THE AUGUSTAN POETS: THEIR MASTER's VOICES?

A STUDY of the POLITICAL VIEWS of
VERGILIUS, HORATIUS and PROPERTIUS.

Een wetenschappelijke proeve op het gebied van de Letteren

Proefschrift

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The image of Augustus is the so called ‘Augustus Bevilacqua’ bust, kept since 1589 in the Palace Bevilacqua, Verona. Vergilius’ portrait is the so-called ‘Bust of Vergil’ from the ‘Tomb of Vergilius’ in Naples. The portrait of Horatius can be seen in the supposed home of the poet in Venusia (modern Venosa). The picture entitled ‘Propertius and Cynthia at Tivoli’, is by the French painter Auguste Jean Baptiste Vinchon (1789-1855) and is from a private collection.
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Preface and Acknowledgements

The subject of the political views of the Augustan poets has fascinated me ever since I first attended a class on Horatius’ poetry during my time as a student at the Radboud University. I was struck by the relevance of many of his poems to life today interpreting his *Sermones* and *Carmina* on the vanity of riches, luxurious building, greed and loose sexual moral as the equivalent of the commentary of the better columnists in today’s newspapers, or of the political satirists of whom the Dutchman Wim Kan has certainly been the greatest. At one of his workshops Professor M.G.M. van der Poel drew my attention to Galinsky’s book *Augustan Culture* in which many facets of the culture of the period, such as political and social history, literature and arts are discussed. The reader will come across Galinsky and his views on several pages of this book. Towards the end of my studies in Nijmegen I decided to take a closer look at the subject and to focus on the work of three of the greatest poets of classical Latin literature: Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius. Although much has been written on the subject since the 1930’s, many of the publications concentrate on pre-selections of the poems and certain genres of the poems have not been examined at all. I have decided to examine the whole output of the three poets.

This book is structured as follows: *Introduction and method of research* is followed by a *summary of the secondary literature* (chapter I). Then the context in which the poets lived and worked is discussed in *The context* (chapter II). After this there are five chapters in which all the works of the three poets are examined. In the final chapter, entitled *Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius: their master’s voices? Conclusion* (chapter VIII) I present my conclusions. If one does not have the opportunity to read the whole book, one can grasp its essence by reading the introduction and the chapters I, II and VIII only.

I am very grateful to my late parents who sent me to an excellent grammar school in Amsterdam in 1951 at a time when their financial situation did not really permit such an opportunity. The school was the Gereformed Gymnasium (later Woltjer Gymnasium) on the Keizersgracht where I spent a most enjoyable six year period. I want to recall some of the men who taught me: Kokisma for physics, and van Dorssen, Koopmans, Staat and Scheps for Greek and Latin. At the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam I read physics and chemistry and I enjoyed the lectures of the other Kokisma, Coops and Los. The latter was my supervisor when I conducted research in physical chemistry and, together with Gus Somsen, my *promotor* in 1967.

Enrolling at university in 1957 meant joining one of the student unions: in my case a group of members of the student society of the Vrije Universiteit with the beautiful classical name of A.G.O.P.A. I have never again found myself in a group of men as diverse as this one, and so united by *amicitia*. The ties of friendship with a number of them still exist and I am particularly grateful for the close *amicitia* of A.J., Siemen and his wife Matty and for the amicable contacts with many others. I mention Hans K., Hans L., Ruud, Nico, Victor, Jan and all the others when we meet annually at our *dies natalis* in October.

Having decided after my retirement to read classics, I enrolled as an undergraduate at the Department of Classics of Radboud University Nijmegen. From the very beginning I was impressed by the welcoming and friendly attitude of staff and students alike which meant that I have enjoyed the programme and the personal contacts very much indeed. I owe a debt of gratitude to professor Kessels who received my wife and me with much warmth when we visited the department for the first time. We will not forget the help of
Mrs. Trees Hesen and during my years at GLTC she always maintained the same level of high spirits and support. I recall with much pleasure the lectures of the professors de Blois (Ancient History), Hekster (Ancient History), Lardinois (Greek), Moormann (Archeology) and Orbán (Early Christian Greek and Latin). The teaching of Leon ter Beek, Bé Breij, Stefan Mols, Floris Overduin, Willeon Slenders and Carolien Triechnigg has often been challenging. I am particularly grateful to Vincent Hunink, who not only taught me, but also supervised my thesis for the bachelor’s degree, for the patience with which he guided me through the possible pitfalls of writing a paper on the subject of Latin literature, which is so different from the same exercise in physics. Without the help of Lisenka Fox and Bé Breij my electronic version of this book would have been a great muddle.

My special thanks are to professor Marc van der Poel, my promotor, who has always been very supportive of my research. At every meeting he put forward his critical questions and he challenged my ideas on the one hand, and he also made useful suggestions on the other hand. But foremost, he focused on the major aspects of the work and he let me free to steer my own course.

I am very grateful to two experienced classicists, Els van Thiel and Arienne de Jong, who have donated many hours to reading the draft and who have not spared me their critical comments when they were of a different opinion or when I had not been clear. It has been of great help.

During the research for and the writing of this book many people have shown much interest. Firstly, my teacher of Latin and Greek in Zeist Lènneke Verbrugge and her husband Frans who rekindled my old love for the classics. I will recall the Tuesday evening classes with Jacqueline, Marjolein, Jan, Theo and Willem. Many other friends have also shown interest and I want to mention especially Siemen, Walter, Diana and Christian. I am indebted to my good neighbor Arnold van Lindert who realised the ‘surrealist’ design of the cover: he spent many hours in front of his computer to find the right composition or colour mix.

Marja’s and my children and their spouses have always been more than ready to share their views on the subject of my research. Many thanks are due to Inez and Ruud Gommers, Frederiek Weeda and Menno Steketee and Lex Gommers. Special thanks however to my youngest daughter Claire Weeda and to my son-in-law Stefan Royé who have the onerous task of being my para-nymphs. On top of today’s task Claire has always been keen to challenge my ideas and has suggested many improvements. I owe a very special debt of gratitude to my eldest daughter Hanneloes Royé who edited the whole work: and a good job she did as she not only greatly improved the English, but also sharpened the expression of my ideas in many cases.

My very special gratitude is to Marja who has always listened with interest to my ideas and criticised these when necessary, has read my writings and given her opinion and suggested other ways of exploration. But most of all she has supported me by her loving presence and excellent care.

Zeist, 8th January 2010
Introduction and method of research

Many fundamental changes took place in Rome in the second half of the first century B.C. After the murder of Iulius Caesar in 44 B.C. the civil war entered a new phase and it was only after the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. that Octavianus (63 B.C.-14 A.D.) could set about establishing his authority, by which order and tranquility became possible.¹ Until that year an armed struggle had been taking place, as Octavianus had directed extensive military campaigns against his major opponent Marcus Antonius and others. In 27 B.C. Octavianus became princeps and from that moment onwards occupied himself with the transition that eventually transformed the republic into a monarchy. From 26 B.C. there was relative peace in Italia and the population could begin to repair the economy. However, the ‘Golden Age’ as a period of peace and restoration did not commence immediately after Octavianus’ victory at Actium and his assumption of power soon afterwards. The destruction of the countryside, the heavy taxes that had been levied to finance the war and the expropriations of the land of many landowners and small farmers alike, as part of the programme of resettlement of veterans, which had started during the civil war, had impoverished the population.

These events caused many leading families in the republic to feel deep resentment towards Augustus and they resisted the changes fiercely. For many others, relief that the war and the slaughtering were over took precedence over any objections they may have had that Augustus would most likely rule as rex. At that time kingship had a very negative connotation. It is therefore often said that there was a need to win the support of the leading classes and that convincing them and the public at large of his vision as to how to organise the state was a matter of the highest priority for Augustus. It is obvious that in this vision Augustus had assigned to himself the highest authority and in 27 B.C. and again in 23 he received such a commission from the senate. Others would claim that he had ‘assumed’ this position and so the need for a propaganda programme to influence and to manipulate public opinion was a necessity, also after 27. In the opinion of many scholars the objective of such a programme would have been to demonstrate the blessings of the new age. It is thought that for this purpose he used several different means, such as the repair and aggrandizement of Rome, the building of new temples and public buildings and the commissioning of self-portraits.² For the discussion in this book I have adopted the following definition of propaganda, which is a modification of the definition in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). I define propaganda as: the systematic and managed propagation of information, images or ideas by an interested party in order to encourage or instil a particular attitude or response. In comparison with the definition in the OED, I have added the word ‘managed’ as I believe that propaganda generally emanated – and emanates still in modern times - from a central

¹ Gaius Octavius, son of Gaius Octavius (senator and praetor) and Atia, a daughter of Iulius Caesar’s sister Iulia, was born in September 63 B.C. He was a grand-nephew of Iulius Caesar, who appointed him his heir in his testament. After the events of March 44 Octavianus adopted the name Gaius Iulius Caesar Octavianus. Although Octavianus preferred to be called Gaius Iulius Caesar, I will use the name Octavianus for him until January 27 B.C., when the senate gave him the name Augustus. I do this to avoid confusion with his grand-uncle Iulius Caesar in the earlier period.

² Galinsky, 1996, 3-41.
source which maintains control of the process. I have also added the word ‘images’ as, in my opinion in Augustus’ time, much information or many ideas may have been transmitted through words or images in visual media. In contrast to the definition in the dictionary I have deleted the words ‘especially in a tendentious way’ since this gives propaganda too much of a negative connotation.

Thus, it appears to be general opinion that Octavianus started a propaganda programme. But the question arises as to whether he actually organised any propaganda at all. Was he really interested in subjecting the elite and the general population to his views? Had propaganda any role to play in Roman politics of the second half of the first century B.C? Are our opinions too preconceived by our experiences of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in assuming that ‘taking people along’ was necessary and that this was achieved by propagating information? Did the average educated Roman read poetry; did the average non-educated Roman study coinage or reliefs? According to Manders, the emperor’s use of various media was meant to represent power, and the representation of power was aimed at ‘information, glorification and legitimization.’ Information and legitimisation can certainly be seen as driving forces of propaganda, as the essence of propaganda is the aim of instilling a particular attitude or response in the recipient. Glorification was often the result of the ‘offerings of respect by subjects to the emperor’ and self-glorification by the ruler can perhaps enhance the attraction and thus the persuasion of the regime. However, in my opinion, it is doubtful whether these were motivated by a desire to commit others to the ruler’s views or to receive approval for his achievements.  

I use a rather narrow definition of propaganda as I want to connect with the views on propaganda which prevailed for many years in secondary literature on this matter. This is why I have introduced in my definition the notion of ‘central management’ in exercising propaganda in the time of Augustus. After all, I intend to examine the question whether some of the literary output was ‘court inspired’ literature, under Maecenas as minister of propaganda. But I will also consider possible other reasons why one finds poetry which is supportive of the ruler. In my opinion the whole concept of propaganda and the related notions of the representation of power in Augustan time are in need of reappraisal, even if Galinsky has indicated in his book that ‘more recent explanations of propaganda have become more careful and nuanced.’ For the purpose of this study I will depart from the assumption that in the time of Augustus propaganda was exercised in fact. Examining the likelihood whether Vergilius’, Horatius’ and Propertius’ poems contained propaganda may contribute towards finding an answer to the general question of the existence of propaganda in the Augustan age. Indeed, if it can be made plausible that the poems were not propagandist, these at least can no longer be used to support the ‘propagandist’ point of view.

It is a moot point whether or to what extent the written word had a place in propaganda. There exists a large extant body of panegyric poetry, but this is not to be equated with written propaganda, if the latter existed. Panegyric is different and I define this as: the (generally) voluntary writing of the praise of the interested party to express admiration for or gratitude towards the addressee. The praise was generally of a private nature, and generally on

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3 Manders, 2008, 12. In her recent dissertation (written at this university) Manders looked at the use of coinage by the emperors in the period of 193-284 A.D. Although she describes a situation of two or three centuries after Augustus, she makes some general points which were probably also valid at the time of Augustus. See also Barbara Levick in Galinsky, 1996, 28-38, esp. at 30.

4 Galinsky, 1996, 40.
the writer’s own initiative, or upon suggestion by someone else and panegyric texts were about the person or about the views of the praisee. In works of propaganda the interested party had to be portrayed ‘as he wished to be seen’, while in panegyric poems the poet portrayed the addressee as he sees him.\(^5\) It is often said that the text itself does not show whether it has been written by order of the ‘interested party’ or whether it is a creation by the poet, on his own initiative. In general, however, I would assert that the poets clearly show their true colours. For instance, some poems have both a panegyric and opposite tone in one, such as Horatius’ *Carmen* 1.37 which on the one hand lauds Octavianus’ victory over Cleopatra whilst at the same time expresses admiration for the queen. Or Propertius’ *Elegia* 4.6 where the poet praises Octavianus, but at the same time expresses his reservations. Where the praise for the queen and the above mentioned reservations are concerned, it is unlikely that these were written by order of Octavianus. Furthermore, there are times when the poets criticise current affairs, whilst at the same time write a eulogy of the princeps. For example, Horatius expresses in *Carmen* 2.12 in a *recusatio* his critical attitude towards Augustus in 27 B.C., but at the same time he writes a eulogy of the princeps who brought peace to Italia in *Carmen* 3.4. If a poet writes a critical poem and a supportive poem in one and the same year, the latter poem is not necessarily propaganda. It is equally possible that on both occasions he simply expressed his own view.

This thesis deals with the question whether the poets and writers played a role in the supposed programme of propaganda. This subject has been extensively discussed in the past and the debate expanded in the twentieth century, especially in the thirties, in the wake of political events in Europe. And indeed the debate is still very lively.\(^6\) Amongst others the following questions have been posed which are still on the scholarly agenda. Did Vergilius (70 B.C.-19 B.C.), Horatius (65 B.C.-8 B.C.), Propertius (ab. 50 B.C-2 A.D.), and the other poets of that time, write any propaganda at all? Or did they only present their own private opinions as intellectuals who were engaged in contemporary issues? Did their poems reach readers other than the elite who were of the same political and social backgrounds and who held similar views anyway? Is poetry a suitable means for mass propaganda? What is the relationship between poetry and other forms of art in the way these were perceived by the Romans of that time? Do these different art forms tell the same story? In this study I will further explore

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5 Nauta, 2006, 302-305. In his article Nauta discusses, among other things, the views of ancient commentators as Aelius Donatus and Servius. He quotes for example Donatus, who says that Vergilius wrote his *Bucolica* with the following intention: *etiam in laude Caesaris et principum ceterorum per quos in sedes suas atque agrosredit* (‘also in the praise of Caesar [Octavian, the later Augustus] and the other leaders through whom he [Virgil] returned to his home and his lands’). See for an interesting discussion of panegyric epic in the Augustan age: White, 1993, 78-82 and White, 1993, 99 on panegyrics: ‘It is the writers themselves who crowd forward with panegyrics’ on the grounds of a passage in Suetonius’ *Divus Augustus* 89, 3.


The excellent essay of Watson about Horatius’ *Iambi* in the recently (2007) published work *The Cambridge Companion to Horace* (ed. by Stephen Harrison) is illustrative. On page 97 Watson discusses Horatius’ membership of Maecenas’ circle. He states that this created ‘all the obligations to trade mutual benefactions [..], in Horace’s case the composition of politically engaged poetry.’ He sees *Iambi* 4 as an example of this and states that the poem ‘provides the launching-pad for two propagandist messages, one explicit, one implicit:’ (italics are mine). The messages were concerned with Sextus Pompeius and his forces.
these questions and I will pose, as the general theme, the following research question: Do the works of Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius contain conscious and explicit propaganda for the person and policies of Augustus, or do the poets express their own opinions about the social and political questions of their time in their works?

Much has been written about the subject. Perhaps too much. It is not feasible to present a complete overview of all the secondary literature and I have had to make a choice. In the literature since 1939 many views are represented and I have organized these in such a way that four different schools are discernable. These are the schools of the ‘poets-literati’, the ‘poets as propagandists’, the ‘poets as subversives’ and the ‘poets as commentators’. Within the context of this thesis the two schools which matter most are those of the ‘poets as propagandists’ and the ‘poets as commentators’. In chapter I below I will discuss the views held by these schools in more detail. In the course of this thesis it will become clear that I do not see the poets as propagandists but as commentators who were in fact presenting their views on actual contemporary events.

Before presenting the details of my method of studying the poems, I will explain the starting points of my research. Fundamental to my approach is my conviction that the works of the poets hold the key to their views and beliefs and that a student of the texts should examine these unburdened by so-called relevant theories: the texts come first. Such theories carry the danger of forcing upon the student modern notions which do not necessarily apply to the situation of two thousand years ago. For instance, I have considered the use of modern theoretical concepts about propaganda, but these rely on our present-day assumptions about the ease of communication along different means, about the understanding of messages on different levels and above all about the desirability to involve as many people as possible. A similar case arises when applying modern concepts in the field of economic and monetary theories to the situation of the last decades B.C., when the economy was mainly based on barter with a labour force which consisted of slaves and poor using a level of technology which was not comparable to that of our age.

It will become evident that I have examined the poems from a specific angle, that of the political and social within the context of contemporaneous events. This is the consequence of the research question which focuses the search on poems with a likely propagandist content. Eventually, my objective is to identify those poems which are supportive of the person or the policies of Octavianus and later of Augustus and to scrutinise these for the likelihood of propaganda. However, in a study like this, one cannot hope to find scientific evidence which is based on firm hypotheses and which is tested by experiments as is usual in the natural sciences. The best one can hope for, is to make a hypothesis plausible from the evidence as it reaches the student through a careful examination of the texts with the aid of the model described below.

Two groups of questions will be examined: one group which originates from the context of the texts and another group which is internal to the texts. I will consider the group of contextual questions first as the conclusions from these will constitute the backdrop of the main analysis, which is the one of the texts. A proper understanding of the real situation of the past will never be possible and will always remain incomplete and fragmentary, but the student must endeavour to become a ‘participant’ of
In my opinion the messages which the poets give us in their works can only be understood properly by placing these against the background of matters like the time of writing, political and social situation, the cultural climate, literacy and many other issues. Although I am not a qualified student of ancient history, I have endeavoured to assess these issues. Therefore, in line with the research question of this thesis, the final purpose of chapter II is to examine whether poetry in general was suitable for propagandising and whether, through exposure to the work of the poets, the audiences of the poets were likely candidates for the reception of propaganda. In addition, in this chapter the poets’ positions in society and the likelihood that they were compelled to write propaganda through the system of patronage will be studied and the related issue of their independence will be examined. On the ground of this research, I have formulated three conclusions. Firstly, that poetry is not a suitable vehicle for mass-propaganda and that it has only very limited value for propaganda purposes within the social and political elite. Secondly, that Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius wrote their poetry for like-minded groups of individuals who had received a similar education, held similar intellectual interests and political views and came from the same social circles as the poets. Thirdly, that the poets offered their own views on contemporaneous matters on their own initiative.

After this, the next step is the crucial one of my research: the critical analysis of the texts in order to understand their meaning with respect to political propaganda. This is where the second group of questions - those internal to the texts – comes to the fore. As an aid to the analyses of these texts, which will cover the main part of this thesis (chapters III to VII), I have developed my own model of research, which is nothing more than a structured way of classifying the poems with the use of criteria. The model offers a structure to an otherwise ‘naive’ reader who has continually wondered what an educated Roman reader might have thought when he read or heard the poems.

The first criterion is based on the fact that, in general, a poem with a propagandist content deals with matters which have a political or social scope, as the interested party – in our study Octavianus (later Augustus) – wanted to propagate his views. Although the poems were written by men who actively observed the developments of their time and who participated in the best of social circles, the actuality of their time is obviously not present in all of their work. Some of their poems are purely private and deal with their personal joys or sorrows, loves or hates, successes or failures, such as Vergilius’ *Ecloga* 2, or Horatius’ *Sermones* 1.1 – 1.3 or the majority of the poems in the first book of the *Elegiae* of Propertius. Thus, as a first step I want to establish whether a poem deals explicitly and overtly with actual political matters and this is where firstly the criterion of actuality will be appropriate. If this is the case then there are two options possible: the poem belongs to the group of ‘political’ or to the group of ‘private political’ poems. I have introduced these two definitions in order to classify a poem about actual issues more accurately. I label a work as a ‘political’ poem when it addresses or mentions Augustus or any other prominent political figure directly and when it contains commentary on a specific political or economic decision, situation or event or commentary on a specific issue or issues in the area of social or moral policies. In addition a work is ‘political’ when the poet writes about specific political, economic, social or moral issues without necessarily addressing a member of the political leadership.

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7 As Glenn Most has expressed this at a recent (2009) seminar at this university: ‘In a larger sense, even the complete works that survive from antiquity may be considered to be fragments, inasmuch as the larger cultural context which produced and enjoyed them has been lost.’
Furthermore, a poem is ‘political’ not only when the poet writes explicitly about major social or political questions, but also if I find implicit or indirect references or allusions to political issues. These will be covered by the criterion of references which I will discuss below.

I label a poem as ‘private political’ when a poet gives his views or commentary on the political, economic, social or moral situation of the day without directly referring to a particular person or event. In these cases the poet may reflect in general terms on the behaviour of his fellow citizens or of a particular group, for example the nouveaux riches. Poems with the poet’s views on life also belong to this group. My definition of a ‘private political’ poem is not all that different from what Brink calls the ‘indirect method’ which he described as ‘the political subjects are set in Horace’s poetry of moral reflection’. I have used the words ‘without directly referring’ where Brink uses the expression ‘indirect method’.8

As examples of the two definitions the following may be helpful. Horatius’ Carmen 1.37, the famous ‘Cleopatra Ode’, is clearly ‘political’; the poet writes about the battle of Actium and he rejoices in Cleopatra’s death, as she can no longer threaten Rome. I term Horatius’ Carmen 2.15 where he denounces megalomania and the ostentatious luxurious buildings as a ‘private political’ poem. These definitions have been used for the classifications in the appendices II till XI at the end of this book.

However, before discussing the next criterion two other points with respect to the criterion of actuality must be made. The first point is that it is rather unlikely that a poet is a propagandist writer when only a minor part of his output concerns contemporaneous social or political issues. But when the reverse is the case, one needs to take heed: a high percentage of poems about actual social and political issues is not automatically a sign of the writing of propaganda. In all cases the poems need to be scrutinised on their subject matter and on the question whether the poem is supportive of Augustus’ views or his regime or just critical. Many ‘private political’ poems in particular are supportive of Augustus simply because the views of the poet and of the princeps happen to coincide. The second point concerns the genres and the likelihood that one finds poems about contemporary issues in certain genres. The three poets cover between them a wide range of genres: some of these are at first sight more apt to propaganda or political commentary than other. Yet, in my opinion it would be wrong to exclude certain genres beforehand and indeed I have often found implicit or explicit commentary in love poems. Consequently, I have decided to study all the extant works of the three poets.

Secondly, the criterion of references is important. When I discussed the first criterion of actuality I stated that reference to a person or a situation is a determinant factor as to whether a poem belongs to the group of ‘political’ or ‘private political’ poems. Consequently, a poem must also be scrutinised for references or allusions and what the likely meaning of these may be. I use ‘refer to’ or ‘reference to’ when a word or words apply directly to a person or a thing. There is no doubt in the reader’s mind who or what is meant. An ‘indirect reference’ means that the word or words apply obliquely or covertly, i.e. by suggestion or by a hidden

8 Brink, 1982, 544. The meaning of the word ‘private’ in my definition of ‘private political’ is similar to that in for instance ‘private opinion’. The latter is defined in the OED, 1998, as: ‘one’s own mind or thought.’

In a recent essay under the title ‘Horace and Augustus’, Michèle Lowrie, 2007, 82 also writes about the general and private political. I quote: ‘Politics breaks into Horace’s quiet and secluded lyric space from the outside, rather than occupying the centre. The dominance of the private, however, is a political stance.’ (italics are mine). In my definition these poems would not belong to the category of ‘private political’, as I regard the dominance of the private sphere and the withdrawal therein as a signal of the poet’s refusal to be involved in and to communicate about political matters.
or obscure meaning. A good example of an indirect reference may again be found in Horatius’ *Carmen* 1.37. Horatius does not mention Cleopatra by name and she is identified by the word *regina* in line 7. A third form of reference is an allusion, which ‘is a covert, implied or indirect reference’ and is often symbolical or is achieved by using a metaphor, parable or allegory (OED). The main difference between an indirect reference and an allusion lies in the use of symbols or myths in the case of an allusion. An allusion requires a greater power of association by the reader than a (indirect) reference.

Allusions were quite common in Augustan Rome and were used in all kinds of visual media, particularly in sculpture, architecture and painting. These allusions were understood by the Romans and were seen as a form of commentary on the events of the day. ‘Augustan culture, and especially the arts, architecture and poetry, were a sophisticated and cosmopolitan blend of many traditions.’

This is very visible in for example the *Ara Pacis Augustae*, Augustus’ *Prima Porta* statue, wall paintings and the Forum of Augustus. Similarly allusions were very common in poetry and the reading of the poems of that age with an eye to allusions can reveal hidden themes. During the research of the poems I have been very keen on allusions and one will find some forty examples listed in the General Index. These range from allusions to persons (Augustus, Cleopatra) or historical events (Actium, the civil war) to situations (Rome as the capital of the empire). One finds these in each of the three poets. Some examples may be helpful. In *Elegia* 2.32 Propertius says in line 35: *deam pastorem amasse* (‘a goddess [Venus] loved a shepherd.’) which I interpret as an allusion to Anchises of whom Venus gave birth to Aeneas. In the poem Propertius denounced the infidelities of Roman women and the moral standards in Rome despite Augustus’ intention to do something about it. In the meantime, he reminds the *princeps* of the divine infidelity which lay at the origin of his own *gens* and implies that this is part of life. Another example is Horatius’ *Iambus* 7, where it seems to me that the poet lays the responsibility for the renewed hostilities in the civil war with Octavianus, the new Romulus, after the treaty of Brundisium in 40 B.C. and the peace of Puteoli in 39 B.C. had not held. In the poem Horatius refers to Romulus’ killing of Remus and this reference can be seen as an allusion to Octavianus.

A literary model can act as a form of allusion as well. In the *Aeneis* Vergilius created mythical persons and placed these back in time to more than a thousand years before his own. He probably used literary models from his own day for these mythical persons. In this way Vergilius combined myth and reality in order to interpret his own time and therefore the use of the particular model becomes the origin of allusions to contemporaneous persons or events. In this respect the literary model belongs to the domain of allusion. In the case of the *Aeneis*, Vergilius probably used Cleopatra as a model for Dido and through this model Vergilius wanted to allude to current events in the 30s B.C.; in this manner one could deduce Vergilius’ view on these events, such as the outcome of the war between Octavianus and Cleopatra and Antonius.

**Thirdly, the criterion of dates:** I will confront the likely dates of writing of a poem with the actuality at the time of writing. The idea behind this is that it is less likely that a text was written as propaganda when this text was released years after the event. Again Horatius’ *Carmen* 1.37 is a good example. If Horatius had to write propaganda for Octavianus and against Cleopatra, one would expect that he would have been ordered to do this sometime.

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9 Galinsky, 1996, 148. This quotation is from the extensive and illuminating chapter called ‘Art and Architecture’ in Galinsky’s book *Augustan Culture*, 141-224; Zanker, 1990, 3.

10 Griffin, 1985, 183-197. See also note 213 on page 96 of this book.
between 37 B.C., when Antonius joined the queen in Alexandria and 31 B.C., the year of Actium. However, the poem concerned was written in 30 B.C., after the event.

A summary of the likely dates of writing and the dates of release of the books of poems will be presented in appendix I; the details appertaining to the individual poets will be shown in the relevant appendices.

Next, I have determined whether a poem is supportive, neutral or critical of Octavianus and later Augustus, his regime, his relatives or the circle of men and women in his direct vicinity, or about his policies. It is not necessarily the case that all that a poet has written has been part of his personal experience or has been his firm personal opinion. The poet may have expressed a view different from his own: for instance on the grounds of his poetic licence or because he wished to stimulate the reader by showing another side or to soften the effects of earlier work. However, it may also be that he has been asked or forced to express a view that was not his own. This can be the case in neutral, critical or supportive poems, but poems which are neutral or critical cannot have a propagandist aim, even if the views expressed in the poems were not those of the poet. The difficulty lies with the poems which are supportive of the princeps or his regime. However, it would be a mistake to automatically see these poems as panegyrics or as propagandist. In order to resolve this dilemma I will scrutinise in chapter VIII the supportive poems on the durability of the poets’ opinions: if the conclusion is that the poet has expressed a particular view consistently over a long time, it is more likely that this was either his personal opinion or his poetic stance. For instance, the poet can present views on certain moral issues which happen to coincide with those of the princeps without having been ordered to write about these as a propagandist: this is the case in the many elegies of Propertius in which he writes critically about the moral values of Roman women which are very close to Augustus’ views (e.g. Elegiae 2.6, 2.9, 2.25, 4.3 and 4.4).

By applying the criterion of actuality and the criterion of references, the poems can be placed in either the group of ‘political’ or the group of ‘private political’ poems. Together these two groups constitute the body of poems in which, in principle, propagandist content may be found. In addition, I have registered whether a poem is supportive or critical. Next, the poems have been arranged in six categories according to their content. The years in which the poems were written, if known, have also been registered. If the probable date of writing is unknown the period can be shown at least. After this, one can construct a scheme with a vertical axis which is the time-line and with a horizontal axis on which the six categories are presented. On the time-line I also show the key historical and literary events. The results are given in appendix III for Vergilius, VIII for Horatius and X for Propertius.

The six categories in which I have grouped the ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems are:

I. The poet wrote about his own experience. In this category I have placed the poems that concern experiences from the poet’s own life which have a bearing on actual events. An example of this is Horatius’ Sermo 1.5, the journey to Brundisium.

II. The poet wrote about his own poetry. To this group belong all poems which deal with the poet’s position and with the question of his mission as a poet vis-à-vis contemporaneous events. An example is Horatius’ Sermo 1.4.
III. The poet wrote about the civil war. These are the poems in which the poet expresses either his views on the continuing civil war, or a factual commentary on the war, such as Horatius’ *Iambi* 7 about the renewal of civil war.

IV. The poet’s hope for better times. In this group I have brought together the poems in which the poet describes either hopes for and expectations of peaceful and better times after the civil war, or later gratitude that these had arrived. Propertius’ *Elegiae* 4.6 belongs to this category.

V. The poet’s poetry on moral issues. This category contains the poems with commentary on moral issues in Rome at large, such as Horatius’ *Sermo* 2.8 about self-enrichment of the new rich, or many of Propertius’ *Elegiae* about the loose sexual moral and lack of marital fidelity of Roman women of the elite, such as *Elegiae* 2.6, 2.25, 2.31/32, 4.3 and 4.4.

VI. The poet’s views on life. These deal with the poet’s personal philosophical convictions. Examples are the poems in which Horatius expresses his contentment with simple life, such as *Carmen* 3.16.

All poems have been subjected to this schematic approach. However, in the case of the *Georgica* and the *Aeneis* the presentation differs from the others, as these works do not consist of distinct individual poems which can be classified as such. The systematic analysis has made it possible to typify individual poems and to create relevant groupings, such as the group of poetry about the civil war for instance, which is critical of Augustus, or the group about moral issues which is supportive of Augustus’ ideas. Another advantage of this classification is the opportunity it provides to compare the poets.

In my opinion the use of these criteria in their mutual interconnection has led to a number of new insights into the meaning of several poems. These new interpretations can be read in the relevant parts of the thesis, but it may be helpful to give a few examples at this stage. Thus in the case of Vergilius’ poetry I read in *Ecloga* 6 a reference to the destruction of nature by human aberrations, and in *Ecloga* 8 an allusion to the destruction of the social order in Italia. In my opinion the *Aristaeus’ epyllion* in book 4 of the *Georgica* has a much more extensive political message than one can read in most, if not all, scholarly commentaries.11 Turning to Horatius, I offer alternative interpretations of his *Iambi* 7, 9 and 16. *Iambus* 7 I have briefly mentioned above. My interpretation of Horatius’ *Iambus* 9 differs from those of others who generally see the poem as a panegyric of Octavianus after the sea battle of Actium. I also find serious criticism of Octavianus in this poem. It seems to me that *Iambus* 16 has originated in Horatius’ frustration that the civil war had flared up again. His suggestion to go to the *Insulae Beatae* is a metaphor for his hope of a better future. In the case of Propertius’ poetry I see some nuances which perhaps have not received sufficient attention. Examples are *Elegiae* 1.21, 1.22 and 4.6. It seems to me that Propertius in 1.21 and 1.22 has shown that he did not feel too favourably disposed towards the new regime which he held responsible for the high death toll in the civil war. With respect to his *Elegia* 4.6, I hold the opinion that the poet considerably weakened Apollo’s earlier praise of Augustus by his reference to Iulius Caesar and Cleopatra.

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11 The details of these scholarly commentaries can be found when I discuss the relevant poems. For *Ecloga* 6 see pages 66-67, *Ecloga* 8 pages 68-71, the *Aristaeus’ epyllion* pages 88-93. Horatius’ *Iambus* 7 is discussed on pages 157-159, *Iambus* 9 on pages 160-163 and 16 on pages 166-169. One finds *Elegiae* 1.21 and 1.22 on pages 255-257 and *Elegia* 4.6 on pages 308-313.
In summary my theoretical model looks as follows:

**Step 1:**

a). Define the notions of propagandist and panegyric poetry.

b). Formulate the research question: did Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius write propaganda for Augustus?

**Step 2:** Examine the contextual questions.

1). the historical context
2). the Augustan values
3). the relationships between poetry and the visual images in Augustus’ age
4). literacy, distribution of poems and audiences for poetry
5). patronage and the independence of the poets
6). propaganda and panegyric poetry in more detail.

**Step 3:** Formulate three preliminary conclusions as a result of the findings of step 2.

a). Poetry was not suitable for mass-propaganda and has only very limited value for propaganda aimed at the political and social elite.

b). Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius wrote poetry for like-minded people.

c). The poets were commentators who offered their views on contemporaneous issues on their own initiative.

**Step 4:** Examine the questions which are internal to the texts. Do the texts confirm the hypotheses of step 3? Do the texts have a propagandist content or are the texts commentaries?

Formulate three criteria of investigation of the texts.

a). *The criterion of actuality.* Does the poem deal with actual questions?

If a poem deals with actuality, examine the poem to establish whether:

1) the content is *political*?
2) the content is *private political*?
3) the poem is supportive or critical of Augustus or his regime?

b). *The criterion of references.* Do the poems contain references or allusions and what do these mean?
c). **The criterion of dates.** Confronting the likely dates of writing and the events at the time.

**Step 5.** Examine all poetry of Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius with the three criteria of step 4 in mind. Present the ‘political’ and the ‘private political’ poems in a schematic form by which the relationships between (1) the content of the poem, (2) a possible supportive/critical attitude and (3) the (approximate) date of writing can be shown. The contents of the poems are divided into six different groups: poems about the poet’s own experience, about his own poetry, about the civil war, about hope of better times, about moral issues and about his views on life.

**Step 6.** Conclusions.

a). Determine which poems could have a propagandist content and consider alternative explanations for the content, such as the date of writing, the known attitude of the poet towards or opinions about the issues, the development of the poet’s political opinions.

b). Compare the conclusions for the three poets.

In this thesis I will analyse all the extant work of Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius as the poetry of these poets offers unique opportunities ‘for examining a poetic response to this [Augustus’] concentration of power.’

Although there are important generational differences between the three poets, all three lived in times of considerable change. Vergilius and Horatius were both born during the civil war, and both experienced its horrors. Propertius was a mere child when Iulius Caesar was murdered and he grew up in the time of the struggle for power between Octavianus and Antonius. The decision to study these three poets was not only taken because they experienced the transition and political change, but also because they were the important poets of their age and because there is a substantial body of their poetry still available. In addition the three poets cover between them the most important poetic genres. Vergilius left us a didactic poem, pastoral poetry and an epic, Horatius satirical poems, odes with a wide range of subjects and letters in verse, and Propertius was the leading poet of love-elegies.

I have not included the work of Tibullus and of Ovidius in my research as I consider that the work of the three chosen poets represents a sufficiently broad spectrum to give the conclusions a general validity. In the case of Ovidius, there is a further motive to exclude him. Although he undoubtedly belongs to the group of poets of the Augustan age, the point of debate is the nature of his poetry. There has been in the past and there still is today much scholarly discussion whether Ovidius was ‘anti-Augustan’, which eventually boils down to the question whether he in his early poems, such as the *Amores, Ars Amatoria, Remedia Amoris* and *Heroides*, expounded views on marital fidelity which were not in line with Augustus’ opinions. Certainly Ovidius dealt with these issues, which indeed at the time were ac-

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tual and political, but it is often held that he remained within the limits of his poetic expression, which was playful. In this view Ovidius presumably considered his poems to be an expression of his personal convictions and when he touched on general issues and events of his time, he was not inclined to serious commentary. A similar question is at stake in the case of the *Metamorphoses*. Therefore, all Ovidius’ poetry requires a separate and comprehensive analysis with the aid of a different method of research which concentrates specifically on his literary inspiration and poetical craftsmanship. This branch of research is beyond my competence and, even if I were competent, the inclusion of Ovidius’ work would make this book grow out of all proportions.

Three well-known and established poets are the subject of this study, but it would be equally interesting to examine graffiti, or the work of unknown or anonymous poets, ‘folk-poets’ or ‘street-poets’, who were not members of the Roman upper classes or intellectual circles. On the one hand these poets may have expressed very different views as they stood closer to the common people. On the other hand they may have been more eager to write propagandist texts as they were economically more dependent on the favours of the ruling class. This would be an interesting area for future research.

This thesis is divided into several main sections. The first section includes the chapters I and II, in which I shall deal with general issues. In the first chapter I give a summary of a relevant selection from the body of secondary literature since 1939, which is devoted to the question whether Augustus ‘used’ the poets for his propaganda programme. This survey of secondary literature is included for two reasons. Firstly, to show that opinions concerning the subject have developed considerably since the 1930’s, from the position that everything the poets wrote was propaganda to a far more nuanced point of view. Secondly, to show lines of reference against which my interpretation of the poems can be mirrored. This does not mean to say that my line of argument will be constructed from the secondary literature: the texts come first. I have endeavoured to interpret the words of the poets within the context of the time in which they were written, at least in as far as my understanding of this context goes. Furthermore, I do not depart from the secondary literature, as much of this literature is founded on a model which has been derived from modern political, social or economic theories and I have explained above that as a general rule one must be very careful in applying those to a context of two thousand years ago.

The environment within which the poets wrote will be presented in the second chapter. A short overview of events from the murder of Iulius Caesar in 44 B.C. until the death of Augustus in 14 A.D. will be given. In the same chapter one can find a brief discussion of the visual media such as statues, reliefs, portraits and paintings in Rome and Italia in the Late Republic and Early Empire. The levels of literacy, the process of distribution and multiplication of the poems, the likely audiences in the public and private sphere and the position of poets in general and their dependency on patronage are briefly discussed. Finally, there is a summary of the chapter in which I put forward three conclusions concerning the context in which the poems came about and the audiences of the poets.

The following part consists of the third and fourth chapters in which I deal with Vergilius’ poetry. In chapter III some biographical data of Vergilius are presented. After this, I discuss in this chapter his *Eclogae* and *Georgica*. Chapter IV is devoted to the *Aeneis*. In chapter IV I have placed the discussion about a literary model in the *Aeneis* and the way in which Vergil-
ius used it before the part which deals with the analysis of the Aeneis. The chapter closes with a discussion of Vergilius’ political views.

The chapters V to VII together form the third part. In V and VI I analyse Horatius’ poetry. After an introduction to the life of Horatius I discuss in the fifth chapter his Sermones and Iambi. The Carmina and Epistulae follow in chapter VI. At the end of this latter chapter I discuss the development of Horatius as a politically engaged poet. In chapter VII the poems of Propertius are presented.

All the analyses in chapters III to VII follow a similar pattern, namely that on the basis of examples from the texts I investigate whether the poets deal with actual contemporary events and whether one can establish the poet’s views on these. In addition, I establish the likely references and allusions, the possible supportive or critical nature of the poem and the likely dates of writing.

The presentation of the results differs. In the case of Vergilius’ Eclogae and all the works of Horatius and Propertius I discuss each and every individual poem and I present my view as to whether the poem is ‘political’ or ‘private political’. The Georgica and the Aeneis are not suitable for such a presentation and for these works I present my views by means of comprehensive discussion of each work. I have discussed some poems in greater detail than others when I consider these as being significant for the present study. Examples are the Aristaeus’ epyllion in the Georgica, Horatius’ Iambi 7 and 9 and Propertius’ Elegia 4.6.

Finally in chapter VIII I deal with the central question of this study and present a number of arguments why I believe that the poets were men who had their own opinion about what they saw and experienced in their time and who presented this in the way they chose. At this stage I will not discuss the arguments at length as I present my conclusions about Vergilius in great detail at the end of chapter IV (section IV.c., pages 122-125), about Horatius in section VI.c. (pages 238-243) and about Propertius at the end of chapter VII (pages 323-329). This is all summarised extensively in chapter VIII. I conclude that the poets did not write propaganda; they were commentators. I have summarised the contextual arguments above: poetry was not suitable for mass-propaganda, it had only a limited value for propaganda aimed at the social and political elite, and the poets wrote for like-minded people. The arguments which result from the study of the texts differ for each poet, but in the case of Vergilius and Horatius the general tenor is that an appreciable proportion of their output was of a ‘political’ or ‘private political’ character which was a consequence of their place in the context of the Roman society. Their engagement is visible not only through the number of poems about political or social issues, but also through the manner in which the content of their poems developed over time: from an early emphasis on the civil war and its effects, through the focus on hopes of better times and on moral issues during the twenties to support Augustus’ rule in the late second and early first decades B.C. It is obvious that after Vergilius’ death the latter is only visible in Horatius’ case, but both poets saw Augustus’ rule as the only path to order and stability. The conclusion in the case of Propertius is also that he did not write propaganda. However, the picture which emanates from his work is different. In Propertius’ poetry the number of poems in which he committed himself to his political views is much less than that of Vergilius and Horatius. Although there is a development over the years, a substantial number remains love-elegies. Propertius seems less concerned about current affairs and more self-centred than his two colleagues and he appears to be the aristocrat
who plied his own genre of love poetry. In the last chapter I also describe my understanding of the personal experiences of the three poets and how this determined their views.

At the end of the thesis I will present the appendices in which the results of the research are summarised, an extensive bibliography, a general register and an *index locorum*.
I. **A summary of the secondary literature**

There exists a large and varied body secondary literature on the question whether the Augustan poets wrote propaganda for Octavianus and later for Augustus and in this section I will analyse the secondary literature on this subject. I will not discuss other possible forms of propaganda, such as that found on coins or in architecture. My focus is on literature.

It is a moot question whether propaganda really produced changes in the outlook of the ordinary Romans of Octavianus’ and later Augustus’ times. Today, in our age of mass communication, it is taken for granted that written propaganda can shift public opinion, but one must be careful in applying modern theories about propaganda to the situation of two thousand years ago. However, it is not only in our day that propaganda is a much written about subject, as references to the subject exist in ancient literature.\(^{14}\) An example which can be found in the letter of Augustus to Maecenas and which Suetonius quotes in his *Vita Horati* is clearly about propagandist writing. Maecenas is asked to release Horatius to become Augustus’ secretary: *Augustus epistularum quoque ei officium optulit, ut hoc ad Maecenatem scripto significat* (‘Augustus offered him the post of secretary, as appears in this letter of his to Maecenas.’). Horatius managed to get out of the appointment, but in Suetonius’ account Augustus clearly requested poems on specific subjects, preferably in a position close to the *princeps*. Suetonius tells us: \(^{15}\)

\[\textit{Scripta quidem eius usque adeo probuit mansuraque perpetuo opinatus est, ut non modo Seculare carmen conponendum inuinersit sed et Vindelicam uictoriam Tiberii Drusique, priuignorum suorum, eumque coegerit propter hoc tribus carminium libris ex longo intervallo quartum addere} \]  
(‘As to his writings, Augustus rated them so high, and was so convinced that they would be immortal, that he not only appointed him to write the Secular Hymn, but also bade him celebrate the victory of his stepsons Tiberius and Drusus over the Vindelici, and so compelled him to add a fourth to his three books of lyrics after a long silence.’).

The celebration of Tiberius and Drusus became Horatius’ *Carmen* 4.14, which the poet turned into an abundant eulogy of Augustus.\(^ {16}\) That Horatius refused to accept the post and did not always live up to expectations is well-known and points to the fact that even Augustus did

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\(^{14}\) I do not interpret a passage which can be found at Cassius Dio 52.30, 9 as dealing with propaganda: ‘none of the cities should be allowed to have its own separate coinage or system of weights and measures; they should all be required to use ours.’ In this passage Maecenas counsels Augustus not to let cities have their own coinage and weights and measures. In my opinion this does not refer to the potential of imperial coinage to transmit propaganda messages throughout the whole empire, but it should be regarded as an advice for prudent financial management by the cities and for standardisation in the interest of trade with other regions.

\(^{15}\) Rolfe (Loeb), 2001B, 461-463. In general the quoted passages of Latin texts in this study are taken from the Oxford Classical Text (OCT) editions, where available. If the OCT text is very old or not available, the Teubner or another standard edition has been used. The renderings into English are taken from the Loeb editions. Again, there are some exceptions and in some passages I have used another translation. This is when a recent OCT edition has been published (e.g. Propertius’ text edition of Heyworth, 2007) and when the Latin text in the OCT edition differs substantially from the Loeb. In the case of Propertius I have used Heyworth’s translations from Heyworth, 2007, *Cynthia: A Companion to the Text of Propertius*. In some other cases when the Latin text in the Loeb edition is suspect or the rendering into English is very old fashioned, alternative translations have been used. Some of the translations from the Greek or from the Latin are my own. All these deviations from the general rule will be clearly indicated in the text.

\(^{16}\) See the pages 218-220 of this book.
not manage to engage everyone he wanted; this perhaps shows that the prin
ceps did not see the matter of propaganda as one of priority. Furthermore, Horatius was free to write his ‘recusatio’ poems when the poet refused to deal with a certain subject, about which he was asked to write. Probably he had different views of the matter or considered the subject as too controversial.17

The question of propaganda is still very much alive and has been extensively dis
cussed since the thirties of the last century.18 This has produced an overwhelming amount of books, essays and other secondary literature. Therefore, the summary which follows is no more than a selection, in which I have listed the main points of view and presented my own classification of the secondary literature in four main schools.

There is a group of scholars who see in the works of the Augustan poets only beautiful liter
dary works, in which the epical history of Rome or contemporary events are described. I call this scholarly view the first school of the ‘poets-literate’. Farron19 (1993) is a pre-eminent member of this first school. He sees the Aeneis as a poem with no other meaning than pre
tenting ‘emotionally moving episodes, especially pathetic ones’. He denies any other mean
ing emphatically.

Other scholars have read in the poems also the opinion of the poets about the events of their time and many saw the poets as executors of a political programme determined by their master, the prin
ceps. According to the publications of this school in the period 1965 to 1990, Maecenas acted as a kind of minister of propaganda. Gordon Williams, for example, discusses propaganda and related aspects within the context of Maecenas’ patronage in his book Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry, which was published in 1968. He remarks among other things: ‘Modern assessment of this patronage [Maecenas’ patronage] swings between two poles: on the one hand, emotional assertions [by some scholars] of deep sin
cerity [of the poets]; on the other, a cynical appraisal [by other scholars] of the hired propa
gandists.’20 In Williams’ view the poets wrote propaganda for Augustus.

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17 Williams, 1990, 266-269. See also White, 1993, 94-100.
18 Adler, 2003; Conte, 1986; Davis, 2006; Galinsky, 1996; Millar, 1973 and 1981; Powell, 2004; Raaflaub and Toher, 1990; Stahl, 1998; Syme, 1939; White, 1993; Woodman and West, 1984. Several of these works present a short chronological survey of the secondary literature.
19 Farron, 1993, 1 and 70; his denial of any other meaning of the Aeneis brings Hershkowitz (The Journal of Roman Studies, 85, 327) in his review of Farron’s book to the despairing and ironical comment: ‘Forget the socio-political implication of Aeneas sojourn in Carthage: if we can just accept that the Dido episode has no purpose in the Aeneid beyond making us reach for a box of tissues then we are finally getting it right.’
20 I have given the definitions of propaganda and panegyric which I will use in this book on pages 1-3 and I will further elaborate on the subjects on pages 48-49, 331-343 and 337, note 727.
I call these scholars the representatives of the second school who see the ‘poets as propagandists’.

There is a third school which sees these poets as subversive antagonists in disguise, the ‘poets as subversives’. In this view they enjoy all the trappings of Maecenas’ and other’s amicitia while they cleverly write disguised critical poetry about the princeps.

Williams also discusses in 1968: ‘the conception [which at the time was held by some scholars] of the poet as interpreter and critic of his own society to itself is represented by many Augustan poems’.21 This is shown by Horatius who maintained his independence throughout. This latter view shows the shift to the nuanced opinions of the representatives of a later school who see the ‘poets as commentators’. After the eighties of the last century this fourth school gained strength. In 1998 Stahl described this in the following words: 22

‘Today there is also a tendency to discount the possibility of officious directives given to the poets. Some interpreters will argue in favor of mutual respect and of the Augustan poets’ intellectual independence rather than resume the unpalatable line of court-inspired literary production, which prevailed largely unquestioned before World War II (and even World War I) when and wherever the first European emperor was held in high esteem.’

I begin my chronological survey of the literature with Ronald Syme’s book The Roman Revolution which was published in 1939, at the time when the emerging fascism in Italy and Germany dominated the discussion of propaganda in Antiquity. The new leaders in these countries adopted Augustus as an example of a strong leader, who among other things executed a comprehensive programme of influencing public opinion.23 Although Syme24 did not want to be associated with fascism, Galinsky describes Syme’s view as follows: 25

had to be the prime concern of anyone who aspired to, or held, power. Their own personal interests coincided with those of the state in the solution of those problems. What needed to be done for these poets, [...], was to convince them that Augustus – and Augustus alone – had both the insight and the capacity to solve the problems. That was the function of Maecenas.’

21 Williams, 1968, 44, 75 and 88.
23 Yavetz, 1990, 27. I quote from this essay the following examples: ‘It was in the early thirties that Werner Schurr depicted Augustus as the “Führer” who redeemed Rome from “einer hundertjährigen Epoche der Zuchlosigkeit und des Verfalls”, and that Wilhelm Weber detected in Augustus not only “indogermanische Urkraft” but also “heilige Wut und Glaube an das beste Blut.”’ (Schurr, W., 1934, Augustus, (Lübeck), 5; Weber, W., 1936, Princeps, vol.1, (Stuttgart), 99-100, 240. See also Linderski, 1990, 42-43. Zanker, 2007, 3. Zanker writes: ‘Recent experience has tempted us to see in this a propaganda machine at work, but in Rome there was no such thing.’
24 Galsterer, 1990, 3. ‘The book [The Roman Revolution] decidedly, if not overtly, took a position in the battles waged at Oxford during the Spanish civil war and up through 1939 about the proper policy to adopt toward the Continental dictators.’ The essay of Galsterer is a lucid discussion of Syme’s work, his views and his methodology (the prosopography, i.e. the study of the family- and other relations of the political leading classes and the resulting formation of factions).
‘Essentially, Syme’s Augustus was a successful party leader who came to power after a ruthless civil war. [...] His aim was power, and his victory in the power struggle had hardly any redeeming moral foundation or spiritual consequences; the poets, for instance, were simply operatives within the framework of the “organization of opinion”.’

In his review of the first two parts of the collected work of Syme (The Roman Papers) Millar argues that Syme’s treatment of the Augustan literature was deeply influenced by the propaganda of the fascist and communist regimes in the twenties and thirties of the last century, when he says: ‘perhaps indeed it was too much influenced, in seeing the victory of Actium as prepared and produced by successful propaganda’.26 This is clearly the view of a member of the second school (poets as propagandists), as is the view of Maria Wyke who published her article in 1992 about the need for a new (feminist) view on the representation of Cleopatra in Augustan poetry after Actium.27 She says:

‘Augustan poetry [...] should not be read in isolation from the whole system of discourses whose function it was to validate the Augustan autocracy. [...], the Augustan state itself continually recognised the word and, specifically, the poem as a tool for sustaining political power.’

She continues by saying that from 44-30 B.C. different forms of the written word, such as graffiti, letters, pamphlets, were used as instruments to assert political power. This did not stop after Actium and the surrender of Alexandria and she sees the ‘autobiography’ of Augustus and the Res Gestae as examples. In addition she interprets the decision of Augustus to transfer the Sibylline books to a place near his residence as a sign of his belief in the power of poetry. Finally she is of the opinion that one can conclude from the style of, for example, Carmen 3.30 by Horatius (exegi monumentum aere perennius/ regalique situ pyramidum altius, etc.) (‘I have finished a monument more lasting than bronze,/more lofty than the regal structure of the pyramids’) that the poets attached to their work the same power as to physical monuments.

The views of the third school (poets as subversives) were expressed earlier (1986) by Michael Putnam in his commentary on Horatius’ fourth book of Odes.28 The following quotation is a subtle way of putting forward the poet’s dilemma:

‘But before we look more closely at the Carmen Saeculare [...] we should remind ourselves of how tempered was Horace’s earlier vision of Augustus and his Rome, and how restrained his response to the notion of writing about them. His first ‘refusal’ ode, 1.6, [...] edges away from the leaden ferocities of war to banquets, song and love’s nimble feuds. [...] Even a poem on Caesar’s homecoming from Spain, Carmen 3.14, serves as an excuse for a private festivity, not a public accolade.’

Although Horatius’ position in these poems can be considered as being of the school of the poets as commentatores, there is a subtle difference. In the view of Putnam, Horatius draws

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27 Wyke, 2004, 98-140, esp. 113. I have used a recent reprint; the first edition is from 1992.
the attention away from the public approval (or propaganda) and abandons the commentary, and he moves to the safe ground of a private occasion. The reader can experience these poems as implicit criticism of Augustus; this is the subversive stand. Putnam formulates this as follows: ‘Accompanying poems where generic incompatibility offers an excuse for imaginative aloofness are carmina where misgivings about Augustus and the civil bloodshed enmeshed with his rise to power take over the poem.’ However in a later work (1995) about the Aeneis Putnam holds a different view, namely unreservedly the view of the poet as commentator when he writes:

‘In partially rejecting the nineteenth-century attitude about the Aeneid as the glorification of Augustan Rome, with Virgil merely pulling the strings at the emperor’s puppet show, we are also disposing of a basic critical fallacy, namely that distinguished poetry emanates directly from the fabric of society. [...] The poet, on the other hand, comments, teaches, argues from an intellectual and emotional distance which prods society by applying the goad of quality.’

In his essay ‘The Aeneid and the Embarrassments of Augustus’ Powell points to a number of scholars who were convinced of the a-political character of the poems of Vergilius. He quotes for example the view of Wilkinson about the Georgica (‘We may surmise, then, that the mainspring of the Georgics was not political [...]’), although he agrees with the view of the latter that the Georgica ‘fitted nicely into Octavian’s propaganda against Antony in contrasting the good Italy with the decadent East.’ However, ‘fitting in’ is not necessarily a result of propagandist writing, but may be the result of opinions which coincide. I will return later to the subject of the political character of the Georgica and other poems in more detail when I discuss these in the coming chapters.

In the same essay Powell cites with approval the work of Binder, who in 1971 already moved in the direction of the fourth school. Binder states:


From the passage following this quotation, however, it appears that Binder allows for the possibility that Augustus attempted to exert his influence with respect to the contents of the work of the poets.

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29 Putnam, 1986, 17-18. He alludes to the following poems. Carmina 1.2; 1.35; 2.1; 3.29 and the six Roman Odes.
34 Binder, G., 1971, 5. This passage was translated by Powell as follows. ‘Perhaps Virgil’s poetry can be labeled with the modern term engagé. Neither Virgil nor the other poets of the Augustan period have engaged in cheap propaganda for Augustus’ policies. But they were [...] happy to salut the new period of peace [...]’.
The scholars who view the poets as commentators, particularly those at the end of the twentieth century, see the position of the poets within a wider perspective. These scholars point to the relations between the poet and his environment, to the views the poets may have held and their backgrounds. In addition the literary outputs are studied within the context of and are compared with other manifestations of art, such as statues, portraits, architecture and painting. This implies that the question of propaganda is approached differently and that the putative propagandist effects of the works of Vergilius, Horatius and others are judged in conjunction with the effects of other art. In this fourth school with its more integrated approach, it is no longer the literary critics, scholars of classical history and classicists only who occupy themselves with the question of propaganda, but also the art historians and scholars of political sciences. In this fourth school, beside the work of White, that of Galinsky who finished his book *Augustan Culture* in 1996 is of particular importance. In the first chapter he presents a summary of his approach and I will quote here a rather extensive passage from this work which I think summarises the changing views admirably.  

‘The perspective of the 1930s had an especially noticeable effect on the interpretation of Augustan literature. Vergilian scholars in particular were left in a quandary. The prevalent, preceding interpretation had been that the major purpose of the *Aeneid* was the praise of Augustus and Rome. [...] This interpretive straitjacket, of course, did very little justice to the complexities of the *Aeneid*, but the next phase of Vergilian interpretation did not really dissolve it. Theses were simply converted into antitheses. It was necessary to get out of the predicament of cherishing a poet who was the cheerleader for an autocrat. Hence new aspects of the *Aeneid* were discovered at last, such as the poet’s assumed “private” voice (as distinct from the official key of the epic), and further voices have been added in the meantime. They were still fitted, however, into the existing framework: if Vergil wrote anything other than the most overt praise of Augustus – and those passages are very rare in the first place – it suggested his tacit and indirect disapproval, and perhaps even his “subversive intent”, to use a current catchphrase.’

Although it may appear that Galinsky belongs to the third school (‘subversive intent’), he raises the discussion to a different plane. Particularly after the work of Zanker (*The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*) who looks at the many nuances and facets of Augustan art in general had been published, the clichés of simple propaganda were replaced by the view that in the time of the change from the republic to the principate a much more complicated process had taken place. At this time ideology and propaganda were not pre-eminent, but rather the ideas of restoration and a new beginning. Galinsky\(^\text{37}\) devotes a whole chapter to

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\(^{35}\) ‘Natürlich hat Augustus mit Unterstützung des Mecenas von der Dichtern ständig grössere und deutlichere Bekundungen zugunsten seiner restaurativen Friedenspolitik und die Verherrlichung seiner Kriege und Siege gefordert. Dies beweisen die wiederholten Weigerungen der Dichter, Augustus und seine Taten zum Mittelpunkt eines nationalen Epos zu machen; sie sind aber auch ein beredtes Zeugnis dafür, dass die Dichter nicht gewillt waren, aus Opportunismus ihre Kraft für Auftragspoesie zu vergeben. In den Werken der Dichter, aber auch zwischen Vergil, Horaz, Properz und Ovid sind vielerlei Abstufungen in der Direktheit des Herrscherlobs festzustellen.’

\(^{36}\) Galinsky, 1996,4.

\(^{37}\) Galinsky, 1996, 10-41 and 80-140. Galinsky, 1996, 30 regards the poets as ‘active discussants’.
the subject ‘A Principal Concept: Auctoritas’, and one to ‘Ideas, Ideals and Values’, before he starts discussing the art, architecture and literature of the period.

In 1982 a book of C.O. Brink entitled *Horace on Poetry* appeared. As an epilogue the book contains an essay called ‘Horace’s Literary Epistles and their chronology: Augustanism in the Augustan Poets.’ The essay deals with the political and literary scene after Actium and discusses the political character of several poems and questions concerning propaganda. Clearly Brink does not share the views of the school that views the *poets as propagandists* as the following quotation shows:

‘[...], it is proper to point out that neither Virgil nor Horace (of Varius we know virtually nothing), let alone the Elegists, had been as obliging as was perhaps expected of them. By this I mean that we do not find truly ‘commemorative’ verse, sustained panegyrics of *Caesaris facta*, which a more determined ‘cultural policy’ might have induced them to provide. Certainly for all its Augustanism, the Aeneid is far from being such. At any rate that amount of freedom there was, and it is rather surprising that there should have been.’

Brink holds the view that the poets were motivated by their convictions about the causes of the civil war. They wrote their poems with this in mind and thus I see Brink’s views as correspondent with those people who see the *poets as commentatores*. It looks as if later in his essay he shades his opinion with his statement that after 19 B.C., when Maecenas had left public life, Augustus was able to successfully exert pressure on Horatius and that the latter complied.

Not much later, in 1984, DuQuesnay produced an essay called ‘Horace and Maecenas; The propaganda value of *Sermones I*’, in which he reveals himself as an avowed disciple of the school which sees the *poets as commentatores*. He observes that the *Sermones* are generally understood as a-political poems, which is surprising at a time when most scholars held the view that Maecenas had assembled a group of talented young poets to praise Octavianus. DuQuesnay however sees the poets differently, as cultured and intelligent watchers of events:

‘Horace does not in these poems overtly praise Octavian as Triumvir or as victor in the *Bellum Siculum*. Nor, perhaps more surprisingly, does he exploit the traditional function of satire in times of civil war and social and political division to denigrate the opposition systematically and in detail. His technique is both less direct and more positive. His basic strategy is to present an attractive image of himself and his friends as sophisticated, cultured and intelligent men who are humane in their attitudes to others and mindful of the *mos maiorum*. Above all he exhibits a concern with moral issues.’

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38 Brink, 1982, 523-577.
39 Brink, 1982, 531. *Italics are mine.*
40 Brink, 1982, 551-552.
41 DuQuesnay, 1984, 19-58. See also Brown, 2007, 13-14 where he discusses DuQuesnay’s views.
42 The *Bellum Siculum* is the war with Sextus Pompeius from 38 till 3rd September 36 B.C., when Octavianus defeated Sextus at Naulochus. This war was mainly a confrontation in the waters around Sicily.
A conclusion similar to the one of DuQuesnay is drawn by Yavetz, although from a different perspective.⁴³ I will return to this point in the last chapter. Powell in 1992 also supported the view of the poets as commentators when he wrote:⁴⁴

‘We should try to refine the notion that Virgil in the Aeneid is praising Augustus. I shall contend that the poem was meant among other things to function as a complex set of arguments to the effect that Augustus and his settlement would last.’ And ‘It will be argued that Virgil has with remarkable persistence faced a large number of Augustus’ very many political embarrassments, in a way which his contemporaries would have found tactful but unmistakable’.⁴⁴

In 2005 Griffin adopts a view which is very near to the opinion of Powell.⁴⁵ In his essay Griffin deals with the larger group of poets and with a wider selection of their work. He argues that the poets were all under pressure by Maecenas and Augustus to produce panegyric poetry, but that ‘Octavian is not easy to find in the poetry before his final victory in 31 B.C.’.⁴⁶ Eventually Vergilius ‘produced his Aeneid: the closest approach, it turned out, which was possible for a real poet to an epic on Augustus. [...] It should reconcile nostalgia for the Republic with enthusiasm for the Principate. [...] It should glorify Augustus, without being obviously about him. It should grieve for Dido and yet support the moral revolution.’ This does not sound as if Griffin sees that Vergilius succeeded in writing such a major panegyric epic and he says: ‘in the end of course Augustus had to accept that Maecenas’ poets would not produce that panegyric epic.’

Within the fourth school the opinions of Eve Adler about the Aeneis and the intentions of Vergilius have a very special position. She argues that Vergilius in his epos laid the theoretical foundations of new political times and she sees him in the first place as a philosopher. In her opinion Vergilius’ inspiration was Lucretius’ De Rerum Natura. She asserts that Aeneas was involved with the founding of two cities, Carthago and Rome, and that these two cities stand for two differing political systems. Carthago is in the Aeneis ‘part of a poetic presentation not of the historical Carthage, which was in the past, the greatest enemy of the historical Rome, but of an ideal “Carthage”, the city of science [...]’.⁴⁷ Rome is the model of the well organized state, in which traditional religion serves the foundation of a system of domination of the world. Aeneas’ myth proves the doctrine of Vergilius in the following manner, namely that one city ruling over other countries is necessary to establish universal peace and the wellbeing of mankind. ‘Carthage’ does not possess the power, but ‘Rome’, a city of the gods and of iron, does.⁴⁸

I do not quote Adler in order to agree or disagree with her opinions, but to demonstrate the range of interpretations of the Aeneis; reading the epos in this way is far removed from simply enjoying the mythical history.

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⁴³ Yavetz, 1990, 40.
⁴⁶ Griffin, 2005, 311 and 316. Griffin quotes as evidence the following: Vergilius’ Eclata 6, 1-12; Horatius’ Sermones 1.10, 31ff; 2.1, 4ff; Carmino 1.6, 2.12, 4.2, 4.3, 4.15; Epistula 2.1, 250ff; Propertius’ Elegae 2.10; 2.34,25ff; 3.1, 3.3, 4.1; Ovidius’ Amores, 1.1, 1.15, 2.1, 2.18.
⁴⁷ Adler, 2003, 40.
It is clear that the secondary literature on the interpretation of the Augustan poets is very extensive and divers and the books which I have discussed above is only a selective one. What is also clear is that the views on the *Aeneis* in particular have developed during the last seventy years or so. Originally it was a matter of being for or against the opinion that the work was a panegyric poem, tinted or not with propaganda. Nowadays the epos is seen as a holistic poem which has different layers of interpretation and scholars no longer believe that it is composed as a piece of state sponsored propaganda.

Although I have quoted in this chapter several different views on propaganda and panegyric, it is far from being an exhaustive discussion of the subjects. My intention in the previous paragraphs was to show the different opinions and the shifts among them. Questions like the different forms of propaganda, such as coinage, reliefs or indeed poetry, or the reception of propagandist material by different groups will be discussed in the next chapter. In addition I will present some views on propaganda and panegyric in the last section of the next chapter (II.f.).

One might draw the conclusion that the matter has been settled and that the question which I address in this thesis has been resolved. It would seem as if the body of secondary literature has progressed to the view that the poets acted as commentators and not as propagandists. In other words, this present study forces an open door and states the obvious. If that were the case, it is surprising to observe that in many of the recent books the scholars of today still see the need to address the old question whether the works of the Augustan poets were written as propaganda or not. A few examples may support this. Brown’s *Horace: Satires I*, originally from 1993 but reprinted in 2007, Davis’ *Ovid and Augustus* in 2006, *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus* edited by Galinsky of 2005, Powell’s *Roman Poetry and Propaganda in the Age of Augustus*, a reprint in 2004 of the original in 1992, Stahl’s *Vergil’s Aeneid; Augustan Epic and Political Context* in 1998 and Watson’s essay on Horatius’ *Iambi* in the *Cambridge Companion to Horace* of 2007.49

Finally, even in a recent (2004) general textbook about the history of Rome as *The Romans; from village to empire* by Boatwright et al. the authors deal with the question.50 They write that the *Aeneis* can neither be seen as a copy of an earlier epic nor as propaganda for Augustus. Vergilius has made the story his own and the opinions he held are presented with sufficient nuance. It is the mixture of myth and actuality that makes the epic such a fascinating work. In the same vein Horatius was not Augustus’ spokesman despite their personal relationship. Occasionally Horatius is clearly sceptical when he searches for the valuable in Rome after the bloody excesses during the civil war and its aftermath.

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50 Boatwright et al., 2004, 295.
II. The context

In this book I address the question whether some or all of the Augustan poets wrote propaganda for Octavianus (later Augustus). Before analysing the poems in detail, I will examine the backdrop against which the poets worked: they were men who lived an active life in Roman society and who were influenced by people and events around them. It is not only the question who and what affected the poets which requires our attention, but equally whom the poets wanted to reach and what message they wanted to convey, if any. It can not be taken for granted that they wrote propaganda, but if this was the case their supposed propagandist output must have served an aim. Was it that Augustus wanted different strata of the population to accept his policies and if so, which groups did he have in mind? Was it the population at large that he wanted to convince, not only at Rome but also in the provinces? Perhaps he would rather have kept them quiet by different means. Or was he only interested in the upper crust, the opinion leaders? This gives rise to many different questions about the context in which the poets worked: not only the general context, such as the course of the struggle for power after 44 B.C. and the political developments at Rome, but also the specific, such as the audiences for which the poets wrote. Of course these can not be investigated extensively in a study like this one. However, I will present an overview in this chapter and some will be discussed in the following chapters in the biographies of the poets.\(^{51}\)

The following will be presented in this chapter. Firstly (in section II.a.), a general historical overview of the period from the death of Julius Caesar until the end of Augustus’ reign in 14 A.D. Secondly (in section II.b.), I will briefly discuss the Augustan values, as the poets often make their values and norms explicit which they compare then with those of Octavianus, and later Augustus. In the third section (II.c.) a discussion of the visual media in Rome and Italia in the Late Republic and the Early Empire will follow. This is of importance in order to see whether the visual images served a wider aim such as the representation of power or whether these were instruments of propaganda and to explore what the relationship of poetry and the visual media was. After this, the role of poetry will be considered. If poetry was used in propaganda it must have been either read privately or recited in public or in semi-public readings. In section II.d. issues like levels of literacy, education and the likely audiences in the public and private area will be briefly discussed. In section II.e. I will deal with the subject of literary patronage as most of the established poets belonged to the circles of different leading figures, such as Maecenas and Messalla, of whom it is often said that they were instrumental in putting pressure on the poets to write propaganda. This chapter will be closed with a summary and with the conclusions of the suitability of poetry in a putative programme of propaganda, the audiences of the poets and the probable posture from which they wrote their poems about actual issues. (section II.f.).

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\(^{51}\) In this study I have used a number of recent general textbooks and specialised handbooks which deal with the Late Republic and the Augustan Age. These are: Boatwright et al., 2004, 267-316; Brunt, 1988A; Earl, 1968; Galinsky, 1996, 80-140; Galinsky, 2005; Naarebout and Singor, 2004, 253-276, 302-307; Raaflaub and Toher, 1990; Stahl, 1998; Wallace-Hadrill, 2005; Yavetz, 1990, 21-41 and Zanker, 1990.
II.a. The historical context

The murder of Iulius Caesar on 15th of March 44 B.C. marked the beginning of the end of the civil wars, which had ravaged Italia and Rome for many decades. Immediately after the murder Marcus Antonius, at that time consul with Caesar, took charge, convened the senate and reached a compromise which meant that the murderers of Iulius Caesar would not be charged, but that Caesar’s measures were to be maintained. Octavianus hastened to Rome. As a result of the opposition of the people against the clemency shown to the murderers, Brutus and Cassius were forced to leave Rome. When Octavianus insisted on punitive measures against the conspirators, Antonius resisted, but he eventually had to yield to the greater military power and the popularity of Octavianus among the people. Octavianus pressed on and in 43 at the age of only nineteen he gained his first major political victory when the senate appointed him consul. Furthermore, he convinced the senate to condemn the murderers. Octavianus and Antonius were reconciled and together with Marcus Lepidus they formed the Second Triumvirate to restore order.

The civil war entered a new phase when in 42 Antonius and Octavianus advanced eastwards against Brutus and Cassius. In October of the same year both rebels were defeated in the battle of Philippi after which they committed suicide. Antonius stayed in the East to direct the war against the Parthians and in 41 he met Cleopatra; not for the first time, but this time their encounter had important consequences.

In the meantime Octavianus had to deal with other adversaries such as Fulvia and Lucius, the wife and brother of Antonius. In 40 B.C. both were captured after the siege of Perusia (modern Perugia) and died soon after. A more dangerous enemy was Sextus Pompeius, who blockaded the coast of Italia at different places with his fleet from a base on Sicily, thus threatening the Roman grain supplies. With the aid of Antonius from Egypt and of Lepidus from Africa, Agrippa, the faithful general and friend of Octavianus, engaged Sextus. In 36 Agrippa defeated the navy of Sextus in a number of naval battles (the last was the battle near Naulochus) around Sicily, who could escape to Asia Minor, where he hoped to join forces with Antonius. Not much later Sextus was captured and killed.

In the struggle for power Lepidus saw his chance to push aside Octavianus and he claimed command of the legions of Sextus Pompeius. Octavianus solved this in his own characteristic way by entering the camp of Lepidus’ army and inviting the troops of both Lepidus and Sextus to accept him as their commander. He was successful and Lepidus was removed from the Triumvirate and exiled to a small provincial town. From then Antonius was the last obstacle on the road to absolute power.

From 40 B.C. until 33 B.C. Antonius joined Octavianus in a continuation of the Second Triumvirate, in which he kept control of the eastern part of the empire. At the insistence of Octavianus he married Octavia in 40. Three years later Antonius sent Octavia back home to

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52 Yavetz, 1990, 29-30 offers an interesting discussion about the different options with which Antonius was faced.
53 For five years they formed a Triumviri rei publicae constituendae (‘triumvirate for the restoration of the republic’).
54 Horatius fought in this battle at the side of Brutus.
55 Sextus Pompeius was a son of the great Gnaeus Pompeius, who was treacherously murdered in 48 B.C. by king Ptolemaeus XIII of Egypt. Sextus Pompeius continued his father’s resistance against Iulius Caesar and his successor.
Rome and he passed his time alternately between military campaigns in the East and the palace in Alexandria. Subjugating the territories in the East served not only the imperialistic aim of Rome, but also the political and territorial aspirations of Cleopatra. These aspirations were a strong empire led by her and Antonius with Alexandria as capital, where the Greek intellectual power was to be paired with the political and military might of Rome and which would certainly not be subordinate to Rome. During these years she took Antonius along in this ambition, which eventually culminated in the so-called Donations of Alexandria in 34 B.C., when Antonius presented Cleopatra’s children with some of the recently won lands.

It would not take long before the struggle between Cleopatra and Antonius on the one hand and Octavianus on the other would be decided in arms. In 32 B.C. civil war flared up again and Octavianus declared war on Cleopatra and Antonius. As time passed Octavianus provoked Antonius more and more, among other things by publishing the content of the latter’s testament. In his public utterances Octavianus made it appear that Cleopatra wished to destroy Rome and that Antonius was wholly enslaved to her. Most probably this was not far from the truth.

On 2nd of September 31 B.C. the sea battle near Actium was fought and resulted in a deciding victory for Octavianus and Agrippa. Antonius and Cleopatra fled to Egypt and in 30 Alexandria was taken.

Thus the succession of civil wars which had started in 88 with Sulla’s march on Rome finished in 30 B.C. And although Octavianus made it appear that the war against Cleopatra and Antonius was a war against a foreign enemy, this conflict also has to be viewed as a continuation of the internal power struggles at Rome, which had dominated the best part of the first century B.C. The consequences of these wars had been terrible for Italia and Rome. Modern scholars estimate that during the civil wars 14 to 17% of the total number of adult male citizens had been enlisted in the army. It is impossible to determine the total number of victims among the civilian population in Italia and the total number of military losses, but over a period of nearly sixty years it must have been very substantial. In many parts of the country the administration had ground to a halt, public order was seriously affected and massacres and looting by groups of roaming soldiers and slaves were the order of the day. This contributed to the collapse of the economy and food supplies were seriously endangered by the reduced production in Italia and by the disturbance of grain imports.

At the age of thirty three Octavianus had eliminated his competitors for sole rule, in a process which caused much misery and many deaths. ‘To this end he had been responsible for death, destruction, confiscation, and unbroken misery on a scale quite unmatched in all the previous phases of Roman civil conflict over the past century’. After this, it was necessary

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56 Cassius Dio, 49.40.2–41.4.
57 Cassius Dio, 50.24-28; the formal declaration of war was on Cleopatra only, as Octavianus did not want the war to be seen as a civil conflict.
58 Boatwright et al., 2004, 301;
Estimates by Brunt, 1971, and Hopkins, 1987, (summarized in De Blois and van der Spek, 2001, 209) present the following figures: in 83 B.C. 143,000 soldiers; 14% of the total number of adult male citizens,
in 63 B.C. 120,000 soldiers; 12%,
in 43 B.C. 240,000 soldiers; 16% and
in 33 B.C. 250,000 soldiers; 16%.
After Actium this reduces to: in 23 B.C. 156,000 soldiers; 9%.
59 Boatwright et al., 2004, 288.
to consolidate his absolute power, but not in the same autocratic way as his predecessor Iulius Caesar had tried. Although at the end of the year 33 the Triumvirate had not been renewed, Octavianus still exercised the powers of the Triumvirate and held the office of consul, which was renewed every year. He could not consider establishing a form of absolute power by relying on the loyalty of the army; this was a dangerous option due to the unreliability of many commanders. In January 27 after careful preparation, Octavianus decided to convene the senate and to return all power ‘to the senate and the people’. The startled senators immediately asked him to continue as consul and to exercise power over Spain, Gaul, Cilicia, Cyprus, Syria and Egypt for a period of ten years, and gave him authority to appoint legati. From then onwards nearly all commanders of the legions and the governors of the provinces where these legions had been stationed were his legati. When he died there was only one legion not under his command, the legion in Africa. The arrangements of January 27 are known as the ‘First Settlement’; on that occasion he also received the honorary name Augustus.60

With this Augustus had restored the republic: at least the constitution was such that the republican institutions and offices could continue functioning. Augustus assumed the title of princeps and not of imperator and he ruled within the existing framework of the old republic. Tacitus writes in Annales 1.9: *non regno tamen neque dictatura, sed principis nomine constitutam rem publicam*; (‘Yet he organized the state, not by instituting a monarchy or a dictatorship, but by creating the title of First Citizen’). While he respected the senate, he cleverly exercised his influence through personal contacts and by means of discussion.

From the very beginning of the new order Augustus was occupied by his succession. This received an extra impulse in 23 when he fell seriously ill. There is no room here to discuss all his options. In short, he set his hopes on one of his two grandchildren Gaius (born in 20 B.C.) and Lucius (born in 17 B.C.) out of the marriage of his daughter Iulia and his friend Agrippa. Their early deaths caused him great grief. Eventually Tiberius (42 B.C.-37 A.D.), the son of his wife Livia from an earlier marriage and Iulia’s third husband survived him. Tiberius became his designated successor.61

The arrangements of January 27 (‘The First Settlement’) were temporary and in 23 time had come for a revision. In that year Augustus abdicated as consul, but retained his imperium of his provinces, which constitutionally meant that he held the power of a proconsul.62 However, the senate decided to take a new important step by extending his imperium (imperium maius), which factually ushered in the absolute rule of Augustus. This so called ‘Second Settlement’ meant the recognition that the power of Augustus was superior to any other and that all men in office had to obey his commands. He also assumed the power of a tribunus without the related duties and this tribunate would be renewed every year till his death. The authority of a tribune did not add much to the power he already possessed apart from the formal right to convene the senate and to veto its decisions. In addition it gave him another bonus as the function of tribune gave him the image of protector of the common citizen.63

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60 See also note 1.
61 Boatwright et al., 2004, 296-298.
62 I use the word *imperium* for the power held by an official. See for a detailed discussion of the notions *imperium* and *provincia* Richardson, 2008, *The Language of Empire*.
63 Boatwright et al., 2004, 293; Galsterer, 1990, 14.
From the year 23 Augustus was in fact emperor, although all offices which Augustus now held were still to be renewed every year.\(^{64}\)

The change was considerable for the senate, its members and for the elite in general. The senate was no longer the highest authority and while Augustus kept in close contact with the senate and consulted it regularly, important decisions in matters of foreign policy, military matters or important appointments were taken within a small circle of confidants. The role of the senate was much reduced, and rejection of imperial decisions was impossible. There were three main areas of change which met with opposition by the senate. These were the reduction in membership of the senate, the extraordinary powers which Augustus took (or which the members of the senate assumed that he took) and the legislation which went against the privileges of the elite. However, the senate offered only firm opposition when they felt that their privileged positions were being eroded. Several members of the old patrician families had not survived the civil war or had disappeared. Those who were still alive reluctantly accepted the emperor’s increasing power; the alternative - yet another destructive war between rivals - was untenable, also for them. Augustus introduced *homines novi* from Italia and from the Latin speaking western provinces as members of the senate and many of the non-political classes without any real influence became the new political leaders.\(^{65}\) Thus he appointed officers in the legions and administrators in the provinces from the class of *equites*. He succeeded in gaining and keeping the loyalty of many senators - new and old - by appointing them to the most important posts in the provinces, such as governors and chief commanders in the army.\(^{66}\)

This does not mean that there was no open opposition to Augustus.\(^{67}\) Within several sections of Roman society there were signs of unrest and ancient sources refer to several instances of political opposition. Tacitus dedicates a fairly long passage about this opposition in his *Annales* which I will not quote in its entirety. The following from *Annales* 1.9-1.10 will give the gist:

9. *Multus hinc ipso de Augusto sermo, plerisque vana mirantibus quod idem dies accepti quondam imperii princeps et vitae supremus, [...] numerus etiam consulatum celebrabatur, [...] at apud prudentis vita eius varie extolletur arguebatur. hi pietate erga parentem et necessitutine rei publicae, in qua nullus tunc legibus locus, ad arma civilia actum quae neque parari possent neque haberi per bonas artis. [...] pausa admodum vi tractate quo ceteris quies esset.*


\(^{64}\) There was one exception. The office of *pontifex maximus* which Augustus held from 12 B.C. was for life.


\(^{66}\) For an interesting discussion about the changes in the senatorial classes in Rome after Augustus took power and the importance of the system of *clientela* see the essay of Galsterer, 1990, particularly 16-17. See for a general review of the system of *clientela* Brunt, 1988C, 382-442.

\(^{67}\) Raaflaub and Samons II, 1990, 417-454.
view. According to some, “filial duty and the needs of a country, which at the time had no room for law, had driven him to the weapons of civil strife – weapons which could not be either forged or wielded with clean hands. [...] Very few situations had been treated by force, and then only in the interests of general tranquillity.”

On the other side it was argued that “filial duty and the critical position of the state had been used merely as a cloak: [...] After that [the struggle with Pompeius, Lepidus and Antonius] there had been undoubtedly peace, but peace with bloodshed – the disasters of Lollius and of Varus, the execution at Rome of a Varro, an Egnatius, an Iullus.”

Suetonius reports in the *Divus Augustus* 14-18 the uprisings of Lucius Antonius and the siege of Perusia, Sextus Pompeius and the Sicilian war, Marcus Lepidus and the struggle with Marcus Antonius which was the most dangerous of all, which ended at Actium. But this was not the end of his troubles and some attempts at revolution and other uprisings continued as we read in the *Divus Augustus* 19, 1:

Tumultus posthac et rerum novarum initia coniurationesque complures, prius quam inualescerent indicia detectas, compressit alias alio tempore; Lepidi iuvenis, deinde Varronis Murenae et Fanni Caepionis, mox M. Egnati, exin Plauti Rufi Lucique Pauli progeneri sui, ac praeter has L. Audasi falsarum tabularum rei ac neque aetate neque corpore integri [...]. Audasi atque Epicadus Iuliam filiam et Agrippam nepotem ex insulis, quibus continebantur, rapere ad exercitus, [...].

('After this [Perusia, Pompeius, Lepidus and Actium] he nipped in the bud at various times several outbreaks, attempts at revolution, and conspiracies, which were betrayed before they became formidable. The ringleaders were, first the young Lepidus, then Varro Murena and Fannius Caepio, later Marcus Egnatius, next Plautius Rufus and Lucius Paulus, husband of the emperor’s granddaughter and besides these Lucius Audasius, who had been charged with forgery, and was moreover old and feeble; [...] Audasius and Epicadus had planned to take his daughter Julia and his grandson Agrippa by force to the armies from the islands where they were confined, [...].')

Not all these conspiracies were equally threatening and they were certainly not as dangerous as the power struggle between 40 and 31 B.C. Young Lepidus (30 B.C.) had a grudge against Octavianus after the experiences of his father. C. Cornelius Gallus (27 B.C.) was the first prefect in Egypt and did not understand his position. The case of Varro Murena and Fannius Caepio (23/22 B.C.) is a celebrated one as they had murderous intents. Nothing is known about Caepio and Varro Murena is most likely L. Licinius Varro Murena. It seems that they had a following of people in influential positions and that they conspired against the princeps. Marcus Egnatius Rufus (19 B.C.) is rather unknown and his conspiracy was an amateurish revolt. There were two family plots against Augustus, namely the scandal of Iulia the Elder and Iullus Antonius (2 B.C.), M. Antonius’ son, who were accused of having an adulter-

68 Lollius was defeated in Germania in 16 B.C.; Licinius Varro Murena and Egnatius Rufus were executed for conspiracy in 23 and 19 B.C. and Iullus Antonius became a lover of Iulia and was forced to commit suicide in 2 B.C.

69 He was the same Cornelius Gallus to whom Vergilius was very devoted as a friend. Vergilius would have sung his praises in book 4 of the *Georgica* but withdrew these when Gallus fell from favour.

70 Licinius Varro Murena was the brother of Maecenas’ wife Terentia and it is likely that he was the addressee of Horatius’ *Carmen* 2.10. See also Nisbet and Hubbard, 2004, 151-158 and page 185 of this book.
uous affair and of conspiracy, but who presumably tried to influence the future succession. About ten years later (6-8 A.D.) there was a second scandal, namely that of the younger Iulia (Augustus’ granddaughter), followed by the conspiracy of L. Aemilius Paullus and Plautius Rufus. This again had all to do with family feuds and family quarrels about the succession and not much with opposition against the principate or the princeps. Obviously, any of these conspiracies could have resulted in the death of Augustus and perhaps a return to the old struggle for power between various families and factions. If one considers the whole period of Augustus’ reign there was always opposition which Augustus and his immediate circle managed to keep in check. It is a moot point however whether the opposition was made less serious due to the success of Augustus’ propaganda.

In general, however, the rule of Augustus was received favourably. At Rome and in the provinces there was peace and stability and as the economy became stronger, the crippling poverty of many sections of the population was relieved to a large extent. For the first time after many years of armed conflicts, in which groups and individuals wrestled for power, a general feeling arose that the ruler - the princeps Augustus - was accessible and felt responsible for the well-being of the whole population. The common people welcomed in particular the end of the general conscription and they benefitted most from the revival of the economy, which was most visible in the extensive programme of public building and infrastructure, such as roads, public offices and the many new tenement buildings, which Augustus erected.\textsuperscript{71} It took some time however, for the ‘Golden Age’ to arrive. War did not end with Actium and in the next decade there was still substantial unrest. It was not before June of the year 17 B.C. that Augustus felt confident to openly celebrate the new era when he organized the \textit{ludi saeculares} for which Horatius wrote his \textit{Carmen Saeculare}.\textsuperscript{72} In the meantime he succeeded in combining absolute power with the restoration of the old institutions of the republic, which ensured that the changes could be recognised.

‘Many changes could thus be linked to the past and tradition, and several were represented as an overdue return to neglected past practice. Altogether, by appealing to conservative sentiments which he shared himself, and at the same time instituting a new, personal style of long term, responsible leadership, Augustus saved and reshaped the Roman world.’\textsuperscript{73}

Augustus himself says about this in the \textit{Res Gestae} (8.5): \textit{Legibus novis me auctore latis multa exempla maiorum exolescentia iam ex nostro saeculo reduxi et ipse multarum rerum exempla imitanda posteris tradidi}. (‘By new laws passed on my proposal I brought back into use many exemplary practices of our ancestors which were disappearing in our time, and in many ways I myself transmitted exemplary practices to posterity for their imitation.’).\textsuperscript{74}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{71} Kleiner, 2005b, 212-218. \\
\textsuperscript{72} Putnam, 1986, 15-16. \\
\textsuperscript{73} Boatwright et al., 2004, 316. \\
\textsuperscript{74} Brunt and Moore, 1967, 22-23. In general the quoted passages of Latin texts in this study are taken from the Oxford Classical Text (OCT) editions, but in the case of the \textit{Res Gestae} I have used the edition of Brunt and Moore.
\end{flushright}
II.b. The Augustan values

Augustus appealed to the conservative values of the time of the republic in his political struggle to restore the *res publica*.\(^{75}\) In my opinion it is irrelevant whether he stressed these traditional values in order to underline continuity with the old republic or whether these were part of his own values and norms. In other words, whether Augustus made clever use of the *mores maiorum* for his own political ends, or whether he believed in these *mores* as a personal moral guide, which he wanted to transfer to the Roman people. Important is that Augustus earned a special moral authority (*auctoritas*): an intellectual and moral superiority and the final authority in moral matters.\(^{76}\) His gesture, encouragement or suggestion could be sufficient to begin or to stop an action. And most probably Augustus knew that the republican feelings at Rome would be encouraged strongly if he turned out to be an authoritarian leader with the hallmarks of a *rex*. He had to manoeuvre between maintaining the *auctoritas* of the senate and the power of the patrician families on the one hand and his own *auctoritas* on the other. It seems that he allowed the people around him a substantial degree of freedom and that they acted as sounding boards for his opinions and policy measures.

I will mention briefly the old values which Augustus propagated. This is not only to understand better the person of Augustus, but also because these values return in the art and literature of his time. In art, for example, on the *Clupeus Virtutis*, the golden shield which the senate placed in his honour in January 27 B.C. in the assembly house, the *Curia*. On this shield the following values were displayed: *virtus*, *clementia*, *iustitia* and *pietas*. In Augustan literature there are also many references to these values.

The most important value is *pietas*. This is the old value of social responsibility, the obligations towards one’s family, one’s native country and the gods. This notion developed into the special tie between the *princeps* and the people.

The second value - together with *pietas* - is *virtus*. This is the value of manly courage in battle and gaining personal honour by one’s great achievements in the service of the community.

The other values speak for themselves. *Clementia* relates to the behaviour of the victor towards the vanquished. And it goes without saying that a ruler shows *iustitia*. This is not only being just, but also that his administration is founded on sound and just laws and not on personal power.

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75 Boatwright et al., 2004, 315-316; Galinsky, 1996, 6-7, 80-140; Yavetz, 1990, 21-41.
76 Boatwright et al., 2004, 291-292; Galinsky, 1996, 10-41.

Galinsky (1996, 10-41) points out that Augustus relied on a special form of *auctoritas* with strong moral elements. Augustus felt that his authority was supported by the ideals and ideas which he propagated. Galinsky (1996,11) writes that Augustus in the *Res Gestae* (34.3) says that after 27 B.C. he surpassed everybody else in *auctoritas* and he quotes the passage from the *Res Gestae* as follows (Brunt and Moore, 1967, 34-37): *Post id tempus auctoritate omnibus praestiti, potestatis autem nihil amplius habui quam ceteri qui mihi quoque in magistratu conlegae fuerunt.* (‘After this time I excelled all in influence[moral authority], although I possessed no more official power than others who were my colleagues in the several magistracies’). Crook (1997, 287-288) disagrees with Galinsky in his review of the latter’s book *Augustan Culture* and wonders whether the concept of *auctoritas* is a modern label and whether we know how the *auctoritas* of Augustus was experienced in his own time. Regrettably Crook does not answer these questions.

I have translated *auctoritas* as ‘moral authority’ and not as ‘influence’. The Latin means among other things: ‘authoritative opinion’, ‘approval’, ‘validity’.

See for a discussion of Augustus’ *auctoritas* in the field of literature: White, 1993, 110-118.
These four values were also seen as guiding principles for public life. In Galinsky’s words:

‘The four Augustan values did not freeze into a “canon”. Such routinization is more typical of the later Roman empire; the Augustan period was more dynamic and less conformist. The virtues were, in a way, the famous “Augustan constitution”. Exemplifying his transforming leadership, they were a statement of principles that the senate and people attributed to him and on which he and they were to act as part of a new consensus universorum. He was the guarantor of these principles; their implementation was not his alone, but needed to be shared by all. Therefore the resonance they found, especially in literature, is far removed from the rigid schematization of an ideology.’

This constitution lay at the basis of a new ethos, which was evoked amongst others by the poets, such as Vergilius in his fourth Ecloga and his description of the Golden Age in the Georgica. This Golden Age is not like the mythical times of Saturnus when life was a blissful ‘dolce far niente’, but the new Golden Age was built on hard labour and required ongoing effort and strong leadership. It was not a focus on materialism, but on simple life. Peace was only possible with a strong army and the willingness to go abroad and to conquer. Horatius wrote in the same vein when he in the Carmen Saeculare asked Fides, Pax, Honos and Pudor, which have been long neglected, to return (Carmen Saeculare, 57-58). One more example is Horatius’ Carmen 4.14, 3-5 where the poet asks how Augustus’ virtues can be immortalised (Auguste, virtutes in aevum/[…]/aeternet,).

II.c. Poetry and visual media in Augustus’ age

Augustan poetry was not created in a vacuum, but had its roots in the Latin literary tradition with its many Classical Greek and Hellenistic influences and existed in conjunction with the arts in general which in turn consisted of an intricate ‘construction’ of tradition, taste and fashion, foreign influence (again mainly from Greece and the Hellenistic world), politics, social and economic developments and other elements. I will consider Augustan poetry and the visual media of that period both in the public space and in the private domain. In the public space there were portraits, statues, reliefs and coins. The first three of these were generally erected in Rome and in the major cities of the empire, while coins were used and minted through all the lands under Roman rule. I count the public readings of poetry which occasionally took place in the public domain as well. In the private domain one finds among other things the mural paintings and ornamental plates, vases and goblets. To this domain also belong the readings of poetry in private or small gatherings, for instance at a meal or at a symposion.

In this section some general aspects of Latin poetry in the Augustan age will be discussed first, followed by some characteristics of the visual media, particularly the way in which the visual media refer to contemporary issues. Thirdly, I will discuss the relationship between Augustan poetry and the visual media and fourthly I will consider which likely audi-
ences were reached by either the public or private renderings of poetry and the displays of visual arts.

In the Republican age Greek literary creations served as sources of inspiration for Roman authors. In the beginning there was much experimentation. What were originally Greek metres were applied to a modified Latin language, Greek mythical subjects were reworked and Greek poetic genres adopted by Latin authors. The end of the Republic saw the rise of the poetae novi or Neoterici of whom Catullus (ab. 84-54 B.C.) was the most important. They formed as it were an artistic bridge between Greek Hellenistic and Latin poetry and they no longer wrote grand poetry such as epic, but concentrated on poetry in which the subject matter was to be found in their own microcosm and in which they could express their own feelings. Genres such as elegiac and lyric poetry became the vogue. Hellenistic poetry was obviously a new discovery found as a result of Roman military expansion and thus formed the second source of inspiration. Towards the end of the first century B.C. these two main sources often resulted in poems in which as many Greek archaic - for instance Alcaeus or Pindar - as Hellenistic poets - as for instance Callimachus - can be traced.

Although poetry in the Augustan age remained under the influence of Republican tradition, it became very sophisticated and showed a high degree of involvement in contemporary issues as I will endeavour to demonstrate in chapters III to VII. ‘The poets, then, were creative participants in the ongoing discussion about ideals and values, and they had their own minds about them’.\(^78\) Bowra testified as long ago as 1945 that the Aeneis had helped many to see the main problems of life.\(^79\)

A major characteristic of Augustan poetry was what Galinsky\(^80\) calls ‘complexity and multiplicity of meanings’. A major reason for this is that the Augustan poets made reference to Greek mythical figures who were then given a place in contemporaneous events. The choice of the allusions would also indicate the poet’s approval or disapproval of a certain issue and the audience could understand these. Thus one could read or listen to a poem on different levels. The ‘aesthetic’ level where one could appreciate the characters in the poem on their own poetic merits and experience the beauty of their personalities or their actions. Or the ‘associative’ level by which one’s thoughts were directed towards the events and issues of the day, whereby the reader or listener would often be invited to contemplate moral or ethical questions. Later in this thesis I will argue that the poets of the Augustan age made extensive use of several forms of allusions and associations (see section IV.b.)

The use of allusions was not exclusive to the poets: it was common in Roman art in general and allusions were part of the general conception as to how to produce the best of art.

In the following section I will examine, in rather general terms, some characteristics of the visual media beginning with the Republican era, followed by the years of the transition from the Republic to the Principate and finally during Augustus’ reign. I will look at examples in the public area such as statues, coins, reliefs and architecture, and in the private space such as mural paintings and ornamental pieces. I will focus on characteristics such as the context of the creation and the nature of the images. This will be done in rather general terms and

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\(^{78}\) Galinsky, 1996, 225.

\(^{79}\) Bowra, 1945, 34.

\(^{80}\) Galinsky, 1996, 229-234.
for detailed studies I refer the reader to the well-known standard works of which Zanker’s *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* stands out.\(^{81}\)

In the Late Republic one can find several examples of what Zanker calls ‘political imagery’ on monuments, which in addition to visual images often carried texts as well. These generally revealed who had erected or repaired the monument and occasionally why. There is, for example, the base of a monument which according to Zanker was erected by the censor Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus who died in 104 B.C. On one side of the base his duties as a censor are exhibited and on the other three sides the wedding of Poseidon and Amphitrite. Zanker interprets this as an allusion to Domitius Ahenobarbus’ descent from the sea god. It is possible that the monument has nothing to do with Ahenobarbus, but that it was placed by Marcus Antonius, the grandfather of the adversary of Octavianus. In that case the allusion could be ‘a biographic narration of Antony’s naval victories in the Greek East and his position in Rome as censor in the early 90s B.C.’\(^{82}\) In either case the monument exudes for viewers a link between on the one hand the gods and myth and on the other hand known historical facts and creates associations in the viewer’s mind. Another example is ten coins issued in 66 B.C. by Q. Pomponius Musa with Apollo on the obverse side and Hercules with the nine Muses on the reverse side. The latter is an obvious allusion to his name. Another form of allusion in the Republican age was the building by victorious generals of many temples to their patron deities; these contained many statues of the gods which they had taken home as a loot from Greece or from the East. In the centre of the temple stood a statue of the general himself which outdid the divinities. The allusion is self-evident. Well-known examples of allusion which are close to self-delusion was ‘when cultivated Roman Senators reclined [in their Campanian villas] beside a portrait of Plato or Aristotle to philosophize or read poetry’.\(^{83}\) By this allusion to Greek culture they could imagine themselves to be Greek amongst the Greeks.

Octavianus was quick to learn from his predecessors. On 2 January 43, within a year of Caesar’s murder and at the age of only nineteen, he was voted a statue on the speaker’s platform. Although the statue has been lost we know of it as its picture was shown on a coin soon after. The equestrian statue was to stand next to those of Sulla, Pompeius and Iulius Caesar and so the object of the statue itself became an instrument of allusion: Octavianus was as great a general as his illustrious predecessors. A second statue exemplifies this even stronger. Again the statue is only known from coins, which were minted after Naulochus in 36 B.C. Octavianus was shown ‘in a pose familiar from late Classical Greek art. The model may have been a famous statue of Poseidon by Lysippus. The victor in a sea battle, he [Octavianus] holds in his right hand the stern (*aphlaston*) of an enemy ship as a trophy, while the lance in his left hand marks him as a general. He rests his right foot on a *sphaira*, symbol of all-embracing rule over land and sea.’\(^{84}\)

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\(^{82}\) Zanker, 1990, 12-13. The views on this monument have changed since Zanker wrote his book; see Kleiner, 1992, 49-51, especially at 49. These days the reliefs are to be found in Paris and Munich and therefore the group is nowadays referred to as the Paris-Munich Reliefs.

\(^{83}\) Zanker, 1990, 22-29.

\(^{84}\) Zanker, 1990, 39.
This statue of Octavianus was full of allusions. Sextus Pompeius who was defeated in the final sea battle had enjoyed a number of earlier victories over Octavianus. This resulted in Sextus’ well-known claim that he had been adopted by Neptunus as a son. Therefore, Sextus used many maritime symbols, one of which was a statue – again known to us because of a coin from 42-40 - where Sextus places his foot on the beak of a ship and which shows an allusion to pietas. This was clearly a sneer in the direction of Octavianus which the latter paid back after Naulochus; one could say that there was a ‘battle of allusions’ between the two.

In addition, Octavianus may have referred to a second statue and this reference may be more important still. According to Cassius Dio (43.14, 6) Iulius Caesar had in about the year 46 B.C. erected a bronze statue with his foot placed on the globe, expressing power over the whole world. The ‘father’ and the ‘divi filius’ stood there for all to see.

Other manifestations of ‘political images’ in the public domain can be found on many coins, which had the potential to carry significant political messages; that is, if the finer points did not go unnoticed. Perhaps it was not the general public – in particular in the provinces – that was the intended audience, but the army. I will touch only briefly on this interesting field and the following can be seen as examples. Before 31 B.C. Octavianus had issued a set of six denarii consisting of three pairs. Three coins carry the portraits of Octavianus and on the reverse sides a picture of either Pax, or Venus Genetrix or Victoria. The three other coins have the heads of the same divinities and on the reverse side a full-length portrait of Octavianus either addressing his troops with an adlocutio, or giving the signal to attack, or celebrating his triumph. The message is clear. Pax is the goal of the battle, Venus is the protector of the admirable general and Victoria is the result. Apart from these six coins there is also a series of three coins from the same period; two of these commemorating the victory over Sextus and one showing the Curia. The latter symbolizes Octavianus’ promise to restore the Republic.

Coins were used by Octavianus to pay his troops. Therefore the allusions on coins were a powerful way of distributing his political messages to soldiers or of representing the power of the ruler. The same holds for statues, particularly if one takes into account the choices of location, such as the Forum. A third field of interest of public images is that of reliefs, and particularly those of the temple of Apollo on the Palatine and the Ara Pacis Augustae. Octavianus had promised Apollo a temple after the defeat of Sextus in 36 B.C. and it is estimated that the temple was dedicated in 28 B.C. Some terracotta plaques of the temple have been recovered and on one the battle of Apollo and Hercules for the Delphic tripod is shown. Some authors see in this an allusion to the struggle between Octavianus and Antonius for the hegemony. Another interesting ‘political image’ was shown at a prominent place, namely the temple doors: on these the death of Niobe’s children was carved. ‘In sum, it is apparent [...] that it [the sculptural programme] was fully orchestrated by Octavian [...] to underscore his personal rapport with the god Apollo, and to make reference to his momentous victory over Antony and Cleopatra at Actium.’

Octavianus’ temple for Apollo competed with the rebuilding of the temple for Apollo in Circo by C. Sosius who had fought on Antonius’ side, but had been pardoned. But Sosius

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85 Galinsky, 1996, 28-38; Harris, 1991, 213; Note 3 on page 2 of this book. I agree with Galinsky who expresses doubt whether coinage was used as propaganda.
86 See also my discussion of Horatius’ iambus 7 on pages 157-159. The quotation is from Kleiner, 1992, 82-84, especially at 84.
understood the new political realities; a frieze of the rebuilt temple showed Octavianus’ triple triumph and not Sosius’ own triumph ex Judaea in 34 B.C. His newly-found loyalty went even further when he placed an Amazonomachy in the pediment of the temple. This was generally seen as referring to Octavianus victory at Actium, which was often compared with the defeat of the Amazons by the Athenians.\(^{87}\)

The *Ara Pacis Augustae* which was built by order of the Senate between 13 and 9 B.C. is the apex of allusions. The ‘Altar of Augustan Peace’ had been voted to the princeps as a monument to peace after his safe return in 13 from Gallic and Spanish campaigns. It goes too far to discuss the altar in detail. The significant reliefs tell the history of Rome and the emerging new dynasty. History was represented by a panel on the front of the building, the west side; to the right of the entrance Aeneas together with Ascanius is seen sacrificing after their safe arrival in Latium. Aeneas is shown as a ruler with a spear and in Roman dress, Ascanius as a youth still in Trojan dress and holding a shepherd’s staff. Immediately around the corner of Aeneas’ panel Augustus was placed together with the young Gaius and Lucius, Augustus’ adopted sons, who also wear Trojan dress. In this way Augustus was linked to Aeneas and the boys Gaius and Lucius to Ascanius. The scene alluded to Augustus’ ‘descent’ of Aeneas and to the continuation of this historic line in Gaius and Lucius. More mythological figures were placed at the east side of the monument, one of the goddess Roma sitting on a pile of discarded armour and one of what is most probably Pax with all kinds of fertility symbols. The message is clear and Zanker summarises this as ‘that the blessings of peace had been won and made secure by the newly fortified *virtus* of Roman arms.’\(^{88}\)

The north side depicts a procession of senators and families and the south side the same with the extended imperial family including children and all, led by Augustus in his office of pontifex, who together with a group of priests, performs the rites and sacrifices to the household gods. The two processions should presumably have been experienced as one. These two friezes represented a powerful political message. Firstly, the pride of place was given to Augustus and the family, symbolising the elevated position of the emerging dynasty, while the Senate is to be found at the tail end of the procession. Secondly, the coming together of Aeneas and Augustus symbolised not only Augustus’ divine descent, but also his task of establishing a new order and restoring peace, as Aeneas had done before him.\(^{89}\)

The ‘political images’ which I have just quoted were very much those of the public space and I will now turn briefly to some of those in the private domain. Antonius’ identification with Dionysus was an easy target for political attacks. Supporters of Octavianus used it to denounce Antonius as a man whom Cleopatra held in her evil clutches. Their Alexandrian parties were portrayed as foreign and decadent orgies which were typical for the East and all over Rome effeminate statues of Dionysus - for instance in private gardens – received Antonius features. Octavianus on the other hand was a paradigm of order and good morals as a protégé of Apollo and many owners of great houses set up portraits of Augustus and his family in their atrium.

\(^{87}\) Galinsky, 2005, 220-221; Zanker, 1990, 84-85.

\(^{88}\) Zanker, 1990, 174-175. The quotation is at page 175. There are various identifications of the goddess, Tellus, Venus, Italia, Ceres or Pax. Zanker considers Pax the most likely as the monument is the *Ara Pacis* and as the neighbour panel is that of Roma with the discarded armour.

In the private sphere other examples of propaganda against Antonius have also been found. The same mockery which had been used against Pericles centuries earlier was now used against Antonius, as several clay bowls produced in a pottery in Arezzo show. Heracles, dressed as a woman, sits in a chariot drawn by centaurs and Omphale follows in his lion skin in a second chariot. Heracles looks longingly back at Omphale. In the meantime he is well looked after by servant girls while she is offered a large drinking cup. The allusion is clear, and particularly the spear-carrying guards behind the second chariot and the large drinking cup, which were seen as referring to Cleopatra. The effeminate Heracles is obviously Antonius.

At home, in a private villa, a patrician – or a parvenu - could explain the scene to his guests and show them where he stood. To quote Zanker.

Mythological symbols and parallels also offered contemporary Romans the chance to express their affinity with one side and its lifestyle or the other. It is becoming increasingly clear that the political affiliations that can be detected in poetry are intimately related to those expressed in the visual arts, even in the private sphere, as in the decorative scheme of a room or in such diverse objects as tableware and seal rings.

I will finish this section with a fine example of political imagery in the private sphere, namely ‘in the decorative scheme of a room’, the use of wall paintings. In Boscotrecase, which was near Pompeii, the family of Agrippa owned a large estate with a beautifully decorated villa. In one of the rooms wall painting in the so-called Third Style has been discovered, probably dating from 10 B.C. The scene is a pastoral idyll, a ‘bucolic phantasy’ in the words of Zanker, which was not uncommon at the time. The painting displays a sacrifice before an enthroned goddess in an idealised pastoral landscape where no toiling farmer is visible. The landscape is a park in which one sees some trees but which is dominated by a temple and a villa. The pastoral element is a herdsman with his goats. The picture exudes the happiness of life in the countryside when one has escaped from the moral decay in the city. The image is ‘modern’ and mythical elements are absent in this picture. Yet, the painting gives a powerful political message in support of Augustus which was to be expected in a villa of this family. It alludes to a peaceful and tranquil life in the countryside which can be found now that order and peace have been restored by Augustus. It is possible to escape the bustle of the city where the princeps is at work with his programme of moral reform. This theme is well-known from the poetry of Horatius and Vergilius.

To summarise we may conclude that both in the public and in the private areas there was a proliferation of different forms of visual images. With these the patrons of art wanted to express their views of their own position or to broadcast their political messages in public spaces and in the private space their wealth and their allegiance. This was achieved by a sub-

90 Zanker, 1990, 59-60. Plutarchus referred to this. In Demetrius and Antonius 3.3 he says: ‘Antony, on the contrary, like Heracles in paintings where Omphalé is seen taking away his club and stripping off his lion’s skin, was often disarmed by Cleopatra, subdued by her spells, and persuaded to drop from his hands great undertakings and necessary campaigns, only to roam about and play with her on the sea-shores by Canopus and Taphosiris.’
91 Zanker, 1990, 62.
tle artistic presentation of well-known figures or situations from the mythical or historical past which either alluded to the patron’s successful behaviour in contemporary events or showed the patron or his policies in the most advantageous fashion. In principle this was not different from the situation in the last decades of the Republic; it was only the scale which differed. The princeps was a major patron and many manifestations of his ‘political image’ are known. These public manifestations can be seen as forms of representation of power or of propaganda.

II.d. Literacy and audience for poetry

So far I have concluded that both in poetry and in the visual arts allusions to actual issues were not uncommon. In subsequent chapters I will show several examples of these in the poetry of Vergilius and Horatius which make up part of the political messages they sent out in both the public and in the private spheres. But before we – in the course of this study - can start drawing conclusions about the likelihood of the use and impact of poetry for propaganda purposes, we must first consider two other aspects. These are the question of the ability to read Latin poetry in different social strata of Rome and Italia in the first century B.C. and the first century A.D., and the related question of the audiences of poetry. The view behind these two questions is of course that, if hardly anyone could read poetry or if poetry was only read by or recited to certain groups, the propagandist impact in these circumstances was different, than if a wide and socially diverse audience could read poems.

I will commence with the question of literacy which is fraught with difficulties. There has been much scholarly research on this matter, which has been summarized in 1989 by W.V. Harris in his Ancient Literacy. Before starting the proper discussion a few preliminary points need to be made. Firstly, confusion can arise about the use of the word ‘literate’ which can mean two things: either ‘cultured’ or ‘capable of reading and writing’. I will investigate the latter meaning. Most likely there was a great difference between reading and writing levels in Rome. However, I will focus on reading as in this thesis I investigate the reception of Latin poetry by contemporary readers. Secondly, in antiquity, the literacy of on the one hand women and on the other hand men, differed greatly; there were only a few women of the upper classes who could read and write. Thirdly, and most importantly, the definition of literacy is very unclear. This entails that the results of the many studies of the historical development of literacy and the recent official surveys by UNESCO or others are unreliable. The figures which will be given in this part are therefore estimates with a wide range of uncertainty. Fourthly, in view of these uncertainties Harris suggests to divide the field of reading and writing ability into three groups: a first group of illiterates, a second of literates and a third middle group of what he calls semi-literates who are the ‘persons who can write slowly or not at all, and who can read without being able to read complex or very lengthy texts.’

93 Harris, 1991; the following chapters are of particular interest. I. “Introduction: Levels of Greek and Roman Literacy”; II. “Introduction: The Functions of Literacy in the Graeco-Roman World” and VII. “Literacy and Illiteracy in the Roman World: The Late Republic and the High Empire, 100 B.C.-250 A.D.”

94 Harris, 1991, 3-8. In Harris’ opinion the definition of UNESCO is the most acceptable. This definition is: ‘an illiterate should be defined as someone “who cannot with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life.”’ The problem however is that this definition has not been respected by many officials in several countries. Harris is sceptical about the measurement of literacy by the use of people’s ability to sign for instance a marriage certificate or by counting the number of years of a form of elementary schooling.
my opinion this third group of semi-literates belongs, for the purpose of this study, to the group of illiterates, as I look at the ability of understanding poems which are generally ‘complex or very lengthy texts’.

In our Western, industrialised world the ability to read and write is generally seen as something natural. However, ‘in rural Greece in 1951 the illiteracy rate among males was 14.9 %, that among females 49.9 %. Greece at the time, however, was a country in rapid transition; more typical of an early-modern setting would be Sicily in 1871, with 79 % male and 91 % female illiteracy.’ Societies can only achieve mass literacy when some preconditions have been fulfilled such as the cheap mass production of reading material, schooling on a large scale, and economic necessity. The cheap mass production of reading material only started after the introduction of the printing press in the fifteenth century and an extensive school system was not in place before the nineteenth century. During the period of the industrial revolution, for instance, in eighteenth-century England, the literacy rate of the male population shot up as the factory owners wanted a literate workforce. A fourth impulse of a religious or ideological nature for the growth of literacy has been recognised, such as the increase in Protestant Germany and Holland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when people wanted to read the Bible at home.

It is clear that these positive factors did not prevail in Rome in the first century B.C. Although there were competent copyists and some trade in books, there was nothing like a mass production and the costs of reading material were such that only the rich could afford to buy these. A school system as such existed only on a limited scale and presumably only in the cities. The education in the privately run ‘primary’ schools was only for boys whose parents could afford the fees. Here they were taught reading, writing and some arithmetic. ‘Secondary’ education was given by a grammaticus who taught Latin and Greek grammar through the reading of the great classical writers. Yet, it is unlikely that the ‘great classical writers’ who are the subject of my study, were read at the schools in the last decades of the first century B.C. Horatius was outspoken about the subject. In his literary satire, Sermo 1.10, probably written in the year 35 B.C. he writes about his own expectations as a poet. In the lines 74-76 he says: an tua demens/ vilibus in ludis dictari carmina malis?/non ego: (‘What, would you be so foolish/as to want your poems dictated in common schools?/Not so I.’).

And in 21 B.C. Horatius wrote the poem (Epistula 1.20) with which he closed his first book of Epistulae. In this he addressed the whole book and he reflected on the fate of his poems. The lines 17-18 say: hoc quoque te manet, ut pueros elementa docentem/occupet extremis in vicis balba senectus. (‘This fate, too, awaits you, that stammering age will come upon you/as you teach boys their A B C in the city’s outskirts.’). Horatius was scornful about a future for his poetry as teaching material and he rather saw himself in line 23 of the same poem as me primis Vrbis belli placuisse domique (‘that I found favour, both in war and peace, with the foremost in the State.’). Eventually, he was unable to prevent the use of his poetry in schools, but it appears that he did not stimulate it and perhaps it took until after his death in 8 B.C. before these were part of the curriculum.

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95 Professionals in orthopedagogy in The Hague estimated in 2008 that the illiteracy rate of children in the later years of primary education and who live in certain deprived areas is in the order of 20 %.
96 See for a more extensive discussion of Horatius’ Sermo 1.10 pages 136-137 and of his Epistula 1.20 pages 232-233 of this book.
School buildings have hardly been found. Generally teaching took place in makeshift ‘classrooms’, outside, at the corner of the forum or on the street. Boys and girls of the upper classes and of the new rich were often educated within the family by itinerant teachers, often learned slaves. The boys learned to read and write as a preparation for the typical elite forms of ‘higher’ education in *rhetorica* and law, again at home with somebody.

There existed two driving forces in Roman society which had a positive effect on the literacy rates, the army and international trade. The army required the services of a considerable number of literates and the same held for international trade, but the effect on general literacy was limited. I agree with Harris who states:

‘We must distinguish between, on the one hand, an economy [like the Roman] which provides a certain number of clerical jobs and gives some incentives, though not an overwhelming one, to an artisan or shopkeeper to read and write, and, on the other hand, an economy [like ours] in which the mass literacy of its workers and its consumers is an integral feature. It is obvious that the Romans never went beyond the former of these situations.’

There is much conjecture in trying to establish the literacy rates in the Augustan age and in general high estimates of the literacy rates in Roman society prevailed before 1970. One scholar stated ‘that there were few illiterates in Roman antiquity, “even among slaves” and another testified that ‘many Romans read newspapers’ and that the ‘Roman administration was as paper-dominated as ours.’ It is Harris’ view that ‘the likely overall illiteracy level of the Roman Empire under the principate is almost certain to have been above 90%’. This refers to the overall level. In much of the empire, including Italia, the written word was never encountered. However, the written word had spread considerably within the administration, the army and international trade. There were many specialist literates in the latter areas due to the increased need of written documents such as wills and marriage contracts and due to the requirements of the management of the affairs of the state and of the army in documents such as tax- and property records and rosters of army personnel. Everybody who wanted to draw up a contract or record a transaction could use the professional services of these specialist scribes, often slaves, who would write up the document. Transactions of a modest size, however, were seldom put in writing. Apart from the corps of specialist scribes one encountered a high degree of literacy with the legionaries, while the auxiliaries were in the main illiterate. The officers in both armies could read and write.

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97 School buildings have not been excavated at Pompeii or Ostia. Buildings have been traced in a number of Greek cities and Seneca testifies to a fairly large school at Corduba.
99 Harris, 1991, 18.
100 Harris, 1991, 270 and 280. In Harris’ estimates the literacy rates were much lower than other scholars present. I give two quotes out of many; for instance on page 270 when he discusses the rate in Roman Britain: ‘Unawareness of ancient educational conditions, tinged perhaps by *patriotic optimism*, has allowed some *exaggerations*,’, and on page 280 when he mentions that the costs of education prohibited many to learn to read and write ‘- which would hardly need saying but for persistent *lack of realism on this subject among scholars*.’ (*italics* are mine).
101 The quotations are from Harris, 1991, 9, 14 and 22.
102 Harris, 1991, 253, note 413. Harris gives an amusing anecdote which shows that the army in general had a rather high degree of literacy. There were attempts in the late 40s and 30s B.C. to propagandise the soldiers. I quote Harris: ‘In 46 Caesar tried to subvert both the local and Roman troops of Scipio Nasica in Africa by
Much official communication with the public at large was not written but oral, for instance through town criers, the *praecones*. They announced public meetings, the results of voting and gave general information. As a rule, official decrees and edicts were posted at public places such as the forum for anyone to read and if one could not read there was generally someone who could read it aloud.

The writing of letters was very common, not only in the private domain. The communication between Rome and the governors in the provinces or between the provincial administrative centres and the commanders of the army was generally by letter, which had the advantage that it could overcome distance. The same held for the communication with and between traders in the provinces.

The overall literacy level of 10\% then, will almost certainly have included a very high literacy level among the educated elite who wrote and read Greek and Latin literature, studied philosophy, wrote letters, prepared and made legal pleas, addressed political meetings and so forth. The aristocracy and the new rich constituted the elite; from this class the senators and higher officials were recruited. According to the standards of today’s prosperous Western world and of parts of the Eastern world with its increasing prosperity, the Roman Empire as a whole had a relatively small middle-class of amongst others successful freedmen, professionals and officials, craftsmen and middle-ranking army personnel. This was also true for Rome and Italia. Within this class there was a fair degree of at least the ability to read. The group of people who were poor to very poor was much larger than we know; it was similar to the situations in the poorest countries of today, both in terms of absolute numbers and in terms of percentage of the population. Needless to say that the level of poverty meant that boys remained illiterate; again not dissimilar to some of the poorest countries we know today.

Thus far I have discussed the level of literacy in the Roman Empire at the end of the first century B.C. What matters for our subject is not just literacy as such, but more specifically the ability to read Latin, as the poetry which I consider was not translated into other languages at the time. This raises the questions of Latinisation and bilingualism; for the purpose of this study I define the latter as the ability to speak and read - in this case – Latin, next to the ability to speak, read and possibly write another, generally the indigenous language. It is obvious that in a large geographical area as the Roman Empire many local and generally very old and long-established languages of old civilisations existed. It is also obvious that the picture varied widely through the empire. There were great differences between on the one hand Rome and some other large cities in Italia and on the other hand the countryside of for instance southern Italia. As an aside, there were great differences in Rome itself with her many immigrants and a large imported population, and there were great social differences. The Latinisation in many Gallic and Spanish cities was much more advanced than in Alexandria and other cities of Hellenistic origin, where Greek was the language of the upper classes

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means of brief *biblia*, with some success; Nasica replied in kind (Dio xliii.5; cf. *Bell. Afr.* 32). Octavian tried the same technique on Antony’s army in 44 (App. BC iii.44: many *biblia*), as the Caesarians did against Brutus before the second battle of Philippi (Dio xlvii.48.1). When Antony had such leaflets shot into Octavian’s camp outside Alexandria in 30 (which, incidentally, shows what a lightweight object a *biblion* could be), Octavian read them out to the soldiers himself (Dio lii.2-3). So much for written propaganda.
and the administration, and education was seen as natural. In the backwoods of say Cappadocia or of Cantabria the literacy was virtually zero, Latinisation was minimal and bilingualism hardly existed. The presence of the army was an important factor.

In summary, it is not possible to come to precise figures of the ability to read Latin in either Rome and the other towns of Italia, or the Italian countryside, or the different cities and regions of the empire in the Augustan age and to specify these for the social strata of Roman society. However, two general conclusions may be drawn. Firstly, with respect to the overall levels of literacy Harris gives the following estimates for the various regions. In Rome and Italia the overall level of literacy was below 15 %, and he gives a similar figure, for instance, for Gallia Narbonensis and Baetica (modern Andalusia and Granada) and for the cities of the African provinces of Numidia (modern Northern Algeria) and Africa (region of Carthago; modern Tunisia). Harris estimates the average literacy level for the Western provinces as a whole as between 5 and 10 %. In Rome and Italia literacy is defined as the ability to read and write Latin and in the Western and African provinces as being bilingual according to the definition which I gave above. However, the situation in the Eastern provinces is very different as the main language for the literates was Greek. Thus, an estimate that the overall level of literacy in the latter provinces was similar to Rome and Italia does not mean that the ability to read and write Latin was similar as well. Secondly, considering the literacy in the different social strata Harris states that the social and intellectual elite of Rome and the larger towns of Italia could generally read and write, often in Latin and in Greek, although there were still many members of the upper classes who were illiterate. An appreciable part of the successful freedmen, craftsmen and traders of these cities could read Latin. The Roman elite spent much time on their estates in different parts of Italia and formed small pockets of Roman culture there. In the provinces however, the great majority of the people was not Latinised and did not participate in the Latin cultural manifestations. There were pockets of acculturisation in the towns where groups of originally Roman administrators, traders and others mixed with the indigenous populations who together formed the elite and who could read and write Latin. This was a small minority and constituted a much smaller percentage of the total population than in Rome.

Who were the audiences of poetry and how much were they in touch with poetry? Did they read poetry or did they listen to public or private recitations? Did people purchase books? Was Latin poetry read in places outside Rome, in Italia or perhaps far away in the provinces? Before I look at the audiences of poetry, I will discuss the process of the making and

103 During the reign of Augustus' successor Tiberius (14-37 A.D.) – admittedly a few decades later than the period which I discuss – a boarding school for sons of the aristocracy in Gallia was established in Augustodunum (modern Autun).
104 Harris, 1991, 175-193. Harris discusses in these pages all geographical areas of the Empire.
106 Horatius referred to this point in his Epistula 1.20 and his Carmen 2.20. In the former he reflected on the fate of his poems and in the lines 10-13 he says to his book:

carus eris Romae, donec te deserat aetas;
contractatus ubi minibus sordescere vulgi
coeperis, aut tineas taciturnus inertis,
on fugies Vticam aut vinctus mitteris Ilerdam.
('you will be loved in Rome, till your youth leave you; when you've been well thumbed by vulgar hands and begin to grow soiled, you will either in silence be food for vandal moths, or will run away to Utica, or be sent in bonds to Ilerda.'
distribution of books first. How did a book of poetry come about? Was it published and then sold through the book trade? Was there a market for books?

According to Starr not much is known about the book trade in the period which I consider. Perhaps this lack of knowledge is not all that serious as we have a fair idea about what he calls book circulation. He states that 'Romans circulated texts in a series of widening concentric circles determined primarily by friendship, which might, of course, be influenced by literary interests, and by the forces of social status that regulated friendship.' Starr offers a credible model which I will explain briefly.

He suggests that an author sent gift copies of the finished work to his circle of friends and that this was effectively the point of release of the book. The author had these copies made at his own costs and under his management and there was no commercial copying at this stage. When the text had been released, other people were free to make their own copies. There were no commercial transactions and if someone wanted a copy made he had to pay for the creation of a copy, and there was no fee back to the author on the basis of copyrights. ‘Most readers depended largely if not entirely on privately made copies,' not only for new work but also for older.

Libraries formed another source from which work could be obtained for copying. There existed a number of private libraries which were found both in the Roman townhouses and the villas of the upper classes. Generally it is held that Lucullus created the first private library in Rome and Tusculum which was stocked with books he had brought back from Asia Minor. Faustus, the son of Sulla, continued his father’s library after the latter’s return from Athens in 86 B.C. Both these libraries lost parts, or perhaps the whole of their collections through confiscations in the late 40s or early 30s. Others like Cicero and his friend Atticus held large collections of books. Cicero mentions in his letters that he consulted the libraries of his friends and that he borrowed books to have these copied.

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*Epistula 1.20, 10-13*

He was proud of his success in Rome, but fearful that this might change and that his book of poems might be disregarded and would turn up in Utica in North Africa or in Ilerda (modern Lerida) in Spain; just like a master who sells off his ageing slave. A few years earlier, in 25 B.C., he had finished his second book of *Carmina* and in *Carmen* 2.20 he referred to his hope that after his death his work might survive and that he would visit the outermost borders of the known lands as a canorus ales (‘a tuneful swan').

It seems to me that in these two passages Horatius did not necessarily refer to an international readership, but that these are poetic allusions to fear of future obscurity in the *Epistula* or to hope of future fame in the *Carmen*. In line 13 of the latter he compared himself to another famous flyer Daedaleo Icaro (‘Daedalus’ Icarus’) and wished to become notior (‘more renowned’) than Icarus. Nisbet and Hubbard gave the following commentary on this line: ‘in choosing bizarre symbols to express his thought, he [Horatius] shows an agreeable detachment from a deeply felt aspiration.’ See Nisbet and Hubbard, 2004, 337; White, 2005, 321-339 at 322.

108 Casson, 2001, 61-108. Cicero wrote about the library of Lucullus in *De Finibus* 3.2, 7: nam in Tusculano cum esset vellemque e bibliotheca puere Luculli quibusdam libros uti ('I was down at my place at Tusculum, and wanted to consult some books from the library of the young Lucullus'), about the library of Sulla in his letter to Atticus 4.10, 1: Ego hic pascor bibliotheca Fausti ('I am living here on Faustus’ [Faustus Sulla’s] library. About the borrowing books from Atticus he wrote in his letters to Atticus 8.11, 7; 8.12, 6; 13.31, 2 and 13.32, 2. Some examples are: *Ad Atticum* 13.31, 2: Quoniam etiamnum abes, Dicaearchi quos scribis libros sane velim mi mittas, addas eiam ‘Καταβάσεως.’ (‘Since you are still absent, I should be very glad if you would send me Dicaearchus’ books of which you write, and put in the ‘Descent’ as well.’) and *Ad Atticum* 13.32, 2: Dicaearchi ἐπι Ψυχης utroque velim mittas et ‘Καταβάσεως’ (‘Please send me Dicaearchus’ two books ‘On the Soul,’ and the volumes of his ‘Descent.’).
Apart from private libraries, some public libraries were established at the time in Rome. The first one was the library which Iulius Caesar had planned, but which was built by Asinius Pollio in the late 30s or early 20s B.C., quickly followed by two other libraries by Augustus, one next to the temple of Apollo on the Palatine in 28 B.C. and one in the Porticus Octaviae which was built after 23. The public libraries held contemporary authors, as a passage from Ovidius’ *Tristia* shows. When Ovidius was banished in 8 A.D., his books were forbidden and their author was no longer able to visit the library on the Palatine. About this library one reads in *Tristia* 3.1, 63-64: *quaene viri docto veteres cepere novique/pectore, lecturis inspicienda patent.* (‘and all those things which the men of old or of modern times conceived in their learned souls are free for the inspection of those who would read.’)

Distribution of copies from a master copy which was stored in a public library can not have started earlier than about 30 B.C., when Vergilius had finished his *Eclogae* and Horatius his *Sermones* and *Iambi.* In 30 B.C. only the public library of Pollio had been opened and therefore the supposed dissemination of propagandist literature at the time before Actium and the fall of Alexandria through these channels was not possible.

Book dealers were a third option. It is assumed that they stocked older works and a limited selection of recent work. Normally, the book dealer had only the copy made which he sold, a kind of ‘copying on demand’. In Cicero’s time there were some booksellers at Rome whose copies were often of a dubious quality. Cicero complained about this poor quality in one of his letters to his brother Quintus (*Ad. Quintum Frat.*, 3.6.1) where he writes: *sed res operosa est et hominis perdiligentis. Sentio ipse, qui in summno studio nihil adsequor. de Latinis vero quo me vertam nesco; ita mendoza et scribuntur et veneunt.* (‘But it [obtaining books] is a laborious business and needs somebody who will take a lot of trouble. I know that from my own experience of trying very hard and making no headway. As for the Latin ones [books], I don’t know where to turn, the copies are made and sold full of errors.’). Horatius referred in *Epistula* 1.20, 1-2 to the possible sale of his book in a bookshop. He says:

*VERTVMNVMM lanumque, liber, spectare videris, scilicet ut prostes Sosiorum pumice mundus.*

(‘You seem, my book, to be looking wistfully toward Vertumnus and Ianus, in order, forsooth, that you may go on sale, neatly polished with the pumice of the Sosii.’). *Epistula* 1.20, 1-2

The ‘*Vortumnus*’ was a well-known shopping street in Rome with some book trade and the Sosii were booksellers. It seems to me that when Horatius wrote these lines in 21 B.C., he reckoned with the possibility that a number of copies of his book would be distributed through the book trade. However, he had his reservations about that option. He used indeed words which refer to boy prostitution, such as *prostes* and *pumex* which was used by boys for scraping off their skin hair in order to look younger and for smoothing the ends of the book rolls. Horatius referred to the Sosii the second time in his *Ars Poetica*, 344-346 when he wrote about ‘international best sellers’. I interpret these lines not just as a description of the bookseller’s work but also as an expression of his desire to keep away from the cheap writ-

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109 Horatius referred to this library in his *Epistula ad Augustum* (*Epistula* 2.1, 216-217). See also pages 233-236 of this book. Although there was some diffusion of libraries in Rome, Gallia did not have a single library at the end of the first century B.C.
ing for the masses. There is nothing wrong with a poem that both delights and instructs, but it should not be judged on those criteria alone. There ought to be a place for other poetry as well. It seems that Horatius suggested in these lines that only poems which were expected to do well commercially were selected by the booksellers. The lines say:

\[
\text{lectorem delectando pariterque monendo;}
\]
\[
hic meret aera liber Sosiis; hic et mare transit
\]
\[
et longum noto scriptori prorogat aevum.
\]

('at once delighting and instructing the reader. That is the book to make money for the Sosii; this the one to cross the sea and extend to a distant day its author’s fame.’)

\textit{Ars Poetica}, 344-346

It is obvious that this system of dissemination of literary work could not create a great number of copies. It was expensive and out of most people’s reach and one had to find a ‘master’ to make a copy. Thus, obtaining a work was a matter of a specific search for a particular work. There was a complete absence of any form of advertising and ‘active push’ selling and thus one needed to have active knowledge about or at least interest in the message of the author. One could gain this knowledge from friends, from hearsay or from private and public recitations. In many cases the acquaintance of and affinity with the work was the result of contacts within a limited circle with whom one shared the same interests and ideas. Therefore, it seems probable that most copies of for instance the poetry of Vergilius or Horatius were read or recited within a limited group of people, generally men, who shared the poet’s culture, education and who could discuss the ideas which the poets expressed. Moreover, as I will discuss below in the section about patronage, most poets belonged to the upper class. Starr makes the point that

‘for older Roman writers [for instance Vergilius and Horatius], literature was always seen as merely one facet of the life of an aristocrat, albeit a very important one. Although writing and reading undoubtedly affected their social relationships, those relationships were also based on other ties such as politics, marriage alliances, and family traditions.’

Above I have touched only briefly on the question of which people or groups formed the audiences of a poet; some research on this subject exists which I will discuss in the present paragraph.\textsuperscript{110} An examination of the likely audiences is relevant and important for the present study as the audience is the final stage in the process of transmitting the views or the feelings of the poet. If poetry has been used for propagandist purposes, one of the deciding questions is where these messages eventually arrived. In other words whose minds were targeted: the public at large, the soldiers, the middle class, the upper class, the senate or all these groups at once? With respect to the position of literature in Roman society there existed a fundamental dichotomy which is visible in other societies as well. Quinn remarks the following about this:\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{110} Quinn, 1979; Quinn, 1982, 75-180; Woodman and Powell, 1992, 110-123 and 204-215.

\textsuperscript{111} Quinn, 1979, 35.
'On the one hand, there is the possibility of a large audience, the possibility of a viable social function; if the writer is appreciated, he can feel he is worth his salt. On the other hand, there is the likelihood of no more than a small hypercritical élite more interested in technique than in what the writer has to say and the frustrating feeling of fulfilling no social function. [...]. The conflict is occasioned in large measure by the shift from an oral literature to a written literature: Plautus had a wide audience, for whom he had an immediate appeal; Horace wrote for a small audience of those seriously interested in difficult poetry.'

Plautus’ audience, craftsmen and soldiers or ex-soldiers, could not read well enough to appreciate a long and difficult piece. They were accustomed to listen to the oral transmission of texts. However, it is not Plautus’ time in which we are interested, but the last decades of the first century B.C. No new tragedies and only a few comedies for performance in the theatre seem to have been written in this time and drama did not occupy the same place in Roman life as it did in previous centuries. Mime, comparable to our ‘music-hall shows ranging from striptease to political satire’, became fashionable and that was the entertainment for the general public.\textsuperscript{112} Private readings of plays to invited audiences and reading privately became fashionable with the elite who looked down on popular theatre. The writers of drama were members of the upper class who did not write for the stage and did not want to be associated with organized performances.\textsuperscript{113} Plinius Minor (61 A.D. – 113 A.D.) wrote about this in a letter to his friend Caninius Rufus (6.21): \textit{Atque adeo nuper audiui Vergilium Romanum paucis legentem comoediam [...] Nescio, an noris hominem, quamquam nosse debes; [...] In summa extorquedo ei librum legendumque,} (‘On the contrary, I have just heard Vergilius Romanus, reading to a small audience a comedy [...] I don’t know whether you know the man, but you certainly ought to. [...] In fact I will get the book out of him and send it to you to read,’).\textsuperscript{114} Although Plinius wrote in the first century A.D., he described a custom which had started a hundred years earlier. Ovidius’ \textit{Medea} was presumably never performed on stage, ‘since later in life Ovid boasted he had never written for the stage.’\textsuperscript{115} The same holds presumably for the tragedies which Asinius Pollio had written. Vergilius and Horatius, writers of serious poetry, had to find a new status for poets and poetry which meant that they lost all contacts with popular audiences: the contacts within their circles of \textit{amici} helped them to find these new audiences.

It is well known that Vergilius read his work in private sessions.\textsuperscript{116} This has been testified by some who were present, as for instance Melissus, Maecenas’ freedman. In \textit{Vita Donati}, 16 we read that Melissus said: \textit{in sermone tardissimum ac paene indocto similem} (‘spoke hesitantly and almost like an uneducated man’).\textsuperscript{117} More evidence is available from another episode which again can be found in the \textit{Vita Donati} and which is related to an occurrence after the battle of Actium. In the \textit{Vita 27} we read:

\textsuperscript{112} Quinn, 1979, 92.
\textsuperscript{113} Quinn, 1979, 113; White, 1993, 47-63.
\textsuperscript{114} About Vergilius Romanus not much is known; this mention in Plinius’ letter is the only source.
\textsuperscript{115} Quinn, 1979, 113.
\textsuperscript{116} Goold, 1992, 110-112; White, 2005, 322-323.
\textsuperscript{117} The texts of the \textit{Vita Donati} can be found in: Hardie, 1966, \textit{Vitae Vergilianae antiquae, etc.}
Georgica reverso post Actiacam victoriam Augusto atque Atellae reficiendarum faucium causa commorantique per continuum quadriduum legit, suscipiente Maecenate legendi vicem, quotiens interpellaretur ipse vocis offensione.

('When on his return after Actium Augustus stopped at Atella for treatment of his throat, Virgil read the Georgics to him over four successive days, Maecenas taking his turn at reading whenever the poet was forced to rest his voice.').

There is a further mention of private readings by Vergilius to Augustus. Servius in his commentary on the Aeneis 6, 861 testified that Vergilius read book 6 to Augustus and Octavia, and probably others as well. One of the listeners, perhaps Octavia, broke out fletu nimio ('in uncontrollable weeping').

Horatius has testified which kind of audiences he preferred. In Sermo 1.10, 73-74, which he probably wrote in the year 35 B.C., he says that he does not attempt to reach large audiences:

\[\text{[..], neque te ut miretur turba labores, contentus paucis lectoribus.} \text{[..]}\]
\n\n\n\n\n('[..], and you must not strive to catch the wonder of the crowd, but be content with the few as your readers. [..]').

Sermo 1.10, 73-74

About twenty five years later he still held the same opinion. In 12 or 11 B.C. he wrote a lengthy passage about three forms of poetry in his Epistula ad Augustum (Epistula 2.1, 156-218). I will discuss the poem in more detail in section vi.b., but for the purpose of this discussion I will quote Horatius’ statement about his preferred option. He asks Augustus to look favourably on his art, which is poetry for private reading (lectori credere ('to put themselves in a reader’s hands')). The lines 214-216 read:

\[\text{verum age et his, qui se lectori credere malunt quam spectators fastidia ferre superbi, curam redde brevem,} \text{[..]}\]
\n\n\n\n\n('But come, upon those, too, who prefer to put themselves in a reader’s hands, rather than brook the disdain of a scornful spectator, bestow a moment’s attention, [..]')

Epistula 2.1, 214-216

In his earlier Epistula 1.19, written between 23 and 19 B.C., he expressed similar feelings. In the lines 41-44 he says:

\[\text{[..]. ‘spissis indigna theatris scripta pudet recitare et nugis addere pondus’ si dixi, ‘rides,’ ait, ‘et lovis auribus ista} \]

Epistula 2.1 will be discussed in more detail on pages 233-236 and Epistula 1.19 on page 232.
servas: [...] ('... If I say, “I am ashamed to recite my worthless writings in your crowded halls, and give undue weight to trifles,” “You are in a merry mood,” says one, “and keep your lines for the ears of love. [...]’)

Epistula 1.19, 41-44

At the end of his life when he wrote his *Ars Poetica*, he again poured scorn on the writing for large audiences and showed himself dismissive of the taste of large crowds either in the theatre or in someone’s townhouse. In the lines 212-213 of the *Ars Poetica* he wrote:

\[
\text{indoctus quid enim saperet liberque laborum}
\]
\[
rusticus urbano confuses, turpis honesto?
\]
('For what taste could you expect of an unlettered throng just freed from toil, rustic mixed up with city folk, vulgar with nobly-born?')

*Ars Poetica*, 212-213

These passages tell us a few things. Firstly, that large-scale recitations (*spissis theatris*) of poetry took place and that Horatius detested these. Secondly, that Horatius did not have much regard for the typical theatre crowds and did not want to cater for their tastes. Thirdly, that he was a lucky fellow as he could read his poetry to *auribus Iovis*, Augustus’ ears.\(^{121}\)

Propertius also refers obliquely to his preferred audience in *Elegia* 3.16, 29-30 when he refers to his burial place. The lines say:

\[
\text{aut humer ignotae cumulis uallatus harenae.}
\]
\[
\text{non iuuat in media nomen habere uia.}
\]
('or let me be buried walled in by piles of unmarked sand. It does not please to have a name in the middle of the highway.‘)

*Elegia* 3.16, 29-30

He expresses in the closing line his wish to be remembered as a poet who was read by a select group of friends and admirers.

Later when I have analysed the works of the poets, I will discuss in more detail the question whether the work of the Augustan poets was propaganda. At this stage, I want to make two further points about the audiences of poetry which most likely consisted of members of the social and intellectual elite. My first point is that the manner in which works of poetry were selected and received by these audiences did not create ideal conditions for Octavianus’ and later Augustus’ putative programme of propaganda. These people had other ways of forming their opinions and they chose their allegiance on the grounds of their perception where their political and social interests lay. There is serious doubt in my mind whether these men were easily convinced by the poets to either adopt a view or to change a view which they had held

\(^{121}\) There are other passages where Horatius testified his reservations about the theatre and about comedy in particular. See again my discussion of *Epistula* 2.1 on pages 233-236. See also White, 1993, 59-63.
for a long time. It is perhaps typical of our twenty-first century thinking that everyone has to be loaded with information to be able to make up one’s mind. I suspect that the convictions of these people were not a result of information, but had been formed by their class, their family and their position. In addition the works of the poets were merely a tiny part of the total of information which they received, and probably not the most important part. This brings me to my second point: the growing auctoritas of the princeps. As time went on, Augustus’ rule grew firmer which meant that he became more and more a force to be reckoned with. In addition his authority was not just a function of his position, but also of his personality and many people within the elite were starting to see the peace and stability which he had brought.122 It is not inconceivable that many began thinking along the same lines as Augustus and actually approved of his actions. These men did not need any propaganda. In the chapters to come, which deal with the individual poets, I will show that there are clear indications that in the course of time they adopted a similar acceptance of the princeps which led to the writing of panegyric poetry.

In summary, the conclusion about the nature of the audience or readership of poetry is that, in general, only the members of the elite could read and for most other people the usual way of dissemination of information was the oral one. We have seen that the distribution of books was an expensive business and that only members of the upper classes could afford to buy these. This meant that poetry circulated within a small circle and that poems were used for private reading or for recitation in small gatherings, whose participants were members of the political and intellectual elite for whom poetry was not the most popular instrument of forming their opinions.

II.e.  Patronage or amicitia?

When examining propaganda by the poets of the first century B.C. questions about the positions of the poets and their ‘patronage’ have to be considered, as these touch on the issue of their independence.123 The social background of the poet, his way of raising an income, the nature of the system in which the wealthy man and the poet operated is important.124

Most of the poets of Augustus’ days were members of the elite. Several belonged to the equestrian class, namely Tibullus, Propertius and Ovidius; Vergilius was probably an eques; in any case it is very likely that his father was a landowner. Horatius was son of a freedman and

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122 Galinsky, 1996, 10-41. See also note 76 on page 31 of this book.
123 Up until now I have used the word ‘patronage’ as it has become the common expression in secondary literature to describe the relationship between a wealthy man and a poet in Augustan Rome and later. However, I have now reached the point where these relationships have to be defined very carefully and this will be done in this section of this study. An article of Peter White in The Journal of Roman Studies of 1978 entitled ‘Amicitia and the Profession of Poetry in Early Imperial Rome’ throws new light on this subject. Amongst other things he points out that the word patronus is never used in Latin to describe the literary relationship. ‘A patronus is somebody who has manumitted a slave, the formally designated sponsor of a town or corporation, or a lawyer who has undertaken a defense. The word does not denote the man who maintains a circle of friends and dependants.’ (White, 1978, 78-79). The use of the word ‘patron’ or ‘patronage’ originated in the Middle Ages to denote the men or women who founded and endowed churches with the right of appointment to them. Therefore I will use the terms which White suggest, which are amicitia and amicus. See also White, 1993, 32-34.
it is thought not unlikely that he had been admitted to the equestrian ranks. Although this was an exception, Horatius would not have been an isolated case.125

In today's society paid work to raise a sufficient income to survive is standard practice, also for the elite. This was not the case in late Republican and Augustan Rome and Italia. Equites and candidate senators had to satisfy a property qualification in order to belong to the senatorial ranks and the required property was of such a level that a minimum one could live in reasonable circumstances. Therefore, for the elite ‘not-working’ was the norm and it was this elite that supplied the leading politicians, army officers and intellectuals. It goes without saying that for the rest of the population a life of hard toil, if not slavery, was the norm. The leading classes and their extended families lived a comfortable life in town-houses in Rome and other cities, supported by a great number of servants and surrounded by a large retinue who were dependent in one form or another. In addition most had one or several estates in Italia and lived the life of the landed gentry. The large estates could accommodate many hundreds, namely the members of the family, tenants, servants and slaves. The economic and social relationships at the level of the extended family encouraged mutual dependencies of the family members, where the services of many were bartered for food and protection from the few. The result was that in the economic unit of the family barter was the norm, just as this form of economic exchange was common in many parts of society. Such was the economic environment which the poet knew and of which he was a privileged member. The nature of this membership in the form of amicus of the head or of a leading member of the family will be discussed below after some other economic aspects of being a poet have been considered.

Did the poet have any earning potential? The answer is clearly that this was not the case. Firstly, in a time when the mass production of books did not exist and where the markets for selling books were limited there was not much opportunity to generate an income. There were booksellers but their turnover was limited. A source of income was writing for the stage, particularly for pantomime, which had become popular. However, this was not regarded a serious occupation for a serious poet and was even frowned upon. In some cases a poet seems to have received some payment for a production in a theater and the best known case is Horatius’ Carmen Saeculare in 17 B.C.; but these instances are few. Secondly, the poets came from and worked in an environment where payment for any service was uncommon. Particularly payment for intellectual services, such as writing poetry or oratory was seen as demeaning, as it brought the artist or professional down to the level of a trader. Thirdly, as argued above, most of the poets did not need any payment for their work anyway as they had sufficient income from other sources.

This is the economic and social background of the special bond between a rich and often influential man and a poet in Rome in Augustus’ time. The phenomenon of amicitia was founded on this bond and the concept of amicitia will be discussed in more detail now.

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125 White, 1993, 5-14, especially at 8-12 and 211-222; Ross Taylor, 1925, 161-170; Horatius himself provides us with the evidence that his father and he were not poor. Firstly, in Sermo 2.7, 53-55 he lets his slave Davus refer to his status as an eques when Davus says to him: tu cum proiectis insignibus, anulo equestri/Romanoque habitu, prodis ex iudice Dama/turpis […]. Secondly in Sermo 1.6, 76-78 Horatius refers to his education which his father could only afford if he had sufficient financial means: sed puerum est ausus Romam portare, docendum/artis, quas doceat quivis eques atque sena/tor/semet prognotos […] (‘nay, he boldly took his boy off to Rome, to be taught/those studies that any knight or senator/ would have his own offspring taught. […]’).
As established above, the poets belonged broadly to the social upper class and therefore moved easily within this group as orators, lawyers and philosophers. It was not done to charge for the services rendered, and a different but much more subtle mechanism transferred forms of recompense from the wealthy and influential to the professionals. White says the following about this:  

‘At least in Rome, these professions involved not simply the independent pursuit of an art or discipline but engagement in the life and interests of well-to-do society. Their practitioners provided services which beguiled the leisure or abetted the business of the leading citizens. By these services they established ties of amicitia which yielded far greater rewards than any system of fees or commissions would have done. Testamentary bequests, gifts of cash or property, and large loans on easy terms might fall into the lap of a rich man’s friend. [...] The exchange of gifts and benefits had an important and well-defined place in the Roman code of friendship; and the wealth which accumulated in the hands of the rich during the early empire gave them rare means of putting in practice the virtue of liberality.’

Several times descriptions of this form of amicitia can be found in Horatius’ Carmina and Sermones. For example in the following selection from the Carmina. The opening lines of the book of Carmina testify of his feelings of friendship, when he says in Carmen 1.1, 1-2 (dedication to Maecenas): MAECENAS [...] / o et praesidium et dulce decus meum, (‘Maecenas, [...] / my protection, my fame and my joy,’). In Carmen 1.20 (an invitation to Maecenas to drink wine together) he says in the lines 1-5:  

VILE potabis modicis Sabinum  
cantharis, Graeca quod ego ipse testa  
conditum levi, datus in theatro  
cum tibi plausus,  
care Maecenas eques, [...]  
(‘You will drink from modest cups a cheap Sabine wine that I stored away in a Greek jar and sealed with my own hand on the day when you, dear Maecenas knight, were given such applause in the theatre [...]’)

Carmen 1.20, 1-5

This short poem of twelve lines is a moving expression of Horatius’ feelings of amicitia as he offers Maecenas wine which not only has been very well looked after, but has also been stored away on the day of Maecenas’ return to public life after a dangerous illness. This showed how much Maecenas had been in the poet’s thoughts.

Carmen 2.17, 3-4 (our destinies are linked, Maecenas) where one reads: [...] Maecenas, meurum/grande decus columna rerum. (‘Maecenas, you who are the great glory and keystone of my existence’). Further in book 3, Carmen 3.16, 29-30 where he expresses his joy with

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126 White, 1982, 56. See also Brunt, 1988b, 351-381; DuQuesnay, 1984, 24-27 and White, 1993, 3-34.
127 See also Heyworth, 2007b, 102-103.
128 The Loeb edition has in line 5: clare. The translation in the Loeb of line 5 is: ‘Maecenas, illustrious knight,’
the Sabine estate he received: *purae rivus aquae silvaque iugerum/ paucorum et segetis certa fides meae* (‘A stream of clear water, a few acres of woodland,/ a harvest that never lets me down’).

In the beautiful Ode to Maecenas (*Carmen* 3.29) Horatius expresses his concern for Maecenas’ well-being in the lines 25-28 and 32-34:

\[ tu civitatem quis debeat status \\ curas et Vrbi sollicitus times \\ quid Seres et regnata Cyro \\ Bactra parent Tanaisque discors. \\ [...]. quod adest memento \\ componere aequus; cetera fluminis \\ ritu feruntur, [...] \\
\]

(‘You are concerned about what constitution best suits the state, and in your anxiety for the capital you worry about what plots are being hatched by the Chinese and Bactra (once the realm of Cyrus) and the Don with its internal feuds. 

[...] Make sure to settle immediate problems calmly. Everything else flows away like a river (…)’

*Carmen* 3.29, 25-28 and 32-34

Horatius tells his friend not to fret about matters of state and counsels him to take life calmly.

In *Carmen* 4.11, 18-20 he is genuinely happy at the celebration of Maecenas’ birthday: 

\[ [...], quod ex hac/ luce Maecenas meus adfluentis/ordinat annos. (‘[…], because from this bright day/my dear Maecenas counts the course/of his years.’). \\
\]

Finally, in *Sermo* 1.5 he describes the value he attaches to being in the company of friends (‘nothing would match with the joy a friend may bring’). The party is on the way to Brundisium to attend a meeting between Octavianus and Marcus Antonius. Maecenas has joined them earlier and a few days later the other *amici* arrive. About the reunion with the latter, among them Vergilius, he writes:

\[ Plotius et Varius Sinuessaes Vergiliusque \\ occurrunt, animae qualis neque candidiores \\ terra tulit neque quis me sit devinctior alter. \\ o qui complexus et gaudia quanta fuerunt! \\ nil ego contulerim iucundo sanus amico. \\
\]

(‘At Sinuessa there meet us Plotius, Varius, and Virgil, whitest souls earth ever bore, to whom none can be more deeply attached than I. 

O the embracing! O the rejoicing! Nothing, so long as I am in my senses, would match with the joy a friend may bring.’)

*Sermo* 1.5, 40-44
Yet another source about the amicitia of Horatius and Maecenas is a passage of Suetonius in his Vita Horati 2.2:129

‘Maecenas quantopere eum dilexerit satis testatur illo epigrammate:
Ni te visceribus meis, Horati,
plus iam diligo, tu tuum sodalem
nimio videas strigosiorem;

sed multo magis extremis indiciis tali ad Augustum elogio: “Horati Flacci ut mei esto memor”.’

(‘How fond Maecenas was of him is evident enough from the well-known epigram:
If that I do not love you, my own Horace,
more than life itself, behold your comrade
scraggier than a rag doll.

But he expressed himself much more strongly in his last will and testament in this brief remark to Augustus: “Be as mindful of Horatius Flaccus as of myself.”’).

It has been suggested that either a Volcacius Tullus, nephew of L. Volcacius Tullus who was consul in 33 B.C., or Maecenas was Propertius’ patron. In my opinion Propertius did not write seriously about any patron at all and this view is confirmed by Heyworth.130 He says: ‘In fact there is nothing to suggest closeness between Tullus and Propertius.’ and ‘my [Heyworth] conclusion is that Tullus is intended to be read not as a real patron in either book [Elegiae book 1 and 3] but as a poetic imitation of one.’ In Elegia 1.22, 2 Propertius refers to amicitia with Tullus. Heyworth however pours scorn on this amicitia and sees Tullus as nothing more than an acquaintance of Propertius.131 Heyworth also discusses the relationship between Propertius and Maecenas, the other candidate for supposed patronage. He argues convincingly that the two poems (Elegiae 2.1 and 3.9) which are often seen as a foundation for the supposed patronage by Maecenas ‘seem bizarre to base an unquestioning belief in Propertius’s acceptance of Maecenas’s patronage.’132

Thus, generally the poets have been installed in circles of friends and belonged to the retinue of a member of the Roman elite, together with other intellectuals, who had not wished to pursue or had not been accepted in a political or judicial career. Although gifts from the magnates were forthcoming, such as Maecenas’ gift of the Sabine farm to Horatius, it was not financial support which the poets expected. Through their association with the powerful the poets hoped to receive recognition and publicity for their work. In these ‘salons’, they recited not only their work, but presumably they also discussed all kinds of subjects and their opinions might be sought, once they enjoyed the confidence of their amicus. Consequently, it is not surprising that the poets expressed their views in their poems. Obviously, this raises

129 Svetonio, ed. by Rostagni, 1944, 112-113.
130 Heyworth, 2007b, 95-97 and 103. See also note 131.
131 Heyworth, 2007b, 98. In his book Cynthia etc. (Heyworth, 2007a, 94, note 57) Heyworth makes an interesting point about the relationship of Propertius and Tullus. Although he does not discuss explicitly the question of patronage versus amicitia, I interpret his view on the relationship of the two men as one without amicitia: however, by making the point Heyworth probably means to say that one would expect amicitia. He says: ‘there is no adequate evidence to suppose the patronage of Tullus was important to Propertius: he explicitly rejects the opportunity to accompany him as part of his uncle’s cohors in I vi, and in other poems in which he features (I i, xiv, xxii; III xxii) the relationship is one of distance and contrast, not intimacy and respect.’
the question about the independence of the poets. Contrary to what has often been stated, the involvement as an amicus in a circle of amici worked as a guarantee of their independence. As accepted members of the circle of friends, the poets who were financially independent, were seen as having a contribution to make and the writing of poems about political or social questions emanated naturally from their position of intelligent observers and participants in the arguments, and not because they were ordered to do so or to write propagandist material. This is a very different picture than that of the ‘safe and subsidized’ poet by a ‘patron’: the scenario of amicitia is far more subtle. It is part and parcel of the social relationships in the late Republic and the early Empire. As White says: ‘And once established in the amicitia of a rich man, poets received material benefits which were the perquisites of friends rather than the due of poetry’.133

II.f. Summary and conclusions

Before drawing the different sections of this chapter to a close I will quote a passage written in 1984 by Woodman and West, as I believe that they support my examination of contextual factors.134 The final passage in their book entitled Poetry and politics in the age of Augustus reads:

‘We set about this collection in the hope that it would shed some light on an interesting subject which is important both to literary scholars and to historians. Our contributors show that easy distinctions such as ‘Is this poetry or propaganda?’ and ‘Are the poets sincere or are they puppets?’ take us nowhere. The matter is complicated by the genuine friendships within the circle of writers and principes uiri, by the delicacy with which Maecenas treats his poets, by the recognition that Augustus had restored peace, order and idealism to a society which had lost them, by the significance of the form a poem takes and of the time when it was written. There can have been few ages in which poets were so intimately and affectionately connected with the holders of political power, few regimes with a richer iconography, few poets so pro-

133 White, 1978, 92. Naturally, there are other points of view as well. Firstly, Watson, 2003, 2-3. I quote from his book on Horatius’ Iambi. ‘But as a result of his first poems (Satires as well as Epodes), Horace was introduced about 38 BC to Maecenas, Octavian’s man of affairs, and some nine months afterwards taken up into his entourage, with all the obligations to trade mutual benefactions – on Maecenas’ side the treasured gift of the Sabine farm – that such a relationship entailed. It is to this development that one can trace the ideological sea-change which Horace now undergoes.’ Secondly, Brink (1982, 558-560) who in his book about Horatius’ Epistulae sees a new period in Roman literature after 19 B.C. He considers the withdrawal from public life of Maecenas as one of the significant factors. A quotation: ‘Such was the point of time and the situation in which Augustus seems to have pressed for official and panegyrical verse, with Maecenas apparently unable to mitigate the pressure.’ According to Brink this pressure resulted in Horatius’ writing of the Letter to Augustus. Thirdly, Raaflaub, 2004, 57-58. His essay entitled ‘Aristocracy and Freedom of Speech in the Greco-Roman World’, referring to Cicero, touches on the exclusive character of the Roman aristocracy and their ways of dealing with power. Although the essay is about freedom of speech, the conclusions may also be relevant for the restrictions which the Roman elite put on dissenting opinions and thus restricted the poets in feeling free to express their points of view. I quote from Raaflaub’s essay: ‘It [freedom of speech] was not, however, a primary political value in aristocratic communities, even if at least the political elites claimed it as their natural right, based on their social distinction. [...] What mattered to them was that they were part of an exclusive group who shared power and government and in that sense were equal – even if within this framework they competed fiercely for primacy.’

In the chapter about Horatius’ poetry I will suggest a very different point of view about the poet’s attitude.

134 Woodman and West, 1984, 195.
foundly moved by a political ideal and so equipped to sing its praises with subtlety, humour, learning and rapture. The reader of these poems needs a touch of all these.’

The subject matter upon which the authors touch has been broadly discussed in the present chapter. The conclusions of my chapter are that Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius lived and worked at a time of great political and social upheaval and change. When peace arrived, new intellectual and artistic stimulants emerged in poetry with new values, such as a high degree of involvement in contemporary issues. In the Augustan visual media and in poetry allusions to particularly mythical and historical subjects were very common when presenting messages about actual events, often with a political content. The degree of literacy was very low and only the wealthy could afford to purchase poetry which was distributed by means of copying anyway. This copying process generally started with gift- or borrowed copies within a circle of friends and commercial distribution was secondary. The poets were involved in circles of amici and belonged to the retinue of a member of the Roman elite, together with other intellectuals, who did not wish to pursue or who had not been accepted in a political or judicial career. One might thus seriously doubt whether poetry with a propagandist character was an effective means of communicating political messages within the Roman elite.

These contextual factors are the ground for formulating some conclusions and in the following chapters III – VII I will examine the texts to see whether these conclusions hold ground. The three conclusions are:

- Poetry was not suitable for mass-propaganda and had only very limited value for propaganda aimed at the political and social elite.
- Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius wrote poetry for like-minded people.
- The poets were commentators who offered their views on contemporary issues on their own initiative.
III. Vergilius: his life, the Eclogae and the Georgica

As some knowledge of the life of Vergilius is necessary to understand his work, I will open this chapter with a short biography. After this the Bucolica (Eclogae) and Georgica will be discussed in detail, according to the scheme as I set out in the introductory chapter. The aim of this analysis is to establish whether Vergilius deals with actual themes, whether he refers to the main actors on the political scene in Rome in the first century B.C. and whether there are significant allusions. The poems will be also examined on their supportive or critical content. Vergilius’ works will be presented in the chronological order in which they were written as this also shows his development as a poet and as an observer of the scene around him.

III.a. The life of Vergilius

Publius Vergilius Maro, about whose life Suetonius has written, was born on the fifteenth of October in the year 70 B.C. in the district of Andes, near Mantua. Not much is known about the first twenty eight years of his life; according to tradition his father was a smallholder who had risen socially by acquiring land. He was probably a Roman citizen descending from the early colonists of the area and Vergilius may have been an eques. The family was not without means. Tradition also has it that, at the time of the expropriations of 40 or 39 B.C. by Octavianus, his father had to leave his property, or at the very least there was a serious threat of eviction. From archeological evidence it seems likely that Octavianus was personally involved in the expropriations in the area of Cremona and Mantua: it appears that, amongst others, the tenth legion of trusted veterans of Iulius Caesar’s time, which had been recruited in Italia, received property after the soldiers had been discharged. It is said that the embitterment about this loss can still be read in Vergilius’ first and ninth Eclogae which were published between 42 and 39 or 35 B.C.

After secondary school at Cremona, the young Vergilius initially received his higher education at Mediolanum (modern Milan). At the age of eighteen he went to Rome, but remained there only for a short time before moving on to Naples where, according to Macrobius who lived at the end of the fourth until the beginning of the fifth century A.D., Vergilius was taught Greek by Parthenius of Nicaea and studied rhetoric and perhaps astronomy and astrology. Naples became his favourite place and in that time he probably joined an Epicurean society of poets and turned away from rhetoric. Later he probably acquired an estate at Nola to which a fragment of Aulus Gellius’ Noctes Atticae (6.20.1) testi-

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135 See pages 4-11.
137 Nauta, 2006, 302-305. See also Wilkinson, 1997, 29-35; this great Vergilius scholar gives an interesting reconstruction of the events, aided by his analysis of the Eclogae 1 and 9. His opinion is that at the time of the land confiscations in the Mantua area the farm of Vergilius’ family was threatened as well, but that it was reprieved through Vergilius’ efforts and that perhaps the poet Cornelius Gallus intervened on his behalf before Octavianus. I will return to this matter when I discuss the Eclogae of Vergilius.
139 Davies, 1969, 362. The source of this, which may be dubious, is Macrobius Saturnalia 5.17.18. The text is: versus est Parthenii quo grammatico in Graecis Vergilius usus est (‘Furthermore, there is a verse of Parthenius, the grammarian who taught Vergil Greek,’). See also Wilkinson, 1997, 40.
140 See Georgica 4, 563-564; illo Vergilium me tempore dulcis alebat/Parthenope, studiis florentem ignobilis ati (‘In those days I, Virgil, was nursed by sweet/Parthenope [Neapolis], and rejoiced in the arts of inglorious ease’).
From his poetry it appears that Vergilius loved the countryside, but that, although he lived on an estate, he was not a farmer. He remained a man of letters who loved to observe nature and he was certainly interested in farming matters.

Vergilius’ friends included among others the poet C. Cornelius Gallus and either the lawyer L. Alfenus Varus to whom Servius refers, or more probably Quintilius Varus who is mentioned in Horatius’ *Carmen* 1.24 as a friend of Vergilius, or both. Other friends were Plotius Tucca, L. Varius Rufus and the writer C. Asinius Pollio. About his introduction to Maecenas’ circle Wilkinson remarks:

‘We do not know which of his influential friends introduced Virgil to Octavian or to Maecenas – the ancient biographers were probably guessing; but by 39/38 both he and Varies had become part of his circle, [...]. From now on we must think of Virgil in the context of that circle, though he remained particularly devoted, as *Eclogue* 10 shows, to Cornelius Gallus, who was a Caesarian but independent of it [the circle], and no doubt also to Pollio, who after triumphing over Dalmatia became neutral in politics, occupying himself with writing tragedies and the history of the civil wars. What we think of as the Augustan Age was already beginning. It is important nevertheless to remember that, although Octavian was ‘Divi filius’, Antony was still at this stage the dominant Triumvir;’

In 38 he was introduced to Horatius who became a close friend (*amicus*) and also a member of the same group of intellectuals and writers. In his poetic art Vergilius was affiliated to the Neoteric movement. The term was first used by Cicero and it described the young *poetae novi* who were inspired by the Hellenistic poets. They no longer wrote large epic poems, but shorter poetry such as elegiac and lyric poetry. Their subjects were often taken

141 Aulus Gellius lived from ca. 123-165 A.D. The passage concerned is: *Noctes Atticae*, 6.20.1: *Scriptum in quadam commentario repperi versus istos a Vergilio ita primum esse recitatos atque editos:*

*Talem diues arat Capua et uicina Veseuo.*

*Postea Vergilium petisse a Nolanis, aquam uti ducer et in propincum rus, Nolanos beneficium petitum non fecisse, poetam offensam nomen urbis eorum, quasi ex hominum memoria, sic ex carmine suo derasisse ‘oram’que pro ‘Nola’ mutasse atge ita reliquisse:*

*et uicina Veseuo.*

*Ora iugo.*

(I have found it noted in a certain commentary that the following lines were first read and published by Virgil in this form:)

Such is the soil that wealthy Capua ploughs

and Nola near Vesuvius’ height.

That afterwards Virgil asked the people of Nola to allow him to run their city water into his estate, which was nearby, but that they refused to grant the favour which he asked; that thereupon the offended poet erased the name of their city from his poem, as if consigning it to oblivion, changing Nola to ora (region) and leaving the phrase in this form: ‘The region near Vesuvius’ height.’).

142 Servius in his commentary on *Ecloga* 6, 13; *nam vult exequi sectam Epicuream, quam didicerant tam Vergilium quam Varus docente Sirone.* (‘for he wants to join the Epicurean movement to which both Vergilius and Varus had been devoted through the teaching of Siro’). Siro, a philosopher of the Syrian school, taught at Naples together with his colleague Philodemus. The rendering from Latin into English is mine.


144 Nisbet and Hubbard, 2001, 40; Williams, 1990, 258-275. See Horace *Sermo* 1.6,55, *Carmina* 1.3 and 1.24. In *Carmen* 1.3,8 Horace declares his friendship with Vergilius as follows: *anima mea dimidium meae* (‘who is half my soul’).
from daily life, and they expressed their personal feelings. The most famous member of this movement was Gaius Valerius Catullus (ca. 85-54 B.C.). It is thought that Gaius Helvius Cinna was the artistic model for the young Vergilius who inspired him to follow the movement. However, as time passed on one sees that Vergilius became more involved in writing about social and political matters, without losing the beauty of his literary style and of the execution of his poems. The beauty of the *Bucolica* (otherwise known as *Eclogae*) which he wrote when he was still very much under the influence of the Neoterics was maintained in his later work. Particularly in the *Eclogae* and in the *Georgica*, he portrays himself as a man whose roots lay in the land of Northern Italia, and who showed a genuine interest in the vicissitudes of the lives of the small farmers. The latter were under tremendous pressure because of the fundamental changes in the Italian countryside; these changes were not just caused by the evictions, but were also a result of the disappearance of the free peasants due to the introduction of economies of scale in the production of cereals, vines and olives through large scale farming on the large estates, the *latifundia*.

Vergilius wrote his *Eclogae* in the years 42 to 35 B.C. Between 35 and 29 Vergilius composed the *Georgica*, his didactic poem about agriculture, and he wrote his *Aeneis* between 29 B.C. and his death on September 22nd of the year 19 B.C. He fell ill when he returned from Greece where he had met Augustus and he died in Brundisium. At his death the epic had not yet been finished and Vergilius gave instructions in his will to destroy the work. Augustus prohibited this and ordered L. Varius Rufus and Plotius Tucca to publish the work.

When Iulius Caesar was murdered Vergilius was only 26. Vergilius probably sympathised with Iulius Caesar, who in 50 B.C. had conferred Roman citizenship to all cities of *Gallia Cisalpina*, of which Vergiliius’ family had also benefitted. In addition his Epicurean friends in Naples were closely connected to Calpurnia, Iulius Caesar’s wife. It has been suggested that Vergilius’ first political association was with Asinius Pollio whom he knew well and who was one of Marcus Antonius’ lieutenants at the time. It took therefore four or five years, until 39 or 38, before he became involved with Octavianus and Maecenas. Although he had personal experience of the upheavals and terrors of the civil war, he had also witnessed the first signs of restoration and stability in the reign of Augustus.

III.b. The *Bucolica* (*Eclogae*); pastoral poetry with a commentary

The book of poems which is commonly known as the *Eclogae* was written between 42 B.C. and 35 B.C. Originally the word *ecloga* meant a ‘selection’ but by the time of Plinius Minor it had come to mean a ‘short poem’. It seems likely that Vergilius worked on the collection until the date of their publication in 35. The order of the poems in the book is not the same as the order in which they were written; the first *Ecloga* is not the eldest, but the ninth was most likely written earlier than the first. Clausen remarks:

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145 Clausen, 1994, 125; Wilkinson, 1997, 26. There is a parallel with Horatius. The latter fought at Philippi with Brutus. At the start of their career as poets, both men belonged to the other, ‘non-Augustan’ party.
146 I will use the name *Eclogae* to indicate the poems. The year 42 is derived from the reference to the land confiscations in *Eclogae* 1 and 9 and the year 35 B.C. from the reference to Octavianus in *Ecloga* 8, 6-13.
148 Clausen, 1994, 266.
'In the Ninth Eclogue, the land confiscations are over. There is no turmoil, as in the First, no hopeless flight; only, for Moeris, the dreary routine of a menial existence embittered by memory. Peace has returned to the countryside, a desolate peace.

The Ninth is, however, the earlier Eclogue;'

This means that the ninth is considered earlier than the first, but other Eclogae were probably written earlier. The likely order of composition would be: Eclogae 2, 3, 5, 4, 8, 7, 6, 9, 1 and 10.\textsuperscript{149}

Vergilius was probably inspired by a collection of pastoral poetry by Artemidorus of Tarsus who worked in Alexandria in the first half of the first century B.C.: this anthology contained among others ten poems by Theocritus who is seen to have been the most important inspiration of the Neoteric poet Vergilius.\textsuperscript{150} There are ten poems in total.

As a support to the discussion of the poems in this section, short analyses of the ten Eclogae will be presented in appendix II, where the subject matter of the poem is summarised and a view of a possible ‘political content’ is presented.

The first Ecloga is written as a conversation between Meliboeus who has to leave for foreign lands as he has been expropriated from his farm and wonders if he will ever return. On the other hand, there is Tityrus who has the good fortune that he can remain, albeit on a small plot of infertile land. The poem is all about the land confiscations after the battle of Philippi and Vergilius pictures beautifully the contrast between the unhappy Meliboeus for whom there is no future (as for many others) and the lucky Tityrus. Meliboeus says in line 4: \textit{nos patriam fugimus: tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra} (‘We [Meliboeus] are outcasts from our country; you, Tityrus, at ease beneath the shade [of his own beech]’). After this Meliboeus asks why Tityrus has been absent and Tityrus answers that he was in Rome. Now that he is living with frugal Amaryllis he can save enough from his property (\textit{peculium}) to purchase his freedom. At Rome he had seen the [...] \textit{iuvenem, [...]}, \textit{quotannis/bis senos cui nostra altaria fumant} (‘that youth/for whom our altars smoke twice six days a year’) (lines 42-43). The youth is Octavianus and the altars refer to the Hellenistic ruler-cult of celebrating the ruler’s birthday every month.\textsuperscript{151} Octavianus had given Tityrus his freedom, which he now enjoys in the shade of the beech. That is why in lines 6-7 Tityrus cries out:

\begin{quote}
\textit{O Meliboeoe, deus nobis haec otia fecit. namque erit ille mihi semper deus, [...]}
\end{quote}

(‘O Meliboeus, it is a god who gave us this peace – for a god he shall ever be to me; [...]’)

\begin{quote}
\textit{Ecloga 1, 6-7}
\end{quote}

I interpret these lines as follows that, in the year 35 B.C., when Vergilius wrote this poem, he acknowledged the relative peace which Octavianus had brought after Perusia (40 B.C.) and after the defeat of Sextus Pompeius (36 B.C.). However, Goold’s statement that ‘in lines 7 and 42 of the First Eclogue the poet unequivocally nails his colours to the mast of Caesar’s heir’ is

\textsuperscript{149} Perutelli, 1995, 28.
\textsuperscript{150} Clausen, 1994, XX-XXIII; Griffin, 2005, 306-309.
\textsuperscript{151} Clausen, 1994, 48. Wissowa, 1902, 157-159.
unlikely to be correct, as Vergilius at the time presumably still harboured the memory of his negative experiences of Octavianus’ role in the land confiscations.152

The second half of the poem treats the contrast in the fortunes of the two. Meliboeus says to Tityrus in lines 46-48:

\[ \text{M. Fortunate senex, ergo tua rura manebunt.} \]
\[ \text{et tibi magna satis, quamvis lapis omnia nudus} \]
\[ \text{limosoque palus obducat pascua iunco:} \]
\[ ('Happy old man! So these lands will still be yours, and large enough for you, though bare stones cover all, and the marsh chokes your pastures with slimy rushes.') \]
\[ \text{Ecloga 1, 46-48} \]

While in lines 67-72 Meliboeus bewails his misfortune:

\[ \text{M. en umquam patrios longo post tempore finis,} \]
\[ \text{pauperis et tuguri congestum caespite culmen,} \]
\[ \text{post aliquot, mea regna, videns mirabor aristas?} \]
\[ \text{impius haec tam culta novalia miles habebit,} \]
\[ \text{barbarus has segetes: en quo discordia civis} \]
\[ \text{produxit miseris: his nos consevimus agros!} \]
\[ ('Ah, shall I ever, long years hence, look again on my country’s bounds, on my humble cottage with its turf-clad roof –shall I, long years hence, look amazed on a few ears of corn, once my kingdom? Is a godless soldier to hold these well-tilled fallows? a barbarian these crops? See where strife has brought our unhappy citizens! For these have we sown our fields!') \]
\[ \text{Ecloga 1, 67-72} \]

These six lines near the end of the poem strongly suggest that the first \textit{Ecloga} is a sad poem marked by the embitterment and despair caused by expelling the small farmers, which makes it a poem with a ‘political’ content.

Scholars generally accept that \textit{Ecloga} 2 (together with 3) is Vergilius’ earliest work.153 The second \textit{Ecloga} is a love poem in Hellenistic fashion against a Vergilian background showing the contrast between the simple and good life in the country and the spoiling threat of the city. The poem tells us that the shepherd Corydon is hopelessly in love with the boy Alexis, who is kept by their master in town. The poem suggests the power of the absentee landlord over the life of the farmer.

In the third \textit{Ecloga} the threat to pastoral life is maintained. The opening concerns the lack of care of the herdsmen, Menalcas and Damoetas, for their sheep and the suffering of the flocks. The opening presents the dark side of their work when they destroy the vines (line 11) \textit{atque mala vitis incidere falce novellas} (‘and hacking tender vine shoots with a malicious pruning knife’) or try to steal goats (lines 17 and 18) \textit{non ego te vidi Damonis, pessime},

\[ ^{152} \text{Goold, 1992, 110.} \]
\[ ^{153} \text{Clausen, 1994, 238.} \]
caprum/excipere insidiis [...] (‘Didn’t I see you, rascal, trapping Damon’s [the owner’s] goat [...]?’).

They decide to turn to poetry and commence a singing-match. They settle on the prices. Menalcas’ price is a pair of beautiful beech cups and Damoetas also brings a pair of goblets along; ‘these are strange objects for a humble shepherd to be carrying around – esoteric and highly cultivated.’ Thus, these simple country folk have the unexpected qualities of appreciation of the beauty of the arts. The singing starts with offering their respect to Jupiter and Apollo followed by singing the praises of their loves. Then in line 84 Asinius Pollio appears, the lover of pastoral poetry and poet himself. At the time of writing this Ecloga Vergilius and Pollio were friends and by introducing him Vergilius makes the point that in good poetry simple country life and the sophistication of the elite can meet. Thus, all people who love Pollio’s poetry can aspire to the same success. The lines 88-89 say:

\[\begin{align*}
D. & \text{Qui te, Pollio, amat, veniat quo te quoque gaudet;} \\
   & \text{mella fluant illi, ferat et rubus asper amomum.}
\end{align*}\]

(‘May he who loves you, Pollio, come where he rejoices that you, too, have come! For him may honey flow and the bramble bear spices!’)

\[\text{Ecloga 3, 88-89}\]

In my opinion, Vergilius who, at that time, was a poet just beginning and an inspired follower of the Neotenic movement, speaks about himself. When he wrote this poem, probably in 42 B.C., he had just gone through or was still experiencing the trauma of the possible expropriation of the family farm and thus he was emotionally very much involved with the country life. He expresses the wish to be a poet of pastoral song and to reach the same heights as Pollio. The poem ends in a positive vein. Poetry has a stimulating effect on the two shepherds: from line 92 onwards they change into responsible men. Their singing-match ends a draw.

I read the two Eclogae 2 and 3 as a statement of Vergilius on the noble values of life in the countryside, regrettably under threat. However, Vergilius is determined to call attention to the farmer’s life and his tribulations in poetry which, with the help of the gods, will match up to the best of his time. The two poems together are the roadmap of his future work.

The following poem was probably written in 40 B.C., but not later than 37 when Antonius broke with Octavia; Ecloga 4 is the famous poem in which the poet writes about the birth of a saviour and which has been hijacked by the early Christians as foretelling the birth of Christ. The poem gives us Vergilius’ vision of the Golden Age, namely that this age will be restored to man and that the restoration will coincide with the birth of a child. This was to happen when Asinius Pollio was consul in 40. The pact of Brundisium between Antonius and Octavianus had brought this about and there was hope of a lasting peace. I will quote the whole passage, lines 4 till 14.\footnote{\footnote{Putnam, 1970, 125.}}

\[\text{Vtima Cumaei venit iam carminis aetas;}\]
magnus ab integro saeclorum nascitur ordo.
iam redit et virgo, redunt Saturnia regna,
iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto.
tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum
desinet ac toto surget gens aurea mundo,
casta fave Lucina: tuus iam regnat Apollo.
teque aede decus hoc aevi, te consule, inibit,
Pollio, et incipient magni procedere menses;
te duce, si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri,
inrita perpetua solvent formidine terras.

(‘Now is come the last age of Cumaean song;
the great line of centuries begins anew.
Now the Virgin returns, the reign of Saturn returns;
now a new generation descends from heaven on high.
Only do you, pure Lucina, smile on the birth of a child, under
whom the iron brood shall at last cease and a golden race
spring up throughout the world! Your own Apollo now is king!
And in your consulship, Pollio, yes, yours, shall this glorious
age begin, and the mighty months commence their march;
under your sway any lingering traces of our guilt shall become
void and release the earth from its continual dread.’)
Ecloga 4, 4-14

The child concerned was the hoped-for son of Antonius and Octavia whose marriage solemnised the pact.\textsuperscript{156} For the contemporary reader it was a son of Antonius who was to be expected and not one of Octavianus: in 40 B.C. the former was the great prince of Rome. The marriage of Antonius and Octavia produced a daughter and was dissolved soon after, when Antonius returned to Cleopatra. Lines 15-17 tell us more about the expected child who as son of Antonius would descend from Hercules (as Antonius claimed).\textsuperscript{157}

\textit{ille deum vitam accipiet divisque videbit
permixtos heroas et ipse videbitur illis,
pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus orbem.}
(‘He shall have the gift of divine life, shall see heroes mingled
with gods, and shall himself be seen by them, and shall rule the
world to which his father’s prowess brought peace’)

\textsuperscript{156} Clausen, 1994, 121-125; Goold, 1992, 110.
\textsuperscript{157} Williams, 1974, 44-46; Williams states in this essay, written in 1974, that the child could have been born from the marriage of Octavianus and Scribonia who had married a few weeks before Brundisium. However, he (Williams, 1968, 283) states earlier that Vergilius deliberately had kept his options open, as ‘it saved Virgil’s poem both from a too embarrassingly close relationship to contemporary historical reality and from a premature and ludicrous obsolescence should the child turn out to be a girl or a moron or no child at all.’ I do not concur with Williams’ view, but it does not alter the main point which Vergilius makes in the poem anyway: he accepted a succession in a quasi-royal line which corresponded with his views on the desirability of a monarchy in Rome. Moreover, Vergilius was not a man to be too easily embarrassed once he had committed himself to a view. Thus, I consider Goold’s suggestion that the poem is about a child of Antonius and Octavia very credible, as it reflects the political situation in 40 B.C. See also Clausen, 1994, 125. ‘Failure of historical perspective vitiates much that has been written about the Fourth Eclogue.’ (italics are mine).
Particularly line 17 is interesting as Vergilius expected that Antonius – and not Octavianus – would bring peace to Italia (\textit{pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus orbem}). This was all part and parcel of the political reality of the years immediately after Iulius Caesar’s death when Antonius was the prominent leader. In the poem, however, Vergilius testifies that he expected that the son would rule and thus he expected some form of hereditary succession in a quasi-royal line. At the time this was most likely to be in the line of Antonius. Vergilius belonged to Antonius’ party and was befriended with Pollio, at that time one of Antonius’ most trusted lieutenants.

\textit{Ecloga 4} is a poem of hope for peace and the return of order, particularly order to farming lands of Italia and, as the child grows up, the expansion of Roman power, particularly in the East (\textit{ad Troiam magnus mittetur Achilles}) (line 36). The blessings of the ‘Golden Age’ were to spread over the whole earth and the land would bring forth the produce without hard labour. However, things worked out differently. The Pact of Brundisium did not hold, Octavianus had to fight several civil wars and eventually had to confront Marcus Antonius; in the end the power struggle had to be decided in the sea battle near Actium. Vergilius develops another view on farmer’s work; in the \textit{Georgica} he extols the need and blessings of hard work.

I give a brief selection from the passage where Vergilius describes this paradisiacal state:

\begin{quote}
\begin{align*}
ipaes lacte domum referent distenta capellae \\
ubera, nec magnos metuent armenta leones; [...] \\
pauca tamen suberunt priscæ vestigia fraudis, [...] \\
erunt etiam altera bella \\
atque iterum \textit{ad Troiam magnus mittetur Achilles}. \\
hinc, ubi iam firmata virum te fecerit aetas, [...] \\
omnis feret omnia tellus. [...] \\
adgrede o magnos (aderit iam tempus) honores, [...] \\
o mihi tum longae maneat pars ultima vitae, \\
spiritus et quantum sat erit tua dicere facta: \\
(‘Unbidden, the goats will bring home their udders swollen with milk, and the cattle will not fear huge lions. [...] \\
Yet will a few traces of old-time sin live on, [...] \\
a second war will be fought, \\
and great Achilles be sent again to Troy. \\
Next, when now the strength of years has made you a man, [...] \\
every land will bear all fruits. [...] \\
O enter upon your high honours – the hour will soon be here – [...] \\
I pray that the twilight of a long life may then be vouchsafed me, and inspiration enough to hymn your deeds!’) \\
\end{align*}
\end{quote}

\textit{Ecloga 4}, 21-22, 31, 35-37, 39, 48 and 53-54

All this befell Octavianus and Vergilius was present for another twenty years to ‘hymn his deeds’. The last two lines (53 and 54) suggest that Vergilius had intended to eulogise the new
prince on his own initiative and not because he was ordered to do so in the context of a propaganda exercise. At the time of writing he could not know that he had to transfer his allegiance to Octavianus. But when he saw that the latter brought peace, he started to sing his praises.

The fifth Ecloga is the first of a number of bucolic poems (Eclogae 5-8) in which Vergilius shows his preference for pastoral poetry; at the time he belonged after all to the Neoteric movement and he leaned strongly on Hellenistic poets as Theocritus or Callimachus. However, the present poems also contain references to actuality, which lie deeply hidden in the text. One reads about the deep love of Vergilius for the countryside, the ‘simple and honest’ life of the shepherd and the suffering of the land and the farmer. It is as if he wanted to show the relativity of political business and military successes and as if he wished to stress where the real roots of the people of Italian land and cities lay.

Ecloga 5 is about two men, a younger, the newcomer Mopsus, and an older one, the shepherd Menalcas, who decide to make music and to sing. An example of allusion is Vergilius’ use of the name of Mopsus; the name returns in Ecloga 8 and in both poems the name refers to a stranger (see note 158). In my opinion, ‘Mopsus’ alludes to the men who after the recent expropriations moved to the area where earlier only the small holders and shepherds worked and lived. In the text of the present Ecloga one can find several indications. The first is in the opening line of the poem: CUR non, Mopse, boni quoniam convenimus ambo,... consemimus [...]? (‘Mopsus, now that we have met, good men both,... – why don’t we sit together [...]?’). In the Loeb edition ‘covenimus’ has been translated as ‘have met’. This does not necessarily mean: ’met for the first time’, but it gives a formal meaning to the meeting, such as ‘we have come together.’ This formality may be the result of Menalcas’ feeling of apprehension about the intentions of recently arrived Mopsus and of their short acquaintance. There is a second indication in the manner in which Menalcas pays young Mopsus compliments and grovels before the new man. During the wrangling as to who will sing first and where, one reads in lines 8-9:

Me. Montibus in nostris solus tibi certat Amyntas.
Mo. Quid, si idem certet Phoebum superare canendo?
(Me. Among our hills your only rival is Amyntas.
Mo. He might just as well compete with Apollo in song.)

Ecloga 5, 8-9

Mopsus appears to feel rather superior and in the words of Clausen: ‘Menalcas tactfully changes the subject and invites Mopsus to begin.’

The younger one starts with a song about Daphnis’ death. One can read an allusion to the actual state of the countryside in Mopsus’ song and Putnam remarks on it when he discusses the passage (lines 20-44) and especially the opening lines of this passage, Ecloga 5, 20-23:

158 Clausen, 1994, 153, 175-177. An example of Vergilius’ inspiration by Theocritus is the former’s choice of the shepherd’s names in the Eclogae. Many of these come from Theocritus’ Idylls, such as Tityrus, Thyrisis, Menalcas, Corydon and others. But not Mopsus. Mopsus (Μόψος) was a mythological hunter and warrior who was mentioned by Apollonius Rhodos. Perutelli, 1995, 42-44. See also Clausen, 1994, 155 about Mopsus’ name in Ecloga 5. Clausen says there: ’Mopse, not a pastoral name before Vergilius; perhaps borrowed from Ap. Rhod. 3.916-18.’
**Exstinctum Nymphae crudeli funere Daphnim flebant [...]**,  
*cum complexa sui corpus miserabile nati*,  
*atque deos atque astra vocat crudelia mater.*  
(‘For Daphnis, cut off by a cruel death, the Nymphs wept, [...] when, clasping her son’s piteous corpse, his mother cried out on the cruelty of both gods and stars.’)  
*Ecloga* 5, 20-23

Putnam says:  

‘With his opening words we sense a reason for Mopsus’ changes [i.e. themes as exciting, strange, or novel to the bucolic mode]. To sing of death in a sylvan setting is ominous enough; the elegiac tone is not consonant with the pastoral world’s assumed idealism. But to mourn for the “cruel” demise of Daphnis, bucolic hero par excellence, is to hint at the ruin of the landscape. No wonder that Mopsus does not wish to sing his words to hazels [but rather in a cave], the very trees who must bear witness to nature’s sorrow at Daphnis’ loss!’

Further in the same passage the theme of destruction of the pastoral paradise is mentioned again by Mopsus. Lines 38-39:

*pro molli viola, pro purpureo narcisso*  
*carduus et spinis surgit paliurus acutis.*  
(‘Instead of the soft violet, instead of the gleaming narcissus, the thistle rises up and the sharp-spiked thorn.’)  
*Ecloga* 5, 38-39

It is time for Menalca’s reply. Daphnis has been deified as lines 56-57 show:

*Candidus insuetum miratur limen Olympi*  
*sub pedibusque videt nubes et sidera Daphnis.*  
(‘Daphnis, in radiant beauty, marvels at Heaven’s unfamiliar threshold, and beneath his feet beholds the clouds and the stars.’)  
*Ecloga* 5, 56-57

Nature is restored and peace has returned as we read in the lines 58-61:

*ergo alacris silvas et cetera rura voluptas*  
*Panaque pastoresque tenet Dryadasque puellas*  
*nec lupus insidias pecori, nec retia cervis*  
*ulla dolum meditantur: amat bonus otia Daphnis.*  
(‘Therefore frolic glee seizes the woods and all the countryside,

---

159 Putnam, 1970, 172-173 (*italics* are mine).
Vergilius points at the restoring power of nature itself as the ‘bucolic hero par excellence’ is among the gods and the poet wants to show that the return to normality is not due to political forces. One would expect Vergilius to express this view at that stage in his development: a poet just beginning who saw the ravages of political strife which was still raging when he wrote this poem (about 40 B.C.), and who could not yet see any sign of peace and stability. The latter had to come from within. This commentary makes Ecloga 5 a poem with ‘private political’ content.

The poem is also about poetry and its healing power. As Putnam points out:

‘Nevertheless it is as an ars poetica and not so much as a vehicle for new ideas that the poem looks ahead. [...] The next poem puts the ars poetica in the place of primary importance. [...] Hence the position of Eclogue 5 in the book as a whole proves to have been carefully chosen. It sums up the past in idealistic strains which ring harmoniously next to its predecessor. Yet it also prepares the way for the next five poems which, each in its special way, examine particular facets of poetic expression.’

I would add that the second half of the book of the Bucolica from the fifth onwards shows Vergilius as the man who sees the beauty of the small-scale world and as a man who values conservation.

In the sixth, seventh and eighth Eclogae the themes of the fifth are maintained. The sixth starts as a recusatio when Vergilius declines to write about Alfenus Varus’ military successes. He will write pastoral poems as lines 6-8 testify:

\[
\begin{align*}
nunc ego (namque super tibi erunt qui dicere laudes, \\
vare, tuas cupiant et tristia condere bella) \\
agrestem tenui meditabor harundine Musam. \\
(‘And now – bards in plenty will you find eager to sing your praises, Varus, and build the story of grim war – now will I woo the rustic Muse on slender reed’) \\
Ecloga 6, 6-8
\end{align*}
\]

Two young shepherds, as usual, find a drunken Silenus asleep in a cave and awaken him, aided by the beautiful Naiad Aegle. They make him sing. Silenus sings first of the creation of the world and mythological figures, such as Pyrrha, Saturnus, Prometheus and Pasiphaë and her bull. Vergilius may suggest with the impossible and unhappy love of the woman for the bull that not all was happiness for the human race in the mythological past. The bull has the perfect pastoral environment and the love (lines 53-54) which the woman lacks when she roams through the countryside as line 52 suggests. The passage of the lines 52-55 says:

\[
a, virgo infelix, tu nunc in montibus erras:
\]
Ille latus niveum molli fultus hyacintho
ilice sub nigra pallentis ruminat herbas
aut aliquam in magno sequitur grege. [...]
('Ah! unhappy girl, now you roam the hills;
he, pillowing his snowy side on soft hyacinths,
under a dark ilex chews the pale grass,
or courts some heifer in the populous herd. [...]
Ecloga 6, 52-55

Without wanting to give this passage a ‘Christian’ interpretation, I would suggest that Vergilius points at a form of Fall of man in mythological times and the consequence thereof that man destroys nature through his aberrations; this is what he saw happening to his own environment in Italia.

Vergilius shows that he knows how to write the best of bucolic poetry, when suddenly Silenus sings of C. Cornelius Gallus, a good friend of Vergilius, who meets Linus, ‘the divinely inspired shepherd’, on Mount Helicon and who ‘gives him the pipes of Hesiod’ (lines 64-73). In this way Vergilius seems to ask his friend to start writing another kind poetry. Putnam sees this as ‘the renunciation of a poetry of emotion in favor of a higher, more aloof, more descriptive sort, like that of the shepherd Hesiod, wherein the poet, though he may sing of creation and love, is above this passion himself’. It is impossible to confirm Putnam’s hypothesis and equally impossible to see whether Gallus followed this good advice. Although much of the poem is about poetry, the reference to the derangement of Pasiphaë may be seen as a commentary on actual events, namely the destruction of the countryside. I see Ecloga 6 as a poem with ‘private political’ content.

In the seventh, Meliboeus (perhaps Vergilius?) encounters two Arcadian shepherds, Corydon, whom we also met in the second Ecloga, and Thyrsis and a third person, Daphnis. These three are together while the two herdsmen are cantare pares et respondere parati (‘ready in a singing match to start, ready to make reply’) (line 5). Daphnis is there to represent the ideal pastoral poet and to set the standards by his presence. The serious singing begins in line 29 as the shy and gentle Corydon and the smug budding poet Thyrsis offer their praises, one to Diana and the other to Priapus, and both to Galatea, to other gods such as Bacchus and Venus and finally to love and nature. The poem is set against the background of pastoral life in which a sharp contrast is made between the positive, loving and generous attitude to nature of Corydon and the pessimistic, crude and cheap attitude of Thyrsis. The poet shows the attitude of the latter in for instance the lines 33-34 which refer to Thyrsis’ lack of interest:

Sinum lactis et haec te liba, Priape, quotannis
exspectare sat est: custos es pauperis horti.

('A bowl of milk, Priapus, and these cakes once a year, are all you can expect from me; the garden you watch is poor.
Ecloga 7, 33-34

In line 57 we are confronted with a similar picture of Thyrsis: Aret ager, vitio moriens sitit aëris herba ('The field is parched; the grass is athirst, dying in the tainted air,’).

---

Vergilius shows us these contrasting attitudes in order to denounce the changes which were taking place in farming in Italia, which he saw as negative and reprehensible. Furthermore the seventh Ecloga can be read as an allusion on the one hand to the genuine farmers and herdsmen of old with their deep love for their flocks and the country (Corydon), and on the other hand as an allusion to the uninterested ‘nouveaux riches’, the new landowners (Thrysis). There were many of the latter who had made their fortunes during and after the civil war and through the land confiscations. Vergilius saw that in the process most of the smallholders had been reduced to beggary and that his old beloved Italian countryside had disappeared. Therefore, this poem is not only about poetry but also a critical statement on the part of Vergilius about social and political developments in his time. The criticism in this poem with a ‘political’ content was directed at Octavianus as well who was personally very much involved in the expropriations and the resettlements of veterans.

Immediately after the opening lines of the eighth Ecloga Vergilius mentions an unnamed patron about whom Clausen remarks: ‘were they [lines 6-13] removed, their absence would not be felt.’ Yet, I think it is important that the likely identity of the patron is established as the message of the poem may depend on it. Although Clausen sees the lines as superfluous he analyses the question thoroughly and comes to the compelling conclusion that the patron is Octavianus and not Pollio. His first argument is taken from history and geography: in lines 6-7 Vergilius says about the patron: *tu mihi, seu magni superas iam saxa Timavi,/sive oram Illyrici legis aequoris,* (‘But you, whether you are already sailing past the rocks of great Timavus/or coasting the shore of the Illyrian sea,’). These lines were seen to apply to Pollio’s return to Italia after his campaign in 39 B.C. against the Parthini in Dalmatia and this would have meant a rather roundabout and dangerous sea journey from the region of the Parthini via Timavus which is about 650 kilometers to the North West. A crossing of the Adriatic to Brundisium would have been more comfortable. Octavianus, however, campaigned in Dalmatia in the Timavus region in 35 B.C. If Octavianus is meant, the poem’s date is 35. A second point is the reference to Sofokles in lines 9 and 10: *en erit ut liceat totum mihi ferre per orbem/sola Sophocleo tua carmina digna coturno?* (‘Shall I be ever free to spread your songs throughout the world,/that alone are worthy of the buskin of Sophocles?’). It is thought that this may refer to Octavianus who had begun composing his tragedy Ajax. Pollio was too well-known as a tragic poet to receive such an expression of hope for the future. A third argument is found in a quotation from Quintilianus’ book 10.1, 91-92 where in congratulating Domitianus ‘on his accession to the throne, and extolling his [Domitianus’] literary genius, he [Quintilianus] quotes the last line of Virgil’s dedication.’ This last line is line 13 which reads: *inter victrices hederam tibi serpere laurus* (‘The ivy creeps between your conqueror’s bays.’). The point which Clausen makes is that Vergilius’ dedication must have been to Octavianus as Quintilianus would later not have used a dedication to the rather unknown Pollio. Finally, there are the words of lines 11 and 12: *accipe iussis/carmina coepta tuis

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162 Clausen, 1994, 233.
163 Clausen, 1994, 233-237. See also Putnam, 1970, 255 who considers Pollio as the patron.
164 Quintilianus’ abbreviated text reads as follows: [...]Germanicum Augustum ab institutis studiiis deflexit cura terrarum, [...] Quem praesidentes studiiis deae proprius audirent? Cui magis suas artis aperiret familiare numen Minerva? [...] Nos tamen sacra litterarum coelentis feres, Caesar, si non tacitum hoc praeterimus et Vergilianum certe versu testamur

*inter victrices hederam tibi serpere laurus.*

(‘[...] Germanicus Augustus [Domitianus] has been diverted from the literary pursuits he had begun by his responsibilities for the world, [...] Whom would the goddesses who preside over literature listen to with closer
(‘Accept the songs essayed at your bidding’). According to Clausen the word *iussis* can only refer to Octavianus as he could give orders and not Pollio. This argument is dubious as *iubere* often means ‘request, strongly suggest’ or indeed ‘bid’ in the sense of ‘invite’, as in the Loeb translation.

It seems likely that Octavianus was the patron to whom Vergilius dedicated *Ecloga 8*. If that is the case the remainder of the poem assumes a special significance. Two shepherds, Damon and Alphesiboeus each sing a long song. Damon’s song is about a shepherd who lost the girl whom he had hoped to marry but who was given away to another. The following lines tell the story. Lines 26-30 and 32-35 say:

> Mopso Nysa datur: quid non speremus amantes?
> iungentur iam grypes equis, aevoque sequenti
> cum canibus timidi venient ad pocula damnae.
> Mopse, novas incide faces: tibi dicitur uxor.
> sparge, marite, nuces: [...]  
> o digno coniuncta viro, dum despicis omnis,
> dumque tibi est odio mea fistula, dumque capellae
> hirsutumque supercilium promissaque barba,
> nec curare deum credis mortalia quemquam -

("To Mopsus is Nysa given! For what may we lovers not look? Griffins now shall mate with mares, and, in the age to come, the timid deer shall come with hounds to drink.

Mopsus, cut new torches! For you they bring the bride!
Scatter the nuts, bridegroom! [...]
O wedded to a worthy lord! even while you scorn all men, and while you hate my pipe and my goats, my shaggy eyebrows and unkempt beard, and think that no god recks aught of the deeds of men!")

*Ecloga 8*, 26-30 and 32-35

Putnam interprets the lament of Damon’s shepherd as a case of having lost his girl to another shepherd. But suppose that Mopsus is not a shepherd. The text gives some indications in lines 32 and 33. Nysa is *coniuncta digno viro* (‘wedded to a worthy lord’) and she is *dumque tibi est odio mea fistula, dumque capellae* (‘while you hate my pipe and my goats’). One attention? To whom would his patron deity, Minerva, more readily reveal her arts? [...] Yet, Caesar, you will forgive me, as a worshipper at the shrine of literature, if I refuse to pass this by, and insist on testifying at least that, as Vergil has it, The ivy creeps between your conqueror’s bays.

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165 Putnam, 1970, 259 assumes that the shepherd of Damon’s song is called Tityrus, the name in line 55. Equally on page 278 he attributes the name of Amaryllis to the woman in Alphesiboeus’ song on the basis of the lines 101 and 106. He admits that no direct attributions are made in Vergilius’ text but he gives the names ‘to save confusion’. I will not use these names but describe the two as ‘Damon’s shepherd’ and ‘Alphesiboeus’ woman’.

166 Putnam, 1970, 261-278.

167 Line 31 *dum despicis omnes* reads in the Loeb translation ‘even while you scorn all men’. In my opinion, ‘while you despise everyone’ is a better rendering (as Putnam gives on page 266). The latter translation suggests that Nysa despises her old environment due to her changed circumstances. The first translation is somewhat strange just after the wedding party.
would hardly expect her to marry another shepherd when she hates his work so much. Therefore, in my opinion Mopsus is not a shepherd but a newcomer, perhaps a soldier to whom a piece of land had been given. The social order has been upset and the shepherd’s life has been irrevocably changed. Even nature is confused, when griffins mate with mares. Strangers set the tune and what he has known and loved since childhood is lost. If Damon’s song is read in this way the dedication to Octavianus is suddenly clear. Vergilius wants him to be aware of the deep trouble in the countryside and of the destruction of traditional life. Octavianus ought to do something about it. After this Alphesiboeus’ song is about a woman who has lost her coniunx; he has left her and the countryside for the city. Lines 64-68 describe the situation:

A. *Effer aquam et molli cinge haec altaria vitta,*
*verbenasque adole pinguis et mascula tura,*
*coniugis ut magicis sanos avertere sacrís*
*experiar sensus; nihil hic nisi carmina desunt.*
*ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnim.*

("Bring out water, and wind soft wool round this altar; and burn rich herbs and male frankincense, that I may try with magic rites to turn to fire my lover’s coldness of mood. Naught is lacking here save songs. Bring Daphnis home from town, bring him, my songs!")

*Ecloga* 8, 64-68

In these lines there is a resemblance with the song of Damon. His shepherd had lost his girl Nysa to a man who did not belong to the shepherd’s world and Alphesiboeus sings about a woman who lost her man Daphnis to a girl who did not belong to the woman’s world either. In the song of Alphesiboeus the peace and quiet of the country has again been overturned. However, the solutions to these sorrows are different. Damon finishes his song by saying (line 59 and 60) *praeceps aërii specula de montis in undas/deferar* (‘Headlong from some towering mountain peak I will throw myself into the waves;’). Alphesiboeus woman, however, places her trust in the power of magic and song, as lines 69-71 testify.

*carmina vel caelo possunt deducere Lunam,*
*carminibus Circe socios mutavit Vlixi,*
*frigidus in pratis cantando rumpitur anguis.*

(‘Songs can even draw the moon down from heaven; by songs Circe transformed the comrades of Ulysses; with song the cold snake in the meadows is burst asunder.’)

*Ecloga* 8, 69-71

I interpret *Ecloga* 8 as a poem about the destruction of normal life in the countryside. There are two reactions: Damon’s shepherd is driven to suicide but Alphesiboeus’ woman uses poetry as a healing power. The woman is the stronger personage, although both suffer from the disruptions of their lives. The shepherd in the song of Damon and the woman in the song of Alphesiboeus represent the positive values of pastoral life, such as home, fidelity and genuine love. Nysa and Daphnis however, represent the opposite values.

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168 See note 158 on page 64.
At the end of the poem, when Alphesiboeus finishes his song in line 109, all is well for the woman. Line 109, a variation on the refrain, says: *parcite, ab urbe venit, iam parcite carmina, Daphnis.* ('Cease! Daphnis comes home from town; cease now, my songs!'). Vergilius testifies that the values of pastoral life as expressed through her song – through his poetry – win in the end. This is his message of hope. Putnam’s closing remarks about the eighth Ecloga are: ‘The first song is essentially a tragic vision, looking at the end of a pastoral dream. The second offers a renewal of happiness after a time of uncertainty’. However, I do not share his analysis of the principal message of the poem. Putnam’s analysis is that ‘like Eclogues 6 and 7 it [Ecloga 8] is a poem about the possibilities of bucolic verse, as form and as idea’, and ‘the totality is once more a meditation on bucolic poetry, this time [in Ecloga 8] specifically concerned with how love can either destroy or recreate the pastoral myth’. Of course this is one message of the poem, but in my opinion the eighth Ecloga carries another message as well, which is that the civil war and its aftermath had destroyed the way of living in the countryside and with it the essential values of Italia. Vergilius is critical of Octavianus – to whom the poem was probably dedicated – who, in his struggle for power, shares in the responsibility for the destruction. The eighth Ecloga has ‘political’ content.

The connection of the ninth Ecloga and the first has been discussed above. Both poems deal with the evictions of the farmers and herdsmen from their land when many areas in Italia were given to veterans after the battle of Philippi. The place of Ecloga 9 in the book after 6, 7 and 8 is apt as the poem describes again the destruction of the countryside.

But in the case of the ninth there is more at stake. Firstly, the poem’s opening is very direct in describing the effects of the land confiscations. One can feel the anger and embitterment of the dispossessed in the first six lines, when Moeris, who is now a tenant on his own old farm, brings his payment in kind to the new owner who lives in town.

*L. Qvo te, Moeri, pedes? an, quo via ducit, in urbem?*

*M. O Lycida, vivi pervenimus, advena nostri (quod numquam veriti sumus) ut possessor agelli diceret: ‘haec mea sunt; veteres migrate coloni.’ nunc victi, tristes, quoniam fors omnia versat, hos illi (quod nec vertat bene) mittimus haedos. (‘Lycidas. Whither afoot, Moeris? Is it, where the path leads to town? Moeris. O Lycidas, we have lived to see the day – an evil never dreamed – when a stranger, holder of our little farm, could say: “This is mine; begone, old tenants!” Now, beaten and cowed, since Chance rules all, we send him these kids – our curse go with them!’)*

Ecloga 9, 1-6

Secondly, Vergilius seems to be personally involved as appears from the conversation between Lycidas and Moeris. The former says in lines 7-10:

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L. Certe equidem audieram, qua se subducere colles incipiunt mollique iugum demittere clivo, usque ad aquam et vete"es, iam fracta cacumina, fagos, omnia carminibus vestrum servasse Menalcan.

(‘Lycidas. Yet surely I had heard that, from where the hills begin to rise, then sink their ridge in a gentle slope, down to the water and the old beeches with their now shattered tops, your Menalcas had with his songs saved all.’)

Ecloga 9, 7-10

Moeris sceptically says in lines 11-13 that one hears so many stories which are worth nothing.

M. Audieras, et fama fuit; sed carmina tantum nostra valent, Lycida, tela inter Martia quantum Chaonias dicunt aquila veniente columbia.  

(‘Moeris. You had heard, and so the story ran. But amid the weapons of war, Lycidas, our songs avail as much as, they say Dodona’s doves when the eagle comes.’)

Ecloga 9, 11-13

And several lines later:

M. Immo haec, quae Varo necdum perfecta canebat  

‘Vare, tuum nomen, superet modo Mantua nobis, Mantua vae miserae nimium vicina Cremonae, cantantes sublime ferent ad sidera cycni.’  

(‘Moeris. Why not these lines, still unfinished, which he sang to Varus: “Varus, your name, let but Mantua be spared us – Mantua alas! too near ill-fated Cremona – singing swans shall bear aloft to the stars.”’)

Ecloga 9, 26-29

Wilkinson makes a very credible suggestion – supported by Servius – that these last three passages refer to the efforts of Cornelius Gallus, the friend of Vergilius, to mediate between Vergilius and Alfenus Varus who was in charge of the land confiscations to exempt the area of Mantua.\(^{172}\)

The region which is described in the passage of the lines 7-9 is presumably the

\[^{172}\text{Wilkinson, 1997, 29-34, especially 29-31. The renderings into English of the passages by Servius are by Wilkinson and adapted by myself. The text of Servius is from his commentary on the Ecloga 9, 7-10 (Teubner edition, Thilo, 1887, 109-110) and refers very specifically to the fact that the Mantuan area was involved: usque ad eum autem locum perticam limitarem Octavius Musa porrexerat, limitator ab Augusto datus, id est per quindecim milia passuum agris Mantuani, cum Cremonensis non sufficeret […]. alii agrum suum volunt descripsisse Vergilium, ut ostenderet ex utraque parte esse clivosum, (‘To this spot Octavius Musa, the boundary commissioner [limitator] appointed by Augustus, had extended his surveying-poles, that is to say, through fifteen miles of Mantuan territory, since that of Cremona had proved insufficient. […] others want to see that Vergilius has described his own land to show that it is steep to both sides’). Gallus was in charge of taxing the townships in Northern Italia. Servius quotes in his commentary on line 10 ‘a passage from a speech by ‘Cornelius’ (presumably Gallus) against Varus’. The passage reads as follows: quod Mantuanis per iniquitatem Alfeni Vari, qui agrum divisit, praeter palustria nihil relictum sit, sicut ex oratone Cornelii in Alfenum ostenditur cum iussus tria milia passus a muro in diversa relinquere, vix octingentos passus
Mantuan and the shepherd poet Menalcas in line 10 stands perhaps for Vergilius himself. The next passage (lines 11-13) testifies that the efforts were not successful and that Mantua was involved in the expropriations as the force of arms, the *tela Martia* and the *aquila*, was stronger than poetry, *nostra carmina*. Vergilius’ frustration about the situation in the country can also be read in the lines 35-36.

\[
\textit{nam neque adhuc Vario videor nec dicere Cinna
digna, sed argutos inter strepere anser olores}
\]

(‘For as yet, methinks, I sing nothing worthy of a Varius or a Cinna, but cackle as a goose among melodious swans’)

*Ecloga* 9, 35-36

Although these words were spoken by one of the dispelled farmers, Lycidas, they can be seen as applying to Vergilius. Lycidas says that he is a poet as well, but that he is only a ‘cackling goose’ and not a ‘melodious swan’ as are Varius or Cinna. The frustrated Vergilius says that he is not capable of writing epic like Varius and that his pastoral poetry leads to nothing.\(^{173}\)

Yet, *Ecloga* 9 ends with a positive note. In lines 47-51 the farmers turn to the realities of the day.

\[
\textit{L. ecce Dionaei processit Caesaris astrum,}
\textit{astrum quo segetes gauderent frugibus et quo}
\textit{duceret apricis in collibus uva colorem.}
\textit{insere, Daphni, piros: carpent tua poma nepotes.}
\]

\textit{M. Omnia fert aetas, animum quoque; [...]
}\n
(‘Lycidas. See! the star of Caesar, seed of Dione, has gone forth-the star to make the fields glad with corn, and the grape deepen its hue on the sunny hills. Graft your pears, Daphnis; your children’s children shall gather the fruits you have sown.”

*Moeris.* Time robs us of all, even of memory; [...])

*Ecloga* 9, 47-51

It is likely that this *Ecloga* was written as one of Vergilius’ first around 40 B.C. and it was perhaps modified later. In fact Iulius Caesar had been murdered only four years earlier, Antonius was the champion of the Caesarian party and Octavianus’ star still stood very low. The expropriations had started. In this passage Caesar’s star presumably refers to the comet which had been seen after Iulius Caesar’s death and signified his deification, while Dione, the mother of Venus, signified the divine ancestress of Iulius Caesar. The passage can be interpreted as the ‘Caesarian’ Vergilius telling us that Iulius Caesar’s star had come and gone and

\[
\textit{aquae quae circumdata est admetireris reliquisti} \quad (\text{‘as due to the harshness of Alfenus Varus, who had divided the lands, nothing had been left for the Mantuans other than the marshes, as appears from a speech by Cornelius to Alfenus which says: when you [Varus] had been ordered to leave three miles from the wall in every direction, you scarcely left 800 paces of water which lie around it’). It may be that a piece of land belonging to Vergilius’ family was within this area and that the Cornelius was Cornelius Gallus. In that case it is credible indeed that the passage of Servius refers to Gallus’ involvement and perhaps to interventions on behalf of Vergilius’ farm.}
\]

\(^{173}\) See also Putnam, 1970, 313; he makes the point of Vergilius’ frustration as well, but he sees this as frustration as a poet. Putnam considers the passage as a *recusatio* to ‘try his hand at a narrative poem in celebration of his contemporaries’ by Vergilius.
that his ‘reign’ now belongs to the past.\(^{174}\) Of course he hopes for better times and that the *nepotes Daphni* will gather the fruits that Daphnus has sown. Eventually, coexistence between the pastoral life and Rome may be possible, as *omnia fert aetas, animum quoque* (‘Time robs us of all, even of memory,’). There is a mood of resignation as the two shepherds proceed on their journey to the town in the depths of misery. They are halfway and see the tomb of Bianor who was one of the mythical founders of Mantua. The land is dead and it is where *densas /agricolae stringent frondes* (‘farmers are lopping the thick leaves’). In these lines (58-61) Vergilius shows us the loss of the pastoral environment, where even the last shade has been removed. Lycidas suggests singing and Moeris’ answer contains a glimmer of hope. In the last line of the poem he says: *carmina tum melius, cum venerit ipse, canemus* (‘Our songs we shall sing the better, when the master [Menalcas] himself has come.’). To quote Putnam:\(^{175}\)

‘With the vivid directness of fact and symbol, Virgil shows the depredation which armed might can wreak on a helpless enemy whose strength is only spiritual. Taking full advantage of metaphor and ambiguity, heconjures up the fallen land through the shepherds’ eyes. Whatever the passing optimism of the quotations, it is cancelled with all the devices at a poet’s command. Once the impulse of arms has forced its way into the pastoral world, all its beauty is broken.’

Vergilius uses his poetic freedom to the fullest extent and *Ecloga* 9 is a highly critical ‘political’ poem. In the first and ninth *Ecloga* Vergilius writes openly about the land evictions. Similarly in some of the other *Eclogae* (seventh, eighth) which are often seen to be pastoral poetry and nothing more, he gives his ‘political’ view. In these poems Vergilius also gives messages about social and political conditions; he does so by ‘hiding’ references, often critical, in his poems which are allusions to what he saw and wanted to denounce. I have indicated these allusions when it seems to me that Vergilius has included them in the texts. It is not only in the *Eclogae*, his earliest work, that one comes across these. Below, when I discuss the *Georgica* and the *Aeneis*, I will regularly return to the subject of allusions as these are significant in his other work as well.

The last *Ecloga*, the tenth, is generally seen as an expression of Vergilius’ friendship with Cornelius Gallus, by inviting him into his pastoral world.\(^{176}\) Gallus, the writer of elegiac love poetry, is in Arcadia *indigno cum Gallus amore peribat* (‘when Gallus was pining with unrequited love.’) (line 10). After this Gallus seems to enjoy his life among the shepherds and flocks and he wants to be part of bucolic life. However, in the end, he rejects this life and in lines 63-64 he says farewell to pastoral life and returns to the elegiac liaison.\(^{177}\)

\[
[...]; ipsae rursus concedite silvae. 
non illum nostri possunt mutare labores, 
(‘[...]; once more farewell, even ye woods! 
No toils of ours can change that god,) 
Ecloga 10, 63-64
\]

\(^{174}\) The word *processit* can mean here not just ‘appear’, but can also have the meaning ‘pass’ or ‘elapse’.
\(^{175}\) Putnam, 1970, 332.
\(^{176}\) Clausen, 1994, 288-292; Coliero, 1979, 269.
\(^{177}\) Putnam, 1970, 342-394.
Gallus returns to his old genre, the love-elegy, and the poem ends with Vergilius expressing his respect for Gallus’ work in line 69 (omnia vincit Amor: et nos cedamus Amori. ('Love conquers all; let us, too, yield to Love!'). As Putnam remarks: ‘Gallus may pretend to embrace the pastoral spirit but his final decision is to renounce its aloofness and return to the battleground of love and war.’ The indignus amor (line 10) for his girl and the insanus amor (line 44) for work as a soldier. At the end of the poem Vergilius expresses his love and belief in poetry and shows his friendship for Gallus in lines 73-74.

Gallo, cuius amor tantum mihi crescit in horas
quantum vere novo viridis se subicit alnus.
('Gallus, for whom my love grows from hour to hour as fast as the green alder shoots up when spring is young.')
Ecloga 10, 73-74

Two passages refer to the actual political situation: in lines 14-17 Vergilius addresses Gallus.

pinifer illum etiam sola sub rupe iacentem
Maenalus, et gelidi fleverunt saxa Lycaei.
stant et oves circum (nostri nec paenitet illas,
necte paeniteat pecoris, divine poeta;
('For him, as he lay beneath a lonely rock, even pine-crowned Maenalus wept, and the crags of cold Lycaeus.
The sheep, too, stand around – they think no shame of us, and think you no shame of the flock, heavenly poet;')
Ecloga 10, 14-17

Clausen states that Gallus found himself in a very ‘un-bucolic’ landscape of ‘lonely rocks’ and ‘cold Lycaeus’, a mountain in Arcadia and the birthplace of Pan. Vergilius places Gallus in Arcadia, as a pastoral setting could no longer be found in destroyed Italia or war-torn Sicily, even though he invokes the Sicilian nymph Arethusa in the first line. In addition, Clausen remarks that Gallus was troubled by the sheep as he, a soldier and townsman, was not used to pastoral life. However, in my opinion it should be understood differently. Although Gallus remained Vergilius’ friend, he could not be shown as belonging to the pastoral world and as feeling comfortable in it, because Gallus had been working as a tax official in Northern Italia at the time of the land expropriations. In that capacity he may have been associated with the men who carried out the expulsions of the farmers and perhaps he was seen as someone who had contributed to the destruction of the countryside on the sideline. Therefore, Gallus was not a man who could be portrayed as fitting into a pastoral environment.

There is a possible second reference to actuality, namely the reference to Lycoris in line 2. Servius in his Commentary on Ecloga 10, 1-2 identifies Lycoris, Gallus’ love, with

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178 Putnam, 1970, 378; Pagán, 2004, 378-381. Victoria Pagán sees a connection between Gallus and Orpheus. This is why at the end of the Georgica ‘it makes sense that he [Vergilius] replaced Gallus with Orpheus.’
179 Clausen, 1994, 289-290. Maenalus and Lycaeus are both mountains of Arcadia.
180 Whitaker, 1988, 454-458. Whitaker states that this — with other arguments — means that Gallus did not write pastoral elegies.
181 See note 172 on page 72 of this book.
Cytheris, Antonius’ mistress. Supposing that the identification is correct, Vergilius shows by presenting her in his poem that he was well acquainted with the affairs of Antonius’ circle to which Gallus belonged and that he could write openly about these. Gallus suffered as Lycoris, or Cytheris, did not stay with him and ran off with another soldier, as Apollo himself had told him in lines 21-23.

omnes ‘unde amor iste’ rogant ‘tibi?’ venit Apollo, ‘Galle, quid insanis?’ inquit. ‘tua cura Lycoris perque nives alium perque horrida castra secuta est.’

(‘All ask: “Whence this love of yours?” Apollo came. “Gallus,” he said, “what madness this? Your sweetheart Lycoris has followed another amid snows and amid rugged camps.”)

Ecloga 10, 21-23

Perhaps it was not Antonius whom she had followed as she went to the Alpinae nives et frigora Rheni, a region which was not to Antonius’ liking. There is another option which is speculative, but worth offering. If the Alpinae nives et frigora Rheni are seen as Vergilius’ poetic way of describing any land north of Umbria, one could think of Mutina (modern Modena) where in 43 B.C. Antonius had laid siege to the town and was defeated by Octavianus. Lycoris Octavianum secuta est.

In spite of these two possible political references I have not classified this poem as ‘political’. I consider the references as good-humoured tongue-in-cheek and it seems to me that his regard for Gallus as a friend is the focus of this last Ecloga.

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182 Anderson, Parsons and Nisbet, 1979, 152-153; Clausen, 1994, 294; Servius’ text (Teubner edition, Thilo, 1887, 118-119) says:

Gallus amavit Cytheridem meretricem, libertam Volumnii, quae, eo spreto, Antonium euntem ad Gallas est secuta: propter quod dolorem Galli nunc videtur consolari Vergilius. […] LYCORIS pro ‘Cytheris’; licet enim poetis alia nomina pro aliis ponere.

(‘Gallus loved the prostitute Cytheris, a freedwoman of Volumnius, who, as she despised him [Gallus], had followed Antonius when he went to Gallia: therefore, it looks as if Vergilius relieves Gallus’ sorrow. […] LYCORIS in stead of ‘Cytheris’. Poets may substitute names.’).

The rendering into English is mine.

Syme states however: ‘Cytheris as Lycoris, the notion is highly plausible. Yet gentle dubitation intrudes. The scholars in late Antiquity [Servius] are capable of any fantasy or folly.’

In the article of Anderson et al. in The Journal of Roman Studies the discovery of a fragment of a poem of Cornelius Gallus, Vergilius’ friend and poet of love-elegies, in 1978 is described. The first line of the fragment refers to Lycoris and expresses Gallus’ sorrow, and perhaps irritation, at his abandonment by his beloved. It says: tristia, nequit[ia….]a Lycori tua. (‘….sad, Lycoris, by your misbehaviour.’). Anderson et al. make the very credible point that these lines were not written by Gallus in the period after 30 B.C. when he was prefect in Egypt, as these words would have been rather embarrassing for a man in his position. They state that the most likely date of writing these lines is 45 B.C.

183 Ecloga 10 was written between 42 and 35, but probably not later than 39 B.C. The siege of Mutina was in 43 B.C. The likely year in which Gallus wrote his elegy (45 B.C.) and the year of the events around Mutina (43 B.C.) do not need to be a contradiction. Lycoris’ literary model was presumably a well-known society woman or actress who maintained sexual relations with many men and Gallus might have portrayed her fickleness and his dismay - a favourite theme in love-elegy anyway - at any time in several poems; before 45, in 45 and after 45 B.C.
Looking at Vergilius’ book of *Eclogae* as a whole, one discerns the development in the contents of the poems. Putnam summarises this as follows:\(^{184}\)

‘The first eclogue shows what happens when the power to free or enslave is left in the hands of an autocracy; the ninth comments specifically on the place of poetry amid the results of civil war. The fourth, on the other hand, maintains that a union between the bucolic “landscape” and society can be achieved by a return of the Golden Age which the poet sees ahead. It would be oversimple to state that Virgil preserved the same balance between optimism and pessimism in his subsequent poetry. His admiration for the accomplishments of Rome is constantly tempered by a stronger, more negative awareness that they are not achieved without loss.’

I agree with Putnam’s assessment, but I am inclined to put more emphasis on the political stance which Vergilius took in the *Eclogae*. I interpret eight of the ten poems as dealing with actual matters. Five of these are outright ‘political’ poems, namely *Eclogae* 1, 4, 7, 8 and 9. All five deal with either the civil war or with hope of better times and were written between 40 B.C. and 35 B.C. (the date of writing of 7 is not known). Three of these five are critical of Octavianus or the political leaders in general.

The *Eclogae* present us with a picture of Vergilius as a man who harboured great love for ‘old Italia’, the land of farmers, and who was very concerned about the way the land was being destroyed and the smallholders were being expelled from their farms. In addition, Vergilius had personal experience of lawlessness and probably he had seen many killed. He regarded this as being a result of the long period of never-ending civil war and he held the leaders of the different factions responsible. At the time he wrote the *Eclogae* he kept his distance from Octavianus and showed himself to be critical of his actions.

### III.c. The Georgica: a didactic poem as well as a view of politics

Vergilius wrote the *Georgica* between 35 and 29 B.C. As the opening lines show, the four books were dedicated to Maecenas (*Quid faciat laetas segetes, quo sidere terram/vertere, Maecenas [...]*/hinc canere incipiam.[…]*) (‘What makes the crops joyous, beneath what star, Maecenas,/ it is well to turn the soil [...]/* hence shall I begin my song. [...]*/’): probably because Vergilius had been invited to join Maecenas’ circle of friends a few years before he commenced writing the *Georgica*.

It is a truism to say that the *Georgica* is more than a didactic poem about land, trees, cattle and bees. It has a very visible social and political content.

The political aspects can be shown if one collapses the complete work to just the opening and the finish. After addressing several of the gods, Vergilius wrote in the opening section (1, 5 and 24-28) of the first book of the *Georgica*:

\[
\text{Quid faciat laetas segetes, [...]} \\
\text{hinc canere incipiam. [...]} \\
\text{tuque adeo, quem mox quae sint habitura deorum} \\
\text{concilia incertum est, urbesne invisere, Caesar.}
\]

---

terrarumque velis curam, et te maximus orbis
auctorem frugum tempestatumque potentem
acciapt cingens materna tempora myrto,
(‘What makes the crops joyous, [...] hence shall I begin my song. [...] and you above all, Caesar, whom we know not what company of the gods shall claim ere long; whether you choose to watch over cities and care for our lands, that so the great globe may receive you as the giver of increase and lord of the seasons, wreathing your brows with your mother’s myrtle;’)
Georgica 1, 1, 5 and 24-28

And he closed 2152 lines later with the final lines (559-566) of the fourth book:

Haec super arvorum cultu pecorumque canebam
et super arboribus, Caesar dum magnum ad altum
fulminat Euphraten bello victorque volentis
per populos dat iura viamque adfectat Olympo.
illo Vergilium me tempore dulcis alebat
Parthenope studiis florentem ignobilis oti,
carmina qui lusi pastorum audaxque iuventa,
Tityre, te patulae cecini sub tegmine fagi.
(‘So much I sang in addition to the care of the fields, of cattle, and of trees, while great Caesar thundered in war by deep Euphrates and bestowed a victor’s laws on willing nations, and essayed the path to Heaven. In those days I, Virgil, was nursed by sweet Parthenope, and rejoiced in the arts of inglorious ease – I who toyed with shepherds’ songs, and in youth’s boldness, sang of you, Tityrus, under the canopy of a spreading beech.’)
Georgica 4, 559-566

Immediately in the opening lines (24-28) there is a reference to Caesar, Octavianus; Vergilius praises him and places him among the gods for the future, after he has announced in lines 1-5 that he will sing (canere incipiam) about agriculture. Many lines later he closes his didactic poem by saying that he has sung (canebam) about ‘care of the fields, of cattle and of trees’. However ‘he has been taking it easy in a cultured resort with a Greek name [Parthenope, which is Naples]. Caesar, on the other hand, has been working wonders...[...]. Virgil is concerned with the relationship of poetry and the traditional Roman values, as, on the view here put forward, he has been all through the poem.’185 In this and other ways Vergilius offers in the Georgica both poetry and views on Rome. This will be the subject of the discussion in this section.

This raises the question for whom the Georgica was written and what kind of farmer Vergilius had in mind. It is evident that only a highly sophisticated man could have appreci-

185 Griffin, 1979, 71-72; Griffin, 2005, 310-311.
ated the poem. This was generally not the free farmer who, together with his family, worked a small plot of land, but rather the absentee landlord or the owner of the large estate who lived in Rome or another city. Although these men were generally no active farmers themselves, they were sufficiently knowledgeable and did not need to be taught the basics, and indeed Vergilius’ writings on the subject were technically sound. Italia at large was an agricul- tural society and many people had ties with the land.\footnote{It was like the England of today where the possession of a piece of land is very desirable and bestows status.} It was like the England of today where the possession of a piece of land is very desirable and bestows status.

It is generally held that Hesiodus’ \textit{Works and Days} gave Vergilius the inspiration to write his didactic poem. Wilkinson remarks the following:\footnote{It seems more likely that the impulse [for writing the \textit{Georgica}] came from literature: having succeeded in becoming the Roman Theocritus [in the \textit{Bucolica}], Virgil aspired to be the Roman Hesiod, partly because he was interested in rustic life, partly because Lucretius [in \textit{De Rerum Natura}] had shown how great a didactic poem could be as poetry, and partly Hesiod, so much admired by the Alexandrians of the third century, interested the neo-Callimachean poets of the Neoteric movement and yet had not been appropriated.’

And elsewhere Wilkinson remarks: ‘Virgil’s [task was] to portray in the guise of instruction’.

Although Vergilius shows that he knew the technical side of farming on a smallholding, the \textit{Georgica} is not a handbook for farmers as the \textit{De agricultura} of M. Porcius Cato (234-149 B.C.) or the work in twelve books \textit{Rei rusticae libri} of Iunius Moderatus Columella (first century A.D.). It is not as comprehensive as the \textit{De Re Rustica} of M. Terentius Varro ‘Reatinus’ (116-27 B.C.). Vergilius himself remarks on different occasions that he has no wish to be complete. In the second proem to book 2 (39-44) he writes:

\begin{quote}
\textit{tuque ades inceptumque una decurre laborem, o decus, o famae merito pars maxima nostrae, Maecenas, pelagoque volans da vela patenti. non ego cuncta meis amplecti versibus opto, non, mihi si linguae centum sint oraque centum, ferrea vox. […]}
\end{quote}

(‘And you, Maecenas, my pride, my justest title to fame, come and traverse with me the toilsome course I have essayed, and spread your sails to speed over an open sea.
Not mine the wish to embrace all the theme within my verse, not though I had a hundred tongues, a hundred mouths, and a voice of iron! […]’)
\textit{Georgica} 2, 39-44

And in book 4, 147-148 he says:

\begin{quote}
\textit{verum haec ipse equidem spatiis exclusus iniquis}
\end{quote}

\footnote{Wilkinson, 1997, 56}
\footnote{Wilkinson, 1997, 183.}
praetero atque aliis post me memoranda relinquo.
(‘But all this I must pass by, constrained by narrow bounds, and leave to others after me to record.’)

*Georgica* 4, 147-148

Vergilius expresses a desire for brevity not for the sake of restricting his agricultural teaching, but because he wants to send out another message. The didactic element is meant as a backdrop to his description of his love for the countryside and his political and social views. What these are, I will discuss a little further down.

The limitations to his agricultural lessons in the four books also show in another aspect. In book 1 which deals with field crops Vergilius concentrates on cereals only, in book 2 which is about trees he writes about vine with a few lines on olives. Book 3 is about cattle, horses, sheep and goats and no other animals are mentioned and book 4 is only on bees.

The first book begins with the proem to the whole work in which Vergilius presents the contents of the four books and addresses Maecenas. He invokes the twelve divinities of agriculture and from line 24 he asks Octavianus, already deified, to give his assent to his bold enterprise (line 40: *audacibus adnue coeptis*) and to share Vergilius’ pity on the poor farmers (line 41; *mecum miseratus agrestis*). Vergilius refers here to the desolate state of the free farmers on their smallholdings and asks Octavianus to work towards an improvement of their fate.

In the following part of book 1, 121-146 Vergilius has put forward one of his beliefs that good husbandry is hard work, which the Father (Jupiter) himself has willed. In Vergilius’ view ‘men depend on their own efforts, though under the aegis of helpful gods like Ceres (1.147).’

It is not as easy as in the mythical ‘Golden Age’ and however hard one toils one has to cope with weeds and insects, and man must learn how to use tools. In *Georgica* 1, 121-124 he writes:

\[
[...]. pater ipse colendi \\
\text{haud faci} \text{em esse viam voluit, primusque per artem} \\
\text{movit agros curis acuens mortal} \text{ia corda,} \\
\text{nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno.} \\
(‘[...] The great Father himself has willed that the path of husbandry should not run smooth, who first made art awake the fields, sharpening men’s wits by care, nor letting his kingdom slumber in heavy lethargy.’)
\]

*Georgica* 1, 121-124

I have quoted this passage to show how Vergilius very cleverly weaves his Hesiodic inspiration in his teaching about farming. Many more examples of this twofold approach can be found in the poem.

After the part about good husbandry there follows the farmer’s calendar. The influence of the stellar constellations on the weather is explained, Eratosthenes’ five zones of the earth and the need to observe the seasons for reaping and sowing. The devastation caused

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189 Galinsky, 1996, 93-96.
190 I have used here the words ‘Hesiodic inspiration’ advisedly. In the *Works and Days* man’s hard labour is a punishment for Prometheus’ theft and puts an end to the mythical ‘Golden Age’. Vergilius’ belief is different from Hesiodus’. Vergilius sees human toil as a god given necessity and the new ‘Golden Age’ is the result of this labour.
by a heavy storm is described. After this follows a section about the weather-signs and the need to watch out for these in order not to be caught unawares by the weather.

In the last fifty lines of the first book (from line 463 onwards) Vergilius changes the subject abruptly to actual political matters, namely the death of Iulius Caesar and the future of Italia. Vergilius shared with Lucretius the horror of war and the ensuing destruction of the land. This is what he describes in the finale of book 1. We hear first of the portents after Iulius Caesar’s death, but after line 489 the picture changes to the ravages of the civil war at Philippi and other places.

It is generally assumed that book 1 was completed at the end of 36 or early in 35 B.C. Wilkinson presents a coherent argument that the finale was written at the same time. The political situation at that time was that Antonius was far away on the Eastern front and that Octavianus had just defeated Sextus Pompeius and had entered Rome in triumph. In those heady days Vergilius described the destructions of the civil war in lines 489-497, in a scene which could have applied to Northern France or to Ypres after 1918. He prays that Octavianus will restore peace and that the land can be farmed again. I will quote two passages from the finale. Firstly the passage about the ravages at Philippi and the surrounding area, *Georgica* 1, 489-497:

*ergo inter sese paribus concurrere telis
Romanas acies iterum videre Philippi;*

*nec fuit indignum superis bis sanguine nostro
Emathiam et latos Haemi pinguescere campos.*

*scilicet et tempus veniet, cum finibus illis
agricola incurvo terram molitus aratro
exesa inveniet scabra robigine pila,*

*aut gravibus ræstris galeas pulsabit inanis,*

*grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulcris.*

(‘so it was that Philippi beheld for a second time Roman armies clash in the shock of matching arms; and Heaven above did not demur at Macedon and the broad Balkan plains being twice glutted with the blood of our fellow citizens. Yes, and a time will come when in those lands the farmer, as he cleaves the soil with his curved plough, will find javelins corroded with rusty mould, or with his heavy hoe will strike empty helmets, and marvel at gigantic bones in the upturned graves.’)

*Georgica* 1, 489-497

The second passage is the prayer in *Georgica* 1, 498-514 that Octavianus will restore order:

*Di patrii, […]*

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191 Wilkinson, 1997, 159-162. His argument is: ‘The finale follows quite naturally and embodies the emotions of the day. Virgil would not feel called upon to modify it later. I much prefer this conception to the idea [Fraenkel’s idea in his book entitled *Horace*, 287-288] that the lines about Caesar were inserted after Actium, […].’

192 Vergilius probably refers to the second battle of Philippi of 23
d October 42 B.C., three weeks after the indecisive first.
hunc saltem everso iuvenem succurrere saeclo
ne prohibite! [...] 
iam pridem nobis caeli te regia, Caesar,
invitet atque hominum queritur curare triumphos,
quippe ubi fas versum atque nefas; tot bella per orbem,
tam multae scelerum facies, non ullus aratro
dignus honos, squalent abductis arva colonis,
et curvae rigidum falces conflantur in ensem.
 [...]; saevit toto Mars impius orbe: [...].
('Gods of my country, [...] at least do not prevent this young prince from succouring
a world in ruins! [...] 
long enough have Heaven’s courts grudged you, Caesar, to us,
complaining that you care for earthly triumphs!
For here are right and wrong inverted; so many wars overrun
the world, sin walks in so many shapes; respect for the plough
is gone; our lands, robbed of the tillers, lie waste, and
curved pruning hooks are forged into straight blades.
 [...] ; the god of unholy strife rages throughout the world, [...]')
Georgica 1, 498-514

This closes book 1. Book 2 is about trees, or rather about the vine and olive. After having addressed Bacchus and Maecenas and made the point that he has no desire to be complete (line 42), Vergilius describes the art of propagation and again mentions in lines 61-62 briefly one of his favourite themes, hard labour (scilicet omnibus est labor impendendus, et omnies/cogendae in sulcum ac multa mercede domandae. ('On all, be sure, must labour be spent; all must/be marshalled into trenches, and tamed with much trouble.')) After this a catalogue of wines and riches from Arabia, India and China, of incense, ebony and silk follows. However, there is no land like Italia and Vergilius sings the praises of his homeland.

Sed neque Medorum silvae, ditissima terra,
nec pulcher Ganges atque auro turbidus Hermus
laudibus Italiae certent, [...].
hic ver adsiduum atque alienis mensibus aestas:
bis gravidae pecudes, bis pomis utulis arbos.[...] 
adde tot egregias urbes operumque laborem,
tot congesta manu praeruptis oppida saxis
('But neither Media’s groves, land of wondrous wealth,
nor beauteous Ganges, nor Hermus, whose mud is gold,
may rival the glories of Italy- [...] 
Here spring is perpetual, and summer extends to months
other than her own; twice a year the cows calve,
twice a year the trees serve us fruit. [...] 
Count, too, those many stately cities, monument to human toil,
and all the towns built by man’ s hand on rocky crags')
Georgica 2, 136-138, 149-150 and 155-156
This whole passage (lines 136-176) was presumably written in 30 B.C. as can be deduced from lines 170-172 ( [...] et te, maxime Caesar, / qui nunc extremis Asiae iam victor in oris / inbellem avertis Romanis arcibus Indum. (‘[...], and you, greatest of all, Caesar, / who, already victorious in Asia’s farthest bounds, / now drive the craven Indian from our hills of Rome.’). This refers to the time immediately after Actium when Octavianus went to Alexandria and after the deaths of Antonius and Cleopatra went through Syria. In 30 the worst of the civil war was over and Vergilius expresses his hope and confidence that the glory of a unified Italia would arrive. If this would happen the land would be restored and people could enjoy peace and tranquility for the first time. This stability, however, was founded on military strength and the passage contains many lines which on the one hand praise Italia as a fertile land with many riches and on the other refer to her as having bred a genus acre virum (‘a vigorous breed of men’). These are two sides of the same coin.

In the next part the poet turns to the nature of the different soils of Italia and for which trees these are best suited. If one were to doubt Vergilius’ technical knowledge, one ought to read lines 226-258 carefully. Here speaks the equivalent of an engineer with a degree from a modern agricultural college. After this the planting, manuring and caring of vines is discussed. Naturally the theme of hard labour pops up again. A short section on trees that require less care finishes this part.

Finally, the finale of the second book is devoted to another of Vergilius’ favourites, the happiness of rural life and the contrast with the hectic life of the city dwellers. Wilkinson remarks:193

‘To relieve its length the finale is presented as a triple contrast: between city luxury (460-6) and country sufficiency (467-74); between scientific philosophy (475-82, 490-2) and knowing the gods of the country (483-9; 493-502); and between worldly ambition (503-12) and innocent country pursuits (513-40).’

In this passage Vergilius also brings Saturnus ‘Golden Age’ back and expresses that a new ‘Golden Age’ could arrive where cows produce plenty of milk and the farmers have time for a holiday; however, this new paradise is the result of hard labour.

A few lines chosen from this lengthy passage (lines 458-542) at the end of book 2 show the point made.

O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint, 
agricolas! quibus ipsa procul discordibus armis 
fundit humo facilem victum iustissima tellus; [...] 
fortunatus et ille, deos qui novit agrestis [...] 
; neque ille 
aut doluit miserans inopem aut invidit habenti. 
quos rami fructus, quos ipsa volentia rura 
sponte tulere sua, carpisit, nec ferrea iura 
insanumque forum aut populi tabularia vidit.[...] 
agricola incurvo terram dimovit aratro: 
hinc anni labor, hinc patriam parvosque nepotes 
sustinet, hinc armenta boum meritosque iuvencos. 
nec requies, quin aut pomis exuberet annus 
aut fetu pecorum aut Cerealis mergite culmi,[...]

casta pudicitiam servat domus, ubera vaccae lactea demittunt, pinguesque in gramine laeto inter se adversis luctantur cornibus haedi.
ipse dies agitat festos fusiisque per herbam, [...] 
hanc olim veteres vitam coluere Sabini, 
hanc Remus et frater, sic fortis Etruria crevit [...] 
aureus hanc vitam in terris Saturnus agebat;
('O farmers, happy beyond measure, could they but know their blessings! For them, far from the clash of arms, most righteous Earth, unbidden, pours forth from her soil an easy sustenance. [...] But happy, too, is he who knows the rural gods, [...] if he has not felt pity for the poor, he has never envied the rich. He plucks the fruits which his boughs, which his willing fields, have freely born; nor has he beheld the iron rigours of the law, the Forum's madness, or the public archives. [...] 
Meanwhile the husbandsman has been cleaving the soil with crooked plough; hence comes his year's work, hence comes sustenance for his country and his little grandsons, hence for his herds of cows and faithful bullocks. No respite is there, but the season teems either with fruits, or with increase of the herds, or with the sheaves of Ceres' corn, [...] his unstained home guards its purity; the cows droop milk-laden udders, and on the glad sward, horn to horn, the fat kids wrestle. The master himself keeps holiday, and stretched on the grass, [...] 
Such a life the old Sabines once lived, such Remus and his brother. Thus, surely, Etruria waxed strong; [...] such was the life golden Saturn lived on earth,')
Georgica 2, 458-460, 493, 498-503, 513-517, 524-527, 532-533 and 538

In book 3 the animals appear; horses and cattle in the first part and sheep and goats in the second.\textsuperscript{194} The proem shows Pindaric influences, such as the lines 17-18 about 'driving a hundred four-horse chariots' (\textit{illi victor ego et Tyrio conspectus in ostro/centum quadriiugos agitabo ad flumina currus}. ('In his [Octavianus'] honour I, a victor resplendent in Tyrian purple,/will drive a hundred four-horse chariots beside the stream')).\textsuperscript{195} The horse-drawn chariots stand for Vergilius' verses. The second Pindaric element is the transfer of the games from
\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{194} See Wilkinson, 1997, 92. Horses were not farm animals in Italia. These were mainly used for military purposes and for hauling, breeding and racing.
\item\textsuperscript{195} Wilkinson, 1997, 167 remarks that the picture of driving chariots is found in Pindarus' \textit{Olympian Odes} 6, 22-27 and 9, 81; in his \textit{Nemean Ode} 1,7 and in his \textit{Isthmian Odes} 2,1-2 and 5,38. However, in the \textit{Olympian Ode} 6 the chariots were drawn by mules and not by horses. In addition, in the sixth \textit{Olympian} the driver is Phintis, who took part in the race and not the poet. Similarly, in \textit{Olympian} 9 the command is addressed to the Muses. The chariot in the first \textit{Nemean} is that of the winner Chromios of Syracuse and in the two quoted \textit{Isthmian Odes} the commands to drive are given to the Muses in the chariots. Although I can accept that Vergilius was inspired by Pindarus, as the transfer of the games to Italia refers clearly to the subjects of the Pindaric Victory Odes, Vergilius uses however a mixture of Pindaric pictures.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Greece to Italia in lines 19-20 (*cuncta mihi, Alpheum linquens lucosque Molorci/cursibus et crudo decernet Graecia caestu* (‘For me all Greece will leave Alpheus [the river of Elis near Olympia] and the groves of Molorcus [Nemea],/to compete in the foot race and with the brutal boxing glove.’)).

This Pindaric setting is a suitable background to praise Octavianus whom he places in a marble temple near Mantua. In this way Vergilius poetically links the future emperor with his beloved part of rural Italia. In the last part of the proem he describes the carvings in gold and ebony on the temple doors: a celebration of the triumphs of the Romans under Octavianus. Lines 26-29 tell part of the story, that of Actium and Antonius and Cleopatra.

\[
\text{in foribus pugnam ex auro solidoque elephanto}
\]
\[
Gangaridum faciam victoris arma Quirini,
\]
\[
atque hic undantem bello magnumque fluentem
\]
\[
Nilum ac navali surgentis aere columnas.
\]

(‘On the temple doors I have sculptured in solid gold and ivory the battle of Ganges’ hordes and the arms of conquering Quirites; there, too, the Nile in flood and billowing with war, and lofty columns clad with the bronze prows of hostile fleets.’)

*Georgica* 3, 26-29

This passage is about the final defeat of Octavianus’ last adversaries, Antonius and Cleopatra. The *Gangaridum* represent the Oriental forces that fought under Antonius at Actium and I take it that *victoris Quirini* means Quirinus, the victor and that by Quirinus Octavianus is meant. At the time there was much talk to give him that name in honour of his achievements; eventually this became Augustus. The ‘columns clad with bronze prows of hostile fleets’ were made of the bronze beaks of the captured Egyptian fleet. Some were set up in the Capitol, some in the temple of Divus Iulius. In the following lines other triumphs of Octavianus are mentioned. In the proem Vergilius expresses the possible return to normality and peace when the farmer can once again concentrate on the care of his animals, just as he did earlier in 2, 136-176. However, in the present passage Vergilius focuses on Actium and its aftermath as this victory has removed the most significant threat. I do not interpret this as propaganda, but as a statement of Vergilius’ relief that the future looked better.

Book 3 continues with cattle and horses and the selection for breeding. Vergilius speaks about horses as if they are people. He refers to their sexuality, their grief at defeat and their pride in victory, *et quis cuique dolor victo, quae gloria palmae* (‘the grief each shows at defeat or the pride in victory’) in line 103. After this a lengthy passage (lines 157-283) about the rearing and training of calves and foals, and about the danger of the sexual preoccupation of cattle and horses follows. This is a threat to the efficiency of the animals and ‘the havoc lust can cause. Once again, man and beast are not distinguished:’

In the second half of book 3 (lines 284-566) Vergilius is concerned with sheep and goats. The care for these animals in winter and in summer is described. From the lovely pastures in Italia he goes abroad to the hard life of the nomads on the Libyan plains who migrate with all their belongings just like Roman legions on a forced march. Or he describes the

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196 I consider the Loeb translation of this passage slightly inaccurate. My rendering would be: ‘the arms of conquering Quirinus [Octavianus]’. However, I did not wish to depart from using the Loeb editions.


198 See pages 82-83 of this book.

hardship of the Scythian cattlemen in their frozen land. The theme of hard labour shines through in these lines.

Sheep and goats provide men with wool and milk. But dangers also loom: thieves, wolves and snakes. Man has to look after his sheepdogs to protect the animals and the poet gives more good advice for the safety of his flocks. And finally there are diseases and the plague. Vergilius finishes book 3 with the horrible deaths of animals due to an epidemic plague in Northern Italia.

Book 4, the last of the Georgica treats bees and has two parts. In the first (lines 1-314) Vergilius teaches us beekeeping and in the second part (lines 315-558) he gives the well-known Aristaeus epyllion. At first sight this epyllion seems a rather odd closure of the poem and there has been much speculation about Vergilius’ motives to include this. Servius in his Commentary on Georgica 4.1 says: sane sciendum, ut supra diximus, ultimam partem huius libri esse mutatam: nam laudes Galli habitu locus ille, qui nunc Orphei continet fabulam, quae inserta est, postquam irato Augusto Gallus occisus est (‘It must of course be realized that, as I said above, the last part of this book was changed. For the praises of Gallus stood in the place which now contains the story of Orpheus, which was inserted after the anger of Augustus led to Gallus being killed’). Cornelius Gallus was a good friend of Vergilius who, as the first prefect in Egypt, had become too big for his boots, had fallen from favour and was forced to commit suicide in 27 B.C. and suffered a posthumous damnatio memoriae. Gallus’ downfall happened in 30-29 B.C., just about the time that Vergilius finished his poem and this was obviously not the right time to sing his praises. Servius is not always correct in his assertions and it is no longer possible to check his story. It is equally possible to argue that Vergilius intended from the start that the epyllion would close the poem. Whatever happened to the end of the poem, the Aristaeus epyllion as it stands forms an organic part of the whole with a clear expression of Vergilius’ views and I will expound these below after I have discussed the first part of book 4.

The first part of book 4 contains not just good, practical advice about beekeeping but also interesting observations about the life of the bees. The proem is short but sets out the structure of the book in a very compact form. It does not deal only with bees and honey, but also with other matters. I will quote lines 1-5:

\[
PROTINUS aërii mellis caelestia dona 
exsequar: hanc etiam, Maecenas, aspice partem. 
admiranda tibi levium spectacula rerum 
magnanimosque duces totiusque ordine gentis 
mores et studia et populos et proelia dicam.
\]

(‘Next will I discourse of Heaven’s gift, the honey from the skies. On this part, too, of my task, Maecenas, look with favour. The wondrous pageant of a tiny world - chiefs greathearted, a whole nation’s character and tastes and tribes and battles - I will in due order to you unfold.’)

*Georgica* 4, 1-5

Vergilius’ ‘nation’ is the swarm of bees with many human traits. Their hives, their swarming and settling, the honey gathering and the hard work involved, their propagation without sexual intercourse, pests and diseases are all reviewed. In this manner Vergilius gives his commentary on a number of very topical issues.

Bees, according to Vergilius, are like a nation living under the authority of a strong leader. The rule is that there is only one leader and this rex governs his people and directs the work of building the hives and gathering the honey. It is interesting to see which words Vergilius uses to describe the leader. In line 4 of the proem the leader is a dux, in line 21 the word rex is used for the first time and this word is repeated eight times in the first part of book 4, that is till line 315. It is interesting to consider whether Vergilius would have written differently had he realised that the leaders of the bees are not reges but reginae!

However, there are also times when concord is far away and two bee-kings struggle for power. This is described in lines 67-103 and in this passage Vergilius shows us a picture of the civil war. In the lines 67-68 we read:

Sin autem ad pugnam exierint – nam saepe duobus
regibus incessit magno discordia motu;
('But, if haply for battle they have gone forth – for strife with terrible turmoil has often fallen on two kings;')

Naturally one is the stronger and when the fight has been fought both warlords are called back from the field and Vergilius remarks in lines 89-90:

deterior qui visus, eum, ne prodigus obsit,
dede neci; melior vacua sine regnet in aula.
('give up to death the meaner of look, that he prove no wasteful burden; let the nobler reign in the palace alone.')

This passage in the lines 67-103 is a reference to the civil war; the battle as described was one between two bee-kings from one and the same beehive. The passage in the lines 89-90 refers

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201 See also Griffin, 1979, 68-70 and 73-74. Griffin has a different point of view. He remarks that ‘the bees presented him with a powerful image for the traditional Roman state, in its impersonal and collective character.’ In spite of the many citations which support his view on the collective nature of early Roman society in his appendix I, the question remains whether this was still the case at the time of Octavianus. The devastating civil wars and the power struggles in Rome may have stimulated individualistic attitudes. Secondly, the bees in the allegory in Georgica 4 present indeed many traits of collectivism, but this can be read as the collectivism of the toiling populace at large as was common in all lands around the Mediterranean. I am inclined to read this whole passage about bee-life (lines 1-228) as describing any nation and not just the Roman. Vergilius presents the effects of a monarchy and not ‘the traditional Roman state’. Further in his essay Griffin says: ‘The bees, then, with their collective virtues and their lack of individuality and art, serve as a counter-part to the old Roman character. Their patriotism and self-denial (and devotion to their ‘king’ is only devotion to the state and to authority, not an encouragement to emperor-worship) are admirable.’ I do not interpret this part as Vergilius giving us ‘encouragement to emperor-worship’, but as presenting his view that times have come to fundamentally change the order and that Octavianus may be a suitable candidate; in the words of Griffin: ‘Only Caesar can rescue the world turned upside down, and Virgil prays desperately for his success. The reconstruction longed for in the first Georgic is, we may feel, under way by the fourth; order is being restored, and the poet becomes aware of the cost – a society efficient and admirable, but impersonal and dispassionate.’ In Georgica 1, 41 Vergilius raises this point with Octavianus in the expectation that he will show ‘pity on the farmers’.  

202 Not counting caeli regem in line 152.
to Octavianus (*melior*) as the rightful victor with a justified claim for the leadership over Antonius (*deterior visus*). Vergilius hopes intensely that Octavianus may be able to realise this claim and to create peace and order.

In the first part of the book Vergilius devotes some eighty lines (149-228) to the hard work of the bees and the propagation. In this part Vergilius’ words again contain a reference to actuality in the lines 210-218. The passage is a eulogy on a monarchy in the way that Vergilius hopes and expects that the task will be accomplished. This requires royal authority as the lines 213-214 show; when the king is away disorder is rife (‘when he is lost, straightway they break their fealty, and themselves pull down/the honey they have reared and tear up their trellised combs’). That is not the way the absolute despot in Egypt or Persia see their tasks. Vergilius expects that the *rex* in Italia shows sympathy with the people and that ‘he is the guardian of their toils.’ If that happy state of affairs arises the people will follow their king where he goes. The passage reads as follows:

praeterea regem non sic Aegyptus et ingens
Lydia nec populi Parthorum aut Medus Hydaspes
observant. rege incolumi mens omnibus una est;
amisso rupere fidem, constructaque mella
diripuere ipsae et cratis solvere favorum.
ille operum custos, illum admiratur et omnes
circumstant fremitu denso stipantque frequentes,
et saepe attollunt umeris et corpora bello
obiecant pulchramque petunt per vulnera mortem.

(‘Moreover, neither Egypt nor mighty Lydia, nor the Parthian tribes, nor Median Hydaspes, show such homage to their king. While he is safe, all are of one mind; when he is lost, straightway they break their fealty, and themselves pull down the honey they have reared and tear up their trellised combs. He is the guardian of their toils; to him they do reverence; all stand round him in clamorous crowd, and attend him in throngs. Often they lift him on their shoulders, for him expose their bodies to battle, and seek amid wounds a glorious death.’)

*Georgica* 4, 210-218

Next, we are introduced to the *Aristaeus epyllion*. However, Vergilius first deals with the possible disappearance or death of one’s bees and the knowledge ‘how to restore the race in a new line’ in book 4, 281-315. The great Arcadian master is introduced immediately in *Georgica* 4, 281-284:

*Sed si quem proles subito defecerit omnis,*
*nec genus unde novae stirpis revocetur habebit,*
tempus et Arcadii memoranda inventa magistri
pandere, […]

(‘But if anyone’s whole stock has failed him, and he knows not how to restore the race in a new line, then it is also time to reveal the famed device of the
The Arcadian master is the beekeeper Aristaeus and the ensuing epyllion tells us his story. He had lost his bees as a consequence of the anger of the gods brought about by his attempted rape of Orpheus’ wife Eurydice. After he had become reconciled with the gods he was shown how to make a new swarm of bees out of a bullock ‘beaten to death, and his flesh is pounded to a pulp through the unbroken hide’ (plagisque perempto/tunsa per integram solvuntur viscera pellem). When this is left with thyme and fresh lavender (casia) in a damp and warm environment bees will grow out of the cadaver; this is the art of ‘bougonia’ which is practiced in Egypt.

However, the myth of Aristaeus is not just the end of a great didactic poem, but also an allegory for Octavianus and Antonius, whose struggle for power had reached its height in September 31 B.C.; Vergilius finished the Georgica two years later. The narrative provides us in the person of the beekeeper with allusions to Octavianus, the victor at Actium and later princeps and to his adversaries Antonius and Cleopatra, and perhaps to Sextus Pompeius as well. The different steps in the story oscillate, as it were, between Aristaeus who reminds us of Octavianus and the same Aristaeus who is Antonius. At the end of the story the ‘Octavianus-Aristaeus’ is the winner when he assumes control over the bees, the Roman state. Nadeau follows a similar line of interpretation and says the following about this: ‘My intention is to show that the Aristaeus epyllion is an allegory for Augustus, Antony and Cleopatra, and Actium. [...], the contrast between the Statesman and the Lover: between, that is, Augustus and Antony.’

However, there is an important difference between his view and mine. I am not of the opinion that the main contrast is that between the statesman and the lover, but that the story oscillates between the sense of duty of Octavianus to restore order and bring peace on the one hand and the destructive affiliation of Antonius and Cleopatra on the other.

The view that in an allegory one persona (Aristaeus) or one object may represent opposite qualities within one and the same person, or portray two different persons (Octavianus’ duty and Antonius’ passion), may strike as being rather fanciful. However, this can be found in other places too, for instance in the story of Pallas’ sword-belt (Aeneis 10, 480-505) which Turnus appropriated after having killed Pallas and which symbolises his cruel exultation (Aeneis 10, 500: quo nunc Turnus ovat spolio gaudetque potitus (‘Now Turnus exults in the spoil, and glories in the winning.’). The same belt was later the cause of cruelty, when he was slaughtered by Aeneas (Aeneis 12, 941-949) after pleading for his life. The sword-belt (the object) symbolises both Turnus’ emotions of elation when having killed Pallas as well as Aeneas’ fury when he killed Turnus (Aeneis 12, 947-948: tune hinc spoliis indute meorum/eripiare mihi? (‘Clad in the spoils of one of mine,/are you to be snatched from my hands?’)).

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203 Bougounia is ‘born of an ox’.
204 Nadeau, 1984, 59. His essay is entitled ‘The Lover and the Statesman’.
205 This can be deduced from the following passages: Georgica 4, 317-332 (Octavianus’ claim as heir to Iulius Caesar), 4, 351-356 (attacks on Octavianus’ heritage), 4, 360 (juvenis refers to Octavianus), 4, 453-459 (Antonius’ passion for Cleopatra and her death) and 4, 554-558 (Octavianus’ victory). I will discuss these passages in detail on the next pages.
Thus the theme of the epyllion is perhaps not so different from that of the *Aeneis*. This is supported by Nadeau when he points at the parallels between the narrative in the *Aeneis* and the *Aristaeus epyllion* and I summarise these in the footnote.\footnote{The similarities between the narrative in the *Aeneis* and in the *Aristaeus epyllion* according to Nadeau (1984, 59-82) are summarised below. I will not quote the passages from the poems to which Nadeau refers, but I will only indicate these.}

In the analysis of the *Aristaeus epyllion* in the fourth book of the *Georgica* I will follow the narrative.

In the first lines of the epyllion (*Georgica* 4, 317-332) Aristaeus complains bitterly to his mother Cyrene about the loss of his bees and tells her to let the rest of his work be destroyed as well.

*pastor Aristaeus fugiens Peneia Tempe,*

*amissis, ut fama, apibus morboque fameque,*

*tristis ad extremit sacrum caput astitit amnis*

*multa querens, atque hanc adfatus voce parentem:*

*mater, Cyrene mater,*

[...]

\footnote{The similarities between the narrative in the *Aeneis* and in the *Aristaeus epyllion* according to Nadeau (1984, 59-82) are summarised below. I will not quote the passages from the poems to which Nadeau refers, but I will only indicate these.}

- The storm which Juno sends and Aeneas’ fear (*Aeneis* 1, 102-123 and *Aeneis* 1, 208-209) has a parallel in Aristaeus’ despondency at the loss of his bees (*Georgica* 4, 317-332).
- Venus complains to Jupiter on Aeneas’ behalf (*Aeneis* 1, 223-253) after Neptunus has calmed the storm (*Aeneis* 1, 124-156). Aristaeus complains to his mother Cyrene, the nymph Arethusa hears this and comes to help (*Georgica* 4, 317-332 and 351-356).
- Aeneas’ mother is Venus, Aristaeus’ mother is Cyrene. Vergilius gives the latter various Venerean characteristics, such as
  - The story of Venus and Mars to which Cyrene is found listening (*Georgica* 4, 345-346).
  - When Cyrene is about to lead Aristaeus to meet Proteus, she does for her son (*Georgica* 4, 415-418) what Venus does for her son Aeneas when he is about to meet Dido (*Aeneis* 1, 588-591). The sons were beautified.
  - Cyrene gives Aristaeus ambrosia under his nose to drive away the stench of Proteus’ seals and Venus beautifies Aeneas with ambrosia. There was a common source for this, namely when Menelaus meets Proteus in *Odysseia* 4, 444-447.
- The storm which wrecks Aeneas is caused by an offended deity (Juno). Aristaeus’ loss of bees is also caused by an offended deity (Orpheus) (*Georgica* 4, 453-459).
- The snake parallel. In *Aeneis* 8 Cleopatra is pictured on the shield of Aeneas; in line 8, 697 Cleopatra does not see the snakes. Eurydice’s death is caused by a snake which she had not seen (*Georgica* 4, 457-459).
- Aeneas has to sacrifice to Juno to placate the offended goddess (*Aeneis* 3, 435-439). Aristaeus has to sacrifice to the nymphs, companions of Eurydice to placate the offended gods (*Georgica* 4, 531-553).
- Aeneas has to abandon Dido’s love before he can perform his duty (from ‘Lover’ to ‘Statesman’). Aristaeus is the ‘Statesman’ who recreates the bees (‘bougonia’) and is thus a founder. However, he has inclinations to (illicit) love as well and has to be fortified in his role as Statesman/Founder by the tale of Orpheus.
- The passages in the sixth book of the *Aeneis*, where Aeneas visits the Underworld are very close to the *Georgica* 4, 464-484, where Orpheus goes down to bring Eurydice back.

Nadeau speaks of the ‘allegory’ for Augustus, Antonius and Cleopatra: he recognises the similarities between the personae of Aeneas and Dido in the *Aeneis* and the historical figures of Augustus and Cleopatra. On page 65 he says: ‘Cleopatra, who features prominently in the first half of the *Aeneid* in the person of Dido.’ I hold the view that it is very likely that Vergilius used Cleopatra as a literary model for Dido.
en etiam hunc ipsum vitae mortalis honorem,
quem mihi vix frugum et pecorum custodia solisers
omnia temptanti extuderat, te matre relinquo.

('Aristaeus the shepherd, quitting Tempe by the Peneus,
when – so runs the tale – his bees were lost through sickness
and hunger, sorrowfully stopped beside the sacred fount at the
stream's head, and with much complaint called on his mother
thus: “O mother, mother Cyrene, [...]
Lo, even this very crown of my mortal life, which the skilful
tending of crops and cattle had scarce wrought out for me for
all my endeavour – though you are my mother, I resign.’)

Georgica 4, 317-321 and 326-328

It is generally held that in the Georgica the bees stand for the Roman state and in my opin-
ion this passage (317-332) can be understood as an allusion to Octavianus who fights for polit-
ical control in Rome of what he claims to be rightfully his as heir to Iulius Caesar.

After having given the names and the pursuits of the sea nymphs who are in the company of
mother Cyrene, the nymph Arethusa appears in a following passage (351-356). She hears
Aristaeus’ ‘loud lament’ and calls on Cyrene to pay attention.

[...]; sed ante alias Arethusa sorores
prospiciens summa flavum caput extulit unda,
et procul: ‘o gemitu non frustra exterrita tanto,
Cyrene soror, ipse tibi, tua maxima cura,
tristis Aristaeus Penei genitoris ad undam
stat lacrimans, et te crudelem nomine dicit.’

('[...]. Yet, first of all the sisters, Arethusa,
looking forth, raised her golden head above the water’s brim,
and cried from afar: “O sister Cyrene, not vain was your alarm
at this loud lament. ’Tis even he, your own beloved, your
Aristaeus, standing sadly and in tears by the waters of our
father Peneus, and crying out on you by name for cruelty.”)

Georgica 4, 351-356

It is not a coincidence that Vergilius gave this role to Arethusa. She is a Sicilian nymph and
her presence reminds readers of Octavianus’ shipwreck off the Sicilian coast in the war
against Sextus Pompeius. I read in these lines an allusion through Aristaeus to Octavianus
who bewails the attacks of Sextus and of Antonius on his political heritage.

The nymphs bring Aristaeus to Cyrene’s underwater palace. In line 360 of this passage
Aristaeus is called iuvenis, by which name Octavianus was often referred to. The beekeeper
duly enters the palace and is looked after by the nymphs. Cyrene decides that Proteus
should be consulted and she tells her son how to overcome his resistance and what to say
when he has submitted to Aristaeus. Mother and son depart to the cave of Proteus and
watch him return home to his flock of seals. When the seer has settled, Aristaeus approach-
es him to ask him why he had lost his bees. Proteus does his tricks, but the pastor overcomes
him and says to him in Georgica 4, 448-449: [...] deum praecipitam secuti/venimus hinc lassis
quaesitum oracula rebus.” (‘[...]. Following the counsel of Heaven/we are come to seek hence an oracle for our weary fortunes.’). Proteus answers in 4, 453-459:

‘Non te nullius exercent numinis irae;
magna luis commissa: tibi has miserabilis Orpheus
hauquaquam ad meritum poenas, ni fata resistant,
suscitat, et rapta graviter pro coniuge saevit.
illa quidem, dum te fugeret per flumina praeceps,
immanem ante pedes hydram moritura puella
servantem ripas alta non vidit in herba.
(‘It is a god, no other, whose anger pursues you:
great is the crime you are paying for; this punishment,
far less than you deserve, unhappy Orpheus arouses against
you – did not Fate interpose – and rages implacably for the loss
of his bride. She, in headlong flight along the river, if only she
might escape you, saw not, doomed maiden, amid the deep
grass the monstrous serpent at her feet that guarded the
banks.’)

Georgica 4, 453- 459

Aristaeus is told that the gods are angry with him as he had attempted to rape Eurydice who
died by snakebite when she ran away from him. This is where the story swings to an allusion
to Antonius who is reproached for his illicit affair with Cleopatra and to Cleopatra herself
who was believed to have died from snakebites. Vergilius continues in lines 460-527 to tell the
story of Orpheus and Eurydice and his attempt to rescue her from the underworld. Does this
passage perhaps refer to Antonius and Cleopatra as well? Is the significance of this passage
the allusion that the love between the two was destined to fail as it was an illicit affair be-
tween a Roman knight and a foreign woman?

The narrative continues as Proteus suddenly disappears and Cyrene tells her son to
expiate himself with the gods, the nymphs and Eurydike. Aristaeus does as his mother bids
him and on the ninth day he offers to Orpheus the funeral dues. And after this he is given
back his bees. In Georgica 4, 554-558 the poem says:

hic vero subitum ac dictu mirabile monstrum
aspiciunt, liquefacta boum per viscera toto
stridere apes utero et ruptis effervere costis,
immensasque trahi nubes, iamque arbore summa
confluere et lentis uam demittere ramis.
(‘But there they espy a portent, sudden and wondrous to tell –
throughout the paunch, amid the molten flesh of the oxen,
bees buzzing and swarming forth from the ruptured sides,
then trailing in vast clouds, till at last on a treetop they stream
together, and hang in clusters from the bending boughs.’)
Georgica 4, 554-558

Aristaeus’ new swarm of bees comes out of a corpse and this is generally seen as being an
allusion to the ravages of the civil war and the final years in particular. This passage express-
es the costs with which Octavianus attained his final victory when he won control over the bees, the Roman state. Therefore, these lines show Vergilius’ concern regarding the way the principate had been established and the havoc it had created and this implies some criticism. Octavianus-Aristaeus is the eventual victor and one reads Vergilius’ relief that perhaps an end to the war and slaughter is in sight.

Nadeau in his essay connects the *Aristaeus epyllion* with the story of Dido and Aeneas as described in the *Aeneis*. He finishes with the following words: ‘It is not part of my purpose to argue that the Aristaeus epyllion and the Dido and Aeneas story are straightforward and single-minded political propaganda.’ I will argue in section iv.c. that on many occasions Vergilius commented on actual events by way of allusions and that this should not be interpreted as propaganda.

Apart from the allusions in the main narrative, there are also other references to actual events. I will discuss one, namely the place where the art of ‘bougonia’ was practiced. This was in Egypt as *Georgica* 4, 287-288, 291 and 294 show:

\[
\text{nam qua Pellaei gens fortunae Canopi} \\
\text{accolit effuso stagnante flumine Nilum} \\
\text{[...] et viridem Aegyptum nigra fecundat harena,} \\
\text{[...] omnis in hac certam regio iacit arte solutem.} \\
\text{('For where the favoured people of Macedonian Canopus dwell by the still waters of the flooded Nile,} \\
\text{[...] and with its black sands fertilizes verdant Egypt,} \\
\text{[...] there the whole region rests its sure hope of salvation upon this device [bougonia].’)} \\
\text{*Georgica* 4, 287-288, 291 and 294}
\]

And when Aristaeus reaches Proteus’ hiding place, we are told in lines 425-426 of book 4 that this is where *rapidus torrens sitientis Sirius Indos/ardebat caelo* (‘the Dog Star, fiercely parching the thirsty Indians, was ablaze in heaven,’). The Indians are the Ethiopians, Egypt’s neighbours and this passage is linked with the one quoted above. Nadeau concludes, in my opinion correctly, that ‘we have reason to suspect that the covert allusion to Egypt as the place where Aristaeus is taught ‘bougonia’ is an allusion to the war against Antony and Cleopatra.’

At this point the balance of the structure which overlays the *Georgica* has become visible. The work is divided into two parts; the first consisting of books 1 and 2 and the second of books 3 and 4. Book 1 is somber in tone, emphasises hard work and ends with a catastrophe, the death of Iulius Caesar and the horror of the war which followed. Book 2 is gay and deals with lighter work. This pattern is repeated in the second part, books 3 and 4. Book 3 begins with a factual description of the care of cattle, horses and sheep, but ends with the disaster of animals dying of the plague. The last book teaches about bees including the possible loss of the whole swarm, but ends with the positive climax of their resurrection through ‘bougonia’. The first two books are about ‘immovables’, fields and trees, while books 3 and 4 deal with animals and bees.

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207 Nadeau, 1984, 82; see also page 90, note 206 of this book.
208 See also: Nadeau, 1984, 72-73.
But there is more. The proem to book 1 deals with the desolate state of farming and the sufferings of the farmers and asks Octavianus for his pity. The finale of book 2 picks up this theme and describes the improvement of the farmer’s lot and praises life on the land. This pattern of related themes repeats itself in the last two books. The proem of book 3 praises Caesar Octavianus and his victories, among others the defeat of Cleopatra. At the end of the book in the finale to book 4 Vergilius returns to this subject and lauds Octavianus for his victories. Thus Vergilius sets out his main themes at the crucial points of the structure: the poverty of the free farmers in Italia (proem to 1), the hope of recovery of Italia by the work of Octavianus (finale of 2), Octavianus’ actual victories (proem to 3) and the gratitude for his work and Vergilius’ desire that Octavianus obtains supreme power (finale of 4).

The teaching about the bees in book 4 (lines 1-314) contains a powerful political message as well, and the lines 67-103 and 210-218 are particularly significant, as I have shown above: the need for powerful leadership and the admissible change from a republic to a dynasty. In my opinion, educated Romans understood Vergilius’ allusions.

In the final section of the next chapter (section iv.c.) I will bring together all the evidence concerning Vergilius’ poetry after I have analysed the Aeneis and I will discuss Vergilius’ political message in more detail.
Vergilius worked on the *Aeneis* during the last ten years of his life. Already in the first century A.D. Quintilianus equated his epic to the *Ilias* and the *Odyssey*.\(^{209}\) In the twentieth century the *Aeneis* is still considered ‘ein Grundtext nicht nur der römischen, sondern der europäischen Kultur’,\(^{210}\) and from the very beginning the work has been an inspiration for countless poets, writers, painters and composers.\(^{211}\) The work is not only a beautifully written epic about Rome’s mythical history but also a poem in which Vergilius gives his commentary on what he saw happening around him. He did this not only by referring directly to persons or events of his own time, but also by indirect references. These latter have come to us in the form of literary models or in the form of allusions: the former can be seen as an ‘indirect allusion’ as the use of a model can create an allusion to a person or to an event in the mind of the reader of or the listener to the poem. The literary model is the origin of the allusion, as it were.

This chapter is about the *Aeneis* and Vergilius’ commentary on the social and political scene of his day. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part (IV.a.) will deal with the question whether Cleopatra was a literary model for Dido. In successive sections I will discuss the concept of literary models, the question as to who the historical Dido was and the early myths that surround her (section IV.a.1.), Dido in the *Aeneis* (section IV.a.2.), literary models for Dido (section IV.a.3.), and the question whether Cleopatra was a literary model for Dido (sections IV.a.4. and IV.a.5).

The second part (section IV.b.) is about direct references and allusions in the *Aeneis*, particularly those to Cleopatra – and often by implication to Antonius – or to Octavianus and later Augustus.

For the analysis I have made a selection of texts which illustrate the points I want to make. In a book like this it is not possible to discuss the whole *Aeneis*, but I am confident that the texts I have chosen are representative of the whole work. In the case of the *Aeneis* the presentation of the results of the analyses is different from the presentation of the *Eclogae* of Vergilius and, as will appear later, from the poems of Horatius and Propertius. This is because the *Aeneis* – as indeed the *Georgica* – does not consist of distinct individual poems which can be typified as such. Therefore, one will not find appendices with a summary of the results of the *Aeneis*.

In the third part (section IV.c.) of the chapter I will examine Vergilius’ political views which in my opinion can be deduced from the analysis of the *Eclogae*, the *Georgica* and the *Aeneis*.

**IV.a. Literary models**

The leading characters in the *Aeneis* have acted as models for many others over a period of more than two thousand years. Did Vergilius perhaps use models too? He was certainly in-

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\(^{209}\) Quintilianus, *Institutio Oratoria* 10.1, 85. *Itaque ut apud illos Homerus, sic apud nos Vergilius auspiciatissimum dederit exordium, omnium eius generis poetarum Graecorum nostrorumque haud dubie proximus* (‘And so, as to Homer did among the Greeks, so here Vergil will afford us the most auspicious beginning. There is no doubt that, of all epic poets, Greek or Roman, he comes next after Homer’).

\(^{210}\) Von Albrecht, 1994, 533.

\(^{211}\) Von Albrecht, 1994, 555-559.
spired by Homerus. But whether he had a literary model (or models) in mind is a different question. And if this is the case who was or were his model or models? Was Aeneas sufficiently known through mythical stories and did Vergilius use a model for Dido? Or was Dido a known figure? Did he perhaps use models for both? Other questions can be raised as well, such as: if Vergilius used literary models, did he only choose them in order to present Augustus in a favourable light, or is the choice also a commentary on the social and political situation of his time?

The term *literary model* has been used above. Before further developing the theme of this section this term needs further definition. When an author wants to describe a persona he often has a living person in mind whose character, social position or looks he ‘borrows’. The model can be a well-known historical or mythical person. This is called a *literary model* and its role is similar to the model who sits for a painter. The author does not always attach all the model’s features to his persona and often the persona in the literary work develops in its own direction. Although in Anglo-Saxon literature one often uses the word ‘role model’, I prefer not to use this term as it suggests that the persona treads in the footsteps of the *literary model*.

Binder uses different words, but what he calls ‘die typologische Auslegung [explanation]’ is not synonymous but very similar to the use of literary models, which in the reader’s mind can create the allusions of which Galinsky speaks. Typology can be defined as ‘the process of seeking correspondences between persons and events [...] in the course of history and looking [...] to the recurrence of a pattern.’ Binder remarks: ‘Für die Deutung der Hauptgestalten der Aeneis und ihrer Taten [...] empfielt sich die typologische Auslegung.’ With this he means that the personae in, for example, the *Aeneis* are like his models (‘Er [Augustus] ist nicht Hercules oder Aeneas, aber er ist wie sie, ist ihr historisches Abbild [portrait]’). Therefore, there are in the epic poetical connections between the myth and the present which refer the reader to the actuality of the present.

Most modern scholars hold the view that Vergilius employed a model when he described the mythical Dido and in the extensive literature on the subject much has been written about the different options. Many women, generally mythical heroines and even goddesses, are paraded. One finds Hypsipyle, Medea, Helena, Calypso, Nausicaä, Cleopatra and many others. Horsfall remarks: ‘In despair, attentive readers of Aeneid 4 are reduced to...’

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213 Griffin, 1985, 183-197. Griffin also believes that Vergilius used literary models and according to him Vergilius ‘has no equal in literature for deftness in seizing and exploiting the hints offered by his literary models.’ (pg. 187). See also page 7, note 10. I do not concur with Griffin’s view on the *multi – literary models* where a character has been built up from a number of mythological figures, e.g. Dido is Nausicaä, Calypso, Medea and Cleopatra in one. See also Galinsky, 1996, 23-24.

In the foreword to his translation of Conte’s book (Conte, 1986, 14), Segal also refers to the relationship between history and the poet’s personal vision when he remarks: ‘In Conte’s subtle reinterpretation of the relations between history, the narrative grammar of epic, and Virgil’s personal vision, Virgil emerges as able “to retrieve from the depths of history the lost truths that the epic norm had always smothered” (chapter 5 [of Conte 1986,]).’

In this respect the view of Nadeau (1984, 59-82) is worth considering. He argues that in the *Georgica* and in the *Aeneis* Vergilius uses Aristaeus and Aeneas as allegories for persons of his own time. I have discussed this in chapter III which deals with the *Georgica*. See page 90, note 206 of this book.

drawing up lengthy lists of Dido’s mythical and literary analogues. In the case of Dido he distinguishes between three categories of literary models, namely Dido as (1) ‘alleged allegorical comparisons’, (2) Dido in ‘Naevius and others’ and (3) ‘Homer antecedents, female and male, and antecedents in Greek tragedy and Hellenistic poetry’. Strictly speaking, the second category is not necessarily a literary model in the sense that the poet had a woman in mind and transferred this picture to the figure of Dido. This second category may be formed by a generally accepted picture of Dido in (Latin) myth which Vergilius used.

This section is about the choice of a possible model and I will show the likelihood that Vergilius had one particular woman in mind, whose characteristics he borrowed when he created the public and private persona of Dido. If - as I believe - he wanted to emphasise the unique character of Dido in her public role, he was most likely to choose a literary model whose public appearance could be recognised by every reader, immediately and without reserves. Below I will endeavour to show the probability that Cleopatra was the literary model for Dido. This will imply that many passages in the Aeneis where Vergilius tells us about the person of Dido can be seen as allusions to Cleopatra.

In addition, it is likely that Vergilius borrowed in particular the most unique and visible characteristics of his model without making Dido a copy of her model in each and every detail. Differences between the literary persona and the model can be inverted by the poet and are not necessarily derived from a second or third model or a combination of these.

This also means that there is no reason to suppose that Vergilius has constructed one literary model from the examples of several separate historical or mythical women, as Galinsky suggests in his book Augustan Culture. Galinsky states that, when one reads the Aeneis, one feels the power of Dido’s personality directly and one does not need to possess any knowledge of literary models. However, he also states that ‘a full understanding of the character’s complexity comes with the reader’s awareness of the literary models of Dido.’ In my opinion Galinsky uses the term ‘literary model’ not as I have defined it: he means that for certain episodes in the epic, Dido was compared with different examples and that an appreciation of these examples heightens the understanding of Dido. For example in Aeneis, 1, 498–502, where Aeneas meets Dido for the first time, Vergilius likens her to Diana and her company (or perhaps to Nausicaä by means of the Homeric simile which he uses at that point). Diana (or Nausicaä) serves in this passage not as a literary model for Dido, but as a Virgilian simile. Equally in book 4 there is a simile when Dido, who is madly in love with Aeneas, is compared to Medea. Vergilius refers in these passages very specifically to well-known mythical women whom he employed as unique examples for unique events. Howev-

215 Horsfall, 1995, 133-134. At the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century A.D. at least one attentive reader of the fourth book of the Aeneis made his choice of a literary model. Macrobius wrote in his Saturnalia 5.17.4: adeo ut de Argonauticorum quarto, quorum scriptor est Apollonius, librum Aeneidos suae quartum totum poene formaverit, ad Didonem vel Aenean amatoriam incontinentiam Medeae circa Iasonem transferendo. (‘Thus he has modeled his fourth Book of the Aeneid almost entirely on the fourth Book of the Argonautica of Apollonius by taking the story of Medea’s passionate love for Jason and applying it to the loves of Dido and Aeneas.’). The Latin text is from the Teubner edition, 315 and the translation into English is by Davies, 1969, 359.

216 Galinsky, 1996, 229-231.

217 E.g. Aeneis 4, 143-150; this passage is held to refer to Apollonius Rhodos’ Argonautica 1, 307. See Page, 1962a, 356 ‘The comparison of Aeneas to Apollo is a pendant to that of Dido to Diana’ (1, 498). Here however Virgil closely copies Apoll. Rhod.1, 307.’ In addition Aeneis 4, 365ff and 489-490; these passages refer to the Argonautica 3. See also Page, 1962a, 372 and 381.
this does not exclude that Vergilius used a literary model – and a different one than Diana or Medea.

IV.a.1. Dido: was she a historical figure? Early myths surrounding her person

Dido’s history as described by Vergilius was founded on the established tradition in his time, which dates back to Timaios, a historian from Tauromenium on Sicily (ca.356–260 B.C.). Other mythical stories circulated about Dido at the time, of which some will be discussed in this section. Nowadays, there is general consensus that there was an earlier Phoenician trade post on the site of old Carthago and that the city was founded by Elissa (Dido) of Tyros in 814 B.C. The first who mentions this was Timaios and modern archeological research points also in the same direction.

In Phoenicia’s history the beginning of the ninth century B.C. was of crucial importance. At that time the power of Assyria increased and the independence and freedom of the Phoenician cities diminished rapidly. The annals of the Assyrian king Assurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.) state: ‘During that time I travelled past the mountains of the Lebanon, and towards the Great Sea [...] the honours of the kings of the coast, of the peoples of Tyros, Sidon, Byblos, [...] did I receive and they worshipped me [...].’ The Phoenician cities did not put up an armed resistance and submitted themselves gradually to Assyria. It is assumed that both internal strife in some cities and the increasing pressure and the harshness of the Assyrian regime in the ninth century led to a growing emigration to other parts of the Mediterranean region. This has also caused the departure of Elissa, the sister of king Pygmalion of Tyros, who was married to her uncle Acharbas (who in the Aeneis (1,342) is called Sychaeus), after the assassination of her husband. She left together with a group of citizens from Tyros.

As said above the eldest source is a fragment which originated from Timaios and was quoted in the Strategemata of Polyaenus. The fragment says:

‘Timaios says that she, who in the Phoenician language is called Elissa and who was a sister of Pygmalion of Tyros, founded Carthago in Libya. When her husband was murdered by Pygmalion she loaded her possessions in ships and fled together with a number of citizens. After great suffering she reached Libya after a long journey and was made very welcome by the Libyan people. After she had founded that city she was forced by the citizens to marry as she wanted to become queen of the Libyans, but she resisted. She pretended to submit to the ritual which would free her from her vows of marriage; she had a large pyre erected near her palace, lit this and threw herself on the stake instead.’

If one knows the Aeneis one immediately sees the differences with the story in this fragment, where Dido commits suicide to escape a forced marriage in Carthago. Aeneas does not feature at all in the fragment. Noteworthy is of course that in about 300 B.C. Timaios assigned the founding of Carthago to Elissa of Tyros.

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220 Moscati, 1984, 38-47.
221 Luckenbill, 1926-1927, in Moscati, 1968, 15.
222 Timaios, Fragmente in: Jacoby, 1950, 624 (the translation is my own). Polyaenus lived in the second century A.D.
As mentioned earlier Vergilius may have used and perhaps modified a well-known mythical story about Dido, which has since been lost. This leads to the question what and how much was known about Dido and the founding of Carthago in Vergilius’ time. Our knowledge about this is very limited due to the paucity of the extant sources about Dido from the time before Vergilius.

There exist some fragments of the *Bellum Poenicum* of Gnaeus Naevius, some of the *Annales* of Quintus Ennius, some texts in later commentaries of the fourth century A.D., such as of Servius and Macrobius and finally a fragment that is included in the *Anthology* of Planudes 223 and that has been translated by Ausonius (fourth century A.D.). These later texts indicate that more archaic stories about Dido existed which have been lost but which Vergilius may have known. It is beyond doubt that Vergilius was inspired by Homer when he wrote his *Aeneis*. Whether he was guided by myths about Aeneas and Dido, which existed in his time, is a different matter and this has given rise to much speculation in secondary literature. 224 I will discuss the most relevant texts.

Firstly, the *Bellum Poenicum* of Naevius (ca.270–ca.200 B.C.) is important. In book 1 Naevius describes the history before the First Punic War, in which he fought. He goes back to the flight of Anchises and Aeneas from Troy and he mentions a great storm in which the Trojans found themselves. Dido however is never mentioned in the whole extant part of the *Bellum Poenicum*. Some modern authors believe that a number of fragments from the *Bellum Poenicum* 1 may refer to Dido. 225 For example fragment 18, fragment 19 and fragment 20. In addition a number of references of commentators of later centuries is known and this may suggest that Naevius mentioned Dido. Servius Grammaticus 226 (fourth century A.D.) in his commentary on Vergilius (4.9) has handed down to us: *cuius filiae fuerint Anna et Dido, Naevius dicit.*

Macrobius writes in the beginning of the fifth century A.D. in his *Saturnalia* (6.2, 31) that the first book of the *Bellum Poenicum* exercised great influence on Vergilius. 227 The passage says:

*Sunt alii loci plurimorum versuum quos Maro in opus suum cum paucorum immutatone verborum a veteribus transtulit. et quia longum est numerosos versus ex utroque transcribere, libros veteres notabo, ut qui volet illic legend aequalitatem locorum conferendo miretur. In primo Aeneidos tempestas describitur, et Venus apud Iovem queritur de periculis filii, et Iuppiter eam de futurorum prosperitate solatur. hic locus totus sumptus a naevio est ex primo libro belli Punicici.*

(‘There are other passages, consisting of many lines, which Vergil has transferred, with the change of a few words, from earlier writers to his own poems; and, since to repeat a large number of lines (Vergil’s and his model’s) is tedious, I shall simply call

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223 “Epigrams of the Planudean Anthology, not in the Palatine Manuscript”, part 4 (epigram 151), 248. Maximos Planudes (ca. 1255–ca. 1305 A.D.) was a Byzantine monk, who worked as a grammarian and philologist. He published a collection of epigrams from Hellenistic times and many of these epigrams are by known authors; the epigram about Dido however, that is cited here, is by an anonymous author.

224 Horsfall, 2007, 138-144.

225 Horsfall, 2007, 138–144; Hunink, 2006b, 63-64. The indication of the fragments of the *Bellum Poenicum* is according to Morel, 1995.

226 Servii Grammatici Commentariorum, Thilo, 1923, 462.

227 The Latin text is taken from the Teubner edition, ed. by Willis, 1963, 365. The translation into the English is from Davies, 1969, 405. See also Horsfall, 2001, 138-144. Italics in the translation are mine.
attention to the old books, so that he who will may read these passages there and by comparing them with Vergil mark the astonishing similarities. Thus, at the beginning of the Aeneid there is a description of a storm; Venus then complains to Jupiter of the dangers which threaten her son, and Jupiter to comfort her tells of the good fortune of the race that is to be. The whole of this passage is taken from Naevius (from the first Book of his Punic War).

Secondly, two extant fragments from the Annales of Ennius (239–169 B.C.), in which he relates the history of Italia and Rome from the mythical beginning after the fall of Troy, may refer to Dido and the founding of Carthago. These are fragment inc.27 (verse 472) from Annales, liber 7: Poenos Sarra oriundos (‘Phoenicians [people of Carthago] sprung from Sarra [Tyros]’) and fragment 8.24 (verse 297) from Annales, liber 8, when he writes about the Second Punic War and where he warns the Romans not to underestimate the people of Carthago. The text says: Poenos Didone oriundos (‘Phoenicians [people of Carthago] sprung from Dido’). However, these two fragments are found in books 7 and 8 of the Annales. In the extant fragments of book 1, where Ennius writes about Aeneas’ mythical journey to Italia and the founding of Rome and where Dido’s name was to be expected she cannot be found.

Thirdly, the epigram from the Anthology of Planudes needs mentioning in this survey: this has been translated from the Greek by Ausonius (ca.310–393 A.D.) and reads as follows:

‘Thou seest, o stranger, the exact likeness of far-famed Dido, a portrait shining with divine beauty. Even so I was, but had not such a character as thou hearest, having gained glory rather for reputable things. For neither did I ever set eyes on Aeneas nor did I reach Libya at the time of the sack of Troy, but to escape a forced marriage to Iarbas I plunged the two-edged sword into my heart. Ye Muses, why did ye arm chaste Virgil against me to slander thus falsely my virtue?’

This epigram comes most likely from an anonymous author from the Hellenistic era; the translation from the Greek into the Latin by Ausonius indicates that it was known before Ausonius’ time and perhaps in the time of Vergilius.

Fourthly, there exists a text from Servius (4.682) in his commentary on the passage in book 4 of the Aeneis (exstinxit te meque, soror), which says: Varro ait non Didonem, sed Annam amore Aeneae impulsum se supra rogum interemisse (‘Varro said: it was not Dido but Anna who, forced by her love for Aeneas, drove herself to take her own life on the pyre.’). This text turns the whole Aeneis upside down, as one could deduce from this that both sisters took their lives or that Dido lived on after Aeneas’ departure and that the meeting between Dido and Aeneas in the underworld could never have taken place.

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228 Hunink, 2006a, 82; Skutsch, 1985, 114; Warmington, 1988, 84. The indication of the fragments of the Annales in Hunink’s and my text is according to Skutsch, 1985.
229 Hunink, 2006a, 92; Skutsch, 1985, 95; Warmington, 1988, 98.
230 Hunink (Quintus Ennius, Annales, 73-74) states that fragment inc.18 refers to Dido as well, namely to her arrival in Africa. The fragment says: sed sola terrarum postquam permensa parumper (‘but after a long time of wandering over land’). The problem is here that Dido is not mentioned by name and that this text can refer to others.
231 “Epigrams of the Planudean Anthology, not in the Palatine Manuscript”, part 4 (epigram 151), 248-249.
232 Servii Grammatici Commentarii, Thilo, 1923, 580.
Finally, Macrobius mentions Dido in his *Saturnalia* 5.17, 5-6. The text is as follows:

_Quod ita elegantius auctore digessit, ut fabula lascivientis Didonis, quam falsam novit universitas, per tot tamen saecula speciem veritatis obtineat [...]. Tantum valuit pulchritudo narrandi, ut omnes Phoenissae castitatis conscii, nec ignari manum sibi inieisse reginam, ne pateretur damnum pudoris, conniveat tamen fabulae et, intra conscientiam veri fidem prementes, malint pro vero celebrari quod pectoribus humanis dulcedo fingentis infudit._

(‘And here he has arranged the subject matter so much more tastefully than his model that the story of Dido’s passion, which all the world knows to be fiction, has nevertheless for all these many years been regarded as true. [...] Indeed, the beauty of Vergil’s narrative has so far prevailed that, although all are aware of the chastity of the Phoenician queen and know that she laid hands on herself to save her good name, still they turn a blind eye to the fiction, suppress in their minds the evidence of the truth, and choose rather to regard as true the tale which the charm of a poet’s imagination has implanted in the hearts of mankind.’)

In other words, Vergilius’ Dido and Aeneas is nothing but fiction and Timaios’ text about Dido and the anonymous epigram in the *Anthology of Planudes* are strikingly similar. Both latter texts say that Dido took her own life to avoid a forced marriage. In Timaios’ text Aeneas is not mentioned and the author of the epigram even explicitly denies any relationship with Aeneas.

Thus the evidence is very conflicting and it appears that it is no longer possible to trace whether Vergilius used stories about a mythical Dido - written or oral – which may have existed before his time, and which he adapted and turned into the Dido we know from the *Aeneis*. Horsfall says the following about this point: ‘Are we in a position to say anything about the function and character of Dido in the *Bellum Poenicum* or about the influence of Naevius’ Dido on Vergil’s? Any reconstruction is a mere house of cards.’

This ‘house of cards’ does not only apply to the Dido in the *Bellum Poenicum* but equally well to the picture of her which could arise from other scarce mythical sources. Nowadays one can only conclude with any form of certainty that a mythical Dido from Carthago was known before Vergilius’ time and that it is likely that somebody testified that a Dido committed suicide on a pyre. Vergilius’ Dido however is a ‘complete’ woman to whom he attributed many features. Did Vergilius perhaps connect the arrival of a mythical Aeneas, which Naevius had mentioned, with a semi-historical Dido and did he construct a new myth from these facts? Anyway, the answer cannot be found in our extant sources and it will remain unresolved whether Vergilius used earlier myths.

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233 The Latin text is again from the Teubner edition (page 315) and the rendering into English is again from the edition of Davies, 1969, 359.

234 Horsfall, 2001, 138-144. It is noteworthy that Horsfall a few lines later in the same article states: ‘The influence of Naevius’ Dido on Vergil’s in character and function was, I suspect, vastly greater than can now be plausibly guessed, let alone proved.’
IV.a.2. Vergilius’ Dido

Vergilius conceived the *Aeneis* in the epic tradition while living and working within the cultural climate of his own time. It is reasonable to suppose that he, when he created the persona of Dido, followed his own idea which was determined by his own objectives. In this section I will concentrate on the persona of Dido as she comes across to us from the *Aeneis*. An appreciation of her personality is crucial as in a later section she will be mirrored against possible literary models. Who is Dido, in her public appearances and as a private person?

Reading the *Aeneis* one can only be impressed by Dido’s personality; Dido who left Tyros together with her supporters to establish a new kingdom and to rule there as their queen. In Vergilius’ epic this takes place soon after the end of the Trojan war. In book 1 of the *Aeneis* one reads:

\[his commota fugam Dido sociosque parabat.\]
\[conveniunt quibus aut odium crudele tyranni\]
\[aut metus acer erat; navis, quae forte paratae,\]
\[corripiunt onerantque auro. portantur avari\]
\[Pygmalionis opes pelago; dux femina facti.\]

(‘Moved by this, Dido made ready her flight and her company. Then all assemble who felt towards the tyrant relentless hatred or keen fear; ships, which by chance were ready, they seize and load with gold; the wealth of grasping Pygmalion is borne overseas, the leader of the enterprise a woman.’)

*Aeneis* 1, 360-364

The three last words of the quoted passage tell the whole story. How unusual that a woman is the leader of the expedition! In book 1 this point is again emphasised when Aeneas carefully enters Carthago and sees Dido at work there. The passage reads:

\[iura dabat legesque viris, operumque laborem\]
\[partibus aequabat iustis aut sorte trahebat:\]

(‘Laws and ordinances she gave to her people; their tasks she adjusted in equal shares or assigned by lot;’)

*Aeneis* 1, 507-508

In several other passages in book 1 (338–370; 496–508) Dido is portrayed as a ‘good’ queen; she is *pulcherrima* (1,496), she is likened to Diana and has divine qualities (1,499), goes *ad templum* (1,496) with royal piety.\(^\text{235}\)

When a party of stranded Trojans is allowed to address her, and Aeneas – still hidden in his cloud – looks on, it is Dido who demonstrates that she knows the history of Troy and that of Aeneas and she declares that the Trojans are very welcome. She invites them to stay and to build Carthago with her and her people. Emphatically she includes Aeneas and she wishes that he were present as well. Is Vergilius suggesting here that she considers establishing a new dynasty with Aeneas if he were to turn up in Carthago? It seems as if this is what she means. She says to the Trojans:

\(^{235}\) See also: Cairns, 1990, 1-21.
‘vultis et his mecum pariter considere regnis?
urbem quam statuo, vestra est; subducite navis;
Tros Tyriusque mihi nullo discrimine agetur.
atque utinam rex ipse noto compulsus eodem
adforet Aeneas! equidem per litora certos
dimittam et Libyae lustrare extrema iubebo,
si quibus ejectus silvis aut urbibus errat.’
(‘Or is it your wish to settle with me on even terms within these realms? The city I build is yours; draw up your ships; Trojan and Tyrian I shall treat alike. And would that your king were here, driven by the same wind – Aeneas himself! Nay, I will send trusty scouts along the coast and bid them traverse the ends of Libya, if perchance he strays shipwrecked in forest or in town.”)
Aeneis 1, 572-578

At the end of book 1 things develop as the reader expects. Dido is struck by Amor:

\[
\begin{align*}
  \text{nec non et vario noctem sermonem \textit{trahebat}} \\
  \text{\textit{infelix Dido longumque bibebat amorem,}}
\end{align*}
\]
(‘No less did unhappy Dido prolong the night with varied talk and drank deep draughts of love,’)
Aeneis 1, 748-749

It is often held that Aeneas courted Dido and that she reluctantly consented. Dido certainly had her doubts, as is made clear in book 4 when she discusses her new love with her sister Anna. The text however shows that Dido took initiatives in the affair as well: several scholars have made this point in the past.  

\[
\begin{align*}
  \text{uritur \textit{infelix Dido totaque vagatur}} \\
  \text{urbe furens, \textit{qualis coniecta cerva sagitta,}} \\
  \text{quam procul incautam nemora inter Cresia fixit} \\
  \text{\textit{pastor agens telis liquitque volatile ferrum}} \\
  \text{nesciue:} [...]
\end{align*}
\]
(‘Unhappy Dido burns, and through the city wanders in frenzy - even as a hind, smitten by an arrow, which, all unwary, amid the Cretan woods, a shepherd hunting with darts has pierced from afar, leaving in her the winged steel, unknowing: [...]’)
Aeneis 4, 68-72

In her confused state of mind she takes the lead and decides to win over Aeneas when she shows him round in the city and when they attend a grand dinner in the evening.

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The narrative accelerates when Dido and her suite and Aeneas with his Trojans go hunting. A sudden thunderstorm forces them to take shelter and Dido and Aeneas find themselves in the same cave.

*speluncam Dido dux et Troianus eandem deveniunt.*

‘To the same cave come Dido and the Trojan chief. [..]’

*Theseus* 4, 165-166

The two lines which follow shortly tell all:

*[..] neque enim specie famave movetur
nec iam furtivum Dido meditatur amorem:*

‘[...] For no more is Dido swayed by fair show or fair fame, no more does she dream of a secret love:’

*Theseus* 4, 170-171

The passages (*Theseus* 4, 68-72 and 165-171) show Dido as a woman who is totally engrossed in her love for Aeneas and who creates opportunities to share her love with him. Later in book 4 however, the picture of Dido changes, as she demonstrates the characteristics of a ‘bad’ king.237 Dido knows no restraint as she wanders through the city like a Bacchante:

*saevit inops animi totamque incensa per urbem bacchatur,*

‘Helpless in mind she rages, and all aflame raves through the city, [..]’

*Theseus* 4, 300-301

Dido’s intense love for Aeneas is a lack of royal dignity and this kind of love is not the love which ‘[..] “leads to self-control and virtue”, but is in truth for Dido the “terrible love which destroys mortals”.238 Complete submission to love was equated in Rome to uncontrolled feelings and could lead to the neglect of duty and the denial of other values which a ‘good’ king ought to possess.239

The text of the *Theseus* shows clearly that Dido loves Aeneas. But is this love returned by Aeneas?240 There are only two short passages from which this could be concluded, one in book 4, when Aeneas leaves Dido.

*multa gemens magnoque animum labefactus amore*

‘with many a sigh, his soul shaken by his mighty love,’

*Theseus* 4, 395

237 Cairns, 1990, 52-55.
238 Cairns, 1990, 55.
239 Farron, 1993, 14 and 19 has a completely different view on the subject. ‘Vergil’s contemporaries were fascinated by passionate, tormenting, self-destructive love, and most of them admired it highly’ and ‘Vergil, even more than his contemporaries, admired suffering and dying for love’. Against his argument one can suggest that Vergilius chose here the word *bacchatur*, which implies disapproval of Dido’s behaviour.
240 Cairns, 1990, 50.
The other is in book 6 when Aeneas meets Dido in the underworld:

\[ \textit{demisit lacrimas dulcique adfatus amore est} \\
\text{('he shed tears, and spoke to her in tender love:')} \]

\[ \textit{Aeneis 6, 455} \]

While Aeneas moons about in Carthago, Iuppiter decides that he can not condone that Aeneas neglects his duty and the chief god sends Mercurius to dispatch Aeneas at once to Italia. Dido notices that he is going to leave her and she reproaches him for his departure.

Dido’s anger and distress are not just a result of Aeneas’ choice to follow his own path and to reject her love. There is something else the matter. In book 4 Dido says:

\[ \textit{saltem si qua mihi de te suscepta fuisset} \\
\textit{ante fugam suboles, si quis mihi parvulus aula} \\
\textit{luderet Aeneas, qui te tamen ore referret,} \\
\textit{non equidem omnino capta ac deserta viderer.”} \]

('At least, if before your flight a child of yours had been born to me, if in my hall a baby Aeneas were playing, whose face, in spite of all, would bring back yours, I should not think myself utterly vanquished and forlorn.')  

\[ \textit{Aeneis 4, 327-330} \]

This is not just an expression of Dido’s distress caused by the loss of Aeneas’ love, but in this passage the childless Dido also displays the frustration by the failure of her plan to start a new dynasty with him. The end of this episode is well-known. Aeneas leaves for Italia and Dido takes her life on the pyre. They will meet once more when Aeneas visits the underworld.

The picture of Dido is that of an independent queen, a leader of her people. She was socially active and she took the decisions about the organisation of the city and the state. She possessed the ambition to establish a new empire. In short, Dido showed courage and physical strength in her public role, she had an elevated social position and acquired fame. She was leading in the Carthagian society, at the top of the elite. On a personal level she was a passionate woman, who admitted openly to her love for the stranger, she took initiatives in her relationship with him and by this chose her own way. She was not submissive to any man, but rather superior to many. She was also able to face her own situation and took the consequences, how terrible her death might turn out to be.

Dido did not fit the model of the women of the Roman elite of Vergilius’ time at all. Although from the second century B.C. onwards women of the Roman elite, the matronae, moved more freely, the fact remained that they were still dependent on their husbands, their fathers-in-law or other male members of their family. Dido surpassed all this in her public role, in the passion- for all to see- in her life and death and in her independence. It would not be possible to meet many women like Dido in Rome in 25 B.C.: not because she was a mythical figure, but because she would have been unique.

\[ 241 \text{Naerebout and Singor, 2004, 306-307, 317.} \]
IV.a.3. Literary models for Dido from Greek epic, tragedy or Hellenistic poetry

Earlier Horsfall’s three categories of possible literary models for Dido were mentioned. In section IV.a.1 I concluded that it is unlikely that Vergilius could have used an existing myth about Dido without major alterations. And even if Vergilius adjusted a story about a mythical Dido, it is still feasible that he used a literary model. In this section I will consider whether he may have used a model from the third category ‘Homeric antecedents, female and male, and antecedents in Greek tragedy and Hellenistic poetry’. Comparing these heroines and Dido I will focus on the unique and special features of Dido, namely her public actions, her independence and her leadership. Earlier I touched upon the question whether Vergilius could not have used several different literary models for different aspects of Dido’s persona. It is feasible that Vergilius did this for some features, but it is not likely that he did so for the uniqueness of Dido. None of these mythical women had founded an empire, built a city, were the independent queen of their people, the commander of soldiers or a lawgiver. Only some of these characteristics are known of the queens of the Amazons or of Hypsipyle, but not the full measure of queenship. To illustrate whether mythical women are appropriate models, I will briefly discuss a comparison between Dido on the one hand and Andromache and Medea on the other. They have been chosen as their characters and actions can be adequately constructed from the extant epic literature. In addition these two women epitomise the role and position of women in their time.

In the sixth book of the *Ilias* Andromache is portrayed as a woman who obviously loved her husband (*Ilias* 6, 407-413) and to whom she was subservient. Her task was within the family and there she was the manager. When she ventured outside domestic affairs she was curtly refused by her husband Hector and she accepted that, as the scene in which she offers him some sound military advice (*Ilias* 6, 484-492) shows. For her it was not possible to conceive a life without her husband as protector and bread-winner. With this she fits very well into the archetype of the woman of the elite within Homeric society.

Medea is a different matter; in the epic *Argonautica*, which Apollonius of Rhodos wrote about 250 B.C., Medea developed from a girl with a consuming passion for the stranger Iason to a woman. She struggled with this love and its consequences. She is portrayed as somebody who can analyse and articulate her feelings: a woman with brains and with a heart. She took her own decisions, showed initiative and stood up for her own interests. She considered herself equal to Iason, the hero. Medea was much more a woman of the world and in her case we do not read anything about domestic tasks. In addition, she had very special qualities as a sorceress, which was not considered as something objectionable in Alexandria of the middle of the third century B.C. She fits well in the picture of the women of the originally Greek elite of Alexandria of these days.

When one compares Dido as portrayed in the *Aeneid* by Vergilius on the one hand and her mythical sisters Andromache and Medea on the other, the difference in the essential features is immediately clear. Dido is queen with all characteristics befitting this, and Andromache and Medea are royal princesses and wives. In the cases of all three mythical women their loves are decisive; however, with important differences. Andromache is an example of self-effacing conjugal love. Medea revenges the rejection by Iason but her vengeance remains within the limits of their personal relationship, namely their sons. Dido however experiences her love for Aeneas as a woman with a public duty and sees his departure not just as a personal rejection. The decisive issue for her is the loss of authority she suffers and in a
sense she abdicates from the throne; her public duty determines her personal action. Dido’s persona is unique for the time in which Vergilius created her, while Andromache and Medea occupy positions which we would have expected women to hold in the societies of Homerus’ and Apollonius’ times.

IV.a.4. Cleopatra: a literary model for Dido

Earlier I concluded that it is impossible to trace the contents of the myths about Dido which may have existed in Vergilius’ time. Therefore, it is equally impossible to assert that these myths supplied a literary model (Horsfall’s second category). Neither does Horsfall’s third category (models from Greek epic, tragedy or Hellenistic poetry; see section IV.a.3.) seem to fit. Consequently over the following pages I will focus on his first category, namely ‘the alleged allegorical comparisons’. My hypothesis is that Cleopatra may have been a literary model. In order to test the validity of this hypothesis I will in this section present a sketch of the life of the historical Cleopatra before comparing her with the mythical Dido in the next section.

A number of authors in antiquity such as Plutarchus, Cassius Dio and Suetonius wrote extensively about Cleopatra. Horatius devoted his ninth epodos and his famous Carmen 1.37 (nunc est bibendum) to her and Propertius referred to her in his elegies 3.11 and 4.6.

Cleopatra VII (69 B.C.-30 B.C.) was the last queen of the Ptolemaic dynasty, which began with Ptolemaeus I, a general of Alexander the Great, who assumed power over Egypt and the bordering regions in 305 B.C. From 168 onwards the rich kingdom of Egypt was a protectorate of Rome. After her father’s death in 51 B.C. Cleopatra became queen of Egypt at the age of eighteen together with her younger brother Ptolemaeus XIII. The political tensions in Egypt eventually resulted in Iulius Caesar’s intervention. Caesar arrived in Alexandria in 48 B.C., where he became heavily involved in the power struggle between Cleopatra and her brother. Caesar took Cleopatra’s side, her brother mysteriously drowned in the Nile and Caesar installed Cleopatra and her second, very young brother Ptolemaeus XIV on the throne. Caesar remained in Egypt and he and Cleopatra began a love affair. At that time Cleopatra was twenty-one years old. It has often been suggested that Caesar fell for her exceptional beauty. Plutarchus writes about this as follows:

‘For her beauty, as we are told, was in itself not altogether incomparable, nor such as to strike those who saw her; but converse with her had an irresistible charm, and her presence, combined with the persuasiveness of her discourse and the character which was somehow diffused about her behaviour towards others, had something stimulating about it. There was sweetness also in the tones of her voice; and her tongue, like an instrument of many strings, she could readily turn to whatever language she pleased, [...]’

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243 Cassius Dio, 42.3-10.
244 Cassius Dio, 42.34, 3-35.
245 Plutarchus, Antonius 27, 2–4.
Caesar stayed in Alexandria for a considerable time and in 47 B.C. their son Caesarion was born.\textsuperscript{246} In 46 Caesar took both to Rome and after Caesar’s death in March 44 Cleopatra and Caesarion returned to Alexandria. In 42 B.C. the rule over the territories in the East had been entrusted to Antonius. Whilst residing in Tarsus Antonius invited Cleopatra to come and see him. Plutarchus writes:\textsuperscript{247}

‘As he [Antonius] was getting ready for the Parthian war, he sent for Cleopatra, ordering her to meet him in Cilicia in order to make answer to the charges made against her of raising and giving to Cassius much money for the war. But Dellius, Anthony’s messenger, when he saw how Cleopatra looked, and noticed her subtlety and cleverness in conversation, at once perceived that Antony would not so much as think of doing such a woman any harm, but that she would have the greatest influence with him!’

This passage has been quoted in full, since it clearly shows how an intelligent contemporary as Q. Dellius saw the power of Cleopatra.\textsuperscript{248} He understood that she captured men not only by her beauty or by sexual attraction, but mostly by her intelligence paired with her determination to be queen of a powerful empire. During the meeting in Tarsus she floored Antonius with a grandiose show of her luxurious taste, her intelligence and social skills. This was the start of a twelve year relationship that lasted until their deaths in 30 B.C.

In the winter of 41 Cleopatra brought Antonius to Alexandria. Plinius the Elder in his \textit{Historia Naturalis} described the extravagant feasts and meals at the queen’s court: in a bet she once dissolved a very large pearl in concentrated vinegar and Plutarchus does not omit to portray the Roman prejudices concerning the luxury, waste and decadence of the court in Alexandria, as Antonius indulged with enthusiasm in Cleopatra’s favours.\textsuperscript{249} Increasingly Cleopatra took over control of political affairs. Plutarchus writes that the territories in the East stood opposed to those in the West, and he leaves no doubt that Cleopatra was the leader.\textsuperscript{250}

The final struggle between Octavianus on the one hand and Antonius and Cleopatra on the other came in 31 B.C., when the armies and navies confronted each other. Although Antonius was presumably stronger on land than at sea, the deciding battle took place at sea on 2nd of September 31 B.C., near Actium. Plutarchus testifies ‘But to such an extent, now, was Antony an appendage of the woman [Cleopatra] that although he was far superior on land, he wished the decision to rest with his navy, to please Cleopatra, […]’.\textsuperscript{251} The result is well known. After Actium Antonius and Cleopatra continued their resistance and Egypt became the scene of war. Alexandria was taken by Octavianus and Antonius tried to commit suicide, but failed. He had himself taken to Cleopatra in whose arms he died. Octavianus wanted to capture Cleopatra alive in order to take her to Rome for the triumph. But after a

\textsuperscript{246} Caesarion, who was a natural and not an adoptive son of Iulius Caesar, was murdered after the fall of Alexandria in 30 B.C., when he was sixteen or seventeen years old. Octavianus was of a similar age (eighteen) when Iulius Caesar was murdered in 44 B.C.

\textsuperscript{247} Plutarchus, \textit{Antonius} 25, 1-2.

\textsuperscript{248} For Quintus Dellius see Horatius’ \textit{Carmen} 2.3.

\textsuperscript{249} Plinius, \textit{Natural History} 9, 119-121; Plutarchus, \textit{Antonius} 28 and 29; Griffin, 1985, 41.

\textsuperscript{250} Plutarchus, \textit{Antonius} 61, 3–62,1.

\textsuperscript{251} Plutarchus, \textit{Antonius} 62,1; Horatius’ \textit{lambus} 9, 12 refers to Antonius who is \textit{emancipatus feminae} (‘enslaved to a woman [Cleopatra]’).
few days she managed - still in Alexandria – to take her own life. Cleopatra preferred death to imprisonment by Octavianus.252

IV.a.5. Dido and Cleopatra

It is now possible to set the mythical person of Dido, as portrayed by Vergilius between 29 B.C. and 19 B.C., against the historical queen Cleopatra, who died in 30 B.C. When Vergilius wrote the Aeneis he lived and worked with a group of engaged individuals close to the centre of power. The circle around Maecenas, of which he and Horatius were members, was engaged in the important questions of their day and their work was read by a well-educated elite.253 Vergilius’ position at the court of Augustus made him highly aware of political developments and most likely he was well informed about the political and social events of the fifteen year period prior to the time when he started writing the Aeneis. It would not be surprising therefore if he had a clear picture of the person of Cleopatra in mind, when in 29 he started writing his mythical history of Rome. From her palace, the queen of Egypt played an important role in Roman life up until the year 30 B.C.

A detailed comparison of Dido and Cleopatra shows striking similarities between them, both in public and in personal appearance.254 In their public roles both were unique. The mythical Dido was not only exceptional in her virtual society as queen of Carthago, but also in the position which Vergilius gave her when he wrote the Aeneis in the Rome of the first century B.C. The historical Cleopatra held a position which was in general unattainable for women at the end of that age. Dido and Cleopatra were both independent sovereigns, ruling kingdoms on the southern coasts of the Mediterranean. Both came to power after conflicts and strife within their families. Dido was a threat to Rome for two reasons: firstly, if Aeneas had stayed with her – and she made much effort to keep him – Rome would not have been founded, and secondly Dido built Carthago, a future threat to Rome. Cleopatra was queen in Alexandria, the centre of culture. In the first century B.C. Cleopatra formed an actual danger to Rome and in the eyes of her contemporaries in Rome she was a determinant factor at an important junction in Rome’s history.

Both queens had full sovereign powers: they enacted law, administered justice and commanded their troops. The continuity of their dynasty was a prime issue for both of them, as much for Dido in her relation to Aeneas as for Cleopatra in her ‘marriage’ with Antonius. Both women said - one in the mythical story, the other in reality - that they saw great opportunities to build a powerful empire with their new partners. Although they were described as clearly absorbed in their love, their primary loyalties lay with their constitutional positions...

252 See also Horatius’ Carmen 1.37.
254 Galinsky, 2000, 17-23. The summary of this essay ‘Horace’s Cleopatra and Vergil’s Dido’ is: ‘There are considerable affinities between Horace’s portrayal of Cleopatra (Carm.1.37) and Virgil’s of Dido. They involve verbal echoes, theme, treatment and especially tragic problemisation. Most probably these similarities are due to creative interchange between the two poets. Horace’s Cleopatra, rather than the real Cleopatra, is one of the many models for Virgil’s Dido.’ Galinsky says this as he holds the opinion that Horatius in Carmen 1.37 described Cleopatra only ‘in human terms’, in the same way that Vergilius shows only ‘the human dimension’ of Dido. However, as I demonstrated above, one can find many passages about the ‘public’ Dido in the Aeneis and there are striking parallels in the public roles of both queens. See also Desmond, 1994, 32; ‘Dido also functions as a figure for Cleopatra’. For further reading she refers to Pease, 1967, 24-28, who holds a position in the middle: ‘if Dido is designed to suggest to some extent the figure of Cleopatra […]’.
and the influence and power which that brought. Both Dido and Cleopatra lived in great style at their courts. Dido received Aeneas with sumptuous banquets and organized hunting parties, while Cleopatra’s style was almost proverbially exuberant. The life styles of both sovereigns confirmed the worst opinions of Romans about the decadent East. Both queens were rich; Dido as a result of the gold of Sychaeus, and Cleopatra through the proceeds of the Egyptian land.

With respect to their personalities there are also several parallels. Both ladies were intelligent and communicative. Cleopatra was attractive, but not particularly beautiful, while Dido has been described as a great beauty. They knew how to charm men, with Cleopatra as the clear champion in this respect. Dido and Cleopatra had had sexual experience before they met their new lovers: Dido had been married to Sychaeus and Cleopatra had had a three year relationship with Iulius Caesar and had known other lovers as well. It appears that it was the women who took the initiative in their new relationships, and that these were subordinate to their dynastic goals and constitutional positions. In both cases a son to safeguard the succession was important. Dido is portrayed as a kind and sympathetic woman: an image that Cleopatra does not share. Both felt and behaved as the equal partners of their lovers. In the case of Cleopatra this developed into a dominant position over Antonius, while the relation of Dido with Aeneas was too short lived to see any development. An obviously significant difference is that Cleopatra and Antonius remained together until the very end and that Dido lost Aeneas almost immediately.

The two sovereigns both regarded their power as a natural right, which belonged traditionally to their families. Dido refers to this when she speaks about her father (Aeneis 1, 621-622) and the table linen at the banquet for Aeneas displays the history of her family (Aeneis 1, 639-642). Cleopatra saw herself as the natural ruler of Egypt.

Both women committed suicide in the prime of life. They acted out of frustration as their designs had failed and they refused to be subordinate to their male opponents. Dido felt betrayed by Aeneas and Cleopatra had lost her empire and Antonius and did not want to subject herself to Octavianus.

The significant similarities in many characteristics of Dido and Cleopatra point to the feasibility that Vergilius used the latter as a literary model for the former. These similarities lie as much in their public as in their personal appearances and they relate to important aspects of their lives. It follows that the many passages in the Aeneis where Vergilius tells us about the person of Dido can be seen as allusions to Cleopatra.

Pease points out that a number of scholars link Aeneas, Dido, and perhaps even the minor characters in the Aeneis with Augustus, Cleopatra, and their contemporaries and he considers that ‘in its larger aspects and in some minor ones this view is attractive’. Although he summarises the many parallels between Cleopatra and Dido, he also points to some differences. He gives as examples that Cleopatra ruled a decadent society, while Dido was a pioneer, that the former was of Aryan, the latter of Semitic race, that Cleopatra ‘is bent upon her own licentious pleasures, while Dido is capable of great devotion’ and more.

Against the opinion of Pease there are two points to make. The first is that a character in a literary work never matches the model in every aspect. The second is that the objective of Vergilius may precisely have been that the reader ‘links’ (to use Pease’s own word) in

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his mind the characters in the Aeneis with Augustus, Cleopatra and others and in this way creates associations.

Against my view that it is probable that Vergilius used Cleopatra as a model for Dido, the criticism may be levelled that in general Vergilius writes ‘sympathetically’ about Dido while his references to Cleopatra are not kind. However, the poet is not unreservedly positive about Dido as I have pointed out above. When the story develops one sees Dido’s negative traits. Vergilius portrays her without self-control and dignity when she suspects Aeneas’ departure (Aeneis 4, 300-303); such a fury does not befit a ‘good queen’. This is repeated when a few moments later she tells Aeneas what she thinks of him (Aeneis 4, 365-392).

One can also consider the passage in Aeneis 4, 584-629 as one in which Vergilius shows Dido in an unfavourable light. She sees that Aeneas’ fleet is preparing to depart and for obvious reasons this arouses a deep anger with her. However, she does not voice anger but a fierce hatred and again Vergilius does not portray her as a queen who acts in a composed manner as a ‘good queen’ should. The following lines from her long tirade show the other side of Dido:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{non potuii abrep\textit{tum} divellere corpus et undis} \\
\text{spargere? non socios, non ipsum absumere ferro} \\
\text{Ascanium patriisque epulandum ponere mensis?} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(‘Could I not have seized him, torn him limb from limb and scattered the pieces on the waves? Could I not have put his men to the sword, and Ascanius himself, and served him as a meal at his father’s table?’)

Aeneis 4, 600-603

Not so long before this curse Dido had wished herself a little baby brother of Ascanius (line 328-329).
Her anger is not just directed against Aeneas: a few lines later she curses him and prays for an ongoing hostility between her people and Aeneas’ descendants.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{“[…]; nec, cum se sub leges pacis iniquae} \\
\text{tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur,} \\
\text{sed cadat ante diem mediaque inhumatus harena.} \\
\text{haec precor, hanc vocem extremam cum sanguine fundo.} \\
\text{tum vos, o Tyrii, stirpem et genus omne futurum} \\
\text{exercete odiis, cinerique haec mittite nostro} \\
\text{munera. nullus amor populis nec foedera sunto.} \\
\text{exorire, aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor} \\
\text{qui face Dardanios ferroque sequare colonos,} \\
\text{nunc, olim, quocumque dabunt se tempore vires.} \\
\text{litora litoribus contraria, fluctibus undas} \\
\text{imprecor, arma armis: pugnet ipsique nepotesque.”} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(‘[…]. Nor yet, when he has submitted to the terms of an unjust peace, may he enjoy his kingship or the life he longs for, but perish before his time and lie unburied on a lonely strand! This is my prayer; this last utterance I pour out with my blood. Then do you, Tyrians, persecute with hate his stock and all the
race to come, and to my dust offer this tribute! 
Let no love or treaty unite the nations! 
Arise from my ashes, unknown avenger, to harass the 
Trojan settlers with fire and sword – today, hereafter, 
whenever strength be ours! May coast with coast conflict, 
I pray, and sea with sea, arms with arms; war may they have, 
themselves and their children’s children!”

_Aeneis 4, 618-629_

This whole passage is a prophecy by Dido in which she foretells that Aeneas will experience many hardships and struggles and ‘legend told that his reign was brief and that he met an unnatural death at the river Numicius, his body disappearing and so not given burial.’

The last five lines (exorari...nepotesque) refer not only to Aeneas’ fate, but can also be interpreted as referring to the Punic wars and to Hannibal (aliquis utor) and as an allusion to Vergilius’ own days. The reader in the final decades B.C. may have felt that the wars with the peoples of the African coasts were never ending as the Egyptian queen had only recently been vanquished.

**IV.b. References and allusions in the Aeneis**

The epic of Vergilius can be read and experienced in different ways and on several levels. In Antiquity and in the Middle Ages the _Aeneis_ represented for many a true rendering of history, the founding of Rome. Nowadays it is for many no more than a beautiful poem about a mythical subject in which, as in a tragedy, the human emotions which go with war, suffering and love are told. However, in the epic there are many different layers, each with their own message. Cairns, for example, devotes three chapters to the allusions to kingship in the _Aeneis_ and Galinsky maintains that the emphasis of the work is on the transition from disorder to order and on the effort which such a change requires.

He writes that the epos is not concerned with the result, but with the effort: ‘it is the toil necessary for the achievement, and not the achievement itself, that is the stuff of the _Aeneis._’

Turning our attention to the subject of this section, it is important to emphasise that references and allusions as found in the _Aeneis_ can be traced in all forms of art of the period of Augustus. These references were understood by the Romans and Galinsky gives examples of the _Ara Pacis_, the statue of Augustus of Prima Porta, the portraits of Augustus, frescoes, the Forum of Augustus and the temple of Apollo at the Palatine. About the _Ara Pacis_, which he considers to be the most important monument of the Augustan age, he says: ‘In its combination of experimentation, deliberate multiplicity of associations and inspirations, and a clear overall meaning; it is a splendid example of the culture in general […].’ In Galinsky’s opinion the same holds for poetry and thus literature is a continuous interplay of images and associations. In this section I will examine the cases where Cleopatra, Augustus and other

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258 Galinsky, 1996, 141-224.  
259 See also the discussion of the _Ara Pacis_ in Kleiner, 2005a, 212-219 and in 2005b, 219-229.  
leading persons in Vergilius’ time are mentioned by name in the Aeneis as well as the indirect references and allusions to the personages.

Firstly, I will deal with the passages where Cleopatra is mentioned. The best known passage is in Aeneis 8: the story about the new shield which Aeneas received from his mother Venus and which had been produced by Vulcanus.\(^\text{261}\) Although she remains nameless in this passage, there is no doubt that Vergilius writes about Cleopatra and therefore I consider this passage as one where she is mentioned directly and not one containing an allusion to her. Antonius is mentioned by name and Cleopatra is connected with him in the same line.

The future into which Vergilius allows us a glance is introduced in Aeneis 8, 625-629:

\[
\begin{align*}
hastamque et clipei non enarrabile textum. \\
ilic res Italas Romanorumque triumphos \\
haud vatum ignorans venturique inscrutae aevi \\
fecerat ignipotentis, illic genus omne futurae \\
stirpis ab Ascanio pugnataque in ordine bella.
\end{align*}
\]

(’The spear, and the shield’s ineffable fabric. There the story of Italy and the triumphs of Rome had the Lord of Fire fashioned, not unversed in prophecy or unknowing of the age to come; there, every generation of the stock to spring from Ascanius, and the wars they fought in their sequence.’)

Aeneis 8, 625-629

In the course of his description of the history of Rome, which takes up virtually the remainder of book 8 (Aeneis 8, 630-728), Vergilius relates the important facts up until the events of his own day. Cleopatra appears three times in 8, 671-713, a passage which deals with Actium and its aftermath, although not by name. For the first time Cleopatra is referred to in 8, 685-688: Antonius and his nameless Egyptian wife (Antonius[…], sequiturque (nefas) Aegyptia coniunx) are quoted in just one line. The second appearance of Cleopatra is in the lines 8, 696-697.\(^\text{262}\) In a third passage Cleopatra’s flight to Egypt is described in 8, 707-713.\(^\text{263}\)

\[
\begin{align*}
ipsa videbatur ventis regina vocatis \\
vela dare et laxos iam iamque immittere funis. \\
ilam inter caedes pallentem morte futura \\
fecerat ignipotentis undis et Iapyge ferri, \\
contra autem magno maerentem corpore Nilum \\
pandentemque sinus et tota veste vocantem \\
caeruleum in gremium latebrosaque flumina victos
\end{align*}
\]

(’The queen herself was seen to woo the winds, spread sail, and now, even now, fling loose the

---


\(^{262}\) Gurval, 1998, 237 and 240; Gurval points out that there is some reminiscence with Dido in 8.696. ‘Like Dido the Egyptian queen is also fated to die.’ In the next passage there is textual similarity with Dido; in 8.709 we read that Cleopatra was pallentem morte future (‘pale at the coming of death’) and in 4. 644 Dido was described as pallida morte future (‘pale at the imminence of death’). However, Gurval does not suggest that Vergilius used Cleopatra as a literary model for Dido.

\(^{263}\) Goold (Loeb), 2002, 556. The Iapyx is a wind blowing from lapugia (Apulia) toward Greece.
slackened sheets.
Amid the carnage, the Lord of Fire had fashioned her
pale at the coming of death, borne on by waves and
the wind of Iapyx;
while over against her was the mourning Nile,
of massive body, opening wide his folds and with all
his raiment welcoming the vanquished to his azure
lap and sheltering streams.
Aeneis 8, 707-713

Williams analyses this passage extensively and one of his conclusions is the following.264

‘An important feature of both accounts [Aeneis 8, 675-713 and Propertius’ Elegos 4. 6, 1-
14] is that Octavian’s real enemy is scarcely mentioned. It would be hard to realize
that Actium was the last battle of the civil war and that Romans were fighting against
Romans. Instead the figure of Cleopatra and the barbarous hordes of the East are
built up into a sinister enemy. Such was the strength of Augustan propaganda: only
so could an account of the battle inspire poets or readers.’

In my opinion there is no doubt that Cleopatra was referred to three times in this passage. In
line 685 Antonius is mentioned by name and clearly connected with Cleopatra. Vergilius re-
fers clearly to the civil war and to the fact ‘that Romans were fighting against Romans.’
In line 686 one reads: victor ab Aurorae populis et litore rubro, (‘victorious over the nations of
the dawn [Eastern peoples] and the ruddy sea [Indian Ocean]’). This line clearly refers to
Antonius’ indecisive victories against the Parthians in 39 and 38 B.C. and his successes in Ar-
menia in 34 and suggests in my opinion that he had committed the Roman legions from the
Eastern campaigns to Actium. Every Roman who read these lines knew that Roman and
Egyptian forces fought at Antonius’ side. Therefore, in my opinion Vergilius unequivocally
refers to Antonius as ‘Octavian’s real enemy’ and that he had not followed ‘the strength of
Augustan propaganda’.

Secondly, there are the passages where Cleopatra is mentioned indirectly. Apart from the
allusions to Cleopatra in the persona of the mythic al Dido mentioned above, some schol-
ars265 also find an allusion to Cleopatra in a passage in Aeneis 10, 495-505, that contains the
story about the sword-belt of Pallas.

[...].’ et laevo pressit pede talia fatus
examinem rapiens immania pondera baltei
impressumque nefas: una sub nocte iugali
caesa manus iuvenum foede thalamique cruenti,
(‘[...]’ So saying, with his left foot he trod upon the

264 Williams, 1968, 54-57. Apart from the question whether Vergilius referred to a war against a foreign
nation instead of to a continuation of the civil war with Antonius as the main opponent, there is another point
here. This is that Williams states implicitly that the effects of propaganda by Augustus against Antonius (if it
existed at all) continued after 30 B.C., if one assumes that Aeneis 8 was written a few years after 29 B.C.
265 Harrison, 1998, 223-242. See this article for an extensive discussion of the different views on the
meaning of the symbolism.
dead man, tearing away the belt’s huge weight
and the story of the crime engraved on it –
the youthful band foully slain on one nuptial night,
and the chambers drenched with blood –’)

*Aeneis* 10, 495-498

On this belt the myth of the Danaids was depicted: the fifty daughters of the Egypto-Greek king Danaus who were married to their cousins and who – with one exception - slaughtered their newly-wed husbands on their wedding night. Clearly the myth is symbolic here and there has been much discussion about the nature of the symbolism. This is not the right place to discuss the different views, but I want to focus on the point of view of Kellum, who says that the Danaids represent the evil forces of oriental barbarism. These were defeated at Actium. The spouse-murdering Danaids of Egypto-Greek origin ‘are surely an appropriate mythological representation of Cleopatra, the official enemy at Actium, defeated through Apollo’s help in the Augustan accounts of the battle.’ This is clearly an allusion to Cleopatra who had murdered two of her younger brothers, who were also her husbands: the first Ptolemaius XIII in 51 and the second Ptolemaius XIV in 44 B.C. One of the daughters of Danaus was appropriately called Cleopatra.

In the *Aeneis* there are many references to Augustus. After a short reference to the house of the Iulii (book 1, 267-268), the first is in book 1, 286-291, in the passage where Venus complains to Iuppiter about the fate of Aeneas caused by the wrath of Iuno. Iuppiter reassures her as he says:

*nascetur pulchra Troianus origine Caesar,
imperium Oceano, famam qui terminet astris,
iulus, a magno demissum nomen iulo.
hunc tu olim caelo spoliis Orientis onustum,
accipies secura; vocabitur hic quoque votis.
aspera tum positis mitescent saecula bellis;
(‘From this noble line shall be born the Trojan Caesar, who shall extend his empire to the ocean, his glory to the stars, a Julius, name descended from great Iulus!
Him, in days to come, shall you, anxious no more, welcome to heaven, laden with Eastern spoils; he, too, shall be invoked in vows. Then wars shall cease and savage ages soften;’)

*Aeneis* 1, 286-291

While in this passage Augustus is not mentioned by name, it is clear that ‘*pulchra Troianus origine Caesar*’ refers to him. In Vergilius’ time it was well known that the Iulii claimed to be descendants of Aeneas and Augustus being Iulius Caesar’s adoptive son had joined this clan. I see this as a virtually direct reference.

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267 Galinsky, 1996, 247; Powell, 2004, 143-149.
The words which follow a few lines later in book 1, 294-296 (\textit{claudentur Belli portae; Furor impius intus/saeva sedens super arma [...]}) (‘The gates of war shall be closed; within impious Rage, sitting on savage arms [...]’) refer to the end of the civil wars, the coming of peace and the role of Augustus in bringing this about.

In addition there are two other well-known passages to which Galinsky also refers: ‘The next two times we see Augustus, he will extend the empire beyond the Garamants (in Africa) and Indians (6, 794-795) and fight valiantly against Mark Antony and Cleopatra (8.675-728), a depiction that ends with his great triple triumph.’ I will quote a part of the passage from book 6, where Anchises prophesies:

\textit{[...]. hic Caesar et omnis Iuli}
\textit{progenies magnum caeli ventura sub axem.}
\textit{hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promittit saepius audis,}
\textit{Augustus Caesar, divi genus, aurea condet}
\textit{saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva}
\textit{Saturno quondam, super et Garamantas et Indos}
\textit{proferet imperium; [...]}

(‘Here is Caesar and all the seed of Iulus destined to pass under heaven’s spacious sphere. And this in truth is he whom you so often hear promised you, Augustus Caesar, son of a god, who will again establish a golden age in Latium amid fields once ruled by Saturn; he will advance his empire beyond the Garamants and Indians [...] ’)

\textit{Aeneis} 6, 789-795

Book 8 of the \textit{Aeneis} has a long passage (8, 626-731) in which Vergilius describes Aeneas’ shield. The poet tells us what the shield represents in line 626: \textit{res Italas Romanorumque triumphos} (‘the story of Italy and the triumphs of Rome’). Later, in the passage in book 8, 675-681 which deals with the sea battle near Actium, Augustus is mentioned.

\textit{in medio classis aerates, Actia bella,}
\textit{cernere erat, totumque instructo Marte videres}
\textit{fervere Leucaten auroque effulgere flunctus.}
\textit{hinc Augustus agens Italos in proelia Caesar}
\textit{cum patribus populoque, penatibus et magnis dis,}
\textit{stans celsa in puppi, geminas cui tempora flammas}
\textit{laeta vomunt patriumque aperitur vertice sidus.}

(‘In the centre could be seen bronze ships – the battle of Actium; you could see all Leucate aglow with War’s array, and the waves ablaze with gold.
On the one side Augustus Caesar stands on the lofty stern, leading Italians to strife, with Senate and People, the Penates of the state and all the mighty gods; his auspicious brows shoot forth a double flame, and on his head dawns his father’s star.’)

\textit{Aeneis} 8, 675-681
Whether Augustus played such a heroic part at Actium is a moot question, but fortunately Agrippa, his loyal general and admiral, was there: *parte alia ventis et dis Agrippa secundis/arduus agmen agens* ('Elsewhere, favored by winds and gods, high-towering Agrippa leads his column') (*Aeneis* 8, 682-683).

Vergilius’ description of Aeneas’ shield ends with a jubilant prophecy of the greatness of the new ruler. The poet tells us in *Aeneis* 8, 714-731 of Octavianus’ triple triumph in 29 B.C. when he celebrated his victories in the Illyrian campaign, in the sea battle of Actium and the final surrender of Antonius and Cleopatra at Alexandria. However, Vergilius confuses the facts and adds some fantasies. Immediately following the passage about the battle at Actium, which I discussed earlier, he writes about the triumph.268 The lines 714-716, and 720-728 say:

\[
\text{at Caesar, tripli invectus Romana triumpho}
\text{moenia, dis Italis votum immortale sacrabat,}
\text{maxima ter centum totam delubra per urbem. […]}
\text{ipse sedens niveo candentis limine Phoebi}
\text{dona recognoscit populorum aptatque superbis}
\text{postibus; incedunt victae longo ordine gentes,}
\text{quam variae linguis, habitu tam vestis et armis.}
\text{hic Nomadum genus et distinctos Mulciber Afros,}
\text{hic Lelegas Carasque sagittferosque Gelonos}
\text{finxerat; Euphrates ibat iam mollior undis,}
\text{extremique hominum Morini, Rhenusque bicornis,}
\text{indomitique Dahae, et pontem indignatus Araxes.}
\]

('But Caesar, entering the walls of Rome in triple triumph, was dedicating to Italy’s gods his immortal votive gift – three hundred mighty shrines throughout the city. […] He himself, seated at the snowy threshold of shining Phoebus, reviews the gifts of nations and hangs them on the proud portals. The conquered peoples move in long array, as diverse in fashion of dress and arms as in tongues. Here Mulciber had portrayed the Nomad race and the ungirt Africans, here the Leleges and Carians and quivered Gelonians. Euphrates moved now with humbler waves, and the Morini were there, furthest of mankind, and the Rhine of double horn, the untamed Dahae, and Araxes chafing at his bridge.')

*Aeneis* 8, 714-716 and 720-728

Octavianus could not have been seated *niveo candentis limine Phoebi* (‘at the snowy threshold of shining Phoebus’) as the temple of Apollo was not ready before 28 B.C. The Nomads had come with Bogudes, king of Mauretania and ally of Antonius, the Leleges and Cares came from Asia, the Geloni all the way from the Dnjepr, and the Dahae, a Scythic people. From the West came the Morini of the region of modern Calais, and the people of the ‘Rhine of double horn’, near Nijmegen, where the river divides in Rhine and Waal.269

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Vergilius presented a potpourri of peoples which cannot have been present in Octavianus’ triumph. He mixes adversaries of Octavianus at Actium with those of later dates. When Vergilius wrote this, some years after the triumph, he gave in his mythical prophecy of centuries ago his vision of a stable and peaceful future under Octavianus’ leadership.

The shield not only shows the courage and glory of war, but also the horrors. The latter are epitomised by the rape of the Sabine women in lines 8, 635-638, by the dismemberment of the traitor and coward Mettus Fuffetius in lines 8, 642-645 and by more recent history and civil strife in the person of Catilina in lines 8, 668-669. The horrors of civil war had preoccupied Vergilius for a long time and with his private voice he had often aired his sorrow and indignation. However, Iuppiter’s prophecies in the first book of the Aeneis (1, 286-296) were being fulfilled and Vergilius’ description of Aeneas’ shield is the poet’s public voice: his hopes of better times turn gradually into expectations of better times.

In the Aeneis there are also many indirect references to Augustus. As I can not discuss all passages I have chosen Aeneis 6, 69-70 which epitomises an allusion to Augustus. The passage deals with the temple which Aeneas had promised Apollo and which can be read as an allusion to the temple on the Palatine which was dedicated in 28 B.C. by Augustus. This was the time when Vergilius wrote the Aeneis. The passage reads:

\[
\text{tum Phoeblo et Triviae solido de marmore templum}
\]
\[
\text{instituam festosque dies de nomine Phoebi.}
\]
\[('Then to Phoebus and Triva will I set up a temple of solid marble, and festal days in Phoebus’ name.')\]
\[\text{Aeneis 6, 69-70}\]

In addition, the allusions reach us through the manner in which Vergilius draws the persona of Aeneas and one can speculate whether Augustus was not a literary model for Aeneas in the same way as Cleopatra was for Dido. I am putting forward that when Vergilius describes Aeneas using loaded epitheta such as rex Aeneas or pius Aeneas he is in fact alluding to Augustus. Cairns also refers to the many instances in the Aeneis where the word rex or related words are used. He compares this with the Ilias and the Odyssea and he concludes that Vergilius uses the term far more often. It is certainly true that in mythological times, as described in the Aeneis, kingship was common, but this was also the case in Homeric times. At any rate, the character which is most frequently described as king is Aeneas, which is a clear indirect link between Aeneas and Augustus. Cairns formulates this as: ‘Of course caution must be exercised in applying things said about Aeneas to Augustus, and the pair is to be seen as analogues rather than equated. But any repeated attribute of Aeneas must to some extent have reflected on Augustus.’

The same is true for pietas. Although the number of times that the words pius Aeneas are used has not been counted as in the case of the word rex, it has been mentioned that there is a ‘sustained and emphatic connection between pietas and Aeneas’. In section II.b.

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270 Page, 1962b, 243. I quote from Page: ‘Mettus Fuffetius, dictator of Alba, after making peace with Tullus Hostilius had treacherously deserted him in battle, and was dragged asunder by two four-horse chariots.’


272 Trivia stands for Hecate with whom Artemis was associated. The temple on the Palatine is connected with Apollo and his sister. Horatius refers to this temple in his Iambus 7.


I have shown that Augustus saw *pietas* as the most important value and thus I see the use of the word in the *Aeneis* as another significant allusion to the *princeps* and his ideals.\textsuperscript{275}

It is not only praise for Augustus which can be found in the *Aeneis*. Some scholars, discussing Vergilius’ public and private voice, state that Vergilius underwent a development in his attitude towards and his appreciation of Augustus, which is visible in the *Aeneis*.\textsuperscript{276} This is a discussion about Vergilius public and private voice. Publicly he extols the virtues of Augustus, privately his sympathy lies with the suffering and sorrow of many of the characters in the poem. In the opinion of these scholars Vergilius held a positive view of Aeneas and, as a consequence, of Augustus by allusion to the latter in the first books.\textsuperscript{277} This positive view can be seen, for example, in Jupiter’s revelation of Rome’s future in book 1 (254-296) and the prophecy of Anchises in book 6 (789-795). However, in the same book 6 (847-853) Vergilius expresses a concern which amounts to criticism of the new era. He feels that the Romans as imperial conquerors must pay a high price for their success. This is expressed in one of the most famous passages in which the Romans were given their marching-orders, namely *parcere subiectis et debellare superbos* (‘to spare the vanquished and to crush the proud’). As Griffin says: ‘This unrivalled speech is at once a boast and a lament, a proud claim by a conqueror and a sigh of regret for the cost.’\textsuperscript{278} Vergilius is not ‘anti-Augustan’, but he is clearly unhappy with the way things are going. The passage says:

\begin{quote}
‘excudent alii spirantia mollius aera  
(credo equidem), vivos ducent de marmore vultus,  
orabunt causas melius, caelique meatus  
descrivent radio et surgentia sidera dicent:  
tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento  
(hae tibi erunt artes), pacisque imponere morem,  
parcere subiectis et debellare superbos.’
\end{quote}

(‘Others, I doubt not, shall with softer mould beat out the breathing bronze, coax from the marble features to the life, plead cases with greater eloquence and with a pointer trace heaven’s motions and predict the rising of the stars:)

\textsuperscript{275} See page 31 of this book.
\textsuperscript{276} Stahl, 1990, 179-182. Stahl quotes a number of European scholars such as K. Quinn and R.D. Williams who wrote in the sixties of the last century about the two voices of Vergilius. Among others he quotes Williams who refers to Vergilius’ ‘public voice extolling the greatness (actual and potential) of Golden Rome and his private voice of sympathy and sorrow.’ Stahl (1990, 210) however, holds a different view. He states: ‘my conclusion then would be not only that Vergil agrees […] with Aeneas’ act of killing Turnus, but views it as the only morally justified solution to his epic.’ My own view is that Vergilius levels his criticism not at the killing of Turnus, but specifically at the brutal manner in which this took place.
\textsuperscript{277} Stahl, 1990, 178. In his essay Stahl states that Propertius’ *Elegia* 2.1, 42 ‘suggests that the epic on Aeneas is to be written for the sake of glorifying Augustus.’ In line 42 one reads: *Caesarius in Phrygios condere nomen auos* (‘to enshrine the name of Caesar among his Phrygian ancestors.’). While I agree with Stahl’s interpretation of this line that Propertius indeed has referred to the *Aeneis* and that Propertius was of the view that the epic had been written to glorify Augustus, the time of writing of this line by Propertius is probably crucial. Propertius wrote this elegy in 29 or 28 B.C., when Vergilius had just started writing his *Aeneis* (29 B.C.). It seems to me that Stahl, in putting forward his opinion of Propertius’ view on the *Aeneis*, has overlooked the possibility that Vergilius’ views developed from praise of Augustus in the first books to a more critical attitude later in his epic. In 29/28 B.C. perhaps this was not yet visible in the progress of the *Aeneis* and contemporaries of Vergilius may not have been aware of the two sides of the epic.
\textsuperscript{278} Griffin, 1979, 65-66.
you, Roman, be sure to rule the world
(be these your arts), to crown peace with justice,
to spare the vanquished and to crush the proud.”

_Aeneis_ 6, 847-853

The _alii_ are the Greek, the masters of art. For the Romans there remain the hard arts of conquest and dominion. This passage contains explicit criticism of the new age. According to Griffin this criticism is that:

‘In the _Aeneid_ Virgil has succeeded in devising ways of bringing out this complex of ideas, central to his vision of Rome and of history: of Roman destiny as an austere and self-denying one, restraining _furor_ and _superbia_, and imposing peace and civilization on the world; at the cost of turning away, with tears but with unshakable resolution, from the life of pleasure, of art, and of love.’

The finale of a poem has a special significance: the poet has a last opportunity to express his feelings or to make his point. Vergilius does just that in the manner in which he describes the death of Turnus. Aeneas had to fulfill his duty and he could not allow his adversary to continue to challenge him. He had been charged by the gods to establish his new realm and Turnus had to submit. The power of arms was to decide. When, in the final clash between the two, Turnus was forced down on his knees and begged Aeneas for mercy, the latter noticed the belt of young Pallas on Turnus’ shoulders. In the last eight lines of the epic (12, 945-952) Aeneas changed into a merciless conqueror. These last lines are:

*ille, oculis postquam saevi monimenta doloris
exuviasque hausit, furiis accensus et ira
terribilis: ‘tune hinc spoliis indute meorum
eripiare mihi? Pallas te hoc vulnere, Pallas
immolat et poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit.’
hoc dicens ferrum adverso sub pectore condit
fervidus. ast illi solvuntur frigore membra
vitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras.*

(‘Aeneas, as soon as his eyes drank in the trophy, that memorial of cruel grief, ablaze with fury and terrible in his wrath: “Clad in the spoils of one of mine, are you to be snatched from my hands? Pallas it is, Pallas who sacrifices you with this stroke, and takes retribution from your guilty blood!”
So saying, in burning rage he buries his sword full in Turnus’ breast. His limbs grew slack and chill and with a moan his life fled resentfully to the Shades below.’)

_Aeneis_ 12, 945-952

A much discussed question is whether it was necessary to kill Turnus in such a brutal way, _fervidus_ (‘in burning rage’). Was Aeneas’ action lawful or did Aeneas shed too much blood? Galinsky reviews Aristoteles’ view on anger as ‘later Roman law incorporated many of Aristo-

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279 Griffin, 1979, 68.
tle’s ideas on the responsibility for acts committed during emotion. Aristoteles gave four reasons why a lack of restraint with respect to anger is less blameable than lack of restraint with respect to other emotions. ‘Firstly, anger is based on a judgement [one has to think through the situation]; secondly, anger is more ‘natural’ than a desire for excessive pleasures. Thirdly, anger is an open response and not crafty and fourthly, anger is accompanied by pain.’ Finally, Galinsky concludes that ‘in sum, so far from finding Aeneas’ anger repugnant, most of the ancient ethical tradition would find it entirely appropriate and even praiseworthy. After the breach of the foedus earlier in Book 12, Aeneas has every reason to respond with anger.’

I doubt whether Galinsky’s argument holds. Vergilius uses very specific words to describe Aeneas’ state of mind, particularly those words which suggest that Aeneas has temporarily lost his faculty of judgement. Firstly, in lines 946-947 he says *furiis accensus et ira terribilis* (‘ablaze with fury and terrible in his wrath’); the word *furia* (and derivatives) means ‘violent passion, rage, madness’, while *ira* has a somewhat more moderate meaning, such as ‘anger, wrath’. Vergilius uses words like *furia* at other places, such as in 12, 680 when Turnus tells his sister that he was ready to meet Aeneas for the final confrontation: *hunc, oro, sine me furere ante furorem* (‘Let me first, I beg, give vent to this madness.’). Furthermore, in the end Aeneas’ *ira* is *ira terribilis*. Secondly, Vergilius uses in 8, 494 the expression *furiis iustis* (‘righteous fury’) when king Evander describes how Etruria rose in *furiis iustis* against their cruel despot Mezentius who found shelter with Turnus, his friend. Apart from *furia* Vergilius knew *furia iusta* and he uses this to describe justified anger.

It seems to me that Vergilius is making the point that he considers that Aeneas has lost his self-control. This corresponds with the poet’s view that war is a messy business, which always goes paired with cruelty and violence and this applies also to Aeneas, as Quinn points out when he discusses the final passage of the *Aeneis*: 281

‘True, Turnus must be got rid of: however humane the gesture if Aeneas had spared his life, it would be dramatically and poetically intolerable for Turnus to survive to fight another day. Aeneas’ victory leaves no place for Turnus. But Aeneas does not have to kill his enemy in a *mad blaze of anger*. He kills Turnus in revenge, as the agent of a personal vendetta, not as the agent of the destined victory of his people.’ And he says also: ‘Instead of asking them [who were being denied the simple heroics they had expected] to criticize Aeneas, was not Virgil asking his audience to admit to themselves that by the time final victory comes, *no man, least of all perhaps the leader of the winning side, can hope to count his hands or his conscience clean?’

Quinn may suggest that Vergilius aims to show through Aeneas that ‘good kings’ are also human beings with their dark sides. However, this passage can also be interpreted as an allusion to Augustus, implying criticism of Augustus who had been accused of cruelty in the civil war, for instance in the case of the farmers’ evictions of their land, which had caused many casualties and even worse in the case of the slaughter at the surrender of Perusia.

280 Galinsky, 1988, 321-348. In this essay Galinsky discusses in detail the question of permissible anger. He investigates the views in Rome at the time of Augustus and traces the philosophical origins of permissible anger at Aristoteles, Plato, the Epicureans and the Stoics.

281 Quinn, 1979, 67-68. (*italics* are mine).
In the *Aeneis* Vergilius both lauds and criticises Augustus. This shows that the poet’s objective was probably not to write a panegyric poem about the *princeps*, but to write an epic about the mythical foundation of Rome; this epic contains both panegyric and critical passages.

In this section I have shown that the *Aeneis* contains many direct and indirect references to actual events, such as the war with Cleopatra and Antonius, the emergence of the principate, the sufferings of civil war and Augustus’ conduct in war. This proves at the very least that Vergilius was involved in what was happening around him. In my view his involvement was more than mere concern. He had something to say, and in the next section I will discuss his political views as these come to us through his poetry.

**IV.c. Vergilius’ political views**

In this section I will bring together my views on Vergilius’ political message as I interpret these from the *Eclogae*, the *Georgica* and the *Aeneis*. For my analysis of his views I refer also to the short summary of the *Eclogae* at the end of section III.b. and that of the *Georgica* at the end of section III.c. and to the appendices II and III which are given at the end of this book. Appendix III, in which I have made the results of my analyses visible, is important for an understanding of my views on the *Eclogae* and the *Georgica*.

The method of analysis is briefly as follows. The poems have been arranged by placing them in six categories according to their content. The poems were also placed in the order in which they were (probably) written, if this is known. If the probable date of writing is unknown, the period at least can be shown. From this, one can construct a scheme with a vertical axis which is the *time-line* and with a horizontal axis on which the six categories are presented. On the *time-line* I have also given the key historical and literary events. In this case the majority of the data on the *time-line* fall in the period from 42 B.C until 19 B.C., the period in which Vergilius probably wrote his poems.

The six categories in which I have grouped the ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems are:

I. *The poet wrote about his own experience.* In this category I have placed the poems that concern experiences from the poet’s own life which have a bearing on actual events. In Vergilius’ case there are none in this category.

II. *Vergilius wrote about his own poetry.* To this group belong all poems which deal with the poet’s position and with the question of his mission as a poet *vis-à-vis* contemporaneous events. An example is *Ecloga* 3.

III. *Vergilius wrote about the civil war.* These are the poems in which the poet expresses either views on the continuing civil war, or a factual commentary on the war. *Eclogae* 1 and 9 which express the embitterment about the land expropriations fall within this category.

IV. *Vergilius’ hope for better times.* In this group I have brought together the poems in which the poet describes either hopes for and expectations of peaceful and better times after the civil war, or later gratitude that these have arrived. Although at the time of writing Vergilius had probably not set his hopes on

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282 The method has been described in greater detail on pages 5-9 of this book. A similar analysis will be made of Horatius’ and Propertius’ poetry. In the case of Vergilius’ poetry one does not find poems in some categories. However, I have mentioned all six categories in order to be consistent with the analysis of Horatius’ and Propertius’ works.
Octavianus, *Ecloga 4* is an example of his hope for a lasting peace and restoration.

**V. Poetry on moral issues.** This category contains the poems with commentary on moral issues in Rome at large. In the case of Vergilius there are none in this category.

**VI. The poet’s views on life.** These deal with the poet’s personal philosophical convictions. I have not placed any of Vergilius’ poems in this category.

In the case of the *Eclogae* and *Georgica* the emphasis of Vergilius’ poetry, which is about contemporaneous political issues, is on the civil war and on hopes for better times. Behind this lies his deep love of the countryside and rural life. His own bitter experiences show in his early poetry. Vergilius had seen the horrendous death toll of the power struggles in the last days of the Republic and the devastation of the countryside particularly by the expropriations and the might of arms. It is known that in his younger days his sympathies lay with Iulius Caesar who was governor of *Gallia Transalpina* and *Cisalpina* from 58 B.C. and who had conferred Roman citizenship to the towns of the latter region in 50 B.C. At the time when Vergilius was twenty years old, the last days of the Republic had arrived and the instability after the time of Caesar’s death in 44 had still to come: Philippi in 42, Perusia in 40, the defeat of Sextus Pompeius in 36 and the declaration of war with Antonius and Cleopatra in 32 B.C.

His earliest *Eclogae 5*, 6 and 7 are all about the destruction of his environment and of the social order which he knew and appreciated. *Eclogae 1* and 9 were presumably written between 39 and 35 B.C. when he was still a relatively young man and these poems testify to his embitterment. Some of the poems - of which *Ecloga 8* was written in 35 B.C. - are blatantly critical of Octavianus (7, 8) and are an urgent plea to him to bring about change.

*Ecloga 4* has a special place. It was written in 40 B.C., at a time when Antonius was still the leading contender for power in Rome. In this poem Vergilius expresses his hopes that Antonius, and later his son, will establish and maintain peace and stability. In my opinion this poem is very significant for understanding Vergilius’ political views. When he combines the father and the son he may have been thinking in terms of a dynasty of a single ruler with regal powers. Thus in 40 he expressed his leanings towards a kingship to which he returns in his later poetry as well.

This kingship of Antonius and his offspring can not be the result of Octavianus’ propaganda. Therefore, it is plausible that Vergilius welcomed the change from the Republic to the emerging Principate which can be read in the *Georgica*.283 Vergilius wrote the *Georgica* between 35 and 29 when he had probably come to realise that a stable and strong form of government was needed, such as the kingdom of the bees enjoyed. We know that Vergilius was attracted to the Neoterics, although we do not know when he joined the movement. But it is reasonable to assume that through his education and through his affiliation to the Neoterics he was not only well versed in Hellenistic poetry but was also knowledgeable about the political situation in Asia and Egypt. He knew that these peoples had monarchies as *Georgica 4*, 210-211 shows. It is generally assumed that he wrote the fourth book in 30 or 29. In that year Octavianus had turned matters to his advantage and Vergilius, who was forty one years old, had seen more than twenty years of civil war and destruction. It is likely that after Actium he had come to the conclusion that it was only Octavianus who could bring sta-

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283 See Woodman and West, 1974, 131: ‘The importance of contemporary history is most conspicuous in the political poems, the *Eclogae* and *Georgica*. Williams and Lyne show again and again how the details of these poems and their emotional tone are to be connected with the emergence of Octavian.’
bility and it is also likely that Vergilius had reached the conclusion that Rome and Italia needed a monarch and that Octavianus was the suitable candidate. This was when he finished the *Georgica* and one reads in the fourth book his plea for a monarchy, but not one as in Egypt or in Persia please.

 Particularly in the fourth book of the *Georgica* Vergilius works towards a climax. After he extols the advantages of a well-organized state under a strong leader in the first part, Vergilius suggests Octavianus as the candidate for leadership. Is this clever propaganda on the orders of Octavianus? Or can it be understood as Vergilius expressing his private opinion on his own initiative? I hold the opinion that the latter is the case. An important argument lies in the fact that it was not the first time that he recommended a monarchy. He had done precisely that ten years earlier when he saw Antonius as the right candidate. A second argument lies again in the chronology of the events. 'The First Settlement' is of January 27 B.C. when Octavianus accepted only a partial solution for a limited period. It is likely that Octavianus had set his mind on absolute power in the future, but not at that juncture. He had to manoeuvre between achieving his long-term goal and keeping the loyalty of the Senate and the leading elite in general. The next and much more meaningful step on the way to absolute rule came in 23 B.C. The *Georgica* was published in 30 or 29 B.C., three years before the First Settlement. Is it really plausible that under those circumstances Octavianus started a propaganda campaign for his elevation to kingship in the years before 30 B.C. when Vergilius wrote his *Georgica*?

In the *Aeneis* the idea of kingship is maintained by Vergilius. If one accepts the view that he used Cleopatra as a literary model for Dido and that Dido thus alluded to Cleopatra, the development of the relationship between Aeneas and Dido had a powerful actual meaning. It indicates that Augustus was the right choice and not Antonius. Augustus was the Aeneas who did not stay with his love but stayed true to his calling. Dido reminded the readers of Cleopatra who had tried to keep Antonius away from his duty. The gods had supported the right man at Actium. This man could bring peace and order, as Vergilius testifies on different occasions, such as Iuppiter's promise to Venus in *Aeneis* 1, 286-296 and particularly Anchises' prophecy in book 6, 788-800. In these lines Vergilius expresses not only his expectations of Augustus' leadership in Italia, of a new 'Golden Age' and of the restoration of the land, but also of his exploits abroad as for example in book 1, 286-287 (*Caesar,/imperium Ocano, famam qui terminet astris, ('Caesar,/who shall extend his empire to the ocean, his glory to the stars,'*) and in book 6, 794-795 (*super et Garamantas et Indos/proferet imperium; ('he will advance his empire/beyond the Garamants and Indians')*).

This required a strong leader and by the use of such epitheta as *rex Aeneas*, which can be interpreted as an allusion to Augustus, Vergilius returns in the epic to his old theme of kingship which he had expounded in his previous poems, fifteen or more years earlier: in *Ecloga* 4 in 40 B.C and in book 4 of the *Georgica* in 30 B.C. When he refers in the *Aeneis* to the idea of a king as future ruler, this is neither a new fancy of his, nor a view on the constitution which he presented by order of the new regime. Just as in 30 or 29 B.C., the late twenties B.C. was not the right time for Augustus to start a lobby and a propaganda for his elevation. Furthermore, there was no need to press Vergilius, as he had written down his views on the blessings of a monarchy on his own initiative twice before.

The word *rex*, often used in conjunction with Aeneas, has been used 334 times in the *Aeneis*. In the poem there are several passages in which confidence in a strong leader is

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284 See page 118, note 273 of this book.
expressed; examples of this are Aeneis 1, 294 (claudentur Belli portae (‘the gates of war will be closed’) and Aeneis 6, 792-793 (Augustus Caesar, divi genus, aura condet/ saecula [...]) (‘Augustus Caesar, son of a god, who will establish a golden/age’). These expressions of confidence stem from the years after Actium when it seems that Vergilius had made up his mind that Octavianus was the suitable candidate to become ruler. But there remains a critical note in Vergilius’ question whether the costs of the transition had not been too high. The final lines of the Aeneis epitomise this.

Vergilius shared the old values, the mores maiorum. Although he was prepared to live under a king, he expected the king to be pius and iustus: the rex should show his responsibility towards society at large and should be just. Aeneas should be his true example and only by ruling in accordance with the standards which Aeneas had set, could the king succeed.
V. Horatius: his life, the Sermones and the Iambi

Horatius’ poetry forms the focus of this chapter and the next. After a short biography of the poet I discuss his work according to what is generally regarded as being the order in which he wrote his poems. At the end of sections V.c. (Sermones) and V.d. (Iambi) I briefly review the poems and draw some general conclusions.

V.a. The life of Horatius

In this section I present a short summary of Horatius’ life, about whom relatively much is known as there are regular autobiographical references in his work. In addition Suetonius wrote about Horatius in the De Poetis of his De Viris illustribus. 

According to Suetonius, Quintus Horatius Flaccus was born on 8th of December in the year 65 B.C. in the town of Venusia (modern Venosa) in Apulia. His father had been a slave, who had been set free and who later became a praeco (auctioneer) and coactor (middleman who provided credit for a purchaser). In Chapter II I made the point that Horatius’ father had become a man of reasonable financial means and that it is not unlikely that Horatius himself was later admitted to the equestrian ranks. Experiences from his early youth in Venusia became the subject matter of his later work and in his Sermo 1.6, which is a satire containing much autobiographical information, he writes the following:

\[ \text{Causa fuit pater his, qui macro pauper agello} \]
\[ \text{noluit in Flavi ludum me mittere, magni} \]
\[ \text{quo pueri magnis e centurionibus orti,} \]
\[ \text{lævo suspensi loculos tabulamque lacerto,} \]
\[ \text{ibant octonos referentes Ídibus aeris:} \]
\[ \text{('I owe this to my father, who, though poor} \]
\[ \text{with a starveling farm,} \]
\[ \text{would not send me to the school of Flavius,} \]
\[ \text{to which grand boys used to go, sons of grand centurions,} \]
\[ \text{with slate and satchel slung over the left arm,} \]
\[ \text{each carrying his eightpence on the Ides,'} \]
\[ \text{Sermo 1.6, 71-75} \]

This poem reveals two things. Firstly, that Venusia was punished after Sulla’s victory and that it had to accept the settlement of veterans. In Horatius’ time there was a recurrence and the centuriones in the poem stand for the veterans. Secondly, that the veterans were not very popular among the citizens and that they, together with their young sons, terrorised the original population. Horatius’ father decided that there was only one place possible for his son’s education and took him to Rome as the poet later testified in 1.6, 76-78:

\[ \text{sed puerum est ausus Romam portare, docendum} \]

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285 Suetonius, Vita Horati.
286 Nisbet, 2007, 7; Ross Taylor, 1925, 161-170. Nisbet refers to Sermo 1.6, 86-87: [...] ut fuit ipse, coactor/mercedes [...] (‘or like himself/as taxcollector’).
287 White, 1993, 5-14; See note 125 on page 49.
artis quas doceat quivis eques atque senator semet prognatos.[...]
('nay, he boldly took his boy off to Rome, to be taught those studies that any knight or senator would have his own offspring taught.[...]')
Sermo 1.6, 76-78

At school he studied among other things the *Odissia* of Livius Andronicus and the *Ilias*. 288 This combination of Latin and Greek poetry was regarded as the best form of education for a Roman youth. After completing his education at Rome he moved to Athens to be taught at ‘university’ subjects such as moral philosophy and theory of knowledge. In Greece he became acquainted with Greek lyric poetry, which he often quoted in his later work. 289

Presumably Horatius met Brutus in Athens in 44 and he joined him in Asia. Brutus appointed him *tribunus militum*, a high rank for a freedman’s son. 290 In 42 he fought with Brutus and Cassius at Philippi, where Brutus’ army was utterly defeated and Brutus committed suicide. 291 Horatius managed to escape, which he describes with a reference to the Greek lyric poets in *Carmen* 2.7: 292

\[
tecum Philippos et celerem fugam
sensi relicta non bene parmula,
cum fracta virtus, et minaces
turpe solum tetigere mento.
\]

(‘with you beside me I experienced Philippi and its headlong rout, leaving my little shield behind without much credit, when valour was broken and threatening warriors ignominiously bit the dust.’)
*Carmen* 2.7, 9-12.

After Philippi disaster struck as Horatius most probably lost both his home and the farm in Venusia during the expropriations. Horatius was forced to earn a living and he became a ‘professional’ poet. However, it was not possible for him to earn a sufficient income from this occupation and luckily he was fortunate to find work in the Roman civil service. Suetonius in his *Vita Horati* writes: *victisque partibus venia impetrata scriptum quaestorum comparavit* (‘when his [Brutus’] party was vanquished, he was pardoned and purchased the position of a quaestor’s clerk’). It is generally understood that he, and perhaps his father,

289 Among others: Archilochus and Hipponax and as *lambus* 14, 9 shows also Anacreon. Later work shows that he also knew Alcaeus and Pindarus. See Fraenkel, 2002, 9 and 435.
290 See Horatius *Sermo* 1.6, 48, *quod mihi pareret legio Romana tribuno*. (‘because as tribune I had a Roman legion under my command’). See also Ross Taylor, 1925. It is held that Brutus elevated Horatius to the rank of *eques*. There are other examples from that period that the sons of freedmen reached that status.
291 In addition to the passage in *Carmen* 2.7 which I quoted, his involvement in the battle of Philippi is mentioned in *Carmen* 2.7, 1-2, *O saepe mecum tempus in ultimum/deducte Bruto militia duce* (‘My friend, so often carried with me into moments of the utmost peril/when Brutus was in charge of operations’) and in *Epistula* 2.2, 47-49, *[... in arma/Caesaris Augusti non responsura lacertis./unde simul primum me dimisere Philippi,* (‘[...] amid weapons/those were to be no match for the strong arms of Caesar Augustus./Soon as Philippi gave me discharge therefrom.’). 292 Anacreon and Alcaeus threw away their shields.
had sufficient means to buy the position of a *scriba* at the equivalent of the Public Record Office, where the resolutions of the Senate were kept.

In 38 Horatius was introduced to Vergilius and both became involved with the group of poets who were connected to Maecenas: Horatius gained the trust and friendship of both Augustus and Maecenas. This was documented by Horatius himself in *Sermo* 1.6, 45-64. I will only quote two lines (61-62) from this long passage: [...] *et revocas nono post mense iubesque/esse in amicorum numero.* (‘then, nine months later, you sent for me again and bade me join your friends.’). Much has been written about Maecenas’ *amicitia* and the positions of Vergilius and Horatius in this circle.\(^{293}\) It is well known that, at some time before 31 B.C., Maecenas had presented him his Sabine estate near Licenza which changed his economic circumstances dramatically. Horatius testifies to this in *Sermo* 2.6, 1-5. I deal with this poem below in the section about Horatius’ *Sermones*.

Horatius became more or less Maecenas’ private secretary, accompanied him on his travels and Maecenas, as an *amicus*, could rely on his public support.\(^{294}\) Horatius gained access to leading figures at Rome, of whom the *princeps* was the most important. Obviously this gave him unrivalled sources of information.

This raises the question to what extent Horatius, or for that matter Vergilius, were able to maintain their independence.\(^{295}\) Although Horatius and Maecenas were *amici*, the latter could not impel Horatius to write in support of the regime and Horatius was in the position to write critical satires about the reign of Augustus. I have dealt with the subject of Vergilius’ and Horatius’ independence above.

It is known that Augustus held Horatius in high esteem, so much so, that he offered him the job of private secretary. Suetonius quotes from a letter of Augustus to Maecenas: *nunc occupatissimus et infirmus Horatium nostrum a te cupio abducere* (‘now overwhelmed with work and in poor health, I desire to take our friend Horace from you’). Horatius declined the offer.\(^{296}\)

Horatius’ life ended on 27\(^{\text{th}}\) November in the year 8 B.C. He was buried next to the tomb of Maecenas, his *amicus*, whom he survived by 59 days.

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\(^{293}\) DuQuesnay, 1984, 24-25; Gold, 1987, 111-141; Williams, 1990, 258-275;

\(^{294}\) It is a moot point whether Horatius was present at Actium. I will come back to this when I discuss *Iambi* 1 and 9. It seems likely from these two poems that he was present, particularly as *Iambus* 9, 17-20 reads as a description of the battle by somebody who was there; *ad hunc frementes verterunt bis mille equos/Galli, canentes Caesarem, hostiliumque navium portu latent/puppes sinistrorsum citae.* (‘But two thousand Galatians have turned their snorting horses in our direction/chanting Caesar’s name;/and the sterns of the enemy’s ships, after making off at speed to the left/skulk in harbour.’). See also Nisbet, 2007, 11-12.

\(^{295}\) DuQuesnay, 1984, 24-58. DuQuesnay in his article ‘Horace and Maecenas’ shows a very perceptive insight in the complexities of the *amicitia* between the two men. See also the chapter ‘Maecenas and Horace’ in Gold, 1987, 115-141 and the earlier quoted chapter of White in Gold, 1982.

Watson, 2007, 97 states: ‘In 38 BCE, according to the accepted dating, Horace’s artistic promise saw him taken up into the entourage of Octavian’s man of affairs, Maecenas, *with all the obligations to trade mutual benefactions that such a relationship entailed, in Horace’s case the composition of politically engaged poetry*. (italics are mine). I hold a different opinion. Firstly, *amicitia* did not necessarily induce such obligations; secondly, Horatius was politically engaged in his own right. See also DuQuesnay’s (1984, 36-37) comments on *Sermo* 1.7 on page 135 and my comments on page 145; further page 3, note 6 in the Introduction and the section about patronage in chapter II, pages 49-54 of this book.

\(^{296}\) Suetonius, *Vita Horati*. 
V.b.  The poetry of Horatius

Horatius’ poetry can be spread over several genres. For his Epodi, or Iambi as he also called them, he found inspiration in the iambic poetry of Archilochus of Paros, the Greek poet who lived in the seventh century B.C. This inspiration is particularly found in the metre and less in the content. In addition he knew the Iambi of Callimachos. His Sermones or Satires are influenced by Lucilius (ab. 180-101 B.C.), the first Roman poet to write satire. He did not follow the polemic style of Lucilius, nor did he copy the personal attacks of Archilochus. Horatius often refers to Lucilius and in a number of Sermones Horatius expresses the view that he had improved the genre considerably. In much of his Epicurean thinking he is a follower of Lucretius (ab. 99-55 B.C.) which can be traced in the satires. The largest group of poems is the Carmina, or Odes, which are particularly inspired by the seventh-century B.C. Greek poets Alcaeus and Sappho and the fifth-century B.C. Pindar. In the Carmina Horatius displays much of his personal philosophy. In the Epistulae Horatius sets foot on new ground. Though Lucilius published letters in verse, and while personal letters in prose were common, it was Horatius who developed the literary genre.297

In the sections about the different genres which follow below the known or estimated dates of writing of the poems will be presented. In the case of many it is not possible to establish such a date and in fact only the dates of writing of the poems with a ‘political’ or ‘private political’ content can be determined or estimated with some degree of certainty. I will follow a recent summary by Nisbet and the order in which I deal with the different genres is in accordance with his chronology.298 In summary, it is likely that some of Horatius’ first Sermones (1.7, 1.2) belong to his earliest work, which he probably wrote in 42 or 41 B.C.; his first book of Sermones was released in 35 B.C. and the second in 30. Therefore, I will commence the discussion below with the section about the Sermones. In the same period 42 to 30 B.C. Horatius wrote his Iambi (also called Epodi) and these poems form the subject of section V.d. Before 30 he already wrote his first Carmina (Odes) and the first three books were probably released in 23 B.C. The Carmina are discussed in the next chapter VI.299 This was followed by his first book of Epistulae, probably between 23 and 20 or 19. The Carmen Saeculare came in 17 and he worked on his fourth book of Carmina between 19 B.C. (or earlier for some) and probably 13 or 11. There are conflicting opinions about the date of his letter to Florus, namely 19 B.C. or 12 B.C.300 The letter to Augustus is from 12 or 11 and the Epistula ad Pisones, better known as the Ars Poetica, was released in 12 or soon after. All Horatius’ Epistulae are discussed in section VI.b.301

In the following sections I will focus on two main questions. Firstly, I will discuss where and to what extent Horatius wrote about actual contemporary matters in his poems, which will be analysed in the same manner as described in the introduction and already applied in the case of Vergilius’ Eclogae. The results of these scans will be presented in appen-

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299 Although Horatius wrote his first book of Epistulae in the time between finishing his books 1-3 of the Carmina and starting the fourth book of Carmina I have grouped all Carmina in one section for the sake of clarity of presentation.
300 See for the different points of view Nisbet, 2007, 18-19.
301 For the same reasons as in the case of the Carmina I have brought all Epistulae together in one section, VI.b.
In each appendix a very short description of the contents and an indication as to whether Horatius deals with actuality are presented, as well as the year in which it was most likely written (if this is known).

V.c.  The Sermones (Satires) of Horatius

Horatius wrote two books of *Sermones*, of which book 1 is the first book of poems which he released. It is presumed that he began writing the *Sermones* in 42 or 41 B.C. and that these were probably released in 35 B.C. Book 2 appeared five years later. Already in antiquity the genre satire was seen as being typically Roman, so much so that Quintilianus wrote in his *Institutio Oratoria* (10.1, 93) the famous lines *satura quidem tota nostra est* (‘Satire, for its part, is entirely ours.’).  

Horatius’ *Sermones* are ‘sermons of a rather special kind. They do not call for allegiance to any divine power or any sacred writings, nor do they urge us to repent and seek salvation. Their only appeal is to common sense. What is it, they ask, that makes man unhappy?’  

These sermons display many of Horatius’ views on what we would call social questions and can thus contribute to our knowledge of the position he took in these matters. A summary of the poems, constructed with the aid of commentaries is presented in appendix IV.  

The first three poems concern the place of the individual in society; not the institutions are the issue here but the behaviour of individuals in a moral sense. For instance, *Sermo* 1.2 concerns the vice of adultery, when men do not keep to the ‘golden mean’: either a married woman or a prostitute. Horatius says in lines 28-30:

\[
\begin{align*}
nil \ medium \ est. & \ sunt \ qui \ nolint \ tetigisse \ nisi \ illas \\
& \ quarum \ subsuta \ talos \ tegat \ instita \ veste; \\
& \ contra \ alius \ nullam \ nisi \ olenti \ in \ fornice \ stantem.
\end{align*}
\]

(‘There is no middle course. Some men would deal only with women whose ankles are hidden by a robe with low-hanging flounce; another is found only with such as live in a foul brothel.’)

*Sermo* 1.2, 28-30

Women who wear ‘a robe with low-hanging flounce’ are married. The poet states that it is safer ‘trafficking in the second class – with freedwomen, I mean’ (*merx est in classe secunda,/libertinarum dico*) (the lines 47-48); although one should not become infatuated by them, as this could turn out to be an expensive business. The middle course should be taken which is ‘satisfaction of one’s desires on a casual, dispassionate basis.’  

In lines 74-76 one reads young Horatius’ words of advice:

\[
\begin{align*}
[...], \ tu \ si \ modo \ recte \\
dispensare \ velis \ ac \ non \ fugienda \ petendis \\
immissere. \ [...]
\end{align*}
\]

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303 Rudd, 2007, 1.
(‘[…], if you would only manage wisely, and not confound what is to be avoided with what is to be desired! [...]’)
Sermo 1.2, 74-76

At the end of the poem he repeats his advice not to seek a matrona as there is always a chance of being caught out as we read in line 127: nec vereor ne dum futuo vir rure recurrat (‘No fears have I in her [the prostitute’s] company, that a husband may rush back from the country,’).

Galinsky sees in the opening of Sermo 1.3 Horatius’ way of saying that ‘poets have a mind of their own’ and he states the following:306

‘in literature, at any rate, men emerged who had similar talents as Augustus [had in the realm of government and politics], whose creative works were similarly complex, and who, whether they agreed with him or not, used the moral direction he [Augustus] provided as a point of departure for their own reactions and reflections. It is these qualities, and not any ideological concurrence, that make them “Augustan”. They were not afraid to innovate and thus become pioneers. The same is true of art and architecture where the impetus given by Augustus leads to autonomous developments and a pinnacle of creativity rather than “propaganda”.’

I concur with Galinsky that the men of literature in Augustus’ time did not produce propaganda: however, I cannot read this conclusion in the first four lines of 1.3., as I see these lines as concerning the peculiarities of poets and as belonging to their private environment. These say:

OMNIBUS hoc vitium est cantoribus, inter amicos
ut numquam inducant animum cantare rogati,
iniuissi numquam desistant. Sardus habebat
ille Tigellius hoc.[…]
(‘All singers have this fault: if asked to sing among their friends they are never so inclined; if unasked, they never leave off. That son of Sardinia, Tigellius, was of this sort’) Sermo 1.3, 1-4

There is another – perhaps more convincing - argument of timing which makes it unlikely that Horatius wrote about propaganda in this poem. He had been introduced to the circle of Maecenas in 38 B.C. and he wrote this satire in the previous year or perhaps in 38. It is most unlikely that Horatius broached the subject of propaganda before joining the group of Maecenas, or at such an early point in time of his membership. In all his other satires of that period there is no mention of the subject of propaganda.

Whilst I consider the first three Sermones as belonging to the poet’s private domain, DuQuesnay sees a hidden political content in them.307 He points out that Sermones 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are generally Epicurean and a rejection of extreme Stoicism, which was the popular philosophy of those who supported the republican cause. In DuQuesnay’s opinion Horatius

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306 Galinsky, 1996, 72-73; the italics in the quotation are mine.
wants to show us that ‘the Stoics and the Pompeians have no monopoly of concern with morality.’ I interpret the first three satires as representing Horatius’ philosophical leanings as he writes these as ‘conversations’ about moral issues with his friends, which creates the impression that he himself holds these Epicurean views. Horatius could be regarded as making political statements which were either supportive of Octavianus or critical of him: supportive, because he presents Octavianus as somebody who shares these high-minded principles. Critical, because the poet could be regarded as stating these principles with the aim to show that he aligns himself with the common opinion at the time that the Triumvirs and Octavianus had not acted from high moral principles at all but from avaritia, ambitio and luxuria. However, I doubt whether Horatius made any political statement on the ground of the emphasis on personal morality in the three poems. Therefore, I interpret the first three satires as personal reflections on moral issues without an overtly political content.

Sermo 1.4 forms together with 1.10 the so-called literary satires. 1.4 was written early in Horatius’ career in 39 or 38 B.C. The first lines of the poem place satire within the tradition of the Old Attic Comedy and in lines 6-14 the comparison with Lucilius is made:

\[ EVPOLIS atque Cratinus Aristophanesque poetae, \\
[...] aut sicarius aut alioqui \\
\]

\[ famosus, multa cum libertate notabant. \\
hinc omnis pendet Lucilius,[...] \\
\]

('Eupolis and Cratinus and Aristophanes, true poets,

[...] or cut-throat, or as scandalous

in any other way, set their mark upon him with great freedom.

It is on these that Lucilius wholly hangs; [...]')

Sermo 1.4, 1; 4-6

To this second passage belongs the famous line 11 (cum fluere lutulentus, erat quod tollere velles: ('In his [Lucilius'] muddy stream there was much that you would like to remove.'). A scholarly opinion holds that criticism was levelled at Horatius after his Sermo 1.2 and that this made him write the present poem. Rudd says about this:

‘By taking up the Lucilian tradition Horace put himself in an awkward situation. In 39 B.C. as a pardoned Republican and a man of no social consequence he could not afford to give indiscriminate offence, and even if he toned down the inventor’s polemic there would always be people who disapproved of satire on principle. In spite of this he wrote a diatribe on adultery (1.2) – a work of courage as well as craftsmanship. It was read by people for whom it was not primarily intended and, predictably, complaints were made. Horace therefore resolved to write another poem, justifying his activity as a satirist and setting out the main features of the genre as he saw it.’

This turned out to be Sermo 1.4, a poem of justification and explanation of writing satire with its concomitant criticism. Whatever one thinks of Rudd’s thesis that the poem was written in defence after publishing 1.2, the poem can certainly be read as one in which a young author

\[ Rudd, 1955, 165-175; Rudd, 2007, 88-92. See also Fraenkel, 2002, 124-128. Fraenkel sees this satire as a moral justification of Horatius in writing satire. He does not make the point about supposed criticism leveled at Horatius after the publication of earlier satires. \]
feels that he has to explain himself: the verses read as observations written for a circle of friends. Thus, I view the work as a ‘private political’ poem.

Rudd ranges Sermo 1.5 (together with 1.7, 1.8 and 1.9) under the general heading ‘Entertainment’. He sees this poem as a witty and amusing narrative of Horatius’ journey from Rome to Brundisium in 38 B.C., where a conference between Octavianus and Antonius about the threat by Sextus Pompeius was to take place. He travelled in the company of amongst others Maecenas, Vergilius, Varius and Tucca. I agree with Rudd that the poem is certainly a clever and entertaining description of the countryside through which they travel and of the different experiences of the group. In my opinion, however, the poem makes another important point. This poem is not just about Horatius’ enjoyment during the journey, but about his pride in his achievements. At the age of about 27, he - a man of humble origins from the deep south of Italia - finds himself in the company of the great and mighty on his way to a major political meeting. Therefore, the poem has a similar theme as 1.6, where he writes about his background and his career, and Rudd could have equally well placed Sermo 1.5 under his heading ‘Poet and patron’. In addition however, this satire is about the context of Octavianus’ efforts to establish his rule and to eliminate the opposition. It is clear from the tone of the poem that Horatius was aware of the significance of the meeting which was to take place: this is particularly apparent in the lines 27-29:

\[
\text{huc venturus erat Maecenas optimus atque Cocceius, missi magnis de rebus uterque legati, aversos soliti componere amicos.} \\
\text{('Here Maecenas was to meet us, and noble Cocceius, envoys both on business of import, and old hands} \\
\text{at settling feuds between friends.')}
\]

Sermo 1.5, 27-29

These lines refer to the arrival of Maecenas and L. Cocceius Nerva, who was consul suffectus in 39 B.C. Line 29 is of special importance where Horatius refers to the role of Cocceius as an intermediary at an earlier conference in Brundisium in 40 B.C., through whom the threat of war between Antonius and Octavianus had been lifted for the time being. In these lines Horatius wants it to be known that he had a high opinion of Cocceius (optimus) and that he had set his hopes on Octavianus to resolve the threat posed by Sextus. After all he travelled in the same party as Maecenas and Cocceius who were Octavianus’ envoys on important business. Nisbet states that ‘Horace artfully conceals any political involvement.’ Horatius may have concealed political involvement but not his political opinion: I label this poem as ‘political’ as Horatius shows his true political colours here – not yet openly - by the fact of his membership of the travelling party and his hopes that Octavianus would be the man to remove the threat posed by Sextus.

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310 See also Brown, 2007, 10. He states the following; ‘Attempts to find a central satiric purpose in the poem are unconvincing and misguided, but the good-humoured, ironic detachment with which the various tribulations of the journey are recounted does much to develop the personal image of the satirist which is conveyed to the reader.’ (Italics are mine).
311 Brown, 2007, 142-143.
312 Nisbet, 2007, 10.
Sermo 1.6 is again of a ‘private political’ nature. Horatius combines his personal background and history with a commentary about descent and the chances of having an attractive and prosperous career. Low birth should not be an obstacle and high birth no guarantee. When people dislike him it is not because of his humble origins, but because they are envious of his achievements. In the poem Horatius expresses the experiences of his early youth in his hometown, which was compelled to accept many veterans, who behaved arrogantly towards the original population. I have quoted earlier in the section about Horatius’ life (Section V.a.) lines 61-62 which contain the invitation from Maecenas and his entry into Maecenas’ circle, and lines 71-78, which show, in a veiled way, his critical views on the resettlement programme.

Horatius also shows in this poem his firmly held view on the state of affairs in Rome in the thirties B.C. Rudd writes: ‘It is clear, then, that this satire implies a thoroughgoing critique of the aristocratic-republican system. According to Horace the concepts of nobilitas, dignitas and libertas have been perverted and misunderstood.’ Horatius does not want to be involved, as Sermo 1.6, 128-131 shows:

[...]Haec est vita solutorum misera ambitione gravique; his me consolor victurum suavius ac si quaestor avus pater atque meus patruusque fuisserant.

(‘[...]Such is the life of men set free from the burden of unhappy ambition. Thus I comfort myself with the thought that I shall live more happily than if my grandfather had been a quaestor, and my father and uncle likewise.’)

Sermo 1.6, 128-131

Does this also explain his later attitude towards Augustus, whom he expects will improve matters? Horatius’ manner of taking a healthy distance is also the ground for his independence, which he kept his whole life.

There is another point about this poem. In lines 104-128 Horatius depicts the attractions of simple rural life. Nisbet’s suggestion that he ‘tried to avert the malice that attended his new success’ and that it served as ‘a denial of larger ambitions’ is worth considering.

Poem 1.7 is declared a failure by Rudd. Again I hold a different opinion as I believe that Horatius makes a risky statement about his past in this satire. He had joined Brutus in 44 or 43 B.C. and he relates here an event which presumably took place in 43. The likely year of writing of this poem is before 42 B.C.; this is before Philippi and the death of Brutus (42 B.C.). From 38 onwards Horatius belongs to the circle of Maecenas and wins the trust of Octavianus. When the first book of Sermones was released in 35 Horatius could have decided not to include this poem about events seven years earlier when he had been on the losing side against Octavianus. He took a risk in openly reminding his audience about his faux pas and this timing says a lot about Horatius’ confidence and Octavianus’ forbearance.

The last four lines (32-35) of this Sermo are significant:

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313 Rudd, 2007, 51-52.
314 Nisbet, 2007, 10.
at Graecus, postquam est Italo perfusus aceto,
Persius exclamat 'per magnos, Brute, deos te
oro, qui reges consueris tollere, cur non
hunc Regem iugulas? operum hoc, mihi crede, tuorum est.'

('But the Greek Persius, now soused with Italian vinegar,
cries out: 'By the great gods, I implore you, O Brutus,
since it is in your line to take off "kings", why not behead this
Rex? This, believe me, is a task meet for you.')

Sermo 1.7, 32-35

The slaying of the kings refers to the Brutus of old who had driven out Tarquinus and to the Brutus who led the murder of Iulius Caesar. In the poem the Greek Persius, who had brought a lawsuit against a certain Rupilius Rex - originally from Praeneste - invites Brutus to slay (Rupilius) 'Rex'. Horatius took a risk yet again by referring in a rather nonchalant fashion to Iulius Caesar’s murder by the same Brutus and by not condemning this outright. Although there is in Horatius’ words no approval of and praise for Brutus’ act in March 44 either, his halfhearted treatment of Iulius Caesar’s murder may reflect on the fact that Horatius still had strong republican feelings at the time when he wrote this, probably before 42 B.C., and that he felt free to express these. This was also recognised by DuQuesnay:

‘But what makes the poem really interesting is simply the fact that it is included at all in a collection dedicated to Maecenas. There is no overt malice against Brutus. [...] This creates the overwhelming impression that the friendship of Maecenas has imposed no inhibitions on Horace about freely recalling his earlier allegiance.’

This happened only one year before he was pardoned. In my opinion, Horatius probably made yet another suggestion with a political overtone, which goes even further. One might speculate that the word play about the slaying of a third ‘Rex’ may not have fitted the picture Octavianus had of his own future. Is this perhaps the reason why Sermo 1.7 has subversive, republican elements? It seems to me that one finds here either the independent Horatius at work, or the man who is still sitting on the fence wanting to see how matters develop. With Sermo 1.7 Horatius wrote a much more meaningful poem than Rudd allows for.

The next Sermo 1.8 deals with the modern times which have arrived. Part of an old burial ground for the poor on the Esquiline Hill is turned into beautiful gardens by Maecenas, as many places in Rome were improved.

nunc licet Esquiliis habitare salubribus atque
aggere in aprico spatiari, quo modo tristes
albis informem spectabant ossibus agrum;
('To-day one may live on a wholesome Esquiline,
and stroll on the sunny Rampart, where of late one
sadly looked out on ground ghastly with bleaching bones.')
Sermo 1.8, 14-16

316 Brown, 2007, 165: ‘the flippant allusion to the assassination of Caesar.’
317 DuQuesnay, 1984, 36-37.
The cemetery had been a haunting place for witches, but luckily a statue of Priapus, the god of gardens, had been placed in the grounds. Priapus ‘breaks wind with a deafening explosion’ as Rudd puts it (1.8, 46-47) and the witches flee in terror into town. Through this allegory Horatius shows his contentment that, in his view, witchcraft is losing its hold and is on the way out. He sees sorcery as particularly dangerous to the moral health of Rome. This is not just an amusing satire about Priapus and witchcraft, but also Horatius’ way of welcoming new times, as the city of Rome was being improved after years of neglect. Horatius ridicules witchcraft and indicates that there is no longer a place for such superstition.

The poem which follows, *Sermo* 1.9, is in my opinion more than just an ‘amusing account of how Horace, on his morning walk fell into the clutches of one who has been variously described as ‘an impertinent fellow’, ‘a forward coxcomb’, and (more recently) ‘a bore’.’ This satire is about somebody who tries to ingratiate himself with Horatius and in this way tries to get close to Maecenas. The impertinent fellow says in lines 43 – 47:

\[
{[...]}'Maecenas quomodo tecum?'
\]
\[
hinc repetit: 'paucorum hominum et mentis bene sanae; nemo dexterius fortuna est usus. haberes magnum adiutorem, posset qui ferre secundas, hunc hominem velles si tradere: [...]'
\]
\[
(’[[...] “How stands Maecenas with you,”
he thus begins afresh, “a man of few friends and right good sense? No one made wiser use of his luck. You might have a strong backer, who could be your understudy, if you would introduce your humble servant. [...]’)
\]

*Sermo* 1.9, 43-47

Although the groveling interlocutor presumably paints a picture of the place of some lowly members of Maecenas’ circle which is near to the truth, the poem shows Horatius’ pride at being recognised as somebody close to Maecenas and is part of the general drift of the first book in which Horatius advertises his advancement in society: I interpret this as a ‘private political’ poem.

Finally, *Sermo* 1.10 is like 1.4 a so-called literary satire and in 1.10 Horatius returns to the subject of 1.4., which he had written a few years earlier and in which he had criticised Lucilius. However, he testifies to the fact that he had also praised Lucilius for his satiric power.

\[
Nempe incomposito dixi pede currere versus
Lucili. quis tam Lucili fautor inepte est,
ut non hoc fateatur? at idem, quod sale multo urbem defricuit, charta laudatur eadem.
\]
\[
(’To be sure I did say that the verses of Lucilius run on with halting foot. Who is a partisan of Lucilius so in-and-out of season as not to confess this? And yet on the self-same page
\]

318 Rudd, 2007, 71.
319 Rudd, 2007, 74.
the self-same poet is praised because he rubbed the city down with much salt.’
Sermo 1.10, 1-4

And in lines 9-15 he sets out the requirements of good satire, a standard which was met by the authors of the Old Comedy.

illi scripta quibus comoedia prisca viris est
hoc stabant, hoc sunt imitandi; [...] ('Thereby those great men who wrote Old Comedy won success; therein we should imitate them- [...]')
Sermo 1.10, 16-17

In 1.10 Horatius frees himself of any association with Lucilius and declares that he is following his own path. It is probable that this poem was written after 38 B.C. as lines 81-89 refer to the approval of the literary great which led to his introduction in Maecenas’ circle. Perhaps the year of writing was 35 B.C. Horatius does not attempt to reach large audiences and from line 78 he takes his detractors and enemies to task. He is not impressed by their attacks as long as he sees that men like Fuscus, Plotius, Varius, Maecenas, Vergilius, Pollio, Messalla and others like his verses. Sermo 1.10 is in my view another example of how Horatius puts himself on the literary map and expresses satisfaction about his contacts. Again a poem of a ‘private political’ nature.

In appendix IV I show that I count seven satires which deal with actual issues: four of these have a ‘private political’ content with a fairly strong personal political tone and are concerned with two subjects: firstly, the relationship of his poetry to that of Lucilius (1.4 and 1.10) and secondly his new position within the society of the new leadership which replaced the old aristocracy (1.6 and 1.9). Furthermore, I also regard the Sermones 1.1-1.3 (which are neither ‘political’ nor ‘private political’) as expressions of Horatius’ search for his position in life. I see this private content as being highly significant, as Horatius writes here without restraint about matters which could make him socially and politically controversial. Socially, as satire is a genre which puts critical questions to the leadership or expresses views on the functioning of individuals. In 1.4 and 1.10 Horatius compares himself with the master of the genre, Lucilius, and informs the reader that he will do better. However, there is an important difference with Lucilius; Horatius does not attack living prominent individuals. Although many names feature in book 1, none of these are influential people still alive and many are types, historical or mythical persons or pseudonyms. Politically however, Horatius had not yet made up his mind and it seems as if he keeps his options open. On the one hand, he shows his sympathy for Octavianus and Maecenas in 1.5 and 1.6, and on the other he expounds ‘republican’ views in 1.7. These poems

321 In Sermo 1.10, 83, and in Sermo 1.9, 61, in Carmen 1.22 (‘Integer vitae’) and in Epistula 1.10 we meet Aristius Fuscus. He was a dramatic writer and scholar and a good friend of Horatius. Plotius is Plotius Tucca; Varius is L. Varius Rufus, epic poet, who together with Plotius Tucca later edited the Aeneis; Pollio is C. Asinius Pollio, tragedian, orator, historian and general; Messalla is M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus, soldier, statesman and patron of a.o. Tibullus. See also Brown, 2007, 186-193.
322 See Rudd, 2007, 132-159. This chapter is appropriately called ‘The Names’. Octavianus is mentioned only once in the first book of Sermones; this is in Sermo 1.3, 4. See also Lowrie, 2007, 81.
were written between 39 and 35 B.C., when it was not self-evident that Octavianus would emerge as the eventual winner; Sextus Pompeius for example was defeated in 36.

In my opinion there are no examples of a clear positioning of Horatius with respect to political issues, one way or another in *Sermones* book 1. Brown expresses the following view on the political content: 323

‘Although *Satires* I contains no direct denigration of Octavian’s political opponents and enemies, still less any overt praise of the future emperor, a political dimension and propagandist function should not be totally discounted, and the book should not be read without regard to the contemporary political background’.

It will be obvious that I agree with the political dimension of the book, but not with the propagandist function.

Above I have presented my view that some of the *Sermones* ‘conceal’ a political content: I have indicated this for *Sermones* 1.5, 1.7 and 1.8. DuQuesnay makes the same point. 324

Above, I have discussed the case which DuQuesnay makes for *Sermo* 1.7 as a poem with a ‘political’ content. A second case is the *Sermones* 1.4 and 1.10, Horatius’ so-called literary satires, in which the poet compares his writing of satire with that of Lucilius. Again there is a political dimension here, which is made plausible by DuQuesnay as follows: 325

‘This brief survey [DuQuesnay’s discussion of 1.4 and 1.10 and the views on satire in the late Republic] will, it is hoped, have made it clear that Horace’s choice of Lucilius as a model is potentially much more significant than has generally been realised. It is true that Lucilius had acquired a considerable reputation as a poet. But Horace makes it plain that he had chosen him as his model in spite of and not because of his purely literary achievements. The reader is confronted with a Horace who proclaims himself to be the *amicus* of Maecenas and at the same time the modern equivalent of the poet [Lucilius] who had inescapable associations with Republican *libertas*, with Scipio and the Scipionic Circle and with Pompeius [the Great]. For the most part the reader is left to draw what inferences he will from this combination. But he is surely intended to leave the *Sermones* with the impression that Horace and his friends cherish the true Republican ideal of *libertas*; that this circle of friends is characterised by its cultured interest in Hellenistic philosophy, blended with a deep respect for the *mos maiorum*, and by its interest in literature which conforms to the highest contemporary standards, a circle in fact remarkably reminiscent of the legendary Scipionic Circle; and, finally, that in this latest war between a second Caesar and a second Pompeius it is the champions of *libertas* and the *mos maiorum* [Octavianus and his associates] who have won, not their oppressors.’

The author gives other examples of political content as well, some of which are close to my own interpretations, such as in the case of *Sermones* 1.6, 1.7 and 1.8.

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325 DuQuesnay, 1984, 32.
In summary, in the first book of *Sermones* Horatius attempts to conquer a place as a poet which he feels is rightfully his. Politically, he does not commit himself and keeps his powder dry. In the word of Kiessling: ‘In der Satire lucilischer Art fand er ein Instrument, das seiner Neigung zu ruhiger Betrachtung ebenso zu dienen vermochte wie seiner sprudelnden Laune; eine Form, in der er dem prickelnden Bedürfnis genügen konnte, sich nach Wunsch lang oder kurz, ernst oder heiter auszusprechen über die mancherlei Schwächen und Gebrechen der Gesellschaft[...]’.

Horatius develops his own approach and presents his commentary on the events of his time. In the first book of the *Sermones* one sees already that ‘Horaz ist kein strafender Richter, der einen Delinquenten vor sein Tribunal zieht und unbarmherzig züchtigt, kein Prediger, der einem Sünder zu Herzen und in das Gewissen redet; er ist vielmehr der menschenkundige, philosophische *Beobachter* [...]’.

The second book of *Sermones* was written between 33 and 30 B.C. and contains eight satires. Boll shows the following symmetry, namely *Sermones* 1 and 5 are about consultations, 2 and 6 about rural simplicity, 3 and 7 are Stoic sermons and 4 and 8 concern the follies of gastronomy.

Generally speaking, there is a different tone in book 2. At the time of release Horatius was an established poet and the need to mark and defend his position was no longer acute. Yet, he begins book 2 with a legally-coloured satire about freedom of speech. He gives his poems the form of philosophical dialogues with a wink at Plato. His subjects are more philosophical and weightier than in book 1. Muecke expresses the tension between the philosophical content - often seen to be moralistic – and the satire as follows: ‘Philosophical dialogue aims to expound or follow the lines of ideas and arguments; satire humorously to expose the folly of dogmatists and ideologues.’ Horatius presents his personal view on life in the satires of book 2 and the main themes are the golden mean, natural limits and self-sufficiency.

*Sermo* 2.1 continues with the theme of 1.4 and 1.10, the relationship with Lucilian verse. Therefore, 2.1 is seen as a connecting poem between the first and second book. However, this comparison with Lucilius is only a motive to pose the question of admissibility of writing satirical verse under Roman law, as Horatius was about to begin composing his second book of satires in which ‘he ridiculed the follies and vices of his fellow-citizens.’ He has an imaginary consultation with C. Trebatius Testa, a famous lawyer of Cicero’s time, but still active. *Sermo* 2.1 begins with the words that some people regard his verses as being unacceptable; lines 1-2 say: ‘[...] nimis acer et ultra/legem tendere opus; [...]’ (‘[...] too savage/and strain the work beyond lawful bounds [...]’). Trebatius advises Horatius to write an epic about Octavianus’ victories.

> ‘aut si tantus amor scribendi te rapit, aude
> Caesaris invicti res dicere, multa laborum
> praemia laturus.’ [...]"
('Or if such a passion for writing carries you away, bravely tell of the feats of Caesar, the unvanquished. Many a reward for your pains will you gain. [...]')

_Sermo_ 2.1, 10-12

‘Caesar’ refers here to Octavianus whose judgement matters and who may be inclined to reward the poet; in lines 14 and 15 the ‘Gallos’ and the ‘Parthi’ are mentioned and most scholars take these to refer to the conquest of Britain and the Parthians, both regular themes in Augustan poetry.332

In the central part of the poem Horatius makes the point that he will always be a writer of satire, according to the model of Lucilius and that satire is polemic by nature. He will attack, but he will not be malicious and when attacked he will retaliate. Trebatius warns him that he may lose some friends and Horatius answers that Lucilius criticised people but still kept Scipio’s friendship as his criticism concerned moral issues. Finally Trebatius issues another warning that by writing ‘bad’ poetry he will offend against the law. It is not clear which law is meant here but most likely it is Sulla’s _Lex de injuriis_ or a provision of the Praetor’s Edict (actio iniuriarum) _ne quid infamandi causa fiat_ (‘let nothing be done with intent to defame.......’).333 Others pertain that Horatius refers to a law of the XII Tables (‘qui malum Carmen incantassit’).334

Horatius plays with the word ‘malum’ at the end of the _Sermo_. In lines 82-83 Trebatius says:

\[
'si mala condiderit in quem quis carmina, ius est iudiciumque.' [...]
\]

(‘If a man write ill verses against another, there is a right of action and redress by law. [...]’)

_Sermo_ 2.1, 82-83

In these lines ‘mala’ means ‘ill, harmful, malicious’. Horatius picks this up and answers in the following lines (83-85):

\[
[...] esto, si quis mala; sed bona si quis iudice condiderit laudatus Caesare? si quis opprobriis dignum latraverit, integer ipse?
\]

(‘[...] To be sure, in case of ill verses. But what if a man compose good verses, and Caesar’s judgement approve? If he has barked at someone who deserves abuse, himself all blameless?’).

_Sermo_ 2.1, 83-85

Trebatius’ answer in the next and last line of the poem is: ‘You will get off scot-free.’

The first _Sermo_ of book 2 has a political content, hidden under the literary and legal discussion. Horatius cleverly draws a respected lawyer into the conversation and thus there cannot be any doubt about the validity of his legal pronouncements. More importantly, Octavianus

332 Muecke, 1993, 103.
334 Muecke, 1993, 113 gives a comprehensive discussion about the many options with an extensive bibliography. See also Morton Braund, 2004, 413-426. She explores the tension between free speech (libertas) and insult (licentia) in Horatian satire. I quote: ‘Satire knows that it can incur censorship and censure’.
has been subtly positioned as to join in the conversation: first reluctantly in words which do not come directly from Octavianus, but refer to the likely position which he might have taken if he had been the subject of one of Horatius’ poems. This occurs in lines 16-20:

‘Attamen et iustum poteras et scribere fortem,
Scipiadam ut sapiens Lucilius.’ haud mihi deero,
cum res ipsa feret: nisi dextro tempore, Flacci
verba per attentam non ibunt Caesaris aurem,
cui male si palpere recalcitat undique tutus.
('TRE. But you might write of himself, at once just and valiant, as wise Lucilius did of Scipio.
HOR. I will not fail myself, when the occasion itself prompts. Only at an auspicious moment will the words
of a Flaccus find with Caesar entrance to an attentive ear.
Stroke the steed clumsily and back he kicks,
at every point on his guard.')
Sermo 2.1, 16-20

In this passage there is a touch of panegyric when Octavianus is described as *iustum et fortem*. The same touch is visible in *Sermo* 2.5.335

And then towards the end of the poem Caesar is present again when Horatius allows Octavianus to give a positive judgement (lines 84-85). In fact Horatius causes Octavianus to say that there is freedom to write satire within the limits of good manners and when it is not outright slander. One cannot make out whether Octavianus truly spoke these words or whether this is Horatius’ view on ‘freedom of speech’. In either case it makes this a ‘political’ poem. After this, Horatius could write the other seven satires of book 2.

*Sermo* 2.2 is a poem about plain living and food; the form is a philosophical sermon which oscillates between monologue and dialogue. Ofellus, a simple man of the land, expounds the values of simple life in the countryside, an image of civic virtue. These values of the farmer contrast with those of the city, where one finds ‘irrational extravagance, lack of proportion and self-destructive indulgence of the urban gluttons’. Plain healthy living with simple food is sustainable and does not lead to ruin.336

In this *Sermo* Horatius presents beliefs which are likely to correspond with the values of Octavianus: I assume that these also represent Horatius’ own views. It is a combination of social criticism and Hellenistic ethics and the philosophical basis is Epicurean.337 I have placed this *Sermo* in the category of poems with a political content as Horatius makes a serious political point at the end of the poem. Horatius knew Ofellus when he was a boy and Ofellus had been evicted from his farm presumably in 41 B.C., which was given to a returning

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335 Lowrie, 2007, 82.
337 Kiessling, 1959, 205; In 1886 Kiessling pointed out that Horatius’ lines are very similar to those in Epikouros’ famous letter to Menoikeus as given by Diogenes Laertius (10, 122-135). In the Loeb’ translation these lines are: ‘Plain fare gives as much pleasure as a costly diet, when once the pain of want has been removed, while bread and water confer the highest possible pleasure when they are brought to hungry lips. To habituate one’s self, therefore, to simple and inexpensive diet supplies all that is needful for health, and enables a man to meet the necessary requirements of life without shrinking, and it places us in a better condition when we approach at intervals a costly fare and renders us fearless of fortune.’ See: Diogenes Laertius, 2005, 655-657.
veteran after the battle of Philippi. Ofellus continued to work on his old property as a paid farmhand. The point is made that, in spite of his misfortune, Ofellus has succeeded in accepting his reduced circumstances without losing his independence of mind. Horatius criticises here implicitly the social consequences of the land confiscations by Octavianus. The following quotations show this.

\[
\text{[..]}\text{ puer hunc ego parvus Ofellum integris opibus novi non latius usum quam nunc accisis. videas metato in agello cum pecore et gnatis fortem mercede colonum, (\text{[..]}, I will tell you how, when I was a little boy, this Ofellus, as I well know, used his full means on no larger scale than he does now, when they are cut down. You may see him on his little farm, now assigned to others, with his cattle and his sons, a sturdy tenant-farmer.\text{\textemdash})}
\]

_Sermo_ 2.2, 112-115

And towards the end he says:

\[
\text{\textquoteright nunc ager Vmbreni sub nomine, nuper Ofelli dictus, erit nulli proprius, sed cedet in usum nunc mihi nunc alii. quocirca vivite fortes, fortiaque adversis opponite pectora rebus.\textquoteright}
\]

(“To-day the land bears the name of Umbrenus; of late it had that of Ofellus; to no one will it belong for good, but for use it will pass, now to me and now to another. Live, then, as brave men, and with brave hearts confront the strokes of fate.”)

_Sermo_ 2.2, 133-136

In these words a rather cynical resignation to the land confiscations can be felt.

In _Sermo_ 2.3 Horatius is at his Sabine farm where he receives Damasippus, a recent convert to Stoic philosophy with a reputation for financial speculation. Damasippus expounds the ideas of his teacher Stertinius, who was a respected philosopher. The dialogue between Horatius and Damasippus centers upon the thesis ‘all men, save only the wise, are mad’. Madness shows in five vices: avarice, ambition, extravagance, love and superstition. In the discussion examples of all these are given from Roman society. The plot of the _Sermo_ gives Horatius the opportunity to expose the extremes of human conduct and to express his own ideas of finding a golden mean in man’s behaviour. However, Horatius distances himself from the rigid dogmas of the Stoa and he even ridicules these in the final lines of the poem. Damasippus quotes the fable of the puffed-out mother frog that swelled herself up to the point of bursting and compares Horatius with the swollen frog. The closing lines of _Sermo_ 2.3 (322-326) say:

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338 As not all readers will know this fable I will give Horatius’ rendering in _Sermo_ 2.2, 314-320. These lines precede the passage I have quoted in the main text. I use the translation from the Loeb edition.

‘A mother frog was away from home when her young brood were crushed under the foot of a calf.’

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Horatius can not believe what he hears Damasippus saying: it is too foolish to be true! Muecke states ‘that despite his [Damasippus] naivety his criticisms of Horace ring true [which] is also ironic.’ In my opinion, however, Horatius wants to show that he is merely a human being (‘the lesser madman’) who is not elevated above human vice, but who is not prone to the extreme behaviour which he criticises. He was not compelled to publish this imaginary conversation which finishes with these critical remarks and he wanted to show his lack of sympathy with the exaggerations of many, including the views of the Stoics.

Three quarters of Sermo 2.4 is taken up by a lecture of the otherwise unknown gourmet Catius about preparing the most exclusive dishes, the best places to get game, fish, fruit and other ingredients, and how to avoid health risks. The manner in which Horatius presents this poem about the art of good living is a gentle mockery of the Epicurean teaching of ‘Gastrology’, as in the view of Horatius, pleasure in good food received far too much attention at the cost of real Epicureanism, which is Horatius’ philosophy. Just as in Sermo 2.3 he waits until the last three lines of the poem to make his point, this time by parodying a passage of Lucretius. Horatius says tongue-in-cheek: I would like to attend these lectures about gastronomy as well.

One only escaped to tell the tale to his mother, how a huge beast had dashed his brothers to death. “How big was it?” she asks; “as big as this?” puffing herself out. “Half as big again.” “Was it big like this?” as she swelled herself out more and more. “Though you burst yourself,” said he, “you’ll never be as large.” Not badly does this picture hit you [Horatius] off.’

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340 Lucretius, De rerum natura, 1, 927-928; iuvat integros accedere fontis atque haurire (‘I love to approach virgin springs and there to drink’).
Sermon 2.5 is again a poem about moral values, or rather the perversion and degeneration of these. It is about inheritance-hunting (captatio), ‘the aim of which is to win favour of a rich, childless, old man (or woman) and be made his (or her) heir. The method is to make oneself an indispensable friend and confidant, ready to undertake whatever services are required as long as the ultimate reward remains in view.’ \[341\] Horatius views captatio as a perversion of amicitia and considers it an act that undermines the old values. The poem is a satiric dialogue in epic style between Teiresias and Odysseus after the passage in the Odysseia 11, 90-149. Odysseus is in the underworld, learns that he will return home impoverished and wants to know how he can recover his wealth. Teiresias shows him the ways of captatio. Sermon 2.5 is a denunciation of what Horatius regards as social evil, evident from the manner in which he expresses ‘the nastiness of both the subject-matter and the portrayal of Ulysses and Teiresias.’ \[342\] It is generally held that the poem was written in 30 B.C., or at the most one or two years later, as the lines 62-64 refer to Octavianus and Actium (‘tempore, quo iuvenis Parthis horrendus, ab alto/demissum genus Aenea, tellure marique/magnus erit [...]’ (‘In the days when a youthful hero, the Parthian’s dread/scion of high Aeneas’s lineage shall be mighty/by land and sea [...]’).

Rudd points out that this last passage is the first time that Horatius pays a compliment to Octavianus which is not more than reiterating well-known facts in Rome at the time, 30 B.C. or at the most a few years later. \[343\] Octavianus had been victorious at Actium and was expected to recover Crassus’ lost standards. In the first book of Carmina there are also a few examples of praise of Octavianus. Carmen 1.2 expresses Horatius’ hopes of a better future and was written in 27. Carmen 1.14 (‘may calmer times arrive’) was written in 34 or 29, 1.21 (‘avert danger from Augustus’) in 27 B.C., 1.35 most likely in 30 or 29 B.C. and 1.37 (‘The Cleopatra Ode’) after Actium. The Carmina of the other books are generally of a later date. Rudd’s point is interesting as it again shows that Horatius wrote no panegyric of Octavianus before 30 B.C., which makes it unlikely that he wrote propaganda in the period that Octavianus’ need for support was greatest. \[344\]

As a consequence of the praise of Octavianus, which I regard as a political statement, I consider this Sermon as one with a political content.

Fraenkel regards the sixth Satire of the second book as ‘the most accomplished of all Horatian satires.’ \[345\] It deals with Horatius’ life at his Sabine farm on the one hand and his life in the city on the other. The poem opens with an expression of Horatius’ gratitude for and enjoyment of his farm (Hoc erat in votis: modus agri non ita magnus, (‘This is what I prayed for! – a piece of land not so very large’). It then turns to his life in Rome and Fraenkel describes this passage (lines 23-58) as follows:

‘And yet Rome is to Horace by no means all unpleasantness and worry. While he is sighing so movingly, his face is all the time lit up by a faint yet unmistakable smile.

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\[341\] Muecke, 1993, 177.
\[342\] Muecke, 1993, 179.
\[344\] This is a reasonable argument to date Carmen 1.14 in 29 B.C. See also page 176 of this book.
\[345\] Fraenkel, 2002, 142.
There is no denying it: Horace does enjoy being such a well-known figure, watched whenever he is seen in the company of Maecenas, and pestered by an envious crowd when he is on his way to the great man.’

After having grumbled about the nugas (trifles) of conversation with the city dwellers, he praises the delights of being at his farm and of the interesting discourses he has with his friends and guests.

\[\begin{align*}
\textit{ergo} & \quad \textit{sermo oritur, non de villis domibusve alienis,} \\
& \quad \textit{nec male necne Lepos saltet; sed quod magis ad nos} \\
& \quad \textit{pertinet et nescire malum est agitamus; utrumne} \\
& \quad \textit{divitiis homines an sint virtute beati;} \\
& \quad \textit{quidve ad amicitias, usus rectumne, trahat nos;} \\
& \quad \textit{et quae sit natura boni summumque quid eius.}
\end{align*}\]

([...] And so begins a chat, not about other men’s homes and estates, nor whether Lepos dances well or ill; but we discuss matters which concern us more, and of which it is harmful to be in ignorance – whether wealth or virtue makes men happy, whether self-interest or uprightness leads us to friendship, what is the nature of the good and what is its highest form.’)

\textit{Sermo} 2.6, 70-76

I differ from Nisbet who states: \textsuperscript{346}

‘At some stage Maecenas presented Horace with an estate near Licenza in the Sabine hills (2.6.1-5); this gave him not only respite from time-consuming obligations in Rome (2.6.23-39), but a continuing income from his five tenants (\textit{Epistles} 1.14, 2-3). He was now bound firmly to the regime by ties of gratitude and loyalty, an important consideration in the crisis that threatened.’

Nisbet does not give sufficient credit to Horatius’ ongoing independence and critical attitude towards the regime after he had received the estate, which at the latest occurred in 31 B.C. This is evident from \textit{Iambus} 9 (31 or 30 B.C.), \textit{Sermo} 2.2 (33 or 30 B.C.), \textit{Carmina} 1.6 (>29 B.C.), 1.35 (30 or 29 B.C.), 2.1 (<30 B.C.), 3.6 (28 B.C.). \textsuperscript{347}

The poem ends with a delightful fable about the country mouse and the city mouse; an allegory about peacefulness in the country and the bustle of the city. The poem contains all the elements which one also finds in his later poetry: ‘city/country; political/private; civic duty/leisured non-involvement (\textit{otium}); Stoicism/Epicureanism; Maecenas’ luxurious town-house/the Sabine estate; the world/the individual.’ \textsuperscript{348} The poem has many autobiographical elements. Yet, it is not only about Horatius’ life, but also touches on general themes which Horatius considers important: the criticism of continuous moneymaking and not being satis-

\textsuperscript{346} Nisbet, 2007, 11.
\textsuperscript{347} See also: DuQuesnay, 1984, 24-58; Gold, 1987, 115-141; White, 1982, 50-66.
\textsuperscript{348} Muecke, 1993, 194.
fied with sufficient means. Despite this, I interpret the poem as one in which the emphasis is on the poet’s personal views.

Sermo 2.7 again takes the form of a dialogue in which Horatius can express his views through a persona, in this case his slave Davus: this makes it easier for him to state his views because he can keep some distance. As discussed in chapter II it is in this poem that Horatius suggests that his social position is rather elevated, as he allows Davus to refer to his equestrian status (tu cum proiectis insignibus, anulo equestri (‘You, when you have cast aside your badges, the ring of knighthood’) (line 53). The dialogue takes place at the time of the feast of the Saturnalia when slaves were permitted to speak their minds. The main theme is the Stoic doctrine of ‘only the wise are free’ or ‘every fool is a slave’. Davus argues that masters are no better than slaves or to be more precise that Horatius is no better than Davus. The latter demonstrates this by reminding Horatius of his pleasure in accepting an unexpected invitation by Maecenas, leaving his own table and hurrying to his friend’s party. And there are also other pleasures which Horatius pursues, such as his adventures with a married woman, which he condemned so severely in Sermo 1.2, or his partaking in cenis opimis (rich suppers).

Davus asks:

‘nil ego, si ducor libo fumante: tibi ingens
virtus atque animus cenis responsat opimis?
obsequium ventris mihi perniciosius est cur?’
(‘If I’m tempted by a smoking pasty, I’m a good-for-naught:
but you - does your heroic virtue and spirit defy rich suppers?
Why is it more ruinous for me to obey the stomach’s call?’)

Sermo 2.7, 102-104

With this and similar questions which Horatius permits Davus to ask, the poet ‘tries to prove that in their subservience to their irrational desires for pleasure (sex, art and food) master and slave are no different.’ Horatius expounds the Stoic doctrine of ‘every fool is a slave’, in other words that a man who is ruled by his desires has no control and has lost all rights of self-determination; he is no more than a slave. This satire is one of the poet’s best satires in which Horatius expresses his ethical and moral points of view: in the present poem the views remain in the personal domain.

The final satire, 2.8 is about a symposion at which Maecenas is guest of honour and at which three men of letters, one of them Varius, are among others also present. Horatius was not invited and the events were related to Horatius by another guest. ‘The satire is directed, partly against the ostentation and vulgarity sometimes displayed by wealth, and partly against the curious and affected erudition of pronounced epicures.’ The poem contains a number of what approaches real ‘dramatic effects’, such as the awning which comes crashing down halfway during the dinner party and which brings the otherwise unknown host Nasidenius Rufus into a state of panic, or the departure of the guests before the meal has ended. The focus of the satire is on the host, a parvenu, who pretends to know all about food and wine and presents the most boring views on the preparation of the dishes. Howev-

349 See page 49, note 125 in section II.e. ‘Patronage or amicitia’.
350 Muecke, 1993, 213.
352 Fairclough, 1999, 236.
er, he is totally ignorant of the art of conversation, which according to Cicero ought to be the ‘principal dish’.  

Horatius intends to demonstrate the lack of style of the *nouveau riche* and shows the unease of guests like Maecenas at such a gathering, the lack of culture and education of the host and most of his guests, the waste of food and the ostentation. The host embarrasses Maecenas by the choice of wine as the following lines make clear.

\[Caecuba vina ferens, Alcon Chium maris expers.\]
\[hic erus: ‘Albanum, Maecenas, sive Falernum te magis appositis delectat, habemus utrumque.’\]
(‘with Caecuban wine, and Alcon with Chian, unmixed with brine.
Then said our host: “If Alban is more to your taste, Maecenas, or Falernian, we have both.”"

*Sermo* 2.8, 15-17

The wines which the host offers are the best available and the scene reminds one of today’s new rich who, when asked which wine they prefer with their lobster, say ‘the best and the most expensive, waiter.’ Horatius’ commentary on this tasteless display is short and sharp - in line 18 he requires only two words: *divitas miseris!* (‘O the misery of wealth!’). A few lines later (lines 25-26) he adds insult to injury when his informant Fundanus describes the unlikely taste of the food which requires the explanation of the parasite Nomentanus:

\[Nomentanus ad hoc, qui si quid forte lateret indice monstraret digito: […]\]
(‘Nomentanus was there to see that if anything perchance escaped our notice, he might point it out with his forefinger;’)

*Sermo* 2.8, 25-26

The sudden departure of the guests after the awning crashes down and before the meal has ended would perhaps be misplaced in our eyes, but not so for the Romans. The ambitious Nasidenius does not know how to handle this situation, loses control and is totally disorientated. This is not how a Roman was expected to behave and in Rudd’s words: ‘He [Horatius] must have seen their departure as a dramatic gesture which paid the host back for his absurd and vulgar display.’

However, this poem is much more than just a witty and subtle demonstration of Horatius’ view on the incompatibility of the old and new elite. In my opinion, Horatius wanted to show that mixing the aristocracy and the new rich was as dangerous as it was undesirable. The parvenu who ingratiates himself with the elite also forms the theme of *Sermo* 1.9 and the parvenu who shows off and is not to be trusted was already described by him as early as 42 B.C. in *Iambus* 4.

But the present *Sermo* takes the subject much further, as becomes clear when we look closely at the closing lines of the poem, which are at the same time the last lines of the book and which were written sometime between 33 and 30 B.C. These lines read:

353 Muecke, 1993, 228.
354 The Caecuban wine was one of the best in Italia and the Chian in Greece.
355 Rudd, 2007, 222.
In these lines we meet Canidia again, who is very present in *Iambi* 5 and 17, both written around 36 B.C., before the present poem. In addition, in the last lines of 2.8, Horatius mentions the ‘African serpents’ and at the time there was one ‘African serpent’ who was to be feared - the Egyptian queen - to whom the poet also alludes in *Iambus* 17. Thus, in the last *Sermo* and in the last *Iambus*, both written a few years before Actium, Horatius writes about Canidia and her sorcery and alludes to Cleopatra. I will argue below when I discuss *Iambus* 17 that Horatius considered sorcery and magic which had penetrated the Roman elite more than was sound to be dangerous for a healthy society. The combination with Cleopatra represents the danger of all the dark eastern forces which could demolish Roman values, not just by sorcery but also by military and political action. In my opinion Horatius makes a similar point in the present poem: the guests run off because they do not want anything to do with the new rich who are in allegiance with evil forces such as magic and Cleopatra.

*Sermo* 2.8 is a poem which contains not only serious social and moral criticism, but also makes a political point by pointing at the dangers facing Rome by foreign, Egyptian, domination. I classify this poem as ‘political’.

Concluding this section about Horatius’ *Sermones* one finds that, generally speaking, in most of the poems of both books the poet expresses many of his views on social and ethical questions. In book 1 there is an additional theme, as Horatius sets out his professional position as an emerging poet and his social position as a member of Maecenas’ circle. The majority of the *Sermones* of book 1 were written at the very beginning of his career, some poems as early as 42 or 41 B.C., when Horatius was between twenty six and thirty years old. At the same time he wrote his book of *Iambi* which has similar content. When he wrote his second book of satires between 33 and 30 B.C. Horatius was already an established poet and the focus lies much more exclusively on general philosophical and ethical questions and on his own moral and ethical stance. There is a shift between book 1 and book 2 from commentary on general and political issues towards a more personal point of view. If one regards both books together there are eleven out of a total of eighteen poems with a ‘political’ or ‘private political’ content. This is a percentage of 61, which is significantly higher than the percentage in the *Carmina* (45 %); when one compares the estimated dates of writing of the two books of *Sermones*, his *Iambi* and the first book of *Carmina*, the following picture emerges.

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357 Rudd, 2007, 258-273. In an essay entitled ‘Dryden on Horace and Juvenal’ Rudd discusses similar aspects. He also points at the likely times of writing of several poems of Horatius. On page 258 he states against Dryden: ‘First of all it is incorrect to suggest [as Dryden does in his *Discourse Concerning The Original And Progress Of Satire*] that the *Epodes* and *Odes* precede the *Satires*. The First Book of satires was published about 35 B.C. and the second about 30. As for the *Odes*, the first collection, comprising Books 1-3, did not appear until 24 or 23 B.C., and there is no proof that any of these poems [*Odes*] were written before 30.’ The English poet Dryden (1631-1700) published his essays in 1692 (See Ker, 1900, 15-114). However, I do not concur with Rudd’s
Sermones book 1 42/41 and 39-35 B.C.
Carmina book 1 35-23 B.C. (of 18 poems the date is estimated, for 7 of these 18, the date lies between 35 and 30; 4 of these 7 are ‘political’ or ‘priv. pol.’ poems).
Sermones book 2 33-30 B.C. (percentage of ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems in book 1 and 2 is 61)
lambi 42 and 39-30 B.C. (perc. of ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems is 71).

It is a well-known fact that Sermones 1 belongs to Horatius’ earliest work. After five years and only ten satirical poems (in 35) he finished writing satires and started writing his first Carmina. Two years later (in 33) he returned to writing satires and continued writing his Carmina. Three years later (in 30) he finished writing satires altogether. Over this whole ten-year period, from 39 to 30 B.C., the poems with a ‘political’ or ‘private political’ content amount to about two thirds of his output in both the Sermones and Iambi. In the Carmina of the same period this is roughly half. One would expect a difference caused by the difference in the genres; the Sermones (satires) and Iambi (lampoons) on the one hand and the Carmina (odes) on the other.

These results do raise an important question which I will not attempt to answer in this study. The question is: why did Horatius abandon writing satires or Iambi? Did he come to the conclusion that he could not improve on Lucilius? Is that how Sermones 1.4 and 1.10 ought to be understood? When during the thirties Octavianus established his authority the time was right to attack the adversaries. However, this was not what Horatius did. He did not write satiric verses in the manner of Lucilius, by confronting the opposite camp in an open attack and by identifying the enemy by name. His satires are about general moral issues, such as greed, cruelty, intolerance, snobbery, ambition, avarice, erotic adventures, to name but a few. He could have written sharp satire without any risk, as he was protected by his amicitia with Maecenas. Rudd addresses the same question and points out:

‘In fact, as we have seen, the more security Horace acquired the milder and less personal his work became, until finally he abandoned satire altogether. It may be, of course, that when he became emperor Octavian discouraged such writing in the hope of promoting social unity. But I prefer to think that Horace had more positive reasons for turning to other forms. The matter may perhaps be summed up by saying that,

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view on the dating of the Carmina. Nisbet and Hubbard, 2001, discuss the dating of the Carmina in their commentary on book 1. The section from which I will quote is entitled ‘Odes up to 30 B.C.’. In their commentary they offer evidence about likely dates among others on grounds of metric. Although the authors are reserved about the evidence (‘It is true that the Odes contain no historical allusions that can be assigned with certainty to before 30 B.C.; but the explanation may simply be that the earliest poems of the collection were mainly non-political [with ‘non-political’ they mean that the poem was not concerned with a historical event]’). Nisbet and Hubbard have good reasons to date 1.7 in 32-30 (see page 91); 1.9 in 35-30 (see page xxix); 1.14 in 34 or 29 (see pages xxix and 181); 1.18 in 39 or 35 (see page xxix); 1.20 in 33 (see page 244); 1.35 in 35 or 27 (see pages xxvi/xxviii and 387). The poems of Horatius’ book of Iambi are discussed in the next section of this chapter and the results which I present here can be found on page 171 of this book.

Rudd, 2007, 270.
although Horace was not free to attack all and sundry, such freedom would have made little difference.'

Finally, I want to close this section with three conclusions.

**Firstly**, Horatius’ poetry in the *Sermones* is as motivated by his involvement with political, social and moral questions as his concurrent poetry in the book of *Iambi* and his later *Carmina*.

**Secondly**, as in the *Carmina* Horatius shows an interest in and affinity with Augustan social and moral values.

**Thirdly**, in the *Sermones* there are hardly any allusions to the major political events and the individuals involved.

## V.d. The *Iambi* (Epodi)

The book of *Iambi* or *Epodi* was written between 42 and 30 B.C., which is roughly in the same period as his two books of *Sermones* which he started in 42 and which were released in 35 and 30 B.C. The title *Epodi* (*Epodes*) is usually given to the book, but it is not certain whether this was Horatius’ own choice. The title *Epodi* became fashionable in late antiquity, but ‘it is perhaps most judicious to leave open the question whether Horace labeled his book *Iambi* or *Epodi.*’

The word *iambus* is the Latinised form of the Greek ́ιαμβος which can mean either the iambic metre or the iambic verse. The iambic verse is derisive satire which goes back to Archilochus of Paros, the seventh-century B.C. Greek inventor of the genre, who, in the words of Horatius, hurled his verses in the new manner, fuelled by rage; Horatius says in the *Ars Poetica* 79: Archilochum proprio rabies armavit iambos; (‘Rage armed Archilochus with his own *iambus*’). The *iambus*, which seems to have been the ancients’ term for poetry of an informal every-day kind which was designed essentially to entertain’ had a fair share of indecorous language and the content which belonged to the world of comedy, such as sex, food and abuse of individuals.

The word *epodos*, which is also used, is derived from the Greek *Επωιδός* which originally means ‘by way of a soothing incantation’ and became to mean also ‘an epodic verse’. In the words of Watson: ‘This properly describes a verse which follows or ‘echoes’ a preceding (usually longer) one, but became by synecdoche to refer to the epodic distich and by extension to a poem composed in a series of such distichs. The most straightforward example of this system is [Horatius’] *Epodes* 1-10.’

The genre goes back to the archaic Greek poets Archilochus and Hipponax, who had in Callimachus their Hellenistic successor. There exists much scholarly dispute whether Horatius was inspired by Archilochus or Callimachus or by both: by Archilochus as the founder of the genre and/or by Callimachus for the less confronting and more moderate tone. The most notable difference between Horatius and Archilochus is the latter’s use of the *Iambi* for

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359 Watson, 2007, 94. It has been suggested that Horatius played on the word *epodos* (*Επωιδή*) and used its original meaning of ‘spell, incantation’ to recognize the role of magic in the work. See also Oliensis, 1998, 76.

360 ιαμβος is associated with the Greek verb Ιάπτω which means ‘hurl a weapon’.

361 Watson, 2007, 93-98. See also Watson, 2003, 4-17 for the literary background.


363 Watson, 2007, 94. Synecdoche is when a word with a narrow meaning is extended to a wider or the reverse.
a sustained hostile attack on his enemies, often identifiable individuals as Lycambes and his daughter Neobule and her younger sister. The broken engagement of Archilochus and Neobule led to the poet’s retaliation which was so violent that the two sisters committed suicide. Horatius disclaimed this kind of use as he testifies of his natural lack in pugnacity in \textit{lambus} 1, 15-16:

\begin{quote}
\textit{roges, tuum labore quid iuvem meo,}
\textit{imbellis ac firmus parum?}
\end{quote}

(’Should you ask how I, who am all too lacking in toughness and pugnacity, can assist your efforts with mine,’)

\textit{lambus} 1, 15-16

Examining the literary development of the iambic genre from Archilochus’ time up until Horatius’ age is outside the scope of this book, but in the periods of both Archilochus and Horatius the \textit{lambus} was an instrument to articulate one’s social and political opinions, particularly in times of social and political change. The forties and thirties of the first century B.C. were turbulent times in which iambic poetry fitted well.

At this stage it is opportune to consider whether the subject matter of Horatius’ \textit{Sermones} and \textit{lambi} differs. In both genres the poet voices his opinions about the socio-political state of Rome in his days and there is certainly a distinct difference in style. In \textit{Sermo} 1.10 Horatius defines good satire as requiring humour as he says in line 7, \textit{richtum risu} (’grin with laughter’) and in line 9 \textit{brevitate opus} (’You need terseness’). Moreover, also in Horatius’ case, the language in the \textit{lambi} is more coarse and aggressive than in his \textit{Sermones}, or for that matter his \textit{Carmina}. But most importantly, Horatius in his \textit{Sermones} tends to be more philosophical and contemplative and to deal with issues which are nearer his personal environment. He writes in the \textit{Sermones} about his position as a satiric poet (1.4, 1.10 and 2.1), contentment with one’s lot (1.1), avoiding harshness in judging one’s friends (1.3), \textit{amicitia} with the great and mighty (1.5 and 1.9), ambition and high birth (1.6), simple life in the country (2.2 and 2.6), and commentary on moral issues (2.3, 2.5 and 2.7). In the \textit{lambi} he feels empowered to address a larger audience about more weighty matters, such as the continuing civil war (7 and 16), corruption of values when a delinquent ex-slave rises to wealth (4), witchcraft (5 and 17), loss of acceptable sexual standards (8 and 12). I have mentioned above the parallel between the last \textit{Sermo} and the last \textit{lambus}: at the end of both books Horatius has cautions his fellow Romans against the dangers of allowing foreign powers to control their lives.

In the discussion of the individual \textit{lambi} I will follow a similar line as I did earlier in the analyses of Vergilius’ \textit{Eclogae} and Horatius’ \textit{Sermones}. I will focus on the political content of the seventeen poems. The results are presented in appendix \textit{V}.

The first \textit{lambus} deals with Maecenas’ departure for a battle at sea. Although it is generally assumed that the opening lines of the first \textit{lambus} refer to the battle of Actium in 31 B.C., the words are equally applicable to the battle of Naualochus in 36 B.C., when Octavianus met Sextus Pompeius. It all depends how one reads the lines 1-2:

\textit{IBIS Liburnis inter alta navium,}

\footnote{I have been aided by the following secondary literature. Nisbet, 1984; Mankin 1995; Oliensis, 1998, 64-101; Watson, 2003 and Watson 2007.}
amice, propugnacula,
(‘You, Maecenas, will sail on a Liburnian galley
among ships with towering superstructures,’)
lambus, 1, 1-2

Are the ships with towering superstructures Antonius’ heavy cruisers at Actium or Octavianus’ heavy ships at Actium or at Naulochus?365

Whenever or wherever it was, Maecenas considers setting out on a dangerous mission during which he might face death for the sake of his friendship with Octavianus. Whether Maecenas actually accompanies Octavianus or not does not matter: the issue is whether in that case Horatius is then to follow Maecenas. The latter’s departure gives Horatius the opportunity to explore his amicitia with Maecenas. At the end of the poem Horatius decides to join Maecenas if the latter were to go and the poet disclaims that he does so for material gain, but that it is out of affection for Maecenas. The date of writing of this poem is therefore undecided; it could have been the year 36 or 31 B.C.

The poem is not just a propemptikon (send-off poem) but also a dedication of the book of iambi to Maecenas. Immediately in line 2 Horatius uses the word amice and after this he gives the essence of his amicitia in lines 5-8.

quid nos, quibus te vita si superstite
iucunda, si contra, gravis?
utrume iussi persequemur otium,
non dulce, ni tecum simul,
(‘What about me, to whom life will be a delight
if you survive, but otherwise a burden?
Shall I do as you say and follow peaceful pursuits
which have no charm if not shared with you?’)
lambus 1, 5-8

Further in the poem Horatius utters an important statement which makes mockery of all who maintain that he only felt friendship for Maecenas because he expected rich rewards, unless he was utterly insincere when he wrote these lines. This is rather unlikely as he could always be kept to his word at a future date, when he wrote that he had received ‘enough and more than enough’ from Maecenas in lines 31 and 32.

satis superque me benignitas tua
ditavit: [...] 
(‘Your kindness has given me enough and more
than enough in the way of riches.’)
lambus 1, 31-32

Indeed, his statement in lines 23-30 is clear.

libenter hoc et omne militabitur
bellum in tuae spem gratiae,
non ut iuvcensis illigata pluribus

---

aratra nitantur mea,
pecusve Calabris ante sidus fervidum
Lucana mutet pascuis,
neque ut superni villa candens Tusculi
Circaea tangat moenia.

(I shall gladly serve in this or any other war
in the hope of pleasing you,
not with the intention that more bullocks may be
yoked to my hard-working ploughs,
or that my flocks may move from Calabrian to Lucanian
pastures before the coming of the blazing star,
or that I may have a shining villa close to the Circaean
walls of lofty Tusculum.’)

This first Horatian *lambus* is not exactly what one expects of a poem of this genre. Though
the poem is placed first it was written a year or so before the book was released. It is rather
restrained and not at all vindictive of anybody, not even the poor miser Chremes who is a
type-figure. Yet, the poem is very significant for understanding Horatius. Firstly, the opening
poem of the book is placed against the background of the preparations for a decisive sea
battle, Naulochus or Actium. Secondly, it defines Horatius’ *amicitia* for Maecenas. When one
takes these two points together one is invited by Horatius to appreciate his closeness to the
major political events of the day and his support for Octavianus. But, he remains independ-
ent as he does not expect any rewards for his support, while he expresses his hope of a good
result by which the end of the power struggle may become visible. Horatius makes a power-
ful ’political’ point.

In the second *lambus* lines 1-66 are taken up by a description of the pleasures of working
one’s own farm and eating one’s home-grown food. Who would not forget the city? And
who could not see how delightful it is to tend to one’s own herd and to have a respectable
wife who prepares a simple meal which tastes better than the most exquisite food? After
this the four closing lines introduce the well-known moneylender Alfius who pretends to live
in the country and purchase a farm, but eventually decides to use his money in his usual
fashion.366

366 Watson, 2003, 75-86. See also Watson, 2003, 124; The Kalends was the usual day to pay interest on a
loan, but the Ides was also used. Alfius used the time interval between the Ides and the Kalends to find new
customers for his money.
Horatius’ praise of small farming ignores the many problems of that sector at the time. As Watson says: ‘the picture is impossibly rosy.’ It was the time of the expropriations and confiscations when the most fertile land was given to the veterans and the loss of continuity contributed greatly to the famines in Italia during the 30s B.C. Added to this groups of desperadoes roamed the countryside, and smallholders were particularly exposed to land-grabbing. Last but not least, there were structural changes in the agricultural sector, where the farming estates, the latifundia, were established at the cost of the traditional farmers with the help of capital of the nouveaux riches and old elite.

When one tries to understand the poem as a whole, one must find an acceptable explanation for the change in tone between the bulk of the poem and the last four lines. One must understand the ‘function’ of the closure. It seems to me that Watson’s explanation has much to offer. I quote his argument in full.

‘A more broad based approach is desirable in attempting to answer the question of Horace’s intentions, an approach which ideally will combine literary and historical considerations. I would suggest that we have in Epode 2 an instance of a phenomenon by no means uncommon in Greek and Latin verse texts, whereby the body of a poem sketches a situation which is palpably too good or too exaggerated to be true, so that the reader is led to expect that the exaggeration will be redressed in the concluding lines, without of course knowing what form this modification is likely to take. In the present case the unreality of the speaker’s words is advertised above all by the factual hiatus between the glamorized picture of rural existence which he proffers and the actualities of life on the land in the 40s and 30s B.C. [...] it functions in large measure as a mocking lead-in to a concluding exposure of hypocrisy; [...] Alfius articulates very publicly sentiments which they [he] do[es] not really feel.’

I agree with Watson’s vision and in my view Horatus exposes Alfius’ hypocrisy about life in the country in order to denounce the cynical attitude towards the situation in the country which was prevalent in Italia’s and Rome’s leading circles. The book of Iambi contains more poems which criticise the new rich, such as Iambus 4.

Iambus 3 is about Horatius who suffers severe indigestion after a meal with Maecenas who had used too much garlic in the sauce. Horatius ends the poem with the cheerful curse:

\[
\text{at si quid umquam tale concupiveris,} \\
\text{iocose Maecenas, precor} \\
\text{manum puella savio opponat tuo,} \\
\text{extrema et in sponda cubet.} \\
\text{('If ever you are greedy enough to eat such stuff,} \\
\text{my merry Maecenas, I hope} \\
\text{your girl will ward off your kisses} \\
\text{and lie on the very edge of the bed.'})
\]

Iambus 3, 19-22

368 Watson, 2003, 85-86; see also Fowler, 2000, note 53.
Though this poem has no political content, it expresses in a light-hearted manner the intimacy of the two *amici*. It is similar to some *Sermones* of the same period (1.5, 1.6 and 1.9) in which Horatius wants to let us know that he is enjoying Maecenas’ *amicitia* and that he belongs to the intellectual elite.

The next poem, *Iambus* 4 again describes a parvenu which was a popular subject in ancient literature, from the Old Comedy (Cratinus) to Cicero (*Pro Roscio Amerino*, 135 on Sulla’s freedman Chrysogonus). The parvenu is an ex-slave who likes to show off his newly found wealth in public. He is not identified and Horatius’ presentation is most probably a type-figure. One of the parvenu’s very visible riches is his estate as we read in line 13 *arat Falerni mille fundi iugera* (‘Now he ploughs a thousand acres of Falernian land’) and he had risen to the rank of officer in Sextus’ navy. The closing lines of the poem read:

‘*quid attinet tot ora navium gravi*

*rostrata duci pondere*

*contra latrones atque servilem manum*

*hoc, hoc tribuno militum?’*

(‘What’s the point of sending so many ships’ bows

beaked with heavy rams

against a rabble of brigands and slaves,

when this, yes this fellow, is a senior officer?’)

*Iambus* 4, 17-20

In these closing lines Horatius points out that the parvenu’s arrogance is unjustified as he was no more than a useless officer in a useless naval force recruited from among slaves and upstarts, although at the time it was not unusual that sons of freedmen were appointed to the equestrian ranks and served as officers. Indeed, Horatius himself had served in that capacity under Brutus. This is perhaps why many scholars have posed the question why Horatius compares himself - the son of a freedman - to the ex-slave. Both have estates, both have obtained the equestrian rank, and both were a *tribunus militum*. However, there is an essential difference between the two, to which Horatius draws our attention. Parvenus, like the ex-slave of this poem, and also Alfius of *Iambus* 2 are a new breed in Rome, who like to display their wealth and above all tend to look after their own interests. Horatius is cynical about their real contribution to society, which he considers negative, because this new class erodes traditional Roman standards, which he tends to uphold. Horatius, of humble origin himself, expounds all the traditional values in his poetry and lays his trust in members of the old established families to bring back order and justice. In my opinion this poem is a ‘political’ statement as Horatius had seen too many new men rise to powerful positions. In his view these men are incompetent and not to be trusted which is a worrying factor for the sound management of Rome’s affairs.

*Iambus* 5, together with the final *Iambus* 17, deals with magic and the witch Canidia, who also features in *Sermo* 1.8. In the fifth *Iambus* Horatius describes how a group of witches un-
der Canidia’s leadership has kidnapped a young boy who pleads for mercy. The witches intend to bury him alive up to his neck, starve him and use his marrow and liver to make a love-charm in order to rekindle the love of Varus for Canidia. Varus was a faithless lover or husband and Canidia attempts to seduce him to her bed once more by a spell which fails. Thus the witches decide to make a love-charm. As a result the boy must die and he curses the witches with the most terrifying threats, which seem to do the trick, and the boy appears to survive, although the poet leaves this to our imagination.

Scenes about magic were quite common, for example in Vergilius’ Ecloga 8, 69-71, in mime and in Hellenistic poetry and novels. These rituals were reality and in reading Iambus 5 one needs to take account of the ‘historical and magical facts.’ Plinianus in his Historia Naturalis, 25, 25 describes the use of hellebore. It was rumoured that the famous general Lucullus was killed with such a potion. Others were also accused of being involved in magic and sorcery, and Antonius himself no less. According to Octavianus he had been bewitched by Cleopatra’s φάρμακα as Plutarchus testifies. The latter also wrote that Antonius had lost the Parthian campaign as ‘he was not master of his own faculties, but, as if he were under the influence of certain drugs or of magic rites, was ever looking eagerly towards her [Cleopatra], and thinking more of his speedy return than of conquering the enemy.’

Magic and sorcery had penetrated the upper classes although official policy attempted to put a halt to these practices. Horatius most probably supported this policy and one reads in his poetry that acts of magic were always carried out by people at the bottom of the social ladder, which is an implicit warning to the elite. Canidia’s magic was so repelling that it deserved his criticism as a writer of iambic verses. Her activities were symptomatic of the ethical and social malaise at the time. Watson states: ‘in the Epodes, Horace generally chooses as his target a public nuisance of one type or another with some demonstrable basis in current social realities (a good example is the parvenu of Epode 4).’

Watson suggests that there is a link with mime which is essentially frivolous. In Iambus 5 there are also a number of absurdities. The first is that four witches perform such a rite simply to give Canidia her old Varus back. The second is that it ought not to surprise us that Varus had lost his sexual appetite for Canidia, who in lines 15-16 is made to look like Medusa:

\begin{quote}
Canidia, brevibus illigata viperis
crinis et incomptum caput,
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
('But Canidia, her untidy hair
entwined with little snakes,')
\end{quote}

Iambus 5, 15-16

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371 There is no suggestion that the poet Varus is meant.
373 See for Ecloga 8, 69-71 page 70 of this book. Sandy, 1979, 368, points out that in Lollianus’ Phoenicica a boy is sacrificed and his heart is cut out as well.
375 Plinius, Historia Naturalis, 25, 25: Vetant dari senibus, pueris, item mollis ac feminei corporis animive, etc. (‘Hellebore is never prescribed for old people or children, or for those who are soft and effeminate in body or mind, etc.’).
376 Plutarchus, Antonius 60.1.
377 Plutarchus, Antonius 37.4; see also Watson, 2003, 179.
378 Watson gives a comprehensive discussion of magic in Watson, 2003, 176-182.
The third absurdity is the power which the boy exerts over the witches. In line 86 he hurls 'curses worthy of Thyestes' at them (Thyestean preces). As curses of the dying always come to fruition the boy renders the witches powerless and frightens them to death. One could argue that the roles have been reversed.

Horatius regarded the ugly excesses of magic and sorcery as a danger, and as an iambic poet he considered it his duty to try to help annihilate it. He made Canidia and her colleague witches look ridiculous and the poem radiates scepticism about the power of magic. This poem has a 'private political' tone.

In the short poem, *iambus* 6, Horatius again picks up a theme which can also be found in *Sermones* 1.4 and 2.1. This is his work as a satirist and he makes his point as one would expect in an iambic poem. The poet challenges a treacherous dog that harasses passers-by, but does not confront wolves. If the dog should attack Horatius he would answer with vigour and assertiveness as did Archilochus and Hipponax. Lines 11-14 say:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{cave, cave: namque in malos asperrimus} \\
\text{parata tollo cornua,} \\
\text{qualis Lycambae spretus infido gener.} \\
\text{aut acer hostis Bupalo.}
\end{align*}
\]

('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.')

*iambus* 6, 11-14

The vicious and cowardly dog is not meant to represent a real person, but rather a class of individuals who fight against Horatius. His message is that they better watch out.

*iambus* 7 deals with a theme which returns later in the sixteenth *iambus*: the civil war. Horatius asks himself why there is another civil war. This will only gratify Rome’s enemies. In the closing lines 17-20 he answers the above question. *Sic est* ('that’s it'): Rome has been doomed to self destruction since Romulus has slain his brother. The opening lines say:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{QUO, quo scelesti ruitis? aut cur dexteris} \\
\text{aptantur enses conditi?}
\end{align*}
\]

('Where, where are you rushing to in this evil madness? Why are you drawing swords that have only just been sheathed?')

*iambus* 7, 1-2

And the final four lines read:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{sic est: acerba fata Romanos agunt} \\
\text{scelusque fraterne necis,} \\
\text{ut immerentis fluxit in terram Remi} \\
\text{sacer nepotibus cruor.}
\end{align*}
\]

('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.’

Iambus 7, 17-20

Concerning this poem there remains the vexed question who the addressees are. Horatius wrote in the plural (*ruitis, aptantur*), but in my opinion there is no need to suppose that Horatius is addressing the Roman people at large or his companions at a symposium, as Watson and others state. Watson testifies: *Epode* 7, then, is no internalized monologue but a dramatized fiction in which the reader must envisage Horace preaching to the populace of Rome.’ Horatius may be addressing only a few particular individuals; the question is whom.

In Watson’s chapter about *Iambus* 7 he concludes that the poem was written at some time in 39 or 38 B.C. The dating of the poem has been a contentious issue and Watson devotes three pages to it. He makes the credible suggestion that Horatius wrote the *Iambus*, which is deeply pessimistic, out of frustration that the treaty of Brundisium in 40 between Antonius and Octavianus and the peace of Puteoli in 39 between the triumvirs and Sextus had not held and that civil war had again commenced.

In September of the year 36 Octavianus defeated Sextus Pompeius in the sea battle of Naulochus. In the words of Galinsky: ‘This victory was as welcome as it was significant. [...] The occasion called for a prominent architectural association with Victory, and the Palatine Hill was a good choice for that reason alone.’ Octavianus chose the hill as the location where the new Temple of Apollo, to whom Octavianus had vowed a temple after Sextus’ defeat, was to be erected. The Palatine was associated with the place where Romulus’ hut had been. ‘By selecting this particular site for his temple, therefore, Octavian associated himself both with victory – a general theme he pursued at the time – and with some of the most hallowed traditions of the founding of Rome.’ This ‘most hallowed tradition’ was Romulus.

It is highly conceivable that Octavianus’ association with Romulus was not a sudden idea which came to him in 36, the year of his victory over Sextus. It is very likely that this idea has played in Octavianus’ mind before, for example since the year 40 or 39 B.C. and that Horatius knew this.

Thus, we are faced with the conceivable position that Horatius wrote this poem in 39 or 38 B.C. at a time of renewed hostilities and that the addressees are therefore not the Roman people at large or his friends at a symposium, but the perpetrators of the next phase in the civil war, Antonius, Sextus and above all Octavianus.

Here the second point is important, namely Horatius’ reference in line 18 to Romulus. It is likely that when Horatius mentions Romulus and refers to the latter’s murder of his brother Remus and the ensuing curse on the Romans, he is alluding to Octavianus who had associated himself with Romulus. At that time Horatius saw Octavianus as being to blame

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379 Lowrie, 2007, 80; Nisbet, 1984, 7; Watson, 2003, 266-268
381 There is another passage where Romulus is associated with violence, namely *Aeneis* 8, 638. This is the passage where Vergilius describes the scene of the violent rape of the Sabine women on Aeneas’ shield. The men of Rome carried off the women *sine more* (‘lawlessly’) and in line 638 the men are called *Romulidae* (‘sons of Romulus’).
for the renewal of the hostilities. When Horatius wrote the poem the outcome of the power struggle was not at all certain and he was not yet a member of the group of Maecenas.\(^{382}\)

Thus *Iambus* 7 is not just a ‘political’ poem, but one which is highly critical of Octavianus.

The eighth *Iambus* is written as an iambic poem ought to be. Horatius describes a classical subject of the iambic genre and he uses the usual strong language. There are two ‘layers’ in this poem. The first layer concerns an elderly woman who makes herself sexually available but cannot arouse the poet. The deeper meaning of the poem may be Horatius’ denouncement of the moral standards of the new generation of sexually liberated women of the Roman elite or it may even allude to a specific woman.\(^{383}\)

Horatius describes a man who finds himself in the bedroom of an elderly and rich woman of some considerable learning. She stands naked before him, but the man is not able to meet her sexual demands and she reproaches him as one reads his reply in first two lines:

\[
\text{ROGARE longo putidam te saeculo} \\
\text{viris quid enervet meas,} \\
\text{('To think that you, who have rotted away with the long passage of time,} \\
\text{should ask what unstrings my virility,'')} \\
\text{\textit{iambus} 8, 1-2}
\]

It is not due to impotence that he is not aroused, but he finds the woman repulsive as he makes more than clear in the lines 3-10. I will quote the most repulsive description from this passage:

\[
\text{hietque turpis inter aridas natis} \\
\text{podex velut crudae bovis?} \\
\text{('and your disgusting anus gapes between your shrivelled buttocks like that of a cow with diarrhea!')} \\
\text{\textit{iambus} 8, 5-6}
\]

Watson makes the point ‘that, in *Epode* 8, both parties are made to look ridiculous – the *vetula* [‘old woman’], for her insensitivity to her lack of physical allure, Horace, for his bad taste in becoming involved with her in the first place.’\(^{384}\)

The next question is whether the woman can be identified. Watson speculates that Horatius had ‘Cicero’s philosophically minded [woman] friend Caerellia, with whom gossip alleged that he had an affair when she was many years older than he’, in mind. This speculation apart, there are other suggestions. The first one is Cleopatra which seems unlikely as she was not regarded an old hag at the time. The second speculation which I will not pass over is that the poem was indeed inspired by an actual event which was an encounter between Antonius’ wife Fulvia and Octavianus at or after the time of the siege of Perusia.

\(^{382}\) Nisbet, 1984, 6-8 gives a different view (the general threat of war with a foreign people, e.g. the Parthian menace); Nisbet passes over the significance which I attach to lines 17-20. Similarly, White, 1993, 161 who interprets the poem as about the theme of ‘the Grandeur of Empire.’

\(^{383}\) Watson, 2003, 287-293.

\(^{384}\) Watson, 2003, 288 and 305. Watson assumes that Horatius has written about his own experience and that the story is not a poetic invention.
There is an extant epigram of Octavianus against Fulvia from 41 B.C. and which is quoted by Martialis (Epigrammata 11.20). The possible connection of iambus 8 with Fulvia and Octavianus is a creative speculation. There are no independent indications that the poem originated by attempts of Fulvia to ensnare Octavianus. However, Horatius could be alluding to her action in order to denounce the sexual moral of many high-born women. Fulvia was well-known and Octavianus had published his epigram for all to read. In 40 or 39 B.C. Horatius’ ties with Octavianus were not yet very strong and he could have had no inhibitions to use the epigram. However, there are no indications whatsoever about the date of writing of iambus 8, and for that matter iambus 12, and thus the matter remains unresolved.

Fulvia apart, it seems to me that this poem and iambus 12 express criticism of the sexual moral and behaviour of the women of the Roman elite and that Horatius expresses a ‘private political’ point of view.

Nisbet has called iambus 9 ‘a running commentary’ on the sea battle at Actium at which Horatius was most probably present. Horatius opens his ninth iambus by asking Maecenas when Octavianus’ victory will be celebrated as had been the case after the defeat of Sextus Pompeius. The middle part of the poem is a running commentary on the events leading up to the battle (lines 11-18), the battle itself (lines 19-20) and the aftermath including the flight of Antonius (lines 21-32). The poem concludes when Horatius asks to have the best wine fetched in order to dispel fears for Octavianus’ safety and to combat seasickness. The poem has a sympotic flavour and lines 35-36 suggest that the symposium was held on board of one of the ships after the battle.

In this poem Horatius combines two of his great political themes, the civil war and praise of Octavianus. In addition he connects the two great sea battles in this poem. The poem is about Actium and in lines 7-8 he refers to Sextus Pompeius (Neptunius dux) and Naulochus:

\[
ut nuper, actus cum freto Neptunius
dux fugit ustis navibus,
\]

(‘That’s what we did, not long ago, when the ships of Neptune’s general were burnt, and he fled, driven from the sea –’)

iambus 9, 7-8

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385 Watson, 2003, 390. Martialis’ epigram reads as follows: Caesaris Augusti lascivos, livide, versus/sex lege, qui tristis verba latina legis: quod futuit Glaphyram Antonius, hanc mihi poenam/Fulvia constituit, se quoque uti futuam./Fulviam ego ut futuam? quid si me Manius oriet/pedicem, faciam? Non puto, si sapiam.”/aut futue, aut pugnemus” ait. Quid quod mihi vita/corior est ipsa mentula? signa canant!”/Apsolvis lepidos nimirum, Auguste, libellois/qui scis Romanu simplicitate loqui. (‘Malignant one, you who read Latin words with a sour face, read six wanton verses of Caesar Augustus! Because Antony fucks Glaphyra, Fulvia determined to punish me by making me fuck her in turn./I fuck Fulvia? What if Manius begged me to sodomize him/would I do it? I think not, if I were in my right mind.”/Either fuck me or let us fight,” says she. Ah, but my cock is dearer to me/than life itself. Let the trumpets sound.”/Augustus, you surely absolve my witty little books, knowing how to speak with Roman candor.’).

386 Nisbet, 1984, 16.

Whether this poem is in praise of Octavianus I will discuss below.

The lines 11-16 deal with the preparations before the battle, but equally these lines emanate from the contemporary view on the threat caused by Cleopatra and Antonius who were seen as ‘aiming at the enslavement of Rome’ and the view on the decadence of the Alexandrian court. The lines read as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Romanus, eheu, - posteri negabitis –} \\
&\text{emancipatus feminae} \\
&\text{fert vallum et arma miles et spadonibus} \\
&\text{servire rugosis potest,} \\
&\text{interque signa turpe militaria} \\
&\text{sol aspicit conopium.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

("The shame of it! A Roman enslaved to a woman
(you future generations will refuse to believe it)
carries a stake and weapons, and in spite of being a
soldier can bear to serve a lot of shrivelled eunuchs,
while the sun gazes down on the degenerate mosquito
net among the army’s standards.’

\textit{Iambus} 9, 11-16

In this passage Cleopatra is the \textit{femina}. The \textit{turpe conopium} (‘degenerate mosquito net’) epitomises the decadence, although it seems to me a rather sensible precaution in the mosquito infested army camps.

\textit{Iambus} 9 is generally regarded as a poem of praise. Yet several passages can be seen as pointing in the opposite direction, namely that of a critical poem.

Firstly, lines 7-8 which I quoted above do violence to the truth of the real events in the war with Sextus who was only ‘driven from the sea’ after many failures by Octavianus. The latter lost a number of sea battles before Agrippa defeated Sextus at Naulochus and at one stage during the war Octavianus had to ask Antonius to come to his aid.

Secondly, in the passage about the Galatian cavalry (lines 17-18) Horatius describes how the \textit{Galli, canentes Caesarem} (‘Galatians, chanting Caesar’s name’) deserted Antonius for Octavianus. This suggests that the Galatians under Amyntas had been converted to Octavianus’ cause. Cassius Dio (50.13, 8) tells a different story which is that Amyntas changed sides when he saw that he had joined the losing party.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{388} Watson, 2003, 314; Isaac, 2004, 352-370.
\item \textsuperscript{389} Watson, 2003, 314 states: ‘a final point of note in this section is the ostentatious refusal to name Cleopatra.’ He quotes Nisbet, 1984, 12: ‘these lines vividly demonstrate the manipulation of opinion that was so decisive a factor in the war of Actium. Antony is simply ignored and Cleopatra is too abominable to be named.’ I prefer to read this differently. Firstly, not just Antonius and Cleopatra are not mentioned by name; Sextus Pompeius (lines 7-8) is also not mentioned directly. Secondly, for any Roman reader it must have been abundantly clear who the \textit{femina} and the \textit{dux} of line 24 were. Thirdly, in \textit{Carmen} 1.37, 7 Cleopatra is called \textit{regina} and again not referred by name.
\item \textsuperscript{390} Bartels, 1973, 312; Watson, 2003, 310-317.
\item \textsuperscript{391} \textit{Dio’s Roman History}, 50.13, 8 (Loeb edition, 464-467): ‘Finally he [Antonius] became afraid that Quintus Dellius and Amyntas, the Galatian, who, as it chanced, had been sent into Macedonia and Thrace to secure mercenaries, would espouse Caesar’s cause, [...]’.
\end{itemize}
Thirdly, the lines 27-28 can also be interpreted as critical of Octavianus. These two lines deal with the flight of Antonius and say:

\[
\textit{terra marique victus Punico}
\]
\[
\textit{lugubre mutavit sagum}.
\]
('Defeated on land and sea, the enemy has put on a cloak of mourning instead of his scarlet one.')

\textit{lambus} 9, 27-28

Antonius (\textit{hostis}) had after his flight disguised himself by casting off his red general’s cloak. However, Suetonius in his \textit{Divus Augustus} 10.4 reports an interesting story about Octavianus: \textit{Priore Antonius fugisse eum scribit ac sine paludamento equoque post biduum demum apparuisse} (‘In the former of these [battle of Forum Gallorum in 43 B.C.], so Antonius writes, he [Octavianus] took to flight and was not seen again until the next day, when he returned without his cloak and his horse;’).  

In the present poem Horatius twice uses a similar device as he did in \textit{lambus} 7 when he was critical of Octavianus by alluding to Romulus. In \textit{lambus} 9 Horatius may be giving his readers a subtle reminder firstly that Octavianus was not such a successful general when he refers to the sea battles against Sextus. Secondly, by alluding to Antonius’ flight he may be reminding his readers of Octavianus’ similar behaviour when he fled after the battle of Forum Gallorum.

Then there is another point. Above I have mentioned the sympotic character of the ninth. In the opening line Horatius suggests that they drink the \textit{Caecubum}, the best of wines, at their celebrations. In line 35-38 the \textit{Caecubum} wine arrives; not as the best of wines for a celebration but to forget the worries about Octavianus and to combat seasickness.

\[
\textit{vel quod fluentem nauseam coercet metire nobis Caecubum:}
\]
\[
\textit{curam metumque Caesaris rerum iuvat dulci Lyaeo solvere}. 
\]
('or rather Caecuban so that it may check our seasickness. It’s a joy to get rid of our worry and fear for Caesar’s cause with the sweet Loosener’s help.')

\textit{lambus} 9, 35-38

It seems to me that Horatius is poking fun at the whole celebration here, that there perhaps was no party at all and that the wine was being used as a medicine against more mundane worries. On balance I read \textit{lambus} 9 as a poem which is critical of Octavianus.

\textsuperscript{392} Gurval, 2001, 137-165. Gurval also discusses the change of cloaks which he interprets as a line which evokes pity for Antonius or which is meant ‘to elicit sympathy or, at least, greater interest in the reader for the fate of Antony.’ He sees the poem as a whole not as a piece of propaganda for Octavianus, but rather as a ‘poet’s personal and complex response to a critical and still confused situation’. If we seek Horatius’ underlying motives ‘they might be found (better) in his concerns and fears of renewed Roman civil war than in his unrestrained patriotic fervor and propagandistic gestures. [...] The sentiments of disquiet and despair, so forcefully expressed in \textit{Epodes} 7 and 16, have not been dispelled.’ Gurval does not support the allusion to Octavianus.
In the years before the battle of Actium Horatius wrote several other poems in which he was highly critical of the civil war and Octavianus’ role in it (Iambi 7 and 16 and Sermo 2.2). In general Octavianus’ reputation in the civil war was not positive and the later princeps himself may have felt it wise to downplay the episode. 393 Although Octavianus erected a number of victory monuments in the Actium region after the battle, there are two indications that he did not feel comfortable about the way he had conducted himself in the civil war. The first indication is that in his ‘triple triumph’ in 29 B.C., which was spread over three days, the first day was dedicated to his actions in Illyria and the second day to Actium. The third day, dedicated to the fall of Alexandria and the death of Cleopatra, outshone the first and second triumphs. It seems as if Octavianus decided to subdue the significance of the sea battle and put the emphasis on ‘the war with a foreign enemy’. A second indication can be found in the Res Gestae which he wrote at the end of his reign. Here he describes the civil war in Res Gestae 1.1-1.4 and in 4.24 and 5.25, altogether in about sixty lines, and the foreign wars in 5.26-6.33, in eighty lines. This is not a significant difference in quantitative terms. There is however, a striking difference in other respects between his description of on the one hand the civil war and on the other of the truly foreign wars. Firstly, in the part about the civil war Marcus Antonius, Cleopatra or Sextus Pompeius are not mentioned by name.394 The battle of Philippi is not mentioned at all and Actium only once by name in 5.25 and referred to in 4.24. In the passages about the foreign wars of later years Augustus mentions freely and in detail his conquests of the foreign peoples. Secondly, the tone of Augustus’ description of the foreign wars is more confident, matter-of-fact and assertive. One can only speculate about these differences. It seems to me that there could have been three reasons why Augustus was more reticent in his rendering of the civil war. The first reason was perhaps that he felt that the events of the civil war were sufficiently well-known. The second reason could have been that he wanted to emphasise his achievements in the later period of his reign and the third reason that he wanted to hide from view the whole personally damaging period of the civil war. If that was how Augustus felt, Horatius shows his independence when he wrote his critical poems at the time and just after the civil war. His independence shows not only because these poems are critical, but also because they are critical about truths which Augustus preferred to hide.

The tenth iambic poem is about ‘stinking Maevius’ and Horatius’ wish that the ship on which Maevius travels may sink and that his body may be washed on the shore and be eaten by the seagulls. The poet will sacrifice offerings to the goddesses of the Tempest.

What was Maevius’ crime to deserve such a curse? It has been suggested that it was of a sexual nature.395 Mankin offers a different opinion, namely that Maevius was a scapegoat, ‘an individual ritually expelled in order to carry away with him divine anger, curses, plagues, or other ills that afflict the community’ and that his eviction is necessary to avert danger from Rome.396 It is impossible to resolve whether Maevius was a real life person or a type figure and whether ritual expulsion was the cause for his curse. Mankin’s suggestion that Iambus 10 ‘is a fitting sequel to Epode 9, with its anxiety about further civil strife’ is

393 Gurval, 1998, 45, note 50.
394 There are allusions. For instance, the following two to Antonius in Res Gestae 1.1: dominatione factionis (‘tyranny of a faction [Antonius’ faction]’) and in 4.24: cum quo bellum gesseram (‘my late adversary’). One allusion to Sextus Pompeius in 5.25: Mare pacavi a praedonibus (‘I made the sea peaceful and freed it of pirates.’), which referred to the general view that Sextus’ navy was recruited from runaway slaves.
worth considering, but in my opinion *iambus* 10 can also be read as an exercise by Horatius or as a statement of his intention to become a real writer of iambic verse as he had promised in the sixth *iambus*.

*iambus* 11 is addressed to Pettius who is perhaps a friend but otherwise unknown. Horatius testifies that he no longer feels pleasure in writing poetry when in love. He had been in love with the girl Inachia and had suffered her maltreatment. Now he is in love with the tender boy Lysiscus and he can only be rescued from this by falling in love with yet another girl or boy. The last two lines testify:

\[
\text{sed alius ardor aut puellae candidae} \\
\text{aut teretis pueri longam renodantis comam.}
\]

('That can be done only by another flame – either a pretty girl or a well-formed boy who ties back his long hair in a knot.')

*iambus* 11, 27-28

This poem is the first of the second part of the book as the poem begins with a named addressee. *iambi* 11 (and 15) are very much like love elegies. It may be possible that it was one of Horatius’ exercises in writing iambic verses and that he wanted to demonstrate the scope of his abilities to Maecenas, who in *iambus* 14 asks him to hurry up and finish his book.

The twelfth iambic poem is very similar to the eighth. However, there are some minor differences. At this instance Horatius is repelled by the foul smells of the woman. Further, it is not only her unlovable body but equally her unlovable personality which shows in her using foul language. Lines 18-20 are a good example:

\[
\text{cum mihi Cous adesset Amyntas,} \\
\text{cuius in indomito constantior inguine nervus} \\
\text{quam nova collibus arbor inhaeret.}
\]

('And all the time I could have had Amyntus [sic] of Cos, whose sinewy member stands more firmly in his tireless crotch than a young tree on the hillside.‘)

*iambus* 12, 18-20

Amyntas was a common name in Rome and there are no references to real people; it is also generally held that Horatius addresses the same woman in *iambus* 12 as he did in *iambus* 8.\(^{397}\) I have given my view on the twelfth iambic when I discussed the eighth.

*iambus* 13 is a beautiful, imaginative poem about the ravages of war in the setting of a symposion. It is bad weather which is a good excuse for a drinking session and a sing-song. Perhaps our fortunes may improve: when Achilles came to Troy he had received similar advice to lessen his anxiety about his death with drinking and singing. The poem presents us with a number of questions, such as: when was it written, what are the *diris sollicitudinibus*

\[^{397}\text{See Watson, 2003, 411. The name Amyntas of Cos appears in Theocritus’ seventh *Idyll*. Watson states that ‘Cos’s production of luxury items suggests contextually appropriate thoughts of moral laxity.’ Perhaps there is also a pun on *coire*, ‘copulate’.}\]
('awful depression') in line 10 and what is the meaning of the passage about Achilles in lines 11-18?

It is not possible to establish the date of writing. Watson suggests that ‘the mood of gloom which the poem exudes has generally been associated either with Actium (the tense run-up to it, or else the period of anxiety which followed it), or with the battle of Philippi in 42 BC, at which Horace was present.’ In scholarly literature one can find many arguments for either one or the other. Even when we remain in the dark as which specific battle the poem alludes to, it is highly likely that the poem was inspired by the uncertain and belligerent times of the 40s and 30s B.C. The opening line of the poem **HORRIDA tempestas caelum contraxit** (‘A grim storm has made heaven frown’) may well refer to times as a storm is often an allegory for an armed struggle.

The meaning of the passage about Achilles has caused much scholarly discussion. There is a meaningful dichotomy in the poem. From line 3 to line 8 the poet tries to cheer up his friends, while from line 8 to the closing line 18 he describes the fate of Achilles in Troy. The latter’s fate was not that cheerful because Achilles knew that he would not return from the war. Although Achilles had no prospect, he drank his wine to relief his fear and he sung to the lyre. The crucial lines are lines 8-10 and lines 16-18.

\[\ldots\].nunc et Achaemenio

\textit{perfundi nardo iuvat et fide Cyllenea}

\textit{levare diris pectora sollicitudinibus;}

(‘[...]. Now is the time to soak our hair with balsam fit for Achaemenes and to lift the awful depression from our hearts with Mecury’s lyre strings;’)

\textit{lambus} 13, 8-10

And

\[\ldots\], nec mater domum caerula te revehet.

\textit{illic omne malum vino cantuque levato,}

\textit{deformis aegrimonie dulcibus alloquiis.}

(‘[...], and your sea-green mother will not carry you home. While you’re there, lighten all your woes with wine and song, those sweet assuagers of horrid despair.’)

\textit{lambus} 13, 16-18

In the poem Horatius says to his friends that one ought not to lose heart in these dire times but that one must trust that one will survive. Achilles may not have returned but many heroes have. With respect to this poem I am of the ‘optimistic’ school and I do not share the ‘pessimistic’ reading of Michèle Lowrie whose argument is that as Achilles dies all must die and that ‘an even further level of indirect expression is at issue in Achilles’ mortality. [...] Achilles’ inability to return home conveys on the level of mortality what the poet fears for his country.’ Indeed, Horatius worries about the fate of Rome and Italia, but he hopes (\textit{fortasse}) that matters will take a turn for the better, as lines 7-8 testify:

---

399 See Watson, 2003, 420-422 for a summary.
400 Achaemenio refers to Achaemenes, the mythical founder of the Persian empire; the balsam is the best possible. Cyllenea refers the lyre of Mercurius which he invented immediately after his birth on Mount Cylene.
401 Lowrie, 1992, 429; Watson, 2003, 422.
I label *iambus* 13 as a poem with a ‘political’ content as it expresses Horatius’ sorrow that the war is still continuing and that some of his friends may not return.

*iambus* 14 is very short, only sixteen lines. Maecenas had been asking Horatius why he did not finish his book of *iambi*. Horatius answers that he is prevented by love for a freedwoman whose faithlessness makes him wretched. Although pressure on the poets to finish their work was not uncommon, Horatius may very well present us in line 5 with fictitious pressure by Maecenas. Horatius’ response is not submissive. Lines 6-8 are suitably vague and only in lines 15-16 does he offer an explanation.

\[
\text{deus, deus nam me vetat}
\text{inceptos, olim promissum carmen, iambos}
\text{ad umbilicum adducere.}
\]

(‘It’s the god, the god, that prevents me from bringing to the end of the roll the poem I promised you, the iambics that I began some time ago’)

*iambus* 14, 6-8

And

\[
\text{[...]; me libertina neque uno}
\text{contenta Phryne macerat.}
\]

(‘as for me, Phryne, a freedwoman who is not satisfied with one man, keeps me on the boil.’)

*iambus* 14, 15-16

In my opinion *iambus* 14 shows Horatius’ independence of mind and his feeling that he stands on equal terms with Maecenas. This poem, together with *iambi* 11 and the following 15, may be Horatius’ exercises in writing according to the rules of the genre and perhaps the poet decided to incorporate these in the book in order to accomplish his task of finishing the promised work.

The following *iambus* 15 is about Neaera who has deserted him. Horatius will have his revenge and he says in line 14: *et quaeret iratus parem* (‘and in his anger he [Horatius] will look for a genuine soul mate’). He tells Neaera’s new lover that he too will be deserted and replaced by someone else. Horatius will have the last laugh.

This is a poem about unhappy love and in the previous paragraph I have given my view on its place in the book of *iambi*. 
Iambus 16 has a very political message. The civil wars have lasted very long. Neither Etrusca, Spartacus, Allobrox, Germania or Hannibal managed to destroy Rome, but now we will succeed. Line 9 states:

\[\text{Impia perdemus devoti sanguinis aetas,}\]
\[\text{('that city will be destroyed by us, an unholy generation whose blood is accursed,')}\]

Iambus 16, 9

The time has come to abandon Italia forever and to go to the divites insulas ('rich isles') where the land is fertile and one can live in peace. It is generally agreed that the poem was written at the same time as Iambus 7, in 39 or 38 B.C., when the civil war had flared up again after the agreement between Octavianus and Antonius on the one hand and Sextus Pompeius on the other was broken.

To begin with, I want to consider the question of Horatius’ likely sources of inspiration for his suggestion to flee Rome, because an understanding of these sources is important to establish Horatius’ message in this poem.

In lines 17-20 Horatius refers to the historical departure of the Phocaeans who in 540 B.C. sailed from their Ionian homeland to Corsica in order to prevent Persian domination, which they could not contemplate as proud and independent seafarers. The lines read:

\[\text{[...], Phocaeorum velut profugit exsecrata civitas}\]
\[\text{agros atque Lares patrios, habitandaque fana}\]
\[\text{apris reliquit et rapacibus lupis,}\]
\[\text{('[...], following the precedent of the Phocaean community which, after swearing a solemn oath, abandoned their lands and ancestral gods, leaving their shrines to be occupied by boars and savage wolves,')}\]

Iambus 16, 17-20

Horatius here uses a rather unfortunate example. Any departure from Rome was not velut ('as') the old Phocaeans, who left to avoid foreign domination and not in the course of a civil war.

Horatius could have used an episode from Roman history, namely that of Q. Sertorius (123-72 B.C.) who planned to escape from Spain to the Beatae Insulae. This story was described in Sallustius’ Historiae 1, 99-100. There are precedents to this plan as well. Livius in

402 The Allobroges were a people in Gallia Narbonensis.
404 See Herodotus, Historiae 1, 163-167.
405 Reynolds, 1991, (OCT), 170-171 and Sallustius, Historiarum reliquiae, 1, 99-100, ed. by Maurenbrecher, 1891-1893, 43-44. The two fragments say: Cum Sertorius neque erumpere tam levi copia navibus...... Quas duas insulas, propinquas inter se et decem <milia> stadium <procul> a Gadibus sitas, constabat suopte ingenio alimenta mortalibus gignere. [...]. ('When Sertorius [could not] break out with such a light naval force....... And he [Sertorius] was certain in his own mind that these two islands which were near to each other and a thousand miles from Cadiz gave food for people.' It is thought that the ‘Blessed Isles’ are to be identified with either the Canary Isles or with Madeira.
See also Nisbet, 1984, 4-8 and Watson, 2003, 480-484. Horatius’ description of the Beatae Insulae in Iambus 16 is so close to that of Plutarchus in Sertorius 8.2-9.1 that it is very probable that ‘the two must be drawing on the
Ab urbe condita gave two incidents of groups of people being urged to leave Italia, in 390 and 216 B.C. ⁴⁰⁶ In more recent times Iulius Caesar was said to have contemplated moving the seat of power to Alexandria. Again, Horatius would not have chosen wisely if he had used these incidents, as these were seen as acts of treason.

For another possible source of inspiration Nisbet and Watson both refer to Sibylline and Oriental, in particular Jewish prophecies which contain ‘the belief that the pious can, by fleeing the cities of men, save themselves from the destruction which at the end of the world will overtake the ungodly.’ ⁴⁰⁷ One reads in the closure of the poem that Horatius sets the flight in the context of mythological times when Iuppiter marked the shores of these blessed isles for the virtuous members of the bronze and iron ages. In the lines 63-66 one reads:

\[
\text{luppiter illa piae secrevit litora genti,}
\]
\[
\text{ut inquinavit aere tempus aureum;}
\]
\[
\text{aere, dehinc ferro duravit saecula, quorum}
\]
\[
\text{piis secunda vate me datur fuga.}
\]

(‘Jove set these shores apart for the righteous race when he debased the golden age with bronze. First with bronze, then with iron, he hardened the generations of men. A blessed escape is offered to their righteous members if they heed me as their seer.’)

Iambus 16, 63-66

Finally, there is still another suggestion about a possible source. This is a passage in the Library of History by the contemporaneous Sicilian historian Diodorus Siculus. In book 5, 19-29 he writes that the Beatae Insulae were discovered by the Carthaginians. The Etruscans had heard of their existence and wanted to establish a colony there, but were refused permission by the Carthaginians. ⁴⁰⁸ Horatius may have known this story, but this was rather an un-

same authority, whether Sallust or some other writer who was utilized by both Sallust and Plutarch.’ (Watson, 2003, 480). Plutarchus’ passage is too long to quote in full and I will give only the beginning and the end of the passage: ‘Here he [Sertorius] fell in with some sailors who had recently come back from the Atlantic Islands. These are two in number, separated by a very narrow strait; they are ten thousand furlongs distant from Africa, and are called the islands of the Blest. [...] When Sertorius heard this tale, he was seized with an amazing desire to dwell in the islands and live in quiet, freed from tyranny and wars that would never end.’ It is clear that the Canary Isles appeared equally attractive to visitors in Antiquity as these are for the modern tourists.

These two incidents are described in Ab urbe condita 5.50,8 when during the siege of Rome by the Gauls in 390 B.C. the tribunes behaved improperly by urging the people to leave Rome: tum demum agitans tribunus plebem adsiduis contionibus, ut reliquit in urbem paratam Veios transmigrarent, (‘the tribunes, who were urging the plebs unceasingly to quit their ruins and emigrate to a city ready to their hand at Veii,’). In Ab urbe condita 22.53,5 Livius reports about events after the battle of Cannae in 216 B.C. This passage reads: Quibus [Publius Scipio et Appius Claudius] consultabant inter paucos de summa rerum nuntiat P. Furius Philus, consularis viri filius, nequiquam eos perditam speram fovere; desperatam comploratamque rem esse publicam; nobiles iuvenes quosdam, quorum principem M. Caecilium Metellum, mare ac naves spectare, ut deserta Italia ad regum aliquem transfugiant (‘These two [Publius Scipio and Appius Claudius] were considering the general situation, in company with a few others, when Publius Furius Philus, the son of an ex-consul, came in and told them that they were idly entertaining a lost hope; the state was already given over and mourned as dead; some of the young nobles, of whom Marcus Caecilius Metellus was the chief, were looking to the sea and ships, proposing to abandon Italy and flee for refuge to some king.’). ⁴⁰⁶ ⁴⁰⁷ ⁴⁰⁸

Watson, 2003, 481-482.

Watson, 2003, 482. A selection of some relevant passages from Diodorus (Loeb, vol III, 144-151) says: ‘we shall give an account of those [islands] which are in the ocean [beyond the Pillars of Hercules]. [...] Its land is fruitful, much of it being mountainous and not a little being a level plain of surpassing beauty. [...] the climate
likely source as he says in line 59: *non huc Sidonii torserunt cornua nautae* ('no sailors of Sidon turned their yardarms in this direction.')

It is rather unlikely that Horatius was inspired by such an eschatological vision that his travellers should be pious believers of the Jewish and other Eastern religions, or men and women like the old Etruscans. The many stories from Roman history which I have quoted above had sufficient material for his poem. In lines 35-39 Horatius defines the people whom he would like to see going to the isles. He asks for the virtuous: the courageous, intelligent and industrious. The text says:

*haec et quae poterunt redivit abscindere dulcis*
*eamus omnis exsecreta civitas,*
*aut pars indocili melior grege; mollis et express*
*inominata perprimat cubilia!*
*vos quibus est virtus, muliebrem tollite luctum,*

('After swearing these oaths and any others that will cut off the prospect of a sweet return, let us be off – the whole community, or at least that part which is superior to the unteachable masses. Leave the timid and the hopeless to lie forever in their beds of doom! You who have not lost your manhood – away with womanly wailing,')

*Iambus* 16, 35-39

With all these possible sources of inspiration in mind it is not easy to make out what Horatius is saying in this poem. Does it express Horatius’ frustration that the civil war had flared up again? Does it mean just the opposite and is Horatius asking the Romans to stay where they are? Or is it to be understood in a literal sense and does the poet propose to go to the Canary Isles?

It should not be surprising to find a poem about the desire to flee political troubles, and to escape from the wars, or about the hope of finding elsewhere the peaceful and blessed environment which Italia once had been. This could express an ‘escapism’ to compensate for the loss of the well-known established social order, particularly in the countryside where the population of farmers of old had been driven out by several mechanisms, such as the resettlement of veterans, the rise of *latifundia* and other changes. Horatius expressed his frustration and perhaps even his anger at the renewal of war, which only made matters worse: this theme is often found in his poetry. I interpret his proposal to go to the *Beatae Insulae* as a metaphor for his hope and expectation of better times. The *Insulae* stand for these better times and *vos quibus est virtus* ('you who have not lost your manhood') stand for those in Rome who will see sense and help to restore order. I interpret the final line 66 [...] *quorum/piis secunda vate me datur fuga*. ('A blessed escape is offered to their righteous members if they heed me as their seer') as a statement as to how he sees his

is so altogether mild that it produces in abundance the fruits of the trees and the other seasonal fruits, [...] so that it would appear that the island, [...] were a dwelling-place of a race of gods and not of men. [...] The Phoenicians, then, while exploring the coast outside the Pillars for the reasons we have stated and while sailing along the shore of Libya [Libya extends here to the West coast of Africa] were driven by strong winds a great distance out into the ocean. [...] and when they had observed its [the island’s] felicity and nature they caused it to be known to all men. Consequently the Tyrrhenians [Etruscans], at the time when they were masters of the sea, purposed to dispatch a colony to it; but the Carthagians prevented their doing so, [...]'.

Diodorus uses *Phoenicians* for the inhabitants of Carthago.
own contribution to this improvement. In the book of *lambi* he refers regularly to his role as a poet and a moral guide for the Romans.

The seventeenth and final *lambus* is about the witch Canidia, about whom Horatius wrote earlier in *lambus* 5 and in *Sermo* 1.8. This latter poem provides the motive for this poem. In his satire Horatius had described Canidia’s black rites upon the Esquiline and in the present poem he imagines that she has taken revenge by striking him with her most terrible spells. Horatius suffers badly in body and mind as the lines 19-24 show:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{dedi satis superque poenarum tibi,} \\
&\text{amata nautis multum et institoribus:} \\
&\text{fugit iuventas et verecundus color} \\
&\text{reliquit ossa pelle amicta lurida;} \\
&\text{tuis capillus albus est odoribus;} \\
&\text{nullum ab labore me reclinat otium;}
\end{align*}
\]

(‘You have punished me enough and more than enough, you who are so much loved by sailors and hawkers. My youth and modest complexion have vanished, leaving my bones covered with yellow skin, while my hair has been turned white by your perfumes. No peace gives me respite from my sufferings.’)

*lambus* 17, 19-24

Horatius begs her to stop casting her spells, but Canidia refuses and she says in lines 62-64.

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{sed tardiora fata te votis manent:} \\
&\text{ingrata misero vita ducenda est in hoc,} \\
&\text{novis ut usque suppetas laboribus.}
\end{align*}
\]

(‘However, a slower death than you would like lies in store for you. You will have to drag out a hateful life, ever available for new agonies.’)

*lambus* 17, 62-64

It has often been said that this poem is about Horatius’ agonies caused by his love for Canidia.\(^{409}\) I agree with Watson that this view is wrong and that the poem is about Canidia’s imagined revenge by magic spells after Horatius’ disclosure of her imagined activities upon the Esquiline in *Carmen* 1.8., or rather after his disclosure of the many real magic rites in Rome at the time. Lines 56-59 spell this out.

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{inultus ut tu riseris Cotyttia} \\
&\text{vulgata, sacrum liberi Cupidinis,} \\
&\text{et Esquilini pontifex venefici} \\
&\text{impune ut Vrbem nomine impleris meo?}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{409}\) Oliensis, 1998, 77: ‘But it would be a mistake to reduce the sexual epodes to allegories or moralizing diagnoses of the contemporary political scene. […] The dynamics of Horatian misogyny may be better understood in terms of what Neil Herz has called “male hysteria under political pressure.” See also Mankin, 1995, 277: ‘H[orace] may be implying that he has slept with Canidia’ and in 278: ‘given the amatory purpose of so many spells, for people suffering from unrequited passion.’ Italics are mine. Watson, 2003, 534.
Horatius had shown ‘Cotytta’s rites’ as secret, licentious activities.\footnote{For Cotytta see Watson, 2003, 572-573. I quote: ‘Cotyto was a Thracian deity related to Artemis-Bendis, whose mysteries were characterized by extreme wantonness.’}

How should the last poem in the book be interpreted? Is it a poem in which Horatius ridicules the power of magic by the improbability of the scene and the hyperboles? Or is he denouncing magic and showing its degeneracy because he sees it as a danger to a healthy society? Are the many allusions to Greek mythical sorcerers and sorceresses throughout the poem a reference to what he regards as Eastern barbarism threatening traditional Roman values? We find Telephus, Circe, Nessus’ blood, Medea and others. Or is the poem, which was most likely written in 36 B.C., an allusion to Cleopatra who held sway over Antonius and many Romans through Eastern sorcery and magic? Oliensis has a similar thought when she writes: ‘One foreign woman plays directly into this story – Antony’s ally and mistress, the seductive queen of Egypt, whom Horace eyes askance in Epode \text{9}; Canidia is in a sense Horace’s personal Cleopatra.’\footnote{Oliensis, 1998, 77.} I do not see Canidia in the same way as Oliensis: she seems to refer to a sexual relationship, but in my opinion Horatius wished, by exposing the evil oriental forces, to express the danger to Rome of Cleopatra’s and Antonius’ political actions.

Summarising the book of \textit{iambi} as a whole, three points are of importance.

\textit{Firstly}, it seems to me that the book contains many ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems, twelve out of a total of seventeen (71\%). I agree with Mankin who testifies:\footnote{Mankin, 1995, 6.}

‘Five of the seventeen \textit{Epodes} (1, 4, 7, 9, 16) are explicitly concerned with the last stages of the story just recounted [i.e. the political developments in the 40s and 30s B.C.], and it is possible to relate most, if not all, of the others to this theme. It is clear, then, that, as a whole, the \textit{Epode} book was meant as a ‘response’ to the crisis of the end of the Republic.’

In this genre Horatius focused more clearly on actuality than in other genres.

\textit{Secondly}, Horatius writes in \textit{iambi} 7, 9 and 16 about the civil war: \textit{iambi} 7 and 9 are critical of Octavianus and 16 is critical of the failure of the political leadership to bring the wars to an end. \textit{iambus} 13 is about his expectations of better times. Other ‘political’ iambic poems are either about general moral issues (2, 4, 5, 8, 12 and 17) or about his views on life (1).

\textit{Thirdly}, many scholars have looked for unity in the subject matter in the book of \textit{iambi} and have not found it.\footnote{Watson, 2003, 20-30.} It seems to me that unity is present in the focus on contemporary matters. Horatius feels very strongly about the social, political and moral state of the nation.
VI. The Carmina (Odes) and Epistulae of Horatius

In the previous chapter I discussed the Sermones and the iambi which I presented together because they belong to the same period (42 to 30 B.C.) and share in many respects the same subject matter. During this period Horatius had started writing the Carmina in 35 B.C., which form the subject of section VI.a of this chapter. This is followed by the last group of poems, the Epistulae, in section VI.b. The chapter finishes with section VI.c which deals with my view on the development of Horatius’ political engagement and his views on the political and social scene of his time.

VI.a. The Carmina

Horatius himself claimed in several of his poems (Carmen 1.1, 34, Lesboum barbiton; 1.26, 11, Lesbio plectro; 1.32, 5, Lesbio civi) that his Carmina or Odes were inspired by Alcaeus, the poet from Lesbos who lived in the seventh to sixth century B.C. This is visible in several technical aspects of Horatius’ Carmina, for example the use of the Alcaic stanza. Influences of choral lyrics such as of Bacchylides are visible when Horatius employs the narrative poem, for instance in Carmina 1.7, 25-32 (Teucer’s speech) and 1.15.414 A second main source of inspiration was Pindar: in Carmen 4.2, 1 and in the opening of Carmen 4.9 he mentions Pindarus by name and the opening of 1.12 has a theme similar to Pindar’s Second Olympian Ode.415

The genre as executed by Horatius is characterised by a wide range of subject matter, stretching from his views on his own poetry and his vocation as a poet, the beauty of the countryside, his opinions on several kinds of moral issues, the ravages caused by the civil war, love poems and many other subjects. The form and metre vary widely. Horatius employed the genre during a period of over twenty years (35-13 B.C.), far longer than he did the forms of his previous poetry and his later Epistulae. It shows perhaps that he felt comfortable in the lyric genre which may have corresponded to his contemplative and moderate outlook.

Dating the poems is not easy and the dates of some can not be established at all. Generally, the poems which deal with actuality can be dated reasonably well because Horatius often refers to historically known events or persons. The dates of writing of the poems are presented in appendix vi and can be summarised as follows. In book 1 two or three of the poems which deal with actual matters can be dated before the deaths of Cleopatra and Antinous (1.7 and 1.20 and perhaps 1.14) and two (1.35 and the famous ‘Cleopatra Ode’, 1.37) are dated in 30. Seven ‘actuality’ poems in book 1 belong to the period 30 to 23 B.C., and one (1.38) can not be dated. In book 2 ten poems about actual issues can be dated: six of these range from 30 B.C. to 25 B.C., two (2.1 and 2.18) are thought to have been written before 30, and one (2.10) before 22; of one (2.17) the date is uncertain, but the best estimate is 33 B.C. The ‘Roman Odes’ of book 3 are from 28 or 27 B.C., and the other ‘actuality’ odes in the book are from the period 28 to 23 B.C., the year in which the three books were released. The Carmen Saeculare is from 17 and book 4 was written between 17 and 13 B.C. The probable dates of writing of the poems about actual matters in book 4 are evenly distributed over this period, apart from the very last ode, Carmen 4.15 which is thought to have been written in 11 B.C.

414 Carmen 1.15 is considered as a likely imitation of Bacchylides’ ode with a similar prophecy to Paris; Nisbet and Hubbard, 2001, 188.
415 Nisbet and Hubbard, 2001, xi-xv.
The dates of composition played a larger part in the arrangement of the Carmina into books than is generally assumed; in other words, most poems in book 1 are earlier than those in book 2, and the second book is earlier than the third.\textsuperscript{416} However, there is no strict chronological order. The first three books were issued together in 23 B.C.\textsuperscript{417} The Carmen Saeculare was written in 17 and the fourth book was presumably written in four years, the last poem was most probably released in 11 B.C.

Carmen 1.1 is a dedication to Horatius’ amicus and benefactor Maecenas, which was not unusual for the first poem in a book. It was written in 23 B.C., the year of the Second Settlement. Horatius writes in lines 3-4 of this ode that some men are happy when they curriculo pulverem Olympicum/collegisse (‘raising/Olympic dust with their chariots’) and others when they enjoy political success. We read in lines 7-8:

\begin{quote}
\textit{hunc, si mobilium turba Quiritium
certat tergeminis tollere honoribus;}
\end{quote}

(‘one man is delighted if the mob of fickle citizens strive to elevate him to the three great offices;’)

\textit{Carmen} 1.1, 7-8

This may refer to Maecenas himself. The poet gives a number of examples of other men who are happy in their occupations, before turning to his own choice. He is happy to be a poet, as he stated in lines 29-30:

\begin{quote}
\textit{me doctarum hederae praemia frontium
dis miscent superis, […]}
\end{quote}

(‘As for me, the ivy crown, the reward of poetic brows, puts me in the company of the gods above; […]’)

\textit{Carmen} 1.1, 29-30

Horatius tells us a number of things in this short opening poem: he is not ambitious for honour in the field of sports and as far as politics are concerned he wants to keep his distance. He is happy to be a poet. He wrote this a few years before Augustus’ request that he become his secretary, as referred to by Suetonius in his \textit{Vita Horati}.\textsuperscript{418} Did Augustus perhaps entertain the thought of offering him this post in the late twenties, in or around 23 B.C. when Augustus started to consolidate his power? Carmen 1.1 with its personal touch has a similar theme as other poems of Horatius at that time, namely his wish to remain far from being involved in politics. I see the poem as one with a ‘private political’ content.

The next ode, Carmen 1.2, is an interesting mixture of fear (lines 1-20), criticism (lines 21-24) and gloom (lines 25-40), which turns in the last three stanzas (lines 41-52) into hope that delivery by Caesar, who is Augustus, is near. I will quote Horatius’ critical lines and some of his lines of hope (lines 49-52). The mood of war-weariness and the reverberation of the horrors of the civil wars are expressed.\textsuperscript{419}

\textsuperscript{416} Nisbet and Hubbard, 2001, xxviii and xxvii-xxxvii.
\textsuperscript{417} Nisbet and Rudd, 2007, xix; In Epist. 1.13.2 Horatius speaks of ‘the rolls’ (volumina) when he orders Vinius to deliver these to Augustus.
\textsuperscript{418} See page 128 of this book.
\textsuperscript{419} In conjunction with the Loeb translation Nisbet and Hubbard write: ‘Persae, a more grandiose name for the Parthians’. See Nisbet and Hubbard, 2001, 28 and Isaac, 2004, 371-380.
In contrast to this criticism, one finds hope in lines 25-48 when Caesar is made to resemble the gods and which culminate with the description of Caesar as Mercurius on earth. The hope is visible in the final passage of the poem as follows:

Carmen 1.2, 49-52.

Despite the critical elements in this ode, the praise of Augustus and the poet’s expectations of his reign are dominant and thus I label this poem as ‘private political’ and supportive of the princeps.

The next three poems do not deal with actuality. Carmen 1.3 is about Vergilius’ sea journey and the irresponsible exploits of man which lead to his ruin, 1.4 about the arrival of spring when love should be enjoyed as death will eventually overcome us all and 1.5 is a poem about lovely Pyrrha who will be unfaithful to her lover, a young boy.

Carmen 1.6, written after 29 B.C., is a recusatio poem. Varius is more apt to sing the praises of Agrippa because Horatius is not capable of writing such poetry. In lines 9-12 we read:

420 With imbellis lyrae Musa Horatius may refer to Apollo Citharoedus. See Nisbet and Hubbard, 2001, 86 and Richardson, 1977, 450.
This poem has a ‘private political’ content.

_Carmen_ 1.7 is a complicated case. Although Horatius begins by singing the praises of Tibur, the poem concerns a political figure, L. Munatius Plancus, who most likely originated from Tibur. He had left Italia in 42 B.C. to join Antonius and Cleopatra, to whom he was a devoted courtier. After ten years he switched camps to Octavianus, out of opportunist motives. The poet tells Plancus that one day he will return to his hometown: the passage of lines 15-21 reads:

\[
\begin{align*}
  \text{albus ut obscuro deterget nubile e caelo} \\
  \text{saepe Notus neque parturit imbris} \\
  \text{perpetuo, sic tu sapiens finire memento} \\
  \text{tristitiam vitaæque labores} \\
  \text{molli, Plance, mero, seu te fulgentia signis} \\
  \text{castra tenent seu densa tenebit}
\end{align*}
\]

_Tiburis umbra tui. [...]_ (‘As the bright South Wind often wipes the clouds from the dark sky and does not invariably produce rain, so you should do the sensible thing, Plancus, and make sure to drown life’s sadness and trouble with mellow wine, whether you are living, as now, in the camp with its glittering standards, or in the dense shade of your beloved Tibur. [...]’)

_Carmen_ 1.7, 15-21

In lines 21-32 Horatius ‘quotes’ a speech by Teucer who addressed his mates to forget their sorrows and not to despair when they were exiled from home. Horatius wrote approvingly about Plancus and the interesting question is how Horatius, at a time when Plancus was about to, or had just changed sides (in 32-30 B.C.), could write a positive ode about a man who had been so much in the other, anti-Augustan camp. It shows Horatius’ independence and this poem has a ‘political’ content.

Next, four poems with a private character follow. _Carmen_ 1.8 is about a certain lovesick Sybaris who has withdrawn to hide in a corner. Ode 1.9 is the well-known Soracte Ode: it is cold, but one should enjoy life and love while one is young. _Carmen_ 1.10 is an ode to Mercurius and tells of the god’s achievements and 1.11 is about accepting the events which befall one.

_Carmen_ 1.12 is a fine example of a panegyric for Augustus. The poem was written sometime between 25 B.C. and 23 B.C., at a time when Octavianus had received the support of the Senate for the first time. After having sung the praises of gods and heroes, among whom Romulus, Numa and recently Marcellus, Horatius sings the praises of _magni Caesaris_, Augustus at the end of the poem. In this way he links the great deeds of the gods and heroes with Augustus’ achievements. Lines 51-57 say:

\[
[...] \text{: tu secundo}
\]

---

422 Teucer was the brother of Ajax who had returned home from Troy without him. His father Telamon banished him and consequently Teucer founded Salamis.
Caesare regnes.
ille, seu Parthos Latio imminentis
egerit iusto domitos triumpho,
sive subjectos Orientis orae
Seras et Indos,
te minor laetum reget aequus orbem;
(’...; may you have Caesar as vice-regent of your kingdom.

Whether it be the Parthians (now a threat to Latium) that he conquers and leads in a justified triumph, or the Chinese and Indians who live close to the region of the rising sun, he will rule in fairness over a happy world, so long as he is subordinate to you.’

*Carmen* 1.12, 51-57

This is a panegyric poem with a ‘political’ content because Horatius shows his support and his great expectations of the new leader.

The next short *Carmen* 1.13 is about jealousy: the lover is jealous when his beloved Lydia shows signs of passion for other men. This form of savage passion will not bring happiness which only true love and harmony can bring.

Quintilianus cited *Carmen* 1.14 in his *Institutio Oratoria* 8.6,44 as an example of allegory: *nauem* [line 1] *pro re publica, fluctus* [line 2] *et tempestas* [*Africo* in line 5] *pro bellis ciuilibus, portum* [line 3] *pro pace atque concordia dicit* (‘in which he represents the state as a ship, the civil war as waves and storms, and peace and concord as the harbour’). This poem is about ‘the ship of state’, but from the text of the poem it has not been possible to determine the year in which it was written.\(^{423}\) Two years are generally quoted: after the defeat of Sextus Pompeius in 34 B.C. or (likely) after Actium in 29. The tenor of the poem is that the ship once more sails in bad weather and can not survive unless she stays in the safe harbour. Lines 2-3 say: *o quid agis? fortiter occupa/portum!* (‘O, what are you doing? One final effort now, and make port before it is too late!’). At the end of the poem Horatius says in lines 17-18:

\[\begin{align*}
nuper sollicitum quae mihi taedium, 
nunc desiderium curaque non levis, 
('Until lately you caused me worry and disgust: now you inspire my devotion and fond concern.') \end{align*}\]

*Carmen* 1.14, 17-18

Whatever the precise events were which inspired the poem, if any, Horatius seems to express his deep concern about the ways things are progressing, after he had thought that there was hope of a better future and that he had seen initial improvements in the affairs of state. He is no longer indifferent about these matters, but saddened. It is impossible to determine the political situation: allowing for the fact that the poet is voicing a general view, I label this poem ‘private political’.

\(^{423}\) Nisbet and Hubbard, 2001, 179-181. See page 144, note 344 of this book.
After this, there is a group of five poems which have no bearing on actual events. Some scholars interpret *pastor* in line 1 of *Carmen* 1.15 (Paris) and Helena as an allusion to Antonius and Cleopatra. This is unlikely as Helena is treated as an innocent victim of her abduction, while Cleopatra was generally seen to be an evil spirit. Paris on the contrary is denounced by Horatius for the damage he causes. I agree with Nisbet and Hubbard that the ‘genesis of the poem is a literary one, the desire to emulate the Greek lyrist in their rehandling of literary topics.’ The next poem, 1.16 is a charming request to a young girl to give him her affection if the poet were to recant his earlier *criminosis iambis* (‘scurrilous invectives’). In *Carmen* 1.17 Horatius describes the beauty and peace of his Sabine farm and asks the girl Tyndaris to share these with him. In 1.18 the poet declares that there is no better tree to plant than the vine. However, in line 7 Horatius makes a plea for moderation: *ac ne quis modici transiliat munera Liberi* (‘Yet no one must abuse by excess the gifts of the moderate God of Freedom [Bacchus].’). In bacchanals self-love, pride and indiscretion are rampant. In *Carmen* 1.19 the poet tells us that he has been captivated by Glycera, a symbol for poetry.

*Carmen* 1.20 is an invitation to Maecenas to come and drink the wine which Horatius had stored away on the day that Maecenas returned to public life after a dangerous illness. The poem is reminiscent of some of the earlier *Sermones* (1.5 and 1.9) where Horatius had expressed his pride that he had been recognised as one of Maecenas’ circle. In the present ode Horatius wants it to be known that he has become close to Maecenas. The poem has a ‘*private political*’ content because the reader associates Horatius with Maecenas as an *amicus* who is on equal terms with the latter, and who manages to keep his independence. Horatius is not planning to change his style when Maecenas arrives, he proudly announces in the opening of the poem. In lines 1-2 we read: *VILE potabis modicis Sabinum/cantharis* (‘You will drink from modest cups a cheap Sabine wine.’).

The short ode *Carmen* 1.21 has only sixteen lines and was most likely written in 27 B.C. The poem is a good example of Horatius’ aptitude for expressing his concern for Augustus in a short poem and in a rather unobtrusive manner. In the year that Octavianus became *princeps Caesar* (line 14), the poet of the ‘hymn’ asks young girls and young boys to sing a song of praise to Diana and to Apollo and to move the latter to protect Augustus, Apollo’s protégé. The last lines 13-16 are:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{hic bellum lacrimosum, hic miseram famem} \\
&\text{pestemque a populo et principe Caesare in} \\
&\text{Persas atque Britannos} \\
&\text{vestra motus aget prece.}
\end{align*}
\]

(‘Moved by your prayer, he will drive away mournful warfare, he will drive away wretched famine and plague from our people and Caesar, our leader, and direct them against the Persians and Britons.’)

*Carmen* 1.21, 13-16

This prayer for the new ruler is equivalent to the modern ‘God be with us’ and this at the time of the ‘First Settlement’ makes the poem a political statement by Horatius.

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424 Nisbet and Hubbard, 2001, 188-190.
Next, there is again a group of four poems with a personal tone; three of these are love poems. *Carmen* 1.22 is particularly famous and often sung in modern times: *INTEGRIS vitae scelerisque purus, etc.* When a man, ‘who is unstained by crime’, travels alone, he has no need of weapons and when he sings of his love Lalage the wild beasts will flee. When I am far away I will still love Lalage. The next poem, 1.23, is to young Chloe who should not shy away from him as she is *tempesta sequi viro* (‘you’re old enough for a man.’). *Carmen* 1.24 is a dirge for Quintilius Varus, not to be confused with Alfenus Varus. Quintilius was a friend of Vergilius, of whom Horatius says in line 10: *nulli flebilior quam tibi, Vergili* (‘and none weeps more than you, Vergil.’). In 1.25 Horatius punishes Lydia for her refusal to see young men who no longer seek admittance. In lines 6-8 the poet describes the scenes at her front door:

```
[...]; audis minus et minus iam
‘me tuo longas pereunte noctes,
    Lydia, dormis?’
('[...]. Less and less often now do you hear
“Lydia, are you sleeping, while I your slave am wasting away
through the long night?”')
```

*Carmen* 1.25, 6-8

Horatius tells her that when she gets older and her beauty fades, men will stay away and she will no longer attract her clients.

With the next short poem, *Carmen* 1.26, Horatius returns to the theme of the first ode, when he expresses his lack of interest in politics. He belongs to the Muses and asks them to inspire him with a song for his friend Lamia in the style of Alcaeus. In line 11 we read: *hunc [Lamiam] Lesbio sacrare plectro* (‘To sanctify Lamia with the quill of Lesbos.’). Like 1.1., this poem has a ‘private political’ content.

*Carmina* 1.27 and 1.28 again have no bearing upon actual issues. The first is about moderation in drinking as Horatius says in line 1: *NATIS in usum laetitia scyphis* (‘Tankards were meant for joy.’). Fighting and drinking do not go well together and are barbarous. But, you boy, you must tell me who your love is. She, she is terrible! In line 20 the poet tells the boy: *digne puer meliore flamma* (‘My boy, you deserve a better flame.’). In ode 1.28 a drowned corpse speaks a monologue and says that death comes to all. This corpse is no exception and he asks a passer-by to bury him.

With *Carmen* 1.29 we find another ‘private political’ poem. It is addressed to an unknown scholar Iccius who is planning to join the campaign of Aelius Gallus in 26-25 B.C., designed to gain control over the trade routes into the East. Horatius derides and denounces Iccius’ plans: derision with the words in lines 1-2: *ICCI, beatis nunc Arabum invides/gazis* (‘What now, Iccius? Have you got your eye on the rich treasure of the Arabs?’) and denouncement in for instance lines 5-6: *[..] quae tibi virginum/sponso necato barbara serviet* (‘[..] What foreign maiden/will be your slave when you have killed her betrothed?’). I see this as a ‘private political’ poem, not because Horatius expresses his horror that Iccius is considering changing from philosophy to soldiering, but because of his disapproval of the imperialist wars.

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At the end of the first book there is a number of poems which do not deal with actuality, *Carmina* 1.30, 1.31, 1.33, 1.34 and 1.36. *Carmen* 1.30 is an invocation to Venus to leave Cyprus and to visit Glyceria and bring Cupido and other gods with her. In 1.31 the poet prays to Apollo in the newly *dedicatum Apollinem* (‘consecrated [temple of] Apollo’); the temple on the Palatine had been consecrated by Augustus on 9th October 28 B.C. The poet’s prayer is not for wealth, but for health and old age so that he can devote his life to poetry.

*Carmen* 1.32 is an invocation to the lyre to sing a Latin song; in line 5 the poet says about the lyre: *Lesbio primum modulate civi* (‘You [the lyre] were first tuned by a citizen of Lesbos,’). Horatius testifies in this line that he owes much gratitude to Alcaeus for his inspiration. However, Horatius follows Alcaeus only partially as is apparent from the next passage of which I will quote lines 6-10:

```
qui ferox bello, tamens inter arma
sive iactam religarat udo
litore navim,
Liberum et Musas Veneremque [...] canebat
('who [Alcaeus] was a valiant warrior, and yet, between attacks,
or if he had tied up his storm-tossed ship
on the still-wet sand,
would sing of Bacchus and the Muses and Venus [...']')
```

*Carmen* 1.32, 6-10

Horatius conveniently overlooks Alcaeus’ political poetry and concentrates on the healing power of Alcaeus’ lyrics, although he refers to Alcaeus’ military prowess. In this ode Horatius again confirms that he prefers to abstain from writing political poetry. Thus, *Carmen* 1.32 is a successor to 1.26 and I label the poem as ‘private political’.

Returning to the poems with a personal tone, *Carmen* 1.33 is addressed to the poet Albius Tibullus whom Horatius urges to stop writing elegies about his unfaithful Glyceria; it happens to all because Venus moves in mysterious ways and inspires all kinds of adulterous liaisons. The poet himself has to contend with Myrtale, a bad-tempered freedwoman. In 1.34 the poet recants his Epicureanism and from now on his new god is Fortuna.

The next poem, *Carmen* 1.35 is an ode to his new god, Fortuna, *gratum quae regis Antium* (‘you who reign over your favourite Antium’). Antium (modern Anzio) is where the god had a famous temple. In the opening passage the poet lauds his god, whose support is sought by rich and poor and by men and women from different places. In a sense *Carmen* 1.35 is similar to 1.21, as both poems express a concern for the well-being of Augustus and his legions. In 27 and 26 B.C. the *princeps* was contemplating major campaigns such as an invasion of Brittanica. This is apparent from the lines 29-32:

```
serves iturum Caesarem in ultimos
orbis Britannos et iuvenum recens
examen Eois timendum
partibus Oceanique rubro.
```
‘Protect Caesar as he sets out for Britain at the edge of the world, and also the fresh swarm of our young soldiers who will bring terror to the lands of the East and the Indian Ocean.’

*Carmen* 1.35, 29-32

In this and in next passages there is a mood of pacifism. In lines 30-31 the words *iuvenum recens/examen Eois timendum* refers to the horrors of war, but the feeling is much stronger in the following lines 33-38 which I will quote in full:

\[
eheu, cicatricum et sceleris pudet
fratrumque. quid nos dura refugimus
aetas? quid intactum nefasti
liquimus? unde manum iuventus
metu deorum continuit? quibus
pepercit aris? [...]
\]

(‘Ah, the shame of our scars and crimes and what brother has done to brother! From what deed have we recoiled in this stony age of ours? What have we left unsullied by our unspeakable wickedness? From what outrage have our young men restrained their hands out of respect for the gods? What altars have they left undesecrated? [...]’)

*Carmen* 1.35, 33-38

It is thought likely that *1.35* was written in 30 or 29 B.C. and that the pacifism fits the period after Actium. Yet, the empire had still to be established by Octavianus, and the poet prays that the latter be preserved for the future. This courageous poem is a powerful denunciation of war: this time not just of the civil war, but also of wars in foreign lands, where the Roman armies took brutal action against the local population. In my opinion Horatius does not excuse Octavianus in this poem as there is no mention that wars would be conducted differently under his leadership, which clearly was not the case. I label this as a poem as having ‘political’ content that is critical of Octavianus.

The next ode, *1.36*, calls for a joyful celebration of Numidia’s return from Spain. Who Numidia was and what he did in Spain is totally unknown. The celebration will be a happy occasion as his new sweetheart will be there; and in the last lines we read:

\[
[...] nec Damalis novo
divelletur adultero
lascivis hederis ambiosisior.
(‘[...], and Damalis for her part will not be torn away from her new lover, clinging to him more closely than amorous ivy.’)
\]

*Carmen* 1.36, 18-20

*Carmen* 1.37, the ‘Cleopatra Ode’, starts with the famous ‘*NUNC est bibendum.*’ In the opening stanzas Horatius calls for a feast as Cleopatra can no longer threaten Rome with her aggressive plans. Although Horatius does not mention Cleopatra by name, but writes about the
regina, the general opinion is that he is referring to the Egyptian queen, if only through the picture of her in lines 7-12.  

\[ NUNC est bibendum, [...] \]
\( ('Now let the drinking begin! [...]') \)
\( Carmen 1.37, 1 \)

\[ [...] dum Capitilio regina dementis ruinas, funus et imperio parabat contaminato cum grege turpium morbo virorum, quidlibet impotens sperare fortunaque dulci eбриa [...] \]
\( ('[...]at a time when the queen, along with her troop of disgustedly perverted men, was devising mad ruin for the Capitol and death for the empire - a woman so out of control that she could hope for anything at all, drunk, as she was, with the sweet wine of success.[...]') \)
\( Carmen 1.37, 6–12 \)

The next lines 12-17 refer to the battle of Actium.

\[ [...] sed minuit furorem \]
\( vix una sospes navis ab ignibus, mentemque lymphatam Mareotico redegit in veros timores Caesar [...] adurgens, [...] \]
\( ('[...] But her frenzy was sobered By the survival of scarcely one ship from the flames; and her mind, crazed with Mareotic wine, was brought down to face real terror when Caesar pursued her, [...]') \)
\( Carmen 1.37, 12-17 \)

While in the first five stanzas Cleopatra’s hostile actions are described and denounced, Horatius shows some admiration for the queen in the following three which conclude the poem. He praises her courage, independence and pride as the last three lines clearly show. At the end of the poem ‘Cleopatra is radically transformed, not a monster of vicious depravity but an emblem of virtuous nobility’ and ‘by committing suicide, by exercising unwomanly

Galinsky, 2000, 17-23; Nisbet en Hubbard, 2001, 407 ('This poem celebrates the suicide of Cleopatra in 30 B.C.').
force upon her woman’s body, the once-impotent [defeated] queen succeeds in ending her life in perfect self-possession."\(^{427}\)

\[
\text{deliberata morte ferocior,}
\text{saevis Liburnis scilicet invidens}
\text{privata deduci superbo}
\text{non humilis mulier triumpho.}
\]

(‘Once she had resolved to die she was all the more defiant - determined, no doubt, to cheat the cruel Liburnians: she would not be stripped of her royalty and conveyed to face a jeering triumph: no humble woman she.’)

*Carmen* 1.37, 29–32

This ode is a poem with a ‘political’ content.

The first book of *Carmina* closes with a short poem in which Horatius denounces Oriental luxury.

In summary, book 1 contains five poems with an outright political content (1.7, 1.12, 1.21, 1.35 and 1.37). One poem of these, *Carmen* 1.12, is clearly a panegyric. Although I have classified the following nine poems from book 1 (*Carmina* 1.1, 1.2, 1.6, 1.14, 1.20, 1.26, 1.29, 1.32 and 1.38) within the category of poems which deal with actuality, these poems have varying degrees of political content with a personal touch and can therefore be seen as belonging to the sub-category of ‘private political’ poems.

The second book opens with a ‘political’ poem: it is addressed to C. Asinius Pollio, consul, soldier and man of letters whose most significant work was the lost *Historiae* about the civil war.\(^{428}\) This book is the subject of Horatius’ *Carmen* 2.1 and the poet warns Pollio in the lines 6-8 about the dangers of his work:

\[
\text{periculosa plenum opus aleae,}
\text{tractas, et incedis per ignis}
\text{suppositos cineri doloso.}
\]

(‘that is your theme, a dangerous gamble at every point; you walk over fires still burning

---

\(^{427}\) Oliensis, 1998, 139-140. See also Kleiner, 2005a, 200; she makes the credible suggestion that Octavianus also had a high regard for Cleopatra. She points out that after her death Octavianus allowed the gilded statue of her and Caesarion which Iulius Caesar had erected in the temple of Venus Genetrix to remain. Gurval, 1998, 22; Gurval recalls that fifteen years earlier Arsinoë, Cleopatra’s younger sister, had to walk in chains at the head of the group of prisoners at Iulius Caesar’s triumph after his Egyptian campaign. He adds: ‘we may wonder if Cleopatra, more than fifteen years later, thought back to the plight of her sister when she [Cleopatra] resolved to take her own life rather than adorn Octavian’s parade.’ See also Cassius Dio 43.19, 3-4: ‘and the sight of Arsinoë, a woman and once considered a queen, in chains, - a spectacle which had never yet been seen, at least in Rome, - aroused very great pity, and with this as an excuse they [the Roman people] lamented their private misfortunes. She, to be sure, was released out of consideration for her brothers; but others, including Vercingetorix, were put to death.’ See also Syndikus, 1972/3, Band I, 338-339.

\(^{428}\) Nisbet and Hubbard, 2004, 7-11
beneath the treacherous ash."

*Carmen* 2.1, 6-8

Pollio’s book may unleash old enmities which is not without danger for the history writer and Horatius hopes that Pollio will soon return to the safer ground of writing tragedy.

Next, the poet envisages the contents of Pollio’s book and he sees the generals and armies in action at the battle of Thapsus in Africa in 46 B.C., when Iulius Caesar breaks the final resistance of his political opponents. Many of them preferred suicide to subjugation to Iulius Caesar and the best known death is that of Cato (line 24). In the next passage (lines 29-36), Horatius changes to the general theme of the horrors of warfare. I will quote a few examples:

\[
\begin{align*}
\textit{quis non Latino sanguine pinguior} \\
\textit{campus [...]}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\textit{qui gurges aut quae flumina lugubris} \\
\textit{ignara belli? [...]}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\textit{quaecaret ora cruore nostro?}
\end{align*}
\]

(‘What plain has not been enriched with Latin blood, [...] What sea, what river, is unaware of war’s desolation? [...] What shore is uncontaminated with our blood?’)

*Carmen* 2.1, 29-30, 33-34 and 36

The poem ends with Horatius’ avowal that war history is not his preferred theme for poetry. This poem again shows Horatius’ critical anti-war view.

*Carmen* 2.2 is the first of many ‘private political’ poems in book 2. The poem is addressed to Sallustius Crispus, Maecenas’ successor. Horatius compares the munificence of the latter with that of Sallustius and suggests that Sallustius may continue to support the men of letters. The poet quotes the example of the contemporary Proculeius, brother-in-law of Maecenas, who had divided all his property between his brothers when they had lost everything in the civil war. At the end of the poem Horatius denounces avarice by praising the man who can look at riches whilst continuing to live as he did before. In lines 22-24 he writes:

\[
\begin{align*}
\textit{deferens uni propriamque laurum,} \\
\textit{quisquis ingentis oculo irretorto} \\
\textit{spectat acervos.}
\end{align*}
\]

(‘it confers lasting laurels on one man alone – him who looks at enormous heaps of treasure, and then moves on without a backward glance.’)

*Carmen* 2.2, 22-24

The following ode is again a ‘private political’ poem in which Q. Dellius is made respectable after a career during which he had often changed sides. He had been associated with Cassius, then Antonius and just before Actium he had changed his allegiance to Octavianus. He

---


430 Nisbet and Hubbard, 2004, 32-35 and 40; Rudd (Loeb), 2004, 344.
had been a favourite courtier in Alexandria and at the time of the poem he might have found
life in Rome rather boring. Horatius counsels Delli us to remain calm in hard times, to be
moderate in better times and to enjoy the good life at his estate in Tibur, as he is sure to die
(mortitue Delli). When death comes he has to give up his possessions as we read in lines 19-
20: [...] et extstructis in altum/divitiis potietur heres (‘[...] and your heir will take possession
of the wealth/you have built so high.’). In the end all men are similar and all go to Hades. The
closing lines read:

[...] serius ocius
sors exitura et nos in aeternum
exsiliium impositura cumbae.
(‘[...]; sooner or later, out it will come,
and put us aboard the skiff
for eternal exile.’)
Carmen 2.3, 26-28

Although at first sight this ode seems to be nothing more than the musing of the poet on the
enjoyments of a hedonist, the addressee gives the poem a broader meaning. Q. Dellius was
tolerated in Rome but never received any serious assignment after his last change of alle-
giance. Horatius does not take him seriously either in the present poem, but at least shows
some sympathy. Many in Rome presumably had very different views of Dellius and it shows
Horatius’ independent mind that he does not automatically follow general opinion. Thus, I
label the poem as ‘private political’.

Carmina 2.4 and 2.5 are about love. The first tells a certain Xanthias that he need not be
ashamed of loving a slave girl. He has worthy predecessors, Achilles, Ajax and Agamemnon.
This girl Phyllis stands out and is perhaps the daughter of a king and the poet admires her
figure. The second Carmina is about a young girl, Lalage, who is not yet ready for love. In lines
1-2 the poet says: NONDUM subacta ferre iugum valet/cervice
(‘She is not yet strong enough
to bear the yoke with a submissive/neck.’), which Nisbet and Hubbard interpret as she is not
yet ready for breaking in’.431 It will not take long before Lalage rushes to her mate.

Carmina 2.6 concerns an invitation to join a certain Septimius in Spain during the Cantabrian
war. Horatius refuses to become involved as he wants to remain at his estate or, if that is
impossible, to find peace and good food at the edge of the river Galaesus, near Tarentum
(line 10). Carmina 2.7 has a similar theme, namely Horatius’ joy that his comrade in arms at
Philippi, Pompeius, has returned to Italia. The latter poem urges the addressee to forget war
and come to Tibur to enjoy wine and other revelry. This is a theme which is often found in
Horatius’ work, namely the abhorrence of war and the enjoyment of the peace and quiet of
one’s estate. Therefore, I interpret both poems as ‘private political’.

In Carmina 2.8 Horatius admonishes the girl Barine not to make a habit of breaking her love
oaths. She does not suffer from her perjuries, but becomes more beautiful than ever. The
more she treats men badly, the more they swarm around her: te suis matres metuunt
iuvencis (‘You are the one who is dreaded by mothers for your effect on their young steers,’).

431 Nisbet and Hubbard, 2004, 77.
Carmen 2.9 with the well-known opening *Non semper imbres* has been addressed to Valgius Rufus, a poet and friend of Horatius. Just as bad weather always comes to an end, Valgius should stop writing elegies in which he laments his lost lover boy Mystes. As Nisbet and Hubbard say: ‘Sometimes these lamentations must have passed the boundary between the sentimental and the erotic; Valgius’ elegies, Horace implies, were of the latter kind, as was natural in the genre. Mystes is unlikely to have been a real person.’ Not even Nestor grieved long for Antilochus or Troilus’ parents for their son. Let us celebrate Augustus’ victories in the East, presumably those of 26 B.C. after the Parthian rebellion. The poem is a compliment to Augustus, although it has elements of a *recusatio*. Horatius attempts to pass on the writing of eulogies to Valgius without committing himself to more. The ode is also about his hope of better times as the wars of Augustus are no longer on Italian soil, but serve to expand the empire. I interpret the ode as a *political* poem because Horatius appears to recognise and to approve the regime’s military campaigns abroad, although this approval is contrary to his rejection of war, which is apparent in many other poems.

The next ode, 2.10, is perhaps addressed to L. Licinius Varro Murena, Maecenas’ brother-in-law or otherwise to an unknown Licinius. In the case of the former the poem was written at the time that Licinius Murena was in political difficulties as he was either accused of involvement in the conspiracy of Fannius Caepio in 23 or 22 B.C. or because he was too close to Marcellus at the time of Augustus’ illness in the same year. If the Licinius of the poem was Murena, the poem, which is about ‘the golden mean’, can be interpreted as an admonition to Murena not to push the politician’s luck too far. If the Licinius can not be identified the poem may be interpreted as Horatius’ view that one ought to remain safely in the middle of the road, which means that in his opinion there is merit to be found in waiting to see what happens, without rushing into hasty allegiances. I label this poem as *private political* because Horatius is making a statement that times were uncertain and that the most sensible course was not to commit oneself, certainly not by revolt.

Carmen 2.11 addresses a Quinctius, who can not be identified with certainty. The same man is presumably mentioned in *Epistula* 1.16 and the words in line 18 of the latter suggest that Quinctius ‘was prosperous and well known’:* iactamus iampridem omnis te Roma beatum* (*‘All we in Rome have long talked of you as happy,’*). Horatius tells his friend not to worry about war and the needs of our short life. In lines 1-5 we read:

```latex
Quid bellicosus Cantaber et Scythes,
[...], remittas
quaerere, nec trepides in usum
poscentis aevi pausa: [...] 
(‘[...], leave off asking what the warmongering Cantabrian is plotting and the Scythian, [...] and don’t fuss about the needs of our short life, for there is little that it requires.’)
```

---

433 There is much conjecture about the historical background of this *Carmen*. Nisbet and Hubbard, 2004, 151-158 give a detailed summary of this, but their view is also that there is no proof of any of the options. See also Raaflaub and Samons II, 1993, 425-426 and the discussion on pages 29-30 of this book.
The poet suggests relaxing in the shade of a tree, drinking a good wine and inviting the attractive prostitute Lyde. I label this ode as 'private political' because of the theme which we often encounter in Horatius’ poetry: his advice to a man who was probably involved in the affairs of state, to withdraw from them and the poet’s own refusal to become involved at all.

The next ode, 2.12, is a *recusatio* poem, addressed to Maecenas. The poet begins with the statement that neither war and bloodshed or mythical themes are suitable subjects for his lyrics. Prose is much more suitable and he suggests that Maecenas writes the history of Augustus’ exploits. In lines 9-11 of *Carmen* 2.12 Horatius says: *tuque pedestribus/dices historiis proelia Caesaris,/Maecenas,* ('You, Maecenas/, will better describe in the prose of history/ the battles of Caesar'). Next, Horatius testifies that his Muse wishes him to sing about *domina Licymnia* ('lady Licymnia'). If Licymnia happens to be Horatius’ sweetheart at the time, the meaning of the poem is that he will sing about love and not about war: a Horatian theme we recognise. However, Nisbet and Hubbard offer a tantalising suggestion, namely that Licymnia stands for 'Terentia, Maecenas’ temperamental wife'.\(^{435}\) The authors then suggest that Terentia was Horatius’ sweetheart and that in lines 13-20 and 25-28 the poet is openly alluding to his love-affair. The suggestion that Horatius wrote about Terentia may be credible. However, I want to put forward a different and certainly less scandalous interpretation of these lines and I particularly draw attention to lines 15-16 and 21-23.\(^{436}\) These lines read:

\[\text{[\ldots] et bene mutuis fidum pectus amoribus, [\ldots]}\]
\[\text{num tu quae tenuit dives Achaemenes aut pinguis Phrygiae Mygdonias opes permutare veils crine Licymniae}\]
\[\text{([\ldots], and her heart that is rightly loyal to a loving partnership. [\ldots]}\]

Would you [Maecenas] be willing to accept all the wealth that Achaemenes once possessed, or the whole of fertile Phrygia (rich Mygdon’s realm), in exchange for a lock of Licymnia’s hair?"

*Carmen* 2.12, 15-16 and 21-23

Lines 15 and 16 refer explicitly to Licymnia’s loyalty which may be understood as Terentia’s to Maecenas. Lines 21-23 are part of the last passage of the poem and I interpret this passage as Horatius saying to Maecenas: you would never want to lose Terentia, not for all the riches of the world, would you? It is known that Maecenas was an amateur poet and if one then returns to the beginning of the poem one might consider also that Horatius could have added: it is time, Maecenas, that you also start writing love lyrics and perhaps dissociate yourself somewhat from political affairs.

Thus, there are two options, the first being that if Licymnia is Horatius’ mistress, he is expressing his preference for lyrics on love, enjoyment and leisure, to poetry on martial and heroic subjects. In addition, he is subtly trying to make Maecenas his ally by suggesting that

\[\text{435} \quad \text{Nisbet and Hubbard, 2004, 179-183.}\]
\[\text{436} \quad \text{Achaemenes is the legendary ancestor of the Persian kings and Mygdon a legendary king of Phrygia.}\]
the latter should write about Augustus’ achievements, in order to allow Horatius to court the woman (not Terentia) and write freely and easily his love poems for her. The second option is that Licymnia is Terentia: in that case he goes much further by suggesting to his amicus Maecenas that the latter should value his wife’s loyalty and give her more of his attention by changing his career. I interpret this poem as ‘political’.

The two poems which follow do not deal with actual political matters. In the first, Carmen 2.13, Horatius describes a narrow escape from death as a falling tree on his estate lands on his head. The poet imagines himself in furvae regna Proserpinae (‘the kingdom of dusky Proserpine’), listening to Sappho and Alcaeus. The second poem, Carmen 2.14, is about the inevitability of death and has been addressed to Postumus, who ‘cannot be certainly identified.’ Even with the most careful precautions one can not escape death as the poet testifies in the second part of the poem. In the passage from line 13 onwards we read:

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{frustra cruento Marte carebimus} \\
& \text{fractisque rauci fluctibus Hadriae, [...]}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{visendus ater flumine languido}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{Cocytos errans [...]}
\end{align*}
\]

(‘All to no avail will we escape bloody Mars and the tossing waves of the hoarse Adriatic, [...] We must go and gaze on the black Cocytus meandering with its sluggish stream, [...]’)

Carmen, 2.14, 13-14 and 17-18

Carmen 2.15 is a denunciation of luxury; especially luxurious building, as the farmer is expelled and villas are erected on fertile land. The poem starts with the powerful lines:

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{IAM pauc\ae aratro iugera regiae}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{molest relinquent, undique latius}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{extenta visentur Lucrino}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{stagna lacu, [...]}
\end{align*}
\]

(‘Soon our princely piles will leave only a few acres for the plough; before our gaze fish ponds will extend in every direction more widely than the Lucrine Lake; [...]’)

Carmen 2.15, 1-4

Horatius makes the point that these extravagances did not exist in the past and that norms were different for men of old. We read in lines 13-14:

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{privatus illis census erat brevis,}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
& \text{commune magnum: [...]}
\end{align*}
\]

(‘For them private assets were small, the common wealth great. [...]’)

Carmen 2.15, 13-14

\footnote{Keith, 2008, 5-8; Nisbet and Hubbard, 2004, 223. He may be the Postumus of Propertius’ Elegia 3.12 who was a relative of Propertius. See also page 291, note 635 of this book for a detailed discussion.}
This ode is an indictment of luxury and megalomania and belongs to the category of ‘private political’ poems.

The next ode is addressed to Pompeius Grosphus, a rich Sicilian landowner. *Otium*, a quiet life cannot be bought, not by the sailor or by the Persian soldier. In lines 13-16 Horatius tells us who can find *otium*:

*vivitur parvo bene, cui paternum splendet in mensa tenui salinum nec levis somnos timor aut cupidus sordidus aufert.*

(‘The good life is enjoyed at little expense by the man whose forefathers’ saltcellar gleams on his frugal table, one who is not robbed of his blithe slumbers by fear or sordid greed.’)

*Carmen* 2.16, 13-16

The words *in mensa tenui salinum* (‘saltcellar on his frugal table’) mean that, even where simplicity and frugality are maintained, a silver saltcellar may be found as a piece of admissible luxury. One should not be anxious about the future and *laetus in praesens animus quod ultra est/oderit curare* (‘The mind that is happy for the present should refuse to worry about/what is further ahead.’) (lines 25-26). Achilles died young after he had achieved great things and Tithonus lived to an old age. Therefore, one ought to enjoy good times and to be content with a small estate and sufficient income.

*Carmen* 2.17 is addressed to Maecenas and Horatius testifies in this poem that their fates are linked. Horatius expresses his gratitude that Maecenas has survived a serious illness and he links Maecenas’ recovery to his own lucky escape from a falling tree, about which we read in 2.13. The poem shares a theme with *Carmen* 1.20, in which Horatius also writes about Maecenas’ recovery and which expresses his concern for his friend’s well-being. In lines 5-6 Horatius displays genuine feelings of friendship towards Maecenas when he writes:

*a! te meae si partem animae rapit maturior vis, quid moror altera,*

(‘If some force snatches away you, who are part of my soul, before me, ah, what do I care for the other part,’)

*Carmen* 2.17, 5-6

We read similar feelings in lines 10-12:

*[…]: ibimus, ibimus, utcumque praececedes, supremum carpere iter comites parati.*

(‘[…]: we will go, yes, we will go

438 Nisbet and Hubbard, 2004, 261.
439 Nisbet and Hubbard, 2004, 252-256; Tithonus is the prince with whom Dawn fell in love and who received immortality from Zeus. However, Dawn had forgotten to ask for eternal youth for him.
whenever you take the lead; we are ready
to set out on the final journey as comrades together.’

Carmen 2.17, 10-12

The poet recognises Maecenas’ importance for the new order, as stated in lines 25-26 and the applause refers to Maecenas’ first public appearance after his illness.

\[\text{\ldots, cum populus frequens}
laetum theatris ter crepuit sonum:}
\begin{quote}
‘when the crowds of people
at the theatre gave three happy rounds of applause.’
\end{quote}

Carmen 2.17, 25-26

I label this poem as ‘political’ because of Horatius’ recognition of the contribution by Maecenas to the public cause.

The next poem, Carmen 2.18, is about opulent wealth, particularly in luxurious villae maritimae. Although the poem is not addressed to anybody in particular, Nisbet and Hubbard suggest that Horatius censures Maecenas’ private wealth.\textsuperscript{440} The poet begins with a passage in which he describes his own modest villa and his contentment with his talents and his life on his Sabine estate. We read in lines 1-2, 9-10 and 12-14:

\begin{quote}
NON ebur neque aureum
mea renidet in domo lacunar, \ldots
at fides et ingeni
benigna vena est, \ldots
\ldots nec potentem amicum
largiora flagito,
satis beatus unicus Sabinis.
\end{quote}
\begin{quote}
‘No panelled ceiling of ivory and gold
glitters in my house; \ldots
But I do have good faith and
a generous vein of talent, \ldots
\ldots, nor do I badger my powerful friend
for more lavish gifts.
I am quite happy enough with simply my Sabine acres.’
\end{quote}

Carmen 2.18, 1-2, 9-10 and 12-14

Next, Horatius describes the lavish building of villae in Baiae where the houses of the rich partly extend into the sea at the cost of confiscating farmland. In lines 20-28 the poet paints a moving picture of the evictions of the poor:

\begin{quote}
marisque Bais obstrepentis urges
summovere litora,
parum locuples continente ripa.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{440} Nisbet and Hubbard, 2004, 287-290.
The poet asserts that there is no point in amassing riches as we are all destined to die. I have stated above that Nisbet and Hubbard point out in their commentary that the poem is about Maecenas’ wealth. As evidence for their suggestion they quote that _potentem amicum_ in line 12 can only refer to Maecenas and that consequently _dives_ of line 10 can only be Maecenas, who was known for his grandeur. It can not be excluded that he had a villa at Baiae. If the suggestion is correct the poem is a testimony to the friendship between Maecenas and Horatius as the _amicitia_ endured such an indictment. If Horatius is writing about the rich and powerful in general, however, _Carmen_ 2.18 is a courageous poem and it again shows the poet’s independence as, after all, the rich were powerful men who would not have taken kindly to this open criticism. I interpret the present ode as a ‘private political’ poem in which Horatius rejects strongly opulent wealth and the often reprehensible ways of obtaining it.

A number of _Carmina_ allude to Octavianus or to Augustus and _Carmen_ 2.19 can be read in this manner. It is a prima facie poem about Bacchus’ rule, frenzy and wine. However, Stevens puts forward a number of convincing arguments to read this poem as an allusion to Octavianus.\(^{441}\) The poem was written between 30 and 23 B.C., after Actium.

In his article Stevens offers two main arguments. The first is the reference in lines 21-24 to the Gigantomachy, which is rather unusual in Latin poetry. The text is as follows:\(^{442}\)

\[
\begin{align*}
  \text{tu, cum parentis regna per arduum} \\
  \text{cohort Gigantum scanderet impia,} \\
  \text{Rhoetum retorsisti leonis} \\
  \text{unguibus horribilique mala;}
\end{align*}
\]

(‘You, when the impious band of Giants climbed up the slope to reach your father’s kingdom, hurled back Rhoetus, causing panic


\(^{442}\) Rhoetus is the name of one of the Giants.
with a lion’s claws and fangs.’

*Carmen* 2,19, 21-24

In *Carmen* 3.1, 7 and in 3.4, 42-68 the Gigantomachy points at Octavianus victory at Actium and by analogy with these two passages it is likely that our text in 2.19 also alludes to the battle of Actium.\(^{443}\)

A second point made by Stevens concerns the role of Bacchus in Horatian poetry.\(^{444}\) I quote a passage from his article.

‘Before turning to *Carm.* 2.19, it is worth noting that Horace’s other ode to Bacchus (3.25), is expressly intended as political poetry ([*Carmen* 3.25,] 3-6: *quibus/antris egregii Caesaris audiar/aeternum meditans decus/stellis inserere et consilio lovis?* ([‘In what grotto shall I be heard/as I practice setting the eternal glory of peerless Caesar/among the stars and in the council of Jove?’])). To suggest the praise of Augustus by singing about Bacchus, Horace implies a comparison of his allegiance to Caesar to that of an initiate in Dionysian mysteries ([*Carmen* 3.25,] 18-20: […] *dulce periculum est,/o Lenaee, sequi deum/cingentem viridi tempora pampino.* ([‘it is an intoxicating danger,/o God of the wine press, to follow your divinity,/wreathing my temples with green vine leaves.’])). The point of similarity between Augustus and Bacchus lies in the tremendous “metamorphosis” that Augustus is bringing upon the Roman empire. Bacchus, the “twice-born” god, is remembered especially for bringing down mighty kings (for example Pentheus in the *Bacchae*);’

Thus Bacchus is a god of change and although Bacchus is often interpreted as referring to Antonius and his indulgence, in our *Carmen* 2.19 the god alludes to Octavianus, who had also brought down mighty men. Lines 26-27 of 2.19 can also be understood in this way:

\[
\text{[...]: sed idem } \\
\text{pacis eras mediusque belli.}
\]

(‘[...], yet you proved a central figure in war as in peace.’)

*Carmen* 2.19, 26-27

Nisbet and Hubbard say about the ode: ‘Horace chose Bacchus as a subject, but it does not give the poem the kind of seriousness that some critics suggest’.\(^{445}\) However, I concur with Stevens’ interpretation. Both the analogy of the Giants (lines 21-24 of the present ode) with the passages in the political ‘*Roman Odes*, *Carmina* 3.1 and 3.4, and that of Bacchus in the present ode with *Carmen* 3.25 suggest that the present ode is about the central, and by implication positive role of Octavianus in the civil war and in the period of the beginning of the restoration after the war. Therefore, I label the poem as ‘political’.

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\(^{443}\) Stevens, 1999, 283. See also Nisbet and Rudd, 2004, 9 and 68-71. In *Carmen* 3.1, 7 one reads: *clari Giganteo triumpho*, (‘in the glory of his triumph over the Giants’) and the commentary of Nisbet and Rudd is: ‘Elsewhere their [Giants’] rebelliousness is associated with resistance to earthly rulers, notably Augustus.’ The passage in *Carmen* 3.4, 37-48 is generally accepted as referring to Augustus’ victory over Antonius and Cleopatra. On page 155 of the 2004 Loeb edition of Horatius’ *Odes* Rudd says in a note on these lines of *Carmen* 3.4 the following: ‘The mythical revolts against Jupiter (Zeus) are seen as a parallel to the battles of Actium and Alexandria.’

\(^{444}\) Stevens, 1999, 284.

\(^{445}\) Nisbet and Hubbard, 2004, 317.
The final *Carmen* 2.20 is a *sphragis* at the end of book 2 where Horatius speaks of his future fame. He compares himself to a swan because the bird was believed to sing just before dying. He asks that there be no mourning at his funeral, as his poems will survive.

When one looks at book 2 in its totality, there is a preponderance of poems which deal with actuality (65%). However, there are at first sight only three ‘political’ poems in the full sense, namely 2.1 (the denunciation of civil war), 2.9 (celebration of Augustus’ victories) and 2.12 (the recording of Caesar’s conquests). However, I also consider Carmina 2.17 and 2.19 as being outright ‘political’. *Carmen* 2.17 because it expresses the recognition of Maecenas’ contribution to the public cause, and *Carmen* 2.19 because it refers to Octavianus’ role in the restoration after the civil war. Of the remaining poems which deal with actual issues, six (2.2, 2.3, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10 and 2.11) are addressed to or discuss well-known political persons. Augustus hardly figures in the book. The two remaining poems which deal with actuality have a strong ‘private political’ character. For instance, in 2.15 Horatius denounces megalomania and luxurious buildings and in 2.18 the vanity of riches. The rest of the poems in book 2 are not concerned with actuality and are often very personal. For example, 2.13 where Horatius muses about his escaping injury from a falling tree and his survival as a poet, 2.14 about the inevitability of death, 2.16 about contentment with a small income. Finally, there are three poems about matters of love in book 2 (2.4, 2.5 and 2.8).

Turning our attention to book 3, it is likely that this was written between 30 and 23 B.C. The first six poems are the so-called ‘Roman Odes’ which Horatius composed between 30 and 27. These six odes form a separate entity and all six deal with actuality and with contemporary persons. The ‘Roman Odes’ have ‘a substantial length, an absence of individual addressees, a subject-matter that concentrates on the political and moral issues which were thought important by the new regime, and an impressive seriousness of style’. In five of the six poems Augustus is mentioned or referred to, the exception being 3.1 and in 3.6, 13-14 there is a clear allusion to Cleopatra. I will begin my discussion of book 3 with the group of ‘Roman Odes’.

The first ‘Roman Ode’ has an intriguing opening. The poet presents himself in the *persona* of a priest who says in line 1: *Odi profanum vulgus et arceo* (‘I shun the uninitiated crowd and keep it at a distance.’), by which the poet means to say that he wants to deal only with those who are open for his ideas, particularly the *virginibus puerisque* (‘the girls and boys’). He asks for silence and in lines 5-6 he sets the backdrop of the poem and places the issues in their right perspective:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{*regum timendorum in propios greges,}\nonumber \\
&\text{*reges in ipso imperium est lovis,}\nonumber \\
&\text{('Dreaded monarchs have power over their own flocks;}\nonumber \\
&\text{monarchs themselves are under the power of Jove,'})\nonumber \\
&\text{*Carmen* 3.1, 5-6}\nonumber 
\end{align*}
\]

---

446 Nisbet and Hubbard, 2004, 1-6.
447 I have used the commentaries of Nisbet and Rudd, 2004, and of West, 2002.
448 Nisbet and Rudd, 2004, xx.
Even the power of kings is subject to the power of the gods. Next, Horatius examines the different aspirations and prospects of those men who enter the elections for political office, but in the end it is Fate that decides. In lines 14-16 we read:

\[
\text{[...]: aequa lege Necessitas} \\
\text{sortitur insignis et imos;} \\
\text{omne capax movet urna nomen.}
\]

('Fate recognizes no distinctions, choosing by lot the highest and the lowest alike; everyone’s name is shaken in its capacious urn.

\textit{Carmen} 3.1, 14-16

After this, the poem deals with its main theme, simplicity. In the fifth to eighth stanzas Horatius examines both the extravagant men who can not sleep because of their worries while the simple men enjoy a somnus lenis ('gentle sleep'), and the man who knows when he has had enough and remains untroubled. We read in lines 25-26:

\[
\text{desiderantem quod satis est neque} \\
tumultuosum sollicitat mare
\]

('The one who desires what is enough is not worried by a stormy sea')

\textit{Carmen} 3.1, 25-26

With these words the poet wants to tell us that ‘the man of limited desires is undisturbed by the bad weather that harasses the acquisitive merchant.’\textsuperscript{449} The behaviour of the man who leads a simple life contrasts greatly with the arrogant man who builds his villa in the sea. In the last four stanzas Horatius paints us a picture of the building contractor who constructs the rich man’s house. However, the latter can not escape his anxieties and the poet asks the rhetorical question in the last two lines of the poem:

\[
cur valle permutem Sabina \\
divitas operosiores?
\]

('Why should I change my Sabine valley for riches that will bring an increase only of trouble?')

\textit{Carmen} 3.1, 47-48

The first ‘Roman Ode’, \textit{Carmen} 3.1, is a poem with a ‘political’ content as Horatius’ criticism of luxuria was a traditional Roman attitude which was very much propagated by Octavianus at that time and later also when he was princeps. I do not interpret the present ode as overtly supportive of Octavianus, as Horatius did not reject greed and luxurious living for the same reason as did Octavianus. Octavianus’ denunciation was because he found it to be antisocial, but Horatius’ rejection was because he believed that it made people unhappy.

The second ‘Roman Ode’ is again about moral values: this time about military and social virtues. The poem opens with praise of military life and it refers specifically to the cavalryman in his combat with the Parthians. Rome had not managed yet to avenge the affront of

\textsuperscript{449} Nisbet and Rudd, 2004, 3.
Carrhae.\footnote{Carrhae in Parthia is where Crassus was defeated by the Parthians in 53 B.C. with the loss of 20,000 men killed and 10,000 men taken prisoner and the loss of the legionary standards.} This time Horatius propounds a view on war which is very dissimilar to his earlier pronouncements as we read in line 13: dulce et decorum est pro patria mori (‘It is sweet and fitting to die for one’s country.’). After this, the poet discusses a more elevated form of virtus which is that one should not give up one’s responsibility in the face of opposition and it is quite feasible that Horatius is hinting at the emerging leadership of Octavianus. Nisbet and Rudd suggest that line 17 (virtus repulsae nescia sordiae (‘A man’s true worth does not acknowledge a demeaning rebuff’)) relates to the opposition which Octavianus might have met in 27 B.C. but which did not diminish his determination.\footnote{Nisbet and Rudd, 2004, 22. I consider the suggestion of Rudd in Rudd (Loeb), 2004, 145 as less likely. Rudd says about line 17: ‘Specifically a rebuff at the polls. It is not altogether fanciful to see these lines as an allusion to an attempt by the Princeps to introduce moral legislation in 28 B.C.’ I will discuss Augustus’ supposed moral legislation of 28 B.C. on page 261, notes 573 and 575 of this book when I examine Propertius’ Elegia 2.7. The conclusion with respect to the elegy of Propertius will be that it is rather unlikely that the introduction of any moral legislation was attempted in 28 or 27 B.C.} The virtus of a great leader means that he is his own counsel as we read in lines 19-20:

\begin{verbatim}
 nec sumit aut ponit securis
 arbitrio popularis aurae.
\end{verbatim}

(‘it [a man’s true worth] does not take up or lay down the axes of authority at the people’s whim.’)

\textit{Carmen} 3.2, 19-20

Next, the poet turns to the manner in which he could contribute – even if only slightly – to a stable government. He promises that he will have nothing to do with those who undermine the authority of the princeps by divulging Cereris sacrum arcanae (‘the secrets of mystic Ceres’), after he had remarked in lines 25-26: est et fidelis tuta silentio/merces (‘There is also a sure award for loyal silence.’). These lines in the last two stanzas of the poem have puzzled many scholars.\footnote{Nisbet and Rudd, 2004, 22-23.} I will hazard a conjecture: Horatius had become closer to the intimate circle around Augustus which was where the real business of state was conducted as opposed to the Senate. The poet had noticed that many of the political elite did not support this new reality and were trying to undermine the authority of the princeps by leaking information to the old offices of state. Horatius says in these lines that he will respect the new situation and that he will support the new authority of Octavianus. Therefore, I interpret this poem as ‘\textit{political}’.

Horatius opens \textit{Carmen} 3.3 with the same theme that he expounds in lines 17-24 of the previous poem:

\begin{verbatim}
IVSTVM et tenacem propositi virum
non civium ardor prava iubentium,
\end{verbatim}

(‘The man of integrity who holds fast to his purpose is not shaken from his firm resolve by hot-headed citizens urging him to do wrong,’)

\textit{Carmen} 3.3, 1-2
It is very likely that this alludes to Augustus because in the third and fourth stanzas the poet describes on the one hand the princeps reclining in the presence of Pollux and Hercules and on the other hand he refers to Bacchus and Quirinus. The latter is Romulus with whom Augustus liked to associate himself and of all four Horatius remarks that they possessed hac arte (‘this quality’), namely the quality of firm resolve. Following this, Iuno makes a long speech to the council of the gods. The goddess recalls the fate of Troy and in her own words she emphasises the roles of Paris and Helena. In lines 18-21 and 25-28:

\[
\begin{align*}
\ldots: & \text{ ‘llion, Ilion} \\
\text{fatalis incestusque iudex} & \text{ et mulier peregrine vertit} \\
in \text{pulverem, } & \text{[...]} \\
iam & \text{nec Lacaenae splendet adulterae} \\
famous & \text{hospes nec Priami domus} \\
periura & \text{pugnaces Archivos} \\
Hectoreis & \text{opibus refringit}, \\
(‘[...] ‘Ilium, Ilium,} & \text{has been reduced to rubble} \\
by & \text{that calamitous and polluted judge} \\
and & \text{a foreign woman [...]} \\
No & \text{longer now does the infamous guest dazzle} \\
his & \text{Spartan adulteress, nor does the fraudulent house of Priam} \\
hurl & \text{back the Achaean’s onslaught} \\
with & \text{Hector’s help.’} \\
\text{Carmen} & \text{3.3, 18-21 and 25-28}
\end{align*}
\]

In these lines fatalis incestusque iudex (line 19) and famous hospes (line 26) refer to Paris and mulier peregrine (line 20) and Lacaenae adulterae (line 25) to Helena. This passage can be interpreted as an allusion to Antonius (Paris) and Cleopatra (Helena), who had also begun an adulterous affair and who was the cause of a war.

After this, Iuno allows Romulus to be deified and Rome to hold dominion, provided that Troy is not rebuilt. In lines 40-44 the goddess says:

\[
\begin{align*}
dum Priami & \text{Paridisque busto} \\
insultet & \text{armentum et catulos ferae} \\
celent & \text{inultae, stet Capitolium} \\
fulgens & \text{triumphatisque posit} \\
Roma & \text{ferox dare iura Medis.} \\
(‘As long as cattle trample on the tombs of Priam and Paris, and wild beasts safely hide their whelps within them,} \\
may & \text{the gleaming Capitol stand,} \\
and & \text{may warlike Rome have the power} \\
to & \text{rule over the conquered Medes.’} \\
\text{Carmen} & \text{3.3, 40-44}
\end{align*}
\]

---

\text{Nisbet and Rudd, 2004, 36-38.} \\
\text{Nisbet and Rudd, 2004, 38.}
Iuno’s conditions for the reconciliation are spelled out in lines 57-60:

\[
\begin{align*}
\textit{sed bellicosis fata Quiritibus} \\
\textit{hac lege dico, ne nimium pii} \\
\textit{rebusque fidentes avitae} \\
\textit{tecta velint reparare Troiae.}
\end{align*}
\]

(‘But on this condition only do I reveal their destiny to the warrior citizens of Rome: they must not, out of excessive piety or confidence in their power, attempt to restore the buildings of ancestral Troy.’)

Carmen 3.3, 57-60

Iuno will recognise Rome’s imperium, but on one condition only: Troy must not be rebuilt and if it were she (Iuno) ‘will lead the hosts that hurl it to defeat’ (ducente victrices catervas) (line 63). The city of Rome must remain the capital of the Roman empire.

In Carmen 3.3 Horatius shows us four matters. Firstly, the allusion to Augustus as if he were the addressee of the poem (lines 1-2). Secondly, through the speech of Iuno there is the allusion to Antonius and Cleopatra (lines 18-30). Thirdly, Iuno’s reference to the power which Rome will hold (lines 37-56) and fourthly, the allusion to moving the capital to another city (lines 57-68). It must also be remembered that this ode was written soon after Actium and the defeat of Antonius and Cleopatra. The informed and educated reader in contemporary Rome could very well interpret these allusions as a reference to the political reality of his day. Indeed, Antonius and Cleopatra had developed plans for their own empire with Alexandria as the capital. The reaction of the educated Roman may well have been that the outcome of the recent struggle for power was the right one and that through Octavianus’ victory there could be some hope of order and stability. In that respect the content of Carmen 3.3 may be similar to one of the messages in the Aeneis which Vergilius gave us when he used Cleopatra as a literary model for Dido and in so doing created allusions to the relationship of Antonius and the Egyptian queen.\footnote{I have explained my view on Vergilius’ use of Cleopatra as a literary model for Dido in section IV.a (pages 95-112) and discussed the significance of this allusion on page 124 of this book. My interpretation of Carmen 3.3 differs from Nisbet and Rudd’s view on the references (Nisbet and Rudd, 2004, 38). The authors write a.o.: ‘Some see a criticism of Antony’s oriental policy; but though the ode hints at a correspondence between Helen and Cleopatra (25f.), Troy was too different from Alexandria to make an extended analogy plausible.’ My arguments against the view of Nisbet and Rudd are firstly that the allusion is not to Troy or Alexandria as cities, but that the allusion concerns the presumed transfer of the capital. Secondly, that the allusion to Antonius and Cleopatra is rather obvious and Iuno’s reference to Rome’s power is explicit. Thirdly, that the three allusions and the reference should be considered in their entirety.} In the present poem Horatius uses Paris and Helena to allude to Antonius and Cleopatra. The message of both Vergilius and Horatius is that it was not to be expected that the latter would bring order and stability to Italia and that the future of the land would be served better by Octavianus’ victory. I label the ode as ‘political’ and I see the poem as supportive of Augustus.

The fourth ‘Roman Ode’ opens with an invocation of regina Calliope to give a melos which places this ode in the Pindaric tradition.\footnote{See Nisbet and Rudd, 2004, 53-56.} Horatius situates the place of his inspiration when he was a young man in Italia near Mount Vultur in the region of Venusia where he was born and which is his equivalent to Mount Helicon. His present inspiration by the Camenae (Mus-
was in more sophisticated land: the Sabine region where he came to live as an adult and Praeneste, Tibur or Baiae (lines 21-24). Next, he gives us some more biographical information, of a kind which might have surprised the reader. He recalls the time when he belonged to Brutus’ party and fought at Philippi in 42 B.C. In lines 26-27 we read non me Philippis versa acies retro,/[...]exstinxit (‘I was not destroyed by the rout of our line at Philippi,’). Horatius was clearly an accepted figure when he wrote this in 28 B.C, as he could openly refer to that battle. More acceptable is his reference in lines 27-28 to his near-drowning off the coast of Sicily when he was involved in the struggle against Sextus Pompeius in 36 B.C: exstinxit [...]/nec Sicula Palinurus unda (‘nor (destroyed) by Palinurus with his Sicilian waters.’). He proudly announces that he is prepared to venture anywhere, so long as the Muses are with him.

Next, Horatius turns his attention to Augustus. The same Muses provide recreation (in line 40: recreatis) for Caesar, now he has brought his labours to an end and the evil powers have been overcome at Actium and in Alexandria. The poet again refers to the defeat of the Titans as he did earlier in Carmen 2.19, 21-24. In the present ode we read in lines 41-42 that the Muses had given Augustus helpful advice: vos lene consilium et datis et dato/gaudetis almae (‘You in your kindness give him [Caesar] gentle advice,/and are glad to have given it.’). After this, Horatius recalls the myth of what we know as the Gigantomachy, the terrible mythical struggle between order and disorder, and the mythical figures of Gyges, Orion, Tityos and Pirithous, all four of whom were driven by uncontrollable lusts. All these examples from myth show the disasters which are the result of lack of control and lack of order. The advice given to Augustus by the Muses gives him good sense and helps the princeps to create order. The poet gives a succinct summary of this in lines 65-68:

\[
\text{vis consili expers mole ruit sua:} \\
\text{vim temperatam di quoque provehunt} \\
\text{in maius; idem odere viris} \\
\text{omne nefas animo moventis.}
\]

(‘Power without good sense comes crashing down under its own weight. When power is under control, the gods too raise it to greater heights; but they also hate the power that devises every kind of evil in its heart.’)

Carmen 3.4, 65-68

Poetry and power used with good sense create harmony and as Augustus is counseled by the inspiring Muses of poetry, Augustus is well entrusted with new power. West says about this ode: ‘In this the most powerful of Horace’s Roman Odes, praise of Italy is praise of Augustus. The welfare of Italy was a cornerstone of the Augustan settlement.’ I label this ode also as ‘political’ and supportive of the princeps.
In the first stanza of the fifth ‘Roman Ode’, which looks forward to the eventual defeat of the Parthians, Augustus is compared to Iuppiter himself.\(^{460}\)

\begin{verbatim}
CAELO tonantem credidimus Io
tem: praesens divus habebitur
Augustus adiectis Britannis
imperio gravibusque Persis.
\end{verbatim}

('Because Jove thunders in heaven
we have always believed that he is king there;
Augustus will be deemed a god on earth when the
Britons and the deadly Persians have been
added to our empire.')

\textit{Carmen} 3.5, 1-4

Horatius raises an important subject here: the defeat of Crassus at Carrhae in 53 B.C., the fate of the prisoners of war and the return of the standards. These matters had not been resolved when Horatius wrote the present ode. Horatius suspects that most of the captured Roman soldiers had been integrated in Parthian society and that is why he tells the story of Regulus who had been captured by the Carthaginians in 253 B.C. and who was allowed to return to Rome to negotiate an exchange of prisoners.\(^{461}\) Regulus had foreseen the humiliation of the soldiers and therefore he counselled the Senate not to enter in a deal as the poet describes in the lines 13-18:

\begin{verbatim}
hoc caverat mens provida Reguli
dissentientis condicionibus
foedis et exemplo trahentis
perniciei veniens in aevum,
si non periret immiserabilis
captiva pubes. [...]
\end{verbatim}

('It was this that the far-seeing mind of Regulus had sought
to prevent when he rejected humiliating terms and
a precedent involving disaster
for future generations if the
young captives were not left to die
without pity. [...]')

\textit{Carmen} 3.5, 13-18

However, Horatius changes the story to a version in which Regulus travels to Rome to discuss a ransom instead of an exchange. Regulus sees ransom as adding insult to injury as one reads in lines 25-27:

\begin{verbatim}
auro repensus scilicet acrior
miles redibit. flagitio additis
damnum: [...]'
\end{verbatim}

('If a soldier is ransomed with gold, I suppose he will be all
the fiercer when he comes home. You are adding financial loss
to moral disgrace. [...]')

\(^{460}\) The Persis are synonymous to the Parthians.

\(^{461}\) The story of Regulus has been explained in detail by Nisbet and Rudd, 2004, 80-82.
**Carmen 3.5, 25-27**

It may be useful to give Nisbet and Rudd’s exegesis of these lines: ‘A ransomed soldier will not renew the fight, for he has proved his cowardice by being taken prisoner.’ He could better have died. Regulus returned empty-handed to Carthago, was tortured and killed. What is the meaning of the Regulus story in this poem? Horatius’ motive for relating events of two centuries earlier was the analogy with the fate of the men who were held captive in Parthia. It was not necessary to remind people in Rome of their situation as the issue was felt as a disgrace. Indeed, there had been recent efforts to resolve the issue with military efforts, such as the campaign of Antonius in 36 B.C. which failed.

When Horatius wrote *Carmen* 3.5 he was probably in a patriotic mood. In 27 B.C. Augustus’ power seemed secure for the time being and Roman pride could be restored. Avenging Carrhae was an attractive cause and it had the additional advantage that Augustus could get the better of Antonius, whose efforts had failed. In the poem Horatius offers some good advice - that the release of the prisoners and the return of the standards had to be achieved without damaging the honour of the captured soldiers: in other words through a military campaign and not through ransom. That Augustus resolved the issue with diplomatic means in 20 B.C. is a different matter. I place this poem in the category of ‘political’ poetry.

The sixth Roman Ode is pessimistic in tone as Horatius states that with each new generation there has been an ongoing decline in moral standards and in piety which had brought disasters over Rome. He appeals to his fellow citizens to repair the temples and shrines of the gods in the opening of the poem; in lines 1-4 and 7-8 he says:

*DELICTA maiorum immeritus lues,*
*Romane, donec templo refeceris*
*aedesque labentis deorum et*
*foeda nigro simulacra fumo.*
* [...] di multa neglecti dederunt*
*Hesperiae mala luctuosae.*

(‘Though guiltless, you will continue to pay for the sins of your forefathers, Roman, until you repair the crumbling temples and shrines of the gods, and the statues that are begrimed with black smoke.’)

* [...] Because they have been neglected, the gods have inflicted many a woe on sorrowing Westland.’*

*Carmen* 3.6, 1-4 and 7-8

The poet continues by giving several examples of recent misfortune, such as the rout of Antonius’ troops in 36 B.C. due to the dubious role of the Parthian Monaeses and the earlier defeat of Antonius in 40 B.C. by the Parthian general Pacorus. In addition, Horatius does not fail to mention the dangerous threat of Cleopatra, here described as the *Aethiops,/hic classe formidatus* (‘the Ethiopian, the former a menace with her fleet’) (lines 14-15), and the Dacians who had sided with Antonius at Actium and who were believed to have planned to join Antonius in an invasion.\(^\text{462}\)

\(^{462}\) Nisbet and Rudd, 2004, 103-104.
paene occupatam seditionibus
delevit urbem Dacus et Aethiops,
(‘Occupied with internecine feuds, the capital has been
almost destroyed by the Ethiopian and the Dacian,’)
*Carmen* 3.6, 13-14

It is telling that Horatius pictures Antonius as the main culprit in the four examples which he
mentions in the passage (lines 9-16) above. In this way he makes Antonius the paradigm of
moral decay, without mentioning him by name.

Next, the cause of the decline of Rome is described, which in Horatius’ opinion was the loss
of proper sexual moral by the women and young girls of Rome. In lines 17-32 the poet gives a
sad description of what was left of former marital fidelity.

*fecunda culpae saecula nuptias*
*primum inquinavere et genus et domos;*
*hoc fonte derivata clades*
*in patriam populumque fluxit.*
*motus doceri gaudet Ionicos*
*matura virgo et fingitur artibus*
*iam nunc et incestos amores*
*de tenero meditatur ungui;*
*mox iuniores quaerit adulteros*
*inter mariti vina, neque eligit*
*cui donet impermissa raptim*
*gaudia luminibus remotis,*
*sed iussa coram non sine conscio*
*surgit marito, seu vocat institor*
*seu navis Hispanae magister,*
*dedecorum pretiosus emptor.*
(‘Generations prolific in sin first defiled marriage,
the family, and the home.
From this source is derived the disaster which
has engulfed our fatherland and its folk.
The girl who had just reached puberty enjoys taking lessons in
Ionian dancing, and is trained in the arts that go with it;
even at this stage she contemplates illicit love affairs
with total absorption.
In due course, when her husband is in his cups, she looks for
younger lovers; but she does not select some man
to whom she may hurriedly give forbidden pleasures
when the lamp has been removed;
on the contrary, when sent for quite openly, she gets up, with
her husband’s full connivance, whether the caller is some
salesman or the captain of some Spanish ship who pays
a high price for such degradation.’)
*Carmen* 3.6, 17-32
I have quoted this passage at some length because Horatius gives a comprehensive description of the practical side of moral decay and because one gains an impression here of some of the Roman prejudices. The girl ‘does not select some man to whom she may hurriedly give forbidden pleasures’, which would appear to be acceptable, particularly from the point of view of the man. Her behaviour is reprehensible as she gives herself to a salesman or even worse ‘the captain of some Spanish ship.’ The poet continues by stating that at the time of the first Punic war, more than two centuries earlier, such behaviour was unheard of and children were taught discipline by their parents, who were not of such loose morals. No wonder that Rome had declined as the present generation had been educated by our fathers who were even worse than the generations before. The last stanza of the poem tells all:

\[
dannosa quid non imminuit dies?
aetas parentum peior avis tulit
nos nequiores, mox daturos
progeniem vitiisiorem.
\]

(‘Iniquitous time! What does it not impair?
Our fathers’ age, worse than our grandfathers’,
gave birth to us, an inferior breed, who will in due
course produce still more degenerate offspring.’)

*Carmen* 3.6, 45-48

Although not stated explicitly, the implicit message here is that it was high time that Augustus introduces his reforms, such as marital legislature and other laws to uphold old Roman virtues. The poem exudes impatience that these issues had not yet been dealt with and therefore I interpret this ode as critical, not only of Roman society but also of Augustus. It may be obvious that I consider *Carmen* 3.6 a ‘political’ poem.

*Carmen* 3.7 is a charming poem in which Horatius counsels the girl Asterie not to weep for her lover Gyges, whom she presumes is lost in a storm at sea. The poet informs her that Gyges remains faithful despite the approaches by a go-between on behalf of the amorous woman Chloe. Asterie is told not to fall in love in the meantime with Enipeus, her athletic neighbour.

The next poem is one of Horatius’ invitations to Maecenas to come for a celebration as he did earlier in *Carmen* 1.20 and does again in 3.29. This time the occasion is the 1st of March, the day of the annual celebration of the poet’s escape from death a few years before when he was hit by a falling tree at his estate: one learns about this unfortunate incident in *Carmen* 2.13 and again in 2.17. The year of writing of the present *Carmen* is 25 B.C. as he refers in lines 18-24 to the events in Dacia, Parthia, Spain and Scythia which had taken place between 29 and 26 B.C. The falling tree must have made a great impression on Horatius as this poem is the third on the subject. He says in lines 6-8 of the present ode that he promised Bacchus offerings for his survival:

\[
voveram dulcis epulas et album
Libero caprum prope funeratus
arboris icu.
\]

(‘Well, I vowed to the God of Freedom [Bacchus] a delicious

---

463 Rudd (Loeb), 2004, 169.
meal, including a white goat, on the occasion when I was almost sent to my grave by the blow of a tree.’)

*Carmen* 3.8, 6-8

In lines 25-26 Horatius calls on his friend to forget his affairs of state for a moment:

\[
\text{neglegens ne qua populus laboret}
\]
\[
\text{parce privates nimium caveret} \ldots
\]

(‘Don’t worry in case the people are in any trouble;
you are a private citizen, so try not to be overanxious;’)

*Carmen* 3.8, 25-26

The words of line 26 (‘you are a private citizen, so try not to be overanxious’) show Horatius’ disparaging view of Maecenas’ political work. The poem was written in 25 when Augustus was on a campaign in Spain and Maecenas was in charge in Rome. Consequently, Maecenas was much more than a ‘private citizen.’ Therefore, I label this poem as ‘private political’ because it shows the liberties that Horatius could allow himself to say what he thought.

*Carmen* 3.9 is the first of a series of five poems which deal with matters of love or are personal effusions. The first ode is a dialogue between Lydia and the lover. Lydia has been replaced by Chloe, but Lydia now loves Calais. However, there is a happy ending. The lover and Lydia enjoy their reconciliation and Lydia says in her final line: *tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens* (‘I [Lydia] would love to live with you [lover], and with you I would gladly die.’).

The next ode is a *paraclausithyron*, the lament of a lover who is kept outside at night and lies at the beloved’s doorway, whose name is Lyce. She does not bend, which brings the lover to exclaim in lines 17-20:

\[
\ldots, \text{nec rigida mollior aesculo}
\]
\[
\text{nec Mauris animum mitior anguibus.}
\]
\[
\text{non hoc semper erit liminis aut aquae}
\]
\[
\text{caelestis patiens latus.}
\]

(‘[…] you are no more pliant than the rigid oak,
no more soft-hearted than Moorish snakes.
This body of mine will not endure for ever your doorstep and the rain from heaven!’)

*Carmen* 3.10, 17-20

At the beginning of *Carmen* 3.11 Horatius invokes Mercurius who had taught Amphion to move stones with his song and who may help him – together with the lyre of tortoise-shell - to sing for Lyde who has *obstinatas auris* (‘obstinate ears’) and behaves like a young filly. She keeps men at a distance. The poet mentions the power of Mercurius in the underworld as he relieved the pain of the Danaids. After this, he tells the myth of ‘the notorious man-haters’ and he hopes that *audiat Lyde scelus atque notas/virginum poenas* (‘Let Lyde hear about the virgins’ crime/and their well-known punishment:’) (lines 25-26). Nisbet and Rudd make the point that ‘Horace uses them [Danaids] as a warning to Lyde [as a man-hater]; at the same time he glorifies Hypermestra, who was merciful to her man.’

---

Nisbet and Rudd, 2004, 149.
also told by Vergilius in the *Aeneis* 10, 495-498 where he describes Pallas’ sword-belt. In the latter case I have argued that this is an allusion to Cleopatra and there are some scholars who see the same in the present passage. In the case of *Carmen* 3.11 I do not interpret the story of the Danaids as an allusion to Cleopatra and I concur with Nisbet and Rudd that Horatius means to tell the girl Lyde, who he presumably had tried to seduce without success, that she should yield to him if she does not want to remain a virgin forever and to run the risk of similar wickedness as the Danaids.

*Carmen* 3.12 is about the poor girl Neobule who can neither enjoy her love nor drown her sorrows in wine, without meeting her guardian who admonishes her about her girlish duties, which are not watching handsome Hebrus. The last poem in this group, 3.13, is the famous speech to the spring of Bandusia which gave cool water to the beasts. Tomorrow the spring will receive the present of a sacrificial kid.

*Carmen* 3.14 is a beautiful panegyric to Augustus. It celebrates his victorious return from Spain and compares Augustus to Hercules. Augustus had left for Gaul in 27 and he had not revisited Rome until his return in 24. During the campaign he had fallen seriously ill and when he finally reached Rome ‘he declined a triumph, but was voted other honours to celebrate his recovery and return (Dio 53, 28, 3).’ In the fourth stanza of the poem Horatius says about this day that it is *vere mihi festus* (‘is for me truly festal’) and in the fifth he gave instructions to his slave (*puer*) for a private celebration with a good wine. In lines 17-18 we read:

\[
i pete unguenteum, puer, et coronas \\
et cadum Marsi memorem duelli,
\]

(‘Go, my boy, and look for scented ointment and garlands and a jar that remembers the Marsian War,’)

*Carmen* 3.14, 17-18

Next, he tells his girl friend Neaera to hurry to join the festivities. Although it was a festive day, the poet kept away from public celebrations which were perhaps not to his liking. It could also be a sign that he preferred to keep aloof from any public association with the foreign wars of Augustus.

However, the poet expresses in this ode one of his deeply held views on the political situation of his time, namely that stability could only be achieved through Augustus’ rule. In the fourth stanza of this ode Horatius testifies that after many decades of civil war, peace has arrived and that only the *princeps* is able to maintain this. He feels that strong leadership is required to ensure a stable empire with Rome as her capital. This stability is a precondition for a pleasant life.

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467 Nisbet and Rudd, 2004, 180  
468 Lowrie, 2007, 84-85. She poses a number of questions about *Carmen* 3.14. Her main point is that ‘his [Horatius’] new level of tolerance lays aside his earlier hot-headed Republicanism; now peace averts any fear of external or internal disturbance.’ According to Lowrie, Horatius’ new level of tolerance shows among other things in line 28 (*calidus iuventa/consule Planco*. (‘hot-blooded youth/when Plancus was consul.’)). This refers to his role at Philippi. She offers a different interpretation of lines 14-16 as she asks the question: ‘Why negate fear of civil disturbance under Caesar at this point?’ And finally she puts forward a point of text tradition. In line 5 she has *uniuira* instead of *unico*; the latter is given in the Oxford Classical Text. *Uniuira* (‘of one husband’) refers according to her to Livia who has been ‘not-of-one-husband’ (*unico* goes with *marito* and is translated as...
hic dies vere mihi festus atras
exiget curas; ego nec tumultum
nec mori per vim metuam tenente
Caesare terras.

('This day, which for me is truly festal,
will dispel my black worries. I shall not be
afraid of insurrection or violent death
while Caesar is in charge of the world')

*Carmen* 3.14, 13-16

I interpret 3.14 as a ‘political’ ode expressing Horatius’ hope of better times and one which is supportive of Augustus.

In the next ode, *Carmen* 3.15, we read about Chloris, the elderly wife of Hybicus and mother of Pholoe who is mocked for her misbehaviour as she is too fond of sex with young men and drink.

In *Carmen* 3.16 Horatius writes about one of his favourite themes, the contrast between wealth and the enjoyment of a good life on his estate with moderate but sufficient means. The poet starts by saying that gold opens every door: for Zeus the tower in which Danae had been locked, for Polynices the joining of the expedition to Thebes by Amphiaras and in lines 15-16 even *munera navium/saevos illaqueant duces* (‘presents ensnare savage admirals.’).\(^\text{469}\)

The richer one gets, the more one worries and the poet is right to remain unnoticed and simple: unlike Maecenas who is wealthy and who is *equitum decus* (‘the glory of the Knights’). In the lines which follow (22-23) we read that Horatius chooses the side of those who desire nothing (*nil cupientium/nudus castra peto* (‘destitute myself,/I want to join the camp of those who desire nothing.’)). The lines which follow form the core of the poem. Horatius says in lines 25-28:

*contemptae dominus splendidior rei
quam si quidquid arat impiger Apulus
occultare meis diceret horreis,
magnas inter opes inops.*

I do not agree with Lowrie that Horatius was referring to Augustus in 3.16. Even if she is right about the last point, it seems to me that we do not see in Horatius ‘a new level of tolerance’, but more importantly a new level of confidence. In my opinion the tolerance is with Augustus who in 24 B.C. felt sufficiently strong to accept such allusions: that is if Lowrie is right. I do doubt, however, whether Horatius has meant to refer to the actuality in the manner of Lowrie.

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\(^{469}\) Amphiaras was persuaded by his wife to join the expedition to Thebes. His wife had been bribed by Polynices with a golden necklace. The savage admiral was probably Menodorus, who first joined Sextus Pompeius and later deserted him and was rewarded by Octavianus. See Rudd (Loeb), 2004, 184-185.
These lines show the changes in Italian agriculture. The Apulian reaps but the rich landowner stores it in his barns.

Next, he shows his gratitude towards Maecenas for his simple Sabine estate. In lines 29-30 and 37 he is very particular when he writes:

\[\begin{align*}
\textit{purae rivos aquae silvaque iugerum} \\
\textit{paucorum et segetis certa fides meae} \\
[...\textit{importuna tamen pauperies abest}] \\
\textit{\ldots nevertheless, I am free from nagging poverty,\ldots}
\end{align*}\]

\textit{Carmen} 3.16, 29-30 and 37

Horatius knows that if he needs more, Maecenas will provide it. However, he would rather reduce his desires. Thus, the poem places the \textit{amicitia} between the two men in its right perspective: Horatius has no intention of overstraining the relationship between them and thus he remains free. By remaining simple he is perhaps happier than Maecenas with all his wealth. The last two lines summarise this:

\[\begin{align*}
\textit{[\ldots]: bene est, cui deus obtulit} \\
\textit{parca quod satis est manu.} \\
\textit{\ldots All is well for the man to whom God with a frugal hand has given enough.}\ldots
\end{align*}\]

\textit{Carmen} 3.16, 43-44

I label the poem as ‘political’ because I interpret it as being more than ‘gold and good sense.’ In my opinion the ode has elements of criticism of the rich landowning class to which Maecenas belonged (lines 22-28) and which Horatius views as a threat to social stability (line 28).

Next, there are four odes which have no bearing on actual political issues. In \textit{Carmen} 3.17 Horatius teases L. Aelius Lamia, who belongs to a family of growing importance through successful business, with his mythical descent of Lamus, the ruler of the Laestrygones. The latter were placed in Formiae, a coastal town in Latium, where the Aelii Lamiae had their family estate. The poet gives his friend a weather forecast: the crow tells him that rain and storm are coming and that Aelius ought to gather dry wood and can only have a simple meal. \textit{Carmen} 3.18 is a prayer to Faunus to visit Horatius’ estate and to be kind to his new-born animals. On the fifth of December at the Faunalia the poet will sacrifice a kid. In the ode which follows, 3.19, the installation of a Murena as augur is celebrated. It is not clear whether this is Licinius Murena of \textit{Carmen} 2.10 or A. Terentius Varro Murena, the consul elect for 23 B.C. Horatius is anxious to have the party organized and he calls for the preparations of a wild symposium (line 23: \textit{dementem strepitum} (‘wild uproar’)) with wine and women, amongst them \textit{Glycerae meae}. \textit{Carmen} 3.20 tells Pyrrhus to be careful in trying to appropriate the boy Nearchus who is also desired by a fearsome woman.

\begin{flushright}
470 Rudd (Loeb), 2004, 183.
471 Nisbet and Rudd, 2004, 211-214; \textit{Der Kleine Pauly, Vol. II}, 594. Formiae was near modern Cap Torre d’Orlando.
\end{flushright}
Carmen 3.21 has an intriguing opening. One first thinks that Horatius is addressing a woman or a man, until it appears in line 4 to be a *pia testa* (‘kindly jar’). Eventually in line 7 it becomes clear that the poem was written for M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus. The poet praises the wine and these words refer also to Corvinus’ virtues, such as in lines 17-20. This was substantial praise of the achievements of the aristocrat Corvinus, who was born in 65 or 64 B.C., which means that he was virtually a contemporary of Horatius. He may have known the latter in Athens where they both studied at the same time; the two young men fought on the same side at Philippi. Later Corvinus joined Octavianus’ cause and fought in the battle of Actium and in many more battles. In 31 B.C, at the age of 34, he became consul and in 27 B.C. he celebrated a triumph for his military successes in Aquitania.472 Thus, Corvinus had been a leading politician and general at Octavianus’ side since the early 30s and due to his efforts he became one of the main contributors to the restoration of order: it is not ‘Dutch courage’ that we read in lines 19-20, but rather the beginning of peace and order and the increased confidence of the common man.473 When the poem was written, sometime between 27 and 23 B.C., his star stood high. Lines 17-20 say:

*tu spem reducis mentibus anxiis,*  
*virisque et addis cornua pauperi*  
*post te neque iratos trementi*  
*regum apices neque militum arma.*

(‘You bring back hope to anxious minds,  
and supply strength and courage to the poor man  
(after you he no longer quakes at the angry crowns  
of potentates or at soldier’s weapons.’).

*Carmen* 3.21, 17-20

I interpret *Carmen* 3.21 as a ‘private political’ poem as Horatius testifies to his admiration for Messalla Corvinus and expresses views which concurred with the policies of Corvinus.

The odes 3.22 and 3.23 are personal poems. The first is a charming poem about Diana as the guardian of the woods. In the second Horatius gives good advice to a country woman called Phidyle on her offerings to the *Lares*. While he reflects on the intent of offering to the gods, he tells Phidyle that the pontiffs have to offer cattle, but that for her *ros marinus* and *myrtum* will suffice.

*Carmen* 3.24 was probably written in or around 27 B.C. The poem deals with moral extravagance in different forms and the need of constraint. The ode begins with one of Horatius’ favourite subjects to which he took offence, namely the luxurious building of *villae maritimae* which will not take away the dread of death. Look at the Scythae and the Getae,

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473 Messalla Corvinus may have been seen as being sympathetic to the rights of the Roman citizens. In 26 B.C. he had been appointed to the newly created office of *praefectus urbis* from which he resigned after a few days. It is said that he considered the office *incivilis*, ‘incompatible with the rights of Roman citizens.’ See: Raaflaub and Samons, 1993, 434.
who lead an itinerant simple life, where after one year, the work of one man is continued by
another. Their women are strong and chaste as one reads in lines 19-22:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nec dotata regit virum} \\
\text{coniunx nec nitido fidit adultero.} \\
\text{dos est magna parentium} \\
\text{virtus [...]}
\end{align*}
\]

(‘no wife tyrannises over her husband on the strength of
her dowry, nor does she place her trust in some sleek adulterer.
Their only dowry, and a big one it is, is the upright
character they have received from their parents, [...]’)

*Carmen* 3.24, 19-22

These words are reminiscent of those with which Horatius closes *Carmen* 3.6. It is from the
parents that the next generation receives its uprightness. The next passage is again an ap-
peal to Augustus to call a halt to the moral degeneration of Rome, which is the source of
bloodshed and war. The poet says that if he wants to earn the inscription *PATER VRBIUM* on
his statues he must ‘have the courage to curb lawless license’ (*indomitam audeat/refrenare
licentiam*) (the lines 28-29). The language of the poet in lines 25-32 is unequivocal:

\[
\begin{align*}
o quisquis volet impias \\
\text{caedis et rabiem tollere civicam,} \\
\text{si quaeret PATER VRBIUM} \\
\text{subscribi statuis, indomitam audeat} \\
\text{refrenare licentiam,} \\
\text{clarus postgenitis: quatenus – heu nefas! –} \\
\text{virtutem incolumen odimus,} \\
\text{sublatam ex oculis quaerimus [...].}
\end{align*}
\]

(‘Whoever wants to get rid of unholy bloodshed
and the madness of civic strife,
if he aspires to having Father of Cities
inscribed on his statues, oh let him have the courage
to curb lawless license.
He will be a famous man in future generations; for
(shame on us!) we reject virtue when it is alive; then,
when it is removed from our sight, we long to have it back, [...]’)

*Carmen* 3.24, 25-32

However, according to Horatius it is not just a matter of legislature, but rather of new mor-
als; we read in lines 35-36: *quid leges sine moribus/vanae proficient* (‘What use are laws,/vain
as they are without morals,’). The businessmen need to be kept in check as no sea is too high
in their pursuit of avarice. After this, the poem draws to a close with Horatius’ appeal to his
fellow citizens to truly repent and to bring part of their wealth as offerings to the gods. But
equally important is the renewed attention for the next generation, through strict education
and no more pampering. The poet says in lines 51-54:

\[
eradenda cupidinis
\]
pravi sunt elementa et tenerae nimis
mentes asperioribus
formandae studiis. [...]

('The basic causes of sinful greed
must be rubbed out, and minds that are too soft
must be hardened
in rougher pursuits. [...]')

*Carmen* 3.24, 51-54

The poem ends with Horatius’ observation that those who have amassed their shameless wealth will never be content with what they have: a theme we very clearly today. I interpret *Carmen* 3.24 as a ‘political’ poem in which Horatius expresses without any reservations his views on morality and his rejection of materialism and appeals to Augustus to do something about it.

In *Carmen* 3.25 we find Horatius in a strange mood of Bacchic possession, which is his source of inspiration; in lines 3-6 he tells us what his purpose is:

[...] quibus
antris egregii Caesaris audiar
aeternum meditans decus
stella inserere et consilio lovis?

('[...]? In what grotto
shall I be heard as I practise setting the
eternal glory of peerless Caesar
among the stars and in the council of Jove?')

*Carmen* 3.25, 3-6

Horatius is to begin with the momentous task of writing a song for the deification of Augustus and he requires the help of Bacchus who is also a god of poetry, of the more exuberant sort. I interpret the ode as ‘political’ because of the announcement of Augustus’ early deification which is recognition of the princeps’ power.

*Carmen* 3.26 is a renuntiatio amoris in which Horatius not only renounces love, but also love poetry as he says in lines 3-4: definitumque bello/barbiton hic paries habebit (‘this wall will have, [...] the lyre whose/ fighting days are over.’). The wall is a dedicatory wall in Venus’ temple on which Horatius had hung his lyre. The short poem ends with the poet requesting the goddess to give Chloe, the haughty thing, just one flick (tange Chloen semel arrogantem). The last lines are interpreted as either a request to Venus that Chloe will love Horatius or that Venus gives Chloe a taste of her own medicine by making her love a supercilious man. But in the meantime the poet hopes that she will return to him.474

The next ode, 3.27, begins with a propemptikon when his woman friend Galatea departs on a sea journey. The poet is going to miss her as he tells us in lines 13-14: sis licet felix ubicumque mavis,/et memor nostri, Galatea, vivas (‘I hope you will be happy, Galatea, wherever you choose to be, and that you won’t forget me.’). Horatius then compares her journey

474 Nisbet and Rudd, 2004, 309-311; Rudd (Loeb), 2004, 205.
to the abduction overseas of Europa by Zeus and the story is intended as a warning to Galatea that the bull has been deceitful (*doloso* in line 25) and that Europa is going to hate that *infamen iuvencum* (‘detestable young bull’) (line 45). In the end when Europa is full of guilt, Venus tells her in line 73 who the bull is: *uxor invicti lovis esse nescis* (‘You don’t realise that you are the wife of invincible Jove.’). Finally, the goddess consoles her in lines 75-76: *tua sectus orbis/nomina ducet* (‘A region of the world will/bear your name.’).

*Carmen* 3.28 is a short ode for Neptunus on his feast day, 23rd of July. Lyde is told to bring out the wine and in turn Horatius and she will sing about Neptunus, the Nereids, Diana and Latona and together about Venus and Night. Between songs they may have made love.

I interpret all three previous odes as having no bearing on actual matters.

The last but one ode of book 3 is addressed to Maecenas and can be seen as a pendant to the first ode of book 1. Both poems begin with *Maecenas* and are a testimony to the close relationship between Maecenas and Horatius. The statesman is invited to Horatius’ estate to leave Rome and his *molem propinquam nubibus arduis* (‘the pile that almost touches the clouds overhead.’) (line 10), to enjoy wine, a simple meal and to relax. The constellations announce the coming of the hot summer and Maecenas is totally engrossed in the affairs of state. In lines 25-28 one reads about Maecenas’ daily concern:

\[
\begin{align*}
tu & \text{ civitatem quis deceat status} \\
\text{curas et Vrbi sollicitus times} \\
\text{quid Seres et regnata Cyro} \\
\text{Bactra parent Tanaisque discors.}
\end{align*}
\]

(‘You are concerned about what constitution best suits the state, and in your anxiety for the capital you worry about what plots are being hatched by the Chinese and Bactra (once the realm of Cyrus) and the Don with its internal feuds.’)

*Carmen* 3.29, 25-28

This is all hidden by the gods and one cannot foresee what will happen in the future. Deal with every day as it comes and *cetera fluminis/ritu feruntur* (‘everything else flows away/like a river’) (lines 33-34). Next Horatius states one of his beliefs in lines 41-43:

\[
\begin{align*}
[...] & . \text{ ille potens sui} \\
\text{laetusque deget, cui licet in diem} \\
\text{dixisse “vixi”: [..]} \\
(“[...]. That man will be master of himself}
\text{and live a happy life who as each day ends}
\text{can say “I have lived.” [..]”}
\end{align*}
\]

*Carmen* 3.29, 41-43

Now, the poet develops the theme of the transitory man: each day can be the last and one ought to be grateful for the blessings of the past which can never be taken away from one. In line 52 one reads that Fortune is fickle and that she moves her favours easily from one to another: *nunc mihi, nunc alli benigna* (‘kind now to me, now to someone else’). The poem ends with an allegory when Horatius places himself in the position of a merchant in danger of losing his ship and his goods in a storm at sea and who tries to save these. Not so
Horatius, who will make for the safety of land. I hear the poet saying here that he has no intentions to suffer the troubles and dangers of the pursuit of commercial gain, but that he will withdraw to the simple life of peace and quietude on his farm. As the ode is addressed to Maecenas, who has been told that he is too engrossed in political affairs, the latter is given the Epicurean message that he ought to relax, worry less about things over which he has no control and above all that ‘the way to achieve happiness and inner peace is to concentrate on the present, regarding life as complete as each day ends.’ In Carmen 3.29 Horatius urges Maecenas to leave Rome and in this poem the poet shows that ‘antipathy toward Roman immorality and freedom of mind to pursue an intellectual course not necessarily to the liking of the ruling powers seem essential components of the Horatian spirit’. I label this poem as ‘political’.

The last poem of book 3, Carmen 3.30 (EXEGI monumentum aere perennius (‘I have finished a monument more lasting than bronze’) is obviously very private and is Horatius’ σφράγις, his confident seal at the release of the three books. Horatius declares in line 6 that he expects that his work will survive him: non omnis moriar (‘I shall not wholly die’). A few lines later (lines 10-14) he remembers his home country Apulia and his simple origins, on the one hand with some sadness and longing and on the other with pride in what he has achieved and how he may live on in his poetry.

dicar, qua violens obstrepit Auffidus
et qua pauper aquae Daunus agrestium
regnavit populorum, ex humili potens
princeps Aeolium camen ad Italos
deduxisse modos. [...] (*I shall be spoken of where the violent Aufidus thunders and where Daunus, short of water, ruled over a country people, as one who, rising from a lowly state to a position of power, was the first to bring Aeolian verse to the tunes of Italy. [*]*)

Carmen 3.30, 10-14

Carmen 3.30 says much about Horatius’ independence and this ‘autobiography’ is a ‘declaration of poetic autonomy.’ He declares his autonomy in the closing lines of the present ode. In these lines Horatius submits himself to Melpomene and not to Maecenas or Augustus.

[...]. sume superbiam
quaesitam meritis et mihi Delphica
lauro cinge volens, Melpomene, comam.
(‘Take the pride, Melpomene, that you have so well earned, and, if you would be so kind, surround my

---

475 Nisbet and Rudd, 2004, 346.
477 The Aufidus (modern Ofanto) was the main river of Apulia, and was near Venusia, Horatius’ birthplace. Daunus was the legendary king of Apulia. See Nisbet and Rudd, 2004, 374.
478 Oliensis, 1998, 104 and 133-134. Horatius’ independence is nicely phrased by her: ‘Horace says: “I belong to the Muses” [Carmen 3.4, 21] in order to prove that he doesn’t belong to Caesar.’
hair with Delphic bay.

*Carmen* 3.30, 14-16

The third book of *Carmina* as a whole contains 11 ‘political’ poems of which the 6 ‘Roman Odes’ assume an important share. In the book we no longer find poems about the civil war, while there are 4 about hope of better times (*Carmina* 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.14), 3 of which are ‘Roman Odes’. Of the remainder of the ‘political’ poems 4 deal with moral issues (*Carmina* 3.1, 3.2, 3.6 and 3.24), 2 with the poet’s views on life (*Carmina* 3.16 and 3.29) and 1 with his own poetry (*Carmina* 3.25). Of the 11 ‘political’ poems there are 3 supportive of Augustus and 2 are critical. There are 2 ‘private political’ poems, 3.8 and 3.21. The first poem is an invitation to Maecenas to come to celebrate Horatius’ deliverance from a falling tree and this poem belongs to the virtually empty category of the poet’s own experience. The second ‘private political’ poem is 3.21 in which the poet gives his views on life.

In addition to the ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems, book 3 has a relatively high share of poems which do not concern actuality: 17 out of a total of 30. *Carmen* 3.13 is addressed to the spring of Bandusia which is honoured as a god. In 3.17 Horatius praises a simple lifestyle and in 3.18 he enjoys the new-born animals on his estate. In *Carmen* 3.19 Horatius celebrates the installation of T. Varro Murena as augur. 3.22 is about Diana as a guardian and 3.23 has advice about the offerings to the Lares. The last ode of the book is his *sphragis*. Finally, there are 10 poems about matters of love in book 3 (3.7, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12, 3.15, 3.20, 3.26, 3.27 and 3.28).

The *Carmen Saeculare* (‘Century Ode’) was written in 17 B.C. at the special request of Augustus. It is described as ‘a public gesture of applause for present Roman well-being and suppli- cation for its continuance [...]. We learn of Rome’s physical, moral and political prosperity and we pay heed to the gods – [...] - and to the terrestrial ruler, Augustus, who have brought it about and, the speaker prays, will maintain it.’

The ode is about the *princeps* and his efforts to make Romans adhere to moral principles again, such as his marriage law of 18 B.C. (lines 17-20) (*diva, producas subolem, patrumque/prosperes decreta super iugandis/feminis prolisque novae feraci/lege marita,* (‘O goddess,/be pleased to rear our young,/and to grant success to the Fathers’ edicts on the yoking together/of men and women and on the marriage law for raising a new crop of children,’). Further in the ode the poet asks for the return of the old virtues which have been absent for a long time. The ode also relates the establishment of Rome by Aeneas, reminding the reader that Augustus is also the offspring of Venus and Anchises, a theme very similar to the story of the *Aeneis*.

In 13 or 10 B.C the fourth book of *Carmina* was released. The uncertainty about the date of release of book 4 is due to the lines 6-9 of the very last ode, *Carmen* 4.15. In these lines Horatius mentions the return of the standards by the Parthians and the closure of the temple of Janus. Nisbet has recently argued that this most likely refers to a second surrender of standards in 10 B.C. and the closure of Janus in the same year.

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481 Nisbet, 2007, 17. Nisbet wrote this essay shortly before he died in 2005. Regrettably, there is no commentary on book 4 of Horatius’ *Carmina* by Nisbet et al. In this study I have used Putnam, 1986 and Quinn, 2004, 298-327.
In the fourth book about half of the Carmina deal with actuality and six poems (4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.14 and 4.15) have an outright political content, the exception being 4.9 which is a ‘private political’ poem. There is a significant development in the language of the poems in book 4, compared to those written earlier. In 13 B.C. Horatius wrote with more confidence about the affairs of state; he was 52 years old and an experienced observer of events. But even more important than his confidence, is the power of his public voice, the genuineness of his praise of Augustus and his conviction that only a strong ruler can maintain this happy state of affairs.

Next, I will discuss the fifteen odes of book 4 in the same systematic way as I did the previous books, starting with Carmen 4.1.

The first poem is about Horatius as a lover and a love poet and he poses the question whether he is not too old for both: he is circa lustra decem (‘nearly fifty years’). Venus should visit the young, for instance Paullus Fabius Maximus, a member of the old aristocratic family et centum puer artium/late signa feret militiae tuae (‘and as a young fellow of a hundred accomplishments/he will carry far and wide the banner of your army.’) (lines 15-16). In his villa Venus will find many boys and girls numen [...] tuum/laudantes (‘praising your divinity’). As for Horatius, he is past such pleasures as he tells Venus in lines 29-31:

\[
\begin{align*}
me & \text{ nec femina nec puer} \\
iam & \text{ nec spes animi credula mutui} \\
nec & \text{ certare iuvat mero} \\
(\text{‘As for me, neither woman nor boy} \\
\text{nor the fond hope of a kindred spirit gives me pleasure now,} \\
\text{nor competitive drinking bouts.’})
\end{align*}
\]

\textit{Carmen 4.1, 29-31}

However, there is the beautiful boy Ligurinus, of whom the poet lies awake. Are we to expect love poems?

\textit{Carmen} 4.2 reads like a recusatio, where Horatius tells the praetor Iullus Antonius to sing the praises of Augustus upon his arrival at Rome in 13 B.C., after his time in Gaul pacifying the Sygambri. As a praetor Iullus was probably involved in organising the festivities upon Augustus’ return. Against his better judgment Horatius suggests that Iullus should write a poem in Pindaric fashion which is not an easy task. In lines 5-9 one reads of Horatius’ high regard for Pindarus:

\[
\begin{align*}
\textit{monte decurrens velut amnis, imbres} \\
\textit{quem super notas aluere ripas,} \\
\textit{fervet immensusque ruit profundo} \\
\textit{Pindarus ore,} \\
\textit{laurea donandus Apollinari,} \\
(\text{‘Like a river rushing down a mountainside, swollen by rains} \\
\text{above its normal banks, Pindar boils} \\
\text{and surges immeasurably on with his} \\
\text{deep booming voice,} \\
\text{deserving the award of Apollo’s bay,’})
\end{align*}
\]

\textit{Carmen 4.2, 5-9}
In comparison with the swan Pindarus, Horatius feels no better than a bee. Iullus will take the lead however: *concines maiore poeta plectro/Caesarem* ('You, a poet of larger quill, will celebrate/Caesar') (lines 33-34). Horatius’ contribution will be modest, as he says in lines 45-49:

\[
\begin{align*}
tum meae, s\text{ }quid loquar audiendum, 
vocis accedet bona pars, et, 'o Sol 
pulcher! o laudandel!' canam, recepto 
Caesare felix. 

terque dum procedis, [...] 
\end{align*}
\]

(‘Then, if I have anything to say that is worth hearing,
I shall join in to the best of my ability, singing
“O glorious day, o worthy of all praise!”
in my joy at Caesar’s return.
And while you take the lead,’)
*Carmen* 4.2, 45-49

Horatius again presents himself as the poet who does not want to become too involved and who would rather follow events from a distance. In the present poem, which is very reminiscent of 3.14, he excuses himself and openly refuses to contribute to the triumph of Augustus. Therefore, I interpret the poem as ‘political’ and critical of Augustus.

*Carmen* 4.3 is an ode to Horatius himself. He is not one for glorious victory in the Isthmian Games, or for a military career, but he is made to be a poet, *Romanae fidicen lyrae* (‘the minstrel of the Roman lyre,’). Thanks are to the Lady of Pieria, Melpomene.

The next ode, *Carmen* 4.4, begins with two similes: one of the eagle and one of the lion. Drusus is like the young eagle in lines 9-10: [...] *mox in ovilia/demisit hostem vividus impetus* ('before long a vigorous impetus/sent him [eagle] hurtling down to attack sheepfolds;'), or like the young lion which attacks a *laetis caprea pascuis/intenta* ('a roe that has been engrossed by the rich pasture') (lines 13-14). This is how the Vindelici saw Drusus in his victorious campaign against the Gallic tribes in 15 B.C. 82 Tiberius and his younger brother Drusus, the youthful Nero, had been adopted by Augustus as his stepsons and it was the *princeps’* guidance which had developed the two youngsters. Horatius testifies to his belief in firm education in lines 33-34:

\[
\begin{align*}
doctrina sed vim promovet insitam, 
rectique cultus pectora roborat; 
\end{align*}
\]

(‘But training develops innate powers,

82 See Quinn, 2004, 305. Horatius has confused the facts. It was Tiberius who had vanquished the Vindelici and Brutus the Raeti. The land of the Vindelici is nowadays the area of Württemberg and Bayern, north of the Alps (*Der Kleine Pauly*, vol. V, 1279). The Raeti were a group of many tribes in the central region of the Alps, between Lake Como and the Bodensee (*Der Kleine Pauly*, Vol. IV, 1330-1333). In the summer of 15 B.C. the Raeti were subjected by Rome in a campaign where Drusus and Tiberius shared command. Drusus has operated in the Brenner area and Tiberius to the west of him until he reached the Bodensee. The region of the Raeti and that of the Vindelici became one administrative unit.

White, 1993, 128-130, who gives a brief summary of the military events, does not resolve the inconsistency of Brutus’ contact with the Vindelici and states that ‘Horace speaks solely of Drusus’ expedition in the Tirol and not of Tiberius’ activities, [...]. This poem must therefore have been written before commencement of the second and more extensive [Drusus and Tiberius together] phase of operations.’ His main point however, is that ‘the poem is not about the war but about the first test of a young aristocrat’s capacities.’
and the inculcation of what is right strengthens the heart.’)

Carmen 4.4, 33-34

After this, Horatius gives a lecture on Italian history. He takes us back to an ancestor of the Nero brothers, C. Claudius Nero, who defeated Hasdrubal in 207 B.C. at the battle of the river Metaurus (modern Metauro), while in the meantime Hannibal destroyed the cities of Italia:

\textit{dirus per urbis Afer ut Italas[/...]} equitavit ('since the dreaded African [Hannibal] galloped through the towns of Italy') (lines 42-44). At that time the young men of Rome became strong and overcame the enemy: in line 30 the young men are called young bulls (\textit{est in iuvencis}) and horses (\textit{est in equis}). The emphasis on youth was an important aspect of Augustan values and is also visible in the youthful appearance of Augustus in the famous ‘Prima Porta’-statue.\footnote{Putnam, 1986, 99-100.} In lines 45-48 we hear that they have restored the temples, which remind the reader of Augustus’ own efforts:

\begin{quote}
post hoc secundis usque laboribus  
Romana pubes crevit, et impio  
vastata Poenorum tumultu  
fana deos habuere rectos,
\end{quote}

('After that the young men of Rome grew strong through struggles that were always successful; and shrines wrecked by the impious depredations of the Carthaginians once more housed gods that stood upright.')

Carmen 4.4, 45-48

This then is the backdrop for Hannibal’s imaginary speech, a panegyric to the Claudii Nerones, in which Hannibal is made to say that Rome’s greatness is due to valiant Aeneas, which can also be interpreted as an allusion to Augustus. According to Hannibal the strength of Rome is like an oak which grows stronger under the blows of \textit{duris bipennibus} (‘hard two-headed axe’), or like the Hydra or the monsters of Colchis which all grew fiercer when attacked.\footnote{The Hydra’s heads grew on again as soon as Herakles cut them off. The monsters of Colchis are the fiery bulls and the dragon from whose teeth armed warriors emerged who Iason had to fight.} Hannibal was no Herakles or Iason, and he had to admit defeat as he says in lines 65-68:

\begin{quote}
\textit{merses profundo: pulchrior evenit:}  
luctere; multa proruet integrum  
cum laude victorem geretque  
proelia coniugibus loquenda.’
\end{quote}

('Plunge it [Rome] in the deep, it emerges all the finer; wrestle with it, amid loud applause it will throw a previously unbeaten champion, and then go on to fight battles for its wives to tell of.’)

Carmen 4.4, 65-68

The climax comes in the last stanza of the poem. Tiberius and Drusus are great, thanks to the fatherly advice (\textit{curae sagaces} (‘wise counsels’)) of Augustus:

\begin{quote}
il \textit{Claudiae non perficiunt manus},
\end{quote}
quas et benigno numine Iuppiter
defendit et curae sagaces
expedient per acuta belli.

(‘There is nothing that the hands of the Claudii will not accomplish; for Jupiter defends them with the favour of his power, and wise counsels carry them safely through the sharp crises of war.’)

*Carmen* 4.4, 73-76

Horatius deals with the same theme in 4.14, where he states that the two Claudii are great, but that Augustus is greater still. Because of the implicit praise of the leadership of the princeps, I label the present panegyric ode as ‘political’ and supportive of Augustus.

In the fifth ode Augustus has been absent for a long time and Horatius expresses fear for his safety. The appeal to Augustus to return shows Horatius’ warm feelings towards the princeps. For instance one reads in lines 5-8:

\[
\textit{lucem redde tuae, dux bone, patriae:}
\textit{instar veris enim vultus ubi tuus}
\textit{adfulsit populo, gratior it dies}
\textit{et soles melius nitent.}
\]

(‘Bring back the light, dear leader, to your country; for when your face shines like spring upon the citizens, the day passes more happily and the sun’s radiance is brighter.’)

*Carmen* 4.5, 5-8

In lines 15-16 Horatius sums up as follows: *sic desideriis icta fidelibus/quaerit patria Caesarem.* (‘so with pangs of longing does his loyal/country look out for Caesar.’). Law and order have been restored as one reads for instance in lines 21-22: *nullis polluitur casta domus stupris,/mos et lex maculosum edomuit nefas,* (‘the home is pure, unstained by any lewdness,/custom and law have gained control over the plague of vice,’). There needs to be no fear for Parthians or German tribes, as long as Caesar is safe (*Caesare incolumi* in line 27) all is well.485

Next, the eulogy displays the quietude of the Italian countryside as a result of the peace of the *princeps’* reign. The country man honours Caesar and in the last stanza Horatius is identified with the farmer. The poet gives us a typical farmer’s prayer expressing his joy that he can work and relax again. In the words of Quinn: ‘Compared with what it had been before Augustus, life has become one continuous holiday: long may it remain so!’486 The prayer runs: *‘longas o utinam, dux bone, ferias/praestes Hesperiae!’* (“May you bring long holidays to Westland, dear leader;”) (lines 37-38). This eulogy to Augustus has a political con-

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485 *Carmen* 4.5, 27-36 is very similar to *Georgica* 4, 212; the text of the latter is: [*...]. Rege incolumi mens omnibus una est; (‘While he [the king of the bees] is safe, all are of one mind’). In other words when Caesar [Augustus] or rex are present in Italia to rule the country, all is well. Horatius wrote his ode about fifteen years after Vergililus finished the *Georgica.*

486 Quinn, 2004, 309.
tent as Horatius expresses his contentment with the peace and stability which the reign of Augustus has brought.

The first six stanzas of the sixth ode constitute a hymn to Apollo in which Horatius shows us the god as one who kills those who are carried away by success. The first victims of the god are Niobe magnae linguae (‘with her boastful tongue’) and her children and Tityus who had raped Latona, the god’s mother. However, the poet’s main attention goes to Achilles of whom he says in line 5: ceteris maior, tibi miles impar, (‘he was a greater warrior than any other, but no match for you [Apollo],’). In this one line the poet makes clear that Achilles had gone too far when he fought with the god himself who was disguised as Paris. Horatius does not make clear whether Achilles should have known this. After this, the poet relates a second example in which Achilles seriously oversteps the mark. In lines 17-20 he refers to Achilles’ cruelty which was offensive to Romans, but not to Homerus’ heroes.

\[
\text{sed palam captis gravis, heu nefas! heu!}
\]
\[
\text{nescios fari pueros Achivis ureret flammis, etiam latentem matris in alvo,}
\]
\[\text{\q{but quite openly he would have cruelly ill-treated the captives; ah, think of the enormity of it! He would have burnt with Achaean fire the children as yet incapable of speech, and even the infant lying in its mother’s womb,'}}\]

\textit{Carmen} 4.6, 17-20

Had it not been for Venus’ and Apollo’s intervention, Aeneas would have perished. This reveals the true reason for Achilles’ death by Apollo’s hand: ‘Achilles stood in the way of fate’s plan for the rise of Rome.’\(^{487}\)

In the last five stanzas, Horatius recognises Apollo as the source of his poetic inspiration and addresses the choir of boys and girls who sang his \textit{Carmen Saeculare}. By asking for the god’s protection at the performance of the festive ode he shows his lack of pride. However, Horatius shows less modesty than we might have expected. In the last stanza he addresses one of the choir girls who might say in future that she has performed the hymn to please the gods, “having learned the tune from its eminent composer: Horace.” (\textit{docilis modorum/vatis Horati}).

I label the poem as ‘political’ because the subject matter is the \textit{Carmen Saeculare} which is a praise of the restoration of Rome and because the poem exudes the feeling that the new order is permanent.

\textit{Carmen} 4.7 is about the seasons of life and mortality and 4.8 about the power of poetry. The first of the two odes begins at a time when one feels the first warmth of spring and before moving on to the seasons which follow, the poet sets out the theme of the poem in lines 7-8:

\[
\text{immortalia ne speres, monet annus et almum quae rapit hora diem:}
\]
\[\text{\q{You should not hope for immortality; that is the message of the year and the hour that steals away the kindly day.'}}\]
In the remainder of the poem the themes of the uncertainty of life’s end (lines 17-18) and the irrevocability of death appear.

_Carmen_ 4.8 has puzzled many scholars. Was it an accompaniment to a presentation copy of book 4, or an introductory poem to the same book, which was perhaps first abandoned and later added? Was it the first part of the next poem for Lollius? I will discuss the poem as it stands. The ode is addressed to Censorinus, who was a friend of Horatius and may have been the consul of that name in 39 B.C., or to his son who was consul in 8 B.C. Horatius remarks that he could not offer works of art, but that he liked to present poetry. He adds that the Muse of poetry is the most suitable to record the achievements of great men. That is where the poem ends.

_Carmen_ 4.9 is addressed to M. Lollius, consul in 21 B.C., proconsul in Macedonia in 19-18 B.C. and governor in Gallia comata (over the Alps) in 17-16 B.C. This becomes clear only after a long introduction in which Horatius assures that his _Carmina_ will be comparable to Homerus, Pindarus, Simonides, Sappho and other Greek lyricists. Furthermore, Helena was not the only adulteress in ancient times and Hector, Teucer and Agamemnon were not the only heroes: indeed we do not know of other ancient heroes, save those which were immortalised by poetry. In lines 26-30 Horatius writes:

```
[...]; sed omnes illacrimabiles
urgentur ignotique longa
nocte, carent quia vate sacro.
paulum sepultae distat inertiae
celata virtus. [...]
```

(‘[...]; but all lie buried unwept
and unknown in the long night,
because they lack a sacred bard.
In the grave there is little to distinguish unrecorded valour from forgotten cowardice. [...]’)

_Carmen_ 4.9, 26-30

The next line begins with the encomium proper of Lollius which Horatius formulates in rather general terms. Lollius has a mind ‘wise in practical affairs’ (animus tibi rerumque prudens), he is upright (rectus), ‘swift to punish dishonest greed’ (vindex avarae fraudis) and when in office he ‘rejected the bribes of the guilty’ (reiecit [...] dona nocentium) and ‘carried his weapons victoriously’ (explicit sua victor arma). At the end of the poem, Horatius offers more general remarks:

```
non possidentem multa vocaveris
recte beatum: rectius occupat
nomen beati, qui deorum
muneribus sapienter uti
```

(‘One would not be right to call happy the man of

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489 Quinn, 2004, 316.
many possessions; the title of happy is more rightly claimed by the man who has the intelligence to make wise use of the god’s gifts’)

*Carmen* 4.9, 45-48

The poem is phrased in rather uninspired language and the images are obligatory. However, it is clearly a panegyric of Lollius and Horatius’ choice of words with which he praises Lollius reveals the poet’s views on life. I have labeled the poem as ‘private political’.

Next, there are four poems about general and personal subjects and about matters of love. *Carmen* 4.10 describes the boy Ligurinus’ fading beauty, who will soon no longer be attractive to men and who regrets that he did not feel before what he feels at present. The eleventh ode is a poem of invitation to Phyllis, the ‘last of my loves’ (*meorum/finis amorum*) (lines 31-32). She is invited to join the poet for a party in honour of Maecenas’ birthday as one reads in lines 18-20:

```
[...], quod ex hac luce Maecenas meus adfluentis ordinat annos.
('[...] because from this bright day my dear Maecenas counts the course of his years.')
```

*Carmen* 4.11, 18-20

Horatius then tells Phyllis that she has no chance with Telephus who has been captured by a rich girl. Phyllis should not be too ambitious: Phaetion and Bellerophon *exemplum grave praebet* (‘provide a weighty moral’) (line 26). The poem ends with Horatius’ request that she may ‘learn some tunes/that you can sing to me with your lovely voice’ (*condisce modos, amanda/voce quos reddas*). *Carmen* 4.12 is again about a party, this time an invitation to Vergilius. The poem was either written before 19 B.C., the year in which Vergilius died, or otherwise the poet describes an imaginary party. It is set at the time of a new spring when *nec prata rigent* (‘the fields are no longer frozen’) and when the mythical swallow (Procne) builds her nest and the shepherds *delectantque deum cui pecus et nigri/colles Arcadiae placent*. (‘are delighting the god [Pan] who loves the flocks/and dark hills of Arcadia.’) (lines 11-12). Horatius promises his guest the most exquisite liquors, which he has learned to appreciate at the tables of *iuvenum nobilium* (‘young nobles’). In the same way that a *nardi parvus onyx* (‘a tiny shell of spikenard’) will be accepted in exchange for a full jar of respectable wine, so Vergilius is asked to ‘come quickly – with your contribution’ (*cum tua/velox merce veni*) (lines 21-22). One can interpret *merce* as a request for one of Vergilius’ poems in return for his invitation to the party. In the closing lines of the poem Horatius admonishes Vergilius in the same manner as he had often urged Maecenas to relax: *dulce est desipere in loco* (‘It’s nice to be silly on the right occasion’). The thirteenth ode is a ‘study in the ageing flirt’, *tamen/vis formosa videri* (‘you still/want to look pretty’), and who wants to enjoy a drinking party to the full. Horatius observes Lyce, one of his friends and he sees her faded beauty.

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490 *Nardus* is spikenard, an expensive odour. In Dutch the oil is known as ‘*nardus-olie*’. 
The theme of Carmen 4.14 is that of abundant praise of Augustus. Horatius gives as the formal occasions for this eulogy the defeat of the Vindelici which he attributes in the present poem to Augustus (lines 7-8), the Genauni and Breuni to Drusus (lines 9-13) and the rout of the Raeti (lines 14-32) in 15 B.C. to the maior Neronum (‘the elder Nero [Tiberius]’). In fact the Alpine campaign of 15 B.C. was a joint venture of Tiberius and Drusus. The latter was given praise earlier in Carmen 4.4, while the present ode concentrates on his elder brother Tiberius, before the poem turns into a eulogy of Augustus. The opening of 4.14 is addressed to Augustus, as one can read in lines 1-9:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{QUAE cura patrum quaee Quiritium} \\
&\text{plenis honorum muneribus tuas,} \\
&\text{Auguste, virtutes in aevum} \\
&\text{per titulos memoresque fastus} \\
&\text{aeternet, o, qua sol habitabilis} \\
&\text{illustrat oras, maxime principum?} \\
&\text{quem legis expertes Latinae} \\
&\text{Vindelici didicere nuper,} \\
&\text{quid Marte posses. [...]}
\end{align*}
\]

(‘Senate and people are anxious to immortalise your virtues for all time with full honours through inscriptions and public records. How can this be done, Augustus, most mighty Princeps wherever the sun shines on habitable regions, whose military power was recently learned to their cost by the Vindelici, who lay beyond the reach of Latium’s laws? [...]’)

\textit{Carmen} 4.14, 1-9

In these lines Horatius describes the preparations for the celebrations of Augustus’ return and he proclaims the desire of the Senate and people of Rome to record Augustus’ virtutes. These could refer not only to his military success abroad, but also to the Augustan values as a moral fundament of the new ‘Golden Age’, as lines 7-8 show: the Vindelici beyond the Alps have now been brought under Latium’s laws which can be interpreted that the Augustan civilisation has spread over Italia as well as over greater parts of Europe. After this, the poet paints Tiberius’ achievements in the third to eighth stanzas.

In the ninth stanza of 4.14 the poem returns to Augustus. Horatius testifies that Tiberius’ successes would not have been possible without the support of his adopted father. In lines 33-34 he writes: \textit{te copias, te consilium et tuos praebente divos} (‘and the troops, tactics and divine assistance were all supplied by you.’). In the finale Horatius portrays the achievements of Augustus in his military and diplomatic campaigns. It had all begun fifteen years earlier, in Alexandria when he had overcome the threat of Cleopatra and Antonius, as one reads in lines 34-36:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{te copias, te consilium et tuos praebente divos} \\
&\text{et neque suis virtutibus gloriam} \\
&\text{nec in armis militum imperio.}
\end{align*}
\]

491 The Breuni lived in the area which is nowadays the region of the Brenner and they were fierce fighters (\textit{Der Kleine Pauly}, Vol. I, 944). The homeland of the Genauni was probably the area of modern Garmisch Partenkirchen (\textit{Der Kleine Pauly}, Vol. II, 738). See also page 213, note 482 and the discussion of Carmen 4.4 on pages 213-215 of this book.
However, it did not finish in that year: over the past fifteen years Augustus had overcome many other peoples and lands, such as the Medes and the Scythians and the sources of the Nile, the Danube and the Tigris and the land of the Britons, Gaul and stubborn Iberia.

I have interpreted this poem as ‘political’ which is supportive of Augustus.

Finally, I will examine the last ode which concludes the four books (4.15). In lines 4-6 of this poem Horatius introduces the new Augustan age for the first time which has restored the economy and brought peace:

\[
\text{[...]. tua, Caesar, aetas}  \\
\text{fruges et agris rettulit uberes,}  \\
\text{et signa nostro restituit lovi}  \\
\text{([...]. Your age, Caesar, has brought back}  \\
\text{rich harvests to the fields, and}  \\
\text{restored to our Jove the standards [held by the Parthians]‘)  \\
\text{Carmen 4.15, 4-6}
\]

He refers in lines 9-11 to the programme of new laws ([... et ordinem/rectum evaganti frena licentiae/iniecit [...] ([... it has put a bridle on licence which was straying beyond the proper limits [...]’) and the restoration of old Roman values (line 12) (et veteres revocavit artis (‘and revived the ancient arts’). The words of the fifth stanza repeat the well-known theme of Augustus bringing peace and stability.

\[
\text{custode rerum Caesare non furor}  \\
\text{civilis aut vis exigit otium,}  \\
\text{non ira, quae procudit ensis}  \\
\text{et miseris inimicat urbis.}  \\
\text{('With Caesar in charge of affairs, peace will not be}  \\
\text{driven out by civic madness or violence, or by the anger}  \\
\text{that beats out swords and makes cities wretched by}  \\
\text{turning them against one another.’)  \\
\text{Carmen 4.15, 17-20}
\]

The last stanza of the Carmina is a beautiful finale to the four books. Horatius closes with an allusion to the greatness of Augustus by referring to Troy, Anchises and the offspring of Venus, Aeneas and Augustus. One reads in lines 27-32:

\[
\text{cum prole matronisque nostris,}  \\
\text{rite deos prius apprecati,}  \\
\text{Carmen 4.15, 27-32}
\]
This allusion to Augustus (\textit{virtute functos duces} (‘leaders who lived their lives like true men’) is one of the most subtle in Horatius’ poetry and is the crown of the panegyrics.\footnote{Lowrie, 2007, 77-89. In an essay entitled “Horace and Augustus” Michèle Lowrie gives all references to Augustus in Horatius’ poetry. In the \textit{Carmina} these occur in 1.2, 1.6, 1.12, 1.21, 1.35, 1.37, 2.9, 2.12, 3.2 - 3.6 (\textit{Roman Odes}), 3.14, 3.24, 3.25, 4.2, 4.5, 4.6, 4.14 and 4.15. In the \textit{Sermones} 1.3, 1.5, 2.1, 2.5 and 2.6. In the \textit{Epodi} 1, 7, 9 and 16. and in the \textit{Epistulae} 1.3, 1.5, 1.12, 1.13, 1.16, 1.18 and 2.1 (\textit{Letter to Augustus}).}

The last ode is a rich eulogy of Augustus, who shields Rome and who has restored old values. Brink holds the view that Horatius has written his panegyrics to Augustus after serious requests from the emperor.\footnote{Brink, 1982, 547-548 and 551-552. See also Lowrie, 2007, 86-87. She argues that one reads in the fourth book of \textit{Carmina} that ‘the poet gradually lets his distance [towards Augustus] go.’ She too questions whether Augustus put pressure on Horatius and she quotes the arguments of White, 1993, 65.}

This pressure came after Maecenas had finished his public duties in 19 \textit{B.C.} and was no longer able to shield Horatius. Thus in Brink’s view these \textit{Carmina} are belated examples of Horatius’ compliance which should prove that he wrote propaganda for the emperor. Brink hastens to add: ‘to avoid misunderstandings it should perhaps be said that such compliance as there was must not be taken for servility. The freedman’s son was the most unservile of men.’ Later I will argue that it is much more likely that these poems of praise came on Horatius’ own initiative as he felt by that time that Augustus had served Rome well, had restored peace and had created prosperity. This poem has a ‘political’ content and is supportive of Augustus.

\textit{Carmen} 4.15, 27-32

Book 4 as a whole has 6 ‘political’ poems of which 4 are about Horatius’ hope of better times (\textit{Carmina} 4.4, 4.5, 4.14 and 4.15), and which are all supportive of Augustus. Two deal with his own poetry (4.2 and 4.6). The one ‘private political’ poem (4.9) is about his views on life. Of the remaining 8 poems which have no dealings with actual issues, 2 deal with poetry: in 4.3 Horatius thanks Melpomene for the gift of poetry and in ode 4.8 he says that poetry is eternal and the poet (Horatius) can immortalise glorious deeds. In \textit{Carmina} 4.7 (time passes on and the seasons rotate; life comes to an end), 4.10 (beauty of a man fades away) and 4.12 (nature renews in spring; come and drink with me Vergilius) Horatius writes about private matters and personal thoughts. There are 3 poems about matters of love (4.1, 4.11 and 4.13).

The results of the analyses are presented below and summarised in appendix \textit{VI}. These show that of the 38 poems in book 1 of the \textit{Carmina}, 14 deal with ‘political’ or ‘private politi-
cal’ subjects (37%). In book 2 there are 20 poems, of which 13 deal with actuality (65%). Book 3 contains a total of 30 poems, of which again 13 are ‘political’ (43 %), and in book 4 this amounts to 7 out of 15 (46 %). In the four books the overall percentage is 46. Of the ‘non-political’ poems many are about love; we count 26 over the four books, which is a quarter.\footnote{Brink, 1982, 538. Brink counted the ‘political odes’ and remarks: ‘The number of wholly or partly political odes is not all that large – say, five in Book I and two or three in Book II; in Book III the position is slightly different with one or two but this time against the background of the “Roman Odes”.’ He has in mind 1.2, 1.6, 1.12, 1.35, 1.37, 2.1; 2.7, 3.1-6, 3.14 and 3.25. I have classified all but three of these (1.2, 1.6 and 2.7) as outright ‘political’ poems (see appendix vi), and I have concluded that there are 21 in books I-III. Brink counts 15 and it seems therefore that I have used a wider definition than Brink who also states that ‘political allusions are often found in poems with a wider moral scope’; these I have counted as ‘private political’ poems. See appendix VIII. In about 27 B.C., the year of the ‘First Settlement’, Horatius turns away from the critical Carmina towards the supportive poems.} The dates of writing which can be important when deciding on the likelihood of propaganda have been presented in the same appendix.

In summary, the following conclusions can be drawn.

Firstly, in the odes which deal with actual themes Horatius shows greater reservation about Augustus’ achievements before 27 B.C. than after. It seems as if he has accepted that the princeps is the preferred way to stability.\footnote{See appendix VIII. In about 27 B.C., the year of the ‘First Settlement’, Horatius turns away from the critical Carmina towards the supportive poems.}

Secondly, apart from one ode which has elements of a recusatio (4.2) and was written sometime between 17 and 13 B.C. Horatius wrote his recusatio and other critical odes about Augustus before 23 B.C.

Thirdly, the panegyrics of the fourth book (17-13 B.C.) are more exuberant than those of the first three books (before 23 B.C.).

Fourthly, in his personal or ‘private political’ poems Horatius expresses his affinity with Augustan values; love of life in the country, moderation, endurance, simplicity, etc. This is maintained throughout the four books.

Fifthly, Cleopatra and Antonius do not feature in any poem before 30 B.C., the year of their deaths. There are only four odes (1.37, 2.19, 3.3 and 3.6) about them anyway.

\section*{VI.b. The Epistolae: a book of poems presented as letters in verse}

Personal letters in prose had been published before Horatius’ time. More than 800 letters of Cicero (106-43 B.C.) are known, as well as many by Pompeius, Iulius Caesar and others. Lucilius had written letters in verse, but as far as we know it was Horatius who was the first to release a book of poems in 20 or 19 B.C. which were presented as letters in verse. These were meant to be read as poems and the book is certainly not a book of letters in the form of poems.\footnote{Ferri, 2007, 121-131; Mayer, 1994, 1-52.}

Book 1 contains 19 short hexameter poems in the form of personal messages to friends, young and educated men. The audience which Horatius wanted to reach was obviously wider. The last poem takes the form of an address to the whole book. His second book of letters in verse contains two longer letters, the first to Augustus and the second to Iulius Florus. Apart from these two there is a third letter, to the Pisones, better known as the Ars Poetica.
The unifying factor of the book is Horatius’ concern for ethics, his views on *recte vivere* (‘live aright’). Horatius’ focus is on freedom and self-sufficiency. In many of the letters of the first book Horatius offers advice on and meditates about philosophical and moral questions. Horatius presents himself as the man in search of truth, who is able to see the questions from different angles. He shares his thoughts with the reader. However, he should not be labeled as a philosopher. Although he was probably inspired by the letters of Epicurus and was a follower of his teachings, he makes it clear that much, perhaps even most, wisdom is to be found in poetry. Homerus is his guide as the opening lines from *Epistula* 1.2 shows:

*TROIANI belli scriptorem, Maxime Lolli,*
*dum tu declamas Romae, Praeneste relegi;*
*qui quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,*
*planius ac melius Chrysippo et Crantor dicit.*

(‘While you, Lollius Maximus, declaim at Rome, I have been reading afresh at Praeneste the writer of the Trojan War; who tells us what is fair, what is foul, what is helpful, what not, more plainly and better than Chrysippus or Crantor.’)

*Epistula* 1.2, 1-4

Other poems deal with straightforward domestic issues, such as *Epistulae* 1.4 and 1.5 which are invitations, 1.9 a letter of introduction or 1.13 a letter with instructions to his slave who delivers his three books of *Carmina* to Augustus. There has been much scholarly argument whether the letters were actually meant as communications with a real addressee or poems ‘which imitate reality’. In some letters Horatius uses the opportunity to expound his ideas. Mayer sees an element of self-revelation and giving an example to others. Horatius’ view is that poets should instruct. It is generally held that Horatius began the composition of the letters in 23 B.C. and that they were published in 20 or 19 B.C., at a time when Horatius was an established poet in Rome who belonged to the intellectual elite and was asked by Augustus to join his personal staff. Below I will analyse the twenty *Epistulae* of book 1 and the two of book 2. In my analysis I will again focus on the question whether these poems refer to actuality and are a commentary on political or social issues. The results are summarized in appendix VII.

In the first *Epistula* in book 1, which is dedicated to Maecenas, Horatius announces that he wants to finish writing lyric verses. In line 10 he says: *nunc itaque et versus et cetera ludicra pono* (‘So now I lay aside my verses and all other toys’). He is now too old for this and prefers to pursue the study of philosophy; In line 16 he professes that he will be *agilis fio et mersor civilibus undis* (‘I become all action, and plunge into the tide of civil life’), a good Stoic attitude. But beside the Stoics he feels attracted to *Aristippi praecepta* (‘the rules of Aristippos’), the forerunner of Epicurus, who taught that man should be in control of circumstances. He is impatient as lines 23 and 24 show: *sic mihi tarda fluunt ingrataque tempora, quae*
spem/consiliumque morantur agendi naviter id (‘so slow and thankless flow for me the hours which defer my hope and purpose of setting myself vigorously to that task’).

Other themes include health of body and mind, avoiding poverty at all cost and escape from evil. It is better to be upright than rich and not to go along with popular opinion, as line 76 states: nam quid sequar aut quem? (‘For what am I to follow or whom?’). Men change their likings every hour (line 82). And I, Horatius, change as well, but the Stoics follow the right course. The last three lines sum this up.

ad summam, sapiens uno minor est love, dives,
liber, honoratus, pulcher, rex denique regum;
praecipue sanus, nisi cum pituita molesta est.
(‘To sum up: the wise man is less than Jove alone. He is rich, free, honoured, beautiful, nay a king of kings; above all, sound – save when troubled by the “flu”!’)

Epistula 1.1, 106-109

Although Horatius presents a number of his beliefs in this poem, it has no overt general political engagement. I place this letter in the group in which Horatius deals with general moral issues, the ‘private political’ poems.

The second letter is to a certain degree similar to the first. Horatius tries to interest Lollius, who is still a young man, in moral philosophy by reading Homerus. Horatius remarks that Homerus is wiser and a better moral guide than all philosophers. In lines 6-8 he summarises the *Ilîas* and shows his rejection of war, which is not surprising after so many years of bloody civil strife.

fabula, qua Paridis propter narratur amorem
*Graecia Barbariae lento collisa duello,
stultorum regum et populorum continet aestus.*
(‘The story in which it is told how, because of Paris’s love Greece clashed in tedious war with a foreign land, embraces the passions of foolish kings and peoples.’)

Epistula 1.2, 6-8

And in lines 17-18 he says about the *Odyssea*:

rursus, quid virtus et quid sapientia possit
utile proposuit nobis exemplar Vlixen,
(‘Again, of the power of worth and wisdom he has set before us an instructive pattern in Ulysses,’)

Epistula 1.2, 17-18

We must live like Odysseus and acknowledge the importance of living ‘aright’. Do not put off the day of reform, Horatius testifies in lines 41-42.

[...] qui recte vivendi prorogat horam,
rusticus exspectat dum defluat amnis; [...]
(‘[...] He who puts off the hour of right living is like the bumpkin waiting for the river to run out: [...’])
In the remainder of the poem Horatius gives moral lessons. Do not pursue riches as these do not bring health; clean your heart and make it sound. In the last seventeen lines Horatius gives a variety of moral maxims, such as line 56 *certum voto pete finem* (‘aim at a fixed limit for your desires’), line 62 *ira furor brevis est: animum regre*, (‘Anger is short-lived madness. Rule your passion,’) or lines 67-68 [*nunc adibie puro/pectore verba puere, nunc te melioribus offer*]. (‘[…] Now, while still a boy, drink in my words/with clean heart, now trust yourself to your betters’).

Horatius inquires after Florus’ and his friends’ literary activities during the journey, as in line 7 when he asks: *quis sibi res gestas Augusti scribere sumit?* (‘Who takes upon him to record the exploits of Augustus’). Several names pass by; Titius (line 9) who cannot be identified with certainty, Celsus (line 14) who is the Celsus Albinovanus of *Epistula* 1.8 and now unknown and L. Munatius Plancus who is the addressee of *Carmen* 1.7 (line 31). The latter could either be the elder or a son. Having encouraged young Florus in his literary pursuits, Horatius advises him not to neglect the study which leads to real understanding (*sapientia*). In lines 25-27 one reads:

\[
\text{[...]. quosdi} \\
\text{frigida curarum fomenta relinquere posses,} \\
\text{quo te caelestis sapientia duceret, ires.} \\
\text{(...) But could you} \\
\text{but lay aside your cares – those cold compresses –} \\
\text{you would rise to where heavenly wisdom would lead.}
\]

*Epistula* 1.3, 25-27

In the last line of the letter Horatius urges Florus to make peace with Munatius with whom he obviously quarreled and invites both to dinner when they are back in Rome, *pascitur in vestrum reditum votiva iuvenca* (‘a votive heifer is fattening against your return’).

The letter is a mixture of friendly concern for the young and homely advice. Again there is no overt political content. Personal moral issues form the content of the second and third letter and I have placed these in the group of ‘private political’ poems.

The next two *Epistulae* 1.4 and 1.5 are both letters of invitation, the first to a visit at Horatius’ farm and the second to a dinner. The first is addressed to the poet Albius Tibullus who had just read Horatius’ *Sermones*. As Tibullus ‘seems to have been of a sensitive and somewhat melancholy disposition’ Horatius tries to cheer him up and invites him to his Sabine farm.

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500 Mayer, 1994, 8 suggests that Titius was perhaps either the friend of Ovidius or the son of M. Titius who was consul in 31 B.C. L. Munatius Plancus was consul in 42 B.C. who after the fall of Perusia fled with Fulvia to Marcus Antonius in Athens; he joined Octavians’ party in 32. He was also the man who in 27 B.C. in the senate proposed the title ‘Augustus’ for Octavianus. He died after 15 B.C. See *Der Kleine Pauly*, 1969, Vol. III, 1461-1462.

501 Fairclough (Loeb), 1999, 275.
Epistula 1.5 was written to invite a member of the old patrician family of the Manlii Torquati for dinner to be held on the evening before Augustus' birthday. The letter says that this date was chosen so that the guests could sleep late the following morning. The dinner will be simple, but the wine will be excellent, a Massic from the region of Campania where a Manlius defeated the Latins in 340 B.C. Torquatus is asked to bring some guests. Contrary to custom the dinner party will be held in the evening when it is cooler and when Torquatus, who is a lawyer, has seen his last clients of the day.

In the sixth letter, which is addressed to an unknown Numicius, Horatius expresses some of his personal ideas. In Epistulae 1.1 and 1.2 he refers to some philosophical schools. The opening words are significant, nil admirari, the philosophic calm is the correct attitude to open the mind and make learning possible. In this letter Horatius offers clues to living ‘aright’ and happiness in a passage which begins at line 29; vis recte vivere: quis non? (‘You wish to live aright (and who does not?)’). Do not give matters too much value and do not pursue ideals in excess, be it Virtus, or regina Pecunia (‘Queen Cash’), or popularity, or good eating or none of these. This poem does not concern ‘political’ or ‘private political’ issues.

Epistula 1.7 is addressed to Maecenas. The letter is interesting as it gives us an insight into how Horatius sees his relationship with Maecenas and shows us his independence from Maecenas. Obviously Horatius stayed longer in the country than he had originally foreseen and in the letter he explains to his amicus why. It was his anxiety about his health that kept him away from Rome. He assures Maecenas that he is grateful for his gifts, but he also draws the boundaries of his dependence. In lines 24-26 Horatius says:

dignum praestabo me etiam pro laude merentis.
quodsi me noles usquam discedere, reddes
forte latus, nigros angusta fronte capillos,

(‘Worthy I, too, will show myself, as the glory of your good deed demands. But if you will never suffer me to leave you, you must give me back strength of lung, and black locks on a narrow brow;’)

Epistula 1.7, 24-26

Horatius insists that he is no longer a young man and that he can not spend as much time with Maecenas as he did in the past. Mayer summarises the remainder of the poem (71 lines), in which Horatius tells a number of stories to illustrate his point, as follows: ‘But from this opens out an altogether more pressing issue, the right relation between patron and client, focussed above all on the patron’s obligation to keep an eye on the client’s best interests and so respect his aspiration towards independence and self-determination.’ Above I have argued that I do not consider the relationship between Maecenas and Horatius – or

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Vergilius for that matter – as a patron-client relationship but, one of amicitia. However, amicitia certainly carries the obligations which Mayer mentions.  

*Epistula* 1.7 gives insight into several aspects of Horatius’ way of thinking about amicitia and independence. These issues are not neutral because it concerns the relationship between a powerful politician (Maecenas) and the poet, which bears upon the poet’s public voice. Therefore, the letter has a ‘private political’ content.

The two letters which follow are very short and deal with personal matters. In *Epistula* 1.8 Horatius writes to Celsus Albinovanus, who also features in the third letter. The poet grumbles about his sickness, his *funesto veterno* (‘fatal lethargy’). The letter closes with Horatius wishing his friend good health and not too much elation from his position on the staff of Tiberius. The ninth letter is a letter of introduction of a certain Septimius to Tiberius. Horatius knows his place.

*Epistula* 1.10, addressed to Aristius Fuscus, concerns a well-known Horatian theme, the praise of the countryside.  
The town has other attractions and city dwellers and country folk can choose according to their taste. Simple country life, however, offers independence as lines 8 and 9 testify:

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quid quaeris? vivo et regno, simul ista reliqui
quae vos ad caelum fertis rumore secundo,
(‘In short: I live and reign, as soon as I have left behind what you townsmen with shouts of applause extol to the skies.’)
*Epistula* 1.10, 8-9
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In line 32 Horatius says that the city has ‘grandeur’ (*fuge magna* (‘flee grandeur’), but this is fickle as it depends on fortune, which may change. Lines 30-31 say:

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quem res plus nimio delectavere secundae,
mutatae quatient. […]
(‘One whom Fortune’s smiles have delighted overmuch, will reel under the shock of change. […]’)
*Epistula* 1.10, 30-31
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Freedom can be found under a humble roof (*paupere tecto*) and sufficiency is enough when one can gather *plura quam satis est* (more than enough) (lines 45-46). The poem ends with Horatius saying that he is happy, save that his friend is not with him. This letter refers to autarky and to the temporary nature of fortune: I interpret the letter as ‘private political’.

The following poem, *Epistula* 1.11, addresses a friend of the poet, Bullatius, who is rich and travels in Asia to see the sights. Horatius suggests he settles in a lonely place where one can be happy when one’s mind is at rest. *Epistula* 1.12 was addressed to Iccius, the manager of M. Agrippa’s Sicilian estates, who also featured in *Carmen* 1.29, where he deserts philosophy to join a military campaign in Arabia. He complains about his work. Although he is not the owner, Horatius tells him that there is enough to live on. Iccius is a student of natural philos-
ophy, in spite of his busy life. Horatius urges him to study moral philosophy as well which will make him happier. At the end of the poem Horatius broaches the themes of bounty and military successes abroad.

The addressee of Epistula 1.13 is a certain Vinius Asina who was sent by Horatius to Augustus in order to hand a book of poems to the princeps: probably the Carmina books 1-3. In this letter Horatius worries about the reception of his poems and he gives Vinius further instructions as to how to behave: strong on the road and tactful at court. Horatius’ message is obviously that Augustus takes a close interest in his work.

In the fourteenth letter Horatius is in Rome and he writes to one of his slaves who is now the bailiff at his Sabine estate. The slave would prefer to be in Rome and is bored in the countryside. However, Horatius in Rome longs for the life at his farm. Horatius is the wise old man, whilst the slave hankers after the bustle of the city. In the fourteenth letter Horatius gives his view on life which is beautifully expressed in the opening line:

\[ \textit{VILICE silvarum et mihi me reddentis agelli,} \]
\[ ('Bailiff of my woods and of the little farm which makes me myself again –') \]

\textit{Epistula} 1.14, 1

In the next letter, the sixteenth, Horatius addresses a certain Quinctius who can not be identified.\textsuperscript{506} Horatius tells him about his estate and the produce of his farm. In lines 15 and 16 he assures Quinctius of his good health:

\[ \textit{hae latebrae dulces, etiam, si credis, amoenae,}\]
\[ \textit{incolumen tibi me praestant Septembribus horis}. \]
\[ ('This retreat, so sweet – yes, believe me, so bewitching – keeps me, my friend, in sound health in September’s heat.’) \]

\textit{Epistula} 1.16, 15-16

Next, Horatius enquires after Quinctius’ health and asks him how he is getting on as an official. Is he as well and happy as people think he is? Popularity is fragile. If ever Quinctius were to be praised with flattering words like these which ‘according to the scholiasts are the verses cited from the “Panegyric on Augustus” by Varrius, Virgil’s great friend’ he should pause to think:\textsuperscript{507}

\[ \textit{‘tene magis salvum populus velit an populum tu,}\]
\[ \textit{servet in ambiguo qui consulit et tibi et urbi Iuppiter’, Augusti laudes agnoscer e possis:} \]

\textsuperscript{506} Quinctius is also mentioned in Carmen 2.11; see page 185 of this book.

\textsuperscript{507} Fairclough (Loeb), 1999, 352. See also Mayer, 1994, 36-39 and 230-231.
Quintius would certainly know that these words were not addressed to him but to Augustus. The passage as a whole tells us that in public life many mistakes are made and that men who may seem ‘good’, are not necessarily ‘good’, even though the powerful are often seen as unassailable.

After this, Horatius muses about the *vir bonus* (‘the good man’). The really good man is not only just and good in public but also in private. The good man is epitomised by Dionysus who is independent and free and dares to defy the mighty king Pentheus. In lines 73-75 we read:

*vir bonus et sapiens audebit dicere: ‘Pentheu, rector Thebarum, quid me perferre patique indignum cokes?’* [...] (‘The truly good and wise man will have courage to say: “Pentheus, lord of Thebes, what shame will you compel me to stand and suffer? ”’ [...])

*Epistula* 1.16, 73-75

Horatius concludes the poem in line 79 with the philosophical words:

*[..]. Mors ultima linea rerum est.*
(‘[...] Death is the line that marks the end of all.’)

*Epistula* 1.16, 79

This poem has more of a ‘public voice’ than the other *Epistulae*. Horatius places his reflections on the good man within the context of the management of public affairs which gives the poem truly ‘political’ content. In addition there is praise of Augustus by the citations from Varius’ panegyric: a work which was presumably widely known and d.

*Epistulae* 1.17 and 1.18 share the same theme, namely how to ingratiate oneself with the powerful. The seventeenth is addressed to an unidentified man called Scaeva. Horatius tells him that one can still be happy even if one is not rich or famous. A quiet life is to be preferred. The poet describes the contrast between Diogenes, the Cynic, and Aristippus. The former has learned that our needs are few and must be satisfied as cheaply as possible. The latter presents the role model for the young Roman careerists by ‘adapting himself to situation and occasion and role’, and mixing freely with the rich and powerful.

It is possible that Horatius’ advice was sought as his relationship with Maecenas was known and young men wanted to know how he had reached *amicitia* with somebody in such circumstances.

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508 Horatius refers here to Euripides’ *Bacchae*. Pentheus, king of Thebes, took the disguised Dionysus prisoner and interrogated him.

509 Mayer, 1994, 44 and 233. See also *Der Kleine Pauly, Band I*, 562: Aristippus of Cyrene (ab. 435-ab. 366 B.C.): ‘Seine innere Freiheit, die er als Frucht des Philosophierens bezeichnet, gestattet ihm, jeder Lebenslage ein Höchstmass von *ἡδονή* abzugewinnen, ohne den materiellen Gütern horig zu werden.’
an elevated position. One can also read in the poem that Horatius defended himself against the charge levelled at him that he was a sycophant of the great. In the last part of the poem the actual advice is given.

The eighteenth *Epistula* is addressed to Lollius, whom we know from the second *Epistula*. The poem is not about the relationship with a patron, but about *amicitia*. In the opening lines Horatius uses the word *amicus* (in line 2 *amicum*) and this returns in the lines 4 (*amicus*), 24 (*dives amicus*), 37 (*illius* which refers back to *dives amicus* in 24), 44 (*potentis amici*) and in 73 (*venerandi amici*). Horatius is clear about this relationship in lines 3-4:

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ut matrona meretrici dispar erit atque
discolor, infido scurrae distabit amicus.
('As matron and mistress will differ in temper and tone, so will the friend be distinct from the faithless parasite.’)
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*Epistula* 1.18, 3-4

Horatius sees the relationship which Lollius ought to have as one of *amicitia*, the same as he enjoys with Maecenas. Horatius’ advice can be summarised by ‘a true friend never plays the parasite (*scurra*), yet on the other hand never shows his independence by rudeness or by insistence upon trifles.’ Do not pursue one’s own tastes at the cost of his *dives amicus*, be discreet and make sure that one does not fall in love with a girl or boy in his household. And more practical advice follows.

In the passages with admonitions as to how to behave Horatius weaves a hidden panegyric to Augustus. In lines 54-66 he praises Lollius for his action in the Cantabrian wars in Northern Spain under a great leader, Augustus, who at the time of writing this poem in 20 B.C. is recovering the standards which the Parthians took from Crassus.

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[...]; denique saevam
militiam puer et Cantabrica bella tulisti
sub duce qui templis Parthorum signa refigit
nunc, et si quid abest Italis adiudicat armis.
[...], Actia pugna

tе duce per pueros hostile more refertur,
adversarius est frater, lacus Hadria, donec
alterutrum velox Victoria fronde coronet.
consentire suis studiis qui crediderit te,
fautor utroque tuum laudabit pollice ludum.
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('[...]. In fine, while a mere youth, you served in a hard campaign, and in the Cantabrian wars, under a captain who even now is taking down our standards from the Parthian temples and, if aught is still beyond our sway, is assigning it to the arms of Italy.’

'[...]; with you as captain, the Actian fight is presented by your slaves in true foemen’s style; opposing you is your brother, the lake is the Adriatic;

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510 See the discussion about patronage and *amicitia* on pages 49-54 of this book.
till winged Victory crowns with leafage one or the other chief-tain. He who believes that you fall in with his pursuits will with both thumbs eagerly commend your sport.

_Epistula_ 1.18, 54-57 and 61-66

Lollius stages this mock battle at his father’s estate on the Adriatic coast. He ‘fights’ his brother: this is an allusion to the civil war, a war between brothers. In the poem the brothers are Octavianus and Antonius and the mock battle does not make clear who will win. This passage shows that ten years after Actium the sea battle could be turned into a young man’s pastime, but perhaps could still touch a nerve. There had been rumours indeed that Augustus had not been as successful at Naulochus and Actium as he had wished and that the positive outcome of the battles had been due to Agrippa. In lines 59-60 Horatius says _quamvis nil extra numerum fecisse modumque/curas_, (‘however much you take care to do nothing out of time and tune’). Lollius was encouraged to make sure he was on the right side of Augustus and that if he did so, there would be enough room for him to play his game.

Towards the end of the poem Horatius urges his young friend to read and study the _doctos_ (‘wise’) - the philosophers and the poets - if he wants to pass his days in tranquility. The end of all is quiet retirement and as the previous poem (1.17) begins with a description of the values of simple life and of quiet retirement, the present (1.18) closes with this theme. In lines 102-103 Horatius says:

_{Quid pure tranquillet, honos an dulce lucellum, an secretum iter et fallentis semita vitae.}_

(‘What gives you unruffled calm – honour or the sweets of dear gain, or a secluded journey along the pathway of a life unnoticed?’) 

_Epistula_ 1.18, 102-103

and in lines 107-110 he continues by:

_{sit mihi quod nunc est, etiam minus, et mihi vivam quod superest aevi, si quid superesse volunt di; sit bona librorum et provisae frugis in annum copia, neu fluitem dubiae spe pendulus horae.}_

(‘May I have my present store, or even less; may I live to myself for what remains of life, if the god will that aught remain. May I have a goodly supply of books and of food to last a year; nor may I waver to and fro with the hopes of each uncertain hour.’)

_Epistula_ 1.18, 107-110

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512 Gurval, 1998, 165. Gurval states: ‘Horace never addressed in his poetry the former role of the princeps in civil war. Actium was not an exception.’ Gurval passes by a number of (critical) allusions to Octavianus in several poems which he wrote before 30 B.C. These are: _lambus_ 7 of 39 B.C. (renewal of civil war and role of Octavianus), _lambus_ 9 of 31 or 30 B.C. (Actium; was Octavianus competent?), _Sermo_ 2.2 of the period 33-30 B.C. (criticism of the land confiscations by Octavianus) and _Carmen_ 1.37 of 30 B.C. (Cleopatra Ode; Actium; Cleopatra and Octavianus’ triumph); the latter is not critical of Octavianus, but certainly refers to his role. See also Appendix VIII. For Octavianus’ role at Naulochus and Actium see also my analysis of _lambus_ 9 on pages 160-163 of this book.
Thus, in the end one retires with a good book.

In these two poems Horatius gives us his views on amicitia and the obligations which go with it. Epistulae 1.17 and 1.18 are about important moral matters appertaining to the social and political elite. Horatius returns to the traditional values and encourages his readers to construct their views on vivere recte with these in mind. I interpret these poems as ‘private political’.

The nineteenth Epistula, addressed to Maecenas, was Horatius’ answer to criticism of his book of iambi and of his books of Carmina which were released in 30 B.C. and 23 B.C. respectively. Poems ought not to be written by aquae potoribus (‘waterdrinkers’), but rather by the inspired vinosi (‘winebibbers’), such as Homerus. Halfway through the poem he writes his personal literary history.\(^{513}\) In lines 23-25 he declares:

\[
[...]. Parios ego primus iambos
ostendi Latio, numeros animosque secutus
Archilochi, non res et agentia verba Lycamen
\]
\(\text{‘[...]. I was the first to show to Latium the iambics of Paros, following the rhythms and spirit of Archilochus, not the themes or the words that hounded Lycambes.’} \)

Epistula 1.19, 23-25

He writes in lines 32-33 about Alcaeus:

\[
hunc ego, non alio dictum prius ore, Latinus
vulgavi fidicen. [...]
\]
\(\text{‘Him [Alcaeus], never before sung by other lips, I, the lyrist of Latium, have made known. [...]’} \)

Epistula 1.19, 32-33

He rejects the criticism that he had slavishly followed the Greek masters. In the last third of the poem he addresses what he considers the real reasons for the criticism; he had not tried to please and to win approval. Horatius is seen as being arrogant. In lines 37-38 he says:

\[
non ego ventosae plebis suffragia venor
impensis cenarum et tritae munere vestis;
\]
\(\text{‘I am not one to hunt for the votes of a fickle public at the cost of suppers and gifts of worn-out clothes.’} \)

Epistula 1.19, 37-38

After this declaration of Horatius’ confidence, independence the final poem in the book follows, an address to the book itself, which is portrayed as if it were a young slave who wants to see the world. The book either goes to far-away Utica, or it awaits the abominable fate of a schoolbook, as Horatius says in line 17: pueros elementa docentem (‘as you teach boys their A B C.’). But there is another possibility. In line 19 he says:

\(^{513}\) See also pages 47-48 and 129 of this book.
cum tibi sol tepidus pluris ad moverit auris,
('When the milder sun brings you a larger audience')
*Epistula* 1.20, 19

And in the following lines Horatius testifies to his belief that he has achieved a position which commands respect. In line 23 we read;

\[ \text{me primis Vrbis belli placuisse domique;} \]
('that I found favour, both in war and peace, with the foremost in the State;')
*Epistula* 1.20, 23

Looking at the whole of the first book of *Epistulae* the following conclusions may be drawn.

*Firstly*, the book has 9 poems which deal with actuality which is about half of the total. This does not differ much from Horatius’ work in total. The majority of these are what I have called ‘private political’ poems.

*Secondly*, these ‘private political’ poems deal with moral issues or give Horatius’ personal views on life.

In these years of adult life and with the experience of a man in his forties, Horatius was very involved in the world of philosophy – which was the world of ethics – and his friends. Traditional poetry had become less important and he concentrated on giving his messages with themes as amicitia and how to remain independent (e.g. 1.7, 1.17, 1.18) and themes of self-sufficiency (e.g. 1.10, 1.16), simplicity and living ‘aright’ (e.g. 1.5, 1.16, 1.19). He again picked up several topics from the *Sermones*: an example is the theme of exaggeration in *Epistula* 1.15 when the glutton preaches contentment with the simple life, but is not in peace with himself. *Sermon* 2.7 has a similar theme. He views Roman society from his Sabine estate as a commentator. The tone is contemplative and often indirect; the reader is reached through the addressee, to whom Horatius wrote as if from the sideline of Roman society.

Book 2 contains two longer letters, the *Epistula ad Augustum* (2.1) and the *Epistula ad Florum* (2.2). The story in Suetonius’ *Vita Horati* of Augustus’ teasing note asking Horatius for a poem which was addressed to him is well-known. This poem, which we now know as the *Epistula ad Augustum*, was most likely written in 11 B.C. In the opening lines Horatius praises Augustus and testifies to his regard for the princeps.

\[ \text{CVM tot sustineas et tanta negotia solus,} \]
\[ \text{res Italas armis tuteris, moribus ornes,} \]
\[ \text{legibus emendes, in publica commoda peccem,} \]
\[ \text{si longo sermone morer tua tempora, Caesar.} \]
('Seeing that you alone carry the weight of so many great charges, guarding our Italian state with arms, gracing her

---

514 See also page 42, note 106 of this book.
In this passage Horatius sees Augustus as guarding not just Rome, but the whole of Italia. Does he express here the notion of an emerging Italian national identity?

The poem continues by comparing Augustus to the demigods and heroes of the past and by testifying that Augustus’ achievements can be recognised at the right time, namely during his life. In line 15 we read:

*praesenti tibi maturos largimur honores,*

(‘Upon you, however, while still among us, we bestow honours betimes,’)

*Epistula 2.1, 15*

This timeliness is not characteristic for the Romans or perhaps the inhabitants of Italia - *tuus populus* in line 18 - who prefer everything ancient, especially in literature.

From this point onwards Horatius develops different aspects of Roman literary history. He quotes several examples from Livius Andronicus and Ennius until Terentius. He compares their official status with his own opinion of their merits and he states that the public and critics are mistaken. In lines 63-65 he says:

*interdum vulgus rectum videt, est ubi peccat.*

*si veteres ita miratur laudatque poetas*

*ut nihil anteferat, nihil illis comparet, errat:*

(‘At times the public see straight; sometimes they make mistakes. If they admire the ancient poets and cry them up so as to put nothing above them, nothing on their level, they are wrong.’)

*Epistula 2.1, 63-65*

Horatius then remarks that it is the spite and envy of the poets of today which make the critics and public acclaim the old writers. How different was the situation in Greece. After the Persian wars had finished the Greeks turned to *nugari* (‘trifle away the time’) (line 93), with athletics, sculpture, painting, music, tragedy, whilst they always appreciated the latest achievements of their poets and artists. However, we at Rome are more serious, Horatius says in lines 103-104:

*Romae dulce diu fuit et sollemne reclusa*

*mane domo vigilare, […]*

(‘At Rome it was long a pleasure and habit to be up at dawn with open doors, […]’)

*Epistula 2.1, 103-104*

We are practical men and only recently have we turned to writing verses. As I do myself, says Horatius in lines 112-113.

*[…] et prius orto*

*sole vigil calamum et chartas et scrinia posco.*
(‘[...] before sunrise I wake, and call for pen, paper, and writing-case.’)
*Epistula* 2.1, 112-113

We poets have much to offer society indeed: we educate the young, tell of noble deeds and write our sacred hymns.

After this Horatius turns to an analysis of the development of Roman literature, as he sees it. He discusses three classes: Roman poetic drama, poetry for public performance and poetry for reading. In his view drama goes back to the ‘harvest festivals’ of the original farming population in Latium. History shows how the old farmers’ songs lost their rough edge by men who changed their tune out of fear of the cudgel wielded by the men of law and through the refining influence of Greece. Line 156 captures the latter:

*Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit [*]…
(‘Greece, the captive, made her savage victor captive, [*]…’)  
*Epistula* 2.1, 156

But Roman drama remained too rough, as the famous dictum of line 160 shows:

*[…] hodieque manent vestigia ruris.
(‘[…] and still live on, traces of our rustic past.’)  
*Epistula* 2.1, 160

In Horatius’ time the educated Roman looked down on drama, not to mention Comedy and Plautus who was mainly interested in filling his pockets. In the following passage Horatius discusses drama for public performances which he rejects as in that case a poet is too dependent on his audience. He examines several kinds of audiences and their preferences. The masses want *ursum aut pugiles* (‘a bear or boxers’) (line 186). Knights ask for something else again and the noise in the theatre is terrible. Drama is not his forte, but he is aware that the great dramatic poets can move his soul.

Horatius prefers the third class of poetry which is written for quiet reading and he asks Augustus to look favourably on this art, to fill the newly established library in Apollo’s temple with volumes of poetry and to set up a cultural policy as it were by encouraging the poets of the day to write poetry for reading. In lines 216-218 he asks the *princeps*:

*curam redde brevem, si munus Apolline dignum  
vis complere libris et vatibus addere calcar,  
ut studio maiore petant Helicona virentem.
(‘bestow a moment’s attention, if you wish to fill with volumes that gift so worthy of Apollo, and to spur on our bards to seek with greater zeal Helicon’s verdant lawns.’)  
*Epistula* 2.1, 216-218

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517 This division in these three classes is taken from the discussion of the poem by Brink, 1982, 464-487.

518 See also page 47 of this book.
Horatius then continues by excusing the poets who are often without tact and over-sensitive to criticism. They live in hope that someone like Augustus will send for them, as he says in lines 227-228:

\[\text{[...], commodus ul}tro \]
\[\text{arcessas et egere vetes et scribere cogas.} \]
\[\text{([...], you will go as far as kindly to send for us, banish our poverty, and compel us to write.‘)}\]
\[\text{Epistula 2.1, 227-228}\]

In effect Horatius asks Augustus to continue to be a patron of the arts. After all the princeps is a man of good taste, not like Alexander the Great who asked a poor poet like Choerilus to write verses for him. Augustus however chose Vergilius and Varius and they did not disappoint him.

The poem ends with a recusatio in which Horatius declares that he would like to sing Augustus' exploits but he does not feel that he is able to. He says in lines 257-259:

\[\text{si quantum cuperem possem quoque; sed neque parvum carmen maiestas recipit tua, nec meus audet rem temptare pudor quam vires ferre recusent.} \]
\[\text{‘if only I had power equal to my longing; but neither does your majesty admit of a lowly strain, nor does my modesty dare to essay a task beyond my strength to bear.’} \]
\[\text{Epistula 2.1, 257-259}\]

In the last line Horatius shows much false modesty when he writes that in the end the work of poor poets will only be used as wrapping paper.

I have discussed the Epistula ad Augustum extensively not just because it is a long poem but since I interpret it as a ‘political’ poem, and not just one in which Horatius sets out his views on Roman poetry in general. He wrote this in 12 or 11 B.C., when Augustus was firmly settled as the sole ruler and Horatius was fifty four years old and perhaps felt that his end was near. I feel something of two moods in the work. Indeed, there is peace and Augustus ought to be praised for this. But, there is a mood of disappointment as well that Augustus had not done more in encouraging poetry which has so much to offer. The latter may have asked for this poem as appears from Suetonius’ later statement and Vergilius and Varius may have been chosen to sing Augustus’ praises, but in the end Horatius is critical of the results which are few.

The Epistula ad Florum (2.2) is addressed to the same Iulius Florus as Epistula 1.3.\[519\] The opening of the letter is about what today is called ‘declaring the hidden defects’. If one buys a slave prudens [...] vitiosum; dicta tibi est lex: (‘with your eyes open – fault and all; the condition was told you;’) (line 18), one must not grumble later. Florus ought not to complain as he knew that Horatius was not to write back. It is like the soldier of Lucullus’ army who in anger stormed the castle, took it and received sufficient prize-money to recover what he had lost after his purse was stolen. When he was later asked to repeat this he answered that one

\[519\] Brink, 1982, 496-512.
ought to look for a soldier who had had his money stolen. This is similar to Horatius’ own case: he lives in leisure because there is no need for him to write poetry any longer like there was after Philippi when he was poor.

However, there are also other reasons for his silence, such as his advancing years and the bustle of Rome. A poet must live a quiet life and does not need public acclaim. The writing of good poetry requires a critical mind as Horatius says in lines 109-110:

\[
\textit{at qui legitimum cupiet fecisse poema,}
\]
\[
\textit{cum tabulis animum censoris sumet honesti;}
\]
\text{('But the man whose aim is to have wrought a poem true to Art's rules, when he takes his tablets, will take also the spirit of an honest censor.'})
\]
\textit{Epistula 2.2, 109-110}

The good poet would rather throw away the bad lines.

Horatius sees a different future, \textit{nimirum sapere est abiectis utile nugis}, (‘In truth it is profitable to cast aside toys and to learn wisdom;’) (line 141). He wants to begin with the study of philosophy. He muses about several wisdoms he has picked up in life. Avarice is a sickness of the mind just as dropsy is one of the body and one should go to see a doctor, as one reads in lines 146-147:

\[
\textit{si tibi nulla sitim finiret copia lymphae,}
\]
\[
\textit{narrares medicis: […]}
\]
\text{('If no amount of water could quench your thirst, you would tell your story to the doctor: […]')}\]
\textit{Epistula 2.2, 146-147}

One has to treat avarice and one ought only to pursue wealth if wealth could make one wise. Ownership is ephemeral and ends at one’s death anyway. Horatius does not want to own more than he needs; sufficiency is the right mean as lines 190-191 say:

\[
\textit{utar et ex modico quantum res poscet acervo tollam, […]}
\]
\text{('I shall use and from my modest heap take what need requires, […]')}\]
\textit{Epistula 2.2, 190-191}

The poem ends with Horatius reflection on wrong pursuits, which a wise man will try to avoid. What counts is \textit{vivere recte}. If one does not know how to ‘live aright’, it is time to go. In lines 213-214 Horatius summarises this as follows:

\[
\textit{vivere si recte nescis, decede peritis.}
\]
\[
\textit{lusisti satis, edisti satis atque bibisti:}
\]
\text{('If you know not how to live aright, make way for those who do. You have played enough, have eaten and drunk enough.'})\]
\textit{Epistula 2.2, 213-214}
In this letter Horatius reflects on the ways of ‘living aright’ and I have placed the *Epistula ad Florum* in the group of ‘private political’ poems.

I will deal briefly with the *Epistula ad Pisones* or *liber de arte poetica* as Quintilianus called it in his *Institutio Oratoria*. Later the poem became known as the *Ars Poetica*. I do not consider the *Ars Poetica* as part of the second book of *Epistulae*; there is uncertainty about the manuscript tradition of the poem and therefore I do not show it as *Epistula 2.3*. Although there is still much scholarly dispute about the date of writing, the year which is seen as the most probable is 10 B.C. It is Horatius’ longest poem and it is a manual on the composition of poetry. In lines 1-294 Horatius writes about the *ars* (‘technique’) and matters such as unity of the poem, choice of subject, metre and style, and model (Homerus will always do well) in a poem. For dramatic poetry, building of the characters, number of actors, the chorus etc. require special attention. The second part, lines 295-476, is about the poet who needs common sense, ideals, intellectual power, knowledge about the literary history of poetry and open-mindedness to criticism.

Although the main focus of the poem lies on the art of poetry, there is a passage which can be understood as commentary on moral and actual issues. Horatius praises in his history of poetry the contribution which the archaic Greek poetry of Solon had made in law-giving. In lines 396-401 he says:

*Ars Poetica*, 396-401.

Horatius might have referred to Augustus’ legislative programme and particularly his laws on marriage. Yet, I do not see the poem as a whole as dealing with actuality.

**VI.c.  Horatius as a politically engaged poet**

Horatius’ attitude towards Octavianus and later Augustus and his regime developed during his life and this can be traced in his poetry. In order to substantiate this hypothesis I have arranged Horatius’ poems which deal with actuality (his ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems) according to their subject matter. The number of these poems amounts to 82 out of a
total of 162 (51%). Of these ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems 33 were written in the period from 42 B.C. until 30 B.C. which is an average of 2.5 per year. 49 were written between 30 and 11 B.C., also at a rate of 2.5 per year. These statistics (which give only approximations) show that Horatius maintained his output of engaged political poetry at a constant level during his life. Of this total of 82 poems which deal with actuality 44 are outright ‘political’ poems, a quarter of his extant poetry.

My analysis of Horatius’ poems is carried out along the same lines as that of Vergilius’ work which I presented earlier, but for the sake of clarity I will repeat the approach. The poems are arranged in six categories according to their content. The poems were also placed in the years in which they were probably written, if this is known. If the probable date of writing is unknown, the period at least can be indicated. Following this one can construct a scheme with a vertical axis which is the time-line and with a horizontal axis on which the six categories are presented. On the time-line I also show the key historical and literary events. In Horatius’ case the majority of the data on the time-line fall in the period from 42 B.C to 11 B.C., the period in which he probably wrote his poems.

The six categories in which I have grouped the ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems are:

I. Horatius wrote about his own experience. In this category I have placed the poems that concern experiences from the poet’s own life which have a bearing on actual events. An example of this is Sermo 1.5, the journey to Brundisium.

II. Horatius wrote about his own poetry. To this group belong all poems which deal with his position and with his mission as a poet vis-à-vis contemporaneous events. An example is Sermo 1.4, about his form of writing satire.

III. Horatius wrote about the civil war. These are the poems in which he expresses either his views on the continuing civil war or his factual commentary on the war. An example of the former is Iambus 7 about the renewal of civil war and of the latter Iambus 9 with his commentary on the battle of Actium.

IV. Horatius’ hope for better times. In this group I have brought together the poems in which he describes either hopes for and expectations of peaceful and better times after the civil war or later gratitude that these had arrived. An example of the former view is Carmen 1.14 (may the ship of state find calmer waters) and of the latter Carmen 4.15, panegyric to Augustus who shields our world.

V. Horatius’ poetry on moral issues. This category contains the poems with Horatius’ commentary on moral issues in Rome at large. Iambus 4 about the ex-slave who turned into a parvenu epitomises this.

VI. Horatius’ views on life. These deal with his personal philosophical convictions. Examples are his many poems about his enjoyment of the simple life at his Sabine farm.

Before drawing my main conclusions from this scheme I have divided the time frame in two, namely the period from 42 B.C. to 30 B.C. and the period from 30 B.C. to 11 B.C. The arguments for this subdivision are firstly that the year 30 B.C. was a turning point in the political history. In addition it was the year in which Horatius released both his books of Sermones and his book of Iambi and the year in which he decided to start writing a different genre, the Carmina; after that year he wrote only odes (Carmina) and letters (Epistulae).
The data in appendix VIII may be summarised as follows;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Number of poems about:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42-30 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his own experience</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his own poetry</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civil war</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>better times</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moral issues</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>views on life</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which supportive:</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which critical:</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-11 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his own experience</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his own poetry</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civil war</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>better times</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moral issues</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>views on life</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which supportive:</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which critical:</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data above show several patterns:

**Firstly**, Horatius wrote 82 poems which deal with actual events. This is approximately half his output. He wrote these poems throughout his whole career at a constant rate. 44 of these are outright ‘political’ poems.

**Secondly**, in his younger years Horatius wrote more often about his own experiences than in his later years. In my opinion this is caused by his inclination during his younger years to write poetry in which he aimed at establishing himself as an accepted member of Maecenas’ circle, whose amicitia is referred to in a number of his poems. Four of the nine were written before 35 B.C., when he was thirty.

**Thirdly**, during his whole career he wrote about the form of his own poetry and his position as a poet. This seems to me a natural tendency for any poet.

**Fourthly**, before 30 B.C. there are eight poems about the civil war and after 30 only one: the latter is Carmen 1.6 which has been dated as later than 29 B.C. It is self-evident that the focus on the civil war was greater before 30 than after that year. All six critical poems of the first period are poems about the civil war.

**Fifthly**, in his later years there are six times as many poems about ‘better times’ than in his younger years (13 instead of 2). The statistical basis of the poems in this category for the period from 42 to 30 B.C. is too small to say anything meaningful about these. It seems as if, in the years before 30, there was no hope of peace and stability and that Horatius only felt the frustration and despondency of the civil war as expressed in his poems about the war.

However, in the period from 30 to 11 B.C. the situation is very different. There are thirteen poems in which Horatius expresses his expectations that better times and stability will arrive – or, later in the period, that actually have arrived – and that this new peace is due to Augustus. Added to this, there are in this period 13 poems in which Horatius is supportive of Augustus and the new regime. Out of these 13, 10 poems deal with ‘better times’. There is a third point. Horatius wrote 6 poems of praise for Augustus in the years between 27 B.C. (the year of the ‘First Settlement’) and 23 B.C. (the year of the ‘Second Settlement’), followed by a pause of six years (from 23-17 B.C.) in which there is only one poem of praise (Epistula 1.18). After this, there is a final outburst of praise (6 poems) in the fourth book of Carmina written
between 17 and 11 B.C. (another period of six years). In the same period 30-11 B.C. he wrote 6 poems with a critical tone. Finally within this category, the poems of praise become more exuberant.

**Sixthly**, in the first period there are 13 poems about moral issues and his views on life against 24 in the second period. This is not a significant increase when the greater length of the second period is taken into account. There is a shift however from poems about more general ‘moral issues’ towards more personal poems about his ‘views on life’.

**Lastly**, the number of poems which are supportive of Octavianus, later of Augustus, or of the regime in general, is roughly equal to the number which is critical. But there is a significant difference. The ‘supportive poems’ are almost absent between 42 and 30 B.C. and nearly all are written after 27 B.C. The ‘critical poems’ are evenly distributed between 42 and 11 B.C.

With only two exceptions (*Carmen* 1.2 and *Carmen* 1.6) all poems which are either supportive or critical are outright ‘political’ poems. This was to be expected as Horatius would have expressed his praise or criticism of Octavianus, and later of Augustus, in poems which dealt with matters of substantive political weight.

In my opinion the total of 37 poems containing a message about moral issues (e.g. parvenu, luxury, lack of moderation, loose sexual moral, etc.) or containing his views on living ‘aright’ (e.g. preferring the simple life, the golden mean, etc.), which are equally distributed over both periods, is significant. This suggests that Horatius was a man with a message, although he did change the tone of his message from the sharp and aggressive genre of the satirical and iambic poetry to the more moderate, philosophical and contemplative genre of his *Carmina* (Odes). This happened in or around the year 30 B.C. A second point of significance is that Horatius’ message did not concern general moral issues only, but also the major political issues of his days (e.g. civil war, the leadership, peace, etc.). As appears from the data which I have presented above, Horatius wrote 44 poems which I have labelled as outright ‘political’ which deal with major contemporaneous events. In 20 of these Horatius dealt with the civil war and the hope of better times and in three quarters of these 20 he expressed both his support or criticism of Octavianus, or later Augustus, or the regime. This shows that he was a man with clear opinions, either for or against the regime. There is a third point. In total Horatius wrote 24 poems about the civil war and about better times, equal to the total on moral issues (24). This suggests again that, apart from his views on moral issues Horatius had outspoken political opinions.

Throughout his whole career Horatius wrote critical poetry which was much more outspoken before 30 B.C. (e.g. *lambi* 7, 9 and 16 on the civil war) than after 30. In the latter period 3 of the 6 critical poems are *recusatio* poems which is a special form of protest (*Carmina* 1.6, 2.12 and 4.2). Nisbet and Hubbard state that ‘a diffident reluctance to praise [*recusatio*] might prove the least exhausting form of flattery’. In my opinion, if a *recusatio* poem is considered to be a ‘form of flattery’, this does not make it a piece of propaganda. A *recusatio* poem is certainly not a poem in which the achievements of the praiseworthy man

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523 Firstly, I do not read Horatius’ *Carmina* 1.6, 2.12 and 4.2 as *recusatio* caused by Horatius feeling modest about his talent. Secondly, some scholars see *recusatio* as a form of flattery. For example, Nisbet and Hubbard, 2001, 82-83. I quote: ‘They [the Roman poets] sometimes found it [the *recusatio*] an elegant device to brush off importunate patrons, avid for commemoration in the grander genres. A diffident reluctance to praise might prove the least exhausting form of flattery,’ and ‘In the first collection of *Odes* Maecenas is diverted with urbane charm (2.12), and later the same strategy is used directly against Augustus himself: [...] In the fourth book of the *Odes* Horace suggests a more suitable poet, Iullus Antonius (4.2.33ff.).’
were expounded for all to read: one expects in a piece of propaganda that at least all achievements are set out.

Above I have mentioned that virtually all Horatius’ poems of support date from the years after 27 B.C. (13 out of a total of 15). This means that in the years in which Octavianus had the greatest need of propaganda in support of his struggle for power, he and Maecenas had failed to convince or force Horatius to write this. Horatius kept silent, despite his amicitia with Maecenas from 38 onwards, during the times of the national emergencies such as the wars with Sextus Pompeius and with Antonius and Cleopatra. It took until 27, the year that Octavianus became Augustus, that Horatius started to write his poems of praise, and he wrote his most exuberant praise of Augustus in the fourth book of Carmina between 17 and 11 B.C. This was at the time when Augustus’ need for propaganda was at its least as he had consolidated his power. Two-thirds (9 out of 13) of the supportive poems written after 27 B.C. are about hope that Augustus may enjoy good health (Carmen 1.21), the wish that he may rule in peace (Carmina 1.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 4.4) and the expectation that better times may come (Carmina 3.14, 4.5, 4.14 and 4.15). Although he has expressed in a few poems before 30 B.C. (e.g. Sermo 1.5 and Iambus 9) his support for Octavianus, he detracted from this by giving criticism in the same poem (e.g. Iambus 9) (see pages 335-336 and note 724).

One can interpret Horatius’ poems which deal with actuality differently than merely labelling them as propagandist. But if one tries to interpret Horatius’ poetry – his 82 poems about actual matters and his 80 other poems – one first has to try to build up a picture of the man himself. A few things emerge clearly from his work. He was the son of a freedman of reasonable means, he grew up in the deep south of Italia and he received a good education. The area where he lived in his youth had been seriously affected by the expropriations and in his poems one reads that he had suffered through the disturbances which these had caused. He had made a wrong choice when he joined Brutus as a young man with Republican sympathies, but he got away with it. In Rome he was admitted to the intellectual elite and he started to write poetry. During his twenties and early thirties – that is between 42 and 30 B.C. – he wrote in the abrasive manner of the satirical and iambic genre which perhaps did not fit his gentle and reasonable personality as is evident from much of his ‘non-political’ poetry. Horatius was the man of ‘the golden mean’, of simple living, self-sufficiency, and of not burdening others. He seems to have been a modest man, but a man with clear opinions on a whole range of matters: social, political and moral. Added to this, he was very involved and cared about developments in Italia.

If this picture of the man Horatius is correct one can read the ‘political’ and the ‘private political’ poems from his younger years as an expression of his personal anxiety about the slaughter, havoc and destruction caused by the civil war and the social upheaval. During these years he is critical of the men struggling for power: Antonius, Sextus Pompeius and Octavianus and their henchmen. In addition, he waited to see who would be victorious. After Actium he came to the conclusion that Octavianus was best suited to bring peace and stability to Italia. One sees that he writes poetry supportive of Augustus after 27 B.C., not because he had been asked to do so, but because he had reached the conclusion that Augustus could be the saviour. As he became older his poems mellow and Horatius wrote commentary on contemporary events, just as any man who has left the years of the ‘angry young man’ behind.
A valid question - which is related to the one if Horatius wrote propaganda or not - is who came first, Augustus or Horatius. Lowrie says the following about this:\textsuperscript{524}

‘Did Horace expound his views [as he did in\textit{ Carmen} 3.6] before or after Augustus began restoring the temples, before or after he began pressing for marriage legislation? Is his emphasis the result of co-operation, of a poet parroting imperial policy, of an emperor picking up on a good idea, of Maecenas mediating between the two, or were these issues generally ‘in the air’? The co-operation between Horace and Augustus in the \textit{Ludi Saeculares} was still a decade away. The \textit{Zeitgeist} has fallen out of favour as an explanation, and we cannot recuperate the historical particulars. While my sketch gives priority to Augustus and makes the poetry reflective of his decisions, these responded, however, if not directly to the poetry of Horace and Vergil, then to the cultural matrix in which they flourished. Ideology cannot be pinned down to a single source.’

I agree with her. I do not see Horatius as the \textit{auctor} of Augustus’ views. It seems to me that they shared the same ideas and that they influenced each other, but that it is impossible to resolve either how widespread these ideas were or who the \textit{auctores} were, as Richardson has also recently pointed out.\textsuperscript{525}

\textsuperscript{524} Lowrie, 2007, 79.
\textsuperscript{525} Richardson, 2008, 6-7.
VII. Propertius: his life. The Elegiae: love affairs and a few affairs of state

Sextus Propertius, who later became one of the great elegiac poets of the Augustan era, was born in the middle of the first century B.C., about one generation after Vergilius and Horatius. In this chapter I discuss his work using the same model of analysis as for Vergilius’ and Horatius’ poetry. In the following section (VII.a.) I present a short summary of the genre, followed by a brief biography of Propertius (VII.b.). The analysis of Propertius poetry is presented in section VII.c. In the final section of this chapter (VII.d.) I discuss my view on the development of Propertius’ political views based on my reading of his poems.

VII.a. The Latin elegiac poets

Originally the word ‘ελεγεϊον indicated the metre of the elegiac distichon and it was not until the fourth century B.C. that the term was used for the poem itself, written in such a metre. Contrary to the epic form, the elegiac poem was very suitable for the poet to express his personal views on a subject. The genre developed in the direction of melancholic poetry and lament, or commemorative epigrams, but ‘there is no evidence that these were among its primary functions at an early date’.\(^{526}\) The subject matter was very diverse. The archaic Greek elegiac poet Tyrtaeus (7th century B.C.) for instance wrote poems in which he urged men to be brave on the battlefield and in Solon’s poetry (ab. 640-560 B.C.) one finds much social and political commentary.\(^{527}\)

The Latin love-elegists were inspired by the archaic Greek and Hellenistic elegies: Propertius quotes Mimnermus and the influence of Callimachus and Philitas can also be traced. However, until quite recently, scholars recognised an important difference between the Hellenistic elegists on the one hand and the Latin on the other. The former were considered to have written ‘objective’ love elegy as ‘their erotic passages are third-person narrations of the emotions and experiences of mythical and historical characters’.\(^{528}\) The Roman love-elegists on the other hand wrote ‘subjective’ love poetry in the first person, rendering their own experiences and this was seen as their invention. This controversy, however, overlooked two important aspects. Firstly, there is now a fresh appreciation for much of the archaic Greek elegy as ‘subjective’ and the same holds for Hellenistic fragments of elegiac poetry.\(^{529}\) Secondly, the Latin elegiac poet may employ a persona who expresses views and feelings, without these necessarily being the personal ‘subjective’ feelings of the poet.

Therefore the Latin elegists probably stood much more firmly in the Hellenistic tradition than originally thought and they wrote about more matters than only ‘their’ erotic and love affairs, just as their archaic Greek predecessors did. The content of these non-erotic Latin elegiac poems may have been ‘subjective’ and I will discuss below that it is to be expected that their commentary on events was coloured by their personal experience. The

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\(^{528}\) Cairns, 2006, 70.

\(^{529}\) Cairns, 2006, 73-80 and 89-95. Examples of archaic Greek ‘subjective’ elegiac poetry are Mimnermus about Nanno and Theognis about Cyrnus. In the Hellenistic period there was Antimachus (4th century B.C.) about his deceased wife Lyde and Hermesianax about Leontion. Furthermore, the Aetia of Callimachus is highly ‘subjective’; not subjective love poetry, but nevertheless subjective. See Cairns, 2006, 79.
events which they describe could on the one hand be real and historical and on the other hand total fiction. When they write about Actium one may assume that they are referring to the actual sea battle of 2nd of September 31 B.C, but when Propertius writes about his presence at Gallus’ lovemaking (Elegia 1.10), this is likely to be pure fiction. Thus, the poet may use a persona to express his views - or to pretend that these are his views -, he may also make use of a casus (occasion), fictional or real. However, in all cases the real or imaginary ‘events’ form the cadre of their subjective commentary and the reader has to form an opinion whether it can be interpreted as referring to actuality, or not.

Apart from Hellenistic influence there may also have been Catullus’ influence: I do not discuss Catullus’ poetry in this thesis as he died at the young age of thirty in the year 54 B.C. when Octavianus was only nine years old. His poems 65, 66, 67 and 68 are the ‘first extant Roman elegies’, of which 65 is subjective and 68 concerns Catullus’ grief caused by the loss of his brother, a highly ‘subjective’ subject.530

The current view on the origin and development of Roman love-elegy is that it is unlikely that Gallus was its ‘inventor’, but that the genre developed naturally from archaic Greek and Hellenistic roots and that Propertius, Tibullus and Ovidius brought it to fruition. Propertius himself shows his debt to his Greek predecessors when he counsels Lynceus, his supposed rival for Cynthia’s love, on the subject of writing love poetry.531 In Elegia 2.34, 30-33 he writes:

\[
\textit{nil iuuat in magno uester amore senex.}
\]
\[
\textit{tu potius memorem Musis imitere Philitan}
\]
\[
\textit{et non inflati somnia Callimachi.}
\]

(‘Your old man is no help amidst a great love.
You should rather imitate with your Muses the unforgetting Philitas and the dreams of Callimachus free from bombast.’)

\textit{Elegia} 2.34, 30-33

The ‘old man’ of line 30 is Socrates and Epimenides, a sixth-century Cretan sage.

530 Cairns, 2006B, 82-83. Varro Atacinus (82-37 B.C.) may have written ‘subjective’ love-elegy before Catullus. Ovidius (Tristia 2, 439-440) wrote: \textit{is quoque, Phasiacas Argo qui duxit in undas,/non potuit veneris furtas tacere suae.} (‘He [Varro] too, who guided the Argo to the waters of Phasis,/could not keep silent about his own adventures in love.’).

531 The Loeb edition gives for line 31: \textit{tu satius Musam leviorem imitere Philitae} (‘Better that you should imitate the slighter muse of Philitas’). This brings me to the question, with which I have struggled much, as to which edition of the OCT I should use: the recent one of Heyworth (2007) or the earlier of Barber which was originally published in 1953 and which was revised in 1960. It appears that the qualities of the new OCT edition have been hotly debated and that the matter recently reached the pages of the Times Literary Supplement (Thomas, 2009). Eventually I chose the Heyworth’ edition: what settled the matter was the option to use his OCT edition in conjunction with his book entitled Cynthia: A Companion to the Text of Propertius which was published at the same time and ‘consists in a commentary on the text, concentrating on the problematic couplets and passages.’ Because the text of the new OCT edition differs substantially from the Loeb in many instances, I have used Heyworth’s translation which he gives in Cynthia: etc. throughout my book. See page 15, note 15 of this book.

Philitas of Cos was a Hellenistic elegiac poet.
Quintilianus mentions Propertius in his *Institutio Oratoria* 10.1, 93:532

_Elegia quoque Graecos provocamus, cuius mihi tersus atque elegans maxime videtur auctor Tibullus. Sunt qui Propertium molint. Ovidius utroque lascivior, sicut durior Gallus._ (‘In elegy, too, we challenge the Greeks. The most refined and elegant author seems to me to be Tibullus. Some prefer Propertius. Ovid is more self-indulgent than these two, Gallus stiffer.’)

Propertius is part of this study, but Gallus, Tibullus and Ovidius are not. In the case of Gallus this is because virtually all his work has been lost. A newly-found (1978) fragment of his poetry suggests that he wrote ‘subjective’ elegiac poetry.533

**VII.b. The life of Propertius**

There is not much known about Propertius’ life; as much as we find biographical information in Horatius’ work, as little we find in Propertius.534 He was probably born near Perusia or in

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532 Hubbard, 2001, 2. She states in her Introduction to her book that Quintilianus regards his description of Tibullus’ style - _tersus_ (‘refined’) and _elegans_ (‘elegant’) – ‘as equally apt to Propertius’. In Quintilianus’ judgement Tibullus and Propertius were the two great elegiac poets of the Augustan era. Regrettably important elegiac poetry of the period has been lost (e.g. Gallus and Varro) and therefore our judgement must be founded on the extant work of Propertius and Tibullus only. With this in mind Margaret Hubbard shares Quintilianus’ view and not many would disagree.

533 Anderson et al., 1979, 125-155. The fragment of Gallus is by far the oldest manuscript of Latin poetry. It was found in Qaṣr Ibrîm in Egypt in 1978 and the text goes as follows:

```
tristia nequitïa...Ja Lyco... tua.

fata mihi, Caesar, tum erunt mea dulcia, quom tu
maxima Romanae pars eris historiae
postque tuum reditum multorum templorum deorum
fixa legam spolieis deivitiora tueis.

Qui, [

[.....].....tandem fecerunt c[ar]mina Musae
quaæ possem domina deicere digna mea.
[.....]...atîr idem tibi, non ego, Visce

[......]........ Kato, iudicic te vereor.

[....sad, Lycoris, by your misbehaviour.

My fate will then be sweet to me, Caesar, when you are the most
important part of Roman history, and when I read of many gods’
temples the richer after your return for being hung with your trophies.
At last the...Muses have made poems that I could utter as worthy of my
mistress.........the same to you, I do not, Viscus, I do not, Cato, fear....’,
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The translation into English is from Anderson et al.

Assisi sometime between 55 and 50 B.C. from a distinguished family. In *Elegia* 4.1, 121-125 one reads:

\[\text{Vmbria te notis antiqua Penatibus edit} \]
\[\text{(mentior? an patriae tangitur ora tuae?)} \]
\[\text{qua nebulosa cavo rorat Mevania campo} \]
\[\text{et lacus aestuiis intepet Vmber aquis;} [...] \]
\[\text{[scandentisque Asis consurgit uertice murus,]} \]
\[\text{('Ancient Umbria produced you from a famous home} \]
\[\text{(do I lie? or is the area of your homeland touched on?)} \]
\[\text{where misty Mevania is moist in its deep-lying plain,} \]
\[\text{and the Umbrian lake warms up with summer waters; [...]} \]
\[\text{[and the wall of climbing Assisi rises on its hill-top,')]}

*Elegia* 4.1, 121-125

It is probable that with his social background Propertius received a good education. In his work there are indications of this, for instance the references to the sixth-century elegiac Greek poet Minnermus and to Homerus in *Elegia* 1.9, 11, Corinna and Erinna (Hellenistic poets, 4th cent. B.C.) in 2.3, 21-22, Pindarus in 3.17, 40 and many other Greek and Latin poets. Furthermore, there are many references to the Trojan war and Greek mythology. Propertius lost his father at a young age and the family had to move to a smaller estate which was later confiscated in the late 40s by Octavianus, as we learn from lines 127-130 of *Elegia* 4.1:

\[\text{ossaque legisti non illa aetate legenda} \]
\[\text{patris, et in tenues cogeris ipse Lares;} \]
\[\text{nam tua cum multi uersarent rura iuuenci} \]
\[\text{abstulit excultas pertica tristis opes.} \]
\[\text{('and you collected the bones of your father that should not be} \]
\[\text{collected at that age, and were yourself driven into a reduced} \]
\[\text{household: for though many oxen worked your fields, the grim} \]
\[\text{surveyor's pole took away the cultivated wealth.')} \]

*Elegia* 4.1, 127-130

The siege of nearby Perusia and the slaughter that followed left behind a great impression on the young Propertius. In the last two poems of the first book of *Elegiae* (1.21 and 1.22) he refers to this and I will discuss Propertius’ moving account below.

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535 Hubbard, 2001, 97; Keith, 2008, 1-18. Recent excavations in Assisi have ‘unearthed tantalizing evidence for the family holdings of our poet and his putative descendant [the elegiac poet and friend of Plinius the younger, C. Passennus Paullus Propertius], in the so-called Domus Musae.’ In addition, two inscriptions have been found in the same area under the church of *S. Maria Maggiore* in Assisi which should furnish evidence of family links between Sextus Propertius and senator C. Propertius Postumus. Although the family connection between the poet and senator Postumus is considered as highly likely, these inscriptions require further investigation. See Keith, 2008, 16-18 and Cairns, 2006A, 28-31. There is a third supposed family connection, namely between Sextus Propertius and Maecenas who both came from Umbria. However, the family connection between the two through the above C. Propertius Postumus, who had married the daughter of Aelius Gallus is very speculative. See also *Elegia* 3.12 on pages 291-292 of this book.

536 Mevania (modern Bevagna) is a city about 25 kilometres from Assisi and *Lacus Vmber* is a large shallow lake near Assisi.
Later he went to Rome and it is generally assumed that he released his first book of *Elegiae* in mid or late 29 B.C. It is held that book 2 was released in two parts; the first part in 28 or early 27 B.C. and the second part in late 26 or 25 B.C. At around this time Propertius was admitted to Maecenas’ circle. The third book of *Elegiae* was released in 22 or 21 B.C., followed by his last, book 4, after 16 B.C. and not later than 2 A.D.\(^{537}\)

It is not certain when Propertius died: most likely he died before 2 A.D. Ovidius mentions him in the *Remedia Amoris* 763-764, which was written around the turn of the century and in which Ovidius refers to Propertius in the perfect tense.\(^{538}\)

**VII.c. Propertius’ Elegiae**

In the following I will analyse Propertius’ poems. There has been much scholarly discussion about the manuscript tradition which is not always clear. This means that one often finds that poems have either been split or have been joined. It is not part of the scope of this thesis to enter into these discussions and as I have explained above, I will follow the latest edition of the Oxford Classical Text and not that of Barber.\(^{539}\) At any rate, the texts which particularly appertain to my focus of research, namely those which relate to actual political and social events, can be found adequately in both editions.

Much of Propertius’ work, particularly in the earlier books, consists of love-elegies. A detailed review of the love poems falls outside the scope of this book, but as many of his poems on subjects of a ‘political’ and ‘private political’ nature concern matters of sexual moral or marital fidelity, I will also include brief discussions of his love-elegies. In my opinion, the manner in which the poet treats the subject of love and the relationships between women and men in his love-elegies have a bearing on the views which he expresses about sexual moral and other related issues. I trust that thus the discussions of the love poems will create a better understanding of Propertius’ ‘political’ and ‘private political’ views. The results will be summarised in section VII.d. and in appendices IX and X.\(^{540}\) The first book of *Elegiae* has twenty two poems. Twenty of these feature his beloved Cynthia.

In *Elegia* 1.1, dedicated to Tullus,\(^{541}\) which constitutes an introduction to the first book, we become acquainted with Cynthia, the beloved. Cynthia was perhaps not a real person, but one through whom Propertius expressed his feelings of love. We encounter her throughout the four books, albeit less frequently in the last. In this first elegy Propertius reveals the typical characteristics of his elegiac love poetry, the feeling that the lover is tormented by his beloved and his resignation to this fact. His love is a sickness which he can only control to a certain extent by analyzing its effects.\(^{542}\)

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538 Ovidius’ text in *Remedia Amoris* 763-764 is: *Carmina quis non potuit tuto legisse/Tibulli, vel tua, cuius opus Cynthia sola fuit?* (‘Who could have read unscathed the songs of Tibullus,/or thine whose work was Cynthia alone.’). Line 764 refers to Propertius and Ovidius has used *fuit*, the perfectum.
539 See for more details: Heyworth, 2007A (*Cynthia: A Companion to the Text of Propertius*).
541 This Tullus is probably a nephew of L. Volcacius Tullus, proconsul of Asia in 30-29 B.C. DuQuesnay, 1992, 76-79; Heyworth, 2007b, 95-97; Hubbard, 2001, 24-25.
In the second elegy the poet addresses his beloved (vita) and implores her not to use cosmetics: *naturaque decus mercato perdere cultu* (‘destroying your natural charm with imported finery’) (line 5). He would rather see her in her natural state, as he says in line 8: *nudus Amor formae non amat artificem* (‘Love is naked, and does not love those who contrive artificial beauty.’). Many mythological women did not have recourse to ornaments to charm their heroes and she is not inferior to them.

*Elegia* 1.3 is a beautiful poem about the poet who finds Cynthia asleep. He compares her with the sleeping Andromeda when he discovers Cynthia while he is intoxicated with drink and love. Lines 13-14 say: *duplci correptum ardore [...] hac Amor hac Liber* (‘though on this side and that Amor and Liber, [...] seize me with double passion’). He does not want to wake her, but eventually she awakes due to the moon shining in her face and angrily she reproaches him that he has been drinking all night and has been with another woman. She is the deserted lover.

In the next elegy Propertius describes Bassus’ interference in his relationship with Cynthia. Bassus was presumably the poet whom Ovidius mentioned in the *Tristia* 4.10, 47-48 and the former had spoken unfavourably about Cynthia. Propertius states that he lives in ‘servitude’ (*servitio*) with his beloved and that Cynthia has many graces, including those which he describes in lines 13-14: [* [...] quae gaudia sub tacita discere ueste libet* (‘joys one loves to learn beneath a discreet coverlet’). Cynthia and he do not take his remarks kindly and Bassus will not get away with it. Propertius will continue to be loyal to Cynthia and to suffer in his addiction to her. In line 16 of this elegy Propertius for the first time testifies his *fides* (‘loyalty’) to his beloved and this will return in many poems to come, such as *Elegiae* 1.6, 1.11 and 1.19. *Fides* belongs to true love and one of the ‘Augustan ideals’ of Propertius (and the other elegiac poets) is to combine the values of marriage, such as fidelity and commitment, with true passion.

The fifth *Elegia* deals with a similar subject; this time it seems as if a Gallus feels Propertius’ wrath. However, this is a clever artistic device of the poet to analyse his own feelings about Cynthia. Gallus knows better than that to love Cynthia is not a simple matter and in line 13 the poet predicts: *mea contemptus quotiens ad limina curres!* (‘Ah, how often you will run to my door, rejected!’). In the next lines Propertius tells of his own experiences in loving Cynthia in whose *servitium* he lived. He cannot console the other and in lines 28-30 he testifies about himself in particular:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\textit{cum mihi nulla mei sit medicina mali;} \\
&\textit{sed pariter miseri socio cogemur amore} \\
&\textit{alter in alterius mutua flere sinu.}
\end{align*}
\]

(‘since I have no cure for my own sickness; but together unhappy in our shared love we will be forced to weep for one another, each in the other’s embrace.’)

*Elegia* 1.5, 28-30

Love is a terrible suffering.

*Elegia* 1.6 reads like a *recusatio*, but one of a special kind. Horatius has pleaded incompetence in his *recusatio* poems, but Propertius blames Cynthia when he refuses to join Tullus on his journey; in line 5 he says: *sed me complexae remorantur uerba puellae* (‘but the words

\[\text{[543] It is not certain whether Cornelius Gallus, the elegist, is meant. See Baker, 2000, 88.}\]
and embrace of my girl hold me back,'). He would rather miss doctas cognoscere Athenas/atque Asiae ueteres cernere diuitias (‘to get to know learned Athens/and to set eyes on the ancient wealth of Asia,’) than see Cynthia’s sorrow and anger (lines 13-14). It is likely that this poem was written in 29 B.C., as the patrui secures (‘uncle’s axes’) in line 19 refer to the symbols of the office of L. Volcacius Tullus, the uncle of Tullus who is addressed in the poem, as proconsul in Asia 30-29 B.C. Line 22, semper at armatae cura fuit patriae (‘but always there has been a concern for your country and its arms.’) refers then to actual events; young Tullus had fought on Octavianus’ side in the civil war and possibly at Actium. In the end however, Propertius is born for love and not for glory or arms. In line 30 he testifies: hanc me militiae fata subire uolunt (‘this [love] is the soldiering that the fates wish me to undergo’).544 Although this is the first reference to contemporary events, I do not consider this love-elegy as a poem with a ‘political’ or ‘private political’ content because the poet excuses himself by quoting Cynthia’s anger if he were to leave Rome and so makes his refusal part of the poetic expression of his commitment to his beloved.

The next poem, Elegia 1.7. deals with Propertius as a poet. He testifies in this poem that he wants to be a writer of love-elegy and not an epic poet – primo contendis Homero (‘compete with Homer for primacy’) - as the unknown Ponticus who is in the grip of passion and to whom this poem is addressed.545 He wishes that after his death he should be remembered as the love-elegist. In lines 23-24 he says:

\[
\text{ne poterunt iuvenes nostro reticere sepulcro:} \\
\text{‘ardoris nostri magne poeta, iaces?’} \\
\](‘nor will the young men be able to keep quiet at my tomb: ‘Great composer of our passion, do you lie dead?’)
\]

\textit{Elegia 1.7, 23-24}

The poem ends with a warning to Ponticus: if ever you fall in love, you will not be able to compose the right verses and you will think of me.

\textit{Elegia 1.8} resembles Vergiliius’ \textit{Ecloga} 10. Both poems describe a woman who runs off with a rival who goes abroad. The eighth elegy is generally divided into two parts, \textit{8.a} (‘the voyage proposed’) and \textit{8.b} (‘the voyage abandoned’).546 The first poem starts with the poet’s outcry: TVNE igitur demens […]? (‘Are you mad then, [...]?’). The lover is both angry at his beloved that she wants to follow another fellow to Illyria and worried that she will not endure the cold. Girls in Roman poetry seem to prefer regions with snow; compare line 8 in this \textit{Elegia} (insolitas nives (‘the snow you are not used to’) with line 47 in Vergiliius’ \textit{Ecloga} 10 (Alpinas nives (‘Alpine snows’)). Nevertheless as Cynthia is the domina, he hopes for her safe return and says that he will always remain faithful to her.

His protestations are effective as \textit{8.b} begins with: Hic erit: Hic iurata manet; (‘here she will be: here she has sworn to remain.’). The lover is victorious and Cynthia prefers his verses to the riches of his rival. His joy is great, as line 44 shows; siue dies seu nox uenerit, illa mea est; (‘come day, or come night, she is mine,‘).547

In the ninth elegy Propertius continues with the theme of the seventh, Ponticus falling in love. He mocks the lover as his mistress is a recently bought slave-girl; line 4 says: et

\begin{footnotes}
545 Brouwers, 1967, 129.
546 The Loeb edition gives these two headings. Loeb, 2006, 59 and 61.
547 Hubbard, 2001, 46.
\end{footnotes}
tibi nunc quidvis imperat empta modo. (‘and a woman who was recently bought now gives you any sort of order.’). Propertius counsels Ponticus to stop his epic and to cane quod quaeuis nosse puella uelit (‘sing what any girl would wish to become familiar with.’) (line 14). The pangs of love will only become worse, admit to your love and start writing love-elegies.

One of Propertius’ most explicit love-elegies is Elegia 1.10. It starts with an account of the lovemaking of Gallus and his beloved which Propertius has been permitted to watch. After this experience he offers Gallus his good services as a teacher of love; in lines 19-20 he says:

\[
\text{Cynthia me docuit semper quaecumque petenda quaeque cauenda forent: [...]
\]

(‘Cynthia has taught me whatever is to be sought, and what must be avoided: [...]’)

\textit{Elegia} 1.10, 19-20

The poem closes with a long list of good advice for the young lover. The focus of the poem moves away from Gallus and his beloved to Propertius and his feelings of love for Cynthia. Therefore, in my opinion the poem is not a description of Propertius’ actual presence in Gallus’ bedroom, but Propertius creating an opportunity – perhaps after reading one of Gallus’ poems - to write about young love, posing as a an experienced lover who is subiectus Amori (‘submissive to love’) and who feels the strains of his relationship.\textsuperscript{548} Whether Gallus is the same man who features in the fifth \textit{Elegia} is unclear.

\textit{Elegia} 1.11 is written in the form of a letter and again deals with separation from Cynthia. This time the poet is worried about her visit to the fashionable resort of Baiae on the shore of the Bay of Naples. He is concerned that she will fall under the spell of a good-for-nothing; in line 15 he articulates his worry as follows: ut solet amoto labi custode puella (‘as a girl often slips when her guardian is removed’). He asks her to come home as he is totally dependent on her.

The twelfth elegy in the first book is also about separation from Cynthia; some scholars claim that she was still at Baiae, although the poem does not say so explicitly.\textsuperscript{549} In the poem Propertius does not specify the place, but says in line 3 only that Cynthia is multa milia (‘many miles’) away. Propertius is unhappy about the continued separation and is envious of the men who have found constant love. Whatever Cynthia does, Propertius is steadfast in his love for her. The poem closes with the line: Cynthia prima fuit; Cynthia finis erit (‘Cynthia was the start; Cynthia will be the end’).

\textit{Elegia} 1.13 continues the theme of the tenth: Gallus’ new love and his bliss with his new mistress. Gallus, the man with the reputation of a seducer is now totally enthralled by the girl, as we read in lines 5-7:

\[
dum tibi deceptis augetur fama puellis, certus et in nullo quaeris amore moram, perditus in quadem [...]
\]

(‘While your reputation for deceiving girls increases, and you are determined in aiming to linger in no love, you have lost yourself over someone [...]’)

\textsuperscript{548} Heyworth, 2007A, 49; his commentary on line 10.
\textsuperscript{549} Baker, 2000, 124-125.
In the tenth elegy Propertius has seen their lovemaking and the poet recalls the climax when he says in line 18: *et quae deinde meus celat, amice, pudor.* (‘and things in addition that my sense of shame hides, my friend.’). Propertius thinks that Gallus’ girl is wonderful, he says in lines 29-32:

*nec mirum, cum sit Ioue digna, et proxima Ledae
et Ledae partu, gratior una tribus.
illa sit Inachiis et blandior heroinis,
illa suis uerbis cogat amare Iouem.*

(‘And no wonder, since she is worthy of Jupiter and equivalent to Leda and Leda’s offspring, one more graceful than three. She would be even more charming than the daughters of Inachus, famed in myth, she would with her words compel love to love her.’).

*Elegia 1.13, 29-32*

The girl is very attractive indeed, as attractive as Leda herself and the daughters of Inachus: the identity of the latter has attracted much scholarly dispute and Booth makes the attractive suggestion that she is Io, the most famous daughter of Inachus and very much loved by Zeus.\(^550\) Propertius closes the poem by counseling Gallus to make the most of it and to remain happy.

In the fourteenth elegy Propertius asserts that true love is of the greatest value, better than wealth such as Tullus enjoyed. When Propertius was loved by Cynthia he felt as if kings would pay homage to him and he asks in line 15: *nam quis diuitiis aduerso gaudet Amore?* (‘For who has delight in wealth when Amor is ill-disposed to him?’). For him, Venus rules and when she visits him he is rich.

The next poem is about the poet’s fear that Cynthia is not sincere. She is not honest about her love for Propertius and he suspects that she is seeing another man. She is treacherous (*perfidia* in line 2) and not like many mythological heroines who kept their love and who acted accordingly. Whatever Cynthia says, Propertius does not trust her words and he warns her that the gods will be offended by her falsehoods. The poet however, will remain faithful to her, even if there are no women’s blandishments which are safe to trust.

*Elegia 1.16* is an engaging poem in which Propertius deals with the theme of exclusion by the beloved in yet another way. The old door of the house of the beloved is the speaker who tells of his experiences. He has stood open for and seen many *magnis triumphis* (‘mighty triumphs’) (line 1) in the past, but these days it is all drunkenness and *exclusi signa* (‘signs of the excluded lover’) (line 8). This poem is a so-called *paraclausithyron* (‘a song outside a locked door’).\(^551\) The door wants to protect his mistress’ reputation and he remains firmly closed and does not even yield a little for the girl to hear the songs of the miserable lover. The latter accuses the door of being even more cruel than his mistress and of keeping the lover out on the doorstep in spite of the many gifts which he has received. The poet expects

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550 Booth, 2006, 528-537. Prof. Joan Booth suggests that ‘the plural form *Inachiis heroinis* may be a red herring. If it stands poetically for the singular here, there is an attractive candidate: Io.’ Added to this, there is a version of Io’s story by Gallus and ‘if the Gallus of Propertius’ poem is indeed supposed to be a semi-fictionalized version of the elegist Cornelius Gallus, an original Gallan context could elucidate the elusion.’

551 Baker, 2000, 144.
the worst of his girl of whom he says in line 33: *nunc iacet alterius felici nixa lacerto* ('As it is, she lies on the lucky arm of another'). Propertius who is of course singing about his own fears of desertion, ends the poem with a word of self-pity from the door, who is ‘the piggy in the middle’ between the *dominae uitiis* ('the faults of my mistress') and *semper amantis fletibus* ('the weeping of the eternal lover').

In the seventeenth elegy Propertius imagines that he has distanced himself from Cynthia’s anger by a sea-journey and that his life is threatened by a storm. The thought that Cynthia would be in tears at his presumed death and that he has disappeared without Cynthia being able to grieve over his remains, haunts him. In lines 11-12 he says: *an poteris siccis mea fata revoluere ocellis,/ossaque nulla tuo nostra tenere sinu?* ('Or will you be able to review my death dry-eyed,/and hold no bones of mine in your bosom?'). He should have remained at home and if he had died there, she could have given him a loving funeral. Finally, he asks the sea-nymphs to bring him safely home, and enjoy quiet love with Cynthia.

We see the unhappy lover in *HAEC certe deserta loca* ('This place at least is deserted') in *Elegia* 1.18. He reflects on Cynthia’s disdain which is a new development in their relationship. He searches for the reasons for her change towards him. Does she suspect him of infidelity? The poet refutes the allegations of his beloved, such as his supposed love for another girl, the absence of his tokens of love, or his complaints to all about her behaviour. He insists that he loves her and that he has not acted improperly; he is embittered that his reward is utter solitude as he says in lines 27-28:

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pro quo dumosi montes et frigida rupes
et datur inculto tramite dura quies
('In return for this I am given overgrown mountains and chill rocks and uncomfortable rest on uncultivated land;')
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*Elegia* 1.18, 27-28.

In the present elegy Propertius places his unhappy lover in a desolate landscape. Vergilius’ *Ecloga* 10, 14-15 also finds an unhappy lover in barren lands, Gallus. I have interpreted this as one of the ‘political’ aspects of Vergilius’ poem, who has placed Gallus in a non-pastoral environment as Gallus had been involved in the land expropriations and the destruction of the countryside and therefore could not be portrayed as fitting in a pastoral scene.\(^{552}\) I do not read such a point into the present elegy. This is different in Propertius *Elegia* 1.20, which I interpret as similar to the passage of Vergilius’ *Ecloga* 10.\(^{553}\)

The next elegy, 1.19 is about Cynthia and separation from her by death of which the poet says that it is not death he fears, but rather *ne forte tuo careat mihi funus amore*, ('that my burial may happen to lack your love,') (line 3). He then compares his love for Cynthia with that of Protesilaus for his wife Laodamia at the beginning of the Trojan war and he considers Cynthia’s beauty greater than that of all the Trojan princesses who were given to the Greek heroes at the end of that war.\(^{554}\) But he fears that Cynthia will forget him as soon as he dies. In the meantime while we are alive the lines 25-26 tell us:

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\(^{552}\) See pages 74-76 of this book.

\(^{553}\) See pages 254-255 of this book.

\(^{554}\) Goold (Loeb), 2006, 429-430. Protesilaus was the first Greek to be killed in the Trojan war. He had gone to Troy immediately after his marriage.
quare, dum licet, inter nos laetemur amantes:
non satis estullo tempore longus amor.

('So, while we may, let us enjoy our love between the two of us:
love is not long enough over any period.')

Elegia 1.19, 25-26

This nineteenth elegy concludes the series of poems about Cynthia and about Propertius’
views on love in the first book. I consider these poems as love-elegies without any refer-
ences to actual events.

Elegia 1.20 is probably an early poem. Propertius addresses Gallus, again in the role of
praeeceptor amoris (‘instructor in matters of love’). Baker states that ‘there is good reason for
supposing that the addressee is one and the same as the love-elegist Gaius Cornelius Gallus;
for supposing, indeed, that motifs from Gallus’ own elegies are woven, by way of compli-
mentary allusion, into Propertius’ poem.’ In the poem Gallus is warned not to be careless
in his love for a boy whom Propertius compares to the mythological Hylas. Gallus is in danger
of losing his Hylas to others, just as Hercules, when he as a member of the crew of the Argo
had lost his Hylas. It is not only girls who chose Hylas; we read in line 25 that duo fratres,
Aquilonia proles (‘two brothers, the sons of the north wind’), referring to the male rivals of
Gallus, are also interested in Hylas. However, Hylas escapes to the nymphs, the Hamadry-
ads. Therefore, in Propertius’ poem there is a second assault on Hylas, this time by the girls.
He retells the fate of the mythical Hylas, Hercules’ love, who was snatched away by the
nymphs and lost by Hercules. The poem ends with the warning to Gallus in the lines 51-54:

his, o Galle, tuos monitus seruabis amores,
formosum nymphis credere rursus Hylan.

('Warned by this story, Gallus, you will keep your love safe,
Be careful not to entrust a beautiful Hylas to the nymphs again.')

Elegia 1.20, 51-54

A passage in Elegia 1.20 requires further discussion. In lines 11-14 Propertius warns Gallus not
to lose his ardor (‘passion’) to the nympharum semper cupida [...] rapina (‘the lustful abduc-
tion of nymphs.’); if that should happen he will forever wander in a bleak land, as we read in
lines 13-14:

ne tibi sit duros montes et frigida saxa,
Galle, neque expertos semper adire lacus.

('lest it be your lot always to approach harsh mountains
and chill rocks and lakes not tried before, Gallus.’)

Elegia 1.20, 13-14

556 The two sons of Aquilo (Boreas) are Zetes and Calais, the Boreads.
557 The OCT edition indicates that lines 52 and 53 of this poem have been lost.
The description of the landscape in which Gallus has to live reminds us of Vergilius’ description of Gallus’ environment in Ecloga 10, 14-15, as indeed the description of the landscape of Cynthia’s unhappy lover in Elegia 1.18 may have the same effect. Thus, we have three Augustan poets, Gallus (by implication), Vergilius and Propertius, who allude in similar ways to this unhappy landscape. We do not know when Gallus wrote his lines; Vergilius wrote his tenth Ecloga before 35 B.C. and Propertius wrote the present elegy not later than 29 B.C. Was this manner of expressing the pitiful state of an abandoned lover the vogue or has Propertius borrowed Vergilius’ words and thus given in this Elegia 1.20 his first ‘political’ statement? This makes it likely that the description of the landscape is an allusion by Propertius to the desolate state of Italia’s countryside after the civil wars. In this respect, there are three further points to consider. Firstly, Propertius wrote this elegy at the time of or just after the fall of Alexandria when the civil war was still being fought or had just ended; of course at the time of writing the poet could not have known that the civil war had come to an end. Secondly, there is the link with Vergilius’ Ecloga through the figure of Gallus. Thirdly, after this elegy the first book closes with two poems which carry a clear reference to the civil war and the siege of Perusia. Thus, the time of writing, the connection with Vergilius’ tenth Ecloga and the place of the poem in the book add to the description of the suffering lover Gallus the dimension of the bleak after-war landscape: this is why I label this elegy as one which refers to actual events and which has a ‘private political’ content.

In Elegia 1.21 Propertius deals with another piece of recent history, namely the Perusine war of 41 B.C., which had ravaged the city and her region. He introduces two fellow soldiers, defenders within the walls of the city of Perusia at Lucius Antonius’ side who had managed to escape. One, called Gallus, now lies dying outside the city and suggests to the other that his sister, Gallus’ wife, who will want to bury the dead Gallus, should not be told the irony of his death, which is that he had survived the capture of the town, but was killed afterwards by ignotas manus (‘unknown hands’) (line 8). In lines 9-10 Gallus says:

\[ \text{et, quaecumque super dispersa inuenerit ossa} \\
\text{montibus Etruscis, haec sciat esse mea.} \]

(‘and, whatever bones she finds scattered up on the Etruscan hills, let her know that these are mine.’)

Elegia 1.21, 9-10

Contrary to Baker, I interpret this as: ‘tell her which of all these bones are mine for burial’, but not as ‘in all this hopeless confusion of bones, you might just as well let her take one lot as any other, to exercise her sisterly pietas on’. There has been much scholarly discussion

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558 Baker, 2000, 175. Baker says about this: ‘In mentioning “hard mountains” [our ‘harsh mountains’] and “rocks that are frigid” [our ‘chill rocks’] among the things in store for Gallus when his Hylas has gone, Propertius seems again to allude to the love-elegies of Cornelius Gallus. These features of landscape are very similar to those in the poetry of the lovelorn Gallus, as reported at Verg. Ecl. 10.14-15 and 58-59, and in the poetry of the lovelorn Propertius at 1.18.27-28, which probably also imitates Gallus’ poetry; see Ross 1975, 71ff.’ See pages 74-76 of this book.

559 In a discussion about this elegy Mrs. Arienne de Jong suggested that this passage may have a different meaning: the bleak landscape does not refer to the abandoned lover, but to the much more desolate state of a life without love.

as to whether Gallus was a relative of Propertius, and whether he was dying, already dead or
even imaginary: a discussion which has not resolved the question.\footnote{See for instance Stahl, 1985, 113: ‘the campaign in which Propertius’ relative Gallus participated’ and Richardson, 1977, 207: ‘Many critics would like to see Gallus as the relation of P. mentioned in 1.22 as having died in the Perusine War, but that is unlikely.’ Heyworth, 2007A, 99 suggests that ‘It [Gallum in line 7] will presumably have replaced another name.’ DuQuesnay, 1992, 75-78; ‘The available evidence [of the different options of Gallus’ identity] does not allow detailed conclusions [about the identity in Elegia 1.21].’ (page 78). In the same essay (pages 66-67) DuQuesnay makes the attractive suggestion that the soror in line 6 was the sister of the miles and the wife of Gallus; this has also been suggested by Stahl, 1985, 112.} Fortunately, this unresolved question has no bearing on the point which I want to make, namely that Propertius expresses in this poem his views on the evil of the Perusine war and the responsibility for the struggle. Although the present (and the following poem) are part of Propertius’ personal experience, I have classified these two poems in the group of poems about the civil war because I consider his comments on the war as preponderant.

With the final poem of the first book, \textit{Elegia} 1.22, Propertius focuses again on the dead of the Perusine war. The poem is addressed to Tullus to whom the first elegy was dedicated and it is the poet’s \textit{sphragis}, his seal.\footnote{See for Tullus’ relationship with Propertius: Heyworth, 2007A, 94 note 57 and 2007B, 95-97. See also page 53, note 131 of this book.} Tullus came from Perusia and Propertius describes the city in lines 3-5:

\begin{verbatim}
   si Perusina tibi patriae sunt nota sepulcra,
   Italiae duris funera temporibus,
   cum Romana suos egit discordia ciues,
   (‘If you know the Perusine tombs of our country,
   the burial place of Italy in grim times,
   when Roman strife assailed her citizens’)
\end{verbatim}

\textit{Elegia} 1.22, 3-5

The extent to which the suffering caused by the war affected Propertius appears from the next passage when he addresses the soil of Etruria in lines 6-8: \footnote{DuQuesnay, 1992, 80: ‘As we have already seen, the Perusine War made an exceptionally deep impression on contemporaries. The fighting had been fierce and many had died fighting to protect their lands and families.’ Heyworth, 2007B, 95: ‘Yet Propertius, twelve years or so after the event, still sees the siege of Perusia as a defining moment in his life.’}

\begin{verbatim}
   (sed mihi praecipue, puluis Etrusca, dolor:
   tu proiecta mei perpessae es membra propinqu,
   tu nullo miseri contegis ossa solo):
   (‘but to me especially are you a source of pain, Etruscan dust:
   you let the limbs of my relative be cast out,
   you cover the bones of the poor man with no earth,’)
\end{verbatim}

\textit{Elegia} 1.22, 6-8

In these last two poems Propertius grieves for the death of many in the Perusine war and by implication in the civil war. Furthermore, I consider that \textit{Elegiae} 1.21 and 1.22 are critical of Octavianus which appears in particular in \textit{Elegia} 1.21, 7 \textit{(per medios ereptum Caesaris enses} (‘snatched to safety through the middle of Caesar’s swords’) and in \textit{Elegia} 1.22, 5 \textit{(Romana}
discordia). My interpretation of ‘Romana discordia’ is very different from the one which DuQuesnay offers, who remarks the following:564

‘Our sources for the Perusine War make it quite clear that there did exist versions which held Octavian primarily responsible for the atrocities that happened. Some accused him of starting the war deliberately to serve his own ends; others even accused him of conspiring with L. Antonius in order to flush out his personal enemies and destroy them. In these hostile versions, Octavian is held directly responsible for the destruction of Perusia and for the slaughter that attended it. Some went so far as to say that he ritually sacrificed three hundred senators, knights and town-councillors of Perusia at an altar dedicated to Divus Iulius on the Ides of March 40 B.C.

But there was another version.’

DuQuesnay then continues by interpreting Propertius’ Discordia as follows:

‘the responsibility for the war, and so for the consequent suffering, is attributed to Discordia. In effect Propertius is here quoting Virgil, Eclogues 1.71f.: en quo Discordia ciuis/produxit miser.

[‘See where strife has brought our unhappy citizens!’] [...] Virgil had not blamed Octavian for the war but had presented him rather as a just benefactor, the only man capable of ameliorating the effects of Discordia.’

Line 5 of Elegia 1.22 shows that in the years before 29 B.C. Propertius did not feel favourably disposed towards the political elite in Rome whose political discordia (‘strife’) he held responsible for the death toll in the civil war and by using the words Caesaris enses (the slaughter of the nobles) in 1.21 he sees Octavianus as an accomplice.565

Generally speaking, the first book of Elegiae is a book of love poetry. It is only at the end of the book that Propertius turns to actual issues and makes political statements. As the order in which Propertius has written the poems of the book is not certain, one can not conclude that he wrote these ‘private political’ (Elegia 1.20) and ‘political’ (Elegiae 1.21 and 1.22) poems at around 29 B.C., after the fall of Alexandria at a time when the first signs that Octavianus was winning appeared.


565 Galinsky, 1996, 227. See also Hubbard, 2001, 40 and 98-99; Miss Hubbard’s view on Elegiae 1.21 and 1.22 differs substantially with mine. She states in her book on Propertius: ‘It [Elegia 1.20, the poem about Hy- las] is indeed in a sense the last poem of the [first] book, as the two closely related epigrams that follow [1.21 and 1.22] make up the sphragis or seal that we find at the end of many ancient works, where the poet, in de- fault of a dust jacket, gives us what biographical information about himself he regards as relevant. [...] From a poet writing after Actium, the declaration is unexpected and indeed startling, and it brings the book to a trou- bling close.’ Later in the same book (pages 98-99) she shades her view and s something of the deeper meaning of the poem. She says: ‘And in the last poem of all [1.22], telling of his own origin, he makes it plain that this Gallus was his kinsman and speaks feelingly of the slaughter at Perugia; that was his own country.’ (italics ‘in de- fault...as relevant’ and ‘speaks feelingly...at Perugia’ are mine). In my opinion the ‘biographical information’ in the two poems is indeed ‘unexpected and startling’, but in a different sense than Miss Hubbard states. The poet was very troubled about what had happened to his home country and he made a courageous statement about the destruction and slaughter in the recent civil war. It was probably for the first time that he spoke out about it and his sphragis has a political meaning which he has put into words quite openly.
The second book of Elegiae has a total of thirty three poems of which the majority is love-elegies. However, already the first poem has a different focus and through the book as a whole one sees poetry which deals with actual issues. I will discuss the individual poems in the same way as I did in the case of the first book and all the poems are summarised in appendix ix.

Elegia 2.1 opens with Propertius’ emphatic statement that his source of poetic inspiration is his beloved, whom the reader assumes to be Cynthia, although the poet does not mention her by name. After this opening he addresses Maecenas and testifies that he would rather sing about Octavianus’ great deeds than about mythical subjects, but that he does not feel able to do so (lines 17-18); this makes the poem a recusatio. He would involve Maecenas in his songs as he testifies in lines 25-26:

\[
\textit{bellaque resque tui memorarem Caesaris, et tu Caesare sub magno cura secunda fores.}
\]

(‘I would record the wars and actions of your Caesar, and you would be my second concern, just behind mighty Caesar.’)

Elegia 2.1, 25-26

Next, Propertius gives a summary of Octavianus’ successes: Mutina, Philippi, Sicily, Alexandria. There has been much discussion in secondary literature whether Propertius criticises Octavianus in this passage (lines 27-36) and some see this as criticism indeed and others do not.\(^{566}\) In my opinion the passage has two lines which are indicative of criticism; \textit{ciuilia busta} (‘burial place of citizens’) in line 27 and \textit{euersosque focos antiquae gentis Etruscae} (‘and the overturned hearths of he ancient Etruscan race’) in line 29. The last line in particular shows how Propertius was affected by the ravages in the Perusine war and the tone is one of continued and ill-concealed resentment of the perpetrators. The theme of distress caused by the civil war in this poem links up with the last two poems of the first book and I label \textit{Elegia 2.1} as a ‘political’ poem with a critical tone. The recusatio continues in the next passage (lines 39-46) when he says that he does not feel capable of writing an epic for Octavianus through his \textit{Phrygios avos} (‘his Phrygian [= Trojan] ancestors’). He is better suited for another kind of poetry as we learn from lines 45-46:

\[
\textit{nos contra angusto uersamus proelia lecto: qua pote quisque, in ea conterat arte diem.}
\]

(‘we on the other hand engage in [and versify] battles on our narrow bed: let each spend his time on that art where he is able.’)

Elegia 2.1, 45-46

Yet, in his life and in his poetry he knows \textit{laus} (‘glory’) as much as the soldier does who through his \textit{virtus}, which shows in his courage and his attainment of honour in service of the community, receives his glory. His glory, however, is of a different kind as he says in the lines 47-48:

\[
\textit{laus in amore mori; laus altera si datur uno}
\]

\(^{566}\) Syndikus, 2006, 248; See also Stahl, 1985, 164-167.
posse frui: fruar o semper amore meo,
('There is praise to die in love; further praise if it is given to be able to enjoy one love: oh may I always enjoy my love,').

_Elegia_ 2.1, 47-48

These are references to Augustan ideas and Roman values, even if Propertius does not accept them he subjugates manly virtues to the womanly, such as _laus_ in married love. This reversal of values would not be popular thinking in Rome. He hopes that he can enjoy a single love, which, we may assume, is that of Cynthia, although we do not meet her name in this poem, as we do not in many poems to come. He hopes that he can enjoy her love until his death, although he is not so sure of this and although there is much pain in his beloved’s harshness. The last line of the poem quotes his supposed epitaph and says:

‘_Huiq misero fatum dura puella fuit._’

('A hard-hearted girl was the destiny of this poor soul.').

_Elegia_ 2.1, 78

This poem is an interesting blend of on the one hand Propertius’ determination to continue writing love-elegies in which he can express all the vicissitudes of his love, and on the other his commentary on the recent past of the people of his native soil: he persists with his critical attitude ‘to the regime that now dominates Rome’s politics’, the attitude which he also showed in 1.22.\(^ {567}\)

_Elegia_ 2.2 is a charming description of his beloved beauty whom Propertius compared to the greatest of the Greek goddesses. Although she is not mentioned by name before the fifth elegy, one understands that this is Cynthia.

Although there is a view that the third and fourth elegy belong together (it has been argued that the traditional end of the third is presumably the beginning of the fourth: in other words _Elegia_ 2.3, 45-54 should be seen as belonging to _Elegia_ 2.4), I will follow the OCT edition.\(^ {568}\) The third elegy is again a eulogy of his girl’s beauty, not only her physical attraction but everything which makes a woman attractive. She is portrayed as an accomplished musician and poetess. She has gifts which she has not received from her mother, but as Propertius says in line 25: _haec tibi contulerunt caelestia munera diui_ ('The gods conferred on you these heavenly benefactions,'). Her beauty is comparable to Helena’s and he quotes in line 40 Priamus and his friends when they say that for such a woman: _uel Priamo belli causa probanda fuit_ ('even to Priam as a cause of war it was fit to be approved').\(^ {569}\) Propertius points out that it is not easy to love somebody like Cynthia and often he has tried to please her, without success. The lover can only survive if he submits to her demands, just like a bull who first refuses to plough but _post uenit assueto mollis ad arua iugo_ ('afterwards comes gentle to the fields, once the yoke is familiar,' ) (line 2.3, 48). Towards the end of the short next poem, _Elegia_ 2.4, Propertius remarks in line 17: _hostis si quis erit nobis, amet ille puellas_: ('If someone will be an enemy to me, let him love girls;'). Love makes the lover desperate.

\(^{567}\) Heyworth, 2007B, 101-103 and 105-108 at 108.

\(^{568}\) Syndikus, 2006, 254; Heyworth, 2007A, 124-127: although he admits the problems of the text, he does not emend them.

\(^{569}\) Propertius refers to _Ilias_ 3, 154-158.
It is in *Elegia* 2.5 that Cynthia is mentioned by name for the first time in the second book. The poet can not believe what he has heard about her licentious behaviour and he considers leaving her, until he realises that he loves her so much that he can not live without her. At the end of the poem Propertius warns Cynthia not to damage her reputation.

The sixth *Elegia* begins with a description of what is called ‘an almost pathological jealousy’ of Propertius. He is jealous of almost everyone who comes into contact with Cynthia, her mother, sister, girlfriends and even children. He then explores the theme that jealousy has led to wars in Greece in the past. Next however, Propertius changes the theme to that of uncontrolled behaviour, which he sees in Rome today. At the centre of the poem, in lines 19-22 he places Romulus who ordered the rape of the Sabine women, a crime of which the effects were still felt in the licentious behaviour of men and women. The lines say:

\[
[...] tu criminis auctor, 
\textit{nutritus duro, Romule, lacte lupae.} 
\textit{tu rapere intactas dociusti impune Sabinas;}
\textit{per te nunc Romae quidlibet audet Amor.}
\]\n
(‘[...] You are a source of the crime, Romulus, 
nourished on the bitter milk of the she-wolf. 
You taught to rape Sabine virgins and not be punished; 
thanks to your Love dares anything at Rome these days.’)

*Elegia* 2.6, 19-22

Propertius then moves on to denounce the adulterous behaviour of Roman women, as is shown in line 26, using quolibet as the similar quidlibet in line 22. Line 26 says: si cuius nuptae quolibet ire licet? (‘if any bride can go exactly wherever she likes?’). This is followed by a diatribe against erotic paintings which do not give young girls the right moral standards. The elegy ends with this topic. The only protector of Cynthia’s fidelity is not his jealousy, but her own moral standard.

Propertius touches on two points in this elegy. Firstly, there is a possible allusion to Octavianus in line 20 when the poet refers to Romulus, not dissimilar to Horatius’ *Iambus* 7, 17-20. Propertius wrote this poem between 29 and 27 B.C. In the case of Horatius’ seventh *Iambus* I have argued that Horatius’ reference to Romulus was an allusion to Octavianus as, at the time that Horatius wrote his poem (39 or 38 B.C.), Octavianus had associated himself with Romulus. My point was that this led to the decision in 36 to build the new temple of Apollo at the Palatine near the mythical hut of Romulus. When Propertius wrote his elegy the promised temple had been completed or was near completion. Thus, it may be possible that Propertius also makes the connection Romulus - temple of Apollo – Octavianus. In this poem however, Propertius resents Romulus and accuses him of lying at the source of the contemporary reprehensible sexual standards. This leads to the second point. It is likely that at the time that Propertius wrote this *Elegia* 2.6 (between 29 and 27 B.C.) Octavianus took offence at the loose moral standards in Rome, having his future marriage- and divorce legislation already on his mind. There are indications of this in Propertius’ next *Elegia* 2.7 which I

570 Syndikus, 2006, 258.
571 Heyworth, 2007A, 135 suggests that there must be a lacuna in the manuscript(s) before line 15 which linked the events of the mythical past to Propertius’ fears.
572 See pages 157-159 of this book.
573 The legislation which Augustus eventually introduced in 17 B.C. is the *Lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus* which made a.o. marriage and remarriage mandatory for men and women in certain age categories and made provisions on inheritance and the *Lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis* which was directed against several forms of
will discuss below. The problem however is that my first point (Romulus, the man at the source of poor sexual standards, is an allusion to Octavianus) is at odds with my second point (Octavianus, the man who will introduce legislation against poor sexual standards). In the matter of the sexual licentiousness in Rome of his time Propertius took Octavianus’ side, as is clearly visible by the poet’s condemnation in the present elegy. In the next poem it will be obvious that the poet was well informed of the effects of old Republican laws in or around 28 B.C. While I did interpret the mentioning of Romulus in Horatius’ seventh iambus as a critical allusion to Octavianus, I consider Propertius’ mentioning of Romulus here as a ‘neutral’ or a possible critical allusion to Octavianus. I interpret Propertius’ allusion as a reminder that the decay of standards has begun long ago (in Romulus’ time) and he plants the thought in peoples’ minds that Octavianus, the successor of the original perpetrator of the crime, ought to start a moral revival. I see Elegy 2.6 as a poem with a ‘private political’ content.

Elegia 2.7 again concerns legislation, although there has been much controversy about which law Propertius means in the first line of this poem written in 28 or at the latest 26 B.C. GAVISA es certe sublatam, Cynthia, legem (‘You certainly rejoiced, Cynthia, at the abrogation of the law,’). Scholars have offered several options, such as the most probable option of an old provision from the time of the Republic which made it possible for the Triumviri to levy taxes by edict and which had been used in the 40s and 30s by them to finance the war, or the less likely option of a piece of incidental legislation of the early 20s by Octavianus and withdrawn by him after a few years, or of a precursor to the Leges Iulie of 17 B.C. Whatever the precise motive for the legislation was, it imposed on bachelors a heavy tax which Propertius could not pay, or it compelled him to marry Cynthia, which was impossible. It is difficult to assess why he could not marry her. Some argue that it was ‘because of her notorious way of life’ or because she was a meretrix (‘prostitute’), but I prefer Badian’s view that we simply do not know Cynthia’s social status. Whatever law was repelled in 28 B.C. or 26 B.C. Propertius expresses in the present elegy his relief that the threat of separation from Cynthia had been removed. However, it seems to me that the poet in this poem makes a statement which is as least as interesting as his words of relief that he could continue his relationship with Cynthia on the same footing as before. The interesting point of this poem is Propertius’ discussion of the threat of interference in private life by political extramarital liaisons. In addition to these two there was also new legislation de pudicitia (‘about modesty’) and de ambitu (‘about vanity’). Later the Lex Papia Poppaea was introduced in 9 A.D. which alleviated some of the severe penalties of the Lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus. See Badian, 1985, 83, note 3 and Galinsky, 1996, 128-138.

Heyworth, 2007B, 109-114; Stahl, 1985, 139-155 at 143: ‘The threat to the individual contained in such legislation is so basic that, as a response, a statement of principle is required, independently of the law’s enactment or realization.’ In lines 1-2 of Elegia 2.7 Propertius says: legem/quodam edicta femus uterque diu (‘law/whose promulgation made us both weep a long while’). Badian (1985, 94) points out that Propertius by the very use of the word edicta wanted to indicate that this law was issued by the Triumviri (Octavianus, Antonius and Lepidus). Hubbard’s position (2001, 101, note 2) is opposite to this. She makes the point that Propertius referred to ‘attempted moral legislation of (probably) 28 B.C. [by Octavianus].’ Heyworth, 2007B, 109-110 states: ‘The lex is not presented by Propertius as the responsibility of the ‘triumvirate’, but (verse 5) as an attempt by Caesar to interfere in private life by imposing marriage. [...] Caesar was himself one of the triumvirate, and the one who was active in Rome and who needed money in the mid to late 30s.’ See for a summary of the different options Badian’s article.
leaders: an actual subject indeed, even in the present day. Propertius rejects this completely and utterly. In lines 3-5 he says:

\[\ldots;\ quartuis diducere amantes\]
\[non quetius invitos Iuppiter ipse duos.\]
\[‘at magnus Caesar.’ Sed magnus Caesar in armis:\]
\[\ldots;\ though Jupiter himself could not divide two lovers against their will.\]
\[‘Yet Caesar is mighty.’ But it is in arms that Caesar is mighty.’\]
\[Elegia 2.7, 3-5\]

The lover would rather die than marry by order. Certainly he would not be willing to beget sons who could be soldiers for a future war; line 14 reads: nullus de nostro sanguine miles erit (‘There will be no soldier from my blood.’). This line may give us a clue as to the true motives of Octavianus’ legislation, namely that there was a shortage of men after the civil war. The poem closes with Propertius’ assurance that he is made for another battle, that of love-poetry; and all to express his love for Cynthia.

At first sight this poem is a love-elegy and nothing else. However, I read his courageous declaration of belief in personal freedom and, as a result of this, his rejection of interference in private matters by ‘the politicians’ as a powerful and critical political statement.

In Elegia 2.8 Propertius returns to a well-known theme, the separation from his beloved of whom he dramatically says in line 5: possum ego in alterius posita spectare lacerto? (‘Can I bear to see her lying on another’s arm?’). The poet wants to accept his fate, that the lover may lose one day and win another. Next he addresses his former sweetheart directly and heaps all sorts of reproach on her: she has always insulted him. Then he addresses himself: if he dies she will gloat over his death and calcet ossa mea (‘tread on my bones.’) (line 20). Death is the only escape and Propertius becomes rather violent when he says in line 25 that his beloved should die with him: mecum morioris oportet; (‘it is right that you die with me’).

In the final part of the poem common sense returns to Propertius, and with his keen sense of the grand comparison he says in line 36 that he feels like Achilles when he was robbed of Briseis: tantus in erepto saeuit amore dolor. (‘so much did his pain rage over his stolen love.’).

The theme of the next elegy, 2.9, is very similar: his beloved’s infidelity when Propertius had been away for a single night. He contrasts her behaviour to that of Penelope and Briseis and in lines 17-18 he again briefly alludes to the theme of marital fidelity:

\[tunc igitur ueris gaudebat Graecia nuptis;\]
\[tunc etiam caedes inter et arma pudor.\]
\[(‘Then therefore Greece rejoiced in true wives; then even amid slaughter and warfare there was a sense of proper behaviour’)\]
\[Elegia 2.9, 17-18\]

Propertius continues by blaming her for her actions; she could not manage without a man for a single night and she was now presumably drinking with the very same who had left her earlier, and who was making fun of Propertius. He was a useless creature anyway who had not cared a hoot when she was ill. The poet then returns to the old dogma that this is the
way women behave and he would rather be dead. Yet, he loves her so much that she will always remain his. In line 46 he testifies his eternal love: *solus ero, quoniam non licet esse tuum.* (‘I shall be alone, since it is not possible that I be yours.’) and he wishes his rival dead.

I interpret the short passage in the middle of the poem as one with a ‘private political’ content. Particularly in line 18 Propertius gives a critical comment on the moral decline of his time. The poet shows an antithesis between those women who maintained their high moral standards in archaic Greece in times of war and the women in Rome of his own days.

The tenth elegy in book 2 concerns the same theme as the one with which Propertius opened the book, namely praise of Augustus. Propertius will from now on sing of the great deeds of his leader and the poem shows signs of a sense of urgency, exemplified by the use of *nunc* in lines 9, 10 and 12 and *iam* in 2, 3, 11 and 13. He will take leave of his love poetry and will start writing war poetry. In line 8 he says: *bella canam, quando scripta puella mea est.* (‘I shall sing wars, since my girl is written.’). In the third stanza the poet sets out Augustus’ military achievements on which he intends to focus. The problem however is that the campaigns which Propertius intends to celebrate had just begun or were only in the preparatory stage. One finds a good example in line 16: *et domus intactae te tremit Arabiae;* (‘and the home of untouched Arabia trembles before you’). Indeed, in 26 or 25 B.C. there was a campaign into Arabia under Aelius Gallus which ended in a disaster, while Propertius wrote this line before 27 B.C. And in lines 19-20 the *vates magnus* (‘the inspired and great poet’) makes it abundantly clear that he is talking in the future tense:

> haec ego castra sequar; uates tua castra canendo
> magnus ero: seruent hunc mihi fata diem.
> (‘I shall follow these campaigns; in singing your campaigns I shall become an inspired poet and a great one: may the fates preserve this day for me!’)
>
> *Elegia* 2.10, 19-20

Writing as an epic poet and following Augustus’ ‘camp’ is ‘all wishful thinking.’\(^{577}\) In line 25 in the last stanza of the poem one reads that he feels that he is not yet skilled in this and that *nondum etiam Ascreaeos norunt mea carmina montes,* (‘Not yet do my poems know the Ascrean mountains.’).\(^{578}\) He is not yet an epic poet and rather remains a critical observer.

In the secondary literature one finds different interpretations of this poem. One can read it as a *recusatio*, but the interpretation of Stahl is interesting.\(^{579}\) He makes the credible suggestion that Propertius wrote this tongue-in-cheek and that the very choice of the possible future campaigns, about which he was going to sing, means that he was not yet prepared to write an eulogy of Augustus and unwilling ‘to give up the independence which he so

\(^{577}\) Syndikus, 2006, 267.

\(^{578}\) Loeb, 2006, 134. Ascra was the home of Hesiodus. This refers to Vergilius’ *Ecloga* 6, 64-73. Gallus received there the pipe of Hesiodus and was admitted to the epic poets.

\(^{579}\) Stahl, 1985, 156-162. Syndikus (2006, 266) poses the question whether Propertius would have said *mei ducis* in line 4 if his praise had been a pretense only. It seems to me that the choice of these words could be part of the pretense.
fiercely defended in 2.7. Heyworth makes a similar point when he introduces ‘other political poems in Books 2 and 3’ with a short discussion of 2.10. He says:

‘In the remainder of our Books 2 and 3 [i.e. from Elegia 2.7 onwards], Propertius at times suggests a movement towards support for the regime, with panegyrical material promised or briefly provided. But regularly there is an underlying tone of cynicism and disdain, and always there is a return to the norms of individualism.’

The eleventh elegy is presumably a short (six lines) fragment of a longer poem which Propertius probably wrote after one of the break-ups with his beloved. He tells her that his poems will not bring her everlasting fame and that her grave will remain unnoticed. The next elegy, 2.12, exudes a different mood. After a description of Amor, who received his wings to arrive in a lover’s heart and his arrows to strike upon the lover unnoticed, the poet testifies that he is a victim of Amor. In line 12 he says: in me tela manent; manet et puerilis imago; (‘In my case the weapons remain valid; so too does the boyish appearance’). Amor had lodged himself in his heart and tormented him, sapping his strength. If this were to continue, who will then sing Amor’s praises and be the writer of love poetry in Rome? In line 22 the poet says: (haec mea Musa leuis gloria magna tua est) (‘this light Muse of mine is your great glory’). In Elegia 2.12 Propertius states that he considers himself the love poet and this poem is thus a confirmation of 2.10.

In Elegia 2.13 Propertius anticipates his own death and funeral, just as in 1.17 and 1.19. However, the beginning of this elegy is full of life. Amor is his inspiration and in line 7 Cynthia is nostro stupefiat [...] versu (‘stun with my verse’). When Cynthia is the judge of his poems, love and poetry are connected: love poetry is the kind of poetry which he prefers to write. In line 14 he says: nam domina iudice tutus ero (‘for with my mistress as judge I shall be safe’). His fame will be greater than that of the legendary Greek singer Linus of Argos. However, at present Cynthia does not return his love and thus the poet turns to his death and funeral and gives Cynthia detailed instructions about the arrangements which should be worthy of a poet, simple and dignified. He wants to be remembered as a love poet and his beloved Cynthia is asked to mourn for him at his grave. But alas, she cannot bring him back from the grave: sed frustra mutos reuocabis, Cynthia, manes: (‘But in vain, Cynthia, will you call back my mute soul’)(line 57).

The fourteenth elegy of the second book is one of Propertius’ jubilant love poems. His sweetheart has granted him a whole night of love as he triumphantly wants inscribed on a pillar of Venus’ temple: TOTA NOCTE RECEPTUS AMANS. (‘THE LOVER WELCOMED FOR A WHOLE NIGHT.’)(line 28). Earlier in the poem he says that he is happier than some of the famous mythological men and women, as Atreus’ son Agamemnon, Electra or Minos’ daughter Ariadne who all had to suffer much and long before they reached their goals, without finding their happiness. He muses that gaining Cynthia’s love has not been all roses, but that in the night of love she has given herself to him and is deaf to others knocking at the door: pulsabant alii frustra dominamque vocabant: (‘Others were knocking in vain and calling on

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582 See also my Appendix X.
583 Heyworth, 1992, 45-59.
their mistress;') (line 21). But some doubt creeps into the last line: if Cynthia changes her mind again he shall fall down dead before her door.

_Elegia_ 2.15 concerns Propertius celebrating of a night of love, possibly the same as he described in the previous poem, or perhaps because his beloved offered him more. It is a real love poem and the poet is at times rather explicit in the pictures of their love-making. He wants his sweetheart naked just as Paris saw Helena. In lines 17-18 we are given a vivid picture of what the excited lover will do:

\[
\text{quod si pertendens animo uestita cubaris,} \\
\text{scissa ueste meas experiere manus.} \\
\text{('But if you persist in your intention of lying clothed,} \\
\text{you will experience my hands tearing your dress.'})
\]

_Elegia_ 2.15, 17-18

May this feast of love continue forever: _nox tibi longa uenit, nec reditura dies._ ('a long night is coming for you, and a day that will not return.') (line 24). He wishes that they will stay joined together which Propertius presents in an attractive picture in lines 27-30:

\[
\text{Exemplo uinctae tibi sint in amore columbae,} \\
\text{masculus et totum femina coniugium.} \\
\text{errat qui finem uesani quaerit amoris.} \\
\text{uerus amor nullum nouit habere modum:} \\
\text{('Let doves bound in love be an example to you,} \\
\text{male and female a complete marriage.} \\
\text{He errs who seeks an end to mad love:} \\
\text{true love does not know to have any limit.'})
\]

_Elegia_ 2.15, 27-30

His life would be transferred to a different plane if his beloved would give him such a night more often. After this apex Propertius turns away from the personal to the general. In lines 41-46 he introduces his well-known theme ‘make love, not war.’ This is a significant passage as he weaves into his love-elegies his opinions about actual events, just as he did in for instance _Elegiae_ 2.6 and 2.7. Lines 41-46 of the present elegy read:

\[
\text{qualem si cuncti cuperent decurrere uitam} \\
\text{et pressi muito membra iacere mero,} \\
\text{non ferrum crudele neque esset bellica nauis} \\
\text{nec nostra Actiacum uerteret ossa mare,} \\
\text{nec totiens propriis circum oppugnata triumphis} \\
\text{lassa foret crines soluere Roma suos.} \\
\text{('If such were the life everyone desired to run through} \\
\text{and lie with their limbs weighed down by much wine,} \text{there would be no cruel iron nor ship for war,} \\
\text{nor would the sea at Actium turn over our bones, nor would Rome, so often attacked all round by civil triumphs,} \\
\text{be weary of loosing her hair [i.e. in mourning].')}\]
In the finale of the poem he urges his beloved to enjoy their love while it is still possible; his lines are written in ‘major’ after the previous ‘minor’.

The passage quoted above is in my opinion very significant for an understanding of Propertius, who expresses here in clear terms that ‘the world would be a different place if we all lived in this [his] way: There would be no wars, and Rome would not have to mourn the deaths caused by so many civil wars.’ Stahl in his discussion of the present elegy goes even further when he says:

“For a last time the elegy’s view is broadened (37-48) as the lover reflects on the true purpose and meaning of life (vitae, 38; qualem...vitam, 41; haec, 47; cf. vitae, 49), and on what the word “immortality” truly means for human beings: not the allegedly “eternal” glory achieved through the crimes of warfare, but rather the innocent, intense dedication of a lover’s life. If all men were motivated like Propertius and desired this kind of life (qualem si cuncti cupidet decurrere vitam, 41), one would not now have to face the cruel and murderous results of Rome’s bellicose history (43-46). This view, which makes Propertius’ life a potential model for all (cuncti) to strive after, but makes Roman history a series of pollutions, is so shattering to the Augustan poetic ideal, [...].”

Living in this manner means making love which would turn a man into a god (nocte una quuiuis uel deus esse potest.) as Propertius says in line 40 or ‘lie with their limbs weighed down with much wine’ as suggested in line 42. This is not the way in which Octavianus imagined life in Rome when he tried to shape reality according to his high-minded principles, but rather Marcus Antonius’ way. What the poet proposes here is nothing less than an alternative way of life. The poet goes even further, as the tone in which he has written lines 44-46 not only expresses his grief after his experience of the civil war, but also implies criticism of the contemporary leadership. As appears from line 44 the poem was written after Actium in 28 or 27 B.C. at the time of the ‘First Settlement’ when Octavianus’ rise to power had started in earnest. Therefore, this passage is a reminder that Octavianus is the principal remaining leader who represents ‘Rome, so often beset by her own conquests’: the poem has a political content which is critical of the princeps.

*Elegia* 2.16 is in a sense a pendant of the previous elegy. While 2.15 concerns the ecstasy of love in contrast to the horrors of war, the present poem is about the poet’s fear of losing his beloved, here represented by Cynthia. An old rival, presumably the *praetor* of *Elegia* 1.8 has regrettably returned to Rome from Illyria and he celebrates this with a banquet where Cynthia is present, but to which the poet has not been invited. Cynthia is open to seduction as *semper amatorum ponderat illa sinus;* (‘she always weighs the purses of her lovers.’). (line 12). She sleeps with *tam foedo uiro* (‘so foul a man’) for seven nights (line 24). Despairingly Propertius wishes that Rome of old would still exist when there was no opulent wealth and even the leader, Romulus, lived simply; lines 19-20 say: *et ipse/ straminea posset dux habitare casa.* (‘and the leader himself could live in a thatched cottage.’). Everything has
changed and the morality of men and women alike is poor. Slaves can rise to wealth and push even poor Propertius aside; lines 27-28 state this ultimate insult:

\[
\text{barbarus exutis agitat uestigia lumbis,}
\]
\[
et subito felix nunc mea regna tenet;
\]

(‘A barbarian goes through his paces with uncovered loins, and suddenly now he is successful and controls my kingdom;’)

_Elegia_ 2.16B, 27-28

In other words, a rich upstart, a former slave, is now Cynthia’s lover. This greed for gold is what attracts the women of his day. Next, the poet refers (in lines 37-40) to Marcus Antonius who out of blind love abandoned his fleet at Actium when he saw that Cleopatra had fled. In his anger and despair Propertius makes a rather poor comparison as far as Cynthia is concerned: a few lines earlier (12) he reproached her for her greed and not for blind love.\(^{586}\) After this ill-chosen example the poet provides a number of instances from mythology where the receivers of presents came to grief. At the end of the poem Propertius loses his self-control to such an extent that he tells Cynthia that Iuppiter’s wrath of the thunderbolt could come over her; in line 53 he says: _periuras tunc ille solet punire puellas_ (‘then [when the thunder rolls across the sky] he regularly punishes girls who have perjured themselves,’). I started by saying that this elegy concerns the fear of having lost Cynthia. In the present poem the theme of war has not the same meaning as in the previous poem where it probably indicates a critical reminder of the horrors of war. In _Elegia_ 2.16 the war theme fits within the poet’s ‘outburst of uncontrolled emotions’ and does not give a message about actual events.\(^{587}\) Yet, there is another reference to contemporary affairs in this poem, namely to the changes in Rome’s social order where the _nouveaux riches_ gained much – and some must have thought too much – influence and to the loss of old values: like the barbarian who takes his Cynthia away, the new men have risen socially and leave Propertius standing. Therefore, I place elegy 2.16 in the category of ‘private political’ poems.

The seventeenth elegy is a special case as some editors, for instance the Loeb edition, place this poem after _Elegia_ 2.22 and incorporate both the last eight lines of 2.22 (lines 43-50) as the opening and the first four lines of 2.18 as the closure of the ‘new’ _Elegia_ 2.17. I will follow the order and the text of the OCT edition.

_Elegia_ 2.17 is a sombre poem. The poet is no longer his girl’s favourite and all he receives are promises or one visit in ten days. The lover’s suffering is worse than that of Tantalus or Sisyphus. However, the lover will remain faithful, as we read in the closing lines 17-18:

\[
\text{quod quamuis ita sit, dominam mutare cauebo:}
\]

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\(^{586}\) In general there are a number of places in this part of the second book of elegies where the order of the text is not certain. I will follow the order of the OCT edition. _Elegia_ 2.16, 41-42 is a case in point. The Loeb edition places these two lines after line 40. In that case line 41 _Caesaris haec virtus et gloria Caesaris haec est_ (‘This is the quality of Caesar and this Caesar’s glory:’) can be interpreted as praise of Octavianus for winning the sea battle. In the view of the editor of the Loeb edition Propertius wrote in lines 41-42 (as the previous passage (lines 37-40) may suggest) that the victory at Actium was not due to Octavianus’ military leadership, but due to Antonius’ concern for Cleopatra’s safety. However, the OCT edition places lines 41-42 between brackets at the end of the text and the editor (Heyworth) obviously does not see the same connection. The changes in _Elegia_ 2.17, 2.18 and 2.22 in the Loeb edition are also a result of this lack of textual clarity.

\(^{587}\) Syndikus, 2006, 281.
tum flebit, cum in me senserit esse fidem.
(‘Although this is so, I shall take care not to change my mistress:
then she will weep, when she feels that there is loyalty in
me.’)

_Elegia_ 2.17, 17-18

The eighteenth elegy again concerns the same theme as the two previous poems: the poet’s fear of losing – or having lost – his beloved. As in the seventeenth Cynthia is not mentioned by name and thus this poem could concern the worries of any lover whom the poet presents through his own persona. In this poem the poet blames the withdrawal of his beloved on his age, while he still feels young. In line 19 he scolds her _at tu etiam iuuenem odisti me, perfida_ (‘But you hate me even as a young man, you traitress,’). He compares her to Aurora who _cum sene non puduit dormire_ (‘did not feel shame to sleep with an old man [Tithonus]’) (line 17).\(^{588}\) She had better think of the day when she becomes old herself. Does she feel that her beauty withers? She uses too much make-up, such as is the habit of the Britanni and the Belgae to paint their faces. She does not need this artificial stuff as she is beautiful without it. He loves her as she is and wants to care for her.

In _Elegia_ 2.19 Cynthia returns in an epistolary poem by going away again. She will visit the countryside, which is met by approval from Propertius. The countryside is pure and his beloved will not be beset by a seducer. Instead she will enjoy the simple delights of the country folk. For Cynthia and for his peace of mind this is a much safer place to be than the city. Propertius goes hunting for small game in a remote part of Umbria, not far from his birthplace and not far from the place where Cynthia is staying. He hopes to visit her in a few days: one never knows. The last line shows his never-ending worry: _absenti nemo non nocuisse uelit_ (‘no one would wish not to harm a man in his absence.’).

_Elegia_ 2.20 shows a reversal of the well-known role of the two lovers. The girl is grieved by the infidelity of the man and she writes him ‘letters of entreaty’. The girl is suffering more than _abducta Briseide_ (‘the abducted Briseis’) or _captiua Andromacha_ (‘the captive Andromache’) or Philomena (_uolucris funesta [...] Attica_) or Niobe.\(^{589}\) Next he protests his innocence and says that he would overcome everything to be with her and that he _tibi ad extremas mansurum, uita, tenebras_ (‘shall remain yours, my life, till the final darkness:’) (line 17). He loves her for her kindness, beside her beauty and fame. Their relationship has been generally known for the past seven months through his poems and in line 24 he declares that she has been good to him: _non numquam lecti copia facta tui_ (‘never has there not been access to your bed.’). He can not forget that she in turn wants him; in lines 27-28 he testifies:

> _cum te tam multi peterent, tu me una petisti:_
> _possum ego nunc curae non meminisse tuae?_
> (‘Although so many sought you, you alone sought me:
can I now forget your love?’)

\(^{588}\) Tithonus was the son of Laomedon of Troy who was abducted by Aurora who had fallen in love with him. Through her he received the gift of immortality, but she forgot to ask for the gift of eternal youth.

\(^{589}\) _Uolucris funesta Attica_ (‘the mourning bird of Attica’) is the nightingale who had been Philomela an Athenian princess. She mourned over the child Itys who was killed by Prokne, the mother of the child and the sister of Philomela, as vengeance on his father Tereus, Prokne’s husband. Prokne was transformed into a swallow, Philomela into a nightingale and Tereus into a hoopoe.
The poem ends with a solemn declaration that he may be punished severely if he ever forgets this and that he will remain faithful for the rest of his life.

The next elegy, 2.21, concerns his beloved who has been beguiled by a man who shortly afterwards left her to marry his bride. Propertius' reaction is: 'I told you' and he blames his girl for her silliness, while the man boasts his success. That is what men do; witness the unfair treatment of Medea by Jason and that of Calypso by Odysseus. Girls should not believe men’s promises. But whilst his beloved is now looking for another man, Propertius assures her of his unceasing fidelity. The poet contradicts much of this in the next Elegia 2.22, where he declares with much confidence to his friend Demophoon that he prefers to delight in more than one girl. Particularly in the theatre, he can become excited by a candida non tecto pectore (‘fair girl with her bosom uncovered’) (line 8). Propertius can not resist female beauties as he states in lines 19-20:

me licet et Thamyrae cantoris fata sequantur,
numquam ad formosas, inuide, caecus ero.
(‘Though the fate even of the singer Thamyras attend me,
never to beautiful women, o wielder of the evil eye,
shall I be blind.’)

Elegia 2.22A, 19-20

This is a rather unlikely comparison as the Thracian bard Thamyras was punished with blindness when he boasted that he could sing better than the Muses. Next, Propertius states that all this love-making has not sapped his strength and that his performance in bed is very adequate, equal to that of Iuppiter, Achilles or Hector; in lines 23-24 he declares:

[...]: saepe est experta puella
officium tota nocte ualere meum.
(‘[...]: my girl has often found
my duties continue strongly all night long.’)

Elegia 2.22B, 23-24

Propertius then goes on to explore the advantages of having two sweethearts at the same time. If one withholds her favours, there is another to turn to and this has a second advantage, as he states in line 40: at sciat esse aliam quae uelit esse mea (‘yet she may know there is another who wishes to be mine.’). The poem closes with a change of focus, as he addresses a girl, asks her to come to him and tells her to give a clear yes or no; what he can not stand is that girls accept and then withdraws. What to make of this masculine behaviour after his many poems in which he declares his unswerving dedication to one, Cynthia?

The divisions between the Elegiae 2.23 and 2.24 have caused much uncertainty. I will use the divisions which the OCT edition gives and which Syndikus also follows.590 In line 17 of 2.24 the poet starts with a new topic and thus they take 2.23 and 2.24, 1-16 as a whole and turn this

into the first poem, which I indicate as 2.24A. This is followed by 2.24, 17-52 as the second poem, entitled 2.24B. These divisions differ from the Loeb edition. At the beginning of the first poem (2.24A) Propertius mentions in lines 8-9 to a friend the difficulties of courting a Roman lady when the lady writes ‘muneris ecquid habes?’ (‘do you have any gift?’) or when one has the privilege of cernere [...] uultum custodis amari (‘can gaze at the face of an unpleasant guard,’). In line 11 he poses the question whether the few occasions of seeing her are worth the expense? quam care semel in toto nox uenerit anno! (‘How dearly shall a night have come once in a whole year!’). It is much easier to visit courtesans who will not brook any delay or ask for exorbitant presents or who will say: ‘timeo; propera iam surgere, quaeso;/infelix! hodie uir mihi rure uenit.’ (‘I am afraid; hurry up and get out of bed, I beg you;/unfortunate! my husband comes home from the country today.’) (lines 19-20). The friend is amazed as his first book of poems is well-known in Rome, in which he described his passionate and never-ending love for one mistress, Cynthia. Propertius’ answer is that, if Cynthia had only treated him kindly and had not deceived him, he would not have sought common women; the latter parcius infamant (‘they bring infamy more sparingly’). The change in the poet’s attitude, which is visible in the preceding poems, should be noticed; Elegiae 2.20, 2.22 and 2.23 share the theme of male infidelity.

In Elegia 2.24B Propertius returns to the theme of the fickleness of his beloved. She has read his poems and has raised his expectations, only to drop him. In the opening part of the poem Propertius complains in lines 21-22:

me modo laudabas et carmina nostra legebas;

ILLE TUUS PENNAS TAM CITO UERTIT AMOR?

(‘Recently you were praising me and reading our poems;

has that Love of yours so swiftly turned his wings away?’)

Elegia , 2.24B, 21-22


592 In Elegia 2.24, 1-2 one can read a contradiction with what I wrote earlier about book distribution and audiences of poetry on pages 42-49 and which I have summarised on page 49 in the following way: ‘In general, only the members of the elite could read and for most other people the usual way of dissemination of information was the oral one. We have seen that the distribution of books was an expensive business and that only members of the upper classes could afford to buy these. This meant that poetry circulated within a small circle and that poems were used for private reading or for recitation in small gatherings, whose participants were members of the political and intellectual elite.’ However, in the passage in Elegia 2.24 one reads: ‘sic loqueris, cum sis iam noto fabula libro/et tua sit tota Cynthia lecta foro?’ (‘Do you speak so, although you are a byword since your book became known, and your Cynthia is read all over the forum?’). Several scholars (Manuwald, 2006, 220-221, note 10; Syndikus, 2006, 292), including the editor of the OCT edition (Heyworth, 2007A, 211: ‘Propertius is speaking despite his notoriety as the author of Cynthia.’), suppose that ‘Cynthia’ in Elegia 2.24, 2 refers to Propertius’ first book of elegies and some quote as evidence Martialis in Epigrammata 14, 189, who mentions that Elegiae book 1 was well-known by the name of ‘Cynthia’. Martialis’ text reads: Monobyblos Properti: Cynthia - facundì Carmen iuvenale Properti - /acceptit famam, non minus ipse dedit (‘The “Monobyblos” of Propertius: Cynthia, the youthful song of eloquent Propertius, received fame, and herself bestowed it no less.’). However, I do not take it for granted that the mentioning of ‘Cynthia’ in Elegia 2.24, 2 indicates the book. Firstly, Camps (Camps, 1985, 162) points out that in Martialis’ text ‘carmen’ may mean ‘subject of song’ and that in Elegia 2.24, 2 ‘lecta’ can mean ‘read about’. Secondly, ‘fabula’ in line 1 of Elegia 2.24 can very well mean ‘a subject of talk, especially ridicule and gossip’ rather than ‘legend’ which differs in nuance (Richardson, 1976, 281). Thirdly, it seems to me that Propertius introduced some exaggeration. Therefore, I would suggest the translation: ‘Do you speak so, although you are a byword since your book became known, and everywhere one reads about Cynthia, your girl?’ This rendering does not conjure up a picture of groups of Romans at the forum reading eagerly Propertius’ bestseller, his first book of elegies.
Next, he suggests that his rival *contendat mecum ingenio, contendat et arte*; (‘let him contend with me in wit, and contend with me in art;’) and keep himself to one love. The poet assures his girl that the other can not meet her demands and that they will be parted soon. Propertius’ love however is ‘till death do us part.’ His beloved will bury him and then know that he has been faithful, though not of noble birth or rich. He will remain faithful to one so beautiful contrary to the wealthy aristocrats who would not come to lay her to rest as he would. But may she outlive him.

The twenty-fifth elegy in the second book is again addressed to Cynthia, which constitutes the first word of this poem. She is the most beautiful of all and in his books he shall make her renowned, even more so than Calvus did for Quintilia or Catullus for Lesbia. His love however causes him pain as she time and again turns her love away from him. Although an old soldier may put away his arms or an old ship lies rotting on the beach, he will not stop loving Cynthia in his old age. But his sufferings are unspeakable, worse than the torture within Phalaris’ bull or the sight of the Gorgon or Prometheus’ agonies by the vultures. Propertius will remain faithful to Cynthia as he says in line 17: *at nullo dominae teritur sub crimine amator:* (‘But a lover is worn away beneath no charge of his mistress.’). While the poet begins by addressing Cynthia, he addresses in the second part of the poem his colleague-lovers and warns them not to celebrate their successes too soon. Enjoy love carefully in order to make it last longer. Lasting love relationships existed indeed in old times, and in these changed times the poet still wants to keep his ideals about love. Propertius is not convinced that frequently changing one’s beloved is satisfying as he says in line 40: *quantus sic cruciat lumina uestra dolor!* (‘how much pain thus tortures your eyes!’). One woman is more than enough and he finishes the poem with the philosophical statement in lines 47-48:

\[
\text{cum satis una suis insomnia portet ocellis,} \\
\text{una sat est cuiuis; femina multa malum.}
\]

(‘Since one woman carries sleepless nights enough in her eyes, one is enough for anyone; many a woman is a disaster.’)

*Elegia* 2.25, 47-48

One can interpret this elegy as Propertius’ protest against the loose morals of his time as in the last part of the poem (the lines after line 39) he addresses vos which can be understood as a substantial number of men. In addition in line 45 he refers both to plebeian girls and to women *sandycis amictu* (‘clothing of scarlet dye’), the colour of the upper classes. Thus Propertius makes a general point and in this passage he shows himself critical of the values in Rome. Syndikus makes a similar point when he says about this final passage: ‘By looking at attitudes to love which are different from his own, *albeit with a skeptical eye,* the contemplation of his own love turns into something like a philosophy of love in this elegy.’

Consequently, I label this poem as a ‘private political’ one.

*Elegia* 2.26 has been divided into three parts (Loeb) or into two (OCT). I will follow the latter: 2.26A (lines 1-28) and 2.26B (lines 29-58). In the first poem Propertius tells his beloved of a dream in which she is shipwrecked and drifts in the Ionian Sea. In line 2.26A, 3 he hears her *quaecumque in me fueras mentita fateri* (‘admitting whatever lies you have used against me’) and later in line 12 he writes *saepe meum nomen iam peritura uocas.* (‘often called my

593 Syndikus, 2006, 297. Italics are mine.
name now you were on the point of death.’). The dream, however, has a happy ending. The
gods, who recognised her beauty, send a dolphin to rescue her and the poet jumps from a
ciff to offer help. Next, we find that she is not on a sea journey, but in bed with Propertius;
in line 24 she says: ‘de nostro surge, poeta, toro’ (‘Rise, poet, from our bed.’). The poet ex-
presses his amazement that such a girl is his: she admires his poetry and recites it. He con-
cludes that poetry is stronger than wealth in winning the love of a woman. In the next poem,
Elegia 2.26B, the theme of the sea journey is continued: this time the beloved wants to cross
the sea and the poet is prepared to follow her despite his warnings and his nightmare. The
poet sees the advantages of the journey as a chance to be with his sweetheart and enjoy
himself on board the ship, as expressed in lines 33-34:

\[
\text{et tabula una duos poterit componere amantes,}
\]
\[
\text{prora cubile mihi seu mihi puppis erit.}
\]

(‘And one plank will be able to provide rest for two lovers,
whether my bed is the prow or the stern.’)

Elegia 2.26B, 33-34

Above all, he is prepared to endure all the hardships of the sea journey as long as she is at
his side (line 41): illa meis tantum non umquam desit ocellis (‘Provided she is never absent
from my eyes,’). If they perish, he hopes that they drown together and are washed ashore
on the same beach. Next Propertius realises that it would be rather unlikely that his sweet-
heart and he would meet such an end. The gods, who knew love themselves, would protect
them and even Scylla and Charybdis nobis mitescet (‘will soften for us’). But if death were to
come and if it were to happen while he rests in his beloved’s arms, he will face it and death
will not be dishonourable.

In the short and elegant Elegia 2.27 Propertius testifies to his belief that the power of love
can bring a man back to life when his beloved calls him. After the poet has described the
uncertainties of life, he says that common man does not know the time of his death. For a
lover, however, this is different: in lines 11-12 we read: solus amans nouit quando periturus et
a qua/morte (‘Only the lover knows when he is to perish and by what/death’), which pre-
sumably means that he will die when his beloved leaves him.

A dangerous illness threatens the life of his beloved in Elegia 2.28. Propertius calls on Iuppiter
to save her and initially he blames the god for her malady. In lines 25-30 he wonders whether
the heat is the cause or whether it is the girl’s own fault as she often breaks her vows, or
whether she perhaps made Venus jealous or Iuno and Pallas angry. The poet also thinks of a
third possibility: Iuppiter is in love with his beloved as he once was with Io and other mortal
women. Mythical heroines rose above their earthly status because of their beauty and so his
girl will be raised. If she dies she will be received among the blessed and at the end of this
first part of the poem he encourages her to believe that all could turn out well in the end.
We read in lines 31-32:

\[
nunc, utcumque potes, fato gere saucia morem:
\]
\[
et deus et durus uertitur ipse dies.
\]

(‘Now, to the extent you can, make your behaviour show your
submission to fate, stricken as you are:
both the god and the harsh day [of death] itself can be
Next, a sombre mood comes over Propertius. No longer does he believe that his mistress will be saved; magical rites have not improved her situation and he sees many dark omens. However, the real question is: saved from what? Hubbard offers an interesting interpretation. She points out (page 55) that the type of magic which was tried on the sick girl and which Propertius describes in lines 35-36 is known only as an aphrodisiac or antaphrodisiac cure. Thus Hubbard asks the question whether the meaning of the passage is that Propertius wants to win back his mistress’s love or perhaps ‘cure Iupiter of love for her.’ However, concerning the last allusion she says herself that if this was the case the poet ‘was asking a lot of his readers, perhaps too much.’ If the magic is a cure to restore his mistress’s love, Propertius presumably sees the death of his beloved as synonymous to a definitive separation from her and the poem would not describe a physical illness. If she goes he wants to die too, as attested in lines 41-42:

\[ \text{si non unius, quaeso, miserere duorum:} \\
\text{uiuam, si uiuet; si cadet illa, cadam.} \]

(‘If you do not pity one, pity two, I beg: 
I shall live if she will; if she falls, so shall I.’)

Elegia 2.28, 41-42

Next, Propertius asks Iuppiter to save their lives by restoring his girl’s love for him and he pledges to thank the god with a solemn poem. His girl will bring her own sacrifices of thanksgiving. Persephone and Pluto are asked to show mercy and not to take his sweetheart to the underworld, as they have there a sufficient number of beauties to choose from already. In lines 49-50 he says:

\[ \text{sunt apud infernos tot milia formosarum;} \\
\text{pulchra sit in superis, si licet, una locis.} \]

(‘There are so many thousands of beautiful girls with those beneath; 
let there be one fair girl, if possible, in the upper world.’)

Elegia 2.28, 49-50

With this prayer Propertius places his girl on the same level as the most beautiful women before her; he mentions amongst many Antiope, Europa and in lines 53-54:

\[ \text{quot Creta tulit uetus et quot Achaia formas} \\
\text{et Thebae et Priami diruta regna senis;} \]

(‘and as many beauties as ancient Crete produced and Achaea and Thebes and the overturned kingdom of aged Priam;’)

Elegia 2.28, 53-54

The poem closes with the girl’s recovery and the poet suggests that she gives thanks to Diana and gives him, her lover, who has suffered so much for her sake, ten nights.

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Today's common opinion is that, what was for a long time considered just one poem, *Elegia* 2.29 consists of two separate parts: 2.29A formed by the lines 1-22 and 2.29B by the lines 23-42. The poet, who wanders in a dream alone at night through the city, bumps into a boisterous group of love gods. They drag him to Cynthia's house while they shout at him (line 13): *haec te non meritum totas exspectat in horas*; ('She waits up for you till all hours, though you don't deserve it;'). After they have delivered him at her house, their parting words are: *'i nunc et noctes disce manere domi'* ('Go now and learn to stay at home at night.') (line 22).

While 2.29A is a fantasy, 2.29B presents action and reality. The poet arrives at Cynthia's house at dawn and he says to himself in the first line: *MANE erat, et v dul, si sola quiesceret illa, uiusere* ('It was morning, and I wanted to see her, if she was sleeping alone:'). She is alone, awake and Propertius 'was amazed' (*obstupui*). She is more beautiful than ever. However, Cynthia's reception is not what he hoped for. In lines 31-33 she scolds him:

> 'quid tu matutinus' ait 'speculator amicae?  
> me similem uestris moribus esse putas?  
> non ego tam facilis: sat erit mihi cognitus unus,

('What are you doing coming in the morning to spy on your girlfriend? 'she said. 'Do you think I have a character like you men?  
I'm not so fickle: knowing one will be enough for me,')

*Elegia* 2.29B, 31-33

Propertius is sent away.

The thirtieth elegy opens with a short prologue of twelve lines in which the poet testifies that a man can not escape love: wherever one goes *semper Amor supra caput improbus instat amanti* ('Love, the rogue, looms over the lover, always above his head,') (line 7). However, if the lover submits to Amor he is not deaf to prayers. Next, in lines 13-14 he asks his vita ('my life') not to be diverted from their convivia, their 'party ing' of love, by the stern morals of old men. With these lines Propertius returns to the theme of 'contrasting the accepted rules for the traditional Roman way of live to his life dedicated to love.' He asks the rhetorical question whether he ought to be ashamed of what he is doing, writing love poetry instead of war poems. In lines 23-24 he says:

> una contentum pudeat me uiuere amica?  
> hoc si crimen erit, crimen Amoris erit:

('Am I to feel ashamed at living contentedly with a single mistress? If this is a crime, it will be crime of Love:')

*Elegia* 2.30, 23-24

Following this, he wants to bring Cynthia to his world of the Muses and love where Cynthia will join in the singing with Bacchus as choirmaster. Propertius in the meantime will write his love poetry with Cynthia as his inspiration; the poem closes with the words: *nam sine te nostrum non ualet ingenium*. ('for without you our poetry has no power.'). The poet reiterates in this poem two things. Firstly, he will continue to write his love poetry as he said he would in

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595 Heyworth, 2007A, 238.
for instance the poems 1.7, 1.9, 2.10 and 2.12. Secondly, Cynthia is his inspiration as he testified earlier in 2.1.

_Elegiae_ 2.31 and 2.32 are generally taken together as one poem. The thirty-first has sixteen lines which were composed when Apollo’s temple on the Palatine was dedicated in October 28 B.C. Propertius gives a succinct description of the complex and one reads the poem as if the poet-guide is showing a visitor the temple and its precinct. Propertius is clearly impressed by the new building, but he does not say anything about the origin of the new temple, which was of course Octavianus’ victory over Sextus Pompeius in 36 B.C. Propertius places his visit to the new temple in the private domain, as he addresses his girl, who later in line 2.32, 8 appears to be Cynthia, in the first line with an apology for his late arrival. In the opening lines of 2.32 he suggests that she should visit the new temple rather than disappear to the fashionable villages which surround Rome, such as Praeneste (modern Palestrina) or Tibur (modern Tivoli). He does not believe her when she says that she wants to hide from the eyes of the men who desire her, as Propertius describes in what reads like a riddle in lines 1-2: _qui uidet, is peccat: qui te non uideret, ergo/non cupi et:_ (‘He who sees, sins. ’The man who has not seen you will therefore/not desire you:’). In Propertius’ eyes this was simply not true and he maintains that she had visited these places in the course of a love affair with a rival, most likely a member of Roman high society. He tells her that her affairs are well-known in Rome and that they had caused the loss of her good name; in lines 21-22 we read: _famae iactura pudicae/tanta tibi miserae, quanta meretur, erit._ (‘the loss of your chaste name will be as great for you, poor thing, as is deserved.’). Next, it seems as if he has changed his mind as he continues by saying that the beauties of old, who had their love affairs, had eventually not lost their reputation. For instance Helena who left home with a stranger but had come back ‘unharmed and uncondemned.’ Anyway, Propertius is not upset as this happens in the best of families, he writes in passage 29-40, of which I will quote lines 29-30 and 33-36:

```
sin autem longo nox una aut altera lusu
consumpta est, non me crimina parua mouent.[…]
ipsa Venus, quamuis corrupta libidine Martis,
non minus in caelo semper honesta fuit.
quamuis Ida deam pastorem dicat amasse
atque inter pecudes accubuisse deam, […]
('But if one night or a second has been spent in drawn-out
play, small charges do not move me. […]
Venus herself, although she was seduced by lust for Mars,
nonetheless was always held in honour in heaven.
Although Ida says that a goddess loved a shepherd,
and a goddess lay with him amid the flocks, […]')
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_Elegia_ 2.32, 29-30 and 33-36

Who was the shepherd to whom Venus gave herself? It was Anchises, of whom Venus gave birth to Aeneas, the father of the first of the Iulian gens, whose adopted son and heir was Augustus.597 Next, Propertius describes the situation in Rome and condemns the moral

597 Goold (Loeb), 2006, 203. In line 35-36 Propertius uses the words _pastor_ and _pecus_ which have been translated as ‘shepherd’ and ‘flocks’. The story of Aeneas’ conception is told in the _Ilios_ 5, 312-313: ‘had not the daughter of Zeus, Aphrodite, been quick to notice,/his mother, who conceived him to Anchises as he tended his
standards explicitly. In his opinion one should not expect that a girl behaves differently from what she sees around her, because in Rome it is considered lucky if one finds only one girl behaving decently. In lines 43-46 Propertius points out:

\[\begin{align*}
o \text{nimium nostro felicem tempore Romam,} \\
\text{si contra mores una puella facit’?} \\
\text{haec eadem iam ante illam impune et Lesbia fecit:} \\
\text{qua\ae\ sequitur, certe est inuidiosa minus.} \\
\end{align*}\]

('O Rome too lucky in our times
if a single girl acts against the usual morality’?
Lesbia too did the same things with impunity already before her: the one who follows is surely less deserving of opprobrium.’).

*Elegia* 2.32, 43-46

Furthermore, one only needs to look at what happened in primeval times since Deucalion; in lines 55-56 we find the answer:

\[\begin{align*}
dic mihi, quis potuit lectum seruare pudicum? \\
quae dea cum solo uiuere sola deo? \\
\end{align*}\]

('tell me, who could keep his bed chaste?
what goddess could live alone with a single god?’).

*Elegia* 2.32, 55-56

If Cynthia does what she sees other women around her do in contemporary Rome, she can not be blamed, we are told in the final lines 61-62:

\[\begin{align*}
quod si tu Graias, si tu es imitata Latinas, \\
semper uiue meo libera iudicio. \\
\end{align*}\]

('But if you have imitated Greek, if you have imitated Latin girls, live for ever free in my considered judgement.’)

*Elegia* 2.32, 61-62

In my opinion Propertius offers us two views without fear for the repercussions of the princeps’ anger. Firstly, the moral standards in Rome of his day leave a lot to be desired and whatever is being said or done about it, the moral renewal which Augustus set in had not taken hold in any shape or form (lines 43-44 and 61-62). Secondly, he subtly alludes to the conditions under which Augustus’ gens came into being. Venus and Anchises’ brief affair was
cattle.’ In the *Ilias* Anchises is a cowherd and not a shepherd. However pastor can also mean a ‘herdsman’ in general and pecus is not necessarily a flock of sheep but can also mean a herd of cows. Thus the rendering into English of lines 35-36 can be: ‘Although Ida says that a goddess loved a herdsman/ and a goddess lay with him amid the herd.’ This translation corresponds with the story in the *Ilias*. Syndikus (2006, 311 and note 204) interprets the passage as referring to the meeting of Paris and the nymph Oenone on Mount Ida. He also mentions the possibility of the meeting of Aphrodite and Anchises and discusses the arguments for and against. However, it seems to me that Syndikus has missed that the text starts in line 33 with Venus ipsa which is followed twice by quamuis; the second time at the beginning of line 35 which is the line about the pastor. In my opinion quamuis in line 35 links to Venus. However, the most compelling argument is deam in line 35; Syndikus, who reads Parim instead of deam, admits that some scholars see Parim as corrupt (see note 204). The OCT edition has deam.
not all that different from what he notices in Rome’s leading circles of his own time. I label this poem as one with a ‘political’ content and which is critical of the lack of progress of Augustus’ plans.

The last but one elegy is again considered as consisting of two parts, of equal length (22 lines), *Elegia* 2.33A and 2.33B.598 At the beginning of 2.33A Propertius complains about Cynthia who celebrates Isis’ rites, which implies a period of ten days of abstinence. He angrily curses the goddess who demanded these unreasonable sacrifices of girls and their lovers, compares her to Io, calls her a cow and finally scolds the goddess that she had come from Egypt to Rome, asking her whether Egypt has not sufficient daughters to worship her. The goddess should be banished from the city and in line 20 he says: *cum Tiberi Nilo gratia nulla fuit* (‘Nile has never had influence with Tiber’). Obviously, this line is an allusion to the recent war against Cleopatra and Antonius. The poem closes with Propertius looking forward to the end of Cynthia’s ‘excess of piety’ (*nimium pia*) and *ter faciamus iter* (‘let us thrice make <love’s> journey.’). Propertius refers to Egypt’s bad reputation in Rome and the efforts of the magistrates to root out Isis’ cult. However, I do not consider this a piece of propagandist writing, but rather as Propertius venting his anger of and his contempt for these foreign habits. He shares this contempt with most of his contemporaries. This poem is one with a ‘private political’ content at the most. The second poem, *Elegia* 2.33B, written after the period of Lent, when Propertius and Cynthia both attend a symposion where the latter drinks too much and throws the dice too often. This time the poet turns his wrath on the invention of wine and claims in lines 33-34 that:

\[ \textit{uino forma perit, uino corrupitur aetas,} \\
\textit{uino saepe suum nescit amica uirum.} \]

(‘Beauty perishes to wine; youth is corrupted by wine; through wine a girl often does not know her man.’)

*Elegia* 2.33B, 33-34

However, he suddenly notices that Cynthia is not drunk at all and that she is reading his poems. At the end of the poem Propertius muses that women may long for an absent lover, but that they easily get bored by the constant attention of a lover who is always present. There is hope and in line 41 he makes the point: *nulla tamen lecto recipit se sola libenter:* (‘No woman willingly retires to bed alone, however,’).

The last elegy of book 2 is longer than most. *Elegia* 2.34 begins with a verbal attack on his friend Lynceus who is obviously a colleague poet.599 Propertius accuses his friend that he has set eyes on his sweetheart at a symposion, which she also attended. Luckily, Lynceus appears not to have misbehaved himself and Propertius blames his extreme ‘shadow’ for his angry words (lines 17-19):

\[ \textit{lecto te solum, lecto te deprecor uno:} \\
\textit{riualem possum non ego ferre Iouem.} \]

---

598 The Loeb edition has three parts; 2.33C is a fragment of the last four lines of 33B in the OCT edition. See Heyworth, 2007A, 259.

599 There has been much scholarly speculation who Lynceus could have been. Camps, 1985, 235 and Goold (Loeb), 2006, 209 suggest that Lynceus is a pseudonym for Lucius Varius Rufus who introduced Horatius to Maecenas, the publisher of the *Aeneis* and a dramatist. Syndikus, 2006, 316 note 214 is of the opinion that too few of Varius’ work have survived to come to this identification. I tend to agree with Syndikus.
He decides to forgive his friend. The poem then moves on to the main subject which is the nature of elegiac poetry. Now Lynceus is in love he would presumably wish to write love-elegies. His previous studies of philosophical literature are no longer of any use to him and Propertius admonishes his friend to imitate Philitas and Callimachus and write something new.\textsuperscript{600} Lynceus should use a softer tone and write about the fires of love he feels and perhaps Propertius could be a useful example to Lynceus.

Next Propertius discusses his relationship with Vergil’s work and, addressing Vergil, he does not offer wholehearted praise for the great poet and his epic. Stahl sums up ‘what Propertius had to say about Vergil as follows:\textsuperscript{601}"

Propertius’ criticism of the \textit{Aeneid} is not open (and we easily understand why: Vergil’s patron is too powerful), but must be inferred partly from the foregoing judgment on “Lynceus”, which reconfirms Propertius’ low opinion of epic and shows his appreciation of a personal development which runs counter to Vergil’s. In his review of Vergil’s career as a poet, Propertius does not avoid the surface impression of praise for the \textit{Aeneid} (65/66), although he sets out by picturing provocatively the contrast between himself and Vergil (59ff.). His true attitude is revealed by the fact that the only aspect of Vergil’s poetry with which he can personally become involved seems to be the bucolic, [...].’

After this, the poem changes to a praise of his own (Propertius’) work where the theme of love is apparent. In lines 81-82 he is explicit:

\begin{quote}
\textit{non tamen haec ulli uenient ingrata legenti}
\textit{siue in amore rudis, siue peritus erit.}
\end{quote}

(‘But these songs will not come unpleasing to any reader, whether he will happen to be new to love or experienced.’)

\textit{Elegia} 2.34, 81-82

It was not Vergilius who sang of love themes, but Varro, and Catullus, Calvus and recently Gallus. The latter four exposed their mistresses, Leucadia, Lesbia, Quintilia and Lycoris. And triumphantly Propertius closes the second book with the words:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Cynthia quin uiuet uersu laudata Properti,}
\textit{hos inter si me ponere Fama uolet.}
\end{quote}

(‘Yes, Cynthia will live, praised by the verse of Propertius, if Fame is willing to place me amongst these poets.’)

\textit{Elegia} 2.34, 93-94

\textsuperscript{600} See also page 244.

\textsuperscript{601} Stahl, 1985, 172-188; particularly page 182. See also Heyworth, 2007A, 264 and 276-280.
This is where Propertius feels that he belongs, inter hos: the Roman poets who made one woman famous and sang about their beloved from their ‘subjective’ personal feelings.

Although there is still a preponderance of love poetry in the second book of Elegiae – 23 out of a total of 34 poems (68 %) – the number of poems which concern actual issues has increased significantly. In contrast to Horatius’ poetry, where I have classified a number of his poems in which he wrote about his own experience or about his own work as poems which deal with actuality, I have done so only in a few cases where Propertius is concerned. I see for instance Horatius’ Sermones 1.4, 1.5, 1.9, 1.10 or 2.1 as ‘political’ or ‘private political’ statements because in these poems he expresses his thoughts about his position as a poet within the political and social framework (1.4, 1.10 and 2.1) or his confidence through his place near the centre of power (1.5 and 1.9). Similarly, I interpret Propertius’ Elegia 2.10 as a poem in which he places his views on his own poetry within a political context. However, in the majority of his poems which deal with his own poetry, Propertius states his views in a different context. His desire to write love-elegy and not epic was embedded within the manner in which he conducted himself in his personal life. In his poetry his relationship with his beloved is the focal point from which his views on life flow; this can be summarised as ‘make love, not war’.

Of the 10 poems on actual issues 4 are ‘political’ and 6 are ‘private political’; 5 of these have a critical tone (2.1, 2.7, 2.10, 2.15 and 2.31/32). In the group of ‘political’ poems 3 are critical of the civil war or of warfare in general (Elegiae 2.1, 2.10 and 2.15) and 1 is a critical poem in which he resents interference in his personal life and states his belief in personal freedom (2.7). All six ‘private political’ poems are about moral issues (2.6, 2.9, 2.16, 2.25, 2.31/32 and 2.33).

Propertius’ third book of elegies contains twenty-five poems which were presumably written between 26/25 and 22/21 B.C. The poet deals with a wider range of topics than in the previous two books. The focus is less on ‘subjective’ love poetry and although Cynthia still features in the book, one feels the forthcoming break between the poet and his mistress. While at the end of book 2 (Elegia 2.34, 85-94) Propertius places his work in the tradition of his Latin predecessors as Varro, Catullus, Calvus and Gallus, book 3 starts with a search to discover his Greek sources of inspiration.

In Elegia 3.1 the opening lines show Propertius’ new intentions; in lines 1-4 he calls upon the two Hellenistic poets whom he believes should be his new inspiration:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{CALLIMACHI manes et Coi sacra Philitae,} \\
in uestrum, quaeso, me sinite ire nemus. \\
\text{primus ego ingredior puro de fonte sacerdos} \\
\text{Itala per Graios orgia ferre choros.}
\end{align*}
\]

\(\text{('Spirit of Callimachus and poetic rites of Coan Philitas,} \)
\(\text{allow me, I pray, to go into your grove.} \)
\(\text{I am the first priest from the pure spring to begin bearing} \)
\(\text{Italian sacraments to the accompaniment of Greek music.'}) \)

Elegia 3.1, 1-4

---

602 I have not altered the total number of poems (34) in book 2; therefore I have counted the combined Elegiae 2.31 and 2.32 as two.
In this poem, which was presumably written in 23 B.C., Propertius sees himself as the new poet who would sing of ‘exuberant revels’ and who could learn one or two things from Callimachus and Philitas. What he will not become is a poet of war, as he had previously promised in 2.10, but as a poet of refined verses he will receive new fame. This book of verses should be read in peace, as it descends from Mount Helicon, the house of the Muses. The fame which he will not achieve during his lifetime will be achieved after his death: post obitum duplici faenore reddet honos. (‘glory will repay it twice over after death.’) (line 22). This is the case with Homer too, who is famous because he wrote his verses in antiquity. Propertius repeats towards the end of the poem in line 35 that he expects meque inter seros laudabit Roma nepotes (‘And Rome will praise me amongst its distant generations.’).

Elegia 3.2 is addressed to Propertius himself nostri redeamus (‘let us return’) in line 1 and to his mistress gaudeat ut [...] puella (‘so that the girl may rejoice, [...]’) in line 2 and concerns the power of song. He describes the power of Orpheus and the singing of Polyphemus which moved even Galathea. In lines 9-10 he congratulates himself with the words:

\[
miremur, nobis et Baccho et Apolline dextro, 

turba puellarum si mea uerba colit?
\]

(‘Is it surprising, seeing that both Bacchus and Apollo give me their favour, if a crowd of girls pays court to my words?’)

Elegia 3.2, 9-10

It is not wealth which motivates him and he says in line 15: at Musae comites, et carmina cara legenti (‘yet the Muses are my companions and my poems are dear to the reader,’). What he can do well is to write poetry for his beloved, his fortunata (‘happy woman’) and in line 16 he writes the words which are so reminiscent of Horatius: carmina erunt formae tot monumenta tuae (‘my every poem will be a monument of your beauty.’). What follows in lines 19-26 is a direct analogy with Horatius’ theme in his Carmen 3.30: his genius will give Propertius everlasting fame.

In the third poem of the third book the poet again explores the future direction of his poetry. It is presented in the form of a dream which Propertius has at the spring near Mount Helicon, where Ennius once received Homer’s poetic mantle. Propertius starts to compose his own Annales while he remembers Ennius’ epic, although not wholly correct: he incorporates in Ennius’ work the return of L. Aemilius Paullus in 167 B.C., when Ennius had already died. However, Apollo, who has been watching all this, decides to intervene. Propertius de-
scribes this in lines 15-26 and Apollo’s intervention boils down to the god’s view that heroic poetry does not suit the poet’s competence and that he has set his ambitions far too high. He would do better to stay with the genre he knows best. I will quote lines 16 and 19-20:

\[
\textit{carminis heroi tangere iussit opus? [...]}
\textit{ut tuus in scamno iactetur saepe libellus}
\textit{quem legat exspectans sola puella uirum}
\]  
('Who told you to touch what is the work of heroic poetry? [...] so that your book may often be tossed on a stool for a lonely girl to read while she is waiting for her man.')

\textit{Elegia} 3.3, 16 and 19-20

Apollo takes him to a grotto which is a museum of \textit{orgia Musarum} (‘the ritual objects of the Muses’) (line 29), where all nine Muses are busy with their own tasks. Calliope, the Muse of epic and elegy, takes charge of him and tells him to concentrate on love poetry. Calliope’s advice is very precise; in lines 49-50 the Muse encourages Propertius to write poetry which by no means corresponds to Augustus’ ideals that underlay his future \textit{Lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis} of 17 B.C.\footnote{See page 261, notes 573 and 575 of this book.}

\textit{ut per te clausas sciat excantare puellas}
\textit{qui uolet austeros arte ferire uiros.}

('so that with your help the man who wishes to use a trick to cheat strict husbands may know how to charm out girls who have been locked in.')

\textit{Elegia} 3.3, 49-50.

This poem has two messages, both of a ‘political’ nature. Firstly, it contains a kind of general \textit{recusatio} to sing the praises of past and current warfare. Secondly, Propertius seems to have found a way to combine his desire of being a poet of love-elegies with his wish of being of some wider service to Roman society: this time aided by Apollo and Calliope. In this way he claims beforehand divine approval of his future poetry in which he denounces the stern morals of the \textit{princeps}. This attitude also corresponds with what he testified earlier in \textit{Elegia} 2.7 when he rejected the interference in his personal life. I label this poem as one with a ‘political’ content which is critical of Augustus.

The beginning of \textit{Elegia} 3.4 is an almost jubilant praise of the war plans of \textit{deus Caesar}.\footnote{Augustus is here, as in \textit{Elegia} 4.11, 60, called \textit{deus}. Propertius did not wait until the death of Augustus and made him divine in his lifetime. Richardson, 1977, 330 suggests that Propertius gave Augustus this divine status as the Roman people considered his planned campaigns into Asia a repeat of Alexander’s ‘who was worshipped as a god in the East’. In my opinion, Augustus’ early deification by Propertius was a compensation for the potentially offensive manner with which he rejected Augustus’ plans and his offhanded rejection of these.} The poet describes the lands in the East which were to be conquered and particularly the chance that the old defeat of Marcus Licinius Crassus in 53 B.C. at Carrhae, in which he died and lost thirty thousand men and his standards to the Parthians, will be avenged. Line 6 of the present elegy refers to this: \textit{assuescent Latio Partha tropaea Ioui} (‘Parthian trophies will get used to Capitoline Jove.’) The standards of Crassus return in the next elegy. After this Propertius prays to Mars and Vesta that he may live to see the triumphal procession of Augustus. However, the mood of the final lines of the poem is completely different: he will watch the
procession with his sweetheart from the sidelines as he knows that booty was the main reason for the soldiers’ efforts. Hubbard summarises this poem with the following words: ‘Both poems [3.4 and 3.5] see the motive for war as the desire for gain. The poet rejects acquisitiveness and militancy, in favour of love and poetry now while he is young […].’ As in the previous poem, Propertius gives here his alternative views on life, which again deviate much from current Roman thinking. Thus, I label 3.4 as a ‘political’ poem with a critical attitude towards the leadership of Augustus.

The next poem Elegia 3.5 is in a sense a pendant of 3.4, which treated the subject of war and its spoils. In the present poem Propertius reflects on peace and love and the way to spend his mature years. In the opening stanzas the poet again states his belief that a life of love with his girl is all he desires and that he has no cares for the riches of the world. Next, he muses about the great questions of life: man’s creation was not without its shortcomings as corpora disponens mentem non uidit in arto: (‘Arranging the body, he [Prometheus] did not see that the brain was in short supply:’) (line 9). At the end of the day all are equal when they meet Acherontis undas (‘at the waters of Acheron.’) in the underworld. Propertius has been happy to have lived his life of love and poetry, but when he becomes older he will turn to the study of natural philosophy. In lines 23-25 he says:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{atque ubi iam Venerem grauis interceperit aetas} \\
\text{spars"erit et nigras alba senectas comas,} \\
\text{tum mihi naturae libeat perdiscere mores,}
\end{align*}
\]

(‘And when the weight of time has stolen Venus away, 
and white old age has speckled my black hair, 
than let it be my delight to learn the habits of nature,’)

Elegia 3.5, 23-25

After this a long catalogue of phenomena which he wishes to explore follows, ranging from the movement of the moon, to the force of winds, earthquakes, the gods of the underworld, the wicked and punished men and more. The poem again closes with a rejection of the supposed honour of warfare; in the last two lines of the poem he says:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{[…]; uos quibus arma} \\
\text{grata magis, Crassi signa referte domum.}
\end{align*}
\]

(‘[…]: you to whom arms are a greater delight, 
bring home the standards of Crassus.’)

Elegia 3.5, 47-48

These last lines can be interpreted as an unfriendly allusion to Augustus, who at the time of writing of the poem (between 26/25 B.C. and 22/21 B.C.) was considering a lasting settlement with the Parthians and was engaged in diplomatic efforts to ensure the return of Crassus’ standards, which arrived in Rome soon after (in 20 B.C.). It is probable that Propertius’ charge against the princeps was unjustified and that Augustus was an exception who did not enjoy warfare for warfare’s sake and who had very legitimate political reasons to see the relationships with the Parthians improved. Like the previous poem, I place the present in the group

\[609\] Hubbard, 2001, 81. See also Heyworth, 2007B, 116.
of ‘political’ poems and I consider this poem again as being critical of Augustus, even if Propertius’ view on the princeps’ intentions was presumably wrong.\textsuperscript{610}

These closing lines of 3.5 are again indications of Propertius’ changing outlook, as indeed we noticed in poem 3.4. He also wrote in books 1 and 2 also about moral issues, but the issues were restricted to his views on sexual moral and on the civil war or warfare in general. His commentary in these two last poems is broadened to other issues: the desire for gain is a motive for war (3.4 and 3.5), his rejection of wealth (3.5) and his views on eschatological questions, such as the state of man after death (3.5).

With Elegia 3.6 we return to the familiar ground of the love-elegy. The poem is a report of the conversation between Propertius and the slave Lygdamus, who mediates in an estrangement between the poet and his mistress. The poet does not make clear whether the mistress is Cynthia or another girl: it is likely that there is literary fiction and that the mihi of line 1 is the persona of a lover. The latter wants to know every detail of the state of mind of his beloved and he hears about her distress. Next the poet gives us a verbatim of the woman’s tirade against her rival who has bewitched the lover as appears from line 25: non me moribus illa, sed herbis improba uicit (‘She has conquered me not with her character, but with herbs, the witch:’). After he has heard all about his girl’s frustration the lover sends Lygdamus back with the message: he has suffered too, yet he has remained chaste and faithful to her. He has hopes of a reconciliation and in that case Lygdamus, liber eris (‘Lygdamus, you will be free.’).

The next elegy, the seventh of book 3 differs very much from its predecessor and its successor. Before I discuss the text, we should first briefly note that the text as transmitted through the manuscripts is chaotic, and each scholar presents his own transpositions.\textsuperscript{611} I lack the competence to pass any judgement on their decisions anyway and thus I will follow the OCT edition as usual. Secondly, many scholars observed that the theme of 3.7 is very reminiscent of a Hellenistic epigram and could serve as a good summary of the poem.\textsuperscript{612} This elegy is a dirge for an unknown young man called Paetus who had drowned at sea on his last trip, which he had undertaken in the course of his commercial interests. The poet lays the blame for the young man’s death blatantly on the greed of the victim. The first line of the poem says: ERGO sollicitae tu causa, pecunia, vitae es. (‘So, money, you are the cause of a troubled life.’). The circumstances of Paetus’ drowning and death are developed in the next passages: the sea is more dangerous than land and we do not have sufficient skills to make seafaring safe as the Greeks returning from Troy experienced. Paetus is thrown into the rough sea and in lines 53 and 52 Propertius gives a graphic description of what happens to him:\textsuperscript{613}

\begin{quote}
\textit{hunc paruo ferri uidit nox improba ligno,}
\textit{et miser inuisam traxit hiatus aquam;}
\end{quote}

\textit{('Him a foul night saw carried on a little plank and the poor...')}

\textsuperscript{610} Heyworth, 2007B, 117. I quote: ‘I [Heyworth] thus read the opening sequence of Book 3 [Elegiae 3.1-3.5] as a strong reassertion of poetical and political opposition to Augustus.’

\textsuperscript{611} Heyworth, 2007A, 309-312; Richardson, 1977, 340-341.

\textsuperscript{612} Goold (Loeb), 241; Hubbard, 2001, 82-83. The text is of Julianus in the Palatine Anthology 7, 586 and reads: ‘It was not the sea which was thy end, and the gales, but insatiable love of that commerce which turned thee mad. Give me a little living from the land; let others pursue profit from the sea gained by fighting the storms.’ See: Paton (Loeb), 1960, 314-315.

\textsuperscript{613} The word order in the OCT edition is indeed first 53 followed by 52 which makes good sense.
man’s gaping mouth swallowed the hateful water.’

_Elegia_ 3.7, 53 and 52

Before the young man is thrown onto the rocks he asked the gods of the Aegean sea that his body may be cast on the shores of Italia; in line 64 Paetus’ last words are: _hoc de me sat erit si modo matris erit_ (‘This will be enough of me, if only it will come to my mother.’). After this, Paetus disappears in the waves and the poet reflects upon what could have become of him if only he had stayed at home. He would have been poor but happy. The Nereids and Thetis, _materno tacta dolore_ (‘touched by maternal grief’) (line 68), are reproached for not coming to his aid. The North Wind and Neptunus are denounced for destroying a vessel which _portabat sanctos [...] viros_ (‘was carrying reverent men.’) (line 16). Paetus’ death is horrible: his mother can not bury him, he will be eaten by the sea birds and his grave lies on the seabed. The poem closes with an appeal to the waters to return his body and with a solemn promise by the poet that he will never venture out to sea and that he wants to be laid _ante fores dominae_ (‘before the doors of my mistress.’). There is much melodramatic exaggeration in this poem and one can not help feeling that Propertius gives an ironic commentary on the fate of men of commerce who were prepared to chance everything in their pursuit of wealth. It is abundantly clear that this is not Propertius’ own way of life. On the one hand this poem is a satiric commentary on the risks of a commercial journey and on the folly of such a life; on the other hand the poem wants to demonstrate the destructive power of the lust for money. In the latter case Propertius probably wants to denounce this and to suggest an alternative of contented life in the countryside. I label this poem as one in which the poet gives his view on life.

In _Elegia_ 3.8 we find again Propertius’ old art of love-elegy. The poet and his girl quarrel and in this poem he pretends that he enjoys what she does and says to him. He will gladly show his bruises to his rivals as he says in line 21: _in morso aequales uideant mea uulnera collo:_ (‘Let my rivals see wounds on my bitten neck;’). Her tantrums make their relationship exciting and he sees these as signs of her love for him. In lines 18-19 we read:

_has didici certo saepe in amore notas.  
non est certa fides quam non in iurgia uertas:_

(‘I have learnt that these are often the signs in a case of love that is sure. It is not a sure commitment that you cannot turn to quarrels:’)

_Elegia_ 3.8, 18-19

His love is like Paris’ infatuation for Helena when Aphrodite had rescued him from death by Menelaus’ hand and Helena submitted to him in her bedroom.614 A few words in lines 29-32 make clear to whom the lover compares his mistress:

_dulcior ignis erat Paridi, cum Graia per arma  
Tyndaridi poterat gaudia ferre suae:  
dum uincunt Danai, dum restat Dardanus Hector,  
ille Helenae in gremio maxima bella gerit._

(‘Sweeter was his passion to Paris, when he could bring delight

614 _Ilias_ 3, 383-448.
to his Helen through Greek fighting:
while the Achaeans are winning, while Dardan Hector resists,
he wages the greatest wars in Helen’s lap.’

_Elegia_ 3.8, 29-32

However, there is a rival. This is a trivial matter as the rival has been offered one night only and the girl is vexed with the poet.

_Elegia_ 3.9 is addressed to Maecenas and is Propertius’ answer to the former’s request or pressure to write about grander national or epic themes. Immediately in the second and third lines of the poem Propertius states his feelings concerning this request. The poet, who is well aware of his own limitations and preferences, asks Maecenas why he can not remain who he is. This is precisely what Maecenas himself did: he remained an _eques_ and had no wish of being elevated to a higher rank. Lines 1-3 say:

> MAECENAS, eques Etrusco de sanguine regum,
> intra fortunam qui cupis esse tuam,
> quid me scribendi tam uastum mittis in aequor?

(‘Maecenas, knight from the blood of Etruscan kings,
you who desire to stay within the limits of your good fortune,
why do you send me on so vast an ocean of writing?’)

_Elegia_ 3.9, 1-3

Propertius declares that the ‘vast ocean of writing’ epic does not suit him and he maintains his nautical imagery when he says in line 4: _non sunt apta meae grandia uela rati_ (‘Large sails are not suited to my vessel.’). The poet observes that in the world of art there also exist different talents which work to different ends. Next, the poet quotes a great number of famous men from the past, artists such as, amongst others, Lysippos, Calamis, Apelles, Phidias and Praxiteles and men who won prizes in the Olympic Games.  

As all these men excelled in different arts, the implication of this passage is that he, Propertius, should be left to do what he does best. In the next passage (lines 21-32) the poet brilliantly strengthens his _recusatio_ when he makes the same point to Maecenas as he infers in the second line. This time, however, his arguments are much more developed and he makes it clear to Maecenas that he wants to do the same as Maecenas himself did. In line 21 he says: _at tua, Maecenas, uitae praecepta recepi_, (‘But I have received your rules for life, Mae-

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615 Calamis (ab. 480-450 B.C.), of whom no work is extant, was well-known for his skill in shaping figures of horses. Apelles of Colophon (4th century B.C.) was a painter of portraits and particularly famous for his _Aphrodite Anadyomene_ in Cos, where the goddess was shown as rising from the sea and wringing the water from her hair. Lysippus, Phidias and Praxiteles are sufficiently known.

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cenas,’). In this passage Propertius notices the restraints which Maecenas places on his own position, for whatever reasons: philosophical or pure modesty. Because of this, the poet praises Maecenas and does not see why he should follow a more ambitious course. Next, Propertius affirms that writing epic about the struggle for Thebes or Troy is not his forte and he uses again a nautical image in line 35: *non ego ueliferam tumidum mare findo carina:* (‘I do not cut through the swollen sea on a sail-bearing keel.’). He is not able to write epic, but only through the inspiration of Callimachus and Philitas he can feel comfortable; in lines 43-44 he states:

*inter Callimachi sat erit placuisse libellos*
*et cecinisse modis, Coe poeta, tuis.*

(‘It will be enough to have pleased amidst the books of Callimachus and to have sung in your metres, Coan poet.’)

_Elegia_ 3.9, 43-44

We come next to a passage which is difficult to interpret: in lines 47-60 Propertius seems to have changed his mind and says that under Maecenas’ guidance (_te duce_ in line 47) he will write about grander themes from Roman history. In the present passage he then goes on to specify these. Some scholars interpret this passage differently and this is summarised by Richardson as follows:617

‘Editors in desperation have hunted for some catch in the phrase [_te duce_] that will let Propertius off. The most popular, that of Postgate, BB [Butler and Barber], Camps, _et al_, is to take the ablative absolute as conditional; if Maecenas will lead the way _by changing his own philosophy_, then Propertius will follow suit. Knowing that Maecenas has no intention of changing, Propertius will be excused. What then follows is a _recusatio_, a catalogue of the subjects Propertius considers to fall outside his scope. This is certainly a possible interpretation, but it puts great weight on one tiny phrase that is not apt to be immediately read as a condition.’618

Richardson then gives his own interpretation, which is that _te duce_ should be read as ‘if you wish it’ and that Propertius says that he will not write ‘the ordinary epic’ but that he is prepared to write about grander themes in the manner of Callimachus. This can be found in Propertius’ fourth book of elegies. Hubbard’s interpretation is close to Richardson’s. She writes:

‘By the end of 3.9 he [Propertius] seems to be professing readiness to accept Maecenas’ suasion to a higher task, not epic, which has already been excluded in lines 37ff, but the Roman _Aetia_, still elegiac and Callimachean, but different from his poetry hitherto, more serious, more Roman, more in harmony with the professed ideals of the _régime_. [...], and it seems certain that he embarked on the _Aetia_, but never got far with it.’

I am inclined to favour a different interpretation. It seems to me that he says ‘if you, Maecenas, wish I shall write about grander themes’, while he knows or at least suspects that Ma-
Cenas will not insist too much on him fulfilling such a promise. Firstly, this was not the way in which amicitia between the two men worked: a request was perfectly permissible, but an unacceptable degree of pressure was not. Secondly, Propertius had as an example Vergilius and Horatius, who both followed their own convictions. Thirdly, this poem was written some time between 26/25 B.C. and 22/21 B.C. This was the time that Maecenas’ position was changing and that he was starting to withdraw. It is possible that Maecenas followed his own philosophy indeed and that he began living at his estate. Although scholars no longer adhere to the view that Maecenas fell from favour around 23 B.C. and that from that year on Augustus claimed all contacts with the poets, there are signs that Maecenas’ influence was waning. Propertius may have been aware of this changing relationship and may have thought that he could promise one thing and do another: in other words he may have seriously considered singing the praises of Augustus, but first and foremost he may have wished to enjoy Maecenas’ amicitia.\(^6\) The last two lines of the poem thus make sense as the poet’s justification of his wish to join Maecenas’ circle. The last lines 59-60 read:

\[
\text{nunc mihi, Maecenas, laudes concedis, et a te est quod ferar in partes ipse fuisse tuas.}
\]

(‘Now you leave me this honour, Maecenas, and it is to your credit that I shall be said to be one who followed you of my own accord.’)

\[Elegia\ 3.9, 59-60\]

The rendering of \textit{Elegia} 3.9, 59-60 is not from Heyworth, but my own.\(^6\) The editor’s translation is: ‘As things stand, Maecenas, you grant me glory, and it is thanks to you that I am said to have come into your faction.’ I consider the present poem as one of Propertius’ most outspoken declarations that he intends to make up his own mind. Heyworth’s rendering does not match the view that Maecenas allowed Propertius to follow his own mind and that the poet makes the point that he joins Maecenas’ circle of his own accord (ipse) knowing that Maecenas left the poets relatively free. This also fits in with the view which Propertius expresses in lines 1-2 and 21-22, that he considers Maecenas as a kindred spirit. The words (line 60): ‘one who followed you of my own accord’ can be interpreted not as physically joining Maecenas’ group, but as an expression of the poet’s wish to receive Maecenas’ approval for not writing grand poetry.\(^\) Therefore, it seems to me that the poem is a recusatio wrapped in very subtle wording.

\textit{Elegia} 3.10 is a birthday poem for his mistress; some, for instance Goold, assume that she is Cynthia, but her name does not feature in the text.\(^\) One might perhaps deduce from lines

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\(^6\) Heyworth, 2007A, 326-327 and 573. Heyworth does not give his view on the nature of Propertius’ motives when he joined Maecenas’ circle, as can be derived from \textit{Elegia} 3.9. My view is more akin to that of Camps (1993, 101-102). His interpretation of the two lines is: ‘Do you leave this honour to me when it might be yours, and it is to your credit, Maecenas, that I shall be said to have ranged myself on your side of my own accord (i.e. without encouragement from you)?’ and ‘This yields an obliquely phrased request for patronage on the poet’s own terms, and makes a good conclusion of the elegy.’ I would disagree with Camps that the couplet does express a request for patronage: I interpret the words as a choice for amicitia. However, I am very much in agreement with Camps’ view that Propertius’ choice is ‘on the poet’s own terms’.

\(^\) See page 53 of this book and Heyworth, 2007B, 103-108.

\(^\) Goold (Loeb), 2006, 255.
that Cynthia was Propertius’ addressee. The lines read: *dein qua primum oculos cepisti ueste Properti/indue,* [...] (‘Then put on/the dress in which you first captured the eyes of Propertius, [...’]). These sound as if the poet is recalling a personal experience which took place some time earlier. The poem begins with a morning visit of the *Camenae* who remind the poet of the birthday followed by the poet’s fantasies of the perfect day which his girl and he will enjoy, with no mention of rivals (line 24). He hopes that the day will end in bed, as we learn from lines 29-32:

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cum fuerit multis exacta trientibus hora,
noctis et instituet sacra ministra Venus,
annua soluamus thalamo sollemnia nostro,
natalisque tui sic peragamus iter.
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(‘When the time has passed with many a cup, and Venus as attendant sets up the ceremonies of night, let us pay our annual dues in our bedchamber, and so complete the course of your birthday.’)

*Elegia* 3.10, 29-32

The eleventh elegy of the third book is about female power which was so very visible at the battle of Actium. The poem was presumably written in 24 B.C. on the occasion of the first celebration of the *Ludi Quinquennales*. In line 1 Propertius begins by putting the rhetorical question why one should wonder *meam si uersat femina uitam* (‘that a woman governs my life,’), as so may great heroes endured the same fate. Following this, he gives examples of Medea and Jason, Penthesilea who fought the Greeks at Troy and whom Achilles killed, Omphale who humiliated Hercules, and the Assyrian queen Semiramis who had built the walls of Babylon and made it *Persarum urbem* (‘the city of the Persians’). These are all oriental women with ambitions to dominate the world and he implies that if the heroes of the past were the slaves of women, his devotion to Cynthia is but a small matter. Next the poet leaves the personal aspect behind and turns to Cleopatra, the woman from the East who desired to dominate Rome. In the remaining forty-three lines of the poem Propertius presents a piece of recent history, a subject matter of which he said in *Elegia* 3.9 that he was prepared to discuss. The lengthy passage about Cleopatra again begins with a rhetorical question: *quid*, what to think of the woman who had set her eyes on the domination of Rome, as we read in lines 30-32:

```
et famulos inter femina trita suos?
coniugii obsceni pretium Romana poposcit
moenia et addictos in sua regna patres.
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(‘and the woman worn out sexually by her slaves? She demanded the walls of Rome as the price of her obscene marriage and senators indentured into her sovereignty.’)

*Elegia* 3.11, 30-32

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623 The *Camenae* are originally spring-nymphs with predictive gifts. Later the name was also used for the Muses, particularly the Muse of poetry.


625 Goold (Loeb), 2006, 257; Richardson, 1977, 359 and 365. The *Ludi Quinquennales* were established in 28 B.C. to commemorate the victory at Actium.
Propertius qualifies Cleopatra as *trita* (‘worn out, often laid’) and the marriage as *obscenus*. By this he implies that Cleopatra undermined the traditional role of the Roman man by selecting her own lovers, even if they are her slaves. To a certain degree Cynthia is similar to Cleopatra. She also chooses her own men, although she is more critical. Cleopatra however goes much further by also ensnaring senators and through this she threatens Rome not only on a military level but also on the level of immorality. Stahl remarks: ‘What has happened to Propertius [his passion for Cynthia] happened also to Antony [his addiction to Cleopatra] and almost happened to Rome [domination by Cleopatra] as well.’ The point the poet is making here is that it is no wonder that a woman governs his life when not so long ago others like Antonius experienced a similar fate. In addition, Propertius recalls here, thirteen years after the event, the general fear in Rome caused by the liaison of Marcus Antonius and Cleopatra, which culminated in their unlawful marriage in 37 B.C. These lines evoke the notion that the walls of Rome were Antonius’ wedding present to the Egyptian queen.

Propertius continues by recalling several of the proverbial Egyptian vices of the previous twenty-five years. He describes the history and the murder of Pompeius the Great in 48 B.C. in Egypt (lines 33-38) and the attempts — be they true or not — of Cleopatra to introduce Egyptian gods to Rome, such as the worship of Isis. The decadent *conopia* (‘mosquito-nets’), which were also a thorn in Horatius’ flesh, reappear. Propertius looks a long way back in history when he states that there was no point in deposing Tarquinius Superbus in 510 B.C., *si mulier patienda fuit* (‘if a woman had to be endured?’) (line 49). In my opinion the passage about Pompeius and his *socerus* is not only meant to demonstrate the treachery of the Egyptian queen and her brother but also to make another important point about the events of his own day. The murder of Pompeius had been ordered by the boy-king Ptolemaeus XIII after which Iulius Caesar arrived in Alexandria and started his love affair with Cleopatra which lasted until his death in 44 B.C. Iulius Caesar was Pompeius’ father-in-law through his daughter Iulia. Lines 33-38 say:

noxia Alexandria dolis aptissima tellus;
et, totiens nostro Memphi cruenta malo,
tres tua Pompeio detraxit harena triumphos.
tollet nulla dies hanc tibi, Roma, notam;
issent Phlegraeo melius quam ibi funera campo,
vel sua si socero colla daturus erat.

(‘Guilty Alexandria is the land fittest for treachery;
and, Memphis so often bloodied to our misfortune,
three triumphs your sand stole away from Pompey.
No day will remove this stain from you Rome.
Death would have come better on the Phlegraean fields than
there, even if he would have been bowing his neck to his father-in-law.’)

*Elegia* 3.11, 33-38

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626 Stahl, 1985, 238-239; Griffin, 1985, 34.
627 Richardson, 1977, 362.
630 Stahl, 1985, 239-240. The lines 37-38 refer to the following; I quote Stahl: ‘Indeed, it would have been better for Pompey if he had died on his sickbed near Naples in 50 B.B, or bowed his head to C.J. Caesar, his father-in-law, instead of having it cut off by king Ptolemaeus’ Secretaries.’
The foregoing passage is full of allusions to recent events in Propertius’ Rome. Firstly, mentioning Pompeius and his father-in-law Iulius Caesar reminds the Roman reader in 24 B.C. of the struggle between Pompeius’ son Sextus and Iulius Caesar’s adopted son Octavianus, which had come to a conclusion in 36 B.C. Secondly, the reader was reminded that Iulius Caesar was Cleopatra’s lover before Marcus Antonius. Thirdly, and most importantly, Propertius reminded his audience of the irony that Iulius Caesar’s ‘son’, Augustus, had fought a war against his ‘father’s’ former mistress, Cleopatra. However, in this last point lies Propertius’ praise of Augustus. The princeps had not shunned his responsibility and had not been a lovesick lapdog of Cleopatra like Hercules of Omphale, (lines 17-20) or like Marcus Antonius or like the great Iulius Caesar. Augustus’ behaviour was like that of Aeneas who fulfilled his duty in Vergilius’ epic.

In the last quarter of the poem Propertius describes the scene of Octavianus’ triple triumph which was celebrated in August 29 B.C. In the procession an effigy of Cleopatra is shown reclining on a sofa while asps bite her arms. I will quote the whole passage about Cleopatra. Although tinged with some of the well-known prejudices of her as in line 56: dixerat assiduo lingua sepulta mero (‘the tongue buried in constant wine had said.’), Propertius here expresses his admiration for the queen. This admiration is reminiscent of Horatius’ words in the ‘Cleopatra Ode’, Carmen 1.37, 21-32, and of Iambus 9 both written six years earlier. Lines 51-56 of Elegia 3.11 say:

fugisti tamen in timidi uaga flumina Nili;  
accepere tuae Romula uinclam manus.  
braccia spectasi sacris admorsa colubris,  
et trahere occultum membra soporis iter.  
‘non hoc, Roma, fui tanto tibi ciue uerenda:’  
dixerat assiduo lingua sepulta mero.  
(‘You fled, however, into the uncertain waters of fearful Nile; 
your hands received the Romulean manacles. You watched 
your arms bitten by the sacred snakes and your limbs 
drawing out the hidden route of sleep. 
‘I was not to be feared when you have such a citizen, Rome,’ 
the tongue buried in constant wine had said.’)

Elegia 3.11, 51-56

Propertius’ admiration for the queen is evident from the descriptions of her courage as she avoids arrest by the Romans (lines 51-52), her courage shown in her suicide (lines 53-54) and her words of praise for Octavianus (line 55). Next, the poet’s attention turns to Rome itself. Although line 58 is missing in the major manuscript and the OCT edition omits the line altogether, the most acceptable interpretation of this passage is that Rome will not be destroyed by human hands. The walls of Rome were founded by the gods and in line 66 the poet says: vix timeat saluo Caesare Roma Iouem (‘Scarcely would Rome fear Jupiter while Caesar is safe.’). According to Richardson ‘this curious near blasphemy, in its context, is intended as the highest praise: Caesar is not only a god, he is equivalent in power to the supreme del-

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631 See page 25 of this book.
632 See pages 160-163 of this book. See also Griffin, 1985, 32 with different results: ‘The self-consciously noble manner of Horace [...] is far away.’
Octavianus did not yield to the temptations of Cleopatra’s seductive powers as Marcus Antonius did. The hyperbole, which is not unusual for Propertius, again sees Augustus deified in his lifetime. In the passage which follows, the poet gives a number of examples of divine interventions and of great men who rescued Rome such as Scipio and M. Furius Camillus, the saviour of Rome during the invasion of the Gauls in 387 B.C. The spoils won of Hannibal and Pyrrhus count insignificant compared to Augustus’ victory. Similarly the heroism of Marcus Curtius, of P. Decius Mus, or of Horatius defending the bridge against the Etruscan army, count for naught. In the last four lines Propertius returns to more recent events and he sings the praise of Octavianus who won victory at Actium and who made the Ionian Sea safe again. Apollo Leucatas in line 69 refers to the god who had a temple on Leucas, the island near Actium: Octavianus restored the building after the battle as a token of gratitude. Lines 71-72 remind the sailors that the sea is safe again after the threat of Antonius and Cleopatra has been removed. The final lines of the poem say:

Leucadius uersas acies memorabit Apollo:  
tantum operis belli sustulit una dies.  
at tu, siue petes portus seu, nauita, linques,  
Caesaris in toto sis memor Ionio.

(‘Leucadian Apollo will record the turning of the battle lines:  
a single day of war took away so much labour.  
But you, sailor, whether you make for port or leave it,  
throughout the Ionian sea be mindful of Caesar.’)

Elegia 3.11, 69-72

Summarising, this poem has many similarities with Horatius’ Carmen 1.37, ‘the Cleopatra Ode’. Both poems concern threat of Cleopatra, the decadence of the queen and Egypt in general, the battle of Actium and the events which followed, such as the triumph of Octavianus. In addition, both poems praise Octavianus for his victory and both express admiration for Cleopatra. I read Elegia 3.11 as a poem with a ‘political’ content which praises Octavianus’ achievements.

With Elegia 3.12 Propertius returns to a theme with which he also dealt in for instance 1.6 and 1.17, namely the folly of men who leave their beloved for a journey abroad. The poem is addressed to an unknown Postumus who considered following Augustus on a campaign against the Parthians, and was at the point of leaving his wife Galla behind in tears: a campaign which never took place. Propertius’ anger is not aimed at the budding soldier’s departure,
but at the general pursuit of wealth which was for many the motivation for their participation and the war fever which accompanied this. The poet is pretty clear about this in lines 5-6:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{si fas est, omnes pariter pereatis auari} \\
\text{et quisquis fido praetulit arma toro.}
\end{align*}
\]

('If it is right, all you greedy men should perish together, and anyone who has preferred arms to a faithful marriage bed.')

_Elegia_ 3.12, 5-6

After this, Propertius paints the many hardships Postumus will have to face, while his Galla pines away in Rome, worried to death but forever faithful. Postumus is mad to leave her behind and in line 15 the poet states: _ter quarter in casta felix, o Postume, Galla:_ ('O Postumus, you are three times, four times blessed in the chastity of Galla.') Next the poet reviews Odysseus’ absence and his wandering and he concludes with the hero’s safe return in the final lines:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nec frustra, quia casta domi persederat uxor.} \\
\text{uincit Penelopes Aelia Galla fidem.}
\end{align*}
\]

('and not in vain, since his wife had sat chaste at home throughout. Aelia Galla is outdoing the fidelity of Penelope.')

_Elegia_ 3.12, 37-38

I consider this poem as one in which Propertius acts once again as the _praeeptor amoris_, as he did in earlier poems, such as 1.9, 1.10 and 1.20.

In _Elegia_ 3.13 Propertius writes as a satiric poet should and the subject matter is the wantonness and infidelity of women and the contrast with the bliss of the mythical Golden Age. The poem begins with the complaint that nights with the girls are so costly nowadays: this is because women want the most expensive presents and _luxuriae nimium libera facta uia est_ (‘the road to luxury has been made too free.’) (line 4). The luxuries the girls want are only the best: gold from India, pearls from the Persian Gulf, purple from Tyrus and perfumes from Arabia. In lines 13-14 Propertius describes the greed and the declined moral standards as:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nulla est poscendi, nulla est reverentia dandi,} \\
\text{aut, si qua est, pretio tollitur ipsa mora.}
\end{align*}
\]

('There is no proper respect in asking, there is none in yielding; or, if there is, the very delay is removed for a price.’)

_Elegia_ 3.13, 13-14

There is a nice ambiguity in these lines as the asking and giving can be understood both as the man who asks for sexual favours and the girl consenting, as the girl who asks for presents which the man gives.

Next, the poet relates the fidelity of Eastern wives who throw themselves on the funeral pyres of their dead husbands and seek the death with him. The remainder of the poem

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the Postumus of Propertius’ present _Elegia_ Nisbet and Hubbard share the view of Keith. On the same page they say: 'Propertius’s Postumus has plausibly been identified with a successful relative of his own [i.e. C. Propertius Postumus, the senator].' See also page 187, note 437 of this book.

is taken up by a nostalgic description of the bliss of the Golden Age. In the countryside the young men only needed to pick flowers and grapes and with these luxuries they could steal kisses from the girls when they lay in the grass. In those days *nec fuerat nudas poena uidere deas* (‘nor was it a cause of punishment to see goddesses naked.’) (line 38). At the time of the blissful age the flocks looked after themselves and the gods were always there to give support. However, in Propertius’ time this had changed as lines 48-50 reveal:

> aurum omnes uicta iam pietate colunt.  
> auro pulsa fides, auro uenalia iura,  
> aurum lex sequitur, mox sine lege pudor.  
> (‘piety has been overcome and everyone worships gold; gold has driven out fidelity, through gold justice can be bought; gold is followed by law, and afterwards, in the absence of law, all sense of proper behaviour.’)

*Elegia* 3.13, 48-50

*Aurum*, four times mentioned, is the cause of all evil and all spheres of life are corrupted by it. The poet gives three examples from the past which show what the greed for gold can do: Brennus, the leader of the Gauls who in 278 B.C. attempted to sack Apollo’s sanctuary at Delphi, the Thracian king Polymestor who murdered Priamus’ son for his gold, and the woman Eriphyla, who let herself be bribed by Polynices to persuade her husband to join the Seven against Thebes. The poem closes with the poet in the guise of Cassandra: Propertius prophesises in the lines 59-60:

> proloquar (atque utinam patriae sim falsus haruspex!):  
> frangitur ipsa suis Roma superba bonis.  
> (‘I shall speak out (would that I may be a false prophet for my homeland!); proud Rome is being destroyed by its own wealth.’)

*Elegia* 3.13, 59-60

Propertius took his intention to engage himself more in current affairs seriously, as he expressed in *Elegia* 3.9. In the present poem he states his fears for Rome due to the extreme materialism and the women’s loss of values. *Elegia* 3.13 is a poem about actual matters and shows his ‘private political’ views on social issues.

The next elegy concerns Propertius’ views on the status of women in Roman society which he compares with that of the women of Sparta. The poet begins *Elegia* 3.14 with a picture of the girls in Sparta who engage themselves in manly sports such as the pancratium. The scene culminates in a picture of Castor and Pollux exercising with their bare bosomed sister Helena who *fertur nec fratres erubuisse deos* (‘is said not to have blushed before her divine

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637 Richardson, 1977, 374. Richardson assumes - in my view correctly - that the *deas* were not Olympic goddesses. Actaeon and Teiresias were severely punished when they saw Artemis and Pallas naked. Perhaps Propertius was thinking of the mortal lovers of goddesses or more likely of nymphs.

638 A pancratium is a rough form of wrestling in which for instance hard hitting, twisting of limbs and strangleholds were permitted, but biting and gouging not. The first contests were introduced in Olympia in 648/647 B.C.
brothers.’) (line 20). These exercises of nude girls in the presence of naked men make them free and approachable and give women an independence which is very different from that of Roman women who have to live with the restrictive rules of their society. In Sparta a suitor could approach a girl directly and marriageable girls were not kept behind locked doors. Not so in Rome where the girls are heavily chaperoned and one cannot speak to them whilst the lover remains in the dark. In the last two lines the poet wishes that Rome would copy these Spartan customs so that she, Rome, would be dearer to him. It seems to me that Propertius did not advocate unrestricted sexual freedom for Roman women, but that he was pleading the cause for greater social freedom which could improve the social status of women and make social intercourse with men easier. In this poem Propertius makes a ‘private political’ point.

Elegia 3.15 concerns passionate female jealousy. The poet introduces the persona of a young man who tries to explain his first sexual experience with Lycinna to his mistress. At the time of his initiation he was only very young, as we read in lines 3-4:

\[
\begin{align*}
vt mihi praetexti pudor est releuatus amictus \\
et data libertas noscere Amoris iter,
\end{align*}
\]

('When the restraint of boyhood clothing was removed from me and the freedom was allowed to know the path of Love,')

\textit{Elegia} 3.15, 3-4

This had passed more than three years ago and his present love, who has heard gossip about this is driven by her jealousy and intends to settle matters with Lycinna. Next, the poet tells the story of Dirce and Antiope in great detail and thus reminds his mistress that she should not believe everything she hears and that she should control her violent temper.\textsuperscript{639}

In \textit{Elegia} 3.16 we find a theme which we know from earlier Propertian elegies: the power of a mistress over her passionate lover. The man is bidden at midnight by letter to come immediately to Tibur to see his beloved. Once he had disobeyed her commands and suffered greatly for this, we read in lines 9-10:

\[
\begin{align*}
peccaram semel, et totum sum pulsus in annum: \\
in me mansuetas non habet illa manus.
\end{align*}
\]

('Once I made a mistake, and was driven out for a whole year: she does not have kind hands towards me.')

\textit{Elegia} 3.16, 9-10

The question is: will he go or not go? He considers the obvious dangers of ‘ruffian hands’. Perhaps a lover is protected as Venus and the radiance of love make a flaming torch which...
will frighten away every villain. If he were to die, she will bury him in a secluded spot and beautify his grave. This alone would make the journey worthwhile. The last line is especially intriguing: *non iuuat in media nomen habere uia* (‘It does not please to have a name in the middle of the highway.’) which could refer to the secluded spot which he prefers. These words can also be interpreted as his desire not to be remembered as a popular poet who is recited in public places, but rather as the poet for private reading by a selected group of connoisseurs.  

**Elegia** 3.17 is a prayer to Bacchus whom the poet asks for help after his mistress turned him away. He explains to the god that he will take to drinking so that he will forget the pains of rejection in his stupor. In line 4 one reads: *curarumque tuo fit medicina mero* (‘in your wine there is a cure for passion.’). If the drink will allow him to forget, he will plant vines the next morning and become a vinedresser and devote himself to honouring Bacchus in his poetry: in line 20 he promises *virtutisque tuae, Bacche, poeta ferar* (‘and be called the poet of your excellence, Bacchus.’). Next he presents a catalogue of Bacchian myths which comprise the subjects of some of his poems. In other poems he will celebrate the god with music and dance; the people of Bacchus’ birthplace Thebes, whose king rejected the god, will dance for the god and Pan and Cybele will join in. The poet will sing these hymns in front of the god’s temple in the manner of Pindarus. The elegy ends with a repetition of the prayer from the beginning; the final lines read:

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tu modo seruitio uacuum me siste superbo,  
atque hoc sollicitum uince sopore caput.  
(‘Do you only set me free from my servitude to an arrogant  
woman, and overcome this troubled mind with sleep.’)
```

**Elegia** 3.17, 41-42

**Elegia** 3.18 is a lament at the early death of M. Claudius Marcellus, the husband of Augustus’ daughter Iulia and only son of his sister Octavia. Marcellus died at Baiae in 23 B.C. It is generally assumed that Marcellus was regarded by Augustus as his potential successor and his death was highly regretted. Vergilius wrote an extensive passage about the young man in *Aeneis* 6, 854-886 when Aeneas and Anchises in the underworld look forward in time to Vergilius’ own time and foresee the fate of Marcellus. Propertius’ poem begins with a picture of Baiae in which not the delights of the place are painted for once, but the town is seen as a near accomplice in the death of Marcellus. In line 8 the poet says: *quis deus in uestra constitit hostis aqua?* (‘what hostile god has stopped in your waters?’).  

In line 11 the poet asks the rhetorical question *quid genus aut virtus aut optima profuit illi/mater* (‘What has been the use to him of his birth or excellence or his noble/mother?’). Marcellus is dead and whatever dreams about military campaigns and great triumphs he may have had, these will not materialise. Death will come to every man, to *primus et ultimus ordo* (‘the highest class and the lowest.’) (line 21), to the man who locked himself away, and to mighty Achilles or wealthy Croesus. Propertius closes the poem with the wish that Charon may transfer Marcell-

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640 See also page 48 of this book.
641 Camps, 1993, 139; Heyworth, 2007A, 380-387; Richardson, 1977, 113 and 392. **Elegia** 3.18, 9 reads: *his pressus Stygius...*, and *pressus* carries the suggestion that Marcellus drowned. Another interpretation may be that *premere* means ‘crush’ or ‘compress’, which could signify that Marcellus had to take the waters and that his death was from asphyxiation through an illness which he had contracted in contaminated waters.
lus’ soulless body to heaven just as his ancestor with the same name in 208 B.C., and his grandfather-by-double-adoption Iulius Caesar; we read in the closing lines:

qua Siculae victor telluris Claudius et qua
Caesar ab humana cessit in astra uia.
(‘by which Claudius victor in the land of Sicily and by which Caesar passed from the human road to the stars.’)

*Elegia* 3.18, 33-34

Whether Marcellus was considered deified at the time is unknown. Although the poem concerns the death of Marcellus, this poem, through the deceased, eulogises the whole extended family of Augustus and treats the group as a budding dynasty. Particularly Augustus’ adoption of Marcellus into his family and his choice of the young man as his potential successor is approved by the poet. This is clear especially from lines 11-16 and 33-34. Therefore, I label this a ‘private political’ poem with some characteristics of a panegyric of the imperial family.

The nineteenth elegy in the third book is again a love-elegy or rather a ‘lust-elegy’. The poem is written in answer to the poet’s mistress who *OBICITVR totiens a te mihi nostra libido* (‘Our male lusts are so often brought by you as a charge against me.’). His answer is that woman’s lust is far greater and that sooner nature will change its course than that women control their wantonness. He says in lines 9-10:

*quam possit uestros quisquam reprehendere cursus
et rabidae stimulos frangere nequitiae.*
(‘than anyone could restrain your career and break the goads of maddened lasciviousness.’)

*Elegia* 3.19, 9-10

After this the poet recalls a number of mythical women such as Pasiphaë, Tyro and Myrrha who are known to have gone to great lengths to satisfy their passion and it is not necessary to relate the details of Medea’s passion or Clytaemnestra’s.\(^{642}\) Finally, he addresses the *innuptae* (‘unmarried girls’) of Rome as in a wedding song and wishes for them not the fate of Scylla but a happy marriage. The final lines of the poem describe Minos as judge of the underworld and his manly dispassionate nature when he pardons his foe Nisus: *victor erat quamuis, aequus in hoste fuit* (‘although he was the victor, he was just in the case of his enemy.’). Minos’ magnanimity was a paradigm of self-control and self-control is the reason why men are not easily obsessed by lust.

In *Elegia* 3.20 the poet describes the suspense with which a lover waits for his new love with whom he has a first assignation. He thinks aloud and repeats what he has told the woman:

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\(^{642}\) The story of the passion of Minos’ wife Pasiphaë for a bull is well-known. Salmoneus’ daughter Tyro was raped by Neptunus in the guise of the river-god Enipeus: a somewhat unfortunate example of Propertius as the poor girl was not driven by lust. Myrrha, daughter of Cinyras, king of Cyprus, fell in love with her father who unknowingly made love to her; she was transformed into a myrrh-tree. Scylla was the daughter of Nisus, king of Megara, who was at war with Minos. Out of love for Minos she betrayed her father by cutting off a lock of his hair on which his life depended. Minos did not reward her assistance, but dragged her along with his boat in the sea until she drowned. See Camps, 1993, 145-146.
her former lover who has gone to Africa will not remember her or her beauty and he is an idiot to have gone away. By now he will have another love, whilst the woman he left behind is very charming. In lines 9-10 he speaks admiringly of her and implores her to come to his bed:

fortunata domus, modo sit tibi fidus amicus;

fidus ero: in nostros curre, puella, toros.

('Your house is blessed, provided you have a faithful lover;
I shall be faithful: run into my bed, girl.
')

Elegia 3.20, 9-10

He is looking forward to his first night with his new love and he prays to the moon not to hurry and to the sun to cut his journey short. However, before they go to bed together the lover thinks of the formalities which have to be fulfilled: in lines 15-16 the poet says:

foedera sunt ponenda prius signandaque iura
et scribenda mihi lex in amore nouo.

('First, treaties must be settled and agreements signed and laws written for my new love.
')

Elegia 3.20, 15-16

In effect Propertius is here beginning his farewell poems to Cynthia. What purpose do these formalities have? He wants to extract the most solemn promises from his new mistress that she will remain faithful to him. Propertius has had unpleasant experiences with his previous love. This also explains the emphasis on fidelity in lines 9-10. This is his way of stating his expectations, the same as in the case of his previous love: fidelity. May the gods be witnesses to their union. In the final part of the poem the poet reflects on the unhappiness for either if they break the promise. The final line sums up: semper amet, fructu semper amoris egens ('let him always love, always lacking the fruit of love.
').

In the following elegy, 3.21, Cynthia returns. Propertius plans a longer visit to Athens in order to be freed from his love for her; in line 2 he says: ut me longa graui soluat Amore uia ('so that a long journey may release me from the heavy weight of Love.
'). Cynthia’s love for him is over and on the few occasions he sees her there is nothing left to enjoy. In line 8 he is full of self-pity: seu uenit, extremo dormit amicta toro ('or if she turns up, she sleeps in her clothes at the edge of the bed.
'). He will board a ship and leave Cynthia, his friends and Rome behind. For Propertius this will be the first time that he crosses the seas to Greece, which is rather unusual for a man of his social position and education. He is looking forward to making up for lost years and he will animum emendare ('improve the mind') in Plato’s Academia or in the garden of Epicurus. The study of rhetorica or the writings of Menander and enjoying the arts will keep him occupied. If he dies there, this will be honourable as he will be engaged in the pursuit of knowledge and he will not be wasting his time.

Elegia 3.22 is a propemptikon to Tullus whom we also met in 1.1, 1.6, 1.14 and 1.22. At present Tullus is at Cyzicus, a wealthy and beautiful city on the coast of the modern Sea of Marmora in Mysia. Tullus was about to embark on a long journey which was to bring him to Ephesus (line 15: ora Caystri; the Caystros was Ephesus’ river) and to Egypt and the Nile (line

et quae serpentes temperat unda uias ('and the water that governs a serpentine route,').

Even if he made a long roundtrip which was to bring him to Libya, Spain and back again to the lands around the Pontus (Black Sea), he would not find the same miracula ('marvels') as one does in Italia. Propertius then sings the praises of Italia and her people and in lines 21-22 the poet states:

\[
\text{nam quantum ferro tantum pietate potentes stamus: uictrices temperat ira manus.}
\]

('For we stand powerful as much through piety as the sword: anger tempers [i.e. directs] our hands when they are victorious.')

_Elegia_ 3.22, 21-22

These words are very reminiscent of Vergilius’ in _Aeneis_ 6, 851-853 and exude the same sentiment.\(^{644}\) Next, Propertius reminds Tullus of the beauty of the Italian landscape with its rivers, such as the Anio (modern Teverone) north of Rome, the Clitumnus (modern Clitunno) near Spoleto in Umbria and the _Aqua Marcia_ or the Alban Lake (modern Lago Albano).\(^ {645}\) Foreign countries like Africa harboured many monsters, or like Greece where hideous crimes had taken place, such as those of Atreus or of Althaea or the killing of Pentheus by the Bacchants, or the death of Iphigeneia and many more.\(^ {646}\) The poem ends with an appeal to Tullus to return to Italia and find his happiness there as _hic ampla nepotum/spes, et uenturae coniugis aptus amor_ ('here considerable hope of grandchildren/, and the appropriate love of a wife to be.').

In the twenty-third elegy Propertius bemoans the loss of some of his writing tablets which he treats as his personal friends. They had served him well and had obtained their own status as faithful messengers between him and his female recipients. The poet muses about what one may still find on these tablets: a reproach from his mistress that he had not turned up as she imagined that he was seeing another girl, or an invitation to come over at once and stay the night? Perhaps the tablets are now being used for trivial writings such as accounts. The poet hopes that the lost tablets will be returned to him and he will reward the finder.

The last two poems of the third book are rolled into one, _Elegia_ 3.24/25. It is proper that this last poem of book 3 is a farewell to Cynthia, as we have felt in the course of the book that the break between the poet and his beloved is unavoidable. In the opening of the poem, Propertius recalls his earlier love-elegies for Cynthia, such as the first lines of book 1 in _Elegia_ 1.1, when he wrote _Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis_ ('Cynthia was the first; she

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\(^{644}\) The text in _Aeneis_ 6, 851-853 is: ‘_tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento (hae tibi erunt artes), pacisque imponere morem, parcere subjectis et debellare superbos._’ (‘you, Roman, be sure to rule the world (be these your arts), to crown peace with justice, to spare the vanquished and to crush the proud.’)

\(^ {645}\) The _Aqua Marcia_ is the aqueduct built by Q. Marcius Rex in 144-140 B.C. and provided Rome with water of the best quality; the _Aqua Marcia_ took its water from the Anio.

\(^ {646}\) Atreus killed his brother Thyestes’ children and fed them to their father. Meleager’s mother Althaea had kept a log from the fire which would prevent her son from dying as long as the wood was preserved. When her son had killed her brothers in a row over the Calydonian boar she burned the log in anger and her son died.
caught me with her eyes and made me miserable - ') or in the last but one line of book 2 in 2.34, 93 where he says Cynthia quin uiiet uersu laudata Properti ('Yes, Cynthia will live, praised by the verse of Propertius,'). And indeed the symmetry of the opening and the closure of the third book is complete as he opens book 3 by stating his intention to embark on a new venture and considers writing a genre of poetry different from love-elegy. The problem appears to be that Cynthia has become over-confident, he says in the first line of 3.24/25: FALSA est ista tuae, mulier, fiducia formae ('Mistaken is that confidence in your appearance, woman,'). His break with Cynthia seems definitive when he calls her mulier and tells her that whatever she now is, she has become by his making. He has been cured of the sickness of his infatuation with her, and now that he is sane again he thinks differently about her beauty. He is safe and free to speak his mind, thanks to Mens Bona, si qua dea es ('Good Sense, if you are a goddess,') (line 19). And when he speaks his mind it is very plain what he means. He says in line 3.25, 1 that when he was present at one of Cynthia’s parties he was ridiculed: risus eram positis inter conuiuia mensis ('I was a laughing-stock amidst the parties when tables were set out,') and in lines 25, 3-4 we read:

quince tibi potui servire fideliter annos: ungue meam morso saepe querere fidem.
('I have been able to serve you faithfully for five years: often you will bite your nail and lament my fidelity.')
Elegia 3.25, 3-4

At last he has learned her tricks and he knows what to expect of her. In lines 5-8 he summarizes the failure of their relationship:

nil moueor lacrimis; ista sum captus ab arte; semper ad insidias, Cynthia, flere soles.
flebo ego discedens, sed fletum inuiaria uincit: tu bene conueniens non sinis ire iugum.
('I am moved not at all by your tears; I have been deceived by such tricks of yours; always you are accustomed to weep to set snares, Cynthia. I myself shall weep as I part, but the harm done outdoes the weeping: you do not allow the yoked pair to advance though well-matched.')
Elegia 3.25, 5-8

When Propertius reaches the very end of their relationship at the end of the poem, he is vindictive and not at all gentlemanlike. He curses her and wishes her loneliness in old age, that she will become an old woman and will lose her beauty. In the final line of the third book he tries to destroy Cynthia’s most precious possession, her beauty: euentum formae disce timere tuae ('learn to fear the end in store for your beauty,'). The poem is not just a farewell to Cynthia, but also a farewell to the typical form of love poetry which he had written thus far, the total submission to one girl and the emotions involved: the extreme form of subjective love poetry.

Looking at the whole of book 3, the number of poems in the book which deal with actual issues comes to 9 out of a total of 24 (38%). This is not much higher than the percentage in
book 2 which was 32%. These 9 poems can be divided into 4 ‘political’ poems and 5 ‘private political’. When I discussed Elegiae 3.4 and 3.5 above I remarked that in book 3 one sees the first signs of a broadening of Propertius’ outlook. Although the majority of the poems on actual issues in the third book remain within the categories of the civil war and views on moral issues, Propertius presents in the third book 2 poems that contain his view on life (Elegiae 3.7 and 3.9). Within the category of poems which deal with moral issues one sees careful steps towards a broadening of mind as well. The subjects about which he writes are: the desire for gain as a motive for war (3.4 and 3.5), rejection of wealth in general (3.5, 3.7 and 3.13), sexual morals (either seen as too stern by Augustus as in 3.3, or as too loose by women in 3.13), personal freedom (for himself in 3.9 and for women in 3.14), the civil war (Actium in 3.11) and an implicit approval of the dynasty of the imperial family (3.18).

In books 1-3 Propertius wrote much about the lover’s experiences – either as a persona or by presenting his own real experiences - and about his own poetry. The majority of these poems concerns the relationship of the lover and his beloved or is within the context of a praeceptor amoris, and consequently these poems are ‘subjective’ love-elegies. However, when he writes about actual matters such as civil war or moral issues, his views can be felt. It may be that he deals with topos, although one may assume that his choice of subjects relates to the importance which he gives them. In the first two books more than half of the ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems are critical of Augustus, his regime or the upper classes and none are supportive. In book 3 this has changed: two out of nine are supportive, three are neutral and four are critical. However, there is one subject which was often discussed by Vergilius and Horatius but which one never meets in Propertius’ poetry: the hope of better times after the civil war. Did Propertius remain skeptical about the developments and the new regime? It is unlikely that he had not experienced the ravages of the civil war, as Elegiae 1.21 and 1.22 show that indeed he had. It seems that the wider political and social scene did not lie in his area of interest and that his focus was much more on the more intimate and personal aspects of human life.

In the fourth and last book eleven elegies are brought together. It is not certain when these poems were written. However, it is thought likely that they were not composed before 16 B.C., as the passage in Elegia 4.6, 77 seems to refer to the submission of the Sugambri in that year and not after 2 A.D., the year which is thought to be the latest in which Propertius was still alive. As Elegiae 4.6 and 4.11 were probably commissioned for respectively the ludi quinquennales in 16 B.C. (the commemoration of Actium) and for the funeral of Cornelia in the same year, it is likely that the fourth book was released not long after 16 B.C.647

Elegia 4.1 consists of two parts: in the first (4.1A) Propertius describes the beauty of Rome and in the second (4.1B) the reply of Horos, a Babylonian astrologer. In 4.1A the poet compares the city of his days with the humble past in the days of the arrival of Aeneas. He shows in a guided tour many of the new or restored buildings and without mentioning Augustus by name the poem is a eulogy on the princeps’ achievements. He praises the buildings which stand on sites where in former days there was only grassland as we read in the opening lines:

\[ \text{HOC quocumque uides, hospes, qua maxima Roma est,} \\
\text{ante Phrygem Aenean collis et herba fuit} \]

---

‘Everything you can see here, my friend, where the great city of Rome is, before Phrygian Aeneas was hill and grass;’

_Elegia_ 4.1A, 1-2

It is not only the town buildings but also the reforms which Propertius praises. In lines 17-18 he says:

nulli cura fuit externos quaeere diuos
cum tremeret patrio pendula turba sacro;

(‘There was no concern to seek out foreign gods at a time when a crowd of hanging figures quivered in the local rite.’)

_Elegia_ 4.1A, 17-18

However, in line 37 Propertius utterly destroys the beautiful picture of contemporary Rome and by implication also his aetiological project when he says: _nil patrium nisi nomen habet Romanus alumnus_ (‘The Roman nurseling has nothing from his forefathers except the name;’).

He then revisits Troy’s destruction and refers to Aeneas who carried his father out of the burning city. Through the efforts of heroes such as Decius and Brutus the Romans became stronger until in the end Venus herself assisted her offspring Caesar, who is Augustus. Thus, through him and through Rome mighty Troy is continued, we read in lines 87-88, 53-54.

_dicam: ‘Troia, cades, et Troica Roma, resurges;’
 et maris et terrae candida regna canam.
‘uertite equum, Danai: male uincitis. Ilia tellus uiuet, et huic cineri Iuppiter arma dabit.’

(‘I shall say: ‘Troy, you will fall, and, Trojan Rome you will rise,’ and I shall sing of propitious rule over land and sea.
‘Greeks, turn the horse: it is futile for you to win. The land of Ilium will live, and Jupiter will give arms to this ash.’”)

_Elegia_ 4.1A, 87-88, 53-54

Now follows a passage which is a near- _recusatio_ and a programme statement in one. The poet is searching for a new way to praise Rome’s greatness and to be of service to his country. In line 58 one reads his near- _recusatio_ as he says that he can not write epic: _ei mihi, quod nostro est paruus in ore sonus!_ (‘Alas that the sound from my mouth is so small.’). In line 61 he quotes Ennius and in 62 he prays to Bacchus; he sees the latter as the inspiration for his love poetry through which he has found fame. The climax comes in the closing lines 63-70 when Propertius states his programme: in line 69 one reads: _sacra deosque canam et cognomina prisca locorum_ (‘Rites and gods I shall sing and the ancient names of places’). The obvious interpretation of this is that he will write about the history of Rome like Ennius did, and he will do this in the manner of Callimachus. However, lines 63-64, with which Propertius opens the closing passage, may create doubt in our mind: the lines read:

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Heyworth, 2007A, 417-418. There are different interpretations of _tremeret [...] pendula turba_. Some think of figures in trees in old Italian rituals. Heyworth suggests that it may also be possible that ‘Propertius [...] intended to evoke a period when it was a crowd of real people, rather than figures, that swung.’

In this passage there is a credible transposition. The order of the lines is: 52, 87, 88, 53, 54. Line 54 means that a race of warriors will rise from the ashes of Troy. See Camps, 1988, 60.
Propertius forewarns us of this in line 37 when he reverses his words of praise of Rome. I thus interpret the latter lines (in conjunction with 37) as follows: when he is like Callimachus he will sing about Rome, the city and her institutions. Just see where that brought us: denial of the greatness of Rome and reversal of praise. It is when he sings as the Umbrian love-elegist that we are to hear his real poetic voice, of which he and his homeland may be proud. The remaining ten poems of book 4 will show whether he fulfilled his intention.

In the second half of the poem, 4.1B, Propertius gives us Horos’ reaction, who at once urges caution. The omens are not favourable: *auersus cantat Apollo* (‘Apollo sings unfavourably;’) (line 73). Next the astrologer reveals to the poet his lineage and presents his credentials. He vows in lines 79-80: *non degenerasse propinquos,/inque meis libris nil prius esse fide* (‘that I have not disgraced my kin;/in my books there is nothing before truth.’) and recalls some of his successful prophecies. Horos testifies that astrology is superior to other techniques, as can be proven by the failure of Calchas, the seer of the Greeks in the Trojan war. After this, Horos reads Propertius his own horoscope, which gives the poet an excellent opportunity to switch into a personal mode and, after he has described his own history, to continue his thoughts about his own poetic future. I have discussed the passage about the poet’s descent above in the section about Propertius’ life. When the poet looks to the future Horos gives him the advice not to change his theme, but to continue with writing elegy. In lines 135-136 the poet says:

\[
\text{'at tu finge elegos, fallax opus (haec tua castra),} \\
\text{scribat ut exemplo cetera turba tuo.}
\]

(‘You are to compose elegies, deceitful work: this will be your campaign, so that the rest of the crowd may write in imitation of you.’)

*Elegia* 4.1B, 135-136

The astrologer also warns him that his situation will not much differ from the past: he will again be slave to a mistress and his fate is to come from love. But he should be wary of the sign of Cancer: perhaps as this sign is harmful to lovers. Thus, the *recusatio* returns, this time on the authority of the astrologer. Whether the halfhearted ideas about change will be put into practice, remains to be seen. Indeed, the first part of *Elegia* 4.1 is a panegyric of Augustus in which his achievements are clearly set out, but in the second part there is again a
commitment to love poetry. This ambiguity forms the pattern of book 4, not only in the sense that love poetry takes turns with ‘national’ poems, but one also often finds a mixture of both national aetiological and erotic focus within poems, such as for instance in 4.3.

_Elegia _4.2 is the first of the aetiological poems: these are poems which claim to explain the origin of some name, ritual or institution. The god Vertumnus, whose statue stood behind the temple of Castor near the _Forum Romanum_, is the subject of this elegy.⁶⁵² The statue speaks to a passer-by and states in lines 5-6 that he is very happy in his present position:

> haec me turba iuuat; nec templo laetor eburno:
> Romanum satis est posse uidere forum.
> ('The crowd here pleases me; nor do I take delight in a temple decorated with ivory: it is enough to be able to see the Roman Forum.‘)

_Elegia _4.2, 5-6

Next, in true aetiological fashion the statue continues to explain his origins: how he came to Rome, the different etymologies of his name and the rituals which are connected with the god. The most important ritual was probably the offering of the fruits of the changing seasons, the statue himself states in lines 11-12: _seu, quia uertentis fructum praecerpimus anni, /Vertumni rursus creditur esse sacrum_ (‘or again, because we pluck the first-fruits of the passing year, /the rite is believed to belong to Vertumnus.’). The ritual is repeated in lines 41-42.⁶⁵³ The poem ends with an inscription of six lines explaining that the bronze statue was made by Mamurrius, an artist in Numa’s time, as a replacement of an earlier _stipes acernus_ (‘a maple stump’). Although I regard this as an exercise in aetiological poetry, there are two allusions to the contemporary greatness of Rome in comparison with the mythical age. The first allusion is that Propertius points out the importance of the _Forum Romanum_ in lines 5-6 and the second is the replacement of the wooden statue by a bronze one. However, I do not see the poem as dealing with actual issues.

_Elegia _4.3 is a love poem written in the form of a letter from a young Roman bride to her husband who is away on military service. In this poem Propertius uses one of the well-known themes from his previous books: the separation of lovers. But, the poem is also an example of Propertius’ view on moral issues woven into a love-elegy, presented as a moving story of a young girl, called Arethusa, who expects more from her new conjugal state than her husband Lycotas is giving her. In lines 11-12 she asks Lycotas:

> haecne marita fides et pacta haec foedera nobis,
> cum rudis urgenti bracchia uicta dedi?
> (‘Is this the loyalty of a husband, and this the troth pledged by

---

⁶⁵² Ball Platner, 1929, 489 and 584; Camps, 1988, 72; Richardson, 1977, 424; _Der Kleine Pauly V_, 1969, 1220. Not much is known about Vertumnus who was originally an Etruscan god and who was introduced to Rome when Etruscans from Volsinii assisted Romulus against the Sabines under Tatius (see lines 4.1, 51-52). Apart from the statue mentioned in the present poem, Vertumnus had also a temple on the Aventine. In the temple was a picture of M. Fulvius Flaccus who had conquered Volsinii (on the site of modern Orvieto) in 264 B.C. Richardson supposes that the ancient god was summoned to the side of the Romans by _evocatio_, and was promised a temple in Rome in return.

⁶⁵³ Camps, 1988, 73 and 76; Günther, 2006B, 366.
us when I first in defeat yielded my arms to your pressing embrace?

_Elegia_ 4.3, 11-12

Arethusa tells her husband of her loneliness and her longing for him. She scolds the inventors of war in lines 19-20:

*occidat immerita qui carpsit ab arbore uallum*
*et struxit querulas rauca per ossa tubas,*

(‘Perish the man who plucked a military stake from an undeserving tree, and manufactured complaining trumpets from noisy bones.’)

_Elegia_ 4.3, 19-20

The young woman is worried about two things: that his shoulders may be blistered by his breastplate and that his neck may be hurt by the love-bites of some girl. Lines 23-28 belong to Propertius’ most beautiful and moving poetry and are worthy of being quoted in full.

*dic mihi, num teneros urit lorica lacertos?*
*num grauis imbelles atterit hasta manus?*
*haec noceant potius quam dentibus ulla puella*
*det mihi plorandas per tua colla notas.*
*diceris et macie uultum tenuasse; sed opto*
*e desiderio sit color iste meo.*

(‘Tell me, does the breastplate chaff your youthful arms? does the heavy spear roughen your unwarlike hands? Rather let these things cause their damage than that any girl make marks on your neck with her teeth for me to weep over. You are said to have become thin about the face with lack of food; well, I hope that paleness comes from missing me.’)

_Elegia_ 4.3, 23-28

In the central passage of the poem Arethusa tells her soldier-husband of the empty bed in which her little dog now takes the place of her beloved. She imagines him at his duties and she searches the map for places where he goes on the campaign; in line 35 she says: _et disco qua parte fluat uincendus Araxes_ (‘and I learn where flows the Araxes that must be conquered’). She is lonely, the house is empty and in line 41 she sighs _assidet una soror_ (‘My sister alone sits with me’). If only she was like Hippolyta; she could join him _Romanis utinam patuisissent castra puellis_ (‘How I wish that camps were open to Roman girls:’) (line 45). The young woman is seized by her love, as one reads in lines 49-50:

*omnis amor magnus; sed rapto coniuge maior:*
*hanc Venus, ut uiuat, ventilat ipsa facem.*

(‘All love is mighty; but it is mightier when a husband is taken away: Venus herself shakes this torch so that it may live.’)

_Elegia_ 4.3, 49-50
The poem ends with an appeal to her husband in lines 63-66; she says in line 63 that he may not pay the highest price: *ne, precor, ascensis tanti sit gloria Bactris* (‘I beg you, let not the glory of scaling Bactra be so important,’). She wants him back, but on one condition: that he remains faithful to her as she is to him. In the last but two lines she says:

\[
\textit{sed,} [...] \quad \textit{incorrumpa mei conserua foedera lecti;} \\
\textit{hac ego te sola lege redisse uelim;} \\
\text{‘But, [...] as you keep unstained the pledges of my marriage bed:} \\
\text{on this condition I would wish for your return;}\)

\textit{Elegia} 4.3, 67-70

In what I consider the most beautiful of Propertius’ love poems, the roles of the woman and the man are reversed, in contrast to his earlier love-elegies. In the present elegy the woman is under the spell of love and attests her fidelity, which is the opposite of the girls’ behaviour in Propertius’ earlier poems. In those he condemned the materialistic mistresses who took the opportunity to commit adultery as soon as their men were absent. Cynthia never wished to join her lover-soldier on his campaign, but would rather rush off with a wealthy rival. Arethusa’s love is pure, but at the same time she is self-assured and expects her husband to be faithful also. Therefore, this poem can be read as an appeal to Roman women for conjugal fidelity and a different morality. But there is more: it shows the new place in society for women, one which is moving in the direction of more equality with men. Propertius’ commentary on these issues means that this poem has a ‘private political’ content which is supportive of Augustus’ ideals of a moral revival.

The fourth elegy of the fourth book is again an aetiological poem in which a love lament has been placed. The poem deals with the story of Tarpeia who in Romulus’ time had betrayed the Roman garrison after she had fallen in love with the Sabine king Titus Tatius, who was waging war as revenge for the rape of their women. Propertius recalls the events and shows the places where these events occurred, indicating the contemporary state of the site. For instance, Propertius refers to the position of the camp of the Sabines in line 13 as \textit{murus erant montes; ubi nunc est Curia saepta} (‘The hills were the wall; where now the Senate-house is balustraded’).\textsuperscript{654} After the poet has explained the different military dispositions allowing the reader to relate these to the contemporary map of Rome, he narrates that Tarpeia used to fetch water near Tatius’ camp and had at once fallen in love with him. In lines 21-22 there is no doubt:

\[
\text{obstipuit regis facie et regalibus armis;} \\
\text{interque oblitas excidit urna manus}. \\
\text{‘she was struck with amazement by the appearance of the king} \\
\text{and his kingly arms;} \\
\text{and the pitcher fell between heedless hands.’}\)

\textsuperscript{654} Richardson, 1977, 435-436. Richardson gives the following credible explanation of this rather indistinct description of the military disposition of the two armies in the passage of lines 3-14. He states: ‘According to tradition, the Sabine army under Titus Tatius encamped at the north corner of the Forum Romanum, [...]. The stream of Cloaca ran across the valley, and the Sabines were on the northwest side of this in the area subsequently occupied by the Comitium and Curia.’ and ‘more likely he [Propertius] means that the Romans depended for defence on the natural scarp of the Palatine and Capitoline.’
Next, the poet describes how Tarpeia often slipped away from the Roman fortress on the Capitolium and how she prays that Romula ne faciem laederet hasta Tati ('Romulus's spear not harm Tatius's face;') (line 26). After she has returned to the hill hirsutis brachia secta rubis ('arms cut by thorny brambles') she sits down and laments in a long monologue her love-pangs. She wishes that she were captured by the Sabines and could only gaze at the face of Tatius (line 34: conspicer ora Tati). She, a Vestal maiden, testifies that she understands such mythical female sinners as Scylla and Ariadne well, who, driven by love, betrayed their own kin. She works out how to bring Tatius up to the Roman fortress, tomorrow on the day of the festival of the Parilia, when the whole city would be off its guard. She imagines herself as the bride of the new king Tatius and, if he were to reject her offer, she wishes that she could be the girl through whom the Sabine rape would be avenged, by being raped herself. But if there to be a marriage, a treaty could be arranged and the armies could be separated. Next, she gives herself over to a short sleep in which she is visited by Venus who fans her passion and who brings her into a state of frenzy, as ‘a Bacchante in her madness and an Amazon in her impetuosity.’ In the early morning of the feast of the Parilia she goes to Tatius and in line 82 one reads: pacta ligat, pactis ipsa futura comes ('she seals the agreement, herself to come along as part of the agreement.’). The Sabines scale the hill and overwhelm the fortress. The wedding, however, does not materialise as Propertius writes in lines 89-91:

at Tatius (neque enim sceleri dedit hostis honorem),
‘nube’ ait ‘et regni scande cubile mei!’
dixit, et ingestis comitum super obruit armis.

('But Tatius said (for though an enemy he gave no reward for a crime), ‘Marry, and climb the bed of my kingdom!’ As he spoke he crushed her by piling on top the arms of his companions.’)

Elegia 4.4, 89-91

Propertius states that her death was regarded as just, irrespective of the ambiguity of the last line of the poem. The poem ends with the words: o uigil, iniiustae praemia sortis habes ('watcher in the night, you have recompense for your unfair lot.').

Tarpeia is a Roman Medea who is prepared to sacrifice the people who were nearest to her, for her passionate love. Her love is destructive in contrast to Arethusa’s love in Elegia 4.3 which was constructive. In these two poems Propertius wants to show this contrast and

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655 Richardson, 1977, 416. I quote: ‘The Parilia, feast of Pales, goddess of the flocks, was celebrated April 21, the birthday of Rome, with bonfires of hay over which the celebrants jumped in a rite of purification and a purification of the flocks with a composition of ashes and blood probably by gelding [castrating] a horse.’

656 Richardson, 1977, 439.

657 Camps, 1988, 95. Camps’ translation is: ‘such is her reward for the traitor’s watch she kept.’ I question this interpretation as the text is: iniiustae sortis. The text of the Loeb edition reads: o vigil, iniiustae praemia mor- tis habes and the translation is: ‘O wakeful one, you do not deserve such a reward for your death.’ The interpreta tion of the latter is then: ‘The wakeful one is Tarpeia (cf. 86), and her reward is the naming of the hill after her.’ (Goold (Loeb), 2006, 340-341). The interpretation of Richardson, 1977, 440 who states that uigil refers to Iuppiter who would have received as a reward the epithet Torpeius for having suffered the iniiusta sors of capture is a result of his ‘recourse to very intricate reasoning and argument.’ Praemia in line 94 refers back to mons est cognomen in line 93: the hill is called ‘Tarpeian’ after Tarpeia and this is her recompense for her ‘unfair lot, i.e. that of being a Vestal who falls in love.’ (according to Heyworth, 2007A, 595).
testifies that Arethusa’s love is the kind which the new Roman society requires. *Elegia* 4.4 is supportive of Augustus’ moral policies and I label the poem as ‘private political’.

*Elegia* 4.5 is again a poem about matters of love and concerns the evil which a *lena* (‘bawd’ or ‘procuress’), called Acanthis, can achieve. The poem starts and ends with a curse over the procuress’ grave who died not so long ago of consumption, as we learn from line 68: *sputaque per dentes ire cruenta cauos* (‘and bloody sputum passing between her pitted teeth’). In the passage of lines 5-20 the poet describes the evil powers of Acanthis who could even *Hippolytum Veneri mollire negantem* (‘soften an Hippolytus who says no to Venus’) or *Penelopen [...] /nubere lasciuo cogeret Antinoo* (‘would force Penelope [...],/and marry the licentious Antinous.’). The major part of the poem is devoted to a long speech of the procuress to a girl who appears to be the poet’s mistress and who has been overheard by the poet. In this speech Acanthis teaches the girl the ways to ensnare men and to get the better of it. If she wants riches from the Orient then she must: *frange et damnosae iura pudicitiae* (‘and break the laws of costly chastity.’) (line 28). She has very practical advice to keep a lover in suspense, as one can read in lines 33-34:

\[
\begin{align*}
denique ubi amplexu Venerem promiseris empto, \\
fac simules puros Isidos esse dies.
\end{align*}
\]

(‘When you have finally promised love and sex has been paid for, make sure you pretend it is the days of abstinence imposed by Isis.’)

*Elegia* 4.5, 33-34

Such advice was not to the liking of the poet and also went against the views of Augustus, who made several attempts to ban the worship of foreign gods such as Isis. These cults imposed regular periods of sexual abstinence. In the theatre the girl ought not to follow the grand passions of the great heroines of the past, but rather the ways of the *moecha* (‘slut’) in one of Menander’s plays who *ferit astutos [...] Getas* (‘tricks cunning slaves.’) (line 44). It is the money which counts, not the sweet verses of a lover: an advice which the poet does not wish his sweetheart to remember and which makes love a crude business in his opinion. Lines 53-58 give a clear summary of all the sordid activities of the *meretrix*:

\[
\begin{align*}
aurum spectato, non quae manus adferat aurum: \\
uersibus auditis quid nisi uerba feres? \\
qui uersus Coae dederit nec munera uestis, \\
istius tibi sit surda sine aere lyra.
\end{align*}
\]

(‘Look at the gold, not the hand that proffers it; when you have heard poetry, what will you take away but words?
As to the man who has given verses and not gifts of Coan cloth, you should be deaf to his lyre that comes without cash.’)

*Elegia* 4.5, 53-58

In my opinion, this poem is one of three: the other two being 4.3 and 4.4. All three deal with ‘ideal love’: 4.3 is about pure conjugal love, 4.4 condemns destructive love which rides rough-

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658 Geta was the name of the stock figure of the cunning slave in plays of the New Comedy.
659 Lines 55 and 56 are missing.
shod over the feelings of others and is totally egocentric and 4.5 rejects the so-called love which is only there for gain. The three are a mixture of poems about matters of love and matters of personal morality: with respect to the latter Propertius breaks a lance for stable relationships between men and women which are based on respect and equality. This theme is reminiscent of that of *Elegia* 3.14 where Propertius advocates greater social freedom for women in Rome. However, all this should be accompanied by an improvement of sexual morality, especially among the elite. He sees the loose morals of his day as a threat to the stability of the social fabric. I put *Elegia* 4.5 in the category of ‘private political’ poems.

The next elegy, 4.6, is a much discussed poem and is often compared with other ‘Actium’ poems such as Vergilius’ *Aeneis* 8, 671-713 and Horatius’ *Iambus* 9 and *Carmen* 1.37. Propertius places Augustus and Actium at the centre of the poem. Whereas the present elegy is an aetiological poem when Propertius writes about the origin of the new temple of Apollo on the Palatine, it is also a poem in praise of Augustus’ victory at Actium. The celebration of Apollo does not detract from the eulogy of Augustus, because Propertius’ portrayal of Apollo does not leave the impression as if the god had won the victory. ‘Apollo was Augustus’ family god and personal patron, so that what Apollo did at Actium showed his willingness and ability to help his protégé Augustus.’ The poem was presumably written in 16 B.C., fifteen years after the sea battle, a year in which the *ludi quinquennales* were held. In the opening passage the poet presents himself as a *vates* (‘priest’) who performs the rites of a sacrifice (perhaps at the temple of Apollo). The poet was inspired by Philitas and particularly by Callimachus’ hymn to Apollo. Next follows a dedication to Augustus in lines 13-14:

Caesari in nomen ducuntur carmina: Caesar
dum canitur, quaeso, Iuppiter ipse uaces.

(‘Songs are composed for the glory of Caesar: while Caesar is sung, Jupiter, I beg that even you pay attention.’)

_Elegia* 4.6, 13-14

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660 I use a selection of secondary literature about Propertius’ *Elegia* 4.6. Cairns (1984, 129-168), in his essay entitled ‘Propertius and the battle of Actium (4.6),’ points out that until the late 60’s and early 70’s of the last century there was much unease about the poem and that ‘almost everyone writing about the elegy has regarded it as bad and/or insincere.’ (pages 131-132). For instance Williams, 1962, 43: ‘that one of the most ridiculous poems in the Latin language is his [Propertius’] celebration of the battle of Actium [4.6].’ This view on 4.6 has now changed considerably and Cairns’ essay is one of the first which presented a more positive assessment of the poem. Useful commentaries are those of Heyworth, 2007A, 457-463; Hutchinson, 2006, 152-169 and Richardson, 1977, 446-454. Günther, 2006B, 373-379 gives a good summary. See for a discussion of Vergilius’ _Aeneis_ 8, 671-713 pages 113-114 and 116-117; of Horatius’ _Iambus_ 9 pages 160-163 and of Horatius’ _Carmen* 1.37 pages 180-182.

661 Cairns, 1984, 137.

662 It is not unlikely that the present elegy was performed at the *ludi quinquennales* of 16 B.C. However, Cairns, 1984, 151-154 suggests that the poem may have been performed at the annual celebration of the foundation of Apollo’s temple, on the 9th of October. This seems a credible conjecture, even though he weakens his suggestion when he is carried away by supposing the presence of a picture of the battle of Actium in the temple of which the passage in 4.6 is a description, just as the passage in _Aeneis* 8 was a description of the shield.

663 Günther, 2006B, 374; Mair (Loeb), 2000, 21-24 and 49-59: Callimachus’ _Hymn to Apollo*. The similarities are in: the hushing (Prop., 1; Call., 17), the sprinkling with water (Prop., 7; Call., 111-112) and the laurel (Prop., 10; Call., 1).
In the lines which follow (lines 15-66) Propertius continues by describing the battle and this suggests to the reader that the temple on the Palatine had been built in thanks of Apollo’s assistance at Actium, while in fact Octavianus had promised the building after the defeat of Sextus Pompeius at Naulochus in 36 B.C. Aside from this, the passage about Actium gives us a succinct account of the sea battle and above all clear insight in the right of Octavianus’ cause and the wrong of the cause of Antonius and Cleopatra. In the opening passage about the battle the narrator recalls the two fleets which were on the point of engaging in battle: on one side Antonius’ and Cleopatra’s fleet *Teucro damnata Quirino* (‘doomed by Trojan Quirinus’) (line 21), on the point of being crushed by Octavianus. The fleet of the queen carried a crew of Romans under her command: in line 22 one reads: *pilaque femineae turpiter apta manu* (‘its legionary javelins were shamefully fitted into a female hand;’), which is reminiscent of Horatius’ *Iambus* 9. On the other side there goes *Augusta ratis* (‘August ship’). The importance of only four words in line 19 should be noted: *huc mundi coiere manus* (‘Here met the forces of the world;’). Propertius regarded this sea battle as being highly significant and decisive for the future of the ‘civilised’ world of his time.

In line 25 the first of a number of meaningful allusions is given. Nereus’ action, who favoured Octavianus, can be read as an allusion to the earlier defeat of Sextus Pompeius who had claimed that he was the favourite of the sea-gods. The leading part of the gods has been left to Apollo and the god shows that he understands the importance of his role. His appearance is described in lines 31-33:

\[
\begin{align*}
\textit{non ille attulerat crines in colla solutos} \\
\textit{aut testudineae carmen inerme lyrae,} \\
\textit{sed quali aspexit Pelopeum Agamemnono uultu} \\
\textit{('He had not come with hair loose on his shoulders} \\
\textit{or bringing the unarmed song of his tortoise-shell lyre, but} \\
\textit{with the expression with which he looked on Agamemnon, descendent of Pelops,')}
\end{align*}
\]

_Elegia_ 4.6, 31-33

The god, protector of Troy and Rome, comes as a warrior and looks as angrily at the enemies of Octavianus as he had earlier looked at Agamemnon, who had wronged his priest Chryses. The allusion in lines 35-36 is equally meaningful:

\[
\begin{align*}
\textit{aut quali flexos soluit Pythona per orbes,} \\
\textit{serpentem, imbelles quem timuere deae.} \\
\textit{('or with which he unravelled the winding coils of the Python,} \\
\textit{the snake whom the unwarlike goddesses [Muses] feared.')}
\end{align*}
\]

_Elegia_ 4.6, 35-36

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664 See also Propertius’ *Elegia* 2.31 (page 275) and the discussion of Horatius’ *Iambus* 7 (page 157-159).
666 The ‘Trojan Quirinus’ refers to Romulus who ‘was frequently invoked as the protector of the Roman state […], especially in the early Augustan period, perhaps because Romulus was one of the titles proposed for Octavian before the Senate settled on Augustus.’ (Richardson, 1977, 449). In addition, Augustus associated himself with Romulus and therefore the ‘The Trojan Quirinus’ also refers to Augustus.
667 See page 161 of this book.
These lines refer to ‘the Muses who lived on Helicon, conceived as terrified by the great serpent Python which Apollo killed at his coming to Delphi.’

The serpent was ‘commonly regarded in antiquity as symbolizing vices, including that love of strife which generated civil war; and the destruction of these monsters by gods or heroes was seen as a moral victory.’

Cleopatra was clearly ‘a great serpent’ and together with Antonius the generator of civil war.

A third allusion comes a little later, in the ‘general’s speech’ of Apollo to Octavianus. The allusion is given in line 49: *quodque u vehement prorae Centauros saxa minantes* (‘or that the prows bear Centaurs threatening to hurl rocks.’). The ships of the enemy’s fleet have figureheads of Centaurs which refer to the mythical battle of the Lapiths and the Centaurs of which the latter were considered the guilty perpetrators of discord and a symbol of barbaric behaviour, very similar to that of the Egyptians.

Apollo in his speech reminds Octavianus of his claim that through Rhea Silvia he descended from the kings of Alba Longa and from Romulus, with whom Octavianus liked to associate himself. The god promises his help in the sea battle and Octavianus’ mission is revealed in line 41: *solue metu patriam* (‘Release your homeland from fear;’). The god adds weight to this mission in lines 43-44: Rome’s future depends on Octavianus and unless he is victorious Rome had better not been founded.

*quam nisi defendes, murorum Romulus augur
ire Palatinas non bene uidit aues.*

(‘if you do not defend her, Romulus the inaugurator of her walls did not propitiously see the birds going over the Palatine.’)

_Elegia_ 4.6, 43-44

Apollo ends his speech with encouraging words to Octavianus not to lose heart at the sight of the enemy’s fleet and with the god’s assistance the sea battle is duly won; in line 57 Propertius says: *vincit Roma fide Phoebi; dat femina poenas;* (‘Rome conquers through the good faith of Apollo; the woman [Cleopatra] pays the penalty.’).

Propertius then gives the poem an unexpected turn by the words of the deified Iulius Caesar in lines 59-60:

*at pater Idalio miratur Caesar ab astro:
’sum deus: est nostri sanguinis ista fides.’*

(‘And father Caesar gazes with wonder from the star of Venus: ‘I am a god: this [victory] is proof of our bloodline.’)

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668 Camps, 1988, 109. The ‘coils’ are a snake’s winding body.
669 Cairns, 1984, 163.
670 This refers to the mythical story of the wedding of Theseus’ friend Peirithoös to beautiful Hippodameia, princess of the Lapiths. At the wedding not only the Lapiths were present but also the rough Centaurs, who were related to the bridegroom. One of the Centaurs decided to try to abduct the bride and many of his friends followed his example by assaulting the girls which led to the ferocious battle.
671 Alba Longa was founded three hundred years earlier by Aeneas’ son Iulus (Ascanius). Romulus’ mother was Rhea Silvia, the daughter of king Numitor of Alba Longa.
672 Lines 43-44 refer to the foundation myth of Rome. Romulus saw twelve birds from the Palatine against Remus’ six. Remus was killed in the ensuing quarrel.
673 Richardson, 1977, 452. Idalium [...] ab astro in line 59 refers to the star of Venus. Idalium, a mountain city in Cyprus was sacred to the goddess. Whether the star is the comet that appeared after Iulius Caesar’s murder or the planet or a star is not so relevant, because the point is that it is the deified Iulius Caesar who speaks.
Richardson, in his commentary on these two lines, states:

‘It is hard to read this line [line 60] without amusement, but it must be remembered that the more sophisticated Romans generally viewed the deification with a certain amusement. The notion that the proof of divinity is the ability to produce heroic sons is a clever conceit.’

However, the cause of my own amusement is another. It is Iulius Caesar who speaks here and the sophisticated Roman might well remember that he had had a consuming love affair with Cleopatra which started in 48 B.C. in Alexandria, after which he brought her and their son to Rome in 46 B.C. where she remained as his mistress until his murder in 44 B.C. The sophisticated Roman might have felt that of all people, it was not Iulius Caesar who was the one to gloat over Cleopatra’s defeat. The Roman social and political elite might also have remembered that the Egyptian queen and Iulius Caesar had a natural son who had as good a claim to nostri sanguinis, the bloodline, as Octavianus, who was Iulius Caesar’s adopted son. Propertius thus weakens the praise spoken by Apollo in the earlier passages and makes the opening of Apollo’s eulogy insincere and somewhat ridiculous. The opening lines 37-38 read:

\[ \textit{mox ait: 'o Longa mundi seruator ab Alba, Auguste, Hectoreis cognite maior auis,} \]

(‘Then he spoke: ‘Saviour of the world from Alba Longa, Augustus, recognized as greater than Hector and your ancestors,’)

\[ \textit{Elegia 4.6, 37-38} \]

While Apollo is referring in line 38 to Augustus’ (at the time Octavianus’) presumed long lineage which went back to Aeneas (‘Hector and your ancestors’, or ‘your Trojan ancestors’), Iulius Caesar, looking down from the star of Venus, hijacks Augustus’ ancestry in line 60. Augustus did not require Iulius Caesar’s bloodline, as the former’s claim that he is a descendant of the kings of Alba Longa, and thus of the Trojan royal family, is as ‘good’ as that of Iulius Caesar.

There is a second moment at which Propertius weakens Apollo’s words. In the passage following Iulius Caesar’s, the poet describes Cleopatra’s flight to Egypt and in lines 65-66 he states:

\[ \textit{di melius! quantus mulier foret una triumphus, ductus erat per quas ante Jugurtha uias!} \]

(‘Thank heaven! What a triumph a single woman would have been in the streets through which Jugurtha was led in the past!’)

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674 See pages 107-108 of this book.
675 See Richardson, 1977, 450. ‘Your [Augustus’] ancestors who fought with Hector’ in line 38 refers to Octavianus’ descent from Aeneas. Richardson writes the following: ‘Hectoreis: It would appear a blunder on P[ropertius]’ part to call Aeneas Hectoreus, were it not for the fact that Vergil speaks of the line of the kings of Alba as gente...Hectorea (Aen. 1.273), and the popularity of Hector as a hero made Hectoreus equivalent to “Trojan”. In fact, as descendants of Hector’s sister Creusa (cf. Vergil. Aen. 12.440), the Julii has as good a claim as any on relationship with Trojan royalty.’ Hector and Creusa were both children of Priamus and Hecabe and Creusa was Aeneas’ wife.
Apart from the fact that, as usual Cleopatra is not mentioned by name (mulier), Octavianus has three kings, the children of Antonius and Cleopatra and many others in his triumphal procession, but not Cleopatra herself. Propertius says in these lines that one should be grateful (di melius) that she was not captured at Actium: in this way she was spared the shame of perhaps being paraded on her own through the streets of Rome. However, if one imagines what the reaction to these words of, again, the Roman elite may have been, these lines might obtain a different meaning. As these words come immediately after Iulius Caesar has spoken, the reaction may well have been that it was for the better that she had not returned to Rome, as this may have reminded the elite too much of her previous stay in the city together with Iulius Caesar.

Before the 1970's many scholars held the opinion that in the present elegy too much credit for the victory at Actium was given to Apollo and in their view, lines 55-56 and 67-68 point in that direction. However, these lines can be read differently and I do not interpret for instance line 56 proxima post arcus Caesaris hasta fuit (‘next after the [Apollo’s] bow was Caesar’s [Augustus’] spear’) and lines 67-68 [...] quod eius/una decem uicit missa sagitta rates (‘because each arrow of his [Apollo] when shot conquered ten ships.’) as detracting from praise of Octavianus. It seems to me that line 56 can be read in such a way that the poet emphasises the power of the god’s assistance and that he states that Octavianus - and not Agrippa – was the bravest and strongest of the human fighters. The two lines 67-68 may refer to the rebuilding of the temple of Apollo near Actium, in which parts of ten enemy ships were shown as trophy.

Although I agree with those who regard Elegia 4.6 both an aetiological and a panegyric poem in one, Propertius presents his praise with the two reservations which I discussed above, and there is a third reservation, when the poet begins the passage of lines 69-85, which constitutes the closure of the poem, with a significant short statement: bella satis cecini (‘I have sung enough of war.’). What follows sounds as a recusatio. In my opinion he is saying here that in the present elegy he has shown that he can be the Roman Callimachus and is now able to write about such matters as the origin of the two temples for Apollo, which in his view lies in the battle of Actium. That he was wrong with respect to the temple of Apollo Palatinus is a different matter. In addition, he can write about matters of warfare, but rather lets others do this. In the final section he calls on others to sing about the great exploits of Augustus and he offers them a number of suggestions. The poem ends appropriately with the lines:

\[
\text{sic noctem patera, sic ducam carmine, donec}
\]
\[
\text{iniciat radios in mea uina dies}
\]
\[
\text{('That is how I shall spend the night with cup and with song,}
\]
\[
\text{until day casts its rays into my wine.'})
\]

Elegia 4.6, 85-86

I have given much attention to Elegia 4.6 as I see this poem as one of Propertius’ clearest political statements and as a poem with many different aspects. It seems to me that his statement is that the battle of Actium marked the beginning of a new era, one of peace and order and that this was the achievement of Octavianus. Propertius can have his party without any worries about the future of the realm. Therefore, I label this poem as ‘political’ which is supportive of Augustus.
In *Elegiae* 4.7 and 4.8 Cynthia returns; in the first Propertius describes her apparition just after her death and in the second her unexpected presence at a party. *Elegia* 4.7 begins with a significant statement in the first two lines:

\[ \textit{SUNT aliquid manes: leatum non omnia finit,} \\
\hspace{1cm} \textit{luridaque extinctos effugit umbra rogos.} \]

(‘The dead have some existence; death does not finish everything, and a ghostly shade escapes the pyre as it burns out.’)

*Elegia* 4.7, 1-2

In the third line the poet informs us that Cynthia’s ghost has come to his bedside at night. With this introduction Propertius sets the scene for one of two possible scenarios. In 4.7 he is either reconstructing Cynthia’s biography — perhaps to the point that he reveals that she never in fact existed, but that she was fictitious, or he is exploring dreams which he may have had soon after Cynthia’s death. Below I will discuss briefly a few passages which some scholars regard examples of inconsistencies between the ghost’s behaviour and the Cynthia as portrayed in Propertius’ earlier poems.\(^{676}\) In my opinion the scenes which the poet describes are in keeping with the earlier picture of Cynthia and portray some of her main traits: her jealousy and suspicion and her fickle nature.

Cynthia’s ghost bursts out in a long and angry monologue and makes Propertius many reproaches: her tirade covers eighty-one lines of the total of ninety-six. For instance, the apparition reproaches him in lines 13-22 for being fast asleep and for having forgotten her and their nightly escapades so soon. The opening lines of the passage are:

\[ \textit{in te iam uires somnus habere potest?} \\
\textit{iamne tibi exciderunt uigilacis furta Suburae} \\
\textit{et mea nocturnis trita fenestra dolis?} \]

(‘can sleep already have power over you? \\
Have you already forgotten the secret encounters on the nocturnal Subura and the way my window was worn by nighttime deceits?’)

*Elegia* 4.7, 14-16

Cynthia displays her anger at his apparent lack of respect and indifference at her funeral in the next passage and in lines 27-28 we read:

\[ \textit{denique quis nostro curuum te funere uidit?} \\
\textit{atram quis lacrimis incaluisse togam?} \]

(‘Moreover, who saw you bent over at my funeral? \\
who that your black toga grew warm with tears?’)

*Elegia* 4.7, 27-28

Her angry words continue with the accusation that a disreputable woman took her place in the poet’s house, soon after her funeral. In lines 39-40 the ghost says:\(^{677}\)

\[ \textit{Richardson, 1977, 454-455.} \]

\[ \textit{A cyclas is the white dress with a purple hem of Roman women.} \]
Later in the poem it appears that this new woman is Chloris. This reproach is not quite fair as in line 6 the poet is found ‘complaining of the chill empire of my bed’ (quererer lecti frigid regna mei).

The ghost assures him that she remained faithful and asks him to show his respect for her by burning the poems he has written about her (lines 77-78). Whether this means that she wants all his poems about her burned, to blot out any memory of her, or whether she wants to have a major part of Propertius’ work destroyed, is not clear. At the end of the poem Cynthia’s ghost asks Propertius to attend to her grave. She expects to be reunited with him soon after his death and she ends her monologue in lines 93-94:

\[
\text{nunc te possideant aliae; mox sola tenebo, mecum eris et mixtis ossibus ossa teram.}'
\]

(‘For now others may possess you: in time to come I alone shall have you, you will be with me, and I shall grind bone with intermingled bone.’)

\textit{Elegia 4.7, 93-94}

Propertius claims the last two lines and in line 95 he qualifies her words as: \textit{haec postquam querula mecum sub lite peregit} (‘When she had run through this speech with me in the form of a querulous complaint’). With these words the poet rejects any form of reconciliation. Therefore, my interpretation of the poem is that Propertius confirms the image of a querulous and jealous Cynthia – whether she was a real living person or not – which he presented in his earlier poems, whilst at the same time he is saying a definitive farewell to her. \textit{Elegia 4.7} is either a personal poem in which Propertius is looking back at a troublesome affair with Cynthia, a woman whom he had known, or at an affair with a beloved persona, or it is a poem in which Propertius is looking back at the persona of a lover and his troubles.

In \textit{Elegia 4.8} Propertius attempts to soften the embitterment with which he had looked back at his relationship with Cynthia in the previous poem, real or imagined. In the present elegy the poet relates a story about Cynthia who is quite the opposite of the woman in 4.7: this time full of life and love. Probably the events have been invented.

After the short opening of the poem there is a description of the snake cult of Lanuvium, a small town outside Rome on the \textit{Via Appia} with the shrine of Iuno Sospita.\textsuperscript{678} A snake with a remarkable power protects the shrine: the power to discriminate between virgins and unchaste women. One reads in line 11: \textit{ille sibi admotas a virgine corripit escas} (‘The serpent snatches the food brought for him by a virgin’) and he rejects the food offered by an unchaste girl. Cynthia is driven along the \textit{Via Appia} in an expensive and fashionable chariot (the equivalent of a modern Lamborghini) by a man, on her way to Lanuvium: not to visit

\textsuperscript{678} Goold (Loeb), 2006, 417; Hutchinson, 2006, 190-192; Richardson, 1977, 462-464.
Iuno’s shrine however. The poet says in line 16: *causa fuit Iuno; sed mage causa Venus* (‘Juno was the cause, but Venus more so.’). Propertius decides to pay Cynthia back for her infidelities and we read in lines 27-29:

```
cum fieret nostro totiens iniuria lecto,
mutato uolui castra mouere toro.
Phyllis Aventinae quaedam est vicina Dianae:
('Since wrong was so often being done to our affair, I decided
to change my bed and move camp. There is a certain
Phyllis, neighbour of Diana of the Aventine,')
Elegia 4.8, 27-29
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Thus, Propertius invites Phyllis of the Aventine who *cum bibit, omne decet* (‘when she drinks, all charm’) and Teïa who is *candida, sed potae non satis unus erit* (‘fair, but when she is drunk, one man will not be enough.’) (line 32) for a wild night. Next, he describes in detail the preparations for the party, including the couch and the placing of the girls. In lines 35-36 the poet is very specific:

```
unus erat tribus in secreta lectulus herba.
quaeris discubitus? inter utramque fui.
('The three of us had a single couch on a secluded lawn. You
ask about the placement? I was between the two of them.')
Elegia 4.8, 35-36
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There is wine, music and dancing but poor Propertius is unlucky in the game of dice and is unable to enjoy himself. In lines 47-48 we read:

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cantabant surdo, nudabant pectora caeco:
Lanuuii ad portas, ei mihi, totus eram;
('The girls sang to a deaf man, bared their breasts to a blind;
 alas, I was entirely at the gates of Lanuvium,')
Elegia 4.8, 47-48
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One can guess what has happened: Cynthia has returned unexpectedly. The following scene is too funny not to quote in full. In lines 51-62 we read how Cynthia resolves matters to her advantage, obviously highly admired by the poet.

```
nec mora, cum totas resupinat Cynthia valuas,
non operosa comis, sed furibunda decens.
pocula mi digitos inter cecidere remissos,
pallueruntque ipso labra soluta mero.
fulminat illa oculis et quantum femina saeuit,
spectaulum capta nec minus urbe fuit.
Phyllidos iratos in uultum conicit ungues;
territa, 'uicini,' Teïa clamat, 'aquam!' 
crimina sopitos turbant elata Quirites,
onmis et insana semita uoce sonat.
illas direptisque comis tunicisque solutis
excipit obscurae prima taberna uiae.
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Elegia 4.8, 51-62
(‘No delay before Cynthia flattens the folding doors entirely, her hair a mess, but lovely in her wildness. The cup fell from between my fingers as they lost their grip, and my lips, sagging with the wine, actually grew pale. She flashes lightning from her eyes and rages as a woman does, and the scene was no less spectacular than the sack of a city. She hurled Angry nails at Phyllis’s face; terrified, Teia cries out, ‘Neighbours, fire!’ Shouted abuse disturbs the sleep of the populace, and the whole alleyway resounds with maddened cries. With their hair torn and clothes undone they [the girls] find refuge in the first tavern on the dark backstreet.’)

Elegia 4.8, 51-62

After the victory over her rivals Cynthia gives her lover a hiding and she makes short work of his supplications. She pardons him on her terms which are that he is not to look at other women and that he should sell his slave, Lygdamus. In lines 81-82 we read that he accepted all these terms: respondi ego ‘legibus utar,’/risit et imperio facta superba dato (‘I replied, ‘I shall abide by the conditions’;/and she laughed, made proud by the power she had been given.’). Next, Cynthia gives everything which the other girls have touched a good cleaning and the poem ends happily:

atque ita mutato per singula pallia lecto
res pacta et toto soluimus arma toro.
(‘And so, once every single sheet had been changed, the matter was settled, and we made peace and love all over the bed.’)

Elegia 4.8, 87-88

This is the last extant love-elegy of Propertius, nearly at the end of his fourth book. This shows that he had not forgotten the genre.

Elegia 4.9 is a poem about an aetiological theme: the story of Hercules and Cacus and the origins of the Ara Maxima. Hercules has driven the cattle of Geryones to the Palatine hill from where Cacus steals two beasts by dragging them ‘backwards by the tail into his cave’ on the Aventine (auersos cauda traxit in antra boues) (line 12).\(^679\) The lowing of the animals betrays the thief who is duly killed by Hercules. Next, Propertius offers us alternative explanations for the name of the Forum Boarium and an alternative for the origin of the Ara Maxima. In the case of the Forum Boarium the poet suggests in line 20 that Hercules drove his cattle there and used it as a pasture: nobile erit Romae pascua uestra forum (‘Your pasture will be a famous forum in Rome.’). The ‘more prosaic explanation’ of the name is that of an ancient cattle market.\(^680\)

Furthermore, according to Propertius the great altar (Ara Maxima) was erected by Hercules after he had destroyed the shrine of probably the Bona Dea when the chief priest-

\(^679\) The beautiful cattle was owned by the monster Geryones who lived on the island of Erythea (Frythia) in the bay of Cadiz and was taken by Hercules, who arrived in Rome with the animals on his way back to Mycene. This was the hero’s tenth labour by order of Eurystheus, king of Mycene.

\(^680\) Richardson, 1977, 473.
ess refused to let him drink from the nearby spring, as access to the place was prohibited for men. The poet tells the story at great length in lines 21-70. There was an old monument at the Forum Boarium called the Herculis Inuicti Ara Maxima, the origin of which was not clear to the Romans: it could have been an altar ‘built by Hercules for himself, an altar built by Hercules to Jupiter, or an altar built to Hercules by Evander.’ However, Vergilius favoured a different fourth explanation of the altar, namely that Hercules had erected the altar when he killed Cacus, according to the story as told by king Euander to Aeneas in Aeneis 8, 185-275.

The poem as a whole is one of Propertius’ exercises in aetiology and has no political content.

The last but one elegy, 4.10, is again an aetiological poem: this time about the spolia opima and the cult of Iuppiter Feretrius, as the poet explains in the opening lines:

NUNC Iouis incipiam causas aperire Feretri armaque de ducibus trina recepta tribus.

(‘Now I shall begin to reveal the origins of Feretrian Jove and the three sets of arms received from three leaders.’)

Elegia 4.10, 1-2

The temple of Iuppiter Feretrius was rebuilt by Augustus and arma in the second line refers to the spolia opima which are the arms won by a Roman general who had fought and killed his adversary in single combat. These spoils were then dedicated to Iuppiter Feretrius and stored in his temple on the Capitoline. The origin of the temple is said to go back to Romulus who is supposed to have founded the temple after he killed Acron in combat, Caenina ductor ab arce (‘general from the fortress of Caenina’) (line 9). The story of the founding of the temple was also told by Livius in his Ab Urbe Condita 1.10, 6-7 and Romulus was the first to have placed his spolia in the temple. Propertius then testifies in the passage which begins with line 23 that, after Romulus, Aulus Cornelius Cossus had placed the spolia after killing king Tolumnius of Veii, the Etruscan town, in 428 or 426 B.C. The latter had given orders to kill four Roman envoys and when the armies met, Cossus had challenged the king and taken the armour of the dead man which he brought as spolia to Rome. The third who placed his spolia in the temple was M. Claudius Marcellus: in lines 39-41 Propertius informs us:

Claudius Eridano traiectos arcuit hostes,
Belgica cum uasti parma relata ducis,
Virdomari. […]

681 Richardson, 1977, 475.
682 According to Livius’ Ab Urbe Condita 1.10, 2-6 the story of king Acron’s death is a direct result of the rape of the Sabine women. Acron was king of the small Sabine town Caenina who did not wait for the other Sabine forces and attacked Rome alone. Next, Livius tells in 1.10, 6-7: ‘Iuppiter Feretri’ inquit, ‘haec tibi uictor Romulus rex regia arma fero, templumque his regionibus quasi modo animo metatus sum dedico, sedem opimi spoliis quae regibus duciuseque hostium caesis me autorem sequentes posteri ferent.’ Haec temple est origo quod primum omnium Romae sacratum est. (‘Jupiter Feretrius,” he said, “to thee, I, victorious Romulus, myself a king, bring the panoply of a king, and dedicate a sacred precinct within the bounds which I have even now marked off in my mind, to be a seat for the spoils of honour which men shall bear hither in time to come, following my example, when they have slain kings and commanders of the enemy.” This was the origin of the first temple that was consecrated in Rome.’). See also Richardson, 1977, 476-478.
683 This story was also told by Livius in Ab Urbe Condita 4.17-20; See Der Kleine Pauly, Vol. I, 1309; Richardson, 1977, 479.
This passage refers to the defeat of the Gauls at Clastidium near the Po in 222 B.C. by Claudius Marcellus who killed the Gallic chief.\textsuperscript{684}

Propertius relates three stories of \textit{spolia opima} which were well-known in Rome at the time, particularly as Augustus had restored the temple of Iuppiter Feretrius. As the first of the depositors of arms was Romulus, one can read an allusion to the \textit{princeps} in this poem. However, the poet’s account of the three previous occasions at which a general was allowed to dedicate the spoils can be also interpreted as a telling allusion. Indeed, there had been a recent occasion at which a Roman general, M. Licinius Crassus, had won his \textit{spolia opima}, but had not been honoured in this way. I will quote a passage from Richardson who discusses the situation at the time.\textsuperscript{685}

In 29 B.C. M. Licinius Crassus, then proconsul in Macedonia, killed Deldo, king of the Bastarnae, in single combat and so should have had the right to dedicate the \textit{spolia opima}, but it was evidently ruled that because he derived his command from Octavian and was not general in his own right, he was ineligible (Cassius Dio 51.24.4). At all events the \textit{spolia} were not dedicated on this occasion, and it must have been plain to the Romans that they were not apt to be dedicated again in the foreseeable future.

Octavian, despite his enormous abilities as a leader of men, was not a distinguished soldier. [...] But he was also a jealous man and dynastically minded; the Romans were not to forget that he was commander-in-chief, that wars were undertaken under his auspices and victories belonged to him (Augustus, \textit{RG} 1.3-4).\textsuperscript{686}

This was not the first time that Octavianus and later Augustus claimed military success which was not his and suppressed the achievements of others. This was the case in the Sicilian war against Sextus Pompeius when Agrippa overcame Sextus, and in the sea battle at Actium it was again Agrippa to whom honour was due. There have been imputations of cowardice in Horatius’ \textit{lambus} \textsuperscript{9}.\textsuperscript{687} In \textit{Elegia} 4.10 Propertius

‘was venturing onto swampy ground. The denial of the dedication to Crassus would not have been soon forgotten, and the evocation of those moments when Roman commanders had proven themselves supermen in the field invited invidious comparisons. [...] The wonder is that P(propertius) should have published the poem at all, for

\textsuperscript{684} Richardson, 1977, 480. \textit{Eridanus} is the old mythical name for the river Po.

\textsuperscript{685} Richardson, 1977, 477.

\textsuperscript{686} The text of Cassius Dio says: ‘Crassus himself slew their king Deldo and would have dedicated his armour as \textit{spolia opima} to Jupiter Feretrius had he been general in supreme command.’ In the \textit{Res Gestae} 1, 3-4 we read: \textit{Bella terra et mari civilia exter}naque toto in orbe terrarium \textit{s}(uscepil); \textit{victorque omnibus (veniam petentibus) civibus pepercii}.[...]. \textit{(Bis) ovans triumphaq(i, tris egi c)urulis triumphos et appellat(us sum viciens) (se)mel imperator [...] (W)ars, both civil and foreign, I undertook throughout the world, on sea and land, and when victorious I spared all citizens who sued for pardon. [...] Twice I triumphed with an ovation, thrice I celebrated curule triumphs and was saluted as imperator twenty-one times.’.

\textsuperscript{687} See page 162 of this book.
while one does not think of him as an ardent Augustan, one does not think of him as anti-Augustan.\textsuperscript{688}

I interpret this elegy as one with a ‘political’ content and critical of Augustus. Although this poem does not specifically concern accusations of Augustus’ occasional lack of bravery in the civil war, it alludes to events at the very end of that period when Crassus killed Deldo in 29 B.C. and may have reminded Romans of the civil war. Therefore I have placed this poem in the category of the civil war in appendix X. I will discuss my view on Propertius’ attitude towards Augustus at the end of this chapter.

The final poem of the four books of \emph{Elegiae} concerns the speech of Cornelia, the wife of L. Aemilius Paullus Lepidus and daughter of P. Cornelius Scipio and Scribonia: the latter was also the mother of Julia by Augustus. Cornelia was a member of the Roman aristocracy whose husband was consul in 34 and censor in 22 B.C. and who was connected to the house of Augustus. She was blessed with three children, two of which were sons. She died relatively young in 16 B.C., probably in her late twenties.\textsuperscript{689} In the poem, Cornelia is underway to the underworld and she asks her husband in the opening lines to cease crying as this will not move the gods:

\begin{quote}
\textit{DESINE, Paulle, meum lacrimis urgere sepulcrum:}
\textit{panditur ad nullas ianua nigra preces;}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{Elegia} 4.11, 1-2

She is frightened and protests her innocence and asks for a fair judgement, we read in lines 17-18:

\begin{quote}
\textit{immatura licet, tamen huc non noxia ueni:}
\textit{nec precor huic umbrae mollia iura meae;}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{Elegia} 4.11, 17-18

Following this, she prepares herself for her defense before the judges of the underworld and she addresses Aeacus, who with his brothers Minos and Rhadamantus formed the tribunal and she declares in line 27 \textit{ipsa loquor pro me} (‘I plead my own defence’). After she has testified to her noble line and the achievements for the Roman cause of her ancestors, she mentions that she has had one husband only, in lines 35-36:

\textsuperscript{688} Richardson, 1977, 477.

\textsuperscript{689} I have not been able to find any reliable information of Cornelia’s year of birth. My conjecture that she died in her late twenties is the result of the following. Firstly, Cornelia was Scribonia’s daughter out of her marriage to Scipio. Scribonia married Augustus in 40 B.C. Secondly, when Cornelia died she was described as a young woman who had three children of whom the youngest girl was six years old. Cornelia must have been born before 40 and if this had been in 41, she was 25 when she died in 16 B.C. However, her youngest child was 6 which means that her eldest son could not be older than 8, and born in 24 B.C. (the young age of the children at her death is also suggested by lines 73-84 of the present elegy). If Cornelia had married at the age of 16/17 this would make sense. If Cornelia had married at the age of say 20, she would have been 28/29 when she died. See Syme, 219 and 229, note 7.
After this, Cornelia begins the central part of her testimony by the ashes of her famous forebear, Scipio Africanus the Elder, and she refers to her own history of female virtue. She has always been faithful to her husband, which was not that common in Rome of her days. In lines 41-42 and 45-46 Propertius allows her to say:

*me neque censurae legem mollisse nec ulla*
*labe mea nostros erubuisse focos.*
*nec mea mutata est aetas, sine crimine tota est:*
*uximus insignes inter utramque facem.*

(‘that I did not soften the rulings of the censors, and that our hearth has not blushed at any stain on my name.
Nor did my life change: it is entirely without wrong-doing;
we have lived a beacon between the two torches [of marriage and death].’)

_Elegia_ 4.11, 41-42 and 45-46

She continues by saying that no woman has to be ashamed when sitting next to her and that she did not injure her mother Scribonia. She reminds her mother that not just the city lamented her but that Augustus was also present at her funeral. In line 58 we read: _defensa et gemitu Caesaris ossa mea_ (‘my bones are defended by the groan of Caesar.’). She was the mother of three children none of whom had died before her. In line 98 she says: _uenit in exsequias tota caterua meas_ (‘the whole troop came to my funeral’), her sons Lepidus and Paullus and her daughter who at the age of six was counselled that she should ‘make sure you copy me in having a single husband’ (_fac teneas unum nos imitata uirum_) (line 68).

Next, a moving passage follows in which Cornelia commends the children to her husband’s care. I will quote a few lines from the whole passage which runs from line 73 until 84.

*fungere maternis uicibus pater: [..]*
*oscula cum dederis tua flentibus, adice matris: [..]*
*et si quid doliturus eris, sine testibus illis! [..]*
*atque ubi secreto nostra ad simulacra loqueris,*
*ut responsurae singula uerba iace.*

(‘Father, perform the duties of the mother: [..]
When they weep and you give your kisses to them, add a mother’s kisses: [..]
And if you grieve at all, let it be without their seeing: [..]
When you privately speak to my image, make the utterances separately as if to one who will reply.’)

_Elegia_ 4.11, 75, 77, 79 and 83-84
After this Cornelia speaks to the children and she urges them to accept a new marriage of their father if this were to take place. She says in line 87: *coniugium, pueri, laudate et ferte paternum* ('children, praise and proclaim your father’s marriage'). Other pieces of good advice follow, such as *nec matrem laudate*: ('and do not praise your mother') and the wish that the children will support their father, as we read in line 96: *prole mea Paullum sic iuuet esse senem* ('thus may the presence of my children make Paullus pleased to be an old man.'). The elegy ends with Cornelia’s wish that she may travel to the place of her illustrious ancestors because of her virtues.

This poem has given rise to very different reactions: to quote three. Firstly Richardson who states:

‘it [the poem] amounts to an indictment of the life Rome required of the women of its nobility. [...] But her [Cornelia’s] defense shows us a rather different picture, a woman who has little to show for having lived, who can only count her ancestors and the advantages for which she must have been envied, and who seems doubtful of the love of her husband.’

While I do not read Richardson’s last point in the poem, I interpret his words as pointing out the unsatisfactory, dependent role of wife and mother in the Rome of Cornelia. Although this may be regarded as an interpretation of Roman life through the eyes of our times, there are indeed other poems (*Elegiae* 3.14, 4.3) where Propertius makes a plea for more equality between men and women.

The second reaction is that of Susan Treggiari who testifies:

‘A powerful theme [in literature] is that women, barred from the dizzy heights of office, conquest, and triumphs open to upper-class men, could still achieve distinction as wives and mothers. Propertius makes the dead Cornelia [...] balance the triumphs of her ancestors against her earned (the word is also used of honourably discharged soldiers) status as virtuous once-married wife and mother of three. She reflected credit on her ancestors and left an example to her descendants (Propertius 4.11.27-72). She deserved praise: “This is the final reward of a woman’s triumph” (Propertius 4.11.71).’

In my opinion this assessment of the poem is much nearer the mark. However, the third view on the poem has an extra dimension which I think does Propertius justice. Stahl states:

‘On the whole, by warmly painting Cornelia’s affection for her family and the purity of her entire life, the poem [*Elegia* 4.11] describes an ideal turned reality. At the same time, it serves the Emperor’s purpose: by showing a flesh-and-blood paradigm of the legislated Augustan womanhood, defined by pious loyalty towards ancestors, marital integrity (lines 36 and 68 specifically point to monogamy), dedication to child-rearing. If then, the collection’s last poem does not offer another *αἵτιον*, it at least contains

690 Richardson, 1977, 481.
691 Treggiari, 2005, 146.
692 Stahl, 1985, 262.
references to the First Family, thus complementing the Palatine viewpoint of 4.1A in still another dimension. Also, by making it the last poem in his last book, Propertius appears to seal his career with a last-minute conversion from the type of woman Cynthia represented. Some [Williams], unoffended by the rhetorical make-up, have called this epilogue the “Queen of Elegies’.

I share Stahl’s view: apart from being a moving elegy, the poem has a political message which is supportive of Augustus’ vision of moral reforms and a return to old Roman values. After all, the poem was written in 16 B.C. when Augustus’ legislation was well under way. Heyworth suggests that 4.11 was Propertius’ last poem as it was ‘time to stop.’ While I am generally in agreement with Heyworth’s views, I cannot share his interpretation of this poem. He remarks:

> ‘So here we have a poet who dramatizes his moment of silence; he realizes that writing elegy as he has conceived it requires him to deal with Augustus and his power, and this means speaking the language of the regime and thus providing succour that he wishes to deny it.’

The last lines of his much appreciated article are: ‘The first words of the final poem were Desine, Paulle: in Latin and Greek the poet told himself that it was time to stop. He realized at the end that political writing, however sarcastic in phrasing, is in danger of bolstering the very regime it attacks. He ended his life in cunning silence.’

I do agree that the present poem reads like a closure. I also agree that political writing – even when it is critical – may be understood as supportive, if only by focusing attention on the issues. My objections to Heyworth’s conclusion are firstly that I interpret the text by what it seems to be saying: the story of a woman who was a responsible mother and wife. Secondly, if Propertius wished to finish writing poetry, it is likely that he would have said so. There are a number of examples in his earlier poems where he is clear about his intentions. In Elegia 4.1A and 4.1B, which were probably written at or around the same time (16 B.C.), he examined the future direction of his poetry: we do not read about any intention to stop. In book 3 (written between 26 and 21 B.C.) there are examples where he is quite open about his future, such as 3.1, 3.3 and 3.9. Thirdly, 4.11 was most likely written in 16 B.C., the year of Cornelia’s death. Propertius probably died ten or fifteen years later. Did he remain silent during these last years, or did he write a further book or books which we do not know about?

When book 4 is considered as a whole one should recall that the first poem of this book concerned the future direction of Propertius’ poetry. In Elegia 4.1 the poet examined whether he ought to devote himself to the writing of verse which was of service to his city. In the first poem there was an ambiguity in the sense that poetry about matters of love alternated with poetry with a ‘national’ theme and Propertius maintained this ambiguity throughout the whole book 4. However, there is a significant change with respect to the first book, as in the present there are 7 poems which are either ‘political’ (3) or ‘private political’ (4): together this is two thirds of the total against 14% in book 1. Of the three ‘political’ poems there is one

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693 I interpret this as concurrent with my view on Elegia 4.1A: Propertius’ intention to write aetiological poems and praising Rome’s greatness and being of service to his country.

694 Williams, 1968, 534.

695 Heyworth, 2007B, 125-127 and 128.

696 See pages 302-303 of this book.
about hope of better times (4.6), his only one (Actium is the beginning of a new order). *Elegia* 4.10 deals with the civil war (criticism of Augustus’ leadership) and 4.11 is supportive of Augustus’ ideal of moral reform. It is telling that this is the subject matter of his very last poem. Apart from 4.1 which is the programmatic poem at the beginning of the book, the other three ‘private political’ elegies (4.3, 4.4 and 4.5) belong together and deal with pure love, destructive love and the wrong kind of love respectively. Propertius offers us his views on these issues.

The poems in book 4 were written in 16 B.C. or later. Only one of the poems in the book is critical and four are clearly supportive. When I discussed *Elegia* 4.1 I posed the question whether Propertius would change towards writing more poems which were concerned with actual political and social issues. It seems as if he kept his promise.

**VII.d. The development of Propertius’ political views**

Propertius was first and foremost a writer of love-elegies. In his first book, written in the period before 29 B.C., when he was twenty-six years old at most, nineteen of the total twenty-two poems are love-elegies. Although there is a gradual shift towards politically and socially-biased poetry in the second book, which was released at the latest in 25 B.C., the love-elegies still number twenty-three out of a total of thirty-three (70 %). The picture we gain from the third book, which was released in 22 or 21 B.C., is no different: fifteen love-elegies out of a total of twenty-four (63 %). It is only in the fourth book, which was released sometime after 16 B.C., when Propertius was in his late thirties or early forties that the picture changes. Book 4, with a total of eleven poems, is relatively short compared to the three earlier books and it contains only four love-elegies (36 %).

At the beginning of section VII.c. I state that, although an examination of the love-elegies lies beyond the focus of this book, I would still present brief discussions of each and every poem, including the love poems, and that I would briefly discuss in the present section my interpretation of the manner in which Propertius treats the subjects of love and of love relationships. I do this because many of his ‘private political’ poems deal with sexual moral and marital fidelity (*Elegiae* 2.6, 2.9, 2.16, 2.25, 2.31/32, 3.13, 4.3, 4.5 and 4.11) and because there may be a link between his views on love and one’s beloved on the one hand, and his views on sexual relationships, within or outside marriage, on the other. It is feasible indeed that all his love poetry, in the many different forms, is not the result of a relationship with a woman who was called Cynthia or to whom he gave that name. As a poet he may have presented us the persona of a beloved and his experience as a lover. It is not known whether Propertius was married or whether the woman he called Cynthia was his one great love. Perhaps his love poems are nothing else than a poetic expression of general *topoi*, and do not represent his real feelings. In my opinion, from his love-elegies, a picture emerges which is at least consistent. My interpretation, which I can only give within the restraints of brevity, is that Propertius was a privileged member of the Roman upper classes who could afford complete freedom in sexual affairs. Although there are a few poems in which he advocates male infidelity and the prerogatives of more than one liaison at the same time (*Elegiae* 2.20, 2.22, 2.23 and 3.19), or in which he rejects the stern morals of Augustus (*Elegia* 3.3), the general impression from his love poetry is his need for a stable relationship with one woman, or at least his pleading for one. This becomes clear from the poems which express his fear that

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697 See page 248 of this book.
Cynthia or his beloved will leave him (Elegiae 1.8, 1.11, 1.15, 1.16, 1.19, 2.5, 2.8, 2.9, 2.16-2.19 and 2.31/32), and also from his frequent declarations of fidelity, or the stress that he lays on it (Elegiae 1.8, 1.12, 1.15, 2.20, 2.21, 2.24, 2.25, 2.28, 2.30, 3.6 and 4.3), culminating in the return to Cynthia in a dream at the end of book 4 (Elegia 4.8). His angry farewell from Cynthia in 3.24/25 is tinged with disappointment and sadness (Elegia 3.24/25, 3-4 and 5-8) and the conclusion of his dream in Elegia 4.8, 87-88, written in or after 16 B.C., indicates that he had never taken leave of his ideal of an affair with the one with whom he had started in or before 29 B.C.

There are also indications that he regards women differently than most of his contemporaries: he states in a number of poems that he considers his beloved to be accomplished (his beloved is an accomplished musician and poetess in 2.3; is the judge of his poems in 2.13; she reads his poems in 2.33), and that he believes that Roman women require more equality with men in social intercourse (Roman women need greater social freedom in 3.14; self-assured love of the woman in 4.3; love between men and women ought to be based on respect and equality in 4.3 and 4.11).

While it may be unreasonable to expect that Propertius did not share the general views of his time and thus accepted that the standards for male fidelity were more liberal than for female, he appears to have propagated a view which demands more respect for women than the norm at the time. In my opinion his love poems show that he considers this respect as particularly called for in the relationship with one’s beloved and that it is a matter of give and take, whereby the man has to give as well. In his love-elegies Propertius holds up a mirror and tries to show more than one point of view. His beloved — Cynthia or another woman — may have been one of the ‘society girls’ in Rome who were available as mistresses for the men of the upper classes, or a married woman in the Roman elite who had a number of affairs: some of her other contacts that Propertius describes and some of the places she visits point in that direction. These women generally found themselves in the position of lust objects and their affairs denied them an existence based on respectful relationships with the other sex and may have undermined the traditional family structure. In my opinion, Propertius intends to show us the alternative, and this is where the link between Propertius’ views on love relationships on the one hand, and his view on moral decay within the elite and the loose sexual standards of the Roman women on the other hand, lies.

Before discussing the development of Propertius’ political views, I want to examine in more detail the subject matter of his ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems, in the same manner as I did earlier in the cases of Vergilius’ and Horatius’ poetry. I summarise the results in appendix X.

As with Horatius, it makes sense to distinguish in Propertius’ case two distinct periods, namely one before 16 B.C. when he wrote books 1-3 and one after 16 B.C. when he wrote book 4. I have made this division for three reasons. Firstly, in Elegia 4.1 Propertius announces that he is going to write more ‘national’ poetry and less love-elegy. Secondly, we have concluded above that indeed the last book has a significant higher number of ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems than the earlier three. Thirdly, the year before, in 17 B.C., Augustus had

698 Unnamed members of Rome’s elite or new rich appear in for instance 1.8, 1.16, 2.8, 2.16, 2.29 and 4.8. Places such as Illyria, Baiae, Lanuvium and the Umbrian countryside are mentioned in 1.8, 1.11, 2.19 and 4.8. White, 1993, 90: ‘Women of the demimonde had fewer restrictions than high-born ladies on their movements in public, and if they acquired complaisant husbands, that gave them the greatest freedom of all. The independent and autocratic mistress of the elegists is far from being a literary figment unrelated to life.’

699 See for the discussion of Vergilius’ poetry pages 122-125, and for that of Horatius’ poetry pages 238-243 of this book.
celebrated the *ludi saeculares* by which he openly demonstrated his confidence in the new era and his increasingly firm hold of political matters: something which could not have remained unnoticed, even for a determined love-elegist like Propertius.

For the sake of clarity, I repeat the six categories in which I have grouped the ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems:

I. *The poet wrote about his own experience.* In this category I have placed the poems that concern experiences from the poet’s own life which have a bearing on actual events. I do not find any in the case of Propertius’ poetry.

II. *Propertius wrote about his own poetry.* To this group belong all poems which deal with the poet’s position and with the question of his mission as a poet vis-à-vis contemporaneous events. There is only one, *Elegia* 4.1, in which he questions whether to write aetiology or elegy or both.

III. *Propertius wrote about the civil war.* These are the poems in which he expresses either views on the continuing civil war, or gives a factual commentary on the war. There are some, such as 1.21 and 1.22 about the Perusine war.

IV. *Propertius’ hope for better times.* In this group I have brought together the poems in which the poet describes either hopes for and expectations of peaceful and better times after the civil war, or later gratitude that these have arrived. Again there is only one, 4.6, but this is at once an impressive poem.

V. *Propertius’ poetry on moral issues.* This category contains the poems with Propertius’ commentary on moral issues in Rome at large. This is the majority and most of these are about sexual and marital morality as I discussed in the previous paragraph.

VI. *Propertius’ views on life.* These deal with the poet’s personal philosophical convictions. There are only a few of these and a good example is *Elegia* 2.7 in which he gives a powerful statement of his rejection of interference by the authorities and his belief in personal freedom.

The data in appendix X may be summarised as follows;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Period &lt; 16 B.C.</th>
<th>Period &gt; 16 B.C.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>his own experience</em></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>his own poetry</em></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>civil war</em></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>better times</em></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>moral issues</em></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>views on life</em></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which supportive:</td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which critical:</td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When the above data are examined in detail it is possible to draw some general conclusions. I will follow the same scheme in the interest of consistency and comparability with the similar analysis of Horatius’ poetry.\textsuperscript{700}

\textit{Firstly}, Propertius wrote 29 ‘political’ or ‘private political’ poems. This is about one third of his total output. Of the total of 29 poems with a bearing on actual issues, 12 are blatantly ‘political’ poems. As mentioned above Propertius wrote hardly any ‘political’ or ‘private political’ poems before 29 B.C. in his first book the \textit{Monobyblos}. It was only in his last book 4 that the share of these poems increased to about two thirds. If one disregards the first book because of its concentration on love-elegies and the fourth book because of its short length, the average share of ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems in the second and third books only, written between 29 B.C. and 21 B.C., is about one third. In Horatius’ case the yield of such poems in these years was about half his output.

\textit{Secondly}, the range of subject matter of Propertius’ poems is relatively limited. There is no poem about his own experiences outside the sphere of his love-elegies, if one is prepared to see the latter as comprising part of his personal experience.

\textit{Thirdly}, there is only one poem which concerns the direction of his own poetry, \textit{Elegia} 4.1. This poem is a special case because it stands at the beginning of the last book and he may in 16 B.C. have been under pressure of perhaps the \textit{princeps} or his representative or of his friends and peers to write about issues of ‘national’ importance.

\textit{Fourthly}, poems about the civil war are few: only 4 before 16 B.C. and 1 after. In 2 poems (1.21 and 1.22) Propertius expresses the effects of the civil war on him personally, when he writes about the Perusine war which raged in his native Umbria when he was a boy and which had obviously left a big impression on him. It was some ten years after the event that he wrote these two poems and one feels that the poet was still suffering from the horror and the destruction of his home area.\textsuperscript{701} \textit{Elegia} 3.11 is about Actium and the defeat of Cleopatra and 1.20 about the destruction of the countryside. In the fifth poem (4.10) he writes about his criticism of Augustus’ military leadership and he only refers indirectly to the civil war.

\textit{Fifthly}, Propertius wrote only one poem about his hopes for better times, \textit{Elegia} 4.6 in 16 B.C. Although this poem is a powerful statement of his view that after the end of the civil war Augustus would establish a new and better order, the poem was written at a time when the \textit{imperium} of the \textit{princeps} had already been founded and was still on the increase. Furthermore, the poem has pacifist elements as the poet refuses to sing the praises of Augustus’ new military campaigns.

\textit{Sixthly}, three quarters of Propertius’ ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems are about moral issues and about his views on life: 22 of the total of 29. Of these 22 poems, 11 are a commentary on or a condemnation of the sexual or marital moral of the members of the Roman elite, particularly of the women (\textit{Elegiae} 2.6, 2.9, 2.16, 2.25, 2.31/32, 3.13, 3.14, 4.3, 4.5 and 4.11). 3 are anti-war poems (2.1, 2.15 and 3.5) and 2 deal with his rejection of materialism (3.7 and 3.13).\textsuperscript{702} The remaining 6 poems deal with a range of subjects. It is significant that there are no poems about moral issues or his views on life in the first book, of which the overwhelming majority of poems are love poems, 19 out of 22.

\textsuperscript{700} See pages 238-241 of this book.
\textsuperscript{701} Heyworth, 2007B, 127-128.
\textsuperscript{702} \textit{Elegia} 3.5 also contains a passage about the rejection of materialism.
Lastly, until the year 16 B.C., half (11 out of 22) of the ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems is critical of Augustus, the elite and society at large; only 2 poems are supportive. It was only after this year in book 4 that the share of poems which are supportive increases, even when book 4 has only 11 poems.

Propertius wrote a total of 12 ‘political’ poems of which 10 are critical, while the total of critical poems is again 12: in other words once Propertius had decided to commit himself to a ‘political’ poem – which he did in only 12 of the extant 90 poems - the great majority of these ‘political’ poems were critical (10 out of 12). In these 10 poems with a clear political commitment he writes critically about issues of importance: the leadership of Augustus (3x), anti-war (3x), the horrors of the civil war (2x), the interference with personal freedom (1x) and only once about sexual moral.

During his whole writing life Propertius wrote 17 ‘private political’ poems: roughly two thirds of these (10) are about sexual and marital moral, of which only a small minority (2) are supportive of Augustus or his plans (4.4 and 4.5). However, for the sake of clarity I repeat what I stated above (see sixthly) that in the majority of these (9) he condemned not Augustus or the leadership, but the elite in general.

What is then the picture of Propertius which emerges from this analysis? In the first place we may conclude that Propertius wrote about matters of love for virtually his whole life. His love-elegies and his ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems with commentary on sexual and marital moral, together add up to 73 poems out of a total of 90 (81 %). In the second place it appears that he hardly shifted away from poetry about love to other themes. His first book, which he wrote when he was in his late teens and early twenties, contains almost exclusively love-elegies, while in book 4, written when he was in his mid-thirties to mid-forties, 8 of a total of 11 poems still deal one way or another with matters of love.

Yet, Propertius did have something of a broader agenda, even though this is only expressed in a small number (10 only) of poems. These 10 critical ‘political’ poems concern major contemporaneous political issues. The first two, Elegiae 1.21 and 1.22, were released in 29 B.C. We do not know whether these two poems were written earlier, but Propertius can not have been older than 26, and perhaps he was even younger when he wrote about the events in Perusia, some ten years before 29 B.C.703 It is clear from the poems that his experience as a boy of ten to fifteen years old left a deep impression on him: Propertius and his family had not only suffered from the warfare in and around Perusia, but also from the expropriations of the family estate to which the poet refers in Elegia 4.1, 127-130.704 Although I do not share Stahl’s view that these experiences of the young boy determined his later relationship with Cynthia, it is highly feasible indeed that they were the root of his later pacifist, anti-war attitude.705 The pacifist attitude appears in Elegiae 2.1, 2.15 and 3.5, his anti-war poems. As a con-

703 If Propertius’ year of birth was 55 B.C., he was about 26 years of age in 29 B.C. If his year of birth was 50 B.C., he would have been only 21.
704 See pages 246-248 of this book.
705 Stahl, 1985, 99-129. Stahl’s gives a ‘psychological’ explanation in his chapter entitled “Early memories: the civil war.” His argument is that the traumatic experiences which Propertius suffered in his youth caused an extreme fear of losing Cynthia and an intense dependence on her. On the pages 125-126 Stahl writes: “Before meeting Cynthia, the boy’s mind was imbued with the experience of war and the sorrow about a near relative’s lonely death [Elegia 1. 21]. If these are the prominent and determining events of his youth as he sees it still in 29 or 28 B.C., he makes his reader understand much better the absorbing love and unconditional attitude towards Cynthia which his poems pronounce. The fear of losing her would naturally be much more intense after the lover had experienced the loss of a loved one already. We are now put in a position to see how his early
sequence Propertius shows a critical attitude towards Augustus’ leadership. In the years before 29 B.C. Propertius was not favourably disposed towards Octavianus whom he held co-responsible for the ravages of the civil war, as he showed in 1.21 and 1.22. In a few of his later poems his criticism of Augustus’ leadership and views returns, such as in 2.10 (not convinced that the war effort should continue; written in 28/27), 2.15 (regrettably the war effort continues; Propertius’ alternative way of life; written in 28/27), 3.4 (gain is the motive for war; written sometime between 26-21) and the last but one 4.10 (critical of Augustus’ qualities as a military leader; written after 16).

Thus, the analysis shows that, although Propertius remained first and foremost a poet of love-elegies during the thirty years or so of active poetic composition (roughly the period between 35 B.C. and 5 B.C.), there is a small thread of politically-engaged poetry. In this latter poetry he expresses mainly his criticism of the civil war and his rejection of war in general and the motives for warfare.

Finally, I want to venture on the slippery slope of speculation concerning Propertius as a person. It is highly likely that he was born into an upper-class family, which probably counted a senator among its members. His love-elegies centre around a tortured man who is totally engrossed in his love life: the suffering lover and his beloved may be imaginary and the subject matters of the poems may be fashionable, yet, it is not without relevance that these form his main topics and it seems as if Propertius was only interested in the wider political and social arena when it touched him personally. The civil war was for him restricted to the effects it had on his own family in Perusia. He rejected warfare in general because he preferred ‘to engage in battles on our narrow bed’ as one reads in Elegia 2.1, 45. The same attitude can be deduced from his writings about moral issues, which are dominated by the relationships between men and women. His political engagement was minimal and perhaps typical of the men of his class who did not want to be involved in politics and preferred to enjoy a life of pleasure. His pacifist attitude may have stemmed from his experiences as a youth, but may equally well have been part of a man who finds war too difficult and too tiring.

impressions (not to mention what he later, in 4.1, tells us about his early years) could drive the young man in the same direction as his love and intensify the dependence on Cynthia (and on “Cynthia poetry” as a central form of self-expression).’ In my view Stahl overlooks the many uncertainties around the family relationship between Propertius and Gallus and indeed the question whether Cynthia was his real life love or rather an imaginary girl or girls. See pages 255-257 of this book.

My conclusions are very similar to those of Heyworth (see his synopsis entitled ‘A short story’ in 2007B, 127-128). A few quotations: ‘In combination with his elevation of love and love-poetry as a way of life, he established his distance from the political world of magistracies and foreign travel by introducing into the text as a contrast to himself a young acquaintance, Tullus, […]’ In his following books [books 2 and 3] the elegist [Propertius] teased his readers with intimations that he might have been bought by the regime, but he maintained his distance; for every fleeting moment of flattery there are two of sarcasm and disdain. Though writing mainly about Cynthia and poetry, the poet did not ignore the reality of where power lay in Rome, but used his words to express his abhorrence for the policies and ideals of the regime. He stressed the bloodiness of warfare and the greed involved in Rome’s expansionism.’ However, at the end of the ‘short story’ Heyworth makes an interesting statement with which I do not agree. He says: ‘He realized at the end that political writing, however sarcastic in phrasing, is in danger of bolstering the very regime it attacks. He ended his life in cunning silence.’ At the end of my discussion of Elegia 4.11, I have explained my objections to this view on pages 321-322 of this book.

Keith, 2008, 5. The senator was C. Propertius Postumus. See also page 247, note 535 of this book.
Propertius was certainly not a writer of propaganda: too many poems are critical. In the few cases that he wrote as a commentator, he seems to have been moved by a reluctant urge to express the views of a privileged member of his class.
VIII. Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius: their master’s voices? Conclusion

In this final chapter I will return to the question which I posed at the beginning of this book: do the works of Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius contain conscious and explicit propaganda for the person and policies of Augustus, or do the poets express their own opinions about the social and political questions of their time in their works? At the end of chapter II I concluded on the grounds of the contextual situation in the poets’ own lifetime, that it is unlikely that they wrote propaganda, and that the texts need to be carefully scrutinised before final conclusions can be drawn.709 In the chapters III to VII I presented an examination of the texts. My assumption is that if the poets wrote propagandist poetry, propaganda is to be found in the poems which are supportive of the person of Octavianus and later Augustus, or of other members of the leadership, or of their policies and views and which were written at the time when this propaganda was relevant. Thus, with the help of the criteria of actuality and of references all the poetry of the three poets has been classified and it has been possible to reduce their complete work to that part which is relevant for an exploration of the central question, namely their ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems. Within this group I have endeavoured to isolate the ‘supportive poems’ which were written at a relevant time and it is on these that I will focus on the final pages of this book.

In my view all the evidence points in the same direction for all three poets, namely that they did not write propaganda. They were intelligent, well-educated men, who mixed with the leaders of the society of their day. They were well-informed and spoke their own mind.

In the research which I have presented I have consistently followed the same scheme for all three poets: it is only in the presentation that differences can be found between Vergilius on the one hand and Horatius and Propertius on the other.

Before presenting the evidence and the conclusions I will briefly recall the scheme of research which I have applied. In the first two chapters I have reviewed the secondary literature (chapter I) and I have examined several aspects of context in which the Augustan poets worked (chapter II). At the end of chapter II I have presented three conclusions:710

- Poetry was not suitable for mass-propaganda and had only very limited value for propaganda aimed at the political and social elite.
- Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius wrote poetry for like-minded people.
- The poets were commentators who offered their views on contemporaneous issues on their own initiative.

In order to substantiate the above conclusions I have analysed the whole oeuvre of the three poets. In my examination of the texts in order to determine whether a poem concerns actual political matters, i.e. is ‘political’ or ‘private political’, I have applied three criteria which I defined in the introduction to this book:711

709 See page 55 of this book.
710 See pages 4-11 and 55 of this book.
711 See pages 5-8 of this book.
- **the criterion of actuality** with which I have established whether a poem deals explicitly and overtly with matters which have a political or social scope. This has led to the subdivision into ‘political’ or ‘private political’ poems.

- **the criterion of references** with which I have examined each poem in order to find out whether it contains references or allusions which could be important determinants to render a poem ‘political’ or ‘private political’. A literary model which the poet may have used could also act as a form of allusion by triggering references to contemporaneous persons or events in the reader’s mind.

- **the criterion of dates** with which I have confronted the likely dates of writing with the actual events at the time.

The next step has been to establish whether a poem is supportive, neutral or critical of Octavianus, or later of Augustus, as a poem is unlikely propagandist if it is neutral or critical about the princeps. As I have stated above, this does not mean that a supportive poem is propagandist as a matter of course.

Finally, the ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems have been presented in a schematic form by which the relationships between (1) the content of the poem, (2) a possible supportive/critical attitude and (3) the (approximate) date of writing can be shown. The contents of the poems are divided into six different groups: poems concerning the poet’s own experience, about his own poetry, about the civil war, about hope of better times after the civil war, about moral issues and about his views on life. I recognise that the treatment of the subject matter by the poet may not represent his personal views or feelings, but that the poet deals with topoi on which he wants to express an opinion. However, if a specific opinion returns regularly over a period of time, it becomes likely that we are receiving the poet’s personal point of view.

In appendix III I have presented the results for the *Eclogae* and for the passages of the *Georgica* in which I consider that Vergilius has committed his political views. Appendix VIII contains the results for Horatius’ poetry and appendix X for that of Propertius. In appendix XI the three poets have been presented in a comparative fashion.

It is not possible to present the results of the *Georgica* and the *Aeneis* in the same manner of detail as Vergilius’ *Eclogae* and the poetry of Horatius and Propertius. The latter consist of distinct individual poems which generally form a unity and can be classified as such. The *Georgica* and the *Aeneis* on the other hand tell complete and multidimensional stories of which some parts contain a political message whereas other parts do not. Yet, I believe that I have found a satisfactory way of presenting the essential passages with a ‘political’ or ‘private political’ bias in the two poems and that it has been possible to determine the nature of the contents.

All data from appendices III, VIII and X are brought together in the following two tables A and B. Table A shows the poems of Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius which have been found to deal with ‘political’ and ‘private political’ issues by applying the criteria of actuality and of references. Apart from the *Aeneis*, the body of these poems appears to consist of 130 poems, 18 by Vergilius, 83 by Horatius and 29 by Propertius. In Table B I have summarised whether a poem is supportive or critical of Augustus.
Table A: ‘Political’ and ‘private political’ poems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vergilius Eclogae and Georgica</th>
<th>Horatius</th>
<th>Propertius</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of poems:</td>
<td>10 Ecl.</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which ‘political’ and ‘private political’:</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>82 (51 %)</td>
<td>29 (32 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about own experience:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about own poetry:</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about civil war:</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about better times:</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about moral issues:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about views on life:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which supportive:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15 (10 ab.better times)</td>
<td>6 (4 ab.views/moral)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which critical:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12 (7 ab. civil war)</td>
<td>12 (9 ab.views/moral)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The summary in Table A demonstrates that each poet has committed his political views in his work, whereby Horatius appears to be the most outspoken.

The ‘political’ and private political’ passages in Vergilius’ Georgica and Eclogae, which he wrote before his fortieth, focus on the civil war and on his hopes of better times. On these subjects he was more often critical than supportive of Augustus: I will discuss the questions related to the poets’ supportive or critical attitudes in more detail below.712

As stated above, it is not possible to capture the data with respect to Vergilius’ Aeneis in this scheme: nevertheless some general conclusions about the poet’s political stance in the epic have been drawn in chapter IV, entitled: Vergilius’ Aeneis: an epic with commentary on current affairs.713 In summary, my conclusions are that Vergilius possessed outspoken views on major political questions. In his view it was right that Octavianus had vanquished Antonius and this was for the good of Rome. Although the civil war had severely damaged Italia, which dispirited Vergilius, Octavianus proved to be the best hope of restoration after 30 B.C. The restoration required strong leadership and a different constitution; and kingship was acceptable for Vergilius. It appears that Vergilius had outspoken views on these important political matters.

Half of Horatius’ work consists of ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems and one can find in 82 of his poems views on a wide range of matters, some neutral and others supportive or critical of what he observed. In fact, in Horatius’ case, two thirds of his ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems are neutral, and in the majority of these he expresses views on moral issues or views on life (37 together). In these the poet covers many subjects, such as his rejection of luxurious living and his contentment on his farm, the vanity of riches, materialism and megalomania and living ‘aright’. In his later years these poems became more focused on personal issues, such as how to enjoy life and the value of amicitia.

712 See also pages 123-125 of this book.
713 See pages 124-125 of this book.
Horatius turned to more weighty subjects when he expounded his political views in those poems which were supportive or critical of Octavianus and later of Augustus: in his case 27 poems in total, one third. The pattern emerging in these 27 poems is that 17 are concerned with either the civil war and its aftermath or with hope of better times. His poems about the civil war as such were all written before 29 B.C. After that year the majority of poems in which he committed himself to political statements deal with his hopes of better times.\(^{714}\)

In the case of Propertius the share of ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems is only one third: 29 in total. Of these the majority concern his views on political and social matters with a strong focus on the subject of the sexual and marital moral of the women of the Roman elite. It appears that he expresses outspoken opinions about this subject as nearly three quarters of his supportive and critical poetry is either a commentary or a condemnation of the moral.\(^{715}\) In addition there is a consistency and a continuity discernible which makes it likely that we are dealing with solidly held views by Propertius.

Until now I have discussed the results of applying the criterion of actuality and the criterion of references to the poems: this has made it possible to establish whether the poet committed himself to political views. The next criterion, that of the dates, will be discussed presently. The date of writing a poem is not only of importance for the general context in which the work was written, but can also determine whether a poem was propagandist. I will give a few examples, from the Georgica and the Aeneis, the Carmina of Horatius and from Propertius’ Elegiae.

In the first part of book 4 of the Georgica, which was written either in 30 or 29 B.C., Vergilius welcomed the emerging Principate.\(^{716}\) He felt that the time for strong and stable government had arrived. Although the passage in book 4 could be interpreted as supportive of the intentions of Octavianus and perhaps could even be seen as propaganda by order of the latter, I consider it as highly unlikely that it was written as such. This would imply that Octavianus, who was in the middle of his struggle with Antonius and Cleopatra and who needed all the support of the Roman political and social elite, had started a propaganda campaign for his elevation. The time was not ripe for this. This is a fine example of consideration of the time of writing of a passage or of a whole poem, which tells us whether a poem was propaganda or not.

Vergilius wrote the Aeneis in the years 29 to 19 B.C. However, the heyday of Augustus’ propaganda against Antonius and Cleopatra lay between 36 and 30 B.C. (the capture of Alexandria) as in those years the Egyptian queen and Antonius were the two remaining adversaries. Therefore, if one accepts that either by direct reference or by allusion Cleopatra features in the Aeneis it was not for reasons of propaganda against the queen that she figures, as Vergilius started writing the epos only after her death.\(^{717}\)

Turning to Horatius similar points can be made. At the end of section vi.a I concluded that Horatius shows greater reservations in the ‘political’ and ‘private political’ odes about Augustus’ achievements before 27 B.C. than after. Another conclusion was that Cleopatra and

\(^{714}\) See pages 239-242 of this book.

\(^{715}\) See pages 323-324 of this book.

\(^{716}\) See pages 87-89 and 123-125 of this book.

\(^{717}\) See pages 113-115 of this book.
Antonius do not feature in any of his odes before 30 B.C. Again, if Horatius wrote propaganda, it was at the wrong time. Augustus’ greatest need for propaganda – if any - was from 40 B.C. until 23 B.C. (the year of the ‘Second Settlement’), just at the time that Horatius was showing his reservation. In conjunction with this, an aspect of Maecenas’ role is interesting. Maecenas is often seen as Augustus’ minister of propaganda, who initiated the perceived acts of propaganda with the poets. But Maecenas’ role in government ended in the twenties, while Horatius’ panegyrics are most exuberant after 17 B.C.  

Putnam makes a similar point about Horatius:

‘Moreover, if Augustus were given to demanding the superficial homage or flattery for whatever reasons or, more negatively, had been troubled by what we have seen to be less than enthusiastic approach on the poet’s [Horace’s] part to the public affairs of Rome, he [Augustus] would have been expected to manifest his feelings early in his career, when his own fortunes were still in doubt and uncertainties remained.’

In 24 B.C. Propertius wrote his _Elegia_ 3.11 which contains an allusion to the wedding of Antonius and Cleopatra and the intention of the bride to dominate Rome in the lines 31-32. This wedding took place in 37 B.C. and although the poem praises Augustus’ victory over the pair, one can hardly imagine that Propertius would have written a propagandist condemnation of the intentions of the Egyptian queen thirteen years after the event.

These examples may demonstrate that it is advisable to pay heed to the dates of writing and not to rush to the conclusion that a panegyric poem or a poem which is supportive of the _princeps_ is therefore a poem written with propagandist intent. Next, I will examine which poems are either supportive or critical. The results will be presented in Table 8.

After this, I will focus on the supportive poems and submit each of these individually to a close inspection in order to establish whether they were written as pieces of propaganda. In the inspection I will also include the criterion of dates, of which I have given four examples above. Below I will give a few examples of the additional considerations with which I have examined the poems and in appendix XII I will present a survey of the results. In all there are 22 poems and 4 passages from the _Aeneis_ to consider.

Firstly, I have considered if the poet praises or supports Augustus by expressing a positive view on the _princeps_ in a specific ‘supportive’ poem, while we can deduce from other (preferably critical) poems that it is reasonable to assume that the poet held that positive view anyway. Examples are _Aeneis_ 1, 789-795 or Horatius’ _Carmina_ 1.21 and 3.3 which all express that peace and order have arrived and that Augustus is the right leader. The likelihood that these poems were written as propaganda by order of Augustus is less than that they originated on the poet’s own initiative.

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718 See pages 221-222 and page 242 of this book.
719 White, 2005, 335. Williams, 1990, 258-259, is more precise; he writes 23 B.C.
720 Putnam, 1986, 23. See also Stahl, 1990, 175: ‘[…] the portrait of the forefather [Aeneas] was being painted [by Vergilius] at a time (29-19 B.C.) when the descendant [Augustus] had already completed the conquest of his unholy opposition, […]’. The conclusion is that there was no longer a need for propaganda against Cleopatra.
Secondly, there are poems where the poet expresses views which happen to coincide with those of Augustus: for instance in the case of Propertius’ Elegia 4.11 where the poet wrote in support of Augustus’ wish to reform sexual and marital morality. Propertius wrote many elegies condemning loose sexual moral.\textsuperscript{722}

Thirdly, in a number of instances the poets wrote lines of praise of Augustus, but detracted their praise in the course of the poem. Examples are Horatius’ Carmen 1.2 where the poet on the one hand praises Augustus and on the other criticises him for the horrors of the civil war. A second example is Horatius’ Epistula 1.18 where he praises Augustus, but detracts by alluding to the latter’s lack of success at Naulochus and Actium. Further example is Propertius’ Elegia 4.6 where the panegyric element is weakened by the introduction of Iulius Caesar and Cleopatra.

Fourthly, there is an instance when Horatius in Sermo 2.5 pays a compliment to Octavianus about his victory at Actium and says that he expects that the latter will recover the standards which had been lost by Crassus. This was the prevalent wish in Rome at the time and hardly required a boost of propagandist verse.

Table 8: Supportive and critical poems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vergilius\textsuperscript{723}</th>
<th>Vergilius</th>
<th>Horatius</th>
<th>Propertius</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eclogae and Georgica</td>
<td>Aeneis (selection)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of poems:</td>
<td>10 Eclogae + Georgica</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which ‘political’ and ‘private political’:</td>
<td>18 (8 Eclogae &amp; 10 passages Ge.)</td>
<td>82 (51%)</td>
<td>29 (32%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which supportive:</td>
<td>1 (Ge.3,26-) 1,286ff (empire) 6,789ff (empire) 8,675ff (shield, Actium) 8,714ff (shield, triumph)</td>
<td>15 (18%)</td>
<td>6 (20%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which critical:</td>
<td>3 Eclogae Ge.4, 554ff 6,847ff (costs) 12,945ff (Turnus killed)</td>
<td>12 (14%)</td>
<td>12 (41%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive poems about civil war:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about better times:</td>
<td>1 (30 B.C.)</td>
<td>10 (all &gt;30 B.C.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about moral issues:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (2 &gt;30 B.C.)</td>
<td>4 (3 &gt;16 B.C)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about views on life:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (&lt;30 B.C.)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about other subjects:</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (&gt;30 B.C.)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{722} See pages 323-324 of this book.
\textsuperscript{723} Capturing Vergilius’ poetry in a scheme like this is fraught with hazard. The Aeneis can not be placed and the data about the Eclogae and the Georgica are limited.
Critical poems about civil war: 3 (>40/30 B.C.) ------ 7 (all <29 B.C.) 3 (2<29 and 1>16)
about better times: 1 (35 B.C.) ------ 0 0
about moral issues: 0 ------ 1 (>29 B.C.) 2 (<16 B.C.)
about views on life: 0 ------ 2 (>29 B.C.) 7 (<16 B.C.)
about other subjects: 0 ------ 2 (>29 B.C.) 0

In summary, considering the data of Table B and of appendix XII, the following may be concluded about the candidates for propagandist writing: the ‘supportive’ poems of the three poets.

Firstly, the number of possible propagandist poems (the ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems which are supportive of Augustus) amount to a total of 21, leaving the passages in the Georgica and the Aeneis aside. This is about 8% of the total number of 262 poems.

Secondly, the number of critical poems amount to a total of 27 (about 10%).

Thirdly, applying the four considerations of (1) timing, (2) the poet’s own views, (3) the detraction from praise and (4) the following of general opinion, it appears that of the twenty-one ‘supportive’ poems six are possibly propagandist (Horatius’ Carmen Saeculare, Carmina 1.12, 3.4, 4.14 and 4.15 and Propertius’ Elegia 3.18).

Fourthly, the remaining fifteen ‘supportive’ poems are unlikely products of propagandist writing. Of these one poem does not fit the propagandist criterion as the date of writing shows: Propertius Elegia 3.11.

Seven of the fifteen disqualify as poems with a propagandist content because these present views of which we can assume that the poet held these views anyway: these are Horatius’ Carmina 1.21, 3.3, 3.14, 4.4 and 4.5, Epistula 1.16 and Propertius’ Elegia 4.5. There are two poems in which the poet presents a view which happened to coincide with the view on Augustus: these are Propertius’ Elegiae 4.4 and 4.11.

In four of the fifteen the poet detracts his praise: these are Horatius’ Iambus 1, his Carmen 1.2 and Epistula 1.18 and Propertius’ Elegia 4.6. In Elegia 3.11, which is disqualified on the grounds of timing, there is a second aspect by which it must be rejected as a propagandist

All these Carmina of Horatius deal with the hope that Augustus may enjoy good health, the wish that he may rule in peace, the expectation of Rome’s dominion and that better times may come. The poems have been written between 30 and 13 B.C. Horatius held the view that Octavianus and later Augustus was the best man to bring better times, since he wrote Sermo 1.5 in 37 B.C, when he was an enthusiast supporter of Augustus in the party which went to Brundisium. Later in for instance Iambus 9 he expressed his satisfaction that Octavianus had defeated Antonius at Actium. In one of his later poems which is critical, Carmen 4.2 (17-13 B.C.) he calls for a celebration of Augustus’ achievements. The view which Horatius expresses in Carmina 1.21, 3.3, 3.14, 4.4 and 4.5 was durable since 37 B.C. and is visible in supportive, neutral and critical poems. See also page 242 of this book.

Propertius’ supportive Elegia 4.5 is a poem in which the poet asks for a greater respect for women: this opinion fits his many poems about the need for an improvement of sexual morality. See pages 322-324 of this book.

White, 1993, 123-132 discusses whether the Carmen Saeculare and Carmina 4.4 and 4.14 have been written at Augustus’ request. He considers 4.14 as ‘proffered [by Horatius] on his own initiative’ which according to my definition means that the poem was not propagandist.
poem: the poet detracts from the praise of Augustus and consequently loses its propagandist designs, namely by the implicit admiration of the poet for the queen.

Finally, there is the one instance of *Sermo* 2.5, when Horatius makes a general point.

**Fifthly,** turning our attention to the *Georgica* and the *Aeneis* of Vergilius, *Georgica* 3, 26-29 is a passage about the defeat of Antonius and Cleopatra and other achievements of Octavianus. Vergilius expresses his relief that Octavianus has brought peace: an opinion which can be assumed on the grounds of a number of passages in his poems that he held anyway, as I will explain below. The ideas about kingship and his approval of a strong leadership which Vergilius expounded in the first part of book 4 of the *Georgica*, and indeed in a different form in *Ecl. 4*, were his political conviction before Octavianus’ rise to power.\(^{725}\)

*Eneis* 1, 286-296 and 6, 789-795 bring the message across that a strong leader is required and that Octavianus is the suitable candidate, as he brought peace. Similarly in *Georgica* 3, 26-29. In *Eneis* 8, 675-683 Vergilius describes the heroic part which Octavianus played at Actium, but he detracts from this in the last two lines of this passage. Moreover, the lines which immediately follow are in direct conflict with Octavianus’ presumed propaganda objectives against Cleopatra.\(^{726}\) Finally, there is *Eneis* 8, 714-728 where the poet expresses his sorrows caused by the horrors of the civil war, but also tells of his hopes that, with Octavianus, better times will arrive: the theme is again that the latter is the right leader.

In summary, a strong case can be made for the fact that, of the total of twenty-one ‘supportive’ poems, fifteen (ten by Horatius and five by Propertius) were not written by order of Augustus or anyone else as propaganda. In the case of six of these poems (five by Horatius and one by Propertius) this seems possible, however, these six must be considered with the total output of the two poets in mind. When we look more closely, the *Carmen Saeculare* is a special case: requested by Augustus, written for a special occasion and no doubt with a strong ‘national’ content which may be seen as propagandist. The putative propagandist nature of the other five possible ‘candidate-poems’ (*Horatius’ Carmina* 1.12, 3.4, 4.14 and 4.15 and *Propertius’ Elegia* 3.18) may be explained by the eulogistic writing of the poets on their own initiative: the five poems mentioned belong together with some other of Horatius’ and Propertius’ poems (*Carmina* 1.2, 3.3, 3.14, 4.4, 4.5, *Epistulae* 1.16, 1.18 and 2.1 and *Elegiae* 3.11 and 4.6) to the group of panegyric poems.\(^{727}\) The latter are naturally supportive of Augustus. All of these

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\(^{725}\) For *Ecl. 4* see pages 61-64 of this book and for the first part of *Georgica* 4 pages 86-88 and 123-125 of this book.

\(^{726}\) In *Eneis* 8, 685-688 (see pages 113-114) Antonius and his nameless Egyptian wife (*Antonius[...], sequiturque (nefas) Aegyptia coniunx.*) are quoted and this passage is part of the description of Aeneas’ shield with the picture of the sea battle at Actium and its aftermath. It is often said that Octavianus made it appear in his propaganda that he warred against Cleopatra. The war ought to be a war against a foreign nation, Egypt and not an internal Roman power struggle. However, in these lines Vergilius mentions Antonius as the adversary in the first place and only then connects Cleopatra whom he has not mentioned by name. This does not match the presumed propaganda objectives of Octavianus.

\(^{727}\) See for a definition of panegyric poetry pages 2-3 of this book. Some of the poems mentioned (*Carmina* 1.2, *Epistulae* 1.18 and *Elegiae* 3.11 and 4.6) are not outright panegyric, but contain panegyric elements only. In *Carmina* 1.2 there is praise of Augustus and positive expectations of his reign, but also a mood of war-weariness and sadness about the horrors of the civil war (see pages 173-174). In *Epistulae* 1.18 Horatius weaves into the panegyric of Augustus’ role in the battle of Actium the question whether he was as successful as he had wished and whether the victory was to Agrippa (see pages 230-231). *Elegiae* 3.11 praises Augustus at Actium, but displays also admiration for Cleopatra (see pages 288-291). *Elegiae* 4.6 is a panegyric with reservations such as lulus Caesar’s claim and allusion to the latter’s affair with Cleopatra and has a *recusatio* (see pages 308-313).
were written during the seventeen years’ period of 27 till 11 B.C., when Augustus’ reign took hold and peace, order and stability returned: the absence of these had been a recurrent theme of the poets.

If we were to consider the thirteen panegyric poems (which include the five ‘candidate-poems’ with a supposed propagandist nature) as propagandist we should be aware that these were written by the same men who together wrote a total of 252 poems, of which 24 were outright critical. We should also accept the unlikely case that the poets wrote critical poetry one day and propagandist poetry the next and we should believe that the presumed interested party who had commanded the propaganda (Augustus) would have accepted this. As we will examine in the next paragraph, there might be an alternative explanation for the motives of the poets, especially as they wrote for like-minded members of the small political and social elite, who had their own ways of forming their views on the events of their day: and this was not only by reading of or listening to poetry.

This brings us to the final question: if the poetry of Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius was not propagandist, what was it then? In my opinion the research presented in this book shows that the poems which I have labelled as ‘political’ and ‘private political’, and particularly that part of their oeuvre which is supportive and which is critical of Augustus, are nothing more than either the expression of the poet’s own views or the expression of opinions through the persona of the poet on the major questions of their day. It was their position in Augustan society which gave Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius their overall view. Coupled with their attitude of wanting to maintain their personal freedom and independence of mind, they positioned themselves as ‘poets as commentators’. They were well-informed commentators with views on many aspects of life around them and with the best information at their disposal through their connections with Maecenas and others. They were inclined to write about a wide range of subjects with a vision which has its roots in their personal experiences.

The results of my examinations of their texts are consistent with this. Not only the many politically engaged poems which I have identified and which the poets wrote from the early days through to the end of their careers, but also the critical poems confirm the view that the poets were independent commentators. Although few in total, the first critical poems of Vergilius were indeed his Eclogae 7 and 9 about the effects of the civil war, written sometime between 40 and 35 B.C., when Octavianus was still in the middle of his power struggle with several opponents.728 His last critical piece is the final lines of the Aeneis about the death of Turnus, written in the late twenties B.C.729 In the case of Horatius, who wrote roughly the same number of critical (12) as he did supportive (15) poems during his career, the first critical poems are the Iambi 7 and 16 also about the civil war, written in 39/38 B.C.: Horatius describes the renewed hostilities of the civil war and his wish to leave Italia.730 He wrote his last critical poem in 12/11 B.C., the Epistula 2.1 about Augustus’ lack of effort in encouraging poetry.731 Propertius’ earliest critical poems date from the early twenties (29 B.C.) and are the last two of his first book of Elegiae, 1.21 and 1.22. They tell about his personal

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728 For Ecloga 7 see pages 67-68 and for Ecloga 9 pages 71-74 and for both page 123 and appendix III of this book.
729 See pages 120-122 and appendix III of this book.
730 For Iambi 7 see pages 157-159 and for Iambi 16 pages 166-169 and for both poems page 241 and appendix VIII of this book.
731 See pages 233-236 and appendix VIII of this book.
experiences of the slaughter in the Perusine war. His last is *Elegia* 4.10 which he wrote after 16 B.C. about Augustus’ false claims of bravery.

All Vergilius’ critical poems deal with the civil war and his hope for better times and the same is true for Horatius’ critical poems until 29 B.C. However, in his case there is a sudden shift after 29 B.C. towards a broader range of subjects, such as moral issues, his views on life and the nature of his own poetry. Propertius’ critical poetry after 29 B.C. was almost exclusively about social issues and views on life.

Considering the supportive and critical poems together, one can conclude that Vergilius was the least outspoken of the three and that most of his critical poems are about the civil war and his hope of better times. Horatius was the most outspoken: the majority of his supportive poems were written after 29 B.C. and these testify to the fact that better times have arrived, thanks to Augustus. The majority of his critical poems was written before 29 B.C. and concerns the horror of the civil war and war in general. Propertius can be positioned in the middle: in most of his supportive and critical poetry he expounds his views on the sexual and marital moral of the women of the Roman elite. However, in the case of all three poets one finds that, when they wrote supportively, they were nevertheless still critical, either in the same poem or at the same time, or vice versa. In the work of each of the three poets there are a few themes which return consistently throughout their whole career, in supportive as well as in critical poetry. The themes are different for each poet individually.

In the case of Vergilius’ ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems in the *Eclogae*, and in the *Georgica* and in the *Aeneis* two political convictions are recognisable. It remains unresolved whether these convictions were Vergilius’ own or whether he expressed topoi or generally held views. The same is true for the two other poets. In my opinion, however, the chance that we are being confronted with their private opinions is high because these views return consistently over a longer period and are presented as part of their personal experiences. Therefore, I will treat these views as their personal opinions. In section IV.c. I have pointed out that most of the *Eclogae*, which were written at the start of Vergilius’ poetic career, during the period of 42 to 35 B.C., all concern the destruction of his beloved countryside and the social order he had known, the plight of the farmers and his embitterment, and his hope of better times. The theme of the farmers’ suffering appears in the proem to book 1 of the *Georgica*, and the hope of better times in the finale of book 2 of the *Georgica*. In Vergilius’ view this required a strong leader and in the fourth *Ecloga* of 40 B.C. he virtually advocates a dynasty with a ruler with regal powers, at that time the offspring of Marcus Antonius. In his later poetry Vergilius obviously shifted his allegiance to Octavianus as can be read in the proem to book 3 of the *Georgica*. His preference for a *rex* remained as can be concluded from a number of passages in the *Georgica* 4 and from the *Aeneis*. In the latter he alludes to the outcome of the struggle between Antonius and Octavianus who, like Aeneas, had not forsaken his duty as Antonius had done when he had remained with Cleopatra. He believed that Octavianus was the right man to restore peace and stability and the references in the

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732 See pages 255-257 and appendix x of this book.
733 See pages 317-319 and appendix x of this book.
734 See for section IV.c. pages 122-125 of this book. The *Eclogae* which deal with the destruction of the countryside and the social order, the plight of the farmers and his embitterment and his hopes of better times are *Eclogae* 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.
735 See pages 80-84 and 94 of this book.
Aeneis to the need of a rex was not something which Vergilius wrote by order of Augustus, but was a view which he had held for years. With his words about Aeneas as rex and about the need for a strong king Vergilius addressed first and foremost the Roman social and political elite to make them accept the kingship.

A similar continuity of themes can be recognised in Horatius’ poetry. In section vi.c. I have summarised all his poems and concluded that the number of ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems amount to roughly half of his output. In these one can clearly the thread of his political thought. In the poetry of his younger years, the Sermones, the Iambi and his early Carmina, all written before 30/29 B.C., the main themes are (1) his own poetry and his position in Augustan society, and (2) his criticism of the civil war and his hope of better times. In addition there is a variety of poems about moral issues as befits a satirist: examples are the loose sexual moral and the loss of old values, the vanity of riches, simple life and the art of living ‘aright’. After 29 B.C. there was an abrupt change which was the result of the new political realities and of Horatius’ position. That is why some themes have disappeared, while some of his old beliefs appear to be more pronounced. Firstly, there are hardly any poems about his own experience which is probably the result of having been accepted in the right circles. Secondly, there remains only one poem about the civil war which can be explained by military and political developments. Thirdly, the poet wrote thirteen poems about better times after 29 B.C. At the beginning of his career his poems express his hope that, with Octavianus, stability might arrive, but after 28/27 B.C., the year of the First Settlement, his poems express gratitude that stability actually had arrived. Fourthly, while Horatius remained a poet who wrote about the moral wrong which he observed, there is, after 27 B.C., as he matures, a shift from more general issues towards more personal and philosophical subjects. Before 27 B.C. one finds poems denouncing megalomania and the love of wealth, while after that year the great majority of Horatius’ poems are about living ‘aright’, the study of philosophy and his appreciation of the quietude of life.

Of the total output of Propertius roughly one third is ‘political’ and ‘private political’, as I have shown in section vii.d. He hardly wrote any of these before 29 B.C. and when the number gradually increased, the range of his subject matter still remained limited. There are only six poems about the civil war and his hope of better times. The remaining three quarters (twenty-two) of his ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems deal with moral issues and his views on life and half of these are a commentary on the sexual and marital moral of women,
particularly of the Roman elite.\textsuperscript{741} The conclusion about the poetic output of Propertius is that he was a poet who wrote about matters of love for virtually his whole life. His love-elegies and his poems, with his commentary on sexual moral add, up to more than 80\% of his total output. Moreover, during his life there has hardly been a shift away from poetry about love to a broader agenda.

I trust that this research has shown that Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius have at times been either critical or supportive of Octavianus and later Augustus and of the people who shared the leadership with him. In their poems they consistently expressed views which were most likely their own on their own initiative and not by order of the princeps or by people near to him as Maecenas. Speaking out was concomitant with the notion of libertas in the Roman Republic and early Empire and freedom of speech was one of the most treasured rights, particularly at Rome itself. This feeling may have been the source of the inclination of the poets to offer their critical views.\textsuperscript{742} Horatius for instance was content with the new regime although he posed critical questions. Quoting DuQuesnay: ‘But there is also no reason whatsoever to think that Horace was insincere, \textit{that he did not believe genuinely that Octavian represented the best, even the only, hope of achieving peace, prosperity, and freedom},’ and other scholars nowadays hold similar views.\textsuperscript{743}

Finally, a few thoughts about the question whether the commentary by Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius may be understood on the ground of their personal experiences.

The year 29 B.C. appears to have been a significant year, not only for Octavianus who had been victorious over his most dangerous adversaries, but for Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius also. Vergilius started writing the \textit{Aeneis}, while he still bore the sorrow of the destruction of Italia as he had known it. He had a great love for the countryside and its people and he shared the old values, the \textit{mores maiorum}. Vergilius was a man who did not like change, a true conservative. However, he remained convinced of the need to restore the land and to bring order and stability and he saw that the changing world required a more efficient authority, which the republic could no longer provide. When in 30 B.C. Alexandria fell and in 27

\textsuperscript{741} For section vii.d. see pages 323-329 of this book. See also appendix x. Propertius’ poems about the civil war and hope of better times are \textit{Elegiae} 1.20, 1.21, 1.22, 3.11, 4.6 and 4.10; the are anti-war poems are \textit{Elegiae} 2.1, 2.15 and 3.5 and the two about his rejection of materialism are 3.7 and 3.13; there are five about miscellaneous subjects. The poems about the sexual moral of women are a.o. \textit{Elegiae} 2.6, 2.9, 2.16, 2.25, 2.31/32, 3.3, 3.13, 3.14, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.11.

\textsuperscript{742} Chrissanthos, 2004, 342-348.

\textsuperscript{743} DuQuesnay, 1984, 57. \textit{Italics} are mine. The other scholars are: Galinsky, 1996, 13; Powell, 2004, 141-143; White, 1993, 206-208; Woodman and West, 1984, 195. Galinsky puts forward a view which requires further study. He brings together the concept of Augustus’ \textit{auctoritas} with the activities of the poets. I quote the passage from Galinsky; ‘[...] for the way Augustus wanted the role of his \textit{auctoritas} to be understood. He can be the initiator but, just as important, he is the guarantor and approver of the initiatives of others. We are not dealing with a political, let alone cultural, model that involves constant top-down commands and Augustus as the sole agent. Instead of a rigidly hierarchical “organization of opinion” in particular, the emphasis is on the initiatives of many, especially in the areas of art and literature.’ Galinsky’s words do not correspond with the view that Vergilius and Horatius wrote propaganda on behalf of Augustus. The conclusions of White (1993, 206-208) are worth reading; I will quote one passage (1993, 206): ‘As citizens, they [the Augustan poets] shared convictions that led many elements of Roman society to welcome the new order, and they prided themselves on having a distinctive medium in which to express civic sentiment. Their pride as citizens was the public counterpart of their claim in private life to a place in the friendship of the well-to-do.’
Octavianus was made princeps there was not just one major change in the Mediterranean, but two. The end of the republic coincided with the fall of the last Hellenistic kingdom. The republic had to be replaced with a new structure and it is feasible that the emerging leader looked at how power was organized in the East. Although Vergilius’ Aeneis is first and foremost an epic about the mythical founding of Rome, the poem had also something to say about contemporaneous affairs. As Vergilius was a man who believed that the restoration of Italia would be only possible in a well-ordered society, he testified in the poem to his belief that the new leader should receive wide authority and should show his responsibility towards society at large. Thus, I see Vergilius as the commentator who on his own initiative gave his opinions about fundamental matters such as the new constitution of Rome.  

The year 29 B.C. also brought important changes for Horatius. He had become an established poet who moved in the best circles and who found himself associated with men who were representatives of the highest authority. Horatius was a man who, from his younger years onwards, sought with gusto to be involved in what was happening around him, probably driven by his critical attitude. When he was in his twenties he was an ‘angry young man’ who found himself at the wrong and losing side and this probably led to the fact that he felt attracted to the abrasive and critical genre of satiric verses. After he had committed himself in his early thirties to Octavianus, after he had come to the conclusion that matters were improving and when he could live a relatively independent life at his estate in the countryside, his poetry mellowed and one reads that he could enjoy simple life. Many would have regarded his circumstances as rather pleasant. However, up until his death he remained a critical observer and commentator of the many abuses of power and wealth: he was a thorn in the side of ‘political’ Rome and his role was much like that of the modern columnist of a quality newspaper or a political satirist on stage or television.

For Propertius the year 29 B.C. marks a change in his literary output, even if this change was limited to a few first careful steps. In his early twenties, he released his book 1 of the Elegiae in 29 which contains almost exclusively love-elegies save the last poems about the civil war. In the same year there appear in Elegia 2.1 the first doubts as to whether he ought to continue to write only love poetry. Although at that time he still rejected any other option, there is, from that year onwards, a slow and gradual change to a limited number of poems with a broader agenda. However, in essence he remained the poet who wrote about matters of love. Propertius was a scion in an old family with right connections and he may have enjoyed all the privileges of his class. From his poetry one gains the impression that during his whole life he remained aloof from the radical changes in Roman society and that he was mainly interested in his relationships with the fair sex. There is an element of self-centeredness and preoccupation with his own affairs in his poetry: the pampered man who can not be bothered about the misery of others. It is not surprising that the number of his politically engaged poems is limited.

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744 See also pages 122-125 of this book.
745 See also pages 238-243 of this book.
Finally, my conclusion is that the poets did not write propaganda. This view is based on the evidence which I presented above: the context in which the poets worked makes it unlikely that they wrote propaganda and the texts support this point of view. Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius wrote as commentators and not as their master’s voices. The poets teach us that if one maintains one’s independence and follows one’s own sound judgement, there is no need to become one’s master’s voice.
Appendices

Bibliography

Indexes

Summaries in English and in Dutch
## Appendix I: Some key general and literary dates

In this scheme I give on the vertical axis the timescale and the key political and literary events during the lives of the Augustan poets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key general events</th>
<th>Vergilius</th>
<th>Horatius</th>
<th>Propertius</th>
<th>Tibullus</th>
<th>Ovidius</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>70 B.C.</strong></td>
<td>Verg. born (70)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aug. born (63)</td>
<td>Hor. born (65)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Tib. born (54)</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ovid. born (43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.44 Murder of Iulius Caesar</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.42 Philippi</td>
<td>Start Ecl. (42)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td>.40 Perusia</td>
<td>Joins Maec. (38)</td>
<td>Joins Maec. (38)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.36 Nauchus</td>
<td>Ecl. rel. (35)</td>
<td>Serm. 1 rel. (35)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Start Geor. (35)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.31 Actium</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td>.30 Death of Iambi rel. (30)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anto/Cleop.</td>
<td>Geor. rel. (29)</td>
<td>Serm. 2 rel. (30)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Start Aen. (29)</td>
<td>Eleg. 1 rel. (29)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.27 First Settl.</td>
<td>Eleg. 2 A rel. (28/27)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eleg. 2 B rel. (26/25)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.23 Sec. Settl.</td>
<td>Ca. 1-3 rel. (23)</td>
<td>Eleg. 3 rel. (22/21)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verg. died (19)</td>
<td>Eleg. 1 rel. (20)</td>
<td>Tib. died (18)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hav. rel. (19)</td>
<td>Ca. 1-3 rel. (23)</td>
<td>Eleg. 4 rel. (&gt;16)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Carr. Saec. (17)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ca. 4 (13/11)</td>
<td>Eleg. 2 rel. (12/11)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Epist. 2 rel. (12/11)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Hor. died (8)</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Prop. died (&lt;2)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5 A.D.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ovid. died (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>August. died (14)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>20</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.**

Ecl = Eclogae  
Serm = Sermones  
Eleg = Elegiae  
Geor = Georgica  
Ca = Carmina  
Aen = Aeneis  
Epist = Epistulae
## Appendix II: Analysis of the Eclogae of Vergilius

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ecl.</th>
<th>Date (B.C.)</th>
<th>Subject matter</th>
<th>Deals with actuality ('political' or 'priv. political' poem)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Conversation between an expelled farmer and one who is allowed to retain his farm. Hope that Octavianus will bring peace. Embritterment about the expropriations.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>42-35</td>
<td>Love song. A shepherd sings about an unfulfilled passion for a young boy who is kept in town by their master. Contrast country and town.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Singing-match between two herdsmen. Threats to country life. However, pastoral poetry is a means to call attention to the plight of the farmers. Vergilius' poetry will match the best.</td>
<td>yes (priv. pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>'The Golden Age'. Vergilius' vision of the Golden Age. Restoration with the birth of a child to Octavia and Antonius after pact of Brundisium. Hope for lasting peace. The future Golden Age under the new prince.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ab. 40</td>
<td>Singing match between two shepherds. Death of Daphnis, allusion to the destruction of the pastoral paradise, i.e. the countryside. Daphnis is deified and peace returns. Restoration of nature comes from within, not from political intervention. Poetry has healing power; <em>Ars poetica</em>.</td>
<td>yes (priv. pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>42-35</td>
<td>Vergilius' <em>recusatio</em> to write about Varus' successes. He wants to write bucolic poetry. In the poem he makes Silenus sing about creation and many mythological figures. Gallus is invited to change his poetic orientation. Allusion to the destruction of nature by man’s aberrations.</td>
<td>yes (priv. pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Singing match between two shepherds with Daphnis in the chair. One sings positively about nature, the other not. Allusion to the difference in attitude of the farmer of old and the newcomers. Critical of Octavianus.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Dedicated to Octavianus. Damon’s shepherd loses his girl to Mopsus, a newcomer. The social order and the old structures in the countryside have been destroyed. Is there hope? The second song, of Alphesiboeus, testifies the power of pastoral poetry and magic and expresses the hope that better times will come. Critical of Octavianus, who shares in responsibility for destruction.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>39/35</td>
<td>Embitterment about the land expropriations. Vergilius' region is also affected. Not even Menalcas' [Vergilius'] appeal to Varus helps. Poetry is no match for the force of arms. Bucolic poetry is no help in situations like these. No point in mourning over Iulius Caesar’s death. There is a new situation. Perhaps coexistence between the pastoral land and city power is possible in future.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>42-35</td>
<td>Vergilius expresses his regards for his friend the poet Gallus. The latter is lonely in Arcadia. His love has left him. He considers changing his life and poetry to pastoral genre, but decides against it. Two possible political allusions.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Notes.** Date is the estimated date of writing. 
*priv. pol.* means that the poet makes a ‘private political’ statement in the poem.
Appendix III: The development of Vergilius as an engaged poet

In this scheme I give on the vertical axis the timescale and the key events during the life of Vergilius and on the horizontal axis the subject matters of some of Vergilius’ poetry and his attitude towards the regime when this is clear from the contents of a poem. The different categories in which I have arranged the subject matter are:

I. Vergilius on his own experiences.
II. Vergilius on his own poetry.
III. Vergilius on the civil war.
IV. Vergilius’ hope of better times.
V. Vergilius’ poetry on moral issues.
VI. Vergilius’ views on life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key historical events</th>
<th>Subject matter of Vergilius’ poetry</th>
<th>Supportive or critical of regime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. own exper.</td>
<td>II. own poetry</td>
<td>III. civil war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IV. better times</td>
<td>V. moral issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VI. views of life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. 70 B.C.</td>
<td>65 Horatius born</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. 44 Murder of Iulius Caesar</td>
<td>42 Horatius at Philippi</td>
<td>Ecl.3(42?) Ecl.5(ab.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. 38 Verg. joins circle Maec.</td>
<td>Ecl.7(?)</td>
<td>Ecl.9(39/35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. 36 Naulochus</td>
<td>Ecl.1(35)</td>
<td>Ecl.8(35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. 35 Ecl. rel.</td>
<td>Start Georgica</td>
<td>Ge.1,40-41(36/35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. 31 Actium</td>
<td>Ge.1,489-514(36/35)</td>
<td>Ge.2,170-172(30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 30 Death of Anto/Cleop.</td>
<td>Ge.3,26-29(30)</td>
<td>Ge.3,26-29(30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Geo. rel.</td>
<td>Ge.4,291 Ge.4,210-218(30)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>start Aeneis</td>
<td>Ge.4,317-328(30)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aeneis rel.</td>
<td>Ge.4,553-527(30)</td>
<td>Ge.4,554-558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Vergilius dies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Ecl = Ecloga; Ge = Georgica. Ecl.4(40) = Ecloga 4, dated in 40 B.C. Ecl.9(39/35) (written in italics) means that Ecloga 9 is a ‘political’ poem.
### Appendix IV: Analysis of the Sermones of Horatius

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sermo</th>
<th>Date (B.C.)</th>
<th>Subject matter</th>
<th>Deals with actuality ('political' or 'priv. political' poem)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Diatribe: everybody is discontented with his lot and envies his neighbour; the cause of this restlessness is the longing for wealth. Observe the golden mean.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>&lt;42</td>
<td>Diatribe: there is a golden mean between adultery and prostitutes. Seek an attractive freedwoman, but do not fail to keep your head.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Diatribe: if you are harsh in judging your friends, they will be harsh towards you; everyone is prone to do wrong, so let us be fair in our punishments.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>39/38</td>
<td>Horatius defends his form of writing satire and compares Lucilius’ work with his own, at whose poems he levels his literary criticism. He does not want to discuss whether satire is true poetry; his verses however are not malicious, but are observations and are written only for the company of his friends.</td>
<td>yes(priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Report of a journey from Rome to the Brundisium conference in 38 B.C., in the company of a.o. Maecenas, Vergilius, Varius and Tucca. Horatius enjoys himself with his friends; we read a description of the countryside. The poet supports Octavianus and hopes that he will gain the victory over Sextus.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>To Maecenas; low birth is no obstacle to high office and high birth should not be a guarantee. The folly of ambition. Horatius’ humble origins. His youth and education. The arrogance of the veterans in his hometown Venusia. The aristocracy has let the political system degenerate and is not able to govern.</td>
<td>yes(priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>&lt;42</td>
<td>Horatius is present at an incident in Asia and refers to Brutus’ murder of Iulius Caesar without condemning that act. A call for a new ‘regicide’?</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>What had been a cemetery for the poor and where the witches were active Maecenas had converted into a garden within the programme of beautification of Rome. A statue of Priapus was placed and this drives the witches away.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>ab.35</td>
<td>When walking alone along the Via Sacra Horatius is joined by an impertinent acquaintance who ingratiates himself and wants to get access to Maecenas.</td>
<td>yes(priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>ab.35</td>
<td>This poem is a sequel (a few years later) to 1.4. Although he had criticized Lucilius’ work, it has great satiric power. But he is now free from Lucilius. Horatius defines good satire, which needs humour, brevity, clearness etc., just as in oratory.</td>
<td>yes(priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>33-30</td>
<td>Dialogue in which Horatius consults C. Trebatius Testa, a famous jurist about the reception of his previous book in which he expressed indignation in the manner of Lucilius. Trebatius advises him to stop writing satire as he may be accused of writing ‘bad’ [libelous] verses against someone, which is against the law. But Octavianus is the judge; if he approves there are no legal problems. Poem has praise of Octavianus.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dialogue with Ofellus, a sturdy Apulian farmer; learn from him the value of simple life. Do not despise frugal fare, do not prefer costly food. One creates own pleasure in eating. Plain living is not mean living. Simple life is healthy and life of luxury leads to ruin. Use money for better ends and look at Ofellus, who once was a landowner, and when misfortune came faced this bravely; this is a reference to the confiscation of Ofellus’ farm. Criticism of the land confiscations.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>‘All men, save only the wise, are mad.’ Dialogue between Damasippus, a recent convert to Stoic philosophy, and Horatius. Damasippus quotes Stertinius, a well-known Stoic. Five vices are discussed by Damasippus and are shown as forms</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of madness. These are: avarice, ambition, extravagance, love and superstition. The satire is an opportunity for Horatius to express his opinions about these moral issues.

2.4 33-30 Dialogue about the art of good living, especially about food. More than three quarters of the poem is a lecture by a certain Catius (unknown) about preparing the most exclusive dishes.  

2.5 30 About inheritance-hunting (captatio). A topic of moral concern for Horatius, probably inspired by Cicero. Captatio is the opposite of amicitia and the perversion of the latter is a degeneration of the old values. The poem is the first which has a compliment for Octavianus.

2.6 30 About life at the Sabine estate and at Rome. The farm gives peace and the right surrounding for a philosophical chat. The city is full of hassle and often a waste of time. The poem ends with the allegory of the two mice, the country and the city mouse. It has most of the general moral themes.

2.7 33-30 This poem is a moralistic dialogue between Horatius and his slave Davus at the feast of the Saturnalia. Through Davus Horatius expounds the Stoic dogma that ‘every fool is a slave’. A master is no different from a slave in subservience to pleasures and because of this a master has also lost control over his life. The poem gives one of the few references to Horatius’ equestrian rank.

2.8 “A dinner party where Maecenas is the principal guest and where Horatius is not present. The events were described by a guest. The poem shows the baseness of the parvenu and the incompatibility of the old and new elite. The satire is a serious criticism of the lack of culture and the self-enrichment of the nouveaux riches. Allusions to sorcery and Cleopatra. Too many of the new rich are in allegiance with these two threats to Roman life.
### Appendix v: Analysis of the Iambi (Epodi) of Horatius

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Iambi</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject matter</th>
<th>Deals with actuality (‘political’ or ‘priv. political’ poem)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>36 or 31</td>
<td>To Maecenas. Preparations for the battle of Naulochus or Actium. Maecenas will join Octavianus. Should Horatius join as well? Out of friendship and not expecting rewards.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>What pleasure in working one’s own farm and eating one’s home grown food. Who would not forget the city? What to think of Alfius, who pretends to want to live in the country, but decides against it? Alfius’ hypocrisy is denounced. His hypocrisy is typical for the new rich.</td>
<td>yes(priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Horatius suffers from indigestion after eating sauce rich on garlic offered by Maecenas. The latter is gently cursed by Hor.; shows the intimacy between them.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Poem is about a parvenu who shows off his new riches. The ex-slave was an officer in Sextus’ navy. The new class of <em>nouveaux riches</em> is not to be trusted as through them the old Roman values will not return.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>36?</td>
<td>Canidia and her gang of witches want to kill a boy and use his marrow and liver as the ingredients for a love potion by which Canidia’s lover may come back. The boy curses the witches most vehemently and it is left open whether he dies or survives. The poem is a denunciation of magic and sorcery.</td>
<td>yes(priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>39-38</td>
<td>A treacherous, but cowardly dog is challenged by Horatius. The poet however will retaliate with vigour as a satirist befits.</td>
<td>yes(priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Call for a symposion to celebrate the victory at Actium. Commentary on the events before, during and after the battle. Allusions to Sextus, Antonius and Cleopatra. Was Octavianus a competent general? Has he fled at an earlier occasion?</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>36?</td>
<td>Horatius is in the bedroom of an elderly, rich woman; he is not able to meet her sexual demands. She reproaches him and he answers by saying that she cannot arouse him as he finds her repulsive. He describes her older body in coarse terms which is typical for the iambic genre. Criticism of the free sexual moral of women of the upper classes.</td>
<td>yes(priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>May the ship that carries the stinking Maevius perish and may the gulls devour his corpse. Possibly an exercise in writing iambic verse.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>To Pettius. Horatius feels no longer pleasure writing poetry when in love. His girl has left him and he is now in love with a tender boy. He can only be cured by falling in love with yet another girl or boy. Similar to a love elegy. Again a possible exercise in writing iambic verse.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Similar to the eighth. The same criticism of sexual moral.</td>
<td>yes(priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>It is bad weather and a symposion is organized. Perhaps our fortunes may improve. Achilles was advised the same. He knew that he would not return from Troy, but wine and song kept his spirits. Sorrow that war continues.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Maecenas had been asking Horatius when he was going to finish his book of <em>Iambi</em>. The poet is prevented by love for a freedwoman whose faithlessness makes him wretched.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Neaera dropped Horatius who will take his revenge by beginning a new love. Neaera’s new lover must know that he will be dropped in the future and Horatius will have the last laugh.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A very pessimistic poem in which Horatius gives vent to his frustration that the civil wars never end. Foreign enemies did not manage to destroy where the Romans succeed. Let us abandon Rome and Italia forever and go to the rich isles and rebuild society. The latter is a metaphor. Horatius wants to be a moral guide with his poetry.

Horatius has written earlier (Sermo 1.8) about the black rites which the witch Canidia performed on the Esquiline. Canidia takes revenge by black magic and Horatius suffers greatly in body and mind. Many references to Greek myth. Canidia does not show mercy. Did Horatius express concern about the loss of traditional values in Rome? Or is the poem an allusion to Cleopatra?
### Appendix VI: Analysis of the Carmina of Horatius

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Car- men</th>
<th>Date (B.C.)</th>
<th>Subject matter</th>
<th>Deals with actuality ('political' or 'priv. political' poem)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>To Maecenas; happiness in political success. Horatius is rather a poet.</td>
<td>yes (priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>To Augustus, the hope of the state; war-weariness; panegyric after Actium.</td>
<td>yes (priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>To Vergilius; his sea journey; his friendship.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>It is spring; enjoy love, death comes to all.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>To a lovely girl, who is a flirt and will be unfaithful.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>&gt;29</td>
<td>Recusatio; Varius better suited to sing praises of Agrippa.</td>
<td>yes (priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>32-30</td>
<td>To Plancus; do not despair either as a soldier or at Tibur. Hope of better.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Infatuation for Lydia; is she hiding her lover?</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>35-30</td>
<td>The Soracte Ode; cold winter, be merry when you live.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10</td>
<td></td>
<td>To Mercurius; recalls the pathos of Greek myth.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Better to accept whatever happens.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>25-23</td>
<td>Horatius will sing the praises of Augustus, who is like the gods and heroes.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jealousy; not savage passion, but harmony gives happiness.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>34 or 29</td>
<td>The ship of state; may after all the trouble calmer times arrive.</td>
<td>yes (priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nereus' prophecy about the Trojan war and the fall of the city.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.16</td>
<td></td>
<td>The poet recants his earlier criticism of a fair maiden.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.17</td>
<td></td>
<td>Love of country live at the Sabine farm with the dream girl.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>39 or 35</td>
<td>To Varus; plant vine, beware of the vices of revelry, e.g. self-love.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.19</td>
<td></td>
<td>The poet is captured by love for Glycera, symbol for poetry.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>To Maecenas: an invitation to visit Hor. and drink simple wine.</td>
<td>yes (priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Song of praise to Latona and children; averts danger from Augustus.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.22</td>
<td></td>
<td>Poet loves Lalage; wild beasts run away from the righteous.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.23</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fear me not, Chloë; you are old enough for love.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Dirge for Q. Varus. Vergilius, his friend, can not recall him.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.25</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lydia, you reject your lovers, but your beauty will fade.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>26-25</td>
<td>Poet does not care about politics; Muse praise Lamia, the politician.</td>
<td>yes (priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.27</td>
<td></td>
<td>Let moderation reign when drinking and tell us whom you love, boy.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.28</td>
<td></td>
<td>Death is the doom for all, also for me, drowned man; give me a grave.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>25-24</td>
<td>Scholar Iccius (Epist. 1.12) wants to become adventurer and soldier in Arabia.</td>
<td>yes (priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.30</td>
<td></td>
<td>O Venus; leave Cyprus and visit Glycera.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>The poet prays to Apollo for health and opportunity to write poetry.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.32</td>
<td></td>
<td>Invocation to the lyre; help me and accept my salutation.</td>
<td>yes (priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.33</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consolation of Tibullus for the bad faith of Glycera; happens to all.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Poet recants his belief in Epicurus; his god is now Fortune.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>30-29</td>
<td>Hymn to Fortune; take care of Caesar and the armies; outrage in wars.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.36</td>
<td></td>
<td>Celebration of the safe return of Numida (unknown) from Spain.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>‘The Cleopatra Ode’. At last celebrations after Actium and the fall of Cleop.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.38</td>
<td></td>
<td>Away with Oriental luxury.</td>
<td>yes (priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1 <30 To As. Pollio; writing the history of the Civil Wars is hazard. Latin blood. yes
2.2 26-25 Addressed to Sallustius, successor to Maecenas; his munificence is compared to that of Maecenas. Horatius denounces avarice. yes (priv.pol.)
2.3  >30  To Q. Delli; who changes sides and who should enjoy life.  yes(priv.pol.)
2.4  25-24  Do not be ashamed of loving a slave-girl; Achilles and others did same.  no
2.5  29  The girl is not yet ready for your love, she is too young.  no
2.6  To Septimius (unknown); you want to go to war, but I stay at Tibur.  yes(priv.pol.)
2.7  Joy that Pompeius, comrade in arms at Philippi, returns to Italy.  yes(priv.pol.)
2.8  Barine is charming but cannot be trusted; mothers fear her.  no
2.9  26-25  To V. Rufus; stop lamenting, celebrate Augustus' victories instead.  yes
2.10  <22  I believe in ‘Golden Mean’; what about you?, Licinius Murena (?).  yes(priv.pol.)
2.11  29 To Septimius (unknown); you want to go to war, but I stay at Tibur.  yes(priv.pol.)
2.12  27  Recusatio; better that Maecenas records Caesar's conquests.  yes
2.13  33  A narrow escape from a falling tree; I am still here for poetry.  no
2.14  To Postumus (unknown); death is inevitable and property must be left.  no
2.15  Megalomania; denunciations of luxury building.  yes(priv.pol.)
2.16  Be content with small income and enjoy the good moments.  no
2.17  33  To Maecenas, who survived an illness; his contribution to public cause.  yes
2.18  <30  Vanity of riches and grand villa; after death poor and rich same.  yes(priv.pol.)
2.19  Bacchus has the power; Allegories: Bacchus is Aug; Gigantomachy is Actium.  yes
2.20  25  Let there be no mourning at my funeral; my poems will survive.  no

3.1  (Roman Ode)  Reject luxury as it does not give happiness; high and low are subject to Fate.  yes
3.2  (Ro) 30-27  Endurance is better than love of wealth; Augustan virtues, e.g. virtus.  yes
3.3  (Ro) 27  Be steadfast in justice; let the empire grow under Aug.; Rome be the capital.  yes
3.4  (Ro) 28-27  Augustus brought peace to Italia, as luppiter overcame the Titans. Praise Aug.  yes
3.5  (Ro) 27  Divinity of Augustus will be proved by his conquests, which require courage.  yes
3.6  (Ro) 28  Religious revival is called for; the heroes of the Republic are examples.  yes
3.7  Love poem; do not despair, your lover is held up by storms and is faithful.  no
3.8  25  Drink Maecenas, in honour of Hor.’ deliverance; forget your worries ab.state.  yes(priv.pol.)
3.9  Love poem; lover and Lydia both love somebody else. They are reconciled.  no
3.10  Paraclausithyron; lament by excluded lover in front of Lyce’s closed door.  no
3.11  A song to win Lyde, who shies away from a mate. Take warning from Danaids.  no
3.12  Wretched are the girls who can neither enjoy love nor drown sorrows in wine.  no
3.13  Spring of Bandusia; tomorrow you will receive the sacrifice of a kid.  no
3.14  24  Celebration at the return of Augustus to Rome after long absence in Spain.  yes
3.15  Chloris, old woman do not storm young men’s houses; let your daughter do this.  no
3.16  Wealth has not brought Maecenas as much happiness as Sabine estate Hor.  yes
3.17  <24  Friendly banter with his illustrious friend Aelius Lamia; praise of his simple lifestyle.  no
3.18  Faunus, walk through my lands and be kind to new-born animals.  no
3.19  23?  Symposium in honour of T. Varro Murena; let it be a wild party.  no
3.20  Pyrrhus, do not try to appropriate boy Nearchus, who is in clutches of a woman.  no
3.21  To a jar of Massic wine, which reminds us of the virtues of Messalla Corvinus.  yes(priv.pol.)
3.22  Dedication of a pine tree to Diana, guardian of woods and helper at childbirth.  no
3.23  Paraenesis; how to offer to the Lares; Gods love the giver rather than the gift.  no
3.24  27  Denounces materialism and calls for moral revival. Asks Aug. to check this.  yes
3.25  24  To Bacchus, god of poetry. Aug.’ greatness. Hor. prepares for Aug. apotheosis.  yes
3.26  Renuntiatio amoris; Hor. renounces love and love poetry; Chloe is unresponsive.  no
3.27  May Galatea have a happy journey, not like Europa who felt betrayed.  no
3.28  Lyde, it is Neptunus’ day; bring out the wine and sing of Neptunus, Diana, and Venus.  no
Maecenas, leave affairs of state and come to Horatius’ farm. yes
Horatius’ confident closure of the three books; his everlasting monument. no

Carmen
Horatius wrote at Augustus’ request the celebratory poem for the Ludi Saeculares; yes
the poem is a public praise of Roman well-being and of Augustus, who realised
peace and a prayer that he will be able to maintain it. no

Saecu. 17
Venus, I am of an age to command love away; be present with the young. no
You, Iullus Antonius should celebrate Augustus in Pindarist fashion, not I. yes
Melpomene, it is your gift to me that makes me a worthy poet. no
Success for young Drusus; youthful Augustus rejuvenates and inspires Rome. yes
Augustus, your absence is too long; return to Rome and be safe. yes
Invocation to Apollo, who is the source of Horatius’ creativity. Peace in Rome. yes
Time passes and the seasons rotate; life comes to an end. no
Poetry is there forever and the poet can immortalise glorious deeds. no
In praise of valiant Marcus Lollius; the general inner pattern of his life. yes (priv.pol.)
Beauty of a man fades away. no
Horatius invites his Phyllis to celebrate the month of Venus/Maec. birthday. no
Nature renews in the spring; come and meet Bacchus with me, Vergilius. no
Lyce, the gods have turned you to old age and to ugliness, which you hide. no
Drusus and Tiberius are great; Augustus is greater as he defeated Cleopatra
and other foes. yes
Panegyric to Augustus, who shields our world and who restores our values. yes

Notes. Date is the estimated date of writing.
The sign > means after a certain year; the sign < before.
### Appendix VII: Analysis of the Epistulae of Horatius

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Epist.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject Matter</th>
<th>Deals with actuality (<em>political</em> or <em>priv. political</em> poem)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>23-19</td>
<td>To Maecenas. Introduction to the first book of <em>Epistulae</em>. Horatius explains why he has given up writing lyric poetry and why he starts writing philosophy. Other themes are health, being upright, and not following popular opinion. Only the sage can be perfect.</td>
<td>yes (priv. pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>&gt;24</td>
<td>To Lollius Maximus. Horatius wants him to read Homer to acquaint himself with moral philosophy. Poetry is a better moral guide than philosophy. The importance of living 'aright'. Beware of riches. Variety of moral maxims.</td>
<td>yes (priv. pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>To Iulius Florus, who is in Armenia with Tiberius. Horatius inquires after his well-being and the literary pursuits of Florus and his friends. Who writes about Augustus? Horatius urges him not to neglect the study of philosophy.</td>
<td>yes (priv. pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>&lt;23</td>
<td>To Albius Tibullus who sounds depressed and is invited to Horatius' Sabine farm.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>23-19</td>
<td>To Torquatus of the Manlii Torquati who is invited to a simple dinner at Horatius’.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>To Numicius, who is otherwise unknown. Wise indifference is the only clue to happiness. Pursue what makes you happy but do not pursue ideals in excess. The art of living ‘aright’.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>To Maecenas, who says that Horatius stays in the country longer than expected. He is not ungrateful towards Maecenas but he must consider his health. Horatius gives his view on their amicitia and the obligations this brings.</td>
<td>yes (priv. pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>To Celsus Albinovanus on Tiberius’ staff. Be not elated by good fortune.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>To Tiberius. Letter of introduction of one Septimius to the prince.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10</td>
<td></td>
<td>To Aristius Fuscus, a good friend. The simple country life and the town have each their own attractions. The former however offers independence.</td>
<td>yes (priv. pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11</td>
<td></td>
<td>To Bullatius. Asked to settle by the sea after much travelling. One is happy when in a quiet state of mind.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>About Iccius (see <em>Carmen</em> 1.29) who grumbles about his work. Iccius is the manager of Agrippa’s estate on Sicily. Study not just natural philosophy but also moral philosophy. That should make you happy. Latest news from abroad.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>To Vinius Asina. Horatius sends books 1 to 3 of <em>Carmina</em> to Augustus by a messenger, Vinius. I.s.o. a formal letter to Augustus, this is letter with instructions to Vinius.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.14</td>
<td></td>
<td>To the bailiff of his estate who wants to live in the city while Horatius longs for his farm.</td>
<td>yes (priv. pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Horatius requires cold baths on doctor’s prescription. He wants to know from his friend Vala the best places in Southern Italia. He assures Vala that he has not changed into a glutton and parasite.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.16</td>
<td></td>
<td>To a certain Quinctius. About praise, popularity and the <em>vir bonus</em>. ‘Good’ in public life must be matched with ‘good’ in private. Know when praise is meant for oneself and when for others. Quotes from Varius’ panegyric to Augustus.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.17</td>
<td></td>
<td>To the unknown Scæva. If not rich or famous one can still be happy. The quiet life is to be preferred. Horatius gives advice as to how to ingratiating oneself with the powerful. Poem is about <em>amicitia</em>, although the word is not used.</td>
<td>yes (priv. pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>To Lollius (see <em>Epistula</em> 1.2). About <em>amicitia</em> with the great and mighty. The word is used six times in the poem. How to gain and how to keep a powerful <em>amicus</em>. The poem praises Augustus. End of the poem is concerned with the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
praise of the quiet life with a book and food.  

1.19 Horatius’ answer to criticism of his book of *Iambi* and *Carmina* 1-3. He gives his own literary history. In Horatius’ opinion, the real reason of the criticism is caused by his unwillingness to please. Statement of his confidence and independence.  

1.20 Dedicated to the whole book of *Epistulae* when it was ready for release. The book is portrayed as a slave who wants a future far away and without his master. When the book is read widely, it reveals his life in which he found favour with the great.  

2.1 12 or 11 Letter to Augustus who is praised for his achievements during his lifetime. This is not the case for poetry. Romans give the ancient poets too much praise. Several classes of literature are discussed. Horatius prefers to write poetry for reading. *Recusatio* for not singing the praises of Augustus. The latter is asked to encourage poetry and to continue as a patron of poets.  

2.2 19 or 12 Letter to Iulius Florus, the same man as is addressed in *Epistula* 1.3 and who grumbled that Horatius has not answered. The latter has not promised to do so and has other occupations anyway. The poet has turned to philosophy. He muses about the art of *vivere recte* and makes the point that one who cannot live ‘aright’ ought to step aside.  

*Ars Poetica*. Manual on the writing of poetry. The first part is about the technique of writing and the second about the characteristics of the poet.
Appendix VIII: The development of Horatius as an engaged poet

In this scheme I give on the vertical axis the timescale and the key events during the life of Horatius and on the horizontal axis the subject matters of Horatius’ poetry and his attitude towards the regime when this is clear from the contents of a poem. The different categories in which I have arranged the subject matter are:

I. Horatius on his own experiences.
II. Horatius on his own poetry.
III. Horatius on the civil war.
IV. Horatius’ hope of better times.
V. Horatius’ poetry on moral issues.
VI. Horatius’ views on life.

Key historical and literary events:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Subject matter of Horatius’ poetry</th>
<th>Supportive or critical of regime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65 B.C.</td>
<td>Horatius born</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Murder of Iulius Caesar</td>
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<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Horatius at Philippi</td>
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<td></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Pardoned by victors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Perusia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Hor. joins circle Maec</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Naulochus</td>
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<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Sermones</td>
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<td></td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>Sermones releas.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Death of Anto/Cleop.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

65 B.C. Horatius born

I

{ 44 Murder of Iulius Caesar

42 Horatius at Philippi

{ 41 Pardoned by victors

{ 40 Perusia

38 Hor. joins circle Maec

{ 36 Naulochus

{ 35 Sermones

30 Death of Anto/Cleop.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I.</th>
<th>II.</th>
<th>III.</th>
<th>IV.</th>
<th>V.</th>
<th>VI.</th>
<th>sup. critic.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>own exper.</td>
<td>own poetry</td>
<td>civil war</td>
<td>better times</td>
<td>moral views</td>
<td>views of life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **30 Book of Exper.**  
  - **Ca.1.37(30)**

- **30 Book of Poetry**  
  - **Ca.1.38(?)**

- **30 Book 2 of War Times**  
  - **Ca.2.3(>30)**

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**Sermones releas.**

- **Ca.2.6(29)**  
  - **Ca.1.6**  
  - **Ca.1.14(29)**  
  - **Ca.1.6 (>29)**

- **Ca.2.7(?)**  
  - **Ca.1.2(27)**  
  - **Ca.1.2 (27)**

- **Ca.1.21(27)**  
  - **Ca.1.21(27)**

- **Ca.1.26(26/25)**  
  - **Ca.2.9(26)**  
  - **Ca.2.9 (26)**

- **Ca.2.12(27)**  
  - **Ca.2.12 (27)**

- **Ca.1.29(25/24)**  
  - **Ca.2.15(?)**  
  - **Ca.2.10(<22)**

- **Ca.3.6(28)**  
  - **Ca.3.6(28)**

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**27**  

- **27 First Settlem.**  
  - **Ca.3.3(27)**  
  - **Ca.3.3(27)**

- **27 Sec. Settlem.**  
  - **Ca.3.1(27)**

- **Ca.3.4**  
  - **Ca.3.2(27)**  
  - **Ca.3.4(28/27)**

- **Ca.3.24(27)**

- **Ca.3.5(27)**

- **Ca.3.8(25)**

- **Ca.1.12(25/23)**  
  - **Ca.3.16(?)**  
  - **Ca.1.12(25/23)**

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**23**  

- **23 Carmina**  
  - **Ca.3.14(24)**  
  - **Ca.3.21(?)**  
  - **Ca.3.14(24)**

- **23 Sec.**  
  - **Ca.3.25(24)**  
  - **Epi.1.2(>24)**

- **Ca.3.1(23)**  
  - **Epi.1.3(20)**

- **Ca.3.17(20)?**

- **Ca.1.18(20)**  
  - **Epi.1.18(20)**

- **Ca.1.7(?)**

- **20 Epistulae released.**  
  - **Epi.1.10(?)**

- **Epi.2.2(19)**

- **Epi.1.16(?)**  
  - **Epi.1.16(?)**

---

**17**  

- **Carm. Saec.**  
  - **Carm. Saec.(17)**  
  - **Epi.1.14(?)**  
  - **Carm. Saec.(17)**

- **Ca.4.4(15)**  
  - **Ca.4.9(17?)**  
  - **Ca.4.4(15)**

- **Ca.4.2(17/13)**  
  - **Ca.4.5(13)**  
  - **Ca.4.5**  
  - **Ca.4.2(17/13)**

- **Ca.4.6(?)**  
  - **Ca.4.14(15)**  
  - **Ca.4.14(15)**

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**11**  

- **Epi.2.1(12/11)**  
  - **Ca.4.15(11?)**  
  - **Ca.4.15**  
  - **Epi.2.1(12/11)**

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8  

- **Horatius dies**

**Notes.**  

- **Se** = Sermo; **Ia** = Iambus; **Ca** = Carmen; **Epi** = Epistula. **Ia.4(42) = Iambus 4**, dated in 42 B.C.  
  **Ia.4(42) (written in italics) means that Iambus 4 is a ‘political’ poem.**
### Appendix IX: Analysis of the Elegiae of Propertius

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ele-gia</th>
<th>Date (B.C.)</th>
<th>Subject matter</th>
<th>Deals with actuality ('political' or 'priv. political' poem)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>&lt;29</td>
<td>To Tullus; characteristics of elegiac love poetry. Love is an illness.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Poet asks beloved not to use cosmetics; she is more beautiful in her natural state, just as many mythological women were.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Propertius found Cynthia asleep; he lets her sleep but she wakes up by the moonlight and reproaches Prop. for drinking all night.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>A certain Bassus is spoken to as he interfered in relationship Prop/Cynthia.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Through the poet Gallus Prop. analyses his feelings for Cynthia. Love is a terrible suffering and loving Cynthia is not a simple matter.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td><em>Recusatio</em>. Prop. does not join Tullus on journey as Cynthia did not like him to go away. Reference to actual events; Tullus fought at Octavianus’ side in civil war. Propertius is born for love and not for soldiering.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Propertius wants to remain a writer of love-elegies. Epic poet Ponticus receives the warning that if he continues writing epic, he will not be able to compose the right verses when he falls in love.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>The lover is angry that his beloved plans a journey to Illyria with another man. Nevertheless, he hopes for her safe return and he will always be faithful to her. She decides to stay.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Another poem addressed to Ponticus who has fallen in love and whom Propertius again counsels to stop writing epic and change to love-elegy.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Propertius has been allowed to watch the lovemaking of Gallus and his girl. Poem turns into one about young love and Prop.’ pose as an experienced lover.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Poem is written as a letter and deals with the separation from Cynthia who is in Baiae. Propertius is worried that she will fall for somebody.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Again a poem about Cynthia’s absence. Prop. is unhappy and envious of men who have found constant love. Whatever Cynthia does, Prop. is steadfast in his love.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Prop. praises Gallus’ new love and admonishes him to make the most of it.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>True love is the greatest wealth. Venus rules and when he is with Cynthia he is rich.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Poet fears that Cynthia is not sincere. However, he will remain faithful to her.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>A <em>paraclausithyron</em>. Dialogue with the door of his mistress’ house which protects the woman and keeps the lover outside. Propertius sings about his own fear of being deserted.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Prop. has distanced himself from Cynthia by an imaginary sea journey. He imagines a storm through which he will perish without his girl attending his funeral.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>The unhappy lover is in a lonely spot suffering from the disdain of his beloved. He insists that he loves her and that he has not acted improperly.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>The fear of separation from Cynthia haunts the poet. It is not death which he fears; he is afraid that she will not be present at his funeral and that she will forget him as soon as he is dead. In the meantime he hopes for her love.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Addressed to Gallus who is warned to look after his boy love. There are rivals. If Gallus loses his love he will forever wander in bleak land. This is similar to Gallus’ position in Verg. <em>Ecl.</em> 10. Reference to the destruction of countryside in the civil war.</td>
<td>yes (priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Sad poem about the Perusine war. Two brothers-in-law, of whom one is dying, discuss what to tell their wife and sister about the death when she prepares</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Critical?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Grief for the many dead in the Perusine war. Critical of civil war and Octav.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>29/28</td>
<td>Recusatio. Propertius about the source of his poetic inspiration. Praises Augustus' successes and resents ravages of the civil war. His glory is in writing love poetry. He hopes to enjoy until his death the love of his mistress and to continue with the writing of love-elegies. Critical tone.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>28/27</td>
<td>Praise of Cynthia’s beauty which is comparable to the greatest Greek goddesses.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Eulogy on his girl’s beauty. She also possesses many other gifts which originate from the gods. She is like Helena.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>It is not easy to love someone like Cynthia. The lover has to submit to her demands.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Prop. cannot believe Cynthia’s licentious behaviour. Considers to leave her. However, he cannot leave her because he loves her.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Propertius is very jealous of everyone who meets Cynthia. He condemns the sexual standards of Roman women. Romulus started this by the rape of the Sabine women. Allusions to Octavianus and moral standards. Critical.</td>
<td>yes(priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>The poet is relieved by the repeal of legislation which threatens his relationship with Cynthia. He rejects emphatically the authorities’ interference in his personal life and he gives a courageous declaration of his belief in personal freedom. Powerful and critical political statement.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Propertius vents his anger and distress about the infidelity of his mistress. Death is the only escape.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>This poem is again about the infidelity of his beloved. He alludes to the low standards of marital fidelity in Rome. He is critical of these.</td>
<td>yes(priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Propertius considers writing epic. But not yet. His plan is a pretense. At the time, he saw things differently and was not yet prepared to write an eulogy of Augustus. Critical.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Presumably written after one of the breaks with his beloved; her grave would be unnoticed and she would remain without fame.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Poem about his own form of poetry; he is the writer of love poetry in Rome.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Propertius anticipates his funeral. Amor is his inspiration and Cynthia the judge of his poems. Cynthia receives instructions about his funeral. But she can not bring him back.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Jubilant love poem after a night of love-making with Cynthia.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>After a night of love Propertius wishes that the feast continues forever. Then he turns to actual events and he states that, if everyone lives like he does, there would be no war. He proposes an alternative way of life, different from the values which have been adopted by Octavianus. Anti-war poem. Critical of the princeps and the conquests.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>An old rival, perhaps the praetor from Elegia 1.8, has returned and has claimed Cynthia. Her greed for gold made her an easy victim. Rome’s social order has been overthrown. Women have adopted other values and norms and upstarts have gained too much influence.</td>
<td>yes(priv.pol.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Sombre love poem. The poet is no longer his girl’s favourite.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>The poet about his fear of losing his beloved. Her withdrawal is due to his age.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Cynthia goes to the countryside; Propertius approves as most likely rivals are absent. Propertius will come and visit her. Still worried about new suitors.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>In this poem there is a reversal of the usual roles between Prop. and his girl; this time she accuses him of infidelity. He protests his innocence and he will</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
always love her; he is grateful for her love and will never forget this.

2.21 " His beloved has been beguiled by a man who shortly afterwards married another. While Propertius’ girl is looking for another man, Propertius will remain faithful to his beloved.

2.22 " The many promises of his fidelity seem to be forgotten by Propertius. In the present poem he explores the advantages of two sweethearts at the same time.

2.23 " In this poem Propertius is again concerned with the subject of courting another lady than Cynthia. This time he describes the difficulties of seeing a married woman. It is easier to see courtesans. It is all caused by Cynthia’s deceptions.

2.24B " Propertius is back to his old theme of the fickleness of his girl. He himself will stay until death.

2.25 " Propertius will make Cynthia famous through his poetry. But he suffers in his love as she often withdraws and he suffers like the great mythical heroes. He tells other lovers to enjoy a lasting single relationship as in the old times. One woman is more than enough; Propertius again condemns the loose morals of his time. yes(priv.pol)

2.26 " In the first part of the poem he dreams that his beloved drowned and was rescued by the gods who recognised her beauty. When he awakes, he is with her in bed and his admiration for her grows. Next, she wants to go on a sea journey and he sees the advantage; he will be with her and if she dies they will die together.

2.27 " A poem about the power of love. Only a lover knows when he will die; that is when his beloved leaves him.

2.28 " An illness threatens his girl’s life. The poet searches for the cause; is it the heat, or his girl’s infidelity or even Juppiter’s love? If his beloved dies she will be received amongst the blessed. Magic is applied to cure her of her infatuation and the poet prays to the gods to return her health, which is the return of her love for him. She recovers and he asks his girl to give thanks to Diana and to give him ten nights.

2.29 " In a dream the poet meets a boisterous group of love gods. They take him to Cynthia’s house and reproach him that he has not been with her. When he is awake, he goes to her house wondering whether she is alone. She is indeed, but she is angry as she suspects him of spying and he is sent packing.

2.30 " One cannot escape Amor. Prop. wants to continue celebrating his love for Cynthia, together with her. He will continue writing love poetry with her as his inspiration.

2.31/32 " Generally seen as one poem. Propertius admires the new temple of Apollo on the Palatine. When he arrives late at Cynthia’s he suggests to her that she should visit the temple, rather than the fashionable villages around Rome. He fears that she sees a lover, perhaps a member of Rome’s high society. It will further damage her reputation; the poet is not disturbed by the loss of her reputation as even those of goddesses were not harmed by their affairs. Allusion to Aeneas/Augustus; the loss of reputation happens in the best families. Critical of lack of progress of Augustus in the renewal of standards. yes(priv.pol)

2.33 " Cynthia was celebrating Isis’ rites with ten days of abstinence. Propertius vents his anger at foreign gods and habits. Although there is an allusion to the war with Antonius and Cleopatra, this allusion refers to Egypt’s bad reputation. In the second part Cynthia and Prop. are present at a symposion. Cynthia looks drunk, but the poet suddenly notices her when she reads his poems. There is hope for his loving presence. yes(priv.pol)

2.34 " His friend Lynceus has set eyes on his girl. Prop. is jealous but forgives his friend. Eulogy on Vergilius. Varro, Catullus, Calvus and Gallus made their girls famous. He belongs to their circle and he will sing about his feelings. no

3.1 " Propertius explores new forms of poetry. He will write refined verses which
will make him famous after his death. He will not write war poetry. No

3.2 "Poem about the power of poetry. Prop. can write fine love poetry and he will reach everlasting fame through his genius. No

3.3 "Prop. explores the future of his poetry. In a dream Apollo tells him that he is not suited for heroic poetry and Calliope tells him that he should write love poetry; this is in conflict with Augustus’ ideals. Critical of stern morals of Aug. Yes

3.4 26-21 The poem starts with praise of Augustus’ war plans. Propertius will watch the triumphal procession from the sidelines. Motive of war is desire for gain and the poet pleads an alternative way of life. Critical ab. leadership of Aug. Yes

3.5 "All the poet wishes is a life of love with his girl and he has no desire of being wealthy. Man’s creation has many faults. At the end of his life Propertius will turn to natural philosophy. Rejection of warfare and unfriendly allusion to Augustus. Critical. Yes

3.6 "Love-elegy. Poet’s mistress is distressed about a supposed rival. The poet sees this as a sign of her love for him. He sends a slave back with message of his loyalty. No

3.7 "Dirge for Paetus who drowned at sea. On the one hand the poem is a satiric commentary on the risks of a commercial journey and on the folly of such a life; on the other, the poem shows the destructive power of lust for money. View on life. Yes(priv.pol)

3.8 "Love-elegy in which the poet interprets the tantrums of his girl as signs of her love. No

3.9 "Recusatio. Answer to Maecenas’ request to write about grander national themes. Propertius says that he is not suited for this. Why can he not remain who he is? Like Maecenas himself or the many men who excelled in art. Propertius seems to change his mind and states that he wants to write other poetry under Maecenas’ guidance. He wants to keep his freedom, and he does not believe that Maecenas would compel him. Yes(priv.pol)

3.10 "Birthday poem for his mistress. Dreams about perfect day and night of love. No

3.11 24 A woman governs the poet’s life in the same manner as many heroes who suffered the same fate. Then Propertius turns to Cleopatra and her threat to Rome. Why should we bear her yoke? At Actium Octavianus has defeated the queen who committed suicide later. Admiration for Cleopatra. Abundant praise of Augustus. Yes

3.12 22 Folly of men who leave their beloved behind to go to war for the pursuit of wealth. Postumus’ wife Galla is a paradigm of chastity. No

3.13 26-21 Wantonness of women contrasts with the bliss of Golden Age. The nights with the girls have grown costly. In the Golden Age a man could be kissed by a girl for a bunch of flowers. Gold is the cause of all evil. He fears for Rome due to the materialism and loss of values. Views on social issues. Yes(priv.pol)

3.14 "The poet compares the status of girls in Rome with that of Sparta in the past. He wishes that Roman girls would take exercises like the Spartan girls. This would make them free and approachable. Plea for greater social freedom of Roman women. Yes(priv.pol)

3.15 "About excessive female jealousy of the first sexual experience of a young man. Girls should not believe all gossip. No

3.16 "At midnight the lover is asked by his girl to come over at once. Will he go or not? There is the danger of ruffians. If he were to die, the poet wants to be remembered as a poet for quiet private reading. No

3.17 "The poet was turned away by his mistress. He asks Bacchus to help him find consolation in drinking. When the forgets the pain he will become a vinedresser. No

3.18 23 Lament after early death of young Marcellus. His dreams of glory will not materialise. Poem is an eulogy of Augustus and family. Poet approves of the choice of Marcellus
as Augustus' potential successor. Panegyric of the imperial family.  yes (priv.pol)

3.19  26-21 Lover is repeatedly reproached by his mistress: men are lustful. Lover sets out to prove that women's lust is greater. Men have self-control.  no

3.20  A lover is waiting for the first assignation with his new love whose former lover has left her. He praises her charms and looks forward to their first night. But he must first extract her promises of fidelity, after his earlier bad experience.  no

3.21  Propertius plans a visit to Athens to make himself free of Cynthia. She does not love him anymore. He looks forward to visit the places of learning. If, in the pursuit of knowledge, he dies in Athens, his death will be honourable.  no

3.22  Propemptikon to Tullus who is in Mysia and plans a journey through Asia Minor. The poet tells him that in the foreign lands he will not encounter the beauty of the Italian landscape and the civilisation of her people. He better returns.  no

3.23  Some of the poets writing tablets have been lost. What has been written on them?  no

3.24/25 Farewell of Cynthia. He has come to realise that their break is definitive and that he has been cured of his infatuation. He knows her tricks and she has made their relationship impossible. He curses her.  no

4.1A >16 The beauty of Rome; poet wants to find new ways of praising Rome and of being of service to his city. Rome is the successor of mighty Troy thanks to Augustus. Propertius wants to turn to aetiology.  no

4.1B The astrologer Horos gives Propertius his own horoscope. Poem turns into personal document. Horos gave Prop. the advice to remain an elegiac poet. Recusatio; ambiguity between aetiology and elegy. Direction not clear.  yes (priv.pol)

4.2 About the god Vertumnus; first aetiology. Allusion to the importance of Forum Romanum and to the replacement of Vertumnus‘ wooden statue by bronze.  no

4.3 Love poem written as a letter by a young bride Arethusa to her new husband who is far away on military service. She is lonely, but will remain faithful. She wants him to return safely. The woman is confident and there is a reversal of roles between man and woman to one that moves in the direction of equality. Propertius presents a commentary on matters of sexual moral and advocates pure love.  yes (priv.pol)

4.4 Poem about Tarpeia’s love for Titus Tatius. The girl had been prepared to betray her people. Her plan did not materialise; Tarpeia suffered of destructive love in contrast to 4.3. Supportive of Aug. moral reforms.  yes (priv.pol)

4.5 About a procuress who counsels the beloved about the ways to ensnare a man. It is not love which matters but the man’s money. Wrong kind of love. Propertius advocates stable relationships and a different sexual moral. He supports Augustus. 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 belong together and contain commentary on moral issues.  yes (priv.pol)

4.6 16 Poem about Actium and Augustus’ victory. Apollo’s role in the sea battle. Dedication to Augustus. Octavianus’ cause at Actium was right; Antonius and Cleopatra were wrong. Actium was decisive for the ‘civilised’ world. Allusions to the help of the gods. Allusion to Iulius Caesar who is not the Right man to gloat over Cleopatra’s defeat. It was as well that Cleopatra was not paraded through Rome as that could have reminded Romans of her stay with Iulius Caesar. In the finale of the poem Propertius refuses to sing Augustus’ military exploits. Actium is the beginning of new order, thanks to Aug. 4.6 is supportive of Augustus. Theme is hope of better times.  yes

4.7 >16 In this personal poem Cynthia’s ghost appears at Propertius bedside. The poet looks back at his troublesome affair with Cynthia, or otherwise the persona of a lover looks back at a similar affair with a beloved. Propertius confirms
the picture of Cynthia which he gave in his earlier poems. His final farewell of Cynthia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Funny poem about Cynthia’s presumed visit to the shrine of Iuno Sospita at Lanuvium. She returned when Prop. had organized a sex-party with two girls. Cynthia throws the girls out and in bed she is reconciled with Propertius.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Aetiological poem about the origins of the <em>Ara Maxima</em>. Propertius’ version differs from that of Vergilius in the <em>Aeneis</em>.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>Aetiological poem about the <em>spolia opima</em> and the cult of <em>Iuppiter Feretrius</em>. The poem refers to the <em>spolia</em> of Romulus who founded the temple, of Aulus Cornelius Cossus and of M. Claudius Marcellus. Allusions to L. Licinius Crassus who was denied the privilege. Criticism of Augustus’ military leadership.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>Cornelia’s speech in the underworld. Her affection to her family and her care for those she left behind. Ideal woman and mother. Support of Augustus’ ideal of moral reform.</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. Date is the estimated date of writing. The sign > means after a certain year; the sign < before.
### Appendix X: The development of Propertius as an engaged poet

In this scheme I give on the vertical axis the timescale and the key events during the life of Propertius and on the horizontal axis the subject matters of Propertius’ poetry and his attitude towards the regime when this is clear from the contents of a poem. The different categories in which I have arranged the subject matter are:

I. Propertius on his own experiences.
II. Propertius on his own poetry.
III. Propertius on the civil war.
IV. Propertius’ hope of better times.
V. Propertius’ poetry on moral issues.
VI. Propertius’ views on life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key historical events</th>
<th>Subject matter of Propertius’ poetry</th>
<th>Supportive or critical views of regime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 ab.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{44}</td>
<td>I. own exper.</td>
<td>I. sup.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{40} Perusia</td>
<td>II. III. own civil better own poetry</td>
<td>II. III. sup.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{36} Naulochus</td>
<td>IV. V. moral issues</td>
<td>IV. V. crit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{31} Actium</td>
<td>VI.</td>
<td>VI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{30} Death of Antonius and Cleopatra</td>
<td>E1.1.20(29)</td>
<td>E1.1.21(29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{E1.1.21(29)}</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{29} Eleg.1 rel.</td>
<td>E1.1.22(29)</td>
<td>E1.1.22(29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{E1.2.1(29)}</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{E1.2.6(28/27)}</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{E1.2.7(28/27)}</td>
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<tr>
<td>{E1.2.9(28/27)}</td>
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<tr>
<td>{E1.2.10(28/27)}</td>
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<tr>
<td>{E1.2.15(28/27)}</td>
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<tr>
<td>{E1.2.16(28/27)}</td>
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<tr>
<td>{E1.2.25(26/25)}</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{E1.2.31/32(26/25)}</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{E1.3.4(26/21)}</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{E1.3.5(26/21),E1.3.7(26/21)}</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{E1.3.11(24)}</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>{E1.3.11(24)}</td>
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<tr>
<td>{E1.3.18(23)}</td>
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<td>{E1.3.3(23)}</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{E1.3.3(23)}</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. own exper.
II. own poetry
III. civil war
IV. better times
V. moral views
VI. of life
supp. critic.

20

{ El.4.6 El.4.1(16) El.4.6(16), El.4.11(16)

{ .>16 Eleg.4 rel. El.4.1(>16) El.4.3(>16)

{ El.4.4(>16) El.4.4(>16)

10 El.4.10(>16) El.4.5(>16) El.4.5 El.4.10(>16)

2 A.D. <2 Propertius dies

Note. El.1.20(29) = Elegia 1.20, dated in or about in 29 B.C.
El.1.21(29) (written in italics) means that Elegia 9 is a ‘political’ poem.
**Appendix XI: Vergilius (red), Horatius (green) and Propertius (blue): three poets compared**

In this scheme I give on the vertical axis the timescale and the key events during the lives of the three poets and on the horizontal axis the subject matters of their poetry and their attitude towards the regime when this is clear from the contents of a poem. The different categories in which I have arranged the subject matter are the same as in previous tables:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key historical and literary events</th>
<th>Subject matter of the poets’ poetry</th>
<th>Supportive or critical of regime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. own exper.</td>
<td>II. own poetry</td>
<td>III. civil war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. better times</td>
<td>V. moral issues</td>
<td>VI. views of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sup. critic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 70 B.C.  
- **70 Verg. born**

### 65  
- **65 Hor. born**

### 60  
- **63 Aug. born**

### 55  
- **54 Tib. born**

### 50  
- **ab.50 Prop. born**

### 45  
- **44 Murder Iu.Cae**

### 40  
- **40 Perusia**

### 36  
- **36 Nauleochus**

### 35  
- **31 Actium**

### 30  
- **30 Death of Anto.**

### 27 First Settl.  
- **27 First Settl.**

### 25  
- **25 First Settl.**

### 23 Sec. Settl.  
- **23 Sec. Settl.**

---

70 B.C.  
- **70 Verg. born**

65  
- **65 Hor. born**

60  
- **63 Aug. born**

55  
- **54 Tib. born**

50  
- **ab.50 Prop. born**

45  
- **44 Murder Iu.Cae**

40  
- **40 Perusia**

36  
- **36 Nauleochus**

35  
- **31 Actium**

30  
- **30 Death of Anto.**
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Key historical and literary events</th>
<th>Subject matter of the poets’ poetry</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I. own exper.</td>
<td>II. own poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>III. civil war</td>
<td>IV. better times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V. moral views</td>
<td>VI. views of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{</td>
<td>Ca.2.10</td>
<td>Epi.1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{</td>
<td>Epi.1.17,Epi.1.18</td>
<td>Ca.3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{</td>
<td>Epi.1.7,Epi.1.10</td>
<td>Ca.3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{</td>
<td>Epi.1.6</td>
<td>Epi.1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{</td>
<td>Epi.1.14,Ea.4.9</td>
<td>Car.Saec.,Ca.4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{</td>
<td>Ca.4.2</td>
<td>El.4.11(16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{</td>
<td>Ca.4.3</td>
<td>Ca.4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{</td>
<td>Ca.4.15</td>
<td>Car.Saec.,Ca.4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{</td>
<td>El.4.10(16)</td>
<td>El.4.5(16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{</td>
<td>Ecl.3 = Vergiliius’ Ecloga 3; Ge.1.40 = Vergiliius’ Georgica 1, 40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{</td>
<td>Se.1.7 = Horatius’ Sermo 1.7; Ia.4 = Horatius’ Iambus 4; Ca.2.17 = Horatius’ Carmen 2.17; Epi.1.3 = Horatius’ Epistula 1.3; Car.Saec = Horatius’ Carmen Saeculare.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{</td>
<td>Ecl.1.20 = Propertius’ Elegia 1.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note.</td>
<td>Ecl.7 = Vergiliius’ Ecloga 7; Ge.1.40 = Vergiliius’ Georgica 1, 40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Se.1.7 = Horatius’ Sermo 1.7; Ia.4 = Horatius’ Iambus 4; Ca.2.17 = Horatius’ Carmen 2.17; Epi.1.3 = Horatius’ Epistula 1.3; Car.Saec = Horatius’ Carmen Saeculare.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ecl.1.20 = Propertius’ Elegia 1.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this scheme there is an inconsistency: I have not entered the results of the Aeneis as the text is difficult to capture in the model of analysis which I have used for the poetry of Horatius and Propertius. Thus, a great part of Vergiliius’ work is not shown and in reality much more of his poetry than is shown here deals with actual issues and has a ‘political’ or ‘private political’ content.
Appendix XII: The ‘supportive’ poetry of Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius

In this scheme two passages of the *Georgica*, four of the *Aeneis* and the individual poems of Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius, which are supportive of the person of Octavianus and later Augustus, or of other members of the leadership, or of their policies and views, are presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poet/work</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Propaganda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vergilius:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Eclogae</em>: Ecl.4:</td>
<td>40:</td>
<td>In <em>Ecloga</em> 4 the poet approves some form of hereditary rule.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Georgica</em>: 3, 26-29: pages 85 and 94.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>About the defeat of Antonius and Cleopatra and other triumphs of Octavianus; the poet honours Octavianus’ achievements and shows his relief that Octavianus has brought peace.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4, 1-314 pages 87-8, 123-4.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>The poet extols idea of kingship; as he did in <em>Ecloga</em> 4. However, it is not the right time for Octavianus to lobby for kingship.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aeneis</strong>: 29/19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 286-296 pages 115-6, 124-5.</td>
<td>29/19</td>
<td>The poem refers to Octavianus’ supposed descent from the Iulii. There is peace after civil war was ended by Octavianus. Strong leader is required. Vergilius is convinced that Octavianus is the most suitable leader.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6, 789-795 pages 116, 124-5.</td>
<td>29/19</td>
<td>Augustus will expand the empire in Africa and in India. Strong leader is required. Vergilius is convinced that Octavianus is the right candidate.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8, 675-683 pages 116-7.</td>
<td>29/19</td>
<td>Aeneas shield; Actium. Allusion to heroic role of Octavianus. Agrippa referred as leader ‘of his column’. Vergilius has doubts about Octavianus’ leadership.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8, 714-728 pages 117-8.</td>
<td>29/19</td>
<td>Octavianus’ great triumph in 29. Stable future under Augustus. Vergilius’ sorrows about the horrors of civil war. However, he is confident that his hopes of better times will come true.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Horatius:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sermo</em> 2.5 page 144.</td>
<td>&gt;30</td>
<td>About <em>captatio</em> (inheritance-hunting) which is perversion of <em>amicitia</em>. First time that Horatius pays a compliment to Octavianus (2 lines only); Octavianus’ victory at Actium and expectation of the recapture of Crassus’ standards. The latter was the general expectation in Rome at the time.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Iambus</em> 1 pages 151-3.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Against the background of preparations for Naulochus or Actium. About <em>amicitia</em> with Maecenas. Horatius is close to major political events and supportive of Octavianus. However, the poet remains independent, as he does not expect rewards (lines 23-30).</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Carmen</em>: 1.2 page 173-4.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>A poem of praise of Augustus. However, the poet shows a mood of war weariness and he criticises Octavianus for the horrors of the civil war.</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.12 pages 175-6.</td>
<td>25/23</td>
<td>Panegyric poem. The great deeds of gods and heroes are linked with Augustus’ achievements. Great expectations.</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Line</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Prayer for Augustus’ health and well-being. Great expectations in the year of the ‘First Settlement’. Aug. will bring peace. The poem is in line with Horatius’ permanent view on Aug. as a strong leader. no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Refers to the men ‘of firm resolve’, i.e. Augustus. Allusion to the affair of Antonius and Cleopatra. The gods consent that Rome becomes the capital of the world and order that the capital should not be moved. This is allusion to the perceived plans of Ant. and Cleop. to establish Alexandria as the capital. Augustus has prevented this. The poem shows again Horatius’ permanent view that Augustus is the right leader. no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>28/27</td>
<td>Horatius mentions his own military involvements. Next, he refers to Augustus and describes the Gigantomachy, the struggle between order and disorder. Augustus can create order. The welfare of Italia was the cornerstone of the Augustan settlement. Augustus is the right choice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Panegyric to Augustus when he returns from Spain after three years of absence. Horatius keeps away from the public celebrations. This signifies that he did not want to be associated with Augustus’ wars abroad. However, the princeps can bring peace and order and maintains the conditions for a pleasant life. no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Horatius wrote at Augustus’ request the celebratory poem for the Ludi Saeculares; the poem is a public praise of Roman well-being and of Augustus who realised this. The poem is also prayer that he can maintain this. yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmen:</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Panegyric to Tiberius and to Drusus who had great success in their Gallic campaign. They have been great due to fatherly advice of Augustus who is greater still. Praise of Augustus’ leadership. This poem is consistent with Horatius’ permanent view of Augustus, when the poet was in his fifties. no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Warm feelings towards Augustus who has been away for a long time. Concern for Aug. safety. Peace and stability has returned to the Italian countryside and this will remain as long as Aug. reigns. The poet is content with the peace in the land and poem is consistent with the feelings which he held at the end of his life. no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Similar to Carmen 4.4. The defeat of the Gallic tribes by Tiberius and Drusus has been achieved by the leadership of Augustus. Preparations for celebrations of Augustus’ military and diplomatic Achievements. The latter started 15 years earlier with the defeat of Antonius and Cleopatra and have continued since. no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>11?</td>
<td>‘Crown of panegyrics’ to Augustus who had restored the economy and the peace, and also brought new laws. Refers to Augustus’ greatness which originates from his descent of Venus and Anchises. In his late fifties Horatius looks back and testifies that Augustus has served Rome well. ?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistula:</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>Horatius asks official Quinctius if he is happy. If ever he were to be praised with the words of Varius, he should know that these are not meant for him, but for Augustus. Poet reflects on the meaning of vir bonus and puts this in the perspective of managing the affairs of state. The good man is good in public and in private, just as Augustus is. The poem is consistent with Horat.’ permanent view on Aug. no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Panegyric in part in which Horatius praises Augustus, but detracts from the praise by subtly alluding to the latter’s lack of success at Naulochus and Actium. no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propertius:</td>
<td>Elegia:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>24 Propertius’ ‘Cleopatra Ode’. However, the poem was written thirteen years after the ‘marriage’ of Antonius and Cleopatra which created panic in Rome. Praise of Octavianus’ victory and the restored safety of Rome. The praise is reduced by the unconcealed admiration for Cleopatra.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>&gt;16 Poem about Tarpeia’s destructive love for the Sabine king Titus Tatius. She was prepared to sacrifice everything for a passionate love. Support of Aug. moral laws which are consistent with Propertius’ own views.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>&gt;16 About a procuress who taught a girl how to ensnare men and how to feign the rites of Isis and abstain from sex. Propertius condemns the advice which also goes against Augustus’ banning of foreign gods. The poem appears to be in support of the marital and moral laws of Augustus, but adds a very personal view held by the poet: his plea for relationships between men and women on basis of respect and equality.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>16 The battle of Actium was the beginning of a new era, one of peace and order and this is the achievement of Octavianus. This is the panegyric element of the poem and is consistent with Propertius’ own views. However, the poet detracts from the praise by (1) the introduction of Iulius Caesar and allusion to Cleopatra in the poem: Iulius Caesar gloats over Cleopatra’s defeat and recalls their natural son, while Octavianus is an adopted son. (2) The poet says that it was as well that Cleopatra had not been captured at Actium and had been part of Octavianus’ triumph. This is a gibe at Cleopatra’s previous stay at Rome.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>16 Speech of Cornelia, daughter of Scribonia, who died at a young age. She addresses the judges in the underworld and attests of the purity of her life as wife and mother. Support of Augustus’ moral reforms which are also in line with Propertius’ own convictions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bibliography

Primary literature, in alphabetical order

Apollonius Rhodius:

Augustus:

Callimachus:

Cassius Dio:

Cicero:

Diodorus Siculus:

Diogenes Laertius:

Ennius:

Epigrams:


**Gallus:**


**Gellius:**


**Homerus:**


**Horatius:**


**Livius:**


**Lucrètius:**


**Macrobius:**


**Martialis:**


**Naevius:**


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Plinius Minor:

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**Summary in English**

In this study I explore the question whether the works of Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius contain conscious and explicit propaganda for the person and policies of Octavianus, later Augustus (63 B.C.-14 A.D.), or whether the poets unfold their own opinions about the social and political questions of their time in their poems.

After Iulius Caesar’s murder in 44 B.C. the civil war, which had raged in the Republic, entered a new phase and it was only after the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. that Octavianus could set about establishing his authority, through which order and tranquility became possible. Until that year an armed struggle had been taking place, as Octavianus had directed extensive military campaigns against his major opponent Marcus Antonius and others. In 27 B.C. Octavianus became princeps and from then on concerned himself with the transition, which would eventually transform the republic into a monarchy. It is often stated in secondary literature that Octavianus started a programme of propaganda in order to legitimise the new constitutional arrangements and his own position. It is suggested that he used several different means for this purpose, such as the restoration and aggrandisement of Rome, the building of new temples and public buildings and the erection of self-portraits. Many scholars in the field of literary research have testified that, in addition, the princeps forced – or at least strongly encouraged – the poets at the time to write propagandist poetry. This discussion among scholars turned into a politically loaded debate in the 1930’s when the leadership in Italy endeavoured to start such a propagandist programme to further their own political aims. In this book I will review the secondary literature and classify the most important essays and books according to the author’s position in the debate (Chapter I).

Before commencing with an assessment of all the extant poetry of Vergilius (70 B.C.-19 B.C.), Horatius (65 B.C.-8 B.C.) and Propertius (ab. 50 B.C.-2 A.D.), I examine the backdrop against which the poets worked. As they were influenced by people and events around them, the question is explored as to what affected the poets. In the context of our research an equally relevant question is whom the poets aimed to reach and what message they wanted to convey, if any at all. It can not be taken for granted that they wrote propaganda, but if this was the case, their supposed propagandist output must have served an aim. Was it for Augustus who wanted to gain acceptance of his policies by different strata of the population? Which groups did he have in mind? Was it the population at large that he wanted to convince, not only in Rome but also in the provinces? Or was he only interested in the upper classes which provided the opinion leaders? This gives rise to many different questions about the context in which the poets worked: not only the general context, such as the course of the power struggle after 44 B.C. and political developments in Rome, but also of the specific context, such as the audiences for which the poets wrote. I address these questions in Chapter II, which begins with a short discussion of the historical context. This is followed by a brief review of the visual media in Rome and Italia in the Late Republic and the Early Empire. This is of importance in order to see whether the visual images served a wider aim than the representation of power alone and whether these were instruments of propaganda and in order to explore what the relationship of on the one hand statues and visual images, and on the other hand poetry was. After this I examine the possible role of poetry for propaganda. If poetry was used for propaganda it must have been either read privately or recited in public or in semi-public readings. Thus, issues of literacy levels, education and likely audiences in the public and private arena and the subject of literary patronage are briefly discussed. At
the end of Chapter II I formulate three preliminary conclusions which result from studying the context. These conclusions are. Firstly, poetry was not suitable for mass-propaganda and had only very limited value for propaganda aimed at the political and social elite. Secondly, Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius wrote poetry for like-minded people. Thirdly, the poets were commentators who offered their views on contemporaneous issues on their own initiative.

In order to validate these conclusions, I have examined the texts with the help of a scheme, which I have developed specifically for this purpose and in which I apply the following three criteria. Firstly, the criterion of actuality is applied to determine whether a poem evidently concerns matters which have an actual political or social scope. I have subdivided poems with such a scope in either ‘political’ or ‘private political’ poems. In ‘political’ poems the poet mentions Augustus or another leader explicitly and the poet presents his commentary on specific political or social issues (e.g. Horatius’ Carmen 1.37). In ‘private political’ poems a poet gives his views or commentary on the political, economic, social or moral situation of the day without directly referring to a particular person or event. In these cases the poet may reflect in general terms on political, social or moral issues (e.g. Carmen 2.15). In the case of some poems it is immediately clear that the poem concerns political issues, but in other poems the poet conceals his commentary. Therefore, the second criterion, the criterion of references is important. With this criterion I examine each poem in order to find out whether it contains references or allusions which could be determinants to render a poem ‘political’ or ‘private political’. Thirdly, I apply the criterion of dates by which I have confronted the likely dates of writing with the actual events at the time.

I have carefully scrutinised all texts for allusions and their likely meaning. Allusions were very common in classical poetry and the reading of the poems of that age with an eye to allusions can reveal hidden themes: one will find nearly forty examples listed in the General Index. These range from allusions to persons (Augustus, Cleopatra) or historical events (Actium, the civil war) to situations (Rome as the capital of the empire). A literary model can also act as a form of allusion by triggering references to contemporaneous persons or events in the reader’s mind. In the Aeneis, Vergilius creates mythical persons and places these back in time to more than thousand years earlier, while probably using for these mythical persons literary models of his own time. In this manner Vergilius combines myths and reality to interpret his own time. The use of a particular model can form the origin of allusions to contemporaneous persons or events. In this respect the literary model belongs to the domain of the allusions. In my opinion the use of these criteria in their mutual connection has led to a number of new insights into the meaning of several poems. Examples are Vergilius’ Eclogae 6 and 8, and his Aristaeus’ epyllion, Horatius’ Iambi 7, 9 and 16, and Propertius’ Elegiae 1.21, 1.22 and 4.6. These new interpretations can be read in the relevant parts of the thesis.

As a next step I establish whether a poem is supportive, neutral or critical of Octavianus and later of Augustus. This step is necessary in order to determine whether a poem is propagandist; it is unlikely that a poem is propagandist if it is neutral or critical of the princeps. This is not to say that a supportive poem is propagandist as a matter of course.

Finally, I present the ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems schematically, by which the relationships between (1) the content of the poem, (2) a possible supportive/critical attitude and
(3) the (approximate) date of writing can be made visible. The contents of the poems are divided into six different groups: poems about the poet’s own experience, about his own poetry, about the civil war, about hopes of better times after the civil war, about moral issues and about his views on life. The treatment of the subject matter by the poet may not represent his personal views or feelings. The poet deals with _topoi_ on which he wants to express an opinion. However, if a specific opinion returns regularly over a length of time, it becomes likely that we are being confronted with a view which the poet holds.

The main body of research have been the texts themselves. Fundamental to my approach is my conviction that the works of the poets hold the key to their views and beliefs and that a student of these texts should examine the poems unburdened by so-called relevant theories: the texts come first. All the extant work of the three poets has been examined without preselecting the genre. Successively I analyse the _Eclogae_ (Bucolica) and the _Georgica_ of Vergil (Chapter III), his _Aeneis_ (Chapter IV), the _Sermones_ (Satires) and _lambi_ of Horatius (Chapter V), his _Carmina_ (Odes) and _Epistulae_ (Chapter VI) and finally the _Elegiae_ of Propertius (Chapter VII). Examining the texts with the help of the above mentioned scheme leads me to identify those poems with a ‘political’ or ‘private political’ content which are either supportive or critical of Octavianus or Augustus, or of people in his immediate circle, or of his policies. It has not been possible to capture the data with respect to Vergil’s _Georgica_ and _Aeneis_ in the same manner as in the case of the individual poems. Nevertheless some general conclusions about Vergil’s political stance can be drawn from the _Georgica_ and from the _Aeneis_. In summary, this is that Vergil possesses outspoken views on major political questions. In his view it was right that Octavianus had vanquished Antonius and this was for the good of Rome. Although the civil war had severely damaged Italia, which dispirited Vergil, Octavianus’ victory created the best hope of achieving restoration. The restoration required a strong leader and a different constitution: thus kingship was acceptable for Vergil. In the first part of book 4 of the _Georgica_, which was written either in 30 or 29 B.C., Vergil welcomes the emerging Principate.

The results for Vergil’s _Eclogae_ and for the poems of Horatius and Propertius can be summarised as follows (Chapter VIII). The majority of the _Eclogae_ consists of ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems. Half of Horatius’ work is about issues which relate to the actual political situation and in the case of Propertius this amounts to a third. For the three poets together the total number of ‘political’ and ‘private political’ poems is 120: of these 27 are critical and 22 (1 by Vergil, 15 by Horatius and 6 by Propertius) are supportive.

The first critical poems are either _Eclogae_ 7 and 9 which Vergil wrote sometime between 40 and 35 B.C. or Horatius’ _lambi_ 7 and 16, written in 39 or 38 B.C. All four poems deal with the civil war and its effects, such as the land expropriations and the new land owners or with the ongoing struggle. The first critical poems of Propertius are _Elegiae_ 1.21 and 1.22, which were written ten years later (29 B.C.) and which also deal with the civil war. All three poets wrote critical poetry right up until the end of their careers. Vergil’s last lines of the _Aeneis_ are critical of the manner of Turnus’ death which, in my opinion, is an allusion to Augustus’ alleged cruelty on several occasions during the civil war, for instance in the case the farmers’ evictions of their land which had caused many casualties and, even worse, in the case of the slaughter at the surrender of Perusia. Horatius wrote _Carmen_ 4.2 late in his career, sometime between 17 and 13 B.C., when he refrains from contributing to Augustus’ triumph and one of
his very last works, *Epistula* 2.1 (12 or 11 B.C.) ends with a *recusatio*. Propertius’ last but one *Elegia* (4.10), written after 16 B.C., alludes to Augustus’ failure as a military leader.

Although, when reviewing twenty-five years of critical poetry, a shift in the subject matter from criticism of the civil war towards criticism of moral behaviour and of other moral issues is visible, the three poets remained consistently critical of the *princeps* and his leadership in a major part of their output.

The 22 supportive poems were written during roughly the twenty year period from 30 to 11 B.C.: after Actium when Augustus’ reign took hold and peace, order and stability returned. These 22 are the most likely candidates for propagandist writing. I have submitted each of these individually to a close inspection in order to establish whether they could have been written as pieces of propaganda. I have asked four questions. Firstly, does the poet express in a specific ‘supportive’ poem, views or praise, while we can deduce from other (preferably critical) poems that the poet holds this positive view anyway? The likelihood then that this poem was written as propaganda by order of Augustus is less than that it originated on the poet’s own initiative. Secondly, does the poet express views which happen to coincide with those of Augustus? Thirdly, does the poet write lines of praise of Augustus in a specific poem, only to detract from these in the course of the poem? Fourthly, does the poet pay a compliment to the *princeps* which coincides with the general feeling in Rome at the time and hardly requires a boost of propagandist verse?

The result of this analysis of the 22 supportive poems is that 16 of these are unlikely products of propagandist writing, that 1 is clearly propagandist (*Carmen Saeculare*) and 5 are possibly propagandist (Horatius’ *Carmina* 1.12, 3.4, 4.14 and 4.15 and Propertius’ *Elegia* 3.18). However, these 6 poems must be considered with the total output of the poets in mind. When we look more closely, the *Carmen Saeculare* is a special case: requested by Augustus, written for a special occasion and no doubt with a strong ‘national’ content which may be seen as propagandist. The putative propagandist nature of the other 5 possible ‘candidate-poems’ can be explained by eulogistic writing of the poets on their own initiative: the 5 poems mentioned belong together with some other of Horatius’ and Propertius’ poems (*Carmina* 1.2, 3.3, 3.14, 4.5, *Epistula* 1.16 and *Elegiae* 3.11 and 4.6) to the group of panegyric poems. The latter are naturally supportive of Augustus. If we are to consider the twelve panegyric poems (which include the 5 ‘candidate-poems’ with a supposed propagandist nature) as propagandist we should be aware that these were written by the same three men who together wrote a total of 262 poems of which 27 were blatantly critical. We should also be forced to accept the unlikely case that the poets wrote critical poetry the one day and propagandist poetry the next and we must believe that the presumed interested party who had ordered the propaganda (Augustus) would have accepted this.

The conclusion of my research is that Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius were well-informed men through their education and their position in Roman society, who were capable of judging the events of their days. Coupled with their attitude of wanting to maintain their personal freedom and independence of mind, they are unlikely writers of propaganda. The results of the analyses of the texts support this point of view. The high share of politically engaged poetry, the critical poems which they wrote during their whole career, and the continuity of their themes are the grounds for my conclusion that Vergilius, Horatius and Propertius wrote as commentators and not as their master’s voices.
**Summary in Dutch**

In deze studie onderzoek ik de vraag of de werken van Vergilius, Horatius en Propertius bewuste en expliciete propaganda voor de persoon en het beleid van Octavianus, later Augustus (63 v. Chr. – 14 na Chr.), bevatten, of dat de dichters hun eigen opvattingen over de sociale en politieke vragen van hun tijd laten zien.

Na de moord op Iulius Caesar in 44 v. Chr. kwam de burgeroorlog, die de Republiek teisterde, in een nieuwe fase en pas na de slag bij Actium in 31 v. Chr. kon Octavianus een begin maken met het vestigen van zijn gezag, waardoor orde en rust mogelijk werden. Tot dat jaar had het gewapend conflict geduurd en had Octavianus een uitgebreide militaire campagne tegen zijn belangrijkste tegenstander Marcus Antonius (samen met Cleopatra) en anderen gevoerd. In 27 v. Chr. werd Octavianus princeps en vanaf dat jaar hield hij zich bezig met de verandering die uiteindelijk van de republiek een monarchie maakte. Men leest veelal in de secundaire literatuur dat Octavianus een propaganda programma opzette om de nieuwe constitutie en zijn positie te legitimeren. Men stelt dat hij hiertoe vele verschillende middelen inzette, zoals het herstel en de verfraaiing van Rome, het bouwen van nieuwe tempels en openbare gebouwen en het oprichten van beelden van zichzelf. Vele geleerden op het gebied van het literaire onderzoek hebben beweerd dat de princeps bovendien de dichters van die tijd dwong – of tenminste sterk aanmoedigde – om gedichten met een propagandistische inhoud te schrijven. Deze discussie tussen geleerden werd een politiek beladen debat in de jaren dertig van de vorige eeuw, toen de politieke leiding in Italië een dergelijke propaganda campagne probeerde te beginnen voor de eigen politieke doeleinden. In dit boek bespreek ik de secundaire literatuur en rangschik ik de belangrijkste essays en boeken op grond van de positie van de auteur in het debat (hoofdstuk I).

Voorafgaande aan het onderzoek van al de overgeleverde poëzie van Vergilius (70 – 19 v. Chr.), Horatius (65-8 v. Chr.) en Propertius (ca. 50 v. Chr. – 2 na Chr.), heb ik eerst de achtergrond waartegen de dichters werkten onderzocht. Zij waren mannen die bewust en actief leefden in de Romeinse en Italiaanse samenleving en die beïnvloed werden door de mensen en gebeurtenissen van hun tijd. Niet alleen de vraag wie en wat invloed hebben gehad op de dichters moet bestudeerd worden, maar evenzeer de vraag wie de dichters wilden bereiken en welke eventuele boodschap zij wilden brengen. Het is niet vanzelfsprekend dat zij propaganda hebben geschreven, maar als dit wel het geval geweest is, zal hun veronderstelde propaganda een doel gehad hebben. Wilde Augustus dat zijn beleid door verschillende lagen van de bevolking zou worden geaccepteerd en welke groepen had hij op het oog? Wilde hij brede lagen van de bevolking overtuigen, niet alleen in Rome, maar ook in de provinciën? Was hij wellicht alleen geïnteresseerd in de bovenlaag, waaruit de opinieleiders kwamen? Hieruit volgen vele vragen over de context waarin de dichters werkten, niet slechts de algemene context, zoals het verloop van de machtstrijd na 44 v. Chr. en de politieke ontwikkelingen in Rome maar ook de specifieke context, zoals het publiek voor wie de dichters schreven. In hoofdstuk II ga ik op deze vragen in. Het hoofdstuk begint met een beknopte beschrijving van de historische context. Dit wordt gevolgd door een korte beschrijving van een aantal publieke- en privé portretten, afbeeldingen en voorstellingen in Rome en Italië in de Late Republiek en de Vroege Keizertijd. Dit is van belang om te kunnen vaststellen of de portretten en voorstellingen, - naast het doel om de macht van de princeps te tonen -, ook instrumenten van propaganda geweest zouden kunnen zijn. Vervolgens ga ik in op de mogelij-
ke rol van poëzie als middel tot propaganda. Als gedichten voor propaganda zijn gebruikt zijn deze of door iemand gelezen of in openbare of semiopenbare bijeenkomsten voorgelezen. Daarom bespreek ik kort de mate van alfabetisme, opleiding, het mogelijke publiek in de openbare en privé bijeenkomsten en het literaire mecenaat. Aan het einde van hoofdstuk II geef ik drie voorlopige conclusies die op grond van de bestudering van de context kunnen worden getrokken. Deze conclusies zijn: ten eerste, poëzie was niet geschikt voor massa propaganda en had slechts een beperkte waarde voor propaganda die gericht zou zijn op de politieke en sociale elite; ten tweede, Vergilius, Horatius en Propertius schreven poëzie voor hun gelijken; ten derde, de dichters waren commentatoren die op eigen initiatief hun visie op de vragen van hun tijd gaven.

Om deze conclusies te toetsen heb ik de teksten bestudeerd met behulp van een onderzoeksmodel dat ik hiervoor heb ontwikkeld en waarin ik de volgende drie criteria gebruik. Ten eerste, het criterium van de actualiteit wordt gebruikt om vast te stellen of een gedicht evident over actuele politieke of sociale zaken gaat. Hierbij maak ik een ondervdeling in ‘politieke’ of ‘privé politieke’ gedichten. ‘Politieke’ gedichten zijn die waarin Augustus of een andere leider expliciet wordt genoemd en waarin de dichter commentaar op specifieke politieke of sociale zaken geeft. Een voorbeeld is Horatius’ Carmen 1.37, waarin de dichter zijn vreugde over de dood van Cleopatra uit. ‘Privé politieke’ gedichten zijn minder expliciet en ook minder gericht op een persoon of situatie: de dichter reflecteert over algemene politieke of sociale gebeurtenissen zonder een bepaalde persoon daar direct in te betrekken. Als voorbeeld kan Carmen 2.15 van Horatius genoemd worden, waarin de dichter zijn afkeuring van megalomanie en het najagen van grote luxe laat blijken. Bij sommige gedichten is het onmiddellijk duidelijk dat deze tot de groep van gedichten met een politiek of sociaal onderwerp behoren, bij andere is het commentaar verborgen. Daarom is het tweede criterium van belang, namelijk het criterium van de verwijzingen. Hiermee heb ik ieder gedicht onderzocht om te bepalen of het gedicht verwijzingen of allusies (zinspelingen, indirecte verwijzingen) bevat die belangrijke determinanten kunnen zijn om een gedicht ‘politiek’ of ‘privé politiek’ te maken. Ten derde, gebruik ik het criterium van de datering waarbij ik de waarschijnlijke tijd of periode van het schrijven van het gedicht vergelijk met de gebeurtenissen in die periode.


In de volgende stap stel ik vast of een gedicht ondersteunend, neutraal of kritisch over Octavianus, en later Augustus is. Dit onderscheid is nodig om te bepalen of een gedicht propagandistisch zou kunnen zijn; het is onwaarschijnlijk dat een gedicht propagandistisch is als het neutraal of kritisch is over de *princeps*. Dit wil niet zeggen dat een ondersteunend gedicht vanzelfsprekend propagandistisch is.

Tenslotte plaats ik de ‘politeke’ en de ‘privé politieke’ gedichten in een schema waarmee de relaties tussen (1) de inhoud van het gedicht, (2) een mogelijke ondersteunende of kritische houding en (3) de datum van schrijven van het gedicht (indien bekend) inzichtelijk gemaakt kunnen worden. De inhoud van de gedichten is verdeeld in zes verschillende klassen: gedichten over de eigen ervaring van de dichter, over zijn eigen poëzie, over de burgeroorlog, over hoop op betere tijden na de burgeroorlog, over morele vragen en over zijn levensvisie. Het is mogelijk dat de wijze waarop de dichter een bepaald onderwerp behandelt niet noodzakelijk zijn eigen persoonlijke opinie weergeeft, maar dat de dichter algemene onderwerpen van gesprek (topoi) behandelt waarover hij zijn mening wil geven. Als echter een bepaalde opvatting regelmatig terugkeert over een langere periode wordt het waarschijnlijker dat wij te maken hebben met een mening van de dichter zelf.

De teksten zelf vormen het belangrijkste deel van mijn onderzoek. Bepalend voor mijn benadering is mijn overtuiging dat de werken van de dichters de sleutels tot hun standpunten zijn en dat degene die de teksten bestudeert dit moet doen zonder gehinderd te worden door het gewicht van de zogenaamde relevante theorieën: de teksten zijn leidend. Ik heb al het overgeleverde werk van de drie dichters bestudeerd zonder een genre uit sluiten. Achtereenvolgens heb ik de *Eclogae* (*Bucolica*) en *de Georgica* van Vergilius (hoofdstuk III), zijn *Aeneis* (hoofdstuk IV), de *Sermones* (Satiren) en *lambi* van Horatius (hoofdstuk V), zijn *Carmina* (Oden) en *Epistulae* (hoofdstuk VI) en tenslotte de *Elegiae* van Propertius (hoofdstuk VII) geanalyseerd. Onderzoek van de teksten met behulp van het schema heeft geresulteerd in het vaststellen welke gedichten een ‘politeke’ of een ‘privé politieke’ inhoud hebben en welke ondersteunend of kritisch over Octavianus of Augustus, over mensen in zijn omgeving of over zijn beleid zijn. Het is niet mogelijk om de resultaten van Vergilius’ *Georgica* en *Aeneis* op dezelfde wijze weer te geven als die van de individuele gedichten. Toch kunnen een aantal algemene conclusies over Vergilius’ politieke standpunten worden getrokken door het bestuderen van de *Georgica* en de *Aeneis*. De dichter had uitgesproken meningen over de belangrijke politieke vragen. Hij ondersteunde Octavianus’ overwinning over Antonius en hij was van mening dat dit tot heil van Rome was. Hoewel de burgeroorlog Italia ernstige schade had berokkend, waaronder Vergilius had geleden, was met Octavianus’ komst weer hoop gekomen dat herstel mogelijk zou zijn. Het herstel vereiste een sterke leider en een andere constitutie: het koningschap was acceptabel voor Vergilius. In het eerste deel van het vierde boek van de *Georgica*, dat Vergilius in 30 of 29 v. Chr. schreef, verwelkomde hij het opkomende Principaat.
De resultaten van het onderzoek van Vergilius’ *Eclogae* en van de gedichten van Horatius en Propertius worden samengevat in hoofdstuk VIII. De meerderheid van de *Eclogae* bestaat uit ‘politieke’ en ‘privé politieke’ gedichten. De helft van het werk van Horatius gaat over onderwerpen die betrekking hebben op de actuele politieke situatie en in het geval van Propertius is dit een derde. Voor de drie dichters samen is het totale aantal ‘politieke’ en ‘privé politieke’ gedichten 120. Hiervan zijn 27 kritisch en 22 (1 van Vergilius, 15 van Horatius en 6 van Propertius) ondersteunend.


Gedurende vijfentwintig jaren (van ongeveer 40 tot ongeveer 15 v. Chr.) schrijven de drie dichters kritische poëzie over de *princeps* en zijn leiderschap. Er is echter een verschuiving in de onderwerpen, van kritiek op de burgeroorlog naar kritiek op de morele waarden van vooral de Romeinse elite.

De 22 ondersteunende gedichten zijn geschreven gedurende de periode van ongeveer twintig jaren van 30 tot 11 v. Chr.: dit is na Actium, in de tijd dat de regering van Augustus zich ontwikkelde en vrede, orde en stabiliteit weer heersten. Deze 22 gedichten zijn de meest waarschijnlijke kandidaten voor propagandistische poëzie en ik heb elk ondersteunend gedicht onderzocht om te zien of deze als propaganda zou kunnen zijn geschreven. Ik stel vier vragen. Ten eerste: verkondigt de dichter in een bepaald ondersteunend gedicht opvattingen of lofprijzingen waarvan wij uit andere (bij voorkeur kritische) gedichten weten dat de dichter deze mening toch al was toegekend? In dat geval is het onwaarschijnlijk dat het gedicht op bevel van Augustus als propaganda is geschreven. Het is waarschijnlijk dat een dergelijk gedicht is ontstaan op eigen initiatief van de dichter. Ten tweede: heeft de dichter over bepaalde onderwerpen dezelfde gedachten of meningen als Augustus? Ten derde: wordt in een gedicht Augustus geprezen terwijl in hetzelfde gedicht deze lof weer wordt weggenoemen of sterk verminderd? Ten vierde: prijst de dichter de *princeps* terwijl uit andere bronnen bekend is dat deze positieve houding algemeen was en geen verdere stimulans nodig had door middel van ‘de open deur’ van propagandistische verzen?

Het resultaat van deze analyse van de 22 ondersteunende gedichten is dat het niet waarschijnlijk is dat 16 hiervan de producten zijn van propagandistisch schrijven, terwijl 1 duidelijk (*Carmen Saeculare*) en 5 mogelijk propagandistisch zijn (Horatius’ *Carmina* 1.12, 3.4, 4.14 en 4.15 en Propertius’ *Elegia* 3.18). Deze 6 gedichten moeten echter wel beoordeeld wor-
den binnen het totaal van het werk van de dichters. De *Carmen Saeculare* is een speciaal geval: geschreven op verzoek van Augustus voor een speciale gelegenheid en zonder twijfel een gedicht met een sterk ‘nationaal’ karakter dat als propaganda kan worden beschouwd. Maar de vermeende propagandistische aard van de overige 5 ‘kandidaat gedichten’ kan ook verklaard als men annueeit dat de dichters op eigen initiatief een eulogie schreven: de 5 genoemde gedichten behoren met een aantal andere van Horatius’ en Propertius’ gedichten (Carmina 1.2, 3.3, 3.14, 4.5, Epistula 1.16 en Elegiae 3.11 en 4.6) tot de groep van panegyriek (lofrede), die uiteraard ondersteunend is. Als men de 12 panegyrische gedichten (waartoe de 5 ‘kandidaat gedichten’ met een veronderstelde propagandistisch karakter behoren) inderdaad als propagandistisch zou beschouwen, dan moet men wel bedenken dat deze zijn geschreven door dezelfde drie mannen die met elkaar 262 gedichten geschreven hebben waarvan 27 regelrecht kritisch zijn. Bovendien moet men dan het onwaarschijnlijke feit aanvaarden dat de dichters nu eens kritische poëzie en dan weer propaganda schreven en dat de princeps, die het schrijven van de propaganda bevolen zou hebben, deze toestand zou hebben getolereerd.

Op grond van mijn onderzoek concludeer ik dat Vergilius, Horatius en Propertius door hun opleiding en hun plaats in de Romeinse samenleving goed geïnformeerde mannen waren, die in staat waren om de gebeurtenissen van hun tijd te beoordelen. Gevoegd bij hun wens om hun persoonlijke vrijheid en onafhankelijkheid te bewaren, is het niet waarschijnlijk dat zij propaganda schreven. De uitkomst van de analyse van de teksten ondersteunt deze opvatting. Uit het grote aandeel dat geëngageerde poëzie heeft in hun totale werk, uit de kritische gedichten, die zij gedurende hun gehele carrière schreven, en uit de continuïteit in hun thema’s, concludeer ik verder dat Vergilius, Horatius en Propertius schreven als commentatoren en niet als ‘de stem van hun meester’.
Curriculum Vitae

Leendert Weeda was born on 22nd January 1940 in Bussum, the Netherlands.

From 1951 to 1957 I attended the Gereformeerder Gymnasium (later Woltjer Gymnasium) in Amsterdam where I did my finals in science (gymnasium B). In September 1957 I enrolled at the Science Faculty of the Vrije Universiteit, also in Amsterdam. I graduated here in Physical Chemistry in 1964. Following this I wrote my Ph.D. dissertation in the field of chemical physics on a subject entitled ‘Ionic Enthalpies of Solvation’. Having defended my thesis on a Friday afternoon in June 1967, I joined the Royal Dutch Navy on the following Monday morning as a conscript trainee naval officer. Two years later I was discharged.

I joined Philips Electronics in Eindhoven in 1969. In January 1972 I moved to the United Kingdom, initially for a period of two years. This resulted in over fourteen enjoyable years, where I successively worked as production manager of a Mullard (full daughter of Philips) factory in Southport, near Liverpool and later of the newly-built colour tube factory of Mullard in Durham. In 1977 I moved to London where I was appointed to the board of Mullard as technical director.

After seventeen years with Philips I returned to the Netherlands in 1986 and changed my career: I joined the Slingeland Hospital in Doetinchem as chairman and general manager. The Slingeland Hospital was the result of a fusion of two smaller local hospitals. The focus of my efforts was to establish the new organisation and to build a new hospital. Eight years later I moved on again to become involved with Philips in Eindhoven once more. In 1994 I was appointed as the interim director of Philips’ Medical Services with the additional task of detaching the services from Philips and to bring them together in a new separate company, independent of their former mother. This was achieved in 1998.

In the meantime I had been asked to join the Faculty of Economics and Business Studies at the University of Groningen. I taught there as a senior lecturer and assistant professor until 2001, when I retired. A few years earlier my wife and I had joined the Latin class of Mrs. Lennieke Verbrugge at the grammar school in Zeist, where we live. Through her classes my old love for the classics was rekindled. As I do not like to do things by halves I enrolled at the classics department of the Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen in 2001, where I have spent a most enjoyable nine years, a student among the students: and a fine lot they are!