

Euripides' reason for staging this scene on the roof is obvious enough. His reason for introducing the phrase διήρεξ ἔσχατον is less obvious. I would like to speculate, however, that it has something to do with his characterization of Antigone. As Mastronarde so well emphasizes in his defense of the scene's authenticity, one of its purposes is to establish her virginal innocence (*Phoen.* 89, 94, 193–98) and the modesty that she must abandon (cf. 1275–76). If an appearance of a woman on a roof bore, for the spectators, implications of brazen self-exhibition, perhaps the poet's purpose was to signal to them that that was not where the fictional Antigone should be imagined as standing.¹⁵

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15. Exactly opposite considerations may have influenced the staging of another scene, which begins at Ar. *Eccl.* 877. E. Fraenkel, "Dramaturgical Problems in the *Ecclesiazusae*," *Kleine Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie*, vol. 1 (Rome, 1964), 475–76, argues that at *Eccl.* 884 both the young girl and the old woman are on the roof, in front of a recessed upper story which represents a γυναικωνίτις. R. G. Ussher, *Aristophanes: "Ecclesiazusae"* (Oxford, 1973), p. xxxii and ad 884, however, believes that the girl is looking out her upper-story window (cf. *Eccl.* 698), although he admits the possibility (p. xxxii) that she is on the roof. If at 884 Aristophanes did present one or both women on top of the skene the motive may have been to emphasize the sexual aggressiveness of the new woman. Mastronarde, "Actors," p. 257 and n. 28, p. 282, because of the need to give the effect of height, believes that the girl may well have been stationed on the roof, but only with the help of scenery that would have represented an upper story with a window.

CELEUS RUSTICUS: A NOTE ON OVIDIAN WORDPLAY IN *FASTI* 4

At *Fasti* 4.507–8, Ovid describes how Eleusis acquired its current reputation as a famous shrine of Ceres:

sors sua cuique loco est: quod nunc Cerialis Eleusin
dicitur, hoc Celei rura fuere senis.

The transformation of Celeus in the ensuing episode from King of Eleusis, as previously identified in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (96–97, 475), to humble rustic is generally explained as an instance of Ovid's fondness for ringing changes on the Hellenistic "hospitality theme":¹ "The welcome given to Theseus by the poor old woman in Callimachus' epyllion *Hecale* set the tone (and fashion) for episodes like the hospitality of Celeus to Ceres, or Hyrieus to Jupiter and Mercury (5.499–534) or that of Baucis and Philemon (*Met.* 8.629–720)."²

Ovid's predilection for innovation and experimentation with well-known tales is itself well known: the variant versions of the rape of Proserpina in the *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*, in the latter of which occurs this transformation of Celeus, have served from Heinze to Hinds as a textbook case for the discussion of the interplay of

1. See the appendix so titled in A. S. Hollis, ed., *Callimachus: "Hecale"* (Oxford, 1990), 341–54.
2. E. Fantham, ed., *Ovid: "Fasti" Book IV* (Cambridge, 1998), ad 4.508.

and variation in style and genre in Ovid.³ Ovid's use of the hospitality theme in *Fasti* 4 also allows him to present a characterization of Celeus that contributes to the broader themes of this book, the fertility of nature and the arrival of spring.

While I agree with this general line of interpretation, I want to suggest that the transformation of Celeus to humble farmer also allows Ovid to provide a new etymology for the name of the festival celebrated at this point in the Roman calendar, the Cerealia. The association of the festival's name with Ceres and its derivation from hers seem obvious; but by juxtaposing in lines 507–8 the names of the place where Ceres is worshipped now (*Cerialis Eleusin*) and its identity in the past (*Celei rura*), Ovid suggests that the name of her festival also carries with it an etymological association with the old rustic who first welcomed Ceres to Eleusis. In so doing, Ovid appears to be picking up on a suggestion, barely implied, by Virgil in the first *Georgic* that Celeus was no king but rather an agricultural laborer. The sole reference to Celeus in Virgil occurs at *Georgics* 1.165 (*virgea praeterea Celei vilisque supellex*), in a context describing the tools of the farmer.⁴

The suggestion that Ovid intends his reader to see a play on the name of *Celeus* in the epithet *Cerialis* receives further support from several other features of the language used at *Fasti* 4.507–8. *Dicitur*, so frequently used in Roman poetry to mark a learned “Alexandrian footnote,”⁵ also plays a (not unrelated) role in the diction of etymologizing.⁶ The combination of *nunc* with *dicitur* reinforces this association; at *Aeneid* 6.234–35, *monte sub aereo, qui nunc Misenus ab illo / dicitur . . .*, for example, the pattern established in the relative clause *qui nunc . . . dicitur* and distributed over two hexameters is identical to Ovid's *quod nunc . . . dicitur*, easily adapted to the elegiac couplet.⁷

The instance of wordplay identified here depends upon familiarity with the occurrence of the consonantal shift *l* > *r* known in historical linguistics as dissimilation.⁸

3. R. Heinze, “Ovids elegische Erzählung,” *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig*, Phil.-hist. Klasse 71.7 (Leipzig, 1919); S. Hinds, *The Metamorphosis of Persphone* (Cambridge, 1987).

4. R. A. B. Mynors, ed., *Virgil: “Georgics”* (Oxford, 1990), ad loc., following W. Frenzt, *Mythologisches in Vergils Georgica*, Beiträge zur klass. Philol. 21 (Meisenheim am Glan, 1967), 10–11, believes that Virgil's use of the adjective *vilis* in this line suggests that Virgil followed a form of the story of Celeus' meeting with Ceres in which he has “become little more than a smallholder.” The context in which a reference to Celeus occurs at *Nic. Ther.* 486–87 is too general to allow a determination of the character of Celeus as mentioned there, although Frenzt believes that Nicander's expression ἐν θεράπωνι, describing the house of Celeus, is intended to suggest the simple, hospitable house of a servant.

5. For the term, see D. O. Ross, *Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry: Gallus, Elegy, and Rome* (Cambridge, 1975), 78; see also Hinds, *Metamorphoses*, p. 40 and p. 58, n. 22 and idem, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge, 1998), 1–5.

6. On the intersection between the Alexandrian footnote and the “naming construction as etymological signpost,” see J. O'Hara, *True Names: Vergil and the Alexandrian Tradition of Etymological Wordplay* (Ann Arbor, 1996), 79; also, K. S. Myers, *Ovid's Causes: Cosmology and Aetiology in the Metamorphoses* (Ann Arbor, 1994), 65–66.

7. On the use of *nunc* to mark a change of a name in etymological wordplay, see O'Hara, *True Names*, pp. 90–91 and n. 346 (features list 10a); see also Myers, *Ovid's Causes*, 66. It may be noted in passing that the etymological wordplay identified here follows closely upon another example at *Fast.* 5.503–4, *hic primum sedit gelido maestissima saxo: / illud Cecropidae nunc quoque triste vocant*.

8. A. Arlotto, *Introduction to Historical Linguistics* (New York and Boston, 1972), 87, defines dissimilation as the process “whereby one of two similar sounds will change so as to become even more differentiated from the other.” For a discussion with examples of the phenomenon in Latin, see M. Leumann, *Lateinische Laut- und Formenlehre*⁵ (Munich, 1977), 230–32.

In fact, this linguistic phenomenon appears to have been understood and exploited by Ovid on a number of occasions in the *Fasti*. Closely following the narrative involving Ceres, Celeus, and the Cerealia in *Fasti* 4 is Ovid's celebration of Pales and her festival the Parilia on 21 April. The etymologies both of Parilia and of the name of the divinity associated with this holiday were much disputed in antiquity, and thus served as useful fodder for learned etymologizing: perhaps best known is the playful association made at Tibullus 2.5.25–30 between Pales and *pasco*, *Palatia*, *Pan*, and *pastor*, subsequently extended to include *Palilia* at 2.5.87.⁹ Ovid's endorsement of this association is implicit in his juxtaposition of *Parilia* and *Pales* at *Fasti* 4.721–22; the consonantal shift in *Palilia* > *Parilia* is a clear instance of dissimilation, whereby one *l* of the earlier formation shifts to *r* to make the entire word easier to pronounce.

Ovid exploits the possibilities of this phonological pattern on a number of other occasions in the *Fasti*.¹⁰ At 2.599–616, Ovid tells the story of the chatty nymph Lala, whose eponymous loose tongue, etymologically connected, Ovid implies, with the Greek verb λαλεῖν, leads to her downfall (5.599–601):

forte fuit Nais, Lara nomine; prima sed illi
dicta bis antiquum syllaba nomen erat,
ex vitio positum. . . .

When Lala is unable to refrain from reporting to various interested parties Jupiter's intention to seduce her nymph-sister Juturna, the vengeful father of the gods takes away Lala's tongue and sends Mercury to escort her off to the underworld (5.603–10). Alone with her in a grove, Mercury rapes Lala, now unable to cry out in her own defense, and so makes her the mother of the Lares (5.611–16); her name too is henceforth changed, to *Lara*. And in *Fasti* 5, Ovid effects a clever reversal, this time suggesting the consonantal shift *r* > *l*: the *Lemuria*, a holiday on which the souls of the dead are commemorated, is named after Remus, killed on this day long ago by Romulus' agent Celer.¹¹ As Ovid reports, the day was originally called the *Remuria* by Romulus (5.479–82):

Romulus obsequitur, lucemque Remuria dicit
illam, qua positis iusta feruntur avis.
aspera mutata est in lenem tempore longo
littera, quae toto nomine prima fuit.

Thus, concludes Ovid, the souls of the dead came to be called *lemures*, and their festival, the *Lemuria* (5.483–84).

It is quite possible that Ovid, a student of the etymologizing of Varro and Verrius Flaccus, found a description of this phonological pattern in one of his sources, now lost to us.¹² A loose analogy is provided by Varro's extant discussion of the frequent

9. See Ross, *Backgrounds*, 155–57; O'Hara, *True Names*, 274–75; Fantham, "Fasti", ad 5.721–82, who also notes the other popular etymology for Parilia, i.e., as derived from the verb *parere*.

10. Cf. D. Porte, *L'Étiologie religieuse dans les Fastes d'Ovide* (Paris, 1985), 237–39.

11. On the story of Celer, his association with Romulus and Remus, and the possibility of further word-play in this episode, see my essay "'Celabitur auctor': The Crisis of Authority and Narrative Patterning in Ovid, *Fasti* 5," forthcoming in *Phoenix*.

12. So runs the suggestion of P. Kretschmer, "Remus und Romulus," *Glotta* 1 (1909): 293–94, following T. Mommsen, "Die Remus-Legende," *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. 4, *Historische Schriften*, Vol. 1 (Berlin, 1906), 7, although Kretschmer finds nothing playful in Ovid's etymologizing.

shift from *c* to *g* in the spelling of Latin words: *ut ait Ennius, quae "quod gerit fruges, Ceres"; antiquis enim quod nunc G C* (LL 5.64 = Enn. Var. 49–50 V).¹³ A similar discussion of the interchangeability, at least under certain circumstances, of *l* and *r* is easily imaginable, though it is not a necessary precedent to Ovid's word-play; in fact, Ovid may have combined his observation of the pattern *l* > *r* with Varro's notice of the Ennian etymology for Ceres to create his own variant etymology.¹⁴ With the ambiguity of *Palilia/Parilia* (and associated wordplay) already available to him, Ovid can easily be imagined to have exploited it to allow for several etymologies that are entirely his own. In any case, the association of *Celeus* with the *Cerealia*, by means of a hypothetical earlier form **Celealia*, allows Ovid to introduce a new and purely Latin etymological aetiology for the holiday of a Greek agricultural divinity now celebrated on Italian soil.

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13. See D. O. Ross, *Virgil's Elements: Physics and Poetry in the "Georgics"* (Princeton, 1987), 34; O'Hara, *True Names*, 253, on Varro's text; D. Feeney, *The Gods in Epic* (Oxford, 1991), 121; and Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.67: *a gerendis frugibus Ceres tamquam Geres* (and cf. A. S. Pease, ed., *M. Tulli Ciceronis "De natura deorum"* [Cambridge, MA, 1955–58], ad loc.). Cf. also the alternative etymology for Ceres mentioned by Servius ad *Geo.* 1.7: *Ceres a creando dicta*.

14. O'Hara, *True Names*, 50, notes several other pairs of letters the interrelationship of which gained Varro's notice in the extant books of *De lingua Latina*: *s* and *r* (7.26); *l* and *s* (5.138); *i* and *e* (6.95). Support for Ovidian linguistic experimentation may also be found in Leumann's suggestion (*Lateinische Laut- und Formenlehre*, 230–31) that dissimilation can sometimes be a result of "folk etymologizing": "Lautlicher Anklang an ein anderes Wort, also das Spiel der Volksetymologie, begünstigt offenkundig vielfach diese Fernwirkungen; nicht immer ist allein die Lautschwierigkeit auslösend. Besondere Gelegenheit für Fernwirkungen bieten etymologisch isolierte Wörter, also auch Fremdwörter, und zwar in der Volkssprache." Ovid's application of this etymological play to unusual and, as in *Celeus'* case, patently foreign names is a clever variation upon what might otherwise seem an unconscious linguistic process.

PROBLEMS WITH THE GENRE OF *PROBLEMS*: PLUTARCH'S LITERARY INNOVATIONS

The place to start is where Boulogne concluded: the purpose of all of the *quaestiones*/προβλήματα is "augmenter les chances d'appréhender les réalités humaines dans leurs diverses dimensions."¹ Upon such a project Plutarch exercised skills far beyond quaint antiquarianism and hollow erudition, although he claimed nothing more for himself than that his works be μη παντελῶς ἄμουςα (*Quaest. conv.* 612E). The practiced craftsmanship that Plutarch transparently brought to bear on word choice and organization clearly indicates that in his several essays he enfolded a series of related inquiries about philosophical or natural phenomena with the same lavish conscientiousness that he brought to his *Lives* and the more formal essays within the *Moralia*.

Much more than an illustration of style, however, these essays perhaps afford the greatest opportunity to glimpse a side of Plutarch so rarely heralded: his role in the

1. J. Boulogne, "Les *Questions romaines* de Plutarque," *ANRW* II.33.6 (1992): 4707.