

CICERO'S *PRO SEXTO ROSCIO* AND CYPRIAN¹

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The recent Spanish translation of Cyprian's complete works by Juan Antonio Gil-Tamayo obviously has a problem with the passage in *Letter* 39 describing the persecution-induced scars that qualify the confessor Celerinus for the clergy². The Cyprianic passage in question reads thus: *lucent in corpore glorioso clara vulnerum signa, eminent et apparent in nervis hominis ac membris longa tabe consumptis expressa vestigia* (Epist. 39, 2, 3). Here *eminent et apparent... expressa vestigia* is rendered by Gil-Tamayo as "se advierten y sobresalen las señales"³. Significantly Gil-Tamayo has inverted the order of the verbs (*eminent et apparent*), while omitting *expressa* altogether. It is noteworthy that a similar inversion marks the recent Italian translation by Maria Vincelli ("sono visibili ed evidenti"), where the stronger term is again put second in contrast to the Cyprianic order⁴.

1 Texts are cited according to *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae: Index librorum scriptorum inscriptionum*², Leipzig 1990, repr. Berlin 2009, and its on line *Addenda* at <http://www.thesaurus.badw.de/pdf/addenda.pdf>.

2 J.A. GIL-TAMAYO, *San Cipriano de Cartago: Obras completas* 1-2, Madrid (BAC 717; 737) 2013-16. The *Letters* conclude vol. 1.

3 O.c. (n. 2) 1, 563.

4 C. DELL'OSSO, M. VINCELLI and G. TAPONECCO, *Cipriano vescovo di Cartagine: Lettere* 1-50, Rome (Scritt. Crist. Afr. Rom. 5,1) 2006, 279.

Such foot-in-mouthness in attempts to render this Cyprianic clause is typical. The canonical French translation by Louis Bayard renders these words (*eminent et apparent... expressa vestigia*) as “on voit... les traces des souffrances endurées”⁵. This time *eminent et apparent* is shrunk to a mere “on voit”, while *expressa* is again left out as qualifier of *vestigia*, which however is now qualified by the entirely unwarranted “des souffrances endurées”. The canonical English translation by Graeme Clarke offers the following awkward rendering of said clause (*eminent et apparent... expressa vestigia*): “you may distinguish clearly the prominent traces of his sufferings”⁶. Once again “of his sufferings” is an unwarranted addition that reveals the translator’s uncomfortableness. Again *eminent et apparent* is garbled (“you may distinguish clearly”), while *expressa* is misrendered (“prominent”)⁷. These (mis-)translations of *eminent / apparent* and *expressa* also entail a not-worth-saying obviousness: if the traces are “prominent”, they all-too-obviously can be “distinguished”. More recently Allen Brent has rendered this bothersome clause (*eminent et apparent... expressa vestigia*) thus: “their (sc. the wounds’) deep impressions have left clear and striking patterns”⁸. While the order of *eminent et apparent* is again inverted (“clear” is put first), the rendering of *eminent* as “striking patterns” is a Brennian head-trip without toe-hold in *Oxford Latin Dictionary*⁹.

The reason for this pervasive perplexity in rendering this Cyprianic clause is evidently to be sought in an unidentified debt here to Cicero: two Ciceronian passages are involved. These echoes would seem to be particularly significant. Cyprian never refers to a pagan writer. On the other hand Jerome reports that Cyprian had taught oratory¹⁰. Since oratory was synonymous with the name of

5 L. BAYARD, *Saint Cyprien: Correspondance*² 1, Paris 1962, repr. 2002, 98.

6 G.W. CLARKE, *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage* 2, New York (Anc. Chr. Wr. 44) 1984, 55. Nothing whatever is said about this sentence in Clarke’s accompanying and “très détaillé” commentary, which is “remarquable par l’ampleur de l’érudition et la finesse de l’interprétation” (so S. DELÉANI, *Saint Cyprien: Lettres 1-20*, Paris [Coll. Ét. Aug., Sér. Ant. 182] 2007, 9).

7 There is no warrant for such a rendering of *expressus*; cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict.*² 1 (2012) 716 (s.v.).

8 A. BRENT, *St. Cyprian of Carthage, On the Church: Select Letters*, New York (Pop. Patr. Ser. 33) 2006, 101.

9 Cf. *Oxf. Lat. Dict.*² 1 (2012) 664 (s.v. *emineo*).

10 *In Ion.* 3, 6 ll. 212-4 D. (*in tantam gloriam venit eloquentiae, ut oratoriam quoque doceret Carthagini*); *Vir. ill.* 67, 1 (*gloriose rhetoricam docuit*).

"Cicero"¹¹, a debt to the Arpinate on Cyprian's part might seem no surprise. Such is not however the case: "though no educated writer of post-Augustan date could fail to show the influence of Cicero, yet there can be none who is less indebted to him than Cyprian"¹². Identification of two reminiscences of Cicero in the present text of Cyprian is accordingly a matter of not inconsiderable importance.

The Cyprianic text that contains these Ciceronian echoes belongs to the extensive corpus of this ecclesiarch's correspondence. In Diercks' new critical edition of these letters the "Index Auctorum" makes no mention of Cicero whatsoever¹³. The only pagan author to appear at all in this "Index" is Horace, for whom a single passage is adduced: *Epist.* 1, 11, 27 (*caelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt*). This line of Horace is assumed to be imitated by Cyprian in *Letter* 52, 1, 2: *quasi mutasse sit hominem mutare regionem*. However Watson had already pointed out that Cyprian's wording here "must be simply proverbial, not Horatian"¹⁴. Under such skimpy *Quellenforschung*-circumstances, special significance attaches to the case to be made below for the presence of two certain echoes of the classics in one and the same clause of these Cyprianic *Letters*¹⁵.

The first of this pair of Ciceronian imitations in this Cyprianic clause is the first three words: *eminent et apparent*. Exactly the same

11 Cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 10, 1, 112 *ut Cicero iam non hominis nomen sed eloquentiae habeatur*.

12 E.W. WATSON, *The Style and Language of St. Cyprian*, Oxford (Stud. Bibl. Eccles. 4) 1896, repr. Piscataway, NJ 2006, 203. Cf. G.W. CLARKE, *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage* 1, New York (Anc. Chr. Wr. 43) 1984, 17: "All the quotations, allusions, and verbal reminiscences of classical letters, the poets and writers of the past, which richly embellished the compositions of an accomplished rhetorician of the day, are astonishingly absent from his churchman's prose".

13 G.F. DIERCKS and G.W. CLARKE, *Sancti Cypriani episcopi epistularium*, Turnhout (CCSL 3 D) 1999, 935-48.

14 WATSON, o.c. (n. 12) 205 n. 3. CLARKE, o.c. (n. 6) 287 (*ad loc.*) refers (not "no. 286" and "1980", but "no. 285" and "1890") for this "proverbial expression" to A. OTTO, *Die Sprichwörter und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten der Römer*, Leipzig 1890, repr. Hildesheim 2013, 61. Clarke might have referred further to R. HÄUSSLER, *Nachträge zu A. Otto, Sprichwörter und sprichwörtliche Redensarten der Römer*, Hildesheim 1968, 53; 70; 142.

15 For a survey of the few classical echoes that have been identified elsewhere in Cyprian cf. R. NOORMANN, *Ad salutem consulere: Die Paränese Cyprians im Kontext antiken und frühchristlichen Denkens*, Göttingen (Forsch. z. Kirchen- u. Dogmengesch. 99) 2009, 22-8, referring in particular to S. FREUND, *Vergil im frühen Christentum: Untersuchungen zu den Vergilziten bei Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Novatian, Cyprian und Arnobius*², Paderborn (Stud. z. Gesch. u. Kult. d. Altert., N. F. 1,16) 2003, 213-6 (with lit.). In addition one might refer to the present writer, "Excussaque pectore luno est: *Aen.* 5, 679 in Cyprian", *VetChr* 46 (2009) 315-8.

verbs in exactly the same order had been employed by Cicero: *eminet et apparet*¹⁶. In both authors these verbs, which evince virtually the same lexical form (*eminent... apparent* / *eminet... apparet*), are also linked by the same copulative (*et*)¹⁷: in both texts the verbs also occupy a similarly marginal position¹⁸. The only instances of this notable collocation to be provided by the online *Library of Latin Texts* before Cyprian and besides the *Pro S. Roscio* are not comparable: two passages of the Younger Seneca, where these verbs are instead used antithetically¹⁹, and one passage of the Younger Pliny, where the reference is to a rock that really does “stick up”²⁰. Since *emineo* already connotes “visibility”²¹, Cicero’s prompt addition of *appareo* might be felt to entail an element of tautological anticlimax. In the *Pro S. Roscio* however this collocation can be justified as an antithesis to the two immediately preceding verbs: *eminet* and *apparet* correspond respectively to *opprimitur* and *absconditur*²². In Cyprian on the other hand there is no such justificatory antithesis: nobody is trying to “cover up” the confessor’s wounds. The resultant inconcinnity confirms Cyprian’s indebtedness.

The subject of Cyprian’s *eminent et apparent* is *expressa vestigia*, which is placed at the other end of the clause. The source of this Cyprianic *expressa vestigia* is evidently an earlier text of this same Ciceronian speech (*S. Rosc.* 62): *expressa sceleris vestigia*²³. According to *Library of Latin Texts* the only writer before Cyprian to imitate Cicero’s *expressa vestigia* is Fronto (p. 129, 1 v. d. H.): this scrap of Frontonian epistolography may be discounted as a possible source

16 *S. Rosc.* 121. This speech “was a staple of the rhetorical schools” (A.R. Dyck, *Cicero: Pro Sexto Roscio*, Cambridge 2010, 19).

17 For alternatives (besides asyndeton) cf. (e.g.) Ps. Asper, *Gramm. suppl.* 57, 18-9 H. *da copulativas* (sc. *coniunctiones*): *et, que, at, atque, ac, ast*.

18 If in Cyprian these verbs are placed at the beginning, in Cicero they stand conspicuously at the end.

19 Viz. *Dial.* 3, 1, 7 (*alii affectus apparent, hic eminet*); *Epist.* 19, 2 (*ut otium tuum non emineat, sed appareat*). This antithetic use makes the non-antithetic application of the same verbs in Cyprian all the more noteworthy.

20 Viz. *Epist.* 3, 31, 17 (*eminet iam et apparet saxeum dorsum*).

21 Cf. *Synon. Cic.* p. 439, 12-3 B. *eminet. emicat. elucet. enitet. praefulget. praeenitet*.

22 This Ciceronian sentence reads in full: *est quiddam quod occultatur: quod quo studio sius ab istis opprimitur et absconditur, eo magis eminet et apparet*.

23 This passage of the *Pro S. Roscio* was well-known: Cicero’s *expressa... vestigia* is separated by just three lines of OCT text from wording quoted by Marius Victorinus, *Rhet.* 2, 14 p. 269, 39-40 H.

for Cyprian²⁴. The Ciceronian formulation itself has been subjected by Cyprian to a twofold stylistic enhancement. On the one hand Cicero's *expressa sceleris vestigia* is compressed to *expressa vestigia*. On the other hand Cyprian also improves the clausulation²⁵: Cicero's prosodically unremarkable spondee cretic (*sceleris vestigia*) is replaced by an elegant double cretic (*expressa vestigia*), which corresponds accentually to the *cursus tardus* with coincidence of metrical ictus and word accent²⁶.

If Cyprian's *imitatio* of Cicero is marked by such improvement, it also entails an impairment. The point was made above that Cyprian's reprise of Ciceronian *eminet et apparet* gives rise to a linguistic flaw. It may now be observed that both these Cyprianic clones of the *Pro S. Roscio* also entail a contextual blemish. In this Cyprianic clause the language of a pagan classic is being applied to the victim of a pagan persecution. The language in question involves a reference to "crime"²⁷. The "crime" in question is moreover nothing less than parricide. The language describing this "parricidal crime" is now applied incongruously to a paragon of Christian virtue. Here Cyprian "putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old" (Lk. 5, 36). He should have known better. As Christ warns, "the new agreeth not with the old" (*ibid.*).

ABSTRACT

A passage of Cyprian's *Letter 39* presents translators with a Gordian problem. The solution is to point to a pair of hitherto unidentified echoes of Cicero's *Pro S. Roscio*. These reminiscences are specially significant in view of the extreme paucity of Cyprian's borrowings from the classics. The particular echoes at issue here can also be shown to shed light on Cyprian's compositional technique in general.

Key words: Cicero, Cyprian, *imitatio*, *Quellenforschung*.

24 Fronto is altogether absent from the index to WATSON, *o.c.* (n. 12).

25 In both Cicero and Cyprian the phrase occupies the same final position.

26 Cyprian also makes a small improvement to Ciceronian *eminet et*. His own *eminent et* avoids Cicero's breach (-*et et*) of the precept *ne ultima syllaba prioris verbi eadem sit quae prima posterioris* (so [e.g.] Fortunatianus, *Rhet.* 3, 11).

27 Cf. Cicero's *expressa sceleris vestigia* and his mention (122) of *malefici, sceleris, caedis* in connection with the subject (*quiddam quod occultatur*) of *eminet et apparet*.