

Idmon (A.R. 1.139, al.), Polyidus (Apollod. 3.18 (2.3.2.)), Idyia and Medea. Ovid of course would have been perfectly well aware of the point. His penchant for etymological word-play in both tongues has been sufficiently illustrated by recent scholarship;⁵ his use of *monstrat* (= *φράζει*) here points unequivocally to his having written (what he almost certainly found in Callimachus, who was himself not one to pass up opportunities for word-play) *Phrasius*.

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⁵ See e.g. J. C. McKeown, *Ovid: Amores i* (Liverpool, 1987), pp. 45–61; S. Hinds, *The Metamorphosis of Persephone. Ovid and the Self-conscious Muse* (Cambridge, 1987), Index s.v.

LUCAN 6.715¹

primo pallentis hiatu
haeret adhuc Orci, licet has exaudiat herbas,
ad manes uentura semel.

Erichtho the Thessalian witch is conducting a necromancy: she has selected a corpse, applied her potions to it and invoked the powers of the Underworld to release its soul to deliver the prophecy. She specifies that this is a recent corpse whose soul has hardly entered the Underworld; hence she describes it as 'still hesitating at the entrance to pallid Orcus' chasm' and as 'a soul which will join the dead only once'. However, as Francken says,² "exaudire herbas" est absurda iunctura'. The problem lies in either noun or verb. The phrase must refer to Erichtho's magic; the choice is between spells and potion. *herbas* in the sense 'incantation' is apparently unparalleled,³ but *herbas* as a reference to Erichtho's brew is perfectly acceptable,⁴ especially given the long description of her concoction of the revivifying potion and of her application of it to the corpse in the preceding lines, 6.667–84. Moreover, only a few lines later Lucan draws a contrast between *uerba* and *herbae*, spells and potion (6.768). If *herbas* is sound, suspicion falls on *exaudiat*; the occurrence less than ten lines earlier of the uncontroversial *exaudite preces*, 6.706, which suggests scribal repetition, strengthens the suspicion.

I propose *exauriat*, to which the reading *exaudiat* in M is a significant pointer.⁵ By 'draining down the potion', the potion applied to the soul's corpse only a few lines earlier, the soul is magicked up by Erichtho from where it stands, at the entrance to the Underworld. That *herbae* may be envisaged as liquid is shown by Tibullus in a similarly magical context, 2.4.59–60:⁶

si modo me placido uideat Nemesis mea uultu,
mille alias herbas misceat illa, bibam.

And *exaurio* is regularly used of drinking up or draining down liquids, e.g. wine (Ov. *Fast.* 5.513) and, more appropriately here, drugs or poison: e.g. Quint. 7.2.17 *pater, acceptae potionis epota parte, dixit uenenum sibi datum; filius quod reliquum erat*

¹ Thanks to my colleague Dr Richard Seaford for helpful suggestions.

² C. M. Francken, *M. Annaei Lucani Pharsalia* (Leiden, 1897) *ad loc.*

³ *Pace TLL s.v. herba* 2618.73ff.

⁴ Cf. *TLL* 2618.30ff.

⁵ The corruption will have occurred either by haplography (after 'haeret' or 'has') or by simple omission of *h*; cf. F. W. Hall, *A Companion to Classical Texts* (Oxford, 1913), p. 191.

⁶ *TLL s.v. herba* 2618.69. Cf. passages which mention grasses' juices, e.g. Ov. *Met.* 6.139, 14.299.

exhausit; [Quint.] *Decl.* 321 p. 263, 28 *uenenum do: et unde scio, an exhausta potione statim concidat?*; cf. Cic. *Cluent.* 31 *exhausto illo poculo mortis*.⁷ *exhauriat* enhances the already marked alliteration of *h* in these lines, alliteration particularly appropriate perhaps to the notions of hesitation (*hiatu, haeret*) and drinking up (*has, herbas* and now *exhauriat*).⁸ It may be objected that an incorporeal soul cannot 'drink up the potion'; but there are a number of necromancy scenes in Greek and Latin literature where shades drink *blood*, most obviously Hom. *Od.* 11.98, 146–9, but also Val. Fl. 1.740 *libato... sanguine*, Sil. It. 13.495 *delibauit... cruorem*.⁹

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⁷ Cf. *TLL* s.v. *exhaurio* 1407.80ff.

⁸ For some other examples of evocative alliteration in Lucan see M. P. O. Morford, *The Poet Lucan* (Oxford, 1967), p. 51 n. 1.

⁹ Also Stat. *Theb.* 4.603 *monstrat... cruorem* and, more allusively, *ibid.* 624–5 *mulcetur honoris/muneribus tingitque genas*. On necromancy scenes in Greek and Latin epic see D. Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 235–58.