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Virgil *Aeneid* XI. 690

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VIRGIL *AENEID* XI. 690.

PROTINUS Orsilochoum et Buten, duo maxima
Teucrum
corpora : sed Buten adversum cuspidē fixit
loricam galeamque inter, qua colla sedentis
lucent, et laevo dependet parma lacerto.

It is an admittedly rash thing to meddle with the text of Virgil, yet I am inclined to think that this passage has been altered since the time of Statius. I am not now concerned to defend *adversum* against the *aversum* of most MSS.; that has been sufficiently done by Dr. Henry (*Aeneidea*, iv. 282). The word to which I take exception is *sedentis*, on which Conington briefly remarks 'sitting on horseback.' No doubt Butes was sitting on horseback, but then so were they all: Virgil is describing a cavalry engagement, which begins at l. 597, and there is no conceivable reason for telling us, nearly a hundred lines later, that one warrior occupied a position necessarily occupied by them all. The correct reading is, I suspect, shown by the imitation of Statius, quoted by Dr. Henry *ub. supr.*, though he does not draw the same inference from it:

Cedentem Acheloius heros
impetit, et librans uni sibi missile telum,
derexit iactus, summae qua margine parmae
ima *sedet* galea, et iuguli vitalia *lucent*.
(*Theb.* viii. 522)

This he cites to prove that the wound inflicted on Butes was in the throat, in front, not in the neck, behind; but I think it proves more. I believe that Statius was imitating

Sed Buten adversum cuspidē fixit
loricam galeamque inter qua colla sedentem
lucent, cet.

'Butes as he faced her she pierced with her javelin, where his throat showed white between his corslet and settled helm,' *i.e.* the *sit* of his helm, as we talk of the *sit* or *set* of a hat or coat. Virgil meant to describe the unguarded interval between the upper rim of the corslet, and the lower rim of the helmet, which *sedebat*, was settled, or fixed, on a line with the chin. The remaining words are added, as Dr. Henry has pointed out, to show that the shield was not raised to protect this uncovered spot, but held low down.

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[That Statius referred the last word of 692 to galeam seems incontestable. But there is no reason why it should not also be referred to *loricam*, in which case *sedentis* will be the accusative plural and it will be unnecessary to change the reading of the MSS.—Ed. C.R.]

ON HORACE *ARS POETICA* vv. 125 FOLL. AND 240 FOLL.

I VENTURE to express a hope that Mr. Maidment's remarks¹ on these passages will receive careful attention. His practical suggestion is to remove 240-3 ('Ex noto fictum . . . honoris'), so that they will stand before 128 (*Difficile est proprie, etc.*).

I need add nothing to what Mr. Maidment has so well said as to the intrinsic excellence of these 'most Horatian' lines, and the extreme difficulty of forcing them into any connection with the precepts for writing Latin Satyric Drama, which they now interrupt. Even if such a connection can be established, it must narrow the scope of the lines, which in themselves vigorously enforce Horace's favourite warning to

Roman poets that 'easy writing makes hard reading,' and that the true poet

ludentis speciem dabit *et torquetur*
(*Ep.* 2, 2, 124).

Coming to the question of *where* the lines may have stood, I feel strongly with Mr. Maidment (and with Schütz, ed. 1883) that their natural neighbourhood is somewhere about 128. As to the particular place, I would ask consideration for an alternative view (one of several suggested by Schütz), viz. that they may possibly have immediately followed 130 (*quam si proferres ignota indictaque primus*). I do so on two grounds:

(1) 'Ex noto' will then naturally arise out of 'ignota,' according to a practice

¹ C.R. xviii. 9, pp. 441-2 (Dec. 1904).