

W. KISSEL, ed., *A. Persius Flaccus: Saturarum Liber*. Berlin - New York: W. de Gruyter, 2007, xxviii + 57 pp., ISBN 9783110194869.

The new Teubner text under review is not the first edition of Persius Walter Kissel has produced. In 1990, he prefaced his vast and ungainly commentary on Persius with an edition of the text, based on three manuscripts (PAB), that would, in terms of choice of witnesses and method, have been completely at home in 1890. Since then, he has clearly worked much more on the transmission and has now produced a new text with an apparatus regularly citing nine manuscripts (and another nine occasionally) as well as the scholia. The new apparatus is much fuller than the old one; what is striking is that despite a complete revision of his understanding of the paradosis—and a drastic lowering of his estimation of PAB—the text above the apparatus differs from the 1990 edition in only six even marginally significant readings.¹ *Pendas* for *pendes* at 1.30 is possible but unlikely; *claudere* for *cludere* at 1.93 might be considered purely orthographic, but Clausen's observation that *cludere* (in ABX) is the spelling used by Caesius Bassus ought to carry some weight. In two passages (2.14 *conditur* and 3.46 *discere*) he abandons an obviously wrong choice in his earlier edition and returns to Clausen's reading.² At 3.34 there is little to choose between *rursum* (new) and *rursus* (old), except that *rursus* is found in P and its congeners and *rursum* is not; and at 5.117, similarly, the new choice of *sub pectore* rather than *in*

¹ W. Kissel, ed., *Aules Persius Flaccus: Satiren* (Heidelberg 1990). There are in fact eleven differences, but one of them is a typographical error (the omission of *numero* in the new edition at 1.64) and four more are minor orthographic changes (*Pr.* 2, 2.45, 5.13, 5.172)

² W. V. Clausen, ed., *A. Persi Flacci Saturarum Liber* (Oxford 1956). Unless otherwise noted, citations from Clausen are from this edition.

pectore is a rejection of PABX. Beyond that, K.'s edition differs from Clausen's 1956 edition in 25 other significant readings (omitting orthography)—and in two of the more significant ones (*Pr.* 9 *nostra uerba* and 5.59 *fregerit*, the readings of the new edition) Clausen had already changed the reading in his 1959 Oxford Classical Text.³ Nor are K.'s choices in the remaining 23 passages reassuring. At 1.60 (*tentae* Barth), 1.73 (*inde* Kissel), and 4.36 (*bulbos* Richter) he prints conjectures, of which his own displays a misunderstanding of both syntax and rhetoric (made by egregious mispunctuation); the other two are as wrong as they are ingenious. At *Pr.* 4 he may be right to print *Heliconiadas* rather than *Heliconidas*, although it is otherwise attested only once, in Lucretius, while the other form is found several times in Statius. At 1.19 his choice of *hic* rather than *tunc* is almost certainly wrong, as the connection is temporal rather than local. At 1.46 K.'s 'quando hoc? rara auis est' in place of 'quando haec rara auis est' strains credulity and meter alike; it can only with difficulty be compared to 5.5 'quorsum haec? aut quantas...', the only example in Persius of strong punctuation after a first foot spondee, but there the punctuation is in fact weaker, coming between two parallel questions rather than between question and answer. At 2.2 there is not a great deal to choose between K.'s *apponit* and Clausen's *apponet*, except that (as at 1.30) Persius seems to use the future tense in places that we might not. At 2.15-16, K. prints *poscat . . . mergit . . . purgat* rather than the second-person equivalents; but the passage goes on with a second-person verb and there is no reason to switch. At 2.18 *est* (K.) is probably not so good as the better-attested *estne*. At 2.61 *inanes* is certainly wrong; 'o curuae in terris animae et caelestium inanis' is genitive rather than nominative. At 3.78 'quod satis est, sapio mihi' (K.) might be *lectio difficilior* rather

³ W. V. Clausen, ed., *A. Persi Flacci et D. Iuni Iuuenalis Saturae* (Oxford 1959). The other divergences from Clausen 1956 are at *Pr.* 4, 1.19, 1.46, 1.60, 1.73, 2.2, 2.15-16 (three parallel verbs with the same variation in person), 2.18, 2.61, 3.9, 3.16, 3.29, 3.78, 4.36, 4.37, 5.21, 5.35, 5.66, 5.69, 5.87, 5.105, 5.172, 6.46.

than 'quod sapio, satis est mihi', but 'what I know is enough for me' makes more sense than 'I know what's enough for myself.'

I add one more significant if fairly minor variant. At 4.37 *tunc cum* (K.) is a worse choice than *tum cum*. As a matter of euphony and editorial convention, in imperial poetry *tunc* generally appears before vowels, semivowels or nasals, *tum* before stops. Here only one of Clausen's minor manuscripts reads 'tum,' not even mentioned by K. PAB and a number of others read *tunc*, but CLW (Clausen's sigla) and the scholia read *tu*. What Clausen points out, and K. does not, is that in several other passages of Latin poetry the manuscripts are divided between *tunc* and *tu*, where *tum* is almost certainly the right reading: *tu* at 4.37 would involve anacoluthon; *tunc* is phonetically poor, and *tum* not only fits editorial convention but satisfies the principle *utrum in alterum*: one can explain both *tunc* and *tu* as errors for *tum*, but one can not easily explain *tu* as an error for *tunc* or vice versa. In terms of sense, this is a trivial variant, but it reveals fairly clearly what passes for critical method in K.'s edition.

There are eleven more variations from Clausen's edition that might be examined, but there is little difference in the result. A few of K.'s choices are possible, even plausible; but most of them are less likely readings, and not one of them marks a significant improvement in the text. Add to that the fact that his punctuation is excessive and appalling (there are uses of the colon for which odd is much too kind a word), and one wonders why this edition was published at all.⁴

'But,' says my imaginary interlocutor, 'the text of Persius is in very good shape. Clausen prints only one conjecture in the whole thing, Kissel a few more. On the whole, in fact, in a modern edition based on thorough knowledge of the evidence, the display of that evidence in the apparatus and preface matters much more than the actual choice of readings. No editions differ

⁴ One should note that his text of the ancient *Vita* differs from Clausen's in several places. Kissel's text is often more sensible—but the question remains whether what is sensible is correct in a badly corrupt text. The obelus still has its uses.

much from one another.' True enough, *quisquis es*, and that's just where K.'s edition takes the short step from mediocre to bad. So make yourself comfortable while I offer a brief discourse on the transmission of Persius.

Like Juvenal, Lucan, and some other imperial poets, Persius was very widely read both in late antiquity and in the Carolingian period. As a result, there are a great many manuscripts of reasonable quality; and while (as with most texts) there are rarely more than two variants for a given passage, the text was almost certainly transmitted in more than two streams. With one important exception, Housman's dictum about the manuscripts of Lucan being more like factions than families—their constantly shifting allegiances precluding useful stemmatics—applies to both Persius and Juvenal. That one exception, however, is crucial. For Juvenal, there is Montepessulanus 125, the codex Pitheoanus (=P), preserving almost uniquely a different strain of text from the other witnesses: superficially quite corrupt but with a great many valuable readings either correct or pointing to a correct reading. For Persius too, P is important and behaves in a similar way; but for Persius, P is not alone. It is closely related to Montepessulanus 212 (A) and Vaticanus tabularii basilicae H 36 (B) and, to a greater or lesser degree, to a few more witnesses. A and B are far more closely related to one another than they are to P, and they share one feature that has always been the reddest herring for the editor of Persius, namely the subscriptions of Flavius Junius Tryfonianus Sabinus, who corrected a manuscript twice, in Barcellona and Toulouse, in 402 CE, 'temptaui emendare sine antigrapho' in one version 'prout potui sine magistro' in the other.

What all this means, beyond much doubt, is that all the manuscripts except PAB (and their minor relatives) are contaminated and are almost always copied from contaminated manuscripts. Persius was read, corrected, and copied; readings filtered from one manuscript or scriptorium to another; virtually every manuscript has variants or corrections in its margins and between its lines. Indeed, with a text as short and memorable as that of Persius, it would be surprising if some variants were not created by false recollections in the minds of scribes rather than copied from earlier books. To write a stemma of these manuscripts

is hopeless and useless; but to pick a good and representative set of manuscripts to provide access to whatever good readings were circulating in the tenth century is very important. And as for PAB, even they are not immune to the process of contamination, although their main value lies in the fact that their surface errors show that they (or their parents) were isolated from the rest of the tradition for a long time and are less contaminated than the others. With PAB, the problem is to decide whether a given reading attested only in one of those manuscripts is an instance of Persius' peculiar way with the Latin language or simply an error, and that is not always easy. But in general, what is clear is that, within some reasonable limits, the problem facing an editor of Persius is not recension, but selection: what one puts in the text comes from a sense of Persius' style; it is not the result of the application of stemmatics or of divination. What one puts in the apparatus is not there, for the most part, to demonstrate the validity of a stemma, but to represent the range of useful and plausible readings whatever source(s) preserve them.

All that I have said here is said more elegantly in the preface to Clausen's 1956 *editio maior*, and while one may disagree with some of his choices of reading—and, as noted above, he changed his mind himself in a few cases—his principles are right and his choice of manuscripts is excellent. Other similar choices might be made, but there is little point, as it is the collection of readings rather than the relationship of manuscripts that matters. And as for Sabinus, it has long been clear that he is unimportant except as one more piece of evidence that AB are closely related. He did not perform a 'recension'; he did not do more than proofread his own copy; he was, as K. too knows, a bored thirty-year old soldier in the imperial guard without another copy of Persius to collate and without a teacher to help him.

But what K. knows in theory and what he does in practice are very different things. On p. ix he says 'eius studio recensionis nomen non nisi aegre tribuas'; but Sabinus' *recensio* reappears on p. x, xi, xii and on and on. A mere habit of loose nomenclature should not be held against K.; but there is more to it than that. He does not believe that Sabinus performed a recension; but he does believe that Sabinus' MS is representative of a recension which he wants to recover: 'ut codices inuenias, qui recensionis Sabinianae

lectiones integras et sine librorum AB mendis ostendunt' (xv). K. says that because other Carolingian manuscripts exist which do not have the subscription or some of the more serious errors of AB but do have many readings in common with them, those manuscripts are better witnesses to the *recensio Sabiniana* (x). And he finds those manuscripts in Vat. Pal. Lat. 1710 (X) and Vat. Reg. Lat. 1560 (V), to which he adds the much later Laurentianus 37.19 (F) as having some signs of similarity to P. Of these, V is indeed useful, and was so used by Clausen. X has some readings, both good and bad, in common with PAB; it agrees with them against all other witnesses in a grand total of six passages (see Clausen xiii n.1). It is certainly worth citing, but, as Clausen notes (*ibid.*) "it is in many respects quite an ordinary MS" with its share of bad readings and trivial mistakes. F (Clausen's R) also agrees at times with PAB or one of them—but so does virtually every other manuscript of Persius. It is a contaminated text, and by the late eleventh century (F's probable date), that is only to be expected. The grouping of manuscripts associated with PAB is questionable, except for V; even more questionable is the logic and the goal. K. is looking for a better form of the 'recension' to which AB are witnesses. The only evidence that there ever was a 'recension' is the subscription of Sabinus, which K. (for once, rightly) dismisses as insignificant. All that K. does is put the problem back a generation or so, and Sabinus becomes evidence for a recension in which he had no part—and which probably never existed.

Given the amount of cross-fertilization and the number of interlinear or marginal variants, groupings are sometimes possible, but stemmatics are not. Nonetheless, K. produces a convenient bipartite stemma (xxiv) with group sigla which he employs in his apparatus to the expected ill effect. In the preface, he gives a long list of variants between the two sides into which he divides the tradition; but it is no surprise that P turns out to represent the non-'Sabinian' side of the stemma almost as often as it does the side where K. thinks it belongs. Repeat after me, *quisquis es*: the tradition is contaminated, and heavily contaminated. A stemma is useless; and more than useless, it is wrong. K's attempts to construct one lead from circularity to complete incoherence; I defy anyone to understand what he

says about the relationship between γ and φ on p. xx, and I do not think that it is his Latin which is at fault.

But γ (a small group comprising Bern 257 (G) and Leiden BPL 78 (L)—which K. without argument dates a generation earlier than Bischoff dated it) deserves a little more attention. According to K., the only significant textual differences between G and L arise ‘quod G siue in textu siue in uariis lectionibus secunda manu additis haud ita raro uestigia codicis alicuius $\alpha\upsilon$ similis ad emendandum adhibiti ostendit’ (xviii-xix). In the first place, the source of these variants is a manuscript like AB or X; but X is a manuscript which (see above) in fact is a perfectly normal representative of the large group of lesser manuscripts that have a few readings also found in A. K. has the relationship, as often, backward. But there is more to this: what on earth is the significance of shared readings that are *either* in the first hand *or* in that of the corrector? To the unbiassed mind, that would suggest that they do not come from the same source; and K., in his footnote, does some very fancy footwork to explain the nonsense. It has an explanation, but it is not his. G is a perfectly adequate manuscript, and so is L. But they have no particular relationship to PAB; they are not significantly different from the other φ manuscripts; and in a tradition as contaminated as this—with as short a text as this—stemmatic precision of the kind K. wants to attain is simply not to be had.

K.’s comments on G. point to one other failing. In his discussion, he uses the readings of a corrector as well as those of the first hand. But when, after all this futile pseudo-precision, one finds at the end K.’s admission that he has not looked at *any* manuscript except in photographic reproductions⁵—which he admits makes it nearly impossible to distinguish corrections—one has more than doubts about K.’s ability to understand even the basics of editing a text. He has been working on Persius since before 1990, and Erlangen is not that far from Rome or Montpellier. It is perhaps not irrelevant to point out that

⁵That, at least, is how I understand ‘facere non potui, quin exemplaribus ipsis praetermissis non nisi imagines phototypicas in meum usum conuerterem’ (xxviii).

Clausen, coming from three thousand miles away, looked at virtually all the manuscripts on site and took copious and precise notes (which I have used) about hands and correctors. One learns something about editing by studying manuscripts rather than photographs.⁶

The result of K.'s labors is, as noted at the outset, a text not very different from Clausen's; but it is accompanied by a completely misguided misunderstanding of how the text was preserved and how to present it. K.'s edition costs, at slightly less than one Euro per page, exactly twice as much as Clausen's OCT, and that edition throws in a perfectly good text of Juvenal as a bonus. Buy two copies of the OCT and give one to a student: you will both be better off.

JAMES E. G. ZETZEL
Columbia University in the City of New York
zetz@columbia.edu

⁶ Even I, a non-traveller, visited Montpellier and learned a great deal about the scholia in P that would not have been evident from photographs. Since I learned most of what I know about textual criticism in general and the text of Persius in particular from Clausen, the attentive reader will not be wrong if she finds a certain animus in some of my comments. Others may think it less deserved than I do.