XIV.—*Nullus argento color* (Horace, *Odes* 2.2.1–4)

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The argument is that Bentley erred in making *nisi . . usu* the protasis of *inimice lamnae;* that consequently the *nisi* clause must be construed, as it was regularly before Bentley's time, with *nullus . . . terris;* that the difficulties of this construing vanish if one realizes that *argento* and the *argentum* required as subject for *splendeat* both mean "silver money." An inner meaning for *inimice lamnae* is investigated. The verse's meaning is: "There is no color for silver money buried by misers in the earth, Sallustius Crispus personal foe of filthy lucre, unless it gains shine by (recovered) use,—which should be well-regulated."

The punctuation and explanation of this stanza given by Richard Bentley in 1711 [1] has since that time been universally accepted [2] save that his semicolon after *terris* is now replaced in all the editions by a comma in accordance with modern practice. Bentley maintains that *nisi temperato / splendeat usu* is to be regarded as the conditional to *inimice lamnae*, and his interpretation of the passage is as follows: "*Nullus color*, nulla gratia, nihil pulchri est *argento abdito terris*, sive in terras defosso, ut avaris mos est thesauros suos sepelire, Crispe Sallusti, inimice *lamnae*, nisi *lamna* illa splendeat." [3] The latter part of this is further explained by a clause in another place in his note thus: "qui nihili facis *lamnam*, nisi in quantum humanis *usibus* inserviat." A typical rendering into English of Bentley's view is this: "Silver is colourless when hidden in the miser earth, O Sallust, who hatest the metal, unless it shines with moderate use." [4] It is easy to see from Lambinus' note on the passage, which Bentley quotes, that the explanation current in his time connected the *nisi* clause with the *nullus . . . terris* sentence, of which he disparagingly remarks: "Est enim simile ac siquis dicat, Nulla est mulieris deformis gratia et venustas, nisi formosa sit." To get around this difficulty Lambinus altered *abdito* to *abditae*,

[1] In his Cambridge Horace, vol. 1, p. 95, col. 2, or in the Weidmann reprint (Berlin, 1864), vol. 1, p. 93.

[2] Except by V. Ussani in his *Le Liriche di Orazio* (Torino, 1927: Chiantore), vol. 2, p. 6 (second edition); to this further reference will be made.

[3] Formed by piecing together parts of two Bentleian sentences. The italics are his, as also in the subsequent quotation.

[4] Thus S. Gwynn, *The Odes of Horace* (London, 1902: Blackie), p. 218.

and, by placing a comma after *est*, made *avaris abditae terris* a modifier of *lamnae*, and thus left everything so ordered that the *nisi* clause could readily attach itself to the simple statement *nullus argento color est*. This is the reading which became the standard between the end of the sixteenth century and the date of Bentley's edition of Horace. Bentley's zeal against Lambinus' alteration and on behalf of *abdito*, "Lectionem in omnibus MStis receptam," is rather amusing in view of the one hundred and fifty changes in the text of the *Odes* which Bentley himself was putting forward, many of them of the most arbitrary character; yet let us hasten to agree with him on this occasion when he is defending the traditional text, confident that, as Ussani puts it,[5] "il testo di Orazio non ha bisogno di congetture."

Thus far the honors are with Bentley, but it has to be observed that he makes no mention of the word *temperato* in his long note. This is quite curious since he emphasizes both the *splendeat* and the *usu*. I do not like to charge him with deliberately passing over the *temperato* because its presence in the stanza is unfavorable to his view; I shall content myself with demonstrating that it is so. Let us bear in mind that Bentley's exegesis binds *inimice lamnae* and the *nisi temperato / splendeat usu* tightly together; this makes the *nisi* clause with its subjunctive *splendeat* a virtual oratio obliqua and thus attributes all the words and sentiments in it to Sallustius Crispus, who is thus made to say: "I am the personal enemy of filthy lucre [6] unless it acquires lustre through well-regulated use." It is very important to grasp the point that under the Bentleian interpretation it is Sallustius himself who is credited with the sententious dictum that the only lustre acquired by *lamna* arises from a use of it which implies *regulation and control on the part of its possessor*. At this stage it becomes necessary to assemble all that is known about Sallustius Crispus in order to ascertain how far, if at all, it agrees with the view with which the Bentleian exegesis credits him.

In *Satires* 1.2.47–54 Horace, in the course of a virulent attack on fools who avoid one folly only to fall into another, mentions a

[5] In the introduction to the second volume of the second edition of his *Le Liriche di Orazio* already noticed in fn. 2.

[6] The justification for this translation will be dealt with presently. To Bentley *lamna* meant the metal in the raw, unmined form, a very questionable meaning to attach to it.

Sallustius of whom he has this to say:

> Tutior at quanto merx est in classe secunda,
> libertinarum dico, Sallustius in quas
> non minus insanit quam qui moechatur. At hic si,
> qua res, qua ratio suaderet, quaque modeste
> munifico esse licet, vellet bonus atque benignus
> esse, daret quantum satis esset nec sibi damno
> dedecorique foret. Verum hoc se amplectitur uno,
> hoc amat et laudat: 'matronam nullam ego tango.'

This, it will be agreed, is not a description of the historian Sallust if on no other ground than the story retailed by Aulus Gellius [7] of his being detected by Annius Milo in the act of adultery with the latter's wife and getting a good horse-whipping for it; the person sketched by Horace followed more prudential courses. It may well be, however, the historian's grand-nephew and heir Sallustius Crispus; the confining of his attentions to *libertinae* and his frankly proclaimed avoidance of *matronae* would rest, in part at least, upon a painful incident in the annals of the family. Points of special interest in the passage are: (1) that although this Sallust could have been munificent in a reasonable way (*modeste*) with his women, he preferred to secure with them the reputation of being a big, generous-hearted fellow even at an utterly extravagant cost; (2) that he is credited with summing up his philosophy of sex-relations succinctly and colloquially (notice the postponed *nullam*) in the dictum "I never touch a married woman," the expression of his *prudentia* in this particular field of adventure.[8] Some editors [9] find this identification of the Sallustius of the satire with Sallustius Crispus of the ode difficult because the tone of the ode is friendly. It is open to question, as will subsequently appear, whether the ode is actually friendly; in any event it must be remembered that satires and odes are two different genres, also that some years had intervened with possible changes in social relations such as the years often bring.[10]

[7] *Noct. Att.* 17.18.

[8] Contrast the policy of Crispinus in Juvenal *Satires* 4.4: viduas tantum spernatur adulter.

[9] E.g. E. P. Morris, *Horace the Satires* (N. Y., 1909: A. B. Co.), p. 45.

[10] *Sat.* 1.2 is generally regarded as one of Horace's earliest attempts in that field, and *Odes* 2.2 is, from the reference in v. 17, to be dated B.C. 29 at earliest. This allows an interval of possibly ten years.

We have also an epigram of Crinagoras [11] of which the following is a close rendering: "Crispus, you ought to have as your neighbors not merely three Lady Lucks, but all the Lady Lucks that preside over every event. For what will suffice such a man for (providing) endless bounty towards his friends? But now may Caesar, who is mightier than these goddesses of fortune, exalt you to greater heights! What luck brings pleasure apart from him?" Attention of the reader is invited to the question: "What will suffice such a man for (providing) endless bounty towards his friends?" [12] For this an answer has been anticipatively provided, namely, a combination of all the Lady Lucks in the world. This can only mean that Crispus is so free-handed that wealth must constantly flow in upon him to make it possible for him to maintain the scale of his liberality. One is reminded at once of the Sallustius of the *Satires* who is represented as wanting to be regarded by his freedwomen paramours as a good-hearted, generous fellow and "damn the expense." As for the criticism in the passage of the *Satires* on Sallustius for impairing his property by such gallantry, wealth has come to him in abundance in the interval between the date of *Satires* 1.2 and that of the epigram of Crinagoras, written when Sallustius Crispus had succeeded in gaining a high place in imperial favor after a very inauspicious start.[13]

This brings us to the extended death-notice accorded Sallustius Crispus by Tacitus in the record of events marking the end of the year 20 A.D.[14] In this he is revealed as belonging to that class of which Maecenas is the great historical example, consisting of men who avoided all political office though providing from among them the personal cabinet of Augustus, and who enjoyed their wealth pretty much as they pleased, and sometimes at least, profiting by their nearness to the throne, "outstripped in power many of those who had held the consulship and had enjoyed triumphs." As for

[11] *Anth. Palat.* 16.40.

[12] Mistranslated by C. H. Moore, *Horace Odes and Epodes* (N. Y., 1902; A. B. Co.), p. 166: "For what can be enough for such a man to reward his endless kindness towards his friends?"

[13] Yet surely even in the Crinagoras epigram there is the suggestion that if anything stopped the flow, Sallustius Crispus would be sadly embarrassed, holding the views he did.

[14] *Ann.* 3.30. The statement about the *equites* in the next sentence and also the subsequent quotation relating to Sallustius Crispus' manner of life, are derived from this chapter.

his character these words are deeply significant: diversus a veterum instituto per cultum et munditias copiaque et adfluentia luxu propior. The last five words must mean that his wealth was enormous and that "he leaned to the side of extravagance." [15]

Though the evidence is not extensive it proves reasonably adequate. In one place probably and in two definitely we find Sallustius Crispus represented as a free and easy spender; there is not one single suggestion of *temperantia*, of self-control, of regulation, in his handling of the immense gifts which fortune poured out on him in such profusion. Whatever may have been the good qualities of Sallustius Crispus, it is impossible to argue rationally that a temperate use of money was one of them. That his *usus* of wealth was on a vast scale is established; that it was in any sense *temperatus* is refuted even by such limited evidence as chance has preserved to us from antiquity. Thus, unless one is willing to advance the theory that Sallustius Crispus laid claim to a *temperantia* he obviously did not possess, the Bentleian exegesis fails through overlooking or ignoring the *temperato* of the stanza's third line. And if *nisi temperato / splendeat usu* does not attach itself to *inimice lamnae*, there is left only the *nullus . . . terris* sentence to which it can relate itself, and interpretation must proceed with that conclusion definitely kept in view.

The truth is that despite Macleane's somewhat mid-Victorian alarm over the circumstance that "some commentators have supposed Horace meant to give him a hint on his extravagance," [16] the word *temperato* is the signal for a criticism of Sallustius Crispus which runs throughout the ode. Miserliness robs silver of its color by burying it; true, but it is not just *usus* that does give it color,

[15] That such a man was a very close friend of Augustus need occasion no surprise; the princeps had some very odd millionaire friends like Vedius Pollio, for example, who fed his lampreys with live slaves. His only mistake lay in presuming to inflict on the Head of the State an ocular demonstration of his abominable cruelty. Augustus, qua princeps, legislated for sobriety of life, but it does not follow that he required such things of his friends. See R. Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford, 1939), p. 452.

[16] A. J. Macleane, *Horace* 3d ed. (London, 1874: Bell), p. 90, col. 1. He adds: "for which impertinence the great man would not have thanked him." This remark of Macleane's shows how his *parti pris* would prevent his taking under genuinely judicial consideration the position I am maintaining, even though he does briefly allude to it. Perhaps Horace was less impressed with the nobility than Macleane. In any event at the ode's date, whether 29 B.C. or a little later, Sallustius Crispus was not as yet in the close intimacy of Augustus. Indeed he had hardly purged himself from the error of having taken the wrong side.

but *temperatus usus*. "The point lies here. Physical use of metal will keep it bright, but 'controlled' use implies an effort of body and mind." [17] The criticism is enforced by the citation of Proculeius in the second stanza as a fine example of thoughtful and considered generosity in a hard and mercenary age. I agree with Wickham when he writes [18]: "The true person of the Ode, however, is Proculeius, the example of the right use of wealth." The third stanza affirms that the taming of a grasping spirit is a far greater evidence of power within one than the doubling of earthly possessions, and if it be said that the epithet *avidum* does not agree well with the *luxu propior* of the Tacitean description, my reply is that in regard to wealth two things at least have always to be considered, the one how it was acquired, the other how it is disbursed; a man may grind the faces of the poor to accumulate wealth or to keep it rolling in and at the same time be very generous in disbursing it to his own circle of favorites. Towards the end of the ode it is emphatically stated that the popular use of terms of praise and felicitation is often far astray from the realities of the case; the mob, for instance, calls a man *beatus* (v. 18) who has just been restored to the occupation of a very insecure throne, but "sound judgment removes him from the number of the fortunate." It is then equally possible for a person to look upon himself as *bonus*, *benignus*, "good fellow," "generous chap," [19] who is actually freehanded only because money has come to him easily, as by inheritance in Sallustius Crispus' case, and continues to come easily because money has an uncanny habit of breeding money and perhaps also because he turns the screws at the source. Horace was free enough to criticize; if we confine ourselves merely to the neighborhood of this particular ode, one might profitably examine *Odes* 2.1, 2.3, 2.10, and 2.17.

Perhaps before returning to the interpretation of the opening statement of the ode plus its *nisi* limitation I may here digress for a few words on the combination *inimice lamnae*. The solution for that appears to me to lie in regarding it as the insertion here of a phrase which the great man was fond of using about himself, a phrase so characteristic that readers would derive as much amuse-

[17] H. Darnley Naylor, *Horace Odes and Epodes, a Study in Poetic Word Order* (Cambridge, 1922), p. 75.

[18] E. C. Wickham, *Horace the Odes etc.* (Oxford: 1914), notes, p. 93.

[19] As Sallustius did in *Satires* 1.2.51.

ment from seeing it thus conspicuously placed at the head of the poem as Horace gained satisfaction from putting it there. The man who defended his penchant for a certain type of mistress by saying *matronam nullam ego tango,* is here represented as justifying his careless, open-handed liberality among his friends and retainers by something equally brief and colloquial, *inimicus lamnae <ego sum>*. The word *lamna* is uncomplimentary,[20] and corresponds to our use of the argot "iron men" or "cartwheels" for silver dollars, towards the weight and clumsiness of which we at least feign resentment. By the phrase Sallustius meant "I'm the personal enemy of filthy lucre," and, being its personal enemy, he persisted in thoroughgoing attempts to get rid of it by "throwing money around." It may be suggested also that *lamna* is a colloquial word, especially in its shortened form, as well as an uncomplimentary one, and that his disdain for wealth, always so possible a pose for those who have riches,[21] is effectively accentuated by the word-choice. *Inimicus lamnae <ego sum>* may not be a very profound saying, but the commonplace observations of multimillionaires have a habit of acquiring a value far beyond their intrinsic worth, as who should know better than ourselves.[22]

Returning to the exegesis of the thought of the stanza, we observe that the present standard interpretation depends on a view succinctly expressed by Ussani thus[23]: "*argento*: nel doppio senso di argento allo stato naturale, e di 'argento coniato,' 'denaro.'" The interpretation arising out of this may be expressed in paraphrase as follows, adhering to the Bentleian punctuation: "Silver in ore form, buried in the earth as a miser buries his treasure, has no color, Sallustius Crispus, personal foe of bullion unless that

[20] The scholiast in the *Pseudacronis Scholia in Horatium vetustiora*, ed. O. Keller (Leipzig, 1902: Teubner), p. 142, says (of the poet): lamnam pro infabricata et rudi materia argenti posuit. This could mean something like our "the crude stuff."

[21] Cf. the story told in *Epistles* 1.6.40–44 of Lucullus' ignorance, no doubt largely affected, of the extent of his wardrobe.

[22] My colleague Professor Ivan M. Linforth says of this: "It is perhaps more likely that Horace himself originated the phrase in the ironical sense 'You behave as if you were the personal enemy of filthy lucre, always trying to get rid of it as you do.' The explanation of *lamnae* as slang is equally suitable in this view."

[23] L.c. in fn. 2. He continues: "nota dunque che l' *abdito terris* del v. 2 ha il valore di una proposizione relativa: *quod est abditum terris* (un prosatore avrebbe aggiunto anche *ut ita dicam*) che è poi l'apodosi della protasi ipotetica la quale chiude la strophe." The assumption that *abdito terris* is metaphorical and not literal seems to me impossible.

bullion has been minted or in some way manufactured and acquires shine by use,—which should be well-regulated." Of course this exegesis has been put out of commission by my demonstration that the Bentleian hypothesis is unsound, but one may add that it is quite a feat of interpretation to envelop the whole process of mining, refining, and minting or manufacturing out of *splendeat usu*, which also involves a complete change in the character of the *argentum* from raw ore to finished product.

Since the above explanation is impossible, it appears that the only thing left to do is to assume that *argentum* is not used in a double sense, and that the *argento* of the opening sentence and the *argentum* implied as the subject of *splendeat* are one and the same thing, namely, "coined silver," "silver money"; the moment that this is realized the poet is relieved of an otherwise reasonably preferred charge of obfuscation. The interpretation then runs as follows: "Silver money buried in the miserly earth has no color, Sallustius Crispus, 'personal foe of filthy lucre,' unless by getting into employment—which must be controlled—it should come to gleam." The only pressure here is on the word *usu* which, in the circumstances, may be considered slight indeed, considering the exigencies due to the high compression of lyric forms under which our poet has constantly to work. As this is decidedly a departure from the currently presented interpretation, a little running commentary may perhaps be tolerated.[24]

The silver buried in the miserly earth (or "in the earth by misers") is silver already mined, refined, and minted, *silver money* which has been committed to the earth by some person who lives in dread of losing it through craft or violence; under those circumstances it naturally has not brightness. But let us consider an hypothetical contingency—note the present subjunctive with *nisi*—which may arise in connection with the money that has been so dealt with; it may be found, brought forth into the light of day, put into circulation again, and in that case there would be no question of its gleaming. And if during the period of its burial it

[24] On the subject in general of this past paragraph Professor Linforth expresses himself as follows, approving my solution: "In *avaris abdito terris* the fundamental issue is whether this refers to (1) unmined silver, (2) silver (coined or manufactured) actually buried in the ground by its owner. If (1), why *avaris? Avaris* suggests misers, and *avaris* and the literal meaning of *abdito* taken together favor (2)." It is quite possible that "buried in the earth by misers" is the meaning rather than "buried in the miserly earth," which sounds like a hang-over of the older point of view.

has suffered discoloration, the evidence of its former concealment would vanish through rubbing and fingering as the silver coin passes around once again, as coin is intended to do, from hand to hand. Under the prevailing interpretation we have to accept the dubious proposition that minted money shines by circulation, whereas it is a matter of the most ordinary observation that it is never brighter than when it is turned out from the mint and steadily loses something from its original *splendor*. Further, under my exegesis a telling contrast is set up between the true use of money and the folly shown by misers in burying it in the ground; nothing could be more apposite to the general significance of the stanza, which is now seen to reveal two extremes, the folly of misers on the one hand, the loose-handed, irrational generosity of Sallustius Crispus on the other, while between the two lies the golden mean, *temperatus usus*. To sum up, the points which have been established are the following: (1) the *nisi* clause is a limitation or restriction on the main statement *nullus argento color est avaris / abdito terris*, and not on *inimice lamnae;* (2) any slight illogicality [25] apparent as between the main statement and the *nisi* clause disappears if we give *usu* its correct emphasis and allow for lyric compression, which leaves to the reader's imagination the discovery of the hoarded wealth and its return to employment; (3) the nature of the *nisi* clause's limitation on the main clause is that of an hypothetical contingency which might conceivably alter the condition of affairs postulated by *abdito terris;* (4) *argento* in the main clause and the *argentum* implied as the subject of *splendeat* both mean "silver money" (or silver which has been in some way subjected to the processes of manufacture); (5) *inimice lamnae* is either a phrase of Sallustius Crispus expressing colloquially the very rich man's disdain for money in the concrete, or a mild jest of Horace's at the careless and loose-handed distributory methods of Crispus. The sense of the stanza is approximately as follows: "Silver money has no color when buried in the earth after the manner of misers, Sallustius Crispus, 'personal enemy of filthy lucre,'—unless the money by <renewed> employment, under proper control, should acquire a gleam."

[25] To Lambinus the illogicality was necessarily enormous because he thought of *argentum* in a double sense; with that obsession removed the illogicality is trifling and hence unembarrassing.

There remains to be said a word about *avaris terris*. (1) It has been commonly assumed to mean "the earth greedy of its treasures," reluctant, that is, to surrender to humanity the metals it contains. This is inconsistent with the meaning we have shown that *argentum* should bear, namely, "silver coin," and may therefore be dismissed. (2) *Avaris* may be a case of transferred epithet; in that case it means loosely, in combination with *terris*, "miserly earth," that is, "earth in which, as we all know, misers constantly hide their treasures." (3) *Avaris* may be attached to *abdito* as a reference dative with the implication of agency, "buried by misers in the ground." This leaves *avaris* and *terris* functioning in entire syntactical independence of one another, and is a very simple explanation agreeing well with the stanza's intent and meaning. The starkness of each of the words may be an instance of Horace's *furchtbare Realität*, *avaris* literal, *terris* literal.[26] (4) There may be some point in the use of the plural *terris* here. It is true that a hiatus is thus avoided before *inimice*, and it is always possible that a metrical consideration is the deciding factor in such a case. But it does not follow that because the use of a plural rather than a singular avoids a metrical difficulty, there is no value inherent in the plural as such. The whole subject needs full investigation before one attempts to dogmatize on it.[27] It is at least interesting to speculate that *terris* here means "earths" in the sense of "different places in the earth." If that is so, the transfer of the epithet *avaris* would be striking: "different miserly places in the earth" imparts picturesqueness to the phraseology by the suggestion of the miser carrying his caution to the point of splitting up his silver into several lots for concealment in various holes rather than risking it all in one place. The same value which I put forward here as an interesting possibility may be present also in the *terris* of *Satires* 1.8.43, though there too the plural avoids metrical embarrassment, or at least appears to do so.

[26] The judgment is Goethe's.

[27] A very promising start has been made by Dr. Maurice P. Cunningham in *The Singular and Plural of Substantives in Latin Poetic Diction* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of California, 1941).