

MISZELLEN

PEDE POENA CLAUDO (HORACE ODES 3.2.32)

Poena, says Williams, is personified "as if she were one of the Furies"¹. Let us be more exact: she is one of the Furies. They of course rejoiced in many names, 27 of which are listed by Wüst². The first extant personification of Ποινή occurs in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, where it is clearly identified with an Erinyes (especially Eum. 321 ff., but note also Ch. 936 and 947 with Garvie ad loc.), as it is in other passages from tragedy³. Fourth-century oratory continues the identification (Aeschines, in Timarch. 190) and from about the same date (346–5) we have two Apulian volutekraters depicting the Furies and designating them as ΠΟΙΝΑΙ⁴. The emergence of the Ποινάι as separate goddesses is Hellenistic⁵ – appropriately enough, since they remained essentially a literary conceit, without any real character of their own⁶.

The original identification of the Ποινάι with the Erinyes continued alongside of this separation. In Latin literature we find again that the first personification of *Poena* is as a Fury. To Varro's Menippean satire *Eumenides* is ascribed a description of *tertia Poenarum* (fr. 123 Bücheler)⁷; her designation has been plausibly restored as *Insania*, reminding us that Μανία was another name by which the Furies were known in the Greek world (Paus. 8.34.1), although it remains unclear whether Μανία is attested as an individual name of one of the Furies⁸.

Subsequent Latin personification of *Poena* shows the same ambivalence about her as we find in contemporary Greek sources. Sometimes distinguished from the Furies⁹, sometimes identified with them¹⁰, often the relationship is

1) The Third Book of Horace's Odes (Oxford 1969) 36.

2) RE suppl. VIII (1956) 86–91.

3) See Kruse RE XXI 1 (1951) 1212.

4) Karlsruhe B 4, Naples 3222 (inv. 81666) (= Trendall and Cambitoglou, *The Red-Figured Vases of Apulia* [Oxford 1978–82] 430–2; for the date see *ibid.* 413).

5) Ilberg in Roscher, *Lex. Myth.* 3.2603.

6) Kruse (n. 3 above) 1213.

7) The recent Teubner edition by Astbury (1985) retains Bücheler's numbering.

8) The designation of one Ποινή as Μανία on the volute-krater Naples 3222 (see n. 4 above – this further detail is not recorded by Trendall-Cambitoglou, but see Lewy in Roscher, *Lex. Myth.* 2.2324) is perhaps not meant to show her personal name but to present an alternative title which any Fury had (see Lewy). Quintus Smyrnaeus 5.451 ff. has Μανία descending to the Furies, but she may be a companion rather than one of their number; cf. *Ov. Met.* 4.485 where *Insania* accompanies Tisiphone. Note too μανιάς as an epithet of a Fury in Nonn. *Dionys.* 44.277.

9) E.g. Cic. in Pison. 91, *Stat. Theb.* 8.24 f.; cf. *Plut. de sera num.* 564E. See further Kruse (n. 3 above) 1212.

10) E.g. *Val. Flacc.* 7.147; cf. *Strabo* 3.5.11.

unclear. Why then should we believe that Horace's *Poena* is a Fury? The answer lies in the description he has given us of her, a description which shows a typically Augustan – and in particular a Horatian – way of handling Greek poetry in Latin.

*raro antecedentem scelestum
deseruit pede Poena claudo*

runs the whole clause with *Poena*; *pede ... claudo* is to be taken, with Kiessling-Heinze, Page and most translators, as an ablative of description¹¹: the *Poena* is characterized as having a lame foot. Now pursuit was one of the chief functions of the Furies, most famously in the *Oresteia*, but already in Heraclitus B 94. Hence the large number of adjectives which emphasize their feet in Greek poetry: we have *καμψίπους* (Aeschyl. Sept. 791), *πολύπους* (Soph. El. 488), *χαλκίπους* (ibid. 491), *τανύπους* (Ai. 837) and *ὑπερόπους* (Orph. Arg. 1164, cf. AP 12.229.2). Horace's description of *Poena* makes it clear that he has an Erinys in mind, but he has found a characteristic way of avoiding the essentially Greek device of a compound adjective. Since Aristotle (whose Rhet. 3.3 owes an important debt to Isocrates on this point and others)¹² compound words had been picked out as a distinguishing feature of poetry, and early Latin verse was keen to take on this exotic feature, although by the time of Vergil and Horace fully-fledged compounds had become much rarer¹³. Vergil has a number of instances, but invariably in passages which seem to have an archaic, often Ennian, inspiration¹⁴; Horace, writing in a style recognizably less grand than that of his friend¹⁵, uses only one adjective formed from a compound of nouns, appropriately *tauriformis* (C. 4.14.25), outlandishly applied to a river: the Greek conceit is expressed linguistically in a Greek way¹⁶. In Odes 3.2.32 he uses the ablative of description instead of a compound adjective, a substitution well documented in the poetry of Vergil¹⁷, but which I have not seen noted in Horace before.

But why is our Fury 'lame-footed'? Other descriptions applied to them suggest speed: *δρομάδες* (Eur. Or. 317), for instance, or *ταχείαι* (Soph. Ai. 843). But another type of adjective indicates slowness, and to the *ὑπερόπους* cited above we could add *ὑπεροφθόρος* (Soph. Ant. 1074). Vengeance can come early or late; no wonder another epithet was *ποικιλόμορφος* (Nonn. Dionys. 32.100). On our passage Quinn (ad loc.) rightly remarks: "that divine justice is slow but sure is a commonplace", and he compares "our proverb" of the Mills of God. But we have only borrowed that cliché from the ancients (Sext. Emp. Math. 1.287, Plut. de sera num. 549D), who had another proverb *dei irati pedes lanatos habent*, expressing the same idea in imagery closer to Horace's¹⁸. However, Quinn conclu-

11) Williams (n.1 above) 34 takes it as an ablative of cause: "seldom has Vengeance abandoned a wicked man through lameness of foot". This seems remarkably bathetic to me. Horace's love of the striking oxymoron and his deep knowledge of Greek deserve better.

12) See my 'Alcidamas, Aristophanes and the Beginnings of Greek Stylistic Theory' (Stuttgart 1992) 50f.

13) See Norden on Verg. Aen 6.141, Wilkinson CQ 9 (1959) 185.

14) See Norden (previous note).

15) Many examples of the prosaic vocabulary of the *Odes* are presented in Ch. 4 of B. Axelson, *Unpoetische Wörter* (Lund 1945).

16) See Mynors on Verg. Georg. 4.371–3.

17) Austin on Aen. 1.189f., 313, 469, 2.333, 475, 697, 6.631, Williams on 5.609.

18) The proverb is quoted by Porphyrio on our passage as an explanation of

des that the image of a limping *Poena* is due to Horace; this may be true, but one would like to be sure that the ἀπαξ quoted above from Aeschylus, καμψίπους, really does not mean ‘bending the knee’ (i.e. swift) as it is usually taken, rather than the more obvious ‘with bent (i.e. lame) foot’. It has been suggested that *claudus* may be derived from *clauus* in an early sense of ‘bent’¹⁹.

Horace’s *Fury*, the product of Greek literature but described in his own way, remains mysterious. Is she there simply as a general warning against wrong-doing, or is there a more precise reference to the betrayal of the secret *Cerereis sacrum arcanae* which introduces this section? One suspects some deeper connection between the earth deities. There was a cult of Demeter Erinys near Thelpusa in Arcadia (Paus. 8.25.4), for instance, and Persephone was the mother of the Furies according to one ancient genealogy²⁰. But our information is too scant to allow convincing connections to be made. The same might be said of other possibilities – the Erinyes’ punishment of oath-breaking (Il. 19.259 f., Hes. Op. 803 f.) and (very appropriate here) a curious connection with silence which somehow seems to be part of their function. It was they who silenced Achilles’ horse (Il. 19.418), they whose grove required special quietness (Soph. OC 131 f.), like the graves of the dead whose spirits they resemble in some ways²¹. But at this point Horace’s poem and our own ignorance enjoin silence.

The University of Western Australia

Neil O’Sullivan

the phrase; see also Otto, Sprichwörter 110 f., who points out that *lanatos* has the sense of “tied (with wool)”, thus “slow”, rather than “quiet”.

19) TLL 3.1314.19 f.; cf. Wood, *AJPh* 23 (1902) 196, deriving *claudus* from an I-E stem *klū-* meaning “bend, incline”.

20) See Wüst (n. 2 above) 85.

21) See Harrison, *JHS* 19 (1899) 211.