

TEXTUAL PROBLEMS IN THE POEMS OF SIDONIUS APOLLINARIS

Abstract: Several passages of Sidonius Apollinaris are explained.
Key words: Sidonius Apollinaris, textual criticism.

Resumen: Se explican diversos pasajes de Sidonius Apollinaris.
Palabras clave: Sidonius Apollinaris, crítica textual.

2. 8

*tuque o cui laurea, Iane,
annua debetur, religa torpore soluto
quavis fronde comas*

S. Bailey¹ pointed out that scholars have been puzzled by the meaning of *quavis fronde*, and suggested that the poet wrote *quavis fronte* “on whichever brow you please.” S. Bailey explained that Janus “was two-faced (*bifrons*), and poets are apt to remind us of the fact.” Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. Previous scholars have failed to understand that *quavis*² means here *quavis ratione*. We should translate as follows:

“Bind your hair with a garland for whatever reason you like (*quavis*)³.”

2. 487

*circumspice taedas
antiquas: par nulla tibi sic copula praesto est.*

S. Bailey⁴ noted that scholars have been puzzled by the meaning of these lines. I would like to suggest that we should translate as follows:

“no equal (*par*) union (i.e. between two royals) thus presents itself as a hostile rival (*scil.* to your wedding) to you⁵”.

¹ Cf. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Selected Papers*, The University Of Michigan Press 2000, page 22 f. I have used this interesting and informative article as the starting point of my research.

² Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *quavis*: “*unus amet quavis aspergere cunctos*, i.e. *quavis ratione*, Hor. S. 1, 4, 87.”

³ Løyen’s explanation (in his Budé edition of Sidonius) is correctly rejected by S. Bailey: the laurel does not offer any “protection” to the god.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, page 23.

⁵ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *praesto* 11, B: “With *esse*, to present one’s self in a hostile manner, to resist, oppose.”

Praesto esse alicui means either “be at someone’s disposal” (to help) or “approach someone in a hostile manner.”

2. 429

*pectora bis cingunt zonae, parvisque papillis
invidiam facit ipse sinus.*

Scholars (cf. S. Bailey, *op. cit.*, page 23 f.) have been puzzled by these two lines. The most precise is Anderson, who notes in his Loeb edition *ad loc.* “The meaning is not clear ... *invidiam facere* regularly means ‘to bring reproach upon’”. The meaning of the passage is clear, as I shall now show. *Sinus* in the sense “upper fold of her robe” (cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *sinus* II, A) is here opposed to *pars extima pep̄li*, line 430⁶. The sense is that the upper fold of her robe brought reproach upon her small breasts⁷, because her décolletage was too daring⁸.

5. 293

*sic fatur et illum
rure iubet patrio suetos mutare labores,
fatorum currente rota, quo disceret agri
quid possessorem maneat, quos denique mores
ius civile parēt, ne solam militis artem
ferret ad imperium.*

line 295 *agri* Luetjohann, *agro* codd.

The reader will note that Luetjohann⁹ printed the alteration *agri* in line 295. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. We should translate as follows:

“so that he might learn what is in store for a possessor (i.e. an owner) in his land (*agro*)¹⁰.”

5. 312

*iam tunc imperium praesentis principis aurea
volvebant bona fata colu; sed publica damna
invidiam fugere viri. quicumque fuerunt
nomen in Augustum lecti, tenuere relictum
Caesaribus solium; postquam tu capta laboras,
hic quod habet fecit.*

S. Bailey¹¹ noted that scholars have been puzzled by the meaning of this passage. Perfect sense can, however, be made of the transmitted text if we place a full stop after *fugere*, and translate as follows:

⁶ Cf. Ovid, *Amores* I, 4, 37, where *sinus* is distinguished from *papillis*.

⁷ As Løyen notes *ad loc.*, small *papillae* were thought to be beautiful, cf. Ovid, *Rem. Am.* 337, and *Thes.*, s.v. *papilla* 255, 25 f.

⁸ I owe this observation to Prof. G. Giangrande. Either the *sinus* is personified (for *ipse* cf. e.g. Dracontius, *Orest.* 122) or *facit* is causative.

⁹ Cf. S. Bailey, *op. cit.*, page 24.

¹⁰ *Agro* is *ablativus locativus*, cf. e.g. Ovid, *Met.* 7, 547 *agrisque*.

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, page 24 f.

“but public calamities avoided envy. And those men who were chosen (*viri quicumque fuerunt / ... lecti*) ...”

5. 415

*pars poplite secto
mortis ad invidiam vivit.*

Scholars¹² have been puzzled by the meaning of these words. I would like to suggest that Death¹³ has been personified. We should translate as follows:

“Some live, but their knees have been cut due to the envy of Death (*Mortis ad¹⁴ invidiam*).”¹⁵

7. 97

*plus, summe deorum,
sum iusto tibi visa potens quod Parthicus ultro
restituit mea signa Sapor positoque tiara
funera Crassorum flevit dum purgat. et hinc iam
(pro dolor!) excusso populi iure atque senatus
quod timui incurri; sum tota in principe, tota
principis, et fio lacerum de Caesare regnum,
quae quondam regina fui.*

S. Bailey¹⁶ noted that scholars have been puzzled by the meaning of the words *quod timui incurri*. I would like to suggest that we should translate as follows:

“because (*quod¹⁷*) I was afraid, I committed a fault (*incurri¹⁸*).”

7. 164

*solverat in partum generosa puerpera casti
ventris onus; manifesta dedi mox signa futuri
principis ac totam fausto trepidi patris aulam
implevi augurio. licet idem grandia nati
culparet fata et pueri iam regna videret,
sed sibi commissum tanto sub pignore cernens
mundi depositum, ne quid tibi, Roma, periret,
iuvat fortunam studio.*

¹² Cf. S. Bailey, *op. cit.*, page 25.

¹³ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *mors* I, B, 1: “Personified.”

¹⁴ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *ad* I, D, 3, a: “The moving cause, in consequence of.”

¹⁵ For *invida* as an epithet of *Mors* cf. Carter, *Epitheta deorum*, s.v. *Mors*.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, page 25.

¹⁷ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *quod* I, 1: “That, in that, because.”

¹⁸ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *incurro* II, B, 2: “To commit a fault.”

S. Bailey¹⁹ was puzzled by the meaning of this passage. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. We should translate as follows:

“although he found fault with the great calamities (*fata*²⁰) of his son, and foresaw already the tyranny (*regna*²¹) of the boy ...”

7. 195

*quam pulchrum, cum forte domum post lustra revertens
horrore splenderet apri virtusque repugnans
proderet invitum per fortia facta pudorem!*

S. Bailey²² argued that *invictum* should be printed in line 197. I would like to point out, however, that the mss. reading *invitum* provides perfect sense. We should translate as follows:

“he should be illustrious (*splenderet*) due to terror (*horrore*), and resisting the courage of a boar, he should show a reluctant (*invitum*) blush (*pudorem*²³) due to his brave deeds.”

7. 248

*qui proxima quaeque
discursu, flammis, ferro, feritate, rapinis
delebant, pacis fallentes nomen inane.*

Scholars²⁴ have been puzzled by the meaning of these lines. I would like to suggest that we should translate as follows:

“they destroyed all things near them by the rape of Peace (*rapinis* / ... *Pacis*²⁵), concealing a worthless reputation (*nomen*²⁶).”

7. 272

*sic Phrygium Emathia victorem cuspide poscens
Aeacides caeso luctum frenavit amico,
per mortes tot, Troia, tuas iam vilia per se
agmina contentus ruere strictumque per amplos
exerere gladium populos; natat obruta tellus
sanguine, dumque hebetat turba grave caedua telum,
absens in cuncto sibi vulnere iam cadit Hector.*

¹⁹ *Op. cit.*, page 25 f.

²⁰ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *fatum* II, B, 2, a: “Bad fortune.”

²¹ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *regnum* B, 2: “In a bad sense, despotism, tyranny.” Cf. Ovid, *Fasti* 6, 189 *dam-natus crimine regni*.

²² *Op. cit.*, page 26.

²³ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *pudor* II, B: “A blush.”

The “blush” of line 197 is paralleled by line 199 *roseo sudum radiabat ab ore*.

²⁴ Cf. S. Bailey, *op. cit.*, page 26.

²⁵ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *pax* 2: “Personified: *Pax*, the goddess of peace.”

²⁶ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *nomen* II, A: “Of ill repute, bad reputation.”

Scholars²⁷ have been puzzled by the meaning of line 274. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. We should translate as follows:

“due to your many deaths, Troy, he was content to cast down (*ruere*²⁸) troops (*agmina*) which were now worthless due to him.”

7. 295

*haec post gesta viri (temet, Styx livida, testor)
intemerata mihi praefectus iura regebat,
et caput hoc sibimet solitis defessa ruinis
Gallia suscipiens Getica pallebat ab ira.*

S. Bailey²⁹ explained that Jupiter is speaking. I would like to point out that Jupiter states that the laws of Rome are “inviolable” (*intemerata*³⁰) as far as he is concerned. The temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus (the guardian of Rome) stood on the Capitol³¹.

7. 403

*obstupere duces pariter Scythicusque senatus
et timere suam pacem ne forte negaret.
sic rutilus Phaethonta levem cum carperet axis
iam pallente die flagrantique excita mundo
pax elementorum fureret, sqq.*

S. Bailey³² was puzzled by the meaning of *pallente* in line 406. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. The Day (*Dies*³³) is said to have grown pale with fear (*pallente*³⁴) when Phaethon drove his chariot.

²⁷ Cf. S. Bailey, *op. cit.*, page 26 f., who alters *iam* into *tam*.

²⁸ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *ruo* II: “Act., to cast down with violence.”

In other words, *iam* means that, after Achilles had killed so many enemies (*per mortes tot*), the *agmina* he further killed were by then (*iam*) *vilia per se* “of no importance in themselves and their deaths would bring him no glory”, as S. Bailey himself writes.

²⁹ *Op. cit.*, page 27.

³⁰ Cf. Virgil, *Aen.* 2, 143 *intemerata fides*.

³¹ *Mihi* is taken by editors to go with *regebat* (“le héros fut l’un de mes Préfets”, Loyen; “he was my Prefect” (Anderson). S. Bailey thinks that *intemerata mihi* must be placed within the parenthesis, and that *Styx intemerata mihi* alludes to Claud. *Rapt.* 1, 111, *Stygiamque paludem, di cuius iurare timent et fallere numen*. But *intemerata* would be inappropriate to Styx, because it is obvious that “Jupiter has never broken an

oath by the Styx” (so S. Bailey). Here *intemerata* refers to *iura*: the laws of the emperor are inviolable: cf. Verg. *Aen.* 2, 143 *intemerata fides*, as explained by Forbiger, who refers to 2, 541 *iura fidemque*.

Mihi is an “ethic dative”, as S. Bailey has not perceived because *iura* (cf. Verg. *Aen.* 2, 141 ff., 541) are the prerogative of the gods; *intemerata* is predicative. In his encomium of Avitus, Jupiter says “he administered on my behalf the laws that were not violated”: Avitus’ government was so severe that no law was violated under his rule.

³² *Op. cit.*, page 28.

³³ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *dies* III: “*Dies* personified ... I. q. Sol ... coupled with *Mensis* and *Annus*, Ov. *Met.* 2, 25.”

³⁴ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *palleo* II, B: “To grow pale at anything, to be anxious or fearful.”

The personified *Dies* became pale with concern and fear when she saw that the inexperienced Phaethon was imprudently driving the chariot.

7. 423

*nec dicere saltim
desidiae obtentu possum te proelia nolle:
pacem fortis amas. iam partes sternit Avitus;
insuper et Geticas praemissus continet iras
Messianus; adhuc mandasti, et ponimus arma.*

S. Bailey³⁵ noted that the meaning of this passage has puzzled the critics. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. We should translate as follows:

“Avitus is now destroying your side (*partes*³⁶).”

11. 86

*te quoque multimodis ambisset, Hiberia, ludis
axe Pelops, cursu Hippomenes luctaque Achelous,
Aeneas bellis spectatus, Gorgone Perseus.*

S. Bailey³⁷ explained that “Venus compliments the bride, Hiberia.” Textual alteration is, however once again not necessary. The poet states that Aeneas was admired (*spectatus*³⁸) by Lavinia due to warfare (*bellis*), whereas Perseus was admired by Andromeda due to his conquest of the Gorgon.

15. 162

*Taenaron hic frustra bis rapta coniuge pulsat
Thrax fidibus, legem postquam temeravit Averni,
et prodesse putans iterum non respicit umbram.
hic vovet Alceste praelato coniuge vitam
rumpere, quam cernas Parcarum vellere in ipso
nondum pernetam fato praestante salutem.*

S. Bailey³⁹ explained that the poet refers here to the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. Orpheus⁴⁰ guided Eurydice from Hades by the sound of his lyre. The poet states that Orpheus disturbs (*pulsat*⁴¹) Taenarus with his lyre (*fidibus*), and thinking that not looking back is in his favour (*prodesse*), he does not look back at Eurydice’s shade again.

³⁵ *Op. cit.*, page 29.

³⁶ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *pars* II, A: “A party, faction, side, etc. (usu. in plur.)” Note that the possessive adjective has been omitted, as often in direct speech.

³⁷ *Op. cit.*, page 30.

³⁸ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *spectatus* B: “In gen., looked up to, respected, esteemed.”

S. Bailey argued that the text makes no sense. However, *ludis*, as S. Bailey has not perceived, implies

that Aeneas was such a good soldier that *bellum* was for him a *ludus*, cf. *Thes.* s.v. *ludus* 1794, 22.

³⁹ *Op. cit.*, page 30.

⁴⁰ Cf. Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*, Middlesex 1972, reprint, vol. I, page 112.

⁴¹ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *pulso* II, A: “... to disturb” ... (*urbes rumoribus*, Petr. p. 679).

S. Bailey was perplexed by the meaning of *prodesse*. His perplexity is, however, not justified.

15. 193

*perge libens, neu tu damnes fortasse iugari,
quod noster iubet ille senex qui non piger hausit
numina condemnans Anyto pallente venenum.*

line 195 *contemplans* Wilamowitz : v. l. *condempnans, condempnens, contempnens*

S. Bailey⁴² noted that this passage refers to “Socrates drinking the hemlock.” I would like to point out that the variant reading *contemnens* provides perfect sense. Socrates is described as “despising the gods” (*numina contemnens*⁴³). Savaro explained that there is a reference to Socrates’ “alleged atheism⁴⁴”.

17. 7

*nec per multiplices abaco splendente cavernas
argenti nigri pondera defodiam.*

S. Bailey⁴⁵ noted that the critics have been puzzled by the meaning of these lines. He correctly sees that Loyen takes *defodere* as a synonym of *effodere*, but maintains that such a meaning of *defodere* = *effodere* does not exist. In reality, *defodere* is well attested, in late Latin, in the sense “effodere”, “herausgraben”: cf. *Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch*, München 2007, s.v. *defodio*, I, b, γ.

22. 7

*et licet in carmen non passim laxet habenas
Phoebus et hic totis non pandat carbasa fandi,
quisque tamen tantos non laudans ore penates
inspicis, inspiceris: resonat sine voce voluntas;
nam tua te tacitum vivere silentia clamant.*

S. Bailey⁴⁶ was puzzled by the meaning of line 8. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. *Hic* means “at this time”: cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *hic* 11: “Of time ... *hic regina gravem poposcit pateram*, Verg. *Aen.* 1, 728.”

22. 74

*laeva parte tenet vasta dulcedine raucam
caelato Pythone lyram*

⁴² *Op. cit.*, page 31.

⁴³ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *contemno* : “despise, disdain.”

⁴⁴ S. Bailey thinks that *condemnans* means that “the death of Socrates was a condemnation of the gods who allowed it to happen.” S. Bailey contradicts Savaro, but Savaro is supported by Diog. Laert. II, 40.

Contemnens is apposite as a causal participle. Socrates was sentenced to death because he despised the traditional gods. S. Bailey preferred the variant *condemnans*. However, the gods could not be condemned by somebody who denied their existence.

⁴⁵ *Op. cit.*, page 31.

⁴⁶ *Op. cit.*, page 32.

S. Bailey⁴⁷ noted that scholars have been puzzled by the meaning of the words *vasta dulcedine*. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. The lyre is said to be noisy (*raucam*) due to its enormous sweetness (*vasta*⁴⁸ *dulcedine*).

22. 215

*lauri spatiabor in istis
frondibus, hic trepidam credam mihi credere Daphnen.*

S. Bailey⁴⁹ explained that the poet is referring to Daphne. Textual alteration is not necessary. We should translate as follows:

“I shall think that (*credam*) she trusts me (*mihi credere*⁵⁰).”

23. 228

*tum si forte fuit quod imperator
Eoas soceri venire in aures
fido interprete vellet et perito,
te commercia duplicis loquelae
doctum solvere protinus legebat.*

S. Bailey⁵¹ was puzzled by the meaning of *solvere*. Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. We should translate as follows:

“learned to unfetter (*solvere*⁵²) the intercourse of two tongues.”

Conclusion. I hope that I have made it clear to the reader that textual alteration is often not necessary if we have sufficient knowledge of the poet’s *Sprachgebrauch*.

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⁴⁷ *Op. cit.*, page 32.

⁴⁸ Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *vastus* II, C, 2 (of sounds: *clamor, murmur, latratus*, etc.).

The sound of the lyre could be so powerful as to equal the voice of a singer: cf. G. Giangrande, *Veleia* 23, 2006, page 393 f.

⁴⁹ *Op. cit.*, page 33.

⁵⁰ Note the use of falsa anaphora: cf. my *Studies In The Text Of Propertius* (Athens 2002), page 163.

S. Bailey cannot explain *credere*, which he alters into *cedere*. The fact that *credere* means “trusts” was already understood by Anderson, a fact which S. Bailey has overlooked.

⁵¹ *Op. cit.*, page 33.

⁵² Cf. Lewis-Short, s.v. *solvo* I, B, b: “*linguam solvere*, to unfetter the tongue, to give flow to words.”