

Quo, Quo Scelesti Ruitis:
The Downward Momentum of Horace's *Epodes**

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I. The *Epodes*' Structure of Descent

It is clear that Horace has carefully arranged his collection of *Epodes*.¹ Most obviously, there is the metrical sequence, with the first ten poems using an iambic couplet and the concluding seven ranging widely—combinations of iambic and dactylic elements in 11 and 13–16, dactyls in 12, straight iambic trimeters in 17. There is also, as in Horace's other collections, the placement of Maecenas poems in positions of special importance. *Epode* 1, addressed to Maecenas as he sets off for Actium, begins the collection, and *Epode* 9, also to Maecenas, but this time celebrating the victory at Actium, is at the exact center. Moreover, these two "public" Maecenas poems (compare the more private 3 and 14) interlock with the two other *Epodes* that have a national theme, 7 and 16, both of which focus on the agony of the civil wars.² From a different

* I am pleased here to record my gratitude to *ICS*'s two anonymous readers. Their comments and suggestions have led to significant improvements in this final version.

¹ Among many, see W. Port, "Die Anordnung in Gedichtbüchern augusteischer Zeit," *Philologus* 81 (1926) 291–96; R. W. Carrubba, *The Epodes of Horace: A Study in Poetic Arrangement* (The Hague 1969); K. Büchner, "Die Epoden des Horaz," in *Werkanalysen. Studien zur römischen Literatur* 8 (Wiesbaden 1970) 50–96; E. A. Schmidt, "Amica vis pastoribus: Der Jambiker Horaz in seinem Epodenbuch," *Gymnasium* 84 (1977) 401–23; H. Dettmer, *Horace: A Study in Structure* (Hildesheim 1983) 77–109; D. H. Porter, *Horace's Poetic Journey: A Reading of Odes 1–3* (Princeton 1987) 254–59; and esp. two recent studies: W. Fitzgerald, "Power and Impotence in Horace's *Epodes*," *Ramus* 17 (1988) 176–91; and E. Oliensis, "Canidia, Canticula, and the Decorum of Horace's *Epodes*," *Arethusa* 24 (1991) 107–35.

² On 1 and 9, 7 and 16, see Carrubba (previous note) 33–40, 82; Dettmer (previous note) 101–02. On the historical background to the four poems, see E. K. Wistrand, *Horace's Ninth Epode and its Historical Background* (Göteborg 1958); D. Ableitinger-Grünberger, *Der junge Horaz und die Politik: Studien zur 7. und 16. Epode* (Heidelberg 1971); R. G. M. Nisbet, "Horace's *Epodes* and History," in *Poetry and Politics in the Age of Augustus*, ed. by T. Woodman and D. West (Cambridge 1984) 1–18; E. Kraggerud, *Horaz und Actium: Studien zu den politischen Epoden* (Oslo 1984); F. Cairns, "Horace *Epode* 9: Some New Interpretations," *ICS* 8 (1983) 80–93; L. Watson, "Epode 9, or The Art of Falsehood," in *Homo Viator: Classical Essays for John Bramble* (Bristol 1987) 119–29. Not everyone links 1 to Actium: M. W. Thompson, "The Date of Horace's First Epode," *CQ* 20 (1970) 328–34, argues for the

perspective, the arrangement of these four poems creates closely parallel sequences in the two halves of the book, with a Maecenas poem (1 and 9) leading to a civil war poem (7 and 16) within each half. In addition, the second poem, in which Alfius dreams of escaping Rome for a pastoral utopia, balances the penultimate poem, in which Horace urges the Romans to abandon their city for a utopia very similar to Alfius'. Finally, as I shall show, numerous motifs—animals, feasts, fire and burning, the search for release, etc.—run through the book, binding its diverse poems into a cohesive and coherent whole.

To note these relationships, however, is to understand only part of Horace's organizational strategy in the *Epodes*. Architectural in character, even static, they fail to explain the sense of rapid but controlled movement that the collection evokes.³ For the headlong momentum that characterizes *Quo, quo scelesti ruitis* finds expression elsewhere as well. The *Epodes* are punctuated throughout by departures—Maecenas in 1, Alfius in 2, Mevius in 10, Achilles in 13, the citizens of Rome in 16; fittingly the collection begins with *Ibis* and ends with *exitus*.⁴ Furthermore, the poet goes out of his way to suggest forward movement between poems. In *Epode* 1 Maecenas is departing for Actium; by the time we reach 9, Horace is looking to celebrate Roman victory there with Maecenas. *Epode* 7 focuses on the past history, the ancient causes, of Roman civil strife; its companion piece, *Epode* 16, turns to the future, to what lies ahead for the war-ravaged Romans. The mention of Canidia in *Epode* 3 leads to the extended portrait of her in *Epode* 5, this in turn to the recantation in 17. In addition, there are the jarring juxtapositions, the unexpected turns that permeate the book. Horace's poem on Maecenas' departure for serious national business is followed by the pastoral satire of Alfius' imagined departure from the serious business of Rome, this in turn by the jesting 3, so different from 1 in its stance toward Maecenas. The lengthy and dark 5 is enclosed by the short and sniping 4 and 6. The grossly parodic 8 serves as transition between 7, Horace's anguished lament over the civil wars, and 9, his joyous response to the victory at Actium—and so on into the second half of the book.⁵ Given this ubiquity of movement and change, given these dynamic contrarities,

campaign against Sextus Pompeius (for a response, see S. Watson, "Two Nautical Points: 1. Horace, *Epode* 1. 1–2; 2. Catullus 4. 20–21," *LCM* 8 [1983] 66–69).

³ This tension between static and dynamic is typical of Horace's other collections as well; see M. S. Santirocco, "Horace's *Odes* and the Ancient Poetry Book," *Arethusa* 13 (1980) 43–57; J. E. G. Zetzel, "Horace's *Liber Sermonum*: The Structure of Ambiguity," *Arethusa* 13 (1980) 59–77; D. H. Porter, "From Separation to Song: Horace, *Carmina* 4," *ICS* 12 (1987) 97–119. On the many ways in which the Augustan poets make use of the shifting perspectives inherent to the book roll, see the whole of *Arethusa* 13.1 (1980).

⁴ Oliensis (above, note 1) 127, who also notes many other links between 1 and 17.

⁵ See Büchner (above, note 1) 51–52. K. F. Quinn, "Two Crises in Horace's Poetical Career," *AUMLA* 5 (1956) 35–38, finds the divergences among poems so severe that he can only assume Horace lumped old and new together to constitute the *Epodes*, a hypothesis which, to my mind, neglects the book's many indications of careful construction.

there is the greater need for an overall sense of direction, a defining gesture, a controlling "curve of movement."⁶

In this article I shall suggest that such a "curve of movement" does indeed shape the *Epodes*—a downward curve, initially felt in the progression of the first half of the book (1–8), mirrored in the parallel progression of the second half (9–17), and present as well in the movement of the book as a whole from the hopes of 1 and 2 to the despair of 16 and 17. I shall additionally show that numerous seemingly unrelated aspects of the book—the recurrent motifs, the metrical arrangement, the jarring juxtapositions, the prominent role accorded Canidia—contribute to and are part of this overall movement. Finally, I shall suggest that Horace builds into his collection a contrapuntal movement focused on poetry that, while not negating the downward trajectory of the book as a whole, nonetheless colors its conclusion with a characteristically Horatian complexity (as well as foreshadowing the thematic role poetry will play in *Odes* 1–3 and *Odes* 4).

The animal motifs, prominent throughout the *Epodes*,⁷ offer a useful starting point in that they so clearly chart the descending movement of the opening eight poems. The motif first appears in *Epode* 1 in the rather commonplace simile of the bird and the serpents (19–22) and in Horace's assurances to Maecenas that his devotion is not motivated by the hope for material rewards—such as more cattle on his estates (25–28)! In both instances the thrust of the motif is positive, suggesting the depth and the disinterest of the poet's affection for his patron. In a motivic link typical of the *Epodes*, the flocks Horace does not want in *Epode* 1 lead in *Epode* 2 to the flocks for which Alfius longs—*bubus* 3, *mugientium . . . greges* 11–12, *infirmas ovis* 16, *laetum pecus* 45, *pastas ovis* 61, *fessos . . . boves* 63.⁸ Other animate creatures also fill Alfius' rural utopia—birds (26, 34, 35, 54), boars and dogs (31–32), the hare (35), fish and shellfish (49–50), wolf, lamb, and goat (59–60); and again, as in 1, the motif carries positive connotations throughout; even the slaughtered lamb and the wolf-snatched kid (59–60) contribute to a festive meal.

Animals take on somewhat darker colors, albeit in a jauntily humorous context, in *Epode* 3, as Horace tries to suggest the virulence of the garlic he has ingested by alluding to the blood of vipers (6), to Jason yoking the bulls (11), and to Medea's winged serpent (14). The opposition of wolf and lamb, implicit only in 2. 59–60 (*agna . . . lupo*), returns explicitly in the

⁶ I owe the phrase to M. L. Rosenthal and S. M. Gall, *The Modern Poetic Sequence* (Oxford 1983) 15.

⁷ See Fitzgerald (above, note 1) 188 ff.

⁸ On the ways 1. 23 ff. leads into 2, see S. J. Heyworth, "Horace's Second Epode," *AJP* 109 (1988) 73–74; F. Nóvoa, "El epodo II de Horacio," *Argos* 3 (1979) 31–40. Motivic ties link adjoining poems throughout the book—e.g. *dura . . . ilia* 3. 4, *dura compede* 4. 4; the toga in 4. 7–8 and 5. 7; *dente livido* 5. 47, *atro dente* 6. 15 (cf. *dens ater* 8. 3); *solvere*, end of 9, *soluta*, beginning of 10; *mollibus* and *mollitie* 11. 4 and 24, *mollis* 12. 16.

sneering words with which *Epode* 4 begins, *Lupis et agnis quanta sortito obtigit, tecum mihi discordia est*, and the snide reference in 4. 13 to the upstart plowing his thousand acres recalls the allusions to flocks and fields in 1. 25–28. Animals are as ubiquitous in *Epode* 5 as they were in *Epode* 2, but where in 2 they delineated Alfius' pastoral fantasy, in 5 they underscore the black humor and the malignancy of Horace's portrait of the witches. The sporting hunt of 2. 31–36 is replaced by *petita ferro belua* 5. 10, *ieiunae canis* 5. 23 (cf. *multa cane* 2. 31), and the *currens aper* to which Horace compares Sagana in 5. 28 (cf. *acris . . . apros* 2. 31–32). The *viperinus . . . cruor* (3. 6) to which Horace compares the garlic becomes the vipers in Canidia's hair (5. 15) and the frog's and owl's blood she uses in her vile concoctions (19–20). In contrast to 2, the only peaceful animals in 5 are the sleeping beasts (55–56), and even they provide the backdrop for Canidia's dark machinations. Otherwise, dogs harass humans (57–58), wolves and birds scatter unburied bodies (99–100), and the *puer* himself threatens to haunt Canidia as a predatory bird (93 and 95). And Canidia herself, both in name and in character, is decidedly doglike.⁹

The descent of the motif from benign to malignant continues in 6 with the canine imagery that pervades the entire poem.¹⁰ In addition, what was simile in 4. 1–2 and 5. 27–28 becomes metaphor in 6. 1 ff.—a natural evolution from the implied metaphors of 5. 93 and 95. As in 4 there is obvious humor in Horace's outrage, but the humor is unpleasant, even nasty in tone, an effective prelude to *Epode* 7, where the motivic chain we have been following reaches its climax (7. 11–12): *neque hic lupis mos nec fuit leonibus umquam nisi in dispar feris*. To read these lines is to understand the destination of the ever more savage animal references of the previous six poems: Horace's indictment of the animal behavior evoked by the civil wars.¹¹ It is also to see how the poet has used this motif to limn the descent from the hopes of 1 and the bright vision of 2 to the grim reality of 7—a powerful way of working the downward, destructive rush of *Quo, quo scelesti ruitis* into the very fabric of the poems and the collection.

Other motifs chart a similar progression, and to a similar purpose. In the language and imagery of liquids, the wine which will adorn Alfius' imagined feasts (2. 47) leads to the viper's blood (3. 6) that Horace suspects in the garlic-permeated feast, to *uncta turpis ova ranae sanguine* (5. 19) and the witches' love potions (5. 38, 73, 78), and finally to Latin blood spilled on land and sea (7. 3–4) and *Remi sacer nepotibus cruor* (7. 19–20).¹² The

⁹ See Oliensis (above, note 1) 110 ff. and passim.

¹⁰ See L. C. Watson, "The Iambist as Sheep-Dog: Horace, *Epode* VI 7–8," *Mnemosyne* 36 (1983) 156–59. And cf. Horace's *asperrimus parata tollo cornua* (6. 11–12) with Sagana in *Epode* 5: *horret capillis ut marinus asperis echinus aut currens aper* (5. 27–28).

¹¹ Given the reference in 7. 17–20 to Romulus' slaying of Remus, may not the *lupis* of 11 recall the she-wolf of the same legend? The passages enclose the second half of the poem.

¹² Cf. the decline from *dapes inemptas apparet* (2. 48) to *malas Canidia tractavit dapes* (3. 7–8) and *bis terque mutatae dapis* (5. 33); *Thyesteas preces* (5. 86) continues the motif.

land itself, mentioned in passing at 1. 33 and portrayed as a fruitful paradise throughout 2, becomes the source of the plants and trees which the witches collect for their brew (5. 17–22, 67–68) and turns into a wasteland polluted by Remus' blood (7. 19–20; note the identical position of *terra(m)* in 1. 33 and 7. 19, the penultimate lines of 1 and 7; cf. 7. 3–4). Alfius imagines the *sacrum . . . focum* of his new home (2. 43), but the sacred becomes sinister in Canidia's mouth (*arcana . . . sacra* 5. 52) and accursed in the *sacer nepotibus cruor* of 7. 20.

These recurrent motifs—and others behave in a similar fashion¹³—clearly underscore the descent from the first *Epode* to the seventh. They also persist throughout the book, and their effect there, as in the first half, is to emphasize the downward movement from *Epode* 9 through *Epodes* 16 and 17. The animal motif is positive in 9. 17 and 22 (the *frementes . . . equos* of the *Galli* and the *intactas boves* of the victory sacrifices), takes on darker colors in the intermediate poems (10. 21–24; 12. 1, 5–6, 11, 17, 25–26; 15. 7–8, 19), and reaches its nadir in the two concluding poems. In 16 animals are important to Horace's utopian vision (49–52, 61–62), but above all they underscore his denunciation of Rome's decline (10, 12) and the finality of the abandonment he urges (19–20, 30–34).¹⁴ As in *Epode* 5, animals loom large throughout 17, and in contexts that emphasize Canidia's power. Horace may offer to sacrifice bullocks (39) and may cite the authority of myth for humans' escape from mutilation by animals (11–12) and from transformation into animals (15–17), but in the end Canidia's animal powers will triumph. She too cites myth—Prometheus forever subjected to his bird (67)—and promises that she will as *equus* ride Horace's *umeris . . . inimicis* (74).

As the wine, milk, and honey of *Epode* 2 turn to poisonous substances and thence to blood in subsequent poems of the first half, so in the second half the wine with which Horace plans to celebrate victory in 9. 1–4 and 33–38 yields to the wine which reveals his amorous subjection in 11. 13–14, to the sleep-inducing *pocula* which he feels he has drunk in 14. 3–4, and, in the final poem, to the black blood of Nessus (17. 31–32), the (feigned?) blood of Canidia's birthings (17. 50–51), and the *pocula* which Canidia tempers (17. 80). Just as the *dapes* which Alfius imagines in 2. 47 ff. become the garlicky *dapes* which inflame Horace's innards in 3—as if Canidia herself had handled them (7–8)!—and the *daps* by which the *puer* is tantalized in 5. 33 ff., so in the second half the *festae dapes* imagined by

¹³ E.g., fire and burning. Favorable in 1. 27–28 and 2. 43–44 (cf. 66), progressively more negative in 3. 17–18, 4. 3, 5. 24, 65–66, and 81–82, the motif climaxes in the reference to the burning of Carthage in 7. 5–6, one of the details by which Horace indicts the Romans. The motif is absent from 8, then reappears in positive guise in 9. 8 before again taking on darker colors in 10. 13, 11. 4 and 27, 14. 9 and 13–14, 16. 11 (cf. 55 and 62) and 17. 30–35 (cf. 79).

¹⁴ Cf. *indocili . . . grege* (37) with *gregem* (62); both recall similar motifs early in the book.

Horace in 9. 1 yield to the feast of Tantalus with which Canidia threatens him in 17. 66, the final appearance of this minor but important motif.¹⁵

Horace thus underscores the parallel downward trajectories of 1 to 7 and 9 to 16–17 by his controlled use of recurrent motifs in both halves of the book. What about *Epode* 8, which stands at the juncture between these parallel sequences? This placement may seem strange but is in fact brilliant, for *Epode* 8 provides a skillful join between the two halves of the book—no easy task, given the tonal gulf between *Epodes* 7 and 9. The ugly theme and language of 8 (note the marked continuation of negative animal imagery in lines 5–8) sustain the disgust and despair expressed in *Epode* 7: The Rome of the civil wars is vile, and so is *Epode* 8. But by the time the poem reaches the Stoic *libelli* amidst the Persian pillows (15–16) and the *illiterati . . . nervi* (17), it has become so exaggerated, so overdone as to be patently absurd, a parody of itself (as of its genre), a mode that leads naturally into the gross jest with which the poem concludes. This dark humor wrested from ugliness prepares the way for the lighter mood of *Epode* 9, though not without leaving its unpleasant aftertaste. This residue is itself part of Horace's scheme—a hint that the seeming brightness of 9, like the hopes of 1, will soon dissipate as the second half of the book begins its descent to the pessimism of the final two poems.

This daring use of 8 as transition between 7 and 9 works partly because Horace has woven such close motivic ties into the three poems. Thus the animals to which he compares the woman in 8 recall the animal images he uses of the Romans in 7; the *superbo . . . inguine* of 8. 19 picks up the *superbas . . . arcus* of 7. 5–6; the snide reference to the woman's triumph—*funus atque imagines ducant triumphales tuum* (8. 11–12)—echoes the *Britannus* led in triumph down the Sacred Way in 7. 7–8; and Horace's enervated *vires* (8. 2) recall the *vis acrior* which has seized the Romans in 7. 13. And just as Horace transforms the grim motifs of 7 into the ugly parody of 8, so he transmutes the grossness of 8 into the joyous language of 9. The woman's "triumphal" procession (8. 11–12) becomes the *io Triumphe* of Roman victories past and future (9. 21–26); the bovine and equine slurs of 8. 6 and 8 become the horses and heifers of 9. 17 and 22; and the sneering *esto beata* of 8. 11 becomes the *beate Maecenas* of 9. 4. In the *fluentem nauseam* of 9. 35, though, there remains a telling reminder of the disgust that animated the previous poem.

In addition to effecting the transition from 7 to 9, *Epode* 8 also extends the parallelism of 1 to 7, 9 to 16. For both 8 and 17, the poems that follow 7 and 16, address women with whom Horace has had a previous—and

¹⁵ Cf. note 12 above. In the same way, the positive *terra marique* of 9. 27 yields to the despairing *o mare et terra* of 17. 30; cf. *campis atque Neptuno* (7. 3).

unpleasant—relationship.¹⁶ There is a crucial distinction between these two halves, however. The vileness of 8 is promptly dispelled by the seeming brightness of 9—and we have seen how Horace eases this transition. In contrast, *Epode* 17, in so many ways the counterpart to 8, differs significantly in that nothing follows: It has no *Epode* 9 to wrest from its ugliness a more balanced view of the world.

II. Corollaries to the Structure of Descent

That the *Epodes* end with Canidia's rejection of Horace's plea relates directly to a central theme, that of hopes, plans, illusions that are shattered, unfulfilled, unattainable. The theme is introduced in the very first poem, where Horace's promise to follow Maecenas to the ends of the earth (11–14) is phrased in terms so hyperbolic as to invite disbelief. Similarly, in *Epode* 9 Horace asks Maecenas when together they will drink the Caecuban in honor of Caesar's victory—a question which remains pointedly unanswered in the *Epodes* that follow.¹⁷ The theme is even more apparent in *Epode* 2, where the final lines of the poem reveal that Alfius' grandiloquent musings are just that—musings (67–70).

The same theme is central to *Epode* 16, the poem that balances 2. There is, to begin with, the simple fact that what the *vates* offers is only words—a vision, a dream. And that dream, despite its eloquence and passion, is manifestly of a no-place, a utopia, impossible of realization, concocted of the commonplaces of the genre—the blessed fields, the rich isles, the crops that grow at all seasons, the cattle that unbidden return with udders full, the absence of hostile animals and human malefaction. The reference near the end (64) to the golden age merely seals the point: The place to which Horace invites the Romans exists only in the past, only in myth—a hauntingly lovely vision, but no reality.¹⁸

Horace underscores this point by relating 16 both to *Epode* 2, its structural counterpart, and to *Epode* 17, its immediate sequel. He links 2 and 16 not only by similar size and balanced placement but also by striking verbal and thematic ties. Both paint vivid, enchanting pictures of a world too good to be true. Granted, 2 makes more concessions to reality than does 16—humans still must contend with the changing seasons (2. 17–18, 29–30;

¹⁶ On the parallelism of 1–7–8 and 9–16–17, see Carrubba (above, note 1) 82; Dettmer (above, note 1) 80, 101–02. On the parallel movement of the two halves, see Porter (above, note 1) 255–59.

¹⁷ As many have commented, *Odes* 1. 37 finally responds to the *Quando . . . bibam* of *Epode* 9; see, e.g., E. Fraenkel, *Horace* (Oxford 1957) 159; C. W. Macleod, "Horace and his Lyric Models: A Note on *Epode* 9 and *Odes* 1,37," *Hermes* 110 (1982) 373.

¹⁸ See Nisbet (above, note 2) 6: "But unlike the Sibyl of the [fourth] eclogue, this prophet sees the good society not as something that is now being inaugurated in Rome, but as an unrealisable fantasy to be set before the beginning of history or outside the known world"; D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Profile of Horace* (Cambridge 1982) 8: "The Islands of the Blest in context with the grim realities of the period are at best a pleasing whimsy."

cf. 16. 53–56),¹⁹ the land still requires plowing (2. 3 and 63; cf. 16. 43) and trees grafting (2. 13–14 and 19; cf. 16. 46); domestic animals do get killed upon occasion (2. 60; cf. 16. 51); life involves work as well as play. Nonetheless, the similarities are far more significant than the differences. Cattle with bulging udders figure prominently in both poems (2. 45–46, 16. 49–50). In both honey flows (2. 15, 16. 47) and falling waters sound (2. 25 and 27, 16. 47–48). Both are secluded (cf. *reducta valle* 2. 11, *Iuppiter illa . . . secrevit litora* 16. 63), insulated from the unseemly sides of human existence (2. 1 and 5–8, 16. 57–60), and both are throwbacks to an older and better time (cf. *prisca gens mortalium* 2. 2, *tempus aureum* 16. 64). Finally, there is the striking link between the distant *beata . . . arva* to which Horace invites the Romans (16. 41–42) and the *Beatus ille, qui procul negotiis* with which 2 begins. Their many similarities of theme and language, their balanced placement within the book, and their similarity of length all inextricably link 2 and 16 to each other in any consecutive reading of the *Epodes*, and the effect of this linking is strongly to underscore the unreality of the *vates*' promised land in 16. Just as Alfius paints an enchanting picture of a world that will never be his, a world modeled on Rome's past, so Horace holds out to the Romans a vision of a place, also modeled on the past, that can never be theirs.²⁰

An obvious difference between the two poems is that in the final four lines of 2 Horace explicitly shows up Alfius' picture for what it is—an imaginary escape—while in 16 he leaves readers to draw this conclusion for themselves. Indeed, the fact that 16 stops after 66 lines, precisely the length of *Epode* 2 without its final tag, underscores this difference. But the end of 16 is not, of course, the end of the book. *Epode* 17, and Canidia, are still to come, and they undercut the vision created in *Epode* 16 even more devastatingly than the final four lines of *Epode* 2 undercut Alfius' dream. For from the noble *vates* of 16, confident in his powers of leadership, we abruptly descend to the pathetic poet of 17, begging absolution from Canidia and confessing himself reduced to total submission. For the poet urging courage and resolution in 16 and laying powerful oaths upon the Romans (25 ff.) we have the poet offering his hands in surrender and swearing by the tools and divinities of Canidia's own craft. Replacing the everlasting joys to which Horace invites the Romans in the last 28 lines of 16 are the everlasting horrors to which Canidia consigns Horace in the last 29 lines of 17. There may be no Medea in Horace's promised land (*neque impudica Colchis intulit pedem*, 16. 58), but Medea's presence is surely felt in the next poem (*cales venenis officina Colchicis*, 17. 35). And while

¹⁹ On the seasons of *Epode* 2, see Heyworth (above, note 8) 74 ff.

²⁰ Cf. K. J. Reckford, *Horace* (New York 1969) 83: "... *Epode* 16: a *cri de coeur* at the unbridgeable gap between what ought to be and what unalterably is." On the balance between 2 and 16, see Schmidt (above, note 1) 404; Dettmer (above, note 1) 77–79, 97–99; Fitzgerald (above, note 1) 179.

Horace offers the Romans an end to their *malis . . . laboribus* in 16. 15–16, in 17. 64 he finds himself condemned to *novis . . . laboribus*.²¹ What more effective way of negating Horace's vision of freedom than by this sudden shift from the daring *vates* of 16 to the enslaved poet of 17? As if to seal the point, Horace places in the first line of *Epode* 17, which immediately follows the 66-line 16, a clear echo of the final four lines of 2—the very lines which contain its surprise ending. The 68th line of 2 describes Alfius as *iam iam futurus rusticus*, words echoed in 17. 1—the 67th line of 16, had 16 continued: *Iam iam efficaci do manus scientiae*.

Epodes 2 and 17, which at first glance seem virtuosic set pieces of Horatian wit, thus turn out to be integral thematic signposts. The surprise conclusion to *Epode* 2 sets the pattern for the whole book, in which everywhere high hopes, sounding words, lead to naught, and the counterpoise of *Epodes* 2 and 16 provides the key to understanding that the *vates'* words in 16 project as unreal a vision as do Alfius'. In the same way, the transition from 16, where Horace creates a vision so powerful as almost to seem real, to 17, where the poet's seemingly irresistible pleas to Canidia prove of no avail, reiterates the point. So does 17 itself, as Horace spins out an elaborate poetic construct in the first 52 lines, only to have it founder on the reality of the final 29.

The parallel courses of the book's two halves, considered above, relate to this same theme, with the hopes of 1 and 9 leading to the realities of 7 and 16. With respect to Rome's future, *Epode* 9 seems an advance over *Epode* 1, but the hopeful anticipations of 9 are cruelly undercut by the final national poem, 16, where Horace urges his fellow citizens to abandon all hope for their city—a stance even more despairing than that adopted in 7. Other poems play variations on the same theme. In 4 and 6 in the first half, 10 and 15 in the second, Horace threatens various adversaries with dire revenge—but his threats remain mere words, do not become reality; the *puer's* threats in 5. 87–102 are similarly hollow. 13 explicitly points out that Achilles' high hopes and brilliant promise will be cut short (12–16). Both 11 and 14 deal with purposes foiled: Horace, love-smitten, can no longer write, and even when he resolves to mend his ways, he finds himself unable to do so, drawn back to his self-destroying patterns (11. 19–22). Even the woman whom Horace reviles in 12 sounds the same theme: Her friend had recommended Horace to her as a bull, but he turns out *mollis*—and for this she gave up the tree-like Amyntas (12. 17–20)!

Contributing also to this theme of expectations foiled are the significant differences between the two halves of the book. While the recurrent motifs of the first half create an almost linear progression leading from the hopeful

²¹ Cf. the same motif in the final line of 8: *ore allaborandum est tibi*. With *labor* in 8, 16, and 17, cf. Horace's willingness to share Maecenas' *labor* in 1. 9 and 15. With Canidia as *eques*, establishing her power over the earth (17. 74–75), cf. the barbarian *eques* who will rampage over the land of Rome (16. 11–12): Oliensis (above, note 1) 132–33.

anticipations of 1 to the pessimism of 7 and the grossness of 8, in the second half these same motifs continue to appear, but the poems move by fits and starts. These very non sequiturs—in character not unlike the rude shock provided by the final four lines of *Epode 2*—themselves embody this theme by constantly jarring us with the unexpected. Horace's joyous anticipation of Maecenas' return in 9 leads to his nasty send-off for Mevius in 10.²² In 10 Horace revels in the power of his curses to destroy Mevius; in 11 he finds himself unable to write. From *puellae candidae* at the end of 11 Horace moves to *mulier nigris dignissima barris* at the start of 12. The epodic depths of 12 yield as abruptly to the lyric heights of 13, a poem that celebrates the power of poetry and ends in a quasi-heroic vein. 13 leads in turn to the decidedly unheroic 14, a love poem in which again poetry is silenced (cf. the sequence of 10–11), and this to 15, in which the poet who was the victim of *mollis inertia* and of love in 14 now stresses his vigor and manliness in the service of hate.²³ And from the highly personal invective of 15 Horace jumps to the lofty public stance of 16, from there back to the personal, satiric voice of 17. 15 ends with laughter (*ast ego vicissim risero*), 16 begins with anguish (*Altera iam teritur bellis civilibus aetas*); 16 ends with *fuga*, 17 with *huis clos*.

These jagged thematic and tonal clashes play yet one more variation on the theme of hopes foiled, expectations denied, undercutting any illusion of predictable thematic or tonal sequence. The book's metrical pattern points in the same direction, for whereas the first ten poems are metrically consistent, this regularity begins to dissipate with 11—shortly after the midpoint—and we get, in the final seven poems, six different meters.²⁴ Once more, the final poem contains the climactic surprise. Not only is its meter one not previously encountered in the *Epodes*, but for the first time the distichs that have been the rule throughout yield to simple iambic trimeters. Moreover—the ultimate irregularity!—the book's final poem has an uneven number of lines, the only such occurrence in the *Odes* or *Epodes*.

Several corollary themes complement this ubiquitous jolting of expectations. For one thing, hopes for the future are constantly drawn back into the past. The relative placement of the two pairs of national poems, 1 + 9 and 7 + 16, grounds this principle in the structure of the collection. In both real and dramatic time, 7 and 16 clearly antedate 1 and 9. Horace so organizes the book that as we read its successive poems we move

²² That *Epode 10* inverts the conventions of the propempticon (S. Commager, *The Odes of Horace* [New Haven 1962] 125–26) further underscores the tonal gulf between 9 and 10. H. Hierche, *Les Épodes d'Horace. Art et signification* (Brussels 1974) 20–21, notes how 10 also balances and contrasts with 1, a positive propempticon to Maecenas.

²³ On 11, 14, and 15, see E. Fantham, "Putting Love in its Place—A Tribute to Horace," *EMC* 23 (1979) 41–43; J. Christes, "Die 14. Epode des Horaz—ein Vorbote seiner Liebeslyrik?" *Gymnasium* 97 (1990) 341–56.

²⁴ See Carrubba (above, note 1) 20, on 11 as metrical transition from 1–10 to 11–17; Hierche (above, note 22) 90–91, on 14–16 as transition back to the iambs of 17.

backwards in time, drawn from the “later” pair back to the “earlier.” This movement also shapes each half of the book. In 1 Horace asks how he should respond to Maecenas’ departure, and the poem is filled with futures (*persequemur, laturi, feremus, sum futurus, militabitur, paravero*) and with questions about what lies ahead. By the time we reach 7, however, the focus is firmly on destructive patterns that are long established, that have become habitual. Horace looks back to the history of the civil wars, to the blood that has been spilled, and concludes that the Romans are fatally gripped by the curse of the past. The pattern is even more marked in the relationship between 9 and 16. 9 begins with Horace looking ahead to celebrating with Maecenas the victory at Actium (*Quando . . . bibam*) and ends with him ordering his *puer* to bring wine for his own present celebration. In contrast, 16 begins with Horace placing the present against the grim history of the past—yet *another* age is being worn down by civil wars!—and ends with him urging the Romans to embrace a utopia from the past (63–66).

As so often, *Epode 2* establishes the pattern. Alfius looks to a new and better future only to find himself drawn inescapably back to the established ways of his past. Once again, there are many subsidiary reflections of the same movement, especially in the second half. In 9 and 10 Horace looks to the future; in 11 he finds himself, like Alfius, irresistibly drawn back to the past (note especially 11. 5 ff.), a pattern extended in the retrospective glimpses of the next poem (12. 16 ff.). 13 reproduces the pattern within itself as the poet begins by recommending present action (*nunc . . . nunc, rapiamus, solvatur, move*), then looks toward a better future (*deus haec fortasse benigna reducet in sedem vice*), but ends by singing of the ancient heroes Chiron and Achilles (11–18).²⁵

The movement also shapes the two final poems. In 16 Horace enjoins the Romans to abandon the land they have known for so long, to reject the past, to embrace new patterns and new possibilities. And yet he turns to the past—to the legendary Phocaeans—for his model (17 ff.), and where will he lead the Romans but to a prelapsarian (there are no serpents: 52!) golden age of the past, before the time of the Argo, Medea, and Ulysses (note the perfects of 57–60)? The pattern repeats in 17 as Horace again endeavors to create a better future, this time for himself, promising the punishments he will endure, the expiations he will accomplish, the boons he will bestow on Canidia (note the futures of 37–41). But again, past patterns reassert themselves. Just as the curse of a bitter past condemns the Romans in 7. 17 ff. (*acerba fata Romanos agunt*), so what awaits Horace represents no such change as he had sought: *tardiora fata te votis manent* (17. 62). Canidia too can imagine the future, but her future, not unlike that which

²⁵ On the movement of 13, see J. V. Muir, “Two Poems of Horace,” *Latomus* 40 (1981) 328–29; D. Mankin, “Achilles in Horace’s 13th Epode,” *WS* 102 (1989) 133–40; M. Lowrie, “A Sympotic Achilles, Horace *Epode* 13,” *AJP* 113 (1992) 419–29.

Horace envisions for the Romans in 7, entails the endless repetition of past agonies. In the first part Horace amasses mythological exempla which argue for mercy and suggest the possibility of change—Telephus and Achilles, Priam and Achilles, Ulysses and Circe, Castor and Pollux; Canidia responds with exempla also, but hers point in the opposite direction—to the finality of judgment, the impossibility of change: Tantalus, Prometheus, Sisyphus, figures for whom the most excruciating torture is that their past will always be their future.

As hopes and illusions fade, as visions of a better and brighter future are pulled back to the dark past, human capacity also falters. This movement is especially pronounced in the second half of the book, and especially focused on the theme of poetry. In 10 Horace boasts that his words will destroy Mevius' ship, but in 11 the power of poetry suddenly fails him: *Petti, nihil me sicut antea iuvat scribere versiculos amore percussum gravi*. The pattern repeats in the progressions from 13 to 14 and from 16 to 17. 13 ends with a ringing assertion of the power of song: *illic omne malum vino cantuque levato, deformis aegrimoniae dulcibus alloquiis*; 14 answers with Horace again unable to write: *deus, deus nam me vetat inceptos, olim promissum carmen, iambos ad umbilicum adducere*. 16 ends with the *vates'* promise of *fuga*, a promise negated by 17, where Horace's best efforts to contrive his own escape—through song—fail absolutely. And in 17 Horace's own words turn into lies as he promises to sing on *mendax lyra* (39) whatever Canidia may wish.

Related to this repeated erosion of poetry's power is another pervasive sub-theme. Early in the book Horace introduces the opposition of masculine strength and effeminate weakness (*mente laturo decet qua ferre non mollis viros*, 1. 9–10; *imbellis ac firmus parum*, 1. 16), and he recalls this theme frequently in subsequent poems, especially in the second half.²⁶ The opposition between manly and effeminate, weak and strong, is central both to his description of the Roman victory at Actium (9. 11–16)²⁷ and to his appeal to the Romans in 16. 37–39: *mollis et exspes inominata perprimat cubilia! vos quibus est virtus, muliebrem tollite luctum*. In 10, perhaps to suggest his manly resolve, Horace promises to sacrifice a lusty goat (10. 23),²⁸ and he imagines *illa non virilis eiulatio* that will arise from Mevius' doomed ship (10. 17). But in the very next poem he is prone *mollibus in pueris aut in puellis urere* (11. 4), the slave of the *mollities* of the effeminate Lyciscus (11. 23–24), a theme continued into 12 as the woman complains that Horace, in contrast to Amyntas, is *semper ad unum mollis opus* (12. 15–16; note also how *nec firmo iuveni*, 12. 3, recalls *firmus parum*, 1. 16). The pattern repeats from 13 to 14 as Horace in 13 crafts a

²⁶ See Fitzgerald and Oliensis (above, note 1).

²⁷ See Macleod (above, note 17) 373–74.

²⁸ For other connotations of the *capere* (Mevius' smelliness and lecherousness), see S. J. Harrison, "Two Notes on Horace, *Epodes* (10, 16)," *CQ* 39 (1989) 271–73.

song of clearly heroic cast only to portray himself again in the next poem the victim of *mollis inertia* (14. 1).²⁹ In 15. 11–12 and 16. 37–40 Horace again stresses his manliness, but in 17 he is exhausted (24–26),³⁰ white-haired (23), totally in the power of a woman (note especially *do manus* 1, *vincor* 27, *quae finis aut quod me manet stipendium* 36). Whereas in 8 Horace can sneer at his female adversary, secure in his own liberty,³¹ in 17—the parallel poem—he is in thrall. Now it is Horace who is *emancipatus feminae* (cf. 9. 12),³² the woman who has the power (*potes nam* 17. 45). And whereas male divinities preside over Alfius' rural utopia (2. 21–22), in 17 the female divinities of Canidia's world hold sway (17. 2–3). In retrospect we see that a theme introduced humorously in the first poem, Horace's lack of manliness (1. 16), proves prophetically apt as the book, especially in its second half, repeatedly reduces his claims of masculine vigor to naught.³³

Furthermore, the *Epodes* intimate something more all-encompassing than merely the decline of individual powers. Both halves of the collection move in such a way as progressively to suggest a universe falling into chaos, humans declining to the level of animals.³⁴ We have tracked this descent into the animal closely in the first eight poems. Though in the poems of the second half the progression is less measured and less clear, it carries even further. Whereas in 7 humans are compared unfavorably to animals (*neque hic lupis mos nec fuit leonibus umquam nisi in dispar feris*, 7. 11–12), in the parallel poem animals will actually take over the land (*impia perdemus devoti sanguinis aetas, ferisque rursus occupabitur solum*, 16. 9–10).³⁵ In the succeeding lines Horace envisions the barbarian trampling the land and scattering to the winds the bones of Romulus, and he urges the Romans to abandon their historic city to the beasts (11–14, 19–20).

Other seemingly insignificant features in the poems of the second half reinforce this theme. 10. 13–14 and 14. 13–14 allude to the burning of

²⁹ Cf. Maecenas' queries about *mollis inertia* (14. 1) with Horace's *mente latari decet qua ferre non mollis viros* (1. 9–10; cf. 16); see Fitzgerald (above, note 1) 180–81.

³⁰ On the sexual nature of Horace's exhaustion—and his *labor*—in *Epode* 17, see E. W. Bushala, "Laboriosus Ulixes," *CJ* 64 (1968) 7–10.

³¹ Cf., however, notes 33 and 53 below.

³² On the phrase, see R. H. Brophy, "Emancipatus Feminae: A Legal Metaphor in Horace and Plautus," *TAPA* 105 (1975) 1–11.

³³ See C. L. Babcock, "Si certus intrarit dolor: A Reconsideration of Horace's Fifteenth Epode," *AJP* 87 (1966) 413 ff., who notes the frequent innuendo in *mollis* and suggests a contradiction between Horace's claims to potency and the reality presented by the poems. Cf. also Horace's bull-like threats (6. 12) with *taurum . . . inertem* (12. 17); and note *impotentia* (16. 62), on which see Oliensis (above, note 1) 121 ff., 134–35.

³⁴ See Fitzgerald (above, note 1) 185: "a human order disrupted by civil war"; Oliensis (above, note 1) 110: "... the upheaval is general and encompasses all spheres of life." The word play in *Roma . . . ruit* (16. 2) contributes to this sense of societal collapse; see C. W. Macleod, "Horace and the Sibyl (*Epode* 16. 2)," *CQ* 29 (1979) 220–21.

³⁵ Note how the grave *impia . . . aetas* of 16. 9 recalls the jesting *impia manu* of 3. 1.

Troy, that city so closely connected in myth with the fate of Rome (cf. also 13. 13–16). 15. 3 ff. focuses on the breaking of oaths, that bulwark of society, a prelude to the shattering of civilization evoked so powerfully in the opening lines of 16. That the *Epodes* conclude in Canidia's world of fire, *furor*, and *dementia* underscores this sense of collapse; the powers of darkness are now in control (17. 2–3). The theme gains further reinforcement through those structural features of the second half already noted—the shift from the metrical predictability of the first ten poems to the metrical wanderings of the last seven, from the relatively sequential motivic and tonal development of the first eight to the constant *para prosdokian* of the last nine.

Not only is the collapse in the second half more marked, more suggestive of universal breakdown; it also focuses on Horace himself and turns against him his own words. *Epode* 3 is typical in the way its motifs subsequently boomerang upon the poet. In 3. 17–18 Horace alludes to the gift which burned (*inarsit*) Hercules; in 11. 4 and 27 and 14. 9 ff. it is Horace who burns, in 17. 30–32 Horace who says, *ardeo quantum neque atro delibutus Hercules Nessi cruore*. In 3. 3 and 5 Horace compares the garlic to poisons, in 3. 9–14 to the substances with which Medea worked her magic;³⁶ in 11. 2 Horace succumbs to the disease of love, in 14. 3–4 he speaks of himself as drugged, and in 17. 35 he himself is beset by Canidia's Medean poisons (cf. 17. 61). Horace in 3. 5 humorously speaks of the garlic raging (*saevit*) in his innards; in 11. 6 he describes his own raging (*furere*), and in 17. 45 he is the victim of *dementia*.³⁷

Other poems similarly introduce motifs which later recoil upon Horace. In 1. 3 Horace speaks of Maecenas as *paratus* to undergo any danger on behalf of Caesar. In 17. 38 it is Horace who is *paratus* to do whatever Canidia demands (cf. Canidia's *maius parabo* 5. 77). In 1. 9 and 15 Horace declares himself willing to bear whatever *labor* may await him, to assist Maecenas *labore . . . meo*, and in 1. 5–6 he attests that without Maecenas his *vita* would be *gravis*. In 17. 63–64 these motifs return with a vengeance as Canidia spells out Horace's future: *ingrata misero vita ducenda est in hoc, novis ut usque suppetas laboribus*.³⁸ In 1. 25 ff. Horace assures Maecenas that his friendship is not motivated by the wish that his fields may be plowed by *iuvenis . . . pluribus*; in 17. 39 he is willing to sacrifice *centum iuvencos* if that is what Canidia requires. And while in 1. 31–32 he declares that Maecenas has enriched him *satis superque*, in 17. 19 he uses

³⁶ Fraenkel (above, note 17) 68 notes the special attention given Medea in these six central lines of a 22-line poem. The emphasis is appropriate given her importance in 5, 16, and 17.

³⁷ Cf. 3. 1–2 (the threat of garlic to a parent's *guttur*) and 6. 13–14 (poets who drove their enemies to hang themselves) with 17. 72: Horace will long to throttle his own *guttur*.

³⁸ With the emphatic *ingrata* of 17. 63, cf. also 1. 24, in *tuae spem gratiae*.

the same phrase of the punishments he has paid Canidia: *dedi satis superque poenarum tibi*.³⁹

Even phrases from Alfius' imagined paradise circle back upon Horace himself. Alfius imagines a retreat where one can forget the cares of love (2. 37–38); in *Epodes* 11 and 14 Horace finds himself unable to escape those same cares. Alfius' utopia will provide health to body as well as spirit (see esp. 2. 57–58, *gravi malvae salubres corpori*); Horace in later poems is *amore percussus gravi* (11. 2), the victim of *languor* (11. 9) and of *vulnus . . . malum* (11. 17), and in 17. 21–23 he gives a clinical description of the dire effects Canidia's powers have had upon his body (cf. also *macerat*, 14. 16). Alfius praises the sleep-inducing powers of the country streams (2. 27–28); Horace in 14. 3–4 finds himself drugged by the Lethe-like sleep of love, in 17. 24–26 the victim of agonies in which day presses upon night, night upon day. Horace satirizes Alfius as *iam iam futurus rusticus*, but the satire comes home in his own appeal to Canidia in 17: *Iam iam efficaci do manus scientiae*.

The curses Horace hurls upon Mevius in 10 also boomerang in 17. In 10. 1 Mevius' ship goes forth accompanied *mala . . . alite*; in 17. 67 Canidia uses Prometheus, *obligatus aliti*, as an image of the perpetual anguish in store for Horace.⁴⁰ In 10. 16 Horace envisions the *pallor luteus* which awaits Mevius; in 17. 21 he speaks of the flight of his own *verecundus color*. Mevius as he seeks to avoid shipwreck will direct his *preces . . . aversum ad Iovem* (10. 18); Canidia tells Horace that his *preces* will fall upon ears deafer than those Neptune extends to beleaguered sailors (17. 53–55) and that *leges Iovis* prohibit any respite (17. 69). Mevius will see no friendly star in the sky (10. 9); Horace is at the mercy of a witch who controls—indeed, will walk!—the stars (17. 5, 41; cf. 78). In 10. 3 ff. Horace prays that Mevius' ship may be buffeted by winds; in 17. 33–34 he compares himself to a cinder borne on hostile winds.⁴¹ And *illa non virilis eiulatio* which Horace predicts for Mevius well describes the plaint to which the poet is reduced in 17.⁴²

Above all, however, it is the language, imagery, and situations of *Epode* 5 that prove prophetic of the poet himself. Whereas in 5 Horace merely reports on the pathetic plight of the *puer*, by the time we reach 17 Horace himself has become Canidia's victim.⁴³ We saw earlier how motifs introduced jestingly in 3 take on sinister connotations in 5; almost without

³⁹ On this echo, see Oliensis (above, note 1) 127.

⁴⁰ Cf. also 16. 23–24, *secunda . . . alite*, the same image as in 10. 1.

⁴¹ Once more 17 picks up a motif from 16; cf. the winds in 17. 33–34 and 16. 21–22.

⁴² Cf. the sacrifice Horace promises for Mevius' destruction in 10. 23–24 with the sacrifice he promises Canidia in 17. 38–39. Note also how his description of the defeated enemy, *fertur incerto mari* (9. 32), circles back upon himself in 11. 20: *ferubar incerto pede*. On the identity of the enemy in 9. 27–32, see Cairns (above, note 2) 85–90.

⁴³ See E. A. Hahn, "Epodes 5 and 17, *Carmina* 1. 16 and 1. 17," *TAPA* 70 (1939) 213–20; E. Paratore, "L'epodo V di Orazio," *Philologus* 129 (1985) 67–69.

fail these motifs, directed against the *puer* and against Canidia's recalcitrant lover in 5, recoil on Horace himself in 17. Her venoms and spells now poison and burn him; the animal forces of 5 are now directed at him; it is to Horace that Canidia now boasts of her love potions (cf. *amoris . . . poculum* and *maius . . . poculum* 5. 38 and 77–78, *desideri . . . pocula* 17. 80). And as with the *puer*, Horace's efforts at persuasion are of no avail. At least the boy could threaten to return as a nocturnal *Furor* (5. 92) and, besieging Canidia's *praecordia* (95), to banish sleep; in 17 Horace is at the mercy of a nocturnal fury, his *praecordia* beset day and night (17. 1 ff., 25–26).⁴⁴

Indeed, the *puer* of 5, buried to the chin in the earth (32–36), is an apt image for both the Romans of 7 and 16 and for the Horace of 17. Just as the earth holds the *puer*, so too the tainted soil holds the Romans (7. 19–20), and the escape Horace offers in 16 leads nowhere—to *ou-topia*. In the final poem Horace devotes his all to contriving an escape only to find that for him too there is no release. Indeed, the specific image used of the *puer* in 5 recoils upon Horace. The *puer* was to be starved to death, tortured by the ever-renewed feasts placed before him. In 17. 66 Canidia evokes *egens benignae Tantalus semper dapis* to describe the future she plans for Horace: so much for his hope in 9. 1 of *festae dapes!*⁴⁵ And whereas the *puer* of 5 at least has, in his Thyestean threats, the last word, the *exitus* on which 17 ends are those contrived by Canidia. That Horace has become the *puer*, and that he has seemingly no recourse against Canidia, is particularly ironic in light of Horace's final words in 6—yet another threat that circles back upon himself: *inultus ut flebo puer*.⁴⁶

The language of the *Epodes* underscores this theme of imprisonment. Not surprisingly, the verb *solvo* and other language of freeing and binding play a significant role throughout. Alfius longs for a life in which he may be *solutus omni faenore* (2. 4) and speaks of the freedom from cares one will find in the country (2. 37–38). Canidia laments that Varus *solutus ambulat veneficae scientioris carmine* (5. 71–72). Horace in 9. 9–14 emphasizes the chains and the demeaning servitude associated with Sextus Pompeius and with Antony and Cleopatra and ends the poem with the god who sets free: *curam metumque Caesaris rerum iuvat dulci Lyaeo solvere*.⁴⁷ In 16 Horace offers the Romans surcease from their labors (*malis carere quaeritis laboribus*, 16. 16) and in the final line of the poem returns to the escape he can give them (*piis secunda vate me datur fuga*).

⁴⁴ Hahn (previous note) 219–20. Cf. also 5. 81–82 (Varus will burn) with 11 and 14 (Horace burns); the witches' *poculum* (5. 38 and 78) with Horace's *pocula* (14. 3).

⁴⁵ In the same way, Horace's *Quando . . . bibam* in 9. 1 leads to Canidia's *pocula* in 17. 80.

⁴⁶ S. J. Harrison, "Horace, *Epode* 6. 16," *CQ* 37 (1987) 523–24, suggests *inutilis flebo puer* and points out the resonance of this reading with *insignibus raptis puer* in 5. 12.

⁴⁷ See Nisbet (above, note 2) 17: ". . . *Lyaeo*, 'the Liberator' . . . is pointedly combined with *soluere*; Horace is not just thinking of the conventional 'release' of the symposiast but implying that the Caecuban, the token of victory, is bringing liberation from foreign bondage (cf. 11–14)."

But in this book escape proves impossible. 9 ends with Bacchus Lyaeus and with *solvere*; Horace picks up this final word in the first line of the next poem, but with a difference, as he sends forth Mevius' ship, binding it to destruction: *Mala soluta navis exit alite*. In 11 it is Horace who seeks release, Horace whom, despite his best intentions, neither his own *libera bilis* nor the *libera consilia* of his friends can liberate (*expedire*: 11. 15–18, 24–26). In 14 he is again in bondage—ironically to the *libertina* Phryne!⁴⁸ Finally, while in 5. 71 Varus *solutus ambulat*, in 17 Horace must seek escape: *citumque retro solve, solve turbinem* (7); *solve me dementia* (45). As for the respite from labors which Horace promises in 16. 16 (*malis carere quaeritis laboribus*), Canidia again has the last word, both for Horace himself and for the book: *novis ut usque suppetas laboribus* (17. 64).

We have seen that at every level the *Epodes* display a persistent and powerful downward pull. In the first poem Horace hopes to play a man's role in labors with Maecenas; in the last he finds himself condemned to eternal labors in service of a woman. The *iam iam futurus rusticus* at the end of *Epode 2* may deftly parody Alfius' dreams of a brighter and seemingly imminent future, but the *altera iam teritur* at the start of 16 evokes the reality of an evil and ever-repeating present.⁴⁹ In 3 Horace alludes in passing and in jest to Canidia, in 5 he recounts her deeds from a distance; in 17 he is in her grasp. As if to drive the point home, the final poem itself repeats the downward trajectory yet once more, beginning in a cautiously hopeful vein (and with words reminiscent of Alfius in 2. 68: *Iam iam . . .*) but ending with Horace's hopes denied and with Canidia's promise that Horace's sufferings will be eternal. Other aspects of the book—the parallel descents of the two halves, the recurrent verbal motifs, the sequence of meters—underscore this ubiquitous downward movement and work it into the fabric of the collection. It is clear also that the downward pull relates to public concerns as well as to private: The collection ends respectively with the accursed Romans obliged to abandon their land and the powerless poet enslaved to Canidia. The animals which gradually infiltrated the poems of the first half will now take over Rome, and the poet who elsewhere threatens others now finds himself the target of threats, himself placed in the position of the helpless *puer* of 5.

⁴⁸ Note also the negative connotations of *pene soluto* in 12. 8.

⁴⁹ The *iam* of 16. 1 relates also, of course, to line 1 of *Eclogue 4*. On the relative date of the poems, Nisbet (above, note 2) 2–9 adds strong arguments for the priority of *Eclogue 4*; on the other side, see G. E. Duckworth, "Animae Dimidium Meae: Two Poets of Rome," *TAPA* 87 (1956) 289–90; Büchner (above, note 1) 85–88.

III. And Finally, Poetry

We have noted the progressive decline in the power of poetry, including Horace's own, a decline which, like so much else in the book, reaches its nadir in 17. True, poetry is Horace's weapon against his adversaries, and through poetry he promises to celebrate Actium (9. 5–6). But in 11 and 14 the poet finds himself unable to sing, in 16 the flight he fashions as *vates* is, like Alfius' vision, mere words, and in 17 his elaborate recantation leads to naught. Horace may speak in 6. 13–16 of poets' power to drive their enemies to suicide and in 13. 18 of poetry as a cure for *aegrimumia*, but in 17. 70–73 Canidia tells Horace that in her hands he will become a victim of *aegrimumia* and will be unable even to kill himself. The occurrences of *carmen* underscore the same pattern. In 9. 5 Horace promises a *carmen* in celebration of Actium, but in 14. 7 he is unable to complete his *promissum carmen*; and in 17. 4 and 28 the *carmina* in control, and against which he is struggling, are Canidia's.

The sequence of meters in the collection is again relevant. In the opening ten poems—up through his threats against Mevius—Horace uses nothing but iambs. Beginning with 11, the first of the two poems dealing with his “writer's block,” he turns from iambs to meters which use dactyls as well as iambs (indeed, dactyls alone in 12).⁵⁰ As if to mark this shift, Horace in 14 specifically relates his “writer's block” to iambic poetry: *deus, deus nam me vetat inceptos . . . iambos ad umbilicum adducere* (6–8). And in the final poem, where the *carmina* of Canidia now hold sway, the straight iambic trimeters are turned against Horace, and Canidia, speaking of Horace's powerlessness to change his fate, echoes his words about his inability to write iambs: *sed vetant leges Iovis* (17. 69; cf. *deus, deus nam me vetat*, 14. 6).⁵¹ The poet who prided himself on the destructive force of his iambs now finds himself the victim of Canidia's iambs, and the words he used of Rome in 16. 2, *suis et ipsa Roma viribus ruit*, like so much else in the book, turn upon himself: Like Rome, Horace is being destroyed by his own powers.⁵²

There is, however, more to be said about poetry in the *Epodes*—and about the persona the poet assumes in them. For if he uses several poems of the second half to suggest a gradual diminishment of his powers, poetic and otherwise, by way of counterpoint he assigns to himself a dramatic role that becomes increasingly prominent as the collection progresses. Several aspects of the opening *Epode* seem to suggest that Horace's natural place is on the sidelines—his characterization of himself as *imbellis ac firmus*

⁵⁰ Cf. L. C. Wilson, “Problems in *Epode* 11,” *CQ* 33 (1983) 232: “*Epode* 11 does announce a new orientation for Horace within the *Epode*-book . . .”

⁵¹ In 5. 71–72 Canidia laments the ineffectiveness of her *carmina*; in 17 they work.

⁵² On the reversals between 16 and 17, see Oliensis (above, note 1) 130 ff.; on the shift to iambs in 17, *ibid.* 128–29. Oliensis also explores *passim* the resonance of *Canidia* with *cano*: That 17 should revolve around her *carmina*, her iambs, is appropriate.

parum, the simile of the concerned but ineffective *avis* (19–22), even the promises of 11–14, whose exaggerated character assures us that these words (like those of Alfius in the next poem) are unlikely to be realized (do we really expect Horace to visit the *Alpium iuga inhospitalem et Caucasum?*). And it is largely on the sidelines that Horace locates himself in the next four poems. In 2 and 5 he is merely the narrator, and in 3 and 4 he explicitly marks his dramatic presence only by the *me* of 3. 7 and the *mihi* of 4. 2. Furthermore, his threat of action in 3. 19–22 is hardly weighty, and any action that may issue from his outrage in 4 remains implicit. In 6, by contrast, he emphasizes throughout his dramatic presence (4, 7, 11–12, 15–16), his threat is explicit, and his feisty readiness for the fray differs sharply from his self-characterization in 1. 16. This new voice prepares for 7, where his persona breathes an assurance not previously encountered in the book. The poet who cast himself so much as an onlooker in 1 here delivers an impassioned jeremiad, upbraiding the Romans for their sins, demanding their response, and authoritatively identifying the source of their woes.

This strong dramatic presence continues into the transitional *Epode* 8. Here again Horace is fully involved, fully confident—even arrogant. The Horace of 9, like that of 7, speaks out confidently on issues of state; there is nothing of the fawning, self-effacing bystander of 1. His voice becomes yet more assured in 10, and he remains the dominating presence in the remainder of the book. The Horace of 11 and 14 may lament the temporary loss of poetic momentum, that of 17 may find himself subject to Canidia, but there is no question that the poet we meet in these poems is comfortable playing a lead role. 11 and 14 are focused on Horace—his loves, his poetry, his life: *fabula quanta fui* (11. 8)—and the same is true of 17; for while in 5 Horace cast himself merely as narrator, in 17 he is a central player. The voice assumed in other poems of the second half coheres with this confident stance. In 12, as in 8, he takes the position of power and casts the woman in that of victim,⁵³ and in both 10 and 15 he speaks with assurance of the revenge he will work. And just as the final lines of 6 lead naturally into 7, so the strong ending of 15 prepares the way for 16, where Horace commands the stage even more authoritatively than he did in 7, boldly taking the role of *vates* and promising his people to lead the way. The contrast with the retiring persona assumed in 1 is even more striking than it was in 7.⁵⁴

If Horace gives himself an ever more prominent dramatic role as the book progresses, he does the same with the theme of poetry. There is no direct mention of this theme in the first four poems. Surprisingly, Horace alludes explicitly to poetry neither in 1 or 3, both to Maecenas, nor—where

⁵³ Oliensis (above, note 1) 122 ff. notes, however, that Horace's stance is not altogether convincing: Both 8 and 12 "betray the logical priority of impotence" (123).

⁵⁴ Fitzgerald (above, note 1) 177 calls 16 "the most forceful claim of an effective role for the poet in a collection that is predominantly concerned with the problem of the poet's efficacy."

again one would expect it—among the commonplaces which fill Alfius' pastoral reverie.⁵⁵ The book's first explicit mention comes in 5, and here the song is not Horace's but the witches' (5. 45, 72). Horace specifically mentions his own poetry first in 6, and here only indirectly, via the reference to Archilochus and Hipponax—and the concluding hint that Horace too can use poetry as a weapon. He may speak as *vates* in 7, but he does so only implicitly, and neither in this poem nor in 8 is there any explicit mention of verse (indeed, in 8. 17–18 Horace seems if anything to side with the *illiterati!*).

In *Epode* 9 Horace's own verse receives explicit mention for the first time. From here on, it is focal in all of the remaining poems except 12. In 9. 5–6 Horace promises poetry in celebration of Actium.⁵⁶ In 10 he clearly believes that his words can turn the winds against Mevius' ship. His poetry is central in 11 and 14, and the power of poetry, be it Horace's or another's, is at the heart of 13 (9, 11, 17–18). Moreover, if in 14. 7 Horace denies his power to "bring his iambs to completion," the final three poems of the book themselves controvert this statement. In 15 it is clear that Horace's revenge on Neaera and her lover will come through the power of his words—that the *virtus* of line 11 is his *virtus* as a poet. Although Horace calls himself *vates* only at the end of 16, that role has been implicit throughout the poem in the character and eloquence of his language and the stance adopted toward the citizens of Rome.⁵⁷ And although the *carmina* mentioned in 17. 4 and 28 are Canidia's, the focus of this last poem is clearly on a poet attempting, Stesichorus-like, to appease an offended divinity by the power of his poetic recantation.⁵⁸ And, despite 14. 7–8, the poem which brings the book *ad umbilicum* is pure iambs!

It is true that in 17 Horace's poetry falls short, and the fact that it does so is central to Horace's shaping of the collection. On the other hand, there is a striking contrast in tone between this poem and *Epode* 5. 5 is not without its macabre humor, but its portrayal of the young boy remains grim and even pathetic.⁵⁹ In contrast, 17, despite its negative conclusion, contains humorous touches throughout; like 8, its structural counterpart, 17 becomes at times a parody of itself. Horace may claim that he has paid *satis*

⁵⁵ Note, e.g., the centrality of poetry in *Odes* 1. 17, also set in *reducta valle* (cf. 1. 17, 17, *Epode* 2. 11); or its place in *Georgics* 2. 475 ff., in the passage (458 ff.) that may have provided the model for *Epode* 2; see Duckworth (above, note 49) 291; A. Pieri, "L'Epodo 2 di Orazio e le *Georgiche*," *SIFC* 44 (1972) 244–66.

⁵⁶ Cf. the same theme later in the poem: . . . *Galli, canentes Caesarem* (9. 18).

⁵⁷ Horace's emphasis on *virtus* and his rejection of womanly softness in 16. 37 and 39 recall his claim to *virtus* in 15. 11; see Fitzgerald (above, note 1) 177–78.

⁵⁸ Leading up to Horace's association of himself with Stesichorus in 17 are his references to Archilochus and Hipponax (6. 13–14), to Anacreon (14. 10), and to himself as *vates* (16. 66). The whole book, of course, represents an early demonstration of his ability to adapt the Greek poets to Latin, on which see esp. Fraenkel (above, note 17) 24–75.

⁵⁹ On the tone of 5, see C. E. Manning, "Canidia in the *Epodes* of Horace," *Mnemosyne* 23 (1970) 393–401; Shackleton Bailey (above, note 18) 5.

superque for his sins and that his youth and color are gone, his hair turned white (19–23), but when in the midst of these statements he addresses Canidia as *amata nautis multum et institoribus*, we cannot miss the note of satire. The same is true of his description of Canidia at 35—*cales venenis officina Colchicis*; of his promise, true to his Stesichorean persona, that by the power of his lying lyre Canidia, Helen-like, will walk the stars *pudica* and *proba*;⁶⁰ and above all of his peroration, so full of oblique and not so oblique insults, so like *praeteritio* in its reiteration of the very slanders he professes to recant (17. 46–52):

o nec paternis obsoleta sordibus,
 neque in sepulcris pauperum prudens anus
 novendialis dissipare pulveres.
 tibi hospitale pectus et purae manus,
 tuusque venter Pactumeius, et tuo
 cruore rubros obstetrix pannos lavit,
 utcumque fortis exsilis puerpera.

The tone of these words colors the *solve me dementia* which precedes them, the *quid obseratis auribus fundis preces* which follows. And Horace puts into Canidia's mouth more words of the same ilk—her description of Horace as *Esquilini pontifex venefici* (58); her self-condemning question, *quid proderit ditasse Paelignas anus?* (60); her threat to be borne as *equus* on Horace's unfriendly shoulders (74); even the questioning cast of her final words: *plorem artis in te nil agentis exitus?*⁶¹ This patently satiric language gives to 17 a lift that pulls against its dark theme and its explicit meaning. The words Horace scripts for Canidia also underscore the fact that this Canidia is Horace's creation. She may reject his recantation, may prophesy all manner of future ills for him, but the way the poem is written reminds us constantly that it is Horace who has shaped its every detail.

The same is true of 16. There can be no question about its deep pessimism, its evocation of a Rome destroyed by her own powers, fit only to be abandoned to the animals; nor does the poem permit us to doubt that the *beata arva* to which Horace invites the Romans are poetic fiction, not reality, a vision as illusory as Alfius'. But that, of course, is in a sense the whole point. Horace in the last line proclaims himself, for the first time in the *Epodes*, *vates* to the Romans, and what he has given them, both in this poem and in the *Epodes* as a whole, is real, not illusory, an artistic construct which expresses a complex understanding of Rome's condition and the human condition. That this construct is deeply pessimistic, with a downward pull woven into its every thread, does not negate the fact of its creation. Horace cannot undo the horror of the civil wars, cannot lead the

⁶⁰ The lines echo Catullus and Stesichorus: Fraenkel (above, note 17) 64–65; L. I. Lindo, "Horace's Seventeenth Epode," *CP* 64 (1969) 176–77; Oliensis (above, note 1) 115–16.

⁶¹ On the tone of 17, see F. Cairns, "The Genre Palinode and Three Horatian Examples: *Epodes*, 17; *Odes*, I,16; *Odes*, I,34," *AC* 47 (1978) 549.

Romans to a utopia beyond the seas, cannot negate the evil that is within us. But he can mold his dark insights into an organized and beautiful whole that is real and lasting; this is the *fuga* the *vates* can and does offer. Though the *Epodes* in the end seem to deny the poet's power, to emphasize the illusory nature of human ambition, this strangely fascinating, deeply troubling hall of mirrors⁶² itself bespeaks by its very existence the poet's creative capacity. Canidia, powerful though she be, is but an illusion called forth by the craft of her victim. And though the *beata arva* which Horace offers the Romans are illusory and unattainable, the *beata arva* he offers in his poetry, not least in *Epode* 16 itself, are real. The Romans cannot escape their past, we cannot escape our animal nature, Horace cannot escape Canidia—and yet the imaginative range and sweep of the *Epodes* themselves vigorously affirm that very freedom which the poems seem expressly to deny.⁶³

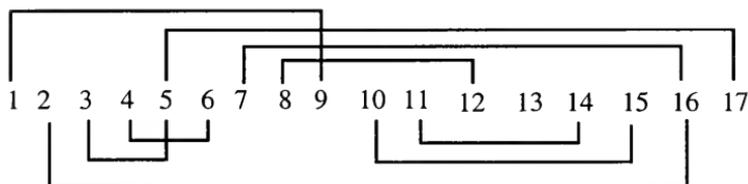
With respect to this theme, *Epode* 13 plays a special role, and Horace stresses its importance by the reference to his own birthday in line 6. In addition, he gives 13 a central position in that part of the collection where poetry and Horace himself are becoming more focal and by arranging the remaining poems of the collection in such a way as to isolate 13.⁶⁴ The *Epodes* fall into interlocking and overlapping pairs. Thus 1 and 9, the two public Maecenas poems, form a natural pair, as do 7 and 16, the two civil war poems, and 5 and 17, the two long Canidia poems. 8 and 12 have obvious ties of tone and subject, as do 4 and 6 in the first half, 10 and 15, 11 and 14 in the second. Both 2 and 3 also line up naturally with a poem located in one of these other pairs: As we have seen, 2 is in several ways the counterpart to 16; and 3, which introduces Canidia and many of the motifs of 5, pairs up naturally with 5 within the poems of the first half.⁶⁵

⁶² Cf. the fine comments of Lowrie (above, note 25) 430 ff. on mirroring in *Epode* 13.

⁶³ Cf. the marked ambiguity with which *Epistles* 1 ends; see P. J. Connor, "Book Despatch: Horace *Epistles* 1. 20 and 1. 13," *Ramus* 11 (1982) 145–52; S. J. Harrison, "Deflating the *Odes*: Horace, *Epistles* 1. 20," *CQ* 38 (1988) 473–76.

⁶⁴ On the isolation of 13, see Dettmer (above, note 1) 79–80, who adduces numerical as well as structural arguments in support of its "non-corresponding" nature. Its special character has made itself felt even apart from its unique place in the structure of the collection; see G. Pasquali, *Orazio Lirico* (Florence 1964) 300; Fraenkel (above, note 17) 65–66; Büchner (above, note 1) 50; Oliensis (above, note 1) 133. R. S. Kilpatrick, "An Interpretation of Horace, *Epodes* 13," *CQ* 20 (1970) 135–41, would link 13 to Philippi.

⁶⁵ On 3 and 5, see Dettmer (above, note 1) 79, 83–87. Dettmer (77–109, esp. 77–81, 101–03) was the first to suggest that the *Epodes* consist of two overlapping ring patterns, and in this respect my analysis builds on hers. We differ, however, in that her analysis focuses on the architectonics of the *Epodes*, mine on the dynamic movement of the cycle. Furthermore, the ingenious numerical schemes which Dettmer (79–80) adduces in support of her structural analysis strike me as too mechanical to be fully convincing. I have the same problem with comments such as that on pp. 80–81 (on the fact that *Epode* 2 is a "non-corresponding poem" in the second of Dettmer's two ring structures): "The following rule applies to situations like this one. When a Horatian book or cycle is ordered in more than one ring, the correspondences of some poems may remain the same in both patterns (e.g., *Epodes* 3–6 and 10–15), or one or at the most two poems which were corresponding in the first scheme may be non-corresponding in the second." I may well be wrong, but my intuition tells me that Horace did not use "rules" of this sort in writing his poems and constructing his books.



The diagram points up the unique character of 13—its central position within the second half, framed by enclosing pairs, and the fact that alone among the seventeen *Epodes*, 13 does not naturally pair up with another poem. Horace has given 13 this focal, stand-alone character to underscore its thematic importance. For *Epode* 13 suggests in its central (9–10) and final (17–18) lines the theme that is implicit in the book as a whole:

et fide Cyllenea
levare diris pectora sollicitudinibus;
...
illic omne malum vino cantuque levato,
deformis aegrimoniae dulcibus alloquiis.

Just as for Achilles, and for humans in general, poetry is the one secure refuge, so the *Epodes* themselves offer one lift amidst the prevailing momentum of descent—that represented by the poems themselves, by the creative act through which Horace has cast his dark vision into this comprehensive and satisfying whole.⁶⁶

There remains one final point to make about *Epode* 13. The speaker of its final lines is Chiron, the *nobilis* . . . *Centaurus* (11). That in a book which progressively pits the human against the animal, not least in its final poems, Horace has chosen a composite animal/human to speak these crucial lines is significant. As Chiron's words offer a measure of resolution to the bleak cast of the collection, so the fact that they are sung (*cecinit* 11) by a creature who unites the human with the animal itself suggests a resolution between two sectors which elsewhere in the collection are pitted against each other. It is probably also not accidental that in the final lines of the *Epodes* Canidia's words turn Horace himself into a quasi-centaur (74): *vectabor umeris tunc ego inimicis eques*.⁶⁷ We have seen that in this final poem Horace strongly suggests his own shaping hand, his own governing

⁶⁶ Cf. Lowrie (above, note 25) 432, on 13: "... for the poet and his addressee, compensatory song is not just the exemplum sung on the *fide Cyllenea* (9), but the epode in its entirety."

⁶⁷ Oliensis (above, note 1) 133–34 contrasts the noble centaur of 13. 11 with the evil centaur (Nessus) of 3. 17–18 and 17. 31–32. Canidia as *eques* probably glances at the fact that both Maecenas and Horace were *equites*; on Horace as *eques*, see D. Armstrong, "Horatius *Eques et Scriba*: Satires 1. 6 and 2. 7," *TAPA* 116 (1986) 255–63.

wit, his own creation of all that Canidia is. The infernal Canidia may literally “supersede” Horace, subsume his powers to her purposes, in these final lines of the book. But it is only by Horace’s own act that this union takes place, and in so ending the book Horace joins himself—literally—with those potent animal and female forces so strongly associated with Canidia throughout the *Epodes*. The “centaur” of 17. 74 not only unites human and animal, male and female, not only merges the two singers, the two iambists, of *Epode* 17 into a force the earth must recognize; it also recalls the noble centaur of 13 and his theme of poetry’s power to confront and counter those forces, both within and without, that would pull down and destroy us, that would enslave the human to the animal.⁶⁸

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⁶⁸ On the dynamics of the *Epodes*, and the final equilibrium achieved, see Büchner (above, note 1) 94–96; cf. Rosenthal and Gall (above, note 6) 15: “The balance of affects—radiant tonal centers of specific qualities, and intensities, of emotionally and sensuously charged awareness—in Browning’s poem [“The Englishman in Italy”] provides the germ of how a sequence works. It precisely indicates the nature of lyrical structure, which is based on dynamics: the succession and interaction of units of affect.”