

Secreta ... dare carmina: Statius' Silvae, a 'Greek' encomium?

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1) Stat. *silv.* 1.3.1-6:

Cernere facundi Tibur glaciale Vopisci
si quis [...] potuit [...]
illum nec calido latravit Sirius astro 5
nec gravis aspexit **Nemeae frondentis** alumnus.

“If anyone ever saw the cool Tiburtine villa of eloquent Vopiscus [...], Sirius did not bark at him with its warm star, nor did the Lion, who dwelt in **leafy Nemea**, set his oppressive eyes on him”.

Nemeae frondentis: cf. Pind. *Isthm.* 6.61 τὰς [sc. νίκας] δ' ἀπ' εὐφύλλου Νεμέας “(your family members reaped many victories) from leafy Nemea”; *Ol.* 13.44 γόρτοις ἐν λέοντος “in the Lion’s grassy plains”

2) Stat. *Theb.* 1.485-487:

Illi in speciem quem per Teumesia tempe 485
Amphitryoniades fractum iuvenalibus annis
ante Cleonaei vestitus proelia monstri.

“It resembled that lion whom the son of Amphitryon strangled in his youth, in the valley of Mount Teumessos, when he had not yet worn the skin won in the fight against the Nemean monster”.

- cf. Pind. *Isthm.* 6.47-48 τόδε δέρμα [...] περιπλανᾶται / θηρός, ὃν πάμπροτον ἀέθλων κτεῖνα ποτ' ἐν Νεμέα
“this skin [...], embracing me, of the frightening beast which I slew one day in Nemea, the first of my labors”

3) Stat. *silv.* 1.3.8: *Pisaeum ... domus non aestuat annum* (“the house does not suffer from such intense heat as that which was once felt in Pisa”)

- cf. Pind. *Ol.* 3.13-34 [Hercules planted trees to shield Olympia from the heat]; *Ol.* 8.9 Πίσας εὐδενδρον ἐπ' Ἀλφεῶ ἄλσος “the shady grove of Pisa, on the banks of the Alpheus”

4) Pind. *Ol.* 12.13-19:

υἱὲ Φιλάνορος, ἦτοι καὶ τεὰ κεν,
ἐνδομάχας ἅτ' ἀλέκτωρ, συγγόνῳ παρ' ἐστία
ἀκλεῆς τιμὰ κατεφυλλορόησε ποδῶν, 15
εἰ μὴ στάσις ἀντιάνειρα Κνωσίας ἄμερσε πάτρας.
νῦν δ' Ὀλυμπία στεφανωσάμενος
καὶ δις ἐκ Πυθῶνος Ἴσθμοῖ τ', Ἐργότελες,
θερμὰ Νυμφῶν λουτρὰ βαστάζεις, ὀμιλέων παρ' οἰκείαις ἀρούραις. [cf. Stat. *silv.* 1.5]

“Son of Philanor, your pride would have ingloriously lost all its leaves, fallen one by one to your feet, like a fighting rooster that is never seen outside the house, if you had remained in your home by the ancestral hearth, if the civil war, which pits man against man, had not damaged your homeland, Knossos. But now you, Ergoteles, have been crowned victor at Olympia, and twice at Delphi and on the Isthmus, and can enjoy heartening baths in the warm springs of the Nymphs, frequenting them as they flow near your property”.

5) Ov. *trist.* 4.3.75-78

Hectora quis nosset, si felix Troia fuisset? 75

Publica virtutis per mala facta via est.

Ars tua, Tiphys, iacet, si non sit in aequore fluctus;

si valeant homines, ars tua, Phoebus, iacet.

“Who would have known Hector’s name, if Troy had succeeded? Only through hardship a path, leading everywhere, is opened to Virtue. Your ability rest unemployed, Tiphys, if there are no storms to swell the waves; if all men were always in good health, your healing powers, Phoebus, would rest unused”.

- See also vv. 79-80 *quae latet inque bonis cessat non cognita rebus, / apparet virtus arguiturque malis* (“virtue, which remains hidden and, unknown, does not accomplish any feats in prosperity, is revealed and tested by misfortunes.”)

6) Stat. *silv.* 1.5.63-65

Macte, oro, nitenti

ingenio curaque puer! Tecum ista senescant

et tua iam melius discat fortuna renasci.

65 [cf. *silv.* 3.3.154 *infra*]

“Congratulations to you, my boy, for your brilliant mind and commitment! This is my prayer: may this wonderful building age with you and may the fortune of your house finally learn how to be reborn, in even better conditions.”

7) Pind. *Isthm.* 1.34-40

γαρύσομαι τοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς ἐν τιμαῖσιν ἀγακλέα τὰν Ἀσωποδώρου πατρὸς αἴσαν

Ἐρχομενοῖό τε πατρώαν ἄρουραν,

35

ἃ νιν ἐρειδόμενον ναυαγίαις

[cf. Ov. *trist.* 1.5.36; 4.5.5-6]

ἐξ ἀμετρήτας ἄλως ἐν κρυοέσσῃ

δέξατο συντυχία·

νῦν δ' αὖτις ἀρχαίας ἐπέβασε πότμος

συγγενῆς εὐαμερίας.

40

“I shall also sing, as part of the celebration of this man, the glorious destiny of his father, Asopodoros, and his ancestral homeland, Orchomenos, which welcomed him [sc. Herodotos, the *laudandus*] in his fearful misfortune, when he was cast ashore from the endless sea by a shipwreck [sc. exile]. **But now the fate of his house has brought him back to the prosperity of former good days.**”

- schol. vet. *ad v.* 36^a: φυγαδευθεὶς γὰρ ὁ Ἀσωπόδωρος Θήβηθεν ἐν Ὀρχομενῷ ἐπολιτογραφήθη (“when Asopodoros was exiled from Thebes, he became a citizen of Orchomenos”)

- schol. vet. *ad v.* 36^b: ἀμφίβολον δέ, φησὶν, ἐστὶν, ὁ Δίδυμος, πότερον τὸν Ἡρόδοτον ἢ τὸν Ἀσωπόδωρον λέγει· δύναται γὰρ ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρων ἀκούεσθαι (“Didymos states that the text is ambiguous: it is uncertain whether the poet refers to Herodotos or Asopodoros, for the verse could be understood in both senses”)

8) Stat. *silv.* 3.3.83-84

Tu totiens mutata ducum iuga rite tulisti
integer **inque omni felix tua cumba profundo.**

“You were so many times under the yoke of different emperors, yet you managed to bear it without any harm, and **your ship reached safely the port on every sea it had sailed.**”

9) Stat. *silv.* 3.3.154-171:

Quas tibi devoti iuvenes pro patre renato ¹ ,	155	¹ [cf. Ov. <i>Pont.</i> 3.6.16-17; Pind. <i>Pyth.</i> 4.271-272]
summe ducum, grates ² , aut quae pia vota rependant?		² [cf. Ov. <i>trist.</i> 5.1.41-46]
Tu, seu tarda situ rebusque exhausta senectus		³ [cf. Ov. <i>trist.</i> 2.207; 3.1.52; 3.5.52]
erravit ³ , seu blanda diu Fortuna ⁴ regressum		⁴ [cf. Pind. <i>Ol.</i> 12.5-12; <i>Pyth.</i> 4.291-293]
maluit, attonitum ⁵ et venturi fulminis ictus		⁵ [cf. Ov. <i>trist.</i> 1.1.81; 1.5.3; 3.8.14]
horrentem tonitru tantum lenique procella		
contentus monuisse ⁶ senem; cumque horrida supra	160	⁶ [cf. <i>trist.</i> 2.33-36; <i>Pont.</i> 1.2.125-126; 2.2.117-118]
aequora curarum socius procul Itala rura		
linqueret, hic molles Campani litoris oras		
et Diomedea concedere iussus in arces ⁷ ,		⁷ [cf. Ov. <i>Pont.</i> 1.3.61-82]
atque hospes, non exsul, erat ⁸ . Nec longa moratus		⁸ [cf. Ov. <i>trist.</i> 3.12.53-54]
Romuleum reseras iterum, Germanice, limen	165	
maerentemque foves inclinatosque penates		
erigis ⁹ . Haud mirum, ductor placidissime, quando		⁹ [cf. Ov. <i>trist.</i> 1.6.5; <i>Pont.</i> 2.3.60; Pind. <i>Pyth.</i> 4.273-275]
haec est quae victis parentia foedera Chattis		
quaeque suum Dacis donat clementia montem,		
quae modo Marcomanos post horrida bella vagosque	170	
Sauromatas Latio non est dignata triumpho ¹⁰ .		¹⁰ [cf. Ov. <i>trist.</i> 2.41-50; 5.2.36; Pind. <i>Pyth.</i> 4.291]

“How grateful should his sons, your faithful servants, be to your Majesty **for having brought their father back to life**? What prayers should they say on your behalf, to repay their debt? He [sc. Claudius] **might have made a mistake unintentionally**, misled by extreme old age and exhausted by his charges. It may also be that Fortune, after supporting him for so long, suddenly turned her back on him, on a whim. Be that as it may, **you limited yourself to warning** that old man only with thunder and a mild storm, while he already felt **as if he had been struck by a thunderbolt** and was afraid of the incoming lightning. His colleague in the tiring imperial office had to leave the soil of Italy, exiled far away, across dreadful oceans, whereas Claudius was ordered to retire to the pleasurable shores of Campania and to the islands fortified by Diomedes, where **he was a guest, not an exile**. After a short delay, Germanicus, you reopen the doors of the imperial palace and let him in: you support him in his misery and **restore his house, which had begun to collapse**. No wonder, most merciful of rulers, for this is the clemency which agrees to peace terms that spare the Chatti, which allows the Dacians to dwell in their mountains, and, recently, did not deign to celebrate a Roman triumph over the Marcomanni and the Sarmatian nomads, after terrible wars.”

10) Pindar. *Isthm.* 4.23-24:

ἐν ὕπνῳ γὰρ πέσειεν [sc. φάμα]· ἀλλ’ ἀνεγειρομένα χρῶτα λάμπει,
Ἄωσφόρος θαητὸς ὡς ἄστροις ἐν ἄλλοις

“your glory had fallen into a deep coma; but now she has awakened and, rising from bed, shines with healthy splendor, just as the Morning Star stands out among the other stars”.

- Cf. *silv.* 1.4.57 *insidiosa quies* “a treacherous sleep” (Gallicus’ coma-like disease)
- Cf. *silv.* 1.4.109-110 *donec letiferas vario medicamine pestes / et suspecta mali ruperunt nubila somni* (“[Apollo and Asclepius tended to Gallicus] until they drove away, with various remedies, the lethal scourges and dispelled the dangerous fog of a harmful sleep”)
- Cf. *silv.* 1.4.8: Gallicus has come back to life, stronger (*melior*) and shinier (as the comparison to a snake that has just shed his old skin suggests)
- Cf. *silv.* 1.4.37-38: *vaga cingitur astris / luna* (Gallicus excels among the other poets as “the errant moon stands out among his cortege of stars”)

- See also Pind. *Pyth.* 3: the poet had not access to Chiron and Asclepius, to heal Hieron, whilst Gallicus was literally healed by Apollo and Asclepius with the drugs processed *Chironis in antro* (v. 98)

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