WORDS BORN AND MADE: HORACE'S DEFENSE OF NEOLOGISMS AND THE CULTURAL POETICS OF LATIN

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The defense of neologisms at Horace *Ars Poetica* 48–69, with its famous simile comparing words to both leaves and feats of engineering (60–69), is among the most memorably poetic passages in Horace's great poem on poetics.[1] The question of sources and analogues in the work of earlier poets as well as in poetic, rhetorical, and grammatical theory has consequently attracted much interest, since the passage, as has been shown, provides striking testimony both to Horace's awareness of critical discussions and his originality as a poet (see esp. Brink 1971.132–60). But our emphasis on identifying sources for Horace's concepts and imagery may have prevented us from perceiving all that the comparison with other discourses on language can tell us about the passage as a feature of Roman culture. The prescriptive discourses used to situate word-creation within "correct" Latin employed a distinction between what was "born" or "native" and what was "made" or "new." Some Romans insisted on the avoidance of "new" words, and, although allowances were made for poetry, this nevertheless posed problems for anyone who, like Horace, sought to recommend their use.[2]

1 All references will be to Rudd's text of the *Ars Poetica* except where indicated. Translations are my own.

2 Poetry was allowed to use some Greek words for *ornatus* (Quint. *Inst.* 12.10.33), but see below. As Brink 1971.146 notes, positions on such *licentia* "must have been well represented also in poetic theory," but the surviving evidence is scanty. Hor. *Ep.* 2.2.119 also recommends using "new" words in poetry.

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Defending neologisms in prescriptive discourses on language often meant taking a stand on the relative merits of Latin and Greek in a manner incompatible with Horace's aims in *Ars Poetica* and inconsistent with the overall tenor of the poem.[3] The distinction between words born and made was regularly conjoined with an argument, carried on over many decades and in diverse venues, between those who saw Latin as "poorer" than Greek in its supply of "native" words and those who objected, explicitly or implicitly, to this claim. Horace's poem is decidedly muted in its nationalism and sharply critical of Roman poets; it praises Greek poets as models while suggesting that emulation of them in Latin is indeed possible. Horace prefers to focus on what is taught and teachable rather than on any intrinsic merits of Greek versus Latin. Thus the question arises as to how Horace avoids the suggestion of this topic while using terms implicated in the debate to argue for word-creation.

In this paper, I argue that Horace approaches these terms so as to diminish the force of the distinction between what is born and what is made. On the one hand, Horace is careful not to assert the poverty of Latin in the manner that usually tied the subject of word-creation to that of cultural prowess. On the other hand, the metaphors through which Horace develops his description of neologisms blur the distinction itself. Allusion to the diachronic concerns of etymology and historiography, as well as reminders of Greek cultural priority and the Romans' historical indebtedness, linguistic and poetic, to the Greeks, also help undermine the idea of Latin itself as a language "born" to original users without disparaging Latin. Horace's defense of neologisms needs to be appreciated not only as poetic theory and a striking poetic image in its own right, but from the perspective of "cultural poetics." It needs to be read for its adaptation of a representational strategy advanced by other means elsewhere in Roman society and deeply impli-

3 In speaking of "Horace's aims," I assume an identification of author and narrative persona that some, admittedly, may find problematic. Although I view Horace as an author capable of the utmost sophistication in the manipulation of voice and persona (cf. Dufallo 2000), I read *Ars Poetica* as a statement of poetic precepts that, while tinged throughout with characteristic humor and irony, is essentially meant to be taken seriously as such. (Thus I do not agree with extreme views of the separation between author and persona such as Frischer 1991.) For the poem's dramatic engagement of its addressees, the Pisos (a question with an important bearing on that of the narrative persona), see Kilpatrick 1990.32–57. For a recent account of Horace's aims in the poem as a whole, see Golden 2000.

cated in the dynamics of power within that society—the opposition, that is, between words born and made. Reading the *Ars Poetica* in this manner is perhaps all the more needful because of the tendency to examine the poem for the ideas and imagery it borrows from its "sources." This tendency works against asking how the form of the *Ars* as *poetry* allows a particular kind of participation in the broad social conversation about the Latin language.

When one discussed "new" words in rhetorical and grammatical theory, it was customary to distinguish them from *verba propria,* the "proper words" that could be imagined to date back virtually to the origins of a language itself and possess a "definite" relation to the objects they signified. *Verba propria* were *nata,* "born," as Cicero remarks in *de Oratore*, *paene una . . . cum rebus ipsis,* "almost together with things themselves (3.149)."[4] Due to the nature of our evidence, it is easiest to trace Roman attitudes toward such words during the period roughly contemporaneous with Horace in the rhetorical writers, although similar attitudes clearly informed the emerging discipline and profession of the *grammatici* as well (see below). Neologisms, which could arise either through entirely new creation or derivation,[5] were acceptable as a part of oratorical Latin, but they carried the mark—potentially a stigma—of what was *facta* (or *ficta*), "made" and not "born" naturally.[6] Cicero observes, for example, that words such as *versutiloquas,* "speaking crafty words," and *expectorat,* "banish from the mind," *ex coniunctione facta esse . . . non nata,* "are made from combination . . . not born" (*de Orat.* 3.154).[7] In spite of being acceptable as a practice, word-creation in oratory had a certain danger about it: if done wrong it could result in ridicule (Quint. *Inst.* 1.5.70).

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4 Cf. Quint. *Inst.* 1.5.71: "Propria sunt verba cum id significant, in quod primo denominata sunt," "Words are proper, when they signify that thing for which they were denominated originally." Cf. Var. *L.* 6.55, 78 on *propria nomina* and 6.36–37 on *primigenia,* "primitives."

5 Original creation (*onomatopoeia*), however, was seen as the domain of the Greeks and virtually unavailable to the Romans (Quint. *Inst.* 8.6.31; cf. below).

6 Cicero uses both *facta* and *ficta* for "new" words: e.g., *de Orat.* 3.149, 154, *Part*. 16, *Leg.* 2.28, *Fin.* 4.7, 5.89. For the dispute over the reading of Hor. *Ars* 52 (*ficta* or *facta*), see Brink 1971.143.

7 Note that Cicero's choice of words with which to illustrate the principle suggests a touch of disapproval. Both words are from Latin versions of Greek drama and so may reflect Greek compounds: *versutiloquas* is from an unknown tragedy (*Inc. trag.* 114 R) and *expectorat* from Ennius's *Alcmeo* (Enn. *scen.* 23 V) (see below on Cicero's belief in Latin vocabulary as richer than Greek).

A conventional and highly influential approach to the topic, made famous by Lucretius, was to tie one's argument about word-creation to an argument concerning the relative merits of Latin in comparison to Greek. An author could handle this conventional approach in various ways. Lucretius cites the difficulty of "illuminating" with Latin words *Graiorum obscura reperta,* "the dark discoveries of the Greeks" (1.136–37). He views the new words he employs as a means by which *clara . . . praepandere lumina menti,* "to open clear light to [the] mind" (1.144).[8] Quintilian grumbles that Romans persist in "laboring" under the "poverty" of their language (*Inst.* 8.3.33), with some, like Celsus, even denying that the orator should use new words at all (8.3.35). Quintilian suggests that such persistence is not due to anything in the *natura,* "nature," of Latin as opposed to Greek, but to the fact that Romans admire and prefer what is *alienum*, while disparaging what is their own (1.5.70). *Fingere verba* is a practice Romans are more comfortable conceding to the Greeks than engaging in themselves (8.3.30). Quintilian's implication is that Latin speakers should lay claim to the capacities of their own language in this regard. Cicero, more than once, simply rejects the conventional claim that Latin is impoverished. Indeed, he insists, Latin is actually richer than Greek (*Fin.* 1.10, 3.5, *N.D.* 1.8), capable of making more subtle distinctions (*Tusc.* 2.35, 3.10, 3.11), and clearer in its expression of some philosophical concepts (*Tusc.* 4.10; cf. Kaimio 1979.263). He asserts, famously, that he does not use more Greek when speaking Latin than Latin when speaking Greek (*Tusc.* 1.15). Elsewhere, however, Cicero echoes the "poverty topos" (e.g., *Fin.* 3.51; cf. *Tusc.* 2.35).[9]

Although new words could be fashioned by combining Latin elements, it was obvious that many were transliterated from Greek words or based on them (Quint. *Inst.* 8.3.33). Roman attitudes toward Greek loan words show little sign of ill-sentiment with respect to the Greek language; nationalism, however, was nevertheless present in the debates surrounding such words.[10]

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8 But see Farrell 2001.41–51 on the apparent irony of the remark. Lucretius may, in fact, be arguing implicitly for the superiority of Latin.

9 For a fuller account of the "poverty topos" in Latin authors, see Fögen 2000.

10 For the lack of anti-Greek sentiment in Roman linguistic nationalism, see Kaimio 1979.297–99. See further Adams's richly documented chapter on "code-switching" (2003.297–416) and cf. Mayer 1999, which offers an illuminating study of Roman attitudes toward *figura Graeca*, or syntactical Grecism, so as to argue that modern approaches to Grecism in Latin, with their historical and grammatical emphasis, have largely neglected Roman poets' self-conscious and admiring imitation of Greek syntax.

As technical terms, Greek words were thought to be admissible and appropriate when no Latin word was available (*Rhet. Her*. 4.10, Cic. *de Orat.* 1.155, *Orat.* 211, *Fin.* 3.15, Quint. *Inst.* 1.5.58). But one had to be careful. Graecisms were viewed by some as "harsh" (*Rhet. Her*. 4.10), although this harshness could be "softened" over time (Quint. *Inst.* 8.3.32). Using the Greek declensions instead of the Latin could be considered a sign of weakness. One made the Latin language "stronger" (*potentior*), in this view, by refusing to rely on such "foreign practices" (*alienis institutis*) (1.5.59–60). If one intended to use new words derived from Greek (or some other language), the safest thing, it was generally acknowledged, was to use words that had already gained some measure of acceptance: *verba usitata* (1.5.71; cf. 57, 1.6.41).

In spite of the fact that Roman linguistic nationalism was rarely directed against Greek, the distinction between words old and new could be phrased in a way that might encourage Roman distrust of Greek cultural influence. Consider Varro's comparison of new words to vessels brought from Greece that have, in their popularity, replaced old-fashioned Roman items (*L.* 9.21). Varro argues on this basis for the acceptance of new words according to the principle of analogy. We do not, he reasons, allow *vetus consuetudo,* "long-standing custom," to prevent us from innovation in clothing, buildings, and utensils; why should words be any different?[11] Varro bases the comparison on the observation that many Romans prefer Greek cultural products to those "of ancient custom" (*antiquae consuetudinis*). But certainly not all Romans did. Varro's practical observation, in other words, cannot erase the traditional view of the corrupting influence of Greek "luxury." If words could be compared to aspects of material culture, so, too, they could be regarded as symptoms of excess. It was certainly possible to use Greek too much (cf., e.g., Cic. *Off.* 1.111, Var. *R.* 2 *praef.* 2). Conversely, the "poverty" of Latin, when aligned with traditional Roman virtues of simplicity and moral uprightness, could emerge as a "positive advantage" (Farrell 2001.51).

Varro's argument for new words alerts us to the importance of grammatical theory in Roman debates about them. *Latinitas,* "Latinity," *natura*, and *vetustas,* "archaism," were all grammatical concepts, although there was considerable overlap in the discussion of such matters between grammar and rhetoric. The discipline and profession of the *grammaticus*,

11 Although Varro is represented in Cic. *Ac.* 1.24–26 as avoiding Greek terms; but see Kaimio 1979.311.

like that of the rhetor, was developing rapidly in Horace's day, and, in spite of the relative paucity of our evidence for this period, grammar, like rhetoric, is an important matrix within which to situate the passage of the *Ars Poetica* under discussion. In *de Lingua Latina*, Varro discusses both *fictio verborum* and the very early forms of words known as *primigenia* (5.7, 5.9, 6.36–37, etc.). Varro states that *natura* "dux fuit ad vocabula imponenda homini," "nature was man's guide in the imposition of names" (*L.* 6.3), and apparently distinguished between a word *recenti novitate fictum,* "coined with fresh innovation," and one *antiqua origine incorruptum,* "uncorrupted from its ancient origin" (Var. *ap.* Gell. 12.10.4). The polymath scholar and elite Roman Varro played an important role in developing Latin grammar along the lines laid down by the Greek grammarians. Actual Roman *grammatici*, among whom were Greek freedmen, could incite the scorn of the educated elite, but a generation or so after Horace's death, Q. Remmius Palaemon brought the development of Latin grammar to a point that allowed later practitioners to represent themselves as masters of a well-defined intellectual discipline and profession.[12]

In *Ars Poetica*, Horace reveals his awareness of the conventional discussions of words "born" and "made," but he is careful to avoid the impression that he is disparaging Latin for its "poverty" or insisting that it can rival Greek in the area of word creation—still less that Latin is "richer" than Greek. Why, Horace asks, should contemporary poets be denied the opportunity to create words when Cato and Ennius "enriched" their *sermonem patrium,* "native language" (53–58)? Note that this is not quite the same thing as saying that the Latin language suffers from "poverty." Horace is aware of the conventional trope, but he handles it with great care so as to alter the dynamics of power it was often used to perpetuate. Latin, already "enriched" by Cato and Ennius (and this does not necessarily imply that Latin was "poor" before), can become richer through the use of new words. Similarly, Horace does not assert, like Lucretius, that new words can be used to disclose the Greeks' "dark discoveries," but that they may be helpful when a poet desires "indiciis monstrare recentibus abdita rerum," "to show forth obscure matters with recent signs" (49). There is perhaps a comic touch in Horace's reference here to new words never heard *cinctutis Cethegis,*

12 The basic work on the development of Latin grammar remains Barwick 1922. Useful overviews are available in Kaster 1988, 1995.xxi–xxix, 1996.

"by the girded Cethegi" (50), but Horace does not deny the possibility that the Cethegi *had* words to denote obscure matters, or that these matters are the exclusive domain of the Greeks.[13]

Horace counterbalances his use of terms that suggest the distinction between words born and made with descriptive material that confounds these categories. His natural metaphors suggest that new words are both "made" and produced or "born" as a part of the larger processes of nature. Thus a poet, when seeking "to show forth arcane matters with recent signs," has the opportunity *fingere,* "to fashion" (50), words not heard before. Some of the poet's words will be *nova fictaque nuper,* "new and made recently" (52). *Fingere* and *ficta* are terms derived from the discussions of the rhetorical schools and, like the handbooks, Horace recommends prudence in the use of *verba ficta* (51). But his poetic imagery suggests a different paradigm: words *nova fictaque nuper* will gain acceptance "si / Graeco fonte cadent parce detorta," "if they fall from a Greek water-source sparingly opened" (52–53). Arguments for the mellifluousness of Greek may, in part, be responsible for Horace's choice of water-imagery to introduce the conventional idea of Greek loan words' admissibility.[14] The image suggests, too, however, that Greek words exist, so to speak, in nature (they spring from a *fons*), and their use is less an entirely new production than a modulation of what nature offers.[15]

Horace continues to blur the boundary between artificial and natural in what follows. In Horace's view, the "tongue of Cato and Ennius" *protulerit,* "put forth," (58) new names for things, and a present-day poet, likewise, is permitted *producere,* "to bring forth," the word *signatum,* "stamped" (59) like a coin with the mark of the day. Immediately following this latter observation, however, comes the simile of the leaves and engineering feats (Hor. *Ars* 60–69): [16]

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13 It is perhaps also significant that line 47 refers to the *notum . . . verbum,* "familiar word," distinct, as Brink 1971.138 points out, from *propria verba*, which Horace renders later in the poem as *dominantia* (234: these will not suffice, Horace suggests, for satyr plays).

14 For the mellifluousness of Greek, see Quint. *Inst.* 12.10.33.

15 Water imagery, it should be stated, was not unconventional in such contexts: cf. Quint. *Inst*. 1.1.12 on Latin learning as derived from Greek: "unde et nostrae [disciplinae] fluxerunt," "from where our [disciplines] flowed"; cf. Var. *L.* 8.5: among the *verborum principia,* "origins of words," *impositio* ("imposition") is the *fons*, *declinatio* ("inflection") is the *rivus,* "stream."

16 Rudd's text with Lehrs's supplement *exempli gratia*.

ut silvae foliis privos mutantur in annos,
ut nova succrescunt novus et decor enitet illis,
prima cadunt, ita verborum vetus interit aetas,
et iuvenum ritu florent modo nata vigentque.
debemur morti nos nostraque; sive receptus
terra Neptunus classes aquilonibus arcet,
regium opus, sterilisve palus prius aptaque remis
vicinas urbes alit et grave sentit aratrum,
seu cursum mutavit iniquum frugibus amnis
doctus iter melius, mortalia facta peribunt,
nedum sermonum stet honos et gratia vivax.

Just as woods change their leaves year by year, as new ones grow in and a new splendor shines forth from them, while the first ones fall, so the old generation of words perishes and, like youngsters, those just born flourish and thrive. Both we ourselves and what is ours are owed to death; whether the sea, admitted inland, protects the fleets from the North wind, a kingly achievement, or what was a sterile swamp fit to be traversed with oars nourishes neighboring towns and feels the heavy plow, or a river, taught a better path, has changed the course unfavorable to crops, mortal accomplishments will perish, and still less does the esteem and favor of words endure.

The passage likens words both to products of nature (leaves) and to human feats of engineering (a harbor created inland, an arable field produced from a swamp, a river diverged). As before, Horace here uses the very terms employed by rhetorical theory: in being like the leaves, words are like things that are *nata* in nature (62); in being like building projects, they are like things that are *facta* by mankind (68). Although the idea of comparing words to natural processes was not new, the close juxtaposition of the concepts of "birth" and "making" suggests an awareness of the potentially negative connotations of the latter and a wish to place this aspect of poetics in the most favorable possible light. Horace attempts this not by addressing the question of the relative merits of Latin and Greek (as others might have done in such a context), but by describing the phenomenon in such a way as to call into question the *nata*/*facta* opposition itself.

In addition to helping blur the distinction between words "born" and "made," Horace's descriptive focus on natural "generations" shifts the

emphasis of the passage away from synchronic concerns like those of rhetorical theory toward the diachronic concerns of etymology and historiography. Horace thus mitigates the potential negative impact of viewing new words, from a synchronic perspective, as essentially different from the *nata* or *nativa* words that precede them. Rhetorical and grammatical theory recognized the derivation of Latin words from Greek, but etymology and historiography pursued the implications of this phenomenon much further. Indeed, some had gone so far as to argue for the Greek origins of the Latin language itself.[17] Horace does not take an explicit stand on this complex and contentious issue; however, allusion to the debates over Latin's origins casts doubt implicitly on the notion of Latin as a language "born" to original users. Horace indicates, significantly, that the process he is describing holds true for all time, not just for the present moment: "Licuit semperque licebit / signatum praesente nota producere nomen," "It always has and always will be permitted to bring forth a word stamped with the mark of the day" (58–59). And the argument for new words is, of course, strengthened if Latin itself is made up not partially but predominantly of earlier Greek words.

Horace underscores the idea of Latin's historical indebtedness to Greek with a reminder of Roman culture's debt to Greece in the specific area of poetry. Horace makes his whole justification for acceptance of word-creation depend on Homer's simile of the leaves at *Iliad* 6.146–49, as received through Homer's previous imitators, both Greek and Roman (Brink 1971.147). In developing the Homeric simile, Horace illustrates the value of Greek models: a principle on which he insists frequently elsewhere in the poem. Here, Horace demonstrates his own dependence (like that of his great Roman contemporary, Vergil, who had also employed the simile of the leaves [*A.* 6.309–10; cf. *G.* 4.473]), on such a model. Self-referentiality of this kind is in keeping with Horace's practice earlier in the passage. The word *invideor*, derived, as ancient commentators first pointed out, from the Greek φθονοῦμαι, puts into practice, as it were, the principle of derivation for which Horace has just argued (Brink 1971.145). Like this Greek-derived word itself, Horace's version of the Homeric simile is an emblem of the productive cultural inheritance from Greece. Indeed, Homer's words here function not only as a tropological model but as an example of inspired

17 For the theory, see Gruen 1992.60, 234–35, Dubuisson 1984. The matter is linked to the larger question of Rome's Greek and/or Trojan origins, on which see D.H. 1.5–90, Gruen 1992.6–51, Gabba 1991.97, 106–09, 114–15, 134–38, Solmsen 1986. On the political implications, see further Farrell 2001.38–39.

teaching: Horace will later (391–407) identify this as the original role of the poet in Greek society and specify that the successful poet has learned from a *magister* (414–15). Horace draws a parallel between linguistic and poetic debt to underscore his point about neologisms.

Readers since Porphyry have perceived allusions to Roman achievement in the engineering feats that are, like human beings themselves, "owed to death" at *Ars* 63. More recent critics, however, have called these Roman allusions into question. In fact, as Rudd suggests, precision is not what Horace wants here (1989.161). Horace could well have been explicit about the particular Roman achievements he intended, but he is not explicit, and Greek achievements are also possible referents. In particular, the *regium opus,* "royal work," of the artificial harbor might have called to the minds of Horace's Hellenophile associates not only the *portus Iulius* at Puteoli but the royal harbor at Alexandria (Rudd 1989.161). Given the overall pose of humility and reverence before the Greeks in the *Ars*, one possible effect of referring to great feats of engineering in this fashion is to remind the reader of the priority of Greek culture and suggest that the rise and fall of Greece's political might should be understood as comparable to the natural cycle of birth and death signified by the generations of leaves. Horace never questions the fact of Roman military dominance over Greece; but he is, famously, ironic about it: at *Epistles* 2.1.156–57, "captured" Greece has "captured" its conqueror through the importation of its arts. If the simile in the *Ars Poetica*, however, is understood to refer to Roman achievement, the effect is to dampen any implication that the Romans have ultimately "won out" over the Greeks because of their achievements, since the point about the feats of engineering is that they are transient. Again, Greek wisdom frames the comparison of words to human works: the expression *debemur morti,* "we are owed to death," adapts the Greek of, e.g., *A.P.* 10.105.2: θανάτῳ πάντες ὀφειλόμεθα (attributed to Simonides). And this comparison, too, is gathered under the authority of the Homeric simile comparing human beings to leaves.

It is difficult to ascribe to Horace's *Ars Poetica* a number of the self-promoting or conflicted impulses that scholars have recently revealed in Roman prescriptive discussions of language, such as an eagerness to assert the dominance of an Hellenophile elite or an unacknowledged envy of Greek cultural prowess.[18] As much as Horace insists on Greek models, he

18 See, e.g., Bloomer 1997 and discussions of the term *Latinitas* such as those of Krostenko 2001.122–23 and Farrell 2001.36–39. For Latin literature as a cultural practice that served

seems skeptical that a properly Hellenophile poetics has been realized at Rome. The cultural elite he imagines and addresses is, if anything, in constant danger of losing its footing where poetry is concerned, and Horace's envy of the Greeks is far from tacit. This is not to deny that Horace's pose is ideologically charged, only to point out that his discussion of language is not the medium for divisive ideology of a kind found elsewhere. But this should not surprise us. The representational strategies employed in defining correct Latin arose from and informed the social reality of long-term Roman contact with Greece and Greeks, contact that was, in the first century B.C.E., arguably at its most culturally productive in Rome's history. Given the close and long-term nature of the contact, it is implausible to assume that all accounts of language were predominantly self-promoting or deeply conflicted in nature and intent, even if they often were, and even if self-promotion is discernible in many discussions of debt and cultural exchange. Horace does, in different circumstances, direct the barbs of satire against an imagined *Lucili fautor* who argues that a style of speech in which Greek and Latin are blended is as pleasing as a mixture of Chian and Falernian wine (*S.* 1.10.23–24). But Horace's criticism here depends, significantly for the present essay, on drawing a distinction between what is appropriate in a speech and what is appropriate in a poem. Does the observation of the *Lucili fautor* apply, Horace asks, not only to poetry but also to the pleading of cases (25–30)?[19]

The nationalism of *Ars Poetica* is muted in comparison with the nationalistic sentiments expressed or implied in many Roman discussions of language and culture. When praising the Roman genre of *fabula praetexta*, for example, Horace remarks simply, "nec minimum meruere decus vestigia Graeca / ausi deserere et celebrare domestica facta," "nor have those who dared to abandon the path of the Greeks and celebrate our homeland's deeds deserved the least honor" (286–87). Conversely, Horace can be harsh in his criticism of his compatriots. Romans, in Horace's view, suffer from the *aerugo,* "canker," of lust after petty profit (*cura peculi*) because they have been taught since childhood "to divide the *as* into a hundred parts" (325–26). Roman poets' work suggests hastiness, carelessness, or ignorance of their art

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the interests of the elite, see Habinek 1998. I do not mean to claim, of course, that *Ars Poetica* does not reflect and perpetuate the interests of a wider elite in any fashion, only that we need not assume that these interests are addressed here in exactly the same way as they are often addressed elsewhere.

19 Horace ridicules his own efforts to write poetry in Greek a few lines later: it is as foolish, he says, as bringing wood to the forest (31–35).

(258–62). To the Greeks, on the other hand, the Muse gave *ingenium,* "genius," and *ore rotundo . . . loqui,* "well-rounded eloquence" (323–24). Horace's attitude would not have struck many Romans as unusual. Indeed, it can be understood as a version (though perhaps less extreme and more balanced) of what Cicero calls the *domesticarum rerum fastidium,* "disdain for our homeland's products" (*Fin.* 1.10) that he has remarked among his contemporaries.

Horace's defense of neologisms ascribes cultural power to the Greeks and their language; but Horace avoids either disparaging or promoting Latin and instead concentrates on what, in his view, will make a successful poet. The use of "new" words can contribute to poetic success because verbal innovation is, in the right circumstances, appreciated. *Usus*, the "usage" of educated speech, decides what words will be favored at a given time (71–72). Discussion of poetry *in* poetry, Horace realized, might frame its own particular kind of interaction between Greek and Latin, even if it was necessary to borrow a common trope from other Roman discussions of language to describe the phenomenon of neologisms itself. It was possible to use the trope in such a way as to avoid its expected connotations. One could blur the distinction between words "born" and "made" simply through the way one described language change. Other discourses, such as etymology and historiography, also cast doubt on the distinction in their fashion, while the idea of Rome's poetic inheritance from Greece served, similarly, as a powerful reminder that all things Roman were not "native." The juxtaposition and comparison of Horace's defense of neologisms with the texts and discourses often numbered among its sources allows Horace's careful response to his cultural context to come to light. The interest of the passage lies not only in the originality with which Horace adapts the imagery and concepts of his sources, but in how he transforms the dynamics of power implied by a common cultural trope by turning it into memorable poetry.

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