MYTH AS HISTORIC BENCHMARK IN HORACE [1]
ODES 3:1 – 6

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Can a lyric poet have anything valid to say about historic realities?[2] In this paper I argue that by looking carefully at Horace's use of myth[3] as a larger frame of reference against which *Odes* 3.1 – 6[4] should be read, a case can be made for a lyric poet's subtly critical assessment of the contemporary reality.[5] In short I want to suggest that the poet uses myth as a means to comment (implicitly) on the contemporary historic reality concerned. Furthermore, if a reference to myth can operate as implied comment on the present, this reference can also include didactic purpose, or more specifically advice on how to act in the present reality.

In *Odes* 3. 1 – 6 (the Roman odes) we hear the elevated and authoritative tone of the didactic public bard rather than the colloquial, personal voice of the lyric poet.[6] Normally the lyric environment elucidates the world of the individual. Nearly all Horace's other odes are addressed to a specific person or godly entity.[7] In the Roman odes, however, there is no personal addressee except for the rather generic "Roman youth" as implied in *favete linguis*, in *Odes* 3.1. 2, the impersonal "Roman" as in

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[1] The simplest possible definitions for myth and history will suffice, for instance that myth operates in a reality not bound by time or space while history takes place in time and space that is both real and limited. The benchmark referred to includes both the benchmark set **by** history (in the past) to be met in the present and the benchmark set **for** history (in the present) against which events will be assessed in future. See Csapo 2005 for a working summary of theories as well as functions of myth.

[2] Lyric is the genre for preoccupation with a personal perspective *par excellence*.

[3] The use of myth is also one of the most subtle techniques to reflect the poet's personal perspective on a topic. Mythology represents society's shared frame of reference, but the interpretation of myth still depends on the poet's presentation of individual details. Cf Csapo 2005 on myth in general as well as Lowrie 1997 on Horace's use of figurative language.

[4] The use of myth in Greek and Latin poetry is well established. It is generally used as an aid to define and describe the world of the poet/author concerned. Myth can be compared in function to an extended and complex metaphor where context determines its ramifications and the reader's knowledge and imagination are brought into play to begin to determine meaning. Furthermore, its use is generally accepted as a poetic resource, which increases the impact and broadens the meaning of the poem concerned. In this paper I also argue that the use of myth in the Roman odes is one of the most successful over-arching strategies used to integrate poems focused on war and other socio–political issues – not a common focus of lyric poetry in Horace's time – into a collection of staunchly personal poetry.

[5] Horace's "allegiance" or lack of support for the Augustan regime is beyond the scope of this paper.

[6] *Ars Poetica* (391 – 407) does emphasize the poet's didactic duty.

[7] There are notable exceptions such as *Odes* 1.34, 2.14 and 3.4. *Odes* 1.34 can be considered a poet's soliloquy on his own position: the poet talking to his alter ego. Interestingly enough *Odes* 2.15 seems to anticipate the Roman odes: it is also in the alcaic metre, the addressee is not specified and seems to prepare the ground for the perspectives reflected in the Roman odes. In *Odes* 3.4 the changing addressee seems to be first Calliope, then the poet's comrades and finally the muses.

Romane in *Odes* 3.6. 2 and the poet's audience as implied in *auditis* in *Odes* 3.4.5. [8] The didactic purpose rather than the personal perspective of the poet seems to be paramount in the Roman odes.[9]

In this paper I intend to look at how this didactic purpose concerning contemporary reality – that is, instructions having a bearing on how to act in the present – is conveyed in *Odes* 3. 1 – 6 by means of directives based on mythological exempla. I discuss *Odes* 3. 1 – 6 as examples of a strategy where the poet uses a mythical reference not as a type of metaphor to broaden meaning but rather as an independent set of circumstances against which the reality evoked by the poem in question must be assessed. The mythical reference acts as foil against which a specific historic or contemporary situation is presented and scrutinised. The mythical environment that is evoked by the poet implicitly comments on the historic reality with which it is associated.

Furthermore, if the didactic purpose of the Roman odes is paramount, this didactic focus seems to require special treatment to enable these odes to be slotted smoothly into a collection of lyric poetry. [10] I would like to suggest that Horace's specific use of myth represents one of the ways in which this focus is made more palatable to the general lyric thrust of the collection as a whole. Horace's use of myth therefore enables these odes to portray their untypical – for lyric poetry of Horace's time, that is – socio-political commentary.[11]

In these odes the mythical reference involved has a definite didactic impact which affects the setting and more precisely the tone and reading of a specific poem. Horace's use of this type of mythical reference is used to create an external value system, an external corrective as it were, against which the historic reality reflected in the poems must be measured. Horace's references to mythology seem to function as a didactic ploy to encourage the Roman people to take united action to ensure their future history because of their shared mythical past.[12]

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[8] Even though other godly entities are omitted, the muses are indeed addressed (Calliope in *regina…Calliope (Odes* 3.4.2) and the Muses as a collective in *Camenae (Odes* 3.4.21)).

[9] Doblhofer's caution (1966:1927) concerning Horace's public and private voice remains as valid as when it was first made.

[10] The problem is dovetailing six poems, different to the rest of the *carmina* in every respect (purpose, tone, metre, etc. to name a few aspects) into the lyric collection where they appear? Different publication dates of individual poems as well as the publication dates of books of poems are beyond the scope of this article. *Odes* 1 – 3 was probably published in 23 BC. See Nisbet & Rudd 2004:xix for a discussion on whether individual books were published separately. *Odes* 4 was published in 13 BC nearly 10 years later.

[11] Here I do not suggest that serious didactic purpose or social and political criticism cannot be incorporated into lyric poetry. More often than not the personal perspective better reflects an example of social or political ills than any other. It is the tone in which the didactic purpose of the Roman odes is presented that sets them apart from the rest of the collection.

[12] Almost all ancient poets and most rhetoricians use myth or passing references to myth to amplify the frame of reference of the poetic description or argument concerned. Generally a reference to a parallel situation in mythology can be offered as example (an indication of the validation or the possible outcome of a current situation), as general proof for the argument under discussion, or to suggest a myriad of possibilities in between. In the best possible way the reference to the mythological incident can work like an extended metaphor, implicating a whole further frame of reference available to the poet and reader alike without the poet laboriously having to establish

How is Horace's use of myth in the Roman odes then any different to the exceedingly broad application of it by other poets and rhetoricians in general? It is my contention that Horace's references to myth in these six poems are intended very specifically as references to a historical reality rather than to evoke a mythical reality even though the references concerned might be presented as mythological.[13] The didactic purpose is therefore implicit, not explicit, depending on the audience's sensitivity to this purpose.

The Roman odes tellingly focus on a single theme.[14] Ancient Rome had always been held up as an example to Horace's contemporaries and, according to the poet in *Odes* **3.1**, contemporary Romans in dire need of this directive. The fact that the poet proclaims his position as *musarum sacerdos* (3.1.3) singled out from the Roman people (*profanum vulgus*, 3.1.1) in a song cast as a hymn indicates his function: he will act as a spokesman for the muses, disclosing to the Roman people an

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this larger poetic reality bit by bit. See Lowrie 1997 for a discussion of the use of specific examples of figurative language in Horace.

[13] This does not imply that Horace's use of myth in these six poems differs fundamentally from his use of myth in general – an implication beyond the scope of this paper.

[14] Horace's Roman odes (*Odes* 3.1 – 6) have long been considered rather inappropriate for the collection of personal poetry in which they find themselves, because of their thematic unity and because this very unity differs so substantially from the lyric diversity in the rest of the odes. (Syndikus 1990: 3 – 6). Highet 1957:131, Grimal 1975, Shackleton Bailey 1982:44 – 45, Mader 1987: 11 and Michel 1992 to name but a few, all point out that the major political statement contained in the Roman odes does "not fit" the lyric thrust of the rest of the collection. To have six successive poems in the same metre (alcaic) included in a volume that started as a showpiece of their author's impressive claim to metrical mastery seems to undermine, at the least, this initial parade of metrical expertise (Nisbet & Hubbard 1970). In the larger collection the occurrence of two poems with a similar metre next to each other is highly unusual. Where this does happen the express purpose is to align the content reflected in one poem very closely with that of its neighbour(s). In *Odes* 1.16 and 1.17 for instance the alcaic metre underlines the fact that the epic story with its emphasis on jealousy and anger portrayed in *Odes* 1.15 is worked out in an alternative, lyric environment in *Odes* 1.16 as well as in *Odes* 1.17. *Odes* 1.26 and *Odes* 1.27 reflect two different personal relationships where the impact of each is equally noteworthy. Nobody can deny that alternating the alcaic and sapphic metres for the first twenty odes of book two forces the reader to take careful note where (in *Odes* 2.13, 14, 15 and again in *Odes* 2.19 and 20) and why this pattern is interrupted or changed. Only two other sets of repetitions occur. *Odes* 3.24 could easily be read as an echo of the Roman odes. The addressee is not specified, but appears to be the same "you" (Roman) as in *Odes* 3.1 – 6. The same metre connects 3.25 directly to 3. 24 even though the subject matter is totally different. This clearly suggests that the interpretation of 3.25 should be made in terms of 3.24. The final set of metrical repetitions comes at the end of book four (published ten years later than the first three books) where *Odes* 4.14 and 4.15 not only share the same addressee, Augustus, but also cover the same ground. *Odes* 4.14 reflects on Augustus's specific achievements. *Odes* 4.15 places these deeds in the larger context of Rome's history. Another characteristic that fits uneasily into a lyric collection would be the explicit and seemingly heavy-handed didactic purpose reflected in all six of the poems at the beginning of book three, harking back to early Greek lyric poets like Solon and Tyrtaeus who were exponents of this type of instructional poetry, *par excellence*. In short these poems incorporate both technical and contextual characteristics that are not normally associated with Hellenistic and Roman lyric poetry, but is a feature of early Greek lyric poetry. In this paper the six Roman odes are considered as an introductory unit to book three. When the individual odes were written therefore does not affect the larger interpretative issues at stake.

otherwise inaccessible perspective on their specific (not general) time, their own on-going history and even their future. For this important purpose the poet chooses myth as the means by which to put his message across.

By claiming his status as representative of the muses (*musarum sacerdos,* 3.1.3) right at the beginning of the Roman odes, Horace invokes the myth of divine inspiration for the poet's individual and specific message. The songs for the muses not heard before *(carmina non prius audita,* 3.1.2 – 3) direct the poet's audience to the context of the mythical world and its unexpected implications for their own contemporary (historical) situation.

As spokesman for the muses and interpreter for the people, the poet starts his exposition by placing human history and pre-history in context. For the ancient Greeks and Romans the world of pre-history and myth's early focus was on the time when the Titans were conquered and replaced by the Olympians. This conquest established a fixed hierarchy fundamental to the divine order and to the order subsequently reflected in human society. The Olympian victory guaranteed the position of the father of the gods and by implication guaranteed any legitimate authority of a ruler over his people. A basic order underpins the mythological world and therefore underpins society as a reflection of this mythic world. It is with this basic order in mind that the poet-prophet's exposition of contemporary society in the following six odes needs to be interpreted.[15]

However even the law of hierarchy is subjected to the completely unpredictable law of necessity in the world of myth as well as in its counterpart, the historic reality as experienced by Horace's contemporaries. In the ordinary contemporary world, the ruler as well as his most obscure underling may have his specific, determined position in society, but eventually both, as individuals, are subject to the equalising law of dire necessity (*aequa lege Necessitas,* 3.1.14). The seemingly general perspective on Roman society is substantiated by several specific examples from everyday Roman life: the farmer, the politician, the patron and the client as reflected in *Odes* 3.1 lines 9 – 16. Right at the beginning of Book three, Horace makes this focus on the present, historical reality clear. This is no mythical society. Nor is this a society from ancient times. This is Roman contemporary society intimately known to Horace's readers. The law of necessity is the law to which they are subject, like all people before and after them, irrespective of their individual position in present society. This reference to the two types of law (hierarchy and necessity) bridges the gap between the mythical origin of the law of hierarchy and the present law of necessity accepted as having its effect in contemporary reality. Right at the beginning of this series of poems (*Odes* 3.1 – 6) the poet ensures that the present readers do make the connection between mythical origin and present reality; that their focus is directed to historical truth, not mythical *exempla*.[16]

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[15]   Horace's support of Augustan political organisation (cf. Fraenkel 1957, Davis 1991, Pöschl 1991, White 1993, Oliensis 1998) or opposition to the same (cf. Putnam 1986, Santirocco 1995, Lyne 1995) is beyond the scope of this paper. See also Nisbet and Rudd's succinct summary of the situation (2004).

[16]   Cf. Bowersock (1994) who points out the problems associated with historical vs. fictional truth.

This is the introductory statement to the Roman odes, where Rome and the political power of her citizens are under scrutiny. The reminder that even the highest power[17] in the mythic past is subservient to fate[18] comes as a clear indication of the transience of power in general. And this transience of power applies to people in all positions. The poet goes even further. He follows this introductory *caveat* with a telling example from so far back in history as to straddle the gap between myth and history (*Odes* 3.1. lines 17 – 21): Damocles may have been a man with political power, but in the end this power could not protect him from the real sword hanging over his head (Nisbet and Rudd 2004: 12). Political power will always be limited fundamentally by fate's control over the individual wielding the power (or the riches, the influence, the means, the social standing, etc., as established by the alternatives preceding the Damocles example in the poem, *Odes* 3.1 lines 9–16). Right at the beginning of the Roman odes the mythological references to the Gigantomachy and the historical example of Damocles establish an important fact: a higher authority limits even so-called unlimited power, making the individual concerned responsible and accountable for that power.

In citing Damocles as an example of an individual under threat because of his personal situation (very specifically in time and space – the sword after all is hanging exactly above Damocles' head) the poet underlines the connection between the individual's personal position in society and his consequent perspective on that society. Damocles as individual is put into a position where he experiences a great personal threat to enable him to grasp another person's vastly different historical perspective on time and space.

To underline the possibility of a changing personal perspective on historic time and space as reflected in the reference to Damocles (before and during the banquet), the poem ends with an example from Horace's contemporary world. It describes an individual who, by not striving for the burdens imposed by riches (or power, or influence, or means) somehow avoids the concomitant life-threatening pressures associated with wealth and power and who embodies the opposite of the Damocles experience in the most fundamental way.[19] In ending the poem by celebrating an individual who understands what is sufficient for happiness (*desiderantem quod satis est*, 3.1.25) as opposed to one who thinks power and riches (or any of the other supposed *desiderata* mentioned by the poem) can guarantee happiness, the poet underlines the historical implications of his *exemplum* (Nisbet and Rudd 2004: 14).

The Damocles example, bordering as it does on the mythical, is brought to bear with great effect on the historical reality faced in the present. It is used as indication of a specific example of a value system which must be applied directly to

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[17] This power is based on the victory of the Olympians over the Titans when a new hierarchy was established.

[18] Fate is a law unto its own and of necessity supersedes the law of hierarchy.

[19] This final comparison gains much from Horace's close following of the motifs reflected in Lucretius's prooemium, book 2, where the shortness of life (all being subject to fate) underlines the folly of relentless effort. See Syndikus 1973: 7 – 9 for an extended comparison between Lucretius book 2 and Horace *Odes* 3.1. Virgil's *Georgicae* reflect the same appreciation of the simple life.

the present historic reality. The Roman hankering after more power, should take due note of the burden such power imposes on the ordinary individual (who by implication will find himself in Damocles' position with the sword hanging over his head) as well as on the leader who has the sword hanging over his head continuously.

This introductory poem represents food for thought, suggesting as a *sine qua non* the specific need for an imaginative understanding of the real burden associated with power as well as for specifically requiring a subsequent change of perspective on what is truly needed for personal happiness – the desire to have what is sufficient (*desiderantem quod satis est*, 3.1.25). The mythological reference in this poem is not used as an extended metaphor or as an amplification of an implied value system. It enters into the present by representing the actual benchmark against which contemporary historic reality should be measured in the end.[20]

The mythological references and implications in the next poem (***Odes* 3.2**) work somewhat differently. The present situation of the Roman people is compared directly to the initial position of their forbears landing for the first time in Latium on what would later become Roman soil.[21] The poet's pre-history (about what happened after the Gigantomachy) initiated in *Odes* 3.1 thus continues. In *Odes* 3.2 the Olympians are firmly entrenched. In the world of men it is time for Aeneas and his followers to establish themselves as a people.[22] Interestingly enough the entire initial conquest is described in terms of individual effort or activity, picking up not only on the *Aeneid*, but also on the *Iliad*. These references could easily be seen to point to Aeneas himself (*illum*, 3.2.6) watched avidly by the wife (*matrona... / prospiciens*, 3.2.5 – 6) of the resident foe (*bellantis tyranni*, 3.2.6) (Nisbet and Rudd 2004: 25). Lavinia, future consort of Aeneas, sighs over the anticipated bloody battle (*adulta virgo / suspiret...* 3.2.8 – 9) and the inevitable demise of the promised husband, Turnus (*sponsus*, 3.2.10) (Nisbet and Rudd 2004 26).[23] By the middle of the poem (3.2. 13) the heroic effort of specific individuals has established the beginnings of the Roman state.[24]

The next half of the poem explains very specifically how this founding of Rome was made possible. Manliness and courage were the characteristics required by the individuals involved. Manliness and courage are those rare individual characteristics not subject to the fickleness of public opinion (*arbitrio popularis aurae*, 3.2.20). Instead they are the special qualities associated with those exceptional individuals who do not deserve to die (*immeritis mori*, 3.2.21) and who will therefore

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[20] This is a fundamental perspective in Roman law and represented in a general way by the *vir bonus:* a perspective all would accept as the most equitable or desirable.

[21] It is clear that Horace extolls the modern Roman soldier to follow the heroic examples of the past in general (as reflected in Homer's *Iliad* (19:291 and 22:462) and Virgil's *Aeneid* (11:475)). However, Horace's description seems to evoke Virgil's closely and very specifically.

[22] Horace's friend Virgil was involved in the planning and composition of the *Aeneid* since 29 BC (*Georgicae* 3.10). See Syndikus 1990:36 for a discussion Virgil's work on the idea and planning of the *Aeneid*.

[23] Virgil refers to Turnus as a lion (*Aeneid* 3.19) linking him directly to the wounded lion, Hector (*Iliad* 9.19).

[24] In founding the fatherland the right thing to do was apparently indeed to die for one's country (*dulce et decorum...pro patria mori,* 3.2.13).

escape fate's final sway (*aequa lege Necessitas*, 3.1.14) because their glory lives on[25] (like that of Aeneas). Alternatively, individuals may escape fate's final sway, because they no longer fear fate's final judgement (like the poet or sensible individual in the previous poem).[26] It is clear that in this section of the poem – immediately after the successful founding of the Roman state – the qualities needed for this particular enterprise are extolled. At the same time these qualities are identical to the ones needed to escape the figurative sword of Damocles hanging over all individuals as described in the previous poem. Myth can indeed function as the benchmark for action in the contemporary word.

We have already seen that manliness and courage (*virtus*) were essential in founding the Roman state (*Odes* 3.2.17 – 24). In the last two stanzas of *Odes* 3.2 a final mythological perspective is brought to bear on these specific means historically employed in the conquest of Latium. Now a further crucial characteristic for a Roman citizen is required. Horace ends his poem by extolling the specific need for that fundamental Roman virtue, *pietas,* reflected in a person's respect for the divine order, the gods, and man's own limitations – *pietas* a virtue of which the mythic Aeneas was an absolute embodiment.[27] Aspects such as trustworthy silence (*fideli... silentio*, 3.2.25) reflecting an innate sense of duty, an awareness of what is right and an appreciation for man's position in the world, as reflected in a respect for sacred rites of the most fundamental kind (*Cereris sacrum /...arcanae*, 3.2.26 – 27) are listed .[28] When these are absent the result is as far-reaching as when the father of the gods ignores "what is right" and overthrows the basic order of the universe by offhandedly (*neglectus*, 3.2.30) failing to distinguish between the upstanding (*integrum*, 3.2.30) and the depraved (*incesto*, 3.2.30). Even *virtus* itself is no guarantee without the context given to it by *pietas.*

The mythological example points out the dire consequences to all caused by a lack of *pietas* in both individual and state.[29] In short Horace's reference to the world of myth and the founding of the Roman state, serves as backdrop as well as benchmark against which a Roman citizen, as well as the collective citizenry (the state), must assess individual actions and choices in a present reality.[30] This mythological backdrop is very specific in its requirements. The historic reality which must measure itself against this backdrop, must measure itself against very specific requirements, not against general mythological *exempla*. The myth is not used as emotional amplification for rallying Romans to an appreciation of their heroic

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25   This is a commonplace also in early Greek lyric poetry.

26   "Der Gedanke ist in dieser Form ursprünglich stoisch", Syndikus 1990: 31. For the purpose of this paper the escape from fate's final sway because of individual choice is crucial, not whether the idea should be attributed to Greek philosophers rather than Greek poets.

27   Virgil wrote an entire epic in praise of this characteristic called *pietas*.

28   Fertility rites are generally regarded as the most fundamental of ancient rites.

29   The ode is after all an injunction to the individual (*puer*, 3.2.2) as a member of civil society, to do his duty.

30   "Wie der Einzelmensch die Tugend üben soll, so soll es auch der Staat", Syndikus 1990:34. This is not only sound advice. It is also the only way to avoid *Poena* (vengeance, 3.2.32) and her inevitable retribution. The echo of an injunction to escape n*ecessitas* with her *aequa lege* (3.1.14) is obvious.

beginnings. It is rather used as an indication of a specific value system which must be applied like a benchmark to the present historic reality.

The extolling of these qualities by means of the references to Rome's mythical origins seems to suggest that if these characteristics were fundamental to the founding of the Roman state, they are still and will be fundamental to the ongoing "founding" of the Roman state (and future Empire).[31] Once again the mythological references are not used only as an extended metaphor or as an extolling of a chosen value system. The references have become part of the present by representing an implied criterion against which contemporary historic reality will eventually be measured. In historic terms the state and its citizens will have achieved a successful organisation of government if they measure up to the precise standards set by the mythological founders, by measuring up to the requirements set by both *virtus* and *pietas*.

Odes **3.3** picks up on the broadening picture of a mythological criterion as basis for historic action that has emerged in *Odes* 3.1 and 3.2. At the same time the *musarum sacerdos* seems to continue his discussion of Roman pre-history.[32] A man more focused on his purpose (*tenacem propositi virum,* 3.3.1) than Aeneas would be hard to find. In an effort to lead him astray from this purpose, he was subjected to the misguided passion of his fellows (*civium ardor prava,* 3.3.2), the threats of an implacable ruler (*vultus instantis tyranni*, 3.3.3), the squalls caused by the unpredictable south wind (*auster, / dux inquieti turbidus Hadriae*, 3, 3, 4 – 5) and certainly the heavy hand of thundering Jupiter (*fulminantis magna manus Iovis*, 3.3.6). It seems as if Horace commences the third poem in his collection by underlining the primary quality needed to avoid both the impact of fate (*Necessitas*, 3.1.14) and of retribution (P*oena*, 3.2.32). In the first poem this quality is reflected in a man who knows the just measure of things (*desiderantem quod satis est*, 3.1.25). In the second poem the qualities needed are courage (*Virtus*, 3.2.17) and *pietas* (as described in 3.2.25 – 26). In the third poem it seems clear that an erratic display of good measure, courage and *pietas* is not sufficient. They need to become a way of life.

Once again the mythological world serves as model, illustrating the poet's purpose. In the world of myth Romulus-Quirinus (as precursor of Augustus) did indeed escape death by displaying the characteristics required (*hac [arte] Quirinus/ Martis equis Acheronta fugit*, 3.3.15 – 16). If he displays these qualities Augustus, as representative of the Roman people, will be put in a position to share the godlike existence of other heroes (*quos inter Augustus recumbens / purpureo bibet ore nectar*, 3.3.11 – 12). The world of myth does not focus on praise for Romulus (and by implication neither does it focus on praise for Augustus as a second or subsequent Roman hero). It focuses on what Romulus-Quirinus did to deserve that praise. It sets a specific criterion for the present, based on a mythological *exemplum.*

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[31]   At this stage (23 BC) it is somewhat premature to speak of the Roman Empire but whatever form of government is involved, Horace points to the prerequisite for a future based on values incorporating the criteria set by the past.

[32]   In the introductory section of the Ode, Aeneas is not mentioned by name. He immediately comes to mind, though, since all the references could apply to him and since the situations mentioned could hardly apply to an ordinary person.

The direct connection between what the world of myth requires and what is required in the Roman world of Horace's contemporaries is clear.

A very interesting point is made in this poem. The focus is shifted to the story of Troy and the circumstances preceding the founding of the Roman state. The myth quoted by Horace is put into the mouth of Juno (not Hera).[33] It is a Roman goddess relating the story of Troy and the conditions that had to be met in order to legitimize the founding of the Roman state. It is because of Romulus's founding of an entirely new state based on the *pietas* of her people and not because of the settling of a new Trojan colony, that the founding of Rome was acceptable to the Olympians who supported the sacking of Troy and Aeneas's long struggle to find a new home. Juno's retelling of the myth is focused on Rome and the Roman atonement for the sins associated with Troy. The terms she uses are explicit, all reflecting a Trojan lack of understanding of what is due to the greater order of things. She justifies her own wrath against the Trojans by listing specific examples of their transgressions as well as this fundamental lack of understanding. She lists Paris, whose initial judgement (or lack of judgement) caused the war in terms of his flawed understanding of the situation he had to face. She refers to him as biased (*incestusque iudex,* 3.3.19); she calls the Trojans and their king treacherous (*populo et duce fraudulento*, 3.3.24); she refers to the house of Priam as untrustworthy (*domus / periura,* 3.3.26 – 27) – the laws of hospitality were transgressed in a fundamental way when Helen was kidnapped and her subsequent return refused. The implication of this mythical pre-history (*Odes* 3.3.18 – 36) is clear: the Romans can only justify their present existence because they atone for the transgressions of their Trojan ancestors.

The implication of Juno's "prophecy" for the Romans (*Odes* 3.3.37 – 68) is even clearer: the Romans should not revert back to committing the sins of their Trojan predecessors. In 3.3.37 Juno refers back by word to *Ilion,* the initial point of departure of her narrative of the reasons for the sack of Troy. In this manner Juno's Trojan myth is transposed into becoming an anticipation of Rome's future history. Mythology is used to suggest an anticipated history. This future history however should take very careful note of the benchmark set by the Trojan myth in order not to repeat this fateful disaster.

Horace's single-minded focus on Juno's warning could hardly be seen as an indication that Rome as a world power should not become embroiled in the wars associated with the maintenance of such power. It is much rather an implied warning to his contemporary fellow citizens that having won these wars, having established themselves, they should aim to achieve a successful peace. It is a most explicit warning that they would do well to take Troy as an example of what attitude not to display as they strive to establish peace and take their place in history.

In the final stanza of *Odes* 3.3 (69 – 72) Horace seems to take his lyre to task for having diminished a great epic theme (like the Trojan War) with his puny lyric perspective (*magna modis tenuare parvis*, 3.3.72).[34] This is lyric inversion with a

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[33]   See Nisbet and Rudd 2004: 36 – 38 for a discussion of Juno's speech.

[34]   It seems as if Horace is self-conscious about the previous claims made by the poem. Lyne explains as follows: "Displeased or embarrassed by a public and political role, or its prospect, he [Horace] presents his excuse: his *lyra* is naturally *iocosa*" (Lyne 1995:103).

vengeance. This reference underlines his present deadly, un-lyric seriousness about myth and its implications for present-day history, about the dire need to work towards a successful peace and the difficulties involved in attaining this goal.

After turning so abruptly to his muse and the playfulness of her lyre, Horace speaks directly to her, as if she were right at his side, at the end of *Odes* 3.3 (*non hoc iocosae conveniet lyrae: / quo, Musa, tendis*? 3.3.69 –70). Horace continues this focus on the muses in **Odes 3.4.** He addresses Calliope directly asking her to descend from heaven to join him. It is interesting to note that the muse concerned in *Odes* 3.3 69 –70 is not mentioned by name but merely indicated as a muse with power over a playful lyre. Euterpe, muse of lyric poetry, springs to mind. The muse in *Odes* 3.4, however, is identified specifically as Calliope, the flute-playing Muse of epic poetry.[35]

Taking the six Roman odes as a poetic unit, the middle of such a unit (that is the end of the third ode and the beginning of the fourth ode) rhetorically speaking represents the traditional position where the reader would expect some kind of crux. Such an explicit repetition of a call on the muses by their personal spokesman (*musarum sacerdos,* 3.1.3) seems to align the lyric and the epic world. It is as if Horace has to interrupt his overview of the mythical history of Roman society with all its implications for the future history of Rome, to reaffirm his position as inspired poet-prophet talking on behalf of the muses. Horace is using this crucial point in the Roman odes to confirm that he is indeed acting as a conduit for the muses rather than speaking only as himself. His words therefore have all the authority of the muses behind them.[36]

Horace does not only call on the muses as authoritative backup for his pronouncements, he also describes their personal protection of him from his earliest years onwards. He was set apart as a fearless child (*non sine dis animosus infans*, 3.4.20) and led a charmed existence finally to become their bard. He was kept safe from the worst of natural dangers, like snakes and bears (*toto ab atris corpore viperis / ... et ursis*, 3.4.17 – 18) by two of the most powerful gods in myth: Apollo and Venus.[37] In short the powers of music and love, as well as the muses themselves, have already guaranteed the *auctoritas o*f whatever follows in the rest of the poem. They have also guaranteed Horace's personal safety on whatever poetic journey he should undertake in *Odes* 3.4.25 – 36.

It is striking that this blithe recital of Horace's tireless roaming far and wide should be followed by a description of the muses refreshing a battle weary Augustus settling down at last ([*recreatis]...Caesarem .../finire quaerentem labores*,

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[35] Nisbet and Rudd 2004:57 point out that Hesiod describes Calliope as one who "accompanies kings" and therefore may be associated with "political wisdom".

[36] This anticipation is further enhanced by the fact that the first stanza *Ode* 3.1 and the last stanza of *Ode* 3.6 also seem to reflect the same situation, except that the "song of innocence" that the muses's bard attempts to sing to the youth of his country in *Odes* 3.1, has changed into the song of bitter experience in *Odes* 3.6 where the hope of the country turns out to be even worse (*progeniem vitiosiorem,* 3.6.48) than the present generation.

[37] The bay tree is associated with Apollo and the myrtle with Venus. Apollo furthermore was associated with divination as well as with music and Venus with the sea (that symbol of a voyage into the unknown) as well as with love.

3.4.37 – 39). The world of poetry and the real world are brought together directly, with a clear emphasis on the restorative powers of the muses. It is as if Horace at this crucial point in this group of poems wants to re-emphasise the connection between the world of myth as extolled by his poetry and present-day historical reality. It is equally striking that as Augustus and his troops strive to respond to the gentle counsel (*lene consilium,* 3.4.41) of the muses, the mythological equivalent of their battles continues.

Mortals know all about the founding battle of mythology, the Gigantomachy, where the power of the thunderbolt was called upon to strike down the wrong-minded Giants (*impios / Titanas*, Odes 3.4.42 – 43) and their terrifying gang of followers. The power displayed through the use of the thunderbolt is after all the power on which Jupiter based his reign and which guarantees all subsequent political authority. This was underlined at the beginning of the Roman odes (3.1.4 – 8) right after the spokesman of the muses (*sacerdos musarum*, 3.1.3) identified himself and his objective to speak to the youth of the country (*virginibus puerisque canto*, 3.1.4) – the people's future – about ideas not heard previously (*carmina non prius / audita* 3.1.2 – 3). *Odes* 3.4 dwells on the details of the Gigantomachy, giving a sound idea of the effort involved and Jupiter's real fear of failure (*magnum... terrorem*, 3.4.49), before the thunderbolt finally brought victory. Even more interesting is the list of gods who backed Jupiter: Athena, Vulcan, Juno and even Apollo. The Roman god of war, Mars, is conspicuous by his absence.[38] By reinterpreting a myth with which all Romans were raised. Horace has prepared his audience very carefully for his own further reinterpretation. If Jupiter who established himself as the father of the Roman Olympians understood the limits of his powers, including his need for counsel and allies, how much more should a mortal ruler be sensitive to the limits of his mortal power and be aware of his need for counsel and allies. This is not an explicit put-down of Augustus, but it is a strong reminder to anyone in power to look towards sound advice – and in effect – to share such power.

It is clear that Horace repeatedly turns to the war between the Titans and the Olympians as an explicit example for the Romans who have just put a devastating period of civil war behind them and who are still facing serious foreign enemies. It seems as if overwhelming force had the final say in the civil war, but Horace implies that another criterion must still be met. He is quite explicit in his statement that the gods hate power that is focused on wrong-doing (*idem odere viris / omne nefas animo moventis*, 3.4.67 – 68) or more clearly, the gods hate power that ignores the inherent limits placed on it by a broader perspective. It is as if Horace, by means of his gigantomachy example, accepts the use of controlled force in war to achieve victory – as was symbolised by the power of the thunderbolt. However, once victory has been achieved, his example does not allow for the further use of force at all. Jupiter is flanked by his allies, Athena, the goddess of strategy but also of arts and crafts, by Vulcan, the god of technology for war but also for farming, by Juno the goddess of hearth and home and even by Apollo the healer, the god of divination and of music. Such allies will supply a very specific type of counsel where wisdom (*consili,* 3.4.65) will replace brute force. Furthermore, Horace points out explicitly that force alone

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[38]   His Olympian counterpart, Ares, is not mentioned either.

turns on itself and implodes (*vis consili expers mole ruit sua*, 3.4.65) if it does not take this counsel seriously.

Horace ends this ode by again referring to his charmed existence because of his position as bard of the muses (*Odes* 3.4.60 – 80). The entire underworld is taken as witness to the authority of his words (*testis mearum / …sententiarum*, 3.4.69 – 70). He would expect the same from the Roman people. The crux addressed in this poem therefore embodies proof of Horace's authority as a poet. This is the focus of the entire collection of odes as well as being the focus of the Roman odes in particular.

It seems as if the lyric poet's authority is easily acceptable in his lyric poetry. *Odes* 3.4 is claiming this same authority for the poet in the untypical Roman odes as well. Everything he says (especially in what follows) should therefore be taken with the utmost solemnity.

In *Odes* 3.4 Horace called upon Calliope to come down from heaven to support him in his song (*descende caelo et dic age tibia*, 3.4.1). In the following ode, *Odes* **3.5**, he again refers to heaven. This time heaven represents not the dwelling-place of the muses but the seat of the father of the gods (*caelo tonantem credidimus Iovem/ regnare*, 3.5.1 – 2). In *Odes* 3.4 we have just seen that force as well as careful counsel was needed for Jupiter to obtain and maintain his position as father of the gods. Immediately after this very firm connection with the previous ode is established, even to the point of repeating the same word (*caelo*) for Jupiter's seat of power, Horace turns to Augustus's position of power. This seat of power seems to leave much to be desired. In fact it is described in realistic terms and backed up by specific examples, none of them comforting or persuasive (Nisbet and Rudd 2004: 80 – 82). In short it seems that Augustus can only claim his power, because of far-flung (and by implication unimportant) victories over the Britons or the Parthians (*divus habebitur / Augustus adiectis Britannis / imperio gravibusque Persis*, 3.5.2 – 4). Even worse are the consequences of these wars of conquest. To maintain such a far-flung empire Roman soldiers settled in these barbarian areas, intermarried with the locals and grew old in the military service of their new non-Roman family-connections (*consenuit socerorum in armis*, 3.5.8).[39] In the process they lost their Roman identity the symbols of which Horace lists explicitly in the references to the shields, the Roman name, the toga (signifying a citizen's coming of age) and the city's eternal dedication to Vesta (*anciliorum et nominis et togae / oblitus aeternaeque Vestae*, 3.5.10 – 11).

Given the Jupiter example where the war was won and peace managed successfully, the establishment of Augustus's far-flung peace raises serious questions. The preceding civil and foreign wars were won at great cost to the Roman people; reconciliation too has taken place. It seems however, that the price paid for all this is only slowly becoming clearer.

According to Horace's understanding of the situation, the moral price for the ongoing war-mongering is a lack of moral fibre in the Roman people and this price is

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[39]   Cf. Nisbet and Rudd 2004:85 who argue for *armis* rather than *arvis* (3.5.8) as well as discussing the moral implications of the behaviour set out in 3.5.5 – 12.

generally not taken into account. This seems to be the basis for the possible failure of the reforms in forming a prospective peace.[40]

It is as if Horace in this second last of the Roman odes gives a summary of every salient point he has made in the preceding Roman odes. The first ode focused mainly on the transience of power and the need to limit what an individual as well as a state should desire (*desiderantem quod satis est,* 3.1.25). The second ode focused on the characteristics required for the proper maintenance of such power – characteristics (such as courage and *pietas*) embodied by the individual *vir bonus*, by the citizens, but especially by the rulers of the Roman state. The third ode focused on the justification of Rome's establishment and the requirements for her continued existence. The fourth ode interrupted this ongoing prophecy of the future of the state to reaffirm the bard's authority. It is therefore with the full authority of the muses behind him that the poet continues his prophecy for Rome in the fifth and sixth of the Roman odes.

Having given his audience the mythological yardstick by which to measure their present situation, Horace also gives them an equally apposite example from recent history. It seems as if the mythological example is even more to the point when embodied in an historical case in point. In the Roman historical consciousness Regulus is that outstanding example of someone who chose honour instead of expediency. Horace's version of Regulus's speech before the Senate (*Odes* 3.5.18 – 40) fulfils the same purpose as Juno's speech in *Odes* 3.3. It warns the Romans about the dire consequences of present action (or lack of it) for their future. In no uncertain terms Regulus foretells ruin through the following ages (*perniciem veniens in aevum*, 3.5.16), if the Romans do not respond to his warnings. It is striking that Regulus's speech focuses on the exact characteristics required for the original founding of the Roman people, which *Odes* 3.1 and 3.2 pointed out in great detail.

It is in Regulus's speech that Horace gives his most explicit summary of the present problems besetting the state. If extended periods of war accustom the Roman people to war, they will confuse peace with war (*unde vitam sumeret inscius / pacem duello miscuit*, 3.5.37 – 38). They will be weary and disinclined for the immense effort required by war and, subsequently, for the even greater effort required by peace.

It is striking that Horace's mythological example of Jupiter's war followed by a successful peace puts war and peace on the same level. Both require exceptional effort. In Regulus's example Horace implies that exceptional effort focused on war was acceptable – up to the point of Regulus's self-sacrifice. He implies, however, that peace too requires such exceptional self-sacrifice. This is the prerequisite for a Roman future.

In the final of the Roman odes, ***Odes* 3.6**, Horace therefore implies that peace requires the same self-sacrifice and focus as war. The requirements for peace match the mythical example as is pointed out in the final prophecy for the future of Rome. Juno's explicit prophecy (*Odes* 3.3) for Rome is clearly the foil against which the

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[40]   This perspective would support Augustus's moral reform programme. Horace however is identifying the basic cause of the problem, which seems to suggest his opposition to "regulating" against the problem instead of trying to deal with the cause of moral decline in the first place.

present peace should be measured. A future is only possible if the present generation fulfils their duty and expiates the sins of the previous generations (*delicta maiorum immeritus lues*, 3.6.1) – by implication sins going back to the fall of Troy.

Horace calls on mythology as example to a much lesser extent in *Odes* 3, 5 and 6. In the previous four Roman odes the mythological examples have been explicit and clear. The need now is not for *exempla* but to make the connection of those *exempla* with the present. The examples cited are from Rome's recent history. The foes the Romans themselves conquered and still need to conquer now take the place of the Titans crushed by Jupiter. According to the example from mythology such foes must be crushed with effective force. *Odes* 3.5 focused on the physical effort and mind-set required from Romans to wage a successful war.

At the same time the focus is on the wise counsel needed to manage a successful and on-going peace through which a real future for Rome would become possible. This aspect is the focus of *Odes* 3.6 (Nisbet and Rudd 2004: 98 – 99). Horace is as explicit as is possible in linking the future of Rome to the Romans' acceptance of their subservience to the gods: Rome reigns because Rome understands that her position of power has its origin in the gods (*dis te minorem quod geris imperas*, 3.6.5). This understanding has serious moral consequences.

At present Rome's actions do not reflect such understanding. Horace describes the present as an age ripe with wickedness (*fecunda culpae saecula*, 3.6.17). The whole central section of the poem (*Odes* 3.6. 17 – 32) spells out this wickedness in great detail. The prophecy is quite clear. There will be no real future if the present situation continues. Only a series of increasingly wicked generations will follow (*progeniem vitiosiorem*, 3.6.48) neither worthy of the prophecy nor the name Roman. They will indeed not hear the song of the bard.

In all six Roman odes, Horace reaffirmed (or reaffirmed by implication, as in *Odes* 3.6) the mythical founding of Rome as a basis for Rome's future. That the founding of Rome came about through war goes without saying. The sack of Troy after one of the greatest war efforts ever, was after all the direct cause of Aeneas's conquest of Latium and the subsequent founding of Rome. It has also become clear that Horace's position on war as implied in his use of myth is much more complex than just reflecting a lyricist's distaste of an alien and objectionable activity. The lyric poet has a very real appreciation for the individual sacrifice and courage required by a war effort. At the same time his rallying call for the effort required for peace, not only focuses on the contribution required of the individual, but also on the subsequent collective responsibility to maintain such a peace. This perspective on peace is not simplistic or wholly supportive of it– in a *pax gratia pacis* way – either. Furthermore, this perspective is not at all what one would expect of a lyric poet for whom the *negotium* of peace is supposedly a *sine qua non*.[41] It seems then that Horace could balance the complexities involved in writing poetry about war and peace to such an extent that he could indeed sing to the accompaniment of Calliope's flute as well as to the Euterpe's lyre.

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[41]   Interestingly enough, the pacifist's preference for not engaging in war at all is not even seen as an option.

Conclusion

In all six Roman odes a specific didactic perspective has been put up for scrutiny. Furthermore, Horace has taken inordinate pains to have his Roman odes fit in smoothly with the rest of his collection of lyric poetry. The mythological examples made it clear that the individual *vir bonus* required for political and social reasons in the Roman odes is no different from the individual *vir bonus* meeting the standards required by the lyric perspective for a good person leading a good life.[42] This is a person who is not influenced by circumstances (social, political, military or personal) to give in to the opinions, pressures, and expectations of the many (*virum / non civium ardor prava iubentium / ... [quatit]*, 3.3.1 – 4). It seems then as if Horace's mythological examples are meant to confirm that the philosophical ideal for the individual is the same as for society.[43] In short the ideal to which the individual of a private lyric world aspires is also the ideal to which the Roman state should aspire. What closer connection could there be between a set of poems and the collection in which they find themselves than a shared philosophical point of view as embodied in the mythological examples set out as a criterion for action? What better guarantee of a shared perspective than an individual equally sought after as private individual and as citizen of the state? In short what better basis for maintaining peace or, if needs be, for waging war than an individual *cum* citizen that, in real life, meets the criteria set by myth?

　　　The Roman odes reflect a complex perspective on Roman society, including such fundamental issues as opting for war or rooting for peace. References (implicit or explicit) to the myths concerned place this perspective in context. It seems clear then that the didactic purpose reflected so clearly in the Roman odes, represents a fiercely personal vision of the Roman state and the personal responsibilities of its citizens. As such the Roman odes reflect the poet's relationship not to a single individual or godlike entity, as does the rest of the collection. They rather represent the poet's very personal relationship to the society in which he finds himself. And it seems that in myth the lyric poet found the many-faceted tool needed to reflect this complex relationship.

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[42]　Cf. Miller who underlines the importance of Horace maintaining the autonomy of the private lyric world as well as that of the public world of political reality (1994:144).

[43]　The parallel between individual and society is implicit in Plato's *Republic.*

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