POLITICAL OR PERSONAL PROPAGANDA?
HORACE, SERMONES 1.5 IN PERSPECTIVE

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Considering the importance of the political context in which Horace’s ‘Journey to Brundisium’ is set, it is understandable that his merely passing references to the real purpose of the journey have proved to be the most puzzling, if not exasperating feature of the satire. At one extreme the poem has given rise to an attitude of bored dismissal, as illustrated by Palmer’s assessment: ‘The poem is interesting, but on the whole disappointing: it is wonderful how little Horace has told us worth remembering’. A.Y. Campbell is even less charitable: ‘Considering the occasion, and still more the persons ... it would, one must think, have been impossible to write an account that should be for posterity quite uninteresting; but Horace has surely come as near to that as he or anybody could’. At the other extreme the anomaly between the dramatic circumstances surrounding this particular journey and the poet’s apparent preoccupation with trivial observations and anecdotes has challenged commentators to detect in the poem elements of political comment and even propaganda. It has been suggested, for example, that Horace’s application of ointment to his smarting eyes (lines 30-31) is symbolic of his scepticism regarding the impending ‘summit’ conference at Tarentum, and that the insulting repartee between the buffoons, Messius Cicirrus and Sarmentus (lines 51-69), reflects the acrimonious exchanges at that conference.

More recently an attempt has been made by I.M. de M. Du Quesnay to attribute a subtle propaganda element to Book 1 of the Sermones as a whole. He points out that Horace’s satires are generally read as if they were apolitical poems or even as if they implied a deliberate rejection of any concern with public life; and he then draws attention to the apparently anomalous fact that Maecenas had gathered around him a number of talented poets who would glorify Octavian’s achievements and encourage support for his policies. It would be strange, therefore, if Book 1 of the Sermones — the ‘first fruits’ of Maecenas’ patronage, as he describes it — did not have a political dimension: as he later argues, Horace joined Maecenas’ circle and that means that he committed himself to support of the Triumvirs and of Octavian.
Du Quesnay describes Horace's technique as 'both less direct and more positive. His basic strategy is to present an attractive image of himself and his friends as sophisticated, cultured and intelligent men who are humane in their attitudes to others and mindful of the “mos maiorum”. Above all, he exhibits a concern with moral issues'.\textsuperscript{11} If one believes that there was a strategy of subtle political propaganda underlying the first book of the \textit{Sermones} as a whole, then it is clear that the fifth satire provided Horace with an ideal opportunity to portray both the characters and the relationships of the members of Maecenas' circle in a more detailed and intimate way than he could in any of the other satires.

Within the context of this theory, Du Quesnay provides a persuasive analysis\textsuperscript{12} of the fifth satire, the salient points of which are:

1. Horace is 'notoriously reticent' about the political context in which the poem is set and his account is 'noticeably free of all tensions'; this is surely deliberate.

2. The poem is obviously modelled on Lucilius' description of a journey which he made to his estates in Sicily, and the main effect achieved by harmonising the two journeys is 'to transform a recent moment of crisis into something familiar, ordinary and amusing'. The atmosphere of good-natured humour and co-operation makes it hard to believe that there ever was a real danger of war between Octavian and Antony. In short, 'the poem justifies the propaganda of the Triumvirs, who advertised their continuing friendship after Tarentum'.

3. One distortion of the truth which is really apparent is that the party appeared to be travelling through a 'brigand-infested Italy' without a heavily-armed bodyguard. The intention was, perhaps, to create the impression that Octavian's military successes in 36 had made travel safe once more.

4. The description of the role of Maecenas, Fonteius and Cocceius is vague about the exact nature of their mission and a 'masterpiece of understatement' which minimises tension. The impression is created that this is a party of private individuals going about their business. It is hard to imagine a more complete contrast with the impression which Caesar made on Cicero when he visited him in 45, accompanied by 2000 soldiers.

5. Maecenas and his party travel in the manner of ordinary citizens of their class, who have to endure a variety of discomforts en route — an impression reinforced by the sustained parallel with Lucilius. The complete absence of pomp and ceremony is cleverly emphasized by Horace, particularly in his description of the over-zealous and deferential mayor of Fundi. The amused reaction of the travellers (line 35) contrasts with the self-congratulation and pride of Cicero on his return.
from exile. The message is plain: Maecenas and his friends are not behaving like Hellenistic monarchs or tyrants or their self-important courtiers and they do not expect to be treated as such.

(6) At atmosphere of mutual goodwill and co-operation prevails amongst members of the party and this is reflected particularly in their enjoyment of the verbal banter of Messius and Sarmentus (lines 51-70). This episode — 'the high spot of the journey' — serves to dissolve all tensions within the group and to dispel the reader's anxieties. After this, none of the 'legati' is mentioned again, because their mission has in a sense ceased to matter, for no one can have any doubts about the outcome.

(7) The poem tells us much about Horace's friendship with Maecenas, and particularly striking is the complete absence of any sign that he is obliged to dance attendance on his powerful friend; nor is there any show of flattery or adulation. Maecenas is shown as humanely considerate towards his friends, and his behaviour contrasts with Julius Caesar's arrogance and imperiousness — the marks of a tyrant. Horace's portrayal of Maecenas and his friends serves to counter the bitter contemporary attitude towards the Triumvirs, as exemplified by Sallust in the preface to the Bellum Jugurthinum.

As mentioned earlier, these arguments are indeed persuasive — if one assumes that Horace was motivated by a strong desire or need to foster the interests of Octavian's party. It would obviously be nonsensical to suggest that Horace's attitude towards Maecenas would be anything less than prudently supportive, but I would question the need to read a broader and deliberately contrived political dimension into the first book of the Sermones, particularly the fifth satire. I believe that the 'Journey to Brundisium' can be interpreted quite adequately within the narrower focus of Horace's own literary ambitions and his desire to justify and consolidate his newly formed friendship with Maecenas.

Of particular relevance to any assessment of the fifth satire are Horace's criticisms of Lucilius and the fact that the latter's so-called 'Iter Siculum' was the direct antecedent of the 'Journey to Brundisium'. In the tenth satire of Book 1, Horace justifies his choice of genre by pointing out that comedy, tragedy, epic and pastoral poetry can boast contemporary writers of unrivalled talent in the persons of Fundanius, Pollio, Varius and Virgil. That Horace, newly admitted to Maecenas' patronage and patently eager to win the friendship and respect of the other members of that literary circle, should have been reluctant to compete directly with his fellow poets is quite understandable. Satire, however, was a genre in which no contemporary enjoyed unrivalled supremacy; as Horace points out, 'This had been tried by Varro of Atax and others without success and was therefore one
which I could perhaps develop'.

When Horace says 'melius quod scribere possem', the standard which he aspires to eclipse is that set by his more distant predecessor, Lucilius. However, Horace treads warily, careful not to make extravagant claims: he had recognized at the outset that he fell short of the inventor of the genre ('inventore minor') and that he would not presume to snatch from Lucilius' head the crown which he wore with such distinction. Yet, while he acknowledges the significant contribution which Lucilius made towards the final establishment of satire as a peculiarly Roman genre, his style by modern standards left much to be desired: his verses lurched awkwardly along; his writing could be compared to a muddy river which often carried more that deserved to be removed than retained; his verses were not polished or smoothly flowing — perhaps the product of his own harsh nature and that of his times; he seems to have been content merely with arranging words in hexameter verse and to have enjoyed writing 200 lines before supper and another 200 afterwards; were he alive now, asserts Horace, he would do much smoothing away and pruning, while frequently scratching his head and chewing his nails.

Such are the criticisms which Horace levels at Lucilius, or more particularly at his own critics, in the concluding satire of Book 1. What is more pertinent to this discussion is that these criticisms constitute a carefully constructed defence of similar views already set out in the fourth satire of Book 1: 'Witty he was', said Horace of Lucilius, 'and with a keen-scented nose, but harsh when it came to framing verse. That was where his fault lay. As a tour-de-force he would often dictate 200 lines an hour standing on one leg. In his muddy stream there was much that you would like to remove. He was wordy and too lazy to put up with the effort of writing — correctly that is'. These comments make it quite clear that even if Horace did not presume to snatch the crown from Lucilius' head, he was going to make it sit a little less securely and perhaps less resplendently.

Can it, therefore, be merely fortuitous that Horace's criticism of Lucilius and his exposition of his concept of satire should be followed immediately by a poem which so obviously invited comparison with a Lucilian counterpart? The commentator Porphyrio, who was obviously in a far better position than we are to judge the affinity between the two satires, stated quite explicitly that in this satire Horace was emulating a description by Lucilius in his third book of a similar journey from Rome to the Sicilian straits. Collectively the extant fragments of Lucilius' poem leave little doubt that there was a strong correlation between the two satires, both in overall theme and even in some details. I do not intend here to enter into the debate about the authenticity of the incidents which Horace describes, but there can surely be no doubt that the poet did accompany Maecenas on that journey to Brundisium. I would suggest, however, that the desire to emulate Lucilius could well have prompted Horace at least to select
and quite probably to adapt some of his own experiences and observations to conform with aspects of Lucilius’ account, in order to contrive a more closely paralleled narrative; I think here particularly of the description of the banter between Sarmentus and Cicirrus — a disproportionately lengthy episode in an otherwise fast-moving and economical narrative, and one which seems to echo a similar parody in Lucilius’ satire. It is significant that parodies on epic and tragedy played an important role in the latter’s writing.

If Horace was intent on surpassing Lucilius in economy of expression and elegance of style, then the fifth satire certainly does demonstrate his talent in this regard. It is a quality of this poem which Rudd and Anderson have rightly emphasized. The opening sentence provides an excellent example of conciseness (‘egressum magna me accepit Aricia Roma/hospitio modico’), and this is seen again, for example, in lines 77–80, where Horace, in focussing on the hills of Apulia, has managed to compress into little more than three lines a nostalgic reference to the locality (‘montes ... notos’), an evocation of the aridness of the area (‘quos torret Atabulus’) and an indication of how rugged the terrain was (‘et quos/nunquam erepsemus’); at the same time, the ‘nisi’ clause neatly introduces the next staging post, Trivicum. Variety of expression, together with ellipse, asyndeton, historic infinitives and the varied use of participles prevent the account from lapsing into a mere catalogue of arrivals and departures. The varied manner in which the latter are indicated is remarkable:

‘inde Forum Appi’ (3); ‘exponimur’ (23); ‘repimus atque subimus’ (25); ‘linquimus ... deinde ... manemus’ (35–7); ‘tectum praebuit’ (45–6); ‘hinc muli Capuae citellas ... ponunt’ (47); ‘hinc ... recta ... villa’ (50); ‘tendimus hinc recta’ (71); ‘incipit ... Apulia ... ostentare’ (77–8); ‘hinc rapimus’ (86); ‘inde ... pervenimus’ (94–5); ‘via peior ad usque Bari moenia’ (96–7); ‘dein Gnatia ... dedit risus’ (97–8); ‘Brundisium ... finis ... est’ (105).

It is possible that Horace’s concluding description of his poem as ‘a long story’ — despite the fact that it is considerably shorter than any of the preceding satires — is an ironic ‘dig’ at the verbosity of Lucilius. It is unfortunate that the extant fragments of Lucilius’ poem allow no sure estimate of its length, but one fragment does provide a hint of what Horace finds unattractive about Lucilius’ style (including his use of Greek words);

verum haec ludus ibi, susque omnia deque fuerunt,
susque haec deque fuere inquam omnia ludus iocusque;
illud opus durum, ut Setinum accessim finem,
 alphaion montes, Aetnae omnes, asperi Athones’

‘But there all this was play and everything was free and easy, all this I say was free and easy, play and fun; but when we reached the boundary of
Setia — that was a hard business — goat-deserted mountains, all Aetnas and rugged Athoses'.

Horace’s attention to variety is seen too in his handling of time (‘iamque dies aderat’, 20; ‘quarta hora’, 23; ‘postera lux oritur’, 39; ‘postera tempes-tas melior’, 96) and in his impressions of places and people (Forum Appi choc-a-bloc with boatmen and stingy innkeepers, 3–4; damned mosquitoes and bog-frogs which make sleep impossible, 14–15; the maudlin crooning of a drunken boatman, 15–16; the temper tantrum of a passenger who cannot take the delay any longer, 21–23; the town of Anxur perched atop its gleaming white rocks in the distance, 26, and so on).

On a purely narrative level it may be said that Horace has managed to turn a potentially tedious and repetitive travelogue into an entertaining and varied account, whose pace never flags and which could never be criticized for turgid verbosity. It is, in fact, a fine response to Horace’s own injunction: ‘You need terseness, to let the thought run freely on without becoming entangled in a mass of verbiage that will hang heavy on the ear’.

At this point I should like to comment on the vexed question of why Horace describes the important mission of Maecenas and Cocceius in such a vague and fleeting manner. This is surely deliberate, but not for the reason that Du Quesnay suggests (see above p.52). There can be no doubt that the political mission undertaken by Maecenas and others in 37 B.C. formed the basis of the fifth satire; but, if one of Horace’s main purposes in writing this satire was to invite a direct comparison of his ability as a poet with that of Lucilius, then the trip to Brundisium in the first instance merely provided the substance for a description of a journey and not the opportunity to compose a piece infused with propaganda. Sheer coincidence in fact had presented Horace with a chance to emulate Lucilius in a very direct manner, at precisely the time that he was engaged in the composition of satires. Lucilius’ trip was made under very different circumstances — a private visit to his estates in Sicily — but the route and probably many of the experiences were very similar to those which Horace encountered. Horace was describing a real journey, and to have stripped the narrative of all references to his travelling companions and to the purpose of the journey would have detracted from the veracity of his account and, probably, from the enjoyment of Maecenas and the others for whose entertainment the poem was likely to have been written in the first place.

This brings me to another factor which I think helped to shape this poem: Horace’s eagerness to consolidate his own position within Maecenas’ circle. The sixth satire of Book 1 shows how acutely aware Horace was of jealous criticism of his social elevation in particular, and he goes to great lengths to counter such criticism: he attributes his acceptance into
the 'amicitia' of Maecenas to his personal qualities alone — the product of his father’s careful upbringing — and he gives a candid account of his own awkwardness and diffidence when he was first introduced to Maecenas on the recommendation of Virgil and Varius. Viewing the 5th satire against this background — and taking into account Horace’s obviously affable personality — it is easy to account for the complimentary references to Maecenas and the other envoys (27–9), the warm tributes to his fellow-poets Plotius, Varius and Virgil (39–42) and the spirit of bonhomie evident on various occasions (e.g. in the description of their amusement at the excessively deferential mayor of Fundi and of their enjoyment of the evening entertainment at Cocceius’ villa). Similarly, descriptions like that of the disastrous meal prepared by their bungling host at Beneventum (71–76) were surely written partly for the amusement of Maecenas and the others present on those occasions. The fact that Horace does not provide us with any inkling of the weighty political issues which some imagine dominated the conversation en route is not to be construed as a deliberate attempt ‘to transform a recent moment of crisis into something familiar, ordinary and amusing’; quite simply, Horace’s own interests and the parameters of his Lucilian ‘model’ lay in the familiar, the ordinary and the amusing.

A third related factor underlying the composition of this and other satires is Horace’s understandable desire to present a favourable self-image to Maecenas and the members of his circle. Of all the literary genres, satire provided the best opportunity for a poet to imbue his writing with his own personality, and Horace explicitly refers to satire’s potential in this respect: ‘In the past he (Lucilius) would confide his secrets to his books, which he trusted like friends; and whether things went well or badly he’d always turn to them; in consequence, the whole of the old man’s life is laid before us, as if it were painted on a votive tablet’.32

That Horace was much concerned with winning the acceptance of Maecenas and his circle at this stage of his literary career is also suggested by his repeated assertions that he is writing not for the public at large but for the enjoyment and approval of a select audience. The most pertinent statement to this effect occurs in the tenth satire of Book 1: ‘I should like these poems to win the approval of Plotius and Varius, Maecenas and Virgil, Valgius, Octavius and the admirable Fuscus; and I hope that the Viscus brothers will enjoy them; I can also mention you, Pollio, without incurring any suspicion of flattery, you Messalla, and your brother, and also you, Bibulus and Servius, and you, my dear candid Furnius, and several other accomplished friends whose names I purposely omit. I should like them to find my work attractive, such as it is; I’d be sorry if it caused them disappointment’.33 There are five other instances34 in Book 1 which echo these sentiments, and I can see no good reason for questioning Horace’s sincerity. Poets could not and did not rely on their writing as a direct source
of income; rather, their literary talent was a means of gaining admission to the patronage, or more accurately, the ‘amicitia’ of the wealthy, from which the real benefits flowed. Horace’s Sabine farm is a case in point. Horace surely did not accompany Maecenas to Brundisium as some sort of travelling minstrel; he did so because he was an ‘amicus’ whose personal attributes, quite apart from his literary talent, made him a valued companion. The same, presumably, may be said of Virgil and other poets who made that journey.

An aspect of the fifth satire which deserves more attention than it usually receives is the extent to which it makes the narrator himself the focus of amused interest; and I think it is worth drawing attention to the fact that the fifth satire falls between two poems which are very much concerned with Horace’s position as a writer, his character and upbringing and his relationship with his patron. It may also be significant that in the fourth satire Horace is at pains to rebut accusations that as a satirist he is cruel and malicious. What better remedy could there be than to raise a few laughs at his own expense, while at the same time making his satirical comments about other people and places mild and good-natured — and, one might add, markedly un-Lucilian.

A tone of wry self-mockery is evident from early on, and the picture which emerges within the first 20 lines or so is that of someone who really is out of place amid the rigours of long-distance travel, but who somehow endures the ordeal with resignation and a sense of humour: he grumbles about Forum Appi, swarming with sailors and stingy hoteliers (3–4); he would rather dawdle along than exert himself (5); he gets diarrhoea and to his chagrin has to ‘hang around’ while the others enjoy their dinner (7–9); he is clearly annoyed by the noisy altercations between slaves and boatmen and by the tedious delay while fares are collected and the mule is harnessed (9–14); he is tormented by mosquitoes and frogs, and, if that is not bad enough, his insomnia is prolonged by the crooning of the boatman, which in turn prompts one of the passengers to take up the refrain (14–17). The mood of the exasperated passenger who beats the mule and lazy boatman with a cudgel (17–23) probably reflects the mood of the poet himself at this stage.

It is precisely because Horace is portraying his own peevishness in the face of all these discomforts and irritations that, after the brief mention of Maecenas’ and Cocceius’ mission (27–8), attention is immediately shifted back to Horace and to yet another complaint — his sore eyes. This juxtapositioning of the important and the trivial is surely deliberate but it is not an attempt to show that he was under no obligation ‘to dance attendance on his powerful friend’, as Du Quesnay suggests, but rather an amusing illustration of how preoccupied the tired and ‘ratty’ traveller can become with his own ailments. This theme is picked up again in lines...
48–9, where Horace and now Virgil too, are incapacitated by sore eyes and dyspepsia — while even Maecenas can waddle off for a ball game. The almost ecstatic delight which Horace experiences when he is united with Virgil and other friends is quite probably an accurate reflection of the sort of bonhomie which would prevail in those circumstances.  

The tone of wry humour is also evident in the description of the disrupted meal at Beneventum (71–6); and again we are reminded of poor Horace's smarting eyes when, in lines 79–80, he mentions the villa at Trivicum 'lacrimoso non sine fumo'. This uncomfortable place provides an apt setting for the ultimate annoyance and embarrassment in Horace's catalogue of woes: his frustration at waiting in vain till midnight for a girl to come to his bed. Whether or not Horace is making up this tale in response to an apparently similar episode in Lucilius' account, it does provide a fitting climax to this humorous presentation of himself.  

The satire ends on a light-hearted note, with the recollection of how they all laughed and joked about some superstitious hocus-pocus which they witnessed at the town of Gnatia (97–103). It is perhaps significant that the emphasis here on Horace's own Epicurean outlook would have met with the approval of his patron.  

The personality of the poet, evident both in his self-description and in the narrative generally, is a dominant feature of the fifth satire. To my mind, Horace is far more concerned with endearing himself to his patron and friends with his entertaining reminiscences, his wry sense of humour, his genial personality and, perhaps most importantly, his talent for concise and vivid description, than he is with presenting to the world a politically palatable view of Maecenas' circle. In fact, Horace's 'credentials' (a freedman's son, very conscious of his inherited limitations in the public sphere, and a rueful supporter of the Republican cause) together with a clearly stated preference for a life 'free from the cruel compulsion to get to the top' suggest that he was less likely to have embraced the role of political propagandist with any real confidence, let alone fervour.  

The only interests which Horace promotes consistently and obviously in Book 1 of the *Sermones* are his own. The choice of satire as a more profitable avenue for him to explore also provided Horace with a useful precedent for his friendship with Maecenas, namely Lucilius' relationship with Laelius and Scipio; and Horace does not forego the opportunity to exploit the analogy. When Trebatius, in the first satire of Book 2, expresses his fear that satire will be Horace's downfall because one of his powerful friends may 'freeze him stiff', Horace points out that neither Laelius nor Scipio was offended by Lucilius' wit; not only that, but 'when the worthy Scipio and the wise and gentle Laelius left the stage of public life for the privacy of home, they would let their hair down and join the poet in a bit of horseplay while they waited for the vegetables to cook'.  

The analogy was
clearly intended to be instructive, and had already been given substance by the fifth satire of Book 1 in particular. 41

There is no really convincing evidence to suggest that Horace’s efforts to consolidate his position within Maecenas’ circle were coloured noticeably by wider political considerations, or that his friendship with Maecenas implied active support of Octavian’s party or, indeed, a close relationship with Octavian himself. If this was the case, then his Sermones made a pretty poor job of it — judging from a passage in Suetonius’ Life of Horace: ‘...after reading several of his “sermones”, the Emperor thus expressed his pique that no mention was made of him: “You must know that I am not pleased with you, that in your numerous writings of this kind you do not talk with me, rather than with others. Are you afraid that your reputation with posterity will suffer because it appears that you were my friend?”’. 42 It would appear that Octavian’s overtures were quite insistent: not only did he endeavour — unsuccessfully — to lure Horace away from Maecenas to be his own secretary and to press his hospitality upon him, but he was also generous with his gifts and terms of endearment. 43 One may wonder whether Horace’s aloofness can be attributed in part to his being affectionately described by Octavian as ‘penis purissimus’!

Suetonian gossip aside, it is clear that even when Horace composed what was probably his last satire 44 he was still remarkably reluctant to extol Octavian’s virtues and achievements with any confidence or enthusiasm:

Trebatius: ‘...if you’re so carried away by this passion for writing, try your hand at recounting the triumphs of Caesar. Your trouble will be most handsomely rewarded.

Horace: ‘I only wish I could, sir; but I lack the power. Not everyone, after all, can portray lines of battle bristling with lances, Gauls dying with their spears splintered, or the wounded Parthian slipping from his steed.’

Trebatius: ‘But you could depict his fairness and courage, as Lucilius wisely did with Scipio.’

Horace: ‘I shan’t be wanting when the chance occurs. If the moment isn’t right then Floppy’s words won’t penetrate Caesar’s pricked-up ear. Rub him the wrong way and he’ll lash out right and left with his hooves in self-defence.’ 45

Satire, it would seem, was an inappropriate — if not hazardous — vehicle for ‘political’ propaganda.
NOTES


2. 'huc venturus erat Maecenas optimus atque
Cocceius, missi magnis de rebus uterque
legati, aversos soliti componere amicos' (27–29);
'...interea Maecenas adventu atque
Cocceius Capitoque simul Fonteius, ad unguem
factus homo, Antoni non ut magis alter amicus' (31–33).


9. Du Quesnay (above, n.8) 15.

10. Du Quesnay (above, n.8) 57.


12. Du Quesnay (above, n.8) 39–43.


21. ‘Lucilio hac satura semulatur Horatius iter suum a Roma Brundesium usque de-scribens, quod et ille in tertio libro fecit, primo a Roma Capuam usque et inde fretum Siciliense’ (Porphyrio on *Serm*.1.5.1.); cf. A. Kiessling, R. Heinze, *Quintus Horatius Flaccus, Satiren*, Berlin 1957, 89.


23. See, for example, W.S. Anderson (above, n.7) 57–9.

24. See Fiske (above, n.22) 308–10.

25. See Fiske (above, n.22) 48.

and the analogy he proceeds to draw between Horace and Odysseus are not very convincing.

27. On the probable length of Lucilius' *Iter Siculum*, see Anderson (above n.26) 7.

28. W 102–5. Unfortunate, too, for Lucilius' reputation is the survival of his homily on 'virtus':

‘Virtus, Albine, est pretium persolvere verum quis in versamur quis vivimus rebus potesse; virtus est homini scire id quod quaerente habeat res; virtus scire homini rectum utile quid sit honestum, quae bona quae mala item, quid inutile turpe inhoneste; virtus quaerendi finem re scire modumque; virtus divitiis pretium persolvere posse; virtus id dare quod re ipse debetur honoris, hostem esse atque inimicum hominem morumque malorum contra defensores hominem morumque bonorum, hos magni facere, his bene velle, his vivere amicum, commoda praeterea patriae, prima putare, deinde parentum, tertia iam postremae nostra.’

(W 1196–1208);

and the following excerpts provide a useful illustration of Horace's comparative terseness:

Lucilius:

‘Quid sibi vult, quare fit ut introvorsus et ad te spectent atque ferant vestigia se omnia prorsus?’

(W 1119–20)

Horace:

‘quia me vestigia terrent, omnia te adversum spectantia, nulla retrorsum.’

(Hor. *Epist.* 1.1.74–5)

29. Serm. 1.10.9–10.

30. I can find no good reason for believing that Horace is being disingenuous — pace Du Quesnay (above, n.8, 26) — when he repeatedly declares his passion for writing *per se* and his preference for a select and appreciative audience; see p.57 and notes 33 and 34.

31. Non quia, Maecenas, Lydorum quicquid Etruscos incoluit finis, nemo generositor est te, nec quod avus tibi maternus fuit atque paternus olim qui magnis legionibus imperitarent, ut plerique solent, naso suspendis adunco ignoto aut, ut me, libertino patre natos.

(Hor. *Serm.* 1.6.1–6)

32. Serm. 2.1.30–4.

33. Serm. 1.10.81–9.

34. Serm. 1.4.71–4 and 132–43; 1.10.37–9 and 73–5; 2.1.27–8 and 57–60.


36. Ehlers (above, n.3) 76 takes a more serious view of this incident: ‘Der Leser fühlt das ganze Gedicht hindurch deutlich den Abstand zwischen Horaz und den Grossen der Politik, in deren Kreis er sich seit kurzem bewegen darf. Diese Grossen sind
durch Reichtum wie durch Gesundheit (der ballspielende Maecenas, der die Siesta nicht nötig hat) dem durch Horaz verkörpertem Normalmass weit entrückt'. This notion is surely contradicted by the relaxed enjoyment and shared amusement of the travelling party at Fundo ('Fundus ... linquimus, insani ridentes praemia scribas', 34–5), at Coceius’ villa ('prosus iucunde cenam producimus ilam', 76) and at Gnadia ('dein Gnadia ... dedit riusque iocusque', 97–8).

37. Is Horace really suggesting any more than ‘thank goodness for the arrival of my friends — if it hadn’t been for them I would never have survived that ghastly trip!’? Classen (above, n.3) 246–7 reads more into this passage: ‘Mit dem Vers 39 kehrt Horaz noch einmal zum Phänomen der Freundschaft zurück. Dean jetzt treffen jene Freunde ein, die auf der gleichen Stufe stehen wie er selbst und denen er sich besonders eng verbunden weiß — wie er ausdrücklich betont, durch die sehr persönliche Charakteristik bestätigt und durch die besonders herzliche Begrüßung unterstrichen ... Mag diese Freundschaft nicht zwischen jenen Grassen geschlossen sein, die die Geschicke der Völker lenken, und daher allgemeiner Wirkung entbehren, so verbindet sie verwante Geister in besonderer Innigkeit und wird dadurch für jeden einzelnen Partner wesentlich und bedeutungsvoll’.

38. Classen (above, n.3) 244 does not think that Horace was merely raising a laugh at his own expense: ‘Wieder bestimmt das ganz persönliche Erlebnis die Darstellung. Horaz benützt sich nicht damit, seine Erfahrungen und Eindrücke zu schüldern; er gibt zugleich eine Wertung, mit der er sich hier selbst kritisiert. Torheit ist es, sich auf andere zu verlassen, wenn man ihnen nicht vertrauen kann — das entspricht genau dem Lob echter Freundschaft, das er bei dem Treffen mit Varius und den anderen ausgeprochen hatte (44)

39. Serm. 1.6.129.
40. Serm. 2.1.60–74.
41. I.e. the uninhibited enjoyment of the entertainment at Coceius’ villa (58–70), in particular.
42. ‘... post Sermones vero quosdam lectos nullam sui mentionem habitant: ita sit ques-tus: “Irasci me tibi scito, quod non in plerisque eius modi scriptus mecum potissi-mum loquaris; an vereris ne apud posteros infame tibi sit, quod videaris familiaris nobis esse?”’ (Suetonius, Vita Horati). According to Suetonius, Octavian then forced (‘expressat’) from Horace a selection which began:

Cun tot sustineas et tanta negotia salus,
Res Italas armis tuteris, moribus ornes,
Legibus emendes: in publica commoda peccem,
Si longo sermone morer tua tempora, Caesar.
(Epist. 2.1.1–4)

43. ‘Augustus epistolaram quoque ei officium optulit, ut hoc ad Maecenatem scripto signif-icat: “Ante ipse sufficiebam scribendis epistulis amicorum, nunc occupatiissimus et infirmus Horatium nostrum a te cupio abducere. Veniet ergo ab ista parasitica mensa ad hanc regioni, et nos in epistulis scribendis iuvabit.” Ac ne recusaret quidem aut suspensui quicquam aut ancilatam suam ingerere desit. Estante epistulae, e quibus argumenti gratia paucis subieci: “Sume tibi aliquid iuris apud me, tamquam si convictor mihi fueris, recte enim et non temere feceris, quoniam id usus mihi tecum esse volui, si per valitudinem tuam fieri possit.” Et rursus: “Tui qualem habeam memoriam, poteris ex Septimio quoque nostro audire; nam incidit ut illo coram fieret a me tui mentio. Nescio enim si tu superstes ancillatam nostram sprevisti, idcirco nos quoque ipsiusque eum inter alios io-
cos 'purissimum penem' et 'homuncionem lepidissimum' appellat, unaque et altera liberalitate locupletavit' (Suetonius, Vitae Horatii).

44. See Rudd (above n.26), 124–31.
45. Serm. 2.1.10–20.
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