

TWO NOTES ON LUCAN*)

1, 498 f.

turbidus Auster

reppulit a Libycis immensum Syrtibus aequor

499 *immensum* Ω: *inversum* Bentley

Bentley asked why Lucan need say the sea was boundless here, and found a more suitable epithet in *inversum*, explaining '*inversum*, quia ab austro pulsum et ab imis sedibus erectum', with the parallel of Hor. epod. 10, 5 *niger rudentis Euris inverso mari / fractosque remos differat*. This conjecture, if never actually included in a modern text, still seems attractive to editors¹); and certainly there is little appeal in the general interpretation of *immensum*, that it is a reference to the great masses of water driven by the storm. So e.g. Getty²), comparing the storm in Aen. 1 (with its sandbanks), *praeruptus aquae mons* (1, 105), *ingens . . . pontus* (1, 114) etc., and

*) Prof. R. G. M. Nisbet and Dr. D. P. Fowler kindly read a draft of these notes and made several useful criticisms.

1) Housman *ad loc.* 'pro *immensum* multo significantius Bentleius *inversum*'; Shackleton Bailey *ad loc.* '*inversum* Bentley, fort. recte'.

2) CQ 30, 1936, 61.

citing the description of the Syrtes at Sall. Jug. 78, 3 *nam ubi mare magnum esse et saevire ventis coepit, limum harenamque et saxa ingentia fluctus trahunt*; similarly translations such as Ehlers³), 'ungeheure Wogen' and Luck⁴), 'das gewaltige Meer'. The problem with this is that it seems pointless to give the Syrtes as the source of these mountainous waves and stormy seas, if the Syrtes are to play no part in the shipwreck⁵); but this is an objection that applies equally to Bentley's conjecture and indicates that this is not the solution to be followed. In his edition of Book 1⁶), Getty also suggested '*Inmensum* aptly describes the sea round the Syrtes, where the land is far away, cf. 9, 341 *procul omnibus arvis* and 344 *litora nulla vident*.' This surely is the opposite of the true interpretation: rather *inmensum* ... *aequor* suggests the boundless open sea (so already Gagliardi, 'l'immensa distesa del mare')⁷) as contrasted with the shoals of the Syrtes⁸). The Auster, blowing water off the Syrtes, drives back the open sea, to replace it with the sandbanks that will wreck the ship. Clearly parallel is 9, 322 f. (which as here immediately precedes a dismasting), the Auster

*longe ... a Syrtibus undas
egit et inlato confregit litore pontum.*

6, 452 ff. *carmine Thessalidum dura in praecordia fluxit
non fatis adductus amor, flammisque severi
inlicitis arsere senes. nec noxia tantum
pocula proficiunt aut cum turgentia suco
frontis amaturae subducunt pignora fetae:
mens hausti nulla sanie polluta veneni
excantata perit.*

tantum in 454 must mean 'only' rather than 'so much' to make a reasonable sequence of 457 f. That, even without the use of potions, minds fall to incantation has no logical connection with the statement 'spells are more powerful even than potions' – it does not illustrate it and indeed makes a lesser claim than it; it has, on the other hand, a very natural connection with the statement 'not only potions are effective'. But with this meaning *nec ... tantum* most naturally suggests that *noxia ... pocula* have been the subject of the previous lines; there, however, the witches work by incantation, *carmine* (452). It is possible to take *nec ... tantum* as expressing negatively the idea of 452–454, 'they charm by incantations and not just by philtres'; but this seems awkward and unnatural and also makes the lines straggling and repetitive. One cannot (as Duff seems to) treat *carmine* as a general word for

3) W. Ehlers, Lucanus, Bellum Civile. Der Bürgerkrieg, Munich 1973.

4) G. Luck, Lukan, Der Bürgerkrieg, Berlin 1985.

5) Admittedly Silius Italicus, who seems to be imitating this passage, apparently uses the Syrtes merely as the source of the huge seas that the Auster brings against Hannibal (17, 246 f.), *Auster / nudavit Syrtim correpta nubilus unda*. Lucan's phrasing *reppulit a ... Syrtibus aequor* suggests that with him the interest is in the revealed shallows rather than the sea.

6) R. J. Getty, M. Annaei Lucani De Bello Civili Liber I, Cambridge 1940, 96.

7) D. Gagliardi, M. Annaei Lucani Belli Civilis Liber Primus, Naples 1989 ad loc.

8) For the contrast of Syrtes and open sea, cf. Manil. 4, 600 f. (*pontus*) *litora ... in Syrtes revocat sinuata vadasas / rursusque ad Nilum directis fluctibus exit*.

magic, since it so ill serves the contrast of 454–458, especially when the previous lines (443–451) have been talking of *carmina* in the sense of ‘incantations’. *carmine*, then, invites emendation to provide reference to love potions (a reference also suggested by *in praecordia fluxit ... amor*); *gramine* perhaps⁹).

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9) For this usage, see T.L.L. VI 2 p. 2168, 56 ff.; the corruption of *gramen* to *carmen* is an easy one and occurs at Ov. met. 7, 152; 14, 34; Stat. Theb. 4, 418. It might be objected that to find *herbae* here interrupts a series of lines whose subject is incantation (443–458); but such a division of the lines according to the means employed is mistaken and produces a similar interruption: 437–442 herbs; 443–458 incantation; 459–460 twisted thread; 461–462 unstated; 462–491 incantation. Rather the division is clearly one of the different areas in which the witches exercise their power (after the initial lines on the land itself, 437–442): 443–451 the gods; 452–460 love; 461–484 the universe, astronomical, geographical and meteorological; 485–491 animals.