

## NOTES • KORT BYDRAES

THE ETYMOLOGY OF *AMNIS* IN HORACE'S *ARS POETICA*

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The dynamism of etymological studies in general is exemplified by the recent appearance of Marangoni's supplement to Maltby's *Lexicon*.<sup>1</sup> Marangoni's own contribution is likewise lacunose;<sup>2</sup> in particular Marangoni fails to take proper account of the etymological matter preserved by the scholiastic tradition. Such is especially the case with the scholia to Horace.<sup>3</sup> The use of etymology in Horace himself similarly calls for closer investigation.<sup>4</sup> Gini's unpublished monograph on etymological *jeux de mots* in Horace's *Epistles* does address the passage of the *Ars Poetica* (67-68) which includes the straightening of an *amnis* among feats of engineering (*seu cursum mutavit iniquum frugibus amnis / doctus iter melius*);<sup>5</sup> however, Gini has nothing to say about any etymological intent in Horace's treatment of the particular term *amnis*. Rudd's commentary on the *Ars Poetica* is totally silent about the line containing *amnis*.<sup>6</sup> Exactly fifty lines earlier in this poem Horace again has occasion to speak of a river, which he now includes among possible topics

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<sup>1</sup> C. Marangoni, *Supplementum Etymologicum Latinum* 1 (Trieste 2007), supplementing R. Maltby, *A Lexicon of Ancient Latin Etymologies* (Leeds 1991).

<sup>2</sup> For the book's shortcomings, cf. the review by N. Adkin, *Latomus* 68 (2009) 497-99.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. N. Adkin, 'Further supplements to Marangoni's *Supplementum Etymologicum*: the commentators on Horace', *ImLac* 30 (2008) 261-77.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the remark which concludes the article on 'Etimologia' by V. Viparelli in *Orazio: Enciclopedia oraziana* (1997) 2.833-35, at 835: 'e. e accostamenti etimologici hanno un ruolo fino ad oggi quanto meno sottovalutato nella lingua di H.'

<sup>5</sup> A. Gini, *Philosophy and Word-Play in the Epistles of Horace* (Diss. Brown University 1989) 122.

<sup>6</sup> N. Rudd, *Horace: Epistles, Book II, and Epistle to the Pisones ('Ars Poetica')* (Cambridge 1989) 162. On the next line (*doctus iter melius*) he merely discusses the use of the accusative with the passive of *doceo* and then observes: 'The river, like the swamp and the sea, is personified'.

for a ‘purple patch’ (17: *et properantis aquae per amoenos ambitus agros*).<sup>7</sup> Here Rudd merely notes: ‘The largely dactylic line echoes the speed of the swift-flowing water.’<sup>8</sup> The aim of the present note is to argue that in both passages Horace is providing an etymology of *amnis*.

In the first passage (*properantis aquae ... ambitus*) *ambitus* is an odd word to use in conjunction with *properantis*, since the resultant collocation is close to being self-contradictory;<sup>9</sup> the point of this incongruence between *properantis* and *ambitus* is evidently to draw attention to the use of the latter. *Ambitus* is the etymon of *amnis*:<sup>10</sup> evidently, therefore, we have here a case of etymologizing in which the etymologized term *amnis* has been suppressed.<sup>11</sup> An additional pointer to the suppression of *amnis* is provided by the immediately ensuing occurrence of the synonymous *flumen* at the start of the next line: *aut flumen Rhenum*.<sup>12</sup> Besides *ambitus*, the other etymon of *amnis* is *amoenitas*.<sup>13</sup> It is therefore noteworthy that Horace should choose to have *ambitus* immediately preceded by *amoenos: per amoenos ambitus agros*. Here the two etyma of the suppressed *amnis* have accordingly been directly juxtaposed. Such resort to

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<sup>7</sup> It may be observed that both of these texts are an *exemplum* in a *synathroismos*; for the latter cf. H. Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* (4th edition, Stuttgart 2008) 336.

<sup>8</sup> Rudd (note 6) 152. Neither text is discussed by K. van der Heyde, ‘*Flumen, fluvius, amnis*’, *Mnemosyne* 60 (1932) 135-46.

<sup>9</sup> *Ambitus* in this line is glossed by Ps.-Acron as *circuitus*, which is explicitly associated with *mora* (cf. Cassian, *Conl.* 10.8.4: *circuitus mora*). *Morari* is, however, the ‘opposite’ of *properare* (cf. *TLL* 10.2.1978, lines 58-60 [*s.v. propero*]: ‘fere opp. ... [de]morari’).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Maltby (note 1) 30. For supplementary documentation of this etymology cf. N. Adkin, ‘Some additions to Maltby’s *Lexicon of Ancient Latin Etymologies*’, in C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* 12 (Brussels 2005) 74-96, at 76.

<sup>11</sup> For such ‘suppression’ cf. J.J. O’Hara, *True Names: Vergil and the Alexandrian Tradition of Etymological Wordplay* (Ann Arbor 1996) 79-82.

<sup>12</sup> For *flumen* as a synonym of *amnis* cf. *TLL* 6.1.967, lines 58-71 (*s.v. flumen*). In the present passage Horace has contrived to invest *flumen* with particular prominence. Firstly, Augustan poetry supplies no other instance of such use of *flumen* with ‘Rhine’. Secondly, on all the other occasions on which Horace himself employs *flumen* in this way in conjunction with the name of a river, the name does not, as here, follow *flumen*, but always stands in front of it; cf. *Carm.* 2.6.10-11; 2.9.21; 4.4.38; 4.15.24; *Epist.* 1.11.4; *Epod.* 13.14.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Maltby (note 1) 31. For additional evidence of this etymology cf. N. Adkin, ‘More additions to Maltby’s *Lexicon of Ancient Latin Etymologies* and Marangoni’s *Supplementum Etymologicum: the scholia to Lucan*’ (forthcoming).

an alternative etymology can be paralleled elsewhere:<sup>14</sup> it would seem to make the present passage especially significant.

This significance would appear to be further enhanced by the antiphrastic repetition of the same double etymology fifty lines later in the other fluvial text adduced at the start of the present note. Here the term *ammis* is employed explicitly: *cursum mutavit iniquum frugibus ammis / doctus iter melius* (67-68). This time, however, *ammis* is not associated with *amoenitas* and *ambitus*; on the contrary, it is juxtaposed with *iniquum frugibus* and *doctus iter melius*. These two syntagms in the second passage correspond antithetically to *amoenos ... agros* and *ambitus* in the first. *Amoenus* is etymologized from *amor*,<sup>15</sup> which is also the etymon of *amicus* and its antithesis *inimicus*,<sup>16</sup> the latter is frequently associated with Horace's term *iniquus*.<sup>17</sup> Similarly the first text's *ambitus* is echoed in the *iter* of the second:<sup>18</sup> both *ambitus* and *iter* are etymologized from *ire*.<sup>19</sup> However, this *ammis* has now been improved: it is no longer a 'going around' (*ambitus*),<sup>20</sup> but has learned a better 'going' (*doctus iter melius*).

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. O'Hara (note 11) 92-93 ('suggesting two different etymologies for the same word').

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Maltby (note 1) 31.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Maltby (note 1) 30 and 304. For additional documentation of the first and second of these etymologies respectively, cf. N. Adkin, 'Supplements to Marangoni's *Supplementum Etymologicum*: the commentators on Terence', forthcoming in *Eos* (s.v. *amicus*); *id.*, 'Further supplements to Marangoni's *Supplementum Etymologicum*: the collections of *Differentiae* published by Beck and Brugnoli', *Euphrosyne* N.S. 37 (2009) 407-14, at 411 (s.v. *inimicus*).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *TLL* 7.1.1640, lines 12-82 (s.v. *iniquus*), where a large number of passages are adduced in which *iniquus* is synonymous with *inimicus* and opposed to *amicus*. It may be noted that Horace's antithetic terms *iniquum* and *amoenos* are both bacchiac words occupying exactly the same *sedes* before the fifth foot. Finally, C. Fea, *Q. Horatii Flacci opera* 2 (Heidelberg & Speyer 1827) 358 glosses the *frugibus* in *iniquum frugibus* as 'agris frugiferis', which accordingly matches the *agros* in *amoenos ... agros*.

<sup>18</sup> It may be noted that the second passage carefully reproduces the order of the first: *iniquum ... iter / amoenos ambitus*.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Maltby (note 1) 28 and 314. For further evidence of the etymology of *ambitus* cf. Adkin (note 3) 262; *id.* (note 16, '*Differentiae*') 408.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. H.J. Botschuyver, *Scholïa in Horatium* 4 (Amsterdam 1942) 461 (on 67): *quia ... tortuose meabat*.

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