seed, however, I would reject because of its excessive power of heat. Some call it *pituitaria*.[30] They especially apply it against snakebite.

Scribonius Largus (8, 166) adds the fact that *staphis agaria* is also called *pedicularia* 'louse-herb'; Columella (6.30.8) calls it *herba pedicularis*.[31]

Siler therefore seems to be another name for σταφὶς ἀγρία, the most famous cure for lice infestation. This identification receives support from the Greek texts on which Pliny and his sources drew. This passage is taken fairly directly from the sources Pliny shares with Dioscorides 4.152.[32] Phthiriasis is the Latinized version of φθειρίασις, a word used (apart from testimonia about the bizarre deaths by lice of Pherecydes and Callisthenes)[33] only in the medical writers and *only* in connection with σταφὶς ἀγρία. The recipes combine it, as in Celsus' and Pliny's cures, with *sandaraca*.[34] Pliny's other use for *siler* also fits in well with staveacre. So, fact 6: its leaves cure headaches. The leaves of staveacre, as Pliny says, resemble wild vine leaves, and Pliny has just recommended vine leaves for the same purpose (23.3).[35] The idea seems to be that vine leaves and things that resemble them are good for headaches.

Staveacre thus fits well the few facts about *siler*. 1. It grows wild. 2. It grows in the same areas as broom. 3. It could be called *molle* (for what that is worth). 4. It is a bush with a tall stalk that would make a fine stick. 5. It is the best-known cure for lice. 6. It has vine-like leaves that cure headache.

There are three possible objections to this identification. 1. Pliny says that *siler* only grows in watery places and staveacre is not especially associated with river banks, though it can, of course, flourish there.[36] However, as we have seen, Pliny's statement is incorrect when it comes to several of his species and was probably influenced by his misreading of Vergil. 2. Would Vergil have considered as growing spontaneously (*ipsae* / *sponte sua*) a plant with seeds? However, broom (*genista*), the example which Vergil links to *siler*, has exactly this type of visible seed pod, and Vergil's contrast (*G.* 2.14—16) is with chestnuts (*castanae*; *Castanea sativa*), sessile oak (*aesculus*; *Quercus petraea*) and English oak (*quercus*; *Quercus robur*), all with large nuts. Further, Pliny (17.136) is well-aware that *genista* can be a crop grown from deliberately planted seeds. He also knows that willows can grow from seeds and the seeds are a famous abortifacient (16.110). Only the poplar (*populus*) is seedless (16.108). 3. If *siler* is *staphis agria*, why does not Pliny just say so? It is common, however, in Pliny to find one plant under several names, and the discrepancies are due to Pliny's use of his

[29] Pliny has confused οὖλον 'gums' in Dsc. with οὐλή 'wound'.

[30] Only here.

[31] Larg. 227 also has *pedicularis* not glossing *staphis*. The additions to Dioscorides found in Wellman's MSS RV (Vindob. med. gr. 1 + suppl. gr. 28; Laur. 73, 41 + 73, 16 + Vind. 93) give various synonyms: 'Ρωμαῖοι ἕρβα πηδουκουλάρια, οἱ δὲ μιουτεσσούδια. It is unclear what this last is supposed to be.

[32] Possibly Sextius Niger's Greek works; see J. Scarborough, 'Pharmacy in Pliny's Natural History: some observations of substances and sources', in R. French and F. Greenaway (edd.), *Science in the Early Roman Empire: Pliny the Elder, his Sources and Influence* (Totowa, NJ, 1986), 59—85.

[33] DK 7 A 1, 27, and add Neanthes fr. 18 (FHG); Jacoby *FGrH* T2b 124 frg. 7 and 18d. See Pliny on the death of Sulla, above.

[34] Also [Dsc.] *Eup.* 1.48 (in eyebrows and lashes), 1.101; Orib. *Syn.* 6.1, 8.27, *Eun.* 4.32. Cf. similar recipes at [Dsc.] *Eup.* 1.117

[35] So too ivy leaves (24.75). These are Pliny's only uses of leaves for headaches.

[36] http://www.cyclamen.org/cse96sit.htm.

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sources.[37] The section on *staphis agria* (23.17), which he shares with Dioscorides, comes from a Greek source. The chapter on *siler* (24.73), using what seems to be a native name, presumably comes from a Latin source. Both share the fact that the plant is good for getting rid of lice. Pliny elsewhere knows one semi-Latin name for *staphis agria* as *pituitaria* ('phlegm-plant', as it were),[38] and Scribonius and Columella know another, *pedicularia* (*-is*), but it is likely that Pliny simply failed to reconcile his different entries and their different references.[39] *Siler* seems to have been an uncommon (possibly country) word for a shrub. Despite necessary uncertainties, its fame as a cure for lice points most directly to staveacre (*Delphinium staphisagria* L.) as the likeliest identification.

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[37] For example, Woad (*Isatis tinctoria*) is called *isatis* in 20.59 (as a type of lettuce), 27.84, but *glastum* in 22.2. *Lolium* (*Lolium temulentum*) is given its Latin name at 18.153, 22.160 (quoting Verg. *G*. 1.154) but called *aera* (ἆϊρα) at 18.155–56, and 22,125, 24.100 (*aerina* of the meal). The houseleek (*Sempervivum tectorum*) is called *aizoum* and Pliny gives its Latin names of *sedum* and *digitillum* (18.159, 19.179, 25.160). However, throughout Book 26 only the Greek name is used (26.32, 45, 100, etc.).

[38] Semi-Latin in that while *-itarius* is Latin, *pitu-* is a Greek borrowing.

[39] As Scarborough not unsympathetically notes (62), 'Pliny's rampant and childlike curiosity led to a too rapid compilation of pharmaceutical data, shown by a lack of attention to specific detail, and an apparent lack in cross-checking references and the omission of revisions.'

DIVUM INCLEMENTIA IN VERGIL, *AENEID* 2.602

> non tibi Tyndaridis facies invisa Lacaenae
> culpatusve Paris, divum inclementia, divum
> has evertit opes sternitque a culmine Troiam. (*Aen*. 2.601–3)

The purpose of this short note is to contribute to the study of the methods employed by Vergil in activating allusions to ancient Greek tragedy.[1]

The traditional view, voiced by Austin, that Vergil may have had in mind Priam's words to Helen in *Il*. 3. 164–5 *οὔ τί μοι αἰτίη ἐσσί, θεοί νύ μοι αἴτιοί εἰσιν, / οἵ μοι ἐφώρμησαν πόλεμον πολύδακρυν Ἀχαιῶν*, is not satisfying. Besides, even Austin himself observes that Vergil wrought Priam's words 'into a context and into a picture that owes nothing to Homer'.[2]

[1] On Vergil's dramatic feeling and on the influence of Greek drama throughout the Aeneid see P. Hardie, 'Virgil and tragedy', in C. Martindale (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil* (Cambridge, 1997), 312–26 (for bibliographical material see esp. 325). For a more detailed analysis concerning the source of the expression *divum inclementia* see my paper (in Greek) presented at the 5th Panhellenic Symposium of Latin Studies, 5–7 November 1993 held in Athens, published in the Acts of the Symposium (Athens, 1996), 117–35.

[2] See R. G. Austin, P. *Vergilii Maronis Aeneidos Liber Secundus* (Oxford, 1964), 233–4 on 602. Cf. also G. Highet, *The Speeches in Vergil's Aeneid* (Princeton, 1972), 272–3, esp. 273 where he argues that *Aen*. 2 601–3 are a grim variation on Priam's words to Helen on the wall (*Il*. 3.164–5). V. Ussani (Jr), 'Eschilo e il libro II dell' *Eneide*', *Maia* 3 (1950), 249 asserts that *divum inclementia* corresponds to *θεῶν φθόνον* (Aesch. *Pers*. 362).

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