

SALLUST AND PS.-ACRO: THE PROLOGUE OF THE *CATILINE*
AND THE COMMENTARY ON HORACE, *EPISTLE* 1.4

Epistle 1.4 is the brief but important poem that Horace addressed to his fellow-poet Tibullus. The epistle ends with Horace's famous self-comparison to a "pig from Epicurus' sty" (1.4.16). Here Ps.-Acro makes the following comment: *hara locus dicitur, ubi stant sues, id est suinae, animal nimium primum ac ventri deditum*. In an article on the text of Ps.-Acro's commentary on the *Epistles* Keller devoted as much as half a page to this single sentence; he was nonetheless unable to detect in it any echo of the classics¹. The canonical edition which Keller then proceeded to publish likewise failed to indicate any such debt². Nor was the section devoted to "Autorenzitate" in Noske's important monograph able to identify the influence of any *auctor* in these particular words³. It would nonetheless seem possible to show that the sentence of Ps.-Acro at issue is in fact heavily indebted to a classical text.

Sallust was a very popular author at the end of antiquity⁴. This familiarity is also shared by Ps.-Acro⁵. The opening sentence of Sallust's preface to the *Catiline* ends as follows: *veluti pecora, quae natura prona atque ventri oboedientia finxit* (1.1). Here we evidently have the source of Ps.-Acro's *primum ac ventri deditum*, which exactly matches the Sallustian *prona atque ventri oboedientia*⁶. Ps.-Acro has merely replaced *oboediens* with *deditus*. Here three points may be made. In the first place the two participles are synonymous: both are glossed as *subditus*⁷. Secondly Sallust himself had

¹ O. Keller, *Verbesserungen zu Pseudacron (Hor. Serm. und Epist.)*, "Wien. Stud." 23, 1901, 116-117.

² O. Keller, *Pseudacronis Scholia in Horatium Vetustiora*, II, Leipzig 1904, repr. Stuttgart 1967, 228.

³ G. Noske, *Quaestiones Pseudacroneae*, Diss. Munich 1969, 220-226.

⁴ Cf. the present writer, *Hieronymus Sallustianus*, "Graz. Beitr." 24, 2005, 93-110. Sallustian phraseology even finds its way into the Vulgate itself; cf. id., *Biblia Pagana: Classical Echoes in the Vulgate*, "Augustinianum" 40, 2000, 82-87. On the other hand for the dangers of over-zealous attempts to identify Sallustian influence cf. id., *Two Further Echoes of Sallust's 'Histories' in Jerome (Vita Hilarionis 22,3 and 30,2)?*, "Vet. Christ." 37, 2000, 209-215.

⁵ Cf. Keller, *op. cit.* (n. 2) 405 and 492 ("Index auctorum" and "Index generalis" s.v. "Sallustius").

⁶ Ps.-Acro's foregoing *animal* likewise has a counterpart in Sallust's similarly antecedent *animalibus*. The Sallustian echo in this sentence of Ps.-Acro fails to find mention in the recent examination of Sallust's influence in R. Poignault (ed.), *Présence de Salluste* (Coll. Caesarodunum 30bis), Tours 1997.

⁷ Cf. G. Loewe and G. Goetz, *Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum*, IV, Leipzig 1889, repr. Amsterdam 1965, 51.4 (*deditus*) and 544.1 (*oboediens*; cf. app. crit.).

employed the similar collocation *dediti ventri atque somno* in the immediately following chapter (2.8)⁸. Finally the effect of Ps.-Acro's substitution of *deditus* for *oboediens* is an elegant spondee cretic clausula⁹. Ps.-Acro's resultant formulation rounds off the commentary on this epistle with a very graceful flourish.

Notwithstanding this elegance the echo also entails an inconcinnity. If Ps.-Acro's *ventri deditum* corresponds to the Horatian *pinguem*, there is no warrant for the commentator's *pronum*. Moreover Sallust's point is that all *pecora* are *prona*. Ps.-Acro's insertion of *nimium* is accordingly a rather gauche attempt to accommodate the reminiscence to the new context with its particular reference to a pig. The awkwardness provides convenient verification that here we have to do with a borrowing. By way of conclusion it may be observed that the present passage of Ps.-Acro offers an intriguing glimpse into the personality of this Dark Age commentator: on the one hand the reminiscence reveals a deep attachment to the classical tradition, while on the other the inconcinnity betrays a grasp of it that is no longer perfect.

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⁸ The two Sallustian contexts resemble each other: in particular the adjoining *vitam sicuti peregrinantes transiere* of ch. 2 corresponds closely to the similarly adjacent *vitam... transeant veluti pecora* of ch. 1. It was therefore natural to combine the two texts.

⁹ The same cadence is generated by hyperbaton a few lines earlier in the commentary (1.4.5): *suis uti bonis*.