

HORACE, *ODES* 1.30\*

## ABSTRACT

*This brief poem (Hor. Carm. 1.30) is by turns enigmatic (what is the purpose of Horace's prayer to Venus?) and slightly incoherent (why should both Horace and Glycera be praying to Venus? Are they praying for the same thing or for different things? Either has its problems). A further problem is that, if Horace intended uocantis in line 2 for a genitive, the text as it stands misleads the first-time reader, contrary to Horace's normal practice of authorial kindness toward such readers. The way to deal with this is to take uocantis as accusative ('those calling on you with much incense') and to insert an 'and' in the text to connect sperne and transfer: sperne dilectam Cypron et uocantis | ture te multo <ac> Glycerae decoram | transfer in aedem ('reject your beloved Cyprus and your incense-offering devotees and move to Glycera's beautiful shrine'). If this is right, it addresses the incoherencies under which the usual interpretation labours.*

**Keywords:** hidden quantities; ambiguity; Glycera; Venus; scribal omission

O Venus, regina Cnidi Paphique,  
 sperne dilectam Cypron et uocantis  
 ture te multo Glycerae decoram  
 transfer in aedem.  
 feruidus tecum puer et solutis                      5  
 Gratiae zonis properentque Nymphae  
 et parum comis sine te Iuventas  
 Mercuriusque.

This brief poem raises many questions that have not thus far found satisfactory answers.<sup>1</sup> What is Horace's relation to Glycera in this poem? Why does the poet ask Venus to visit Glycera? Is it so that she will fall in love with him, as David West thinks?<sup>2</sup> If so, how is this related to Glycera's calling on Venus with much incense? Is she in love with someone? If that someone is Horace, and the latter is praying that he may win Glycera with Venus' help, either his prayer or hers would seem to be superfluous. If they are praying for different outcomes (she to win another lover and he to win her), Glycera's

\* I am grateful to J.S. Clay for drawing attention to these problems and to Clay, A.J. Woodman and CQ's reader for helpful criticisms and suggestions.

<sup>1</sup> I cite the following commentators by author name only: D.H. Garrison, *Horace: Epodes and Odes: A New Annotated Latin Edition* (Norman, OK, 1991); A. Kiessling and R. Heinze, *Q. Horatius Flaccus: Oden und Epoden* (Berlin, 1917); R. Mayer, *Horace: Odes Book I* (Cambridge, 2012); C.H. Moore, *Horace: Odes and Epodes* (New York, 1902); R.G.M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace Odes, Book I* (Oxford, 1970); R.G.M. Nisbet and N. Rudd, *A Commentary on Horace, Odes, Book III* (Oxford, 2004); J.K. Orelli and J.G. Baiter, *Quintus Horatius Flaccus*, vol. 1<sup>3</sup> (Zürich, 1850); T.E. Page, *Q. Horatii Flacci Carminum libri iv, Epodon liber* (cited from the reprint of New York, 1967); K. Quinn, *Horace: The Odes* (London, 1980); D. West, *Horace Odes I: Carpe Diem. Text, Translation and Commentary* (Oxford, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> West 144–5.

prayer is not only irrelevant to Horace's but also antithetical to it. This duplication or contradiction of the two appeals has not been satisfactorily explained.<sup>3</sup>

A somewhat pedantic grammatical question, the length of the final vowel in *uocantis*, may help to shed light on these. All commentators and translators known to me take it as short, making the word genitive. This is understandable since all these scholars have read the entire poem before proceeding to comment or translate, and they see that *Glyceræ* is genitive and decide that *uocantis* must modify it, there being no other word for it to modify. In an article published some fifteen years ago I set out the evidence that Horace wrote his *Odes* bearing in mind the needs of those reading them, whether aloud or for their inner ear, for the first time, and described his policy of kindness to his readers: in the vast majority of cases he takes care to avoid causing readers to mispronounce on first reading a vowel whose quantity is hidden because it is followed by two consonants or stands as the last syllable of its line and then to have to go back and correct it.<sup>4</sup> The doubtful word, if an adjective, will marry up either with a preceding noun or, if a noun, with a preceding adjective; or its case will be strongly suggested by a verb or other preceding word; or its mate will be no more than two words further on. I noted, against the approximately three hundred and seventy cases where Horace follows this philanthropic practice, eleven instances (including the present passage) where a reader could be in doubt and guess wrong.

But the present passage is the only one of the eleven that positively misleads the reader by the *et* that apparently connects *Cypron* and *uocantis*, suggesting an accusative interpretation. In the other ten cases it is much easier to avoid a wrong guess.<sup>5</sup> Our passage is a distinct outlier since, as the text stands, *Cypron et uocantis* strongly suggests to the reader that *uocantis* is parallel to *Cypron* when in fact, on the usual view, it must be genitive.

<sup>3</sup> F. Cairns, *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry* (Edinburgh, 1972), 192–3 says that the poem gives an example of a 'vicarious or substitute speaker', someone who speaks 'on behalf of another human being who is the real protagonist'. But if Person B speaks on behalf of Person A, we would not expect Person A to be making a similar plea, as *Glyceræ*, on the usual view, is doing. Neither here nor in *id.*, 'Five "religious" odes of Horace (I, 10; I, 21 and IV, 6; I, 30; I, 15)', *AJPh* 92 (1971), 433–52, at 444–7 does Cairns explain why *Glyceræ* should engage in summoning *Venus* when Horace is doing so on her behalf. Similarly, Quinn has Horace sponsoring *Glyceræ*'s appeal to the goddess. He seems to suggest that *Glyceræ* is in love with someone who refuses her ('Has she for once encountered stubborn resistance? If so, who is the recalcitrant lover?'). He promises an explanation in his note on lines 5–8, but no real explanation for *Glyceræ*'s prayer is forthcoming. West, as noted, thinks that Horace is asking *Venus* to come to *Glyceræ* so that she may fall in love with him. He too fails to explain the duplicated prayer.

<sup>4</sup> D. Kovacs, 'Double trouble: *duplīcis* at Horace, *Odes* 1.6.7 and the limits of ambiguity', *ICS* 31–2 (2006–7), 55–74, at 61–9, 71–4.

<sup>5</sup> *Carm.* 1.14.19: though an accusative governed by a prepositional prefix (here *inter-*) is rare, to take it as such ('that flows among') is plausible, and nothing suggests that *nitentis* is genitive; 2.9.18: the next word suggests that *noua* is accusative; 2.19.29: editors take *recedentis* as genitive, but no harm is done if a reader takes it as accusative ('your retreating feet' instead of 'your feet as you retreat'); 2.20.2: nothing suggests that *biformis* is accusative; 3.2.11: the fact that an accusative *quem* precedes might well suggest that *cruenta* is nominative; 3.3.6: the fact that the preceding line has a phrase with a genitive of possession might suggest (and nothing suggests the contrary) that *fulminantis* is genitive; 3.6.9: *Pacori manus*, connected by *et* to *Monaeses*, is most easily construed as 'the band (rather than "the hands") of *Pacorus*'; 3.11.1: the preceding direct object *te* makes reading *docilis* as nominative a strong likelihood, and there is nothing at that point to suggest accusative plural (though *lapides* could be called 'easily taught' or 'responsive', they are separated by four words from *docilis*); 3.20.15: the *aut ... aut* makes it likely that *Nireus* is parallel to *raptus* and hence *aquosa* is not nominative; 3.27.6: nothing suggests that *similis* should be read as accusative plural.

If Horace's policy has so many instantiations and only this one *prima facie* exception, what can be done to restore his wonted kindness here? We could do the natural thing and take *uocantis* as an accusative. This would mean that another 'and' is needed to connect 'move over to the shrine of Glycera' with *sperne*. We could posit that *ac* has dropped out before *Glycerae* and read *sperne dilectam Cypron et uocantis | ture te multo <ac> Glycerae decoram | transfer in aedem* 'abandon your beloved Cyprus and those who call on<sup>6</sup> you with clouds of incense <and><sup>7</sup> come over to<sup>8</sup> the lovely shrine of Glycera'.

This change not only restores Horace's solicitude for his reader but also eliminates the problem mentioned earlier, namely that, if it is Glycera who is making offerings of incense, there is either a duplication of Horace's efforts by Glycera's or a contradiction between them. It is hard to find a way of looking at the stanza that is plausible and coherent if *uocantis* modifies *Glycerae*.

By contrast, there are parallel expressions elsewhere in Greek and Latin poetry if we assign the incense offerings to the people of Cyprus. The conjunction of a divinity's favourite cult centre and the mention of incense offerings *at that centre* is to be found at Hom. *Od.* 8.362–3 ἦ δ' ἄρα Κύπρον ἴκανε φιλομμειδῆς Ἀφροδίτη | ἐς Πάφον. ἔνθα δέ οἱ τέμενος βομῶς τε θυήεις, imitated by Virgil at *Aen.* 1.415–17; in Sappho, fr. 2 Voigt, the first line mentions a ναῦος, the second a χάριεν ἄλκοσ, and the third and fourth βῶμοι. . . τεθυμιάμενοι λιβανῶτοι. In Pindar's third *Paeon* the seventh line begins with ναόν, while lines 8–9 read καὶ θυόε[ντα and βομῶν. See also Eur. *Tro.* 1060–2 οὕτω δὴ τὸν ἐν Ἰλίου | ναόν καὶ θυόεντα βω- | μὸν προῦδωκασ Ἀχαιοῖσ. So to give *sperne* these two objects (*Cypron, uocantis ture te multo*) is consonant with the poetic tradition. In the above examples cult centre and incense-laden altars are joined by 'and', as cult centre and those who use the altars are in Horace.

Three considerations thus make against genitive *uocantis*: unkindness to readers, narrative incoherence, and other passages that suggest coordinated accusatives. In my view we may take it as virtually certain that *uocantis* is accusative. This makes the inexpensive remedy *multo <ac>* virtually certain as well.<sup>9</sup> What kind of poem results?

In the old text Horace asks Venus to give up one thing, her beloved Cyprus, in order to get an incense offering from Glycera and her lovely house or the shrine within it. The first gain, however, is no gain at all: throngs of worshippers will surely burn more incense than a woman in one private house. With the new text Horace is engaging in

<sup>6</sup> Substantivized present participles are to be found at *Carm.* 1.1.11, 1.35.15, 2.12.27, 3.1.41, 3.10.14, 3.16.22, 3.16.42, 3.24.46, 4.3.22, and 4.9.42 and 45.

<sup>7</sup> One reason for preferring *<ac>* to *<et>* here is that its disappearance could have been facilitated by the similarity between its last letter and the first letter of *Glycerae*. But *et* is also prone to omission, often without obvious palaeographical cause: at *Carm.* 3.8.27 and at *Sat.* 1.10.4 and 2.2.85 *et* is omitted from the older manuscripts and supplied, perhaps by conjecture, only in the *deteriores*. Bentley supplied it at *Carm.* 3.24.60 and *Epist.* 1.18.15.

<sup>8</sup> Some commentators (Quinn, Orelli-Baiter, Garrison) take *transfer* as a reflexive verb with the *te* of the previous line. But the pronoun, sandwiched where it is and going so closely with *uocantis*, does not seem available to be the object of *transfer*. It seems more reasonable to take *transfer* as intransitive. Quite a few transitive verbs in Latin are used intransitively (M. Leumann, J.B. Hofmann and A. Szantyr, *Lateinische Grammatik. Zweiter Band: Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik* [Munich, 1965, repr. 1972], 295–7). In particular the intransitive uses of *uerto* (*OLD* s.v. 9b, 12 and 22a) provide a good analogy to *transfer* here.

<sup>9</sup> Some slight further support may be found in the Poseidippus poem (*Anth. Pal.* 12.131) quoted in Nisbet and Hubbard. There too the poet is praying to the goddess, whose shrines are enumerated, to come to visit a *hetaira* as an act of graciousness. The reason given is her kind reception of lovers (Horace omits any similar reason). Absent is the mention of any redundant prayer by the woman.

a much bolder rhetorical strategy. Now he asks Venus to give up *two* things and in return offers her the shrine and—nothing! Why? The poet, I suggest, is implying that Glycera is herself special enough to compensate for the loss of temple and worshippers on Cyprus. Horace is magnifying Glycera by implication. In the *Iliad* Helen's beauty is never described but indicated only by the effect it has on the Trojan elders. Here Glycera's remarkable qualities are not described but only hinted at by what he is asking Venus to do on no other grounds than herself.<sup>10</sup>

This remarkable hyperbole, implicit only, is reinforced by two explicit cases of hyperbole: in line 2 Horace says *sperne* 'reject with scorn' rather than simply 'leave behind' (for example *linque*);<sup>11</sup> and in line 4 *transfer* suggests 'move lock, stock, and barrel', which is explicated by lines 5–8, the request to bring her entire retinue. The poem is thus an extravagant compliment to Glycera, all the more extravagant for the absence of any hint that Horace desires her for himself.<sup>12</sup>

The poem as restored is a breath-taking display by Horace of good will toward a woman he is inviting his audience to admire. The new text, differing from the old only by the addition of a single *ac*, not only rids us of the sole case in the *Odes* where Horace misleads a first-time reader but also brings the text closer to Greek descriptions of shrines such as Venus' and removes unhelpful distractions from the poet's chosen topic.

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### ARS ADEO LATET (OVID, *METAMORPHOSES* 10.252)

#### ABSTRACT

*The problems recently detected in the famous words ars adeo latet arte sua (Ov. Met. 10.252) can be resolved if the line is repunctuated on the basis of an unjustly neglected interpretation put forward by Byzantine and Renaissance scholars.*

**Keywords:** Ovid; *Metamorphoses*; textual criticism; ancient scholarship; Graeco-Latin bilingualism; editing

<sup>10</sup> E. Fraenkel, *Horace* (Oxford, 1957), 198 says that 'Glycera remains completely in the background; it does not matter who she is or what the poet may feel for her'. Horace's *erōs* for her is in the background, but I would argue that the lady herself is very much to the fore.

<sup>11</sup> Nisbet and Hubbard say that *sperne* 'need not imply contempt', and they cite *Carm.* 3.2.24 *spernit humum*. But when in that passage Virtus leaves the earth behind, it is in a spirit of rejection, as would have been apparent in a fuller quotation: *coetusque uulgaris et udam | spernit humum fugiente penna*. Nisbet and Rudd ad loc. say, correctly, that the word expresses 'disdain'.

<sup>12</sup> There may be a still more startling compliment in the phrase *Glyceræ ... aedem*. Some scholars (Page, Moore, West, Mayer) interpret this to mean that she has a shrine to Venus in her house, while Garrison thinks that a *hetaira*'s house would naturally be considered a shrine of Venus. Kiessling and Heinze say that the house becomes Venus' shrine on the goddess' arrival. In a phrase such as 'the temple of X', however, X is normally a divinity. Perhaps the compliment is more daring still and Glycera is the goddess to whom the *aedes* is consecrated. Horace would be asking Venus to visit someone as potent in the field of love as herself.