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GRAPHIC USE OF THE PERFECT
IN HORACE ODES 1, 1, 27 - 28

R o l f W e s t m a n

Carm. 1,1,23-28

*multos castra iuvant et lituo tubae
permixtus sonitus bellaque matribus
25 detestata; manet sub Iove frigido
venator tenerae coniugis immemor,
seu visa est catulis cerva fidelibus
seu rupit teretes Marsus aper plagas.*

When Horace started to describe the various occupations of men at the beginning of the poem he used a form of the verb *iuvare* (v. 4). He does so again here in connection with *castra* and *bella*. Now between vv. 23-25 and the following *exemplum* there is a sustaining semantic link, in the concern of the womenfolk back home. But what probably strikes the reader more is the difference between these two *exempla*. There is a shift from the plural (*multos*) to the singular *venator* (cf. the similar transition from vv. 3-6 to 7sqg.), and there is one aspect of the semantic contrast between *iuvant* and *manet* which also makes for greater particularization.

Iuvare meant permanent interest in the occupation described. *Manet*, on the other hand, although in form keeping up the smooth regular flow of the *exempla*, signifies a temporary act, subject to given

conditions. The hunter does not habitually leave his wife alone (possibly all night). He does so only when he has met with something out of the ordinary. I repeat 'has met' - because what necessitates his staying away from home is the aftermath of a hunting incident that needs clearing up.

Horace gives us two examples of such hunting scenes (vv. 27 and 28), each forming a complete whole although consisting of only six words (of which in both lines the first, *seu*, is merely formal). The scenes are full of life, and both imply a follow-up for which many of the men participating in the hunt will be needed. This implication is brought about through the use of the perfect tense, which opens up a perspective toward developments subsequent to the action actually mentioned.¹

The liveliness of the scenes is enhanced by two adjectives, *fidelibus* and *teretes* (chiastically arranged in relation to their nouns): in spite of his brevity, the poet finds time to dwell on the close fellowship between the hunters and their dogs, and on the quality² of the trap that the boar - a stout male, well worth catching - has broken.

Of course every reader sees that Horace's intention in verses 25-28 is to show a man as infatuated with hunting as men are with

1 These are the only instances of finite perfect in the poem, with the exception of *condidit* v. 9, which contains no such implication but simply expresses finality.

2 For *teretes* (the exact meaning of which is much debated but immaterial to my point) see Nisbet and Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book I*, 1970, p.13, with references. For comments on the whole passage (vv. 25-28) cf. also Schönberger, *Gymnasium* 73(1966)397 and Vretska, *Hermes* 99(1971)329 as well as Setaioli 1973 (see *L'année philol.* 45, 160) 42 fin. and 45-48.

horse-racing or with military life in previous *exempla*. But the graphic detail which he employs to create this impression seemed worth calling attention to.³

³ I thank Dr. Roger Sell for helpful suggestions as to the form of this article.