PRIAM AND POMPEY IN SUETONIUS' *GALBA**

The criteria for determining the significance of allusion or intertextuality have often been discussed and can be difficult to evaluate. For example, Wills has provided two general criteria that are useful for the task: (i) context and (ii) content, that is, echoes of the text—whether verbal, positional or rhythmical.[1] (i) may be insufficient on its own, but when combined with (ii) it can make a very strong case. (ii) is by far the most important, and the more unique the evidence is the more confident we can be in the allusion, provided the uniqueness cannot be accounted for by an earlier source or *topos*.[2] In this note I want to look at some possible allusions to Priam and Pompey at the end of Suetonius' *Galba* with regard to these two factors. I shall then show what significance the allusion has for the wider interpretation of the text.

Let us begin by looking at a case which to some extent anticipates my argument, yet does not convince because it is less cogent on our two conditions for significance, particularly (ii). Benario argues that Tacitus alludes to Priam through the death of Galba in his *Histories*.[3] His case rests largely on four parallels of context: both are elderly rulers; they arm themselves in vain, are killed near a sacred spot, and then decapitated. To these Benario adds two parallels of content. First, he claims that Tacitus' description of Galba as *imperatorem . . . inermem et senem* (*Hist*. 1.40.2, 'the emperor, a defenceless old man') recalls Virgil's epithet for Priam: *senior* (*Aen*. 2.509, 544, 'the old man'). Second, he compares Priam's *trementibus aeuo* / *. . . umeris* (509–10, 'shoulders trembling from age') to Tacitus' phrase *neque aetate neque corpore sistens* (1.35.1, 'he had neither the youth nor strength to stand'), suggesting that neither ruler can bear the weight of his armour.

However, Benario fails to compare all the accounts of Galba's death. His four contextual parallels are all present in the other three versions of Plutarch, Suetonius and Dio. Therefore, if these similarities were shaped with Priam in mind, it was probably done by an earlier source, not by Tacitus.[4] The content cited by Benario is also too general. The description of Galba as 'the emperor, a defenceless old man' is found in the same place in two of the other accounts, and is therefore not unique.[5]

* I am grateful to Stephen Oakley and Timothy Duff for their insightful comments on previous drafts of this paper, as well as to Judith Mossman and the anonymous referee for their helpful suggestions. I also wish to thank Daniel Curley, who discussed allusion with me and provided valuable comments on my preliminary research. For ancient authors, I use the following editors' texts. Suetonius: M. Ihm (Leipzig, 1908); Dio: U. P. Boissevain (Berlin, 1955²); Appian: P. Viereck and A. G. Roos (Leipzig, 1962²); Virgil: R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969); Plutarch: C. Lindskog and K. Ziegler (Leipzig, 1973²); Tacitus: H. Heubner (Stuttgart, 1978). All translations are my own.

[1] J. Wills, *Repetition in Latin Poetry: Figures of Allusion* (Oxford, 1996), 18.

[2] S. Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge, 1998), 25–6; cf. D. A. West and T. Woodman (edd.), *Creative Imitation and Latin Literature* (Cambridge, 1979), 195 (editorial epilogue), quoted by Hinds (above), 19.

[3] H. W. Benario, 'Priam and Galba', *CW* 65 (1972), 146–7; cf. id., *An Introduction to Tacitus* (Athens, GA, 1975), 109.

[4] It is generally held that all four accounts independently derive in large part from a single source now lost, although this does not preclude the additional use of supplementary sources. For full discussion and bibliography, see C. L. Murison, *Rebellion and Reconstruction, Galba to Domitian: An Historical Commentary on Cassius Dio's Roman History, Books 64–67 (A.D. 68–96)* (Atlanta, 1999), 12–17.

[5] *πρεσβύτου . . . ἄρχοντός τε κοσμίου καὶ ἀρχιερέως καὶ ὑπάτου* (Plut. *Galb*. 27.4); *γέροντος ἀνόπλου* (Plut. *Otho* 6.2); *τὸν γέροντα τὸν ὕπατον τὸν ἀρχιερέα τὸν Καίσαρα τὸν αὐτοκράτορα* (Dio 64.6.3).

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Benario's other parallel of content is based on a misunderstanding of both passages, since Priam trembles simply 'from age' (*aeuo*),[6] and Tacitus' line refers to the force of the mob.[7]

Let us now turn to Suetonius' account to see if there is more concrete evidence for allusion to Priam. Besides the same contextual parallels we have already discussed, there are two striking echoes of Virgil's text in Suetonius' death-scene, that is, parallels of content. Both are in direct speech and thus thrown into sharp relief:

iis ut occurreret prodiit tanta fiducia, ut militi cuidam occisum a se Othonem glorianti: '*quo auctore?*' responderit . . .

sunt qui tradant, ad primum tumultum proclamasse eum: '*quid agitis commilitones? ego uester sum et uos mei*', donatiuum etiam pollicitum.

He went up to meet them with such confidence that to a certain soldier boasting to have killed Otho, he replied: '*On whose authority?*' . . .

According to some, at the first upheaval he cried out: '*What are you doing, fellow-soldiers? I am yours, and you are mine*', and even promised the donative. (*Galb.* 19.2–20.1)

Galba's words are reminiscent of Priam's speech to Sinon:

'quisquis es, amissos hinc iam obliuiscere Graios;
noster eris, mihique haec edissere uera roganti:
quo molem hanc immanis equi statuere? *quis auctor?*
quidue petunt? quae religio, aut quae machine belli?'

'Whoever you are, forget now the Greeks driven from here; *you will be ours*, and tell me these things truly: why did they erect this giant construction of a horse? *Who had the authority?* What were they trying to do? What sacred object is it, or what instrument of war?' (*Aen.* 2.148–51)

Comparison with the other accounts reveals that these echoes are unique. For the first echo (*quo auctore?*) the other sources have a similar version, but it is differently phrased: 'Who ordered it?' (*quis iussit?*/*τίς ἐκέλευσε;*).[8] Given the consistency of this phrasing in the other three accounts, Suetonius' *auctor* was probably not in the common source.[9] The second echo (*quid agitis commilitones? ego uester sum et uos mei*) is no less unique and was even noticed by a scholiast.[10] Suetonius' *uester sum* ironically recalls Virgil's *noster eris*. For this too the other accounts have something different: 'What was my crime?' (*quid mali?*/*τί κακόν;*).[11] Interestingly, Suetonius' variation serves the same purpose of degrading Galba, and even adds the same detail

[6] Cf. *trementem* again at *Aen.* 2.550 with R. G. Austin, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Secundus* (Oxford, 1964), 211. Trembling was viewed as a stock characteristic of the elderly; see T. G. Parkin, *Old Age in the Roman World: A Cultural and Social History* (Baltimore, 2003), 82.

[7] Galba had to be carried in a litter because he could not withstand the *inruenti turbae* (*Hist.* 1.35.1, 'onrushing crowd'), not because he was unable to rise in his armour; see M. G. Morgan, 'Tacitus, *Histories* 1.58.2', *Hermes* 121 (1993), 371–4, at 374; also G. E. F. Chilver, *A Historical Commentary on Tacitus' Histories I and II* (Oxford, 1979), 95–6.

[8] *quis iussit?* (Tac. *Hist.* 1.35.2); *τίς σε . . . ἐκέλευσε;* (Plut. *Galb.* 26.3); *καὶ τίς σοι τοῦτο ποιῆσαι ἐκέλευσεν;* (Dio 64.6.2).

[9] The biographer may also be annotating his allusion through this word; cf. Wills (n. 1), 31 on *Aen.* 10.510–12. Virgil's *auctor* at *Aen.* 2.150 may itself be an annotation of Euripides' *Philoctetes*, his model for the episode with Sinon (J. W. Jones, 'Trojan legend: who is Sinon?', *CJ* 61 [1965], 122–8). For echoes of that play in Priam's words, see Austin (n. 6), 78–9.

[10] J. Geel (ed.), *Dav. Ruhnkenii scholia in Suetonii vitas Caesarum* (Leiden, 1828; repr. Amsterdam, 1966), 340–1 (on *Galb.* 20.1).

[11] *alii suppliciter interrogasse quid mali meruisset, paucos dies exoluendo donatiuo deprecatum* (Tac. *Hist.* 1.41.2); *καὶ τί κακὸν ἐποίησα;* (Dio 64.6.4).

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about paying the donative that we find in Tacitus (*exoluendo donatiuo*).[12] This suggests that if Suetonius changed what was in the common source, it was not in such a way as to distort the earlier tradition completely. Plutarch omits this version of Galba's last words in keeping with his generally more favourable account,[13] but considering that the other two authors agree, it is again likely that they are the ones following the common source and that Suetonius has deviated from it, perhaps supplementing it with material derived from a different writer.[14]

Suetonius' death-scene may also evoke the text to which Virgil's Priam alludes in the first place, which would further confirm the allusion in Suetonius.[15] It has long been recognized that Virgil's model for Priam's death was almost certainly the account of Pompey's death in the *Histories* of Asinius Pollio.[16] While this narrative is now lost, it seems to have been the canonical version upon which all later versions were based.[17] Whatever changes may have been made, it is possible that at least Pompey's last words would have been one detail important enough to survive. Let us look at our two fullest accounts to see if they accord:

ἀποβλέψας εἰς τὸν Σεπτίμιον, Οὐ δή πού σε, εἶπεν, ἐγὼ γεγονότα συστρατιώτην ἐμὸν ἀμφιγνοῶ; κἀκεῖνος ἐπένευσε τῇ κεφαλῇ μόνον . . .

Turning his eyes to Septimius, he said: 'Am I not mistaken that you are a *fellow-soldier* of mine?'. And that man merely nodded his head . . . (Plut. *Pomp.* 79.1)

ἐπιστραφεὶς ἐς αὐτὸν εἶπεν· Ἆρά σε γινώσκω, συστρατιῶτα; καὶ ὃς αὐτίκα μὲν ἐπένευσεν . . .

Turning to him, he said: 'Do I not recognise you, *fellow-soldier*?'. And that man nodded at once . . . (App. *B Civ.* 2.85)

From this comparison, it appears likely that, unless Plutarch and Appian are both following the same supplementary source,[18] Pompey's word συστρατιώτης comes from Pollio and is a translation of *commilito*.[19] If this is true, not only Virgil but also Asinius Pollio may be echoed in Galba's *quid agitis commilitones? ego uester sum et uos mei*, since it is very like that Suetonius knew Pollio's work and made use of it for

[12] C. F. Gorringe, *A Study of the Death-Narratives in Suetonius' De Vita Caesarum* (Diss., Queensland, 1993), 337. Cf. previous note.

[13] E. Keitel, 'Plutarch's tragedy tyrants: Galba and Otho', *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar* 8 (1995), 275–88, at 281.

[14] Cf. G. B. Townend, 'Cluvius Rufus and the *Histories* of Tacitus', *AJPh* 85 (1964), 337–77, at 360. See also above, n. 4.

[15] In general on allusions to an earlier writer and that writer's source, see J. C. McKeown, *Ovid, Amores: Text, Prolegomena and Commentary*, 4 vols. (Liverpool, 1987; Leeds, 1989–), 1.37–45; Hinds (n. 2), 8–10.

[16] J. L. Moles, 'Virgil, Pompey, and the *Histories* of Asinius Pollio', *CW* 76 (1983), 287–8; L. Morgan, 'The autopsy of C. Asinius Pollio', *JRS* 90 (2000), 51–69, at 52–5.

[17] See Moles (n. 16); also C. B. R. Pelling, 'Plutarch's method of work in the Roman Lives', *JHS* 99 (1979), 74–96, at 84–5 (= id., *Plutarch and History: Eighteen Studies* [London, 2002], 12–13, 35–6).

[18] It is improbable that Appian used Plutarch's *Pompey*, although a case could be made for his use of Plutarch's *Caesar*; see Pelling (n. 17), 84–5 and n. 75 (= *Plutarch and History*, 12–13 and 35–6, n. 75); cf. T. E. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (Oxford, 1999), 254, n. 43.

[19] Conceivably Pompey could have spoken in Greek, but Plutarch usually marks Greek utterances in his Roman *Lives*; see J. L. Moles, 'Some "last words" of M. Iunius Brutus', *Latomus* 42 (1983), 763–79, at 775.

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the *Divine Julius*.[20] The word *commilito* has an ingratiating sense,[21] and thus not only the content but also the dramatic context of the scene is mirrored in Suetonius: both Pompey and Galba use the word in futile attempts to regain the allegiance of their former soldiers, who assassinate them nonetheless. While the word itself is not rare, its use in both scenes is unusual, since the point is not to recognize, but to *be recognized*.

We have shown that there is evidence both of (i) context and (ii) content for allusions to Priam and Pompey in Suetonius' *Galba*. It therefore remains to ask whether the allusions have any meaning for the biography as a whole.

Suetonius leaves no doubt about the condemnatory verdict of his *Galba*:

> maiore adeo et fauore et *auctoritate* adeptus est quam gessit imperium, quanquam multa documenta egregii principis daret; sed nequaquam tam grata erant, quam inuisa quae secus fierent.
>
> He won the empire with greater favour and *authority* than he ran it, although he gave many signs of an excellent emperor; but they were in no way as celebrated as the contrary result was despised. (*Galb*. 14.1)

This sentence is epigrammatic and a counterpart to Tacitus' famous line that Galba was thought by all capable of ruling, until he did.[22] The sentiment must have been in the common source, and Suetonius is not alone in developing the theme of Galba's lacking *auctoritas*. Tacitus too has Otho point out Galba's *auctoritas fluxa* (*Hist*. 1.21.2, 'fleeting authority'), and a few chapters later uses the word with considerable irony in his own narration:

> igitur consultantibus placuit pertemptari animum cohortis, quae in Palatio stationem agebat, nec per ipsum Galbam, cuius integra *auctoritas* maioribus remediis seruabatur.
>
> After discussion it was agreed that the feeling of the cohort on guard in the palace should be tested, but not by Galba himself, whose *authority* was being kept intact for greater emergencies. (*Hist*. 1.29.1)

In Suetonius' death-scene the theme is even more prominent, underscoring the statement above (*Galb*. 14.1) that it was the reason for the emperor's fall. Suetonius mentions Galba's 'authority' in the advice given to him before his death: *auctoritate et praesentia praeualere* (*Galb*. 19.1, 'prevail by his *authority* and presence').[23] The theme is picked up again in the following section by the rioters' promise of total obedience (*omne obsequium*) and of course by Galba's own question *quo auctore?* (*Galb*. 19.2). Suetonius even announces the theme in the first line of the biography by reminding the reader that Galba had no legitimate claim to the empire: *progenies Caesarum in Nerone defecit* (*Galb*. 1, 'The descendents of the Caesars ended with Nero'). The double allusion to Priam and Pompey fits in with this theme, occurring at the moment when Galba is shown no longer able to wield any authority in the eyes of fellow-soldiers, just as Priam before Pyrrhus (*Aen*. 2.535–43)[24] or Pompey before his slayers.

[20] See Pelling (n. 17), 84 and n. 74 (= *Plutarch and History*, 12 and 35, n. 74).

[21] See S. P. Oakley, *A Commentary on Livy Books VI–X*, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1997–2005), 1.520 (on 6.14.4).

[22] *omnium consensu capax imperii, nisi imperasset* (*Hist*. 1.49.4).

[23] Contrast Tac. *Hist*. 1.32–3; Plut. *Galb*. 26.1.

[24] See D. H. Mills, 'Vergil's tragic vision: the death of Priam', *CW* 72 (1978), 159–66, at 162–3.

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To conclude, there is a strong case for an allusion to Priam in Suetonius' death of Galba. There are two verbal echoes of Virgil's *Aeneid* that do not appear in the other versions. The uniqueness of these evocations combined with an abundance of contextual similarities suggests the allusion's certainty. It is further supported by a possible reminiscence of Virgil's model, the death of Pompey, if we accept that *commilito* was also one of the last words uttered by Pompey in the account of Asinius Pollio. The allusion is especially compelling because it reinforces the theme of *auctoritas*, which was a central part of the tradition on Galba's death. It is undeniable that the emperor's *peripeteia* lent itself to a comparison with Priam and Pompey. However, no writer seems to have developed this connection before Suetonius. The deaths of Priam and Pompey were the final nails in the coffins of Troy and the Republic respectively,[25] both phases of the Roman past whose end brought great instability and strife. In the same way, Suetonius' account of Galba's death symbolically punctuates the end of the Julio-Claudian regime with which the biography begins, and the *Life* ends by mentioning the future dynast Vespasian (*Galb*. 23). Thus Suetonius' allusion makes the same point as Tacitus' remark that Galba's last year was nearly that of the Roman empire (*Hist*. 1.11.3).

University of Reading TRISTAN J. POWER
t.j.power@reading.ac.uk
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[25] See Morgan (n. 16), 53–4; on Priam and Troy, cf. R. Heinze, *Vergil's Epic Technique* (London, 1993; first published in German, Leipzig, 1903), 23–4.

APULEIANA II[1]

***Met.* 2.6.1** *tantum a cautela Pamphiles afui ut etiam ultro gestirem tali magisterio me volens ampla cum mercede tradere*. This sentence is unexceptionable. But is *volens* right? It seems weak and it certainly adds nothing after *ultro*.[2] Reading *volans* gives us a much more forceful picture. And indeed when, a few lines below, he does return to Pamphile's home, he so describes himself, *ad Milonis hospitium perniciter evolo*. Lucius' desire to 'fly' to Pamphile may then have a humorous analogue in the scene where he watches her transform herself into a bird and literally fly away (3.21.6).

6.8.7 *meas potissimum manus incidisti et inter Orci cancros iam ipsos haesisti*. Nothing resembling a satisfactory explanation of *cancros* has been offered, either by way of exegesis or by way of parallel. But it surely gives us a graphic image. *OLD* takes *cancer* here in the sense of 'barrier', as attested at Paul. Fest. 46.40. This seems very weak, especially with *haesisti*. Those who would promote this view might find a little support at 11.21.6 (*inferum claustra*). *TLL* thinks it alludes to some underworld

[1] See *Apuleiana* in S. Bay (ed.), *Studia Palaeophilologica* (Champaign, 2004), 37–44. I cite Apuleius from D. S. Robertson's three-volume edition of the *Metamorphoses* (Paris, 1940–6).

[2] *Ultro . . . volens* does occur at Seneca, *Phaedra* 441 (*si quis ultro se malis offert volens / seque ipse torquet*), but there it seems suitable and pointed, since the essence of the passage is the distinction between someone who is afflicted by fate and someone who willingly takes on affliction. Note *ultro . . . volens . . . ipse*.

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