STYLE AND SOUND IN HORACE C.1.21

No detailed discussion of stylistic and metrical features in Horace C. 1.21 exists. This type of omission, common enough in Horatian criticism and deplorable enough generally in the case of such a meticulous craftsman, is here particularly lamentable. For this ode's truly remarkable technical skill is of distinct importance, both for a full appreciation of the poem itself and for comparison of it with its model, Catullus 34.

With regard to the overall structure of C. 1.21, there is balance between the choirs of girls and boys and in the order of addresses (female, male, female, male), an arrangement which also produces extensive contrasts between the sexes. However, in the first stanza the girls are told to laud Diana alone, but the boys are told to laud Apollo and Latona. In parallel fashion in the remainder of the ode, while the girls are given more specific instructions about the praise of Diana, the boys are given more specific instructions about their praise of Apollo and are allocated a prayer to him as well. This repeated male preponderance is also reflected in the line-allotment (1: girls, 2–4: boys, 5–8: girls, 9–16: boys).

Within the first stanza there are corresponding connotations of youth in the two epithets present in 1–2 ('tenerae' and 'intonsum'), and there is similar balance between girls celebrating the goddess in 1 and boys celebrating the god in 2 (with 'dicite' reiterated at the same point in 2). In addition, the nouns in those two lines form a chiasmus (divinity, humans, humans, divinity). Throughout 1–4 the four divine names alternate in position at the beginnings and ends of successive lines, and the deities are referred to in a manner which involve both parallelism and extensive antithesis (goddess without adjective, god with (preceding) adjective, goddess without adjective, god with (preceding) adjective). Furthermore, a tricolon crescendo occupies the first stanza ('Dianam', 'intonsum . . . Cynthium', Latona described in two full lines), and a second (interlocking) tricolon crescendo begins in 3 (3–4: Latona, 5–8: Diana, 9–16: Apollo).

To move on to the second stanza, in the rivers and forests mentioned in 5 the moving is opposed to the stationary, as water is to land. Then in the tricolon diminuendo in 6–8 a mountain is named at the end of every line (with the locale becoming progressively more remote), and each mountain is preceded by one epithet applied to it or its features (with a colour-contrast between the adjectives in 7 and 8). Finally, all three lines contain 'aut' (following a disyllabic sound).

The third stanza as a whole corresponds to the second in that it involves praise of a divinity. More specifically, 9–10 are parallel to 5–8 since they concern a deity and his favourite places. Likewise there is an internal balance between two standard haunts (9–10) and two standard accoutrements (11–12). However, there are contrasts as well, between the mainland and an island in 9 f. and between a warlike and a peaceful implement in 11 f. A tricolon crescendo extends over all four lines ('Tempe', 'natalemque . . . Delon Apollinis', the god's shoulder occupying two lines, and there is also repetition ('vos' (9) echoes 'vos' (5) at
exactly the same point in the stanza, while in 10, 11 and 12 ‘-que’ is attached to an initial trisyllabic word).

To come to the final stanza, 13 contains anaphora of ‘hic’, balance and a chiastic arrangement of nouns and adjectives. In the following two lines there is further parallelism (‘populus’ and ‘princeps’ in 14, the two enemies in 15), although geographical antithesis is present as well (between 14 and 15 (Rome and abroad) and within 15 itself). Finally there is a tricolon diminuendo in 13–15 (evils to be averted, persons from whom, peoples to whom), and in 16 ‘vestra’ picks up ‘vos’ (9).

Dexterity of style is complemented by beauty of sound, to which the frequent verbal repetitions contribute. Note in particular the (generally forceful) alliteration in 1, 9, 11–12 and 14–15 and the assonance in 1–2, 6–8 (including rhyme between the first two words in 7 and the first two in 8 and between the final word in 7 and the final one in 8), 9, 10–12 (an especially complex and involved blending) and 13–14.

Such an investigation has the fault of reducing poetry to a rather prosaic inventory, but it has the merit of demonstrating that there is so much skill within so few lines here that C. 1.21 can justifiably be described as a veritable tour de force.

NOTES

1. For the very few, frequently repeated observations in this area made so far see Page on line 7, Wickham on 8, Kiessling-Heinze on 1–4, Wilkinson, Horace and His Lyric Poetry, Cambridge, 1945, 136, Fraenkel, Horace, Oxford, 1957, 210, Nisbet and Hubbard on 1, 7, 13 and 14.
2. I realize that several of the remarks in my examination may seem purely subjective to some, but I feel that most would agree with the majority of my comments.
3. Horace (within a shorter compass) outdoes Catullus in stylistic polish and complexity at any rate.
4. It seems more obvious and natural to take ‘umerum’ in 12 as a direct object qualified by ‘insignem’ than to understand ‘Apollinem’, qualified by ‘insignem’, with ‘umerum’ as accusative of respect. Cf. Nisbet and Hubbard ad loc.
5. For numerous stylistic and structural considerations the first ‘hic’ in 13 seems preferable to ‘hinc’, which is found in a few ms., and Bentley’s ‘haec’. See also Nisbet and Hubbard ad loc.

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