

Ciris 58

WŁODZIMIERZ OLSZANIEC* 

Institute of Classical Studies, University of Warsaw, Poland

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Received: January 14, 2022 • Accepted: July 4, 2022

Published online: August 12, 2022

© 2022 Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest



ABSTRACT

This note argues that the text of *Ciris* 58 should read: *illam etiam aerumnis quod saepe legamus Ulixi*.

KEYWORDS

Ciris, textual criticism, emendation

*Complures illam magni, Messalla, poetae
(nam verum fateamur: amat Polyhymnia verum)
longe alia perhibent mutatam membra figura
Scyllaeum monstro saxum infestasse voraci;
illam esse aerumnis quam saepe legamus Ulixi 58
candida succinctam latrantibus inguina monstis
Dulichias vexasse rates et gurgite in alto
depressos nautas canibus lacerasse marinis.*¹

54 complures *ed. Ald. 1517*: cum plures Φ illam ρ : illa *Z post* illam *add.* et ρ 55 amant ρ 56 alia...mutatam...figura ρ : aliam...mutata in...figuram *Z 57* monstro saxum *Haupt*: monstra saxum (in *post m. add.* ρ) *H ρ* : monstra saxosum *A*: saxo monstra *R* infestasse *Baehrens* (infestare *iam Haupt*): infectata *Z*: conversa ρ voraci *Hertzberg*: vōri *H*: vocavi *AR*: vocari ρ

* Corresponding author. E-mail: w.olszaniec@uw.edu.pl

¹The text and the apparatus is quoted from LYNE, R.O.A.M.: *Ciris. A Poem Attributed to Vergil*. Cambridge 1978, 71.

Line 58 of the *Ciris* as transmitted in the MSS poses one serious difficulty: it is the combination of *saepe* and *legamus* that can hardly be accepted if we assume that *aerumnis Ulixi* means virtually “in the *Odyssey*”.² Although *legamus* itself could easily be explained as a potential subjunctive (“we could read”), and the same could be said of *saepe* if it were accompanied by the indicative *legimus* (the passage of the *Odyssey* alluded to is popular and often read), *saepe legamus* is difficult to interpret. Therefore, we should either agree with R.O.A.M. Lyne’s observation that *saepe* is “a fairly blatant metrical stop-gap”³ or we should try to emend the text.

The latter was attempted by F.R.D. Goodyear, who, in the apparatus to his OCT edition of the poem, conjectured: *illam aerumnosi quam saepe legamus Ulixi*.⁴ Yet, although *saepe legamus* now acquires a clear meaning (“how often we could read that she...”), *aerumnosi Ulixi* cannot be accepted since it would depend on *rates* of verse 60 (*Dulichias rates aerumnosi Ulixi*). And already F. Skutsch correctly noticed that *Ulixi* cannot be associated to *Dulichias rates* because there is an entire hexameter between them: *candida succinctam latrantibus inguina monstis*.⁵

I believe the solution to the problem can be found in the poet’s *usus*. Thanks to the author’s tendency to frequently repeat certain words and expressions,⁶ we may often, so to speak, *Cirin ex Ciri saphenizein*. Now, if we look at the text of the poem, we encounter an analogy to the discussed passage in vv. 391–399 where a similar enumeration, introduced by the word *complures*,⁷ is found:

Complures *illam nymphae mirantur in undis,
miratur pater Oceanus et candida Tethys
et cupidas secum rapiens Galatea sorores,
illa etiam iunctis magnum quae piscibus aequor
et glauco bipedum curru metitur equorum* 395
*Leucothea parvusque dea cum matre Palaemon;
illi etiam alternas sortiti vivere luces,
cara Iovis suboles, magnum Iovis incrementum,
Tyndaridae niveos mirantur virginis artus.*

Although this parallel is not exact (*illa* at 394 and *illi* at 397 do not refer to Scylla, mentioned at 391), another passage of the poem (133–137: *Sed malus ille puer, quem nec sua flectere mater / iratum potuit, quem nec pater atque avus idem / Iuppiter (ille etiam Poenos domitare leones / et validas docuit vires mansuescere tigris, / ille etiam divos † homines – sed dicere magnum est)*) confirms the poet’s fondness for the pattern which consists in repeating a form of the pronoun

²Cf. LYNE (n. 1) 127. For a discussion of the passage, see also IODICE, M. G.: *Appendix Vergiliana*. Milano 2002, 283–284; KAYACHEV, B.: *Ciris. A Poem from the Appendix Vergiliana*. Swansea 2020, 95; ZOGG, F. (ed.): *Appendix Vergiliana*. Berlin 2020, 265.

³LYNE (n. 1) 127.

⁴GOODYEAR, F. R. D.: *Ciris*. In *Appendix Vergiliana*, rec. W. V. CLAUSEN, F. R. D. GOODYEAR, E. J. KENNEY, J. A. RICHMOND. Oxford 1965, 105.

⁵SKUTSCH, F.: *Gallus und Vergil*. Leipzig und Berlin 1906, 32–33: “Trotzdem scheint mir klar, daß *Ulixi* zu *aerumnis* gehört, nicht zu *Dulichias rates*; es scheint mir schon darum klar, weil zwischen diesen beiden Wortgruppen [...] ein voller Hexameter mitten innesteht: *candida succinctam latrantibus inguina monstis*”.

⁶LYNE (n. 1) 30.

⁷At 54 the MSS read *cum plures*, but the restoration (going back to the Aldine edition) leaves no doubt.



ille accompanied by *etiam*.⁸ This leads us to suspect that the corruption is not concealed in the expression *saepe legamus*, but in the words *illam esse quam* which begin the line. Replacing *esse* with *etiam*, and *quam* with *quod*:

*illam etiam – aerumnis quod saepe legamus Ulixi –
candida succinctam latrantibus inguina monstribus
Dulichias vexasse rates et gurgite in alto
deprensos nautas canibus lacerasse marinis.*

not only simplifies the construction of the phrase (the somewhat convoluted a.c.i. *illam esse quam legamus vexasse* is at odds with the simple a.c.i. that opens our passage:⁹ *complures poetae perhibent illam infestasse*¹⁰), but also solves another difficulty: the sentence *illam etiam ... vexasse ... et ... lacerasse* (59–61), as an a.c.i. depending on *perhibent* in line 56, becomes easily understandable now. The conjectured reading gives an intelligible sense: “She too – as we can often read in the <histories about> the toils of Ulysses – girt about her white groin with barking monsters, attacked the Dulichian ships...” etc.¹¹ I think the poet has in mind here not only the *Odyssey*,¹² but also other literary works which pass on the “traditional” Homeric version, i.e. the representation of Scylla as a monstrous being that devastates the Dulichian ships and devours the sailors.¹³ Then *legamus* can finally be explained on the grounds of Latin grammar as a potential subjunctive.

The process of corruption is not difficult to explain: at first stage *quod* was corrupted to *quam* under the influence of the feminine *illam*.¹⁴ And the replacement of *etiam* with *esse* was a scribal attempt to make any sense out of *illam etiam [...] quam*.

⁸This pattern is employed by the Augustan poets, cf. for example Tibul. 2. 1. 39–41, Verg. G. 4. 137–144.

⁹This problem is also noticed by KAYACHEV (n. 2) 95.

¹⁰I follow LYNE (n. 1) 126 in accepting Baehrens’ conjecture *infestasse*.

¹¹I am using the translation of KAYACHEV (n. 2) 74, with modifications.

¹²Such a meaning to *aerumnis Ulixi* is rightly given by IODICE (n. 2) 251, who translates: “nelle peripezie di Ulisse”.

¹³For example Lyc. 649–656; A. R. 4. 789–790, 4. 920–923; Apollod. 1. 136, *Epit.* 7. 20; perhaps also (depending on the date of the poem’s composition) Ov. *Met.* 7. 64–65, 14. 59–74; Ps.-Verg. *Culex* 331–333. An important and much discussed parallel to vv. 59–61 is Verg. *Ecl.* 6. 75–77: *candida succinctam latrantibus inguina monstribus / Dulichias vexasse rates, et gurgite in alto, / a, timidus nautas canibus lacerasse marinis*, on which see LYNE (n. 1) 127–128.

¹⁴Assimilation to the number and gender of an adjacent word is a common error. For a similar example, see Catul. 13. 13: *donarunt Veneres Cupidinesque, / quod tu cum olfacies, deos rogabis* where *quod* is corrupted to *qui* in the MSS.

