

QUAM LEPIDE LEXEIS COMPOSTAE. . . :
CATULLUS 64. 174

171 Iuppiter omnipotens, utinam ne tempore primo
Cnosia Cecropiae tetigissent litora puppes
indomito nec dira ferens stipendia tauro
perfidus *intortum* religasset nauitā funem
nec malus *haec* celans dulci crudelia forma
consilia in nostris requiesset sedibus hospes!
nam quo me referam? . . .

174 *intortum scripsi*: in *cretam* X, in *creta* O

175 *haec* O: hic X, edd.

177 iam quo *Baehrens*

Almighty Jupiter, would that at the start Athenian sterns¹ had not touched Cnossian shores, and that, bringing dreadful tribute to the unmastered bull [i.e. the Minotaur] the faithless sailor [i.e. Theseus] had not tied up his *twisted* cable, and, evilly hiding *these* cruel plans with his beguiling beauty, had not rested in our home a guest! Where am I to betake myself? . . .

Most editors and commentators have acquiesced without enthusiasm in the reading *in Creta religasset* at 174, though Mynors in his Oxford text (1958) reverted to what had been the old vulgate *in Cretam religasset* (e.g. in Silvius' Delphin edition (Paris, 1685); Vulpius' (Padua 1737). If we read *in Cretam*, the sense must be 'Would that Theseus had not untied his rope [sc. at the Piraeus for the voyage] to Crete'; if *in Creta*, 'had not tied up his rope on Crete'. Particular objections have been made to each of these readings; my purpose is to point out that there is a stylistic consideration that damns both, and which strongly implies that O's neglected *haec* is the right reading in 175. Lastly, there is lexicographical question of the meanings of *religare*, which may be of timely interest to the editors of *TLL* and *OLD*, neither of which had, at the time of writing, quite reached their *R*-fascicles.

I

The objections to *in Cretam religasset* are these:

(i) With this reading, we must understand Catullus to be saying in effect in the three wishes given to Ariadne 'Would that he had never come here in the first place (*utinam*. . .) . . . Would that he had never even started his voyage hither (*indomito* . . . *in Cretam religasset* . . . *funem*) . . . Would that he had never come

¹ Two points should be noted: (i) this is not a case of synecdoche; it was normal for boats on landfall to approach the shore stern first to facilitate departure; cf. Virg. *Aen.* 6. 3 and the commentators ad loc.; (ii) it is better to understand the first wish to express a general regret ('would that no Athenian ships had ever beached on Crete') and the second the particular regret that Theseus ever came than to suppose with most commentators a mere hendiadys, 'Cnosia Cecropiae . . .' and 'indomito nec . . .'

both alluding to Theseus' arrival. After all, he had only one ship. With characteristically perverse ingenuity, Baehrens proposed 'ne) Cnosia Cecropiae [a noun!] tetigisset litora puppis', 'would that the Cnossian stern (i.e. of Androgeon's ship) had never touched the shores of Attica', thus making the regret extend back to the first contact of Cretans and Athenians; but this reading is out of the question because of the point of style discussed below, p.113.

here (*nec malus . . . hospes*).’ That is bad rhetoric: the three wishes should be more clearly differentiated, and should refer to regrettable events in their chronological order; *tempore primo* implies *deinde* and *deinde*.

(ii) As Fordyce observes ad loc., although *religare* can mean untie, in every other nautical context, of which there are a good many, it is certain that *religare funem* means ‘moor’, not ‘unmoor’. On the use of *religare* and the circumstances in which it is reasonable to entertain a meaning ‘untie’ for it, see below, p.114.

The only virtues of the reading *in Creta* adopted or commended by most modern editors and commentators is that it escapes these objections. In itself, however, it is awkward. One ties up one’s rope to the shore, the land, a tree, a bank, a post, a rock, or whatever; not to the name of what is after all an island of one hundred cities. The closest parallels differ from our line with *in Creta* in just this point:

A. R. 2. 462 *πείσματ’ ἀνάψασθαι μυθήσασθαι Θυνίδι γαίη*

Ov. *Met.* 13. 439 ‘Litore Threicio classem religarat Atrides’

Ov. *Met.* 14. 248 ‘Circaeο religata in litore pinus’

Here the proper name is made a qualification of a good solid noun — *γαῖα*, *litus* — on to which it is reasonable to tie up a rope.

It has been recognized at least since Norden’s time, though never as widely as it should be — you will find nothing about it, for example, in Wilkinson’s *Golden Latin Artistry* — that from Ennius on when separation of noun and epithet is indulged in in hexameter verse, it is quite a strong rule that the epithet will come first: Enn. *Ann.* 1 ‘Musae quae pedibus *magnum* pulsatis *Olympum*’. This simple fact is crucially important for the characteristic texture of Latin hexameter verse even in its most elaborately baroque styles. By seeking this arrangement the poet poses a kind of riddle: in *Ann.* 1, the syntax, but not the sense, is complete when we reach ‘pulsatis’: ‘*Olympum*’ specifies and completes the sense, thus solving the riddle implied by ‘*magnum*’: great *what*? By avoiding the opposite arrangement in hyperbata, poets prevented the almost inevitably feeble effect ‘*Olympum . . . magnum*’. The neoteric poets, and none more than Catullus in this poem, experimented with the interweaving of pairs of adjectives and nouns both within the line and across line-end. Considerable attention has been given to this in several important papers in recent years;¹ it is perhaps to be traced to the pre-occupations of our school-days that in some of these studies too much attention is paid to the mere patterning of cases, with the result that the crucial principle and its poetic purpose is obscured. When in Catullus 64 two adjectives and two nouns are interwoven within or across lines it is not the *abab* or *abba* arrangement of *cases* that demands our attention as such, nor the precise position of the words in relation to the verbal element, but the fact that we regularly have the order Adjective₁ Adjective₂ Noun_{1/2} Noun_{1/2} with a verbal element often though not necessarily intervening between the adjectives and the nouns. In Catullus 64 this is one of several mannerisms which the poet pushes even to excess; as many as one in seven lines is of this elaborate type.

¹ See E. Norden, *Aeneis VI* (3rd edn., 1927), pp. 393–8; H. Patzer, ‘Zum Sprachstil des neoterischen Hexameters’, *Mus.Helv.* 12 (1955), 77 ff., C. Conrad, ‘Traditional Patterns of Word-Order in Latin Epic from Ennius to Vergil’, *HStCP* 69 (1965), 195–258, T. E. V. Pearce, ‘Enclosing Word-Order in Latin Hexameters’ *C. Q.* N.S. 16 (1966),

140–71, 298–320, and id., ‘A Pattern of Word-Order in Latin Poetry’, *C. Q.* N.S. 18 (1968), 334–54. It is not too much to say that these authors’ researches and the generality of the underlying principle are among the most important discoveries ever made in the field of Roman poetic technique.

The present passage is very carefully composed in this tessellated manner. Lines 172 and 173

CNOSIA *Cecropiae* tetigissent LITORA *puppēs*
INDOMITO *nec dira* ferens *stipendia* TAURO,

have respectively *abab* and *abba* case-arrangement with the adjectives first. Since the next line also ends with the pattern . . . verb, noun₁, noun₂ and begins with adjective₁, there is an overwhelming probability that the line as a whole should have the form

PERFIDUS †*incretā(m)*† *religasset* NAVITA *funem*,

where †*incretā(m)*† represents the expected adjective₂ to qualify *funem*. This argument independently, therefore, finds fault in the transmitted *incretā(m)*, and implies the nature of the solution. If Catullus is using *funis* as a masculine (Lucretius has it feminine at 2. 1154), we may suggest *intortum* as *le mot juste*. *Intortum* and *incretam* are similar in Carolingian script; at 64. 235 Catullus writes ‘candidaque intorti sustollant uela rudentes’ (another line from the same mould); Ovid, *Met.* 3. 679 has ‘alter ad intortos cupiens dare brachia funes/ brachia non habuit’ (he is turning into a fish); in this context, there is a *curiosa felicitas* in ‘perfidus intortos’: Theseus is faithless, and everything to do with him is ‘twisted’, including his rope and Ariadne’s convoluted style. However this may be, it seems certain that the diagnosis is sound.

A consequence is that *religare funem* ‘moor’ is being used without an explicit adverbial phrase stating where. In the context, however, there can be no ambiguity: ‘Would that the Athenian ships had not backed water and beached on the shore of Cnossus, and that the villain had not tied up his cable. . .’ is quite clear. The first wish evokes the image of a fleet backing water to run up a beach, and is general; the second is specific recalling Ariadne’s first glimpse of Theseus as he moored his ship; the third his effect on her in Minos’ palace.

All editors read *nec malus hic* in 175, taking *malus hic* as a substantive combination ‘this villain’; cf. Vergil *Aen.* 4. 10 ‘quis nouus hic nostris successit sedibus hospes’, Dido’s unconsciously ironic echo of this line. But it is mechanical to infer that *hic* in our line is supported by the Virgilian line. Where is Theseus? Out of sight; and to my ear, *nec malus hic, celans* . . . involves a perceptible colon-break before *celans* which damages the gradual *accelerando* of the verse towards its bitterly postponed climax, *hospes*. In 175–6 we have a very bold hyperbaton: *malus* is predicative, and reading *haec* with *O*, we have the sequences *malus* . . . *celans* . . . *hospes* intertwined with *haec* . . . *crudelia* . . . *consilia* and *dulci* . . . *forma*. *Haec* . . . *crudelia* . . . *consilia*, of course denotes specifically ‘this my abandonment’: *crudelia* . . . *consilia* without the specification *haec* loses, I feel, in particularity, and therefore force.

Fordyce’s note on 177 makes it clear that he thinks *nam* is causal: but, as Baehrens saw, we do not want a causal particle, but rather asyndeton for the beginning of Ariadne’s deliberation. He was, however, wrong to suggest *iam* ‘now’ for *nam* on the basis of Medea’s *νῦν ποί τράπωμαι*; (Eur. *Med.* 502). The text is right, and *nam quo* . . . is the same as *quonam*, ‘where precisely?’, see OLD s.v. ‘nam’ 7 (p.1154 middle column).

II

It is the traditional but implausible lore of dictionaries that while *religare* normally means ‘tie up’ it can equally well mean ‘untie’ *tout court*; Lewis and Short imply

uneasy disapproval by describing this as 'poetical and post-classical', but that is not in fact an accurate description of the circumstances in which the verb may mean 'untie', and neither they nor other lexicographers have attempted to define the kind of context in which *religare* might have this sense. The impression gained by the consulter of a dictionary is in fact that there is no contextual restraint on this alleged use, and that *religare* might possibly mean 'untie' anywhere. Hence I used to think and to maintain that in *carm.* 1. 5. 3 'cui flauam religas comam?' Horace might intend a more spicily and explicitly sexual image ('For whom are you untying your golden hair?') than commentators and translators have always supposed; I am now sure that they were right and I was wrong, but I was not alone. The idea, regrettably characteristic of the Swinging Sixties, also occurred to D. West in his *Reading Horace*, (Edinburgh, 1967), pp. 106 f. West alluded for support not to Cat. 64. 174 read with *in Cretam*, but to the following passages:

(a) Ovid *Met.* 14. 445 'soluitur herboso religatus ab aggere classem' But *religare ab* is one of the regular ways of saying 'tie up to', not 'untie from', cf. V. *Aen.* 7 106 'gramineo ripae religauit ab aggere classem', Luc. 7. 860 'nullus ab Emathio religasset litore funem' 'no one would have moored on (not 'unmoored from') the Thessalian shore'; and the implication that *soluere* and *religatus* are here virtual synonyms makes feeble sense.

(b) Palladius 3. 13. 2 'sed prouidendum est omnibus annis uitem resolui ac religari, quia refrigeratur'. But what Palladius means here is clarified by Columella's fuller account of the same point of viticulture at *R.R.* 5. 6. 27 'maxime autem prodest uitibus omnibus annis resolui; nam et commodius enodantur et refrigerantur cum alio loco alligatae sunt minusque laeduntur ac melius conualescunt', 'It is very beneficial to vines to untie them every year; for thus they can both more effectively be freed of knots and they are refreshed when they have been bound up *in a different place* and are harmed less and recover better'; i.e. it is a matter of *shifting* the ties, so that in Palladius *religare* is surely the antonym of *resolui*, not its synonym.

(c) Catullus 63. 84 'ait haec minax Cybebe religatque iuga manu'. Catullus does not seem quite sure in his own mind whether Cybele is releasing one or both her lions: at 76 the poet writes 'ibi iuncta iuga resoluens Cybele leonibus' but it is the left-hand lion which Cybele urges on (78-83) in the words which immediately precede 'ait haec' of 84. Most commentators understand 'religatque iuga manu' to repeat the idea of 78 'ibi iuncta iuga resoluens', so that here is a case of *resoluere* = *religare*. This is probably right. The alternative is to suppose with Robinson Ellis ad loc. that in 63. 84 Cybele is tying up the traces and straps, but that is a poetically less striking final image of the dread Goddess, and a common principle of ring-composition justifies the repetition anyway. Here then there is an example of *religare* = 'untie', but it should be recognized as the only one, and it provides no defence for *religare* as 'untie' in Catullus 64. 174 with *in Cretam*, which, as we have seen, it to be counted corrupt on other grounds, and where the verb has its usual sense.

It should not be inferred that Cat. 63. 84 represents a specially 'poetic' use of *religare*. This is clear from the use of *reuincire*, which, like *religare*, normally means 'bind up', but which at least once means 'untie' in a workaday context. Columella, in discussing (*R.R.* 1. 8. 16) how the bailiff should act in matters of discipline, writes that one must among other things check 'num quem uilicus aut adligauerit quempiam domino insciente aut reuinxerit, nam utrumque maxime

seruare debet ut et quem pater familiae tali poena multauerit ulicus nisi eiusdem permissu compedibus non eximat et quem ipse sua sponte uinxerit antequam sciat dominus non resoluat'.

The tentative conclusion to be drawn from these passages is not the linguistically implausible proposition that *religare* and *reuincire* can mean 'tie up' and 'untie' in *any* context, but that when each occurs as the *second* verb in parallel or antithetical sentences in which the meaning of the first verb is certain, it must be interpreted from the context: it does not follow that when *religare* occurs by itself, as e.g. in Hor. *carm.* 1. 5. 3 and Cat. 64. 174, it is open to us to entertain the possibility of a meaning 'untie'.

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