

OPPORTUNE INSANITY: AN INTERPOLATION IN HORACE, *CARMINA* 4.12.25–8

The fourth book of Horace's *Carmina* contains the one interpolation which editors and interpreters consider absolutely certain, although they disagree about its precise extent.¹ It is not unlikely that *Carm.* 4, compared with the previous three books, had a smaller circulation of copies directly checked by the author: hence some predisposition to the addition of spurious verses already in the oldest stages of transmission (1st c. A.D.).²

Such an interpolation I suspect in another passage of Book 4. Let us consider the two last stanzas of *Carm.* 4.12:

ad quae si properas gaudia, cum tua
velox merce veni: non ego te meis
immunem meditor tinguere poculis,
plena dives ut in domo.

verum pone moras et studium lucri
nigrorumque memor, dum licet, ignium
misce stultitiam consiliis brevem:
dulce est desipere in loco.

(21–8)

The last stanza, I believe, was not written by Horace. Its first word is very suspect and should be blamed on an interpolator rather than emended: the prosaic adverb *verum* is elsewhere used by Horace exclusively in his hexametric *sermones* (usually with a distinctly adversative sense: e.g. *Sat.* 1.2.92, 2.1.7, *Ars P.* 225).³ But here it is the very gist of the stanza itself that appears to be redundant, insisting as it does on a trite idea of *carpe diem*: the addressee is invited to look at funeral 'fires', which are 'dark' (*nigri*: maybe the adjective comes from line 11; cf. of course 4.2.23–4 *nigroque* | ... *Orco*), and be mindful of them, in order to enjoy an insanity that must not be too long (as if to say: *semel in anno licet insanire*).⁴ Equally unconvincing is the parenthetic *dum licet* (26), which has all the appearance of a plug, placed as it is between *memor* and *nigrorum* ... *ignium*: what does it mean, strictly speaking, to say 'to be mindful, as long as one can, of death'? (A different case is *Carm.* 2.11.16, where *dum licet* does not break such a strong

¹ I refer to *Carm.* 4.8, where according to Lachmann interpolated verses should reach a total of six (15b–19a and also 28, 33): G. Jachmann, 'Calabrae Pierides', *Philologus* 90 (1935), 331–51; cf. F. Stok, 'Critica del testo', in *Enciclopedia Oraziana* I (Rome, 1996), esp. 348–9; P. Fedeli, I. Ciccarelli, *Q. Horatii Flacci Carmina Liber IV* (Firenze, 2008), 387. The excision of 3.11.17–20 is also widely, but by no means universally, accepted.

² This is a generalization of the principle observed, in the context of archaic Greek poetry, by L.E. Rossi, 'L'autore e il controllo del testo nel mondo antico', *Sem. Rom.* 3 (2000), 165–81.

³ Hence Campbell's *rerum*, printed in the text by Shackleton Bailey, who refers in the apparatus to *Epist.* 1.17.21 (see also *Epist.* 1.5.30); cf. J. Delz, *Gnomon* 60 (1988), 497. The whole beginning of the stanza (*verum pone moras*) sounds like a variation of epic addresses: e.g. Verg. *G.* 3.42–3 *en age segnis* | *rumpe moras*; *Aen.* 4.569 *heia age, rumpe moras* and also 9.13; Ov. *Met.* 2.838; Luc. 1.281 (quite different is *Carm.* 3.29.5 *eripe te morae*).

⁴ Cf. Men. fr. 354.2 K.-Th.; Sen. *Dial.* 9.17.10 *nam sive Graeco poetae credimus 'aliquando et insanire iucundum est'*; *De superst.* fr. 36 Haase (*apud August. De civ. D.* 6.10).

syntactical dependence; cf. also *Sat.* 2.6.96, *Epist.* 1.11.20: the formulaic *dum licet* is used more appropriately even by Trimalchio in Petron. *Sat.* 34.10 v. 4)⁵.

With line 24 *Carm.* 4.12 comes to a perfect end, rounding off an exact balance between two groups of three stanzas:⁶ first, stanzas 1–3 describe the beginning of spring and the consequent desire for good wine (1–12); then, in stanzas 4–6, comes the playful invitation (13–24). The addressee is invited to come in lines 21–2 *ad quae si properas gaudia* (cf. 4.11.14) ... | ... *velox* ... *veni*, while in lines 22–4 Horace explains the necessity of the bargain, by ironizing his own modest means: *plena dives ut in domo* (24) sounds like a quite effective conclusion, in response to *iuvenum nobilium cliens* (15)⁷. I do not believe that after the sixth stanza Horace needed to reiterate the invitation that he had explicitly stated in line 22 *veni* (*pone moras* sounds moreover redundant and inappropriate after *si properas* and *velox*). Already in two other atypical invitations, just one verb in the second person concludes the poem: *Epist.* 1.4.15 *me* ... *vires*, 1.5.31 *falle clientem* (for the poet's modest means we should also remember the conclusion of *Carm.* 1.20 *Vile potabis modicis Sabinis* esp. 10–12). The author of the last four verses, not necessarily aiming at falsification, has reproduced with some audacity typical Horatian themes, having in mind odes such as 3.8 *Martiis caelebs quid agam Kalendis* (esp. 25–8), or simply the conclusion of the preceding *Carm.* 4.11, 31–2 *age iam, meorum | finis amorum* ... 35–6 *minuentur atrae | carmine curae*.⁸ But he did not pay attention to the fact that Horace had subtly alluded to the theme of *carpe diem* already in lines 19–20, where he mentioned that miraculous jar which knows how to cancel every pain: ... *spes donare novas largus amaraque | curarum eluere efficax*.

Maybe some readers will not be willing to give up the concluding sentence: *dulce est desipere in loco* (28). But I believe that the expression *in loco*, typical of Terence's language (*TLL* VII.2, 1598, 79–1599, 11), has to be interpreted as a sort of idiomatic insert, intended to produce an effect of *sermo urbanus* (but not, in fact, Horatian): it is explained as a synonym of *opportune*, which is exactly the sense it has here, by the schol. Bemb. ad Ter. *Haut.* 537.⁹ It is suspect, moreover,

⁵ Some difficulty is perceived by the interpreters: e.g. K. Quinn, *Horace, The Odes* (London, 1980), 321 ad loc. '*dum licet* anticipates *misce*, but grammatically it modifies *memor*'; also I.G. Orelli, I.G. Baiter, G. Hirschfelder (Berlin, 1886), 581 ad loc. An excision in 4.12, but for the sixth stanza (lines 21–4), was proposed by K. Lehrs, 'Zu Horatius', *RhM* 22 (1867), 403–12 at 410: 'In der zwölften Ode ist die vorletzte Strophe *ad quae si properas gaudia* unächt. Er eilt ja nicht, sondern bedarf der Aufmunterung *ut ponat moras et studium lucri*'. A more radical proposition would be to suspect the interpolation of the final three stanzas in their entirety.

⁶ Consequently, E. Fraenkel's brilliant insight on the structure of the ode has to be reformulated: *Horace* (Oxford, 1957), 418–19.

⁷ The poet's concluding reference to himself and to his home is a mode of expression, here tinged with typical Horatian irony, that already belongs to Greek lyric poetry: e.g. Pind. *Isthm.* 6.74–5, *Pyth.* 4.298–9; cf. I. Rutherford, 'Odes and ends: closure in Greek lyric', in D.H. Roberts, F.M. Dunn, D. Fowler (ed.), *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature* (Princeton, 1997), 43–61. As a final word *domus* already appears in *Carm.* 1.15.35–6 *uret Achaicus | ignis Iliacas domos*; see moreover the concluding stanza of *Carmen saec.* esp. 74–6; also Catull. 63.92; Verg. *Ecl.* 10.77.

⁸ Cf. also *Epist.* 1.5.8 *mitte levis spes et certamina divitiarum*; 30 *rebus omissis*; for the theme of 'insanity' e.g. *Carm.* 3.19.18 *insanire iuvat*. On 'concluding interpolations' see R.J. Tarrant, 'The reader as author: collaborative interpolation in Latin poetry', in J.N. Grant (ed.), *Editing Greek and Latin Texts* (New York, 1989), 121–62, esp. 150.

⁹ The expression seems to belong to the common knowledge and language of grammarians: cf. Don. Ter. *Ad.* 476, 1 *εἰρωεῖα indignantis in loco addita est*; the only other occurrences registered in *TLL* are Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.37, Tac. *Ann.* 2.4.3.

that *in loco* repeats *in domo* (24), which is the ending of the preceding stanza (the last one, to my mind, that Horace wrote for the poem).

This has significant consequences. The expression *studium lucri* (25) has been considered decisive for the identification of an obscure Vergilius '*mercator*' as the addressee of this ode. But if Horace is not the author of the last stanza, all the irony about the addressee must be limited to *iuvenum nobilium cliens* (15). Here *cliens* is surely used in a playful mood, implying the subsequent invitation to dinner: *Epist.* 1.7.75 *mane cliens et iam certus conviva*.¹⁰ It is in any case unlikely that by the word *cliens* Horace meant to hurt his addressee: he must rather be exalting the unreachable greatness of those young men, who no doubt belonged to Augustus' entourage.¹¹

But which Virgil could Horace treat so confidentially? Which Virgil could be mentioned by Horace immediately after undeniable bucolic allusions (9–11) and the very name of Arcadia (12)? After the poem to Maecenas (4.11), here Horace is probably addressing himself to another old friend, the great poet recently dead.¹² Written before 19 B.C., the poem to Virgil was included by Horace in the book of *Carmina* which was very likely to be his last, just to recall that affectionate sharing of scents and wines: one joyous night when the two aged poets were briefly able to relive their youth and their Epicurean friendship.¹³ The exhortation *cum tua velox | merce veni* (21–2) is more easily understood as a playful expression in the neoteric mode of Catullus 13, than as an explicit order to a supposed *mercator*. Is it impossible, in the end, that Horace, by describing his friend as 'client of noble young men' was mostly caricaturing himself, as a modest host, with too sharp an eye on his friend's fortune? The adjective *dives*, full of ironical pungency, underlined by the alliteration with *domo*, deserves to be the last note on which the ode ends: a comparable alliteration, involving the word *domus*, already occurs as a conclusion in the *Carmen saeculare* (74–6 *domum ... | doctus ... Dianae | dicere*; see n. 7).

The uncertainty between Virgil the poet and Virgil the *negotiator* (or the even more evidently fanciful *unguentarius*) can already be detected in the ancient exegetical tradition, where Porphyrio, who apparently uttered no doubt about the first

¹⁰ See another playful occurrence in *Epist.* 2.2.78 *rite cliens Bacchi somno gaudentis et umbra* (referring to the *scriptorum chorus*); *TLL* III, 1346, 49–70. The humorous slant excludes any juridical exactness in the word: but it is worth noting that the relationship between poets and (human or divine) patrons is very often expressed in terms of *clientela*; e.g. Suet. *Gram.* 6.2 ... *quia scriptores ac poetas sub clientela Musarum iudicaret* [*sc. Aurelius Opillus*], with R.A. Kaster (Oxford, 1995), 114 ad loc.; see also P. White, *Promised Verse: Poets in the Society of Augustan Rome* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), esp. 29 and n. 47.

¹¹ In *Carmina* 4 and *Epistulae* 1 Horace looks to a new generation of young patrons of letters (especially Drusus and Tiberius, but also, for example, the Paulus Maximus of *Carm.* 4.1.13 *et nobilis et decens*).

¹² Note that in 4.11 the young girl has a name, Phyllis, that is full of Virgilian (as well as Horatian) memories.

¹³ The beginning, with the winds on the sea (1–2), may remind the reader, and the addressee himself, of the first poem Horace addressed to his fellow poet and friend (*Carm.* 1.3). Moreover, special value should be attached to the argument put forth by D.H. Porter, 'Horace, *Carmina*, IV, 12', *Latomus* 31 (1972), 71–87, at 77–8: namely that the sequence 4.12–13 is paralleled by the sequence 1.24–5; see, also for extensive bibliography, F. Bellandi, 'Virgilio 2', in *Enciclopedia Oraziana* I (n. 1), 942–4. Anyone who rejects the idea that our Virgil is the poet may find in Fedeli's commentary some vigorous support (esp. pp. 505–6). Horace had already shown a real familiarity with Virgil in *Sat.* 1.5.48–9, where he is explicit about his friend's *cruditas*; cf. also here 21 *gaudia* with *Sat.* 1.5.43.

hypothesis, is opposed to Ps.-Acro. But this uncertainty itself, probably dating back to the earliest stages of Horatian exegesis, may have stimulated the addition of the seventh spurious stanza.

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JUVENAL 2.39: *PUDOR MISREAD?**

The sanctimonious rant of a hypocritical male draws from one Laronia this retort:

felicia tempora quae te	
moribus opponunt! habeat iam Roma pudorem:	39
tertius e caelo cecidit Cato.	

Commentators since the fifteenth century who have glossed *habeat iam Roma pudorem* all take it to mean 'it's time Rome stopped behaving disgracefully'. As Laronia turns out to be no crusader for moral reform, Ascensius (Lyon, 1498) and Britannicus (Brescia, 1501) were right to say that it must then continue the sarcasm of *felicia tempora*. Both elements of this interpretation can already be found in medieval glosses, for instance one written above *habeat iam Roma pudorem* by a later hand (p or P², s. x/xi) in the Pithoeanus (P, Montpellier 125, s. ix¹): *servet castitatem, yronice*.¹

I see no decisive objection, but surely instead Laronia means 'it's time Rome called it a day: this is the third Cato that has landed on us'. To borrow an expression from Augustus (Suet. *Aug.* 87.1), *contenta sit his Catonibus*. Martial complains that his Muse is driving him too hard (8.3.1–4):

quinque satis fuerant; nam sex septemve libelli
est nimium. quid adhuc ludere, Musa, iuvat ?
sit pudor et finis. iam plus nihil addere nobis
fama potest: teritur noster ubique liber.

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¹ E. Lommatzsch, *Quaestiones Iuvenalianae* (Leipzig, 1895), 29 = *Jahrb. für class. Philol.* Supp. 22 (1896), 399. As he showed, pp. 6–9 = 376–9, p used the collection of glosses transmitted in the families later called ϕ and χ by P. Wessner, *Scholia in Iuvenalem vetustiora* (Leipzig, 1931), xxiii–xxxii, who associated it with Heiric of Auxerre by way of Remigius; Stefano Grazzini is editing it, and I thank him for confirming that most of Wessner's manuscripts agree with p except that they have *yronicos* for *yronice*. Veronika von Büren kindly tells me that the earliest witness to many of the glosses may be Cambridge King's 52, once Philipps 16395 (s. ix²); at 2.39 it has *quod impossibile est id est servat* [sic] *castitatem yronicae*.