

HORACE, *EPISTLES* 1.2.42–3*

Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis: at ille
labitur et labetur in omne volubilis aevum.

‘One of Horace’s fables remembered or invented. It is not found elsewhere’ (E. C. Wickham). Not elsewhere in classical literature, certainly. But a story illustrating precisely this absurd ignorance of the natural world is attested later, in circumstances which make it highly unlikely that it derives from Horace’s brief reference, and I think we may safely assume that he did not invent the tale.

Under the (apparently unpromising) heading ‘Numskull bales out the stream’ the *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* gives the following summary:¹ ‘He comes to a stream but not wishing to get his feet wet he sits to wait for the stream to run down. He helps to bale the stream out with a hazelnut shell and keeps it up for months.’ The *Motif-Index* gives two references; the first leads to a sixteenth-century collection of jokes, anecdotes, apophthegms, etc., *L’Hore di Ricreatione* of Lodovico Guicciardini.² Here we find the following story. A peasant’s son was brought up at home by his mother, who mollycoddled him, so that he grew up quite lacking in experience. One day he was sent to town by his father with produce to sell. He came to an easily forded stream, and stayed there the whole day, waiting for it to stop flowing. At last he returned home, extremely annoyed that the stream just went on flowing.³

This tale fits Horace’s reference very nicely. Its appeal is indicated by its incorporation, in a more elaborate form (corresponding to the *Motif-Index*’s précis),⁴ in the well-constructed feminist narrative ‘Von dem klugen Mädchen’ recorded by Laura Gonzenbach in Sicily in the last century.⁵

Polygenesis is surely unlikely in this case, and it seems fair to infer that this tale of rustic naiveté was already in Horace’s time part of Italian traditional lore.

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¹ Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, iv (Copenhagen, 1957), J. 1967; cf. A. Aarne-Stith Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale*² (Helsinki, 1961), no. 1273 A.

² *L’Hore di Ricreatione di M. Lodovico Guicciardini patritio Fiorentino* (Antwerp, 1583), i.48 (d).

³ ‘Vn’ figliuolo d’vn contadino alleuato in casa letiosamente dalla madre, senza esperienza alcuna, fu mandato vn’ giorno dal padre alla città con frutta a vendere; costui arriuato a vn’ fiumicello, che si guadaua da ognuno a piacere, si fermo aspettando tutto il giorno, che quel’ Rio finisse di correre. In fine non ne veggendo alcun’ segno, torno a casa pieno disdegno, dolendosi forte della sua fortuna, e di quelle acque, che non fussero mai cessate, e corressero ancora.’

⁴ Here, as often, the *Motif-Index* offers an invaluable guide to literature which may throw light on a particular theme, but its précis corresponds to only one of the items listed. A surprising number of peculiar Herodotean stories have been claimed as ‘widespread folktales’ by scholars who evidently thought it wasted labour to pursue the *Motif-Index*’s far-flung citations.

⁵ *Sicilianische Märchen, aus dem Volksmund gesammelt*, i (Leipzig, 1870), 114–18, no. 17.

HORACE, *EPISTLES* 2.2.89

At *Epistles* 2.2.87–9 Horace introduces an argument against writing poetry based on the unpleasant mutual admiration required in poetic society with an anecdote about an orator and a juriconsult:

†frater erat Romae† consulti rhetor, ut alter
alterius sermone meros audiret honores,
Gracchus ut hic illi, foret huic ut Mucius ille.

Critical attention has focused on the opening three words here, and on the question of whether in the last line the (second) 'hic...illi' of the MSS. is tolerable, or whether we should (with most editors, and surely correctly) accept Britannicus' 'huic...ille'. But the general sense seems clear and unexceptionable: the jurist called the orator a Gracchus, the orator called the jurist a Mucius. There were a number of renowned legal Mucii, but it is natural to think first of the most famous, Q. Mucius Scaevola the Pontifex (*RE* 'Mucius' 22), one of the founding fathers of Roman legal studies; the Gracchus can only be C. Gracchus, almost equally famous as an orator. The sense is unexceptionable.

Bentley suggested that this perfectly intelligible opposition was corrupt, and conjectured *Crassus* (i.e. L. Licinius Crassus, *RE* 'Licinius' 55) for *Gracchus*:

...mihi persuasum est, non GRACCHUM hic, sed CRASSUM ab Horatio memorari; 'CRASSUS ut hic illi foret, huic ut Mucius ille'. ubi P. Licinius Crassum eloquentium iurisprudētissimum, et Q. Mucium Scaevolam iurispritorum eloquentissimum mecum intelliges. Hi enim aequales erant, et in omnibus magistratibus collegae, praeter tribunatum et Censuram; una Consules A.V.C. 659. At Caius Gracchus et aetate Mucio prior, et in oratoria laude Crasso inferior. Autor Dialogi De Oratoribus c. 18. 'Sicut Catoni seni comparatus C. Gracchus plenior et uberior; sic Graccho politior et ornatio Crassus.' Rectius itaque Crassus, quam Gracchus, cum Mucio Scaevola componitur. Vide modo Ciceronis librum de Oratore primum, ubi dialogi partes sustinet Crassus hic et Mucius, et de claris Oratoribus c. 39, 40, 43; et mecum senties, ut polliceri ausim. Unum inde locum hic tibi delibabo. [*Brutus* 40 148] 'Noli existimare his duobus quidquam fuisse in nostra civitate praestantius. Nam, ut paullo ante dixi consultorum alterum disertissimum, disertorum alterum consultissimum fuisse: sic in reliquis rebus ita dissimiles erant inter sese, statuere ut tamen non posses utrius te malle similiores. Crassus erat elegantium parcellissimus, Scaevola parcorum elegantissimus. Crassus in summa comitate habebat severitatis satis; Scaevolae multa in severitate non deerat tamen comitas.' Et Gracchum pro Crasso fortasse Librarii substituerunt, fortassis et Horatius dedit: neque enim illud damno, sed hoc ei praefero. Seneca Epist. CXIV [13] 'Gracchus illis et Crassus et Curio nimis culti et recentes sunt: ad Appium usque et Coruncanium redeunt'. Ammianus Marc. XXX, 4. [6] de priscis Oratoribus loquens: 'Consulares multi et triumphales, Crassi atque Antonii et cum Philippis Scaevolae alique numerosi'.¹

The emendation seems to us certain, and was in fact made independently by E. H. B. No-one has ever printed the conjecture in their text (even Bentley seems to be hesitating when he raises the possibility that *Crassus* is perhaps an improvement on Horace rather than a restoration after corruption), but it has found occasional favour with editors, notably Schütz² and A. Y. Campbell.³ It was at least mentioned by nineteenth-century editors like Müller and Wickham, but as with many conjectures it dropped out of sight with the establishment of the modern vulgate: it is not to be found in Kiessling-Heinze, Garrod, or Klingner, nor even in Brink's monumental commentary. Shackleton Bailey has restored it to the apparatus, but as even he does not put it in the text, and it is not mentioned amongst the 'selection of Bentley's most interesting proposals' given by R. G. M. Nisbet in reviewing Borzsák's rival Teubner,⁴ it seems worth restating the case for *Crassus*, even though the essentials are already in Bentley.

As Bentley remarks, there is nothing wrong with the pairing of Gracchus and Scaevola, but they lack any close connection. By contrast Crassus and Scaevola were contemporaries⁵ and associates whose careers were almost continually intertwined, reaching a peak with their joint consulship in 95 B.C. Crassus had been married to a

¹ Quoted from the third edition (Berlin, 1869).

² Ed. Berlin, 1883.

³ 'Horatiana', CQ 39 (1945), 113–18, at 118: 'if space permitted I should defend it further'.

⁴ *Gnomon* 58 (1986), 611–15 at 613–14. There is no sign of the conjecture even in the extensive lists of H. K. Joliffe, *The Critical Methods and Influence of Bentley's Horace* (Chicago, 1939).

⁵ *Aequales*; cf. Cic. *De or.* 1.180, *Brutus* 145, *RE* xvi.1 437.28ff.

cousin of Scaevola's, the daughter of Q. Mucius Scaevola the Augur,⁶ a fact on which the last was made to remark in Lucilius' version of his trial for extortion in 119/118 B.C.: 'Crassum habeo generum, ne rhetoricoterus tu sis'.⁷ Crassus and the younger Scaevola were on opposite sides in the famous *causa Curiana* of 93 B.C., where Scaevola took the part of strict legal interpretation, Crassus of equity: the case and the performances of the two parties are often referred to by Cicero.⁸ It is these references to the two in Cicero which provide the best argument for Bentley's conjecture (as he again remarks). At *Brutus* 194–200 Cicero gives an account of the *causa Curiana*, and describes the dilemma that would have faced a non-expert judge in deciding between them: 'hic ille de populo iudex, qui separatim alterum admiratus esset, idem audito altero iudicium suum contemneret.' Earlier he had compared and contrasted the two men in the words Bentley quotes, and again remarked on how they were *Doppelgänger*: 'cum omnis virtus sit, ut vestra, Brute, vetus Academia dixit, mediocritas, uterque horum medium quiddam volebat sequi; sed ita cadebat ut alter ex alterius laude partem, uterque autem suam totam haberet' (149). Moreover, Brutus in the dialogue is made to compare the relationship between Scaevola and Crassus to that between Servius Sulpicius Rufus and Cicero himself, and he remarks on how he hears nothing but praise of each of the latter from the other: 'simul illud gaudeo, quod et aequalitas vestra et pares honorum gradus et artium studiorumque quasi finitima vicinitas tantum abest ab obrectatione et invidia, quae solet lacerare plerosque, uti ea non modo non exulcerare vestram gratiam sed etiam conciliare videatur. Quali enim te erga illum perspicio, tali illum in te voluntate iudicioque cognovi' (156). If Horace did not use the pair of Scaevola and Crassus, then either there is some special point to Gracchus which has so far eluded scholars or he missed an obvious opportunity: to the latter we prefer the hypothesis of an easy scribal corruption.

If *Crassus* is correct, two points may be made about line 87. First, there is conceivably a special point to the mildly pejorative *rheto*r in that line: as censor in 92 B.C. Crassus closed the schools of the *Latini rhetores*, as he is made to remark in *De oratore*.⁹ Second, it is natural to ask whether the reading *Crassus* offers any help with the crux in 87. There are four objections to the reading *frater erat Romae*, well summarized by Brink ad loc.:

- (a) an inadmissible use of *ut* (the variant *et* is excluded anyway);
- (b) the lack of an indication why the mutual praise was undeserved;
- (c) the lack of a reason why two brothers should not praise each other;
- (d) the improbability of the reading *Romae*, because when H. tells anecdotes, his habit is to mention places other than Rome, but not the capital itself.

The first three of these are already made by Bentley, while the last is added by Housman.¹⁰ It has been assailed by Alan Cameron,¹¹ and does not seem to us cogent, despite Brink's support: the emphasis on these events taking place in Rome is not inappropriate, since it is the Roman literary scene which is Horace's concern in this section. Of the many attempts at emendation, the best so far is undoubtedly Bentley's

⁶ cf. Wilkins' edition of Cicero, *De Oratore* (Oxford, 1892), p. 23.

⁷ Fr. 86 Marx = 86 Warmington (Cic. *De Or.* 3.171).

⁸ cf. Wilkins, op. cit. (n. 6), p. 12., Douglas on *Brutus* 143.12, J. Stroux, *Summum ius summa iniuria* (Leipzig, 1928), pp. 29–31.

⁹ 3.93; cf. Suet. *de gramm.* 25, Tac. *dial.* 35.

¹⁰ 'Horatiana [III]', *Classical Papers* (Cambridge, 1972), i.136–61 at 153–4.

¹¹ *CR* 15 (1965), 11–13.

own 'pactus...consulto':¹² 'quippe eo ipso ridiculi et vecordes erant, quod paciscerentur, ut alter alterum magnifice laudarent; quasi gloriam et rem ex alternis laudibus apud populum aucupaturi.' Housman's only objection to this, apart from the question of *Romae*, is that 'the corruption is hardly to be explained' (!), while Brink prefers *fautor* (which does not suit a reciprocal arrangement) solely on the grounds of economy (and with the irrelevant observation that Bentley's emendation 'anyway did not satisfy him'). We would stress rather that the notion of a conscious pact between two parties is less satisfactory than that of a relationship in which the mutual flattery arises more unconsciously. The fact that Scaevola and Crassus were related (Crassus' wife Mucia would have been a second cousin of Scaevola: her great-grandfather Q. Mucius Scaevola P. f. was also Scaevola's great-grandfather) might support the presence here too of some relationship between the parties which would give a reason for mutual admiration but one which might still be criticised e.g. a marriage tie in which both parties had something to gain from mutual praise. This seems to rule out *frater* (to which the first objection is also decisive),¹³ but it is much harder to say what it supports, and we have to confess ourselves beaten. We wish others more luck.¹⁴

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¹² For the dative, see Bentley *ad loc.*, *TLL* x.1.19.36ff.

¹³ Contra M. J. McGann, *CR* 16 (1966), 266–7.

¹⁴ We are most grateful for comments and corrections to Dr R. O. A. M. Lyne and Professor R. G. M. Nisbet.

A PALAEOGRAPHICAL CORRUPTION IN OVID, *EX PONTO* 4.6

In lines 35–8 Ovid compliments the poem's recipient Brutus on his skill as a forensic orator. The transmitted text is as follows:

hostibus eueniat quam sis uiolentus in armis
sentire et linguae tela subire tuae,
quae tibi tam tenui cura limantur ut omnes
istius ingenium corporis esse negent.

The MSS. *ingenium corporis* could only mean 'so that all would deny that the talent of your body exists'; Ovid can hardly be identifying the *tela* of 36 with Brutus' *ingenium*. Wheeler translates 'On these [the missiles of your tongue] you use the file with such extreme care that none would recognize in them your real nature', and André 'que personne ne croirait qu'un tel esprit habite ton corps'; neither translation fits the Latin.

The correct reading is 'ut omnes / istius *ingenui pectoris* esse negent', meaning 'so that all would deny that they are the product of your kindly spirit'. In lines 27–30 Ovid has already described this apparent contradiction in Brutus' character:

lenem te miseris genuit Natura, nec ulli
mitius ingenium quam tibi, Brute, dedit,
ut qui quid ualeas ignoret Marte forensi
posse tuo peragi uix putet ore reos.

The corruption of *ingenui* to *ingeniū* is simple enough, and the interchange of *pectus* and *corpus* is a common error: the fifth-century codex Romanus of Virgil (*R*) gives