

TAKING ENEMIES FOR CHAINS:  
 OVID *EX PONTO* 4.13.45 AGAIN

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**I**N *PHOENIX* 40 (1986) 322 Mark Akrigg argued that at Ovid *Epistulae ex Ponto* 4.13.45–46:

sic capto Latiis Germanicus hoste catenis  
 materiam uestris adferat ingeniis

*capto* should be emended to *uincto*, on the grounds that *capto* ... *catenis* could only have the unsatisfactory meaning "captured with chains." In *Phoenix* 42 (1988) 176 Allen Kershaw defended the paradoxis by proposing that *catenis* be taken as a dative of purpose, with the meaning that "Germanicus will take an enemy *for* Latin chains" (his emphasis).

Kershaw's defense fails to convince. The most serious flaw in his argument is that *capere* does not mean the same thing in *Pont.* 4.13.45 that it does in his two examples of *capere* with a dative of purpose. In Livy 5.38.1 *non loco castris ante capto* it means "choose, select" (with *castris* this is a military usage catalogued in the *OLD* s.v. 9 with further examples from Livy, Cicero, and Tacitus); the tribunes acted without first selecting a site for (i.e., for the purpose of making) a camp. The same meaning may apply in Kershaw's second passage, *Aeneid* 5.712 *hunc cape consiliis socium*, where Nautes urges Aeneas to choose Acestes as his companion for (i.e., for the purpose of making) deliberations. If however we import this sense of *capere* and this construction (which is natural enough with a verb implying purposeful choice, but not with others) into *Pont.* 4.13.45, then Ovid hopes that Germanicus will inspire the poet Carus by selecting an enemy for the purpose of Roman chains—a meaning even less satisfactory than that given by taking *catenis* as ablative. Even if Kershaw could offer examples of *capere* in the sense of "capture, seize" construed with a dative of purpose (the *OLD* s.v. 6 has none), "for the purpose of chains" would remain obscure, and "chains" alone will not stand for "triumph."

It may be worthwhile to forestall another possible defense of *catenis* as dative before it is advanced in a reply to this reply. That would be to take *capto* as "captured" but construe *catenis* as an ethical dative (Kershaw's paraphrase, quoted at the end of the first paragraph, would equally suit this interpretation). But this desperate attempt to salvage the paradoxis is open

to the damning objection that it entails an intolerable personification of the chains; Roman commanders did not conquer enemies in order to gratify their instruments of bondage. I submit then that *catenis* cannot be dative, and Akrigg's objections are valid.

Kershaw also adduces two parallels from Silius Italicus for "chains ... clearly separated from the actual capture," but seems not to realize that he is thereby supporting Akrigg's emendation, which has the same effect. Sil. 17.367 *neue sinas captum Ausonias perferre catenas* simply offers a co-ordinating use of the participle ("let him not be captured and bear Italian chains"); 8.276<sup>1</sup> *Latia deuinctum colla catena* seems to be cited as a parallel for "Latin chains," but if we compare it to P. 4.13.45 as emended by Akrigg—*uincto Latiis ... hoste catenis*—it looks like a reminiscence with variation (compound verb for simple, singular noun for plural) of this very passage.

One final point. Translators of the *Epistulae ex Ponto* have apparently felt a difficulty here, and two seem unconsciously to have anticipated at least the spirit, if not the letter, of Akrigg's conjecture. A. L. Wheeler in the Loeb edition renders 45, "So may Germanicus lead the enemy captive in Latin chains"; "lead" of course has no basis in the Latin text, but it gives *catenis* a construction independent of *capto*. F. Della Corte (Genoa 1973) translates *capto Latiis ... hoste catenis* as "caricàti di catene latine i nemici catturati" (cf. also the paraphrase "messi in catene i nemici" in his commentary in volume 2); J. André in the Budé edition renders it as "chargeant de chaînes latines l'ennemi captif." Neither "caricàti" nor "chargeant" corresponds to anything in the Latin; the deviation from a strict translation is again inspired by the need to construe *catenis* separately from *capto*. That both Della Corte and André import the particular notion of "loading" with chains suggests that they would be sympathetic to *uincto*, having clearly sensed the need for something of the kind before it was ever proposed.

In short, Akrigg has good reason to remain, as Kershaw puts it, "quite unequivocal" about his conjecture; it is a plausible remedy for a passage which is impossible as transmitted.

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<sup>1</sup>Editor's note: In the quotation of Sil. 8.276 f. at *Phoenix* 42 (1988) 176 Fabio was omitted by mistake. This was an error of *Phoenix*, not of Professor Kershaw.