

The *praenomen* of Ticida

The Roman poet Ticida (or Tcidas) belonged to the neoterics¹. Comparatively little is known about his life, writings and position among the *poetae novi*. Apuleius (*Apol.* 10) reports that he wrote love poetry to a Metella under the Greek name of Perilla. Ovid (*Tr.* II 433-438) lists him among the other *poetae novi*:

*quid referam Ticide, quid Memmi carmen, apud quos
rebus adest nomen nominibusque pudor?
Cinna quoque his comes est Cinnaque procacior Anser
et leve Cornifici parque Catonis opus
et quorum libris modo dissimulata Perillae
nomine nunc legitur dicta, Metelle, tuo.*

Additionally, M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus, the patron of the elegiac poets, associated Ticida with two neoterics, Furius Bibaculus and Valerius Cato (see Suet. *De gramm.* 4,2): *eisdem litteratores vocitatos Messalla Corvinus in quadam epistula ostendit non esse sibi dicens rem cum Furio Bibaculo, ne cum Ticida quidem aut litteratore Catone.*

The poet was known in antiquity under his *cognomen* Ticida. The alternative version Tcidas (with final -s) indicates most likely an Italic, perhaps Sabine or Samnite, origin of this *cognomen*. Unfortunately, the *nomen gentile* is not attested. Some scholars believe that the writer may be identified with an *eques*, L. Ticida, who when bringing supplies to Caesar's army in Africa in 46 B.C. was caught (and apparently executed) by the Pompeian Metellus Scipio (*Bell. Afr.* 44,1, 46,3). Others reject the identification or remain the question unsolved. In fact, this identification is only a guess² and I agree with H. Bardon that Lucius Ticida is rather a relative of the poet.

In his discussion of the problem Bardon (*LLI* I 353) recalls the corrupt reading of Tcidas' name in Priscian (I 189). The text runs as follows:

*'sole' quoque †Atticidas† in hymenaeo:
felix lectule talibus
sole amoribus.*

atticidas **BDH**: Atticidas *historicus* **Rr**: Attidicas [vel Atticidas] **A**: Aticidas **KVt**:

¹ See N. Scivoletto, *Ticida, poeta novus*, *PLF* 201-211.

² Cf. F. Münzer, *L. Ticida*, in *RE* VI A/1 (1936) 844-846; Bardon, *LLI* 352f.

attiquidas **G**: Catti quidas **L**: Ticidas *Weichert et L. Mueller*: C. Ticidas 'sive quod aliud fuit huic viro praenomen' *Casaubonus*: A. Ticidas *Bardon*: antiquitas vel antiqui priores *edd.*: antiqui. Ticidas *Hertz et alii*.

Both recent editors of the fragments of Latin verse, Edward Courtney (*FLP* 228f.) and Jürgen Blänsdorf (*FPL* 225f.), accept Hertz's doubtful conjecture *antiqui. Ticidas* without mentioning proposals by Casaubonus and Bardon. It is obvious that the old restitution *antiqui(tas)* is *facilior*, therefore cannot be accepted. In my opinion, Hertz's emendation is nothing other than a contamination of two different (and mutually contradictory) possibilities and therefore we must abandon it.

As all modern editors agree that «the corrupt reading of the name in Priscian should not mislead us into referring to the poet as Ticidas» (*FLP* 229), we rather ought to follow Bardon's way of thinking. The French scholar reads *A. Ticidas* instead of *Aticidas* (so *codd. KVt* according to M. Hertz³), thus suggesting that the depravation arose by an uncorrect joining of the *praenomen* *A.* (= *Aulus*) with the *cognomen* *Ticidas*. A similar corruption is well attested in the case of Aulus Gellius, who was also miscalled *Agellius* (*sic!*) in most Priscianian manuscripts⁴. The reverse process of a fictitious disintegration of *nomen gentilicium* occurs in the spelling *M. Accius* for *T. Maccius* Plautus.

Though Bardon's explanation is better founded than all other emendations proposed so far, it is possible to propose an even more reasonable solution. We must take in consideration that most Priscian's manuscripts attest the double *-tt-* in the corrupt place and this geminate is reckoned to be the primitive one (Courtney, *FLP* 229 prints: «attiquidas uel atticidas *codd.*»). Therefore, it is easier to assume that the spelling *atticidas* stands for original *At. Ticidas*, where *At.* may be assigned as an abbreviation of the Sabine *praenomen* *Attius* (or *Attus*). This «sabinischer Vorname», used for instance by the *gens Tullia*⁵, is commonly treated as an equivalent of the Roman name *Appius* (abbreviated *App.*)⁶. Also the *cognomen* *Ticidas* may be of Sabine origin.

If my restitution *At. Ticidas* for †*atticidas*† is correct, then the Roman poet Attius Ticida(s), as well as the *eques* Lucius Ticida, had to belong to a noble family of Sabine origin. Unfortunately, we do not know what family used the

³ *Prisciani grammatici Caesariensis Institutionum grammaticarum libri XVIII*, ex recensione M. Hertzii, I, Leipzig 1855, 189.

⁴ *Prisc. Inst.* VII 80; VI 61, VI 75; cf. IV 31. Compare Marache's words in the introduction to his own edition of *Noctes Atticae* (VII): «L'auteur des *Nuits Attiques* s'appelait A. Gellius, selon Lactance, Servius et Saint-Augustin. Flavius Vopiscus ne cite que le nom Gellius. Priscien au contraire le nomme Agellius, et c'est la forme que la plupart des manuscrits nous ont transmise. C'est aussi celle qui a prévalu au Moyen Age».

⁵ The Volscian general Attius Tullius was a murderer of Cn. Marcius Coriolanus (488 B.C.).

⁶ Cf. E. Klebs, in *RE* II (1896) 2256 and 2259.

uncommon *cognomen* Tícida(s). It cannot be excluded, however, that new epigraphical findings will explain this problem in the future. At present the *nomen gentile* of Tícida remains an insoluble riddle.

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KRZYSZTOF T. WITCZAK

Abbreviations used

FLP = *The Fragmentary Latin Poets*, ed. with commentary by E. Courtney, Oxford 1993.

FPL = *Fragmenta Poetarum Latinorum epicorum et lyricorum praeter Ennium et Lucilium*, post W. Morel novis curis adhibitibus ed. C. Buechner, editionem tertiam auctam curavit J. Blänsdorf, Stutgardiae et Lipsiae 1995.

LLI = H. Bardon, *La Littérature Latine Inconnue*, I-II, Paris 1952-1956.

Marache = Aulu-Gelle, *Les Nuits Attiques*, I-IV, texte établi et traduit par R. Marache, Paris 1967.

PLF = *Poesia latina in frammenti. Miscellanea filologica*, ed. G. Puccioni, Genova 1974.

RE = *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*.