

# NOTES ON OVID'S *METAMORPHOSES*

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**M**ANUSCRIPT READINGS are reported from W. S. Anderson's edition (Leipzig 1977).<sup>1</sup>

1.386 *detque sibi veniam, pavidō rogat ore pavetque  
laedere iactatis maternas ossibus umbras.*

*timido* Heinsius, *timetque* cod. Vossianus, *cavetque* Gronovius. *pigetque*?

2.482 f. *neve preces animos et verba precantia flectant,  
posse loqui eripitur.*

14.365 *concipit illa preces et verba precantia dicit* offers no parallel for the disgusting tautology, even if *venefica* of certain manuscripts is not accepted there as it sometimes has been; to make it one, *concipit* or *dicit* would have to disappear. In preference to *potentia* (Burman) I suggest *querentia*; cf. 9.303 *moturaque duros / verba queror silices*.

6.537–540 *omnia turbasti. paelex ego facta sororis,  
tu geminus coniunx. hostis mihi debita poena.  
quin animam hanc, ne quod facinus tibi, perfide, restet,  
eripis?*

Philomela to Tereus. The latter half of 538 is an old crux. I would suggest that *si* fell out after *hostis* and that *mihi* came in to fill the gap. If Philomela deserved the punishment of an enemy (e.g., in a captured town), why just rape? Why not kill her as well?

6.634 f. *cui sis nupta vide, Pandione nata, marito.  
degeneras; scelus est pietas in coniuge Tereo.*

Procne finally overcomes her reluctance to kill her son. If *Terei* has not previously been proposed, it should have been—and accepted. There is no question of Procne showing *pietas* towards her *husband*. She means, and has already said in effect (634), that as Tereus' wife she should have no truck with maternal feelings; that would be letting down the side, as it were (*degeneras*, sc. *maritum*; cf. 7.542 *acer equus quondam magnaēque in pulvere famae / degenerat palmas*, though it makes no odds to the sense whether the verb is active or neutral). The note in Haupt–Ehwald could hardly be further astray: “du entartest, bist deiner edlen Abkunft (*Pandione nata*) nicht würdig, wenn du so schwach bist, Mitleid mit dem Frevler zu empfinden.”

<sup>1</sup>I am grateful to Professor R. J. Tarrant for his expert criticisms and for permission to quote from them.

Having written the above I found that *Terei* had been conjectured by D. A. Slater in *Towards a text of the Metamorphosis of Ovid* (Oxford 1927). But as it is there advanced without argument, except for a reference to 629 (*sed simul ex nimia mentem pietate labare / sensit*), and seems to have attracted no attention, I let the note stand.

8.189 *nam ponit in ordine pennas  
a minima coeptas longam brevior sequenti.*

*sequente* EPUW<sup>2</sup>p. The paradosis contradicts itself. *longa* (Holland) is supposed to give the meaning *ita ut longa brevior esset quam sequens*, as though it were a matter of course that all the feathers were long; but see to the contrary Daremberg-Saglio, fig. 2281. I suggest *longa e brevior*. Each feather was longer than its precursor and started so close to it that it seemed to sprout from it.

9.37-41 *et modo cervicem, modo crura micantia captat,  
aut captare putes, omnique a parte lacessit.  
me mea defendit gravitas frustra que petebar,  
haud secus ac moles, quam magno murmure fluctus  
oppugnat.*

Hercules is in the ring with Achelous. The explanation "*micantia* sc. *oleo*" is impossible for reasons given in Bömer's note. As for "rapidly moving" ("nos jambes promptes à lui échapper" Lafaye), phrases like *semianimesque micant digiti* (Virg. *Aen.* 10.396) do not justify such a use of *micare*, which besides is ludicrous in connexion with the fortress-like Achelous. I suggest that *micantia* comes from *milia*: *et modo cervicem, modo crura, modo ilia captat*. In the fight between Tydeus and Polynices *iam crebros ictus ora et cava tempora circum / obnixi ingeminant, telorum aut grandinis instar / Rhiphaeae, flexoque genu vacua ilia tundunt* (Stat. *Theb.* 1.418). *ilia* occurs eleven times elsewhere in Ovid (nine in *Met.*), eight times as the fifth foot of a hexameter.

9.98 f. *hunc tamen ablati domuit iactura decoris,  
cetera sospes habet.*

*Hercules Acheloum domuit* is sense. *cornus iactura Acheloum domuit* is not, at least not in this context. Burman proposed *haud tamen ablati nocuit iactura decoris; / cetera sospes enim*. But *huic . . . doluit* (Markland) is so perfect semantically that I incline to think it what Ovid wrote, even though elsewhere he gets no nearer this construction (for which see *ThLL* 5.1.1827.65) than 10.393 *ut sibi committat quicquid dolet*.

9.248-250 *sed enim (nec pectora vano  
fida metu paveant) istas ne spernite flammas.  
omnia qui vicit, vincet quos cernitis ignes.*

248 *nec* MU<sup>2</sup>a, *ne* cett. 249 *istas ne/ M, oetaeas* cett., *istas nunc* Riese.

The gods were alarmed at the sight of Hercules burning on Oeta: *timuere dei pro vindice terrae* (241). Jupiter reassures them: the fire will consume only the mortal part of the hero, which he derives from his mother. *Oetaeas* is a makeshift; the gods did not need telling where Hercules was. I suggest: *istis ne credite flammis*, "don't believe what those flames tell you." *credite* might become *spernite* under the influence of *scernitis* below.

9.490 f. *omnia di facerent essent communia nobis  
praeter avos; tu me vellem generosior esses.*

Slater thought the verses corrupt. But 491 has been badly explained. Burman: "recte vero optat Byblis ut se generosior esset Caunus et ideo ad stuprum sine metu repulsae ferretur." Byblis' one wish is that Caunus were not her brother. If only she had been born in a different family, no matter if a humbler one!

9.764-767 *nec lenius altera virgo  
aestuat utque celer venias, Hymenaeae, precatur.  
quod petit haec, Telethusa timens modo tempora differt,  
nunc ficto languore moram trahit.*

More neatly: *quae petit, haec Telethusa timens.*

9.777 f. *cunctaque cognovi, sonitum comitesque facesque  
sistrorum, memorique animo tua iussa notavi.*

A lacuna is generally marked after 777, with Ehwald. Alternatively *sacrorum* might replace *sistrorum*; cf. 687 *pompa comitata sacrorum*.

10.321-326 *di, precor, et Pietas sacrataque iura parentum,  
hoc prohibete nefas scelerique resistite nostro;  
si tamen hoc scelus est. sed enim damnare negatur  
hanc Venerem Pietas, coeuntque animalia nullo  
cetera delicto; nec habetur turpe iuvencae  
ferre patrem tergo, fit equo sua filia coniunx.*

324 *coeunt* Uce. "Aber es ist kein Frevel, denn die *pietas* verwirft solche Liebe nicht" Haupt-Ehwald on 323. According to the text, *Pietas* is said not to condemn incest. Said by whom? That is just what *Pietas* is generally supposed to do. Why else pray to "her" in 321? And cf. 354 *pius ille memorque est / moris*, 366 *pietatis nomine dicto / demisit vultus sceleris sibi conscia virgo*. The question raised with *si tamen hoc scelus est* is answered: *sed enim damnare putatur / hanc Venerem Pietas*. This in turn is countered, asyndetically, as so often, in what follows (read *coeunt*): incest is accepted practice among all living creatures except man.

Another possible substitute for *negatur* is *vocatur*: "to condemn this form of love is called *pietas*." But despite a certain palaeographical advantage in this, I think *putatur* is probably what Ovid wrote.

10.583 *et ne quis iuvenum currat velocius optat  
invidiamque timet.*

*invidiaque* dett., Micyllus. Read *insidiasque*; Hippomenes prays that no suitor win the race and fears sharp practice such as he himself was to employ.

10.661 f. *o quotiens, cum iam posset transire, morata est  
spectatosque diu vultus invita reliquit!*

In the early stages of the race, then, Atalanta repeatedly passed Hippomenes, though with reluctance and dallying. Clearly she was the faster runner. How then did he repeatedly regain the lead? She must have deliberately allowed that to happen. Yet the existing text says nothing about it, but goes straight on to describe Hippomenes' weariness and the throwing of the first golden apple. I do not think the narrator is to blame for this omission. Four times in the poem one exclamatory *quotiens* is presently followed by another: 2.489, 491; 3.427 f.; 7.589, 593; 15.490, 492. Only once (14.643) does it occur without such a follow-up, apart from this passage. There is therefore good reason to suspect that a couple of verses, beginning *o quotiens*, are missing after 462.

11.222 *concipe: mater eris iuvenis qui fortibus annis  
acta patris vincet maiorque vocabitur illo.*

*annis* FMNSe, *armis* EM<sup>2</sup>N<sup>2</sup>PUW, *actis* LP<sup>2</sup>, *athlis* Vollmer. *ausis*?

11.461-466 *at iuvenes, quaerente moras Ceyce, reducunt  
ordinibus geminis ad fortia pectora remos  
aequalique ictu scindunt freta. sustulit illa  
umentes oculos stantemque in puppe recurva  
concussaue manu dantem sibi signa maritum  
prima videt redditque notas.*

Alcyone's companions, to whom nothing else in the passage alludes, would naturally be looking towards the ship and would see the signals as soon as she did; or rather, sooner, since Ceyx presumably started to make them before she raised her head. I do not think Ovid was so silly as to imply that "Alcyone's love makes her keener-sighted than her fellow-spectators" (G. M. H. Murphy). Ceyx would not have waited until the ship was nearly out of sight. Taken with *signa*, however, *prima* makes no sense at all (Miller: "saw her husband . . . waving his hand in first signal to her;," the signal was in fact his last, though he did not know it). *prona*, conjectured by Hellmuth in a dissertation (Kaiserslautern 1880) which I have not seen, is recorded in Magnus's apparatus (Berlin 1914), whence it passed into Ehwald's (Leipzig 1915). Since then it seems to have dropped out of sight. Alcyone raises her head (she had collapsed, 460), leans forward (hands outstretched) towards the receding vessel, and sees what she sees. As often with Ovid, a painting was probably in mind.

11.512 f. *sic ubi se ventis admiserat unda coortis  
ibat in arma ratis multoque erat altior illis.*

*arma ratis* should mean the tackle or the steering gear; there is no parallel for the assumed sense "bulwarks." I suggest *alta*; cf. 5.421 *in gurgitis ima* et sim., Sen. *Oed.* 390 *alta caeli*, Tac. *Hist.* 2.22.1 *altiora murorum*, also 529 *pulsarunt celsi latera ardua fluctus. alta . . . altior* is, of course, in Ovid's manner. The corruption might be due to *in arma* in 511 at the same place in the line, as Professor Tarrant has suggested to me.

- 12.250–253 *illisit (sc. funale) fronti Lapithae Celadontis et ossa  
non cognoscendo confusa reliquit in ore.  
exsiluere oculi disiectisque ossibus oris  
acta retro naris medioque est fixa palato.*

Can *disiectis ossibus oris* be tolerated after *ossa confusa reliquit in ore*? Perhaps *disiectisque ossibus* (sc. *naris*) *omnis*. As Professor Tarrant suggests, *oris* may derive from a recollection of 5.292 *discussisque ossibus oris*.

- 12.507 *saxa trabesque super totosque involuit montes  
vivacemque animam missis elidite silvis.  
silva premat fauces, et erit pro vulnere pondus.*

*silva* looks like a copyist's repetition. Perhaps *massa*.

- 12.571 *corporis adfixi pressa est gravitate sagitta.*

*adfecti* would express the appropriate sense. As the body is dashed to the ground its weight drives the arrow through.

- 13.591 *si tamen aspicias quantum tibi femina praestem,  
tum cum luce nova noctis confinia servo,  
praemia danda putes.*

Aurora's service is to the world rather than to Jupiter in particular. Read *orbi*?

- 14.243–247 *multaque conquesti terris adlabimur illis  
quas procul hinc cernis. procul hinc, mihi crede, videnda  
insula visa mihi; tuque, o iustissime Troum,  
nate dea (neque enim finito Marte vocandus  
hostis es, Aenea), moneo, fuge litora Circes!*

An island seen from a distance can be contrasted with the same seen at close quarters, but not with the same seen. I would read *procul hinc, mihi crede, videnda / insula; crede mihi, tuque* sqq. *visa* may have arisen ditto-graphically from *sula*, of which it is virtually an anagram.

- 14.489–493 *sors autem ubi pessima rerum,  
sub pedibus timor est securaque summa malorum.  
audiat ipsa licet et, quod facit, oderit omnes  
sub Diomede viros; odium tamen illius omnes  
spernimus. et magno stat magna potentia nobis.*

*tanta* (Heinsius) for *magna* does not help. *potentia* must surely be Venus' power, not the ability to defy it. Perhaps *victa*. Venus' power has been overcome because she cannot harm people who have already plumbed the lowest depth of misery; and overcome (wry afterthought) at a heavy cost.

14.739 f. *icta pedum motu* trepidantem et multa timentem  
*visa dedisse sonum est adaperataque ianua factum*  
*prodidit.*

*trepidantum . . . timentum* v et alii. et *cuncta paventem* W. *moventem* Laur. 36.7, *gementem* Laur. 36.8. Most critics have been helpless here because they have missed the point, that the drumming of the hanged man's heels sounded like someone knocking: *icta pedum motu trepidantum aperire iubentem / visa dedisse sonum est.*<sup>2</sup>

15.379–381 *nec catulus, partu quem reddidit ursa recenti,*  
*sed male viva caro est; lambendo mater in artus*  
*figit et in formam, quantam capit ipsa, reducit.*

Punctuated thus, *quantam capit ipsa* ("une forme semblable à celle dont elle est elle-même susceptible" Lafaye) is nonsense. *gerit* (an old flotsam) is no answer, unless *quantam* is replaced by *qualem*. Substitute *et in formam, quantam capit, ipsa reducit*, "herself brings him into a shape as large as he (i.e., his present size) admits of." The *size* of the formed cub corresponds with the size of the formless lump of flesh.

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<sup>2</sup>Professor Tarrant writes: "The combination *trepidantem et multa timentem* is, I assume, influenced by a memory of 6.522 *trepidamque et cuncta timentem*. Merkel seems to have seen the required meaning, but preferred to arrive at it by deletion rather than emendation (bracketing *trepidantum . . . sonum*); Postgate's variation on this was to omit *et . . . adaperataque*, and this was printed by Edwards in Postgate's *Corpus*."

#### ADDITIONAL NOTE

In a note on Just. praef. 5 (*Phoenix* 34 [1980] 227) I proposed to read *otii mei, cuius et Cato reddendam [operam] putat, apud te ratio constaret*, adding that "omission of *operam* produces an exceptionally, but not perhaps incredibly, bold brachylogy." However, the *Metamorphoses* furnishes two parallels: 2.294 f. *circumspice utrumque: / fumat uterque polus* and 12.154 *sacra tulere suam, pars est data cetera mensis*.