

## THE AUREA DICTA OF AUGUSTUS AND THE POETS

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In order to clarify the implications of the title of this paper it is necessary to make a few preliminary remarks.<sup>1</sup> The phrase "aurea dicta" is applied to the *praecepta* of Epicurus by Lucretius (3.11-12):

floriferis ut apes in saltibus omnia libant,  
omnia nos itidem depascimur aurea dicta.

The *dicta* of Augustus, supplied to us by Suetonius (*Aug.* 25.4, see below) are few in number in contrast to the rich content of the work of Epicurus. The nearest approximation in the Augustan poets to the epithet "aurea" of the *dicta Augusti* is found in the famous phrase "aurea mediocritas" (*Odes* 2.10.5) which is in itself a synthesis of some of these pronouncements and lies in a context which reflects at least one of these concepts.<sup>2</sup> In the third section of this paper ("Poetica Mella") the analogies between the "honey of poesy" as characteristic of Horace's poetry and the flattering connotation of a close relationship between the poet and his grand patron will tend to illuminate what Horace had in mind. The relationship may be stated in this way: as the honeyed words of Lucretius did honor to Epicurus, his *magister*,

<sup>1</sup> Reference will be made to the following articles in the course of this discussion: "The Art of the Third *Eclogue* of Vergil," *TAPA* 89 (1958) 142-58 (cited as *Art III*); "The Wine of Maron," *TAPA* 96 (1965) 375-401 (cited as *Maron*); "Variations on a Theme by Augustus," *TAPA* 97 (1966) 431-57 (cited as *Var. I*); "More Variations on a Theme by Augustus," *TAPA* 98 (1967) 415-30 (cited as *Var. II*).

<sup>2</sup> This ode contains as its central theme a variant on a *dictum strategicum* discussed below: "auream quisquis mediocritatem / diligit . . . sperat infestis, metuit secundis / alteram sortem bene praeparatum pectus." G. E. Duckworth in an article entitled "Animae Dimidium Meae," *TAPA* 87 (1956) 312, notes that the doctrine of the mean occurs in both Vergil and in Horace. He cites *Aen.* 10.501-5 (death of Pallas where *poeta loquitur*): "nescia mens hominum . . . et servare modum, rebus sublata secundis!" This is an echo of the central theme in the ode of Horace just cited.

so too the interweaving of the commendable precepts of Augustus into the poems of Horace—and of Vergil—had a noted precedent in the great work of Lucretius. In two former papers (see above, note 1) an attempt was made to delineate some of the permutations in Augustan poetry of one of those *dicta*—the paradoxical injunction, *speude bradeôs*. In this paper attention is paid in addition to the adaptation by one of these two poets of certain precepts of Augustus regarding military or naval operations. Horace introduced related ideas in terms of athletic competition which were designed to illustrate these same *dicta*.

#### PRAECEPTA STRATEGICA

It is natural to expect that Horace's song of triumph over Antony and Cleopatra (1.37) would catch not only his patron's attention but would be eagerly conned by him. The poem moreover served as the actual epilogue of the first *volumen* of the poet's impressive collection of odes, as a fitting *Gegenstück* to the solemnity of the "Iam satis teris" prelude. These poems balance each other. The second ode, serving as a prelude, calls upon Caesar as leader to linger among his people for a while ("diuque / laetus intersis populo Quirini," 45-46) and concludes with a fervent wish that Caesar live to celebrate great triumphs ("hic magnos potius triumphos, / hic amœ," 49-50). The celebration of the naval victory at Actium paved the way for such a triumph. The dedicatory first ode to Maecenas is highly personal, as is the delicate anti-climactic "Persicos odi" poem. They in a sense serve as counter-weights to enclose the two major odes—the second and the thirty-seventh—that were especially intended for the eyes and ears of Caesar ("carmina, quae possint oculos aurisque morari / Caesaris," *Epist.* 1.13.17-18).

The theme of the 37th *Ode* lends itself to a vivid portrayal of the *hybris* and inevitable downfall of a foreign *regina*. The name of Caesar appears exactly in the middle of this triumphal ode (16).<sup>3</sup> Here Horace's principal reader would be likely to search for motifs recommended by the commander himself, which would win his admiration

<sup>3</sup> Cf. L. A. Moritz, "Some Central Thoughts on Horace's *Odes*," *CQ* 18 (1968) 122-23. For an article on this general theme see O. A. W. Dilke, *CQ* 17 (1967) 323-26. Cf. E. Fraenkel, *Horace* (Oxford 1957) 281.

for their reflection of his tactics in naval and military engagements. For the purpose of this paper, the ode can be seen as culminating in the projection of two striking phrases, "Caesar . . . daret ut catenis / fatale monstrum" (20-21) and "non humilis mulier triumpho" (32).

There is very little reportage here of what actually happened in this crucial naval encounter. Just one verse indicates what must have been a conspicuous feature of the flight of the Egyptian fleet in the midst of flames: "vix una sospes navis ab ignibus" (13). That and the speed of Cleopatra's flotilla *ab Italia volantem* (16), like doves fleeing from hawks or like hares pursued by a hunter in Thrace, give a reporter's point of view.

Horace presents in his ninth *Epode* a few more details of the land and sea forces arrayed on the shores of Actium and the Ambracian gulf. Even here certain features lack clarity because of our insufficient knowledge of both sides in this wide-spread battle front.<sup>4</sup> Propertius (4.6.15-66) has been influenced both by Horace's *Epode* and by Vergil's fanciful depiction of the affair in the shield of Aeneas. Propertius gives us a hint that the two fleets faced each other in a half circle: "tandem acies geminos Nereus lunarat in arcus" (25). There is more space given to this important event in the historical account of Velleius Paterculus (2.4.1), but his report is more rhetorical than detailed. A striking fact appears in Vergil's description of this event in Aeneas' shield (8.694-95) in which reference is made to flaming tow and shafts of steel. That sort of operation is presented in exaggerated form by Horace, as we have noted. That "scarcely one ship" escaped the flames is, as Professor Pöschl states,<sup>5</sup> *eine starke Übertreibung*. We have here an instance of Horace's flair for propaganda.

The reading of Professor Pöschl's recent excellent commentary on the "Nunc est bibendum" ode has had the effect of raising once more a question which has inspired certain articles of mine. Since the 37th *Ode* seems to stand out as a sort of "epilogue" to his first book, Horace would hardly forego the opportunity to please his principal

<sup>4</sup> Cf. W. W. Tarn in *CAH* 10.100-110.

<sup>5</sup> Viktor Pöschl, "Die Kleopatraode des Horaz" (*Interpretationen lateinischer Schulautoren*, Nr. 733; Frankfurt am Main 1968) 112. The thirty pages of this article are filled with keen observations of Horace's art in this ode. There is also given a select bibliography, 129-30.

reader by injecting therein some of Octavian's favorite themes. The main source for these themes, as I have noted elsewhere (*Var. I*, 431), is found in Suetonius' *Divus Augustus* (25.4):

nihil autem minus [in]perfecto<sup>6</sup> duci quam festinationem temeritatemque convenire arbitrabatur. crebro itaque illa iactabat: σπεῦδε βραδέως·

ἀσφαλὴς γάρ ἐστ' ἀμείνων ἢ θρασὺς στρατηλάτης

et: "sat celeriter fieri quidquid fiat satis bene."<sup>7</sup> proelium quidem aut bellum suscipiendum omnino negabat, nisi cum maior emolumenti spes quam damni metus ostenderetur. nam minima commoda non minimo sectantis discrimine similes aiebat esse aureo hamo piscantibus, cuius abrupti damnum nulla captura pensari posset.

It will be noticed that the four or five recommendations insisted upon time and time again by the Princeps are really a composite based on an injunction that one should practice prudence and avoid its opposite, rashness, in both peace and war—with especial emphasis on the latter.

The 37th *Ode*—celebrating the signal victory over Antony and Cleopatra at Actium in 31 B.C.—could conceivably have furnished a major occasion for the poet to inject a theme that would make a strong impression on his patron. The problem which the poet had before him was one that inevitably faces the artist in such a situation. Hence in this ode we may expect to find Horace in a display of the subtle art of revealing an admired *arcanum consilium* to his principal reader, who would feel highly complimented to have his major policies so cleverly characterized. The 37th *Ode* along with the 9th *Epode* will serve as a testing-ground for the hypothesis that Horace attempted to incorporate some of the injunctions of his patron into two poems which present verbal pictures of the most important naval or military engagement in the career of "Caesar," whose name appears virtually in the center of both poems (cf. above, note 3).

<sup>6</sup> This is the correction of Bentley. The text is that of M. Ihm (Leipzig 1908).

<sup>7</sup> The Greek verse is Eur. *Phoen.* 599. Cf. B. E. Perry, "Demetrius of Phalerum and the Aesopic Fables," *TAPA* 93 (1962) 289: a bitch and a sow compare notes on *eutokia*—perfection should be the norm in giving birth, not speed. Haste makes waste. Besides the references to this topic in Greek literature cited in *Var. I*, note 1, there is an interesting reflection in Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1427–29 ("Euripides" on Alcibiades).

Did Horace specifically indicate in his triumphal ode that Octavian's opponents failed to follow his directives in war, that a commander's *hope* for eventual success should far outweigh any *fears* he may have of failure in this naval battle? The final objective of the *regina* was no less than the occupation and destruction of the Capitol at Rome: "dum Capitolio / regina dementis ruinas / funus et imperio parabat." This aim was the result of a wildly conceived—and unfulfilled—hope: "quidlibet impotens / sperare fortunaque dulci / ebria." When the queen realized that her hopes were shattered with the destruction of her fleet, her fears were intensified by drafts of "Mareotic wine," but the truth of her fears was eventually revealed to her by the fact of Caesar's swift pursuit: "redegit in veros timores / Caesar ab Italia volentem."

In very clever fashion the poet now presents his theme of hope and fear from the queen's point of view, the theme of fear coming first following the pattern of "hysteron proteron" and balancing what was already envisaged in the poet's words "in veros timores," applied to the enemy by the victorious admiral.<sup>8</sup> The queen experienced no dread of the enemy's sword: "quae generosius / perire quaerens nec muliebritur / expavit ensem." She overcame her *fear* in her defeat by looking forward in serene *hope* to a victory over herself: "ausa et iacentem visere regiam / voltu sereno<sup>9</sup> fortis et asperas / tractare serpentes." Her boldness was accentuated—*deliberata morte ferocior*—now that she anticipated a virtual victory over her adversary by cheating him of a proud triumph in a procession up to that *Capitolium* which the queen had once planned in her frenzy to destroy.

In the ninth *Epode* the poet begins also in a mood of celebration, *victore laetus Caesare*. The poem conveys Horace's acceptance of the invitation of Maecenas to partake in the festivities honoring the victory

<sup>8</sup> See the keen analysis of "redegit in veros timores" in Pöschl (above, note 5) 113: "An die Stelle von Hoffnungen, die nur Illusion waren, treten Ängste, die real sind. Horaz ist ein wichtiger Vorläufer des *brevitas* des Tacitus und seines pointierten Stile."

<sup>9</sup> Cf. the portrayal of Dido in *Aen.* 4.477: "consilium voltu tegit ac *spem fronte serenat*." In the Dido episode Vergil uses many military terms. There is the term *hostem* (424) and the council of war (257–95), with what seems to be the Augustan formula at the end: "*ocius omnes / imperio laeti parent et iussa facessunt*." Plutarch in his life of Antony (71.2) depicts Antony as having been relieved at his total defeat, for it dispelled both hopes and fears.

at Actium. Antony is referred to as "Romanus...emancipatus feminae" (11-12). The military camp on shore is described briefly. The exact significance of the verses which follow (19-22) is in dispute because of our ignorance of the precise details of the naval encounter.

hostiliumque navium portu latent  
 puppes sinistrorsum citae.  
 io Triumphe, tu moraris aureos  
 currus et intactas boves?

The principal subject of this song of triumph is mentioned three times in the 38 lines of the *Epode*. The name of Caesar appears in the virtual center and at the beginning and end of this poem. What is more natural than that suggestions of "Caesar's" recommendations for action in times of war and peace should appear after his name? Whatever the first verse in the citation means, the second points to a peremptory summons for the fleet of the enemy to advance on the left. Plutarch (*Ant.* 65.4-5) informs us that the left wing of Antony's fleet went into action. At this "Caesar was delighted" and ordered his right wing to row backward so as to draw the enemy farther out from the gulf.

There is intended, unless I am mistaken, to be a contrast here between the concept of swiftness in *citae* and that of delay in *moraris* in the next verse. It would seem that the sight of Antony's highly decorated ships inspired in Horace's mind the thought of a triumph, with the *Actia rostra* being drawn up in the procession along the *via sacra* (Propertius 2.1.31-33). Aside from difficulty in interpreting the maneuver suggested by what appears to be the war-ships of the enemy verging under orders to the left (*sinistrorsum citae*), there is the sudden address to the abstract divinity called "Triumphus." We seem to see the poet's mind in action here; he is still thinking of the "Caesar" just mentioned. Both the poet and "Caesar" can visualize the coming triumph and are impatient at a possible delay: "io Triumphe, tu moraris aureos currus" (on which the victor would ride). The poet, if I am right, has captured the attention of his principal reader by inserting—in a rather inept collocation with *puppes citae*—Octavian's favorite paradox *speude bradeôs* at this crucial moment in the naval battle. *Moror* and *cunctor* became code words with similar connota-

tions in the works of both Horace and Vergil.<sup>10</sup> This early and clumsy attempt of Horace at flattering his patron by this method of recall will be followed later on by other and better approximations to that prosaic *sententia*. The poet in this instance seems also to have felt the need of complementing his initial approach to obtain "Caesar's" favor by a terminal hint of his approval of the necessity in war of balancing *cura* (= *spes*?) with *metus*. In this way we can perhaps interpret Horace's concluding distich (37-38):

curam metumque Caesaris rerum iuvat  
dulci Lyaeo solvere.

#### DICTA CIRCENSIA: THE POET AS ATHLETE

The concluding *Epistle* (19) of the first book—the 20th is an "envoi"—of Horace epitomizes the main features of the poet's defence of his *Odes*, *Epodes*, and *Satires* against the censures of certain critics during the years following the publication of these poems. This *Epistle* is addressed to Horace's patron, Maecenas, who is reminded that as *doctus* he would appreciate the poet's original contributions to Latin literature as a successor to Archilochus, Alcaeus, and Sappho. This concluding *Epistle* was composed as a companion piece for the first. To indicate that *Epistles* 1 and 19 are to be taken by the reader as complementary poems, the poet aptly echoes the theme of *Epist.* 1.1.2-3, the poet as athlete now retired from the arena:

spectatum satis et donatum iam rude quaeris,  
Maecenas, iterum antiquo me includere ludo,

in the closing scene of the 19th *Epistle* (47):

"Displicet iste locus," clamo et diludia posco.

Here *diludia*—a word seemingly of Horace's coinage—denotes a claim for a pause by a contestant in a wrestling match in order to settle some disputed point. The poet in the initial epistle makes his patron aware that he has fought in the arena of poetry with credit and deserved to retire, like an aged race-horse, before he became incapacitated. He then in a sweeping statement places his previous verses—his *Epodes*,

<sup>10</sup> See *Art.* III, 155; *Var.* I, 451-57.

*Odes*, and *Satires*—in the category of *ludicra*: “nunc itaque et versus et cetera ludicra pono” (10). A resumption of this type of literary activity would hinder his progress in the serious pursuit of philosophy, “quid verum atque decens curo.” His well-known statement, “nullius addictus iurare in verba magistri,” is presented in a twofold setting. *Magister* may be taken to mean both master of a school of philosophy or the trainer of a group of athletes—wrestlers or gladiators. The poet is primarily engaged in delineating the tenets of two schools of philosophy (16–17):

nunc agilis fio et mensor civilibus undis,  
virtutis verae custos rigidusque satelles.

These verses leave no doubt that the poet is thinking of becoming an adherent of the principles ascribed to the Stoics, who approved of active participation in civic affairs. The word *agilis* in this connection is usually equated with the Greek *πρακτικός*, but there seems to be an additional sense here, as we shall see, of physical activity, in accord with Horace's commitment to a certain ambivalence in this book. Next the poet states that “he slips back in a furtive manner,” thus following the *praecepta Aristippi*: “nunc in Aristippi furtim praecepta relabor.” The humor here lies in the depiction of the stance of the gladiator-wrestler: first the poet represents himself as physically nimble and active: the words *custos* and *rigidus* point to the give and take of the athlete. The second posture is sketched as one in which the athlete retreats and changes his position—for what purpose?—to comply with the injunctions of the philosopher Aristippus. Fortunately Horace has given us an inkling of what these precepts were in one of his *Satires* (2.3.100–2):

Graecus Aristippus, qui servos proicere aurum  
in media iussit Libya, quia *tardius* irent  
propter onus *segnes*.

Horace, if I am right, felt that the action of Aristippus in getting rid of his burden of gold, because it made the progress of his caravan slow and tedious, had a special application to what he considered ought to be jettisoned of the poet's literary work up to the year 20. Hence



the curious repetition of phrases implying length of time, "nox longa . . . dies longa . . . piger annus."

The poet synthesizes these concepts in the verses which immediately follow in this initial *Epistle* (23-26), to which he adds a brief sketch of the philosophical problems which will free him from his Aristippan burden:

sic mihi *tarda* fluunt ingrataque *tempora*, quae *spem*  
*consiliumque morantur* agendi naviter id quod  
 aeque pauperibus prodest, locupletibus aeque  
 aeque neglectum pueris senibusque nocebit.

The climactic phrases (which have been italicized) have more than usual significance in the light of what I have indicated elsewhere as recurrent variations in the *Odes*, *Epodes*, and *Satires* of the favorite theme of Augustus, *speude bradeôs*. Not only does "tarda fluunt tempora" reflect this theme, but the words which follow recall certain phases of the military strategy of Augustus which we have discussed in the first part of this paper. Hence "tempora, quae spem consiliumque morantur" represents Horace's attempt to convey to his principal reader the thought that another of his patron's precepts—*spes et consilium* (= *damni metus*?)—as directives in war could be transferable to a literary and philosophical framework. It is implied in this *Epistle* that Horace's progress towards a more perfect art has been subjected to influences that tended to retard the work of the artist.

The poet is still aware of his theatrical pose with interchangeable masks of philosopher and athlete. We have noted in this initial epistle the twofold nature of the shift of his action—offensive (*agilis fio*) and defensive (*relabor*)—concepts which could also be applied to Stoic rigidity and Cyrenaic relaxation. Horace introduces in *Sat.* 2.3.307-13 his customary note of self-depreciation in a thumb-nail sketch of the philosopher-poet as wrestler-gladiator. Here Damasippus jokingly characterizes Horace as a "puny midget" who laughs at the antics of two ill-matched participants in the arena: "longos imitaris, ab imo / ad summum totus moduli bipedalis."

The comic features of a prolonged poetic duel in the manner of a pair of gladiators between two poets of different schools—Horace and Propertius(?)—were well epitomized later on by Horace (*Epist.*

2.2.95-100). In all these rôles Horace does not profess to strive for victory. This would be in accord with his noted *aurea mediocritas* (*Ode* 2.10). To Horace the political principles of Augustus, that haste should be tempered by hesitation (*mora*) and that *prudentia* should displace *temeritas*, needed to be illustrated time and time again. As an epilogue to the second epistle of the first book (70-71), addressed to Lollius, who seems to have served in the Cantabrian campaign with Augustus, the poet gives an Epicurean tinge to his version of one of the *dicta* of the Princesps:

Quod si cessas aut strenuus anteis  
nec tardum opporior, nec praecedentibus insto.

In a later epistle addressed to Florus, who was a field officer with literary ambitions under Tiberius, Horace aptly summarizes his philosophical conviction that in every aspect of life—as in a race course or boat race—one should aim at a middle position between the first and last place (2.2.203-4):

viribus, ingenio, specie, virtute, loco, re,  
extremi primorum, extremis usque priores.

In fact since this epistle serves as a sort of terminus to Horace's poetic works, leaving only the specialized epistle on the art of poetry which follows, we may consider these extremely synoptic lines as Horace's last expressed statement on his own art. It may not be inadmissible to see in the first and last of the characteristics there mentioned—*viribus . . . loco, re*—that Horace, the *poseur*, was towards the end conscious of his whimsical role as poet-athlete. There was a certain reciprocity in this relationship. Augustus, besides being extremely devoted to the presentation of *ludi* and *spectacula*, was especially interested in the sports of wrestling and boxing.<sup>11</sup> In *Epistles* 2.2.47-48, Horace gives an autobiographical hint that his debacle at Philippi was due to the strong muscles of his opponent: "in arma / Caesaris Augusti non responsura lacertis."

<sup>11</sup> See *Mon. Ancy.* 4.31-48 (Hardy); Suet. *Aug.* 43-45 notes the extraordinary interest of Augustus in games and spectacles: "spectaculorum et assiduitate et varietate et magnificentia omnes antecessit."

## POETICA MELLA

The close of the 19th *Epistle* of the first book is intentionally ambiguous and has a touch of the gentle humor one would expect from Horace. The *double entendre* in the word *locus* in the phrase "displicet iste locus" is intended to convey two concepts at once. Primarily there is the rhetorical notion of "topic, subject matter," and secondarily an athlete's—here a wrestler's—point of vantage. The phrase "luctantis acuto ne secer ungui" seems to point to the actions of a wrestler rather than those of a gladiator.

We are prepared for the idea of *topos* by the reference to the *grammaticae tribus* (40) before the repartee begins between the poet-defender of his own poetry (*dixi*) and the anonymous critic, who puts in the mouth of his opponent the crucial subject matter of his accusation. To the defender's plea that he is ashamed to read his rather trifling verses in public, the point is made in reply that the poet-defender's main interest is something else indeed (43-45):

"rides," ait, "et Iovis auribus ista  
servas: fidis enim manare *poetica mella*  
te solum, tibi pulcher."

In other words, the accusation is a definite *ad hominem* plea: your delight is to serve up dainties for the special delectation of Jupiter-Augustus, not for the public at large. The reader will not appreciate the metaphorical reference to the "honey of poesy" nor the meaning of "te solum, tibi pulcher," unless he is aware of the contents of the *Ode* (4.2.27-32) where Horace later compares his poetry to the careful work of a "bee of Matinus":

ego apis Matinae  
more modoque  
grata carpentis thyma per laborem  
plurimum circa nemus uvidique  
Tiburis ripas operosa parvus  
carmina fingo.

Here more than anywhere else Horace reveals his *mos modusque* as a literary artist. The odes of the fourth book represent a period in the poet's life when he basked in the favor of the court after the success of his *carmen saeculare* in the year 17. Not only the Princeps himself,

but also the distinguished members of the *quindecimviri* who presided at the saecular games<sup>12</sup> became admirers of both his *carmen* and his many other contributions to Latin letters. To attain that eminence, he had to face, about three years before this public event, the insinuations of his critics that he wrote chiefly for the delectation of Augustus. Horace, they implied, packed in a special ingredient into his verses—*poetica mella*—distilled for the ears of the great. The frank revelation (“ego apud Matinae”) of his *modus poetandi* in the ode addressed to a member of the inner court circle, Iullus Antonius, was an assurance that the poem would be weighed and appreciated by Horace’s principal critic. Antonius, he conceded, would be a more apt choice to celebrate the *reditus Augusti* from Gaul in the year 13. Horace’s contribution to the subject of the long-desired return (*impetrato reditu*, 42–43) is represented in his fifth ode (4.5.2–4):

abes iam nimium diu;  
maturum reditum pollicitus patrum  
sancto concilio redi.

Here was a challenge to our poet: how to apply his special technique—*apis more modoque*—to this important event. Elsewhere I have shown the result of this fine *appliqué* work.<sup>13</sup>

Let us return to the epistle in which the poet introduces us to the conceit of the “honey of poesy” suited for the ears of his patron. We are surprised here at Horace’s revelation of self. Horace, however, is not completely satisfied with this humorous interplay as a presentation of a clue to the precise nature of this packing of concepts. To aid the perceptive reader the poet slyly illustrates his conceit by adding another *cella* to this genial battle of wits. His “displicet iste locus” has been shown to have a double meaning. He is emphatic in his objection: “that subject of poetic honey is not to my liking.” The poet intimates that such a type of criticism is likely to lead to angry and swift reactions. So, simulating displeasure, he calls loudly for a postponement or “time out” (*diludia*, a word of Horace’s coinage).

<sup>12</sup> CIL VI 32323. Among the *quindecimviri* present at the recital of the *carmen* of Q. Horatius Flaccus were M. Cocceius (cf. *Sat.* 1.5.28) and M. Lollius (cf. *Epist.* 1.2.1, 18.1).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Var. II*, 425–27.

The alternative, he assures his opponent, in the nature of things—*genuit* is a “gnomic” perfect—would be a “free-for-all” wrestling match with the possibility that uncontrolled wrath might result in war to the death (*Epist.* 1.19.48–49):

ludus enim genuit trepidum<sup>14</sup> certamen et iram,  
ira truces inimicitias et funebre bellum.

Horace wished to make clear the opposition between *diludia* and *trepidum certamen* in order to overturn his adversary. “If you want another specimen of the *vitium* which you suggest is characteristic of my contribution to letters,” the poet seems to say with a smile, “here is one more of the same.”

Horace felt intrigued by what he felt was his success in out-witting his critic who had suggested that his introduction of the “honey of poesy” was inspired by his desire to please the first man in the state. He returned, therefore, to this subject in his letter specifically addressed to Augustus himself (2.1.219–23), where he cleverly hits back at his anonymous critic. In doing so he reveals great pleasure at his display of wit in the 19th *Epistle*. Horace’s pleasure in recalling in his letter to Augustus this verbal encounter is modified by the recollection of his many inadequacies in his associations with his patron. Horace’s “flash-back” to the anonymous critic’s disapproval of one such relationship is both serious and humorous (*Epist.* 2.1.221–23):

cum laedimur, unum  
si quis amicorum est ausus reprehendere versum;  
cum *loca iam recitata* revolvimus irrevocati.

Horace confides to Augustus that he had repeated in the 19th *Epistle* the topic condemned by his critic: *loca iam recitata*. This original *locus*, we have pointed out, refers to the *recitatio* incorporating the alleged meretricious “honey” formula in a variation—discernible to the initiated—of the favorite paradox of Augustus (*speude bradeôs*). To cap the climax the poet very subtly intimates that his witty repetition

<sup>14</sup> *Trepidus* and *trepido* were favorite words with Vergil. With the meaning of *festino* these words are glossed by Servius and his source (Donatus?) in nine places in the *Aeneid* (see *editio Harvardiana* 3 [1965] on *Aen.* 4.642). “Trepidum certamen” has been translated “tumultuous strife” (Fairclough).

of the *topos* in the 19th *Epistle* was his own idea—not induced by the audience's request for an encore (*irrevocati*)!

For the original conception, however, *poetica mella*,<sup>15</sup> we must revert to the early work of Vergil on the *aërii mellis caelestia dona* (*Geo.* 4.1.). Vergil attempted in several ways to indicate to his principal reader—as well as to his immediate patron Maecenas—that the realm of the bees was that of the ideal Roman state under the aegis of its “king” bee. The poet felt it necessary to give some clues to the identity of this *dux apium*. An opportunity was afforded by the introduction of a simile in which the work of the bees is compared to the labor of the Cyclopes on the shield of Aeneas: “Ac veluti *lentis* Cyclopes fulmina *massis* / cum *properant*” (170–71). This is a fairly close approximation to the Augustan theme, “*festina lente*.” Moreover the virtual repetition of two verses which follow (174–75) in the description of the forge work of the Cyclopes in the eighth *Aeneid* (452–53) would seem to assure the reader that the two activities were regarded by the poet as parallel. The repeated verses are significant in that the slow spondaic movement of the first verse is followed by a rapid dactylic rhythm of the second. This variation in tempo—slow and fast—is the poet's way of convincing his reader that there is another aspect to this proposed analogy.

Elsewhere I have noted the significance of the synthetic phrase, “*praecipitate moras*.”<sup>16</sup> This is Vulcan's final injunction to his collaborators. Vergil's *lentis massis* and *properant*, connoting the work of the bees—that and the repetition of the two verses in different tempo—point in one direction. He is endeavoring to flatter the Princes and at the same time identify the activities of the bees along with their “king” with the forging of the shield in which the victor at Actium was given a prominent part. An attempt to interpolate this favorite

<sup>15</sup> Pindar has frequent reference to the “honey of poesy.” In *Nem.* 11.17–18 he expresses a wish that the victorious athlete and his family should be honored with “well-designed (*daidalthenta*) songs sweet as honey.” Horace was conscious of this Pindaric trait when he wrote *Odes* 4.2.1–3: “Pindarum quisquis studet aemulari, / Iule, *ceratis* ope Daedalea / nititur *pinnis*”—with a word play in “Pindarus . . . *pinnis*.” We note the contrast here with the low-flying *apis Matina* (27). This ode has the waxed seal (*sphragis*) of the poet. It is well to note that Horace's first three volumes were carefully sealed, *signata volumina*, when presented to Augustus.

<sup>16</sup> *Var.* I, 447.

theme of Augustus in a more pointed way with a humorous touch can be detected. If you deprive the "kings" of their wings, not one bee in the entire swarm will advance into action when their leader is inactive (*Geo.* 4.106-8):

tu regibus alas  
eripe; non illis quisquam *cunctantibus* altum  
ire iter aut castris audebit vellere signa.

The poet seems to have been conscious that the Augustan motto was especially appropriate in a picture of simulated military activities.

#### THE POET AS "URSUS" AND "HIRUDO"

The conclusion of the *Ars Poetica* provides an "epilogue" to a famous work on literary criticism—or a series of three such poems. To the general reader in Horace's day this highly humorous picture of a poet-bear breaking out of his *cavea* in the arena so as to drive the audience—*indoctum doctumque fugat* (474)—into a panic represented a return to reality, the reality of the Roman stage. The analogy of a mad poet taking vengeance on his unreceptive audience is flawed, it would seem, by the closing verse on the leech which drains the blood of a typical *auditor*. If this were an Aesopic fable we might expect something in the nature of an "epimythium" at this point.<sup>17</sup> There remains the vivid contrast between the lumbering *ursus* bent on destruction and the tiny *hirudo* determined to bleed its victim. The bear takes hold of and slays his victim like the poet-*recitator* boring someone to death *legendo* (475-76):

quem vero arripuit, tenet occiditque legendo,  
non missura cutem, nisi plena cruoris, hirudo.

The sudden transition is startling to say the least. What is the *hirudo* doing *dans cette galère*? The fable or simile has a twofold meaning. The mad Empedoclean poet is represented as performing the obverse

<sup>17</sup> B. E. Perry, "The Origin of the Epimythium," *TAPA* 71 (1940) 391-419. There is an analogous drawing of the poet Anacreon depicted as a bear in several early red-figured vases, some probably from the poet's lifetime (C. G. Starr, *The Awakening of the Greek Historical Spirit* [New York 1968] 122). The unsteady gait of the performing bear seems to suggest that we have here a caricature of the bibulous Anacreon. For Horace and the Fable see H. Musurillo S. J., *Symbol and Myth in Ancient Poetry* (New York 1961) 206, note 20; Ed. Fraenkel, *Horace* (Oxford 1957) 356-59.

of the action of the playwright in *Epistle* 2.1 (182–86), addressed specifically to Horace's principal reader. There the audience is depicted as *indocti stolidique* with evident echoes of the scene of the *ursus* at large in the *Ars Poetica* (*indoctum doctumque fugat*). In *Epistle* 2.1 to Augustus the tables are turned: the poet, despite his courage, is often driven off the stage by the rabble (*plebecula*): “saepe etiam audacem fugat hoc terretque poetam” (182). The rude audience wanted the introduction of a performing *ursus* to take the place of the boring play. The two farcical scenes, the poet as victim and the poet as victimizer, were intended to attract the attention of the principal reader of Horace's poems, who was himself an enthusiastic playgoer of *spectacula*, especially of the unusual (*tigrin in scaena*, Suet. *Aug.* 43.4).

The climactic scene of the poet-leech draining the life blood of his *auditor* is one that Augustus would appreciate. At this point I wish in the interpretation which follows to beg the reader to suspend his will to belief or disbelief. Horace, it seems, could not refrain from interposing another example of his injection of *poetica mella* in the closing burlesque scene, stemming from his relationship as a poet who to some extent depended for his inspiration on certain themes in the *dicta* of his patron Augustus. Horace felt that he had happily succeeded in such an unexpected *tour de force* in his 19th *Epistle*, as we have shown above. If we can interpret “verba” as “logoi” in the famous appraisal of Quintilian (10.1.96), Horace in his epilogue to the *Ars Poetica* proved himself to be *et varius figuris et verbis felicissime audax*. Did Horace in this notable epilogue of metamorphosis conform to the pattern (movement-rest, haste-delay) which Augustus was openly urged to appreciate in Horace's epistle addressed to the Princeps (2.1.221–23)? In the epilogue to the *Ars Poetica* we have two definitely contrasting pictures (*ut pictura, poesis*, 361). In the rampaging *ursus* violent action is depicted: “certe furit . . . indoctum doctumque fugat.” The obverse of this sketch of precipitate speed lies in the macabre static position of the “*hirudo non missura cutem*,” ingesting the blood of the *auditor*—here Horace's victimized special listener to his extensive collection of poems.<sup>18</sup> If this instance of the distillation of the “honey

<sup>18</sup> Representations of the poet as *ursus* (cf. note 17) are not confined to Anacreon and Horace. Donatus in his life of Vergil (*Vita* 6.78–82 Br.) reports a saying of the poet that he composed his works *more ursae*, licking her offspring into shape. To



of poesy" was intended by the poet, we have here another example of the subtle way in which Horace expressed his satisfaction in presenting in this terminal poem a thematic pattern designed to please one who was himself the source of such themes as these, as well as a patient, but bored listener—*occiditque legendo*—to their recital.

Empedocles identified the flow of blood to the heart with thought (*animus*). Cicero (*Tusc.* 1.19) reports this concept: "Empedocles animus esse censet cordi suffusum sanguinem." It is significant because of its climactic position in Vergil's epic (10.487) that this identification is also associated with the tragic death of Pallas at the hands of Turnus: "una eademque via sanguis animusque sequuntur."<sup>19</sup> We see here that Vergil associated *animus* with the movement of *sanguis* as in the teaching of Empedocles. Horace depicts himself as a mad Empedoclean poet who has been transformed into a bear let loose in the arena and—to our surprise—into a leech which takes its fill of blood from the *auditor*. Servius and his Donatan source interpret the *animus* which emerges along with *sanguis* from the wound of Pallas as "thought": "animus pro anima, nam *animus consilii est*, anima vitae." Horace as a poet-leech gorged himself with the blood of his listener (*plena cruoris*). As an Empedocles *redivivus* he gives us as his final assurance: the thoughts of my principal listener are the source of my *consilia*.

Vergil, Horace is perhaps indebted for the fantasy of a poet-leech. In the *Culex* an aged shepherd is saved from the deadly attack of a giant serpent by the action of a tiny gnat in stinging his *gemmans pupula* ("jewelled orb," Fairclough). In what was intended to be a comic situation the gnat, that is the poet himself, is as a result inspired to sing of its adventures in the Otherworld in the form of a dream by the shepherd (see *Maron* 396-98 and note 1).

<sup>19</sup> By a curious coincidence both poets have purposely glossed over these parallel Empedoclean reflections with a touch of the Augustan cliché. The Pythagorean opposites (*Arist. Meta.* 5.986A22)—movement and rest—are uppermost in the Horatian picture. The more elementary concepts of "delay" and "speed" are just perceptible in the death scene of Pallas. The spear of Turnus pierces through the barriers of his breastplate ("loricaeque moras"). Pallas immediately grasps to no avail the still warm steel ("ille rapit calidum . . . telum"). The verb *sequuntur* of *sanguis animusque* seems to convey further the idea of action (10.484-87).