

SOME ANOMALOUS WORD JUNCTIONS
IN THE AUGUSTAN ELEGISTS:
OV. *EPIST.* 7.152; TIB. 1.5.28; 1.6.34; PROP. 2.13.19; 3.11.461*

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SUMMARY

Textual suggestions are made at Ov. *epist.* 7.152; Tib. 1.5.28; 1.6.34; Prop. 2.13.19; 3.11.46; three of the suggestions involve synonym substitution. All five suggestions remove metrically abnormal word junctions presented by some or all of the MS traditions. It is argued that the MSS of the elegists are not to be trusted when they present easily removed abnormalities.

KEYWORDS

Augustan elegy; textual criticism; metrical abnormality.

RESUMEN

Se hacen sugerencias textuales a Ov. *epist.* 7.152; Tib. 1.5.28; 1.6.34; Prop. 2.13.19; 3.11.46; tres de las conjeturas implican sustitución por sinónimos. Las cinco conjeturas evitan anomalías métricas en junturas de palabras presentes en algunos o todos los manuscritos. Se defiende que los manuscritos de los elegíacos no son de confianza cuando presentan anomalías fáciles de evitar.

PALABRAS CLAVE

elegía augústea; crítica textual; anomalía métrica.

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A. Ramírez de Verger, "Heroides, 7, 152", *Paideia* 66, 2011, 437-48, a valuable article on the textual history of line 152 together with an original proposal for its correction, has encouraged the author of this note to make a different attempt; the discussion will also lead to the consideration of two passages of Tibullus and two of Propertius.

* My thanks are due to *Exemplaria Classica*'s anonymous reader for much helpful comment and in particular for persuading me to prefer to its possible rival the version of Prop. 3.11.46 that I now recommend.

In H. Dörrie's edition, Ovid's couplet runs as follows¹:

Ilion in Tyriam transfer felicius urbem
iamque locum regis sceptraque sacra tene.

A single capital MS of the *Heroides* survived to be copied in the Carolingian Renaissance. The best of its descendants is P (Puteaneus; Par. Lat. 8242), which is the only surviving Carolingian MS; next oldest are E (Coll. Eton. 150) of the 11th century and G (Guelferbytanus extrav. 260) of the 12th; although generally inferior, EG are not direct descendants of P, and in any given case either or both may contain a better reading; the same is on occasion true of the *recentiores*. E. J. Kenney writes: "the bulk of the later MSS, dating from the eleventh century onwards, must be treated by the editor collectively, as a reservoir of readings to be evaluated on their individual merits"². In line 152 the MSS exhibit major discrepancies. The original reading of the first two words in P has been erased apart from what appears to be an initial *h*. P²EG and most other MSS offer *inque loco*; however, other MSS give *inque locum*; *hicque locum*; *hancque locum*. In the second half P had *sceptraque sacra*; P² and others offer *sceptrata sacrata*; others again show *sceptrata tenenda*; *sceptrata paterna*; *sceptrata beata*; *nostraque ceptra*. EG and others have *regia sceptrata*. Ramírez de Verger considers and rejects the various conjectures that have been made to date³. Of these the two best are due to Arthur Palmer⁴: he suggested *iamque locum regis sceptraque sacra tene*, of which Ramírez de Verger points out that there is 'ningún paralelo para *iam* en la segunda oración de una serie de imperativos'; it may be added that there is no clear explanation for the postulated corruption. The same consideration applies even more strongly to his later suggestion of *resque loco regis*⁵; furthermore, the assonance of the unrelated *res* and *regis* seems unattractive.

Ramírez de Verger himself suggests:

hicque locum regni sceptraque nostra tene.

Which has the disadvantage, as he himself recognises, that *-que* is added to *-c* in classical poetry only at Ov. *Fast.* 4.848 '*sic'que 'meos muros*

¹ P. Ovidii Nasonis *Epistulae Heroidum*, Berlin & New York 1971.

² Ovid: *Heroides XVI-XXI*, Cambridge 1996, 27.

³ "Heroides", 438-9 & n. 6.

⁴ P. Ovidii Nasonis *Heroides XIV*, London 1874.

⁵ P. Ovidi Nasonis *Heroides*, Oxford 1898.

transeat hostis', ait, where the fact that *-que* is not part of Romulus' words presumably accounts for the abnormality⁶. That apart, Ramírez de Verger's suggestion fits the context well, yet seems somewhat lacking in Ovid's habitual sparkling brilliancy. For a line which makes good sense and is thoroughly Ovidian in style, readers are invited to consider the reading of EG and their fellows:

inque loco regis regia sceptrā tene.

Ignoring for the moment the obvious metrical problem, we have excellent sense:

Relocate Troy to Carthage with better fortune,
and in the king's place hold the kingly sceptre.

Just as importantly, we have a typically pointed example of the familiar repetition of the same word or stem on either side of the caesura, of which many examples are given by J. Wills⁷. The stylistic excellence of E's reading is recognised by H. Dörrie: "Schade, dass der Vers nun metrisch fehlerhaft ist (Schlussilbe von regia) – man sieht hier einen tüchtigen Lateiner am Werk, der mit Ovid und seiner Ausdrucksweise wohl vertraut ist, aber die prosodischen Gesetze nicht mehr beherrschte"⁸. As we shall see, it would have been easy for Ovid to observe the laws and preserve the brilliancy simultaneously.

In our passage the most economical hypothesis is that the reading of the pre-Carolingian archetype was *inque loco regis regia sceptrā tene*; that there were at least two independent descendants of this archetype; that in one copy *regia sceptrā* was preserved and transmitted intact to EG and their fellows; that in the other copy or copies *regia* was omitted by a typical haplography, and that the extraordinary variety of alternative versions is a clear symptom of metrical interpolation⁹.

It is now time to consider the metrical problem. It is clear that Ovid did not place a word ending with a short open vowel before a word beginning with *s* and another consonant, except with words like *smaragdus* that would otherwise be unusable in dactylic poetry¹⁰. Therefore the reading

⁶ "Heroides", 440 & n. 9. Cf. J. N. Madvig, *M. Tulli Ciceronis de Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*, 3rd ed., Copenhagen 1876, ad 5.40; M. Haupt, *Opuscula*, Leipzig 1876, III, 508-10.

⁷ *Repetition in Latin Poetry*, Oxford 1996, 228-31; 275-8.

⁸ *Untersuchungen zur Überlieferungsgeschichte von Ovids Epistulae Heroidum*, Göttingen 1960, 155.

⁹ For this form of corruption, see Housman, *Manilius*, Londinii 1930, I, lix-lxvi.

¹⁰ Cf. M. Platnauer, *Latin Elegiac Verse*, Cambridge 1951, 62-3.

of the archetype cannot be accepted as it stands, and we must pass from recension to emendation. We can restore metre without losing any of our reading's merits by the change of a single syllable:

inque loco regis regia iura tene.

There is of course no palaeographical route from *iu* to *scept*, but scribes were quite capable of substituting one synonym or near synonym for another without any assistance from the ductus litterarum. J. Willis gives numerous examples from Macrobius, Statius, Juvenal, Lucan and Vergil¹¹; E. J. Kenney gives a long list of instances from the amatory works of Ovid¹²; S. J. Heyworth provides examples from Propertius¹³; I append some specimens from Tibullus below. Finally, it might be worth adding that the scribes would have pronounced *sceptra* with only one initial consonant, so it would have been natural for them to overlook the metrical problem.

The expression *regia iura* is an unexceptionable poetical plural for *ius regium*, for which cf. Tac. *Hist.* 5.9 *ius regium seruili ingenio exercuit*; Ovid himself uses the expression *regia iura* – in a slightly different sense – at *Met.* 14.823, and there is no reason why he should have avoided it here. It is true that *iura tenere* often means ‘to follow authority’, but it can also mean ‘to possess rights’ when the context so demands; cf. Cic. *Ver.* 13 *Siculi neque suas leges neque nostra senatus consulta neque communia iura tenuerunt*; *Catil.* 1.28 *numquam in hac urbe, qui a re publica defecerunt, ciuium iura tenuerunt*; Liv. 3.63.10 *si sua quisque iura ordo, suam maiestatem teneat*.

Synonym substitution may also offer an explanation for the apparent lengthening, cited by M. Platnauer¹⁴, of short final *-e* before initial *sp-* at Tib. 1.5.28:

illa deo sciet agricolae pro uitibus uuam,
pro grege spicas, pro grege ferre dapem.

We would naturally expect Tibullus, as an Augustan elegist, either to leave vowels in this position short like Propertius or to avoid such collocations altogether like Ovid. Platnauer refers to apparent parallels at Grattius 142; 259;

¹¹ *Latin Textual Criticism*, Urbana 1972, 54–5 & 79–80

¹² “The Manuscript Tradition of Ovid’s *Amores*, *Ars Amatoria*, *Remedia Amoris*”, *CQ* 12, 1962, 1–31, 26 n. 5.

¹³ *Cynthia*, Oxford 2007, 55.

¹⁴ *Latin Elegiac Verse*, 63.

however, Wernsdorf's *generosam* (mentioned by Platnauer)¹⁵ for *generosa* and Vlitius' *uulpina specie* for *uulpina species* would plausibly eliminate the abnormal lengthenings. It is at least a real possibility that Tibullus wrote *messi* (for the form, cf. Varro, *L.* 5.2.1; *R.* 1.53; Nemes. 1.67; Charisius *GLK* 1.43.28), and that this was accidentally replaced by its synonym; such corruptions have certainly occurred in the textual history of Tibullus; cf. 1.1.2 *multa* / *magna*; 1.2.19 *derepere* / *decedere*; 1.2.89 *damnasset* / *luisisset*; 1.3.4 *mors modo nigra* / *mors precor atra*; 1.5.15 *lino* / *filo*; 1.10.5 *an nihil ille miser* / *forsan et ille nihil*; 1.15.18 *uitibus* / *fructibus*; 2.3.1 *Cerinthe* / *Cornute*; 2.3.38 *mors propiorque* / *morsque propinqua*. It should be noted that *OLD* reports abl. *segeti* from Cato *Agr.* 37.2; Var. *R.* 1.50.2, which would of course be a much easier solution. However, such an ablative singular is certainly abnormal in a consonant-stem noun, and we may feel that its existence would need to be proved either by meter or by ancient grammatical doctrine; *segeti* at Ov. *Pont.* 2.1.14 is dative and is so taken at *ThLL* 8.1086.33–4. The possibility of *segeti* in our passage is tacitly and rightly ignored both by Platnauer and by the editors of Tibullus.

The practice of classical Latin poets with regard to short final vowels before *s* and another consonant was not uniform¹⁶. However, this provides no justification for the lengthening at Tib. 1.6.34, which Platnauer rightly describes as “very strange”¹⁷:

quid tenera tibi coniuge opus? tua si bona nescis
seruare, frustra clauis inest foribus.

It is difficult – perhaps impossible – to find genuine examples of lengthening before mute and liquid in the next word in the 200 years or so after the death of Catullus¹⁸. Furthermore, the pause between *seruare* and *frustra* makes it even less likely that the latter could metrically affect the former. The recentiores variously insert *et ac heu ah*; as in our passage of Ovid, the variety of alternatives looks like a symptom of metrical interpolation. If so, the intention was better than the execution; the interjections have no apparent purpose apart from mending the metre, and the conjunctions are out of place between protasis and apodosis. Unexceptionable sense and metre may be obtained thus:

¹⁵ *Latin Elegiac Verse*, 63 n. 1.

¹⁶ Cf. L. Mueller, *De Re Metrica Poetarum Latinorum*, 2 ed., Leipzig 1894, 390.

¹⁷ *Latin Elegiac Verse*, 63.

¹⁸ For the few *prima facie* specimens, cf. A.E. Housman, “Prosody and Method”, *CQ* 21, 1927, 1–12, 3 = *Collected Papers*, III, 1117; Mueller, *De Re Metrica*, 390–1.

quid tenera tibi coniuge opus? tua si bona nescis
seruare, his frustra clauis inest foribus.

Tibullus has already mentioned the door in line 12, and it is entirely natural that he should now refer to it as “this door”; for the use of *hic* of that which is present to the mind’s eye, cf. e.g. Iuv. 5.172–3 *nec dura timebis / flagra pati, his epulis et tali dignus amico*. The omission could easily be caused by a scribe jumping from the final *-is* of *his* to that of *clauis* and then failing to restore all that he had passed over. Note that the key has now been inserted into the door verbally as well as physically.

Propertius, as already remarked, regularly left vowels short before *sc-* etc.¹⁹ But there are two apparent exceptions. The first is at 2.13.19:

nec mea tunc longa spatietur imagine pompa

At first sight *longa* may appear to agree with *imagine*; but Heyworth argues that it agrees with *pompa*, which it must indeed do if the text is correct²⁰; however, this introduces a metrical anomaly and at the same time leaves *imagine* awkwardly deprived of any epithet while *pompa* has two. It would be simpler to suppose that there has been substitution of a near synonym and to read:

nec mea tunc multa spatietur imagine pompa

We may compare Sil. 17.12 *multa fulgebat imagine aurorum*, which is adduced by Heyworth. It should be noted that F. Plessis saw the desirability of *multa*, but substituted it for *mea tunc* rather than for *longa*²¹.

The second Propertian example is at 3.11.46:

foedaque Tarpeio conopia tendere saxo,
iura dare statuas inter et arma Mari.

The unsatisfactory *et* inserted by some MSS before *statuas* is presumably no more than a symptom of metrical unease on the part of the more sophisticated scribes. Here we might employ an equally common idiom (*OLD* s.v. *ius* 4b) and write:

dicere ius statuas inter et arma Mari.

¹⁹ Cf. Platnauer, *Latin Elegiac Verse*, 62–3.

²⁰ *Cynthia*, 165.

²¹ “Propertiana”, *RPh* 15, 1891, 41–5.

dicere is habitually abbreviated *drē*. This could easily have been misread as *dare*; the paradosis would then represent an ensuing attempt to restore metre. It should be noted that *ius inter statuas dicere et arma Mari* is also possible; it would be further from the paradosis, but would comply more closely with the Roman tendency to avoid the collocation *-s s-*²².

We may perhaps permit ourselves the following general conclusion. The Augustan elegists chose to submit themselves to very strict metrical rules; the contrast with Catullus in elegiacs and with Vergil in hexameters is striking. We should therefore be reluctant to believe the very corrupt MSS of the elegists when they exhibit metrical abnormalities, especially when those abnormalities can be easily removed without depriving the passages of any merit of style or content.

²² Cf. L.P. Wilkinson, *Golden Latin Artistry*, Cambridge 1963, 13-5.

