Miszelle

A FRAGMENT OF ALCAEUS IN SENeca?


nam sive Graeco poetae
credimus "aliquando et
insanire iucundum est" eqs.
(Seneca Dial. 9. 17. 10)

The words cited above appear in a discussion of the thesis that non­numquam et usque ad ebrietatem veniendum, non ut mergat nos, sed ut deprimat. No attempt, to my knowledge, has been made to identify this Graecus poeta in Seneca. In considering this problem three passages from Horace’s Odes are of much importance:

recepto
dulce mibi furere est amico (2. 7. 27–8)
insanire iuvat (3. 19. 18)
dulce est desipere in loco (4. 12. 28)

Each example has two things in common: it is a) a sweet or pleasant thing b) to be mad. Examination of the contexts reveals a third similarity: in each instance the “madness” meant is intoxication. In Ode 2. 7 Horace is celebrating the safe return from war of an old army companion, Pompeius. A banquet therefore, is the order of the day; preparations are made and the poem ends: Quem Venus arbitrum/dicit bibendi? non ego sanius | baccabor Edonis: recepto | dulce mibi furere est amico. Ode 3. 19 introduces Horace at a banquet in the capacity of συμποσιακός; after stating the correct proportions to be observed in mixing the wine and water he then exclaims insanire iuvat! Finally, Ode 4. 12 announces the return of spring; Horace invites Vergil (the poet?) to celebrate the occasion by sharing a cask of good wine with him. The poem ends misce stultitia | consiliis brevem: | dulce est desipere in loco. The three-fold agreement in these three passages is no accident; Horace has given thrice the same thought in different words. What is the source? For Odes 3. 19 and 4. 12 no original is known. Ode 2. 7, however, – a poem composed in Alcaics – is modelled on a still partially preserved piece by Alcaeus (frg. 50 Diehl); in this poem Alcaeus celebrates the return of his brother Antimenidas from war, just as Horace celebrates the return of Pompeius. Another “drinking” ode, the famous mune est bibendum (1. 37), is also modelled on Alcaeus, namely on his poem celebrating the death of the tyrant Myrsilus: νῦν χορὸ νεκρὸν καὶ τίνα πέρ βιαν | πάντων, ἀπειθή κάθανε Μύρσιλος (frg. 39 Diehl). Again, Ode 1. 9, with its call for wine, is partially copied from Alcaeus frg. 90 Diehl. Alcaeus’ φιλονία is copiously illustrated by Athenaeus 10. 430 a sq. and in general it seems very likely that he is Horace’s source1).

To return to Seneca; here the complete agreement with Horace is striking: Seneca’s insanire corresponds to Horace’s furere | insanire | desipere; iucundum est answers to dulce est | iuvat; and finally, the reference, as in Horace, is specifically to Bacchic μαῦλα. It does not seem that such close agreement can be accidental and yet we know that Seneca is not borrowing directly from Horace: as he himself tells us, he is quoting a Graecus poeta. The agreement between the two Latin authors therefore is probably to be explained by assuming a common source. We have seen that it was likely that Horace’s source was Alcaeus; it is thus quite possible that Alcaeus was Seneca’s
source as well. The words *aliquid et insomniacum est* deserve to be printed as a doubtful fragment, in Latin dress,

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of the great Aeolic poet.

(The *et* [= "even"] is no doubt part of the quotation and should be noticed.) It was for similar reasons – the intoxication theme and the Alcaic metre – that Bergk ascribed to Alcaeus the anonymous fragment preserved by Demetrias Laco, *περὶ ποιημάτων β* col. xxx in *Vol. Hercul. Oxon.* I. 122, an ascription which has been generally accepted by later editors.

1) Some commentators compare the *Anacreontea* 8 (Bergk) where the expression *θέλω θέλω μανήν* occurs several times. This cannot be Horace's source (*μάνισθαι* is hardly decisive, since it is not unusual to find this verb used of intoxication in Greek); there is nothing in Horace corresponding to θέλω θέλω and nothing in the *Anacr. corresponding to θέλω θέλω* and nothing in the *Anacr.*

2) Actually, the Greek poem (too long to be reproduced here) with its mythological parallels sounds a quite different note. Others compare Menander frg. 354 (Körte) καὶ συμμανήνιαι δ' ένα δεί. This too is different and is in fact a variant of a common Greek proverb; see my note in *CR* 13 (1963) 131-2.

2) For another fragment of Alcaeus preserved only in Latin, see Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* i. 28. 79: *nauros in articulo pueri delectat Alcaeu...* 3) It should be noted that Seneca's vague expression *Graeco poetas* implies that both the poet and the quotation were sufficiently well-known to be recognized by his readers without further identification. Obscure poetasters are to be excluded from consideration.


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**ANECDOITA PARIS.**

I, p. 167, 17ff (CRAMER)

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Ολον γάρ καὶ τὸ πῦρ πάσας τὸ ψόμενα, εἰτε λυβανωτὸς εἰτε δέρματα, τὴν ὅμως σαφραλίζει τὸ ἕκατέρον: ταύτω δὴ ταῦτα καὶ δ ὁ λίνος ποιεῖ: ὄποιον μὲν ἄν τύχη ἡ ὑδὸς ἐν αὐτῷ θυμιώμενον, τοιοῦτος γίνεται.

This text was adopted by G. S. Kirk (*Heraclitus, the Cosmic Fragments*, Cambridge, 1934; reprint with corrections 1962, p. 192). But I think *δέρματα* and ὑδὸς are out of place here. I would suggest *άρωμα* and *εἴδος* instead and read the whole text as follows:

Ολον γάρ καὶ τὸ πῦρ πάσας τὸ ψόμενα, εἰτε λυβανωτὸς εἰτε άρωμα, τὴν ὅμως σαφραλίζει τὸ ἕκατέρον: ταύτω δὴ ταῦτα καὶ δ ὁ λίνος ποιεῖ: ὄποιον μὲν (γάρ) ἄν τύχη εἴδος ἐν αὐτῷ θυμιώμενον, τοιοῦτος γίνεται.

As for the meaning of *εἴδος* 'spices', cf. Lydus *De magistratibus* III, 61.

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