

Bad Bronze Again

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NAEVIUS AND THE *ALIMONIUM REMI ET ROMULI*

DONATUS, *ad Ter. Ad.* 537, after offering two explanations of the phrase *lupus in fabula*, adds 'nam falsum est quod dicitur interuenisse lupum Naeuianae fabulae alimonio Remi et Romuli, dum in theatro agitur'. Does this mean that Naevius wrote a separate praetexta dealing with the infancy of Romulus, or was this the same praetexta as that entitled *Romulus* which is mentioned by Varro (*L.L.* vii. 54)? It seems to me that neither of these alternatives should be adopted. Donatus is merely refuting an absurd theory (which one almost suspects him of inventing). Since *fabula* can mean 'play' as well as 'story', 'fable', the phrase *lupus in fabula* could

be taken to have originally meant 'the wolf in the play'. The question would then arise—what was the play in which a wolf might be supposed to have appeared? The mention of a wolf might suggest the infancy of Romulus, and Naevius had written a praetexta dealing with Romulus. But to explain the phrase in this way would, as Donatus very rightly says, be false. The only value of the passage is to confirm indirectly the statement of Varro that there was a play of Naevius which had Romulus as its hero.

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BAD BRONZE AGAIN

IN *C.R.* lix. 52 Mr. D. E. Eichholz and Professor T. A. Sinclair have criticized my interpretation of Aesch. *Ag.* 390-3 κακοῦ δὲ χαλκοῦ τρόπον τρίβω τε καὶ προσβολαῖς μελαμπαγῆς πέλει δικαιοθεῖς (*C.R.* lviii. 35), the former on the ground that it is technically impossible. I deferred my reply in order to obtain expert advice, and now offer the following comments after consulting a Greek goldsmith.

Mr. Eichholz wrote: 'It was not the touchstone which marked the gold, but on the contrary the gold which marked the touchstone.' That is true, so far as the lydian stone is concerned. There was a confusion in my note on this point, and I am grateful for the correction.

But how does he translate Theogn. 449-50 εὐρήσεις δὲ με πᾶσιν ἐπ' ἔργμασιν ὡσπερ ἀπεφθον χρυσόν, ἐρυθρόν ἰδεῖν τριβόμενον βασάνῳ? The last four words must surely mean 'red to look at when rubbed with the touchstone'. Here it is the mark left by the stone on the gold that is inspected, not the mark left by the gold on the stone.

The colour of impure gold varies according to the alloy. Mixed with copper, it is reddish; with silver, whitish; with nickel, greenish. When the lydian stone is used, the colour of the metal proper, as distinct from any dirt with which it may be encrusted, appears as a thin streak adhering to the stone, which being black throws it into relief. This method has the additional advantage that the stone can be marked previously with a streak of pure gold to serve as a standard of comparison. But the true colour of the metal will also appear on the metal itself if it is rubbed with any object hard enough to remove superficial dirt. This is only a rough-and-ready test, but quite practicable, and I suggest that this is what both Theognis and Aeschylus had in mind.

The colour of impure gold is not necessarily darker than that of pure gold; it is simply different. Therefore the idea of μελαμπαγῆς is not taken from

gold-assaying. Professor Sinclair explains it as follows: 'If bronze or copper or brass is bad, polishing and hammering will reveal impure streaks of black.' This is technically correct, but it involves three difficulties. It is doubtful whether προσβολαῖς can mean 'hammering'; the idea of bad bronze as a symbol of unrighteousness is without parallel in Greek poetry; and, as he admits, μελαμπαγῆς is left without point in relation to the *man*.

It seems that my interpretation is the only one that does justice to μελαμπαγῆς.

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TWO NOTES ON EURIPIDES

Cyclops 402-4

καὶ †καθαράσας†
λάβρω μάχαιρα σάρκας ἐξώπτα πυρί,
τὰ δ' ἐς λέβητ' ἐφήκεν ἐφῆσθαι μέλη.

I suggest keeping *καθαράσας* and reading *μάχαιραν*. It seems not essential for Euripides to specify the cutting up. For the corruption cf. 394 κλάδω LP for κλάδων Scaliger, *Rhes.* 126, *Ar. Ach.* 23 ἄωρία Suid. for ἄωριαν codd. et Phryn.: conversely, *Hel.* 981-θηρᾶν LP for θηρᾶ Canter, *Or.* 1187, *Phoen.* 166, *I.A.* 567, *Soph. Tr.* 831, *Ar. Av.* 1620 μωστῖαν vulg. for μωστῖα Suid. λάβρω now goes with πυρί: cf. *Or.* 697. Is λάβρος anywhere applied to a weapon? For *καθαράσας μάχαιραν* cf. *Andr.* 1122, *Eur. El.* 819.

I.T. 753-4

Πυ. ἄκουε δὴ νυν ὄν παρήλθομεν λόγον.
Ἰφ. ἀλλ' αὐθὺς ἔσται καινός, ἦν καλῶς ἔχη.

I propose ἀλλ' εὐθὺς ἔστω καινός (*κοινός* Markland). For *κοινός* cf. *Hippol.* 609, *Tro.* 53-4, *Or.* 1098, *I.A.* 44: εὐθὺς, αὐθὺς are variants at *Ar. Av.* 377: apogr. Paris. gives ἔστω for ἔσται at *Eur. Supp.* 1191: for the sentiment cf. *Tro.* 717-18.

E. L. B. MEURIG DAVIES.