

In *Silv.* 4.4 Statius pays homage to Vitorius Marcellus,¹ the young dedicatee of the poem (for this small but meaningful detail, see Stat. *Silv.* 4.4.45 *iuuenes ... annos*; 4.4.74 *iuenemque ... parentem*), praising his skills as an orator (*Silv.* 4.4.39–45) and foreseeing a brilliant military career for him (4.4.61–4). The last point is highlighted in a brief portrait of Marcellus as a perfect foot soldier and horseman (4.4.64–9):²

... nec enim tibi sola potentis
eloquii uirtus: sunt membra accommoda bellis 65
quique grauem tarde subeant thoraca lacerti.
seu campo pedes ire pares, est agmina supra
nutaturus apex, seu frena sonantia flectes,
seruiet asper equus.

For potent eloquence is not your only strength. You have limbs well fitted for war
and arms slow (?) to don a heavy corselet. If you make to march on the level, your

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¹ On the dedicatee, see F. Grotto, ‘*Egregius formaque animisque. Un Marcello “virgiliano” in Stazio, *Silvae* IV 4’, *Maia* 70 (2018), 312–19, at 312.*



² I reproduce below the text and the translation by D.R. Shackleton Bailey, *Statius. Silvae* (Cambridge, MA, 2015², with corrections by C.A. Parrott), who prints exactly the reading of the Madrid manuscript, Bibl. Nat. 3678 (M), ann. 1417 uel 1418.

crest will wave above the ranks; if you manage jingling reins, the mettlesome charger
will be your slave.

The whole passage is clear, except for the adverb *tarde* in line 66. In recent times, apart from Shackleton Bailey (who, however, expresses his doubts in a footnote to his translation), all critical editors and commentators of Statius³ agree that the reading of manuscript M is barely defensible. This suspicion dates long back, and its reason is evident: having been said that Vitorius' limbs (*membra*) are suitable for military employment (*accommoda bellis*), Statius' statement that Marcellus' arms are unable to fit his breastplate properly would be self-contradictory.

Emendation therefore seems to be needed. Barth's proposal *haud tarde* reveals its weakness since in Statius *haud* never modifies this adverb,⁴ while Goodyear's *subeant apte*⁵ and Liberman's

³ See K.M. Coleman, *Statius. Silvae IV* (Oxford, 1988); E. Courtney, *P. Papini Stati Silvae* (Oxford, 1992 repr. with corrections); G. Liberman, *Stace. Silves* (Paris, 2010).

⁴ See C. von Barth Papinii Statii quae extant ex recensione et cum animadversionibus locupletis Casparis Barthii, (Zwickau, 1664),  86 (*Ad P. Papinii Statii Silvarum Libros Animadversiones*).

The relevant point against this conjecture was raised by Liberman (n. 3), 347. I list here the occurrences of *haud* used with reference to an adverb: *haud aliter* recurs six times (*Theb.* 3.45; *Theb.* 3.140; *Theb.* 6.880; *Theb.* 12.66; *Silv.* 3.3.179; *Silv.* 5.2.121), *haud citius*, *haud minus*, and *haud olim* once (respectively *Theb.* 10.674, *Theb.* 7.725, and *Theb.* 5.735), *haud procul* six times (*Theb.* 6.368; *Theb.* 7.441; *Theb.* 8.575; *Theb.* 12.246; *Theb.* 12.409; *Achil.* 1.150), and *haud umquam* six times (*Theb.* 5.273; *Theb.* 7.153; *Theb.* 9.795; *Theb.* 10.149; *Silv.* 5.2.107; *Silv.* 5.4.13).

In his discussion of line 66, Barth proposed also *intarde*, but this form is not attested elsewhere.

⁵ Conjecture mentioned in the *apparatus criticus* of the edition by Coleman (n. 3): this proposal was preceded by *subeant arte* of O. Müller, *Quaestiones Statianae* (Berlin, 1861), 30. Both conjectures

subito (*subeant*) and *propere* (*subeant*) can sound better than *recte* (*subeant*) or *dextre* (*subeant*), which were proposed by Courtney,⁶ but they seem to be mere attempts to emend a much-disputed *locus criticus* rather than decisive conjectures which settle the problem.

However, another approach to emendation has been proposed, and I think that this turns out to be more convincing. It consists in replacing *tarde* not with an adverb, but with an adjective suitable for Marcellus' arms. In this way the hexameter would perfectly match the structure of a golden line: the verb *subeant* will be embedded between a pair of adjectives (*grauem* + the unknown adjective to be referred to *lacerti*) and a subsequent pair of nouns (*thoraca lacerti*).⁷ Even on the basis of replacing *tarde* with an adjective, the list of conjectures is quite long:⁸ Markland's *ualidi* (preferred by him to


are perhaps too radical, since they require a change in the word order and the restoration of the word corrupted in *tarde*: as we will see, a more plausible solution can be found.

⁶ See the *apparatus* by Courtney (n. 3); the two proposals have been criticised by W.S. Watt, 'Notes on Latin Poetry. Ovid, Lucan, Silius Italicus, Statius, Martial, Rutilius, and Fragmentary Latin Poets', *BICS* 42 (1997–1998), 145–58, at 154–5.

⁷ At the suggestion of the referee, I list the most relevant examples of golden lines occurring in descriptive passages of the *Silvae*: see Stat. *Silv.* 1.1.34; 1.1.51; 1.3.33; 1.4.114; 2.1.114; 2.2.82; 2.2.89; 3.1.113; 3.2.2; 3.2.38; 3.2.141; 3.3.2; 3.3.24; 3.3.130; 3.3.150; 3.3.189; 3.4.83; 3.5.66; 3.5.80; 3.5.97; 4.1.1; 4.4.14; 4.4.92; 4.6.79; 4.8.51; 5.1.93; 5.1.244; 5.2.3–4; 5.2.24; 5.3.95; 5.3.112. Among these lines, the case represented by Stat. *Silv.* 3.5.66 *candida seu molli diducit brachia motu* is very similar to the line now discussed and can be a good parallel in order to support the proposed reconstruction.

⁸ For bibliographical references, see J. Markland, *P. Papinii Statii Libri quinque Silvarum* (Dresden-London, 1827²), 321–2; A. Otto, 'Zur Kritik von Statius' *Silvae*', *RhM* 42 (1887), 531–46, at 539; and J.S. Phillimore, *P. Papini Stati Silvae* (Oxford, 1918²) in the critical apparatus of his edition. The last two conjectures quoted here are printed respectively in Coleman (n. 3), 24 (not in

fortes), Otto's *faciles*, Phillimore's *artandi*,⁹ Coleman's *ingentes* and Watt's *crudi* may deserve consideration in terms of the sense, but they do not account well for the genesis of the error (Lieberman¹⁰ points out that, as regards palaeographical evidence, Watt's proposal is the most likely, but I wonder how *crudi* could have been corrupted into *tarde*).

Though not totally convincing, Otto's proposal sets up an intriguing and well balanced contrast (a  ~~liberechnete~~ Gegensatz', as he put it) between an adjective that conveys the sense of weight (*grauem*) and one that points to the agility of Marcellus' arms (*faciles*). If this strategy sounds convincing, perhaps, a more suitable conjecture can be *lenti*. This adjective is frequently used with reference to the physique of young people in the sense of 'supple, but at the same time tough': for the best examples, see the description of Leander's arms cleaving the water in Ov. *Her.* 18.58 *iactabam liquido bracchia lenta mari*¹¹ and *Her.* 19.48 *lentaque dimotis bracchia iactat aquis*. Note also that *lenti ... lacerti* might be interpreted as the Latin rendering of the Homeric formula describing the suppleness of young limbs: see e.g. Hom. *Il.* 11.668–9 οὐ γὰρ ἐμὴ ἵς | ἔσθ' οἷη πάρος ἔσκεν ἐνὶ γναμπτοῖσι μέλεσσιν ('since my strength is no longer the one I possessed in my pliant limbs'; here we have old Nestor complaining for his diminished strength); Hom. *Od.* 11.393–

the main text, but in the critical apparatus) and Watt (n. 6), at 154–5. For the sake of completeness, I mention also *tardi*, printed for the first time in A.P. Manutius, *Statii Sylvarum libri quinque Thebaidos libri duodecim Achilleidos duo* (Venice, 1502): this proposal, however, has already been criticised by Markland, quoted before.

⁹ The adjective would enhance 'the arms to be compressed' due to the muscles rippling beneath the skin, but this expression sounds too bombastic and humorous in this situation.

¹⁰ See again Lieberman (n. 3), 347–8.

¹¹ On this passage see the illuminating commentaries of E.J. Kenney, *Ovid. Heroides XVI–XXI* (Cambridge, 1996), 151 and G. Rosati, *P. Ovidii Nasonis Heroidum Epistulae XVIII–XIX. Leander Heroni. Hero Leandro* (Florence, 1996), 79–80.

4 ἀλλ' οὐ γάρ οἱ ἔτ' ἦν ἴς ἔμπεδος οὐδ' ἔτι κῆρυς, | οἷη περ πάρος ἔσκεν ἐνὶ γναμπτοῖσι μέλεσσι
(the description of Agamemnon's ghost); Hom. *Od.* 21.281–3 ὄφρα μεθ' ὑμῖν | χειρῶν καὶ σθέneos
πειρήσομαι, ἥ μοι ἔτ' ἐστὶν | ἴς, οἷη πάρος ἔσκεν ἐνὶ γναμπτοῖσι μέλεσσιν (Odysseus showing his
youthful strength).¹²

The proposed correction has also another significant advantage over other attempts, since it reasonably accounts for the genesis of *tarde*. There are at least two possibilities: the first and most likely is that *lenti* was glossed with the adjective *tardi*, further corrupted into *tarde*. Alternatively, a passage from *lenti* to *lente* is not difficult (especially in a late-antique manuscript written in a majuscule writing, where the two letters are quite similar); having *lente* substituted the original reading, a scribe may have altered the corrupted adverb into its synonym *tarde* in order to give it a better sense. Whichever explanation we prefer, I hope to have argued that the original reading was *lenti*.

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¹² Note that these parallels gain even more significance if we note that *membra* in line 65 is the Latin word for Greek μέλη.