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## Textual Notes on the *Passio Nazarii, Celsi, Geruasii et Protasii* (BHL 6043)

Mikhail Shumilin

A. M. Gorky Institute of World Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences,  
25a, ul. Povarskaya, Moscow, 121069, Russian Federation  
The Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration,  
82, pr. Vernadskogo, Moscow, 119571, Russian Federation; mvlshumilin@gmail.com

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In her critical edition of the *Passio Nazarii, Celsi, Geruasii et Protasii* (BHL 6043), a text dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century AD and probably translated from Greek, Cecile Lanéry introduces several conjectural changes aimed at language standardization. The author of the present article takes issue with several of her conjectures and suggests that in each case the transmitted text actually stands criticism and should probably be left unchanged. At 2.3, the transmitted *alapas* is not to be changed to *alapis* with *percutio*, since *percutio* with both the accusative of direct object and the accusative of a word meaning “blow” is several times reliably attested in the *Vetus Latina*, and in one of these instances the word used for “blow” is actually *alapa*. At 5.1, *et* in the expression *uocans Nazarium et dixit ei* should not be deleted, since there are numerous parallels for this syntax in Late Latin. At 8.2, *in carcerem* is to be retained as a possible way to describe position in Late Latin, whether confusion of expressions denoting position and direction or hypercorrect graphic *-m* is at issue. At 12.1, the form *imperatoris* is to be retained as a possible orthographic variant for the ablative in Late Latin.

**Keywords:** textual criticism, hagiography, Late Latin, *passiones*, case government, apodotic *et*, orthography.

BHL 6043, a rare version of the late antique *Passio Nazarii et Celsi*, is only attested by three medieval manuscripts. It was first published in 2010 by Cecile Lanéry,<sup>1</sup> who argued convincingly that, although the original version of the *Passio* was written in Latin,<sup>2</sup> BHL 6043 is a Latin translation of a Greek reworking close to those published by Ugo Zanetti

<sup>1</sup> See Lanéry 2010a.

<sup>2</sup> It is possibly identical with BHL 6039, dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> century and still lacking a critical edition.

(BHG 1323 and 1323d).<sup>3</sup> However, the text of *BHL* 6043, according to Lanéry, itself dates from the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. and at the same time it is now provided with a diligent edition based on the complete study of its manuscript tradition, which makes it one of the best edited texts in the corpus of late antique *passiones* of Italian martyrs, for the most part very badly served with critical editions.<sup>4</sup> Given the paucity of witnesses, it should come as no surprise that Lanéry is forced to introduce several conjectures. These are generally quite sober, but some are controversial. It is the purpose of this article to point to these instances.

It will be seen that every instance considered in the article is connected with language standardization on the part of the editor. Possibly Lanéry's approach implies the idea that '[v]ulgarism is a feature of other narrative texts like *Vitae Patrum* but not of *Acta Martyrum* which have a plain, sometimes banal, style but very little hint of vulgarism' (Coleman 1999, 354) and that consequently the remaining features of strikingly non-classical language are to be emended away in them. Arguably, however, this impression results from the standardization tacitly introduced in the existing editions of most *passiones*.<sup>5</sup>

### 2.3

*Et alapis percutiens puerum Dento stetit dicens Nazario: 'Vocat te magnus Nero et nos a nobis non uenimus'. (BHL 6043, 2.3, p. 270.3–4 Lanéry)*

"And, giving blows to the boy [Cels(i)us<sup>6</sup> who followed St. Nazarius arrested by officer Dento and wept], Dento stopped and said to Nazarius: 'Great Nero is summoning you, and I do not come on my own initiative.'"<sup>7</sup>

The corresponding text of the Greek versions is the following:

Καὶ ὁ Δέντων ράπισας τὸ παιδίον ἔστη λέγων· 'Ναζάριε, καλεῖ σε ὁ μέγας Νέρων· ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἂφ' ἑαυτῶν οὐχ ἤκομεν'. (*BHG* 1323, ch. 8, p. 324a.12–16 Zanetti)

Καὶ ράπισαντες τὸν παῖδα, ἔστη Δέντων καὶ εἶπεν Ναζαρίῳ· 'Καλεῖ σε ὁ μέγας Νέρων· ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἂφ' ἑαυτῶν οὐκ ἐληλύθαμεν'. (*BHG* 1323d, ch. 8, p. 324b.13–17 Zanetti)

*Alapis* is Lanéry's conjecture for the transmitted *alapas*. However, double accusative with *percutio* is attested in antiquity, and *TLL* 10.1.1.1249.44–45 gives an example from the *Vetus Latina* exactly parallel to ours, also with *alapa*: *Ioh.* 18.22 [cod. 10]<sup>8</sup> *alepam percussit Iesum*. Other examples are also similar, all from the same *Vetus Latina*: *1 Macc.* 1.30 [rec. L] *percussit eam ciuitatem plagam* (Gr. ἐπάταξεν αὐτήν [sc. τὴν πόλιν] πληγὴν μεγάλην),<sup>9</sup> *Num.* 11.33 [as quoted in Aug. *Loc. hept.* 4.31]: *percussit <populum> plagam magnam nimis* (Gr. ἐπάταξεν κύριος τὸν λαὸν πληγὴν μεγάλην σφόδρα).<sup>10</sup> It appears

<sup>3</sup> See Zanetti 1987, 313–346.

<sup>4</sup> See in general Lanéry 2010b, Lapidge 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. n. 13 below.

<sup>6</sup> *BHL* 6043 spells the name as Celsius, while independent Latin versions call this saint Celsus.

<sup>7</sup> All translations are mine.

<sup>8</sup> This is the same as *codex Brixianus* or *f*, itself dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Gryson 1999, 33, Houghton 2016, 216).

<sup>9</sup> The fact that here and in the next example the Greek text provides a motivation for the accusative together with Augustine's comment quoted in the next note and the semantic similarity of all the passages cited suggests strongly that these are real accusatives and not just instances of hypercorrect *-m* added graphically to ablatives, on which see Väänänen 1981, 66, Stotz 1996, 284–285.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Augustine's comment on this phrase: *Notanda fuit locutio: 'percussit plagam', non 'percussit plagā', quod est usitatum.*

therefore that the Latin translator of *BHL* 6043 reproduced a Biblical expression, and that *alapas* is to be left in the text.

## 5.1

*Maturans uero imperator Nero uenit ad portum maris. Et stantibus multis nauibus cum multitudine magna nautonum, uocans Nazarium [et] dixit ei: 'Exi de ciuitatibus et de terra hac'.* (*BHL* 6043, 5.1, p. 274.1–3 Lanéry)

“Nero woke up early in the morning and went to the harbour. There were many ships there and a great multitude of sailors, and he called Nazarius and said to him: ‘Leave these cities and this land.’”

The corresponding Greek texts are:

Ὁρθρίσας δὲ βασιλεὺς Νέρων ἦλθεν εἰς τὸν λιμένα τῆς θαλάσσης· καὶ ἐστῶτων πολλῶν πλοίων καὶ ὄχλου ἱκανοῦ καὶ αὐτῶν,<sup>11</sup> ἐκέλευσεν ἄγεσθαι Ναζάριον καὶ τὸ νήπιον. Καὶ καλέσας Ναζάριον εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Ἔξελθε ἐκ τῶν πόλεων καὶ τῆς γῆς ταύτης. (*BHG* 1323, ch. 11, p. 331a.28–332a.4 Zanetti)

Πρωῖας δὲ γενομένης, ἦλθεν Νέρων πρὸς τὸν λιμένα τῆς θαλάσσης· καὶ ἐστῶτων πολλῶν πλοίων καὶ δήμου ναυτῶν πολλοῦ, ὁ Νέρων ἐκάλεσε Ναζάριον καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· Ἔξελθε ἐκ τῶν πόλεων καὶ ἐκ πάσης τῆς γῆς ταύτης. (*BHG* 1323d, ch. 11, p. 331b.28–332b.3 Zanetti)

Lanéry deletes *et* before *dixit* preserved in two out of the three manuscripts. However, this ‘apodotic’ use of *et* is in fact well attested in many late texts with occasional substandard features,<sup>12</sup> often in verbal constructions introducing speeches; cf. e. g. the following instances:<sup>13</sup>

*...statim dominus temptans eum et dixit... (Acta Andreae et Matthiae apud anthropophagos, recensio Casanatensis [= BHL 429d], ch. 6, p. 43.10 Blatt)<sup>14</sup>*

“...and then immediately Lord put him to the test and said...”

*At illa respondens tertio cum iuramento et dixit... (Vita Geretrudis, Virtutes [= BHL 3495], ch. 11, p. 470.28 Krusch)<sup>15</sup>*

“As an answer, she swore thrice and said...”

<sup>11</sup> Either αὐτῶν (as suggested in Zanetti’s apparatus, see Zanetti 1987, 331) or perhaps the whole phrase καὶ αὐτῶν must be a corruption for the original ναυτῶν.

<sup>12</sup> For the problematic question of its origin, see Wehr 2008, Galdi 2014. Even though it is probably connected with Greek ‘apodotic’ καὶ, its use in Latin is clearly not restricted to calques in translations: see the examples adduced below.

<sup>13</sup> I choose examples from Wehr 1984. I can add several examples from my own research on the manuscript tradition of the 6th century Italian *Passio Susannae* (*BHL* 7937), e. g. ch. 19, AASS Febr. III 64b as preserved in two good manuscripts (Vat. Pal. lat. 846, 9th cent., at fol. 118vb, and Vat. Arch. Cap. S. Pietro A 4 before correction, 11th century, at fol. 115vb): *Respondens Maximus et dixit...* One instance of such ‘apodotic’ *et* in the *Passio Susannae* is preserved in the 9th century manuscript Brussels, Museum Bollandianum 14; it is notable that J. Bolland, who prepared the edition of the first 23 chapters of this text which still remains standard today, used this manuscript and reports some of its readings, but neglects this variant.

<sup>14</sup> Scholars date this Latin text to the 6th century and connect it with Italy: Blatt 1930, 20, 29, Prieur 1989, 35.

<sup>15</sup> This part of the *Vita Geretrudis* was composed, according to Krusch 1888, 449, ca. 700, obviously in France. The earliest manuscript used by Krusch dates from the 8th century; it contains the passage in question.

*Petrus uero introiuit et uidens unam de senioribus uiduam ab oculis et filiam eius manum ei dantem et inducentem in domum Marcelli et dixit ad eam Petrus... (Actus Petri cum Simone [= BHL 6656], ch. 20, p. 102.513–514 Döhler)<sup>16</sup>*

“Peter entered and saw a blind widow, one of those elderly people, and her daughter who led her by the hand to Marcellus’ house, and Peter said to her...”

In this context it seems hardly reasonable to eliminate this construction conjecturally (and Lanéry is right to suggest by square brackets that *et* is to be restored in the archetype and that the deletion is therefore conjectural).

## 8.2

*Virum qui dicitur Nazarius inueni, fugientem potestatem tuam, et seditionibus perturbantem ciuitatem nostram, et peruertentem [m]al<i>os quos diu iam in carcere[m] retinens sperabam persuadere diis immolare. (BHL 6043, 5.1, p. 277.2–5 Lanéry)*

“I have found the man called Nazarius who fled from your power and is now disturbing our city with riots and seduces others, those whom I have been holding in prison for a long time hoping to persuade them to sacrifice to the gods.”

The Greek versions have the following:

Τὸν ἄνδρα τὸν λεγόμενον Ναζάριον εὗρον ἐκφυγόντα τὴν ἐξουσίαν σου, ἀνασειόντα τὴν πόλιν ἡμῶν καὶ διαστρέφοντα καὶ ἑτέρους οὖς πρὸ πολλοῦ ἐν τῇ εἰρκτῇ κατέχων ἐδόκου πείθειν τοῖς θεοῖς θύειν... (BHG 1323, ch. 14, p. 339a.19–26 Zanetti)

Τὸν ἄνδρα τὸν λεγόμενον Ναζάριον εὗρον ἐκφυγόντα τὴν ἐξουσίαν σου, κινουῦντά τε τὴν πόλιν ἡμῶν καὶ ταρασσόντα, καὶ ἄλλους δὲ οὖς πρὸ μικροῦ<sup>17</sup> χρόνου κατέσχον ἐν τῷ δεσμοτηριῷ ἐλπίζων πείσαι αὐτοὺς τοῖς θεοῖς ἡμῶν θύειν, τούτου συμβουλευόντος οὐκ ἐπέισθησαν. (BHG 1323d, ch. 14, p. 339b.18–27 Zanetti)

Although both Greek versions have ἐν + dative in the place corresponding to the transmitted *in carcerem*, both confusion of expressions denoting position and direction<sup>18</sup> and hypercorrect graphic *-m*<sup>19</sup> are well attested in Late Latin. Thus, though it is conceivable that *-m* was added by a scribe, nothing prevents us from imagining that *carcerem* was the original reading of BHL 6043, and perhaps it should better be left in the text.<sup>20</sup>

## 12.1

*Quando uero bene conplacuit Deo qui est gloriosus in sanctis suis, reuelauit in nostram aetatem Ambrosio beatissimo episcopo Mediolanensi et confessori, imperante clementissimae memoriae Theodosio imperatore. (BHL 6043, 12.1, p. 280.6–9 Lanéry)*

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<sup>16</sup> The Latin text is now usually dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> centuries (Zwierlein 2009, 37–39) or simply the 4<sup>th</sup> century (Döhler 2018, 1). It is preserved in a single manuscript, itself dated to the 7<sup>th</sup> century (Lowe 1947, 18, 468a). I modify Döhler’s punctuation.

<sup>17</sup> Μικροῦ is clearly a corruption of μακροῦ here.

<sup>18</sup> See Önnarfors 1955, Adams 2013, 327–345.

<sup>19</sup> See n. 9 above.

<sup>20</sup> Note that Lanéry’s policy as regards this feature is inconsistent: in the next passage discussed in the present article she leaves the expression *in nostram aetatem* in the text, although the Greek texts have expressions denoting place, not direction, in the corresponding place, and in BHG 1323d it is actually again ἐν + dative.

“But when it pleased God, who is glorified in his saints, he revealed [the bodies of the martyrs] in our times to the most blessed Ambrose, bishop of Milan and confessor of faith, in the reign of emperor Theodosius of most pious memory.”

The Greek texts are:

“Ὅτε δὲ ἠδόκησεν ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ ἐνδοξαζόμενος ἐν τοῖς ἀγίοις αὐτοῦ, ἀπεκάλυψεν ἐπὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας γενεᾶς Ἀμβροσίῳ τῷ τρισμακαριωτάτῳ ἐπισκόπῳ τῆς Μεδιολάνου καὶ ὁμολογητῆ — βασιλευόντος τοῦ τῆς εὐσεβοῦς μνήμης αὐτοκράτορος Θεοδοσίου... (BHG 1323, ch. 18, p. 345a.30–346a.3 Zanetti)

“Ὅτε δὲ ἤρесе τῷ Κυρίῳ ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ τῷ δοξαζομένῳ ἐν τοῖς ἀγίοις αὐτοῦ, ἀπεκάλυψεν ἐν τοῖς ἡμετέροις χρόνοις Ἀμβροσίῳ τῷ τρισμακαρίστῳ ἐπισκόπῳ Μεδιολάνου καὶ ὁμολογητῆ τοὺς κατὰ χάριν Θεοῦ ἀναδειχθέντας μάρτυρας, ἐν τοῖς χρόνοις Θεοδοσίου τοῦ εὐσεβεστάτου αὐτοκράτορος. (BHG 1323d, ch. 18, p. 345b.28–346b.3 Zanetti)

*Imperatore* is Lanéry’s conjecture for the *imperator* transmitted by one of the three manuscripts, while the other two omit the word. As Lanéry points out in her apparatus, αὐτοκράτορος in the Greek texts suggests that the word is to be retained; however, her decision to correct the form to the classical ablative is controversial, since in Late Latin orthography the ablative ending *-e* is often represented graphically by *-i*<sup>21</sup> due to the merger of Classical Latin phonemes *ĕ* and *ĭ* in a close *e* in unstressed syllables in most regions of the empire.<sup>22</sup> It is true that the ending of *imperator* was probably influenced by the ending of the preceding *confessor*, but it is not necessary to suppose that it was a scribe who changed the spelling under this influence, since the translator himself could introduce the same ‘perseverant’ spelling where pronunciation allowed for several orthographical interpretations. Perhaps *imperator* is to be left in the text.

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<sup>21</sup> See Stotz 1996, 23. For instance, expressions like *relicto regi Chilperico* (5.25, p. 231.2–3 Krusch-Levison) or *custodi me posito* (5.11, p. 206.5 Krusch-Levison) are widespread in Gregory of Tours’ History, for which several 7<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts are extant to confirm that these readings were at least known that early.

<sup>22</sup> See Väänänen 1981, 36–37, Herman 2000, 34.

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