

Avitacum over and above the reputation of the Lucrine, *stagnum* may be meant to sound patronizing (*Carm.* 18.7–8): ‘Lucrinum stagnum diues Campania nollet, / aequora si nostri cerneret illa lacus’. When Martial imagines a friend boating in small pleasure-craft on the still waters of the Lucrine, the lake is once again a *stagnum*, reduced thereby to the status of a recreational pond (*Mart.* 3.20.19–20): ‘an aestuantis iam profectus ad Baias / piger Lucrino nauculatur in stagno?’. Juvenal himself alludes to the conditions required for these insubstantial craft in conveying the notion that the surface of Trajan’s inner basin at Ostia is as smooth as a millpond (12.79–81): ‘sed trunca puppe magister / interiora petit Baianae peruia cumbae / tuti stagna sinus’. In conjunction with Trajan’s triumph of naval engineering, *stagna* (‘pools’) is deliberately bathetic; the choice of a single word to undercut the grand or the pretentious is typical of Juvenal’s satire.²⁰

If we look again at the evidence for Montanus’ discriminating palate, we find far-flung Rutupiae on the coast of Kent described by a stately periphrasis. After *stagnum*, the epic solemnity of *Rutupino ... fundo* would acquire a special edge: from the shallow standing water of the lagoon (recalling the derivation of *stagnum* from *stare*) Juvenal plunges to the depths of the Oceanus Britannicus. The epicure plots the Roman Empire by its oyster-beds, so that, just as ‘fishpond’ is the right word for the provenance of the oysters guzzled by Martial’s hypocritical host, so it is consonant with Juvenal’s habit of mocking the pretensions of cultural snobs to ascribe to Montanus the refinement of being able to identify oysters from, yes, the Lucrine, but not the ‘Lucrine Lake’: rather, the ‘Lucrine Pond’.

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²⁰ Mythological contexts particularly lend themselves to this treatment: e.g. the golden fleece is designated by a diminutive form of *pellis*, ‘hide’ (1.10–11 ‘furtivae... aurum / pelliculae’); Daedalus, the great inventor, is a ‘craftsman’ (1.54 ‘fabrum... uolantem’); Pegasus is Medusa’s ‘nag’ (3.118 ‘Gorgonei delapsa est pinna caballi’); Jason himself is a trader (6.154 ‘mercator Iason’).

*FEROX SCELERUM? A NOTE ON TACITUS, ANNALS 4.12.2**

nam Seianus ubi videt mortem Drusi inultam interfectoribus, sine maerore publico esse, ferox scelerum et quia prima provenerant, volutare secum, quonam modo Germanici liberos perverteret, quorum non dubia successio.

Commentators on this passage have drawn attention to the unusual genitive in the phrase *ferox scelerum*, ‘fierce in his crimes’: ‘this adj. seems here alone to take an objective genitive’, says Furneaux, while Martin and Woodman state that ‘the dependent genitive of an external attribute, evidently on the analogy of its use with personal characteristics (e.g. Ovid, *Met.* 8.613 *mentis*), seems unparalleled and is perhaps intended to suggest that Sejanus’ criminality was innate’. Most commentators add a reference to Sallust’s description of Jugurtha as *sceleribus suis ferox* (*Jug.* 14.21), but that passage is no help as a parallel for the construction, since it gives the ablative usual after *ferox* in Tacitus and other writers to describe the reason for ferocity (cf. *Agr.* 27.1 *fama ferox*, *Hist.* 1.51.1 *ferox praeda*, *Ann.* 1.3.4 *robore corporis stolide ferocem*, *TLL* 6.567.76ff.).

As Martin and Woodman rightly note, this is the only passage in classical Latin where *ferox* is found with a genitive which does not refer to the ferocious person’s

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mind or character, i.e. a genitive which is not a genitive of 'sphere' (on this see E. Löfstedt, *Syntactica*² (Malmo, 1956) 1.172-4). The other instances of a genitive construction after *ferox* quoted in *TLL* (6.568.42ff.) may be listed, since there are so few. Four of the five refer to the mind and provide no possible parallel for *ferox scelerum*: Ovid, *Met.* 8.613 *mentisque ferox*, Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.32.2 *animi ferox*, SHA *Aurelian* 32.3 *animi ferox*, Prudentius, *Perist.* 3.32 *ingeniique ferox*. The fifth is Tacitus *Hist.* 1.35.1, [*equitum plerique ac senatorum*] *nimii verbis, linguae feroces*, where balance with the preceding phrase would suggest that *linguae* is a genitive governed by *feroces* ('ferocious in tongue'). *Feroces* is in fact only the reading of two late manuscripts and therefore probably a conjecture; the Mediceus, the sole authoritative manuscript, reads *ferocis*, and *linguae ferocis* would be a perfectly acceptable genitive of quality of a Tacitean kind (cf. e.g. *Ann.* 4.29.1 *Lentulus senectutis extremae*, 6.30.3 [*Gaetulicus*] *effusae clementiae*). If *feroces* is accepted, the genitive after *ferox* can still be avoided by reading the easy conjecture *lingua* (Georges and Heraeus), the usual ablative. But even if one accepts *linguae* as genitive after *ferox*, *ferox linguae* is no real parallel for *ferox scelerum*. *Lingua* can be regarded as a personal and internal attribute, and is therefore clearly analogous with nouns such as *animus* and *mens*; no such argument is available for *scelus*, clearly an external and non-personal attribute, especially in the plural, which seems to refer specifically to acts of wickedness rather than the attribute of wickedness itself.

Of course, anomalous uses of the genitive are not unknown in Tacitus (see the collections of material by A. Draeger, *Über Syntax und Stil des Tacitus*³ (Leipzig, 1882), 18-35 and H. Furneaux, *The Annals of Tacitus I: Books 1-6*², H. F. Pelham and C. D. Fisher (eds.) [Oxford, 1896], 50-53). Genitives apparently analogous to that of *ferox scelerum* appear at *Annals* 4.53.1 *pervicax irae* and 12.22.1 *atrox odii*, but in each case the noun which follows refers to an internal and not an external attribute. Two further passages look more promising: *Annals* 13.46.3 *procax otii et potestatis temperantior* and *Annals* 14.33.2 *laborum segnes*. But neither is truly parallel. At *Annals* 13.46.3 the construction of *procax otii* is surely influenced by that of *potestatis temperantior* (for the genitive after *temperans* cf. Terence *Ph.* 271 *famae temperans*, Pliny *Pan.* 52.5 *temperans gaudii*). At *Annals* 14.33.2 the words *laborum segnes* are both conjectural (*laborum* is from Lipsius, *segnes* from Mercerus; the Mediceus reads *aliorum insignes*, clearly corrupt) and perhaps not a reliable parallel for that reason; but if they are accepted, the genitive construction here is clearly a Grecism, imitating the genitive found after ἀργός (cf. esp. Plato, *Laws* 8.835d πόνων δὲ σφοδρῶν... ἀργοί and id. ib. 7.806a, Aeschylus *Sept.* 411, Euripides *I.A.* 1000). The shift from ablative to genitive after *ferox* admits of no such natural explanation, and seems highly dubious.

Here, as often, we should recall that the text of *Annals* 1-6 descends from a single manuscript, and that corruption is always a possibility. The problematic syntax of *ferox scelerum* is easily removed by the change of a single letter; read instead *ferax scelerum*, 'fertile in crime'. The corruption is of course an easy one, and found in the manuscripts of Tacitus; compare *Ann.* 1.41.3 where editors read Beroaldus' *obsistunt* for the manuscripts' *absistunt*. This emendation replaces a highly anomalous construction with one which is not only regular (cf. *TLL* 6.488.72ff., 489.72ff.) but also Tacitean: cf. *Annals* 4.72.3 *ingentium beluarum feraces saltus*, 'woods fertile in mighty beasts'. The metaphorical use of *ferax* is no problem; cf. *TLL* 6.489.44ff. and especially Livy 9.16.19 *illa aetate, qua nulla virtutum feracior fuit*, of which the sense at *Annals* 4.12.2 is a neat reversal. One might also compare Horace, *Odes* 3.6.17 *fecunda culpa saecula*; *ferax* for a male is paralleled at SHA *M. Aurelius* 16.4 (of M.

Aurelius) *multo melior et feracior ad virtutes*, and the similarly 'female' *fecundus* is used of a male at Valerius Flaccus 5.204 *fecundi proles Iovis*. The image is also well suited to the context, where it gives real point to the *et* linking *ferax scelerum* to *quia prima provenerant*: *provenire* can be seen like *ferax* as a metaphor from agriculture, referring to the shooting or springing up of plants – cf. Tacitus, *Agr.* 12.5 *solum praeter oleam vitemque et cetera calidioribus terris oriri sueta patiens frugum pecudumque secundum: tarde mitescunt, cito proveniunt*; OLD s.v. *provenio* 3. Sejanus, having seen his evil designs achieve their first shoots in the death of Drusus, moves to put into practice the further criminal plans with which his mind is burgeoning.

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‘ALII DISCUNT – PRO PUDOR! – A FEMINIS’: JEROME,
EPIST. 53.7.1

In the letter which initiated his correspondence with Paulinus of Nola Jerome deplores the propensity of the inexperienced to pontificate on scripture. Three kinds of incompetence are denounced. The second takes the following form: ‘alii discunt – pro pudor! – a feminis, quod viros doceant’ (Epist. 53.7.1). As in the other two denunciations, Jerome has chosen to express himself in general terms; scholars have nonetheless assumed that here a specific individual is meant. Nautin argued that with these words Jerome was attacking Rufinus, who is here represented as being intellectually dependent on his patroness Melania.¹ More recently Testard has maintained that Jerome’s criticism is in fact directed against Ambrose.² However Nautin’s view that Rufinus is the target has now been re-affirmed by Rebenich.³ The purpose of the present note is to draw attention to a piece of evidence which has hitherto been overlooked; it would seem to indicate that the object of Jerome’s attack cannot be Rufinus.

The full text of the sentence in question is the following: ‘alii discunt – pro pudor! – a feminis, quod viros doceant, et, ne parum hoc sit, quadam facilitate verborum, immo audacia disserunt aliis, quod ipsi non intellegunt’. Jerome’s antagonist is credited with ‘quaedam facilitas verborum’.⁴ ‘Verbal facility’ is,

¹ P. Nautin, ‘Études de chronologie hiéronymienne (393–7)’, *REAug* 19 (1973), 222–3.

² M. Testard, ‘Jérôme et Ambroise: Sur un “aveu” du *De officiis* de l’évêque de Milan’, in Y.-M. Duval (ed.), *Jérôme entre l’Occident et l’Orient* (Paris, 1988), pp. 245–6. Testard’s case has evidently been accepted by Y.-M. Duval, ‘Les premiers rapports de Paulin de Nole avec Jérôme: Moine et philosophe? Poète ou exégète?’, in *Polyanthema: Studi di letteratura cristiana antica offerti a Salvatore Costanza* (Stud. Tardoant. 7; Messina, 1989), p. 195. Testard argues that Jerome’s first two denunciations of incompetence are aimed at Ambrose; for evidence that the third is also an attack on him cf. the present writer, ‘“Taceo de meis similibus” (Jerome, Epist. 53.7)’, *VetChr* 29 (1992), 261–8. Testard did not attempt a rebuttal of Nautin’s thesis; he merely set out his own as an alternative.

³ S. Rebenich, *Hieronymus und sein Kreis* (Stuttgart, 1992), pp. 230–1. Nautin’s interpretation had also been accepted by J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (London, 1975), p. 192. Most recently P. Lardet, *L’apologie de Jérôme contre Rufin: Un commentaire* (Leiden, 1993), p. 288, has simply recorded both views and observed that ‘une cible n’exclut pas forcément l’autre’.

⁴ Nautin (op. cit. n. 1), 223, n. 51, remarks that ‘la même expression’ occurs in the *Liber de optimo genere interpretandi* (Epist. 57), where Jerome defends his translation of Epiphanius’ famous letter to John of Jerusalem: ‘ac ne forsitan accusator meus facilitate, qua cuncta loquitur...’ (Epist. 57.1.2). Nautin accordingly argues that here too the reference must be to Rufinus; his reasoning is accepted by G. J. M. Bartelink, *Hieronymus, Liber de optimo genere*