SHORTER NOTES

TROJAN CICERO: A NOTE ON *PHILIPPICS* 2.55*

ABSTRACT

This note highlights the presence of a previously unnoticed hypodochmiac clausula in Cic. Phil. *2.55, which introduces a tragic element towards the end of the sentence. This feature complements the established reading of the passage in light of ancient tragedy. It will be argued that Cicero employed this tragic dimension to emphasize Antony's moral degeneracy and foreshadow the Civil War he would provoke in 44 B.C.*

Keywords: Cicero; *Philippics*; Mark Antony; Greek metre; ancient tragedy; invective

Recent scholarship has identified Cic. *Phil*. 2.55 as containing a comparison between Mark Antony and Helen of Troy, designed to highlight Antony's effeminacy and alleged passive homosexuality, traits purportedly manifest since his youth.[1] While the analogy with Helen[2] may carry a comic element, as scholars have noted,[3] the metrical structure in the last clause of the sentence injects a tragic dimension hitherto unnoticed by scholars:

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[1] J.T. Ramsey, *Cicero Philippics I–II* (Cambridge, 2003), 241; R. Evans, 'Phantoms in the *Philippics*: Catiline, Clodius and Antonian parallels', in T. Stevenson and M. Wilson (edd.), *Cicero's Philippics: History Rhetoric Ideology* (Auckland, 2008), 62–81, at 66; R.A. Pitcher, 'The *Second Philippic* as a source for aristocratic value', in T. Stevenson and M. Wilson (edd.), *Cicero's Philippics: History Rhetoric Ideology* (Auckland, 2008), 131–9, at 136–7; G.C. Marrone, *Marco Antonio* (Rome, 2020), 48–9; L. Samponaro, 'The mirror has two faces: the Republican style in crisis in Cicero's *Second Philippic*', *Rhetorica* 40 (2022), 333–82, at 341. For a comprehensive overview of Cicero's rhetorical scholarship, see further R.L. Enos, 'Cicero's rationale for his use of prose rhythm in argumentation', *Argumentation and Advocacy* 58 (2022), 148–62; R.L. Enos, 'Cicero's *maledicta*: the darker side of Cicero's arguments', *Argumentation and Advocacy* 60 (2024), 298–315. I would like to express my gratitude to the anonymous reviewers for recommending this bibliography.

[2] Further references to Helen in Cicero's works can be found in *Orat*. 164 and particularly in *De or.* 3.219, with D. Mankin, *Cicero De oratore Book III* (Cambridge, 2011), ad loc. This allusion is likely a quotation from Pacuvius' tragedy *Iliona*: cf. E.H. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin II: Livius Andronicus, Naevius, Pacuvius, Accius* (Cambridge, MA and London, 1935), 215–17. The portrayal of Helen in Latin poetry is further examined by L. Fratantuono and J. Braff, '*Communis Erinys*: the image of Helen in the Latin poets', *AC* 81 (2012), 43–60, especially at 43 n. 2.

[3] Although Sussman does not specifically address this passage, see L.A. Sussman, 'Antony as a *miles gloriosus* in Cicero's *Second Philippic*', *Scholia* 3 (1994), 53–83 and especially 'Antony the *meretrix audax*': Cicero's novel invective in *Philippic* 2.44–46', *Eranos* 96 (1998), 114–28. For an analysis of the influence of theatre on Cicero, see, for instance, F.W. Wright, *Cicero and the Theater* (Northamptom, MA, 1931); G. Aricò, 'Cicerone e il teatro: appunti per una rivisitazione della problematica', in E. Narducci (ed.), *Cicerone tra antichi e moderni: atti del IV Symposium Ciceronianum Arpinas, Arpino, 9 maggio 2003* (Florence, 2004), 6–37; P. Schierl, 'Roman tragedy—Ciceronian tragedy? Cicero's influence on our perception of Republican tragedy', in G.M.W. Harrison (ed.),

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ut Helena Troianis, sic iste huic rei publicae causa belli, cāusā pēstīs ātque ēxĭtī fŭīt.

As Helen was to the Trojans, so this fellow was to this Republic, the cause of war, the cause of ruinous destruction.[4]

The rhythmic prose forms a hypodochmius, a less common variant of the dochmius—a clausula par excellence of Greek tragedy—frequently employed in moments of heightened emotional turmoil to convey agitation and despair.[5] Latin rhythmic prose, including the hypodochmiac clausula, appears to have developed from Hellenistic prose rhythm,[6] with Hutchinson arguing that Cicero was the first to adopt the Hellenistic rhythmic system.[7] However, owing to the limited and fragmentary evidence of Latin prose before Cicero, absolute certainty on this point remains elusive.[8] It seems that Cicero significantly influenced later authors of the Republican and Imperial eras, although some discrepancies are evident.[9] While Sallust and Livy appear to have deliberately avoided these rhythms, exhibiting markedly different preferences, Tacitus employed the so-called 'Ciceronian' rhythmic canon in the *Dialogus* but refrained from doing so in his historiographical works.[10] According to statistical analyses by Keeline and Kirby, the highest incidence of hypodochmiac clausulae occurs in Velleius Paterculus' *Historiae* and Seneca's *De clementia*.[11] Regarding Cicero, although the use of the hypodochmiac clausula is not widespread, it is by no means rare.[12] In the *Philippics*, this clausula appears in several instances, such as at 5.5, where Cicero warns of the dangers of granting Gallia Ulterior to Antony, evoking the spectre of barbarian troops threatening Rome;[13] at 9.15, where he calls upon the senators to honour and express gratitude to the deceased Sulpicius Rufus for his service to the *res publica*;[14] and

Brill's Companion to Roman Tragedy (Leiden and Boston, 2015), 45–62; G. Petrone, '*Cadere in tempus nostrum*: Cicerone, il teatro e le interferenze dell'attualità', *Aevum(ant)* 20 (2020), 57–73.

[4] Text and translation from D.R. Shackleton Bailey (rev. J.T. Ramsey and G. Manuwald), *Cicero: Philippics 1–6* (Cambridge, MA and London, 2009). Another potential tragic element can be found at *Phil*. 2.92, in the depiction of the ship of state (*te gubernante naufragia*), and 2.117 (*tyrannum occidere*), with Ramsey (n. 1), ad loc.

[5] For the hypodochmiac clausula, see, for example, M.L. West, *Greek Metre* (Oxford, 1982), 110–11; and, specifically within Attic tragedy, e.g. A.M. Dale, *The Lyric Metres of Greek Drama* (Cambridge, 1968), 114–15; N.C. Conomis, 'The dochmiacs of Greek drama', *Hermes* 92 (1964), 23–50, at 31–4.

[6] Cf. e.g. G.O. Hutchinson, *Greek to Latin: Frameworks and Contexts for Intertextuality* (Oxford, 2013), 233–4; T. Keeline and T. Kirby, '*Auceps syllabarum*: a digital analysis of Latin prose rhythm', *JRS* 109 (2019), 161–204, at 163; G. Kelly, 'Periodisations', in R. Gibson and C. Whitton (edd.), *The Cambridge Critical Guide to Latin Literature* (Cambridge, 2024), 97–157, at 133. See also Enos (n. 1 [2022]), 151.

[7] Hutchinson (n. 6), 234–5.

[8] Keeline and Kirby (n. 6), 163 n. 15.

[9] Keeline and Kirby (n. 6). See S.M. Oberhelman, *Prose Rhythm in Latin Literature of the Roman Empire: First Century B.C. to Fourth Century A.D.* (Lewiston, NY, 2003).

[10] Kelly (n. 6), 134. Cf. the conclusions of Keeline and Kirby (n. 6), 200–1.

[11] Keeline and Kirby (n. 6), 170. I am grateful to the reviewers for encouraging me to develop these points further.

[12] See Cicero's definition of the dochmius in *Orat*. 218 and, for more about the dochmius, Dale (n. 5), 104–19; F. Lourenço, *The Lyric Metres of Euripidean Drama* (Coimbra, 2011), 53; L.P.E. Parker, *OCD*[4] 946, s.v. 'metre, Greek'. Cf. G.O. Hutchinson, 'Rhythm, style, and meaning in Cicero's prose', *CQ* 45 (1995), 485–99, at 485–6. See also E. Fraenkel, *Leseproben aus Reden Ciceros und Catos* (Rome, 1968), 16.

[13] P. Fedeli, *M. Tulli Ciceronis scripta quae manserunt omnia: In M. Antonium orationes Philippicae XIV* (Leipzig, 1986), 76 (app. crit.); G. Manuwald, *Cicero, Philippics 3–9*, 2 vols. (Berlin and New York), 2.568.

[14] Fedeli (n. 13), 121 (app. crit.).

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at 13.21, where Cicero, after introducing several themes of invective, such as *ferocitas* and *immanitas*, portraying Antony and his followers as barbarians, and criticizing their disunited conduct towards Rome, the embassy and Cisalpine Gaul, questions whether Lepidus ought to make peace with Antony.[15] In all these instances, Cicero introduces a tragic tone, reminding his audience of the threat that Mark Antony poses to the Republic.

It is conceivable that Cicero drew upon both Attic and Roman tragic plays, particularly tragedies centred on the Trojan Cycle. Helen's culpability for the outbreak of the Trojan War was a recurrent theme in Greek tragedy,[16] notably in the *agōn* between Hecuba and Helen herself in Euripides' *Trojan Women* (914–1035).[17] Note also Helen's use of *anticategoria* in the *Trojan Women* (particularly in lines 917–65), a rhetorical technique by which an accusation is turned back on the accuser. Cicero employs the same strategy in *Phil*. 2.19, 21, 34, 39, 74–5, and it can be argued that he uses it in the present context too. In this passage, Cicero not only accuses Antony of having instigated the Civil War in 49 B.C. but also defends himself against the accusation made by the consul of 44, who blamed Cicero for the rupture between Pompey and Caesar.

It is also possible to include a fragment preserved by Cicero in *Diu*. 1.42,[18] commonly attributed to Ennius' lost tragedy *Alexander*,[19] which exhibits language strikingly similar to that in *Phil.* 2.55:

> Apollo puerum primus Priamo qui foret
> postilla natus temperaret tollere;
> eum esse **exitium** Troiae, **pestem** Pergamo.

Apollo with foretelling voice gave forth that Priam should forbear to take up the first boy who should be born to him after that; that the boy would be a ruin to Troy, a plague to Pergamum.[20]

The lexical and thematic parallels between the Ennian fragment and the passage of Cicero suggest that Ennius may have been Cicero's source for *Phil*. 2.55. These shared elements further reinforce the relationship between the hypodochmiac clausula in Cicero and the tragic framework of the passage.

Other tragic sources may also inform our understanding of the passage. For instance, Seneca's *Trojan Women* (892) employs language that echoes both the Ennian and the Ciceronian fragments, presenting Helen as the source of the Greeks' and Trojans' destruction (Sen. *Tro.* 891–2):

[15] Fedeli (n. 13), 162 (app. crit.). Further examples may be found in Hutchinson (n. 12), 485–6, including one from the *Philippics*. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewers for prompting me to consider additional examples from the *Philippics*.

[16] Cf. e.g. Aesch. *Ag*. 689–90 and Eur. *Tro*. 498–9, 780–1, 966–8.

[17] *Phil.* 2.23–4 with Ramsey (n. 1), ad loc. For the application of this technique in Euripides' *Trojan Women*, cf. E. Hall, 'Introduction', in J. Morwood (ed.), *Euripides: The Trojan Women and Other Plays* (Oxford, 2001), 1–71, at 39. For its use by Cicero in the *Second Philippic*: C.P. Craig, *Form as Argument in Cicero's Speeches: A Study of Dilemma* (Atlanta, 1993), 147–68; D. Alexander, 'Mark Antony's assault of Publius Clodius: another look', *Ciceroniana* 8 (2024), 155–75, at 164 (specifically for sections 21–2 and 49).

[18] It is noteworthy that this treatise was composed in the same year as the *Second Philippic*; for the date of composition of this work, see D. Wardle, *Cicero: On Divination Book 1. Translated with Introduction and Commentary* (Oxford, 2006), 43; C.E. Schultz, *A Commentary on Cicero De Divinatione I* (Ann Arbor, 2014), 10 n. 4.

[19] See, for example, E.H. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin I: Ennius and Caecilius* (Cambridge, MA and London, 1935), 234 and H.D. Jocelyn, *The Tragedies of Ennius* (Cambridge, 1967), 78; see also *adespota TrRF* 1.76 and *FRL* 2.22.

[20] My emphasis. Text and translation from Warmington (n. 19), 234–5.

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quisquam dubius ad thalamos eat,
quos Helena suadet? **pestis exitium** lues

Can anyone hesitate to enter on a marriage that Helen advocates? You plague, you ruin, you scourge.[21]

Thus, considering these reflections and the context of Cicero's use of the hypodochmiac clausula, it is reasonable to infer that he aimed to reinforce the tragic argument in this passage about Antony, drawing on established themes from Attic and Roman tragedy.

In conclusion, Cicero underscores two key elements: Antony's degeneracy, evident since his youth, which renders him unfit to govern the *res publica*; and the theatrical dimension, beginning with the comic image of Antony dressed as Helen and culminating in the use of a hypodochmiac clausula at the end of the sentence. This clausula introduces a tragic atmosphere, drawn from tragic sources, and reminds the audience that, just as in 50/49, Antony would once again instigate a civil war.[22]

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[21] My emphasis. Text and translation from E. Fantham, *Seneca's* Troades*: A Literary Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary* (Princeton, 1982). See also A.J. Keulen, *L. Annaeus Seneca* Troades*: Introduction, Text and Commentary* (Leiden / Boston / Cologne, 2001), 442. The term *pestis* is also employed in the *Philippics* to characterize the negative attributes ascribed to Antony and his associates, as illustrated in passages such as 3.5, 8.9 and 10.11. For further discussion on the use of *exitium* in Ciceronian invective, see G. Achard, *Pratique rhétorique et idéologie politique dans les discours 'optimates' de Cicéron* (Leiden, 1981), 339.

[22] In *Vit. Ant*. 6.1–2, Plutarch critiques this passage, arguing that Caesar was already contemplating civil war and merely used the violation of tribunician rights as a pretext to initiate the conflict. See C.B.R. Pelling, *Plutarch: Life of Antony* (Cambridge, 1988), ad loc. Cf. e.g. F. Chamoux, *Marco Antonio: último príncipe del Oriente griego* (Barcelona, 1990), 55; R. Cristofoli, *Cicerone e la II Filippica: circostanze, stile e ideologia di un'orazione mai pronunciata* (Rome, 2004), 181; K. Matijević, *Marcus Antonius Consul – Proconsul – Staatsfeind. Die Politik der Jahre 44 und 43 v. Chr.* (Osnabrück, 2006), 25; W.J. Tatum, *A Noble Ruin: Mark Antony, Civil War, and the Collapse of the Roman Republic* (Oxford, 2024), 72.

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