

Two words in Festus: Philological and etymological notes

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I. *Promellere* Fest. 300.30–31 L., Paul *ex F.* 301.6 L. (L. = Lindsay 1913)

1. Universally understood to mean ‘delay, postpone’ (Scaliger 1574, 1585b: “antiquum verbum a Graeco μέλλειν, cuius vestigia supersunt in voce *Remeligines*”; Dacier 1699: “*Promellere* autem est *procrastinare*, *producere*, a mello, moror, quod a Graeco μέλλω”; sim. subsequent edns., etymologica, etc.).

[*Prōmellere* is missing from de Vaan 2008.]

2. Standard gloss: *litem promouere* ‘to delay/postpone a lawsuit’. Actually emendation by Orsini 1583:62, followed by Dacier 1699:383, Müller 1839:205, and hesitantly Lindsay 1930:359. But let’s look at the evidence:

FESTUS (CODEX FARNESIANUS)		PAULUS DIACONUS
DIPLOMATIC	NORMALIZED	
Prome[(<i>ca. 27 letters</i>) ri lituū puere [	Prome[ri lituum prouere [	Promellere litem promouere.

[Gap in middle is probably filler; reconstructions below, assuming attribution to Verrius Flaccus, Festus’ source; typographically normalized:

Prome[llere Verrius ait significa]re litem promouere.	(Orsini, Dacier)
Prome[llere est ex opinione Ver]ri litem promouere.	(Müller)
Promel[lere litem (?) est ex opinione Ver]ri lituum ¹ (-tem ?) pro<mo>vere.	(Lindsay 1930)]

4. But *lituum* is the *lectio difficilior*. (1) Much rarer word (*lituus* ‘curved war trumpet; augur’s staff or crook’ vs. *līs lītis* ‘dispute, lawsuit’). (2) Context of neighboring entries is augury (Reitzenstein 1887:50, cf. also Brause 1875:50); Messalla the augur mentioned in ll. 28–9, the *ius augurum* in l. 34. (3) *prōmouēre* means ‘postpone’ only at Ter. *Andr.* 711; otherwise ‘move/extend horizontally forward’, which works better with a physical object.

5. *TLL s.v. prōmello* (italics in orig.): “*Verrius igitur non de lite, sed de lituo promellendo (sc. ad designanda spatia caeli²) egisse videtur.*”

6. Mackey 2022:318: demarcation of augural space took place in the mind’s eye. Based on his reading of augural prayer at Varro *L.* 7.8 and *animo finiuit* ‘delimited in his mind’ at Liv. 1.10.8. But staff was used for this: Serv. *ad Aen.* 7.187, Cic. *ND* 2.9, *De div.* 1.30–31. See *RE* 13, cols. 805–6. Use of staff not excluded in Varro, and implied in Liv. 1.10.7–9, where *animo finiuit* only refers to one step in the process.

¹ This does not mean Lindsay preferred this reading. His practice in this edition was to report the attested reading and put emendations in parentheses following.

² This phrase is silently cribbed from Serv. *ad Aen.* 7.187.

7. *prōmouēre* in gloss need not have reflected the full meaning of *prōmellere*; whatever the exact sense, **mellere* a transitive verb of motion, ‘make go, move’ in some way. Connection to Gk. μέλλω (n.b. not ‘delay’ until 5th cent.! Only ‘be about to, be destined to, be likely to’ in Hom.) must be abandoned.

8. Forssman *apud TLL s.v. prōmello* and esp. Meiser *apud TLL s.v. remelīgo*: **mellere* << **ml-n(e)-h₃-* < **melh₃-* ‘come/go forth’ (: Gk. βλώσκω ‘come, go’, aor. ἔμολον). Cp. **cellere* ‘raise’ (*ex-cellere*) << **kl-n(e)-H-*, **cellere* ‘throw, dash’ (*per-cellere* ‘throw to the ground’) << **kl-n(e)-h₂-*, *pellere* ‘push, drive’, U. **ampentu** ‘touch’ (Weiss 2010:164–71) < **-pel-ne-tōd* (Meiser 1986:164–6) << **pl-n(e)-h₂-*.

9. Ironical coda: Stüber 2019 resuscitates Szemerényi 1951 that μέλλω meant *‘go’ and is from same root as βλώσκω. If so, then root of *prōmellere* and μέλλω the same after all; but not clear that they are right about μέλλω.

II. *remelīgīnēs* Fest. 344.15–25 L., Paul *ex F.* 345.6–9 L.

10. Festus: Re-
meligines et remorae †memorando dictae sunt
in Plauto in Casina (804): “Nam quid illae nunc tam diu intus
remorantur remeligines.” ab Afranio in Proditio:
“remeligo a Laribus missa sum †hanc† quae cursum
cohib[eam.”]
non man[]
inno[Plautus (Trin. 37): *odioss-*]
aeque su[nt, remoramque faciunt rei priuatae et]
publi[cae.” Lucilius: *quaenam* uox ex te resonans]
meo gr[adu remoram facit?”

Paul: Remeligenes et remorae a morando dictae. Plautus: “Quid illae nunc tam diu intus
remorantur remeligines;” et Lucilius: “Quaenam uox ex te resonans meo gradu
remoram facit?”

11. Also gloss *remiligines*: *remoratrices* CGL 4.162.8, 5.479.21, 609.50 (*remilicines*), 636.44 (*remilittinis*).

[Barbara (2006:243) adduces a scholion to Lucan (*Adnot. super Luc.* 6.675 Endt) where *ech<e>nais* (= Gk. ἔχενηϊς), a small fish that was thought to hinder the forward movement of ships, is given the Latin synonym *remiligio*, etymologized as *quod liget remos* ‘because it ties up the oars’. Also called *remora*. Not clear if this is an old meaning or not.]

[*Remelīgō* is missing from de Vaan 2008.]

12. Standard view, continued by Meiser: *remelīgō* is related to *prōmellere* via a **remellere* ±‘delay’. But (assuming **mellere* < **melh₃-* ‘come/go [forth]’), that should—as with *re(d)-* +

MOTION generally—refer to reversal and return or removal. N.b. *re-dūcere* ‘lead back; move earlier (!) in time’. Exception: *reicere* ‘throw back; postpone’.

[*re(d)-* + MOTION = reversal/return/removal: *re-bītāre*, *-currere*, *-ferre*, *-gerere*, *-gredi*, *red-igere*, *-īre*, *re-meāre*, *-migrāre*, *-mittere*, *-mouēre*, *-nāre*, *-pellere*, *-pōnere*, *-silīre*, *-sultāre*, *-surgere*, *-tractāre*, *-trahere*, *-uehere*, *-uenīre*, *-uertere*.]

13. And *-ll-* vs. *-l-* a problem. Other deverbal *-īgō* nouns are deprelential: *prūrīgō* ‘itch, horniness’ ← *prūrīre* ‘itch’, *scaturīgō* ‘bubbling spring’ ← *scaturīre* ‘bubble forth’, *ēsūrīgō* ‘hunger’ ← *ēs(s)urīre* ‘be hungry’, *ūrīgō* ‘horniness’ ← *ūrere* ‘burn’, *orīgō* ‘source, origin’ ← *orīrī* ‘arise’, also most likely *dē-im-petīgō* (names of skin diseases) ← *petere* ‘attack’, *uertīgō* ‘dizziness’ ← *uertere* ‘turn’. Exception: *intertrīgō* ‘sore caused by chafing, esp. ’twixt the thighs’ either syncop. < **interterīgō* or built to allomorph *trī-* of *trīuī*, *trītus* of *terere* ‘rub, wear away’ that was used because of its *ī*.

14. *remillus* Fest. 346.2–7 L. (terribly mutilated) = Paul. *ex F.* 347.1. Meiser *apud TLL s.v.* upholds derivation from **melh₃-* by glossing it as ‘recurrens sim.’ But it’s glossed as *quasi repandus* ‘basically curved back, upturned, arched’. Not compelling semantics; no expl. for *-i-*; morphology?

15. Pokorny 1959:

3. mel- ,zögern‘.

Gr. μέλλω, Fut. μελλήσω ,zögere, bin im Begriffe‘ (μόλις ,kaum‘?); μέλει μοι ,es liegt mir am Herzen‘, μέλω, -ομαι, -ήσω, μέμηλα (dor. μέμαλα), μέμβλεται ,am Herzen, im Sinne liegen, besorgt sein‘, μελέδη, μελεδών, μελέδημα ,Sorge‘, μελέτη ds., μελέτωρ ,Fürsorger‘; lat. *prō-mellere* (*-ll-* = *-ln-*) ,litem prōmovēre‘, *re-melīgō* ,remoratrix‘, *re-mulcum* ,Schlepptau‘, *prō-mulcum* ds.; air. *mall* (**ml̥-so-*) ,langsam‘.

WP. II 291 f., WH. II 370, 427 f.

16. *remulcum* ‘rope used to tow a boat’ Caes.+. But this is ← *remulcāre* ‘to tow with a rope’ Sis.+ < Gk. ῥῆμουλκέω ‘id.’ (as though ← **ῥῆμουλκός* ‘pulling a rope’, cf. ῥῆμα ‘rope for towing’, ἔλκω ‘drag, pull’), with 1st syll. remade as *re-*. *prōmulcum* ‘ship’s rope’ Paul. *ex F.* 251.3 L. (also in glossaries) modeled on *remulcum*.

[*Remulcum* and *prōmulcum* were once thought by some to be native Latin words. Cf. critique already by Fay (1913:124 n. 2).]

17. OIr. *mall* ‘slow’ (‘tardus’ Sg. 66^a7, ‘hebes’ 66^a5, ‘morantem’ 64^a5). Celtic etymologica accept connection with *remelīgō* (Vendryes 1960: *s.v. mall*; Matasović 2009: *s.v. mall*), reconstruct **ml̥-no-* or **ml̥-so-*.

18. Vendryes adduces W. *mall* ‘lent, mou, flétri’ as cognate; but gloss is misleading. Cf. *GPC* “rotten, putrid, corrupt; evil, wicked, accursed, wanton, foolish; grievous, bad, unsavoury, unwholesome, unhealthy, sick, decrepit, blighted, blasted; dull (of fire, pain, &c.); ?slow” (italics in original). More frequently, subst. ‘pestilence, rot, destruction, evil’.

19. Matasović: two roots, **mel-* ‘delay’ for OIr. *mall* ‘slow’ and **mel-* ‘evil’ (: Lat. *malus*) for W. *mall* ‘rotten, etc.’. But ‘slow’ can be ← ‘bad, rotten’ via ‘lazy, idle’, cf. Eng. *slow* ← ‘lazy’, Germ. *faul* ‘lazy’ ← ‘rotten’. No need for **mel-* ‘delay’ here; see Höfler 2017:63–65 (**m_l-s-o-*, cp. βλασ[-φημέω] ‘slander’ < **m_l-s-*, Gk. μέλεος ‘idle’ < **mel-es-o-*, Arm. *mel* ‘sin’ < **mel-s-o-*, etc.).

20. μόλις ‘with difficulty, barely’. See Weiss 2016:482–3: to μόλος· πόνος. μάχη. φρύαγμα Hsch., μῶλος ‘toil and moil of war’, Lat. *mōlēs* ‘large mass, massive undertaking’, *molestus* ‘bothersome’, etc. < **(H)mel(H)-* ‘struggle’.

21. Gk. μέλω ‘have as a concern’. Many competing etymologies; newest discussion is Pozza 2020, building on Rieken 1999:49–51 and Serangeli 2016 on Anat. **mal-* ‘think’ (> Hitt. *māl-* ‘[mental] force’, CLuv. *mal(ā)i-* ‘think’, etc.). Rieken: *mal-* cognate with μέλλω; both < **mel-* ‘delay’. Serangeli: *mal-* cognate with μέλω.

22. Rieken’s parallel for ‘think’ = ‘delay’: the claim that **men-* ‘think’ = **men-* ‘stay, remain’. Pozza expands on this, but using Serangeli’s etymology, and brings in *remelīgō*.

23. Idea of ‘think’ = ‘delay’ is very old: already in Bopp 1830:209 (though not in the 2nd ed., 1847:257), Curtius 1858:84–5, 275–6, Pott 1870:118–9, Walde and Pokorny 1930:2.267 s.v. 5. *men-*. Toned down in Pokorny 1959:s.v. 5. *men-*: “‘bleiben, (sinnend) stillstehen’ (= *men* ‘denken’?).” Not in *LIV*.

24. But no motivation to derive *remelīgō* from ‘think’. Not clear that the ‘think’–‘delay’ idea is even right. **men-* ‘think’ and **men-* ‘remain’ utterly distinct throughout the family. Older cited exx. of ‘think’ ⇔ ‘remain/delay’ now outdated. Hard to find actual exx. of ‘think’ ↔ ‘remain’ or ‘delay’.

[‘Stand’ shows up in words for ‘know’, but that is mediated by preverbs, e.g. Pahl. *apa-stāk* ‘knowledge’, Gk. ἐπι-στήμη, Eng. *under-stand*; and ‘know’ ≠ ‘think’.]

25. So **mel-* ‘delay’ has to take a bow. On to another idea about *remelīgō*: Nussbaum *apud* Weiss 2016:482 n. 40 connects it to Lat. *mōlēs* ‘mass’, *molestus* ‘annoying’, etc. But root meant ‘struggle’ (§20 above); preferable would be something closer to ‘delay’.

26. Two outdated ideas: a compound (Fay 1913:124: *reme-* to Ved. *rāmāti* ‘stands still’ + *-līgen-* to λογγάζει διατρίβει); “Sabine *l*” approach (Petr 1899:138–9: **remedīgō* to Slav. **mǔdlīnī* ‘slow’, etc.; but latter rather from **meudh-*).

27. Festus’ own etymology: to *(re)morārī*³ ‘(cause) delay’, along with *remora* ‘a cause of delay’. Add *remor(is)** ‘forcing a delay’ (in *remores aues in auspicio dicuntur, quae acturum aliquid remorari compellunt* ‘in taking the auspices, birds are called *remores* that force someone who is about to undertake something to delay’ Paul ex F. 345.14–15 and *alterum uero Remum dictum, uidelicet a tarditate; quippe talis naturae homines ab antiquis remores dici* ‘(that) the other was

³ See the text in §10 above: the Farnesianus has the corrupted *a memorando*, perhaps for *a remorando*; Paul has *a morando*.

called Remus, evidently from his being late, since men having that nature were called *remores* by the ancients’ Mar. Victor. *Or.* 21.5.

[Peruzzi 1966:56–7 raises the possibility of *Remurinus ager* also being derived from *remor(is)**.]

28. Whatever people say about it (“manifestement fausse,” Fabia 1894:140), the semantics are absolutely *einwandfrei*. Actually not hard to pull off: **remor-* + *-īgō* with *r-r > r-l* dissimilation, i.e. either **remorīgō > *remolīgō > remelīgō* or **remorīgō > *remerīgō > remelīgō*. Cf. ἔργαστρον or ἔργαστήριον > *ergastulum* ‘slave prison’, **curcuriō > curculiō* ‘weevil’, prob. **gurguriō > gurguliō* ‘gullet’, and cp. **Palilia > Parilia* (festival in honor of the Pales), **militālis > militāris* ‘military’, etc. (Leumann 1977:231).

29. *Remelīgō* preserved *-e-* by *alacer* rule (Weiss 2020:128–9; but *remil°* transmitted in Plaut.), cp. *sepelīre*; *-o-* restored in *remora*, *remorārī*, *remor(is)**. Note that *-līgō* is common (*fūlīgō cālīgō ūlīgō mellīgō sribilīgō (cōn-)silīgō uutilīgō lollīgō pullīgō*), and cf. spread of *-lāgō* (*carti-lāgō*, etc.).

[Pace Weiss 2016:483 n. 44, the *alacer* rule does not mean that *e*-vocalism of *remelīgō* is original. A *(*)remer/līgō* that arose by weakening would have fed the rule just as well as an identical form with original *-e-*.]

30. Base: adj. *remor(is)** ‘causing delay; delaying’ ← *remorārī*. Either *i*-stem of the type *rebellis* ‘rebellious’ ← *rebellāre* ‘revolt’, or pseudo-root noun backformed to a secondary verb like *dēprāns* ‘fasting’ Naev. ← *prāndēre* ‘eat lunch’. Cf. *rōbīgō* ‘plant rust’, *fūlīgō* ‘soot’ from *i*-stems, and *tentīgō* ‘erection’, *ūlīgō* ‘marsh’ (← *ūdus* ‘covered with water’), *claudīgō* ‘lameness’ from adjectives, and *mellīgō* ‘propolis’ from a cons.-stem.

31. But why *-īgō*? Otherwise forms concrete nouns mostly referring to coverings/cloakings (e.g. *cālīgō* ‘obscurity of a mist/fog’, *fūlīgō* ‘soot’), surface phenomena (e.g. *scaturīgō* ‘bubbling spring’), or skin diseases or other physical conditions (e.g. *impetīgō* ‘eczema vel sim.’, *uutilīgō* ‘vitiligo’, *uertīgō* ‘dizziness’, *claudīgō* ‘lameness’). ?Cf. *impetīgō ~ impetix* (°īx?) Paul. ex F. 97.8, *uīb-īx* ‘welt’ ~ *iūn-īx* ‘heifer’; *cicā-trīx* ‘scar’ ~ *-trīx* fem. agent n. suff.

[*Rōbīgus* ‘god of plant rust’ ← *rōbīgō* ‘plant rust’ is not much of a parallel, as this is just an artificial masculinization of the disease name.]

32. Festus’ etymology perhaps suggested by Plautus’ *Nam quid illae nunc tam diu intus remorantur remelignes* (above, §10). A conscious or unconscious *figura etymologica*?

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