

## HORACE, *ODES* 4. 1

THE introductory ode of Horace's fourth book has been given comparatively little critical attention, although it might have been expected to arouse exceptional interest, being the first-fruits of the lyricist's autumnal harvest. The neglect is due partly to the poem's deceptive simplicity but much more to the unease which it arouses in Horace's admirers: Venus does not seem the most fitting deity for the poet laureate to invoke, and moreover this is not so much an invocation as an appeal to be left alone; the young man who is the subject of Horace's eulogy was hardly a person of much eminence at the time of writing, though he became prominent later and is now prosopographically well endowed;<sup>1</sup> above all, there is the disturbing picture of the elderly poet testily acknowledging an amorous urge and surrendering his dignity in pederastic dreams. The troubled critic tends to gloss over the central problems with specious reference to literary convention or by concentrating on general topics such as the traditional religious concepts of ἀπο- and ἐπι-πομπή.<sup>2</sup> In this paper an attempt is made to explain why Horace wrote the poem in the way he did and to establish its relationship with the rest of the book.

The ancient commentator introduced the poem with the remark: *allegoricos a se affirmat ex intermisso scribi carmina ad Venerem*. The notion that the piece is an allegory has rightly been seized upon by modern critics, but the range of interpretation is wide. If the whole poem is allegorical, we are forced to assume that Horace is putting forward Maximus as a more suitable recipient for lyric inspiration than himself in the same spirit as he acknowledges his own inferiority to Iullus in 4. 2. This is unlikely, not merely because neither here nor anywhere else is there a hint that Maximus wrote poetry,<sup>3</sup> but because the main emphasis of Horace's eulogy is placed upon his amiable personal qualities. To some extent the reader is bound to accept that love is a genuine theme and not solely a substitute for the poetic urge. But if love is the subject of the poem, are we to regard this as a new chapter in Horace's amatory adventures, whether real or imaginary? And must we suppose that the amours of this gilded young aristocrat, not to mention Horace's own regrettable passion, were specially chosen as the most suitable material for a *Programmgedicht*? One thing at least is certain: 4. 1 is intended to serve as a preface to a new collection of poems. The commentators find difficulty, however, in demonstrating its appropriateness. Fraenkel has tried to defend the ode as an 'overture': the poet is preparing the reader for some love poems and a series of portraits of great men.<sup>4</sup> One must conclude that either the ode is a very bad one or the

<sup>1</sup> Judged merely in terms of space allocated in the *Prosopographia Imperii Romani* Paullus Fabius Maximus rates higher than 93 per cent of those who held the consular office between 30 B.C. and A.D. 14, but almost all the evidence relates to his subsequent career.

<sup>2</sup> The fullest treatment of this element and indeed of the poem as a whole is by Otto Weinreich, 'Religionswissenschaftliche und Literaturgeschichtliche Beiträge zu Horaz',

*Zeitschr. für Kirchengeschichte*, lxi (1942), 33-70 — a valuable but understandably one-sided study.

<sup>3</sup> It is improbable that the *scripta* referred to by Ovid in *Ex P.* 1. 2. 135 were poetical compositions.

<sup>4</sup> *Horace*, 413. I regret having to oppose Fraenkel's views here and elsewhere in this paper. He teaches and inspires even when he seems most mistaken, which is a measure of the great value of his book.

explanation is inadequate, for it is plain that anyone who expects love poems is going to be sadly disappointed by Book 4; moreover, what Horace provides for Maximus, who was at this time by no means a great man, is not so much a portrait as a recommendation of a special and wholly mundane kind, as I hope to show.

## I

*Intermissa, Venus, diu  
rursus bella moves?*

That Horace deliberately gave up writing lyric is a fact; why he did so is a perennial subject for discussion, though the disagreements derive more from difference of emphasis than of evidence. The weight which some writers attach to Horace's disappointment with the reception of *Odes* 1–3 is out of proportion to the strength of Horace's own statements. When Fraenkel, for example, writes of 'the anger which he vented in the nineteenth epistle', which he describes as 'the only thoroughly bitter document that we have from Horace's pen',<sup>1</sup> I cannot help wondering if he is referring to the same piece as appears in my text of the *Epistles*, which seems to me to express honest pride, cheerful contempt, and rueful resignation—certainly nothing which would suggest that disgust and chagrin had made Horace resolve never to compose lyrics again.<sup>2</sup> *Ep.* 1. 1, which Fraenkel does not treat, seems a more useful guide to Horace's feelings: the gladiator wishes to retire, the old horse to be turned out to grass. Horace was exhausted and his interests had changed. Revealing also is the Letter to Florus (*Ep.* 2. 2), in particular 126–8:

*praetulerim scriptor delirus inersque videri,  
dum mea delectent mala me vel denique fallant,  
quam sapere et ringi.*

Horace was one of the least self-deceptive of writers and like many expert craftsmen and artists he found it progressively harder to satisfy his own *animum censoris honesti*. He had worked his vein very thoroughly and even the most undemanding reader cannot deny that there is a grain of uncomfortable truth in the schoolboy's complaint that 'Horace always seems to be singing the same sort of song to the same sort of tune'. When Horace began to write lyrics again in response to the external pressures of which the *carmen saeculare* and the Suetonian story of Augustus' demands are indications, he must have been seized by the powerful temptations to which the retired expert is prey, while recognizing that whatever new work he did might not, perhaps could not, match the level of achievement reached in his prime. These two emotions—the longing to yield to the poetic drive and regretful remembrance of past potency—underlie the statements in the initial and final portions of the first ode of Book 4.

Secure in reputation and status, Horace no longer needed to address a human patron. It was to be expected that he would begin the new collection of lyrics with some form of *Dic mihi, Musa*, but the choice of Venus rather than one of the nine sisters or Apollo has led to some confusion. In purely literary

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit. 365 and 350.

takes a much milder view of the epistle than

<sup>2</sup> C. O. Brink, in *Horace on Poetry*, 179–83, Fraenkel.

terms the appeal to Venus is explicable enough but too many commentators have been satisfied with superficial and limited explanations. When Heinze, for example, states that for the singer of *convivia et proelia virginum* composing and loving are identical, so that by announcing the renewal of one Horace also proclaims the other, he says no more than the truth but a great deal less than the whole truth. The approach in an ostensibly erotic guise enabled Horace subtly to express the conflict between the desire to write and the sad knowledge that he could not fully revive the inspiration of the past; to admit that his work might fall short of his own claim to be the lyric poet of Rome; to hint that the best of life was over without actually mentioning death; to construct a marvellously coherent unit out of two quite separate poems—one about himself as a writer and one about Maximus as a lover.

Venus is a Protean goddess and it is necessary to determine in what form and to what purposes Horace summons her. Here a brief review of the manifestations of VENVS (by that or another name) in the Horatian corpus may be helpful. The *Epodes* provide no examples; in the *Satires* the term is applied to physical union;<sup>1</sup> in the *Epistles* it signifies 'charm' or 'love affairs';<sup>2</sup> the *Odes* offer more than 30 instances, covering a wide range of meaning: the mating urge of animals (2. 5. 4, 3. 13. 5); the lucky throw in the game of knucklebones (2. 7. 25); attractiveness (4. 13. 17); love (1. 27. 14, 1. 33. 13, 2. 1. 39, 3. 9. 17). The remainder refer to the goddess of love in a personal, if largely traditional, manner. She has several minor walking-on parts of a conventional kind, as for example in the first of the spring songs: *iam Cytherea chorus ducit Venus imminente Luna* (1. 4. 5). She appears as the associate of Bacchus (1. 18. 6, 3. 18. 6, 3. 21. 21); as the giver of captivating graces (1. 13. 15, 4. 10. 1); as the subject of lyric (2. 1. 39, 3. 28. 13–15); as the lover's ally, helping Jupiter to outwit Acrisius (3. 16. 6), giving Paris false confidence (1. 15. 13), abetting Hypermetra (3. 11. 50), persuading Europa that her fate is better than death (3. 27. 66–76). But she also takes more important contemporary roles, sometimes wholly beneficent as in 1. 30, and sometimes dangerous and erratic as in 1. 19—*Mater saeva Cupidinum*. The same strong epithet, which Horace alone among the poets applies to Venus,<sup>3</sup> appears in 1. 33. 10–12:

*sic visum Veneri cui placet imparis  
formas atque animos sub iuga aenea  
saevo mittere cum ioco.*

A gentler tribute but with its hint of the lover's revenge is *Vixi puellis nuper idoneus* (3. 26), with which one may compare 1. 5, where the *maris deus* stands allegorically for Venus,<sup>4</sup> and 3. 10. 9, where Lyce is warned that she is offending the goddess by refusing to yield to her lover's appeals. There remains a special group of cases where Venus plays the part of *Aeneadum genetrix*, which seems to have particular prominence in Book 4. Horace had described Augustus in the *carmen saeculare* as *clarus Anchisae Venerisque sanguis* (1. 50) and the fourth book of

<sup>1</sup> S. 1. 2. 119, 1. 3. 109, 1. 4. 113, 1. 5. 84, 2. 5. 80.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep.* 1. 6. 38, 1. 18. 21, 2. 2. 56, *A.P.* 42, 320, 414.

<sup>3</sup> Weinreich, *op. cit.* 60.

<sup>4</sup> Zielinski's emendation *deae* for *deo* in

1. 16, recently defended by R. G. M. Nisbet (*Crit. Essays on Roman Literature: Elegy and Lyric*, ed. J. P. Sullivan, 183), is not only superfluous: it destroys what was meant to be a joke.

the *Odes* provides certainly two, probably three, related references: in 6 Apollo and Venus share the credit for persuading Jupiter to save Aeneas the founder from the ruins of Troy; in 15 Horace brings his work to a close in a glorious chant of praise concluding with *Troiamque et Anchisen et almae | progeniem Veneris canemus*; to these I would add the reference in 11. 15–16, *qui dies mensem Veneris marinae | findit Aprilem*, which in its context has a mild flavour of Julianism, though it is hardly flattery of the kind found in Ovid, *Fasti* 4. 57–61. Apart from these references in the *carmen saeculare* and Book 4 there is only one example in the rest of Horace's work which has any claim to be included in this category: at *Odes* 1. 2. 33 Erycina appears, followed by mention of ancestral Mars. *Erycina* is glossed *Aeneadum genetrix* by Kiessling–Heinze and one must concede that the connection is felt, though it is hardly emphasized. It should by now be obvious that Horace can make Venus take on a variety of characters, each of which must be assessed in its own particular surroundings, and that it would be rash to assume either that the repertoire had been exhausted in the first three books of the *Odes* or that Venus in 4. 1 is necessarily the same as in any of her previous appearances. It seems that she should be approached with at least an awareness of the Julian relationship and therefore with special respect. As Horace ended his final collection of lyrics with a compliment to the descendant, he began it with a supplication to the divine ancestor and patron of the imperial family.

At first sight, however, the opening of the poem seems essentially personal to Horace himself. The links with his own past are prominently displayed: *rursus—Cinarae—mater saeva Cupidinum*. The allusions are to be taken as references not merely to what he has experienced but also to what he has written and—as Heinze acutely observed in the case of Cinara—to his own moods. Both the references to Cinara in the first book of the *Epistles* (7. 25 ff. and 14. 32 ff.) describe his departed youth, which is a major theme in the first ode of Book 4.<sup>1</sup> Likewise the quotation from *Odes* 1. 19 is an allusion to his own feelings, which are complex. It is not enough to recall that 1. 19 purports to describe a former capitulation to love accompanied by the offering of a sacrifice or substitute: that poem was also an expression of literary frustration, whether real or fictive; it was a *recusatio*. 4. 1 contains a *recusatio* of sorts but it is not of the conventional, ironic kind, which demonstrates that he really can do what he pretends is beyond his capacity, as in the second ode, *Pindarum quisquis studet aemulari*. The difference is made plain by the words *non sum qualis eram*, for here as nowhere else Horace implies that he was once fit, but is so no longer. What he is no longer fit for, of course, is superficially love but in reality writing lyric, even love lyrics. The denial is all the more striking because in other *recusationes* the implication is that he can at least sing *dulces cantus* to a *iocosa lyra*.

## II

Having begun on two levels with the real meaning clearly showing through the surface, Horace peremptorily dismisses allegory in 1. 7: *abi | quo blandae iuvenum te revocant preces*. He is now talking about love, not about poetry, and so far the commentators have been able to follow him, but their comments on the

<sup>1</sup> Cinara does not appear in the *Odes* before Book 4 for those who can resist the temptation to identify her with Glycera (1. 19. 5, 1. 30. 3, 1. 33. 2, 3. 19. 28).

central portion of the poem require careful examination. Two propositions are usually advanced: that Horace in applying the conventional language of the *castra amoris* is merely paying a compliment and using it as a pretext for introducing his eulogy, and secondly that Paullus Fabius Maximus was indeed so eminent a citizen that it was natural for Horace to give him pride of place in a portrait gallery of noble Romans, which was to include Drusus, Tiberius, and Augustus.

When Horace, or any Roman poet, writes about love it need not necessarily be assumed that he is speaking of a specific personal experience; he may be merely carrying out an exercise on a traditional theme and, however convincing the result, it cannot be taken to describe a particular involvement. The situation is different, however, when the poet abandons the first person and refers to a well-known, clearly identified contemporary. In this particular case it must be recognized that a poet who is both *caelebs* and *privatus* can without offence confess to an emotion, whether real or imagined, which might be regarded very differently if attributed to a prominent, well-connected, and ambitious man of affairs. Whatever interpretation is attached to the central part of the ode, it must allow for two things: that the wish for Maximus' success in love is genuine and that the desired conquest is of a kind that would not offend Maximus or the society in which he moves.

On Paullus Fabius Maximus it has, understandably enough, become the practice to list his distinctions: he was *consul ordinarius* in 11 B.C., proconsul of Asia, *amicus*<sup>1</sup> and connection by marriage of Augustus, a *pontifex*, a *frater arvalis*, a famous orator. He was certainly an eminent man, but a review of the evidence shows that when Horace wrote this poem Maximus' splendid career was still almost entirely in the future. He was, of course, a Fabius but the fact that he was very noble (there is a tendency to improve on Horace's positive degree) is not enough to explain the extraordinary encomium which he receives. That the *laudes Maximi* are extraordinary, even in some ways unique, can be demonstrated easily enough by comparing the other *laudes* which appear in the *Odes*. Going through the *Odes* with only this purpose in mind one finds that in terms of frequency the chief recipient of praise is—rather charmingly—Horace himself. In qualitative terms the highest honours awarded to living human beings go, of course, to Augustus, but it is fair to say that the compliments paid to him are as vague as they are extravagant. The *princeps* is described as a triumphant and brave conqueror; he passes good laws and restores ancient virtues; he is *praesens divus*, *praesens tutela*, *custos rerum*, *pater*; he quaffs nectar in heaven, acts as Juppiter's vicegerent on earth, is 'Mercury'; there is nothing greater or better than he. The poet could hardly go further but he has not presented anything like a rounded portrait of the *princeps*, who emerges as admirable, benign, magnificent, but wholly impersonal and indefinite. Similar comments may be made on the praises of Drusus (4. 4) and Drusus and Tiberius (4. 14). The effect is grand but, as in the short earlier poem on Agrippa (1. 6), all that we learn of the subjects personally is that they were brave and victorious. Turning to lesser mortals, one finds few who are given more than a very limited description or a single attribute: *beatus* Sestius, Iccius student of philosophy, Grosphus owner of much good land, noble Lamia. Even in the case of Maecenas there is something of the vagueness which

<sup>1</sup> He was one of the two provincial governors known to have been given this title in the time of Augustus. See J. A. Crook, *Consilium Principis*, 23-4.

attaches to the *princeps*, but at least we are left in no doubt about the sincerity of Horace's affection and gratitude and can, by piecing together scattered references, build up a picture of Maecenas as noble, rich, busy with affairs of state, a master of Greek and Latin lore, a loving husband.<sup>1</sup> It transpires that the only living men who are given praises which can properly be compared with those of Maximus are Pollio in 2. 1 and Lollius in 4. 9. The ode to Pollio exhibits a number of similarities to our poem: it is given a particularly honourable position at the beginning of the book,<sup>2</sup> it is a *recusatio*, and the *laudes Pollionis* are precise and informative. Horace reports that Pollio is writing a detailed and scholarly history of the civil wars beginning with the year 60, a difficult and risky undertaking which will require great tact; to do this he must give up writing tragedy for the time being; he is distinguished at the bar and in the senate; he has won a triumph in Dalmatia. Noble and high-sounding as this ode is in its total effect, Horace's appraisal of Pollio and his present activities gives an impression of sincerity, balance, and accuracy. It is a compliment but there is no flattery: Horace is pleased to give rather than giving to please.

The feeling that Horace is consciously conferring a benefit on the man he praises is borne in far more strongly upon the reader of the ode to Lollius (4. 9). What Horace has to give is made abundantly clear in those glorious seven opening stanzas—too glorious perhaps, because when he turns to Lollius the praises which follow seem dim and banal in comparison. I do not propose to treat here the question of Horace's real attitude to Lollius.<sup>3</sup> It is enough for my purpose to note that he describes the ex-consul as a man of political wisdom, firm and straight in good fortune and in bad, a stern judge, one who rejects the consuming temptations of money, a man of truly consular mould, who has honourably carried out his official duties, successfully ignoring self-interest, scorning bribes, and battling triumphantly against opposition. Pollio, Maximus, Lollius, an ill-matched trio these men who received from Horace such exceptional recommendations. Pollio and Lollius at least were men who had reached great eminence and it can be seen that each of them had, in different degrees, something to gain from Horace's public praise. We must now consider in what way Maximus could benefit from the poet's eloquent support.

Maximus' consulship was still probably at least two years ahead when this ode was composed, and one other of his distinctions, which cannot itself be accurately dated, had certainly not yet come to him—his connection with the *princeps* through marriage. It must be regarded as beyond dispute that Horace could not have invited Venus to give her attention and the promise of future conquest to a man who was already most respectably married. Paullus Fabius Maximus was still, as Kiessling correctly observed, a bachelor, though it seems probable that he married before he became consul—for two reasons: in the first place, because the marriage connection offers a likely explanation of the favour of Augustus towards the Fabii, without which they would hardly have

<sup>1</sup> *Odes* 2. 12. I have no doubt that the traditional identification of Licymnia with Terentia is correct. For a good discussion of the poem see G. Williams, 'Poetry in the Moral Climate of Augustan Rome', *JRS* lii (1962), 28–46, esp. 35–8.

<sup>2</sup> W. Wili, *Horaz*, 155 remarks: 'Die Ehre

der Widmung des zweiten Buches wird gleichsam zwischen Pollio und Maecenas geteilt, ähnlich wie sie in B. IV der Lieder dem Paullus Maximus und Augustus zugleich zukommen sollte.'

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Fraenkel, *op. cit.* 425–6.

gained the consulship in successive years; secondly, because it may be presumed, in view of the *princeps*' well-known attitude to marriage, that bachelorhood was no asset to the ambitious.<sup>1</sup> These are merely suppositions, but they provide some excuse for considering how Maximus appears if we assume that he was still indeed a bachelor but one whose days of freedom were known to be numbered. Long familiarity with the *lascivi amores* of the lyric and elegiac poets tends to make the critic forget that love had a part to play also in the Roman institution of marriage, particularly during the period of courtship. It is my contention that this ode refers specifically to the forthcoming marriage of Maximus and Marcia and that the poem can be properly understood only if this fact is recognized. Maximus, the young aristocrat whom Horace wished to flatter, is not a very convincing character, but Maximus, the suitor of Augustus' cousin, is a much more significant figure, well fitted to appear at the threshold of a collection of poems in which so much honour is paid to members of the Julian family. Within the limits of the introductory ode itself Maximus provides the perfect link between the amatory allegory by which Horace describes his own feelings and the public purposes to which he addresses his muse. The courtship hypothesis, however, is not proved by the fact that it makes Maximus a much more suitable subject, and it is necessary to look for more direct evidence within the poem. The main difficulty here is that the language of love is ambiguous: the suitor and the playboy do not necessarily speak differently. It might, for example, be suggested that many words assume a deeper meaning if marriage is intended: *dulcium* (4) is not merely another Horatian antithesis but is a cunning addition to temper the *saeva* in the quotation from *Odes* 1. 9 and in association with *mollibus* (6) to hint that this is *bona Venus*, *Venus pronuba*; the *blandae iuvenum preces* are the *vota* of serious suitors; *tempestivius* (9) refers not only to Maximus' being younger than Horace but to his current intentions, which make Venus' visit most timely; Horace's daring introduction of *comissor* (11) into respectable Latin poetry is based upon the Pindaric use of *κωμάζειν* in the sense of 'to sing a triumphal song' and is a high-flown expression of congratulation to Maximus for a splendid conquest. As interpretation these remarks may have some slight value, but as arguments they are two-edged and useless.

A more fruitful approach is to consider the central part of the ode with reference to other poems which are undoubtedly *carmina nuptialia*, to see in fact whether it has any of the characteristics of the epithalamium.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately we are hampered here by the poverty of the available material. A good deal has been written about the epithalamium and a score or so of poems have survived for examination of the genre, but there has been a tendency among critics to make light of the melancholy fact that for the period from the beginnings of Latin literature to the fourth century of the Christian era the only remnants which can be said to have much relevance are the poems of Catullus (61, 62, and part of 64), the *Medea* of Seneca (ll. 56-115), and Statius, *Silvae* 1. 2. The

<sup>1</sup> The great majority of the Augustan consuls (30 B.C.-A.D. 14) were married at some time in their lives, but unfortunately the biographical material is not sufficient to establish how many married before they took office. If Cassius Dio (56. 10. 3) is to be believed, there were at least two very re-

markable examples of bachelor consuls—M. Papius and Q. Poppaeus, *cons. suff.* A.D. 9.

<sup>2</sup> I use the term in its usual rather loose sense. For a discussion of terms see R. Muth, "Hymenaios" und "Epithalamium" in *Wiener Stud.* lxxvii (1954), 5-45.

poems of Catullus are not very helpful in the interpreting of our ode because 61 and 62 are ostensibly hymenaeals, in which the matchmaking and courtship are already completed and Venus is given only a small subsidiary role. The same and other objections may be made to the 'epithalamium' in the *Medea*.<sup>1</sup> Statius' *Epithalamium in Stellam et Violentillam* is much more apposite and parts of it offer virtually a commentary on Horace's poem.

Statius introduces Venus in the preface of the poem naming her *genetrix Aeneia* (11). When the dramatic narrative of the divinely directed courtship begins at 51 *alma Venus* is revealed resting in bed surrounded by the *tenerum agmen Amorum*, who await her commands for the day's campaigns (54-6). The most active of the little warriors appeals to her to yield for once to human prayers (61-9): the suppliant is noble and handsome (70-2); much sought after as a son-in-law, he has been conquered and enslaved by love (76-8); let him be married, for he is a soldier and a standard-bearer in the service of Venus, as he has shown by abandoning martial themes for erotic poetry (94-102).<sup>2</sup> Venus agrees after lengthy eulogy of the bride, sends for her carriage and her purple swans (140-2), and flies joyously to the rich home of the bride, which is luxuriantly described (147-57). The goddess advises the girl to yield and praises the groom, who is wholeheartedly in love, is handsome, well-born, a writer whose poems are known to all the lads and lasses of Rome, a man who is destined to attain the consulship before his time through the emperor's favour (170-6). The remainder of the poem is not relevant to our purpose: it consists of descriptions of Stella's joy, and the wedding day, and it ends with the usual wishes for children. I have stressed the similarities, not because I wish to suggest that *Odes* 4. 1 is a kind of crypto-epithalamium, but in order to illustrate the assertion that many of the features of the ode are as appropriate literary material for a serious courtship as for any *solutus amor*. The list of merits attributed to Maximus reinforce the theory, for they suit nobody as well as a prospective husband: he is, by implication, young and in love; he is explicitly noble, handsome, a powerful advocate, a most able and cultivated fellow; his love will be widely proclaimed; he is rich, very rich, and pious. Truly, *vile nil decet sonare in Maximorum laudibus*.<sup>3</sup> These *laudes* have troubled the commentators, who have seen that they are neither the traditional virtues of Roman public life nor pure literary *ἐπαφρόδιτα*. Fraenkel singles out what he regards as the intrusive *pro sollicitis non tacitus reis* and argues that Horace put this in to emphasize Roman values and save Maximus from appearing 'in the main, a ladies' man'.<sup>4</sup> Williams asserts that what we have here is simply a compliment cast in a conventional Greek mould: 'The one real distinction allowed to Fabius is Roman and irrelevant: he is a successful lawyer.'<sup>5</sup> Both these explanations are unconvincing and give no great credit to Horace. It is preferable to assume that what Horace wrote is good sense than to suppose that he wrote rubbish which can be defended only by desperate means.

<sup>1</sup> Z. Pavlovskis, 'Statius and the Late Latin Epithalamia', *Cl. Phil.* lx (1965), 164-77 argues that the *Medea* has the last of the *hymenaios*, which were superseded by the *epithalamia* (with Venus as the central figure). This seems to me to be drawing a more definite conclusion than the meagre evidence will allow.

<sup>2</sup> Maximus does not appear to have been

a poet like Stella, but he had Horace to sound the *tibia* for him.

<sup>3</sup> From the marriage-song of a later Maximus: Ennodius, *Epithalamium dictum Maximi*, 27. Cf. 17-18: *cui sanguis census genius mens vota superstant | Musarum primo fulta supercilio*.

<sup>4</sup> Op. cit., 413-14.

<sup>5</sup> Loc. cit., 39.



If a young bride is content with a husband who is loving, handsome, and charming, her family is likely to demand that he should also be of the right status, have talents which assure success, be well-off and open-handed in fulfilling his obligations. Horace's recommendation is faultless and must surely have pleased everybody from the daughter of the temple-building consular herself to the Juno of the Palatine, who doubtless took a profound, if unobtrusive, interest in such matters.<sup>1</sup> As the marriage had not yet taken place, it is obvious that Horace could not safely name the lady or even resolve the ambiguities of the amatory vocabulary by any mention of a wedding, but he could be of real service to Maximus' suit. Far from needing a patron, Horace was now in a very real sense a patron himself. There are clear indications in Book 4—particularly in the odes to Censorinus and to Lollius—that Horace had no doubt whatever of the value of the gifts he had to offer. Maximus was not the least of his beneficiaries, but by an odd quirk of fate the honours which Horace heaped upon him have been badly tarnished by time. The process began in antiquity, as the vicious remark of Cassius Severus shows: *quasi disertus es, quasi formosus es, quasi dives es; unum tantum es non quasi, vappa*.<sup>2</sup> This looks like a deliberate reference to Horace's eulogy, which must have been frequently quoted when Maximus became well known. Recalling that Horace uses *vappa* in the *Satires* (I. 1. 104, I. 2. 12) as the opposite of *avarus*, one might ask whether Cassius' criticism means more than that Maximus was generous to a fault. Cassius was a cantankerous fellow and he appears to have had his own reasons for disliking Maximus, but recent critics have less justification. Fraenkel gives an imaginative picture of the lush life which he thinks Maximus led: 'There Venus will be surrounded by the gay company which Maximus is in the habit of entertaining by day and night with rich feasts and hilarious dancing to the tunes of a full orchestra.'<sup>3</sup> Williams harps on the theme of 'extravagant mixed parties'.<sup>4</sup> Since this kind of lurid comment now seems to be the fashion it is necessary to point out that Horace says nothing whatever about feasts or parties, diurnal or nocturnal, doubtful, mixed, or otherwise. Only the writers' private assumption that Maximus was indeed a bit of a gay dog can explain these aberrations. What Horace describes in 19–28 is the building of an expensive shrine in a neighbourhood of peculiar sanctity among the Latins, where perfectly respectable rites may be celebrated in honour of an august goddess, rites which are not dissimilar to some of those performed during the *ludi saeculares*. There is not the slightest reason to suppose that the young people who are to dance in triple measure are very different from those who sang the *carmen saeculare* or who formed the chorus at society weddings. Whether Maximus built the *sacellum* must for ever remain a matter for conjecture. What is certain is that he married his Marcia, and a charming lapidary witness has survived to link her name with the worship of Venus.<sup>5</sup>

The theory that this ode refers to the forthcoming marriage of Maximus is not, of course, new. Kiessling remarked in 1876: *Atque si ariolari libet, possumus*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dio Cassius, 58. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Sen. *Controv.* 2. 4. 11. Syme observes: 'It was Cassius who defined for all time the character and capacity of Paullus Fabius Maximus' (*The Roman Revolution*, 487). But Syme has special cause for despising Maximus—his Asianism (*ibid.* 375).

<sup>3</sup> Op. cit. 412.

<sup>4</sup> Loc. cit. 39.

<sup>5</sup> An inscription found at a shrine of Venus Paphia in Cyprus: *Μαρκία Φιλίππου θυγατρὶ, ἀνεψιᾷ Καίσαρος θεοῦ Σεβαστοῦ γυναικὶ | Παύλου Φαβίου Μαξίμου, Σεβαστῆς Πάφου ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος*. (Ditt. *OGI* 581 [*CIG* 2629]).

*conicere Horatium Venerem orare, ut futuris Fabii cum Marcia nuptiis propitia adesse velit: id ipsum enim poetae verbis:*

*Et quandoque potentior  
largi muneribus riserit aemuli,  
Albanos prope te lacus  
ponet marmoream sub trabe citrea*

*eqs. tecte subindicari videtur.*<sup>1</sup> I suspect that Pope understood the purport of the central part of the poem well enough when he translated it in 1737 (his own fiftieth year) substituting William Murray for Maximus: Murray, afterwards famous as Lord Mansfield, married Lady Betty Finch in 1738.

### III

In the fifth stanza Horace completed his commendation of Maximus by gracefully suggesting that he outshone his contemporaries in wealth as well as charm. The poet's masterly device for gilding brass enables him to move on in stanzas 6 and 7 to a description of religious celebrations involving music and the dance and so to return in the most natural way to his own world—the world of *Romanae fidicen lyrae*. At the beginning of the eighth stanza Horace himself confronts us without disguise. In this stanza, which corresponds to the third, which introduced Maximus, there is no allegory, no Pindarizing, no flighted poetical expression; here is the blunt truth, punched home with firm blows. He had no desires left, he has given up hoping for any exclusive love, he no longer enjoys drinking or any kind of festivity. In other words, he is old and has lost interest in the things which form the basis of the erotic-sympotic poetry which he has professed as his *métier*. If there is anywhere in the *Odes* a plain statement, this is it, and it is in complete contrast with the following stanzas, which are intensely allusive and literary, and so carefully worked that they seem almost histrionic in comparison. The usual comment on this contrast is that Horace is back where he started, trying to resist an embarrassing passion, whether real or imaginary. There is certainly a return to the opening theme, but that theme was plainly ambivalent and light in touch; the final stanzas are as allegorical as the first two, but they are powerfully charged with the most vivid emotions.

But who, or what, is Ligurinus? The choice between a purely imaginary figure and a real person disguised by a pseudonym is offered to the reader by Heinze, who inclines, rather surprisingly, to the latter alternative. This does not seem to me to be an improvement upon Kiessling: 'Natürlich ist Ligurinus ein reines Phantasiegeschöpf, hier wie IV. 10.' Even if Ligurinus is imaginary, however, there is still a difficulty to be resolved, for one must ask what Horace meant by introducing him. It is not sufficient answer to this question to say that Horace uses a conventional Greek theme to give the poem a balancing end-piece expressing at the most a feeling of growing old. The final statement of the ode has a desperate poignancy which cannot be so easily dismissed.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *De Horatianorum carminum inscriptionibus commentatiuncula*, 4.

<sup>2</sup> This has led a number of critics to believe that Horace is here making a genuine

confession: e.g. W. Wili, *Horaz*, 355 and L. P. Wilkinson, *Horace and His Lyric Poetry*, 51-3.

The first problem to consider is the time relationship between 4. 1 and 4. 10. It is usually assumed that the tenth ode was a later composition than the first. This I question. With most of the odes the order of composition is of little moment, but in this particular case it matters very much. If Horace wrote 1 before he wrote 10, then he is writing in the last two stanzas about Ligurinus (real or fanciful); if he wrote 1 when 10 was already in existence, then he may possibly be referring to Ligurinus but he is certainly referring to his *poem* on Ligurinus. Logically, of course, the reverse should apply, but in fact 10 is so much of a set piece in the Hellenistic tradition that it would be difficult to maintain that it was in any way coloured by 1. I would advance two arguments in favour of the hypothesis that 1 is later than 10. First, it is plain that 1 is a preface designed to introduce a very carefully arranged collection of poems.<sup>1</sup> A preface or overture, to use Fraenkel's term, which prepares the reader or listener for the main body of work which he is about to enjoy, is best composed when the style and themes of that work have already emerged: what will be read first is written last. Secondly the nature of 10 suggests an early composition. A number of Horace's odes are clearly experiments with a particular metre or a conventional theme; they are, to use another musical metaphor, hardly more than 'five-finger exercises'.<sup>2</sup> It is obvious that the tenth ode is one of these—so obvious indeed that it has been sometimes regarded as one of Horace's *carmina juvenilia* put in to fill up space. It is much more likely that the poem was written as an exercise when Horace took up lyric again. These two arguments from probability—that 1 was late and 10 early—reinforce one another. Leaving aside conjecture for the moment, however, we must consider the fact that the reader who followed the normal sequence would meet Ligurinus first in 1. If any of Horace's contemporaries had wondered who Horace's ringleted youth of love was, he would have found the answer without difficulty as soon as he came to 10, for this artist's dummy has no closer contact with reality than fair-haired Ganymede in the talons of an eagle. To speculate why Horace wrote 10 is to enter a guessing game without prizes. If it was not simply a rendering of a Greek poem which appealed to Horace or one of his friends, it may have been primarily a metrical exercise or showpiece.<sup>3</sup> Kiessling suggested that it was composed to fill a gap in Horace's erotic odes, which had hitherto not included a poem devoted to *Knabenliebe*. Whatever the reason for the creation of 10, it is difficult not to agree with Pasquali: 'Forse in nessun altro carme egli segue così servilmente i suoi modelli; in nessun carme si comporta, oseremo dire, più passivamente rispetto all'ispirazione.'<sup>4</sup>

When Horace came to compose the prefatory poem for his new collection he must have felt, or known, what most of his readers have perceived, that the spirit no longer moved him as it had done in the exhilarating days of his prime. The laborious exercise of superlative craftsmanship in response to external demands could not satisfy a poet who had known much enthusiasm on his own account; flashes of splendour could not compensate for the waning of a

<sup>1</sup> Fraenkel is very illuminating on this point. For a tidying and partial modification of Fraenkel's scheme see W. Ludwig, 'Die Anordnung des vierten Horazischen Odenbuches', *Mus. Hel.* xviii (1961), 1–10.

<sup>2</sup> It would be rash to offer a list of these, but 3. 12 can probably be safely cited as an example.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of some of the metrical features see L. Rotsch, 'Zur Form der drei Horaz-Oden im Asclepiadeus maior', *Gymn.* lxiv (1957), 89–98. Horace seems to have made a point of including a wide range of metres in the fourth book as he had done in the first.

<sup>4</sup> *Orazio Lirico*, 461.

constant brilliance. He designed the opening of his poem to provide a charming, humorous apology, suggesting that he could no longer write as he had done when his mind had been fully sensitive to inspiration. At the close he restates this loss of feeling with complete seriousness and with all the emphasis at his command in the eighth stanza. Then, beginning with halting monosyllables and developing an audible sob with the hypermetron at the end of the third line he appeals in the next stanza for an explanation of the painful longing which afflicts him. The allegory with which the poem opened is not lost but brought into sharper focus by naming the source of the new poetic urge—Ligurinus. Ligurinus was selected, I suggest, because when Horace reviewed the poems of his new collection he found that, of the characters who appear in those poems, only Ligurinus had the qualities which suited his own emotional yearning: he was unobtainable and he was young. The last stanza has been regularly misunderstood because readers have not observed that it describes a dream in the present *about the past*. Horace dreams of running after Ligurinus on the race-track and swimming after him in the Tiber, which clearly indicates a young, athletic man's passion for a younger one. Moreover, the very notion of a homosexual attachment is in Roman literary terms to be condoned only in a young man, who might naturally pass through this stage but would be expected to outgrow it.<sup>1</sup> The poet dreams of himself when young. The last four lines express, with a haunting sadness, Horace's longing for what he once possessed but could not now recapture except in dreams—not really Ligurinus, who never existed, but his own youth, and that not for its own sake, but because of the emotional power which it gave him to write the poems for which, ten years before, he had claimed the laurels of Apollo.

Book 4 as a whole may not stand as high in the world's eyes as Horace's earlier lyric work, but there can be few readers who do not feel that there are places in it where the poet's dream became reality.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Fescennine section of Cat. 61. 119-43.