Horace's *Odes* and *Carmen Saeculare*

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Introduction, Texts, Translations in the Original Metres and Notes

By

Simon Preece

Cambridge Scholars
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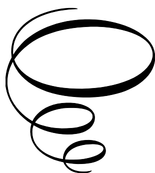

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To

Dicky

ibimus, ibimus

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PREFACE

> Then farewell, Horace, whom I hated so,
> Not for thy faults, but mine; it is a curse
> To understand, not feel thy lyric flow,
> To comprehend, but never love thy verse...
>
> *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*
> Canto IV Stanza 77 Lines 685-688 (1818)

In the two centuries since Byron published his poem, generations of scholars have shone powerful intellectual beams onto the works of Horace; indeed, the last sixty-five years in particular have been a Golden Age in the interpretation of his poetry. Opportunities for us to gain at least some understanding of his "lyric flow" abound in books aimed at scholars, at students and at general readers. But no book about Horace the man or about his *Odes* can help the reader to "feel" what his poetry is like. Even those who have good Latin can only come to feel the verse by frequent immersion in it; and for those whose Latin is less strong or non-existent it is unrealistic to suggest such a course of action. Translations, however, can provide a useful stepping-stone.

To establish the number of translations of individual odes by Horace would require the skills of an Archytas or Archimedes. Sir Ronald Storrs' posthumous *A Polyglot Collection of Translations of Horace's Ode to Pyrrha* (ed. Sir Charles Tennyson (Oxford 1959)) presented 144 renditions of that one ode in 26 languages, but Storrs had collected 451 translations of it, and many new ones have been published since. Translators have included poets of the highest and of lower rank, classical scholars, professional translators and amateurs. I am one of these last. I had the luck to be taught by schoolmasters with an enthusiasm for Horace and then took the opportunity to study a larger number of odes as an undergraduate; but my enduring admiration for the poems has come from repeated readings over a long period. Among the attempts of so vast a swarm of translators will be found many fine translations and versions in a wide variety of styles, but, despite the potential suggested by poems like Swinburne's *Sapphics* and (Alfred) Tennyson's *Milton* (in Alcaics), few of Horace's translators into English have used the metres he himself adopted. J. B. Leishman published thirty odes in the original metres in his *Translating*

Horace (Oxford 1956). He chose the better-known poems and demonstrated eight of the thirteen metres found in the *Odes*. James Michie's justly praised *The Odes of Horace* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis 1964) includes thirteen poems in the original metre, of which ten are in Alcaics (he says eleven, but 1.4; 1.5 and 4.7 are not). Rev. Philip E. Phelps published a full set which claimed to be in the original metres (London: James Parker 1897); Helen Rowe Henze (Norman, Oklahoma 1961) and Charles E. Passage (New York: Frederick Ungar 1983) are more convincing; but Guy Lee's sharp and skilful *Horace Odes and Carmen Saeculare* (Leeds: Francis Cairns 1998) is perhaps the only truly successful complete set using the metres in English. It is because I admire his translations and believe they bring things not available elsewhere—something of the feel of Horace and of his tautness of expression— that I wanted to create another set of its kind.

An account of my methodology can be found in the Introduction, and an explanation of the thirteen metres is placed at the back of the book, but I hope that the reader will quickly come to feel how each metre goes in the English. Then, as the rhythms become familiar, it should be possible to transfer them from the translations to the facing Latin text, and this will provide a foundation on which to build a feel for Horace's lyric flow. A more rigorous understanding of how Horace deploys his metres can be developed by reading Nisbet and Hubbard *A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book 1* (Oxford 1970) xxxviii-xlvi.

Once I had decided to adopt Horace's metres, it seemed natural to attempt as far as possible to express what Horace said as he said it. I have often enjoyed reading looser translations and versions, and find that rhyme can be particularly effective in the lighter odes. But there is no shortage of adaptations of that type. Horace's Latin is not always easy, and I remember the frustration I felt as a student approaching some of the *Odes* for the first time. Often, if I got stuck and consulted a translation, I found that it was so loose as to be useless to me; much of the wit too seemed to be that of the translator rather than of Horace, and many of Horace's own words were simply ignored. But a clear understanding of the sense of a poet's words, of how those words fit together, how they play off each other, is an indispensable tool for making valid literary judgments; and for those not fluent in the original language, accurate renditions have a valuable part to play. Students can now use Niall Rudd's stylish translation for the Loeb Classical Library series, *Horace Odes and Epodes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard 2004). It is admirably accurate and eminently readable, but as it is in prose it does not help with the feel of the verse.

An ideal set of translations would perhaps rival Rudd for accuracy, outmatch Lee for metre and vie with Michie for sheer wit, but for all my efforts I make no claim to have produced such a work. I have, however, paid attention to sound, register and undertones as well as to the precise meaning. And there is one feature of Horace's *Odes* which should not be ignored in any good translation: word-placing. Because Latin is an elaborately inflected language—the endings of adjectives, nouns and verbs all demonstrate how the words fit into each sentence—it is possible for a poet to separate words which would naturally go together or juxtapose words which would normally sit apart. In the *Odes* Horace often plays with word-placing to bring out contrasts and parallels. His style is sometimes highly artificial; never can anybody have spoken such Latin (except when reading the *Odes* aloud), and no other works of either prose or poetry, not even the other poems of Horace, explore such effects so systematically. His short lyric metres both encourage and emphasise these effects. There are risks for a translator who tries to imitate unusual word-placing, but any version which *always* reads like normal spoken English has failed to translate one of the most important and individual aspects of the *Odes*. I want my translations to read well, but also to reflect what was distinctive about Horace's poetry, so I imitate his techniques of word-placing wherever I think it can be done effectively in English.

The diligence and acuity of scholars have resulted in excellent commentaries aimed at other scholars and very fine ones aimed at students. The former assume competence in several languages including Latin and Greek, the latter in Latin—David West's volumes are an exception (see Further Reading). Most translations provide only short notes explaining some of the references in each poem. My endnotes occupy a little of the sparsely populated territory in between. They are aimed at students and committed general readers—those who are curious about what Horace actually wrote but whose skills at reading Latin may be fledgling or neglected. With such people in mind, I provide English translations of all texts quoted in foreign languages, and Greek, when it appears, is in transliterated form. A single paragraph for each poem gives an overview; then more detailed notes covering a wide range of topics follow. Readers will rightly ignore whatever they individually do not need, but they will also find preliminary answers to many of the questions the poems provoke, without having either to keep a dozen books at their side or to trawl through an ocean of internet factoids of uncertain reliability.

A close reading of the text is the best way to begin the literary exploration of any lyric poem, so I devote considerable space in the endnotes to linguistic matters, especially to the nuanced meanings of

words in their context. I hope this will encourage readers to look at the Latin itself. I also discuss the sound of the Latin, the rhetorical devices Horace deploys, the structure of the poems and some of the most persuasive ways in which each poem has been approached. No translation is entirely neutral; each is itself an act of literary criticism. Furthermore, where there is uncertainty, I have had to make decisions about which text to adopt, but informed readers will sometimes disagree with my choices. The notes highlight the places where disagreement is most likely on textual, linguistic and literary matters, indicate what lies behind my decisions and show some of the other textual or interpretative possibilities. A section of the Introduction explains why textual choices have to be made and how I approach them.

In addition to information on metrical, linguistic, literary and textual matters, the notes give brief explanations of all overt and many hidden references in the poems. Some of these are intertexts with or allusions to earlier works in Greek or Latin; others are mythological or religious; others again philosophical, historical or geographical. In order to keep the notes within reasonable proportions, I have had to be extremely selective with supporting argument, and I urge interested readers to explore the major commentaries, without which my own notes would not have been possible. I have tried to bring together a range of views, and for each poem I include the current orthodox position as I understand it, whether I agree with it or not. I also express personal opinions about the qualities Horace's poetry displays, but my principal aim is always to offer some tools with which readers can form their own judgments.

I cross-reference frequently between the poems, believing that they should be read individually, but also as part of their book, of the collection within which they were published, and of the wider collection: the *Odes*. When Latin words are used in an unusual or potentially surprising way, I indicate the relevant sub-entry in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* ed. P. G. W. Glare (Oxford 1982); it is a wonderful resource for seeing precisely how Latin authors used their language. For literary and factual matters, I cite many Greek and Latin sources; these can all be found online in their original languages, almost all of them in English too (especially useful are the Perseus and Lacus Curtius websites). More information on mythology (and much else) is available in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* edd. Simon Hornblower, Antony Spawforth and Esther Eidinow (Oxford 4th edn. 2012). Many modern authorities are cited in the footnotes to the Introduction, but I mostly omit such citation in the endnotes: I wanted to avoid making the notes too cluttered, and to encourage readers to look first and foremost at the poems themselves. However, the Further Reading

section surveys a selection of modern works which offer varied and illuminating perspectives on Horace, and many of these do appear in the endnotes; other articles and books are cited there only when the alternative would have been to argue at length to support an assertion or interpretation. Comprehensive bibliographical resources too can be found under Further Reading, and most of the works mentioned there have rich bibliographies; by using these, those who have access to specialist libraries or deep pockets can find a lifetime of stimulating reading.

The Introduction begins by setting the poems in their biographical and historical context. It then considers something of their literary background and tries to abstract general features and inferences from them. I hope such contextualisation and analysis may provide a springboard towards a more personal engagement with the poems: reading them aloud, listening to what they say and, yes, feeling their lyric flow. I also urge readers to make their own translations; it is the best way of getting to know Horace at close quarters.

This book was conceived, written and revised during gaps between rehearsals and performances at the Royal Opera House. Many of my fellow-singers supported me, most of them unwittingly. I am especially grateful to Paul Parfitt, the best of friends, and to Charbel Mattar, whose encouragement helped me believe in the book. Professor A. J. Woodman read the whole of an early draft with gimlet eye and generous heart. His many constructive suggestions improved my script immeasurably, but his agreement with my interpretations should never be assumed. I am also grateful to the staff of CSP for easing the birth-pangs of an unusual brainchild. Most of all, I thank Dicky Thomas, *animae dimidium meae*, who has learned to turn a deaf ear, smiling and nodding and thinking of Arsenal.

London
February 2021

INTRODUCTION

1. Horace: The Life of a Poet

No ancient poet tells us so much about his father, his childhood, his career, his friends and lovers, and his views on matters trivial and profound as Horace.[1] The evidence of Suetonius too survives, albeit only in a short digest. His *Life of Horace* was written early in the 2nd century CE. Where it corroborates what Horace himself says, we may wonder whether Suetonius or his sources read the poetry as autobiography; but the *Life* adds to our picture of the poet, especially when it quotes from letters from Augustus to Horace. Under the emperors Trajan and Hadrian, Suetonius held a succession of major secretarial posts. One of these gave him access to autograph copies of the correspondence of the Imperial house. The *Life* may predate such access, but if so, Suetonius clearly consulted publicly available letters.[2] His evidence, then, is valuable. But, while there is agreement on the basic facts of Horace's life, interpreting what the poet himself says about the details is difficult. Often, he chooses to omit biographical incidents when he has the chance to tell them, or to blur and mythologise instead of giving a straightforward account; for, although all the genres he was working in had a history of including a strong personal element, and this may have been a reason for his choosing them, Horace was a sophisticated poet; he did not simply write autobiography.[3]

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[1] Stephen Harrison *The Cambridge Companion to Horace* ed. Stephen Harrison (Cambridge 2007) 22 states that "*ego* and its oblique cases occur some 460 times in the 7,795 lines of [Horace's] extant poetry".

[2] Line numbers for the *Life of Horace* will relate to the text at www.thelatinlibrary.com/suetonius/suet.horace.html. The precise date of its composition is uncertain (D. Wardle *Suetonius Life of Augustus* (Oxford 2014) 1-6). Under Hadrian, Suetonius as Secretary *ab epistulis* was in charge of all the empire's official correspondence (G. B. Townend *The Hippo Inscription and the Career of Suetonius* (Historia 10 (1961) 99-109)). Suetonius *Augustus* 71.2 and 87 show his access to autograph copies of Augustus' letters.

[3] I explore many examples of Horace's omitting and blurring incidents in his life in this section, more in the endnotes. Harrison *Horatian Self-Representations* (*Cambridge Companion* 22-35) brings the evidence together. Earlier Roman Satire as practised by Lucilius was highly autobiographical: the invective of Archilochus and

Quintus Horatius Flaccus was born on 8th December 65 BCE at Venusia (modern Venosa), near the boundary between Apulia and Lucania. His father was a freedman, but, given Horace's pride in his Apulian background, he too was probably a native of Southern Italy.[4] In the Social War (91–88 BCE) Venusia had been the only city with Latin rights to join the revolt of the Italians against Rome. One of the results of the campaign was that Venusia gained full citizen rights for its inhabitants, but most authorities think that Horace's father may have been enslaved at this time.[5] He was free, however, by the time Horace was born, and, as the *Life* notes, Horace himself tells us that his father worked as a *coactor*, the middleman between the sellers and buyers at auctions—potentially a lucrative job. Suetonius goes on to say that in his own day, by contrast, it was generally thought that Horace's father had been a *salsamentarius* "seller of salt fish". This idea derives from the alleged *sal niger* "black salt" or "caustic wit" of Horace's *Satires*, which were written somewhat after the manner of Bion of Borysthenes (c. 325–255 BCE): Bion had given an account of how his own father, also a freedman, had indeed been a seller of salt fish, and Suetonius even relates about Horace's father a taunt thrown at Bion about *his* father *bracchio se emungentem* "wiping his nose on his arm". However, it is clear that Suetonius believed Horace

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Hipponax which prefigures Horace's *Epodes* builds upon personal venom, whether real or assumed for literary purposes; the lyric voices of Alcaeus, Sappho and others which lie behind the *Odes* are equally based on their own real or fictive experiences; and the letters from which the poems known as the *Epistles* derive naturally present their writers' personal views. However, it would be naive to imagine that the autobiographical content of even the earliest poets was not moulded to suit its poetic context.

[4] For the whole name Suetonius *Life* 1; Quintus *Satires* 2.6.37; Horatius *Odes* 4.6.44; Flaccus *Epodes* 15.12. *Life* 33 gives the date; *Odes* 3.21.1 confirms the year; *Epistles* 1.20.27 the month. However, the date precedes the Julian reform of the calendar (introduced 45 BCE), and we cannot pinpoint the modern equivalent for Horace's day of birth. *Life* 1 tells us that Horace was Venusian; *Satires* 2.1.34-35 adds that Venusia was near the borders of Apulia and Lucania, perhaps intimating that Horace's family had land right on the border. For Horace's father as a freedman the *Life* is confirmed by *Satires* 1.6.6; *Epistles* 1.20.20. For Horace's pride in Apulia: *Odes* 3.4.9; 3.5.9; 3.16.26; 3.30.10-14.

[5] Appian *Civil Wars* 1.34-54. Gordon Williams *Libertino patre natus: True or False* (*Homage to Horace: A Bimillenary Celebration* ed. S. J. Harrison (Oxford 1995) 296-313) convincingly argues against earlier theories that Horace's father was an oriental slave and puts the case for his capture when Venusia fell (88 BCE) (Diodorus 37.2.10). More speculatively, Williams also suggests that the family may have had distinguished local connections.

rather than such gossipy stories, and so should we. Horace's mother too was probably a freedwoman, but we hear little about her in the poems; and there are no references to any brothers or sisters.[6]

In the *Odes* the most comprehensive account of Horace's life is 3.4.9-28. Lines 9-20 describe how, when he was a child, *fabulosae palumbes* "fable-famed woodpigeons" protected him from snakes and bears. One of Horace's aims here is to portray himself as a poet of sufficient stature to give advice, albeit obliquely, to Octavian. The story of his miraculous childhood is a part of this and should be set alongside astonishing stories about other great poets. However, snakes and even bears were certainly dangers which an unattended child in the Southern Italy of this period might face.[7] More intriguingly, we learn that he had a nanny or nurse, and that she lived on the slopes of Monte Vulture (1326m), a few miles outside Venusia. Whether she was a free woman or a slave living in a small house provided by Horace's father, the young poet's family was clearly not indigent, and it is reasonable to suppose that Horace was sent up into the hills to escape the worst of the sweltering South Italian summer. It will have been in these formative years that he came to know, and evidently love, the uplands of Acherontia and Bantia and the lowlands of Forentum, warmly recalled in lines 14-16.[8]

Horace's father, who, the poet claims, had use of only *macro agello* "a scraggy scrap of land", wanted to give him a better education than was available locally, where the settlements of veteran soldiers had filled the school with *magni pueri magnis e centurionibus orti* "the bruiser sons of bruiser centurions". He took the boy to Rome and sent him to a school

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[6] *Satires* 1.6.86-87 may imply that Horace's father, at least sometimes, acted as *praeco* "auctioneer" as well as being the *coactor*, who collected the monies. *Epistles* 2.2.58-60 links Horace's *Satires* with both caustic wit and Bion; for Bion's story: Diogenes Laertius 4.7.46. The social stigma attached to being a freedman was such that opportunities for wedding above one's station were few, and Horace nowhere suggests that his mother came from a higher social background than his father (*Odes* 2.20.6-7).

[7] For myths about future poets: the bees which placed a honeycomb in the mouth of the sleeping Pindar (Pausanias 9.23.2). A similar story was told of Menander (*Anthologia Palatina* 9.187) and of Virgil (*Vita Focae* 52-54). For bears in Southern Italy: [Ovid] *On Fishing* 58. For potentially deadly snakes: *Odes* 1.17.8-9 (Italy); 1.37.26-28 (Egypt); 2.19.19-20 (mythical). Italy still has vipers.

[8] The text is disputed in the lines about the nurse (3.4.9-12n), but my point about finances stands. David Armstrong *The Biographical and Social Foundations of Horace's Poetic Voice* (*A Companion to Horace* ed. Gregson Davis (Wiley-Blackwell 2010) 7-33) starts by considering *Odes* 3.4 and argues that Horace was comfortably off throughout his life. For all the places named in 3.4.9-28: endnotes.

attended by the sons of senators and knights, even accompanying him to school trailed by slaves to protect him from unwanted physical advances and sneers about his background. Here Horace studied the early Latin poet Livius Andronicus under Orbilius of Beneventum, who is succinctly (and perhaps affectionately) described as *plagosum* "lavish with blows". But Horace says that it was his father who gave him his sense of right and wrong.[9]

The boy's formal curriculum also included Homer,[10] and he must have been a good pupil, because, when he reached what might now be called "university age", his father paid for his education to be continued at Athens, where the sons of senators and knights went to study philosophy and sow wild oats away from their families. For all his lowly background, Horace will have had the opportunity to mix with the coming generation of the rich and powerful, men like Cicero's son, Marcus, and Brutus' stepson, Lucius Calpurnius Bibulus.[11] In August 44 BCE, while Horace was in Athens, Brutus himself arrived. He had fled Italy after helping to assassinate Caesar, and won widespread support among the students by attending philosophy lectures.[12] Horace was among those who chose to support the Republican cause, and Brutus was sufficiently taken with him to make him a *tribunus militum*. The post was normally filled by sons of the rich, and some took exception to its being given to Horace, son of a mere freedman; it seems to have brought with it the status of *eques*, a knight, and it could, and as it turned out did, involve the command of a legion in battle.[13]

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[9] For Horace's education: *Satires* 1.6.71-88; 1.4.105-125. For Orbilius: *Epistles* 2.1.69-71. The exercise of flogging did Orbilius no harm: according to Suetonius *On Grammarians* 9, he lived to be nearly a hundred.

[10] *Epistles* 2.2.41-42.

[11] *Epistles* 2.2.43-45. For Cicero's son Marcus: Cicero *Letters to his Friends* 16.21, a letter sent from Athens by Cicero junior to Tiro (summer 44 BCE). It shows the sort of education he received and refers to some misbehaviour he felt guilty about. For Lucius Calpurnius Bibulus: Cicero *Letters to Atticus* 12.32 (March 45 BCE), where Bibulus is about to go to Athens; *Letters to Brutus* 1.7 (May 43 BCE), a letter from Brutus in Greece asking Cicero to nominate Bibulus, who wished to stand for a vacant position as augur; *Satires* 1.10.86 shows Horace's (later) admiration for him.

[12] Plutarch *Brutus* 24.1; for Brutus' approval of Cicero junior: 24.3.

[13] For the post, the criticism and helping to command a legion: *Satires* 1.6.45-48. Cicero's son was also made *tribunus militum*, but he had already gained military experience with Pompey (Cicero *On Duties* 2.45). For the rank: R. O. A. M. Lyne *Horace Behind the Public Poetry* (New Haven and London: Yale 1995) 3 n. 7; Armstrong *Blackwell Companion* 17.

Some may find it surprising that many years later, after Augustus had gained sole control of the Empire, Horace should openly allude in his poems to having fought on the "wrong" side at Philippi (autumn 42 BCE); but he never casts himself as a formidable soldier. Indeed, in *Odes* 2.7, the poem which dwells longest on the campaign, he begins his address to an old comrade from those days with a negative allusion to Brutus:

O saepe mecum tempus in ultimum
deducte Bruto militiae duce...

O often led with me to the brink of death
When Brutus was the leader of our campaign...

and goes on (9-10):

tecum Philippos et celerem fugam
sensi relicta non bene parmula...

Philippi and swift rout I experienced
With you (my poor old shield was unbravely ditched)...

The ignominy of leaving one's shield behind on the battlefield was real, but Horace is here emulating Archilochus, who claims to have left his own shield on the battlefield in the same part of Thrace; and indeed other Greek poets portrayed themselves in a similar way. Further references to Philippi are found at *Odes* 3.4.26, where he speaks of *uersa acies retro* "the battle-line turned about", and at 3.14.27-28, where he playfully alludes to the year of Philippi by saying: *non ego hoc ferrem calidus iuuenta / consule Planco* "Fired with youth, I'd not have put up with that when / Plancus was consul". In all three odes, alongside these references Horace compliments Augustus; and he even rewrites history at *Epistles* 2.2.46-49, saying that his "weapons could not match the muscle of Caesar Augustus in the fighting". This may reflect official propaganda about the campaign (*Res Gestae 2*), but Octavian was ill at the time, his troops were worsted by Brutus' in the first battle, and he was still unable to fight in the second.[14] Horace's Republican past was public knowledge; his references to it all show his present altered allegiance.

[14] The quasi-Homeric miraculous escape of 2.7.13-14 signals the literary aspect of Horace's lost shield. The true architect of victory at Philippi was Antony (Velleius 2.70.1; Suetonius *Augustus* 13.1; Plutarch *Antony* 22; *Brutus* 41; Appian *Civil Wars* 4.105-138).

The outcome of Horace's being on the losing side was that he was stripped of his father's property (a townhouse and a country estate). This will have been at the time of widespread confiscations at Venusia and elsewhere.[15] It is unclear how poor Horace will have been as a result, but the next thing we know is that he bought his way into the important post of *scriba quaestorius*, a position at the Treasury whose duties included looking after public records and providing copies of them to the magistrates and others. The office could be held for life and was usually taken by men who were knights. In order to purchase such a post, either he still had significant private funds, or he was able to borrow on the strength of his prospects, perhaps from friends of the family not affected by the confiscations. Although the diligent might put in many hours at the job of *scriba*, those who did not need the money could treat it as a sinecure, merely attending meetings from time to time. It seems likely that Horace initially did need the money, but that later his poetry and connections saved him from a life of office drudgery.[16.] He himself claims that it was his poverty at this time that drove him to take up poetry, but we should not take him seriously. The context, the same passage from the *Epistles* (2.2.51-54), is humorous, and although poetry was in the end to make Horace's name and fortune, nobody in need of money could seriously imagine that poetry would give him quick access to ready cash. There was no system through which the budding author might win a contract and royalties; a penurious poet could only hope to attract a generous patron.

These years are shadowy. We can guess that Horace was writing some of the *Satires* which were later collected into *Satires* Book 1, and he may also have been testing out his skill at *Epodes*, adapting the invective style of Archilochus; but we cannot date these early poems precisely.[17] We do know that it was during this period Horace became the friend of Virgil and Varius. He admired Varius' epic style and Virgil's *Eclogues* (perhaps published in 38 BCE, but doubtless circulated earlier among friends), and

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[15] *Epistles* 2.2.50-51. The confiscations announced in 43 BCE needed time to be completed, but Octavian will have settled his veterans by 41 BCE (Suetonius *Augustus* 13.3; Appian *Civil Wars* 5.3).

[16] *Life* 3 tells us Horace bought the job. *Satires* 2.6.36-37 gives the impression that Horace may have enjoyed the work the post provided. For *scribae quaestorii*: Nicholas Purcell *The Ordo Scribarum: A Study in the Loss of Memory* Mélanges de l'école française de Rome 113.2 (2001) 633-674 = https://www.persee.fr/doc/mefr_0223-5102_2001_num_113_2_9649.

[17] One attempt to date the poems is Robin Nisbet *Horace: life and chronology* (*Cambridge Companion* 7-21), but on individual poems there is rarely complete scholarly consensus; the dates of most of the collections remain contentious.

he recited his own poetry to friends and sought the approval of the two poets and other men of letters, including Bibulus.[18] It will have been through such readings of each other's poetry that the men grew close, and soon Virgil and Varius introduced Horace to the great patron of the arts, Maecenas. Horace depicts himself as stammeringly nervous at their first meeting, but he made a sufficiently good impression for Maecenas, who chose his friends carefully, to admit him to his circle about eight months later, probably late in 38 BCE.[19]

Such cultural and social pursuits took place against a background of renewed civil wars. Octavian and Antony distrusted each other, but a necessary Treaty between them, which staved off their final breakup by five years, was signed at Tarentum in the spring of 37 BCE. Maecenas, among others, undertook the negotiations, and *Satires* 1.5 describes the journey Horace took from Rome to Brundisium, with his fellow-poets and Maecenas joining him en route, all, it appears, Tarentum-bound.[20] The ancient commentator Porphyrio says that the poem is in imitation of a satire by Lucilius. Fragments of this survive, and Porphyrio is clearly right up to a point, but Horace is also presenting a witty account of the historical odyssey he himself made, presumably in some sort of secretarial capacity. He concentrates on the state of his stomach (queasy) and eyes (bloodshot), the ghastly people he met, his sleeping habits, the surfeit of mosquitoes and the shortage of sex, but, to the frustration of historians, he is the soul of discretion, seemingly seeing and certainly saying nothing of the great events which prompted the journey.[21] Meanwhile, a war was being fought

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[18] For Varius and Virgil's *Eclogues*: *Satires* 1.10.43-45; readings and who Horace wished to please *Satires* 1.4.73-74; 1.10.81-90.

[19] For meetings with Maecenas: *Satires* 1.6.45-62. The second meeting was *nono post mense* "in the ninth month after", but the number may be approximate (as at *Ars Poetica* 388). That meeting must predate the journey Horace made as part of Maecenas' entourage in Spring 37 BCE. Further evidence for the dates comes from *Satires* 2.6.40-42, which says it was nearly the eighth year since Maecenas had included Horace among his friends. Other references in the poem date it to late 31 BCE or early 30 BCE (n. 29). For Maecenas' choosiness in admitting poets to his circle: *Satires* 1.9.43-44. William Anderson *Horace's Friendship: Adaptation of a Circular Argument* (*Blackwell Companion* 34-51) finds the concept "Maecenas' literary circle" unhelpful, preferring to foreground how Horace increasingly creates his own circle of friends through his poems.

[20] Appian *Civil Wars* 5.93-95; Plutarch *Antony* 35; Dio 48.54. For Maecenas' role: *Satires* 1.5.27-29 and 31-33.

[21] Lucilius frr. 94-148W; Emily Gowers *Horace, Satires 1.5: An Inconsequential Journey* Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society 39 (1993) 48-66 =

at sea by Octavian's forces against Sextus Pompeius, younger son of Pompey the Great; and there are reasons to believe that Horace was present when, in 36 BCE, Octavian's fleet was wrecked by a storm at Cape Palinurus: we know that Maecenas was with Octavian at or just after this time; *Odes* 3.4.28 talks of Horace's escape from the waves there; and this near-drowning is mentioned alongside other life-threatening incidents thought to be based on fact (see below).[22]

In about 35 BCE Horace's first book of poetry, *Satires* 1, was published. Times had changed since Lucilius' (c. 180–102 BCE) sprawling, acerbic satires had been written. Horace's poems are in hexameters, as were most of Lucilius', but he uses far fewer elisions and far more enjambments than his predecessor, and he structures his arguments more elegantly. He neither directly praises Octavian nor criticises Antony: attacks on contemporary politicians are off-limits. Instead, shifting his persona between and within poems, he uses wit to expose stupidity and moral failings, and he moulds the form to charm as well as amuse. The book's circulation will have brought Horace to the attention of a wider public, but in Roman times every copy was written by hand, so we should not think in terms of the print runs of modern novels.[23] And sadly the accidents of transmission over two thousand years mean that we do not have more precise information on much of Horace's life after he started to become

Horace: Satires and Epistles ed. Kirk Freudenburg (Oxford Readings in Classical Studies (2009)) 156-180.

[22] Appian *Civil Wars* 5.99; Dio 49.1.3; *Odes* 2.12.1-4n; 2.17.17-20n; 3.4.25-28n.

[23] Niall Rudd *The Satires of Horace* (Cambridge 1966) offers a good starting point, Emily Gowers *Satires Book 1* (Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics 2012) a fine commentary. Ian Du Quesnay argues Horace presents Maecenas and his friends as "the ideal Roman citizens": Horace thus supports Octavian (*Horace and Maecenas: The Propaganda Value of Sermones I* in *Poetry and Politics in the Age of Augustus* edd. A. J. Woodman and D. West (Cambridge 1984) 19-58 = Freudenburg (2009) 42-101). Pliny the Younger *Letters* 4.7.2 (c. 104 CE) claims that Marcus Aquilius Regulus, whose son had died, gave a speech in his memory and then had 1000 copies of it made and circulated throughout Italy and the provinces. Pliny finds the action typical of the man, whom he despises, so the number is probably exaggerated; but it shows how many copies might form an outrageously large "edition". Raymond J. Starr *The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World* Classical Quarterly 37 (1987) 213-223 cautions against using words like "publish" and "edition" which have unhelpful modern connotations. By "publish" I mean the circulation of slave-copied texts by gift or sale to a wider circle than the poet's friends. The Sosii booksellers later sold Horace's books (*Epistles* 1.20.2; *Ars Poetica* 345).

famous than before: Suetonius and the poems themselves remain our best sources, and what they say must be treated cautiously.

At some point in the late Thirties Horace acquired a small estate in the Sabine Hills, north-east of Rome. The traditional view that this was a gift from Maecenas is probably correct, but Horace's frequently expressed delight in the land, although it often occurs in contexts shared with Maecenas, never involves a direct statement that he was given the property by his patron.[24] Now Horace could live a very comfortable life; but already in *Satires* 1.6.111-131, published before he received the estate, he boasts that he can get up late, read or write in the morning, have a massage, play in the Campus Martius, go to the baths, then, after a light lunch, laze about before going out to potter around town. When he talks of having only three slaves serve him at supper (116), he does not mean that they are his only slaves—as ever, the passage has a rhetorical function: this is an idealised picture of the day of a man not weighed down by excessive wealth or ambition; but somebody of Horace's status and social circle could have led such a life.[25]

By the time *Satires* 2 and the *Epodes* were published in 30/29 BCE, Horace was indubitably an *eques*. Perhaps his early rank of *tribunus militum* had conferred this distinction on him for life, but if not, his post as *scriba quaestorius* and another as *iudex selectus*, a sort of Justice of the Peace, will have done so.[26] The second book of *Satires* generally engages

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[24] Harrison (*Cambridge Companion* 26-28) discusses the issue judiciously. The references are: *Satires* 2.6.1-5 including thanks to Mercury as *Maia nate*, aurally suggesting Maecenas (2.6.30-76 form a context); *Epodes* 1.25-32, where *iuuencis pluribus* "more oxen" presupposes a gift of land, but as in the satire the estate is not placed as Sabine; *Epodes* 2.41, where Sabine and Apulian housewives are equally praised; *Odes* 2.18.9-14, where the *potentem amicum* "powerful friend" is surely Maecenas; *Odes* 1.9.7 Sabine wine; 1.20.1 Sabine wine in an invitation to Maecenas; 1.22.9, 3.1.47-48, 3.4.21-22 all of the estate but not addressed to Maecenas; 3.16.29-39 about an estate Horace owns and Maecenas' generosity; 3.29.1-16 inviting Maecenas to Horace's country house. *Epistles* 1.14.1-5 says the estate supported 5 tenant families. See also *Satires* 2.7.118; *Epistles* 1.7.15 and 46-95; 1.16.1-16.

[25] Armstrong (*Blackwell Companion* 16) estimates Horace had two to three dozen slaves at his house; only when he eats alone is he attended by as few as three. Contrast the idealised day of *Satires* 1.6 with the nightmare day of *Satires* 2.6.20-58.

[26] For Horace's wearing the equestrian ring and his being *iudex selectus*: *Satires* 2.7.53-55. He also sits in the same seats as Maecenas, those set aside for the most select knights, at *Satires* 2.6.48. Armstrong, who believes Horace was an *eques* throughout his adult life, discusses the post of *iudex* (*Blackwell Companion* 18-19).

with contemporary politics no more directly than did the first. Instead, Horace presents himself as a reasonable man wittily engaging in dialogue and storytelling with a range of characters. These quasi-Socratic discussions are more inward-looking than *Satires* 1, and the poet is often the butt of the humour. The *Epodes*, by contrast, comprise seventeen wide-ranging poems in a variety of metres. They were probably written on and off over a period of several years and include two highly regarded political poems (*Epodes* 7 and 16) which seem to relate to the resumption of civil wars in 38 BCE. Here, before the gift of the estate, the anti-war rhetoric is fiery. This was a man whose voice it would be preferable to have supporting than opposing you, one in whom political flames may not have been wholly doused. If the dating is correct, it seems that, whatever his earlier views had been, the gift of the estate in the late Thirties bound Horace more closely to Octavian's party. Many of the other epodes are in the fierce invective manner derived from Archilochus and Hipponax, but even in these he draws back for some years from political subject-matter. The *Epodes* were once viewed with embarrassment as the juvenile products of a man who in the *Odes* would show his mature nature. This was to misjudge both the *Epodes* and the *Odes*; Horace was a poet of broader scope than some of his admirers chose to believe. The performative aspects of blame poetry and the generic influences in both sets of poems were given insufficient weight. Furthermore, when he published the *Epodes*, Horace was in his mid-thirties, with a wealth of experience gained in times of peace and of war, not an adolescent versifier.[27]

If the *Satires* approach contemporary politics only obliquely, the *Epodes* eventually come to tackle them almost, but not quite, head on. The most important event in these years, one which might fairly be described as world-changing, was the Battle of Actium (31 BCE), fought between the forces of Octavian and those of Antony. It remains disputed whether Horace was present; but *Epode* 1, addressed to Maecenas, opens: *Ibis Liburnis inter alta nauium, / amice, propugnacula* "You will go, in a Liburnian galley,

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[27] On *Satires* 2: Frances Muecke's lucid commentary (Aris and Phillips 1993) is now joined by Kirk Freudenburg's (Cambridge 2021). *Satires* 2.1.10-20 and 2.5.62-64 do flatter Octavian. On the dating of *Epodes* 7 and 16: Nisbet *Cambridge Companion* 9-10. David Mankin *Horace: Epodes* (Cambridge 1995) is useful for students, Lindsay Watson *A Commentary on Horace's Epodes* (Oxford 2003) better for scholars. Mankin is unorthodox on chronology, but both commentaries transformed the way the *Epodes* are viewed. And yet Fraenkel *Horace* 24-75 remains rewarding. David Mulroy *Horace: Odes and Epodes* (Michigan 1994) 5 described the *Epodes* as "seriously flawed" and "interesting as a stage that Horace had to pass through to get to the Odes", a view once widely shared.

my friend, amid the towering fortifications of the ships". Horace goes on to say that he will follow Maecenas wherever he leads (11-14). It is hard to see how such lines could have been published in the aftermath of the battle if Horace had stayed in Rome. Additional support for Horace's presence comes from *Epode* 9, which takes the form of an eye-witness account of the battle, and here Horace twice makes clear his loyalties. Lines 17-18 read *at huc*[28] *frementis uerterunt bis mille equos / Galli*, *canentes Caesarem* "But two thousand Galatians have turned their snorting horses our way, and sing out Octavian's name"; and the last two lines (37-38) say *curam metumque Caesaris rerum iuuat / dulci Lyaeo soluere* "It's a pleasure to dissolve our worry and fear for Octavian's cause with the help of the sweet Loosener (i.e. wine)". The external evidence for whether Maecenas was at the battle is unhelpfully inconsistent, but, whether Horace was present or not, the poet's public attitude to the now unrivalled Octavian is clear.[29]

Already by the late Thirties Horace had started writing his *Odes*. Several of what are now known as the *Roman Odes* (3.1–3.6) should probably be assigned to the early Twenties, and it is unlikely that these ambitious poems were his first attempts in the lyric genre.[30] In *Ode* 3.4, which may date from 29/28 BCE and is widely regarded as one of his finest poems, lines 25-28 are addressed to the Muses and read:

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[28] For Liburnian galleys at Actium: 1.37.29-32n. Some manuscripts have *ad hunc* "to him" (seemingly Antony)—an unlikely way for the Galatians to desert him. Some translate: "the Galatians muttering (*frementes*) against him" or (with Bentley's *ad hoc*) "...against the mosquito-net", implausibly giving the Galatians two vocal attributes. *at huc* is from the *Blandinianus Vetustissimus* manuscript.

[29] Horace revisits the aftermath of the battle in *Odes* 1.37 (see endnotes). There he is not writing at the front, so if he took part in the battle, he returned home afterwards rather than staying with Octavian's forces when they eventually went to Egypt. The anonymous first *Elegia in Maecenatem* 45-48 places Maecenas in the thick of things, but Appian *Civil Wars* 4.50 has him in charge back at Rome. Nisbet (*Cambridge Companion* 12) explains that the dating of the *Epodes*' publication to 30 BCE is based on the fact that *Epodes* 1 and 9 give the latest datable references. For the similar publication-date of *Satires* 2, he points to *Satires* 2.6.55-56 as that book's latest reference. It speaks of the settlement of Octavian's veterans after Actium (Dio 51.4.3). The dating of 2.6.40-42, counting from the first friendship between Horace and Maecenas (n. 19), provides further support, as does the requirement for Maecenas' seal for documents at 2.6.38. Dio 51.3.6 has Maecenas, in charge of Italy post-Actium, using Octavian's ring as a seal. Velleius 2.88.2 also has Maecenas in Rome just after Actium.

[30] For the *Roman Odes* see endnotes. Some scholars prefer later dates: see Alex Hardie *An Augustan Hymn to the Muses* (Horace *Odes* 3.4) Papers of the Langford Latin Seminar 13 (2008) 55-118; 14 (2010) 191-317.

uestris amicum fontibus et choris
non me Philippis uersa acies retro,
deuota non exstinxit arbos,
nec Sicula Palinurus unda.

Because I'm dear to *your* springs and choruses,
Neither Philippi's battle-line, turned about,
Nor that accursèd tree destroyed me,
Nor Palinurus through Sicily's waves.

We have already seen the significance for Horace of Philippi (42 BCE) and of Cape Palinurus (36 BCE). The third disaster averted, his escape from being killed by a falling tree, crops up repeatedly in the *Odes*, and the event has been dated plausibly to 33 BCE. So far as we know, it was the last life-threatening misadventure Horace faced, unless we are to believe that he really had a close encounter with the monstrous wolf described in *Odes* 1.22.9-16.[31]

Although there are few specific incidents in Horace's life that can be confidently assigned to the Twenties, we can discern in the *Odes* that his relationship with Maecenas gradually changed. Horace was no longer tongue-tied as he claims to have been when they first met in 38 BCE; instead he came to be able to tease the great man for worrying too much and for his interest in astrology, to send him witty literary invitations to parties, and to dedicate to him perhaps his finest Epicurean ode, 3.29.[32] It has been argued that the first two books of odes were published individually in 26 and 24 BCE and that the third book came out in 23 BCE, perhaps alongside the repackaged Books 1 and 2. But the traditional view, still held by most scholars, is that the three books were first published together in 23 BCE. Certainly, there is no simple chronological progression as the books proceed: some earlier odes can be found in Book 3, some arguably later ones in Book 1. But the arrangement of the poems both within books and in the wider collection has been achieved with great care, and one aspect of this is that the development of the relationship

[31] For the dating of 3.4: 3.4.37-42n. For its high quality: Fraenkel *Horace* (Oxford 1957) 273-285; Nisbet and Rudd *A Commentary on Horace, Odes, Book III* (Oxford 2004) 53-56, and 347 comparing it to 3.29. For the tree: 2.13; 2.17.27-30; 3.8.9-12, where the reference to Tullus' consulship dates the incident to 33 BCE. For the wolf: 1.22.9-12n; 13-16n.

[32] Tongue-tied *Satires* 1.6.56-57. Maecenas and worrying *Odes* 2.17; 3.8; 3.29; astrology 2.17; 3.29; invitations 1.20; 3.8; 3.29.

between poet and patron is made to unfold gradually as we read each of the odes addressed to him.[33]

Horace continued throughout his life to pose in his poems as a man of modest means, and no doubt by comparison with great men of state like Maecenas and Octavian (awarded the title Augustus in 27 BCE) he was. But *Odes* 3.4.21-24 demonstrates how Horace's fortunes were continuing to flourish:

uester, Camenae, uester in arduos
tollor Sabinos, seu mihi frigidum
Praeneste seu Tibur supinum
seu liquidae placuere Baiae.

As yours, Camenae, yours I am borne aloft
To steep-sloped Sabines, yours whether icy-cool
Praeneste or reclining Tibur
Or limpid Baiae is favoured by me.

In addition to his Sabine farm, he can now "favour" three fashionable resorts with his presence. Tibur in particular he mentions in five of the odes in Books 1–3; its waters and coolness are evidently especially attractive to him, and at 2.6.5-8 he says that it would be his preferred place to live out his retirement. Suetonius tells us that Horace had a townhouse there, but we do not know when he came by it. When Horace himself twice talks of Tibur in Book 4, the text implies that by then he spent much of his time there; but he may already have had the house in the late

[33] G. O. Hutchinson's important essay *The Publication and Individuality of Horace's Odes Books 1–3* Classical Quarterly 52 (2002) 517-537 argues for separate publication on metrical and linguistic grounds as well as because of the dating of individual odes. His evidence taken together has weight, but the dating of specific odes can rarely be regarded as certain, and the evidence available for his other points is necessarily limited. Nisbet (*Cambridge Companion* 13-14) presents the traditional view, in which 1.4 to Sestius is assumed to give the latest dateable reference in the first three books, that being to Sestius' consulship, which began in July 23 BCE. Separate publication cannot be ruled out, but I believe the balance of the evidence favours joint publication, and I assume throughout this book that Books 1–3 (at least as we have them) were published together. I return to the topic of the arrangement of the poems later in this Introduction. For the way in which Horace's relationship with Maecenas unfolds: Matthew S. Santirocco *Unity and Design in Horace's Odes* (Chapel Hill and London: North Carolina 1986) 153-166.

Twenties, and it is not unlikely that he also owned land or property elsewhere.[34]

Just as Horace's friendship with Maecenas evolved, so did his relationship with Octavian/Augustus. Given the problems in dating poems and the different rhetorical and poetic purposes of the passages in the collection devoted to Augustus, it is difficult, perhaps even impossible, to trace this evolution confidently within Books 1–3. The *Roman Odes*, seemingly written in the early Twenties, are wholly supportive of the moral programme espoused by the regime at that time; 1.2 portrays the Princeps in the manner of Hellenistic ruler-cult; 1.12 places him in a line of Gods, heroes and men who have benefitted Rome; 1.37, not diverging from official propaganda, rewrites his campaign against Antony as one against Cleopatra; briefer mentions in 1.6, 1.21, 1.35, 2.9, 2.12 and 3.25 praise him for his matchless military prowess; 3.14 heralds his return in 24 BCE from campaigning in Spain, within an ode that blends public and private rejoicing; and 3.24, probably an early ode, alludes to him as a potential saviour of the state. Although none of these poems is devoted entirely to Augustus, and several mention him only briefly or show the poet at pains to profess an inability to write about him and his achievements, Horace consistently presents himself as a supporter of the regime. Some interpret this as demonstrating not only that he had changed his political views fundamentally in the years since he had supported Brutus but also that he had come to see Augustus as the only prospect for peace; others that he is paying lip-service to a repressive regime; others again that he is hoping for rewards. The poems can be used to support each of these interpretations, but on their own they do not provide full objective proof for any of them.[35]

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[34] For Tibur: 1.7.21; 1.18.2; 2.6.5; 3.4.23; 3.29.6; 4.2.31; 4.3.10; *Epistles* 1.7.45; 1.8.12 (both implying he is often there). *Odes* 2.18.14 seems to predate Horace's ownership of the Tibur house, for which: *Life* 30. Lyne *Horace Behind the Public Poetry* 9-11 sets out the evidence for further properties, with land at Tarentum seeming particularly plausible (2.6.9-24).

[35] How to interpret Horace's attitude towards Augustus divides scholars. Many find the flattering addresses of *Odes* 4 harder to admire than earlier, more oblique, poems; but such judgments depend partly on how the author views the regime—was it a proto-fascist dictatorship or benign strong rule?—and on whether (s)he feels court poetry can ever be good poetry. Michèle Lowrie *Horace and Augustus* (*Cambridge Companion* 77-89) offers an overview, Lyne *Horace Behind the Public Poetry* more detail. See also Ellen Oliensis' chapter on the *Odes* in *Horace and the Rhetoric of Authority* (Cambridge 1998) 102-153, especially 127-153, Fraenkel *Horace* 239-297, and Richard F. Thomas *Horace: Odes Book IV and Carmen Saeculare* (Cambridge 2011) 13-20. Phebe Lowell Bowditch *Horace and*

We do know, however, that Horace sent a copy of the three books of *Odes* to Augustus. This we learn from one of the poems in his next published book, *Epistles* 1.[36] For now he has moved away from the lyric poetry in a range of unfamiliar metres he had so proudly brought to Rome (*Odes* 3.30) and has returned to hexameters. Indeed, he says at *Epistles* 1.1.10: *nunc itaque et uersus et cetera ludicra pono* "So now I'm laying aside verses and all other frivolities of that sort". At *Satires* 1.4.39-44 he had pretended to regard hexameters as artful speech rather than proper poetry, but it would be wrong to understand him now to be saying that he is giving up only lyric poetry; rather he is claiming to be abandoning all poetry in favour of *quid uerum atque decens* "what is true and proper", i.e. moral philosophy (*Epistles* 1.1.11). And the book of poetry these lines introduce shows how seriously we should take him. It takes the form of verse letters (the longest 112 lines, the shortest 13). They were once regarded as public but essentially genuine letters to men from the wealthy circles in which Horace now moved, but, although they employ epistolary formulas, they are better seen as carefully constructed poems whose elegance adds lustre to Horace's main ethical concerns: how to live rightly/well and how to conduct friendly relationships among peers and across society.[37] In the book Horace tells us he was 44 years old in the December of the year when Lollius declared Lepidus as his consular colleague (21 BCE), and refers to Tiberius' campaign in Armenia, to the "submission" of Phraates to Augustus (both 20 BCE) and to Agrippa's

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Imperial Patronage (*Blackwell Companion* 53-74) and *Horace and the Gift Economy of Patronage* (Berkeley–Los Angeles–London: California 2001) are very useful. Randall L. B. McNeill *Horace: Image, Identity, and Audience* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins 2001) explores Horace's poetic self-presentation in relation to his patron, peers, publics and princeps.

[36] *Epistles* 1.13, where *uolumina* (2), *libellis* (4), *librorum* (13), all plural, cannot mean *Epistles* 1, and *carmina* (17) implies the *Odes.*

[37] Horace says he is giving up love and love poetry in *Odes* 1.5; 3.26; 4.1; and poetry more generally at *Epistles* 1.1.7-12; 2.1.109-113. He says he is unable to write praise poetry in *Odes* 1.6; 2.12; 4.2; 4.3; 4.15. Clearly, he enjoys subverting his own claims. Fraenkel *Horace* 308-363 tends to treat the *Epistles* as public letters; Anna De Pretis "*Epistolarity" in the First Book of Horace's Epistles* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias 2002) sets them more persuasively in their epistolographical context. Ross S. Kilpatrick *The Poetry of Friendship: Horace Epistles 1* (Edmonton 1986) is seminal, Roland Mayer *Epistles Book 1* (Cambridge 1994) excellent on language and metre. The debate about philosophy's role in the book is reviewed by John Moles *Poetry, Philosophy, Politics and Play: Epistles 1* in *Traditions and Contexts in the Poetry of Horace* edd. Tony Woodman and Denis Feeney (Cambridge 2002) 141-157.

victory over the Cantabri (completed 19 BCE); so we can date the book's publication fairly confidently to 20/19 BCE.[38] Maecenas remains a major presence and is addressed in three poems: the dedicatory first poem (where, as we have seen, Horace claims to be giving up poetry), the seventh and the nineteenth. In *Epistles* 1.7 Horace wittily deflects an imagined request from Maecenas that he come back to Rome: although he had promised to stay in the country for just a few days, for reasons of health he now means to remain in the hills all summer; then he will pass the winter on the coast, but he will visit Maecenas *hirundine prima* "with the first swallow" of spring. We need not read this literally as a refusal to attend on his patron for many months; but the poem's cheeky humour does show how the relationship between the men was continuing to evolve.

In *Epistles* 1.19 Horace considers what makes good poetry, looks down on mere imitators, demonstrates his pride in his earlier work, especially the *Odes*, and complains about their critical reception. This passage is often taken together with his move away from lyric metres to argue that Horace was disappointed that the general public had not properly appreciated the *Odes*. In the later book of odes too he says: *et iam dente minus mordeor inuido* "and already I'm less gnawed at by envy's fang", which seems to imply that previously he *had* suffered from envious criticism.[39] But the passage in the *Epistles* offers not a single example of actual criticism of the *Odes*. The critics, Horace says, like the poems in private; and they only carp at them in public because they find his reluctance to go to and to give readings arrogant. And Horace's rejection of the crowd, famously voiced also at *Odes* 3.1 *Odi profanum uulgus et arceo* "I shun the crowd of laymen and ward them off", is at least partly in imitation of Callimachus, the Hellenistic Greek poet, who both urged the avoidance of what was common and bewailed the envy he had himself attracted.[40] The next few years would show that, on Augustus at least, the

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[38] For the consuls: *Epistles* 1.20.27-28; for the others: *Epistles* 1.12.25-28.

[39] Some also understand a sentence in the *Life* to mean that Horace was pressured into writing *Odes* Book 4. If that is correct, Suetonius could be used to support the view that the earlier books had been poorly received and that Horace was genuinely annoyed. But Suetonius can be interpreted differently (see next page). For envy's fang: *Odes* 4.3.16; contrast 2.20.4 (presumably written before the alleged negative reception of the collection) and next note.

[40] For Horace's disdain for the crowd: 2.16.37-40; 2.20.1-5 (also envy). For envious criticism: *Satires* 1.6.45-48; 1.10.78-80; 2.1.75-78; 2.3.13; 2.6.47-48; *Epistles* 2.1.76-89. Callimachus *Epigrams* 28 (Pfeiffer) "I despise all public things" is a source for *Odes* 3.1.1. Callimachus *Aetia* 1 fr. 1.25-28 tells the poet not to "drive your chariot in the same tracks as others have made nor along a wide road". For Callimachus and envy: *Epigrams* 21.4 (Pfeiffer) "his song conquered

Odes had made an excellent impression, and the traditional view of Horace's being dejected at their initial cool reception is probably exaggerated.

In 19 BCE, the Princeps—a title meaning "leading citizen" that Horace himself often uses for Augustus—returned from administrative duties in the East. He will then have had fresh opportunities to get to know the poet better, and it was probably in this period that he asked him to become his private secretary. Significantly, Horace felt able to decline (again, as to Maecenas in *Epistles* 1.7, on the grounds of health), and even more significantly, Augustus was not put out. Indeed, Suetonius quotes a letter from Augustus to Horace in which the Princeps asks him to act as if he were a *conuictor* of his. The word means "somebody who lives on intimate terms with another". Not only has Augustus not taken offence at being turned down; he has complete trust in Horace's loyalty.[41] That he also rated his poetic skills highly is evident from his commissioning him to write the *Carmen Saeculare* "Centennial Hymn" to be sung at the Centennial Games of 17 BCE, arguably the most important state festival of the Augustan period, and one which had not been celebrated since 146 BCE. Suetonius writes of Augustus:

> *scripta quidem eius usque adeo probauit mansuraque perpetuo opinatus est, ut non modo saeculare carmen componendum iniunxerit sed et Vindelicam uictoriam Tiberii Drusique, priuignorum suorum, eumque coegerit propter hoc tribus carminum libris ex longo interuallo quartum addere* (*Life* 16-18).
>
> As for [Horace's] writings, he approved of them and thought that they would last for ever, so much so that he imposed on him not only the duty of composing the *Carmen Saeculare* but also that of (celebrating) the victory of his stepsons Tiberius and Drusus over the Vindelici, and for this reason he compelled him to add a fourth book after a long interval to his three books of *Odes.*

Horace's *Carmen Saeculare* in Sapphics was given two sung performances during the three-day festival and, since the Victory Odes relate to campaigns in 15 BCE, Augustus would not have commissioned them if he

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envy"; *Hymn* 2.105-114. For the traditional view of the reception of *Odes* 1–3: Fraenkel *Horace* 308, 339-50, 365; for the view here: Richard F. Thomas *Horace: Odes Book IV* 1-4.

[41] For *princeps* of Augustus: 1.2.50; 1.21.14; 4.14.6; *Epistles* 2.1.256. For the offer, refusal and reaction: *Life* 9-15. Horace himself uses the word *conuictor* at *Satires* 1.6.47, in describing his own relationship with Maecenas.

had been unhappy with the *Carmen*. Although *iniunxerit*, translated "he imposed on him the duty of", is capable of meaning "he bestowed on him the honour of", no doubt the writing of the ceremonial hymn was a duty expected of Horace. But, by being chosen to compose it, he was also being publicly acknowledged as the greatest living poet (Virgil had died in 19 BCE). And though it would have been difficult for Horace to say no to a request from Augustus for two odes to celebrate the military successes of the Princeps' family (4.4 and 4.14), to insist that Augustus *coegerit* "compelled" Horace to write or dredge up from some drawer of rejects thirteen other odes gives too much weight to Suetonius. Augustus *could* compel a poet to write, as Horace himself suggests at *Satires* 1.3.1-8, but, although he may have urged Horace to write, may even have commissioned the book, there is nothing in what we otherwise know of the way he acted towards poets, in what we have seen of his relationship with Horace or in the odes published (perhaps in 13 BCE) to support the idea of compulsion.[42] Horace's delight in the success of his *Carmen Saeculare* shines out in his *Ode to Apollo* 4.6, which closes (31-44) with a recapitulation of the subject-matter of the earlier poem and a vision of one of its singers proudly remembering her performance of the hymn *uatis Horati* "of our lyric bard Horace" (the only time in the *Odes* that Horace mentions his own name). If he had ever stopped writing lyric poetry, the success of the *Carmen* may have renewed his enthusiasm for the genre.

Augustus' approval of Horace's poetry undoubtedly found expression in generous gifts. *Life* 15-16 says *unaque et altera liberalitate locupletauit* "and he loaded (him) at one time and another with acts of generosity". We know that Virgil and Varius each received a gift of one million sesterces from the emperor—enough to qualify a man to become a senator—and it is quite possible that Horace's property at Tibur, whenever he acquired it, was such a gift. As with the Sabine farm, Horace's gratitude is not

[42] On *Carmen Saeculare* and *Odes* Book 4: endnotes. For Horace's use of *cogere* relating to Augustus and poetry: *Epistles* 2.1.219-228. Perhaps the negative assessment of *Odes* Book 4 by some derives in part from a belief engendered by this passage of Suetonius that Horace's heart was not in the work (e.g. Steele Commager *The Odes of Horace: A Critical Study* (New Haven: Yale 1962) 230-234). The date of Book 4's publication cannot be precisely established; the latest generally agreed reference is 4.5, which anticipates Augustus' return in 13 BCE. Nisbet (*Cambridge Companion* 16-17) leans towards 11 BCE, but that book's chronology (348) tentatively accepts 13 BCE as the date. Gordon Williams *Horace: Greece & Rome New Surveys in the Classics* 6 (Oxford 1972) 46 argues for 8 BCE, but several odes certainly date from the mid-10s, none certainly from after 13 BCE.