

IX. PROCNE, PHILOMELA, TEREUS (VI, 424-674)

The chief monograph on Ovid's sources for this episode is that of Ignazio Cazzaniga: *La Saga di Itis nella Tradizione letteraria e mitografica Greco-Romana*, Part I (1950) and Part II (1951), each paged separately. The second part has the separate title: *L'episodio di Procne nel libro Sesto delle Metamorfosi di Ovidio: ricerche intorno alla tecnica poetica ovidiana*. Cazzaniga holds in brief that: (1) Ovid's essential 'model' is Sophocles' *Tereus* (which he dates after Euripides' *Medea* of 431 B.C.); (2) but only lines 587-674 are based on Sophocles. The earlier part of the episode (ll. 424-586) shows a different style, that of the 'novella' or Hellenistic *epyllion*, though there was no direct Hellenistic model. Cazzaniga points to various features of 'novellistic' technique in lines 424-586: the premonitions of lines 424-38 (here he compares Musaeus' *Hero and Leander* 274-80); the stress on the unexpected (*aprosdoketon*) and the contrast of happy beginning with tragic ending, 434 ff.; the suddenness of Tereus' passion; the emphasis on contrast and *ekplexis* and the marvellous (e.g. Philomela's moving tongue after the *glossotomia*, 557 ff.).

He sees a marked difference after 587. Procne is now the typical *paidophonos* of tragedy (like, for example, *Medea* and *Althaea*); Tereus the typical exponent of *hybris* reduced to misery. The speeches of Philomela had already revealed (a fact that would seem inconsistent with Cazzaniga's sharp division of ll. 424-586 from ll. 587-674) a true tragic *ethopoeia* (496-502, 533-48), and the omission of sensuous detail (as at ll. 524 ff.) shows the tragic intent (in contrast, for example, to the *Salmacis* episode).

I need not repeat my reasons (given in the text) for rejecting Cazzaniga's thesis. There is no reason to doubt Ovid's familiarity with Sophocles' *Tereus* or, much more significantly, with Accius' tragedy of the same name. As we know from Cicero, Accius' *Tereus* was a stage favourite of the late republic and there is every reason to suppose that Ovid himself had seen it as well as read it (cf. Cicero *ad Att.* XVI, 2. 3 and 5. 1). Accius' lines (Nonius 270. 24):

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Tereus indomito more atque animo barbaro
conspexit in eam; amore vecors flammeo
depositus, facinus pessimum ex dementia
configit

are suggestively close to Ovid's (VI, 455 ff.):

Non secus exarsit conspecta virgine Tereus,
quam si quis canis ignem supponat aristas, etc.

* * * * *

hunc innata libido
exstimulat, primumque genus regionibus illis
in Venerem est: flagrat vitio gentisque suoque.

* * * * *

Et nihil est, quod non effreno captus amore
ausit; nec capiunt inclusas pectora flammæ.

But the subject was also exactly suited to the amatory *epyllion* of Parthenius and his disciples, Cinna and Gallus. Its plot has much in common with the *Ciris* or Cinna's *Zmyrna*. Virgil mentions it at the end of a list of neoteric subjects (*Ecl.* 6. 74-81):

Quid loquar aut Scyllam Nisi quam fama secuta est
candida succinctam latrantibus inguina monstris
Dulichias vexasse rates et gurgite in alto
a, timidos nautas canibus lacerasse marinis,
aut ut mutatos Terei narraverit artus,
quas illi Philomela dapes, quæ dona pararit,
quo cursu deserta petiverit et quibus ante
infelix sua tecta supervolaverit alis.

It is obvious that a writer of narrative verse was not bound by the restrictions of drama. Thus the lines of Accius just quoted are obviously taken from the Euripidean prologue of his play (the action of his play began, as I see it, with Philomela's arrival at Tereus' palace = Ovid, 601 ff.) but they correspond to an integral part of Ovid's narrative. We do not know whether the Tereus theme was ever made into a neoteric *epyllion* (there is no record of it) but Virgil's eclogue certainly shows that it was a quite accept-

able subject for one and that there was nothing in the least unusual about putting a tragic plot into 'epylliac' form (cf. Virgil's account of *Pasiphae* in the same eclogue).

Obviously Ovid, like the tragedians, prepared his climax with some care, but there is no 'gap' or sudden shift of narrative technique such as Cazzaniga supposes. This can be easily seen in a schematic analysis of the narrative:

(1) The episode starts with the marriage of Tereus and Procne but this is emphasized (428-32) only to stress its causative importance for the whole narrative: it is the mating of opposites that carries the seeds of all the trouble to come.

(2) lines 433-8 constitute a rapid *praeteritio* that takes us from the wedding to the birth of Itys (the ominous *parentes*) and then to the birthday of Itys (five years later) at which the continuous or true narrative begins (438). The abrupt transition between the gnomic *usque adeo latet utilitas* and *iam tempora Titan quinque per autumnos... duxerat* indicates the dividing point between the preliminary period of apparent happiness (so deceptive) and the actual tragedy that now begins.

(3) lines 438-46 describe both the voyage of Tereus (to Athens) and its motive (Procne's affection for Philomela). The quick obedience of Tereus (he does not even reply to Procne but at once orders out his ships, l. 444) is again a dramatic indication of the gap between appearance (Tereus' conjugal eagerness to comply with Procne's wish) and the reality so soon to be manifested. The main point of these lines is of course to introduce Procne at the start and thus prepare the reader for her definitive re-emergence at the close of the episode.

(4) lines 447-82. Here the true nature of Tereus is revealed as soon as he sees Philomela, but this is only to the reader (as the author empathetically penetrates Tereus' mind): to Pandion, Philomela and the Athenians in general he puts on an impressive show of *pietas* as if it were only the *mandata Procnes* that motivated him.

(5) lines 483-510. Here the difference between the pious Philomela (so devoted to both father and sister) and the lustful Tereus is carefully brought out. The scene marks the narrative interval between the actual success of Tereus' plan (to get possession of Philomela) and its overt realization. Thus dramatic suspense is intensified.

(6) lines 511-30. With *ut semel* (l. 511) the mask is thrown off: Philomela learns and experiences the true nature of Tereus. The rape itself is passed over in a single phrase (*vi superat*, 525). Suspense, however, is maintained by our knowledge of Procne's ignorance. Though 'off the stage', she determines the action as both Tereus' secrecy and Philomela's isolation clearly show.

(7) lines 531-62. These contain the protest of Philomela and the *glossotomia*. Tereus has failed in his effort to exact Philomela's consent or silence. He commits another crime in order to preserve even now his false relationship with Procne. Thus the 'web' episode is motivated.

(8) lines 563-86. Now, however (it is a year later, 571, and Philomela seems isolated and unable to communicate with Procne), the device of the web reverses the previous situation: it is now Tereus, not Procne, who is kept in ignorance. The pivotal lines (582-3):

*Germanaeque suae carmen miserabile legit
et (mirum potuisse) silet. Dolor ora repressit*

mark the transition from one silence to another. Procne's repression of emotion and secrecy is the starting-point and condition of her revenge. The dramatic suspense rises markedly.

(9) lines 587-646. Here the vengeance is prepared (even to the murder of Itys). Without the previous narrative (the false piety and lust of Tereus, the rape, the *glossotomia*) the child-murder would be merely grotesque. Here it is amply motivated. Yet the scene, dramatic as it is, does not interrupt the suspense but actually heightens it: all this is but preparation for the *dénouement* to come.

(10) lines 647-74. With the cannibal feast, the narrative of course comes to its end. The metamorphosis is briefly related as an

all but inevitable result of the sheer animality to which each of the three has already been reduced.

The whole episode is admirably unified. There are of course two parts to it (one in which Tereus tries to keep Procne in ignorance; the other in which Procne tries to keep Tereus in ignorance), but Philomela is the dramatic link between them. Procne's brief emergence at the beginning is absolutely essential to her dominance at the end; the relative eclipse of each spouse (Procne from ll. 447-562 and Tereus from ll. 566-646) is in fact the very basis of the dramatic suspense: it is the one's ignorance of the other's actions that makes possible the final dénouement. But while the episode is dramatic, it is also dramatic narrative. The effects just indicated could not have been achieved in a drama of Sophocles, Euripides or one of their Latin imitators. Ovid's narrative embraces a number of places (Thrace, Athens) and a difference of times (the year between Philomela's departure from Athens and communication with Procne) that the Greek dramatic form could not compass. But a prologue (like that of Accius' *Tereus*) could have been substituted for the first part of the Ovidian narrative. On the other hand, though Ovid may have used a lost *epyllion* such as Virgil referred to, the masterly dramatic narrative seems to be entirely his own: the style is quite unlike any known neoteric *epyllion* (cf. my analysis of the *Ciris*, pp. 62-5 above and remarks on the *Myrrha* below, pp. 391-2). There is no apparent similarity between Euphorion and this episode: cf. the fragments of Euphorion's *Thrax* (D. L. Page, *Greek Literary Papyri*, 1 (1942), pp. 494 f.) and K. Latte's discussion of it ('Der Thrax des Euphorion', *Philologus* 90 (1935), pp. 152-3).

X. PROCRIS-CEPHALUS (VII, 694-868)

The two principal treatments of the sources here are those by Rohde, pp. 30-51, and Viktor Pöschl, 'Kephalos und Prokris in Ovids Metamorphosen' (*Hermes* 87 (1959), pp. 328-43). The story (so far as Procris' 'error' and death are concerned) was also

told by Ovid in *Ars Amatoria* III, 687-746. Ovid was probably most indebted to Nicander represented by Antoninus Liberalis, *Met. Syn.* 41 ('Αλώπηξ, Cazzaniga ed. pp. 75-7; Martini ed. pp. 123-7). But the versions of Hyginus (189 = Rose ed. pp. 133-4), Apollodorus (III, 197-8 and II, 57-9) and the scholium to *Odyssey* XI, 321 (this reflects Pherecydes as it says: ἱστορία παρὰ Φερεκύδην ἐν τῇ ἐβδόμῃ) add interesting details. The principal variations can best be indicated in parallel (cf. p. 177):

Hyginus, 189	Pherecydes (<i>Od.</i> scholium)	Nicander	Apollodorus
Cephalus rejects Aurora's advances, who then changes his shape. Thus disguised, he 'seduces' Procris. At the discovery of C.'s identity, she flees, lives with Diana and is given the magic spear and dog. Then, disguised as a young man, she rejoins Cephalus. In order to secure dog and spear, he consents to her apparently homosexual solicitation. P. then discovers her true self. They are reconciled. Finally she is accidentally killed by his spear as, still jealous of Aurora, she secretly observes him from an ambush in the bushes.	Cephalus tries to 'prove' Procris' virtue by an 8 years' absence and return in a disguised form. He then tries to seduce her; she yields. He reveals his true identity but is reconciled to her. Later Procris becomes jealous of the 'cloud' (νεφέλη) to which or whom Cephalus has been heard to speak. She is, as in Hyginus, accidentally killed.	Eos (Aurora) seduces Cephalus. Then C. tries Procris by pretending absence and sending messenger with offers of money, as if from a stranger who wanted to seduce her. She finally consents; C. reveals the truth; she flees and stays with Minos but returns to C. (disguised as young man) with the dog and spear. She makes same offer as in Hyginus, then reveals herself. Nothing about her final jealousy and death.	Procris, the wife of Cephalus, sleeps with Pteleon for the price of a golden crown. Cephalus discovers her deed. She flees to Minos in Crete. Minos falls in love with her and she gives in to him after overcoming Pasiphae's witchery. But fearing Pasiphae, she flees, returns to Athens and is reconciled to Cephalus. Finally Cephalus kills her (with spear) by mistake while hunting.

OVID

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BY

BROOKS OTIS

*Olive H. Palmer Professor of Humanities
Stanford University*

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