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NOTES ON HORACE'S EPODES

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1, 15-18:

*roges, tuum labore quid iuven meo,
imbellis ac firmus parum?
comes minore sum futurus in metu,
qui maior absentes habet.*
line 15 labore: laborem Mss.

In this passage, Horace states that he wishes to accompany Maecenas in war. I would like to suggest that we should print the mss. reading *laborem*, in line 15, and translate as follows: “You might ask (*roges*) why I would help your toil (*laborem*). Unfit for war and too weak, as a companion for my friend (*meo*¹/ ... *comes*) I shall be less in fear, which grips absent men more.”

1, 19-24:

*ut adsidens implumibus pullis avis
serpentium adlapsus timet*

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¹ Cf. Lewis And Short, s.v. *meus*: “Absol.: *mei* ... my friends”. The mss. reading *laborem*, accepted by the scholiast (cf. Keller-Holder) has been altered into *labore*, because *laborem* seemed unmetrical (cf. Villeneuve *ad loc.*). In reality, the mss. reading *laborem* is sound, being a case of “prosodische Vernachlässigung” (cf. Sommer, *Handb. Lat. Laut und Form.*, page 301). An exactly parallel “prosodische Vernachlässigung” in Horace has been shown to be found at Horace, *Ars Poetica* line 65 (*palus*): cf. G. Giangrande, “Il metodo storico nella critica testuale”, forthcoming in *Habis*. Unfortunately, Watson does not discuss the reading *laborem*. I have used T. E. Page’s excellent edition (London 1970, reprint) as the starting-point of my research. Cf. also L.C. Watson, *A Commentary On Horace’s Epodes* (Oxford 2003): a very learned and informative monograph. Prof. Giangrande supports my explanation of the mss. reading *laborem*. I should like to add that a spondee in the fourth position of the iambic trimeter is rare, but permissible, as I have underlined in *Myrtia* 19 (2004), page 160, note 3 (cf. also Giangrande, *Myrtia* 19 (2004), page 166).

*magis relictis, non ut adsit auxili
latura plus praesentibus.
libenter hoc et omne militabitur
bellum in tuae spem gratiae.*

line 21 non ut adsit: non uti sit v.l.

Scholars² have been puzzled by the meaning of line 21. I would like to suggest that we should print the variant reading *non uti sit*³, and translate as follows: “not that she is likely to help. This and every war shall be more gladly (*plus .../ libenter*) fought by those men who are present (*praesentibus*) in the hope of your thanks.”

2, 21-24:

*qua muneretur te, Priape, et te, pater
Silvane tutor finium.
libet iacere modo sub antiqua ilice,
modo in tenaci gramine.*

That Silvanus should be called here “guardian of the boundaries” is doubtful, as is admitted by those who accept this interpretation (e. g. Villeneuve, quoting *Gromat.* I, page 302, and Watson): the guardian of boundaries was, as a rule, *Terminus*. Here, *finium* means “the farm”, as at *Odes* 3, 18, 2: Silvanus is said to be *custos* (= *tutor*) in an inscription quoted by Forcellini-Perin, *Onomasticon*, s. v. *Silvanus*. Cf. Carter, *Epitheta Deorum*, s. v. *Silvanus: custos hortuli summus*.

2, 37-38:

*quis non malarum quas amor curas habet
haec inter obliviscitur?*

Horace describes in this passage the pleasures of life in the country. Page noted that *Amor* is used in a bad sense, and opposed to simple domestic life. I would like to suggest that we should translate as follows: “Amidst these things,

² Cf. Page’s note *ad loc.*

³ Page pointed out that Bentley read *non uti sit*. Watson is silent on this point. For another possible interpretation of this passage cf. *Orpheus* 27, 2006, page 193.

who does not forget the cares of evil women (*malarum ... curas*), which passion possesses⁴ (*quas amor ... habet*)."

5, 41-44:

*non defuisse masculae libidinis
Ariminensem Foliam
et otiosa credidit Neapolis
et omne vicinum oppidum*

All the commentators, followed by Watson, take *masculae libidinis* to be a *genitivus qualitatis* governed by *Ariminensem Foliam* and denouncing her as a lesbian.

This presents various difficulties, of which Watson is aware. First of all, Folia's private sexual inclinations are irrelevant to her activities. Watson thinks that the words *masculae libidinis* may be a "circumstantial detail fleshing out the shadowy figure of Folia", but she, far from being shadowy, was all too "notorious", as Watson himself concedes. Watson suggests that the detail in question may "implicitly" condemn Canidia "for the kind of company she keeps", but Canidia operated in Rome, whereas Folia was professionally active elsewhere, i. e. in Naples. Finally, Watson writes that "in imputing tribadism to Folia, Horace may be implying that she puts magic at the service of her sexual orientation": but, when describing Folia's magic powers (45-46), Horace indicates nothing of the kind. It may be added that Horace does not seem to harbour any personal hostility against tribadism: he mentions *mascula Sappho* (*Epist.* I, 19, 28) with equanimity.

However, the major problem created by the interpretation of *masculae libidinis* as a *genitivus qualitatis* is represented by the fact that the connection between Folia and Naples remains unexplained (Watson cannot account for it, cf. his note on lines 41-44).

All the above difficulties disappear if we consider three facts. First of all, Horace is fond of "strange instances of *hyperbaton*" (cf. Nisbet-Hubbard, *Horace, Odes* I, ad I, 35, 6) in which the genitive is separated by one or more interposed words from the vocable which governs it (e. g. Hom. *Il.* 22, 189 and the Latin examples of such "weite Sperrung" quoted in Hofmann-Szantyr, *Lat. Gramm.* II, page 692).

Secondly, "Naples and its environs" were "a huge pleasure resort", as Watson knows, where filles de joie serving the lust of their male customers

⁴ Horace is referring to the problems which are caused by evil women together with *Amor*. *Malarum* is a substantivized adjective: cf. *malas* = "wicked women" as quoted in *O. L. D.*, s. v. *malus*, 3, a. Cf. also *Epode* 6,11 in *malos*.

abounded (*meretrix Neapolitis* Afran. 136 Ribbeck). Thirdly, *otiosus* with the genitive means “that has leisure for anything” (cf. Lewis Short, s. v. I, B, 5). *Folia* evidently was active in preparing potions and magic spells customarily needed by such filles de joie and their amorous clients. The upshot of all this is that the sense of the lines is: “Naples, which has leisure for male lust, and every neighbouring town believed that *Folia* of Ariminum was also there⁵”.

5, 55-60:

*formidulosus cum latent silvis ferae
dulci sopore languidae,
senem, quod omnes rideant, adulterum
latrent Suburanae canes,
nardo perunctum, quale non perfectius
meae laborarint manus.*

Canidia hopes that the shameless women of the Subura will rant at the old man, and make everybody laugh at him. We should translate as follows: “may the vile women of the Subura (*Suburanae canes*⁶) rant at (*latrent*⁷)the old rake anointed with perfume -which everybody should laugh at.”

6, 11-12:

*cave, cave: namque in malos asperrimus
parata tollo cornua.*

Horace compares himself to Archilochus and Hipponax. Thus he states that if anybody attacks him, he punishes them with his writings. We should translate as follows: “Beware, beware. For very fiercely I lift my prepared books (*parata ...cornua*⁸), against evil-doers⁹.”

⁵ The genitive *masculae libidinis* is, in sum, governed by *otiosa*, from which word it is separated by the interposed *Ariminensem Foliam*. Cf. *Cumana meretrix* in Hollis, *Fragm. Rom. Poetry*, 89

⁶ Cf. Lewis And Short, s. v. *canis* B, 1, a: “A shameless, vile person”. Cf. also *uxorem ... rabiosam canem* Pl. Men. 936.

⁷ Cf. Lewis And Short, s. v. *latro* I, B, 2: “In speaking, to rant, roar, bluster”. Cf. also Ovid, *Ibis* 232 *latrat ... verba canina*. The barking of the dogs puzzled Watson (“one must ask why the dogs are to bark”). Although he knows that the *Subura* was full of “prostitutes”, he has not understood that *canes*, here, denotes them.

⁸ The critics (cf. e. g. Watson) take *cornua* to mean that Horace describes himself as an “irascible bull.” However, Horace has described himself as a metaphorical dog (line 5),

7, 5-8:

*non ut superbas invidae Carthaginiis
Romanus arces ureret
intactus aut Britannus ut descenderet
Sacra catenatus Via.*

Horace refers here to Carthage and Britain. I would like to suggest that we should place a comma after *intactus*, in line 7, and translate as follows: “not that the Roman might burn unsubdued (*intactus*¹⁰) the proud towers of jealous Carthage, or that the Briton might descend the Sacred Way in fetters.”

7, 11-14:

*neque hic lupis mos nec fuit leonibus,
numquam nisi in dispar feris.
furorne caecus an rapit vis acrior
an culpa? Responsum date.*
Line 12 umquam: numquam Bentley

For the correct interpretation of this passage cf. *Orpheus* 2006, page 196 f. Watson *ad loc.* wrongly considers the mss. reading *umquam* to be “a patent illogicality”, and accepts the conjecture *numquam*, which is unjustified.

9, 5-8:

*sonante mixtum tibiis carmen lyra,
hac Dorium, illis barbarum,
ut nuper, actus cum freto Neptunius
dux fugit ustis navibus.*

and it would therefore be strange if he changed the metaphor “to that of a bull” (cf. Page *ad loc.*).

⁹ *Parata* denotes the books which are ready to be read, i. e. completed (cf. Lewis-Short, s. v. *cornu* B, g). Horace means that he will punish his attackers by means of books that he will finish (and therefore publish). *Cornua* is of course *pars pro toto*, = “books”.

¹⁰ The adjective *intactus* cannot refer to *Britannus* because Julius Caesar had already invaded Britain when Horace wrote this poem. Cf. Page *ad loc.* In their commentary on *Odes* I, 35, line 30 Nisbet-Hubbard point out that Julius Caesar “imposed tribute on the peoples of south-east Britain.” Watson takes *intactus* to refer to *Britannus* (which is impossible for the reason indicated by Page). Here *intactus* means (cf. *Thes.*, s. v. , 2068, 31-32) “*invictus*”, cf. *Just.* 2, 3 *intacti aut invicti*, quoted in Lewis-Short, s. v. , I.

Horace asks Maecenas when they are going to celebrate the victory of Actium. I would like to suggest that we should place a comma after *illis*, in line 6, and translate as follows: “while here (*hac*) the lyre sounds a mixed Dorian song together with the famous flute (*tibiis /...illis*), just as when recently the Neptunian¹¹ leader fled to the barbarians (*barbarum*¹² /... *fugit*¹³), having been driven from the sea when his ships were burnt.”

9, 19-20:

*hostiliumque navium portu latent
puppes sinistrorsum citae.*

Scholars have been puzzled by the meaning of line 20. By far the best discussion is in Page, *ad loc.* I think the textual problem offered by *sinistrorsum* can be solved. The ships reversed their course, and went back to the harbour whence they had departed. This nautical manoeuvre was called *puppis avertere*, or *convertere*, and is best described by Ne. *Han.* XI, 6 *perterriti puppes averterunt seque ad sua castra nautica rettulerunt* (cf. also Cic., *Att.* 13, 21, 3 *navem convertens ad puppim*).

It is in allusion to the said manoeuvre that Horace says *navium puppes*. The ships went neither leftwards, nor rightwards, but back: therefore *sinistrorsum* means here “unfortunately” (scil. for Antony and Cleopatra): it is the semantic opposite of *dextrorsum* which means “luckily”, cf. Thes. s. v. *dextrorsum*, 938, 60 ff. (“*ad superstitionem pertinet*”). The parallelism noted by Wickham (*ad* lines 19-20) is clear: both the ships and the cavalry made an about-turn.

¹¹ Sextus Pompey. Cf. Page *ad loc.*

¹² Note the use of the poetic singular: cf. my *Studies In The Text Of Propertius* (Athens 2002), page 141.

¹³ Cf. Horace, *Epist.* I, 20, 13 *aut fugies Uticam* (= “you will run away to Utica”). Sextus Pompey fled to Asia.

Watson (*ad loc.*) does not seem to have comprehended this passage.