

FURTHER NOTES ON OVID'S *HEROIDES*

Notas críticas y de interpretación acerca de las *Heroidas* ovidianas
Some critical and interpretative notes about Ovid's *Heroides*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Heroidas*, Ovidio, crítica textual, interpretación.

KEY WORDS: *Heroides*, Ovid, textual criticism, interpretation.

2.103-106

*quid precor infelix? te iam tenet altera coniunx
forsitan et nobis qui male favit amor,
utque tibi excidimus, nullam puto Phyllida nosti.
ei mihi, si quae sim Phyllis et unde rogas!*

Scholars¹ have been puzzled by the meaning of lines 103-104. I would like to suggest that we should translate as follows:

“Another wife controls (*tener²*) you now (*iam*) perhaps, and a passion (*amor*) which wickedly (*male*) has been silent (*favit*) due to me (*nobis*)”.

Phyllis means that Demophoon has kept silent about his love-affair with her.

3.111-112

*si tibi nunc dicam, fortissime, “tu quoque iura
nulla tibi sine me gaudia facta” neges.*

Kenney (*op. cit.*, 170) was perplexed by the punctuation of line 111. I would like to suggest that *fortissime*³ is an adverb and means “vigorously”. We should print the lines as follows:

*si tibi nunc dicam “fortissime tu quoque iura
nulla tibi sine me gaudia facta” neges.*

¹ Cf. E. J. Kenney, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 74, 1970, 169 ff. I have used Professor Kenney's learned article as the starting-point of my research.

² Cf. Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s.v. *teneo* 2.h: “Of dispositions, desires, etc., to possess, occupy, control... *magno amore*, Verg. A. I 675”.

³ Cf. Lewis and Short, *op. cit.*, s.v. *fortis* II c –adv.: *fortiter* (1): “Strongly, powerfully, vigorously”. Cf. e.g. *fortissime affirmare* Quintil. 2.4.15 (quoted in Forcellini, *Lex.*, s.v. *fortiter*).

Translate thus:

“If I now say to you: ‘You also swear (*iura*) vigorously (*fortissime*) that no pleasures (*gaudia*⁴) have been accomplished by you without me’, you would refuse”.

For the short *-ě* at the end of adverbs cf. Kühner-Holzweissig § 48, 2 (p. 234), e.g. *maxumě, superně*, etc. At *Her.* 2.104 we read *malě*.

4.137-138

*nec labor est celare licet pete munus ab illa.
cognato poterit nomine culpa tegi.*

Kenney⁵ pointed out that scholars have been puzzled by the meaning of these lines. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. We should punctuate as follows:

nec labor est. celare licet. pete munus ab illa.

Translate thus: “Nor is there trouble (*labor*⁶). It is permitted to hide (it). Seek help from her (*i.e.* Venus)”. Asyndeton is very common in *oratio recta*: cf. *Her.* 1.33-34. Since Phaedra is related by marriage to Hippolytus, it will be easy for her to conceal an affair with him. Venus can be expected to help the adulterous couple, since she had many such affairs: cf. *Mus. Phil. Lond.* vol. X (1996), 50. Consequently their affair will not cause any trouble.

4.154-155

*quid deceat non videt ullus amans.
depuduit profugusque pudor sua signa reliquit.*

Kenney⁷ was puzzled by the meaning of line 155. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. We should translate as follows: “No lover sees what is befitting. He has become shameless (*depuduit*), as fleeing modesty has left her standards behind”. For the repetition *depuduit ... pudor* cf. *Mus. Phil. Lond.* vol. X (1996), 51.

4.175-176

*Addimus his precibus lacrimas quoque: verba precantis
perlegis et lacrimas finge videre meas.*

⁴ For *gaudia facta* cf. Lucan 6.226-227: *gaudia non faceret*.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, 173.

⁶ Cf. Virgil, *Aen.* 4.379 *scilicet in superis labor est*.

⁷ *Op. cit.*, 175.

line 176 *perlegis et: perlege et* v.l.

Scholars⁸ have been puzzled by the meaning of these lines. I would like to suggest that we should print the variant reading *perlege et* and translate as follows:

“Examine (*perlege*⁹) the words of a woman who begs (*precantis*), and imagine that you see my tears”.

The writer of letter wants its recipient to pay attention to her words and to understand her suffering. For hiatus in the *Heroides* cf. Palmer's edition, *Index*, s.v. *Hiatus*.

7.39-41

*...aut mare, quale vides agitari nunc quoque ventis,
quo tamen adversis fluctibus ire paras.
quo fugis?...*

Scholars¹⁰ have been puzzled by the meaning of *quo* in line 40. I would like to point out that Aeneas is said to be the son of Venus and Anchises. In this passage, Dido states that Aeneas is the offspring of the sea, and for this reason (*quo*¹¹) he is willing to seal over the stormy waves.

7.91-92

*his tamen officiis utinam contenta fuisset,
et mihi concubitus fama sepulta foret!*

Kenney was puzzled by the meaning of these lines: cf. *op. cit.*, 177 ff. Textual alteration is, however, not warranted. We should translate as follows:

“Would that I had confined myself to humanitarian duties and that the scandal of my union (*concubitus fama*) has been buried”.

Cf. Ex Ponto 1.5.85 *tunc mea fama sepulta est*.

⁸ Cf. Kenney, *op. cit.*, 176.

⁹ Cf. Lewis and Short, *op. cit.*, s.v. *perlego* (1): “In gen., to view all over, to examine thoroughly, scan, survey... *omnia oculis*, Verg. A. 6.33”. Cf. also Ovid, *Fasti* 1.591 –*perlege dispositas generosa per atria ceras*.

¹⁰ Cf. Kenney, *op. cit.*, 177.

¹¹ Cf. Lewis and Short, *op. cit.*, s.v. *quo* I.B.1: “For which reason, wherefore”. Note, moreover, the *falsa anaphora*. *Quo* means “wherefore” in line 40 and “whither” in line 41. For similar cases of *falsa anaphora* cf. my *Studies in the Text of Propertius* (Athens 2002), 163. Palmer takes *quo* to mean “on which”, but must admit that “no instance is quoted of any verb so used with the relative”. Bornecque inaccurately translates *quo* as *don't*.

7.127-128

*est etiam frater, cuius manus impia possit
respergi nostro, sparsa cruore viri.*

line 127 *possit* : *poscit* v.l.

The critics¹² have been puzzled by the text of line 127. I would like to suggest that we should print the variant *poscit* and translate as follows:

“There is, too, my brother, whose impious hand demands (*poscit*) to be spattered (*respergi*) by my friend (*nostro*¹³, i.e. Aeneas), as it is already sprinkled with the blood of my husband”.

7.141-142

*hoc duce nempe deo ventis agitaris iniquis
et teris in rapido tempora longa freto?*

In his discussion of these lines, Kenney (*op. cit.*, 178 ff.) considers the possible meanings of the adjective *rapido*¹⁴. I would like to suggest that Ovid is referring to the fact that Aeneas passed the straits of Scylla and Charybdis before he came to Dido: *cf. Met.* 14.75 ff. We should therefore translate as follows:

“The god under whose guidance you are tossed about by the unfriendly winds and spend a long time in the swift straits (i.e. in the straits off Sicily)”.

16.141-146

*magna quidem de te rumor praeconia fecit,
nullaque de facie nescia terra tua est.
nec tibi per usquam Phrygia nec solis ab ortu
inter formosas altera nomen habet.
credis et hoc nobis? minor est tua gloria vero,
famaque de forma paene maligna tua est.*

line 143 *par usquam Phrygiae* Naugerius

¹² *Cf. Kenney, op. cit.*, 178.

¹³ *Cf. Lewis and Short, op. cit.*, s.v. *noster* II.A.

¹⁴ Kenney (*op. cit.*, 179) notes that the “natural meaning” of *rapidum fretum* is “a strait with a strong current”, such as the Euripus.

Kenney¹⁵ noted that “in line 143 Naugerius’ correction economically restores sense and metre to the first part of the line”. He was, however, puzzled by the meaning of this passage. I would like to suggest that we should translate as follows: “There is no husband (*par*¹⁶) for you anywhere in Phrygia, nor does another woman amongst the beautiful women from the east (*eolis ab ortu*) have your fame (*nomen habet*)”. *Phrygia*, of course, means “in Phrygia”: *cf.* Palmer *ad loc.*

21.23-26

*...iamque venire videt quos non admittere durum est,
excreat et ficta dat mihi signa nota.
sicut erant, properans verba imperfecta relinquo,
et tegitur trepido littera cauta simu.*

line 26 *cauta* : *coepta* Dilthey

The reader will note that Dilthey proposed the alteration *coepta* in line 26. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. The critics have failed to understand that we are faced here with an example of adjectival *enallage*¹⁷. Cydippe is said to have hidden Acontius’ letter in her bosom. The adjective *cauta* refers to the fact that Cydippe was herself “cautious”.

21.243-244

*cetera cura tua est. plus hoc quoque virgine factum,
non timuit tecum quod mea charta loqui.*

The critics have been puzzled by the meaning of these lines: *cf.* Kenney, *op. cit.*, 183. I would like to point out that perfect sense can be restored to the transmitted text if we place a comma after *virgine*, and translate as follows: “This is also more than is permitted for a girl, that (*quod*) my letter did not fear to mention your deed (*factum*) to you”. Note the ellipse of the *verbum substantivum*. *Cf.* Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s.v. *sum* B.5.b (ε): “*Est, sit, etc.*, with infin. in Gr. constr., it is possible, it is allowed, permitted”.

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, 179 ff.

¹⁶ *Cf.* Lewis and Short, *op. cit.*, s.v. *par* II: “Transf., subst. A. *par, paris*, m., a companion, comrade, mate, spouse”. For the literary *topos* of the “eligible lover” *cf.* G. Giangrande, *Mus. Phil. Lond.*, X, 1996, 13.

¹⁷ For a similar case of adjectival *enallage* *cf.* my *Studies in the Text of Propertius*, 164.

21.247-248

*quid nisi quod cupio me iam coniungere tecum,
restat ut adscribat littera nostra? Vale*

Kenney noted (*op. cit.*, 183 ff.) that the text of line 247 was corrected “in the first Aldine edition of 1502”. At lines 241 ff. Cydippe states that she has confessed to her mother that she had pledged herself to Acontius. She then adds, in lines 247 ff., that she wishes to marry Acontius soon (*iam*). We should translate as follows:

“What remains (*restat*¹⁸) for my letter except to add that I wish to be married to you soon (*iam*)? Farewell!”.

It should be noted that the editors of the early editions had access to manuscripts¹⁹ which are now lost: *cf.* my paper entitled “Language and Style in Ovid” (*Myrtia*, in the press). *Cf.* also *Habis* 33, 2002, 130.

Conclusion: I hope that I have made clear to the reader that many of the textual alterations which have been proposed by modern scholars for the text of Ovid’s *Heroides* are not necessary.

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¹⁸ *Cf.* Horace, *Epistles* 1.1.27 *restat ut ... ego* = “it remains for me”.

¹⁹ The text *quid nisi quod cupio me iam coniungere tecum* is “handschriftlich bezeugt” (to use Dörrie’s words. *cf. Nachr. Akad. Wiss. Gött., Philol.-Hist. Kl.* [1960], 378), as is evident from the negative *apparatus criticus* of Sedlmayer’s edition (Wien 1886). Since the manuscript tradition of the *Heroides* is “completely contaminated” (so Kenney, *Gnomon* [1961], p. 480), it follows that every variant which is “*per se* plausible, may be due to ancient tradition” (so Kenney, 481), owing to the “transmissione orizzontale” which is not taken into consideration by Dörrie (he is a follower of the Lachmannian theory of “transmissione verticale”). The upshot of all this is that the wording indicated above is more likely to belong to the tradition and to be therefore genuine, instead of being an invention by one “Drucker” (to use Dörrie’s words) which miraculously spread into all the *recentiores*.