

eloquentissime, quando eadem Agri<p>pina et Tiberij Caesaris et huius Germanici filij adoptivi eius uxor fuerat. Puto ego Iuliae ex Iulia filia Octavianj fi<liae>. ut potius nescio.” We have but two marginal notes in which Gasparino offers a moral commentary on the text. At Suet. 6. 1. 2, 7 (Ihm) he observes on Nero’s character that “virtute suorum relictā. vitia generis sectatus est.” And at *BC* 3. 104. 2, 10 (Klotz), where the murder of Pompey is described, he laconically writes *scelerate*.

Thus, Barb. lat. 148 is clear evidence of the collaboration of two Italian humanists in a commentary previously unknown to scholarship. What its precise purpose was we are not certain. Most likely it was the work of leisure hours and quiet reflection. We cannot, how-

ever, exclude the possibility that the work was ultimately intended for the eyes of an individual, designated perhaps by the *senator* of Guiniforte’s note and the *vir eloquentissime* of Gasparino. Though at first sight the contributions of the Barzizzas to our knowledge of the text of Caesar and Suetonius may appear disappointing, at the same time their comments, however meager, reflect the Italian humanists’ growing concern with a more philological and historical approach to the classical authors. In this sense, therefore, the new Barzizza *commentaria* on Suetonius and Caesar should be of interest to both classical and Renaissance scholars.

GERALDINE MCGRATH

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

FINAL VOWEL PLUS -M: A NOTE ON THE READING OF QUANTITATIVE LATIN VERSE

A hint about Latin pronunciation *ca.* 83 B.C. is offered by a passage in the anonymous *Ad Herennium*, to which my attention was called recently by Frances A. Yates’ *The Art of Memory* (Chicago, 1966; esp. pp. 11–15). Since Miss Yates’ interest was in something else, she did not draw the phonological inference to be suggested here; but it deserves attention because of continued scholarly interest in the oral reading of classical Latin poetry.

The *ars memorativa*, or *ars memoriae*, discussed in this section of the *Ad Herennium* was important to orators because it taught them ways of holding firmly in mind whatever they wished to include in their speeches. A favorite technique, illustrated profusely by Miss Yates, involved associating sections of the speech with portions or areas of a temple or other public building. The method was thus partly visual: the orator pictured one pedestal or niche or intercolumnar space after another, visiting them in a prearranged order for the purpose of retrieving facts or ideas or arguments or illustrative *exempla* he had associated with them. The technique was widely known in antiquity, hung on through the Middle Ages, and was resuscitated and strongly re-emphasized in the Renaissance treatises on memory to which Miss Yates has drawn attention.

The special interest of the passage to be cited here is that it suggests visual images which will assist the recall of *verba*, as other images assist the recall of *res*. The problem is that of imagining pictures which will somehow contain or imply words—interestingly, not single words but two or more together, presumably because the total number of images will be smaller. Two images only are offered, the line to be remembered being an iambic senarius otherwise unknown: “Iam domum itionem reges Atridae parant.” Of these we shall look first at the latter, partly because it is simpler but also, and more importantly, because it offers a little practice in visualizing before we approach the former and harder illustration.

The second image is meant to assist recall of the final two words of the verse, *Atridae parant*. Let the orator, the author suggests, conjure up a mental image of Aesopus and Cimber, evidently two tragic actors, being dressed for the roles of Agamemnon and Menelaus in the play *Iphigenia*: “Aesopum et Cimbrum subornari ut ad Iphigeniam in Agamemnonem et Menelaum—hoc erit ‘Atridae parant’” (3. 21; LCL text, ed. H. Caplan, 1954). We are to picture the actors backstage, in the tiring room, as they put on robes and masks for the parts of Agamemnon and

Menelaus, the *Atridae*; as we view the imaginary scene we will say to ourselves, *Atridae parant*, precisely the words of which we need to be reminded. Surprising as the invention is, one can see that it might work.

The earlier image is intended to remind the orator of the words *Iam domum itionem reges*, although in fact nothing is done with *Iam*. We might, the author says, find useful an image of Domitius raising his hands to heaven somewhere while he is whipped by the Marcii Reges: "Hunc versum meminisse si volumus, conveniet primo in loco constituere manus ad caelum tollentem Domitium cum a Regibus Marciis loris caedatur—hoc erit 'Iam domum itionem reges'" (*ibid*). As the other image may strike us by its grotesque wit, so may this by its violence. An explanation of both violence and grotesquerie is to come in the next section, in which we will be told that the more striking, ridiculous, or even repugnant an image is the easier it will be to recall: "Si quid videmus aut audimus egregie turpe, inhonestum, inusitatum, magnum, incredibile, ridiculum id diu meminisse consuevimus" (3. 22). Putting this to one side, we remember, or are informed by a note (LCL *ad loc.*) that "Rex" was the name of a well-known family of the Marcian *gens* and that the Domitii were members of a prominent plebeian family. Contemporary readers presumably were expected to make the identifications easily. The modern reader may need help; but when he understands that the *Regibus Marciis* are members of the Rex family of the Marcian *gens* and that *Domitium* is one of the plebeian Domitii, he has all the information necessary to apprehend the cleverness of the rhetor's invention. What remains is the business of puzzling out a connection between image and phrase, which a Roman living about 80 B.C. could be expected to seize without explanation.

Let us return to the passage itself: "conveniet primo in loco constituere . . . hoc erit 'Iam domum itionem reges.'" We picture the scene vividly in the mind's eye, and this "will be" the half-line we wish to remember. Evidently the visual image before *erit* was somehow equivalent to an auditory image produced by the reading of "(iam) domum itionem reges." If the phrase can be plausibly pronounced in

such a way as to relate to the image of members of the Rex family in association with Domitius, we may believe that we have found the key to interpretation.

The crucial syllables are *-um* and *-em*, about the pronunciation of which in classical Latin a good deal has been written. A widely accepted theory is that by the first century B.C. the *m*'s in such endings had ceased to be pronounced, the preceding vowels being nasalized by way of compensation (see, e.g., L. R. Palmer, *The Latin Language* [London, 1954], pp. 159 and 224). One bit of corroborative evidence is the well-known fact that vowel-plus-*m* word endings do not count in the scansion of poetry if the following syllable begins with a vowel. I have myself frequently tried reading Latin poetry with such nasalized vowels in an effort to accommodate the actual sound to the theoretical metrical pattern, but without success; the result has been the creation of an awkward hiatus that instead of speeding up the reading slowed it. I propose, therefore, for the sake of experiment, simply to drop both the *-um* and, despite the fact that in the iambic senarius it is followed by a consonant, the *-em*. If we read *domum itionem reges* so, it becomes *Dom' ition' Reges*—precisely what we need to make sense of the context. "Hoc erit 'Iam domum itionem reges'": "This will be 'Domition' Reges,'" Domitius (being flogged by the) Reges. Although the poetic half-line does not re-create the whole little drama, it picks up for us the identities of the actors.

Concerning the propriety of utterly dropping the *-um* of *domum* I am myself wholly convinced. As a schoolboy who had learned, painfully, the semantic value of endings I long refused to read in the way demanded by textbook explanations of scansion. Some kind of pretense, I felt sure, was involved; and gradually I discovered that metrical theory is in fact full of pretense, as in our scanning "The angel" as "Th'angel" or in scanning Tasso's "Sostien fermo in se stesso i tuoni e l'onte" (*GL* 9. 31. 3) as though it were pronounced "Sostien ferm' in se stess' i tuon' e l'onte" in order to keep the number of syllables down to eleven. The fictions are sometimes ridiculously out of accord with practice, as, for example, when in

Milton's *Samson Agonistes* what is counted as "Or do m'eyes misrepresent? Can this b' 'ee?" is actually read as "Or do my eyes misrepresent? Can this be he?" (124)—the theoretical pentameter thus becoming an actual hexameter. Again, the adjustments may run in the opposite direction, as when long-mute final *e*'s are held in modern French poetry by theory, or, in syllabic Japanese poetry, final *n*'s count as full syllables. Acoustic fact is often in tension with traditional belletristic theory. Nevertheless it is wholly possible that a Roman housewife of the first century B.C. may, in ejecting visiting children from the house at mealtime, have said *Ite dom'* instead of *Ite domum*, and on the strength of the passage in the *Ad Herennium* I believe that by Virgil's time, at least, the colloquial reading, when the final *m* preceded a vowel, had also become the literary one.

The dropping of the *-em* in *itionem*, which is followed by a consonant, is another matter. For one thing, the preservation of it in the passage we have been considering would result in *Dom' itionem*, which by a little humorous stretching or by the ignoring of the final syllable could easily be equated with *Domitium*. Moreover, it seems likely, on purely semantic grounds, that the *-um* in *Domitium* would have to be preserved because the sex of a human being is normally more significant than the gender of a common noun. We should want to know that the Domitian in question was not *Domitiam*. Proper nouns might thus have resisted a development that was occurring in common nouns, at least upon first use in any given context.

One further possibility may be suggested. May not *all* vowel-plus-*m* endings (except those in proper names when the sex had to be indicated) have been dropped in colloquial speech but those which were not followed by vowels have been retained in formal poetry? Such a halfway compromise between the colloquial and the "real" or "correct" forms (as conservative grammarians probably thought of them) in oral readings of poetry would not be unthinkable if the loss of the syllable began before following vowels. If phonologists are correct in thinking that all vowel-plus-*m* endings had dropped from the spoken language, the compromise must indeed have been made.

The course of these reflections has led to some doubt about the *-em* of *itionem*: the pun in the *Ad Herennium* would be neater if it were suppressed, but official metrical theory demands that it be sounded. As regards the *-um* of *domum*, however, the implication is unambiguous; it cannot have been sounded at all. No imaginable slurring or nasalization will avoid obscuring beyond recognition the required homophony with *Domitium*. At the beginning of the *Aeneid* we may accordingly read, unapologetically, *mult' ill'* (or, rapidly, *ille*) *et terris iactatus*; and if a bright student should ask, "Was *multum* really pronounced 'mult'?" we can reply, a little more confidently than before, "By Virgil's time a vowel-plus-*m* ending was silent before a word beginning with a vowel."

WAYNE SHUMAKER

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

SENECA'S *POTENTIA*

With respect to "mors Burri infregit Senecae potentiam" (Tac. *Ann.* 14. 52. 1), D. C. A. Shotter has recently argued for the truth of Tacitus' statement against G. Walter's doubts ("Two Notes on Nero," *CP*, LXIV [1969], 109 ff.).¹ His arguments are not conclusive. The Tacitean picture of the deterioration of

Nero's reign after the death of the supposed paragon Burrus does not stand up to investigation.² After Seneca's interview with Nero and retirement from the court, Tacitus describes him as *perculso* (*Ann.* 14. 17. 1), yet he can still survive secret charges concerning his friendship with Piso which were laid by a mysterious

1. R. Syme, *Tacitus* (Oxford, 1958), p. 591 says much the same, although he slightly qualifies the claim in his note *ad loc.*

2. For Burrus, and the consequences of his death, see my article "Executions, Trials, and Punishment in the Reign of Nero," *Parola del passato*, CXVII (1967) 425 ff.