

## Moss PIKE

### Did Latin have a long-vowel perfect *clêpit* next to *clepsit*?

Standard lexica list Lat. *clepsî* as the only perfect to *clepô* 'to steal'. The manuscript tradition, however, preserves a non-sigmatic perfect stem *clêp-*, which editors explained away on the grounds that *clepsî* is firmly established elsewhere. An asigmatic long-vowel form itself is anything but anomalous, and in fact Latin abundantly attests long-vowel perfects of this type, which were likely productive in Proto-Italic. The most reliable manuscripts of Cicero's *De legibus*, BAL, read *clêperit*, and P and epsilon *dêperit*. Reading a 'cl' for 'd' is an easy mistake for copyists to make, suggesting compellingly that the form *clêperit* is real. Pacuvius further attests *clêpit* in a trochaic septenarius in which the syllable *cle-* must be heavy and thus the *e* long. The metrical difference between *clêpit* and *clepsit* is moot, though we must respect the transmitted form as it stands since it is semantically and metrically understandable. We should then accept *clêp-* as a real Latin perfect stem and can now attempt to interpret it vis-à-vis the *s*-perfect *clepsit*.

Jay Jasanoff's recent work reveals an early layer of PIE acrostatic "Narten" presents with lengthened grade in the active singular which left traces in the dialectal period. Firmly established Narten roots, like *\*h<sub>3</sub>reg'-* 'to direct, guide', may have lent their lengthened-grade imperfects to the Proto-Italic perfect (1998:306-7). A scenario of this sort may explain our *clêp-*, as well as some other long-vowel forms like (*sur*)*rêgit* and *lêgî*, and some other forms traditionally explained by reduplication but which may, according to Jasanoff, show Narten characteristics, such as *êgî* (LIV *\*h<sub>3</sub>e-h<sub>3</sub>g'-* vs. Jasanoff *\*h<sub>3</sub>êg'-*).

The existence of an acrostatic present *\*klêp-ti* underlying Lat. *clêp-* may find almost direct support in Tocharian B. D. Q. Adams has plausibly suggested (1999:171f., 227) that B *kälyp-* 'steal', which clearly belongs with Lat. *clepô*, Gk. *kleptô* etc., may also belong with B *klep-* (I pres. *klyepträ* = Buddhist Hybrid Skt. *sammrsati* 'touches, strokes'), assuming an original sense 'lay hand to' for PIE *\*klep-*. For no good reasons, Adams assumes that *klyepträ* continues a lengthened-grade thematic "intensive" *\*klêp-e/o-*; but the form could continue an athematic middle *\*klêp-tor*, with vocalism remade after an original active *\*klêp-ti*. If so, Lat. *clêp-* beside Toch. B *klyepträ* would recover essentially the same pattern as Lat. *lêgî* beside Toch. A *lyâk* (and Alb. *mb-lodha*), thus pointing to yet another Narten-derived long-vowel perfect in Latin and offering further support for the analysis of Lat. *êgî* proposed by Jasanoff.