

## Myrtle Crowns, Late Roses, and the War on Summer, or, Horace's *Fasti*

*For Philip: 'Thou pluckest / burning'*

In the last lines of his first book of *Epistles*, Horace describes himself—just turned forty in frigid December (27 *quater undenos sciat impleuisse Decembris*)—as ‘well-suited to suns’ (*solibus aptum*)<sup>1</sup>: the plural might be poetic (for the singular), might reflect the regularity of his sunbathing habit, or perhaps his appreciation of suns in different places—one cannot, says a Horatian ode (2.16.18-20), ‘escape oneself’ (*se...fugit*) by leaving for ‘lands warmed by a different sun’ (*terras alio calentis...sole*)—or perhaps this child of winter’s appreciation for other season’s suns. Fond of tanning Horace might have been—might Persius’ mockery of the naked tanner (*Sat.* 4.33–41) be an attack on his own satiric master, Horace, master tanner?—but one sun in particular posed problems for Horace throughout his *oeuvre*: the sun of the Canicule, named after the constellation *Canis*, ‘The Dog’, and our hemisphere’s brightest star, Sirius, whose heliacal rising (roughly between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of July, depending on latitude) marks the hottest period of the year.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter argues that Horace’s war on the summer animates his work from his *Satires* and *Epodes* through his *Odes*. Following a brief tour of the problem of summer for hexameter the poetic tradition since Homer, and a rapid treatment of the problem of the canicule in Horace’s *Satires* and *Epodes*, this chapter shows how a close reading of one especially short and unassuming poem—Horace’s *Persicos odi* (1.38), which crowns his first lyric book with myrtles and the unseasonal rose—helps encapsulate, at one and the same time, Horace’s poetics of the solitary sphere and his cosmic politics, and, connecting the two, what we might call Horace’s *Fasti*, the calendrical rhythms that help stimulate his poetic imagination. Such structures have been difficult to detect due to the divide between the study of ritual on the one hand, and of literature on the other; as this chapter shows, what Renaud Gagné might call Rome’s “ritual archive”<sup>3</sup> can serve as another, perhaps unexpected, thesaurus of the imagination, another intertext, for a poet such as Horace. A variety of temporal rhythms—seasonal, climactic, vegetal, cultic, astrological—form this treasure-house, and help Horace,

<sup>1</sup> The plural *solibus* might be poetic plural, or describe his love for sunbathing on a regular basis (i.e. one day’s sun, the next day’s sun); on the other hand, it might mean the sun as experienced in different places, which Horace elsewhere describes as a change of sun that cannot change one’s fortune, or self (*Odes* 1.16.18-20 *Quid terras alio calentis / sole mutamus? Patriae quis exul / se quoque fugit?*).

<sup>2</sup> Zucker 2016:243–248.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Gagné 2021:375.

child of fortune, subject of *Fortuna*, to triumph over even Jupiter, bedecked as he is, we shall see, in both peaceful myrtle and vaunting laurel.

## The Dog Star, from Homer to Claudian

Horace's interest in the Dog Star as poetic problem and resource builds on its use as structuring figure in the epic tradition. In the *Iliad* (22.25–31), just before Achilles fights and kills Hector, Priam sees the Greek hero sprint across the field as though he were Sirius, the Dog Star: while the 'Dog of Orion' might be the brightest star in the sky (λαμπρότατος), 'yet it is construed as an evil sign, and it brings great burning heat (πυρετόν) for miserable mortals'. What begins as metaphor to explain Achilles' jump ends, as the poet concludes, as description of his armour's glint: that we cannot tell whether one or the other, or both, are focalised through the eyes of Priam or poet makes the moment all the more striking. Whoever is making the comparison, there is a broader symbolism at work: plants in high summer, like Hector's life, flourish, but briefly. In this, Hector's brief life and glorious death resemble Achilles' rejection of his fatherland, Phthia, for glory that is *aphthiton*, 'unwithering', but also, 'not Phthia', the place of wilting, where vegetation, and heroism, goes to die, as if under Sirius' withering gaze.<sup>4</sup>

Hesiod's *Works and Days* (582–8) nuances Sirius' victims, and its beneficiaries, fitting them into a gendered scheme: during the canicule, 'Women are sluttier but that does men no good, greatly weakened as they are in heads and knees from the Dog Star's searing heat'. Alcaeus agreed: 'The artichoke is in flower; now are women most pestilential, but men are weak, for Sirius parches their heads and knees' (Alcaeus, fr. 347). In these sources, the canicule is good for women's libido, bad for men's. Lucretius makes no such gendered distinctions: ending *De Rerum Natura*, it is "death-bearing summer" (6.1138 *mortifer aestus*) that ushered in the great Plague of Athens, at its worst in summer (1257 *quo magis aestu*). When the third book of Virgil's *Georgics* adapts Lucretius' plague, it builds on Aratus' *Phaenomena* (326–336) to turn this plague into a cosmic affliction under Sirius' fiery gaze: 'bad weather burned bright with the full summer of autumn' (3.479 *tempestas totoque autumnu incanduit aestu*)—as in Homer (*Iliad* 22.27 ὀπώρας), in autumn because now past the period of the summer's solstice (in mid-June). This affliction brings that book to a horrific, burning end, and thus parallels the first book's description of the assassination of Caesar and the conflagrations of

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<sup>4</sup> For a recent discussion, building on Nagy 1979, see Garcia 2013 'Appendix: The Semantic Field of 'Decay' in Homeric Epic'.

civil war. It is also parallel to the death of the culture-hero Aristaeus' bees in the fourth book—one recalls that Apollonius of Rhodes (2.500–27) attributes to this same Aristaeus, son of Apollo, the credit for having taught humans how to appease Sirius' wrath, and bring about the Etesian winds, which render the heat more bearable.<sup>5</sup>

Other sources specify that appeasing Sirius, the Dog Star, requires sacrifice of (red) dogs (Fest. P. 358,27 s.v. *Rutilae canes*): in the classical epic tradition, this finds fulfilment at the turn of the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE, when Claudian's *De Raptu Proserpinae* ends with the goddess Ceres transforming into a furious force of fiery death and destruction, using the still-smoldering fires of Jupiter's gigantomachic battles to transform the poem's mythical eternal spring into a lifeless future of scorched earth; as Ceres goes on her way, the poem ends as 'some dogs are silent, and others, not yet terrified, bark' (3.447–448 *canibusque reductis / pars stupefacta silet, pars nondum exterrita latrat*). From the *Iliad*'s fatal duel of Hector at one side of the classical epic tradition, to Ceres' burning anger on the other (and in a poem that had begun in a spring-like winter), the burning dog-star is there, 'Moving without pressure, over the dead leaves, / In the autumn heat' as T.S. Eliot wrote in his 'Burnt Norton', concerning the house of that name, covered with roses, lost to fire.

### Canidia and Canicule in Horace's *Satires* and *Epodes*

The canicule was thus a tool of thought for the epic tradition. It also, though, animated Horace's decidedly non-epic ambitions, and, we shall see, his poetry's structures. Born in wintry December (on the eighth, per Suetonius), Horace's poetic *persona* often saw in the canicule's heating powers a nemesis, or anti-muse, of his earliest works, the hexametric *Satires* (1.8) and his polymetric *Epodes* (5; 17).<sup>6</sup> *nomen omen*: Ellen Oliensis (1991) has shown how Horace's witch Canidia, in particular in the *Epodes*, borrows from *Canis*, Sirius and the Canicule's literary tradition. Canidia causes Horatius Flaccus to grow, as his name would suggest, flaccid. As Emily Gowers has resumed Oliensis' point succinctly for the *Satires* (*ad* Hor. *Sat.* 1.8.24), Canidia constitutes 'at heart a sexual battle between female overheatedness and male debility', precisely the problem of the canicule from archaic poetry on.<sup>7</sup>

As Canidia ends the *Epodes* by torturing a young boy (Horace) with fire, the last of his *Satires* (2.8) features a *convivium* gone wrong; among the many deficiencies of this feast *chez*

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Callim. fr. 75. 33–7 Pf.; see Jackson 2003.

<sup>6</sup> On Horace and the (wintry) bear, see Kachuck 2021b; on Horace's birthday, see Kachuck 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. On heat and male impotence in the *Epodes* and *Satires*, see Fitzgerald 1988: 176–91.

Nasidienus is the burning of dishes. When the host serves a blackbird with its chest *adusto* (*Sat.* 2.8.90—"charred" (Freudenburg *ad loc.*) or "burnt-off" (Gowers 1993:176–7)—the guests decide to leave the food as though it had been breathed upon (*afflaset*) by Canidia. This "breathing-upon" already implies heat or "setting on fire" (OLD s.v. *afflo* 5)—in Germanicus' translation of *Arator*, this is precisely what Sirius does (fr.4.41, *terras cum letifer ortu Sirius afflavit*)—and Nasidienus' guests specifically seek to avoid Canidia's (presumably hot) breath, "worse than African serpents" (*peior serpentibus Afris*), their poison sharpened by the desert's heat.<sup>8</sup> It is thus in Canidia's canicular heat that Horace's pre-lyric projects—the *Satires* and the *Epodes*—come to an end. His *Odes*, we shall see, pick up where those earlier poems left off.

### Horace *Odes* 1.38: When are Roses 'Late'?

Following the *Satire* and *Epodes*, Horace surprises the world with the first three books of *Odes*, likely assembled into a large edition of 23 BC.<sup>9</sup> In search of Horace's genre-spanning war on summer, we turn, first, to an unassuming little poem—the last of the first book of *Odes*—and ask of it a simple question: when are roses late?

Persicos odi, puer, apparatus,  
displicent nexae philyra coronae,  
mitte sectari, rosa quo locorum  
sera moretur.

I dislike Persian additions, boy,  
Crowns woven with linden bast displease,  
Stop looking for the place where the  
Late rose tarries.

Simplici myrto nihil adlabores  
sedulus, curo: neque te ministrum  
dedecet myrtus neque me sub arta  
vite bibentem.

Don't trouble yourself to add a thing  
To simple myrtle, I pray; for myrtle suits  
You serving, me drinking, under  
Thickset vine.

Precisely the smallness of this poem, coming as it does at the book's end, and after the grand ode that precedes it (celebrated Cleopatra's defeat by Augustus), has sparked division among scholars: is its affirmation of simplicity 'against interpretation' (in the sense of Susan Sontag 1966), or does its rejection of complexity invite us to see, behind it, or with it, a variety of

<sup>8</sup> For Lucan on serpents and African heat, see *BC* 9.700–733 (esp. 704–5 *ipsa caloris egens gelidum non transit in orbem | sponte sua*); cf. Barbara 2009. On *afris* vs. *atris*, see Freudenburg *ad loc.*

<sup>9</sup> *pace* Hutchinson 2002.

symbolic structures?<sup>10</sup> While the majority of scholars from both camps have largely tended to see *Persicos odi* as an apolitical response to *Odes* 1.37's exuberant hymn to Cleopatra's death, it has also been read, not least by Philip Hardie, as a repression, as much political as poetic as cultic, of the Dionysiac (hence Marc Antonian *cum* Cleopatra) exuberance of *Odes* 1.37.<sup>11</sup> This chapter builds on this insight to show how Horace's 'late rose' functions in this poem and in the broader structures of Horace's works, showing how this humble poem, far from being an apolitical appendage to the collection, or a response of non-politics to the political realm, represents a form of super-politics, or, rather, a politicization of the Horace's solitary sphere.<sup>12</sup>

In the structure of Horace's oeuvre, *Persicos odi* represents the glorious conclusion to the conflict Horace had begun to trace in his first *Epode*, where Maecenas took part in Octavian's naval attack on the Alexandria-based coalition. If *Odes* 1.37 is dinner, and the miniature *Odes* 1.38 the dessert-course, then it is what Herodotus (*Hist.* 1.133) would describe as a Greek, not Persian, dessert; at Persian feasts, says the historian, and particularly on birthdays, to which Persians allegedly paid great attention, 'their courses are few, the desserts that follow many, and not all served together'. Herodotus' word for 'desserts' (ἐπιφόρημα) means literally 'those things that are piled on after', and one could imagine that Horace's Persian *apparatus* might neatly translate Herodotus' ἐπιφόρημα, with *ad* for ἐπι- (perfectly common), and *paro*, 'to furnish, provide' as φορέω, 'to bear, to fetch for oneself (*med.*)'.

The best roses are Persians, the latest roses too, but even as Horace's concluding poem rejects Persian festivities and flowers, it plays a distinctly Persian game: the Parthian shot, firing in retreat.<sup>13</sup> The Medes had brought the book's second poem to a close, with Augustus as avatar of Mercury warding off foreigners.<sup>14</sup> The book now ends with Horace in self-satisfied, un-Persian, repose. The poem is not a symposium, but a symposium *manquée*: there is but one drinker, a monoposias.<sup>15</sup> The accoutrements requested and rejected make, nevertheless, for sympotic associations: the wine, of course, and the crowns, but also the crowns' specific make up. Anacreon's symposiasts wear 'three crowns: two of roses, a third of naucratite [=myrtle]' (15. 671d-e Στεφάνου δ' ἄνῃρ τρεῖς ἕκαστος εἶχεν / τοὺς μὲν ῥοδίνους, τὸν δὲ ναυκρατίτην). This myrtle could serve practical ends: Athenaeus' sources suggest myrtle crowns prevent hangovers; perhaps Horace's boy can therefore pour generously, without risk to the poet's

<sup>10</sup> For a recent review of options, see Mayer 2012:226–227.

<sup>11</sup> Hardie 1997; cf. Hunter 2006:42–80.

<sup>12</sup> On the public, private, and solitary spheres in Roman literature, see Kachuck 2021a.

<sup>13</sup> Rostovtzeff 1943; Ivantchik, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Hor. *Odes* 1.2.51–2 *neu sinas Medos equitare inultos / te duce, Caesar*.

<sup>15</sup> On the monoposias, cf. Steinhart and Slater 1997.

tomorrow. Who is this boy? A slave, most have thought, but four centuries later, Ausonius will depict Cupid afflicted by his own accoutrement: he is bound to a myrtle tree, and his torture comes to a climax as a wreath of roses is used a whip. Ausonius' poem reflects a long association of roses and myrtles both Venus and her child: might Horace here be served by the versatile boy-god himself? If so, might that make sense of the strange mixture of dominance and polite servility (*sedulus curo*) demonstrated by Horace?<sup>16</sup> We will return to this at this paper's close.

Birthday, dessert (whether Persian or Greek), Cupid, or not, this poem centres rejection of the 'late rose'. To understand why and how, we need first understand when, precisely, a rose might be 'late'.

In winter, perhaps? If so, Horace's poem would complement an occasional poem written contemporaneously by Crinagoras, honouring a marriage within his patron, Augustus', familial orbit (*Anth. Pal.* 6.345 (G-P 6)):<sup>17</sup>

“Roses used to flower in spring (εἶαρος); now in midwinter (ἐνὶ μέσσω Χείματι) we burst red from buds, smiling happily on your birthday morning, which falls to close to your wedding: to be seen on the brow of the loveliest woman beats waiting spring's sun (ἡρινὸν ἡέλιον).”

Crinagoras' miraculous winter-roses celebrate a Caesarian birthday-*cum*-marriage: for this family, winter is *ver perpetuum*. Winter-roses keep Cleopatra, from the previous poem, in view: her predecessor Ptolemy Philadelphus supposedly led a winter-tide procession replete with myrtle-canopy and rose-strewn floor resembling 'a beautiful meadow' (*Athen.* 5.196d).

The case for 'late' roses in summer, though, is stronger. Winter roses get called, not 'late', but 'precocious' or 'early' (*praecox*).<sup>18</sup> 'Late roses' appear in summer, as do roses in Miletus and, more impressively, Praeneste ('very latest of all' says Pliny). While myrtle is technically evergreen, Horace associates it elsewhere with summer: in *Odes* 1.25, a woman in her old age will complain that youth 'rejoices in green ivy rather than dark myrtle (18 *pulla...myrto*), but consecrates withered leaves to winter's comrade, the East wind'.

<sup>16</sup> On Horace's over-politeness to his 'boy', see N-H *ad* Hor. *Odes* 1.38.6.

<sup>17</sup> For Cameron 1980, the bride is Julia Major, Octavian's daughter, married to Marcellus (25 BCE), thus contemporary with Horace's *Odes*; Cichorius 1888 favoured Antonia Minor, daughter of M. Antonius and Octavia, born 36 BCE, married to Nero Claudius Drusus in (probably) 18 BCE; for discussion, see Ypsilanti 2018:96–97, who, though agnostic, favours Antonia Minor.

<sup>18</sup> See N-H. *ad loc.*; Plin. *HN* 21.19–21.

Seasonally, ivy's for spring, myrtle for summer and autumn, withered branched branches for winter.

Summer-roses continue the previous poem's interests more convincingly: Cleopatra outshone her ancestor Ptolemy Philadelphus, giving a rosy summertime reception to Antony; 'On the fourth day', we hear (Athen. 147F), 'she spent a talent's worth to purchase roses: the dining-room floors were strewn with them to a cubit's, depth'. That this meeting in Cilicia unfolded (most likely) in late summer or autumn made this rosy bower of bliss more extravagant yet. Reading from the Cleopatra ode to Horace's monposium, in rejecting even a single 'late rose', Horace turns forcefully from Cleopatra's extravagance. Might Horace's solitary drinking under 'thicket vine' rebuke Antony's reported extravagance: this would-be Bacchus at Athens, sat under green-boughed cave, festooned with Dionysiac apparatus, drinking, feasting, listening to Italian musicians in front of the assembled Greeks'—this last bit a reversal of the convivium's 'natural' order, with Greeks entertaining Italians. Horace's solitary drink—under his own vine, bedecked with simple myrtle—opposes Antony's public spectacle, as his rejection of a single late rose opposes Cleopatra's rose-carpeted floor. This, too, recuperates *Odes* 1.5, which sees experienced lover Pyrrha, bane of innocent boys, making love to a youth 'sprinkled with fragrant perfumes, atop a multitude of roses (*multa...rosa*) in some pleasant cave (*grato...sub antro*)'. Horace's monposium (*Odes* 1.38) imitates some of the décor from Pyrrha's redoubt—scents (perfume there, myrtle here) and canopy (cave there, vine here)—but its rejection of *any* rose rejects Pyrrha's, and Cleopatra's, bed of roses.<sup>19</sup>

This final rejection of *any* roses is also a rejection of certain political regimes: *Odes* 1.37, one recalls, opens with the phrase *nunc est bibendum*, 'now is the time to drink!' This exhortation adapts Alcaeus' celebration of the fall of the tyrant of Mytiline, on the isle of Lesbos: 'Now one must get drunk and drink with all one's might, since Myrsilus has died' (νῦν χρῆ μεθύσθην καὶ τινα πὲρ βίαν | πώνην, ἐπεὶ δὴ κάθανε Μύρσιλος Alcaeus fr. 332 V). *Odes* 1.37 turns Alcaeus' tyrant Myrsilus into his 'Queen' (1.37.7 *regina*) Cleopatra, but the underlying Greek returns in Horace's monposium: Alcaeus' Myrsilus bedecks Horace's head as myrtle, celebrating in the solitary sphere what the public sphere had already fêted.

## Horace's Triumphs, from the *Epodes* to the *Odes*

<sup>19</sup> The reference to the cave as *gratus* invites comparison with the iconography of the Graces at Elis, bearing in their hands (respectively) myrtle, roses, and die (Pausan. 6.24.6-7; see below).

In this way, Horace's solitary feast also helps form the broad story-arcs of Horace's poetic project, spanning from his first *Epode* to the end of his first book of *Odes*...and beyond. In the first *Epode*, the very first line refers to Liburnian galleys upon which Maecenas (but not Horace!) will sail into battle against Cleopatra at Actium (1-4). These Liburnian galleys close *Odes* 1.37, celebrating Augustus victory in that same battle (29-32). The Cleopatra ode with *triumpho*, the triumphal procession in which Cleopatra refuses to be led (*deduci*) as 'private citizen' (*privata*), deprived of regnal title. The first epode's pre-battle prayer thus looks forward to the public celebrations following Augustus' triumph (1.37). That last word *triumpho* points directly to the next poem, though in ways that have not been fully appreciated. Say the word 'triumph' to one of Horace's contemporaries, and one of the first words, images, perhaps even smells to come to mind, might well be laurel (*laura*), plant (to certain Roman etymological ears) of glory (*laus*).<sup>20</sup> The queen who would not be led as private citizen 'in triumph' (last word of *Odes* 1.37) is followed by Horace, private monoposiasist, wearing a crown, not of laurel, but of myrtle. In Roman ceremonial, this is a legible transition: where triumphing generals sport laurel crowns, a myrtle crown might be worn during the *ovatio* ('ovation'), awarded for bloodless victories.<sup>21</sup> As Philip Hardie (1997:53) has pointed out, 'in support of a political reading of *Odes* 1.38 one might note that *apparatus* may be used specifically to refer to the paraphernalia of a triumph' (cf. *OLD* s.v. *apparatus* 3a). Augustus may triumph over Antony, Cleopatra, and Persians in the East (cf. *Odes* 1.2.51-2); might Horace, who sat out Actium (*Epode* 1), have crowned himself with myrtle for bloodless solitary celebration of Augustus', Maecenas', and Agrippa's martial victory?

This association of Horace's myrtle with Augustus' triumph, and in turn with the story arching from first *Epode* to *Persicos Odi*, is confirmed by a new arch that links the end of *Odes* 1 and 3. Where *Odes* 1 ends with Horace's myrtle crown—solitary counterpart to public triumph in the battle trumpeted by *Epode* 1—*Odes* 3 ends with Horace shuffling off mortality's humble coil. Poet is become *triumphator*: where Cleopatra refused to 'be led in triumph' (*deduci...triumpho*), no Aeolian song—there is Myrtilus again, tyrant of Mytiline, on the isle of Lesbos, home to both masters of Aeolian verse, Sappho and Alcaeus!—can withstand Horace's assault, or escape his triumph, this poet who acclaims himself first 'to have led (*deduxisse*)', perhaps one might say 'led in triumph', such songs into Italian *modos*: 'limits', 'boundaries', 'metres'. Horace achieves in his domain even more than Augustus in his. The

<sup>20</sup> Cf. DServ. *ad Ecl.* 8.12; Isid. *Orig.* 17.712; Cassiod. *In Psalm.* 33.21.54; see Beard 2007:246-7.

<sup>21</sup> Plut. *Marcell.* 22; Aul. Gell. 5.6.21-23; Plin. *HN* 15.19; Dio. Hal. *Ant.* 5.47-2-4; 8.67.10; Livy 26.21.1-6 (for Marcus Claudius Marcellus' consolation prize in 211 BCE); cf. Beard 2007:63.

*princeps*' triumphal ambitions were checked by Cleopatra's suicide; Horace leads his verses to a Capitoline monument of his own devising: his monument will last as long, indeed, as priest and virgin Vestals climb the Capitoline steps (8–9). Triumphant generals play the part of Jupiter, but must be reminded that they are not the god himself—'Look behind you. Remember you are a man', says the slave riding behind him<sup>22</sup>—Horace's monument will remain untouched even by time, wind, or Jupiter's rain (cf. *Odes* 1.2). He is become as Jupiter, regulator of worlds. Like Polyphemus, he reaches sublimely towards heaven (cf. *Odes* 1.1); like Homer's cyclopes, Horace may spurn the father of gods and men. The penultimate poem, immediately preceding, could not have been clearer: Jupiter *Pater* cannot unsettle the poet's felicity, (3.29.43–48), *quod fugiens semel hora vexit*, 'what the fleeing hour once brings'. Henceforth Horace, child of fortune, is subject only to *Fortuna*.<sup>23</sup>

### Horace's *Fasti*

To some, we may seem to have strayed far from our path, Horace's 'late roses'. In fact, we have followed the footfalls of memory down passages others have not taken, to enter the rose-garden itself. As Barbara Gold (1993:30) demonstrated twenty years ago, the handful of roses in Horace's works can be gathered into a symbolic complex unique to Horace in his time: 'Thus Vergil', she writes, 'occasionally embeds the rose in human surroundings or extends to it human emotions, but he never turns the rose into a symbol of man's impossible quest for perfection and timelessness as Horace does, and he is much more interested in its natural properties'. Had we space enough and time, we might trace Horace's symbolic rose—this rose as purpose of a quest—from Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* to Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun's *Romance of the Rose*.<sup>24</sup> Yet while Horace is fond of roses, it is only in ending *Odes* 1, and in *Odes* 3.29, penultimate poem of *Odes* 3, that Horace refers specifically to the rose that is seasonally out of place, to summer's rose. *Ode* 3.29 thus brings the three-book collection full-circle, addressed, like the first *Ode*, to Maecenas, Etruscan prince. Horace promises Maecenas wine, perfume, and...roses (1–4 *tibi / non ante verso lene merum cado / cum flore, Maecenas, rosarum et / pressa tuis balanūs capillis*). These offerings gather two things that Horace had all to himself in *Odes* 1.38 (the wine to drink and, for scent, the myrtle), and the one thing he there would pointedly *not* have, the rose, here legion. Later, we see Horace lure

<sup>22</sup> Beard 2007:85–92.

<sup>23</sup> On the Polypheman sublime, see Hardie 2009:92–3, 96–7, 113–16.

<sup>24</sup> On historic symbolism of roses in antiquity and the Middle Ages, see Joret 1892.

Maecenas from Rome to join Horace's roses when 'already now (*iam*) Andromeda's blazing father shows his dark dire, already (*iam*) now Procyon rages, and the star of mad Leo while the sun brings dry days (*sole dies referente siccis*)' (3.29.17-20).

If we learn to read calendrically—or, rather, with the calendar in mind as yet another intertextual archive, another room in Horace's mansions of imagination, another tool of his thought—we can grasp that what is the relationship of season to poetry in this, Horace's *Fasti*. We move *Odes* 3.29 quickly through July: it is hot and getting hotter. For Columella (11.2.51), the constellation Cepheus, father of Andromeda, has its 'evening rising' (if for Alexandria) on 9 July; it shows its 'fire' (*ignem*). Procyon is the brightest star in Canis Minor, the *Antecanis* for Cicero (*Arat.* 222; in Greek, 'the one that comes before the dog'); preceding the dogdays, Columella puts its 'morning rising' on 15 July, and Horace has it 'rage' (*furit*). Finally, 'the star of the mad Lion' is the *stella regia*, brightest star of constellation Leo; heralding the year's hottest days—'le mâle caniculaire, roi puissant et redoutable, au pouvoir destructeur' (Zucker 2016:198)—Columella dates its rising to 29 July (11.2.53).<sup>25</sup> This season is on Horace's mind at the end of his third book, as the previous poem, 3.28, took place on 'the feast day of Neptune' (*festo...die / Neptuni*, 1-2); as Georges Dumézil explored at length (1975), this festival, on 23 July, was dedicated to that god, not here of the sea, but of wells and rivers, relieving the summer's heat. Horace's Neptune *Ode* saw the poet enjoy that feast day alone with a certain Lyde, presumably a *meretrix*, though his name recalls Maecenas' Etruscan (therefore Lydian) origins; they will sing songs of Neptune, then of Venus, implying sexual intercourse (a mixing of warm waters of a different kind). The poem ends with night's well-earned songs, dark enchanted reprieve from the season's heat. Reversing the order ending *Odes* 1, *Odes* 3 turns from the near solitary celebration of July—just Horace and a slave—to an engagement with a public and then an intimate audience.

Glorious summer is in the air, and at its hottest. Although Horace need not have had in mind precisely the same astrological calendar as that which we find in Columella, if we read Columella's date for the *stella regia* of 29 July together with the 29<sup>th</sup> ode of *Odes* 3, some interesting connections emerge. In the heavens, Berenice's lock found its place among the fixed stars at this time. On earth, we turn to a notable anniversary: on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July, in 101 BCE, just before entering into battle against the Cimbri at Vercellae, Quintus Lutatius Catulus, vowed a temple, in Plutarch's Greek (*Marius* 26), perhaps too in the Hellenizing Catulus' own original

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<sup>25</sup> For the Lion, see Zucker 2016:197–202.

Greek, to τὴν τύχην τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης, 'the Fortune of This Very Day'.<sup>26</sup> A temple to that deity, *Fortuna huiusce diei*, was consecrated on 30<sup>th</sup> July, anniversary of Catulus' victory, henceforth honoured as the temple's *dies natalis*, or birthday. temple, the so-called *aedes Catuli*, is likely to be the *tholos*, or circular temple, known as Temple B on the Largo Argentina; joining the other very special *tholos*-temples that then existed in Rome, it seems to have been the same temple described by Pliny as filled by Lutatius Catulus with statuary, making it one of the two most important public art collections in the city of Rome of his time. Other forms of *Fortuna* have more global powers—one need but peruse Champeaux 1987 to discover their vast demesne—but *Fortuna huiusce diei* has more particularity, standing to this given day as a *genius loci* is to a place, or a *genius* to an individual. The monument attests to one such day, but what might such a principle look like if universalized? Horace's poem gives one response: what 'The Fortune of This Very Day' implies if universalized and individualized is that every day is a new throw of the dice. As Cicero says of this very *Fortuna*, 'she has power over every day' (*Leg. 2.28 nam ualet in omnis dies*). Today's luck, we might say, might not be that of yesterday or tomorrow. Horace's *Fortuna*, we might say, is as labile, as mutable, as Horace himself.<sup>27</sup>

This *Fortuna huiusce diei* is thus perfect emblem for the poem Horace set around this goddess' feast day, for at this poem's heart is one of Horace's most famous articulations of the *carpe diem* motif: 'He is master of himself, and happy, who can say each day "vixi" ['I have lived']'. For Nisbet and Rudd, *in diem* ['each day'] must be taken with *dixisse* to mean 'to be able to say from day to day, "I have lived"'; for them, the alternative of taking it with *vixi* to mean 'I have lived for the day' would, they write, 'impair the seriousness of what follows' (N-R *ad* 3.29.41-3, p. 358). In fact, though, Horace's 'seriousness' is precisely his reflection on Jupiter's comparative weakness: *Pater* Jupiter, Father of Gods and Men cannot upset the felicity of Horace's present. One goddess can, though: *Fortuna*, unlike Jupiter, can undo what the 'fleeting hour once brings' (3.29.48, *quod fugiens semel hora vexit*). Thus, *Odes* 3.29 hymns that most Horatian theme: mutability. To each day its fortune, its character. To each day, a new character, a new fortune, perhaps, for Horace...or his readers.

What might it mean for a reader to think of this, the penultimate poem of Horace's third book of *Odes* as about, in reverse order, the goddess *Fortuna*, the ability to say at the end of a day 'I have lived', and the invitation of Maecenas to a party replete with wine, incense, and

<sup>26</sup> Leach 2010; cf. Cic. *Leg.* 2.28; Plut. *Mar.* 26. For statues of Pheidias there, see Plin. *NH* 34.54.60.

<sup>27</sup> On Horace's will to inconsistency, see Kachuck 2021a:151–198.

yes, summer roses, in conjunction with the calendrical associations available through Horace's astrological precision? The poem is not an allegory for the cult of *Fortuna huiusce diei*; instead, the ritual archive is part and parcel of Horace's poetic message. On the one hand, if the cult and temple of *Fortuna huiusce diei* informs 3.29, then it looks forward to the first noun of *Ode* 3.30, with Horace's own *monumentum* recalling the *monumentum Catuli* (Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.126), the circular *tholos*-temple with *Fortuna* at its heart. Catulus, both as builder and as poet, is indeed an essential backdrop for this last poem, as it was, it has been suggested, for the penultimate poem. Catulus was in his own way, like Horace, a *primus*, a *princeps*, in Rome's literary history—and not just for his overt eroticism, including erotic interest in other men (Courtney 1993:75). In one of only two poems by Catulus that we possess, he adapts an epigram where Callimachus (41 Pfeiffer = 4 Gow—Page) complains that only half of his soul (Ἡμισὺ μὲν ψυχῆς) now lives; the other half was stolen, whether by Love or by Death, he knows not. Lutatius Catulus' adaptation (fr. 1 Courtney) ups the ante in one respect—he has lost his entire soul, not only half of it (1 *aufugit mi animus*)—but lowers the stakes in another: Catulus omits entirely the figure of death.<sup>28</sup>

Horace has Lutatius Catulus in mind in *Ode* 3.30, but also, through so-called 'window allusion', Callimachus in mind behind him. Between Catulus and Callimachus, not half, not all, but 'the large part' of Horace's self (*multaque pars mei*), will escape; it will escape, though, not love, nor Catulus' lover Theotimus, but death, so crucial a part of Callimachus' poem, by Horace transformed into Libitina, a Roman goddess of death. There may be no amatory love in *Odes* 3.30, but the allusion to the 'large part' of Horace's self is in its own way a testament to the immortality of friendship: Horace could call Virgil 'half of my soul' (*Odes* 1.3.8 *dimidium animae meae*), and could say to Maecenas that, were the Etruscan prince to die, Horace would lose not only 'half of my soul' but more than that: 'is a life that is not whole sweet' (*Odes* 2.17.6–7 *nec carus aequae nec superstes / integer?*) Indeed, 'that day will drag both of us to ruin' (7–8 *Ille dies utramque / ducet ruinam*). Horace's fate is tied to that of Maecenas: as I have demonstrated elsewhere (Kachuck 2019), Horace in fact proposes a shared re-birthday for himself and for Maecenas on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, a day on which Maeceneas, like Horace, is saved through the powers of Faunus, a figure associated, not coincidentally, with myrtle (Plut. *Quest. Rom.* 20). The last poem of the first book, crowning Horace with myrtle

<sup>28</sup> Horace's use of Catulus' poem in *Odes* 3.30 might, through the last line of Catulus' poem (*da, Venus, consilium*) point already to the opening of *Odes* IV.

(but with *no* roses) may very well celebrate Augustus' victory, but it certainly celebrates Horace himself, and, too, some he loved, 'the loveliest and the best'.

The question of life and death, and of their sequence, has indeed been central to the complex of poems we have studied, as it is central to the problem of the late rose. Indeed, the final poems of each of the first three books tell a kind of story about death and the poet. Working backwards, *Odes* 3.30 claims with confidence that Horace's best part will escape Libitina, Roman mistress of death; *Odes* 2.20, by contrast, will see Horace himself transformed into a bird in flight— 'I shall not tarry upon the earth' (3 *neque in terris morabor*), no need, consequently, for tears at his tomb. Where, though, is life and death to be found in our small rose-free poem of wine and myrtle, the last poem of *Odes* 1? On the one hand, it is implicit in the poem's interest in the passage of time: we live for the moment, not for the world as it was or might have been, and crown ourselves with what is to hand (myrtle), not with what has passed (the late rose). On the other, the whole scene this poem presents—its *Aktionformel*, in the terms of Aby Warburg—breaths the atmosphere of the monoposias, the man who drinks alone with a solitary attendant, evoked in particular in the iconography of the banquet of the dead so well described by Katherine Dunbabin (2003:104):

'The basic motif of the Totenmahl consists of a single male figure, wearing tunic and mantle or with his torso bare, reclining on a couch with a drinking vessel in his hand and a small table in front laden with food. A woman often sits either in a separate chair or on the foot of the couch; a servant brings drink'.

Horace, alone with his drink and his slave—though *not* with a woman, pointedly—fits the picture perfectly, suggesting a clear progression across the books of the *Odes*: from a banquet of the dead (*Odes* 1), to transformation into a swan (*Odes* 2), to immortality (*Odes* 3).<sup>29</sup>

In Horace's *Odes*, though, what is at stake is not simply life and death, but *how* to enjoy one's immortality. Like the *tholos* of the *monumentum Catuli*, *Odes* 3.29 and 3.30 circle back on Horace's corpus. In this poem's last words, Horace celebrates the triumph prepared by his first *Epode*: he crowns himself, at long last, with laurel—a vaunting improvement upon the ivy of his first *Ode* and the humble myrtle of *Odes* 1.38. *Odes* 3.29, as we have seen, marked this recursion in one very specific way: through the figure of the late rose that that poem shares only with *Odes* 1.38 in Horace's corpus. Taken together, the two poems, *Odes* 1.38 and *Odes*

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<sup>29</sup> For a different, illuminating, take progressive conclusions of *Odes* 1-3, see Harrison 2018.

3.29, evoke the three Graces of Elis, which made so strong an impression on Pausanias (6.24.6-7), as we have seen: 'One of them holds a rose, the middle one a die, and the third a small branch of myrtle'.<sup>30</sup> For Pausanias, this represents young love: the rose and myrtle for Aphrodite and her doomed relationship with Adonis, the die the 'is the plaything of youths and maidens, who have nothing of the ugliness of old age'. Were Horace to visit Elis one suspects that the die might likewise represent the *carpe diem* motif of which Horace the seducer is so fond; it would also, though, recall something very much like the Fortune of This Very Day, as unfixed, as chancy, as Horace himself.

To conclude, though, I would like to suggest, more tentatively, how Horace's myrtle crowns and late roses might participate in a larger calendrical structure at work across Horace's poetic oeuvre, forming a story one might call Horace's conquest of summer's heat. Horace's birthday falls several weeks prior to the winter solstice, and he places the rebirthday he shares with Maecenas on the *Kalends* of March, several weeks prior to the vernal equinox.<sup>31</sup> Why, then, does he end the first and third books of *Odes* in summer, and the third specifically at summer's time greatest heat? As we have seen, it is not the first time the canicule has served a structural role for the poet: far from it! In both his *Satires* and his *Epodes*, his great nemesis is the witch Canidia. As Ellen Oliensis has shown, Horace assimilates Canidia to the canicule, specifically its ability to wilt male, and poetic, potency. As Marcel Detienne (2007) showed, the gardens of Adonis grow under the Dog Star not, as Frazerians thought, to promote fertility, but to demonstrate the overlap of super-fertility and sterility: like the god mourned, seedlings planted under Sirius' sun grow fast then die, without fruit, without issue. The witch Canidia emerges as last speaker, and victor, of both the *Satires* and of the *Epodes*. Through his *Odes*, Horace learns to master even the debilitating heat of the canicule, and the structure of books make this clear, from the rose-less humility that ends *Odes* 1, to the rose-strewn exuberance that ends *Odes* 3. Horace and Maecenas leave no children: too fond of the sun, they are, contrary to the Julian Law, as infertile as Adonis and his gardens. And yet they are not for all of that selfish, for they leave behind them 'delights as high as these': Horace's monument of words. By the end of *Odes* 3, we might say, Horace has transcended the impact of the seasons, become, like the Odysseus of Norman Austin's magisterial study of the *Odyssey* (1975), a master of time and space, conquered the problem of summer, and its desiccation, that has been

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<sup>30</sup> On Elis' Graces, see Nagy 2021.

<sup>31</sup> Kachuck 2019.

a tool of thought for him, as for the poetic tradition before him from Homer and Hesiod onwards.

Behind this progression, there is, too, a linking of the individual, the empire, and the cosmos by way of an underlying gigantomachic structure. After his battle against the Titans, Zeus was garlanded by the other Olympians, writes Diodorus Siculus.<sup>32</sup> After Augustus' victory over Cleopatra, Horace's *puer* will crown him with myrtle. What better plant-symbol could there be for this poet, 'too fond of the sun', than a plant that, while perennial, still, in Ovid's phrase, 'fears the cold' (*Amores* 1.15.37 *metuentem frigora myrtum*)? What better plant for the end of the book than one that favors edges, loving shores (Virg. *G.* 4.124 *amantis litora myrtos*)? The penultimate poem of *Odes* 2 will conclude its hymn to Bacchus by speaking to that god's metamorphosis into a lion during the gigantomachy, prior to his descent to hell to rescue his mother Semele; in the next poem, 2.20, Horace will escape death, or death's rites at least, by sprouting wings that evoke the winged giants one sees defeated by Olympians on the Pergamese altar. Finally, in *Odes* 3.29 and 3.30, Horace betters the instruction of Titans and Giants alike, and becomes, thanks to his poetry, and his self-consecration to Fortuna, immune to Jupiter's rain and wind. Thus, after poetic victories, after adoption of a worldview tied to the powers of Fortuna that laughs to scorn the powers of Jupiter himself, Horace will be crowned, in well-earned pride, by the muse Melpomene with Delphic laurel. This, in turn, fulfils Horace's dream of his own election as a poet: having wandered as a baby far from home, he was kept safe by the gods, covered 'with myrtle and laurel' (*lauroque conlataque myrto*, 3.4.19): seeing these, as we now can, as metonymies for *Odes* I and III, Horace is kept safe, in reality...by himself. By collection's end, Horace is become his own Jupiter, untouchable by that supreme god's biting rain or winds, or even by Time's progress, a lesson not lost on Ovid when he ended his own work of self-transformation, the *Metamorphoses*.<sup>33</sup>

By way of conclusion, one might note that, four centuries ago, one of Horace's closest readers, Abraham Cowley, picked up Horace's internalized quest-romance for immortal vitality.<sup>34</sup> His poem, *The Epicure*, leans on Horace to improve Etienne's Anacreontics. He defeats death by attending only to 'to-day'.

'Underneath this myrtle shade,  
on flowery beds supinely laid,

<sup>32</sup> Diod. Sic. 6.4 apud Tertull. *De corona militis* 7; cf. Athenaeus *Deip.* 15.31.

<sup>33</sup> On self-representation in the frame of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, see Kachuck 2020.

<sup>34</sup> On Abraham Cowley's creative use of classical intertexts, see Hardie 2012.

with odorous oils my head o'erflowing,  
and around it roses growing,  
what should I do but drink away  
the heat and troubles of the day?  
In this more than kingly state  
Love himself shall on me wait.'

When Thomas Creech adapted the same passages of Anacreontics, he placed the wing 'when Spring with gawdy flowers the Earth hath spread, / and sweetest Roses grow around our head'. Cowley, however, made the more unnatural choice, one guided by Horace's summery rose: here, in Cowley's pleasance, we are in Horace's summer, served by the ultimate *puer*, the mysterious boy of myrtles, roses, and wine: Cupid, god of love, waiting upon the scholar-poet, 'more than kingly'.