

Apocolocyntosis VI.

Marci municipem vides

The goddess Febris is explaining Claudius's identity and origin to Hercules. Who is Marcus? Many suggestions of varying ingenuity and plausibility have been put forward¹⁾, but none of them seems conclusive. Most recently H. Smilda²⁾ has proposed *Mercri*, which he takes as a popular spelling of *Mercuri*, recalling that Lugudunum derived its name from the Celtic god Lugos whose functions were similar to those of Mercury. But would the public have been expected to recognize such an erudite allusion?

We start our contribution by pointing out that the words form a glyconic line. It may then be that we have yet another verse quotation. Varro used many kinds of metre in his Menippean satires³⁾, and so the presence of a glyconic line in this work need cause no surprise. Recently it has been conjectured that Marcus Aper came from Tres Galliae and became a senator before the censorship of Claudius⁴⁾. Senators from Lugudunum are poorly attested⁵⁾, but they should most be expected (rather than senators from elsewhere in Tres Galliae) at an early period. In his censorship Claudius made a speech, saying among other things that there were already senators from Lugudunum⁶⁾. There cannot have been many, apart from the speaker himself⁷⁾. The speech gave the few an unenviable notoriety. Clever things might be said in verse; they might be remembered six years later.

But why did the verse call M. Aper *Marcus*? His *nomen* is not attested. That may be an accident of the tradition. Yet one might call to mind another outsider who in an earlier age made his way into high society. M. Agrippa did not like his *nomen* to be mentioned; it betrayed his humble origin. People made jokes about his embarrassment⁸⁾.

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1) For a conspectus of suggestions on the point up until the end of last century see A. P. Ball's edition (1902).

2) Mnemosyne N. S. 54 (1926), 265—6. The emendation is accepted by H. H. Mallinckrodt in his edition (1933; 1949²⁾).

3) Cp. Quintilian X, 1, 95; and Cicero Acad. Post. I, 2, 9.

4) R. Syme, Tacitus II, 799—800 (on Tac. Dial. 10, 2 and 17, 4).

5) R. Syme, Tacitus II, 620 n. 1. In view of this paucity of senators Lugudunum might be called "civitas minime favorabilis" (Tac. Dial. 7, 1).

6) C. I. L. XIII, 1668 = I. L. S. 212. If his words may be pressed, Claudius implies more than one senator from Lugudunum.

7) R. Syme, Tacitus I, 460 n. 6.

8) Sen. controv. 2, 4, 13; Sen. de benef. 3, 32, 4.