

## PASSWORDS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE\*

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“Would you give out a password like “Xenophobia”?” “Afraid mine are always more mundane. “Mars the Avenger” or “Pickled fish”, or “The camp surgeon’s middle name”.’<sup>1</sup>

We live at a time when passwords have a prominent role outside the military sphere. Such passwords are often deliberately random sequences of letters, symbols and numbers. Although occasionally shared by a group, today’s passwords are usually designed to be known only to a single individual, who constantly uses them in ordinary, everyday transactions. It is easy to forget the importance given to any word, during and through its use as a shared password, in situations where lives can depend on knowing it.<sup>2</sup> In the ancient world, passwords and watchwords in guarded camps and in fighting were the means by which men, not having uniforms, recognized each other as part of a collective. Words were chosen to link them together for a night (or longer<sup>3</sup>), or the length of a battle. Both ancients and moderns have shown interest in the methods of transmitting passwords and other military signals, both orally and in writing, and in associated issues.<sup>4</sup> The particular kinds of words chosen in such situations, however, have not been the focus of much attention since Roscher’s 1879 article on the practice of σύνθημα.<sup>5</sup> Roscher made an important point about the

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\* I am grateful to Kathleen Coleman, Emma Dench, Chris Pelling, Richard Rutherford, Christopher Smith and others for very helpful comments.

<sup>1</sup> From Lindsey Davis’ comic novel *The Iron Hand of Mars* (1992) (emphasis in original).

<sup>2</sup> For a dramatic example, see ‘Eur.’, *Rhesus* 684–8, where Odysseus is shown to save his life through knowledge of the enemy password (‘Phoebus’).

<sup>3</sup> Veg., *Mil.* 3.5 notes how such words had to change daily, lest the enemy learned them: ‘sciendum tamen est ista uocabula cotidie debere uariari, ne ex usu signum hostes agnoscant et explorantes inter nostros uersentur inpune’. Philo of Byzantium (fl. c. 200 B.C.) speaks of the need to change them ‘sometimes’ (Y. Garlan, *Recherches de Poliorcétique Grecque* (1974), 311 (C35)), and Y. Garlan, ‘Synthêmata’, *BCH* 100 (1976), 299–302, at 300 hypothesizes that Aeneas Tacticus may have believed the same.

<sup>4</sup> Polybius 6.34–6. Garlan, op. cit. (n. 3, *Recherches...*) brings together relevant passages of Aeneas Tacticus, Polybius, Onasander and Philo of Byzantium on the security aspect. E. E. Best, Jr., ‘The Literate Roman Soldier’, *CJ* 62 (1966), 122–7 is interested in the light shed by methods of transmission on the question of literacy among soldiers.

<sup>5</sup> W. M. Roscher, ‘Über die sitte des σύνθημα’, *N.Jahrbücher für Philologie und Paedagogik* 119 (1879), 345–51, unusual in its wide-ranging approach to passwords Greek and Roman, and surveying some thirty examples from Herodotus to Vegetius to show how appropriate they were to the situation, the commander or the troops. His unquestioning acceptance that all the words found in the ancient historians map in an uncomplicated fashion onto reality today seems harder to sustain. The article is cited in H. Stein, *Herodotus V (Books 8 & 9)* (1962), but otherwise infrequently referred to, at least directly. The articles in *RE* IIA (1923) (Kubitschek’s ‘Signa’, col. 2325–47, esp. 2345–7 and Lammert’s on ‘Σημεῖα’ 1331–9, esp. 1338) merely note a few examples of those passwords given, e.g. App. *BC* 2.76, Xen. *Anab.* 1.8.16, Tac., *Ann.* 13.2. See below on B. Due, *The Cyropaedia. Xenophon’s Aims and Methods* (1989). Brief comments are made by M. Launey, *Recherches sur les armées hellénistiques* 2 (1987 (1949–50)), 921 and by those writing commentaries on individual examples, but such comments tend to be confined to listing a few (often the same) other instances (e.g. R. Schneider, *Bellum Africanum* (1905) at 83.1 or M. A. Flower and J. Marincola (eds.), *Herodotus Histories Book IX* (2002), at 9.98) or to citing one instance in context (e.g. M. Jost, ‘Les divinités de la guerre’ in F. Prost (ed.), *Armées et sociétés de la Grèce classique. Aspects sociaux et politiques de la guerre aux V<sup>e</sup> et IV<sup>e</sup> s. av. J.-C.* (1999), 163–78 at 165; R. Lonis, *Guerre et religion en Grèce à l’époque classique. Recherches sur les rites, les dieux, l’idéologie de la victoire* (1979).

prevalence of names of deities among those passwords that have come down to us, but took surviving examples too straightforwardly as evidence of actual practice. My concern in this paper is to go beyond antiquarian aims of listing and evaluating passwords. I want to explore passwords in a variety of contexts as a symbolic resource—their significance enhanced in many cases by the ‘divinity’ of such words, and by the associations this created for listeners and readers.

I shall begin (I) by considering the kinds of texts in which passwords are preserved, and the examples of named passwords known to us, across a broad chronological and geographical spectrum. This will allow nuance to be brought to Roscher’s claim that all those passwords used until the time of Alexander, and nearly all those in Hellenistic and Roman times, were the names of deities. I shall suggest that a broader range of words was probably used in practice in all periods. Passwords were not, however, chosen at random. Divine names will often have been selected, and they were also particularly suitable for inclusion in a range of texts of different genres. Their frequency among passwords in extant evidence stems in part from the greater likelihood of divine names being chosen by commanders at significant moments, of the kind likely to be recorded in history or biography, such as important battles. It is also the case, however, that the presentation of a password in a literary text situates it a new context. The word can be chosen or included because that particular context gives it a new or additional significance, one directed at the reader. In the following section (II), my focus will be upon these literary contexts. I shall suggest that looking again at a well-known passage of Herodotus in the light of his broader work may help with a long-disputed textual problem (II a). My focus thereafter will be narratives of Roman civil wars (II b), especially those of the late Republic, as part of an exploration of Roman leaders competing in a range of places, actions, and texts. Different kinds of context cannot indeed be studied in isolation: passwords in (accounts of) the late Republic, for example, are part of a larger picture of polemical rhetoric and claims about personal and group identity, of which their presentation in historiographical and other texts is an integral and inextricable part. Once we begin to look at examples in such broader contexts, the scope for generalisation is significantly lessened. In the final section (III), I therefore extend the field of discussion in depth, to include topography and rhetoric, but narrow it in scope to certain deities used as passwords in the late Republic. Considering different audiences and readers, and associations that might have been relevant to them, allows a fuller exploration of connections drawn upon by people choosing a password, choosing to record one, or choosing one to record.

## I. NAMING THE GODS?

How passwords, along with other military orders, were chosen and transmitted will have varied in practice, in classical, Hellenistic and Roman times, according to the kind of situation, the kinds of forces involved and the language(s) they spoke, and, at least in the case of transmission, the nature of the terrain. Commanders might well have taken into account whether a word was being issued for a key battle or to those guarding a camp for a night; whether the soldiers sharing the word were a small raiding party or a whole army; whether their troops all came from the same area or were of varied ethnicity; whether they all spoke the same language; and whether or not the troops included mercenaries. Polybius’ second-century B.C. explanation of Roman practice in organizing the watch (6.34–6), for example, was couched in such a way as to suggest that what he described was not familiar to all his readers—in all

probability, particularly not to his Greek readers. Aemilius Paullus' preparations against Perseus in 168 B.C., as described by Livy (44.33), illustrate the adaptation of methods of passing along orders in particular circumstances, to suit the terrain. Aeneas Tacticus, who among our extant sources addresses in most detail the issue of how to choose passwords, was particularly concerned with problems that could arise if an army were made up of men from different cities, speaking different dialects. This was an issue pertinent to the mid-fourth century B.C., when he was writing his *Poliorketica*, and when the use of mercenary armies was common in Greece.<sup>6</sup> We should certainly not imagine uniformity of practice in either the 'Greek' or 'Roman' worlds. The scattered references in texts covering a long time period do, however, suggest that it was common practice to choose a word to allow men to identify one another in a variety of military situations, from open conflict on the field of battle to guarding a Roman emperor. Such a word had the potential to be a symbolic resource—to give the man choosing it the opportunity to convey a message to some or all of his troops.

One element common to passwords identified by name in surviving texts of a variety of genres, from Herodotus in the fifth century B.C. to Vegetius in the fourth century A.D., is the frequency with which these words are the names of deities.<sup>7</sup> Some are presented in historical narratives like those of Herodotus, Xenophon's *Anabasis* and *Cyropaedia* and Appian's account of the civil wars of the Roman Republic. Others occur, both in biographies and histories, in anecdotes told about figures in Greek history and Roman emperors (Josephus, Suetonius, Tacitus, Plutarch, Dio). Others are mentioned as examples of passwords by authors dealing on a practical level with military matters: Aeneas Tacticus in his didactic treatise and, seven centuries or more later, Vegetius in his *Epitoma rei militaris*. One or two occur as illustrative examples of tactics in Polyaeus' *Strategemata* of the second century A.D.. Two are found in satires by Lucian and one in an etymological explanation in Plutarch (*Rom.* 15 on 'Talasius').<sup>8</sup> How representative, in terms of the kinds of words chosen, should we imagine these surviving examples to be of the many hundreds or thousands of occasions on which passwords are likely to have been used during the nine hundred years spanned by the texts? Are those examples in which the writer purports to recount a historical situation likely to give us an accurate picture?

Even from surviving texts it is clear that there was never a 'divine monopoly' on passwords.<sup>9</sup> Two stories from earlier Greek history found in Polyaeus' second-century A.D. collection of *Strategemata*, for example, focus respectively, in their

<sup>6</sup> See Garlan op. cit. (n.3, *Recherches...*); L. P. Marinovich, *Le Mercenariat grec au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle avant notre ère et la crise de la polis*, tr. J. and Y. Garlan (1988); J. Vela Tejada, 'Eneas el Táctico como testimonio histórico', in J. Zaragoza and A. González Senmartí (eds.), *Homenatge a Josep Alsina. Actes del Xè Simposi de la secció catalana de la SEEC Tarragona, 28 a 30 de novembre de 1990* (1992), 353–9. On linguistic diversity see J. N. Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language* (2003) and idem, M. Janse & S. Swain (eds.), *Bilingualism in Ancient Society: Language Contact and the Written Text* (2002).

<sup>7</sup> So Roscher op. cit. (n.5), but see below for exceptions, many of which he did not include.

<sup>8</sup> For a full list, arranged by deity, see n. 25 below.

<sup>9</sup> *pace* Roscher op. cit. (n. 5), who, although he did not purport to have a complete catalogue of extant examples, did claim that all passwords until Alexander the Great were the names of gods. In addition to the examples discussed below, Roscher also omitted Tac., *Ann.* 13.2, although he included the example there alluded to, in Suetonius' version (Suet., *Ner.* 9). He made no mention of Jos., *Ant. J.* 19.186, in which the consuls give Cassius Chaerea, who has assassinated Caligula, the password *LIBERTAS/ELEUTHERIA*, although this example in fact supported his case. See esp. T. P. Wiseman, 'Killing Caligula' in his *Talking to Virgil. A Miscellany* (1992 (1988)), 1–14 on this episode, also his *Death of an Emperor. Flavius Josephus* (1991).

identification of passwords, on the very act of asking for the password and on visual markings differentiating enemies. The Arcadian Acues' password (in a battle against the Spartans at Tegea, probably from the war of the mid-sixth century B.C.<sup>10</sup>) is thus reported to have been 'kill those asking for the password', while the Phocians are elsewhere described as chalking themselves and their weapons, with the password then becoming 'spare the chalked'.<sup>11</sup> In these cases the password has no obvious divine association: the significance of the phrase is entirely practical and linked directly to the tactic in question. More significant are the examples found in Aeneas Tacticus' *Poliorketika*, a text which, as we have seen, is particularly concerned with the kind of fighting taking place in the fourth century B.C., and gives specific recommendations of the kinds of words to use.<sup>12</sup> Most of his examples are deity names, but two pairs are not. ξίφος ἐγχειρίδιον ('sword' and 'dagger'), and λαμπὰς φῶς ('torch' and 'light')<sup>13</sup> are connected to the military sphere, but they have no obvious connection with gods.

In Aeneas Tacticus, and thus in the most extensive surviving collection of examples of passwords, I suggest that what we find reflected is an aspect of real practice as far as the use of both divine and other words is concerned—at least in the context of siege warfare in the fourth century B.C., and in all likelihood more broadly. Aeneas drew on the accounts of earlier writers, such as Herodotus, but much of what he discussed happened within his own lifetime, and will have been preserved by oral communication and/or known to him from personal experience. He, like any writer, obviously made choices in the selection of material for his treatise, heard accounts filtered through the recollection of others and used earlier writers whose own methods must also be borne in mind. Nonetheless, his pragmatic and well-informed work is a good contender for transmitting to us real examples of the *sorts of words* used. It is worth noting that the names of gods *only* occur as passwords in Aeneas, and he makes no reference to any act, such as sacrifice, of the type that we would tend to label 'religious'.<sup>14</sup> He does not, moreover, except in one instance (24.4–14),<sup>15</sup> detail

<sup>10</sup> E. Bianco, *Gli Stratagemmi di Polieno, introduzione, traduzione e note critiche* (1997), 22 and n.25.

<sup>11</sup> Polyaeus *Strat.* 1.11 (κτείνειν τοὺς τὸ σύνθημα ἐρωτῶντας); *Exc.* 12.9 (φείδεσθαι τῶν γεγυψωμένων). Although Polyaeus does not mention his sources, he is known to have used (for the period relevant to these examples) Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon. The second episode resembles that recounted by Pausanias at 10.1.11, although Pausanias does not refer to a password. A line from the *Orestes* of Euripides works in a rather similar way. Pylades explains his plan to murder Helen and Orestes replies (*Eur. Or.* 1130): Ἐλένην φονεύειν: μανθάνω τὸ σύμβολον ('kill Helen: I understand the signal'). The emotionally charged context of this episode, in which the portrayal of Orestes' pitiful state, already built up by Euripides (and the actor playing Orestes), adds greater resonance to his eager response, is clearly rather different from the examples in historians, and the 'signal' is to be shared only between two men. Orestes too, however, makes of Pylades' suggestion, in one short line, a plan, an acceptance of that plan *and* a pre-arranged signal, one which maps very directly and precisely onto the act that it signals. I am grateful to Richard Rutherford for drawing my attention to this example.

<sup>12</sup> Omitted by Roscher *op. cit.* n.5, although, given the date of his article, it is perhaps unlikely that he was unaware of this source, on which much work was then taking place. The text had recently undergone somewhat over energetic revision, but chapter 24 is unaffected in both R. Hercher's Teubner edition of 1870 and A. Hug's edition of 1874.

<sup>13</sup> *Aen. Tact., Pol.* 24.

<sup>14</sup> A. Dain & A.-M. Bon, *Énée le Tacticien. Poliorcétique* (1967), esp. XVIII–XIX on lack of 'religious' material.

<sup>15</sup> Aeneas warns against giving out dialect words rather than a form common to all, lest those from different cities or peoples remember the word in the form in which they normally know it. The illustration he gives in fact involves the opposite situation—the foiling of an attempted retaking of Ilion because a number of men who nearly infiltrated the city, along with those who had just taken it, gave 'Tyndaridai' rather than 'Dioskouroi' as the password. As L. W. Hunter and S. A. Handford, *Aeneas on*

specific occasions on which particular words were used, but rather gives a number of examples of the *kinds* of words used.<sup>16</sup> Given the need to change passwords frequently, it seems likely that those used could at all times have included a wider range of words than names of gods, perhaps especially in camps and in other situations not involving battle. Weapons, or other objects used in fighting, seem an obvious choice in extending the repertoire on more mundane occasions. In literature, and also in life, a message that could be conveyed through a password, above and beyond the practical aim of enforcing security measures, did not always have immediate or obvious divine resonance. For writers of imperial biography in particular, it seems, a watchword might fittingly encapsulate, or serve as a summarising symbol for, a ruler, his reign, an aspect of that reign, or a comparison between reigns. The author of the *Historia Augusta* narrates how, early in Pertinax's reign:

*ad Palatium ergo Pertinax profectus, quod tunc vacuum erat, quia Commodus in Vectilianis occisus est, petenti signum prima die tribuno dedit 'mitemus', exprobrans utique segnitiem temporum superiorum. Quod quidem etiam ante **in omnibus ducatibus** dederat. Exprobrationem autem istam milites non tulerunt statimque de imperatore mutando cogitarunt.*

Pertinax therefore set out for the Palace, which was empty then, because Commodus was slain in the Vectilian Villa. To the tribune asking for the watchword on the first day he gave "let us be soldiers", as if reproving the inactivity of earlier times. In fact, he had really given that word before *in all his commands*. But the soldiers would not tolerate the reproof and immediately thought about changing the emperor.

The same author claims that Septimius Severus' last words emphasized the peace in which Severus had left the *res publica*, which had been beset on all sides when he had become emperor, and that Severus then *iussit ... signum tribuno dari 'laboremus', quia Pertinax, quando in imperium adscitus est, signum dederat 'mitemus'* ('ordered that the watchword "let us work hard" be given to the tribune, because Pertinax, when he took power, had given the watchword "let us be soldiers"').<sup>17</sup>

It is too simplistic, however, to imagine a clear 'line' dividing the divine from the non-divine. A number of the instances inscribed in literature in which the passwords are not the names of gods have or are given divine connotations. Suetonius and Tacitus, for example, choose to mention Nero's use of *optima mater* ('best of

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*Siegecraft* (1927), 86 rightly remark, 'Aeneas' object is simply to give an example of the way in which such mistakes are made'. The reader is surely left to imagine the potentially grave consequences in a 'mixed' army. This story suggests that it is not the word itself that has meaning for those using it. It is not simply a question of the password being a 'token' or audible sign of recognition, but rather the idea to which the word refers (and which might have other signifiers) that is the actual symbol brought to mind for those involved, *pace* M. Bettalli, *Enea Tattico. La Difesa di una Città Assediata (Poliorketika)* (1990), 286.

<sup>16</sup> The same might be said of Vegetius, writing seven centuries later. The specific examples are appropriate to his context, but the mix of gods' names and words with divine association is significant.

<sup>17</sup> SHA *Pert.* 5.7, *Sev.* 23.4. Cf. Suet., *Cl.* 42, *Cal.* 56 and 58. Alexander appearing to leaders before battle in dreams to discuss passwords is a common story. Plutarch includes an account of Alexander appearing to Demetrius in a dream as one of the unfavourable omens before the battle of Ipsus in 301 B.C.. Alexander asks what watchword they are going to give for the battle, and, on hearing the answer 'Zeus and NIKE', declares that he will go away and join their adversaries, who will surely receive him (Plut., *Dem.* 29). 'Alexander' clearly expects to find his own name as (part of) the password, perhaps in Zeus' place.

mothers’) early in his years in power.<sup>18</sup> Given the honours bestowed on powerful women in the imperial family—including deification in Livia’s case—and, perhaps, a potential association with Jupiter in ‘optima’, this example may serve as a salutary reminder of the artificiality of attempting to make too clear-cut a division. Lucian’s discussion of forms of greeting in the *pro lapsu*, moreover, (a work framed as an apology to a patron for using the wrong greeting for the time of day) includes a story about Antiochus Soter. It is said that the king, when about to engage with the Galatians, dreamed that he saw Alexander the Great standing near him and telling him to give his army before the battle the password τὸ ὑγιαίνειν (‘to fare well’), under which word he then won an amazing victory.<sup>19</sup> τὸ ὑγιαίνειν, although not the name of a god, shares a root with HYGIEIA.<sup>20</sup> The association may appear tenuous but it is worth noting because it is made explicit by Lucian himself a few lines later, when he suggests that HYGIEIA or Asclepius had inspired him on purpose to make the ‘mistake’, in order to promise the patron health (HYGIEIA) through Lucian.<sup>21</sup> Vegetius, in a discussion of various types of *signa*, includes examples of those *signa vocalia* (‘voiced signals’) used on the watch or in battle, which are exemplified by ‘VICTORIA’, ‘palma’ (‘palm’), ‘VIRTUS’, ‘deus nobiscum’ (‘god with us’) and ‘triumphus imperatoris’ (triumph of the emperor’).<sup>22</sup> Although ‘palma’ and ‘triumphus imperatoris’ are not obviously deities, the palm is the attribute of and connotes VICTORIA. Moreover, although St. Augustine explicitly claimed that *triumphus* never received cult in Rome, a figure *was* identified by that legend on a coin of 45 B.C., rather earlier than the first appearance on Roman coins of most ‘personifications’ not receiving cult. The ceremony of that name, moreover, obviously has very clear associations with Jupiter and his sphere, inextricably intermingled with military victory.<sup>23</sup> Even the Homeric line on the need for vengeance, said by Suetonius and Dio to have been given to the guard as a watchword by the emperor Claudius when he was punishing conspirators, was originally, in the *Iliad* at least, delivered by Hermes.<sup>24</sup>

While some passwords identified for us in surviving literature, then, have no obvious connection to the divine, others have a variety of divine connotations. The

<sup>18</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 9, Tac. *Ann.* 13.2.

<sup>19</sup> Lucian *pro lapsu* 9. For other episodes involving Alexander, dreams, and passwords, see Plut., *Dem.* 29, *Eum.* 6 and n. 17 above.

<sup>20</sup> I put gods sharing (more than) names with qualities in small capitals, to overcome the difficulty of choosing a majuscule or minuscule initial letter. This problem is one found modern texts, rather than ancient, and certainly not one that posed a problem in speech. See D. Feeney, *Literature and Religion at Rome: cultures, contexts, and beliefs* (1988), 88 and A. J. Clark, *Divine Qualities: Cult and Community in Republican Rome* (2007), ch.1.

<sup>21</sup> Lucian *pro lapsu* 15.

<sup>22</sup> Veg., *Mil.* 3.5, most probably referring to passwords.

<sup>23</sup> August., *De civ. D.* 4.17; *RRC* 472/2. It is not until the time of the emperors that qualities other than those with public temples regularly appear ‘personified’ on coins, although this coin featuring ‘triumphus’ is one of a small number of cases from the 40s B.C. (the others being *RRC* 442/1a, b (*VALETUDO*) and *RRC* 480/24b (*PAX*)), which appear to anticipate the change. If real, the change may be connected to Caesar, but alternative explanations can be posited for each of the apparent exceptions. See Clark op. cit. (n.20), ch.4.

<sup>24</sup> Suet., *Cl.* 42; Dio 60.16.7–8 (*Il.* 24.369; it is also found at *Od.* 16.72, 21.133, where the speaker is Telemachus). Hermes is, of course, unlikely to have been its most obvious association—for Suetonius, Dio, and their readers, and for the guard too, if it were really delivered by Claudius, it could serve to illustrate Claudius attempting to come up with a relevant idea, and especially, perhaps, how out of touch he was with the soldiery.

vast majority, in texts of all genres, are the names of deities.<sup>25</sup> Most of the examples of the kind of password actively recommended in different situations by Aeneas Tacticus, too, fall into this category. In each case an inherent quality or particular aspect of the deity in question is associated with the task—in part to facilitate its recollection; in part, perhaps, to endow the task with that quality:

παραγγέλλειν οὖν χρή τὰ συνθήματα εὐμνημόνευτά τε καὶ μάλιστα ἀδελφὰ ταῖς μελλούσαις πράξεσι γίνεσθαι, οἷον τάδε. ἐπὶ μὲν ἄγρῳ πορευομένο<ι>ς Ἄρτεμιν Ἄγροτέραν, ἐπὶ δὲ κλοπὴν τινα πράξεων Ἑρμῆν Δόλιον, ἐπὶ δὲ βιασμόν Ἡρακλέα, τοῖς δὲ φανεροῖς ἐγχειρήμασιν Ἥλιον καὶ Σελήνην, καὶ ὡς μάλιστα ὁμότροπα τούτοις καὶ κοινότατα πᾶσιν.

You must therefore give out passwords that are both easy to remember and as closely related as possible to the intended actions: for example, for those engaged in the hunt, Artemis the Huntress; for operations requiring stealth, Crafty Hermes; for an assault, Herakles; in overt undertakings, Sun and Moon; and others as much like these as possible and very common to all.<sup>26</sup>

Many examples in other genres, however, clearly cannot be taken uncritically as a straightforward reflection of actual practice: they demand rather to be considered in the light of ancient historiographical methods. Take the five passwords found in Xenophon: ‘Zeus Saviour and NIKE’, ‘Zeus Saviour and Heracles Leader’ and ‘Athena’ in the *Anabasis*, and ‘Zeus Ally and Leader’ and ‘Zeus Saviour and Leader’ in the *Cyropaedia*.<sup>27</sup> Due considers the probability that, on the two occasions in the *Cyropaedia* on which Cyrus the Great adopts passwords similar to those found in the *Anabasis*, the similarity is ‘no coincidence, but a deliberate choice made by the author to break the historical pattern and allude to the present’.<sup>28</sup> ‘Zeus leader’ is also suitable for selection (or invention) by Xenophon for inclusion in this work because of the thematic focus of the *Cyropaedia* on leadership.<sup>29</sup>

The focus on deities, therefore, in most episodes described by ancient writers in which the password is named, may well reflect both the frequency with which such

<sup>25</sup> Ares or Enyalios (Aen. Tact., 24.2); Apollo (‘Eur.’, *Rhes.* 521, 572, 685; Val. Max., 1.5.7; Plut., *Arat.* 7; Serv. *ad Aen.* 7.637); Artemis (Aen. Tact., 24.15); Athena (Aen. Tact., 24.2; Xen., *Anab.* 7.3.39; Paus., 10.1.10; Plut., *Eum.* 6); Demeter (Plut., *Eum.* 6); Dioskouroi/Tyndaridai (Aen. Tact., 24.1 and 13); FELICITAS (Caes., *B.Afr.* 83); Hera (or Hebe?) (Hdt., 9.98.3); Herakles/Hercules (Aen. Tact., 24.15; Xen., *Anab.* 6.5.23; App., *BC* 2.76); Hermes (Aen. Tact., 24.15; Polyaeus *Strat.* 3.9.21); Jupiter/Zeus (Aen. Tact., 24.16; Xen., *Anab.* 1.8.16, 6.5.23, *Cyr.* 3.58.3, 7.1.10; Suet., *Cal.* 58; Plut., *Dem.* 29); Lar Deus (Serv., *ad Aen.* 7.637); LIBERTAS/ELEUTHERIA (Jos., *AJ* 19.186; Dio 47.43.1); Luna (Aen. Tact., 24.15); PIETAS (App., *BC* 2.104); Poseidon (Aen. Tact., 24.16); Pothos (Dio 59.29.2); Priapus (Sen., *de const. sap.* 18.3; Suet., *Cal.* 56); Sol (Aen. Tact., 24.15); Venus/Aphrodite (Suet., *Cal.* 56; App., *BC* 2.76; Dio 43.43.3, 59.29.2); VICTORIA/NIKE (Plut., *Dem.* 29; Veg., *Mil.* 3.5); VIRTUS (Veg., *Mil.* 3.5).

<sup>26</sup> Aen. Tact., *Pol.* 24.14–15.

<sup>27</sup> Xen., *Anab.* 1.8.16, 6.5.25, 7.3.39; *Cyr.* 3.3.58, 7.1.10. Dover, in A. Gomme, A. Andrewes, & K. J. Dover, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides Vol. IV (Books V.25-VII)* (1970), 423 at 7.44.5, unhelpfully uses the four examples involving Zeus and Heracles, ignoring that where Athena is chosen, to describe ‘the lack of imagination shown in Greek passwords’ (my emphasis). Thucydides did not himself name any passwords in his work—even in his narrative of the Athenian night-attack on the Epipolai heights above Syracuse in 413 B.C., the context of the remark under discussion here, in which confusion over the password plays an important part. Dover’s remark has been cited and quoted uncritically in recent commentaries on Aeneas Tacticus, for example, D. Whitehead, *Aeneas Tacticus. How to Survive under Siege* (1990), 165; Bettalli op. cit. (n. 15), 286.

<sup>28</sup> Due op. cit. (n.5), 41–2, at 42.

<sup>29</sup> A point for which I am grateful to an anonymous reader.

words were used in practice, and deliberate selection on the part of those writers or their sources. The names of gods were, in other words, often the *most* meaningful choices available, both to those responsible for choosing passwords (who might be most likely to draw on them for climactic moments like important battles, which they might expect or hope would be recorded), and to those writing about their use on such occasions. Passwords occurred in a form that could be voiced and/or written down when actually in use, and reinscribed (accurately or otherwise) afterwards in accounts of that use, or written into a genre that we might today categorize as more deliberately ‘fictional’, as in the example from Lucian discussed above.

For a commander in the field, choosing a word that was the name of, or connoted, a deity, might well have implied support from that deity in battle—or supplication for such support—for the group linked together by its name or attribute.<sup>30</sup> Important in making the choice was the nexus of associations that such a name could evoke. These associations could change, or different associations could receive further prominence, as the context changed. The commander making a decision before a battle, for example, might principally be concerned to find a word or a name that would best incite *his men* to fight as he wished. If the battle were a success, however, it is possible that other associations might afterwards become more significant, such as links already existing between the commander in question, or his family, and a given deity. Such links might be seen, for example, in the material fabric of Rome, through temple building, and through the consequences of such building on the rhythm of the calendar year, with the addition of new festival days. Alternatively, a vow made to a deity before a battle (or a claim after a battle that such a vow had been made), and the promise of a temple, or a sacrifice, or games to a particular deity, might have been reinforced by another claim, made when recounting the battle in question, that the password under which the battle had been won was also the name of that deity. In many cases the same deity might have answered a number of these needs. A historian, on the other hand, in addition to an awareness of some or all of these associations, had another important context to bear in mind, namely the rest of his own work or even broader *œuvre*, in which in the majority of cases more than one key player, battle or episode figured.

## II a. HERODOTUS AND HERA

Before moving on to illustrations from Roman civil wars, an instructive example may be found in a much earlier account. Herodotus’ Leotyichides (9.98), hoping to draw the Ionians away from the Persians in 479 B.C., is said to have tried to pass to them a watchword that the Persians would not understand because they did not speak Greek. He chose the password in the hope of persuading Ionians fighting with the Persians to defect to him, or at least of making the Persians fear that they would do so:

... ἐνθαῦτα πρῶτον μὲν ἐν τῇ νηὶ παραπλέων, ἐγχιρίμψας τῷ αἰγιαλῷ τὰ μάλιστα, Λευτυχίδης ὑπὸ κήρυκος προηγόρευε τοῖσι Ἴωσι λέγων «ἄνδρες Ἴωνες, οἱ ὑμέων τυγχάνουσι ἐπακούοντες, μάθετε τὰ λέγω· πάντως γὰρ οὐδὲν συνήσουσι Πέφασι τῶν

<sup>30</sup> Launey op. cit. (n. 5), 921. I am grateful to Michael Whitby for pointing out a later example involving the Roman-Armenian-Persian army of 591 fighting to reinstate Khusro II on the Persian throne. According to Theophylact Simocatta (5.10.4), the Romans gave their ‘barbarian’ allies—of mixed faiths—a password (probably ‘Maria Theotokos’, Mary Mother of God) in order to be able to tell them apart from the enemy and so not kill them unwittingly in the heat of battle.

ἐγὼ ὑμῖν ἐντέλλομαι. ἐπεὰν συμμίσγωμεν, μεμνήσθαι τινὰ χρή ἐλευθερίας μὲν πάντων πρῶτον, μετὰ δὲ τοῦ συνθήματος Ἡβης [Ἡρης]. καὶ τάδε ἴστω καὶ ὁ μὴ ἀκούσας ὑμέων πρὸς τοῦ ἀκούσαντος...»

... Leotychides first sailed his ship by the shoreline, bringing it as close in as he could, and through a herald relayed the following to the Ionians: **‘Men of Ionia, if any of you are listening, understand what I am saying. For none of the Persians will understand what I’m enjoining upon you. Whenever we come together, you must first of all remember freedom and then our password, Hebe [Hera]. When you hear this, pass it on to anyone who hasn’t heard.’**

Herodotus compares Leotychides’ purpose with that of Themistocles at Artemisium, for if his words went unnoticed by the Persians he might win the Ionians over, whereas if what he had said was carried to the Persians it might make them distrustful of the Greeks fighting for them (9.98.3). The Persians responded by disarming the Samians, just in case.

Roscher suggested that in this case ‘Hera’ is a more suitable password than ‘Hebe’ (the name found in all the manuscripts). His argument is still accepted or rejected, often without explanation, sometimes without attribution, but only occasionally with real engagement.<sup>31</sup> His own arguments for emending the manuscript reading to ‘Hera’ are worth revisiting briefly. Based on a (mistaken) belief that ‘Hebe’ could have had no significance for the Ionians, Leotychides, *or* the situation, these arguments were fourfold. Two are usually drawn on by those who support his identification: that the Greek fleet had set out from the famous Heraion on Samos (Hdt. 9.96) and that the Heraion then stood behind their battle-line.<sup>32</sup> Roscher also pointed out, however, that the cult of Samian Hera was unquestionably the most famous and most important of the whole area in which the battle of Mykale was fought and that, *according to Herodotus 3.60*, her temple near the town of Samos was the largest of all the temples Herodotus knew. The fourth reason he advanced was that, *according to Herodotus 1.3*, the Hellenes treated the Trojan war, in which Hera had helped the Greeks, as a prelude to the later Persian wars,<sup>33</sup> and that Hera would thus be a good omen for the battle. He further noted that the Samian envoys who approach Leotychides in Herodotus 9.90 appeal, among other things, to their commonly worshipped gods.

Roscher went too far in claiming that Hebe could have had no connection to Leotychides or the situation: as has been subsequently pointed out, Hebe is ‘the bride of Herakles in heaven, *Od.* 11.603 and so might well have charms for a Herakleid on earth’.<sup>34</sup> Gilula, arguing against a large number of nineteenth century textual

<sup>31</sup> R. Macan, *Herodotus Books VII-VIII-IX. Vol. I Part II (Text and Commentaries)* (1908) at 9.98 and W. W. How & J. Wells, *Commentary on Herodotus Books V-IX* (1912) do not identify the hypothesis as Roscher’s. M. A. Flower and J. Marincola (eds.), *Herodotus Histories Book IX* (2002) do, but give no reference to the article in which he argued the case. J. D. Mikalson, *Herodotus and Religion in the Persian Wars* (2003), 128 n. 55 accepts Roscher’s emendation without saying why. D. Gilula, ‘Who was actually buried in the first of the three Spartan Graves (Hdt 9.85.1)?’ in P. Derow & R. Parker (eds.), *Herodotus and his World* (2003), 73–87 at 78, focuses on his emendation and argues against it, but even she does not refer to the article.

<sup>32</sup> How & Wells op. cit. (n. 31) and Stein op. cit. (n. 5), both at 9.98.3. Gilula op. cit. (n. 31), 78, mentions only the first of these, and then remarks, ‘[n]ot a sufficient reason for emending the text’.

<sup>33</sup> It would have been more accurate for him to say that Herodotus himself treated it as such.

<sup>34</sup> Macan op. cit. (n. 31), 796 n.16, also noting that ‘Hebe is in attendance upon Hera, *Iliad* 5.721f., and on Ares, *ib.* 905, and in Hesiod *Theog.* 922, 952, is daughter of Zeus and Hera (and sister of Ares)’. The strongest argument in favour of Hebe is in my view that of Flower and Marincola op. cit. (n.31), at 9.98.3, who point out that ‘her name connoted youthful martial vigour’.

emendations, goes so far as to claim that ‘the name of Hebe is very apt to serve as a watchword (here), perhaps even more than that of Hera’.<sup>35</sup> Although we cannot know what watchword Leotychides actually gave on the occasion, Roscher’s emendation of Herodotus’ choice should not be dismissed so lightly. Those who think in terms of the appeal of Hebe to Leotychides himself or to the Spartans do not give sufficient prominence to the explanation that Herodotus himself gives for Leotychides’ choice, namely his need to appeal *to the Ionians*.<sup>36</sup> Although Roscher assumed unquestioningly that what Herodotus wrote and what Leotychides said were one and the same, he in fact, by basing his reasoning on four internal considerations from Herodotus’ work, took account of two important historiographical contexts ignored by those seeking validation for Hebe. (Her name, it is worth noting, occurs nowhere else in Herodotus). These were the immediate context of Herodotus’ own explanation and the other ways in which Hera and her temple feature in other parts of his work.<sup>37</sup>

## II b. WRITING (AND FIGHTING) CIVIL WARS

In civil wars, the commanders on each side had much the same range of symbolic resources to choose from and to fight with. Tacitus recognizes this when, in order to create the desired level of confusion in his depiction of the second battle of Cremona in A.D. 69, he draws together four points: the hampering effect of darkness on strength and vision, the identical nature of the weapons used, the mixing of flags/colours snatched from both sides—and the watchword becoming known through frequent questions.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Gilula’s claim *op. cit.* (n. 31), 79 that Hebe is the ‘goddess of liberty referred to by Leotychides just before mention of the watchword’, which seems to depend on the identification of Ganymeda/Hebe with the delivery of prisoners (Paus., 2.13.4; see A.-F. Laurens, ‘Hebe I’, *LIMC* 4.1, 458–64, at 459), is attractive, but the specificity of Phlius as the location for this tradition somewhat weakens the argument in this context. The only other evidence given by Laurens (*loc. cit.*) from *outside* Phlius to support a connection between Hebe and ‘freeing’ is the watchword in Herodotus whose very identity is in question here. On the other hand, even if this specific connection is not being made here, Flower and Marincola *op. cit.* (n. 31) seem mistaken in their remark, at 9.98, on the ‘bathetic effect of the zeugma’ here, ‘with the pragmatic σύνθημα in sharp contrast with the abstract and emotive ἐλευθερίας’. The immediate qualification of that σύνθημα as Hebe *or* Hera (μετὰ δὲ τοῦ συνθήματος Ἥβης [or Ἥρας]) surely makes it anything but ‘pragmatic’.

<sup>36</sup> *contra* Macan *op. cit.* (n. 31), 796 n.16, who reductively and erroneously claims it was ‘to compliment the Samians’.

<sup>37</sup> We should note that ‘Athena’ and ‘Phocus’ as watchwords in Paus. 10.1.1–10 resolve the introduction to book 10, and the Delphic oracle given to the Phocians. Other surviving stories illustrate commanders attempting to create unity in the ranks, or dissension among the enemy by choosing a password deliberately designed to delineate a particular group he wished to (re-)unite. At Xen. *Anab.* 7.3.39, Seuthes chooses ‘Athena’ on the basis of claimed kinship with the Athenians, already flagged in 7.2.31. See R. Parker, ‘One Man’s Piety: The Religious Dimension of the *Anabasis*’ in R. Lane Fox (ed.), *The Long March. Xenophon and the Ten Thousand* (2004), 131–53, at 138–9 for a recent discussion of this passage. (The moment at 7.3.39 when that mythical community is evoked again, through the watchword, for reasons both practical and symbolic, is not referred to). On συγγένεια see C. P. Jones, *Kinship Diplomacy in the Ancient World* (1999), and S. Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides, volume II: books IV–V.24* (1996), 61–80. Polyaeus *Strat.* 3.9.21 has Iphicrates using ‘Hermes Philios’ in a bid to reinforce his persuasion of his men that he has arranged betrayal by the enemy of the city they are trying to take with a small band of men. Hermes implies stealth, and perhaps also alludes to the two layers of cunning—real and feigned—in Iphicrates’ plan.

<sup>38</sup> Tac., *Hist.* 3.22; cf. 3.73. See W. Riepl, *Das Nachrichtenwesen des Altertums mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Römer* (1913), 40 (on this passage, App., *BC* 5.46; App., *B.Civ.* 2.76 and Tac., *Hist.* 3.73).

Many of the surviving examples of passwords identified by name in accounts of Roman civil wars come not from this year of the four emperors, but from earlier wars at the end of the Republic: those of Caesar against Pompey or the surviving Pompeians, and of Brutus and Cassius against Antony and Octavian.<sup>39</sup> ‘Venus Victrix’ and ‘Hercules Invictus’ are recorded as having been Caesar and Pompey’s respective watchwords at Pharsalus; ‘FELICITAS’ as Caesar’s password at Thapsus, ‘PIETAS’ as the password of the Pompeians at Munda; ‘LIBERTAS’ as the watchword of the conspirators at the first battle of Philippi and ‘Apollo’ as that of Antony and Octavian in the second battle.<sup>40</sup> In each of these what was involved, for *each* side, was a struggle for (supremacy over) Rome against other Romans who shared, to varying extents, the same vocabulary and socio-religious structures of knowledge. In such cases the choice of *signum* was of great importance. This was particularly the case, perhaps, to those writing accounts of these wars (which may explain the survival, or significant inclusion, of these passwords), since commanders on both sides would have been drawing from the same broad range of possibilities. These passwords were mobilized far from Rome, but, as the names of gods with cult in the city, they could create links to the city, its cults and its histories. These links were available to be drawn upon by some of those reading about the battles, and also to some of the men fighting them for Rome as they conceived of it, or wished to conceive of it.<sup>41</sup>

Two very different presentations of the battles at Philippi, in different genres and by different writers, may serve to illustrate further the historiographical significance of passwords. Dio devotes chapter 42 of his forty-seventh book to a discussion and description of the speeches made on both sides before the first battle, both to each army as a whole and to individual bodies of troops within those armies. He emphasizes that the speeches were mainly very similar, because on both sides there were Romans with their allies (47.42.3). He then highlights the differences between them in a manner very favourable to Brutus (Cassius is not mentioned here), whose officers set before their men τὴν τε ἐλευθερίαν καὶ τὴν δημοκρατίαν (‘both freedom and democracy’). Those on the other side hold out as rewards vengeance and the property of the enemy, desire to rule, and a promised 20,000 sesterces to each soldier (in an ascending order of importance, confirmed by the explicit comment on the last point, ὃ γε μάλιστα αὐτοὺς ἐπέρωσε (‘what encouraged them most’)). Immediately after this, once the passwords have been given, battle is joined. Dio makes clear a connection between Brutus’ password, which Dio chooses to identify in his account as ELEUTHERIA, and his favourable presentation of the way of life offered as a goal by Brutus’ officers in their exhortation. He professes ignorance, moreover,

<sup>39</sup> Serv., *ad Aen.* 7.637 indicates that Servius knew an account or accounts in which ‘Lar deus’ and ‘Apollo Delphicus’ were Marius and Sulla’s passwords. There is insufficient evidence, however, to be certain that Servius is drawing on an account in which Sulla and Marius were fighting against each other.

<sup>40</sup> Passwords: App., *B Civ.* 2.76; 2.104; Caes., *B. Afr.* 83; Dio 47.43.1; Val. Max., 1.5.7 (*contra*, Plut., *Brut.* 24.7, on which see n. 44 below).

<sup>41</sup> Not every soldier fighting at Pharsalus or Thapsus, of course, would either have known Rome, or been concerned with ideological issues about the future of Rome. Nonetheless, recent work by e.g. F. G. B. Millar and R. Morstein-Marx has done much to highlight the extent of knowledge of the city among its inhabitants, while E. Dench, *Romulus’ Asylum: Roman Identities from the Age of Alexander to the Age of Hadrian* (2005), 4 neatly notes how ‘Roman identity, in a progressively far-flung world of Roman citizens who rarely if ever participated in the political institutions of the Roman state, was rooted in the topography of Rome....’. Senior officers would certainly have been among those familiar with the city, and might also have conveyed a number of associations that were clear to them more widely among the troops.

or lack of interest, in the password of the other side, proclaiming: *Κάκ' τούτου πρῶτον μὲν τὰ συνθήματα αὐτοῖς διήλθεν (ἦν δὲ τοῖς μὲν ἀμφὶ τὸν Βροῦτον ἐλευθερία, τοῖς δὲ ἐτέροις ὅ τι ποτὲ καὶ ἔδοθη)...* ('The watchwords then went around (for the followers of Brutus it was "ELEUTHERIA" and for the other side whatever the word was that was given out)...').<sup>42</sup> Dio's ignorance of, or decision to ignore, the password of the opposing side, and to refer to it in this manner (even if he really did not know what that word was), deliberately unbalances his narrative of the conflict, just as in what precedes he has prioritized and described in more favourable terms the exhortations to the troops on Brutus' side.

The *signum* of Antony and Octavian in the *second* battle is presented by Valerius Maximus, in a discussion of omens, as 'Apollo'. Valerius' presentation is a striking contrast to that of Dio, and casts Brutus as a parricide (Caesar being *pater patriae*) whose deserved fate is foreshadowed by his recitation of the dying Patroclus' line to Hector. The reference is to being overcome by Apollo—the god who later 'defeated' Brutus at Philippi. This god's contribution to Brutus' defeat is neatly summarized for Valerius in Antony and Octavian's chosen password: *qui deus, Philippiensi acie a Caesare et Antonio signo datus, in eum tela convertit* ('this god, given as a password by Caesar and Antony at the battle of Philippi, turned his weapons against him [Brutus]').<sup>43</sup> Valerius presents Apollo as manifest on the battlefield through the invocation as *signum*.<sup>44</sup>

Appian's introduction of the passwords chosen by Caesar and Pompey at the battle of Pharsalus, at the end of *B.Civ.* 2.76, forms part of the culmination of a whole series of comparisons made between the two generals in the chapters immediately preceding. They are assessed against each other in terms of supplies, experience of their men, omens, luck, size of army and navy (66–71), and in Appian's representation of the generals' parallel exhortative speeches to their troops (72–74).<sup>45</sup> Appian gives the passwords of both sides, and in each case has provided his reader earlier in his book with a context for the choice. Pompey's selection, Hercules Invictus, is to be understood in connection with his reminder to his men, in the speech before the battle, that they had routed Caesar's forces at Dyrrachium. In historiographical terms, the link is with 2.39, where Appian gave a relatively lengthy account of the foundation legend of Dyrrachium (by Hercules, with Dyrrachus). The importance of this is realized by specifying the password at 2.76. In Caesar's case, the

<sup>42</sup> Dio 47.43.1. Cf. 41.57, with R. Ash, *Ordering Anarchy: Armies and Leaders in Tacitus' Histories* (1999), 18–19.

<sup>43</sup> Val. Max., 1.5.7.

<sup>44</sup> Plutarch (*Brut.* 24), in contrast, quotes Brutus' recitation of the same verse, but gives greater moment to its selection by adding that the historians tell us that the watchword that *Brutus* gave was 'Apollo'. See J. Moles, 'Fate, Apollo, and M. Junius Brutus', *AJPh* 104 (1983), 249–56, defending the historicity of this episode in 44. It is not unusual for Plutarch to transfer material from one character to another in such a way (see C. Pelling, 'Plutarch's method of work in the Roman lives', *JHS* 99 (1979), 74–96 at 79 and n. 41 and 'Plutarch's adaptation of his source material', *JHS* 100 (1980), 127–40, at 129 and n. 10 = C. Pelling, *Plutarch and History* (2002), 1–44 and 91–116) and one can argue, with Pelling, that this is another example of simplification, keeping the watchword with the subject of the life, rather than introducing Antony and Octavian. It has the further effect of heightening the sense of Brutus bringing about his own destruction, particularly since the information about the watchword at Philippi is juxtaposed, as in Valerius Maximus, with the quotation, dated to December 44, thereby telescoping the two.

<sup>45</sup> Note that Appian gives considerable space to an enumeration of the number and origin of the allied troops on both sides, of which Pompey has by far the greatest number in terms of origins (2.70–1), and that he emphasizes again, in 2.75, between the pre-battle speeches and giving of the passwords, the 'noisy and polyglot' nature of Pompey's auxiliaries.

reader has to think less far back. At 2.68, when comparing omens, Appian has twice emphasized Caesar's vow to thank Venus if he is successful by building a temple in Rome to Venus Victrix. He has introduced both the making of the vow itself *and* (at the end of 2.68) Caesar's dream that he was dedicating the temple *in Rome*. This repetition of ἐν Ῥώμῃ is worth noting, given the proximity of the vow and the dream of dedication. They are divided in Appian's account only by unfavourable omens in Pompey's camp. Although Pompey is also able to draw on a powerful god with many cult centres in Rome, Hercules is important to him here, *in Appian's presentation*, in connection to one victory during the war, the whole of which of course took place outside the city of Rome. For the reader, Caesar's choice of Venus Victrix as password, when considered in the context of the rest of *B. Civ. 2*, suggests straight away that he will be victorious at Pharsalus. Its connection in Appian to both vow and dream stresses links to the future and to the past. It looks to future, prospective victory, that is, rather than previous victory, as in Pompey's case. It is anchored, too, in the deeper, richer past in terms of Caesar's ancestral link with Venus. It also emphasizes the anchoring of Venus, to whom (as Victrix) Pompey had dedicated his great temple complex, into the city, control of which, and control of the *name or idea* of which, is being fought for in this battle.

### III. BROADER CONTEXTS

It is clear that passwords were not simply functional, but also a means of conveying messages—both on the battlefield and in literature that partly preserves what might have happened on the battlefield but also uses these symbolic resources to suit the author's broader needs. In the rest of this paper I shall focus on accounts of the late Republic, and take steps towards situating two passwords relevant to the clash between Caesar and Pompey, namely Venus and FELICITAS, in the context of the great complexity of political debate, broadly understood, in that era—of claims and counter-claims, that is, through which public life was conducted, in fields such as building and rhetoric. Understanding some of the ways in which Venus, the deity evoked in Caesar's vow, dream and password, and FELICITAS, also associated with both men, were fought over allows us to understand passwords as one way among many of drawing on deities. This particular way can only be (more) fully appreciated when viewed in the context of other such forms of interaction.

Passwords that were the names of a god were one of a number of forms through which claims could be made about that god, both in their utterance on a battlefield and in their inscription in a written text. Other such forms included creating or interacting with statues, temples, altars, festival days, and images on coins, in a variety of ways, including invocations and acclamations. Not all the associations I shall go on to outline would have been known to all the soldiers hearing (of) the vow, to all those reading about it, or to those hearing, in various locations, a reading of the works in which a password was recorded. This is especially the case for later works like those of Dio or Appian, discussed in the previous section, but less so for their sources and other earlier works, which are no longer extant but which could have been read or heard by those contemporary with the events discussed. Some readers and listeners would have had a mental map of the city of Rome, or an awareness of other forms of earlier competition over deities, even if the reading was happening

elsewhere and long afterwards, but my prime concern here is with contemporaries.<sup>46</sup> While the associations we deduce from surviving textual and archaeological evidence will not map precisely onto those available to contemporaries, we should not lose sight of the fact of how much we do not know: associations now lost to us in a variety of ways would have been available to different individuals and groups at the time. The topographical and rhetorical associations I draw on here are illustrative of some of the kinds of associations the password and its inscription in contemporary texts could have invoked. They are far from an exhaustive list.

The competition between Pompey and Caesar was played out in a number of different fields: that of battle, in the end, but also in their own words and those of others, and in the city of Rome, in their building projects. Caesar's fulfilment of the vow made at Pharsalus was eventually effected as a temple not to Venus Victrix—a deity perhaps easy to appropriate and to risk having *re*-appropriated, and to whom Pompey had already built a temple at the top of his theatre in the Campus Martius—but to Venus Genetrix. The way in which this allowed Caesar to raise the stakes in the competition over Venus, by playing, as one of the Iulii, on his genealogy, is well known.<sup>47</sup> Those who knew Lucretius' work could also have made associations with the Venus Genetrix he invokes, while Sulla's proclaimed connection with Venus would have been more widely known.

Further illumination of Caesar's choice comes from examining the topographical context of the respective temples, which may have been known to some of those who read Appian, and would certainly have been clear to Asinius Pollio and perhaps to more of his readers. The shrine to Venus in Pompey's theatre, for example, firmly established by the time of Pharsalus, can be understood in terms of its links both with the mythical past<sup>48</sup> and with Pompey's residence in adjoining *horti*. Pompey's lower *horti* are probably to be located in the Campus Martius near Pompey's theatre.<sup>49</sup> This would have made a deliberate connection between Pompey's residence and the shrines located in the theatre,<sup>50</sup> which must have towered above Pompey's (reputedly modest) house, thereby allowing Pompey to be seen to dwell in view of Venus Victrix and of the carefully chosen divine qualities (HONOS, VIRTUS, FELICITAS and (?) VICTORIA) with shrines alongside that of Venus.

Caesar's building work in Rome, in the Forum Iulium and the Forum Romanum, can be understood in the light of this whole complex, and of the meanings available to be read into the complex, rather than simply in the light of the fact that Pompey had already put up a shrine to Venus Victrix. The temple of Venus Genetrix in the Forum Iulium was only part of this work. Another element, and one that also

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<sup>46</sup> See n. 41 above. Obviously later writers like Appian and Dio shaped the material on which they drew, and provide examples of the kinds of ways in which this shaping could happen rather than necessarily allowing us access to how earlier writers dealt with such material. On written Rome, see e.g. C. Edwards, *Writing Rome: textual approaches to the city* (1996); for techniques deliberately excluding provincial readers, G. Woolf, 'The City of Letters', in idem & C. Edwards (eds.), *Rome the Comopolis*, ch. 10. For mental maps of the city of Rome, see D. H. J. Larmour & D. Spencer (eds.), *The Sites of Rome: Time, Space, Memory* (2007), esp. 295-322 (by C. Vout).

<sup>47</sup> See T. P. Wiseman, 'Legendary Genealogies in Late-Republican Rome', *G&R* 21 (1974), 153-64; A. Erskine, *Troy between Greece and Rome: Local Tradition and Imperial Power* (2001), 15-23.

<sup>48</sup> See G. Sauron, *Quis deum? L'expression plastique des idéologies politiques et religieuses à Rome* (1994) ch.IV for a close reading of the Pompeian complex.

<sup>49</sup> Asc., *Mil.* 50 Clark. The most recent, extensive support for this theory may be found in F. Coarelli, *Il Campo Marzio dalle origini alla fine della repubblica* (1997), 544-59 and fig. 137.

<sup>50</sup> See F. Coarelli, 'Architettura Sacra e Architettura Privata nella tarda Repubblica', *Architecture et Société de l'archaïsme grec à la fin de la République romaine* (1983), 191-217, esp. 200, focusing on the link with Venus Victrix.

has a complement in Pompey's theatre, was the temple to FELICITAS put up during Caesar's dictatorship in the mid 40s B.C..<sup>51</sup> By the time it was built, part of Caesar's motivation may still be assumed to have been competition, even after Pompey's death, with the complex on the Campus Martius. The newly shaped *fora* seem to have provided, in the old 'heart' of Rome, a new and changing configuration of certain elements found in Pompey's complex in the Campus Martius.<sup>52</sup> Caesar's official residence as Pontifex Maximus from 63 B.C. was the *domus publica* on the *via Sacra*.<sup>53</sup> His residence in this building provides a further element—a kind of anchor—for his plans in the Forum Romanum. By covering this Forum and the *via Sacra* from his house to the Capitol with awnings during games when he was dictator, he appears, in addition to providing practical advantages in terms of shade and magnificence, to have drawn together a large public area, parts of which he was redesigning, and visually to have emphasized the integrity of this complex. Albeit temporarily, the act linked different elements, including shrines of Venus and FELICITAS, in a manner not wholly unlike the link between Pompey's house and theatre, for which a physical realisation—walkway or portico—has been proposed.<sup>54</sup>

Caesar's building plans, then, although flexible, had shape and purpose. Whether or not the battle of Thapsus in 46 B.C. was the occasion of the vow to build a temple to FELICITAS, as seems plausible, one can attribute to Caesar, in Africa, ongoing awareness of these plans and their shape. Speculation that Thapsus might have been the occasion of the vow is based upon the passage from the *Bellum Africanum* which claims that, *quod postquam Caesar intellexit incitatis militum animis resisti nullo modo posse, signo FELICITATIS dato equo admisso in hostem contra principes ire contendit* ('After Caesar realized that his troops, with their spirits roused, could in no way be held back, he gave the signal FELICITAS, let loose his horse, and rushed against the enemy chiefs').<sup>55</sup> In order better to appreciate the implications for Caesar and some of his men of the evocation of this divine quality on the battlefield, we might consider the consequences, in the city, of temple building and the institution of a new cult, which would be known to some of those hearing or reading the African commentary. We might also bear in mind other ways in which FELICITAS formed part of the earlier competition between Caesar and Pompey.

Their contest was also articulated in words, written and spoken. By presenting two fields of contest 'side by side', as it were, it is possible to highlight connections that contemporaries could have made. In comparing surviving evidence, we once

<sup>51</sup> Temple: Dio 43.1.1–3 and 44.5.2.

<sup>52</sup> See Coarelli op. cit. (n. 49), 585–90 on Caesar's plans for a theatre.

<sup>53</sup> Suet., *Iul.* 46.

<sup>54</sup> Plin., *HN* 19.23. Cf. Dio 43.24.2, who mentions the awnings (silk in some accounts) in 46 B.C. as a mark of Caesar's extravagance, and see N. Purcell, 'The Roman Garden as a Domestic Building', in I. M. Barton (ed.), *Roman Domestic Buildings* (1996), 143 on the importance of the shows of cloth in temple porticoes and places of public spectacle. An actual walkway between Pompey's house and the theatre has been envisaged by V. Jolivet, 'Les Jardins de Pompée: nouvelles hypothèses', *MÉFRA* 95 (1983) 115–38, at 125 and L. Richardson Jr., 'A Note on the Architecture of the Theatrum Pompei in Rome', *AJA* 91 (1987), 123–6. Although Richardson's identification of such a tree-lined avenue *on the marble plan* cannot hold, the kind of walkway envisaged is attractive: in the image used by Plutarch (*Pomp.* 40) of Pompey's *domus* in relationship to his theatre being like a small launch towed by a larger vessel, it might constitute the 'tow-rope'. If Coarelli op. cit. (n. 49) is correct to place the villa *north* of the theatre on the site of the later Odeon of Domitian, the 'launch' would have been 'pulled' in parallel to the course of the Tiber. For more extensive discussion of these locations, see Clark, op. cit. (n. 20), ch. 6.

<sup>55</sup> Caes., *B.Afr.* 83. Cf. Plut. *Brut.* 41, where the soldiers rush forward despite the fact that many of them have not heard the password.

again cast light on one set of connections that could have been made, directly or indirectly—not in order to privilege this particular set, but rather as an illustration of many other kinds of association that might have been drawn at the time but are now lost to us. One example of such a comparison is to put side by side Cicero’s *pro Lege Manilia* and the first book of Caesar’s Gallic commentaries (which may have been first made available at the end of 58, to be read by and to people in Rome and elsewhere,<sup>56</sup> and then published in reworked form in the run-up to the Civil War). Welch has suggested that, despite the eight-year gap between the speech in favour of Pompey’s supreme command and the writing of *de Bello Gallico* 1, the latter was in many ways Caesar’s first chance to reply and to present himself as Pompey’s equal or superior.<sup>57</sup> The comparison is perhaps better understood in the sense outlined above, taking speech and commentary as two near-contemporary ways of making claims about a deity.

Cicero associated FELICITAS particularly closely with Pompey in his speech, where a contrast between Pompey and Lucullus was set up early on. Lucullus, he implied, failed for lack of the FELICITAS and FORTUNA which accompanied Pompey. A passage in the *de Bello Gallico* with echoes of this language is to be found in Caesar’s speech at 1.40 to quell the panic which spread amongst his troops at the thought of fighting Ariovistus and the Germans:

*scire enim, quibuscumque exercitus dicto audiens non fuerit, aut male re gesta FORTUNAM defuisse, aut aliquo facinore comperto avaritiam esse convictam: suam innocentiam perpetua vita FELICITATEM Helvetiorum bello esse perspectam.*

...for he knew that on all occasions when an army had not obeyed its general, either FORTUNA had been missing because some affair had been badly managed, or a charge of *avaritia* (greed) brought, because some crime had been discovered. His own *innocentia* (blamelessness) had been seen throughout his life, and (his) FELICITAS in the war against the Helvetii.

*Innocentia*, FELICITAS and *avaritia*, are relatively unusual words in Caesar. This passage is one of only two in which FELICITAS and *avaritia* are found in the *de Bello Gallico* and the only instance of *innocentia* in the work,<sup>58</sup> and it is worth noting that Caesar directly applies it to himself, both in his capacity as narrator *and* as speaker within the narrative. The very rarity of these words in the Caesarian corpus suggest that Caesar may have used his double role as speaker and narrator to present himself as endowed with certain qualities which Cicero had attributed to Pompey in 66 B.C.. Alternatively, given that claims about FELICITAS in the early 50s or 40s would inevitably have brought Sulla to mind, the combination of these resonant qualities may better suit a time around the outbreak of civil war, and have been designed to

<sup>56</sup> T. P. Wiseman, ‘The publication of the *de Bello Gallico*’, in K. Welch and A. Powell (eds.), *Julius Caesar as Artful Reporter: The War Commentaries as Political Instruments* (1998), 1–9 is the most effective proponent of this view, but it has not won universal support.

<sup>57</sup> K. Welch, ‘Caesar and his officers in the Gallic War Commentaries’, in Welch and Powell op. cit. (n. 56), 89 n. 21.

<sup>58</sup> *Caes., B Gall.* 1.40.12. For the whole comparison, see Welch op. cit. (n. 57), 89 n.21. See *B Gall.* 7.42 describing the Aedui during the siege of Gergovia) for the other instance of *avaritia*, and *B Gall.* 6.43 for the other instance of FELICITAS (not referring to Caesar), where Caesar’s troops fail to attain ‘*summam FELICITATEM*’ by catching Ambiorix. The use of these words here, in direct contrast with the only instance of ‘*innocentia*’ points to a deliberate pairing which may well intentionally echo the oppositions set up by Cicero, who stresses Pompey’s *innocentia* (36) in explicit contrast to the *cupiditas* (37, 67) and *avaritia* (37, 39, 40) of others.

reassure senators that Caesar, FELICITAS aside, would not be another Sulla.<sup>59</sup>

What I have sought here is to resituate the significance of passwords within the broader range of ways of drawing on deities that played such a crucial part in the struggles of the late Republic, in a variety of locations, and for a variety of players—not only those giving out passwords, building temples, and making speeches, but also some of those fighting, writing and reading about them.

We began by examining what we can now hope to discern about the choice of passwords in practice in different periods, places and circumstances. Here, Aeneas Tacticus is helpful for the fourth century B.C., and, I have argued, more broadly in the sense that although passwords in battles and guarded camps were probably frequently the names of gods, words from more mundane realms, notably the military sphere, could also potentially be drawn upon, especially for more mundane operations. In most of the surviving evidence for passwords the literary—often historiographical—context does much to determine the selection and inclusion of passwords and the messages they convey, not just among men fighting but also to the reader. In the Herodotean episode, I have suggested that, although a case can be made for both Hera and Hebe as Leotyichides' password, consideration of the historiographical context, internal to Herodotus' work, lends more weight to 'Hera' than it has often been recently accorded. Practice and record are of course far from entirely separable; practice goes beyond verbal communication and is an aspect of a much wider set of transactions to make claims about power and authority. By the final section, focussing on the late Republic, we had moved beyond 'face to face' communication on the battlefield to leaders competing across the empire in a range of actions, texts and places, and explored a few of the broader contexts in which people were embedding the divine words used as passwords, including both the physical monumentality of the city of Rome and the later literary representations of the period. Dio, discussing the triumph and honours of Caesar, chose two illustrations of Caesar's devotion to Venus: his wearing a ring depicting her in full armour, and his making her name his watchword ἐν τοῖς πλείστοις καὶ μεγίστοις κινδύνοις ('in almost all his greatest ventures').<sup>60</sup> Each of these engagements with Venus is, in a different way, 'mobile', taking Venus—or rather claims about Caesar's link with Venus—from Rome across the empire. The selective contexts explored in the final section for just one period—albeit one in which political debate, understood in its broadest sense, was particularly rich—hint at least at the complexity of the contexts that need to be built in, in varying ways, in order for us more fully to appreciate the uses of passwords in this and indeed in other periods and places. For the resonance of divine names as passwords in life as in literature is a phenomenon that, notwithstanding important differences in military, political and literary practice, appears constant in Greek and Roman communities over centuries.

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<sup>59</sup> A point drawn to my attention by Chris Pelling.

<sup>60</sup> Dio 43.43.3.

