3. I am grateful to Dr M. Winterbottom for his comments on this matter, and the HSRC for financial aid.

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TWO NOTES ON CALPURNIUS FLACCUS

(a) *DECL.* 9 (p.9.8–9 Håkanson)

Håkanson writes (*Eranos* 70 (1972) 62), ‘It is obvious that *aut te . . . pater* must be corrupt’, and sets down Gronovius’ and Schulting’s conjectures, neither of which, as Håkanson says, is convincing. His own (see above) achieves acceptable sense: ‘You are such, young man, that you would blind your father just in order that your mother should want to be blinded too’ (*Eranos* p.63). In support of this reading Håkanson cites the beginning of the speech: *Invenit, iudices, pessimus adulescens, quomodo utrumque excaecaret parentem.*

Håkanson’s reading involves four changes, albeit each one palaeographically slight; is the problem such that this nexus of alterations is justified? Clearly it would not make sense for the father to say that the youth is so bad that either he wanted to blind his father or his father wants to blind him. It is the father’s claim (p.8.21–22) that the son did blind him, so that there can be no question of exclusive alternatives. But *aut* need not indicate that: it may replace a statement with a more satisfactory formulation, in other words shift the emphasis (s.v. *OLD* 6b (*cf.* 6a); *LS* IIc; *ThLL* is less helpful here, but s.v. 1564.77ff, 1565.29ff). I would suggest retaining the MSS reading, which I take to mean, ‘You are such, young man, that you wanted to blind your father – or rather that your father wants to blind you.’

This statement is a strong indication of the extremity of the father’s feelings, but it is entirely justified by the facts of the case: the son (it is alleged in the speech) blinded his father, who now *petit talionem* (see p.8.21–22). For the father to succeed in putting his desire for an eye for an eye to use in his case against the son would show very well the ingenuity prized in declamation.

The clausula is not as elegant as that of Håkanson’s conjectural text (not however unparalleled), but the awkwardness of a sequence *talis . . . ut . . . ut . . .* in which the second *ut* bears a different sense from the first is avoided. *Ut* must, according to MSS, be understood in the second limb, but a parallel for this is provided in the same declamation (p.9.4–5). Both *patrem* and *pater* stress the enormity of the son’s badness, so that the placing of parts of the same word at the end of each limb of the *ut* sequence gives a very effective emphasis.
NOTES

1. I am grateful to Dr M. Winterbottom and the anonymous referees for their helpful criticism and to the HSRC for financial aid. I note that Winterbottom is cited in Hakanson’s apparatus (1978) as thinking the text sound.

2. *Aut* and *ut* are fairly commonly confused in MSS, so one might consider *[a]ut te excaecare velit pater*, which achieves by anaphora a rather similar force to the MSS reading.

(b) DECL. 24 (p.23.19ff Hakanson)

Placabo dexteram meam; cedo tantisper exosculer: o manus olim mea, quae me parvulum saepe gestasti, . . . !

‘I will appease my right hand; give it to me just so long that I might kiss it: o hand once mine, which often dandled me as a little child, . . . !’

According to the argument (p.22.23–23.2) the son wants to be killed *manu patris* rather than by executioner. The apostrophe to the father’s hand is pertinent and pointed (one hand to do the deed). The relative clause makes it perfectly clear that *o manus* refers to the father’s hand and this gives *olim mea* its luminary force (cf. 23.17, *manus paterna debetur*). *Placabo dexteram meam*, however is opaque in the extreme: taken literally it is senseless, there is no justification for taking it as applying to the executioner’s hand, and it can only refer to the father’s hand. *Placabo dexteram (patris)* is a paradoxical epigram which could be filled out as follows:—‘Father, you are refusing me the solace of dying at your hand (see p.23.17–19): I will placate that ungiving hand; let me kiss it and it will grant me the solace I seek.’ The rest of the declamation justifies this interpretation, but the use of *meam* makes an already paradoxical saying so dense as to be virtually incomprehensible. *Meam* has not the epigrammatic force here which *olim* and the relative clause give *mea*, nor the clarity of *ipse suo* earlier in the speech (p.23.8). Our text provides us with excerpts, and context could, perhaps, have given *meam* the sense *quaes mihi debetur* (cf. p.23.17), but it would have been perverse of the excerptor to obscure the point so much by not giving the context that such a sense would have depended on.¹ Furthermore, the anticipation (however *meam* was meant) detracts from the effect of *olim mea*. I suggest *Placabo dexteram tuam* (in the sense already indicated): the corruption to *meam* could be explained as arising from the influence of the following *olim mea*, by anticipation.²

NOTES

1. Perhaps one could print *Placabo dextera meam. Cedo . . .*, which would designate *Placabo dextera meam* as a separate and distinct excerpt from the sequel (on the use of initial capitals see Hakanson p.xiv). But *Placabo dextera meam* is not convincing as an autonomous epigram.

2. I am grateful to Prof. F.R.D. Goodyear, Dr M. Winterbottom and the anonymous referees for their helpful criticism, and to the HSRC for financial aid.

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