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# Horace and his audience: the role of reception in the genesis of genres

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In the Augustan Age, Horace revived satire, invented the Latin iambus and gave lyric poetry an unprecedented place in Rome. During the last twenty years, conclusive studies have shown that for the meaning and impact of these poetic innovations to be understood, they have to be placed in their political, ideological and cultural context<sup>1</sup>. Like any poet, Horace took into account what the public could/would or could not/would not hear, for political, ideological or cultural reasons: reception plays a role in the genesis of the *Satires*, the *Epodes* and

<sup>1</sup> Freudenburg (2001, 71-124) has shown that the position occupied by Octavian and the particular post-Actium climate conferred quite a singular form on the book 2 of the *Satires*, with the poet questioning his own legitimacy as a composer of satires when he is close to those in power. In the same perspective, I have shown that while the ideological context of the end of the Republic and the beginning of the Empire could legitimise recourse to the satire genre, it could also make it difficult (Delignon 2006). Barchiesi (2000, 167-182) and Lowrie (1997) have studied the lyric corpus closely and have thrown light on the means by which Horace managed to transpose archaic Greek occasional poetry for performance to the Latin context, even though this was not part of the Roman culture.

the *Odes*. But inversely, Horace affected his audience and was not without influence on its expectations. This subtle dialogue between the poet and his contemporary readers is obviously difficult to reconstruct. We would however like to show, through some examples taken from the *Satires*, the *Epodes* and the *Odes*, that considering reception in all its complexity, and not merely as a constraint, makes it possible to throw some light on important aspects of Horace's poetry.

### The revival of satire and the constraints of reception

By choosing to compose satires, Horace established a complex relationship with his public from the outset. In Rome, in the years before and after Actium, not only was this genre unexpected, but also to a certain extent unwelcome. Lucilius, its main representative and its *primus inuentor*, had composed partisan and aggressive satires, in an extremely tense political climate which had led to the assassination of the Gracchus brothers. Yet polemic, especially when it was open and public, was disapproved of in Rome and it was probably made illegal by the praetor's edict from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC on<sup>2</sup>. What's more, after decades of rivalries, internecine struggles and social disorder, after the assassination of Caesar and the battle of Philippi, the Romans aspired to civil peace, and like all ambitious men at the time, Octavian presented himself as the *pacificator* of the *Vrbs*, guaranteeing a return to order. In this context, claiming to be a new Lucilius was rather risky. Horace was even worse placed than others on this front: at Philippi, he had actually fought beside Brutus and was among those who, after defeat, had taken advantage of the national amnesty declared by Octavian to return to Rome; it is a little strange to see him

<sup>2</sup> See Ulpian 56, 1, Horace *Serm.* II, 1 and Ducos (2003, 294), Suspène (2009, 16-17)

composing satires, a genre so politically charged, just when he should have been living down his past errors. From this point of view, Horace did not seem to make any allowances for his audience's expectations.

But the corollary of Lucilian satire's aggression is plain speaking, one of the forms of *libertas*, regarded by the Romans as a fundamental value of the Republic. For at the same time as they were demanding civil peace, the Romans were anxious to see republican institutions preserved. Octavian had completely understood this and he presented the Principate as the only form of government capable of re-establishing them: this is the promise of the *res publica restituta*. From this point of view, the choice of satire is totally in the spirit of the times. That is why Horace, when presenting himself as Lucilius' heir at the beginning of *Satire* 1.4, does so in the name of this *libertas*: what he is imitating in Lucilius is his *libertas*, his plain speaking, and not his partisan aggression. To avert any suspicion, he takes the precaution of transferring his satirical plain speaking from political to moral ground: he speaks freely, not in order to fuel fratricidal struggles, but to encourage virtue by stigmatising the vices.

And so satire, as the genre of political polemics, offended the taste and aspirations of the Roman public in the 30s. But as the genre of *libertas*, it satisfied their attachment to the vanished Roman republic. By reviving the genre, Horace was going to respond to this fundamental contradiction.

As K. Freudenburg has shown very clearly<sup>3</sup>, Horace knew that because of the political context and his personal situation, satire was a problematic choice: not only did he admit that he could not show the same partisan aggression as Lucilius, but he made a point of it. By demonstrating his desire to stay on the fringes of public affairs, he transformed the genre. In *Satire* 1.5

<sup>3</sup> See Freudenburg (2001, 15-58).

for example, he accompanies Maecenas on a diplomatic mission, but instead of addressing the political issues of this mission, he settles for giving an abundance of details on the meals, lodgings, mosquitoes, his eye infection and his missed assignation with a maid. Still with this in mind, he consistently claims to have a limited audience, reduced to a small number of friends. In *Satire* 1.4.21-24, he maintains that satire annoys people and that he cannot read his poems to everybody. In *Satire* 1.10, he refuses to submit his verse to general criticism (*Serm.* 1.10.36-39), only accepting judgement from his closest friends. Horace probably read his first satires to a few people selected from Maecenas' circle, but it is certain that in 34, when he published the first book, and a fortiori after 29, when he published the second, his poems were widely known. From book 1 to book 2, we can indeed see Octavian take the place of Maecenas in the role of *patronus*, which is an indication of growing fame and influence. The audience as represented in the collection does not therefore reflect exactly the *Satires*' actual public, but it does reveal their expectations: contemporary readers would disapprove of poetry which was too overtly political and polemical, in the tradition of Lucilius; Horace openly rejected public life and presented himself as a poet "in private"<sup>4</sup>.

The example of the *Satires* thus shows that reception plays a role in the genesis of the work at several levels: it can explain the choice of satire which, as a type of *libertas*, meets some of the aspirations of readers in the 30s; it forced Horace to invent a less polemical and apparently apolitical form<sup>5</sup>, in order to accommodate audience reservations about the Lucilian model.

<sup>4</sup> Delignon (2006, 161-189)

<sup>5</sup> In reality, there is no lack of political attacks in the *Satires*, but they are always veiled and distorted. Horace, to attack the anti-Caesars of his day, lashed out for example at anti-Caesars of the past and stigmatised them for supposed moral vices, rather than for their political action. On indirect attacks in the *Satires*, see Delignon (2006, 107-129)

## The invention of the Latin iambus and the constraints of reception

The *Epodes* were written at about the same time as the *Satires*, even a little earlier in some cases. Like the *Satires*, probably even more so, this genre is associated with polemic. Horace should therefore have exercised the same prudence to accommodate his audience's reservations. Yet this is absolutely not the case. While the *Satires* are presented as poems firmly on the fringes of public affairs, even for private consumption only, the *Epodes* take on a public and overtly polemical dimension from the outset. In *Epode* 7, for example, the poet castigates all Romans. He addresses an impious and bellicose 2nd person plural who is not identified straightaway:

*Quo, quo scelesti ruitis? aut cur dexteris  
aptantur enses conditi? (Ep. 7.1-2)*

“Where, where are you rushing to in this evil madness?  
Why are you drawing swords that have only just been  
sheathed?”<sup>6</sup>

At the end of the epode, there can be no doubt as to the identity of this 2nd person plural, as the poet, noting how ineffective his own words are, ends the exhortation in these terms:

*Sic est: acerba fata Romanos agunt. (Ep. 7.17)*

“That's it: a cruel fate (...) has driven the Romans on.”

Hence the first lines were targeting the Romans, incapable of putting an end to fratricidal struggles and civil war. Contrary to what he did in the *Satires*, Horace seemed ready to go against both the taste and the expectations of an audience which disapproved of polemics for cultural and political reasons, as we

<sup>6</sup> For the *Epodes*, I give the English translation of Rudd (2004).

have said. To understand this, we must consider the complexity of the relations Horace had with his audience.

As in the *Satires*, Horace first had to make concessions to the image the Romans had of the genre. With the *Epodes*, he imported to Rome a Greek form, the iambic form as exemplified by Archilochus and Hipponax. Now this form is very difficult to define. In *Epistle* 1.19.23-25, Horace uses the metrical criterion: when composing the *Epodes*, he wanted to adapt to the Latin language Archilochus' epodical distich, consisting of a iambic dimeter and a iambic tetrameter. But this definition only holds for the first ten poems in the collection and is certainly not the one adopted by the Romans. In *Epode* 6.11-14, Horace characterises the genre by its tone: aggression, often in the form of invective. This is certainly more faithful to the image the Roman public had of Archilochus' poems. In fact, the iambus had been taken to be the genre of invective since the archaic Greek period<sup>7</sup> and this still held for the Romans, who consistently associated it with two anecdotes handed down by Hellenistic tradition: Archilochus was said to have pushed Lycambes to suicide just by the aggressive tone of his poetry; Hipponax' iambic poetry apparently reduced the sculptor Bupalus to the same state. Horace does in fact allude to these two episodes in *Epode* 6, when claiming the legacy of Archilochus and Hipponax:

<sup>7</sup> In the second *Pythian Ode*, before singing the praises of Hieron, victor in the four-horse chariot race, Pindar contrasts his own poetry, based on the elegy, with that of his predecessor, Archilochus, based on blame and invective (*P.* 2.52-56). For West (1989<sup>2</sup>, 22 and 25), who refers to some of Archilochus' *Iambi* and to Arist. *Poet.* 1448 b 31, the aggression criterion had won out in the end over the metrical criterion and Archilochus' poems written in trochaic tetrameters, for example, were called *iambi* because of the place given to invective, which had become characteristic of the genre. This idea also prevailed in the Hellenistic period. Thus *Epigram* 69 in book 7 of the *Palatine Anthology* puts Cerberus on his guard against the aggression of Archilochus arriving in Hell. *Epigram* 352 in the same book gives voice to young virgins outraged by Archilochus' *iambi*.

*Caue, caue, namque in malos asperrimus  
parata tollo cornua,  
qualis Lycambae spretus infido gener  
aut acer hostis Bupalus. (Ep. 6.11-14)*

“Take care now, take care! For I am utterly ruthless against villains, and now toss my horns in readiness, like the son-in-law rejected by the treacherous Lycambes, or the fierce enemy of Bupalus.”

When he inveighs against the Romans, Horace therefore fits perfectly into the horizon of expectations which he aroused in his readers by claiming the legacy of Archilochus and Hipponax.

But as in the *Satires*, Horace also had to take into account what the period would or would not allow, what his readers did or did not want to hear, for political or cultural reasons. As we recalled earlier, the years preceding Actium were marked by a deep yearning by the Romans for civil peace: nothing prepared them to give a favourable welcome to poetry of abuse. On top of that, contrary to satire, a Roman genre, the epode is a Greek genre, in other words a genre with a long tradition which was bound to influence Roman reception. In the Augustan Age, Romans often had access to the great Greek texts through Alexandrine editions and commentaries, and Hellenistic practices were a prism the importance of which is generally recognized today<sup>8</sup>. Callimachus composed iambs, and even if only a small number of fragments have survived and it is difficult to know exactly what position archaic Greek heritage occupied in it<sup>9</sup>, it is certain that he developed the genre. In a fragment

<sup>8</sup> Mankin (1995, 12-14) encourages us not to minimise the importance of Callimachus in the genesis of the *Epodes*.

<sup>9</sup> Watson (2003, 11) defends the idea of continuity from Archilochus to Callimachus and thinks that Archilochus' epodes offered a formal variety which we no doubt underestimate, not having conserved all his work.



which probably belonged to the prologue, fragment 191 Pfeiffer, he actually puts into the mouth of Hipponax a sort of *renuntiatio iamborum*, or in any case the announcement of a poem written in iambic meters, but without the aggression which characterised the attacks against Bupalus:

Ἀκούσαθ' Ἴππώνακτος· οὐ γὰρ ἄλλ' ἦκω  
ἐκ τῶν ὄκου βοῦν κολλύβου πιπρήσκουσιν,  
φέρων ἱαμβον οὐ μάχην ἀείδοντα  
τὴν Βουπάλειον [.] (Callimaque, *Iambus* I, fr. 191, 1-4  
Pfeiffer)

“Listen to Hipponax ! That’s right:  
I’m back from hell, where an ox  
Sells for a penny. I’m back,  
Loaded with iambi  
Aimed not at old Boupalos.”<sup>10</sup>

Callimachus, while remaining in the invective tradition, therefore very definitely offered a sanitized and civilized version. And at a time when Alexandrine refinement, introduced by the Neoterics, was completely established in Rome, it is obvious that the taste of Horace’s audience led him to Callimachus’ iambus, and that Archilochus’ iambus, with its propensity for invective, was bound to offend against the new aesthetics of cultivated Romans.

And so as soon as he set out to compose epodes, Horace had to meet his audience’s contradictory expectations: he had to indulge in some invective, since it was the generic marker of the iambus in the Roman mind; but he had to avoid appearing too aggressive, so as not to arouse general disapproval and to respect the good taste of his readers. He achieved this firstly by having recourse to a form of invective which, under cover

<sup>10</sup> I give the translation of Nisetich (2001).

of a personal attack, in fact only expressed a moral consensus. Thus *Epode* 4 lashes out at a freedman who had succeeded in manoeuvring himself into the rank of knight:

*Videsne, sacram metiente te uiam  
cum bis trium ulnarum toga,  
ut ora uertat huc et huc euntium  
liberrima indignatio?* (*Ep.* 4. 6-10)

“Do you notice how, as you stride along the Sacred Way in your nine-foot toga, people walking this way and that turn their faces towards you in the most undisguised indignation?”

The poet does not name the person he is addressing: thus, the epode takes on a universal moral value rather than the truly iambic value of a personal attack. He emphasizes moreover that disapproval was general, by mentioning the indignant looks which all the passers-by gave him: the moral condemnation of the epode is based on consensus; the poet does not arouse polemic. *Epodes* 8 and 12 have occasionally shocked modern readers: Horace makes fun of two old women who refuse to renounce the pleasures of love and describes their physical decrepitude in a particularly violent and crude way, rich in details of their most private parts. Here again, however, Horace’s contemporaries could not fail to adhere to both poems, as they stigmatise behaviour condemned both by the *mos maiorum* and by Ciceronian ethics of the passions<sup>11</sup>: the epode is based on a moral consensus and not on a real personal attack. It is also to meet his audience’s paradoxical expectations that Horace composes insults which are simply literary games. In *Epode* 3 for example, the attack is like a joke. The poet hurls imprecations at Maecenas who had made him eat a dish with too much garlic. His entire revenge is in a single curse: his mistress will deny

<sup>11</sup> In *De Officiis* I, 34, 122-123, Cicero uses the notions of *decorum* and *persona* to affirm that the degree to which erotic passion is reprehensible depends on age.

him a kiss and will sleep with her back to him. This is a long way from the deadly lines of Archilochus and Hipponax. From this point of view, S. Harrison's analysis of genre problems in the *Epodes* is very interesting<sup>12</sup>. For Harrison, Horace began the collection with a homage to his *patronus* to emphasize that he was moving the iambus from a sympotic context to a clientelist context, in other words from a context of free speech to a more constrained context. The collection can then be interpreted as showing clearly Horace's iambic poetry, along with its limits and the difficulties caused for the poet by wanting to be a Roman Archilochus<sup>13</sup>. But to the constraints specific to the patronage relationship may be added constraints which are more cultural than social: Horace also had to take into account his audience's expectations, in other words what the public could/would or could not/would not hear. It is also because he was making concessions to this audience's horizon of expectations that the *Epodes* collection only took on part of its iambic form.

Now it needs to be explained why, in spite of everything, Horace chose to compose iambic poems and why he was keen to play the role of a Roman Archilochus, in such an unfavourable context. To do so we must turn to the we must turn to the ambition of the *Epodes*: Horace chose the iambic genre because he hoped to influence his public.

<sup>12</sup> Harrison (2001, 165-186).

<sup>13</sup> Cucchiarelli (2001, 131-132) develops a similar idea, suggesting that the poet opened the collection with poems which are not iambic because he was seeking to demonstrate that he was gradually adhering to Archilochus' *ethos*. See also Thévenaz (2016, 99-130): his analysis of the *Epode* 1, *Epode* 9 and *Ode* 1.37 clearly shows how Horace uses the *Actium* motif to link iambic and lyric inspirations and to highlight the transition.

## The choice of the iambic form: a pragmatic approach to reception

In certain political epodes, we find attacks which have nothing to do with either the moral consensus, or the literary game and the poet then seems to be going against the expectations of his audience. Thus *Epode* 9 lashes out overtly against Antony, who is represented as an effeminate soldier, under the authority of a woman and of some old eunuchs. In *Epode* 7.1-14, the poet castigates the entire Roman people, accusing them of fratricidal struggles which were still tearing them apart. The same theme is taken up at the beginning of *Epode* 16, but the invective is directed at the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural, as the poet finally includes himself in the impious generation (*impia aetas* l. 9) which is ruining Rome. Horace is not here relying on a political consensus to make iambic aggression acceptable in the Roman context. By attacking Antony, he is overtly taking Octavian's side and fuelling internecine struggles. In *Epode* 16 (l. 41-66), he finally invites the Romans to leave for the Fortunate Isles, a sort of imaginary ideal society, where peace, piety and a *natura naturans* characteristic of the golden age reign. This is a way of saying that the only possible way out is utopian and a commitment to withdraw from politics, which is shocking to Roman morality. To understand the status of these epodes, we must consider another aspect of Horace's relationship with his public: the reactions he was trying to elicit, in other words the pragmatic dimension of his poetry.

Horace composed his *Epodes* between 41 and 30. This period was marked by the fragile entente of the Second Triumvirate and by the rivalry between Antony and Octavian, a succession of ruptures and incessant negotiations. The Romans lived in fear of another civil war. In the political epodes, Horace, far from attempting to reassure them, seemed to be darkly pessimistic: civil war was always presented as an inevitable curse which would always hang over the Romans and for

which the Romans were themselves ultimately responsible<sup>14</sup>. *Epode* undoubtedly shows best the aim of this type of discourse and the meaning of poetry which deliberately refuses to be consolatory. Indeed in *Epode* 7, not only does Horace hurl abuse at the Roman people, reproaching them for the hatred which was tearing them apart, but he also expresses their reaction to such reproaches:

*Furor ne caecus an rapit uis acrior  
an culpa? responsum date.  
Tacent, et albus ora pallor inficit  
mentesque percussae stupent.  
Sic est: acerba fata Romanos agunt  
scelusque fraternae necis,  
ut inmerentis fluxit in terram Remi  
sacer nepotibus cruor. (Ep. 7.14-17)*

“Is it a blind frenzy that hurries you along, or some stronger force, or is it guilt? Answer my question! ... They are silent; a ghastly pallor spreads over their faces, and their minds are shocked and confused. That’s it: a cruel fate and the crime of a brother’s murder have driven the Romans on, ever since the innocent Remus’ blood was spilt on the ground, blood that has brought a curse on his descendants.”

The silence associated with *pallor* marks first the terror of the Roman people: Horace is trying above all to raise awareness in the face of a political situation which should frighten them all. But the idea of silence is also intended to provoke anger. If the Romans continued to keep quiet, that would mean that they accepted the inevitable, as indicated by the adverb *sic*, which takes up what precedes as much as announcing what follows. Consequently, if the Romans wanted to stop this destiny, they had to break their silence: like the poet, they must get angry in

<sup>14</sup> See also *Epode* 13, which expresses the worry felt by the poet and his friends faced with political instability and future uncertainty, and *Epode* 9 on the victory at Actium, which is also on the theme of anxiety while waiting for the return of Maecenas.

order to reject civil war. Horace had recourse to iambic invective because he wanted to raise awareness and trigger political action among the Romans. It is interesting to note that he was thus reviving one of the functions of the Greek iambus. While Greek iambic invective certainly had a ritual value at the beginning, as M.L. West's work has shown<sup>15</sup>, we know that between the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, having lost its role in worship, the iambus was intended mainly for the *symposion*. Now the *symposion* in archaic Greek society was the place where alliances were formed between the great aristocratic families who divided up power between themselves. One of the functions of the iambus was certainly to affirm the cohesion of a political faction by stigmatising its enemies<sup>16</sup>. In what was in the end a fairly similar way, *mutatis mutandis*, the iambic invective in the *Epodes* had to give Rome a means of finding some form of cohesion while defending itself against all those who were stoking fratricidal rivalries.

Some of the epodes can therefore be read in the light of the expectations of the Roman public: while invective is a necessary iambic marker, it had not to be actually polemical. Other epodes can be read in the light of the pragmatic aim of the poem, the effect Horace was trying to have on his public: the invective is political and must arouse both terror and anger. Within the collection, there is a balance between these two ways of playing with the iambic genre. It is obvious that in the absence of amusing epodes, the pessimism and violence of the political epodes would be unbearable. Inversely, some epodes which tackle moral questions with a lighter tone gain depth in the light of the civic-minded epodes. The elegy to rural life in *Epode 2*, the condemnation of social climbers in *Epode 4*, and of erotic passion in *Epodes 8, 10, 11, 12 and 15* are some of the

<sup>15</sup> West (1989<sup>2</sup>)

<sup>16</sup> Aloni (2016, 21-33)

moral themes which, surrounded by more public-spirited epodes, take on another dimension, to the extent that moral and political reform are inseparable in the Roman imagination. This is also the perspective in which the long final epode may be understood: *Epode 17* against the witch Canidia. Strangely, this epode seems to seal the victory of the witch over the poet, whom Canidia's violent imprecations reduce to silence for good and in the whole second part of the poem. This ending could have a cathartic function: if in the epode which closes the collection, the iambic invective finishes in the mouth of Canidia alone, this is perhaps because the poet envisioned a Rome purified of the aggression which she had been turning against herself for decades, a Rome in which violence would be reserved for a few figures on the fringes of society. Be that as it may, the poetry of the *Epodes* is based on a compromise between the public's expectations and the poet's hopes, taking into account on the one hand what the iambus must be in terms of literary tradition but cannot be in the Roman cultural context, and on the other hand what the iambus can arouse in the political arena.

To shed light on the complexity of the *Epodes* and the generic problems it poses, it is therefore worth considering the audience contemporary with Horace both as a horizon of expectations with which the poet had to deal and as a recipient with whom he established a form of exchange, in other words to consider the dialogue between the poet and his audience as bilateral: the genesis of the work is determined both by what the audience expected of the poet and by what the poet expected of the audience.

### The erotic odes and the constraints of reception

In the *Odes*, when Horace explicitly claimed the heritage of the archaic lyric, in particular that of Sappho, Alcaeus and

Anacreon (*Carm.* 4.9.1-12), he had to respond to the ideas that the Roman public had of erotic Greek poetry. In archaic Greece, erotic song had an important place in symposium and it often alluded to the social occasion for which it had been composed, mentioning in particular wine, love and garlands of flowers:

σὺν μοι πῖνε, συνήβα, συνέρα, συστεφανηφόρει,  
σὺν μοι μαινομένῳ μαίνεο, σὺν σώφροσι σωφρόνει.  
(*Carmina conuiuialia* 902 P.M.G.)

“Drink with me, be young with me, love with me, wear garlands with me, be crazy with me when I am crazy, wise with me when I am wise.”

There are many examples of this type of association of wine, love and garlands in an erotic poem<sup>17</sup> and they became Greek markers in the eyes of the Romans. And so Horace regularly introduced them into his erotic odes<sup>18</sup>: it was a way for him to fit in to the lyric tradition to which he was laying claim. In *Ode* 1.17 for example, the poet invites Tyndaris to join him at his Sabine property, but endeavours to transform an invitation to a very Roman country dinner into an invitation to a Greek symposium: Tyndaris will play the lyre (l. 18), drink wine (l. 21) and wear a garland (l. 27). For the poet, this is less about Greek realities than about a whole poetic tradition, the archaic erotic lyric. The lyre is called Teia, that is it comes from Teos, Anacreon's home city: Horace could not have placed himself any more clearly in the lineage of the the Anacreon's poems which are often sympotic poems. In the same way, the wine is from Lesbos. Apart from the fact that Lesbos wine is sweet

<sup>17</sup> Anacreon 346, fr. 4 P.M.G. associates Dionysos and Aphrodite in a fragment which deals for that matter with bringing wine. Alcaeus 347 V. opens with an invitation to drink and finishes with an evocation of masculine and feminine desire. It is also encountered in Sappho. In fragment 94 V., Sappho lists the memories she has kept of a young woman she loved, the garlands she put in her hair and the wine she would drink, as she lay next to her.

<sup>18</sup> *Carm.* 1.17, 1.27, 1.36, 3.19, 3.28, 4.11.



and light and well-suited to the peaceful atmosphere which the poet promises Tyndaris<sup>19</sup>, *Lesbii* associated with *pocula* gives an opportunity to allude to the sympotic poetry of Alcaeus and Sappho, both from this island and who also associated wine and love in a sympotic context<sup>20</sup>.

Also, when Horace was composing his *Odes*, erotic poetry in Rome was mainly represented by the elegy, to which Tibullus and Propertius had just given a new lease of life. This obviously had an impact on the expectations of the public who now associated erotic poetry and songs of passion. It was to meet this other horizon of expectations that the erotic *Odes*, apart from the Greek markers, contain numerous elegiac motifs associated with erotic passion: the *seruitium amoris* (*Carm.* 1.33.13-16), the *paraklausithyron* (*Carm.* 3.10), the figure of the rival (*Carm.* 1.13, 3.7), and the figure of the *dura puella* (*Carm.* 1.5, 3.26). Horace thus combined the two ideas his audience had of the erotic genre: the archaic Greek lyric as people then imagined it in Rome, and the elegy in the form that Tibullus and the first Propertius had given it at that time.

But P. Fedeli has shown that Horace, while borrowing certain motifs from the elegy, differentiates himself clearly from the elegiac genre: to the love of the elegiac poet for one and only one *puella*, he preferred multiple partners, characteristic of the Greek erotic lyric, the *uulgiuaga Venus* which, according to Lucretius, protects against passion<sup>21</sup>. And in fact the erotic odes, while meeting the contemporary public's double horizon of expectations, came somehow as a disappointment to them,

<sup>19</sup> See Nisbet and Hubbard (1970, 225), who quote Athen. 28e-30b, Clearchus fr. 6K, Eubulus fr. 124K, Archestratus fr. 59.10, Longus 4.10.

<sup>20</sup> The fact that, in the *Odes*, Italian wine is normally drunk rather than Greek is an argument in favour of this metapoetic interpretation of Lesbos wine. Cecubi is drunk in 3.28, Alba in 4.11, Falerno in 1.27.

<sup>21</sup> Fedeli (2001, 109-124).

and Horace, while remaining in a certain formal continuity with the archaic lyric and the Roman elegy, broke with this poetic tradition. For Horace did not settle for merely meeting the public's expectations: he also intended to have an effect on it.

### Erotic inspiration and matrimonial inspiration in the *Odes* for a pragmatic approach to reception

When he composed the *Odes*, Horace was part of Augustus' inner circle and even acquired, between book 3 and book 4 of the *Odes*, the status of official poet, by composing the *Carmen Saeculare*. M. Citroni has shown that the first books of the *Odes* were already shaped by this aspiration to become the voice of society<sup>22</sup>. This new position fundamentally altered his relationship with the public. The time for invective was past, Octavian was now Augustus, and Horace celebrated the renewal of Rome and invited the Romans to contribute to this restoration. Now in Augustus' discourse, Rome's renewal had to be political, religious and moral. It was about giving the *Vrbs* back its former grandeur, by restoring republican institutions, putting an end to civil wars and reinstating the *mos maiorum*. This is how the laws on marriage promulgated by Augustus in 18 BC must be understood: the *lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus*, which reaffirmed class segregation and prohibited the marriage of free Romans with freedwomen; the *lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis*, which severely punished adultery<sup>23</sup>. To defend the

<sup>22</sup> Citroni (2016, 225-242). The image of the public which Horace gives in *Ode* 2.20 goes completely in this direction: metamorphosed into a swan, the poet flies away and carries his song to the most remote provinces (Colchis, Dacia, Iberia l. 17-20).

<sup>23</sup> On the ideological value of marriage in the *Odes*, see Delignon (2016, 121-135). On the sociological and legal realities of adultery in the republican period and under the Empire, see Treggiari (1991, 262-275), Treggiari (2002) and Delignon (2008).

institution of marriage was to defend the purity of the great lineages and to restore the well-regulated society of the *maiores*. In the Roman odes, Horace himself also associated political, religious and moral reform<sup>24</sup>. In *Ode* 3.6 for example, he invites the Romans to restore religious edifices, then recalls that the internecine struggles which had torn Rome apart, in particular the conflict between Antony and Octavian, could have benefited enemies, and goes on, without any transition, to condemn young Roman women's loose living. In the verses which follow, Horace celebrates the old Rome, which associated warrior courage and high morality: he paints the portrait of a generation of rustic soldiers (*rusticorum mascula militum proles* l. 37-38), as hardy in war as when working in the fields and completely respectful of a strict mother's authority (*seuerae matris ad arbitrium* l. 39-40).

<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless we must be clear that *Ode* 3.6 appeared five years before the marriage laws were promulgated, as the publication of the first three books of *Odes* has been dated to 23 BC. That does not mean that we must consider Horace a visionary, or even the creator of an ideology still under construction. Augustus did not wait till 18 BC to make marriage and adultery political subjects. Propertius' *Elegy* 2.7.1-6 even leads us to believe that a draft law compelling freeborn Romans to marry may have seen the day around 28 BC, before being abandoned. And even if the existence of a draft law like this in 28 BC is not confirmed, not being attested to by any other source than Propertius, it is certain that the moral side of Augustus' thought emerged early. The restoration of religious buildings was already in Octavian's programme: in 42 BC, he had already entrusted the restoration of the temple of Saturn to Munatius Plancus. Later, he had L. Cornificius finance that of the temple of Diana, which went on till at least 28 BC, also the year in which he inaugurated the temple of Apollo Palatinus: see Suetonius, *Aug.*, 29 and Bert Lott (2004, 68-69), Kardos (2000, 287). As for marriage, he used it as a political argument well before Actium: in an attempt to discredit his rival and to justify the coming offensive, he claimed to embody the values of *mos maiorum* and stigmatised Antony's lifestyle at Cleopatra's court. He reproached him in particular for being married to a foreigner, and an easterner at that (See Dio. 50.3 and 50.23-30 and Suet., *Aug.*, 69.3). From Octavian to Augustus, there is therefore an ideological continuity, and even if the contexts and the stakes vary, political use of the *mos maiorum* and its values of marriage is a constant. It is not therefore surprising to see Horace associate restoration of religious buildings, military virtue and matrimonial morality as early as 23 BC.

Here again, reception plays a complex role in the genesis of the work: on one hand Horace intended to meet the expectations aroused by a whole poetic tradition, by introducing into his erotic odes markers of the sympotic lyric and the elegy, which celebrated desire and passion; on the other hand he wanted to invite his audience to contribute to the restoration of Rome and therefore had to invent a moral erotic poetry, celebrating marriage. This double constraint played a central role in the poetry of the erotic odes. We will take here the example of *Ode 2.5*.

Several odes sing of the erotic power of a nubile young girl, but are in reality exhortations to marry. In *Ode 3.11*, this is explicit: the poet declares that Lyde is *nuptiarum expers* (l. 11: “who had not had the experience of nuptials”) and calls for the assistance of Mercury and the lyre to convince her to be less rebellious. In *Ode 2.5*, the situation is slightly less clear. The poet invites the person he is addressing to renounce the beautiful but awkward Lalage, who is not yet ready for marriage. He then declares that soon enough she will look for a husband of her own accord (l. 16: *petet Lalage maritum*). For some commentators, *maritum* refers metaphorically to a lover and the subject of the ode is sexual initiation rather than marriage<sup>25</sup>. And the ode does indeed open with an imitation of one of Anacreon’s erotic poems, in which a maiden is compared to a wild filly which the poet is getting ready to tame. To the extent that *maritum* designates both husband and male, Horace is perhaps continuing to extend the animal metaphor, maintaining that Lalage will soon want to find herself a male, that is, a lover. Yet, in lines 9–12, he compares Lalage to a bunch of grapes which will ripen and we know, thanks to Gregory of Corinth, that this image appeared in an epithalamium by Sappho and it was used in an erotic context by Theocritus in his *Idyll 11*<sup>26</sup>. We must therefore accept that *Ode*

<sup>25</sup> See for example MacLeod (1979, 92–101). For an opposing view, see Fantham (1979, 47–52).

<sup>26</sup> Greg. Cor. *Rhet. Gr.* 7.1236.10 ss. Walz = Sapph. fr. 156 test.

2.5 is both erotic and matrimonial<sup>27</sup>. This apparent contradiction makes sense if we accept that Horace was endeavouring both to meet his audience's expectations and to influence them. All the first part of the ode is an exhortation to control desire, which must be contained by the institution of marriage: the person he is addressing must renounce his desire as Lalage is a young girl who must be kept for a future marriage; Lalage will one day forget her fears and feel ready to fulfil her role as wife. Such encouragement is in line with the Roman odes and their call to moral restoration. Reception comes in here in its pragmatic dimension: Horace was setting himself up as city poet, he wanted to speak out in public and convince his readers of the necessity of refounding Rome; celebrating marriage was part of this role. But Horace also had to take into account the expectations of his readers, for whom an erotic poem celebrated passion above all: that is why he emphasized the erotic potential of the nubile young girl by imitating Anacreon; that is why he invoked Sappho's wedding poem through the prism of Theocritus' erotic poetry.

Horace therefore invented a Roman erotic lyric and here again reception played a central role: to meet his readers' expectations, Horace followed in the tradition of songs of passion; because of his pragmatic goal, he transformed this song of passion into an exhortation to marry. If we take into consideration all the interactions between the poet and his audience, we can clarify numerous contradictions and put an end to a lot of debates.

## Conclusion

The role played by reception in the genesis of Horace's writings is therefore both important and complex. Horace first had to deal with the horizon of expectations of his audience, with

<sup>27</sup> On this interpretation of *Ode* 2.5, see Delignon (2012, 95-108) and Delignon (forthcoming, 276-384).

their many contradictions. As a genre of political polemic, the satire offended the taste and the aspirations of Romans to civil peace, but it also embodied the genre of *libertas*, a republican value which everyone claimed to defend: to please his readers, Horace had to both be and not be a new Lucilius; in response to this paradoxical injunction, he transformed the genre. In the same way, readers of the *Epodes* expected invective, because it was inherent to the iambus, but disapproved because it shocked their good taste and their expectations. That is why Horace invented a Latin iambus in which invective is sometimes based on consensus and sometimes on a literary game, and does not take up the whole collection. But understanding the role of reception in the genesis of his work also involves considering the pragmatic dimension: the work is determined by what the public expected of the poet, but also by what the poet expected of the public. Thus Horace chose to compose iambic poetry because political invective was for him a way of making the Romans react to the political situation at the time. In the same way, he invented an erotic lyric which celebrated both marriage and passion together, because he wanted both to follow a poetic tradition and to encourage his contemporaries to refound Rome.

Horace composed in a variety of genres and the genres never seemed to be chosen by chance: they were always the product of a compromise between audience expectations and the poet's aspirations, between the role which the audience was ready to give to poetry and the role which the poet intended to play for his audience.

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