

## THE HIDDEN SOURCE OF THE NILE IN NEMESIANUS, CYNEGETICA 68

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Wissen, wo das Wissen ist.



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them as a discrete named event. This adds considerable weight to the assertion that a trace of Dio's narrative of the games of 204 is preserved by Xiphilinus at 77(76).1.4–5. Yet Xiphilinus chose to omit Dio's specific identification of the games when he compiled his epitome.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, if Bandini and Forcina are correct in the identification of the glossator at 27v in Vaticanus gr. 156 with Xiphilinus himself, then Xiphilinus, although clearly interested in the games, chose to omit all references to the *ludi saeculares* in his *Epitome*, even the games of 17 B.C., which Dio records at 54.18.2.<sup>11</sup>

Although this evidence invalidates the arguments of those who have looked to Dio to account for the silence, Scott's solution may be applied (*mutatis mutandis*) to Xiphilinus. Assuming that Dio's annalistic structure was maintained throughout the contemporary books, 77(76).1–2 appears to be a conflation of three successive years' worth of annalistic material, which was selected on account of its similarity of content.<sup>12</sup> At any rate, this 'fragment' from the margin of Vaticanus gr. 156, fol. 27v, should be added to a future edition of Dio's *Roman History*. If it also makes us think more about Xiphilinus, so much the better.

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## THE HIDDEN SOURCE OF THE NILE IN NEMESIANUS, *CYNEGETICA* 68\*

### ABSTRACT

*This note suggests a new emendation for the spurious verb bibunt in Nemesianus, Cynegetica 68. The passage should read Nilique latentem in origine fontem.*

**Keywords:** Nemesianus; *Cynegetica*; textual criticism; emendation; Nile

In close imitation of Virgil's pledge in *Georgics* 3, Nemesianus announces in the *Cynegetica* the future composition of a panegyric poem on the military exploits brought about by the current rulers, Carinus and Numerianus (lines 63–75). He promises to sing of the empire's outer boundaries and of the peoples subdued by the imperial brothers as illustrated by four landmark rivers:

<sup>10</sup> This seems preferable to Carlson's solution (n. 4), 21—namely, that a page was lost from Xiphilinus' epitome.

<sup>11</sup> Bandini (n. \*), 696; Forcina (n. 8), 75.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Xiphilinus' compression of Dio 54.16.3–19.3, a passage spanning the years 18, 17 and 16 B.C., which excerpts a series of anecdotes based around the idea of morality, omitting much and obliterating Dio's annalistic structure (93.26–94.11 D). For Xiphilinus' compositional technique, see M. Kruse, 'Xiphilinos' agency in the epitome of Cassius Dio', *GRBS* 61 (2021), 193–223.

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- mox uestros meliore lyra memorare triumphos  
accingar, diui fortissima pignora Cari,  
65 atque canam nostrum geminis sub finibus orbis  
litus et edomitas fraterno numine gentes,  
quae Rhenum Tigrim**que** bibunt Araris**que** remotum  
68 principium Nilique †bibunt† in origine fontem;

Soon I will gird myself with a better lyre to record your triumphs, you most valiant sons of deified Carus, and will sing of our shores at both boundaries of the world, and of the peoples—subjugated by the divine power of brothers—that drink the Rhine and the Tigris and the distant source of the Arar and †drink† the source of the Nile at its origin;

While the allusion to a people by reference to a river is a common trope among Greek and Roman writers from Homer onwards, it is specifically Virgil and Horace that serve as Nemesianus' literary models. The image of the vanquished peoples dwelling at remote corners of the empire and drinking from their respective local streams draws on Verg. *Ecl.* 1.62 *aut Ararim Parthus bibit aut Germania Tigrim* (cf. *Aen.* 7.715) and Hor. *Carm.* 4.14.45–8 *te fontium qui celat origines | Nilusque et Hister, te rapidus Tigris, | te beluosus qui remotis | obstrepi Oceanus Britannis*.<sup>1</sup> However, neither the Augustan poets nor any other author, for that matter, can account for the curious gemination of *bibunt* in the consecutive lines 67 and 68. Although the repetition in no way violates the metre, it is on stylistic grounds that the authenticity of the text has been questioned. Finding it 'impossible to believe that Nem. could have repeated himself in this way', H.J. Williams in her 1986 edition printed the second *bibunt* between daggers.<sup>2</sup> She is followed by R. Jakobi in his more recent edition who, having dismissed the various suggestions put forth to replace either the first or—more often—the second *bibunt*, concludes that the case remains unclear.<sup>3</sup> The emendations that have been suggested include *uident* or *colunt* (both Johnson), *habitant* (Heinsius), *metunt* (Stern), *libant* (Klein) and *potant* (Williams). What all these conjectural suggestions have in common is the repeated attempt to replace the spurious *bibunt* with another verb which seems to be supported by the presence of the coordinator *-que* in line 68 (to which I will return below). Yet an alternative verb in the third-person plural is by no means the only conceivable solution, if indeed an admissible emendation at all. With *bibunt* in line 67 fully satisfying the syntactical needs for a verb in the relative clause, an adjective in line 68 such as *latentem* ('hidden') that qualifies the source (*fontem*) of the Nile would appear to make for a better case, particularly considering the source's notorious obscurity. Even the elision of the final syllable of *latentem* in order to meet correct verse scansion perfectly concurs with Nemesianus' prosodic and metrical practice.<sup>4</sup>

Given that the obscurity of the Nile's origin is a common topos among Greek and Roman writers since Herodotus discussed the issue at 2.28–34, it is beyond question

<sup>1</sup> As noted by H.J. Williams, *The Eclogues and Cynegetica of Nemesianus, Edited with an Introduction and Commentary* (Leiden, 1986), 166; see also R. Jakobi, *Nemesian, Cynegetica. Edition und Kommentar* (Berlin, 2014), 84–5.

<sup>2</sup> Williams (n. 1), 166 maintains that 'it is more probable that *bibunt* belongs in u. 67 than u. 68 because Nem. appears in u. 67 to be echoing Virgil *Buc.* 1.62 ... and *Aen.* 7.715 ...'.

<sup>3</sup> Jakobi (n. 1), 88.

<sup>4</sup> According to A. Di Stefano, 'Su alcuni aspetti metrico-prosodici dei *Cynegetica* di Nemesiano', *BStudLat* 28 (1998), 57–77, at 58–9, the 325 extant lines of the poem include 52 cases of elision, 47 of which concern short final syllables.

that a learned poet such as Nemesianus was familiar with this geographical mystery.<sup>5</sup> In fact, his knowledge of the matter is indirectly confirmed by his undisputed adaptation of Hor. *Carm.* 4.14.45–6, where it is stated that the Nile ‘conceals the origins of his sources’ (*fontium qui celat origines*). Besides, Nemesianus’ engagement with the opening lines of the first book of Lucan’s *Bellum Civile* further buttresses the notion that he was aware of the issue. Having reworked Luc. 1.10–11 in *Cyn.* 73–4,<sup>6</sup> Nemesianus surely also read Luc. 1.20 (*et gens si qua iacet nascenti conscia Nilo*, ‘and any people dwelling on the Nile, privy to its inception’), a passage that implies the reader’s close acquaintance with the matter at hand.<sup>7</sup> Assuming that Nemesianus read Lucan’s epic in its entirety, he will even have come across the passage where Julius Caesar enquires about the Nile’s *causas per saecula tanta latentis* | *ignotumque caput* (‘the causes, hidden for so many ages, and its unknown head’, 10.190–1), a phrase that may well have exerted influence on Nemesianus’ (assumed) wording of *Cyn.* 68.

Furthermore, a syntactical argument can be made for the adjective *latentem* as opposed to a verb. Not only is there no need for a second verb in lines 67–8, as noted above, but more importantly the arrangement of the connective coordinators (that is, the triple *-que*) strongly suggests the adoption of an adjective rather than a second verb. The first *-que* connects two direct objects, the Rhine and the Tigris (*Rhenum Tigrimque*). Similarly, the second *-que* (*Ararisque ... principium*) and the third *-que* (*Nilique ... fontem*) are attached to a river’s name too, albeit in the genitive; the latter two *-que* seem to suggest a correlation with each other, when primarily they simply connect the third and the fourth direct objects (*principium* and *fontem*) with the earlier ones (*Rhenum Tigrimque*), all of which depend on *bibunt*, while at the same time leaving no coordinator left to connect *bibunt* with a hypothetical second verb in the following line.<sup>8</sup> While there is thus no exclusive correlation between the second and the third *-que* in a strictly grammatical sense, the two coordinators nevertheless highlight the obvious parallel between the two respective units. What is brought to the fore here is the analogy between *principium* and *fontem*, including the spatial distance of each ‘source’. While the Arar’s source is merely described as *remotum*, the Nile’s source is best understood to be so remote that its location is virtually unknown (*latentem*). As each of the three units pertaining to the four rivers increases in length, the mimetic effect of this reflects the increasing length of the rivers and, by extension, the vast extent of the Roman empire itself.<sup>9</sup> In other words, the overall sentence structure not only calls for the adjective *latentem* but also rules out a second verb altogether.

<sup>5</sup> For further examples of this literary topos, see the indexes in A. Merrills, *Roman Geographies of the Nile: From the Late Republic to the Early Empire* (Cambridge, 2017) and E. Manolaraki, *Noscenti Nilum cupido: Imagining Egypt from Lucan to Philostratus* (Berlin, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Jakobi (n. 1), 89: ‘Unter Nutzung von Lucan. 1,10f. *cumque superba foret Babylon spolianda tropaeis* | *Ausoniis umbraque erraret Crassus inulta* wird Numerian als Vollender jahrhundertelanger römischer Persienpolitik gefeiert.’

<sup>7</sup> In fact, Jakobi (n. 1), 147 in his note on Nemes. *Cyn.* 251 (*gens ampla iacet*) points precisely to said passage in Lucan as the likely model for Nemesianus’ choice of words; cf. J. Küppers, ‘Das Proömium der “Cynegetica” Nemesians’, *Hermes* 115 (1987), 473–98, at 492 n. 75.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. J. Wills, *Repetition in Latin Poetry* (Oxford, 1996), 374 on the ‘mutable function of the first *-que* in a pair: it can point forward in a pair as a “correlative” (*A-que B-que*) or backward as a “connective” in a longer sequence (*A B-que C-que*)’. The connective pattern in Nemesianus is *A B-que C-que D-que*.

<sup>9</sup> The units of the tricolon are structured in accordance with Behaghel’s law of increasing members: *Rhenum Tigrimque* | ... | *Ararisque remotum principium* | *Nilique latentem in origine fontem*.

When more than a century later the historian Ammianus Marcellinus discussed the issue of the origin of the Nile at 22.15.4—something he interestingly called *latentem notitiam* ('undisclosed knowledge')—he was convinced that it would never be resolved.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, it was not until modern times that European explorers would eventually 'discover' the river's sources.<sup>11</sup> Should the proposed emendation of line 68 be correct, the long-concealed adjective of the Nile's source in Nemesianus may now be considered 'discovered' too.<sup>12</sup>

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## ORIBASIOS ON CABBAGE: *LIBRI AD EVNAPIVM* 3.13.4\*

### ABSTRACT

*This article suggests a new reading for Oribasius' Libri ad Eunapium 3.13.4. Based on evidence from both Greek and Syriac sources, it argues that the variant contained in Oribasius' Synopsis ad Eustathium should be adopted as the correct reading of the original.*

**Keywords:** Oribasius; *Libri ad Eunapium*; *Synopsis ad Eustathium*; Paulus Aegineta; Dioscorides; Syriac pharmacopeia

In the *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum* edition of Oribasius' *Libri ad Eunapium* by J. Raeder, the text of 3.13.4 (= *CMG* 6.3.406.33–7) reads as follows:

(4) ὑγρῶν μὲν οὖν κάλλιστόν ἐστιν οἶνος· ποιεῖ δὲ καὶ ὀξύκρατον καὶ μελίκρατον· τῶν δ' ἄλλων κολλᾷ τραύματα δρυὸς φύλλα καταπλασσόμενα καὶ ἰτέας καὶ κράμβης τε ὁ καρπὸς καὶ τὰ φύλλα καὶ ὁ χυλὸς καὶ ὁ φλοιὸς τῆς αὐστηροτέρας καὶ ὀξυτέρας, ἀρνόγλωσσον, πάπυρος (5) ὀξύκράτῳ ἢ οἶνῳ βραχεῖσα καὶ ἐν κύκλῳ περιειλουμένη.

*post* κράμβης *add.* μηλέας *Syn.*

And truly among the wet drugs, wine is very good, and both sour wine mixed with water and honey water work; and among other things which join the wounds: oak leaves applied as a plaster, willow leaves, and the fruit, leaves, juice, and bark of the more bitter and sharper cabbage, plantain, and papyrus, steeping in sour wine mixed with water or wine, and wrapped round in a circular manner.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See also Claud. *Nilus* 11–12 on the Nile's secluded source (*secreto ... fonte*) 'that will forever remain hidden' (*qui semper ... latet*).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. R.O. Collins, *The Nile* (New Haven and London, 2002), 8.

<sup>12</sup> Since a scribal error hardly accounts for the textual corruption, a deliberate manipulation of the original wording seems more likely. Perhaps a semi-learned reader who was unfamiliar with the Nilotic question, and thus could make no sense of the fact that somebody would be drinking from a source said to be hidden, decided to substitute the 'odd' adjective with the metrically apposite *bibunt* from the line before.

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<sup>1</sup> If not otherwise indicated, the English translations are my own.