

HORATIAN PHILOSOPHY AND THE REGULUS ODE (ODES 3.5)

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The “patriotic odes” scarcely seem to be the place for expressing Horace’s philosophy. How could an ode like 3.5, in which the main figure is Regulus—that rigid exemplar of Rome’s natural Stoicism—serve the genial Horace as a vehicle for his gently-voiced Epicureanism, so different from the evangelical voice of Lucretius? Well, Horace could laugh at Stoics, could laugh similarly at his own Epicurean proclivities, and yet could embrace both philosophies, even as Seneca and Marcus Aurelius tried to do after him.¹ For Horace, Homer was a better moral teacher than strict moralists like “Scotus or Aquinas.” And Homer, no less than Plato and Aristotle, contains the germinal expressions of both Stoicism and Epicureanism. It ought not, then, be an *a priori* shock to find Horace using Regulus to express the philosophy of *carpe diem*.²

The Pindaric opening of 3.5—gnomic juxtaposition of declarative sentences whose connection derives solely from the analogues implied in the juxtaposition—makes Augustus’ deification not a *fait accompli*, not a sycophantic adulation, but a condition, a contingency:

Caelo tonantem credidimus Jovem
Regnare; praesens divus habebitur

¹ So also P. Grimal, “Les Odes romaines d’Horace et les causes de la guerre civile,” *REL* (1975) 142.

² Of course, when in *Odes* 1.11 Horace tells Leuconoe, “*carpe diem*,” he is transcending the more vulgar expressions of hedonism associated both with Epicureanism and the phrase *carpe diem*. As wine, he tells her, is to be tasted wisely (*sapias*), not gulped, so with love. Part of the winetasting is the preparation for it; so too with love. As we strain wine, we perceive both the pure vintage and the dregs; so with love. The act of love must be accompanied with sadly civilized awareness of its dregs, death. Kenneth Reckford, *Horace* (New York, 1969) 91, refers to Lucretius’ fool, whom he summarizes as saying (3.912ff.): “Let us drink, for life is short.” Reckford points out that Horace agreed with the fool. He might also have pointed out old Simo in Plautus’ *Mostellaria* (724–25): “Enjoy yourself. At the same time, remember how short life is.” On the connection of *otium*, death, and “*carpe diem*” in Horace, see the sensitive comments by Michael O’Laughlin, *The Garland of Repose: The Literary Celebration of Civic and Retired Leisure. The Traditions of Homer and Vergil, Horace and Montaigne* (Chicago and London 1978) 150–53. See also D. N. Levin, “Horace’s Preoccupation With Death,” *CJ* 63(1968) 315–20, which contains additional bibliography.

Even he who cries *carpe diem* in frenzied lust is, for the moment, philosophical; for the moment, at least, he steps outside the frenzy and advocates a way of life. It is in this blend of double awareness, first of love and then of life, co-existing in the civilized and yet passionate psyche, that Horace attains his artistic goal.

Augustus adiectis Britannis
Imperios gravibusque Persis.

Only if Augustus rights the wrong done to Rome in the defeat of Crassus and his army, only—Horace seems to be saying—if he regains the standards and soldiers lost in those Asiatic fields; only if he adds Britain and Parthia to the Roman imperium, will he become *divus*. And the contingency itself is craftily ironic, for the deification of Augustus will, says Horace, be like that we have in *Iuppiter Tonans*. Such primitive notions of deity had long been made sophisticated, and even the Horace who was converted from the naive Epicurean (*Odes* 1.34) was not apt to be less sophisticated in such matters than Cicero (e.g., in the *De Republica* 1.25 or 1.56).

Horace, however, only “seems” to be promising divinity as a reward for imperial expansion. By the end of the poem, by drawing a parallel between Regulus and Augustus, as he also draws one between Augustus and Jupiter, Horace will be counselling far otherwise than he appears to be doing, and otherwise than he is generally taken to have done.³ If Augustus is to emulate Regulus, he will have to abandon—at least militarily—those shameful Roman soldiers in Asia, just as Regulus counselled the Roman state to abandon their predecessors in Carthage. In point of fact, Augustus did not embark on a military campaign to rescue the Roman soldiers and to recapture the lost standards,⁴ and though he did not, though—perhaps even because—he refused to fulfill the conditions seemingly laid down in the opening strophe, he became *divus*. The ode is patriotic but not chauvinistic. Horace here is scrupulously non-committal on the prospect of conquest; he believed in a policy of containment, as was made specifically clear in the third patriotic ode. Since what follows in *Ode* 3.5 is a further sign of his own policy, we may be sure that he had

³ Generally by, among others, Reckford (above, note 2) 72; K. Quinn, *Horace: The Odes* (London 1980) 253; R. Syme, *Roman Revolution* (Oxford 1956) 286–87; E. Fraenkel, *Horace* (Oxford 1957) 273; D. H. Porter, *Horace's Poetic Journey: A Reading of Odes 1–3* (Princeton 1987) 166–69; Grimal, 145–46; and G. Williams, *The Third Book of Horace's Odes* (Oxford 1969) 57. V. B. Jameson, “*Virtus Reformed: An ‘Aesthetic Response’ Reading of Horace Odes III.2*,” *TAPA* 114 (1984) 235 and 239–40, is an exception and reads the poem as I do, as indicating a position against a war with Parthia and in favor of a negotiated settlement; such also seems to be the position of C. Witke, *Horace's Roman Odes: A Critical Examination* (Leiden 1983) 60–63. See also J. W. Ambrose, “Horace's Foreign Policy: *Odes* 4.4,” *CJ* 69 (1973): 26–27, who takes 4.4, another poem which hearkens back to the Punic Wars, as showing Horace's recommendation to Augustus *not* to embark on a policy of imperial aggression (in the case of 4.4, against Germany).

⁴ In 20 B.C.E., Augustus sent Tiberius on a *diplomatic* mission to Armenia, where he obtained release of the Roman prisoners and the captured standards (Syme, 301–2 and 388; also M. Cary, *A History of Rome* [London 1954] 497). *Odes* 3.5 does not discuss this policy of negotiation which Augustus eventually followed. Perhaps such a policy did not occur to the hawks who were clamoring for action and was not being discussed when Horace wrote. Horace's *Odes* were published in 23; surely there was ample time for the idea of diplomacy to arise between the time of publication and Augustus' decision. The eventual policy of negotiation is, I think, consistent with a nonbelligerant reading of the poem.

reservations and doubts about whether Augustus would succeed as emperor⁵: the *provida mens* of Regulus really belongs to Horace, and it is for him a *persona* by which he might counsel the princeps.⁶

If Augustus dominates the opening of the poem, Regulus dominates the remainder; and Regulus is no fit symbol for a conquering hero deified, like Alexander, for his stunning victories. Whatever divinity Regulus possesses is internal, not external. It is not Parthia and Britain that will make Augustus divine,⁷ but some moral victory in the face of defeat. Regulus, we know, was captured by Rome's early Parthia, the Carthaginians—a fate scarcely available to Augustus. After the formal Pindaric opening, Horace never explicitly returns to Augustus, and herein he does not follow the Pindaric and Greek mode and model.⁸ He is more like Bacchylides, whose subtly abrupt ending in, for example, the fifth ode on Heracles and Meleager, demands that the reader make the necessary connections.

Latin allows, far more than formal English, the use of a pronoun with a vague or general antecedent: *quod* or *hoc*. In the fourth strophe we find just such a pronoun, and to establish its antecedent will require thought. In the second and third strophes Horace paints a degrading picture of the remnants of Crassus' armies, settling down in and under Asiatic despotism, wed to barbaric wives and obeying barbaric fathers-in-law: the enormity of this form of treason is made specific in line 7: *Pro curia inversique mores!* Bad enough for Romans to be such unAugustan *coloni*; but, even worse, they are not really *coloni* at all, despite their domestic and agricultural *otium*; and, in fact, if we reject Bentley's mild reading *arvis*, we see in the *armis* of the manuscripts evidence that these barbarianized soldiers even warred against their ancient homeland. Small wonder that Horace exclaims at their *oblivio* of the sacred shields, of their names,⁹ of the eternal hearth-goddess, who was symbol of a Jupiter and an *Urbs Romana* still unharmed.

These two strophes, together with the first contingent deification of Augustus, are all the antecedent of the *hoc* which begins line 13: *hoc caverat mens*

⁵ Like 3.3, the poem is a moral warning as well as a praise of Augustus. In 3.1 the notion of "stick-to-itiveness" is Augustan and adumbrates what is coming; yet Horace is also hinting at possible defections and falterings on the part of Augustus and his empire. Jameson takes 3.2 in this double way—as praise and warning—*passim* 233–35.

⁶ Not unlike the use of Juno in 3.3. Fraenkel, (above, note 3) 272, sees the Regulus story as a counterpart to the Juno scene.

⁷ On Horace's views of the deification of Augustus as consistent with the party line, see M. S. Santirocco, *Unity and Design in Horace's Odes* (Chapel Hill and London 1986) 121–22.

⁸ On the Pindaric quality of Horace's verses, see Nisbet and Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace: Odes, Book 1* (Oxford 1970) xiii; Fraenkel (above, note 3) 283–85 and 426–30; also G. Williams, "Horace" in *Greece and Rome New Surveys in the Classics* 6 (Oxford 1972) 31. G. Davis wittily observes that "the tradition of appealing to the authority of Pindar to substantiate unmotivated digression in later poets continues unabated" ("Silence and Decorum: Encomiastic Convention and the Epilogue of Horace *Carm.* 3.2," *Classical Antiquity* 2 [1983] 10n. 2.)

⁹ Quinn (above, note 3) 254: "the *Marsus* and *Apulus* should represent tough Sabellian stock." We should of course recall that Horace himself is from Apulia.

provida Reguli. What had the *provida mens* of Regulus been wary of? What is the Pindaric transition which Horace effects from an Augustus, perhaps hot on the heels of universal *imperium*,¹⁰ to Regulus and the Carthaginian wars? In dramatizing the *mythos* of Regulus, Horace succeeds so well that most readers remember the ode as “the Regulus ode.”

Horace’s poem differs significantly from Cicero’s version of Regulus in *De Officiis*. When a poet changes historical or traditional details,¹¹ we ought to ask why. Cicero stresses the exchange of prisoners and makes his Regulus argue more against returning Carthaginians than redeeming Romans; Horace makes his Regulus speak only of the captive Romans, who—Regulus sternly argues—ought to perish unpitied (*immiserabilis*). Their fate is diametrically opposed to that of Crassus’ soldiery, settled slothfully in barbarian servitude: it is as if Horace were lamenting equally a decline in both Roman and barbarian standards, for it is quite clear that Carthage would not only torture Regulus to death for his own *inversi mores*¹² but would also slaughter the captives.

We may schematize this shift in a proportion:

$$\frac{\text{Parthia}}{\text{Carthage}} :: \frac{\text{Crassus' captive soldiers}}{\text{Regulus \& captive soldiers}} :: \frac{\text{Augustus}}{\text{Regulus}}$$

Just as the Parthians did not slaughter or make slaves of their prisoners, where the Carthaginians did, so Augustus ought to allow the Roman “deserters” to wither in barbarian sloth, even as Regulus urged the Romans to force the Carthaginians to slaughter their captives. Different times, different *mores*, Horace seems to be saying—though of course the changes will be proportional. The ethical ratio will govern the imagery and argument of the entire ode.

Regulus’ *oratio*—which, though brief, exemplifies the formal classical oration¹³—occupies twenty of the poem’s fifty-six lines and comes in the exact center, lines 18–40. It gives the ode its tripartite structure: the opening allusion to Augustus and the Parthians; Regulus and his speech on Carthage; the final picture of Regulus’ austere *officium*, although that austerity is couched, as we shall see, in images that demand an awareness of *carpe diem*. The picture will, necessarily, have oblique reference to Augustus.

¹⁰ According to Cary, (above, note 4) 494–95, public opinion urged Augustus to fresh wars and conquests. Augustus, however, saw that war was no longer advantageous to Rome.

¹¹ And Horace tells the story differently from the others. On the relevance of Cicero’s account, see Fraenkel (above, note 3) 272 and J. Krókowski, “Die Regulus Ode des Horaz,” *Eos* 56 (1966): 151–60. Fraenkel (like Shorey earlier) observes that Polybius does not mention Regulus’ mission to Rome and death. Grimal, (above, note 1) 145, thinks, however, that Polybius’ general idea of Rome’s reaching its acme of greatness at the time of the first two Punic wars may have inspired Horace to write the ode. He claims that Horace in 3.5 agrees with the view, but I do not see how he has come up with the idea.

¹² Regulus violates his word to Carthage; see below.

¹³ Regulus’ speech may be outlined thus:

I. Exordium: 18–20

II. Narrative: 21–24

III. Proof: 25–38

IV. Peroration: 38–40

Terms for shame or its opposite appear in each of the three parts and tie them together: *turpis* and *inversi mores* (6-7); *pudor* (38); and *pudica* (41). Crassus' soldiery became examples of a *turpis maritus*, clearly to a *coniunx* who is both *barbara* and *impudica*; for Rome to ransom its cowardly youth, who let themselves be captured rather than die, is *turpis*; and Regulus' own wife, called *pudica*, belies—almost—her epithet by her human wish to keep Regulus from fulfilling his *fides*. No one doubts the chastity of Regulus' wife; but her conduct, if it had affected his decision, would have rendered both herself and him *impudicus*. Regulus is unmoved, except for his own torque-like movement (*torvus*) of turning his proud head down and to the side—a motion which Horace calls *virilis*. Even thus Augustus is being asked to turn his head down in shame and away in rejection from the corrupt remnants of Crassus' army and the corrupting patriotic pleas made in their corrupt behalf. We may remember that Ovid designates the natural gaze of man as *sublime* (*Metamorphoses* 1.85). The virility of Regulus is the means by which he strengthens the consilium of his fellow-senators, described as wavering (*labantis*,¹⁴—a physical symbol of the *ruina* which Regulus predicts in line 40, as the climax of his *oratio*). In ironic contrast, Augustus is being asked to weaken the jingoistic resolve of Romans to attack Parthia, for by weakening their unwavering militarism, he will—in fact—be strengthening the Roman state.

Horace moves from part 1 of the Ode, from Augustus, to Regulus by means of the word *toga* (10), that distinctly Roman garb which enabled Cicero simply to denote Romans as *togati* (e.g., *Phil.* 5.5.14). It is one of the symbolic items which Marsus and Apulus—the G. I. Joes of Romanitas—have forgotten, along with the sacred Salic shields, the Vestal Virgins, and their very names. The primary reference is, of course, to the *toga virilis*, which symbolized their entrance into manhood and citizenship. Such togas were white; but other togas, those with purple, are also intended, for they represent the civic government of Rome. Apulia—Horace's home territory—was the region which produced the best wool in Italy, and togas were always made of wool.¹⁵ Furthermore, Apulia is the region in which Tarentum is located, the word with which Horace closes the ode. Tarentum was the center of a dyeing industry, one which sought, by means of *fucus*—the word will turn up a few lines below—to imitate the finest ancient dye, that of Tyre; and Tyre, we must remember, was the ancient homeland of Carthage, the enemy against whom Regulus is to plead with such poignant rhetoric.

That rhetoric contains a profoundly simple, and profoundly complex, simile:

¹⁴ A term used of falling temples in 3.6.3.

¹⁵ L. M. Wilson, *The Clothing of the Ancient Romans* (Baltimore 1938) 38. For much of the information on wool and wool-dyeing, I am indebted to this book and also to R. J. Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology* 2nd. ed., IV (Leiden 1964). On domestic Italian wool-dyeing, see M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* (Oxford 1957) 73; on Apulia and Tarentum as wool producers, H. T. Rowell, *Rome in the Augustan Age* (Norman, Oklahoma 1962) 136.

...neque amissos colores
 lana refert medicata fuco,
 nec vera virtus cum semel excidit
 curat reponi deterioribus.

The simile is, first and foremost, a means of expressing the notion of irreversibility: as wool once dyed can never regain its true color, so virtue once stained can never be pure and whole again. But Horace's *callida iunctura* and *curiosa felicitas* are at work here as they are everywhere: and in such loaded words as *medicata* and *fuco* we are meant to see the worlds both of Regulus and Augustus. In the earlier days of the Republic, togas were white, or whatever natural color the wool may have had, and purple was reserved for the curile magistrates. As *luxuria* came, the emperors—and even Julius Caesar—found that they had to pass laws against excessive use of purple in garments (Suetonius, *Life of Julius Caesar* 43). So great was the demand that imitation of the Tyrian dye appeared, notably the *fucus* of Tarentum. The word *fucus* comes to be synonymous with deceit and simulation (e.g., *Sat.* 1.2.83) because it is an imitation or faking of the true *purpura*. We need to remember this meaning in order to follow the double application made by Horace of Regulus' simile, which is at once applicable to *his* own situation and to that of the Augustan age.

Caesar and Augustus both censured, and sought to censor, the use of the alien Tyrian dye, partly because it was foreign, partly because it was costly, partly because it was a sign of Rome's growing materialistic *luxuria*.¹⁶ The historical Regulus, of course, would have the simple sense of the simile in mind: Marsus and Apulus ought to keep their souls and characters like their togas, pure, white, native, Roman. But the symbolic Regulus, the Augustan analogue, would take the simile complexly, and the Augustan protest would be dual: first against the foreign fakery of stained garments at all; second against the spurious pretentiousness of attempting to pass off native ersatz dyes as the real—but hatefully alien—thing.

Horace's analogy of wool and virtue is a capsule of the whole ode.¹⁷ At first one takes it as a glancing simile, true at one point only: the irreversibility of the two things, pure white (or natural) wool and pure white (or natural) virtue. But to simplify Horatian intricacy is always dangerous, and especially here, for a merely glancing simile would make Regulus' *oratio* applicable only

¹⁶ Of course, censure of luxury, and of purple in particular, began very early on in Roman history, perhaps even in the tenth Table of the Twelve Tables; it continued in the Oppian Laws and on in the sumptuary laws of Caesar and Augustus.

¹⁷ S. J. Harrison, "Philosophical Imagery in Horace *Odes* 3.5," *CQ* 36 (1986) 502–7, has discovered what may have been Horace's sources for the simile: Plato's *Republic* 429D and Cicero's lost *Hortensius* (frag. 96 Grilli). Harrison regards Horace as using the image differently from Plato, but he admits he is puzzled. I think, however, Horace uses it analogously: according to Plato, right opinion is the dye for the virgin wool of the young guardians; in Horace, native dyes are good; foreign dyes added on are bad. Witke, (above, note 3) 64n. 14, cites the image in Persius 3.37 and Ennius, *Annals* 5.35, but says only that the image is associated with moral discussion.

to the *captiva pubes*, where in fact it is peculiarly and poignantly pertinent to himself.

Schematically the simile works thus:

<u>lana cum coloribus</u>	..	<u>lana medicata fucō</u>
virtus vera	..	virtus amissa

Yet one must remember that for the Romans dyed wool was a good thing—when dyed with native dyes,¹⁸ like that obtained from Aquinum. In *Epistles* 1.10.26ff., Horace says, correctly, that he who cannot tell native dye from foreign is almost as badly off as he who cannot tell right from wrong. The most popular dyes were those imported from Tyre and Sidon—ancestral homeland of the Carthaginians—and from Africa, the Carthaginian continent.¹⁹ Horace mentions such dyes as extravagant luxury in *Odes* 2.16.36ff.

Horace is not, then, arguing that pure white wool is better than dyed wool—as the analogy might at first seem to argue; instead, he is arguing that wool dyed with native hues (hence *amissos colores*) is better than that dyed with foreign stains. So, too, he is not arguing that *virtus* must be undyed in order to be *vera*. Instead, he is arguing that it must be dyed with native Roman hues and not foreign stains. Regulus is saying that foreign dyes added to native Roman hues of virtue are an irremedial stain; and such is what has happened to the *captiva pubes*—both those in Carthage and Parthia. But if we allow Regulus to be only moralistic and not moral, we shall diminish both the man and the ode that is his greatest encomium. Regulus, too, was captured, along with the soldiers who, in his eyes, are not to be pitied, and he spent five captive years in Carthage before being sent to Rome as a negotiator for peace.²⁰ Five years is a long time, long enough for the foreign and African *fucus* to have started staining his native Roman hues. His harsh dicta are equally applicable to himself. He was sent to Rome on the “foul condition” (14–15) that he present Carthage’s case. That trust he broke, and in so doing stained his native Roman hue of *virtus*, imbued in him by his Roman *paideia*. Those who think that he returned to the Carthaginian *tortor* simply because he pledged his word do not see that he broke his word; and, once he had done so, his *virtus* was immedicably lost.

Why, then, should he have been so casuistically scrupulous? Regulus returns to Carthage precisely because he ought to, since by his conduct he has shown himself to be no better than the *captiva pubes*. He rejects the kisses of his chaste (*pudica*) wife and children as if he were *minor capitii*: that is, having been captured, he has forfeited most, and perhaps all, of his native Roman rights

¹⁸ Shorey (*Horace: Odes and Epodes* (Chicago, New York, Boston 1919) 342 takes *colores* (27) as “native hues” and cites the *simplex ille candor* of Quintilian (1.1.5).

¹⁹ Strabo 16.2.23; Pliny, *Natural History* 5.76. Macrobius (2.4.14) reports the witty quip of Augustus when his tailor told him that if he held his cloth up higher it would not seem too dark: “Must I walk on my roof garden before the people in Rome say I am well dressed?”

²⁰ Five years is the traditional length of captivity (Regulus was captured in 255 and sent to Rome in 249). For the dates see *OCD* under “Regulus”; also J. Higginbotham, *Cicero on Moral Obligation* (London 1967) 173 note a.

as a citizen.²¹ Livy reports (22.61) that the Romans always wanted compassion for their own soldiers when captured, and it is against that piteous predilection that Regulus is fighting, even to his own disgrace and loss (26–27). Though back in Rome, and still *virilis* (43), he is a living *exemplum* (15) of his own theory, that a captured Roman is a man not worth having. In fact, he is guilty of even worse than the captive *pubes*, for he has broken his word, made to the Carthaginians, to act as negotiator. His own *vera virtus*, already stained by ignominious capture, is doubly stained by his patriotic oathbreaking. No wonder that he turns his head to the ground in humility, an action described as *torvus* (44). *Torvus* contains the same alliterative sound root used to describe the arms of the *captiva pubes* (22)—*retorta*—and the “torture” lying ahead of him in Carthage; here, however, it is internal, not external, torture. No wonder, indeed, he looks *torvus* when his chaste (*pudica*) wife and friends seek to persuade him to break his word again and remain in Rome. Were his wife and friends to succeed, they would at once lose their own *pudor* and involve poor Regulus in triple guilt, for only by going back to face the barbarian *tortor* (50) can he hope to redeem himself. His Cato-like simile strikes at himself.

Horace describes Regulus’ departure in a brilliant triple oxymoron: *egregius properaret exul* (48).²² “One out of a herd”—such is what *egregius* means; then it comes to mean “outstanding” and even “conspicuously splendid.” We may remember Horace’s description of himself (*Epist.* 1.4.16) as a sleek porker in the Epicurean herd (*grex*). The word “hasten” (*propero*) is ironic: Regulus’ passage is delayed by his family and friends, and the voyage of pain he is about to start on is scarcely one to which a man would hasten. And yet, since his speech has made his own awareness of his guilt bitter, we may well believe that he did wish to hasten; the very entreaties of family and friends must have been a pain which he would avoid as much and as soon as he could. And *exul*: well, an *egregius exul* is ironic, since *exules* were generally those who were hostile to the state. And, as we know, under the empire, *exules* were forbidden to wear the toga, whether the white toga of native honesty, the dark toga of guilt and mourning, the purple toga of magistracy, or even the fakely purple toga of the would-be aristocrats.

Oxymorons, like verbal links, abound in the ode: Regulus’ *torvus vultus*, with its constrained grimness, contrasts with his haste to perform his duty; equally *torvus* anticipates his fate, being prepared by the barbarian *tortor*—and in this word for “barbarian” (*barbarus*) we find the first use of that word since the *barbara coniunx* of the defecting and defective Roman soldier in line 5. To reconcile these contrasts, Horace resorts to his most incredible and yet perfect image: Regulus returns to the fate he well knows (*atque sciebat*) even as (*non aliter*) a Roman lawyer, his case now adjudicated, separates the crowd of clients

²¹ As Shorey (above, note 18) 342 notes, “With heroic Roman pedantry Regulus, applying this technicality to himself, declined to speak from his place in the Senate (Cicero, *de Officiis* 3.27) or to claim the rights of a *paterfamilias*.” Perhaps Shorey’s pejorative wit let him omit another possible pedantic technicality: as candidates were required to wear *togae candidae*, so those on trial or in mourning wore dark togas.

²² Cf. M. O. Lee, *Word, Sound, and Image in the Odes of Horace* (Ann Arbor 1969) 16.

impeding his way and delaying his return (*reditus*). Horace suggests, delicately, that the lawyer's proper place is not Rome and the Forum and the law-courts; his *reditus*, his "return" is to his true home, a type of the Sabine farm. For Horace's conscious awareness of Tibur and Tarentum as superior even to the Sabine farm, we need only consult *Odes* 2.6, where he expresses a wish to retire to just such cultured and cultivated seats.²³ It is there that he "hurries," it is there that he "stretches out" his mind and body (*tendens*), even as Regulus "hurries" and "stretches out" his mind and body to the Carthaginian rack.

With a casual, almost "throw-away" air, Horace concludes his picture of the weary lawyer returning to his country seat to refresh his soul—a country seat located in such places as the fields of Venafrum, noted for their wine, which both Varro and Horace himself thought worthy to be compared to Horace's favorite Falernian, or in Tarentum, whose Spartan origin Horace takes the trouble to mention. It was also a Spartan who aided the Carthaginians in capturing Regulus (Dio Cassius 11.23 [Zonaras 8.13]).²⁴ Regulus is compared to an imperial patron of Horace's own day—his case having been judged (*diudicata lite*: the phrase is ambiguous, since it may refer to the patron's decision on a client's case or Regulus' own self-imposed decision)—who cleaves his way, like a ship through water, through the crowd of clients, his *longa negotia* over, the weekend in view. The phrase *longa negotia* recalls for us Horace's picture of Augustus, in the opening line of *Epistle* 2.1, that epistle written to and for the emperor on imperial command: *Cum tot sustineas et tanta negotia solus*. The nexus of allusions should make us alertly sensitive. Tarentum, founded by Spartans, became the greatest city of Magna Graeca, noted—ironically—for its sybaritic style of life. In constant trouble, it appealed successively for aid to Sparta herself; to Alexander of Epirus—uncle of Alexander the Great; to Pyrrhus—after insulting Rome; and—in the second Punic War—to Hannibal, with whom it sided. Horace frequently refers to it, calling it *molle* and *imbelle*.

And it is to this city that the weary Roman lawyer retreats from Rome, even as Regulus makes his retreat to Carthage, never called *molle* or *imbelle*. What can Horace mean by this strangely contrasting comparison? Does he wish merely to show the calmness and fortitude of Regulus' mind? Such an explanation will not be wrong, though it will leave problematical the reasons for choosing these two towns, neither of which is a typical resort town, like Baiae. Venafrum and Tarentum represent, respectively, wine and Greek culture, two of the elements which make up the Horatian ethos, with its artful mixture of pose and repose. The comparison cuts both ways: if it serves to underline Regulus' stoic insouciance, Regulus serves equally well to underline the kind of *carpe diem* philosophy which pervades Horace's mature works.

The reader who takes the trouble to respond to what Fraenkel (p. 272) calls the veiled hints of the ending will be led back to the beginning, to Augustus, whose conditional deification is made contingent on his acquisition of Britain

²³ See R. G. M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace Odes Book II* (Oxford 1978) 93–105, esp., 94–96. The sense of *carpe diem* in 2.6 is intensified by the references in the last stanza to Horace's own death.

²⁴ On the significance of the Spartan origin of Tarentum, cf. R. Ancona, "Horace Odes 3.5: Why 'Lacedaemonian Tarentum?'" *Augustan Age* 8 (1988):1–4.

and Parthia, especially Parthia, the Augustan Carthage. Historically, we know, Augustus did not react to Parthia as Regulus did to Carthage: he negotiated for the return of the lost ensigns—without the lost soldiers—and he never did invade Britain. Did he read this ode, written by a man he so admired that he sought to make him an imperial secretary, with more sensitive insight than most of us, who take it as a plea by Horace *honoris causa*? It is impossible to say, but in fact Augustus was deified without fulfilling either of the conditions imposed by the opening strophe.²⁵

Would Augustus have been more divine had he captured both Britain and Parthia? Or would he have exposed Rome and himself to a life like that of Regulus, utterly at variance with the Augustan ideal of *otium*?²⁶ Virgil had already, in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, pronounced the proper *modus vivendi* for Rome: to administer the *pax Romana*, an *imperium sine fine*. Was that lack of limit to be temporal or spatial? Augustus wisely chose to see it as temporal, and Horace's ode reinforces both the Virgilian dictum and the Augustan decision. Rome's strenuous *forte* now was to be legal, the administration of law and order, not endless conquest. Then, after a hard week's work at the bar, the Roman administrator, of whom Augustus was the archetype, was to refresh himself with wine and Greek culture. Regulus had been the true type of Roman in the days of expanding empire; but a new ideal was now needed, even as Augustus himself was proclaiming, acting, and enacting. The new ideal was to retain the integrity and *auctoritas* of the old, but its outward form and show were to be mellowed and cultivated, even as the grim old Cato had, according to tradition, taken up Greek in advanced old age.²⁷ If need be, the inner core of stoic-minded

²⁵ In the phrase *praesens divus*, Horace at first seems to be hinting at the value of a glory for Augustus surpassing that of Julius Caesar: deification in Augustus' own lifetime. When we recall Regulus, however, we shall be more likely to see that Horace is warning Augustus against any such ambition for apotheosis. Virgil had already, allegorically, called Augustus *deus* (*Eclogues* 1, etc.), but allegory is not formal deification. (Cf. V. B. Johnson, 231–40, whose views are similar to mine. She gives the bibliography for the usual and contrary view.) Augustus seems to have chosen not Alexander but Hercules as his model: for many years his seal-ring was a picture of that Greek hero known as the benefactor of mankind, the upholder of the world, whose life was a choice of *ponos* and *arete*. Hercules became a god at his death by his choice of service, and his few attempts at conquest are deviations from that ideal. Horace makes the comparison of Augustus and Hercules explicit in 3.3.9–12 and in *Epistle* 2.1, the letter to Augustus. On the association of Augustus and Hercules in Virgil, Horace, Ovid, etc., see G. K. Galinsky, *The Herakles Theme: The Adaptations of the Hero in Literature from Homer to the Twentieth Century* (Totowa, NJ 1972) 138–46; of Augustus and Hercules in Horace, Nisbet and Hubbard, *Commentary II* (above, note 23) 189.

²⁶ For the idea of *otium* as beneficial, esp. in Cicero and later in Seneca, see J. M. André, *Recherches sur l'otium romain* (Paris 1962). Cf. J. Perret, *Horace* tr. B. Humez (New York 1964) 97 and I. M. Le M. DuQuesnay, "Horace and Maecenas: The Propaganda Value of *Sermones* 1" in T. Woodman and D. West, *Poetry and Politics in the Age of Augustus* (Cambridge 1984) 50–51. For Horace as "the greatest poet of free time," see O'Laughlin 51–154.

²⁷ According to tradition, but a mistaken view. For the error, see *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature II* (Cambridge 1982) 140, and for the controversy (with refs.) note 4.

duty would be there to enable Romans to act like Regulus, or like Marcus Aurelius; but under Augustus such needs need not arise. The very anachronism of having Regulus go to Venafrum or Tarentum works for Horace, nor is it a tiny blemish, to be overlooked in our admiration of Horatian art. Regulus would be, in the Augustan age, an anachronism, just as Horace and Augustus would be anachronisms in the age of Regulus.²⁸

When Horace sketches the picture of the Roman lawyer, as he goes back to his country seat at Tarentum, he wishes that picture to enhance the noble fortitude of Regulus; but he wishes also to have it contrast with the shameful life of the Roman soldiers living, not dead, in foreign fields and arms. Theirs is a life of ignoble sloth, not noble *otium*; they perform no *longa negotia* of law and order, as do the Roman lawyer and Augustus.²⁹ We may see, in the phrase *longa negotia*, the specific negotiations conducted for the return of the Roman standards of Crassus' captured army—a negotiation after which Augustus could return to his country seat of Greek culture, of wine and honey, even as the symbolic Roman lawyer returned to Venafrum or Tarentum. And since that symbolic Roman lawyer is in turn the symbol for Regulus, we are meant to see that Augustus emulated Regulus by rejecting military means to effect the return of the captive Roman soldiers. All that remains to complete the parallel is the reversed parallel detail of Carthaginian torture and life in the country seat at Tarentum. Both, Horace is saying, are Roman duties, appropriate to the times peculiar to each hero.

Horace himself, an Apulus, had fought in foreign fields and arms, but his life was to be an exemplar of how Romans should live under Augustus. The patriotic odes are one more sample of how the Apulian bee—the Virgilian image for the Augustan state³⁰—could distil honey appropriate for all occasions,

²⁸ On the anachronism of Regulus/the lawyer to Tarentum, see G. Pasquali, *Orazio Lirico* (Florence 1920) 706. For the literature on anachronistic similes in Augustan poetry generally, see Harrison (above, note 17) 505n. 9.

²⁹ The ending of the poem has been variously interpreted: A. Y. Campbell, (*Horace* [London 1924] 226) thinks that in addition to showing Regulus' fortitude, we see the hero, "his *longa negotia* of life over...his soul at rest...going to his long home"; H. L. Tracy ("Thought Sequence in the Ode," *Phoenix* 5 [1951] 116) that by the ending "unbearable thoughts are diverted...into less painful trivialities"; S. Commager (*The Odes of Horace* [Bloomington and London 1962] 226), interpreting the ending almost indentially to Campbell but adding that the daily routine "provides a context in which the heroic becomes meaningful"; Reckford (above, note 2) 80 that in both the case of the lawyer and of Regulus "the ordinary complication of life is resolved by a simple and proper act"; Quinn (above, note 3) 255 that the simile shows Regulus' calm and detached state of mind; Harrison (above, note 17) 505 that in the change of domicile there is a hint of the change from abode in this world to abode in the next (Harrison then traces the image of change of abode as a symbol for death from Plato to Cicero); Witke, (above, note 3) 64, that the ending "by returning the ode to this level of domestic reality...creates the opportunity for seeing that the enemy we might be accused of consorting with, the enemy that renders us oblivious of our Roman worth, might exist in a domestic setting as well as beyond the empire's frontiers."

³⁰ See B. Otis, *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford 1964) 181–88; also Y. Nadeau, "The Lover and the Statesman: A Study in Apiculture (Virgil, *Georgics*

since sweetness and light, honey and wine are the great symbols of antiquity's vision of tranquil order.*

4.281–558)” 79–80 in T. Woodman and D. West, *Poetry and Politics in the Age of Augustus* (Cambridge 1984).

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