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Versus Ouidi de Piscibus et Feris

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The Classical Quarterly / Volume 1 / Issue 04 / October 1907, pp 275 - 278

DOI: 10.1017/S0009838800005280, Published online: 11 February 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009838800005280

How to cite this article:

A. E. Housman (1907). Versus Ouidi de Piscibus et Feris. The Classical Quarterly, 1, pp 275-278 doi:10.1017/S0009838800005280

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VERSVS OVIDI DE PISCIBVS ET FERIS.

CONCERNING the date and authorship of the fragment preserved under this title in the 9th century MS Vind. 277 and apparently cited by Pliny n. h. xxxii 11 'quae Ouidius prodidit piscium ingenia in eo uolumine quod halieuticon inscribitur', 152 'ab Ouidio posita nomina . . . fortassis in Ponto nascentia, ubi id uolumen supremis suis temporibus incohauit', there are three opinions: that the poem is Ovid's; that it is a work of the 1st century which Pliny mistook for Ovid's; and that it is a forgery later than Pliny's time and spun out of Pliny's citations. The first, though Muretus and others cast doubt on it so early as the 16th century, has been general in the past ages of learning and is highly congenial to the present. The second was held by Vlitius and Wernsdorf and in 1878 was defended with great erudition and discursiveness by Mr Birt in his elaborate and well-known monograph. The third was first explicitly stated, but at the same instant disavowed, by Haupt in his edition of 1838; though Barth in the 17th century had already ascribed the verses, quite at random, to Olympius Nemesianus.

Against the third opinion there is much to be said, and I do not here maintain it; but I propose to consider one element of the problem which has hitherto been superficially and inattentively treated, and which confronts the adherents of the first and second opinions with an obstacle of which they are very imperfectly aware. Those who believe that Ovid wrote the halieutica, or that Pliny read it, must either renounce their beliefs or else find means to rid the poem of a feature which renders both alike incredible: its false quantities.

I do not apply so harsh a term to the disyllabic *milui* of u. 95,

hippuri celeres et nigro terгоре milui;

but it is necessary to observe that the first certain example of this scansion is some forty years later than Pliny's death and a whole century later than Ovid's: Iuu. ix 55 'tot miluos intra tua pascua lassas'. For Mart. ix 54 10 is not a certain example. When two families of Martial's MSS have 'hinc prope summa rapax miluus *ad* astra uolat' and the third has 'miluus *in* astra', one remembers Pers. iv 26, where most MSS give 'miluus oberrat' for the 'miluus errat' of the best; and Arthur Palmer suspects with good reason that *ad* and *in* are alternative interpolations, and that 'hinc prope summa rapax miluus astra uolat', with 'prope' as preposition, was what Martial wrote.

To the iambic *ei* of u. 34, which Mr Birt on pp. 32 sq. declares to be unique, I make no objection, for it is not unique: it occurs twice in Germanicus' Aratea, which was written in Ovid's lifetime or at least within a year or two of his death. Nor do I quarrel with the 'pictae mormyres' of u. 110 because this fish or another is called ὁ μορμύρος by the Greeks. Even the lengthening of the last syllable of χρύσοφρυς in u. 111 'auri | chrysophrys imitata decus' may perhaps be excused, as Mr Birt on p. 116 excuses it, by the caesura semiternaria. But his defence of the false quantity in u. 101,

qui semper spumas sequeris, pompile, nitentes,

is altogether futile. The fish's name is πομπίλος: its scansion is ascertained not merely from its accent but from the usage of the poets: Erinna frag. i 1 πομπίλε ναύταισιν πέμπων πλόον εὐπλοον ἰχθύ, Pancrates ap. Athen. 283 A πομπίλος, ὃν καλέουσιν ἀλίπλοοι ἱερὸν ἰχθύν, Oppian hal. i 186 ἐν κείνοις νέμεται καὶ πομπίλος, ὃν πέρι ναῦται | ἄζονται, and so on. 'Quis non uim agnoscit accentus graeci?' says Mr Birt, 'qua eadem ui et Βηλίδης pro molosso poetae accipere inuitabantur et Λυκουργίδης pro proceleusmatico'—immo epitrito primo—'(Ouidi Ib. 501); falsoque ideo scripsit Muellerus p. 356 inuersionem quantitatum accentu grammatico effectam apud classicos certo comprobari non posse'. But Mueller's false statement is the simple truth. The Greek words whose scansion the classical Latin poets venture to alter are words like *Belīdēs*, which cannot without alteration find a place in their verse, not words like *pōmpīlus*, which can. And when, to effect this purpose, a short syllable must be lengthened, they do as Homer did with ἀθάνατος and Πριαμίδης; they leave accent utterly out of account. When, for example, Martial fits Πανάρετος to a dactylic metre, he transforms it to *Pānaretus*, vi 89 2, not *Panāretus*; and Θεοφίλη he transforms to *Theōphila*, vii 69 1, not *Theophīla*. The fact therefore that *Belides* and *Lycurgides* are paroxytone is an irrelevant accident. What encouraged the Latin poets to lengthen the penultimate syllables of those names was not their accentuation but the familiarity of the ending -είδης in patronymics and the example of the Greeks themselves; for the connexion between poetry and the Ptolemies had given birth and currency to the false form Λαγείδης, which is preserved in inscriptions and was employed by Theocritus himself at xvii 14 Λαγείδας (Λαγίδας MSS) Πτολεμαῖος. The scansion of πομπίλος as *pōmpīlus* is a solecism unparalleled until the 4th century of the Christian era and almost tantamount to a profession of the Christian faith.

But nowhere in the 200 pages of Mr Birt's dissertation, nowhere in Mr Zingerle's assertion of the authorship of Ovid,¹ nowhere in Lucian Mueller's *de re metrica*, nowhere in the world, have I seen the metre of u. 46 either defended or attacked.

anthias his, tergo quae non uidet, utitur armis
uim spinae nouitque suae uersoque supinus
corpore lina secat fixumque intercipit hamum.

46

¹ Kleine philol. Abhandl. ii.

Twice does Mr Birt discuss this verse, its grammar on pp. 19 sq., its matter on pp. 77 sq.; but its metre never. I turn to Georges' lexicon, and there I find 'anthiās, -ae, *m.* (*ἀνθίας*), ein uns unbekannter Seefisch, Ov. hal. 46. Plin. 9, 180; 32, 11', but nothing to explain how 'anthiās' can begin a dactylic hexameter, where the cretic is 'ein mir unbekannter Fuss'. I turn to the thesaurus linguae Latinae, though with no high hopes of enlightenment on a point of metre; for this work, 'editus auctoritate et consilio Academiæ quinquæ Germanicarum' derives from "*Ἀγρίος* a proper name which it scans *Agriōn*, and describes the prosody of *Achaia* by saying that it is $\cup\text{—}\cup\cup$ in hexameters and $\cup\text{—}\cup$ in pentameters. For the thesaurus Mr Birt's text of the halieutica has been revised by Mr Ehwald and the following article then composed by Mr Lehnert: 'anthias, -ae *m.*, *ἀνθίας*, piscis marinus. cf. A. Marx, P W. I 2376. Ov. hal. 46 anthias in (his *cod.*) tergo quae non uidet, utitur armis uim spinae mouitque suae uersoque supinus corpore lina secat fixumque intercipit hamum. PLIN. nat. 9, 179. 32, 13', 'anthias', according to the practice of the thesaurus, means 'anthiās'; so here we have a sixth declension, nom. -ās, gen. -ae.

The earliest and indeed the only instance of any similar shortening quoted by Mueller in his *de re metrica* is Prisc. perieg. 413 *Melās*; and I have none to add but *Biās* from the barbarous verses on the 'septem sapientes' inserted in Hyg. fab. 221 (Riese anth. Lat. ii c. 882, Baehrens poet. Lat. frag. pp. 296 sqq.) where it keeps fit company with *Milēsius*. Should it be sought to scan *anthias* as a spondee, *anthjās*, on that side too there is a lion in the way; for the Greek ι is not thus treated by Latin poets in classical times. *io* indeed, which had become a Latin word, is used as a monosyllable by Catullus and Martial; but *Peljo* in Sil. iii 495 is merely a bad conjecture (*phlegeo* *cod.* Colon., *peleo* *cett.*, *Pholoe* Heinsius), *jambo* in u. 5 of Sulpicia's satire is as good an index of its date as *Rōmuli* in u. 19, and probably the earliest parallel is the trochaic *ἰῶτα* of Ter. Maur. 500. In the couplet which now separates the inseparable verses Ouid. trist. ii 190 and 193,

Iazyges et Colchi Metereaque turba Getaeque 191
Danuuii mediis uix prohibentur aquis,

the name *Iazyges*, though only a conjecture (the two best MSS have *cizyges* and *latiges* respectively), is in my judgment a true one; but the interpolation is ejected by Bentley and Schrader and Merkel, and its author's knowledge of metre would seem to have been much on a level with his knowledge of geography.

To Pliny therefore the hexameter

anthias his, tergo quae non uidet, utitur armis

would have been a scarce less wondrous spectacle than the eruption of Vesuvius. But there are now many critics of Latin poetry whom no such trifle as an initial cretic will deter from assigning this verse to the first century and even to the

hand of Ovid. I see, for instance, that Mr Hosius in 1892 edited Luc. i 398 as follows,

castraque, quae Vosegi curuam super ardua ripam
pugnaces pictis cohibebant Lingones armis, 398

and that after thirteen years, during which neither he nor his reviewers appear to have found any fault in the metre, he presented the verse unchanged in his edition of 1905. Certainly, if Lucan used *Lingonēs* as a dactyl or *Lingonēs* as an accusative, there was nothing to prevent Ovid from beginning an hexameter with *anthias* ; and nothing to prevent him from mentioning Tuticanus as often as he pleased, or from inserting after met. vi 293 the verse which Mr R. Helm in Rhein. Mus. 1901 p. 355 has composed for him : ‘nec tamen *ōmisit* linguam misera illa mouere’.

A. E. HOUSMAN.