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De Nihilo

A. E. Housman

The Classical Review / Volume 34 / Issue 7-8 / November 2020, pp 161 - 164

DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00014074, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00014074

How to cite this article:

A. E. Housman (1920). De Nihilo. The Classical Review, 34, pp 161-164 doi:10.1017/S0009840X00014074

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was enlisted may have been annexed by Rutilius Gallicus during his war against the Bructeri (now datable to 78) is untenable. On the other hand, the Usipi are mentioned in *Hist.* 4. 37 as allies of the Mattiaci (round Wiesbaden) and the Chatti (in Hessen) in attacking Mainz in A.D. 69; and part of their territory lay within Domitian's *limes*. Domitian's attack was launched suddenly (*Front.* I. 1, 8, *Suet.* 6) and swiftly early in A.D. 83, and the Usipi were doubtless at once enlisted forcibly and deported in accordance with the usual Roman method of accelerating the pacification of troublesome tribes. There was ample time for them to be dispatched to Britain and to escape before the winter. If the conquest of the Usipi had no connexion with this war, it would indeed be strange that a *cohors Usiporum* should appear at this particular moment and never before nor after, and that Martial in a poem published in 90 should single out the Usipi from among anti-Roman tribes, as he does when he makes Faustinus say (VI. 60, 3):

*sic leve flavorum valeat genus Usiporum
quisquis et Ausonium non amat imperium.*

(2) In Agricola's sixth campaign (A.D. 82, if we start from 77) the Ninth legion is mentioned as being *maxime invalida*. Urlichs' suggestion that its special weakness was due to its having sent a draft to Germany for the war of 83 (as it is shown by *CIL.* xiv. 3612 to have done) has been generally accepted even by those who maintain the 77 date, except apparently Gsell, whose explanation that the legion may have had to leave a large part of its strength at York to keep an eye on the Brigantes will convince nobody. Gaheis explains

that its weakness was probably due chiefly to the losses which the campaign generally had cost (a cryptic remark which is not illuminated by an irrelevant reference to ch. 22), but he admits that the withdrawal of a detachment 'for the threatening Chatten war may have contributed to the further weakening of the legion.'¹ Urlichs' suggestion has been confirmed and amplified by an inscription found at Baalbek in 1903, which shows that all four British legions sent detachments, but that the detachment sent by the Ninth was specially large (Dessau 9200; see Ritterling, *Oesterr. Jahresh.* vii. Beiblatt, 23 ff.). It is plain that Domitian made comprehensive preparations for his Chatten war: he brought up also the twenty-first legion from Lower Germany to reinforce the four legions of Upper Germany and employed a large number of auxiliary regiments. But the fact that on September 19, A.D. 82, he disbanded a considerable number of auxiliaries serving in Upper Germany is a fairly sure indication that the war was not then in contemplation (Dessau 1995; cp. Weynand, *l.c.* 2556); and it appears wholly impossible that detachments from the four British legions should have been drafted off for this war either before or during the campaigning season of A.D. 82.

The evidence as a whole, therefore, appears to be overwhelmingly in favour of the older view that Agricola's governorship of Britain began in July, A.D. 78.

J. G. C. ANDERSON.

¹ His further statement about the simultaneous withdrawal of the Legio II. Adiutrix is erroneous.

DE NIHILO.

IN C.R. XXXIV pp. 56-9 I investigated the prosody of *nihil* in Ovid and determined to some extent his principle of choice between *nihil* and *nil*. I showed that in the latter half of the first foot of the verse this word, *n(ih)il*,

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is always¹ followed by a vowel; I said that Ovid's only imaginable motive for maintaining this restriction was to pro-

¹ Except in one verse where the sense is faulty, and to correct the sense removes the consonant.

cure a dactyl; and I concluded that in this place he always wrote *nihil*, though in 3 out of 21 examples the MSS give *nil*. I further showed that in the latter half of the second and third and fourth foot of the hexameter the word is sometimes followed by a consonant, so that in these three feet the case stands otherwise than in the first.

This was the best I could do without the guidance of Dr Postgate, which he has now vouchsafed me in *Hermathena* XLII pp. 54 sq. After reminding a forgetful world that in 1892 he quoted against Lachmann the same two instances of *nihil* which Lucian Mueller had quoted in 1861, he attempts to give the Irish an account of my investigations, but does not succeed. My observation about the invariably following vowel he omits altogether, not having grasped its significance; and he describes me as holding the opinion that to procure a dactyl instead of a spondee for the first foot was Ovid's motive for reading *nihil* with Heinsius in *met.* XIII 266, *fast.* I 445, and *Ib.* 284. This of course is not what he was trying to say, but the pen is mightier than the wrist. The statement to which in his following remarks he takes exception appears to be the statement which I really made but which he has not communicated to his readers—that Ovid's only imaginable motive for making a vowel follow the first foot in all the 21 verses which I cited was to procure for that foot a dactyl instead of a spondee. Dr Postgate observes that I adduced not only 18 instances where *nihil* precedes a vowel in the latter half of the first foot, but also 30 where it does so in the latter half of the second or third or fourth, and he proceeds

By needlessly restricting his imagination Mr Housman has failed to perceive the connexion between his two series of instances, and to divine the significance of the poet's behaviour, who was not pursuing a dactyl, but avoiding *nil*.

My imagination, I must confess, is restricted by my knowledge of facts. Ovid did not avoid *nil*: he admitted it everywhere in the first four feet except, as I have established, in the latter half of the first: in the latter half of the third foot he admitted it at least 5 times,

amor. II 1 19, *met.* VIII 440, IX 626, *fast.* III 623, *ex Pont.* III 6 9. Dr Postgate goes on to explain the connexion, which I have failed to perceive and he has succeeded in perceiving, between the 18 instances of *nihil* in the first foot and the 30 instances elsewhere. Instead of attending to the difference between Ovid's employment of *n(ih)il* in the first foot and his employment of it in the second and third and fourth—the circumstance that only in the first foot does he always contrive to let a vowel follow—I ought to have ignored it, and treated all four feet alike. I ought to have imagined, although the propensity of scribes to write *nihil* for *nil* is notorious,¹ that the spelling of the MSS is a guide in the 48 places where they give *nihil* as the latter half of the first or second or third or fourth foot; and for expelling *nil* from *met.* XIII 266 and *fast.* I 445 and *Ib.* 284 I ought to have relied not, as I did, on reasoning, but on the imposing size of this rickety regiment, as if 48 precarious examples were less precarious than one. But suppose that they were so, what then? why should the three examples of *nil* be altered? Because Dr Postgate tacitly assumes the very thing which he is trying to prove, that Ovid did not use both *nil* and *nihil* under the circumstances in question, as modern editors hold that he did.

These methods enable him to formulate the following 'Ovidian rule' in italics: '*nil may be used in the "rise" of a foot before both vowels and consonants, but in the "fall" before consonants only.*' Has Dr Postgate any news from the sick bed of our beloved sovereign Queen Anne? This opinion, as I mentioned in my paper, was apparently held by Servius in the 4th century and certainly by Heinsius in the 17th; it was held by Ovid's editors in general down to the time of Merkel, and I was taught it at school. It may be true, but it may be

¹ 'The preponderance of *nihil* in our MSS (of Phaedrus) does not really need explanation when we consider that it has ousted *nil* almost entirely from the MSS of Lucretius' says Dr Postgate on p. 58, when he has left Ovid a safe distance behind him. In Phaedrus he twelve times alters *nihil* to *nil*, in Lucretius everyone alters it scores of times.

false: it is a mere opinion, like the contrary opinion of Lucian Mueller *de r. m.* p. 296 ed. 2, 'usque ad Augusti finem potiores fuisse existimo formas breuiores (*nil, nilum* etc.) easque restituendas ubiuis, quando metro id permittitur'; and Dr Postgate supports it by no stronger argument than announcing that he holds it. What I did was to remove from the domain of opinion the question between *nil* and *nihil* in the fall of the first foot. It is now ascertained that in this place Ovid used only *nihil*, which gave him what he liked in the first foot, a dactyl. Beyond the first foot certainty does not extend. That in the third foot, where dactyls are much less common than spondees and where *nil* in the fall is 5 times followed by a consonant, Ovid always used *nihil* instead if the following letter was a vowel, is neither ascertained nor intrinsically probable; though the preponderance (about 4 to 1) of following vowels over following consonants lends countenance to the opinion.¹

¹ In a footnote on p. 54 Dr Postgate takes occasion to say that in the *Classical Quarterly* for 1916, pp. 143 sq., I handled *ex Pont.* II 5 11 sq. with odd negligence or perversity. This means that I had the misfortune to tread on one of Dr Postgate's chickens. In the couplet

optastique breuem salui mihi Caesaris iram,
quod tamen optari si sciat ipse sinat,

I upheld the MS text against a troop of conjectures, one of which, alack, was *breui solui*. Parental affection is strong in Dr Postgate, and danger to his offspring has a tendency to discompose his thoughts. Here, by way of defending his conjecture from the charge of treasonable ambiguity which I brought against all the conjectures, he goes about to show, citing *met.* IX 273 sq., that it admits an innocent interpretation, as if that were in dispute. The task of a defender is to show that it does not admit a sinister interpretation; but this he is not calm enough to see. He even argues against himself: 'one might suppose from this'—my charge of dangerous ambiguity—'that no pentameter followed the hexameter, or that this too contained a dangerous ambiguity, as Caesar *might* approve of a prayer for his own demise.' In other and plainer words, Ovid's pentameter implies that Ovid's hexameter was innocent. Which hexameter then is the more likely to be Ovid's: that of the MSS, which is innocent, or that of Dr Postgate, which, as he does not and cannot deny, is ambiguous? When, in this troubled atmosphere, he calls my handling of the passage perverse or negligent, I am not very much

Dr Postgate's willingness to teach is great and obvious, yet I do not find him very instructive. An air of ripe and penetrating judgment is never absent from anything that he writes, but I sometimes miss the substance, and I cannot reconcile the strength of his anxiety to seem superior with the faintness of his endeavour to be so.

On pp. 56 sq. Dr Postgate proceeds to Juvenal, of whom I also spoke in *C.R.* XXXIV pp. 58 sq., and whom I have edited. Juvenal's MSS, or the best part of them, give *nihil* as the latter half of a foot with a vowel following in 15 verses. But in two verses where a vowel followed I found them favouring *nil*:

VI 58

quis tamen adfirmat *nil* actum in montibus
aut in (*nil* PFOU, *nihil* AGLT),

XV 88

sustinuit, *nil* umquam hac carne libentius
edit (*nil* PAFOT, *nihil* GLU);

and at VI 58 I wrote '*nihil* AGLT ut solet Iuuenalis in altero semipede ante uocalem; hic tamen et XV 88 Pithoceanus sequendus uidetur propter numeros, VII 54 non item.' Dr Postgate says on p. 57 'I cannot divine what are the "numeri" supporting *nil* to the overthrow of those conceded to support *nihil* "ut solet," etc.' I gather that because he cannot divine it he thinks that I was contradicting myself; and as I am sure that this suspicion cannot be agreeable to him I will try to dispel it.

These were the only two verses in Juvenal where *nil*, under the conditions described, was better² supported by the MSS than *nihil*, and in both verses the rhythm of *nihil* struck me as unfamiliar and unwelcome. I have little faith in MSS and still less in my own ear, but as they here gave the same counsel I thought there might be something in it; I made investigation, and there was.

In those verses of Juvenal which have

upset: I suppose it was less confused than could have been wished.

² Since Paris. 8072 (II or B) is now found to give *nihil* in VI 58, the support for *nil* in that verse is no longer better, but only equally good.

the normal caesura, and in which the fourth foot is a spondee consisting of a single word, the latter half of the third foot is often a monosyllable, seldom a word of pyrrhic scansion. Of the monosyllable there are 11 examples in *sat.* I alone, of the pyrrhic word there are only 12 in all Juvenal: III 134 *super illam*, 202 *ubi reddunt*, IV 60 *ubi quamquam*, VII 195 *modo primos*, VIII 47 *tamen ima*, X 154 *tamen ultra*, 155 *nisi Poeno*, 194 *ubi pandit*, 323 *habet illic*, XIII 150 *minor extat*, 216 *uelut acri*, XIV 22 *duo propter*. And 10 of the 12 are due to what may be called compulsion, for the rhythm could not be avoided by a different arrangement of the words. The two exceptions are X 155 and XIV 22, where he might have written *Poeni nisi milite* and *propter duo lintea*. Wherever else he can avoid the rhythm, he does, as in XI 122 *latos nisi sustinet*.

When the spondee of the fourth foot is composed of an elided disyllable followed by a monosyllable, there is a similar preference for a monosyllable over a pyrrhic word in the third foot—for the rhythm *nil actum in* over *nil*

actum in. The monosyllables are to the pyrrhics as 7 to 1: monosyllables III 30 *qui nigrum in*, 83, 148, 210, 216, 311, IV 14, 47, 84, VI 178, VIII 128, IX 81, X 356, XI 29, XII 60, XIII 51, XV 42, 43, 78, 166, XVI 53; pyrrhics X 112 *sine caede ac*, XI 146, XIII 221.

So much then for *nil* rather than *nihil* in the third foot of VI 58: now for the second foot of XV 88. In verses where the caesura in the third foot is procured by eliding a disyllable, and the latter half of the second foot consists of a single word, that word is a monosyllable on 10 occasions, IV 35 *res uer(a)*, 102, VI 277, 281, VII 5, 95, X 77, 284, XIII 217, XIV 206, a pyrrhic only on 3, VI 390 *stetit ant(e)*, 596, XII 24: the monosyllables therefore are more than 3 to 1. In verses where the caesura is not procured by elision the proportion of monosyllables to pyrrhics is only 3 to 2. The elision therefore made a difference, and *nil umqu(am)* is preferable to *nihil umqu(am)* in XV 88.

A. E. HOUSMAN.

Trinity College, Cambridge.

NOTES

APPIAN, CIVIL WARS,

I. CH. 14.

ὁ δὲ (Γράκχος) . . . συνεκάλει τοὺς ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν ἐπὶ τὴν χειροτονίαν, ἀσχολουμένων δ' ἐκείνων ὡς ἐν θέρει . . . ἐπὶ τὸν ἐν τῷ ἀστει δῆμον κατέφηνγε.

THIS passage, relating to the tribunician elections of 133 B.C. in which Tiberius Gracchus lost his life, raises a difficulty. Who were οἱ ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν?

Evidently not the general body of landholders on the *ager Romanus*.¹ These had been in possession of their land before Tiberius' land act had ever been heard of, and as this act concerned

none but landless men,² they derived no benefit from it. Tiberius had no claim on their support, and it is incredible that he should have expected them to throw up their work during the busy season in order to support him at the hustings.

Tiberius' appeal can only have been addressed to those who had been benefited, or expected to benefit, under his land act. But in the summer of

¹ So apparently Greenidge (*History of Rome*, p. 136), who describes τοὺς ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν simply as 'farmers,' and Ihne (*History of Rome*, English translation, IV. p. 404), who calls them 'peasants.'

² This is evident from the provisions of Tiberius' law, and especially from the language which he held during his propaganda: 'τοῖς δ' ὑπὲρ τῆς Ἰταλίας μαχομένοις καὶ ἀποθνήσκουσιν ἀερός καὶ φῶτος, ἄλλου δὲ οὐδένας, μέτεστιν, ἀλλ' ἄοικοι καὶ ἀνίδρυτοι μετὰ τέκνων πλανῶνται καὶ γυναικῶν . . . ἀποθνήσκουσι κύριοι τῆς οἰκουμένης εἶναι λεγόμενοι, μίαν δὲ βῶλον ἰδίαν οὐκ ἔχοντες' (Plutarch, *Tib. Gracchus*, ch. ix.).