

the mind, blinds those affected by it to the damage that it may bring upon them and is an irrational part of our nature that has been responsible for disasters in the past too.

Line 22 comes as a complete surprise and gives the first indication that Horace is not as serious as he has seemed.<sup>4</sup> When the poet there says *compesce mentem: me quoque*... (= 'restrain your anger: I too was angry') this must mean that in fact he has just been referring to the woman's anger, since, if he had in mind his own anger at 5–21, *compesce mentem* would be unbearably bald and abrupt, and *me quoque* would be a most odd and illogical progression.<sup>5</sup> So we now realize that he has actually been lecturing the addressee, but with deliberate concealment until this late stage, and in retrospect we see that his remarks at 5 ff. were really rather different in tone. Their implications are rather different too, and by the time the end of the ode is reached Horace has made clear the damage and disaster that the lady's *ira* may cause her (the obvious inference is that if she does not give up her anger he will write more lampoons).

To take lines 5–21 as such a tease seems to me the best way of explaining the great length of that passage, as with this view its extent makes the hoax more elaborate and amusing and heightens the cheek. This interpretation also fits well with the urbane impudence evident elsewhere in l. 16. For at 22 ff., as an argument for the woman giving up her anger, the poet cites his own willingness to give up his (which was the whole reason for her irate reaction in the first place), but at 26 ff. he actually goes on to add a proviso, and in it he makes a stipulation to which she is hardly likely to accede<sup>6</sup> after his treatment of her – *dum mihi | fias... amica | ...animumque reddas*.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The positioning of this poem after the serious l. 15 may well be intended to reinforce subtly the impression (until 22) that l. 16 is also serious.

<sup>5</sup> cf. the similar remarks on *compesce mentem* and *me quoque* by Nisbet and Hubbard (p. 203), who rightly censure the way in which the conventional interpretation ignored this point. But the reader is, of course, ignorant of the content of line 22 when he encounters the earlier part of the poem and would not otherwise suspect that Horace has in mind the addressee's *ira* at 5 ff. Kiessling–Heinze (Berlin, 1930) claim that *compesce mentem* shows that at 5–21 the poet was really thinking of the woman's anger as well as his own and that those lines are partly a warning and partly an apology. However, with this view *compesce mentem* is still unacceptably bald and abrupt, while a genuine apology at 5 ff. is at variance with Horace's tone elsewhere (see below).

<sup>6</sup> To take *amica* and *animumque reddas* (see Pichon *Index Verborum Amatoriorum* s.v. *animus*, and cf. Plaut. *As*. 141, Ovid *Her*. 19. 18) in a specifically amatory sense (bearing in mind line 1) increases the effrontery.

<sup>7</sup> This note was written in June 1980, before a copy of G. Williams, *Figures of Thought in Roman Poetry* (Yale, 1980), had reached me here. Consequently, until informed by the editors of *CQ*, I was unaware that Williams's interpretation of the Ode (pp. 1–5) seems to be on the same general lines as my own.

## SENECAN SOLEO: HERCULES OETAeus 1767

Michael Winterbottom (*CR* n.s. 26 (1976), 39) criticizes Costa's edition of Seneca's *Medea* for failing to annotate *sic fugere soleo* (1022).<sup>1</sup> 'Did Medea', he asks, 'habitually escape by chariot – or is this a coy allusion to Seneca's predecessors?' Of

<sup>1</sup> Actually it appears from Costa's note on 1022 (*Seneca: Medea* (Oxford, 1973), 159) that he understood *soleo* to refer to the second of these alternatives ('M.'s serpent-chariot was familiar to many writers', etc.). But, especially given the immediately preceding words in 1021 (*coniugem agnoscis tuam?*). Herrmann's annotation must be correct: *elle a tué Absyrte en quittant la Colchide et Pélías en quittant la Thessalie*.

course it is neither; *sic fugere soleo* means Medea was accustomed to flee by leaving dead bodies behind to encumber her enemies (her children's in this instance, Absyrtus' and Pelias' on previous ones). According to Seneca's usage, and that of Silver Latin rhetoric in general, once would be enough to establish such a 'habit', for in that fairy-world wonders and horrors become, as Atreus (*Thyestes* 273 f.) says petulantly, *immane . . . sed occupatum* on repetition. At *Troades* 249 and 360 *soleo* is used of the virgin-sacrificing 'habit' of the Achaeans, i.e. the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, which makes the sacrifice of Polyxena seem a good idea. At *Hercules Furens* 1101 f. the hero's shoulders are described as *mundum solitos ferre*, having done this on one previous occasion. The Greek sources, the occasional Augustan example, and the over-use of this inexpensive trick of rhetoric by Seneca and his father's circle before him as recorded in Seneca Rhetor, are admirably described and documented in the *Observations* prefixed to Leo's edition of the tragedies (1878), I. 149 ff.

It seems to me surprising, therefore, that no editor has seriously considered receiving an example of this usage of *soleo*, in itself perfectly plausible, into the text of *Hercules Oetaeus* 1766-9, where Alcmena, mourning her son's death, says

quando ab inferna Styge  
remeabis iterum? non ut et spoliū trahas  
rursusque Theseus debeat lucem tibi,  
sed quando solus?

*spoliū*, however, is the reading of A, whereas the text of E, *solitum*, can easily be defended. We would simply have a case of a habit, as in the passages cited above and in Leo, established on the basis of one previous instance. Hercules had freed Theseus once before. He is thus accustomed to freeing Theseus or, as E correctly puts it, Theseus would be his 'customary' person to bring up from the underworld. 'When will you return a second time from infernal Styx; not that you should bring the usual man with you, and Theseus owe the light to you all over again, but when, alone?' For all modern scholarship has done for the A tradition, it does in fact trivialize the more *recherché* touches of Silver Latin rhetoric in Seneca to be found in E more often than E does in A; and if this use of *soleo* sounds a trifle more strained even than is customary with Seneca, those of us at least who believe the *HO* to be the creation of an enthusiastic but not very tactful imitator will find that entirely consonant with its style in general.

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### ΚΩΛΟΕΙΔΗΣ

τὴν δὲ τῶν πίστεων ἐρμηνείαν οὔτε ἀφελή εἶναι δεῖ, καθάπερ ἐν τῇ διηγῆσει, οὔτε ἀνηπλωμένην καὶ σπερματικῶς ἔχουσιν τὰ πράγματα ἀλλὰ καὶ συνεστραμμένην καὶ οἷον εἰπεῖν κωνοειδῆ καὶ τὸ σύνολον ἀγωνιστικόν.

Anon. *R.G.* i. 387 Spengel-Hammer.

Read κωλοειδῆ.

For κωνοειδής of style I know no parallel; for κωλοειδής compare Sopater, *R.G.* 8 Walz, pp. 9. 24, 56. 14, 214. 11, 215. 10, 218. 12, 288. 10. As in Anon. it refers to the style appropriate to proofs, in particular the compact form of an enthymeme or period. Note especially 65. 14 ff., where proems will avoid κωλοειδέσι<sup>1</sup> νοήμασι καὶ στροφαῖς· ἀγῶσι γὰρ τὸ κῶλον μᾶλλον ἀρμόδιον, a passage also exhibiting clear vocabulary links with Anon.'s συνεστραμμένην and ἀγωνιστικόν. In Sopater

<sup>1</sup> *καλ-* is Walz' misprint.