

LUCANEUM (B.C. 1.20)

I quote Roche's text and admirably compact *apparatus criticus* of 13-20, though I am only concerned with the last line:¹

heu, quantum terrae potuit pelagique parari	
hoc quem ciuiles hauserunt sanguine dextrae,	
unde uenit Titan et nox ubi sidera condit	
quaque dies medius flagrantibus aestuat oris	16 oris <i>SB</i> : horis Ω : auris <i>Oudendorpius</i>
et qua bruma rigens ac nescia uere remitti	
astringit Scythico glaciale frigore pontum!	18 Scythico glaciale Ω : -um -li V
sub iuga iam Seres, iam barbarus isset Araxes	
et gens siqua iacet nascenti conscia Nilo.	20 iacet Ω : latet <i>van Jever</i>

Van Jever's argument may be worth quoting, to save others the trouble of deciphering the not-very-clear Google Docs copy:²

Latet, id est, nobis adhuc incognita est, sive ut PROPERTIUS, Lib. II, El. VIII, vs. 21, ait:

Et si qua extremis tellus se subtrahit oris.

jacere quidem gentes dicuntur respectu sitûs, sed hunc Auctor hic non attendit, quipped loquens *de terrâ IGNOTA*. Statuit enim Poëta, gentium Romanis suo aevo cognitarum nullam in toto orbe reperiri, quae fontes Nili sibi vindicare possit. *Lib. X, vs. 284:*

*Et nulli contingit gloria genti,
Ut Nilo sit laeta suo.*

sic latere et jacere in MSS. confusa, Lib. II. 162.

To me at least, a third verb seems better than either *iacet* or *latet*, namely *tacet*.³ The hypothetical tribe in whose territory the Nile rises is a co-conspirator or accomplice, concealing the river's hideout, 'refuses to say where the Nile's headwaters are'. The dative *nascenti . . . Nilo* seems to suit the personification. The adjective *tacitus* sometimes means 'not mentioned or discussed' (*OLD* s.v. 7). A similar secondary meaning, 'is not mentioned' (because unknown), would work for *tacet* here, and provide some of the same advantages as Van Jever's *latet*.

¹ Paul Roche, *Lucan, 'De Bello Civili', Book I*, Oxford University Press, 2009. I have reformatted the apparatus to suit my own taste, and put it to the right of the text, as if this were an on-line text. 'SB' is D. R. Shackleton Bailey

² Ezra de Clercq van Jever, *Specimen Selectarum Observationum in M. A. Lucani Pharsalia*, Lyons, 1767, 5-6.

³ Just a few pages after our passage (1.260), *tacet* has been corrupted to *iacet* in one manuscript (P).