

(1.12.18 Janko), ἐκγοητεύειν (1.111.25 Janko), κατακληεῖν (2.191.2 Janko).¹⁵ Thus for both Philodemus and his predecessors ψυχαγωγία fits comfortably within the larger conceptual domain of enchantment and need not be watered down through the translation ‘entertainment’.

One final reason for preferring the translation of ‘enchantment’ over ‘entertainment’ is that the former already entails the latter and we lose nothing by sticking with the more traditional sense. Janko’s ‘enthralment’ is certainly closer to the mark; however, in the end, there is no precise reason to divorce the language of ψυχαγωγία from the semantical family of ‘enchantment’ of which it is clearly a part both in Philodemus and elsewhere.

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A NOTE ON THE TEXT AND INTERPRETATION OF CICERO, *DE FATO* 35

ABSTRACT

De fato 35 is part of Cicero’s argument against the Stoic theory of causation. He claims in general that the Stoic chain of causes consists of antecedent but not efficient causes. To the examples cited in the previous chapter he adds verses from the opening of Ennius’ *Medea exul* (lines 208–11 Jocelyn = FRL 2 and TRF 89.1–4) containing the Nurse’s lamentation over the origins of the Argonautic expedition that led, ultimately, to Medea’s current mental distress. Then follows the question *quorsum haec praeterita?* and the answer *quia sequitur illud*, ‘nam numquam era errans mea domo efferret pedem | Medea, animo aegro, amore saeuo saucia’, non ut eae res causam adferrent amoris, citing Ennius, *Medea exul* 215–16 Jocelyn = FRL 2 and TRF 89.8–9. Editors and commentators have struggled to explain the relation of the answer to the question. Here it is argued that the relation becomes clear if one adopts non<ne> for non and punctuates with a query after amoris. The sense will be: ‘Why have these past events been cited? In view of the sequel ... was it not so that they bring on the cause of love?’ In other words, the Nurse, like the Stoics in Cicero’s view, cites antecedent events as if they were efficient causes.

Keywords: Cicero; *De fato*; Stoicism; antecedent cause; efficient cause; Ennius; *Medea exul*

Cicero’s *De fato* 35 forms part of Cicero’s argument against the Stoic doctrine of causality. There is, however, no consensus as to how the passage should be interpreted or, if necessary, emended. It may therefore be worth renewed examination. In Ax’s edition it reads as follows:

ex hoc genere illud est Enni,
 utinam ne in nemore Pelio securibus
 caesae accidissent abiegnae ad terram trabes!

¹⁵ Philodemus quotes Megaclides’ claim that ‘poetry produces enchantment and that enchantment is the subjection of the soul’ (τὴν πόησιν κήησι[ν φέρειν, τὴν]δὲ κήησιν ψ[υχῆς εἶναι κα[τ]άστασιν, *De poem.* 1.130.20–3 Janko).

licuit uel altius, ‘utinam ne in Pelio nata ulla umquam esset arbor!’, etiam supra, ‘utinam ne esset mons ullus Pelius!’ similiterque superiora repetentem regredi infinite licet,
 neue inde nauis inchoandi exordium
 cepisset.
 quorsum haec praeterita? quia sequitur illud,
 nam numquam era errans mea domo efferret pedem
 Medea, animo aegro, amore saeuo saucia,
 non ut eae res causam adferrent amoris.¹

In the final lines the train of thought remains unclear in spite of various attempts at explanation and/or emendation, of which I will discuss the ones that seem most notable.

Cicero holds (after Carneades) that there are two types of causes, antecedent and efficient causes, and that the causal chain posited by the Stoa that results in all-controlling fate consists of antecedent but not efficient causes. To illustrate the distinction, he cites and dilates on verses from the Nurse’s opening monologue in Ennius’ *Medea exul* (lines 208–11, 215–16 Jocelyn = *FRL* 2 and *TRF* 89.1–4, 89.8–9). The introductory words *ex hoc genere* connect the speech of the Nurse with examples just cited of causes that preceded but were not the efficient causes of certain events, including Hecuba’s giving birth to Alexandros/Paris in relation to the deaths of Trojans (§34). The problem lies in determining the relation of the question *quorsum haec praeterita* [*sc. pertinent* or the like]? to the following *quia sequitur illud ... non ut eae res causam adferrent amoris*. Lambin posited a lacuna before *non ut eae res ...*,² but one should exhaust all other possibilities before resorting to such a remedy.

Retaining the transmitted text, Stüve proposed that *sequitur* be taken to refer to temporal sequence. According to him, Cicero claims that the description of Medea’s state in the following verses was simply *after* the events previously mentioned and that they were not adduced as a cause.³ But this mistakes the formula that Cicero uses when he is citing several items in sequence.⁴ *sequitur* means ‘follows’ but in the sense ‘follows in the text of Ennius’. One might also wonder why the Nurse wished that those events had never occurred if she did not see them as in some sense a cause for the present predicament.⁵

Weidemann also retains the transmitted text: taking *quia sequitur illud ...* as the answer to the question *quorsum haec praeterita?* he translates: ‘Worauf zielen (die Verse, in denen er auf) diese vergangenen Ereignisse zurückgreift? (Er hat sie) mit Rücksicht darauf (geschrieben), daß (auf sie) die Verse folgen: “Denn nie wäre irrend meine Herrin durchgebrannt ...”, nicht etwa in der Absicht, daß die (in ihnen) erwähnten Ereignisse die Ursache für die Liebe (der Medea) angeben sollten.’⁶ But this is to create a blatant contradiction, since Ennius’ verses themselves say that without the prior named events Medea would not be in her present state of lovesickness.

¹ W. Ax (ed.), *M. Tullius Cicero: De divinatione, De fato, Timaeus* (Leipzig, 1938), with only trivial modifications in punctuation.

² D. Lambinus (ed.), *M. Tullii Ciceronis opera omnia* (Paris, 1565–6).

³ G. Stüve, *Ad Ciceronis De fato librum observationes variae* (Kiel, 1895), 44.

⁴ Cf. *Har. resp.* 56 *sequitur illud, ‘ne deterioribus repulsisque honos augeatur’; De or.* 2.302 *sermo ille sequitur: ‘occidit’; Leg.* 3.42 *sequitur illud: ‘intercessor rei malae salutaris ciuis esto’.*

⁵ The same objections apply to the interpretation of R.W. Sharples (ed.), *Cicero: On Fate (De fato) and Boethius: The Consolation of Philosophy IV.5–7, V* (Warminster, 1991), 184, who takes *sequitur* as ‘follows’ in the logical sense, with the *ut*-clause as consecutive depending on it.

⁶ H. Weidemann (ed.), *Cicero: Über das Schicksal* (Berlin and Boston, 2019), 133 with comment at 283.

On the other hand, Schäublin sees *sequitur illud ...* and *ut eae res causam adferrent amoris* as alternative possibilities for answering the question *quorsum haec praeterita?* and proposes accordingly to replace *non* with *an* and punctuate with a query after *amoris*.⁷ But this perhaps misconceives the relation of ideas: Medea's current state of mind as described in the quoted verses (*animo aegro, amore saeuo saucia*) is not an alternative to the preceding factors having caused her love.⁸

Perhaps the needed clarification can be provided by attaching *-ne* to *non* (*ne* can easily have dropped out between *n* and *u*) and adding a query after *amoris*:

quorsum haec praeterita? quia sequitur illud,
 nam numquam era errans mea domo efferret pedem
 Medea, animo aegro, amore saeuo saucia,
 non<ne> ut eae res causam adferrent amoris?

The thought will thus be: 'To what end (are) these past events (cited)? In view of the following "for my wandering mistress Medea would never have set foot out of the house, sick at heart, smitten by cruel love", is it not so that those factors would bring on the cause of love?',⁹ that is, the Nurse wishes the named events had not happened, since she views them as the cause of Medea's present lovesickness. For Cicero, however, this is an example of antecedent events that were not efficient causes (and hence, in his view, not causes in the true sense), merely necessary conditions. The Stoics' causes, then, are subtly undercut as the kinds of causes that the Nurse cites, just as in *De divinatione* Book 2 the Stoics are repeatedly criticized for the kind of superstitious thinking that the speaker associates with old women.¹⁰ Hence in the sequel he draws this conclusion: *nulla igitur earum est causa, quoniam nulla eam rem sua ui efficit cuius causa dicitur* (*Fat.* 36).¹¹

Careful consideration of Cicero's practices in citation as well as of the relation of the Ennian quotations to the tenor of Cicero's overall argument shows that a plausible sense can be achieved by a relatively modest intervention in the transmitted text of *Fat.* 35.

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⁷ C. Schäublin, 'Cicero, *De fato* 35–36', in D. Knoepfler (ed.), *Nomen Latinum. Mélanges de langue, de littérature et de civilisation latines offerts au professeur André Schneider à l'occasion de son départ à la retraite* (Neuchâtel and Geneva, 1997), 41–4.

⁸ Cf. also Weidemann (n. 6), 281–2 for another objection to Schäublin's thesis.

⁹ In this rendering, *prolata sunt* (or the like) is supplied; an alternative would be to understand *quorsum haec praeterita pertinent*, in which case *adferrent* would be attracted to the tense of the preceding *ecferret*; cf. R. Kühner and C. Stegmann, *Ausführliche Grammatik der lateinischen Sprache* (Hannover, 1966⁴), 2.195.

¹⁰ Cf. A.R. Dyck, *Commentary on Cicero De Divinatione II* (Ann Arbor, 2020), 29.

¹¹ Here *earum* evidently refers back to *eae res* at §35. Cicero makes this point using the same Ennian passage as illustration at *Top.* 61: *hoc igitur sine quo non fit ab eo in quo certe fit diligenter est separandum. illud enim est tamquam 'utinam ne in nemore Pelio', nisi enim 'accidissent abiegnae ad terram trabes', Argo illa facta non esset, nec tamen fuit in his trabibus efficiendi uis necessaria.*