17) ἵσαρθημος μενούσας ἦ ἰδωλήσει θεῶν ἢ δι᾽ ἀκολοξίαν ἦ διὰ φιλοσοφικοῦ. The reading ἵσαρθημος for the MS ἰσαρθημοῦς was suggested to me by Dr David Sedley. Cf. for either reading Timaeus 39e-41b. For the decrees of the gods see Timaeus 90e-92c. For love of the body see Phaedo 68c, where the word φιλοσώματος occurs for the only time in Plato. As will be apparent, I do not concur in all respects with J. Dillon, The Middle Platonists (London 1977), 293-4 or with his later The Descent of the Soul in B. Layton (ed.) The Rediscovery of Gnosticism, Vol I (Leiden 1982), 359.

18) The sources, if there are any, of the discussion of sensible beauty in cc 1-3 remain undiscovered. On the conventional character of Plotinus’ arguments see Armstrong, Beauty and the Discovery of Beauty in the Thought of Plotinus, Plotinian and Christian Studies XIX, 160; J. P. Anton, Plotinus’ Refutation of Beauty as Symmetry, Journal of Aesthetic and Artistic Criticism 23 (1964), 233-7.

MISCELLANEA

LENTILS FROM PELUSIUM:
A NOTE ON VERGIL’S GEORGICS I 228

In Vergil’s Georgics I 227-230 one finds a reference to lentils from Pelusium, a town on the easternmost branch of the Nile. In the present note I would like to dwell a little on the occurrence of this Egyptian town in Vergil’s Georgics and in a number of other Greek and Roman authors of the imperial period.

In the passage from the Georgics farmers are instructed to sow this particular kind of lentils as well as a few other green crops after the end of October.

si vero viciamque seres vilemque phaselum
nec Pelusiacae curam aspernabere lentis,
haud obscura cadens mittet tibi signa Bootes:
incipe et ad medias sementem extende pruinas

Most commentators have simply assumed that Pelusium was a town famous for the lentils grown in the territory nearby. W. Richter, however, in his comment on the passage thought Pelusiacaus was just affected for ‘Egyptian’ after the fashion of Hellenistic poets. As I hope to show, Pelusiacaus indeed means no more than ‘Egyptian’ but for quite another reason than Richter thought.

According to the traditional interpretation of Pelusiacaus the territory around Pelusium must have been a very productive area in the Roman period. Moreover, the town itself would have added an important handicraft production to the already impressive stock of agricultural products from the surrounding territory. I have collected the following passages from classical authors in which typical products from Pelusium are mentioned.

beer: Columella X 114-116:
Iam siser Assyrioque venit quae semine radix
sectaque praebetur madido sociata lupino
ut Pelusiaci proritet pocula zythi

According to this passage Egyptian beer was made tasteful by the addition of lupine and another ingredient.

**fish:** Herodotus II 15: (Egypt stretches from Aboukir) μέχρι ταραχήμων τῶν Πηλουσιακῶν. Apparently the factories for salting fish at Pelusium were such a prominent sight that they could serve as a landmark.

**lentils:** Apart from Vergil’s *Georgics* I have noted the following:

Martialis XIII 9:
accipe Niliacam, Pelusia munera, lentem: vilior est alica, carior illa faba
Ausonius XII 9, 9:
et Pelusiaco de semine plana teres lens

**linen:** Silius Italicus III 24:
velantur corpora lino
et Pelusiaco filum componere lino


Phaedrus II 5, 12:
ex alte cinctis unus atriensibus
cui tunica ab umeris linteo Pelusio
erat destricta cirris dependentibus

Mishnah, *Yoma* III 7 (translated): ‘In the morning (the high priest) was dressed in (linen) from Pelusium worth 1,200 drachmas, and in the afternoon he was dressed in (cotton) from India worth 800 drachmas’

**salt:** Pliny the Elder XXXI 78: invenit <scil. salem> et iuxta Pelusium Ptolemaeus rex, cum castra faceret

Of all these products only fish and salt are more or less expected in an important harbour town such as Pelusium. Our chief witness for fish is Herodotus who is also the only author from before the imperial period. In the Roman period Pelusium was the port from which most of the above-mentioned products were shipped to the Roman world. This does not necessarily mean that all these products originated in Pelusium and its territory. In fact, only fish and salt are definitively linked with the territory itself, because according to Herodotus the factories for salting fish at Pelusium served as a landmark for sailors, and according to Pliny salt was actually chanced upon by Ptolemy on the spot.

I think it is not difficult to see why so many products were called after the town of Pelusium. Because it lies on the easternmost branch of the Nile it was almost as important a harbour for imports to, and especially exports from, Egypt as Alexandria. All the items mentioned above were, in fact, common Egyptian products. They were shipped to the rest of the Mediterranean world by way of Alexandria, Pelusium or another harbour. A side effect of this was that the products were more often than...