

JANUS PANNONIUS' ANDROMEDA-POEM AS AN *ETHOPOEIA*

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UDK: : 821.124(497.5).09 Česmički, I
Original scientific paper

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Janus Pannonius' poem represents the speech of Andromeda, the mythical Aethiopian princess who is bound to a rock as an offering to a sea monster and is watching Perseus, the hero, as he is fighting the beast. The aim of this paper is to show the role of different classical sources in the poem's composition. Besides the phrases and ideas in various works by ancient poets, there are the Hellenistic rhetorical manuals used in the school of Janus that could provide a generic model for the poem. It is an *ethopoeia*, a speech that represents a person through his/her words, which is a possible groundwork for an elaboration of the mythical theme. The speech of Andromeda is built on personal *topoi* in order to show that it is not worth risking the hero's life to rescue her; at the same time the speech is arranged according to the rhetorical means of *remotio*. In contrast to a regular *ethopoeia*, in the last part of the speech the poet does not hint at future events but leaves open the end of the fight in order to emphasize the passion of love that prevails over fear: whatever her fate will be, the heroine of the poem wishes only for the survival of the hero with whom she has suddenly fallen in love.

Key words: Janus Pannonius; Andromeda; generic composition; *progummasma*; *ethopoeia*; *remotio*

In the interpretation of the poems of Janus Pannonius, as in the case of other humanist poets, it is important to take into account parallel places in the ancient authors. At the same time, it is also worth studying the generic patterns offered by the Hellenistic manuals that were available at the time of the poet's schooling. I would like to illustrate the importance of such a twofold study by the interpretation of an epigram traditionally entitled *Verba Andromedae pugnante adversus cetum Perseo* (Words of Andromeda to Perseus fighting the sea monster)

Janus wrote several poems in which mythological heroes or heroines are characterised by their own words. This time the person speaking is the Ethiopian princess Andromeda. She is represented as being bound to a rock as an offering to a sea-monster and is watching the hero, Perseus, attempting to kill the beast in her defence:

Me miseram! Quae triste manet fortuna duellum?
 Cur mea nunc gravius, quam modo corda pavent?
 Haerebam duris, fateor, minus anxia saxis,
 propugnator adhuc cum mihi nullus erat.
 5 Ipsis cum vinclis utinam fera monstra vorassent
 me prius, huc volucrem quam tulit iste gradum.
 Indefensa quidem, sed certe sola perissem,
 nec noster cuiquam letifer esset amor.
 Nunc timeo, pereat ne insons, servare nocentem
 10 dum studet, et pietas sit sibi causa necis.
 Quid tibi nobiscum, pulcherrime? Non ego mater,
 non ego sum coniux, non tua cara soror,
 ut tanto nostram quaeras discrimine vitam
 impulsus non vi, non prece, non pretio.
 15 Vel forsán nostrae movit te gratia formae?
 Haud ego sum tanti, nec genus omne meum.
 Me fatís permítte meis, tu sospes abito,
 quae secet aërias, est tibi penna, vias.
 Dum loquor, e mediis ter se ardua sustulit undis
 20 bellua; ter fuso contigit astra salo.
 Heu, quam vix diros fugit celer ales hiatus,
 quam paene occasus occidit ante meos.
 Dii, si quos lingua genitrix non laesit iniqua,
 hoc vos iam solum, vivat ut ille, rogo.¹

Miserable me! What a sorrowful fate does await this fight? (2) Why is my heart beating harder than before? (3) Upon my word, I hung with less anxiety on the harsh rock (4) when nobody was there to defend me. (5) I would rather have been devoured together with my chains by cruel monsters (6) before he directed his winged steps here. (7) Though defenseless, certainly only I would have died, (8) and my love would not have brought death to anyone else. (9) Now I fear, lest he, innocent, should perish, while trying to protect (10) the one who is noxious, and his piety be the cause of his death. (11) What have you to do with us, oh, most beautiful? I am neither your mother, (12) nor your

¹ Janus P a n n o n i u s, *Opera quae manserunt omnia*, I, *Epigrammata*, fasc. I., *Textus*, edd. Iulius Mayer, Ladislaus Török, Balassi, Budapest, 2006, n. 109, pp. 113–114.

wife, nor your dear sister (13) that my life is worth saving at such a big risk, (14) although you are driven neither by force, nor by prayer, nor by reward. (15) Or perchance you were affected by my grace of form? (16) I am not worth so much, neither is my gender worth at all. (17) Leave me to my destiny and depart safely, (18) you have wings to cleave the roads in the air. (19) While I am speaking, the monster has reared three times from among the waves; (20) stirring the sea, it reached the stars three times. (21) Alas, how narrowly the swift winged youth escaped its terrible maw, (22) how close he was to falling before my downfall. (23) Oh, Gods, if there are among you some who were not hurt by my mother's unjust words, (24) I beg you only that he may live.

Due to the meticulous work done by László Török, we now know of many parallel places in the epigrams of Janus. We cannot, however, find any exact parallels in the texts that were used in the school of Guarino of Verona where Janus studied, that is, in Hyginus, Ovid and Manilius.² The relevant part of the Andromeda story in Hyginus' *Fables* (64) is too short to be of any use for Janus' poem:

Cassiope filiae suae Andromedae formam Nereidibus anteposuit. Ob id Neptunus expostulavit ut Andromeda Cephei filia ceto obiceretur. Quae cum esset obiecta, Perseus Mercurii talaribus volans eo dicitur venisse et eam liberasse a periculo.³

It is more interesting to note that in Janus' poem there are no literal repetitions from another parallel, Ovid's rendering of the myth (*Metamorphoses*, 4, 665–739), although in the phraseology of the Andromeda epigram Janus obviously relies on Ovid's episode. The third author who adapts the myth is Manilius (*Astronomica*, 5, 538–631) but his phrases do not appear among the parallel places either.

The lack of direct quotes is more characteristic than surprising, since it is a proof of the poet's *copia*, his treasury of knowledge and expressions that he can utilize instead of a servile word-by-word imitation. It is another question whether Janus used these sources for their plot or for rhetorical argumentation. From this viewpoint, we can exclude Hyginus' summary because of its brevity. Since the *Metamorphoses* were traditionally considered the most important source for the school study of ancient mythology, it is again interesting to note that there is no direct resemblance to Ovid's interpretation of the myth: not only lexical, but also narrative echoes of Ovid are missing. In *Metamorphoses* Andromeda plays a subordinate role. Only the

² For Janus' studies of Manilius, Ovid and Hyginus see Battista Guarni, *Opuscula*, a cura di Luigi Piacente, Adriatica, Bari, 1995, p. 78, 153, 154.

³ »Cassiope claimed that her daughter Andromeda's beauty excelled the Nereids'. Because of this, Neptune demanded that Andromeda, Cepheus' daughter, be offered to a sea-monster. When she was offered, Perseus, flying on Mercury's winged sandals, is said to have come there and freed her from danger.« Hyginus, *Myths*, trans. and ed. Mary Amelia Grant, U of Kansas Press, Lawrence, 1960, n. 64, pp. 64–65.

protagonist, Perseus is represented by direct speech. Ovid stresses Andromeda's passivity: *primo silet illa nec audet / adpellare virum* (4, 681–682).⁴ She responds only after Perseus' repeated requests. Meanwhile, the monster emerges from the sea, the virgin cries out and her parents appear. There follows an ironically narrated bargain between the parents (who are more and more scared of the approaching monster) and Perseus who asks for Andromeda's hand as a reward for his victory over the beast. His proposal is long enough to force the frightened parents to accept it (*quis enim dubitaret*, »for who would hesitate«, as we read in a typical Ovidian parenthesis here);⁵ they even promise the hero their kingdom as a dowry. The fight between Perseus and the monster begins only after this negotiation. It seems therefore that for Ovid the figure of Andromeda has no decisive character. She simply provides an occasion to make the bargain possible — and also an occasion for the poet to show his talent in transforming the mythical tradition.

In sum, we have a summary in Hyginus and a passive figure in Ovid — both of which, however, seem to be different from the rendering of Janus.

Let us now turn to Manilius and his narration of the myth in *Astronomica* (5, 538–631). Here we find important connections to the epigram of Janus. Both authors emphasize the emotions of the heroine, her fear that evokes sympathy in her defender (5, 587–590, 606–607). Let us cite now the second fragment: *spectabat pugnam pugnandi causa puella, / iamque oblita sui metuit pro vindice tali / suspirans animoque magis quam corpore pendet*.⁶ Janus could have taken from Manilius the idea of the love that makes Andromeda forget her own fear.

We have found no structural model for the pattern in which this idea is elaborated among the ancient poets. At least there is no such resemblance as there is in the technical handbooks that contain the rhetorical preparatory exercises, *progumnasmata* or, as Quintilian renders this term, *primae exercitationes*. In earlier studies I tried to prove that those exercises could have served as models for Janus' epigrams.⁷ It is enough for now to indicate that they were available not only in the *Institutions* of Quintilian (1, 9; 2, 14; 10, 5, 11–16) that served as a model for the curriculum of Guarino's school, but also in the Greek handbooks, by Aphthonius and

⁴ »She was silent at first, for, being a maid, she did not dare address a man«. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Frank Justus Miller, vol. I., Heinemann, London, 1951, 227.

⁵ For *parentheses* in Ovid, see Gotthard Karl G a l i n s k y, *Ovid's Metamorphoses: An Introduction to the Basic Aspects*, U of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1975, 20–21.

⁶ »The princess watches the duel of which she is the prize and, no longer mindful of herself, sighs with fear for her gallant champion: her feelings more than her body hang in suspense.« M a n i l i u s, *Astronomica*, trans. G. P. Goold, Harvard U Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1977, 349.

⁷ László J a n k o v i t s, »Something under the Cloak: On the Role of Rhetorical Preparatory Exercises in Janus Pannonius' Poetry«, *Acta Classica Universitatis Scientiarum Debreciniensis*, 34–35 (1999), 51–59.

by Hermogenes;⁸ and as for the latter, even in the Latin adaptation of Priscian.⁹ In a very abridged form those exercises can also be found in the *Etymologies* of Isidor of Seville (1, 40–44; 2, 4, 5–8; 2, 5, 7; 2, 7, 1–2; 2, 11–15; 2, 21, 39–40).

One of those exercises is the *ethopoeia*, namely, the characterization of a person by his/her words. In the case of Janus' epigram it is *ēthopoiia pathētikē*; this kind of characterization is based on passions, and the character is represented by a speech that is determined by an emotion evoked by a special situation - as contrasted to the *ēthopoiia ēthikē*, which shows someone's stable character. Another division of this exercise is the person of the addressee — the orator or poet can deliver a speech of someone who is talking to him- or herself; it is possible for the poetic voice to speak to someone else or to mix these two types.¹⁰ Mixing is the case in the Andromeda-epigram: the monologue is followed by words addressed to Perseus and to the deities. According to the recommendation of the handbooks, the poem begins in the present tense, then the speaker moves to the past, and closes the heroine's speech with her desire for the future.

So far we have for the most part discussed the ways in which Janus as a good student could rely on the tradition he was familiar with. In other words, we dealt with imitation rather than with emulation, the other important element in the relation of humanists to their predecessors. What is the emulative element that we can find in the poem in relation to the tradition?

To answer this question we have first to remark that exercising *progumnasmata* is not a passive task. The young orator or poet does not repeat a narrative but shows his/her skills in paraphrasing it. Moreover, the chosen subjects of the model speeches in the handbooks are themselves tricky, curious, they contain contradictory elements — with the sole purpose of improving the pupils' writing skills. Ethopoeia, for instance, is exemplified in the handbooks by such mythological themes as Hecuba watching the ruins of Troy, Niobe lamenting over her children killed by Apollo and Artemis or Medea preparing to murder her offspring.¹¹

Let us now see how this kind of innovative practice works in Janus' epigram.

As was mentioned before, Andromeda's speech starts with a monologue (lines 1–10). This part refers to the past by using the figure of comparison — she confronts her past and present dangers. The first two verses show the present situation of the heroine, but they express the anxiety about the future (*quae manet fortuna*) and in a comparison there appears the past, too (*quam modo*). As for the events of the past, we can see that their description forms a vision of an alternative future. This vision is tragic: Andromeda, when she was chained to the rock, was sure to fall victim to monsters. It is worth noting the plural of *monstrum*: the beasts envisioned by the heroine are imaginary and not identical with the one in the present.

⁸ *Rhetores Graeci*, ed. Leonhard von Spengel, vol. 2., Teubner, Leipzig, 1856, 21–56.

⁹ *Grammatici Latini*, rec. Heinrich Keil, vol. III, Teubner, Leipzig, 1859, 430–440

¹⁰ *Rhetores Graeci*, *op. cit.*, pp. 15–16, 45.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 45–46.

It would be easy to continue this image simply by a joyful description of a sudden turn, the appearance of the defender. What we read, however, is different — the rhetorical figure that directs the speech of the present forms is the paradox: the blameless is defending the blamable one, piety can cause death. This paradox suits the situation well but it is also a figure generally used for expressing love in Greco-Roman poetry.

The next four distichs comprise the speech to Perseus. Lines 11 to 15, three distichs, are arranged by way of argumentation which is defined by Quintilian as *argumentum ex remotione* (5, 10, 66). It refutes a case by dividing the possible positive arguments and proving that each of them is insufficient.

Some of the arguments show allusions to the mythical background, some even to the Ovidian adaptation of the myth. In line 12, *non ego sum coniux* can be read as a false judgment by anyone who is familiar with the myth and knows what follows after the battle. *Preces* and *pretium* in the 14th line could evoke the ironically represented negotiation between Perseus and Andromeda's parents in the above-mentioned passage of *Metamorphoses*. The denial of the importance of the heroine's beautiful appearance also shows a contrast with Ovid: the Roman poet emphasizes its effect on Perseus, who almost forgets to use his wings at the first sight of Andromeda. One can think that these allusions indirectly serve as praise of the heroine, her exceptional innocence compared to the other characters in the story.

It is also worth mentioning the tripartite character of this passage. The arguments are arranged in three distichs; the first two distichs contain three single arguments in themselves: *mater, coniux, soror* in the first, *vis, preces, pretium* in the second. This threefold division seems to be in correlation with the description of the fight (ll. 19–20), where this number is emphasized by repetition:

Dum loquor, e mediis *ter* se ardua sustulit undis
bellua; *ter* fuso contigit astra salo.

According to the phrase *dum loquor* in line 19, the hero is struggling with the monster at the same time Andromeda is speaking. The represented simultaneity of the words and the duel suggest also a structural correlation — as if the attacks of the beast and the words of the heroine would succeed alternately. In other words, each time the monster threatens Perseus, Andromeda claims more emphatically her insignificance for the sake of the survival of her suddenly beloved hero.

According to the recommendations of the rhetorical handbooks, the poem ends with a part that refers to the future. As we know the myth, we could expect a speech about a possible happy ending: the description of the fall of the monster, thanksgiving to the gods and Perseus, the hope of love, and so on. We can even suppose a description of the following tragic events. Let us cite, for the sake of the brevity, Hyginus:

quam cum adducere vellet, Cepheus pater cum Agenore, cuius sponsa fuit, Perseum clam interficere voluerunt. Ille cognita re caput Gorgonis eis ostendit omnesque ab humana specie sunt informati in saxum. Perseus cum Andromeda in patriam redit.¹²

Janus chooses a solution that fits in the prescriptions of the ethopoeia, but it also reduces the future to one single factor that coheres with the character represented in the previous parts of the epigram. This is the reduction of the heroine's wishes to the survival of the beloved hero — a final emphasis on the self-sacrificing love of Andromeda. Perhaps by this kind of characterisation the poem contributes to an innovation of the tradition. It convinces the reader that Andromeda is the single undoubtedly blameless character in the narrative and in this way she becomes the real protagonist of the myth.¹³

¹² »When he [Perseus] wanted to marry her [Andromeda], Cepheus, her father, along with Agenor, her betrothed, planned to kill him. Perseus, discovering the plot, showed them the head of the Gorgon, and all were changed from human form into stone. Perseus with Andromeda returned to his country.« H y g i n u s, *Myths, op. cit., ibid.*

¹³ I would like to express my gratitude here to Bratislav Lučin and Neven Jovanović for their important advice and suggestions to this paper.

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PJESMA JANA PANONIJA O ANDROMEDI KAO *ETHOPOEIA*

Pjesma Jana Panonija koja u tradiciji nosi naslov *Verba Andromedae pugnante adversus cetum Perseo* donosi riječi mitske etiopske kraljevine koje ona, privezana za stijenu kao žrtva morskoga čudovišta, izgovara gledajući junaka Perzeja kako se s njime bori. Svrha je ovoga rada pokazati ulogu različitih antičkih izvora u nastanku pjesme. Osim što su iz djela antičkih pjesnika preuzeti pojedini izrazi i ideje, generički predložak za Janovu pjesmu mogli su ponuditi helenistički retorička priručnici s kojima se on susreo tijekom školovanja.

Mit o Andromedi iznesen je, u sažetijem ili opširnijem obliku, kod Higina, Ovidija i Manilija. U Higinovim *Pričama (Fabulae, 64)* nalazi se samo sažetak mita. Najrazrađeniji prikaz daju Ovidijeve *Metamorfoze (4,665-739)*; no Ovidijevo pripovijedanje usredotočuje se na Perzejeve riječi i djela, dok Andromeda ima podređenu ulogu. S obzirom na pristup koji nalazimo u Janovoj pjesmi, najvjerojatniji je njegov izvor Manilijeva *Astronomija (Astronomica 5,538-631)*, jer taj pjesnik daje detaljniji opis Andromedine sklonosti prema Perzeju. Slično kao u Janovoj pjesmi, u Manilijevoj inačici mita snažno je naglašena Andromedina voljkost da se žrtvuje.

Ipak, unatoč očitim sličnostima, ti izvori ne daju ključ za kompoziciju pjesme. Kao na mnogo mjesta u Janovu djelu, za obradbu mitološke teme mogla je poslužiti koja od retoričkih pripremnih vježbi – i to napose *ethopoeia*, govor koji osobu predstavlja kroz njezine riječi. Čini se da se Janova pjesme posve uklapa u okvir takve vježbe. Prema naputcima helenističkih priručnika, govor u etopeji započinje u prezentu, zatim prelazi u prošlo vrijeme, a na kraju naznačuje budućnost.

U radu se analizira Janova pjesma kao podvrsta takve vježbe, tj. patetična *ethopoeia*, koja prikazuje trenutne osjećaja dotične osobe, što ih često prouzrokuje kakav neočekivan događaj. Općenito govoreći, *ethopoeia* može biti monolog ili obraćanje drugoj osobi. Jan kombinira ta dva postupka i uvodi druge retoričke tehnike. U prvom dijelu kroz Andromedin monolog daje usporedbu prošle i sadašnje situacije, a u drugom dijelu slijedi njezino obraćanje Perzeju. U tom obraćanju ona rabi topose povezane s osobama da bi pokazala kako njezin spas nije vrijedan toliko da bi junak stavio na kocku svoj život; istodobno, govor je uređen prema retoričkom postupku *remotio*. Za razliku od redovitog postupka kojim se služi *ethopoeia*, u završnom dijelu govora Andromeda ne najavljuje buduće događaje. Jan ostavlja kraj borbe otvorenim, da bi naglasio ljubavnu strast koja nadvladava strah: kakva god bila njezina sudbina, junakinja pjesme priželjkuje samo da junak kojeg je iznenada zavojljela ostane živ.