16. For the sake of completeness, a further possibility should perhaps be mentioned which would also be compatible with the authenticity of this passage. In a paper entitled 'The Performance of Lists and Catalogues in the Homeric Epics' delivered at the conference 'Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece' at the University of Tasmania in July 1994, Dr. Elizabeth Minchin has argued, utterly convincingly, that long lists of invented names present especial problems of memorization for the oral poet. I would add that the same would be true for rhapsodes, and that the Argolic text may just possibly be descended from a dictation by an inferior rhapsode who had not been able to master the feat of memorizing this difficult passage and so omitted it. (For the theory that oral transmission played some part in the preservation of the Homeric text see, most recently, A.F. Garvie [ed.], *Homer, Odyssey Books VI-VIII*, Cambridge 1994, 15–17 [esp. 17], cf. 35.) However, this explanation seems less likely than the one presented in my text.

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GIBBON AND LIVY: HISTORY OF A READING

By now, we know enough about Gibbon the historian. But Gibbon the philologist comports unfamiliar pleasures and profits. Here is one example.

In chapter four of his Autobiography,¹ we find this immodest proposal: 'In the perusal of Livy (xxx. 44) I had been stopped by a sentence in a speech of Hannibal which cannot be reconciled by any torture with his character or argument. The commentators dissemble or confess their perplexity. It occurred to me that the change of a single letter, by substituting *otio* instead of *odio*, might restore a clear and consistent sense, but I wished to weigh my emendation in scales less partial than my own. I addressed myself to Mr. Crévier, the successor of Rollin, and a professor in the University of Paris, who had published a large and valuable edition of Livy. His answer was speedy and polite; he praised my ingenuity and adopted my conjecture, which I must still applaud as easy and happy.'

Lord Sheffield had the good taste to suppress this last bit of bragging.² Gibbon does not specify the dissembling and perplexed commentators. The edition of Livy by Jean Baptiste Louis Crévier was issued from Paris over the years 1735–1741. Recording the notion in a single sentence, Sands³ dubs it 'an ingenious correction,' without amplification.

About a century later, Madvig published the same proposal, without any mention of Gibbon.⁴ 'Otio' now prevails in modern editions (e.g., those of Oxford, Loeb, and Teubner). A conspicuous exception is the annotated text of book thirty designed for students by two respectable scholars⁵ in which 'odio' is retained without a single word of comment in the notes.

The names of Gibbon and Madvig do not adorn modern critical apparatuses at this point in Livy. For the simple reason that their 'otio' had
been long anticipated in a single manuscript, the Codex Colbertinus (now Parisiensis 5731), written in the tenth or eleventh century, a close relative of the Codex Puteanus.

Thus far, Housmanly speaking, *editorum in usum*. As to the respective readings. At Livy 30. 44. 7, Hannibal (in the year 201) is giving a speech at Carthage in reply to a personal attack upon himself as the ‘lacrimarum causa’ by Hasdrubal Haedus. The sentence in cause runs ‘nec est cur vos odio/otio vestro consultum ab Romanis credatis.’ It follows Hannibal’s criticism of Punic acceptance of the war reparations, ‘tunc flesse decuit cum adempta sunt nobis arma, incensae naves, interdictum externis bellis; illo enim volnere concidimus,’ and is postluded by ‘nulla magna civitas diu quiescere potest; si foris hostem non habet, domi invenit...’ If taken in close conjunction with this latter (as insisted upon by Madvig), then ‘otio’ is obviously more tempting than ‘odio.’ The argument is a combination of the explicit and the implicit: the Romans can afford not to destroy the city of Carthage, because (with its neighbouring enemies and the previous ‘truceless war’ against the mercenaries in mind) it will soon weaken if not destroy itself in fresh internecine war.

However, Hannibal goes on to say, ‘tantum nimirum ex publicis malis sentimus quantum ad privatias res pertinent ... itaque cum spolia victae Carthaginii detrhaebantur, cum inermem iam ac nudum destitui inter tot armatas gentes Africae cerneretis, nemo ingemuit.’ If connected with this argument, then ‘odio’ would make good sense, despite Gibbon: Rome has no cause to fear Punic hatred, for there is no sense of national indignation at the terms of the treaty imposed, only selfish reaction to the elements that are individually harmful. In his own earlier (30. 42. 13) speech, Hasdrubal had in a *varia oratione* shifted the blame for the war ‘in paucorum cupiditatem ab re publica.’ Thus Hannibal’s response would be ironically consonant with the arguments and phraseologies of his opponent, in the best traditions of Livian rhetorical balance.

So there is a case both for ‘odio’ and ‘otio’. This needed to be said, given the dominance of *otio* in modern texts. Gibbon and Madvig are vindicated by the lone but significant authority of the Codex Colbertinus. But if the claim of ‘otio’ is as clamant as they and their epigones insist, how do they account for the presence of ‘odio’ in all the other manuscripts and the earliest printed editions, especially as (on their own reckoning⁶) the principle of *lectio difficilior soque potior* has not prevailed?

Notes

6. While Gibbon talks of 'odio' as a reading that defies reconciliation by torture, Madvig reviles it with the words 'quid absurdius'?

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PERSIUS' BOILED BUTTOCKS

At *Satire* 4. 39–41, in the course of an inventory (not for the queasy) of the physical decrepitude afflicting what Emily Gowers1 has nicely called 'the rent boy transformed from blooming youth into sad old age', Persius exclaims:

quincen palaestritae licet haec plantaria vellant
elixasque nates labefactent forcipe aduna,
non tamen ista felixullo mansuescit aratro.

Niall Rudd in his Penguin translation2 turns these lines into the following English:

Though half a dozen masseurs in the gym uproot this plantation,
assailing your flabby buttocks with hot pitch and the claws
of tweezers, no plough ever made will tame that bracken.

In cause here are the boiled buttocks. Earlier commentators such as Conington3 and Gildersleeve4 passed them over in discreet silence, the latter adding censorial spice by quoting Pierre Bayle: 'Les Satires de Perse sont dévergondées.' The *Oxford Latin Dictionary* is equally quiet. Authorities ranging from Lewis & Short to Rudd and such modern editors as Cowherd,5 Harvey,6 and Jenkinson7 translate 'elixas' as 'flabby', with the added notion of softening up the buttocks to facilitate depilation. Gowers herself does not explore the detail. Nor from their very different standpoints do Morford,8 for whom the lines are 'obscene and unattractive', or Wehrle9 who finds in them a 'delightful obscenity'. There seems to be nothing about the matter in the latest bibliographical surveys.10

There may be (dare we say?) an extra wrinkle. 'Elixas nates' is a powerful, albeit characteristic of Persius, expression, seemingly without parallel apart from the obvious imitation in Ausonius, *Epigr.* 100. 3 (Green), 'elicto plantaria podice vellis'.11 The phrase might be punningly parodied in Juvenal's gothically comic lines (13. 84–5), 'si vero et pater est, "comedam"
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