

most devotees of Corinthian ware were ignorant chasers after fashion who could easily be fooled by counterfeit items.<sup>4</sup>

By contrast, the younger Pliny found Corinthian ware on the table of the respectable Vestricius Spurinna and thought it acceptable, since Vestricius followed the fashion with restraint.<sup>5</sup> Elsewhere,<sup>6</sup> Pliny mentions his own purchase of a *Corinthium signum*, bought "ex hereditate quae mihi obvenit" and destined for the temple of Jupiter at Comum. Pliny states that he will not retain the item for private delectation: "emi autem non ut haberem domi (neque enim ullum adhuc Corinthium domi habeo)."

Trimalchio's private myth of the original Corinthian ware created by Hannibal at Troy is more than a confused version of Mummius and Corinth. He is mocking both the myth and the fashion. Awareness of the myth is subtly indicated by his later mention of Mummius' bequest of one thousand cups to his patron, who in turn left them to Trimalchio (*Sat.* 52). Nor does he slavishly follow the fashion: glass and silver are more to his taste (50–51).

There may be further proof in this episode that Trimalchio is not really a sensationally

rich man.<sup>7</sup> Corinthian ware was, to be sure, an expensive fad, but the *lanx Corinthia* in question may well have been counterfeit. It is unlikely that Trimalchio would be too lavish in rewarding a cook (unless the scene was re-enacted nightly, and the man gave the dish back to his master). Glass commends itself to him because of its cheapness (*vitrea . . . vilia*, 50). Agamemnon's close scrutiny may indicate his doubts over the authenticity of the piece. If so, Trimalchio's exposition is designed to deflect attention from the dish and also to disparage the Corinthian vogue. He admits that his preference for glass and silver may strike the audience as peculiar: "ignoscetis mihi, quod dixero: ego malo mihi vitrea" (50).

Trimalchio's lecture surprises Encolpius, who had expected that his host would merely claim to import his plate directly from Corinth, forestalls Agamemnon's demonstration of expertise, and provides a nicely logical reason for the very next incident at the *Cena* to begin: "haec dum refert, puer calicem proiecit" (52).

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4. *NH* 34. 6–7: "ac mihi maior pars eorum simulare eam scientiam videtur ad segregandos sese a ceteris magis quam intellegere aliquid ibi subtilius . . . sunt ergo vasa tantum Corinthia, quae isti elegantiores modo ad esculenta transferunt, modo in lucernas aut trulleos nullo munditiarum dispectu."

5. *Epist.* 3. 1. 9: "sunt in usu et Corinthia, quibus delectatur nec adicitur."

6. *Epist.* 3. 6. 1.

7. See G. Schmeling, *CP*, LXV (1970), 248 ff.

## FACT AND FABLE IN HORACE EPISTLE 1. 7\*

The Seventh Epistle has generally been taken (beginning with the ancient commentators) as the most personal and occasional of the entire collection: that is, if it is not the actual document by which Horace declared his independence from Maecenas, it is at least a poetic record of the event, published with the agreement of both parties.<sup>1</sup> The argument over the meaning of the poem has concerned the

extent to which we are to believe that an actual historical rift is represented between the poet and his patron. But in addition to this there also remain some apparent logical flaws in the argument, and these must be examined and resolved.

The Epistles of Book 1 are, in this writer's view, poetic constructs. They may take their rise individually in occasions and personal

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1. See E. Burck's "Nachwort und bibliographische Nachträge" in the reissue of the Kiessling-Heinze commentary, *Quintus Horatius Flaccus: Briefe* (Berlin, 1961), pp. 437–38. Also F. van Ooteghem, "Horace et l'indépendance," *Latomus*, V (1946), 185–88; G. Stégen, *L'Unité et la clarté des Epîtres d'Horace* (Namur, 1963), pp. 40–59; C. Becker, *Das Spätwerk*

*des Horaz* (Göttingen, 1963), pp. 25–37; H. Drexler, "Zur Epistel 1, 7 des Horaz," *Maia*, XV (1963), 26–37; R. G. Peterson, "The Unity of Horace, *Epistle* 1. 7," *CJ*, LXIII (1968), 309–14; G. Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 19 ff.; M. J. McGann, *Studies in Horace's First Book of Epistles* (Brussels, 1969), pp. 48–56; Gregor Maurach, "Der Grundriss von Horazens ersten Epistelbuch," *AClass*, XI (1968), 95–98.

relationships which would be familiar to Horace's close contemporaries; but they blossom into poems transcending time and persons. The epistle form is either suggested immediately by the situation represented or grafted upon it. These poems are the most humanistic statement we have of Horace's view of the *vir bonus et sapiens*, distilling the best from the *Satires* and *Odes* and reshaping it into an essentially new literary form. Of the threads that are interwoven through the fabric of the *Epistles*, the most characteristic is that of *communis sensus*—a feeling for the tactful way to guide and even admonish friends of all ages and stations.<sup>2</sup> The *Epistles* sketch dramatically a series of situations involving the poet and his friends and suggest tactful solutions or explanations for them.

Horace's *Epistles* may be thought of in terms of both a development from the *Satires*<sup>3</sup> and a genre of the dialogue. The second party to the discussion is sometimes assumed to have expressed his views already (perhaps in a letter of his own); and where appropriate, these views are implied or repeated. While the possibility cannot be discounted that some were actually sent as letters, we must look upon them critically as dramatized discussions of ideas of general applicability and interest. The conventional dialogue, including the form it takes in the second book of *Satires*, presupposes the same degree of artificiality as the text of a play. The epistle, on the other hand, conveys an illusion of reality—that the reader is eavesdropping upon something real, and that he must apply his imaginative powers to understand the entire fictional situation. The ancients, like everyone else, liked to read other people's mail.<sup>4</sup>

If the analogy of the philosophical dialogue is valid in trying to assess the degree of historicity of the Horatian epistle, Cicero's procedure can help. Writing to Marcus Terentius Varro in 45 B.C., he explains: "feci igitur sermonem inter nos habitum in Cumano, cum

esset una Pomponius. Tibi dedi partes Antiochinas, quas a te probari intellexisse mihi videbar: mihi sumpsi Philonis. Puto fore ut, cum legeris, mirere nos id locutos esse inter nos quod numquam locuti sumus; sed nosti morem dialogorum" (*Fam.* 9. 8. 1.). Horace might have written the same (*mutatis mutandis*) to Maecenas.

There is no way of determining the degree of genuine autobiography in the situation that Horace sketches in the Seventh Epistle.<sup>5</sup> Our business with the poem is to determine what the poet says and implies the immediate dramatic situation to be, and what his solution or comment is. The background to the poem is clearly given in lines 1–13 and 25–28. Two-thirds of the lines are devoted to analogies drawn from rustic and urban life, beast fable, and epic, which provide a rich and varied texture to the work. The remainder consists of reflections and comment arising out of the situation and the analogies.

Horace dramatizes a situation in which, going to the country for a few days in August, he has promised Maecenas to return soon to join him in Rome. When at the beginning of September he has not returned, he learns that he is sorely missed (1–2). The reasons for his absence are clarified in terms of his aversion to the all too lethal city in September (3–13), intensified by his sense of inadequacy for the kind of life the city demands and by his advancing years and delicate health (25–28):

quodsi me noles usquam discedere, reddes  
forte latus, nigros angusta fronte capillos,  
reddes dulce loqui, reddes ridere decorum et  
inter vina fugam Cinarae maerere protervae.

The antithesis in the poet's feelings for the city and the country and the details he offers of each recall vividly another treatment of the whole question which he published some ten years earlier.

*Satire* 2. 6 is, in Niall Rudd's words,<sup>6</sup> a poem about wishes. The motivation of this

2. Horace touches upon this theme in *Sat.* 1. 3. 66 (see Heinze *ad loc.*). I have attempted an analysis of *Epist.* 1. 8 from this standpoint in *Mnemosyne*, XXI (1968), 408–14.

3. See E. Fraenkel, *Horace* (Oxford, 1957), p. 308.

4. For the evidence of Cicero's letters, see W. W. How, *Cicero Select Letters*, II (Oxford, 1926), 135; also *Att.* 6. 3. 8.

5. This is exactly the problem that has obscured much of the scholarship on the *Epistles*. See E. Burck, *op. cit.*, pp. 388–91, 433. The more recent views are more balanced: e.g., McGann, *op. cit.*, pp. 89–100, and Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 577.

6. *The Satires of Horace* (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 243, 257.

Satire is the fulfillment of the poet's fondest dreams, and he modestly prays to Mercury to allow him simply to keep what he now has, free from any taint of envy for anyone else ("ut propria haec mihi munera faxis," 5), a sentiment he repeats in his prayer to Apollo: "frui paratis et valido mihi, / Latoe, dones" (*Carm.* 1. 31. 17 f.). Then he sketches the features of life in the city which Maecenas' gift now allows him to escape. These include *mala ambitio* (18), *autumnus gravis* (19), and *Libitinae quaestus acerbae* (19). He resents court appearances (24), especially in the winter. When he has so appeared, he must battle his way through mobs in the street (28) and endure envious jibes at his ties with Maecenas (jibes which he admits give him much more satisfaction than they intend). Even when he finally reaches the Esquiline, the strain is not over: "aliena negotia centum / per caput et circa salient latius" (33 f.), as the lobbyists go after him. Horace characteristically plays down the importance of his role in Maecenas' daily round (41–46). That role makes his dealings with others extremely sensitive and causes him undeserved resentment. This is all a waste of time in comparison with the joys of the country: reading the classics, napping, leisure, diversion from his responsibilities in the city, and conversation, both philosophical and homely. The Satire concludes brilliantly with the telling of the fable of the town and country mice, which underscores the antithesis of *otium rusticum* and *negotium urbanum*.<sup>7</sup> The poem is both Horace's finest piece of self-revelation and a thank-you to Maecenas.

There is no explicit declaration in *Sat.* 2. 6 that the poet is not physically adequate to the strain of his life in the city. But the germ is there. And in *Epist.* 1. 7 we have a man now some forty-five years old, reassessing his position: his lungs are weak, his hair is getting thin, his laugh grates, and his prowess in every respect has sadly slipped (25–28). Horace uses his health as an excuse for his already prolonged absence and as grounds for pro-

longing it still more. And, reasonable as this is intended to sound, he tempers it further with expressions of regret and affection: *mendax desideror* (2), *dulcis amice* (12), *vates tuus* (11), *si concedes* (13). He will return "cum zephyris . . . hirundine prima" (13). Lines 1–13 are a graceful apology to Maecenas, in which his somewhat surprising plans to go to the seashore when the snows come are more a compliment, in terms of Horace's confidence in the depth of Maecenas' affection and understanding, than willful determination to have his own way.

But Horace takes the opportunity to expand the issue of his preference to an issue of broader significance to himself and to Maecenas—and ultimately to us. He goes on to praise Maecenas' past generosity, in terms first of a rustic anecdote from his own part of Italy, clearly intended as a contrast to their own relationship. The point of the story of the Calabrian farmer seems to be this. What he has to give to the stranger are the pears which lie on the ground in his orchard. They are of no particular consequence to their owner; if they are still there before the day is out the pigs will gobble them up where they are. Furthermore, the farmer presses them with a zeal out of all proportion to their worth (and his regard for them) upon the visitor, whom he probably does not even know. The stranger, for his part, remains tactfully appreciative yet firm in his insistence that he has no use for them. What follows ("prodigus et stultus donat quae spernit et odit," 20) is not so much the moral of this anecdote as a general and stringent comment upon a truth about the essence of real generosity, and the consequences of ignoring it: "haec seges ingratos tulit et feret omnibus annis" (21). The collocation of *prodigus* and *stultus* suggests foolish extravagance and total lack of discrimination in making benefactions, which lead to the worst of social sins and the bane of friendship, ingratitude: "nullum enim officium referenda gratia magis necessarium est" (*Cic. Off.* 1. 15. 47). There is nothing Horace tells us to

7. J. P. V. D. Balsdon's discussion of the *otium-negotium* antithesis is very useful: *Life and Leisure in Ancient Rome* (New York, 1969), pp. 130–44.

suggest that Maecenas was ever indiscriminate in his favors.

vir bonus et sapiens dignis ait esse paratus  
nec tamen ignorat quid distent aera lupinis.  
dignum praestabo me etiam pro laude merentis  
[22–24].

“The man of goodness and wisdom says that he has things worth giving (to worthy people), but (by contrast) *does* know the difference between real coin and sham. I will show that I am worthy to a degree quite consistent with (your) praise of my merits.”<sup>8</sup>

The poet has led his apology and plea for further time away from Rome during the unhealthy fall and dreary winter, by an easy step, to what amounts to a discussion of the anatomy of generosity. This is a topic which had already been explored fully in the *De Officiis*. According to Cicero, each of the three elements in an act of giving must be fully proportionate and complementary: the giver, the recipient, and the gift. The giver<sup>9</sup> must render his gifts with careful consideration, not with compulsive haste, nor to all and sundry. The recipient<sup>10</sup> must be chosen for his *dignitas*, with regard for his character, devotion, and service, and also for his *virtutes*, *modestia*, *temperantia*, and *iustitia*. This is what Horace has in mind when, by means of his anecdote and the stated principles of generosity, he reminds Maecenas of his own practice and the virtues of their relationship.

8. K. Büchner (“Der siebente Brief des Horaz,” *Hermes*, LXXV [1940], 66) thinks that these three lines are the key to the Epistle as a whole. They are interestingly ambiguous in some specifics, but their general thrust is clear. The farmer has shown himself to be ignorant of the essence of real benefactions. He claims to have something worth having, but then reveals how he really feels. And he clearly does not know or care anything about the person to whom he offers the pears. His antithesis is the *vir bonus et sapiens*; for when the latter offers a gift he does understand its nature and that of its recipient. *Nec tamen* (23) has an adversative force (“none,” Fraenkel; “weak,” Büchner) to make the distinction between claims and truth in each case. Having stated Maecenas’ merits as a benefactor, he must now (as beneficiary) either bask in his own praise or find a modest and tactful escape from charges of doing so. So he says that he will try to live up to Maecenas’ implied opinion of him. There is ambiguity in *dignis* (22), and not by chance: *dignitas* should be a criterion of both gift (i.e., ablative) and recipient (i.e., dative). Similarly the genitive *merentis* (24) can be either subjective (i.e., Maecenas) or objective (i.e., Horace). Either way (or both) it is a modest acknowledgement of the compliment. Cf. Naevius (Cic. *Fam.* 15. 6. 1): “laetus sum laudari me apud te, pater, a laudato

It is therefore easy to take him at his word in his promise to be *dignus* in the future as he has been in the past. Remember also what he says below: “saepe *verecundum* laudasti, rexque paterque / audisti coram, nec verbo parcius absens” (37 f.). These sentiments lie behind the statement, “non quo more piris vesci Calaber iubet hospes / tu me fecisti locupletem” (14 f.).<sup>11</sup>

We now are brought back (25) to the original theme, Horace’s absence from Rome (with his reasons), and Maecenas’ *desideratio*. “I simply can’t come,” he says. “I’m completely unfit for life in the city any more.” The specific weaknesses he cites remind us of the strain he had described in *Sat.* 2. 6: he now lacks *forte latus* and *dulce loqui*, both requirements of the man of activity and sophistication in Rome.

Then follows the fable of the fox in the grain bin (29–33). The details are well known. But what is its allegorical relevance to either the situation or principles of benefaction so far under discussion, or what follows? Does the weasel represent someone specific (even Maecenas?) or just the type of envious social-climber we have already met in *Sat.* 1. 9 and 2. 6?<sup>12</sup> Does the fox represent Horace? This depends entirely upon our interpretation of 34, “hac ego si compellor imagine, cuncta resigno.”

If *resigno* here is equivalent to *reddere* or *rescribere*, then the poet pleads guilty to the

viro.” All of the arguments to date over *dignis* seem needlessly exclusive.

9. *Off.* 1. 14. 49: “multi enim faciunt multa temeritate quadam sine iudicio, vel morbo in omnes vel repentino quodam quasi vento impetu animi incitati; quae beneficia aequae non sunt habenda atque ea quae iudicio, considerate constanterque delata sunt.”

10. *Off.* 1. 14. 45–46: “ut in beneficentia dilectus esset dignitatis; in quo et mores eius erunt spectandi, in quem beneficium conferetur, et animus erga nos et communis ac societas vitae et ad nostras utilitates officia ante collata; . . . colendum autem esse ita quemque maxime, ut quisque maxime virtutibus his lenioribus erit ornatus, *modestia*, *temperantia*, hac ipsa de qua multa iam dicta sunt, *iustitia*.”

11. *Locupletem* should be taken in its etymological sense: “when you bestowed property upon me.” The entire analogy of the Calabrian is *ex contrario*. (See also McGann, *op. cit.*, p. 49.)

12. Büchner alone seems to have seen in the weasel “irgendwelcher neidischer Betrachter” (*op. cit.*, p. 75). *Procul* (32) supports this view. (But Büchner also goes on to make Horace speak in the role of the fox; i.e., he will sacrifice whatever *luxuries* he must to get out of Maecenas’ cage.)

analogy and his own moral culpability. But nowhere in this poem does Horace allow us to accuse him, as the fox is accused, of gorging himself gluttonously until he loses his shape. The emphasis upon himself as recipient of Maecenas' generosity is in terms of his *modestia* (*verecundum*, 37); and this is particularly important if the Ciceronian discussion of the qualities of a worthy recipient is relevant. Lines 35 f. too seem to say that Horace affirms his moderation in life-style by refusing to envy either the poor or the rich, since he now (thanks to Maecenas) has everything he needs to be happy. The pseudo-Acron commentary sees an inconsistency here in 37: "mire, quia nunc paulo asperior est." K. Büchner has suggested that *cuncta* could mean Maecenas' city favors alone. After all, to Horace the Sabine farm was *parva* (*Carm.* 2. 16. 37) in the best sense. Yet the context defies this solution.

The crux of the inconsistency could be the two verbs in 34. Both Porphyryon and pseudo-Acron identify *compellor* with *compellere*: *si cogatur* (Porph.), *si . . . non concedatur* (ps.-Acron). But how can a fable compel anyone to repent of something he has not done? And particularly if it is some envious outsider (*procul*) who adduces it! It makes much better sense to insist (with Lewis and Short) on its being from *compellare*, "to accost, accuse, attack, impugn." This verb is regularly used with such ablatives as *edicto* (Cic. *Phil.* 3. 7. 17) and *lege* (*Fam.* 8. 12. 3).

It should mean, "If I am the man impugned in this fable . . ." But if Horace really affirms that he is "returning" everything, it must only be to agree that he has accepted too much for his own good. What else could *resigno* mean? First, it must be recognized as a very uncommon word in Latin, in both prose and poetry. Horace has used it already in this Epistle in its literal sense of "unseal" (*testamenta resignat*, 9); he also uses it in *Carm.* 3. 29. 54, where it is usually glossed *reddere* or *rescribere* (*resigno quae dedit*). Persius uses it of unsealing the contents of the heart: *totum hoc verba resignant* (5. 28). That the writer's meaning in using this

word was not always clear is shown by Servius' note on *Aen.* 4. 244. Some ancient commentators maintained here that in the expression *lumina resignant* Vergil meant not that Mercury was "opening the eyes" of the dead for the trip to the underworld, but rather "dimming the vision" at the moment of death. Cicero uses the expression *oculus conturbatus* (*Tusc.* 3. 7. 15); and *turbare* is the alternate meaning that Servius cites for *resignare*. Quintilian, conversely, uses the expression *ceram turbare*, "break the seal" (12. 8. 13).

It is in the sense of "annul, cancel, invalidate, destroy, rescind" (Lewis and Short) that *resignare* is found in Cicero and Florus. Cicero uses the word only twice, once in the literal sense of opening a letter, and once in the other sense of *conturbare* (*Arch.* 9). Here the expression is *omnem tabularum fidem resignasset*, "destroyed completely the reliability of the records." Florus may be imitating the passage: *ne quid ex constituti fide resignaret* (2. 17. 14). So Horace's phrase could mean, *omnem criminis fidem resigno*, or *cuncta* (*sc. crimina*) *resigno*: "If I am the man impugned in this fable, I refute it all!"<sup>13</sup> By this interpretation, Horace defends his past conduct as consistent with his own and Maecenas' views, rather than admitting fault and taking drastic measures to reform. It is completely consistent with what he has said already.

It now remains to see whether the rest of the Epistle fits. Lines 35–38 are a statement of the *modestia* Horace claims and to which Maecenas testifies, and which confers upon him the *dignitas* which marks the ideal recipient of benefactions. The last hurdle is 39, but it too can be removed. "Inspice si possum donata reponere laetus"; "Ask yourself whether I can be happy just to keep what has (already) been given to me." The choice of this meaning of *reponere* is consistent both with the tone of 34–38, and with Horace's own usage. Nowhere else does he use the word in the sense of "give back" or "forego"; it means rather, "put where (it) belongs" or "lay up." That *reponere* has a meaning close to

13. If *resignare* does mean "give back" in *Carm.* 3. 29. 54, it must acquire this sense from the context. And yet, if *Fortuna* flies away, one has really no option but to relinquish her gifts. "Write off" comes closest to Horace's meaning

there: "go cheerfully into bankruptcy." Of course the synonym of *resignare*, *conturbare*, can mean "declare bankruptcy." But the language of the Epistle is unmistakably legal, not commercial.

*componere* is clear. Cicero uses the hendiadys "condendi ac reponendi scientia" (*ND* 2. 62. 156); and Horace, "condo et compono quae mox depromere possum" (*Epist.* 1. 1. 12). So *reponere* and *componere* seem to be a metrical doublet. The sentiment is echoed by Tibullus (1. 1. 77–78): "ego composito securus acervo / dites despiciam despiciamque famem." This, remember, was the object of Horace's prayers in *Sat.* 2. 6, and *Carm.* 1. 31.<sup>14</sup>

But how does the *exemplum* of Telemachus and Menelaus follow from this? Here again, as in 14–19, a triangular situation is depicted which examines the ethical interrelationships between the giver, recipient, and gift.

Haud male Telemachus, proles patientis Ulixei,  
 "Non est aptus equis Ithace locus, ut neque planis  
 porrectus spatiis nec multae prodigus herbae:  
 Atride, magis apta tibi tua dona relinquam"

[40–43].

For Telemachus, too, it is not a matter of returning gifts previously received, but rather of making a choice in a tactful way, based upon the principle of appropriateness. As in the Greek (*Od.* 4. 602), the verb is *relinquam* (*leipso*), "forego." Menelaus offers him first what he considers would be worthy (*dignum*) of him: three fine horses and a car. But while it is worthy, it is not appropriate (*decens*) since Ithaca is not suited to fast horses. And the young man is not afraid to give his host his honest opinion. He has sufficient confidence in both the older man's sincere regard for him and the reasonableness of his case to ask for something else, smaller in size and more appropriate for him to take; and, not least important, to ask for something appropriate for the host to give: a valuable keepsake from

his storehouse (*Od.* 4. 600). Menelaus' reply shows that he fully understands Telemachus' reasons for declining the gift and the tact beyond his years that he displayed (609–12). The substitute gift is an heirloom silver crater with a golden rim made by Hephaestus, which Phaidimos, the king of the Sidonians, had given to Menelaus (613–19). The whole experience serves to cement the bond of affection and respect between the two friends. Horace's interpretation of the *exemplum* is not far to seek (44 f.): "parvum parva decent: mihi iam non regia Roma / sed vacuum Tibur placet aut imbelli Tarentum." Rome and Maecenas' further bounty there are no longer suitable for him. He is a person of small consequence, needs, and stamina. The adjectives *parvum*, *vacuum*, and *imbelli* contrast with *regia* to remind us of what he is asking, and what he has consistently asked for—the opportunity of enjoying what he has, and living according to his own standard.<sup>15</sup> Menelaus represents for the poet both a compliment to Maecenas and a hope, firmly based upon his understanding of their relationship and their mutual sense of what is fitting.

The anecdote about Philippus and Volteius Mena is the final reprise of the theme of the real essence of generosity. Büchner sees it nicely as a *karikierte Spiegelbild*.<sup>16</sup> Both parties are responsible for the debacle that ensues. Philippus' motives are wrong. He presses his favors upon Mena and enjoys watching him being carried away by them. Cicero provides an apt commentary upon this kind of benefaction. "Videndum est enim, primum ne obsit benignitas et iis ipsis, quibus benigne videbitur fieri, et ceteris, deinde ne maior benignitas sit, quam facultates, tum ut

14. The sentiment is also used as a precept in *Epist.* 1. 2. 49–50: "valeat possessor oportet, / si comportatis rebus bene cogitat uti." And with Horace's "ligna super foco / large reponens" (*Carm.* 1. 9. 5–6), cf. Cato *RR* 37. 5: "ligna in caminum . . . compone."

15. Büchner's paraphrase (p. 76): "Für einen bescheidenen Mann wie mich passt eben dieses Leben nicht, was du als einer der Grossen dieser Welt in der Pracht des königlichen Roms führst. Mir sagt Tibur oder Tarent zu."

16. *Op. cit.*, p. 77. O. Hiltbrunner's article (*Gymnasium*, LXVII [1960], 289–300) traces the origins of the two characters in this anecdote. He identifies Philippus as the consul of 91 (censor 86), mentioned by Cicero (*De Or.* 3. 1. 4), who had a friend named Sextus Naevius (a *praece*). He concludes

(p. 300): "Das Gedicht kündigt, wie die auf *sapientia* gegründete Lebenskunst eine Freundschaft in äusseren Divergenzen ungetrübt zu halten vermag, wie Freundschaft und innere Freiheit sich nicht ausschliessen, sondern zu edler Harmonie zusammenklingen." If the interpretation of *Epist.* 1. 7 put forth in the present paper is correct, the thrust of the Philippus-Volteius Mena anecdote is really quite different. It appears to complement the story of the Calabrian farmer, in which at least the recipient's reactions appear consistent with those of a *vir bonus et sapiens*. This final story is the complete reversal of the ideal, except that the *agellus* (81) itself seems neutral: it is potentially *dignum*, unlike the pears. Of the four *exempla* in 1. 7, only that of Telemachus and Menelaus is not *ex contrario*.

pro dignitate cuique tribuatur; id enim est iustitiae fundamentum, ad quam haec referenda sunt omnia. nam et qui gratificantur cuiquam, quod obsit illi, cui prodesse velle videantur, non benefici neque liberales, sed perniciosi assentatores iudicandi sunt" (*Off.* 1. 14. 42).

Mena in turn becomes uncontrolled and immoderate as a result of his change of fortune and his desire to succeed and become rich: "immoritur studiis et amore senescit habendi" (85). Thus he is totally unprepared for failure and frantically seeks the fastest way out of his predicament. The moral, "metiri se quemque suo modulo ac pede verum," ends both the tale and the Epistle. Cicero had put it this way: "ea tamen (universa natura) conservata propriam nostram sequamur, ut etiamsi sint alia graviora atque meliora, tamen nos studia nostra nostrae naturae regula metiamur" (*Off.* 1. 31. 110). The apparent resemblances

to the events of Horace's and Maecenas' relationship are intended only to intensify the contrasts. And again Horace has used a triangular pattern on which to construct an *exemplum* that will help to clarify the whole issue of benefactions between *virī boni et sapientes*.<sup>17</sup>

The theme of the Epistle is not independence, except in the abstract, but rather the fitness of one's aspirations as measured by one's proper nature.<sup>18</sup> It is developed within the framework of a request from Horace to Maecenas to be forgiven his extended absence and allowed further time away from his friend. This theme of *decorum* is expressed in terms of giving and receiving, which are made to provide a generous and tactful background for the poet to ask and the patron to grant.

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17. The fable of the fox (29–33) is the only apparent exception. The *mustela* can have nothing to do with the fox's predicament, since he entered the bin *forte* (29). The uniqueness of this fable within the plan of the Epistle may remind us that it is put forward by someone other than the poet, in order that *he* may refute it.

18. That an "assertion of independence" is the main point

of this Epistle seems to have been the assumption of all critics who have handled it. The one exception is Büchner, who recognized the importance of the themes of giving and receiving, and the warm treatment of the friendship between the two. His article remains, in this writer's view, the most sensitive reading to date.

### PLAUTUS *MILES GLoriosus* 211

ecce autem aedificat: columnnam mento suffigit suo.  
apage, non placet profecto mihi istaec aedificatio;  
nam os columnatum poetae esse inaudivi barbaro,  
cui bini custodes semper totis horis occubant.

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In this allusion to the imprisonment of Naevius by the Metelli, *os columnatum* has been variously interpreted but not convincingly explained. Brix-Niemeyer's suggestion that it represented "das in Kummer und Leid auf den Arm (*columna*) gestützte Gesicht" is not supported by parallels, and it is not included as a posture of grief in K. Sittl, *Die Gebärden der Griechen und Römer*, although *Miles* 201–9 is given as an example of southern expressiveness (p. 48). Such a posture seems too similar to the attitude of cogitation shown by Palaestrio to be credible as signifying something different. Dousa's interpretation (*apud Gronovius*), that Naevius used to compose with his hand propping his chin,

understandably does not now feature in commentaries, and merely illustrates how puzzling the expression must have been found to give rise to so weak an explanation. A. Ernout suggested (in the Budé edition) that Naevius "fut emprisonné et sans doute mis au carcan (ce qui explique la plaisanterie de Plaute sur l'*os columnatum*)."

But such a *servile supplicium* seems unlikely in the case of a free citizen with aristocratic backing, whose imprisonment must have been in the nature of a *custodia libera*, if he did indeed write the recantatory *Hariolus* and *Leon* in prison (F. Marx, *Ber. d. sächs. Ges.*, LXIII [1911], 71), and whose incarceration must, in view of the great Republican freedom to criticize, have