

# Siliana

Autor(en): **Watt, W.S.**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Museum Helveticum : schweizerische Zeitschrift für klassische Altertumswissenschaft = Revue suisse pour l'étude de l'antiquité classique = Rivista svizzera di filologia classica**

Band (Jahr): **45 (1988)**

Heft 3

PDF erstellt am: **20.09.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-35147>

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## Siliana

By W.S. Watt, Aberdeen, Scotland

- 1, 239ff. *hae postquam Tyrio gentes cessere tyranno  
utque dati rerum freni, nunc arte paterna  
conciliare uiros armis, consulta senatus  
uertere, nunc donis.*

The young Hannibal comes to power at Carthage. He wins over the Carthaginians (*uiros*), and overturns the decrees of their senate, partly by his father's guile and partly by bribery.

Delz is certainly right in returning to this punctuation, which recognizes the anaphora *nunc ... nunc*. He takes *armis* as ablative, 'by his exploits in war', parallel to the following *donis*; but I think that it is *arte paterna* (= *dolo*) which is parallel to *donis*, and that *armis* is dative (= *bello*); so Ruperti, 'ad belli societatem sollicitare', i.e. to make war on Rome. Compare 268ff. *rumpere foedera certus, / quo [sc. bello] datur, interea Romam comprehendere bello / gaudet*: as an interim measure he involves the Romans in war in Spain; a greater war (272) will come later.

- 2, 93ff. *Cres erat, ...  
Dictaeos agitare puer leuioribus annis  
pennata saltus adsuetus harundine Mopsus.*

I do not think that *leuioribus annis* is adequately defended by such expressions as *grauis annis*. Bauer and Delz report Bentley's emendation *melioribus*, but without referring to the passages which Bentley adduced in support: Sen. Contr. 1, praef. 1 *meliores ad annos respicere*; Sen. Dial. 10, 18, 1 *maior pars aetatis, certe melior*; Sen. Herc. f. 851 *pars ... melioris aeui*. I add Ov. Trist. 4, 10, 93f. *iam mihi canities pulsus melioribus annis / uenerat*. The corruption of *mel* to *leu* is of a well-known type.

- 2, 293ff. *ergo armis foedus fasque omne abrumpitur armis,  
oppida quassantur, longeque in moenia nostra  
Aeneadum arrectae mentes, disiectaque pax est.*

\* The following modern editions are referred to: G. A. Ruperti (Göttingen 1795, 1798); L. Bauer (Leipzig 1890, 1892); W. C. Summers in Postgate's *Corpus Poetarum Latinorum*, vol. 2 (London 1905); J. D. Duff (Loeb edition, London 1934); J. Delz (Stuttgart 1987). Reference is also made to Housman in *The Letters of A. E. Housman*, ed. H. Maas (London 1971) and to S. B. = D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Class. Quart.* 9 (1959) 173–180. I am most grateful to Professor Delz for commenting on an earlier version of these notes.



All editors before Delz have accepted *donabit* without query; this is surprising, because the word is meaningless in this context. Delz alters to *denabit*, a compound of *nare* which is otherwise unattested. But there is no need to invent a nonce-word when it is so easy to write *durabit*, 'persevere in'; this verb is not often construed with an infinitive, but of the few instances listed in ThLL V 1, 2297, 78ff. three are from Silius (10, 652; 11, 75; 15, 213). It is not a valid objection to *durabit* that Vespasian did not in fact conquer Thule; no more did he lead an army into the Caledonian forests, or sail his ships on the 'Caledonian Ocean' (Val. Fl. 1, 8).

4, 5ff.                    *[Fama] diros canit improba motus*  
                               *et gliscit gressu uolucrique citatior Euro*  
                               *terrificis quatit attonitas rumoribus arces.*

Delz adopts Damsté's *capit* for *canit*, but the latter is, I think, guaranteed by Verg. Aen. 4, 190 (likewise of *Fama*) *pariter facta atque infecta canebat*. However, it means not 'prophesied' (Duff) but 'recounts', 'harps on', ὑπολαί; this passage is therefore correctly placed in ThLL III 268, 26. I take *motus* to be *belli tumultus* (ThLL VIII 1536, 84ff.), as at 1, 20; 14, 110; 15, 289.

4, 300f.                *ductore amisso pedibus se credere Celtae;*  
                               *una spes anima tantusque pependerit ardor.*

On the death of their leader the Gauls take to flight.

I suggest that the contrast with *una* demands *totus*, not *tantus*; the two words are frequent variants, as at 308 below. The *unus / totus* contrast recurs at 423f. *plus petit improbus uno / consulis exitio tota quam strage cadentum*.

5, 600ff.                    *haec pompa sequetur*  
                               *exsequias, seroque emptum uolet impia Roma*  
                               *non uiolasse mei corpus mucrone Sychaei.*

Hannibal threatens to make Rome pay dearly for the death of his beloved Sychaeus.

*Sero*, though retained by all editors, does not cohere with *emptum*, which requires some indication (either an ablative or an adverb) of the price paid. This was first realized by Bentley, who also proposed what I think is still the best emendation (though it is not mentioned by any editor except Bauer), *caro*; this form of the adverb, which is an easy change, is found three times in [Quint.] Decl. mai. (references in Håkanson's Index), in Decl. min. 253, 4, and occasionally later. Independently of Bentley, Schrader suggested *care*; this form is more frequent than *caro* but not very much more frequent (ThLL lists only 10 occurrences). In preference to either of these, editors mention Thilo's *auro*, which is definitely inferior.

6, 307ff. *iam Martem †ciere† atque astus adiungere ferro  
et duris facilem per inhospita ducere uitam  
haud isti, quem nunc penes est sollertia belli,  
cederet Hannibali.*

In the martial arts, and in enduring hardships, the Spartan Xanthippus is not inferior to Hannibal.

The vulgate is *regere*, which has little palaeographical probability. Delz prefers to read his own conjecture *scire*, but the parallels which he quotes (*bellum discunt* and *militares artes scire*) do not lend strong support. I suggest *c⟨o⟩lere*, comparing 8, 462 *haud parci Martem coluisse*, ‘no laggards in war’ (Duff).

6, 411ff. *me uoce quieta  
affatus iubet et uestros et coniugis una  
arcere amplexus; patet impenetrabilis ille  
luctibus et numquam summissus colla dolori.*

Marus describes how Regulus behaved towards his wife (*coniugis*) and his two sons (*uestros*) on his return to Rome as a Carthaginian prisoner.

The combination of *patet* with *impenetrabilis* seems impossible. Delz adopts Ruperti’s *pater* (an easy change), construed with what precedes; it might be claimed that this strikes a suitably pathetic note, but I think that it is both untidy (with *coniugis*, as well as *uestros*, preceding) and otiose. A better sense results from Ruperti’s other conjecture *manet*, construed with what follows; but preferable to *manet*, both in itself and also palaeographically, would (I suggest) be *⟨s⟩tetit* (*s* lost by haplography; *t⟩p*); so just previously (394ff.) Regulus in the senate *stetit ... inter tot gemitus immobilis*. One is reminded of Dido in Verg. Aen. 6, 470f. *nec magis ... uultum ... mouetur / quam si dura silex aut stet Marpesia cautes*.

8, 372ff. *non illis solitum crispare hastilia campo  
nec mos pennigeris pharetram impleuisse sagittis:  
pila uolunt breuibusque habiles mucronibus enses.*

‘*uolunt* multis suspectum’, says Delz; the conjectures are *uolant*, *ualent*, *colunt*, *uibrant*. I think, however, that *uolunt* is sound: when 374 is taken in conjunction with 372–373, *uolunt* gets from the context the sense of *malunt*. So Duff, ‘they prefer’.

9, 77f. *at tum barbaricis Satricus cum rege cateruis  
aductus e.q.s.*

The bare ablative has aroused justifiable suspicion. The easiest remedy is *tum ⟨in⟩ barbaricis*. For the elision of the monosyllable cf. 1, 257 *cum*; 13, 188 *tam*; 14, 353 *dum* (in the same metrical position as our *tum*).

9, 428ff. *nam rapido subitam portans in morte salutem  
procursu incepta in sese discrimina uertit  
Scipio.*

At the battle of Cannae Scipio rushes forward to save Varro's life.

'*incepta* cannot be salvaged, either by taking it with *morte* (Bauer) or otherwise'; so S. B. (p. 174). Although Delz still keeps *incepta* in his text, he acknowledges that he thinks S. B.'s conjecture *excepta* (with *discrimina*) right. But this would leave *morte* without a qualifier, and a qualifier is essential because Varro did *not* die at Cannae. I would read *intenta* (abl.), comparing Consol. Liu. 361 *nece[m] intentam*; Val. Fl. 5, 339 *intenta nece*; Lucan 8, 568; OLD sense 7b; also Verg. Aen. 1, 91 *intentant omnia mortem*. Silius has *intento igne* at 17, 478.

10, 10ff. *uelocius inde  
Haemonio Borea pennaque citatior ibat  
quae redit in pugnas fugientis harundine Parthi.*

Since *harundo* cannot mean 'bow' (Duff), S. B. (p. 174) emends *pennaque citatior* to *pennataque ocior*, thus restoring to *harundine* its proper sense of 'arrow'. This ingenious emendation has been adopted by Delz, but it gives rise to doubts: (a) the supposed corruption seems unlikely, (b) *pennaque citatior* is unobjectionable in itself: *penna* = 'arrow' at 11, 412 and 15, 630, and *citatus* is a favourite word of Silius (*citatior* at 4, 6). I think it more probable that *harundine* has, because the context concerns arrows, displaced another expression which bears a superficial resemblance to it, viz. *ab agmine* (construed with *fugientis*). For this sense of *agmen* cf. 5, 377f. *ex agmine Poenum / cedentem*, 'Hannibal leaving the fighting line' (Duff); 13, 682 *abrupto liquerunt agmine signa*, 'broke their ranks and deserted our standards' (Duff).

10, 173ff. *iacet ingens Phorcys ab antris  
Herculeae Calpes, caelatus Gorgone parmam,  
unde genus tristisque †deae† manabat origo.*

Phorcys, from Calpe, had Medusa's head engraved on his shield because he was descended from her.

'Exspectes *tristisque uiro*, nam certe de origine Phorcyos, non Gorgonis, loquitur poeta', says Delz. And there is a second reason for eliminating *dea* (in any form): Medusa was the only one of the three Gorgons who was *not* immortal. As a word which would fulfil the same function as *uiro* but be palaeographically more acceptable I suggest *duci* (*dei* and *duci* are variants at Ov. Trist. 3, 5, 26); in speaking of Hannibal and other leaders Silius is very fond of using *dux* as little more than an unemphatic pronoun; e.g. 1, 147 *tristia corda ducis* (where Heinsius's conjecture *duci* is very plausible).

10, 365ff.

*tunc uox effusa per auras:*

*'sat magna, o iuuenis, †pressa† est tibi gloria Cannis.  
siste gradum.'*

Hannibal dreams that a divine voice warns him that he will not be allowed to capture Rome.

The humanist correction *pressa* has been adopted by all editors; it is certainly preferable to Drakenborch's *parta*, which is the banal expression (10, 445; 15, 654) and here devoid of palaeographical probability. But perhaps one might suggest *pensa*, 'paid out', 'vouchsafed' (OLD sense 3b); for the corruption cf. 11, 9, where Bentley's *pensurus* is rightly adopted by Delz for *pressurus*.

10, 608ff.

*haud secus ac, fractae rector si forte carinae  
litoribus solus †uacuis† ex aequore sospes  
adnatet, incerti trepidant, tendantne negentne  
iactato dextras, ipsamque odere salutem  
unius amissa superantis puppe magistri.*

Varro, returning alive from Cannae, is compared to a ship's captain who is the sole survivor of a shipwreck.

*Vacuis* has seldom been queried, but it is rightly obelized by Delz. Damsté would substitute *patriis*, Delz tentatively suggests *notis*, but neither of these is a convincing change (one might also query whether the following lines really imply that the shipwrecked captain is swimming to his own home shores, since any shore will do when a man is swimming for his life). I suggest *siccis*, noting that *litore sicco* occurs three times in Virgil (Aen. 3, 135 and 510; 6, 162), once in Ovid (Met. 2, 870), and three times in Lucan (8, 726; 9, 148 and 447).

11, 20ff.

*ora uadosi*

*litoris, Argiuos maior qua Graecia muros  
seruat et Ionio alluitur curuata profundo,  
laetas res Libyae et fortunam in Marte secuta  
iurauit pauitans Tyrio sua proelia Marti.*

The cities of Magna Graecia defect to Hannibal after his victory at Cannae.

Silius is often careless about word-repetition, but in this passage suspicion seems justified. This has been directed towards *in Marte* (23), but the suggested replacements listed by Delz are singularly unconvincing. So perhaps it is *Marti* (24) which should be changed, as being an erroneous repetition from the previous line. The obvious change, I think, is *regi*, i.e. *Hannibali*, as at 4, 131 (*Tyrio canit omina regi*), 4, 446 (*Tyrio regi*), and 5, 545 (*Tyrio concurrere regi*).

11, 90ff.

*excipit his frendens Fabius: 'pro cuncta pudendi!  
sedes ecce uacat belli uiduata procella:  
quem, quaeso, e uobis huic imposuisse paratis?'*





soon; (b) some definition of these *saxa* would not come amiss, particularly because of the preceding *scopuli*. I propose to change one letter, an *f* to an *l*, and read *Aetna elatis* (sc. *saxis*), ‘stones discharged from Etna’. For *efferre* of volcanic discharge see Sen. Epp. 51, 1 and 79, 2 *ignis* (sc. *ex Aetna*) ... *effertur*; Plin. Epp. 6, 16, 6 (*nubes ex Vesuuio*) *elata in altum*. Silius has more than a dozen instances of *efferre* with an ablative.

13, 47ff.      *tum meus adiuncto monstratam euadit in arcem*  
*Tyrides Ithaco et dextra amolitus in ipso*  
*custodes aditu templi caeleste reportat*  
*Palladium ac nostris aperit mala Pergama fatis.*

A descendant of Diomedes tells how his ancestor and Ulysses stole the Palladium from Troy, thus ‘opening up’ the city to the Greeks.

‘Threw open Troy to our conquering fortunes’ (Duff). This is difficult to accept. Perhaps *fatis* should be *castris*, which Silius is fond of using in the sense of *copiis* or *militibus*.

13, 146ff.      *is trepido ac lituum tinnitu stare neganti*  
*imperitans uiolenter equo, postquam auribus hostis*  
*uicinum sese uidet et clamore propinquo*  
*‘Claudius huic’ inquit ...*  
*‘det sese campo atque ineat certamina mecum.’*

The Capuan Taurea challenges Claudius to single combat.

The only way of keeping both *imperitans* and *et clamore propinquo* is that of Housman (on Lucan 9, 12), who takes the ablative phrase as parallel to the *postquam* clause and linked to it by *et*; this seems an implausible construction. On the other hand Bauer’s suggestion (adopted by Delz) *et clamare propinquum*, ‘and (sees) that he is shouting near at hand’, is likewise unconvincing; at the cost of two changes it produces an undesirable repetition of *auribus hostis uicinum sese* (sc. *esse*) *uidet*. Another suggestion is that of Lefebure, strongly supported by A. Y. Campbell in *Class. Rev.* 5 (1955) 138: *sese uidet, ‘en!’ clamore propinquo / ‘Claudius huic’ inquit*. Yet another expedient is Bauer’s alteration of *imperitans* to *imperitat* (an easy change); then *et* links *imperitat* with *clamore propinquo inquit*: ‘he halted his horse when he got within earshot of the enemy and shouted’. With either of the last two readings *propinquo* remains a repetition of what precedes. I suggest that it is a ‘psychological’ error (due to the context) for a word which superficially resembles it, viz. *profundo* (at Stat. Theb. 3, 692 *profundo* is found as a variant for *propinquo*). In a somewhat similar scene in the Thebaid (10, 760) Menoeceus, about to kill himself in the sight of the warring armies, *despexitque acies hominum et clamore profundo / conuertit campum iussitque silentia bello*.

13, 187ff. *rapiunt sibi quisque laborem.*  
*quos ubi tam erectos animi uidet et †superesse*  
*fortunam † sibi quemque ducem, ruit impete uasto*  
*ad portam magnaëque optat discrimina famaë.*

Fulvius, with his army in high spirits, assaults Capua.

The editors quote Liv. 22, 5, 7 (of the battle of Trasimene) *tum sibi quisque dux adhortatorque factus ad rem gerendam*, a passage which Silius may have had in mind at 9, 33 (of the same occasion) *dux sibi quisque uiam rapito*. This is very like 187 *rapiunt sibi quisque laborem*, but more relevant to 189 may be Appius Claudius, frag. 3 Morel, *fabrum esse suae quemque fortunae*, and Plaut. Trin. 363 *sapiens quidem pol ipsus fingit fortunam sibi*. Perhaps what we have in Silius is a variation of a proverbial phrase about each man being the architect of his own fortune or 'the bringer of fortune to himself'; in that case the old emendation of *fortunam* to *fortunaë* must be right. It only remains to deal with *superesse* or *super esse*, neither of which can be made to yield tolerable sense. Now in two passages (6, 233 and 10, 247), where the paradosis is *super*, Delz seems right in adopting (from Summers and Damsté respectively) the emendation *subit*. The same corruption may have occurred here: 'when Fulvius saw that his men were in high spirits, and the proverb came to his mind.'

13, 671ff. *octaua terebat*  
*arentem culmis messem crepitantibus aestas,*  
*ex quo cuncta mihi calcata meoque subibat*  
*germano †deuexa † iugum Tartessia tellus.*

Eight years had passed since the two Scipio brothers conquered Spain.

Summers was the first editor to alter *deuexa* (which is meaningless); he read *deuicta*, and Delz (who obelizes) suggests *defessa*. Preferable to either of these, I believe, would be *depressa*. The common phrase is *iugo premere*; cf. ThLL VII 2, 641, 54ff., and add Sen. Herc. f. 1019, Ag. 134f., Oct. 413. However *iugo deprimere* is found at least once elsewhere, at Sen. Oed. 300 (*bouem*) *numquam colla depressam* (or *-sum*) *iugo*. The corruption of *p* to *u* can be paralleled, and perhaps an unfortunate recollection of 8, 360 *deuexa iugo* may have played a part. Compare also 13, 695 *oppressa Hispania*.

13, 680ff. *subito uenale, cohortes*  
*Hispanae, uulgus, †Libyci quas fecerat auri †*  
*Hasdrubal, abrupto liquerunt agmine signa.*

Some Spanish cohorts are bribed by Hasdrubal to desert the Romans.

*Libyci auri* was construed by Housman (p. 433) as a possessive genitive: 'literally "had rendered them the property of Punic gold", "the slaves or creatures of his bribery", so that they had no independence'. This view was followed by Duff, but I agree with S. B. (p. 177) that the phrase 'means neither

that nor anything else'. Between them Bauer and Delz (who obelizes, as above) report half-a-dozen attempts to rewrite the latter half of the line, none of them convincing. I think that the text is not corrupt but lacunose; a specimen supplement might be:

*Libyci quas fecerat auri*  
 < *pondere ut immemores sacrati foederis essent* >  
*Hasdrubal e.q.s.*

Silius is very fond of postponing the subject to the end of a clause or sentence.

14, 442f. *has inter uoces tremulo uenit agmine cornus*  
*et Neptunicolae transuerberat ora Telonis.*

'*agmine de telo dictum caret exemplo*', says Delz, and conjectures *impete* (as at 2,243). I think that *aere* is worthy of consideration: the air is said to tremble as the trembling or quivering spear passes through it. So at 17, 406f. *contremuere aerae rapido uibrantibus hastis / turbine*; cf. also 10, 118 *cornus tremebunda*, 2, 448 *tremantibus hastis*, 15, 441 *stridentem cornum*, 13, 235 *cornum sonantem*.

15, 33f. *quis furor hic, non digne puer, consumere bello*  
*florem aevi?*

The beginning of Pleasure's address to Scipio.

Although all editors except Summers (who has no punctuation at all in the line) put a comma after *puer*, it should be deleted, and *consumere* construed with *non digne*. This was pointed out by Bentley; it is one of the few corrections made by him which are not reported by Bauer, and in consequence it has escaped the notice of editors. (Bentley's manuscript notes on Silius are to be found in his copy of Drakenborch's edition, now in the Cambridge University Library; they were published in the *Classical Journal* 3, 1811, 381ff.)

15, 455f. *ille foro auditus dulci cum soluerat ora*  
*aequabat Pyliae Neleia mella senectae.*

The eloquence of C. Laelius.

Since *dulcis* is a very inappropriate epithet for the forum and a very appropriate one for Laelius, it has been traditional to alter *dulci cum* to *cum dulcia*, a double change which still leaves untouched the objectionable *auditus*; even if this is taken as the equivalent of a present participle ('while he was being listened to') it is completely otiose. All difficulties can be overcome by the transposition of a single letter: *auditu dulcis, cum*.

16, 312ff. *inde refert sese circo et certamina prima  
incohat ac rapidos cursus proponit equorum.  
fluctuat aequoreo fremitu rabieque fauentum  
carceribus nondum reseratis mobile uulgus.*

Scipio holds games in honour of his father and uncle.

*Aequoreo fremitu* is rendered by Duff 'with a voice like the sound of the sea', and in support of this Delz quotes Hor. Od. 3, 27, 23 *aequoris nigri fremitum*. I do not believe either in this interpretation or in any of the replacements which have been proposed (*aequato, interea, incerto, aetherio*). It seems possible that the last five letters of *aequoreo* conceal *uario*; cf. Verg. Aen. 12, 486 *uario nequiquam fluctuat aestu*; Paneg. 12 (9), 19, 2 *innumerabilis multitudo ... impulsu uario fluctuare*. The missing syllable, however, is not obvious; perhaps *hic* (= *tum*, as often in Silius) would be least objectionable.

16, 373ff. *nisusque apprehendere primos  
Panchates animosus equos super altior ire  
et praecedentem iam iamque ascendere currum  
pone uidebatur.*

The horse Panchates strives to catch up with the car in front of him.

Delz is the first to query *super altior*, and with some justification since *super* seems devoid of meaning. Perhaps *sublimior*, the word used of this same horse at 353 *crescere sublimem ... putares* and 398 *fertur sublime per auras*. The corruption could be explained by the inadvertent substitution of a synonym (*altior*) for *sublimior*, and consequent patching (*super*).

16, 540ff. *multoque cruore  
exsatiata simul portantes corda sub umbras  
occubuere. pari nisu per pectora adactus  
intima descendit mucro; superaddita saeuis  
ultima uulneribus uerba, et conuicia uoluens  
dirus in inuitas effugit spiritus auras.*

Two brothers in single combat fall dead together.

At 17, 412 *gentilemque bibit Tellus inuita cruorem* ('Earth grieved as she drank the blood of her sons'), *inuita* has obvious point. In our passage the adjective has no such point: why should the air be reluctant to receive the spirits of these two brothers? Blass emended to *inuisas*, which is not appropriate of the *aurae aetheriae* (10, 577 et al.) but would be quite appropriate of the underworld (cf. 13, 425 and the other passages listed in ThLL VII 2, 197, 68ff.). In that case *auras* should be changed to *oras* (the two words are easily confused); for *orae* of the underworld cf. ThLL IX 2, 868, 60ff. It is true that this would repeat 541f. *sub umbras / occubuere*, but there is a similar repetition in *uerba* followed by *conuicia*.

*Addendum.* Following the example of A. Ker, Proc. Cambr. Philol. Soc. 13 (1967) 31, I correct some mistakes in the translation of J. D. Duff:

- 1, 112 *te surgente* not 'when you arise' but 'while you are growing up' (OLD sense 8b).
- 1, 269 *quo datur* not 'as far as he could' but 'in the war in which he could'.
- 6, 497 *subito* should be construed with *uociferans*, not with *stans*.
- 6, 649 *diues praedae* qualifies *Picenum*, not the subject of *fundit*.
- 9, 451f. *quantumque uicissim / auderent* not 'what he could dare to do' but 'what the other dared to do'.
- 9, 487 *reuocat mentes* not 'renewed his purpose' but 'renewed the courage' (of the Romans).
- 9, 535 *longi laboris* not 'her unending task' but 'the prolonged suffering' (of the Carthaginians).
- 10, 494 *pignora pacis* is in apposition not to *Cloelia* but to *uirgineas cateruas*.
- 11, 315f. *parte relicta / tectorum* not 'when they had left part of the building behind them' but 'in a deserted part of the building'.
- 12, 456 *per proxima* not 'through the surrounding country' but 'by the shortest route'.
- 13, 751 *maiorque recessit imago* not 'and his ghost seemed taller as he went away' but 'and his ghost, taller than he was in life, retired'.
- 14, 363 *insultant pariter pelago* not 'both fleets rode proudly on the wave' but 'the rowers [in the Roman fleet] strike the sea in unison' (cf. 13, 241; 11, 489).