

MANUELA GARCÍA VALDÉS - LUIS ALFONSO LLERA FUEYO - LUCÍA RODRÍGUEZ-NORIEGA GUILLÉN (edd.), *Claudius Aelianus De Natura Animalium*, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Latinorum Teubneriana 2006, Berlin-New York: De Gruyter, 2009, pp. xxx + 469. ISBN 978-3-11-022005-6.

It is nearly a century and a half since this work of Aelian was edited with full apparatus criticus by Hercher. In the meantime there have been a few significant contributions, notably the investigation of the manuscript tradition by E.L. De Stefani and the helpful Loeb edition by A.F. Scholfield. We are now offered a new text by a team of colleagues from the University of Oviedo.

The editors confirm that the stemma of the MSS constructed by De Stefani is correct, and they have examined two more MSS that have come to light (Escorial T.1.1 and Uppsala gr. 27); these prove to be copies of other extant witnesses and so can be eliminated. For practical purposes the text has to be based on L (Laur. 86.7), P (Paris grec 1456) and V (Paris supp.gr. 352). On p. x it is noted that four other MSS (AWHF) have occasionally to be taken into account, but in the list of sigla on p. xxii W and F do not figure, and the reason for this emerges on p. xv, where it is reported that W is badly damaged and F offers a much interpolated text. The most important result of the editors' inquiries is that Hercher made insufficient use of V and failed to report a number of readings that will have been in the archetype. It should also be noted that the numbering of chapters, especially in Book 17, has been improved (the details are given on pp. 436-8).

It is of course well known that Hercher altered the text in a great many passages in the light of what he considered to be the correct Attic usage. The editors have quite understandably reacted against this and are anxious not to intervene without necessity; on p. xx they note a few points in which they have followed Hercher against the consensus of the MSS. The chief difficulty for the textual critic is that Aelian was an Atticist, and unfortunately he was not as proficient as other practitioners of that fashionable linguistic archaism. On every page there are unsuccessful efforts to imitate the idiomatic usages of classical authors. There are many expressions which, if transmitted in the text of those authors, would almost certainly need to be emended. When such expressions are transmitted in the text of Aelian, there is a case for taking the view that they can be allowed to stand in the text. But some of them could be due to the carelessness of scribes, and it is not always easy to decide which category an error belongs to. The editors have drawn the line between the two categories in such a way as to indicate considerable confidence in the accuracy of the text as transmitted, which entails the view that Aelian's linguistic shortcomings are extremely numerous. In many passages they print a text which cannot be translated without doing violence either to common sense or to the rules of syntax. Though Aelian's command of

classical Attic leaves much to be desired, I do not believe him capable of serious offences against basic rules, and I am convinced that there are many passages where emendation cannot be avoided.

A few details in the preface may be mentioned. P.vii: *quantum scimus*: I would prefer *quod sciamus*. Ibid., n. 2, *cum facit*: one would expect *cum faciat*. P. xii: we need *ex alio quodam fonte*. P. xix: the statement that the ancients used letters to indicate numerals is misleading as it stands, since it appears that in literary papyri numerals tend to be written in full, not abbreviated. Ibid., *numeralia* is dubious Latin. P. xx: I am not clear why it is thought that Aelian was not himself responsible for the division of his work into 17 books.

The typography of this edition arouses mixed feelings. The Greek type-face, though not the one that I would prefer, is acceptable enough, but the lines are too long, measuring 103 mm., whereas Teubner texts of the previous era had lines of 85 mm., which is much more comfortable for the reader. Another typographical feature deserves mention. The apparatus criticus is too densely printed on many pages. While I appreciate that there are difficulties of spacing when an entry runs over from one line to the next, I am certain that a better result was achievable. I also feel that the system of single and double vertical lines separating the entries is unnecessary and aesthetically displeasing.

Users of this edition will appreciate that the text is based on the right MSS, but they will also wish to be confident that the collations are reasonably accurate, and on this point I have to express a caveat. Whereas many Greek MSS are easy enough to read with a little practice, V is written in a rather difficult script which requires more attention, and examination of photostats of a couple of pages in my possession led to the following observations.

Book 2 ch. 3 (p.28, l.26). The editors record the faulty variant form Τηρήα. But it is not so; the epsilon of Tereus' name is written in ligature with the following alpha, resulting in a distortion of its natural form. The identical ligature is found again a few line below in the word ἐάν.

Book 2 ch. 6 (p. 29, l. 24). The editors record the name as Λεώνδας, but I think the compendium used for the final syllable should be interpreted as ης.

ibid., l. 26. The last letter of the name Pleroselene (*sic*) is eta, not omega.

ibid., p. 30, l. 7. V agrees with the other MSS in reading ὑπέρσεμνον.

ibid., l. 12. V agrees with the other MSS in reading προσνέων.

Book 10 ch. 1 (p. 233, l. 14). ἀμφοτέρους is clear in V and is therefore the paradosis and should be printed.

ibid., ch. 4 (p. 234, l. 12). V reads μηκίστους, an obvious slip.

ibid., l. 15. V seems to read ὑπερεί and to have omitted the last two syllables of the verb.

It is a pity to have to conclude that the collation of one of the key witnesses to the text appears to be rather inexact.

I come now to consideration of the textual choices made by the editors. Here I have to report that as I began to read the text it immediately became clear that editorial policy is far too conservative. Here are some examples from the first few pages. In the proem, p. 1, line 13, I simply do not see how one can do without Jacobs'

supplement of τὰ, but it is not adopted. Book 1, ch. 3 (p.3, ll. 5 and 8): Cobet's ζώφ and Hercher's τῆ οὐρά are not accepted. Book 1, ch. 11 (p.7, l.3): Hercher deleted ἐκ τῶνδε κέφαλον; I do not see how to translate these words or how the interpolation came about, so would be inclined to obelise, a procedure which the editors seem oddly unwilling to contemplate. Book 1, ch. 12: it is hard to believe that Meineke's πολύσεμνοι should be rejected. Book 1, ch. 13 (p.8, l.5): the emendation καταχρήσει is essential. Book 1, ch. 18 (p.10, l.20): the MSS have μεμυκότες, which the editors retain, though it is syntactically impossible; Jacobs tried μεμυκότης, which yields the banal sense "when it closes its mouth you cannot see its teeth", whereas Scholfield translated "when it opens....", which is what one might expect, and so I would consider reading ἀναμεμυκότης, though the word is rare and late. Ibid. (p.11, l.1): σπαρτώδει μιμήματι induces the comment *sana mihi non vid.* (why not *nobis*, since the editors are a trio?), but no use of obeli. One might try σπειρώδει, so as to give the meaning "in imitation of a garment". I could continue, but this small sample of passages makes the point clearly enough.

A reviewer's next duty is to indicate the extent to which the editors have made a contribution through their own conjectures. There are a few conjectures, mainly towards the end of the text, and some of them quite acceptable, e.g. at 5.20, 11.10 (p. 263, l.4), 16.11, 17.23. Others are less convincing. At 7.44 (p.190, l.1) τοῦ λέοντος is printed in the text instead of the transmitted εὔδοντος, but I am at a loss to see how this can be translated. At 11.10 (p.261, l.23) I am unable to translate the proposed μήτιος. At 12.42 (p. 306, l.18) the proposal in the lyric of Arion is unnecessary, and could have been avoided if they had consulted West's paper in *ZPE* 45, 1982, 5-9. At 13.23 (p.326, l.22) I cannot see any need to alter the transmitted ταῦτα. At 15.6 (p.362, l.26) the first person verb ἐπεφήμισα is unconvincing, since it is not Aelian himself who devised the epithet for Poseidon; the text here has been seen to require other surgery, which the editors do not record. At 15.25 (p.375, l.28) I see no reason to print an eccentric and presumably erroneous spelling of the name Gedrosioi that is hinted at by the MSS. At 17.44 (p.426, l.20) I doubt if δίου for τοῦ Διός helps unless it can be shown that this is an epithet regularly applied to Heracles.

There are odd features in the Latin of the apparatus. Though there are three editors, when they make a proposal they indicate it with *scripsi* rather than *scripsimus*. They also tend to use subjunctives, e.g. *deleat* instead of *delet*, perhaps because they are misled by the formula *malit*, which is generally accepted.

This ought to have been the definitive edition, at least for several decades and perhaps longer if there are no further discoveries of papyri or medieval manuscripts, but it falls short of achieving that aim in two significant respects. One of the most important manuscripts needs to be freshly collated by someone with sufficient palaeographical experience. And the exaggerated conservatism in textual matters needs to be put right, at least to the extent of ensuring that what is printed can be translated satisfactorily.

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