Josephus tells us, with scorn in his voice, that the eminent Greco-Egyptian scholar Apion congratulated the city of Alexandria for having so great a man as he as a citizen: μακαρίζει την 'Αλεξάνδρειαν ὅτι τοιοῦτον ἔχει πολίτην (contra Apionem 2.135). Surely Apion intended by such a statement to identify himself with no less a figure than Cicero, who similarly congratulated the city of Rome: O fortunatam natam me consule Romam. ¹ How well acquainted Apion was with Cicero’s work we have no way of knowing. But he was a learned man who spent considerable time in Rome. And it is certainly likely that Cicero’s bon mot had acquired enduring notoriety; it is quoted in whole or part by Juvenal (10.122) and Quintilian (9.4.41, 11.1.24). Thus, Apion, a person of both literary and political pursuits, will have seen fit to identify himself with the Roman Republic’s most eminent literary-political figure.

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1) E. Courtney, The Fragmentary Latin Poets (Oxford 1993), fig. 8, p. 159.

DIOGENES LAERTIUS 7.83

The antepenultimate sentence, εἰς µὲν γὰρ... ἔχειν εἰπεῖν, of the concluding paragraph of the doxography (as with some latitude we may call it) of Stoic logic in book seven of Diogenes Laertius is by several scholars believed to be corrupt. It has been emended in various ways, sometimes drastically, at other times a bit less drastically, but the results of these attempts are far from satisfactory and no agreement has been reached. Literal translations of what is in the manuscripts as a rule either avail themselves of tacit, or implicit, additions, or are perhaps too clever (see on Long & Sedley below). What is more, either way the unity and coherence of the passage as a whole are not maintained. In the present note I shall propose a very slight emendation. But first let us look at the text of D.L. 7.83 as transmitted:

καὶ τοιοῦτοι µὲν ἐν τοῖς λογικὸις οἱ Στοικοί, ἣν µάλιστα κρατύνωσι διαλεκτικὸν αἰὲν¹) εἰσόδηµα τῶν συµφών: πάντα γὰρ τὰ πράγµατα διὰ τῆς ἐν λόγῳς θεωρίας ὀρθῶσθαι, ὡς τε τοῦ φυσικοῦ τόπου τυγχάνει καὶ αὐτὸ πάλιν ὡς τοῦ ἥθικος. εἰς µὲν γὰρ τὸ λογικὸν τῶν δὲ λέγειν περὶ τὸν νοµάτων ὥρθοτητος ὡποίς διέτειξαν τοῖς νόµοι τοῖς ἐρήμοις ὡς ἐν ἔχειν εἰπεῖν. δυοῖν δὲ οὖσαν συνηθεῖσιν ταῖς ὑποπτοῦσιν τῇ ἀρετῇ, ἢ µὲν τῷ ἐκαστὸν ἔστι τῶν ὄντων σκοπεῖ, ἢ δὲ τῇ καλεῖται. καὶ ὥστε µὲν αὐτοῖς ἔχει τὸ λογικὸν.
Cobet in the Didot Laertius (1850) p. 177 translated: “Nam ad disserendi rationem quid dicere oporteat et de recta nomen ratione et quo pacto statuerint leges de operibus, non habere eam quid dicere possit”. This quite surprisingly turns logic into its opposite. Of course Cobet profoundly disliked philosophy and philosophers, as one who has read his correspondence with Geel will know. Von Arnim (1903) at SVF 2.130 desperately suggested (in apparatu only; I have italicized the changes): ‘fortasse ei μὲν γὰρ τὸν λογικὸν τί δεῖ λέγειν περὶ [τε] ὠνόματων ὀρθότητος, πῶς τὰ κατ’ ἄξιαν ὄνοματα [διέταξαν οἱ νόμοι] ἐπὶ τοῖς ἔργοις ὡς ὁν ἐχειν εἰπεῖν;[2] O. Apelt in the Laertius of the Philosophische Bibliothek (1921) changed νόμοι into νομοθέται (“Namengeber”) and translated: “—denn die Logik braucht hier selbstverständlich nicht in Betracht genommen zu werden,— und über die Richtigkeit der Wörter, d.h. über die Frage, wie die Namengeber die Worte auf die Dinge verteilen, würden sie (ohne Dialektik) überhaupt nicht reden können”. Hicks in the Loeb Laertius (1925) printed what has been transmitted, referring to von Arnim in a footnote, but his version fails to translate the text. H.S. Long in the OCT Laertius of 1964 also printed what has been transmitted, but—presumably following Apelt—changed the punctuation, thus: (εἰς μὲν γὰρ τὸ λογικὸν τί δεῖ λέγειν;) M. Gigante creatively translates (I quote from the third, amplified edition, Bari 1983) “Perche la correttezza dei termini nel sapiente è il risultato dello studio della Logica né d’altra parte le disposizioni legislative relative agli azioni degli uomini potrebbero essere intese dal sapiente senza lo studio della Logica”.

Long and Sedley in their Hellenistic Philosophers (1987) at 31C keep the text as transmitted; however they accept H.S. Long’s punctuation. But part of their translation recalls that of Cobet: “As to logic, this goes without saying. In regard to ‘correctness of names’, the topic of how customs have assigned names to things, the wise man has nothing to say”. They explain their choice of ‘customs’ rather than ‘laws’ in their second volume, pp. 187-8: “Diogenes makes a new point about dialectic—its lack of concern with historical linguistics”. But pace Long and Sedley historical linguistics, or etymology, is of some relevance in Stoic logic and Stoic philosophy in general (think for instance of the etymological explanation of the names of virtues). Long’s & Sedley’s point of view is not far from Apelt’s motive in proposing νομοθέται, though their interpretation is quite different. K.-H. Hülsers at FDS (1987) Nr. 88 translates (same punctuation in his conservative Greek text): “Denn zum Bereich der Logik—was müßte man dazu sagen?—Und über die Richtigkeit der Bezeichnungen—auf welche Weise die Gesetze die Handlungen ordnen,— darüber wüßte man [ohne Dialektik] überhaupt nicht zu reden”. The addition of ‘without dialectic’ is thus clearly indicated. Isnardi Parente in the UTET Stoichi Antichi (1989) translates a bit freely: “(che che dire poi di quelle pertinenti alla logica stessa?) né si potrebbe dire alcunché circa l’esattezza dei termini, né circa le prescrizioni che le leggi impongono agli uomini”. The author probably forgot