

## HORACE IN LOVE, HORACE ON LOVE\*

### ABSTRACT

*The anti-Catullan and anti-elegiac perspective characterizing Horace's erotic Odes builds on elements of the biography of his persona found in his juvenile collections, the Satires and the Epodes, where the construction of Horace's poetic autobiography as a lover brings together matters of didactics, ethics and literary criticism.*

**Keywords:** Horace; love poetry; persona; poetic autobiography; *Satires*; *Epodes*; *Odes*

### INTRODUCTION

Few ancient poets are as eager as Horace to provide specific details about different aspects of their lives in their own works. By telling his readers about his geographical origins, his family, his education, his role during the Civil Wars, his relationship with contemporary figures, his hobbies and lifestyle, Horace constructs a poetic persona characterized by a strong temporal dimension.<sup>1</sup> The differences of genre between the works in which this autobiography is outlined sometimes affect the nature and quantity of the autobiographical details provided, but not the narrative itself, which is consistent throughout the *Satires*, *Epodes*, *Odes* and *Epistles*. The temporality and consistency of Horace's autobiography add to its credibility, which in turn contributes to abolishing the distinction between the poet and his persona in the readers' eyes.<sup>2</sup> Temporality and consistency, I argue, also inform Horace's narrative of his personal (that is, his persona's) erotic experiences, which supports the peculiar anti-neoteric<sup>3</sup> and anti-elegiac attitude that distinguishes him from the other contemporary Roman love poets.

Fragments of this narrative are scattered throughout the *Satires*, *Epodes* and *Odes*, in a way that invites the reader to appreciate how his criticism of the neoteric and elegiac approach to love and love poetry developed through phases (a criticism which is less central, but still present, in the *Epistles*).<sup>4</sup> These fragments share three important features, on which my discussion will focus: a didactic tone, by which Horace casts himself as a teacher or advisor about erotic matters; a discourse about the ethics of love, consisting in a commentary about his as well as other people's behaviour; and an intertextual engagement in literary debates on the topic, aimed at putting a discourse

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<sup>1</sup> E. Gowers, 'Fragments of autobiography in Horace *Satires* 1', *ClAnt* 22 (2003), 55–91, at 55–8.

<sup>2</sup> R.G. Mayer, 'Persona<|> problems. The literary persona in antiquity revisited', *MD* 50 (2003), 56–80. My argument builds on his approach. See also C. Tsitsiou-Chelidoni, 'Horace's "persona<|> problems": on continuities and discontinuities in poetry and in classical scholarship', in S.J. Harrison, S. Frangoulidis and T.D. Papanghelis (edd.), *Intratextuality and Latin Literature* (Berlin, 2018), 173–97.

<sup>3</sup> I use the word 'neoteric' with awareness of the caveats set out by R.O.A.M. Lyne, 'The neoteric poets', *CQ* 28 (1978), 167–87, at 168–9 with n. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Ars P.* 75–8, with M.E. Clark, 'Horace, *Ars Poetica* 75–78: the origin and worth of elegy', *CW* 77 (1983), 1–5.

about how to love on the same tracks as a discourse about how to write about love. I will explore these elements, and the connections between them, by considering selections from Horace's *Satires* (1.2 and 2.3), *Epodes* (11) and *Odes* (1.5, 1.13 and 1.33).

'DEGLI AMANTI LE SMANIE DERIDO': *SATIRE* 1.2

*Satire* 1.2 is about the balanced approach (golden mean) that—Horace recommends—one should adopt in matters of love and sex. This approach should inform the choice of a lover on socioeconomic grounds: middle-class freedwomen should be preferred to adulterous *matronae* at the upper end of the social scale, or prostitutes at the lower end. Most importantly, however, the golden mean should inform one's attitude to erotic experiences: the ideal approach is that which avoids excess, making one content with casual sex and able to experience love as something other than a pathological obsession. Horace enumerates the dangers and downsides of adulterous relationships with upper-class married women, but his argument does not persuade an unnamed fan of *matronae* who disdains erotic pleasures too easily obtained and with whom Horace starts engaging in conversation:

leporem uenator ut alta	105	
in niue sectetur, positum sic tangere nolit,		
cantat et apponit 'meus est amor huic similis; nam		
transuolat in medio posita et fugientia captat.'		
hiscine uersiculis speras tibi posse dolores		
atque aestus curasque grauis e pectore pelli?		110
nonne, cupidinibus statuatur natura modum quem,		
quid latura sibi, quid sit dolutura negatum,		
quaerere plus prodest et inane abscindere soldo?		
num, tibi cum faucis urit sitis, aurea quaeris		
pocula? num esuriens fastidis omnia praeter		115
pauonem rhombumque? tument tibi cum inguina, num, si		
ancilla aut uerna est praesto puer, impetus in quem		
continuo fiat malis tentigine rumpi?		
non ego; namque parabilem amo Venerem facilemque.		
illam 'post paulo', 'sed pluris', 'si exierit uir'		120
Gallis, hanc Philodemus ait sibi quae neque magno		
stet pretio neque cunctetur cum est iussa uenire.		

He sings of how the hunter pursues a hare in deep snow and thus refrains from touching one which lies at hand, and he adds 'This is what my love is like: it flies past what lies at hand to all and it chases what flees.' Do you hope, with little verses like these, to be able to drive sorrows, the ardour of passion and heavy troubles away from your heart? Would it not be more profitable to ask what limit nature sets on desires, what privations she will be able to endure and what, if denied, will make her grieve, and to distinguish void from solid? Do you demand a golden cup, when thirst parches your mouth? Do you scorn everything but peacock and turbot, when you suffer hunger? Would you rather be burst by sexual tension, then, when your loins swell, if a maidservant or a slave-boy is nearby, whom you could attack immediately? Not me; for I love a sexual pleasure that is easy and on hand. 'In a while!' 'But it will cost you more!' 'If my husband is not at home!'—this kind of woman is for the Gauls, says Philodemus; the kind for him is one who is neither very expensive nor slow to come when instructed.

To back up his preference for adulterous relationships with *matronae*, the anonymous speaker of lines 105–8 paraphrases and partly translates Callimachus' *Epigram* 31. In

his response to this, Horace reiterates his argument against adultery with upper-class married women through a series of rhetorical questions that combine references to real-life situation with philosophical remarks of Epicurean stamp (more on this below). The series closes with a crisp assertion of Horace's preference for erotic pleasures that can be easily obtained and do not entail risks, a preference which—he says—he shares with the Greek poet Philodemus (121).<sup>5</sup> By naming him, Horace resorts to the same argumentative weapon as that of his interlocutor at lines 105–8: just as Callimachus is used (tendentiously, as we will see) as a literary authority in favour of adulterous relationships with *matronae*, another Greek author of epigrams is now cited in support of the opposite case.<sup>6</sup>

Before reiterating his argument against adultery with *matronae*, Horace expresses scepticism about the idea that singing poetry, such as the Callimachean *uersiculi*, may be a remedy for erotic pain (109–10). This idea was an important point of a poetic debate in which Callimachus had engaged in *Epigram* 46, a response to Theocritus' *Idyll* 11. The idyll, addressed to the doctor and poet Nikias, opens with a reference to poetry as a φάρμακον (1) for love and cites the case of Polyphemus' song to Galatea as an example. Theocritus' concluding words immediately after the song itself (80–1), however, do not clarify whether the φάρμακον (a word ambiguously meaning both 'medicine' and 'poison') actually worked, or whether the Cyclops deluded himself and his song simply had a palliative effect, perhaps even worsening the disease in the long run.<sup>7</sup> At *Epigr.* 46.1–4, Callimachus is less ambiguous and refers to poetry as a remedy for amatory sufferings, praising Polyphemus for discovering it. In the transition from the paraphrase of Callimachus' *Epigram* 31 (*Sat.* 1.2.105–8) to Horace's expression of scepticism about the therapeutic usefulness of poetry (1.2.109–10), there seems to be no direct intertext with *Epigram* 46. Yet this very transition is a display of poetic learning; for in the reply to his interlocutor Horace tacitly supplies a piece of information about Callimachus' perspective on love, thus adding a further element to a discussion which, up to line 109, had not been concerned with the idea of poetry as a φάρμακον. By doing so, Horace suggests that he has not only spotted the allusion to Callimachus' *Epigram* 31 in the words of his interlocutor, but is also familiar with other epigrams by the same Greek author.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Anth. Pal.* 5.126, with the reference to castration (included in Horace's list of dangers at lines 37–46; cf. *Gallis* at line 121) and the woman's price (cf. *magno ... pretio*, at lines 121–2). Philodemus' fear could be the reason for his erotic inactivity with the married woman of *Anth. Pal.* 5.120. Horace suggests that Philodemus opposes adultery with hesitant and scared wives (120), not adultery *tout court*; indeed, the boldness of the unfaithful married woman in *Anth. Pal.* 5.25 (with the reading θρασεῖα at line 5) convinces Philodemus to commit adultery despite the thoughts of punishment and despite the Epicurean view on the matter: D. Sider (ed.), *The Epigrams of Philodemus. Introduction, Text, and Commentary* (New York and Oxford, 1997), 116–19. Philodemus' description of the daring and confident attitude of the cheating wife in *Anth. Pal.* 5.25 contrasts with the image of the fleeing game in Callimachus' *Epigram* 31.

<sup>6</sup> For Philodemus in *Satire* 1.2, see Q. Cataudella, 'Filodemo nella Satira I 2 di Orazio', *PP* 5 (1950), 18–31. The possible allusion to Philodemus at *Sat.* 1.2.92 (*O crus! O braccia!* Cf. *Anth. Pal.* 5.132) should not be interpreted as a criticism of his perspective. Whereas Horace's point is that some body parts may not be as beautiful as others, Philodemus makes it clear that his positive comments apply to the entire body of the girl (which he can see in full, including her pudenda) and that he is bewitched by each and every anatomical feature of it: Sider (n. 5), 104–7.

<sup>7</sup> S. Goldhill, 'Desire and the figures of fun: glossing Theocritus 11', in A. Benjamin (ed.), *Post-Structuralist Classics* (London and New York, 1988), 79–105, at 86–96; R. Hunter (ed.), *Theocritus. A Selection: Idylls 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11 and 13* (Cambridge, 1999), 220–1.

Horace was not the first Roman poet to pick up and engage in the Hellenistic debate on the usefulness of poetry. Virgil had already engaged in it and indirectly disagreed with Callimachus in *Eclogue* 2, the closest Latin imitation of Theocritus' *Idyll* 11. Virgil does not describe Corydon's song as a φάρμακον as explicitly as Theocritus and Callimachus do, but the dramatic setting of the opening lines of *Eclogue* 2 entails that, by singing, the shepherd is trying to cure his love for Alexis, who gave him no hope of reciprocation (2) and who is not there (cf. *solus*, 4).<sup>8</sup> Virgil's words leave no doubt that Corydon's attempt to soothe his pain through poetry is in vain: his *studium* is *inane* (5), an adjective emphatically located at the very end of the poet's introduction to the *carmen pastorale* itself. It is tempting to question the punctuation of *Eclogue* 2 adopted in all major editions, and take Virgil as the speaker of the last five lines (69–73), since this would create a nice symmetry both within the poem itself (which opens with a five-line introduction) and with regard to Theocritus' *Idyll* 11 (which opens and closes with the poet's comments).<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, the final words about how Corydon's madness (*dementia*, 69) led him to waste his time (70–1) may refer not just to the shepherd's foolish love for Alexis but also to the futility of his attempt to soothe erotic pain through poetry, an issue already anticipated at lines 1–5. If the character of Corydon is a rustic counterpart to Cornelius Gallus, as hypothesized by DuQuesnay,<sup>10</sup> one may speculate that Gallus characterized his elegies as remedies for the pain of love,<sup>11</sup> and that Virgil challenged this idea, just as Horace does at *Sat.* 1.2.109–10. What is certain is that the two key themes of the Horatian passage—namely, the opposition between the pursuit of a hardly achievable love and the preference for easily available erotic pleasures, and the question of the therapeutic power of poetry in erotic matters—had already been paired in various texts of different genres, by Greek and Roman poets, much earlier than *Satire* 1.2. For an author, agreeing with one opinion or another on such issues entailed siding with one literary predecessor or another, with intertextual ramifications.

Intertextuality and siding with one Greek poet or another are important features of Horace's dialogue with the proponent of adultery with *matronae* at *Sat.* 1.2.105–22. So far, we have considered how the literary background of this conversation is provided by Callimachus' *Epigrams* 31 and, less explicitly, 46, as well as by the mention of Philodemus. Hunter spotted allusions to yet another epigram by Callimachus in *Satire* 1.2, namely *Epigram* 28.<sup>12</sup> This programmatic text describes Callimachus' feeling of repulsion for everything that is common and easily available, including a lover who sleeps around (περίφοιτος, 3), and it ends with the praise of the extraordinary beauty of a boy named Lysanias. Horace's words *dolores pelli* (109–10) translate the name Λυσανίη, and Callimachus' use of the rare verb σικχαίνω (4), which generally

<sup>8</sup> I.M. Le M. DuQuesnay, 'From Polyphemus to Corydon. Virgil, *Eclogue* 2 and the *Idylls* of Theocritus', in D. West and T. Woodman (edd.), *Creative Imitation and Latin Literature* (Cambridge, 1979), 35–69, at 47–8. This is what the reader would expect from a close imitation of Theocritus' *Idyll* 11, where the issue of the usefulness of poetry as a φάρμακον is introduced by the *persona loquens* of the poet before the shepherd's song.

<sup>9</sup> For the issue of the punctuation of speeches in Roman poetry, see D. Feeney, 'Hic finis fandi: on the absence of punctuation for the endings (and beginnings) of speeches in Latin poetic texts', *MD* 66 (2011), 45–91 (especially 67–8 on Virgil's *Eclogues*, but with no reference to the case I discuss here).

<sup>10</sup> DuQuesnay (n. 8), 60–3.

<sup>11</sup> As may emerge from Verg. *Ecl.* 10.60–3: P. Gagliardi, *Commento alla decima ecloga di Virgilio* (Hildesheim, 2014), 228–32.

<sup>12</sup> R. Hunter, *The Shadow of Callimachus. Studies in the Reception of Hellenistic Poetry at Rome* (Cambridge, 2006), 110–14.

refers to a feeling of repugnance in front of food one dislikes, is taken up by Horace's *fastidis omnia* (115) in matters of food. The reader is invited to recognize these allusions by the direct paraphrase of another epigram by Callimachus, which immediately precedes them, at *Sat.* 1.2.105–8. Horace's choice to include them in his response to that paraphrase is certainly part of a poetic strategy aimed at further remarking on his opponent's profession of Callimachean élitism in matters of love and sex, as Hunter suggests. However, given that *Epigram* 28 is 'Callimachus' most famous expression of that élitism [and, at the same time,] one in which he himself mocks its pretensions',<sup>13</sup> I submit that Horace's allusions to this text also cast doubt on the accuracy of his interlocutor's professed Callimacheanism.

In the last couplet of *Epigram* 28, Callimachus is about to confess his love to beautiful Lysanies, but he changes his mind when he learns that Lysanies already belongs to somebody else (ἄλλος ἔχει, 6).<sup>14</sup> The irony of this *pointe finale* lies in the fact that Callimachus cannot love Lysanies because he would have to share his affection with at least one other person, which would make the boy περίφοιτος (3).<sup>15</sup> What Callimachus says in this text can be combined with what he says in *Epigram* 31, so as to obtain a more complete picture of the poet's persona: Callimachus likes to chase a difficult lover, but only if the lover is not already taken by somebody else and can be entirely his. As we will see, Horace's construction of his own erotic persona is based on the idea that a reader should look for a consistent and holistic account of a poet's view on love across different texts, rather than relying only on isolated snippets. The anonymous figure quoting Callimachus in *Satire* 1.2 offers a partial reading of Callimachus' perspective, by translating *Epigram* 31 while completely neglecting *Epigram* 28, with which he, a proponent of adulterous relationships, could hardly agree. Horace does not respond by explicitly accusing his interlocutor of not telling the full truth about Callimachus; instead, immediately after reminding his interlocutor, and the readers, that he too is familiar with Callimachus' epigrams and aware of Callimachus' perspective on the issue of the usefulness of poetry as a remedy for love sufferings, he offers a truly Callimachean response by alluding to *Epigram* 28. If so, Horace is not criticizing Callimachus directly but the partial and wrong interpretation of Callimachus' perspective by somebody else, presumably in Rome.<sup>16</sup>

The Latin love poets are the most obvious candidates as his targets. Owing to the lack of primary evidence on neoteric love poetry other than Catullus', and above all the paucity of fragments from Cornelius Gallus' *Amores*, a study of the intertextual relationship between Horace's *Satire* 1.2 and Roman love poetry (produced before and in the early 30s) necessarily focusses on Catullus. Indeed, Horace's response to the proponent of adulterous relationships with *matronae* has several points of contact with Catullus' *œuvre*. Lines 109–10, for instance, appear to be a specific mockery of the love-anguish described in Catullus 2, the first poem about Lesbia in

<sup>13</sup> Hunter (n. 12), 111.

<sup>14</sup> Or 'somebody else, too' (κάλλος): G. Giangrande, 'Callimachus, poetry and love', *Eranos* 67 (1969), 33–42, at 38.

<sup>15</sup> Giangrande (n. 14), 35–8; A. Henrichs, 'Callimachus *Epigram* 28: a fastidious priamel', *HSPH* 83 (1979), 207–12, at 211–12.

<sup>16</sup> R.K. Gibson, *Excess and Restraint. Propertius, Horace, and Ovid's Ars Amatoria* (London, 2007), 24–34 argues that Propertius 2.23 is a response to Horace's *Satire* 1.2. If so, there may be a possible follow-up to this quarrel on the correct interpretation of Callimachus in Propertius' poem, which opens with an allusion to Callimachus' *Epigram* 28.

the collection.<sup>17</sup> Regardless of her true identity, Lesbia is an upper-class married woman (cf. 68b)—which makes Catullus' case a good match for Horace's argument against committing adultery with a rich *matrona*. Horace's words *cantat* (107) and *uersiculis* (109) may hint at neoteric poetry as well. The verb *cantare* occurs again in Horace's *Satires*, at 1.10.19, where another anonymous poet is said to be trained to recite nothing but the poems of Calvus and Catullus.<sup>18</sup> The word *uersiculi*, as a neoteric diminutive, may directly allude to the love poems of Catullus' *libellus*, which Catullus himself calls *uersiculi* (16.3, 50.4). It may also refer to how the lines of Callimachus echoed at *Sat.* 1.2.105–8 come from an epigram, a short form of poetry practised by Catullus and his friends. Catullus' collection features Latin translations or paraphrases of Callimachus' poems, including an epigram (70), as well as two passages where he explicitly refers to his own versions of *carmina Battiadae* (65.15–16, 116.1–2). Finally, Horace's mention of the *Galli* (121), whose taste in erotic matters he and Philodemus condemn, deserves attention. In Rome, these were the castrated priests of Cybele—and the reference thus points to the danger of castration, which both Horace (*Sat.* 1.2.45–6) and Philodemus (*Anth. Pal.* 5.126.5–6) associate with adultery with married women. Perhaps, however, it is not a coincidence that Catullus and almost all other so-called *poetae noui* were from Gallia, and had a particular interest in Cybele and her cult (cf. Catull. 35.17–18 and 63).<sup>19</sup> Alternatively, one may take the word *Galli* to be a direct reference to Cornelius Gallus;<sup>20</sup> if so, and if Gallus' lover Cytheris (*alias* Lycoris) really was Mark Antony's 'official' concubine, the risks Cornelius Gallus was running in having an affair with her seem comparable to those of Catullus' affair with Lesbia (that is, perhaps, Clodia), a married woman.

Horace was not the first Roman poet to criticize the neoteric-elegiac perspective on love. Lucretius had anticipated him in Book 4 of the *De rerum natura* (= *DRN*). The most famous example is probably the catalogue of endearments and epithets addressed by a blinded lover to his *puella* at 4.1160–70, each of which has several equivalents in Greek and Roman love poetry.<sup>21</sup> Lucretius' criticism is even more specific at 4.1146–8 and 4.1171–3, where the poet seems to be responding to two precise statements made by Catullus, respectively at 76.13–14 (about the difficulty of abandoning a long-lasting love) and 86.5–6 (about Lesbia's beauty embracing all of Venus' graces).<sup>22</sup> Horace does not explicitly refer to the *DRN* in *Satire* 1.2, but intertextual connections between the two poems do exist. At 1.2.111–13, in particular, Horace's reference to the force of *natura* and the limits it sets on human desires seems to echo Lucr. 5.1430–3, and the words *inane* and *soldum* are loans from Lucretius' translation of the Epicurean terms τὸ κενόν (the empty space) and τὸ στερεόν (the matter). Further down, Horace's sentiment about luxury at 1.2.115–17 parallels Lucretius' at 2.23–36. More generally, both poets describe lovesickness as a form of human madness leading to troubles and

<sup>17</sup> E. Gowers (ed.), *Horace Satires Book I* (Cambridge, 2012), 113.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. also Cic. *Tusc.* 3.45, although the exact reference is debated: see Lyne (n. 3), 185–6.

<sup>19</sup> The *Galli/Gallae*, understood as the castrated priests of Cybele, feature in Catullus' *carmen* 63, where the eunuch Attis can be seen as the embodiment of Catullus' self-emasculatio: cf. M.B. Skinner, 'Ego mulier: the construction of male sexuality in Catullus', in J.P. Hallett and M.B. Skinner (edd.), *Roman Sexualities* (Princeton, 1997), 129–50, at 133–47.

<sup>20</sup> K. Freudenburg, *The Walking Muse. Horace on the Theory of Satire* (Princeton, 1993), 197; Gowers (n. 17), 115.

<sup>21</sup> J. Godwin (ed.), *Lucretius De rerum natura IV* (Warminster, 1986), 162–3.

<sup>22</sup> E.J. Kenney, 'Doctus Lucretius', *Mnemosyne* 23 (1970), 366–92, at 388–92.

pain, for which the suggested remedy is to resort to what Lucretius calls a *uulgiuga Venus* (4.1071)<sup>23</sup> and Horace a *parabilis Venus* (1.2.119)—namely, paying for sex.

The reader of *Satire* 1.2 has been prepared for this intertextuality by the ‘Lucretianism’ of the preceding satire, particularly in the finale, with the programmatic image of the *conuiuia satur* at 1.117–19 famously echoing *Lucretius* 3.938 and 959–60. In light of this, and of the Epicurean stamp of the golden mean recommended in *Satire* 1.2,<sup>24</sup> Horace’s endorsement of Philodemus—a poet but also an Epicurean philosopher—at *Sat.* 1.2.121 seems to be literary as well as philosophical. To some extent, Lucretius and Philodemus were closer to one another in their approach to Epicureanism than either was to Epicurus himself, since Epicurus regarded poetry as something incompatible with his precepts, whereas both Lucretius and Philodemus entrusted Epicurean philosophical messages to their poems.<sup>25</sup> One may wonder why, when Horace endorsed the Epicurean perspective on erotic matters and criticized the neoteric-elegiac view in *Satire* 1.2, he chose to mention Philodemus but not Lucretius. A possible answer could be that Philodemus’ choice to teach about love and sex by referring to his own personal experience was more appropriate to Horace’s approach than the gravity and lecturing tone of Lucretius’ *DRN*. If so, *Satire* 1.2 provides an example of what Hardie calls Horace’s ‘ironic yearning’ for Lucretius’ ‘vatic commitment and sublimity of purpose and expression’.<sup>26</sup> After suggesting that it would be profitable to deal with erotic themes in the manner of Lucretius (especially at lines 111–13), Horace apparently cannot do better than cite a less sublime Epicurean poet, that is, Philodemus, whose words about love and sex stemmed from first-hand experience rather than from theoretical knowledge. Horace’s preference for practice over theory in *Satire* 1.2 is consistent with his overall approach to philosophy in the rest of the collection.<sup>27</sup> Most importantly to the purpose of my discussion, it is consistent with the ‘didactics’ of his discourse about love and sex: *Satire* 1.2 closes with the picture of Horace himself experiencing the downsides of adultery with a married woman (125–34), an *exemplum* which he puts forward to prove the points made throughout the poem. In this case, Horace is proving the truthfulness of his ‘teaching’ by imagining himself in the shoes of a mime character.<sup>28</sup> Elsewhere in his works, however, his love lessons are anchored to experiences that he—or, better, his persona—claims to have actually lived.

‘S’OGGI QUESTA MI TORNA GRADITA FORSE UN’ALTRA DOMAN LO  
SARÀ’: *EPODE* 11 (AND *SATIRE* 2.3)

In the same years in which he was writing his *Satires*, Horace was also working on his *Epodes*. Love and sex are important themes of the collection, and *Epode* 11 provides a

<sup>23</sup> Probably reversing Callimachus’ perspective in *Epigram* 28 (discussed above): R.D. Brown, ‘Lucretius and Callimachus’, *ICS* 7 (1982), 77–97, at 89.

<sup>24</sup> J. Kemp, ‘Fools rush in: sex, “the mean” and Epicureanism in Horace, *Satires* 1.2’, *CCJ* 62 (2016), 130–46.

<sup>25</sup> D. Sider, ‘Epicurean poetics: response and dialogue’, in D. Obbink (ed.), *Philodemus and Poetry. Poetic Theory and Practice in Lucretius, Philodemus, and Horace* (New York and Oxford, 1995), 42–57.

<sup>26</sup> P. Hardie, *Lucretian Receptions. History, The Sublime, Knowledge* (Cambridge, 2009), 181.

<sup>27</sup> Freudenburg (n. 20), 11.

<sup>28</sup> Gowers (n. 17), 116.





mistress par excellence, Gallus' Lycoris.<sup>33</sup> Heslin observes that the name of Horace's lover could also be modelled on Meleager's metrically equivalent Myiscus. Both poets are in love with a boy (unlike Gallus), whose name constitutes the diminutive form of an animal: Myiscus is 'the little mouse', Lyciscus 'the little wolf'. According to Heslin, '[w]hereas Meleager's name had emphasized the unprepossessing appearance of the boy, Horace emphasizes his fearsomeness despite his small size.'<sup>34</sup> The context in which Horace's Lyciscus is mentioned, however, allows us to push this interpretation of his name further. The lupine combativeness of Lyciscus, which is suggested by his name as well as by his warlike attitude to love (cf. *gloriantis ... uincere*), matches the traditional aggressiveness of iambic poetry.<sup>35</sup> Horace's statement that he is busy with Lyciscus can therefore be read in metapoetic terms: the poet is currently busy with iambs.<sup>36</sup>

Horace and Lyciscus, namely the poet and his work, have an important feature in common. As is well known, Horace's lack of manly sexual power constitutes a central element of the construction of his persona, throughout the *Epodes*, as a poet not at ease with himself. The fact that Flaccus is flaccid, as he puts it at 15.12, undermines his virility; and it is therefore not surprising to find him enslaved to Lyciscus in *Epode* 11. In turn, however, Lyciscus lacks virility too; for he claims to be able to outdo *mulierculae* in *mollities* (11.23–4). Commentators point out that, by *mulierculae*, the poet here means female prostitutes, in comparison to whom Lyciscus, a boy, stands out for his effeminacy (*mollities*).<sup>37</sup> But if the passage is read in metapoetic terms, whereby Lyciscus stands for the *Epodes*, who exactly are these *mulierculae*? Since *Epode* 11 argues for an anti-neoteric and anti-elegiac approach to love, Horace's reference to the *mulierculae* may hint precisely at the Roman neoteric and elegiac poets, whose destabilization of gender roles was famously based on the depiction of the poet-lover as *mollis*.<sup>38</sup> The *Epodes* pursue the same destabilization, but in iambic poetry; and the character personifying them, that is, Lyciscus, claims to be better than his neoteric and elegiac predecessors in doing this.

The targets of Horace's criticism in *Epode* 11, then, are the same as those of the passage from *Satire* 1.2 considered above. Just as Horace endorses Lucretius' perspective on love in *Satire* 1.2, Horace's identification of the rising of a new passion for yet another *puer* or *puella* as the only remedy for his love for Lyciscus at *Epod.* 11.25–8 is consistent with Lucretius' advice not to be *semel conuersum unius amore* (4.1066). In metapoetic terms, the final lines of *Epode* 11 allow space for the possibility that Horace will, in the future, write something different from iambic poetry, as suggested

<sup>33</sup> Barchiesi (n. 30), 132.

<sup>34</sup> P. Heslin, 'Metapoetic pseudonyms in Horace, Propertius and Ovid', *JRS* 101 (2011), 51–72, at 65, whose interpretation of *Epode* 11 as a response to Propertius 1.4, however, is unconvincing for chronological reasons (see below).

<sup>35</sup> See M. Lowrie, review of L.C. Watson, *A Commentary on Horace's Epodes* (Oxford, 2003), *CR* 55 (2005), 525–8, at 526, on the generic significance of names in *Epode* 11 (but see below on Inachia).

<sup>36</sup> J.R. Townshend, 'O ego non felix: Inachia, Lesbia, and Horace's *Epodes*', *AJPh* 141 (2020), 499–536, at 502–5 argues that the name of Horace's former lover, Inachia, conceals a reference to Calvus' neoteric poem *Io*. If so, the reference to iambic poetry embedded in the name Lyciscus further stresses the difference between Horace's past and present attitudes to love.

<sup>37</sup> D. Mankin (ed.), *Horace Epodes* (Cambridge, 1995), 204; Watson (n. 35), 379.

<sup>38</sup> M. Labate, 'Critica del discorso amoroso: Orazio e l'elegia', in R. Cortés Tovar and J.C.F. Corte (edd.), *Bimilenario de Horacio* (Salamanca, 1994), 113–24, at 121–2 suggests that the link between *mollities* and neoteric-elegiac poetry also emerges from *Epode* 14.

by his reference to the *ardor* for a new boy or girl.<sup>39</sup> This possibility is not at odds with Horace's scepticism about the idea that poetry is an effective remedy for erotic sufferings (*Sat.* 1.2.109–10). The verb *expedire* (25) casts the abandonment of Lyciscus, that is, iambic production, as a liberation. Accordingly, the poet's *ardor* for a new passion is pitched in positive terms, not as a cause of distress for which a remedy will be needed. In fact, Horace will write love poems in a non-iambic manner when turning to lyric poetry; but, even there, his anti-neoteric and anti-elegiac perspective will survive, and his amatory *Odes* will have no therapeutic purpose for him. The reader of the final lines of *Epode* 11 has already been warned about the uselessness of poetry as a remedy by Horace himself, at the very beginning:<sup>40</sup>

Petti, nihil me sicut antea iuuat  
 scribere uersiculos amore percussum graui,  
 amore, qui me praeter omnis expetit  
 mollibus in pueris aut in puellis urere.  
 hic tertius December, ex quo destiti  
 Inachia furere, siluis honorem decutit. 5

Pettius, now that I am smitten by heavy Love I get no pleasure from writing little verses just as before—Love, who aims to make me, more than everyone else, burn for tender boys or girls. December is now shaking the glory from the woods for the third time since I stopped going crazy over Inachia.

The combination of the word *uersiculi* (2) with the idea of getting pleasure or, more generally, benefitting from the writing of poetry (cf. *iuuat*, 1) offers the possibility of a close parallel between this passage and the passage from *Satire* 1.2 considered above. There, as we have seen, Horace addresses an unnamed Roman love poet, suggesting that his *uersiculi* (1.2.109) are pointless as a remedy for the troubles of love. The grounds for this parallel are provided by the similarity between the neoteric-elegiac perspective of Horace's interlocutor in *Satire* 1.2 and the neoteric-elegiac attitude to love which characterized Horace's relationship with Inachia, according to his account at *Epod.* 11.7–23.<sup>41</sup> In this account, Horace mentions some *fomenta* (17) to which he had resorted in the attempt to soothe the pains of love, but to no avail. The word entails a medical metaphor which casts love as a pathology; and since the person suffering from this pathology is a poet who used to behave in a neoteric-elegiac way, it is reasonable to assume that the writing of poetry was one of the *fomenta* he tried out.<sup>42</sup> Watson makes a convincing case for this, quoting Callimachus' *Epigram* 46 as a possible model for Horace's words at *Epod.* 11.17.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Townshend (n. 36), 529 suggests that the next poem, *Epode* 12, 'may ... indicate a real pull away from iambic, perhaps even signaling [Horace's] planned move to lyric'. It is tantalizing to speculate that Horace planted the seeds of his *Odes* as early as 34–33 B.C. (see my chronological corollary below), though the last two lines of *Epode* 11 may have been added later.

<sup>40</sup> A much debated passage: L.C. Watson, 'Problems in *Epode* 11', *CQ* 33 (1983), 229–38, at 229–33; Heyworth (n. 30), 87–8 and Barchiesi (n. 30), 129–30, all with further references.

<sup>41</sup> Horace's *scribere uersiculos* at the beginning of line 2 has been recognized as an allusion to Catullus' *scribens uersiculos* at 50.4, where the two words also occur at the beginning of the line: A.J. Woodman, 'Problems in Horace, *Epode* 11', *CQ* 65 (2015), 673–81, at 678. The Catullan nature of the passage is consistent with the neoteric use of the word *uersiculi* by Horace at *Sat.* 1.2.109.

<sup>42</sup> For an elegiac parallel, cf. Prop. 1.1.25–8, with S.J. Heyworth (ed.), *Cynthia. A Companion to the Text of Propertius* (Oxford, 2007), 11. Both Propertius and Horace depict elegiac love as a form of madness (cf. *Epod.* 11.6; Prop. 1.1.7) which brings about wrath (cf. *Epod.* 11.15–16; Prop. 1.1.28).

<sup>43</sup> Watson (n. 40), 235–8.

The possibility that Horace may be alluding to this text is particularly interesting, since, as we have seen, Callimachus' *Epigram* 46 is an important witness to the literary debate over the usefulness of poetry as a φάρμακον for love, in which Horace positions himself in *Satire* 1.2. The difference between *Satire* 1.2 and *Epode* 11 is that the former text scoffs at someone else's trust in the therapeutic usefulness of *uersiculi* in the present, the latter at Horace's in the past. The opening lines of *Epode* 11 reveal the poet's awareness that writing verses cannot give him any pleasure and, as a consequence, cannot help him soothe his pain—a statement in which the two meanings of the verb *iuuare* (1), 'to please' and 'to help', fundamentally overlap. What made him aware of this is a form of πάθει μάθος: he tried to cure his passion for Inachia with poetry in the past (cf. *sicut antea*, 1), but in vain. Accordingly, now that he is once again in love, this time with Lyciscus, Horace knows that the only effective remedy is something else, namely a new passion for another boy or girl (27–8), a model of volatile love in contrast to neoteric and elegiac principles.

From this interpretation of the opening lines of *Epode* 11, a corollary about the chronology of the poem follows. Although Horace questions the usefulness of writing poetry as a φάρμακον for his love for Lyciscus, his words entail that when he composed *uersiculi* in the past, two or three years before the setting of *Epode* 11 (cf. *hic tertius December*, 5), he believed that they could be helpful in soothing the sorrows caused by Inachia. If Horace intends to seem credible when constructing the autobiography of his poetic *persona* as a lover, he cannot appear to have any trust in the therapeutic usefulness of writing poetry himself and, at the same time, explicitly question the usefulness of doing so at *Sat.* 1.2.109–10. Accordingly, one may take the words *sicut antea* at *Epod.* 1.1 to refer to a moment of Horace's life prior to the writing of *Satire* 1.2. This enables a *terminus ante quem* for *Epode* 11 in 34–33 B.C.; for if *Satires* Book 1 was published around 35 and Horace believed in the therapeutic usefulness of *uersiculi* two or three years before the setting of *Epode* 11 (cf. *hic tertius December*, 5), a later *terminus* would make the poet's words about the futility of *uersiculi* at *Sat.* 1.2.109–10 inconsistent with his own practice.<sup>44</sup> This conclusion, in line with previous attempts to date the poem to as early as 38–37,<sup>45</sup> relies on the idea that the voice of Horace's *persona* in the *Epodes* intersects with the one in the *Satires*. Cucchiarelli, who has shown that the simultaneous production of these two collections was the most natural bifurcation of the same poetics, has collected evidence of a dialogue deliberately established by Horace between his *Satires* and his *Epodes*, which entails a continuity of his poetic *persona*.<sup>46</sup> This dialogue—I suggest—also concerns the poet's attitude to love and sex.

On this matter, the similarity of perspectives on the theme of the therapeutic (un)usefulness of poetry is not the only point of contact between the *Epodes* and the

<sup>44</sup> An early dating is by no means unlikely and would invalidate the reading of the poem as a response to Propertius 1.4 proposed by Heslin (n. 34), 60–6, even if one agreed with the chronology of the *Monobiblos* advanced by P. Heslin, 'Virgil's *Georgics* and the dating of Propertius' first book', *JRS* 100 (2010), 54–68 (by which I am not convinced for reasons concerning the age of Propertius). In turn, the date of *Epode* 11 affects the dramatic and, perhaps, compositional chronology of *Epode* 12, where Inachia is mentioned again (14–15). M.B. Skinner, 'Lesbia as procuress in Horace's *Epode* 12', *EuGeStA* 8 (2018), 131–44, at 138–9 interprets the flashback as a programmatic move for Horace's anti-neoteric perspective on love. See also Townshend (n. 36), 500–11.

<sup>45</sup> R.W. Carrubba, *The Epodes of Horace. A Study in Poetic Arrangement* (The Hague and Paris, 1969), 16.

<sup>46</sup> A. Cucchiarelli, *La satira e il poeta. Orazio tra Epodi e Sermones* (Pisa, 2001), 119–86.

*Satires*. As previously observed, Horace's promiscuity in *Epode* 11, where he mentions his love for boys as well as for girls (at the beginning, 3–4, and at the end, 27–8), neatly contrasts with the neoteric-elegiac obsession with the everlasting love for a *puella*. This feature of Horace's attitude to love and sex emerges from the *Satires* too. Gender promiscuity is in fact evoked in *Satire* 1.2 (cf. *ancilla aut uerna*, 117) and, most importantly, applied to Horace's own experience in *Satire* 2.3. At *Sat.* 2.3.307–25, the poet has the philosopher Damasippus listing Horace's forms of madness, amongst which we find 'mad passions for a thousand girls and a thousand boys' (*mille puellarum, puerorum mille furores*, 325). In his reply to Damasippus (326), Horace does not deny his promiscuity, but he challenges the idea that his behaviour is a form of madness: if it is—he says—then Damasippus is even crazier than him. *Satire* 2.3 therefore reveals the same anti-elegiac attitude to love as the one deployed in *Epode* 11 and in *Satire* 1.2, by remarking on Horace's preferences in matters of sex. When talking about amatory relationships, the biography of his persona which the poet constructs in the *Epodes* is continuous with the one he constructs in the *Satires*. How does Horace's shaping of this biography in his juvenile works impact on our reading of the love poems he wrote in his mature years, namely his erotic *Odes*?

'DEL MIO CORE L'IMPERO NON CEDO': *ODES* 1.5, 1.13 AND 1.33

To answer this question, I finally turn to three poems from the first book of the *Odes*—namely, 1.15, 1.13 and 1.33. In these pieces, Horace looks back at some erotic experiences he had in the past, with a view to using fragments of his amatory autobiography as *exempla* in support of the 'arguments' about love which each of the poems puts forward. It is worth starting with *Ode* 1.33, where a common thread of the juvenile poems we have considered so far, namely Horace's confrontation with neoteric and elegiac poetry, finally becomes explicit, in the very first stanza:

Albi, ne doleas plus nimio memor  
immitis Glycerae neu miserabilis  
decantes elegos, cur tibi iunior  
laesa praeniteat fide.

Do not grieve too much, Albius, when you remember the bittersweet Glycera, and do not sing pitiful elegies over and over again, asking why a younger man outshines you now that her promises have been broken.

Whereas the Latin love poet with whom Horace had conversed at *Sat.* 1.2.105–22 was unnamed, *Ode* 1.33 explicitly addresses Tibullus from its beginning.<sup>47</sup> Horace introduces two themes which had characterized his perspective on love in his juvenile works. The recommendation of avoiding excess in erotic feelings is consistent not only with the concept of *aurea mediocritas* advertised in the *Odes*<sup>48</sup> but also with the core message of *Satire* 1.2. Similarly, when Horace suggests to Tibullus that he stop writing sad elegies, the reader may well remember that Horace, in *Epode* 11, had confessed to having lost his faith in poetry as a useful remedy to soothe amatory distress,

<sup>47</sup> R. Ball, 'Albi, ne doleas: Horace and Tibullus', *CW* 87 (1994), 409–14.

<sup>48</sup> M. Lowrie, 'Lyric's *elegos* and the Aristotelian mean: Horace, *C.* 1.24, 1.33 and 2.9', *CW* 87 (1994), 377–94, at 381–3.

and that *Satire* 1.2 had described the writing of love poetry as an ineffective medicine for erotic sorrows.

Commenting on the opening of *Ode* 1.33, Lowrie observes that Horace's advice on Tibullus' attitude to love as a man (in line 1) and as a poet (in lines 2–3) is programmatic in terms of poetics and intertextuality.<sup>49</sup> Horace's choice to hide the name of Tibullus' lover behind the words *immitis Glycera* (2) aims at paralleling Tibullus' amatory experience with Sappho's, by means of a learned allusion to her definition of ἔρος as γλυκύτικρον in fr. 130 Voigt. However, whereas Tibullus' *elegi* describe his everlasting obsession with a single girl, the adverb δηῦτε in Sappho's fragment casts her current infatuation as the re-enactment of an experience she has already lived with a different lover. Horace is thus tacitly suggesting that Tibullus' excessive mindfulness (cf. *memor*, 1) of *immitis Glycera* is making him insufficiently mindful of Sappho, whose perspective on love is therefore embodied in Rome not by Tibullus' elegies but by Horace's own lyric poetry. On the one hand, this strategy associates the persona of a Roman love poet with something a Greek love poet had stated, and then it questions the former's understanding of the latter, so as to suggest Horace's superior affinity with the tradition of Greek lyric. On the other, the criticism of the elegiac attitude to love aims at recommending the pursuit of Horace's stance, which his poetry embodies and exemplifies. What Horace does in *Ode* 1.33 is not dissimilar to what he had already done in *Satire* 1.2 and *Epode* 11. For, as we have seen, at *Sat.* 1.2.105–18 Horace suggests that he is more familiar with Callimachus' erotic epigrams than his interlocutor, while *Epode* 11 pitches Horace's response to his love for Lyciscus as preferable to the elegiac attitude he had deployed with Inachia in the past.

Precisely the fact that Horace used to behave like Tibullus, as the readers know from the biography of his juvenile poetic persona, makes the final stanza of *Ode* 1.33 particularly effective. Here, as West puts it, the poet 'is gently reminding his friend of the brevity and unimportance of his suffering in love, suffering which Horace, too, has known':<sup>50</sup>

ipsam me melior cum peteret Venus  
grata detinuit compe Myrtale  
libertina, fretis acrior Hadriae  
curuantis Calabros sinus. 15

I myself, although I was sought after by a better lover, was held fast in pleasing fetters by Myrtale, a freedwoman more tempestuous than the waves of the Adriatic sea which hollows out Calabria's bays.

Horace now reveals that he was a slave to Myrtale, just as Tibullus is to Glycera. The use of the perfect *detinuit*, which neatly contrasts with the present tenses of the first stanza (about Tibullus' affair), locates that condition of slavery in Horace's past. Once again, a parallel can be drawn between this autobiographical statement and Horace's words in *Epode* 11, where the love for Lyciscus is represented as a form of slavery (cf. *tenet*, 24 and *expedire*, 25) from which the poet will be set free by a new love for yet another boy or girl. A reader of *Ode* 1.33 who remembers what Horace had stated in *Epode* 11 can easily identify Myrtale as one of the random lovers of his

<sup>49</sup> Lowrie (n. 48), 384–6.

<sup>50</sup> D. West (ed.), *Horace Odes I. Carpe Diem* (Oxford, 1995), 161.

youth, who had freed the poet from Lyciscus (himself one of those lovers), and who—we now learn—had temporarily enslaved Horace in turn. Myrtale was, in other words, one of the *mille puellarum, puerorum mille* with whom Damasippus had associated the *furores* of young Horace at *Sat.* 2.3.325. Indeed, the specification of Myrtale's social status should help readers direct their minds to what Horace had said in his juvenile works: when Horace states that he chose *Myrtale libertina* over a lover of a higher socioeconomic position by whom he was being sought (*me melior cum peteret Venus*, 13), one can hardly fail to think of the poet's recommendation to prefer freedwomen over rich *matronae* in *Satire* 1.2, and the reasons for this. Myrtale's temperament may have been harsher than the Adriatic waves, but opting for a *melior Venus* may have put Horace in an even less desirable situation (cf. *Sat.* 1.2.37–46).

The occurrence of Horace's enslavement to Myrtale in the past is what puts the poet in a position to advise Tibullus on matters of love. Horace is older and has already experienced, in his youth, the suffering Tibullus is going through now. He has learned his lesson and is now teaching it to a young lover: the obsession with an individual *puella* is pointless, writing poetry does not help, and love itself is not eternal. Horace has come to realize all this not by following some theoretical instructions or the dogmas of a philosophy but through a form of *πάθει μάθος*. His discovery of how to cope successfully with lovesickness is a consequence of his own experience, of which he had already spoken in the *Epodes* and the *Satires*.

Horace's lesson about how to love, which he has learned through love, is delivered to another love poet in the last erotic *Ode* of Book 1. Although there may be a touch of nostalgia in the recollection which closes the poem (cf. *grata*, 14), the teacher advising Tibullus towards the end of the *liber* sounds rather disenchanted about the stability of love.<sup>51</sup> Earlier on in the collection, however, Horace sounds much less unbothered and imperturbable when recalling episodes of his erotic autobiography, as if the assertiveness of his address to Tibullus were the result of a certain evolution of Horace's conscience throughout the book.<sup>52</sup> *Ode* 1.13 is a good example. As Mayer puts it, although the remembrance is tacit in this text, '[t]he poem invites some reconstruction of its imagined background.'<sup>53</sup> The episode of Horace's autobiography which is implied is his break-up from a girl named Lydia, who now has a new, young lover, Telephus. The poet describes the physical and psychological symptoms which he experiences every time he hears her praising Telephus (1–8) and sees the marks which the boy left on her shoulders and lips (9–12), a reminder that the things between the two often get physical—probably both in and out of the bedroom. The diagnosis of Horace's 'pathology' is extremely easy to make for the reader, thanks to the success which Sappho's fr. 31 Voigt enjoyed in antiquity:<sup>54</sup> whether he wants to admit it or not, Horace is still in love with Lydia and feels jealous about Telephus.

The first twelve lines of *Ode* 1.13 elaborate on a topos of erotic poetry, the 'symptomatology' of love and jealousy, established by Sappho and later pursued by a

<sup>51</sup> J. Reckford, 'Some studies in Horace's odes on love', *CJ* 55 (1959), 25–33, at 25–6.

<sup>52</sup> That Horace arranged his poems within the book very carefully is now widely recognized: see R.G. Mayer (ed.), *Horace Odes Book 1* (Cambridge, 2012), 17–18. The final words of the last love poem, *Ode* 1.33, pick up the sea storm imagery as a metaphor for love troubles (*pace* Reckford [n. 51], 26), which is central in the first love poem, *Ode* 1.5 (discussed below), thus creating a ring composition.

<sup>53</sup> Mayer (n. 52), 132.

<sup>54</sup> For a survey, see S. Costanza, *Risonanze dell'ode di Saffo* *Fainetai moi kēnos da Pindaro a Catullo e Orazio* (Messina, 1950).

number of Greek and Latin poets—most notably, in Rome, Catullus (*carmen* 51).<sup>55</sup> Although it would be wrong to speak of direct imitation, the structure of Horace's *Ode* 1.13 seems to have been designed so as to encourage a comparison specifically with Catullus' adaptation of Sappho's original.<sup>56</sup> Just as Catullus 51 is characterized by a sudden change of focus and tone from the description of the symptoms of lovesickness to the effects of *otium* (13–16),<sup>57</sup> so the last four lines of Horace's *Ode* 1.13 (17–20) create a thematic as well as stylistic contrast with the first part (1–12). In the Horatian poem, however, the transition between the two sections occurs more smoothly than it does in the Catullan text, because of another set of four lines in-between (13–16), which clarify the rationale for the transition itself.<sup>58</sup>

non, si me satis audias,	
speres perpetuum dulcia barbaram	
laedentem oscula, quae Venus	15
quinta parte sui nectaris imbuit.	
felices ter et amplius	
quos inrupta tenet copula nec malis	
diuulsus querimoniis	
suprema citius soluet amor die.	20

If you listen to me enough, you should not hope for everlasting love from someone who savagely wounds your sweet lips, which Venus has moistened with a fifth part of her nectar. Three times happy and more are those whom an unbroken pledge keeps together and whom love, not destroyed by evil quarrels, will divide no sooner than their last day.

After exploiting the topos of the symptomatology of lovesickness, in the μακαρισμός which closes the poem, Horace builds on yet another topos of erotic—and specifically Catullan and elegiac—poetry: the *foedus amoris* (or *amicitiae*).<sup>59</sup> As Horace anticipates to Lydia in the lines which introduce this second topos, the marks which Telephus left on Lydia's body, and which contributed to stir up the poet's jealousy in the first place, reveal that the love pact between the two will be broken at some point in the near future. By the time Horace states how splendid it is to be in a stable and everlasting relationship (17–20), the reader has already been faced with the picture of two break-ups, one between Horace and Lydia (which occurred in the past) and another between Lydia and Telephus (which is inevitable). This reinforces the μακαρισμός: if two lovers are able to hold to their *foedus* forever, they truly deserve to be called blessed and fortunate. At the same time, however, the fact that the μακαρισμός is preceded by two examples of failed relationships casts a shadow of doubt on the idea that a never-ending *foedus amoris* can actually exist.

Indeed, further examples of broken *foedera amoris* are provided by the works of Catullus and the Roman elegists, with which *Ode* 1.13 seems to encourage a comparison

<sup>55</sup> For a survey, see R.G.M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard (edd.), *A Commentary on Horace Odes, Book 1* (Oxford, 1970), 173.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Mayer (n. 52), 133, who also notes that the structure of *Ode* 1.13 may be indebted to Sappho's 'archetypical' poem as well, if the final words of the fragment originally served as an introduction to a different, albeit love-related, theme.

<sup>57</sup> I agree with the (nowadays prevailing) unitary thesis about the poem.

<sup>58</sup> For the structure of the poem and the contrast between the first part and the final lines, see C. Segal, '*Felices ter et amplius*. Horace, *Odes*, I. 3', *Latomus* 32 (1973), 39–46.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Catull. 109.3–6, Prop. 2.15.25, [Tib.] 3.11.15–16.





proun *quibus*. Are these people ‘wretched’, like the *puer*, because they are still bewitched by Pyrrha’s shining beauty (cf. *nites*) but have not experienced her deceitfulness and fickleness yet? Or are they *miseri* because they have not ‘tried out’ beautiful Pyrrha (cf. *intemptata*), that is, they have not had sex with her, unlike the *puer* and, perhaps, Horace himself? The ambiguity, which is left unresolved, facilitates the transition between the third and the fourth stanzas: whereas the indicative *nites* recalls the gold imagery used to describe the naivety of the *puer* in line 9 (cf. *aurea*), the metaphor of the shipwreck in the final lines of the poem is anticipated by the participle *intemptata*, a word commonly applied to sea explorations.<sup>64</sup> Horace knows that one can learn to love only through love, as he did himself and as the *puer* will do, no matter how painful the lesson can be. As Quinn observed with regard to the final lines of this poem, ‘the sailor who has just eluded shipwreck does not give up the sea [...]. But from now on he is prepared for danger; he will never again put to sea with the same rash innocence; and he will watch with a mixture of amusement, cynicism and compassion the innocence of those who have yet to learn the lessons of experience.’<sup>65</sup>

Although the scope of this article does not enable a full reconstruction of Horace’s autobiography as a lover, it seems clear that this autobiography unfolds in a linear fashion. It is up to us as readers to decide whether we want to believe that Horace was truly able to experience erotic troubles in a painless way when he pitied Pyrrha’s victims in *Ode* 1.5 or advised Tibullus in *Ode* 1.33. In his address to Lydia in *Ode* 1.13, he certainly sounds far from imperturbable. Perhaps it took him a few more years to master his skills. Did Venus’ decision to declare war on him in *Ode* 4.1, some time after his words about the end of hostilities in *Ode* 3.26, constitute a serious danger for fifty-year-old Horace (cf. *circa lustra decem*, 6)? Whoever feels sympathy towards him can only hope that it did not. For the sooner he learnt how to love, the less he must have suffered.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the *Odes*, Horace invites us to consider how the advice that he is able to offer to young lovers comes from his own life experience—or, better, the life experience which Horace associates with his persona throughout his works. Since part of this autobiography is outlined in the *Satires* and the *Epodes*, the stance on love which emerges from the *Odes* is deeply rooted in what he had said several years earlier. Already back then, Horace’s expression of his perspective relied on an engagement with neoteric and elegiac poetry, which will extend into his lyric poems. Before operating between texts, this engagement consists in a dialogue between the personae of the poets who wrote them. This is particularly clear when Horace does not leave it to readers to ‘overhear’ the dialogue (on the grounds of their familiarity with the works and personae of Catullus, Propertius, or Tibullus), but actually stages it. The unnamed love poet of *Sat.* 1.2.105–8 and Tibullus in *Ode* 1.33 perform a dramatic function within a ‘story’, which sees Horace as the main character. They exemplify what Horace used to be and no longer is: the former, a lover trying to soothe his amatory distress by writing poetry; the latter, a lover hoping to hold onto his partner forever.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. *TLL* s.v.

<sup>65</sup> K. Quinn, ‘Horace as a love poet: a reading of *Odes* 1.5’, *Arion* 2.3 (1963), 59–77, at 76.

Horace never abandoned the realistic and disillusioned stance on love which emerges from his *sermones* (as one would expect from a collection of satires) to espouse a different stance in the other genres which he practised. As a matter of fact, the demarcation of the boundaries between his own love poetry and the love poetry of the neoteric and elegiac kind is particularly neat in the *Epodes* and the *Odes*, the two collections which come closest to sharing poetic aspects with the works of authors such as Catullus, Propertius and Tibullus. Horace's poetic career has sometimes been described as a 'circle': from *sermo* (*Satires* Books 1–2), through iambic and lyric (*Epodes* and *Odes* Books 1–3), back to *sermo* (*Epistles* Books 1–2, with a temporary return to lyric in between, in the *Carmen Saeculare* and *Odes* Book 4).<sup>66</sup> His perspective on love and love poetry contributes to making this circle a continuous line. For not only does Horace's stance remain constant throughout works of different genres, but its actualization in each of these works largely relies on the perspective he had adopted in previous poems.

The memory of the extemporaneous *uersiculi* he wrote before starting his career informs what he says about the writing of love poetry in two texts from his earliest collections, *Epode* 11 and *Satire* 1.2; *Satire* 2.3 then picks up on the persona which Horace had constructed for himself as a lover in those two juvenile collections; and the *Odes*, in turn, build on this persona, casting Horace as an expert in erotic matters precisely because of the experiences he had had and described in his youth, and justifying his anti-neoteric and anti-elegiac attitude to love poetry on the same grounds. Across all these works, the consistency of Horace's persona in the *ludus* of love and love poetry relies on a principle not dissimilar to the one which the mature Horace will outline several years later, at *Epist.* 1.1.12, when abandoning *ludicra* and turning (back) to philosophy: his poems, and the life experiences they recount, supply him with provisions to be used before long.

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<sup>66</sup> S. Harrison, 'There and back again: Horace's poetic career', in P. Hardie and H. Moore (edd.), *Classical Literary Careers and their Reception* (Cambridge, 2010), 39–58.