

VENIMUS AD SUMMUM FORTUNAE:  
PROSPERITY AND FLOURISHING OF ARTS  
IN HORACE (*EPIST.* 2. 1. 32–33)

At the start of his epistle to August, Horace moves abruptly from praising August to literature. It is just and reasonable that Romans grant divine honours to August in his lifetime, placing him above both Roman and Greek heroes, – but in other cases they have been less judicious (v. 15–21). This is exemplified in their admiration for national archaic poetry and corresponding prejudice against contemporary poets. The personification of an admirer of the archaic (*fautor veterum*, v. 23) is fairly caricatured: he not simply extols old poets, but persistently claims that the twelve tablets and military agreements of the kings were uttered by Latin Muses (v. 23–27).

Horace focuses his scorn not on archaic poets, but on their obstinate admirers – whom scholars usually assume to be Varro or his followers<sup>1</sup> – and appeals to justice and common sense. Criticism of the archaic is not unjust and should not be regarded as blasphemy, while modern poetry should not be resented simply on the ground of its novelty (v. 63–85). Furthermore, in the historical excursus the condemning of archaic Roman poetry as a whole (v. 66–67 *quaedam nimis antique ... pleraque dure ... ignave multa*) is reinforced: old Roman tragedy is tarred as unpolished (v. 167) and comedies of Plautus as vulgar farces (v. 170–176).

Impugning the opinion that archaic Roman poets are *ipso facto* better than modern ones, Horace mentions two possible arguments in favour of this (anaphoric *si ... si*, v. 28 and 34) and dismisses them right away – the first one with pointed brevity, the second rather talkatively.

si, quia Graiorum<sup>2</sup> sunt antiquissima quaeque  
scripta vel optima, Romani pensantur eadem

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<sup>1</sup> Fraenkel 1957, 387 n. 1; Brink 1962, 175–200; cf. idem 1963, 193–194; 1982, 565.

<sup>2</sup> Brink 1982, 66–67 stresses that the choice between *Graiorum* and *Graecorum* is difficult, though most editors, following Bentley <sup>2</sup>1713, 622, prefer the former, which is supported by the authority of Blandinianus vetustissimus (V). According to Brink, the loftier *Graiorum* foreshadows *Achivis unctis* in v. 33.

scriptores trutina, non est quod multa loquamur: 30  
 nil intra est olea(m)<sup>3</sup>, nil extra est in nuce duri;  
 venimus ad summum fortunae: pingimus atque  
 psallimus et luctamur Achivis doctius unctis.  
 si meliora dies, ut vina, poemata reddit,  
 scire velim, chartis pretium quotus adroget annus... 35

Graiorum *VCg*; Gr(a)ecorum *cett.*, *Porph.*, *Ps.-Acr.*;  
 olea *dett.*, *Bentley*, oleam *codd.*

The refutation of the second argument – poetry is like wine, ‘the older the better’<sup>4</sup> – develops into a comic sketch (v. 35–49). Horace defeats his imaginary opponent by his inductive reasoning which corresponds to a well-known paradox of a heap and single grains, the σωρίτης (Cic. *Div.* 2. 11 *acervalis*, cf. v. 47 *ratione ruentis acervi*). In v. 45–46 he alludes to the image of pulling out a horse’s tail one hair at a time, which is well known from the anecdote about Q. Sertorius and recalls the paradox φαλακρός.<sup>5</sup> The boundary between old and new poets, initially drawn hundred years before now, is gradually shifted by a year or a month, until it turns out that there is no difference between them at all. Whether Horace realized the naivety inherent in such a relativistic approach and argued *cum grano salis*,<sup>6</sup> or else this rebuttal was meant to be taken seriously – either way, the lover of the archaic is baffled and ashamed.

<sup>3</sup> It is not relevant for the present discussion, whether the emendation of Bentley 21713, 622, is to be accepted (he wanted both *intra* and *extra* to be adverbs with the omission of the first *in*, like in v. 25 and *Carm.* 3. 25. 2), but Hiltbrunner 1962, 254–267 pointed out that whereas *extra* was used both as preposition and adverb, the examples of adverbial *intra* from the Augustan age are scanty.

<sup>4</sup> Analogy with wine must have been a hackneyed argument in favour of conservatism (cf., e.g., Cic. *Lael.* 67, of friendship), *inter alia* with regard to literature (Pl. *Cas.* 5–6). Though Pindar’s advice to praise old wine but new hymns (*Ol.* 9. 48–49) expresses the opposite idea, it looks like an objection to a common saying and according to scholia is an allusion to Simonides (fr. 97/602 Page): ἐξελέγχει νέος οἶνος οὐπω / <τὸ> πέρυσσι δῶρον ἀμπέλου... Cf. also Cic. *Brut.* 287 on the choice of a literary style: not the last year’s, but neither too old Falernian is recommended.

<sup>5</sup> For instances see Brink 1982, 74–75; Pease 21963, 365–366. Diogenes Laertius (2. 108) ascribes both σωρίτης and φαλακρός to Eubulides of Megara, though similar argument is attested as early as in Zeno of Elea (Arist. *Phys.* 7. 5. 250 a 19–22).

<sup>6</sup> Thus A. Kiessling 1889, 162: “Bestreitet ... nicht mit ernsthafter Logik, sondern führt in satirischer Laune ... *ad absurdum*”. Haendel 1966, 383–386 extends the facetious tone to the disproof of the first argument as well: “Die horazische Argumentation in Vs. 28–49 war eher spaßig gewesen, jetzt, in Vs. 60 ff., wird die Vorliebe für die alten Dichter seriös bekämpft”. Bösing 1972, 17 stresses that the decisive argument against archaists is not given until v. 90–92, while v. 28–49 disprove false analogical inferences.

The first argument appeals to analogy with Greek literature, and here the essence of Horace's counter plea requires explanation, which this article aims to offer.

Horace agrees that the principle '*antiquissima scripta*<sup>7</sup> are *optima*'<sup>8</sup> is true with regard to Greeks. It can hardly imply the archaic period alone, but rather the founders of different genres (and consequently, their best specimens), who as a whole stand in opposition to contemporary writers. It is not quite clear whether the boundary between the old and the new in this case lies before or after Callimachus and other Hellenistic poets. According to v. 38, with regard to Romans the description 'old and good' refers to the poets who died 100 years ago and earlier. On the other hand, Greek literature is much older, and therefore the boundary with regard to Greeks could have been drawn earlier.

In any way, v. 31–33 must contain an objection against applying the same principle ('*antiquissima* are *optima*') to Roman literature. This objection is designed to be concise and obvious (*non est quod multa loquamur*), its target being the analogy with Greek literature. The oldest Greek poets are indeed beyond comparison, but the inference that the same is true for the Romans is, judging by the context, to be met with a resolute "*Non sequitur!*" However, the sense of these verses and their relation to the line of reasoning are obscure.

The olive has no hardness within, the nut has none without. We have come to fortune's summit; we paint, we play and sing, we wrestle with more skill than the well-oiled<sup>9</sup> Achaeans<sup>10</sup> (tr. H. R. Fairclough, with minor corrections).

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<sup>7</sup> It is poetry, not prose, that is further discussed in the epistle (cf. *poemata* in v. 34 and *poetas* in v. 41), but in v. 29–30 more general terms *scripta* and *scriptor* are used. However, since *scriptor* in v. 36 and *chartae* in v. 35 undoubtedly refer to poetry, it is unlikely that *scripta* and *scriptor* in v. 29–30 were meant to imply prose as well.

<sup>8</sup> Brink 1982, 67–68 with reference to Hofmann, Szantyr <sup>2</sup>1972, 502, § 270c rightly observes that *vel* with superlative has restrictive rather than intensifying sense and, probably, colloquial flavour.

<sup>9</sup> I incline to agree with Kiessling 1889, 162 and others that *uncti* refers only to wrestling (cf. Iuv. 3. 68 *et ceromatico fert niceteria collo*). Often it is taken in the sense of 'refined, civilized', but the examples from *OLD* and Forcellini 4. 864 suggest metaphorical connotations of wealth rather than of elegance. If *uncti* were meant to have any particular connotation with regard to Achaeans, it would rather be, by contrast, that of luxury and effeminacy (cf. Iuv. 8. 113 *unctamque Corinthon*). The translation 'anointed for burial' ("die gesalbten Achäer", Simon 1972, 259) can hardly be correct.

<sup>10</sup> Stok 1993, 182–183 rightly stresses that *Achivi* in the sense of 'Greeks' is remarkable: Horace otherwise applies *Achivi* to heroes of the Trojan War (*Carm.* 3. 3. 27;

V. 31 has been interpreted as an example of denying an obvious truth, like ‘black is white’ or ‘twice two makes five’.<sup>11</sup> This implies the following train of thought: ‘Then that’s all that there is to it: an olive has no bone, a nut no shell (i. e., everything is topsy-turvy)’. However, this interpretation was justly opposed by L. Döderlein: arguing in so off-hand a manner is unworthy of Horace and hardly fits the context of the passage.

In this case Horace’s objection would indeed be no more than a vehement denial: ‘What you are saying is sheer nonsense’ – a universal answer to every opponent on every occasion. Meanwhile, the absurdity of the analogy with Greeks is to be explored and considered rather than rejected out of hand. Horace has not yet disproved the superiority of old Roman poets over modern ones, but objects to possible arguments in favour of this opinion. His response to the second argument (the analogy with wine) implies that he attacks the essence of his opponent’s argument, not the thesis. If he had resolutely contested the superiority of old Roman poets in v. 31, what would be the point in disproving the second argument in v. 34–49?

According to another – now almost universally accepted<sup>12</sup> – interpretation, offered by Wieland<sup>13</sup> and defended by Döderlein,<sup>14</sup> v. 31 exemplifies something more than just a false statement – namely, the false conclusions drawn from two implicit analogical inferences opposite to one another:

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4. 6. 18; *Sat.* 2. 3. 194; *Epist.* 1. 2. 14.), and up to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD *Achivi* always refers to the Greeks of heroic age, who cannot be implied here. Stok explains its epic overtones as alluding to Verg. *Aen.* 6. 847 ff. *excudent alii spirantia mollius aera...*, but his conclusion is based on interpreting of *summum fortunae* as military-political predominance – as will be seen below, it must be rejected.

Often *Achivi* is regarded as disdainful (Kiessling 1889, 162; Rudd 1974, 296 ‘a supercilious sneer’) – probably, in view of v. 93 ff. (cf. n. 42 below) and of Juvenal’s famous attack on Greeks swamping Rome (3. 61 *quota portio faecis Achaei?*; but there *Achaei* refers to the continental Greeks as opposed to the Greek-speaking population of Asia Minor). Most probably, *Achivi* is mock-epic (cf. Iuv. 6. 187 *Cecropis*), but without sarcastic scorn (cf., e.g., Mart. 4. 66. 9 *Argolica missus de gente minister* and *Aen.* 2. 78). Good parallels are lacking, but curious is *Achivo ritu* instead of *Graeco ritu* in the protocols of Augustan Secular Games (*CIL* VI 32323. 91; Dessau 1902, II.1, 285 cites as a parallel Ἀχαιοῖσι in the Sibylline oracle in Phlegon, *Mirab.* 10 = *FGH* II B, 257. 16).

<sup>11</sup> Thus Erasmus, *Adag. chil.* I, cent. 9. 73; Otto 1890, 248 (s. v. *nux*, § 2). Schmid 1830, 29, like many others, considered this very sentence to be proverbial, but Otto, supported by Brink 1982, 70, reasonably doubts it; parallels are lacking.

<sup>12</sup> Thus, e.g., Orelli 1838, 500; Schütz 1883, 174–175; Wilkins 1885, 252; Kiessling 1889, 161; Brink 1982, 61–62.

<sup>13</sup> Wieland 1816, 55.

<sup>14</sup> Döderlein 1835, 6–8; idem 1858, 65–66.

‘By reasoning like that (i. e., by analogy) you may as well assert that an olive, like a nut, has no bone, and *vice versa*, that a nut, like an olive, has no shell’.

It might seem difficult for the reader to complete these opposite enthymemes from what is mentioned *expressis verbis*: it is only the conclusions reached upon this line of reasoning that are verbalized in the verse. Yet the context itself, which suggests ridiculing analogical inferences, helps the reader to develop his thought in the proper direction. The obvious fact that olives and nuts are opposite with regard to a bone and a shell, though similar in both producing oil and growing on trees, simplifies this task.<sup>15</sup> These implicit analogical inferences, which perform a *reductio ad absurdum*, give a good sense and fit perfectly into the context of the passage.

Despite the lack of evidence,<sup>16</sup> one may assume that ‘the olive and the nut’ was a commonplace of school logic, like the paradox of the heap.<sup>17</sup> In this case it would be even easier for educated readers to supply the missing logical links.

Döderlein suggested a question mark after v. 30 (‘Does an olive have no bone..?’), but Orelli<sup>18</sup> rightly objected that it would be a less lively and expressive way of refuting the analogical inference than the sarcastically preposterous assertion.<sup>19</sup>

Verses 32–33 are more difficult. The statement on the superiority over ‘Achaean’ in painting, music and wrestling is surely ludicrous, as is the case with the olive and the nut. These arts, being a part of Greek culture and

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<sup>15</sup> Arguing against Vahlen’s interpretation of v. 30 and rephrasing it, O. Ribbeck 1871, 243, curiously suggested that the olive and the nut respectively symbolize Greece and Rome, and that, moreover, an olive, with the bone inside, corresponds to early blossoming and a nut, with its external shell, to late development. Combining olive with Greece might be tempting, but nuts were spread in Greece and Italy alike. That a bone and a shell hint at bad poetry (*durum*) is also questionable: why should ancient times correspond to the surface of the fruit rather than to its interior? If the verse hints at a logical enthymeme, such symbolic associations in addition would overcomplicate the matter.

<sup>16</sup> A similar distinction is attested in biology: Macrob. Sat. 3. 19. 1: *sunt de agricultura scriptores qui nuces et mala sic dividunt, ut nuces dicant omne pomum quod foris duro tegatur et intus habeat quod esui est, malum vero quod foris habeat quod est esui et durum intus includat*. Cf. Plin. *NH* 15. 111–112; Serv. in *Ecl.* 2. 52.

<sup>17</sup> Thus Fraenkel 1957, 387 n. 2 (“in terms of hackneyed school logic”, with reference to Orelli – Baiter), and Brink 1982, 70.

<sup>18</sup> Orelli 1838, 501.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. n. 29 and 36 below.

education,<sup>20</sup> were not simply neglected, but almost disdained by Romans. For example, claiming that Roman culture is on the whole not inferior to Greek, Cicero makes an exception for music and painting on the grounds that they were held low in the esteem of his compatriots (*Tusc.* 1. 1. 4). Examples of this are abundant.<sup>21</sup> Nor did Romans think high of wrestling,<sup>22</sup> which was appreciated only as a physical exercise; the *gymnasia* and *palestrae*, popular among Greek inhabitants, disgusted them.<sup>23</sup> Thus, Horace picks out those arts that make the very idea of Roman superiority not only preposterous, but comical.

The asyndeton between *Venimus ad summum fortunae* and the following sentence is often taken as explanatory (*asyndeton explicativum*): ‘We are extremely lucky, for we excel ‘Achaean’ in painting, music and wrestling’.<sup>24</sup> This statement could be interpreted in two ways:

1) as an example of denying the manifest truth: ‘[If you think like that,] congratulations! You can go on to say that we draw, play and wrestle better than Greeks’ – that is, ‘there is as much logic in what you are saying, as this’. Yet, as has been stressed above, an unmotivated absurd does not fit the context: the false assertion must have some relation to the argument disproved by Horace (in this case, to the analogy with Greek culture);

2) as a sarcastic indication of the fact that the Greek culture is incomparable with the Roman one: ‘[if you put us on a level with Greeks], we are lucky: [you may go on to say that] we also paint, play and wrestle brilliantly – just like Greeks – and even better’. This interpretation also meets serious objections.

<sup>20</sup> Brink 1982, 72: “There is an educational implication here”. Cf. Arst. *Pol.* 8. 3. 1337 b 23–25 ἔστι δὲ τέτταρα σχεδὸν ἃ παιδεύειν εἰώθασι, γράμματα καὶ γυμναστικὴν καὶ μουσικὴν καὶ τέταρτον ἔνιοι γραφικὴν...

<sup>21</sup> See, e.g., Petrochilos 1974, 80–81 (on painting); 172–176 (on music). Cf. Plin. *NH* 35. 19–20 ...*postea* (i. e. after Fabius Pictor) *non est spectata* (scil. *pictura*) *honestis manibus*; Sall. *Cat.* 25. 2: *psallere, saltare elegantius quam necesse est probae*; Nep. *praef.* 1. Quint. *Inst. or.* 1. 10 doubts that music and geometry can be useful for eloquence.

<sup>22</sup> For instances see Zajcev 1993, 90; 108 n. 100.

<sup>23</sup> Petrochilos 1974, 177–182; cf. Plin. *Ep.* 10. 40. 2 (Traiani): *gymnasiis indulgent Graeculi*. For further instances see Mayor 1901, 189; 354 (on Iuv. 3. 68: *et ceromatico fert niceteria collo*); 194 (on 3. 114–115: *et quoniam coepit Graecorum mentio, transi / gymnasia*). For references to literature see Courtney 1980, 165 (on Iuv. 3. 68).

<sup>24</sup> Thus Vahlen 1871, 22 = idem 1911, 464, arguing that (1) the words *venimus ad summum fortunae* cannot be interpreted as a premise for the following; and (2) unless they refer to the following, their sense is unclear. As will be seen below, both these statements are questionable.

First, the imaginary opponent does not compare the merits of the Roman culture to that of the Greek one (may the Greek authors be a hundred times more valuable), but simply judges by analogy: ‘If the older Greek masters are better than the new, the same must be true for Romans’. (E. g., Ennius must be beyond comparison for Romans, as Homer for Greeks, etc.) This is not the case when Horace pokes fun at the manifestly absurd remarks of his *interlocutor*. This analogical argument does not appear to be a self-evident absurdity and deserves an adequate disproof, notwithstanding its comic overtones.

Further, the absurdity concerning the olive and the nut is logically motivated; one may therefore expect that the second absurdity also follows the logic of the opponent. However, contrary to a visual *reductio ad absurdum*, represented by the olive and the nut, the false assertion on surpassing Greeks in arts does not follow from the disproved argument and is implicated only by the presumed putting on a level with Greeks – an arbitrary change of emphasis instead of a compelling objection.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, even if we assume a satirical overstatement (or, rather, distortion of the opponent’s view), it remains unclear why Romans should not only equal Greeks in arts, but surpass them.<sup>26</sup> Arbitrariness of this kind would make Horace’s position less convincing.<sup>27</sup>

Another line of interpretation treats the asyndeton in v. 32 as implying logical sequence that could be expressed by conjunctions *ergo* or *igitur*

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<sup>25</sup> Vahlen 1871, 4 = idem 1911, 465 admits that v. 32–33 in his interpretation do not have direct logical connection to the disproved argument in v. 28; according to him, v. 32–33 are not a syllogism, but a deprecation of patriotic overestimation of Roman culture; idem 1873, 25 = idem, 1911, 509: “...und wozu nur unseren alten *Dichter* Unübertrefflichkeit beweisen? läßt sich ja mit solcher Argumentation, aus solchen Prämissen mehr und größeres herleiten, daß wir Römer Maler, Musiker, Athleten sind selbst den Griechen überlegen: *nam eadem ratione reperiemur Graecis meliores* (Lambin)”. Likewise Wilkins 1885, 252, with reservation: “though certainly the logic is neither clear nor good”.

<sup>26</sup> This was justly indicated by Ribbeck 1871, 243–244 in his polemic against Vahlen (“...der Schluss schiesst ja durch seinen Komparativ (*doctius*) ganz über das Ziel hinaus, zerstört jede Logik, die doch unanfechtbar sein muss, wenn man einen *ad absurdum* führen will”) and supported by K. Lehrs 1871, 13 = idem 1902, 411–412. Ribbeck’s conclusion was that *venimus ad summum fortunae* must be a premise for the following; Lehrs suspected a corruption in *fortunae*.

<sup>27</sup> Another difficulty is that it would be odd if in a poem dedicated to August the words *venimus ad summum fortunae* were meant ironically. On these grounds Schütz 1883, 175 suggested to emend *fortunae* (suspected also by Lehrs, see n. 26 above) to *culturae*, but Wilkins 1885, 252 rightly objected that in good Latin *cultura* implies the process of cultivation rather than its result.



(*asyndeton conclusivum*):<sup>28</sup> ‘We have come to fortune’s summit: therefore, we surpass ‘Achaean’ in painting, music and wrestling’.<sup>29</sup>

Since the second assertion is obviously false, while the words *venimus ad summum fortunae* do not seem to be meant ironically in a poem dedicated to Augustus,<sup>30</sup> scholars interpret this conclusion as a paralogism: a wrong conclusion is drawn from a right premise. The line of reasoning is explained as follows: *summum fortunae* is taken in a military-political sense, as indication of the Romans’ military skill and their domination over the world. This premise presumably leads the imaginary opponent to the wrong conclusion that Romans surpass Greeks in other spheres of life as well, namely painting, music and wrestling. This interpretation was put forward by Döderlein<sup>31</sup> and is prevailing nowadays.<sup>32</sup>

Most likely this interpretation has been accepted so widely because of those passages which contrast Roman military-political success with the achievements of Greek culture.<sup>33</sup> However, there are two decisive arguments against such a view.

Firstly, I cannot conceive that the word *fortuna* (‘good luck’ or ‘prosperity’) standing alone, without any indication of the context, could imply ‘military success’ or ‘domination over the world’. In appropriate context *fortuna* could, of course, refer *inter alia* to feats of arms, but clearly it does not suffice. To understand the words *venimus ad summum fortunae* in this way one has to find convincing parallels that are not shown in commentaries.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Type: ‘You are the oldest; you should know better’. See Hofmann, Szantyr <sup>2</sup>1972, 830 § 55 II Zus. α.

<sup>29</sup> Döderlein, the founder of this line of interpretation, put a question mark after *unctis*, as in the case of the olive and the nut. Conclusion of a syllogism in the form of a question is not impossible (cf., e.g., Pers. 5. 83–85), but in both cases sarcastic assertion makes *reductio ad absurdum* more expressive than rhetorical question. Cf. p. 283 with n. 18–19 above and n. 36 below.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. n. 27 above.

<sup>31</sup> Döderlein 1835, 7–8; idem 1858, 65–66.

<sup>32</sup> Thus, e.g., Orelli 1838, 500–501; Krüger <sup>7</sup>1872, 290; Kiessling 1889, 161; Brink, 1982, 72; Rudd 1989, 78.

<sup>33</sup> Hor. *Epist.* 2. 1. 156–167; *AP* 289–291; a *locus classicus* is Verg. *Aen.* 6. 847–853. Cf. n. 10 above.

<sup>34</sup> Stok 1993, 180, following Brink 1982, 72, refers to Cic. *Tusc.* 3. 21 *hominem summa audacia summaque fortuna* (of Alexander the Great); but Brink quotes the passage merely to show that *summa fortuna* is a more common expression than *summum fortunae*; of course, it does not prove that *fortuna* can have military-political connotations, because here the word, though referring to military deeds, still has its usual sense of ‘luck’.



Secondly, this train of thought does not fit the context. This logical mistake would be completely different to the judgment by analogy refuted by Horace and therefore, as an objection it would be out of place. This was rightly indicated by O. Ribbeck<sup>35</sup> and D. R. Shackleton Bailey,<sup>36</sup> who respectively ventured to transpose and to athetize v. 32–33.<sup>37</sup>

For proper understanding of v. 32–33 it is important to take into account their resemblance to v. 93–102, a fact long noted by scholars:<sup>38</sup>

ut primum positis nugari Graecia bellis  
 coepit et in vitium fortuna labier aequa,  
 nunc athletarum studiis, nunc arsit equorum, 95  
 marmoris aut eboris fabros aut aeris amavit,  
 suspendit picta voltum mentemque tabella,  
 nunc tibicinibus, nunc est gavis tragoedis;  
 sub nutrice puella velut si luderet infans,  
 quod cupide petiit, mature plena reliquit. 100  
 [quid placet aut odio est, quod non mutabile credas?]<sup>39</sup>  
 hoc paces habuere bonae ventique secundi.

<sup>35</sup> Ribbeck 1869, 176–177; he transposes v. 32–33 after v. 107 and in addition inserts *AP* 73–85 after v. 99. Perhaps it was due to this editorial arbitrariness that even his sound arguments were not taken into account by later scholars.

<sup>36</sup> Shackleton-Bailey, “Vindiciae”, 1985, 168; also in his Teubner edition (idem [ed.] 1985, 293); after *unctis* he prefers a question mark, as Döderlein.

<sup>37</sup> Both interpretations discussed above were anticipated by Porphyryon (on v. 32): *Venimus ad s.f. Utrum ‘imperio’ an ‘et ceteris rebus, quas enumerat’?* However, his further words oddly extend the subject to poetry (noted by Wilkins 1885, 252): *Non habet, inquit, quod nobis amplius fortuna iam praestet. Ergo et perfecti poetae sumus. Sed hoc intellegi quam dici <a?> se maluit.* This has influenced Mueller 1893, 191: “Es scheint uns jetzt, da die Bürgerkriege beendet sind, das höchste Glück eine ausgezeichnete poetische Literatur zu besitzen. Statt sie aber zu schaffen, glauben wir sie schon zu haben”. I had been puzzled by both these commentaries, until Alexander Verlinsky explained to me that Porphyryon (and in his footsteps Mueller) took the superiority over Greeks at face value: they thought that Romans really came to surpass Greeks in painting, music and athletics, which suggested similar success in poetry!

<sup>38</sup> This resemblance has been adequately pinpointed by Ribbeck 1869, 176–177, but led him misguidedly towards transposition. Witte 1927, 407 even regarded v. 32–33 as superfluous at their place and believed that their only aim was to anticipate v. 93–98.

<sup>39</sup> V. 101 is problematic, as it disrupts the connection between v. 102 and the section that is summarized in it (v. 93–100). The general statement of the fact that tastes are changeable does not sit well with the context: it would be apt if the point were, on the contrary, that habitual and long established values were changing. For discussion see Brink 1982, 139–140. Most scholars either athetize v. 101 or transpose it after 102 or 107 so that it would refer to the passage on the earnestness of Romans and the sudden change announced in v. 108: *mutavit mentem populus levis...* Haendel’s attempt

Most scholars agree that this passage refers to the rise of arts in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC after the Persian Wars – which is indeed very probable: the flourishing of painting, sculpture and athletics falls on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, whereas that of tragedy can only refer to the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

The terms *nugari* and *vitium* suggest the disastrous effect that *otium* has on the state: the release from external danger leads to moral decay (the theme has become a commonplace). Another motif used here is that material wealth along with an enduring period of peace favour the development of arts.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, the adoption of Greek tragedy by Romans is likewise linked with the end of the Punic Wars (v. 162 *post Punica bella quietus quaerere coepit*... corresponds to v. 93<sup>41</sup>).

It has also long been noted that v. 93–102 bear close resemblance to the passage from Aristotle's *Politics* (8. 6. 6. 1341 a 28–32) which must have influenced Horace, be it directly or through mediation:

σχολαστικώτεροι γὰρ γιγνόμενοι διὰ τὰς εὐπορίας καὶ μεγαλοψυχότεροι πρὸς τὴν ἀρετὴν, ἔτι τε <καὶ> πρότερον καὶ μετὰ τὰ Μηδικὰ φρονηματισθέντες ἐκ τῶν ἔργων, πάσης ἥπτοντο μαθήσεως, οὐδὲν διακρίνοντες, ἀλλ' ἐπιζητοῦντες. διὸ καὶ τὴν αὐλητικὴν ἤγαγον πρὸς τὰς μαθήσεις.

The tone of v. 93–102 is surprisingly disdainful: in contrast with the famous deferential lines of *AP* (323–324 *Grais ingenium, Grais dedit ore rotundo Musa loqui, praeter laudem nullius avaris*), the great achievements of Greek culture are mentioned here without delight and even sneered at. Clearly Greek flippancy and fickleness are meant to contrast with the earnestness and fidelity of Romans (v. 103–107). Besides, the preceding v. 90–92 represent an important argument against conservatism: ‘if novelty

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to change the interpunction of v. 102–103: *hoc paces habuere bonae ventique secundi / Romae: dulce diu fuit*... (Haendel 1966, 387–388:) is implausible: cf. Fraenkel 1957, 389 n. 3. Perhaps v. 101 can be retained as a parenthesis that refers only to the image of a capricious girl: ‘what likes and dislikes of hers you would believe to be constant?’

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Brink 1963, 196–198.

<sup>41</sup> There is no general agreement on whether the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Punic War is meant. The chronological difficulty is aggravated by the reference to the conquest of Greece (v. 156–157 *Graecia capta ... artes intulit*) and controversies over how Livius Andronicus, who was dated differently by Accius and Varro, fits in with it. For discussion see Brink 1982, 183–186, 205–207. One could agree with Brink that (1) Horace's historicity is not to be overestimated; and (2) the performance of Livius Andronicus was hardly relevant for him: more probably, he refers to first successes in tragedy that mainly fall on the period after the defeat of Hannibal (cf. idem 1962, 191–192). Along the same lines runs Bösing 1972, 39 n. 26.

had been as distasteful for Greeks as it is for us, what would now be ancient? Or what would every single one of us make worn thin by much reading?’ (In other words, what we now cherish as classical was once innovative.) Most likely the next passage, as often is the case in Horace’s satires, focuses on the opposite extreme, namely excessive ardour for novelty.<sup>42</sup>

Now back to the connection between *fortuna* and flourishing of arts in v. 32–33: the resemblance between v. 32–33 and 92–103 is striking: *summum fortunae* is paralleled by *fortuna aequa* (v. 94) and *venti secundi* (v. 102); *pingimus* – by v. 97 (*suspendit picta uoltum mentemque tabella*), *psallimus* – by the kindred art of auletics (*tibicinibus*, v. 98) and *luctamur* – by *athletarum studiis* (v. 95).

Firstly, this similarity suggests that *summum fortunae* in v. 32 implies the same as *fortuna aequa* in v. 94 and *venti secundi* in v. 102, namely ‘the state’s prosperity and wealth’.<sup>43</sup> Apart from the parallels between the passages, this meaning accords with the semantics of the word *fortuna* much better than ‘political or military dominance’ – and it would be highly appropriate with regard to Augustus. The superlative in this case would imply that Augustan Rome enjoyed a larger degree of prosperity than the 5<sup>th</sup> century Greece.

Secondly, it would be natural to suggest that the connection between *summum fortunae* and the following mention of painting, music and athletics in v. 32–33 is the same as in v. 93–102: it would mean that material

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<sup>42</sup> This scorn is often attributed to the perception of a conservative Roman philistine, as if Horace was humorously pretending to adopt his views. Thus Ribbeck 1869, 177; Mueller 1893, 201; Vahlen 1871, 506 = idem 1911, 475, cf. idem 1873, 22–23 = idem 1911, 506; Klingner 1964, 418; Bringmann 1974, 244.

Fraenkel 1957, 389, on the contrary, strips the passage of any irony: “The whole description makes it clear that the amusements of the Greeks would be utterly unworthy of any serious adult, let alone a Roman” and suggests (*ibid.*, 392) that Horace hints at “combining the moral and political virtues of a Roman with the best gifts of Greek Muse”.

Bösing and Brink take a middle view (Bösing 1872, 23: “der zwischen Ernst und Unerst schwebende Ton”; Brink 1982, 134: “two pairs of spectacles – Aristotelian irony and Romanizing caricature”).

Alexander Verlinsky suggested that Horace might intend to point out the following: (1) the achievements of old Greek culture adored by the conservative belong to the period that was in fact ideologically vicious and prone to novelties; and (2) on the contrary, modern Roman culture, neglected by the conservative, is not subject to vice, though it also flourishes due to prosperity and peace. Its essence is poetry that by its nature improves virtues: v. 118–138.

<sup>43</sup> Thus Bösing 1972, 15; 39 n. 25, citing Tac. *Ann.* 14. 21. 2 and Sen. (Maiores) *Suas.* 7. 10 as parallels for *fortuna* in this sense.

wealth and enduring peace lead to the flourishing of arts (in v. 32 peace is not mentioned, but as concerns Augustan Rome it can easily be implied tacitly).

This interpretation of *summum fortunae* and the reference to the flourishing of arts in the 5<sup>th</sup> century Greece enables us to restore the logical connection of the passage: in this case v. 32–33 would fit into the context, being a *reductio ad absurdum* and disproving the analogical inference based on the analogy with Greece. The difficulty is that the second premise of this paralogism, based on the analogy with the 5<sup>th</sup> century Greece after the Persian Wars, is not verbalized: the reader has to complete it himself, like those of the olive and the nut. In its full form the paralogism would run as follows:

- 1) We are at the height of prosperity and wealth.
- [2) In the 5<sup>th</sup> century Greece prosperity and wealth (along with peace) resulted in the flourishing of arts, including painting, music and athletics (cf. v. 93–102).]
- 3) Therefore, our painting, music and athletics must be even better than in Greece (since the degree of prosperity and wealth is higher).

This explanation of v. 32–33 was put forward by L. Bösing,<sup>44</sup> but he did not dwell upon this problem at length: instead, he concentrated on disproving Fraenkel's opinion that Horace's disparaging remarks of Greeks in 92–103 should be taken seriously and that *Achivi* in v. 33 was meant pejoratively. Bösing's idea to refer *summum fortunae* to prosperity and wealth did not go unnoticed in reviews,<sup>45</sup> but in general his interpretation of the passage was not supported.<sup>46</sup> Yet, it is this explanation that must be accepted without hesitation.

Firstly, it fully fits into the context of the passage: a comically false assertion is a conclusion that, like the argument disproved, suggests judging

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<sup>44</sup> Bösing 1972, 15: “‘Wir haben einen Höchstmaß an Wohlstand und Sicherheit erreicht: also müsse – wie einst bei den Griechen – auch die Künste blühen, und zwar, da wir ja mächtiger sind, als die Griechen waren, sogar noch prächtiger als bei Ihnen’. Aus dem Komparativ *doctius* geht nachträglich hervor, daß auch der Superlativ *summum fortunae* schon eine Steigerung gegenüber die Griechen intendiert”. The words ‘mächtiger’ and ‘Sicherheit’ suggest that he associated Greek and Roman wealth with their military successes (cf. Cic. *De or.* 1. 14 cited by him in n. 26 on p. 39).

<sup>45</sup> Dilke 1973, 307–308; Rudd 1974, 296; cf. Okál 1975/76, 390.

<sup>46</sup> Brink 1982, 72–73 does not mention it. Neither does Rudd's commentary (Rudd 1989, 78–79), though his review did (see n. 45 above). Stok 1993, 180 n. 12 oddly refers to objections in Rudd's review, though Rudd merely retells Bösing's interpretation without objecting to it. Stok's own objection (*ibid.*) is incomprehensible to me.

on Rome by analogy with Greece. Secondly, the understanding of *fortuna* in this case is satisfactory semantically; in a letter addressed to Augustus it is this meaning that inevitably comes to mind. Thirdly, this train of thought explains why Romans should not simply equal Greeks in painting, music and wrestling, but surpass them – because they enjoy not just high (as once did Greeks), but the highest possible degree of wealth.

Admittedly, the necessity of completing the second premise, which suggests the analogy with the rise of arts in the 5<sup>th</sup> century Greece, poses a problem. Horace shuns obscurities,<sup>47</sup> but v. 32–33 would then seem to be an example of the rule *brevis esse laboro, obscurus fio*: at first sight it seems dubious that even a well-educated reader could complete this train of thought until he had read v. 93–102.

However, this difficulty can be put up with, because, as in the case of the olive and the nut, it is the context itself that pushes the reader in the right direction. A universally accepted pattern of Greek cultural development (*‘antiquissima scripta are optima’*) is extended to Rome – and one expects an objection to it. Therefore, both the premise (*fortuna*) and the conclusion (*pingimus, psallimus, luctamur*) must refer not only to Rome, but to Greece as well. From this point it is a stone’s throw to the topos ‘wealth and peace lead to the flourishing of arts’ applied to the 5<sup>th</sup> century Greece. Once we assume that the flourishing of arts in Greece after the Persian Wars was commonly attributed to prosperity and wealth (as it is in v. 93–102, along with peace, and in the passage from Aristotle’s *Politics* above), everything falls into place.

This suggestion can be supported by another example (Diod. 12. 1. 4):<sup>48</sup>

ἀπὸ τούτων γὰρ τῶν χρόνων ἐπὶ ἔτη πεντήκοντα πολλὴν ἐπίδοσιν ἔλαβεν ἡ Ἑλλάς πρὸς τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν. ἐν τούτοις γὰρ τοῖς χρόνοις αἱ τε τέχναι διὰ τὴν εὐπορίαν ἠϋξήθησαν, καὶ τότε μέγιστοι μνημονεύονται τεχνῖται γεγονέναι, ὧν ἐστὶ Φειδίας ὁ ἀγαλαμ- τοποιός...

Here, the rise of arts refers to the same epoch and is explained by the same words as in Aristotle (διὰ τὴν εὐπορίαν); the sculpture is mentioned *exempli gratia*, while other arts, including painting and music, are likely to be implied as well.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Suet. *De Poetis* fr. 40 (= *Vit. Hor.*), l. 62–63 *epistula etiam obscura, quo vitio minime tenebatur*.

<sup>48</sup> This passage is quoted in W. L. Newman’s commentary on the *Politics* (Newman 1902, 554); on Greek views of the intellectual and artistic progress of the 5<sup>th</sup> century cf. also Edelstein 1967, 41 with n. 40.

The interpretation of Bösing defended here adds one more touch to the picture of Roman views on the history of Greek culture. Aristotle's thesis that Greek prosperity and wealth after the victory over Persians influenced the flourishing of arts, *inter alia* painting, music and athletics, was familiar enough for Horace's well-educated reader (at least to the poet's mind) to restore his train of thought in the lively and amusing polemic against the archaist. Presumably, this thesis was established in the tradition of rhetoric schools.

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The explanations of the passage Hor. *Epist.* 2. 1. 32–33 that prevail in scholarly literature are not satisfactory, though the asyndeton in v. 32 is rightly taken as *conclusivum* and the distichon as a paralogism. The author defends at length the interpretation of L. Bösing (1972): the trace of thought suggests the implicit premise, which must have become a commonplace: ‘The wealth and peace in the 5<sup>th</sup> century Greece after the Persian Wars resulted in the flourishing of arts’ (cf. v. 93–102, Aristot. *Pol.* 8. 6. 6. 1341 a 28–32, Diod. 12. 1. 4). This presumed analogy with Greece leads to the ironic analogical conclusion that, since Romans enjoy the highest possible degree of prosperity and wealth, they must not only equal Greeks in painting, music and wrestling, but even surpass them.

Пассаж Гор. *Epist.* 2, 1, 32–33 неудовлетворительно объясняется в научной литературе, хотя бессоюзие в ст. 32 правильно понимается как конклюдзивное, а двустиишие справедливо считается примером паралогизма. В статье подробно защищается толкование Л. Бёзинга (1972): связь мыслей предполагает имплицитную предпосылку, которая, по-видимому, была широко распространенным представлением: “Мир и благополучие после греко-персидских войн привели к расцвету искусств в Греции V в. до н.э.” (ср. ст. 93–102; Aristot. *Pol.* 8. 6. 6. 1341 a 28–32; Diod. 12. 1. 4). Эта подразумеваемая аналогия с греческой культурой и дает повод для иронического заключения по аналогии: римляне достигли апогея процветания, они должны не только сравняться с греками в музыке, живописи и борьбе, но и превзойти их.

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