

TWO PASSAGES IN JUVENAL'S EIGHTH SATIRE¹

- I. tamen ima plebe Quiritem
 facundum invenies, [solet hic defendere causas
 nobilis indocti,] veniet de plebe togatus
 qui iuris nodos et legum aenigmata solvat,
 hinc petit Euphraten iuvenis domitique Batavi
 custodes aquilas armis industrius; at tu
 nil nisi Cecropides truncoque simillimus Hermae.
(viii. 47-53)

THE words I wish to delete in 48-9 spoil a 'tricolon crescendo' whose three members are clearly marked (*ima plebe . . . de plebe . . . hinc*) and whose verbs are perhaps deliberately varied in person and tense (*invenies, veniet . . . petit*). The parataxis by means of *hic* is awkward, and the words seem to be a versified gloss. The Scholiast says: *id est: tu nobilis tantum et imperitus. nam de plebe, id est de humili familia, eloquentes exeunt, qui nobilium imperitorum causas defendunt*; but that could be a paraphrase based on the text as it stands in our manuscripts.

If Juvenal's point is that Rubellius Blandus himself (or any other *nobilis*) requires the services of this eloquent plebeian, the intrusive gloss spells the point out for us. If, as I prefer to think, it is simply that members of the *plebs* he despises are more useful to society than Rubellius Blandus, then the author of the gloss has been misled by the second person *invenies*.

Finally it is difficult to suppress a feeling that the Scholiast's plural *nobilium imperitorum* is more appropriate than the singular *nobilis indocti*: 'this man appears regularly for the Hon. Freddie Threepwood.'

2. esto bonus miles, tutor bonus, arbiter idem
 integer; ambiguae si quando citabere testis
 incertaeque rei, Phalaris licet imperet ut sis
 falsus et admoto dictet periuria tauro,
 summum crede nefas animam praeferre pudori
 et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.
 dignus morte perit, cenet licet ostrea centum
 Gaurana et Cosmi toto mergatur aeno.
(viii. 79-86)

A reader who did not know the context of vv. 85-6 would translate: 'He dies, and he deserves to die, though he be dining on a hundred oysters . . .' In context this is impossible, for the third person singular has no reference.²

We therefore have to take the lines as a generalization: 'the man who deserves death dies'—or, since that is silly, 'the man who deserves to die is (morally) already dead', *perit* standing for *periit* as at vi. 563 and elsewhere.³

¹ I have profited greatly from discussion with Mr. R. C. T. Parker, Mr. P. J. Parsons, and Mr. M. D. Reeve.

² If these lines are supposed to be about Phalaris they are strangely placed and have

no relevance to Juvenal's point in this passage.

³ So the Scholiast: *sic habendus, qui morte dignus est, quasi iam perierit, licet cottidie copiose vivat*. Other commentators follow him.

This yields acceptable sense, even if it is strangely expressed. But what has it got to do with Ponticus? Juvenal is telling him not to suppose that virtue is conferred by distinguished ancestry, but to be *bonus* and *integer* himself: it is better to die than to bear false witness. If you are urging a man to remain true to his principles even in the face of death, it is irrelevant to add that oysters and perfume will not save him from the moral death which results from turpitude.

It is hard to decide on a satisfying solution. Deletion of 85–6 will not commend itself to many. Perhaps an antecedent relative clause has been lost before 85. I publish this note in the hope of provoking someone more ingenious.

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