FIVE INTERPOLATIONS IN LATIN POETRY[*]

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SUMMARY

It is suggested that there have been interpolations of one or more lines at Hor. *epist.* 1.7.20, Iuv. 3.260-1, Lucan. 2.605-7, Verg. *Aen.* 9.579; and that there has been interpolation of a single word to restore metre at Prop. 2.13.48.

KEYWORDS

Interpolations, Latin poetry, manuscript tradition.

RESUMEN

Se sugiere que se han interpolado uno o más versos en Hor. *epist.* 1.7.20, Iuv. 3.260-1, Lucan. 2.206-7, Verg. *Aen.* 9.579, y que se ha producido una interpolación de una sola palabra en Prop. 2.13.48 para restaurar la métrica.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Interpolaciones, poesía latina, tradición manuscrita.

So long as an interpolation makes some sort of sense, it can easily remain unnoticed; here are five examples, of which four involve the interpolation of one or more lines, while one is a metrical interpolation designed to restore metre after the loss of a word.

1. HORACE *EPISTLES* 1.7.20

> *'ut libet; haec porcis hodie comedenda relinques.'*
> *prodigus et stultus donat quae spernit et odit:*   20
> *haec seges ingratos tulit et feret omnibus annis.*
> *uir bonus et sapiens dignis ait esse paratus,*
> *nec tamen ignorat quid distent aera lupinis.*

The generosity of Maecenas differs from the Calabrian host's attempt to give away his pears in two respects: 1) Maecenas gives away what is of genuine value to himself. 2) He gives exclusively to worthy recipients. By contrast the Calabrian gives indiscriminately to men and to pigs, and what he gives is of no value to himself. But what has line 20 to do with this? Even if it is meant primarily as a generalisation, it should at least include the case of the Calabrian, and it does nothing of the sort. There are no grounds for calling him *prodigus*, for there is no reason to suppose that he would squander anything of genuine value; nor is he *stultus*, for there is nothing better to do with pears that he cannot eat himself nor sell in the market - no peasant would be so foolish as to cast pears before swine if he could get money for them; nor is it true that he *spernit et odit* the fruit that he has himself grown. Therefore it is clear that whoever wrote line 20 did not understand the passage; therefore line 20 was not written by Horace. It is in fact very reminiscent of the fatuous generalisations that have been insinuated into the MS tradition of Juvenal; cf. the note on Iuv. 3.260-1 below. The removal of line 20 puts the beneficiaries of the Calabrian host and of the *uir bonus et sapiens* in closer and more effective contrast:

> *'ut libet; haec porcis hodie comedenda relinques.'*   19
> *haec seges ingratos tulit et feret omnibus annis;*   21
> *uir bonus et sapiens dignis ait esse paratus,*
> *nec tamen ignorat quid distent aera lupinis.*

E. Fraenkel gives detailed consideration to 20-23 and points out the formal and metrical equivalence of *uir bonus et sapiens* and *prodigus et stultus*, but this equivalence could easily derive not from Horace himself but from an interpolator's desire to imitate[1]. Fraenkel attributes to 20-21 and 22-23 'the strictest possible symmetry', but if any symmetry is intended it is violated by the fact that lines 20 and 21 do not have the same subject unlike lines 22 and 23.

M. J. McGann advances the minority opinion that the *prodigus et stultus* is not the Calabrian; this is confirmation of the difficulty but not in itself convincing[2]. If the *prodigus et stultus* were someone other than the Calabrian but of more or less equal importance, he would need to be as vividly drawn, which is certainly not the case.

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[1] E. Fraenkel. *Horace*, Oxford 1957, 329-30.
[2] M. J. McGann, *Studies in Horace's First Book of Epistles*, Brussels 1959, 49.

2. Juvenal 3.260-1

nam si procubuit qui saxa Ligustica portat
axis et euersum fudit super agmina montem,
quid superest de corporibus? quis membra, quis ossa
inuenit? obtritum uolgi perit omne cadauer   260
more animae. domus interea secura patellas
iam lauat et bucca foculum excitat et sonat unctis
striglibus et pleno componit lintea guto.
haec inter pueros uarie properantur, at ille
iam sedet in ripa taetrumque nouicius horret   265
porthmea ...

We will take the difficulties of 260-1 in the order in which they occur:

1) *inuenit* would be better as a future; Juvenal ought to be asking, 'what is left of the bodies of the victims? and who will find their bones and limbs?' (*sc. ubi marmor sublatum erit*). The immediate consequences of the accident are still in the mind's eye, and the remains are still hidden beneath tons of rubble. It might, it is true, be justified as an excited present for future, but it would be poor writing to put such a present in the middle of half a dozen genuine presents.

2) *uolgi .... omne cadauer* is very unsatisfactory. If it is a generalisation, as the use of *uolgi* and *omne* suggests, it is a singularly foolish one; such deaths are rare, and commoners do not in fact get squashed any flatter than the rich by the contents of overturning wagons. If it refers to the consequences of this particular accident, it is a superfluous expansion of what we have already been told, and *uolgi* seems unduly hyperbolic. Braund accepts Emerita's *uulgo*, and translates 'every corpse, crushed indiscriminately, disappears like its soul' with a reference to *OLD sv uulgo* 4[3]; but the line would still be a generalisation and would still treat a very rare form of death as a common one, and it would still be untrue to allege that 'every corpse' disappears. The interpolator was perhaps misled by the preceding questions, which mean not that the body completely disappears but that it is reduced to a pulp in which individual bones and body parts can no longer be distinguished.

3) *more animae* is untrue (see above); it is also quite inappropriate; Juvenal very likely believed that death means the extinction of body and soul (cf. 2.149ff.), but he would not spoil the imminent contrast between the expectant household and the new boy in the Underworld by insisting here that there is nothing which survives death. E. Courtney writes: '*Animae* means the breath of life, not the soul which survives (264-7)'[4]. However the con-

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[3] S. M. Braund, *Juvenal Satires Book 1*, Cambridge 1996.
[4] E. Courtney, *A Commentary on the Satires of Juvenal*, London 1980.

trast with *corpus* is so strong here that any ordinary reader would surely have taken *anima* as 'soul' in this context.

4) *interea* is more forceful if it follows directly on the description of the scene of the accident.

All these problems can be cured by simply excising *obtritum .... animae* and putting *inuenit* into the future:

quid superest de corporibus? quis membra, quis ossa	259
inueniet? domus interea secura patellas	260 / 261
iam lauat	262

There are numerous parallels for such interpolations in Juvenal, whether we take it as an obtuse generalisation (cf. e.g. 1.14; 4.8; 5.66; 5.140; 6.188; 6.460; 10.323; 11.99) or as an otiose expansion (cf. e.g. 3.242; 3.281; 8.202-3; 8.258; 13.166). For Binneninterpolationen (i.e. interpolations which begin and end in the middle of lines), cf. G. Jachmann, *Binneninterpolation* in *Textgeschichtliche Studien* (ed. C. Gnilka), *Beiträge zur Klassischen Philologie* 143, Königsten 1962, 528-80[5]. H. Parker and S. Braund very sensibly propose as 'the best guide' for detecting interpolated lines in Juvenal the question: 'Do the lines spell out something that the poem has just told you (only with more wit)?'[6]. It will, I hope, be agreed that their diagnostic test has been met satisfactorily in this instance.

3. Lucan 2.605-7

The simile which describes Pompey's retreat to Brundisium, is based on Verg. *georg.* 3.220-36; it runs as follows:

pulsus ut armentis primo certamine taurus	
siluarum secreta petit uacuosque per agros	
exul in adversis explorat cornua truncis	
nec redit in pastus nisi cum ceruice recepta	
excussi placuere tori, mox reddita uictor	605
quoslibet in saltus comitantibus agmina tauris	
inuito pastore trahit, sic uiribus impar	
tradidit Hesperiam profugusque per Apula rura	
Brundisii tutas concessit Magnus in arces.	

[5] Originally published in *Nachrichten von der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen (phil-hist. Kl.)* N.S. 1, 1936, 123-44, 185-215. Cf. also R. G. M. Nisbet (ed. S.J. Harrison), *Collected Papers on Latin Literature*, Oxford 1995, 19-28; 227-30; 280-4.

[6] H. Parker, S. Braund, "Imperial Satire and the Scholars", in S. Braund, J. Osgood, edd., *A Companion to Persius and Juvenal*, Malden MA-Oxford 2012, 452.

E. Fantham describes 605-7 as 'surprising'[7]; it is significant that she produces a number of Virgilian parallels for the wording of the rest of the simile but none for *mox .... uictor*, which goes some way towards confirming that we are dealing with the products of two different workshops.

Likewise D. R. Shackleton Bailey observes ad loc: *'et tauris* (*paruis* Bentley) *et victor taurus Pompeio fugienti neque mox victuro assimilatus suspicionem movent*[8]. Fantham identifies the accompanying bulls with 'Pompey's noble associates like Domitius and the consuls'; but in the terms of the simile other bulls would not be welcome allies but dangerous rivals to be driven away. Furthermore, there is no sense whatever in *inuito pastore* either as part of the simile or with reference to Pompey's position, and *quoslibet in saltus* is little better. Even if sense could be made of the details, nothing could less resemble Pompey's retreat to Brundisium and his eventual flight from Italy than the triumphant return of a victorious bull to his former pastures.

Despite Fantham, it is intolerably obscure that '*uictor* would stand for his hope of victory in Greece and *quoslibet in saltus* for his freedom to return to Italy or any other Roman territory', seeing that his hope was never to be fulfilled and that he was never free to return.

On the other hand, if the simile ended at *tori*, it would be a model of appropriateness; the defeated bull retiring to recover its strength and not returning unless (*nisi*) it does so agrees perfectly with Pompey's retreat to Brundisium, from which he was unable to return as he did not in fact recover his strength. We may express the argument as follows: Lucan was a competent writer who understood his own words; therefore he did not write *mox .... trahit*. We may reasonably suppose that some poetaster tried his own hand at simile-writing by providing an untimely expansion of *redit in pastus*. Remove the Binneninterpolation and write:

exul in aduersis explorat cornua truncis	
nec redit in pastus nisi cum ceruice recepta	604
excussi placuere tori; sic uiribus impar	605 / 607
tradidit Hesperiam	608

4. PROPERTIUS 2.13.48

Here we have a case of metrical interpolation, i.e. the insertion of a word so as to restore metre in a line which has suffered the accidental loss of the correct word.

[7] E. Fantham, *Lucan de Bello Civili II*, Cambridge 1992.
[8] D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Lucanus: de Bello Civili*, Stuttgart 1988.

> *Nestoris est uisus post tria saecla cinis.*
> *cui si longaeuae minuissent fata senectae*
> *Gallicus Iliacis miles in aggeribus,*
> *non ille Antilochi uidisset corpus humari,*

Gallicus Iliacis is the reading of the MSS, and Housman very properly denounces 'the great and manifest absurdity' of *Gallicus*[9]. The absurdity of *in* is just as great, though less manifest. Depending on its epithet (*Iliacus Grais* was casually suggested by T. Bergk and is accepted by S. J. Heyworth[10]), *in aggeribus* will mean either 'within the fortifications of Troy' or 'within the Greek camp'. But Nestor was never at risk within either set of fortifications; furthermore, he would have been just as dead if killed fighting in the plain, where he was often at risk and where he came into particularly grave danger on the occasion described at *Il.* 8.80ff.

Therefore we must make the minute change of *in* to *ab*; Nestor would not have seen his son's burial if he had previously been killed by a soldier *from* Troy. A somewhat similar expression can be found at 1.21.2 *miles ab Etruscis saucius aggeribus.*

What are we to do with *Gallicus*? We know that Nestor would have been just as dead wherever he was killed; we also know that he would have been just as dead whoever killed him. This refutes all those epithets which exclude either the Trojans themselves or their far-called allies.

The best of the existing suggestions is the anonymous *barbarus* accepted by W. A. Camps[11]; cf. Hor. *carm.* 2.4.9[12] for the use of *barbarus* to mean 'non-Greek' of the Trojans and their allies jointly. Palaeography cannot explain the change of *barbarus* to *Gallicus*, but it could conceivably be a deliberate or accidental alteration by one of the French scribes to whom we owe the preservation of Propertius; the Crusades saw many a *Gallicus miles* (*miles* of course means 'knight' in medieval Latin) fighting in Asia.

However, reading *ab* for *in*, we can suggest a more plausible context for interpolation. Read:

> *Iliacis <ueniens> miles ab aggeribus,*

Discounting two virgulae, *ueniens* and *miles* both contain five letters, both begin with at least two minims, and both end with *-es*. If *uẽiẽs* was absorbed by *miles*, a French scribe might have restored metre and intro-

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[9] A. E. Housman, *M. Manilii Astronomica*, London 1903, I, xlv.
[10] S. J. Heyworth, *Sexti Properti Elegi*, Oxford 2007.
[11] W. A. Camps, *Propertius Elegies Book II*, Cambridge 1967.
[12] Cf. R. G. M. Nisbet, M. Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace, Odes Book II*, Oxford 1978 *ad loc.*

duced his native land by interpolating *Gallicus*. Propertius has *ueniens* in the same position at 4.7.18 *alterna ueniens in tua colla manu*; cf also Verg. *Aen.* 10.544 *Caeculus et ueniens Marsorum montibus Vmbro* (some Carolingian MSS have *ex montibus*, very likely rightly).

5. Virgil *Aeneid* 9.579

> *hunc primo leuis hasta Themillae*
> *strinxerat, ille manum proiecto tegmine demens*
> *ad uulnus tulit; ergo alis adlapsa sagitta*
> *et laeuo infixa est alte lateri, abditaque intus*   579
> *spiramenta animae letali uulnere rupit.*

Such is the reading of the Oxford Text of R.A.B. Mynors. For line 579, the MSS present the following:

> *et laeuo infixa est lateri manus, abditaque intus*

where the only significant variation is *adfixa* (P and Servius's lemma) for *infixa*. Gemoll suggested *eminus* for *manus*. *alte lateri* is the suggestion of Housman[13]. He argues that *alte* was absorbed by *lateri* and that *manus* is a metrical interpolation, while *adfixa* is a consequent 'conjectural emendation .... invented to suit the *manus* which is now the subject of the clause, *infixa* refers to the *sagitta* which ought to be its subject.' Housman's objections to the text with *infixa .... manus* are threefold: 1) the text with *infixa* has Privernus's hand driven into his side, which is ludicrous 2) 'the left side is the very last place where a man who was carrying a shield would be grazed by a spear' 3) the text says that Privernus received his mortal wound not from the arrow but from his own hand. However, it should be observed that elision of an anapaest in this place is very rare and in Virgil occurs only at *Aen.* 2.658; 4.420; 8.96[14]. Furthermore, J. Dingel observes that both Gemoll's *eminus* and Housman's *alte* are pointless fillers, the former because every arrow comes *eminus*, the latter because it adds nothing to *infixa .... abditaque intus*[15]. The arguments of Kinsey are strong against Housman but unconvincing in favour of the reading of the MSS[16].

G. Wakefield printed *adfixa* and altered *et* to *ut*, giving[17]:

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[13] Housman, *M. Manilii Astronomica*, I, lxv.

[14] Cf. E. Norden, *P. Vergilius Maro Aeneis Buch VI*, Stuttgart 1957[4], 455, who suggests that they are borrowings from earlier poetry.

[15] J. Dingel, *Kommentar zum 9. Buch der Aeneis Vergils*, Heidelberg 1997, *ad loc.*

[16] T. F. Kinsey, "Virgil, Aeneid 9.578-80", *LCM* 13, 1988, 80.

[17] G. Wakefield, *P. Virgilii Maronis Opera*, London 1796. Housman, perhaps deterred by Wakefield's *Lucretius*, seems not to have looked into Wakefield's *Virgil* or *Horace*. If he

> *ergo alis adlapsa sagitta,*
> *ut laeuo adfixa est lateri manus, abditaque intus*
> *spiramenta animae letali uulnere rupit.*

Some *auctores* carry more *auctoritas* than others, and it is possible that
this is what editors would print if it had been suggested by Housman and if
Wakefield had suggested *alte lateri* for *lateri manus*. Yet the line is clumsy
and unnecessary however we take it; it should be deleted as an incompe-
tent attempt to conclude the history of the *manus* referred to immediately
above. Read:

> *ergo alis adlapsa sagitta*
> *spiramenta animae letali uulnere rupit.*

This says all that needs to be said - he was grazed by a spear; he dropped
his shield; as a result he was killed by an arrow - and Virgil can have had no
motive to spoil his description by adding 579. It should be added that Peer-
lkamp observes '*oratio melius ita procederet "ergo alis adlapsa sagitta*
/ spiramenta animae letali uulnere rupit, / et laevo adfixa est lateri
manus": deletis "abditaque intus" '[18]. G. B. Conte brackets at *laeuo adfixa*
est lateri as a parenthesis[19]. This recognises, but fails to cure, the awkward-
ness of the expression. Finally, O. Zwierlein produces so much evidence for
interpolation in Virgil, that the discovery of a hitherto unsuspected example
need occasion no surprise[20].

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had been aware of Wakefield's suggestion here, he would have mentioned it as at least being
diagnostic of the difficulty. Similarly, at Hor. *S.* 2.3.172 Housman (*CPh* 1, 179-80) suggests
ecfundere for *et ludere*, observing that '*effundere* has already been proposed by Hamacher'.
W. Hamacher, *Schedae Criticae: insunt aliquot Emendationes Propertianae*, Trier 1858,
18 writes 'v.172 effundere *non* et ludere'; however, neither Hamacher nor Housman can have
read G. Wakefield, *Q. Horatii Flacci quae supersunt*, London 1794: 'Effundere *vidi: Haud*
equidem veritus sum loco difficillimo consulere, et propriam coniecturam, ad litterarum
ductum proxime accedentem, in textum importare: nec fortasse doctorum iudicia, de hac
re habita, me criminis postulabunt.'

[18] P. H. Peerlkamp, *P. Virgilii Maronis Aeneidos Libri*, Leiden 1843.
[19] G. B. Conte, *P. Vergilius Maro Aeneis*, Berlin & New York 2009.
[20] O. Zwierlein, *Die Ovid- und Vergil-Revision in tiberischer Zeit*, Berlin 1999, 17-63.