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Francesca K. A. Martelli
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# 1 Introduction: Ovid and authorial revision

Authorial revision is a more or less invisible aspect of all literary composition. When an author chooses to advertise the revised status of a text, s/he invites the reader to look for the strategy involved in making this aspect visible. In the case of Ovid's literary corpus, this practice arouses an unusual degree of curiosity because it is not isolated to one or even a few of this author's texts, but characterises all the major works that span his long career. If any ancient author invites us to view his own processes of revision as a meaningful authorial statement, it is this one. The main thesis of this book is that in choosing to advertise the revised status of all his major works, Ovid invites us to plot and interrogate the commentary that revision imposes on them. However we construe or interpret that commentary, authorial revision lends itself to being unravelled and viewed *as* commentary because, as a mode of textual transformation, it is a process that one can plot. Yet revision – authorial revision – transforms more than simply the relationship between 'revised' and 'original' texts; it reconfigures our perspective on a series of other relationships – between author and text, text and oeuvre, author and oeuvre, etc. A further aspect of my central thesis, then, is that in revising the individual texts that make up his oeuvre, Ovid invites us to plot a series of other narrative transformations over his 'life' and 'work'.

This book is therefore a study of the processes by which authorial revision transforms (a) a series of individual literary works; (b) a literary corpus; and therefore (c) an author. It is undertaken on the premise that because authorial revision has a transformative effect on the literary texts that an author writes, it also has a significant transformative effect on the author who is the sum total of the texts that bear her name. The title of a book on Ovid's authorial revisions could quite easily have been, *Ovid, the author as editor*; but it is not the title of this one. In tracing the revisory practices that run through each of the texts scrutinised in this study, I have tried to maintain a sense of the impact that each case of revision has on the author's larger oeuvre – on the evolution of his literary career and on the revision of his authorial identity. I want to argue, moreover, that although the mode of authorial revision seen in Ovid's works may not be



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unique to this ancient author, nevertheless, in the case of his career, it is certainly uniquely persistent and far-reaching. As such, it offers an important set of insights into a particular aspect of the self-construction of the writing subject – and, therefore, of subjectivity more generally. When we consider why this aspect of authorial self-fashioning should emerge with such force in the literary career of this particular author, we find that it is inextricably bound up in the transformative effects produced by the new author function that had arisen at the centre of Roman political power at this time. In this way, Ovid's revisory practices sit alongside another mode of revision that recent scholarship has identified as gaining new ground in the moment of transition from republic to principate, and which is worth scrutinising for the ontrol it provides against Ovid's parallel revisory practices.

A recent book by Sean Gurd identifies literary revision as a preoccupation that, while not peculiar to authors of the late republic and early empire, certainly intensifies in this period.[1] Gurd's particular focus is on collaborative revision – on the exchanges that take place between the author and the other institutions involved in textual production, which, in antiquity, means primarily the coterie of readers who help that author arrive at a particular format for her text, collectively pushing her towards its 'technical improvement'. The approach owes much to the preoccupations of genetic criticism prevalent in France and Germany,[2] and likewise shares an affinity with the concept of social editing promoted in the Anglo-American world by Jerome McGann[3] – each of them a school of editorial theory that seeks to wrest textual authority away from the isolated author and to demonstrate the involvement of a wide range of figures and institutions in the physical production and verbal formatting of the published text.[4] These methods

[1] Gurd 2012.

[2] On the French school of *critique génétique*, see Hay 1979 and 1988; and Bowman 1990. On the related German school of *Radikalphilologie*, see Lernout 1995; and, perhaps the most controversial example of this approach to textual editing, the 1984 critical and synoptic edition of Joyce's *Ulysses* by Hans Walter Gabler. For an illuminating appraisal of the grounds on which other editorial schools have either rejected Gabler's *Ulysses* project, or claimed it as their own, see Lernout 1996 and 2006.

[3] Cf. esp. McGann 1983a; and Mackenzie 1999.

[4] The methods by which the European Schools of Genetic Criticism and the Anglo-American School of Bibliography ('New New Bibliography') arrive at this position are, admittedly, somewhat polarised: while Genetic Critics focus on the *avant-texte* – i.e. the manuscripts, letters and notebooks that precede an author's 'final' autograph (sic) – in order to reconstruct the processes that produce it, the practice of the New New Bibliographers is to focus on the first published edition of a text, in order to restore the role played by editor, publisher and printing press in the creation of textual meaning. What both schools share in common, however, is an interest in locating the roles played by influences external to the author himself in the processes of textual production.

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originally arose as a challenge to a style of editorial practice that aimed at recovering the author's 'final intentions' as regards the form in which her texts were published,[5] by showing how that intention is always already distributed across a wider field of textual collaborators than that attributed to the individual author in her isolation. Yet a further by-product of the industry generated by the Genetic Critics and 'New New Bibliographers' alike has been to find novel ways of (and reasons for) situating the literary text within its social and historical context,[6] and of promoting an idea of distributed authorship – a call to which Sean Gurd responds in his study of collaborative revision in antiquity, with its central thesis that revision makes textuality a medium of social exchange.[7] His approach is thus readily appropriated by Classical scholars invested in the social construction of the authorial subject, and in the project of situating authorial agency within a wider nexus of social and political pressures.[8]

A notable omission from Gurd's survey of literary revision in this period is any discussion of the oeuvre of the poet Ovid, an author whose tendency to display the revised status of his texts persists throughout his career. All of Ovid's major literary works, from the *Amores* to the *Ex Ponto*, are presented to us as having changed shape – whether by being extended, contracted or otherwise transformed – following a preliminary moment of completion or, indeed, 'publication'. The persistence of this practice across Ovid's remarkably long career, as well as the marked self-consciousness with which he inscribes revision into his texts, makes this author cry out for a place in Gurd's study. Yet in many ways, his absence from this work is not

[5] The theory of final intentions is associated with an approach to editing known as the Greg–Bowers theory of copy-text after Walter Greg and Fredson Bowers, who both promoted the idea that an editor's main task was to use as copy-text the earliest completed version of a text (whether autograph or printed version) on the grounds that this approximates best to the author's 'original'. However, as McGann 1983a, 28–36ff. points out, the theory of final intentions was not germane to the original 'rationale of copy-text' put forward by Greg 1950, which was formulated as a working principle to deal with accidental (as opposed to substantive) variation in texts produced in quite specific historical circumstances (namely, the early modern period), and the quite particular typographical conditions that affected printing in that period, when there was no standard orthography. Bowers 1964 extended the use of Greg's 'rationale' to later periods, when orthography in print was standardised and which, more significantly, supplied an abundance of autograph manuscripts for the editor to choose from as the basis for his copy-text; it was he who developed the theory of final intentions as justification for choosing the earliest completed autograph in a surviving series.

[6] Cf. esp. McGann 1983b.

[7] Gurd 2012, 4: 'My most important conclusion is that revision made textuality into a medium of social exchange.' Cf. also esp. Gurd 2012, chs. 3 and 5.

[8] Habinek 2009, for example, promotes Gurd 2006 (republished as chapter 2 in Gurd 2012). The uses of Gurd's work extend beyond its insights into authorial subjectivity to a further emphasis on the social distribution of 'ancient subjectivity' more generally, as demonstrated by Várhelyi and Habinek 2010.

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surprising. Ovid's revisory practices do *not*, for the most part,[9] conform to those scrutinised by Gurd in *Work in Progress*. Firstly, this poet displays rather than discusses his revisions, such that, whether or not the same collaborative processes are in play, these processes are largely obscured from the reader's view. Instead, authorial revision of the kind that Ovid's works advertise absorbs these collaborative processes into the person of the revising author – or, rather, makes writing author and revising editor one and the same person. Textual authority, while still displaced, is now made to shuttle between Ovid (the author) and Ovid (the editor). Second, the revisions to which this author submits his work do not confirm the view that revision always aims at improvement. In Ovid's case, revision is usually presented to the reader as a practice that is unto itself – revision for the sake of revision. The poet may update a text with new information. Or supplement a text with a new ending. But however transformative the effect that these changes may have on our reading experience, they are seldom presented to us as part of a process of technical improvement.

The one way in which Ovid's revisory practices can be said to confirm Gurd's insights is also the way in which he marks his most significant point of divergence from this scholar's account of revision: revision for Ovid is likewise a means of self-extension. But it aims at extending the self not on the synchronic axis of social distribution but on the diachronic axis of temporal drift. This axis is one that extends every authorial subject, but it tends to get lost in discussions of collaborative revision, which, in the effort of wresting 'the author' away from the status of isolated individual and of situating her within a broader social nexus, reinforce the assumption that *prior* to this moment of social intercourse she existed as a single, isolable entity. What Ovid's revision practice tells us is that the author is always already extended, because the authorial subject, like every subject, exists in time. Or, more accurately, that writing submits the authorial subject to the temporal extension that is both a symptom of and condition for the written word, alienating the author irrevocably from herself and multiplying her identities accordingly.

## Revision and textual authority

Despite their several differences, authorial revision and collaborative revision do, however, share a commitment to dismantling the presuppositions

[9] The one exception to this rule is the *Epistulae Ex Ponto*, where Ovid does discuss editorial issues with his addressees. The development that this practice represents for Ovid's revisory methods is discussed in chapter 6.

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that attach to one influential editorial theory – namely, the assumptions, both practical and theoretical, that underpin the theory of final intentions.[10] As recent schools of editorial theory have shown, this theory has been found wanting from the very first:[11] even if an author ever had a single, 'final' 'intention' for the format and design of her text,[12] where and how could we access it? In her final autograph? In her earliest printed version? Or in the printed proofs inscribed with her corrections? Even when printed, *which* publication represents the author's final intentions – the text serialised in magazines? Or the novel subsequently collated from the serialised excerpts (which may, after all, be the format that the author desired from the very outset)? These questions of intended format are even harder to determine in the case of ancient authors, whose intentions are made the more inaccessible to us by the traffic of scribal and editorial activity involved in the transmission of a text before it reaches us. But the same – or similar – questions apply: are we to locate these authors' final intentions in the original epigram or ode circulated on its own and for a particular occasion? Or in the new format it derives from being published alongside other poems in the papyrus roll or codex? Deciding where the author's final intentions reside – at the end of one textual process, or at the start of another – is as arbitrary a game as deciding where to locate a point of textual origin or closure, and invariably sends us chasing after the elusive traces of a process that always begins and ends elsewhere. Revision, when advertised, makes

[10] Again, it is important to distinguish here between Bowers's theory of final intentions and Greg's rationale of copy-text, since the latter was formulated expressly to cater for the textual variation produced by an author's revisions. Greg restricted the rationale of the copy-text (i.e. choosing as copy-text the text in a monogenous series that is historically closest to the author's original) to accidentals *specifically* in order to allow editors to accommodate the revisions that authors subsequently made to the substantives of a text after its first imprint. On this, see Greg 1950, 381–2. However, even while it does away with the tyranny of the 'original', this practice nevertheless obscures the process of revision in its endeavour to produce a composite, synchronic 'replica' of *all* the author's choices over time.

[11] McGann 1983a, 31ff. surveys some of the objections that Bowers's approach has elicited from textual critics. See Gaskell 1972, Thorpe 1972 and Zeller 1975 for examples of the kinds of objection proffered by other New Bibliographers.

[12] Evidently many authors do *not* conceive of their texts in a single, final format: McGann 1983a, 69–73 cites the publication practices of Landor as a modern example of this kind of textual multiplication (i.e. the publishing of the 'same' poem in formats that diverge substantially – rather than just in terms of 'accidentals' – from one another). See also Stillinger 1994 for a wide-ranging discussion of the issues raised by this practice in Coleridge, who published all of his best-known poems in numerous different versions. As Stillinger points out, these issues extend well beyond the practical (e.g. which text should editors print today?) to important questions of interpretation (e.g. how does multiplication affect the constitution of the Coleridge canon? How does it affect the ontological identity – or 'mode of existence' – of a specific work in the canon? Is the *Ancient Mariner* a single version of the work or all the versions taken together? And if the latter, is the work constituted by the process of its revisions, one after another, or by all the versions existing simultaneously?).

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this point explicit, in that it reveals to the reader the variety of possible intentions that an author may have for the format of her text over a period of time, and reveals to us too that it is frequently impossible to say whether *any* of those intentions was ever conceived of as final.

The idea that we can access an author's final intentions, and thereby arrive at an authoritative text, which is to say the textual format authorised by her, takes us to the heart of theories of intentionality and their expression, as formulated, for example, by John Searle.[13] Likewise, the way in which revision problematises the possibility of locating an author's final intentions replicates the rebuttal that these theories of intentionality have inspired, most notoriously, in Derrida's exchanges with Searle, which respond in particular to the philosopher's account of the workings of performative language. For Searle, the category of statement that makes the speaker's/writer's intentions most explicitly present is the speech act – that mode of utterance predicated on the possibility that a speaker's intentions are retrievable, because they remain identical at the moment of delivery and at the moment of reception. The speech act derives its force or effectiveness from this condition, producing an equation between the authority of an utterance and the intentionality that underpins it. Central to this thesis is the idea that the speaker's intention can remain present – which is to say, undifferentiated – over time and in the hands of any number of different receivers, so long as it is guaranteed by the presence of the speaker herself at the moment of utterance. The editorial theory of final intentions shares much in common with Searle's account of the speech act, in that it too operates on the premise that authority – the authoritative text – is the end goal, and derives this authority from the presence within it of the author's final intentions (a view which likewise maintains that those intentions can remain present and undifferentiated over time).

Derrida's rebuttal of the position claimed by Searle and Austin entails an account of the workings of language that offers an excellent working model for the processes of textual revision. Derrida contests the premise of intentionality that underpins the speech act, by asking whether any speaker (or writer, for that matter) can ever be fully present to the 'utterance' that she produces, given the inherently differential nature of language (*all* language, spoken and written).[14] Language cannot help but make us differ from ourselves – in part, because we are always quoting the words of others; and partly too because words are only made to communicate meaning by the time-lags that alienate sender and receiver, and which also alienate the

[13] Searle 1969, 1979, 1983. [14] Derrida 1977a 186–93; Derrida 1977b, *passim*.

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speaker/writer/sender from herself.[15] Textual revision casts these differential processes in sharp relief, in that, as a mode of self-citation, it cannot help but expose the *non-identity* of the speaker/writer over time, and displace textual authority accordingly. Authorial revision and collaborative revision alike open up a gap within the identity of the utterance source, alienating speakers/writers from themselves, and distancing them from their original intentions, even before they reach the hermeneutic deflections of another reader or hearer. Revision, when viewed in this light, denies the utterance or statement its totalising context, its premise of intentionality, and, therefore, its authoritative status, and instead places alterity at the heart of its referential operations in ways that approximate to Derrida's model of *écriture*.

If this will convince some as a serviceable theoretical framework for thinking through revision, it will not convince many as the right way in which to approach self-citation. Derrida's view of citation is characterised by difference – by the alterity that makes the citation differ, by however small a margin, from the original. Others choose to conflate the differences, making self-citation a means of extending the authorial voice and of restoring both identity and presence to that voice *despite* its distribution. This is a view that sees self-citation as a mode, not of revision, but of extended utterance; it denies the iterative, differential nature of language, and makes writing, with Searle, a means of guaranteeing the presence of the 'speaker' behind the utterance despite her palpable absence, and of investing that utterance with an authoritative (or 'authorising') force. This position is replicated in the approaches taken by numerous scholars to the question of distributed authorship or utterance in literary texts by authors ranging from Homer to Callimachus – approaches that dismiss revision outright from the range of possible explanations in the interest of investing that author's voice with a totalising identity and a single, stable intention.

The difference between these two positions, and the implications that they hold for the authority of the 'extended' authorial voice are well illustrated by two alternative approaches to that most authoritative of ancient authors, Homer, each of which places a different emphasis on the performative or citational capacities of Homeric 'utterance' in order to promote a completely different view of the kind of authority that we might

[15] Derrida 1977b, 183–6, in response to Searle 1977, 199–200. The example that they both use to illustrate this point is that of the shopping list (for Searle, the limiting case of a text that does not – *cannot* – imply a distance/absence between sender and receiver; for Derrida an example of a text that implies precisely that, because it reveals the temporal distance that separates the speaker from himself/herself).

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attribute to this author's voice. Diachronic extension is a factor that demands particular consideration for this 'author' by virtue of the unusual compositional questions that attach to his name.[16] But this extension commands a completely different degree of authority depending on whether we choose to collapse all the composers and performers that constitute 'Homer' into a single authorial voice in the interests of investing Homeric utterance with the authoritative force of a performative; or whether we choose to stress the alterity within this compositional/performance tradition, thereby opening up avenues for citation (which, for Homer, must be a form of 'self-citation') and, therefore, revision.

Thus Nagy, on the one hand, who recognises the variation within the transmission – both oral and textual – of Homer, does not see this as a challenge to the authority of the Homeric voice, but, by calling it *mouvance* rather than variation, treats it as a mark of the living (i.e. still effective) state of the performance tradition,[17] and therefore as a sign of the authorising presence of the author. The rhapsodes who perform (as) Homer *are* Homer: a total identification between author and performer that invests the rhapsode's utterance with the performative power to transform himself into Homer, and which thereby authorises him to 'move' the Homeric 'text' without subjecting it to the citational drift of alterity.[18] Rather than revising the Homeric tradition, each rhapsode's variant performances are thus incorporated into the unifying voice of Homer, whose authority remains unchallenged as a consequence of containing the multiplicity of rhapsodic voices within 'his' 'own' single, extended utterance.[19] On the other side of

[16] On the etymological significance of that name to the compositional tradition that it designates, see Durante 1957; Nagy 1979, 297–300 and 1996, 74–6.

[17] Much of Nagy's argument rests on the totalising qualities that he attributes to the performance contexts in which the rhapsodes perform: cf. Nagy 1996, 19–20 for the idea that authority *in* performance (which is key to the concept of authorship in performance/composition) derives from the authorising context *of* performance – i.e. by being performed before an audience of other authoritative members of the same song culture.

[18] Hence the careful distinction that Nagy 1996, 9–10 makes between *mouvance* (the term coined by Zumthor 1972 to account for the variants in the manuscript tradition of the *Chanson de Roland* as an effect of the variations taking place in the performance tradition) and *variance* (the term coined by Cerquiglini 1989 to describe the variance that appears in the transmission of medieval manuscripts as a consequence of deliberate changes effected by scribes in the process of copying). The heavy investment that Nagy makes in this distinction reveals a more fundamental set of assumptions about differences between speech and writing.

[19] Nagy thus attempts to get around the idea of alterity by containing the multiplicity of rhapsodic voices within the selfsame authorial subject, 'Homer'. In many ways, this would seem to conform with the Derridean view that sees alterity contained within the speaking/writing subject – were it not for the fact that Derrida's view is one that compromises the unity or identity of that subject, whereas, for Nagy, containment within the author function, 'Homer', effaces the alterity between the multiple voices out of which this 'author' is constituted.

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the fence of Homeric authority we encounter scholars like Pietro Pucci, whose application of tools such as allusion and intertextuality to the formulae of oral composition explicitly draws on devices that we associate more readily with writing in order to invest the oral tradition with the alterity necessary for citation and, therefore, revision to take place. No less committed than Nagy to the idea of 'Homer' as an oral tradition,[20] but placing greater emphasis on the differential dynamics within that tradition, Pucci sees the oral formula not as a mark of the unified presence of the source(s) 'behind' the extended utterance of Homer but as a sign made meaningful by being repeated in different contexts.[21] This view of formulae makes them operate along much the same lines as the written words of a thoroughly textual system of writing: verbal units made to mean through the play of sameness and difference. This is the very definition of intertextuality, one that identifies difference as the key to its semantic system,[22] and thus makes repetition the space in which citation and, indeed, revision take place. What are the consequences raised by this for the authority of Homeric utterance?

One of Pucci's best-known readings – that of Odysseus' account of his encounter with the Sirens in *Odyssey* 12 – raises questions about the authority of the Homeric voice, and makes these questions issue directly from the citational quality of Homer's 'text'. Pucci's passage is well chosen: the verses at *Od.* 12.181–94, in which Odysseus repeats to the Phaeacians the song that the Sirens sang to him as his ship sailed past, both exemplify and thematise the effects of citation. Odysseus' own 'quotation' of the Sirens' promise to recount to him tales of the Trojan War, and thereby reveal to him their omniscience, itself quotes words and phrases found only elsewhere in the

[20] Pucci's reference to Homeric 'writing' does not describe the physical inscription of the poem on papyrus or any other medium but follows Derrida in striving to collapse certain assumed distinctions between the spoken and written sign. Cf. Pucci 1987, 27: 'It is therefore with polemic intent and with a specific strategy in mind that in this book I speak of Homeric "writing." I use this expression to refer to the original oral mode of composition and performance of the lays that developed diachronically in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.'

[21] See also the polemical manifesto placed discreetly in a footnote at Pucci 1979, 130 n. 7: 'Obviously I do not mean by "text" the "original creation" by one or several authors, the expression and mirror of his (or their) intentions, the place of a fixed and closed up meaning whose truth is deciphered by the most careful reading, or uncovered from under the veneer of historical dust and corruption . . . For the text emerges through the passivity and dissemination of language, in this case of the epic tradition: activity, meaning, authorial force and passivity, dissemination of meaning and of the author's intentions coexist *in the mode of a specific "repetition," that "creates" our poems and that embodies in its own way the difference and the deferral of language*' (my emphases).

[22] The idea of repeating something in a different context explodes the performative premise of a totalising context.

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*Iliad*.[23] Far from simply recycling the oral formulae of Homeric song, this is a passage that appears to quote an earlier Homeric 'text': when the Sirens promise Odysseus a tale of what happened at Troy, they do so in language that quotes the text in which those events were last recounted. But what is the force of the quotation marks that we encounter here? Pucci interprets their effects by assessing the alternative ways in which they impact on the Sirens' claim to omniscience. Is that claim negated by Odysseus' capacity to sail past them on this occasion, forewarned by Circe, revealing their muse-like access to knowledge to be limited to the deadening past of the *Iliad* – a past that Homer pointedly makes Odysseus bypass in the new context of the *Odyssey*?[24] Or do they rather remind us of the seductive power that the *Iliad* continues to exercise over the *Odyssey*?[25]

Pucci's readings of this passage are, in fact, two; and his interpretation of the quotation marks around the Sirens' Iliadic quotation changes from one reading to the next. This is in itself significant: one of the most common effects that quotation marks can have is to destabilise the capacity of a given utterance to hold any single authoritative meaning. Indeed, it is this very destabilisation of authority that Goldhill, *quoting* Pucci,[26] sees as the point of the Sirens' Iliadic quotation. Stressing, with Pucci, the Sirens' association with the Muses, but highlighting in particular their commonality as figures who claim special access to authoritative knowledge, Goldhill suggests that the Sirens' use of this claim as a means of seduction casts doubt on the authority of the Muses' omniscience in the *Iliad*: 'The framing of this narrative places the claim of authoritative knowledge in inverted commas, a sign of seductive language.' A point that is nowhere better illustrated than by the relay of quotation marks that this passage inspires among the authoritative readers of Homer today: Goldhill quoting Pucci quoting himself . . . According to these two readers, 'Homer' thus provides an excellent example of how the location of textual authority may be displaced by the institutions of production, dissemination and reception – the factors highlighted by genetic critics and bibliographers alike as integral, rather than external, to the production of textual meaning. Yet because this 'author' incorporates all of these functions into his own authorial voice and identity, in the form of the performance tradition that produces, disseminates and receives 'his' 'text', 'he' also highlights the difficulty entailed in isolating the author from these institutions. Indeed, it is precisely this difficulty that makes Nagy suppress the differentials between Homeric utterances

[23] The examples of Iliadic diction are listed at Pucci 1979, 121–4. [24] Ibid. 125–9.
[25] Pucci 1987, 209–13. [26] Goldhill 1993, 153 n. 15 acknowledges his debt to Pucci.

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