HORACE AND THE MONUMENTS: A NEW
INTERPRETATION OF THE ARCHYTAS ODE (C.I.28)

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HORACE’S Archytas Ode has recently been called “undeniably bizarre in conception but [also] original and imaginative.”1 Criticism of the poem has itself come to a bizarre result. The poem has been read in a variety of mutually exclusive ways as monologue or dialogue, as serious or sarcastic, as about Archytas or some other dead man—including Horace himself. Perhaps the strangest reading is what can fairly be called the standard interpretation of the poem. According to its adherents, the ode is a monologue “spoken by the corpse of a drowned man. First the dead man apostrophizes the great fourth-century B.C. Pythagorean, Archytas of Tarentum, as he lies buried in his grave. Then at 23 he turns to a passing nauta and asks for burial himself. The structure of the poem causes perplexity because we do not know till 21 that the speaker is not Horace but a corpse.” So Nisbet and Hubbard, repeating an interpretation traceable to Weiske and most recently endorsed by Syndikus.2


2Nisbet and Hubbard (above, n. 1) 317–318; cf. B. G. Weiske, “Ueber die 28. Ode im 1. Buche des Horaz,” Jahrbücher für Philologie und Paedagogik 12 (1830) 349–362; H. P. Syndikus, Die Lyrik des Horaz I (Darmstadt 1972) 262–268. Weiske’s interpretation was ridiculed as unworthy of Horace by K. Lehr, Q. Horatius Flaccus (Leipzig 1869) lvi; according to Orelli and Baier, Q. Horatius Flacci I (Zürich 1850–52) 162, Weiske was anticipated by Hottingerus in Programm. Turicc. 1788–89 (not available to me). Despite Lehr’s remarks, Weiske received the overwhelming support of his contemporaries: cf., e.g., the commentaries and articles on the poem by Trompheller (above, n. 1) 804 (“die Beweisführung Weiske’s hat in der That auch eine solche Kraft ... dass seitdem die Ode ziemlich allgemein als ein Monolog aufgefasst wird”); H. Schütz (above, n. 1); G. F. Friedrich, Q. Horatius Flaccus. Philologische Untersuchungen (Leipzig 1894) 31. Perhaps the last holdout for the traditional reading of the poem as a dialogue is W. Wili, Horaz und die augusteische Kultur
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Nisbet and Hubbard underestimate the perplexity their interpretation causes. In fact, there are at least five other reasons why this reading of the poem is odd. Why is this the only ode in which Horace is not the speaker? Why would Horace write an ode about a nameless ghost in any case? If the poem is a monologue spoken by a dead man, why does Horace fall into the blatant contradiction of putting a sermon on the finality of death into the mouth of a dead man? If lines 1–20 are spoken by the same man as verses 21–36, then why do we find such an abrupt shift in tone from philosophical enlightenment in 1–20 to unenlightened superstitiousness in 21–36? Finally, if both parts are spoken by the same man, then how are we to explain the lack of literary precedents for the resulting situation, in which one dead man consoles another for having to die?

Clearly none of these reasons for being puzzled by this reading of ode is so strong as to allow us to claim that the reading is wrong; on the other hand, taken together, they certainly are disquieting. In this article, I intend to argue for a new reading of the poem, one that will make it seem much less strange though, I hope, no less original and imaginative. I will also show that the poem is intentionally designed to provoke precisely the great diversity of readings that is attested by the scholarly record since the Renaissance. I should preface my

(Basel 1948) 231. There is no recent comprehensive survey of the extensive secondary literature on this ode. For useful older surveys see Weiske, "Ueber die 28. Ode"; Orelli and Baiter 160–163; G. Hirschfelder, Q. Horatius Flaccus (Berlin 1886) 164–167 (= Orelli-Baiter5); L. Cantarelli, "Un' ode oraziana," RFIC 11 (1883) 86–98, esp. 86–96.

3On this point the interpretation of Wilamowitz fails; see U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, De Tribus Carminibus Latinis (Göttingen 1894) 6. Against Wilamowitz's interpretation in general see F. Jacoby in Gnomon 10 (1934) 483ff.; G. Schwind, Zeit, Tod, und Endlichkeit bei Horaz (diss. Freiburg im Breisgau 1965) 32 n. 4. It is strange that W. J. Oates, The Influence of Simonides of Ceos upon Horace (diss. Princeton 1932) 74, could have written that "no better character could be found to express the idea of lines 15–16 than a ghost." D. W. T. Vessey's solution ("Horace's Archytas Ode," Živa Antika 26 [1976] 73–87, esp. 81) to the problem—to imagine that what the Epicureans called the anima is speaking—is subject to the objection that he himself raises that "the anima . . . would of course have been [viewed] by the Epicureans as deprived of all consciousness" (loc. cit.).

4Weiske (above, n. 2) 357 already noted that verses 21–36 express ideas too primitive to be worthy of Archytas. Vessey (above, n. 3) 83–84, has recently also stressed the shift in attitude in the two parts, but his solution to the problem of how such different attitudes can be present in the same speaker is unconvincing (viz., Archytas, having learned the error of his beliefs in part one, lapses back into his old ways in the second section).
explanation with an admission: what I shall offer will, I hope, make better sense of the poem, but it cannot be proven to be correct; it can simply be shown to be possible. Before this admission is taken as a sign of any weakness, I should hasten to add that it is, in fact, a point of strength, for my main thesis is that the Archytas Ode is designed to express Horace’s belief—inspired by ancient semiotic theories—that no reading of a text can be more than possible. Thus, a poem that at first seems to be about sêma in the restricted sense of the tomb turns out also to be about sêma in the more general sense of the mark or sign.

It will be well to begin with an overview of my new reading. I will argue that the Archytas Ode is neither a monologue nor a dialogue but an illustration of the impossibility of communication between the living and the dead at the tomb. In verses 1–20, Horace is the speaker. He sarcastically addresses the dead Archytas and belittles his Pythagorean myths about the afterlife as exemplified by the funerary iconography on Archytas’ tomb, which is a cenotaph. From the point of view of the dramatic context of the poem, Horace’s purpose in attacking Archytas and his beliefs is to create a situation in which Archytas would not fail to reply, if he could, to Horace’s abuse. In verses 21–36, the epitaph on Archytas’ tomb is quoted as the only response that Archytas can make after Horace’s address. The wit of the poem consists in the fact that Archytas’ epitaph in no sense responds to the issues that Horace raises. All the text of the epitaph can do is endlessly repeat the same idle threats and promises, the irrelevance of which reinforces the point of Horace’s attacks on Archytas’ beliefs in the survival of consciousness in the afterlife and in the possibility of communication between the living and the dead at the tomb. That the poem is itself a text means that it shares with the epitaph and the funerary sculpture on the tomb the limitations of marking and writing; and in order to strengthen the critique of writing he makes in the poem, Horace designs the ode in such a way that it, too, illustrates the problem of textuality.

II

Let us begin our detailed examination of the ode with a look at the imaginary situation we find in the very first lines. The poem opens with an address to Archytas, who is described as being dead. Since antiquity, critics have assumed that the speaker’s motivation in addressing Archytas is a vision of Archytas’ umbra. There is,
however, another possibility, as Lehrs recognized long ago. The speaker may speak to Archytas because, while standing before a tomb near the Matine shore, he sees not a ghost but an inscription identifying the tomb (or more precisely, the cenotaph) as Archytas'.

This possibility is more likely, I would argue, not only because we must otherwise wonder how the Roman speaker has managed to recognize the ghost of a man dead for three centuries but also because of the epigrammatic tradition of poets addressing the dead, whom they recognize through epitaphs. Excellent examples of this are Callimachus' epigram about Timonoe (A.P. 7.522 = XV Pfeiffer) and Theocritus' epitaph of Glauc (A.P. 7.262 = XXIII Gow). Horace's ode represents a further step in the development of the theme because, with centuries of literary tradition behind him, Horace can omit the explicit reference to Archytas' inscription and still expect his readers to grasp the *mis en scène*. Of course, readers do not need to be literary historians to grasp the point that the speaker addresses Archytas because he has read Archytas' name on a monument, for the point is not only traditional, it is also logical. On the other hand, the sudden appearance of a ghost would be unprecedented in literature and hence in need of more explicit exposition to be grasped by the reader; it might also have sooner evoked from the speaker an expression of shocked surprise than familiar address.

For the moment, we may leave in abeyance the problem of the speaker's identity (cf. section VIII) after simply noting that in the epigrammatic tradition, he is normally the poet himself. We may also

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5 Lehrs (above, n. 2) lviii: "dabei kann dieser Schatten noch lesen: denn er hat eben vom Grabe abgelesen, dass dies Grab den Archytas birgt."

6 Vessey's suggestion (above, n. 3) 77 that the poem was motivated when "Horace heard that the corpse of Archytas had been discovered on a particular beach near which stood his tomb" is incredible for logical and biological reasons. The problem of why Horace was concerned enough with the long-dead Archytas to write this ode has led some commentators naively to suppose that the poem is a translation of an earlier Greek poem; see, e.g., C. G. Mitscherlich, *Q. Horatii Flacci Opera* I (Leipzig 1800) 260–261.

7 Callimachus: Τιμονόη, τίς δ' έσσι, μά δαιμόνος, οὐ τ' ἐν ἐπέγγον. / εἰ μὴ Τιμοθέων πατρός ἐπὶν ὀνόμα / στήθη καὶ Μήθυμμα τῇ πόλις, ἡ μέγα φημί / χήρον ἀνασαρά σὺν πόσιν Εὐθυμένη. Theocritus: Αὐθήσει το γράμμα τι σάμα τε καὶ τίς υπ' αὐτῷ. / Γλαύκης εἰμί τάφος τῆς ὀνομαζόμενης.

8 F. A. Wolf, "Noch etwas über Horazens 28ste Ode des ersten Buches," in *Vermischte Schriften und Aufsätze* (Halle 1802) 431–451 (originally published in 1789), argued (439) that the speaker cannot be Horace because Horace, an anti-Pythagorean, would never have praised Pythagoras, as the speaker of 7–14 seems to do. This argument has been very influential on the scholarship about
note that Horace's *mis en scène* and the precedents behind it make reading an explicit theme. So, right from the beginning we are led to expect that self-consciousness is an important aspect of the ode. The poet is a reader who writes about reading and who makes his readers read what he has written about what he has read. Thus, it should not be surprising to find that the poem is designed to make the reader recapitulate the poet's own experience of reading.

III

Just as crucial as the situation at the beginning of the poem is the tone in which Archytas is addressed. Nisbet and Hubbard, like many commentators before them, point out that in describing Archytas as measurer of land, sea, and sand, Horace uses a topic typical of a class of funerary epigrams, in which the professional accomplishments of the deceased are praised. The tone at the beginning would accordingly seem to be laudatory. In their notes on the phrase *numeroque carentis harenae*, however, the commentators also point out that counting grains of sand was a proverbial expression for hybristically attempting the impossible (cf. n. 10). In fact, as Kiessling-Heinze note, the topic of measuring the immeasurable was used by Hermias in his *Σαν συνακόντας τῶν ἐξω φιλοσόφων* to ridicule Pythagoras, Archytas' *non sordidus auctor naturae verique* (14–15).

Although aware of the connection of the proverb to diatribe, the commentators do not attempt to explain how this topic of invective is reconcilable with the supposedly laudatory tone of the first two lines. ¹⁰

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¹⁰That lines 1–6 are sarcastic, not laudatory, in tone was first suggested by I. Cruquius, *Q. Horatius Flaccus cum Commentariis* (Lugduni Batavorum 1597) 63, and this interpretation was accepted by L. Torrentius, *Horatii Opera* (Antwerp 1608) ad c. 1.28.1; T. Marcilius, "In Q. Horatii Odas," in D. Laminus, ed., *Horatii Flacci Opera Omnia* (Paris 1604) 29–31; L. Despréz, *Quinti Horatii Flacci Opera* (Philadelphia 18285) 62; G. Dillenburger (above, n. 1) 78; H. Duentzer, *Q. Horatii Flacci Opera,* (Paris 1849) 85; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (above, n. 3) 5–6. It is strange that the majority of commentators, perceiving only praise in these lines, has never bothered to explain how the topic of the foolish futility of counting grains of sand can be interpreted in
Indeed, it is not. As the immediately following topic of Archytas' hybris in storming heaven (aerias temptasse domos)\textsuperscript{11} and the sarcastic words \textit{iudice te} (14) make clear, Horace speaks to Archytas in a tone of barbed sarcasm, not deferential praise.\textsuperscript{12} The poem begins with the

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any way other than as an indication of sarcasm. F. A. Wolf, for example, dealt with the problem by simply dismissing it with the curt words, "wie man diese Zeilen als einen spöttischen Vorwurf hat nehmen können, ist unbegreiflich" (above, n. 8) 436. C. W. Göttling, "Die Archytas-Ode des Horatius eine Tabula votiva," in Gesammelte Abhandlungen aus dem classischen Alterthume II (Munich 1863; originally published in 1854 and 1862) 218, claimed that the proverb does not imply criticism of Archytas' foolishness but, to the contrary, is "eine überschwengliche Bezeichnung für die höchste Stufe der Wissenschaft des Archytas." Generally, the commentators simply change the subject from the tone to the source of the lines and point out that Archimedes calculated how many grains of sand could fill the universe. This evasion cannot be permitted not only because it is irrelevant but also because it is the wrong answer to the right question. The question of tone cannot be answered with a fact about source; and the question about the source of Horace's phrase harenae mensorem cannot be answered by reference to Archimedes' \textit{Σαμωίτης} in any case, since Archimedes' purpose was not (as, according to Horace, Archytas' was) to calculate the number of grains of sand actually existing on earth but to quantify the size of the universe using as a unit of measurement the grain of sand. Archimedes' measurement was accordingly the number of grains of sand theoretically filling the universe—a very different calculation. This important distinction was noted by E. C. Wickham, \textit{The Works of Horace I} (Oxford 1896) 103, who, however, did not point out the important conclusion to be drawn that whereas Archimedes' calculation was quite reasonable, given his model of a finite universe, Archytas' was proverbially futile and foolish. So, Archimedes is not likely to have been Horace's source for the phrase harenae mensorem. The probable source was noted long ago by Lambinus (\textit{ad c. 1.28.1 Te maris et terrae etc.}), and Turnebus, \textit{apud T. Pulmannus, Q. Horatius Flaccus. Adnotationes} (Antwerp 1557) \textit{ad c. 1.28.1–2}, namely, the Pythia's claim to know the number of grains of sand on earth (cf. Herodotus 1.47). Thus, Horace is suggesting that by claiming Apollo's knowledge, Archytas is hybristic, just as he displays hybris in his storming of heaven (5).

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11The parallels cited by the commentators (Lucretius 1.74 and Cicero \textit{De Finibus} 2.102) are very different: whereas in both "parallels" Epicurus \textit{peragravit mente} the universe, Archytas is said to have "stormed heaven" with his mind. For Horace, the difference in tone and meaning between \textit{peragrare} and \textit{temptare} is crucial.

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12On \textit{temptasse domos} as an example of hybris see Mitscherlich (above, n. 6) 262–63 (\textit{ad c. 1.28.4–6}); and cf. Horace \textit{c. 1.3.38} (\textit{caelum ipsum petimus stultitia}), where Horace explicitly links the topic to \textit{stultitia} and \textit{scelus}. The commentators either (1) ignore the problem of the tone of the topic and speak only of how "von der Erde hat die Forschung des Philosophen sich empor in den Luftraum gewagt und das Himmelsgewölbe durchschweift" (so A. Kiessling, \textit{Q. Horatius Flaccus. Oden und Epoden} [Berlin 1884] 91–92, and Kiessling-
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image of a man who has foolishly wasted his life counting grains of sand and attacking heaven coming to his just reward in a grave near the Matine shore, a place so obscure that few readers, ancient or modern, can confidently locate it.  

In verses 2–4 we see that the foolishness Archytas displayed while alive continues after his death. If while alive, Archytas’ ambitions were too grand, now that he is dead they are too petty: he is kept near this spot by his desire for “the small gift (munera) of a little dust” (24). How does the speaker know that this is Archytas’ current obsession? He knows it from the same source that has told him this is Archytas’ grave—from the epitaph he is reading on the tomb. As we will see (cf. section IX), the epitaph is quoted in verses 21–36 of the ode. In lines 23–25 and 35–36 the text, speaking in Archytas’ name, twice asks the passerby to perform the funerary rite (munus) of the humatio, or the sprinkling of sand or dust on the corpse—precisely the concern the speaker attributes to Archytas in lines 2–4. So, the speaker is inspired to be sarcastic, not by his tendentious fantasy but by what he sees before him on Archytas’ tomb.

At this point, we must pause to examine the precise meaning of the crucial words te cohibent pulveris exigui parva munera in verses 1–4. The commentators have interpreted this to mean “a small grave confines you” (so Orelli-Baiter, Dillenburger, Kiessling2, Kiessling-Heinze6 [above, n. 9]) or (2) note the implication of hybris without adjusting their sense of the tone accordingly (so Nisbet and Hubbard).

13That is, the consternation expressed by readers since antiquity about the identification of this place name (cf. Nisbet and Hubbard) is undoubtedly the response intended by Horace. The purpose is not to provoke learned debate about the location of the Matine shore but to ridicule the megalomaniacal Archytas for ending up in such an angulus. On the Epicurean background for Horace’s belittling of Pythagorean mathematics see A. Barbieri, “Epicuro e le conquiste matematiche-astronomiche,” in Epicurea in Memoriam Hectoris Bignone (Genoa 1959) 73–88; J. Mau, “Was There a Special Epicurean Mathematics?” in Exegesis and Argument: Studies Presented to G. Vlastos, Phronesis suppl. 1 (1973) 421–430; and P. H. and E. A. De Lucy, Philodemus. On Methods of Inference (Naples 19782) 194–195.

14It has often been assumed that if munera pulveris is understood in the way I am suggesting, then we have to imagine that Archytas’ body must be lying unburied on the shore before the speaker (so, e.g., Weiske [above, n. 2] 354; A. Meineke, “Zu Horaz,” Philol. 5 [1850] 171–172; H. Weil, “Bemerkungen zu Horaz,” Jahrbücher für Philologie und Paedagogik 71 [1855] 721; Nisbet and Hubbard. However, there is another possibility, viz., that Archytas does have a tomb but is not buried in it; i.e., he has a cenotaph. The likelihood of this view will be argued below (in section IV). Now, it is necessary to point out that the alternative tomb/burial is vitiated by the tertium quid of a cenotaph.
Heinze, and Nisbet-Hubbard). This is possibly not correct, for it assumes that *pulveris* means *tumulus* or *sepulcrum* and is a genitive of definition dependent on *munera*. Note, however, that although a few parallels exist for *pulvis = tumulus*, only one (probably postdating Horace) exists for *sepulcrum* as a kind of funerary *munus*. This is hardly surprising, since the tomb (very often built and paid for by the deceased before his death or provided for upon his death by a provision in his will) is not a funerary rite. Moreover, the redundancy of *parva/exigui* that arises if the genitive is definitionally is troubling, and calling *exigui* “conventional” (Nisbet-Hubbard) is no satisfactory solution. Motivating the commentators’ interpretation is the fear that if these words do not mean “a small grave,” then the way is opened to take the words *capiti inhumato* (24) as a reference to Archytas’ unburied body. This the commentators are unwilling to do because it would be inconsistent with interpreting the poem as a monologue not spoken by Archytas.

There is, however, another possibility (which will be argued in detail in section IV). In lines 1–6, Horace does, indeed, presume the presence of Archytas’ tomb before the speaker, but the tomb is a cenotaph, not the normal variety. We have already seen that the situation in verses 1–6 presumes that the speaker is inspired to address Archytas because he has read an inscription on the monument identifying it as the philosopher’s. The phrase *te cohíbent pulvis exigui parva munera* is also inspired by the inscription, which, as we will see, is quoted at length in lines 21–36. There, the speaker of the inscription (the imaginary ghost of Archytas) asks the passerby to be-

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15The only possible exception of which I am aware (the commentators have oddly not even bothered to adduce a single parallel) is *CIL X.579* (Salerno): A.CLODIO.A.L.AN(t).AEO.PATRONO/MVNERI DAT, where Mommsen (in the Index Notabilia 1189) glossed *muneri dat* as “locus sepulturae?” V. Bracco, *Inscriptiones Italice*, vol. 1-regio 1, fasc. 1-Salernum (Rome 1981) nr. 154 (p. 85) writes: “muneri dat, sepulcrum scilicet: urnam ipsam intellego, in qua cineres positi sunt.” It would be hazardous to claim, on the basis of this single piece of evidence, that *munus* could normally mean a place or receptacle of burial. (N.B. that in Ovid *Trist.* 3.3.65, the alleged parallel cited by G. Hirschfelder [above, n. 2] 157–58, the word *munus* does not even appear!) According to H. Schütz (above, n. 1) 104 and L. Despréz (above, n. 10) 62, 64, it was Scaliger (where, Schütz and Despréz do not say and I have not been able to find the passage myself) who first pointed out that verse three seems to imply that Archytas is already buried. It was this supposed fact that motivated Weiske (above, n. 2) to attack the “dialogue” theory of the poem according to which the poem divides into two speeches (1-6 and 7-36) spoken by a sailor and Archytas respectively.
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stow a little sand (23–25) and three handfuls of dust (35–36) on his unburied body; here, the living speaker comments ironically on the dead man’s petty and superstitious request, as if to say: “you—who were a great mathematician—are kept near the Matine shore by the wish for the modest funerary rite of a little dust.” Thus, *cohibere* should be glossed by the Greek word συνέχω (= occupy, engage, detain), not κατεχω (= cover in a grave), as it usually is.16

Finally, the traditional interpretation of *parva munera* as a “small tomb” ignores the technical funereal sense of the phrase. Speaking of the Feralia, the festival of the dead on 21 February, Ovid writes:

Est honor et tumulis, animas placate paternas
parvaque in extinctas munera ferte pyras!
Parva petunt manes, pietas pro divite grata est
munere, non avidos Styx habet ima deos.

(Fast. 2.533–536)

Thus, the phrase *parva munera* may well be a formula from the Roman cult of the dead. If *parva munera* are given, then the dead help the living; if not, the dead take vengeance (2.534–555). It is perhaps no coincidence that Horace speaks of Archytas’ concern for the *parva munera* of a little bit of dust in the context of the dead man’s promises of reward or punishment to the passerby who is asked to perform the rite of *humatio* in lines 23–36. To conclude, the words *te cohibent pulvis exigui parva munera* can be taken to mean “the funerary rite of a little dust occupies/concerns you.”

The sarcasm of the introduction—which is given strong verbal support by the harsh alliterations in *pueris*, *prope*, *parva*, *prodest*, *percurrisses*, and *polum*—reaches a climax in the striking hyperbaton *animoque... morituro* (5–6) that encloses the last clause of the opening section. Despite the emphasis Horace gives it, this phrase has received very little comment.17 Marcilius was the first to point out that *morituro* can be construed with *animo* (5) instead of *tibi* (4), and he also noted that the

16 For *cohibere* in this sense see ThLL s.v. *cohibere* II.A.2.a. *Cohibere* has been interpreted in c. 1.28 in the way I propose above by T. Obbarius, Q. Horatii Flacci Carmina (Jena 1848) *ad loc.* and, apparently at some length, by F. Adam, whose 1880 article on the problem is unavailable to me. (For a summary see G. Hirschfelder [above, n. 2] 166.)

17 The best argued case for taking *morituro* with *animo* (5) and not *tibi* (4) was presented by F. Ritter, Q. Horatii Flaccus (Leipzig 1856) *ad loc.* (and cf. Nisbet and Hubbard *ad loc.*).
intellectual-historical background relevant to the notion of a "mind doomed to die" was Epicureanism, which was one of the few ancient philosophies to claim that the soul cannot survive after the death of the body. Ritter gave added arguments in favor of construing *morituro* in this way.¹⁸

The fact that the speaker may consider Archytas' *animus* to be *moriturus* would do more than explain his philosophical allegiance; it would also account for his motivation in ridiculing Archytas. Alive, Archytas spent his time in Pythagorean research of mathematics, geometry, and astronomy. For an intelligent being subject to mortality, the pursuit of such psychologically and ethically useless knowledge does not help (*nec . . . prodest, 4*) bring about a solution to the central problem of existence: living well in the face of death. Once he has died, Archytas' foolish superstitions about funerary *munera* and his foolish inability to accept the truth that death destroys the soul along with the body are advertised for all to see on his tomb. The strongly emphasized phrase *animo morituro* thus expresses the basis of the speaker's critique of Archytas and introduces the main theme of his address in verses 1–20.

IV

The fact that the speaker adopts a sarcastic tone because of the foolishness he sees expressed on Archytas' epitaph suggests that the tomb (whether imaginary or real we need not—and cannot—determine)¹⁹ is worth investigating more closely, especially since in


¹⁹Horace may be referring to a well-known sight in Tarentum. The impressive Tarentine necropolis survived the Roman sack of the city by Fabius in 209 (cf. J. Coleman Carter, *The Sculpture of Taras, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, n.s. 65, pt. 7 [1975] 13). Thus, Horace, from nearby Venusia and, like Virgil, an admirer of Tarentum (cf. Horace c. 2.6.9–22; Virgil, *Georg.* 4.125–148), could have been familiar with Archytas' grave—or a grave so identified by local *ciceroni*. It is not unreasonable to suppose that Horace would have sought out Archytas' tomb while visiting the city, since we know that the Romans considered such graves to be sights of interest. Cicero searched for and restored Archimedes' tomb in Syracuse (*Tusc. Disp.* 5.23.65–66); Germanicus (Suetonius, *Gaius* 3) and Hadrian (cf. *Kl. Pauly* IV s.v. Parthenios [1], col. 530) are also known to have visited and repaired the tombs of famous men that they passed on their travels.
the next verses (7–16) the art decorating it provides the speaker with additional material upon which to vent his spleen.

Commentators have not had anything to say about the tomb's location prope litus Matinum, except to note the geographical difficulty of identifying the place. Wherever the Matine shore may have been (and, as we have seen, it is precisely the obscurity of the place that Horace finds poetically useful), it is odd that a tomb should be erected nearby. Ancient cemeteries were not normally near the sea; they usually lined roads leading out of town. The great Tarentine necropolis was—exceptionally, and like Sparta's—inside the walls of the city but not especially near the seashore. In fact, from literary epitaphs, we know of only one class of tombs regularly located near the coast: cenotaphs dedicated to the memory of those drowned at sea.

The evidence of the literary epitaphs is confirmed by the archaeological remains. For example, the earliest cenotaph known from the classical period is that of Menecrates near the seashore of Kastrades, one of the harbors of Corcyra. The monument dates to 625–600 B.C. and has the shape of a tumulus. An inscription informs us that Menecrates was a Corcyraean proxenos who died at sea. It is therefore appropriate for the structure to be located about 100 meters from the shore on a site well below the ancient port cemetery, which was on a hill farther inland. Similar cenotaphs are known from Thasos and Rheneia, the island-necropolis of Delos. This archaeological fact

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20 On the Tarentine necropolis see P. Wuiileumier, Tarante (Paris 1939) 250; N. Degrassi, EAA VII s.v. Taranto (Rome 1966) 608–610; and for an excellent study of a Tarentine naískos tomb (similar to tombs popular in Archytas' day, if fifty years later in date) see J. C. Carter, "Relief Sculpture from the Necropolis of Taranto," AJA 74 (1970) 125–137, and see in general on the architecture of Tarentine tombs J. C. Carter (above, n. 19) 14–16, and H. Klumbach, Tarentiner Grabkunst (Reutlingen 1937) 32–55, 77–99. For the illustration of a naískos-tomb in Apulian vase painting see A. D. Trendall, South Italian Vase Painting (London 1966) 12.

21 "In der Regel sind die Gräber der Schiffbrüchigen an der Meeresküste errichtet," R. Weisshäuser, Die Grabgedichte der griechischen Anthologie (1889) 90–92.

22 On the cenotaph see R. Meiggs and D. Lewis, A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions (Oxford 1969) 4–5 (nr. 4).

suggesting that Archytas’ tomb was the cenotaph of a drowned man is, of course, given explicit support in the tomb’s epitaph, for in verses 21–25 we read that the speaker has died in the Adriatic and that his corpse lies unburied somewhere. Moreover, the address to the nauta in the epitaph (23) is consistent with identifying the tomb as a cenotaph, since the nauta, not viator, is the appropriate addressee for the epitaph of a man lost at sea (cf. A.P. 7.499).

One problem with interpreting the poem in this way has long since been pointed out: we have no independent confirmation (especially in Diogenes Laertius, where it might well have been expected) that Archytas died by drowning. For the sake of argument, let us assume that Archytas did not die in this way. Does this make our interpretation untenable? Not necessarily, I would argue, because Horace may have a point to make, in keeping with his sarcastic treatment of Archytas, by attributing this form of death to him. That is, the rule that literary critics must always observe of keeping historical reality distinct from artistic imagination is just as much in effect in the present instance as it usually is.

C. W. Goettling (above, n. 10) 230, argued that lines 21–36 nowhere explicitly state that the subject is dead. This is, strictly speaking true; however, it is logical to expect that only a dead man will be as concerned about burial as is the speaker of these lines. Cf. F. A. Wolf (above, n. 8) 444: “[the part of the poem beginning in verses 23ff.] enthält offenbar Bitten und Beschworungen, mit einer Kraft und Wärme gesagt, wie man nur für seine eigene Haut thun kann.” It is important to note that the location of the speaker’s corpse is also nowhere explicitly stated. This imprecision is much more important than that noted by Goettling. The body of a man lost at sea will often be irrecoverable (cf. A.P. 7.495); yet there is always the possibility that it will someday wash up on some shore. The epitaph quoted in verses 21–36 of c. 1.28 takes this possibility as its point of departure and asks anyone finding the body—who, for reasons of epigrammatic convention is addressed as a sailor (cf. A.P. 7.499)—to bury it (so, E. S. Thompson, “Note on Horace, Odes 1.28,” CR 10 [1896] 327–328, who, however, thinks that the cenotaph is not Archytas’ but an unnamed sailor’s). In favor of this interpretation is the fact that in epitaphs of voyagers lost at sea, the absence of the body (A.P. 7.495, 496, 500) or its possible recovery on some beach, usually only vaguely identified (A.P. 7.291, 497, 499, 501), are traditional topics.

By H. J. Heller, “Horaz, Ode 1,28,” Philol. 16 (1860) 732; and most recently, by P. H. Callahan and H. Musurillo, “A Handful of Dust. The Archytas Ode (Hor. Carm. 1,28),” CP 59 (1964) 262–266. Vessey (above, n. 3) 76 attempts to argue that Archytas may have died by drowning, but he does not confront the issue that Diogenes Laertius says nothing about Archytas’ death.
As has been observed, we know of one famous man connected with the Pythagorean school who drowned: Hippasus of Metapontum. Hippasus’ death is attributed in the sources to the fact that he was punished by the Pythagoreans for revealing the secret of the existence of irrational numbers. According to one tradition, Hippasus’ drowning was not real but symbolic, consisting of the erection of a cenotaph in his name. If we grant that Archytas did not really die at sea, we can still explain Horace’s purpose in claiming that he did as resulting from Horace’s invective against Archytas’ philosophy. Symbolically “drowning” Archytas by erecting a cenotaph on the seashore to him in Ode 1.28, Horace punishes a Pythagorean philosopher with the appropriate form of Pythagorean punishment.

The technique of hoisting a man with his own petard is, of course, typical of the diatribe mode, and its presence here bolsters my claim that Horace’s treatment of Archytas is sarcastic and ironic. Whether or not Archytas died by drowning we will never know. In any case, the plausible assumption that he did not cannot be offered as evidence that my interpretation of this ode is impossible. Indeed, if Archytas did not really die by drowning, my reading of the poem as a diatribe is not weakened but strengthened.

If Archytas’ drowning is symbolic, then we should expect that other details of his imaginary last voyage also have a symbolic significance contributing to Horace’s ironic intent. The major detail about the voyage that Horace provides us is that it took place through “the Illyrian waves” (22). Why should Archytas have come to grief on the Adriatic, a very strange sea for him to be sailing? We know from several sources that Pythagoras advised his followers to die in religious silence. In one of the sources we hear that Pythagoras “ordered people during the last hour not to speak ill but, as when putting out to sea in a ship, to take the omens with religious silence, as people do who sail through the Adriatic.” “Sailing through the Adriatic” is here a Pythagorean metaphor for taking the potentially

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28Iamblichus, Vita Pythag. 246 (Deubner 138).
29Plato, Phaedo 117E and cf. the comments of Olympiodorus (p. 244.9–13 Norvin) and Damascius (II 244 N) ad loc.
30Iamblichus, Vita Pythag. 257 (Deubner 138).
dangerous journey to the underworld. If Archytas' drowning symbolizes in Pythagorean terms his betrayal of philosophy (probably as Horace, not the Pythagoreans, conceived it), then his shipwreck on the Adriatic represents his failure to arrive safely and in good standing into Hades, despite his reassuring belief in a happy afterlife for the Pythagorean elect.

The next lines of the poem (7-15) mention the mythical figures Tantalus, Tithonus, Minos, and Euphorbus. As with the previous lines, we need to ask whether the tone here is consolatory—as it is usually taken to be—or sarcastic. We also need to know why Horace compares Archytas to these four men who are very different from each other and from Archytas.

We may begin by noting that Kiessling-Heinze, Nisbet-Hubbard, and most earlier commentators perceive the tone to be consolatory. The evidence adduced again comes from funerary epigram, where, to be sure, we sometimes find consolation expressed through the idea that death is mankind's universal fate, which even great men and heroes cannot escape. The commentators, however, fail to point out that Horace has reversed the standard pattern in one important way, as a survey of the examples of the makes clear.31 Whereas in a typical epigram, the dead are shown comforting the living with the thought that excessive grief is pointless because all men are destined to die, in

31 For examples see R. Lattimore (above, n. 9) 250-256, and add, e.g., the epigram discussed by W. D. Lebek, "Topik und Sprachgestaltung in einem Grabepigramm," ZPE 14 (1974) 11-13; the epigram from Bakirköy published by E. Schwertheim in Die Inschriften von Kyzikos und Umgebung, Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 18.1 (Bonn 1980) nr. 496, lines 12-15 (pp. 206-207); and the dialogue between Phthonos and a grieving mother on an epitaph from Kraneion at Corinth published by J. Bousquet in REG 94 (1981) xxi-xxii. We may note here the most Pollyannish interpretation of this part of the poem—C. Landinus' view that "[Horatius] hortatur homines ad bonas artes acquirendas: Nam docti indoctique pariter moriuntur. Tamen hoc meliori causa sunt docti qui post mortem vivunt fama" (in Horatius cum Quattuor Commentaris [Venice 1498] fol. xlvii). Finally, we may also note that one ancient commentator seems to have been aware of the reversal of the topic and even proposed an acceptable solution, assuming one believes that lines 7ff. are spoken by Archytas to himself. The Schol. in Hor. u (Botschuyver, III [Amsterdam 1939] 40) writes ad c. 1.28.6, "quasi ipse Archytas responderet ad consolationem sui."
Horace and the Monuments

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the Archytas Ode. Horace has put this thought into the mouth of the living speaker of the poem, who is shown addressing a dead man. What does this reversal mean? It implies that the living speaker, far from receiving consolation for his grief from the deceased, sarcastically taunts the dead man with the thought that the dead man, despite the special status of wise man he claimed while alive, had to die all the same, just as such other privileged men as Minos, Tithonus, and Euphorbus had had to die in the distant past. So, the formal reversal results in a complete reversal in tone. For any reader too dull to miss the tone, the words *iudice te non sordidus auctor naturae verique* (14-15) leave so little doubt about the speaker’s drift that some editors have felt it necessary to emend *te* to *me*.

If an example of how the theme of Pythagoras’ reincarnations could be used for flattery, not diatribe, be sought, then reference may be made to a newly published inscription from Ephesus honoring the Platonic philosopher Ofellius Laetus.

As for the second question, we can now see why Horace implicitly compares Archytas to characters as different as Tantalus, Tithonus, and Minos, a fact about which Nisbet and Hubbard express their puzzlement. If the tone were consolatory—and not sarcastic—it would, indeed, be odd to hear Horace comparing Archytas to Tantalus, whom Nisbet and Hubbard rightly call one of mythology’s “great sinners.”

However, the comparison is apt because Horace’s tone is sarcastic, and the invective gains added force once we realize that the figures to whom Archytas is compared have not been randomly selected but form a perfectly economical picture of the Pythagorean view of the afterlife. Minos is the judge of the underworld. Tantalus represents the punished sinner, Tithonus the apotheosis of the righteous. Euphorbus, who was, according to the Pythagoreans, later reborn as Pythagoras, stands for the final possibility of reincarnation.

VI

Why does it occur to Horace to allude to these symbols of the Pythagorean afterlife, and why does he collapse the Pythagoreans’ crucial distinctions between judge and judged, rewarded and punished,

32See Wolf (above, n. 8) 447.


34Nisbet and Hubbard *ad c.* 1.28.7.
into an undifferentiated heap of dust that includes Archytas? It is no accident that the mythical figures mentioned by Horace are all attested in the surviving funerary art of pre-Roman Tarentum. As a recent study of the funerary sculpture has shown, the most popular scenes on Tarentine tombs were rapes like that of Tithonus remotus in auras (8).\textsuperscript{35} Another popular theme was a fight between warriors, like that of Menelaos and Euphorbus at the beginning of the seventeenth book of the \textit{Iliad} (17.69ff.). Tantalus first appears in ancient art in Apulian vase painting, as K. Schauenberg has pointed out.\textsuperscript{36} It is accordingly possible that Horace’s outburst was occasioned by the decoration of a Tarentine tomb believed in his day to be Archytas’ that displayed the Pythagorean myth of the afterlife with the judgment, punishment, reward, and reincarnation of the dead. We do not know whether any of the funerary art of Pythagorean Tarentum was intended to convey Pythagorean messages nor whether any messages that were incorporated into the pre-Roman art could still be understood in Horace’s day; but we do, at least, know that the impressive Tarentine necropolis survived the Roman sack of the city in 209 and so could be visited. We also know that in the first century B.C., when Horace was writing, Pythagoreans did express their beliefs in their funerary monuments.

A good example of this is the so-called “stele of Pythagoras” from Philadelphia near Sardis.\textsuperscript{37} It was erected for a namesake (and


\textsuperscript{36}K. Schauenberg, “Die Totengötter in der unteritalischen Vasenmalerei,” \textit{JDAI} 73 (1958) 63-64. On underworld scenes generally in Tarentine vase painting and their possible Orphic (Pythagorean?) significance, see M. Pensa in \textit{Atti 10. Convegno di Studi sulla Magna Grecia} (Naples 1971) 305-307. For Minos as judge of the dead in Apulian vase painting see S. De Marinis \textit{EAA} 5 s.v. Minosse (Rome 1963) 103. For an example of Euphorbus in archaic art see the eastern Greek plate showing the fight of Euphorbus and Menelaus illustrated by K. Schefold, \textit{Frühgriechische Sagenbilder} (Munich 1964) table 75, and cf. also T. B. L. Webster, \textit{Hellenistic Poetry and Art} (London 1964) 24 and 24 n. 2. For other scenes showing Euphorbus see F. Brommer, \textit{Vasenlisten zur griechischen Heldensage} (Marburg 1973) 403.

\textsuperscript{37}This stele was first published by J. Keil and A. von Premerstein, “Bericht über eine Reise in Lydien und der südlichen Aiolis,” \textit{Denkschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften}, philos.-hist. Kl. 53 (1910) 34-35; it has recently been briefly discussed by J. Onians, \textit{Art and Thought in the Hellenistic
undoubtedly, a follower) of the philosopher. The stele was decorated with a large Upsilon that divides the relief into three bands; in the lowest register are the figures of two youths standing next to Vice on the left and Virtue on the right, both of whom are identifiable from inscriptions. Above, in the middle register, are two more symbolic scenes. On the left we see a man reclining with a woman; on the right, another man working in a field. Finally, hovering above the junction of the two arms of the Upsilon and looking toward the right is the deceased Pythagoras. The relief may be interpreted as an illustration of the Pythagorean notion of life as the bivium on which man must choose between the left path of evil and pleasure and the right path of goodness and labor. Our man Pythagoras, who looks toward the right, has clearly chosen the path of righteousness and so has become apotheosized after his death.

So, Horace may have been inspired by an actual Pythagorean monument erected in Archytas’ honor, or—equally possible—he may have himself created Archytas’ tomb as a literary fiction using as his source of inspiration actual iconographical themes popular in Pythagorean Tarentum as well as the actual behavior of contemporary Pythagoreans like Pythagoras of Philadelphia. Thus the answer to our first question is that Horace writes about figures symbolic of the Pythagorean afterlife because they decorated Archytas’ real or imaginary tomb. Seeing them—or imagining them—on the tomb is what gave Horace the idea to use them in this ode.

In verses 15–16, Horace explicitly states his motivation in denying Archytas’ beliefs about these figures and the vision of the afterlife they embody: death is final, irreversible, and fatal to the soul as well as to the body (cf. the phrase animo . . . morituro in 5–6). Just after his sarcastic words about Archytas’ hero-worship of Pythagoras, Horace says: sed omnis una manet nox / et calcanda semel via leti. In this sentence, Horace fuses two separate thoughts: death-as-night and the unrepeatability of life. Neither thought is new. What is somewhat unusual here is Horace’s demythologizing of the topics. In CLE 1097, an often-cited parallel, death is sentimentally called a domus. In CIL I.1009.3, dating from the first century B.C., death is called the domus leti.

In Horace, death is not a cozy home. It is simply the black noth-

ningness of night. In many Greek passages cited by the commentators, the road of death is called ἡ εἰς Ἁδῆς; here, the road is not a road to Hades but simply to letum, physical destruction.

A parallel for this is not hard to find. In SV 14, Epicurus says, "We have been born once and there can be no second birth. For all eternity we shall no longer exist." Although the Epicureans were not the only philosophers to claim that the soul is mortal (cf. Cic., Tusc. Disp. 1.31.77), they were unique in coupling the idea of the soul's mortality with a polemic about the dangers of the popular myths about the afterlife. It is just such myths that Minos, Tithonus, Tantalus, and Euphorbus reflect; it was owing to his belief in such myths that Archytas has wasted his whole life. Moreover, Horace's view of life as a one-way road to death implicitly conflicts with the Pythagorean image—exemplified by the stele of Pythagoras—of life as a forked road leading to good or evil. Hence, Horace's Epicurean demythologizing of the topic in verses 15–16 complements his sarcastic treatment of Archytas' Pythagorean myths of the afterlife in 7–15.

VII

After debunking Pythagorean mythology in verses 7–15 and demythologizing the topic of life as a one-way road to Hades, Horace unexpectedly uses mythology in a seemingly positive way in verses 17–20. Why does Horace shift his approach in these lines? The answer is that Horace's implied theology in this part of the poem is anti-Pythagorean. From a Pythagorean point of view, Horace's conception of the Furies, Mars, and Proserpina is wrong for two reasons. First, according to the Pythagoreans, the gods mete out their justice not, as Horace implies, within an individual's lifetime and certainly not for their perverse amusement but between incarnations by raising or lowering the soul's status in its next embodiment in accordance with its display of vice or virtue in the previous life on earth. As a

38 As K. E. Bohnenkamp, Die horazische Strophe: Studien zur "Lex Meinike-sana," Spudasmata 30 (1972) 211, perceptively notes, nox receives added emphasis from the fact that it is the only one-syllable word in the poem located at a line ending. W. J. Oates (above, n. 3) 67 cites Simonides fr. 17 Page as a parallel for verse 15, but in Simonides the topic is still expressed in mythological terms ("for all things come to the same horrible Charybdis").

39 On the image of the bivium in Pythagoreanism see W. Harms, Homo Viator in Bivio (Munich 1970) 40–44.

40 On the evidence for the Pythagorean doctrine of reincarnation see W. Burkert (above, n. 27) 120–165.
result, the qualities Horace assigns to the gods in lines 17-20 must appear completely wrong to someone like Archytas.

The Furies do not “provide spectacles for cruel Mars” because they do not operate on earth. Instead, according to the Pythagoreans, they reside in the part of Hades reserved for the impure, whom they imprison in unbreakable bonds. And, Proserpina is anything but saeva.

The commentators have had very little to say about the epithet saeva. Orelli-Baiter pointed out one possible parallel, viz. ἔπαινή in Od. 11.47. Other examples could be cited from Homer (Od. 10.491, 534, 564; Il. 9.457, 565) and Hesiod (Theogony 768). West has pointed out regarding the last passage that the meaning of the word is “puzzling” and that in Homer and Hesiod it is used of Persephone only “when she is coupled with Hades.” In c. 1.28, Proserpina is not mentioned with Hades, furthermore, Homer’s ambiguously euphemistic word has become unequivocally negative. It is equally important to note that saeva as an epithet for Proserpina appears only here in all of Latin poetry, in which Carter catalogued thirty different epithets attributed to the goddess. Horace’s use of the word is thus unusual and requires an explanation.

Many of the epithets used to describe Proserpina are neutral in tone (filia, matrona, Plutonia, dea, regina); others have a very different connotation from saeva (candida, casta, rapta, maxima). The word most different from Horace’s epithet is pulchra, which was used by Virgil in Aen. 6.142. The fact that pulchra describes Proserpina in the most Pythagorean section of a very Pythagorean book is neither accidental nor irrelevant to our study.

In the Aeneid, Proserpina is called “beautiful” because she is the queen of the underworld, whom no virtuous mortals bearing a gift of gold need fear and from whom mortals receive their final judgment and reward in proportion to their goodness. In his commentary on

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41 Cf. Diogenes Laertius 8.31 (= 1.451, 1 D-K). The Furies’ improved status in Pythagoreanism may result from (and be reflected in) the Orphic tradition that they are the offspring of Persephone and Apollo (Orph. Fr. 194 Kern).
43 The etymology of ἔπαινή is unclear; the Homeric scholiasts thought the word to be derived from aiveiv by antiphrasis or euphemism (cf. H. Ebeling, Lexicon Homericum I [Leipzig 1885] 432 s.v. ἔπαινή).
44 See J. B. Carter, Epitheta deorum quae apud poetas latinos leguntur (Leipzig 1902) 88-89.
these lines, Norden\textsuperscript{45} notes the relevance of the Pythagorean\textsuperscript{46} gold tablets found in graves in Thurii, Petelia, Pharsalus, and Hipponion.\textsuperscript{47} In two of these tablets, Persephone is explicitly addressed and called \(\delta\gamma\nu\nu\). In the model of these texts, the goddess was probably called \(\delta\gamma\nu\nu\).\textsuperscript{48} The notion of a pure and noble Persephone receiving and rewarding the spirits of the faithful in the afterlife is at once very comforting and very beautiful; this same notion may be found expressed in cult practice in Tarentum, where Persephone "exerçait un pouvoir prépondérant."\textsuperscript{49} This beautiful Persephone is, in fact, exactly the opposite of Horace's Proserpina the grim reaper.

Horace's purpose in verses 17-20 should now be clear: so to reverse Archytas' Pythagorean understanding of the nature and function of the Furies and Proserpina that Archytas, or any other Pythagorean hearing his words, must be not only annoyed but also offended and provoked to respond.

VIII

Who is the speaker of lines 1–20? "[Horace] normally professes to be talking in propria persona; the only obvious exception is 1.28," write Nisbet and Hubbard.\textsuperscript{50} Why is the Archytas Ode exceptional? The argument that Horace cannot be the speaker, except in an imaginary sense,\textsuperscript{51} is based on the assumption that the speaker of lines 1–20 is the same as that of 21–36. This assumption has never been proven; it has been supported solely by the negative means of

\textsuperscript{45}E. Norden, \textit{P. Vergilii Maro Aeneis Buch VI} (Stuttgart 1916) 171–172.

\textsuperscript{46}Scholarly debate continues about whether the tablets are to be characterized as "Pythagorean" (so G. Zuntz, \textit{Persephone} [Oxford 1971] 322–323, 337–338, 342–343) or as "Orphic-Pythagorean" (so, most recently, L. J. Alderink, \textit{Creation and Salvation in Ancient Orphism}, American Classical Studies 8 [1981] 78–80). In either case, we will not go astray if we cite them in this study as evidence for Pythagoreanism.

\textsuperscript{47}For the Hipponion text see G. Zuntz, "Die Goldlamelle von Hipponion," \textit{WS} n.s. 10 (1976) 129–151; for the other texts and a commentary see G. Zuntz (above, n. 46) 277–370.

\textsuperscript{48}See G. Zuntz (above, n. 46) 317.

\textsuperscript{49}On the worship of Persephone at Tarentum see P. Wuilleumier (above, n. 20) 502–511.

\textsuperscript{50}Nisbet and Hubbard xxiv.

\textsuperscript{51}Cf. the article signed "H" written in 1789 and mentioned in Weiske (above, n. 2) 358, and see, most recently, the article signed "Patricius" in \textit{Greece and Rome} 12 (1965) 51–53.
refutation of the only other possibility hitherto considered, viz., that lines 7–36 are spoken by Archytas. A refutation of this view, however, is not per se proof of the reading that makes the poem into a monologue spoken, not by Archytas (as the scholiasts and most pre-nineteenth-century moderns held) but by a nameless drowned man whose corpse has washed onto the Matine shore. A proof of what we might call the “ghost monologue theory”—first proposed by Weiske in 1829 and still opinio communis today—has never been presented. At most, then, we may grant that it is possible to understand the poem this way, but it is not necessary to do so.

Equally possible is a reading based on an assumption not yet proposed in the literature: Horace is the sarcastic speaker of verses 1–20; another voice is heard in lines 21–36. Nothing stated in verses 1–20 contradicts assigning these lines to a single speaker, or to Horace. Weiske has already noted that line 7 continues the thought of verses 1–6, so that no change of speaker need be postulated between lines 6 and 7. The Epicurean basis of the critique of Archytas is in accord with identifying the speaker as Horace, and Horace, indeed, elsewhere belittles Pythagoreanism. His motive in writing the ode becomes more comprehensible if he, not some nameless umbra, talks in lines 1–20. The identification of the addressee as Archytas becomes much easier to accept once we see that Horace recognizes Archytas from the inscription on his tomb: we no longer need to postulate an educated ghost in Roman times who is perceptive enough to recognize the three-hundred-year-old shade of Archytas. Finally, if the speaker at the beginning is Horace, then the exceptional status of the poem in the Horatian corpus of over one hundred odes is removed. The only obstacle to identifying the speaker in this way is

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52 The best version of the refutation is given by Weiske (above, n. 2) 354–358.
53 By “Horace,” I mean, of course, the Horatian lyric persona, not the man himself.
54 A similar interpretation was suggested by Heinsius, who had Horace speak verses 1–20 and Archytas 21–36. As we will see, I do not consider Archytas to be speaking in propria persona in lines 21–36.
55 Weiske (above, n. 2) 355.
56 The following passages are cited by Nisbet and Hubbard (above, n. 1) 319: epod. 15.21, serm. 2.6.63, epist. 2.1.52.
57 That Horace is hardly likely to have put the poem into the mouth of a nameless sailor was already noted by H. Weil (above, n. 14) 721: “wie sollte der Dichter auf den Gedanken kommen, einen unbekannten, namenlosen Schatten redend einzuführen?” Weil’s interpretation of the poem fails because to sustain it, he must emend obruit to obruit in verse 22.
establishing that one section of the poem can end in line 20 and another can begin in 21. To this I turn next.

IX

In verse 21 we encounter the most important difficulty for determining the structure of the poem. The words *me quoque devexi rapidus comes Orionis* have been understood by most critics to mean that the speaker of the poem is, like Archytas, a dead man. I have already given the reasons why I think this interpretation may not be correct. Is there any other way to understand this line? I would suggest that a hitherto undetected usage of the word *quoque* may provide a key.

*Quoque*, of course, means “too” and as a copulative adverb must immediately follow the clause or sentence that it links with the clause or sentence in which it appears. Like Greek *καί*, however, it has an exceptional inceptive use at the very beginning of a piece of prose or (more frequently) poetry. Elsewhere I plan to examine this usage in detail, proving the existence of three different varieties exemplified by over thirty examples in Latin literature of the first century B.C. through the eleventh century A.D. A few cases may be cited here. Livy begins book 31 with the words, *me quoque iuvat* . . . (“I, too, am pleased to have come to the end of the Punic war, as if I had myself been a participant in the task and danger”). The phrase *tu quoque* opens book 7 of the *Aeneid*, and the words *te quoque* stand at the start of book 3 of the *Georgics*. Cicero’s and Caesar’s epigrams about Terence both begin with the words *tu quoque*, and Domitius Marsus’ epigram about Tibullus similarly starts *te quoque*. The number of epigrammatic examples cited here is not unrepresentative of the repertoire of known cases. Moreover, many parallels of inceptive *καί* can be found in the epigrams of the *Greek Anthology*. On the basis of this evidence, I would guess that the origin of this use of *quoque* was the genre of epigram. Be that as it may, we may now state the important conclusion that the claims found in the scholarship on *Ode* 1.28 that verse 21 cannot be attributed to a new speaker because of the presence of *quoque* are simply wrong. *Quoque* can be inceptive.

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38Cf., e.g., H. J. Heller (above, n. 25) 733, H. Schütz (above, n. 1) 368: “wie aber ein Gedicht . . . mit *me quoque* beginnen kann, ist unverständlich.” Cf., more recently, F. Heinimann, “Die Einheit der horazischen Ode,” *MH* 9 (1952) 200 n. 50: “den ‚abenteuerlichen Gedanken eines Dialogs zwischen Archytas und den Schiffbrüchigen‘ (Kiessling-Heinze), den zuletzt Wili . . . aufnimmt, schliesen *quoque* (v. 21) und die Anrede *nauta* (v. 23) aus.”
The existence of inceptive *quoque* makes it possible that line 21 is not to be taken with what preceded it but rather as the beginning of an epigram embedded within the poem. There is probably no way to prove that such a reading is definitely right or wrong. If taking it this way results in a more meaningful—and less bizarre—poem, then we have the best assurance we are ever likely to have that it is correct—or at least preferable to the traditional interpretation. There are, however, four points that support taking *quoque* as inceptive. First, there is the fact that the sentence in verses 21–22 is separated from the clause to which it is supposedly linked (namely, line 18) by two lines. This is perhaps possible but unusual (one may compare *c. 1.16.22–24* for a more normal example of contiguity of the *quoque* and conjoined clauses in Horace). Second, there is the fact that *quoque* in 21–22 cannot logically link those lines to verse 18 because the statement “I, too, drowned in the Adriatic” implies not the conjoined clause “others have drowned in the sea” but “others have drowned in the Adriatic.” Of course, poets need not be so logical, but one may suspect that the lack of strict logic and contiguity of clauses serves some point, and the point may well be to heighten the discontinuity between lines 21–22 and 1–20 while at the same time providing a rather smooth transition between the two main sections of the poem by means of what we might call a “syntactical” as opposed to “semantic” use of the copulative adverb. Third, it has been clear from the beginning of the poem that the speaker has read Archytas’

59That the words *me quoque* do not logically construe with the thought of the immediately preceding lines was argued by L. Döderlein in *Verhandlungen der zwölften Versammlung deutscher Philologen zu Erlangen* (Erlangen 1852) 51–57, esp. 53. E. A. Nairn, “Horace, Odes I.28,” *CR* II (1897) 445, in the course of arguing for the division of the ode into two separate poems at line 21, pointed out one parallel for inceptive *quoque*, viz., *A.P.* 7.263 (Anacreon). Note in this regard the comment of A. Kiessling (above, n. 12) 91 about the “absolute Beziehungslosigkeit” of verses 21–36 with 1–20, and cf. the similar recent remark of D. Gall, *Die Bilder der horazischen Lyrik, Beiträge zur Klassischen Philologie* 138 (Königstein/Ts. 1981) 111, who says that the topic of 1–20 “steht beziehungslos neben der Bitte um Bestattung im zweiten Oden­teil”; finally, note the critical tradition (mentioned below, n. 73) of dividing the ode into two poems at line 21. Other scholars have attempted to rescue the monologue theory by reading between the lines to find some tacit link between the two parts of the poem; cf., e.g., L. Desprez (above, n. 10) *ad loc.* (“ne mirare igitur nauta, quod interii, inquit Archytas; sicut illi suo quisque modo obiere mortem: ita ego submersus Illyrico mari”); Oates (above, n. 3) 72 (“We are expected to read between the lines and to supply some stage action taking place between lines 22 and 23 in order to understand the ode”).
epitaph, since that would have been the easiest way for him to know that the grave he is looking at is Archytas' (see above, n. 5). It is therefore appropriate for the epitaph to be quoted in the ode.

Finally, we may point to the tradition of such embedded epigrams in Golden Latin literature as exemplified in Virg. Ecl. 5 (43-44) and the elegies of Tibullus (1.3.55-56), Propertius (2.13.35-36; 4.7.85-86), Ovid (Amores 2.6.61-62). Horace's contemporary reader would therefore not have been surprised to find an epigram in Ode 1.28. The inceptive quoque must have functioned as quotation marks do today to indicate a change of speaker, something for which no graphic sign was available.

It is interesting that the examples of embedded epigrams in Golden Latin literature are all funerary, for commentators since Obbarius have noted that the topics of verses 21-36 are from the traditions of literary epitaphs. If we read verses 21-36 as an epitaph—and not simply as a series of allusions to epitaphs—then a number of difficulties caused by the traditional interpretation disappear. For one thing, the speaker is no longer the same as in verses 1-20, so that the shift recently noted by Vessey between sophisticated enlightenment in 1-20 and primitive superstitiousness in 21-36 is not a contradiction but a mark of the difference in character between the poem's two speakers. Second, the mysterious nauta of verse 23 is no longer a passing sailor who unexpectedly appears on the scene and thereby disturbs the economy and unity of the poem. Instead, the nauta is the
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X

Whose epitaph is it? The answer must be Archytas'. In the first part of the poem, we hear Horace's sarcastic reaction to the funerary iconography and inscription on Archytas' tomb; in the second part, we hear Archytas' only "response" to Horace's taunts in the form of his epitaph, which falls into the category of epitaphs in which the dead man addresses a passerby to convey information about his death and to request a favor (cf. the very beautiful epigram by Leonides in A.P. 7.657). The poem as a whole thus belongs to the class of funerary epigrams in which the poet comes upon the tomb of a famous man or woman and engages in a dialogue in which, sometimes, the achievements of the deceased and the nature of the afterlife are discussed. Typical of this class of poem is one of Callimachus' epigrams in the Anthology (A.P. 7.524 = XIII Pfeiffer). In this epigram, and in all the dialogue poems, we find the notion that communication between the living and the dead can occur at the tomb. What the living and the dead talk about is, naturally enough, the nature of death and the afterlife.

Horace's poem is quite similar in its structure of an exchange between the living and the dead at the tomb (except, of course, that the two exchanges are not stichomythic), but in Horace the conceit and wit have progressed a step. As in Callimachus' poem, the living speaker initiates the exchange, but in the Archytas Ode it is clear that

65For examples of dialogue epigrams see Gow-Page, Garland of Philip II (Cambridge 1968) 485 s.v. dialogue-epigrams; A.P. 7.37 (Dioscorides), 163 (Leonidas of Tarentum), 164 (Antipater of Sidon), 165 (Archias), 524 (Callimachus), 548 (Leonidas of Alexandria), 552 (Agathias Scholasticus), 576 (Julianus). For Latin examples cf. CLE 543, 973, CIL VI.21200, 30112. It is interesting that the same controversy we find on Horace c. 1.28 about whether the poem is to be read as a monologue or dialogue may be found about Sera-pion 1 in Gow-Page (on which see Gow-Page II 409) and Antiphilus X in Gow-Page (= A.P. 9.551), which is read as a dialogue by A. Wifstrand, Studien zur griechischen Anthologie (Lund 1926) 68-69.
the speaker does not believe in the possibility of communication. To the contrary, by his sarcasm, Horace tests Archytas’ beliefs in the afterlife by goading him to respond, if he can. Horace’s Epicurean doctrines about death reassure him that Archytas, despite his Pythagorean vision of the underworld, will not be able to answer back because his soul, which was “doomed to die” (5–6), is now as dead as his body.

The second part of the poem presents Archytas’ only possible answer to Horace: the epitaph incised on his tomb. Like the “dead” writing of Plato’s *Phaedrus* that “always say[s] only one and the same thing . . . [and] when ill-treated or unjustly reviled . . . always needs the help of its father” (275C–276B), Archytas’ writing is as dead as he is.66 Instead of responding to Horace’s diatribe and defending the Pythagorean doctrines of the afterlife, Archytas’ text simply proves Horace right by saying the same things it has always said to the passersby.

The fact that these things are almost entirely inappropriate to the present case adds weight to Horace’s invective. Horace is not a sailor (23, contrast c. 1.3.9ff.), nor is he a profit-seeking merchant, as the text assumes in verses 27–28. As a native of Venusia, he will hardly be pleased by the inscription’s promise to divert storms from the sea to the Venusian woods (26–27).67 As a Roman living in the first century B.C., Horace must have reacted with amusement to Archytas’ invocation of Neptune as Tarentum’s protector and as the guarantor of Archytas’ promises and threats, for by Horace’s day Tarentum, destroyed by Fabius in 209, had been reduced to an out-of-the-way angulus, as Horace himself calls it in in *Ode* 2.6.9–22.68 As one influenced by Epicureanism, Horace must have considered Archytas’ obsession with proper burial in verses 30–36 to be just as sure a sign

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66 One would like to know how the Epicureans analyzed writing, but very little, if anything, is preserved on this topic. The materialism of the Epicureans makes one suspect, however, that the Epicureans would have been at least as critical of the popular and poetic conceit of the talking inscription as was Plato.

67 Rührmund (above, n. 2) 199 noted that verses 26–27 suggest that Horace was angry with the inhabitants of his native city. One may find this inference amusing while appreciating the basic insight that it is odd for Horace to direct storms from the sea to Venusia.

68 This is not to imply that Neptune did not continue to be a key divinity in Roman Tarentum as he had been before the Roman conquest. For the evidence of worship of Neptune in the *Colonia Neptunia Tarentum* see G. Giannelli, *Culti e miti della Magna Grecia* (Florence 1963) 15–27, and add the inscription published by L. Gasperini, “Il municipio Tarentino: Richerche epigrafiche,” in *Terza Miscellanea Greca et Romana* (Rome 1971) 158–160.
of *stultitia* as Archytas’ belief in active gods, for Epicurus said that the wise man will not be concerned about his burial (Diog. Laert. 10.118). In book 4 of his treatise *On Death*, Philodemus—who was possibly Horace’s teacher of Epicureanism—mocked popular superstitions about how the outraged dead take vengeance upon the living (col. xxvii.35–37 Sammartano). Thus, Archytas’ “response” cannot be considered the reply of a conscious intelligence to a set of issues and insults with which it has just been confronted; moreover, what the dead text of Archytas does express simply exemplifies the very foolishness, dignified by the name of Pythagorean philosophy, that Horace the Epicurean cannot abide. Both the medium and the message of Archytas’ text prove the truth of Horace’s claim that Archytas’ soul was doomed to die and, while alive, fell into ridiculous error because it denied this fundamental fact of the human condition.

XI

I shall conclude now with a few arguments adding to the plausibility of my interpretation of the ode and with some words about the poem’s significance.

My interpretation helps explain three external facts about the ode. First, it accounts for the poem’s position in the first book just before the Icicus *Ode* (1.29), which is the only other piece in Book I to deal with the folly of a philosopher. In that poem, Horace satirizes Icicus, who has been a student of Panaetius and hence a believer in the justice of Roman imperialism but who is about to go off to plunder women, slaves, and booty in Arabia. Both odes belong to the tradition of epigrams mocking philosophers that Page, Dawe, and Diggle have recently discussed in their edition of *Further Greek Epigrams* (Cambridge [1981] 475–477). Moreover, Philodemus wrote a satirical parody of an epitaph about a priest of Cybele named Trygonion (*A.P.*).
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7.222 = Philodemus XXVI Gow-Page). So, Horace's originality in *Ode* 1.28 consists in combining within the lyric mode the epigrammatic precedents of an attack on a philosopher, a mock epitaph, and a dialogue between the poet and a famous dead man.

Second, my interpretation helps explain Horace's choice of meter, for the first Archilochian meter *(6da/4da)* is the closest lyric equivalent to the meter of funerary epigram and so is appropriate for the epitaph in lines 21-36. It was also, of course, a meter associated with invective and so helped undergird the satiric tone of the first twenty lines of the poem. Moreover, the first Archilochian was a meter Horace associated with bipartite poems containing an abrupt change of speaker, as happens in *ode* 1.7 and epode 12, both written in this meter.

Finally, my reading helps us understand why we find so many different interpretations of the ode in the secondary literature—indeed, why it is fair to say that this poem has been interpreted in more different ways than any other work of Horace. This brings us to the question of the significance of the Archytas *Ode*.

I suggested that in deliberately writing verses 21-36 so as not to join issue with lines 1-20, Horace was inspired by Plato's famous analysis of the problem of writing near the end of the *Phaedrus* (275C-276B). In that passage, Plato distinguished between the "bad" writing of everyday usage, which is called illegitimate and dangerous because it is outside the control of its father and because it destroys the very memories that it would preserve, and the "good" writing that is inscribed by a living teacher in the soul of a faithful student (276E-277A). Plato's argument is thus that everyday writing is deficient because, although its purpose is to make present what is absent, it really only succeeds in making what is absent still more inaccessible because of the polysemous and potentially fraudulent nature of the sign. As numerous commentators have pointed out, Plato's formulation of the problem of writing in the medium of a written dialogue inevitably results in the mind-boggling and irresolvable contradiction that Plato's condemnation of writing is itself an example of writing.

Despite the overwhelmingly Epicurean orientation of his critique of Archytas' Pythagoreanism in *Ode* 1.28 (or perhaps because the Epicureans accepted Plato's analysis of the problem of writing), Horace's treatment of the problem is ultimately traceable to Plato's; indeed, the

Archytas' Ode almost seems to be a lyrical reformulation of the ending of the Phaedrus in all its complexity. As we have seen, Horace’s point of departure in the poem is the epigrammatic tradition, exemplified by the poem of Callimachus mentioned earlier (A.P. 7.522 = XV Pfeiffer)—in which the poet reads an epitaph on a tomb and engages in a conversation with the spirit of the tomb. In Ode 1.28, Horace reads Archytas’ epitaph and the message of the funerary iconography decorating his tomb. However, in a Platonic reversal of the epigrammatic tradition, Horace does not engage in a sentimental conversation with these semata; rather, he attacks them and shows that, without the aid of their putative father Archytas, they are as defenseless as Plato said all marks are. The substance of the attack is that the marks are wrong in claiming that consciousness survives after death for the animus is moriturus. By failing to respond to this attack, the marks prove to be as empty and devoid of consciousness as is Archytas’ cenotaph, a kenon sêma, as the Greeks called it. Moreover, there is the additional irony that the marks, which purport to be Archytas’, are clearly fraudulent, since they cannot really have originated with their putative author. By the marks’ own admission, Archytas’ body is not present in the cenotaph but lies unburied outside the tomb, presumably somewhere else. In the Archytas Ode, Horace thus explodes two epigrammatic traditions: that the living are able to converse with the...

72That the two senses of the term σῆμα (i.e., sign and tomb) could occasionally be operative in single occurrences of the word in Homer has been noted by G. Nagy in par. 19 of his article “Sêma and Noësis: Some Illustrations,” Arethusa 16 (1983) 35–55. In par. 25 of the same article, Nagy presents evidence from Homer, Pindar, and black-figured vase painting indicating that in traditional Greek thought, the sêma, in the sense of “tomb,” is not only the sign of the dead but also the means whereby the dead may “return to light and life.” This same tradition of confusing the consciousness of the sender with his sign obviously informs the funerary epigrams that inspired Horace in c. 1.28; moreover, as S. L. Tarán has recently observed (above, n. 64) 133, when the epigrams involve cenotaphs, not normal tombs, the situation is a “tour de force in which the dead man speaks but the corpse is not lying under the inscribed stone.” Thus, in choosing to write about Archytas’ cenotaph, Horace is exposing the foolishness of the traditional confusion of sender and sign in its reductio ad absurdum. Indeed, in the case of the particular cenotaphic epigram discussed by Tarán (Asclepiades 31 = A.P. 7.500) “the reader wonders whether the whole composition was meant seriously or whether Asclepiades’ intention was to write a parody of an epitaph for a shipwrecked man. The suspicion arises from the basic inconsistency of the epigraph. Euippus died in shipwreck... Who then built his cenotaph...?” (134).
dead at the tomb; and the even more absurdly sentimental conceit that communication with the unburied dead can occur at a cenotaph.

Our analysis of the ode cannot stop with this observation, for by attacking writing through writing, Horace inevitably gets caught up in Plato's contradiction in the *Phaedrus*. If Horace, the reader of the poem, sees only absence and (self-) deception in Archytas' marks, then Horace, the author of the poem, forces his reader to recapitulate his experience of the patricidal mark that renders its father inaccessible and absent to consciousness. In this connection it is important to recall that Horace calls the odes his *monumentum*, his memorial, in the last poem of the collection (3.30). So, the equation forced on us by the *Phaedrus*—namely, that Horace: Archytas Ode: Archytas: the cenotaph—is very Horatian indeed (cf. also c. 4.8). The ode begins as a meditation about an attempt to overcome death through a tomb and ends as a study of the semiotics of signification.

There are theoretically over thirty different possible classes of interpretation of the Archytas *Ode*, many of which are actually to be found in the secondary literature. The poem can be read as a monologue or dialogue, as laudatory or sarcastic in tone, as spoken by Horace, Archytas, an anonymous ghost, a passing sailor or by any two of the four, and as addressed to Archytas, a passing sailor, or a generalized reader. Furthermore, if the poem is read as a dialogue, the change of speaker can occur at three possible breaks: after line 6, 16, or 20. Finally, Lehrs and several other critics have divided the text into two separate and unrelated poems: lines 1–20 and 21–36. All these variables make possible a great, but limited, number of different and mutually exclusive interpretations.73

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73H. Schütz (above, n. 1) 104 discussed the various possible structural divisions of the poem and noted that all seem "gleich willkürlich." K. E. Bohnenkamp (above, n. 38) 207 comments on the "open strophic form" of the ode's metrical organization. Most adherents of the dialogue-theory have divided the poem into two speeches at either line 7 (so Landinus [1482], A. Mancinellus [1492], J. Locher [1498], among the earliest commentators, and F. Burger [1927] among the most recent) or 21 (so L. Torrentius [1608], Heinsius [1629], and P. Buttmann, *Mythologus II* [Berlin 1828–29] 369–370). Dillenburg (above, n. 1) 78 divided the poem into two speeches after verse 16. The poem was divided into two separate works at line 17 by Döderlein (above, n. 59) 51–57; and at line 21 by Lehrs (above, n. 2) *Ivi-i-x*; Nairn (above, n. 59) 444–445; C. Bulle, "Die Archytas-Ode und der Mons Matinus," *Philologus* 57 (1898) 340–343; J. J. Hartman, "De Horatii Carmine 1,28," *Mnemos.* 26 (1898) 335–338; and C. E. Bennett, *Horace, Odes and Epodes* (London 1914) 76–78. C. W. Göttling (above, n. 10) 229, and R. Kent, "Horace and the High Seas," *CW* 13 (1919) 41–45, make the poem into a monologue spoken by
The central problem creating these alternative tones, structures, speakers, and addressees is always: who is speaking? The problematic nature of the voice or voices in this poem is not something that we need to prove; it is adequately attested by the history of readers’ responses to the poem since the ancient scholiasts. It must, in fact, be taken as the major feature of the ode—we cannot be certain who is speaking. Even the new interpretation that I have presented here makes no greater claim than to be possible (and, indeed, to make a stronger claim would be self-defeating): the quoque in 21 may be inceptive, but we cannot prove definitely that it is; the mis en scène may be that Horace is reading Archyta’s epitaph, but again, positive proof is lacking—as it is. I hasten to point out, for every major critical decision that any interpreter can make about this poem. If my interpretation has any special claim to make, it is that it can at least admit and account for this rather startling degree of textual indeterminacy, for the problem of who is speaking is precisely the inevitable result of the presence of the patricidal sign.\textsuperscript{74}

Interpreters’ attempts to fix the structure and meaning of Ode 1.28 have been just as unsuccessful as Horace’s attempt to rouse the shade of Archytas. That is the failure of the poem and the reason it seems so bizarre. On the other hand, it is a failure that was planned in advance by Horace: it is a desired failure, for stated differently, one can attribute the success of the poem to its ability to provoke as strong a response to itself as was Horace’s diatribe against Archytas’ epitaph and tomb. Just as Horace did not believe that Archytas could be roused through his séma, so Horace’s critic should not think that Horace’s conscious intentions can be made present through his monumentum—unless, of course, that very message of showing textual

\textsuperscript{74}On writing as parricidal see J. Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy,” in Dissemination, trans. B. Johnson (Chicago 1981) 61–171, esp. 164. For a recent analysis of the problem of semiotic indeterminacy and why readers fail to decode signs in the way their senders encoded them see U. Eco, A Theory of Semiotics (Bloomington, Ind. 1979) 140–142. The Epicureans apparently recognized the polysemous nature of signs; cf. P. H. and E. A. De Lacy, Philodemus. On Methods of Inference (Naples 1978) 192–193. The earliest recognition of the problematic nature of the speaker of Ode 1.28 is to be found in the late antique or early medieval commentary published by H. J. Botschuyver, Scholia in Horatium, 4.1 (Amsterdam 1940) 44–45, esp. ad c. 1.28.7 (cf. ix-x for speculation about the identity of the scholiast).
indeterminacy was Horace's simple and unequivocal intention in writing the ode.

In 1856 J. A. Mähly wrote the following words about the Archytas Ode:

No reader of our poet would express great regret if this poem were not accepted into the corpus of Horace: first of all, because it in fact does not contain extraordinarily beautiful things... and also because such a great number of so many different interpretations (only one of which the poet can have intended) can never speak in favor of the excellence of a poem, which, in the end, ought to be as open to understanding as any piece of prose. At least, no poetics has yet dared to make the concept of obscurity a necessary element of any literary product.  

What a difference a hundred and twenty-five years have made—now we have not one but several poetics of what Mähly called "obscurity" and what we would call textual indeterminacy; now we find a poem interesting—and perhaps beautiful—precisely because it is not simplex dumtaxat et unum, as Horace himself said that poetry should be in the Ars Poetica. Or did he? As is perhaps appropriate for a study about indeterminacy, I conclude with a question, not an answer. Can we really believe that the poet who equated poetry to a cenotaph in the Archytas Ode intended us to take seriously his speaker's celebration of the poetic virtues of simplicity, unity, and clear structure in the Ars Poetica?  

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75 J. A. Mähly, "Horatius carm. lib. I.XXVIII," RhM n.s. 10 (1856) 127 (my translation).
76 An earlier version of this article was given as a lecture at Johns Hopkins University, the University of Cincinnati, Harvard University, and Brown University in the fall of 1982 and the winter of 1983; I wish to thank the various audiences for their helpful comments and especially Professors Stanley Fish, Charles Segal, Michael Putnam, D. R. Shackleton Bailey, and Zeph Stewart for their useful suggestions. I am also grateful to Professors Malcolm Bell and Russell T. Scott for discussing the poem with me at the American Academy in Rome in 1975 and 1982; Ernst A. Schmidt sent me some helpful written comments on an earlier draft. Finally, I wish to thank the American Council of Learned Societies and the Academic Senate of UCLA for grants supporting the research of this article. I dedicate this article to my teacher Archibald W. Allen.