

## AES TRIPLEX (HORACE, ODES 1. 3. 9)

NISBET and HUBBARD, the most recent editors, remark on the phrase as follows: 'In early poetry a metal heart is a mark of toughness, insensitivity, or cruelty.' They offer analogies for this interpretation from Homer on and summarize: 'In view of these parallels Horace may be suggesting insensitivity as well as fearlessness.'<sup>1</sup> But Horace is specifically describing not the heart itself but what is around the heart (*circa pectus*). Kiessling-Heinze (ad loc.) are closer to the truth: 'Hier aber ist nicht das Herz selbst aus härtestem Stoff . . . sondern das Herz ist gegen jede von aussen andrängende Empfindung verwahrt, wie in einer Lade aus Eichenholz mit dreifachem Erzbeschlag.' It is not by comparison with the poet's own lack of a *χάλκεον ἦτορ* (*Il.* 2. 490) or with Priam's *σιδήρειον ἦτορ* (*Il.* 24. 205) that Homer helps us most but in his description of the *ἀντιξ* of Achilles' shield as *τρίπλακα*. Earlier Horatian commentators, notably Orellius, Nauck, and Dillenberger, observed that a shield is in question. No annotator, however, seems to have remarked that the only other occurrence of the phrase *aes triplex* in Latin is at *Aeneid* 10. 784, where Aeneas' spear pierces the shield of Lausus (*orbem / aere cavum triplici*). Horace's triple bronze protects the heart of his first seafarer from the terrors of the deep to which he has committed his frail bark. Critics could well refer to one of Richard the Second's more bitter moments ('as if this flesh which walls about our life / were brass impregnable . . . ' [*Richard II*, III. ii. 167-8]) or to the wisdom of Robert Frost ('Triple Bronze', in *A Witness Tree*).

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<sup>1</sup> Porphyron (ad loc.) glosses along the same lines: 'Exsecratur eum, qui primus ausus sit navigare, dicitque eum durissimo

corde ac pectore fuisse, qui tanta pericula non timuerit. Habet autem hic quiddam Homericum' (the reference is to *Il.* 2. 490).

## THE CRUX AT EPODE 5. 87 AGAIN

*uenena magnum fas nefasque, non ualent  
conuertere humanam uicem.*

IN his article entitled 'Two Horatian Problems' (*CQ* N.S. xvii [1967], 327-31) Dr. Giuseppe Giangrande argues persuasively on palaeographical and other grounds for the reading *miscent* in place of *magnum*. 'In conclusion,' he summarizes, 'the emendation proposed here solves all the difficulties which have puzzled scholars so far and at the same time is capable of a palaeographical explanation' (loc. cit. 328).

While in no way wishing to detract from the able presentation of Giangrande, I should like to draw the attention of scholars to a little-known book from which two sentences are here quoted.

'I suggest *miscent* for *magnum* in the sense of *miscebis sacra profanis* of *Ep.* 1. 16, 54 and of *pacem duello miscuit* in *Od.* 3, 5, 38. . . . In palaeography *IS* might easily be read as *A*, and that is, I believe, the origin of the blunder' (E. R. Garnsey, *Epilegomena on Horace*, [London, 1907], 30).

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