THE CASE OF **ILBulg** 248:
A LA RECHERCHE DES NOMS PERDUS

**Abstract.** – The author proposes a new reading of the Roman epitaph from Lâdzane near Lovech, Bulgaria. Much of his interpretation of this heavily fragmented text is about various possibilities and relative probabilities of restitution of its lost parts. Beside battered phrases and trivialities the epitaph seems to relate a rather extraordinary case of death in the marital bed, not without connexion to the myth of Atalante as told by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*. The author also suggests that the few palpable oddities of language and style may have had their motive in as many puns intended on the (now mostly lost) personal names of the deceased and her family members.

**Key words.** – Roman Epigraphy, Latin Verse Inscriptions, Epitaphs, The Language of Latin Poetry.

In the early years of the 20th century the remains of a Roman mausoleum were discovered in the village of Lâdzane (Лъдзане) in northern Bulgaria, near the location of the ancient town of Melita, modern Lovech (Ловеч). It was a square-based structure (8×8 m) with thick walls (2 m) built of large blocks of limestone. In the eastern wall there was a doorway framed with two pillars on the outside. Of the architrave, which was decorated in relief, an inscribed fragment remains (**ILBulg** 247): MATPONASACMARIT[---]TERRENO ET LAPIDE[---]. This inscription makes it safe to assume – in spite of the uncertainties – that the mausoleum belonged to a woman called Matrona and her husband (and possibly to their family and descendants), the assumption being corroborated by the fact that beneath the northern wall two pedestals were found, together with headless fragments of two statues – a male and a female figure.1

The interior or the mausoleum was a square room (4×4 m) with the ceiling decorated in relief (the pattern consisted of floral/faunal motifs). Of the marble plates that once covered the walls one is preserved, bearing an

1 As described by Seure 1916, 364–9.
2 Discussed by Seure 1916, 371–8. The upper line has been read as MATPONEN-SAC-MARIT, with the abbreviation hesitatingly resolved as either sac(erdos) (Filov (see n. Error: Reference source not found below), followed by Gerov in **ILBulg**) or sac(rum) (Seure 1916, followed by Gerov in "Romainty" 2, 378, no. 382). Judging by the photograph in **ILBulg**, there may be another dot after the s, which would permit us to read Matrona sibi et marito --- : for the abbreviated s(i/bi) outside formulas such as sibi et sui or sibi vivas, cf. e.g. **CIL** 5.3684, 3844, **AE** 1979.452, 1993.963; for the use of ac (instead of the more frequent et) in similar contexts, **ILS** 1289 marito dulcissimo ac sibi, **CIL** 14.5146 sibi ac Iulio Segeo.
3 On examining their facture Seure concluded that these must have been ready-made generic figures with portrait heads fixed upon.

8 Чланак представља резултат рада на пројекту: Антички надписи на језу Илирика: кривошиће изузетне и интердисциплинарна истраживања епиграфских споменика (бр. 147003) који финансира Министарство за науку и технолошки развој Републике Србије.
inscription, which may well not have been the only one. And there was another room below, the hypogeum, in which stood at least three sarcophagi.4

The inscription5 from the upper room of the Ládzane mausoleum is a marble tabula ansata broken into pieces but preserved up to more than a half of its original size. The bigger, left-hand part consists of four contingent fragments, with two more pieces reaching the right-hand border and the upper-right corner of the inscriptional field. The original dimensions of the plate were about 30×39×3 cm. There are 15 lines of text in Latin, the preserved portion amounting to more than two thirds of the original extent. The carving is equal and the letters read well despite their being rather small (varying around 1 cm of height) and occasionally ligatured. I am reading from the photograph given in ILBulg:5

(9m the upper pits of the ansae) D || M ||

1. siste viator iter animam[---]e|chro
et lege quam dure sit mihi v[---]ita|a · ipsam
margebam florenti caro m[---]|to in xvi|a
annum mors mihi saeva fuit · [---]seq|petarunt
5. fata ne pia esse patri · nec maf[---]|rem|be|ae
pie faeneae caste · pro pier[---]|rjas
satiavi fata superba · nomflye[---]
rest[---]|bar · qui nuncquam sc[---]
ab impia fata · disceptata die ut n[---]
10. marito · crudelis thalamos post mor[---]
reliqui · teque ro|go · com.s dolea|s; tibi pulch|ius illud;
quod mea virginitas mort[al]i som[o] abolevit;
isque tuas cineres aurea|era|e ter|ra teget.

This is the epitaph of a young female (the age of fourteen is mentioned in l.3–4) whose parents were alive at the time of her death (cf. l.14, l.5) and who was married (cf. the mention of a husband in l.10 and probably l.3). This last observation, common enough in an epitaph, becomes remarkable in view of the phrase mea virginitas occurring in l.12. While it is true that use of virgo to refer to a young married woman is not entirely strange to the language of Latin poetry,7 the actual term virginitas does, by all accounts, imply and mean virginity.8 Its present occurrence, then, will not only call for an explanation but could also serve as a clue.

Clues, indeed, are much needed if we are to advance beyond isolated remarks towards a veritable reading of the epitaph. This has not been fully achieved, despite several good observations and a valuable attempt at restitution by Seure:10

Siste, viator, iter, animam [que intende sepul]chro,
et lege quam dure sit mihi vita tua.
Ipso immarcebam caro florentie marito,
in (quartum decimumque) annum. Mors mihi saeva fuit.

v.5 [Nam d]isceptarunt fata ne pia esse patri
nec mat[ri posse]n] te[ne]r(a)e, pi(a)e fae-emini(a)e, cast(a)e.
Pro pie[ls! int]er, pr]imas satiavi fata superba;
nomine [.................] rest[i]o[ue]barto?).
Qui nunc quam sc[t]s raptam, illa sed[ab impia fata]
disceptata die, ut n[ondum conincta] marito
crudelis thalamos post mor[ten invita] reliqui,
teque ro[go], comis dolea(s); tibi pulch[ius i]llud;
quod mea virginitas mor[t]i son[o] abolevit;
isque tuas cineres aurea|era|e te|teger.

v.10 [Ast hoc tantum vox] ego nunc moneo, (o) genitore[s]!

Of this text Seure admitted that no proper translation could be given, which is why he chose to set out its meaning in rather wide terms. According to his explanations,9 the daughter of Matrona and husband died at the age of fourteen, having been engaged to a man but yet unmarried, or, more probably, married so shortly before her death that she hadn’t had time to become her man’s woman; whence the kind of consolation she now

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4 As he sorted the fragments by their facture and ornament, Seure identified what he referred to as the “Sarcophagus of the Winged Genii”, the “Pan Sarcophagus”, and the “Sarcophagus of Hercules’ Labours”.

5 Described and provisionally published by B. Filov (B. Филов) in the Известия на Българското археолошко друже|ство 3 (1912), 322, with a facsimile (Fig. 252). Edited with supplements and a commentary by Seure 1916, 378ff., no. 150 (with Filov’s facsimile reproduced as Fig. 48); whence AE 1916.122. Revised and republished by Gerov as ILBulg 248 (with a photograph). – The monument and the inscription are thought to date from the 2nd or 3rd century (Seure 1916, 370; 2nd century, Gerov, “Romanity” 2, 378, no. 382).

6 This is reproduced here as Fig. 1. Note, however, that on Fig. 1 the two top-right fragments have been relocated where they belong (which is the position they occupy on Filov’s facsimile), while their shaded image has been left where the original photograph has them.

7 Cf. Verg. Ecl. 6.47 and Hor. Carm. 3.11.35.

8 To prove this Latin verse inscriptions are as good as any text: see Fele & al. 1988, s.vv. virginitas, virgo.

9 Cf. Bojadziev 1983, 57: “le texte… est si muti[té] que le sens en demeure obscur”.

10 Seure 1916, 380. Note that his bracketing does not quite follow the system that prevails today. – From this point on I shall be using the prefix “v.”, “vv.” for lines of verse, as opposed to “Ⅰ.”, “Ⅱ.” for lines of text.

11 Seure 1916, 386.
offers to her husband: let his grief be “calm” (comis), since he will have done better without the joys of a union which would have left him regretting his loss (v.12). The rest of the epitaph Seure deemed to be all pad-outs and banalities: death was particularly cruel to the deceased (v.4), who died among the first of her generation (v.7) and did not live to fulfil the last duty to her parents (vv.5–6); but destiny’s verdicts can only be recognized for what they are (vv.15–16); her young husband will also die one day (v.14). Fashionwise, this whole composition would be a cento of lines and halflines that are found elsewhere in funerary poetry; these would have been forced into an awkward unity, inconsistencies of syntax and metre bearing witness to the process. Seure also seems to assume that at least two mistakes were made by the stonemason (florenti caro for caro florente in v.3; omission of inter in v.7).

The general picture drawn by Seure must be true—it looks probable that the parents of the deceased were the same persons who owned the mausoleum, and I am convinced by what Seure suspected of the girl’s marriage, too. Yet when it comes to details, Seure’s restitution of the epitaph does not seem wholly acceptable, and, more importantly, his understanding of some of the preserved portions was arguably wrong. I propose, then, to reopen the file and look for more insight into the form and meaning of the Lâđžane epitaph.

12 In Seure’s opinion the locution comis dolea[s] would be an “error of signification”, as the adjective comis stands for the adverb comiter, this, again, being an equivalent of the more normal leniter (Seure 1916, 381).

13 Believing (as many did then and some do today; see Wolff 2000, 58–9) that the ancients must have had handbooks of epitaph-writing for the use of whoever needed funerary formulas and/or verse, Seure suspected imitation of models even at v.7. He thought that satisavi fata superba, v.11 cruideles thalamos post mortem — reliqui, v.16 fata potest quis rumpere? nemo (Seure 1916, 383–5). In fact, all these places not only are unparalleled in our sources but also show some remarkable features that I shall discuss later in this article.

14 E.g. in v.6 pie faemine caste Seure reckons that the actual dative preserves the scansion of a nominative which would have stood in the model (pia femina casta); in v.11 reliqui he thinks that the verb looks back to v.10 ut and supposes that the unexpected indicative mood comes from the model.

15 Cf. Ulp. Dig. 50.17.30 nuptias non concubitus sed consensus facit.

16 My impression is that, as the text goes on, his supplements become ever less plausible. It should be noted, though, that Seure never thought it possible to arrive at anything exact in the way of supplement for the longer lacunae that appear towards the end of the text (Seure 1916, 381).
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The beginning of *ILBulg* 248 goes along with no less than six epitaphs from Buecheler’s collection:17

CLE 1083 (Capua)

\[ tu \text{ qui praet} \text{eriens spectas mortis monu} \text{mentum aspice qu} \text{am indigne sit data vita mihi: quattuor anno[}
\]
\[ \text{in qu} \text{i into scande[ns] deposui heic animam. } \]

1084 (Venafrum)

\[ tu \text{ qui praet} \text{eriens legis hoc mortis monumentum aspice qu} \text{am indigne sit data vita mihi: xv annorn quin[o] dalcissima vixi,}
\]
\[ \text{in sexto et decem ascendes deposui hanc anima. } \]

1539 (Segusio)

\[ tu \text{ qui praet} \text{eriens spectas monumentum meum, aspice qu} \text{am indigne sit data vita mea: annorum septem vixi dalcissima patri, octavo ingredies animam deposui meam. } \]

1540 (Rome)

\[ tu \text{ qui stas et spectas mortem monimenti mei aspice qu} \text{am indigne sit data mihi: vixi annis vi, in vii ascenden} \text{ds animam deposui meam. } \]

1541 (Rome)

\[ tu \text{ qui praet} \text{eriens spectas mortis monumentum meum aspice qu} \text{am misere sit data vita mihi: annorn viii vixi dalcissima parentibus meis, in x ascenden} \text{ds anima deposui meam. } \]

1542 (Luca)

\[ \text{tu [q]ui s[tas atque spectas] m[o]nimentum meum [aspice qu} \text{am indigne] sit data vita m[ihi]:} \]
\[ \text{[quince] annos sui [pare]ntes, sexto[m annum insce]dens anim]am deposui mea[m. } \]

All of these are from Italy, and all stood on children’s graves, the eldest being a girl of fifteen in CLE 1084; none were married. In all cases the initial distich draws the attention of the passer-by to the fact that the deceased “had been given life under one outrageous condition”, that of dying soon. The second distich always contains a sentence amounting to this, “Having lived for n years I died at the age of n+1”, and always the child was about to “step up to” his or her next year of age (the verb used is *scandere* or one of its compounds) when death came – which event is invariably referred to as “giving up the ghost” (*animam depone*).

It appears that the author of the Lâdžane epitaph not only understood this cliché properly18 but also felt he could improve on it. The instances of the model he was adopting19 were not without flaws: there was the uneasy ending of the initial hexameter, *mortis monumentum*; the less-than-Biblical distribution of the verbs *specere*, *legere*20 to convey the two ideas of “looking at” the monument and “reading” the inscription; and, with *quam indigne* in v.2, a harsh elision on the monosyllable. In face of these shortcomings the author of *ILBulg* 248 acted judiciously. He replaced the “*tu qui*” formula in v.1 with another conventional interpolation21 which not only scanned more easily but also permitted him to drop the hypotaxis, *et* at the beginning of v.2 and use *lege*, the right word, to fill up the first dactyl. Similar considerations seem to lie behind the substitute he gave for *quam indigne*. CLE 1541 with *quam misere* proves that indeed a substitute was desired; but while *quam misere* was an easy solution that flatly missed the point, the alternative that we find in *ILBulg* 248, *quam dure* “how cruelly”, clearly preserved the sense by giving even more relief to the original idea: the adverb *dure* was distinctly unpoetical,22 but it was – again – the right

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17 Two of these were already pointed at by Seure 1916, 384. Another epitaph, the badly mutilated CLE 2082 from Ostia, is best left aside as an instance on which this very cliché was applied by the modern editor: see Lommatzsch *ad loc.* (he was aware of the Lâdžane epitaph, too).

18 Which was not always the case. In CLE 1540 the cliché was misconstrued – instead of “having been given life”, the deceased was now “given death”, and this in turn seems to be the reason why in v.1 we have the words “see the death of my memorial” instead of “…the memorial of my death” – the accusative *mortem* was needed to support the intended prolepsis (*mortem aspice quam indigne sit data mihi*). The whole confusion was maybe due to contamination with another cliché, the one we have e.g. in CLE 1007 *praetetiens quicumque legis consiste viator et vide quam indigne raptus inane querar.*

19 One may note that in spite of the location of the plate, which was inside the mausoleum, the epitaph itself preserves the fiction of a traveller’s passing by the grave. However, as we have no clue to who the author was, we cannot take it for granted that he was aware of the actual form of the monument or the exact location in which his verse would be displayed.

20 With one of these, *aspicere*, the original intention may have been to draw the reader’s attention to an image of the deceased (“look how I was given life…?” = “look at me: I was given life…”) rather than the inscription itself. Of the six Italian epitaphs cited above, this condition is maybe met by Buecheler’s CLE 1082 from Ostia, is best left aside as an instance on which this very cliché was applied by the modern editor: see Lommatzsch *ad loc.* (he was aware of the Lâdžane epitaph, too).

21 For “*tu qui*” and other forms of interpolation in the epitaphs, see Conso 1996, 299.

22 In classical and classicizing Latin prose the adverb *dure* is unfrequent and mostly confined to the notion of expressing oneself “roughly” or “harshly” (cf. e.g. Cic. *Phil.* 12.25, Quint. *Inst.* 1.5.67). The sense we are dealing with here appears in post-classical prose, e.g. Sen. *Ep.* 82.2 *male mihi esse multo malo molliter*; “*male* nunc sic exipe quemadmodum a populio solet dici: *dure*, aspere, laboriose; id. *Dial.* 1.4.12 *quid mirum si dure generosiss spiritus desis temptat? namquam virtutis molle documentum est;* Plin. *Ep.* 1.15.3 *dure fecisti;* Dig. 35.2.54 *quod videndum ne dure constituatur.* The word
word. In the other half of v.2 we find *sit mihi vita data*, as opposed to *sit data vita mihi*, which is in the other epitaphs. Now anyone with a taste for the elegance of Latin verse would have felt that this new word order degraded the pentameter quite perceptibly, but the author of *ILBulg* 248 was reasoning along different lines: as he was making his words meet his sense as closely as possible, he found it appropriate to move the pronoun *mihi* to a position of lesser prominence.

The first distich, then, appears to show that whoever wrote the Ladźane epitaph had a conscious approach to the model he had chosen. The insistence on the logical and the quest for the right word give the impression of someone who may have been no wizard of Latin verse but certainly knew what he was doing as he aimed to produce a meaningful text on the stone. This is why I find no reason to believe, as Seure did, that the author of the epitaph did not have Latin as his first language.

The second distich (v1.3–4, l.2–4) is where my reading of *ILBulg* 248 begins to part from Seure’s. The photograph reads *ipsum… in XIIII annum*.

The Latin verb *marcebam*... *in xiii annum*,24 I take it that instead of following the cliché closely by saying “I lived for thirteen years and died as I became fourteen”, our epitaph has it this way: “I withered all along to my fourteenth year of age”. *Marcebam*25 suggests a lingering illness; it appears that the girl was chronically feeble.26 Note the imperfect tense, which expresses a lingering illness; it appears that the girl was healthy? Is it all about mentioning the fact of their marriage? This cannot be the only motive, since the

23 Seure 1916, 382.
24 For the number, Seure 1916, 383, insisted on a verbal resolution and gave in *quartum decimuncimum annum*: together with the subsequent *mors mihi saeva fuit* this would make v.4 into a hypermetric pentameter. But there is no necessity to do so; it may be safely assumed that the number stands ametrical.
25 The actual spelling *margebam* (unduly ignored by Gerov in *ILBulg*) used to be invoked by Romanists discussing the etymology of *merg* in Romanian (from Latin *mergere*: REW, no. 5525; cf. Bourciez 1967, § 202 c). However, its opposition to the subsequent *florent* (see below) suggests that it does represent *marcare*, not *mergere*. Seure had his own reasons for believing the same: to him, the form *margebam* not only had an *a* for *e* (but note that *ar* for *er* is in fact a common feature of Vulgar Latin) and displayed a “faulty conjugation” (intransitive active instead of the expected passive – which is exactly what the Romanists had been looking for to connect the Romanian word back to *mergere*: “submerge” > “sink” > “disappear” > “go away” > “go”), but was also deprived of any complement (one should have expected *innergebar* in mortem et simul.) (Seure 1916, 381 n. 1). It is difficult to say whether *margebam* for *marcebam* represents anything more than a casual misspelling. Phonetically, *rc* > *rg* is not easily supported (see Văianănei 1982, §§ 104–8; B. Löfstedt 1961, 138–49), and the parallels are meagre: cf. *Dvulg* 143 (3rd-century Gaul; see Pirson 1901, 66) *Vergelleses*, i.e. *Vercellensis*, in an inscription which is otherwise full of errors; yet the same word with the same feature stands in *ILS* 2483 (Egypt under Augustus) C. Vibius C. f. *Anitensis tribi* *Vergellis*.
26 For mentions of fatal illness in the epitaphs, see Lattimore, 153.
27 Do these words mean that the girl died a particularly ugly death that made a gruesome impression on those who witnessed it? (For one such impression cf. *Pass. Perpl. Fel. 7.5* (a seven-year old boy)*facie cancerata male obiti ita ut mors eius odio fuerit omnibus hominibus.*) The adjective *saevus* does often qualify physical suffering (pain, e.g. *Pac. trag. 267, Lucr. 5.997*; disease, *Luc. 9.629–30, Tac. *Ann. 2.69*; thirst, *Sen. Tro. 583*; hunger, *Luc. 4.94*). But death can also be *saevus* in itself. This is the underlying idea in Tac. *Ann. 13.17 tradunt… crebris ante exitium diebus illius esse pueritia Britanniæ* Neronem, ut iam non praematura neque saevos Pluto rapuit me ad infera templa… sed tibi non potuit mors haec reddere, quod vocas saevum, asperum, agique dure credis et nimium impie saeva virtus indigne occidit, quoius fatum acerbum populus indigne tulit.
28 The number, *XIIII* annus… *saevos Pluto rapuit me ad infera templa… sed tibi non potuit mors haec reddere, quod vocas saevum, asperum, agique dure credis et nimium impie saeva virtus indigne occidit, quoius fatum acerbum populus indigne tulit.*
husband reappears in l.10 anyway. As we look for a possible answer we may do well by reading the text as we have it. Assuming that the phrase florenti caro marito was always there in its actual form, nothing prevents us from taking florenti as a dative, not ablative, and the text seems to make enough sense as it stands. The dative would be one of (dis)advantage, to be taken with marcebam: “I withered before the eyes of my dear husband, a vigorous man”. This would still be the sort of truism we have wondered at; but marcebam florenti caro marito can also mean “I withered before the eyes of my dear husband Florens”. The sentence, then, would be aimed at producing a double entendre, and the motive for mentioning the husband’s vigour would have been no other than to neatly communicate his name.

The possibility of taking Florenti as the husband’s name was briefly considered by Seure: “Je soupçonne, sans pouvoir en apporter la preuve…”33 Much of what I have to say from this point on should be taken with the same caveat, as I will be putting forward a construct largely based on my own suspicions. What is certain, though, is that allusions to and puns on personal names are not uncommon in Latin verse inscriptions.34 In their authors’ and readers’ eyes they were not inappropriate; even to us, as far as one can judge, they are not always absurd or tasteless: one has only to remember the delightfulness of T. Statilius Aper, CLE 441:35 “There you lie, you kind-hearted boar (innocuus aper), stricken not by the Virgin’s wrath…” I will argue that in the case of ILBulg 248 it is possible to follow this path beyond the one mention of Florens maritus at v.3. This will ultimately lead me to the hypothesis that the “name game” was an important aspect of the Lâtzhane epitaph as a whole.

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At present, however, let me adopt what I should call the order of probability and discuss the least difficult places first, rather than proceed line by line. The text as we have it admits the conclusion that the epitaph ended with two distinct messages to the living. The first began

lies overcome by the sleep of death. And may it [the mortalis somnas] once cover your own ashes with earth of gold.”

As for the details, the impersonal construction of dolere followed by a dative of person (doleat tibi quod) instead of doleas quod) is well attested as something of a colloquialism.36 For pulchra futura… virginitas I rely on CLE 1517 vitam… brevem puellae, crescebat modo que futura pulcra multorumque amor. The supplement morra omn[e] is almost certain in this context (with mora[---]is omn[---] we don’t seem to come at anything); for the eternal sleep of death cf. CLE 1997 hic tumulata silet aeterno munere somni.37 At the end of v.13 I supply somnis o seputa est) as a stereotyped phrase.38 The image of someone’s ashes being covered


28 This inference looks natural in view of the very prominent position the word ipsum is given, standing at the beginning of the distich and waiting for the rest of its phrase to come. The meaning of ipsum here is the one that the pronoun normally has in phrases like triennis ipso minor (Cic. Brut. 161) or decem ippos dies (id. Fam. 2.8.3); see OLD, s.v., 8c.
29 For examples see OLD, s.v., 3.
30 Seure 1916, 385.
31 For a particularly clear example among many, see Hernández Pérez 2001, 12 (on CIL 2.7.478).
32 The present participle in Latin was just about the last type of a 3rd-declension word to be affected by the vulgar confusion between e and i in the ablative: the ending e persisted as a feature that could set apart a genuine participle from what was to be taken as an adjective (or a noun) – see Leumann 1977, 438, and Stotz, HLSMA 4, VIII §35.9. The ablative absolute may still stand, participle or no participle, as florenti may simply be the ablative of florens the adjective (cf. OLD, s.v.); but my point is that florenti does not have to be an ablative here.
33 Seure 1916, 386 n. 1. He was also aware of the difficulty with the participle ending (see Note Error: Reference source not found above).
35 = Courtney 1995, no. 176, with a bibliography ad loc.
36 Cf. e.g. Ter. Ph. 132 tibi quia superest dolet, Brut. ap. Cic. ad Brut. 25.6 dolet mihi quod tu nunc stoncharis, Sen. Nat. 4b.13.3 nobis dolet… quod solem emere non passamus, Pass. Perp. Fel. 6.5 doluit mihi casus patris mei, and on the other hand Cic. Var. 31 quis non doluit rei publicae casum?, Caes. Civ. 1.9.2 doluisse se quod populi Romani beneficiun sibi exsquamur. See Kühner/Steinmann 1976, 2.276; Krebs/Schmalz 1905, s.v. dolere. Seure’s unconvincing reading dolet(s) tibi is a mark of deference to the “correct” usage.
37 For similar uses of another word for “sleep” see Fele & al. 1988, s.v. sopor.
with golden earth (v.14) is known from CLE 1308 = ILS 8132 quisque haec tumulo possuit ardentem lucernam, illius cineres aurea terra tegat. According to Buecheler ad loc., “ardentem lucernam addonip parentantes (monumento meo mensibus lucernam accendant dig. XL 4, 44)”.39 The idea is that the goodness of whoever makes a grave shine with light should once be rewarded with a burial shimmering with gold.40 In ILS Bulg 248 the original motivation is disappeared, but the wish remains – may the husband once receive a burial equal to his loyalty and grief. The term comes in the epitaphs typically refers to wives rather than husbands;41 consequently teque rog(o) com[e]l]42 in l.12 should mean “I, your life’s companion, beseech you”, which, however, is inconsistent with the apparent need to identify the one to whom the request (te rogo) goes: we must therefore accept comes as a vocative and masculine here. This particular detail puts a mark of inferiority on the person of the husband;43 which sort of inferiority, one can only guess, but we may relate this to the observation that the healthy young man Florens had married a sick daughter of wealthy parents, and that, notwithstanding the marriage, the girl’s burial took place in her parents’ mausoleum.

The other message goes to the parents (genitores) of the deceased. The lacuna in l.13 cannot hold as much text as was proposed by Seure – it cannot contain both the ending of v.14 and the whole first half of v.15. This means that we have the caesura of v.15 coming between nemo and genitore[x]; and, if this is true, the next lacuna (the one in l.14) occupies such a position that the subsequent [r]umpere nemo (l.15) cannot possibly be the ending of v.15. Again, these words cannot constitute the beginning of v.16, since there does not seem to be room enough for v.16 to stretch out thereafter. It is therefore necessary to take the words r]umpere nemo as belonging to the second hemistich of v.16, to be supplied with a final word which must have stood in l.15 at roughly the same distance from nemo as is the one between nemo and the foregoing r]umpere. Now if the final hemistich begins with a dactylic word, then it must be the latter half of a pentameter, and we shall have to supply an iambic word at the end, while the first half of the pentameter must be covered by the lacuna in l.14. I propose, then, to read vv.15–16 (ll.13–15) as follows:

v.15 Vosque] ego nunc moneo, genitore[s; fatorum legem] r]umpere nemo [postest.

“And I remind you too, my parents: no one can break the law of destiny.”

Seure was perhaps right in suspecting that the lacuna contained another mention of fata (two previous being found in ll. 5 and 9), but he was almost certainly wrong in supplying the phrase rumpere fata, which does not have the sense he credited it with (“change destiny”), but rather the opposite (“cut short a mortal life”).44 This is why I prefer to supply fatorum legem;45 other supplements are possible, though.46

The previous line of verse (v.15) should be an hexameter, the beginning of which is easily restored, vosque being parallel to the beginning of the first message (cf. v.12 teque); for the rest cf. CLE 1494 vos ego nunc moneo etc.47 This, however, is the point where the calculation we attempted a moment ago yealds one significant result: if v.16 is to begin immediately after genitore[s], then v.15 must be an unfinished hexameter line. The fact is that unfinished lines of verse are not uncommon in the inscriptions and cannot always be reduced to errors committed by the stonemasons. Nevertheless, our v.15 might be an instance of this type of error. As already observed by Seure, the carving of ILS Bulg 248 is such that the letters become more and more condensed as the text goes on48 – but then suddenly there comes a point.

39 For lamps lit on graves cf. also ILS 8366 and 8368, and see Toynbee 1971, 63.
40 The parodic occurrence of cuisi cineres aurea terra tegat in an erotic graffito from Ostia, Courteney 1995, no. 94e, suggests that the formula was known and used rather more widely than we would infer from the extant epitaphs.
41 Cf. CLE 96, 110, 516, 1187; markedly so in 1432 thalami tumuliqae comis; a surviving wife referring to herself in 2099 vita fuit tecum, comes anxia lucem aeternam sperans hanc cupit esse brevem.
42 The actual form of the word may have been com[i] as well, cf. CLE 439, 1409, 1432.
43 Note that even the use of comes for “wife” is rather uncommon outside the epitaphs. Literary texts show a clear preference for coniux or consors, presumably because comes was all but a blunt statement of inferiority – cf. OLD, s.v., 2: “a companion, friend, comrade (often in an inferior capacity or of humbler rank)”.
44 Cf. CLE 1156 Parcae crudeles, nimium prosperasitis rumpere fata mea, with an obvious reliance on clichés like ruperunt fila sorores or ruperunt stamina Parcae or tuos/meos mors ruperit annos, which is by far the most common use of rumpere in the epitaphs (see Felle & al. 1988, s.v.).
45 Cf. CLE 386 invida .. fati lex, 432 vota supervacua fletusque .. naturae leges fatorumque arguit ordo, 1021 fati quod lege necess. 1278 fati .. lege, 1530 A fatorum lege.
46 E.g. Parcarum legem, cf. CLE 428 and 1160; or even aeternam legem, cf. CLE 104.
47 Parataxis after nemo also in CLE 627 alios moneo: vita brebis est and 1231 qui legitis, moneo: vivite, mors properat, as well as in the cliché vivite victuri/mortales/felices, moneo, mors omnibus instat (485, 486, 803).
48 Seure 1916, 379.
where the carver realizes that there is more than enough space for the remaining text, after which he expands the content of the last line rather widely. It may be conjectured that the sudden appearance of extra space was due to omission of text, the omitted segment being the original ending of v.15. This must have contained text which was both omissible without crippling the sentence and susceptible to being left out by a saut du même au même – something like this:

v.15  Vosque] ego nunc moneo, genitore[s, <vosque, parentes>

The word parentes would have meant not “parents” but “relatives” (a sense not uncommon in post-classical usage), but “relatives” (a sense not uncommon in post-classical usage), but since the meaning of the two words.

* * *

Seure’s restitution of the segment going from l.9 ab impia fata to l.11 reliqui develops the theme of the un consummated marriage and at the same time provides a miniature account of the immediate circumstances that led to the girl’s death. Seure’s supplements, however, fall short of conviction. No matter how we understand the phrase thalamos reliqui, it is difficult to conceive an action being performed by the agent “reluctantly after her death”, post mor[tem invita. As for the clause expected after disceptata die ut..., with reliqui we are rather badly served (Seure explained this away by supposing that the entire v.11, although unparalleled in the epitaphs or elsewhere, was adopted from a model in which the verb stood correctly in the indicative). It looks more natural to satisfy the ut by supplying a verb in the lacuna that covers the end of l.9 and take the subsequent thalamos... reliqui as the main clause. The text could then run like this:

v.9  …ab impia fata
disceptata die ut n[imis essum bland[a] marito, crudelis thalamos post mor[bi accessum] reliqui.

“On a day that wicked fate had chosen for me to be overly charming to my husband, I passed away from the cruel bedroom after an onset of disease.”

It would seem that the marriage went unconsumed until the fateful day – which may have been her fourteenth birthday, as vv. 3–4 appear to suggest – on which the girl decided or agreed53 to satisfy her husband. This effort on her part provoked an accessus morbi, an acute aggravation of her chronic disease (cf. v.3), and the couple’s thalam, i.e. their attempt to consume their marriage, proved so cruelly wrong (crudelis) that it resulted in the girl’s death.

Restitution along these lines is suggested primarily by the repeated mention of the husband (we already know of him from v.3), now taking part in an event which was brought about by fate55 and caused the girl’s “leaving the cruel bedroom”.56 But there may be more to it. There is the story of Atalanta and Hippomenes, famously told by Ovid in Metamorphoses 10:57 the couple meet their fate after Hippomenes is “overcome by an untimely desire for sex” in the temple of Cybele: concubitus intempestiva cupido occupat Hippomenen (Ov. Met. 10.689–90). Atalanta, however, had been aware

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49 For epigraphic instances of this usage cf. e.g. ILS 1581 and 2777.
50 In the epitaphs this is normally the case. In literature, genitores “parents” is attested in Late-Republican poets, perhaps replicating to[pi(e) (Lucr. 2.615; Catul. 63.59), but later disappears from high poetry and is also unfrequent in the epitaphs, which mostly have it along with parentes as a means of elegant variation (cf. CLE 168, 742, 1994). (The use of genitor in the singular is another matter – see Krebs/Smalz 1905, s.v., and cf. e.g. CLE 507 genitor... tuque optima mater, 682 haec mater et genitor conscribunt carmina.)
51 Seure 1916, 381 and 384. The subjunctive in diem statuere quo aliquid fiat and similar turns is not of the sort which could easily be dropped in favour of an indicative (see Hofmann & Szantyr 1965, 642–3, and Stotz, HLSMA 4 IX §111.30), and Seure was right in not trying to justify ut... reliqui simply as a vulgarism.
52 See above, p. 163 and n. 28.
53 I have proposed n'imis blanda above, but n'imis grata is possible too (cf. Ov. Rem. 6.738): the latter would rather put the initiative down to the husband.
54 For the term cf. e.g. Plin. Nat. 28.46 accessus febrium, Gel. 4.2.13 morbus et vitium distare quod vitium perpetua, morbus cum accessu decesseque sit.
55 I take ab impia fata to be a neuter AccPl rather than a feminine AblSg: cf. 1.7 satiavi fata superba, and see Löfstedt 1933–42, 1.49 and 2.374. The epigraphic occurrences of the feminine fata (which is postulated by the Romance reflexes) are all in the plural, e.g. ILS 3760 (dedication) Fatibus, CIL 2.89 quai (i.e. cui) Fate crescesserunt vivere anis XXXIV (on which Carnoy 1906, 227). For the accusative after ab in verse inscriptions cf. CLE 1830, 1943, 2115; for some further occurrences of abAcc in epigraphic texts see ILS 3, p. 865.
56 The key word here, thalami, is notoriously used in poetry to mean sex (marital or otherwise). In most cases this is sufficiently suggested by using “bedroom” in translation, although the metonymy sometimes goes a step further, e.g. Mart. 7.585 deseris imbelles thalamos mollemque maritum. The sporadic appearance of AccPl is in the epitaphs, as crudelis for crudelis here, is labelled archaisma by Mariné Bigorra 1952, 52. Some prose inscriptions have it too (see Pirson 1901, 118–9, and Carnoy 1906, 219).
57 The prose rendering of the same is Hyg. Fab. 185.
ever since her girlhood that her marriage someday
would bring misfortune; prior to the fateful race
that would make her Hippomenes’ wife, she tries to dissuade
him by delivering an impeccable piece of oratory, the
sum of which is this:

\[
dum licet, hospes, abi, thalamosque relinque cruentos:
coniugium crudele meum est. \quad (620-1)
\]

I believe that this line of Ovid was the model for
cruides thalamos relinquere in ILLBulg 248: the author
appears to have used the very words that he found in the
best-known literary version of a myth whose central
motif, love-making at the wrong time, closely corres-
ponded to the real case he was illustrating. From his
point of view, the fact that Ovid’s thalamos relinquere
now described a very different reality – not the act of
shying away from a marriage but the one of dying in the
marital bed – was a legitimate and agreeable effect of
the transference he had made.

* * *

The central part of the epitaph begins with the old and
much-favoured topos of the natural order of human
deaths reversed\(^{58}\) – the girl died too early to be able to
bury her own parents:

v.5 \[ Sic disceptatunt fata, ne pia esse(m) patri 
nee ma[r] TEMRE pie faemine caste. \]

“Fate decided that I should never perform the [last] duty
to my father or my mother […] a pious and virtuous woman.”

At the beginning of v.5 I propose \( \text{sic disceptatunt fata, ne eqs., rather than the less idiomatic nam eqs. (as supplied by Seure).} \)\(^{59}\) The main interest, however, lies in the occurrence of disceptare here and again later (v.10). This verb seems entirely absent from CLE: in this respect the verse inscriptions comply with the usage of high poetry, in which neither disceptare nor disceptatio
is anywhere to be found.\(^{60}\) What is more, ILLBulg 248 has the unpoetic disceptare in a derived meaning which,
while attested in classical Latin prose, belonged to the
judiciary-administrative jargon – based on the primary
sense of looking into, and arbitrating in, a quarrel or
lawsuit, it acquired the more general sense of determin-
ing, ruling, or deciding.\(^{61}\) The unexpected occurrence of
a word from this register\(^{62}\) in an epitaph sheds more
light on the personal profile of the author: with his
apparent belief that the solemnity of what he had to say
would be improved with a bit of bureaucratese here and
there, he must have been of the half-educated kind.

With l.6, v.7, we come to the point where the right-hand
fragments of the inscription offer just a few more
letters; from l.7 on only the left part remains, so that any

\(^{58}\) For the origin an diffusion of this topos, see Lier 1903–04, § 4.
\(^{59}\) Cf. e.g. CLE 417 sic denique fata tuler[unt], 490 sic fata
dedersunt, 1339 sic rerum natura iubet, sic temporum ordo, 2156 sic se
fata ferebant; for the cataphora, 382 sic tulerat fatus, non exsuperasse
parentes.

\(^{60}\) The only exception being Sil. 16.186 disceptentque armis
terrarum uter imperet orbi.

\(^{61}\) E.g. Cic. Ver. 5.183, Mil. 23, Fat. 46; its occurrence in
Leg. 2.21 suggests that the usage was ancient.

\(^{62}\) More generally, disceptare as a “popularized technicality”
appears to have had some currency in Late Latin. The Vulgate offers
a number of examples of disceptare, disceptatio in contexts where
contendere, contenditio would have been preferred in Classical Latin.

\(^{63}\) As are the reflexes of tenerum in Western Romance: see
\( \text{e.g. REW, no. 8645.} \)

\(^{64}\) See Fele & al. 1988, s.v.

\(^{65}\) ILLBulg 247; see above, p. 90.

\(^{66}\) One may further speculate that the both hederae in ILLBulg
248 (ll. 3 and 5) were used to label ametric places in the text; if so,
their position at line-ends would be incidental. This would explain
why space was used sparingly in l.5 (cf. the ligatured \( \tilde{x} \) before the
lacuna) only to finish with a hedera. To my knowledge, however,
the use of hederae with this specific purpose is unparalleled. (Not
close enough comes the interesting and yet unnoticed role of
hederae in an inscription from Capidava, IsM 5.31 sibi et…
coniugi sue postu titulum vibius \( \vdash \) visit annis \( \vdash \) item coniux annis \( \vdash \)
avere; the two latter hederae were seemingly meant as placeholders
for numerical data to be inserted when the time came.)
attempt at restitution becomes more difficult and less definitive. A lucky circumstance, though, is that of the vv.8–11 the beginnings and endings are preserved. Here is how I read v.7:

v.7 pro piet[ate lacr]imas satiavi fata superba,

“Instead of [doing this] duty [of mine], I sated the arrogant fate with tears”.

with an obvious connection to vv.5–6: the girl was forced to give her parents pro pietate lacrimas, “tears instead of pietas”. Pro pietate is a phrase typical of many tomb inscriptions in prose and verse, mostly within the formula pro pietate possit, “[this monument] dutifully erected by...”. The pietas in this phrase is normally the one shown to the dead by the living; but as, on the other hand, the inscriptions very often call the dedicatees pientissimi, it is no wonder that pro pietate was sometimes taken to mean “in return for his/her pietas”, referring to the deceased.

This sort of shift makes it easier to accept pro pietate in ILBulg 248 in the sense that it apparently has, “instead of being pia”.

After pro pietate lacrimas one anticipates praestiti or the like. What comes instead is an unexpected turn. It looks as if two consecutive ideas had been squeezed together to form an indistinct unity. What would normally be worded like this, (parentibus) pro pietate praestitit lacrimas quiubus fata superba satiavi, became pro pietate lacrimas satiavi fata superba. To say lacrimas fata satiavi (literally “I sated Fate tears”) instead of using the ablative (lacrimis, “…with tears”) was not impossible. The double accusative was an occasional solution for the ever-present dilemma concerning the choice of a direct object for a number of different verbs: the possibility of saying, for instance, compleure vas aqua and also compleure aquam gave rise to constructions which are ultimately similar to the English “feed somebody something”: e.g. alqm alqd nutrire (cf. Soran. 1.87), potare (cf. Iren. lat. 2.33.2), curare (“cure”, cf. Aug. Civ. Dei 22.8), alqd alqd perfundere (cf. Apic. 6.9.13), perunguere (cf. Orib. lat. Eup. 4.64 (Aa)). In the inscriptions we have CIL 5.1863 titulum immanem montem Alpinum ingenem litteris inscriptis and especially CLE 737 qui tantum propererati matrix foedere senectam senilemque aetatem tantos onerare dolores.71

So, with satiavi fata superba the sentence suddenly turns towards the topic of fatal destiny. The motive for this may appear straightforward – the author of the Ladhane epitaph simply liked to talk about destiny (he mentions fata three times). This, however, does not exclude the choice of the other word, satiare, which is unparalleled in the epitaphs. Satiare fata, if taken literally, makes for an odd picture. True, if we assume that satiare here means “fulfil, accomplish, realize” (a figurative sense occasionally found in Late Latin), then satiavi fata would mean “I fulfilled my fate” (viz. by passing away); but the doubt remains whether we can take the verb metaphorically and still allow for the double accusative. The literal interpretation, therefore, looks more probable, with a further suspicion that, if the author built an awkward sentence around a bizarre expression and did so in the middle of a text for which he was relying on commonplace ideas and ready formulas, he must have had some strong motive to depart from the conventional.

Judging by the extant beginning of v.8 (nomine), this segment of the epitaph is where the name of the deceased was given. For this line and the next I venture to propose the following restitution:

v.8 nome [quae Satia genitori Eva]resto voca]bar, qui nunc quam sceleratus erat, quodad eqs.

“I was called Satia by my father Evarestus, who had never been wretched until the moment when...”

67 E.g. CIL 13.8650 nepotis suo pro pietate sua f. c.
68 Seure took pro to be exclamative, whence pro pietas; after which he supposed that an originally hypermetric verse had been curtailed by the curver: intro pr]mas satiavi fata superba (he offered per lacrimas as an alternative, though: Seure 1916, 382, n.1). I find pro pietate preferable to pro pietas not only in view of the stereotype mentioned above, but also because of this: the normal (and very common) use of the exclamative pro in the epitaphs is the one equivalent to “What a... this!?”: cf. e.g. CLE 501 pro dolor, 750 pro nefas, 1061 pro superum crimen, fatorum culpa nocentum, 1535 A pro xulos inductum detestandum uel legenti. In this respect the epitaphs again seem to follow the post-classical literary usage, in which the presence, rather than the absence, of the thing mentioned after pro is what causes the indignation: e.g. Sen. Suas. 7.11 pro facinus indignum, Flor. Epit. 1.36 (3.1.9) pro dedecus; contra, Sen. Dial. 11.17.4 pro pudor imperii.
69 Phrases like supremum officium praestare are often found in the epitaphs (see Fele & al. 1988, s.v. praestare). In pro pietate lacrimas praestitit the direct object lacrimas would be standing ανονομενον – cf. CLE 826 nomen titulus praestat suisque dolorem.
70 Cf. Svennung 1935, 226–31. For the very wide diffusion of the double accusative in Late Latin see also Bonnet 1890, 525–6.
71 Löfstedt 1933–42, 1.250.
72 The similarity with Apul. Met. 11.1 fato... iam meis tot tantissime cladibus satiato – is only superficial. In Apuleius, cladibus fatum satiare means to “live through many calamities”, after which his hero finally arrives at a spes salutis.
73 E.g. Cypr. Op. et el. 5 ni .. operum accessione satientur (deprecationes).
This would mean that the oddities of v.7 were there to prepare the ground for the subsequent pun on the personal name, *satiavi*—*Satia*. For the name, cf. AE 1982.677 (*Satia Maxsumma*), CIL 8.7710 (*Satia Ruf*), 13.2125 (*Satia Heliane*). The rest of my supplements is based on the assumption that *qui* at the beginning of v.9 refers back to some male person mentioned in v.8. This person is very probably the father. As already shown, there is a strong possibility that both the husband and the mother of the deceased were mentioned by name in v.3 and v.6 respectively; the father’s name would now, so to speak, conclude the list of mourners. *Genitori* would be a dative of the agent, looking forward to vocabar: “my father used to call me Satia”. In the epitaphs the mention of the parents as the “callers of the name” is often purely conventional; a well-known early example of this is CLE 52, in which the name of the deceased is thus introduced: *nomen parentes nominant Claudiam*. Both this wording and the one I have supplied for ILBulg 248 may appear strange; as Matteo Massaro puts it, there was little point in referring to a gentile name as specifically given or used by the parents: a parental couple in which the male partner was a Claudius could not help calling any daughters Claudia. However, other examples suggest that this point should not be pressed too far. Take CLE 98: after D. M. Xanthippes sive Iaiae C. Cassius Lucilius alumnæ dulcissimæ, a carmen begins by restating the name of the deceased; a section follows by way of a *laudatio*, and the epitaph closes on these lines:

*Quam, si qua pietas insitast cælestibus,*
*viventi ingeniо soli et luci reddite*
*altoris memoram, quem parentes dixerant,*
*cum primum natust, Lucilianum Cassium.*

There was no need here to restate any names, and even with the names the epitaph could have finished off a whole line earlier (*altoris memorem Lucilianæ Cassii* would have done nicely): the parents of the *altor* had nothing to do with the fact that his name appeared on a third person’s tombstone, but they ended up there none-theless, as the man “whom his parents had called Lucilius Cassius as soon as he was born” was building a lasting memory not so much to his *alumna* as to himself.

Back to the Lādzane epitaph, any attempt at filling the lacuna which opens after “who never...” (*qui nuncquam sc[, end of L8]*) has to be based on what comes after the lacuna: “a day chosen by fate” etc. The text in its present state still allows us to grasp the general sense: the father has never been as utterly devastated by anything as he is now by his daughter’s death. With *sc[ immediately before the lacuna the choices are few: *qui nuncquam scelerat* leaves us in want of an accusative object (a subordinate clause would be too clumsy for the space), and it is difficult to see how this could be provided without really vexing the idiom; on the other hand, *sceleratus* is a genuine “tombstone word”, and with *qui nuncquam sceleratus erat* in v.9 we come fairly close to the required sense.

My next point is about a mere, or even faint, possibility. Suppose that the supplement I have proposed for v.9 is correct: the middle section of the epitaph then reads:

“I was called [name] by my father [name], who had never been *sceleratus* until one day, – the day that wicked fate had chosen for me to be overly charming to my husband, – I passed away from the cruel bedroom after an onset of disease.” (vv.8–11)

Now why should the very natural idea of a father’s being shaken by his daughter’s death be put in words in such an oblique manner, by saying that he had *not* been devastated *before* that event? This again is an oddity, not unlike the two that we have seen previously – the one with “sating one’s fate” in v.7 and especially the one with the girl’s being ill “while her husband was healthy” in v.3. With the supplement *genitori Eva*rest[t]o in v.8,
I propose to explain this last quirk as another pun on a personal name. It is conceivable that the girl’s father had a cognomentum dubbing the bearer a good man,\textsuperscript{80} it is in this sense that he might be called numquam sceleratus (“never wicked”, or “Never Wicked”); he became sceleratus, “wretched”, only after he lost his daughter. A pun based on the two meanings of sceleratus is actually attested in one of Martial’s epigrams, 9.15 inscriptis tumulis septem scelerata virorum se fecisse Chloe. quid pote simplicius?: the “candidness” of the seven-time widow appears in the fact that the tombs of her husbands are all inscribed with the words Chloe coniunx scelerata fecit.\textsuperscript{81}

\* \* \*

Let us now take a wider look at the text again. The Lâdžane epitaph seems to consist of three sections. The first (vv.1–4), without being purely generic, follows a cliché and is marked by the predominance of the conventional:

\begin{verbatim}
v.1 Siste, viator, iter, animum]que intende sepulchro, et lege quam dure sit mihi [via data.
Ipsum marceban Florenti caro m[arito]
in X[III] annum: mors mihi saeva fuit.

The middle section (vv.5–11) concentrates on the specific with an obvious leaning towards the narrative. This is where all the key persons come into sight (let me emphasize that in making them appear under their names my intention has been to point at an interesting possibility without ever thinking it could be made into a probability), while some expressions and images that first came as vague hints to an untold reality acquire a fuller meaning in the scene of the girl’s death:

\begin{verbatim}
v.5 [Sic diispercurtunt fata, ne pia esse[m] patri nec ma[ri---] TEMPSIE fae mine cast.
Pro pier[ate lacr]inas satiavi fata superba,
nomine [quae Satia genitori Eva]rest[o vocal]
qui numquam se[leratus erat, quoad] ab impia fata
disceptata die ut n[izin essum blanda] marito,
crudelis thalamos post mor[bi accessum] reliqui.
\end{verbatim}

The third section (vv.12–16), with its two apostrophes and messages of a rather common sort, is smoothly but not very tightly connected to the previous:

\begin{verbatim}
v.12 Teque rog(o), com[exs], doleat(t) iibi, pulch[ra futura]
quod mea virginitas mor[ali] son[m][o sepulta est],
isque tuas cineres aurae ter[ra tegat].
v.13 Vosque] esqo nunc moneo, genitore[s:
fatorum legem ]umpere nemo [potest.
\end{verbatim}

This division appears to be the underlying factor when it comes to the form of the epitaph. The most salient formal feature of \textit{ILBulg} 248 is the sporadic appearance of pentameter lines in a composition consisting mainly of hexameters. This phenomenon occurs in quite a number of epitaphs and is usually attributable to the authors’ inability to compose proper elegiacs.\textsuperscript{82} In the Lâdžane epitaph, however, the pentameters do not seem to come chaotically.\textsuperscript{83} It rather looks as if the first section was composed in elegiacs and the second in hexameters, while in the third section each of the two pentameters marks the finale of its own message. The whole scheme is alien to the classical canons of verse composition, but I still do not believe that the author simply wanted to write elegiacs throughout but could not do it properly.\textsuperscript{84} On the contrary, I think that in \textit{ILBulg} 248 the pentameters were used on purpose.

\* \* \*

As he worked on the restitution of the Lâdžane epitaph, Seure visibly followed one important rule: any text he was proposing to bridge the lacunae had to be prosodically correct. This is unquestionably a sound principle, but its application in this case proved contrary to its purpose, which of course is probability of

\textsuperscript{80} For the name Evarestus cf. \textit{CIL} 6.13088, 17299, 17300, 10.2328. Another name, Euchrestus, would also do in the context and is actually attested more frequently. There is, however, the additional problem of the beginning of l.8, which alone in \textit{ILBulg} 248 cannot be made to coincide with the beginning of a word (Seure’s rest(i)or[ae]bar does not seem to fill the gap; my own first idea was Rest[i]uta voc(al), which again requires too much space). It is therefore necessary to conclude that the name was divided between l.7 and l.8, in which case the smoother division, Eva[rest[o], looks preferable to Euch[rest[o]. For the spelling -str cf. \textit{ILS} 8223 damnas estto, AE 1988,195 postterisq[ue], and especially AE 1996,1221 (Siscia, third century) ‘Opeating... Külistto... Kérito.

\textsuperscript{81} Zarker 1966, 150.

\textsuperscript{82} See e.g. Mariné Bigorra 1952, 168–9, and Courtney 1995, no. 27. See also n. Error: Reference source not found below.

\textsuperscript{83} For some similar cases see Galletier 1922, 287–8.

\textsuperscript{84} Seure 1916, 382. According to Seure, the main reason for such “derailments” was that the authors tended to reuse lines of verse they found elsewhere, so that sometimes a stolen hexameter was used to convey an idea for which, in the actual context, a pentameter was needed, or vice versa; in other words, the correct handling of elegiacs required a degree of versatility hardly achievable to those who heavily depended on external (and disparate) models. This is a clever explanation, but I do not think it should be unreservedly applied to the case of \textit{ILBulg} 248.
the restitution. As one examines Seure’s supplements one cannot help noticing that the least fortunate solutions appear wherever he refused to hypothesize the features that, apart from being sufficiently attested elsewhere in the epitaphs, were already present in the preserved portions of *ILBulg* 248 itself: the possibility of granting an ammetrical status to numeric or onomastic data, and, more importantly, the acceptance of certain incorrect prosodies. It looks neither arbitrary nor unfounded to assume, in view of v.5 *pía*,

85 that in v.12 too *có[m]ēs* is the substantive, not the adjective, despite the quantity; or to supply *somm[ō]* in v.13, with the wrong quantity of the ultima, after actually seeing *ca[rō]* employed in v.3, *faemínē* in v.6, and *disceptatā* in v.10. On the other hand, the quantity of the pretonic syllable was handled correctly by the author even in some delicate positions, cf. v.3 *Flórenti*, v.11 *cätzelēs*; this may be incidental; still, it is the reason why the restitution of *sepulta est* at the end of v.13 should be preferred to anything like *sōpita est*. 86 In the supplied part of v.9 I have used the standard spelling *quoad* only to avoid confusion; what I really assume is the monosyllabic form of this word spelt in any of the attested fashions (*quad*, *quod*, *quot* etc.). 87

As far as metre is concerned, the main difficulty lies in the first half of v.7, *pro pietάte lacrimάs*. My supplement here is based on what the size and context of the lacuna seem to suggest or even impose, with little or no regard for the metre. On the assumption that the supplement is correct, the faultiness of v.7 would not consist simply in erroneous syllable-quantities. The whole first half of this line would have to be scanned *pró pietάte lacrίmás*, with the second ictus falling on two syllables (*tate*). In verse inscriptions this is no strange phenomenon; 88 one may even argue that it is attested more frequently than is usually admitted. There is, for example, the case of *CLE* 1988, v.21 *quid crura? Atalantes status illī comicus ipse*, which once elicited the following explanation: “This line is a real monster – it has seven feet and can be scanned only under the double condition of allowing the ultima in *status* to lengthen before the caesura and making the ultima of *crura* into a long syllable too, with the hiatus left open before *Atalantes*, etc.” 89 As a matter of fact, the line contains no incorrect prosodies but only an anapaest in the second foot – before the caesura it scans *quid crur(a) atalántēs*, i.e. 1– 2 3– 4– 5– 6– 7–, and it continues normally (*...status illī cómicus ipse*). 90 Similarly I assume that in v.7 of *ILBulg* 248 the words *pro pietate lacrimas* metrically stand for 1– 2 3 4 5– 6– 7–, with the second foot having its first half resolved in two light syllables. This presupposes the wrong quantity of the accented syllable in *pietátē*, which, again, is paralleled by *ẹsse* actually standing in v.5. 91

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Those are the details that complete the picture of the Lādzāne epitaph. In many aspects, including vocabulary, grammar, versification, and even invention, this epitaph clearly deviates from classical literary usage. Yet there are palpable limits to this deviation. The author obviously knew some good poetry and was relatively skilful in putting his models into use. To claim that he composed his little poem “in the style of the Augustan poets” 92 may be an overstatement, but it would be even more wrong to think of the Lādzāne epitaph as a prime example of ineptitude set in stone. If nothing else, it represents a coherent whole – the segmentation is logical, the first-person strategy is consistently carried out, and, as far as one can see, some ingenuity was invested in the arrangement of the conventional data. No reader accustomed to Latin literary texts can help recalling how much poetry was superior to this, and how far; but the comparison is unfair. The testimony of Latin epigraphy reminds us that the scale of literary (and/or sub-literary) value and achievement was longer than we usually assume, and there are a great many epitaphs which, by any fair measure, must rank inferior to this one.

85 However, see n. 91 below.


88 To resolve the first half of a dactyl is an occasional licence which the verse inscriptions share with the early dactylic poetry: cf. Enn. var. 36 *Mitylenae est pecten*, 42 *melanurum tardum* (and also *Ann. 490 capitibus nutantis*, according to Drexler 1967, 85; alternatively (e.g. Leumann 1977, 91) a syncope is assumed in *cap(i)tibus*, for which cf. the hexameter ending *facilia faxeis* in *CLE* 248).

89 Galletier 1922, 301.

90 Neither is there really a reason to follow Lommatzsch *ad loc.*: “lege Atlantes”.

91 Seure scanned the latter part of v.5 as né *pía ēsse patrí*, making it into the second half of a pentameter, in which case neither *pía* nor *ēsse* would be true. I find Seure’s scansion unconvincing, since (1) the line would then amount to a half-hexameter plus half-pentameter (a structure unparalleled in *ILBulg* 248) and (2) *at pia esse* it leaves an hiatus open before the ictus, while in the extant portion of *ILBulg* 248 the only hiatus, that in v.10 *die ur*, is duly eliminated even though it occurs *under* the ictus, where it could have been easily left open.

92 Gerov, “Romanity” 2, 378, no. 381.
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**ЕПИТАФ ILBulg 248:**

**У ПОТРАЗИ ЗА ИЗГУЂЕНИМ ИМИНИМА**

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