

NOTES ON THE TEXT OF TIBULLUS

Abstract: Explanation of several passages of Tibullus.

Key words: Tibullus. Textual criticism.

Resumen: Explicación de varios pasajes de Tibulo.

Palabras-clave: Tibulo. Crítica textual.

TIBULLUS I, 1

At line 45 ff. the poet mentions his beloved:

*quam iuvat immites ventos audire cubantem
et dominam tenero continuisse sinu,
aut, gelidas hibernus aquas cum fuderit Auster,
securum somnos imbre iuvante sequi!*

line 48 *imbre: igne* A

Tibullus states that it is pleasant to try to sleep while listening to the wind outside during the winter. I would like to point out that the ms reading *igne* makes perfect sense in line 48. The words *igne iuvante* mean «with the aid of my beloved». The poet means that he would like to sleep after he has made love.

Cf. Lewis And Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s. v. *ignis* II, A, 2: «Transf., like *amores*, a beloved object, a flame.» Cf. Virgil, *Ecl.* 3, 66: *at mihi sese offert ultro meus ignis Amyntas.*

THE BRAVE LOVER

At I, 2, 16 ff. Tibullus tells Delia to be bold, since Venus helps the brave:

*audendum est: fortes adiuvat ipsa Venus.
illa favet seu quis iuvenis nova limina temptat
seu reserat fixo dente puella fores;
illa docet furtim molli derepere lecto,
illa pedem nullo ponere posse sono,
illa viro coram nutus conferre loquaces
blandaque compositis abdere verba notis.
nec docet hoc omnes, sed quos nec inertia tardat
nec vetat obscura surgere nocte timor.
en ego cum tenebris tota vagor anxius urbe,
nec sinit occurrat quisquam qui corpora ferro
vulneret aut rapta praemia veste petat.*

25

Scholars have been puzzled by the text of line 25 ff.: cf. *Luck, Tibullus, ad loc.* I would like to point out that perfect sense can be restored to the text if we print it as follows:

*en ego cum tenebris tota vagor anxius urbe,
usque meum custos ad latus haeret Amor¹
nec sinit occurrat quisquam qui corpora ferro
vulneret aut rapta praemia veste petat.*

Tibullus states that when he is afraid at night in the city, *Amor* is always at his side, and acts as his guardian (*custos*). He then adds, in line 29, that «whoever is protected by *Amor*» (*quisquis Amore tenetur*) may go safely wherever he wishes and should fear no ambush:

*quisquis Amore tenetur², eat tutusque sacerque
qualibet; insidias non timuisse decet.*

The reading *usque meum custos ad latus haeret Amor* was preserved for us by Pontanus, who used mss in order to correct the text of Tibullus: cf. *Luck, Tibullus*, ed. Teubner, 1988, page XVI. Similarly, Burmannus and Heinsius used mss to correct the text of Propertius: cf. my *Studies In The Text Of Propertius* (Athens 2002), pages 71 and 166.

THE POET SICK

At I, 3, 27 ff. Tibullus asks Isis to cure him of his illness:

*nunc, dea, nunc succurre mihi (nam posse mederi
picta docet templis multa tabella tuis)
ut mea votivas persolvens Delia noctes
ante sacras lino tecta fores sedeat
bisque die resoluta comas tibi dicere laudes
insignis turba debeat in Pharia.*

line 29 *noctes* ; *voces* v. l.

The reader will note that Scaliger printed the reading *noctes* in line 29. I would like to suggest that better sense is provided by the ms reading *voces*. Delia will worship at the temple of Isis and thus fulfil Tibullus' vows to Isis. We should translate as follows:

«so that my Delia, fulfilling (*persolvens*³) my votive words (*votivas... voces*), may sit all swathed in linen before your holy door, and twice in the day be bound to sing your praise with loosened hair for all to see amid the Pharian throng.»

¹ Propertius states that a band of Cupids showed him the way at night: cf. my *Studies*, page 68. Cf. also Ovid, *Met.* 7, 66 f.: *nempe tenens, quod amo, gremioque in Iasonis haerens / per freta longa ferar.*

² Cf. Horace, *Epist.* I, 16, 77 —*in manicis et compedi-bus saevo te sub custode tenebo*—. Cf. also Horace, *Odes* 3, 11, 42 ff.: *ego illis / mollior nec te feriam neque intra /*

claustra tenebo. Virgil states that Manlius was the guardian (*custos*) of the Tarpeian fort and held (*tenebat*) the Capitol: cf. *Aen.* 8, 652 f.: *in summo custos Tarpeiae Manlius arcis / stabat pro templo et Capitolia celsa tenebat.*

³ Cf. Propertius 2, 25, 23 *an quisquam in mediis persolvit vota procellis* («does any man perform his vows in mid-tempest?»). Tibullus is referring to the fact that the

In other words, Tibullus made a vow to Isis that Delia would worship at her temple if he was cured.

TO PRIAPUS

At I, 4, 53 ff. Priapus explains the behaviour of boys to a lover:

*tunc tibi mitis erit, rapias tum cara licebit
oscula: pugnabit, sed tibi rapta dabit.
rapta dabit primo, post adferet ipse roganti,
post etiam collo se implicuisse velit.*

line 54 *sed tibi rapta* Santen: *sed tamen apta* A

The reader will note that A offers the reading *sed tamen apta* in line 54. This text makes perfect sense. As Flower Smith has underlined in his note *ad loc.*, this passage recalls Ovid, *Her.* 15, 129 ff.:

*oscula cognosco, quae tu committere linguae
aptaque consueras accipere, apta dare.*

The words *apta* (*oscula*) refer to «joined kisses», i. e. kisses where tongues and lips are joined together.

TIBULLUS I, 7

In this poem Tibullus celebrates the fact that Messalla had conquered the Aquitanians:

*Hunc cecinere diem Parcae fatalia nentes
stamina, non ulli dissoluenda deo:
hunc fore, Aquitanas posset qui fundere gentes
quem tremeret forti milite victus Atax.*

line 4 *Atax: Atur* Scal.

Scholars have been puzzled by the reference to the river Atax in line 4. Textual alteration is, however, not warranted. The river Atax is personified⁴ by the poet. It had already been conquered but is imagined to tremble at the attack on Gaul. For the «gentle» river Atax (*mitis Atax*) cf. Lucan I, 403.

worshippers of the goddess shouted aloud in her praise: cf. K. Flower Smith, *The Elegies Of Albius Tibullus*, 1971, reprint, page 241.

⁴ Flower Smith explained that the Atax enters the Mediterranean near Narbo and that *Gallia Narbonensis*

took its name from Narbo, the modern Narbonne. For personification cf. my *Studies In The Text Of Propertius*, page 157.

HERCULES AND PYRENE

At I, 7, lines 9-12 Tibullus refers to Messalla's conquests:

*non sine me est tibi partus honos: Tarbella Pyrene
testis et Oceani litora Santonici,
testis Arar Rhodanusque celer magnusque Garunna*

line 9 *Tarbella* Scaliger, M: *tua bella* v. l.

The reader will note that in line 9 Scaliger printed the reading *Tarbella*. I would like to suggest, however, that better sense is provided by the reading *tua bella*. According to legend, Pyrene⁵ was the daughter of Bebryx. She was loved by Hercules, and buried on the mountain called after her name. Alluding to this legend, Tibullus states that beautiful Pyrene (= the Pyrenees) belongs to Messalla. We should translate as follows:

«Not without me was glory won for you. Beautiful Pyrene is yours (*tua bella Pyrene*), and the shores of the Santonian Ocean are witness.»

THE *VIA LATINA*

At I, 7, 55 ff. Tibullus mentions Messalla's family:

*at tibi succrescat proles, quae facta parentis
augeat et circa stet venerata senem.
nec taceat monumenta viae, quem Tuscula tellus
candidaque antiquo detinet Alba Lare.*

line 57 *quem: qu(a)e* v. l.

Tibullus refers here to the fact that Messalla was occupied on the repair of the *Via Latina*, which passed between Tusculum and Alba: cf. Flower Smith, *Tibullus*, page 339. I would like to suggest that better sense can be made of the text if we print it as follows:

*nec taceat monumenta viae, qua Tuscula tellus
candidaque antiquo detinet Alba Lare.*

«and let them not be silent about your monument of the road, due to which (*qua*) the earth of Tusculum and white Alba keep you from your ancient home.»

⁵ Cf. Lewis And Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s. v. *Pyrene* II. Tibullus refers to the personified Pyrenees, i. e. the beautiful daughter of Bebryx. For personification cf. my *Studies In The Text Of Propertius*, page 157. For

the position of *et* cf. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, s. v. *et*. «freq. postponed to second place in Augustan and later poets.»

APOLLO AND ADMETUS

At Tibullus 2, 3, 11 ff. Apollo is said to have loved Admetus:

*pavit et Admeti tauros formosus Apollo;
nec cithara intonsae profueruntve comae,
nec potuit curas sanare salubribus herbis:
quidquid erat medicae vicerat artis amor.
ipse deus solitus stabulis expellere vaccas* 14 a
et miscere novo docuisse coagula lacte, 14 b
lacteus et mixtis obriguisse liquor. 14 c

The critics have been puzzled by the text of line 14 ff.: cf. Flower Smith's note *ad loc.* I would like to point out that perfect sense can be restored to this passage if we print the following lines, which were preserved for us by Pontanus:

*ipse deus solitus stabulis expellere vaccas
in nemora et pastas⁷ inde referre domum.
ipse et spumanti⁸ primus mulctralia⁹ succo¹⁰
implexe expressis fertur ab uberibus,
et miscere novo docuisse coagula lacte¹¹,
lacteus et mixtis obriguisse liquor.*

Translate as follows

«The god himself (i. e. Apollo) was accustomed to drive the cows from the stables to the groves and to bring them back home when they had been fed. And he himself is said to have been first to have filled milking-pails with foaming juice from squeezed udders, and to have taught to mix rennet (*coagula*¹²) with fresh milk, and the milky liquid (is said) to have stiffened due to what it was mixed with (*mixtis*¹³, i. e. the rennet).»

Cf. Ovid, *Met.* 13, 829 f.:

*lac mihi semper adest niveum: pars inde bibenda
servatur, partem liquefacta coagula durant.*

⁷ At Propertius 2, 33, 12 Io, who had been turned into a cow, is said to have remained hidden in the stable after she had been fed in the fields: *mansisti stabulis abdita pasta tuis*. Cf. my *Studies In The Text Of Propertius*, page 74.

⁸ Cf. Virgil, *Ecl.* 5, 67 *pocula bina novo spumantia lacte*.

⁹ Cf. Lewis And Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s. v. *mulctarium* (coll. form *mulctrale*) ... *nivea implebunt mulctaria vaccae*, Verg., *G.* 3, 177.

¹⁰ Cf. Pliny 8, 14, 14 § 37 *lactis suco*.

¹¹ Cf. Lewis And Short, *op. cit.*, s. v. *lac: lac mihi non aestate novum, non frigore deficit*, Verg. *E.* 2, 22.

¹² Cf. Ovid, *Met.* 14, 273 f.: *nec mora, misceri tosti iubet hordea grani / mellaque vimque meri cum lacte coagula passo*.

¹³ Cf. Ovid, *Met.* 14, 269 *quae sit concordia mixtis*.

Polyphemus states that his sheep can hardly walk because their udders are full of milk (*Met.* 13, 826: *ut vix circumeant distentum cruribus uber*). Cf. also Ovid, *Met.* 15, 79 *lacteus umor*. For animals being milked cf. Ovid, *Met.* 15, 472 *ubera manibus pressanda*.

A RIVAL IN LOVE

At 2, 3, 29 ff. Tibullus states that in the past people were not ashamed to admit that they were in love:

*felices olim, Veneri cum fertur aperte
servire aeternos non puduisse deos.
fabula nunc ille est: sed cui sua cura puella est,
fabula sit mavult quam sine amore. deus
at tu, quisquis is es, cui tristi fronte Cupido
imperat ut nostra sint tua castra domo.*

Scholars have been puzzled by the meaning of this passage: cf. Flower Smith's commentary *ad loc.* Perfect sense can, however, be made of the transmitted text if we understand that *deos*, in line 30, is a poetic plural. Moreover, we should place a full stop after *amore* in line 32. Translate as follows:

«Happy the men of olden days, when they say that an eternal god (*aeternos... deos*¹⁴, i. e. Apollo) was not ashamed openly to be the slave of Venus. Now he is a tale (*fabula*¹⁵). But one who loves his girl would rather be the talk of all than be without love. But you are a god (*deus*), whoever you are whom frowning Love orders to make war in my house.»

Tibullus calls his rival a god (*deus*).

THE GOLDEN AGE

At Tibullus 2, 3, 71 ff. the poet describes love in the Golden Age:

*tunc, quibus aspirabat Amor, praebebat aperte
mitis in umbrosa gaudia valle Venus.
nullus erat custos, nulla exclusura dolentes
ianua. si fas est, mos precor ille redi.
horrida villosa corpora veste tegant.
nunc si clausa mea est, si copia rara videndi,
heu miserum, in laxa quid iuvat esse toga?*

¹⁴ For the poetic plural cf. my *Studies In The Text Of Propertius*, page 14.

¹⁵ Note the use of *falsa anaphora*. The word *fabula* means «tale» in line 31 and «the talk of all» in line 32.

For similar cases of *falsa anaphora* cf. my *Studies In The Text Of Propertius*, page 163.

line 76 *tegant: tegam* M

Scholars have been puzzled by the text of line 75 ff.: cf. Luck, *Tibullus, ad loc.* I would like to point out that perfect sense can be restored to the text if we print it as follows:

*o valeant cultus et tinctae murice lanae.
horrida villosa corpora veste tegam.*

Translate as follows:

«Farewell elegance and wool dyed by purple. I shall cover my shaggy (*horrida*¹⁶) body with hairy clothes.»

Tibullus means that he will dress himself in rough skins, like a shepherd, rather than in elegant dyed woollen garments. The reader will note that the reading *o valeant cultus et tinctae murice lanae* was preserved for us by Pontanus. Cf. moreover, Ovid, *Met.* 6, 9 *tinguebat murice lanas* and Virgil, *Aen.* 4, 262 *Tyrioque ardebat murice laena*. For fleeces cf. Ovid, *Her.* 6, 49 *non erat hic aries villo spectabilis aureo*. Apollo stresses that he is not a «shaggy» (*horridus*) shepherd at Ovid, *Met.* I, 513 f.: *non ego sum pastor, non hic armenta gregesque / horridus observo.*

THE CAMP OF THE RUTILIANS

At Tibullus 2, 5, 45 ff. the Cumaean Sibyl mentions the defeat of Turnus:

*ecce super fessas volitat Victoria puppes;
tandem ad Troianos diva superba venit.
ecce mihi lucent Rutulis incendia castris;
iam tibi praedico, barbare Turne, necem.*

Scholars have been puzzled by the reference to the burning of the camp of the Rutili: cf. Flower Smith's note *ad loc.* Textual alteration is, however, not necessary. Tibullus is referring to the burning of Ardea¹⁷, the capital of the Rutili. According to myth, it was burned by Aeneas, and from its ashes the heron (*ardea*) was produced. Cf. Ovid, *Met.* 14, 573 and. Virgil, *Aen.* 7, 411 ff.:

*locus Ardea quondam
dictus avis: et nunc magnum manet Ardea nomen,
sed fortuna fuit. tectis hic Turnus in altis
iam mediam nigra carpebat nocte quietem.*

¹⁶ Note that the adjective *horrida* is proleptic: cf. my *Studies In The Text Of Propertius*, page 124, for a similar case of adjectival *prolepsis*. At II, 4, 27 ff. Tibullus attacks avarice and the use of expensive Tyrian purple dye on sheepskins: *o pereat quicumque legit viridesque smaragdus / et niveam Tyrio murice tingit ovem*. Cf. Horace, *Odes* 3,

6, 13 *Martem tunica tectum adamantina* («Mars covered in an adamantine tunic»). The reading *tegam* was preserved for us by M.: cf. Luck's apparatus *ad loc.*

¹⁷ Cf. Lewis And Short, *A Latin Dictionary, s. v. Ardea*: «The capital of the Rutuli, six leagues south of Rome.»

TIBULLUS AND THE SIBYLS

At 2, 5, 65 ff. Tibullus mentions the Sibyl of Cumae, who had prophesied to Aeneas: cf. Ovid, *Met.* 14, 104 ff. The Sibyl is said to have summoned Apollo:

*haec cecinit vates et te sibi, Phoebae, vocavit,
iactavit fusas sed caput ante comas,
quidquid Amalthea, quidquid Marpesia dixit
Herophile, Phoebae gratae quod monuit,
quasque Aniena sacras Tiburs per flumina sortes
portarat sicco pertuleratque sinu.
haec fore dixerunt belli mala signa cometen,
multus ut in terras deplueretque lapis.*

Scholars have been puzzled by the meaning of this passage: cf. Flower Smith, *The Elegies Of Albius Tibullus*, page 466. I would like to point out that perfect sense can be made of the transmitted text if we understand that Tibullus is referring in line 66 to the Sibylline¹⁸ books. We should translate as follows:

«Thus sang the seer (i. e. the Cumaean Sibyl) and called you to her, Phoebus, but she examined (*iactavit*¹⁹) the parchment hairs (*comas*²⁰) spread out before her head (*caput*); whatever Amalthea (i. e. the Cumaean sibyl), whatever Herophile of Marpeessos foretold, and what a woman dear to Phoebus predicted, and whatever sacred oracles she of Tibur (i. e. Alburnea) brought through the streams of the Anio and carried in her dry bosom. These Sibyls (*haec*) said that there would be a comet, the evil sign of war, and that a thick shower of stones would fall on the earth.»

Tibullus is referring to the famous «Star of Caesar», which appeared in July of 44: cf. Flower Smith's note *ad loc.* The Sibylline books belonged to the Sibyl of Cumae, and contained the predictions of all the previous Sibyls. Apollo is said to have examined these books together with Amalthea²¹, i. e. the Sibyl of Cumae.

PORTENTS OF DOOM

At II, 5, 75-78 various portents are mentioned:

¹⁸ The Sibylline books were written in Greek. They were sold and brought to Rome and were kept in a chest under the Temple of Capitoline Jupiter.

¹⁹ Cf. Lewis And Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s. v. *jacto* II, C.

²⁰ Cf. Lewis And Short, *op. cit.*, s. v. *coma* II, b: «The wool or hair upon parchment» (Tibullus 3, 1, 10). At Propertius 3, 3, 19 f. Apollo prays that the poet's book may be examined (*iactetur*) by a lonely girl, who is

waiting for her lover on a seat: cf. my *Studies In The Text Of Propertius*, page 86. Note the use of *synecdoche*. Tibullus has used *comas* («parchment hairs») instead of *membrana* («parchment»).

²¹ For the names of the various Sibyls cf. Flower Smith, *op. cit.*, page 466. In lines 67-68 Tibullus names two Sibyls, i. e. Amalthea and Herophile. He then refers to an unnamed Sibyl, who is said to be dear to Phoebus (*Phoebae grata*). Cf. Ovid, *F. I.*, 585 *vates diis gratissima*.

*ipsum etiam solem defectum lumine vidit
iungere pallentes nubilus annus equos
et simulacra deum lacrimas fudisse tepentes
fataque vocales praemonuisse boves*

line 76 *annis*: *amnis* v. l.

Tibullus mentions in lines 75-76 an eclipse of the sun: cf. Flower Smith's commentary *ad loc.* I would like to suggest that better sense is provided by the reading *amnis*²², which refers to the constellation Eridanus. We should translate as follows:

«The cloudy (*nubilus*) River (i. e. the constellation Eridanus²³) saw (*vidit*²⁴) the sun itself, weakened in light, yoke pale horses.»

Ovid mentions many similar portents and states at *Met.* 15, 789 that the morning-star became dark: *caerulus et vultum ferrugine Lucifer atra / sparsus erat.*

THE TEARS OF JUPITER

At 3, 4, 63 f. Apollo states that women are changeable:

*sed flecti poterit; mens est mutabilis illis:
tu modo cum multa bracchia tende prece.*

Pontanus preserved the following text in line 64: *fere nec ante pedes pudeat dominamque vocare.* I would like to point out that this reading alludes to the fact that Jupiter was said to have cried when his beloved Semele died: cf. Propertius II, 16, 54 —*deceptus quoniam flevit et ipse deus*—. Jupiter was tricked into killing Semele by Juno: cf. Ovid, *Met.* 3, 259 ff. and my *Studies In The Text Of Propertius*, page 55. Since Jupiter had lamented for Semele, Apollo argues that Lygdamus should not be ashamed to cry and to grovel at the feet (*ante pedes*) of his beloved, whom he should openly call his mistress (*dominam*). Cf. Ovid, *Her.* 12, 185 f.:

*tam tibi sum supplex, quam tu mihi saepe fuisti,
nec moror ante tuos procubuisse pedes.*

CONCLUSION

At Tibullus I, 2, 25 ff., II, 3, 14 ff. and II, 3, 75 ff. the text which has been preserved for us by Pontanus provides perfect sense. These readings are genuine²⁵ and contain allusions to

²² Cf. Lewis And Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s. v. *amnis* II, A: «Poet., of the constellation Eridanus... *Scorpios exoriens cum clarus fugerit amnis*, Germanic. *Arat.* 648.»

²³ Cf. Virgil, *Aen.* 4, 490 *mugire videbis sub pedibus terram et descendere montibus ornos.*

²⁴ For the constellation Eridanus cf. *Aratus* 360. The Eridanus was identified with the river Po, into which Phaëthon fell: cf. *Mus. Phil. Lond.*, X, 1996, page 45 ff.

²⁵ Similarly I have attempted to show that the readings which are preserved by Callimachus' *recentiores* are genuine

contemporary poetry. Moreover, at I, 10, 25 Tibullus addresses Horace and calls him a *rustica porcus*, i. e. a glutton. Finally it should be noted that the reading provided by Pontanus²⁶ at III, 4, 64 alludes to the fact that Jupiter was said to have once cried due to love.

HEATHER WHITE

and contain allusions to contemporary poetry as well as to Homer: cf. my *New Essays In Hellenistic Poetry* (Amsterdam 1985), page 93 ff. For the fact that the *recentiores* have often preserved the correct text cf., moreover, *Myrtia* 18, 2003, page 373.

²⁶ My article is heavily indebted to the excellent Teubner edition of Tibullus which has been produced by

Prof. Georg Luck (Stuttgart 1988). This is an extremely learned and informative work, which provides us with a very interesting and useful survey of Tibullus' mss. Georg Luck has made a fundamentally important contribution to our understanding of the history of the text of Tibullus.