Banking on Friendship:
Horace's Defense of Epicurean Friendship in *Odes* 1.24

Though infrequently considered within the canon of ancient philosophy, Augustan-age poets did help to transform and transmit Hellenistic philosophy into a Roman context. For example, both Horace and Vergil integrated their philosophical educations into their poetry,[1] perhaps even into the practice of their friendship.[2] Unfortunately, little is known of their relationship, and few avenues exist by which to illumine its nature.[3] In the twenty-fourth ode of the first book of Horace's *Carmina*, however, one such avenue exists. Here Horace pens a complex consolatory poem addressed to Vergil following the death of their friend Quintilius Varus.[4] As he does throughout his lyric corpus, Horace shares the ode with his readers, but also addresses it to one reader in particular, in this instance, Vergil. As a result, the relationship between the poem's narrative persona and addressee offers the perceptive reader insight into Horace and Vergil's friendship and the philosophy that informed it.

In this paper, I argue that this dual audience creates a dual purpose for the ode. On the one hand, Horace aims to cure Vergil of his excessive mourning with Epicurean therapy; on the

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[1] For consideration of the philosophical underpinnings in both Horace and Vergil, see Armstrong, introduction to *Vergil, Philodemus, and the Augustans*.

[2] Thomas, *Virgil and the Augustan Reception*, 55-73 argues that Horace and Vergil were merely acquaintances, not close friends.

[3] For considerations of their friendship, see Campbell "*Animae Dimidium Meae*: Horace's Tribute to Vergil,"314-318 and Duckworth, "*Animae Dimidium Meae*: Two Poets of Rome," 281-316.

[4] For recent work on the addressee in lyric poetry, see Culler, "Apostrophe," 135-54 and Waters, *Poetry's Touch*. For the function of the addressee in Horace's Odes, see Barchiesi "*Carmina Odes.*"

other, he attempts to counter Cicero's caricatures of Epicurean friendships.[5] These two objectives

intertwine, as Horace's practice of Epicurean therapy within the poem paints a picture that coun-

ters Cicero's faulty representation of Epicurean friendships. With reference to the ode's explicit

audience, Horace attempts to curb Vergil's grief by reminding him that death is unconquerable

and frank friends remain. More specifically, Horace suggests his own merit as a friend by prac-

ticing active friendship through the poem. With reference to the implicit audience, Horace pro-

vides his readers with a disanalogy to Cicero's anti-Epicurean caricatures by coloring his portrait

of friendship with mercantile language. Although Cicero used commercial analogies to suggest

that Epicurean friendships were selfish and dehumanizing, Horace subverts Cicero's critiques

with metaphors that engage his language, yet counter his conclusions. Offering a vindication of

the Epicurean relationship, Horace illuminates for his readers important aspects of his friendship

with Vergil. *Odes* 1.24 may thus be read as both a demonstration and defense of Epicurean

friendship.

Before more carefully examining the poem itself, let us briefly consider its context. *Odes*

1.24 was published in 23 B.C. as a part of the first book of Horace's *Carmina.* Horace likely

wrote the poem in the mid-20s B.C., after the death of Quintilius Varus of Cremona, a friend to

Vergil and Horace alike. As Michael Putnam points out, the ode conflates the genres of *epicedi-*

um and *consolatio,* of lamentation for Quintilius and condolence for Vergil.[6] These two genres

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[5] The bibliography on Cicero's anti-Epicureanism is extensive. For a summary of Cicero's role as the chief voice against Epicureanism in antiquity, see Nicgorski, "Cicero, Citizenship, and the Epicurean Temptation.".See also Stokes,"Cicero on Epicurean Pleasures," Striker, "Epicurean Hedonism," Griffin, "Philosophy, Politics and Politicians," Maslowski, "The Chronology of Cicero's Anti-Epicureanism," 55-78. Cicero's specific distaste for the pleasure calculus appears in *In Pisonem passim*, *Pro Sestio* 23, 138-39, and *Pro Caelio* 39-42.

[6] Putnam, "The Languages of Horace *Odes* 1.24," 123; for similar treatment of the rhetoric of consolation in 1.24, see Pasquali, *Orazio lirico*, 249-57.

roughly divide the poem in half—the first half is dirge, the second is consolation. Akbar Khan argues that the ode's first half mimics an actual dirge written by Vergil.[7] Aside from generic elements, the poem has an "almost critical tone," which Philip Thibodeau argues Epicurean *parrhesia,* or frank criticism, underpins.[8] Our understanding of frank criticism comes primarily from Philodemus's treatise on the subject,[9] which was recovered from Herculaneum, the site of the Epicurean school he led.[10] As the editors of a recent edition of Philodemus's text state in their introduction, for Epicurean communities, frankness proves to be the *sine qua non* of true friendship:[11]

> Reform of character is requisite for progress in wisdom and requires the correction of errors and passions. The Epicurean ideal of fellowship and mutual aid demanded, accordingly, the active participation of friends in the evaluation and correction of one another.[12]

In *Odes* 1.24, Horace conflates eulogy, consolation, and therapy. As a result, Vergil occupies three roles: he is the addressee in a dirge, the recipient of consolation, and the patient undergoing therapy.[13]

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[7] Khan, "Horace's Ode to Vergil," 73-84.

[8] Thibodeau, "Can Vergil Cry?," 244; for further analysis of the poem's the parrhesiatic tone, see Armstrong, "Be Angry and Sin Not," 97-99.

[9] *PHerc.* 1471, entitled *peri parrhesias*. For a general introduction, see Konstan et al., *Philodemus On Frank Criticism*, 1-24.

[10] A former pupil of Zeno of Sidon, the scholarch of Athens' Epicurean school, Philodemus was known for the breadth of his learning; e.g. Cicero's F*in.* 2.119; *Fam.* 15.16.1, 15.19.2; *Acad.* 1.5; *Tusc.* 4.7.

[11] For an outline of the nine features that distinguish Epicurean interpersonal therapy, see Armstrong, "The Adressees of the Ars Poetica,"193-4 and Nussbaum, "Therapeutic Arguments," 31-74.

[12] Konstan et al., *Philodemus on Frank Criticism,* 6.

[13] These roles are not mutually exclusive. In *Vatican Sayings* 66, Epicurus says, "we sympathize with our friends, not through lamentation, but through thoughtful concern"(συμπαθῶμεν τοῖς φίλοις οὐ θρηνοῦντες ἀλλὰ φροντίζοντες). Horace conflates these personae in such a way as to sympathize with Vergil and simultaneously show him his error.

Although commentators have noted the ode's Epicurean milieu, only a few consider its portrayal of the inner workings of an Epicurean friendship.[14] These scholars explain the ode's latent Epicurean content and tone via Quintilius's and Vergil's known Epicurean ties. Together they constitute half of a well-attested Roman Epicurean community whose other two members were L. Varius Rufus and Plotius Tucca.[15] Although Horace's own Epicurean leanings are well known, his participation in this community is less certain.[16] There is some evidence to suggest that Horace was a member of this small group of Roman Epicureans. For example, in *Sat.* 1.5 and 1.10, Horace names Plotius, Varius, and Vergil his "candid" friends. Additionally, Saint Jerome considers Horace a part of this Epicurean community in Italy.[17] Whether or not he was a fully participating member of the group, however, it is beyond dispute that Horace was at least acquainted with this coterie and its mentor, Philodemus of Gadara. Although Horace only names Philodemus at *Sat.* 1.2.121, the philosopher's influence is felt throughout the *Satires* and *Odes,*

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[14] For bibliography, see Putnam, "The Languages of Horace *Odes* 1.24," 123 n. 1 and Thibodeau, "Can Vergil Cry," 243 n. 1. For various commentators' readings, see Commager, *The Odes of Horace*, 287-90, Khan, "Horace's Ode to Vergil," Nisbet and Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace* Odes *Book 1*, 279-89, Lowrie, "Lyric's 'Elegos' and the Aristotelian Mean," 377-394, Putnam, "The Languages of Horace *Odes* 1.24," and West, *Horace Odes I. Carpe Diem*, 112-15.

[15] For a detailed account of the sources that attest their foursome, see Thibodeau, "Can Vergil Cry?," 248; For further discussion of a Roman Epicurean quartet, see Armstrong, introduction to *Vergil, Philodemus, and the Augustans*, 2-3; for Philodemus' papyri (*P.Herc*. Paris. 2, *P.Herc*. 1082, and *P.Herc*. 253) that name Vergil, Quintilius, Varius, and Plotius as adressees, see Sider, *The Epigrams of Philodemus*,19-21; for discussion of the papyri, see Gigante and Capasso, "Il ritorno di Virgilio a Ercolano."

[16] For the position that Horace was merely an acquaintance of the quartette, see Oberhelman and Armstrong, "Satire as Poetry," and Gigante 1995.THIS IS NOT IN BIBLIOGRPHY

[17] In his *Chronicon,* under the heading of the Roman year 27, in the 190th Olympiad, Jerome writes: "The poets Varius and Tucca, companions of Vergil and Horace, are considered illustrious, who later corrected the book of the *Aeneid* under this condition: that they added nothing" (*Varius et Tucca, Vergilii et Horatii contubernales, poetae habentur illustres, qui Aeneidum libros postea emendaverunt sub lege ea, ut nihil adderent*). For *contubernales* as a Roman term for Epicurean friendship, see DeWitt, "Parresiastic Poems of Horace,"55-63.

including in *Odes* 1.24's parrhesiatic tenor. [18]The historical context of *Odes* 1.24 places it square-ly within the Epicurean tradition.

FRIENDSHIP'S DEMONSTRATION

Having laid the groundwork for this study, let us turn first to elucidate the ode's function as consolatory therapy and then to consider how Horace's picture of his relationship with Vergil counters Cicero's depictions of Epicurean friendship. As noted above, Epicurean frank criticism informs the ode's tone and function. David Armstrong, building upon the work of Martha Nussbaum, outlines nine features necessary for frank speech to function as a means of therapy within Epicurean relationships. [19] Among other requisites, Armstrong points out that *parrhesia* must "be 'individual-relative' rather than based on community values."[20] That is, Horace must address Vergil's particular grief and how to rectify its excess, rather than parade more general Roman ideas on the proper time, place, and extent of mourning. Horace fashions *Odes* 1.24 to be indi-vidual-relative by speaking to Vergil as an author and as a reader. Addressing Vergil the author, Horace steeps his parrhesiatic *consolatio* in Vergilian language and imagery. Addressing Vergil the reader, Horace alludes to a Catullan poem on the death of a loved one as well as to a previous ode concerning Vergil. This thick intertextual *nexus* cements the ode in a more private setting, while simultaneously offering the careful reader a glimpse of Epicurean therapy at work.

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[18] For the influence of frank criticism, see De Witt , "Parresiastic Poems of Horace,"1935: 312-19 and Freudenburg, *1993The Walking Muse*,: 88-90. For the influence of poetic theory, see Oberhelman and Armstrong , "Satire as Poet-ry1995,": 233-54. For the position that Horace was never a student of Philodemus, see Tsakiropoulou-Summers , "Horace, Philodemus and the Epicureans at Herculaneum,"1998: 20-29.

[19] Nussbaum , "Therapeutic Arguments,"1986: 31-74.

[20] Armstrong, "The Adressees of the Ars Poetica," 193-4.

As Father Owen Lee astutely points out, *Odes* 1.24 "is giving Virgil Virgilian consolation" through extensive allusion to Vergil's own corpus.[21] For example, Horace opens *Odes* 1.24 with the direct question, "What shame or limit should there be for the longing of one so loved?" (*Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus / tam cari capitis,* 1-2).[22] Michael Putnam points out that *pudor* and *modus*—shame and limit—are principal themes throughout Vergil's oeuvre.[23] Horace marks their significance in this poem by returning to both terms as the poem continues. First, in the next stanza Horace personifies *Pudor* (6):

> ergo Quintilium perpetuus sopor
> urget, cui <u>Pudor</u> et Iustitiae soror
> incorrupta Fides nudaque Veritas
>   quando ullum inveniet parem?
> *Odes* 1.24.5-8

> [So, everlasting slumber oppresses Quintilius. When will <u>Shame</u> and uncorrupted Faith, the sister of Justice, and naked Truth find anyone equal to him?]

Unlike the normative quality above, here shame is a goddess who personifies one of Quintilius's many virtues.[24] Next, the noun *modus* (1) evolves into the verb *moderere* (14) in the heart of the fourth stanza. This entire stanza and the beginning of the following stanza are saturated with Vergilian language:

> Quid si Threicio blandius Orpheo
> auditam moderere arboribus fidem?
> Num uanae redeat sanguis imagini,

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[21] Owen Lee, *Word, Sound, and Image,*" 84.

[22] Unless otherwise noted, Latin texts are those of Garrison, *Epodes and Odes* and translations are my own. For interpreting the subjunctive as "should" instead of "could," see Commager, *The Odes of Horace*: 288 and Putnam, "The Languages of Horace *Odes* 1.24,"126.

[23] Putnam, "The Language of Horace *Odes* 1.24," 126.

[24] For the role shame plays in the climax of the Dido episode in *Aeneid* 4, see Santirocco, *Unity and Design,*59 and Putnam, "The Languages of Horace *Odes* 1.24,"129 n15.

        quam uirga semel horrida,

    non lenis precibus fata recludere,
    nigro compulerit Mercurius gregi?
    Odes 1.24.13-18

    [What if you should pluck the lyre-string heard by trees more beautifully
    than Thracian Orpheus? The blood wouldn't return to the empty shade,
    which Mercury, who does not easily open the fates to prayers, has herded
    with his horrid wand once and for all into his black herd, would it?]

These stanzas offer an extended allusion to Vergil's Orpheus myths in *Georgics* 4 and *Aeneid* 6.[25]

First, the opening of the fifth stanza, *non lenis <u>precibus fata recludere</u>* (17), echoes, in both lan-

guage and theme, *Georg* 4.470: *nesciaque humanis <u>precibus</u> mansuescere corda* ("hearts that

know not how to soften at humanity's prayers"). Second, the initial description of Orpheus close-

ly parallels Vergil's description of him at *Aeneid* 6.119-20: *si potuit <u>manis</u> arcessere coniugis*

Orpheus / <u>Threicia</u> fretus cithara <u>fidibusque</u> conoris ("if Orpheus was able to summon his wife's

shade, trusting his Thracian lyre and melodious strings").[26] These Orphic references advance

both the ode's *parrhesia* and its consolation. As frank criticism, the *Georgic* episode reminds

Vergil, as David West points out, that "even the great Orpheus, as you [Vergil] know better than

anyone, failed to bring Eurydice back to life";[27] the allusion to *Aeneid* 6 suggests to Vergil that

even *pius Aeneas* may only enter the realm of the dead, not return the dead to life.[28] As consola-

tion, however, Horace recalls some of Vergil's most beautiful poetry, reminding him that, like

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[25] For further commentary on the allusion, see West, *Horace Odes I. Carpe Diem*,113 and Putnam, "The Languages of Horace *Odes* 1.24," 129.

[26] Putnam, The Languages of Horace *Odes* 1.24," 130; for a quick argument supporting Horace's knowledge of at least parts of the *Aeneid* before its publication, see p. 129 n15.

[27] West, *Horace Odes I. Carpe Diem,*113.

[28] Compare *pius Aeneus* to the description of Vergil in line 11, *frustra pius.*

Orpheus, although unable to recall a dead friend, he remains a masterful poet.[29] By alluding to

Vergil's corpus, Horace addresses Vergil *qua* poet in order to ensure that the ode is individual-

relative.

Horace also appeals to Vergil as a reader. To this end, Horace references both Catullus's

and his own poetry.[30] As poets, both Horace and Vergil have a predilection to read and absorb

their poetic forebears. One of the previous generation's most well-known poets, Catullus offers

Horace a common point of reference by which to console Vergil. In his ninety-sixth poem, Catul-

lus addresses his fellow poet Calvus, who is grieving over the death of his wife Quintilia.[31] As

consolation, Catullus suggests that poetry can reach beyond the grave and affect the dead:

> Si quicquam mutis gratum acceptumque sepulcris
>
> accidere a nostro, Calve, dolore potest,
> quo desiderio veteres renovamus amores
>
> atque olim missas flemus amicitias,
> certe non tanto mors immatura dolori est
>
> Quintiliae, quantum gaudet amore tuo.
> Catullus 96
>
> [If it is possible that anything pleasing and acceptable can befall silent
> graves because of our grief, Calvus, by which longing we renew old loves
> and lament lost friendships, certainly a premature death is not so much a
> sadness for Quintilia as her rejoicing in your love.]

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[29] For this reading, see Putnam, "The Languages of Horace *Odes* 1.24," 129, Owen Lee, *Word, Sound, and Image*, 86-9, and Commager, *The Odes of Horace: A Critical Study* 289-90.

[30] Putnam, "The Languages of Horace *Odes* 1.24,": passim. For an examination of Catullus 96, see Davis, "*Quo Desiderio*," 297-302.

[31] Whether Quintilia was his mistress or wife remains open to debate. I follow Lyne, *Collected Papers on Latin Poetry*, 74.

The opening of *Odes* 1.24, *Quis desiderio* (1), recalls Catullus's *quo desiderio* of line 3, suggesting that Vergil's lamentation of Quintilius's death echoes Calvus's grief over Quintilia's.[32] Yet Horace "will not play Catullus to Vergil's Calvus."[33] Although he begins his ode similarly to Catullus, Horace ends on a much different note:

> durum; sed levius fit patentia
>   quicquid corrigere est nefas
> *Odes* 1.24.19-20
>
> [It is hard; but whatever is forbidden to correct becomes easier to bear
> with patience.]

Unlike Catullus, Horace regards the afterlife as "forbidden" (*nefas*). If Khan is correct in thinking that the poem's first ten lines mimic Vergil's actual dirge to Quintilius, it would be natural to assume that Vergil's *epicedium* echoed Catullus's sentiments. Under that interpretation, one could interpret the ending as saying it is forbidden to think that a deceased loved one can hear or respond to one's grief. Using Catullus as *comparandum*, Horace attempts to remind Vergil either that raising the dead is impious folly, or that poetry has its limits—it cannot cross death's threshold.

Horace extends this idea with a further allusion aimed at Vergil the reader. This time, however, Horace uses an "internal self-reference" that recalls one of his previous odes.[34] In *Odes*

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[32] Putnam, "The Languages of Horace *Odes* 1.24," 125 suggests that the similarity in name is not purely accidental and extends Horace's allusion.

[33] Ibid., 126.

[34] Such an "internal self-reference" sends the reader to a work within that author's corpus, rather than to another author. See Thomas, "Virgil's Georgics," 190.

1.24, Horace uses a banking metaphor to recall *Odes* 1.3, a *propempticon* or bon-voyage poem to

Vergil.[35] In the heart of Horace's ode,[36] he describes the deceased Quintilius as *non ita creditum*:

> Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit,
> nulli flebilior quam tibi, Vergili.
> Tu frustra pius, heu, non ita creditum
>   poscis Quintilium deos.
> *Odes* 1.24.9-12

> [He died mourned by many good men, but mourned by none more than by
> you, Vergil. You, uselessly pious, ask the gods for Quintilius, alas! not en-
> trusted on those terms.]

The force of *ita* suggests a referent, yet the poem itself offers none. Within the *Odes*, however,

one finds only one other instance of *creditum*—in *Odes* 1.3: *navis, quae tibi creditum / debes*

Vergilium ("O ship that owes Vergil, entrusted to you," 5-6).[37] The reference is not only linguis-

tic, but also structural. The *creditum* and *Quintilium* of 1.24 lie in the same basic metrical *sedes,*

or positions, (¯ ˘ ¯ / ¯ ¯ ¯ ˘ ˘ ¯) as the *creditum* and *Vergilium* of 1.3:[38]

>   nauis, quae tibi <u>creditum</u>
> debes <u>Vergilium</u>; finibus Atticis
> *Odes* 1.3.5-6

> Tu frustra pius, heu, non ita <u>creditum</u>
>   poscis <u>Quintilium</u> deos.
> *Odes* 1.24.11-2

The *non ita creditum* of 1.24 clearly recalls *Odes* 1.3 via their shared banking metaphor.

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[35] For detailed bibliography, see Elder, "Horace, C., I, 3," 140 and Basto, "Horaces Proemption to Vergil," 30.

[36] Note the shift from *flebilis* to *flebilior,* and see Armstrong, "Be Angry and Sin Not," 79-121 on the Epicurean al-
lowance of emotion but prohibition of emotional excesses.

[37] See *OLD* s.v. 1.a; and cf. *Odes* 2.4, 2.8, 2.13, 2.19, 3.5, 3.27 and 4.9 for other instances of the verb *credo*.

[38] Though the two poems are in slightly different meters; 1.3 is in Second Asclepiadean, while 1.24 is in Third As-
clepiadean.

In order to situate the precise meaning of Horace's metaphor, let us briefly consider its context in Roman banking language. In his *Theory of Credit,* Henry Macleod describes the origins of banking in Rome.[39] Banking began with simple currency exchange in the Forum Romanum, operated by private citizens called *argentarii*. Over time, "it became the custom of private persons to deposit their money with them for the mere purpose of security."[40] The deposited money was termed a *depositum.* This form of banking stands in contrast with a *creditum.* A participial form of the verb *credo* ("entrust")*,*[41] *creditum* is a more archaic term for a deposit and was eventually replaced by the term *mutuum*.[42] Macleod describes how one transacts a *creditum*: "the persons who placed their money with the *argentarius* as a *creditum* lost all the property in it, and acquired only a credit, debt, or right of action in exchange for it."[43] Horace uses the archaic participle *creditum* to create a complex metaphorical scenario that links *Odes* 1.3 to 1.24. In order to illumine the import of the metaphor in 1.24, then, we must first consider its referent in 1.3.

The commercial language in *Odes* 1.3's second stanza portrays Horace as a creditor seeking repayment of the loaned Vergil from an indebted ship:[44]

> nauis, quae tibi creditum
> debes Vergilium finibus Atticis
>   reddas incolumem precor
> et serues animae dimidium meae.
> *Odes* 1.3.5-8

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[39] Macleod, *The Theory of Credit*, 349-68.

[40] Ibid., 349.

[41] For examples, see Sall. C. 25.4; Liv. 6.15.5, 6.27.3, 8.28.3; Sen. Ben. 2.34.1; and Quint. 5.10.105, 5.10.117.

[42] For a Glossary of Roman banking terminology, see THIS IS NOT IN BIBLIOGRAPHYAndreau 1999: xii-xvi. Unfortunately, he does not list or discuss *creditum* or its cognate verb form, *credo*.

[43] Macleod, *The Theory of Credit*, 350.

[44] Garrison, *Epodes and Odes*, 207.

[O ship that owes Vergil, entrusted to you, may you return him unharmed
to Attic shores, I pray, and preserve the other half of my soul.]

The first line of the stanza represents Vergil as on loan to the ship (*navis, quae tibi creditum,* 5);

then, in the last line, Horace famously describes Vergil as "the other half of my soul" (*animae*

dimidium meae, 8). Both *creditum* and *dimidium* describe the proper noun *Vergilium.* This stan-

za-long chiasmus (*tibi creditum ... Vergilium ... dimidium meae*) verbally pictures Horace's de-

sire for his friend's safety (*incolumem,* 7) and return (*reddas,* 7), as *tibi* and the possessive *meae*

create a tension between Horace and the ship. Placing the metaphor in the situation that Macleod

describes, we can better understand Horace's implication:

> "the banker [i.e. the ship] buys the money [Vergil] from his customer [Ho-
> race]: and in exchange for it, he gives his customer a credit in his books,
> which is a right of action to demand back [*debes*] an equivalent amount of
> money [in this case, that he be "intact"]."[45]

Horace's metaphor is not a *depositum*; it is a *creditum.* The stanza's concluding epithet, *animae*

dimidium meae, completes the banking metaphor. T. V. Buttrey has demonstrated that *dimidium*

pictures Vergil as a "halved coin circulating so abundantly at the time this Ode was composed."[46]

Horace imagines and represents Vergil as money on loan as a *creditum.* The ship now holds half

of Horace's soul. This metaphor illustrates the depth of their separation and the cause of Horace's

prayer.

Understanding the referent in *Odes* 1.3 illuminates the meaning of the initially ambiguous

banking metaphor in 1.24. For example, compare Vergil's roles in the two metaphors. In 1.3,

Vergil is the loaned object; in 1.24, the creditor. Horace shifts him from the direct object (*Vergili-*

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[45] Macleod, *The Theory of Credit*, 357.

[46] Buttrey, "Halved Coins," 47 outlines Augustus' monetary reform, in which he institutionalized halved *asses*, cut from newly defined *dupondii*, as currency. Buttrey considers Horace's metaphor as a key literary attestation of this monetary phenomenon.

um, 1.3.5) to the subject (*Tu,* 1.24.11). As in 1.3, Horace is here concerned with Vergil and the theme of separation from a friend. This time, however, the separation is permanent. Although Vergil "asks the gods for Quintilius" (*poscis Quintilium deos,* 12), the "loan" is not such that any price can repay it (*non ita creditum,* 11), revealing that Quintilius's death was not actually a loan at all. [47] Whereas in the beginning of the poem Horace treats Quintilius's death euphemistically (*perpetuus sopor,* 1.24.5), with the banking metaphor Horace reiterates that blood, and therefore life, will not "return to the empty shade" (*vanae redeat sanguis imagini,* 15). Here lies the thrust of the *ita* in line 11—Horace means to remind Vergil that, unlike his previous departure from Horace, Quintilius's separation cannot be remedied.

As we have seen, Horace frames much of his therapeutic criticism with allusions to Vergil's own work, to one of Catullus's poems, and to Horace's earlier ode concerning Vergil. These references help to cement the poem in a shared personal context, a key to Epicurean *parrhesia.* Commentators have noted that Horace's advice conforms to the standard elements of the *consolatio* genre: "that mourning is pointless, death irrevocable, and fortitude the best relief."[48] Yet by couching his admonition in familiar allusions, Horace transforms consolatory poetry into Epicurean therapy.

The therapeutic function of the ode sheds light on an aspect of Horace and Vergil's friendship. We noted at the outset that the relationship between the poem's narrative persona and the addressee could represent their friendship. What, then, is Horace's persona in this poem? If

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[47] *Creditum* shifts the meaning of *poscis* from the realm of pleading to the marketplace, where Vergil is attempting to buy back Quintilius. See Lewis and Short THIS IS NOT CITEDentry for *posco* II.C.2.

[48] Nisbet and Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace* Odes *Book 1*, 281. For the reading of this ode as *consolatio,* see Nisbet and Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace Odes Book 1*, 280-1 and Putnam, "The Languages of Horace *Odes* 1.24,"130.

the ode is an instance of frank criticism, then surely the narrative persona is an Epicurean thera-

pist. At first glance, however, there appears to be no room for Horace, with Vergil as creditor

seeking the Quintilius from the gods. As further consolation for Vergil's grief, Horace demon-

strates his virtue as a friend through the action of the poem. In response to the question, "when

will [the goddesses] find anyone equal to him?" (*cui … quando ullum inveniet parem,* 1.24.6,8),

Horace subtly reminds Vergil that he is a friend capable of being Quintilius's equal. The poem

itself demonstrates that Horace is willing and able to offer frank criticism when needed.

If frankness is the quintessential quality of Epicurean friendships, then Quintilius himself

is the quintessential friend.[49] For proof, one need not look beyond Horace's corpus. First, the

phrase *nuda Veritas* (7) in *Odes* 1.24 captures the meaning of the Greek term *parrhesia,*[50] as both

terms denote blunt honesty. Along with shame, faith, and justice, frankness is one of Quintilius's

primary virtues. Second, Horace references Quintilius's oft-used imperative *corrigere* (correct

it!) to conclude 1.24, reminding Vergil of Quintilius's literary frankness.[51] In his *Ars Poetica,*

Horace recalls how Quintilius would reduce lines of poetry to rubble with this single word, al-

ways willing to offer his critical, but desired opinion. Finally, at *Sat*. 1.5.40-42, Quintilius,

Vergil, and Plotius are described as *candidiores,* "which underscores both their charm *and* their

frankness."[52] By practicing the very art that defined so much of Quintilius's character, Horace

deftly positions himself as the friend that Vergil can receive and has received from the gods. Thi-

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[49] Thibodeau, "Can Vergil Cry?," 251.

[50] For *veritas* and *candor* as Latin translations of *parrhesia,* see DeWitt, "Parresiastic Poems of Horace," 313-4.

[51] See *AP* 438-44 and *Odes* 1.24.20. This word is a further point of reference, revealing Horace surreptitiously slid-
ing into Quintilius' role.

[52] Thibodeau, "Can Vergil Cry?," 251.

bodeau sums up Horace's appropriation of Quintilius's role as parrhesiatic therapist:

> Vergil's original complaint was that he would never find Quintilius' equal in the categories of modesty, trust, fairness, and frankness. Yet without openly saying so, Horace has demonstrated that Vergil's complaint has no basis: the remarkable traits of modesty, trustworthiness, a sense of what is right, and, above all, frankness, are all traits Horace displays in spades in this poem.[53]

While mourning Quintilius's lost friendship, Vergil must not forget the *dimidium* who remains his friend.

FRIENDSHIP'S DEFENSE

In *Odes* 1.24, Horace represents his bond with Vergil in its truest form: one friend openly correcting another in a spirit of good will. The primary purpose of the ode is to cure Vergil, the ode's primary audience, of his excessive mourning with Epicurean therapy. Through the poem's persona, Horace practices frank criticism, thus picturing a vital aspect of his friendship with Vergil. A question remains, however: Why publish this ode if it were meant solely to help Vergil? Philodemus advises Epicureans to practice frank criticism among peers, "not in the presence of all."[54] There seems little reason for Horace to make this *parrhesia* public unless the ode has another, secondary purpose. In order to illumine this other function, we must focus our attention on the ode's other audience—Horace's general readership.

I contend that Horace presents an active picture of his and Vergil's relationship in order to counter Cicero's caricatures of Epicurean friendship. Aside from picturing his point about death

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[53] Ibid., 255.

[54] Fr. 82 (=85 N). For text and translation, see Konstan et al., *Philodemus On Frank Criticism*,87.

and mourning, Horace uses language taken from the marketplace to subvert Cicero's critiques, which had used mercantile language to suggest that Epicurean friendships were selfish and dehumanizing. By engaging with Cicero's language, Horace enters the debate over the merit of the Epicurean form of *amicitia.*

To tease out Horace's subtle intertextual conversation with Cicero, we must first assess Cicero's arguments against Epicurean friendship. Writing a generation before Horace, Cicero frequently lampoons the Epicureans and their strange practices. Indeed, standard Roman *mores* led many Romans to reject Epicureanism. For example, Plutarch and Seneca wrote extensive polemics against Epicurus and his followers, although they infrequently consider Epicurean friendship itself. One of Epicureanism's most dogged critics, Plutarch examines Epicurean friendship only once.[55] Seneca discusses Epicurean friendship explicitly in his Ninth Epistle, and, like nearly all ancient critics, his rejection of Epicureanism centers on its hedonist calculus: "that which you describe is business, not friendship" (*ista, quam tu describis, negotiatio est, non amicitia, Ep.* 9.10). Cicero, however, often criticizes Epicurean relationships. His stature as an author and thinker, even in Horace's time, makes him paradigmatic of Roman anti-Epicureans.

For his part, Cicero faulted Epicurean friendship for two related reasons: it objectifies the friend, and it promotes selfishness. Both criticisms are presented throughout his corpus using mercantile language. As Dan Hanchey points out, Cicero consistently associates Epicureans and practical measuring:

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[55] *Adv. Colot.* 1111B: "he chooses friends for the pleasure he gets, but says that he assumes the greatest pains on their behalf." For his consideration of other Epicurean relations, see *De. frat. amore* 487d and *De latenter vivendo* 1129A, where Plutarch mentions that Epicurus honored his deceased brothers; at *Non posse* 1097E, he discusses the female members of the Garden. None of these reports are presented in a positive light.

> In *De Orat*. 3.285, *Fin*. 2.58, and *Fin*. 5.93, the Epicureans are described as measuring on a calculus of pleasure (*voluptas*); at *Fin*. 2.85 they measure by profit and payment (*emolumentum* and *mercedes*); in *Leg*. 1.41, they measure by their own benefit (*sua commoda*); in *Nat. Deor*. 1.113 they use their stomachs (*venter*) to measure.[56]

Cicero sees insufficiencies in measurement based on any of these standards when assessing value in a social context such as friendship. A friendship founded on measuring necessarily objectifies the friend, reducing him to benefits received. Measuring friendships also leads to selfishness, as each friend will quantify the benefits likely to be received in order to weigh the health of the friendship as a whole. Cicero often uses the language of mercantile measurement to satirize Epicurean relationships:[57]

> quam si ad fructum nostrum referemus, non ad illius commoda, quem diligemus, non erit ista amicitia, sed mercatura quaedam utilitatum suarum.
> *Nat. Deor*. 1.122
>
> [If we will refer it to our own benefit, and not to the advantage of another, whom we esteem, then this will not be friendship, but some mercantile calculation of its own utility.]

This quote summarizes Cicero's view of Epicureans—unlike true friendship that seeks benefits *for* the other, Epicurean friends seek benefits *from* one another.[58]

Various characters in Cicero's dialogues attempt to defend Epicurean friendship. For example, in *De finibus*, the Epicurean Torquatus attempts to justify the Epicurean conceptions of

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[56] Hanchey, "Commercial Exchange." I am grateful to Dr. Hanchey for allowing me to read his forthcoming paper.

[57] Epicurus is named shortly following this passage in 1.123: "But still Epicurus' book concerns sanctity" (At etiam liber est Epicuri de sanctitate).

[58] O'Connor, "The Invulnerable Pleasures of Epicurean Friendship," 177-81, suggests that at the heart of nearly all Roman criticism of Epicurean friendship is the view that it is necessarily ignoble and lacks virility.

friendship by pointing out that Epicureans make a pact to ensure equity in the relationship. Cicero will have none of it:

> Posuisti etiam dicere alios foedus quoddam inter se facere sapientis, ut,
> quem ad modum sint in se ipsos animati, eodem modo sint erga amicos;
> … an vero, si fructibus et emolumentis et utilitatibus amicitias colemus, si
> nulla caritas erit, quae faciat amicitiam ipsam sua sponte, vi sua, ex se et
> propter se expetendam, dubium est, quin fundos et insulas amicis anteponamus?
> *Fin*. 2.83

> [You proposed that some (Epicureans) say that wise men make some pact
> among themselves in order to be disposed toward their friends just as they
> are toward themselves. … But if we cultivate friendships for benefits,
> gains, and utility, and if there is no charity that produces friendship of its
> own accord and by its own force, to be sought from and for its own sake,
> then is there any question that we would prefer estates and apartment
> buildings to friends?]

Cicero questions how Torquatus's pact could produce the charity "that produces friendship itself of its own accord" (*quae faciat amicitiam ipsam sua sponte*) and simultaneously avoid a selfish desire for "benefits, gains, and utility" (*fructibus et emolumentis et utilitatibus*). Once again, Cicero utilizes commercial imagery to suggest that Epicurean friends will always, in the end, place one another on the same level as real estate—a means to an end.

In his most succinct critique of the Epicurean ideal of friendship, Cicero crystallizes his mercantile depictions of Epicureans through the world of banking. In a dialogue on the topic of friendship, Cicero compares Epicurean friendship, which is sought for the "hope of profit" (*spe mercedis*), to lending good deeds at interest (*beneficium faeneramur*):

> Ut enim benefici liberalesque sumus, non ut exigamus gratiam (neque
> enim beneficium faeneramur sed natura propensi ad liberalitatem sumus),
> sic amicitiam non spe mercedis adducti sed quod omnis eius fructus in
> ipso amore inest, expetendam putamus. Ab his qui pecudum ritu ad voluptatem omnia referunt longe dissentiunt.

Laelius 31

> [For just as we do not do good and show generosity so that we may extract favor (for we do not lend good deeds at interest, but are naturally prone to generosity), so too we think friendship should be sought not because we are drawn by a hope for profit, but because its every benefit is contained in love itself. These ideas differ sharply from the ideas of those who, in the manner of cattle, base everything on pleasure.]

The implication of this banking metaphor is clear: Epicureans treat friendship like an investment.[59] Whereas commercial exchange, by definition, takes into account some measurement of utility, one ought to engage in friendship only for its own sake. Epicurean friendship is base precisely because it is sought for the sake of an external benefit.

Yet one may reasonably ask whether Cicero's caricature conforms to Epicurus's own picture of his followers' friendships. A number of Epicurus's *Vatican Sayings* (*VS*) deal with friendship. Let us consider only three. At the conclusion of *VS* 28, Epicurus says, "it is necessary to risk some pleasure for the pleasures of friendship."[60] Contrary to Cicero's account, where Epicurean friends are "drawn by a hope for profit"(*Laelius* 31), Epicurus admits that friendship is likely to bring pain, yet is still desirable. Cicero also faults the Epicureans for their supposed selfish desire for "benefits, gains, and utility" (*Fin*. 2.83). In *VS* 34, however, Epicurus clearly states, "the use of friends is not that they are useful, but that we can trust in their usefulness."[61] It is not a desire for utility that draws us to our friends, even if our trust in their continued utility

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[59] Seneca uses a banking motif throughout *Ep. 9* when speaking directly to Lucilius: "that I may pay my debt at once and square the account, so far as this letter is concerned" (*ut statim tibi solvam, quod debeo, et quantum ad hanc epistulam paria faciamus, Ep.* 9.6); "put it down to my credit, though I have already wiped out my debt for the present day" (*quam tu boni consule, etiam si hunc diem iam expunxi, Ep.* 9.20). This may be a play on the same motif seen here.

[60] δεῖ δὲ καὶ παρακινδυνεῦσαι χάριν, χάριν φίλιας. All of Epicurus' Greek text and translation are from Monadnock Press, trans. Peter Saint-Andre.

[61] οὐκ οὕτως χρείαν ἔχομεν τῆς χρείας <τῆς> παρὰ τῶν φίλων ὡς τῆς πίστεως τῆς περὶ τῆς χρείας.

helps perpetuate our relationship. These two statements put a considerable dent in Cicero's account of Epicurean friendship. Yet perhaps the most telling of Epicurus's dicta defines what a friend is not:

> A friend is not one who is constantly seeking some benefit, nor one who never connects friendship with utility; for the former trades kindness for compensation, while the latter cuts off all hope for the future.[62]
> *Vatican Sayings* 39

In the first phrase, Epicurus offers a picture of friendship that is explicitly contrary to Cicero's account: "A friend is not one who is constantly seeking some benefit." In the second phrase, however, Epicurus appears to agree with Cicero: "[A friend is not] one who never connects friendship with utility." To reconcile these apparent contradictory statements, one can look to Horace's picture of his friendship with Vergil.

As we attempt to reconstruct Horace's defense, we must proceed with caution because the inter-textual relationship between Horace and Cicero is complex.[63] Rather than a single, direct linguistic reference, Horace offers an extended allusion to Cicero's caricatures throughout both *Odes* 1.24 and 1.3. Horace does not directly echo the specifics of Cicero's language. The content, tone, and themes of *Odes* 1.24, however, place it in conversation with such critical caricatures of Epicurean friendships.

The complexity of the inter-textuality allows for at least two different readings of the evidence. The first, Ciceronian reading interprets Horace's two metaphors as indicative of the Epicureans' base form of friendship. Under such an interpretation, Horace's mercantile language

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[62] οὔθ' ὁ τὴν χρείαν ἐπιζητῶν διὰ παντὸς φίλος, οὔθ' ὁ μηδέποτε συνάπτων· ὁ μὲν γὰρ καπηλεύει τῇ χάριτι τὴν ἀμοιβήν, ὁ δὲ ἀποκόπτει τὴν περὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος εὐελπιστίαν.

[63] Aside from mercantile language, Cicero frequently depicts Epicureans as animals, e.g. *Fin.* 2.110. Horace alludes to Ciceronian parodies of Epicureans in *Ep.* I.4.16, calling himself "a hog of Epicurus' herd" (*Epicuri de grege porcum*).

creates images that both objectify his friend and are self-centered. In 1.24 and its referent 1.3, the cynical reader could find Horace poetically treating persons as objects—Vergil in 1.3 and Quintilius in 1.24 (*creditum,* 1.3.5, 1.24.11). Furthermore, the *dimidium* of 1.3 denotes an objectified, quantified value for Vergil insofar as it portrays him as a halved coin. Taken out of context, the Ciceronian critic may see in these terms Horace reducing his friend to an object to be loaned.

This cynic may also interpret Horace's mercantile language as selfish. Through this lens, Horace's description of Vergil as the *animae dimidium meae* implicitly makes his value dependent upon Horace; that is, Horace defines Vergil's value in relation to himself. As noted above, in 1.3, Horace pictures the struggle for Vergil in a chiasmus that extends across the second stanza (*tibi creditum ... Vergilium ... animae meae*). The Ciceronian reader would argue that Horace does not simply want his friend's safe return; he wants his friend because he desires the accompanying benefits. Likewise, in 1.24, the critic has ample ammunition to condemn Vergil as selfish. By seeking something that cannot and should not be returned, Vergil gives in wholly to his selfishness, thus blinding himself to the necessities of reality.

Such a reading is superficial. Instead of treading with caution, the Ciceronian reader divorces much of Horace's images from their context. Horace does use commercial language, just as Cicero does, but not to criticize Epicurean friendship. He aims instead to paint a picture of a correct, active friendship. On the one hand, his mercantile metaphors situate the poem within the Ciceronian milieu of anti-Epicurean critiques, yet on the other, these images co-opt, rather than adopt, such language in order to counter Cicero's caricatures.

Contrary to Cicero, Horace portrays his Epicurean friendship with Vergil as a relationship in which both friends seek benefits *for* one another. The cynical critic misreads Horace if he finds

his mercantile images of friendship selfish. In 1.24, Quintilius's objectification and Vergil's self-ishness are the result of grief (*nulli flebilior quam tibi, Vergili,* 10). That is the point of Horace's *parrhesia.* Moreover, it is entirely human to want "one so loved" back. In 1.3, Horace does not only seek his own benefit when he prays for Vergil's safe return; he also seeks the continued health of a beloved friend. Furthermore, when Horace calls Vergil "the other half of his soul," he is perhaps objectifying Vergil to a degree, but at the same time he is giving Vergil ownership of half of himself. The picture in *Odes* 1.24 reveals that Horace cares for the emotional well-being of Vergil, sharing in lament for a lost friend and acting for the betterment of another. That Horace wrote a poem to help a friend is itself evidence for the health of his friendship with Vergil. To his general readership, the activity of *Odes* 1.24, when mixed with the mercantile language, presents a counter-analogy to Cicero's underlying argument.

In effect, Horace's portrait of an Epicurean relationship argues that even if Epicurean relationships are based on an exchange of benefits, it is a mutual exchange. That is, exchange drives the relationship, not its effectual benefits. Horace's friendship with Vergil allows him to criticize excessive emotion openly. Their relationship is founded upon the free exchange of ideas between friends. Are there benefits? Of course, but one does not enter into a friendship *for* the benefits, as Cicero claims. We may recall what Epicurus says about the false Epicurean friend: "A friend is not one who is constantly seeking some benefit, nor one who never connects friendship with utility." There is a strange balance to be kept in the practice of Epicurean relationships. One ought not to seek benefit as an end in itself, but to disregard the utility of friendship is likewise foolish. Cicero was correct in thinking that "friendship should be sought not because we are

drawn by a hope for profit, but because its every benefit is contained in love itself." His mistake was to believe that Epicurus and his followers disagreed.

In sum, it appears that something can be discovered concerning the inner workings of Horace's friendship with Vergil. It was a lively, open, honest relationship shared with others of like mind and, in this case, even with the world. The reader senses this relationship through the relationship between the narrative persona and the addressee. The narrative persona of *Odes* 1.24 is Horace the friend and practitioner of Epicurean *parrhesia*; the addressee is Vergil, the grieving poet. Writing for the ode's dual audience, Horace aims to use the poem both to cure Vergil of his excessive mourning and to counter Ciceronian caricatures of Epicurean friendships. To paint a picture of his relationship with Vergil, Horace utilizes his practice of Epicurean therapy to image the proper Epicurean relationship. With the infused color of mercantile language, Horace is able to remind Vergil that death is permanent, but true friends, such as Horace himself, remain. The context, tone, and content of *Odes* 1.24 place it squarely within an evolving Epicurean tradition concerning the practice of friendship. As Horace himself admits, "it is hard" (*durum,* 1.24.19), but if we bank on friendship, we may soon understand, in the words of Epicurus, that "friendship dances around the world, announcing to each of us that we must awaken to happiness."[64]

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[64] ἡ φιλία περιχορεύει τὴν οἰκουμένην κηρύττουσα δὴ πᾶσιν ἡμῖν ἐγείρεσθαι ἐπὶ τὸν μακαρισμόν (*VS* 52).

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