Horace and the Greek Lyric Tradition

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ABSTRACT

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Although the Roman poet Horace (65 – 8 BCE) is well known for his celebration of distinctively Roman and specifically Augustan themes, he was also heavily influenced by the traditions of Greek lyric poetry, particularly in the creation of his four books of *Odes*. This thesis uses close readings of selected poems from Horace, Sappho, Alcaeus, and Archilochus to examine the complex relationship between Horace and the Greek lyric poets who inspired him.

The first section of this thesis establishes the claims that Horace himself makes about his relationship to the Greek poets through an examination of several poems in which he reflects on his status as a lyric poet. The second and third sections consist of comparative analysis in which poems of Horace are set against selections of Greek lyric. In the second section, this analysis is focused on the appearance of the personal voice or lyric ‘I’ in Horace’s poetry and in Greek lyric. In the third section, the focus shifts to the use of the lyric addressee, an aspect of the occasion or “moment” for which a poem is supposedly written. The conclusion applies these comparative arguments to a re-evaluation of Horace’s own claims, arriving at an assessment of Horace’s lyric achievement which suggests the necessity for a re-evaluation of Greek lyric as well.
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Introduction

The Roman poet Horace was born in 65 BCE, just two years before the future emperor Octavian (who would receive his more familiar title of Augustus from the Senate in 27 BCE). Horace was born at Venusia, on the borders of Apulia and Lucania, and he writes that his father was a freed slave. Despite Horace’s emphasis on his humble origins, his father was apparently well-off enough to have his son educated at both Rome and Athens (Quinn IX). Horace came of age in a time of great upheaval for Rome: he witnessed the turbulent years of the civil war and Octavian’s eventual rise to power. He fought on the “wrong side” at Philippi, but apparently switched allegiances at some point thereafter, becoming (at least outwardly) a staunch supporter of Octavian/Augustus. In addition to receiving pardon from Augustus for his actions at Philippi, Horace soon came to enjoy the patronage of Maecenas, an extremely wealthy equestrian and counselor to Augustus. Much of Horace’s poetry, including the Odes, is dedicated to Maecenas. Maecenas appears to have been instrumental in making it possible for Horace’s creative work to continue; he gifted Horace with the Sabine farm which the poet describes as an ideal poetic retreat.

Although Horace has been called the “most Augustan of Roman poets,” and indeed much of his poetry celebrates Augustan and Roman themes, he is also well known
for drawing on the traditions of Greek lyric poetry, particularly in the creation of his four books of *Odes*. It is not enough, however, to simply say that Horace “adapted” Greek lyric or used it as his “example.” The relationship between Horace and his Greek lyric predecessors is complex and our modern perception of this relationship may not always be reflected in the claims that Horace himself makes. The goal of this project, then, is both to establish Horace’s own perception of his involvement with the Greek lyric tradition, and to evaluate the claims he makes from the perspective of modern interpretation.

Greek lyric poetry is divided into two primary categories: choral lyric and monody. I will focus on monody in this project, not because Horace ignores the existence of choral lyric, but rather because he draws more *explicitly* on monody, and the features of monody offer better opportunities for direct comparison. Ancient lyric monody consists of short poems, which are usually written in the personal (‘I’) voice, and were originally intended to be performed with musical accompaniment (hence the term ‘lyric’ from ‘lyre’). This kind of lyric is said to be poetry of the “here and now”: it conveys the sense of an immediate moment for which/in which the poem is created. For these reasons, ancient monodists, beginning with Archilochus in the 7th century BCE, often present their personal poetry of the “here and now” as being opposed to the “universal,” heroic values of epic, a comparison which Horace readily adopts. The Greek lyric that survives today is unfortunately highly fragmentary, a state which necessarily limits the scope of any comparative project. In addition to accounting for Horace’s very
different historical perspective on Greek lyric, we must also remember that he had access to much more of it than we do today.

The first chapter of this paper will examine the ways in which Horace presents lyric poetry, lyric poets, and his own place as one of them. The construction of lyric in the *Odes* will be my primary interest; however, I will also turn briefly to Horace’s reflections in *Epistle* 1.19, which seems to offer a more removed “theory” of poetic influence, as opposed to the way this influence is “applied” in the *Odes*. This line of discussion does not imply that I will take Horace “at his word” when he styles himself in a particular way; rather, I will use Horace’s representations of lyric and self as the foundation for a broader analysis, one which will account for perspectives that the author himself does not address. The heart of this project is comparative, and in the second and third chapters, I will provide my own assessment of the relationship between Horace the Greek lyric poets by directly comparing selected poems of Horace with poems of Archilochus, Sappho, and Alcaeus. The second chapter will focus specifically on Horace’s use of lyric’s personal voice or ‘I’ as compared with the lyric ‘I’s found in these Greek poets. The third chapter will address the respective poets’ use of the lyric ‘you’ or addressee as an example of the poem’s “moment” (i.e., the pretense of immediacy or “nowness” that is often cited as a defining feature of lyric poetry). Finally, in conclusion, I will apply these comparative arguments to a re-evaluation of Horace’s own claims, arriving at an assessment of the relationship between Horace and Greek lyric that accounts for both Horace’s privileged (if biased) perspective as an ancient reader of lyric, and the (more or less) disinterested perspective afforded by modern analysis. I will argue
that Horace does in fact succeed in re-embodied a kind of essential lyric “spirit,” creating a continuity between himself and the Greek lyric poets which is all the more evident when we set aside our preconceived readings of Greek lyric in order to understand the ancient lyricists, like Horace, as self-conscious, skillful fashioners of their works.
I. Horace’s idea of lyric

Any attempt to evaluate the nature of the relationship between Horace and the Greek lyric poets must at some point account for what Horace himself tells us about the matter. Horace is, after all, extremely self-conscious about his lyric connections, and this self-consciousness can be very revealing. It is true that his own ambitions necessarily inform his literary construction of both the lyric poets themselves and his place among them, and therefore may not provide a complete picture. Yet, given the fragmentary nature of the Greek lyric that has survived to our own day, it would be naive to suggest that we could provide a definitive view of the complex relationship between Horace and his Greek predecessors by ignoring the poet’s assertions. Horace’s opinions, however subjective, are an important part of the information available to us.

A bold inception

Discussion of Horace’s lyric identity often begins with the first poem of the first book of the Odes, and rightly so: in this poem, he evokes many key themes of his lyric program, setting the stage for his use of these elements throughout the Odes. The poem as a whole is addressed to Maecenas and begins with an extensive priamel, in which Horace lists a variety of activities that others pursue with enthusiasm, from chariot-racing, politics, and commerce to soldiery and hunting. Though I cannot address the many subtleties of this priamel,¹ it clearly has an important function in preparing us for

¹ For a detailed discussion of the priamel, see Sutherland, 20-32.
Horace’s self-presentation. If the poem as a whole “represents the inaugural claim of a Horatian lyric speaker to be a Roman lyricist who plays an essential role in his society” (Sutherland 18), then the priamel, with the diversity of occupations it characterizes, paves the way for the creation of a distinctive poetic occupation for Horace.

The crucial shift to self-presentation occurs in line 29, where a bold opening *me* (repeated after the semicolon in the next line) helps lay claim to the poet’s own space in both the poem and the external world:

```
Me doctarum hederae praemia frontium
dis miscent superis; me gelidum nemus
Nympharumque leves cum Satyris chori
secernunt populo...
```

(1.1.29-32)

As for me, rewards of the ivy of learned foreheads mingle me with the gods above; the cool grove and light choruses of Nymphs with Satyrs separate me from the crowd...

The ivy garland suggested by *doctarum hederae...frontium* is symbolic of public recognition as a poet (Quinn 120), reaffirming the idea that the (lyric) poet can play an important role in Roman society. *Doctarum* is itself a significant word, because it establishes Horace from the first as a poet who is *doctus*, suggesting not only his skill with words, but also his scholarly interest in poetic traditions, particularly the traditions of lyric. Thus, the phrase *doctarum hederae praemia frontium* serves to assert Horace’s claim to poetic authority in two ways. He portrays himself both as a learned poet, deriving authority from the traditions he studies and revives, and as a poet sufficiently integrated into society to deserve public recognition for his
accomplishments, deriving authority from within the cultural environment of his own society.²

The next lines seem to revise the idea of the poet’s role in society somewhat by suggesting his retreat into a realm of imagination and art. The grove (a classic symbol of the poet’s occupation) and the chori of Nymphs and Satyrs “separate” the poet from the people at large, either in the sense that the artistry these beings represent distinguishes him from others, or in the sense that to pursue the kind of poetry with which they are associated he is first compelled to seek artistic seclusion. Either way, our picture of Horace’s self-constructed role as lyric poet is beginning to take shape. He defines himself with reference to society, yet sees himself occupying a space isolated from mainstream or “common” society. This will be an important point to remember when Horace makes explicit reference to particular Greek lyric poets and their place in society.

Horace goes on invoke two Greek Muses, Euterpe and Polyhymnia, which suggests that he wishes to share with the Greek lyric poets a common source of poetic inspiration. In particular, he calls on these Muses to supply tibias (1.1.32) and the Lesboum barbiton (1.1.34), an interesting request in light of the fact that music is no longer an integral part of lyric for Horace. This phrase, however, will be more revealing when viewed in conjunction with some of Horace’s other musical references, a subject to which I will return after completing my discussion of Odes 1.1.

² Though I cannot attempt to prove it here, I suspect that the reference to doctarum...frontium and the idea of poet as scholar is intended to recall Horace’s Alexandrian inheritance, whereas the idea of public recognition (and, as elaborated elsewhere, participation in civic life) recalls his conception of the Greek lyric poets.
The final two lines of 1.1 may prove the most revealing in terms of Horace’s poetic self-presentation. Returning to his address of Maecenas, Horace says:

\[
\textit{quodsi me lyricis vatibus inseres,} \\
\textit{sublimi feriam sidera vertice.} \quad (1.1.35-36)
\]

And if you will place me among the lyric poets, I will strike the stars with the raised crown of my head.

As Paul Allen Miller points out, “poets” is not truly an adequate translation for \textit{vates} in this case: “while \textit{lyricus} is derived directly from Greek, \textit{vates} is an exclusively Latin word which is not strictly equivalent to the Greek \textit{poeta}, but implies a mythical prophetic power rooted in the deepest recesses of early Italic religion and culture” (Miller 158). Yet with \textit{lyricus} attached, we must read some kind of reference to Greek lyric poets such as Sappho and Alcaeus. Denis Feeney and Tony Woodman both state that Horace is referring to the canon of nine lyric poets established by the Alexandrian scholars (41-42; 53-54). In this case, Horace’s wish to be inserted among them is a bold request indeed: “What is at issue is the significance of Horace’s attempt to join long-dead master-poets in a list which had been definitively \textit{closed}” (Feeney 45). If we combine the views of Miller and Feeney, Horace appears still more ambitious: he wishes not only to be inserted among the canonical lyricists, but to achieve this by fundamentally altering their poetry, preserving its lyric spirit yet re-inventing it so that it becomes the domain of a thoroughly Roman \textit{vates}. Thus, the phrase \textit{quodsi me lyricis vatibus inseres} effectively encapsulates Horace’s poetic intentions in the \textit{Odes}, but also hints at the tremendous challenge he has set for himself: to balance mastery of tradition with poetic innovation throughout.
Recalling the lyre

I have already noted that poem 1.1 contains an interesting reference to the musical traditions of lyric poetry:

...si neque tibias
Euterpe cohibet nec Polyhymnia
Lesboum refugit tendere barbiton;... (1.1.32-34)

...if Euterpe does not hold back the flutes, nor Polyhymnia refuse to extend the lyre of Lesbos;...

Why should a lyre or flute be necessary to a poet who publishes, rather than performs, his works? Part of the reason for Horace to persist in these types of references throughout the Odes is obviously to help him evoke the atmosphere of poems performed to music: “Lacking music, he provides an overwhelming pervasive illusion of music for these spoken poems” (Johnson 126). The fiction of music should constantly remind his readers of his lyric intentions in the Odes. Furthermore, his reference in 1.1.32-34 to both the tibia and barbitos suggests the breadth of his undertaking, because the tibia was associated with choral accompaniment, while the barbitos accompanied solo song (Feeney 42, 53). In this way, Horace claims that he has the capacity to tap into both of these types of lyric in his poetry.

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3 In utilizing such explicit references to music, Horace differs from his Alexandrian predecessors, who chose to call attention to the “bookish” nature of their poetry. When the term lyric was established in Alexandria, replacing the old word melic as a description of the nine canonical lyric poets, the lyre had already become superfluous to the composition of new lyric poetry, thus it was “the emblem of a non-entity, the mark of an absence” (Peponi 21). Horace, however, seems determined to overwrite this absence with his persistent musical references, asserting that he is capable of bridging this gap.

4 It is also worth noting that the term barbitos is specifically associated with Sappho and is not attested in the extant fragments of Alcaeus, possibly indicating that Alcaeus was not so singular a source of inspiration for Horace’s Aeolium carmen as he has sometimes been thought (Woodman 53).
In *Odes* 1.32 the lyre, once again termed a *barbitos*, is directly invoked by Horace to help him produce poetry:

...*age dic Latinum,*

*barbite, carmen,*

*Lesbio primum modulate civi,* (1.32.3-5)

...come, inspire Latin song, lyre first played by the citizen of Lesbos,...

The implication of these lines is that the lyre is somehow essential to Horace’s creative process. This need not imply that Horace actually sat under a tree and strummed a lyre in his efforts to recapture the lyric spirit. The *barbitos* that Horace addresses in this poem must be thought of as a conceptual lyre, broadly symbolic of the “spirit” of lyric that lies in both the past and future for Horace: in the Greek tradition that inspires him, and in the living reinvention of that tradition that he intends to produce. Two other important points emerge from this passage. The first is that Horace furthers the illusion of music in his poetry by referring to his work with the word *carmen*, using the vocabulary of “song” and “singing,” as he does throughout the *Odes*. The second point is that he explicitly refers to the *barbitos* here as the one “first played by the citizen of Lesbos.” Presumably, the word *civis* can only indicate Alcaeus. Implicitly, then, Horace is saying that his source of inspiration, the lyric “spirit” of his poetry represented by the lyre, is linked to Alcaeus’ source of inspiration, i.e., that there is an essential continuity between Alcaeus’ poetry and his own. This idea of continuity, however, does not mean the Horace fails to appreciate the changes he brings about in

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5 Horace himself refers to his emulation of the *animos...Archilochi* at Epistles 1.19.24
6 Therefore, in spite of the Sapphic connotations of the word *barbitos* (see note 4 above), Horace does in fact associate this instrument with Alcaeus as well. The significance of the word *civis* in reference to Alcaeus will be discussed shortly.
lyric poetry; rather, it is precisely this changing and re-creating of lyric that he considers to be his true accomplishment.

In *Odes* 4.3, Horace evokes the lyre once again, but in a very different context, asserting that he is known as the *praetereuntium Romanae fidicen lyrae* (4.3.22-23). This line implies that while he derives inspiration from the Greek *lyra* (indeed, as a lyre-player or *fidicen* he has mastered its use), his greatest achievement is that he has transformed that *lyra* into something distinctly Roman, as confirmed by the grammatical agreement of *Romanae...lyrae*. Thus, for Horace, the lyre comes to represent not only the Greek lyric tradition that he strives to evoke in his poetry, but also the unique way in which he has transformed that tradition into a new, Roman lyric.

*Playing with genre*

In *Odes* 1.1, we saw that Horace’s presentation of himself as a Roman lyric poet was set against the other occupations described in the priamel, helping to establish the poet’s persona with reference to that which is *not* his domain. Horace applies a similar technique to his presentation of the lyric genre in poems 1.6 and 2.1, among others. Such poems participate in what Gregson Davis terms “generic disavowal,” where Horace rejects the material of other genres and reaffirms his lyric identity. Davis uses the term “disavowal” to convey that this technique is fundamentally a rhetorical one, and disingenuous in purpose – it often functions to re-incorporate precisely the generic material that the poet claims to reject (Davis 28).

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7 Other relevant poems which will not be discussed here include 1.7 and 2.12.
In 1.6, Horace establishes lyric against the material of both historical and mythological epic. Addressing the poem to Agrippa (whose name appears in line 5), Horace states: “Scriberis Vario...Maeonii carminis alite” (1.6.1-2: “You will be written about by Varius, a bird/bard of Homeric poetry”). Horace then shifts from the feats of Agrippa to the feats of mythical epic heroes like Achilles:

\[
\text{nos, Agrippa, neque haec dicere nec gravem}
\text{Pelidae stomachum cedere nescii}
\text{nec cursus duplicis per mare Ulixei... (1.6.5-7)}
\]

I, Agrippa, (will attempt) to write neither of these matters, nor of the heavy bile of the son of Peleus, unable to compromise, nor of the course of deceitful Ulysses through the sea...

Although he praised Agrippa as fortis et hostium victor (1.6.1-2), Horace now seems to censure the Homeric heroes, or at least to treat them with irreverence. Achilles’ wrath (mēnis in the Iliad) is reduced to stomachum, which can mean “bile,” “irritation,” or “annoyance,” and he is “unable to compromise.” Ulysses, as well, gains an epithet with primarily negative connotations, meaning “double-dealing” or “false.” Aside from Horace’s dismissive treatment of the Homeric heroes, we might wonder what is intended by his positioning of these heroes in such close proximity to the contemporary hero Agrippa. If we take Horace to be in earnest, his seemingly inappropriate treatment of the Homeric heroes might simply serve to demonstrate his claim that he is incapable of writing epic, historical or otherwise. However, a more subversive possibility is that the praise Horace has already given to Agrippa in this poem is meant to be reconsidered or even undermined in light of his treatment of Achilles and Ulysses, particularly since the adjective Maeonii in line two suggests that
the writing of Agrippa’s feats would be in some sense comparable to Homeric epic.\(^8\)

Later, Horace continues:

\begin{quote}
...\textit{pudor} \\
\textit{inbellisque lyrae Musa potens vetat} \\
\textit{laudes egregii Caesaris et tuas} \\
\textit{culpa deterere ingeni.}  (1.6.9-12)
\end{quote}

...modesty and the powerful Muse of the un-warlike lyre forbid me to detract from the praises of illustrious Caesar and yourself with the deficiency of my talent.

Horace completes his rejection of epic, insisting that his own choice of genre is fundamentally \textit{inbellis}. To “detract” from the praises due to his contemporaries might mean to treat them inappropriately – perhaps with the irreverence that he has already shown for the Homeric heroes. Horace is employing a classic element of the \textit{recusatio} here: he claims himself to be incapable of writing suitably about either his contemporaries and their achievements or the achievements of mythical heroes, thus stating explicitly what his treatment of the Homeric heroes had already implied.

In the final stanza of 1.6, Horace reasserts his own choice of genre in a light-hearted manner:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Nos convivia, nos proelia virginum} \\
\textit{sectis in iuvenis unguibus acrium} \\
\textit{cantumus vacui...}  (1.6.17-19)
\end{quote}

I, at leisure,\(^9\) sing of banquets, I sing of the battles of harsh maidens with

\(^8\) It is interesting to note how Horace effectively collapses Homeric epic with Roman epic and historical poetry in this poem. Though it may not have been intentional, I believe that the way in which he makes this connection shows his belief in some sort of literary continuity between the two cultures, thus supporting his own claim that he can bridge the gap between Greek and Roman literature within the lyric genre.

\(^9\) “At leisure” and “carefree” are some of the milder translations of \textit{vacui}. Other, more pejorative possibilities include “empty” or “useless.” The choice depends largely on how one reads the tone of the sentence overall.
sharpened fingernails against young men...

The subject matter that he claims here is surprisingly narrow. Merely a brief glance through the *Odes* should allow us to determine that Horace is understating the scope of his poetic project. Yet his flippant self-presentation must serve some purpose, however elusive. In the context of a *recusatio*, Horace perhaps minimizes his talents in order to avoid contradicting his argument that epic is beyond his grasp; it would be incongruent for him to claim mastery over any weighty themes within the lyric genre, since he has already stated that he is incapable of writing about the *grandia* (line 9) of epic. Instead of claiming the superiority of his genre, he ultimately treats both epic and lyric with a degree of mild ridicule, rewriting the epic heroes as less noble and reconstructing his own poetry as frivolous. Aside from adhering to the self-deprecating attitude called for by a *recusatio*, it is difficult to determine whether Horace has any significant statement to make about his genre in the final stanza of 1.6. Fortunately, comparison of this poem to another, 2.1, can provide insight.

Poem 2.1, unlike 1.6, treats the generic material that it ultimately rejects seriously and at length. Ostensibly praising the work of Pollio, Horace slips into a reverie on the horrors of the civil war. Since I am interested here in what Horace tells us about his own choice of genre (disingenuous though he may be), I will point out just two parts of the poem. First, Horace states that writing about the civil war is *periculosae plenum opus aleae* (2.1.6, a work full of dangerous gambling). This statement seems to caution that literature should not be too bound up in political affairs, lest its author offend the
powerful and find himself in danger. Second, the final stanza heralds a return to the “lighter” themes of lyric:

\[
\text{Sed ne relictis, Musa procax, iocis} \\
\text{...} \\
\text{mecum Dionaeo sub antro} \\
\text{quaerere modos leviore plectro.} \quad (2.1.37-40)
\]

But may you not, brash Muse, give up your jokes...with me down in Dione’s cave seek rhythms with a lighter plectrum.

So, having noted the dangers of historical writing, Horace lays a path for his own retreat from such themes. As in 1.1, the idea of poetic “separation” is evident here when Horace asks his Muse to join him in the secluded creative atmosphere of the cave. Perhaps his excursus on the civil war was a result of his temporary emergence from this sheltered environment, to which he now wishes to return. The idea of “light” poetry from the final stanza of 1.6 is also important here, evidenced by \textit{iocis} and \textit{leviore plectro}. The reference to Dione (mother of Venus) also implies that Horace’s poetry embraces the theme of love (Quinn 199). Thus, what emerges from the end of this poem, in conjunction with the final stanza of 1.6, is the idea that the lyric genre supports a kind of withdrawal, whether to a metaphorical “cave” of creative space, or simply to frivolous themes in place of weighty ones.\footnote{Furthermore, it is not only the poet who practices this “withdrawal.” Elizabeth Sutherland pictures the audience participating as well: “...the poet assumes that we will, like him, be able to \textit{distance ourselves} from those intense scenes by adhering to the ethics of lighter lyric poetry” (81; italics mine).}

It is clear to us that Horace’s poetry does not always adhere to such a doctrine of “withdrawal” (the material preceding the final stanza of 2.1 is a case in point); still, it is significant that Horace defines his work in these terms. Lyric is a genre which Horace believes will allow him to forge a unique role for himself in Roman society, as he
makes clear elsewhere, yet in these poems part of its appeal seems to be that it allows him to maintain a certain distance from public and political life. In this sense, the establishment of genre in Horace’s *Odes* is clearly bound up with his establishment of poetic selfhood; his discussions of genre are an important tool in his construction of himself as the *lyricus vates*.

*Meeting the past*

Horace’s pervasive self-consciousness concerning both himself as poet and his genre sometimes leads him to construct images of his Greek lyric predecessors, which ultimately reflect on his own poetic existence. Horace has already shown that he is concerned both with the nature of the lyric genre and the role of lyric poets in society, so it is no surprise that these both of these concerns appear in his treatment of the Greek lyric poets, Alcaeus in particular.

I have already discussed poem 1.32 in terms of its musical references, but its presentation of Alcaeus is also intriguing:

...*age dic Latinum,*
  *barbite, carmen,*

*Lesbio primum modulate civi,*
*qui ferox bello tamen inter arma,*
*sive iactatam religat udo *
*litore navim,*

*Liberum et Musas Veneremque et illi *
*semper haerentem puerum canebat...* (1.32.3-10)

...come, inspire Latin poetry, lyre first played by the citizen of Lesbos, who though fierce in battle, nevertheless between fights, or if he tied a storm-tossed ship on a wet shore, was always singing about
Bacchus and the Muses and Venus and the boy always attached to her,...

Horace’s image of Alcaeus infers that this ancient poet combined his poetry with civic participation and military life. The themes that Horace attributes to Alcaeus’ poetry are surprisingly “light” compared to the harsh realities that Horace depicts as part of his life – in fact, they resemble the themes that Horace assigns to himself in the final stanzas of 1.6 and 2.1. In this way, Alcaeus’ lyric, like Horace’s lyric, seems able to serve as a release from the hardships of public and political life, though it lacks a truly equivalent sense of “withdrawal” thanks to Alcaeus’ participant status. By idealizing Alcaeus for this “poet-participant” status, Horace suggests that his vision of lyric involves a sense of community and spontaneity that existed in Alcaeus’ world. Surely Horace recognized that he could never recreate this sense fully, given the tremendous gap between Alcaeus’ society and his own.  

1.32, however, effectively commemorates this lost feature of the lyric tradition; Horace’s reflection on Alcaeus, together with his invocation of the lyre played by Alcaeus, serves to incorporate some of the spirit of Alcaeus’ lyric into his own, even while excusing him from re-creating all of its aspects.

In 2.13, Alcaeus appears once again, this time in conjunction with Sappho in Horace’s vision of the underworld:

...(vidimus)...

\[ \text{Aeoliis fidibus querentem} \]

\[ \text{Sappho puellis de popularibus,} \]

\[ \text{et te sonatem plenius aureo,} \]

11 Lacking the social context native to Greek Lyric, Horace must “create social and political relevance for himself through such constructs as the role of the vates” (Lowrie 73).
(I saw) Sappho, lamenting over the local girls with her Aeolian lyre, and you, Alcaeus, playing more fully with golden plectrum about the hardships of seafaring, terrible hardships of exile, hardships of war; and the shades admire each, singing things worthy of reverent silence, but the crowd packed shoulder-to-shoulder drinks in more with their ears the wars and exiled tyrants.

This passage has often been read as conveying Horace’s preference for Alcaeus over Sappho, since Sappho is described as querentem (lamenting or complaining), and it is Alcaeus whom the shades in the underworld seem to prefer. However, Tony Woodman points out that the opinion of the vulgus would rarely hold much weight with a poet in the post-Callimachean tradition (55). Furthermore, Horace’s treatment of Alcaeus here contradicts his treatment in 1.32: the themes of his poetry are heavy rather than light, focused on war rather than love. In light of this troubling incongruity, I am partial to Gregson Davis’s assessment of the issue: “The thematic reduction is deliberately severe...Alcaeus and Sappho here stand, not so much for the historical lyrici, as for two complementary generic poles available to Horace within the Lesbian tradition – namely a more public-oriented variety...and a more inner-directed personal one” (85-86). Thus, the images of Alcaeus and Sappho here participate in the same attempt to balance public and private aspects of poetry and poetic existence that we witnessed in 1.32. In neither poem does Horace concern himself with arriving at a complete assessment of his lyric predecessors. Rather, they become emblematic of certain complementary aspects of the
lyric tradition. 1.32 reveals Horace’s interest in the idea of the “poet/participant,” yet simultaneously reinforces the idea of lyric poetry as a means of retreating from the hardships of such participation. 2.13 illustrates the great breadth of the tradition that has inspired Horace’s poetry, and ultimately argues for his mastery over that tradition: Significantly, the seemingly Orphic power of these two poets is restricted to the underworld, where they perform for their fellow-shades. It reaches Horace’s contemporaries only through him. Therefore, the images of Sappho and Alcaeus in 2.13 provide a powerful validation of Horace’s ability to re-embody the spirit of their poetry in a new and innovative form.

Horace reflects

This chapter would not be complete without examining some of the instances in which Horace looks back on his works and self-consciously assesses his lyric achievements. The most famous of such instances is probably Odes 3.30, but I will also depart from the Odes briefly to examine the perspective on lyric that emerges from Epistles 1.19. Horace, hardly a modest poet, loudly trumpets his own immortality in 3.30; Epistles 1.19 recapitulates this claim, yet contains an undercurrent of self-justification, showing the poet in the position of explaining rather than simply exalting in his accomplishments.

Horace begins Odes 3.30 with a bold statement about the lasting quality of his work:

Exegi monumentum aere perennius
regalique situ pyramidum altius,
quod non imber edax, non Aquilo impotens
possit diruere aut innumerabilis annorum series et fuga temporum. (3.30.1-5)

I have completed a monument more lasting than bronze and higher than the royal structure of the pyramids, which neither destructive rain, nor the wild north wind could demolish, nor an innumerable succession of years and the flight of time.

The “monument” is a multi-faceted entity. It can refer in part to the three books of Odes as tangible objects, but books themselves could not outlast bronze. It is the ideas that will carry on, as dicar (“I will be spoken of,” line 10) later suggests. As long as Horace is remembered and praised (crescam laude recens, line 8), his works will be copied, studied, recited, and, through such dissemination, rendered impervious to the forces that affect merely physical monuments. Denis Feeney points out that Horace’s grasp of future time as an immense sequence of years would have been beyond the understanding of the Greek poets, despite this poem’s surface resemblance to something that one of them might produce (58). The Greek lyric poets, however, are to a certain extent included in the glory of Horace’s monumentum: just as Horace sublimates the poetic power of Sappho and Alcaeus from the underworld into validation of his own work (2.13, discussed above), so too does he support the claims of 3.30 with reference to the past. Horace’s great achievement is that he was princeps Aeolium carmen ad Italos deduxisse modos (3.30.13-14). While the emphasis is on his own innovation, a distinct nod of respect is given to his Greek predecessors, thus incorporating them into the foundation of his monumentum.

Also significant in 3.30 is the association of the poet with his works (Non omnis moriar multaque pars mei vitabit Libitinam, 3.30.6-7). This identification contributes to
the aggressive attitude of certainty displayed in 3.30: Horace is so confident in the quality of his work that “by merging himself with his works, he insists that he will at least partially survive the tomb” (Sutherland 227). Another example of this type of claim has already occurred in Odes 2.20, where the poet’s transformation into a bird (rendered in literal detail), and his subsequent flight across the far reaches of the known world, represent the spread and perpetuation of his poetic ideas or “spirit.”

The final lines of 3.30 contain a culminating request from the poet:

... *sume superbiam quaesitam meritis et mihi Delphica lauro cinge volens, Melpomene, comam.*

Take up the pride obtained by your merits, Melpomene, and willingly encircle my hair with Delphic laurel.

This request displays once again the desire for public recognition that Horace has conveyed since the first poem of the Odes. Elizabeth Sutherland argues that the reader is intended to envision participation in this ritual: “We in the audience are briefly assimilated to this addressee and asked to give the lyricist the emblems of his success” (233). This is a perceptive argument, to which I would add one qualification: the audience called upon to accord the poet his honors seems to be very different than the widespread, generic audience by whom he “will be spoken about” in the future. The address to an obscure Greek Muse, and the phrase *sume superbiam quaesitam meritis* serve to single out the most elite among his readers, perhaps even Maecenas himself, who, we will remember, was asked to honor the poet in 1.1. Ultimately, even allowing for the potential for audience identification, I believe that Melpomene is evocative of the sphere of artistic separation that Horace has elsewhere constructed for himself (e.g., in 2.1,
where Horace asks his Muse to accompany him into the “cave” of his poetic space). The end of 3.30, then, contributes to the balance that Horace strives to achieve between desire for public recognition and investment in maintaining personal artistic space.12

Epistle 1.19, as a later reflection in a different generic form, has very different goals from Odes 3.30. Addressed to Maecenas, its tone is much more conversational, its language less elevated. Following on a harsh critique of imitatores, Horace goes on to explain his own poetic achievement, positioning himself first and foremost as a great innovator:

Libera per vacuum posui vestigia princeps  
non aliena meo pressi pede. qui sibi fidet,  
dux reget examen. (Epistles 1.19.21-23)

I was able to press first with my foot unhindered tracks, not another’s, through empty space. He who is true to himself rules a swarm as leader.

The word princeps echoes 3.30.13, but here Horace develops the idea of being “first” even further with the reference to “tracks through empty space.” Even more definitive is his assertion about “qui sibi fidet:” Horace has already accused others of imitating, while he creates his own path; thus, although “qui sibi...” is generic, Horace implicitly states that he is the one who is “true to himself” while his imitators become a mere “swarm,” (also called a servum pecus in line 19).

We must ask, however, what exactly it means for Horace to be “true to himself” when some of his major achievements, in his own words, were “Aeolium carmen ad Italos deduxisse modos” (Odes 3.30.13-14) and “Parios...iambos ostendi Latio” (Epistles

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12 Elizabeth Sutherland’s discussion of the public/private dichotomy in this poem, along with 3.29, is excellent (see 225-234, especially 233-234).
1.19.23-24) – i.e., precisely his adaptation and use of others’ poetry in his work. As it turns out, there is a fine line between despicable “imitation” and commendable use of tradition. Horace explains his own work as follows:

\[
\text{Parios ego primus iambos} \\
\text{ostendi Latio, numeros animosque secutus} \\
\text{Archilochi, non res et agentia verba Lycamen.} \\
\text{ac ne me foliis ideo brevioribus ornes,} \\
\text{quod timui mutare modos et carminis artem,} \\
\text{temperat Archilochi musam pede mascula Sappho} \\
\text{temperat Alcaeus, sed rebus et ordine dispar} \\
\text{...} \\
\text{hunc ego, non alio dictum prius ore, Latinus} \\
\text{vulgavi fidicen...} \quad \text{(Epistles 1.19.23-33)}
\]

I first introduced Parian iambos in Latin, having followed many ideas of Archilochus, though not his subject-matter and harsh words against Lycambe. And lest you should for this reason honor me with lesser leaves, because I feared to change the meters and artistry of the song, masculine Sappho tempers the muse of Archilochus with her meter, Alcaeus tempers (it), but is different in subjects and arrangement...this man, not spoken of earlier by another mouth, I the Latin lyre-player spread around.

This is a dense and complex passage, and many words could be rendered differently than I have done; I have tried to be as literal as possible to avoid confusion. Horace qualifies his statement about his use of Parian iambos by claiming to have “followed” the “ideas” or “spirits” of Archilochus, rather than his specific subject matter. Clearly the differences between “imitating” vs. “following” and “ideas” vs. “subject matter” are crucial in Horace’s mind, though they may seem slight to us. Anastasia-Erasmia Peponi suggests that the distinction Horace is attempting to explain here lies between “imitation” and the original meaning of \textit{mimesis}, re-enactment (39). If Horace conceives of his poetry as “re-enactment” or “re-embodiment” of Greek lyric ideas then his retention of meters (\textit{modos})
and a certain artistry or aesthetic (*artem*) provides a foundation, and his alteration of subject matter is what serves to make his poetry both unique and relevant to his own society.

Horace further explains his combination of tradition and innovation by arguing that “re-enactment” itself has precedent: Sappho, he says, “tempers” or “blends” the “muse of Archilochus” – i.e., his poetic inspiration and ideas – with her meter, and Alcaeus does the same. Horace in turn brings Alcaeus (*hunc*) into public view through his poetry. This progression depicts Horace as the equal of his lyric predecessors: “Horace regarded these voluminous poets as being, like himself, accomplished exponents of the most demanding metrical forms, as imitators and adapters of each other in a tradition which he is continuing, as self-conscious and versatile literary artists” (Feeney 57). When Horace refers to himself as the Latinus *fidicen*, he cements this argument: as *fidicen*, he is one of the lyric poets, but as Latinus *fidicen*, he is original; the two words play off of each other in a miniature balancing act of sorts. Ultimately, no poetry can be produced entirely out of thin air – poetry emerges from a cultural “matrix” of influences and ideas. What Horace strives to establish in *Epistles* 1.19 is the full extent of his originality within a particular matrix of tradition.

We have seen that Horace demonstrates his poetic self-consciousness in a variety of ways. He positions himself as an extension of the Greek lyric canon, recalling the spirit of lyric poetry through his references to the lyre and its practitioners. Ultimately, however, the goal of such recollection is to establish Horace not as the imitator of his predecessors, but as the innovative re-inventor of the spirit of their poetry. With this
background in mind, I will turn from Horace’s self-evaluation to my own assessment of his poetic “monument.” My account will be comparative in nature, setting Horace against the Greek lyric that he claims to revive, and ultimately asking whether his claims are justified, in what sense his self-assessment is accurate or inaccurate, and whether there is anything that he (perhaps deliberately) neglects or leaves out in envisioning his relationship with the Greek lyric poets. I will begin with discussion of the “lyric I” as a defining feature of lyric poetry.
II. Beyond self-consciousness: reading the lyric ‘I’

The personal voice or lyric ‘I’ is undoubtedly one of the most familiar features of ancient lyric monody. It is also one of the most debated. The “problem of the lyric I,” as S. R. Slings terms it (1), centers on the question of the extent to which the ‘I’ should, or should not, be read as identical to the perspective of poet him/herself. A traditional, Romantic interpretation is that ancient lyric monody “presents us with direct access to the ‘I’ of the man or woman singing” (Feeney 56). This apparent impulse towards authentic self-presentation is seen as a historical marker indicating the rise of self-awareness, the “awakening personality” and the individual’s desire to differentiate him/herself from the rest of society (Slings 1-2). The opposite view is that lyric is born out of a communal, ritual or “occasional” context, and as such, is derived more from convention than from a desire for individual self-expression (Burnett 3). For instance, Martin West has suggested that Lycambes and his daughters, the individuals so thoroughly berated by Archilochus, were actually fictional stock characters originating in traditional entertainment or ritual, rather than living people (Slings 6).1 In reality, neither of these views can account for the diverse perspectives of Greek monody. As Anne Pippin Burnett states, “The songs of Archilochus, Alcaeus and Sappho are obviously neither the sudden inventions of a freshly liberated ‘archaic ego’ nor purely conventional projections of fixed communal gestures” (6). Rather, we can see in lyric’s personal voice both

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1 In particular, West has argued that the -amb- root of Lycambes name was characteristic of such stock figures (see Irwin 178).
elements of individual expression and elements derived from context and convention. As Slings points out, the discussion should not necessarily be seen as a binary opposition between the personal, autobiographical ‘I’ and the conditioned, conventional (and therefore fictional) ‘I’; rather, he suggests that we should see the ‘I’ as that of the performer, which “moves through a continuum in which the biographical I and the fictional I are two extremes: most of the time it is neither” (12).

The status of the lyric ‘I’ as a “continuum” will inform my arguments throughout this chapter, but it will not be my goal to submit a response to this debate. While my discussion draws on both aspects of the lyric ‘I,’ I am not interested in positing its “true” foundation; my discussion here will be concerned with the intertextual relationships between the ‘I’ of the Greek poets and Horace’s ‘I’ rather than with their proposed external and social contexts. This analysis will allow for further elaboration of Horace’s relationship with the Greek lyric poets, ultimately leading to a re-evaluation of his own claims in the conclusion of this paper. For this reason, my discussions of “context” in regard to the lyric ‘I’ will be limited to those contexts which are constructed in the poems themselves rather than those which may be drawn from other sources and applied to the study of this poetry.

In the previous chapter, I was concerned with what Horace himself tells us about his relationship to the Greek lyric poets, i.e., with addressing the issue on his terms. This chapter will provide an opportunity to move gradually away from Horace’s self-evaluation in order to address certain aspects of his relationship with the Greek lyricists that seem to have been less important or less available to him. As a result of this
progression from the terms we saw in the last chapter to the terms I will provide, yet another “continuum” of lyric ‘I’s will emerge: I view Horace’s ‘I’ as ranging from an intentional, self-consciously applied poetic strategy in some cases to a more ambiguous, unconscious entity over which the poet exercises little deliberate control in others. The “unconscious I” will naturally be more difficult to show in action, which is why I will begin with the ‘I’ as self-conscious strategy and progress outward from there. A central concept in this progression will be the idea of “presence,” which encompasses not only the poet’s placement of him/herself in the poem but also the poet’s presence or absence from the constructed context of the poem, and the sense of immediacy that this presence can convey to the audience or reader, as the case may be. Throughout this chapter, I will set Horace’s ‘I’ against the ‘I’s of several Greek lyric poets in order to illustrate how the “continuum” that I have outlined here can inform our understanding of the relationship between Horace and his Greek predecessors.

Self-definition and genre

I have previously discussed Horace’s technique of “generic disavowal” (to borrow Gregson Davis’s terminology), by which he establishes his choice of genre against epic and historical poetry, meanwhile incorporating the very material that he claims to reject. The question of generic alignment can also be used to examine the lyric ‘I,’ at least to the extent that genre and self are treated by the poet as overlapping entities. The correspondence between genre and self seems to have been a concept that was readily available to Horace, for he explicitly draws connections between his ‘I’ and his poetic
pursuits. This close association between genre and self also exists for Horace’s Greek predecessors, but is rarely made so explicit by them as it is by Horace.

One poem in which Horace defines genre and self against other possibilities is 1.7 of the *Odes*, where he sets himself against the vague *alii* and their poetic pursuits:

*Laudabunt alii claram Rhodon aut Mytilenae
aut Epheson bimarisve Corinthi
moenia vel Bachho Thebas vel Apolline Delphos
insignis aut Thessala Tempe;...* (1.7.1-4)

Others will praise illustrious Rhodes or Mytilene or Ephesus or the walls of Corinth between two seas or Thebes, famous because of Bacchus, or Delphos, famous because of Apollo or the Thessalian vale of Tempe;...

This list of geographical references has the effect of making Horace appear well-educated and perhaps well-traveled, but the opening phrase *laudabunt alii* establishes before we even read the list that Horace does not think of these places as a part of his poetic domain. Kenneth Quinn observes that the tone of this opening is “the relaxed talk of a man who is in a mood to be urbanely ironical at the expense of those who praise the famous cities of Greece” (135). It is interesting that Horace should decline to praise Greek cities given his deep debt to Greek poets (two of them from Mytilene, in fact). The purpose of this rejection, then, seems to be similar to the purpose of Epistle 1.19, where we saw Horace critique slavish imitators and establish his own originality within the lyric tradition. The “imitators” of *Epistle* 1.19 are analogous here those who are too dependent on Greece and Greek culture for their poetic material, as Horace makes clearer in the next stanza:

*sunt quibus unum opus est intactae Palladis urbem
carmine perpetuo celebrare...* (1.7.5-6)

There are those for whom the one work is to celebrate the city of virgin Pallas with never-ending song...
The opening phrase *sunt quibus* implies the same vague “otherness” as *alii* in the first stanza. Here, though, *unum opus* gives a more negative impression of these others, suggesting a lack of originality and reliance on overused themes.

Following on this implicit critique of the poetic material used by others, Horace turns to himself in the third and fourth stanzas:

> me nec tam patiens Lacedaemon
doctrinae percussit campus opimae
quam domus Albuneae resonantis

> et praeceps Anio ac Tiburni lucus et uda
mobilibus pomaria rivis. (1.7.10-14)

...neither restrained Sparta nor the plain of fertile Larisa has made such an impression on me as the temple of echoing Albunea and the falls of the Anio and the grove of Tiburnus and the orchard watered by shifting streams.

All of these places which have “made an impression” on Horace are in the area around Tibur (Tivoli). Implicitly, then, Horace is stating that the material of *his* poetry is distinctively Roman in spite of its Greek-inspired forms; whereas others can only participate in one-dimensional adulation of Greekness, Horace asserts command over Greek themes, places, and forms, yet claims to distinguish himself by writing on topics closer to home.

The poetic ‘I’ of 1.7 is clearly concerned with separating himself from other poets and their works. Yet this rejection of Greek themes in favor of Roman ones is conspicuously disingenuous, since it is immediately followed by the *exemplum* of Teucer drawn from (where else?) Greek mythology. The speech of Teucer is linked thematically
to the claims of Horace’s ‘I’: he urges his men to relax, drink wine, and forget their worries for the night, symbolizing the setting-aside of weighty, epic themes in favor of the supposedly lighter themes of lyric. He also speaks of the promise of a “new Salamis” to be founded in another land, which could very well stand for the revival or rejuvenation of Greek poetry in a new cultural context – precisely what Horace hopes to accomplish.

The ‘I’ of 1.7, then, is part of a complex poetic strategy in which Horace constructs an image of his originality as a poet. The I’s preference for certain places is linked to genre, helping Horace to construct an embedded image of his poetic self: he is the skillful reviver of Greek-inspired poetry, yet he is not just a slavish imitator of all things Greek; rather he is uniquely Roman in his poetic choices and themes.

In Sappho’s fragment 16, a similar technique of rejection and self-definition is employed, but her poetic “strategy” is more difficult to discern than Horace’s. We seem to have a pure assertion of individuality when Sappho says:

Some say an array of horsemen is the most beautiful thing on the black earth, others say it is a troop of foot soldiers, others say a fleet of ships, but I say it is that, whatever it is, that one loves;...

Here, the ‘I-poet’ (writing/composing) appears to be subordinated to the ‘I-Sappho’ (being), contributing to the impression that we do indeed have “direct access” (Feeney 56) to the person behind the poetry. Yet the “some say x...others say y...but I say z” construction goes beyond an outpouring of self-expression; it clearly has implications in terms of establishing genre and poetic goals. All those things that Sappho mentions in
the domain of “others” connote the material and values of epic poetry, while “whatever one loves” can easily be seen as describing the subjects of Sappho’s own poetry. Eric Gans points out that this phrase (“whatever one loves”) is a “shifter” – unlike cavalry, soldiers, or ships, its application is subject to individual discretion (39). Gans, however, maintains a fairly traditional, “awakening individual” reading of this poem. This reading is not wrong, per se, but I do think that it neglects the veiled strategy of the ‘I-poet’ – strategy which is less explicit than in Horace’s *Odes*, but important nonetheless.

The *exemplum* of Helen is a powerful indicator of Sappho’s poetic strategy in this case. Helen, of course, is best known from epic, where she is important mainly as an “obstruction,” which serves to provoke the central, male actions of the epic. Sappho, however, completely re-writes Helen as the illustration of her “whatever one loves” doctrine:

\[\begin{align*}
\pi\; \gamma\chi\nu\; \delta\; \varepsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha\varsigma\; \sigma\upsilon\nu\epsilon\tau\omicron\on\omicron\sigma\iota\nu\; \pi\omicron\omicron\sigma\alpha

\pi\; \lambda\acute{n}t\i\; \tau[\sigma]\upsilon\acute{t}\acute{t},\; \acute{a}\; \gamma\acute{a}r\; \pi\omicron\omicron\upsilon\; \pi\epsilon\omicron\sigma\kappa\acute{e}\theta\omicron\iota\omicron\sigma\alpha

\kappa\alpha\lll\lo\alpha\varsigma\; [\acute{a}n\theta]\rho\omicron\pi\omega\nu\; \acute{E}\lambda\acute{e}n\acute{a}\; [\tau\delta]\nu\; \acute{a}n\acute{d}r\alpha

\tau\omicron\nu\; [p\alpha\nu\acute{a}\acute{r}]\iota\omicron\sigma\omicron\on\omicron\nu

\kappa\alpha\lll[\acute{i}\pi\omicron]\acute{\iota}\varsigma\; \acute{\epsilon}\beta\acute{a}\; \acute{\vars}{\acute{\tau}}\rho\acute{\omicron}\acute{\iota}\acute{\acute{\alpha}}\; \pi\lambda\acute{\omicron}\sigma\iota\sigma\alpha\; (\text{fr. 16, 5-9})
\end{align*}\]

And it is entirely easy to make this intelligible to all, for Helen, by far surpassing all mortals in beauty, left behind her husband, the best of men, and sailed away to Troy...

Sappho reclaims Helen from epic assessments of her character and depicts her as a model of the power of love. Sappho goes on in this poem to state her own preference for Anaktoria over the materials of war and epic. But this is more than just ‘I-Sappho’ (i.e., the person *being*) commemorating her desire. It is also Sappho’s ‘I-poet’ (i.e., the artist *writing*) constructing a strategic image of her poetic beliefs and goals. “The most
beautiful thing” is not just a matter of personal preference, but also of poetic preference: implicitly, Sappho rejects epic poetry when she rejects the materials of epic, presenting herself instead as the poet of personal (and changeable) desires. Her appropriation of Helen from the material of epic demonstrates the underlying statement of genre in this poem. Epic, the ‘I-poet’ seems to be saying, is incomplete and fails to address the range of human emotion and experience. Sappho’s poetry, then, is depicted as filling a gap, taking on the material that others (οἱ μὲν...οἱ δὲ) neglect. Thus, when Sappho says “it is entirely easy to make this intelligible to all” (a literal translation of πά ἥχυ δ’ εὖμαρες σύνετον πόησαι/ π ἧττο τ[ο]ῦτ’) at the beginning of her re-written exemplum, she asserts the value of her poetry, suggesting that the viewpoint of her poetic ‘I’ contains an individual, emotional appeal to others that epic lacks.

The ‘I’ of Sappho in this poem is more difficult to interpret than Horace’s ‘I’ in terms of a statement of poetic goals: whereas Horace explicitly links his ‘I’ to a discussion of poetry, Sappho’s ‘I’ appears at first to exist in an un-self-conscious declaration of personal values. Only by inference can we see the connection between her expression of personal preference and her expression of poetic goals. It is hard to determine the exact balance of the ‘I-Sappho’ (being) and the ‘I-poet’ (writing) in this fragment, but surely this was part of the poem’s intended effect: Sappho’s leap from the external world of generic conventions to a statement of personal values elides the poet/performer and the person, creating an illusion of utter immediacy, which is, in fact, a carefully constructed statement laden with external implications. At any rate, it is clear that the ‘I-poet’ of this poem should not be ignored in favor of an “awakening individual”
Sappho’s poetic goals in this fragment, while less explicit than those of Horace, are nevertheless important, and clearly provided one model for the type of disavowal that Horace undertakes not only in 1.7, but in many of the other *Odes*.

Sappho, however, was not the only archaic poet to make a “personal” statement rejecting the values of epic poetry. In one of the most famous fragments of Archilochus, the poet’s ‘I’ leaves his shield behind to save his life, subverting the epic emphasis on honor. This fragment provides a useful counterpart to the statements of Horace’s ‘I’ in *Odes* 2.7, where he also claims to have lost his shield, though at Philippi rather than in Thrace. Archilochus, like Sappho, makes a statement that seems personal rather than poetic, but clearly implies generic choices as well. Horace, on the other hand, explicitly links the loss of his shield at Philippi with his poetic existence and choice of genre, even suggesting that his poetry was what preserved him from disaster.

The fragment of Archilochus’ version of the shield-loss, which according to Campbell is “almost certainly complete” (145), is quite short:

\[
\text{άσπίδι μὲν Σαίων τις ἀγάλλεται, ἥν παρὰ θάμνων} \\
\text{ἐντὸς ἀμώμητον κάλλιπον οὐκ ἐθέλων,} \\
\text{αὐτὸν δ’ ἔξεσάωσα, τί μοι μέλει ἀσπὶς ἐκείνη;} \\
\text{ἐρρέτω· ἐξαὐτίς κτήσομαι οὐ κακίω.} \quad (\text{fr. 6})
\]

Some Thracian is adorned with my shield, a blameless piece of armor which I, unwilling, left beside a bush, and I kept myself safe. Why should that shield concern me? Away; I’ll obtain one again no worse.

The sentiment expressed in this poem is quite striking. Like Sappho’s fragment 16, it appears to give us “direct access” to the ‘I’ of the person *being*, here the ‘I-Archilochus.’ For this reason, it has often been taken as biographical, i.e., as the poet’s record of an actual event from his life, though this claim has lately been disputed (Irwin 178).
Regardless of such external realities, this poem should also be read as a statement about genre and poetic choices. According to Burnett, the fragment so strongly contradicts the values of epic that “the singer claims to be guilty of an epic ‘crime’”2 (41). And yet, he asserts just as strongly that this ‘crime’ means nothing to him: he argues that the shield he lost was of no particular value – his life was more important. The statement “I saved myself” is interesting, because the ‘I’ gives no further description of his reasons for abandoning his shield. Was he in the midst of battle, was he ambushed, or did he simply forget the shield? All of these cases have been argued (Burnett 41), but at a certain point such speculation seems futile. The key point in this fragment is not what the ‘I’ was supposed to have been doing when he left his shield (keep in mind that there may never have been a “real” situation behind this poem), but rather the statement that he makes in doing so.

The tone of the fragment overall suggests recognition of the fact that the ‘I’ acts in contravention of certain (epic) norms, particularly since the rhetorical question “why should that shield matter to me?” asks that the audience recall, then reconsider, those norms. The ‘I’ then proceeds to cheapen the values of epic by stating that he can always just buy a new shield. Ultimately, the ‘I’ of this poem (as with Sappho’s ‘I’ in fragment 16) rejects epic poetry through rejection of the values of epic on a very “personal” level. For the ‘I’ of Archilochus, this rejection takes a practical form: he states a preference for life over honor (even to the point of suggesting that honor is a cheap and meaningless thing). While he appears to a certain degree to recognize his defiance, at the same time,

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2 By “the singer,” I take it that Burnett refers to the ‘I-poet’, i.e. the artist composing the song, and thus recognizes the fragment’s inherent status as a piece of poetic strategy.
he seems little concerned by it, and does not dwell in the external implications of his rejection. Like Sappho, he presents his audience with an alternative to epic, though appealing to them not so much through personal emotion as through the seemingly frank and open pragmatism that his ‘I’ presents.

Horace’s treatment of the “lost shield” motif, compared to that of Archilochus, is set in a more elaborate constructed context. Ostensibly, 2.7 is written to welcome Pompeius home from exile, but we find Horace dwelling on his own service at Philippi, along with Pompeius:

\[ \text{Tecum Philippo et celerem fugam} \\
\text{sensi relictam non bene parmula,} \\
\text{cum fracta virtus et minaces} \\
\text{turpe solum tetingere mento;} \ (2.7.9-12) \]

With you I experienced Philippi and swift flight, with shield left behind not honorably, when brave men were crushed\(^3\) and threatening soldiers shamefully touched the ground with their chin(s).

Horace makes it perfectly clear that his actions were less-than-heroic with the phrases *celerem fugam* and *relictam non bene parmula*: compared to Archilochus’ “not willing,” which seems to justify his action, Horace’s “not well” or “not honorably” openly accepts the charge of cowardice. Horace’s frame of reference for honor in this poem is not epic poetry so much as it is the historical/epic deeds of his countrymen who stayed to fight.\(^4\)

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\(^3\) I like this translation of *fracta virtus*, given by Quinn (211), because its suggests the grim toll that war takes on the best and bravest of society, and it is in keeping with the plural *minaces* which follows. But I also think that *fracta virtus* could connote, more literally, that courage itself (and in particular Horace’s courage) was shattered in the battle.

\(^4\) Although *tecum...celerem fugam sensi* suggests that Pompeius, like Horace, would have fled the battle entirely if he could have, that is if the wave, *unda*, of line 16 had not carried him back into the midst of the fighting. But Pompeius and Horace seem to be like-minded individuals, and Pompeius is not the standard
Horace, like Archilochus, seems unapologetic for this “failure” of his courage. In fact, it seems that Horace’s lack of courage may have contributed in large part to his salvation. Instead of continuing the fight, Horace states that he was whisked away by the god Mercury:

```
sed me per hostis Mercurius celer
denso paventum sustulit aere,... (2.7.13-14)
```

But swift Mercury carried me trembling through the enemy in a dense mist...

The significance of “Mercury” here has not been neglected. Paul Allen Miller sees a connection between this divine rescue and the pardon the Horace received from Augustus (164). It is not to be forgotten, however, that Mercury is a patron god of poetry (having invented the lyre), and so if Horace refers obliquely to his rehabilitation by the emperor here, he suggests at the same time that poetry itself was his salvation, the reason for his pardon. The god (and the emperor?) recognize that the “trembling” poet is unfit for battle, destined instead for other pursuits. This poem is thus, in a way, a *recusatio* of epic-type poetry on a level more personal than anything else we have yet seen from Horace. He was not a soldier of epic valor, nor can he be the poet of epic deeds. Rather, whisked away in his cloud of mist, Horace returns to what is apparently a life of leisure and lighter poetic pursuits (suggested by the emphasis on wine and celebration in this poem).

Indeed, in welcoming Pompeius’ return, he says to his comrade “*longa... fessum militia latus/ depone sub lauru mea...*” (2.7.18-19: rest your body, tired by long military service,

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5 It may be a stretch, but I should at least suggest that the *denso aere* recalls the poet’s vaunted isolation from the cruel outside world.
beneath my laurel), suggesting that his own place as poet (indicated by laurel) is the
perfect antidote to the evils of war.

Setting this poem against fragment 6 of Archilochus, we see several important
differences. While both poetic ‘I’s seem to recognize that they defy certain epic or
historical values, they discuss their rejections differently. Archilochus frames his rebuttal
of epic values in the most pragmatic of terms: “I did it to save my skin, and who cares
anyway? Honor is cheap.” He appears as the ‘I-being,’ giving the illusion that he is
simply describing a real event, and failing make explicit the rejection of epic poetry that
is inherent in the work of the ‘I-poet.’ Horace, on the other hand, despite the “personal
narrative” quality of 2.7, gives his rejection of historical/epic values in a context that
allows him to reflect on poetic existence. Thus he draws attention to the ‘I-poet’ writing
the poem, who suggests that poetry was an important part of his escape from the dangers
of historical/epic battle. Now, asking Pompeius to join him “sub lauru mea,” this ‘I-poet’
reflects on the place that he enjoys in society as the writer of non-epic themes.

*Individual and society*

The link between questions of genre and the construction of the lyric ‘I’ also
relates to the notion of an individual poet’s place in society. The relationship of poet to
society is problematic for Horace, who, as I noted previously, struggles to balance
competing ideals of participation and withdrawal. I wish to return now to the idea of the
“poet/participant,” which I introduced in the first chapter. The poet/participant is a fairly
self-explanatory concept, simply referring to a poet who both composes poetry and plays
an active role in the affairs of his society. Horace constructs such an image of Alcaeus in poem 1.32 of the *Odes*. I must emphasize again that I will be considering the relationship of poet to society only as it is constructed within the poet’s works; external evidence for a poet’s participation or lack thereof is not appropriate to my discussion. I will argue that, to a degree, Horace’s assessment of Alcaeus in 1.32 is correct: the poetry of Alcaeus clearly portrays his ‘I’ as taking an active role in public affairs. Horace himself, on the other hand, discusses public life, but does not show his ‘I’ directly participating. Rather, his poetry seems to serve as a constant “screen” between his poetic ‘I’ and public life.

I will begin by examining one of the famous “ship of state” fragments of Alcaeus before contrasting it with its Horatian counterpart. In Alcaeus fragment 6, the poet’s I exhorts his companions to save their ship, about to be battered by a “new wave”:

φαρχώμεθ’ ὡς ὠκιστὰ [τοῖχοις,
ἐς δ’ ἔχυρον λίμενα δρόμωμεν‘
καὶ μὴ τιν’ ὅκνος μόλθ[ακος ἀμμέων
λάβῃ ...
καὶ μὴ καταισχύνωμεν [ἀνανδρία
ἐσολοις τόκης γάς ὑπα κε[ιμέοις’ (fr. 6, 7-10, 13-14)

Let us strengthen as swiftly as possible the walls and let us run to a safe harbor; and let no faint-hearted hesitation take hold of any of us;...and let us not dishonor by cowardice our noble fathers lying beneath the earth;...

The first person plural subjunctives make it clear that Alcaeus wants to depict himself as being *present* in this situation (which has long been assumed a metaphor for some political crisis) along with those whom he is addressing. As in Sappho’s fragment 16, it is difficult to separate the ‘I-Alcaeus’ and the ‘I-poet’ in this poem. Burnett recognizes this difficulty when she says, “in Alcaeus the singer and the aristocrat were one...” (107).
We need not conclude from this that the poetic I of Alcaeus is identical to the living poet (indeed such a conclusion is beyond the scope of this paper); Burnett’s statement is equally valid when applied to the construction of the I within the poem. We should note that there is no reflection here on the meaning, purpose, advantages, or disadvantages of writing political poetry (such as Horace engages in with poem 2.1 of the *Odes*). Rather, Alcaeus’ “ship of state” simply exists for what it is, and the poet treats himself as an important part of the poem’s constructed context. 6 Thus, whatever the status of the real Alcaeus, his poetic ‘I’ is most definitely cast in the role of the poet/participant. Although Alcaeus may have considered in his own mind the difference between writing and participation, no such distinction is apparent in this poem – the two seem to merge.

Horace’s “ship of state” poem 7 differs strikingly from that of Alcaeus, in the first place because it is addressed directly to the “ship”:

\[
O\ navis,\ referent\ in\ mare\ te\ novi\\
fluctus:\ o\ quid\ agis?\ fortiter\ occupa\\
portum;\ nonne\ vides,\ ut\\
nudum\ remigio\ latus\\
\]
\[
et\ malus\ celeri\ saucius\ Africo\\
antemnaeque\ gemant\ ac\ sine\ funibus\\
vix\ durare\ carinae\\
possint\ imperiosus\\
\]
\[
aequor?\ \ (1.14.1-9)\]

6 The significance of the first person plural verbs should not be underestimated. The repeated exhortation of an “us” in this poem has the effect of blending the poet’s individual ‘I’ together with a collective group of people, further emphasizing his deep investment in the poem’s situation.

7 It has been pointed out that a “ship of state” is not the only interpretation of this poem – it could also be an allegorical “ship of love,” “ship of life,” “poem-ship,” etc. (Paschalis 80). However, I believe that the “ship of state” is by far the most plausible reading, especially given the echo of Alcaeus with *novi fluctus* in the first two lines, and the word “tyrannical” (*imperiosus*) describing the sea in line 8.
O ship, new waves carry you back into the sea; what do you do? Bravely occupy the port; don’t you see that your side is without oars and your mast wounded by the swift Southwest wind and your sails groan and without ropes your keels are scarcely able to endure the tyrannical sea?

Horace does exhort, but his command (occupa) is directed at the personified ship rather than at a putative group of comrades. While Alcaeus focuses on human behavior and potentially dangerous human shortcomings (such as ὄκνος μόλις ακος), Horace shifts his gaze to the physical weaknesses of the ship. The effect of this focus on the ship is to remove Horace’s ‘I’ from the situation, yet it paradoxically allows him to address the situation directly (as analogous to the ship) rather than addressing the people involved. Horace’s “ship,” like that of Alcaeus, seems to be in grave danger, but Horace is not actually on board the ship (i.e., a participant in the struggles of society); rather, he is an observer and a describer who stands outside the situation. The literary construction of a personified ship allows Horace’s poetry to serve as a “screen” between his poetic ‘I’ and direct participation in the societal struggles he depicts.

Another aspect of the involvement of Horace’s ‘I’ in society, which I should elaborate briefly, is the struggle to balance ideals of private satisfaction and public recognition. As I discussed in the last chapter, Horace’s ‘I’ seems at times to embrace an ideal of poetic isolation or withdrawal, while at other times it seeks out public recognition in pursuit of immortality. Here, we have no comparable poems from the ancient Greek monodists for comparison, yet Horace’s own ‘I’ bears a complex relationship to itself from one poem to another.
A clear example of the “private satisfaction” ideal occurs in the last stanza of
*Odes* 2.16, where Horace contrasts his lot with that of a wealthy man described in the
preceding lines:

```
...mihi parva rura et
spiritum Graiae tenuem Camenae
Parca non mendax dedit et malignum
spernere volgus
```

(2.16.37-40)

...to me Fate, not dishonest, has given a small country estate and the
slender inspiration of a Greek muse and the chance to avoid the malicious
crowd.

This at first gives the impression of a deeply personal reflection from the ‘I-Horace’ (the
person being), yet the phrase *spiritum Graiae tenuem Camenae* points to this as a
deliberate depiction of the ‘I-poet’ (artist writing) as well. Thus, when Horace says
“*malignum spernere volgus,*” we know that he is not just talking about Horace the person
avoiding the crowded city, but also about Horace the poet staking out his space of poetic
isolation, an imaginary sphere inhabited by himself and select companions (such as his
*Graia Camena*) only. Yet this artistic isolation seems intimately connected to the
physical separation that the *parva rura* allows for Horace as the ‘I-being.’ Thus, what
Horace has achieved in this poem is a blending of ‘I-Horace’ and ‘I-poet’ akin to that
which we have observed in Sappho. The major difference is that he cannot resist (or
simply sees no reason to resist) reflecting on the nature of his poetry with his reference to
the *Graia Camena*, thus pointing out the ‘I-poet’ more explicitly than Sappho would have.

With its emphasis on private satisfaction, both personal and poetic, the ‘I’ of 2.16
stands in contradiction the ‘I’ depicted elsewhere, which focuses on the achievement of
poetic immortality through public recognition. Poem 3.30, which I have discussed
previously, bears reconsideration in the present discussion. In the first place, this poem represents almost exclusively the desires and demands of the ‘I-poet.’ When Horace begins, “Exegi monumentum,” he is speaking as the artist, saying “I, the poet, have completed a monument.” The emphasis throughout the poem is on the lasting quality of this monument (aere perennius...quod non imber edax, etc.), which thus represents the immortality of the ‘I-poet.’ The poet’s ‘I’ is so strongly identified with his work that first person verbs (crescam...dicar) seem to refer to both the poet’s fame and the work’s popularity. Thus, the poet’s immortality in this poem is dependent on recognition of his works by others (dicar, qua violens obstrepit Aufidus... etc.)

Ultimately, while I cannot set 2.16 or 3.30 against any Greek counterparts, I can nevertheless propose the following assessment of their significance: In 2.16, where Horace focuses on the sphere of private satisfaction, he comes much closer to capturing the “blended” ‘I’ of a Greek poet such as Sappho or Alcaeus. In other words, the impression of unity between the ‘I-being’ and the ‘I-writing,’ which I have already noted as a feature Greek monody, is much greater when Horace focuses on the private or personal. But when he turns to ideals of immortality in 3.30, he departs from this “blended” ‘I’ to focus almost exclusively on the existence of the ‘I-poet’ (artist writing). In this sense, despite the reference to Aeolium carmen in line 13, I think that 3.30 has very little to do with an authentic affirmation of Horace’s lyric identity. Rather, the more important phrase seems to be ad Italos...modos (lines 13-14): the poetic ‘I’ of this poem, with his self-conscious pursuit of immortality through public recognition, participates in a powerful confirmation of Horace’s role in society as a uniquely Roman poet/prophet or
vates. Horace achieves a closer resemblance to the ‘I’ of Greek lyric when he focuses on
the private and poetic. He cannot seem to capture (and perhaps does not want to capture)
for himself the Alcaic depiction of the ‘I’ as participant. Thus his most forceful depiction
of his ‘I’ in a public role departs from this notion of the Greek poet/participant to focus
almost exclusively on the Roman poet.

The poet’s role: doing vs. telling

The discussion of the poet’s ‘I’ as a participant in society can be broadened to
include the idea of participation in any sort of situation created by the poem. Does the
poet’s ‘I’ play an active role in the poem, or does it exist simply as a means of narration?
In other words, is the poet’s ‘I’ depicted as present for the situation at hand, or removed
from it? In this section, it will once again be useful to set Horace against Sappho, using
an invocation to Aphrodite from each poet. I will argue that Sappho’s invocation reveals
a much more “present” ‘I,’ while Horace’s invocation again places a “screen” of distance
between the poetic ‘I’ and the poem’s apparent purpose.

Sappho’s invocation begins:

\[
\text{ποικιλόθρον’ ἀθανάτ’ Ἀφρόδιτα,}
\text{παῖ Δίος δολόπλοκε, λίσσομαί ἑ,}
\text{μὴ μ’ ἀσαις μηδ’ όναις δάμνα,}
\text{πότνια, θύμον, (1, 1-4)}
\]

Immortal Aphrodite on your richly-worked throne, crafty daughter of
Zeus, I beseech you, do not overpower my heart with sorrows and pain,
mistress...

We can see from the beginning the highly personal nature of this poem: Sappho invokes
Aphrodite with a request specifically concerning herself. In this sense the poem seems to
have a definite purpose – that is, the ‘I’ appears to be engaged in an external situation which the poem is supposed to ameliorate by calling on Aphrodite. Once again, the ‘I-poet’ must be distinguished from the ‘I-Sappho’: there is no need to infer from the personal nature of this poem that Sappho herself expected Aphrodite to come at her bidding. Rather, the situation is a constructed one, and in this situation, the ‘I’ is very clearly an active participant.

This participation of the ‘I’ continues throughout this fragment. Sappho recalls past assistance from Aphrodite, creating the image of a longstanding a personal relationship between her ‘I’ and the goddess. She also envisions Aphrodite’s approach in the present situation, and predicts the effect that the goddess will have on the object of her love. To this end, Sappho even goes so far as to write a speech for Aphrodite:

“...καὶ γὰρ αἱ φεύγει, ταχέως διώξει·
αἱ δὲ δώρα μὴ δέκετ’, ἀλλὰ δώσει·
αἱ δὲ μὴ φίλει, ταχέως φιλήσει
κωύκ εὐθέλοισα.”

“...And indeed if she flees, soon she will pursue; and if she does not welcome gifts, she will actually give them; and if she does not love, soon she will love, even if she is unwilling.”

This stanza is notable for its depiction of the incredible power of Aphrodite to alter human behavior. Sappho’s ‘I,’ as the one invoking and writing of such power, is able to indulge in wish-fulfillment, bringing about in her poetry something seemingly unlikely in real life. The poet’s ‘I’ is thus closely linked to the figure of Aphrodite, as emphasized in Sappho’s final request that the goddess be her σύμμαχος (line 28). As I have already stated, Sappho’s ‘I’ in this poem should be considered as a literary construction – the ‘I-
poet’ – not simply as Sappho herself. It is impossible to ignore the sense of immediacy that this ‘I’ gives: the poem produces the image of a specific situation in which the poet’s ‘I’ plays an active role. But we should note the role of the ‘I’ is not limited to ‘I-Sappho’ invoking the goddess. The ‘I-poet’ is also active, assuming control in her poetry over the goddess’s powers and even her speech.

Horace’s invocation of Aphrodite (Venus) in Odes 1.30 contrasts sharply with Sappho’s poem in terms of the role of the poet’s ‘I.’ To begin with, Horace never mentions himself at all in this poem; his invocation is completely impersonal in its apparent purpose:

\begin{verbatim}
O Venus regina Cnidi Paphique,
sperne dilectam Cypon et vocantis
ture te multo Glycerae decoram
transfer in aedem;

fervidus tecum puer et solutis
Gratiae zonis properentque Nymphae
et parum comis sine te Iuventas
Mercuriusque. (1.30)
\end{verbatim}

O Venus queen of Cnidos and Paphos, scorn delightful Cyprus and bring yourself into the elegant temple of Glycera, who is calling on you with much incense; the impetuous boy with you and the Graces with free money-belts and the Nymphs hurry along and Youth, too little cultured without you, and Mercury.

The poem recalls Sappho’s invocation of Aphrodite in a general sense, particularly since it is written in Sapphic stanzas. Like Sappho, Horace begins by addressing the goddess in grand style (compare Sappho’s “richly-worked throne” to Horace’s “queen of Cnidos

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8 Indeed, despite the pervasive use of an intensely authentic-seeming personal voice in Sappho’s poetry, Burnett says that her poems “neither in combination nor separately...constitute a depiction of self in any autobiographical sense” (230).
and Paphos”). However, the third line of Horace’s invocation reveals a major point of departure from Sappho 1: Horace’s ‘I’ seeks nothing for himself, but rather addresses the goddess on behalf of Glycera. Glycera, not Horace, is the one undertaking the physical act of invocation with incense. It is not at all clear that the ‘I’ is intended to be literally present for this act; it seems as likely that he is somewhere else and happens to be reflecting on Glycera’s temple. The second stanza is devoted entirely to evoking the divine retinue of Venus, once again elevating her to the status of regina, and effectively distancing her from any close relationship with the poet’s ‘I.’ Compare this to the relationship that Sappho depicts between her ‘I’ and Aphrodite when she asks the goddess to be her σύμμαχος.

These two poems, which at first glance appear to be similar, actually reveal the very different forms of the poet’s ‘I’ in Sappho and Horace. Sappho’s ‘I’ is constructed as an immediate participant in the poem’s situation, striving to bring about a change in that situation through her requests to Aphrodite, and even enacting that change by describing the goddess’s arrival and speech. Thus, while both poems request the goddess’s presence at a specific location, only Sappho’s ‘I’ asserts the power to participate and bring about the “presence” of Aphrodite. Horace’s ‘I’, on the other hand, lacks a direct role to play, other than as the poem’s narrator, and his Venus is never “present” to him. Rather, the supposed purpose of the poem is to urge Venus to enter the temple of Glycera, a location to which the poet’s ‘I’ seems to have no particular attachment. Along with the elevated style in which the goddess is addressed, this creates a sense of distance rather than presence for Horace’s ‘I’ in 1.30. The ‘I’ is in the
background, and its primary aim seems to be the construction of this literary invocation, rather than the depiction of a credible situation in which it might participate.

I should note that Sappho’s ability to write “in the moment” is not always associated with the ability of her ‘I’ to bring about change. For instance, in fragment 31, her ‘I’ seems helpless to do anything about the situation which she so vividly describes. After expressing her awe (or jealously) of the man who sits opposite the poem’s addressee, Sappho launches into a famous description of the physicality of her desire:

...τό μ’ ἦ μᾶν
καρδίαν ἐν στὴθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν·
ὡς γὰρ ἐς σ’ ἰδὼ βρόχε', ὡς με φώναι -
σ’ οὐδ’ ἐν ἦτ’ ἐίκει,

ἀλλ’ ἄκαν μὲν γλῶσσα ἔαγε, λέπτον
d’ αὐτικα χρῶ πῦρ ὑπαδεδρόμηκεν,
ὅππάτεσσι δ’ οὖδ’ ἐν δρημ’’, ἐπιρρόμ-
βείοι δ’ ἄκουαι, (fr. 31, 5-12)

...

...at this truly my heart flutters in my breast; for whenever I look at you briefly, then it is not possible for me to say one thing, but in silence my tongue is broken, and at once delicate fire runs under my skin, and my eyes see nothing, and my ears hum, ...

The paradox of this poem is nicely summed up by Burnett, who says that it fascinates because of its “curious mixture of cool diction and fiery emotion.” In fact, we see in this poem the masterful interweaving of the illusion of Sappho as being and the skill of Sappho as writing (the “blended I” of ‘I-Sappho’ and ‘I-poet’). I cannot remark at length upon this poem here, but wish simply to point out the powerful impression of engagement with the situation that is conveyed. Although Sappho’s ‘I’ seems helpless,
and although we must realize that the poem is not written at the moment it depicts (if such a moment even occurred), the lyric ‘I’ is nevertheless shown to be “present” – a participant, albeit a passive one.

Although Horace has no direct counterpart to this poem of Sappho, we can effectively compare the two poets by stepping away from the *Odes* for a moment to look at *Epode* 11, where Horace discusses the role of poetry in relation to desire. In this poem, Horace maintains that poetry serves no purpose as an expression of love:

\[
\begin{align*}
Petti, nihil me, sicut antea, iuuat & \\
scribere versiculos amore percussum gravi, \quad (\text{Epode} \ 11, \ 1-2) & \\
\end{align*}
\]

Pettius, it does me no good, just like before, to write verses when I am struck by heavy love...

To write about the symptoms of desire is useless: Horace thus dismisses the whole premise of Sappho 31. He goes even further when he says:

\[
\begin{align*}
...conviviorum et paenitet, & \\
in quis amantem languor et silentium & \\
arguit et latere petitus imo spiritus. \quad (\text{Epode} \ 11, \ 8-10) & \\
\end{align*}
\]

And I regret the banquets, at which feebleness and silence and sighs drawn from the deepest part of my lungs proved that I was in love.

The physical symptoms of love are not all so different from Sappho’s (although depicted without the same intensity or detail). But what matters to the ‘I’ of this poem is not the internal feeling of those symptoms, but their external appearance. Rather than existing “in the moment,” the illusion that Sappho’s ‘I’ gives us, this ‘I’ is two steps removed from the situation described: not only is he looking at himself, but he is looking at others looking at himself. The distance, and the self-criticism that accompanies it, is quite striking. Furthermore, this ‘I’ claims to have once been a serious spokesperson for desire,
and to have received only mistreatment as a result (lines 19-22), further emphasizing the worthlessness of this sort of self-expression.

Some may say that it is too much of a stretch to compare Sappho’s poem to an Epode, since it was in the Odes, not the Epodes, that Horace claimed to be influenced by the poets of Lesbos. Yet I think it is important to note that already in this early poetry, Horace has ascribed to his poetic ‘I’ a certain detachment and capacity for self-conscious reflection far beyond anything evident in Greek monody. This is not to say that the ancient monodists were incapable of this sort of self-reflection. Rather, I would argue that to them, it is simply not “the point.” The almost effortless beauty of Sappho’s poetry stems in large part from her seamless interweaving of the ‘I-being’ and the ‘I-writing.’ Even when Sappho includes a note of self-deprecation, she does it through the words of Aphrodite in fragment 1, thus masking the role of the ‘I-poet’ in this gentle self-mockery. Horace, by contrast, brings the role of the ‘I-poet’ creating the poetry into full view, reflecting not only on the poetic situation, but on poetry itself as a means of communicating that situation.
III. The poem’s moment: reading the lyric addressee

Lyric monody is known for positioning itself as poetry of the “here and now,” claiming to speak for the individual, the particular, and the immediate, rather than the remote universals of epic or tragedy. This pretense of immediacy or “nowness” is as distinct a feature of lyric as its personal ‘I’ voice. As we have seen, the lyric ‘I’ is one component of the larger picture of poetic “presence”; it is one device at the poet’s disposal in the creation of the lyric “now.” The effect of presence, however, is also produced through a variety of other methods. Whereas the previous chapter was focused on the effects of the personal voice as a critical feature of lyric presence, this chapter will consider the sense of presence (and conversely, absence or distance) that can emerge through the depiction of poetic context. While poetic context includes a variety of features, I will focus my analysis in particular on what I have termed the lyric ‘you’ or lyric addressee. This feature, I feel, is an excellent example of the ways in which a poem can convey the sense of an immediate “external” context for itself.

In situating the analysis of this chapter, it is once again important to recognize the existing scholarly debates which stand as the background to my arguments. The extensive debate about the nature of the lyric ‘I,’ discussed in the previous chapter, also has implications for our reading of the “presence” found in poetic context depicted through the lyric addressee. As I observed earlier, the lyric ‘I’ may be understood as existing on a continuum running from biographical to fictional (Slings 12). The two opposing poles of this continuum may also be related to the idea that this poetry ranges
from purely “personal” (the expression of personal views and experiences) to purely “occasional” (the expression of fictional views and experiences created by the poet to suit an external ritual or social occasion). Although it has not been my goal to situate the lyric ‘I’ between these extremes, I have adopted the terms of this debate to serve my own purposes. In the last chapter, I examined the most “personal” aspect of lyric poetry, the lyric ‘I,’ and now I will turn to the “occasional” aspect, examining the constructed external world of individual poems, as depicted through the use of the lyric addressee. The key word, of course, is *constructed*, because I am not addressing the question of any “real” context or occasion for the poetry. As with the lyric ‘I,’ I will treat the lyric addressee as a critical feature of the poetry, an image emerging from a combination of devices employed with a greater or lesser degree of strategic consciousness on the poet’s part. I did not attempt in the last chapter to show that lyric is “really” a poetry of personal expression, and here I do not attempt to show that it is dependent on an attachment to any “real” external person or occasion. Rather, this chapter aims to examine the *representation* of lyric occasion through the use of the addressee in Horace’s poetry as compared to that of his Greek predecessors.

This chapter will progress outward from a more concrete examination of the addressee towards a more abstract discussion of the implications of this device. I will first consider the poet’s placement of an addressee as a means of situating the poem with respect to the constructed image of the external world. This focus on the addressee will suggest related considerations of poetic occasion, setting, and purpose. Ultimately, this examination of lyric presence through the addressee will reveal a set of significant
differences between Horace’s poetry and Greek lyric. In Horace’s case, the image of a genuine poetic “moment” with the addressee will prove illusory: beyond the surface, this device of presence is just as bound up with Horace’s self-conscious reflection on his poetic project as it is with the depiction of an immediate poetic context. For the Greek lyric poets, on the other hand, poetic self-consciousness is not so clearly revealed through devices of presence like the lyric addressee; rather, the poetic moment, however removed from the “real” it may be, retains the pretense of affiliation with an “authentic” moment that Horace’s poetry often seem to lack. This ultimately suggests an important shift in the lyric treatment of the “here and now.” Whereas the Greek lyric poets seem comfortable using their poetry to mediate between themselves and situations which they present as immediate and “now,” Horace alters this process of mediation by inserting the extra “layer” that is poetic self-consciousness between himself as poet and the constructed “nowness” of his poetry.

Modes of Address

The designation of a supposedly external addressee for a given poem is one clearly recognized strategy for the creation of a poetic “here and now,” via the pretense of conversation. According to W. R. Johnson, “The most usual mode in Greek lyric (probably) and in Latin lyric (certainly) was to address the poem (in Greek, the song) to another person or to other persons” (4). His calculations reveal that fully 87 percent of
Horace’s lyric poems are of the “I-You” type. ¹ Despite the apparent continuity between Horace and his predecessors in this regard, I believe nevertheless that important differences between them may be accessed through an examination of their respective “modes of address.” The poet’s choice of a “you” is very revealing. In Horace’s case, I will argue that his “you” most often turns out to be a “reflection,” as it were, of his own poetic goals and practices. His “you” does not offer a position that is functionally distinct from the project of his “I”; thus, his address of an “other” turns out to be interior to his own poetic self-consciousness. Greek lyric, on the other hand, represents the “I-you” situation with a more genuine sense of externality: the “you” is granted a role that is functionally differentiated from the role of the poet’s “I.” This does not mean that the situation of address in Greek lyric is authentically external (i.e., really existed), nor does it indicate lack of strategic planning. Rather, it shows that the strategy of address in Greek lyric is disguised by the sense of an immediate moment that Horace’s poetry, whether deliberately or not, often lacks.

I will begin with Horace in this section before setting him against Archilochus and Sappho. A useful starting-point for examining the self-referential nature of Horace’s “you” is poem 1.32 of the Odes, where the “you” addressed is the lyre. In this poem, the poet’s (plural) ‘I’ and his lyre are conceived of as companions in the creation of poetry:

```
Poscimus, si quid vacui sub umbra
lusimus tecum, quod et hunc in annum
vivat et pluris, age dic Latinum,
barbite, carmen,
```

¹ Modern criticism demands attentiveness to the distinction between the ‘you’ produced in the text, and the ‘you’ of the reader. The deliberate blurring of these addressees is itself an interesting poetic strategy, but one that I will not have time to discuss here at length.
Lesbio primum modulate civi,  (1.32.1-5)

We pray, if we, unoccupied, have played at anything with you beneath the shade which may live in this year and many, inspire Latin song, lyre first played by the citizen of Lesbos...

Horace addresses the lyre as though it were literally present with him in the secluded lyric space that he invokes (sub umbra). However, I argued in the first chapter that Horace’s references to the lyre should be thought of as broadly conceptual: the lyre represents his poetic inspiration rather than a physical object serving to accompany his poetic creations. Horace’s reference here to the lyre as that of Alcaeus (the “citizen of Lesbos”) confirms its conceptual nature: a real, physical lyre could hardly be thought of as having survived from Alcaeus’ time to his own, but an abstract lyre of poetic inspiration potentially could. At any rate, Horace would have us believe that he and Alcaeus are linked by this conceptual lyre – that their sources of poetic inspiration are marked by a kind of essential continuity. If the lyre is so clearly intended to be read as an abstraction, what is implied by Horace’s address? When Sappho speaks to her lyre, she treats it as a real object that is physically available to her, whatever mystical qualities it may take on in addition to its material role. But Horace’s invocation seems to have lost its material referent; instead, his lyre is fundamentally interior to the idea of his poetic project: it is a way of calling upon his own talent as a poet. In this way, Horace’s address of the lyre in 1.32 invokes a very particular kind of “you,” one that is ultimately self-referential. This “you” does not mediate between the poet and any kind of external force or necessity, but shows him reflecting on his own goals and abilities.
A very similar situation is found in poem 1.12, addressed to the muse Clio. This lengthy poem begins with Horace questioning the muse:

*Quem virum aut heroa lyra vel acri tibia sumis celebrare, Clio? quem deum?...* (1.12.1-3)

What man or hero are we to celebrate with the lyre or keen flute, Clio? Which of the gods? ...

It could be argued that the muses in antiquity were viewed as “external” sources of inspiration, rather than elements of the poet’s own thought process. But with Horace, the validity of this argument is limited. He clearly knows that he is the master of his own subject matter (he plays with this theme of “who should I praise?” quite effectively throughout 1.12), and the muse is just a foil for his poetic games. The rhetorical questioning that begins this poem is answered not by the muse, but by Horace himself, with the praise of various men and gods that follows. If the muse may be said to respond to Horace in any way at all, it is *through* him, as a part of his poetry, that she does so. In this way, the address to Clio in 1.12 is another example of the self-reflective “you” in Horace’s poetry: the “other” in this poem is not an external source of self-definition, but rather an integral part of Horace’s own poetic thought-process.

A potential critique of the arguments I have offered so far is that Horace does, in some cases, refer to a “you” that is a literal, historical personage. It is slightly more difficult to view an Agrippa or a Pollio as simply an element of Horace’s thought-process. Although I acknowledge the external existence of such figures, I still believe that there is a compelling case to be made for the self-referential nature of the historical you in Horace’s poetry. After all, if we do not assume that the “I” of Horace’s poetry represents
the poet himself, we should not assume that the “you” of a historical person represents
the person himself. Horace is capable of constructing, even from a historical personage,
a “you” that ultimately serves his own poetic purposes.

An excellent example of this occurs in poem 2.1, addressed to Pollio, who is
apparently writing a history of the civil war. As is often the case with Horace’s historical
“you” (cf. 1.6, 1.7), the name of the addressee is rather delayed: here, Pollio’s name does
not appear until line 14, after Horace has already said quite a bit about the material of
Pollio’s history, the danger of writing history, and his wish for Pollio to return to writing
tragedies. The first hint that the poem is addressed to anyone, in fact, does not appear
until line 7, when Horace uses the second person verb *tractas*. The first two stanzas run
as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Motum ex Metello consule c ivicum} \\
\text{bellique causas et vitia et modos} \\
\text{ludumque Fortunae gravisque} \\
\text{principium amicitias et arma} \\
\text{nondum expiatis uncta cruoribus,} \\
\text{periculosae plenum opus aleae,} \\
\text{tractas et incedis per ignis} \\
\text{suppositos ciner i doloso.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\((2.1.1-8)\)

Civil strife since the consulship of Metellus and the causes of war and
crimes and their methods and the game of Fortune and the serious
consequences of friendships among leading men and weapons flecked
with blood not yet atoned for, a work full of dangerous gambling, you take
on and you advance through the fires hidden beneath false ashes.

The important information here is not who Pollio is (we don’t even know his name yet);
it is instead the material of his genre that concerns Horace. We should note that this
poem is in one sense an example of Davis’s “generic disavowal”: in the process of
ultimately repudiating the historical genre (accomplished in the final stanza), Horace manages to say quite a bit about its subject-matter. The poem continues not only to describe the material of Pollio’s history, but also its effect:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{i} & \text{am nunc minaci murmure cornuum} \\
\text{perstringis auris, iam litui strepunt,} \\
\text{iam fulgor armorum fugacis} \\
\text{terret equos equitumque vultus.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(2.1.17-20)

Already now you deaden ears with threatening roar of the straight horns, already the curved horns sound, already the flash of arms terrifies the flighty horses and the faces of the horsemen.

This vivid description of Pollio’s historical material is, of course, supposed to be outside the scope of Horace poetry. Yet he takes it on anyway. Horace is, in a certain sense, performing Pollio’s poetry through his own. Lowrie observes that this absorption of Pollio’s writing on the civil war “allows for the topic in lyric without committing Horace to talking about it in his own voice” (177). The appropriation of genre here points to the virtual absorption of Pollio’s “you” along with his text: Horace is in a sense actually subsuming the “you” he addresses into his own poetic self-expression.\(^2\) The “other” that is Pollio becomes a means for Horace to incorporate themes that he clearly wishes to speak to, but that would normally seem to transgress the domain he himself has established for lyric.

\(^2\) Elizabeth Sutherland observes that this process involves a broadening of the “you” addressed as the poem progresses: “This \textit{ego} begins as a controlled persona speaking to a single addressee, Pollio; in the course of his text, this \textit{ego} metamorphoses into a less controlled speaker whose addressee is effectively the entire audience of the ode” (79).
The abrupt shift at the conclusion of 2.1 drives this point home. Horace must extract himself from enacting the genre of the other to return to his own stated generic allegiance:

\[
\begin{align*}
\textit{Sed ne relictis, Musa procax, ioci} \\
\textit{Ceae retractes munera neniae;}
\textit{mecum Dionaeo sub antro}
\textit{quaere modos leviore plectro.} \quad (2.1.37-40)
\end{align*}
\]

But lest you abandon jokes, brash Muse, and undertake once more the mournful duties of Simonides, with me down in Dione’s cave seek rhythms with a lighter plectrum.

In these final lines, Horace retreats from his appropriation of Pollio’s genre to re-establish himself in a distinctively lyric space \textit{(sub antro)}. To do this, he relinquishes his address of Pollio, and turns to another “you,” his muse. His turn to the muse makes Pollio’s function even clearer in retrospect. Horace addresses Pollio as an “other” against whom he will define himself, but he undertakes this self-definition through a process of appropriating and enacting the characteristics of the other. Thus while Pollio has an aspect of externality that the Muse lacks, he has no subjectivity, no self-consciousness of his own. His “you” in this poem is, in essence, a kind of vessel which Horace occupies in order to accomplish his own poetic purposes. Thus, the “you” of Pollio, like that of the lyre or the Muse, is ultimately self-reflective in Horace’s poetry, and functions primarily to contribute to Horace’s own self-definition as a poet. The presence of Pollio in 2.1 contributes to an elaborately constructed \textit{recusatio} in which Horace experiments with generic transgression while deflecting the material of this transgression onto Pollio, thereby absolving himself from its consequences. Why this extraordinary effort to

\[3 \text{ See Davis 246-247 for another discussion of the generic implications of this final stanza.}\]
dissociate himself from such experimentation? Horace himself gives us a clue, when he says that Pollio’s genre is \textit{plenum opus aleae} (2.1.6). Although Horace seems to want to speak of the civil war in his writing, to address it directly would be dangerous: there are still \textit{“flames hidden under false ashes”} (\textit{ignis suppositos cineri doloso}, 2.1.7-8). Apparently taking the safer route, Horace distances himself from attempting a direct representation of the \textit{“real”} and chooses instead to represent the \textit{representation} (i.e., the pre-existing literary work of Pollio).

When Archilochus addresses poetry to an apparently historical figure, by contrast, the externality of the you is not so readily absorbed into the poet’s self-consciousness. Fragment 7, where Archilochus addresses a certain \textit{“Pericles,”} is a good example of this. The \textit{“you”} of this poem is not rigidly fixed (it broadens into the address of a plural you by the end), but it is persistently associated with the illusion of an external situation to which the poem speaks:

\begin{quote}
κήδεα μὲν στονόεντα, Περίκλεες, οὔτε τις ἀστῶν μεμφόμενος θαλίης τέρψεται οὐδὲ πόλις;
τοίους γὰρ κατὰ κῦμα πολυφλοίβοιο θαλάσσης ἔκλυσεν…
…ἀλλὰ θεοὶ γὰρ ανηκέστοισι κακοῖς,
ὡς φίλ’, ἐπὶ κρατηρὴν τλημοσύνην ἔθεσαν
φάρμακον…

…ἀλλὰ τάχιστα
τλῆτε γυναικεῖον πένθος ἀπωσάμενοι. (Arch. 7, 1-7; 9-10)
\end{quote}

Blaming groan-causing sorrows, Pericles, neither will any of the citizens take pleasure in festivities, nor the city: for such men the swell of the loud-roaring sea destroyed;...but the gods, friend, supply strong endurance as the remedy for irreparable ills...but bear up as swiftly as possible, driving away this womanish grief.
This ‘I’ of this poem constructs a relationship between himself and a larger “external” situation in which Pericles is only one participant. Pericles, in a sense, mediates between the poet’s ‘I’ and the situation as a whole: the poet’s initial address to this singular “you” seems to prepare the way for the broader exhortation which concludes the poem. As I have shown, Horace’s Pollio functions on a very different level: his “you” allows Horace to address the external situation of the civil war, but Horace does this by enacting Pollio’s literary work, rather than by speaking to Pollio about the situation. Thus Pollio, as a “you” or “other” is explicitly literary in his function, and appears as a part of Horace’s literary self-consciousness, whereas the “you” of Pericles in Archilochus 7 functions as a “real” person – someone with whom the poet’s ‘I’ interacts in order to address a larger situation that is constructed as the poem’s external “here and now.”

A very different example of “I-you” address comes from a fragment of Sappho’s that I have already discussed, her first invocation of Aphrodite (see the previous chapter). Here, the “you” of Aphrodite, as a female divinity invoked by the poet, is more closely analogous to Horace’s muse than to the historical “you” of Pollio. But where Horace seeks the muse’s help in determining his poetic course (Quem virum...sumis celebrare?), Sappho addresses herself to the “you” of Aphrodite in order to effect a change in a situation external to her life as a poet. The beginning of this invocation is worth quoting again in this context:

ποικιλόθρον’ ἀθανάτ’ Ἀφρόδιτα,
παῖ Δίος δολόπλοκε, λύσσομαί σε,
μή μ’ ἄσαισι μὴ δ’ ὀναισι δάμνα,
πότνια, θύμον, (1, 1-4)
Immortal Aphrodite on your richly-worked throne, crafty daughter of Zeus, I beseech you, do not overpower my heart with sorrows and pain, mistress...

It is striking how much agency Sappho grants to her addressee in these lines. Not only is Aphrodite described with elaborate and lofty epithets, elevating her above the status of the mortal poet, but she also has the ability to break the poet’s heart, to “overpower” her. Even though Sappho, as the creator of these lines, is ultimately in control of Aphrodite’s actions in the context of the poem, we are presented with a powerful illusion which says that Aphrodite is the one with all the power in this “I-You” relationship. Horace, by contrast, invokes his muse as merely a co-participant in his creative process, and then proceeds to make it clear (by his maneuverings throughout the remainder of the poem) that he is in ultimate control of his poetic choices.

Even when Sappho “enacts” the role of Aphrodite later in the poem, imagining the goddess’s fulfillment of her request, she does so in a way that gives the goddess a kind of independence, particularly apparent in the fact that she grants Aphrodite direct speech. In this way, Sappho not only maintains, but actively promotes the illusion that Aphrodite is functionally distinct from her “I.” Contrast this to Horace’s Pollio, whose literary works only come to us through Horace’s literary work, or to Horace’s muse, who answers Horace’s rhetorical question (Quem...sumis celebrare?) only through (as an aspect of) his writing in the course of the poem. Ultimately, we observe once again that where Horace invoked the muse as an internal aspect of his poetics, Sappho invokes Aphrodite as though she is external, and comes to mediate between the poet and a “real”
situation. The muse, on the other hand, simply mediates between Horace’s production of poetry and his own (internal) inspiration.

**Addressee and Occasion**

The study of the lyric addressee can also open a broader consideration of the “external” occasion that the poem constructs, and the purpose that is ascribed to the poem within that occasion. Sappho 1 provides a good opening for the transition to these broader concerns, because it conveys not only the sense of an “I-You” address, but also a distinct and “external” situation surrounding that address. This may be contrasted, for example, to Horace’s address of Apollo in 1.31, which constructs a situation that is generalized, and an “I-You” address that is not specific to a distinct occasion.

When Sappho invokes Aphrodite and entreats the goddess to intercede on her behalf, the exact time and place of the poem are not specified, but the situation of the poem is vividly conveyed: Sappho has fallen in love – again. The specificity of this circumstance is suggested by the definite, “here and now” feel of the request: the aorist imperative ἔλθῃ conveys an aspect of conclusive action, yet Sappho simultaneously constructs the image of a situation that has repeated itself. She says the goddess will ask, “...ὅτι δὴ ὕπτε πέπονθα κῶτι/ δὴ ὑπὲρ κάλημι” (1.15-16: “...what I have suffered this time, why I call this time”). This tension (between the desire for conclusiveness and the continuity of process) works to create an acute sense of “now-ness” in this poem, the feeling that Sappho is presenting us with a snapshot of a moment in her life. Thus within
the well-established immediacy of this poem, Sappho’s request conveys a sense of
definite purpose, bound to a circumstance that is presented as external to Sappho’s poetry.

In contrast, when Horace invokes Apollo in *Odes* 1.31, both occasion and purpose
are generalized rather than specific, and closely connected to poetic rather than “external”
goals. Horace’s request to the god is predicated on contemplation rather than the
immediate desire for change in an external situation. In fact, the poem even begins with
rhetorical questioning to establish this abstraction of purpose:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Quid dedicatum poscit Apollinem} \\
\text{vates? quid orat de patera novum} \\
\text{fundens liquorem?} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(1.31.1-3)

What does the poet ask of consecrated⁴ Apollo? What does he ask, pouring freshly-pressed grape juice from the bowl?

By referring to himself in the third person throughout much of the poem, and specifically
here as *vates*, Horace effectively retreats from the specificity of his own situation into a
more generalized contemplation of “what poets want.” The reference to pouring grape
juice fails in this context to create a specific “here and now” of invocation, because it
could effectively be any poet, anywhere offering this libation to the god. Horace then
proceeds, for two and a half stanzas, to reject the pursuits of alternate occupations which
are unappealing to the generalized *vates*. It is not until line 15 that Horace speaks
directly for himself, and the final stanza constitutes his request to the god:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Frui paratis et valido mihi,} \\
\text{Latone, dones et precor integra} \\
\text{cum mente nec turpem senectam}
\end{align*}
\]

⁴ *Dedicatum* has been taken as a reference to the dedication of the temple of Apollo on the Palatine, and it
may well be that an Augustan reader would have understood this. However, I do not consider it a “strong”
external reference, because so little information is given. Even if *dedicatum* does refer to the temple, I see
it more as a side note than as a motivating factor in the creation of this poem.
May you grant me enjoyment of what is at hand, son of Latona, and I pray that with my strength and mind intact that I live an old age neither disgraceful nor lacking the lyre.

In contrast to the distinct, situational request of Sappho 1, this invocation is very broad. It constitutes a reflection on Horace’s existence as a poet rather than a request to change some aspect of his “external” life. The themes of the request (enjoyment of the present, respectable old age) run throughout the Odes, and of course the lyre is used prominently as an emblem of Horace’s poetic self-consciousness. This poem does convey a sense of “purpose” in that it presents a set of seemingly concrete requests. However, these requests must be viewed in light of a situation which has already been framed as general and poetic, rather than specific and “real.” The “real” Horace may desire these things, but the question that began this poem was not “what do I, Horace, request?” but rather “what does the vates request?” Particularly in light of the conceptual nature of the Horatian lyre (here, cithara), this set of requests participates not so much in the construction of a lyric “present” for its own sake as in Horace’s reflection on his poetic future. Once again, Horace uses the devices of lyric immediacy, specifically addressee and occasion, to mediate between himself as poet and a “context” that is explicitly literary rather than “authentically” external.

We have seen that, despite the continuing pretense of the “here and now” in Horace’s poetry, his treatment of the “present” is very different from that of his Greek lyric predecessors. While they convey the lyric present in a way that preserves the illusion of externality, of a “real” that the poet relates to through the poem (in its
construction of addressee, occasion, or setting), Horace appropriates the language and
devices of this immediacy to a different set of uses: in his poetry, the “present” serves to
mediate between Horace and his own literary world. The devices of presence allow him
an opportunity for experimentation (in the case of his address to Pollio), reflection, and
self-conscious expression of poetic beliefs and goals. At the same time, his use of these
devices to reflect inward on himself rather than outward on the world may be said to add
an extra “layer” of literary removal between Horace and the potentially dangerous task of
directly addressing the “real.”
IV. Conclusion

In this paper, I have explored the relationship between Horace and the Greek lyric poets from a number of perspectives. I first examined the claims that Horace himself makes about this relationship, focusing on *Odes* 1.1, 1.6, 1.32, 2.1, 2.13 and 3.30, and *Epistle* 1.19. I then evaluated Horace’s claims based on his adaptation of two prominent features of Greek lyric: the lyric ‘I’ and the lyric ‘moment,’ as exemplified in the use of the lyric addressee. Ultimately, I sought to illustrate some of the ways in which Horace both emulates and departs from the Greek tradition, on his own terms and from a modern perspective. In other words, when Horace concludes his first three books of *Odes* by saying that he has “completed a monument more lasting than bronze,” what does he believe that he has accomplished with respect to the lyric tradition? Would we, as modern readers, agree with this assessment?

In drawing some final conclusions about Horace’s lyric achievements, it is useful to return briefly to the text of *Odes* 3.30, where Horace proclaims:

```latex
Exegi monumentum aere perennius
regalique situ pyramidum altius,
quod non imber edax, non Aquilo impotens
possit diruere aut innumerabilis
annorum series et fuga temporum. (3.30.1-5)
```

I have completed a monument more lasting than bronze and higher than the royal structure of the pyramids, which neither destructive rain, nor the wild north wind could demolish, nor an innumerable succession of years and the flight of time.
As I have already suggested, this text implies a multi-faceted monument, containing both physical and non-physical elements. In fact, the most important factors in the survival of this monument appear to be intangible: Horace goes on to identify the future speech of others, rather than any physical monument, as the crucial factor in the continuation of his poetic immortality (he uses dicar, “I will be spoken of”). Even in the first few lines, by stressing that his monument is impervious to physical forms of destruction, Horace suggests that his most important legacy is one of ideas. Moreover, Horace’s allusion to transcending the passage of time itself in this poem is highly indicative of how he conceives of himself as a lyric poet. As a reader of the Greek lyric poets, who themselves had survived the test of time, Horace clearly envisioned a similar artistic longevity for himself. In this sense, although Horace’s brand of lyric is distinctively Roman, he sees himself as tapping into lyric’s “universal” or “timeless” aspects and applying them to his own context. In the process of articulating this vision in 3.30, he both recognizes the lyric tradition as a foundation of his achievement (princeps Aeolium carmen ad Italos deduxisse modos, 3.30.13-14), and depicts himself as the originator of a new tradition of Latin lyric, the creator of a new intellectual legacy which he says will survive as long as Rome itself. Longevity is clearly a test of the true lyric poet in Horace’s mind; it is interesting, however, that he bounds his own longevity with the survival of the Roman Empire, when Greek lyric had survived so far beyond the time and space of the societies in which it was created. This link between poetry and society is a change that Horace introduces in his creation of a new, Roman lyric poetry.
The sense in which Horace understands his unique intellectual legacy becomes clearer in Epistle 1.19. Reflecting on his poetic career, Horace arrives at the following assessment:

\[ Libera per vacuum posui vestigia princeps \\
non aliena meo pressi pede. qui sibi fidet, \\
dux reget examen. Parios ego primus iambos \\
ostendi Latio, numeros animosque secutus \\
Archilochi, non res et agentia verba Lycamben. \\
ac ne me foliis ideo brevioribus ornes, \\
quod timui mutare modos et carminis artem, \\
temperat Archilochi musam pede mascula Sappho \\
temperat Alcaeus, sed rebus et ordine dispar \\
... \\
hunc ego, non alio dictum prius ore, Latinus \\
vulgavi fidicen... \] (Epistles 1.19.21-33)

I was able to press first with my foot unhindered tracks, not another’s, through empty space. He who is true to himself rules a swarm as leader. I first introduced Parian iambics in Latin, having followed many ideas of Archilochus, though not his subject-matter and harsh words against Lycamnes. And lest you should for this reason honor me with lesser leaves, because I feared to change the meters and artistry of the song, masculine Sappho tempers the muse of Archilochus with her meter, Alcaeus tempers (it), but is different in subjects and arrangement...this man, not spoken of earlier by another mouth, I the Latin lyre-player spread around.

As I have pointed out previously, the distinction between subject-matter and “spirits” or “ideas” (\textit{animos}) is obviously significant to Horace: it is his emulation of the latter rather than the former that makes him an original creator of Roman lyric, rather than an “imitator.” Horace hints at other charges leveled against his variety of lyric when he says that people might honor him less because he “feared to change” either the “meters” or “artistry” of his predecessors. By attributing this view to his detractors, Horace implies that the opposite is true: rather than fear, it was artistic choice that led him to preserve the
“spirits” and “artistry” of Greek lyric. From these terms, it is clear that Horace conceives of his debt to lyric not so much in terms of its specific themes, but in terms of its intangible “feel” (including metrical feel). The language that Horace uses in lines 21-22 makes a dramatic statement of originality: he emphasizes that he was “first” (princeps) and that he proceeded with “unhindered tracks” (libera...vestigia) through a previously “empty space” (vacuum). The word vacuum is particularly suggestive, implying exceptional creative independence, almost to the point of utter isolation.¹ Yet almost immediately, this powerful claim to originality is carefully balanced by Horace’s comparison of his methods to an earlier succession of lyric poets and their adaptation of each other’s work. Thus Horace strives to establish his poetic legacy based on two very different factors: his own creativity, and the authority derived from his use of Greek lyric traditions. The apparent contradiction between his use of tradition and his claim to “empty space” is lessened if we understand vacuum not in the sense of a literal creative “vacuum,” but rather in the sense of a unique and previously untried combination of tradition and innovation. Horace builds on the legacy of the Greek poets, yet is “true to himself,” making him first and foremost the founder of a new intellectual legacy, one which is to be followed by a “swarm” of others imitating.

It is reasonable at this point to wonder how Horace’s use of animos should be understood, since this is the word on which the delicate balance between tradition and originality seems to hinge for him. I would argue that from Horace’s point of view, the concept is particularly useful because of its vagueness and flexibility, as with artem in

¹ Such isolation may bear a relationship to Horace’s depiction of creative isolation elsewhere: for example, when he depicts himself in the secluded atmosphere of a poetic “cave.”
line 27. These terms have many potential meanings in the context of Horace’s poetry. Aside from implying his use of lyric meters, they suggest adherence to a more general set of artistic beliefs or practices. Horace, however, declines to explicitly define this set of practices, leaving “spirits” as a “floating” concept for his readers to understand as they choose. From our perspective, one of the practices suggested by this term might be the poet’s refusal of epic subject-matter in favor of “lighter” topics. In his *recusatio* poems, Horace adopts a kind of standard generic definition of lyric as anti-epic, a lyric “idea” or “spirit” which is already present in Archilochus and Sappho. Clearly the context for Horace’s refusal of epic is vastly different from the earlier poets’ contexts; when Horace declines to write Homeric-style epic in 1.6, he is responding as much to contemporary figures and recent events as Homeric authority. The stakes that are involved in choosing lyric over epic or historical genres become clearer in 2.1, where Horace’s refers to Pollio’s history as “a work full of dangerous gambling” (*periculosae plenum opus aleae*, 2.1.6). Although Horace manages to appropriate plenty of the material of this history in 2.1, he ultimately reaffirms his commitment to the “lighter” lyric sphere at the poem’s end. Although Horace’s subject-matter and context is quite different from that of the Greek poets, we can still see a continuity of aesthetic propositions extending from Greek lyric into his poetry, thus fulfilling his claim to have preserved certain *animos* from lyric.

Another way in which Horace might be said to preserve a certain “spirit” of lyric is through his claims to traditional sources of inspiration. Referencing the Greek muses and lyric instruments (the lyre and flute), Horace implies that there is an essential continuity between the Greek lyricists and himself in terms of poetic inspiration.
However, while the Greek poets reference these sources in a seemingly unself-conscious way, one that seems to situate it as “natural,” Horace’s deliberate construction of his “lyric space” is readily apparent in his poetry. His musical references seem artificial at times, since musical accompaniment was no longer essential to poetic performance for the Roman poet. And when Horace’s poetry depicts him in isolated creative spaces such as the “cave,” he reveals an explicit, self-conscious effort to define himself as a lyric poet, an effort that was not evident in the works of his Greek predecessors.

One of the ways in which I have tried to expose Horace’s increased poetic self-consciousness is through an examination of the lyric ‘I’ that he puts forward in his works. In chapter 2, I contrasted what I see as two components of the lyric ‘I’: the ‘I-writing’ (i.e., the poet as self-conscious artist) and the ‘I-being’ (i.e., the image of the ‘I’ existing or participating in the poem’s constructed context). I also posited the existence of a ‘blended I’ consisting of both of these components in balance. In Greek lyric, the balance appears to be weighted towards the ‘I-being,’ but I have argued that the ‘I-writing’ is also in evidence, albeit “undercover,” so to speak. In Horace’s poetry, then, the balance has shifted towards the ‘I-writing,’ but we are still dealing with a ‘blended I’: Horace attempts to preserve the lyric ‘nowness’ inherent in the use of the ‘I-being,’ but ultimately returns to self-reflection. The relationship between Greek and Horatian lyric thus involves a shift from poetry of seemingly uninhibited self expression to poetry of openly self-conscious artistry. It may appear that we have gone from the true “spirit” of Greek lyric to a more artificial, constructed spirit. Yet this assessment judges both Greek and Horatian lyric unfairly. The Greek poets, as I have tried to stress throughout this
paper, were not necessarily the beacons of absolute self-expression that our inherited interpretations suggest. Rather, their lyric selves and lyric moments may be as self-consciously constructed as Horace’s, albeit less transparently so. Horace, with his emphasis on the ‘I-writing,’ simply chooses to expose the “nuts and bolts” of his poetic process, which the Greek poets had left hidden.

Ultimately, we as readers must decide whether Horace’s self-consciousness is too “artificial” to be a continuation of the lyric “spirit.” If we are willing to understand the ‘I’ of Greek lyric as already being ‘blended’ (i.e., containing veiled elements of the poet-writing along with the I-being), then Horace seems much less artificial, and much more successful in his preservation of lyric “spirits.” This is the case that I have tried to make in arguing for the existence of the ‘blended I’ in Greek lyric. Ultimately, this approach requires that we confront and challenge the ways in which Greek lyric has often been read as pure personal or “natural” expression unmediated by artistry. While I recognize the important shift that has occurred with Horace’s increased level of explicit self-consciousness, I also think that he should be given credit as a perceptive reader of the artistry that lies beneath the surface ‘openness’ and immediacy of Greek lyric, one who has perhaps not altered it so drastically as we might suspect, but has rather expanded some of its already inherent qualities to suit his particular poetic goals. In this way, we can also use Horace’s lyric as an important account of ancient reading practices, deriving from his approach a better understanding of how Greek lyric was read in antiquity (when

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2 We should also remember that Horace had access to far more Greek lyric than we have today. Thus, it is difficult to determine what aspects of the lyric ‘I’ he may have been drawing on in the creation of his own poetic ‘I.’ It is possible that the continuity would have been even more evident to an ancient reader.
more of it survived). This does not necessarily give Horace the “final word” on lyric, but it certainly provides a perspective we should take seriously in evaluating our own reactions to lyric.

In the final analysis, Horace’s “monument” highlights the complexity of his lyric undertaking. Horace sometimes seems to depict his use of tradition as straightforward (a progression from Archilochus to Sappho and Alcaeus to himself in Epistle 1.19), yet his insistence on total originality (with “footsteps” in the epistle, and princeps in Odes 3.30) shows that there is more at stake. Horace is not just an “imitator” of lyric devices and aesthetics; rather, as my analysis has shown, he adapts and alters the devices of lyric immediacy to function in a very different historical moment and serve different poetic needs. In my view, however, this does not make him less of a lyric poet. However much his subject-matter and increased self-consciousness separate him from his Greek predecessors, there is nevertheless something of a lyric “essence” present in Horace’s poetry. Metrically and aesthetically, he has not copied, but re-created or re-embodied lyric. Although his invocation of Aphrodite, for example, lacks the insistent “nowness” of Sappho’s invocation, it nevertheless recapitulates in other ways the intangible aesthetic “feel” of Sappho’s poetry. At the same time, the survival and popularity of his poetry down to modern times (far beyond the limit that he sets for it at 3.30.8-9) indicates a certain “timelessness” that transcends his status as a distinctively Roman poet. And it is precisely in these “timeless” aspects of Horace’s poetry that we see most clearly his debt to the legacy of Greek lyric.
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