

# The Classical Review

<http://journals.cambridge.org/CAR>

Additional services for *The Classical Review*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)



---

**Postgate's *Phaedri Fabulae Aesopiae Phaedri Fabulae Aesopiae cum Nicolai Perotti prologo et decem nouis fabulis, recognouit breuique adnotatione critica instruxit* Iohannes Percival Postgate. One vol. Crown 8vo. Pp. xxviii, no further pagination. Oxonii e typographeo Clarendoniano, 1920. 4s. 6d. paper, 5s. cloth, 7s. 6d. interleaved, net.**

A. E. Housman

The Classical Review / Volume 34 / Issue 5-6 / August 1920, pp 121 - 124

DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00013901, Published online: 27 October 2009

**Link to this article:** [http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract\\_S0009840X00013901](http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00013901)

## How to cite this article:

A. E. Housman (1920). The Classical Review, 34, pp 121-124 doi:10.1017/S0009840X00013901

**Request Permissions :** [Click here](#)

and the Old Latin dramatists (not Plautus only) deliberately adapted the metre to the conditions imposed by the Latin language. The scansion of 763 is quite uncertain (p. xxviii). Nor can I accept the scansion of 584 given on p. xxxi. Nor should Aristophanes *Equites* 1111-20 be quoted (p. xxx) to illustrate the 'colon Reizianum'; for these Greek lines have one syllable too much (except line 1120). How the editor intends lines 175 and 1028 to be scanned is left obscure.

The text and explanatory notes are also not free from defects. In 229 Lindsay's reading is adopted; but is it really suitable to the context? Surely Messenio must mean that there is a greater pleasure than to set foot on land, viz. to get back to one's native soil (*cf non dicam dolo*, 'to tell the truth'). The second person *videas* also shows that the proposition is a general one. He does not mean 'I am even gladder to get ashore than I should be if I had reached home.' In 292 *certo* is said to be 'colloquial for classical *pro certo*.' Am I under some delusion? From boyhood I have regarded *certo scio*, 'I know for certain,' as a classical locution, which any examiner would accept in a Latin composition. The note on *ni* (419), calling attention to the ultimate identity of *ni* and *ne*, is spoiled by the absence of discrimination between the two meanings 'not' and 'if not.' *Truc.*

275 and *Rud.* 712 ff. should not be put side by side with *Men.* 880 f. In 110 and *Rud.* 1381 etc. *ni* cannot be translated by 'not.' In 1093 a note is wanted on the pres. indic. *invenis*: the usage in 1026 is different. Can Plautus really have written *Titanum* in 854, even though that word stands in the MSS. and is supported by Priscian? That Plautus knew what a Titan was is shown by *Persa* 26. Some of the notes on the subjunctive are good; e.g. on *ne comesses* 611. But in 397 *negem* is not 'potential'; nor is the note on attraction (line 111) luminous. What is meant by 'the modal colour'? The subj. is here postulative: *quod...videas* = 'if you see a thing.' It is a mistake to explain it as 'partaking of the potential force of *habeas*.' In 913 my emendation *iugero* seems to me preferable to Lindsay's *iungere* (from a supposed *iungus* = ζεύγος) or *unguine*: for 'an acre of hellebore' *cf.* Hor. *A.P.* 300 *tribus Anticyris*. In 466 *potine* = *potisne est* 'is it possible?', not 'can't you?' The statement that the Ambrosian MS. was first published by Studemund (p. 121) is likely to mislead the student. Small points like this are, of course, of no importance to the schoolboy; and I am glad to be able to add that he will find the explanatory notes for the most part adequate to his needs.

E. A. SONNENSCHIN.

#### POSTGATE'S PHAEDRI FABULAE AESOPIAE.

*Phaedri Fabulae Aesopiae cum Nicolai Perotti prologo et decem novis fabulis, recognovit brevique adnotatione critica instruxit IOHANNES PERCIVAL POSTGATE.* One vol. Crown 8vo. Pp. xxviii, no further pagination. Oxonii e typographeo Clarendoniano, 1920. 4s. 6d. paper, 5s. cloth, 7s. 6d. interleaved, net.

DR POSTGATE'S is a purer text of Phaedrus than Lucian Mueller's and could hardly fail to be a purer than Mr Havet's; and the reason of its superiority is partly that he has used better judgment in choosing among the

lections at his disposal, and partly that he has imported fewer novelties of his own. A simple way to purify the text still further would be to remove those novelties: not that all of them are improbable or injurious, but most of them are, like most of Mueller's and Mr Havet's; and although Dr Postgate's conjectures do less harm than the former's and much less than the latter's, they also do less good. These fables are not a field in which anyone at this date can make 60 restorations, and Dr Postgate was not the critic most likely to make them. The matter and manner of Phaedrus are so plain and lucid that his correctors

have not been baffled or distracted by difficulties inherent in the author; they have been able to concentrate their scrutiny on his textual condition, and the scrutiny of Mr Havet has been uncommonly minute. The consequence is that most errors which can be set right with certainty have been set right already: there remains a vast deal of damage which is beyond repair. The licence of scribes who neither understood nor regarded the metre has bred such disorder that the words in the MSS are often far away from anything that the poet can have written, and editors accordingly have a large choice of possible corrections, few of which, for that very reason, will be probable. To handle a text of this sort is a business which calls for diffidence and flexibility: Dr Postgate is both sanguine and stubborn, and if once he gets hold of the stick by the wrong end he does not soon let go.

He has amended the punctuation of I 27 7; in III *epil.* 28 'excedit animus quem proposuit terminum' his *proposui* is an improvement; in IV 18 25 *odorem mixto* his *odore* is a slighter change than *mixtum* or *odores mixtos*; and in V 9 4 his *tu quam* for *quam* gives a better emphasis than *quam tu*. His *grana* in IV 24 14 is almost required by *congero*, though his derision of *granum* is beside the mark and shows that he has mistaken the author's meaning. *Mulum* in II 7 8 was justly condemned by Riese, and Dr Postgate's *ditem* is probably the best substitute that can be found. With the help of the medieval paraphrasts he has detected gaps after I 7 1 and *app. Perott.* 1 1, and has filled them with something very like what Phaedrus must have written.

In the following passages a variety of corrections are propounded by different critics, and each prefers his own: I will quote alternatives without interposing any judgment, and the reader shall try to pick out Dr Postgate's conjectures from the rest by their superiority. I 16 2 'fraudator homines cum aduocat sponsum improbos, | non rem expedire sed *malauidere* expetit': *malum inferre* or *ingerere* or *ordiri*. III 3 2 'usu peritus hariolo ueracior | uulgo *causa fertur* sed non dicitur': *esse fertur, causa*

or *perhibetur, causa*. III *epil.* 11 'et hoc minus ueniet ad me muneris': *perueniet* or *redibit*. IV 9 1 'homo simul ac uenit in magnum periculum (with title in *periculum simul ac uenit callidus*), | reperire effugium quaerit alterius malo': *homo in periculum simul ac uenit callidus* or *homo magnum ut uenit in periculum callidus* or *magnum in periculum simul ac uenit callidus*. IV 24 19 'aestate me lacessis; cum bruma est (PR, cur bruma NV) siles': *cum brumast* or *cum bruma*. *App.* 11 9 'ferendus esses, arte si te diceres, | superasse qui esset melior uiribus': *qui te melior esset* or *quam tu qui esset m.* or *eum qui te esset m.* *App.* 16 6 'postquam esurire coepit fera societas': *e. societas coepit fera* or *fera esurire coepit s.* *App.* 29 1 'papilio uespam preteruolantem uiderat': *praeuolantem* or *prope uolantem*.

Similar cases, less handy to cite, may be found at I 5 7, 30 7, III *prol.* 22, III 10 2, 13 13, IV 6 2, and several places in the *appendix Perottina*. But there are others where Dr Postgate's expedient is quite evidently inferior. I 3 6-9, where he spoils the natural flow of the narrative, and II 4 19 cannot be dealt with briefly; but take the following examples.

III *prol.* 20 'quamuis in ipsa natus sim *pene* schola.' Heinsius mended nothing but the metre with his transposition *paene sim natus*: Mr Havet saw that *schola* needed definition, and altered *pene* to *Phoebi*: so *Phoebus* in Manil. IV 728 is corrupted to *Poenus* and *Paenus*, and *Phoebigenam* in Verg. *Aen.* VII 773 to *Poenigenam*. But Dr Postgate conceives the project of saving the letter *n*, and apparently with that single aim he writes *Paeanis*. This is not so apt a name as *Phoebi*, it is certainly no nearer to *pene*, and instead of mending the metre it requires the transposition of another word; 'doch die Katze, die Katz' ist gerettet.'

IV 2 4 'sed diligenter intueri has nenias: | quantam *subtilis* utilitatem reperies!' Pithoeus wrote *sub illis*, which procures unimpeachable sense by the irreducible minimum of change. Mr Havet's egotism forced him to prefer *sub titulis*, poor though it was; and against *sub illis* he said the first thing that came into his head, 'quod

post has nefas.' Dr Postgate knows that this is false, that *hic* and *ille* are referred to one object by writers so pure as Plautus and so elegant as Ovid; but the hunt is up and he cannot sit idle, he must venture in *pusillis*. Suppose that I were the author of this conjecture: does Dr Postgate think he would print it instead of Pithou's?

IV 17 8 'factus *periculosus tum* gubernator sophus: | "parce gaudere oportet et sensim queri." *periculis tum* Orelli, *periculo sic* Dr Postgate, who says that Orelli's reading does not account for the -os- (as if his own accounted for the *tum*), and that the plural is inappropriate. The singular is inappropriate: the pilot, who had seen many a storm before, is contrasted with his less experienced and more impressionable shipmates.

These however are places where the tradition is corrupt: there are others where it is sound and where Dr Postgate vitiates it by alteration. His text of III *prol.* 45-8 checked me and threw me out as I read it, and before I had time to look at the note I had hit by conjecture on what I there found to be the MS reading; but not every corruption is so slight.

III 2 5 gives not only a good sense but exactly the right sense. A panther had fallen into a pit, and the country-folk came and threw stones at it; a few however were sorry for the poor creature, sure to die even if nobody molested it, *periturae quippe, quamvis nemo laederet*, and they threw it food instead. The panther after all made its escape in the night, and a day or two later it returned and fell with tooth and claw upon man and beast. When the soft-hearted few implored it to spare their lives, it answered them 'memini quis me saxo petierit, | quis panem dedit: uos timere absistite, | illis reuertor hostis *qui me laeserunt*,' 17-19. In spite of this fingerpost the meaning of *quamvis nemo laederet* was beyond the medieval paraphrasts, and they substituted *qui neminem laesit*, as if the beast of prey were an injured innocent; and upon this hint Dr Postgate writes *quamvis nullum laederet*, in which even the tense is wrong. That he cites the *qui me laeserunt* of verse 19

as bearing him out, and says that *nemo* injures the purpose of the story, and exclaims 'what a reason for compassion!' all serves to indicate his frame of mind; and so does his charge of 'more than questionable Latinity' against *periturae . . . quamvis . . . laederet* (for *laesurus esset*), which is the same construction as *dabunt quamvis redeant* in Hor. *carm.* IV 2 39. There is a fable in Phaedrus about a wolf and a lamb, written for those 'qui fictis, causis innocentes opprimunt.'

IV *epil.* 7-9 'si non ingenium, certe breuitatem adproba, | quae commendari tanto debet iustius | quanto poetae sunt molesti ualidius.' Phaedrus says that his brevity is the more to his credit because he is one of a tedious tribe. This plain and excellent sense Dr Postgate somehow manages to miss; to fortify himself in error he calls *poetae* stupid and intolerable and says it completely stultifies the poem; and to have his own way he writes *cantores* instead. Such iron resolve may be a good thing in its proper place, but in criticism it is less desirable than perception and consideration.

V 10 6. The old hound 'obiectus hispidi pugnae suis | arripuit aurem, sed cariosis dentibus | praedam dimisit. *hic tunc* uenator dolens | canem obiurgabat.' *hic tunc* is both appropriate and idiomatic; but modern editors of Phaedrus are much too full of themselves to find that out, and when Mueller had conjectured *hoc tunc* and Mr Havet *dimisit hietans* it was more natural for Dr Postgate to write *ricтус* in emulation than to bethink himself of Hand Turs. III p. 79 or Mayor on Iuu. III 21. What he says against *hic tunc* is that it 'has no friends.'

At the end of *app.* 27 the medieval paraphrasts, not understanding what they read, have added *sic uerbis mutuo se deluserunt* or similar absurdities. Dr Postgate makes this into a verse, *sic uerbis illi se luserunt inuicem*, marks the poem as mutilated, and calls it 'an ironical composition in which the mutual insincerities of a pair of lovers are transfixed.' It treats of no such matter: all the insincerity is on one side.

I think that Dr Postgate is rather

too fond of these paraphrasts. Their *altitonans* or *Iuppiter intonans ab aethere* at I 2 28 does not justify him in writing *Tonans* for *deus*: it seems to be merely a poetical gewgaw like the others in Mr Havet's notes on I 3 11 and 12 9. At I 21 5, instead of *ad eum*, which is in the MSS and the paraphrasts as well, he writes *spumans*, which is only in the paraphrasts. A more plausible and certainly ingenious conjecture is '*quae* (better *cui*) *dorsum cum tuludisset inuitae diu*,' based on their *tundens dorsum eius*, for the '*quam dorso cum tulisset inuita et diu*' of the MSS at *app.* 24 2. In the attempt to reconstruct lost fables of Phaedrus from the prose of the paraphrases he has taken more pains than his predecessors and practised more self-restraint.

Dr Postgate has shown on other occasions that his ear for the Latin iambic is not perfect, and some of his conjectures here are metrically insecure or vicious. Phaedrus has no such verses as the *illius se miscere antidoto toxicum* and the *Demetrius rex qui Phalereus dictus est* which he offers at I 14 8 and V 1 1, nor as the *ego illius pro semita feci uiam* which he adopts from Johnson at III *prol.* 38; and *fab. nou.* 8 1 is astonishing. At *app.* 12 4 he fills out the verse by inserting *ea* before *ait*: there are probably more than two such elisions in Latin poetry, but I have only noticed two, and neither is in Phaedrus.

The preface gives a clear and comprehensive account of the MSS and the other sources of the text, and the papers in British and American journals of the last two years to which the reader is constantly referred contain matter of value. An orderly and intelligible apparatus criticus, as several

volumes of this series have shown, is a gift not always to be expected from an English editor. Dr Postgate's notes on I 19 7, 28 5, IV 9 5, 17 8 and 10, 18 14, 20 15, V 5 1, *app.* 13 25, 14 10, 15 10, appear to have been written before he knew what his text was going to be, or after he had forgotten what it was. Some of them, e.g. I 28 5, are merely wrong-end-foremost and cause nothing worse than annoyance and delay. Others tell us things which we could infer for ourselves and hide from us things which we cannot: that P has *catulos posset* in I 19 7 might have been said by silence, but who is to know that D has *posset catulos*? The MS reading is not discoverable from the notes on III *prol.* 22 and *app.* 9 2, nor the source of the text from those on III 19 8, IV 17 10, V 5 1, *app.* 9 2, 15 10. The note on III *prol.* 20 contains a wrong statement, and those on III 6 2 and *app.* 4 22 must inevitably mislead. Such particulars as '*xystum* Salmasius, *xistum* P' and '*umor* Havet, *humor* NV' could better be spared than the information that *ni* in *app.* 15 8 is a correction of Mueller's and the MSS have *nisi*. A part of the notes on IV 17 belongs to 16, and there are misprints or other slips in the apparatus at I 12 1, 21 2, 22 8, 26 4, II 3 2, 9 18, IV 1 6, 15 13, *app.* 20 3, and in the text (apart from errors of punctuation) at *app.* 25 2. The name of Heinsius is missing at I 13 13 sq., and Jannelli's rather than Mueller's should appear at *app.* 7 4. The conjecture *logis* ascribed to me at III *prol.* 37 had been anticipated, though I cannot say by whom; and I do not remember proposing *frondosum* in *app.* 6 2.

A. E. HOUSMAN.