## Ovid, Fasti 4.421

Ovid sets the scene for the Rape of Proserpina (F. 4.419-24):<sup>1</sup>

terra tribus scopulis uastum procurrit in aequor Trinacris, a positu nomen adepta loci, 420 grata domus Cereri: multas ea possidet urbes, in quibus est culto fertilis Henna solo.

It seems to me that *ea* in 421 is corrupt, for a combination of reasons. First, the parataxis seems a bit awkward: this is what first drew my attention to the line. Second, the cities which Ceres possessed were notoriously all in Sicily, and we might have expected Ovid to be more specific.<sup>2</sup> The third reason follows from the second: since the cities of Ceres are all in Sicily, the reference of *ea* is unpleasantly ambiguous. The subject of *possidet* is surely the goddess, but some have thought that *ea* refers rather to the island, which might equally well be said to possess the cities contained in it.<sup>3</sup> These three clues should suffice to provide both diagnosis and remedy. In fact, I had hit upon my solution (below) before I found that it had been partially anticipated by the *recentiores*. The fact that the manuscripts exhibit some confusion at just this point is the fourth reason for suspecting the text. In their appendix, A-W-C report that A, the oldest and most independent of them, has *et* for *ea*, which is bad in itself (and A's unmetrical *possedit* is worse), but the fact suggests that the problem lies deeper, and that we should look for some third word. MERKEL reports that two of the *recentiores* give *dea* for *ea*, which would certainly clarify

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> My text is quoted from E. H. ALTON, D. E. W. WORMELL, and E. COURTNEY, *Ovidius, Fasti*, Leipzig 1978, hereafter «A-W-C». For identification of manuscripts, I have used the same authors' *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Ovid's Fasti*, «BICS» 24 (1977) 37-63. Variants are taken partly from the appendix of less probable conjectures in their edition, partly from the apparatus of R. MERKEL, *P. Ovidii Nasonis Fastorum Libri Sex*, Berlin 1841. Other editions referred to are J. G. FRAZER, *Publius Ovidius Naso, Fastorum Libri Sex*, 5 vols., London 1929, F. BÖMER, *P. Ovidius Naso, Die Fasten*, 2 vols., Heidelberg 1957-58, and R. SCHILLING, *Ovide, Les Fastes*, 2 vols., Paris 1993. Except as specified, references are *ad loc*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> FRAZER refers to CICERO, Verr. II 4, 106: Vetus est haec opinio, iudices, quae constat ex antiquissimis Graecorum litteris ac monumentis, insulam Siciliam totam esse Cereri et Liberae consecratam.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> MERKEL reports that D (Monacensis Latinus 8122) glosses *ea* with *domus*.

the subject of *possidet*, though it is probably taken from the following couplet.<sup>4</sup> Another, which Merkel identifies only as «unus», reads *quae*, while two more, including G, one of the five on which A-W-C base their text, read *ibi*.<sup>5</sup> With the possible exception of the last, it may be doubted whether any of these variants is earlier than the vulgate ea.<sup>6</sup> However, they at least show that others have found the line difficult.

Of the problems I have outlined above, the first would be solved by reading *quae*, with MERKEL's «unus», while G's *ibi* would take care of the second and third. However, I prefer to emend to the one word which combines the meanings of *quae* and *ibi* and so answers all three objections at once:

grata domus Cereri, multas **ubi** possidet urbes, in quibus est culto fertilis Henna solo.

All of the cities of Ceres are now specifically stated to be in Sicily, she is clearly the subject of *possidet*, and the phrasing is pleasingly hypotactic.<sup>7</sup> Arguments from paleographic plausibility are inherently less conclusive. It may be that *ubi* was first corrupted to *ibi*, which survived in G, and was then further altered in other manuscripts by scribes who

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> These are MERKEL's  $\Psi$  (Heinsius' Petavianus Secundus, formerly Holkhamicus 320, now Mus. Brit. 49367) and 11 (an unidentifiable Medicean). The fact that *dea* is found in the next couplet (*frigida caelestum matres Arethusa uocarat: / uenerat ad sacras et dea flaua dapes*, 423-4) may be counted against it two different ways: the repetition is very awkward, and the corruption of *ea* to *dea* would have been very easy with *dea* just three lines below.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> These are MERKEL's Z (A-W-C's G, Bruxellensis Bibl. Reg. 5369-5372) and 21 (Ambrosianus E 74 sup.). It is perhaps significant that SCHILLING, in the new Budé text, puts an «y» into his French translation which has no equivalent in the facing Latin, which reads *ea*: «elle y possède de nombreuses villes, parmi lesquelles Henna à la campagne fertile».

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> «Where AZU are extant they contain virtually all the readings that must be considered traditional; the isolated good readings offered by the *recentiores* are hardly ever beyond the powers of a twelfth- or thirteenth-century master.» So R. J. TARRANT in L. D. REYNOLDS (ed.), *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics* (Oxford, 1983), 267. Since IGM form the family Z, TARRANT's AZU refers to all five of the primary manuscripts.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Parallels show that the phrasing is suitably Ovidian: transit et Icarium, lapsas ubi perdidit alas / Icarus, et uastae nomina fecit aquae (F. 4.283-4), hinc mare Trinacrium, candens ubi tinguere ferrum / Brontes et Steropes Acmonidesque solent (F. 4.287-8), at longis anxia curis / Argolis Alcmene, questus ubi ponat aniles, / cui referat nati testatos orbe labores / cuiue suos casus, Iolen habet (M. 9.275-8). Some (cf. BÖMER) have athetized the first passage, and the similarity to the second at so short an interval is certainly one point against it. However, we are still left with two good parallels, which should suffice.

found the sense unsatisfactory. On the other hand, it is possible that all of the rather assorted readings are successive attempts to replace a missing or illegible word.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> It is conceivable that A's *et* is a misplaced correction from the line below, by a scribe altering *Henna* to *Etna*. In that case, there need be no resemblance between *et* and what it extruded. On the other hand, the *recentiores* read *Ethna* or *Aethna* rather than *Etna*, so this is probably a red herring.