

STRUCTURAL SYMMETRY IN HORACE, EPODES 16.41-66

The purpose of this paper is not so much to raise a partisan voice for a particular transposition of a couplet in Horace's sixteenth epode as it is to present a fair airing of a problem which admits three solutions, each of them attractive at one time or another to scholars of considerable reputation. The problem I refer to is the placement of lines 61-62 of epode 16 and the three probable solutions are: 1) the lines belong in their traditional position, 2) they belong after line 52, and 3) they belong after line 56.

To the year 1733, there is no indication either from the MSS or from the scholiasts that lines 61-62 belong elsewhere. The tradition is unanimous and the editors, such as Lambinus, Cruquius and Bentley, are equally in accord. Lines 61-62 then became a problem, or were made a problem, with the appearance of *Miscell. Observ.* edited by Pieter Burman. Included was a conjecture that lines 61-62 had been dislocated through scribal error from their original habitat after line 52¹⁾. The couplet, it is argued, is the original lines 53-54. Some twenty years after this conjecture, Gesner²⁾ reprinted the edition of Baxter with his own observations. While printing lines 61-62 in the text, Gesner bracketed them and noted: *Hi duo versus, uncis ideo inclusi, reponendi videntur post v. 52*. The edition of C. Fea³⁾ early in the nineteenth century occasioned another transposition of the couplet 61-62, this time after line 56. Fea noted the 1733 conjecture of the *vir doctus* and Gesner, and against this transposition and in defense of his own he says:

At non ideo illuc referendi sunt versus, quod ibi de ovili loquatur Poeta: nam locus integer ab ipso refigendus erat, ut illos immediate interponeret ante viperæ mentionem. Nec ad-

1) Amsterdam, vol. 2, p. 381.

2) Lipsiae 1752.

3) Rome 1811.

vertit vir ille, qui praedicatur doctus, alio sensu, et ratione diversa, iterum Poetam gregis meminisse; ut nempe alia phaenomena insigniora exponeret, quae ipsi iam *felices* in illa Insula admiraturi erant, a Caeli temperie propitia, et per ipsum Iovem speciali favore moderata. *Pluraque felices mirabimur*. Hinc est, quod iterum de arvis ipsis loquatur, aquis tantum salubribus perfusus; et hinc, quod ab eadem temperie repetat, greges minime afficiendos nimia humiditate, vel nimio aestu; unde contagia. Harum idearum series, et sequentium versuum contextus verius exigebant, ut illi duo praeponerentur versibus 59 ad 62, qui iungendi sunt conclusioni, *Iupiter illa*, ut nos censuimus.

Before entering into a discussion of the merits of these transpositions as against the traditional position of lines 61–62, it may be instructive to present without comment a representative sampling of the positions taken by editors and commentators from Bentley to our own day:

Traditional	After 52	After 56
Bentley (1711)	Gesner (1752)	Fea (1811)
Keller-Holder (1864) ⁴	Heynemann (1871) ⁵	Peetlkamp (1834)
Orelli-Baiter-Hirsch- felder (1886)	Müller (1900)	Kiessling-Heinze (eds. 1–5, to 1908)
Wickham-Garrod (1912)	Kiessling-Heinze (from ed. 6, 1917)	Vollmer (1912)
Giarratano (1930)	Klingner (1950)	Turolla (1957)
Tescari (1936)	L. Herrmann (1953)	

The transposition of lines 61–62 to follow line 52 has been most ably argued by Heinze, who presents the following structure:⁶

4) O. Keller, *Epilegomena zu Horaz* (Leipzig 1879) pp. 404–405, while defending the traditional position of 61–62 comments: “Und allerdings, wenn wir einen classischen Prosaiker vor uns hätten, würde ich mich vielleicht nicht sträuben, V. 61 und 62 nach V. 56 einzureihen.”

5) S. Heynemann, *De interpolationibus in carminibus Horatii*, (Bonnae 1871) p. 71: *In epodis autem M. Hauptius seclussit versus XVI 61–62, certe non suo loco positos: at non rescandos sed transponendos eos puto ante v. 53.*

6) Kiessling-Heinze, *Oden und Epoden*¹⁰ (Berlin 1960) pp. 552–553. See K. Witte, “Horazens sechzehnte Epode und Vergils Bucolica,” *PbW* 41 (1921) 1095–1103, for agreement and J. Kroll, “Horaz’ Epode XVI und Vergils Bukolika,” *Hermes* 57 (1922) 600–612 at pp. 604–605, for skepticism. H. Drexler, “Interpretationen zu Horaz’ 16. Epode,” *SIFC* 12 (1935) 119–164 at pp. 139–141, accepts the transposition but argues that the structure of 43–66 is not 6 + 6 and 4 + 4 + 4 but 6 + 6 + 4 and 4 + 4 as demanded by the antithesis of 57–60 and 63–66.

- 1) a. triad of distichs of inanimate nature (43-48)
- b. triad of distichs of animate nature (49-52, 61-62)
- 2) triad of paired distichs (53-60, 63-66)

In the first and second distichs of the first and second triads, each line contains a complete image. In the last distich of the first and second triads, the image begins after the bucolic caesura of the hexameter and continues until the end of the following trimeter (enjambement). The triad of paired distichs begins with the second person plural (*mirabimur* at 53) and concludes with the first person (*me* at 66).

Retention of the traditional location of lines 61-62 has been the practice of most scholars for both manuscript and structural reasons⁷). This point of view, in so far as it relates to a refutation of Heinze's structural arguments by the exposition of the artful structure presented by the traditional order of lines, is best represented, it seems to me, by Barwick⁸). His position is as follows. The description proper of the *insulae* (43-62) comprises twenty verses and these are arranged in two large units: (43-52) + (53-62) = 10 (= 6 + 4) + 10 (= 4 + 6); the number 4 of both subunits is repeated in the concluding unit 63-66. The first unit (43-52) comprises six lines (43-48) of inanimate nature followed by four lines (49-52) of the animate. *Illic* (49) consciously harkens back to *ubi* (43). The second unit (53-62), introduced by *pluraque felices mirabimur*, repeats in its first subunit (53-56) the motif of 43-48, inanimate nature. The second

7) Orelli-Baiter-Hirschfelder, *Q. Horatius Flaccus* (Berlin 1886) vol. 1, pp. 696-697: *Transpositionibus quas nonnulli hic facere voluerunt, facile caremus: Poeta primum eas insularum illarum dotes, quae terra ipsa continentur, vv. 43-52 descripsit, deinde res, quae extrinsecus veniunt, subiunxit. Terra ipsa nihil in se continet, quod aut agris aut incolis et gregibus noceat, neque extrinsecus mala veniunt. Etenim agros neque nimiae pluviae vexant nec siccitas exurit, incolae a peregrinis dolosis non turbantur, pecudes denique nullis contagiis laborant. Igitur neque hominibus neque gregibus quidquam timendum est.*

8) Karl Barwick, "Zur Interpretation und Chronologie der 4. Eclogie des Vergil usw.," *Phil* 96 (1943) 28-67 at pp. 41-47. A. Kurfess, "Zu Horazens 16. Epode," *PhW* 45 (1925) 604-606: 43-52 are five distichs, *λόγος προτρεπτικός*, while 53-62 are a second series of five distichs, *λόγος ἀποτρεπτικός*. Both units together, only in their traditional form, build a harmonious whole. G. Funaioli, "Horatiana," *Mélanges J. Marouzeau* (Paris 1948) 183-188 at pp. 184-185, notes two units (43-52, 53-62): "la figurazione consta di due parti, e nella anteriore è tutto e soltanto paesaggio, idealmente e arcadicamente trasfigurato, mondo vegetale e mondo animale in momenti successivi; nella seconda, che ha il suo avvio e rilievo in *Pluraque mirabimur*, dal paesaggio si passa a fenomeni contingenti di vita, della natura nuovamente e degli esseri (uomini e animali)."

subunit (57-62) is introduced by *non huc*, just as the second subunit (49-52) of 43-52 was introduced by *illic*, and 57-62 enlarge upon and complete the animate motif of 49-52. With regard to the distichs having a bucolic caesura: 47-48 end the first subunit of the first unit; 53-54 and 61-62 begin and end the second unit.

At least an equally strong case, in fact a stronger one, can be made for the transposition of lines 61-62 to follow line 56. Let us look at the over-all structure of 41-66. The unity of 43-48 requires no defense but some explanation. Horace catalogues six items of food and drink which the earth of itself provides for mankind's well-being. First, the unplowed earth gives forth grain (Ceres by metonymy); second, the ungrafted vine flowers; third, the olive buds; fourth, the dark fig adorns its tree; fifth, honey flows from the ilex; and sixth, the water leaps down with plashing foot from the mountains. The items and their details are carefully chosen and ordered. As *arva* (41 and 42) harkened back to *litora* (40), so *arva* itself is echoed in *tellus* which introduces the group of food and drink, beginning with the pliant grain grown directly from the earth, going next to the less pliant vine, a kind of horticultural bridge between the grain and the next-mentioned olive tree (the transition is from grape to olive, both of which were eaten as fruit or pressed for liquid) and fig tree. The honey and water are a subunit, but the former flows from a tree (to continue that series) and the liquid quality of it and its verb *manant* prepares the reader for the onomatopoeic (47-48):

...montibus altis
levis crepante lympha desilit pede.

The transition from 43-48 to 49-52 is marked not only by *illic* (49) which parallels *ubi* (43), but both by the two liquids of 47-48 and by the last word of 48, *pede*. From honey and water Horace takes us to milk; and from the water's plashing foot we turn to animals walking home, their udders distended with milk. The remaining pattern of 49-52 may be caught in the following key words: *capellae* ... *grex* ... *ursus* ... *ovile* ... *viperis* ... *humus*. From the first pair of tame *capellae* and *grex* we move to the second pair of the deadly *ursus* and *viperis* by way of *ovile* which unites them. *Humus* (52), again the last word of a last line of a unit, prepares us for the *arva* (54) and *glæbis* (55) of the subsequent unit.

43-48 treated food and drink as products of the bountiful earth, 49-52 focused on animals bountiful and deadly, 53-56 + 61-62 deal with the elements as they affect both the land and its produce and the animals, the topics of 43-48 and 49-52 respectively. This positioning of 61-62 after 56 affords an advantage which neither the traditional nor the transposed position after 52 offers: it maintains within its unit a constant point of view. When 61-62 are added to 49-52, the original thought pattern of animal, bountiful to mankind and wild animal deadly to the tame (and perhaps mankind), is upset by *contagia* induced by the elements as harmful to animals. Nor will the transitional *pluraque felices mirabimur* allow a preceding 61-62 to be joined with the subsequent 53-56. The principal weakness of the traditional position of 61-62 felt by editors, commentators and scholars in general is that it interrupts two units, 57-60 and 63-66, devoted to humans by intruding animals, and the defense of its position relies on the metaphorical transfer of *contagia* from a physical condition to a moral one.⁹⁾

My position is that internal structural symmetry makes the case for joining 61-62 to 53-56 the most convincing. The *caveat* that, although the best arguments support this arrangement, still Horace may not have thus composed the epode is willingly acknowledged. We are here dealing with probability not certitude; no pretense to the contrary is maintained.

Lines 53-56 + 61-62 are:

pluraque felices mirabimur; ut neque largis
 aquosus Eurus arva radat imbribus,
 pinguia nec siccis urantur semina glæbis,
 utrumque rege temperante caelitem.
 nulla nocent pecori contagia, nullius astri
 gregem aestuosa torret impotentia.

Within this six line unit one theme is consistently maintained: the absence of the ill effects of the elements of rain and sun upon earth and its produce and animals; and it should be kept in mind that Jupiter is the moderating power. The thought progression of 53-56 is patent: neither does an excess of rain strip the plowlands nor does an excess of sun burn up seed in

9) Wickham, *The Works of Horace*³ (Oxford 1896) vol. 1, p. 395, on 61-62: "But 'contagia,' 'secrevit,' seem to give the connexion which makes them appropriate here. Isolation protects their flocks and herds from disease, as it protects men from moral contagion." [Vgl. H. Reynen, *Gymn. Beih.* 4. (1964) 77ff.]

the clods of earth, because Jupiter tempers each element. Now what is especially crucial here is the meaning of *utrumque*: rain and sun. In 61–62 it is precisely the moderating power of Jupiter that prevents excessive rain and sun from causing *contagia* harmful to animals. That *astri torret impotentia* does not simply mean that “the star’s fury scorches” is obvious and noted by scholia $\Phi\Psi$: *Ostendit quia in ortu Caniculae contagia laedent pecus*¹⁰). And just as Sirius’ fury causes contagion harmful to the flock, so too does rain, as the first clause implies: *nulla nocent pecori contagia*. Lucretius in discussing the origin of disease and pestilence notes the functions of rain and sun (6. 1096–1102):

[semina morbi] ea cum casu sunt forte coorta
et perturbarunt caelum, fit morbidus aer.
atque ea vis omnis morborum pestilientasque
aut extrinsecus ut nubes nebulaeque superne
per caelum veniunt, aut ipsa saepe coortae
de terra surgunt, ubi putorem umida nactast
intempestivis pluviisque et solibus icta.

Columella tells us that sheep contract *scabies*: *quae fere nascitur, sicut noster memorat poeta,*

cum frigidus imber
altius ad vivum persedit, et horrida cano
bruma gelu¹¹)

Finally, Celsus lists the various diseases which attack humans in time of drought (*in siccitatibus*) and deluge (*per imbres*)¹²).

In keeping with the practice of letting the last word of one section lead into another section, *impotentia* (62), which Forcellini¹³) explains: *saepe sumitur pro animi effrenatione, qua se quis continere non potest*, quite properly is applied to Sirius and the humans of 57–60, who, in defiance of nature’s separation of land by sea, made the longest voyages recorded in myth or history. Neither the Argonauts, nor Medea, nor the Sidonians,

10) Plautus, *Trinummus* 538–552, has the slave Stasimus, in discussing the evils of a farm, include *oves scabrae* and humans who survived there less than six months on account of siriasis: *ita cuncti solstitiali morbo decidunt*. Philto then interestingly comments that this farm would be an ideal place to send malefactors, just as good men are said to gather at the *fortunatorum insulae*.

11) *De re rustica* 7.5.5. He is quoting *Georgics* 3. 441–443.

12) *De medicina* 2. 1. 12.

13) *Lexicon* 3. 409.

nor the companions of Ulysses – all examples of *animi effrenatio* – have set foot on these islands.

These four lines of humans who could not arrive at the blessed islands are in turn followed by the epode's concluding four lines (63-66) whose function scholia $\Phi\Psi$ explain: *Reddit causam quare tantae amoenitatis habeantur illae insulae, quia Iuppiter ad hoc secrevit illa litora, ut pia gens ibi habitaret.*

The numerical and thematic symmetry of 41-66 may now be considered. While it is generally correct to say that 43-52 present the delights that abound there and that 53-62 present the evils absent, this is not precisely correct, for in terms of the positive and negative line 51 marks the transition, as Comm. Cruq. notes: *dixit huc usq. bona quae ibi adfunt: nunc vicissim enumerat mala, quae ibi non sunt.* Still, the *nec ... neque* (51-52) may be considered as a final couplet transitional to the purely negative series of 53-56, 61-62, 57-60: *neque ... nec ... nulla ... nullius ... non huc ... neque ... non huc ... neque*, even as *humus* (52) is transitional to *arva* (54) and *glæbis* (55), and *litora* (40), *pède* (48) and *impotentia* (62) are transitional to their subsequent units. 63-66 then resume the positive statement.

The unity of 43-52 may be reasonably taken to arise from the idea of the spontaneous bountifulness of the islands to mankind, 43-48 stressing the gifts of the earth and 49-52 those of the animals. Similarly, 53-56, 61-62, 57-60 achieve unity through the idea of the absence of the immoderate, whether that be excessive rain or sun harmful to land and animals (53-56, 61-62) or it be simply excessively adventurous people (57-60). The numerical scheme has a pleasing balance: 10 (= 6 + 4) + 10 (= 6 + 4).

While the epode's concluding lines (63-66) have an undeniable antithetical relationship to 57-60, they are set apart from the descriptive section proper because they furnish the reason for the existence of the islands and in so doing take us back especially to the introductory lines 41-42, that is, to Horace and his companions, the *pia gens*, whom the islands await and for whom Jupiter has reserved these shores.

The overall structure of 41-66 is:

Lines	Content	Number of Lines
41-42	Introduction	2
43-56, 61-62, 57-60	Description	20
63-66	Conclusion	4

The linear pattern is:

$$2 + 20 (= 10 [= 6 + 4] + 10 [= 6 + 4]) + 4$$

One final and important point remains. The bucolic caesurae of 43-62 occur at lines 47, 53, 61. Kiessling-Heinze and Barwick both argued that in their arrangements the caesurae achieve a symmetry; and to a degree they are both correct. But let us look not only at the line numbers but also at their content:

mella cava manant ex ilice, montibus altis
 levis crepante lympa desilit pede. (47-48)
 pluraque felices mirabimur; ut neque largis
 aquosus Eurus arva radat imbribus, (53-54)
 nulla nocent pecori contagia, nullius astri
 gregem aestuosa torret impotentia. (61-62)

Quite obviously the couplet 53-54 differs from the couplets 47-48 and 61-62 because it contains a general introductory clause and only *one* item of catalogue. The other two distichs are truly parallels, for each contains *two* (related) items of catalogue. It is only the position of 61-62 after line 56 that permits a true balance of position for 47-48 and 61-62. Each of these is the third couplet of a group of five couplets, and each ends the initial six line subunit of its ten line unit.

The complete structure of Horace's portrait of the blessed islands may be viewed as follows:

Islands of the Blessed (41-66):

A. Introduction (41-42):

Let us seek the islands of the blessed.

B. Description of the islands (43-56, 61-62, 57-60):

1. Spontaneous bountifulness to mankind (43-52):

a. Earth (43-48):

Grain, vine, olive, fig, honey and water all come forth.

b. Animals (49-52):

1) Goat and flock bring milk. (49-50)

2) Neither bear nor viper threatens. (51-52)

2. Absence of the immoderate (53-56, 61-62, 57-60):

a. Excessive rain or sun (53-56, 61-62):

1) Neither wash away the fields, nor burn the seed,
since Jupiter moderates them. (53-56)

2) Nor cause pestilences for animals. (61-62)

b. Excessively adventurous humans (57-60):

Neither the Argonauts, nor Medea, nor the Sidonians,
nor the companions of Ulysses came here.

C. Conclusion (63-66):

Jupiter set these shores apart for a pious people whose prophet I am.

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