

FURTHER NOTES ON HORACE'S *EPISTLES*

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1, 1, 52-55:

Vilius argentum est auro, virtutibus aurum.

“o cives, cives, quaerenda pecunia primum est;
virtus post nummos.” haec Ianus summus ab imo
prodocet, haec recinunt iuvenes dictata senesque,

Fairclough¹ explained that the arch of Janus represents the banking world of Rome. For the phrase *ab imo ad summum* cf. *Sat.* 2, 3, 308. Here the words *summus ab imo* mean probably “with an increasingly loud voice” Cf. *Sen. Con. I pr.* 16, quoted in *O.L.D.* s.v. *imus* 4. *Prodocet* here means “teaches *alta voce*”, cf. Lewis and Short, s.v.

1, 2, 8-11:

stultorum regum et populorum continet aestus

Antenor. censet belli praecidere causam:

quid Paris? ut salvus regnet vivatque beatus

cogi posse negat.

Horace refers here to the story of the Trojan war. I would like to suggest that we should place a full stop after *Antenor*, in line 9, and translate as follows:

“Antenor tries to restrain (*continet*²) the passions of foolish kings and peoples. He proposes (*censet*) to cut away the cause of war. What of Paris? That he should reign in safety and live in happiness. He says that he cannot be forced.”

Fairclough noted that at *Iliad* 7, 350 “Antenor urges that the Trojans restore Helen to the Atridae.”

1. Cf. his Loeb edition.

2. Cf. Lewis and Short, s.v. *contineo* I, B, 2, b: “Trop., to hold back, detain, repress.” Note that *continet* is conative in meaning.

1, 7, 49-51:

conspexit, ut aiunt,
adrasum quendam vacua tonsoris in umbra
cultello proprios purgantem leniter unguis.

Horace mentions here a man who has been close-shaven (*adrasum quendam*). I would like to suggest that Horace has used a pun, based on the fact that *adrasum*³ can mean “stripped of his money.” The man had been “close-shaven” (i.e. stripped of his money) by the barber.

1, 15, 1-5:

Quae sit hiems Veliae, quod caelum, Vala, Salerni,
quorum hominum regio et qualis via (nam mihi Baias
Musa supervacuas Antonius, et tamen illis
me facit invisum, gelida cum perluor unda
per medium frigus.

The situation has not been understood by the critics. Horace *is* in Baiae (not thinking of not going to Baiae in the future, as Wilkins⁴ writes in his commentary), but wants to leave the place (*mutandus locus est*, line 10), because the hot baths of Baiae have been declared “of no benefit” (*supervacuas*, line 3) to him by the doctor called Musa. He is in Baiae, but (*et tamen*, line 3) the town instead of welcoming his presence, hates him, because he is not having warm baths⁵ there.

1, 18, 44-46:

tu cede potentis amici
lenibus imperiis, quotiensque educat in agros
Aetolis onerata plagis iumenta canesque

line 46 *Aetolis*: *Aeoliis* v. l.

Fairclough stated that *Aetolis* is “probably a literary epithet, re-

3. Cf. Lewis and Short, s.v. *rado* B, 2: “To strip off ... *ista tonstrix radit*, i.e. shaves her customers (sc. of their money), Mart. 2, 17, 5.”

4. Cf. A. S. Wilkins, *The Epistles of Horace*, London 1965, reprint.

5. *Gelida perluor unda* (line 4) probably means that he is drenched in cold rain. Hence his asking about the weather in Salernum. Note that Baiae has been personified: cf. my *Studies in the Text of Propertius* (Athens 2002), page 157. For the topical contrast between cold and hot baths cf. G. Giangrande, “Algunos epigramas de la *Anthologia Latina*”, forthcoming in *Veleia*. Horace would have payed for the use of the hot baths at Baiae.

minding the reader of the mythical boar-hunt of Meleager in Calydon.” It should be noted, however, that perfect sense is provided by the variant reading *Aeoliis*. Fairclough noted that *Aeoliis* is explained as equivalent to *Cumanis*, because flax, which made strong nets, grew near Cumae, a colony from Cyme in Aetolia. The reading *Aeoliis* is, moreover, supported by Grattius, *Cyn.* 34 ff. (*lina*) ...*Aeolia de valle Sibyllae*.⁶

1, 18, 91-93:

potores bibuli media de nocte Falerni
oderunt porrecta negantem pocula, quamvis
nocturnos iures te formidare tepores.

Scholars⁷ have been puzzled by the meaning of line 91. Textual alteration is, however, not warranted. Horace states that drinkers hate the man who refuses to drink at night. He explains that those men fear that they will fall in love. We should translate as follows:

“drinkers who quaff Falernian in midnight hours hate the man who declines the proffered cups, although you swear that you dread nocturnal fevers (*nocturnos ... tepores*)⁸.”

1, 19, 21-25:

Libera per vacuum posui vestigia princeps,
non aliena meo pressi pede. qui sibi fidet,
dux reget examen. Parios ego primus iambos
ostendi Latio, numeros animosque secutus
Archilochi, non res et agentia verba Lycamben.

6. Nets were of course used for hunting. The word *Aeoliis* is not a conjecture, but a variant; cf. Shackleton-Bailey's Teubner edition of Horace, and the *apparatus criticus* of Keller-Holder. The criterion *utrum in alterum* shows that the reading *Aeoliis* is the genuine one: not many people knew that flax to be used for nets grew near Cumae, and therefore the reading *Aetolis* was invented, which is an allusion to Meleager's boar-hunt. This reading does not, however, fit the context, which deals with hunting in general.

7. Fairclough noted that the words *bibuli media de nocte Falerni / oderunt* “were probably introduced as a gloss from *Epist.* 1.14.34.”

8. Cf. Lewis and Short, s.v. *tepeo* II, A: “To be warm or to glow with love, to be enamoured”. In other words, drinking wine at parties during the night is imagined to cause men to fall in love. In his *Sympotic Literature and Epigram*, G. Giangrande draws the attention of the reader to Asclepiades who, in *A.P.* 12, 135, describes a friend who *a le vin triste*.

line 23 *Parios: patrios* v. l.

Horace refers here to his *Epodes*. I would like to suggest that the correct reading in line 23 is *patrios*. We should translate as follows:

“I was the first to place my free footsteps on virgin soil; I did not disparage (*pressi*⁹) with my verse (*meo ... pede*¹⁰) foreign matters (*aliena*). Whoever trusts himself will lead and rule the swarm. I was the first to show to Latium native iambs (*patrios ... iambos*), following the rhythms and spirit of Archilochus, not the themes or the words that hounded Lycambes.”¹¹

1, 19, 32-33:

hunc ego, non alio dictum prius ore, Latinus
volgavi fidicen.

line 32 *Latinus: Latinis* v.l.

Horace states that he has made Alcaeus famous. I would like to point out that the variant reading *Latinis* makes perfect sense. We should translate as follows:

“Him (i.e. Alcaeus), never before celebrated (*dictum*¹²) by another mouth, I the lyric poet have made known to the Romans (*Latinis*).”¹³

1, 19, 37-40:

non ego ventosae plebis suffragia venor
impensis cenarum et tritae munere vestis;
non ego, nobilium scriptorum auditor et ultor,
grammaticas ambire tribus et pulpita dignor.

line 39 *auditor: adiutor* v.l.

Horace states that he does not hunt for the votes of the fickle public.

9. Cf. Lewis and Short, s.v. *premo* II, B: “To lower, diminish, undervalue, disparage.”

10. Cf. Lewis and Short, s.v. *pes* K: “A metrical foot.”

11. Fairclough and Villeneuve prefer the variant *Parios*. *Patrios* means here “written in Latin, not in Greek.” Cf. *Sat.* 1, 10, 29. Cf. also *Carm.* 1, 32, 3-4 *Latinum carmen* and *Epist.* 1,3,12.

12. Cf. Lewis and Short, s.v. *dico* I, B, 4: “To describe, relate, sing, celebrate in writing.”

13. Keller-Holder, Villeneuve and Fairclough prefer the variant *Latinus*. *Alio ore* means not that Alcaeus had not been known to anybody, but that he had not been known to the Roman public. Cf. *Carm.* 3, 30, 13 *Italos modos*.

I would like to suggest that Horace says, in line 39, that he is not a nobleman (*non ego nobilium*). We should translate as follows:

“I am not one of the nobles (*nobilium*¹⁴). I am a helper (*adiutor*) and avenger (*ultor*) of writers. I deign to court the tribes and platforms of grammarians.”

2, 1, 69-71:

non equidem insector delendave carmina Livi
esse reor, memini quae plagosum mihi parvo
Orbilio dictare;

line 69 *delendave*: *delendaque* v. l. *Livi*: *levi* v. l.

Fairclough printed the reading *Livi* in line 69, and imagined that Horace is referring here to the plays of Livius Andronicus. I would like to point out that perfect sense is provided by the variant reading *levi*. We should translate as follows;

“I do not blame and I do not think that the poems should be destroyed which I remember Orbilius of the rod dictated to me as a beardless (*levi*¹⁵) boy (*parvo*).

2, 1, 157-160:

sic horridus ille

defluxit numerus Saturnius, et grave virus
munditiae pepulere; sed in longum tamen aevum
manserunt hodieque manent vestigia ruris.

Horace mentions here the Saturnian¹⁶ measure. We should translate as follows:

“Thus the famous rough Saturnian measure vanished, and elegance (*munditiae*) drove away offensive poison (*grave virus*¹⁷).”

14. Scholars have been puzzled by the meaning of the words *nobilium scriptorum*: cf. Fairclough’s note *ad loc*. Horace means that he was not born into a noble family. Similarly Propertius states at 2, 24 A, 37 f., that he is not noble.

15. Cf. Lewis and Short, s.v. *levis* (1): “...*levis Iuventas* (= *imberbis*), smooth, without hair, beardless, Hor. C. 2, 11, 6”. The reading *levi* was approved by *Pseudoacr.*: cf. Keller-Holder’s apparatus. Horace alludes to all the *carmina* written by the ancient poets: cf. line 64 *veteres poetas*.

16. Fescennine verses are thought to have been written in the Saturnian measure: cf. *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, compiled and edited by Sir Paul Harvey, Oxford 1969, reprint, s.v. *Fescennine Verses*.

17. Cf. Lewis and Short, s.v. *virus* II, A, 2: “*Trop.*, ...*fitile virus linguae*, Sil. 11, 560”.

Horace is referring to the poison of invective. Cf. lines 145 ff. where Horace states that men were abused with Fescennine verses, until a law was passed which forbade the employment of such abuse.

2, 1, 166-167:

nam spirat tragicum satis et feliciter audet,
sed turpem putat inscite metuitque lituram.

line 167 *inscite: inscitiae* v. l.

Horace refers here to those Roman poets who wrote Tragedy. I would like to suggest that we should print the reading *inscitiae* and translate as follows:

“but, deeming it disgraceful, he feared the blots (*lituram*¹⁸) of ignorance (*inscitiae*).”

In other words, Roman writers feared that they would make mistakes due to ignorance, and that passages of their works would therefore need to be erased.

2, 1, 169-175:

sed habet Comoedia tanto
plus oneris, quanto veniae minus. adspice, Plautus
quo pacto partis tutetur amantis ephebi,
ut patris attenti, lenonis ut insidiosi,
quantus sit Dosseanus edacibus in parasitis,
quam non adstricto percurrat pulpita socco
gestit enim nummum in loculos demittere.

Horace refers here to Plautus. He states that Comedy has a heavier burden as it allows less indulgence (*veniae*). He means that Comedy judges different characters and does not pardon them. We should translate lines 170 ff. as follows:

“See how Plautus observes the role of the young lover, or of the attentive father, or of the tricky pander; how great a clown (*dossennus*)

18. Note the use of the poetic singular: cf. my *Studies*, page 141. Cf. Lewis and Short, s.v. *litura* II, B, 1: “Concr., a passage erased, an erasure.” For the textual difficulties which are presented by this passage cf. Wilkins *ad loc.* Note that *que* is in the third position and the genitive *inscitiae* is *genitivus causae*.

he would be amongst greedy parasites; how he would run over the stage for a man who is not parsimonious (*non ad stricto*¹⁹). He is eager to drop a coin into his pocket due to Comedy (*socco*²⁰).”

2, 1, 199-201:

scriptores autem narrare putaret asello
fabellam surdo. mam quae pervincere voces
evaluere sonum, referunt quem nostra theatra?

In this passage, Horace states that the philosopher Democritus would laugh at the audience in the theatre. Commentators (cf. e.g. Villeneuve and Wilkins) have maintained that Horace has conflated two proverbs, namely *surdo narrare fabulam* and ὄνφ λέγειν μῦθον, but such a conflation would be pleonastic. I think that we should put a full stop after *fabellam*, and take *surdo* to be a substantivized adjective²¹, the sense being that the audience is stupid like an ass (*asello*) because (*nam*) it emits a loud clamour, not having understood the sense of what is said on the stage. We should translate as follows:

“But for the authors – he would suppose that they are telling their tale to an ass (*asello*). For (*nam*²²), what voices have ever prevailed to drown the din with which our theatres resound for the benefit of a stupid audience?”

2, 1, 269-270:

deferar in vicum vendentem tus et odores
et piper et quidquid chartis amicitur ineptis.

line 270 *ineptis: inemptis* v. l.

Horace refers to books being used as waste paper. I would like to point out that the variant reading *inemptis* makes good sense. We

19. Cf. Lewis and Short, s.v. *astriatus* B, 1: “Sparing, parsimonious.”

20. Cf. Lewis and Short, s.v. *soccus* II: “Transf., Comedy.” The words *non adstricto socco* have proved difficult to understand (cf. e.g. Wilkins *ad loc.*). I think that all becomes clear if we place a full stop after *pulpita*; *adstricto* is a substantivized adjective, and *enim* is placed *tertio loco*.

21. Note the use of the poetic singular: cf. my *Studies*, page 141. For *surdus* “not understanding” cf. Lewis and Short, s.v. II, A.

22. For the position of *nam* cf. Lewis and Short, s.v. I, c.

should translate as follows:

“pepper and whatever is wrapped in unpurchased (*inemptis*²³) writings (*chartis*²⁴).”

2, 2, 68-69:

cubat hie in colle Quirini,

hic extremo in Aventino, visendus uterque;

Horace, states that two of his friends are sick in bed, and he must visit both of them. I would like to suggest that the words *extremo*²⁵ in *Aventino* mean “on the vilest Aventine”. The *Bona Dea*²⁶ had a sanctuary on the Aventine, and her shrine attracted bad characters to this area of Rome.

2, 2, 97-100:

caedimur et totidem plagis consumimus hostem

lento Samnites ad lumina prima duello.

discedo Alcaeus puncto illius; ille meo quis?

quis nisi Callimachus?

Fairclough noted that the two poets are compared to gladiators, who engage in a long fight. He added that it is commonly supposed that the second poet referred to by Horace is Propertius, the elegiac writer who called himself “the Roman Callimachus.” The word *puncto* has caused difficulties: cf. Wilkins *ad loc.* It cannot mean here “vote”, “applause”, because the poets are duelling like gladiators. Here, *punctum* (in the ablative *puncto*) is used metaphorically, in the sense “prick”, “wound”, cf. Cic. *Mil.* 65 *volnus in latere, quod acu punctum videretur, pro ictu gladiatoris probari.*

23. Cf. Lewis and Short, s.v. *inemptus*: “Unbought, unpurchased.”

24. Cf. Lewis and Short, s.v. *charta* (2): “That which is written upon paper, a writing, letter, poem, etc.” Horace is referring to books which have been “remaindered.” The variants *ineptas* and *inemptas* occur in *Epod.* 2, 48. For the reading *inemptis* in line 270 cf. Villeneuve’s apparatus. The variant *ineptis* is evidently not preferable: stupid books are not necessarily remaindered. *Utrum in alterum*: original *ineptis* (i.e. *inemptis*) was misread as *ineptis*.

25. Cf. Lewis and Short, s.v. *extremus* b, b: “The lowest, vilest, meanest, ... *latrones*.”

26. Cf. Flower Smith’s note on Tibullus 1, 6, 22, and especially Juvenal 6, 314 ff. *Extremo* in the sense “on the Aventine’s far side” would not agree with line 70, *intervalla vides humane commoda*.

We should translate as follows:

“I, Alcaeus, depart with his punctures (*puncto*²⁷). Who is he with mine? Who but Callimachus?”

2, 2, 109-114:

at qui legitimum cupiet fecisse poema,
cum tabulis animum censoris sumet honesti;
audebit, quaecumque parum splendoris habebunt
et sine pondere erunt et honore indigna ferentur,
verba movere loco, quamvis invita recedant
et versentur adhuc intra penetralia Vestae;

Horace states that a good poet must act as a censor, and remove unworthy words from his writings. Scholars have been puzzled by the reference to Vesta's²⁸ precincts in line 114. I would like to suggest that, according to Horace, the personified²⁹ words do not wish to leave their home, and therefore they linger (*versentur*) within the precincts of Vesta, i.e. within their home.

27. Cf. Lewis and Short, s.v. *punctum*: “that which is pricked in, a point, small hole, puncture.” Note that Horace has, once more, employed the poetic singular: cf. my *Studies*, page 141. The two poets are imagined to inflict wounds on each other with their sharp weapons.

28. Cf. Fairclough's note in his Loeb edition *ad loc.* The goddess Vesta represents the central part of the Roman home. Cf. also Wilkins *ad loc.*

29. Cf. Gow's note on Theocritus, *Idyll* 16, 6 ff: for the personification of poems.