

DIVINE WIND. LITERARY AND HISTORICAL ECHOES IN THE WORK OF ANTONIUS ROSANEUS

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Since Greek, Etruscan and Roman times, peoples have believed that supernatural entities were in control of meteorological phenomena. Whether the gods were on one's side or not was crucial in determining the outcome of battles, invasions and sieges. This paper focuses on a particular episode in the War of Cyprus, the conflict between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice that started in 1570. On the 15th of August of the following year, during the surrender of Famagusta, which took place a few weeks before the great battle of Lepanto, a fleet commanded by the Pasha and Beylerbey of Algiers, the renegade corsair Uluğ Ali, sailed up the Adriatic Sea and attacked the island of Korčula. Unarmed and unprepared for defense, the islanders were in complete despair. But the attackers *miraculously* retreated shortly after landing, since a sudden storm at sea threatened to damage their anchored fleet. While the chronicler of this battle, archdeacon Antonius Rosaneus, believed God to be responsible for this turn of events, in his description he used the same vocabulary as classical Latin authors. Without citing his source, Rosaneus recalls a famous passage in Claudian, in which the latter commemorated Theodosius's victory over the usurper Eugenius (394 AD) and described how a similar sudden *miraculous* wind reversed the outcome of the battle.

Key words: Intertextuality, epic and history, gods and storms, divine wind, Korčula island, Antonius Rosaneus (Antun Rožanović)

If in any modern European language one says the word »kamikaze«, the mind runs to the young Japanese aviators' suicide flights in the closing stages of the Pacific Campaign (1944-45). In the past few years, a new meaning has been associated with this term: »kamikaze mission« is now widely understood as a

sudden terroristic attack, in which the people assaulting are aware that they will inevitably face death. But *kami*, which means »god, providence« and *kaze* »wind,« was originally a Japanese word to indicate a typhoon, a storm that wrecked the fleets of the Chinese emperor who tried to invade Japan first in 1274 and then in 1281. After this historical-meteorological event, Japanese people began to believe that the gods above loved them, and hated their enemies.

The ancient world offers numerous examples of alleged supernatural interventions that influenced human events: Homer, the Bible, the Etruscan divination that interpreted thunder and lightning, and the miracle of rain during the Marcomannic Wars immortalised in the Antonine Column in Rome (about which Tertullian gave the first example of conscious »Christianization« of a meteorological phenomenon in Latin literature).¹

This essay will start by dealing with an historical event well-known to Late Latinists. At the battle of the Frigidus (September 6-7, 394) fought on the River Wipbach, the Emperor Theodosius came from the East and defeated the Western rival Eugenius and his Frankish general, the *magister militum* Arbogastes, aided by a local Alpine wind called the *bora*. Once arrived at the river Frigidus, Theodosius clashed with the armies of the usurper. The Western Romans had placed on the hills at their backs some precious statues of pagan divinities. But, when they started shooting their projectiles, a northeastern wind blew so strongly that it threw those same weapons back at them. Edward Gibbon famously described the fight in these words²:

In the heat of the battle, a violent tempest, such as is often felt among the Alps, suddenly arose from the East. The army of Theodosius was sheltered by their position from the impetuosity of the wind, which blew a cloud of dust in the faces of the enemy, disordered their ranks, wrested their weapons from their hands, and diverted or repelled their ineffectual javelins. This accidental advantage was skilfully improved; the violence of the storm was magnified by the superstitious terror of the Gauls; and they yielded without shame to the invisible power of heaven, who seemed to militate on the side of the pious emperor.

¹ In the year 172 or 173, during the campaign of Marcus Aurelius against the Marcomanni and Quadi on the Danubian *limes*, the legion called *XII Fulminata* (the 'Thundering Legion') was surrounded by the Barbarians and almost forced into surrender because it had no water. However, when disaster seemed inevitable, a heavy shower relieved the Romans. Immediately, there were several traditions about the cause of the miracle. According to Cassius Dio (72, 88-9), an Egyptian magician had been able to work the miracle. On the other hand, his contemporary Tertullian (apol. 5, 6; Scap. 4, 7) claimed that the prayer of Christian soldiers had caused the miracle.

² E. Gibbon, *The History of Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, III, London 1781, pp. 63-64. See also P. Cosgrove, *Impartial Stranger: History and Intertextuality in Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Newark-London 1999, 225.

To celebrate the victory, in 396 the poet Claudian sang these famous verses within his inaugural panegyric for Honorius's third consulate (carm. 7, 93-101):

Te propter gelidis Aquilo de monte procellis
 obruit aduersas acies reuolutaque tela
 uertit in auctores et turbine reppulit hastas. 95
 O nimium dilecte deo, cui fundit ab antris
 Aeolus armatas hiemes, cui militat aether
 et coniurati ueniunt ad classica uenti.
 Alpinae rubuere niues, et Frigidus amnis
 mutatis fumauit aquis turbaque cadentum 100
 staret, ni rapidus iuuisset flumina sanguis.

The pagan eulogist credited the god Aeolus with having sent this wind favourable to Theodosius and unfavourable to Eugenius. Less than twenty years later, St. Augustine described the same episode in prose and cited Claudian's hexameters, but he omitted two hemistichs by a self-conscious »saut du meme au meme«³ and thus suppressed the profane deity of Aeolus (civ. 5, 26):

Milites nobis qui aderant rettulerunt extorta sibi esse de manibus quaecumque iaculabantur, cum a Theodosii partibus in aduersarios uehemens uentus iret et non solum quaecumque in eos iaciebantur concitatissime raperet, uerum etiam ipsorum tela in eorum corpora retorqueret. Vnde et poeta Claudianus, quamuis a Christi nomine alienus, in eius tamen laudibus dixit:

O nimium dilecte Deo, cui militat aether,
 et coniurati ueniunt ad classica uenti!

Augustine's disciple Paulus Orosius also omitted the same half-lines and, additionally, censored Claudian's name (hist. 7, 35):

Vnum aliquod ab initio urbis conditae bellum proferant tam pia necessitate susceptum, tam diuina felicitate confectum, tam clementi benignitate sopitum, ubi nec pugna grauem caedem nec uictoria cruentam exegerit ultionem, et fortasse concedam, ut non haec fidei Christiani ducis concessa uideantur; quamuis ego hoc testimonio non laborem, quando unus ex ipsis, poeta quidem eximius sed paganus peruicacissimus, huiusmodi uersibus et Deo et homini testimonium tulit, quibus ait:

³ For a more detailed philological analysis of the texts and further bibliography see my papers »'Scriptor si peccat ...' Microvarianti testuali e macrostoria degli eventi«, in *Il calamo della memoria. Riuso di testi e mestiere letterario nella tarda antichità*, V, Trieste 2013, 127-54 <<http://hdl.handle.net/10077/9377>>; »Petrarca 'umanista', fra Claudiano e Agostino (fra Etica e Filologia)«, *Quaderni Veneti* n. s. 2 (2013), 129-46 <<https://iris.unive.it/handle/10278/31750>>.

O nimium dilecte Deo! tibi militat aether,
et coniurati ueniunt ad classica uenti.

Also thanks to the extracts of the Christian authors, for several centuries Claudian's passage deeply influenced European literatures. Cyprianus Gallus, a paraphrast of the *Heptateuchus* contemporary to Augustine and Orosius, quoted the verses from Claudian's original, unabridged text.⁴ Cyprianus was describing the Red Sea crossing, in which Moses, leading the people of Israel *in exitu de Aegypto*, takes the place of the victorius Roman emperor (exod. 474-476):

O nimium felix, celsis cui misit ab astris
munimenta deus, candens cui militat aether 475
et coniuratae ueniunt ad proelia noctes!
Hinc procerem mandata dei depromere uirgam
protenta iussere manu Rubrumque superne
despectare fretum. Quod postquam rite peractum est,
Auster uentus adest, totis qui flatibus usus 480
per tacitam noctem feruentes ebibit undas
siccauitque fretum, medius ut trames apertus
panderet illaesum patefacto in aequore cursum,
cum bibulas refugus nudasset pontus harenas.

Four centuries later (ca. 850), the monk Milon de St Amand adapted the ancient model in his *Vita Amandi metrica*, in which the hero is addressed as follows (4, 241-45):

O nimium dilecte deo, cui militat aether,
cuius in auxilio caelestis machina frendens
bella parat, lumen retrahit letumque minatur!
Pro lituis tonitrus, pro telis igneus imber,
pro parmis quassans innummurat arduus axis. 245

For almost a thousand years, up to the Romantic age, western European artists and poets of the likes of Francesco Petrarca and Giovanni Pontano loved to echo Claudian's words. In particular, this »excerpt« was reused very often between the 16th and 17th centuries. During the Wars of Religion, Claudian's verses were reinterpreted by those Catholics and Protestants who shared a strong classical education. In 1575, four years after the battle of Lepanto, Torquato Tasso wrote a great epic poem to glorify the triumph of the true faith over its enemies. In the following passage, the Saracens, while besieged in the Holy City, try to set fire to a wooden war machine. But the wind changes direction and their attempt fails,

⁴ The half-verse *cui misit ab astris* undoubtedly comes from *cui fundit ab antris*.

hence the eulogy for Godfrey, the leader of the crusaders (*Gerusalemme Liberata* 18, 85-86):

In tale stato eran costor ridutti,
e già de l'acque rimanea lor poco,
quando ecco un vento, ch'improvviso spira,
contra gli autori suoi l'incendio gira.

Vien contro al foco il turbo; e indietro vòlto
il foco ove i pagan le tele alzarò,
quella molle materia in sé raccolto
l'ha immantinente, e n'arde ogni riparo.
Oh glorioso capitano! oh molto
dal gran Dio custodito, al gran Dio caro!
A te guerreggia il Cielo; ed ubidenti
vengon, chiamati a suon di trombe, i venti.

In a previous canto, the auspicious motto *tibi militat aether*, often used to address the highest authorities in coins, medals, commemorative images, also refers to the maiden warrior Clorinda (*Gerusalemme Liberata* 7, 117):

Ella gridava a i suoi: – Per noi combatte,
compagni, il Cielo, e la giustizia aita;
da l'ira sua le faccie nostre intatte
sono, e non è la destra indi impedita,
e ne la fronte solo irato ei batte
de la nemica gente impaurita,
e la scote de l'arme, e de la luce
la priva: andianne pur, ché 'l fato è duce.

Tasso's work was first printed, without the author's permission, in 1579. It was then inaccurately republished up to 1584 in various Italian cities (Genoa, Venice, Parma, Naples, Ferrara and Mantua). The poem had immediate success and popularity in every part of Europe; additionally, it was translated into English by Richard Carew (1555-1620) and Edward Fairfax (1560-1635).

In the contemporary Elizabethan masterpiece *The Spanish Tragedy* (ca. 1587), Thomas Kyd included a dramatic dialogue between the King of Spain and his brother, the Duke of Castile. At the end of the exchange, Kyd re-elaborates Claudian's verses to write a surprisingly fresh and original Latin expression:

[King] Then bless'd be heaven and guider of the heavens,
 from whose fair influence such justice flows.
[Cast.] O multum dilecte Deo, tibi militat aether,
 et coniuratae curuato poplite gentes
 succumbunt: recti soror est victoria iuris.

In *The Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers* (1610) Ben Jonson also alludes to the winds coming in aid of the queen in the famous battle against the *Armada Invincible*. What helped Elizabeth to destroy England's enemies was indeed an extraordinary meteorological event⁵:

I could report more actions yet of weight
out of this orbe, as here of eightie eight,
against the proud Armada, stil'd by Spaine
The Invincible, that cover'd all the mayne,
as if whole Ilands had broke loose, and swame;
or halfe of Norway with her firre-trees came,
to joyne the continents, it was so great,
yet by the auspice of Eliza beat:
that dear-beloved of Heaven, whom to preserve
the winds were call'd to fight, and storms to serve.

What now follows shifts from accounts of high literature and macro-history to a neglected episode of the three-century long wars between the Republic of Venice and the Turkish Empire, which took place on the island of Korčula (Curzola) in the weeks prior to the battle of Lepanto. In late summer 1571, the Ottoman admiral Uluç Ali Paşa⁶ brought a huge fleet into the Adriatic Sea to pillage the Dalmatian cities and test the Venetians' reactions. A detailed description of the events around Korčula was sent by Antun Rozanović (Antonius Rosaneus, the archdeacon and canon of the fortified town) to the Senate of Venice. The manuscript text of *Vauzalis sive Occhialinus Algerii Prorex, Corcyram Melaenam terra marique oppugnat nec expugnat*, was digitised and made freely available by CroALa.⁷

In the early dawn of August 15, on the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, bellmen climbed to their position at the top of bell-towers. From above, they noticed something coming from the East and shouted, in Rozanović's words: »Bad news, the enemy's fleet is approaching our island and getting more and more close. Behind the nearest island we can count 50 galleys with raised sails and speedily

⁵ We read these verses in the book by John Nichols, *The Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities, of King James the First ...*, II, London 1828, 278.

⁶ A Calabrian renegade named Gian Dionigi Galeni: see Gino Benzoni in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 51, Roma 1998, 409-415 <[⁷ On the website <<http://croala.ffzg.unizg.hr/cgi-bin/getobject.pl?c.283:2.croala>>. The complete title of Rozanović's work is: *Vauzalis, sive Occhialinus, Algerii Prorex, Corcyram Melaenam, terra, marique oppugnat nec expugnat. Relatio historica Antonii Rosanei, Patricii ex illustrioribus, et antiquioribus familiis eiusdem Urbis, Archidiaconi, et Iuris utriusque Doctoris, qui praesens omnibus interfuit. 1571*. Every single sheet of the Zadar manuscript is reproduced in facsimile at <<http://www.ffzg.unizg.hr/klafil/croala/slike/0910rosaneo-slike.html>>. An English translation is also available at <\[http://mywikibiz.com/Defence_of_Korcula\]\(http://mywikibiz.com/Defence_of_Korcula\)>.](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gian-dionigi-galeni_(Dizionario-Biografico)/></p>
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rowing. They are already here, outside our city. The rest of the ships can be seen right behind them«.

Illucescente aurora decimo octauo Calendas septembris prope festum assumptionis beatissimae Dei genitricis Virginis Mariae ministri conscenderant campanariam speculam omnium aedificiorum altissimam, arreptisque manu rophalis idest campanarum ferreis malleis siue clauis ferro aes personabant in quendam non ingratum concentum festiuis diebus illic de more frequentatum. Vix ter quaterque manum pulsando duxerant, cum statim prospicientes in orientem exclamant: ‘Vaeh, uaeh nobis, ecce tota classis hostilis adest, ecce pansis carbasis, atque citatis remis quinquaginta uela citra scopulos iam iam super urbem feruntur reliquum classis paulo ulterius conspicitur’.

The screaming spreads throughout the city. The inhabitants of the island are divided between those who want to leave the town gates open to the enemy and hide in the woods, and those who want to resist and fight. We stop the account at this moment of the conflict. The people from Korčula are on the verge of yielding to the enemy, invoking the Virgin Mary for help. Their prayers were heard.

Ecce repente (euidens miraculum) exoritur borealis aura, ita uehemens, qualis uix hiemali, rigidiori tempore, bacchari solet, classemque hostilem sub Urbis moenia ui cepit impellere. Veriti hostes, ne, uel in rupes littoris impingentes Triremes infringerentur, uel a nostris quassarentur Tormentis, remigio, ultimo nixu suscepto, *** ab oppido procul fieri curauerunt; et magno conatu remorum, uix Aurae impetum, et Maris undas parte transuersa recipientes, se in Occidentem, post monasterium Sancti Nicolai in sinum recepere, nostris prius ictibus, maris postea et Aurae impetu concussis nauibus. O subsidium opportunum! Liceat hic mihi dicere quod non tam bene ad suam rem dicit Poeta, quam modo ad nostram ego dicere possum de nostra hac Vrbe ‘Felix cui militat Aether, et coniurati ueniunt ad Classica Veneti’.⁸

The text of this passage was taken from the manuscript held in the State Archive of Dubrovnik (Andrijić family fonds).⁹ In the excerpt, the philologist

⁸ The reading *Veneti* has been grossly corrected to *Venti*, probably by the scribe of the manuscript himself (see **Picture 1**).

⁹ I am quoting from Nives Pantar: *Antun Rožanović, Obrana Korčule od Turaka 1571: rukopisi Državnog arhiva u Zadru i Državnog arhiva u Dubrovniku*, Diploma Thesis (Filozofski fakultet u Zagrebu, Department of Classical Philology, mentor Neven Jovanović), 2012, 36 <<http://darhiv.ffzg.unizg.hr/4130/1/Pantar.Diplomski.pdf>>. Pantar has based her edition on another manuscript, kept in the the State Archive Zadar (ms. 37), which omits this passage altogether, but she has given different readings from the Dubrovnik manuscript in the *apparatus criticus*. Other manuscript witnesses exist; see Neven Jovanović, »Croatian anti-Turkish writings during the Renaissance«, in: D. Thomas, J. A. Chesworth (edd.), *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, 7, Central

will immediately note some errors, which, nonetheless, do not prevent us from recollecting the famous passage by Claudian in the similar description of the alleged prodigious phenomenon of midsummer 1571.¹⁰ Besides, the report made by Rosaneus a few chapters earlier had offered the reader another surprise. In describing the islanders' escape from the Turkish irruption, the narrator uses words that raise the tragic pathos to the highest pitch.

... miserabile erat spectaculum; ita ut in ipso actu senior quidam collacrimans diceret 'Haec facies Troiae cum caperetur erat'.

It is hard to say whether it is true that an old islander recited by heart a pentameter from an elegy by Ovid who, before leaving for exile, parallels the lamentations in his house to those echoing in the falling Troy (tristia 1, 3, 26):

Quocumque aspiceres, luctus gemitusque sonabant,
 formaque non taciti funeris intus erat.
 Femina uirque meo, pueri quoque funere maerent,
 inque domo lacrimas angulus omnis habet.
 Si licet exemplis in paruis grandibus uti,
 haec facies Troiae, cum caperetur, erat.

But it is certainly true that this new identification, fruit of an easy *Quellenforschung*, was made possible by the online archives and their search engines. Powerful winds, indeed, who *coniurati veniunt* ... It would be nice if this »common oath« were to lead several national and international research groups to a joint project. This shared European linguistic heritage was often instrumental in linking together Germans and Slavs, Magyars and Italians, British and French and Spanish, helping them to overcome the artificial ethnic and political boundaries that caused wars, pain and poverty. As a historical expression of our ancient origins, literary Latin during the past centuries strongly contributed to Europe's cultural unity, political wisdom and material happiness. Therefore, we should join our efforts in the present time, and believe that our work is not only for today, but also for tomorrow and throughout the future.

and Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and South America (1500-1600), Leiden-Boston, 2015, 491-515 (at 508).

¹⁰ The learned Rožanović also seems to allude to Claudian in a couplet of his *In Turcas oratio*: *Undique bella tument, noster tibi militat ensis, / Et cruce securus miles in arma ruit* (vv. 73-74; Pantar, 41); cf. *cui militat aether* in Claudian's third Panegyric of Honorius, v. 97.

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nostris prius ictibus, maris portu & fluvio
impetu concussis navibus. & subsidium oppo-
situm: sicut hic mihi dicere quod non
satis bene ad sua venis. Disit hoc, & quam
modo ad nostram ego dicere possum de
nostra hac Tota =

= Felix cui militat Officium

Et conivati veniunt ad Classica Veneti.
Levestres Portuum Copia, cum viderent
suam Classem tempestate Viriata. Et in vol-
lem reducta, ab oppugnatione cessant.
Et in favorem quendam actus totum
suburbium. Deinde omnes sacros, et
privatas domos incendere cum templo et
lynobio sancti Nicolai. et navigij cadue-
ribus. cum in ignem adhiberent om-
nia evomere aggressi sunt. Alij se ad naues
cum preda receperunt. Alij longius
vagati, usque in proximum Rus Le-
noue. ab igne, et devastacionibus ser-
vantes, non inde quidquam aliud,
nisi campanas tantum abiecerunt. Alij
pauci tamen sub figuris adhuc iacu-
lacionibus vacabant.

Proca meridiano animadvertimus, sed
vires nobis hoc, ut ex indamentis ap-
parebat.

Picture 1: Antonius Rosaneus: Ulluzalis sive Occhialinus, Algerii prorex, Corciram Meiaenam terra, marique oppugnat nec expugnat. Relatio historica. State Archive of Dubrovnik (Andrijić family fonds), f. 29r

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BOŽANSKI VJETAR. KNJIŽEVNI I HISTORIOGRAFSKI ODJECI
U DJELU ANTUNA ROZANOVIĆA

Još od vremena Grka, Etruščana i Rimljana ljudi su vjerovali da nadnaravna bića upravljaju meteorološkim pojavama. Za ishod bitaka, vojnih pohoda, opsada, itd. bilo je ključno jesu li jednoj strani u sukobu božanstva naklonjena ili nisu. Ovaj se rad bavi posebnom epizodom iz Ciparskoga rata, sukoba između Otomanskog Carstva i Mletačke Republike koji je započeo 1570. Dana 15. kolovoza sljedeće godine, u vrijeme kad se Famagusta predala, tj. nekoliko tjedana prije Lepantske bitke, brodovlje kojim je zapovijedao paša i alžirski beglerbeg, odmetnuti pirat Uluz-Alija (Eulg-Ali, *Occhialinus*), uplovila je u Jadransko more i napala otok Korčulu. Slabo naoružane i za obranu nepripremljene otočane obuzeo je očaj. No napadači su se, ubrzo nakon što su se iskrcali, *na čudesan način* morali povući jer se iznenadna digla oluja i zaprijetila da će im uništiti usidrenu flotu. Ljetopisac koji izvještava o toj bitci, arhidakon Antun Rozanović, smatra da iza tog obrata stoji Bog, no u svojem opisu služi se vokabularom koji nalazimo kod klasičnih latinskih pisaca. Iako Rozanović ne navodi svoje izvore, njegov tekst na tom mjestu priziva u pamćenje glasoviti ulomak iz Klaudijana u kojem pjesnik slavi Teodozijevu pobjedu nad uzurpatorom Eugenijem (394. po. Kr.), opisujući kako se ishod te bitke na sličan način *čudesno* preokrenuo zahvaljujući iznenadnoj pojavi vjetra.

Ključne riječi: intertekstualnost, ep i povijest, bogovi i oluje, božanski vjetar, otok Korčula, Antun Rozanović