

also re-enter oral folk tradition, via preachers or other professional story-tellers. In each case, we must ask what role an earlier written source might have played and what possible means of transmission existed. In the case of Hor. *Ep.* 1.2.42–3, as the *Motif-Index* shows, stories of fools are common throughout the world; they are still freely invented now. Horace may be alluding to a familiar story, or inventing one for the purpose. As Aristotle remarked, an invented story is useful because it can be fabricated to serve the occasion (*Rhet.* 2.20.7, 1394a2–8).

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### PROPERTIUS 3.11.33–38 AND THE DEATH OF POMPEY

In the midst of his fulminations against Cleopatra, Propertius denounces her land of Egypt in the following ‘wholly admirable parenthesis’:<sup>1</sup>

Noxia Alexandria, dolis aptissima tellus  
 Et totiens nostro Memphi cruenta malo,  
 Tres ubi Pompeio detraxit harena triumphos! 35  
 Tollet nulla dies hanc tibi, Roma, notam.  
 Issent Phlegraeo melius tibi funera campo  
 Vel tua si socero colla daturus eras.

This is the unanimous reading of the major manuscripts (except that A, lost for this portion of the text, seems to have had ‘Res tibi’ at the start of 35)<sup>2</sup> and of all editions, but commentators find difficulties with ‘harena’ in 35, with ‘notam’ in 36, and with the repeated ‘tibi’ of 36 and 37.

‘Harena’ is questionable in the first instance because Pompey died not on the shore but in a skiff at sea (‘in naucula antequam in terram exiret’ according to Liv. *Per.* 122, for example; see Lucan 8.667–73 for a vivid description of the decapitation ‘in obliquo ... transtro’), and commentators have dealt variously with the factual error. Beroaldus and Passerat,<sup>3</sup> followed by Butler, simply rewrote history and asserted that Pompey was killed on the shore, an error shared by the doubly inaccurate Manilius, who at 4.50 has him dying ‘Niliaco ... litore’ (though perhaps ‘Niliacus’ simply means ‘Egyptian’ here); for the triply inaccurate Paley, the ‘harena’ is ‘the African shore, where Pompey was killed by his freedman Pothinus at his own request’. Others, content with a looser association between Pompey and the shore, identify the ‘harena’ as either ‘the beach where Pompey was about to land when he was murdered’ (Camps) or else the site of his burial (Beroaldus, Butler and Barber); in the former case one could object that there seems little point in denouncing a place near the site of Pompey’s death instead of the site itself, in the latter that it was his death, not his burial, that ‘stripped’ him of his glory. Hertzberg declared ‘harena’ an outstanding example of Propertian metonymy in which the place where an event

<sup>1</sup> The following are cited by author’s name only: the commentaries of Beroaldus (from the edition of Zuan Tacuino (Venice, 1500)), Butler (London, 1904), Butler and Barber (Oxford, 1933), Camps (Book 3; Cambridge, 1966), Fedeli (Book 3; Bari, 1985), Hertzberg (Halle, 1843–5), Paley (London, 1872), Richardson (Norman, 1977), and Rothstein (Berlin, 1898), as well as D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Propertiana* (Cambridge, 1956). The quotation is from Butler and Barber, p. 289.

<sup>2</sup> Among its descendants L alone preserves this; P has the further corruption ‘Re tibi’, while F’s ‘Haec tibi’ seems to be a ‘correction’ by Petrarch.

<sup>3</sup> My knowledge of Passerat’s view derives from the variorum edition of Simon Gabbema (Utrecht, 1659).

occurred has been substituted for the event itself – except, of course, that the event did not occur on any ‘harena’. For others the inaccuracy simply does not matter: ‘Propertius may not ask his readers to know the details of Pompey’s death so precisely; “harena” may be meant to suggest only the deserts that cover so much of the country around the Nile, and the idea of a death on the sand cannot but conjure up a picture of the death of a gladiator’ (Richardson: Paley also suggested an allusion to gladiatorial combat); against this view stand Pompey’s high reputation, which makes the gladiatorial reference most unlikely, and the fact that, Manilius apart, later writers seem so well informed about the circumstances of his death that such knowledge can certainly be assumed in an Augustan audience. Fedeli has expressed a comparable view that for Propertius ‘basta inserire nel verso il termine “harena”, che rievoca in generale l’immagine convenzionale del deserto egiziano e in particolare quella della spiaggia dove si conclude il destino di Pompeo, per carettizzare il luogo dove Pompeo trovò la morte (poco importa che egli sia stato ucciso sulla barca che lo conduceva a terra) e i suoi trionfi furono vanificati.’ One may, however, legitimately doubt whether ‘harena’ can simultaneously suggest both desert *and* beach, and Propertius hardly needs to evoke some ‘conventional image’ of the Egyptian desert when the apostrophe of Alexandria and Memphis has already established Egypt as the scene of the crime and the desert has no connection at all with Pompey’s death.

As all these rationalizations suggest, commentators are ill at ease on this irrelevant ‘harena’. But none has identified a further difficulty more serious than a possible historical or geographical blunder, namely the rhetorical weakness of saying that ‘a beach’ or ‘the shore’ or ‘the sand’ stripped away Pompey’s three triumphs; the context’s vehement tone demands something more forceful. Perhaps Fedeli sensed this and unconsciously disguised the awkwardness in his paraphrase ‘i suoi trionfi furono vanificati’. Perhaps Rothstein did as well, for he wrote on this passage that ‘diese schimpfliche Behandlung des Leichnams [i.e. the beheading and denial of burial which he has just reported] ... wiegt nach der Anschauung des Dichters alle Ehren auf, die Pompejus bei Lebzeiten genossen hat’; this, of course, misrepresents Propertius, who has the ‘harena’, not any ‘schimpfliche Behandlung’, take Pompey’s honours, but it is more cogent than the triumph-stealing sand of the *paradosis*.

Rothstein went on to observe that ‘Auch sonst werden die drei Triumphe des Pompejus oft erwähnt, und ihr Gegensatz zu seinem schimpflichen Ende scheint in der Kaiserzeit ein Gemeinplatz römischer Rhetorik gewesen zu sein’. He cited no examples, but had he done so he might have seen the way, or pointed to it for others to see, to restore what Propertius wrote here. Let us begin with Velleius Paterculus, who says of Pompey at 2.53.2 that ‘*princeps Romani nominis imperio arbitrioque Aegyptii mancipii...iugulatus est.*’ Woodman on this passage suggests that the ‘*mancipium*’, usually understood as the eunuch Pothinus, might instead be Pompey’s client Ptolemy, to whom Dio 42.5.3, for example, assigns the blame. Some Roman authors certainly attribute at least partial responsibility to the king, most notably Lucan (with several slighting allusions to the ‘*rex puer*’), Sen. *Ep.* 4.7 ‘*de Pompei capite pupillus [sc. Ptolemy] et spado tulere sententiam*’, and Flor. 2.13.52 ‘*imperio uilissimi regis, consiliis spadonum...trucidatus*’; at Sen. *Cons. ad Marc.* 20.4, ‘*uidit Aegyptium carnificem et sacrosanctum uictoribus corpus satelliti praestitit*’, the ‘*carnifex*’ is probably Achilles and the ‘*satelles*’ probably Ptolemy (or perhaps Septimius). But it is Pothinus, who proposed the assassination, and his lowly status as either slave or, still worse, eunuch that is most often emphasized. The first two of the three passages just cited as involving Ptolemy also allude to Pothinus. When

Seneca at *De Breu. Vit.* 13.7 says of Pompey that 'Alexandrina perfidia deceptus ultimo mancipio transfodiendum se praebuit', the epithet 'ultimus' surely suggests that the slave, not the king, is meant; Claudian, *In Eutr.* 1.480f., certainly uses 'mancipium' of Pothinus ('heu semper Ptolemaei noxia mundo / mancipia! en alio laedor grauiore Pothino'), who could therefore be the 'mancipium' of Velleius despite Woodman's doubts. His servile status is also at issue in Mart. 3.66.5f. ('Antoni tamen est peior quam causa Pothini: / Hic facinus domino praestitit, ille sibi'), and in fact was so already at Cicero, *T.D.* 1.86 'non exercitu amisso nudus in seruorum ferrum et manus incidisset'. Finally Ammianus, like Florus, luridly emphasizes that Pothinus was a eunuch (14.11.32 'istius [sc. Fortunae] iniquitate Pompeius... ad spadonum libidinem in Aegypto trucidatur'). For Ammianus, as for Cicero, Velleius, and Seneca, Pompey's death illustrates the mutability of Fortune: the thrice-triumphant Roman general, who could with slight exaggeration be said to have triumphed over the entire world, 'princeps Romani nominis', died, and what made his death so pointed was not simply that it happened, nor that it happened in Egypt, nor that it happened on a sandy beach or in the water near a beach, but that it was accomplished by the lowliest of creatures, a slave and a eunuch to boot. The attitude would be unfashionably élitist and racist today but was widespread in Roman society, and the persistence of this theme in the Roman rhetorical and historiographical tradition makes a persuasive case for replacing the unsatisfactory 'harena' with Heinsius' almost universally neglected conjecture 'uerna',<sup>4</sup> a word used again by Propertius in an equally scornful context at 4.7.35.

The restoration of 'uerna' also helps to relieve the embarrassment that commentators have experienced in explaining 'hanc notam' in 36, the disgrace that Rome is supposed to have incurred from an Egyptian beach stripping away Pompey's three triumphs. Probably the least plausible explanation was offered by G. G. Ramsay,<sup>5</sup> who said that 'hanc' was used 'more Propertiano, for "illam"', and that the 'notam' was 'apparently that inflicted by the train of Egyptian disasters'; this invites the question, 'What train?', for Propertius has mentioned none other than Pompey's death ('totiens' in 34 is too indefinite to represent any supposed 'train'). Shackleton Bailey, rejecting Hertzberg's suggestion that the treachery of the Roman Septimius is meant (Propertius, who wants Egyptians to take all the blame, naturally ignores him), argues that 'Pompey's death by Egyptian contrivance was in itself an affront to Roman dignity'; this seems essentially correct, except of course that it is rather worse to die by the contrivance of an Egyptian eunuch than by the contrivance of Egyptian sand. He properly refutes the view (upheld by Butler and Barber and by Fedeli) that Propertius means the disgrace accrued from the Civil War, which, by driving Pompey from Italy, led ultimately to his defeat and death; surely 'hanc' demands something immediately relevant to the context, not something which the poet neither mentions nor even suggests, and death at servile hands nicely fills the bill.

Lines 37f. have occasioned much difficulty because of the awkward sequence of 'tibi' (36) referring to Rome followed by 'tibi' (37) referring to Pompey, with no intervening change of address. Shackleton Bailey and Fedeli have defended the text by appealing to some less extreme cases where addressees change with no warning and to some highly controversial passages in 3.7; but 3.7 is too corrupt to shed any light here, and the present repetition of 'tibi', reinforced by the rhythm, seems to create

<sup>4</sup> I have seen it mentioned only in the commentary of Burman-Santen (Utrecht, 1780), which cites in its support only the passage from Claudian before rushing on to consider the difficulties of the following couplet.

<sup>5</sup> *Selections from Tibullus and Propertius* (Oxford, 1900).

special emphasis. A solution is suggested by the passage from the *Tusculan Disputations* cited earlier, in which Cicero stated that Pompey would not have left home, fled Italy, waged war unprepared with his father-in-law, and fallen into the hands of slaves had he succumbed to that illness which struck him in 50 B.C. in Naples; this too, as Rothstein noted without examples, became a commonplace of imperial rhetoric, and was exploited again by Juvenal at 10.283–6. Propertius could have adopted this idea and applied it to Rome rather than to Pompey. He certainly makes Pompey's demise a general disaster for Rome (note 'nostro...malo' in 34); arguably, therefore, he could make Pompey's death in the Campi Flegrei preferable for Rome as well as for Pompey (this connection between 36 and 37 can be emphasized by punctuating with a colon rather than a period at the end of 36). On this interpretation, with 'tibi' in both lines referring to Rome, the formerly awkward repetition proves to be emphatic after all, but now 'tua' and 'eras' are impossible in 38. I suggest therefore that the text – impossible or at least highly suspect as it stands in any case – be emended by the interchanging of two letters, the 't' that begins 'tua' and the 's' that ends 'eras', reading 'Vel sua si socero colla daturus erat'; 'tibi' in 37 could have influenced the transformation of 'sua' to 'tua', and 'daturus' the change of 'erat' to 'eras.' The passage as restored would read:

Noxia Alexandria, dolis aptissima tellus,  
 Et totiens nostro Memphi cruenta malo,  
 Tres ubi Pompeio detraxit uerna triumphos!  
 Tollet nulla dies hanc tibi, Roma, notam:  
 Issent Phlegraeo melius tibi funera Campo,  
 Vel sua si socero colla daturus erat.

To Cicero's point, that death from disease was preferable to eventual death at a slave's hand, Propertius has added another, that surrender<sup>6</sup> to Caesar would have been equally preferable both for Rome and for Pompey. The sentiment which these conjectures attribute to Propertius, that capitulation to Caesar (or even death by his command) would have been preferable to death by a slave's hand, is by no means unique to him. A comparable thought is in fact put into Pompey's own mouth at Lucan 8.627–9, when in the face of death he says to himself,

Ne cede pudori  
 Auctoremque dole fati: quacumque feriris,  
 Crede manum soceri.

That is, do not yield to the disgrace (cf. Propertius' 'notam') and grieve that the author of your demise is a slave (Propertius' restored 'uerna'); imagine that your wounds are inflicted by Caesar. Lucan's Pompey is to console himself by imagining his death as the work of a worthier hand, Roman and free; Propertius' Rome likewise would be less disgraced had Pompey yielded or fallen to that same hand.<sup>7</sup> It is not impossible that Lucan had this very passage of Propertius in mind, or that both

<sup>6</sup> Commentators resist the notion that Propertius could be suggesting execution here rather than surrender, but it is difficult to see how a Roman reading 'colla' could fail to recall Pompey's decapitation. The passage of Lucan cited below suggests that a Roman could indeed conceive Pompey dying at Caesar's hand and could believe such a death preferable to one by a servile hand (see also n. 7).

<sup>7</sup> The idea that death is less disgraceful by a free Roman's hand than by an Egyptian slave's is also implicit in Seneca, *S.* 6.6 'Quid indignamur in Ciceronem Antonio licere quod in Pompeium Alexandrino licuit spadoni?'

independently reflect an otherwise unattested commonplace elaborated in the rhetorical tradition about Pompey.

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### ANNALS 4.28.1 – AN OLD SUGGESTION

reus pater accusator filius (nomen utrique Vibius Serenus) in senatum inducti sunt. ab exilio retractus inluvieque ac squalore obsitus et tum catena vinctus peroranti filio <pater> praeparatur. adulescens multis munditiis, alacri vultu, structas principi insidias, missos in Galliam concitores belli index idem et testis dicebat<sup>1</sup>

The text in *Annals* 4.28.1 has exercised scholars' attention since the rediscovery of Tacitus in the Renaissance. The text of the Medicean manuscript for the central words reads: 'vinctus peroranti filio praeparatur'. Two problems have been perceived: firstly that *praeparatur* lacks an expressed subject, although from the context it is perfectly clear that Serenus senior is meant; secondly, the meaning of *praeparatur* itself.<sup>2</sup>

The textual emendation required to insert *pater* is minor, although not easily explained by abbreviations in the Medicean, which in general are few and in this sentence affect only the *per-* of *peroranti*; what abbreviations were used in the ancestors of the Medicean, where any error will have begun, are not known.<sup>3</sup> I. Gronovius emended *peroranti* into *pater orante*;<sup>4</sup> Erricus Memmius, whose suggestion is recorded in the commentary of Lipsius, created *pater* from the *prae* of the Medicean's *praeparatur*. I shall argue that this is the best solution to this aspect of the textual problem, but shall reject the punctuation suggested by Memmius.

Despite the approving comment in, for instance, Bekker's edition (mostly a rehash of Lipsius and later scholars),<sup>5</sup> Memmius' suggestion was not taken up by later scholars. Madvig proposed a solution involving greater divergence from the manuscript, but which has enjoyed great support: 'peroranti filio pater comparatur'.<sup>6</sup> The creation of the prefix *com-* would not appear to be simple palaeographically, although it may make explicit the notion of 'combat', which some think necessary, and is a phrase familiar from the gladiatorial arena.<sup>7</sup> It is not certain, however, that the idea of combat is foremost in Tacitus' mind (see below).

The advantage of the reading 'peroranti filio pater paratur' over 'pater oranti filio praeparatur' or '...comparatur' is threefold: firstly, the juxtaposition of *filio* and *pater* is acute and effective;<sup>8</sup> secondly, the slip from *pater* to *prae-* is much easier to

<sup>1</sup> The text offered in the latest edition of *Annals* 4 by R. H. Martin and A. J. Woodman (Cambridge, 1989) (henceforth Martin/Woodman).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Martin/Woodman, pp. 162f.

<sup>3</sup> See the facsimile of the Medicean, S. de Vries, *Codices Graeci et Latini photographice depicti*, vol. 7.1 (Leyden, 1902), plate 98R.

<sup>4</sup> (Traiecti Batavorum, 1721), followed by H. Furneaux, *The Annals of Tacitus*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford, 1896) (henceforth, Furneaux), C. D. Fisher, *Cornelii Taciti Annalium Libri* (Oxford, 1906), although both read *oranti*, and H. Rostagno, in the preface to de Vries (above n. 3), p. xiii, who takes the *poranti* of M as an error.

<sup>5</sup> (Leipzig, 1831): 'audio virum magnum et meritis in litteras clarum Erricum Memmum legere: *perorante filio pater* ... et rei et hominis causa quis non comprobet?'

<sup>6</sup> J. N. Madvig, *Adversaria critica ad scriptores Graecos et Latinos* (Hauniae, 1871–4). This suggestion has been accepted by K. Nipperdey and G. Andresen, *P. Cornelii Taciti Annales*<sup>11</sup>, vol. i (Berlin, 1915) and by E. Koestermann, *Cornelius Tacitus Annales* 1 (Leipzig, 1960).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Suetonius, *Caligula* 35.2.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Martin/Woodman, p. 163.