MORBUS CAMPANUS IN HORACE, *SATIRES* 1.5.62*

In a comic battle of insults at the centre of Horace's famous 'Journey to Brundisium' (*Sat.* 1.5), Sarmentus, a member of the entourage of Maecenas, makes fun of the rustic appearance and ugly features of his local opponent, the Oscan Messius Cicirrus. One of his jokes refers to a mysterious *morbus Campanus* (1.5.62), a disease that scholars have unsuccessfully struggled to identify for centuries. The only correct explanation, I will argue, was proposed more than fifteen hundred years ago, but has never been taken seriously.

Sarmentus opens the duel by making fun of the unkempt looks of Messius. Apparently, Messius' hair looks like a shaggy mane, so he compares his rival to a wild horse (*equi te | esse feri similem dico*, 56–7).[1] In addition, Messius' face is disfigured by an ugly scar on his forehead. Sarmentus exploits this fact ad nauseam. He mocks the Oscan first by interpreting the scar as the remains of a horn that Messius seems to have lost at some point (58–60). After that, he pokes some fun at the mysterious Campanian disease (62) but in the end Sarmentus returns again to his opponent's face. This time he interprets Messius' scar as the burnt-out third eye on the forehead of the Cyclops, Polyphemus.[2] He jokes that Messius would be a perfect candidate for the role of the lovesick Cyclops in a pantomimic dance since he would neither need a mask nor, apparently because of his size, the customary high-soled boots of ancient tragedy:

> Campanum in morbum, in faciem permulta iocatus
> pastorem saltaret uti Cyclopa, rogabat:
> nil illi larva aut tragicis opus esse coturnis. (*Sat.* 1.5.62–4)
>
> After many jokes about the Campanian disease (and) about his face,
> he repeatedly asked him to dance 'The Cyclops as shepherd':
> he didn't (even) need a mask or tragic buskins.

The current standard explanation of the mysterious Campanian disease goes back to the so-called Commentator Cruquianus.[3] Cruquianus takes the words *in faciem* as an explanatory apposition to *Campanum in morbum* and writes:

* I would like to thank Georg Luck and Matthew Roller who discussed a first version of this note with me many years ago at Johns Hopkins. I am also grateful to *CQ*'s former editor Rhiannon Ash and the journal's anonymous referee for several helpful comments.

[1] Cf. N. Rudd, *The Satires of Horace. A Study* (Cambridge, 1966), 63. Others have identified the *equus ferus* as a unicorn (e.g. A. Palmer, *The Satires of Horace* [London, 1891⁴, repr. London, 1968], 182; E.P. Morris, *Horace. The Satires* [New York, 1939, repr. Norman, OK, 1968], 90) or as the rhinoceros of Horace's Lucilian model for this passage (cf. e.g. H. Musurillo, 'Horace's journey to Brundisium: fact or fiction', *CW* 48 [1955], 159–62, at 162 n. 11). The last two identifications, however, conflate the joke about Messius' hair with the following joke about the scar as evidence of a missing horn, and that seems unwarranted.

[2] Cf. Rudd (n. 1), 63 n. 19. Cyclopes appear as one-eyed in Homer (*Od.* 9.333 and *passim*) and Hesiod (*Theog.* 144–5). Roman paintings of Polyphemus and Galatea, however, consistently portray the Cyclops with three eyes, see O. Touchefeu-Meynier, 'Kyklops, Kyklopes', *LIMC* 6.1 (1992), 154–9, at 157.

[3] Hereafter called Cruquianus. J. Endt, *Studien zum Commentator Cruquianus* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1906), 25–7 and *passim* argues that the sixteenth-century Dutch editor of Horace, Jacobus

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hoc enim quasi a natura Campanis fere omnibus inest ut capitis temporibus magnae verrucae innascantur, in modum cornuum, quas cum incidi faciunt, cicatrices in fronte manent, quasi notae exsectorum cornuum.

(*Schol. Cruq. ad Hor. Sat.* 1.5.62)

For this is by nature, as it were, characteristic for almost all Campanians that big warts grow on the temples of their head, in the manner of horns; when they have them surgically removed, scars remain on their forehead like marks from the horns that were cut off.

The vast majority of modern scholars seem to accept this rather ludicrous explanation.[4] On the other hand, not even visual inspection may have been able to disprove Cruquianus' theory because, as Max Wellmann in Pauly–Wissowa, *Real-encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* assures us, 'these horn-like tumours or warts on the forehead, the temples, etc. were especially common in Campania and are still common today'.[5] In any case, even those critics who suspected that Cruquianus was just guessing have deemed his note worthy of being quoted.[6]

Other scholars have looked for a different disease that would cause scars or tumours: Some assume that Horace is referring to satyriasis, a disease that, according to Aristotle, makes the face of its victims look like that of a satyr (*Gen. an.* 768b34–6).[7] Munk explained the *morbus* as a kind of elephantiasis that produces facial tumours.[8] Fritzsche, in turn, thought of *lepra nodosa*, a disease apparently rampant in regions of the Mediterranean during his lifetime.[9] Even more popular is the assumption that Cruquianus' facial warts are symptoms of a venereal disease and indicate the wide spread of syphilis among the ancient Campanians.[10] The most recent English commentator, P.M. Brown, quotes not only Cruquianus' theory, but

Cruquius, compiled these scholia himself, mixing excerpts from the ancient scholia preserved to us with notes by later commentators, especially Fabricius, and his own observations.

[4] Cf. J. Gow, *Q. Horati Flacci Saturarum Liber I* (Cambridge, 1901), 76; A. Kiessling and R. Heinze, *Q. Horatius Flaccus, Band II: Satiren* (Berlin, 1960[10]), 100; J.H. Kirkland, *Horace, Satires and Epistles* (Chicago, 1926), 166; G. Puppo, *Orazio. Le Satire* (Torino, 1933), 68; J.C. Rolfe, *Horace, Satires and Epistles* (Boston, 1935[2]), 189; F. Villeneuve, *Horace, Satires* (Paris, 1989), 73 n. 4; Rudd (n. 1), 282 n. 19; K. Büchner, *Horaz. Die Satiren* (Bologna, 1970), 133; O. Schönberger, *Horaz. Satiren und Episteln* (Berlin, 1976), 67; P. Fedeli, *Q. Orazio Flacco. Le Opere, II: Le Satire* (Rome, 1994), 431.

[5] M. Wellmann, 'Campanus morbus', *RE* 3 (1899), 1442 (my translation).

[6] G.T.A. Krüger, *Des Q. Horatius Flaccus Satiren und Episteln* (Leipzig, 1894), 56; Palmer (n. 1), 183; P.M. Brown, *Horace, Satires I* (Warminster, 1993), 146. Morris (n. 1), 92 is the most cautious: 'Some disease not even understood by the scholiasts which was thought to be the cause of the scar.'

[7] L.F. Heindorf, *Des Quintus Horatius Flaccus Satiren* (Reutlingen, 1818), 123–4; C. Kirchner, *Des Q. Horatius Flaccus zwei Bücher Satiren. Vol. 2.1: Commentar zum ersten Buche der Satiren* (Leipzig, 1855), 200–1. Heindorf (ibid.) further comments that Aristotle's satyriasis is identical to the first stage of elephantiasis, 'immer mit grosser Geilheit verbunden'.

[8] Quoted by A. Fritzsche, *Des Q. Horatius Flaccus Sermonen*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1875), 139.

[9] Fritzsche (n. 8), ibid.

[10] Cf. e.g. J.Z. Platner, 'De morbo Campano ad verba Horatii L. I. Sat. V. v. LXII', in F. Platner (ed.), *Ioh. Zachariae Platneri … Opusculorum tomus II: Prolusiones* (Leipzig, 1749), 21–8, at 28; L. Döderlein, *Horazens Satiren* (Leipzig, 1860), 178; A.C.J. Michaelis, *Compendium der Lehre von der Syphilis* (Vienna, 1865[2]), 7; H.N. Cole, 'Antiquity of syphilis with some observations on its treatment through the ages', *AMA Arch Derm Syphilol* 64 (1951), 12–22, at 14. The frequent recent attempts to prove the existence of venereal syphilis in pre-Columbian Europe by pointing to treponemal bone lesions in skeletons are problematic since the non-venereal kinds of treponematosis (pinta, yaws, endemic syphilis) cause similar lesions, *pace* C.

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discusses two further possible explanations: Messius, he thinks, may have suffered either from gigantism (because he does not need high-soled shoes to play the Cyclops, cf. 1.5.64) or from sexual insatiability. The latter option would have Messius, he argues, 'resemble the Cyclops in passion as well as in ugliness and stature' (Brown [n. 6], 146).

Nothing in Horace's words, however, necessitates the identification of the *morbus Campanus* with facial warts of any kind. Horace speaks only of an ugly scar (*foeda cicatrix*, 60) and there is no explicit hint at a connection between this scar and the *morbus Campanus*. Furthermore, nowhere in our ancient sources are Campanians regularly associated with any kind of physical disease, be it warts, venereal diseases, leprosy or gigantism. Nobody regularly accuses them of sexual insatiability either. Accordingly, none of the interpretations of *morbus Campanus* presented so far is convincing.

Interestingly, the ancient scholiasts identified the *morbus Campanus* not as a physical disease, but understood it metaphorically as a bad moral trait typically found in Campanians.[11] Porphyrio based his explanation of the passage on the fact that Campania used to be inhabited by Oscans[12] who were allegedly prone to obscenities (Porph. p. 258 H., cf. ps.-Acro p. 70 K.):

> Campani, qui Osci dicebantur, ore immundi habiti sunt. Unde etiam 'obscenos' dictos putant quasi 'Oscenos'.

Messius is indeed of Oscan descent (1.5.54), and the Oscans were so notorious for their bawdy *fabula Atellana* that ancient grammarians derived the adjective *obscenus* etymologically from their name.[13] Obscenity, however, seems to have been so commonly associated with Oscans that we would expect Messius' disease to be called *morbus Oscus* rather than *morbus Campanus* if Porphyrio's interpretation were correct.

To the Campanians, the Romans attributed first and foremost not obscenity, but arrogance. Cicero, for example, agitated against a plan to sell the state-owned *ager Campanus* and settle Roman colonists in Capua by reminding his audience repeatedly of the notorious Campanian arrogance (*superbia*, *arrogantia* or *fastidium*).[14] In his eyes, Campanians are born arrogant (*Leg. agr.* 1.20) and have always been that way (*Leg. agr.* 2.95). Capua, the capital of Campania, he terms the 'home of arrogance' (*Leg. agr.* 2.97, *Red. sen.* 17). Living in Campania as such is enough, he claims, to make people arrogant. For the magistrates of the recently founded Roman colony not only insist in being called *praetores* instead of the usual *duumviri*, they have already usurped the *insignia* of regular Roman praetors for themselves (*Leg. agr.* 2.92–3).

Roberts and K. Manchester, *The Archaeology of Disease* (Ithaca, NY, 1995²), 158–9 (cf. their lists of symptoms, ibid. 151–5).

[11] For the widespread metaphorical use of *morbus* with regard to *mores vitiosi vel animi passiones* see V. Reichmann and W. Ehlers, 'morbus', *TLL* 8 (1936–66), 1481–2.

[12] See Strabo 5.3.6 (C 233); Plin. *HN* 3.61.

[13] Festus p. 189 M.; Isid. *Orig.* 10.198; see also R. Maltby, *A Lexicon of Ancient Latin Etymologies* (Leeds, 1991), 421.

[14] Cf. Cic. *Leg. agr.* 1.18 (***superbiam*** *et crudelitatem*), 20 (***superbia****: nata inibi esse haec* ***ex Campanorum fastidio*** *videtur*); 2.91 (*illam* ***Campanam adrogantiam*** *atque intolerandam ferociam*), 92 (***superbiam***), 93 (***Campano fastidio***), 95 (*Campani semper* ***superbi***), 97 (*Capuae, in domicilio* ***superbiae*** *atque in sedibus luxuriosis*).

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The picture that emerges from other Roman authors is the same. Livy calls the people of Capua *populus luxuria atque* ***superbia*** *clarus* (7.31.6). Even when the Capuans show pity with a defeated Roman army, he emphasizes that this runs counter to their innate arrogance: *evicit miseratio iusta sociorum* ***superbiam ingenitam Campanis*** (9.6.5). Gellius introduces the self-confident tomb inscription of the poet Naevius, who was born in Capua, as an epigram *plenum superbiae Campanae* (Gell. *NA* 1.24.2). Finally Ausonius, in a poem about Capua, states: *corruerunt Poeni luxu, Campania fastu* (Auson. *Ordo nob. urb.* 59 Green). The one and only trait proverbially associated with Campanians throughout Roman history was their arrogance.

I suggest, therefore, that the expression *morbus Campanus* is a comic allusion to the proverbial Campanian arrogance. The fifth-century scholiast known as ps.-Acro came close to the same conclusion. He could not decide whether Horace was referring to the predilection for obscene language already suggested by Porphyrio or to arrogance. Under the lemma '*Campanum in morbum*' he writes:

aut oris foeditatem aut arrogantiam. Dicuntur enim Campani et foedi esse et arrogantes. Si foedi, accipimus κατὰ τὸ αὐτό. (ps.-Acro p. 69 K)

Either vileness of language or arrogance. For the Campanians are said to be foul-mouthed and arrogant. If 'foul-mouthed', we understand it simultaneously.

Accordingly, the correct interpretation of the phrase *morbus Campanus* as a reference to Campanian arrogance has been around for more than fifteen hundred years. Modern scholars, however, have completely neglected it.[15]

There is one obvious objection to the interpretation of *Campanus morbus* as a comic allusion to Campanian arrogance. All the other jokes Sarmentus makes are aimed at physical flaws of his rival, so an allusion to a character fault seems out of place. Two answers come to mind: first, Sarmentus' mockery of arrogance might have been inspired by a physical aspect of Messius' facial expression that Sarmentus took to indicate arrogance.[16] Secondly, a *scurra* like Sarmentus (cf. *Sat.* 1.5.52) does everything for a laugh and does not hesitate to use jokes that are both old and inappropriate. In a discussion of good and bad humour in Cicero's *De oratore*, Julius Caesar Strabo reports a joke a *scurra* made against an acquaintance with only one eye, and condemns it as *scurrile*:

et quod sine causa lacesserit et tamen id dixit quod in omnes luscos conveniret (Cic. *De or.* 2.246).[17]

[15] There are some exceptions: in the eighteenth century, Platner (n. 10), 22 rejected ps.-Acro's explanation summarily. P. Lejay, *Œuvres d'Horace, Satires* (Paris, 1911), 161 quoted both Cruquianus' and Porphyrio's notes as if he approved of them. Most recently, C. Ferone, 'Campanum in morbum, in faciem permulta iocatus: Nota a Hor. *Sat.* 1,5,62', *Orpheus* 14 (1993), 125–8, argues that *morbus Campanus* has 'un valore polisemico' (ibid. 128), encompassing both the warts of Cruquianus and the moral vices indicated by Porphyrio and ps.-Acro.

[16] Latin idioms often refer to arrogance by localizing it in the face, e.g. the brow (Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.93 *hunc Capuae* ***Campano supercilio*** [ci. Hervagius; *fastidio*, ci. Richter; *praesidio*: MSS]) *ac regio spirito cum videremus, etc.*; Petr. 91.7 *postquam se amari sensit, supercilium altius sustulit*) or the nose (Hor. *Sat.* 1.6.1–6 *non … naso suspendis adunco ignotos*). I owe this observation to Matthew Roller.

[17] Quint. *Inst.* 6.3.34 also disapproves of this kind of jokes: *male enim dicitur quod in plures convenit, si aut nationes totae incessantur aut ordines aut condicio aut studia multorum.* On the

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The same, I would like to argue in conclusion, is true when the *scurra* Sarmentus refers to the 'Campanian disease'. He is making a completely trite joke at Campanians that probably belonged to the repertoire of every Roman *scurra*.

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specific humour of *scurrae* see also Hor. *Sat.* 1.4.34–8 and 78–89; K. Freudenburg, *The Walking Muse* (Princeton, 1993), 92–6. On Roman parasites or *scurrae* in general see most recently C. Damon, *The Mask of the Parasite* (Ann Arbor, 1997).

HORACE, *ODES* 3.5.7

Lines 5 to 12 of Horace, *Odes* 3.5 are transmitted, and usually printed, as follows:

> Milesne Crassi coniuge barbara
> turpis maritus uixit et hostium
> – pro curia inuersique mores! –
> consenuit socerorum in armis
> sub rege Medo Marsus et Apulus,
> anciliorum et nominis et togae
> oblitus aeternaeque Vestae
> incolumi Ioue et urbe Roma?

Pro curia inuersique mores troubles. It is difficult to see the relevance of the Roman senate to the matter at issue – survivors of Crassus' defeat who remain in Parthia and their degeneracy – or, in so far as relevance may be found, not to hear an uncharacteristically direct reproach of Horace's betters.[1] In addition, something negative, not positive, is needed to balance *inuersi mores*. A number of commentators (I cannot make out who did so first) have taken *inuersi* to apply, ἀπὸ κοινοῦ, to both nouns.[2] If they be followed we at least have two undesirable things invoked – a senate house and morals both perverted – and so are relieved of one difficulty. But ἀπὸ κοινοῦ should only be brought to bear if *inuersa curia* suits its context, as does for example *mutatam fidem* at *Odes* 1.5.5–6 *heu quotiens fidem mutatosque deos flebit!* As matters stand *inuersa curia* must conjure a building turned upside down or inside out, and that is, in the surrounds of our poem, grotesque.

[1] If the received text is accepted we are bound to the interpretation of ancient scholia, endorsed most recently by Rudd in R. Nisbet and N. Rudd, *A Commentary on Horace: Odes, Book III* (Oxford, 2004), ad loc.: 'the senate was supposed to represent the honourable traditions of Rome and yet had accepted the behaviour described in vv. 5–12'.

[2] One may take as representative H. Schütz, *Quintus Horatius Flaccus* (Berlin, 1880–3²), '*inversi* ist ἀπὸ κοινοῦ zu fassen' and E.C. Wickham, *The Works of Horace* (Oxford, 1896), 'The force of "inversi" is thrown back upon "curia" after Horace's manner'.

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