SHORTER NOTES

AN ELL OF A DIFFERENCE: OVID, *FASTI* 6.424

ABSTRACT

This paper argues that the local adverb in Ov. Fast. *6.424 should be neither* illi *nor* illic*, both meaning 'there', but* Ili*, 'at Ilium, at Troy', since the place referred to is Ilium, and there is wordplay on the name of Ilium and its founder Ilus.*

Keywords: Ovid; *Fasti*; Ilium; locative; wordplay; emendation

Ovid tells of the Palladium and his visit to the site where it fell from the sky in *Fast.* 6.419–24.[1] My text and the pertinent part of the apparatus criticus are quoted from the 1978 Teubner of Alton, Wormell and Courtney:[2]

> moenia Dardanides nuper noua fecerat Ilus
> (Ilus adhuc Asiae diues habebat opes);
> creditur armiferae signum caeleste Mineruae
> urbis in Iliacae desiluisse iuga.
> cura uidere fuit: uidi templumque locumque;
> hoc superest illi, Pallada Roma tenet.
>
> 424 illi **U** : -ic **ζω** *cf. Housman ad Manil. 3.309 addenda*

The archaic form *illi* for *illic* in 424 is surprising in Ovid, and AWC's note not at all convincing.[3] Following up their reference, we find that Housman's note on Manilius reads:[4]

> **309** *illi* meliores libri aut pars eorum Ouid. fast. VI 424, trist. I 1 17, II 373, Iuu. V 42 (nisi datiuus est).

Modern commentators agree that Juvenal's *illi* is dative, and modern editors print *illic* in Manilius and in both passages of the *Tristia*, leaving this passage of the *Fasti* entirely unparalleled. Should we then print ζω's *illic*? The *lectio facilior* is not always wrong. Or should we take it as dative, with Bömer?[5] His firm rejection of the adverb for lack of parallels is persuasive, but it still looks to me like it ought to be a locative.

[1] Ovid probably visited the site with Pomponius Macer, who was composing a poem on the Trojan War. In *Pont*. 2.10.21 he writes *te duce magnificas Asiae perspeximus urbes*, though he spends most of the passage (2.10.21–42) on their time in Sicily.

[2] E.H. Alton, D.E.W. Wormell, E. Courtney, *Ovidius Fasti* (Leipzig, 1978), hereafter 'AWC'. Of their five 'codices primarii', A and I are not extant for this passage, while ζ is the consensus of GM. I take it that they print *illi* as the *lectio difficilior*.

[3] There is no note on the form in R.J. Littlewood, *A Commentary on Ovid's* Fasti*, Book 6* (Oxford, 2006), though *illi* is printed in the lemma.

[4] A.E. Housman, *M. Manilii Astronomicon Liber Quintus* (London, 1930), 151.

[5] F. Bömer, *P. Ovidius Naso Die Fasten*, 2 vols. (Heidelberg, 1991² and 1958), ad loc. (2.368): 'Nach den Ausführungen von HOFMANN, Thes. VII 368,9ff. 24 nach denen klassisch keine einzige sichere Stelle für ein adverbiales *illi* nachweisbar ist, muß hier gegen FRAZERs Übersetzung und OWEN (Ov. trist. II 1924, 210) *illi* als Dativ des Pronomens aufgefaßt werden.'

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There is perhaps a third possibility. When I first began to wonder why Ovid would have written *illi* rather than *illic* here, I could not help noticing that the 'there' to which *illi* refers is, in fact, Ilium.[6] That made me suspect that Ovid wrote neither *illi* nor *illic* but the locative of *Ilium*: *Ili*, or perhaps *Ilii* with synizesis (*Ilji*). Neither form is attested, and I spent a few years wondering why the grammars consulted refused to tell me what the locative of a noun ending in *-ium* would be. Both forms of the genitive are found in verse and guaranteed by the metre, *Ilii* in Seneca (*Tro.* 428), *Ili* in Valerius Flaccus (2.473, 580), but I did not wish to presume that the locative would necessarily follow the genitive. Eventually, I noticed that there are dozens of locatives of *Brundisium* in Latin literature, and that both *Brundisi* and *Brundisii* are attested in prose, though Lucan can of course only use *Brundĭsĭī* in hexameters (2.609, 5.407). That should suffice to show that either *Ili* or *Ilii* would be correct here. Of the two forms, *Ilii* with synizesis would be slightly easier palaeographically, *Ili* slightly easier metrically, but either would be a very easy corruption. A matched pair of geographical names, *Ili* and *Roma*, would arguably provide better balance to the line. Finally, Ovid plays on the name of Troy and its founder in the preceding couplets, with *Ilus* repeated in 419–20 and *Iliacae* in 422. Would *Ili* or *Ilji* in the next couplet complete the series with an appropriate fourth term?[7] Or would it come too close after *Iliacae*, with the repetition adding nothing to the effect?

If the latter, there is another possibility: that Ovid wrote *illi* for *illic*, not to be pointlessly archaic, rather to continue (a bit surreptitiously) the wordplay in *Ilus* and *Iliacae*, and that we should 'hear' *Ili* as a second meaning while pronouncing (aloud or to ourselves) *illi*. Though I prefer my conjecture—authorial pride, no doubt—I can especially commend this reinterpretation to those with a deep-seated aversion to conjectural emendation—if any of them have read this far.[8]

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[6] Ovid could no doubt have rewritten the line with some form of *Troianus* for *Iliacae*, but that would have destroyed the *Ilus*/*Iliacae* wordplay.

[7] Three is the canonical number for word repetitions, but four is not uncommon. There are four forms of *seruare* in the passage immediately following this one: *seruate* … *seruabitis*, 427; *seruat*, 429; *seruata*, 431.

[8] I owe another, more speculative, argument, to Reviewer #2, along with other helpful suggestions. The pentameter of this couplet strongly resembles that in *Fast.* 4.951–2, on the Vestal flame, brought from Troy with the Trojan Penates and installed in the shrine of Vesta within Augustus' house: *Phoebus habet partem: Vestae pars altera cessit:* | *quod superest illis, tertius ipse tenet* (*ipse* is Augustus). Each pentameter includes *superest* in the first half, *tenet* in the second, and both contexts refer to the transfer of sacred objects from burning Troy to Rome. On the other hand, the parallel has a dative of *ille* with *superest*, which my conjecture removes in 6.424, so this argument is rather double-edged.

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