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### THE DATING OF THE *ILIAS LATINA*

When I was writing the article in *Der Neue Pauly* on the *Ilias Latina* (as that poem has been called since Baehrens), the only conclusion which I could reach about its date was one of despair, since neither the attempt to date it by historical methods based on presumed allusions in 899-902, nor that employing a postulated identification of the author Italicus (his name revealed by the concluding acrostich), nor that depending on stylistic and metrical usage reaches any decisive result. I now wish to propose a new criterion, but first an old one.

As I remarked and others too have remarked, though without making much of it, a *terminus post quem* for the work is provided by some clear imitations of Seneca's tragedies. It is worth while to look a little more closely at the examples remarked by M. Scaffai in his commentary<sup>1</sup> on the *Ilias Latina*, and to do so under two lights. First, as a precaution we must establish that Italicus is imitating Seneca and not the other way round; secondly, we should investigate whether any pattern of imitation emerges.

It does emerge that in cases in which imitation, in either direction, is indubitable, such a relationship is essentially confined to two plays, the *Troades* (which at least has a thematic relationship with the *Ilias*) and the *Oedipus* (which has none). Here first the *Troades*:

*Ilias* 529 *hinc pugnât patriae columen Mavortius Hector*

*Troades* 124 *columen patriae* (also referring to Hector).

*Troades* 117-129 shows much else that recalls the *Ilias*, but nothing that is as clear as this; see in particular 1053 (with Scaffai's note) and 1057. From *TLL* I note also *CLE* 587.6 *magnum patriae columenque futurum* (a very incorrect epitaph from Dalmatia). There is nothing which suggests priority of either author.

*Ilias* 831 *mentitos vultus simulati pandit Achillis* (sc. *Apollo*)

*Troades* 447 *vera ex Achille spolia simulato tulit* (sc. *Hector*)

Here too one could make an argument for imitation in either direction; however, *vera* in Seneca looks artificial, whereas the line in the *Ilias* follows well on 824 *ut quem mentitur verus credatur Achilles*.

Now the *Oedipus*:

*Ilias* 31 *Fatidici his sacras compellat vocibus aures*

*Oedipus* 1042-3 *fatidice, te, te praesidem veri deum / compello*.

In the *Ilias* Chryses is speaking; *fatidici his* is Higt's inevitable emendation

<sup>1</sup> Baebii Italicus, *Ilias Latina*, a cura di M. Scaffai, Bologna 1982 (1997<sup>2</sup>).

for the manuscript reading *fatidicis*. In the *Oedipus* Oedipus is speaking, and his phrase is based on Ovid *Fasti* 2.261-2 *audes / fatidicum verbis fallere velle deum?*, whereas that of Italicus recalls Verg. *Aen.* 4.304 *tandem his Aenean compellat vocibus ultro* (cf. 6.499 *notis compellat vocibus ultro*). The significant point is that in Seneca *fatidice* is a perfectly normal vocative adjective, whereas Italicus has developed it into a full-blown substantive, to which the plural used by Cicero *de leg.* 2.20 in the sense of *harioli* provides no parallel. In short he is doing what imitators do, blending two sources and forcing one of them.

*Ilias* 46-8                      *vulgus ruit undique Graium*  
    *vixque rogis superest tellus, vix ignibus aer,*  
    *derat ager tumulis*

*Oedipus* 53 *omnis aetas pariter et sexus ruit*  
    68 *dest terra tumulis, iam rogos silvae negant.*

Here there is an obvious community of subject-matter; cf. also Ovid *Met.* 7.613 *nec locus in tumulos, nec sufficit arbor in ignes* (the plague sent by Juno on Aegina). Note that Italicus has been forced by his metre to adjust the tense of Seneca's *dest* to an imperfect discordant with the rest of his context, whereas if, like Seneca, he had had the passage of Ovid in mind, he could have written *dest ager in tumulos*.

*Ilias* 1067 *Pieridum comitata cohors* (sc. *me vatem*)

*Oedipus* 432 *te Bassaridum comitata cohors* (sc. *Dionyse*)

Note how under constraint Italicus has unnaturally omitted the object present in Seneca.

One can see other similarities too between Italicus and Seneca, but nothing, I think, close enough to provide the basis of an argument. The above harvest is not abundant, but it looks as if Seneca imitated Italicus in *Troades*, whereas his *Oedipus* was imitated by Italicus; this would imply that they were contemporaries, and that the order of the compositions was *Oedipus, Ilias, Troades*.

Now for my new criterion. The anonymous *Laus Pisonis* 173-7 reads as follows:

*sic movisse fides saevus narratur Achilles*  
*quamvis mille rates Priameius ureret heros*  
*et gravis obstreperet modulatis bucina nervis:*  
*illo dulce melos Nereius extudit heros*  
*pollice, terribilis quo Pelias ibat in hostem.*

Twice in these lines we find a formulaic phrase consisting of *heros* preceded by a patronymic adjective ending in *-ius*; there is a variation of such

formulae in which the adjective is not patronymic but ethnic, as e.g. *Troius heros* Verg. *Aen.* 6.451, but I am not here concerned with this variation. Formulae of this type are not found in Homer nor anywhere else, unless I have overlooked something, in Greek epic. They seem to have been introduced by Vergil, who has *Laomedontius heros* (= Aeneas) in *Aen.* 8.18, and to have been popularised by Ovid. The writer of the *Ilias Latina*, as well as the four instances on which I shall concentrate, has *Pelopeius heros* (131, 739; Agamemnon), *Thetideius heros* (690; Achilles), *Cythereius heros* (895; Aeneas). The other four instances to which I alluded are identical with those found in the *Laus Pisonis*, namely *Priameius heros* in 960 (where it means Paris) and 271 (Hector, as in the *Laus Pisonis*), *Nereius heros* (938, 975; Achilles).

The formulaic nature of such combinations is underlined by the fact that, as in all the instances quoted by me, *heros* almost invariably ends the line, and is usually, though not in the *Laus Pisonis*, immediately preceded by the adjective. Two other features also spring to the eye. First, the adjective often ends not just in *-ius* but in *-eius*. Secondly, it often refers not just to the father but in a *recherché* manner to the mother or grandfather (we may classify Vergil's *Laomedontius heros* here, though Laomedon was not a direct ancestor of Aeneas). This is the case in a number of Ovidian instances; so *Autonoeius heros* (*Met.* 3.198; Actaeon), *Cythereius heros* (*ibid.* 13.625; Aeneas, as in *Il. Lat.*), *Danaeius heros* (*Am.* 3.6.13; Perseus), *Philyreius heros* (*Met.* 2.676, *Fasti* 5.391; Chiron), all, one observes, with *-eius*. All these statements apply to all the instances in *Il. Lat.* except for *Priameius heros*; in 176 the author of *Laus Pis.* could more straightforwardly have written *Peleius heros* (as in fact Statius did, *Ach.* 1.551), but found advantage in conforming to the pattern with *Nereius heros* because of *Pelias* in the next line, referring of course to Mount Pelion and not to Peleus.

So the author of the *Laus Pisonis* twice within the space of five lines uses in a simile incidentally referring to the Trojan war, in a way not conforming fully to the prevailing manner since his adjective does not immediately precede *heros*, phrases also found in a poem whose central subject is the Trojan war and which shows a fondness for using such phrases according to an established pattern. Which is more likely to be the imitator? One must surely answer 'the writer of the *Laus Pisonis*'. He therefore postdates the *Ilias Latina*, and since he must have written before the condemnation of Piso in 65 A.D. as penalty for his failed conspiracy, that gives a *terminus ante quem* for the *Ilias Latina*. Many scholars have thought that they could see traits of Neronian times in the *Ilias*; these have not been strong enough to provide concrete evidence for dating, but if I am right we can now re-

evaluate them, and can definitely reject Lachmann's contention<sup>2</sup> that the historical allusion in 899-902 must pre-date the death of Tiberius. The case would be clinched if we could securely identify the work as a juvenile composition of the known Baebius Italicus, but that depends on finding Cuspinianus' authority for the former name (see my *Neue Pauly* article).

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<sup>2</sup> K. Lachmann, *Über den lat. Homerus des ohne Grund so genannten Pindarus Thebanus*, in *Kleine Schriften*, II, Berlin 1876, 161 f.