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## **Persius and Rhetoric: an Episode of Scholastic *Recitatio*<sup>1</sup>**

*Rhetorical education, as is well known, represents a fundamental stage in the scholastic training of young people in the imperial age. The Latin poet Aulus Persius Flaccus (34–62 AD) certainly also devoted himself to such studies, as can be seen from his *Saturae* (Pers. 3, 44–47) and the *Vita Persi* 6, which, although presenting itself as the result of numerous interpolations and stratifications, represents the only ancient testimony so far known that can offer a complete overview of the biographical events of Persius. Starting from this brief premise, the purpose of my paper will be to attempt to advance a new proposed reading of a controversial passage from the *Vita Persi* placed in the section devoted to Persius' friendships and acquaintances (*Vita Persi* 13), in order to investigate not only the debated relationship between Persius and recitatory practice, but also the relationship he entertained with his contemporary Marcus Anneus Lucanus (39–65 AD) during his years of scholastic training under the philosopher Lucius Anneus Cornutus (1<sup>st</sup> century AD).*

**Keywords:** Persius, Lucan, rhetoric, *Vita Persi*.

Rhetorical education, as is well known,<sup>2</sup> represented a fundamental stage in the scholastic training of young people during the Imperial Age. The Latin poet Aulus Persius Flaccus (34–62 AD) undoubtedly engaged

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<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the importance of rhetorical education in ancient Rome, see, for example, the studies by STRAMAGLIA (2010: 111–151) and LENTANO (2015).

in such studies as well, as evidenced by his *Saturae*<sup>3</sup> and the *Vita Persi*.<sup>4</sup> Although the latter appears to be the result of numerous interpolations and layers of tradition,<sup>5</sup> it remains the only known ancient source that offers a comprehensive account of Persius' life.

Starting from this brief premise, the aim of my research will be to propose a new interpretation of a controversial passage from the *Vita Persi*, located in the section dedicated to Persius' friendships and acquaintances.<sup>6</sup> The goal is to explore not only the debated relationship between Persius and the practice of recitation,<sup>7</sup> but also the nature of his connection with his contemporary, Marcus Annaeus Lucanus (39–65 AD).

Concluding the account of the first meeting between Persius and Lucan, which took place at the school of Annaeus Cornutus, at the time *tragicus sectae Stoicae*,<sup>8</sup> the biographer recounts an anecdote involving the two poets, transmitted by the oldest manuscripts of the *Vita Persi* as follows:

<sup>3</sup> Pers. 3, 44–47: *saepe oculos, memini, tangebam parvus olivo / grandia si nollem morituri verba Catonis / discere non sano multum laudanda magistro, / quae pater adductis sudans audiret amicis*. According to a bold hypothesis proposed by HERRMANN (1955: 318–319), the composition that the young Persius would have been forced to memorize and recite before his father and his assembled friends may be identified with an epigram composed by Seneca during his exile in Corsica (PLM BAEHRENS IV, 9, 4–8). For a deeper exploration of these verses from Persius' third satire, see TANDOI (1965: 315–339) and PIROVANO (2013: 41–60).

<sup>4</sup> Prob. *Vita Persi* 6: *studuit Flaccus usque ad annum XII aetatis suae Volaterris, inde Romae apud grammaticum Remmii Palaemonem et apud rhetorem Verginium Flavum*. The passages from the *Vita Persi* cited in this paper follow the edition by TAKÁCS (2011: 13–16; 170–171), which is preferred over the more recent edition by STACHON (2021: 68–73) out of respect for the manuscript tradition.

<sup>5</sup> For example, PARATORE (1968: 1–55) and BRUGNOLI (1972: 13–24) held this view, in contrast to ROSTAGNI (1944: 167–176), who attributed the authorship of the *Vita Persi* to Probus.

<sup>6</sup> Prob. *vita Persi* 9–16: *amicos habuit a prima adulescentia Caesium Bassum poetam et Calpurnium Staturam, qui vivo eo iuvenis decessit. [...] summe dilectus a Paeto Thrasea est, ita ut peregrinaretur quoque cum eo aliquando, cognatam eius Arriam uxorem habente*.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. e. g. EHLERS (1990: 171–181) and VILLEGAS GUILLÉN (2002: 183–191).

<sup>8</sup> Prob. *vita Persi* 11–12: *[...] cognovit per Cornutum etiam Annaeum Lucanum, aequae tum auditorem Cornuti. [nam Cornutus illo tempore tragicus fuit sectae Stoicae, qui libros philosophiae reliquit]*.

- K: Sed Lucanus adeo mirabatur scriptura Flacci ut vix retineret se <recita> ntem clamore, quin illa vera esset poetica diceret (f. 32v).
- L: Sed Lucanus mirabatur adeo scripta Flacci ut vix se retineret recitantem clamore, quae illa esse vera ipsa poemata ipse luto facere (f. 1v).
- R: Sed Lucanus mirabatur adeo scripta Flacci ut vix se retineret recitantem (Rgl ‘aliter recitante’) clamore (f. 127r).
- T: Sed Lucanus mirabatur adeo scripta Flacci ut vix se retineret recitantem clamore, quae illa esse vera ipsa poemata ipsum lutum facere (f. 94r).
- G: Sed Lucanus adeo mirabatur scripta flacci ut vix se retineret recitantem clamore, quae illa ipsa vera esse poemata suo ludo faceret (f. 93v).
- M: Sed Lucanus mirabatur adeo scribta flacci ut vix se retineret recitantem clamore quae illa esse vera ipsa poemata solutum facere (f. 95r).
- P: Sed Lucanus adeo mirabatur scripturam flacci ut vix retineret se recitantem clamore quin illa esse vera poemata diceret (f. 1r).
- V2: Sed Lucanus adeo mirabatur scripta Flacci ut vix retineret se recitantem clamore, quin illa esse vera poetica diceret (f. 80v).
- N: Sed Lucanus mirabatur adeo scripta flacci ut vix se retineret recitantem clamore quae ille esse vera poemata suo ludo faceret (f. 1v).
- V3: Sed Lucanus adeo mirabatur scripta Flacci ut vix retineret se a clamore recitantem (f. 74r).

From the variety of the above-mentioned *lectiones*, it becomes clear that the manuscript tradition does not agree on the transmission of the second part of the passage under examination (i.e., after the verb *retineret*). Nevertheless, it is still possible to infer that the biographer was recount-

ing an anecdote involving a school recitation of some *scripta* by the Volterran poet, towards which the Corduban poet is said to have expressed profound admiration (*mirabatur*).<sup>9</sup>

Behind the apparent linearity of the content in this short passage from the *Vita Persi* lie two serious exegetical and textual problems, stemming from the highly corrupted state of the manuscript tradition.

One initial problem lies in identifying the person who recited these *scripta* of Persius. The earliest manuscripts of the *Vita Persi* mentioned above<sup>10</sup> consistently transmit the reading *se recitantem*<sup>11</sup> and identify the author of this *recitatio* as Lucan. In this regard, it is worth emphasizing that the biographical accounts concerning the Corduban poet highlight his particular inclination – dating back to his school years – toward the practice of public recitation.<sup>12</sup> Despite this conceptual reasoning about the possible meaning of this corrupt passage from the *Vita Persi*, it remains difficult to accept the text as transmitted by the manuscripts. It seems somewhat implausible, as O. Jahn argued,<sup>13</sup> that Lucan struggled to restrain himself from exclaiming his admiration for Persius' *scripta* while they were being recited aloud. Such behavior on the part of the Corduban poet can only be plausibly explained by imagining that it was

<sup>9</sup> As TAKÁCS (2011: 96) observes, the verb *miror*, which appears twice more in the *Vita Persi* (Prob. *vita Persi* 15: *usus est apud Corntum [...] quos unice miratus est et aemulatus [...]* and 28: *editum librum continuus mirari homines et diripere coeperunt*), is consistently used by the biographer to express intellectual admiration for someone. Building on this passage from the *Vita Persi*, BIGGS (2020: 33–50) traces mutual influences and intertextual references between the poetry of Persius and that of Lucan.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *supra*, 1–2.

<sup>11</sup> This *lectio* was also accepted by CONSOLI (1904: 202); JAHN (1851: 38); JAHN (1868: 35); CLAUSEN (1956: 38); BO (1969: 4) and LEE-BARR (1987: 54).

<sup>12</sup> Suet. *vita Lucani* p. 399, 4–5 BADALÌ: *Dein †civile bellum, quod cum Pompeio a Caesare gestum est, recitavit†* and Vacca *vita Lucani* p. 403, 29–30 BADALÌ: *Declamavit et Graece et Latine cum magna admiratione audientium*.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. JAHN (1843: XXXII; 235). Jahn's thesis was recently accepted by TAKÁCS (2011: 97) and STACHON (2021: 283).

Persius himself – certainly well-versed in the practice of declamation –<sup>14</sup> who recited his own literary compositions, while Lucan, as a member of the audience, attempted to suppress his enthusiasm so as not to interrupt his schoolmate’s *recitatio*. To Jahn’s arguments, one must also add that if the biographer had intended to identify Lucan as the reciter of Persius’ *scripta*, he would scarcely have used the stylistically redundant and otherwise unattested construction *se recitantem*, a phrase not found anywhere in Latin literature. Instead, he would have simply employed the participle *recitans*, in agreement with the subject (*Lucanus*). In light of the above, and considering that it was likely Persius who recited his *scripta* before Lucan, it seems appropriate to adopt the *lectio* ‘*illo recitante*’,<sup>15</sup> or at most, ‘*recitante eo*’,<sup>16</sup> as found in the more recent manuscripts.

The final part of the passage under investigation proves to be even more problematic and difficult to interpret. A primary issue lies in accepting the *lectio* ‘*clamore*’, transmitted by the oldest branch of the manuscript tradition of the *Vita Persi*, following the construction *se recitantem*. This point is supported by the fact that, during Persius’ time, there was a deeply negative view both of those who recited their works with gestures and vocal tones akin to those of performers, and of audiences who

<sup>14</sup> Cf. EHLERS (1990: 171–181). Based on the presumed contempt that Persius, unlike Lucan, would have shown in his *Saturae* towards declamatory practice, PARATORE (1968: 61) almost harbored the suspicion that the biographer had attributed to the author of the *Satires* the tastes and habits of Lucan.

<sup>15</sup> Among the numerous manuscripts attesting to this *lectio*, which was accepted in the past by various editors (cf. e.g. BONARDI (1499: II); PITHOU (1585: 147); JAHN (1843: 245) and HEINRICH (1844: 46)), see, for example, Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 539 (XV cent.) (f. 24<sup>r</sup>); the Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard College Library, Ms. Lat. 137 (XV cent.) (f. 17<sup>r</sup>); Cesena, Biblioteca Malatestiana S. XXV, 1 (XV cent.) (f. 148<sup>r</sup>) and Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ott. lat. 1146 (XV cent.) (f. 110<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>16</sup> This *lectio*, accepted by numerous scholars (cf. e.g. BÜCHELER (1886: 55); NÉMETHY (1903: 14); TAKÁCS (2011: 14; 10; 174) and STACHON (2021: 70)), is attested, albeit with lemmatic inversion (*eo recitante*), only in the manuscript of Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 2876 (XV cent.) (f. 88<sup>r</sup>).

responded with applause and acclamatory shouts.<sup>17</sup> Given this context, it is difficult to believe that the biographer intended to suggest that Persius – described later in the *Vita* as a child of refined and elegant manners –<sup>18</sup> had been accustomed to reciting his youthful compositions in a coarse or theatrical manner before his schoolmate Lucan.<sup>19</sup> In light of this, most scholars have opted to emend *clamore*, proposing four alternative readings of the lemma: some have conjectured *de more*,<sup>20</sup> others have proposed integrating the preposition *cum* before *clamore*,<sup>21</sup> still others have preferred to use the preposition *a* before the latter term,<sup>22</sup> and finally, there are those who interpret it as the corresponding verb *clamare*.<sup>23</sup> If the first two proposed interventions just mentioned find no support in the manuscript tradition of the *Vita Persi*, the cases of the readings *clamare*<sup>24</sup> and *a clamore* are different. The latter is widely attested from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onward<sup>25</sup> and, therefore, I believe it deserves to be accepted here.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. BERARDI (2018: 87–101). This was also the opinion of Pers. 1, 13–21: *scribimus inclusive, numeros ille, hic pede liber, [...] / intrant et tremulo scalpuntur ubi intima versu* and 30–40 [...] *ecce inter pocula quaerunt / [...] nascentur violae? [...]*.

<sup>18</sup> Prob. *vita Persi* 17: *fuit morum lenissimorum, verecundiae virginalis, famae pulchrae, pietatis erga matrem et sororem et amitam exemplo sufficientis. fuit frugi, pudicus*.

<sup>19</sup> Despite the interpretative difficulties just outlined, posed by the *se recitantem clamore* reading transmitted in ancient manuscripts, this latter *lectio* was nevertheless accepted in the past by JAHN (1851: 38); JAHN (1868: 35) and GILDERSLEEVE (1875: 66).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. BÜCHELER (1886: 55); NÉMETHY (1903: 14); ALBINI (1907: XL); OWEN (1949: XIV) and ROLFE (1959: 496).

<sup>21</sup> REIFFERSCHIED (1860: 73).

<sup>22</sup> Among many examples, see, for instance, KISSEL (2007: 42); TAKÁCS (2011: 170); STACHON (2021: 70) and HOLZBERG (2022: 92).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. LEO (1910: 65) and ROSTAGNI (1944: 171).

<sup>24</sup> This *lectio* is attested in the manuscript Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. lat. 664 (XV cent.) (f. 126<sup>v</sup>) and in its *descriptus*, Firenze, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ricc. 664 (XV cent.) (f. 161<sup>v</sup>).

<sup>25</sup> Among the manuscripts that preserve this *lectio*, the following four are worth mentioning: Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 1401 (XII cent.) (f. 74r); Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 37.20 (XIII cent.) (f. 1<sup>v</sup>); Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard College Library, Ms. lat. 137 (XV cent.) (f. 17<sup>r</sup>-17<sup>v</sup>); Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 1614 (XV cent.) (f. 37<sup>v</sup>) and Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ross. 800 (X, 179) (XV cent.) (f. 1<sup>r</sup>).

The issue concerning the final part of the passage under investigation still remains to be addressed. In this portion, the biographer seemingly intended to report Lucan's words of admiration for Persius' *scripta*, which he could scarcely withhold (*ut vix retineret*) so as not to interrupt Persius' recitation. According to the interpretation accepted by most scholars,<sup>26</sup> Lucan would have described Persius' *scripta* as *vera poemata*, in contrast to his own, which he regarded as mere *ludi*<sup>27</sup> or even *lutum*<sup>28</sup>. In transmitting this final section, as evidenced by the manuscript review above, the ancient tradition of the *Vita Persi* is not homogeneous: some manuscripts employ the completive conjunction *quin* with the subjunctive (*diceret*) dependent on *retineret* (**KPV**<sub>2</sub>); others present an indirect statement using the infinitive (*facere* **LTM**) and/or the subjunctive (*faceret* **GN**); while still others omit it entirely (**RV**<sub>3</sub>). In examining the first of the three readings just mentioned, it should immediately be noted that it merely reports Lucan describing Persius' *scripta* as *vera poemata* (**P**) or

<sup>26</sup> Among the most recent works, cf. TAKÁCS (2011: 170); STACHON (2021: 70) and HOLZBERG (2022: 92).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. e. g. REIFFERSCHIED (1860: 73) (*ludos*); HERRMANN (1962: XII) (*ludum*) and KISSEL (2007: 42) (*suo ludo*). The *lectiones* accepted by these scholars are based on the attestation of the lemma *ludus* in the following manuscripts: Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Gud. lat. 79 (XI cent.) (f. 93<sup>v</sup>); München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14498 (XI-XII cent.) (f. 1<sup>v</sup>); Assisi, Biblioteca Comunale 303 (XIV cent.) (f. 83 bis<sup>v</sup>) and München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 526 (XV cent.) (f. 6<sup>r</sup>). It should be noted that the noun *ludus* and its corresponding verb (*ludo*), as well as with the meaning of 'trifle'/'nonsense' (cf. e.g. Cic. *fin.* 1, 27 and *Verr.* 6, 181) are attested, in reference to literary works, to indicate compositions of light, non-committal topics (see e.g. Verg. *ecl.* 6, 1-2 and *Schol. Hor. sat.* 1, 37).

<sup>28</sup> Cf. TAKÁCS 2011, 14. This *lectio* is attested in the Leiden manuscripts, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, BPL 78 (IX-X cent.) (f. 1<sup>v</sup>); Cambridge, Trinity College Library, O. 4. 10 (X cent.) (f. 94<sup>r</sup>) and Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 2876 (XV cent.) (f. 88<sup>r</sup>). Starting from '*lutum*', the *lectio* '*solutum* / *soluto*' was likely derived, as evidenced in the following manuscripts: Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 1614 (XV cent.) (f. 37<sup>v</sup>); München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 23577 (*ZZ.* 577) (XI cent.) (f. 95<sup>r</sup>); München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 19490 (olim Tegerseensis 1490) (XII cent.) (f. 22<sup>v</sup>) and München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 526 (XV cent.) (f. 6<sup>r</sup>). In this last manuscript the *lectio* '*soluto*' can be seen in the right margin of the *folium* as a variant of *ludo*.

*poetica* (KV<sub>2</sub>), without any comparison to his own work. This last *lectio* can hardly be accepted, as it would require either emending *clamore* through substantial intervention in the corrupted text,<sup>29</sup> or conjecturing a transposition of this last lemma within the completive clause to refer it to *diceret*, or – should one opt for *clamore* – to refer this construction to *retineret*, thereby hypothesizing the biographer's unlikely recourse to the stylistic-rhetorical device of ἀπὸ κοινοῦ.<sup>30</sup>

Contemporary scholars have opted to align themselves with the branch of the manuscript tradition that interprets the final section of the present passage from the *Vita Persi* as indirect speech, albeit making significant interventions in the text, which has been transmitted in a corrupt form by the manuscripts.<sup>31</sup> However, a renewed examination of the aforementioned *lectiones* found in the ancient manuscripts reveals that none of those containing the indirect speech offer explicit evidence of Lucan comparing his own *scripta* with those of Persius. On the contrary, in the manuscripts that preserve syntactically plausible *lectiones* (GN), there is an allusion to the idea that the Corduban poet regarded the *scripta* composed by Persius *suo ludo* as *vera poemata*.<sup>32</sup> Further undermining the hypothesis of indirect speech at the conclusion of this passage of the *Vita Persi* is the fact that, as L. Takács rightly observes, *oratio obliqua* is notoriously rare as a discursive mode within the biographical genre.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> This is what those who proposed amending 'clamore' to 'de more' did (cf. *supra*, 4 n. 20).

<sup>30</sup> Cf. PITHOU (1585: 147); CASAUBON (1605: 26); AUTUMNUS (1607: 11) and ERNESTI (1748: 531).

<sup>31</sup> Note, for example, the reading proposals *quae illius essent vera esse poemata, sua ludos diceret* and *quae ille faceret, ipsa esse vera poemata, sua ludos* advanced respectively by CLAUSEN (1956: 38) (later accepted by STACHON (2021: 70)) and by the recent HOLZBERG (2022: 92).

<sup>32</sup> This *lectio*, which can be interpreted as a *dativus commodi* (cf. TAKÁCS (2011: 100)), was accepted by KISSEL (2007: 42), who proposed reading the indirect speech as follows: *illa esse vera poemata, quae ipse suo ludo faceret*.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. TAKÁCS (2011: 96).

Based on what has been said so far and considering the extreme lack of consistency in the manuscript tradition, there is no reason to rule out the possibility that the final section of this passage from the *Vita Persi* – containing Lucan’s alleged last words – was an interpolation<sup>34</sup> added by a scribe who, either naively<sup>35</sup> or deliberately, sought to further embellish the anecdote crafted by the biographer to underscore Lucan’s admiration for Persius. In this context, a plausible model that may have inspired the interpolator is a passage from Suetonius’ *Vita* of Lucan, where the biographer, employing direct speech, has the Corduban poet claim that his early literary efforts were far inferior to Virgil’s minor work *Culex*,<sup>36</sup> which the Mantuan poet himself had labeled a *ludus*.<sup>37</sup> To this Suetonian testimony, one might also add that of Statius, who, in his well-known poem commemorating Lucan’s birthday (*silv.* 2.7), uses the verb *ludes* to refer to the youthful writings of the Corduban poet.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Among those who shared this opinion were, among many others, BONARDI (1499: II); OUDENDORP (1751; 1003); JAHN (1843: 235) and HEINRICH (1844: 46–47). The presence of interpolations in the *Vita Persi* is demonstrated by Prob. *vita Persi* 29–32: *decessit autem vitio stomachi [...] ne hoc in se Nero dictum arbitraretur*]).

<sup>35</sup> It cannot be entirely ruled out that an original confusion between *clamor* and *clamare* may have given rise to the indirect speech found in a branch of the manuscript tradition of the *Vita Persi*. Although rare in the history of the manuscript tradition, instances of interchange between *a* and *o* are attested by PIANEZZOLA (1974: 252) in the Leiden manuscript, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Cod. VLQ. 86 (9<sup>th</sup> century).

<sup>36</sup> Suet. *vita Lucani* p. 399, 4–5 BADALÌ: *Dein tciuile bellum, quod cum Pompeio a Caesare gestum est, recitavit ut praefatione quadam aetatem et initia sua cum Vergilio comparans ausus sit dicere: ‘quantum mihi restat ad Culicem’*. It should be noted that in this final passage of Suetonius’ *Vita Lucani*, the verb *recitare* (*recitavit*) appears, just as it does in the passage from the *Vita Persi* currently under examination (*recitante/lem*).

<sup>37</sup> Ps. Verg. *Culex* 1–3: *Lusimus, Octavi, gracile modulating Thalia / atque ut araneoli tenuem formauimus orsum; / lusimus: haec propter culicis sint carmina docta*. For the meaning of the verb *ludere* in the aforementioned lines of the *Culex*, see BARRETT (1976: 569).

<sup>38</sup> Stat. *Silv.* 2, 7, 55–59: *ludes Hectors Thessalosque currus / [...] et noster tibi profertur Orpheus*. Regarding this composition by Statius, considered ‘the first biography of Lucan’ (NEWLANDS (2011: 435–451)), cf. BUCHHEIT (1960: 231–249); MALAMUD (1995: 1–30); PIERINI (2007: 136–159); ANDRISANI (2020: 628–636) and GOWERS (2021: 45–75).

If this reading hypothesis is correct, considering that two *antiquiores* manuscripts omit the portion of text following ‘clamore’ (RV<sub>2</sub>), one might consider interpreting the present passage of the *Vita Persi* – based on the testimony of most of the *recentiores* manuscripts –<sup>39</sup> in the following way: *sed Lucanus mirabatur adeo scripta Flacci, ut vix retineret se, illo recitante a clamore*.<sup>40</sup>

In conclusion, one might think that the anecdote conveyed in this controversial passage of the *Vita Persi*<sup>41</sup> was conceived by the biographer not only to showcase the literary talents of the young Persius, but also to underscore the importance of rhetorical training in his education. Moreover, it seems intended to emphasize the likely influence exerted by the works of the Volterranean poet<sup>42</sup> – probably composed before his acquaintance with Lucan at the school of Annaeus Cornutus –<sup>43</sup> on those of the Corduban poet, who at the time was developing his own literary interests.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Among the various *recentiores* containing this *lectio*, the following manuscripts may be highlighted by way of example: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 539 (XV cent.) (f. 24<sup>r</sup>); Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard College Library, Ms. lat. 137 (XV cent.) (ff. 17<sup>r</sup>–17<sup>v</sup>); Cesena, Biblioteca Malatestiana S. XXV, 1 (XV cent.) (f. 148<sup>r</sup>) and Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ross. 800 (X, 179) (XV cent.) (f. 1<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>40</sup> In this context, *clamor* can only bear its positive connotation of ‘cry of acclamation’ (cf. e.g., Cic. *Fam.* 12.7.1) or ‘applause’ (cf. e.g., Plin. *Epist.* 4.5.1).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. TAKÁCS (2011: 95) e STACHON (2021: 283).

<sup>42</sup> The hypothesis advanced by TAKÁCS (2011: 96; 148), which identifies these *scripta* with the now-lost works allegedly composed by Persius during his youth (*pueritia*), cannot be deemed entirely implausible (Prob. *vita Persi* 26 [...] *scripserat in pueritia Flaccus etiam praetextam vescio et opericon librum unum et paucos in socrum Thraseae in Arriam matrem versus, quae se ante virum occiderat* [...]).

<sup>43</sup> The view that the scene was set during the years of school education under Annaeus Cornutus has been supported by ROSTAGNI (1944: 171) and STACHON (2021: 282–284). A different opinion was held by PARATORE (1968: 61, 86–88) and TAKÁCS (2011: 98), who hypothesized that the performance in question took place, respectively, at the schools of Virginius Flavus and Servilius Nonianus.

<sup>44</sup> For example, it is worth noting that Lucan – just like Persius (cf. *supra*, 6 n. 42) – attempted to engage with the tragic genre by composing a tragedy, *Medea*, which remained unfinished (Vacca *vita Lucani* p. 405, 63–65 BADALÌ: *Exstant eius conplures alii, ut Iliacon, Saturnalia, Catachtonion, Silvarum X, tragoedia Medea inperfecta* [...]).

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