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The Battle of Lake Trasimene

A. Tilley

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to two shorts: but Aristoxenus and 'Anonymus' have shown us that it could also contain three, four or five shorts; and the latter writer gives the following metrical signs $\cup = \text{♪}$ $\text{—} = \text{♪}$ $\text{L} = \text{♪}$ $\text{U} = \text{♪}$ $\text{W} = \text{♪}$ $\text{^} = \text{♪}$. The lamentable result of endeavouring to produce musical rhythm out of Greek poetry in accordance with the idea that a long is only equal to two shorts is seen in Burney's 'Dissertation on the Music of the Ancients.'

The Roman musicians probably imitated the music of the declining period of Greek art; and about the beginning of the Christian era, the mixture of nations at Rome having caused the Latin language to lose whatever feeling for quantity it had possessed, poetry began to be written in which accent and not quantity formed the basis of the rhythm. A landmark in the ascendancy of accent over quantity can be fixed in the third century after Christ, when Commodianus, a convert to Christianity, wrote poetry of this kind, and distinctly asserted that he did so in order to please the vulgar, who had lost all the old feeling for quantity or time-measurement. One result of the disappearance of strict measure of time from poetry and music was the development of a form of music which followed the construction of prose words, taking its rhythm from the rhetorical construction of the text: and thus there arose on the ruins of the ancient measured music a new and magnificent art, now known as 'Plainsong' or 'Gregorian Music,' the rhythmical construction of which is based on the natural laws of phrasing explained by Aristoxenus, while the individual notes cannot be arranged in metrical feet and modern bars. Later on, towards the tenth century, certain poetical compositions called Sequences were sung in the Church. These consisted of verses containing a given number of accents, and connected by rhymes; but since strict time-measurement or metre did not enter into their construction, they were called Proses, and not

dignified with the name of poetry. To the invention of counterpoint, or music in parts, is due the reawakening of the feeling for metrical music;¹ for it was impossible to sing vocal parts to 'prose' music. But it took many centuries, and the gradual destruction of the fine prose rhythm of Plainsong to develop anew the old metrical rhythmical forms. The early modern composers in their gropings after a satisfactory mould in which to cast their instrumental compositions were gradually arriving at that natural balance and proportion of phrases and periods, anciently called rhythm, now known as 'form'; which, though not absolutely essential for vocal music, where the words, whether in prose or poetry, give the meaning, are imperatively required in instrumental music, if it is to arrive at anything higher than the dance forms. These efforts culminated in the magnificent structure raised by the genius of John Sebastian Bach, the founder of Modern Music: and when he had shown the way, the logical development of form was carried on by his great successors.

Modern composers have, by following the instincts of their genius, unconsciously brought about a renaissance of the natural rhythms and musical forms known to the ancient Greeks, simply enlarging and developing them by the aid of modern resources, while adhering to certain definite principles which on examination are found to agree with those enunciated 2000 years ago by Aristoxenus of Tarentum.

Many of the most powerful effects of music, both in ancient and modern times, have been produced by the use of vigorous forms of rhythm: and through Morelli's fortunate discovery at Venice the musical theorist is able to show why certain rhythms produce certain aesthetic effects, and to throw an important light on the construction of many modern masterpieces.

C. F. ABDY WILLIAMS.

¹ I am leaving out of consideration the simple forms of rhythm used in the dance.

THE BATTLE OF LAKE TRASIMENE.

THE present state of the question as to the scene of this battle may be summarized as follows. It is agreed that Livy represents the battle as being fought on the north shore of the lake between Borghetto and

Passignano. It is almost equally agreed that if we accept Polybius's account we must transfer the scene to the east of the lake. Nissen indeed is, I believe, alone in trying to reconcile Polybius with Livy.

Further, the general opinion is that, while Livy's description of the ground is clear and intelligible, that of Polybius, though clear enough on paper, is not supported by the actual facts. Thus Höfler, who knows the ground, says that the αὐλὼν ἐπίπεδος of Polybius does not exist; and similarly Arnold, though he eventually follows Polybius, thinks that there is nothing between Torricella and Magione on the east of the lake 'to deserve the name of a valley.' For a more complete summary of the discussion I must refer to Mr. W. T. Arnold's edition of Arnold's *Second Punic War* (1886), pp. 384 ff. Since its publication a new turn has been given to the controversy by Hesselbarth in his admirable *Historisch-kritische Untersuchungen zur dritten Decade des Livius* (Halle, 1889), pp. 694 ff. It is sufficient to say here that he puts the battle to the east of Magione, and believes this to be in accordance with Polybius.

Now my experience of Livy and Polybius has taught me that, when they differ, Polybius is almost invariably right. I determined therefore to judge, so far as I was able, with my own eyes, as to whether Polybius could be supported in this instance. Accordingly the other day I drove from Perugia to Magione, and from there set out to investigate the ground. I may say at once that, so far as I could see, there is nothing between Perugia and Magione in any way resembling an αὐλὼν ἐπίπεδος. Hesselbarth's arrangement of the battle, though it has perhaps an air of probability on his plan (in some respects incorrect), appears quite impossible when you have once seen the actual ground. The area of his battle-field is far too extensive and not sufficiently shut in by hills. It was not till I had walked from Magione to the high ground overlooking the lake and begun to retrace my steps that the truth of Polybius's account began to impress itself upon me. It will be remembered that a little to the west of Passignano there begins a narrow defile between the mountains and the lake, about five miles in length, through which the railway and road run. At the village of Torricella the road leaves the lake, having on its right the hill of Monte del Lago, crowned by a curious old walled village with a tower gateway. For about a quarter of a mile it ascends gradually, and then you suddenly find yourself looking down on a more or less ellipse-shaped basin with a flat bottom, and almost completely surrounded by steep hills; the only exit—which from this point appears much narrower than it

really is—being under Magione, where the road from Chiusi to Perugia now runs. This basin—the longer axis of which measures about two and a half miles and the shorter about one and a half—Polybius correctly describes as an αὐλὼν ἐπίπεδος, having on its sides βουνούς ὑψηλοὺς καὶ συνεχεῖς, and at one end λίμνην τελείως στενὴν ἀπολείπουσαν παράδοον ὡς εἰς τὸν αὐλῶνα παρὰ τὴν παρώρειαν (i.e. the defile from Passignano to Torricella). The only difficulty in the description is with regard to the hill at the opposite end, the κατὰ τὴν ἀντικρὺ λόφον ἐπικείμενον ἐρυμνὸν καὶ δύσβατον, where Hannibal posted himself with his Spanish and Libyan troops. For in reality the basin runs nearly due south, and at its southern end is a hill which at first sight appears to answer to Polybius's description. It seems however far more likely that Hannibal stationed his heavy-armed troops so as to block the exit by Magione; and supposing that the Roman army, as is probably the case, was marching in the direction of Perugia, Polybius may with no great inaccuracy from his point of view have spoken of the hill on which Magione stands as ὁ ἀντικρὺ and as ὁ κατὰ πρόσωπον τῆς πορείας λόφος. It should be said that the modern road from Torricella to Magione runs above the basin skirting the sides of the hills; but probably the ancient road ran straight across the bottom of the basin.

Another difficulty suggests itself with regard to the position of Hannibal's cavalry, which with the Gauls was posted under the cover of the hills on the left, so that their line extended as far as the defile leading to the αὐλῶν. It is said that the ground near Torricella is too steep for the operations of cavalry. That is true, but it is not too steep to admit of cavalry being placed there with the object of charging down on troops taken by surprise. On the whole then the nature of the ground corresponds with Polybius's narrative sufficiently to warrant us in following him in preference to Livy. The point to bear in mind is that the scene of the main fighting was not a narrow defile but a fairly broad hollow or combe, which is separated from the lake and the defile by a neck of land about a quarter of a mile in breadth. Polybius's account is also supported by evidence of another kind. Professor Middleton tells me that frequently after sleeping at Passignano for the purposes of sport he has turned up skulls to the east of that place, that is to say, in the defile leading to Torricella. This is in exact accordance with Polybius's narrative. But

had the battle been fought where Livy puts it there could have been little or no fighting in this defile. Further inquiries as to the district within which skulls have been found might lead to positive conviction as to the site of the battle.

It is generally supposed that Livy's account is exceedingly clear; indeed quite recently I saw it referred to as one of the few exceptions to the vagueness with which ancient historians describe battles. But the account, though as usual with Livy's

work it presents a smooth surface, does not bear close inspection. The discrepancies in it have been well pointed out by Voigt (*Philologische Wochenschrift*, p. 1883, iii. 1580 ff.). I will only call attention here to the following phrases—*ab tergo ac super caput †haud dispectae† insidiae; in pontem lateraque pugnari coeptum est; ab lateribus montes ac lacus, a ponte et ab tergo hostium acies clauderat*—and ask how they can be reconciled with one another.

A. TILLEY.

SOME PASSAGES IN THE *THEBAID* OF STATIUS.

I. 224.

nunc geminas punire domos, quis sanguinis auctor
ipse ego, descendo. Perseos alter in Argos
scinditur, Aonias fluit hic ab origine Thebas.

227 mens cunctis † imposita manet: quis funera Cadmi
nesciat et totiens excitam a sedibus imis
Eumenidum bellasse aciem, etc....
.....uix lucis spatio, uix noctis abactae
enumerare queam mores gentemque profanam.

The word always selected for emendation in l. 227 is *imposita* (*infesta*, *inmota*, *infesta* and many other suggestions have been made). I believe that *imposita* is sound and *cunctis* corrupt. Read:

mens *cunis* imposita manet.

'The temper implanted in their cradle is unchanged'; they are still a wicked generation. *Cunis imposita*, meaning *illis imposita in cunis*, requires no illustration.

I. 517.

uario strepit icta tumultu
regia: pars ostro † tenues auroque sonantes
emunire toros alteque inferre tapetas.

Müller *ostro tinctos* (badly; *ostro stratos* would be better). Read:

pars ostro *ardentes* auroque sonantes,

the participles balancing each other. *ardentes* is just the word required to balance *sonantes*;

cp. Valerius Flaccus iii. 340, *ardentes murice uestes* imitated from Virgil's *ardebat murice laena*.

II. 637.

exit et in fratrem cognataque pectora telo
conserit; ille oculos et adhuc in luce
natantes
sistit et aspecta germani morte resolvit.

So the Puteaneus. The other MSS. have *etiamnum* for *et adhuc*. It seems to be generally thought that both traditions are corrupt; Kohlmann asterizes the passage. With either reading the sense is of course the same and seems to me excellent. *in luce natantes* is opposed to *in tenebris mersos*. It is impossible, it may be observed, to retain in the figure the mode of expression which is usually employed in speaking of literal swimming. On the analogy of the opposition between *in aqua* (not *in aere*) *natare* and *in aqua mergi*, we might expect *in tenebris natare*; but as a limit between light and darkness is not familiar like limits between air and water, such an expression would suggest a totally different meaning. I dwell on this because I think that the suspicion thrown on the passage is due to a misapprehension of the metaphor, which must not be confounded with our expression 'his eyes swam.' Everything expressed in Markland's *extrema* or Bährens' *casura in*, is suggested fully by *et adhuc* or *etiamnum*.

As between these two readings, the presumption is of course strongly in favour of the Puteaneus, whose superiority to its fellows is abundantly proved on every page. I should also prefer *et adhuc* in point of sound. As *etiamnum* was a favourite word of Statius (see e.g. iii. 227, vii. 515, xii. 21,