

**The two-faced poet**  
**The complementary personae of Horace's *Satires* and *Epodes***

**Daniel Schouten**

## Contents

Introduction	3
Horace's early poetry	8
Ethics in theory and practice: the programmatic poems	18
Public censure: Horace's political aspirations	37
A superior friend: Horace and Maecenas	45
Humour and philosophy	63
Conclusion	71
Bibliography	73

## Introduction

The 30s BCE were a time of conflict. During several civil wars, Octavian rose to power to become the first emperor. Over this period, the poet Horace wrote his *Epodes*. They were a collection of iambic poems. The genre was quite apt for a time of conflict, as it was famous for profanity and verbal abuse.

Cave, cave, namque in malos asperrimus	11
parata tollo cornua,	
qualis Lycambae spretus infido gener	
aut acer hostis Bupalus.	14

Beware, beware, for I raise my horns, ready to strike the wicked down, like the son-in-law rejected by faithless Lycambes, or the piercing enemy of Bupalus.<sup>1</sup>

This passage from *Epodes* 6 gives an impression of the threat that Horace posed as an iambist. During the same period, Horace also wrote satire. This genre was equally known for attacking and abusing others. However, in *Satires* 1.4, we find the following passage.

cur metuas me?	70
nulla taberna meos habeat neque pila libellos,	
quis manus insudet vulgi Hermogenisque Tigelli,	
nec recito cuiquam nisi amicis idque coactus,	
non ubivis coramve quibuslibet.	74

Why would you fear me? No shop nor stand would have my books so the hands of the masses and Hermogenes Tigellius can sweat over them, nor do I recite to anyone except my friends, and only when forced, not wherever and to whomever.

The difference could hardly be greater. Whereas Horace the iambist strikes an intimidating and threatening pose, Horace the satirist sees no reason why anyone should fear him. As it happens, there are more striking contrasts between the two collections. In this thesis, I want to answer precisely where these differences come from. After all, satire and iambic were kindred genres. Both were famous for criticizing others, mocking and shaming them for their misdeeds. The fundamental question of my thesis is this: if these genres were so alike, why did Horace write both? Or rather, to avoid the troubled matter of author intent, my question is this: what makes each collection unique when compared to the other?

To do this, I will read Horace's iambic through the lens of his satire, and vice versa. This is not to deny that each genre had its own history, conventions and theory. In fact, some differences between them are to be expected. However, these two instances of iambic and satire share an

---

<sup>1</sup> See the bibliography for a list of the text editions used for the quotations in this thesis. All translations are my own.

intimate link, as they were written by the same poet during roughly the same period. I believe this intimate link naturally invites such comparison for any reader of both collections. In other words, I believe that the differences between the two can bring elements to the fore that would otherwise remain obscure. Since these poems were written around the same time, it is interesting to investigate how the two collections might have played off of each other, each defining the other through contrasting elements.<sup>2</sup>

Previous studies have usually made passing comments on the differences between the *Satires* and the *Epodes*. For instance, Ellen Oliensis's (1998) important study of Horace's entire oeuvre discusses some of the differences between the two collections when moving from the *Satires* to the *Epodes*. However, I will make a comparison between them the main focus of my thesis. I will not first give a treatment of the *Satires* and then of the *Epodes*, only discussing how they differ when treating the *Epodes*.<sup>3</sup> Instead, I will repeatedly go back and forth between the two collections. In this way, I hope to give a more detailed description of the relation between the two, one that relies on specific contrasts rather than broad strokes.

Admittedly, even while going back and forth, I will start with the *Satires* in each chapter. There are several reasons for this. First, I cannot deny that the *Satires* have some temporal priority: the first book of *Satires* was published well before the second book and the *Epodes*. For this reason, it is often convenient to start with the *Satires*. Secondly, Horace's *Satires* often contain more explicit statements about his stance as a poet and his relation to the world around him. Therefore, it makes for a clearer argument to first discuss these elements in the *Satires*, and identify the contrasting elements in the *Epodes* afterwards.

In the first chapter, I will give a short overview of the life of Horace and the two collections, consisting of two books of *Satires* and one book of *Epodes*. I will discuss their respective literary pedigrees. Most importantly, I will discuss how Horace's relation to his great predecessors in each genre is similar. This will lay the groundwork for the discussion of the several differences between the two collections in the subsequent chapters.

Since both satire and iambic are such varied genres, I cannot hope to treat all features of them in full. Therefore, I have chosen to focus on a theme that is especially important for both genres: the relation of the poet to the people around him. Within this theme, I will look at three different elements, discussed in three different chapters. I will start with the figure of the poet as a moral critic and blame poet. Specifically, I will look at the way in which he deals with attacks against a single person. This is typically the core business of both the satiric and the iambic poet. As we shall see in the first chapter, such attacks figured prominently in

---

2 In other words, I am generally not interested in what makes the *Satires* satiric qua satire, and the *Epodes* iambic qua iambic, but I am interested in the features that make each contrast with the other. Of course, this is not to say that I will not treat any elements that are typically satiric or typically iambic. There will be plenty of overlap.

3 Usually, the *Satires* are treated before the *Epodes*, undoubtedly because the first book of *Satires* was published well before the *Epodes*.

Horace's great predecessors for both iambic and satire, Archilochus and Lucilius respectively. Secondly, I will look at how the poet deals with society at large, rather than specific people. Specifically, I will look at the poet's stance towards political activity. Thirdly, I will treat the persona's relation to his great friend, the one who looms so large in his poetry: Maecenas. In each of these cases, we shall see that Horace the iambist is far more concerned with action and intervention than Horace the satirist. In the final chapter, I will try to connect these differences to features of the *Satires* and *Epodes* on a larger scale. Specifically, I will discuss the role played by philosophical doctrine and style, and the importance of humour in each collection.

### A word on the persona

It is important to note that when I refer to Horace, I do not refer to the historical person. The Horace I am interested in is the figure that arises from his poetry. It is his so-called persona, or rather, what Ellen Oliensis has termed his poetic 'face'. It is 'the first-person speaker who gradually accumulates characteristics associated with the figure known as "Horace"'. Conversely, '[t]his is a character in whose doings Horace has a particular stake: Horace may be held accountable for what "Horace" says and (thereby) does'.<sup>4</sup> In other words, the first-person speaker of – in the case of this thesis – both the *Satires* and the *Epodes* is a figure who looks just like Horace, and I will interpret his poems accordingly. This entails adducing facts from the historical Horace's life and times. For instance, when a poem mentions Maecenas and discusses Horace's country estate in *Satires* 2.6, it will be relevant to note that this estate was likely a gift from Maecenas to Horace. Similarly, when Horace holds a political speech in *Epodes* 7, it will be relevant to note that Horace never held political office.

The idea of 'face' is not limited to literature, however. People show different faces in different situations of everyday life. In the example of Oliensis, we might imagine that the historical Horace wore a different face in the company of Augustus from the one he showed to his slaves.<sup>5</sup> Neither of these faces would be the entire person that Horace was. Nevertheless, both of these faces are still part of the actual Horace.

Similarly, I will argue that the *Satires* and the *Epodes* each show a different face of the poet Horace. In this, I adapt Oliensis's concept. She analyses all of Horace's poetry to describe a single 'poetic face' that develops over the course of Horace's poetic life. As I hope to show, however, the faces that we encounter in the *Epodes* and the *Satires* are quite different from one another, sometimes even contradicting each other. In my view, this difference is strong enough to treat them as separate faces. Just as Horace might have shown different faces when in the company of different people, I argue that he shows different faces in different genres. Consequently, I will from here on distinguish between Horace the satirist and Horace the iambist. Both of these are different faces of the poet Horace.

---

4 Oliensis (1998) p. 2.

5 *Ibid.* p. 1.

### Reasons and causes

Over the course of my thesis, and especially towards the end, I will try to explain the differences that I find. I will often say that some element or feature of either collection is the reason for another feature, or use language of a similar nature. However, I do not mean to imply that the differences between the *Satires* and the *Epodes* can be reduced to a simple chain of causation. Each of these collections is a complex and interconnected whole which refuses simple explanations. Rather than deny their interconnected nature, I actually hope to uncover a few of the connections that make these collections into what they are.

For instance, I will argue at some point – and I am not the first to do so – that the importance of philosophical doctrine in the *Satires* explains why Horace the satirist is less direct and violent in his moral criticism than Horace the iambist. This is not to say that Horace the satirist would have been more direct and violent if philosophy had played a smaller role. Nor does it mean that the importance of philosophy precludes Horace the satirist from being more violent. In other words, I do not mean to say that the importance of philosophy has *caused* Horace the satirist to be less violent. If we want to designate a cause for all of the features present in the *Epodes* and the *Satires*, I would say we can only point to Horace as the author writing them. He could have chosen any of a countless number of options to compose his poetry. Sadly, we cannot ask him which reasons he had for doing what he has done.

All we have are the texts that have come down to us. Through these, a reader constructs an understanding of the texts and the reasons for which it was written. In the case of personal genres like satire and iambic, the reader may even construct an image of the author, which amounts to the concept of face discussed above. What I intend to say, then, is that philosophy merely provides a framework in which Horace as a less violent satirist naturally finds a place. Indeed, the framework of philosophy helps to define the face of Horace the satirist. The *Epodes*, by contrast, do not have the framework of philosophy to define the face of Horace the iambist. As such, the presence or absence of a philosophical outlook can be viewed as a reason why we find the less violent satirist in the context of philosophy. This is true for all of the explanations that I will adduce in this thesis. They are not the causes of the contrasts between the *Epodes* and the *Satires*. However, they are still reasons that may help to explain these contrasts.

### Aims

The first aim of this thesis is to add to our understanding of the *Satires* and the *Epodes*. Specifically, I hope to provide a synoptic reading of these works, one that does not merely look for the shared themes between the two collections, but also regards the contrasts between them as significant and meaningful. Moreover, I hope to provide a reading that not only describes how single poems can be connected in larger themes and contrasts, but also describes how those larger themes and contrasts influence the reading of single poems.

More generally, I hope to provide some insight into the ways in which two texts or – as in this case – two bodies of texts can be juxtaposed to create meaning that goes beyond the individual texts through association and contrast.

## Horace's early poetry

Horace was born on 8 December 65 BCE in Venusia, a city on the border between Lucania and Apulia. According to Horace's statements in his poetry, his father was a freedman who nevertheless provided him with a high education, even sending him away to Rome and Athens.<sup>1</sup> In Athens, he was recruited into the army of Brutus, and he held the command of a *tribunus militum* in the battle of Philippi in 42 BCE. After the defeat, Horace lost his paternal inheritance. However, Suetonius tells us that he obtained a pardon for his involvement afterwards and purchased the job of *scriba quaestorius*, a high-ranking scribe working for Roman magistrates. In 37 BCE, Horace was introduced to Maecenas, Octavian's powerful supporter. Within a year, Horace was adopted into Maecenas' circle of poets.

It is unclear to which degree Horace owed his position as a poet to Maecenas. To be sure, his friendship with Maecenas presumably gave him access to social contacts who could help him in disseminating his poetry. Moreover, one might make the case that Horace owed his financial independence – and therefore the leisure to compose poetry – to Maecenas. Horace says in his *Epistles* that the confiscation of his property after Philippi drove him to writing poetry.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the Sabine farm that Horace praised in his poetry is often seen as a gift from Maecenas, which gave him financial independence.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, the fact that Horace could purchase a job as a *scriba quaestorius* suggests that he still possessed considerable funds before he met Maecenas.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, he never explicitly states that the Sabine farm was a gift from Maecenas. Finally, when recounting his acceptance into Maecenas' circle in *Satires* 1.6, he mentions that Vergil and Varius introduced him,<sup>5</sup> suggesting that he had already established contacts among his fellow poets.

In any case, Horace himself certainly connected his poetic persona to Maecenas. As Peter White mentions, 'in the *Epodes* and in the first book of the *Satires*, the *Odes*, and the *Epistles*, Maecenas is addressed before anyone else, making him effectively the dedicatee of the respective books.'<sup>6</sup>

### A satiric start

The first book of *Satires* was published around 35 BCE.<sup>7</sup> As such, it is the earliest extant collection of his poetry. It displays a clear concern with the figure of Horace himself and his social progress in the years after the battle of Philippi in 42 BCE.

---

1 *Satires* 1.6.

2 *Epistles* 2.2.51-52.

3 See Mankin (1995) p. 61 and White (2007) p. 198.

4 White (2007) p. 198. The purchase is mentioned in Suetonius' short biography of Horace.

5 *Satires* 1.6.54-55.

6 White (2007) p. 197.

7 Nisbet (2007) dates it to 35 or 34 (p. 10). Gowers (2012) dates it to 36 or 35 (p. 1).

The book opens with three satires that build on the tradition of Greek philosophical diatribe. They are written as leisurely conversations between friends on several philosophical topics, without any explicit formal structure. However, whereas diatribe earnestly sought to make a philosophical point, Horace's satire parodies their style for humorous purposes. His argument is often inconsistent, although his mocking depictions of the foolish behaviour of his fellow Romans is not without bite.<sup>8</sup>

The fourth satire is written in more or less the same style as the first three, but its subject is a defence of the satirical poet's practice. This defence is taken up again in 1.10, the final poem of the book. In both cases, Horace defends himself by claiming that his satire is not meant to publicly censure others, but merely to provide some private amusement to himself and his friends. In 1.6, Horace also defends himself, but in this case he defends his social position as Maecenas' friend.

Other satires feature seemingly inconsequential anecdotes with tantalizing connections to the larger political world of the time. 1.5 is a mundane travelogue of a seemingly unimportant journey through Italy, which was actually a diplomatic mission undertaken by Maecenas. 1.7 tells of a legal dispute poignantly adjudicated by Brutus in his camp in Asia Minor at some point before Philippi. In 1.8, a statue of Priapus narrates how he drove two witches from Maecenas' city gardens by farting. Finally, in 1.9, Horace tells of his failing efforts to politely reject a man seeking access to Maecenas' circle.

The second book of satires followed around 30 BCE, about the same time as the *Epodes*.<sup>9</sup> In this book, Horace's own voice takes a step back, allowing other characters to do most of the talking. 2.1 sets the tone for this, although Horace still has a large speaking role. In this poem, he asks the famous lawyer Trebatius what to do with the criticism Horace has received after his first book of satires. 2.2 is a lecture narrated by the author himself, but Horace claims the content derives entirely from a certain Ofellus. 2.3, 2.4, and 2.7 all feature parodies of philosophical lectures, delivered to Horace by other characters, who themselves also refer to other authorities for the content of their words. 2.3 and 2.7 are particularly interesting for the fact that their principal speakers both criticize Horace, seemingly without being refuted. In 2.5, Horace himself is completely absent, as it features a dialogue between Teiresias and Odysseus in the Underworld, a parodic extension of their encounter in the *Odyssey*. 2.6 comes closest to the style of book 1, once again narrated by Horace. It is something of a sequel to 1.6, once again defending Horace's position as a friend of Maecenas, and thanking the gods for Horace's Sabine farm. However, the ending features a fable narrated by Horace's neighbour

---

8 Kirk Freudenburg (1992) strongly argues that Horace is to be seen as an 'inept moralizer', and laughed at (p. 32). While he is sympathetic, his clumsy moralizing serves to underline the overall parody of diatribe. Maria Plaza (2006), however, argues that this mild mockery of Horace's persona serves to underline his simplicity: he is not a manipulating sophist, which makes him all the more convincing (pp. 197-8).

9 See Muecke (1993) p. 1 and Nisbet (2007) p. 12.

Cervius. 2.8, finally, is another narrative poem. It features a dialogue between Horace and the comic poet Fundanius, who tells Horace of a dinner given by a certain Nasidienus.

### **The legacy of Lucilius**

In the first book of *Satires*, Horace seeks to discern his project from the father of the genre, Lucilius. While Lucilius had not been the inventor of the genre, he was the one to give it its definitive features of moral criticism and mockery. In his first book, Horace claims two important distinctions between Lucilius and himself. Whereas Lucilius freely branded wrongdoers, he says in *Satires* 1.4, Horace takes a more careful approach. He does not seek to publicly shame people. His satires are merely private scribbles for personal amusement. Furthermore, especially in *Satires* 1.10, Horace claims that his satires are more stylistically refined than those of Lucilius. Indeed, Horace makes a point of saying that, even if he does not write as much as Lucilius did, Horace's verses have better composition.

For a long time, these claims have been taken more or less at face value. Indeed, they seem to fit the historical circumstances of each of the two satirists. Horace may naturally be expected to have less freedom of speech than Lucilius. There are two reasons for this. First, Lucilius was a Roman knight possessing considerable wealth. As such, it might be expected that he could attack and mock other people more freely than the relatively dependent Horace, who had lost much of his status after the battle of Philippi. Moreover, Lucilius lived in republican times, whereas Horace lived in a time of civil wars and proscriptions. The threat of violence may have driven Horace to be even more careful not to offend the powerful. As a result, Horace had to weigh his words, producing more refined and subtle satires than the blunt Lucilius.

More recently, however, this interpretation has been shown to be simplistic. Lucilius was very much interested in matters of style. The ruggedness in his verse that Horace condemns was actually a stylistic ideal that was supposed to indicate sincerity, although Horace disagreed with this ideal.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, a speculative reconstruction of certain fragments of Lucilius suggests that Lucilius may have equally struggled with the problem of offending people through his satire.<sup>11</sup>

Of course, any definitive statements about Lucilius may be impossible, given the fragmentary nature of his transmission. However, we should remember that Horace was carving a space for himself as a satirist. Therefore, we should not expect him to give an entirely accurate account of Lucilius' satiric practice. Indeed, we should expect him to deny Lucilius the qualities that Horace wished to take as his own characteristic qualities. Moreover, it is clear that Horace still left plenty of room for aggression in his satire. At the end of 1.4, he claims that writing mocking satires is a minor, forgivable fault. However, he also threatens to 'convert' anyone who disagrees. Similarly, in 2.1, Horace claims he wishes to avoid conflict, yet also threatens to retaliate against anyone who might attack him.

<sup>10</sup> Freudenburg (1992) pp. 150-162.

<sup>11</sup> Plaza (2006) pp. 50-52.

Nevertheless, there does seem to be some truth in Horace's statements. For instance, we know that Lucilius famously attacked people from opposing political alliances. In the words of A.S. Gratwick, '[e]ven the fragments attest an impressive series of the great as his victims'.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the list that Gratwick provides includes two censors and two consuls. Perhaps the most famous example among them is that of the censor Cornelius Lentulus Lupus, whom Lucilius mocked, albeit after Lupus' death. Lucilius attacked these powerful people while he was himself only a knight. By contrast, Horace only attacks people socially below him and unnamed stereotypes.

Moreover, there seems to have been a genuine contrast between Lucilius' discursive style and Horace's brevity. One need only point to the fact that Lucilius wrote thirty books of *Satires* versus Horace's two. There is also the contrast between the two journeys described by the two satirists. Porphyrio tells us that Horace's *Satires* 1.5 is based on Lucilius' *Iter Siculum*, or Journey to Sicily, which took up all of Lucilius' third book of satires. In other words, Horace reduced a whole book of Lucilius to a single satire of a little over one hundred lines. Moreover, as Classen (1981) shows, Lucilius' satire was considerably more verbose than Horace's version. In fact, Horace himself makes frequent remarks about the lazy pace of the journey, and ends by declaring Brundisium the end point of his 'long paper and journey', explicitly connecting the idea of the long journey to the length of his own text. Since the text can hardly be said to be overly long, this is obviously poking fun at the contrast with Lucilius' actually verbose account.

In other words, even if Horace exaggerates when he compares himself to Lucilius, he does seem to have toned down and refined his satire compared to his great predecessor. This is important when we turn to the *Epodes*.

### Horatian iambic

The *Epodes* were published around 30 BCE.<sup>13</sup> They are a collection of iambic poems. The iambic genre was famous for its verbal abuse and aggression. Indeed, the father of the genre, Archilochus, was said to have driven the people he targeted to suicide. However, there was more to the genre. Surveying the corpus of the three canonical archaic iambists Archilochus, Hipponax, and Semonides, Andrea Rotstein notes that there was a lot of variety, both between the authors and within the poetry of each individually. Both the metres and the subject matter differed.

Non-elegiac poems by Archilochus show a variety of themes, including military and political narratives, animal fables, and poetry of moralizing, erotic, or plainly abusive content. Hipponax' narratives seem to focus on a lower *demi-monde*; vulgarity and obscenities are frequent and crude. Semonides' extant poems show a tendency to

12 Gratwick (1982) p. 163.

13 See Nisbet (2007) p. 12 and Watson (2003) p. 1.

reflection, and his criticism (e.g. of women in fr. 7W) is targeted at groups or types rather than named individuals.<sup>14</sup>

In fact, Rotstein notes that there is no indication that the writings of these three poets were seen as belonging to the same genre at the time of composition. It was only later canonizing scholars who placed these authors in one genre. By the time of the Hellenistic era, however, the idea that iambic was primarily concerned with verbal abuse and vituperation was well established.

Nevertheless, even by the time of Horace, there was room for more. Indeed, it is notable that the very first epode is not abusive at all. In fact, it is a poem addressed to Horace's friend Maecenas, and expresses genuine concern for his well-being. This concern with friendship is not a deviation from the core of iambic, but actually a return to its roots. Iambic started as a genre of the Greek symposium. This was an occasion in which aristocrats could form political alliances. Therefore, while iambic branded enemies, it also served to reaffirm friendships. In fact, by attacking the people that might pose a threat to society and its values, an iambic poet simultaneously reminded his audience of the values that they shared, thereby uniting them.<sup>15</sup> The symposiastic elements of iambic are even more explicit in *Epodes* 9 and 13, both of which admonish friends to endure trouble and ease their worries by drinking.

However, there is still plenty of verbal abuse in the *Epodes*. *Epodes* 4 and 6 attack two unnamed targets, the first for being a man of undeservedly high status, the other for attacking innocent people. 10 curses a certain Mevius to die at sea, although it does not directly address him. In 7 and 16, Horace directs his iambic aggression against the entire Roman populace, chastising them for waging civil war. 8 and 12 bring iambic violence to the realm of sex. They feature Horace suffering from impotence while trying to have sex with two women: Horace verbally abuses them for being too ugly to arouse him. 15, on the other hand, curses a former lover of Horace who left him for another. 2 and 3 take a more humorous approach to iambic criticism. *Epodes* 2 features praise of the countryside and the Roman ideal of the independent farmer, only to reveal that it was voiced by the money lender Alfius, who has no intent of changing his business. *Epodes* 3 is a comically overblown description of garlic as if it were the most potent poison, which Maecenas had secretly added to Horace's food. In the end, Horace comically curses Maecenas for this.

*Epodes* 11 and 14 provide something of a counterweight to the aggressive sexual liaisons of 8 and 12. In 11 and 14, Horace excuses himself for not writing iambic: he has fallen in love, which impedes his iambic bile. The two poems seem to look ahead to the love lyric that Horace would write after the *Epodes*.

---

14 Rotstein (2010) pp. 32-33.

15 Mankin (1993) p. 8.

Finally, 5 and 17 are two of the most puzzling poems of the collection. Both of them feature the witch Canidia. *Epodes* 5 is a dark narrative in which Canidia has kidnapped a young boy along with several other witches. They starve him to death to extract his organs for a love potion. Unlike most of the *Epodes*, the narrator is a disembodied voice with no role in the action, which adds to the disconcerting atmosphere of the poem, and makes it difficult to interpret. In 17, Horace has nearly been driven to death by Canidia, seemingly by some magic means. Puzzlingly, Horace apologizes while simultaneously insulting her. Maxwell Teitel Paule has convincingly argued recently that Canidia here functions as a kind of demon that could be driven away by insulting her.<sup>16</sup>

### Archaic Archilochus

While the *Epodes* are clearly iambic, scholars have debated which iambists had the most influence on Horace.<sup>17</sup> The debate has focussed mostly on Archilochus and Callimachus. Only fragments survive of their iambics, which makes the question hard to answer.

Nevertheless, Archilochus unquestionably was an important model for Horace. Indeed, Horace himself states this explicitly in one of his later *Epistles*.<sup>18</sup>

Parios ego primus iambos  
ostendi Latio, numeros animosque secutus  
Archilochi, non res et agentia verba Lycamben 25

I was the first to show Parian iambs to Latium, following the metres and spirit of Archilochus, not his subject and the words hounding Lycambes.

Horace stresses the link. Paros was the birth place of Archilochus, and Lycambes was one of the targets that Archilochus had supposedly driven to suicide. One might then say that the answer is clear: Archilochus was the obvious model for the *Epodes*. However, the passage quoted also states that Horace deviates in some way: he does not follow the *res et agentia verba Lycamben*.

Indeed, scholars have noticed certain striking differences between Archilochus' iambic and Horace's *Epodes*. Stephen Harrison (2001) has even said that Horace is a kind of softened Archilochus. For instance, Archilochus supposedly drove his victims to suicide, yet the *Epodes* hardly ever mention the names of their targets. Similarly, Horace uses Archilochean themes in a reduced form: he discusses war, but is no warrior, as Archilochus was; he insults his lover like Archilochus did, yet Horace is impotent; finally, Horace does not use as much obscene language as Archilochus.

<sup>16</sup> Paule (2017) pp. 102-137.

<sup>17</sup> The following discussion on Archilochus and Callimachus is largely derivative of the first chapter of my bachelor's thesis. I present a shortened version of that chapter here, as the relation between Horace's *Epodes* and the archaic iambist Archilochus is strikingly similar to the relation between Horace's *Satires* and Lucilius.

<sup>18</sup> *Epistles* 1.19.23-25.



Hipponax. From a *diegesis* of the first iamb, we know that it featured Hipponax chastising an audience of literary scholars for harbouring ill-will towards each other. Consequently, the iamb has often been interpreted as an emphatic declaration that Callimachus would write a mild iambic, devoid of the strong violence that characterized archaic iambic. The ‘iamb that does not sing of the Bupalean battle’ would then be a reference to this milder, harmonizing iambic. Following this interpretation, it would seem that Horace derived the idea of softening Archilochus from Callimachus’ softening of Hipponax.<sup>21</sup>

More recently, however, Ralph Rosen has argued that Callimachus did not envision a mild iambic at all. In fact, he says that ‘mild iambic’ would be a contradiction in terms.<sup>22</sup> In his interpretation, Callimachus’ Hipponax does not attack the Hellenistic scholars because they fight, but only because they fight among themselves. Friends are not supposed to do so. However, this does not mean that iambic violence in itself is wrong. The lack of a ‘Bupalean battle’, then, merely refers to the fact that Hipponax attacks the scholars, and not Bupalus, who is long dead. That is to say, it refers to the fact that the target of the attack has changed, not to any changed quality of iambic. Rosen also argues that other Callimachean passages that seem to argue against verbal abuse are merely reminders that iambic invective is a literary game, and should not be taken as actual insults.<sup>23</sup>

If one follows Rosen’s interpretation, Horace cannot have taken his idea of softening Archilochus from Callimachus. However, Callimachus is still an important model for the *Epodes*. The very act of taking up an archaic iambist as a model evokes Callimachus’ *Iambs*. Moreover, the structure of the *Epodes* seems to evoke that of Callimachus’ *Iambs*. Callimachus is usually said to have written thirteen iambs. However, in the *Diegeseis*, these iambs are followed by four other poems in lyric metres. Each of these poems has its own title, but an overarching title is missing. One might interpret these four poems as part of Callimachus’ *Iambs*. The seventeen poems of Horace’s *Epodes* would then be a clear allusion to the seventeen iambs of Callimachus. However, the thirteenth iamb is programmatic and returns to themes from the first iamb. As such, it seems to be an appropriate final poem for the collection. Then again, one might argue that the four lyric poems followed the *Iambs* in text editions of Horace’s time, which makes it likely that Horace was familiar with a Callimachean iambic corpus of seventeen poems. In that case, Horace’s seventeen epodes would be a reference to Callimachus after all.<sup>24</sup>

---

21 Rosen (2007) pp. 175-176.

22 *Ibid.* p. 175.

23 *Ibid.* pp. 172-206.

24 See also Watson (2003) pp. 15-16 and Clayman (1980) pp. 52-54. For an interesting spin on this discussion, see Lyne (2005), who argues that Horace was aware of the uncertainty in the textual tradition of Callimachus, and created a sense of finality in *Epodes* 13, only to then add four more poems, so that his *Epodes* fit both possibilities.

### A two-faced poet?

What we have, then, are two collections of poetry in kindred genres, iambic and satire. Moreover, the approach that Horace has taken to adapt the legacy of his predecessors in these genres seems rather similar. In both cases, he has taken a predecessor known for his violence and abuse, and softened his style. Consequently, one might expect there to be strong connections between the two collections. However, even though both the *Satires* and the *Epodes* are very concerned with the figure of Horace, neither collection mentions anything about its author also writing in another genre.

The only possible reference in one collection to the other is a short mention of Archilochus in *Satires* 2.3. Notably, it is an interlocutor, Damasippus, not Horace himself, who brings him up. Damasippus taunts Horace for having writer's block, and ridicules him for having brought the works of several authors – Plato, Archilochus, and the comic playwrights Eupolis and Menander – to his Sabine estate.

'culpantur frustra calami immeritusque laborat	7
iratis natus paries dis atque poetis.	
atqui vultus erat multa et praeclara minantis,	
si vacuum tepido cepisset villula tecto.	10
quorsum pertinuit stipare Platona Menandro,	
Eupolin Archilocho, comites educere tantos?'	

'In vain your pens get the blame and the wall undeservedly suffers, born under wrathful gods and poets. And yet your face was that of someone threatening more and extraordinary things if your little villa received you at leisure under its warm roof. What was the use of cramming Plato with Menander, Eupolis with Archilochus, of bringing out such great companions?'

One might take this passage as a reference to the *Epodes*. However, the reference is rather muted. After all, the other authors mentioned certainly do not refer to any genre that Horace was writing in. To be sure, these authors are not chosen randomly. The second book of *Satires* mostly consists of dialogues, which explains Horace's interest in Plato. Moreover, Horace had already connected satire with Greek comedy in *Satires* 1.4, even explicitly mentioning Eupolis. The implication, then, seems to be that Horace is reading these authors for inspiration for his satire, not for direct emulation by writing in the same genres as these authors. Since iambic was a genre similar to satire, Archilochus may equally serve as inspiration for Horace's satire.

Therefore, if Horace wanted to connect his satire to his iambic, he did not make the connection particularly explicit. However, there may be a few implicit references to it. For instance, Ian Goh (2016) has surveyed the traces of Lucilius in Horace's *Epodes*. While Lucilius may not have read Archilochus' poetry, Goh argues that Lucilius has nevertheless adopted certain Archilochean features. More importantly, Goh argues that Horace recognized these

Archilochean elements in Lucilius, and used them for his *Epodes*. For example, when Horace verbally abuses someone in *Epodes* 4 and calls him a wolf, he evokes Archilochus' target Lycambes, whose name derived from the Greek word for wolf, λύκος. However, the name also evokes Lucilius' famous target Lentulus Lupus, whose name literally was the Latin word for wolf, *lupus*.

Interestingly, there might also be a reference both to the *Epodes* and to Callimachus' *Iambs* in Horace's *Satires*. In *Satires* 1.4.33-35, Horace describes how the general public fears the satirical poet, saying that he has 'hay on his horns', which was the sign of a dangerous ox.<sup>25</sup> Horace uses this same image of a blame poet as an angry bull in *Epodes* 6.11-12. In that passage, it may derive from Callimachus, who used it in *Iambs* 13.52-53.<sup>26</sup>

While these passages are far from clear references, they do show that Horace may have taken something from iambic when writing satire and vice versa. What I hope to have shown, then, is that there are parallels between the *Satires* and the *Epodes* at different levels. Against this background, I will now turn towards the striking differences between them.

---

25 Gowers (2012) p. 161.

26 See also Watson (2003) p. 263.

## Ethics in theory and practice: the programmatic poems

This chapter will focus on the role of the poet as a moral critic in both the *Satires* and the *Epodes*. I will start with the programmatic poems of Horace's *Satires*, namely 1.4, 1.10, and 2.1. I will try to distil from these a picture of Horace the satirist and his goals as a moral critic. For this, I will pay equal attention to the similarities and the differences between the poems. I will then compare the resulting picture to what we find in the *Epodes*, especially in two of the stereotypical iambic attacks in the *Epodes*, namely epodes 4 and 6. As we shall see, there are telling differences between them. Horace's satirist claims to be far more concerned with himself than with society at large. Only in the *Epodes* do we find a poet who explicitly aims his criticism at the people around him. Finally, I will give some preliminary answers as to what these stances tell us about the two collections at large.

### The shy satirist

*Satires* 1.4 is the first in which Horace describes an explicit image of himself as a satirist. He begins with a description of satire's pedigree.

Eupolis atque Cratinus Aristophanesque poetae	1
atque alii, quorum comoedia prisca virorum est,	
si quis erat dignus describi quod malus ac fur,	
quod moechus foret aut sicarius aut alioqui	
famosus, multa cum libertate notabant.	5
Hinc omnis pendet Lucilius, hosce secutus,	
mutatis tantum pedibus numerisque; facetus,	
emunctae naris, durus componere versus.	
Nam fuit hoc vitiosus: in hora saepe ducentos,	
ut magnum, versus dictabat stans pede in uno;	10
cum flueret lutulentus, erat quod tollere velles;	

The poets Eupolis, Cratinus, Aristophanes, and the other men who made old comedy would freely brand whoever deserved to be written up because he was wicked or a thief, or an adulterer or a murderer or notorious in any way. Lucilius depends entirely on them, following them, having changed only their feet and metres; witty, with a keen nose, he composed rugged lines. For this was his fault: in an hour he often dictated two hundred lines standing on one foot, as if it were something great. Since his flow was so muddy, there were things you wish you could take out.

He first connects the satires of his predecessor Lucilius to the Greek comedy of Eupolis, Cratinus and Aristophanes. However, he quickly distances himself from Lucilius, saying that he was too prolix. Horace makes clear that while he may write fewer verses, they are better ones as well. Nevertheless, he goes on to note that people hate poets like him for mocking others and spreading rumours around town (33-38). They consider them a danger that is to be

avoided. The rest of the satire is a defence of Horace's satire, explaining why he should not be feared. The result is a sequence of strikingly ironic statements.

First of all, he states that he does not consider himself a poet, since he writes in everyday language (39-62). He claims that true poetry should be written in a grand style, so that even if a verse were taken out of its metrical order, it would still be recognizable as poetic language. Since satire is written in everyday language, it does not qualify as poetry. He refers to the existing the debate whether comedy qualifies as poetry.

Idcirco quidam comoedia necne poema	45
esset quaesivere, quod acer spiritus ac vis	
nec verbis nec rebus inest, nisi quod pede certo	
differt sermoni, sermo merus. 'at pater ardens	
saevit, quod meretrice nepos insanus amica	
filius uxorem grandi cum dote recuset,	
ebrius et, magnum quod dedecus, ambulet ante	50
noctem cum facibus.' numquid Pomponius istis	
audiret leviora, pater si viveret?	

For this reason some have wondered whether comedy is poetry, since there is strong spirit and force in neither the words nor the plot; if it did not differ from talk by a certain metre, it's pure talk. 'But a fiery father rages, because his crazy spendthrift son with a prostitute for a girlfriend rejects a wife with a large dowry, and – a great disgrace – goes about drunk with torches before nightfall.' Would Pomponius hear anything less than that if his father were alive?

In other words, since comedy is mundane in both its language and its plot (*acer spiritus ac vis / nec verbis nec rebus inest*), it does not qualify as poetry. To be clear, nowhere in the satire does Horace explicitly agree to this view of comedy. On the contrary, in the first line of the satire, he called the old writers of comedy *poetae*. Nevertheless, he does use this reasoning to claim that he himself is not a poet. A few lines later, he drives the point home by comparing satire with a phrase from what is supposed to be actual poetry: a quote from Ennius.

His, ego quae nunc,	56
olim quae scripsit Lucilius, eripias si	
tempora certa modosque, et quod prius ordine verbum est	
posterius facias praeponens ultima primis,	
non, ut si solvas 'postquam Discordia taetra	60
belli ferratos postes portasque refregit',	
invenias etiam disiecti membra poetae.	

If you took away from these, which I write now, as once did Lucilius, their assigned quantities and measures, and if you made the word that is first in order last, by putting the

final words before the first, you would not, as when you dissolve ‘after horrid Discord broke open the iron doors and gates of war’, still find the limbs of the scattered poet.

What is peculiar however, is that this goes against the poetic precepts that Horace himself would later expound in his *Ars Poetica*. There Horace makes clear that good poetry does not derive from rare and exotic language, but from inventive use of everyday language:

In verbis etiam tenuis cautusque serendis	46
dixeris egregie notum si callida verbum	
reddiderit iunctura novum. Si forte necesse est	
indiciis monstrare recentibus abdita rerum,	
fingere cinctutis non exaudita Cethegis	50
continget, dabiturque licentia sumpta pudenter;	

While subtly and carefully weaving words together, you will also speak excellently if a shrewd combination makes a common word new. If it happens to be necessary to point to untold things with fresh signs, you will have to create words unheard by the girded Cethegi, and licence will be given if used modestly.

In other words, it is the way the words are put together that makes good poetry, not the individual words themselves. Moreover, as Kirk Freudenburg notes, the *Ars Poetica* also encourages dramatic poets to use everyday life as material for their plots:<sup>1</sup>

respicere exemplar vitae morumque iubebo	317
doctum imitatore[m] et vivas hinc ducere voces.	
Interdum speciosa locis morataque recte	
fabula nullius veneris sine pondere et arte,	320
valdius oblectat populum meliusque moratur	
quam versus inopes rerum nugaeque canorae.	

I will command the trained imitator to look back upon a model of life and manners and to draw living speech from there. Sometimes a story that is beautiful in passages and rightly characterized yet has no charm nor weight nor art pleases the people more and entertains them better than verses devoid of content, and melodious trifles.

In other words, Horace acknowledged that good poetry could be made both from everyday language and from everyday events. This is clearly at odds with Horace’s statements in *Satires* 1.4. However, that satire itself contains a few hints that show us where Horace’s true allegiance lies: the lines introducing the lines from Ennius are themselves an example of artful composition. First of all, there is the chiasmus of ‘*ego ... nunc, | olim ... Lucilius*’. Moreover, he literally puts the ‘final words before the first’. By contrast, his example of a ‘truly poetic’

---

1 For a fuller treatment of the literary debates of Horace’s day and its links with Aristotelian thought, see Freudenburg (1992) pp. 119-128.

phrase, a quote from Ennius, is quite prosaic in its word order, so that dissolving it into its 'normal' word order would not actually change anything.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, while Horace denies that poetry can be created from everyday words, his own composition discredits his claim. However, Freudenburg also notes that there were those in Horace's time who actually did believe that poetry derived from unusual language. This explains why Horace so disingenuously defends this position: he is mocking the superficial theories of his poetic rivals.

Horace's next line of defence is equally ironic. He claims that his satires are not to be feared, since they are not actually being published (70-78). Of course, he does so within a collection of satires that was published. Still, he maintains that he only recites his poetry to his friends, and even then he has to be forced to do so. The satire takes a sudden turn when Horace introduces an anonymous slanderer, who accuses him of enjoying hurting his satiric victims. Horace becomes agitated: he demands to know the source of the accusation, fearing it is a treacherous friend (78-81). Emily Gowers notes that this was a common ploy for satirists: the satirist himself is a victim of the true slanderer, and merely defends himself.<sup>3</sup> This gives Horace the opportunity to launch an attack on treacherous friends in general: people who malign their friends behind their backs (82-101). This, according to Horace, is truly despicable. By contrast, Horace satirizes minor faults, not truly offensive behaviour. Even if he has crossed the line a few times, this is forgivable (101-143). It is merely a result of his upbringing: his father taught him good examples to follow, and bad examples to avoid. He has maintained this habit of noting the faults in other people, but his goal is not to bring these faults out into the open for everyone to see. This is just an unfortunate by-product of Horace's otherwise morally sound behaviour. In fact, satirizing is Horace's own minor fault, of the kind that he himself mocks as a satirist. It may not be something to be particularly proud of, but it is not truly malicious or harmful either.

In other words, Horace claims that his satire is not really meant for the outside world. Although it takes its material from society at large, it is ultimately meant for personal use. The satirist is a passive observer of society, only attacking when he is attacked, and only reciting his poetry when he is forced to do so. Aside from those instances, he keeps to himself. Even though the irony of this claim is obvious, it is still a coherent image.

### **Behind the scenes**

In satire 1.10, we again find Horace defending his satire. However, whereas the stylistic statements of 1.4 were a digression in a satire that focussed on the ethical problems of the genre, 1.10 deals exclusively with style. Horace takes up the criticism of Lucilius' style which he voiced in 1.4. He clarifies that his stylistic criticism does not mean that he completely

---

2 For further treatment of the artful composition of these lines, see Gowers (2012) *ad loc.* and Freudenburg (1992) pp. 145-150.

3 Gowers (2012) p. 171.

rejects Lucilius' merit as a satirist. In fact, he says, Lucilius was a funny and effective satirist. But his style was faulty at times. Horace then goes on to explain the proper elements of satiric style.

Nempe in composito dixi pede currere versus Lucili. Quis tam Lucili fautor inepte est ut non hoc fateatur? At idem, quod sale multo urbem defricuit, charta laudatur eadem.	1
Nec tamen hoc tribuens dederim quoque cetera; nam sic et Laberi mimos ut pulchra poemata mirer. Ergo non satis est risu diducere rictum auditoris; et est quaedam tamen hic quoque virtus. Est brevitatem opus, ut currat sententia neu se impediat verbis lassas onerantibus aures;	5
et sermone opus est modo tristi, saepe iocosi, defendente vicem modo rhetoris atque poetae, interdum urbani, parentis viribus atque extenuantis eas consulto. Ridiculum acri fortius et melius magnas plerumque secat res.	10
	15

Yes, I said that Lucilius' verses run on disordered feet. Is any fan of Lucilius so senseless not to admit this? Yet that same man is praised on the same page for rubbing down the city with a lot of wit. But giving him that, I would not give him the rest as well; then I would also have to marvel at Laberius' mimes as if they were pretty poems. Therefore, it is not enough to elicit a grin through laughter; yet there is value even in that. You need brevity, so that the thought runs freely and is not hindered by words that weigh heavy on tired ears; you also need speech that is sometimes serious, often humorous, playing the part now of the orator and poet, occasionally of the refined man, sparing his strength and toning it down deliberately. Laughter is usually stronger and better than violence for taking things apart.

This focus on style creates a striking contrast with 1.4. There Horace says that the style of satire was not important: satire merely consists of everyday language put into metre. In 1.10, however, Horace reveals that the proper style of a good satire takes effort. To be sure, 1.4 already hinted at this idea, as it criticized both Lucilius and Crispinus for merely writing many lines instead of writing good ones. However, 1.10 makes the idea explicit. Indeed, as we shall see, satire 1.10 modifies several claims from 1.4. In itself, this is hardly surprising. After all, we already saw that the claims concerning satiric style in 1.4 were ironic. However, I would like to take a closer look at the claims that 1.4 and 1.10 share in some form or another. Which parts of these claims does Horace modify, and which parts remain constant? The parts that remain constant may tell us what is really important for Horace's satire.

One of the interesting differences between 1.4 and 1.10 concerns the question whether satire is poetry. In 1.4.40-41, Horace says that simply composing a verse line is not enough to call something poetry.

Primum ego me illorum, dederim quibus esse poetis,  
 excerpam numero: **neque enim concludere versum** 40  
**dixeris esse satis**; neque si qui scribat uti nos  
 sermoni propiora, putes hunc esse poetam.

First of all, I exclude myself from those to whom I would give the name of poet: **for you would neither say that spinning a verse is enough**; nor would you deem someone a poet if he wrote something closer to ordinary talk.

In 1.10, however, he defends his criticism of Lucilius using a similar argument.

Tu nihil in magno doctus reprehendis Homero? 52  
 Nil comis tragici mutat Lucilius Acci?  
 Non ridet versus Enni gravitate minores,  
 cum de se loquitur non ut maiore repressis? 55  
 Quid vetat et nosmet Lucili scripta legentes  
 quaerere, num illius, num rerum dura negarit  
 versiculos natura magis factos et euntes  
 mollius ac si quis **pedibus quid claudere senis,**  
**hoc tantum contentus**, amet scripsisse ducentos 60  
 ante cibum versus, totidem cenatus, Etrusci  
 quale fuit Cassi rapido ferventius amni  
 ingenium, capsis quem fama est esse librisque  
 ambustum propriis? 64

Don't you, a learned man, disapprove of anything in great Homer? Doesn't our friend Lucilius change anything in tragic Accius? Doesn't he laugh at Ennius' less than dignified verses, while talking about himself as no greater than those he criticized? What forbids us, when we read Lucilius' writings, to ask whether it was his own rough nature, or that of his subject that prevented him from writing lines that were more polished and flowed more smoothly than if someone, **content merely with putting words into six feet**, loved writing two hundred verses before eating, and just as many after dinner, just as the genius of Etruscan Cassius rushed stronger than a rapid torrent, who is said to have been cremated on his own bookcases and books?

In both cases, the writing of a certain author is discredited, or at least devalued, because it is simple language merely put into metre, without any proper regard for style. In 1.4, the contrast is between the unpoetic satire of Horace himself, and the grand style of a poet like Ennius. In 1.10, however, the contrast is between the unpolished Lucilius and the careful stylist Horace. Of course, this is not as surprising as it may seem. Horace's depreciation of his

poetic style in 1.4 was ironic. We may therefore expect 1.10 to reinstate the poetic status of Horace's satire. Indeed, there are more passages that seem to confirm this interpretation. However, in each case, there is only the implication that his satire is poetry, never an explicit confirmation. Moreover, these implications are always accompanied by a certain degree of self-deprecation, creating even more uncertainty.

One of these passages runs from line 31 until 35. Here Horace describes a dream vision of Quirinus, telling him to stop writing Greek poetry, and turn to Latin instead. This is a clear allusion to the supernatural visions that other poets famously received, namely Callimachus, Ennius and Vergil.<sup>4</sup> However, as Gowers notes, the two lines Quirinus speaks are rather humorous:

There is comic unevenness in the god's tone: a "homely" first line (...), with double monosyllable *ac si* and *insanius* recalling diatribe rather than prophecy, but strong alliteration and "ponderous concatenation of long syllables" in the second line, as if parodying early Latin poetry (...).<sup>5</sup>

On the one hand, then, the parallel with the divine visits to earlier great poets may imply that Horace's satire is equally poetry. On the other hand, the fact that the humour of Horace's version hardly fits the grandeur of a divine visit suggests that Horace's satire is actually unlike the poetry of his great predecessors.

The passage that follows is similarly ambiguous. Horace mocks the turgid style of a certain poet referred to as *Alpinus*. The scholiasts identify him as M. Furius Bibaculus, who wrote an epic about Caesar's campaigns in Gaul.<sup>6</sup> On the one hand, comparing his satire to epic suggests that Horace views his satire as poetry. On the other hand, the disparagement of Furius' style suggests that his epic may not actually qualify as poetry either. Indeed, in the same lines, Horace says 'I amuse myself with these [satires]' (37: *haec ego ludo*), which once again diminishes their weight.

A few lines later, Horace compares his satire to the poetry of his friends. Since they had each taken all of the other genres (or so Horace claims), satire was the only genre in which he could improve upon the work of others, even if he could not surpass Lucilius (39-49). In this case, we may be fairly certain that the works of Horace's friends do qualify as poetry. However, we still do not get a clear confirmation that Horace's satire is poetry as well. After all, his choice for satire is represented as a forced choice, the only thing that was left for Horace.

In the same vein, Horace ends by restating that his satire is only meant for a select audience. In lines 38-39, he had already briefly alluded to the idea that his satire is not meant for the

---

4 Gowers (2012) p. 321.

5 *Ibid.* p. 322.

6 *Ibid.* p. 323.

masses that come to listen to poetry in public places. At the end, however, Horace gives a list of those people for whom Horace's satires are actually meant: an upper-class audience of men who can appreciate Horace's refined style. These include some of his fellow poets already mentioned, namely Varius and Vergil. Of course, Maecenas is included as well. However, the same passage also mentions by name a few people who are emphatically excluded from Horace's audience.

Saepe stilum vertas, iterum quae digna legi sint scripturus, neque te ut miretur turba labores, contentus paucis lectoribus. An tua demens vilibus in ludis dictari carmina malis?	72   75
non ego; nam satis est equitem mihi plaudere, ut audax contemptis aliis explosa Arbuscula dixit. Men moveat cimex Pantilius aut cruciet quod vellicet absentem Demetrius, aut quod ineptus Fannius Hermogenis laedat conviva Tigelli?	80
Plotius et Varius, Maecenas Vergiliusque, Valgius et probet haec Octavius optimus atque Fuscus et haec utinam Viscorum laudet uterque. Ambitione relegata te dicere possum, Pollio, te, Messalla, tuo cum fratre, simulque	85
vos, Bibule et Servi, simul his te, candide Furni, complures alios, doctos ego quos et amicos prudens praetereo; quibus haec, sint qualiacumque, arridere velim, doliturus si placeant spe deterius nostra. Demetri, teque, Tigelli, discipularum inter iubeo plorare cathedras. I, puer, atque meo citus haec subscribe libello.	90

Turn your pen often to write something worth reading again, and don't work to be admired by the crowd, but be content with few readers. Or would you rather have your songs be dictated in common schools, you madman? Not me; for me it is enough to be applauded by a knight, as the bold, hissed off Arbuscula said, spurning others. Should the bug Pantilius bother me, or should I be tormented because Demetrius picks at me when I'm not there, or because the inept guest of Hermogenes Tigellius, Fannius, injures me? May Plotius and Varius, Maecenas and Vergil, Valgius and great Octavius approve of these writings, as well as Fuscus, and may each of the Visci praise these. Without flattery I can name you, Pollio, you Messalla, along with your brother, and equally you, Bibulus and Servius, along with you, brilliant Furnius, and many other learned friends, whom I will prudently pass by; these men I would like to smile at these writings, however they may be, and I will suffer if they please them less than I had hoped. Demetrius, and you, Tigellius, I command to weep among the stools of your pupils. Go, boy, and quickly add these words to my booklet.

This final statement is striking, for it acknowledges that Horace's satires are read outside of his circle of friends. Indeed, the final line explicitly refers to Horace's *libellus*, the book that he is composing. Suddenly, then, at the very end of the book, Horace finally admits that his unassuming satire is actually being published and circulated. At the same time, however, he stresses that his intended audience is far smaller than all of Roman society.

What are we to make of these differences between the two satires? I would argue that they show us how important the unassuming stance of the author is to Horace's satire. First of all, we can see this in his treatment of satiric style. 1.10 reinstates his stylistic practice as something requiring effort and finesse after all. However, Horace cannot afford to take this argument to its final conclusion, and reclaim his satire as poetry. 1.4 does an excellent job of absolving Horace from any responsibility for criticizing his fellow Romans. His satires are hardly read by anyone anyway, so their effect is negligible: they are merely Horace's personal amusement. Reinstating the style of satire does not necessarily change this: the fact that Horace spent a lot of time writing his satires does not mean they merit attention. However, the lofty status of poetry would imply they merit attention.

Similarly, 1.4 claims that Horace's satire is only read by his friends, and that it is not being circulated. This is reiterated in 1.10. Only at the very end does Horace admit that there are also others, like Demetrius and Tigellius, who read his satires, and that his satires actually form a *libellus* that will be circulated. At this point, he no longer needs to keep the illusion going. It is the end of the book, and he will no longer need the pose.

To be clear, I do not claim that Horace's readers would have only realized the irony of 1.4 at the end of 1.10. Indeed, the fact that the reader can see through Horace's satirical pose is why the irony of the *Satires* works. However, to maintain the irony, Horace cannot let on that his claims are less than earnest. Explicitly drawing attention to this would defeat the entire point of irony.

### **Stepping aside**

The final explicitly programmatic satire is 2.1. Here we encounter Horace seeking help from the famous lawyer Gaius Trebatius Testa. The fact that Horace addresses a satire to a specific person is not new: book 1 has several satires that address Maecenas. What is special about 2.1, however, is that Trebatius actually responds. This sets the tone for book 2 of the *Satires*, most of which feature two interlocutors, one of which is often Horace himself. However, Horace is also often the more passive participant in the dialogues, providing occasional comments, but otherwise remaining silent. 2.1 is an exception to this, however, as Horace still has a large speaking role.

The setting is that of a legal consult. Horace has noted that his satires have attracted unfavourable judgement. Some even say that he has 'stretched [his] work beyond what is

lawful' (1-2: *ultra legem tendere opus*). Whereas 1.4 had discussed Horace's satire mainly in terms of ethics, and 1.10 in terms of style, we are now in the realm of satire and the law. The lawyer Trebatius, therefore, is a suitable interlocutor.

Although the tone of the satire is not entirely serious, we can still find Horace making some interesting statements about his satire. Most strikingly, we find him saying that his satire is a weapon to be used against others.

Sed hic stilus haud petet ultro	
quemquam animantem et me veluti custodiet ensis	40
vagina tectus; quem cur destringere coner	
tutus ab infestis latronibus? O pater et rex	
Iuppiter, ut pereat positum robigine telum	
nec quisquam noceat cupido mihi pacis! At ille	
qui me commorit (melius non tangere, clamo)	45
flebit et insignis tota cantabitur urbe.	

But this pen won't harm any living being of its own accord and will guard me like a sword hidden in its sheath. Why would I try to draw it when I'm safe from dangerous bandits? Oh father and king Jupiter, let my weapon be put away and destroyed by rust nor let anyone hurt me who long for peace. But he who disturbs me (it's better not to touch, I tell you) will weep and will be the notorious talk of the town.

To be sure, Horace stresses that he is not the aggressor: he will only attack when attacked. Nevertheless, the mere acknowledgement that his satire has the power to spread rumours around town is a direct contradiction of satire 1.4.

In book 2, then, Horace no longer denies that his satire can have implications. But it would be a mistake to say that he embraces this side of his satire. Indeed, he wishes he will never have to use this powerful weapon of his (43-44). Of course, one may doubt the sincerity of these words. However, irony plays a role in satire 1.4 as well, where Horace claims that his satires are read by nobody, even though he makes this claim in a published collection of satires. The irony, then, is not the issue. Both stances may be ironic, but the fact that they are different is still striking.

We may explain this difference by saying that after the publication of the first book of satires, the game is up: he can no longer claim to be a nobody whose poetry is only read by his closest friends. However, this does not mean that he readily accepts this role. In fact, he still portrays his satiric practice as a kind of imperfection, just as he did in 1.4. When Trebatius reminds Horace that people fear and hate a satirist – something which Horace himself mentioned in 1.4.33-38 – Horace says that he has no choice.

'Quid faciam? Saltat Milonius, ut semel icto  
 accessit fervor capiti numerusque lucernis;                    25  
 Castor gaudet equis, ovo prognatus eodem  
 pugnis; quot capitum vivunt, totidem studiorum  
 milia: me pedibus delectat claudere verba  
 Lucili ritu, nostrum melioris utroque.                            29

What can I do? Milonius dances once the heat in his stricken head and the number of lamps have risen. Castor delights in horses, the child born from the same egg delights in boxing. There are as many thousands of endeavours as there are people alive. I take pleasure in arranging words in metre in the style of Lucilius, a better man than either of us.

Horace likens his proclivity to write satire to that of a certain Milonius to dance. This does little to paint a favourable picture of Horace, since '[d]ancing was regarded as effeminate, and not approved of by Romans of the old school'.<sup>7</sup> Then again, this negative association is assuaged somewhat by several things. As Frances Muecke notes, the fact that Milonius is drunk is an excuse for his dancing, although Muecke also mentions that this was in fact the only excuse. The comparison with the Dioscuri also helps to paint Horace's satire in a more positive light. Still, the overall point is that he cannot help but write satire, whether he likes the consequences or not.

Later on, he seems to have truly accepted the consequences of his satire. He first describes his satire as a weapon, as mentioned above. He then even defiantly proclaims to continue writing satire, whatever the consequence may be.

Ne longum faciam: seu me tranquilla senectus                    57  
 expectat seu Mors atris circumvolat alis,  
 dives, inops, Romae, seu fors ita iusserit, exsul,  
 quisquis erit vitae, scribam color.                                    60

To keep it short: whether quiet old age awaits me or death circles me on dark wings, rich, poor, in Rome, or – if fortune so decides – exiled, whatever the condition of my life, I will write.

One might read these words as a threat, and to some extent they certainly are. However, I would argue the threat is mostly born from resignation. The earlier remarks make clear that Horace is not happy with his new position. Ideally, he would like to return to the world of book 1, where he could simply claim that his satires were harmless since no one read them. However, by the time book 2 comes along, Horace can no longer claim this. His satires are being read widely and he knows it. Moreover, they have consequences for the people Horace writes about. He does not want to bear the responsibility that come with this. However, he is not prepared to give up satire either.

<sup>7</sup> Muecke (1993) p. 106.

He solves the problem in a way we have already mentioned: the figure of Horace takes a step back in book 2. He may be the most important character in 2.1, but this changes in the rest of the book. In 2.2 Horace is the only speaker, but the satire is explicitly styled as a philosophical lecture to an undefined audience. Moreover, Horace claims that the ‘talk’ (2: *sermo*) is not his, but consists of the lessons he learned in his youth from the farmer Ofellus. In satires 3, 4, 7 and 8 of book 2, Horace is present, but functions mostly as a passive listener, making occasional remarks. He is completely absent from 2.5, which depicts a dialogue between Teiresias and Odysseus in the underworld. Only in 2.6 do we find Horace in a role similar to the one who often assumed in book 1: giving a seemingly personal reflection on his own life. Even in 2.6, however, the explicit moral lesson comes in the form of a fable which is quoted as if it is told by Horace’s country neighbour Cervius.

Frances Muecke nicely summarizes Horace’s stance in book 2:

where “Horace” appears, it is not as “the satirist” speaking his concerns in his own voice, but as a man who also happens to be a poet who writes satires. (...) The ambiguity of this ploy, we realise, is foreshadowed in the ironic stance of *Sat.* 2.1, in which Horace advertises a reduction in personal invective on his own part, but also promises to continue to write critical satire.<sup>8</sup>

In both books, then, Horace denies that the traditional picture of the satirist applies to him. In book 1, he does this by claiming that his kind of satire is different from the common idea of satire. In book 2, he does it by no longer explicitly fulfilling the role of a satirist at all, pulling the strings from the sidelines.

### **Biting back**

I will now turn to the *Epodes*. I will start with the sixth epode. It is programmatic in content, although not as explicitly as the satires discussed before. It is also a short poem. Its hostile and indignant tone is similar to that of the fourth epode, which I will discuss later. In contrast to that poem, however, the attack in epode 6 does not arise from personal enmity.

Quid immerentis hospites vexas canis	1
ignavus adversum lupos?	
Quin huc inanis, si potes, vertis minas	
et me remorsurum petis?	
Nam qualis aut Molossus aut fulvus Lacon,	5
amica vis pastoribus	
agam per altas aure sublata nivis	
quaecumque praecedet fera;	
tu, cum timenda voce complesti nemus,	
proiectum odoraris cibum.	10

---

<sup>8</sup> Muecke (1993) p. 100.

Cave, cave, namque in malos asperrimus  
 parata tollo cornua,  
 qualis Lycambae spretus infido gener  
 aut acer hostis Bupalus.  
 An si quis atro dente me petiverit,                   15  
 inultus ut flebo puer?

Why do you harass innocent guests, like a dog afraid of wolves? Why don't you aim your threats this way, if you can, and attack me, who will bite back? For like a Molossian or a tawny Laconian, a strong friend to shepherds, raising my ear, I will chase through the deep snow any beast before me; you, when you have filled the wood with your fearful howl, you will sniff out the food thrown in front of you. Beware, beware, for I raise my horns, ready to strike the wicked down, like the son-in-law rejected by faithless Lycambes, or the piercing enemy of Bupalus. Or shall I, when attacked with malignant force, cry like a boy unavenged?

Horace's target is implied to have previously attacked certain other people. The target is described as a dog who dares to attack innocent strangers, but cowers when faced with wolves. Horace challenges his target to choose a victim who might actually bite back, namely Horace himself. Immediately, Horace likens himself to a sheepdog, chasing any animal that might pose a threat to the flock. The animal similes continue, as Horace suddenly grows horns, which symbolize iambic violence. Indeed, he compares himself to Archilochus and Hipponax.

When we compare Horace's stance in this epode to that of his *Satires*, we find that they are opposites in many ways. Whereas Horace the satirist had claimed to only write for his own enjoyment, and perhaps that of his friends, the epode is specifically directed against its target. Moreover, the iambist attacks on behalf of some unnamed people, whereas the satirist employed the image of self-defence. In other words, whereas the satirist merely watches from the sidelines, only responding to provocations by others, the iambist takes the initiative to engage with the people around him.

Furthermore, the iambist's attack is definitely to be feared. He will bite and use his horns. Indeed, the entire point of the epode is that the iambist is far more dangerous than whoever the epode's target was attacking previously. This forms a stark contrast to the satirist, who innocently asks '*cur metuas me?*' (1.4.70).

Finally, whereas Horace the satirist maintained a somewhat ambiguous relationship with Lucilius, both criticizing him and acknowledging him as his superior, the iambist proudly flaunts his connection to Archilochus and Hipponax. Horace the satirist had taken a scholarly approach, discussing the precise links between genres like comedy and satire and the authors within them. He had also critiqued Lucilius, pointing out both his strengths and his flaws. The iambist of epode 6, on the other hand, is not concerned with scholarly debates at all. He is concerned with threatening his target. In the pose Horace adopts, Archilochus and Hipponax

serve as powerful reminders of the things an iambist is capable of. This threatening iambic pose forms a stark contrast to the satire's disavowal of any potency its genre might have.

To be clear, I do not intend to say that the *Epodes* are straightforward. They contain plenty of irony, subtly undermining the words of the poet as he speaks them. An example of this is the end of epode 6: after comparing himself to a hound, a bull (or some other animal with horns), and his powerful iambic predecessors, Horace finally compares himself to a little boy. As Stephen Harrison notes, this gives a rather comic ending to the epode.<sup>9</sup> However, the iambist does not explicitly recognize this. He remains confident in the efficacy of his words. Just as in the *Satires*, the speaker cannot recognize the irony if the irony is to have its proper effect.

### A direct attack of irony

A clearer example of how this kind of irony works in the *Epodes* is epode 4.

Lupis et agnis quanta sortito obtigit tecum mihi discordia est, Hibericis peruste funibus latus et crura dura compede.	1
Licet superbus ambules pecunia fortuna non mutat genus videsne, Sacram metiente te Viam cum bis trium ulnarum toga, ut ora vertat huc et huc euntium liberrima indignatio?	5 10
'sectus flagellis hic triumviralibus praeconis ad fastidium arat Falerni mille fundi iugera et Appiam mannis terit sedilibusque magnus in primis eques Othone contempto sedet. Quid attinet tot ora navium gravi rostrata duci pondere contra latrones atque servilem manum hoc, hoc tribuno militum?'	15 20

As much as lot has assigned to wolves and lambs, so much strife is there between me and you, rubbed sore as you are on your sides by the Iberian ropes and on your legs by rough fetters. Even though you walk around proud of your money, fortune does not change your birth. When you traverse the Sacred Way with your six ell toga, do you see how the frank indignation of passers-by turns around? 'This man, chopped up by the whips of the triumvirs enough to nauseate the crier, ploughs a thousand jugers of Falernian land and wears out the Appian Way with his horses, and the great knight sits in the front rows

<sup>9</sup> Harrison (2001) p. 177.

spurning Otho. What does it matter that so many heavy beak-faced ships fight against bandits and the servile army when this man is a military tribune?

We find similar contrasts between this epode and Horace's satire to the ones we found earlier. First of all, Horace's attack explicitly arises from enmity (2: *discordia*), not from moral training. Furthermore, whereas Horace the satirist sought to distance himself from public shaming, the iambist in epode 4 explicitly refers to the judgement of people in the streets of Rome to make his point. Indeed, as Mankin notes, while the word *discordia* may at first sight suggest personal enmity, several things speak against this:

1. The enmity is assigned by lot (1: *sortito*);
2. It is similar to the natural enmity of wolves and lambs (1-2);
3. Other people share this enmity, as becomes clear from line 9 onwards.

Mankin therefore suggests that

[Horace's] audience might think of the main sense of *discordia* in the late Republic: "it designates above all oppositions of a general type that occur within the state, and thus is found in such phrases as *discordia ciuium, ciuitatis, ciuilis*" (Hellegouarc'h (1972) 134).<sup>10</sup>

Horace's attack, then, is not simply the result of personal disagreement, but is concerned with the conflict between different groups in society. In other words, the iambist is not merely concerned with personal matters, but with society at large. Indeed, the fact that he quotes people in the street suggests that he may even serve as a kind of spokesman for these people.

However, a closer look reveals that Horace's attack is not as straightforward as it may seem. His target is similar to Horace in many ways: the target is a former slave, while Horace was the son of a freedman; the target is a military tribune, while Horace once occupied the same rank in Brutus' army; both possess an estate; and finally, both sit among the *equites* in the theatre.<sup>11</sup>

Horace's attack, therefore, may seem somewhat hypocritical. It may even seem as if he is mocking himself. In fact, we can compare the iambic practice of adopting a *persona loquens*: the poet adopts the voice of another person, only to have that person say bad things about themselves.<sup>12</sup> In other words, the poet abuses someone else by using that person's own voice. In a way, epode 4 inverts this practice: the poet abuses himself by using another person's voice. Such playful inversion is not as strange as it may seem. In the preceding third epode, Horace also directs his iambic aggression against an unexpected target, namely Maecenas, merely for serving him garlic.

However, there is more. As Mankin notes, the speaker and the people in the street cite different causes for the man's scars: the speaker suggests that he acquired them as a galley

<sup>10</sup> Mankin (1995) p. 101.

<sup>11</sup> Watson (2003) pp. 150-2.

<sup>12</sup> Mankin (1995) p. 8.

slave, while the people in the street say the whip of the *triumviri* is to blame. According to Mankin, this suggests that the speaker and the people in the street may only be guessing. Also, since the target apparently does not hide his scars under a tunic, 'it is possible that, despite his enemies' claims, he acquired them honourably.'<sup>13</sup> Mankin goes on to argue that the ostensible target of the epode is not its true target: it is actually the speaker and the people in the street who are being mocked for criticizing the man unjustly. In this interpretation, the *persona loquens* was used in the traditional iambic way all along.

In short, the poem has three layers. On the surface, we have a straightforward iambic attack against a socially deviant person. On closer inspection, we find that the poem has an ironic quality, criticizing a person who resembles the poet in many ways. Finally, we may conclude that the criticism is inconsistent and undeserved, and it is the speaker and the people who agree with him who deserve to be criticized.<sup>14</sup>

In epode 4, then, the strength of the iambic attack is toned down: its verbal abuse is not as effective as it may seem. However, this is accomplished through contextual cues, not by toning down the abuse itself. Had the abuse of the speaker or that of the people in the street been uttered in isolation, the abuse would have been quite effective. It is only because the two instances of abuse are inconsistent, both with each other and with Horace's biography, that the abuse loses its effectiveness. The stance, then, is very much that of the confident iambist, even if it is used ironically.

### Verbal power over physical power

All of this is not to say that Horace's iambic persona is confident in every way. This is apparent right from the start of the *Epodes*. In epode 1, Horace addresses Maecenas, who is going off to a naval battle, although it is unclear which one. Horace mentions that Maecenas has ordered his friends to stay behind, but Horace refuses.

Utrumne iussi persequemur otium	7
non dulce, ni tecum simul,	
an hunc laborem, mente laturo decet	
qua ferre non mollis viros?	10
Feremus et te vel per Alpium iuga	
inhospitalem et Caucasum	
vel Occidentis usque ad ultimum sinum	
forti sequemur pectore.	
roges tuum labore quid iuven meo	15
imbellis ac firmus parum:	
comes minore sum futurus in metu,	
qui maior absentis habet,	
ut assidens implumibus pullis avis	

<sup>13</sup> Mankin (1993) p. 101.

<sup>14</sup> I have previously used this interpretation of *Epodes* 4 in my bachelor's thesis.

serpentium allapsus timet  
 magis relictis, non, ut adsit, auxili  
 latura plus praesentibus.

20

Should we pursue the quiet life as ordered, which is not sweet unless shared with you, or pursue this hardship, bearing it with the courage with which less delicate men ought to bear it? We will bear it and follow you with strong spirit, whether through the ridges of the Alps and the inhospitable Caucasus, or all the way to the most remote gulf of the east. You might ask what help my efforts might be to you, as I'm unwarlike and not strong enough: I'll suffer less fear as your companion, since fear is stronger for those who are absent, just as a bird caring for featherless chicks fears the approach of snakes more when she has left them, even though she, if she were present, could give no more help.

Although Horace is brave enough to go against Maecenas' wishes, the pose he adopts is hardly confident. He freely admits that he is completely useless when it comes to war. Whereas the confident iambist in epode 6 compares himself to dangerous wolves and bulls, here Horace likens himself to a harmless bird who is powerless to stop a snake from eating her young.

It has been noted that Horace's lack of confidence as a warrior forms a stark contrast with Archilochus, who boasted of his military prowess.<sup>15</sup> In his opening poem, Horace immediately signals that his iambic will be different from Archilochus' iambic in this regard. However, I would argue that this does not mean that Horace's iambic stance is merely self-deprecating. Horace may not be a physical threat, but he does not have to be. As Horace amply shows in his other epodes, his words can be threatening enough. The fact that he downplays his physical power does not diminish the effect of his verbal abuse.

This is an important distinction to make when comparing the *Epodes* to the *Satires*. After all, the first book of *Satires* explicitly downplays the impact of Horace's words. However, this is something that the iambist of the *Epodes* will never do. That is to say, the iambist may at times complain that the full force of his words is being impeded by stronger forces. For instance, in epodes 11 and 14 we encounter an iambist who is stricken with love, which keeps him from writing poetry. And in epode 17 it is Canidia who forces him to submit to her magic. Moreover, the discerning reader may see that the iambist's words are not actually as effective as the iambist would like to believe. We have seen an example of this in epode 4. However, the iambist will never say that his words are of no concern, as the satirist does.

### Conclusion

Putting these things together, we might say the iambist confidently takes his place in society, while the satirist keeps to himself. The words of the satirist are private and best ignored by others: satire is Horace's slight moral shortcoming, which must be looked upon forgivingly. They are the result of a private exercise in morality, not meant as an attack. Although Horace

---

15 See for instance Harrison (2001) pp. 167-172.

will not stop writing them if people are offended by them, it is not his intention to offend. By contrast, the iambist's words are supposed to be heard and to have consequences. They are a deliberate attack aimed directly at its target. Moreover, the iambist can attack on behalf of other people, be they certain people whom the target attacked earlier, or simply the people in the street.

This distinction is borne out by structural features of the *Satires* and the *Epodes*. The *Satires* are mostly fashioned as dialogues, which the reader is listening in on. This is most apparent in the second book, which always features two interlocutors, even if one of them dominates the conversation. However, book 1 already has traces of this style: satires 1.1, 1.3 and 1.6 are all explicitly addressed to Maecenas, and 1.2 and 1.4 are written in a similar style. Indeed, the title *Sermones* indicates that we should regard the *Satires* as 'conversations'. Perhaps as a consequence of this, the mocked and criticized people in the *Satires* are never the addressees of the poems. They are merely spoken of in conversation to others. This is in stark contrast to the *Epodes*, of which 3, 4, 6, 7, 12, 15 and 17 are addressed to the people they mock or attack. To be sure, the *Epodes* also have some 'oblique' criticism, namely 2, 5 and 10. Epode 16 is a special case, as the iambist first criticizes all of Roman society – himself included! – for waging civil war, only to then discern between those who are prepared to leave the violence behind, and those who wish to continue fighting. In other words, I do not claim that Horace's iambic deals exclusively in attacks with a clear and simple interpretation. However, the contrast between the *Epodes* and the *Satires* does point to a tendency for the satirist to be more oblique in his moral criticism than the iambist.

Indeed, as Ellen Oliensis says, 'there is an urgency about the epodes that is absent from the satires. Whereas Horatian satire aspires to universality, the epodes are figuratively located within a particular historical crisis and take the form not of philosophical reflections but of socially engaged and consequential acts.'<sup>16</sup> In other words, I would say the difference between the *Satires* and the *Epodes* is one of moral theory versus moral practice. Horace the satirist is not so much concerned with the moral failings of specific people, as he is concerned with the ethical lessons they may hold. This is borne out by the fact that all satires are either styled as stories or sermons addressed to an undefined audience, or as dialogues. That is to say, they are (intellectual) discussions of people and events after the fact. The *Satires* mostly seek to persuade its audience and/or an interlocutor of an ethical and/or intellectual point, rather than change a specific person's behaviour in the moment.<sup>17</sup>

By contrast, Horace's iambic seeks to right the actual wrongs perpetrated by actual people. The individual poems are addressed directly to their targets. Moreover, many of them have a

---

16 Oliensis (1998) p. 64.

17 Even in *Sat.* 2,3 and 2,7, where Horace is directly addressed and criticized by the characters of Damasippus and Davus respectively, these interlocutors are mostly using him as an example to illustrate doctrines from Stoic philosophy, rather than trying to change his behaviour or castigate him. I will discuss these satires in more depth in the third chapter.

dramatic setting in which there is a specific occasion: they have a direct reason why they are immediately relevant within their dramatic setting. 1 has Maecenas leaving for war; 3 has Horace suffering of indigestion; 7 and 16 take place at political gatherings; 8 and 12 have Horace arguing with a romantic partner. This is quite different from the relaxed atmosphere of after the fact theorizing in the *Satires*. The *Epodes* do not seek moral truths; they seek to change the actual world – or more specifically, the behaviour of the people in that world.

This is not to say that the *Satires* contain no attempts to change the behaviour of other people, nor that the *Epodes* contain no reflection upon human action. They are only tendencies in each of the collections, although I do believe that they are strong tendencies. Nor am I arguing that these two stances – that of the *Satires* theoretical, that of the *Epodes* practical – in any way reflect Horace's actual interests in writing the several poems. Indeed, part of the humour present in both works arises from the irony with which Horace is poking fun at his own words. However, for this irony to work, the stances in both collections need to be consistent. For instance, it is precisely because the iambist is so violently confident that we appreciate how close he is to attacking himself. And it is precisely because the satirist is so self-deprecating that we appreciate how effective his mockery can be.

In this sense, the *Satires* and the *Epodes* move in opposite directions. The *Satires* feature a satirist who, in the first book, claims that his words have no potency and, in the second book, complains when he has found out his words do affect the world around him. Horace the satirist almost becomes a pitiful man, one who, despite his best efforts, cannot help but offend people. In this sense, the *Satires* have an insidious quality: Horace claims to be harmless while often suggesting quite the opposite. By contrast, the *Epodes* feature an iambist who claims authority, yet often falls short of the verbal power he assumes.

## Public censure: Horace's political aspirations

This chapter will look at a contrast similar to that of the previous chapter. However, whereas the previous chapter discussed at the role of Horace as a typical satirist or iambist attacking a single person, this chapter will look at his stance towards the general issues facing society. Specifically, I will look at passages concerning political activity. First, I will look at *Satires* 1.6 and 2.6, both of which emphasize Horace's reluctance to become involved in politics and public affairs. I will compare these satires to *Epodes* 7 and 16. In both of these poems, Horace assumes the role of a magistrate, effectively contradicting the message of *Satires* 1.6 and 2.6.

### Necessity and choice

*Satires* 1.6 starts by thanking Maecenas for recognizing Horace as a good man, even though he is the son of a freedman. He adduces the example of low-born yet virtuous Romans who held high office before the reign of Servius Tullius (7-11). Horace goes on to argue that the common people do not reward virtue and are dazzled by fame and outward display. This leads to the striking conclusion that Horace should not seek political office.

quid oportet	17
nos facere a vulgo longe longeque remotos?	
namque esto populus Laevino mallet honorem	
quam Decio mandare novo censorque moveret	20
Appius, ingenuo si non essem patre natus:	
vel merito, quoniam in propria non pelle quiessem.	

What should we do, who are far, far removed from the crowd? Now, let the people confer honour to Laevinus rather than to Decius the new man, and let censor Appius remove me from the Senate, if I am not born of a free-born father: deservedly even, since I would not have kept myself in my own skin.

Horace then describes the drawbacks of political activity: envy along with continual scrutiny and criticism. However, even as a private citizen, Horace himself is not free from envy either (45-52). Previously, people envied him because he was a military tribune.<sup>1</sup> Now he is envied because he is Maecenas' friend. He stresses, however, that these two cases are entirely different. One might justifiably begrudge Horace an official position of honour, such as a military command. However, there is no ambition at play in the friendship between him and Maecenas. This leads Horace to reiterate that Maecenas is a good judge of character, careful to accept only the virtuous as his friends.

It also leads to a historical digression, in which Horace tells of his introduction to Maecenas (54-64). Afterwards, he goes even further back in time (65-88), thanking his father for raising him to be a man of good character. He details how his father gave him an education in Rome of

---

1 He conveniently omits the fact that he held this office in Brutus' army.



Romae sponsorem me rapis: 'eia!  
 ne prior officio quisquam respondeat, urge.'  
 sive Aquilo radit terras seu bruma nivalem 25  
 interiore diem gyro trahit, ire necesse est.  
 postmodo quod mi obsit clare certumque locuto  
 luctandum in turba et facienda iniuria tardis.  
 'quid tibi vis, insane?' et 'quam rem agis?' improbus urget  
 iratis precibus; 'tu pulses omne quod obstat, 30  
 ad Maecenatem memori si mente recurras?'  
 hoc iuvat et melli est, non mentiar. at simul atras  
 ventum est Esquilias, aliena negotia centum  
 per caput et circa saliunt latus. 'ante secundam  
 Roscius orabat sibi adesses ad Puteal cras.' 35  
 'de re communi scribae magna atque nova te  
 orabant hodie meminisses, Quinte, reverti.'  
 'imprimat his, cura, Maecenas signa tabellis.'  
 dixeris 'experiar': 'si vis, potes' addit et instat. 39

In Rome you carry me off to stand surety: 'Hey! Hurry up so no one answers for duty first.' Whether the North Wind grazes the earth or winter brings a snowy day with its closer circuit, I have to go. Afterwards, having said clearly and surely things that may harm me, I have to wrestle in the crowd and injure the slow. 'What do you want, madman?' and 'What are you doing?' some wretch harasses me with angry curses. 'Do you push everything in your way if you run back in mindful thought to Maecenas?' This is a joy and sweet as honey, I won't lie. But when I've come to the dark Esquiline, a hundred issues of strangers dance over my head and around my sides. 'Roscius asks you to meet him at the Well tomorrow.' 'Quintus, the scribes ask that you remember to return today for an important new issue of common interest.' 'Make sure that Maecenas puts his seal on these documents.' If you say 'I'll try,' he adds 'You can do it if you want,' and insists.

Despite his professed lack of ambition, Horace has moved up in the world. He has obligations and is recognized in the street as a friend of Maecenas.<sup>2</sup> He even admits that he enjoys this to a degree (32: *hoc iuvat et melli est*). In the end, however, he still longs for the peace and quiet of his previous life. Consequently, whereas in 1.6 he said he would not change his life if he was given the chance, in 2.6 he does wish for a change: he wishes for the peace and quiet of the country.

perditur haec inter misero lux, non sine votis:  
 'o rus, quando ego te aspiciam? quandoque licebit 60  
 nunc veterum libris, nunc somno et inertibus horis  
 ducere sollicitae iucunda oblivia vitae?

2 Admittedly, Horace had been recognized in the street as Maecenas' friend in *Satires* 1.9 as well. However, the incident there is still presented as an unusual, unexpected occurrence. By contrast, *Satires* 2.6 presents an everyday routine.

o quando faba Pythagorae cognata simulque  
uncta satis pingui ponentur holuscula lardo?’

64

Amid these things I miserably waste my day, not without wishing: ‘Oh countryside, when will I look upon you? When will I be able to draw pleasant forgetfulness of my troubled life, now from books of old authors, now from sleep and idle hours? Oh, when will the bean, Pythagoras’ kinsman, be served along with vegetables anointed with plenty fat bacon?’

Horace’s life has changed since *Satires* 1.6. He has been thrust into a life of obligations, which was precisely the thing that he rejected in 1.6. To be fair, Horace does not have the obligations of an actual senator, but he can no longer make his treasured strolls through the city. True to his word, he wishes for peace and quiet, which only his Sabine estate can now provide for him. In other words, Horace’s life may have changed since *Satires* 1.6, but his outlook has not.

The contrast with Maecenas here is also noteworthy. Maecenas had notably chosen not to pursue political office. This makes him similar to Horace to a certain degree. Indeed, 1.6, addressed to Maecenas, voices the question of whether to pursue political office referring to *nos*. Of course, this may be a simple case of using the plural for the singular, but it may also imply that the same reasoning holds for both Horace and Maecenas. However, 1.6 also constantly emphasizes the difference between Horace and Maecenas, and only explicitly rejects political office in the case of Horace. Similarly, 2.6 depicts Horace as inferior to Maecenas in public matters. In other words, even Maecenas’ involvement in public affairs, while not actually connected to holding office, is depicted as unsuitable for Horace. I will expand on this in the next chapter, where I will delve deeper into the relation between Horace and Maecenas in both the *Satires* and the *Epodes*.

### **Assuming power: *Epodes* 7**

The conscious rejection of political ambition in the *Satires* forms a stark contrast to the *Epodes*. We have already seen how Horace starts the *Epodes* with a reference to one of the naval battles of the civil wars. In that case, however, he claims to be more concerned with Maecenas’ safety than with the outcome of the battle itself.

In *Epodes* 7, however, Horace clearly envisions himself as a kind of politician. In fact, this poem is a public address, admonishing Horace’s fellow Romans not to wage civil war. The exact dramatic setting, however, is not entirely clear. Mankin believes that the dramatic date is right before the civil war between Octavian and Mark Antony, in 32 BCE. In his interpretation, Horace addresses the consuls and senators of both sides leaving the Curia after civil war became inevitable.<sup>3</sup> Watson favours a dating between late 39 and early 38 BCE, although he stresses that the poem does not provide enough detail to date it definitively.<sup>4</sup>

3 Mankin (1995) pp. 142-143.

4 Watson (2003) pp. 269-271.

What both commentators agree on, however, is the clearly public character of the poem.

Quo quo scelesti ruitis? aut cur dexteris aptantur enses conditi?	1
parumne campis atque Neptuno super fusum est Latini sanguinis,	
non ut superbas invidae Carthaginis Romanus arces ureret	5
intactus aut Britannus ut descenderet Sacra catenatus Via,	
sed ut secundum vota Parthorum sua Urbs haec periret dextera?	10
neque hic lupis mos nec fuit leonibus, numquam nisi in dispar feris.	
furorne caecus an rapit vis acrior an culpa? responsum date.	
tacent et albus ora pallor inficit mentesque percussae stupent.	15
sic est: acerba fata Romanos agunt scelusque fraternae necis,	
ut immerentis fluxit in terram Remi sacer nepotibus cruor.	20

Where, where are you scoundrels rushing off to? And why are your right hands grabbing your sheathed swords? Has too little Latin blood been shed over land and sea, not for the Roman to burn the proud strongholds of envious Carthage, or for the untouched Briton to go down the Sacred Way in chains, but for this city to perish, fulfilling the wishes of the Parthians, by its own right hand? Not even wolves or lions have this custom. They are only cruel against those of a different kind. Is it blind rage that seizes you or a fiercer force? Or guilt? Answer me! They are silent: a white pallor colours their faces and their smitten minds are stunned. That's how it is: a bitter fate and the crime of brotherly murder drives the Romans, ever since the blood of innocent Remus flowed upon the earth, a curse to his descendants.

Indeed, it is striking to see that Horace blames the entire Roman populace for the civil wars.<sup>5</sup> In a very real sense, he claims to defend Rome itself, referring emotionally to the city being destroyed by its own right hand (9-10). Far from staying out of the public eye, as Horace claimed he did in the *Satires*, he steps forward.

5 In fact, part of the difficulty of dating the poem lies in the fact that it explicitly blames the entire Roman populace for the civil wars. The utter pessimism of this passage has led scholars to various conclusions. The problem lies in the implied judgement of Octavian in this passage. Is he one of the cursed Romans continuing the cycle of violence? Some scholars have argued that Horace would never have included this poem in the Epodes collection if it was a condemnation of the civil war against Sextus Pompey, since the outcome of that war had proved successful for Octavian. Therefore, it must be a late poem. Conversely, it has been argued that Horace would never write such a pessimistic poem after he had joined Maecenas' circle of friends. Therefore, it must be an early poem. For a more detailed discussion, see Watson (2003) pp. 269-271.

Admittedly, addressing people to voice complaints is not the same as aspiring to hold office. In that sense, Horace's denouncement of political office in *Satires* 1.6 is perfectly compatible with *Epodes* 7. However, within Roman politics, addressing the people was not a right for every citizen. The usual occasion for such an address was the *contio*. Only magistrates had the power to convene such meetings and to allow others to speak. In principle, the magistrate could allow any citizen to speak. In practice, however, it was almost always another magistrate or ex-magistrate who were given the opportunity to speak.<sup>6</sup> In other words, it was virtually impossible for a non-senator to hold a speech of the kind Horace holds in *Epodes* 7.

Thus, Horace's stance in *Epodes* 7 may seem absurd. However, it is important to note that this stance owes much to Greek practice, specifically Greek iambic practice. Archaic Greek poets such as Archilochus and Solon wrote poems in which they addressed their fellow citizens, admonishing them not to take a certain course of action. These poems themselves were fictional to a degree, since they were performed at a symposium among the poet's friends, not at an actual public meeting.<sup>7</sup> In other words, *Epodes* 7 is not meant as a realistic depiction of an address. The idea of a public address is merely used to voice certain concerns.

However, as Watson notes,

Fictional though it may be, the form of Horace's harangue also owes much to the rhetorical framework of the *δημηγορία*, a speech of address to the people falling under the general rubric of the *γένος συμβουλευτικόν* or *genus deliberativum*, which had as its object persuasion or, as here, dissuasion.<sup>8</sup>

Watson goes on to say that the poem should not be interpreted as a merely personal meditation on the civil wars, as some scholars have argued. The poem is concerned with public matters, and it explicitly addresses the Roman people in its entirety. This is an integral part of the poem, and should not be overlooked, even if Horace could not have physically addressed a general assembly of the Roman people. In this poem, Horace simply assumes the right to speak. I would add that, in a Roman context, this means that Horace effectively assumes the role of a magistrate, the role he had so emphatically rejected in the *Satires*.

### Politics and poetry

*Epodes* 16 is the penultimate poem of the collection. It is a pessimistic poem. Horace proclaims that Rome is doomed. It starts with an apocalyptic vision of Rome in ruins. The city that had

---

6 See Pina Polo (2012), pp. 51-52: 'In practice, data provided by ancient sources allow us to conclude that, with very few exceptions, orators speaking before the people throughout the Roman Republic were all members of the social elite, most of them magistrates in offices, and the rest ex-magistrates, many of them *consulares*. This means that almost all of the Roman orators at *contiones* were senators, and were therefore invested with the *auctoritas* attached to their office.'

7 See Mankin (1995) p. 144 and Watson (2003) p. 266.

8 Watson (2003) p. 266.

withstood so many great adversaries will now be destroyed by its own inhabitants. Those who wish to avoid further violence have only one option left: leave Rome and set sail for the mythical Blessed Isles. These islands have remained in the pristine state of the ancient Golden Age, while the rest of the earth has deteriorated. Here, nobody needs to work the land: crops grow in abundance of their own accord. Goats willingly provide plenty of milk, and there are no predators. This paradise has been set aside by Jupiter himself to be inhabited by the pious.

The poem builds on many different traditions. An important one is the tradition of prophetic texts. At the end, Horace even explicitly refers to himself as a *vates*, the word that can conveniently refer to both poets and seers. As befits Horace's status as a *vates*, the poem is full of fanciful images, both of past and future. At the beginning, he gives an apocalyptic prophecy of Rome in ruins, inhabited by wild animals and barbarians (1-14). Moreover, the description of the Blessed Isles reads as a product of oracular inspiration, with its idealized images of nature perfectly subservient to human needs (41-62).

In between these two descriptions is an even more striking series of impossible events, as part of an oath (25-34). Horace admonishes his audience to swear this oath to leave Rome for good. The oath takes the form of a series of *adynata*: Horace and his followers swear only to return if certain impossible conditions are fulfilled, such as the Apennines running into the sea and tigers mating with deer.

In other words, the poem has something of a surreal feel to it, mostly describing a legendary past or a mythical future. It is therefore striking to see that Horace's plan, setting sail for the Blessed Isles, is introduced in the concrete language of Roman politics. In line 17, he introduces his plan to sail to the Blessed Isles with the phrase *nulla sit hac potior sententia*, 'let no opinion prevail over this one'. This recalls the deliberative language of Roman politics, especially in the word *sententia*, which specifically referred to a proposal brought before the Senate or the people. A few lines later, Horace ends his proposal using similar language.

sic placet? an melius quis habet suadere? secunda                    23  
ratem occupare quid moramur alite?

Do you agree? Or does anyone have better advice? Why are we waiting to seize our rafts when the birds are favourable?

As Watson notes, the phrase *sic placet* 'reflects the consultative formulae *quid placet?* and *quid fieri placet?* whereby an issue was put by an individual (often the consul) to Senate or people'.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, the second question reflects the concluding formula for the recommendation of a presiding magistrate in the Senate. However, *suadere* is characteristic of the *contio*.<sup>10</sup> Indeed,

9 Watson (2003) p. 23.

10 *Ibid.*

Mankin believes that Horace's speech is to be situated in a *contio* on the forum.<sup>11</sup> However, he also recognizes that Horace's stance once again derives from early Greek iambus. Once again, then, Horace takes the Greek iambic tradition of the public address, and adapts it to a decidedly Roman context. As a result, he has to impersonate a Roman magistrate, since magistrates were effectively the only people in Roman politics who were allowed to address a meeting, be it a Senate meeting or a *contio*.

In other words, the contrast between the intervention of the *Epodes* and the relative seclusion of the *Satires* is not limited to Horace's treatment of the moral conduct of individuals, as we saw in the previous chapter. The same contrast can be discerned when it comes to politics and the issues that face Roman society at large.

---

11 Mankin (1995) p. 244.

## A superior friend: Horace and Maecenas

In a way, this chapter occupies the middle ground between the two previous ones: it is concerned with Horace's relation to a single person who was very much involved in public affairs. In this case, however, this person is not a target to attack but a friend. I am referring, of course, to Maecenas. As we shall see, the recurring feature in the depiction of their friendship in both the *Satires* and the *Epodes* is Horace's social inferiority to Maecenas. There are two sides to this.

First, Maecenas is involved in important public affairs such as political alliances and war. Horace the satirist stays away from these political issues, just as we might expect. Indeed, in many ways, Horace the satirist claims to be entirely ignorant of Maecenas' involvement in these affairs. By contrast, Horace the iambist acknowledges them, although he still rejects direct involvement in them.

Secondly, there is the idea of Horace as Maecenas' parasite. Perhaps surprisingly, the *Satires* and the *Epodes* are relatively similar in their treatment of this facet of the friendship. Both poke fun at the idea of Horace having no choice but to obey Maecenas' every whim, specifically when it comes to dining with him.

### Important business

*Satires* 1.5 is the so-called 'Journey to Brundisium'. According to Porphyrio, it is based on the similarly named *Iter Siculum* by Lucilius, but there is little to be salvaged from the fragments of that poem to help us interpret Horace's satire.<sup>1</sup> The one thing that does seem clear, however, is that Horace's account is significantly shorter than that of Lucilius. Horace tells of a journey from Rome to Brundisium, describing the leisurely pace of the journey, the several stops along the way, and the food. He also tells of some incidents, such as a verbal fight between one of his fellow travellers and a local inhabitant, and a wet dream he had after waiting in vain for a girl whom he had invited.

Horace also tells us that Maecenas and his fellow poets Varius, Plotius, and Vergil join him along the way. Indeed, reading between the lines, one can see that the journey described is actually a diplomatic mission intended to establish a treaty between Octavian and Mark Antony. Horace is rather vague on the details, however. This makes it difficult to ascertain which treaty is the goal of the journey. The destination mentioned at the end of the satire, Brundisium, points towards the treaty of Brundisium, in 40 BCE. However, Horace had not yet befriended Maecenas at that point in time. Another option 'is the meeting in Athens between Octavian and Antony in autumn 38 (App. *BC* 5.92) for which Brundisium is the obvious point of departure, but this is inconsistent with the spring setting of the poem'.<sup>2</sup> According to Emily

---

1 Gowers (2012) p. 182.

2 *Ibid.* p. 213.

Gowers, the most likely candidate is the treaty of Tarentum. Both these interpretations imply, however, that Horace omits the final destination of the journey. Perhaps he simply did not go all the way himself. In any case, the omission is tantalizing.

Rather than reconstruct the historical context, I want to focus on what this omission means for the picture painted by the poem. The only indication of the journey's purpose are some cursory remarks made when he meets up with Maecenas and Cocceius, one of the other negotiators, in Anxur.

milia tum pransi tria repimus atque subimus	25
impositum saxis late candentibus Anxur.	
huc venturus erat Maecenas optimus atque	
Cocceius, missi magnis de rebus uterque	
legati, aversos soliti componere amicos.	
hic oculis ego nigra meis collyria lippus	30
illinere. interea Maecenas advenit optimus atque	
Cocceius Capitoque simul Fonteius, ad unguem	
factus homo, Antoni, non ut magis alter, amicus.	33

After breakfast we crawled forward three miles and approached Anxur, situated high on widely shining rocks. Here Maecenas would arrive and the great Cocceius, both emissaries sent on important business, as they were accustomed to reconciling estranged friends. Here I smeared black ointment on my eyes, since they were inflamed. Meanwhile, Maecenas arrived and the great Cocceius, along with Fonteius Capito, a perfectly polished human, and a better friend of Antony than any other.

*Magnis de rebus* and *aversos componere amicos*. That is all we are told of the negotiations. While Antonius is mentioned, there is no mention of Octavian. In other words, Horace is virtually blind to the important events going on around him. He even seems to make fun of this himself, twice describing himself as *lippus*: his eyelids are inflamed. One of these instances is in the passage quoted above. The timing is striking: just before Maecenas and the others arrive, Horace puts ointment on his eyes, in effect closing his eyes to what is happening. A few lines later, something similar happens.

lusum it Maecenas, dormitum ego Vergiliusque;	48
namque pila lippis inimicum et ludere crudis.	

Maecenas went off to play, Vergil and I to sleep; for the ball is ill-disposed to the bleary-eyed, and playing is ill-disposed to those suffering indigestion.

In this case, Horace physically separates himself from Maecenas. He seems to make a point of distancing himself from any business that Maecenas conducts on this journey, even if it is merely playing a game.

It has long been noted that Horace wants to pre-empt any charges of ambition concerning his friendship with Maecenas. At several points in the *Satires*, Horace stresses that he did not befriend Maecenas to enhance his social status. In 1.6, Horace recalls the time when Maecenas accepted him in his circle. He thanks Maecenas for judging him on his life and character (64: *vita et pectore*), not his ancestry. Horace then goes on to thank his father for raising him to be a good friend, free from greed, meanness, and debauchery (68-71).

1.9 paints a similar picture. In this satire, Horace is approached on the Via Sacra by a man who seeks to become Maecenas' friend. Even before the man has made his intent clear, Horace tries to get rid of him. However, the man is persistent, and follows Horace through the city. Over the course of the satire, the man proves himself entirely ignorant of the qualities that are required to gain access to Maecenas' circle. For instance, he praises himself for dancing daintily and being able to write many lines of verse in a short time (23-25). When the man finally broaches the subject of Maecenas' friendship, Horace lashes out.

'non isto vivitur illic,  
quo tu rere, modo; domus hac nec purior ulla est  
nec magis his aliena malis; nil mi officit, inquam,     50  
ditior hic aut est quia doctior; est locus uni  
cuique suus.'

'Life there is not the way you think; there is no house purer or more devoid of these evils than Maecenas' house; it doesn't hurt me at all, I tell you, that this man is richer or that man is more educated; each has his own place.

As Ellen Oliensis points out, the dislocated word order underlines the spontaneity of the outburst.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, as Caroline Kroon points out, Horace is portrayed

as a rather clumsy and over-polite person who is fully absorbed by his artistic occupations and who simply lacks the assertive communicative skills to promote himself into Maecenas' literary circle. He fully owes his adoption into this circle to his being *doctus* and not by displaying the kind of behaviour that *quidam* does.<sup>4</sup>

*quidam* here refers to the man approaching Horace in the street.

*Satires* 1.5 is an illustration of the points made in 1.6 and 1.9: Horace is a simple man and does not seek any kind of power. Although his friend Maecenas is an important man concerned with the politics of the time, Horace is entirely ignorant of these matters. Horace is merely a kindred spirit to Maecenas, whom Maecenas likes to have around for company.

---

3 Oliensis (1998) p. 38.

4 Kroon (2015) p. 226.

### An ignorant friend

Maecenas' presence in book 2 of the *Satires* is not as strong as it was in book 1. For instance, he is no longer the addressee of any of the poems. He is present at the dinner described in 2.8, but Horace himself is absent there. Moreover, Maecenas has hardly a role to play in the narrative. He is only mentioned twice at the beginning: first when the host Nasidienus offers him a choice of wines (16), and shortly after that when the narrator of the story, Fundanius, mentions the guests that Maecenas brought along (22).

The other three poems in which Maecenas is mentioned in book 2 provide more interesting material. In one of these, *Satires* 2.6, it is Horace himself who mentions him. Accordingly, the picture there is similar to that of book 1. However, in 2.3 and 2.7, it is the interlocutors, the merchant turned philosopher Damasippus and Horace's slave Davus, who bring up Horace's friendship with Maecenas. Their portrayal is quite different from what Horace would like it to be. I will first discuss 2.6, since the picture painted there is so similar to that of the first book. I will then discuss how these satires compare to the *Epodes*. Afterwards, I will turn to 2.3 and 2.7, and discuss their relation to the *Epodes* separately.

In 2.6, Horace portrays himself being approached by people around Maecenas' house. One of them asks Horace to obtain Maecenas' seal on a document. Horace replies non-committally, only saying he will try. However, the man insists, saying that 'if you want to, you can' (38-39). We might say that Horace's efforts in book 1 have failed. People still believe that Horace is involved in the political dealings of Maecenas. Therefore, in 2.6, Horace makes the point explicit. He goes on to say that Maecenas only took him as his friend for company and small talk.

Septimus octavo propior iam fugerit annus	40
ex quo Maecenas me coepit habere suorum	
in numero, dumtaxat ad hoc, quem tollere raeda	
vellet iter faciens et cui concedere nugas	
hoc genus, 'hora quota est?', 'Thrax est Gallina Syro par?',	
'matutina parum cautos iam frigora mordent'	45
et quae rimosa bene deponuntur in aure.	
per totum hoc tempus subiectior in diem et horam	
invidiae noster ludos spectaverat una,	
luserat in Campo: 'fortunae filius!' omnes.	49

The seventh year, closer to the eighth, will already have passed since Maecenas accepted me in his group, albeit as someone he might want to bring along in a carriage while travelling and as someone to entrust trifles to, such as, 'what time is it?', 'Is Gallina the Thracian a match for Syrus?', 'the morning cold already stings if you're unprepared' and things that can safely be committed to a leaky ear. During all this time, our person is more subject to envy by the day and by the hour. If he had watched the games together with him, if he had played on the Campus, everyone would say 'son of fortune!'.

We are reminded of 1.5. Horace accompanies Maecenas on the road (43: *iter faciens*). The fact that playing sports with Maecenas invites envy also provides a context for Horace's purposeful avoidance of playing sports with Maecenas in 1.5.48-49. Immediately after the passage quoted, people ask Horace for information on the politics of the nascent empire. When he says he knows nothing, they refuse to believe him. Simply put, Horace's friendship with Maecenas is not as important a subject in book 2 as it is in book 1. However, it is far from absent. Moreover, when the subject does recur, it takes up some of the points from book 1 and makes them explicit.

However, this is not all. 2.6 very probably also contains some oblique reference to Maecenas. The satire starts with a prayer giving thanks for Horace's Sabine farm and asking Mercury to make it his forever (5). The farm was probably a gift from Maecenas.<sup>5</sup> Coincidentally, Horace addresses Mercury as *Maia nate*, or 'son of Maia'. This circumlocution 'suits the prayer style',<sup>6</sup> but also 'faintly echoes the patronal name it displaces', that is, Maecenas.<sup>7</sup> Horace cannot explicitly thank Maecenas, lest he imply he befriended Maecenas to get rich. Again, their friendship is pursued for its own sake, completely disinterested in external matters.

In short, although some things have changed from the time of the first book of *Satires* – Horace has made a name for himself, and is recognized in the streets – he is still committed to the same message in the second book.

### A friend's concern

I will now turn to the very beginning of the *Epodes*. *Satires* 1.5 depicted Horace accompanying Maecenas travelling on behalf of Octavian. In *Epodes* 1, Horace wishes to accompany Maecenas on a more perilous journey.

Ibis Liburnis inter alta navium, amice, propugnacula, paratus omne Caesaris periculum subire, Maecenas, tuo:	1
quid nos, quibus te vita si superstite, iucunda, si contra, gravis?	5
utrumne iussi persequemur otium non dulce, ni tecum simul, an hunc laborem, mente laturo decet qua ferre non mollis viros?	10
feremus et te vel per Alpium iuga inhospitalem et Caucasum	

---

5 See the discussion in the first chapter.

6 Muecke (1993) p. 197.

7 Oliensis (1998) p. 48.

vel Occidentis usque ad ultimum sinum  
forti sequemur pectore. 14

You will go in Liburnian galleys between the high ramparts of ships, Maecenas my friend, ready to endure every danger of Caesar's as your own: what about us, for whom life is pleasant if you survive, and painful otherwise? Should we pursue the quiet life as ordered, which is not sweet unless shared with you, or pursue this hardship, bearing it with the courage with which less delicate men ought to bear it? We will bear it and follow you with strong spirit, whether through the ridges of the Alps and the inhospitable Caucasus, or all the way to the most remote gulf of the east.

We have already seen how this passage continues. Horace admits that he is no warrior at all. However, he still wants to accompany Maecenas. Even if he cannot fight, he acknowledges the political reality of the world around him and accepts his place within these events. Just as Maecenas is prepared to follow his friend Octavian into battle, Horace is prepared to follow his friend Maecenas. However, what follows this declaration is very interesting in light of the *Satires* discussed above.

libenter hoc et omne militabitur  
bellum in tuae spem gratiae,  
non ut iuvenicis illigata pluribus 25  
aratra nitantur meis  
pecusve Calabris ante sidus fervidum  
Lucana mutet pascuis  
neque ut superne villa candens Tusculi  
Circaea tangat moenia. 30  
satis superque me benignitas tua  
ditavit; haud paravero  
quod aut avarus ut Chremes terra premam,  
discinctus aut perdam nepos. 34

I will gladly fight this and every war in hopes of your favour, not to have my ploughs do their work bound to more bullocks or to let my herd change from Calabrian pastures to Lucanian ones before the fiery Dog Star nor to have a villa that touches the Circaean walls of Tusculum, shining high above. Your kindness has enriched me more than enough; I will not have obtained something either to hide it in the earth like greedy Chremes, or to waste it like a dissolute spendthrift.

This epode has many similarities with *Satires* 1.5. First of all, both contain few details on the exact circumstances referred to. Admittedly, both Mankin and Watson date the dramatic date of the poem firmly to some point before the battle of Actium.<sup>8</sup> For instance, Watson refers to the historiographic tradition in which Mark Antony's ships towered over Octavian's, which fits Horace's reference to the *alta propugnacula*, or 'high ramparts', at the beginning of the epode. I

8 Mankin p. 49; Watson p. 56-58.

do not doubt this dating. However, it is not immediately obvious from the poem, which contains no mention of Mark Antony or Cleopatra, or any other name that would give us explicit confirmation.

Another similarity is that both *Satires* 1.5 and *Epodes* 1 illustrate Horace's altruistic concern for Maecenas' well-being. In both poems, Horace does not accompany Maecenas for any practical purpose, only for the sake of their friendship. This is the idea that Horace also makes explicit in *Satires* 2.6. In other words, the overall message concerning Maecenas' and Horace's friendship in *Epodes* 1 is consistent with the *Satires*. The difference lies in the way the topic is brought up.

In the *Satires*, Horace is careful not to mention Maecenas' political business unprompted. In 1.5 he alludes to it, but never explicitly states that Maecenas has ties to Octavian. *Epodes* 1 clearly marks a difference from this practice. Right from the start, we are introduced to Maecenas going to battle for Octavian. To be clear, I do not say that Horace knowing of these matters is inconsistent with the *Satires*. 1.5 does acknowledge that Maecenas is involved in important business. Even if Horace does not mention what it is, the very mention of it suggests that Horace knows more than he lets on. Moreover, if Horace and Maecenas are as close friends as they are portrayed in both the *Satires* and *Epodes*, it would be strange indeed for Horace not to notice his friend was preparing to go to war. What is striking, however, is the fact that Horace explicitly mentions what Maecenas is about to do for Octavian, and that Horace brings this up himself.

A similar picture emerges when we compare *Epodes* 1 to *Satires* 1.6 and 2.6. Both satires stress that Horace has not befriended Maecenas for material gain. In 1.6, Maecenas has accepted him because he has a pure heart (1.6.64), and there was no ambition at play (1.6.51-52). Similarly, 2.6 mentions both Horace's estate and Maecenas, but takes care not to connect the two. *Epodes* 1 is different. We get all but an explicit acknowledgement of Maecenas' gift of the Sabine estate. Horace does not want any *more* bullocks, and rejects ownership of both summer and winter pastures.<sup>9</sup> The reason for this is simple: Maecenas 'has enriched him more than enough'. The bold acknowledgement of this fact is striking. Again, I do not say that this is necessarily incompatible with the message of the *Satires*. In both the *Satires* and this epode, the focus is on the affectionate nature of Maecenas and Horace's friendship. However, whereas the *Satires* avoid any mention of material rewards for Horace, the *Epodes* acknowledge these rewards at the very start. This holds even if one takes the view that Maecenas did not give Horace the Sabine estate. In short, the overall message in the two collections may be the same, but the way in which it is formulated is strikingly different.

---

9 Watson (2003) p. 71.

### Drinking at sea

*Epodes* 9 also concerns Actium. The exact dramatic setting, however, is once again unclear. Mankin believes 'that the setting is Actium, possibly on board a ship in the Caesarian fleet (...) and that the time depicted is shortly after it has become evident that Antony has been defeated'.<sup>10</sup> However, Watson argues that no definite dramatic setting can be determined. On the one hand, the poem declares Antony has been 'defeated on land and sea' (27), which points to a time after the battle of Actium. On the other hand, lines 11-16 describe Antony's soldiers as subservient to the eunuchs of Cleopatra. This suggests a time before the battle. After all, Cleopatra fled to Egypt during the battle. For Watson, 'it seems best to suppose that the poem is concerned with different stages of the Actium campaign, lines 11-18 treating events leading up to Actium, 19-20 the battle itself, and 21-38 its aftermath.'<sup>11</sup> Consequently, the poem cannot be tied to one specific point in time.

Aside from the subject, there are several other similarities between *Epodes* 1 and 9. First of all, both open by mentioning Octavian and Maecenas within two lines of each other.

Quando repostum Caecubum ad festas dapes	1
victore laetus Caesare	
tecum sub alta (sic Iovi gratum) domo,	
beate Maecenas, bibam,	
sonante mixtum tibiis carmen lyra,	5
hac Dorium, illis barbarum?	

When shall I drink the Caecuban set aside for festive banquets, delighted by Caesar's victory with you under your high roof (such was Jupiter's wish), blessed Maecenas, while the lyre resounds mixed with pipes, the lyre singing a Dorian song, the pipes a barbaric song.

Moreover, the epode contains a number of details concerning the battle. I already mentioned the description of Antony's camp. There is also a reference to the Galatian cavalry under king Amyntas who defected from Antony's army to Octavian's side, about a week before the battle (17-18).<sup>12</sup> Moreover, Horace mentions a detail from the battle itself, although it is not entirely clear what he refers to.

hostiliumque navium portu latent	
pupes sinistrorsum citae.	20

and the sterns of the enemy ships, called to the left, hide in the harbour.

---

10 Mankin (1995) p. 159.

11 Watson (2003) p. 312.

12 See Watson (2003) p. 235.

The overall idea is clear: at some point, part of Antony's fleet retreated into the Ambracian Gulf, which proved to be a decisive moment in the battle.<sup>13</sup> *puppae ... citae* is a translation of the Greek idiom *πρύμνας κρούεσθαι*, to row in reverse.<sup>14</sup> The difficulty lies in *sinistrorsum*: this may simply be taken literally, as the retreating ships may indeed have turned left from the perspective of Octavian's fleet. However, it could also be taken to mean 'in flight', or 'to the wrong side'.<sup>15</sup> Watson concludes that we simply do not have enough details on the battle to solve the difficulty definitively.<sup>16</sup> Even if we cannot know the exact meaning of these details, it is striking to see that Horace mentions them of his own accord, in contrast to the *Satires*, where such issues of public interest were always brought up by others.

### Horace and Maecenas

What are we to make of these differences? As I said before, the pictures painted in the *Satires* and the *Epodes* are not incompatible. Both illustrate the genuine affection in Maecenas' and Horace's friendship, the lack of ambition, yet also underline the importance of Maecenas. The only real difference is in the type of details that Horace gives us. The *Epodes* give us more details about the nature of Maecenas' business.

There are a few possible explanations for this difference. First of all, book 1 of the *Satires* was published several years before the *Epodes*. One might argue that Horace was less confident in his friendship with Maecenas at the time of *Satires* book 1, and did not want to emphasize it too strongly. On the other hand, book 2 of the *Satires* was published around the same time as the *Epodes*, yet contains not a single poem addressed to Maecenas. By contrast, book 1 has three poems explicitly addressed to Maecenas (1.1; 1.3 and 1.6). Indeed, the third word in the entire first book of the *Satires* is Maecenas' name.

Then again, it might have been a matter of discretion. For instance, the goal of the journey described in *Satires* 1.5 may have been a public affair, but that does not necessarily mean that all of Maecenas' dealings with his friends during the journey were to be divulged. Whether the satire is fictional or not would not even matter: even revealing fictional details would imply that Horace cannot keep a secret. By contrast, *Epodes* 1 does not deal with any actual events, only with prospective ones. As such, it cannot reveal any factual details, aside from depicting the nature of Maecenas and Horace's friendship. This friendship, however, is something that Horace is quite willing to portray, especially when he can portray it as an affectionate friendship, devoid of ulterior motives. This is exactly what he does in *Epodes* 1. Similarly, the details mentioned in *Epodes* 9 are not exactly private: they discuss the battle, not Maecenas. In other words, there may not be that much of a difference after all.

---

13 Watson (2003) p. 326.

14 Mankin (1995) p. 170.

15 *Ibid.* p. 171.

16 Watson (2003) pp. 327-328.

However, I do not believe that this explains everything. It is one thing to be discreet and not reveal too many details. It is quite another to entirely omit the purpose of the journey that is otherwise described in detail, as Horace does in *Satires* 1.5. Admittedly, *Epodes* 1 does not actually specify Actium either. However, *Epodes* 1 at least gives a clear indication of the kind of context we are dealing with: Maecenas is joining a sea battle on behalf of Octavian. By contrast, *Satires* 1.5 contains no mention of Octavian, and only alludes to the diplomatic purpose of the journey.

In the *Satires*, moreover, Horace never even brings up Maecenas' political importance of his own accord. Whenever he discusses it, he responds to some interlocutor who brought it up first. Again, the difference does not lie so much in the fact that the *Epodes* discuss details that the *Satires* omit entirely, but in the fact that these details are brought up differently. In fact, this difference is similar to the one described in the second chapter. Just as Horace claimed not to attack other people unprompted in the *Satires*, he does not bring up Maecenas' political position unprompted. In the *Epodes*, Horace takes the initiative in attacking people. Similarly, the very opening of the collection discusses Maecenas and the battle of Actium, without any prompt by an interlocutor. This seems connected to the difference that we saw in the previous chapter: unlike Horace the iambist, Horace the satirist tries to stay away from public affairs as much as he can. Consequently, Horace the satirist has to diligently separate Maecenas in the role of Horace's friend from Maecenas in the role of political importance. We shall see how this works in the second half of this chapter.

### Friends at table

It is a notable feature of the *Satires* that Horace is never portrayed sharing a table with Maecenas. In 1.5, the travelling party dines several times, but we only get details on the exceptional events, and Maecenas is never mentioned in conjunction with any dinner. At the end of 1.6, Horace's solitary dinner serves as a rejection of any charges that he is Maecenas' parasite: 'It is characteristic of Horace's defensive irony that the satire documenting his acceptance as Maecenas' *convictor* represents him as dining not at Maecenas' but at his own table, a table that is, moreover, a very study in sumptuary simplicity. No one can accuse Horace of parasitism on this purportedly typical occasion.'<sup>17</sup>

In 2.6, Horace is similarly displaced from Maecenas' table. In the words of Oliensis, '[a]s in *Satires* 1.6, so in *Satires* 2.6 Horace's day notably fails to culminate in a dinner party at the luxurious table of his generous patron.'<sup>18</sup> The two dinners in the fable emphasizes this: 'the imbalance in its dinner parties – two rustic (Horace's and the country mouse's) vs. one urban (the city mouse's) – serves to underscore the absence of a city dinner in the first half of the poem.'<sup>19</sup> 2.8 finally depicts Maecenas dining, during Nasidienus' dinner party. This time, however, Horace is absent.

---

17 Oliensis (1998) p. 35.

18 *Ibid.* p. 48.

19 *Ibid.* p. 50.

### The impatient parasite

There is only one satire which explicitly mentions Horace going to dine at Maecenas' house: *Satires* 2.7. Once again, it is not Horace himself who brings up this subject, but an interlocutor, his slave Davus. The dialogue is set during the Saturnalian festival, 'a time when distinctions between master and slave were temporarily elided'.<sup>20</sup> Davus uses this opportunity to criticize Horace. The basis for this criticism is Stoic doctrine: all fools are slaves to their passions. And since virtually all people are fools, virtually all people are also slaves. Davus uses this to argue that Horace is no better than Davus. He mocks Horace's fickleness, furtive sexual adventures and his gluttony. But most importantly for our purposes, Davus illustrates Horace's fickleness with an example that mentions Maecenas.

'Si nusquam es forte vocatus  
ad cenam, laudas securum holus ac, velut usquam      30  
vinctus eas, ita te felicem dicis amasque  
quod nusquam tibi sit potandum. iusserit ad se  
Maecenas serum sub lumina prima venire  
convivam: "nemon oleum fert ocius? ecquis  
audit?" cum magno blateras clamore fugisque.'      35

'If you happen not to be invited to dinner anywhere, you praise your peaceful vegetables and, as if you go anywhere under constraint, you call yourself fortunate and hug yourself because you don't have to go drinking anywhere. Should Maecenas bid you to come to him late, when the first lamps are lit, to be his guest, you babble shouting loudly "Won't anyone quickly bring me lamp-oil? Does anyone hear me?" and you hurry off.'

Davus directly contradicts Horace's earlier satires. At the end of 1.6, Horace had portrayed himself enjoying a simple meal at home. He also praises simple food in 2.1, 2.2 and 2.6.<sup>21</sup> In 2.7, Davus reveals Horace to be a hypocrite: if Maecenas were to invite him, Horace would forget about his simple meal in the blink of an eye, and he would rush to Maecenas' table like an ordinary parasite. Although nothing is said about the dinner at Maecenas' house directly, the fact that it contrasts with Horace's simple meal implies that Maecenas' dinner is luxurious. Moreover, the word *potandum* 'implies drinking to excess, at the symposium following a dinner party'.<sup>22</sup> Again, this word is not used directly of Maecenas' dinner party, but the fact that both are used as opposites of Horace's simple meal connects them. In other words, both Horace's and Maecenas' behaviour is said not to adhere to the precepts expounded in the *Satires*.

At the end of the satire, Davus starts to level accusations against Horace in quick succession. This pushes Horace's patience too far, and he lashes out.

20 Muecke (1993) p. 212.

21 Specifically in 2.1.74; 2.2.117; and 2.6.60ff.

22 Muecke (1993) p. 217.

‘adde quod idem	111
non horam tecum esse potes, non otia recte ponere teque ipsum vitas fugitivus et erro, iam vino quaerens, iam somno fallere curam: frustra; nam comes atra premit sequiturque fugacem.’	115
‘unde mihi lapidem?’ ‘quorsum est opus’ ‘unde sagittas?’ ‘aut insanit homo aut versus facit.’ ‘ocius hinc te ni rapis, accedes opera agro nona Sabino.’	118

‘Add to that that you cannot stand your own company for an hour, you cannot spend your free time properly and you try to escape yourself like a runaway slave and a vagabond, now seeking to cheat your trouble with wine, now with sleep: in vain; for as a dark companion it oppresses you and follows you as you try to flee.’

‘Where can I get a stone?’

‘What for?’

‘Where can I get arrows?’

‘Either the man is raving, or versifying.’

‘If you don’t take yourself from here quickly, you’ll be added to my Sabine farm as the ninth labourer.’

The question is what we should make of Davus’ words. Are we supposed to take them seriously? As Muecke mentions, Davus is a typical name for the *servus callidus*, or cunning slave, in comedy. This stock character was a scheming type, often being smarter than his master.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, we are faced with a question: is Davus comically revealing his master’s hypocrisy? Or is the fact that he adheres to Stoic doctrine enough to make his words ridiculous within the world of Horace’s satire? After all, Horace had criticized Stoics in earlier satires.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, Davus is allowed to voice these accusations only with the special liberty of the Saturnalian festival. As Lejay mentions, this may serve to undermine his words.<sup>25</sup> The matter is hard to disentangle. Conveniently, however, there is another satire in which a Stoic interlocutor criticizes Horace during the Saturnalian festival. This is *Satires* 2.3.

### Saturnalian folly

In 2.3, Horace is visited at his farm by Damasippus during the Saturnalian festival. The satire starts with Damasippus criticizing Horace for writing too little. Seemingly indulging Damasippus, Horace asks him how he knows Horace so well. Damasippus then tells his story. He was a speculator who intended to throw himself off the Fabrician bridge after he had lost his possessions to moneylenders. He was saved by the Stoic philosopher Stertinius, who persuaded him to become a Stoic as well. Damasippus recounts the speech that Stertinius gave

23 Muecke (1993) p. 214.

24 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 all end with ‘a sideswipe at the Stoics’ prolixity or moral dogmatism’ (Gowers [2012] p. 84).

25 Lejay (1966) p. 561: ‘Horace place les deux exposés doctrinaux du stoïcisme en temps de Saturnales, comme nous placions des causes plaisantes en carnaval.’

him, which comprises the bulk of this satire, the longest of all Horace's satires. He expounds the Stoic doctrine that all except the Stoic sage are fools.

At the very end, Horace asks Damasippus what Horace's own particular folly is. Damasippus immediately starts off.

	'accipe: primum	307
aedificas, hoc est, longos imitaris ab imo		
ad summum totus moduli bipedalis; et idem		
corpore maiorem rides Turbonis in armis		310
spiritum et incessum, qui ridiculus minus illo?		
an, quodcumque facit Maecenas, te quoque verum est		
tantum dissimilem et tanto certare minorem?		
absentis ranae pullis vituli pede pressis		
unus ubi effugit, matri denarrat, ut ingens		315
belua cognatos eliserit. illa rogare		
quantane, num tantum (sufflans se) magna fuisset.		
"maior dimidio" "num tantum?" cum magis atque		
se magis inflaret, "non, si te ruperis" inquit,		
"par eris." haec a te non multum abludit imago.		320
adde poemata nunc, hoc est, oleum adde camino,		
quae si quis sanus fecit, sanus facis et tu.		
non dico horrendam rabiem.' 'iam desine.' 'cultum		
maiolem censu.' 'teneas, Damasippe, tuis te.'		
'mille puellarum, puerorum mille furores.'		325
'o maior, tandem parcas, insane, minori!'		

'Listen: first of all, you are building, that is, you imitate the great while from head to toe you measure two feet in total; and you laugh at Turbo's pride and swagger in arms, too big for his body, as well; how are you less ridiculous than him? Or is it right for you to do whatever Maecenas does while you are so unlike him and to emulate such a great man while being a lesser man? When one of the young of a frog who were trampled by the foot of a calf while she was away escaped, he told his mother that an enormous beast had crushed his siblings. She asked how big, whether it was this big, as she inflated herself. "Bigger by half." "This big?" When she inflated herself more and more, he said "You would not equal it even if you burst yourself." This picture is not much unlike you. Add to this your poems, that is, add fuel to the fire. If any sane man ever made poems, then you are sane in making them as well. I won't mention your terrible rage.'

'Leave off, already.'

'Your style greater than your wealth.'

'Keep to yourself, Damasippus.'

'Your madness for a thousand girls and a thousand boys.'

'O greater madman, please spare a lesser!'

He lists so many follies that Horace, who had accepted Damasippus' criticism up until now, cuts him off, thereby ending the satire. This reaction is obviously quite similar to Horace's reaction to Davus. Interestingly, the first and longest of Damasippus' accusations also mentions Maecenas. Indeed, Damasippus charges Horace with a kind of megalomania, acting as if he were a greater man than he actually is. Of course, mentioning Maecenas as the man whom Horace tries to emulate is an implicit compliment to Horace's patron. However, Damasippus' accusation also underlines Horace's inferiority to his great friend. Indeed, Horace's angry reaction suggests that Damasippus' criticism stings.

Nevertheless, throughout the satire, there are many passages that serve to take the sting out of the ending. Damasippus himself is implicitly ridiculed. He contradicts many of the statements that Horace had made in book 1. At the start, he blames Horace for writing too little, erasing lines that he is unhappy with. However, as we have seen in 1.4 and 1.10, Horace had argued that a satirist should not simply write a lot, but should take care to write good verse. Indeed, 1.10 specifically says that a writer should erase and rewrite.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, Damasippus, by quoting Stertinius, expounds the Stoic doctrine that all people are equally mad, except the Stoic sage. This goes against Horace's admonishments to forgive minor failings in 1.3. Indeed, at the end of that satire, Horace specifically argues against the Stoics when an imaginary interlocutor quotes Chrysippus, head of the Stoic school in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE (1.3.126-42). In 2.3, Stertinius similarly refers to Chrysippus when introducing the Stoic doctrine. At the end, Horace has the final word, and he contradicts Damasippus' entire speech, by claiming that Damasippus is a greater madman than Horace.

All of this suggests that we are not supposed to take Damasippus' words all too seriously. Indeed, his charge of megalomania might actually serve to discredit that very accusation: if a fool like Damasippus says it, it must be wrong. In any case, the humour ensures that any grain of truth that may be present in the accusation is softened.

I believe that we ought to read *Satires* 2.7 similarly. To be sure, there may be some grain of truth in Davus' words. However, the comical associations of his name, his Stoic outlook, and the Saturnalian occasion all ensure that Davus' criticism is not taken too seriously. Both 2.3 and 2.7 allow Horace to poke fun at himself, but his good name is never truly in danger.

### **Taking poison and taking a joke**

In contrast to the *Satires*, the *Epodes* actually contain a poem that directly addresses Maecenas in a dinner setting. This is *Epodes* 3. In fact, it seems that Maecenas has been the one to provide the meal. Horace has unwittingly eaten garlic, which burns in his stomach. The poem humorously exaggerates Horace's distress, claiming that garlic is a suitable substitute for hemlock, and comparing garlic to Medea's and Deianira's poisons, among other things. Either

---

26 1.10.72-73: *Saepe stilum vertas, iterum quae digna legi sint / scripturus* ('Turn your pen often to write something worth reading again'). This refers to erasing, since 'a *stilus* had a pointed end for writing on a tablet and a flat end for deleting mistakes'. See Gowers (2012) p. 333.

Maecenas has played a practical joke on Horace, or Horace simply assumes this for the sake of his own joke.

Parentis olim si quis impia manu  
senile guttur fregerit,  
edit cicutis alium nocentius.  
o dura messorum ilia!  
quid hoc veneni saevit in praecordiis?  
num viperinus his cruor  
incoctus herbis me fefellit? an malas  
Canidia tractavit dapes?

If any person were to have broken the aged throat of a parent with a wicked hand, let them eat garlic, more pernicious than hemlock. Oh, the hardened intestines of reapers! What is this poison raging in my stomach? Have I been tricked by viper's blood boiled in these herbs? Or has Canidia prepared an evil feast?

At the end, Horace curses Maecenas, and wishes him to be avoided for his bad breath if he desires 'such a thing' again.

at si quid umquam tale concupiveris,  
iocose Maecenas, precor  
manum puella suavio opponat tuo  
extrema et in sponda cubet.

But if you ever desire such a thing again, funny Maecenas, I pray that a girl will block your kiss with her hand and lie down at the very edge of the bed.

After the long, grandiloquent build-up, this curse is rather tame. Overall, Horace once again seems to be playing with his own inferiority to Maecenas. The fact that Maecenas has been able to secretly add garlic to Horace's food places Maecenas in a position of power over Horace. Moreover, the feeble curse at the end is supposedly intended to reinstate Horace's lost power, but only serves to underline Horace's failure to do so. However, the fact that Horace can play with his inferiority affirms the essentially amicable nature of Maecenas and Horace's friendship: each is allowed to make a joke at the other's expense.

As it happens, *Epodes* 3 is not the only epode depicting a playful exchange between Horace and Maecenas. *Epodes* 14 also contains an address to Maecenas in a convivial setting. Coincidentally, it is also the final appearance of Maecenas in the *Epodes*. The poem opens by referring to Maecenas' repeated questioning Horace about the *Epodes* themselves.

Mollis inertia cur tantam diffuderit imis                    1  
oblivionem sensibus,

pocula Lethaeos ut si ducentia somnos  
 arente fauce traxerim,  
 candide Maecenas, occidis saepe rogando.           5  
 deus, deus nam me vetat  
 inceptos olim, promissum carmen, iambos  
 ad umbilicum adducere.                                   8

Why soft idleness has poured out so much forgetfulness over the depths of my senses, as if I had drunk with dry mouth cups bringing Lethaeian slumbers, fair Maecenas, you often kill me by asking. For a god, a god prevents me from bringing the promised song, my iambs, started long ago, to the finish.

Horace explains that he is in love with the freedwoman Phryne, and that this prevents him from finishing his poetry. As Watson mentions, '[t]he making of poetry out of a disclaimer that one is unable to write it has a precedent in early Greek poetry'.<sup>27</sup> The most notable example for the *Epodes* is Archilochus fr. 215 W.

καί μ' οὔτ' ἰάμβων οὔτε τερπωλέων μέλει

and I don't care for iambs or enjoyment

The context of this fragment is not entirely clear. It is often connected to the drowning of Archilochus' brother-in-law,<sup>28</sup> but Andrea Rotstein refutes this idea.<sup>29</sup> In any case, Horace's use of the theme has little to do with death in the family. On the contrary, he puts the theme to humorous use. The description of Horace's state is comically overblown: he neglects his iambs to such an extent that Maecenas thinks he may have drunk from the Lethe river, one of the rivers of the Underworld, which caused the souls who drank from them to forget their past lives. The gemination of *deus* in 6 also gives a comically elevated tone to what turns out to be a rather simple love-affair. Moreover, the very act of claiming to be unable to write verse while writing verse itself contains a degree of (comic) irony. Finally, it is somewhat ironic for Maecenas to use the words *mollis inertia* (1), or 'soft idleness', for Horace, as Maecenas himself 'had a reputation for decadence and effeminacy'.<sup>30</sup>

All in all, *Epodes* 3 and 14 paint a similar picture. Both consist of a humorous response by Horace to Maecenas. While *Epodes* 1 and 9 deal with the serious, political and dangerous side of being friends with Maecenas, *Epodes* 3 and 14 give a more light-hearted picture of the two friends leisurely making jokes. Indeed, both of them fit well in the convivial context that was a hallmark of early Greek iambic, affirming the friendship of those present.<sup>31</sup>

27 Watson (2003) p. 439.

28 West (1989) p. 82.

29 Rotstein (2010) pp. 151-156.

30 Mankin (1995) p. 2. See also Watson (2003) p. 441.

31 The love theme of 14 of course also fits love lyric. As such, it seems to look forward to the genre that Horace will tackle next: the lyric of his Odes. While this is interesting, this is not immediately relevant for the present

## Conclusion

When we compare *Satires* 2.3 and 2.7 with *Epodes* 3 and 14, we see a few familiar tendencies. Again, the *Epodes* are more direct in their depiction, both being direct addresses to Maecenas in a convivial setting. *Satires* 2.3 and 2.7, on the other hand, approach the topic more cautiously. Once again, Horace does not introduce the subject of Maecenas in the *Satires* in his own voice, but in that of the interlocutors Damasippus and Davus.

Unlike the interlocutors in *Satires* 1.9 and 2.6, however, Damasippus and Davus do not want Horace to give them access to Maecenas. On the contrary, they criticize Horace's relationship to Maecenas: Davus portrays Horace as a pitiful parasite, and Damasippus accuses Horace of being a kind of 'Maecenas wannabe'. In both cases, the charge is clear: Horace is inferior to and dependent upon Maecenas, and to imagine himself as anything else would be wrong.

Another difference is Horace's reaction to these interlocutors. When the interlocutors of *Satires* 1.9 and 2.6 suggest that Horace can influence Maecenas to help other people get ahead, this is strongly denied. The charges of Damasippus and Davus, however, are not denied. To be sure, Horace becomes angry and cuts them off, but he does not explicitly deny their charges. It seems, then, that the idea that Horace is Maecenas' inferior is allowed to be voiced in a way the image of Horace having influence on Maecenas is not.

To be clear, I am not saying that Horace thought of himself as a pitiful parasite or Maecenas wannabe, or even that he wanted others to view him as such. It is still significant that it is not Horace himself, but the comical characters Damasippus and Davus who voice these extreme accusations. Moreover, they are voiced during the Saturnalian festival, which also undermines their severity. In short, their accusations are certainly not to be taken seriously.

Indeed, in some poems, Horace explicitly casts himself as Maecenas' inferior in his own voice. As we have seen, Horace explicitly downplays his own martial prowess in *Epodes* 1, and he shows clear deference to Maecenas in *Satires* 1.6 and 2.6. Moreover, it is easy to see that making himself Maecenas' inferior helps to reinforce the idea that Horace has no influence on Maecenas' more important decisions. In a way, the image of people asking Horace to talk to Maecenas on their behalf to a certain extent likens Horace to Maecenas: were Horace able to honour their requests, he would become a kind of surrogate Maecenas. Casting himself as explicitly *not* Maecenas' equal, then, reinforces the message that he is no surrogate for Maecenas.

*Epodes* 3 fits perfectly with this. It depicts Horace being the target of a practical joke by Maecenas. At the end, he takes his revenge by cursing Maecenas, but the curse is rather harmless: Horace does not actually have the power to bring down his great friend. Just as in

---

discussion.

the *Satires*, the image of Horace as Maecenas' inferior is brought up and allowed to linger within a humorous atmosphere. The result is that the idea is neither fully endorsed nor completely denied. However, whereas the *Satires* create this effect in a parody of philosophical moralizing, the *Epodes* use the playful convivial context of early Greek iambic, which Horace also uses to depict himself and Maecenas in *Epodes* 14.

It is striking that Horace is not portrayed at table with Maecenas in the *Satires*, while *Epodes* 3 depicts exactly such a scene. In other words, the *Satires* are less direct in their depiction than the *Epodes*. This fits with what we have seen in the second chapter: Horace's *Epodes* are concerned with direct action, whereas the *Satires* discuss events after the fact. Aside from this, however, the difference is not that great. Just as *Epodes* 3, *Satires* 2.3 and 2.7 play with the idea of Horace's inferiority to Maecenas.

This is decidedly different from Horace's treatment of the idea that he has influence over Maecenas' involvement in public affairs. This idea is explicitly denied in the *Satires*. Indeed, Horace seems to feign complete ignorance of the important business Maecenas has embarked upon in *Satires* 1.5. By contrast, the *Epodes* discuss Maecenas' ties to Octavian from the very start. Again, this is connected to the fact that the *Epodes* are concerned with action while the *Satires* are more indirect. However, it is striking to see that, in this case, the difference leads to a kind of contradiction: whereas Horace the satirist claimed to know nothing, Horace the iambist freely admits that he is in the know.

## Humour and philosophy

In this chapter, I would like to discuss two overarching themes that may serve to explain some of the differences that we have seen in the previous chapters. First, I would like to discuss how the importance of philosophy in the *Satires* effectively provides Horace the satirist with an alternative defence of his satiric practice, whereas the *Epodes* use a more traditional and common defence of the blame poet. Secondly, I will discuss how the relative importance of humour differs between the two collections. The *Epodes*, more concerned with action than the *Satires*, contain less humour than the *Satires*. As such, the *Epodes* can tackle more serious issues than the *Satires*.

### The philosophy of satire

In *Making Mockery: The Poetics of Ancient Satire*, Ralph Rosen approaches mockery in ancient poetry as a kind of universal phenomenon. He uses the term *satire* to refer generally to poetic mockery, not just the Roman genre. However, to avoid confusion with the genre, I will use the term *poetic mockery* to describe the general phenomenon discussed by Rosen. On the one hand, this poetic mockery often claims to be only concerned with its immediate circumstances, directed at a specific person at a specific point in time. However, it has certain common characteristics, which are shared by poets across periods and genres. Indeed, Rosen's corpus is large in scope, including epic, iambic, comedy, and, of course, satire. From these common characteristics, Rosen derives the 'poetics of ancient satire' of his title.

An important feature of this poetic mockery is its claim to rightful indignation. This has to do with the traditional problem of any blame poet: how does one claim the moral high ground when one is verbally abusing others? The usual defence in antiquity, as Rosen describes it, was to say that the target deserved the abuse. Specifically, the poet is always responding to the transgression of another, be it an attack against the poet, against someone else, or a transgression of society's laws in general. *Epodes* 4 and 6 are good examples of this, being responses to a transgression of society's laws and to an attack against another person respectively. In this way, the poet can excuse himself for being abusive. He did not start it. He merely responded.<sup>1</sup>

However, another important feature is that these claims are always ironic to some extent. After all, if the poet merely seeks to right a societal wrong, why would he constrain himself by writing in verse? Why not voice his complaint in normal, prosaic language? Surely this would be more effective? The fact that the mocking poet is writing in verse, Rosen says, constantly reminds the audience that he is playing a literary game. The primary aim of this abuse is not to harm someone in the actual world. The aim is simply to create an artistic, stylized form of verbal abuse. The claim to be sincere in this abuse is merely part of the artistic game. It is not

---

1 See especially Rosen (2007) chapter 1.

to be taken serious.<sup>2</sup> Yet the poet cannot acknowledge the fictional nature of his abuse outright: this would nullify his excuse of rightful indignation. He has to maintain that his goal – unlike his verbal abuse – is morally upright: righting society’s wrongs. He upholds society’s laws by abusing transgressors, thereby punishing them for their misdeeds. This is what provides the mocking poet with an excuse for his less than savoury writings.

The literary game, then, plays out on two levels. Some readers may take the claims to rightful indignation at face value, and consequently excuse the abusive character of the poetry. After all, it is for a good cause. On the other hand, the readers who see through the ruse can appreciate the creativity of the abuse. They realize that the poet is not so much concerned with actual abuse meant to harm an opponent, as with stylized abuse, a register of poetic production. This is part of the humour: the poet and his perceptive audience share the joke of the artificiality of the poet’s abuse. Moreover, they can share a laugh at the gullible people who cannot see through the ruse. Nevertheless, it is important to note that poetic mockery is never entirely harmless. After all, the poet still makes a deliberate choice about whom he mocks. Even if they are only targeted for the sake of a joke, they are still singled out and abused.<sup>3</sup>

The *Epodes* follow Rosen’s model reasonably well. I have already used *Epodes* 4 and 6 to illustrate the rightful indignation of the mocking poet. Furthermore, the *Epodes* do not flaunt their status as poetic, fictional compositions. Indeed, as I mentioned before, many of them are written as if spoken within a specific dramatic setting. *Epodes* 7 and 16, the political speeches, are good examples of this. Archilochus and Hipponax may be invoked as models in epode 6, but they are invoked for their abusive power, rather than for their poetic artistry.

The *Satires*, on the other hand, stray from Rosen’s model in several respects. First of all, Horace claims that his satire is not about society around him, but about himself and his personal moral musings. In other words, Horace the satirist cannot right the wrongs of society, for he does not really concern himself with them. Moreover, while he disclaims stylistic merit and poetic status in 1.4, he makes clear that his satire actually requires stylistic effort in 1.10. To be clear, the *Satires* do not reject all of the traditional elements. For instance, 2.1 still has the traditional claim that Horace does not attack others if he is not attacked himself. However, the differences are still interesting. In a sense, the *Satires* strip away the irony that Rosen describes. The *Satires* admit that they are not actual abuse meant to castigate others, but artful compositions meant to be enjoyed for their style. Ironically, this itself draws attention to the fact his satire hurts people even if this is not its aim. Indeed, it is the reality that Horace has to face in *Satires* 2.1.

We may also say that the *Satires* invert the ruse of rightful indignation. Rather than claiming that his satire is righteous punishment for crimes committed, Horace claims that his satire is harmless and is to be ignored. In Horace’s case, however, the perceptive audience that sees

---

2 Rosen (2007) pp. 20-23

3 *Ibid.* pp. 217-223

through this ruse can appreciate the sometimes scathing mockery of his satire. This is not to say that Horace's satire was actually meant as punishment of its targets. However, Horace's stance adds a layer of complexity to model that Rosen describes. By doing so, Horace the satirist creates an alternative defence of the mocking poet.

I would argue that this defence is connected to the prominent role that philosophy plays in the *Satires*. As I mentioned in the first chapter, satire in Horace's representation is not so much concerned with the moral failings of specific people, as it is concerned with the ethical lessons they may hold. This concern with moral theory may be seen as part of a larger concern with philosophy in the *Satires*. The many links between Horace's satire and philosophy have often been noted.<sup>4</sup> Especially the first three satires of book 1 are written in a manner similar to philosophical diatribe.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, we have seen how Damasippus and Davus in 2.3 and 2.7 explicitly refer to Stoic philosophy to criticize Horace. 2.2 and 2.4 also feature lectures in a philosophical style, although 2.4 humorously discusses gastronomy instead of ethics.

It is this prominence of philosophy that gives Horace the satirist an alternative to the traditional defence of poetic mockery that Rosen describes. Rather than castigating wrongdoers, Horace's satire is simply a by-product of doing his personal ethical exercises. I believe that the many satires written in a philosophical style invite the reader to view this ethical exercise as a kind of empirical philosophy: in effect, Horace uses the people around him as examples of philosophical principles. As a result, although Horace the satirist rejects the moral function of upholding the values of society by intervening directly, he can still claim the moral high ground, because he is doing something akin to philosophy.

### **Horace the Epicurean**

This importance of philosophy in the *Satires* may also account for the difference in Horace's stance towards politics in the *Satires* and the *Epodes*. In the *Satires*, Horace's philosophical outlook is often described as that of an Epicurean, although he does not explicitly describe himself as such. To be sure, as Emily Gowers notes, Horace's philosophical views in the *Satires* are eclectic.<sup>6</sup> The simple life that he idealizes was not unique to any single school of philosophy, and his treatment often stresses practice over dogma. Nevertheless, Horace the satirist does betray a certain preference for Epicurean thought.<sup>7</sup>

A good example of this is *Satires* 1.5. Horace's fellow poets Plotius, Varius and Vergil join the travelling party in Sinuessa. Horace dedicates several lines to his delight in seeing his friends again, saying that there is no equal joy in life than a good friend (1.4-39-44). This passage is highly charged. Sinuessa was near Naples, where Philodemus of Gadara and Siro led an

---

4 Gowers (2012) pp. 20-21.

5 For a discussion of this, see Freudenburg (1992) pp. 8-21.

6 Gowers (2012) pp. 20-21.

7 For discussions on the importance of Epicureanism in the *Satires*, see for instance Armstrong (2014), Yona (2015), and Kemp (2016).

Epicurean sect. As it happens, Plotius, Varius, Vergil, and Horace were all associated with this sect.<sup>8</sup> At the end of the same satire, Horace laughs at a local religious site in Gnatia, where incense was said to burn without fire. Horace derides this notion, citing the Epicurean notion that the gods do not concern themselves with the matters of mere mortals (1.4.97-103).

Aside from such instances of Epicurean doctrine, Horace also often butts heads with the perennial nemeses of the Epicureans, the Stoics. In 1.3, he ridicules the Stoic idea that all crimes are equal. And in 2.3 and 2.7, as we have seen, Damasippus and Davus rely on Stoic doctrine to criticize Horace.

As it happens, one of the points of conflict between Epicureanism and Stoicism concerned political activity. The contrast is neatly summarized by Seneca in *De otio* 3.2-3:

Duae maxime et in hac re dissident sectae, Epicureorum et Stoicorum, sed utraque ad otium diversa via mittit. Epicurus ait: "Non accedet ad rem publicam sapiens, nisi si quid intervenerit"; Zenon ait: "Accedet ad rem publicam, nisi si quid impederit."

The two schools, that of the Epicureans and that of the Stoics, disagree greatly as well in this regard, yet each sends us towards leisure by a different course. Epicurus said: "The wise will not enter upon civil affairs, unless something interferes"; Zeno said: "The wise will enter upon civil affairs, unless something prevents it."

Epicurus recommends avoiding political activity, whereas Stoics argue that the wise ought to take up politics. However, it is important to note that Epicurus does not reject political activity altogether: if there is a good reason for it, one might take up politics anyway. As Jeffrey Fish notes, there were those who could not withdraw from public life without bringing trouble to themselves and their loved ones. Nevertheless, '[a]ll things being equal, a genuine Epicurean would never aspire to public life.'<sup>9</sup> Horace's rejection of political activity in *Satires* 1.6, then, perfectly fits his Epicurean outlook. He does not claim that public life is necessarily bad. He merely rejects it as inappropriate for himself.

In the *Epodes*, less concerned with philosophical doctrine, we see that this notion is somewhat relaxed. Horace lets on that he has knowledge of political affairs, and he even depicts himself playing the role of a magistrate in *Epodes* 7 and 16. The *Epodes* do not need to maintain a concern with (Epicurean) philosophy, which allows them to deal more directly with politics.

We may even see traces of this contrast in Horace's depiction of his friendship with Maecenas. Philodemus of Gadara, the leader of the Epicurean sect in Naples, wrote that the greatest advantage of friendship was simply having someone to talk with.<sup>10</sup> This fits Horace's statement in *Satires* 2.6 that Maecenas and Horace's friendship consists of small talk.

<sup>8</sup> See Gowers (2012) p. 197, and *BNP* 'Philodemus'.

<sup>9</sup> Fish (2011) p. 91.

<sup>10</sup> See Armstrong (2011) p. 126.

However, in *Epodes* 1, Horace also mentions that he received certain material benefits from Maecenas. To be sure, this is not necessarily un-Epicurean. Epicureanism recognized material gain as one of the benefits of friendship. Nevertheless, I believe it is no coincidence that the more idealized depiction of their friendship according to Epicurean doctrine is featured in the *Satires*, the more theoretical collection. By contrast, the more practical depiction has its place in the *Epodes*, the collection of action.

This discussion requires one caveat: Horace's main concern is writing entertaining satires, not accurately describing philosophical doctrine. Therefore, his treatment of philosophical issues is not always entirely consistent. While he may make some genuine philosophical points, he is also parodying the style of diatribe. However, for this parody to work, he needs to create an atmosphere of genuine philosophical concern in the *Satires*. I believe that the features I have discussed here are part of creating and maintaining that atmosphere.

### **Being funny**

Finally, there is another striking contrast to note between the *Satires* and the *Epodes*. This has to do with the civil wars of the time. In the *Epodes*, these are explicitly mentioned. Indeed, the very first epode refers to Maecenas going off to war. Furthermore, *Epodes* 7 and 16 directly refer to the wars. By contrast, while reading the *Satires*, one can hardly tell that they were written at a time of conflict. Of course, Horace the satirist skirts around the subject. We have seen this in *Satires* 1.5. Similarly, *Satires* 1.7 describes a courtroom battle in Brutus' camp in Asia Minor during the years between Caesar's assassination and the battle of Philippi. To be sure, this is a highly charged reference, but it is still notably different from the explicit references to war in the *Epodes*.

Of course, we may connect this contrast with Horace the satirist's rejection of political involvement. However, I believe there is more to it. I believe we can also connect the contrast to the difference in humour between the two collections. I will argue that the stronger presence of humour in the *Satires* makes that collection unsuitable for direct treatment of the civil conflict of the time.

For this, I would first like to refer to Kirk Freudenburg's discussion of two 'schools' of humour that were present in antiquity. One of these he terms Aristotelian, as Aristotle was one of the first to articulate it. It argues that jokes should only be made about slight moral failings, not serious ones: 'the gentleman's jest focuses only on slight physical and mental defects of the lampooned (...). In other words, one can be lampooned for being stupid or having big ears but not for being a murderer'.<sup>11</sup> Simply put, serious depravity is not funny, and should not be laughed about. Making light of serious issues would imply that they are not serious, and this is morally wrong.

---

11 Freudenburg (1992) p. 69.

The other 'school' of humour is connected to Old Comedy and iambic. Freudenburg calls it the 'iambic idea'. However, Freudenburg also points to several passages from Aristophanes that exhibit this kind of reasoning. In this mode of thought, mockery is a kind of medicine for the community, daring to speak out about the wrongs that are being perpetrated. What the comic says may not be pretty, but it is true and necessary. Serious misdeeds, therefore, should not be avoided. The humour is the sugar intended to sweeten the bitter message. In other words, the comic may deal in jests, but his aims are very serious.

It is easy to see that the iambic idea has much in common with Ralph Rosen's description of the typical posture of the blame poet. I have discussed how the *Epodes* adhere to this posture, whereas the *Satires* deviate from it. Consequently, one might expect that the *Satires* are closer to the Aristotelian idea of humour, whereas the *Epodes* are closer to the iambic idea. This would hardly be surprising: the *Epodes* are literal iambs. Moreover, the *Satires* severely reprimand people who show no restraint in mocking people and who spread rumours about their friends.<sup>12</sup> There is some truth in this. However, I do not believe that this is a satisfactory account.

First of all, Freudenburg himself goes on to argue that both the Aristotelian and the iambic idea of humour are present in Horace's *Satires*. For instance, clear elements of both can be discerned in *Satires* 1.4. Horace severely reprimands the person who shows no restraint in his jests and who spreads rumours about his friends (1.4.79-101). This is akin to the Aristotelian idea of humour. However, he also opens the satire by tracing satire's pedigree to the poets of Old Comedy, who 'marked' criminals 'with much candour' (1.4.1-5).

Moreover, I would argue that part of the difference between the *Satires* and the *Epodes* lies not in the fact that the *Epodes* joke freely about serious issues, but in the fact that the *Epodes* are simply less humorous than the *Satires*. As Maria Plaza mentions, humour is an integral part of Horatian satire. In fact, she calls it 'the only consistent ingredient' in a collection that is otherwise characterized by ambiguities and paradoxes.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, Horace himself explicitly says that satire has to be 'frequently funny' (*saepe iocoso*) in *Satires* 1.10.11. Moreover, in 1.1.24, he describes his practice as 'saying the truth while laughing' (*ridentem dicere verum*). While the *Epodes* certainly feature plenty of humour – *Epodes* 3 and 14 are good examples – it is hardly a consistent ingredient. *Epodes* 7 and 16 are even outright pessimistic and contain no humour whatsoever. This difference is nicely illustrated by *Satires* 1.8 and *Epodes* 5. Both of these poems feature the witches Canidia and Sagana performing a night-time ritual. In *Epodes* 5, they are accompanied by two other witches, Veia and Folia.

*Satires* 1.8 is narrated by a wooden statue of Priapus. He is standing in the new city gardens of Maecenas, built over a former graveyard. Priapus tells us how Canidia and Sagana entered his

<sup>12</sup> Horace *Satires* 1.4.79-101.

<sup>13</sup> Plaza (2006) p. 259.

domain one night and started performing a ritual, using woollen and wax puppets. Since Priapus statues were apotropaic symbols, it is Priapus' job to drive the witches away, yet he tells us he was mortified and powerless. In the end, however, he manages to scare the witches away by farting loudly.

nam displosa sonat quantum vesica pepedi	46
diffissa nate ficus; at illae currere in urbem.	
Canidiae dentes, altum Saganae caliendrum	
excidere atque herbas atque incantata lacertis	
vincula cum magno risuque iocoque videres.	50

As loudly as a burst bladder I farted, splitting my fig-wooden butt. And they ran into the city. Canidia's teeth and Sagana's high wig falling down, and the herbs and magic bracelets falling from their hands, you would have laughed and joked loudly seeing that.

The atmosphere is one of liberating laughter and a happy end. The danger turns out to be far less threatening than Priapus thought. The witches are harmless frauds, running away at the slightest indication of trouble, and losing their false hair and teeth.

Compare this to *Epodes* 5. Its story is similar to the extent that Canidia and Sagana are once again performing a night-time ritual. There are also a few differences, however. First of all, they are now accompanied by the witches Veia and Folia. Most importantly, however, the ritual they perform is far more sinister than that of *Satires* 1.8. Rather than using puppets, the witches are starving a young boy to death to harvest his organs for a love potion. The idea is that his starved organs will be imbued with a strong sense of yearning, which in turn will imbue the potion with the power to instil yearning in whoever drinks it.<sup>14</sup> There is no happy end in this poem. There is only a curse by the boy, saying that he will return as a kind of fury to haunt the witches.<sup>15</sup>

quin, ubi perire iussus exspiravero,	91
nocturnus occurram furor	
petamque voltus umbra curvis unguibus,	
quae vis deorum est Manium,	
et inquietis assidens praecordiis	95
pavore somnos auferam.	

But when I, as ordained, have breathed my last, I will come to you as a fury of the night and I will fall upon your faces with my crooked talons as a shadow, which is the power of the

14 See Watson (2003) p. 215.

15 As mentioned by Watson (2003) pp. 188-189, one might argue that the boy's curse interrupts the witches' ritual. This would negate the effect of the ritual, since rituals ought not to be interrupted by inappropriate sounds. While this may be seen as something of a happy end, it is still very different from the laughter at the end of *Satires* 1.8.

spirits of the dead, and attending to your restless hearts I will snatch away your sleep through fear.

I believe this difference points to a fundamental difference between the *Satires* and the *Epodes*. The *Satires* are fundamentally humorous. They have to be playful. When the *Satires* treat witches, they have to be bumbling, ridiculous caricatures, unmasked as frauds by the childishly humorous action of farting. There can be no grave consequences, since that would remove the happy end that allows for carefree laughter. By contrast, the *Epodes* are not necessarily humorous. To be sure, they can be funny, but there is no expectation for them to be consistently funny. Consequently, they can discuss darker, more violent events, such as witches murdering a young boy.

I would argue that this also accounts for Horace's treatment of the civil wars in each of the collections. These wars represented something dark and violent, as is apparent from *Epodes* 7 and 16. I would argue that this is part of why they are not explicitly mentioned in the *Satires*. A humorous treatment would simply not lend itself to such dark subject matter. Similarly, it may explain the differences in Horace's depiction of his friendship with Maecenas. When it comes to their personal relation as friends, there is room for humour. This can be seen in *Satires* 2.3 and 2.7, and in *Epodes* 3 and 14, all of which poke fun at Horace's social inferiority to Maecenas. However, when it comes to the important public affairs which Maecenas is involved with, there is no room for jokes. Consequently, the *Satires* have to feign ignorance of these issues, as in 1.5 and 2.6. By contrast, the *Epodes* do mention them, but in a more serious tone, which we see in *Epodes* 1 and 9.

In short, I concede that part of the difference may lie in the fact that the *Epodes* are closer to the iambic idea of humour that Freudenburg describes, whereas the *Satires* are closer to the Aristotelian idea, even though they combine elements from both sides. However, I would say that this is only part of the explanation. It is not simply that the *Epodes* are closer to the iambic idea of humour, daring to joke and mock concerning serious issues such as murder and war: it is that they do not always use humour. This allows them – to some extent – to avoid the dichotomy entirely.

## Conclusion

One final time, I would like to return to *Epodes* 1, this time accompanied by the beginning of *Satires* 1.1.

Ibis Liburnis inter alta navium, amice, propugnacula, paratus omne Caesaris periculum subire, Maecenas, tuo:	1
quid nos, quibus te vita si superstite, iucunda, si contra, gravis?	5
utrumne iussi persequemur otium non dulce, ni tecum simul, an hunc laborem, mente laturo decet qua ferre non mollis viros?	10

You will go in Liburnian galleys between the high ramparts of ships, Maecenas my friend, ready to endure every danger of Caesar's as your own: what about us, for whom life is pleasant if you survive, and painful otherwise? Should we pursue the quiet life as ordered, which is not sweet unless shared with you, or pursue this hardship, bearing it with the courage with which less delicate men ought to bear it?

Qui fit, Maecenas, ut nemo, quam sibi sortem seu ratio dederit fors obiecerit, illa contentus vivat, laudet diversa sequentes? 'o fortunati mercatores!' gravis annis miles ait, multo iam fractus membra labore.	1    5
contra mercator, navem iactantibus Austris, 'militia est potior.'	

Why is it, Maecenas, that nobody alive is content with the lot that either reason has given them or fortune has set before them, while they praise those who follow a different course? 'Oh, how fortunate are merchants!' says a soldier weighed down by his years, already broken in his limbs by much toil. Likewise, the merchant, his ship tossed about by the south wind, says 'Military service is preferable.'

The passages are quite similar. Whereas the *Satires* discuss a soldier and a sailing merchant, the *Epodes* combine this into the single instance of a soldier departing for a naval battle. Moreover, both of these passages are concerned with more or less the same issue: the burden of one's obligations in life. The contrast between them, however, neatly summarizes one of the contrasts between the two collections in general: whereas the satire brings up a philosophical question, the epode refers to actual reality.

This is the most important recurring contrast that we have seen. The *Satires* are in many ways more withdrawn. They do not overtly seek out a confrontation. They stay away from public affairs. When they discuss problems, they are treated in a more theoretical vein. The *Epodes*, by contrast, are concerned with practice. They confront wrongdoers, including the entire people of Rome, if necessary.

As I have argued above, I believe this contrast is connected to two other important differences between the two collections. First of all, the important role that philosophy and philosophical style play in the *Satires* make a more theoretical outlook a natural fit. It even adds an extra layer of complexity to the blame poet's defence as described by Ralph Rosen, providing Horace the satirist with an alternative defence.

Conversely, the importance of humour makes the *Satires* rather unsuitable for treatment of more serious issues concerning violence and war. This can also be seen in *Satires* 1.1 and *Epodes* 1. Soon after the passage quoted, the satire goes on to depict a scene in which the soldier rejects Jupiter's offer to change his life and become a merchant. Jupiter becomes comically upset at the rejection, puffing up his cheeks in anger (15-22). By contrast, *Epodes* 1 has no room for jokes. It has to deal with the very real chance of Maecenas dying in battle.

At the beginning of this thesis, I made a distinction between the face of Horace the satirist and that of Horace the iambist. I would now like to reiterate an important feature of Oliensis's concept of face: the different faces of a person are never completely separate. This is also true for Horace the satirist and Horace the iambist. The contrasts between them, then, may also tell a message of their own. Since the civil wars feature so strongly in the *Epodes*, yet are absent from the *Satires*, the reader is implicitly told that war is no laughing matter. This serves to underline his strong condemnation of civil war in the *Epodes*. And Horace the iambist's aggressive invectives in the *Epodes* may serve to underline the latent threat of Horace the satirist, which we have seen him allude to in *Satires* 2.1.

In a sense, he could be two people at the same time, switching between satirist and iambist. What I hope to have shown, then, is how the *Satires* and the *Epodes* can play off of each other, defining each other through contrasts and even adding force to features present in each collection. The soldier and the merchant of *Satires* 1.1 could only choose one role in life. Unlike them, Horace did not have to choose.

## Bibliography

### Editions used

- J.W. Basore, *Seneca, Moral Essays, Volume II*, Loeb Classical Library 254, Harvard University Press 1932.
- E. Gowers, *Satires: book I*, Cambridge University Press 2012.
- D. Mankin, *Epodes*, Cambridge University Press 1995.
- F. Muecke, *Satires II*, Aris & Phillips 1993.
- R.C.F.O. Pfeiffer, *Callimachus Vol. II: Hymni et epigrammata*, Clarendon Press 1953.
- N. Rudd, *Horace Epistles book II and Epistle to the Pisones ('Ars Poetica')*, Cambridge University Press 1989.
- M.L. West, *Jambi et elegi graeci ante Alexandrum cantati, I: Archilochus, Hipponax, Theognidea*, Clarendon Press 1989.

### Reference works

- BNP* *Brill's New Pauly Online*. Brill 2006.

### Secondary literature

- D. Armstrong, 'Epicurean virtues, Epicurean friendship: Cicero vs the Herculaneum papyri' in *Epicurus and the Epicurean tradition*, edd. K.R. Sanders & J. Fish, Cambridge University Press 2011, pp. 105-128.
- 'Horace's Epicurean voice in the *Satires*' in *Philosophizing muse*, ed. M. Garani, Cambridge Scholars Press 2014, pp. 91-127.
- A. Barchiesi, 'Horace and Iambos: The Poet as Literary Historian' in *Iambic Ideas*, edd. A. Cavarzere, A. Aloni & A. Barchiesi, Rowman & Littlefield 2001, pp. 141-164.
- Ph. Bather & C. Stocks (edd.), *Horace's Epodes: Contexts, Intertexts, and Reception*, Oxford University Press 2016.
- S.M. Braund, *The Roman satirists and their masks*, Bristol Classical Press 1996.
- *Satire and society in ancient Rome*, University of Exeter Press 1989.
- C.J. Classen, 'Die Kritik des Horaz an Lucilius in den Satiren I 4 und I 5' in *Hermes* 109 vol. 3, 1981, pp. 339-360.
- D.A. Clayman, *Callimachus' Iambi*, Brill 1980.
- J.L. Ferriss-Hill, *Roman Satire and the Old Comic Tradition*, Cambridge University Press 2015.
- J. Fish, 'Not all politicians are Sisyphus: what Roman Epicureans were taught about politics' in *Epicurus and the Epicurean tradition*, edd. K.R. Sanders & J. Fish, Cambridge University Press 2011, pp. 72-104.
- K. Freudenburg, *The Walking Muse: Horace on the Theory of Satire*, Princeton University Press 1992.
- E. Giusti, 'Dithyrambic Iambics: Epode 9 and its General(s') Confusion' in *Horace's Epodes*, edd. Ph. Bather & C. Stocks, Oxford University Press 2016, pp. 131-151.
- I. Goh, 'Of Cabbages and Kin: Traces of Lucilius in the First Half of Horace's *Epodes*' in *Horace's Epodes*, edd. Ph. Bather & C. Stocks, Oxford University Press 2016, pp. 63-83.
- A.S. Gratwick, 'The satires of Ennius and Lucilius' in *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature 2: Latin Literature*, Cambridge University Press 1982.

- H.Ch. Günther, *Brill's companion to Horace*, Brill 2013.
- M. Habash, 'Priapus: Horace in Disguise?' in *The Classical Journal* 94 vol. 3, 1999, pp. 285-297.
- S.J. Harrison, 'Some Generic Problems in Horace's *Epodes*: Or, On (Not) Being Archilochus' in *Iambic Ideas*, edd. A. Cavarzere, A. Aloni & A. Barchiesi, Rowman & Littlefield 2001, pp. 165-186.
- (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Horace*, Cambridge University Press 2007.
- D.M. Hooley, *Roman satire*, Blackwell 2007.
- T. Johnson, *Horace's Iambic Criticism: casting blame (iambikē poiēsis)*, Brill 2012.
- J. Kemp, 'A Moral purpose, a literary game: Horace, *Satires* 1.4' in *The Classical World* 104 vol. 1, 2011, pp. 59-76.
- 'Fools rush in: sex «the mean» and Epicureanism in Horace, *Satires* 1.2' in *Cambridge Classical Journal* 62, 2016, pp. 130-146.
- C. Kroon, 'Miscommunications on the *Via Sacra*: A discourse structural analysis of Horace *Satires* 1.9' in *Argumenta: Festschrift für Manfred Kienpointner zum 60. Geburtstag*, Praesens-Verlag 2015, pp. 215-232.
- P. Lejay, *Oeuvres d'Horace: Satires*, Olms 1966.
- R.O.A.M. Lyne, 'Structure and Allusion in Horace's book of *Epodes*' in *The Journal of Roman Studies* 95, 2005, pp. 1-19.
- R. Mayer, 'Sleeping with the enemy: satire and philosophy' in *The Cambridge Companion to Roman satire*, ed. K. Freudenburg, Cambridge University Press 2005, pp. 146-159.
- R.G.M. Nisbet, 'Horace: life and chronology' in *The Cambridge Companion to Horace*, ed. S.J. Harrison, Cambridge University Press 2007, pp. 7-21.
- E. Oliensis, *Horace and the rhetoric of authority*, Cambridge University Press 1998.
- M.T. Paule, *Canidia, Rome's first witch*, Bloomsbury Academic 2017.
- M. Plaza, *The function of humour in Roman verse satire: laughing and lying*, Oxford University Press 2006.
- F. Pina Polo, 'Contio, auctoritas and Freedom of Speech in Republican Rome' in *Rome, a city and its empire in perspective*, ed. S. Benoist, Brill 2012, pp. 45-58.
- R. Rosen, *Making Mockery: The Poetics of Ancient Satire*, Oxford University Press 2007.
- 'Iambos, comedy and the question of generic affiliation' in *Greek comedy and the discourse of genres*, ed. E. Bakola, Cambridge University Press 2013, pp. 81-97.
- A. Rotstein, *The Idea of Iambos*, Oxford University Press 2010.
- I.A. Ruffell, 'Beyond Satire: Horace, Populare Invective and the Segregation of Literature' in *The Journal of Roman Studies* 93, 2003, pp. 35-65.
- C. Schlegel, 'Horace and his Fathers: *Satires* 1.4 and 1.6' in *The American Journal of Philology* 121 vol. 1, 2000, pp. 93-119.
- L. Watson, *A commentary on Horace's Epodes*, Oxford University Press 2003.
- T.S. Welch, 'Est locus uni cuique suus: City and Status in Horace's *Satires* 1.8 and 1.9' in *Classical Antiquity* 20 vol. 1, 2001, pp. 165-192.
- P. White, 'Friendship patronage and Horatian sociopoetics' in *The Cambridge Companion to Horace*, ed. S.J. Harrison, Cambridge University Press 2007, pp. 195-206.
- S. Yona, 'Some Epicurean aspects of Horace's upbringing in *Satires* 1.4' in *Classical Philology* 110 vol. 3, 2015, pp. 227-251.