

HORACE
Satires and Epistles

PERSIUS
Satires

*A verse translation with an Introduction
and Notes by NIALL RUDD*

PENGUIN BOOKS

PROLOGUE

'I have not undergone any of the usual rituals of consecration. I only half belong to the fraternity of bards. But, as we know, the prospect of cash makes all kinds of untalented people poetic.'

I never drenched my lips in cart-horse spring,
nor dreamed upon Parnassus' two-pronged height
(I think) to explain my bursting on the scene
as poet. Pale Pirene and Helicon's Maids
I leave to those whose portraits are entwined
with clinging ivy. I present my song,
a semi-clansman, at the bardic rites.
Who coached the parrot to pronounce 'Bonjour!'
Who helped the magpie mimic human speech?
Teacher of art, giver of genius' gift –
the belly, adept at bending nature's laws.
If cash sends out a tempting ray of hope,
then raven poets and magpie poetesses
you'd swear were singing Pegasus' nectar-flow.

10

SATIRE I

In the course of this dialogue between the satirist and an anonymous interlocutor Persius says that he expects to have few readers because the Romans do not want poetry to have any bearing on real life. Fashionable verse is false and affected, written without a proper apprenticeship to the craft and designed solely to win applause. This decadence in literary taste is directly related to the general decadence in morals. Romans have lost their traditional virility. The satire ends

with a list of certain types whom Persius does not hope to have as readers.

Ah, the obsessions of men! Ah, what an empty world!

'Who will read this?'

Are you asking me? Why, no one.

'No one?'

Well, perhaps one or two.

'Disgraceful! Pathetic!'

But why?

Are you worried in case 'Polydamas and the Trojan ladies' prefer Labeo to me? What the hell? If woolly old Rome attaches no weight to a piece of work, don't you step in to correct the faulty tongue on her balance. Ask no one's view but your own. Is there any Roman who hasn't – if only I could say it – but I can, when I look at our venerable hair and that austere demeanour and all we've been at since we gave up marbles and assumed the

[wisdom

of disapproving uncles, then – sorry, it's not that I want to – but what can I do? It's my wicked humour – I must guffaw!

Behind our study doors we write in regular metre, or else foot-loose, a prodigious work which will leave the strongest lungs out of breath. No doubt you'll finally read the product from a public platform, carefully combed, in a new white toga, with a birthday gem on your finger, rinsing your supple throat with a clear preparatory warble, your eyes swooning in rapture. Then, what a sight! The mighty sons of Rome in a dither, losing control of voice and movement as the quivering strains steal under the spine and scratch the secret passage.

You old fraud – collecting titbits for other men's ears – ears which will puff your skin out of shape until you cry 'Whoa

[there!'

'What's the point of study if that frothy yeast, that fig-tree which has once struck root inside never bursts out of the heart?'

So that's why you're pale and peevish! My god, what have we

[come to?

Is it so futile to know things unless you are *known* to know them?

'But it's nice to be pointed out, and for people to say "that's him!" Isn't it something to be set as a text for a mob of long-haired schoolboys?'

Look, the Roman elite with well-filled stomach are inquiring over the port 'What has deathless verse to say?' Then a creature with a hyacinth mantle draped around his

[shoulders

mumbles some putrid stuff through his nose, filtering out a Phyllis or Hypsipyle or some other tear-jerking bardic rot, letting the words trip prettily against his tender palate. The great men murmur approval. Now surely the poet's ashes are happy; surely the gravestone presses more lightly on his bones! The humbler guests applaud. Now surely violets will spring from those remains, from his tomb, and from his blessed dust!

'You're making fun,' he says, 'and curling your nostrils unfairly. Who would deny that he hoped to earn a place on the lips of the nation, to utter words that called for cedar oil, and to leave behind pages that feared neither mackerel nor incense?'

You, whoever you are, my fictitious debating opponent, if in the course of my writing something special emerges (a rare bird, I admit), but *if* something special emerges, I'm not the man to shrink from applause; my skin's not *that* tough. But I do say your 'Bravo' and 'Lovely' are not the final and ultimate test of what's good. For just shake out that 'Lovely'. What does it not contain? Why Attius' *Iliad*'s there, dotty with hellebore. Yes, and all the dear little elegies thought up by dyspeptic grandees, all the stuff in fact that is scribbled on citrus couches. You cleverly serve at dinner hot sow's udders, give a threadbare coat to a shivering client, then say 'I'm a lover of truth; tell me the truth about *me*.' How can he? Shall I oblige? You're an airy doodler, baldy, though your fat pot protrudes at least a foot and a half! Janus, *you* have no stork pecking you from behind, no wagging hands that mimic long white ears, no tongue stuck out like a thirsty dog's when his star is parching Apulia. My noble lords, who must live with a blind rear wall in your skull, run and confront the jeering grimace at your back door!

'Well what does the public say?'

What you'd expect – that poems

at last have a smooth-flowing rhythm; where the joint occurs, it
[sends
the critical nail skidding across the polished surface.
He *rules* each line, as if stretching a cord with one eye shut.
Our poet's Muse always provides him with great themes –
the royal way of life, perhaps, or its splendours, or its dinners!

Just look, we are teaching them to voice heroic sentiments –
[amateurs
70 who used to doodle in Greek! They haven't the skill to depict
a clump of trees or the well-fed land with its baskets and hearths
and pigs, and the hay smoking on Pales' holiday – that's where
Remus came from and Quintius, who was polishing his share in the
[furrow
when his flustered wife, with a quorum of oxen, invested him
[Dictator,
and the sergeant took home the plough. Bravo my noble bard!

Nowadays one man pores over the shrivelled tome
of Accius the old Bacchanal, others over Pacuvius
and his warty Antiopa – 'a dolorous heart weighed down by woe'.
When you see myopic fathers dinning these daft ideas
80 into their sons, why ask who's to blame for putting this sizzling
mish-mash into their mouths, and for that degrading rubbish
which makes our pumiced knights of the realm jitter on their seats?
You should be ashamed! Why you can't defend that venerable head
in court without eagerly listening for a murmur of 'Very nice!'
'You, Pedius, are a thief!' In answer Pedius weighs
the charges in trim antitheses and is praised for his clever figures.
'How lovely!' Well *is* it lovely? Or is Romulus wagging his tail?
Would that move me? If a shipwrecked mariner sang would I give
[him
a penny? Do you sing as you tote on your shoulders a picture of
[you
in the flotsam? Whoever would bowl me over will have to produce
90 some genuine tears, not rehearsed the night before.

'But the crude old verses have been given a new smoothness and
[grace.
A metrical role has now been assigned to "Berecyntian Attis"
and to "The dolphin slicing his way through dark blue Nereus",

and to "We stole a rib from the long spine of the Apennines."
"Arms and the man" – what desiccated, antiquated stuff that is,
like the branch of an old cork tree enveloped in cakey bark!

Well what is fresh, and good for reciting with limp-held wrist?
'They filled their frightening horns with Bacchanalian brays.
The Bassarid carrying the head torn from a frisky calf
and the Maenad ready to guide the lynx with reins of ivy
cry Euhoe! Euhoe! The shout's taken up by restorative Echo.'
100 Could such things happen if we cherished a spark of our fathers'
[spunk?

This emasculated stuff, this Maenad and Attis, floats on the spit,
always on the tip of the tongue, ready to come drooling out.
It doesn't pummel the back-rest or taste of bitten nails.

'But why do you feel obliged to rub the rasp of truth
on sensitive ears? Better watch it. You may get a chilly reception
from those baronial porches. Don't you hear the rolling r
of an angry dog?'
110

From now let's say everything's white.
I don't care. Bravo! Superb! You're all just marvellous.
How's that? You erect a notice which says 'Refrain from shitting.'
Paint two holy snakes: 'This is sacred ground, my lads;
find somewhere else to piss.' I'm going. Lucilius crunched
the city – Lupus and Mucius and all – and smashed his molar.
While his friend is laughing, that rascal Horace lays his finger
on all his faults; gaining admission, he plays on the conscience –
so clever at holding the public up on that well-blown nose.
Am I forbidden to whisper – to myself – to a ditch – to anything?
Never mind; I'll bury it here in my book. I've seen it myself:
120 EVERY MAN JACK HAS AN ASS'S EARS! That's my secret;
that's my joke. Slight as it is, I still wouldn't sell it
for all your *Iliads*.

If you've caught the spirit of brave Cratinus
or are pale from devotion to angry Eúpolis and the Grand Old
[Man,
if you've an ear for a concentrated brew, then look at this.
I want a reader with his ears well steamed by that comic vinegar,
not the lout who is eager to jeer at Greek-style sandals,
and is willing to shout 'Hey one-eye!' at a man with that affliction,
who thinks he's somebody just because as Aedile at Arezzo

130 he has smashed a few short measures with full municipal pomp,
nor the witty fellow who sniggers on seeing cones and numbers
traced in the sand of the abacus, and is vastly amused if a Nones-girl
cheekily pulls a philosopher's beard. For them I suggest
the law reports in the morning, and *Calliroë* after lunch.

SATIRE 2

Men's secret prayers are discreditable and foolish, revealing an ignorant and debased conception of divinity.

Count this a red-letter day, Macrinus! Another year
rolls in to your credit. Pour a drink for your guardian angel.
You never offer covetous prayers, asking the gods
for things that you wouldn't dare to mention except in private.
But most of the wealthy offer incense from a silent casket.
Not everyone is ready to rid our temples of all that low
whispering and mumbling and to bring his prayers into the open.
'Good sense, good name, good character' – these words ring out for
[strangers
to hear; under his breath he privately mutters 'If only
10 uncle would pop off, what a splendid funeral we'd have!' 'If only
Hercules would let my spade thump on a crock of silver!'
'Although I'm his guardian, I'd like to rub that youngster out.
I'm next in line, and he's mangy and swollen
with jaundice.' 'That's his third wife that Nerius is burying.'
To ensure these prayers are holy you duck your head each morning
three times or more in the Tiber and wash away the night.

Well now, tell me – it's only a tiny point to clear up –
what's your opinion of God? Would you rate him higher than –
['Whom?'

Whom? Shall we say Staius? Or perhaps you balk at that?
20 Is there a finer judge, a more suitable guardian for orphans?
Well take this supplication, with which you are doing your best
to bend God's ear, and make it to Staius. 'Oh God!' he would cry,
'Good God!' So why shouldn't God himself cry 'Good God!'
Do you think you're forgiven when an oak is split in a tempest
by a sulphurous bolt from heaven while you and your house escape?
You don't lie buried in a clump of trees where lightning has struck,

obeying the ritual of a Tuscan crone and her sheep's liver,
an object of dread and abhorrence. Does that mean Jove will let you
tweak his stupid beard? And what, may I ask, have you used
to bribe the ears of the gods? Offal and greasy guts? 30

Here we have a granny or superstitious aunt who has taken a baby
from his cot and now protects his forehead and dribbling lips
by smearing prophylactic spit with her horrible middle finger –
she's skilled at checking the searing blast of the evil eye.
Dandling the scrap of hope in her arms, in fervent prayer
she projects him into Licinian domains or the hall of a Crassus.
'May a king and queen choose him as a husband for their daughter;
[may girls
scramble to get him; may roses appear wherever he treads!'
I'd never allow a nurse to pray for me. Refuse,
O God, to grant her requests, though she ask in her Sunday best. 40

You pray for strong muscles, a physique that won't let you down
when you're old. Fine, but huge platefuls of thick goulash
prevent the gods from granting your prayer and impede Jove.
You hope to build up your assets by killing a bullock; you summon
Mercury with its liver. 'Grant that my house may prosper;
grant growth to my flocks and herds!' And how is that possible,
fat-head, when the tripe of so many heifers melts in the fire?
Yet the fellow strives to prevail on heaven with piles of innards
and cakes: 'Now for more land, now for more sheep, yes now
my prayer will be answered, now!' till the coin left at the bottom
of the money-box, cheated and hopeless, heaves a sigh of despair. 50

If I brought you a present of silver bowls heavily embossed
with gold, you'd break into a sweat; in the left side of your chest
your heart would beat with impetuous joy, expelling the drops.
That's how you got the idea of smearing the faces of the gods
with gold proudly looted from the foe. 'Within that bronze
fraternity, those who send us dreams most clear of catarrh
should stand out from the rest. Let them have beards of gold.'
Gold has pushed out Numa's crockery and Saturn's copperware;
Vestal urns of Tuscan clay are becoming outmoded. 60
Souls bent on earth, devoid of the things of heaven!
What profit is there in carrying our ways into the churches,
using this sinful flesh to decide what's good for the gods?
The flesh has spoilt olive oil by mixing it into a perfume,

and soaked Calabrian fleece in unnatural crimson dye.
 It's the flesh that drives us to gouge pearl from shell and rip
 the veins of glowing ore out of the raw slag.
 The flesh is guilty, yes guilty; but at least it *profits* from sin.
 But tell me, you men of god, what use is gold in a church?
 70 As much as the dolls which a young bride offers to Venus.
 Let's give to the gods what mighty Messalla's bloodshot offspring
 can't give from his mighty dish; a soul in which human
 and divine commands are blended, a mind which is pure within,
 a heart steeped in fine old honour. Let me bring *these*
 to the temple, and I'll win the favour of heaven with a handful of
 [grain.]

SATIRE 3

In the first half of the poem a lazy student, who represents Persius himself, is lectured by an older and wiser companion on the evils of sloth. In the second half (from v. 63 on) the address becomes more general. Sin is a form of disease; better nip it in the bud. Find out the true nature of human existence; forgo sensual pleasures; and live by the rules of Stoic philosophy.

'So this is your diligent study!'

The bright morning sunshine
 is streaming through the shutters, widening the narrow chinks
 with its light. My snores continue, allowing the fierce Falernian
 to simmer down as the shadow nudges the fifth line
 on the dial.

'Well, what's this?' says a friend. 'It's late. The mad
 dog-star is baking the corn dry; the cattle are huddled
 under the spreading elm.'

'Really? Are you sure? Hurry up, then!
 Someone! Is nobody there?' My glistening bile swells up
 and I burst. You'd think Arcadia's asses were braying in concert.

10 I reach for a book and the two-tone parchment with its hair
 [removed,
 also for sheets of paper and a pen of knotty reed.
 First I complain that a thick blob is hanging from the nib.
 I make the black stuff thinner by adding water, and then

complain that the pen deposits a series of runny drops.
 'God help us! Things get worse every day. Has it come to this?'

'Ah, why not do like a pampered dove or a rich man's baby –
 demand to have your din-din pre-chewed, and then throw a fit
 of temper refusing to let your mammy sing you a lullaby?'

'How can I work with such a pen?'

'Who are you kidding? No
 [more

snivelling excuses; the joke's on you; You're oozing away
 mindlessly; you'll be rejected. When a half-baked jar is tapped,
 the greenish clay gives a dull answer betraying its quality.
 You are soft, damp, earth; away and have yourself moulded
 on the whirling wheel till you're properly finished. Oh yes, your
 [family

estate gives a fair yield; you've a pure and spotless salt-cellar
 (no need to worry) and a comfortable dish for the rites of the
 [hearth.

Is that enough? Or again, should you puff up your lungs till they
 [burst

because you, descendant one thousand, trace your family tree
 to Tuscan stock and parade for your Censor in full regalia?
 Let the mob have your trappings; I know what you're like
 [underneath,

in the flesh. Aren't you ashamed to live like sloppy Natta?
 But vice has made *him* insensible; thick fat has surrounded
 his conscience; he has no feelings of guilt, no notion of loss.
 Lying on the bottom, he has ceased to send any bubbles to the
 [surface.

O mighty father of the gods, when sadistic lust with its dagger
 dipped in fiery poison incites dictators to crime,
 may it please thee to punish their cruelty in this and this way only:
 let them see Goodness, and waste with remorse at having betrayed
 [her.

Were the roars more frightful which came from Sicily's brazen bull,
 and did the blade dangling from the gilded ceiling cause more
 [terror

to the purple neck below than for a man to say to himself
 "I'm falling, falling headlong!" and blanch in his heart, poor devil,
 as he thinks of a crime which his own dear wife must never hear of?

'I remember as a youngster I often smeared olive oil on my eyes
to avoid learning the dying Cato's magnificent speech.
(I knew my moronic teacher would praise it highly, and my father
would listen in a sweat of excitement with the friends he had

[dragged along.)

Why not? My highest aim was to learn what I stood to win
from a treble six, what I'd lose on three ruinous ones,
50 never to let the narrow-necked jar avoid my marble,
never to yield first place at whipping a wooden top.
But *you're* no novice at spotting crooked behaviour and grasping
the doctrines of the learned Porch with its mural of trousered

[Persians –

doctrines swotted to the small hours by sleepless, crew-cut
students sustained by lentil soup and bowls of porridge.
Pythagoras' Υ betokens a young man's moral choice.
Your eyes are set on the path which climbs steeply to the right.
Still snoring! Your head's lolling, neck-joints undone
and jaws unfastened at both sides, yawning off yesterday.
60 Have you any goal to strive for? Any target to hit?
Or do you chase wild geese with stones and broken bottles,
not caring where your legs carry you, living at random?

'It's no use clamouring for hellebore when your flesh is already
[sick

and bloated. Nip the disease in the bud. Just what's the point
of promising the earth in fees to Doctor Cráterus? Listen,
you poor unfortunates, and learn the purpose of human existence –
what we are, what kind of life we are born to live;
which is our lane, where the turn, and when to begin it;
how much money's enough, what prayers are right, what advantage
70 are crisp notes, how much should be set aside for the state
and for your nearest and dearest; what role the lord has asked you
to play, what post you have been assigned in the human service.
Learn *this*; never mind those jars piled in a barrister's larder
as rewards for defending some greasy Umbrians, rotting beside
the pepper and hams ("tokens of gratitude" from a Marsian client)
while the first tin of sardines still contains a survivor.

'Here a sergeant-major – one of that smelly fraternity –
may say "I know all I need to know. The last thing I want
is to be like Arcésilas or a woebegone Solon – people who wander
80 about with head hanging down, their eyes fixed on the ground,

champing their silent mutterings in rabid self-absorption,
protruding their lips to serve as a balance for weighing their words,
repeating over and over the dreams of a sick old fool:
'Nothing comes from nothing, nothing reverts to nothing.'
Is this why you're pale? Would this detain a man from his dinner?"
That gets a laugh from the crowd, and the lads with the big muscles
send brays of merriment ringing through their contemptuous
[nostrils.

"Have a look," says the patient to his doctor. "I'm getting
[odd palpitations
here in my chest; I've a sore throat, and I'm short of breath.
Please have a look." He is ordered to bed. By the third night
90 his veins are flowing gently. So he sends a thirstyish flagon
to the house of a rich friend, requesting some smooth Surrentine
to drink at bath-time.

"I say, old man, you're a bit pale."

"It's nothing."

"Still, you'd better watch it, whatever it is.
Your skin's rather yellow and it's quietly swelling up."

"Your own colour's worse. Stop acting like nanny. I buried her
years ago; you're next."

"Carry on. Sorry I spoke."

Bloated with food and queasy in the stomach our friend goes off
to his bath, with long sulphurous belches coming from his throat.
As he drinks his wine, a fit of the shakes comes over him, knocking
100 the warm tumbler from his fingers; his bared teeth chatter;
suddenly greasy savouries slither from his slackened lips.
The sequel is funeral march and candles. The late lamented,
plastered with heavy odours, reclines on a lofty bed,
pointing his stiff heels to the door. He is raised on the shoulders
of men whose caps proclaim them citizens – as of yesterday.

You poor fool – just take your pulse and put your hand
on your heart.

"No fever here."

Feel your fingers and toes.

"They aren't cold."

What if your eye falls on a bundle
of notes, or you get an enticing smile from the pretty girl
next door? Is your heart-beat steady? You are served some leathery
110 [greens

on a cold plate with meal shaken through a common sieve;

let's see your throat: very tender, with a septic ulcer at the back which certainly mustn't be chafed by rough proletarian beet. You shiver when ghastly fear raises hairs on your body; when a match ignites you, your blood boils, your eyes sparkle with anger, and you do and say things which Orestes himself, that legendary madman, would swear were signs of utter madness.'

SATIRE 4

'The conceited young Alcibiades aspires to govern his country, although he manages his private life on the lowest principles.

'No one looks into his own soul. Instead we carp at the faults of others. As a result we in turn are open to malicious attack. Self-deception cannot be maintained indefinitely, and popular acclaim is unreliable. Examine your own soul and see how inadequate it is.'

The first twenty-two verses are supposed to be addressed by Socrates to the young Alcibiades. The latter, who was active in the last quarter of the fifth century BC, represents the politician whose brilliance is not supported by moral integrity.

The setting is based on the pseudo-Platonic dialogue known as Alcibiades I.

Running the country are you? (The question comes from the bearded sage who was carried off by that deadly swig of hemlock.)

By what right? Tell me, mighty Pericles' ward.

Of course your native ability and ready grasp of affairs have developed ahead of your beard. You can sense what has to be [said

and what suppressed. And so, when the proles are seething with

[anger,

you feel impelled to reduce the feverish mob to silence with a lordly gesture. And then what will you say? 'My friends, this, for instance, isn't right; that's bad; but that is better.'

10 You can weigh justice in the double pans of the swaying balance; you can see the straight when it runs between two types of crooked, or when the rule misleads because of a different standard, and you don't hesitate to condemn faults with a black x.

So why not doff that attractive skin (it does you no good), and stop wagging your puppy's tail at the flattering rabble?

You'd be better to lower whole Anticyras of neat hellebore!

What's your idea of the highest good? To dine for ever among the flesh-pots and pamper your skin with regular sunshine? But wait – this hag will give the very same answer. Go on, then, puff out your chest: 'I'm Lady Dinómache's son; and I'm [handsome.'

Fine, but your motives aren't any higher than those of wizened old Baucis as she hawks her sexy herbs to a slob of a slave.

No one – no one – tries to delve into his heart; everyone watches the bag on the back of the man in front. If you ask 'Do you know Vettidius' place?'

'Which Vettidius?'

'The squire at Cures – the one with acres a kite couldn't cross.'

'Oh that damned creature. Even his own mother couldn't love [him.

On a public holiday he hangs up his yoke at the cross-road shrines; reluctantly scraping the dirty old seal off his little wine-jar, he groans "Cheers!" and downs the shrivelled dregs of his senile vinegar, munching an onion in its jacket with a pinch of salt. His slaves cheer excitedly at getting a bowl of porridge.'

But if, after a rub, you relax and focus the sun on your skin, a stranger appears beside you, digs you with his elbow, and spits abuse: 'What a way to behave, weeding your privates and the recesses of your rump, displaying your shrivelled vulva to [the public!

On your jaws you keep a length of rug which you comb and [perfume;

so why is your crotch plucked smooth around your dangling worm? Though half a dozen masseurs in the gym uproot this plantation, assailing your flabby buttocks with hot pitch and the claws of tweezers, no plough ever made will tame that bracken.'

We shoot and in turn expose our legs to the barbs of others. That's how we live; it's the way we know. You've a hidden wound down in your groin, but it's covered by a broad golden belt. As you wish; play tricks and deceive your muscles, if you are able.

'But the neighbours insist I'm a splendid fellow. Am I not to [believe them?'

If you're so greedy that you turn pale at the sight of cash, if you do whatever occurs to your prick, if you carefully whip up the harsh rate of interest, causing many a weal,

50 there's no point in lending a thirsty ear to the public.
Spit out what isn't you; let the crowd take back what they
have conferred; live alone, and learn how sparse your furniture is.

SATIRE 5

'Poets conventionally ask for a hundred tongues.' *'But surely your verse is of a less pretentious kind.'* *'It is, but I would gladly have a hundred tongues to express my gratitude to you, Cornutus; for you taught me the Stoic way of life.'*

'Only the wise man, who has subjected his impulses to the control of reason, can claim to be truly free.'

The satire has many points in common with Horace II. 7.

This is the poet's age-old cry: 'Give me a hundred voices, a hundred mouths, and a hundred tongues for my songs!' whether he's writing a play to be mouthed by a dismal tragedian, or showing a wounded Parthian pulling a spear from his groin.

'What's the point of all this? What lumps of nutritious verse are you cramming in, that you need a hundred throats to ingest
[them?]

Bards committed to the elevated style may gather mists on Helicon – those who would bring Thyestes' or Procne's saucepan to the boil to provide a regular supper for tasteless Sweetman.

10 You're different; you don't squeeze air from a bellows which gasps as the furnace smelts the ore, or go in for hoarse and pent-up muttering, inanely cawing to yourself some deep observation, nor do you strain to blow up your cheeks until they go plop. You keep to the dress of everyday speech, clever at the pointed juxtaposition; you've a fairly well-rounded diction; you're expert at scraping unhealthy habits and nailing vice with a stroke of wit. Draw your material from there. Leave to Mycenae its menus of heads and feet, and get used to common food.'

20 It's certainly not my aim to swell my page with frivolities dressed in mourning in the hope of lending weight to smoke. What I have to say is private; now, with the Muses' encouragement, I'm offering my conscience to you, Cornutus, for a thorough
[inspection.]

I want to show you, my dear friend, how much of my soul belongs to you. Go on – tap it. You're adept at telling what sounds solid from painted stucco put on by the tongue. For this I *would* venture to ask for a hundred throats to enable me to utter in clear tones how firmly I have tucked you inside my heart's folds, that my words may reveal what lies obscure and beyond expression within its deepest fibres.

On shyly removing the purple band which had kept me out of
[trouble,
and presenting my locket to the family gods in their old-fashioned
[clothes
(when a young man's friends are enticing, and his new white toga
[allows him

to run his eyes along the whole Subura at will, when the road forks, and minds wandering in ignorance of life are led in fear and confusion along the branching paths), I took you as a father. You lifted my tender years in your Socratic arms, Cornutus. With quiet dexterity, you laid your ruler down to straighten my twisted behaviour. My mind struggled to submit as it felt the pressure of reason, and under your thumb it took on the right form and features. 40 Together, I remember, we enjoyed those long and sunny days; together we spent the early part of the night at supper. The two of us planned a single scheme of work and rest, and relaxed our serious concerns as we ate a simple meal. Make no mistake about it, our days are held together by a solid pact; from the first they have followed the same star. Fate, with truth in its hand, holds our every minute poised in the even Scales; or the hour which dawned when the loyal pair was born has assigned to the Twins our harmonious lives, and with Jove's help we are breaking Saturn's baleful power. 50 There is certainly *some* star which makes me blend with you.

Thousands of human types: variegated life-styles. Each with his own aim, all with different prayers. Under an Eastern sun one man exchanges Italian goods for shrivelled pepper and seeds of anaemic cumin, while another lies replete and bloated in well-soaked sleep. One is a sports fanatic, another gambles his shirt, another is soft about sex. But then, when stony arthritis smashes their fingers into the branches of an old beech-tree,

60 they moan too late that their days have passed in a thick miasma,
with the sun choked by smog, and they've turned their backs on life.
But *you* enjoy acquiring a pallor from your books at night.
Tending the young like a farmer, you clear their ears and sow
Cleanthes' seed. Young and old, you should draw from that
a clear aim for your urges, supplies for your dismal greyness.
'Tomorrow will do for that.'

'Well do it tomorrow.'

'What?

A day's grace? That's a big concession!

When the next day dawns
we have finished yesterday's tomorrow, and look – a new tomorrow
is baling away our years; it will always be just ahead.

70 Although you are under the same carriage and close to the rim
of the wheel that revolves in front, it's futile trying to catch it,
for you are running in the rear position on the back axle.

We need *freedom* – not the sort which Jack acquires
when he appears as John Smith on the voters' list and is issued
with coupons for mouldy bread. So barren of truth, you imagine
Romans are made by a whirl. Tom is a worthless yokel,
bleary with booze; you couldn't trust him with a bucket of mash.
Then his master turns him round; from that quick spin he emerges
Tom Jones. What's this? You won't authorize a loan

80 which Jones has endorsed? You quail at the sight of Jones on the
[bench?]

It's true – Jones has said so! Would you sign this document, Jones?
That's the real freedom; that's what our cone-caps give us!

'Well who can be called free, if not the man who is able
to spend his life as he chooses? I'm able to live as I choose;
am I not freer than Brutus?'

'Your conclusion is false,' replies
the Stoic here, who has rinsed his ears with biting vinegar.
I grant the rest, but you'll have to remove that 'able' and 'choose'.

'I walked away from the Praetor and his rod as my own boss.
So why am I not able to do what I like – provided
90 it's not forbidden by a section of *Sabinus on Civil Law*?'

Very well, listen – but drop that angry screwed-up grimace
while I pull those weedy old granny notions out of your skull.
It wasn't in the Praetor's power to confer a delicate conscience

on fat-heads, or grant them a proper use of their hurrying lives –
it would be easier to train a ham-fisted bruiser to play the harp.
Common sense intervenes and gabbles softly in your ear
that no one should be let do anything that he's sure to make a
[mess of.

Human and natural law lay down a general rule
that bungling ignorance should bar a person from performing an
[action.

100 Do you mix a dose of hellebore if you can't adjust the weights
on a steel-yard? No – such an act is banned by the rules of medicine.
If a clod-hopping yokel who couldn't locate the morning star
tried to take over a ship, Melicerta himself would cry
that shame had vanished from the world. Has philosophy taught

[you to live
a good upstanding life? Can you tell the true from the specious,
alert for the false chink of copper beneath the gold?

Have you settled what to aim for and also what to avoid,
marking the former list with chalk and the other with charcoal?
Are your wants modest, your housekeeping thrifty? Are you nice to
[your friends?

Do you know when to shut your barns and when to throw them
[open? 110

Can you walk steadily past a coin stuck in the mud
and not have to gulp down the Lord of Lucre's saliva?

When you can truly say 'I possess those goods, they're mine',
deem yourself free and wise in the sight of the Praetor and God.
But if, after just being counted as one of our batch, you retain
the skin of your old disguise and wear a glossy exterior
while keeping a cunning fox inside your rotten heart,
I revoke the concession I made above and draw in the rope.
It stands to reason you'll do nothing right. Waggle your finger
and you're wrong. Is anything smaller? But none of your incense
[will lead 120

the gods to place a gram of what's right in a fool's head.
It's against nature to mix them. If you're a clumsy oaf,
you couldn't do three steps of Bathyllus' satyr routine.

'I'm free.'

On what grounds, when a slave to so many things?
Do you know no master but the one which the rod lifts from your
[back?

'Here boy – run and take Crispinus' scrapers to the baths.'
 If he shouts 'You good-for-nothing loafer!' you aren't jabbed into
 [action
 by the goad of slavery, nor does any external force
 galvanize your muscles; but if inside, in your sickly heart,
 130 masters come into being, how do *you* get off more lightly
 than the lad who ran for the scrapers in fear of his owner's strap?

It's daylight and you're lying snoring. 'Get up,' says Lady Greed,
 'Hey, get up!' You won't. She persists, 'Up!'

'I'm unable.'

'Up!'

'What for?'

'What a question! Go and fetch kippers from
 [Pontus,

plus beaver-musk, oakum, ebony, frankincense, slippery silk.
 The pepper's arrived, unload it before the camel's had a drink.
 Do a shady deal, then swear you haven't.'

'But God will hear.'

'Ha! Listen, you numskull, if you want God on your side
 you'll spend your days happily scraping the bottom of the barrel.'

140 You're dressed for the journey, loading the slaves with bundles
 [and wine-jars.

'Get this aboard right away!' The huge vessel is ready
 to hurry you over the Aegean, when Luxury slyly draws you
 aside for a word of advice: 'Just where the hell are you off to?
 What do you mean? Are you mad? Why a whole jar of sedatives
 couldn't quell the frenzy that's raging in that hot head!
 You – hopping over the sea, having your supper on a bench
 with your back propped against a coil of rope, while a squat mug
 reeks of Veientine rosso ruined by stale resin!
 All for what? That the cash you reared at the modest rate
 150 of five per cent should strain to sweat out a greedy eleven?
 Give yourself a treat; let's make some hay. What you live is ours.
 Soon enough you'll turn into dust, ghost, and hearsay.
 Live with death in mind; time flies – my words reduce it.'

Well then, two hooks are pulling in opposite ways.
 Which will you follow, this or that? Your loyalty is bound
 to vacillate, obeying and deserting each master in turn.

Even if you once succeed in making a stand and defying
 their incessant orders, you can't say 'I've broken my bonds!'
 For a dog may snap its fastening after a struggle, but still
 as it runs away a length of chain trails from its neck.

160

'Davus, look – I really mean it – I intend to stop
 the hell I've been through,' Chaerestratus says as he gnaws his nails
 to the quick. 'Why should I bring disgrace to my decent relatives –
 earning a bad name, squandering the family fortune
 at the entrance to a house of ill repute, drunkenly singing
 outside Goldie's dripping door with my torch doused?'

'Splendid my boy! Now take my advice and slaughter a lamb
 for the gods who protect us.'

'But Davus, do you think she'll cry
 [when I leave her?'

'Nonsense, my boy! You'll get a whack from her red slipper –
 that'll teach you to struggle and gnaw at the tight net!
 170 Now you're wild and fierce; if she called, at once you'd say:
 "What'll I do? Not go near her, not even now
 when she asks me – begs me?"

Not even now, if you've made a clean
 and genuine break.'

There, I tell you, is the freedom we're after,
 not in the piece of stick waved by a silly official.

The man who is led agape by the charms of whitened Ambition –
 is he his own master? 'Do without sleep, let the mob
 scramble for showers of peas, so that old men in the sunshine
 may one day remember our Festival of Flora. A fine aspiration!
 But when Herod's day arrives, and lamps entwined with violets
 180 are placed on the greasy window-sills spewing out heavy clouds
 of smoke, and when the tunny's tail swims, encircling
 the cheap red dish, and the white jar is bloated with wine,
 you move your lips in silence and blanch at the circumcised

[sabbath.

Demons in the dark, perils portended by an exploding egg,
 Cybele's towering eunuchs, a one-eyed priestess of Isis
 complete with rattle – they fill you with gods who will puff up your
 [body,
 unless on rising you take, as prescribed, three heads of garlic.

If you make such remarks in the presence of varicose
 [sergeant-majors,
 190 at once the mighty Pulfenius gives vent to a bray of laughter,
 and offers a clipped coin of bronze for a hundred Greeks.

SATIRE 6

A letter from Persius, who is spending the winter on the Ligurian coast at Luna (modern Luni now inland off the Bay of Spezia), to the lyric poet Caesius Bassus.

After the preliminary greetings Persius takes up the topic of money, rejecting in the Horatian manner the way of the miser and that of the spendthrift.

The main body of the poem, however, recommends that one should spend and enjoy what one has in a sensible way without worrying overmuch about the expectations of one's heir.

Has the winter brought you out to your Sabine fireside, Bassus?
 Are the lyre-strings waking beneath your stern highland quill?
 You excel at turning the oldest words of our tongue into verse
 and setting them to the virile sound of the Latin harp.
 Though old in years, you're an expert in the sport of young love,
 playing with a tasteful touch.

The Ligurian coast is mild,
 and I'm wintering here with my stretch of sea, where the cliffs
 [present

a massive wall and the shore falls back in a deep gulf.
 'Good people, get to know the port of Luna – it's worth it!' 10
 So said Ennius the wise, on snoring off the dream
 of being Quintus Homer descended from Pythagoras' peacock.
 Here I couldn't care less for the toiling masses or the mischief
 which the south wind is plotting for my cattle; couldn't care less
 that a certain corner of my neighbour's land is richer than mine.
 If all my social inferiors grew rich, I'd never become
 hunched and shrivelled with resentment or forgo a tasty dinner,
 or poke my nose at the seal of a bottle that's gone flat.
 Others may differ. Twins born under the same star
 vary in temperament. One, for a birthday treat, will dip
 20 his dry greens in brine which he has cunningly bought in a cup;
 he personally shakes the precious pepper on his plate. The other,

a stylish lad, chews through a huge inheritance. For me
 it's 'Enjoy what you have', though I can't feed my dependants on
 [turbot,
 nor can I tell the subtle flavour of a hen thrush.
 Live up to your harvest; grind your granaries, as you should.
 Why worry? Harrow again, and a new crop's in the blade.

But you say you have obligations. A friend's ship has gone down;
 he's clinging to the rocks of Bruttium, destitute – all his possessions
 and his futile prayers committed to the deep; he's sprawled on the
 [beach,
 with the mighty gods from the stern beside him; the ribs of the 30
 [mangled
 vessel are already drawing the gulls. Well, cut a sod
 off your landed capital and give it to the poor fellow, to save him
 from carting around his picture on a sea-blue board.

But your heir
 will blame you for truncating your property; he'll skimp the funeral
 [feast,
 put your bones in the urn without scent. Is the cinnamon flat,
 or the cassia debauched with cherry bark? He wouldn't know.
 'Serve you right,' he'll say, 'for not keeping up the estate.'

Like Brutus, he blames it on Greek intellectuals: 'That's how it goes;
 since these fancy ideas arrived from abroad with pepper
 and dates, our farmhands have spoilt their porridge with greasy 40
 [sauces.'

Will such things worry you beyond the pyre? But you, my heir,
 whoever you are, may I have a word with you – here, in private?
 I say – haven't you heard? A dispatch decked with laurels
 has come from Caligula; the prime of Germany has crashed to
 [defeat.
 They're raking the cold ashes from the altars; the Empress has
 [ordered

arms for the doorways, royal mantles, yellow wigs
 for the prisoners, chariots of war, colossal figures of the Rhine.
 So for these brilliant successes I'm staging a hundred fights
 in honour of the gods and our beloved leader. Who's going to
 [stop me?

Just try it. Turn a blind eye or else! I'm dishing out oil 50
 to the mob – and bread and meat. Any objections? Speak up.
 'That field nearby,' you say, 'is too full of stones.' Well if none

of my father's sisters or his brother's daughters and none of my
 great-great-granddaughters are left, and my maternal aunt has died
 without issue, if my granny's line is extinct, I'll go to the beggars'
 hill at Bovillae and in no time I'll find some Jack for an heir.

'An offspring of the soil?'

Ask who my grandfather's grandfather
 [was.

It'll take a while, but I'll tell you. Go back a stage – and another;
 we've now reached a son of the soil. So in point of kinship
 60 this Jack turns out to be some kind of great-great-uncle.

You're next; why shout for the baton before I've finished?
 I'm your Mercury, offering a purse like the god in his picture.
 Do you refuse it? Or will you take what's left and be thankful?
 'Some of it's missing.'

It went to meet my expenses. But all of it's
 yours, whatever is there. Forget what became of the sum
 Tadius left me, and don't call me to account: 'Put down
 the sum inherited, add the interest, subtract the expenditure,
 what's the remainder?'

Remainder? Come on, boy, drown the
 [cabbage,

drown it in oil and damn the expense! Shall I on holidays
 70 eat boiled nettles and a smoked pig's cheek with a hook-hole in
 [the ear,

so that one day your young wastrel may gorge on goose's liver,
 and when the fastidious vein throbs in his roving cock,
 relieve himself into an upper-class pouch? Am I to be left
 with transparent skin, while his priest-belly wobbles with fat?

Sell your soul for profit, scour each quarter of the globe;
 clinch your smart deals; make sure that *you* are pre-eminent
 at standing on the hard platform and slapping fat Cappadocians.
 Double your capital.

'I have; now it's trebled; and now
 it's in four folds, now in ten. Pinpoint where I'm to stop?
 80 You're the first ever to have checked Chrysippus' heap!'

Notes

HORACE

Satire I. I

1. *Maecenas*: Horace's patron and friend. He was a knight from an old Etruscan family. Although he never became a senator he was Augustus' chief adviser on home affairs for over twenty years. See also the introductions to *Satires* I. 5, I. 6, and II. 6.
13. *Fabius*: A Stoic bore.
25. *presenting the truth with a laugh*: The Latin is '*ridentem dicere verum*'.
 49–50. *nature's limits*: I.e. too much food and too little food are both harmful.
58. *Aufidus*: A swift river near Venusia, Horace's birthplace.
68. *Tantalus*: He abused the hospitality of the gods, but as he had eaten divine food he could not be killed. He was therefore condemned to eternal punishment, being always hungry and thirsty but never satisfied.
91. *the Park*: The Campus Martius.
- 101–2. *Naevius or Nomentanus*: These names typify prodigality. Naevius the wastrel is not mentioned elsewhere. Some scholars read Maenius, a name which, like Nomentanus, occurs in Lucilius.
- 104–5. *There is . . . massive vassal*: The Latin is '*est inter Tanain quiddam socerumque Viselli*' – 'there is a point between Tanais and the father-in-law of Visellius.' The ancient commentator Porphyrius (third century AD) says that Tanais was a eunuch and that Visellius' father-in-law represented the opposite extreme. This is not a particularly reliable or informative comment, but we have nothing else to go on, and so I have used it as the basis of my translation, which refers to the riddle: 'What is the difference between an Eskimo and a eunuch?' Answer: 'One is a frigid midget with a rigid digit; the other is a massive vassal with a passive tassel.'
108. *I return . . . greed*: For a defence of this reading see N. Rudd, *SH*, pp. 274–5.
121. *Crispinus*: Another wordy Stoic. Cf. I. 4. 14–16 and II. 7. 45.

- Greek poet or perhaps he used it for metrical convenience. The alteration does not appear to provide any additional satirical effect. For discussion of these questions see J. H. Waszink, *Mnemosyne* 15 (1962), 113-32, O. Skutsch, *Studia Enniana* (London, 1968), 124-9, and Ennius' *Annals* (Oxford 1986) 147-50.
4. *Pale Pirene*: A spring at Corinth, sacred to the Muses, where Bellerophon succeeded in catching Pegasus. Persius implies that the pallor conventionally attributed to poets came from drinking the waters of Pirene.
- Helicon's Maids*: The Muses.
- 5-6. *whose portraits are entwined . . . ivy*: Established poets whose busts were to be seen in the public libraries.
7. *a semi-clansman*: As a satirist Persius feels that he does not wholly belong to the company of poets. Cf. Horace, *Satires* I. 4. 39ff.
- bardic rites*: The Latin is *sacra*. Cf. Ovid, *Ex Ponto* III. 4. 67 and IV. 8. 81. Writing poetry is seen as a celebration of the Muses.
14. *Pegasus' nectar-flow*: See n. 1 above.

Persius I

- 4-5. *Are you worried . . . What the hell*: The sense is: 'the Roman reader will prefer Labeo to me, but it would be foolish to worry about such a thing.' Attius Labeo was a contemporary who had produced a popular translation of Homer.
- 'Polydamas and the Trojan ladies'*: An allusion to the *Iliad* 22. 100 and 105, where Hector fears the reproach of Polydamas and the Trojan ladies. Here there is the further implication that the Roman aristocracy is effeminate - an idea developed in vv. 19ff.
8. *Is there anyone in Rome who hasn't* -: The sense is completed in v. 121, which says that every man Jack has an ass's ears.
19. *The mighty sons of Rome*: The Latin is '*ingentis . . . Titos*'. The Tities, along with the Ramnes and Luceres, made up the three tribes of early Rome. Their descendants get a perverted thrill from a recitation of sentimental poetry.
- 22-3. *You old fraud . . . 'Whoa there!'*: These are difficult lines. I take the 'ears' in v. 23 as standing for the audience. This audience will puff up the poet with praise until he is on the point of bursting. For a defence of this view see *Classical Review* 20 (1970) 282-5. Others accept Madvig's conjecture, '*articulis*' (joints) for the manuscripts' '*auriculis*' (ears), translating 'are you, at your age, collecting titbits for other people's ears - titbits to which you will have to say "no" wrecked as you are in your joints and flesh' - i.e. disabled by gout and dropsy.
24. *frothy yeast . . . fig-tree*: The yeast and fig-tree represent the feelings which burst out of the poet's heart. Actually Persius speaks of the liver (*iecur*), which was often regarded as the seat of strong emotion.
34. *Phyllis*: A Thracian princess who hanged herself after being deserted

- by Demophon the son of Theseus. See Ovid, *Heroides* 2 and the notes on p. 289 of Palmer's edition.
- Hypsipyle*: A princess of Lemnos who saved her father when all the other men on the island were killed. She bore Jason two sons, was captured by pirates, and sold into slavery. She figured in tragedy (Euripides) and romantic epic (Apollonius, Statius, and Valerius Flaccus). See also Ovid, *Heroides* 6.
42. *cedar oil*: This was used to preserve books.
43. *mackerel . . . incense*: Pages from unwanted books were used for cooking fish and wrapping incense. See Catullus 95. 8 and Horace, *Epistles* II. 2. 269.
50. *Attius' Iliad*: See note on vv. 4-5 above.
51. *hellebore*: According to Pliny hellebore was taken not only as a cure for madness but also to clear the heads of students.
53. *citrus*: An African tree with fragrant wood; used for high quality furniture.
56. *airy doodler*: The rich man produces trifles of no weight, in spite of his complacency.
- 58-60. *Janus . . . Apulia*: The god Janus had two faces and could therefore see behind him. The stork's bill was imitated by bringing the fingers into sharp contact with the thumb. It was a rude gesture, like the ass's ears and the protruding tongue. The dog-star Sirius rises at the end of July. Apulia, a district in southern Italy, is mentioned here because of Horace, *Epodes* 3. 15-16: 'nor was so great a heat ever cast by the stars on thirsty Apulia.'
65. *the critical nail*: The fingernail was used to test the tightness and smoothness of a carpenter's joint.
66. *a cord*: To mark a straight line the workman would rub chalk on a cord, stretch it along the required line, pull it away from the surface and then let it snap back.
68. *the royal way of life . . . dinners*: The Latin is '*in mores, in luxum, in prandia regum/dicere*'. This could mean 'to attack the behaviour, the luxury, and the dinners of grandees', and it is often taken in that way. Yet it hardly seems in character for the poetaster to denounce vice, whereas feasts like those of Thyestes and Tereus were a common theme, suited to impassioned rhetoric. Cf. 5. 8.
72. *Pales' holiday*: The rustic festival of Pales, reputedly the anniversary of Rome's foundation, took place on 21 April. One feature of the purificatory ritual was jumping through the flames of a bonfire. See J. G. Frazer on Ovid, *Fasti* 4. 785.
- 73-5. *Quintius*: I.e. Quintius Cincinnatus. Livy 3. 26 tells how in 458 BC the Roman Senate appointed Cincinnatus Dictator to save the city from the Sabines. The official messengers found him at the plough. After his wife had fetched his toga from their cottage, the officials hailed him as Dictator and summoned him to take charge of the army.

The *lictor* was a magistrate's attendant with various police duties; hence I have translated the word by 'sergeant'.

76-8. *Nowadays one man . . . by woe*: Some scholars print vv. 76 and 78 as questions and give them to Persius' adversary. This would imply that Persius was lamenting the neglect of Accius and Pacuvius. But Roman tragedy is satirized by Lucilius and Horace, and by Persius elsewhere (see 5. 7ff.). And so it would be odd if he were defending it here. See Introduction, p. xxviii.

Accius: (170-c. 85 BC) A writer who adapted numerous Greek tragedies to the Roman stage. He is called 'the old Bacchanal' because tragedy arose in connection with the worship of Bacchus.

Pacuvius: Another early tragedian (220-c. 130 BC), nephew of Ennius. One of his plays concerned Antiopa, a Boeotian princess who was made pregnant by Jupiter. She escaped from her angry father but was caught and thrown into a dungeon by her uncle. Persius is apparently quoting from the play. See *Remains of Old Latin*, vol. 2, pp. 158-71.

85. *Pedius*: Pedius Blaesus was prosecuted for corruption in AD 59 (Tacitus, *Annals* 14. 18). Persius probably chose his name rather than that of another criminal because of Horace I. 10. 28, where Pedius Publicola is mentioned as speaking in court. Admittedly Publicola is a defence counsel, not a defendant. But Persius' reminiscences are often imprecise. The point about Pedius' style is also probably due to the Horatian passage, for there Horace is recommending the use of direct simple Latin unmixed with Greek. Therefore we are not entitled to infer that Pedius Blaesus defended himself in the manner satirized by Persius.

87. *is Romulus wagging his tail?*: I.e. is Rome guilty of perversion?

93-5. '*Berecynthian Attis . . . arms and the man*': These passages illustrate certain objectionable features of contemporary poetry, but we cannot always be sure of what they are.

Berecynthian Attis: According to Ovid's version of the myth (*Fasti* 4. 221-44) Attis, a Phrygian boy, was loved by the goddess Cybele. She imposed a vow of chastity on him which he broke by making love to a nymph. Cybele killed the nymph, and Attis castrated himself in a frenzy of grief and remorse. The tale itself was morbid, romantic, and unRoman. The adjective *Berecynthius*, referring to Mount Berecynthus in Phrygia which was sacred to Cybele, was a pedantic flourish. It contained the Greek γ , which sounded sweet and exotic to Roman ears. (It was pronounced like the French *u*.) Finally a five-syllable word of that metrical pattern in that position in the line was in Persius' view an affectation. The only other example in his work is the sarcastic '*hyacinthina*' (another Greek word) in 1. 32. He would not have approved of Ovid's '*Cybeleius Attis*' (*Metamorphoses* 10. 104) or his '*Berecynthius heros*' (*ibid.* 11. 106).

The dolphin: The word is *delphin*, a later form of the Greek nominative *delphis*.

Nereus: A sea-god, here used for the sea - a device found in elegy (Tibullus) and silver epic (Valerius Flaccus). The metonymy, itself rather 'poetic', becomes grotesque when Nereus is sliced by a dolphin.

Apennines: Persius objects to the practice, which was popular among the neoterics, of ending the hexameter with a word of four long syllables like '*Appennino*'. Quintilian, who cites this very example, calls the practice 'over-effeminate' (*praemolle*) - see his *Institutio Oratoria* IX. 4. 65. The affectation, however, is hardly confined to the last word. If the context was similar to that of Ovid, *Heroides* 16. 107-12, where a ship is built with timber taken from the mountains of the Troad, and if the long range of the Apennines is thought of as a *dorsum* or spine as in Suetonius, *Julius Caesar* 44 ('*per Appennini dorsum*'), then the conceit of stealing a rib would be sufficiently silly. I should make it clear that this is only a hypothesis and that Persius simply says 'the long Apennines'. But one has to have *some* working hypothesis about the line's context.

96. '*Arms and the man*': The opening words of the *Aeneid*.

98. *limp-held wrist*: A drooping posture was also an effeminate affectation. Cf. Quintilian I. 11. 9.

99-102. '*They filled their frightening horns . . . restorative Echo*': A description of the female devotees of Bacchus. The scene is outlandish and emotional; the sound self-consciously musical; the vocabulary markedly Greek in colouring (*Mimalloneis* - 'Bacchanalian', *bombis* - 'boomings', *Bassaris* - 'Bassarid', *lynxem* - 'lynx', *Maenas* - 'Maenad', *corymbis* - 'ivy', *euion* - 'euhoel', *echo* - 'echo').

106. *pummel the back-rest . . . bitten nails*: Pummelling the back of one's couch and biting one's nails are signs that writing poetry is hard and exasperating work.

109-10. *the rolling r . . . dog*: R was called the dog letter because it sounded like a growl. See Lucilius 3-4 (Warmington). Some scholars (most recently W. S. Anderson in *Classical Quarterly* 52, 1958) take the view that the growl is attributed to satire, not to the baronial porches.

112-14. *You erect a notice . . . else to piss*: Persius compares the objects of his satire to monuments which one is forbidden to deface. The snakes are the guardian spirits of the place. Several inscriptions similar to the notice described by Persius are cited by Villeneuve in his edition. One, from the Golden House of Nero, also contains two snakes.

115. *Lupus*: L. Cornelius Lentulus Lupus, Consul in 156 BC, Censor in 147, and Leader of the Senate from 130.

Mucius: Q. Mucius Scaevola, Consul 117 BC. Both these men were opponents of Scipio Aemilianus. See the index of A. E. Astin, *Scipio Aemilianus*, Oxford, 1967.

116-18. *While his friend . . . well-blown nose*: Horace rarely goes in for

playful banter at the expense of his friends. Persius seems to mean that Horace's satirical strokes make his friends laugh, and then too late they realize that they themselves have the faults in question.

- 119-21. *Am I forbidden . . . AN ASS'S EARS*: King Midas, a legendary king of Phrygia, judged that Pan was superior to Apollo in a music contest; so Apollo gave him ass's ears. He managed to conceal these from everyone except his barber. The latter, bursting with the secret, whispered it into a hole in the ground, but the reeds heard it and repeated it when the wind blew. For this, and for the story of the golden touch, see Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 11. 90ff. See also Introduction, p. xxix.
- 123-4. *Cratinus . . . Eupolis, and the Grand Old Man*: (I.e. Aristophanes) The chief representatives of fifth-century Athenian comedy. Cf. Horace, *Satires* I. 4. 1.
127. *Greek-style sandals*: The idea that Greek sandals are something which calls for comment is found in Cicero, *Rab. Post.* 27, Livy 29. 19. 12, and Suetonius, *Tiberius* 13. Here the man who scoffs at Greek sandals represents a provincial mentality.
128. *'Hey one-eye!'*: The man who shouts this insult is geographically as well as intellectually provincial – he is an Aedile of Arretium. But even as he framed the description Persius was thinking of the man's Horatian counterpart, whose name was Aufidius Luscius – Mr One-eye, (*Satires* I. 5. 34-6). Therefore the choice of this particular insult appears to be due to an association of ideas.
132. *abacus*: Here an object like a tray covered with sand.
Nones-girl: Plutarch (*Camillus* 33) tells how on the Nones of July (7 July) serving-girls, elaborately decked out, would go around chaffing and joking with the men they met. This was part of a festival known as the *Nonae Caprotinae*, i.e. 'the Nones of the wild fig-tree'. For a brief account of this fertility rite see H. J. Rose, *Religion in Greece and Rome*, Harper Torchbooks, 1959, pp. 217-18. An exhaustive treatment is given by S. Weinstock (under *Nonae Caprotinae*) in Pauly-Wissowa XVII. 1. 849-59. This explanation of *nonaria* was first given, I believe, by F. Morice in *Classical Review* 4 (1890) 230. It seems more convincing than the scholiast's view, which is that *nonaria* is a prostitute who plies her trade from the ninth hour.
134. *Calliroë*: The heroine of some popular work, possibly one like Chariton's novel but more likely something in Latin in view of the character's hostility to things Greek.

Persius 2

1. *Macrinus*: An older contemporary who studied in the house of Servilius Nonianus. See O. Jahn's commentary (1843) xxxvii-viii.
14. *'That's his third wife . . . burying'*: I.e. 'some people have all the luck.'

The husband would expect a legacy, and so wishes for the death of his wife.

- 17-23. *Well now . . . 'Good God!'*: The sense is 'If a dubious character like Staius is indignant at the prayer, surely Jupiter himself must be scandalized by it.' Therefore v. 20 must be ironical, and Persius must be joking in v. 19 when he says 'Or perhaps you balk at that?'
- 26-8. *You don't lie buried . . . abhorrence*: If a man was struck by lightning in a grove he was buried where he fell. The spot was then railed off and regarded as sacred. The crone is Tuscan because most of the ancient religious rituals were Etruscan in origin. Cf. v. 60.
- 32-4. *protects his forehead . . . evil eye*: The middle finger was called '*infamis*' because it was used to simulate the penis in rude gestures. Such gestures were often employed to ward off the evil eye. Saliva was also used extensively in magic and medicine. For references see the long note of Jahn.
36. *Licinian domains*: Domains like those of Licinus, a freedman of Julius Caesar's. Under Augustus he was a financial official in Gaul, where he acquired enormous wealth.
Crassus: M. Licinius Crassus made a huge fortune by buying up the property of men who were killed in Sulla's proscriptions. By 60 BC he was one of the three most powerful men in the country, the others being Pompey and Caesar. He was killed in 53 BC when leading a campaign against the Parthians.
54. *Your heart . . . expelling the drops*: The greedy man's heart forces out drops of sweat.
- 55-8. *Smearing the faces . . . beards of gold*: Since he himself is so excited by gold he assumes that it is equally pleasing to the gods.
59. *Numa*: The second king of Rome, esteemed for his simple piety.
Saturn: A divine figure in whose reign Italy was supposed to have enjoyed an era of unexampled peace.
65. *Calabrian fleece*: Calabria is a district on the heel of Italy, which was well known for its wool.
70. *dolls*: These presents signified the end of girlhood.
71. *Messalla*: (64 BC-AD 8) An aristocrat who was a distinguished general, orator, and patron of letters. See Horace, *Satires* I. 10. 85. His son L. Aurelius Cotta Messalinus was notorious for his dissolute habits.

Persius 3

1. The opening words, '*nempe haec assidue*', may possibly be spoken by Persius, in which case they mean 'Always the same story!' The parallel with Horace II. 3, however, suggests that they belong to the companion who breaks in on the sleeping student. For a defence of the *mise-en-scène* adopted in the translation see *Classical Review* 20 (1970) 286-8.
- 4-5. *as the shadow . . . dial*: The time is about 11 a.m.

10. *two-tone parchment*: The two sides of the parchment are different in colour. The hair has been removed with pumice.
29. *parade . . . in full regalia*: The knights (*equites*) used to parade on horseback to be inspected by the Censor.
31. *Natta*: The name occurs in Horace, *Satires* I. 6. 124, but there the character is mean rather than extravagant.
39. *Sicily's brazen bull*: Phaleris was tyrant of Acragas in Sicily in the middle of the sixth century BC. His victims were roasted alive inside a bronze bull.
40. *the blade dangling*: Damocles was a courtier of Dionysius of Syracuse (c. 430–367 BC). When he praised the tyrant's happiness, Dionysius offered to show him what such a life was really like. Damocles was then clothed in purple, and a magnificent feast was set before him. But just above his head hung a sword, attached to the ceiling by a horse's hair.
45. *Cato*: M. Porcius Cato (95–46 BC), a man of austere principles and inflexible will. He upheld the old republican constitution against Pompey, Caesar, and Crassus. Eventually when a choice became necessary he supported Pompey against Caesar. After Pompey's death he continued to resist Caesar in Africa. Finally, after the battle of Thapsus, he committed suicide rather than surrender. See the account of his life given by Plutarch.
53. *the learned Porch*: The Porch or Colonnade in question was built at Athens about 460 BC and decorated with pictures by Polygnotus. One represented the battle of Marathon. From 300 BC on, the building was used by Zeno and his successors, and so their philosophy came to be associated with the Porch or Stoa.
56. *Pythagoras' U*: The old form of the Greek capital U; the stem stands for the unreflecting life of infancy and childhood, the branches for the straight and crooked paths of virtue and vice. The Latin is '*quae Samios diduxit littera ramos*' – 'the letter which separates the Samian branches'. The adjective Samian is transferred from the letter to the branches. The letter is Samian because Pythagoras came from the island of Samos off the coast of Asia Minor.
65. *Doctor Craterus*: Comes from Horace, *Satires* II. 3. 161.
- 73–6. *jars piled in a barrister's . . . a survivor*: The successful lawyer has more presents than he can use.
79. *Arcesilas*: A Greek philosopher who was Head of the Academy in the middle of the third century BC.
Solon: Reformed the economy and constitution of sixth-century Athens, and gave expression to his ideas in poetry. He was counted as one of the seven wise men of Greece.
83. *sick old fool*: This is taken in a wholly general sense by Jahn, Conington, and Villeneuve, and it is true that the doctrine mentioned in the next line was held by more than one philosophical school. Yet it is

- hard to believe that a Roman reader would not have construed '*gigni/ de nihilo nihilum, in nihilum nil posse reverti*' as a parody of Lucretius, e.g. I. 150, 237, 248. In that case Persius had Epicurus chiefly in mind.
92. *Surrentine*: A light wine from Sorrento, often recommended for invalids.
106. *men whose caps proclaim them citizens*: These slaves had been emancipated by the deceased either just before he died or else through his will. Freedmen shaved their heads and wore a felt skull-cap.

Persius 4

11. *you can see the straight . . . crooked*: The straight represents the virtuous mean, the crooked the two faults of defect and excess.
12. *the rule misleads . . . standard*: This seems to refer to cases where the right action is not to be seen as a mean between two extremes.
16. *Anticyra*: In addition to the Anticyra in Phocis on the gulf of Corinth (see Horace, *Satires* II. 3. 83 and 166) there was also an Anticyra on the Malian gulf some thirty-five miles further north.
22. *Baucis*: The name of an old woman, taken from Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 8. 640 ff.
25. *Vettidius*: Unknown.
26. *Cures*: A Sabine town.
28. *On a public holiday . . . cross-road shrines*: The festival referred to is the Compitalia, which took place in early January. The yoke and the plough were hung up as a sign that work had come to an end.
- 48–9. *if you carefully whip . . . a weal*: The Latin is '*amarum/si puteal multa cautus vibice flagellas*', literally 'if careful you whip the harsh well with many a weal.' No one knows for certain what this means. The well was the place where money-lenders used to congregate; so 'well' may be used to denote 'interest'.

Persius 5

4. *Parthian*: The Parthians were Rome's traditional enemy in the east. As such they were an appropriate subject for a historical Roman epic. The actual expression is modelled on Horace, *Satires* II. 1. 15.
8. *Thyestes*: Engaged in a long and horrible struggle with his brother Atreus for the throne of Mycenae in the Peloponnese. At one stage Atreus lured him back from exile and served him dinner. When the meal was over Atreus, to show him what he had eaten, uncovered a dish containing the heads, hands, and feet of his two baby sons.
Procne: On finding that her husband Tereus had violated and mutilated her sister Philomela, Procne murdered her son Itys and served his body up to Tereus. See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 6. 424–674.
9. *Sweetman*: Glycon, a tragic actor, who in Persius' view was rather a ham.

186. *Atreus*: Murdered the sons of his brother Thyestes and served them to their father at dinner.
187. *Procne*: Served her son Itys to her husband Tereus in revenge for Tereus' rape and mutilation of her sister Philomela. When pursued by Tereus, Procne changed into a nightingale (or a swallow).
Cadmus: The founder of Thebes, eventually went to Illyria with his wife Harmonia, where they were both turned into large but harmless snakes.
220. *he-goat*: Horace is alluding to the derivation of tragedy from *tragos*, the Greek for he-goat.
221. *satyrs*: A reference to the origin of satyric drama.
- 237-8. *Davus* . . . *Pythias* . . . *Simo*: Comic characters; the first a slave, the second a slave-girl, and the third an old man.
239. *Silenus*: The teacher and guardian of Bacchus, seen here as a dignified figure.
253. *trimeters*: An iambic metron consisted of two feet; hence a trimeter had six.
254. *At a time in the past*: Glosses over an unsolved crux.
259. *noble*: Not in Horace's judgment, but in that of Accius' admirers. For Accius, see note on *Satires* I. 10. 53.
270. *Plautus*: See note on *Epistles* II. 1. 58.
275. *Thespis*: See note on *Epistles* II. 1. 163.
278. *Aeschylus*: See note on *Epistles* II. 1. 163.
281. *Old Comedy*: Its three main representatives are named in *Satires* I. 4. 1.
292. *Children of Numa*: The Calpurnius Piso family claimed to trace its descent from King Numa.
293. *stilus*: The blunt end of the stilus was used as an eraser.
295. *Democritus holds*: Probably in his book on poetry.
talent: *Ingenium*.
296. *technique*: *Ars*.
300. *Licinus*: Unknown.
301. *three Anticyras*: Anticyra in Phocis on the Gulf of Corinth produced hellebore, which was used in the treatment of madness. Three Anticyras, therefore, meant something like 'three times the output of Anticyra'.
309. *Moral sense*: *Sapere*.
310. *Socrates' school*: A vague phrase denoting 'writers on moral philosophy'.
343. *wholesome and sweet*: *Utile* and *dulce*.
349. [*when you want . . . a treble*]: This line is probably spurious. The fault it describes is not a minor one, and there is a difficulty over the word *persaepe*. See Brink's note.
357. *Choerilus*: See note on *Epistles* II. 1. 233.
370. *Messalla*: See note on *Satires* I. 10. 28.
371. *Aulus Cascellius*: Born c. 104 BC. He may not have been still alive, but his reputation survived.

375. *Sardinian honey*: This was bitter.
387. *Tarpa*: See note on *Satires* I. 10. 38.
388. *the ninth year*: Probably an allusion to Cinna's *Zmyrna*, which according to Catullus 95 finally saw the light in the ninth year.
392. *Orpheus*: The moral progress brought about by Orpheus is ascribed to his poetry.
394. *Amphion*: See note on *Epistles* I. 18. 42.
401. *Tyrtaeus*: A Spartan elegiac poet of the seventh century BC.
404. *Pierian*: The district of Pieria in Thessaly was associated with the Muses.
405. *a king's favour*: Simonides, Pindar, and Bacchylides sought the patronage of rulers in fifth-century Sicily.
- 414-15. *Delphi*: There were musical competitions at the Pythian games.
437. *fox's hidden malice*: In Aesop's fable the crow, congratulated on his singing by the cunning fox, drops the piece of cheese.
438. *Quintilius*: Quintilius Varus of Cremona, the friend of Horace and Virgil, died in 24/23 BC. See *Odes* I. 24.
454. *lunar goddess*: Diana; cf. 'lunacy'.
- 464-6. *how Empedocles . . . the first time*: Empedocles associated cold blood with dullness, which is apparently why Horace calls him *frigidus*, an adjective which could be used in a literary context. See also *Epistles* I. 12. 20n.
472. *a gruesome place*: A place struck by lightning was fenced off and consecrated. Cf. Persius 2. 26.

PERSIUS

Prologue

- cart-horse spring*: A deflationary translation of the Greek Hippocrene, the name given to the spring of the Muses on Mount Helicon. It was produced by a kick from Pegasus.
- dreamed*: Hesiod (*Theogony* 22ff.) tells how the Muses appeared to him on Mount Helicon and inspired him to write poetry. In the third century BC the Alexandrian poet Callimachus told in his *Aetia* (Origins) how he had been transported in a dream to Mount Helicon where he too had been instructed by the Muses. Ennius (239-169 BC), the father of Roman poetry, related in the introduction to his *Annals* how he had gone to the mountain of the Muses. Falling asleep there he dreamed that Homer's ghost expounded the doctrine of transmigration and told him that he now possessed Homer's soul. In the late twenties Propertius says (III. 30) that he dreamed he was on Mount Helicon contemplating a poem on Roman history when Apollo appeared to him and advised him to sing about love. It is not clear why Persius mentions Parnassus instead of Helicon. Perhaps he found it in another

22. *Cornutus*: L. Annaeus Cornutus, born c. AD 20 at Leptis in Libya. He came to Rome, probably as a slave in the household of Seneca or one of his relations. He was then emancipated and became a teacher of rhetoric and philosophy. With Caesius Bassus he produced a posthumous edition of Persius' Satires. Soon after the poet's death Cornutus was exiled by Nero. He was a man of wide erudition, writing on many subjects including Aristotle, Greek mythology, and Virgil.
30. *purple band*: At the age of sixteen a Roman boy would exchange his *toga praetexta*, with its border of purple, for a plain white toga.
31. *locket*: The *bullae*, containing a charm against the evil eye, was worn around the neck. When the boy reached maturity it was dedicated to the household gods.
33. *Subura*: A seedy old street specializing in victuals and vice.
- 48-9. *the even Scales . . . harmonious lives*: 'The *horoscopus*, the sign of the zodiac which is rising at the moment of birth, presides over the first year of a child's life, the next over the second, and so on until the child is twelve years old and the zodiac exhausted; then the first sign presides over his thirteenth year and the wheel goes round again.' A. E. Housman, *Classical Quarterly* 7 (1913) 19. The Scales and the Twins are, of course, Libra and Gemini.
50. *with Jove's help . . . power*: 'In the genitures of Persius and Cornutus the planets Jupiter and Saturn had the same relative positions, and such positions that the benignant Jupiter counteracted the maleficent Saturn,' A. E. Housman, *ibid.* 21.
64. *Cleanthes*: Born 331 BC, he was Head of the Stoic school from 263 until his death in 232. He gave to Stoicism a strongly religious colouring, maintaining that the universe was a living being with God as its soul.
- 73-4. *Jack . . . voters' list*: Jack becomes John Smith when he acquires citizen rights.
76. *whirl*: A slave was touched with the Praetor's rod, and his master turned him around saying 'I wish this man to be free.'
82. *cone-caps*: A freed slave wore a distinctive cap; cf. 3. 106.
90. *Sabinus*: Masurius Sabinus, a distinguished jurist of the first half of the first century AD, who wrote a standard work on civil law in three books.
103. *Melicerta*: A sea deity.
112. *Lord of Lucre*: Mercury. The saliva signifies greed.
115. *batch*: The Latin '*farina*' (flour) suggests a metaphor from baking.
123. *Bathyllus' satyr routine*: Bathyllus of Alexandria was a freedman of Maecenas. He won great fame as a comic mime.
126. *Crispinus' scrapers . . . baths*: Crispinus and the baths come from Horace, *Satires* I. 3. 138-9.
132. *Lady Greed: Avaritia*.
134. *Pontus*: An area on the south coast of the Black Sea.

139. *scraping the bottom of the barrel*: The Latin is '*regustatum digito terebrare salinum*' - 'to scrape a hole in your well-used salt-cellar'.
148. *Veientine*: From Veii in Etruria.
151. *What you live is ours*: I.e. a day which has been lived to the full is a valuable possession which cannot be taken away. Cf. Horace, *Odes* III. 29. 41-8. Luxury will share it; hence 'ours'.
- 161-74. '*Davus, look . . . genuine break*': This interchange is based on the opening scene of Menander's *Eunuch*.
166. *Goldie*: The girl is a Greek freedwoman called Chrysis. Her door is wet and her lover's torch is extinguished because she has thrown down a bucketful of water. Cf. Horace, *Satires* II. 7. 90-91. Other explanations, referring to rain, tears, and ointment, are much less convincing.
175. *stick*: The Praetor's rod.
176. *the charms of whitened Ambition*: Persius is referring to the glamour of the hustings. The Latin is '*cretata Ambitio*' - 'Ambition in her whitened toga'. Men seeking public office had their togas whitened with chalk; hence they were '*candidati*'. Political ambition is here personified as a dangerous vamp. I follow those who place a comma after '*sui*' in v. 176, and take '*palpo*' as an ablative. The theory that '*palpo*' is a nominative is not well based.
179. *Flora*: The Italian goddess of blooming plants. Her festival began on 28 April and was gradually extended to 3 May. It was conducted by the Aediles, who would win popularity by staging shows and distributing food. The licentiousness of the celebrations was much deplored by the serious minded.
180. *Herod*: Herod the Great, king of the Jews (c. 73-4 BC) Persius is referring to the Sabbath.
185. *exploding egg*: According to the scholiast, priests used to put eggs on the fire and watch where the moisture came out. If the egg burst it was regarded as a bad omen.
186. *Cybele's towering eunuchs*: Cybele was the name given to the great mother goddess of Phrygia. Her priests castrated themselves and dedicated the severed parts to her; they then continued in her service but dressed as women. The object of the rite seems to have been an attempt to give the goddess more of the *mana* which she needed for the task of reproduction. The priests were known as Galli, because (according to tradition) the water from the river Gallus made men mad. This derivation is suspect but no other has been accepted.
- Isis*: The Egyptian goddess had many aspects. When angered she would sometimes punish the delinquent with blindness. The rattle was a mystical object used in her worship. Plutarch (*De Iside* 63) says that it signified that all things had to be kept in motion; he adds that it was used to repel the evil god Typhon (or Set).
187. *they fill you with gods*: Persius says this instead of saying 'they inspire

the fear of the gods. For the swelling caused by a god, cf. Martial IV. 43. 7.

191. *offers a clipped coin . . . Greeks*: The centurions see philosophy as something foreign and contemptible.

Persius 6

1. *Bassus*: Caesius Bassus, a lyric poet mentioned with qualified approval in Quintilian X. 1. 96. After Persius' death he edited the satires. He is said to have died in the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79.
5. *you're an expert . . . love*: Bassus seems to have written on love rather in the Horatian vein.
- 7-8. *I'm wintering here . . . sea*: The sentence *hibernat meum mare* is controversial. Presumably the sea is Persius' sea (*meum*) because he has known and loved the place from his boyhood. Some scholars take *hibernat* as the equivalent of *hiemat* ('is rough'), pointing out that according to some ancient authorities the water became warmer as the sea became rough. But (1) it seems odd (even for Persius) to say 'the sea is rough' when one means only to convey that the water is warm. (2) *Hibernare* normally means 'to pass the winter'. (3) The description of the inlet running back behind the cliff does not suggest rough water. (4) There is a logical sequence of ideas in a stretch of water spending the winter where the cliffs offer protection and the coastline withdraws.
9. *'Good people . . . worth it'*: A quotation from Ennius. Warmington (*Remains of Old Latin*, vol. 1) prints it as fragment 14 of the *Annals*. Skutsch, however, assigns it to the *Satires* (*Studia Enniana*, 25-9).
- 10-11. *Ennius the wise . . . Pythagoras' peacock*: The soul of Homer is said to have descended to Ennius via a peacock. 'In Pythagorean southern Italy, and apparently elsewhere, the peacock is a symbol of immortality.' Also 'he is the bird of Samos and thus connected with Pythagoras' (Skutsch, *Studia Enniana*, 153). For Ennius' dream see note on Prologue v. 2.
17. *poke my nose . . . flat*: A miser would keep examining the seal of his wine-jar to check whether it was still intact, even though the wine itself wasn't worth drinking.
28. *Bruttium*: An area covering the toe of Italy.
30. *the mighty gods from the stern*: A ship carried on its stern images of the gods to whom it was entrusted.
33. *carting around his picture*: I.e. as a beggar.
38. *Bruty*: The Latin name is Bestius. In making these complaints the heir is of course hypocritical, for he wanted a bigger legacy for himself. In Horace, *Epistles* I. 15. 37 we hear of a man who denounces luxury like Bestius. There appears to have been something rather suspect about Bestius' sermons. Perhaps he had once been a notorious spend-thrift and then, after ruining himself, had become a fountain of austere wisdom. He may also have been a Lucilian figure.

39. *fancy ideas*: The Latin is *sapere . . . nostrum hoc maris expers*, which can be interpreted in two ways, (1) by taking *maris expers* as 'unmixed with sea-water', and (2) by taking it as 'destitute of virility'. In Horace II. 8. 15 we hear of unsalted Chian wine being served at Nasidienus' dinner-party. Like other items on the menu this was intended to be a sign of the host's exquisite refinement. We know from Galen (10. 833) that certain Greek wines, including one from Chios, were left unsalted (cf. Pliny, *Natural History* 14. 73 and 75). Now if Persius was following Horace, the fancy ideas are, like the pepper and dates, unnecessary, exotic, and decadent. If he has changed Horace, then *maris* comes not from *mare* (sea) but from *mas* (male), and the phrase means 'unmanly'. The two interpretations are not far apart in general sense, and neither is in any way absurd. If we ask 'What did Persius mean by *maris*?' and 'How would his readers have understood it?' the best answer is probably that the word had both meanings. The pun cannot be reproduced in English, but one can choose a word which will include both senses, hence the translation 'fancy'.

The actual content of the ideas is not specified (though they are clearly of a hedonistic kind), and so it seems rather over-precise to connect them solely with gastronomy, as Nisbet tentatively proposed.

- 43-7. *Caligula . . . the Empress has ordered . . . Rhine*: Caligula was the Emperor Gaius (AD 12-41). Suetonius (*Caligula* 43ff.) gives an account of his farcical campaign against the Germans and of the subsequent triumph in which fake prisoners were compelled to march. The yellow wigs mentioned by Persius were to be part of their disguise. The Empress in question was Caesonia, Caligula's fourth wife.
52. *'That field . . . stones'*: The heir is afraid to voice his objections, because if the crowd hears him he will be stoned to death. This is Hermann's interpretation, accepted by Housman. Certainty is impossible.
- 55-6. *the beggars' hill at Bovillae*: Bovillae was eleven miles down the Appian Way from Rome. The beggars' hill was the hill of Virbius some four miles farther on. Hippolytus, who was brought back to life by Aesculapius at the request of Diana, was worshipped with her at Aricia under the name of Virbius. As travellers toiled up the hill on their way south, the beggars would accost them.
61. *why shout for the baton*: Life is here represented as a relay race.
62. *offering a purse*: Mercury, who brought gain, was often portrayed as carrying a purse.
68. *boy*: Here Persius addresses his servant. The sermon is resumed in v. 69.
77. *fat Cappadocians*: Slaves from Cappadocia, which was on the west of the Euphrates between Pontus in the north and Cilicia in the south.
80. *Chrysippus' heap*: The puzzle of the heap may be illustrated by placing a coffee bean on a table and asking a friend if it makes a heap. He will say no. Add another bean and repeat the question. Eventually, when

you have added bean x, he will say 'yes, that *is* a heap.' Then you take off bean x and say 'Do you mean that a single bean makes it a heap?' The process also operates in reverse.

Chrysippus (c. 280–207 BC) was converted to Stoicism by Cleanthes and succeeded him as Head of the school. He was a vigorous apologist and a formidable logician.

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