

of context as the teaching of Orpheus or Musaeus or whoever. The way would then have been open for Hippolytus to treat them as connected with the Mysteries.

*All Souls College, Oxford*

M. L. WEST

[martin.west@all-souls.ox.ac.uk](mailto:martin.west@all-souls.ox.ac.uk)

doi:10.1017/S0009838808000426

## THE POET'S CROAK: THE NAME AND FUNCTION OF CORAX IN PETRONIUS

Names in the *Satyricon* have long interested scholars, and the name Corax is no exception.<sup>1</sup> This name, which means 'raven,' proves to be something of a puzzle. First, his proper name is delayed for quite a long time, which delay may be deliberate technique or (given the state of the text) corruption. Second, Corax is a rare name and its significance in Petronius is not clear. By looking at these problems we can gain insights into Petronius's narrative technique, the habits of his exceptors, and his ironic sense of humour because the raven is notorious for its unmusical croak.

Corax is the hired help (*mercennarius*) of Eumolpus. He is not named when he enters the story, but he is simply designated *mercennarius* or *mercennarius Eumolpi*.<sup>2</sup> After it becomes clear that he is also a barber, the narrator refers to him as *tonsor* twice.<sup>3</sup> Afterwards, the narrator uses either *mercennarius* or *tonsor*.<sup>4</sup> It is not until much later, when the group starts their decent into Croton, that he receives a name (*Sat.* 117.11). His name is not introduced: the narrator simply designates him *mercennarius Corax* just before the character speaks for the first and only time in the extant story.<sup>5</sup> Afterwards, the name Corax appears only twice.<sup>6</sup> This pattern of naming is odd: why does the proper name appear so late and without introduction? It is either the author's strategy or textual corruption. There is evidence for each.

<sup>1</sup> S. Priuli, *Ascyllus: Note Di Onomastica Petroniana* (Brussels, 1975), 13–30, provides a comprehensive overview of earlier scholarship. More recently, A. Barchiesi, 'Il nome de Lica e la poetica dei nomi in Petronio', *MD* 12 (1984). Aside from a simple gloss, discussions of Corax can be found in J.A. Gonzalez de Salas, 'De Satirici personarum nominibus', in P. Burmann, *Titi Petronii Arbitri quae supersunt*, (Amsterdam, 1743; = Hildesheim–New York, 1974), II, 83; P. Sullivan, *The Satyricon of Petronius. A Literary Study* (London, 1968), 66–7; G. Schmeling, 'The literary use of names in Petronius *Satyricon*', *RSC* 17 (1969), 5–10; C. Connors, *Petronius the Poet* (Cambridge, 1998), 117; M. Plaza, *Laughter and Derision in Petronius' Satyricon* (Stockholm, 2000), 186–8; E. Courtney, *A Companion to Petronius* (Oxford, 2001), 147 and 180; and especially M. Labate, 'Di Nuovo sulla poetica dei nomi in Petronio: Corax "il delatore"', *MD* 16 (1986), 135–46.

<sup>2</sup> 94.12, 94.15, 99.6.

<sup>3</sup> 103.3, 103.5

<sup>4</sup> 108.4: *mercennarius*. 108.8 is a textual problem: *mercennarius [tonsor]* (108.8) del. Burmanus, *prob.* Müller 1995.

<sup>5</sup> The action and speech of Corax at this point clearly echo Xanthias in Aristophanes' *Frogs*; see Schmeling, (n.1), 6.

<sup>6</sup> The character Encolpius calls him *mercennarius* in 125.3. In the Philomela story he is twice Corax (140.7, 140.9) and finally *mercennarius* (140.9). In 140.7 and 140.9, the narrator reports Eumolpus' commands; thus, the presence of the name may be due to the representation of Eumolpus' speech. This is not the case, however, in 99.6.

Petronius may have deliberately used a functional name rather than a proper name for a minor character, just as Apuleius often does.<sup>7</sup> This functional naming persuasively explains the use of *mercennarius* and *tonsor*: the character is simply called by his function in the story. The appearance of the proper name, when it comes, requires some explanation. Mario Labate, who argues that the naming pattern is Petronius' strategy, suggests that Corax receives a proper name only when he takes on an autonomous role: he doesn't speak until he is named.<sup>8</sup> These explanations suggest Petronius wrote in a periodic or serial composition.<sup>9</sup> A difficulty, however, remains: if the character is not called Corax until descending upon Croton, then that name would seem especially significant to this episode. Indeed, the legacy hunters are called ravens (*corvi*) only a few lines previously (116.9). Yet, as far as we can tell – the Croton episode is very fragmentary – the connection has no significance in the story. The pattern of naming may not be author's strategy, but the result of textual corruption.

The so-called longer excerpts, or L manuscripts, are our only witnesses to the naming pattern of Corax, and they are demonstrably careless in transmitting how Petronius introduces named characters. Petronius tends to use two techniques to introduce characters: (1) the narrator simply names them, from his own *ex eventu* knowledge, or (2) he waits until a character in the story reveals the name.<sup>10</sup> In other words, he tends to use either a narrative or a dramatic technique. When we compare the overlapping sections of the more complete H with L MSS, we find that the excerpts do not carefully transmit this technique.<sup>11</sup> If the naming pattern does not represent Petronius' original, then it is not necessary to connect the significance of the name too closely to the events at Croton.

The significance of the name serves several functions in the story. First, it gives an appearance of reality because the name, although rare, is a plausible name for a free born *mercennarius*, which is what Corax claims to be (*Sat.* 117.11). As a personal name, Corax is attested epigraphically twice in Rome; in both, Corax is freeborn.<sup>12</sup> Likewise, the poor soul mentioned by Pliny (*HN* 7.183), Marcus Terentius Corax, who died suddenly when writing a note in the forum, is apparently freeborn. The evidence for the Petronian Corax's servile, or formerly servile, status is not as strong. It is true that slaves could be named for animals; Corax, however, is not attested epigraphically as a slave name at Rome.<sup>13</sup> The name is given to a slave in Plautus, but only as one in a list of fantastic names.<sup>14</sup> It seems, on the whole, likely that Corax is an

<sup>7</sup> See B. Brotherton, 'The introduction of characters by name in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius', *CP* 29.1 (1934), 39.

<sup>8</sup> Labate (n.1), 137.

<sup>9</sup> Brotherton (n.7), 43–4, suggests that delayed names in Apuleius sometimes represent oral compositional techniques. See also S. Nimis, 'The sense of open-endedness in the Ancient Novel', *Arethusa* 32 (1999), especially 221.

<sup>10</sup> M. Goldman, 'Anseres [sacri]: restrictions and variations in Petronius' narrative technique', *Ancient Narrative* 5 (2007), 9–10.

<sup>11</sup> K. Müller, *Petronii Arbitri Satyricon reliquiae* (Stuttgart 1995), xviii–iv.

<sup>12</sup> *CIL* 6 23434 and 23937. See H. Solin, *Die griechischen Personennamen in Rom: Ein Namenbuch* (Berlin, 2003), 1130: 'P. Olio P. f. Pub. Coraci 23434 (1./2. jh., Freigeborener)' and '[Sex.] Perperna Sex. f. Col. Corax 23937 (1. jh., Freigeborener).'

<sup>13</sup> Animal names: I. Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina* (Helsinki, 1965), 84–8; H. Solin, *Die stadtrömischen Sklavennamen: Ein Namenbuch* (Stuttgart, 1996), 156–9, lists slaves named for animals. On 158–9, he lists attested slaves named for birds: *Aquila*, *Aquilina*, *Parra*, *Passer*, *Passarina*, *Pavo*, *Pica*, *Picus*, *Pinna*.

<sup>14</sup> Plaut. *Cap.* 657: *Colaphe*, *Cordalio*, *Corax*. Although Corax does provide an allusion to Aristophanic comedy at *Sat.* 117.11, it is rather too strong to claim, as Schmeling does (n.1), 6,

authentic name, which serves to embed the story in the real world. A more common name, however, would have produced a stronger ‘reality effect’; Petronius chose this name so that it might also serve a function in his story as a metonym based on the characteristics of the raven.

Mario Labate has already outlined the specific characteristics of ravens that are worth investigating. Of these characteristics, he argues that the bird’s literary history, which shows the raven unable to restrain his tongue, is the best explanation. This history explains, Labate argues, Encolpius’ odd worry that Corax might betray the plot. The worry is odd because there is no reason to assume this sort of disloyalty in Corax, who has been a steady helper and will prove instrumental in the Philomela episode. In Encolpius’ overwrought mythological mind, however, the mythology of the raven may worry him. There is an objection to Labate’s otherwise persuasive interpretation: why does Encolpius not call him Corax when he is supposedly making reference to the bird’s literary history?

There is one other characteristic that Labate cites, but does not pursue: the bird’s notoriously unmusical croak. This suggestion deserves more attention. Ravens were known for their unmusical croak. This lack of musicality finds its way into the etymology of Corax given by Isidore, who considered the name onomatopoeic.<sup>15</sup> The crow’s poor singing is a theme in Greek literature: for example, in the *Birds*, Peisetaerus expresses his amazement at the fact that the piper is a raven.<sup>16</sup> Dunbar, in her commentary on the passage, writes, ‘the raven was probably chosen as the birds’ ἀλητῆς because of its notably unmusical croak’.<sup>17</sup> In Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon* the *daemon* is compared to a raven singing a tuneless song (ἐκνόμως ὕμνον ὕμνεῖν, 1473–4). Although Aeschylus’ raven doubtless owes its presence to the bird’s reputation as a gallows-bird, the tuneless song is equally important.<sup>18</sup>

Pindar’s second Olympian provides another piece of evidence. Pindar compares people who are wise by nature to long-winded learners who cry like ravens.<sup>19</sup> The scholiast, who read the dual, thought that the ravens were Simonides and Bacchylides: ‘he is alluding to Bacchylides and Simonides, calling himself an eagle and his rivals ravens.’<sup>20</sup> Pindar, if we believe the scholiast, adds the idea that poor singing ravens travel in pairs. I suggest that Petronius chose the name Corax to allude to tuneless, poor singing. It is, therefore, a nice Petronian irony for the companion of ‘Good Song’ to be ‘Croaker’.<sup>21</sup>

Corax illustrates several aspects of Petronian technique. Petronius often chooses names that have at least a plausible connection to the world of first-century Rome.

that the name is derived from a comic ‘character’. W.M. Lindsay, *The Captivi of Plautus* (Oxford, 1982), ad loc., calls the names ‘fantastic’ and the Plautine Corax does not take part in the play (was he even represented on stage?).

<sup>15</sup> *Corvus sive corax nomen a sono gutturis habet, quod voce coracinet* (12.7.43).

<sup>16</sup> τουτὶ μὴ Δί’ ἐγὼ πολλὰ δὴ καὶ δεῖν’ ἰδὼν / οὐπω κόρακ’ εἶδον ἐμπεφορβειωμένον (859–61).

<sup>17</sup> N. Dunbar, *Aristophanes, Birds*. (Oxford, 1995), 509.

<sup>18</sup> Pace Fraenkel ad loc.: ‘in what follows, ὕμνον ὕμνεῖν, the raven (for which κρώζειν or some such word would be suitable; Wilamowitz, in his translation, almost rewrites the text ‘singen das Lied mit Rabengekrächze’) is to be forgotten in favor of the daimon.’

<sup>19</sup> σοφός ὁ πολλὰ εἰδὼς φησὶ / μαθόντες δὲ λάβροι / παγγλωσσία κόρακες ὥς ἄκραντα γαρυέτων (Bergk: γαρυέτων MS) / Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιχα θεῖον (86–8 Snell-Maehler)

<sup>20</sup> Schol. ad 157a (Dindorff): αἰνίτεται Βακχυλίδην καὶ Σιμωνλίδην, ἑαυτὸν λέγων ἀετὸν, κόρακες δὲ τοὺς ἀντιτέχνους.

<sup>21</sup> The anonymous reader points out that Trimachio’s materialistically-named slaves reflect their master’s character traits at *Sat.* 60.8.

Corax also provides a brief glimpse into Petronius' ironic strategies because he uses the raven's associations with unmusicality to hint at the irony in Eumolpus' name. This suggestion does not negate Labate's, which persuasively explains the anxiety of Encolpius. The interpretation of Corax as 'Croaker' is, however, not closely tied to any particular moment in the text; it need not explain the pattern of designations deployed in an unreliably transmitted section. Nevertheless, careful attention to these patterns allows a better appreciation of Petronius's narrative skill.

University of Wisconsin

MAX GOLDMAN

mlgoldman@wisc.edu

doi:10.1017/S0009838808000438

## PERSIUS' MIND AT WORK: A STUDY OF THE SIXTH SATIRE<sup>1</sup>

The recipient, Caesius Bassus, was a lyric poet who wrote, at least occasionally, about love and had a retreat in the Sabine country (1–5). So one assumes that he was, to some extent, a disciple of Horace, though he could not have belonged to the *servum pecus* of *E.1.19.19*. Quintilian names him in rather tepid terms as the only other (dead) practitioner of the genre worth mentioning (*I.O.* 10.1.96).<sup>2</sup>

In lines 2–4 Persius employs several terms connected by Horace with lyric poetry.<sup>3</sup> The most interesting is the verb *vivunt* (2). Horace uses *vivere* of Sappho's passionate love-poems, exploring the idea of survival (*C.4.9.11*); but Persius talks of the strings of the lyre 'coming to life' under the action of the austere plectrum (*OLD* 3a). The plectrum is austere (*tetricus*) because Bassus' diction was, apparently, archaic (*veterum primordia vocum* in v. 3). But it has been suggested that the word also recalls *Mons Tetricus* on the Sabine-Picene border.

On the Ligurian coast and its stretch of water, with which Persius feels a personal link (*mihi* in v. 6, *meum* in 7), *hibernat mare* – a vivid use of a verb usually associated with an army in winter-quarters and therefore at peace.<sup>4</sup> Commentators cite as a

<sup>1</sup> These remarks may be seen as belatedly completing the discussion of *Satires* 1–5 in Chapter 5 of *Lines of Enquiry* (Cambridge 1976, paperback reprint 2004). I am indebted to a referee for some observations which are incorporated in nn. 8, 13 and 16.

<sup>2</sup> If in vv. 5–6 we read with most editors *mox iuvenes agitare iocos et pollice honesto l' egregius lusisse senex*, Bassus, about A.D. 62, is called a *senex*, while Persius is only twenty-eight. Even assuming a low limit for *senectus*, say forty-two, that means Bassus was some fourteen years older than Persius. Yet according to the *Vita* (Valerius Probus) Persius had Bassus as a friend *a prima adulescentia*. So when Persius became a *iuvenis* at seventeen, Bassus was already thirty-one. This gap is somewhat surprising; yet the alternative is more difficult.

If, with Jahn (Leipzig 1843, repr. Hildesheim 1967) and Morton Braund (Loeb 2004) we read *mox iuvenes agitare iocos et pollice honesto l' egregius lusisse senes*, there is no longer any problem about age. But then 'making fun of eminent old men' doesn't sound like a lyric writer, or even a Roman satirist; it points, rather, to comedy. Yet Quintilian recognises Bassus only as a lyrist (10.1.96).

<sup>3</sup> E.g. *lyra, pectine, chordae, numeris, fidis, pollice*.

<sup>4</sup> The shore withdraws *multa valle* (8) – 'along many a valley'; so Harvey (Leiden, 1981) and Morton Braund, perhaps rightly. In the Penguin translation I followed Conington-Nettleship, taking *multa* as *magna*, referring to a deep bay. The question could be resolved by one who knew the ancient geography of the area.