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HIC ET UBIQUE: SURVIVAL OF A FORMULA

Paavo Castrén

Just about 20 years ago I was working in the Palace of Tiberius on the Palatine in order to publish the graffiti to be found there in a small room near the area of the Temple of Magna Mater.¹ Supposedly the room had in the first century of the Empire served as lodgings for the Palace servants many of whom had written or drawn on one of the walls.² In that room there were altogether 97 graffiti, which consisted of drawings representing ships and animals, figures representing gladiators and other persons, and the usual greetings and names, written in Greek and Latin, frequently found in graffiti throughout the whole Ancient World.

Some of the greetings, however, were of particular interest. From a personal point of view, the most striking example was certainly one of the first inscriptions I was able to decipher: *Secundus castrensibus sal(utem)*,³ written in clear if somewhat ornate cursive, without doubt by a person familiar with the use of a stylus. More thorough studies revealed, however, that the greeting of Secundus was not addressed to me personally but to his fellow-servants (*castrenses*) in the Imperial Court.⁴

From a more general point of view, some other greetings offered problems which demanded further examination. There were, for instance, four so-called *tituli memoriales* or greetings consisting of a form of the verb $\mu\mu\nu\eta\sigma\omega$ and a name or its substitute (such as δ $\gamma\rho\acute{\alpha}\psi\alpha\varsigma$); furthermore, there was a formula $\kappa\alpha\lambda\omega\varsigma$ $\acute{\epsilon}\pi'$ $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\theta\omega$ $\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\omicron\upsilon$ which often appears

¹ Graffiti del Palatino II. Domus Tiberiana, raccolti ed editi sotto la direzione di Veikko Väänänen, a cura di Paavo Castrén e Henrik Lilius, AIRF 4 (1970).

² H. Lilius, *ibid.*, 49.

³ *Ibid.*, N° 5.

⁴ P. Castrén, *ibid.*, 72.

in connexion with the *tituli memoriales*.⁵ These graffiti, initially found near the sites of pilgrimage in the East, have later been discovered in many other places.⁶ They served to commemorate the author or his friends or relatives and recommend them to the gods.

Another interesting group of graffiti consisted of four greetings with the formula *hic et ubique vale*. In one of them, *Secundus hic et ubique va(le)*,⁷ evidently the same Secundus as in the graffito discussed above, appears in his turn as the addressee; another example is without a name,⁸ one is addressed to a certain Vettius,⁹ while the fourth is fragmentary.¹⁰ As far as I know, this formula never occurs in ancient Latin literature, while among the Pompeian graffiti there are at least five complete formulae and several incomplete ones. One of the complete formulae *hic et ubique* occurs in isolation in an election programma,¹¹ three others, *Dapnus Asiaticus cum sua Dapna (?) Ionice hic et ubique*,¹² *Diadum(en)us hic et ubique*,¹³ and *Crescens fullonibus salutem hic et ubique*,¹⁴ are all greetings, almost identical to those discovered on the Palatine, although all without the word *vale*. The fifth example, edited incorrectly by Della Corte, *Clodius hic et ubici* — obviously *ubiq(ue)* — *amabiliter*,¹⁵ also belongs to the group of greetings.

The incomplete formula *ubique* — *hic* being apparently omitted as self-evident — occurs on similar occasions 23 times, always more or less clearly connected with greetings or wishes of good luck.¹⁶

⁵ P. Castrén, *ibid.*, 67—70.

⁶ A. Rehm, *Philologus* 94 (1940) 1—30.

⁷ AIRF 4, N° 14.

⁸ *Ibid.*, N° 15.

⁹ *Ibid.*, N° 17.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, N° 63.

¹¹ CIL IV 230.

¹² CIL IV 2393.

¹³ CIL IV 3926.

¹⁴ CIL IV 4120.

¹⁵ CIL IV 8556.

¹⁶ CIL IV 343, 653, 1573 cf. add. p. 208, 2015, 2018c, 2163, 2174, 2201, 3141, 3905, 3940, 4723, 8323, 8339, 8364, 8540, 8627b, 8676, 8708, 8717a, 8806, 9143, 10227?.

However, this formula did not perish with Pompeii in A.D. 79 nor with the ruin of the Imperial Palaces on the Palatine. On the contrary, it has become quite well known much later. It occurs again, in fact, in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, in the fifth scene of the first act,¹⁷ where Hamlet has just met his father's ghost and urges his companions Horatio and Marcellus to repeat the oath "never (to) speak of this that you have seen". The oath is supposed to be sworn on Hamlet's sword, and wherever the three gentlemen go, they can hear the ghost's voice underneath. At one point the prince utters: "*Hic et ubique?* Then we'll shift our ground".

Very few commentators have tried to explain where Shakespeare with his notorious "Small Latine and Lesse Greeke" had obtained the rare expression; most editors seem to pass by the problem without a word. According to some, the formula belongs to the ceremonies of conjurors, while others claim that the scene is a remnant of an earlier tragedy by Shakespeare's predecessor.¹⁸

However, these remarks do not explain where the conjurors or Shakespeare's unknown predecessor were supposed to have obtained the formula. They just shift the problem somewhat further back in time.

Eleanor Prosser has suggested that the Latin formula was used on this occasion to exorcize the spirit who throughout the scene is acting like a devil.¹⁹ As it is a well known fact that in Shakespeare's time both Catholic and Protestant exorcists were active in England,²⁰ it would be reasonable to suppose that the Latin phrase belonged to the traditional formulae used in the rite of exorcism, where Latin was always used.²¹

The previous history of this formula does not in my opinion contradict this interpretation: in both Rome and Pompeii it is connected with greetings and wishes and bears at the same time a certain air of pomposity which could well suit the ritual jargon used by exorcists.

¹⁷ *Hamlet* I, V, 156.

¹⁸ See e.g. *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare*, by Horace Howard Furness, *Hamlet*, vol. I, 114—115.

¹⁹ E. Prosser, *Hamlet & Revenge*, 2nd ed. Stanford 1971, 140.

²⁰ P. Milward, *Shakespeare's Religious Background*, London 1973, 52—54.

²¹ *Shakespeare's England* I, repr. London 1970, 534.