

TEXTUAL PROBLEMS IN OVID'S *TRISTIA*

Abstract: Several passages of Ovid's *Tristia* are explained.

Key words: Ovid, textual criticism.

Resumen: Se explican diversos pasajes de Ovidio (*Tristia*).

Palabras clave: Ovidio, crítica textual.

In this article I shall discuss various textual and interpretative problems which are presented to us by Ovid's *Tristia*.

I have used André's excellent edition (Les Belles Lettres, 1968), as well as the excellent edition by Luck (Heidelberg 1967) as the starting point of my research. Wheeler's Loeb edition (reprint 1965) is also very informative and has been a valuable aid to my work.

1,3,75-76

*sic doluit Mettus tunc cum in contraria versos
ultores habuit proditionis equos*

line 75 *Mettus* Salm. : *metius* v.l. : *Priamus* v.l. *versus...* *equus* v.l. (cf. Luck's apparatus)

Wheeler¹ printed *Mettus*, in line 75, and explained that Ovid is referring to an Alban commander, who was torn apart by horses. I would like to point out that the reading *Priamus* makes perfect sense. We should translate as follows:

«Thus lamented Priam when he possessed the transformed (*in contraria*² *versos*) horse (*equos*³) which punished betrayal.»

Priam⁴ agreed to take the wooden horse into Troy. The wooden horse was used by the Greeks to sack Troy and thus to punish Paris, who had taken Helen from Menelaus and betrayed him.

¹ Cf. his Loeb edition, Index, s.v. *Mettus*. André follows Wheeler.

² Cf. Ovid, *Met.* 12,179 *in contraria versos* = «transformed». Cf. also Lewis-Short, s.v. *contrarium* (a) and O.L.D. s.v. *contrarius* 6 e.

³ For the poetic plural cf. my *Studies in the Text of Propertius*, Athens 2002, p. 142.

⁴ Cf. R. Graves, *The Greek Myths*, Middlesex 1971, vol. 2, p. 331.

Ovid states that the horse was transformed from being a present, which it was originally believed to be, into a hostile creature. Cf. Forcellini, s.v. *contrarius* 11,2.

1,11,31

barbara pars laeva est avidaeque substrata rapinae

substrata : v.l. *adducta*, *addicta* : *adsueta rapinae* Haupt

Haupt suggested the alteration *adsueta rapinae* in this line. It should be noted, however, that mss reading *substrata rapinae* makes perfect sense. The personified⁵ land is said to have surrendered (*substrata*⁶) to greedy robbery.

2,247-250

*este procul, vittae tenues, insigne pudoris,
quaeque tegis medios instita longa pedes.
nil nisi legitimum concessaque furta canemus,
inque meo nullum carmine crimen erit.*

Ovid states that his *Ars Amatoria* was not written for virgins and matrons. It should be noted that there is a pun in line 248. The ruffle (*instita*) on the lower edge of a matron's dress is said to hide «ambiguous verses» (*medios⁷ pedes⁸*). In other words, the matron's long dress can be imagined to hide her feet or books of poetry.

2,409-412

*est et in obscenos commixta tragoedia risus,
multaque praeteriti verba pudoris habet;
nec nocet auctori, mollem qui fecit Achillem,
infregisse suis fortia facta modis.*

line 409 *commixta* : *deflexa* v.l.

In this passage Ovid discusses Tragedy. I would like to suggest that the correct reading in line 409 is *deflexa*. We should translate as follows:

«Tragedy has been directed (*deflexa*) at obscene men (*in obscenos*), and an object of laughter (*risus*⁹) has many words of past shame (*praeteriti*¹⁰ ... *pudoris*); and the authors (*auctori*¹¹) who made Achilles tender with love do not suffer for having weakened by their verses deeds of valour.»¹²

⁵ For personification of geographical entities cf. my *Studies*, p. 157.

⁶ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *substerno* II: «Trop., to spread out, surrender».

Haupt's alteration was accepted by André and Luck.

⁷ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *medius* B,4: «*vocabula*, that can be taken in a good or bad sense, ambiguous».

⁸ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *pes* II, K,2: «A kind of verse, measure».

⁹ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *risus* II: «Transf., an object of laughter: *deus omnibus risus erat*, Ov. *F.* 1, 438».

¹⁰ Cf. Ovid, *Her.* 20,187 *praeteritae ... culpae* (= «past offence»).

¹¹ Note that *auctori* is a poetic singular:cf. my *Studies*, p. 141.

¹² The reading *deflexa* is correctly accepted in Lewis-Short, s.v. *deflecto*, I A: it denotes the degeneration of the genre *tragoedia*: cf. *Rem. Am.* 325 *in peius deflecte*.

2,479-480

*ut bellare sequens sciat et revocare priorem
nec tuto fugiens incommitatus eat;*

mare (vel *mage* vel *male*) *velle* codd. : *bellare* Vogel. Cf. André's apparatus, which is very clear.

The text refers to a competition. Sense can be obtained by accepting the variant *male*. *Male volo*, with a dative to be understood, means «be hostile towards» (O.L.D. s.v. *volo*, 15).

The correct text is

*ut male velle sequens sciat et revocare priorem
nec tuto fugiens incommitatus eat;*

«how he can, when being second (*sequens*) wish his adversary ill and reduce to a second position (*revocare*) him who is ahead (*priorem*)».¹³

2,507-508

*quodque minus prodest, scaena est lucrosa poetae,
tantaque non parvo crimina praetor emit.*

line 507 *poena* : *scaena* Heumann

The reader will note that Heumann followed by André suggested the alteration *scaena* in line 507. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. Translate as follows:

«And because it is less useful, a punishment is possible (*poena est*). These great and lucrative crimes of the poet are paid for at no small price by the praetor.»

Wheeler explained that the officials in charge of the games (aediles, praetors) paid most of the expenses. Ovid means that those who wrote mimes could be punished.

3,5,47-48

*non aliquid dixive, elatave lingua loquendo est,
lapsaque sunt nimio verba profana mero.*

line 47 *dixi velataque* (vel *violataque* vel *violentaque*) Ellis

The reader will note that Ellis suggested the alteration *elatave* in line 47. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. The variant reading *violentaque* makes perfect sense. We should translate as follows:

¹³ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *sequor* I,B,1: «To follow in a hostile manner, to chase, pursue ... *hostem*, Ov. *Met.* 13,548».

«I have predicted nothing, but my tongue was violent (*violentaque*¹⁴) in speech, and impious words were let slip due to too much wine.»

3,10,9-12

*at cum tristis hiems squalentia protulit ora,
terraque marmoreo est candida facta gelu,
dum prohibet Boreas et nix habitare sub Arcto,
tum patet has gentes axe tremente premi.*

line 11 *patet et* : *prohibet* Owen, *parat* André

Owen suggested the alteration *prohibet* in line 11. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. We should translate as follows:

«while it is obvious (*patet*¹⁵) that Boreas¹⁶ and snow reside beneath the Bear, then it is obvious that these tribes are oppressed by the shivering pole.»¹⁷

3,14,47

Threicio Scythicoque fere circumsonor ore

fere : *fero* v.l. *apud* Wheeler

Ovid mentions here the Thracians and Scythians. It should be noted that the variant reading *fero* makes perfect sense. Ovid states that he is surrounded by wild (*fero*¹⁸) Thracian and Scythian speech (*ore*). He is referring to the fact that these people were wild. Horace refers to the wild (*feri*) Britons together with the Scythians at *Odes* 3,4,33ff.: *Britanni hospitibus feri*.¹⁹

4,3,18-20

*quodque potest, secum nomen habere tuum.
vultibus illa tuis tamquam praesentis inhaeret,
teque remota procul, si modo vivit, amat.*

line 19 *inhaeret* : *praesentibus haeret* v.l.

¹⁴ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *que* VI: «*Que* nearly equivalent to *autem, sed ... but*». Cf. also Ovid, *Met.* 3,717 *iam verba minus violenta loquentem*.

Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *dico* B,4,b: «Of prophecies, to predict, foretell».

¹⁵ For the repetition of *patet* in lines 11 and 12 cf. *MPhL* 10, 1996, p. 51.

¹⁶ Note that Boreas is personified: cf. Ovid, *Met.* 6,682.

¹⁷ Luck, because of the repetition which he dislikes, puts the passage between *cruces*.

¹⁸ Note the use of adjectival *enallage*: cf. my *Studies*, p. 164.

¹⁹ If *fero* is a variant found by Wheeler, it is no doubt the correct reading.

The reading *praesentis* is correct, as the editors have seen. However, *vultibus* (poetic plural) means not «tes traits» (André), «dein Antlitz» (Luck) but «your portrait»: for *vultus* = «a painted face, portrait» cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *vultus* 11,2.

5,5,31-32

*sensus inest igitur nebulis, quas exigit ignis:
consilio fugiunt aethera, Ponte, tuum.*

line 32 *consilium* ... *cetera pene* mss. : corr. Withof.

Wheeler, followed by André, printed Withof's textual alterations in this passage. It is, however, possible to make sense of the transmitted text. The poet addresses the reader as a friend (*aspice*, line 29), as in V,1; *pene* is = *paene*, and means «as I may say» (Lewis-Short, s.v.).

The friend advised Ovid to stop crying and missing his fatherland (5,1,35): the vapours (*nebulae*) do not follow the friend's advice (*consilium fugiunt*), and travel towards the fatherland.

Cetera means «partly», because the vapour has split into two parts (line 36), one going towards *Arctos* and the other towards *Ausonia* (lines 39-40).

5,5,45-46

*nata pudicitia est, moris probitasque fidesque,
at non sunt ista gaudia nata die.*

line 45 *moris* : v.l. *mores, morum, morem*; Owen *virtus*

In line 45 Owen suggested the alteration *virtus*. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. Translate as follows:

«Chastity was born, and the uprightness and loyalty of your character (*moris*²⁰).»

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²⁰ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *mos, moris* II,B: «In partic., in a moral point of view, conduct, behaviour».

Kenney's conjecture *ista*, accepted by Luck, is not necessary.