

FOUR HELLENISTIC FIRST LINES RESTORED

The grammarian Marius Plotius Sacerdos, whose work is to be found in Keil's *Grammatici Latini*, vi. 427–546, quotes a number of Greek verses, whose authors he does not specify, to illustrate various metres. He derives them from some earlier Greek metrist, whose practice, like Hephaestion's, was to take his examples from the beginnings of poems. In most cases they have been corrupted by copyists who knew no Greek, sometimes so badly that where the verse is not known from another source it can no longer be restored. But unlike corruptions in Greek traditions, they are almost purely visual in nature. There is a tendency to interchange Ε and Η, Θ and Τ, but otherwise the transformations that occur are into letters and combinations of letters that are similar in shape to the original. For example, ἐν δὲ Βαρουσιάδης, μῆνυ ἄειδε θεά, become ΘΝ ΔΕΒ ΔΤΟΥCΙ ΔΔΝΟCΜΚΝΙΝΑΕΙΔΘΘΕΔ. So if one can extract a plausible verse from the transmitted gibberish with minimal departure from the *ductus litterarum*, one may be confident that one has found the truth. I want to discuss four of these verses quoted by Sacerdos which have not hitherto been correctly restored. They all appear to be of Hellenistic date, probably third century, since that was the great period of metrical experimentation.

- (i) 521.1 *trimetrum iambicum brachycataléctum* . . .

$\left\{ \begin{array}{ll} \Delta\text{CKP}\epsilon\text{CMEN}\text{OYK}\epsilon\epsilon\text{CTINOI}\Delta\text{IXHOC} & (\text{cod. A}) \\ \Delta\text{CKICMEN}\text{OYK}\epsilon\epsilon\text{CTINOI}\Delta\text{IXNOX} & (\text{cod. B})^1 \end{array} \right.$

Huic si addiderimus alterum pedem disyllabum iambum, erit trimetrum iambicum purum acataléctum . . .

{ ΔCKPECMENOYKEECTYNOYΔIXNOXBΔ.ΘΕ
ΔCKPICMENOIKEECTYNOYΔIXNOCBΕΕ

Keil records the following conjectures:

ἀκίς μὲν οὐκ ἐστὶν οὐδ' ἵχνος βέλους Scaliger
 Ἀσκρας μὲν οὐκ ἔσσεστί μοι λύχνος βαθύς Putsche
 ἀσπίς μὲν οὐκ ἐστὶ ἐστί μοι λίγδον δ' ἔχω Bergk (ψυχὴν δ'
 ἔχω Hartung)
 ἀσπίς μὲν οὐκ ἐστὶ ἐστί οἱ διαί χερὸς Emperius.

Scaliger has here done better than his successors. Once something so idiomatic and so close to the *paradosis* as *μὲν οὐκέτ' ἐστὶν οὐδ' ἔχνος* had been found, it should have been held on to. Scaliger does not seem to have appreciated, however, that the word after *ἔχνος* in the *acatalectic* example was added by the metrician for purposes of illustration. The original verse, which had the same metre as Callimachus' eleventh *iambus*, ended with *οὐδ' ἔχνος*, which must accordingly be interpreted not as 'nor a trace' but as 'not so much as a trace'. At the beginning of the line, therefore, we require not a nominative but a genitive. 'Of — — there is no longer so much as a trace.'

¹ I shall give the readings of the two manuscripts in this order in each case.

The variants point to "Ἀσκληρῆς. A town name certainly suits the expression; cf. E. *Hel.* 107 f. ἤδη γὰρ ἤπται (Troy) καὶ κατείργασται πυρί; —ὥστ' οὐδ' ἶχνος γε τειχέων εἶναι σαφές; Antip. Sid. *epigr.* 59.5 (to Corinth) οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδ' ἶχνος πολυκάμμορε σείω λέλειπται. Ascra was in fact laid waste in or before the fourth century B.C. and never reoccupied (Plut. fr. 82 Sandbach, quoting Arist. fr. 565). To say that not a trace of it remained was an exaggeration, but perhaps not much of one; Pausanias 9. 29. 2 tells us "Ἀσκληρῆς μὲν δὴ πύργος εἰς ἐπ' ἐμοῦ καὶ ἄλλο οὐδὲν ἐλείπετο ἐς μνήμην. A Hellenistic poet who had not visited the place himself and who wished to celebrate the immortality of Hesiod's poems in contrast to the impermanence of masonry² might well begin with the line "Ἀσκληρῆς μὲν οὐκ ἐτ' ἐστὶν οὐδ' ἶχνος. Antipater was guilty of a greater exaggeration in the case of Corinth.

It is hard to be sure what lies behind βαθεῖ/βεε, the word that the metrician added to make the line into a trimeter: perhaps βάθρου.

(ii) 521.12 *trimetrum catalecticum iambicum* . . .

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \Delta \text{NT}\omega \text{TIMOY}\Sigma \Delta \text{ΠPOIMHCON} \\ \Delta \text{NT}\omega \text{TIMOY}\Sigma \Delta \text{ΠPOC}\Lambda \text{HCON} \end{array} \right.$$

. . . *huic enim si fuerit addita in fine syllaba, fiet archilochium* . . .

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \Delta \text{NTONINOTIMOY}\Sigma \Delta \text{ΠPOC} \Delta \text{DMIC} \Delta \text{TOC} \\ \omega \\ \Delta \text{NTONINOTI}\Lambda \text{IOXC} \Delta \text{ΠPOC} \Delta \text{AEC} \Delta \text{TOC} \end{array} \right.$$

<setosa> *duris exuere pellibus.* (Hor. *Iamb.* 17. 15)

Keil records the following conjectures:

ἀντρωδὴ κωτίλλουσα προσάλλησον/προσάλλησάτω Scaliger (unmetrical)
 Ἄντωνίνω τι Μοῦσα προσύμνησον μέλος Terhaerius (unmetrical)
 Ἄντωνίνω τι οὐ πρόσσεστι Μοῦσα (σοι) ten Brink
 Ἄντωνίως τις Μοῦσα προσφιλῆς ὦν/προσφιλέστατος Bergk
 ἀγωνυμόν τι Μοῦσα πρὸς λάληθρον/λαλίστατον M. Schmidt
 αἰτῶ τι Μοῦσα πρὸς σ' ἀδμήτος αἰγῆς Emperius
 ἀντρωπὸν ὅττι Μοῦσα πρὸς μ' ἐλέξατο Hartung.

None of these is at all convincing. Μοῦσα is probably right; it is a word likely to occur in the opening line of a poem. For the end of the line Scaliger's is much the best proposal. Sacerdos made his acatalectic trimeter by substituting the third person imperative for the second; -σάτω then became confused with the following *setosa*. The beginning of the line is more difficult. What is transmitted inevitably suggests an Antoninus or Antonius before anything else. But it is improbable that Sacerdos' Greek source took his examples from any poetry late enough to contain such names. My own guess is

ἀνθρώπων τι Μοῦσα προσάλλησον.

The adjective suits the informality of προσάλλησον: the poet, whoever he is, begins his iambus by bidding the Muse, not to *sing* of gods and heroes, but to *talk* or *natter* to him of down-to-earth human affairs. ἀνθρώπωνος is itself a

² For this motif see *HSCP* 73 (1968), 132 f.

word of no stylistic elevation, frequent in comedy, whereas tragedy has ἀνθρώπειος.

(iii) 525.15 *tetrametrum acatalëctum clodum* . . .

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \Delta N \Delta CC \Delta \Theta N \Delta \tau \omega \Pi K O N \Delta \Delta X O Y C \Delta P I O P O N I N C O Y \\ \Delta N \Delta CC \Delta \Theta N \Delta \theta \omega \tau I K O N \cdot \Delta X C O Y C \Delta P I O N I N C O Y \end{array} \right.$$

*parumne campis atque Neptuno superfusum dextris.*³

Sacerdos goes on to point out that this differs from the ordinary iambic tetrameter by having a spondee in the last foot, viz. ΔICCOY (Cod. A) or ΔYCOI (B). By way of conjectures Keil records only a partial attempt by Putsche: ἄνασσα θνατῶν κωνά (false quantity!) μούσα PIONON λίσσον. I have no doubt that the true solution is

ἄνασσ' Ἀθάνα, ζωτικὸν λαχοῦσα ρεῖθρον Ἴλισσοῦ.

Of the corruptions of the Z, that to T is visual,⁴ while the Θ results from a mechanical repetition of ΔΘ. ζωτικός is first attested in Plato and Xenophon, and not so far as I know otherwise found in verse. The poet may have been an Athenian, at least by residence, since the petty Ilissus was not established in Panhellenic tradition like the rivers of Sparta, Argos, or Thebes.

(iv) 529.25 *trimetrum catalëcticum clodum* . . .

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} O \Theta \epsilon O I T \Delta \Delta O I N \Delta I T \Delta N T \Delta \Delta O I O \Delta O N T \epsilon C \\ O \Theta \epsilon O I T \Delta \Lambda O I N \Delta I T \Delta N T \Delta M O I O \Lambda \epsilon N T \epsilon C \end{array} \right.$$

arma ferte, date tela celata.

οἱ θεοὶ τᾶπωνα Ταντάλῳ δόντες Putsche, and similarly with τὰ λοιπά Gaisford, with τὰ κωνά Keil, with τὰ δείπνα Bergk (*Poet. Lyr. Gr.* ed. 4, Hipponax fr. 93). I think Tantalus is a mirage. Read rather

ὦ θεοί, τὰ δεινὰ πάντα μοι δόντες

—a complaint of truly Hipponactean tone (cf. his frs. 34, 36, 38), though the metre, which is a 'lame' form of the acephalous iambic trimeter used by Archil. 197 and Call. *Iamb.* 12, is probably to be attributed to one of Hipponax's many Hellenistic imitators.

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³ In the absence of a genuine Latin example, Sacerdos has created one by adapting Hor. *Iamb.* 7. 3–4. In other instances he invents his own Latin examples, revealing a certain ignorance of classical prosody.

⁴ This would happen most easily with a zeta written in the old way, ζ. Examples of this form occur perhaps as late as the early second century A.D.—not as late as Sacerdos, but this particular corruption might go back to his source.