

A Plautine Emendation: ‘miles gloriosus’ 1268¹

ABSTRACT: This paper argues that attribution of the words *iube ergo adire* to Milphidippa at Plautus, ‘miles gloriosus’ 1268 is wrong, and that they ought to be spoken by Pyrgopolinices.

The attribution of particular words to one character or another in ancient drama is not always the most straightforward task for the editor. The evidence provided by the MSS² is not something which may be attributed to the playwright³, but, in all likelihood, to publishers preparing editions of plays for circulation to readers no earlier than the second-century A.D.⁴. This note will consider the case of verse 1268 of Plautus’ ‘miles gloriosus.’

ACR	mea Milphidippa, adi opsecro et congregere.	1266
PYR	ut me ueretur!	
PAL	illa ad nos pergit.	
MIL	uos uolo.	
PYR	et nos te.	
MIL	ut iussisti,	
	eram meam eduxi foras.	
PYR	uideo.	
MIL	iube ergo adire.	
PYR	induxi in animum ne oderim item ut alias, quando orasti.	
MIL	uerbum edepol facere non potis, si accesserit prope ad te.	1270
	dum te optuetur, interim linguam oculi praeciderunt.	
PYR	leuandum morbum mulieri uideo.	
MIL	ut tremit atque extimuit,	
	postquam te aspexit.	
		1266–73 ⁵

- 1 For Dr W. H. Jackson who has taught me much about scholarship, and even more about friendship.
- 2 DE MELO (2011), Vol. 1, cvi–cvii provides an overview of the appearance of the Ambrosian palimpsest (A), and what may be ascertained about that of the lost Palatine archetype (II) from its descendants.
- 3 DEUFERT (2002), 21–2 suggests that it is conceivable that Plautus, as is the case in contemporaneous Greek papyri, would have used *paragraphoi* (and, possibly, *dicola*) to mark changes of speaker in his autograph.
- 4 AS DEUFERT (2002), 217–21 concludes ‘[ü]berhaupt erklären sich alle Bestandteile dieses Systems – die Angabe von Personennamen und Rolle, die Einteilung in Szenen...und die Markierung der Sprecher innerhalb des Dramentextes durch Personensiglen – aus dem Anliegen eines Herausgebers, den Komödientext einem Lesepublikum möglichst anschaulich zu erschließen, ihm die Informationen zu geben, die der Zuschauer bei der Aufführung unmittelbar vor Augen hat.’ (quot. 220).
- 5 The text used is that of DE MELO (2011).

In this passage, Acroteleutium and her servant Milphidippa are laying the snare which will undo the braggart, Pyrgopolinices, for whom the play is named. In an attempt to seduce him, Acroteleutium pretends to be overwhelmingly in love with the soldier, and dispatches her maid that she might bring about her mistress' meeting with him. Palaestrio – one of the soldier's slaves – has arranged for Pyrgopolinices to be present to encounter Milphidippa and her mistress. Although the two women know their target to have been lured into the street by Palaestrio so that he may meet his supposed admirer, they feign ignorance of his presence; after falsely attempting to sniff him out – apparently quite literally! (1255–9) – Acroteleutium goes weak at the knees on supposedly catching sight of him at last, asking her maid to hold her up lest she fall (1260–2). Milphidippa, in the hearing of the men, and with a view to further flattering Pyrgopolinices, claims that she too would love him if her mistress permitted it. The soldier, emboldened by Palaestrio's observation that he is loved by all women (1264), wonders at how greatly they seem to fawn over him (1266), asserting that he is, of course, a *nepos Veneris* (1265). At the point when the bait seems most likely to be taken, Acroteleutium dispatches her maid. On reaching the men, Milphidippa says that she has brought her mistress outdoors (1267–8) as she had promised that she would at 1085–6. Pyrgopolinices then acknowledges that he has seen her (*uideo*), before the maid tells him to call her mistress over (*iube ergo adire*). Unprompted, the soldier then announces that he has decided to obey the maid's request (*quando orasti*), and has convinced himself not to despise Acroteleutium as he does other women (*induxi in animum ne oderim item ut alias*). Milphidippa responds to this assertion of the soldier's by noting that her mistress, were she to draw near to the soldier, would be quite tongue-tied (*uerbum edepol facere non potis*), going by her response when she is claimed initially to have seen him: *ut tremit atque extimuit, | postquam te aspexit*.

There seems to be an inconsistency here. The attribution of the command *iube ergo adire* to Milphidippa in the *uetustiores* (BCD), and in modern editions⁶, sits uncomfortably with the sense of the passage: why would the maid, who is attempting to persuade Pyrgopolinices of her mistress' near-debilitating love, encourage the soldier to call over Acroteleutium (who feigns the loss of control of her limbs), and then go on to inform the braggart that this same mistress would be incapable of speaking, struck dumb by his presence? Encountering a mute Acroteleutium would hardly be a constructive step in the laying of the snare for the soldier. We might also note that Pyrgopolinices' apparently unprompted words in 1269 are also odd after the command attributed to the maid, as they seem not to respond in a particularly direct way to her suggestion: there is no reason for him to say that he has decided not to despise Acroteleutium anymore after Milphidippa has told him to summon her mistress. Far more attractive to my mind is the notion that the command *iube ergo adire* be attributed to Pyrgopolinices. He would, then, on acknowledging that he has seen Acroteleutium, tell Milphidippa to summon her, since he has decided not to loathe her, and she would reply by saying that, if her mistress were to approach him, speech would fail her (thus implying that

6 The following editions attribute the words *iube ergo adire* to Milphidippa: MERULA (1472); SCUTARIUS (1490); SARACENUS (1499); PIUS (1500); BEROALDUS (1503); PYLADES (1506); CAMERARIUS (1558); LAMBINUS (1576); DOUSA *filius* (1594); PAREUS (1610); PAREUS (1619); GRUTER (1621); PAREUS (1641); BOXHORN (1645); BOTHE (1810); BOTHE (1821); LINDEMANN (1844); RITSCHL (1848); FLECKEISEN (1850); LORENZ (1869); BRIX (1875); USSING (1882); RITSCHL-GOETZ (1890); LEO (1896); LINDSAY (1905); GOETZ & SCHOELL (1906); TYRRELL (1927); ERNOUT (1936); HAMMOND, MACK & MOSKALEW (1970).

their meeting should not occur now – the ruse is more easily managed, surely, with fewer people having to interact with Pyrgopolinices).

It has been suggested to me that there is some difficulty in interpreting *quando orasti* ('since you beseeched me' (1269)), were the command given over to Pyrgopolinices – when would Milphidippa have beseeched him to take her mistress into his affections, if not with the words *iube ergo adire*? The answer lies in verses 991–1093, where Palaestrio and Milphidippa persuade the *miles* into thinking that Acroteleutium is in love with him. The maid uses the verb *orare* (and its cognates) to speak of her pleading with Pyrgopolinices (*nam nisi tu illi fers suppetias, iam illa animum despondebit. | age, mi Achilles, fuat quod te oro, serua illam pulchram pulchre* (1053–4)), and styles herself as an *oratrix* seeking to persuade (*exoro*) him: *quomqu' me oratricem hau spreuisti sistique exorare ex te* (1072)⁸. It could indeed be argued that it would be slightly odd for the *miles* to use the verb *orare* to refer to the phrase *iube ergo adire* in the mouth of Milphidippa. In Plautine diction, the verb *orare* is most frequently used of addresses to superiors (whether social, or by circumstance) or equals when inferiors or peers are desirous of some thing or some situation which is lacking⁹, but this is precisely not how *iube ergo adire* functions here. *iubere* is used by Plautus to refer, for the most part, to social superiors instructing their inferiors (or, more rarely, their equals), and it is only used of inferiors speaking to their social superiors in very particular circumstances, which are usually marked out as such: often of a plotting slave who instructs their master about what he should do to ensure the success of the former's connivance¹⁰; or, of a slave effectively functioning as a messenger to the equal of their master. It is the latter of these that would occur at 1268, were *iube ergo adire* attributed to Pyrgopolinices: he tells the maid to instruct Acroteleutium to approach, and so, although Milphidippa then orders her mistress, it is effectively the *miles* who addresses her through her maid. It is, of course, most common for the imperative of *iubere* to be used to convey a master's wish to their slave through another¹¹, but it may also be used of a slave instructing a social superior on the part of their master¹². The latter, in fact, occurs three times in the scene in question, as Pyrgopolinices instructs

7 Prof. M. Deufert *per litteras*.

8 It is also used of Milphidippa's dealings with the *miles* elsewhere: at 1224, Acroteleutium describes her wonder at her maid's powers of persuasion (*permirum ecastor praedicas te adiisse atque exorasse*); and, at 1405, Pyrgopolinices attempts to justify his making a move on Acroteleutium (*oratus sum [sc. a Milphidippa] ad eam ut irem*).

9 There are a few instances where *orare* is used of a superior addressing an inferior, but there are clear reasons why this occurs. At *mos*. 797, relying on a slave's connivance, the old man, Simo, is said to have begged his neighbour's slave, Tranio, to persuade his master's son to return the house which it is claimed he has acquired. Similarly, in need of information from his slave, Charinus begs him for it, only to point out the irony of having to do so: *opsecro hercle oroque ut istuc quid sit actutum indices, | quandoquidem mihi supplicandum seruulo uideo meo* (*mer*. 170–1).

10 For example, Pistoclerus tells the slave Chrysalus that he will obey him (*Bac*. 228 (*faciam ut iubes*); 727 (*quae parari tu iussisti*); at 729, the slave orders Pistoclerus (*quod iubebo scribito istic*)), and the latter even goes so far as to refer to Chrysalus as his commander in their connivance (*o imperatorem probum!* (759)). Not dissimilarly, at *cas*. 734–58, Lysimachus casts himself as his own slave's slave (*seruos sum tuos* (738)), since he is so greatly in need of his aid, and the scene concludes with the master saying to Olympio, *si tu iubes, em ibitur tecum* (758). *iubere* also occurs in such contexts at *mil*. 899 of Palaestrio instructing Periplectomenus; at *mos*. 396 and 635 of the slave Tranio; and at *trin*. 1064, where Charmides awaits instruction from his slave.

11 e.g.: *mil*. 1034; *Per*. 605; *Poen*. 1148; *Ps*. 1054; *rud*. 856.

12 e.g.: at *mos*. 929–30 Theopropides summons his son through the instruction of Tranio, his slave (*curriculo iube in urbem ueniat iam simul tecum*).

Acroteleutium through Milphidippa, at 1069 (*iube eampse exire huc ad nos*); 1093 (*iube maturare illam exire huc*); and, 1278 (*iube domum ire*). The proposed reattribution of the utterance (*iube ergo adire*) to the *miles* is thus in keeping with the tone of his speech throughout the scene (and makes it a square four times that the imperatival construction is uttered by Pyrgopolinices). The text of 1268, then, should read thus¹³:

MIL	ut iussisti,	
	eram meam eduxi foras.	
PYR	uideo: iube ergo adire –	
	induxi in animum ne oderim item ut alias, quando orasti.	
MIL	uerbum edepol facere non potis, si accesserit prope ad te.	1270
	dum te optuetur, interim linguam oculi praeciderunt.	

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