FIVE INTERPOLATIONS IN LATIN POETRY

JOHN TRAPPES-LOMAX
trappeslomax@hotmail.co.uk

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.

Fecha de recepción: 24/11/2013
Fecha de aceptación y versión final: 15/07/2014

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:
haec seges ingratos tulit et feret omnibus annis.
uir bonus et sapiens dignis ait esse paratus,
nec tamen ignorat quid distent aera lupinis.

¹ My thanks are due to Exemplaria Classica’s anonymous readers for much helpful comment.

BIBLID [1699-3225 (2014) 18, 47-54]
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:

\begin{quote}
*ut libet; haec porcis hodie comedenda relinques.* \hfill 19

*haec seges ingratos tulit et feret omnibus annis;* \hfill 21

*uir bonus et sapiens dignis ait esse paratus,*

*nec tamen ignorat quid distent aera lupinis.*
\end{quote}

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 imitate¹. 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 convincing². 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.

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
more animae. domus interea secura patellas
iam lauat et bucca foculum excitat et sonat unctis
strigibus et pleno componit lintea guto.
haec inter pueros uarie properantur, at ille
iam sedet in ripa taetrumque nouicius horret
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 acci-
dent 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 consequenc-
es of this particular accident, it is a superfluous expansion of what we have
already been told, and uolgi seems unduly hyperbolic. Braund accepts Emer-
ita’s uulgo, and translates ‘every corpse, crushed indiscriminately, disappears
like its soul’ with a reference to OLD sv uulgo 4; 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; Juve-

3 S. M. Braund, Juvenal Satires Book 1, Cambridge 1996.
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:

\[
\text{quid superest de corporibus? quis membra, quis ossa} \quad 259 \\
\text{inueniet? domus interea secura patellas} \quad 260 \, / \, 261 \\
\text{iam lauat ....} \quad 262
\]

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, 528-805. 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:

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


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 fugiendi neque mox victuro assimilatus suspiccionem 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:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{exul in adversis explorat cornua truncis} \\
\text{nec redit in pastus nisi cum ceruice recepta} & \quad 604 \\
\text{excussi placuere tori; sic uiribus impar} & \quad 605 / 607 \\
\text{tradidit Hesperiam ....} & \quad 608
\end{align*}
\]

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.

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. Hey-
worth\(^10\), 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 II. 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 ex-
plain 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 uēiēs was
absorbed by miles, a French scribe might have restored metre and intro-

\(^12\) 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 laevo infixa est alte lateri, abditaque intus
> 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 laevo 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 Housman13. 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 MSS16.

G. Wakefield printed *adfixa* and altered *et* to *ut*, giving17:

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14 Cf. E. Norden, *P. Vergilius Maro Aeneis Buch VI*, Stuttgart 1957, 455, who suggests that they are borrowings from earlier poetry.
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 incompetent 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 Peerlkamp 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 manus as a parenthesis19. This recognises, but fails to cure, the awkwardness 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 surprise20.

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 effundere for et ludere, observing that ‘effundere has already been proposed by Hamacher’. W. Hamacher, Schedae Criticae: insunt aliquot Emendationes Propertianae, Trier 1888, 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. Virgili Maronis Aeneidos Libri, Leiden 1843.