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IV.—HORACE, EPISTLE I, XIX, 28-9.

Among the passages which are essential for the appreciation of Horace's literary theories, Ep. I, XIX, should occupy an important place, since, in this Epistle, Horace expresses very definitely, it seems to me, not only his relation to his Greek models, but also his idea of true and false imitation. Unfortunately, however, the meaning of vss. 28-9,

Temperat Archilochi Musam pede mascula Sappho,  
Temperat Alcaeus, sed rebus et ordine dispar,

is not entirely clear, and the verses have been diversely interpreted.

Of the editors before Bentley, some, following the suggestion of the Scholiast, construed Archilochi with Musam, interpreted temperat as miscet, and made Horace say that he mingled with the measures of Archilochus those of Sappho and Alcaeus; others took temperat in the sense of lenit, mitigat, and understood Horace to mean that he softened the keen invective of Archilochus by the use of the gentler measures of Sappho and Alcaeus. In pede mascula they saw a reference either to the vigor of Sappho's style, or to the bold courage of the poetess in daring to leap from the Leucadian Rock.<sup>1</sup> Bentley pointed out, however, that, with such an interpretation, the adversative sed has no force, and that an et would be necessary. He, therefore, construed Archilochi with pede, supplied suam with Musam, gave temperat the sense of miscet, and made dispar refer to Sappho as well as to Alcaeus. According to his interpretation Horace says, in effect, "I am only doing what Sappho and Alcaeus did before me; they mixed the metres of Archilochus with their own though they departed widely, as I do, from his subjects and purpose." The epithet mascula, in this view, is employed merely to emphasize the manly vigor of Sappho's style.

<sup>1</sup> The latter idea was adopted by Ritter, who notes: pede mascula fuit Sappho quod audace pede in saxa Leucadia progressa inde se in mare deiecit. The note of Porphyrio runs: mascula autem Sappho vel quia in poetico studio est, in quo saepius mares, vel quia tribas diffamatur fuisse.

Editors since Bentley agree in construing Archilochi with pede and in supplying suam with Musam. They do not agree, however, as to whether dispar refers to Alcaeus only or to both Sappho and Alcaeus, nor do they agree on the meaning of temperat. By some, especially the editors of our American textbooks, this verb is translated "moulds," "fashions," "regulates," and Horace is made to say, "Sappho, a woman of spirit," or "a woman with masculine skill, moulds (regulates) her Muse by the verse of Archilochus, Alcaeus moulds (regulates) his, but he (they) differs (differ) from Archilochus in matter and arrangement." Others adopt Bentley's interpretation, making the verb temperare equal to miscere, seeing in it, with Wickham, the suggestion of the metaphor of mixing a cup.

However much the editors may differ in regard to these details of interpretation, they do, and must, agree on one point, namely, that Horace is holding up the practice of Sappho and Alcaeus to justify his own. What that was he tells us explicitly in vss. 23-5:

Parios ego primus iambos  
Ostendi Latio, numeros animosque secutus  
Archilochi, non res et agentia verba Lycamben.

This must mean, "I imitated the iambic verses of Archilochus and their tone, but not the matter of Archilochus nor his words of direct personal attack." It follows, therefore, that not only is the phrase sed—dispar in vs. 29 parallel, as Wickham notes, to non—Lycamben, vs. 25, but that the words numeros animosque Archilochi, vss. 24-5, must also be parallel to Archilochi Musam, vs. 28, that Archilochi depends upon Musam. And not only logic, but the swing of the verse, it seems to me, demands this construction in spite of the warning of the editors to construe Archilochi with pede not with Musam. Pede does, to be sure, look to Archilochi, but it is directly connected, as the older editors saw, with mascula. The reference, however, surely cannot be to the story of the leap from the Leucadian Rock, nor, just as surely, can mascula be what other interpretations make it to be, a mere epitheton ornans, worse than useless. Horace must have meant by it more than an unnecessary emphasis of Sappho's right to be compared with men. And what he does

mean by it is clear from the evident contrast he makes between it and the verb *temperat*,—a contrast which demands the usual meaning of *temperare* as “restrain,” “moderate,” “tone down,” “modify the extremes,” “preserve a due proportion.”

This meaning of the verb is, indeed, the only one which is justified by the usage of Horace and of the poets generally down to his time. The one passage which is cited to support the rendering “moulds” is Propertius III, 32, 78-9: *Tale facis carmen, docta testudine quale | Cynthius impositis temperat articulis*. Here, however, *temperat* is certainly not a mere synonym of *facis*, but refers to the harmony which arises from the playing of Apollo—to the well-modulated tones of the skilled musician. We find the same use of the verb in Hor. Od. IV, 3, 18: *O, testudinis aureae | Dulcem quae strepitum, Pieri, temperas*, “thou who dost tone the noise of thy golden shell into sweet harmony.”

Nor is the evidence any stronger that Horace uses *temperare* in the sense of *miscere*, *immiscere*. Even in *Epod. XVII, 80*, *desiderique temperare pocula*, where the meaning “mix” seems to be necessary, we cannot be sure, since in another poem where Horace uses the phrase *temperare pocula*, the meaning of the verb is clearly “to soften,” “mellow”; *Od. I, 20, 9-13*: *Caecubum et prelo domitam Caleno | Tu bibes uvam: mea nec Falernae | Temperant vites neque Formiani | Pocula colles*: “My cups no choice Falernian fills, | Nor unto them do Formia’s hills | Impart a temper’d glow” (Martin). And in all the other passages where the verb occurs in Horace this idea of “tone down,” “modify the extremes” is basic; cf. *Od. II, 3, 3*: *mentem . . . ab insolenti temperatam laetitia*; *II, 16, 26*: *amara lento | temperet risu*; *III, 4, 66*: *vim temperatam*; *III, 4, 45*: *qui mare temperat ventosum*; so in *Od. IV, 12, 1*; *Od. I, 8, 7*, *temperat ora frenis*; *Ep. I, 12, 16*, *quid temperet annum*; *Serm. II, 5, 71*, *senem delirum temperet*, of the will-hunter who “manages a childish old man” (Morgan). This last example is instructive since we have a contrast between the verb and an adjective similar to that in the passage under discussion.

Vergil’s use of the verb, also, is exactly similar to that of Horace, and nowhere do we find any suggestion of the idea of mould or mix, but only that of “restrain”; cf. *Aen. I, 57*:

Aeolus—temperat iras; 146: Triton—temperat aequor; II, 8: temperet a lacrimis. The force of the verb is well illustrated by such a passage as Georg. I, 110 of a rivulet, scatebrisque arentia temperat arva, where the idea of "moderation" in temperat stands in contrast with the idea of extreme heat in arentia, just as in Hor. Od. III, 19, 6, quis aquam temperet ignibus, it stands in contrast with the extreme of coolness denoted by aqua; cf. Georg. III, 336, cum frigidus aera vesper | temperat. The word is similarly used by Lygdamus, 6, 58: temperet annosum Marcia lympha merum, and by the author of the Panegy. Mess. 167: Quas similis utrimque tenens vicinia caeli | temperat. Tibullus does not use the word, nor Propertius except in the passage cited above. Of the earlier poets Lucretius seems not to have used it nor Catullus nor Lucilius. In the comedy its only meaning is that of "check," "restrain"; cf. Plaut. Rud. 1254, linguae tempera; Truc. 61; Ep. 111, in amore temperes; so with the infinitive, Poen. 22, dormire temperent; cf. 34, 1036; Ter. Phor. 271, famae temperans.

Nor in the prose of the Republican period have I found any passages in which temperare is a simple miscere, but always is there present, as in poetry, the underlying idea of restraint, moderation. Cæsar, B. G. I, 33, neque sibi homines feros—temperaturos existimabat quin, which will occur to all, is typical of his usage. The force of the word is best illustrated, however, by Cicero's use of it, or of derivatives, in connection with moderari or aequare, as in ad Fam. XIII, 29, 7: quod fuerim moderatior temperatiorque quam in ea parte quisquam; de Re pub. I, 69: quod genus erit aequatum et temperatum ex tribus optimis rerum publicarum modis; cf. Or. 98. Or he employs it by the side of miscere, in order to convey the idea of mixing in the proper proportions; cf. de Off. III, 119: nec vero finis bonorum et malorum, qui simplex esse debet, ex dissimillimis rebus misceri et temperari potest; Or. 196: sit oratio permixta et temperata numeris nec dissoluta nec tota numerosa. In this passage temperare clearly emphasizes the need of preserving the proper mean between the two extremes denoted by dissoluta and tota numerosa; so in Or. 21 it denotes the mean between the grandiloqui and the tenues: est autem quidam interiectus inter hos medius et quasi temperatus nec acumine posteriorum nec ful-

mine utens superiorum (hence, clearly, not compounded of the two), vicinus amborum, in neutro excellens, utriusque particeps vel utriusque—potius expers; cf. the similar use in Or. 197, de Orat. II, 212.

Such passages as these are sufficient, it seems to me, to show that temperare could not have meant to a Latin of Horace's time what our words "mould" or "mix" mean to us, but that, on the contrary, it always conveyed the idea of moderation, restraint, of one sort or another.<sup>2</sup> This is the meaning, therefore, which the word must have in the passage under discussion. If we give it this meaning and construe Archilochi with Musam, we may translate: "Sappho, although she had the spirit of a man (viz. Archilochus), and employed the measures of Archilochus, yet dulled the keen edge of his Muse; so did Alcaeus, but, unlike Sappho, he differed widely from Archilochus both in matter and arrangement, nor did he seek out the father of his bride," etc. With this interpretation, the epithet mascula is not otiose, but stands in strong contrast to temperat; the grammatical difficulty of construing dispar both with Sappho and Alcaeus is avoided; and, finally, the puzzling sed ceases to be puzzling. It implies, that is, a greater contrast between Alcaeus and Archilochus than between Sappho and Archilochus in regard to both the arrangement and the content of their iambics.

Whether or not this interpretation is the correct one cannot be definitely settled owing to the fact that we have no way of knowing how Sappho's use of iambics differed from Alcaeus'. We are, however, justified in assuming, it seems to me, by what we know of Sappho's ardent temperament, that, in regard to the use of iambic verse as a vehicle for personal invective, which is the question at issue here, she would be closer akin to Archilochus than Alcaeus was. It is noteworthy, at least, that Horace does not expressly include her in the statement which he makes

<sup>2</sup> This statement holds good, it may be noted, of the descendants of this verb in the Romance languages, Ital. temperare, Fr. tempérer, Span. temperar. It is instructive to compare the Latin use of temperare in connection with music, as in the passages cited above, p. 57, and Cic. de re pub. 6, 18, 18: acuta cum gravibus temperans varios aequabiliter concertus efficit, with the Italian use of temperare of tuning an instrument; cf. in tempra, "in tune."

concerning his practice and Alcaeus', that both he and Alcaeus avoided the use of iambic verse for a *famosum carmen*. We may conclude, therefore, that, in this matter of definite personal abuse, Sappho's practice was to Alcaeus' as Horace's was to Catullus'. Hence it is Alcaeus and not Sappho whom Horace expressly hails in vs. 32 as his model.

This interpretation is certainly in harmony with the context of the Epistle as a whole. It is evident that Horace is confronting two classes of critics, the one made up of those who found fault with him because, in taking over the iambic measures of Archilochus, he had not adopted the content which by tradition and by the practice of Catullus and his school was associated with them, namely, direct personal invective against definite individuals. These critics Horace calls a *servum pecus* because their spirit was shackled; they were slaves to convention and to form. He, on the contrary, was free because, although he imitated the iambic verse of Archilochus and its general tone of raillery and abuse, he did not feel bound to imitate the matter and the words.<sup>3</sup>

The other class of critics went to the other extreme and, like our modern Romanticists, demanded that the Latin poet free himself entirely, in regard both to form and to matter, from all models. Horace defends his method by pointing to the method of Sappho and Alcaeus. They, as he, made use of the verse forms of Archilochus, but they, too, modified his invective. Certainly this is true of Alcaeus, and "his is the lyre, untouched by other hands before me, that I, a Latin, struck for all to hear, and my reward is the favor of gentle readers."

This poem, therefore, instead of being what it has been interpreted to be,<sup>4</sup> an utterance of Horace as the high-priest of convention, preaching the gospel that as the form is so must the content be, is rather the utterance of Horace as the exponent

<sup>3</sup> As R. Heinze, *Herm.* XXXIII, 1898, pp. 488 sq., points out, only three of the Epodes—X, the attack on Maevius, V and XVII, dealing with Canidia—correspond in all the details with the Archilochian norm. I should be inclined to class the Canidia-poems with IV, VI, VIII, XII, attacks directed against typical figures.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Hack, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, XXVII, 1916, pp. 24 sq.

of "the free and transforming imitation of the true classicist."<sup>5</sup> This is the doctrine which he preached as a critic and which he followed as a poet, recognizing, on the one hand, the great value of the principles which underlay the theory of the literary forms, but, on the other, refusing to allow his spirit to be enslaved by them—

*Libera per vacuum posui vestigia princeps.*

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Fiske, *Lucilius and Horace*, p. 483.