The *gubernator* Palinurus appears several times in the narrative of Vergil's *Aeneid* in his colourful role of helmsman of Aeneas' ship. We last meet him after he died, among the unburied souls on the hither bank of Acheron. Of all episodes involving Palinurus the last two are the most significant for the action of the poem, and at the same time the most intriguing. Both deal partly with the same story, the circumstances of Palinurus' fall into the sea. However, there are several factual discrepancies between the two accounts, which have led scholars to believe that they must have been written at different times and never harmonised. It is accepted, in general, that the narrative of *Aeneid 6* is earlier than the narrative of *Aeneid 5*. The problem is further complicated by the question of chronology of the Trojan journey to Italy, and by the story of Misenus which seems to be a double for the story of Palinurus. The matter has many facets and can be argued in various ways by shifting the emphasis on one or the other of its components.

The purpose of this paper is not to suggest a new solution to this problem or confirm an old one, but to keep the matter separate from an erroneous idea which, though proposed some twenty years ago in a short article published in

---

4. *Aeneid 5* is believed to have been an after-thought in Vergil's plan. See Williams, *op. cit.*, xxiii ff. Galinsky, *op. cit.*, 185, thinks that the last part of *Aeneid 5*, which includes the episode of Palinurus' fall, is later than the rest of the book. See Putnam, *op. cit.*, pp. 92–104.
Les Études Classiques,\textsuperscript{7} has not been challenged yet, as far as I am aware.\textsuperscript{8}

According to that idea, a comparison between Vergil's account of Palinurus' fall in \textit{Aeneid} 6 and that of the unnamed helmsman's fall in \textit{Aeneid} 1 suggests the identity of the two men, at least in Vergil's mind when he was writing \textit{Aeneid} 6. The following comparative tableau is drawn to show the analogy between the two accounts:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{l|l}
\textit{Aeneid} 1.113\textsuperscript{ff} & \textit{Aeneid} 6.333\textsuperscript{ff} \\
unnamed pilot of Orontes (v. 115) & Palinurus is mentioned shortly after Orontes (vv. 334 and 337) \\
vviolent storm & violent storm \\
accident due to a shock: & accident due to a shock: \\
\textit{executitur} (v. 115) & \textit{gubernaculum multa vi forte revulsum} (v. 349) \\
journey to Africa & \textit{Libyco cursu} (v. 338)
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

The tabulated similarities look impressive on first view, but a closer examination of Vergil's text dispels the illusion. Let us examine the four points of affinity one by one:

\textit{First}, Palinurus is certainly mentioned after Orontes in the narrative of \textit{Aeneid} 6, but Vergil is careful to distinguish between him and the group of souls to which Orontes belongs:

\begin{quote}
cernit ibi meastos et mortis honore carentis
Leucaspim et Lyciae ductorem classis Oronten,
quos simul a Troia ventosa per aequora vectos
obruit Auster, aqua involvens navemque virosque.
Ecce gubernator sese Palinurus agebat,
qui Libyco nuper cursu, dum sidera servat,
exciderat puppi mediis effusus in undis.
\end{quote}

\textit{Aeneid} 6.333–339

Vergil deals, in one sweeping reference, with all those of Aeneas' friends who had perished together (\textit{simul}) during the journey from Troy, their ship and themselves having been swamped by the South wind. If one of the two people named here is the \textit{magister} snatched by the waves in \textit{Aeneid} 1, this must be Leucaspis. The fact is not only recognised by Servius commenting on \textit{Aeneid} 7.\textsuperscript{20 (1952), 163–167, by F. Jacob, 'L' Épisode de Palinure'.}  

\textit{8. In fact, Jacob's article is cited prominently in several recent and authoritative bibliographical references to the problem of the Palinurus episodes. See, for example, Williams, \textit{op. cit.}, xxv, n. 3, where the article is cited besides Norden and Heinze; Putnam, \textit{loc. cit.} (given above, in n. 3), where the article is actually commended as providing a good discussion of the problem of inconsistencies between the descriptions of Palinurus in Books V and VI of the \textit{Aeneid}. The article is also cited by McKay, \textit{op. cit.}, 3, n. 2, and Quinn, \textit{op. cit.} }

150
but may also be inferred from Vergil's text. The helmsman is the first man to be seized by the waves in *Aeneid* 1 and Leucaspis is the first man to be named in *Aeneid* 6 and is followed, as it is normal, by his captain Orontes and the anonymous crew (*viros*) who drowned with them. The word *ecce* suggests that the poet's eye moves to someone else, Palinurus. He is the man, says Vergil, who fell overboard during the recent (*nuper*) Libyan journey. The distinction between Palinurus and the crew of the Lycian ship as well as between the two different journeys is quite clear. *Nuper* can only refer to the journey which Aeneas had just completed before undertaking his catabasis to the underworld.

Second, there is no evidence in *Aeneid* 6 that Palinurus fell off the ship during a storm. His ghost talks of rising waves (v. 354) and a fierce south wind which tossed him about. But we may well imagine that this storm broke out after he had fallen and did not touch the Trojan fleet, which had covered in the meantime a good distance of its course thanks to Aeneas' taking personal charge of its guidance.

Third, both accidents are certainly due to shock, but Vergil is again careful to differentiate the causes of the shock in each case. *Excutitur* 'is struck off' (by the waves) is what he says in the first instance, while he uses *excidet* 'had fallen off', *forte* 'by chance', in the second.10 The circumstances of the helmsman's fall in *Aeneid* 1 were known by Aeneas11 and would have been known by Palinurus, if Palinurus were that man. In this sense, Aeneas' question: *quis te, Palinure, deorum / eripuit nobis medioque sub aequore mersit?* (vv. 341–342) becomes absurd.

9. *Magister Leucaspis, ut in sexto libro Leucaspim et Lyciae ductorem classis Oronten*. On the other hand, Jacob's argument seems to underly the following statement by Williams, *op. cit.*, p. xxvii: "The original account of the death of Palinurus to which Book VI refers ... may have been implied in the storm in Book I. There (Aen. 1.113f) the pilot of Orontes' ship, who is not named, is lost in the storm; in Aen. 6,333f the mention of Palinurus comes just after a reference to Orontes and the storm. In many ways (but not all) Palinurus' story in Book VI is consistent with this storm, and it is possible that when composing Book VI Virgil may have thought of the loss of Palinurus as having occurred then'. It will appear from the sequence of this paper that I disagree with this contention, although I feel inclined to commend Williams for refusing to accept the idea that the Palinurus' story in Book VI is entirely consistent with the description of the storm in Book I.

10. By the way, *forte* suggests that Palinurus is unaware that he was pushed into the sea by the god Somnus but he thinks of an accidental fall. This would seem to work against the theory that Vergil did not have in mind the episode of *Aeneid* 5 at the time that he was writing *Aeneid* 6. This of course does not preclude the possibility that the Palinurus episode of *Aeneid* 5 was composed later than *Aeneid* 6.

Four, Servius seems to think that *Libyco cursu* means 'during the journey to Libya', and this is indeed the most natural interpretation of the phrase. We must remember, however, that Vergil is primarily a poet, not a grammarian or linguist, and we should not hasten to attach to *Libyco* a meaning which he may not take it to have. Having already spoken of the journey from Troy, during which the Lycian ship was lost, Vergil may have used *Libyco* impulsively in order to signify the journey, during which Palinurus drowned. Any way, Vergil did not fail, consciously or unconsciously, to clarify his statement by the insertion of *nuper*.

On the whole, in spite of the ambiguity of *Libyco cursu*, my investigation leads, I think, to the conclusion that Palinurus of *Aeneid 6* cannot be the *magister* of the Lycian ship of *Aeneid 1*, who is to be identified most probably with the Leucaspis of *Aeneid 6.334*. The greater problem of the connections of the Palinurus episode of *Aeneid 6* with that of *Aeneid 5* remains. I suspect, however, that there is room for revision of existing opinions on that matter also.

University College
University of Toronto

GEORGE THANIEL

---

12. *Italicus cursu* would be clearer and would fit the metre no less than *Libyco cursu*, but Vergil never uses the adjective *Italicus*.
Acta Classica is published annually by the Classical Association of South Africa. The journal has been in production since 1958. It is listed on both the ISI and the SAPSE list of approved publications.

For further information go to: