

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05779-0 - The Classical Museum: A Journal of Philology, and of Ancient History and Literature: Volume 7

Edited by Leonhard Schmitz

Excerpt

[More information](#)

THE  
CLASSICAL MUSEUM.

---

I.

ON CRITICAL INDUCTION.

---

I VENTURE to offer some remarks on the nature of critical induction, with reference to certain passages of Virgil and Horace, which have often been the subject of discussion.

Conjectural emendation is certainly an inductive science. Nobody will assert, now at least, that we have a right to alter a reading, as we might a school-boy's exercise, merely to make it better. But what we do not profess directly, we are constantly in danger of falling into indirectly. There is a constant natural inclination to do it. What we admire, we cannot help wishing to make more perfect, and that, according to our own notions of perfection. It continually happens that persons, to whom the ownership of some beautiful portion of the earth's surface has been unhappily entrusted, have spoiled nature by way of improving her: and it is not at all uncommon, in the present time, to see an old Gothic building entirely ruined, under the name of *restoration*. In emendation upon eminent authors, the excuse is, that they could not have written any thing bad; and that when we correct or *obelize* faults, like the Alexandrian critics, we do so, not as faults, but as inductive improbabilities.

But, is the principle true? According to Longinus, when we speak of the very highest productions of genius, the fact is just the reverse. Sect. 33. he labours the point through several sections most eloquently,—*αἶδα μὲν ὡς αἱ ὑπερμεγέθεις φύσεις ἤκιστα καθαραὶ · τὸ γὰρ ἐν παντὶ ἀκριβὲς κίνδυνος σμικρότητος · ἐν δὲ ταῖς μεγέθεσιν, ὥσπερ ἐν ταῖς ἄγαν πλούτοις, εἶναί τι χρῆ καὶ παρολιγωρούμενον.*

VII.

A

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05779-0 - The Classical Museum: A Journal of Philology, and of Ancient History and Literature: Volume 7

Edited by Leonhard Schmitz

Excerpt

[More information](#)

2

## ON CRITICAL INDUCTION.

And with regard to Shakespeare, though I am very far from going all lengths with the fastidious editorship of Pope, I must contend, against many of his idolators in the present time, for considerable inequality in him; which, I believe, those who most truly enter into his spirit will be the most ready to admit, and he himself would laugh at us exceedingly for making any doubt or difficulty about.

But it may be said, that however this may apply to Greek writers, or to others of a relatively early period of literature, there are some at least among the Romans (*Quibus non licet esse tam disertis, Qui Musas colimus severiores,*) who unite extreme excellence with absolute perfection.

But what says Martial himself, the author of the distinction just mentioned, and a very polished writer?

“*Jactat inæquales Matho me fecisse libellos,  
Si verum est, laudat carmina nostra Matho;  
Æquales faciunt libros Calvenus et Umbro,  
Æqualis liber est, . . . qui malus est.*”

There is a difficulty incident to all induction. If you deny and correct this, that, and the other instance, as contrary to experience, how are you to obtain those collections of facts, upon which experience itself is founded?

The same considerations apply, where the commentator explains, instead of altering. He still assumes, that his author could not have written nonsense.

There is a well known passage in the fourth *Georgic*,

“*Nam qua Pellæi gens fortunata Canopi,*” &c.

the geography of which has puzzled the critics. One of the explanations, perhaps, for more than one cannot, may be thought satisfactory enough to be adopted.<sup>1</sup> But when you have got rid

<sup>1</sup> With regard to the passage itself, Virgil might allude to some odd notion of one river really being identified with another. The Eridanus of the Greeks, (see *Apoll. Rhod.*) is one specimen of that strange sort of confusion. If one traveller finds one great river, and another another, in the same continent, our own experience as to the Niger and Brahmaputra will shew, that

wrong conjectures as to identity, or entire ignorance of connection, may prevail. Much more, when the one traveller's observations were merely repeated by memory, not the two accurately preserved and compared by speculative enquirers at home; when they took no bearings nor latitudes; and had no maps. Almost all remote geography, to the ancient Greeks, was that of the

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05779-0 - The Classical Museum: A Journal of Philology, and of Ancient History and Literature: Volume 7

Edited by Leonhard Schmitz

Excerpt

[More information](#)

## ON CRITICAL INDUCTION.

3

of this, if you turn to another page (*Georg.* i 489,) you find another passage,—

“Ergo inter sese paribus concurrere telis  
Romanas acies iterum videre Philippi,  
Nec fuit indignum Superis, bis sanguine nostro  
Emathiam et latos Hæmi pinguescere campos :”—

in which the same sort of difficulty, a geographical one, occurs with regard to places nearer home, and expressly mentioned on account of events of the most recent occurrence. To explain this too, dissertations and notes have been accumulated. But while we are explaining this, does it not happen to occur, that *the having* a second passage to explain, no error in the text being suspected in either, goes a great way to weaken the assump-

coast. We see the confusion in Homer, compared to the Argonautic accounts, between the Bosphorus and Straits of Messina, as to the Cimmerians, Planctæ, and perhaps Circe and *Æetes*; and hence, I suppose, the *Æthiopians* in the *Odyssey*; τοὶ διχθὰ διδαίπται, ἔσχατοι ἀνδρῶν, οἱ μὴν δυσορέϊνον ὑπέρϊονος, οἱ δ' ἀνίετρος; that is, they were found on the east and west shores of Africa.

“But how could any body suppose, that a river they had seen to its mouth, could be the same as another, whose mouth they were also acquainted with?” (The Indus might indeed, very probably, have been known to the Persians at Attock before its mouth was known, and through them to the Greeks. But there was the Red Sea, at any rate, between it and the Nile.)

They, first, had become familiar with rivers sinking in at one place, and rising at another. They knew, next, of rivers running into large lakes and out again, so as to be pronounced decidedly to be the same; as the Rhone in the Lake of Geneva. In these cases, they sometimes would fancy that it passed untouched through the lake, as it might do through the ground; as the Welch used to do at Bala, asserting that throughout the lake, which is three miles in length, a different sort of fish

is found in the course of the river, from what is in the rest of the lake. Homer tells us this of the Titaeresius, running not through a lake, but with another river; that it flowed at top like oil. The fancy arose from what does happen for some way from the junction, where the rivers differ greatly in clearness or in colour. The notion was directly applied to the case of passing through the sea itself, and for a great length, in the case of the Alpheus. It was connected with another general and very natural fancy, which, in ignorant people's minds, I have no doubt, still exists,—that springs come from some very great connected supply of water, in motion like a river under ground, perhaps identified with the sea itself. Homer says that all wells and fountains of rivers are from the ocean, which in him seems something between a sea and a river; and Euripides, in the first chorus in the *Hippolytus*, applies it even to a spring falling from a rock, ὠκεανοῦ τις ὕδωρ στάζουσα πίτρα λίγεται, βαπτὰν κάλλισι βυτὰν παγὰν προΐϊσα κρημνῶν. See Heyne on the passage about the rivers in *Georg.* iv. 366, who says there is a valuable essay on this, by Voss.

This idea of the ocean however, I believe, was partly taken from the reports of the tides. Flowing and reflow-

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05779-0 - The Classical Museum: A Journal of Philology, and of Ancient History and Literature: Volume 7

Edited by Leonhard Schmitz

Excerpt

[More information](#)

tion implied in the explanation of the first, that the poet himself could not be in the wrong? But here is a third passage; so at least it appears to me, though in Heyne's edition no difficulty is raised about it, in which the error applies to the poet's own country,—

“Quos patre Benaco, velatus arundine glaucâ,  
Mincius infestâ ducebat in æquora purâ.”—*Æn.* x. 205.

I cannot understand what these words mean, unless they mean that they came by water from Mantua to the mouth of the Tiber, where the fleet of Tarchon ultimately arrives. This was temporary oversight, of course, not ignorance. If you ask, how it is possible that such an oversight could exist? I can only answer, that Virgil was a poet and not a geographer, nor yet a cool, learned, plodding commentator, who is expected to be exact about every thing; though indeed even he, often, is not, but in the pursuit of great preciseness in metre or grammar, shews great forgetfulness, at least of these matters of general knowledge. Secondly, that this part of his works was not finally revised.

There is another passage which is not very correct :

“Tum sonitu Prochyta *alta* tremit, durumque cubile  
Inarime, Jovis imperiis imposita Typhæo.”

Whatever may be the exact height of Prochyta, the epithet *alta* is absurd when mention is made in the same sentence of Inarime or Ischia, which is close by it, and one of the highest mountains in the country; and this in a neighbourhood which Virgil is particularly well acquainted with. All that can be said is, that *alta* is a kind of hack epithet with Virgil, and especially with the elision, as here used.

ing would be understood, by those who heard of it at second hand, to be longitudinal, and not up and down the shore, which they were not used to; and the water of which they heard this fact, would, so far, sound like a river, or something like one.

There is a strange passage in Lucan, x. 285, as to the Nile,—

— Medio consurgit ab axe,  
Ausus in ardentem ripas adtollere Can-  
crum :

In Borean is rectus aquis, mediumque  
Booten :

Cursus in occasum flexu torquetur, et  
ortus,

Nunc Arabum populis, Libycis nunc  
æquus arenis :

Teque vident primi, quærun tamen hi  
quoque, Seres ;

Æthiopumque feris alieno gurgite cam-  
pos :

I think taken from the line in Virgil.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05779-0 - The Classical Museum: A Journal of Philology, and of Ancient History and Literature: Volume 7

Edited by Leonhard Schmitz

Excerpt

[More information](#)

## ON CRITICAL INDUCTION.

5

Cristis capita alta corusci.—*Æn.* ix. 678. Maria alta tumescant.—*Georg.* xi. 479. Sulcat maria alta carina.—*Æn.* x. 197. Capita alta ferentes.—*Ib.* i. Priami tecta alta manerent.—*Ib.* iv. Stabula alta ferarum.—*Ib.* vi. 179. Stabula alta Latinus habebat. In nemora alta vocans. Omnes supera alta tenentes.—*Ib.* vi. 788. Alta theatri Fundamenta locant.—*Ib.* i. 427. And in 429, Scenis decora alta futuris. Vocem latè nemora alta remittunt.—*Ib.* xii. 929. Veterum decora alta parentum.—*Ib.* ii. 448. Besides such as, Domus alta sub Ida, Lyrnessi domus alta.—Alta atria lustrat hirundo.—*Ib.* xii. 474, &c.

In the passage,

“Qui nunc extremis Asiæ jam victor in oris,  
Imbellem avertis Romanis arcibus Indum.”—*Georg.* ii. 171,

the geographical terms are carelessly applied, whatever be the precise construction given to it.<sup>2</sup> Indeed the passage is carelessly written, in another way. For it was unskilful to compliment a conqueror with the *unwarlike* turn of the nation he is opposed to.

Eridanus, in *Georg.* iv. 372,

“Quo non alius per pingua culta  
In mare purpureum violentior effluit amnis,”

must mean the Po, because it does in i. 481 :

“Proluit insano contorquens vortice silvas  
Fluviorum rex Eridanus, camposque per omnes  
Cum stabulis armenta trahit,”

which is a fact of his own time. If so, it is in vain to say that it is correct.

There is no connexion with the other passage, which speaks of a flood, and may too be confined to the upper course of the Po. But if the river was banked up on the sides then, as it is to so enormous a degree now, something like what Virgil describes might happen, in case of the breaking up of the banks, in Lower Lombardy also, but not constantly.

From Dio (xlv. 17,) I should infer that the latter was the

<sup>2</sup> When you find loose and confused notions of geography in an author, it is in vain to ask, “What were his ideas? How could he make any map or scheme of geography on these notions?” He

made none. He did not think how they would hang together. If he had tried to form a map, perhaps he would have seen he must be wrong.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05779-0 - The Classical Museum: A Journal of Philology, and of Ancient History and Literature: Volume 7

Edited by Leonhard Schmitz

Excerpt

[More information](#)

case; for he uses the term *πελαγίσας*, and says the river suddenly retired, and left snakes in the dry.

Heyne is loose. He supposes a real change in the river since the ancient times.

Now with regard to history. I cannot but think, as I did before I knew of the explanation of critics, that Virgil has confounded the two Marcelli :

“ Hic rem Romanam, magno turbante tumultu,  
Sistet eques : sternet Pœnos, Gallumque rebellem,  
Tertiaque arma patri suspendet capta Quirino.”

The first words seem so clearly to apply to that small affair with cavalry which first retrieved the honour of the Roman arms against Hannibal, and describe, if so, an important historical event with such neatness and poetical force at the same time, that to take them by a forced construction away from that event, because he has not put the saddle exactly upon the right horse, is to lower him as a poet, which he is in the highest degree, in order to save his credit from an error in history, a subject in which he never pretended to distinction.

I need not observe that it is this part you must get rid of, since the last line, relating to the *spolia opima*, fixes the elder Marcellus in a way not to be disputed.

Now it is very curious, that in a writer so *cognate*, as I may call him, as Horace, exactly the same confusion occurs between the two Scipios, as here between the two Marcelli :

“ Non celeres fugæ,  
Rejectæque retrorsum Annibalis minæ,  
Non incendia Carthaginis impiæ,  
Ejus, qui domitâ nomen ab Africâ  
Lucratus rediit, clarius indicant  
Laudes, quam Calabræ Pierides.”

This must needs be cured, of course. Bentley, taking advantage of the anomalous cæsura,<sup>3</sup> omits the line. Or *incendia*

<sup>3</sup> Some critics seem to think there cannot be an ἀπαξ εἰρημίνον. But in the case of single words it is quite admitted. Why not in expressions, modes of metre, or of grammar?

“ Give me but one second instance,” they say, “ and I am satisfied.”

But why? Why can a man do a thing only once? He must do it once

before he can do it twice. He might have died before he had done it the second time.

I quite admit the principle as a question of degree of probability; but when it is put as constituting absolute impossibility, or nearly so, it is unintelligible.

Horace and Virgil both seem to affect the introducing, in one, or exceedingly

## ON CRITICAL INDUCTION.

7

must be altered into *impendia*, or construed to mean something else, and not a fire. This last is the more untenable of the two. For supposing *incendia* might sometimes mean defeat, and not conflagration, it would be in the utmost degree ridiculous to have so applied it in contact with *Carthaginis*, when it is so conspicuous an event in history, that Carthage was actually burnt one time or other. This explanation is sacrificing, as in the other case, the credit of Horace as a writer, to his accuracy as an historian.<sup>4</sup>

But as to the objection in general. Why is it impossible that Horace made an oversight?<sup>5</sup> "What, Horace," you will

few instances, some peculiarity in metre in imitation of Greek,—and, it may be added, not quite so rarely, in language also.

<sup>4</sup> There is a remarkable error in Dante, the cause of which is pointed out by his commentators. He makes Cassius muscular :

Quell' altro é Cassio, che par si membruto :

Whereas he was a lean man. Dante mistook him for another Cassius, who was one of Catiline's conspirators ; and thought of the words of Cicero,—*Nec contra adipem Cassi*.

There is a curious error in Spenser :

Wise Socrates, who thereof quaffing glad,

Pour'd forth his life and last philosophy,  
To the fair Critias, his dearest bel-amy.

He confounded the death of Socrates with that of Theramenes,

Κριτία τοῦτ' ἴστω τῷ καλῷ :

He confounded the charge against Socrates in Xenophon, that Critias had been his pupil, with the notion of his being a very favourite disciple ; and probably he confounded the name of Critias, partly, with that of Crito.

There is an entertaining mistake of the Tribune Rienzi, pointed out by Gibbon. He was fond of translating old inscriptions ; but unluckily did not know the meaning of the word *pomærium* ; and therefore told his hearers

that some emperor was celebrated for having added largely to the extent of the Roman *apple-orchards*.

There is a very curious error in Chaucer's *Knights Tale*, v. 2019 :

Yet saw I brent the shippes hoppesteres ;

on which Tyrwhitt says, that *hoppesteres* means dancers, that it refers to ships dancing on the sea, and that it is not so proper as the expression in the corresponding line in Boccaccio's *Theseida*,

Vedeva ancor le navi bellatrici.

It is plain that Chaucer read, or thought he read, *ballatrici* ; and blindly copied the mistake, without correcting it.

These instances have not much connection with my subject. But Milton, who had a very extensive knowledge of various branches of science and learning, but a love of display which sometimes outran it, has this passage :—

That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge  
In th' Arctic sky.

Ophiuchus is a very large constellation ; but it happens that the greater part of it is in the Southern Hemisphere.

<sup>5</sup> When Virgil says,—“ *Castigatque auditque*,” are we to come with our microscopical spectacles, and find that this means literally that Rhadamanthus, *βουλαις ἰν ἑρδαῖς*, punished first and enquired afterwards? and build on it a serious reference, in the violent strain of Lord Coke, to the “damnable and

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05779-0 - The Classical Museum: A Journal of Philology, and of Ancient History and Literature: Volume 7

Edited by Leonhard Schmitz

Excerpt

[More information](#)

say, "so exact a writer; the model of *curiosa felicitas*?" Is he then so universally perfect, even in what that passage must have related to, poetical taste? This will only lead us to instances of the same principle of induction in that other branch, the merit of his style. The fact is, there are inequalities in Horace, and some in Virgil, not merely in what may be called their scientific, but poetical character.

Bentley, after Dacier and others, complains most reasonably of the terrible flatness of "caput ejus" in the Ode to Mercury: distinguishes it, with great taste and learning, from cases in which *ejus* is not emphatic, and proposes a most elegant emendation, which, however, he very candidly and ingeniously points out to be not quite applicable.

But the same principle applies. Is Horace never flat in other places?

"Merionem quoque Nosces —;"

and I think in the end of the same Ode:

"Post certas hiemes uret Achaicus  
Ignis Iliacas domos:"

certainly as the conclusion of such an Ode as that. The passage (unless excused as an imitation of other writers, but that is itself bad taste,) quibus mos unde deductus, &c.

These lines—

"Tum spissa ramis laurea fervidos  
Excludit ictus,"

are a mere botch or *cheville*, to fill up the first part of a stanza, of which he had thought of the spirited and excellent termination.

The end of the Ode on *Regulus*,—

"Quam si clientum longa negotia," &c.

is very flat to the mind, I think, though he has made it sounding to the ear.

It is just possible that the very remarkable and awkward way in which many of the odes of Pindar terminate, and more

damned proceedings of the judge of hell?"

It is curious, that in a speech ascribed to Lord Chatham, I think, the passage is quoted just in the other way;

that is, overlooking the misarrangement, to shew that "the very spirits of the infernal regions hear before they punish."



Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05779-0 - The Classical Museum: A Journal of Philology, and of Ancient History and Literature: Volume 7

Edited by Leonhard Schmitz

Excerpt

[More information](#)

## ON CRITICAL INDUCTION.

9

remarkable on account of the magnificent termination of so many of his individual stanzas, led Horace to this ; but I think not. Their minds were totally unlike, and the instances in Horace belong rather to that particular sort of deadness which is incident to a careful and correct writer, as we see now and then in Pope, and which is quite different from the sort of inequality to which impetuous writers, such as Shakespeare, are liable, and to my taste much more disappointing and disagreeable. But the care, being an effort, is likely to break down sometimes by its very nature.

I beg to dissent entirely, however, from those who include among these flat terminations the stanzas—

“ Sed ne relictis, Musa procax jocos — ;”

and

“ Non hæc jocosæ convenient lyræ — ;”<sup>6</sup>

stanzas in the most delightful spirit and taste, and written with the highest finish of any thing in the author ; and perhaps, too, ingeniously and purposely introduced, to avoid that which he was so constantly afraid of, and at last yielded to, sparingly and unwillingly, but, on the whole, successfully,—the writing of serious poetry in favour of Augustus.

Flatnesses in Virgil, here and there, are well known ; as—

“ Bis senos luxere dies —  
Fortemque Gyan, fortemque Cloanthum :”

though some apparently more tedious passages in the Fourth *Æneid*—

“ Et jam prima novo — ”

and

“ Nox erat,” &c.

<sup>6</sup> The words *jocosæ* and *jocosæ*, give me an opportunity of observing, that here and in several other places in Horace and elsewhere, they denote merely love, or the pleasures of Venus, and not any thing which we should call jocular, as in their usual acceptation. Jocosæ Mæcenas, in the epode against garlic, seems to mean in plain terms—scortator ;—precor, Manum puella savio opponat tuo, Extrema et in sponda cubet. So, Vivas in amore jocosque :

for Mimnermus only says, *τί δὲ περὶν ἔνω χερσῶν Ἀφροδίτης*. Ovid, in *Ep. Sapphus Phaoni*,—Crebraque mobilitas ceptaque verba joca. *Trist.* II. 238,—nostros evoluisse jocos ; meaning his Amores, censured by Augustus. And, *Vita verecunda est, Musa jocosæ mihi*, 334. *Quodque magis vita Musa jocosæ mea est*, III. 2, 8, &c. Tibullus, *Venus jocosæ molle ruperit latus*. Catullus, *Ibi illa multa tam jocosæ fiebant, Quæ tu volebas, nec puella nolebat*.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05779-0 - The Classical Museum: A Journal of Philology, and of Ancient History and Literature: Volume 7

Edited by Leonhard Schmitz

Excerpt

[More information](#)

10

## ON CRITICAL INDUCTION.

(so inferior to its model in Apollonius,) produce a great effect by contrast with what follows.

And as to botches, in Virgil we are behind the scenes, by the blanks left, which he did not live to fill up.

Perhaps these considerations may apply to the passage in the *Antigone*, lately discussed in the *Classical Museum*,—

Τοιαῦτά φασι τὸν ἀγαθὸν Κρέοντά σοι,  
κάμοι, λέγω γὰρ κάμέ, κηρύξαντ' ἔχειν.

It is assumed that it must have a logical and emphatic meaning; and the question is, what? But it seems to me just as likely, that it is merely a carelessness or colloquial expression, natural in the author and in the character; corrected rather more stiffly, but still naturally: σοι used only generally, of which I do not know in Greek any examples. (This verse in Philoctetes must be considered as *personal*:

“Ὅδ' ἔσθ' ὁ κλεινός σοι Φιλοκτήτης, ξένε.—575.

as in Hippolytus,—

Τόδε σοι φέγγος λαμπρόν.)

Then, considering it more literally, extended to herself. Of the stiffness I think we have examples:

Ὅ μᾶλλον οὐδὲν τοῦδε τ' ἀνδρός, ἀλλ' ἴσον.  
Καὶ πῶς ὁ φύσας ἐξ ἴσου τῷ μηδενί;  
Ἄλλ' οὐ σ' ἐγείνατ' οὐτ' ἐκεῖνος, οὐτ' ἐγώ.

*Æd. Tyr.* v. 1018.

which is much of the same nature, following up a previous accidental phrase.

Another instance, when I refer to it, I find altered by conjecture in more than one way; exactly illustrating, therefore, the general principle I am contending for,—

Προσψαῦσον, ὦ παῖ.—Θιγγάνω δυοῖν ἴμοῦ.—  
Ἦ τῆσδε, κάμοῦ;—Δυσμόρου τ' ἔμοῦ τρίτης.

*Æd. Col.* 330.

The last words are quite illogical; and, I always thought, most exceedingly natural and affecting. Markland and Brunck read ὦ τῆσδε κάμοῦ, which is the utmost possible dull nonsense; and Dindorf, or some other editor before him, following a conjecture of the Scholiast, transposes the lines, and makes ἦ τῆσδε,