

HORACE, *Carm.* 3.30.1–5¹

Exegi monumentum aere perennius
 regalique situ pyramidum altius,
 quod non imber edax, non Aquilo impotens
 possit diruere aut innumerabilis
 annorum series et fuga temporum.

In the poem which sets the seal on his three books of odes,² Horace declares that his monument to himself will be more durable than bronze and higher than the pyramids. As T. E. Page noted in his commentary, *aere* can suggest not only bronze tablets, but also commemorative statuary, although tablets seems more to the fore here, given the reference to *monumentum*.³ As for the pyramids, they are a fine example of grandiloquent architecture, but of a kind which is nevertheless subject to the destructive natural forces from which Horace exempts his own commemoration.

Horace's poetry will surpass such physical and transient memorials.⁴ Perhaps for a moment it is worth considering why Horace should have chosen to mention pyramids. The poem's second line could be omitted with no damage to sense, and Horace's point on the transience of physical memorials could easily stand on the basis of the first line alone. Whereas the *monumentum*, the funerary plaque, would have been entirely unexceptional, pyramids are not an obvious memorial for a Roman, although they are undoubtedly a convenient symbol for grandeur and, of course, topical in the decade after the battle of Actium.

In fact, mention of the pyramids may have been more than a simply conventional glance at the power of kings, or Rome's triumph over Egypt.⁵ Horace's readers may also have noted an even more contemporary reference. The first three books of the *Odes* appeared in 23 B.C. Dio Cassius (53.23.5–7) recounts that in 26 B.C.⁶ another poet, Cornelius Gallus, had been disgraced and had committed suicide.

¹ I am indebted to Stephen Heyworth, Donald Hill, Robin Nisbet, Jonathan Powell, David West, and Tony Woodman for their comments on earlier versions of this note.

² The whole poem has most recently been discussed by G. K. Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: an Interpretive Introduction* (Princeton, 1996), pp. 350–5.

³ T. E. Page, *Q. Horatii Flacci Carminum Libri IV. Epodon Liber*. (repr. London, 1905), p. 392; Galinsky (op. cit., n. 2), p. 352, notes that laws engraved on bronze tablets could sometimes melt (Cicero, *In Catilinam* 3.19). See also G. S. Bucher, 'The *Annales Maximi* in the light of Roman methods of keeping records', *AJAH* 12 (1987 [1995]), pp. 1–61, especially 13–20. Cf. the 'ex aere et solido rerum tabularia ferro' (Ovid, *Met.* 15.810), mentioned by Jove to Venus as an eternal record of the future glories of her Julian descendants. Does Ovid's evocation at the end of the *Metamorphoses* (15.871–9) of Horace *Carm.* 3.30, a poem which establishes the theme of physical mutability with a reference to the transience of bronze (*aere perennius*), undercut Jove's confident prophecy?

⁴ Parallels for this motif in Greek literature are discussed by Galinsky (op. cit., n. 2), p. 351.

⁵ H. Fuchs, "Nun, o Unsterblichkeit, bist du ganz mein . . ." Zu zwei Gedichten des Horaz', in E. von Beckerath, H. Popitz, H. G. Siebeck and H. W. Zimmermann (edd.), *ANTIΔΩPON: E. Salin zum 70. Geburtstag* (Tübingen, 1962), pp. 149–66, discusses a coincidence between Horace's poem and an Egyptian hieroglyphic text of c. 1200 B.C., which contains the remarkable sentiment that 'Die Bücher der Lehren sind ihre Pyramiden . . .' (pp. 150–1). See further I. Borzsák, 'Exegi Monumentum Aere Perennius', *AAntHung* 12 (1964), 137–47; I. Trencsényi-Waldapfel, '...Regalique Situ Pyramidum Altius', *AAntHung* 12 (1964), 149–67; H. P. Syndikus, *Die Lyrik des Horaz* (Darmstadt, 1972–3, repr. 1989–90), vol. 2, p. 276.

⁶ The death of Gallus cannot be dated with certainty: whereas Dio includes it under events for 26 B.C., Jerome, *Chron. ad Ol.* 188.2 assigns it to 27 B.C. For discussion of the chronology and events of Gallus' fall, see R. Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford, 1939), pp. 309–10 (henceforth 'Syme'), J.-P. Boucher, *Caius Cornelius Gallus* (Paris, 1966) (henceforth 'Boucher'), pp. 5–6,

ὁ δὲ δὴ Γάλλος Κορνήλιος καὶ ἐξύβρισεν ὑπὸ τῆς τιμῆς. πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ καὶ μάταια ἐς τὸν Αὐγουστον ἀπελήρει, πολλὰ δὲ καὶ ἐπαίτια παρέπραττε· καὶ γὰρ καὶ εἰκόνας ἑαυτοῦ ἐν ὅλῃ ὡς εἰπεῖν τῇ Αἰγύπτῳ ἔστησε, καὶ τὰ ἔργα ὅσα ἐπεποιήκει ἐς τὰς πυραμίδας ἐσέγραψε. κατηγορήθη τε οὖν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς ὑπὸ Οὐαλερίου Λάργου, ἐταίρου τέ οἱ καὶ συμβιωτοῦ ὄντος, καὶ ἡτιμώθη ὑπὸ τοῦ Αὐγούστου, ὥστε καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν αὐτοῦ κωλυθῆναι διαιτᾶσθαι. γενομένου δὲ τούτου καὶ ἄλλοι αὐτῷ συχνοὶ ἐπέθεντο καὶ γραφὰς κατ' αὐτοῦ πολλὰς ἀπήνεγκαν, καὶ ἡ γερουσία ἅπανα ἁλῶναί τε αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς δικαστηρίοις καὶ φυγεῖν τῆς οὐσίας στερηθέντα, καὶ ταύτην τε τῷ Αὐγούστῳ δοθῆναι καὶ ἑαυτοὺς βουθυτῆσαι ἐψηφίσαστο. καὶ ὁ μὲν περιαλγῆσας ἐπὶ τούτοις ἑαυτὸν προκατεχρήσατο . . .

In contrast, Cornelius Gallus became more arrogant as a result of being honoured. For he made many foolish and vain remarks against Augustus, and in addition did much that was reprehensible, since he set up images of himself in virtually the whole of Egypt, and he inscribed the deeds that he had accomplished on the pyramids. For this he was accused by Valerius Largus, a friend and companion of his, and he was disgraced by Augustus, so that he was prevented from living in his provinces. After this many others attacked him and brought charges against him, and the senate unanimously voted that he be convicted in court, exiled, and deprived of his property (which would be given to Augustus), and that they themselves should offer a sacrifice. Greatly grieved at this, Gallus killed himself . . .

Dio records that Gallus was responsible for a variety of indiscretions, which included vain gossip (μάταια) about the emperor as well as deeds.⁷ The actual crimes which led to Gallus' fall are intriguing. Dio remarks that he set up statues of himself throughout Egypt, before adding that the vainglorious prefect even recorded his ἔργα on the pyramids; scholars have compared the famous trilingual inscription from Philae (ILS 8995) recording military successes of Gallus in the Thebaid and his reception of ambassadors from Ethiopia.⁸

49–57, L. J. Daly (henceforth 'Daly'), 'The Gallus affair and Augustus' *lex Iulia maiestatis*: a study in historical chronology and causality', in C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* (Collection Latomus, Brussels, 1979), pp. 289–311, K. A. Raafaub and L. J. Samons II, 'Opposition to Augustus', in K. A. Raafaub and M. Toher (edd.), *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and his Principate* (Berkeley, 1990), pp. 423–5, R. A. Kaster, *C. Suetonius Tranquillus De Grammaticis et Rhetoribus* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 184–6, conveniently collects other ancient *testimonia*.

⁷ Cf. Ovid, *Tristia* 2.445–6: 'non fuit opprobrio celebrasse Lycorida Gallo, / sed linguam nimio non tenuisse mero'.

⁸ The traditional interpretation of the Philae inscription as a testimony to Gallus' overweening ambition (thus Syme p. 309 'Lapidary evidence, though not from a pyramid, shows the Roman knight proclaiming that he had advanced southwards in conquest farther than any army of the Roman people or monarch of Egypt') has given way to the more subtle view of Boucher, pp. 38–45, who has argued convincingly that the Philae inscription does not represent an overreaching on the part of Gallus *vis-à-vis* his master, although more traditionally minded senators might well have felt discomfort at the administration of Egypt as the private property of the *princeps*. He concludes (p. 45): 'La stèle manifeste donc la politique d'Octavien, et non pas celle de Gallus. Ainsi bien loin d'être une bravade qui devait irriter le prince, la stèle est une utilisation du rituel égyptien pour faire connaître la gloire et la politique du prince: elle rappelle la gloire d'Octavien ('post reges a Caesare deiui filio deuictos'), elle publie la volonté du nouveau roi de gouverner par un préfet, elle fait savoir aux peuples voisins que le nouveau monarque entend faire régner la paix romaine par la force et par la politique traditionnelle de protection accordée à des rois vassaux. Ainsi Gallus, dans le style glorieux des *imperatores*, manifestait la puissance romaine et se montrait l'ami fidèle du prince. Mais cette primauté d'Octavien, cette royauté qu'il avait en Egypte, cette délégation de l'imperium faite à un chevalier ne pouvait qu'irriter les tenants du *mos maiorum*, de la tradition sénatoriale. Ce sont les seules personnes qui pouvaient s'en formaliser.' Daly, p. 296, argues (developing Boucher's analysis that the Philae inscription cannot have offended Octavian) that the emperor's displeasure towards Gallus was entirely

To return to Horace's poem and monument. The example of Gallus, slain by his own hand some three years before, was a celebrated and pointed warning of the dangers of extravagant ambition. Such regal posturing could only be futile, and perilous. In contrast, Horace's poetic *oeuvre* will outlast not only bronze tablets,⁹ but even the *regali . . . situ pyramidum*.¹⁰ By mentioning the pyramids,¹¹ Horace reminds us that his immortality will be more subtle, an immortality which is part of the immortality which Horace envisages for Augustus' Rome (8–9).¹² Thus Horace's poem, confident and assured as it is, nevertheless suggests that the poet's proper role is to seek immortality through poetry, rather than the more dangerous sphere of political achievement.

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connected with the prefect's conduct not in Egypt, but in Rome. There is, however, perhaps a need for caution, since this argument is based on one inscription alone.

⁹ Is it possible that *aere perennius* has a contemporary reference? The Regia, which appears to have been the place where the *Annales Maximi* were kept, had burned down before being rebuilt by Domitius Calvinus in 36 B.C. (Dio Cassius 48.42.4–5). Bucher (op. cit., n. 3), p. 38, suggests that this was the moment when the bronze *Annales* were lost. Horace's *aere perennius* might thus evoke the loss of this important document.

¹⁰ On the meaning of this phrase see the subtle discussion of A. J. Woodman, 'EXEGI MONUMENTVM: Horace *Odes* 3.30', in A. J. Woodman and D. A. West (edd.), *Quality and Pleasure in Latin Poetry* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 117–18.

¹¹ Galinsky (op. cit., n.2), p. 352, sees additional references both to the mausoleum of Cleopatra (on which see Plutarch, *Antonius* 74.2, 76.4, Dio Cassius 51.8.6, 51.10.8, and Suetonius, *Div. Aug.* 17.4, who notes that Augustus gave orders for the unfinished monument to be completed) and to that of Augustus (Suetonius, *Div. Aug.* 100.4, 101.4), which was completed by 23 B.C. Galinsky rightly draws attention to Propertius 3.2.19–22, where Propertius, emphasizing the lasting immortality of poetry, mentions the transience not only of pyramids but also of the mausoleum of Mausolus. However, whereas a reference to Cleopatra suits Horace's poem, a reference to the mausoleum of Augustus in the context of physical mutability seems to sound a strange note in a poem which otherwise affirms the immortality not only of Horace but also that of Rome (see ll. 8–9). The anonymous referee for *CQ* has suggested to me that allusion to Cleopatra's tomb as an exotic pyramid (though it was not one) neatly avoids any awkward reference to the similar mausoleum of Augustus in Rome. In this context, it is a curious irony that Augustus' *Res Gestae* would later be set up in bronze at the entrance of his Mausoleum (Suetonius, *Div. Aug.* 101.4).

¹² Note the contrast between the transient private monuments of the Egyptian monarchs and the immortal public monuments of Rome's Capitol.

BIRDS, GRANDFATHERS, AND NEOTERIC SORCERY IN *AENEID* 4.254 AND 7.412¹

On his way to convey Jupiter's rebuke to Aeneas, Mercury passes by his maternal grandfather Atlas, a mountain vividly personified as an old man with snowy beard/frozen rivers running down his chin (4.249–51). Here he pauses, then flings himself into the waves (4.253–4):

hinc toto praeceps se corpore ad undas
misit avi . . .

¹ This note has benefited greatly from the comments of James O'Hara and editor Stephen Heyworth.