ADDENDUM TO 'DID CICERO "PROSCRIBE" MARCUS ANTONIUS?'*

ABSTRACT

This note adduces three passages in Seneca the Elder to reinforce a demonstration in CQ *69 (2019), 793–800*[1] *that the text of Plin.* HN *7.117 has suffered corruption in one of its clauses and requires emendation to restore Pliny's intent. This additional evidence concerns a trope employed by declaimers which could have predisposed a scribe to alter Pliny's text to state that Cicero proscribed Mark Antony. Such a statement has no place in a list of achievements that otherwise all belong to Cicero's consulship twenty years earlier in 63* B.C.

Keywords: Pliny the Elder; Seneca the Elder; proscriptions; Mark Antony; Catiline; *Philippics*; C. Antonius

In Book 7 of the *Natural History*, when Pliny embarks on praising Cicero, he informs his readers that he will confine his encomium strictly to the deeds of Cicero's consulship (*e tota uita tua consulatus tantum operibus electis*, 7.116). Yet, towards the end of his enumeration of what Cicero accomplished as consul, Pliny momentarily veers far off course. He does so by crediting Cicero with proscribing Mark Antony (*tu M. Antonium proscripsisti*), an apparent reference to the *Philippics* of 43.[2] But then, in the very next sentence, the reader is abruptly transported back to Cicero's consulship by the reference to Cicero's dual honours of being hailed in 63 'father of his country' (*parens patriae*) and voted a supplication in recognition of his suppression of the Catilinarian conspiracy.

To restore a sound chronological sequence of events in 63, the article proposed the simple emendation *tu* [*M.*] *Antonium circumscripsisti* ('you curbed Antonius'). This removes the anomalous reference to 43 B.C. by crediting Cicero with taking action in 63 to counter a genuine threat posed by his consular colleague C. Antonius, an erstwhile political ally of Catiline. In a review of his consular accomplishments (*Pis.* 5), Cicero recounts how he detached Antonius from Catiline as part of his successful strategy to defeat Catiline and the conspirators. The additional pieces of evidence from Seneca's *Suasoriae* reveal how natural it would have been for a scribe looking at *tu Antonium circumscripsisti* to write instead *tu M. Antonium proscripsisti*.

Two quotations from the seventh *suasoria* of Seneca the Elder attest that rhetoricians were fond of indulging in the conceit that Cicero's bitter invectives against Mark Antony in the *Philippics* had metaphorically *proscribed* Antony by damning his

* I thank the following scholars for reading and commenting on earlier drafts: Dominic Berry, John Briscoe, Robert Kaster, Robert Morstein-Marx and Allen Ward. They are not, of course, to be held responsible for the views expressed.

[1] The references on page 794 nn. 2 and 3 to my article in *HSPh* 110, which had not yet appeared when *CQ* went to press, can now be supplied: the year of vol. 110 is 2019, not 2018, as originally projected; the page-numbers are 237–42 and 244–5 respectively.

[2] Two books that appeared too late for me to take them into account in the *CQ* article can be added to the works of scholarship cited on page 795 n. 7 that have been content to accept without challenge the anomaly of Cicero proscribing Mark Antony at *HN* 7.117: T. Keeline, *The Reception of Cicero in the Early Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 2018), 129 and G. La Bua, *Cicero and Roman Education* (Cambridge, 2019), 72.

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memory for all ages to come. The notion was especially piquant and suited to illustrate poetic justice, because Antony was the triumvir who was held chiefly responsible for ordering Cicero's death in revenge for the *Philippics* (Plut. *Vit. Cic*. 46.2–3; *Vit. Ant*. 19.2). In the seventh *suasoria*, which treats the theme 'Should Cicero burn his writings in exchange for a promise from the Triumvir Mark Antony to spare his life', Cicero is counselled to decline the odious proposition and take pride in the lasting fame of his writings. In urging Cicero to defy Antony, the declaimer Argentarius speaks of Cicero 'proscribing' Antony with these words (*Suas*. 7.8):

sine durare post te ingenium tuum, perpetuam **Antonii proscriptionem**.

Permit that genius of yours to live after you as **an eternal proscription of Antonius**.

An even more explicit formulation of the paradox is to be found in the words of the declaimer Arellius Fuscus (*Suas*. 7.8):

uno **proscriptus** saeculo **proscribes Antonium** omnibus

you, who have been **proscribed** in a single age, **will proscribe Antonius** for all ages to come

In the light of this trope,[3] it is easy to understand how a copyist of Pliny could have been influenced to modify the text after mistaking *Antonium*, unaccompanied by a praenomen, for the Triumvir Mark Antony. The scribe would have been predisposed to think of the triumvir and the proscriptions as a result of having copied out the words *proscriptorum liberos* just a few lines earlier. Pliny used that expression to allude to Cicero's speech justifying his refusal to permit the children of those proscribed by Sulla to stand for public office. Once thoughts of Mark Antony and the proscriptions had been planted in the scribe's head, familiarity with the trope of Cicero proscribing Antony exerted its irresistible nudge. The intrusion of that paradox into Pliny's text is perfectly comprehensible, and the altered text does result in the passage preserving at least a semblance of logic, since all of the other deeds were done *by* Cicero, not to him. They added up to achievements contributing to his lasting fame, as did unquestionably his 'proscription' of Mark Antony by means of his *Philippics*. But, of course, the *Philippics* of 43 B.C. fall far outside the territory Pliny demarcated, Cicero's consulship of 63 B.C., from which exclusively he promised to select deeds to praise.

Finally, one other piece of evidence from the seventh *suasoria* is also relevant. In §2, the rhetor Cestius Pius held up as one of Cicero's memorable accomplishments 'the detachment of Antonius from Catiline and his restoration to the cause of the Republic' (*Antonium auulsum Catilinae, rei publicae redditum*). Here we have evidence that Cicero's success in neutralizing the danger posed by his colleague Antonius was celebrated in the schools of rhetoric. It is the deed that Pliny logically included in his roster of Cicero's consular acts, later corrupted to 'you proscribed Marcus Antonius'. In both Cestius Pius and Pliny, 'Antonius' was perfectly capable of standing on its own; it required no praenomen to designate Cicero's colleague C. Antonius, uncle of the triumvir. 'M.' of the paradosis of Pliny is a later scribal insertion, when *circumscripsisti* ('curbed') was corrupted to *proscripsisti* ('proscribed'). The context in Cestius and Pliny

[3] As pointed out to me by the reader for *CQ*, the two quotations from Seneca doubtless reflect an often repeated theme in the schools, and so they carry more weight than a mere two instances would on their own.

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makes the identity of *Antonium* unmistakable: *auulsum Catilinae* in Cestius; in Pliny, the immediately preceding clause *tuum Catilina fugit ingenium*. The 'Antonius' linked with Catiline at *Suas*. 7.2 *and HN* 7.117 can be none other than C. Antonius (cos. 63).

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NOTES ON SEVEN PASSAGES OF PLUTARCH'S *LIVES**

ABSTRACT

This article discusses the text and interpretation of passages in Plutarch's Lives *of Romulus, Agis and Cleomenes, Pericles, Brutus, Marcellus, Alexander and Marius.*

Keywords: Plutarch; emendation; interpretation; religion; cult; cavalry

(I) *ROMULUS* 29.10

αἱ δὲ θεραπαινίδες ἀγείρουσι περιιοῦσαι καὶ παίζουσιν, εἶτα πληγαῖς καὶ βολαῖς λίθων χρῶνται πρὸς ἀλλήλας.[1]

The slave-girls, going around, ἀγείρουσι and engage in play, then they come to blows and throw stones at one another.

This passage describes the ritual behaviour of slave-girls at the Roman festival of Nonae Capratinae. The verb ἀγείρουσι is commonly mistranslated: 'gather together',[2] or (with περιιοῦσαι) 'run about in companies',[3] 'a gruppi, vanno in giro'.[4] The active verb does not have such an intransitive sense. The correct meaning is given in the Budé edition: 'font une quête' ('make a collection').[5] The girls are engaged in ritual begging (or soliciting of presents).[6]

* I am grateful to Nicholas Lane for helpful comments.

[1] Cl. Lindskog and K. Ziegler, *Plutarchi Vitae Parallelae*, I.1 (Leipzig, 1969[4]), 76.

[2] J. Tatum, in I. Scott-Kilvert, J. Tatum, C. Pelling, *The Rise of Rome: Twelve Lives by Plutarch* (London, 2013), 47.

[3] B. Perrin, *Plutarch's Lives* (Cambridge, Mass., 1914–26), 1.187.

[4] C. Ampolo and M. Manfredini, *Le Vite de Teseo e di Romolo* (Rome, 1988), 171.

[5] R. Flacelière, É. Chambry, M. Juneaux (edd.), *Plutarque*, *Vies*, tome 1 (Paris, 1957), 100. The correct meaning was also recognized by W. Bühler, 'Die doppelte Erzählung des Aitions der Nonae Caprotinae bei Plutarch', *Maia* 14 (1962), 271–82, at 275 (a passing allusion to 'das Detail des Bettelns').

[6] For an explanation of the custom, see J.N. Bremmer, 'The Nonae Capratinae', in J.N. Bremmer and N.M. Horsfall, *Roman Myth and Mythography* (*BICS Supplement* 52) (London, 1987), 76–88, especially 82–3. Bremmer nowhere specifies in which of the sources (listed at 77 n. 3) begging is found. I find it only here and (in a very oblique allusion) at Ov. *Ars am.* 2.257–8. (Two references on his list need to be corrected: Aus. *Fer*. 24.16 to Auson. 14.16 Green and Macrob. *Sat.* 11.11 to 1.11.)

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