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Themes and Patterns in Horace *Odes* Book 2[1]

Number, metre and length of poems

Book 2 of the *Odes* contains 20 poems, almost half the 38 of Book 1 and two-thirds of the 30 of Book 3. Like the earlier *Satires* 1 (10 poems), it thus has a number of poems founded on a decimal base, following Vergil's *Eclogue*s (10) and Tibullus' first book (10), a feature later echoed in Book 3 (30). The contrast with *Odes* 1 is interesting: its 38 poems seem to show a poet keen to emphasise his full acquaintance with the rich range of Greek lyric, with considerable metrical diversity (beginning with nine poems in different metres), while the 20 poems of Book 2 show much less metrical variety: famously, it begins with ten poems in which Alcaics alternate with Sapphics, and then presents seven of its remaining ten poems in Alcaics plus three in other metres. The same restraint and consistency is shown in the matter of length: only 4 of its 20 poems extend to more than 30 lines with none over 40, and none is shorter than 20, whereas in Book 1 poem-length can range from eight lines (1.11, 1.38), 12 (1.23) or 16 (1.19, 1.21, 1.34) to 52 (1.2) and 60 (1.12).

These statistics suggest that where Book 1 shows poetic ambition and diversity, Book 2 shows poetic moderation and consistency. Having shown what he can do in his first book, in his second book the lyric poet settles into a more constant form and establishes the characteristic concerns of the *Odes*. Moderation is a key theme in Book 2: its poems stress moderation across a range of fields – in material consumption, in philosophical outlook, in passions and emotions, and in literary form. The opening poem is here symptomatic: after an impassioned recall of the horrors of civil war treated by its addressee Pollio in his lost *Histories*, the last stanza famously implies that this material is too much for Horatian lyric (2.1.37-40):

> Sed ne relictis, Musa procax, iocis
> Ceae retractes munera neniae,
>   mecum Dionaeo sub antro
>   quaere modos leuiore plectro.

Horatian lyric is here defined as a moderate literary form, both in implicit contrast with the 'tragic' historiography of Pollio evoked in the rest of the poem[2] and in explicit contrast with the intense lyric laments associated with the name of Simonides of Ceos[3]. Note too that this intervention by the poet comes when the lyric ode has reached the maximum number of lines

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[2] See Nisbet and Hubbard 1978: 9.

[3] See Harrison 2001: 264-266.

allowed to an ode in Book 2: restraint of length as well as of emotional intensity, presented as programmatic in the first poem, is indeed a key feature of the book[4].

Variety of addressees

The selection of addressees in Book 2 shows more variety than in metre and length, but here too there is some aspect of moderation and restraint. The *princeps* himself does not figure as addressee, and apart from the indispensable Maecenas (2.12, 2.17, 2.20), the only consular invoked is Pollio, assigned the prestigious initial position in 2.1. A quarter of the poems are addressed to minor friends of Horace, some of whom are also addressed in the first book of *Epistles*: Septimius (2.6; cf. *epist*.1.9), Pompeius (2.7), Quintius (2.11; cf. *epist*.1.16), Postumus (2.14) and Grosphus (2.16: cf. *epist*.1.12). Several addressees have misleadingly resonant names but turn out to be less important than their potential homonyms: Sallustius in 2.2 is an influential figure as friend of Augustus but recalls above all the celebrated name of his great-uncle and adoptive father the historian; Pompeius in 2.7 may well be a Pompeian but is not a significant member of the Pompey clan; and Licinius in 2.10 is probably not the famous conspirator 'Varro Murena'[5]. The theme of civil war raised in 2.1 is continued in the associations of the addressees of several other poems in the first half of the book: Dellius in 2.3, well known for his rapid side-changing, and Pompeius in 2.7, Horace's comrade at Philippi. Writers are also prominent: the historian Pollio in 2.1 has been noted, while 2.3 provides another historian of the civil wars in Dellius (it cannot be an accident that 2.2, the poem intermediate between these two, is addressed, as we have seen, to the homonymous heir of the great historian Sallust), while in 2.9 we find the elegiac poet Valgius. The suggestion in 2.12 that Maecenas himself could write a prose history of Caesar's battles fits the emphasis on contemporary history and its recording in this book. The number of fictional addressees is lower than in Book 1, partly because of the smaller number of erotic odes: the two that appear, Xanthias (2.6) and Barine (2.8), seem to have typical or speaking names, while another poem (2.5) has an anonymous addressee but a fictionally named protagonist (Lalage). Two more serious poems of ethical character have either an anonymous addressee (2.18) or no addressee at all (2.15): both these look forward to the similarly moralising and non-addressed Roman Odes of the following book. Finally, for further variation, we find non-human addressees: the famous tree which nearly ended Horace's life (2.13), and the god Bacchus, invoked as the inspiring deity of lyric poetry (2.19).

This distribution of addressees show some variety, but again looks to moderation in some sense in suggesting a greater emphasis on private friendship than on public figures, though there is some attention given to writers dealing with contemporary historical subjects (which fits the twice-aired possibility of the campaigns of Caesar as a literary topic: 2.9, 2.12).

External architecture: the ordering of poems

Much scholarship on the ordering of poems in the *Odes* has aspired to produce complete and inclusive schemes in which each poem relates significantly to its neighbours[6]. A salutary

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[4] Nisbet and Hubbard 1978: xvii.
[5] I agree here with Syme 1986: 391.
[6] See e.g. Dettmer 1983, Santirocco 1986, Porter 1987, Minarini 1989.

cautionary note was famously struck by Nisbet and Hubbard:

'Yet it is only too easy to imagine some subtle principle either of similarity or difference in every juxtaposition, not to mention more complicated sequences and cycles. Most of these suggestions seem completely fanciful, and equally ingenious reasons could be adduced to justify any arrangement'[7]. In what follows I pursue something of a middle way between these two extremes in suggesting some significance in the order of poems in *Odes* Book 2 but not a complete and elaborate scheme which involves each and every poem.

The poems of Book 2 seem to show some groupings which express both similarity and contrast thematically. A linear reading of the book might emerge with the following, in which repeated themes are underlined and linked consecutive poems are grouped together:

2.1   Pollio, writer of history and tragedy, link with civil wars
2.2   Sallust, nephew of writer of the history of civil wars
2.3   Dellius, famous side-changer in civil wars, Antonian historian; symposium

2.4   Xanthias, young rich Greek, and his lover
2.5   Potential lover, girl too young

2.6   Septimius, old friend and the future (civil wars too?)
2.7   Pompeius, old friend and Philippi (civil wars); symposium

2. 8   Barine, probably fictional living irresistible lover
2.9   Valgius, writer of elegy and his dead lover; advice to a friend (praise of Caesar)

2.10   Licinius, ethical advice to a friend
2.11   Quinctius, ethical advice to a friend; symposium
2.12   Maecenas, potential historian, literary advice to a friend (praise of Caesar) and love

2.13   The tree: near-death of the poet, immortality of Sappho and Alcaeus in the underworld
2.14   Postumus, future death and the underworld

2.15   no addressee, anti-luxury, ethical advice
2.16   Grosphus, anti-luxury, ethical advice to a friend

2.17   Maecenas – near-death, friendship and loyalty
2.18   anonymous addressee, anti-luxury diatribe , ethical advice
2.19   Bacchus, literary/fantastic poem, underworld scene
2.20   Maecenas, friendship, literary/fantastic poem

This scheme shows that there are clearly groups of poems with common themes:

2.1-3 are linked by the civil wars and the writing of history, all addressed to real historical figures (Sallustius cannot be wholly separated from his famous adoptive father here), 2.4-5 are paired as two lighter poems of the life of love, involving figures with fictionalised speaking names, 2.6-7 are both addressed to old friends with real names and look back to the poet's past, possibly both to the civil wars, 2.8-9 are another pair of poems on erotic subjects, the femme fatale Barine and the dead *puer* Mystes, again with speaking names, while the three poems 2.10-2.12 are linked by the offer of advice to a friend. 2.13 and 2.14 are clearly paired by the prominence of death and the Underworld in both poems, while 2.14 and 2.15 stand together as poems of ethical advice against luxury. The final group of four poems is contained by two

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[7] Nisbet and Hubbard 1970: xxiv.

poems addressed to Maecenas, both of which stress the poet's friendship, but 2.19 and 2.20 are also paired together because of their imaginative fantasy about immortals, 2.19 with its description of the divine Bacchus, 2.20 with its description of the immortalised Horace.

These links within groups are matched by links across groups. As already noted, the theme of the civil wars not only holds together the opening sequence of 2.1-3 but also seems to be relevant to the friendship-pairing of 2.6-7; poems concerned with writers move from the initial group linked with historians (2.1-3) to the elegist Valgius in 2.9 and the potential historian Maecenas in 2.12; the theme of the underworld links 2.19 with the pair 2.13-14; diatribes against luxury connect 2.18 with the pair 2.15-16; the theme of praise of Caesar as a potential literary topic is raised in both 2.9 and 2.12; the theme of the symposium draws together 2.3, 2.7 and 2.11, that of love the two pairs 2.4-5 and 2.8-9 as well as 2.12, that of fantasy 2.13 and 2.19-20; and general ethical advice and professions of friendship are liberally distributed across the whole book.

These similarities are accompanied and balanced by contrasts and alternations, which like the variety of addressees (see below) seem to be a carefully orchestrated element in the book as the reader proceeds through. The tragic realism of the opening group 2.1-3 and their links with the civil wars and their historians contrast with the lighter and less 'real' poems of love 2.4-5, but we then return to the realities of Rome's past history with the old friends of 2.6-7, at least one of which provides a strong link with the civil wars. 2.8-9 reprise the erotic themes of 2.4-5: 2.4 and 2.9 both deal with lovers of inferior rank to the addressee, while the issue of excessive youth (too young for love, too young to die) links Lalage in 2.5 with Mystes in 2.9.

The more serious subject of advice to a friend constitutes the core of the next group 2.10-12, while the two treatments of the Underworld in 2.13 and 2.14 (another contrasting switch) have their own internal contrasts (one is fantastic and literary, the other severe and moralising), and in the final two sequences we find the same clear variation between ethical preaching (2.15-16, 2.18) and literary fantasy (2.19-20).

Internal architecture: the turn in the middle

Elsewhere I have set out various ways in which the *Odes* of Horace show a change of subject-matter in or around the central stanza or stanzas[8]. Some of these are nicely exemplified in Book 2: for instance, both 2.7 and 2.11 show a central turn from political subject-matter to symposiastic celebration (also seen in 3.14). In 2.7 we move after four of the seven stanzas from memories of Philippi to the present party:

> O saepe mecum tempus in ultimum
> deducte Bruto militiae duce,
>   quis te redonauit Quiritem
>   dis patriis Italoque caelo,
> Pompei, meorum prime sodalium,   5
> cum quo morantem saepe diem mero
>   fregi, coronatus nitentis
>   malobathro Syrio capillos?
> Tecum Philippos et celerem fugam
> sensi relicta non bene parmula,   10

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[8] Harrison 2004.

cum fracta uirtus et minaces
    turpe solum tetigere mento;
sed me per hostis Mercurius celer
denso pauentem sustulit aere,
    te rursus in bellum resorbens   15
      unda fretis tulit aestuosis.
Ergo obligatam redde Ioui dapem
longaque fessum militia latus
    depone sub lauru mea, nec
      parce cadis tibi destinatis.   20
Obliuioso leuia Massico
ciboria exple, funde capacibus
    unguenta de conchis. Quis udo
      deproperare apio coronas
curatue myrto? Quem Venus arbitrum   25
dicet bibendi? Non ego sanius
    bacchabor Edonis: recepto
      dulce mihi furere est amico.

In 2.11 the poem turns from political news and consequent philosophical reflection to celebration:

Quid bellicosus Cantaber et Scythes,
Hirpine Quincti, cogitet Hadria
    diuisus obiecto, remittas
      quaerere nec trepides in usum
poscentis aeui pauca: fugit retro   5
leuis iuuentas et decor, arida
    pellente lasciuos amores
      canitie facilemque somnum.
Non semper idem floribus est honor
uernis neque uno luna rubens nitet   10
    uoltu: quid aeternis minorem
      consiliis animum fatigas?
Cur non sub alta uel platano uel hac
pinu iacentes sic temere et rosa
    canos odorati capillos,   15
      dum licet, Assyriaque nardo
potamus uncti? dissipat Euhius
curas edacis. Quis puer ocius
    restinguet ardentis Falerni
      pocula praetereunte lympha?   20
Quis deuium scortum eliciet domo
Lyden? Eburna dic, age, cum lyra
    maturet, in comptum Lacaenae
      more comas religata nodum.

In both cases the consideration of politics merits a celebration which can be related to the new Augustan order: in 2.7 the civil strife of Philippi is presented as gone for ever, shown by the amnesty under which the former Republican Pompeius is returning to Italy, while in 2.11 stirrings on the distant borders of the empire need give us no trouble since (it is implied) Rome can now keep order.

Another kind of central turn found twice in Book 2 is that of false closure. In 2.5 the end of the initial instruction to the anonymous addressee not to pursue the still immature Lalage could

give a satisfactory ending to the poem after three stanzas, a length which recalls that of the epigram tradition on which it is based[9]:

> Nondum subacta ferre iugum ualet
> ceruice, nondum munia comparis
>   aequare nec tauri ruentis
>   in uenerem tolerare pondus.
> Circa uirentis est animus tuae   5
> campos iuuencae, nunc fluuiis grauem
>   solantis aestum, nunc in udo
>   ludere cum uitulis salicto
> praegestientis. Tolle cupidinem
> immitis uuae: iam tibi liuidos   10
>   distinguet autumnus racemos
>   purpureo uarius colore.
> **iam te sequetur**; currit enim ferox
> aetas et illi quos tibi dempserit
>   adponet annos; iam proterua   15
>   fronte petet Lalage maritum,
> dilecta, quantum non Pholoe fugax,
> non Chloris albo sic umero nitens
>   ut pura nocturno renidet
>   luna mari Cnidiusue Gyges,   20
> quem si puellarum insereres choro,
> mire sagacis falleret hospites
>   discrimen obscurum solutis
>   crinibus ambiguoque uoltu.

The move from 'she will mature enough for you to pursue her' to 'she will pursue you' begins a new train of thought, and the rest of the poem is dedicated to Lalage's future active sexual potential, a reversal of the first half where her character as passive love object was stressed.

A similar central turn is found in *Odes* 2.13:

> Ille et nefasto te posuit die,
> quicumque primum, et sacrilega manu
>   produxit, arbos, in nepotum
>   perniciem obprobriumque pagi;
> illum et parentis crediderim sui   5
> fregisse ceruicem et penetralia
>   sparsisse nocturno cruore
>   hospitis, ille uenena Colcha
> et quidquid usquam concipitur nefas
> tractauit, agro qui statuit meo   10
>   te, triste lignum, te, caducum
>   in domini caput inmerentis.
> Quid quisque uitet, nunquam homini satis
> cautum est in horas: nauita Bosphorum
>   Poenus perhorrescit neque ultra   15
>   caeca timet aliunde fata,
> miles sagittas et celerem fugam
> Parthi, catenas Parthus et Italum

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[9] For details see Harrison 2004: 100-101.

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        robur; sed inprouisa leti
            uis rapuit rapietque gentis.              20
    Quam paene furuae regna Proserpinae
    et iudicantem uidimus Aeacum
            sedesque discriptas piorum et
                Aeoliis fidibus querentem
    Sappho puellis de popularibus                     25
    et te sonantem plenius aureo,
            Alcaee, plectro dura nauis,
                dura fugae mala, dura belli.
    Vtrumque sacro digna silentio
    mirantur umbrae dicere, sed magis                 30
            pugnas et exactos tyrannos
                densum umeris bibit aure uolgus.
    Quid mirum, ubi illis carminibus stupens
    demittit atras belua centiceps
            auris et intorti capillis                 35
                Eumenidum recreantur angues?
    Quin et Prometheus et Pelopis parens
    dulci laborum decipitur sono
            nec curat Orion leones
                aut timidos agitare lyncas.           40
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Here at line 20 the poem seems to be over: the curse on the tree and reflections on death reach a natural conclusion, aided as in 2.5 by the epigrammatic tradition on which the poem draws[10]. But in fact this is only the end of the first half: the new start at line 21 takes up a quite different poetic theme, a detailed account of the Underworld, which occupies the poem's second half.

Contemporary literary context: Vergil and Tibullus?

The publication of *Odes* 2 is traditionally dated to 23 BCE, as part of the simultaneous collection of *Odes* 1-3[11]; but recent scholarship has suggested that these three books may have been published separately earlier in addition to this collective edition[12]. Internal evidence from Book 2 mentions a date not long before Horace's fortieth birthday in December 25 BCE (2.4.22-24 *fuge suspicari /cuius octauum trepidauit aetas claudere lustrum*), and no poem in the book can be firmly dated after this[13]. If Book 2 is essentially a product of the first half of the 20s BCE, this would fit the prominence of certain intertexts which were recent publications in those years.

Prime amongst these is Vergil's *Georgics*, emerging about 29 BCE. Book 2 seems to be especially interested in the narrative of Orpheus' descent to the Underworld in *Georgics* 4, which is echoed in no fewer than four poems. In 2.9 Valgius is presented as lamenting interminably in language which clearly recalls the lament of Orpheus for the lost Eurydice (2.9.9-12):

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    tu semper urges flebilibus modis
    Mysten ademptum, nec tibi Vespero
            surgente decedunt amores
                nec rapidum fugiente solem.
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[10] For the details cf. Harrison 2004: 99-100.
[11] E.g. Nisbet and Hubbard 1978: 1.
[12] Hutchinson 2008: 131-161.
[13] Cf. Nisbet and Hubbard 1978: 4.

Cf. *georg*. 4.465-466:

> te, dulcis coniunx, te solo in litore secum
> te **ueniente die**, te **decedente** canebat

Here Vergil's tragic episode is ironised in Horace's criticism of his elegiac friend for excessive literary lamentation: the loss of the *puer* Mystes is not to be compared with that of Eurydice. In 2.13 the Underworld of *Georgics* 4 is again invoked. In the second half of this poem, as we have just seen, Horace imagines the journey to the Underworld that he just avoided in being saved from the falling tree (2.13.21-40):

> Quam paene furuae regna Proserpinae
> et iudicantem uidimus Aeacum
>   sedesque discriptas piorum et
>   Aeoliis fidibus querentem
> Sappho puellis de popularibus   25
> et te sonantem plenius aureo,
>   Alcaee, plectro dura nauis,
>   dura fugae mala, dura belli.
> Vtrumque sacro digna silentio
> **mirantur umbrae** dicere, sed magis   30
>   pugnas et exactos tyrannos
>   densum umeris bibit aure uolgus.
> Quid mirum, ubi illis carminibus **stupens**
> **demittit atras belua centiceps**
>   auris et intorti capillis   35
>   **Eumenidum recreantur angues?**
> **Quin** et Prometheus et Pelopis parens .
> dulci laborum decipitur sono
>   nec curat Orion leones
>   aut timidos agitare lyncas.   40

Cf. *georg*. 4.471-472:

> At cantu commotae Erebu de sedibus imis
> umbrae ibant tenues

georg. 4.481-484:

> quin ipsae stupuere domus atque intima Leti
> Tartara caeruleosque implexae crinibus
> Eumenides, tenuitque inhians tria Cerberus ora,
> atque Ixionii uento rota constitit orbis

Here it is the soothing of Cerberus and the snake-garlanded Furies which confirms the intertextual echo. Horace here potentially takes on the role of Orpheus as poetic visitor to the Underworld, but also assigns to the music of Sappho and Alcaeus the famous effect of Orphean singing in the lulling of monsters and the cessation of infernal torments. The soothing of Cerberus occurs again in the ode to Bacchus, 2.19: there the god is not specifically said to use song to quieten the hound of hell, but since the poem addresses Bacchus as the god of poetic inspiration this idea must be at least in the background here (2.19.29-32):

te uidit insons **Cerberus** aureo
cornu decorum leniter atterens
    caudam et recedentis **trilingui**
        ore pedes tetigitque crura.

georg. 4.483:

tenuitque inhians tria Cerberus ora

In 2.14 the visit to the Underworld in death which no-one can avoid is again characterised in the colours of *Georgics* 4 (2.14.17-20):

uisendus **ater** flumina **languido**
Cocytus errans et Danai genus
    Infame damnatusque longi
        Sisyphus Aeolides laboris   .

Cf. *georg*. 4.478-480:

quos circum limus niger et deformis harundo
Cocyti tardaque palus inamabilis unda
alligat et nouies Styx interfusa coercet

Here an Orphean-style visit to the infernal regions is envisaged for the addressee Postumus, though without Orpheus' chance of return.

The *Georgics* is not the only poetic text of the early 20s which receives attention in Book 2. The first book of Tibullus is to be dated to 27/26 BCE[14], and the Bacchus of *Odes* 2.19 clearly owes something to his Egyptian counterpart Osiris as recently described in Tibullus 1.7 (2.19.9-28, 1.7.33-48) as well as to the classic Dionysus of Euripides' *Bacchae*[15]:

Fas peruicacis est mihi Thyiadas
uinique fontem lactis et uberes   10
    cantare riuos atque truncis
        lapsa cauis iterare mella;
fas et beatae coniugis additum
stellis honorem tectaque Penthei
    disiecta non leni ruina,   15
        Thracis et exitium Lycurgi.
Tu flectis amnes, **tu** mare barbarum,
tu separatis uuidus in iugis
    nodo coerces uiperino
        Bistonidum sine fraude crinis.   20
Tu, cum parentis regna per arduum
cohors Gigantum scanderet inpia,
    Rhoetum retorsisti leonis
        unguibus horribilique mala;
quamquam, choreis aptior et iocis   25
ludoque dictus, non sat idoneus
    pugnae ferebaris; sed idem
        pacis eras mediusque belli.

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[14] See Lyne 1998.
[15] On the Euripidean links cf. Pöschl 1973.

> **Hic** docuit teneram palis adiungere uitem,
>   **Hic** uiridem dura caedere falce comam;
> **Illi** iucundos primum matura sapores   35
>   Expressa incultis uua dedit pedibus.
> **Ille** liquor docuit uoces inflectere cantu,
>   Mouit et ad certos nescia membra modos,
> Bacchus et agricolae magno confecta labore
>   Pectora tristitiae dissoluenda dedit.   40
> Bacchus et adflictis requiem mortalibus adfert,
>   Crura licet dura conpede pulsa sonent.
> **Non tibi sunt tristes curae nec luctus, Osiri,**
>   **Sed chorus et cantus et leuis aptus amor,**
> Sed uarii flores et frons redimita corymbis,   45
>   Fusa sed ad teneros lutea palla pedes
> Et Tyriae uestes et dulcis tibia cantu
>   Et leuis occultis conscia cista sacris.

The shared four-fold use of hymnic pronouns within a few lines (*tu…tu…tu…tu, hic…hic… illi…ille*) and the repeated statement that the god is fitted to singing and dancing link these two poems, which also suggest the political topicality of the god in the years immediately after Actium. The Egyptian Osiris/Bacchus of Tibullus had been appropriated as one of Antony's divine identities in the 30s BCE[16]; by the 20s his Roman form of Liber/Bacchus, *uictor*, world benefactor and apotheosed mortal, was a key counterpart of the future god Augustus (*Odes* 3.3.9-16, *Aeneid* 6.801-805).

Poetry and philosophy: the shadow of Lucretius

The prominence of philosophical elements in *Odes* Book 2 has often been noted by scholars[17]. I conclude this paper with a brief consideration of one sometimes neglected source for this material from the literary generation before Horace, the *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius[18].

The Postumus ode (2.14) famously closes with the sombre thought that the addressee must leave behind his family and earthly possessions once death comes (2.14.21-24):

> Linquenda tellus et domus et placens
> uxor, neque harum quas colis arborum
>   te praeter inuisas cupressos
>   ulla breuem dominum sequetur;
> absumet heres Caecuba dignior   25
> seruata centum clauibus et mero
>   tinguet pauimentum superbo,
>   pontificum potiore cenis.

This plainly draws on Lucretius' satirical presentation of the same idea as the basis of a common mistaken view in his diatribe against the fear of death in *De Rerum Natura* 3 (3.894-901):

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[16] Plutarch *Ant*. 33.6 with Pelling's commentary.
[17] E.g. Nisbet and Hubbard 1978: 2-3.
[18] For previous literature see Holzberg 2007: 117.

«Iam iam non **domus accipiet te laeta neque uxor
optima,** nec dulces occurrent oscula nati
praeripere et tacita pectus dulcedine tangent.
non poteris factis florentibus esse tuisque
praesidium. misero misere» aiunt **«omnia ademit
una dies infesta tibi tot praemia uitae».**
illud in his rebus non addunt «nec tibi earum
iam desiderium rerum super insidet una».

Here the Horatian text reinstates (at least for the wealthy Postumus and the more conventional Roman reader) the fear of loss of loved ones and worldly goods too easily dismissed by the radical Lucretius; this is not the only occasion on which Lucretius' lines have been reworked as a genuinely pathetic lament[19].

More overtly in tune with Lucretian philosophy is the opening of 2.16:

Otium diuos rogat in patenti
prensus Aegaeo, simul atra nubes
condidit lunam neque certa fulgent
 sidera nautis;
otium bello furiosa Thrace,   5
otium Medi pharetra decori,
Grosphe, non gemmis neque purpura
 uenale neque auro.
Non enim gazae neque consularis
summouet lictor miseros tumultus   10
mentis et curas laqueata circum
 tecta uolantis.
Viuitur paruo bene, cui paternum
splendet in mensa tenui salinum
nec leuis somnos timor aut cupido   15
 sordidus aufert.

Though the metre of the poem and the repetition of the word *otium* recall Catullus 51 (13-16), the theme of the vanity of human riches clearly looks to the proem of Lucretius 2 (20-39):

ergo corpoream ad naturam **pauca** uidemus 20
esse opus omnino: quae demant cumque dolorem,
delicias quoque uti multas substernere possint
gratius inter dum, neque natura ipsa requirit,
si non aurea sunt iuuenum simulacra per aedes
lampadas igniferas manibus retinentia dextris, 25
lumina nocturnis epulis ut suppeditentur,
nec domus argento fulget auroque renidet
nec citharae reboant **laqueata** aurataque templa,
cum tamen inter se prostrati in gramine molli
propter aquae riuum sub ramis arboris altae 30
non magnis opibus iucunde corpora curant,
praesertim cum tempestas adridet et anni
tempora conspergunt uiridantis floribus herbas.

---

[19] Cf. Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (c.1750) 21-24: *For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn, / Or busy housewife ply her evening care: / No children run to lisp their sire's return / Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.*

> nec calidae citius decedunt corpore febres,
> textilibus si in picturis **ostroque rubenti**   35
> iacteris, quam si in plebeia ueste cubandum est.
> quapropter quoniam nihil nostro in corpore **gazae**
> proficiunt neque **nobilitas** nec gloria regni,
> quod super est, animo quoque nil prodesse putandum…

This same passage underlies the diatribe-type material in the opening of 2.18 (1-8):

> Non ebur neque aureum
> mea renidet in domo lacunar;
>   non trabes Hymettiae
> premunt columnas ultima recisas
>   Africa, neque Attali   5
> ignotus heres regiam occupaui,
>   nec Laconicas mihi
> trahunt honestae purpuras clientae.
>   At fides et ingeni
> benigna uena est pauperemque diues   10
>   me petit; nihil supra
> deos lacesso nec potentem amicum
>   largiora flagito,
> satis beatus unicis Sabinis.
>
> ergo corpoream ad naturam pauca uidemus   20
> esse opus omnino: quae demant cumque dolorem,
> delicias quoque uti multas substernere possint
> gratius inter dum, neque natura ipsa requirit,
> si non aurea sunt iuuenum simulacra per aedes
> lampadas igniferas manibus retinentia dextris,   25
> lumina nocturnis epulis ut suppeditentur,
> **nec** domus argento fulget auroque renidet
> **nec** citharae reboant **laqueata** aurataque templa,
> cum tamen inter se prostrati in gramine molli
> propter aquae riuum sub ramis arboris altae   30
> non magnis opibus iucunde corpora curant,
> praesertim cum tempestas adridet et anni
> tempora conspergunt uiridantis floribus herbas.
> nec calidae citius decedunt corpore febres,
> textilibus si in picturis **ostroque rubenti**   35
> iacteris, quam si in plebeia ueste cubandum est.

In his use of Lucretius Horace can be a good Epicurean, at least in attacks on materialism.

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