EXCEPTUM INSTEAD OF *EXCERPTUM* – IN APULEIUS, *FLORIDA* 9.13*

In *Classical Quarterly* 51, 2001 Vincent Hunink questions the common interpretation of a passage in Apuleius, *Florida* (9.13)[1] by rejecting the version of the Vulgata-MS *exceptum* in favour of *excerptum*, the word found in the important transmission Fϕ. In his edition of the same year he naturally chose the same reading.[2] Benjamin T. Lee has now also accepted this version.[3] The matter, however, is not merely about simple wording, but about an important feature of sophistic grandiloquent speeches of this time, and therefore a critical examination of this proposition is worthwhile.

The first part of *Flor*. 9 constitutes an argument with his rivals who are allegedly envious of his ability (9.1: *invisores mei*). Apuleius is concerned with emphasising the enormous gulf between himself and his competitors whose linguistic inaccuracy the audience might be ready to tolerate. In his case, however, the audience is very strict: 'For who among you would forgive me for a single solecism? Who would allow me one ignorantly pronounced syllable? Who would permit me to jabber any wild and uncouth words…? Yet you easily forgive others these faults and rightly so (*meritissimo*)'.[4]

In order to illustrate this Apuleius draws on a simile from the world of provincial administration: The distance between himself and his rivals in his presentation equals the one between proconsul and herald. The *praeco* has to proclaim many things although his exact words are not very important (*vox garrula*); what he says is never going to be examined too thoroughly, nor is it going to be preserved and therefore cannot be scrutinised later. The situation is very different for the proconsul, i.e. when he appears in public: every single one of his words is going to be recorded accurately and is preserved in exactly this form, as it is at once transferred into the *instrumentum,* the governor's archive (*quae semel lecta neque augeri littera una neque autem minui potest, sed utcumque recitata est, ita provinciae instrumento refertur*).[5] The proconsul is very conscious of this fact; accordingly he does not make public speeches very often, and if he does so he usually only gives speeches he has carefully prepared in advance.

What follows is the explicit comparison of the orator in which, as I have mentioned above, he likens himself to the proconsul: *Patior et ipse in meis studiis aliquam pro meo captu similitudinem; nam quodcumque ad uos protuli, exceptum*/ *excerptum ilico et lectum est, nec reuocare illud nec autem mutare nec emendare mihi inde quidquam licet.* The point of comparison (*tertium comparationis*) is that the proconsul works under more difficult conditions than the *praeco* in that, after he has uttered his words,

* C. Bachmann has kindly prepared the English version.

[1] 9.10 in the Latin-German edition by R. Helm (Berlin, 1977). V. Hunink, 'Was Apuleius' speech stenographed? (Florida 9.13)', *CQ* 51 (2001), 321–4.

[2] *Apuleius of Madauros: Florida* (Amsterdam, 2001), 33, justified 109.

[3] B.T. Lee, *Apuleius' Florida. A Commentary* (Berlin, New York, 2005), 43, without backing it up in the commentary (105). Lee's remark that Apuleius' *Florida* in fact were excerpted later ('this reference…constitutes an uncanny correspondence to the actual physical fate of Apuleius' orations') is of course not meant as an argument.

[4] Apul. *Flor.* 9.7 (9.4 Helm); translation of J. Hilton, in S. Harrison (ed.), *Apuleius, Rhetorical Works* (Oxford, 2001), 147.

[5] *Flor.* 9.12 (9.8 Helm). Lee (n. 3), 104 misunderstands the word *instrumentum* as 'the document which records the text of spoken words'.

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nothing can be changed any more because the text will at once be set down in writing. So the expression *instrumento refertur* corresponds to *exceptum/ excerptum ilico et lectum est*.

The textual variant *excerptum* (Hunink interprets the *quodcumque ad vos protuli* as being the description of Apuleius' own written publication which then would be followed by 'rampant' excerpting) would destroy this comparison in two respects, and Apuleius' self-praise would be deprived of its acuteness. Firstly, because in that case the *excerptum ilico* could vary widely (for it takes time to excerpt) and could no longer correspond to immediate transcription into the proconsular archive. Secondly, it then would remain unclear why – if he had in fact published his speeches – Apuleius should complain so insistently that he does not have the opportunity to revise them. If the original correct speech has been published, little mistakes in the excerpt should not constitute a great nuisance (cf. Apul. *Apol*. 82.2 Helm). Therefore Hunink should actually suppose that Apuleius, without saying so, laments that nobody reads his published original speeches but people prefer to use excerpts of them. This, however, would be a rather doubtful compliment and would be at variance with his train of thought as one understands it so far. The version *excerptum* would mean that Apuleius with a single superfluous 'r' has spoiled his own punch line.

Therefore we can keep this as important evidence for the fact that public speeches were recorded by means of stenographers (*exceptores*) independent of the orator, and of course not only in Africa.[6] Moreover, this is not the only testimony for this practice. Hunink himself points to Cicero, to Suetonius, *Div. Jul*. 55.6, to Quintilian, *Inst*. 7.2.24, and mentions the late-antique tradition of stenographic recording of discussions.[7] There is even a painted representation from Ostia which shows two stenographers as well as the audience listening to a speech.[8]

A further suitable comparison is Speech 42 of Dio Chrysostom (this too is a preface), in which he talks about the popularity of his speeches which are spread throughout the world (*πάντες διαφέρουσιν*), in the process of which their exact wording is deliberately or unintentionally changed (42.4–5). In this case the speeches in question are not propagated in transcript form but through peoples' memories; only then are they (inaccurately) written down, but here again there is no mention of any excerpting. Just like Apuleius, Dio only pretends to complain. Really he is boasting of his own popularity, and just like Apuleius he is far from thinking

[6] This, however, must also be considered in discussions about the publication of Apuleius' apology. Hunink (n. 1), n. 3 seems to have misunderstood my statement in K. Vössing, *Schule und Bildung im Nordafrika der Römischen Kaiserzeit* (Brussels, 1997), 446–7 . I quote there '*Apol.* 55.5–7' not as 'confirmation of the stenography notion' but as confirmation of the fact that Apuleius' speeches were indeed widely known. The text is: *ea disputatio celebratissima est, uulgo legitur, in omnibus manibus uersatur, non tam facundia mea quam mentione Aesculapii religiosis Oeensibus commendata. dicite aliquis, si qui forte meminit, huius loci principium. – audisne, Maxime, multos suggerentis? immo, ecce etiam liber offertur.* Any mention of excerpts, incidentally, is conspicuously lacking here.

[7] For Cicero see especially Asc. *Mil.*, p. 46.21ff. Giarratano. That R.J. Starr, 'The circulation of literary texts in the Roman world', *CQ* 27 (1987), 213–23 does not mention this form of publication does not show its exceptional character. For late-antique examples of non-authorised short-hand notes in pagan literature see D.A. Russell, *Greek Declamation* (Cambridge, 1983), 80f.

[8] M. Korenjak, *Publikum und Redner. Ihre Interaktion in der sophistischen Rhetorik der Kaiserzeit* (München, 2000), 158 with further parallels.

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somebody could eventually be content with excerpts, i.e. a mere summarisation of his golden words.

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A HIERONYMIAN CRUX: *EPIST.* 60.11.2[1]

Jerome's celebrated letter of consolation to Heliodorus on the death of his young nephew and fellow-cleric Nepotianus has been the object of a very distinguished commentary by David Scourfield.[2] Chapter Eleven of this *consolatio* depicts Nepotianus' delight over Jerome's fifty-second epistle, which had been addressed to him as a vade-mecum of the priestly life. In this connection Jerome speaks of Nepotianus as follows (*Epist.* 60.11.2): *si vero peregrinorum, si amicorum quispiam venerat, laetabatur super se nostro testimonio et, quidquid minus in opusculo* (sc. *Epist.* 52) *erat, distinctione moderata et pronuntiationis varietate pensabat, ut in recitando illo ipso vel placere vel displicere cotidie videretur*. The second half of this sentence is a notorious crux. Scourfield himself provides such an excellent synopsis of previous attempts to make sense of it that quotation of his commentary *in extenso* is the best introduction to the problem (pp. 164–5): 'I cannot extract satisfactory sense from this passage as it stands. The problem lies partly with whether *ipso* or *ipse* (or neither) should be read, partly with *displicere.* The earlier editors printed *ipse DΦB*, which puts the emphasis on Nepotianus: 'in reading it out it was *he* [not Jerome] who each day seemed to please or displease'. Whether *illo* is taken to refer to the whole *opusculum* or only to the weaker parts of it (cf. *quidquid…erat* above), this comment has little point. In neither case does it make sense for Jerome to say that Nepotianus sometimes failed to please; and in the latter case, it is absurd to stress Nepotianus in contrast to Jerome, as if Jerome could have given any pleasure by the shortcomings in the letter. Hilberg read *ipso GKa.c.m2Ψ* without substantially improving the sense. The meaning must then be something of this sort: 'in reading out those very parts [i.e. *quidquid minus in opusculo erat*] he seemed to please or displease, varying from day to day'; i.e. if he was on form in his recitation, he could make the less satisfactory parts of the letter appear good, whereas, if he was not, all the weaknesses would stand out. But it is doubtful whether *cotidie* can bear the required sense, 'according to the day'; and again one would have expected Jerome to say that Nepotianus' delivery always made the poorer passages seem good, without any notion of displeasure'. Scourfield himself, who places *ipso…displicere* in *cruces*, suggests that 'the solution may be to delete *vel displicere*'. Such a proposal is however open to three main objections. In the

[1] Works are cited according to *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae: Index librorum scriptorum inscriptionum*[2] (Leipzig, 1990).

[2] J.H.D. Scourfield, *Consoling Heliodorus: A Commentary on Jerome, Letter 60* (Oxford, 1993). For its quality cf. M. Winterbottom's review of the present writer's *Jerome on Virginity: A Commentary on the Libellus de Virginitate Servanda (Letter 22)* (Cambridge, 2003) in *JThS* n.s. 55 (2004), 722–4, at 722, where Scourfield's commentary is described as 'the best of its predecessors'.

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